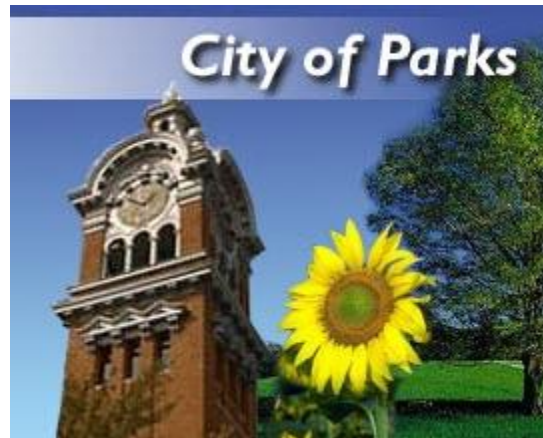


CITY OF MERRILL, WISCONSIN

Revenues, Property Values, & Expenditures Report 2007



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I. Introduction

This report provides data on City of Merrill, Wisconsin's revenues, property values, and expenditures over approximately the last 18 years. It was compiled at the request of the City of Merrill, Wisconsin administrator. The data shown in the graphs and charts is taken from municipal and county annual financial reports, statements of taxes, and Wisconsin Department of Revenue equalized value records. City of Merrill data is compared with cities that have the most similar populations in the state (9,000 to 11,000 residents). These cities are Baraboo, Monroe, Platteville, Portage, Port Washington, and Waupun. The reader should keep in mind that different cities with very similar populations may have very dissimilar budget priorities. Charts showing these cities' 2005 estimated populations based on US Census data and growth trends follow the introduction.

A software program developed by the University of Wisconsin – Extension's Local Government Center called GREAT (Graphing Revenues, Expenditures, and Taxes) was used to create graphs, charts and tables comparing Merrill with these other cities. All graphs, charts and tables created using the GREAT database are adjusted for inflation using 2006 dollars.

It is important to understand what is included in the data. First, the GREAT database includes 23 revenue categories and 26 expenditure categories for every county and municipality in Wisconsin for 1987-2004.¹ Significant characteristics of this data are:

- Revenues and expenditures are from the general fund, special revenue fund, and the debt service fund.
- Revenues and expenditures include both operating and capital budgets for the funds mentioned under the first bulleted item.
- Revenues and expenditures are organized by the chart of governmental accounts and therefore provide a summary figure for several revenue sources and services.
- Revenues and expenditures may reflect different service delivery systems. Where there are joint departments among counties or municipalities, one often serves as the fiscal agent to collect revenues and make payments for whatever service is offered. The county or municipality serving as the fiscal agent may show total revenues and expenditures for this activity, which would lead to a seemingly high level of expenditure for the given activity.

These data characteristics limit the extent to which conclusions may be drawn. The use of several funds, but not all funds, will cover differences among counties and municipalities in how they finance services. For example, a county nursing home that is financed through fees and Medicare reimbursement will not show those expenditures in

¹ Valuation data for 2005 is also included. All definitions of categories and classes and information about the GREAT Database come from the "Graphing Revenues, Expenditures, and Taxes Program Manual," (May 2006; copyright 2000-2002 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System). Portions of definitions and the information about the GREAT Database are quoted verbatim from the manual with the permission of the UW-Extension Local Government Center.

this data beyond a summary account in the proprietary revenues and expenditures. On the other hand, a county that subsidizes its nursing home through the property tax will show this expenditure in the data under health and human services. Both counties have a nursing home and both finance it differently, but further questioning would need to uncover this.

By including both capital and operating budgets in the data, any given municipality or county will show large increases for years that capital items are purchased. This may make revenue and expenditure trends seem erratic at best. The summary categories of revenues and expenditures often seem to compare apples and oranges. For example, one county may coordinate a recycling program, run a landfill and collect and dispose of hazardous waste. By contrast, another county may only coordinate the recycling program. Reviewing their expenditures alone for solid waste collection would show that the first county has extremely high costs compared to the second county and perhaps would seem spend thrifty. However, the first county offers far more services and should be compared to similarly-sized counties that provide the same services.

While these limitations may make the data seem less useful than desired in some cases, it does provide general trend information and spur a county or municipality to ask questions including but not limited to:

- (1) What is included in this revenue or expenditure category for these other comparable governments? Are they delivering the same package of services and using the same revenue sources?
- (2) How is the service financed in the city? How is this service financed in comparable cities?
- (3) How is the service delivered in this city? How is the service delivered in comparable cities?
- (4) What caused the large shift in trends among the comparable cities (i.e., law changes, capital expenditures, increased demand)?
- (5) What are the available options of service delivery and what have other local governments experienced with each option?
- (6) Are revenues in a given category less than what other similar cities (based on population) obtain?
- (7) How have we expanded our revenues in response to growth?
- (8) How can revenues be increased? Will looking at other similar cities' revenue structures give us some indication?
- (9) What cities seem to be providing the same services we provide but more efficiently and effectively? Can we use some of the same methods?
- (10) How have we expanded our services, capital outlays, and debt in response to growth?

Revenue and expenditure data are provided for selected categories where, in most cases, the majority of spending took place as expressed in percentages of annual budgets. The author has attempted to provide additional details under some of the graphs, charts, and tables. He has also, with further research, tried to explain valuation,

revenue and expenditures trends or anomalies in a few instances. The numerous graphs, charts and tables in this report should help the reader more easily see where Merrill is with regard to revenues, property values and expenditures relative to the comparable cities. Hopefully, this will also help the reader begin to more systematically ask the questions listed on page 4.

Equalized value data is the Department of Revenue's estimate of full market value. Graphs showing property value fluctuations are particularly useful because they indicate changes in the community's property base over time. They may also indicate changes in a community's economic sectors. For instance, a community's manufacturing base may be in decline if there is a steady decrease in the value of manufacturing related buildings, land and other related properties. By contrast, the value and construction of commercial property may be rising over the same period, indicating a shift in the economic base. Still, any change in tax base needs further investigation as there may be more manufacturing property but it hasn't increased in value anywhere near what the commercial property has done. It is important to look at both changes in market value and new construction or demolition. This more detailed information is available on the state's Department of Revenue website.

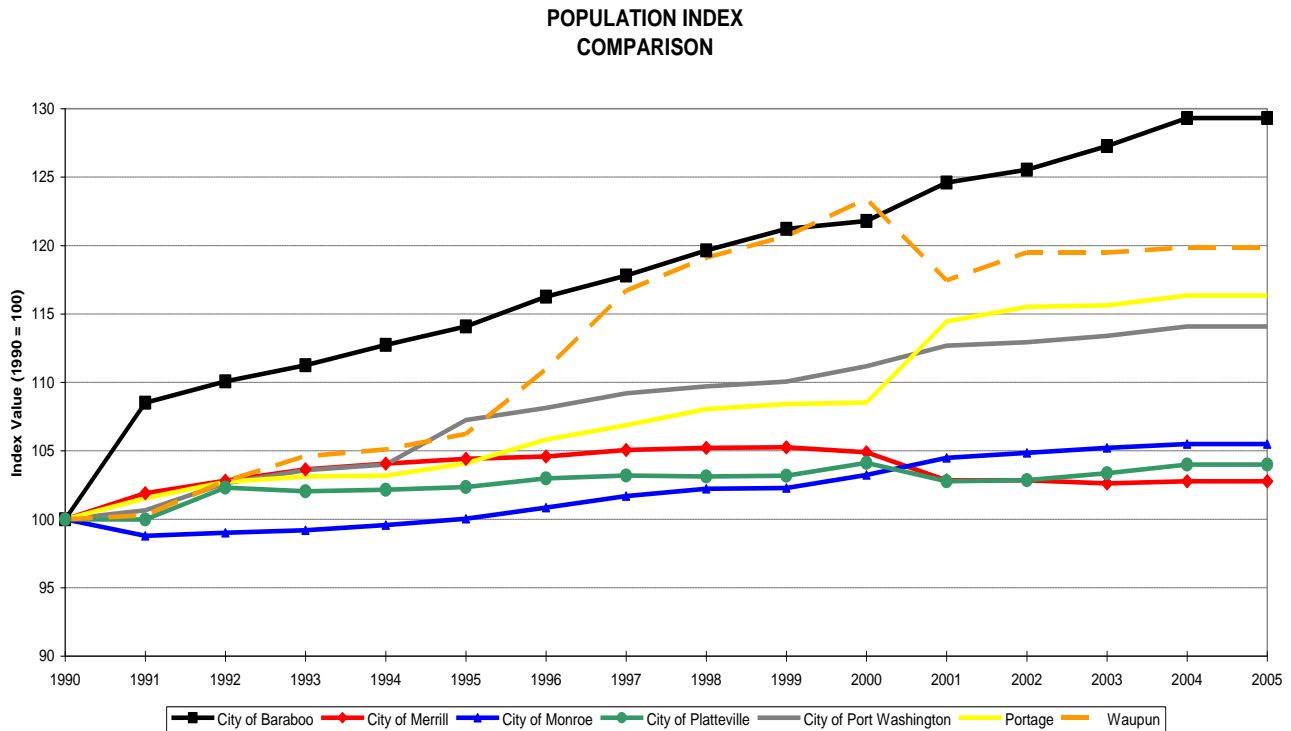
This paper first discusses revenues trends, including property tax data, among the selected cities and then compares and contrasts property value information between Merrill and those other cities. Finally, it outlines expenditures. The property tax is only one, albeit important, component of the city's revenue base. Although categories and comparison cities were carefully chosen, it was impossible to make those choices completely objective. Another author may have chosen different revenue and expenditure categories to focus on. There are other criteria upon which to choose cities that may be the most similar to Merrill, but population seemed to be the most logical.

Because of the somewhat subjective nature of the report, the reader should remember that it is merely meant to promote discussion and further inquiry among City of Merrill, Wisconsin officials about where the city stands in comparison to the other cities chosen. The report should therefore not be the only tool upon which to create a strong foundation for policy changes.

II. Population

Below is a chart listing the estimated 2005 populations of all the cities profiled in this report based on U.S. Census estimates.

