

TOWN OF WESTON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2005

Town of Weston Town Board

Marathon County Conservation, Planning & Zoning
Department

URS, Inc.
MSA

Town of Weston

Conditions and Issues

November 2005

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List of Acronyms

303 (d) list—waters designated as “impaired” under section 303 (d) of the U.S. Clean Water Act.

AADT—Annual Average Daily Traffic

AHI—Architecture & History Inventory (a database of the Wisconsin Historical Society).

BMPs—Best Management Practices

CCR&R—Child Care Resource and Referral Network

CDBG—Community Development Block Grant

CES—Cropland Evaluation System (Marathon County)

CIP—Capital Improvement Program

Comm 83—Chapter 83 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code under the Department of Commerce, setting standards for regulation of private sewage systems.

CRP—Conservation Reserve Program

CTH—County Trunk Highway

CWA—Central Wisconsin Airport

DWD—Department of Workforce Development

EMS—Emergency Medical Services

EMT—Emergency Medical Technician

ERW—Exceptional Resource Waters, a designation by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency

FIRM—Flood Insurance Rate Maps

HOME—Home Investment Partnerships Program

HUD—U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

LHOG—Local Housing Organization Grant

LRTP—Long Range Transportation Plan (Prepared by the Wausau Metro Planning Organization for the Metro area).

LWRMP—Land and Water Resource Management Plan (Marathon County)

MPO—Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

NCHC—North Central Health Care

NCWRPC—North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

NRHP—National Register of Historic Places

NTC—Northcentral Technical College

ORW—Outstanding Resource Waters, a designation under the U.S. Clean Water Act.

PASER—Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating

PMP—Pavement Management Plan

SHPO—State Historic Preservation Office

STF Data—Summary Tape File, referring to data files of the 2000 U.S. Census.

STH—State Trunk Highway

TDP—Transit Development Plan (Wausau Area Transit System)

TIP—Transportation Improvement Program (Marathon County)

USDA—United States Department of Agriculture

USH—U.S. Highway

UW-MC—University of Wisconsin—Marathon County

WATS—Wausau Area Transit System

WDA—Wisconsin Department of Agriculture

WDNR—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

WDOA—Wisconsin Department of Administration

WDOT—Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WHEDA—Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

WISLR—Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads

WPD—Wetland Protection District

WPS—Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

1. Introduction and Summary

The Town of Weston Conditions and Issues Report documents existing conditions in the Town and identifies primary issues or concerns the Town may need to address in the future. It includes information on the Town's demographics, natural resources, land use, transportation, utilities, housing, cultural resources, community facilities, parks, economic development, and intergovernmental cooperation. This report provides a backdrop for the development of the final plan, which will outline policies and actions the Town can take to address identified issues and guide future growth in the Town. Some key findings include:

- The Town of Weston is located on the fringe of the Wausau urban area. Given its adjacency to the City of Wausau and the Village of Weston, the Town is vulnerable to annexation along its west and south borders. In fact, much of the loss of population experienced over the past 30 years has been a direct result of annexations. Most significantly, the incorporation of the Village of Weston in 1996.
- Despite its close proximity to urban type development, much of the Town has retained a rural character. The Town has its own zoning and much of the land area is zoned for rural residential development or wetland protection.
- Town roads are generally in good repair. The Town contracts for on-going road maintenance and improvements through private contractors and the Village of Weston.
- Residents in the Town use private septic systems for on-site wastewater treatment. There are some concerns about older system failures, particularly in the Home Sweet Home subdivision.
- Portions of the Town are within the 208 Sewer Service Area. As such, some areas of the Town may receive public sewer in the future. However, both the City of Wausau and the Village of Weston have policies to not extend public utilities without annexation. Thus, annexations will likely continue, particularly in areas on the west and south edge of the Town if failing septics or well problems arise.
- Housing within the Town consists primarily of single family residences and/or farmsteads scattered throughout the Town. Some older, smaller lot subdivisions are located on the west and south edges of the Town. Demand for residential development is expected to increase in response to the opening of the new hospital complex and business and technology park in the Village of Weston.
- The Town's economy relies primarily upon agriculture. However, given the decline in farming and the close proximity to the urban area, the Town has become a bedroom community.
- The Town's primary intergovernmental concern is annexation by the City of Wausau and the Village of Weston. Annexation results in the loss of land area, population and tax base. Further, Wisconsin law regarding annexation does not give towns much leverage to resist annexation petitions.

2. Demographics

This analysis is intended to describe the existing demographics of the Town of Weston and identify the major demographic trends impacting the Town over the next few decades. Both Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin are also listed for comparison.

Population and Households

Historical Trends

Over the past 30 years, the population of the Town of Weston has decreased by 92 percent. As shown on Table 2-1, the most significant population decline occurred in the 1990s, and reflects the loss of land and population when the Village of Weston incorporated in 1996.

Like population, total households over the past 30 years declined significantly due to incorporation of the Village of Weston. Data from the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) indicates that the size of households in the Town decreased over the past 30 years, consistent with the predominant national trend toward smaller households comprised of singles, couples without children, and widows or widowers.

Table 2-1: Demographic Change, 1970-2000

| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | % change 1970 to 2000 | % change 1990 to 2000 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Population | | | | | | |
| Weston | 6,351 | 11,342 | 11,450 | 514 | -92% | -96% |
| County | 97,457 | 111,270 | 115,400 | 125,834 | +29% | +9% |
| State | 4,417,821 | 4,705,767 | 4,891,769 | 5,363,675 | +21% | +10% |
| Total Households | | | | | | |
| Weston | 1,663 | 3,830 | 4,123 | 179 | -89% | -96% |
| County | 29,771 | 37,865 | 41,534 | 47,402 | +59% | +14% |
| State | 1,328,804 | 1,652,261 | 1,822,118 | 2,084,544 | +57% | +14% |
| Average Household Size | | | | | | |
| Weston | 3.80 | 2.96 | 2.74 | 2.87 | -24% | +5% |
| County | 3.27 | 2.90 | 2.75 | 2.60 | -20% | -5% |
| State | 3.22 | 2.35 | 2.68 | 2.50 | -22% | -7% |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

The population of Marathon County grew from 115,400 in 1990 to 125,834 in 2000, an increase of 9 percent compared to a 10 percent increase in the State and 8.7 percent in the U.S. The most recent estimates (WDOA, Demographic Services, 2002) show an annual growth rate of 0.7 percent in all three jurisdictions. Population growth in Marathon County has been concentrated in the urbanized area surrounding Wausau.

As shown in Table 2-2, the largest age groups in the Town includes residents between 25-54 years old, with the median age being 37.8 years. The overall distribution of population across age groups in the Town is slightly younger than that of the County and State, despite the higher median age.

Table 2-2: Population by Age Group, 2000

| Age Group | Percent of Population | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Weston | County | State |
| Under 5 years | 5.6 | 6.4 | 6.4 |
| 5 to 9 years | 9.1 | 7.5 | 7.1 |
| 10 to 14 years | 9.3 | 8.0 | 7.5 |
| 15 to 19 years | 6.0 | 7.7 | 7.6 |
| 20 to 24 years | 3.1 | 5.4 | 6.7 |
| 25 to 34 years | 10.5 | 13.0 | 13.2 |
| 35 to 44 years | 22.0 | 16.5 | 16.3 |
| 45 to 54 years | 14.0 | 13.9 | 13.7 |
| 55 to 59 years | 2.5 | 4.8 | 4.7 |
| 60 to 64 years | 6.0 | 3.8 | 3.8 |
| 65 to 74 years | 8.2 | 6.4 | 6.6 |
| 75 to 84 years | 2.7 | 4.8 | 4.7 |
| 85 years and over | 0.8 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| Median Age | 37.8 | 36.3 | 36.0 |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000

Population Forecasts

Population projections were completed in 5-year increments between 2000 and 2030. Projections were computed by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) and are based on a historical growth rate between 1980 and 2000. These are shown in Table 2-3.

Assuming a moderate rate of growth, population is estimated to increase by 72, or 14 percent between 2000 and 2030. This is slightly higher than the County increase of 13 percent.

However, these estimates are very general and do not take into account potential loss of population through annexation. The estimates suggest an overall increase in population by 2030 between 9 percent if a lower growth rate occurs and 19 percent if a higher growth rate occurs.

Table 2-3: Population Projections, 2000-2030

| | Total Population by Year | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
| Weston (town) | 514 | 526 | 538 | 550 | 562 | 574 | 586 |
| County | 125,834 | 128,632 | 131,430 | 134,217 | 137,022 | 139,820 | 142,618 |

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 2003

Table 2-3b shows population projections completed by the WDOA, Demographic Services Center. The WDOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96. These projections are based on the same historical time period as those developed by NCWRPC, however more recent years carry a greater weight in the WDOA’s projected populations. Additionally, the WDOA projections are based on the historical population trends of individual communities, whereas the NCWRPC projections are based on trends in the planning sub-areas.

The NCWRPC projections provide a baseline to determine trends in the sub-area. They are useful in identifying future population beyond the borders of individual communities. The WDOA projections are more useful at the local municipality level. It is also noted that the WDOA projections for the Town were compiled in 2004 whereas those for the County were based on 2000 Census.

Table 2-3b: Population Projections – 2000-2030

| Total Population by Year | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | % change |
| Weston | 514 | 581 | 626 | 670 | 715 | 736 | 751 | +46% |
| County | 125,834 | 130,242 | 134,504 | 138,836 | 143,308 | 147,112 | 150,255 | +19% |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000 Census and Nov. 2004.

Note: Town 2025 and 2030 numbers projected from 2020 DOA estimates based on countywide growth rates

Household Forecasts

Like population, household projections were completed in 5-year increments between 2000 and 2030. The number of households was calculated by dividing the average persons per household into the total population for each 5-year increment. As shown on Table 2-1, the average persons-per-household was estimated to be 2.87. Persons-per-household for the County was calculated to be 2.59 based on the average persons-per-household for all five planning sub-areas.

Assuming a moderate rate of growth, the number of households is estimated to increase by 25, or 14 percent between 2000 and 2030. This is slightly higher than the County increase of 13 percent.

Table 2-4: Household Projections, 2000-2030

| Total Households by Year | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | % change |
| Weston | 179 | 184 | 187 | 192 | 196 | 200 | 204 | +14 |
| County | 48,585 | 49,665 | 50,745 | 51,821 | 52,904 | 53,985 | 55,065 | +13 |

Source: Derived from data in Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/10/03

Like the population projection, the WDOA household projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statue 16.96. and are based on the historical population trends of individual communities. Table 2-4b includes household projections completed by the WDOA.

Table 2-4b: Household Projections – 2000-2030

| Total Households by Year | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | % change |
| Weston | 179 | 202 | 218 | 233 | 249 | 256 | 262 | +46% |
| County | 47,702 | 50,109 | 52,902 | 55,589 | 58,181 | 60,283 | 62,035 | +30% |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000 Census and Nov. 2004.

Note: Town 2025 and 2030 numbers projected from 2020 DOA estimates based on countywide growth rates

Education and Income Levels

According to 2000 Census data, 86.9 percent of Town residents have a high school education or higher (see Table 2-5). This compares to 83.8 percent for the County, and 85.1 percent for the State. In the Town, 15.2 percent of residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher, which is lower than the number of persons with a bachelor’s degree or higher in the County and State with 18.3 percent and 22.4 percent respectively.

**Table 2-5: Educational Attainment, 2000
(population age 25 and over)**

| Educational Attainment | Town of Weston | | County Percent | State Percent |
|--|----------------|---------|----------------|---------------|
| | Number | Percent | | |
| Less than 9th Grade | 16 | 5.7 | 8.2 | 5.4 |
| 9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma | 21 | 7.4 | 8.0 | 9.6 |
| High School Graduate | 100 | 35.3 | 38.0 | 34.6 |
| Some College, No Degree | 60 | 21.2 | 18.3 | 20.6 |
| Associates Degree | 43 | 15.2 | 9.2 | 7.5 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 28 | 9.9 | 12.6 | 15.3 |
| Graduate or Professional Degree | 15 | 5.3 | 5.7 | 7.2 |
| Percent high school graduate or higher | | 86.9 | 83.8 | 85.1 |
| Percent bachelor's degree or higher | | 15.2 | 18.3 | 22.4 |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000

As shown on Table 2-6, median household income for Town residents was \$56,719 in 2000. This compares higher than both Marathon County with a median of \$45,165 and the State overall at \$43,791. Income distribution among all income levels is approximately proportionate to levels observed County- and statewide.

