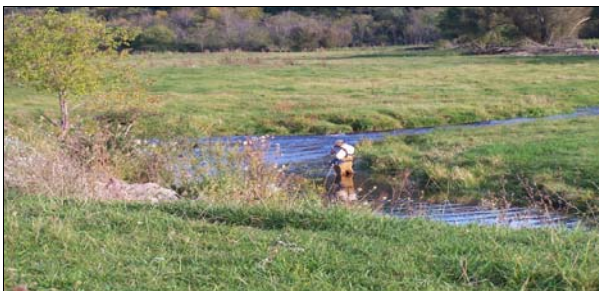


5. CAPACITY OF THE REGION TO ACCOMMODATE MISSION INCREASE AT FORT MCCOY



The Fort McCoy Region has great potential to expand and accommodate new residential/commercial/industrial growth without negatively impacting the military mission of Fort McCoy. Historically, communities in the region have always viewed Fort McCoy as an asset to the area and that same attitude exists today. A review and analysis of the Fort McCoy Region's larger cities and villages (3,000 or greater population) has been conducted to analyze their expansion potential. This includes the cities of Tomah, Sparta, Black River Falls, La Crosse, Onalaska, and the villages of West Salem and Holmen. The municipalities analyzed share in common an abundant supply of ground water, excellent wastewater treatment systems, access to superior educational facilities, and are in close proximity to highly distinguished healthcare providers. In addition, the region's housing is very affordable and the Fort McCoy Region is a safe place to live.

The Fort McCoy Region has an abundant supply of groundwater for public use. The availability of groundwater in the area is an asset for future growth. Wisconsin and the Fort McCoy area have a tremendous supply of cool and clean groundwater. Located below the area is a sandstone and dolomite aquifer deposited 425 to 600 million years ago that holds the majority of the region's groundwater. A 1997 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources report estimated that there are about two million billion gallons of groundwater under Wisconsin. For this reason, all water for the public water systems in the area comes from municipal wells tapping this large groundwater resource. This seemingly endless supply of clean groundwater will allow Fort McCoy and the surrounding cities and villages to continue to grow.



Trout Fishing in Timber Coulee Creek, one of many Class 1 trout streams in the region.

The region's wastewater treatment facilities are well maintained and are operating only at one half of their capacity. The following summarizes the wastewater treatment facilities capacity and performance in the cities and villages (over 3,000 population) in the Fort McCoy Region.

As Table 5.1 illustrates, all of the cities and villages analyzed in the region operate well below the capacity of their respective wastewater treatment systems. Four of the six wastewater systems operate at less than 50% capacity. The cities of Sparta and Tomah which are closest to Fort McCoy have the greatest potential to accommodate growth as each system is operating well below 50% of its capacity. The City of Black River Falls operates closest to its capacity, but is still operating at only 65% of capacity. As the table indicates the existing wastewater treatment plants could accommodate nearly a 100% increase in the residential population, an astounding 96,328 additional residents. Although such a population increase is an unlikely scenario, it demonstrates that the cities and villages in the region are prepared for residential and business growth.

City/Village	2000 Population	Design Flow MGD*	Avg Mnthly Flow MGD*	% of Capacity	System Capacity Population	2003 CMAR Points
Tomah	8,419	2.25	0.85	38%	22,155	4
Sparta	8,648	2.20	1.00	45%	19,217	12
La Crosse/ Onalaska	66,687	20.00	10.50	53%	125,824	31
West Salem	4,738	0.60	0.30	50%	9,476	4
Holmen	6,200	0.80	0.40	50%	12,400	38
Black River Falls	3,618	0.86	0.56	65%	5,566	31
Totals	98,310	26.71	13.61	51%	194,638	NA

*Million of Gallons Per Day

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Table 5.1 also illustrates that the wastewater treatment facilities in the Fort McCoy Region function in an environmentally safe manner. The column "2003 CMAR Points" (CMAR is Compliance and Maintenance Annual

Report) is a numerical value that the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) uses to rate the environmental performance of public wastewater treatment facilities. The range of possible points is 0-540, the lower the point total the better the performance record of the facility. Any score between 0-70 is considered excellent and requires no action by the municipality or the DNR.

Residents of the Fort McCoy Region have easy access to institutions of higher learning. Each community has an excellent public K-12 school system. This is demonstrated by the information provided in Chapter 6 of this report. In addition, Fort McCoy and the communities are within 35 minutes of the excellent higher education facilities of the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Wisconsin Technical College which offer educational opportunities to over 30,000 students annually.