City	Population
Baraboo	10,927
Merrill	10,145
Monroe	10,563
Platteville	9,854
Portage	10,035
Port Washington	10,892
Waupun	10,558



Index graphs like the one above show increases or decreases in population, revenues, expenditures, etc. beyond the base year which begins at 100%. So, if that figure goes from 100 in 1990 to 170 in 2005, that means that population, revenues, expenditures, etc. increased 70% over that period. To illustrate, the graph above shows that Merrill's population increased from 100 (index value) in 1990 to approximately 103 in 2005, which roughly works out to a 3% increase (103 - 100). On the other hand, Baraboo's

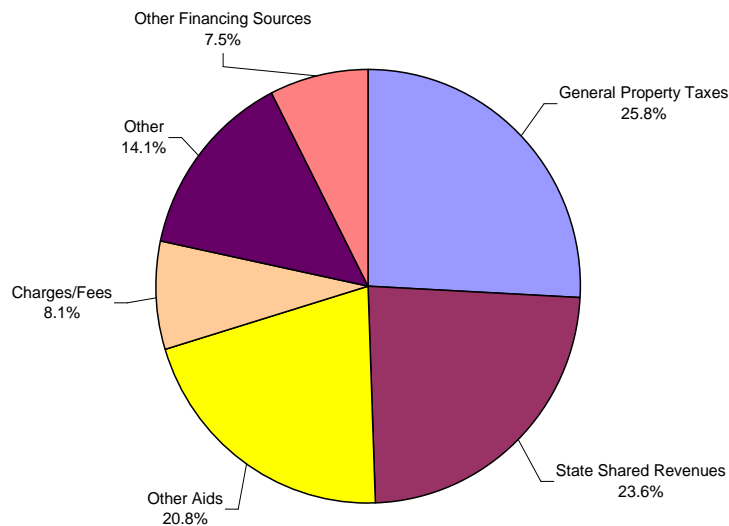
population index rose from 100 to about 129 over the same period, signifying an approximately 29% increase.

III. Revenues

The pie chart directly below shows where the City of Merrill, on a percent basis, obtained revenues in 2004 (latest available data). Slightly over 70% of Merrill's total revenue during that year came from a combination of general property taxes, state shared revenues and other aids. The city's property tax revenues as a percent of total revenues increased from 22.3% in 1990 to 25.8% in 2004.

Definitions explaining each category in this chart, the next pie chart, the Revenue Shares Over Time charts, and the Revenue Shares Comparison chart (pages 9 and 10) are highlighted in grey beginning at the bottom of this page.

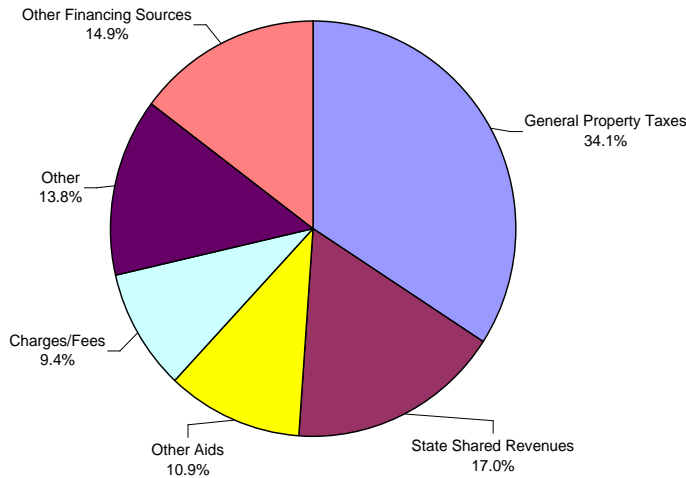
REVENUE SHARES - 2004
CITY OF MERRILL



General Property Taxes include property taxes levied by the city. **State Shared Revenue** includes the city's payment. **Other Aids** include all local, state and federal aid besides shared revenue. **Charges and Fees** include public charges for service, intergovernmental contract fees, interest and penalties. **Other** includes tax increments, in lieu of tax payments, other revenue taxes such as the city sales tax, special assessments, and interest income. **Other Financing Sources** include long-term debt proceeds, interfund transfers, proceeds from refunding bonds, and the sale of major assets.

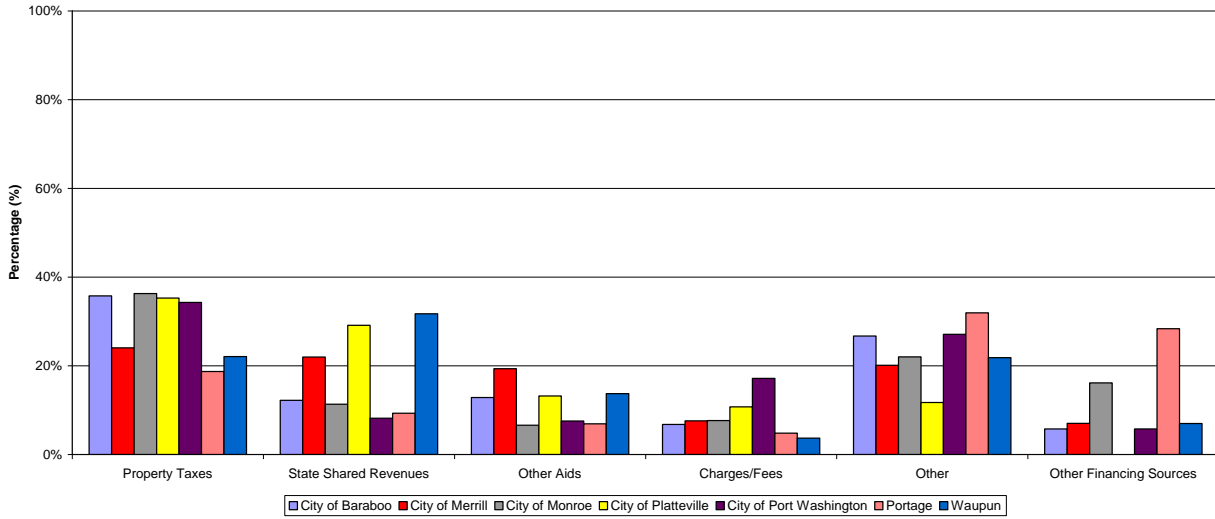
Another pie chart below shows the average percentage of revenue shares in the various categories of only the comparison cities. An analysis of both pie charts indicates that Merrill received significantly less (8.3%) of its total 2004 revenues in property taxes than what the other cities received on average. However, Merrill seems to have done a better job of acquiring state shared revenues than the other cities did on average (23.6% versus 17%) and relied more heavily on other aids (20.8% versus 10.9%) than its counterparts.

REVENUE SHARES - 2004
ONLY SIMILAR CITIES POPULATION 9,000 TO 11,000



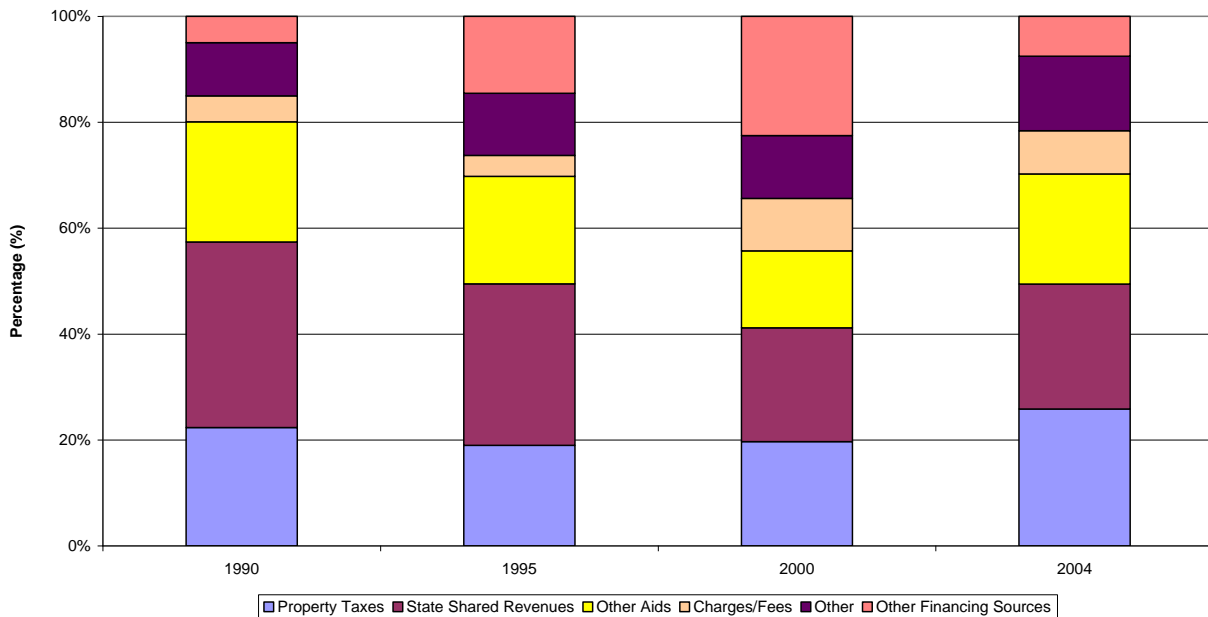
A bar chart comparing 2004 revenues for Merrill and the comparison cities is at the top of the next page. It provides a nice side by side comparison of each city's data. Red bars signify Merrill. State shared revenues among all the cities varied quite a lot, something that could not be discerned from average figures contained in the "Only Similar Cities" pie chart directly above. The bar chart also shows that Merrill obtained the third lowest amount of its total revenues from property taxes. Baraboo, Monroe, Platteville and Port Washington all obtained well over 30% of their total revenues from that source.

**REVENUE SHARES - 2004
COMPARISON**



The bar-stack charts included below summarize Merrill’s revenue shares and the comparison cities’ average revenue shares in 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2004. They show Merrill’s greater reliance over time on other aids (yellow bars) than the comparison cities. They also illustrate the comparison cities’ greater dependency over time on property taxes (blue bars). The purple bars indicate Merrill’s greater reliance on shared revenue over time.

