

Town of Gordon

**Comprehensive
Plan: 2006 to 2025**

**Policy
Document**

Adopted by Town Board On: November 15, 2006

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

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Foreword

In 2002, all of the jurisdictions in Ashland County worked in concert to submit a grant to the Wisconsin Land Council to help fund the preparation of comprehensive plans for each consistent with the new planning legislation adopted in 1999. The application was funded in 2003. The County hired Vierbicher Associates to assist with the countywide plan, and plans for 15 of the 16 individual jurisdictions.

Chapter Contents

- ◆ Foreword
- ◆ What is a Comprehensive Plan?
- ◆ How Will This Plan Be Used?
- ◆ Public Participation and Adoption Process
- ◆ Organization of Plan Documents
- ◆ Plan Monitoring and Amendment
- ◆ Community Survey
- ◆ Previous Local Planning Efforts
- ◆ Statewide and Regional Plans

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a document that describes a long-term vision that a community wants to achieve. It is a broad brush look at the entire community in terms of where it is now and where it would like to be in the coming years. It looks at the many parts of the community, how the community functions, and its role in the region.

The future vision is depicted with maps showing future conditions and with goals, objectives, and policies. Tasks and activities are also identified that need to be achieved to help implement the plan. By law, this comprehensive plan must look out at least 20 years.

“A comprehensive plan is intended to provide a rational basis for making local land use decisions and to serve as a blueprint for community-wide effort to achieve its vision.”

Having described what a comprehensive plan is, it’s also appropriate to describe what a comprehensive plan is not. Because a comprehensive plan is strategic in scope, it does not focus on physical design elements. It does not design a park for example, although the plan may identify a need for the park and prescribe some parameters for creating one. Neither is a comprehensive plan an engineering document intended to fix safety problems at a particular road intersection, for example. The fine details of design and engineering and many others will flow from the basic direction described in the plan.



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How Will This Plan Be Used?

Prior to the passage of the comprehensive planning legislation in 1999, most comprehensive plans in Wisconsin were not used as intended. In practice, many communities used their plans sporadically and inconsistently. Other plans were soon forgotten following adoption.

After January 1, 2010, land use decisions including zoning, subdivision regulations, and official mapping will have to be consistent with this plan (Exhibit 1-1). This means that land use regulations of these types must be revised or prepared so as to implement the vision articulated in this plan. Not only do the regulations have to be consistent with the plan, all individual decisions affecting land use must be consistent with the plan.

Exhibit 1-1. Governmental Actions that Must be Consistent with a Municipality's Adopted Comprehensive Plan

- | | |
|---|--|
| ◆ | official maps |
| ◆ | zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands |
| ◆ | local subdivision regulations |
| ◆ | zoning regulations |

Source: §66.1001(3), Wis. Stats.

Each rezoning after 2010, by law, has to be consistent with the community's comprehensive plan, including the future land use map.

Public Participation and Adoption Process

Prior to starting the planning process, the town board adopted a public participation plan, consistent with state requirements (§66.1001(4)a, Wis. Stats), to document the ways town residents would be involved in the preparation, review, and approval of the plan.

Preparation and adoption of this plan occurred over a 36-month period. The town board established an advisory planning committee and gave it the responsibility of developing the first draft of the plan. After the committee finished its work, it submitted a draft plan to the town's plan commission, which by statute must adopt a resolution recommending it to the town board. The plan commission reviewed the draft as prepared by the committee and made changes prior to sending it to the town board with its recommendation. The town board adopted the plan by ordinance, a copy of which is included as Appendix A. Following plan adoption, a copy of the adopted plan was mailed to the surrounding governmental entities, Wisconsin Department of Administration, and others as required by state law.

A county oversight committee was also established and consulted throughout the planning process. The oversight committee's role was to oversee the county-wide planning process, and to ensure that the individual jurisdiction comprehensive plans included a regional perspective.



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Organization of Plan Documents

The comprehensive plan for Ashland County, as well as each individual jurisdiction, consists of two documents. The first document is the background report. It contains information that describes what is and what has been. It is organized into the following chapters:

- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Utilities and Community Facilities
- ◆ Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Intergovernmental Cooperation
- ◆ Land Use
- ◆ Demographics

The second document is referred to as the policy document. It focuses on future conditions including:

- ◆ Community Vision
- ◆ Goals, Objectives, and Policies
- ◆ Plan-Based Forecasts
- ◆ Future Land Use
- ◆ Future Transportation
- ◆ Future Utilities & Community Facilities

Collectively, the background document and policy document constitute the comprehensive plan.

Plan Monitoring and Amendment

From time to time, it will become necessary to amend this plan. The specific details regarding the amendment process are outlined in the last chapter.