Residents of the Fort McCoy Region have immediate access to world class healthcare facilities. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the Fort McCoy Region has six hospitals; two in the City of La Crosse, two in Tomah, one in Black River Falls and one in Sparta. In addition, over thirteen other medical clinics or facilities are located in the region. These healthcare facilities provide excellent care as well as employment opportunities.

Housing is more affordable in the Fort McCoy Region. The affordability of housing in the Fort McCoy Region (Monroe, Jackson, La Crosse) compares favorably to the State of Wisconsin, the Midwest and the Nation as a whole. A review of the Census 2000 information on *Median Housing Value For Specified Owner Occupied Units, Price Asked for Specified Vacant-For-Sale-Only Housing Units, and Rent Asked For Specified Vacant-For-Rent Housing Units* indicates that the cost of housing, whether it be ownership or rental, is more affordable in the Fort McCoy Region than in other parts of the United States, Table 5.2.

In Table 5.2, the median housing values, median price asked and the median rent asked, in the counties around Fort McCoy have been averaged and the results are referred to as the Fort McCoy Region. In 2000, the median housing value for specified owner occupied units in the Fort McCoy Region was \$83,733. The Western region of the United States median housing value for specified owner occupied units was \$171,000, or an increase of 104% over the Fort McCoy Region. The

Northeast region of the United States median housing value was \$139,400, a 66% increase, while the South region was \$96,300, a 15% increase over the Fort McCoy Region. In addition, the Fort McCoy Region median housing value was 26% less than the Midwest region. The data analyzed on the median price asked for specific vacant for sale only housing units reveals a similar trend. The median price asked for housing units in the Fort McCoy Region was lower than all other regions.

TABLE 5.2
Median Housing Value and Median Rent

Governmental Regions	Median Housing Value	Median Price Asked	Median Rent Asked
Northeast Region	139,400	93,400	511
Midwest Region	105,500	79,000	421
South Region	96,300	79,900	440
West Region	171,000	136,000	579
United States	119,600	89,600	469
Monroe County	77,500	73,900	389
Jackson County	76,800	54,000	337
La Crosse County	96,900	91,100	473
Fort McCoy Region*	83,733	73,000	400

*Average of the Monroe, Jackson and La Crosse County median values.

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 H76. Median Value For Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units

In reviewing the median rent asked for specified vacant-for-rent housing units, once again the Fort McCoy Region was significantly less expensive. The median rent asked for specified vacant-for-rent housing units in the Fort McCoy Region was \$400 per month. The Western region and Northeast region of the United States median rent asked for specified vacant-for-rent housing units was \$579 and \$511, a 45% increase and a 28% increase respectfully. The median rent asked in the South region was \$440, a 10% increase while the Midwest region median rent asked was \$421, a 5% increase over the Fort McCoy Region.

The Fort McCoy Region is a very safe place to live and raise a family. The State of Wisconsin and the Fort McCoy Region is a very safe place to live and raise a family. In 1999 the most comprehensive crime data available, of the fifty states in the nation, Wisconsin had

the 39th lowest crime rate at 3,284 crimes per 100,000 residents. The crime rate includes both violent crimes (forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and property crimes (burglary, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft). The crime rate for the United States was 4,347 crimes per 100,000 residents. An increase of 1,063 crimes per 100,000 residents over the State of Wisconsin. The Fort McCoy Region proves to be safer than both the United States and the remainder of Wisconsin with a crime rate of 2,758 crimes per 100,000 residents.



One of the many recreational parks in the Fort McCoy Region where children can play safely

If a crime is committed in the Fort McCoy Region, it is less likely to be a violent crime (forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) compared to the State of Wisconsin and the United States. Of the total crimes committed in the Fort McCoy Region in 1999, 6% were violent crimes, compared to 7.5% of crimes in Wisconsin and 12.4% of crimes in the United States being violent crimes. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County and City Data Book: 2000, Table A-6 and B-6)

In 2003, more recent state and national crime data was released. The crime data trends are consistent with the previous findings. In 2003, Wisconsin's violent crime rate was 49% less than the Midwest rate (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin) and 57% less than the United States rate. The property crime rate in Wisconsin was 18% less than the Midwest rate and 22% less than the United States rate. (Source: State of Wisconsin, Office of Justice Assistance)

The low crime rate is a statement to the region's Midwestern ethics and excellent law enforcement officials. The mutual respect for each other exhibited by the citizens of the region is a natural deterrent to criminal activity and enhances the region's quality of life.

