

**Village of Highland
Village of Avoca
Town of Highland
Town of Pulaski**

Community Vision Plan

Iowa County

**A Summary of Public Input
December 2002**



On Wednesday December 4 the Villages of Highland and Avoca and the Towns of Highland and Pulaski participated in a community-visioning program called: “***Community Vision: Looking to the Future.***” This visioning exercise took place at the Highland High School in Highland, Wisconsin. Paul Ohlrogge of the UW-Extension Office, Amy Knox of Regional Planning and Mary Jenkins of Regional Planning facilitated this program.

Communities today face any number of pressing concerns, including requests for rezoning, demands for affordable housing or the loss of a major employer. Unfortunately, decisions about these issues are frequently made in the absence of a real vision of how the residents want their communities to look in the future.

Planning for a community’s future can be a difficult, time consuming and costly job. Residents are often more concerned about daily tasks rather than think about a vision. Residents want good schools, decent jobs, safe and clean environments and safe neighborhoods in which to live. Without a vision, however, communities limit their ability to make decisions about these issues – somewhat like driving across the country without a roadmap.

Who should determine a community’s future, other than its residents? Should it be a consultant hired to develop a plan, a state or federal agency making decisions on highways or wetlands preservation, or a private developer constructing a shopping mall or a residential subdivision? All these could have a large impact on a community without input from a broad range of residents. Residents need to participate in and actively envision the future of their communities – or other groups and individuals will determine it for them.

The community-visioning program lasted approximately three hours with good healthy discussions on what folks of these four municipalities envisioned their future to be. The program was broken down into three sections. The first section concentrating on: “Our Current Condition”. The second portion focused on: “Challenges and Opportunities.” The third portion focused on: “The Future.”

What follows is a summary of information gathered during the visioning session on a series of questions posed to the group of citizens in attendance. This information, along with other information gathered from a recent written countywide survey, will be used to assist the Regional Planning Commission in drafting a comprehensive plan for the participating jurisdictions. This visioning session will help guide the future of the participating towns and villages Plan Commissions in their efforts to work towards comprehensive planning.

Section 1: Our Current Condition

The following four questions were asked to the group regarding our current condition:

1. What do you like about living in this area of Iowa County?
2. What are some of the community values?
3. What is unique about your community that is not found anywhere else?

What do you like about living in this area of Iowa County?

- Rural
- Beautiful
- Quiet
- Safe
- Peaceful
- Clean Air
- Economical
- Low traffic
- Nice people
- Welcoming people
- Proximity to economic opportunities
- School system
- Good chance for growth
- Low population
- Wonderful bird life and observation opportunities of the birds
- No large scale farms here
- Lower taxes
- Conservative area
- Good hunting
- Nice mix of woods, wetlands, pastures and fields
- Good neighbors
- Good community services (roads and snow removal)
- Fire protection and EMT's are good
- Wisconsin Public Radio in Highland
- Anthropological sites – Rock shelters
- Clean water
- A lot of farms are still here – It is thee real deal not a Door County
- Wisconsin River Valley is a neat tourism feature – natural
- Abundant public lands
- Avoca prairie is one of a kind

What are some of the community values?

- ◆ School loyalty is strong in the area
- ◆ Keeping the environment clean
- ◆ Concern for our neighbors
- ◆ Thoughtful progressivism
- ◆ Close family ties
- ◆ Honesty
- ◆ Community pride
- ◆ Working together
- ◆ Taking good care of the animals and the land
- ◆ Industrious
- ◆ Good skill level
- ◆ Excellent fire and ambulance service and pride in the service
- ◆ Heritage – pride in our heritage
- ◆ Historic preservation
- ◆ Local support of four businesses
- ◆ Pride in stewardship of the land
- ◆ Helpful people – good Samaritans
- ◆ Abundance of volunteers
- ◆ Wholesome youth
- ◆ Pride in Religion
- ◆ Good educational opportunities

What is unique about your community that is not found anywhere else?

- Terrain of the area
- Driftless area
- Wisconsin River way area
- Avoca prairie
- Blackhawk Lake Recreation Area
- Ethnic identity
- View scapes of rock outcroppings
- Clean water
- Unique plants – Prairie species that are rare
- Physical character of landscape
- Nice curving roads
- Small family farms exist here
- Rock shelters
- Archaeological sites
- Drains naturally
- Strong support for family farms
- Hardwood forests
- Unique type of tourism not the Dells type of tourism
- Organic farms – still have organic soils
- Variety of soils
- Marvelous star gazing
- The night sky
- Variety of wildlife
- Well maintained property
- No four lane roads
- More animals than cars
- Animals crossing the roads
- Trout streams
- Resident Eagles
- Successful family farms

Section 2. Challenges and Opportunities

The second portion of the Visioning Program focused on the Challenges and Opportunities facing the Towns of Pulaski and Highland, as well as the Villages of Avoca and Highland. The following questions were used to facilitate discussion on the upcoming challenges:

1. What are some of the challenges and concerns facing your community?
2. What type of development or redevelopment should occur in this area?
3. What type of development should not occur?

