

## INTRODUCTION

### Town Profile



The Town of Primrose is located in the southwestern portion of Dane County. The town lies in Wisconsin's Driftless Zone, a rolling landscape with steep river valleys that escaped glaciation during the last Ice Age 50,000 years ago. Primrose Brook, Deer Creek and Mount Vernon Creek, all coldwater fisheries, flow from west to east through the town, eventually joining the West Branch of the Sugar River east of the town line in the neighboring Town of Montrose. At the 2000 census, the town had a population of 682 people. The town retains a very rural character, with agricultural, woodland, grassland and open space uses predominating.

### Planning History

The town adopted its first land use plan in 1981, and completed adoption of Dane County's exclusive agricultural zoning ordinance in 1985. In 1994, the town adopted a rewrite of its land use plan and adopted its own land division and building permit ordinances.

To meet the requirements of the state's new comprehensive planning law, the Town undertook the task of updating and expanding their Land Use Plan. With the assistance of Dane County Planning and Development, the Town gathered public input and crafted the goals, objectives and policies to guide the Town over the next twenty years. This comprehensive plan is intended to aid the Plan Commission and Town Board in matters related to the growth and development of the Town.

### Plan Updates

As per Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation, the Town will review and update the *Comprehensive Plan* at least every ten years. Changing conditions and experiences in the Town will be noted and adjustments will be made to the *Plan* text and maps.

## CHAPTER 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Background and Existing Conditions

#### Population Trends and Projections

The Town of Primrose experienced losses in population from 1970-1990. However, from 1990-2000, the Town saw a 14% increase in population (Table A). As of the 2000 census, the Town had rebounded past its 1970 population. Population as calculated by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, is projected to increase over the next twenty years (Table B).

**Table A: Population**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Town of Primrose</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>682</b>
Town of Montrose	962	1,024	1,032	1,134
Town of Springdale	1,132	1,279	1,258	1,530
Town of Perry	664	632	646	670
Town of New Glarus	552	510	571	943

*Source: The Applied Population Lab, Department of Rural Sociology, U. of Wisconsin, Madison, 2008*

**Table B: Population Projections**

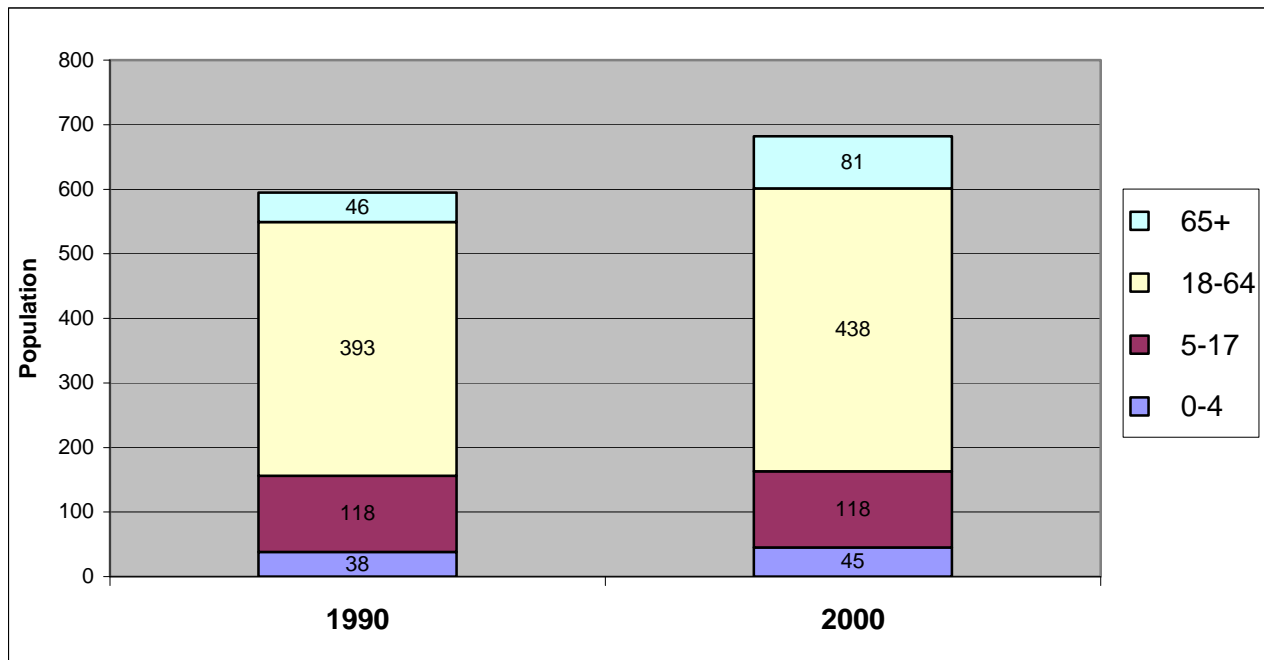
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Town of Primrose</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>811</b>
Town of Montrose	1,168	1,191	1,209	1,234	1,265
Town of Springdale	1,674	1,799	1,916	2,039	2,173
Town of Perry	674	671	672	672	676
Town of New Glarus	1,087	1,228	1,367	1,507	1,265