**REVENUE SHARES OVER TIME
CITY OF MERRILL**

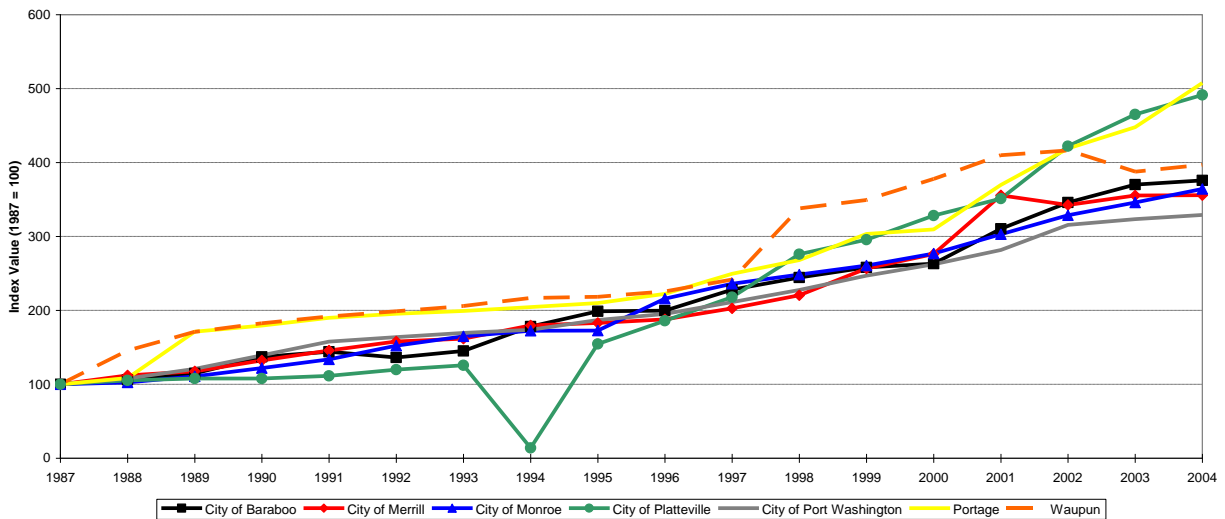


**REVENUE SHARES OVER TIME
ONLY SIMILAR CITIES POPULATION 9,000 TO 11,000**

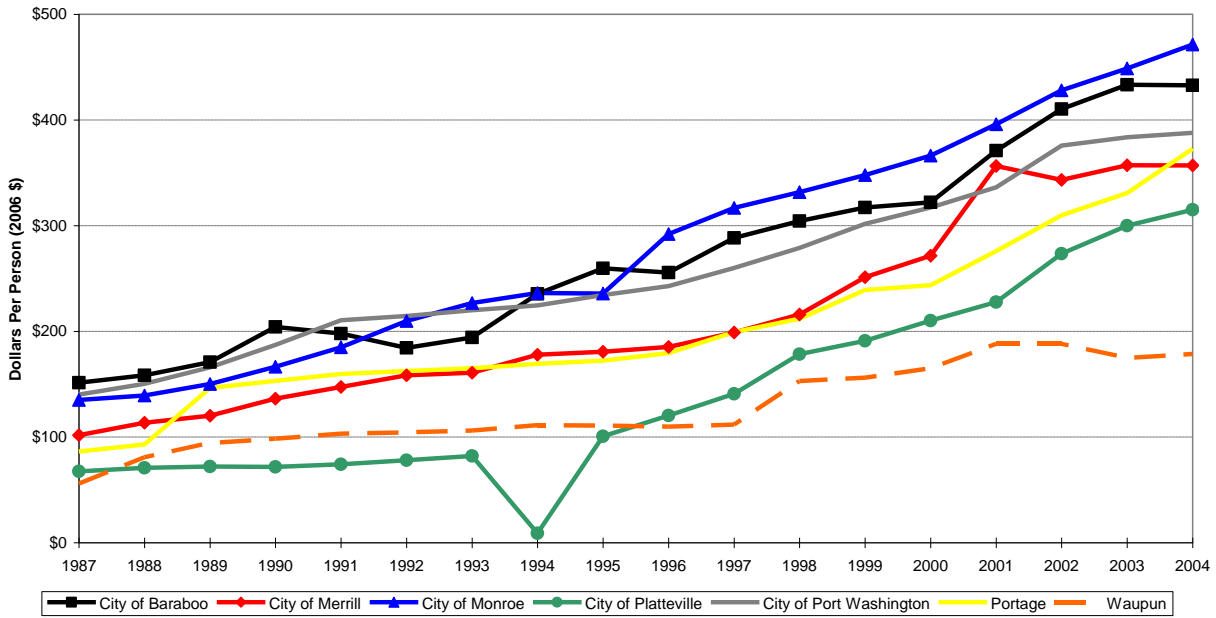


The two line graphs below depict how general property taxes in percentage and in per capita terms fluctuated from 1987 through 2004. Both charts show, for the most part, steady increases in the amounts of property tax collected in each city. Per capita (i.e. amount of dollars received per resident) figures show Merrill's property tax intake (red line) going from about \$102 in 1987 to \$357 in 2004. Since property tax revenues are tied directly to property values, and since property values have steadily increased over these years, one could expect that percentage and per capita figures would also rise steadily over time. The results exhibited in these charts are likely more a function of property value inflation rather than cities seeking to consciously raise property tax rates.

**GENERAL PROPERTY TAXES INDEX
COMPARISON**



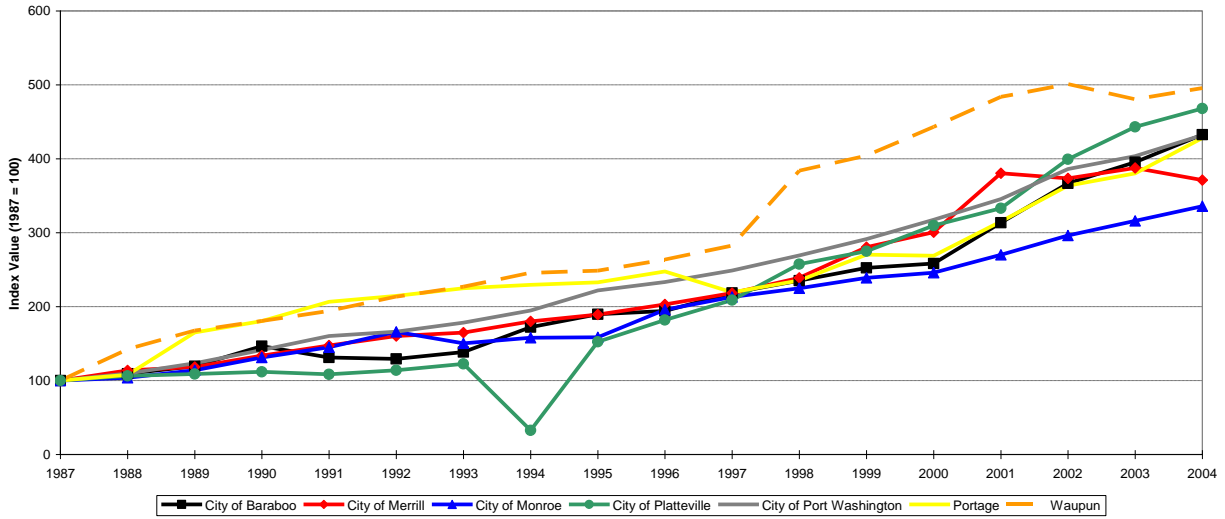
**PER CAPITA GENERAL PROPERTY TAXES
COMPARISON**



In general, per capita charts indicate how population levels affect expenditures, revenues, taxes, and property values in a given community. An analysis of per capita expenditures in various government departments, for example, will provide some indication how local governments are allocating limited resources among services they provide to citizens. Thus, the charts can give some insight about things like what services citizens are most interested in receiving in a given community. They may also show how even relatively small population variations may prompt cities to allocate services in very different ways. But most of all, they prompt citizens and government officials to ask several key questions about service allocation, untapped or not fully tapped revenue sources, and whether more emphasis should be placed on the development of one economic sector over another through the analysis of property values.

Total Taxes (depicted in the line graphs on page 12) are the sum of general property taxes, which are the property taxes levied in the previous year and collected in the current year for those on a modified accrual basis of accounting. They include: in lieu of taxes, or those taxes from regulated municipally owned utilities and other exempt entities; tax increment districts, which are the levies for tax increment finance districts; and other taxes, which include room taxes, general sales taxes, interest and penalties, and estate taxes.

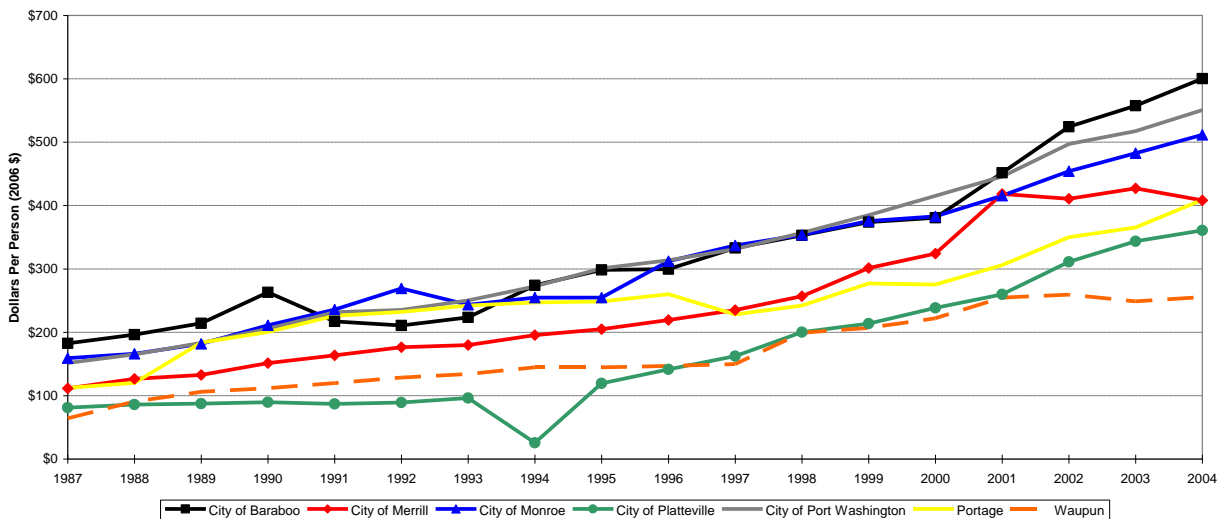
**TOTAL TAXES INDEX
COMPARISON**



Merrill’s total tax revenue (red line) as is depicted in the line graph above rose about 271% over the 18 year period. Every other city with the exception of Monroe had higher percentage increases over the period than did Merrill. Waupun’s total taxes (orange line) rose 396%. The next highest increase was 368% in Platteville. As compared to most of the cities in this study, Merrill seems to have done a relatively good job holding the line on tax increases over these years.

The per capita line graph below shows that Merrill collected significantly less in 2004 total taxes than did Baraboo, Port Washington, and Monroe (\$408.32 as compared to \$600.36, \$550.74 and \$511.54 respectively). The City of Portage collected nearly the same amount as Merrill. The average amount collected per capita for the entire group was \$442.34.

**PER CAPITA TOTAL TAXES
COMPARISON**



The table below shows 2004 total taxes, 2004 property taxes, and 2004 property taxes as a percentage of the total taxes for each city.