Table 2-6: Household Income Levels, 2000

| Income Level | Town of Weston | | County Percent | State Percent |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Number | Percent | | |
| Less than \$10,000 | 5 | 3.1 | 5.9 | 7.1 |
| \$10,000 - \$14,999 | - | 0 | 5.4 | 5.8 |
| \$15,000 - \$24,999 | 24 | 14.7 | 12.3 | 12.7 |
| \$25,000 - \$34,999 | 19 | 11.7 | 13.1 | 13.2 |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999 | 17 | 10.4 | 19.4 | 18.1 |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 50 | 30.7 | 25.2 | 22.7 |
| \$75,000 - \$99,999 | 22 | 13.5 | 10.5 | 10.9 |
| \$100,000 - \$149,000 | 17 | 10.4 | 5.4 | 6.4 |
| \$150,000 - \$199,999 | 3 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| \$200,000 or More | 6 | 3.7 | 1.6 | 1.5 |
| Total Households | 163 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Median Household Income | \$56,719 | - | \$45,165 | \$43,791 |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000

Employment Characteristics

Table 2-7 illustrates the breakdown, by occupation, of the employed population of the Town of Weston in 2000. The “employed population” is defined as people living in the Town who are 16 years and older. In 2000, the Town had an employed population of 236. Most residents were employed in management, professional and related, and in sales and office

occupations. This suggests that the majority of residents commute to jobs outside the Town, but likely within in the Wausau urban area.

Table 2-7: Occupation by Sector, 2000

| Sector | Number | Percent |
|---|------------|------------|
| Management, professional, and related occupations | 79 | 33.5 |
| Service occupations | 28 | 11.9 |
| Sales and office occupations | 68 | 28.8 |
| Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations | 4 | 1.7 |
| Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations | 19 | 8.1 |
| Production, transportation, and material moving occupations | 38 | 16.1 |
| Total Employed* | 236 | 100 |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

* "Total Employed" represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

An employment forecast completed by the NCWRPC in 2003 indicates continued employment growth for the Town of Weston. By the year 2030, it is estimated that the Town will provide employment to about 200 workers. This represents an employment increase of 18 percent and assumes a moderate growth rate based on the rate of change in employment between 1990 and 2000 for non-farm employment.

Table 2-8: Employment Projections, 2000-2030

| | Total Employment by Year | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
| Weston | 170 | 175 | 180 | 185 | 191 | 196 | 201 |
| County | 72,508 | 75,625 | 78,742 | 81,859 | 84,976 | 88,093 | 91,210 |

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 2003

Demographic Trends

- The Town of Weston has experienced a significant loss of population (-92%) and households (-89%) over the last 30 years. Losses are due to annexations into the City of Wausau, and in particular, the Village of Weston, which incorporated in 1996.
- The population of the Town is older, on average than the general population of the County or State, with a median age of 37.8 years compared to 36.3 and 36.0 for the County and State, respectively.
- The Town of Weston has a fairly high percent (86.9%) of residents with high school diplomas or higher, compared to 83.8 percent for the County, and 85.1 percent for the State.
- The median household income in the Town was \$56,719 in 2000, which is higher than median incomes in the County (\$45,165) or State (\$43,791).
- While most jobs located within the Town of Weston are agriculture related, most Town residents work in professional, management and service type occupations located outside the Town.

Issues

No significant issues were identified. However, it is anticipated the Town will continue to lose population as a result of annexation. The northwest portion of the Town has some issues with failing older septic systems, which may prompt annexation petitions into the City of Wausau.

3. Natural Resources

Because natural resource features do not follow geo-political boundaries, it is important to consider their patterns and inter-relationships on a broader scale. In addition, many of the programs for protecting or mitigating impacts to natural resources are administered at the County, State or Federal level. Thus, an overview of recent county-wide natural resource planning efforts is described below, followed by a description of local natural resource conditions. Of particular interest are geographic areas of the landscape encompassing valued natural resources features grouped below by resource type, including water, soil and biological resources.

Recent Planning Efforts Related to Natural Resources

In the last decade, several plans were prepared by the County specifically to address protection and management of natural resources. These plans may be used as resources to guide local policy and decision making regarding resource management and protection. In addition to the plans listed below, Marathon County and several local communities have adopted park and outdoor recreation plans that discuss natural resource based recreational facilities and protection strategies. These are described in more detail in the Parks section.

- **Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP)** - In 2001, Marathon County adopted a LWRMP in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource

management in Marathon County and outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources. Marathon County encompasses portions of 22 watersheds. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ranked these watersheds according to water pollution impacts and designated five as “priority” watersheds to receive special planning and funding through the voluntary, State-funded Priority Watershed Program. The County’s Land Conservation Department works with the WDNR to implement the program. Program funding is used to hire staff to assist in developing management plans for each watershed and to provide cost sharing to landowners for implementation of “best management practices” (BMPs) to achieve the program objectives.

- **Marathon County 2001 Groundwater Protection Guide** – This guide is an extension of the efforts established with adoption of the Marathon County Groundwater Plan in 1988. It is intended to guide local and County officials in setting policy. It also serves as a resource of information about groundwater and other natural resources and recommends strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection.
- **Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 1996-2005** – This plan includes recommendations to guide management of forest land in Marathon County in accordance with the County Forestry Department’s mission to manage and protect the County forest on a sustainable basis for ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future generations. It provides substantial information on

existing forest resources and as well as information regarding the roles of the various agencies and regulatory framework related to forest management.

Water Resources

Marathon County contains abundant water resources. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state and others are in need of focused efforts to improve water quality. Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) designations are derived from an amendment to the U.S. Clean Water Act, which directed states to identify waters that were largely unaffected by pollution and should remain that way. States were required to develop “anti-degradation” policies to protect these waters from pollution. As a result, wastewater entering an ORW must be as clean as the water in the “outstanding” water body. The anti-degradation policies only apply to point sources of pollution, such as an industrial discharge pipe. However, Wisconsin has other programs in place to control non-point source pollution, such as animal waste and pesticides in farm runoff, urban runoff, and failing septic systems.

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board also wanted to extend higher levels of protection to top trout waters. As such, the WDNR established a second category of waterways to be protected under the anti-degradation policy; these are the “Exceptional Resource Waters”. Wastewater entering ERW’s must meet minimum clean water standards, although higher standards are encouraged where feasible.

There are no designated ORW or ERW in the Town of Weston.

Water resources that have been significantly degraded are identified as “impaired waters”. Four of the 22 watersheds in Marathon County have been identified as “impaired waters” on the “303 (d) list” of the U.S. Clean Water Act. The list identifies waters that do not meet current water quality standards and merit water quality improvement and protection. There are no “impaired” watersheds in the Town of Weston.

Streams/Rivers – As shown on Figure 3-1, there are three streams/rivers running through the Town of Weston. The Lower Eau Claire River meanders along the Town’s south border. Big Sandy Creek, and its tributary, Little Sandy Creek, flow diagonally through the center of the Town from the northeast to their confluence with the Lower Eau Claire River just east of CTH X.

Floodplains - Floodplains consist of land likely to be covered by floodwater during the regional (100-year) flood. Floodplain areas are based on information compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). The floodplain includes the floodway and the flood fringe. Areas immediately adjacent to the Lower Eau Claire River and Big and Little Sandy Creeks are in the 100-year floodplain.

Wetlands – Wetlands in Wisconsin were defined by the State Legislature in 1978 as: *“an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions.”*

Programs in three levels of government - local, State and Federal - regulate activities in wetlands. There are dozens of wetland types in Wisconsin, characterized by vegetation, soil type and degree of saturation or water cover. Some of the more prominent wetland types are:

- ***Aquatic Bed*** wetlands contain plants growing entirely on or in a water body no deeper than 6'. Plants may include pondweed, duckweed, lotus and water-lilies.
- ***Marshes*** are characterized by standing water and dominated by cattails, bulrushes, pickerel-weed, lake sedges and/or giant bur-reed
- ***Sedge or "Wet" Meadows*** wetlands may have saturated soils, rather than standing water, more often than not. Sedges, grasses and reeds are dominant, but look also for blue flag iris, marsh milkweed, sneeze-weed, mint and several species of goldenrod and aster.
- ***Scrub/Shrub*** wetlands include bogs and alder thickets and are characterized by woody shrubs and small trees such as tag alder, bog birch, willow and dogwood.
- ***Forested*** wetlands include bogs and forested floodplain complexes. They are characterized by trees 20 feet or more in height such as tamarack, white cedar, black spruce, elm, black ash, green ash and silver maple.

Most wetlands are located adjacent to the rivers, streams, and creeks, as shown on Figure 3-2. The largest wetlands are forested wetlands located adjacent to the Lower Eau Claire River and Big Sandy Creek.

Groundwater – As shown on Figure 3-3, depth to groundwater is generally shallow throughout the Town and supply is generally good. However, in some scattered areas, groundwater supply is limited due to high bedrock as shown on Figure 3-4. In the area north of Big Sandy Creek, wells tend to be deep and the volume of water can be limited.

Soil Resources

Soil Types – The major soil associations in the Town are shown on Figure 3-5. The central portion of the Town and areas along the Eau Claire River and Big Sandy Creek consist of soils in the Mahtomedi-Fordum-Sturgeon association. Portions of the north part of the Town consist of Fenwood-Rietbrock-Rozellville soils. The remainder of the Town includes Loyal-Withee-Marshfield soils.

Susceptibility for soil erosion is generally lower in the Town than the average soil loss rate in Marathon County overall and is not a concern for Town property owners or farmers.

Prime Farm Soils – Figure 3-6 illustrates soils that have been identified as prime farm soils according to the Marathon County Cropland Evaluation System (CES). This system establishes a basis from which one parcel of land can be compared to another. It rates soils on their ability to produce food, feed, forage, and fiber crops. It is based upon the knowledge that soil properties affect yields. The system is non-biased, defensible, and can be consistently applied. Additional information on Marathon County CES can be obtained from Marathon County Land Conservation Department.

Most of the Class 1 and 2 prime farm soils are located in the north and eastern portions of the Town. These class designations refer to the quality of soils for growing crops and are based on United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifications. Class 1 soils are the best soils in Marathon County for growing all crops. Class 2 soils are also very good agricultural soils, however, they may be prone to wetness and are therefore less desirable than Class 1 soils. It should be noted that not all prime farm soils are used for farming; some have been developed with residential or other uses. The “prime farm soils” designation simply indicates that these soils are good productive farmland.

Steep Slopes – Steep slopes are defined as slopes with gradients over 12 percent. Figure 3-7 illustrates where steep slopes exist and separates them into two categories. Category D includes areas with slopes between 12 and 20 percent. Category E includes areas where slopes are all greater than 15%. Most steep slopes are located adjacent to the rivers, streams and creeks. Development is generally restricted or prohibited on steep slopes.

Non-Metallic Mining - There are about 400 operating or abandoned sand, gravel, decomposed (“rotten”) granite and stone excavation sites in Marathon County. In 1989 the County adopted a Non-metallic Mining Ordinance that requires reclamation of these sites to a purposeful and acceptable landscape appearance and use. The program is administered by the Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department and includes incentives to reclaim abandoned excavations.

Biological Resources

Vegetation – About half of the Town of Weston is wooded, with most woodlands located along waterways. Areas of cropland are mostly concentrated in the northeast part of the Town. Vegetation in developed areas consists of private landscaping including trees, shrubs and gardens, although large residential lots are commonly wooded.

Wildlife Resources and Habitat – Wildlife resources include a variety of game and non-game species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians that typically live in Marathon County. Common types of wildlife include bear, badger, wolf, deer, wild turkeys, raccoon, squirrels, songbirds, waterfowl and raptors. Wildlife resources are abundant in the many undisturbed sanctuaries, refuges, reserves, and scattered habitats located throughout the County. Numerous other species of migrating birds use habitat in Marathon County for food, shelter, and resting stops during seasonal migration.

There is a significant amount of wildlife habitat in Marathon County. In addition to County parks and forest units, major wildlife habitat areas include the George W. Mead Wildlife Area, the McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Management Area, and Rib Mountain State Park.