*Source: The Applied Population Lab, Department of Rural Sociology, U. of Wisconsin, Madison, 2008*

#### Demographic Trends

The median age in the Town has increased over the last decade from 35 in 1990 to 39.6 in 2000. The median age of Dane County increased less dramatically during the same period from 30.7 to 33.2 years old. As the population of the Town ages, housing and services to meet older citizens' needs will see a rise. Chart 1 shows the changes in population from 1990 to 2000 according to age groups in the Town.

**Chart 1: Age Group as Proportion of Population, 1990-2000**

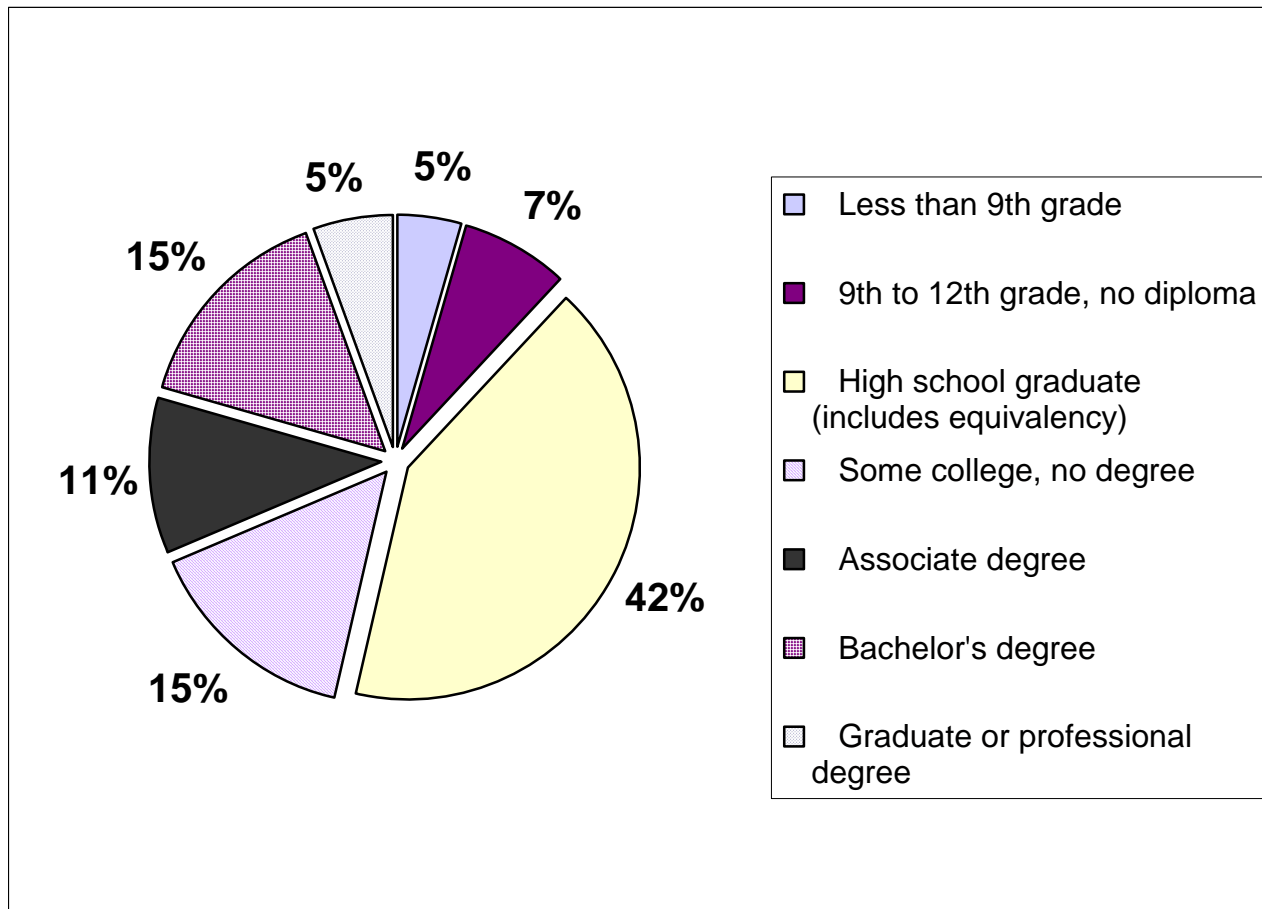


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990, Census 2000