The City of Tomah has 189 acres available for business expansion and over 200 acres planned for residential development. The City of Tomah with a population just over 8,400 people is four miles east of the Fort McCoy Military Reservation. The city is located at the junction of Interstates 90 and 94. This location in relation to other available transportation alternatives and proximity to Fort McCoy make it an attractive place for businesses to locate. The abundance of natural resources, recreational opportunities, and short drive to larger urban areas make it an ideal place to live. The city leader's recognition of Tomah's unique attributes has resulted in the city being prepared for growth.

The City of Tomah developed a comprehensive plan in 2002. The comprehensive plan projected the future housing needs of the city. The plans most aggressive projections estimated that in the next 20 years 872 housing units will be constructed which will occupy approximately 209 additional acres. The city's comprehensive plan designates areas for future residential expansion. The majority of new residential development will infill within the city or be located on the north or west sides of Tomah.



Department of Defense Sponsored Housing Project in Tomah

The City of Tomah currently has three business/industrial parks. One hundred and eighty acres remain open for new development within the parks. The city's comprehensive plan demonstrates that city officials are continually pursuing additional acreage for business/industrial expansion. The properties of highest priority

are those located adjacent to existing business/industrial parks. Most new commercial and industrial development is planned for areas in the southern portion of the Tomah area. In addition, the city has several development organizations that promote business growth and expansion in Tomah. The organizations are the City of Tomah Community Development, Forward Tomah Development Corporation, and the Greater Tomah Area Chamber of Commerce.

The City of Sparta Plan has estimated that over 1,800 housing units will be built in the future to accommodate growth. The City of Sparta which is located just west of Fort McCoy has a population of just over 8,600. Interstate 90 travels south of the city. The city is located approximately 3 miles from the main gate of Fort Mc Coy. The City of Sparta is the County Seat of Monroe County. The city has been proactive in planning its future. The City of Sparta completed a smart growth comprehensive plan in January of 2003. The comprehensive plan projected the future housing needs of the city. The plan estimated that in the next 20 years 1,811 housing units will be constructed which will occupy approximately 504 additional acres. The areas for future residential expansion (primarily north and west of the city) have been designated in the city's comprehensive plan.



The Sparta Business Park located on I90 is one of the largest business parks in Western Wisconsin. Over 250 acres are available for business expansions.

The City of Sparta has two business/industrial parks. Within the industrial parks there are 270 acres remaining for new development. The city also manages a revolving loan fund that is utilized to encourage business startups and expansions. The Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce and the Sparta Industrial Foundation are two private entities that assist in promoting economic development in the Sparta area.

The City of La Crosse is the largest city in the region and has been nationally recognized for its downtown business and residential development activities. The La Crosse is the largest city in the Fort McCoy Region with a population of 51,818. The City of La Crosse is located on the Mississippi River approximately 30 minutes west of Fort McCoy via Interstate 90. The City of La Crosse is the County Seat of La Crosse County. The City of La Crosse developed a comprehensive plan in 2002. The comprehensive plan projected the future population and housing acreage needs of the city. The plan estimated that in the next 20 years the population of the city will increase by approximately 3,295 residents and 317 additional acres of land will be needed to accommodate the increase in population. The city's comprehensive plan encourages new residential growth to take place within the city and take advantage of redevelopment opportunities.

The City of La Crosse has five business/industrial parks. Within the parks 72 acres remain open for development. The City of La Crosse has also been very active in brown field redevelopment opening up opportunities for reinvestment in existing properties. The La Crosse Area Development Corporation and the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce are two active business organizations working to improve the business environment in the greater La Crosse area.

The City of La Crosse is a river city with the largest historic district in the state located in its downtown. Historically, the riverfront was utilized for industrial purposes. In the past 10 years, the city has been very successful in redeveloping its downtown area and its riverfront. The redevelopment efforts are reopening the riverfront to the public while maintaining its functionality as a harbor. Since 1993, \$134 million has been reinvested in downtown La Crosse. As a result, 2,500 new jobs have been created, 3 new hotels and a \$14 million renovation to the La Crosse Civic Center has been completed. In addition, such corporations as Logistics Health Incorporated, CenturyTel, and North Central Trust call downtown La Crosse their home.