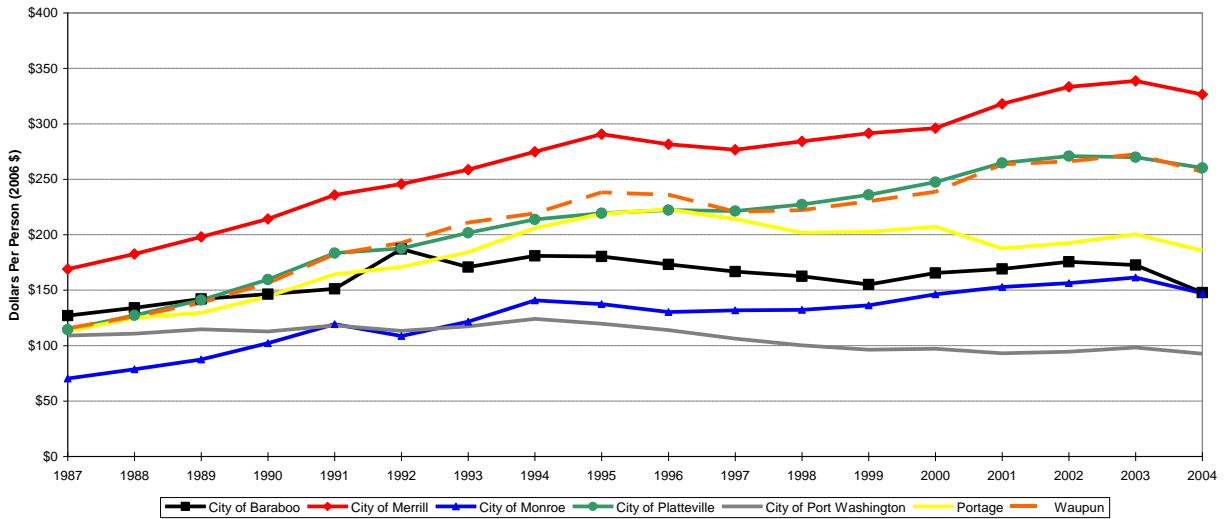
City	Total Tax Per Capita	Property Tax Per Capita	Percent of Property Tax as part of Total Tax
Merrill	\$408.32	\$357.02	87.4%
Baraboo	600.36	432.85	72.1%
Monroe	511.54	471.48	92.2%
Platteville	360.77	315.00	87.3%
Port Washington	550.74	387.90	70.4%
Portage	408.91	372.81	91.2%
Waupun	255.74	178.56	69.8%

According to this table, both Monroe and Portage depended more heavily on property taxes during that year than did Merrill. However, Merrill depended much more heavily on property taxes based on percent of total taxes than three other cities in the study and slightly more than another.

The city's shared revenue allocation as a percent of total revenues decreased from 35.1% in 1990 to 23.6% in 2004, a decline of 11.5% (see Revenue Shares charts on pages 9 and 10). Other cities throughout the state, including the ones in this study, have experienced similar percentage cuts, leading them for the most part to diversify their revenue sources.

However, as the line graph at the top of page 14 shows, state shared revenue in terms of per capita dollars have over time for most of the cities either gone up or stayed roughly the same. Merrill's per capita shared revenues increased from about \$168 in 1987 to approximately \$327 in 2004. Throughout the period, Merrill had the highest per capita shared revenue figures. The City of Platteville, which had the second highest overall per capita rate, acquired \$67 less per resident in 2004 than did Merrill. Port Washington received only about \$93 per capita in 2004 state shared revenues.

**PER CAPITA STATE SHARED REVENUES
COMPARISON**

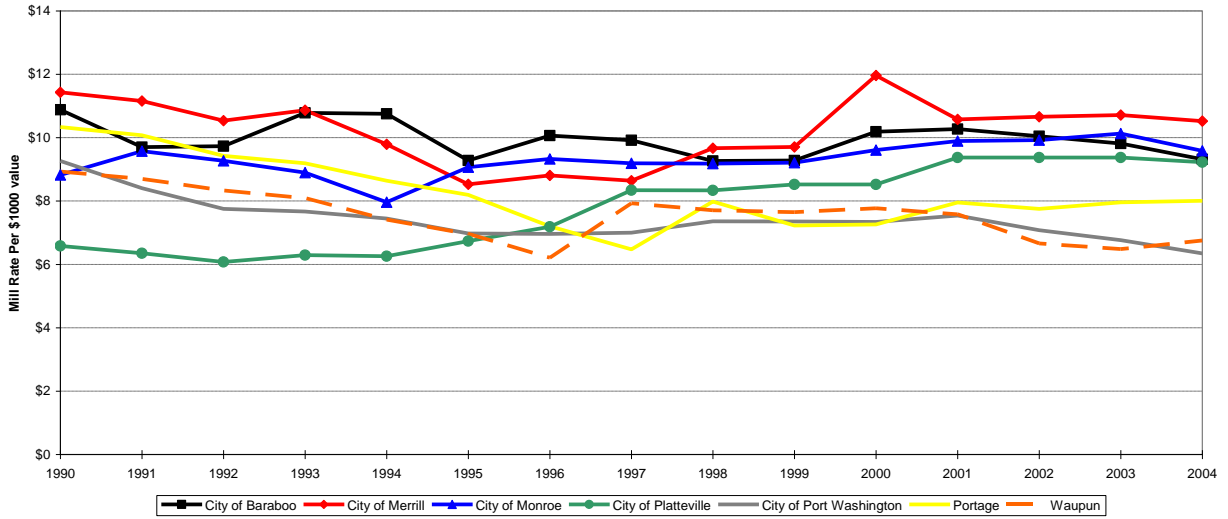


IV. Property Valuation

Property Values consist of the value of real property, or land, and improvement value, or those elements (pools, buildings, roads, etc.) that enhance the use of the land and the property.

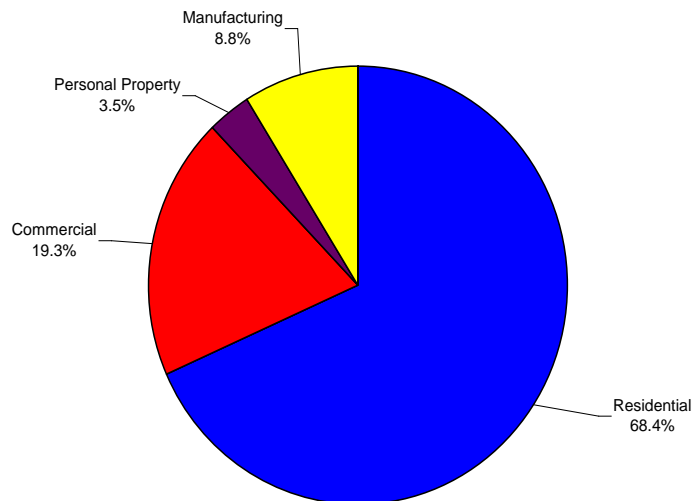
At the top of page 15 is a line graph comparing Merrill’s tax mill rate (gross tax levy amount divided by the equalized property value amount multiplied by \$1,000) with the mill rates of the other cities in this study. Since 1998, Merrill’s mill rate (red line) has been consistently higher than any of the other cities’ rates. In 2004, Merrill’s rate was \$10.52 per \$1,000 of property value. Monroe had the next highest rate of \$9.59 per \$1,000 of property value.

**LOCAL TAX MILL RATE
COMPARISON**



The pie chart below depicts total valuation for property within Merrill in 2005. Property classes include residential, commercial, personal property and manufacturing. Definitions for each class are provided at the top of page 16.

**EQUALIZED VALUE BY CLASS - 2005
CITY OF MERRILL**



The **Residential** class includes all land and improvements to land that are made where people live. This includes apartment complexes of three or less units, single family dwellings, condominiums, time share units used as residences, and mobile homes assessed as real property. Vacant land that does not meet the definition of agricultural use and that will likely be used for residential development is also included in this class.

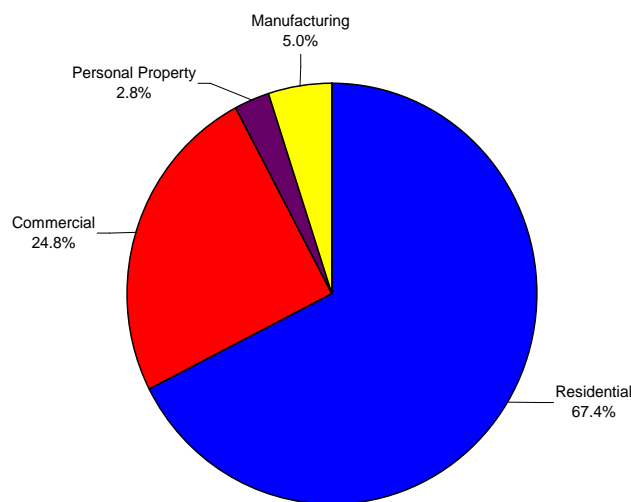
Commercial property includes land and improvements that are used as places where either goods or services are sold. Resorts, motels, hotels, apartment buildings of four or more units, and mobile home courts are included in this class. Vacant land that will likely be used for commercial development is also included in this class.

Personal property includes watercraft, furniture, machinery, tools, patterns, mobile homes in parks or courts, and buildings on forest land. It also includes items not exempt under property taxation. Items that fall under this class in the database are either equalized valuation by the assessor (EVA) or state assessed manufacturing property (SAM).

Manufacturing property includes land and improvements used for processing, assembling, fabricating, making or milling items for profit. Any other building that is used to support manufacturing activities such as offices, storage facilities, and warehouses are included under this property classification.

The pie chart below shows the average per class equalized value of all the other cities combined. Comparing the two pie charts, Merrill has significantly less commercial value

EQUALIZED VALUE BY CLASS - 2005
ONLY SIMILAR CITIES POPULATION 9,000 TO 11,000



than the combined average of the other cities (19.3% versus 24.8%). Residential value in Merrill as a percentage of total value and the average residential value in other cities is about the same. The other cities have less manufacturing property value as a percentage of total value on average than does Merrill (5% versus 8.8%).

The tables starting below compare equalized value figures for the cities in each property category in the years 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2005. Per capita charts showing the amount of valuation in the particular category follow.