According to the 2000 Census, the Town’s racial minority population comprises 1.3% of the total population. Of the Town’s 10 racial and ethnic minority citizens, the largest group identified themselves as mixed racial or ethnic minority background.

Educational attainment figures for the Town are similar to Dane County as a whole. 88% of Town residents, age 25 or older, hold a high school diploma or higher (Chart 2). Dane County reports 92% of residents with at least a high school diploma.

**Chart 2: Educational Attainment, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Income

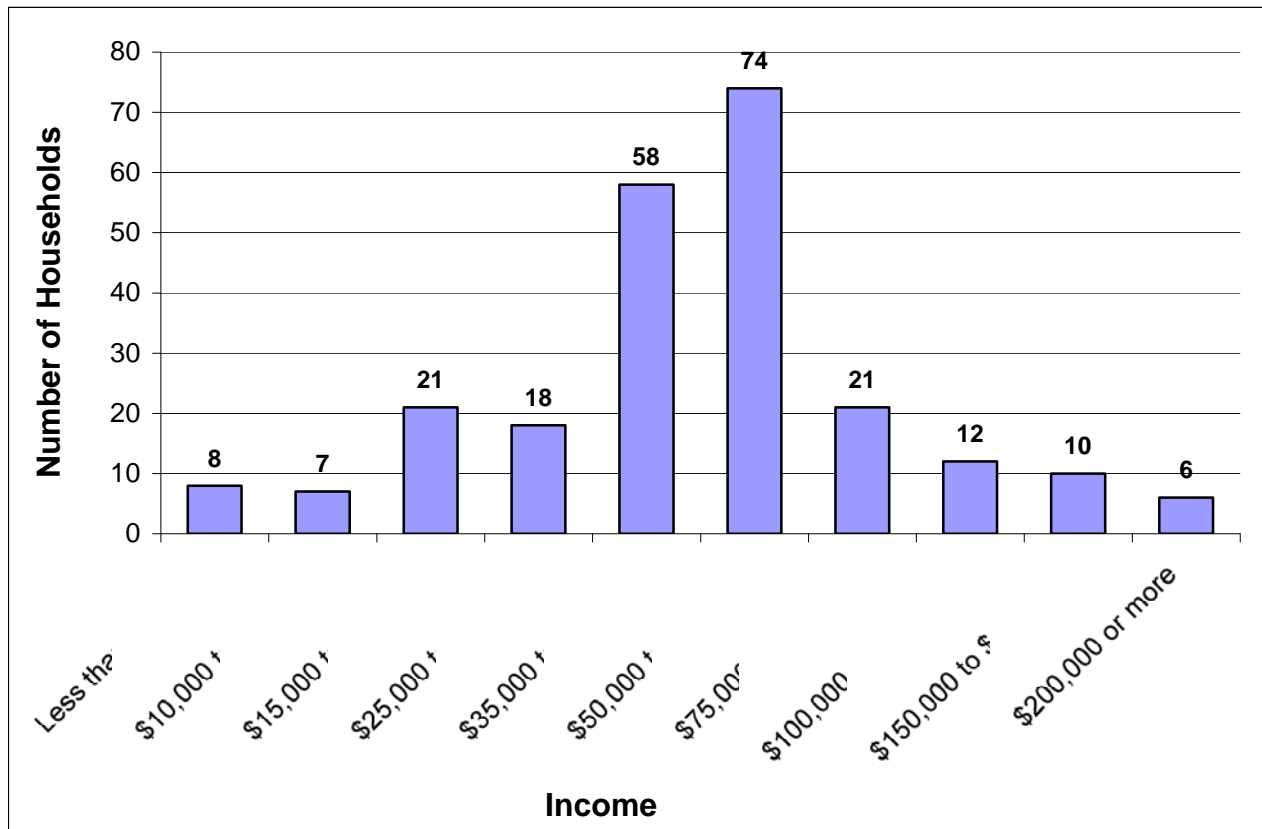
Income levels in the Town are comparable to other similar towns in Dane County. The Town of Primrose’s median household income in 1999 was \$51,964 (Table C). Chart 3 further depicts the Town’s household income dispersal. Income levels are a major determinant in the type of housing a household selects.

