

Where are we now? And where are we going?

DRAFT
TENATIVELY APPROVED



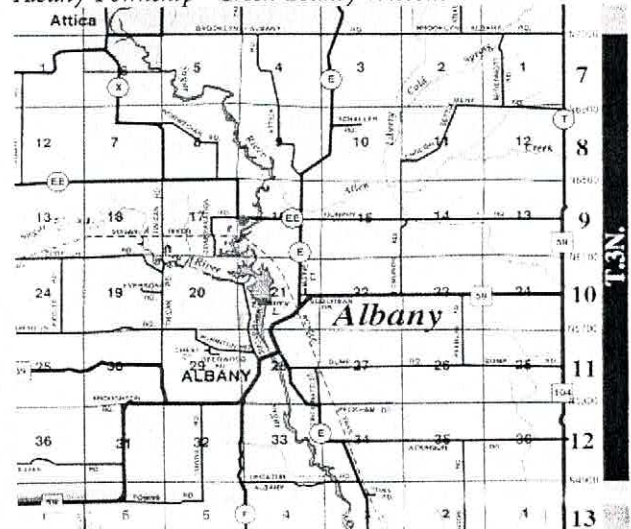
2. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Albany, known for its strong agricultural heritage, has begun to witness some of the impacts of urban sprawl and the desire for rural living among many people over the last few years. As time has passed, the number of active farms in the community has decreased while the number of parcel splits and resulting new residences have increased. While residential growth has had an impact in number, the greater impact to existing residents has been in the location of these residences and the visual/aesthetic impact they have had.

The town recognizes that growth and development can serve as a beneficial impact to the local tax base, but that it needs to be managed so that potential negative impacts can be avoided. Before developing appropriate tools for growth management in the community, an inventory of *Issues & Opportunities* was undertaken in order to understand fully what it is the community wants to become,

and to accomplish State of Wisconsin Smart Growth Goal #12. "S. 16.965(4), Wis. Stats.: Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals."

Albany Township - Green County Wisconsin



The assessment of *Issues & Opportunities* in the Town of Albany in sequenced order utilized four specific forms and a variety of techniques to collect information. Issues & Opportunities information collection was conducted through:

1. Comprehensive Planning Committee meetings utilizing group process exercises.
2. The collection and analysis of demographic, economic and various other types of relevant data.
3. Conducting of a public input focused "Town Hall" meeting.
4. A photographic examination of existing conditions.

These four input collection approaches have created a sound foundation from which the Town of Albany has based its goals, objectives, and policy recommendations. These can be found later in this Issues & Opportunities planning element report.



Step #1

The Town of Albany Comprehensive Planning Committee was asked to participate in a S.W.O.T. analysis to determine existing perceptions and issues in the township. Results of this exercise found:

STRENGTHS

- * Open land
- * Agricultural character
- * Location
- * Existing roadway system
- * Recreational lands

- * Sugar River Trail
- * Snowmobile trail network
- * Liberty creek trout stream
- * Hunting land
- * Open space

WEAKNESSES

- * Current lack of a plan
- * Current mix of resident tenure on the Comprehensive Planning Committee
- * Lack of a local growing employment base
- * Existing labor shortage

OPPORTUNITIES

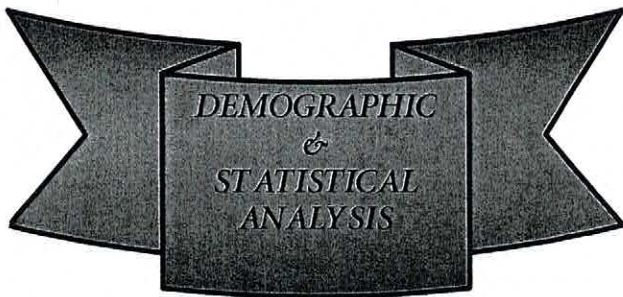
- * Placement of commercial and retail development in the community
- * Manage all growth in the community
- * Capture of tourism
- * Advocating cluster development techniques
- * Focusing new residential development to take place on only class III & IV farmland

THREATS

- * The declining agricultural economy
- * Private property rights
- * Increasing traffic volumes
- * Trucks on rural roadways
- * Light pollution

Discussion on these findings lead Comprehensive Planning committee members to wonder what the opinions and issues of local residents were. Interest in how well their views of strengths and weaknesses matched with those of the general citizenry were voiced.

An additional concern centered around the need to compare changes seen in the visual environment to those proven through statistical history. To address these needs, a demographic and statistical analysis was performed and a public "Town Hall" input/visioning meeting was held.



Past performance and future projections are the corner stones of sound planning practice. For the Town of Albany, a collection and analysis of census and local data was conducted to increase local understanding of growth related dynamics. In all, four major categories were selected for review:

- * Population
- * Agriculture - Facts & Farms
- * Housing - Value & Permits Issued
- * Income/Employment/Education