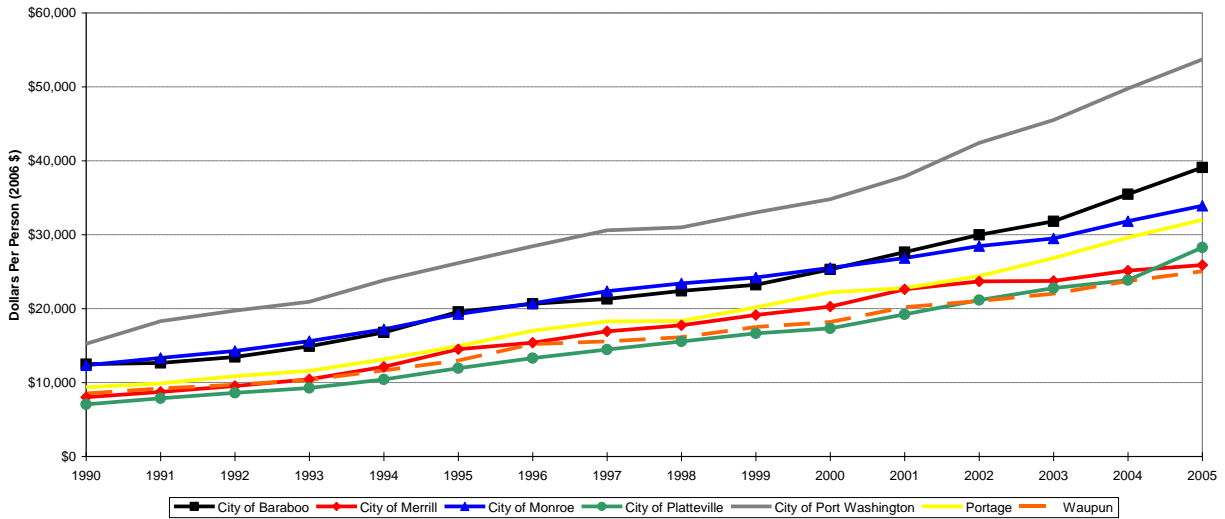
Residential

	1990	1995	2000	2005
City				
Merrill	63.4%	67.2%	68.5%	65.9%
Baraboo	65.0%	68.8%	65.4%	63.9%
Monroe	58.7%	60.5%	62.2%	64.1%
Platteville	62.9%	66.6%	65.8%	65.9%
Port Washington	69.1%	72.8%	72.0%	75.5%
Portage	56.4%	62.2%	57.2%	59.1%
Waupun	76.0%	77.4%	76.6%	77%

In 2005, Merrill had the second lowest residential property figure per capita (see the graph at the top of page 18) compared with the other cities at \$25,885. Only Waupun had a lower per capita amount (\$25,049). As a percent of total value in 2005 (table above), Merrill falls in the middle (average percent = 67.3%). Merrill's total residential property value in 2005 was nearly \$257 million.² Despite having the lowest per capita amount of valuation in this class in 2005, Waupun had the highest percentage of its total property value tied up in residential property.

² Source for total property value figures in all written sections is the "Town, Village, and City Taxes 2005" booklet prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Division of State and Local Finance. Total property value figures exclude values derived from tax incremental financing (TIF) districts.

**PER CAPITA TOTAL RESIDENTIAL
COMPARISON**

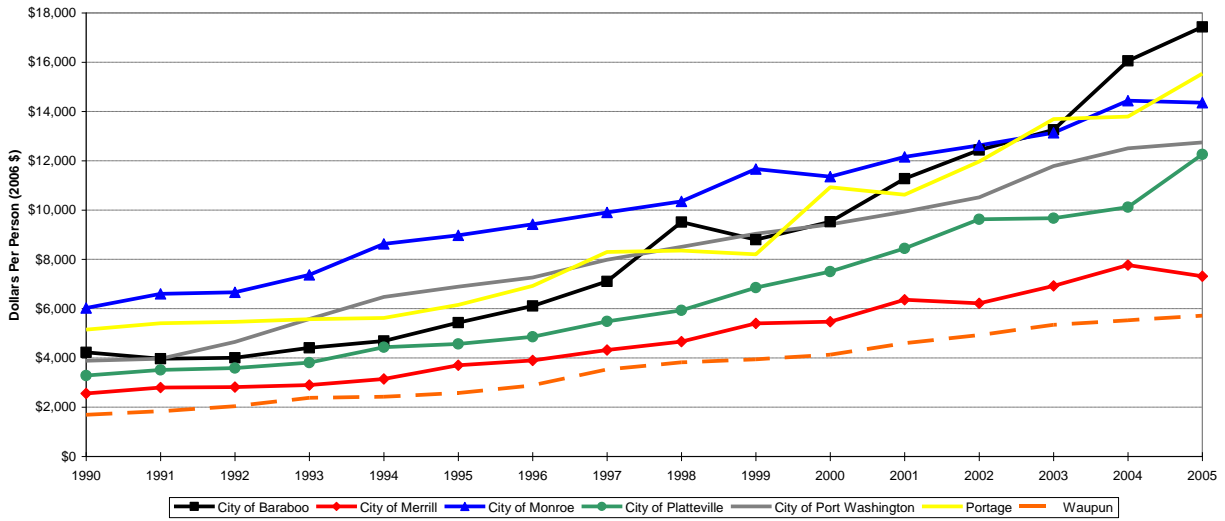


Commercial

City	1990	1995	2000	2005
Merrill	20.2%	17.1%	18.5%	19.3%
Baraboo	22.0%	19.1%	24.6%	28.5%
Monroe	28.7%	28.2%	27.7%	27.1%
Platteville	29.2%	25.5%	28.5%	28.6%
Port Washington	17.6%	19.2%	19.5%	17.9%
Portage	31.0%	25.6%	28.1%	28.7%
Waupun	15.1%	15.4%	17.4%	17.6%

Merrill’s commercial property value over time, as both the table and the per capita line graph at the top of page 19 imply, has lagged behind most of the other cities in the study with exception of Waupun. In 2005, Merrill’s per capita commercial valuation was about \$7,311. The City of Baraboo (black line) had a per capita commercial valuation of roughly \$17,433. Merrill’s total commercial property value in that same year approached \$76 million. In comparison, Baraboo’s total commercial property value was just over \$181 million. That city’s close proximity to Wisconsin Dell’s and other tourist sites such as Devil’s Lake make it a prime location for commercial development.

**PER CAPITA TOTAL COMMERCIAL
COMPARISON**

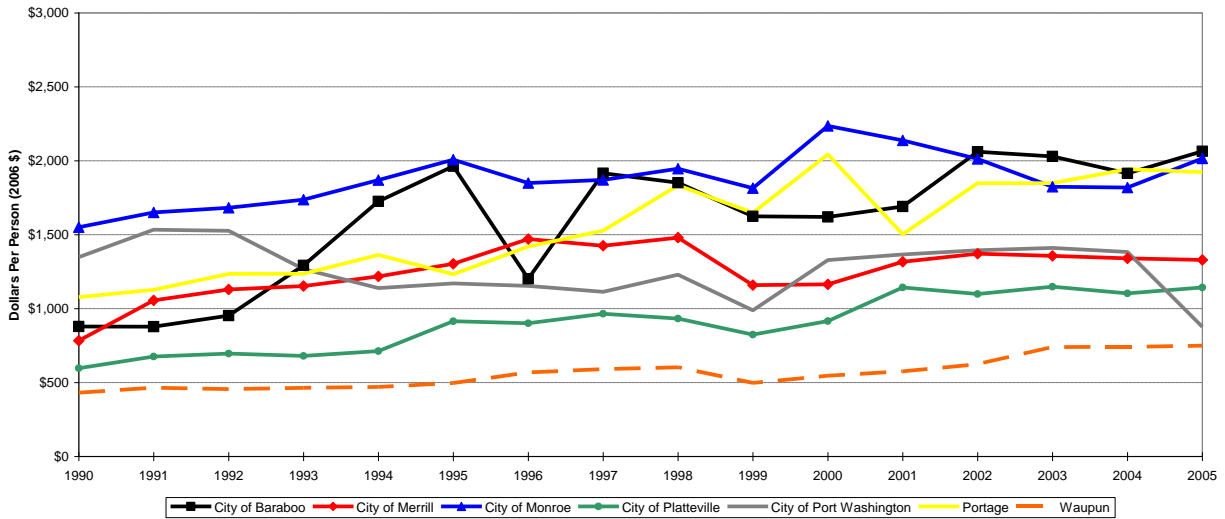


Personal Property

City	1990	1995	2000	2005
Merrill	6.2%	6%	3.9%	3.5%
Baraboo	4.6%	6.9%	4.2%	3.4%
Monroe	7.4%	6.3%	5.4%	3.8%
Platteville	5.3%	5.1%	3.5%	2.7%
Port Washington	6.1%	3.3%	2.7%	1.2%
Portage	6.5%	5.1%	5.3%	3.6%
Waupun	3.8%	3.0%	2.3%	2.3%

Merrill's per capita personal property values (top of page 20) were about \$161 over the average for all the cities in 2005 (average = \$1,329.74). Total per capita personal property value for Merrill in 2005 was approximately \$13.6 million.

**PER CAPITA TOTAL PERSONAL PROPERTY
COMPARISON**

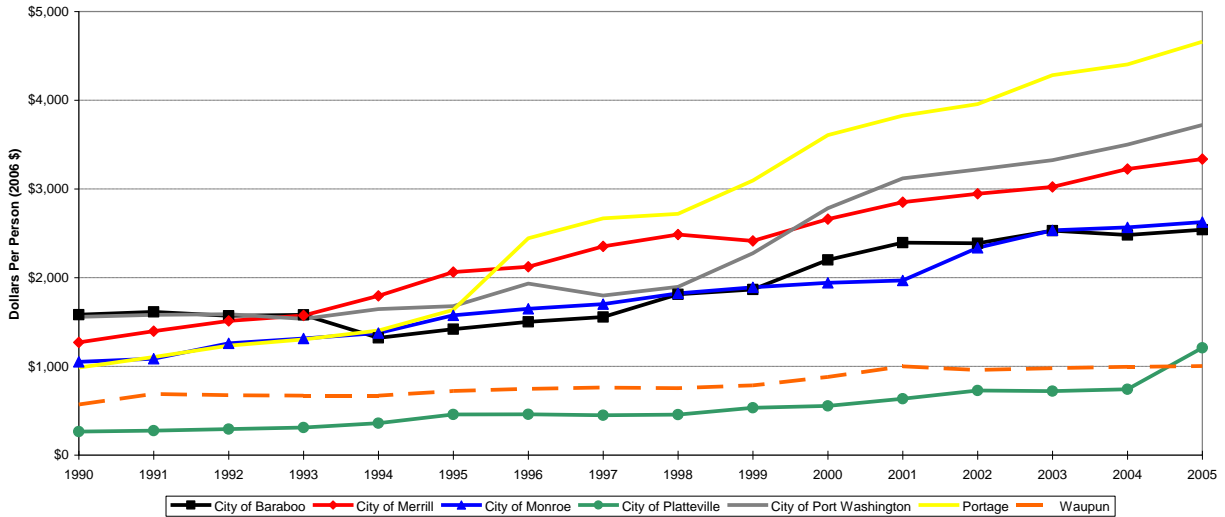


Manufacturing

City	1990	1995	2000	2005
Merrill	10.1%	9.6%	9.0%	8.8%
Baraboo	8.2%	5.0%	5.7%	4.2%
Monroe	5.0%	4.9%	4.7%	5.0%
Platteville	2.4%	2.6%	2.1%	2.8%
Port Washington	7.1%	4.7%	5.8%	5.2%
Portage	5.9%	6.8%	9.3%	8.6%
Waupun	5.1%	4.3%	3.7%	3.1%

Of all the cities in the study, the table above shows that Merrill had the highest percentage of property value as a part of total value tied up in manufacturing property throughout time (with the exception of 2000; Portage). The graph at the top of page 21 shows that Merrill ranked third in per capita manufacturing property value in 2005. At various times during the period from 1990 to 2005, the city ranked either first, second or third in this category. It dipped to a third place ranking beginning in 2000. Merrill's per capita manufacturing value in 2005 was nearly \$3,340. Portage's (yellow line) was almost \$4,460. Total manufacturing property value in 2005 for Merrill was just over \$34 million. Portage's manufacturing property value in that same year was about \$47.