What are some of the challenges or concerns facing your community?

- Keeping it the way it is
- Declining school enrollment
- Balancing of public budgets
- CWD
- Disappearing Main Street businesses
- Keep the big chain stores out
- Keep some type of control on taxes
- Maintaining groundwater quality
- Allowing economic growth
- Cost of health care in rural areas especially those self employed
- Young people leaving the area
- Controlling noxious weeds
- Controlling growth and balancing infrastructure
- Activities are needed for the younger people in our communities
- Getting young people involved in community affairs
- Cost of residential development
- Uncontrolled suburban sprawl
- Keeping quality education here
- Keeping the states shared revenue
- Keeping small rural churches up and running
- Lack of a public library in Highland
- Maintaining standard of living
- Both parents have to hold jobs to make ends meet
- Keeping small businesses here
- Disappearance of the family farm
- Attracting outside dollars and new business development
- Revitalize the business district
- Avoca – Keeping Morey Creek from flooding the Village
- Keeping price of land down
- Cooperation between different groups
- Improvement of Highway 14
- Getting young people involved
- New Village Hall in Highland
- Finding a place for a new Catholic Church

<u><i>What type of development or redevelopment should occur in this area?</i></u>	<u><i>What type of development should not occur?</i></u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing growth boundaries (i.e. Portland, Oregon model) • Develop a museum of history • Further develop the downtown areas of Highland and Avoca • Careful/restrict development on steep slopes • Development to create jobs • Limited restrictions on growth • New industrial park, Develop further and recruit businesses to fill in spots • Residential development in Village of Highland • Village of Avoca can potentially develop more of a tourism area – scenic place • Rail potential in Avoca • Recreational trails – walking paths in the Avoca Prairie • DNR can develop more of the public land for hunting opportunities • Limit the restriction on development so it is not too severe • Potential development of golf courses and hotels • Agricultural tourism (petting zoo’s etc) • Develop plant and animal resources – keeping these areas alive • Get young people involved and hear what they say about development • Recruitment of industry that makes use of local resources • Utilize agricultural commodities • Tree farms – utilize appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate farms • Improper rural housing – i.e. trailers with no septic systems • Heavy industrial development • Rural sub-divisions • Rules should not be so restrictive on the family farm • Mega – stores like a Wal-Mart sited outside of the cities and villages • Large junk yards should not be here • Anything that depletes the water table • Restrictions on growth – should not have too many restrictions • Large sand gravel pits

Section 3. UThe Future

The final segment of the visioning process was to look ahead at a preferred vision of the future. Visioning is a *process* by which a community envisions the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it. Through public involvement, communities identify their purpose, core values and vision of the future. The following questions were asked to encourage discussion on the community's vision for the future.

1. What words do you want your grandchildren to use to describe your community?
2. What do you want to preserve?
3. What do you want your community to look like in 2022?

What words do you want your grandchildren to use to describe your community?

- Beautiful
- Unspoiled
- Scenic
- Clean
- Peaceful
- Rural
- Farms are still here
- Food basket
- Crime free
- Interesting
- Would be nice for them to look back and say we were smart
- Progressive
- Place where they can make living
- Welcoming
- Place where they can have what they want
- Prosperous
- Healthy
- Educationally sound
- Sense of history

What do you want to preserve?

- The rustic look to our roads
- Natural resources of woods, water and prairies
- Parks
- Preserve the ridge-tops from development
- Sense of community
- Historic buildings and sites
- Community history – our history
- Cemeteries
- Small town post offices
- The way of life as we know it now
- Churches
- Schools
- Wildlife
- Scenic Views
- Preserve the food from family farms
- Successful businesses
- Large tracts of land

What do you want your community to look like in 2022?

- Tolerance
- Same diverse wildlife we have now
- Free of terrorism
- Just as many farms
- Prosperity
- Organic produce farms everywhere
- No litter
- Clean air, water a clean environment
- Alternative energy used
- Pretty much the way it is now
- Better agricultural prices for production
- New church at top of the hill in Highland
- Local technical school
- Keeping local units of government
- Keeping local Fire and EMS departments
- Libraries
- Village Hall sufficient size to meet needs
- Better agricultural prices creates a healthier community