

Chapter 2: Issues and Opportunities

2.1 Population Statistics and Projections

This chapter provides a baseline assessment of the Town of Verona past, current, and projected population statistics and contains information required under SS66.1001. This information provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future development in the Town of Verona.

Population Change

Sources of information:

- capitalarearpc.org
- factfinder.census.gov
- wisconsin.hometownlocator.com

The population data show that Town of Verona has grown over 24% from 1960 to 2017 with the largest growth taking place between 1960 and 1970 (40%) (Table 2.1). The highest population of the Town was in 1980 at 2,256 and since then there has been a decrease in population to an estimated population of 1,981 in 2017.

Table 2.1: Population Change, 1960-2017

Population	Town of Verona Number	Percent Change	Dane County Number	Percent Change	Wisconsin Number	Percent Change
Total Population (1960)	1,594	---	222,098	---	<i>n.a.</i>	---
Total Population (1970)	2,235	40.2%	290,272	30.7%	4,417,821	<i>n.a.</i>
Total Population (1980)	2,256	0.9%	323,545	11.5%	4,705,642	6.5%
Total Population (1990)	2,137	-5.3%	367,085	13.5%	4,891,769	4.0%
Total Population (2000)	2,153	0.7%	426,526	16.2%	5,363,675	9.6%
Total Population (2010)	1,948	-9.5%	488,073	14.4%	5,686,986	6.0%
Total Population (2017)	1,981	1.69%	524,787	7.52%	5,783,278	1.69%

Source: US Census, 2017 Department of Administration
Population Estimates

Dane County is currently one of the fastest growing counties in the State. In 2017 Dane County had the largest numerical increase at 6,249 people, and the population increased by 1.21%, which was the second highest increase statewide. This trend for Dane County is expected to continue. The Town is expected to grow in population in the near future because of its natural beauty, quality of life, and proximity to jobs and other destinations in Madison, Verona, Middleton and Fitchburg. There will be addition of four subdivisions before 2020 in the Town and there is also strong pressure for other lot splits. Increases in the Town population are expected to be more than 300 people in the next seven years.

Age and Gender Distribution

The US Census and American Community Survey data show that the gender distribution has remained stable from 2000 to 2012-2016 for the Town of Verona and other comparable communities (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Sex Distribution, 2000-2016

	2000				2016 Estimates			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
Town of Verona	1,101	51.10%	1,052	48.90%	1,004	52.90%	894	47.10%
City of Verona	3,411	48.40%	3,641	51.60%	5,883	48.57%	6,230	51.43%
City of Madison	102,248	49.10%	105,806	50.90%	121,405	49.34%	124,629	50.66%
City of Fitchburg	10,633	51.90%	9,868	48.10%	14,134	51.86%	13,120	48.14%
Dane County	211,020	49.50%	215,506	50.50%	256,341	49.60%	260,477	50.40%
State of Wisconsin	2,649,041	49.40%	2,714,634	50.60%	2,859,055	49.68%	2,895,743	50.32%

Source: US Census, 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The median age of Verona residents as determined by the 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimate is 42.8 years old. As the median age increases, it could have considerable impacts on the social services needs of the area if the older residents remain in the Town of Verona. The 2010 population statistics showed that Verona had a relatively large proportion (13.4%) of population age 65 or older (Table 2.3). By comparison, in 2010, 13.7% of Wisconsin's population was age 65 or older, and only 10.3% of Dane County's population was age 65 or older.