POPULATION

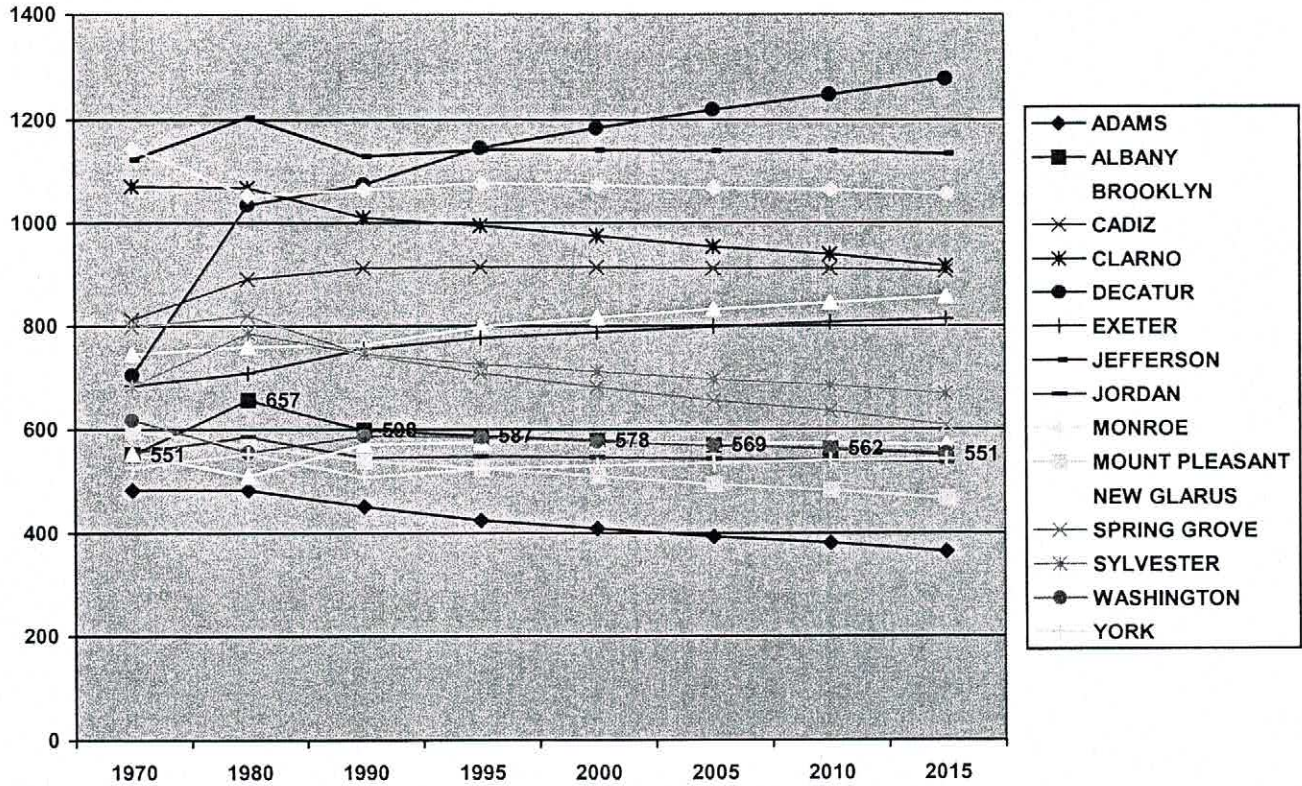
As a rural Wisconsin township, the Town of Albany has been experiencing many of the same population issues as other rural Wisconsin towns. Generally, family size has been decreasing with the additional trend of children moving away once of legal age

to pursue employment in other locations. These trends, along with other calculated factors, result in a decreasing population projection for the town.

The Town of Albany is home to an abundant variety of wildlife



U.S. CENSUS OF POPULATION & HOUSING
Historical Population Counts & Projections



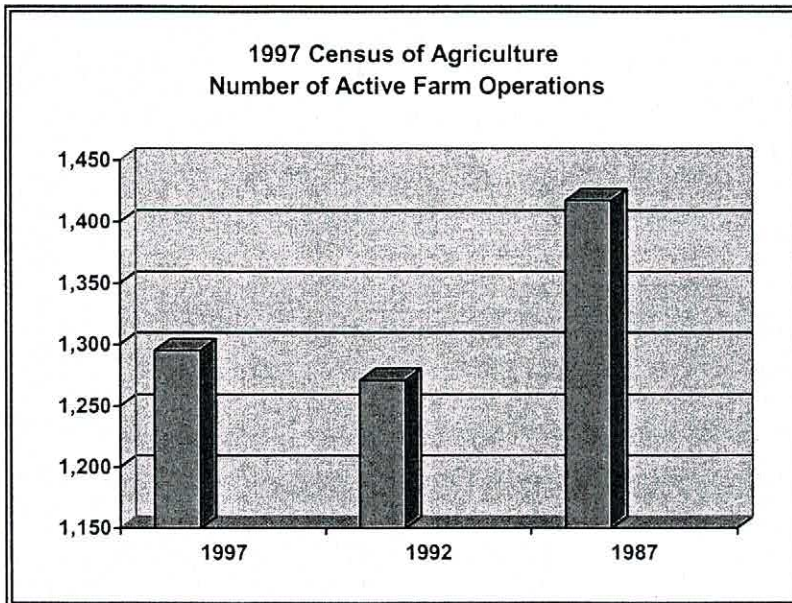
AGRICULTURE

In Green County, Wisconsin the 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture revealed a number of interesting findings related to the growth and development of the Town of Albany.

- * Land in Farms - increased 4% from 293,134 acres in 1992 to 304,963 acres in 1997.
- * Average Size of Farms - increased 2% from 231 acres in 1992 to 235 acres in 1997.
- * Full-Time Farms - decreased 9% from 967 farms in 1992 to 883 farms in 1997.