**Table C: Median Household Income, 1999**

Municipality	Median Household Income
<b>Town of Primrose</b>	<b>\$51,964</b>
Town of Montrose	\$59,821
Town of Springdale	\$65,655
Town of Perry	\$57,125
Town of New Glarus (Green Co.)	\$63,667
Dane County	\$49,223

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

**Chart 3: Household Income, 1999**



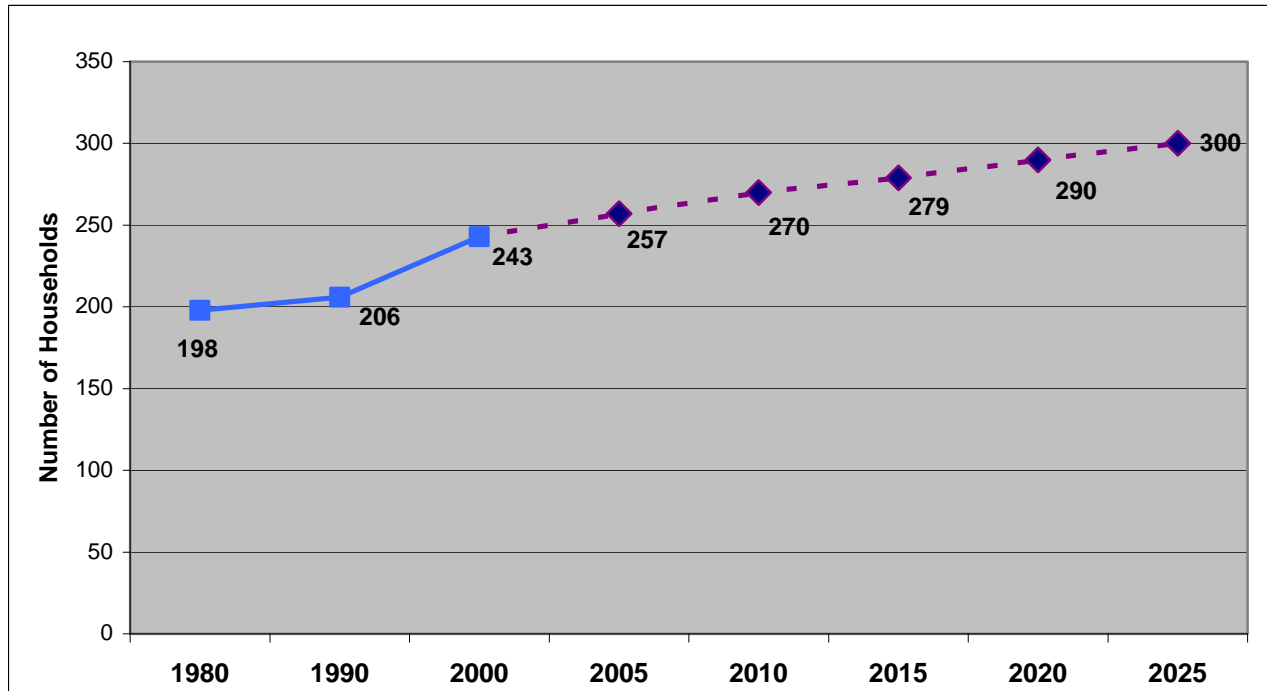
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census