Threatened and Endangered Species - Both aquatic, endangered, threatened, or special concern species are located within the Town. Endangered resources that may be identified at the local level include:

Communities:

- **Floodplain Forest Community** - This is a lowland hardwood forest community that occurs along large rivers, usually stream order 3 or higher, that flood periodically. The best-development occurs along large rivers in southern Wisconsin, but this community is also found in the north. Canopy dominants may include silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), river birch (*Betula nigra*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*), and cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*). Northern stands are often species poor, but balsam-poplar (*Populus balsamifera*), bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), and box elder (*Acer negundo*) may replace some of the missing “southern” trees. Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) is a locally dominant shrub and may form dense thickets on the margins of oxbow lakes, sloughs and ponds within the forest. Nettles (*Laportea canadensis* and *Urtica dioica*), sedges, ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) and gray-headed coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) are important understory herbs, and lianas such as Virginia creepers (*Parthenocissus* spp.), grapes (*Vitis* spp.), Canada moonseed (*Menispermum canadense*), and poison-ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) are often common. Among the striking and characteristic herbs of this community are cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and green dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*).
- **Fast; Hard; Warm Stream Community** – This community generally consists of warm water streams that run fast and have rocky bottoms. These streams are not well suited for trout, although will support a fish population of pike and walleye if they are not too steep.

Flora:

None identified.

Fauna:

- Redside Dace (*Clinostomus elongatus*)
- Black Redhorse (*Moxostoma duquesnei*)
- Splendid Clubtail (*Gomphurus lineatifrons*)
- Skillet Clubtail (*Gomphurus ventricosus*)
- Green-faced Clubtail (*Gomphus viridifrons*)
- Stygian Shadowfly (*Neurocordulia yamaskanensis*)
- Riffle Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus carolus*)
- Pygmy Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus howei*)

Issues

- **Corridor Preservation** – The Town is interested in preserving natural corridors for hiking and biking. One possible corridor includes portions of the floodplain along Big Sandy Creek, which could connect with the Mountain-Bay Trail.

4. Land Use

The Town of Weston is located directly north of the Village of Weston and east of the Cities of Schofield and Wausau. The land area incorporated as the Village of Weston in 1996 was all originally part of the Town. After incorporation, the resulting area of the Town comprises 7.5 square miles, mostly north of the Eau Claire River.

Current Pattern of Land Use

The Town of Weston is dominated by agricultural and low-density, rural residential type land uses. As Table 4-1 indicates, the majority of land in the Town consists of woodlands, cropland, and single-family residential land uses. Most of the more developed areas of the Town were incorporated into the Village of Weston in 1996. One of the oldest residential subdivisions – the Home Sweet Home subdivision – is located in the northwest corner of the Town, near the border with the City of Wausau.

There are two sand quarries in the Town, both located south of Big Sandy Creek. One continues to actively operate and the other may cease operations in the foreseeable future.

Existing Land Use - For purposes of this report, tax assessment land use categories were used to represent existing land use. This was done to achieve consistency in describing existing land uses in the various municipalities in the Highway 51 Sub-Area group participating in the Marathon County comprehensive planning effort. Table 4-1 describes the various land use categories and Figure 4-1 illustrates the existing land use.

Table 4-1: Land Use Classification, 2000

| Land Cover Category | Description | Acres | % of Total Land Area |
|----------------------------------|--|-------|----------------------|
| Single Family Residential | One family structures, farm residences, mobile homes | 326 | 5.58 |
| Multi-Family Residential | Multiple family structures, e.g., condos, duplexes, apartments | 0 | 0 |
| Commercial Services | Retail stores, taverns, restaurants, truck stops, gas stations, farm coops, implement and vehicle dealerships, business offices, motels/hotels, offices, telephone/gas company | 48 | 0.82 |
| Industrial | Saw/paper/lumber mills, dairies, industrial parks, trucking operations, distribution centers | 33 | 0.56 |
| Quarries | Mining operations | 39 | 0.67 |
| Cropland | Tilled agriculture, prime farmland | 1,613 | 27.59 |
| Specialty Crops | Ginseng, orchards, vineyards, nurseries, groves, cranberries, etc. | 20 | 0.34 |
| Other Agriculture | Fallow, pasture and undetermined agriculture, power lines and towers, water towers, municipal wells | 401 | 6.86 |
| Public/Quasi-Public | Schools, churches, cemeteries, town halls, fire departments, National Guard | 0 | 0 |
| Recreation | Ball fields, golf courses, parks, trails, camp grounds, shooting ranges | 2 | 0.03 |
| Woodlands | Forested land | 2,234 | 38.22 |
| Water and Wetlands | Open waters, such as lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, creeks, reservoirs, etc. | 736 | 12.59 |
| Transportation | Airports, highways, road right-of-ways, railroads, logging roads | 215 | 3.68 |
| Barren Land | Unused open land in wooded areas, along streams, along roadsides | 179 | 3.06 |
| Total Land Area | | 5,845 | 100% |

Source: Marathon County Tax Assessment Code Database

Current Land Use Plans and Regulations

Land Use Plan(s) –The Town adopted *The Town of Weston Land Use Plan 1998-2008* in 1998. This plan emphasizes the priority placed on preserving the Town’s rural character. The plan designates areas for residential and agricultural land uses, but expressly discourages industrial development and only provides for minimal commercial development. It also describes five overall goals regarding land use and development that were developed during the planning process. These including:

- Encourage agricultural land use in areas of the township where non-farming development would result in land use conflicts between farming and non-farming land uses and unnecessary increases in the demand for and cost of local government services.
- Encourage residential development that maintains as many of the environmental features of the land as possible, and in those areas of the township where there is existing Town infrastructure and services for residential land use. It is noted that there are no areas in the Town with existing public utilities.
- Allow certain types of commercial development that provide products and services that meet the needs of a rural residential community and maintain the environmental features of the land as much as possible.
- Manage the growth of the Camp Phillips Road/CTH X corridor in a manner that encourages the development of an area of mixed residential and commercial land uses that preserve the environmental features of the land as much as possible.

- Allow industrial development only in those areas adjoining existing industrial land uses in the township and only when such development would not have a negative impact on environmental resources and adjoining property values.

The plan states that low-density single family development is preferred and recommends that the Town encourage conservation subdivision or cluster developments as a means to preserve open space and environmental features.

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances– The Town of Weston has its own zoning and Figure 4-2 illustrates the existing pattern of zoning in the Town. Most of the Town is zoned either RR-Rural Development or Wetland Protection District (WPD). Currently the minimum lot size in the RR district is 2.75 acres (120,000 s.f.). Other residential classifications allow smaller lots, including lots less than 20,000 square feet. The WPD prohibits residential development but allows some agricultural uses provided they do not damage wetlands.

The Town Subdivision Ordinance allows for flexible development regulations through conservation subdivisions and lots as small as $\frac{3}{4}$ -acres are allowed if clustered. The ordinance also allows density to be varied, relative to the amount of green space provided. However, to date, no conservation subdivision have been approved.

There also appears to be support in the Town for increasing landscaping and design requirements. In 2003, the Town adopted an ordinance to regulate cell towers.

Shoreland Zoning - Shoreland, shoreland wetlands, and floodplain regulations are applicable in all geographic areas of the County. Wisconsin law mandates Counties to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land use in shoreland/wetland and floodplain areas for the entire area of the County outside of villages and cities. This ordinance supersedes any Town ordinance, unless a Town ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland/wetland and floodplain area covered under this zoning is the area that lies within 1,000 feet of a lake and within 300 feet of a navigable stream or to the land ward side of a floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

Farmland Preservation Program The State of Wisconsin has a Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Program. The goals of the program are twofold: to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and to provide property tax relief to farmland owners. Landowners keeping land in agricultural use can claim a credit on their State income tax by obtaining a zoning certificate, if the land is zoned “exclusive agriculture” (8 towns in Marathon County), or sign a contract with the State. The program requires that a landowner be a Wisconsin resident, own a minimum of 35 or more acres of contiguous land, and produce gross farm receipts of \$6,000 or more in the last year, or \$18,000 in the last three years. The income requirement can be satisfied with having 35 acres or more enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Landowners must also comply with County soil and water conservation standards. Contracts can range from 10 to 25 years, and remain in effect regardless of change in ownership.

There are some blocks of land with Farmland Preservation Contracts in the northeast corner of the Town as shown on

Figure 4-3. It is noted that there is only one remaining active dairy farm in the Town. All other farms are used for crops and/or pasture.

Development Trends

Land Supply – The primary factor affecting supply of land suitable for development in the Town is the lack of willing sellers. There are also some physical factors that can limit development potential, including wetlands, lack of public sewer and water and loss of land through annexation.

In 1993 the Town entered into a boundary agreement with the City of Wausau stipulating that the Town would not oppose any annexations in the portion of Town west of Big Sandy Creek. However, the Town is not certain this agreement is valid. Regardless, annexations into the City and/or the Village of Weston are a continual possibility. In particular, the Town has concerns that residents in the Home Sweet Home subdivision with older septic systems will request annexation into the City of Wausau to obtain City sewer and water.

In addition, while several existing farmers/property owners are reluctant to sell their land at this time, pressure to develop will likely grow, particularly once the hospital complex and business and technology park are completed in the Village of Weston. This demand will also increase the potential for future annexations in order to develop at urban densities, which requires public sewer and water.

Land potentially available for future development (residential and non-residential) between 2000 and 2030 was estimated by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

(NCWRPC) based on the land cover categories shown in Table 4-1. Land categorized as barren, crop land, forest land, other agriculture, and specialty crop was considered “available” for future development. On the other hand, land categorized as already developed, such as industrial, or areas that cannot easily be developed, such as wetlands or waterways, were considered “unavailable” for future development. In the Town of Weston, 4,446 acres are identified as available for future development and 1,399 are considered unavailable.

It is noted that some of this “available” land may be in public ownership, as shown in Table 4-2, thus making it essentially “unavailable” for development. According to County assessor’s data, in the Town of Weston only about 50 acres are currently in public ownership. As such, public ownership has little bearing on the overall amount of land potentially available for future development.

Table 4-2: Public Owned Land (in acres), 1998-2002

| Year | County Owned | State Owned | Federal Owned |
|----------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1998 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 2002 | 0 | 49.3 | 0 |
| Change | -2 | +49.3 | 0 |
| % Change | -100 | - | 0 |

Source: Data compiled by local assessors with Municipal Board of Review

Land Demand – Given the Town’s desire to restrict commercial and industrial development, most new development will be residential. Development of Saint Clare’s Hospital and proposed expansion of CTH X/Camp Phillips Road will likely increase demand for new residential and other development in the surrounding vicinity.

An estimate of land needed for future residential development was based on projected new dwelling units between 2000 and

2030 derived from WDOA household projections and the average density of dwelling units per acre in the community. The average density was calculated using the total acres of residential land on the 2000 land use/cover map divided by the number of households according to the 2000 Census. It was assumed that the density would remain constant between 2000 and 2030. Future acres needed for residential development were then estimated by multiplying the projected number of households in 2030 by the average density. In the Town of Weston, it is estimated that 167 acres of land will be needed to accommodate new residential development through 2030.

The NCWRPC estimated land demand for future non-residential development based on projected changes in local employment and an estimated current average density of 8.20 employees per acre in the Highway 51 planning sub-area. In the Town of Weston, it is estimated that only 5 acres will be needed to accommodate new non-residential development through 2030.

Land Values -- Table 4-3 indicates the change in assessed land values between 1998 and 2002 for various types of land use in the Town of Weston. It also indicates percent change in value for the Town compared to Marathon County. Between 1998 and 2002 the assessed value of residential increased by over 41 percent, which is significantly more than values in the County overall, which only increased 5.6 percent. Values of commercial land in the Town increased more than all other categories, increasing by almost 110 percent. Commercial land values were also significantly higher compared to the County overall where commercial land values decreased by 4 percent. The largest decrease in values in the Town occurred with agricultural land, which declined by over 68 percent. Values of

Table 4-3: Per Acre Assessed Land Values (in dollars), 1998 – 2002

| Year | Residential | | Commercial | | Manufacturing | | Agriculture | | Swamp & Waste Land | | Forest | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| | Acres | Land Only | Acres | Land Only | Acres | Land Only | Acres | Land Only | Acres | Land Only | Acres | Land Only |
| 1998 | 482 | \$6,526 | 5 | \$4,510 | 0 | \$0 | 1,991 | \$541 | 374 | \$309 | 2,481 | \$830 |
| 2002 | 595 | \$9,234 | 5 | \$9,460 | 0 | \$0 | 1,862 | \$172 | 204 | \$590 | 2,504 | \$1,562 |
| Chg. | +113 | \$2,708 | 0 | \$4,950 | 0 | \$0 | +129 | -\$369 | -170 | \$281 | +23 | \$732 |
| Percent Change Comparison | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Acres | Land (\$) | Acres | Land (\$) | Acres | Land (\$) | Acres | Land (\$) | Acres | Land (\$) | Acres | Land (\$) |
| Town | +23.4 | +41.5 | 0 | +109.8 | 0 | 0 | -6.5 | -68.2 | -45.5 | +90.9 | +0.9 | +88.2 |
| County | +21.2 | +5.6 | +38.4 | -4.0 | -0.5 | +34.4 | -11.2 | -47.6 | +74.8 | +137.0 | +1.0 | +91.8 |

Source: Data compiled by local assessors with Municipal Board of Review

land classified as swamp and waste and forest also increased, but not as much as in the County overall. In the County overall, land classified as swamp & waste had the highest percent value per acre increase of all categories (137%) followed by land classified as Forest with an increase in value per acre of almost 92%.