The City of La Crosse also has an active Downtown Mainstreet Program. In recent years, \$1.4 million has been spent on a levee and river walk, and \$5 million has been invested in streetscape projects. In 2002, the City of La Crosse was awarded the "National Mainstreet Award" from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The City of Onalaska has been a popular location for new housing and retail activity. The City of Onalaska is the City of La Crosse's northern neighbor. The City of Onalaska has a population of 14,839 and is the second largest city in the Fort McCoy Region. The City of Onalaska is approximately 30 minutes from Fort McCoy via Interstate 90. The City of Onalaska has grown rapidly in the last 20 years as a result of its close proximity to the City of La Crosse. Onalaska continues to proactively plan for growth. The City of Onalaska comprehensive plan projects an additional 1,368 new homes by the year 2010 that will accommodate more than 3,310 new residents.

The City of Onalaska is located along the Interstate 90 corridor and has experienced rapid commercial growth. Two business/industrial parks are located in the City of Onalaska. Twenty acres remain open for development within the parks. The Onalaska Center for Commerce and Tourism also assists the City of Onalaska in promoting development.

The Village of Holmen is the fastest growing community in the region and has designated over 600 acres for future residential growth. The Village of Holmen has a population of 6,200 and is located just north of the City of Onalaska. The Village of Holmen is approximately 30 minutes west of Fort McCoy.

The Village of Holmen developed a comprehensive plan in 1997 and is currently revising the plan. The revised plan directs most future residential growth to the northern area of the village. The plan projects that over 1,050 acres will be needed over the next 20 years to accommodate future village growth. It is estimated that over 60% of the growth will be residential and over 600 acres will be needed to accommodate residential growth.

Within the Village of Holmen there are four business/industrial parks with 12.9 acres available for development. The Village of Holmen does have commercial and industrial expansion capabilities adjacent to its municipal boundaries. The Holmen Industrial Corporation is also active in the village for promoting business growth.

The Village of West Salem is poised for growth with 167 acres available in its business/industrial parks and a wastewater treatment facility that is operating at only 50 % of its capacity. The Village of West

Salem is located along Interstate 90 and is located approximately 20 minutes west of Fort McCoy. The Village of West Salem is one of the fastest growing communities in the Fort McCoy Region and has a population of 4,738. The village's wastewater system is operating at 50% of its capacity and can accommodate additional residential users. The village is looking into updating its comprehensive plan in the near future as part of a countywide planning initiative.

The Village of West Salem has two business/industrial parks with 167 acres available for purchase. In addition, the Village of West Salem has ample room to expand outside its existing municipal borders. The Village of West Salem also has the West Salem Area Growth Inc., which promotes business expansion and relocation in West Salem. It is important to note that the Village of West Salem, Village of Holmen, City of Onalaska and the City of La Crosse are all members of the La Crosse Area Development Corporation that initiates and promotes economic development activities in the La Crosse County area.

The City of Black River Falls has over 60 residential building sites available and numerous acres ready for new businesses in its business/industrial park. The City of Black River Falls is the largest city in Jackson County and is located about 35 minutes north of Fort McCoy. Interstate 94 serves Black River Falls as does State Highway 27. Black River Falls is the County Seat of Jackson County and has a population of 3,618. The City of Black River Falls is in the process of revising its zoning map. In the revision process areas for future residential expansion will be designated. Currently, there are approximately sixty vacant lots available in the City of Black River Falls for residential development.

The City of Black River Falls has one business/industrial park. Within the park 45 acres remain available for development. The City of Black River Falls also has several development organizations that assist with economic development initiatives. The organizations are the Black River Area Chamber of Commerce, Black River Falls Downtown Association and the Black River Falls Industrial Park Commission.

The analysis of the larger cities and villages in the Fort McCoy Region demonstrates that the area is ready for future residential growth. The majority of wastewater treatment facilities are only operating at approximately

50% of capacity, and the ground water supply in the region is abundant. Acreage within/outside of city and village boundaries has been designated for planned residential growth.

Also, within the Fort McCoy Region are a number of smaller incorporated and unincorporated communities. Common among these smaller communities is their desire to grow. That willingness is demonstrated by the infrastructure currently in place. Primarily, these communities are rural and can support additional residential growth. In addition, the commitment to planning in the region will eliminate encroachment issues around Fort McCoy.