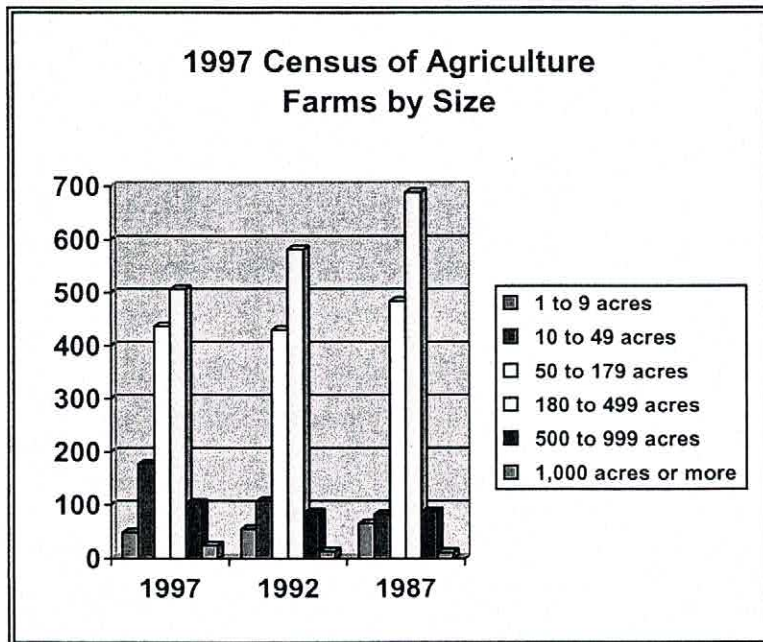
While the number and size of farms in the county and town increased, the actual number of full time farmers decreased. This trend lends to speculation that two phenomena are at work. 1) That more and more farm operations require operators to maintain a source of primary income from another source in order to stay in operation, and/or 2) That more farms are being operated as a hobby by long time residents and/or by new-comers to the area. A closer investigation into the number and size of farms demonstrates that farm numbers, while not at 1987 levels, are back on the rise, and the largest growth in number of new farms can be noted as being between ten (10) to fifty (50) acres in size.

In conflict to the increase in the number of smaller farms, is that while the numbers of farms in the county are currently on the rise so are the average acreage being farmed. In 1982, the



average farm operation in Green County was 232 acres in size. In 1997, the average farm operation in Green County covered 235 acres. This trend demonstrates a growth in the farms that are operating on 500 or more acres throughout the county. In 1987, there were eleven farming operations covering 1,000 acres or more. In 1997, there were 24 farming operations covering 1,000 acres or more. Operations from 500 to 1,000 acres in size have also grown in count from 87 in 1987 to 103 in 1997, an 18% growth.

While the number of farming operations in Green County is currently increasing, so are the land values of the local farmsteads. In 1987 the average total farm value, land and buildings, was at \$214,042. In 1997, the average value had grown to \$314,787, an increase of 46% over the ten-year period.



With the Town of Albany's strong agricultural heritage, it appears agriculture will continue to play a strong role in the community only in a new fashion. If the current trends are allowed to continue unchecked, questions on the development patterns of agricultural lands in the township arise. Specifically, what are the town's opinions towards an increasing number of larger "corporate" and "hobby" farms and is a landscape comprised of rural "hobby" farms mixed with larger "corporate" farms an acceptable development pattern?

These questions were posed specifically at the "Town Hall" meeting. The

following responses were found in the 20-year vision statements, which were created for the town, by meeting participants. Statements from each of the three focus groups indicate:

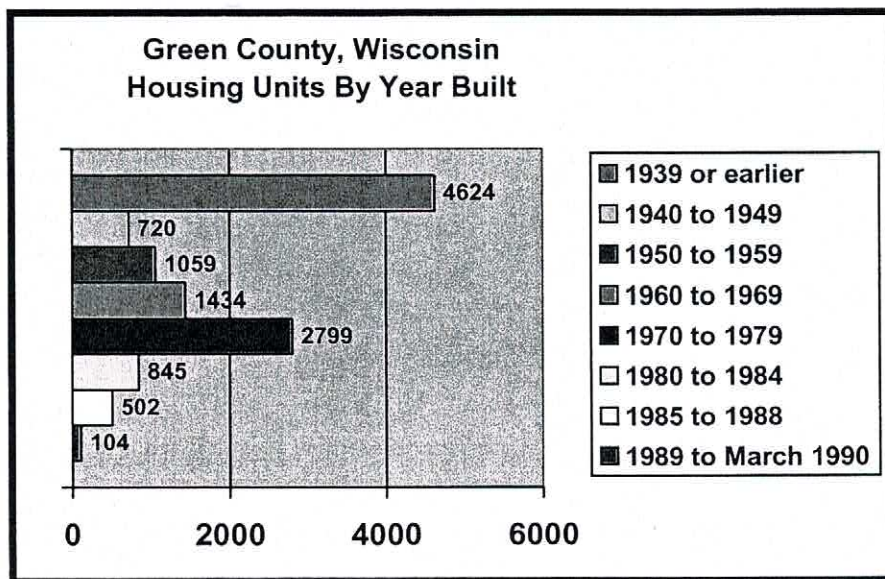
1. "Township should preserve rural character of agriculture land, limiting driveways and clustering development".

2. "Without violating any individual's land rights, we want to see our township maintain its farmland and open space".
3. "The integrity of the area is maintained through a rural quality of living that provides for agriculture, maintains rural and scenic views, and provides for wildlife".

Clearly from these statements it can be said the Town of Albany wants to maintain and enhance its agricultural character.

HOUSING

Over the past 20 years, the housing stock in the Town of Albany has included three basic types of units: single-family homes, duplex homes, and mobile home/trailer, etc. Recognizing the different types of housing that exists within a community is important because it provides insight to present and future housing options for prospective residents. This analysis also lends support to the demographic structure of a community.



The 1990, Census reports within Green County 4,624 housing units were in excess of 50 years of age - representing 38% of all housing units in the county. It can also be noted that another 35% of housing units where built in the county between 1960 and 1979. Between these two periods 73% of all housing units in the county were constructed.