Major Opportunities and Constraints

- **Planned Development** –The Town recently added provisions for conservation subdivisions in its Subdivision Ordinance. These include standards to allow smaller lots and higher densities provided homes are clustered and sufficient open space is provided. This tool will allow the Town to promote planned residential development that preserves rural and natural features and open space. To date, no conservation subdivisions have been created in the Town.
- **Roads** – CTH X/Camp Phillips Road is planned to be upgraded to create an eastern “bypass” around the Wausau metro area and will become a major north-south route. With improved access, lands adjacent to CTH X will likely become more desirable for commercial development, particularly at major intersection such as CTH N, Z and STH 29 where a major new hospital complex (Ministry Health Care) opened in 2005. As mentioned above, the Town wants to discourage new commercial and industrial development and would prefer such development occur in the Village of Weston. The Town is open to lower intensity commercial uses in this corridor, but has concerns about the impact of road widening and increased traffic on existing rural character.

- **Natural Resources** – High bedrock limits water availability, and thus decreases the amount of land suitable for development in some areas. On the other hand, the Town is interested in preserving open space and natural amenities. It is recognized that the presence of Big Sandy Creek and the Eau Claire River add to the natural/rural character and aesthetic appeal of the Town.
- **Lack of Utilities** – The Town does not provide any public sewer or water service, which limits the amount and density of development. It can also lead to annexations into the Village of Weston and/or the City of Wausau.
- **Loss of Identity** –As portions of the Town continue to be annexed to adjacent communities, it becomes more difficult to retain an identity as a separate community.

Issues

- **Annexation** – When the Village of Weston incorporated in 1996, the Town lost more than half of its land base. Also, in 1993 the Town entered into a 20-year boundary agreement with the City of Wausau stipulating that the Town would not oppose any annexations in the portion of Town west of Big Sandy Creek. However, the Town disputes whether that agreement is valid. Regardless, close proximity to communities with sewer and water make annexation a continual threat, particularly in areas of the Town that have older septic systems. The Town feels that they have little control over annexation. In fact, Wisconsin law regarding annexation does not give towns much leverage to resist annexation requests.

- **CTH X “East Bypass”** – The Town has concerns about potential negative impacts to its character resulting from the proposed widening of CTH X/Camp Philips Road to 6-lanes to create a “bypass” around the east side of the Wausau urban area. They also have concerns about safety and are interested in increasing access management in the corridor.
- **Conservation Subdivisions** – The Town would like to encourage the creation of conservation subdivisions and recently added provisions to its subdivision ordinance to allow more flexibility in subdivision design. Developing tools and incentives to encourage developers to utilize the ordinance provisions is a high priority for the Town. The Town is open to exploring a variety of tools such as waiving permit fees, cost-sharing for public improvements (e.g., roads), and limiting the number of building permits issued each year.

5. Transportation

The transportation system in a community consists of a variety of roads; some are owned and maintained by local officials, others are part of the County or State road systems. In addition to roads, the transportation system consists of facilities for pedestrians (e.g., sidewalks), bicyclists (e.g., trails), railroads, airports, and in more urban areas, public transit. This section describes the transportation system in the Town of Weston and related improvements or issues affecting the system.

Background

The Town conducted a community survey in conjunction with preparation of its *Land Use Plan 1998-2008*. While the survey indicated that the majority of respondents are satisfied with conditions and services in the Town of Weston, some desire was expressed for “better roads.” Some specific suggestions include more black top roads and improvements to CTH X.

Existing Transportation Planning Efforts

Transportation planning in Marathon County is coordinated between Marathon County Planning Department staff and the Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission; the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated by the Federal Department of Transportation to be responsible for transportation planning in the Wausau area. The Marathon County Planning Department provides staff for the MPO. The County’s planning department also does transportation planning for areas outside the Wausau metropolitan area.

County transportation planning efforts are presented in various plans and studies. Findings and recommendations presented in these plans should be integrated into local community planning efforts when relevant and appropriate. Recent transportation plans prepared by Marathon County include:

- ***Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)***– The TIP includes all programmed transportation projects receiving Federal and/or State funds. The TIP for 2003-2005 was adopted in October 2002 and is updated every two years.
- ***STH 29 Corridor Land Use Review (1997)***– This plan was prepared by a multi-departmental team working with communities along the STH 29 corridor in the western part of Marathon County. The primary goal was to identify recommendations to allow local communities to protect STH 29 from impacts related to unplanned growth.
- ***Marathon County Functional / Jurisdictional Highway Classification Study (1998)***– This plan identifies and groups classes of roadways that provide similar levels of service. The plan recommended that the unit of government having the greatest basic interest in the roadway’s function would carry out the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the classified roadways.

The Wausau Area MPO in conjunction with the Marathon County Planning Department have developed the following transportation plans for the Wausau metropolitan area:

- ***Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Wausau Metropolitan Area (1996)***– This LRTP was

produced by Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc. for the MPO. This plan considers the transportation system and its relationship to land use. The plan was reaffirmed in 2001 and will be updated by 2006.

- **Local Arterial Circulation Plan (2000)** – This plan was produced by the Marathon County Planning and Highway Departments for the MPO. This plan is intended to guide public and private sector decisions concerning improvements to the local arterial transportation system over the next two to three decades.
- **Transit System Management Performance Audit Wausau Area Transit System (2001)** – The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) is required by statute to conduct a management performance review of all urban transit systems receiving State aid. Performance reviews are conducted at least once every five years.
- **Wausau Area Transit System (WATS) Transit Development Plan (TDP) (1999)** – The TDP was prepared by Abrams-Cherwony & Associates with Urbitran Associates. It is typically updated every five years and provides a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and service recommendation plan.
- **Marathon County Paratransit Study (2001)** – The study, prepared by Urbitran Associates, Inc. with Abrams-Cherwony & Associates, reviewed paratransit services within the Wausau area provided primarily by WATS Plus (WATS+).

Road Network

Functional Classification of Roads/Jurisdiction

(Source: *WDOT Facilities Development Manual*)

Functional Classification – A functionally classified road system is one in which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. At the upper limit of the system (principal arterials, for example), are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas at the lower limits are those local roads and streets that emphasize access.

The functional classifications are generally defined as:

Principal Arterials serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. These routes generally serve all urban areas with populations greater than 5,000 or connect major centers of activity. They carry the highest traffic volumes and are designed to accommodate longer trips.

Minor Arterials, like principal arterials, minor arterials also serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intra-community continuity and service for trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.

Collectors provide both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. The collector system distributes trips from the arterials through the area to the local streets. The collectors

also collect traffic from the local streets and channel it onto the arterial system.

Local Streets comprise all facilities not on one of the higher systems. They serve primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to higher order systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility, and through-traffic movement on these streets is usually discouraged.

Jurisdiction – Roads are commonly classified in one of two ways: by ownership or by purpose. Jurisdictional responsibility refers to ownership of a particular road, while functional classification, as describe above, identifies the road by the level of service it provides.

Jurisdiction refers to governmental ownership, not necessarily responsibility. For example, some State owned roads are maintained by local jurisdictions. Additionally, the designation of a public road as a “Federal-aid highway” does not alter its ownership or jurisdiction as a State or local road, only that its service value and importance have made that road eligible for Federal-aid construction and rehabilitation funds.¹

Ownership is divided among the Federal, State, and local governments. States own over 20 percent of the national road network. The Federal Government has responsibility for about five percent, primarily in national parks, forests, and Indian reservations. Over 75 percent of the road system is locally controlled.

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration Conditions and Performance Report.

In some cases, local municipalities are responsible for conducting routine maintenance and minor repairs on State and Federal highways within their jurisdictional boundaries. In return, the State generally provides financing to those jurisdictions. However, major repairs and reconstruction are generally still the responsibility of the State Department of Transportation. Roadway jurisdictions (i.e., U.S., State, and County highways) are indicated in Figure 5-1.

Major Road Facilities

Following is a brief description of the major road facilities located in the Town, which are shown on Figure 5-1. All major roads are described in terms of functional classification, jurisdiction, and Annual Average Daily Traffic² (AADT), when available.

- **CTH N (Town Line Road)** is an east-west route that serves as the northern border of the Town of Weston. East of Linden Street, CTH N is designated as a major collector. West of Linden Street CTH N is designated as a minor arterial. East of the intersection with CTH J, CTH N had a 2001 AADT volume of 3,000. Near the Big Sandy Creek crossing, CTH N had an AADT volume of 2,600 in 1998 and 2,700 in 2001. West of CTH X, CTH N had an AADT volume of 2,800 in 1998 and 3,500 in 2001.
- **CTH J** is a major collector that serves as the eastern boundary with Ringle. CTH J veers westward farther south and has a grade-separated interchange with STH 29 in the Village of Weston. Traffic count information for CTH J

² 1998 and 2001 Wisconsin Highway Traffic Data, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, May 1999 and 2002.

was only available outside of the Town of Weston. North of CTH N, CTH J had an AADT volume of 990 in 1998 and 1,400 in 2001. South of Weston Avenue, CTH J had an AADT volume of 1,700 in 1998 and 1,600 in 2001.

- **CTH X (Camp Phillips Road)** is designated as a major collector through the Town, providing a connection to Village of Weston and STH 29 to the south. Wisconsin traffic count data for 1998 and 2001, do not indicate AADT counts along CTH X through the Town. However, CTH X is considered a high traffic corridor.
- The Wausau Metropolitan Area’s LRTP calls for CTH X to be expanded to create a new north-south eastern arterial “bypass” around the metro area. The arterial will provide another major north-south route through the area as well as improve mobility and access to the new hospital and related development in the Village of Weston. There is a concern among Town residents that the widening of CTH X and subsequent development along the corridor would be detrimental to the character of the Town.
- **Kersten Road/Kramer Lane/Lester St (formerly CTH SS)** is designated as a minor collector route through the Town of Weston. South of the intersection with CTH N, CTH SS had an AADT volume of 380 in 1998 and 930 in 2001.

Road Maintenance

The Town has a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for road maintenance and improvements and the Town Board sets priorities annually. All road maintenance, paving, etc. is

contracted out to private contractors or to the Village of Weston. The Town contracts with the Village of Weston for snowplowing service.

Most local roads south of Big Sandy Creek are paved. Most gravel roads are located off CTH N, east of CTH X. It is noted that Tamarack Lane was reconstructed a few years ago. The Town is satisfied with their system for conducting road improvements and estimates that most Town roads will be paved in about five years.

Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) – The WDOT requires all incorporated communities to prepare a Pavement Management Plan (PMP) using a pavement rating system for their local roads. These plans were to be submitted for review by December 2001. The data from these plans is intended to provide the foundation for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), which is a computer resource that will enable communities and the State to begin to assess Wisconsin’s local roadway system.

The PASER system, which was designed by the Transportation Information Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is the rating system used most by Wisconsin communities. PASER rates road surfaces on a scale of 1 to 10. This scale is broken down as follows:

- “1” and “2” = very poor condition
- “3” = poor condition
- “4” and “5” = fair condition
- “6” and “7” = good condition
- “8” = very good condition
- “9” and “10” = excellent condition

In addition to its use in the new WISLR, the rating system gives communities a detailed assessment of the appropriate maintenance method for each road segment under their jurisdiction. This assessment is then incorporated into the community’s PMP.

Figures 5-2 and 5-3 and Table 5-1 below illustrate the WISLR road assessment done in 2004 by surface type and condition rating. As shown, the majority of roads in the Town are paved with either asphalt or concrete. Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “Fair” should be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. Roads that display a surface rating of “Good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to maintain safe travel conditions. Those roads without data should be examined to ensure safe travel conditions exist along these routes. Over half of the roads in the Town are rated in “Good” or better condition and will require only preventative maintenance. However, roughly 3-miles of roadways will require some sort of reconstruction.

