

Town of Vermont Comprehensive Plan

1.	Introduction.....	3
1.1	Plan Purpose.....	3
1.2	Definitions.....	3
2.	Issues and Opportunities.....	4
2.1	Background Information.....	4
2.2	Assumptions About the Future.....	6
2.3	Goals.....	7
3.	Housing.....	8
4.	Transportation.....	8
5.	Utilities and Community Facilities.....	10
6.	Agricultural Resources.....	11
6.1	Preservation.....	11
6.2	Cooperation.....	12
6.3	Protection.....	12
6.4	Additional residence.....	12
7.	Natural Resources.....	12
7.1	Floodplains.....	13
7.2	Erosion Control.....	13
7.3	Woodlands and Grassland Habitat.....	13
7.4	Dumping.....	14
7.5	Lighting.....	14
7.6	Signs.....	14
8.	Cultural Resources.....	14
9.	Economic Development.....	15
10.	Land Use.....	16
10.1	Density(John).....	16
10.2	Transfer of Development Rights.....	18
10.3	Siting.....	18
10.4	Ridgetop Protection.....	19
10.5	Driveways.....	20
10.6	Future Land Use.....	21
11.	Intergovernmental Cooperation.....	21

12. Implementation 22

12.1 Plan Commission Procedures 22

12.2 Proposed Changes to Ordinances and Regulations..... 23

12.3 Updating the Plan 24

12.4 Mapped Information 24

1. Introduction

1.1 Plan Purpose

This plan is a guide for decision-making for the Town of Vermont government in managing changes in land use and in carrying out the business of the Town. It provides a framework to guide Town leaders and landowners in making land-use decisions that respect the rights of landowners while preserving and enhancing those qualities that make the town a special place to live and work.

This Comprehensive Plan is the latest product of an ongoing land use planning process that began in 1979 with the first Town of Vermont Land Use Plan, adopted when the Town agreed to participate in the state Farmland Preservation program and the Dane County A-1 Exclusive Agricultural zoning district. Subsequent revisions were adopted in 1985, 1997, and 2011. Like its predecessors, this Plan reflects the values and the shared intentions of the Town Plan Commission, the Town Board and the citizens of the town at the time of its adoption.

This Plan is to be used to guide the development of Town ordinances and policies. In particular, Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning law (Wis. Statute 66.1001) requires that beginning on January 1, 2010, certain actions related to zoning and land use regulation must be consistent with an adopted Comprehensive Plan. The plan and the associated ordinances and policies are to be used in conjunction with applicable Dane County ordinances, Wisconsin statutes and federal laws.

1.2 Definitions

Contiguous - a parcel of land is contiguous if all parts under the same ownership are adjacent along a boundary, or at a point ("corner-to-corner"). Land under common ownership that is divided by a stream, public right-of-way, zoning district boundary, or survey line is considered contiguous.

Driveway -- "driveway" is defined to mean private driveway, road, field road or other means of travel through any part of a private parcel of land which connects or will connect with any public highway.

Density -- the amount of non-farm residential development allowed, in relation to the total area owned. The density limit of the plan is expressed as one "potential development right" per 35 acres.

Farm Accessory Building - is an accessory building or buildings that are used in the operation of a farm.

Floodplain -- is the land adjacent to a body of water which has been or may be hereafter covered by flood water (as delineated on official floodplain maps).

Land of Agricultural Significance -- is that which is of sufficient quality to be preserved for agricultural use as determined by a town planning committee evaluation of: size, productivity, slope, crop history, shape and accessibility. A worksheet for evaluating the agricultural significance of a site is contained in the Plan Commission Policy and Procedure Manual.

Lot -- is a parcel of land occupied or intended to be occupied by a building and its accessory buildings and uses. A lot may be a parcel designated in a plat, a certified survey map, or described in a conveyance recorded in the office of register of deeds.

Ownership Parcel -- a contiguous and discrete tract of land, all under the same ownership and on public record. An ownership parcel is distinct from a zoning parcel, and is not affected by zoning district boundaries.

Potential Development Right -- an allowance for possible construction of a home on a parcel of land based on density requirements. Note that all other requirements of this plan must also be met for residential development on the parcel to be approved.

Public Agency – any unit of local, state or national government and any public utility

Shall and Should -- "shall" means the provision is mandatory for compliance; "should" means desirable as a good practice.

Slope -- is the slant or inclination of the ground expressed as a percentage of the vertical rise divided by the horizontal length. Thus, a 13 percent slope is one that rises 13 feet over a distance of 100 horizontal feet.

Wetlands -- are land areas characterized by high water table, the presence of surface water at any time during the year, predominantly organic soils and aquatic vegetation. Determination of wetland areas will be based on maps prepared by the state Department of Natural Resources or by observation of the characteristics listed above.

2. Issues and Opportunities

2.1 Background Information

The Town of Vermont lies on the western border of Dane County between the villages of Black Earth and Mount Horeb. It is in the driftless area in which the hills have not been rounded off by glacial action and there is no overlying cover of glacial deposits. The nearly level layers of sandstone and limestone are cut by rather deep narrow valleys. The thin soils covering this bedrock are very easily eroded unless kept covered with vegetation. The hilltops are mostly 1,100 to 1,200 feet in elevation while the valley bottoms are mostly 800 feet or lower.

Prior to European settlement, the land in the Town was primarily grassland prairie with some areas of sparsely wooded oak savanna. The valley bottoms were wetlands traversed by braided, meandering streams. This ecosystem had evolved over thousands of years under the influence of frequent fires, started by lightning and by the residents of the area. These regular fires maintained the open, grassy character of the landscape and suppressed most trees and brush with the exception of scattered oak trees.

After European settlers arrived, many wetlands were drained, prairies were plowed and running wildfires were suppressed. The steeper slopes grew up in oak woods, though for many years, use of these areas for pasturing livestock kept them relatively open. In the past several decades, with the decline in pasturing, trees and brush have encroached on these former pastures, and at present about 30 to 40 percent of the land in the town is wooded.

The amount of land used for cropland has also decreased significantly in recent decades. As the agricultural economy has changed, there are fewer farmers working larger farms, and much of the marginal farmland in the town is no longer used for cropland. Many fields and formerly farmed wetlands are reverting to brush and open meadows. This can vary with the market, e.g. if soybeans or corn prices are very high, unused cropland may be put back in production.

The large amount of undeveloped and unfarmed land supports a considerable population of wildlife, and contributes to the rural character of the town.

The streams in the town also provide good habitat for aquatic life, including game fish, as well as important corridors for all types of wildlife.

The steep topography of the town presents a challenge for management of storm water runoff and prevention of erosion. Before the original prairie sod was plowed, its deep root system helped recharge groundwater supplies while preventing runoff and erosion. Early farming practices led to serious erosion and flooding from ridgetops and steep hillsides.

Long-time residents of the town recount the frequent and severe floods in years past. As better soil conservation practices were put into use (from the 1930's on), the floods have become much less frequent, the gullies have become grown over with vegetation, and the streams have stabilized. However, excessive runoff and erosion is still a potentially serious problem when

ridgetops and steep hillsides are disturbed and when impervious surfaces such as roofs and driveways are added.

Disposal of sewage wastes on sloping land with rock formations close to the surface can be a threat to local water quality. Because of the relatively rough terrain and thin soils, there are few locations where conventional septic tank soil absorption systems may be installed. However, with the advent of mound type systems, locations for on-site wastewater treatment systems are less constrained than they have been in the past.

The continued viability of farming operations in the town requires the availability of tillable land. For these reasons the Town of Vermont is suitable only for limited development and a low density of population.