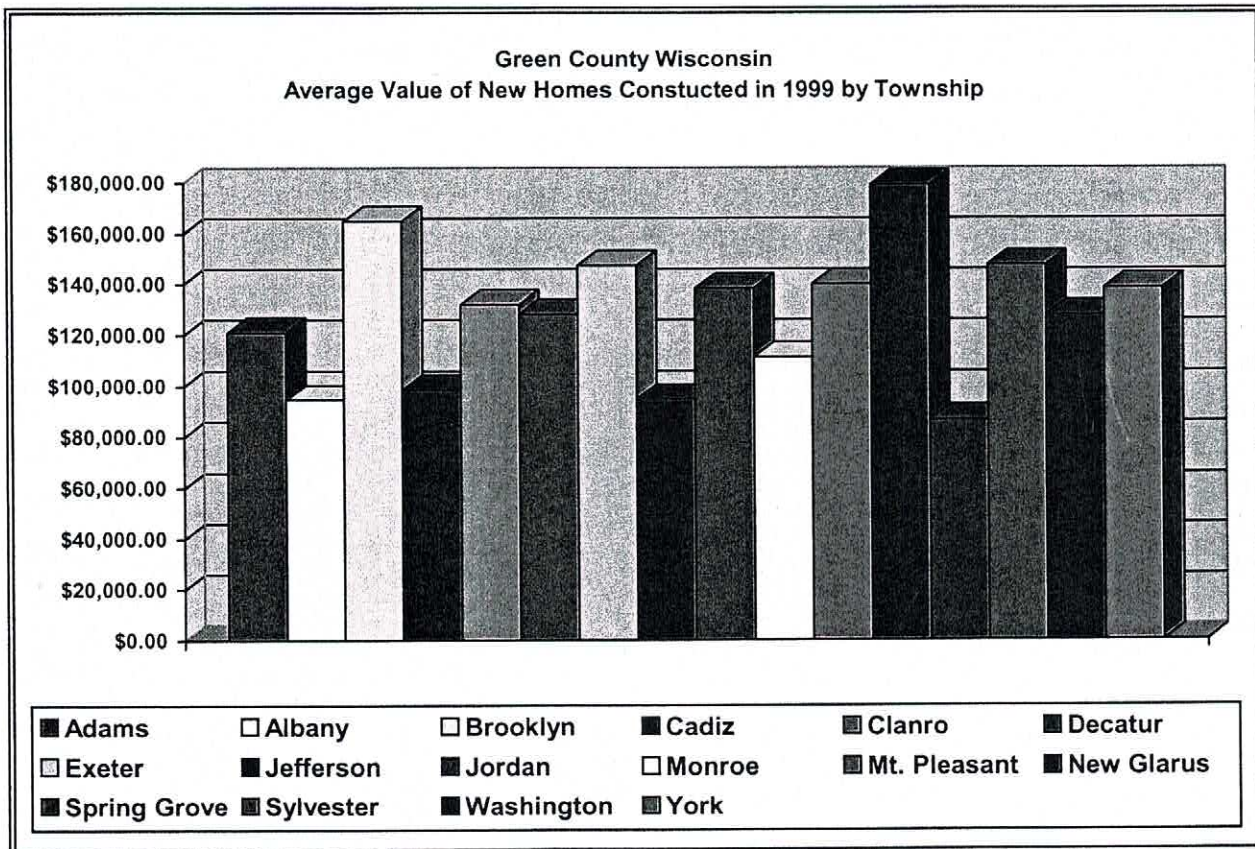
With a large percentage of aged units existing within the county, local Town of Albany residents recognize the need

for the provision of assistance programs in the areas of home repair, up keep and weather conditioning. By recognizing these needs, the Town of Albany currently sees an opportunity to participate in and foster the use of these types of programs locally. It is important to local residents that the town's character and appearance is maintained. By implementing programs of this type the objective can be achieved.

The distribution of home values in the Town of Albany speaks toward the issue of housing affordability. Local housing construction cost data, provided by the Green County Zoning Department, indicate that within Green County townships the average cost of a new home in 1999 was \$128,117. The distribution range of average values started at a low of \$86,611, in the Town of Spring Grove to a high of \$179,101 in the Town of New Glarus. Within the Town of Albany the average cost of a newly constructed home in 1999 was \$94,536. An initial

determination of housing affordability, based on the 1999 average value might assume the following:

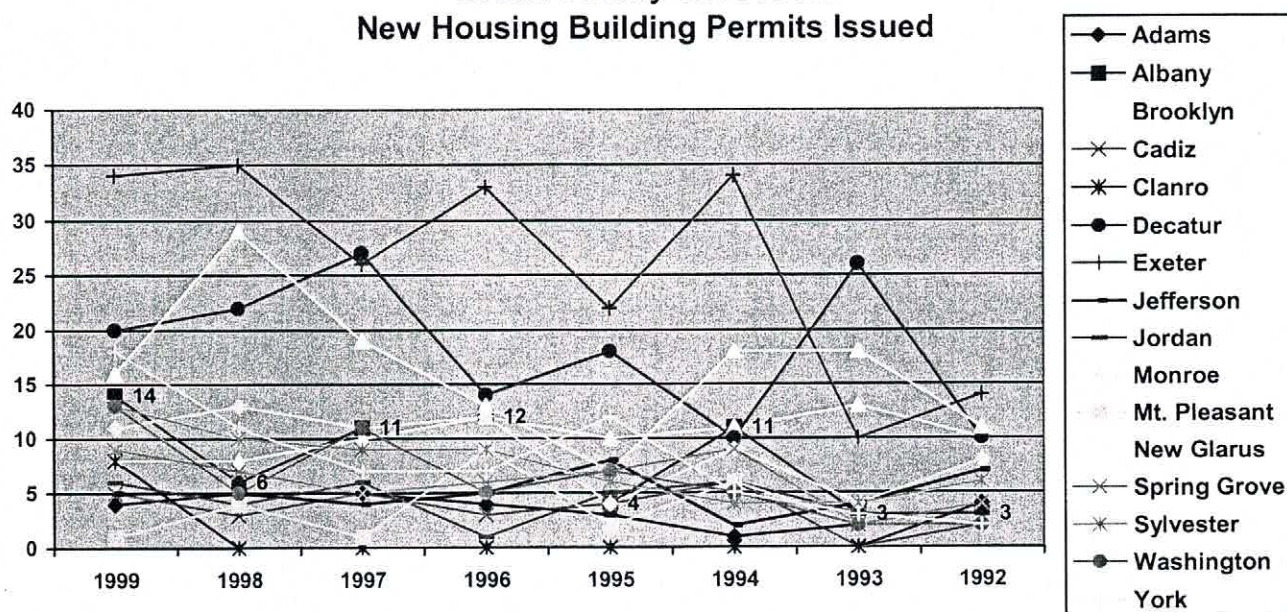
Your Interest Rate: 8 %
 Your Loan Duration: 30 Year(s)
 Your Loan Amount: \$ 94,536.00
 Your Monthly Payment (Principal/Interest): \$ 693.67
 Your Total Payments: \$ 249,721.20
 Total Interest Paid: \$ 155,185.20