### Housing and Household Trends

The number of households in the Town increased from 206 in 1990 to 243 in 2000, an 18% increase. Conversely, the average household size in the Town decreased from 2.89 persons per household in 1990 to 2.79 in 2000. The trend toward smaller household sizes is mirrored nationwide and is due in part to increases in divorce, decreases in the birth rate, and a larger proportion of the population age 65 and older.

The projected number of households in the Town is expected to increase by 23.5% to 300 total households by 2025, according to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (Chart 4). Household projections are useful in planning for future housing development.

**Chart 4: Number of Households, 1980-2025**



Source: *The Applied Population Lab, Department of Rural Sociology, U. of Wisconsin, Madison, 2004, and the Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2004.*

### Labor Force and Employment Trends

The Town’s labor force is comprised of residents who are employed or available for work. This includes those over the age of 16 who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment. Therefore, the total labor force in the Town equals 376 people. Of the Town’s total labor force, 3.3% were unemployed at the time of the 2000 Census. This is a decline from the Town’s 1990 unemployment rate of 4.9%. In comparison, the Dane County average town unemployment rate was 2.6% in 2000.

During the 1990 to 2000 period, the Town experienced a significant loss of employment in the “Farming, Fishing and Forestry” sector (Table D). Over the same period, however, increases occurred in most other sectors, with the “Management, Professional, and Related” sector seeing the largest gain in jobs. The Town is not unique in its employment losses in the “Farming, Fishing and Forestry” sector, this trend is reflected in the county and state data as well.

With planned limited non-agricultural development, the employment forecast for the town is expected to remain similar to what is shown in Table D. Those occupying the new housing are expected to fall into the management, professional and service fields, as they commute into surrounding communities such as the cities of Madison and Verona, and the Villages of Mount Horeb and Belleville.

**Table D: Occupation**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Management, professional, and related occupations	64	156	143.8
Service occupations	31	39	25.8
Sales and office	77	105	36.4
Farming, fishing, and forestry	79	5	-93.7
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	52	31	-40.4
Production, transportation, and material moving	8	40	400.0
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>20.9</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, 2000 Census

## Key Planning Issues and Overall Goals

### Public Participation Process

At the very beginning of the planning process, the town adopted a public participation plan (see Appendix 3). This plan included development of a plan steering committee, and various methods of ensuring participation, including a newsletter, website, community survey, an open house and a public hearing.

Over 80% of survey respondents somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that “maintaining rural character,” “woodland and wetland preservation” and “maintaining traditional farming and current practices” were important to them. Similar majorities ranked “protection of water resources,” “farmland conversion and disappearance,” “protection of scenic beauty” and “preservation of rural look and character” among their top five land use concerns.

### Overall Goals

- Encourage land uses that are consistent with and contribute to the Town’s agricultural, rural and scenic character.
- Promote the long-term preservation of farmland, woodlands, wetlands, hillsides, air quality, rural character, steep slopes, floodplains, wild life habitat, streams, open space, historic resources, scenic views, hills and bluffs within the Town.
- Preserve the Town’s unique and sensitive natural resources to ensure a high-quality environment for the benefit of future generations.
- The Town should support and facilitate the intelligent development of additional community utilities, facilities, and activities that benefit the Town so long as they are consistent with the Town’s other goals