**PER CAPITA TOTAL MANUFACTURING
COMPARISON**



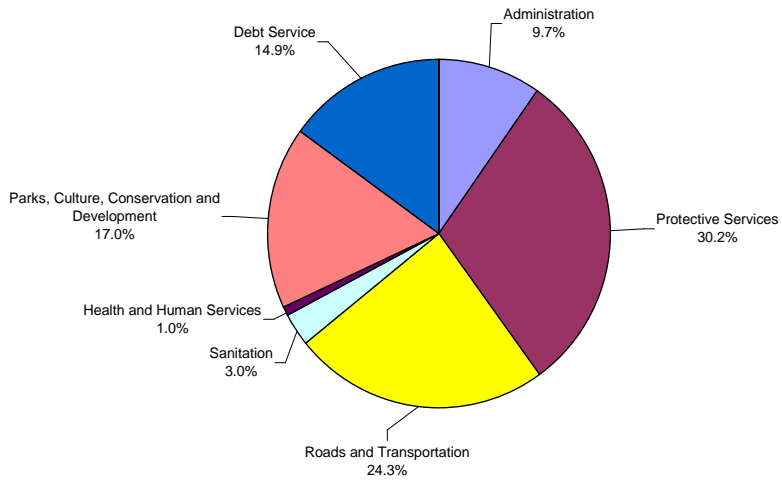
Total Valuation Table

City	Value
Merrill	\$389,885,100
Baraboo	\$635,593,700
Monroe	\$567,121,200
Platteville	\$423,132,100
Port Washington	\$699,113,200
Portage	\$543,636,100
Waupun	\$181,530,200

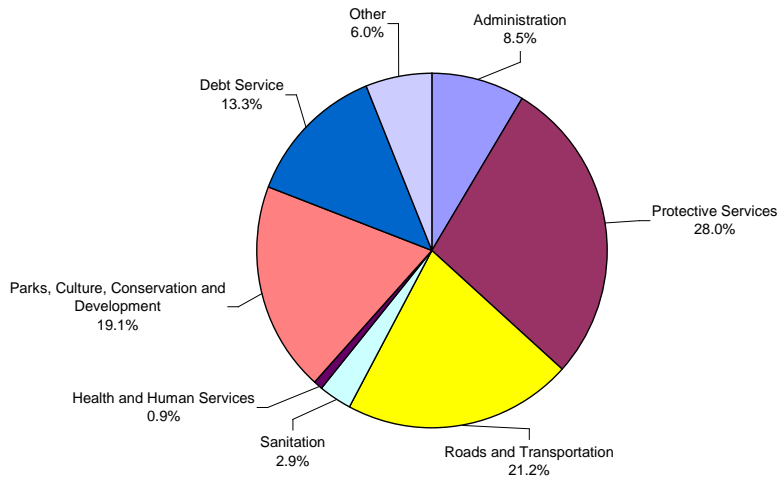
V. Expenditures

The pie charts beginning on page 22 show how Merrill and the comparison cities (average) spent their revenues in 2004. The charts indicate that Merrill spent roughly the same as the other cities did on average in the various categories with the exception of the “other” designation.

**EXPENDITURE SHARES - 2004
CITY OF MERRILL**

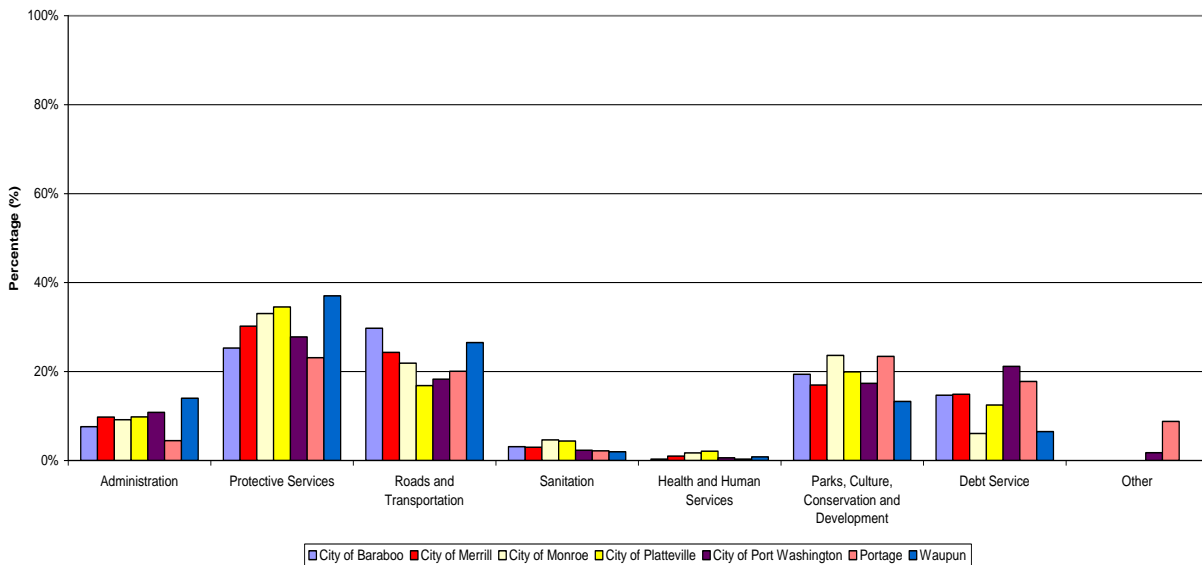


**EXPENDITURE SHARES - 2004
ONLY SIMILAR CITIES POPULATION 9,000 TO 11,000**



The bar chart below compares Merrill’s expenditures in 2004 to spending in each city. All the cities had minimal spending in the Health and Human Services area (county/state responsibility). Protective services was the area of highest spending, with Merrill spending the fourth highest amount of all the cities (30.2%). Waupun spent the most of its total revenue in this category (37%). Merrill spent 9.7% of its revenue on administrative functions. Waupun also spent the most of its total revenue expressed in percentage terms in this category (14%). Merrill also spent 24.3% of its total revenues on roads and transportation, third highest.

EXPENDITURE SHARES - 2004
COMPARISON



The tables directly below show expenditure shares from 1990 through 2004 in mostly five year increments for each of the cities. Data for 2005 is not yet available.

Administration

	1990	1995	2000	2004
City				
Merrill	11.5%	6.8%	9.2%	9.7%
Baraboo	10.1%	8.9%	7.0%	7.6%
Monroe	9.0%	9.5%	9.4%	9.1%
Platteville	13.2%	9.5%	9.2%	9.8%
Port Washington	11.2%	8.4%	7.5%	10.8%
Portage	5.0%	8.3%	5.6%	4.5%
Waupun	14.4%	12.5%	10.3%	14.0%

Protective Services

		1990	1995	2000	2004
City					
Merrill		31.2%	26.8%	33.8%	30.2%
Baraboo		22.3%	22.3%	20.2%	25.3%
Monroe		36.0%	29.6%	28.2%	33.0%
Platteville		33.2%	30.0%	34.7%	34.5%
Port Washington		31.1%	37.9%	22.2%	27.8%
Portage		16.6%	35.2%	28.3%	23.1%
Waupun		20.4%	34.2%	29.7%	37.0%

Roads and Transportation

		1990	1995	2000	2004
City					
Merrill		24.7%	24.4%	26.8%	24.3%
Baraboo		23.9%	31.6%	34.5%	29.7%
Monroe		29.6%	34.7%	27.6%	21.9%
Platteville		16.7%	12.2%	17.5%	16.9%
Port Washington		18.1%	23.7%	18.7%	18.3%
Portage		12.7%	24.9%	35.5%	20.0%
Waupun		36.1%	30.0%	38.5%	26.5%

Sanitation

		1990	1995	2000	2004
City					
Merrill		5.5%	4.8%	3.2%	3.0%
Baraboo		7.7%	9.7%	6.3%	3.1%
Monroe		13.5%	7.4%	9.0%	4.6%
Platteville		4.2%	6.7%	4.6%	4.4%
Port Washington		10.2%	4.4%	2.1%	2.3%
Portage		0%	0%	2.7%	2.2%
Waupun		4.9%	2.9%	2.3%	2.0%

Health & Human Services

		1990	1995	2000	2004
City					
Merrill		0.5%	0.6%	1.7%	1.0%
Baraboo		0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Monroe		0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	1.7%
Platteville		1.4%	1.5%	1.7%	2.1%
Port Washington		0.1%	0.8%	0.5%	0.6%
Portage		0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%
Waupun		0.1%	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%