With \$ 693.67 a month in loan payments it should also be recognized that on average an additional \$ 30.00 a month will be required for insurance payments and another \$90.00 a month will be required for taxes, bringing the total to \$ 813.67 a month.

A final initial consideration and observation of housing trends looks at the issuance of new building permits within Green County Townships and the Town of Albany specifically. With data provided by the Green County Zoning Department, it can be observed that the Town of Albany has been experiencing 8 new housing starts a year over the last 8 years. While some fluctuation exists over the period, it can generally be said that new housing starts have been on the rise. They have ranged from a low of 3 in 1992 to a high of 14 in 1999. This rate of growth has not held true for all townships within Green County. Considering location, proximity and aesthetic appeal it can be conservatively assumed, without full consideration of interest rates and the economy, that Albany's rate of growth will continue at a rate of 8-14 new units a year.

Green County Wisconsin New Housing Building Permits Issued



Based on this housing analysis, the Town of Albany residents face a number of key questions. Namely, is 8 to 14 new housing units a year an acceptable rate of housing growth in the township? Are there opportunities to plan the location of these units? Can input be given to the type and quality of these units?

Some of the answers to these questions in terms of local opinion can once more be found within the three individual vision statements that were created during the "Town Hall" meeting.

1. "Township should preserve rural character of agriculture land, limiting driveways and clustering development".
2. "We would like more business, yet reduce light pollution and keep out unattractive mobile home parks".
3. "There is controlled growth with a variety of housing (no trashy housing allowed) that has good subdivision and cluster housing plans limiting the number of driveways intersecting highways".

These statements of opinion clearly indicate local desire to work on a variety of housing issues. Affordability, quality, quantity, location, etc., want to all be addressed in the Housing Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

INCOME/EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

A general overview of local income/employment and educational attainment was undertaken in order to gain perspective on the regional economy and its link to growth dynamics. Since the mid to late 1980's, the State of Wisconsin has been blessed with a growing economy. As economic growth has continued over the period, the state has recently begun to see a number of related issues appearing. Foremost of these issues has been an increasingly tightening of the labor pool. In general, labor shortages and labor competition have led to the recruitment of labor from locations outside of the state. In doing so, local municipalities have been experiencing the growth and development

of new housing not just from in state migration, but also from new out of state migration populations.

In Green County in 1997, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development estimates there was a 77.1% labor force participation rate. This rate was higher than both the state (75.1%) and national (67.1%) averages. This rate represents an increase from 70.6% in 1990, generally due to employment growing faster than the labor force. There are a large number of workers who reside in Green County that commute everyday into Dane County. Approximately 11% of the workers in Green County travel to work in Dane County, the majority of whom work in Madison. It is estimated that the 2000 census, will indicate increased commuting into Dane County as numbers of smaller towns outside of Madison experienced larger than normal growth.

According to the 1990 Census the majority of Green County's workforce, 43%, achieved an educational attainment level of a high school degree, or equivalent. Another 34% of the workforce went on to achieve a higher level of education, while the remaining 23% have an educational attainment of lower than a high school level degree.

Educational Attainment for persons 25 years and over

	1990
Less than 9th grade	2341
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2236
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8532
Some college, no degree	2682
Associate degree	1553
Bachelor's degree	1705
Graduate or professional degree	659