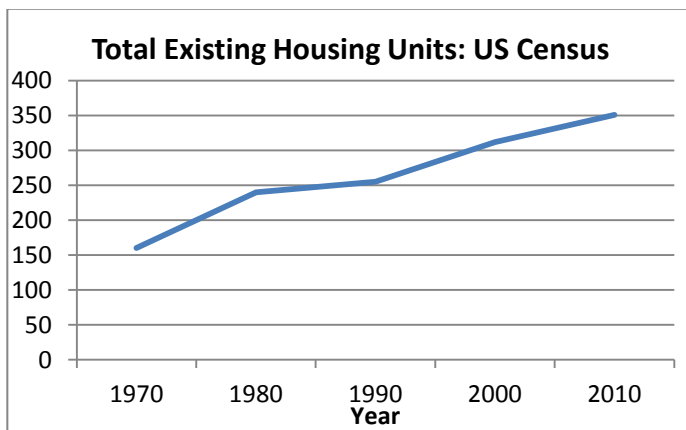
There is no village or high density residential area in the town, but portions of the Town are within the extraterritorial planning areas of the Villages of Black Earth, Mt. Horeb, and Blue Mounds.

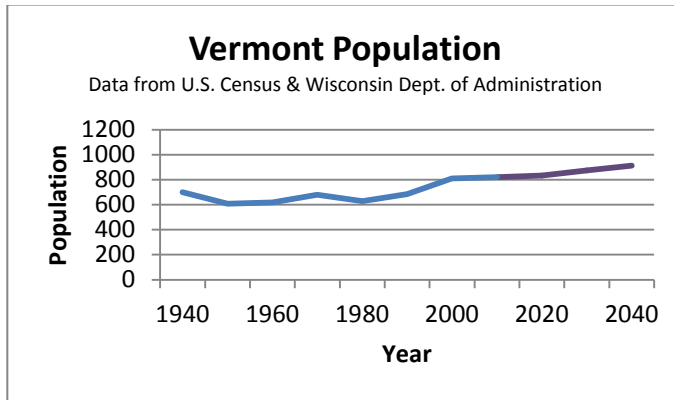
When the first Europeans settled here in the 1840s, the Ho-Chunk people had been living in the area for thousands of years. Two of our town roads, "Old Indian Trail" and "Blue Mounds Trail", were named after foot trails used by the inhabitants to travel between the Wisconsin River and Blue Mounds.

Over the following decades, immigrants came from England, Scotland and Ireland; Prussia, Austria, Switzerland and Norway, as well as from the eastern states.

When first surveyed, the area that is now the Town of Vermont was attached to the Town of Madison. In 1848 the Territorial Legislature removed this area from the Town of Madison and combined it with the Town of Blue Mounds. Seven years later in 1855 Vermont was separated from the Town of Blue Mounds and became a separate entity. It was named the Town of Vermont by one of the old settlers in honor of the Green Mountains of his home state.

The Town's population reached a peak of 1,244 in 1870, but by 1940 it had declined to less than 700, and remained between 600 and 700 until 1990. From 1980 to 2010, the town population has increased by an average of about ten residents per year, while the number of homes has increased by four to five per year.





Demographic Statistics

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2010

	Town of Vermont	Dane County	Wisconsin
Population by Sex/Age			
Total Population	819	488,073	5,667,100
Male	411	241,411	2,822,400
Female	408	246,662	2,864,586
Under 18	166	106,084	1,319,606
18 & over	653	381,989	4,347,494
20 – 24	37	47,252	386,552
25 – 34	58	78,853	721,694
35 – 49	69	99,711	1,163,293
50 – 64	288	90,257	1,135,937
65 & over	106	50,144	777,314
Housing Status			
Total Housing Units	351	216,022	2,625,477
Occupied Housing Units	325	203,750	2,279,768
Owner-Occupied Units	291	121,509	1,551,558
Renter-Occupied Units	34	82,241	728,210
% Single-person household	18%	30.5%	28.2%
% with householder age 65 and over	23%	17.6%	24%
Economic & Labor Force Characteristics			
Median household income	78,465	60,519	62,088
Per capita income	37,249	32,392	25,458
% in labor force	73.6%	74.4%	51.2%
% persons unemployed	4.3%	5.0%	8.7%

2.2 Assumptions About the Future

The policies of this plan have been established and modified assuming major factors that are expected to influence the town's future. These assumptions include:

1. There will be mounting demand for residential development in the Town of Vermont as the population of Dane County continues to grow. This increased demand will come from expansion in the nearby villages of Black Earth, Mt. Horeb, and Blue Mounds along with continuing residential and commercial growth to the east in the towns of Cross Plains and Middleton, as well as the cities of Middleton and Madison.
2. The population and the number of housing units in the Town will continue to grow roughly

as they have over the past 25 years: by about ten residents and four to five homes per year.

3. Larger economic trends such as increasing costs for energy and transportation may temper the increased demand for residential development and may influence the demographic makeup of the Town. Changes in the agricultural economy may also affect the value of land in the Town for agricultural use as opposed to residential development.
4. Residents of the Town of Vermont will continue to strongly support preserving and protecting the scenic beauty, the quality of the environment and a diversity of agricultural opportunities.
5. Major transportation corridors will continue to be Highway 18-151 to the south through Mt. Horeb; Highway 14 to the north through Black Earth; Highway 78 between Black Earth and Mt. Horeb, and Mineral Point Road and County J into the center of the town from the east.
6. Continued technological changes will enable more residents to work and start new businesses from home. .

2.3 Goals

Since the first Town of Vermont land-use plan was adopted in 1979, the Town's residents have consistently endorsed a vision of allowing controlled, low-density residential development while preserving the qualities that make this town so attractive. In support of this vision, we have formulated the following specific goals:

1. Maintain and preserve the rural character of the town;
2. Preserve agricultural opportunities;
3. Protect the environment; and,
4. Protect and preserve the natural beauty of the town.

These goals are detailed below.

Goal 1: Maintain and Preserve Rural Character

The present rural character of the Town of Vermont is characterized by large areas of open space, including wetlands, woodlands, croplands, meadows, pastures, and other undeveloped land. There are sweeping vistas of the surrounding countryside from the hills, valleys, and ridgetops. Traffic on our rural roads is light, and the number of driveways per mile of road is low.

There is a relatively low density of buildings, in terms of the number of buildings visible from any one vantage point, as well as the total number of buildings, visible or not. The buildings that are visible are predominantly farm buildings. To maintain this character, we want to encourage new homes and other structures to be designed and located so they are compatible with their surroundings.

Another important part of the rural character of our town is the sense of community that exists among the residents. People know each other, many are long-time residents, many work in the area. We want to encourage residents to become active participants of this community. We want to encourage opportunities to make a living within the town, through agriculture, cottage industries, and other low-impact businesses.

The objectives of the Town of Vermont with respect to maintaining and encouraging rural character are:

1. To limit the density of new residential development;
2. To encourage design and location of structures that are compatible with their natural surroundings;
3. To encourage opportunities for residents to make a living within the town.
4. To continue to provide only limited public services required for a rural area.

The Town's policies in support of these objectives are described in Section 5, Utilities and Community Facilities, Section 9, Economic Development, and Section 10, Land Use.

Goal 2: Preserve Agricultural Opportunities

The rural character of our town is strongly linked to agriculture. We want to encourage actions and policies that help farmers to pursue their agricultural activities, consistent with the other objectives of this plan.

The objectives and policies of the Town of Vermont with respect to agriculture are detailed in Section 6, Agricultural Resources.

Goal 3: Protect the Environment

The natural environment in Vermont Township is an irreplaceable resource. Some of its important features are surface waters and groundwater, wetlands and floodplains, woodlands and prairies. The steep slopes are susceptible to erosion when disturbed. Protection of these natural features is an important consideration for development in the town.