Community Survey

A written questionnaire was sent to a random sample of households in the county during fall 2003, in an effort to collect resident opinions and preferences on a number of important questions relating to the preparation of this plan.

The survey consisted of four pages and included approximately 20 questions. Sixteen of the questions were standard questions asked of the entire county sample, while the remaining questions were specific to the community that the respondent lived in. Of the 1,800 surveys that were mailed out, there was a response rate of 32 percent. Survey results were used to fashion this plan's long-term vision. A copy of the summary report is on file with the town clerk.



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Previous Local Planning Efforts

The Town of Gordon currently does not have a comprehensive plan or master plan.

Statewide and Regional Plans

A number of statewide policy plans have also been prepared (Exhibit 1-2). Each of these was reviewed as part of this planning effort. These will be discussed in more detail in the remainder of the plan when appropriate.

Exhibit 1-2. Statewide Plans: 1994 to 2004

Title	State Agency	Year
<i>Translink 21</i>	Department of Transportation	1994
<i>Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan: 2020</i>	Department of Transportation	1998
<i>Midwest Regional Rail System</i>	Department of Transportation	2000
<i>Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020</i>	Department of Transportation	2000
<i>Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020</i>	Department of Transportation	2000
<i>State Recreational Trails Network Plan</i>	Department of Transportation	2001
<i>Wisconsin Pedestrian Plan</i>	Department of Transportation	2001
<i>Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2000-2005</i>	Department of Natural Resources	2000
<i>State Rail Plan</i>	Department of Transportation	Pending
<i>Wisconsin Consolidated Housing Plan; 2000-2005</i>	Department of Administration and Department of Commerce	2000
<i>Wisconsin Historic Preservation Plan; 2001-2005</i>	Wisconsin Historical Society	2001
<i>State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan</i>	Wisconsin Emergency Management	2001



Community Vision and Plan Implementation

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Introduction

As most travelers know, it's a good thing to know where you're going and generally how to get there. While an adventurous traveler may relish the unknown, a community can't leave its future to happenstance. It takes a lot of hard work to maintain a high quality of life.

Healthy communities don't just happen – it takes commitment and hard work to develop and sustain them.

And it all starts with a clear vision.

It will guide capital expenditures made by the Town Board and the various town departments.

It will also help give direction to a wide range of non-governmental organizations providing services within the community. It will guide the formation (or revision) of land development regulations, including zoning regulations.

Chapter Contents

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Plan Implementation

This part of the plan provides a vision that will help to avoid the tyranny of small decisions. The town's vision as shown in the inset box is a description of what the town will be like in 20 years. The goals, objectives, and policies listed in this chapter build off of the vision statement.

The information provided in this chapter will help to guide decisions and decision-makers in the coming years. It will guide development occurring in the private sector.

A Vision for the Town of Gordon

In 20 years, the Town sees itself as a community that...

- ◆ has maintained its rural quality of life.
- ◆ has quality, well-paying jobs to sustain growing families.
- ◆ has adequate services (shopping, health care, etc.) for residents to buy locally.

Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Plan Implementation

Goals, objectives, and policies help to put the vision statement into bite-sized pieces and provide additional guidance for decision-makers. A goal is a long-term target that may or may not be achieved, but describes a desired outcome. Objectives are slightly different than goals. Objectives for the most part are measurable and therefore achievable. When an objective is achieved, one can see or sense a difference – something has changed.



Issues and Opportunities

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This part of the plan documents the issues that were considered in the preparation of this policy document. The importance of issues can not be overstated. This whole planning exercise and the resultant plan was issue driven.

Issues can be emerging concerns or old unresolved problems. An issue could be addressed one time, never to reemerge. Or, an issue could never really go away and may always need attention. Issues could range from localized concerns to those that are more global and affect many communities throughout the state and nation. Although the town has limited control over global, national, or statewide events, they are included here to ensure that they are considered and factored in the preparation of this plan to the extent appropriate.

The success of this plan in part rests on identifying relevant issues, prioritizing them for action, and adopting appropriate goals, objectives, and policies to address each.

This chapter also identifies those types of businesses that are compatible with the town's long-term vision.

Chapter Contents	
◆	Introduction
◆	Identification of Issues and Opportunities
◆	Economic Development Approach
-	Desirable Businesses
-	Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses

Identification of Issues and Opportunities

The issues and opportunities listed in this chapter were derived over the course of the planning process and were generated in a number of ways. In fall 2003, a public meeting for the town was conducted. During this meeting, attendees participated in an activity that helped to identify various issues and opportunities in their community. This process involved a brainstorming session to generate a working list of the following issues (Exhibit 3-1).