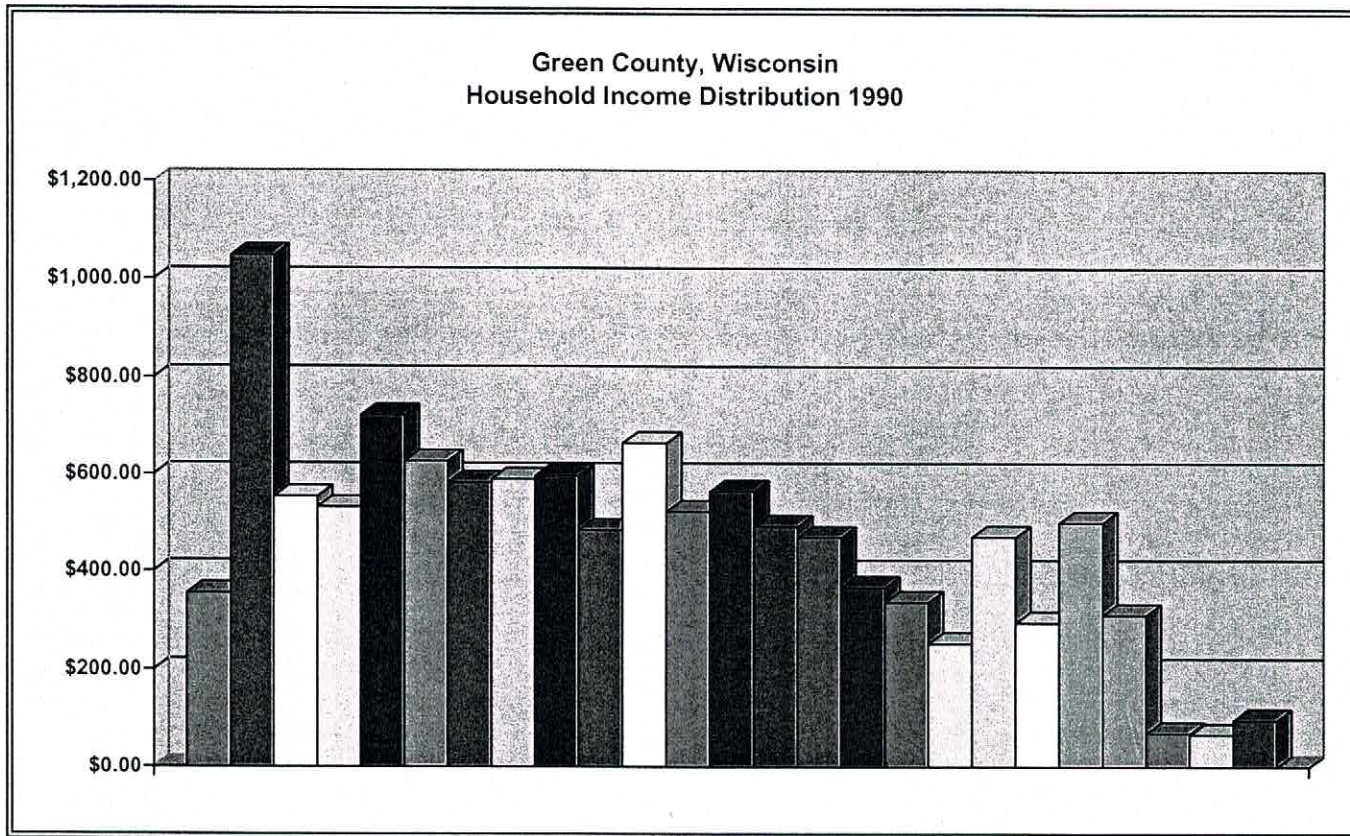
The Town of Albany is home to a number of smaller employers such as the grocery store shown below.



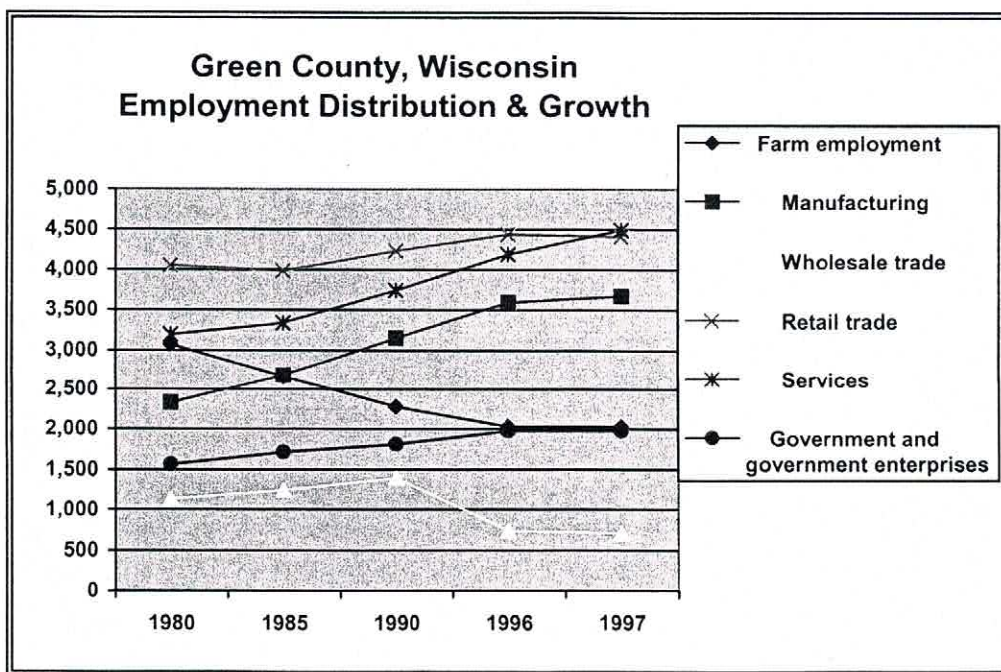
Workforce educational attainment is an indicator to prospective businesses and employers of an area's readiness to fill positions within their industry. In general, it can be said that the more educated the workforce, the more prepared they are to fill "high tech." types of jobs. These jobs in turn are typically higher paying in nature as they require additional skill. With a majority of Green County's workforce educated at a high school level, there is opportunity through training and continuing education to raise the workforce's ability to take on these types of jobs. This in turn can be used as a business recruitment device with local residents benefiting from the potentially higher paying jobs.

Income distribution is an indicator of a region's ability to purchase goods and services. Generally, higher income levels indicate a potentially greater amount of available disposable income which results in business opportunities and potential growth of an area. According to the 1990 census of Population and Housing; Green County's distribution of income ranges from households earning less than \$5,000 a year to households earning over \$150,000 a year. For 1989, it was reported that the Median household income for the Town of Albany was at \$30,469. Only 4% of Albany's

population at the time was living at or below the poverty level.



Workforce distribution by employment sector is an indication of sector strength within the local/regional economy. In a general sense, by understanding which sectors employ the most people, it can indicate over time where employment growth has been occurring.



Employment growth since 1980 in Green County has been centered in manufacturing, led by the introduction of new durable manufacturing employers. The largest declines in employment have come in wholesale trade.