The objectives and policies of the Town of Vermont with respect to resource protection are described in Section 7, Natural Resources.

Goal 4: Protect and Preserve Natural Beauty

The natural beauty of the town is dependent on many of the same qualities that contribute to its rural character. The visual richness of the terrain stems from a diverse natural environment, with wetlands, woodlands, prairies, and meadows. This natural beauty also depends on large areas of open space, with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside, uninterrupted as much as possible by buildings or other structures. The Town's objectives and policies regarding protecting and preserving natural beauty are described in Section 7, Natural Resources.

3. Housing

According to the 2010 census there were 351 housing units in the Town, nearly all of them single-family homes. Of the 325 homes that were occupied, 291 (90%) were owner-occupied, and 34 (10%) were rented. Between 1980 and 2016, the number of homes has increased by four to five per year.

As a rural town, with stated goals of maintaining rural character, protecting the environment and preserving natural beauty, Vermont's primary housing concern is regulation of new residential development.

While some other governmental units are concerned with maintaining an adequate supply of housing to meet the demand, Vermont does not need policies to promote the development of housing. Because our town is such an attractive place to live, there is significant market pressure to develop more housing. Our policies limit such development, to meet our goals of maintaining rural character, protecting the environment and preserving natural beauty, while being fair to landowners.

There is currently no special-needs or assisted-living housing located in the town. The rugged topography and lack of infrastructure would make it a challenging environment for locating such housing. Special-needs housing is available in the Villages of Black Earth, Cross Plains, and Mount Horeb.

4. Transportation

One of the primary functions of Town government is to maintain the local road system. Road maintenance is the largest item in the Town's budget. Town residents are largely satisfied with the local roads, and we hope to continue this success while meeting future challenges.

The major artery in the Town's transportation network is State Highway 78, which runs north and south through the eastern portion of the town between Black Earth and Mount Horeb. County Trunk Highways J, JJ, F, and FF are secondary arterials. Town roads include 51 roads with a total length of 38.30 miles.

Nearby transportation corridors include Highway 18-151, a four-lane limited access highway that runs east-west about three miles south of the Town, and Highway 14, which runs from southeast to northwest and passes within a mile of the Town's northern border.

According to the State Department of Transportation's (DOT's) long-range plan there are no plans for major changes to Highways 78 in the next fifteen (15) years. There are plans to convert Highway 18-151 to a limited access highway within the next five (5) years.

It is unlikely that mass transit will be available within Vermont in the foreseeable future.

While the Town has no public off-road bicycle trails, many town residents and visitors enjoy bicycling and walking on roads in the town. Available in the Town are several public walking trails which are located at Pleasant Valley Conservancy and Parrish Savanna Conservancy. Regional airport facilities include Middleton Municipal Airport - Morey Field, a general aviation airport in Middleton, and the Dane County Regional Airport.

Future road expenditures in the Town will be affected by the following types of traffic:

- Increasing traffic on town roads resulting from more homes in the Town and more miles driven per person.
- Wear and tear on roads resulting from heavy construction and agricultural traffic associated with development in the Town.

The natural beauty and rural character of the town attract many visitors who enjoy using the local roads. We welcome visitors and encourage them to use our roads in a legal and respectful manner. Likewise, we encourage residents to be respectful toward visitors.

The Town's objective with respect to transportation is to balance the need for safe and adequate transportation corridors with the desire for maintaining the natural beauty along roadways. We have adopted the following policies to support this objective:

1. Widening or other alteration of roadways shall be avoided unless necessary for safe passage of traffic.
2. Roads will be maintained in accordance with the town's road maintenance guidelines (available from the Town Clerk), and the long-term Road Maintenance Plan.
3. The town will make only minimum use of de-icing agents on the roads and herbicides along the roadsides.
4. Cutting trees along roadsides is governed by the Town's tree-trimming policy, which attempts to strike a balance between rural character, safety, and maintenance considerations.
5. The Town currently has no plans to construct new town roads. Proposals from private parties to accept new roads will be carefully considered. For a new road to be accepted by the Town Board as a public road, it must meet at least the following conditions:
 - The impact of the road on rural character, natural beauty, and the environment must be positive or neutral, in comparison to the impacts if the road is not built
 - The road must be constructed and paved, at the applicant's expense, to meet state, county, and Town requirements.
6. The Town Board has been regularly evaluating abandonment of dead-end Town Roads that serve a single owner. The current criteria for evaluating road

abandonment are: .

- Abandonment may not result in landlocking of existing parcels.
 - Abandonment must not prevent development of existing PDRs.
 - Abandonment must not force construction of a new driveway.
 - A town road that serves multiple owners will be abandoned and converted to a shared driveway only if all property owners agree to abandonment and, if the town requires them, to easement(s) and a shared driveway agreement.
7. The Town may impose special weight limits on Town roads during the spring thaw period.
 8. In the case of organized events making use of our roads, such as road rallies, bicycle events, etc., we invite and expect event organizers to coordinate with town officials and residents to minimize conflicts, and to comply with Town and County ordinances.
 9. The Town provides financial support for the accessible bussing and other services which are provided by Northwest Dane Senior Services. The Town anticipates continuing this support in the future.

Some of our narrower roads may need to be upgraded to accommodate increasing traffic when more potential development rights are utilized. Increased traffic also increases wear and tear on the roads and shortens the time between major maintenance projects. Heavy equipment associated with construction projects, agriculture and the operation of local businesses greatly accelerate wear on the roads. Under current policies, all town taxpayers subsidize development when we upgrade our roads to accommodate new residences, and when we repair roads impacted by construction traffic.

The Town may develop policies to account for the effects of development on our road system, in terms of increased traffic and increased maintenance costs. These policies should respect landowners' development prerogatives and residents' reasonable business opportunities while limiting taxpayer subsidies of those activities.

5. Utilities and Community Facilities

The Town of Vermont is a rural community that provides limited public services, utilities or community facilities. We anticipate that this will remain the case for the foreseeable future. In keeping with our goal to maintain and preserve the town's rural character, the Town's policies with respect to public services are:

1. To continue providing only limited services required for a rural area. Maintenance of public roads is addressed in the Transportation section of this plan. The Town provides emergency services through its participation in the Mount Horeb Fire Department, the Black Earth Joint Fire District and the District 1 EMS in Black Earth. Police service is provided by the Dane County Sheriff's Office.
2. To avoid any substantial expenditure of public funds and incurrence of municipal debt for construction or provision of municipal improvements and services usually associated with urban development. Since a major goal of the town is to remain rural, urban services will not be needed. Also, it is well established that development leads to higher demand for urban services and, thus, higher taxes.
3. To continue leaving responsibility for trash disposal with individual Town residents. The Town does not provide public trash collection service. Town residents dispose of trash and recyclables at the Transfer Site east of the Village of Mazomanie, or use private collection services. A survey of residents in 2005 showed strong support for maintaining this status quo.
4. To consider the goals, objectives and policies of this plan, as well as the general welfare of all residents, when evaluating any new town services in the future. It is difficult to anticipate future service needs; however, this policy allows some flexibility as long as the general welfare and plan impacts are considered in the deliberation.

The only Town-owned facilities are the Town Hall and garage facilities, located at 4017 County Road JJ. The Town expects to develop a long-term maintenance plan that addresses repair, upgrade, and replacement needs for the Town Hall, garage facilities, and major equipment.

Electric service is provided to Town residents by Alliant Energy, Black Earth Electric and Mount Horeb Electric. Land-line telephone and internet services are provided by TDS and the Mount Horeb Telephone Company.