Table 5-1: Summary of Pavement Conditions

| Surface Type Code (miles) | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Unimproved Road | Graded Earth Road | Gravel Road | Wearing Surface | Cold Mix Asphalt on Concrete | Cold Mix Resurfacing with < 7" Base | Cold Mix Resurfacing with > 7" Base |
| | | 3.97 | | | | |
| Cold Mix Asphalt Base < 7" | Cold Mix Asphalt Base > 7" | Hot Mix Asphalt on Concrete | Hot Mix Resurfacing | Hot Mix Asphalt Pavement | Concrete Pavement | Brick or Block Pavement |
| 5.60 | 10.68 | | | 0.74 | | |
| Surface Condition Rating (miles) | | | | | | |
| No Data | Failed | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Excellent |
| 0.06 | 0.05 | 0.18 | 2.91 | 4.36 | 6.13 | 7.3 |

Source: WDOT (WISLR), 8/10/04

Land Use and Transportation

Land use and transportation have a reciprocal relationship. Land use affects the demand for transportation to and from a given geographic area. Likewise, improved transportation facilities can affect land use decisions.

Traffic Generators – The Town is primarily rural with farmsteads and low density scattered residential. The Town does have one conservation subdivision, which allows clustered homes on smaller lots. There are no major commercial traffic generators.

Travel Patterns – As noted in the Demographics section, most Town of Weston residents work professional, management and service-related occupations. Given the lack of those sorts of jobs within the Town, it is likely that many residents commute to jobs located in the City of Wausau or other communities in the metro area. The Economic Development section indicated limited commercial employment within the Town, which suggests that most shopping and entertainment trip destinations are also outside of the Town.

Access Management – Wisconsin was one of the first states to recognize the relationship between highway operations and the use of abutting lands. Under Chapter 233, the WDOT was given the authority to establish rules to review subdivision plats abutting or adjoining State trunk highways or connecting highways. Regulations enacted by WDOT establish the principles of subdivision review. They require new subdivisions to: (1) have internal street systems; (2) limit direct vehicular access to the highways from individual lots;

(3) establish building setbacks; and (4) establish access patterns for remaining unplatted land.

Marathon County issues driveway permits and implements access restrictions on all properties fronting a lettered County road. The *County Trunk Highway Access-Driveway Policy* addresses the requirements regarding culverts, access width, slope, visibility and spacing. The policy is available through the Marathon County Highway Department. The Town does not control access, except through subdivision approval.

Other Transportation Modes

Pedestrian – There are no public sidewalks in the Town. There are some concerns about safety for pedestrians using the gravel shoulders of County roads.

Bicycle – Many residents use the gravel shoulders of County roads for bicycling, which poses some safety concerns. The Town’s long term goal is to create a bike/hiking trail system that would connect to the Mountain Bay trail. The Town would like to create a trail plan before much more development occurs.

The *Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan for the Non-Urbanized Area of Marathon County, Wisconsin*, 1996 identified suggested bicycle routes in Marathon County. These routes were based on traffic counts and condition of pavement. Formal action has not occurred to adopt these as designated bicycle routes. Figure 5-4 illustrates existing regional trails in the area.

Transit – There is no public transit service provided in the Town. However, transit service for the elderly and disabled is

provided throughout the County through North Central Health Care (NCHC). The services include semi-fixed routes that are scheduled, and demand services available with a 48-hour notice. Information and services are available by calling 848-4555.

Rail – The only area of the Town that is served by rail lines is an industrial property on the western border near the City of Wausau (see Figure 5-5).

Airports – Airports serving the area are described below and shown on Figure 5-5.

- **Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA)** – The CWA is a joint venture of Marathon and Portage Counties. It is the only airport within Marathon County or neighboring counties that provides scheduled air passenger services. The CWA is located east of Mosinee and accessible via I-39.

The terminal has been modernized and highway access reconstructed to be more convenient. Since 1982 more than \$24,000,000 has been spent to keep the airport ready to serve the needs of the region. Service is provided through Mesaba/Northwest, United/United Feeder Service and Skyway/Midwest Express, offering 24 flights per day that connect through Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit and Milwaukee. There are also nine air freight and express flights daily.

- **Wausau Municipal Airport** – The Wausau Municipal Airport, located in the City of Wausau, provides general aviation services and is fully equipped to receive large

corporate jets, charters, and privately owned aircraft. Air charter, flight instruction, aircraft rental, scenic rides, as well as aviation line services such as refueling, transportation, lodging and catering are some of the services available.

Issues

- **CTH X Expansion** – There is a concern that the proposed widening of CTH X to six-lanes to create an east “bypass” will encourage development along the corridor that could be detrimental to the character of the Town and pose safety concerns. The Town would like to limit the amount of commercial and industrial development and ensure adequate access management and traffic control.
- **Trail System** – Establishing a trail system through the Town is a long-term goal. This would include a multi-use trail system that connects to the Mountain Bay Trail.

6. Utilities

This section describes the existing conditions and issues relative to utilities available to the Town of Weston, including sewage disposal, water supply, power supply, and telecommunication facilities and services. It also describes existing conditions with regard to surface water management.

Private Utilities

The Town of Weston does not provide public sewer or water service. The current Town zoning ordinance requires a minimum lot size of 2.75-acres (120,000 s.f.) for installation of individual septic systems and wells.

It should be noted that portions of the Town of Weston are located within the 208 Sewer Service Area defined in the *Wausau Urban Area Sewer Service Plan for the Year 2000* as shown on Figure 6-1. Thus, some portions of the Town are identified as areas where public sewer service may be extended. However, the City of Wausau and the Village of Weston both have policies to not extend sewer service without annexation. Therefore, when and if sewer service is provided, the property would likely no longer be under the jurisdiction of the Town of Weston.

On-Site Waste Disposal Systems

Chapter 15 of the *General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County* requires private sewage systems on all premises intended for human habitation or occupancy that are not served by public sewer. The County Code incorporates by reference rules, regulations, and laws in the Wisconsin Statutes and

Wisconsin Administrative Code governing private sewage systems, including:

- **Comm 83** – This refers to Chapter 83 in the Wisconsin Administrative Code under the Department of Commerce. It sets standards for regulation of private sewage systems. This code was updated in 2000 and now allows the use of new concepts and technologies through a system of individual component approval. Standards for effluent are based on a drinking water standard, although nitrates are generally exempted.

Types of Systems – Under the revised Comm 83 standards, property owners have a wider array of system options than previously available. Septic tanks can be steel, concrete, fiberglass or plastic, but they all must now be equipped with a filter to prevent the movement of solids out into the soil absorption component. In addition, rock in drainfields may now be substituted with specifically engineered foam peanuts bound in mesh or plastic chambers.

On-site waste disposal systems generally fall into four categories:

- **Conventional Systems** – these systems include an absorption field that is buried under the natural ground level. These systems cannot be built in areas where soils do not allow percolation due to high clay content or bedrock where groundwater is too near the surface, or where soils percolate too rapidly and thus pose problems for groundwater contamination.

- **Mound Systems** – these systems include an absorption field that is constructed above ground, creating a “mound”. This type of system is generally used where clay soils, groundwater, rapid permeability or bedrock prevent construction of conventional systems.
- **Mechanical Treatment Components** – these generally replace or augment the septic tank component and may include aerobic treatment tanks and/or self-contained artificial media or sand filters to clean the effluent prior to its discharge into the soil absorption component.
- **Holding Tanks** - Holding tanks are considered the system of last resort and are only allowed if other types of septic systems cannot be used. Temporary holding tanks (e.g., less than 2 years) are sometimes allowed in areas where public sewer is approved for installation in the near future.

All development in the Town is on private septic systems. Homes in the Home Sweet Home subdivision have older septic systems, which raises concerns about the potential for system failures and water contamination. While the Home Sweet Home area is arguably the most vulnerable to septic failures, poor soils, bedrock and other constraints on septic systems may prompt annexation requests to the City of Wausau or the Village of Weston in order to obtain public sewer.

Use of conventional septic systems is limited in some areas due to high bedrock as shown on Figure 6-2. Figure 6-3 illustrates the location of soils suitable for conventional type septic systems.

Permit Requirements – The Marathon County Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning reviews and issues permits for private sewage systems. Soil and site evaluations are required to determine if the proposed septic system is suitable for the specific property and location before a permit will be issued. If deemed necessary, floodplain and/or wetland delineation may also be required prior to permit issuance. In addition, a maintenance agreement must be submitted prior to permit issuance. All septic tanks installed on or after July 1, 1980, are required to be pumped at least once every three years.

Water Supply

All development in the Town of Weston receives water from private wells. Overall water quality is very good; however, water supply is limited in some scattered areas, mostly because of high bedrock as shown on Figure 6-2.

Surface Water Management

In 2001, Marathon County adopted a Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP) in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Marathon County and outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources.

The County is particularly concerned about non-point sources of pollution, including failing septic systems, urban runoff, and issues often identified with rural areas such as soil erosion, animal waste and pesticides. Non-point pollution is best addressed by watershed. Marathon County encompasses

portions of 22 watersheds as shown on Figure 6-4. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ranked these watersheds according to water pollution impacts and designated five as “priority” watersheds to receive special planning and funding through the voluntary, State-funded Priority Watershed Program. Preparation of resource management plans for the following watersheds is currently underway:

- Springbrook in the Town of Harrison;
- Upper Yellow River in the Town of Spencer;
- Upper Big Eau Pleine in western Marathon County; and
- Lower Big Eau Pleine in the south-central part of the County.
- Lower Big Rib River, which extends west from the City of Wausau and north and south of STH 29 to just west of the Village of Edgar.

There are currently no watersheds identified for special planning and funding in the Town of Weston.

Electrical and Gas Utilities

The Town of Weston receives electric power and gas from Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS). Some property owners may also purchase LP gas tanks for private use.

Telecommunication Facilities and Services

- Television/Cable providers – Charter Communications. Cable access is limited to primarily the northwest portion of the Town.
- Telephone/Fiber Optics - Verizon

- Cell towers – The Town adopted a cell tower ordinance in 2003. There is currently one cell tower in the Town.

Solid Waste Management

The Town of Weston contracts with a private company for waste management. Municipal, commercial and industrial waste is accepted at the Marathon County Landfill in Ringle. User fees collected at the landfill defray the cost of landfill operations.

The Marathon County Solid Waste Management Department is in charge of waste management for non-hazardous solid waste. It consists of the 575-acre landfill, recycling programs, composting, and waste-to-energy. The Department opened a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in May 1997 where County residents can drop off hazardous waste free of charge.

Recycling

Recycling pick-up is provided by a private contractor on a bi-weekly basis.

Issues

- **Septic System Failures** – Older septic systems, which have a higher potential to fail, are a concern in the Home Sweet Home subdivision located in the northwest corner of the Town, near the border with the City of Wausau. Septic system failures may come to be one of the primary factors causing property owners to petition for annexation to the City of Wausau or Village of Weston.

7. Housing

Housing is a significant aspect of any comprehensive planning effort. This section provides an inventory and analysis of housing conditions in the Town of Weston. Housing in the Town is predominantly single family, with over 90 percent owner-occupied. The majority of housing units were constructed before 1980 and housing values are similar to the median values for Marathon County as a whole.

Data contained in this section reflect two methodologies of data collection employed by the U.S. Census. The source of data collected for the first table is from 2000 Census, Summary Tape File (STF)-1 Data, which was collected through a household-by-household census and represents responses from every household within the country. To get more detailed information, the U.S. Census also randomly distributes a long-form questionnaire to 1 in 6 households throughout the nation. Tables utilizing this sample data are identified in the footnote below each table and are labeled “STF-3 Data”. It should be noted that STF-1 and STF-3 data may differ for similar statistics, due to survey limitations, non-response, or other attributes unique to each form of data collection.

Housing Inventory

The following information provides a summary overview of the type, character and conditions of the housing stock in the Town of Weston.

Housing Type and Tenure

As shown on Table 7-1, the Town of Weston has 179 occupied housing units and almost 94 percent are owner-occupied. The Town has an average household size of 2.87 persons, which is larger than the average size in the County or State. Only about 11 percent of all households are classified as being “1 person households” and 5 percent of households have a householder 65 years or older. This is significantly less than figures for both Marathon County and the State overall.