Parks, Culture, Conservation & Development

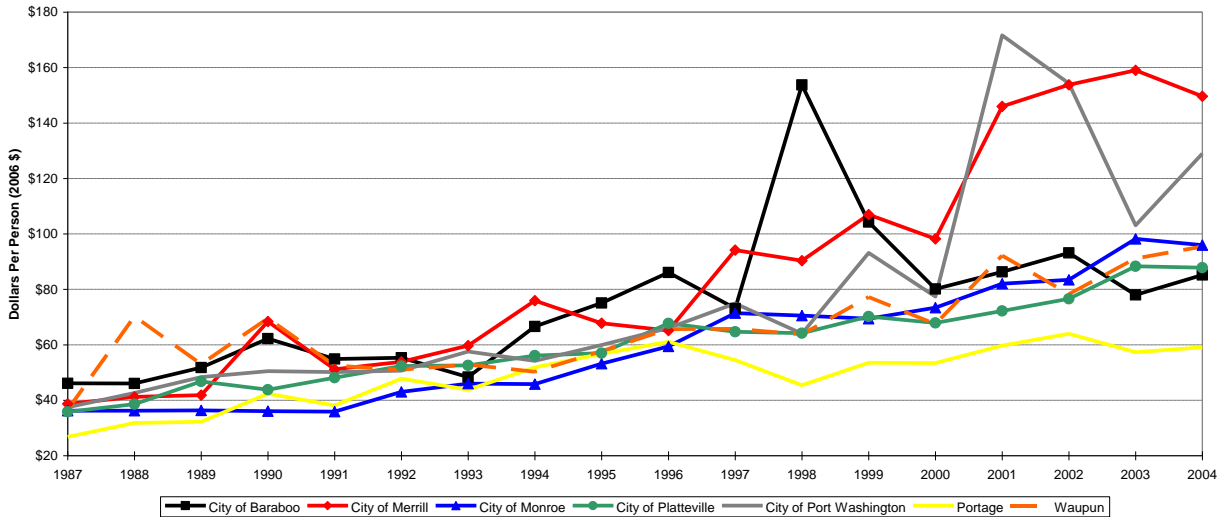
		1990	1995	2000	2004
City					
Merrill		20.6%	30.0%	19.4%	17.0%
Baraboo		24.2%	17.8%	14.6%	19.4%
Monroe		9.1%	13.1%	21.3%	23.6%
Platteville		18.9%	35.4%	21.2%	19.9%
Port Washington		16.8%	14.3%	35.0%	17.3%
Portage		5.7%	18.3%	13.0%	23.4%
Waupun		18.4%	12.1%	9.4%	13.3%

Debt Service

		1990	1995	2000	2004
City					
Merrill		6.0%	6.3%	5.7%	14.9%
Baraboo		6.8%	9.4%	17.0%	14.7%
Monroe		2.6%	5.6%	3.1%	6.0%
Platteville		12.3%	4.7%	11.0%	12.5%
Port Washington		12.1%	10.5%	13.9%	21.1%
Portage		27.7%	8.5%	6.7%	17.7%
Waupun		5.7%	7.8%	7.9%	6.5%

The following line graphs show per capita expenditures for all the cities in selected departments/categories. Category definitions are provided in grey. A summary focusing on highlights of each graph is included below the definitions.

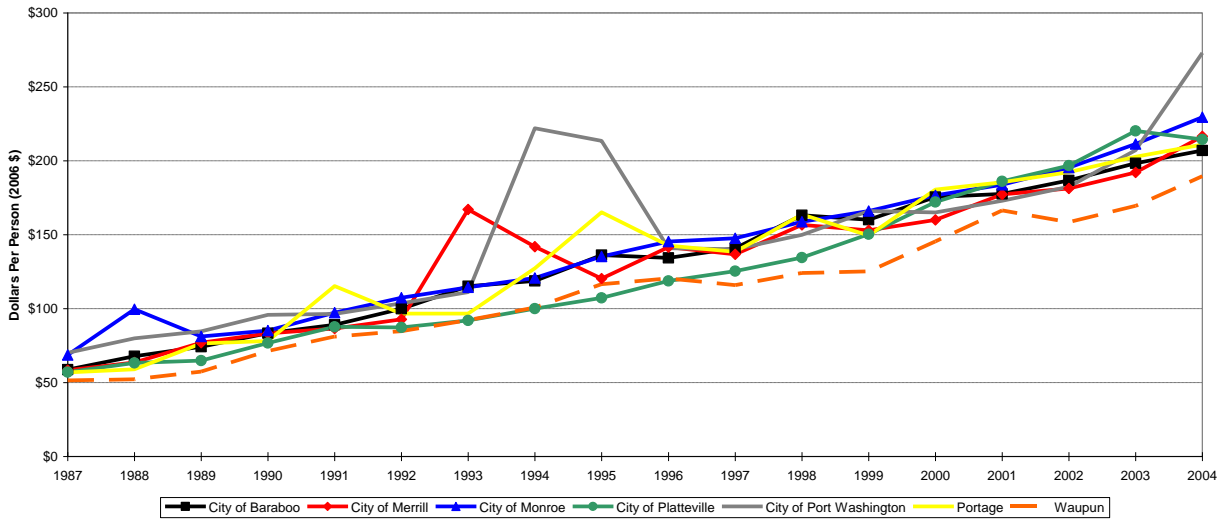
**PER CAPITA GENERAL GOVERNMENT
COMPARISON**



General government expenditures include all costs related to operating and supporting the activities of the county board, treasurer, assessor, accounting, administration, elections, legal counsel, municipal court, municipal buildings, purchasing, risk and property management, judgments and losses, uncollectible taxes and special assessments, and unallocated insurance.

In the area of general government, Merrill spent more per capita than any of the comparison cities in 2004 at nearly \$150 per person. From 1994 through 2004, the city was usually either first or second in spending in this category. Portage was consistently the lowest spender from 1996 through 2004. In 2004, Portage spent just over \$59 per capita on general government related expenses.

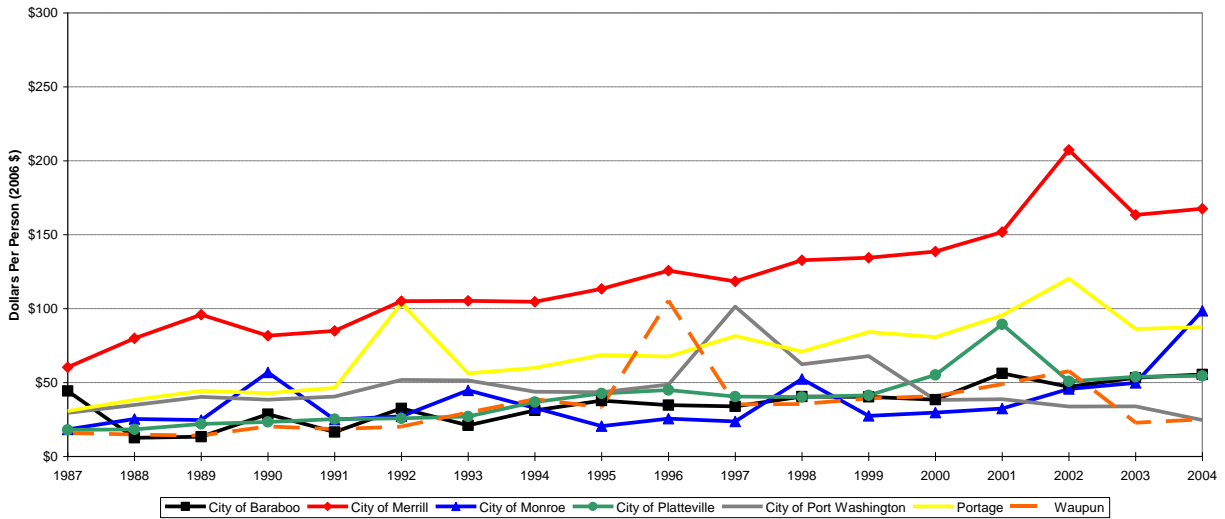
**PER CAPITA LAW ENFORCEMENT
COMPARISON**



Law enforcement includes operating expenses and capital outlays for all law enforcement related activities and services including criminal investigation, officer training, school crossing guards, criminal investigations, community relations, crime prevention (e.g. DARE), traffic patrol, snow mobile law enforcement, communication services, and water safety patrol.

In 2004, most of the cities outlined in this study spent between \$204 and \$237 per person on law enforcement related activities. Merrill spent about \$217 per capita. Waupun spent the least in this category, almost \$190, while Port Washington spent the most at nearly \$273 per person. Throughout most of the 18 year period, steady increases in spending by all the cities was the rule rather than the exception. Merrill's spending over the period rose 277% during the 18 year period.

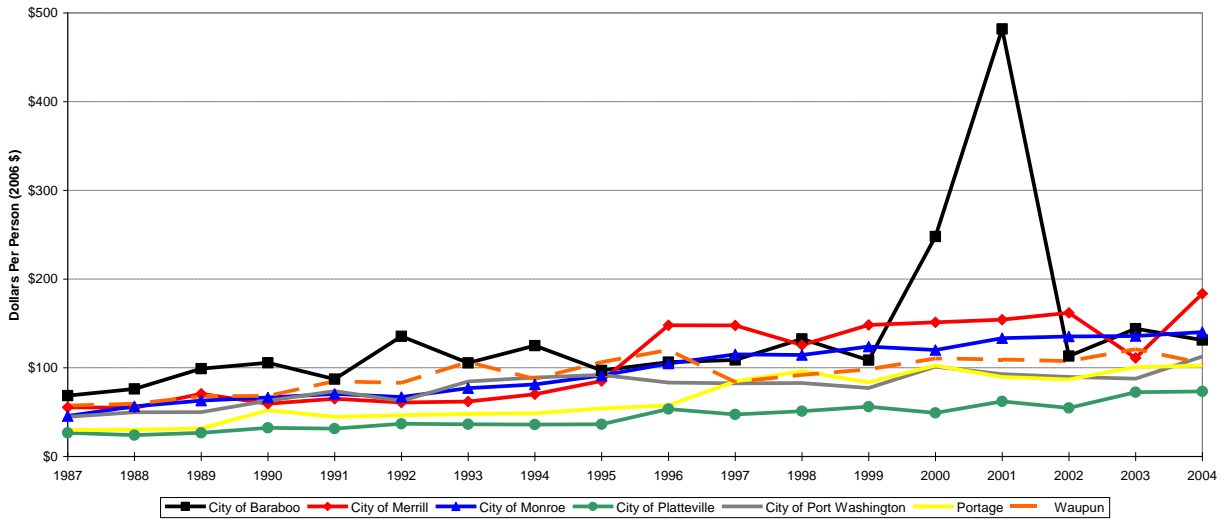
**PER CAPITA FIRE EXPENDITURES
COMPARISON**



Fire expenditures include the operating expenditures and capital outlay for fire protection and related services, such as training, fire inspections, investigation of fire losses, hydrant rental payments to utilities, education, fire signs, and fire fighting.

Merrill’s average per capita fire expenditures were consistently higher than any of the other cities’ expenditures in the category over the 18 period. In 2004, Merrill spent nearly \$168 in fire protection, nearly 42% more than Monroe, the next highest city on the list.