There are no public health care facilities in the Town. Regional hospitals are located in Dodgeville, Sauk City, and Madison. Satellite health-care clinics are located in Mazomanie, Mount Horeb and Cross Plains.

Two active private cemeteries exist within the Town: St. James and Vermont Lutheran. The Town distributes state-provided funding to support the upkeep of the graves of veterans located within these cemeteries.

The Town is part of the South Central Library System. Town residents use the library facilities in Black Earth, Mount Horeb and other communities.

Other regional utilities and community facilities are described in the chapter of that name in the Dane County Comprehensive Plan.

6. Agricultural Resources

This section comprises part of the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element required by the state Comprehensive Planning statute.

The rural character of our town is strongly linked to agriculture. While the number of full-time, larger farms in the town has been decreasing, we still consider ourselves an agriculture-based community. Also, the state, through A-1 Agricultural Exclusive zoning designation, provides tax support to landowners in towns such as Vermont, where policies are in place to protect agricultural land. We recognize that farming is not just an economic pursuit but a lifestyle, and that many town residents are farming part-time.

The continued viability of some of our farms depends on an adequate availability of cropland to rent. Therefore, we support policies concerning residential development that maximize the agricultural land that could be available for rental to farmers.

We also recognize the significant potential of a broad spectrum of agriculture activities. For example, the town is ideally located for production and direct marketing of agricultural products to urban and suburban residents.

The objectives of the Town of Vermont with respect to agriculture are:

5. To preserve productive farmlands for continued agricultural use.
6. To protect existing farm operations from restrictions arising from incompatible land uses and activities, such as locating a new house near a barnyard.
7. To support agriculture as a major economic activity within the town.
8. To support the preservation of the family farm as a viable economic unit as well as a desirable way of life.

In support of these objectives, the Town has adopted the following policies:

6.1 Preservation

To preserve land of agricultural significance for continued use as farmland and regulate use for non-

farm development. While land in the town may not be as productive for commodity farming as other areas of the county, it is important to local agricultural operations and should be preserved. In some cases, the town may allow new residential construction on land where the loss of agricultural opportunities is kept to a minimum. No more than 3 acres total for driveway, septic, dwelling and any outbuildings may be removed from availability for agricultural use. This policy recognizes that, in some cases, a homesite on the edge or corner of a field may be allowed.

6.2 Cooperation

To cooperate with other units of government in any program that encourages the continued use of land for agricultural opportunities. (*Comment:* The town is participating through this plan and Exclusive Agriculture Zoning to make farmers eligible for tax credits under the State Farmland Preservation Program.)

6.3 Protection

To protect existing farm operations from restrictions on noise, odor and the keeping of animals associated with farm operations. To require review by the Town Board of any heavy concentration of livestock, such as a large feedlot, to prevent environmental damage. (*Comment:* Only those ordinances and restrictions that are required for health and safety shall be applicable in farmland preservation areas. This policy recognizes that often new non-farm residents who are unfamiliar with farm operations may desire unrealistic controls or conditions on farm activities.)

6.4 Additional residence

To consider an additional, separate residence for parents or children of the farm operator if the conditional use standards of the A-1 Agricultural (Exclusive) District are met, as well as the town policy criteria for non-farm houses. These residences are subject to the density requirements of Section 10.1. (*Comment:* This policy acknowledges that the A-1 Agricultural (Exclusive) District allows residences for parents or children of a farm operator on a conditional use basis. Since such houses are essentially non-farm, this policy provides the same treatment as a matter of fairness and consistent policy.)

7. Natural Resources

This section comprises part of the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element required by the state Comprehensive Planning statute.

The citizens of the Town of Vermont place great importance on conservation of natural resources. Two of the four primary goals of this plan are concerned with this subject: Protect the Environment and Protect and Preserve the Natural Beauty of the Town.

The natural environment in Vermont Township is an irreplaceable resource. Some of its important features are surface waters and groundwater, wetlands and floodplains, woodlands and prairies. The steep slopes are susceptible to erosion when disturbed. Protection of these natural features is an important consideration for development in the town.

We recognize that diversity of plant and animal species is an important environmental value. We appreciate the value, and scarceness, of native plant communities. We understand the value to wildlife of large tracts of undeveloped land. We will encourage development proposals that will enhance or sustain and protect ecologically significant native plant communities and wildlife habitat.

The natural beauty of the town is dependent on many of the same qualities that contribute to its rural character. The visual richness of the terrain stems from a diverse natural environment, with wetlands, woodlands, prairies, and meadows. This natural beauty also depends on large areas of open space, with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside, uninterrupted as much as possible by buildings or other structures. We will consider preservation of this natural beauty when evaluating development proposals.

The objectives of the Town of Vermont with respect to resource protection are:

1. To recognize and respect the natural environment as an irreplaceable resource.
2. To protect and improve the quality of surface and groundwater within the town, including protection of floodplains and wetlands.
3. To encourage the use of soil conservation practices in farming operations and any development of the town.
4. To encourage residents to be good stewards of the land, and to encourage them to manage and preserve woodlands, wetlands and prairies as an economic land use, an environmental protection area, and a means of preserving the natural beauty of the town.
5. To encourage sensitivity to native plant communities.
6. To recognize the dangers of invasive plants and to consider policies that help reduce their spread.

The objectives of the Town of Vermont with respect to protecting and preserving natural beauty are:

1. To carefully review every development proposal to ensure that the resources which make the town attractive are not destroyed in the process.
2. To ensure that any public land acquisition and use, including public agency easements, conform to the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan.
3. To establish procedures with public agencies seeking to acquire land within the town, through purchase of ownership, lease or easement rights, which assure prior input from both town officials and citizens. To maintain contact with public agencies owning, leasing or holding easements to land in the town, keeping each other informed on current and proposed plans for acquisition, as well as ultimate use of such land.

In support of these objectives, our policies for conserving natural resources and natural beauty are listed below. Section 10.4 also includes specific requirements for protection of ridgetops.

7.1 Floodplains

Construction in floodplains and wetlands will not be allowed, in order to retain them as essential components of the hydrologic system; maintain their value as wildlife habitat; maintain them as focal points of natural beauty; and to avoid expensive future drainage and flooding problems. (*Comment:* Current zoning and sanitary requirements largely preclude such areas from development.)

7.2 Erosion Control

To require erosion control measures for all construction and other land disturbing activity in the Town. All such activities shall meet the erosion control and storm water management requirements of the applicable Dane County Ordinances

An erosion control plan must be submitted before a driveway permit will be approved. Under some conditions, the Town Board may require an engineer's plan. If the Town Board or the Building Inspector determines that the erosion control plan is not being followed, a stop work order by the Town of Vermont will be issued.

7.3 Woodlands and Grassland Habitat

In deciding land use changes, every effort will be made to protect quality woodlands and prairies from unnecessary destruction for development. The town encourages:

1. Management practices that promote diverse, sustainable plant and wildlife resources.
2. The use of woodlands and prairie grass habitats as erosion control measures on

the hillsides or in waterways.

3. Protection of native trees and grasslands in any development proposal.
4. Responsible use of pesticides, including proper application and disposal procedures.

The town will cooperate with other units of government in programs that encourage the restoration of ecologically significant native plant communities and wildlife habitat, or combat biological threats such as invasive plants, animals, or diseases.

7.4 Dumping

The town opposes open dumping and littering. Open dumping and littering detracts from the appearance of the town and constitutes violations of state and county laws. The town requires proper disposal and recycling at the Transfer Site east of Mazomanie or through a private hauler.

7.5 Lighting

The Town may consider instituting limitations on exterior lighting to ensure that residents achieve reasonable lighting objectives without unduly detracting from the Town's rural character and natural beauty. Residents are encouraged to use shielded exterior lighting whenever possible.