Table 7-1: Number of Housing Units by Type and Tenure

| Area | Town of Weston | Marathon County | Wisconsin |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Total Occupied Housing Units | 179 | 47,702 | 2,084,544 |
| Owner Occupied Units | 168 | 36,091 | 1,426,361 |
| Renter Occupied Units | 11 | 11,611 | 658,183 |
| Average Household Size | 2.87 | 2.6 | 2.50 |
| % Owner Occupied | 93.9 | 75.7 | 68.4 |
| % 1 Person Households | 10.6 | 23.6 | 26.8 |
| % With Householder 65 years or older | 5.0 | 21.7 | 21.5 |

Source: 2000 Census: STF-1 Data

Changes in Housing Stock

Table 7-2 notes changes in the housing stock between 1990 and 2000 according to U.S. Census Data. Large decreases are shown for all categories and are the direct result of incorporation of the Village of Weston in 1996. The data suggests that the remaining housing stock in the Town is nearly all single-family, owner-occupied units. In fact, in 2000 only 5 rental units were reported in the Town.

Table 7-2: Changes in Housing Stock

| | 1990 | 2000 | # Change | % Change |
|--|------|------|----------|----------|
| Total Housing Units | 4228 | 178 | -4050 | -96% |
| Occupied Housing Units (Households) | 4124 | 178 | -3946 | -96% |
| Vacancy % | 2% | 0% | -- | -- |
| Owner Occupied Housing Units | 2772 | 173 | -2599 | -94% |
| Renter Occupied Housing Units | 1352 | 5 | -1347 | -100% |
| Owner Occupied Housing Units as percent of Total | 67% | 97% | -- | -- |
| Number of Homes for Seasonal/Rec Use | 11 | 0 | -11 | -100% |
| Number of Single Family Homes | 2582 | 178 | -2404 | -93% |
| *Detached | 2426 | 178 | -2248 | -93% |
| **Attached | 156 | 0 | -156 | -100% |
| Number of Duplexes | 225 | 0 | -225 | -100% |
| Multi Family Units 3-9 units | 783 | 0 | -783 | -100% |
| Multi Family Units 10+ | 83 | 0 | -83 | -100% |

Source: U.S. Census: 1990, 2000 STF 3 Data

* This is a 1-unit structure detached from any other house

**In row houses (sometimes called townhouses), double houses, or houses attached to nonresidential structures, each house is a separate, attached structure if the dividing or common wall goes from ground to roof.

Housing Age

The age of a community’s housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1940s, for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have increased. For example, average homes constructed in the 1980s and 1990s are typically much larger than housing built in previous decades.

This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Marathon County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 7-3: Age of Community Housing Stock

| Total Units | Year Built | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | 1999 to March 2000 | 1995 to 1998 | 1990 to 1994 | 1980 to 1989 | 1970 to 1979 | 1960 to 1969 | 1950 to 1959 | 1940 to 1949 | 1939 or earlier |
| 178 | 2 | 7 | 13 | 20 | 65 | 25 | 9 | 8 | 29 |
| 100% | 1% | 4% | 7% | 11% | 37% | 14% | 5% | 4% | 16% |

Source: U.S. Census: 1990, 2000 STF 3 Data

Table 7-3 shows housing age for the community. In the Town of Weston, data shows that significant portions of the local housing stock were built in the 1970s. Recent housing growth from the 1990s makes up approximately 12 percent of the total housing stock. However, it is difficult to determine how many of the units built prior to the Village incorporation in 1996 remain in the Town.

Physical Housing Stock

Table 7-4 looks at several select measures of physical condition and compares them to figures for Marathon County and Wisconsin. The median home size in the Town of Weston is slightly larger in size compared to the overall figures for the County and State, as measured by number of rooms. All of the Town’s housing stock is classified as being a “single family” home. That is significantly higher than overall figures for the County or State. Census data indicates that all homes in the Town have complete plumbing and kitchen facilities.

Table 7-4: Physical Housing Stock

| Community | Median Rooms | Characteristic (%) | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | 1 unit, detached or attached | In buildings with 10 or more Units | Lacking complete plumbing facilities | Lacking complete kitchen facilities |
| Town of Weston | 6.4 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Marathon County | 5.8 | 76.10% | 4.50% | 0.90% | 0.90% |
| Wisconsin | 5.4 | 69.30% | 9.40% | 1.40% | 1.50% |

Source: U.S. Census: 1990, 2000 STF 3 Data

Housing Values

Median Value

Table 7-5 shows median housing value statistics for the Town, County and State. Specifically, the column to the right shows the median (or middle value) of select owner-occupied homes for each specified area. This value includes only single-family houses that are located on less than 10 acres. Additionally, this statistic only considers homes without a business or medical office on the property. Census data indicates that the Town of Weston has a median home value of \$98,800, slightly above that of the County.

Table 7-5: Median Housing Value

| | Median Value (dollars) |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Town of Weston | \$98,800 |
| Marathon County | \$95,800 |
| Wisconsin | \$112,200 |

Source: U.S. Census: 1990, 2000 STF 3 Data

Range of Values

Table 7-6 shows the range of housing values that exist in the Town of Weston compared to overall percentages for Marathon County. Generally the Town of Weston has a similar range of housing values as the County.

Table 7-6: Range of Housing Values

| Number of Houses per Housing Value Category | Town of Weston | Marathon County |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| < \$49,999 | 0 | 1,459 |
| % | 0% | 5% |
| \$50,000 to \$99,999 | 57 | 13,405 |
| % | 51% | 49% |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999 | 42 | 8,220 |
| % | 38% | 30% |
| \$150,000 to \$199,999 | 8 | 2,368 |
| % | 7% | 9% |
| \$200,000 or more | 4 | 1,714 |
| % | 4% | 6% |

Source: U.S. Census: 1990, 2000 STF 3 Data

Housing Affordability

Several factors impact the varied levels of housing affordability in Marathon County. These factors include rent and mortgage payments, maintenance expenses, lot size, and required or desired amenities for the home. Household size and income are also key factors contributing to what housing options are available and accessible to residents.

Statistically speaking, those spending in excess of 35 percent of their total household income on housing costs may be facing affordability difficulties. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends that

rental-housing costs not exceed 30 percent of the monthly income. HUD also indicates that mortgage lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is less than 29 percent of the monthly household income. The percentage of households in the Town of Weston that pay more than 35 percent of their household income on housing costs is 16 percent, slightly higher than that of the County and State among owner-occupied households.

Table 7-7: Housing Affordability

| | Owner Occupied | | | Renter Occupied | | |
|------------------------|--|-------------|----------------|---|-------------------|----------------|
| | Median selected monthly owner costs ¹ | | | Median Selected monthly renter costs ¹ | | |
| | With mortgage | No Mortgage | % ² | Median Contract rent | Median gross rent | % ² |
| Town of Weston | \$833 | \$230 | 16% | \$0 | \$0 | 0% |
| Marathon County | \$916 | \$295 | 10% | \$423 | \$484 | 20% |
| Wisconsin | \$1,024 | \$333 | 9% | \$473 | \$540 | 25% |

1In dollars

2Percent paying over 35% of household income on housing

Source: U.S. Census: 1990, 2000 STF 3 Data

Additionally, select median owner-occupied costs, for both households with and without a mortgage, are slightly lower in the Town than in the County or State overall. There is no reported rental housing in the Town.

Special Housing

Senior Housing

In Marathon County, housing for seniors and populations with special needs is primarily provided in the urbanized areas in and around Wausau. The Marathon County Aging and Disability Resource Center, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and the Marathon County United Way all maintain a list of these housing options throughout the County. As the number of elderly persons increases in the coming years, there will most likely be an increased need for these types of housing options. This trend will be seen throughout Marathon County, the State of Wisconsin, and the Nation.

The Highway 51 area is the center of Marathon County for population, jobs, and housing opportunities. As such, most of Marathon County’s senior housing opportunities are centered in and around this area as well. There are approximately 110 different senior and special needs housing programs and facilities in and around the Wausau metropolitan area.

Assistance Programs

There are a variety of State and Federal housing programs geared at addressing a variety of housing issues. Grants and low interest loans are available for counties, communities, or individual homeowners. The following housing resources are available to participants as specified by program.

- **Community Development Block Grant-Small Cities Housing (CDBG)**
- **Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)**
 - Rental Rehabilitation Program
 - Home Owner and Accessibility Rehabilitation Program
 - Home Ownership Program
 - Wisconsin Fresh Start Initiative provides at-risk young people with education, skills, and career direction leading to economic self-sufficiency.
- **Homeless Programs (Wisconsin Department of Administration [WDOA])**
 - HUD Emergency Shelter Grants
 - State Shelter Subsidy Grants
 - Transitional Housing
- **Local Housing Organization Grant (LHOG)**

State grants are available to enable community-based organizations, tribes and housing authorities to increase their capacity to provide affordable housing opportunities and services.
- **HOME Loans and Home Improvement Loans (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority [WHEDA])**
- **Housing-Related Consumer Protection Services (Wisconsin Department of Agriculture [WDA])**

The Trade and Consumer Protection Division is responsible for the investigation of unfair and deceptive business practices and handles individual consumer complaints involving landlord/tenant complaints, and home improvement transactions.

Issues

No issues are identified.

8. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources is a broad term that can encompass many aspects of our heritage. Cultural resources may include archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to American Indians or other cultural groups. Cultural resources are those elements around us that signify our heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinctive. Cultural resources include buildings, sites and landscapes that help communities retain their sense of identity in an increasingly homogenized society.

Brief History of the Town of Weston

The Town of Weston began with the early sawmills built along the Eau Claire River as early as the 1840s. John B. DuBay built the first dam and mill on the river, but left Weston and later relocated in the Knowlton area (where a dam and flowage bear his name today). These mills also included one later owned by Dr. William Schofield, as well as a mill farther up the Eau Claire eventually owned by William and N. D. Kelly. The Town was known as Eau Claire until 1859 when the name was changed to Weston, reportedly after an early settler who operated a saw mill at Callon.

Early maps identify the settlements of Callon and Kelly in the east central portion of Weston. Both names live on today in park and street names. The first Town election recorded for Weston occurred in 1869. By 1874, the Wisconsin Valley Railroad (later Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul) reached Weston on its way to Wausau. The Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western (Chicago & Northwestern) was constructed through

the Town in 1880 (now the alignment of the Mountain-Bay Trail).

Weston's location, with railroads, the Eau Claire River, and in proximity to the Wisconsin River, led to urbanization and the creation of several separate municipalities. Schofield incorporated as a separate community in 1904, and Rothschild followed in 1917. The City of Wausau has expanded into the northwest corner of Weston. The largest change, however, was the creation of the Village of Weston in 1996, which resulted in the incorporation of much of the southern half of the Town.

Properties Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

There are no properties in the Town of Weston listed on the NRHP. The Town does not have a local historic preservation commission.

The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains the Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory (AHI) that identifies any properties that may have been surveyed in the past; the Inventory does not convey special status and may not be current. The inventory may be reviewed at www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/index.html. There are 8 historic properties in the Town of Weston that have been previously surveyed and included in the AHI.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has identified 13 archaeological sites and historic cemeteries in the Town of Weston (includes the City of Schofield, Village of Weston, and Village of Rothschild).

Cemeteries, Burial Mounds, Other Burials – Wisconsin Statute 157.70 provides for the protection of all human burial sites, including all marked and unmarked burials and cemeteries. There are currently 133 cemeteries and burial areas identified in Marathon County, and it is likely that other cemeteries and burials may be present. Suspected burial mounds or unmarked burials must be reported to the State Burial Sites Preservation Office. If human remains are uncovered during excavation, all work must cease pending review of the Burial Sites Preservation Office. All cemeteries and burials in Marathon County should be catalogued under Wis. Stat. 157.70 to provide maximum protection of these sites.

Table 8-1: Known Cemeteries

| Cemetery Name | Location | Section |
|----------------------|--|---------|
| Hebrew/Mt. Sinai | Grand Ave., (Bus 51) Wausau, across from Pine Grove Cemetery | 1W |
| Pine Grove | 1501 Grand Ave., (Bus. 51) Wausau | 1W |
| St. Joseph Catholic | Grand Ave., (Bus. 51), Wausau | 1W |
| St. Michael Catholic | Grand Ave., (Bus. 51) Wausau | 1W |
| St. Agnes Catholic | Zinzer St., South of Callon Ave. | 23E |

Source: www.rootsweb.com/~wimarath/CenLocations.htm

Cultural Resource Opportunities and Constraints

- **Lack of Current Information** -- Although a brief countywide historic properties survey was carried out in 1975-77, there has been no update. Many properties identified at that time may be gone, while other properties not previously surveyed may now be evaluated in a new context. It is necessary for the Town to have current information about cultural resources in order to maximize planning and make the best use of historic properties.