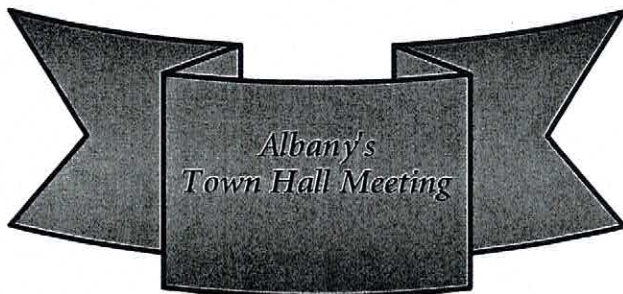
In Green County, as is the case in much of Wisconsin and the nation, service sector employment has been growing rapidly in the

last five years. Service sector employment has added roughly 600 jobs in the last five years, almost a 25% percent growth in service sector employment in Green County. In most locations, business services and health services are receiving the lion's share of that growth in service sector employment. In the first quarter of 1998, the largest private employer in Green County was a provider of health services, and the fifth largest was a provider of business services.

What opportunities exist in the Town of Albany for expansion of the employment base? According to S.W.O.T. analysis findings, interest exists in:

1. Preserving, protecting and assisting with active agriculture.
2. Capturing more of the tourism trade market.
3. Capitalizing on the placement of new potential commercial and retail development within the town.

Strategies for accomplishing these goals need to be defined within the elements of this Comprehensive Plan.



On June 7th, 2000, the Town of Albany Comprehensive Planning Committee hosted a "Town Hall" meeting for approximately 34 community residents. Discussion focused on Albany's preferred future. Broad based

public announcement of this meeting had occurred through the mailing of a newsletter to every property owner in the town, and through a press release to local newspapers and radio stations in the area. The meeting focused on three main topics.

1. A review of committee efforts to date, inclusive of rationale behind decisions.
2. A review of general socio-economic trends affecting the town.
3. A set of facilitated group exercises aimed at identifying local issues of concern and at generating a community vision.

Three sub/focus groups were created for a nominal group exercise which asked participants to generate statements about what they would like their community to be twenty years from now. Participants were then asked to generate vision statements of three sentences or less reflecting the consensus of each group's preferred future. The following statements were generated:

Group #1

1. Township should preserve rural character of agriculture land, limiting driveways and clustering development.
2. Township should preserve scenic views, wildlife areas, frontage areas, and DNR land.
3. Township should work with the Village of Albany to promote tourism, Business Park, lake use and sewer and water regulation.

Group #2

Without violating any individual's land rights, we want to see our township maintain its farmland and open space.

We would like more business, yet reduce light pollution and keep out unattractive mobile home parks.

Group #3

1. The Town of Albany consists of a culturally diverse population with a large range of household earnings.
2. The integrity of the area is maintained through a rural quality of living that provides for agriculture, maintains rural and scenic views, and provides for wildlife.
3. There is controlled growth with a variety of housing (no trashy housing allowed) that has good subdivision and cluster housing plans, limiting the

number of driveways intersecting highways.

While each of these statements are unique there are two common themes which resonate in each of them. These themes can be noted as being:

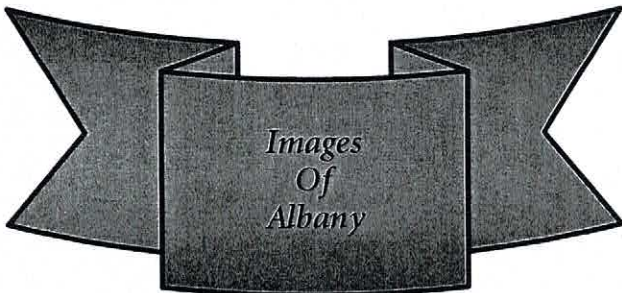
- * The desire to preserve rural character, agriculture, and open space, and
- * The desire to manage growth for quality and location.

Town of Albany
1992 General Land Use
Source - Wisconsin DNR Geo Disk #3



Recognizing these themes, the Comprehensive Planning Committee set about refining all three statements into one vision. The results of this effort led to Albany's final "Vision Statement" of its preferred future:

The Town of Albany consists of a culturally and economically diverse population. Without violating any individual's rights, the town will preserve and protect its rural character, agricultural lands, scenic views, and wildlife areas. It will manage growth and development ensuring that proper placement, quality and safety are maintained while building on the town's economic opportunities and its quality of life.

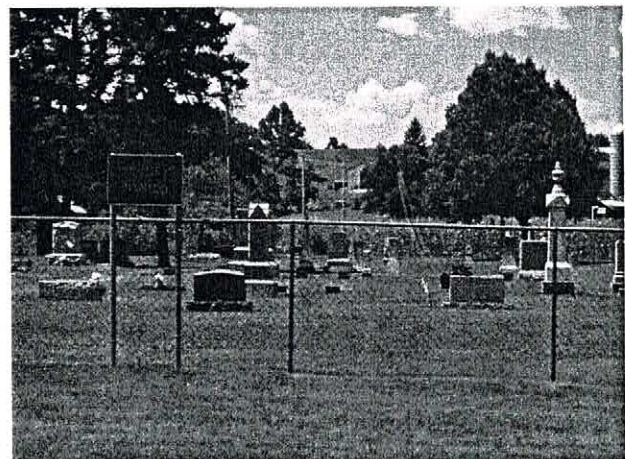


A final description of Albany's unique character can be best related through photographic images of existing conditions and valued assets of the community. The locations in these images contribute greatly to the local sense of place. They represent only some of what the Town of Albany has to offer and protect.