7.6 Signs

Dane County Ordinances regulate signs in the Town. In addition to the provisions of the county ordinance, all signs within the Town of Vermont are limited to a maximum size of 32 square feet.

7.7 Energy Efficiency

Wisconsin Statutes 1.12(3), state that the energy goals of the State include:

1. Energy efficiency. It is the goal of the state to reduce the ratio of energy consumption to economic activity in the state.
2. Renewable energy resources. It is the goal of the state that, to the extent that it is cost-effective and technically feasible, all new installed capacity for electric generation in the state be based on renewable energy resources, including hydroelectric, wood, wind, solar, refuse, agricultural and biomass energy resources.

To contribute to achieving these State of Wisconsin energy goals Vermont Town Government, residents and businesses cooperate to develop or enhance the energy system upon which our community relies and to adhere to these energy investment priorities:

1. Maximize cost-effective energy conservation, efficiency of energy use, and electrical energy load management;
2. Rely to the greatest extent possible on local, renewable generation of electricity;
3. Support local ownership of energy generation that includes dispersed renewable energy to support the local economy, including the creation of sustainable jobs;
4. Minimize the size, scale, voltage, and environmental impacts of electric transmission and generation.

8. Cultural Resources

This section comprises part of the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element required by the state Comprehensive Planning statute.

The Town of Vermont area established a rich cultural heritage prior to its European settlement. Numerous prehistoric archaeological sites, including native American village sites, rock shelters, marker trees, rock art, and burial mounds have been identified in the Town.

No systematic survey of the Town has been carried out. It is likely that there are additional sites that have not been identified. Archaeological sites are a valuable community resource and should be protected from disturbance when locating new buildings. All burial sites are protected from disturbance by state law [157.70](#).

The State of Wisconsin operates a tax [exemption program](#) for owners of archaeological sites listed in the National or State Register of Historic Places [see Wis. Stats. 70.11(13m)]. A landowner who agrees to place a permanent protective covenant for the site area in the deed for the property may obtain a property tax exemption. The intent of the program is not to prevent all use of the property containing a site, but to encourage land use planning that protects our archaeological heritage.

The earliest Europeans to travel through the area were French explorers in the 1670's seeking a route to China through the Great Lakes, Fox River, Wisconsin River and on to what is now Prairie du Chien. The area remained largely unsettled through the early 1800's and only after the Black Hawk wars of 1832 did European settlement begin.

Two historic settlements and numerous Euro-American homestead sites exist. Elvers' Corners and Peculiar Corners are commemorated by roadside interpretive signs. In 1898, a post office named Peculiar was opened in Tom Denny's farmhouse. Many colorful tales are told as to how it was given its name. In 1847, Samuel Lattimer built a saw mill which was called Elvers's Corners and which has a colorful background as the site of a saw mill, grist mill, post office, grocery store, hotel, blacksmith shop, dance hall and until 1958 the Town Hall.

Of the seven one-room schoolhouses that were built by early European settlers, several still stand in the town. One of these, the Sandridge School, now serves as the Town Hall and is the center of the Town's culture of grassroots democracy.

Two private cemeteries exist within the Town: St. James and Vermont Lutheran. In addition to these active cemeteries, two historic pioneer cemeteries have been identified, one of which has been cleaned up by a group of town residents and made accessible for visitation. These cemeteries are a rich source of historical information.

Current culture in Vermont is characterized by groups of like-minded residents gathering together to pursue various common interests. Weekly coffee gatherings and monthly potlucks are open to all interested residents. The annual Lutefisk Dinner draws diners from near and far.

Historically, neighbors pitched in to help each other with tasks like threshing, logging, and putting up firewood, and this tradition continues today. Residents also cooperate in the annual Audubon bird count, and in projects to restore native vegetation and wildlife habitat.

Hunting, fishing, and trapping have historically been important cultural pursuits in Vermont and this is still true today. The Vermont Deer Hunters' Meeting has been an annual tradition beginning the deer-hunting season for over 50 years.

9. Economic Development

The Town of Vermont economy was once primarily agriculture-based, but today most residents pursue other occupations. There are currently fewer than ten farms that provide their owners' primary income, though many more residents are engaged in part-time agricultural enterprises.

Today many residents commute to jobs in Madison or one of the other surrounding communities. According to the 2010 census, 9% of employed residents worked at home, 27% worked less than 20 minutes from home, and 58% drove 20-60 minutes to work.

The two largest employers in the town are the Tyrol Basin Ski Area and the Vermont Valley Community Farm. In addition, Vermont residents operate a broad range of smaller, non-farm businesses, such as but not limited to environmental and management consulting, construction, woodworking and food processing.

These small businesses, in agricultural and other sectors, contribute to local employment opportunities, bring money into the local economy, and help reduce regional traffic congestion that results from commuting to urban centers. The diversity of self-employed residents is also a significant component of the Town's rural character.

The Town expects to continue to promote policies that encourage opportunities for residents to make a living within the town, through agriculture, cottage industries, and other low-impact small businesses.

For commercial uses requiring rezoning, approval will be limited to low-impact small businesses such as, small contractors, vehicle storage, cottage industries and limited outside storage of materials such as provided in the "Limited Commercial Zoning District." Heavy industrial uses are incompatible with the goals and objectives of this plan.

Specific criteria for commercial rezoning are:

- Compatible with the rural character and natural beauty of the town.
- Minimal conflict with neighbors.
- Uses minimal or no productive agricultural land and minimum land area to accommodate the use.

Commercial recreation proposals will be limited to those uses having minimal impact on the natural environment. Access to a state or county highway is preferred. However, if a town road is involved, the applicant must demonstrate minimal impact to neighbors. If the town road requires improvement, the applicant will be required to pay their share of such improvement.

Other commercial development may be considered if it is consistent with the goals and objectives of this plan. Town residents have indicated a preference that any such development should be in the Highway 78 corridor.

10. Land Use

The Town's land use policies are intended to achieve our four primary goals:

1. Maintain and preserve the rural character of the town;
2. Preserve agricultural opportunities;
3. Protect the environment; and,
4. Protect and preserve the natural beauty of the town.

Policies related to other elements such as Transportation, Agricultural Resources, Natural Resources, and Economic Development also have a bearing on land use. The Town intends to apply all applicable town plan objectives and policies in making any land use decision. There may be some situations where unique circumstances on specific sites are not specifically addressed by these policies. In such cases, the Plan Commission and the Town Board will use their best judgment to arrive at a resolution that is consistent with the goals of the plan. We will work with the individuals involved to try to meet the goals of the property owner as well as those of the town.

10.1 Density

The Town of Vermont has adopted a 1:35 acre density policy, which allows one potential development right per 35 acres owned as of January 1, 1985. The number of potential development

rights associated with a property runs with the land; potential development rights are neither created nor destroyed when land is divided or transferred.