- **No Recognition Process** -- Outside the City of Wausau, there is no process to recognize historic buildings or begin to plan for their protection. Once historic properties are identified, towns and villages do not have an established mechanism for recognizing them or integrating them into ongoing planning processes.
- **Rural Character and Historic Resources** --In Marathon County, residents have expressed a strong desire to preserve the rural character of the County and raised concerns about increasing ex-urban development and the decline of working farms. An important part of rural character is the rural landscape and the buildings that convey that sense of place. While it is important to address the location and type of new development, there is also a need to preserve some visible reminders of rural character, including working farms. Without preserving some of the existing resources, including farmsteads and farmlands, the very characteristics that attracted residents will increasingly be lost.
- **Protection of Archaeological Sites and Cemeteries** – Cultural resources planning includes identification and protection of archaeological sites and historic cemeteries. The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains a list of reported sites and cemeteries, representing a fraction of sites that are actually present. This information is often overlooked and should be incorporated into the planning process for local communities.

Issues

No issues are identified.

9. Community Facilities

Community facilities include an array of services and facilities associated with schools, libraries, public protection, and health care. This section describes the existing community facilities and services located in or used by the Town of Weston.

Schools

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Weston is served by the D. C. Everest School District, which has six elementary schools, a middle school, junior high and senior high school. Area schools are shown on Figure 9-1. Students living in the southwest corner of the Town bound by CTH J and N attend Riverside Elementary located at R12231 River Road in the Town of Ringle. The district opened a new middle school at 9302 Schofield Avenue in the Village of Weston in the fall of 2002. The junior and senior high schools are both located in the Village of Weston, with the senior high campus off Alderson Street that includes the new Greenheck Field House.

Growth in the D. C. Everest School District is averaging 35 students per year, sustained over the last 10 years. The Ministry Health Care complex, scheduled to open in spring 2005 in the Village of Weston, is anticipated to foster new residential development in the area. This could create an influx of students, and the district is considering the possible need for a new elementary school. The land where the new middle school is located could accommodate a new elementary school if deemed necessary.

Table 9-1: D.C. Everest School District Enrollment

| Year | Enrollment PreK-12 |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 1996-1997 | 4,882 |
| 1997-1998 | 4,892 |
| 1998-1999 | 4,950 |
| 1999-2000 | 5,032 |
| 2000-2001 | 5,084 |
| 2001-2002 | 5,104 |

Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction

There are no private school facilities located within the Town of Weston. However, there are several in the Wausau metro area and other surrounding communities.

Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

University of Wisconsin – Marathon County (UW-MC) - UW-MC, located in Wausau, offers lower level (freshman/sophomore) college classes, leading to a baccalaureate degree. Associate Degrees are offered in Arts & Sciences, and Bachelor’s Degrees (through collaborative degree programs with UW Oshkosh and UW Stevens Point) offered in Business Administration, General Studies, and Nursing. Enrollment in 2002-2003 was approximately 1,300 students.

Northcentral Technical College (NTC) - NTC, located in Wausau, offers 40 one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields. Approximately 2,300 full- and part-time students attend classes, although more than 16,000 people take at least one class annually.

Libraries

The Town of Weston is served by the Marathon County Public Library system (see Figure 9-1). The Wausau Headquarters Library, located on First Street in downtown Wausau, completed an expansion to 82,000 square feet in 1995. The new main Wausau Library is open seven days a week and offers over 555,800 volumes, as well as facilities including internet access. A new Rothschild Area Branch Library was recently constructed on Grand Avenue in Rothschild, which has 3,240 square feet of space holding over 31,500 volumes.

Public Protection

Police

The Town receives police protection and law enforcement through the Everest Metro Police Department, which also serves the Village of Weston and the City of Schofield. The Town is a part owner of the police department and is a contributing member of the group. Figure 9-2 illustrates police service areas.

Fire and Emergency Response

The Town receives fire protection and emergency response service from the Village of Weston Fire Department, which serves the same communities as the police department. The Fire Department operates two full-time shifts. Figure 9-3 illustrates fire service areas.

E-911 Dispatch Service - The Marathon County Sheriff's Department Communications Division provides E-911

Dispatch for all Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies in Marathon County. The Communications Division services 85 user agencies and also provides alert paging support for the Emergency Management Office, District Attorney, and Medical Examiners Office.

The users are served by a microwave linked voted repeater radio system, consisting of a control center at the Sheriff's Department, and nine remote radio tower sites spread throughout the County. The system is also utilized by the Marathon County Highway Department and the Wausau Fire Department to support their radio communications. The 37 base radio transmitters and 479 mobile radios that make up the integrated system are maintained and serviced by the Sheriff Department's radio technician.

Hospitals

Major health care facilities are shown on Figure 9-4. The major hospital in Marathon County is Wausau Hospital at 425 Pine Ridge Boulevard in Wausau. Wausau Hospital was created in the 1970s from a merger of St. Mary's Hospital and Memorial Hospital. A new building was completed in 1979 and expansions followed in 1982 and 1992. The 321-bed facility is a multi-specialty regional health center serving a 12-county region in north central Wisconsin. Annual admissions in 2001 totaled 13,631.

Wausau Hospital, now known as Aspirus Wausau Hospital, Inc. and its parent corporation, Community Health Care, and other nearby hospitals are part of the Wisconsin Valley Health Network.

St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield and St. Michael's Hospital in Stevens Point are both operated by Ministry Health Care. St. Joseph's Hospital is located at 611 Saint Joseph Avenue in Marshfield and offers a full array of services, specialty services and a complete rehabilitation unit. St. Michael's is a fully accredited acute care facility with 181 beds and nearly 200 doctors on staff. It is located at 900 Illinois Avenue in Stevens Point.

Working in conjunction with St. Joseph's Hospital is the Marshfield Clinic. Marshfield Clinic began in 1916 when six physicians decided to join their efforts. The Marshfield Clinic has grown to over 700 physicians with 41 Regional Centers in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Marshfield Clinic first established satellite locations in 1976. Offices in Marathon County are located in Athens, Colby/Abbotsford, Marathon, Mosinee, Schofield (Everest Center), Stratford, and Wausau (4 locations).

Ministry Health Care announced plans in July 2002 to construct a 104-bed, \$100 million hospital and medical office complex in Weston near the intersection of STH 29 and CTH X. The hospital opened in 2005.

North Central Health Care (NCHC) – In addition to the hospitals and clinics described above, Marathon County is served by NCHC, a public agency that also serves Langlade and Lincoln counties. The NCHC main campus is located at 2400 Marshall Street in Wausau. Additional offices are located in Antigo (Langlade Health Care Center) and Merrill and Tomahawk (Lincoln Health Care Center). According to their web site, NCHC offers outpatient, day hospital, community support and inpatient services for mental/emotional problems;

vocational, life skill training, early intervention, housing and care management services for the developmentally disabled; and assessment, individual and outpatient group counseling, intensive programming, day hospital, referral for residential and inpatient treatment, and education for alcohol and other drug problems. Services for detoxification and for persons suffering from problems with gambling addiction are also offered.

NCHC operates a nursing home (Mount View Care Center) that offers skilled nursing services at the main campus in Wausau. This facility has a licensed capacity of 320 and serves persons requiring either short term or long term skilled nursing care because of complex physical needs, psychiatric and neurological diseases, dementia or behavior problems.

Child Care

The Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCR&R) is a membership organization made up of 17 community-based CCR&R agencies serving the State of Wisconsin.

CCR&R agencies assist parents in selecting quality childcare, help to increase the supply of childcare in areas that may be lacking sufficient care, offer information and technical support to potential child care providers, and give technical assistance and support to existing childcare programs.

Each agency manages a database of existing childcare providers and programs, collects data about childcare rates, provider and teacher salaries, the number of parents and children using their services, the type of care requested and the children's ages.

Town of Weston

The community-based CCR&R agencies that provide services to Marathon and adjacent counties are:

Table 9-2: Area Child Care Providers

| Counties | Agency | Contact Information |
|--|--|---|
| Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Taylor | Child Care Connection | http://www.childcareconnectionrr.org/ (800) 848-5229 |
| Shawano | Community Child Care Connection | 800-738-8899 |
| Portage | Mid Wisconsin Child Care Resource & Referral | 715-342-0788 |
| Wood | Child Care Resource & Referral of Central WI | 800-628-8534 |

Issues

No issues are identified.

10. Parks

Existing Parks, Trails and Open Space

Local Parks, Trails and Open Space

The Town of Weston does not own or operate any public parks. However, residents use many park and recreation facilities in the Village of Weston. Following is a list of parks owned and operated by the Village of Weston:

Kennedy Park - Located near the center of the older part of the Village east of Business USH 51, Kennedy Park is a 38.8 acre community park.

Kellyland Park - Most of Kellyland Park's 38 acres are located in a floodplain of the Eau Claire River.

Callon Park - Located adjacent and next to Kellyland Park, the 27-acre Callon Park is undeveloped. The park has no facilities and is a wetland preservation area.

Weston Community Park - A plan has been drafted to construct a major community park on this 88-acre property owned by the Village. Improvements are scheduled to be complete in 2008.

William's Park - William's Park is a 2.5-acre neighborhood park located north of Schofield Avenue in the center of the Village.

Yellow Banks Park - Yellow Banks is a 16-acre neighborhood park located on the bank of the Eau Claire River off Camp Phillips Road.

Sandhill Meadows Park - Sandhill Meadows Park is a 2-acre park located at the corner of Alderson Street and Shorey Avenue in a small residential neighborhood.

Robinwood Park - Robinwood Park is a 5-acre neighborhood park located south of CTH JJ, and west of Ryan Street.

Vilas E. Machmueller Family Park – The Village and the Town of Weston are working together on this proposed park located in the northeast part of the Village on Kramer Lane. The park is to be 30 acres in size.

Eau Claire River Trail - Extending three miles from Kellyland Park to Ryan Street, this trail runs along Village owned right of way along the Eau Claire River. The trail is an unpaved rustic walking trail and connects to the Mountain Bay Trail.

County or State Parks, Forest and Trails

There are no Marathon County parks or forest units located in the Town of Weston. However, several County and State park facilities are located in the vicinity, as shown on Figure 10-1, and include:

Bluegill Bay Park - Marathon County owns and maintains Bluegill Bay Park and the Nine Mile Forest Unit in the Town of Rib Mountain. Bluegill Bay Park is a 68-acre County park located on the west shore of Lake Wausau between Cloverland

Lane and Parrot Lane. The park provides access to Lake Wausau at its boat landing with piers and a boat trailer parking lot, and is subject to overcrowding at times. The park's picnic area has 20 tables, 4 grills, 3 shelters, flush toilets and 104 parking spaces. A fishing area, including a handicapped pier is also available. Forty-eight acres of the park are undeveloped, and the County's tree nursery is also in the park.

Nine Mile Forest Unit – This is known as a recreation area with many miles of hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country ski trails. Skiing is promoted with a ski chalet and over 25 kilometers of one-way loops. The forest is open to hunting and snowmobiling. Nine Mile has 4755 acres of mixed uplands, marshes, and water impoundments.

Ringle Marsh Forest Unit – This area is located in the Town of Ringle south of STH 29. The Ringle Marsh Unit is a mix of upland forest, primarily aspen, northern hardwoods, and red oak and a large marsh on 2016 acres of land. A wide variety of wildlife is present, including sandhill cranes in the marsh. The unit is open to recreational hunting, snowmobiling, and hiking. A portion of the Ice Age trail passes through the Ringle Marsh, and other hiking trails are also maintained.

Kronenwetter and Leather Camp Forests – These areas are located south of Weston in the Village of Kronenwetter and Guenther. Together these County forests are nearly 10,000 acres in size. The land is a mix of upland forests and marsh. The unit is open to recreational hunting, snowmobiling, and hiking. Improved and woods trails are maintained for access.

Rib Mountain State Park – This park is located within the Town of Rib Mountain. The park's main feature is Rib Mountain, which at 1924 feet above sea level is one of the

highest elevations in the State of Wisconsin. The park surrounds the mountain and has the following facilities: a picnic area with 65 tables, a camping area with 31 developed sites, 3 hiking trails, a nature trail, and a private downhill skiing area (Granite Peak).