Table 2.3: Population by Age

Age	2000	%	2012-2016 Estimates	%	Change	%
Under 5 Years	113	5.2%	100	5.3%	-13	0.1%
5 to 9 Years	151	7.0%	110	5.8%	-41	-1.2%
10 to 14 Years	177	8.2%	144	7.6%	-33	-0.6%
15 to 19 Years	154	7.2%	86	4.5%	-68	-2.7%
20 to 24 Years	56	2.6%	139	7.3%	83	4.7%
25 to 34 Years	162	7.5%	168	8.9%	6	1.4%
35 to 44 Years	373	17.3%	255	13.4%	-118	-3.9%
45 to 54 Years	413	19.2%	256	13.5%	-157	-5.7%
55 to 59 Years	144	6.7%	208	11.0%	64	4.3%
60 to 64 Years	121	5.6%	146	7.7%	25	2.1%
65 to 74 Years	170	7.9%	182	9.6%	12	1.7%
75 to 84 Years	89	4.1%	74	3.9%	-15	-0.2%
85 and Older	30	1.4%	30	1.6%	0	0.2%
Total	2,153	***	1,898	***	-255	***

Source: US Census, 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Racial Makeup

Both the 2000 and 2010 Census indicated that the population of Verona is primarily Caucasian at about 96% (Table 2.4). The 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimate reports a similar value.

Table 2.4 Estimates of Population by Race, 2012-2016

2012-2016	Town of Verona		City of Verona		City of Madison		City of Fitchburg		Dane County		Wisconsin	
Estimates	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White	1,807	95.2%	11,158	92.1%	193,729	78.7%	18,946	69.5%	434,792	84.1%	4,961,193	86.2%
Black or African American	33	1.7%	458	3.8%	17,275	7.0%	2,118	7.8%	26,699	5.2%	361,730	6.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	3	0.2%	0	0.0%	930	0.4%	127	0.5%	1,375	0.3%	51,459	0.9%
Asian	35	1.8%	242	2.0%	21,058	8.6%	1,673	6.1%	28,645	5.5%	148,077	2.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	50	0.0%	35	0.1%	147	0.0%	1,378	0.0%
Some other race	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4,509	1.8%	3,112	11.4%	10,250	2.0%	105,038	1.8%
Two or more races	20	1.1%	255	2.1%	8,483	3.4%	1,243	4.6%	14,910	2.9%	125,923	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	41	2.2%	114	0.9%	16,110	6.5%	5,430	19.9%	32,088	6.2%	371,205	6.5%

Source: 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

According to the 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimate about 98.9 percent of the Town's population had attained at least a high school level education. Approximately 51.6 percent of the population had attained a college level degree or higher (factfinder.census.gov).

Income levels

The 2016 American Community Survey estimates the median household income at approximately \$103,409 and an average income of \$133,083. The population below poverty level is 2.5 percent.

Household Trends and Forecasts

The estimated number of housing units in the Town for 2012-2016 (American Community Survey) is 742. From 2010 to 2016 the average number of new homes increased by four per year and for 2017, seventeen building permits were issued. The housing vacancy rate over this period was roughly 6.2 percent. Owner-occupied units accounted for approximately 88 percent of units. Renter-occupied units accounted for the remainder of occupied units. The average household size is 2.73 persons. The Town recently approved 78 new development units in four subdivisions. Besides these units in the four land condominium developments, there have been 10 lots created since 2016. When these homes are constructed, the population could increase by 270 people.

Labor Force and Employment Trends

A community's labor force is the proportion of the population that is working or available for work. The primary economic activity in the Town is farming, but most residents work outside of the Town. This trend is expected to continue in the future.

2.2 Key Planning Issues and Overall Goals

The Town's Plan Commission has taken the primary responsibility in drafting the 2018 Comprehensive Plan with oversight by the Board of Supervisors. The Plan Commission was greatly assisted by Amanda Arnold, the Town's Planner and staff of three consultant groups, MSA Professional Services, Capital Regional Area Commission and Vierbicher Associates. Some future planning issues for the Town identified by the Plan Commission, Town Board, and staff are:

- A new Comprehensive Plan was necessary as the 2006 was found to be inadequate for future land use planning. (See Appendix 2.1 for the 2006 future land use map. The full document is available on the Town of Verona website.)
- There is a change in areas in the Town that can be developed or have lot splits because of the Boundary Agreement with the City of Verona.
- There is a desire to produce land use plans that allow for new homes and preserve the character of the Town, such as vistas and vision corridors along the Sugar River.
- Boundary agreements are needed with the City of Madison and the City of Fitchburg.
- Currently there is a very high demand for lots/units for construction of new homes in the Town.
- The Town will lose land via annexation into the Cities of Madison and Verona.
- The Town needs to have a financial plan to cover the loss of land in annexation and to meet the increased demand for services by the residents of the Town.
- An update of the subdivision ordinance is needed to accommodate the use of land condominium plats and improved guidelines for conservation subdivisions and planned unit developments.
- Future developments may require the improvement of existing roads or construction of new roads.
- Bicycle use on Town roads is expected to increase and this may require improvements to existing roads.