The number of potential development rights is calculated as follows:

1. Determine the total number of contiguous acres under the control of an owner on January 1, 1985. Divide the total number of contiguous acres by 35. If the result is a whole number plus a fraction, the owner is allowed a number of potential development rights equal to the whole number, plus an additional potential development right if the remaining fraction equals or exceeds 18/35. If the result is a whole number plus a fraction less than 18/35, the owner is allowed potential development rights equal to the whole number.
2. Acreage calculations are based on the 1985 assessor's tax roll, on file with the town clerk, unless other precise evidence acceptable to the Plan Commission and the Town Board modifies the tax roll figures. For the purposes of this calculation, the total number of contiguous acres includes lands located within a public road right-of-way. Note that Dane County Planning staff currently does not include road right-of-way in their density studies. In some cases this discrepancy may lead to errors in the county calculation of potential development rights.
3. One house per ownership parcel, legally habitable and with a fire number assigned as of January 1, 1985, will not be counted as reducing the number of potential development rights.
4. Ownership parcels existing as of January 1, 1985, with at least 20 acres but less than 53 acres, will be allowed one "potential development right." Such parcels with an existing house legally habitable and with a fire number assigned as of January 1, 1985 will be allowed one "potential development right" in addition to the existing house, subject to the other policies of this plan.
5. Ownership parcels of less than 20 acres on January 1, 1985 with no residence are considered "grandfathered" and shall be allowed only one potential development right.
6. The policy does not require a minimum 35-acre lot size for each residence.
7. The density policy applies regardless of the zoning district of the property.
8. Parcels that were rezoned to RH-1 or A-2, or that were created by certified survey, prior to January 1, 1985 are considered separately from contiguous acreage under the same ownership for the purpose of determining the number of potential development rights. The number of potential development rights for such parcels is determined by the density policy, as if they were separate ownership parcels. This provision recognizes the historical precedent set at the adoption of exclusive agricultural zoning in October 1979, which allows one house per substandard zoning parcel.
9. In situations where there has been no formal recording of the allocation of "potential development rights" when land has been divided, it is up to the past and current owners of the land to reach agreement in writing before bringing a proposal before the Town Board. In the absence of a written agreement, the Town Board and Plan Commission will allocate "potential development rights" in proportion to the number of acres in each parcel. In no case shall the total number of potential development rights exceed that determined based on the January 1, 1985 acreage as described above.
10. The Town Plan Commission and the Town Board will have the final authority to determine the number of potential development rights associated with a parcel.
11. No multiple-family, multi-unit dwellings will be allowed. Duplexes will be allowed if all other site criteria are met. A duplex requires two potential development rights. Dependency living arrangements ("mother-in-law quarters") are allowed as provided by Dane County ordinances.
12. Examples of calculation of potential development rights:
 - A 140-acre parcel existing on January 1, 1985 is allowed four potential development rights, and could eventually be divided to create up to four building sites if all other

site criteria are met.

- A 90-acre parcel existing on January 1, 1985 is allowed three potential development rights. (90 acres divided by 35 = $2\frac{20}{35}$. The remaining fraction is greater than 18/35, so the number of potential development rights is three.)
- A parcel of 20 acres with one existing residence as of January 1, 1985 is allowed one potential development right.

Other restrictions may be imposed by pertinent state and county zoning regulations.

10.2 Transfer of Development Rights

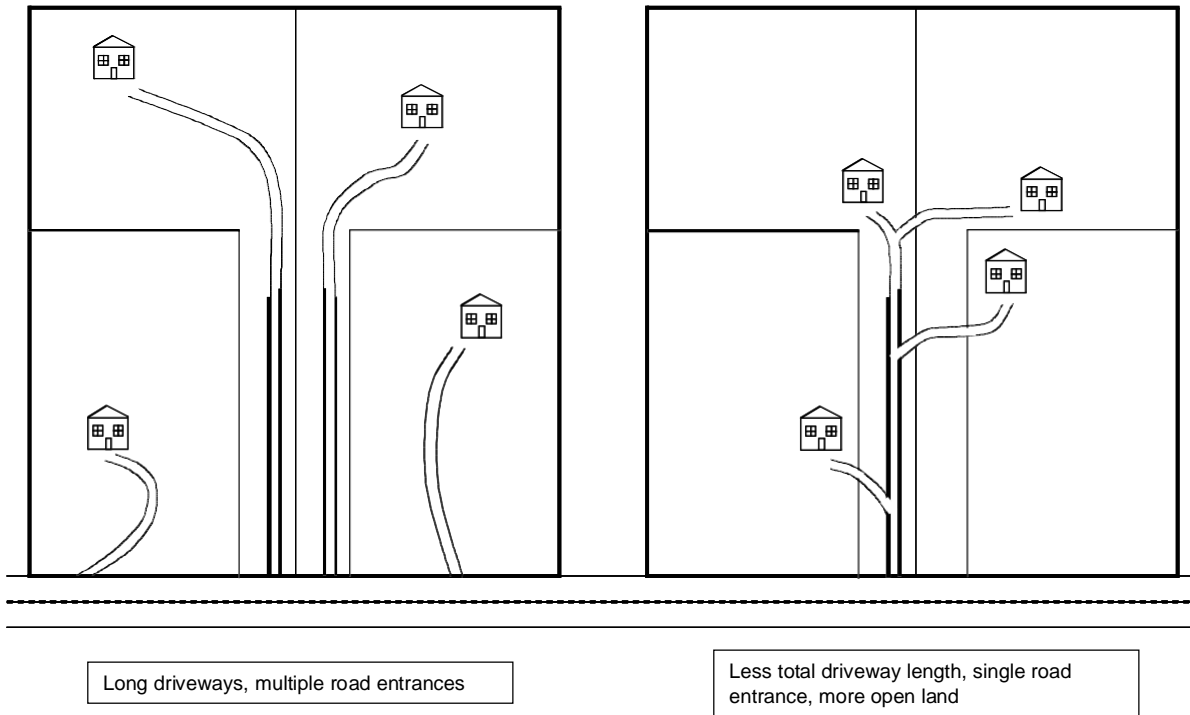
The concept of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) has been proposed as a way to preserve agricultural land and regulate development. The Plan Commission and Town Board have investigated whether a TDR program should be implemented in the town, and have decided not to pursue this idea.

10.3 Siting

Non-farm residential development will be limited to areas that are not deemed essential to agricultural pursuits or the rural environment of the town.

1. The site and the buildings should be located so they are compatible with the rural character and natural beauty of the town. For example, buildings with simple lines, in sheltered locations, are compatible with the traditional farmsteads typical of the town. Buildings that are hidden from view, screened by trees and topography, using roofing and siding materials that blend with the surrounding area, tend to be compatible with the natural beauty.
2. Where development is proposed to be located in open fields or meadows, the site must be evaluated for agricultural significance.
3. Buildings proposed to be located in agriculturally significant fields will only be allowed if located on the edge or corner of a field.
4. For development proposed on agriculturally significant land, no more than 3 acres total for driveway, septic, dwelling and outbuildings may be removed from availability for agricultural use.
5. Suitability for septic tank systems must be shown by test results of a state certified soil tester.
6. Minimum lot size for rezoning is two acres. Parcels less than two acres existing as of January 1, 1985 may be rezoned to an appropriate zoning category.
7. Building location must minimize loss of trees and grading of land.
8. The natural appearance of ridges, ridgetops and ridge shoulders shall be preserved to the maximum extent possible. Buildings located above the shoulder of a ridge must comply with the requirements of Section 10.4, Ridgetop Protection.
9. Note that Dane County Ordinance 75.19(6)(b) requires that each residential ownership parcel of less than 35 acres must front on a public road for at least 66 feet.

When property is being divided to create multiple home sites, it is often advantageous to place them relatively close to each other. *Building sites should use their best efforts in providing appropriate screening of homes affording for visual separation and privacy.* When homes are clustered, they can have shorter driveways and decrease the total development area, while preserving wide expanses of undeveloped land.



10.4 Ridgetop Protection

Ridgetop building is a serious and contentious issue in the Town of Vermont. We encourage applicants to construct their buildings below rather than on top of ridges and high hills. A building located below the crest of a hill causes less impact on the natural beauty and rural character that we seek to preserve.