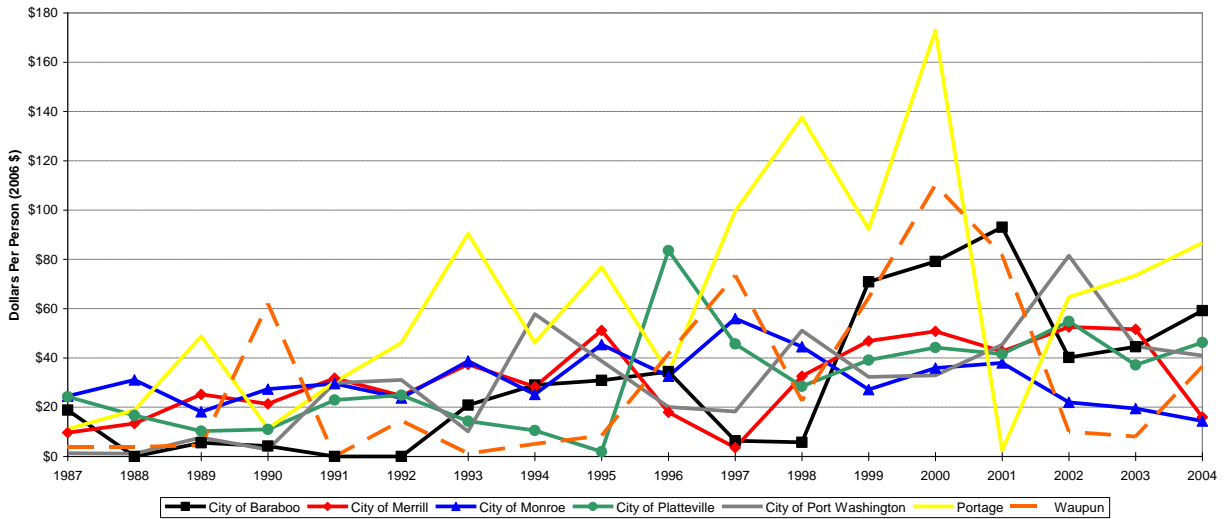
**PER CAPITA HIGHWAY MAINT AND ADM
COMPARISON**



Highway Maintenance and Administrative expenditures are related to highway equipment and buildings, maintenance, and engineering. Equipment depreciation is also included. At least some of these expenditures may depend on things beyond the county's control such as the amount of snow received in a given year which varies from region to region and even city to city.

From 1996 through 2004, with the exception of 1998, 2001 and 2003, Merrill spent more per capita in this category than any other city in the study. In 2004, the city spent about \$183 per capita. Platteville (green line) spent about \$73 per person.

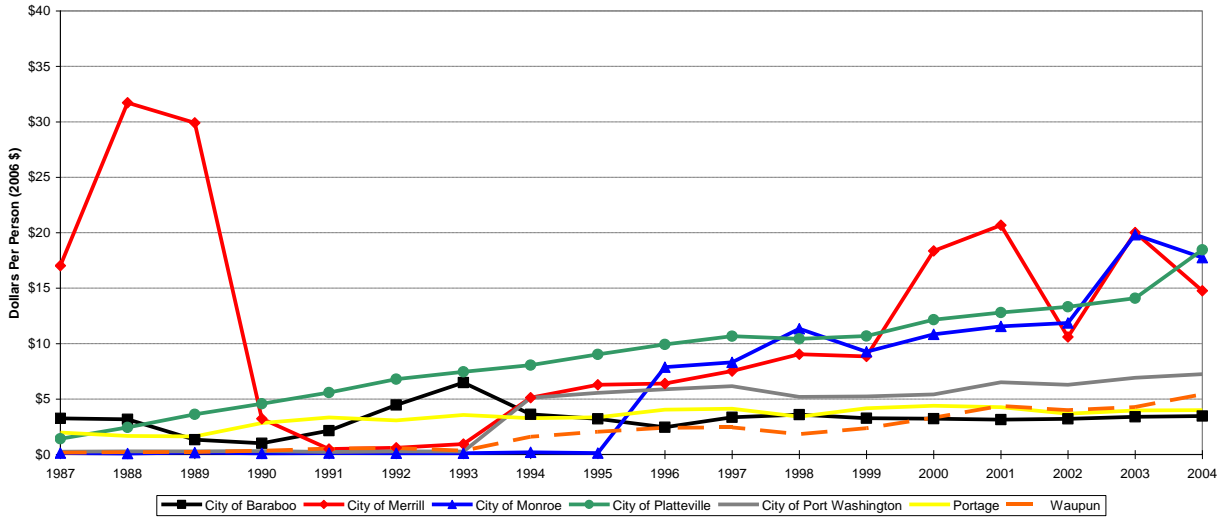
**PER CAPITA HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION
COMPARISON**



Highway Construction includes all operating and capital outlay expenditures for highway construction related projects.

Highway construction expenditures fluctuated greatly for most of the cities in the study throughout the 18 year period. In 2002 and 2003, Merrill spent about \$52 per person on highway construction related activities. The spending dipped to around \$16 per person in 2004. That figure, along with what was spent by the City of Monroe in that year, was the lowest of any of the cities represented in the graph.

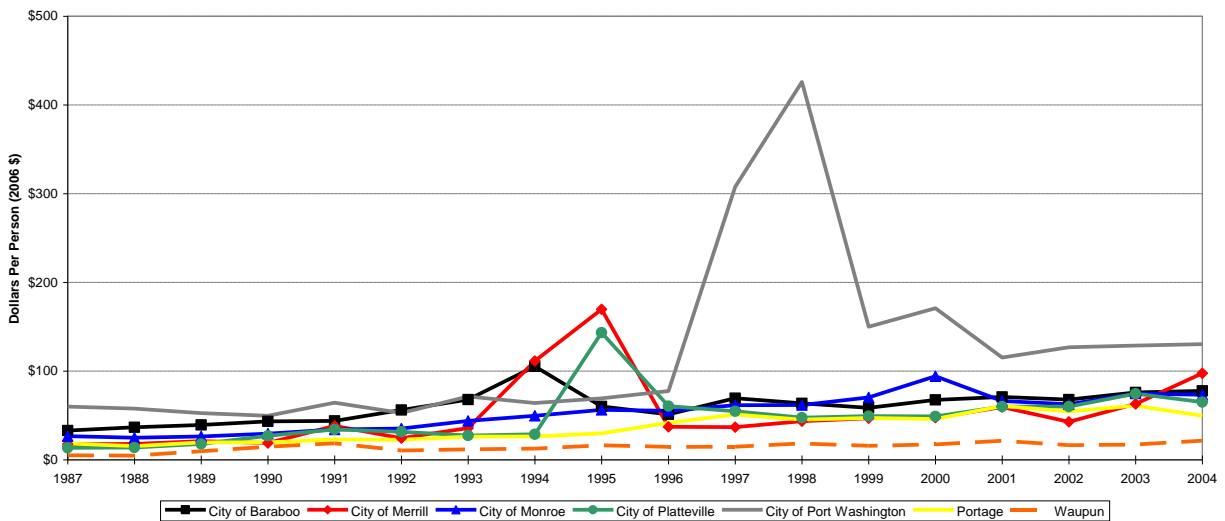
**PER CAPITA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMPARISON**



*Included in the graph above (**Health and Human Services**) are capital outlays and operating expenses for mental health programs, health officers, health inspections, cemeteries, institution care, social programs, animal shelters and control, aging and veterans programs, general relief, and social programs.*

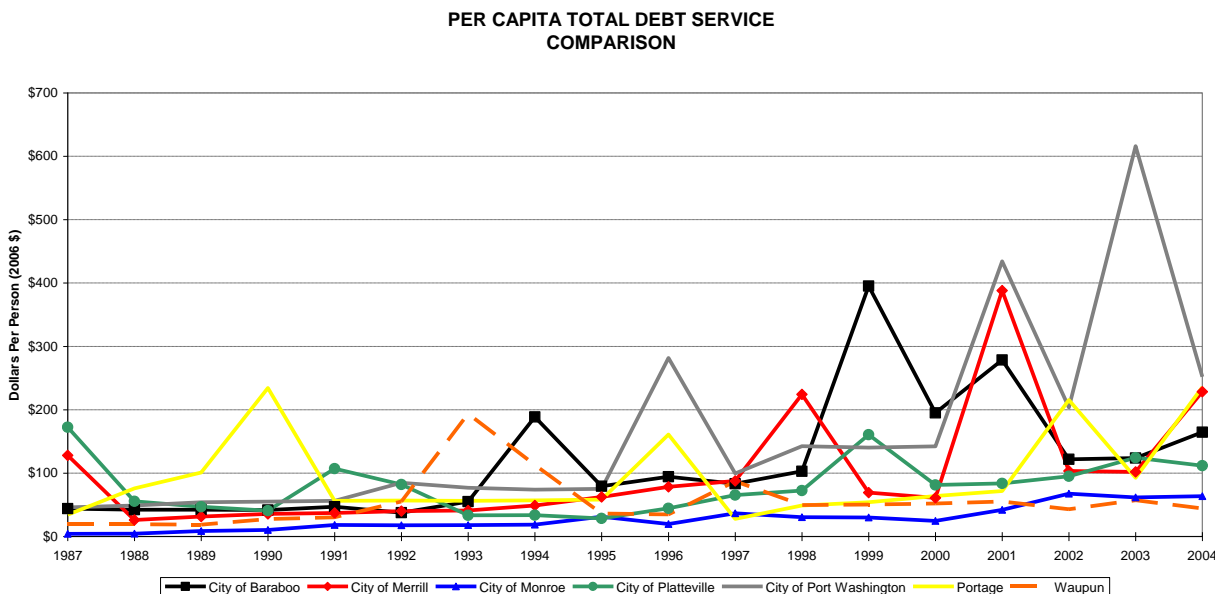
Merrill spent nearly \$15 per person in 2004. Merrill's expenditures in this category fluctuated far more than any other city's.

**PER CAPITA PARKS AND RECREATION
COMPARISON**



*The **Parks and Recreation** graph depicts capital outlays and operating costs for recreation programs, summer baseball leagues, swimming lessons, holiday decorations and parades, and recreation facilities like pools, ice skating rinks, and baseball diamonds, parks, and zoos.*

Merrill spent close to \$97 per capita on parks and recreation related expenses in 2004, second only to Port Washington's \$130 per capita expenditure. The other cities spent anywhere from about \$21 (Waupun) to \$77 (Baraboo).



*The **Debt Service** graph shows spending which is the sum of the principal, interest, and fiscal charges on governmental fund type debt.*

Beginning in 1998, Merrill's debt service payments have peaked every three years. In 1998, the debt service payment per person in Merrill was about \$224. The per capita payment rose to about \$388 in 2001. In 2004, the payment was about \$228. Only the cities of Port Washington and Portage had higher per capita debt service amounts in 2004.

VI. Conclusion

This report is meant to provide only a snapshot of major revenue, property value, and expenditures trends in , Merrill, Wisconsin. As was mentioned in the introduction, it is likely the report will raise many more questions than it answers.

Additional, more focused reports can be generated using the GREAT Database and other information from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. These reports may be generated upon request.

Questions about this report should be directed to Art Lersch, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin – Extension, Lincoln County. His phone number is 715-536-0304. He may also be reached by e-mail at Arthur.lersch@ces.uwex.edu.