2.3 Public Input into the Process

Community Survey

The Town mailed a survey to all parcel owners in 2016. Out of about 1,100 surveys that were sent, 315 were completed. This represents a response rate of 29% percent, which is about the expected return rate. The survey included questions on demographic data, on future development, on important characteristics for the Town, on preservation of the Sugar River Watershed, and on expansion of the Ice Age Trail. A detailed summary of the survey is in Appendix 2.2 and a brief summary includes the following:

- **Community Character:** Respondents were highly in favor of preserving the rural character of the Town, which included vistas, limited development, and maintaining the family farms.
- **Land Use:** Most respondents were in favor of a plan to guide future growth. However, there were mixed opinions on the minimal size of rural parcels and on the value of clustered subdivision developments. Most respondents wanted to preserve the rural character, which included the wetlands and Sugar River watershed. New residential development should be

guided to areas that will have minimum impact on the natural beauty of the Town. Policies should be in place to encourage future farming activities and for smart growth.

- **Economic Development:** The trend of working other places than in the Town is expected to continue. The Town should develop policies to attract commercial development.

Vision Setting Workshop

Strategic planning workshops were held in November 2017 and February 2018 to achieve a shared vision for the Town as it moves forward. All members of the Board of Supervisors, Plan Commission members, Public Works Committee, the Ordinance Committee, and the Natural and Recreational Areas Committee plus the Town Staff were invited to attend.

Public Meetings to Discuss Drafts of Comprehensive Plan

As discussed in Chapter 1, The Town was divided into eight areas because of the diversity in population density, geography, and farming activities in each area. For each of the eight areas a survey was sent to all land owners, a draft land use plan was developed by the Plan Commission, and a public meeting was held for all land owners of each area. Once all eight public hearings had been held, the Plan Commission prepared a draft of the future land use map for the whole Town and decided on definitions of land use categories. Next two public meetings were held on the Future Land Use Map in January 2018. These meetings were advertised by placing a draft of the map and notice of the meeting in a newsletter that went out with all tax bills in December of 2017.

In May of 2018, the Town sought assistance on the plan from the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission and a local land use consultant, Vierbicher Associates, Inc. to review chapters, update data, and make recommendations about land supply. In July 2018, two more meetings were held and public input taken. The first focused on land supply and the second was a regular Plan Commission meeting in which the Plan Commission interactively finalized the draft future land use map. Also during this time, update draft chapters were placed on the Town's website.

Formal Adoption of the Plan

The Plan Commission adopt the draft plan on August 23rd. On August 30th, a notice was printed in the Verona Press giving notice of a public hearing to take place at the October 2nd Town Board meeting. As outlined in state statutes the plan was made available for public comment and adjacent jurisdictions were notified. A copy of the public involvement plan for the process can be found in Appendix 2.3.

2.4 Overall Goals, Objectives and Policies

The Plan Commission developed a set of overall goals during the process of drafting the Comprehensive Plan for 2018-2038. These goals were the framework used as the plan was developed and will guide future Planning efforts. Subsequent chapters include more specific goals, objectives and policies.

Overall Planning Goals

- Preserve the Town's rural and scenic character
- Preserve the Sugar River watershed, wetlands and other natural resources
- Encourage the completion of the Ice Age Trail
- Promote a future land use pattern consistent with this Comprehensive Plan

- Promote farming as an occupation in the Town by preserving the most productive farmland for continued agricultural use
- Develop a fiscal plan for future operations of the Town
- Develop a plan for siting of future development