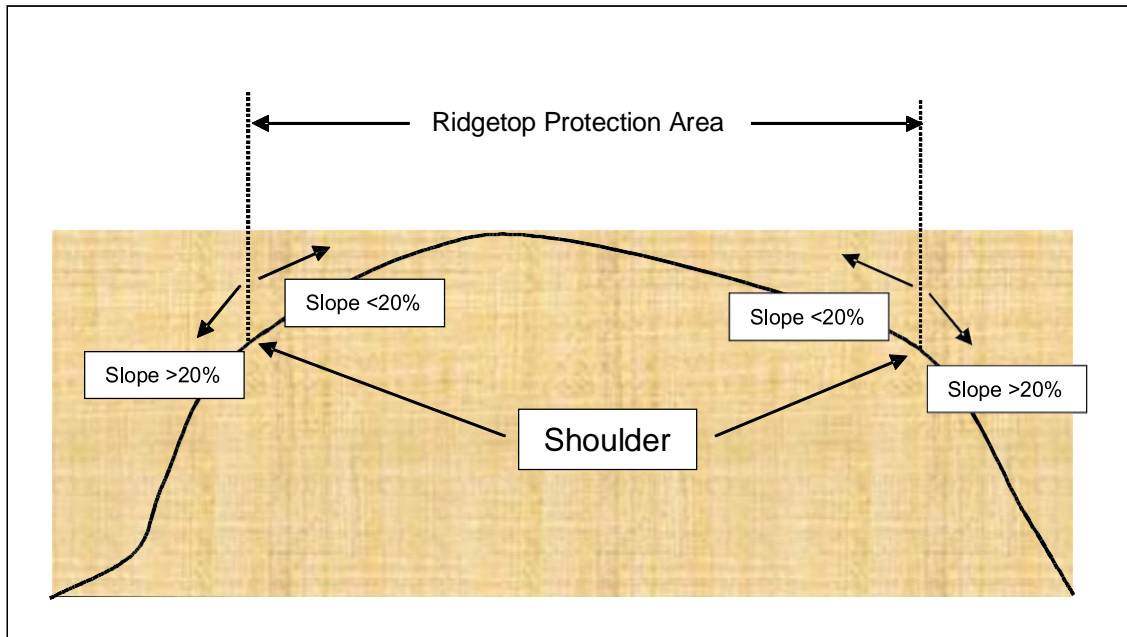
The Ridgetop Protection Area (RPA) is established not to prohibit building on ridgetops, but to minimize the impact of ridgetop building on the natural beauty and rural character of the town. Residences and residential accessory buildings within the RPA are subject to special conditions designed to limit their scale and their visibility from neighbors, from roads, and from other ridgetops.

The (RPA) is defined as any location that is located above the *shoulder* of the ridge. The *shoulder* is the point at which the local slope changes from greater than 20% to less than 20%. On the Town of Vermont website is a map depicting the approximate representation of the RPA, limited by the accuracy and resolution of the Dane County slope data.

To facilitate protection of this area, all new residences and residential accessory buildings located within the RPA are subject to the following constraints:

- The maximum height is limited to 28 feet. The maximum height is measured from the high point of the building to the average ground level around the building. The average ground level is the average of the four highest points of the four outside corners of the building. The ground level at each point is the original natural ground level or finished ground level, whichever is lower.
- External attachments such as chimneys, lightning rods, and antennas are not included in the height measurement.
- Buildings existing at the time of adoption of this plan are not subject to the height limit. Additions to existing buildings must comply with the height limit.
- **Farm accessory** buildings are not subject to the height limit.

We recognize that by the above definition, some sites that are minimally visible from roadways and neighboring properties may still fall within RPA. In such cases, the Plan Commission may at its discretion approve a variance to the height limit.



Definition of Ridgetop Protection Area

10.5 Driveways

The Town's interests in regulating driveways include ensuring safety for current and future owners, preventing excessive erosion, and minimizing visual impact. We encourage driveways that are short, with gentle slopes and minimal excavation.

1. Any person seeking to establish, construct, improve, modify or rework a driveway which changes the existing topography of the land shall first apply for a Driveway Permit from the Town Board.
2. Driveways must meet the requirements of the Town Driveway Ordinance, including safe passage for emergency vehicles, maximum driveway grade, and maximum side-slope steepness. Driveway planning should take into account natural topography and erosion concerns, and minimize long steep grades. Longtime residents understand that long steep driveways can pose significant safety and maintenance problems. Even the best-engineered driveways require regular filling and grading to repair the gullies that result from summer rainstorms. And a grade that is easy to negotiate on a dry sunny spring day can become precarious or even hazardous in the midst of winter snows.
3. A shared driveway may be preferable to multiple individual driveways for environmental or safety reasons. One driveway shall serve no more than four residences. Shared driveways must meet the requirements of the Town Driveway Ordinance for turnout lanes, access easements, and maintenance agreements.
4. Roads or driveways may be permitted to cross agricultural land to reach proposed non-farm development if minimal farmland is removed from production.
5. All driveways shall be constructed and maintained to meet the erosion protection requirements of Section 7.2. A driveway plan showing the location of the driveway, existing and final slopes, cuts, fills and potential erosion problems must be submitted before a driveway permit will be issued. Under some conditions, the Town Board may require an engineer's plan.

6. The base course of the driveway must be complete and approved by the Town's Driveway Committee before construction of the associated residence or building may begin.
 - Exception: driveway ordinance 4.03.3 says "With the approval of the Town Board, the driveway permit may allow for the excavation of a residential construction site to provide for site preparation and to provide fill for the proposed driveway."
7. Driveway permits expire 3 years after they are approved. A holder of an expired driveway permit may apply for reinstatement of the permit. The Plan Commission will review the application for compliance with current zoning and town land use policies. A revised or updated engineer plan may or may not be required.

10.6 Future Land Use

The intention of this plan with regard to future land use is to maintain the rural character of the town, with no concentrated commercial development or residential subdivisions.

All land within the town falls in one of three classifications for future development: Normal requirements for development, special requirements for development, and unsuitable for development.

The normal requirements for development are as outlined in sections 7.2, 10.1, and 10.3.

Special requirements for development are applied to sites within the Ridgetop Protection Area, described in Section 10.4. In addition to the normal requirements, buildings within this area are subject to a height limitation.

Land that is unsuitable for development include wetlands and sites that are not accessible by a driveway that meets the requirements of Section 10.5. Land with no remaining Potential Development Rights, as described in Section 10.1, is unsuitable for new home construction.

11. Intergovernmental Cooperation

As a primarily rural town, the Town of Vermont relies on cooperation with neighboring communities and governmental entities to provide essential services to residents. Except for road maintenance and local government, the Town has no facilities for providing public services.

The Town of Vermont shares borders with the Dane County towns of Blue Mounds to the south, Black Earth to the north, and Cross Plains to the east. The Iowa County towns of Brigham and Arena border Vermont on the southwest and northwest, respectively. Vermont also shares corners with the Dane County towns of Springdale and Berry to the southeast and northeast. The Villages of Mount Horeb and Blue Mounds are both located south of Vermont, and the Village of Black Earth is located to the north. These villages' extraterritorial zoning jurisdictions, where the villages have input into zoning changes, extend into the Town of Vermont.

The Town relies on a number of Dane County ordinances to regulate land use in the Town, including Dane County's zoning ordinance, floodplain zoning ordinance, land division ordinance, subdivision ordinance, erosion control and stormwater management ordinance, and shoreland/wetland regulations.

The Town is served by two school districts providing public pre-K through 12th grade education, with approximately 40% of town residents located in the Mt. Horeb School District and 60% in the Wisconsin Heights school district (see map). The southern half of the town is part of the Mount Horeb Area School District, which serves all or part of 9 local municipalities. The northern half of the town is part of the Wisconsin Heights School District which serves all or part of 8 local municipalities.