Mountain Bay State Trail – This multi-use trail is built on a former railroad right of way stretching 83 miles from the Village of Weston to Green Bay. The current western most trailhead is adjacent to the Village of Weston Municipal Center, where parking and trail passes are available. The trail has a crushed granite surface and passes through the rural countryside and several villages as it makes its way from the Rib Mountain area to Green Bay on Lake Michigan.

Park System Needs

With a variety of park and recreation facilities located in close proximity, the Town does not have any need for local parks. However, the Town is working cooperatively with the Village of Weston to develop the Vilas E. Machmueller Family Park described above.

The Town is also interested in creating a trail system for recreational bicycling and walking that would connect to the Mountain-Bay Trail.

Issues

- **Trail System** – Establishing a trail system through the Town is a long-term goal. The Town would like to develop and implement a multi-use trail system that connects to the Mountain Bay Trail.

11. Economic Development

The condition of the local economy directly influences local growth and development, and therefore must be considered when planning for a community's future. Employment patterns and economic trends generally occur on a regional scale. Oftentimes residents of one community work in another. Similarly changes in a major industry can impact jobs and growth far beyond the community where the business is physically located.

It is therefore important to understand a local community's economy in light of its regional context. The following section provides a brief overview of the economy in Marathon County, in terms of key economic sectors and the regional labor force. A more specific description of employment trends, major local employers or industries, and where most residents of the Town of Weston work follows. Potential economic development opportunities and/or issues regarding the local economy are also identified.

County Economic Environment

Originally, the Marathon County economy was based on forest resources and diversified agriculture. Increased population and infrastructure – railroads, roads and dams for power enabled the area to evolve beyond simple agricultural and logging operations. Resources that once left the area unprocessed were now transformed into finished products in the County, providing employment opportunities and adding value in forest products and agricultural processing. A number of related manufacturing operations grew up in the area, some based on forest products and agricultural products, others supplying the

existing industries with fabricated metal products. As these industries progressed, so did industries such as transportation, communications, public utilities, government, trade, finance, insurance and real estate. The County now enjoys a well-diversified economy.

Agricultural Economy - The Town of Weston is located on the edge of the Wausau urban area and has essentially become a bedroom community. While many Town residents work at jobs located outside the Town, most of the employment located in the Town still relates to farming. Thus, the economic health and vitality of the Town is influenced by the economic health of the agricultural economy. However, the agricultural economy is subject to national and international pressures, creating challenges for rural areas seeking to adapt to the changing economic environment and still preserve their rural agricultural heritage.

The Marathon County agricultural economy is in a depressed state due to a downturn in prices for agricultural goods such as milk and ginseng. At the same time that prices for farm commodities are low, cash rents for Wisconsin farmland has increased, and the percentage of farm equity associated with real estate values have increased significantly. The average cost for agricultural land being converted to non-farm uses has increased from \$544 per acre in 1990 to nearly \$1,200 per acre in 2000. This compares with the average cost for agricultural land continuing in agricultural use, which has increased from \$612 per acre in 1990 to nearly \$1,000 per acre in 2000. When farms are not profitable, and the value of land rises farmers have a harder time competing for the land base.

The following information regarding forces influencing changes in the rural area was summarized from two reports prepared by the Marathon County Task Force on the Rural Economy: *Agricultural Issues in Marathon County* (January 10, 2003) and *Report of the Marathon County Task Force on the Rural Economy* (April 2003):

- Net farm profits are increasingly a function of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) support payments.
- The average age of the current agricultural owner/operator is nearly 55; a large number are nearing retirement.
- The low entry rate into agriculture reflects the high capital investment and low profit margins.
- The number of dairy herds decreased by 40% (1565 to 951 farms) in the past 13 years, and the total number of cows decreased from 77,000 in 1990 to 64,000 in 2000, a decrease of 17%.
- Dairy production is now more concentrated; the average size of dairy herds increased from 42 cows in 1990 to 62 cows in 2001. Nearly 50 dairies have over 300 animal units (200 cows), and 12 dairies have more than 1,000 animal units (more than 700 cows.)
- Local milk production is not sufficient to reliably meet the demand of local dairy processors
- The immigrant work force associated with industrial farms, impacts public services such as schools, social services and law enforcement.
- Crop land and open space are being broken up into smaller fields by rural residences.
- Crop land production is being concentrated into fewer, larger operations.

- Soil erosion is increasing and soil organic matter content is decreasing.
- Environmental regulation of farms by the State and Federal government continues to increase. Agriculture is identified as a major non-point source of water pollution (sediment and nutrients) in the U.S.
- Larger farm equipment damages local roads and farm traffic is increasing.
- Conflicts between various land uses in rural areas are increasing.

Key Economic Sectors

Key sectors of a regional economy can be identified by size; by growth or decline in employment; by a concentration of the industry in the local area exceeding the national concentration. An industry that shows a higher concentration of employment than the national average is considered a “basic industry” and is identified by a technique called “Location Quotient” analysis. Basic industries are those sectors that export a product or service from the local community into the national or international economy. They are a critical part of the “economic engine” for a region, affecting the growth and health of many dependent sectors such as retail, transportation, construction, and local services.

Table 11-1: Marathon County Top 10 Industry Groups Based on Number of Employees (March 2001)

| Industry Group | Employers | Employees | Numeric change | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------|
| | | | 1-year | 5-year |
| Health Services | 139 | 4,646 | 251 | -276 |
| Lumber & Wood Products | 41 | 4,438 | -30 | 253 |
| Educational Services | 22 | 3,792 | 108 | 243 |
| Eating and Drinking Places | 192 | 3,554 | 219 | 335 |
| Fabricated Metal Products | 32 | 3,458 | -184 | 168 |
| Insurance Carriers | 24 | 3,339 | -171 | * |
| Miscellaneous Retail | 120 | 3,142 | 206 | 1,206 |
| Paper and Allied Products | 11 | 2,649 | 4 | * |
| Industrial Machinery & Eqmt | 37 | 2,642 | 41 | 697 |
| Wholesale Trade – Durable | 164 | 2,521 | -89 | 63 |

*data suppressed to maintain confidentiality

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, ES-202, December 2001

Local Economic Environment

As noted in the Demographics section, most Town of Weston residents work professional, management and service related occupations. Given the lack of those sorts of jobs within the Town, it is likely that many residents commute to jobs located in the City of Wausau or other communities in the metro area. Table 11-2 illustrates population and employment information for the Town of Weston. In 2000, there were 170 people employed at jobs located in the Town of Weston. Data show that most employment was in the Other and Self-

employed/Farm sectors. This reflects the agricultural base of the local Town economy.

Table 11-2: Population and Employment by Sector, 2000

| POPULATION | 514 |
|--------------------|------------|
| EMPLOYMENT: | |
| Commercial | -- |
| Manufacturing | -- |
| Service | 33 |
| Other | 73 |
| Self-Employed/Farm | 64 |
| TOTAL | 170 |

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/10/03

Employment Projections

Information on employment in Marathon County is gathered separately for non-farm and farm employment. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) collects data on non-farm employment. The DWD estimated non-farm employment in Marathon County to be 49,407 in 1990 and 65,630 in 2000. This represents about a 33 percent increase over ten years. Data on farm employment is collected by the Census of Agriculture and consists of hired farm labor and operators. In 1987, farm employment in Marathon County was estimated to be 11,643 and in 1997 it was estimated to be 8,298. This represents a decrease of almost 29 percent.

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) computed employment projections, based on the assumption that the historical growth rates described above would continue through 2030. These projections are shown in Table 11-3. It is important to recognize that the projections are very general and somewhat hypothetical. They do not take into

account the potential for loss of land and jobs through annexation or the incorporation of the Village of Weston. These projections are provided to give a gross picture of what could occur, however, given potential annexations they may be overly optimistic.

Table 11-3: Employment Projections, 2000-2030

| Total Employment by Year | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
| Weston (town) | 170 | 175 | 180 | 185 | 191 | 196 | 201 |
| County | 72,508 | 75,625 | 78,742 | 81,859 | 84,976 | 88,093 | 91,210 |

Source: *Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/10/03*

An employment forecast completed by the NCWRPC in 2003 indicates continued employment growth for the Town of Weston. By the year 2030, it is estimated that the Town will provide employment to about 200 workers. This represents an employment increase of 18 percent and assumes a moderate growth rate based on the historical a rate of change in employment between 1990 and 2000 for non-farm employment. The estimates suggest an overall increase in employment by 2030 between 14.7 percent if a lower than expected growth rate occurs and 29 percent if a higher growth rate occurs.

Table 11-4: Percent Change in Employment, 2000-2030

| | Percent Change in Employment by Growth Rate | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------------|-------------|
| | Low Growth | Moderate Growth | High Growth |
| Weston (town) | +14.7 | +18.2 | +29 |
| Marathon County | +21 | +26 | +34 |

Source: *Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/10/03*

Major Local Employers

Most residents in the Town work in the City of Wausau or other communities in the metro area, although some limited active farming operations remain. Recycling of construction waste occurs at the one industrial area located on the west edge of the Town. While there are two quarries located in the Town, offices for those operations are not located on-site and therefore do not have any employees.

Issues

- Low Impact Development** – The Town has concerns about potential demand for more commercial and industrial development resulting from proposed improvements to CTH X and the opening of the Ministry Health Care medical complex. The Town would like to limit the amount of higher intensity land uses and ensure that new development does not have negative impacts on the existing rural and/or natural character of the Town.

12. Intergovernmental Cooperation

This section describes existing mechanisms that the Town of Weston uses to coordinate with other units of government, including: Marathon County, adjacent towns, the school district, the State of Wisconsin and the Federal government. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the existing cooperative mechanisms and summarize the major challenges and issues regarding intergovernmental cooperation and regional planning, including

- Opportunities to reduce or eliminate duplication of services;
- Incompatible goals, policies and development;
- Mechanisms for conflict resolution;
- Opportunities for joint planning and decision making.

Mechanisms for cooperation and coordination primarily take the form of intergovernmental agreements, leases and contracts, and regulatory authority. These can occur between the Town of Weston and other local, regional, State or Federal entities. Following is a brief description of the various functional areas and services that require intergovernmental coordination at various levels.

Shared Services and Facilities

Fire and Emergency Response- The Town receives fire and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) service from the Village of Weston Fire Department, which also serves the City of Schofield.

Law Enforcement - The Town is served by the Everest Metro police department, which also serves the Village of Weston and City of Schofield. The Town is part owner of the police department and is a contributing member of the group.

Relationships to Other Governmental Entities

Surrounding Municipalities: The Town established a boundary agreement with the City of Wausau in 1993 to coordinate annexation in the northwest corner of the Town. However, the Town is not certain this agreement is valid.

Surrounding municipalities in Marathon County are concurrently preparing comprehensive plans, which will increase opportunities for coordination and cooperation on matters of common interest.

School District- The Town is served by the DC Everest School District. There are no school facilities (public or private) located in the Town.

Marathon County- The County provides several services to the Town including: law enforcement through the Sheriff's Department, 911 dispatch service, access permits, maintenance and improvement of County Highways, planning and permitting oversight regarding shoreland, wetland and floodplain regulation, private sewage system regulation, and animal waste and manure management. The County also provides oversight on compliance with County soil and water conservation policy for the Farmland Preservation Program.

Regional Agencies: The Town is a member of the Wausau Area Metropolitan Area Planning Organization (MPO), whose primary role is coordination of regional transportation issues and planning. The Town is no longer a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC).

State and Federal Agencies- The Town has little direct contact with State or Federal agencies. However State agencies regulate certain activities such as access onto State roads, shoreland, floodplain and wetland zoning oversight, navigable waters protection, compliance with water quality standards, farmland preservation tax credits and managed forest tax credit programs.

territory, cities and villages view annexations as a means to provide a more logical pattern of development and efficient provision of services.

Existing or Potential Conflicts

- **Annexation.** In 1993 the Town entered into a boundary agreement with the City of Wausau stipulating that the Town would not oppose any annexations in the portion of Town west of Big Sandy Creek. However, the Town is not certain this agreement is valid. Regardless, close proximity to both the City of Wausau and the Village of Weston make annexation a continual concern of the Town. Annexation results in loss of land area, population and tax base. The Town does not actively encourage or oppose annexations, but considers them a reality that must be accepted.

In Wisconsin, neither incorporated municipalities nor towns can initiate annexation. The process is driven by individual property owners (or developers) who petition for annexation into a city to receive sewer and water service. While towns often view annexation as a means to take their