Albany's Historic Settlement Church



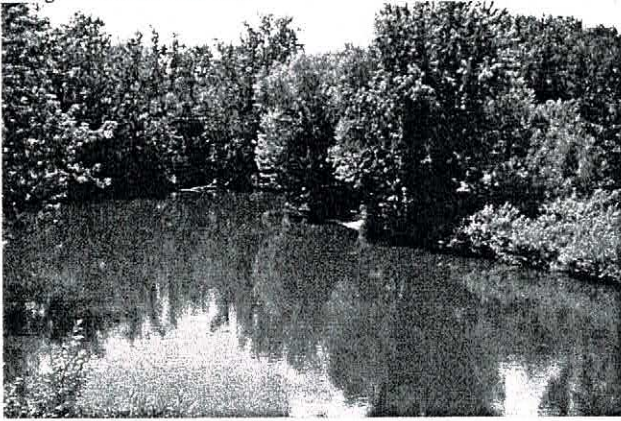
The Union Church Cemetery



Gateway to the Sugar River Trail



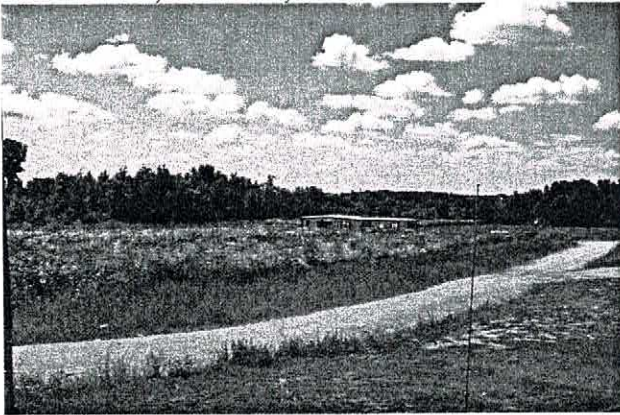
A Sugar River Boat Launch



Rural Subdivision's



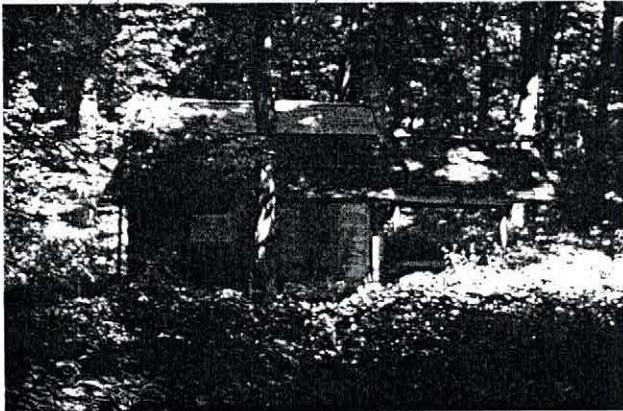
WiDNR – Liberty Creek Wildlife Area



The Amish Grocery Store



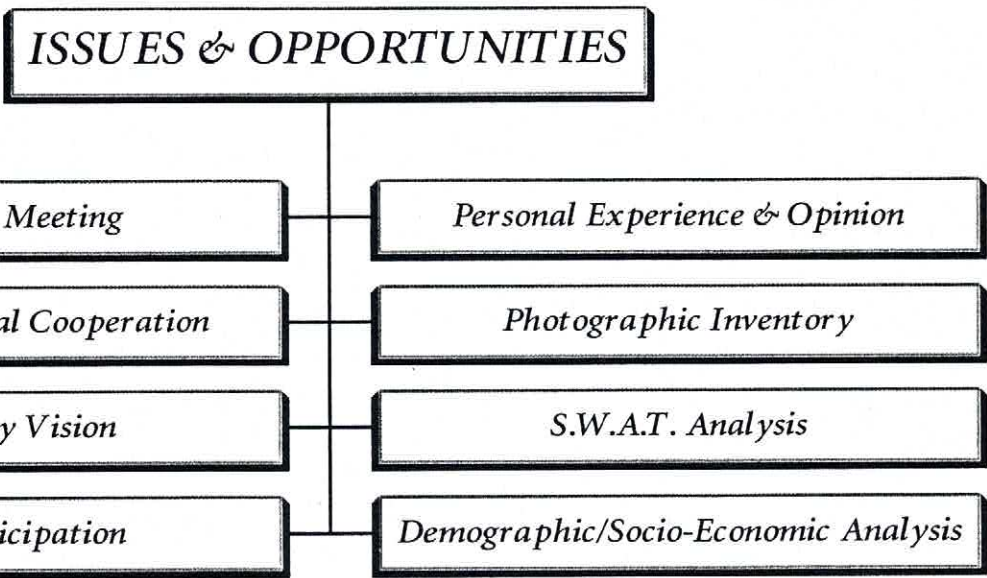
University of Wisconsin – Forestry Education Classroom



Active Businesses



ELEMENT SUMMARY



ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
Decreasing household sizes	Housing rehabilitation programs
Loss of graduating workforce to cities	Development of tourism industry
Increasing land values displacing some residents	Farmland protection
Aging of the housing stock	Commercial & retail development
Increased housing development pressure	Cluster development practices
Housing quality	General growth management
Housing affordability	Corporate & hobby farm development
Current lack of a plan	Building of local job base
Increasing traffic volumes	Recreational lands & waters
Private property rights	Sugar River Trail
Truck traffic	Open space protection
Light pollution	Utilization of State & Federal programs
Labor shortage	First municipality to prepare a Comprehensive Plan in the County
Workforce education	Building Inspection services ensuring quality homes
Under County zoning	Intergovernmental cooperation
Commuting workforce	Public participation
Entire township in general ag. zoning district	New opportunity for input into County subdivision review
Lack of County GIS data	Creation of a driveway siting ordinance
Cost of developing in the Village	Creation of a land division ordinance
Surface water quality	Establishing a land acquisition program
Ground water quality	Investing in conservation easements
Protection of wildlife habitat	Setting speed limits on roads by ordinance
Desire for rural living	Establishing a joint business park with the Village
Increasing land values accelerating sales	Cultural diversity