In 2017, both of our school districts are facing financial crises. We see an urgent need for the State to revise the formula for funding education, particularly as it applies to rural areas.

The Town participates with neighboring municipalities to support fire protection and emergency medical services for the town. The Mount Horeb Area Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services for the southern portion of the Town. The northern portion is served by the Black Earth Fire Department and by District One EMS. The Town appoints a representative to the governing Boards of each of these organizations.

Town Ordinances are enforced through the Mt. Horeb Joint Municipal Court. The Town has no municipal law enforcement officers or structure. The Dane County Sheriff's Office provides local response and law enforcement. The Wisconsin State Patrol may be available for highway and emergency response.

The Town Board appoints a liaison representative to neighboring Villages to monitor and communicate mutual interests and concerns.

In the future we expect to collaborate with regional governmental units and associations in land use planning. We expect to:

- Cooperate with Dane County agencies and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to continue to protect natural areas and open space corridors.
- Maintain membership in the Wisconsin Town's Association to keep abreast of recent legislation and trends in other towns.
- Participate in the Dane County Towns Association to promote our Town's interests and to maintain good relationships with the other towns in Dane County,
- Work jointly with adjacent villages to encourage sound land use planning for land located within extraterritorial jurisdictions. Work towards establishing boundary agreements to have an organized method for handling annexations and development. The Town has areas located within the extraterritorial jurisdictions of the Village of Black Earth, Village of Mount Horeb, and the Village of Blue Mounds.

The Town cooperates with the Towns of Mazomanie, Black Earth, and Cross Plains to pool resources for road maintenance. There may be opportunities to expand this cooperation in the future, and possibly to work more closely with the Dane County Highway Department.

12. Implementation

This comprehensive plan has been developed as an integrated package, with each element of the plan intended to contribute to meeting the goals of the Town.

The Plan Commission has the primary responsibility for implementing the plan, and the plan is the principal guide for the Plan Commission in carrying out its duties.

12.1 Plan Commission Procedures

A primary duty of the Plan Commission is to review proposals to divide and rezone land to allow changes in land use. The Plan Commission develops and maintains specific procedures for reviewing and evaluating such proposals, consistent with this Plan and applicable town Ordinances. The Plan Commission revises and updates these procedures as necessary to provide fair and consistent enforcement of Town policies and to ensure that the goals of the Comprehensive Plan are being met. The procedures are contained in the Plan Commission's Policies and Procedures Manual, which is available from the Plan Commission secretary and is published on the Town website.

A brief summary of the process for evaluating development proposals is provided below. A flow chart illustrating the process is contained in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Citizens contemplating land divisions or changes in land use are encouraged to consult with the

Plan Commission to obtain advice and assistance in planning their proposals.

To allow evaluation of the proposal's compliance with town land use policies, the applicant must submit a site plan showing the locations of the following:

- Property lines
- Surface waters
- Existing or proposed driveway
- Proposed construction
- Contour lines

The Town Plan Commission will visit the site to evaluate the proposal for recommendation to the Town Board. The applicant should expect to appear before the Plan Commission and the Town Board to answer questions regarding the proposal.

An application for rezoning to a residential zoning district must identify the proposed building site and driveway location.

A driveway permit or rezoning may be conditionally approved, if deemed necessary to require compliance with the town land use policies. The approval may be revoked if its conditions are not fulfilled.

Effective erosion control measures as recognized by the Dane County Land Conservation Department must be used to minimize erosion. It is the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate to the plan commission that adequate erosion control will be provided.

In addition to the policies set out in this Plan, there are a variety of Town ordinances along with county, state, and federal laws that may also be applicable to development proposals.

For example:

- State and county laws that have established A-1 Exclusive Ag Zoning districts, which the Town of Vermont adopted effective Oct. 12, 1979. Under these laws, preservation of agricultural land is encouraged by rewarding working farmers in such districts with tax breaks. These laws set a density limitation of one potential development right per 35 acres, among other standards.
- Town ordinances that govern the location of building sites and driveways, particularly in relation to the quality of the land and the slope.
- County zoning laws that govern the types of zoning that can be applied to a parcel and the subsequent use of that land according to the particular zoning definition.
- County and state laws that govern wells, septic systems and building practices.
- State and federal laws that govern the use of land near streams as well as protection of the environment.

These laws are often complex or in the process of being updated or reinterpreted. The Town Plan Commission will provide advice to citizens in formulating their development projects to be consistent with these regulations.

The Town has developed an "Identification Number" system for documenting and tracking Potential Development Rights in the Town. The PRIN documentation is a primary resource for the Plan Commission to determine the number of Potential Development Rights associated with a given parcel.

12.2 Proposed Changes to Ordinances and Regulations

There has been a comprehensive revision of Town Ordinances in 2016 and no additional changes are anticipated in the near future. We expect to develop standards for new and existing town roads

and turnarounds.

12.3 Updating the Plan

This plan must be reviewed and revised as necessary by town officials if the assumptions on which it is based prove wrong or if the policies are failing to achieve the intended outcome. By current state law, the plan must be revised at least every ten years. Minor revisions and updates may be made more often.

The Town Board shall initiate the revision process when the Board or the Plan Commission determine that the plan or any portion of it is not achieving its purpose, or when seven years have elapsed since the plan's effective date. (Past experience shows that a period of at least three years is required for a complete plan revision.)

Revisions to the plan will be drafted by a citizen committee, typically a subcommittee or committee-of-the-whole of the Plan Commission. The revised plan will be presented to Town citizens at a public hearing, after which it may or may not undergo further revision. Final proposed revisions will be subject to the approval of the Town Board, and to the approval process prescribed by state and county requirements.

12.4 Mapped Information

Please note that much of the map data below is available from the Dane County DCI Map website. <https://dcimapapps.countyofdane.com/dcmviewer/>

100 Year Floodplain

Map showing 100 year floodplain, drainage waterways, section lines and roads.

Approximate Representation of Ridgetop Protection Area

Map that illustrates the application of the Ridgetop Protection Area formulas, and includes roads and section boundaries.

Agricultural Land Evaluation

Map showing soil types by Agricultural Groups, and including roads and section boundaries.

Building Site Potential

Map showing future potential for building sites from soils for dwellings with basements.

Elevation

Map showing elevation and contour lines, and including roads and section boundaries.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Map of areas in which The Villages of Black Earth, Blue Mounds and Mount Horeb currently have extraterritorial jurisdiction and which may be covered in future by boundary agreements with the Town of Vermont, and including roads, ownership parcels, and section lines.

Fire and EMS Districts

Combined map of Fire and EMS districts in the Town of Vermont, showing boundaries between Black Earth FD and Mount Horeb FD and District 1 EMS and Mount Horeb VFD EMS, and including ownership parcels, roads and section boundaries.

Hydric Soils and Wetlands

Map showing watershed boundaries, wetlands, ponds and streams, hydric inclusions, and all hydric., and including roads and section boundaries.

Land Use

Map showing 2015 land use, and including dwellings, roads, and section boundaries.

Mineral Extraction

Map showing mineral extraction sites within the Town of Vermont and the status of those sites.

Roads, Towers and Community Facilities, State, County & Town Public Lands

Map showing state and federal lands; cemeteries; town hall; state, county, town, and named private roads; and including section boundaries, streams and water.

School Districts

Existing map showing the boundary between Mount Horeb and Wisconsin Heights School Districts, and including ownership parcels, roads and section boundaries.

Utility Map

Map showing the areas served by various utility companies within the town.

Zoning

Map showing 2016 zoning of all ownership parcels, and including roads and section boundaries.