A community survey was sent to a sample of households in the town to better understand their perceptions and preferences on a range of issues. Many of the questions were designed to solicit input on some of the issues identified in the SWOT analysis and were worded to gauge support for or opposition to various options. The survey results were compiled and summarized in a separate document. Input from that survey is incorporated here and elsewhere in this plan as appropriate.

Over the course of the planning project, a number of public meetings were held to help identify and clarify the list of issues relevant to this plan.



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In contrast, a policy is a statement describing a predetermined position on a particular issue or opportunity. These policy statements are designed to help achieve one or more objectives. Achieving an objective, in whole or in part, will help achieve a stated goal.

Goals
1. Housing
2. Transportation
3. Utilities and Community Facilities
4. Natural Resources
5. Cultural Resources
6. Economic Development
7. Intergovernmental Cooperation
8. Land Use
9. Community Involvement
10. Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation actions are identified here as specific things that should be done to achieve these goals, objectives, and policies.

The town has a lot to do with the quality of life in the community. However, it cannot and should not try to do it all alone. Many other local entities can also help achieve the overall vision for the Town. Churches, civic organizations, the school district, and community leaders, for example, can and do affect the quality of life for town residents.

Given the limited resources these entities have, it will become very important for each of these to look for public/private partnerships whenever they can.

It should be noted that preparation of this plan, and especially the future transportation, and land use maps, implement a many of the goals, objectives, and policies outlined below.

Some of the goals and objectives contained in this chapter can be mapped. These maps identify in broad terms how development should occur in the future and is included in Chapter 5. Once adopted, the maps will form the basis for more specific land development regulations. The future transportation map, also included in Chapter 5, identifies how the transportation network should look by the end of the 20-year planning period.

Taken together, these individual parts will help avoid the “tyranny of small decisions”, which occurs when decisions are made without a view toward the future or without a desired end goal.

This comprehensive plan has been drafted as an integrated whole so that all of the parts are consistent with and support each other and the town’s overall vision. As discussed in chapter 4, much of the plan centers on the anticipated change in the town’s population base. The growth rate and the number of additional housing units certainly have direct implications for the housing stock and also for land use. The future land use map has been fashioned to identify those areas where additional development could occur. Environmental constraints such as wetlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive resources dictate what areas should be left undeveloped or perhaps used in such a way as to preserve the integrity of the resource. In turn, the transportation plan along with the goals, objectives, and policies all support housing and future land use considerations. The same holds true for community facilities and utilities. The presence or absence of certain facilities/services can help to define those areas best suited for development. Economic development strategies recognize the town’s position in the regional economy and accommodate the growing population. Because all of the goals, objectives, and policies are contained in this one chapter, it is possible to ensure consistency by reviewing just a few pages out of the entire plan.



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Goal #1. – Housing: Provide for a variety of housing choices that promote affordable and decent housing for all Town residents.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the quality of the Town's housing stock.
2. Increase cooperation among both public and private agencies to address the provision of affordable housing for residents.
3. Increase the range of affordable housing types and prices in order to meet the needs of the residents.
4. Minimize the environmental impact of residential growth.
5. Maintain a residential growth rate of 1.5 percent per year, which is what the Town experienced between 1990 and 2000.

Policies:

1. Allow only one residential structure, of any kind, per lot of record.
2. Encourage the maintenance of housing units to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of Town residents.
3. Encourage residential development that establishes a variety of lot sizes, dwelling types, densities, and price points.
4. Support residential design with transportation in mind.
5. Work with the County to ensure that the sanitary guidelines under Comm. 83 are being followed.
6. Work with the County to ensure that the standards of the shoreland, wetland, and floodplain overlay zoning districts are being conformed with.
7. Work with County and state agencies to build awareness of housing programs available to Town residents.
8. Match land use intensity with available infrastructure.
9. Match new land uses to adjacent existing uses, structuring transitions between different land use types to minimize any potential conflicts.
10. New development will be encouraged to meet the needs of the Town.
11. Encourage the preservation of existing housing structures to protect the Town's rural character and enhance community health, safety, and welfare.
12. Encourage maintenance of identified historical housing structures to preserve the town's heritage.
13. Manage the location of residential growth.
14. Use the Future Land Use Plan when making development decisions to ensure the availability of land for construction of residential units to meet the projected population demands.
15. Enforce existing housing regulations on a consistent basis.
16. Encourage maintenance of identified historical housing structures to preserve the Town's heritage.



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Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to	to	to	to	
	2010	2015	2020	2025	
1. Develop guidelines (recommendations) for residential development that will maintain the Town's rural character.	X				Plan Commission
2. Create an ordinance that limits residential structures (including mobile homes) to one per lot of record.	X				Plan Commission

Goal # 2 - Transportation: Provide a transportation network that will ensure the safe and efficient movement of individuals and goods, while respecting the quality of life and character of the community.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the natural beauty of the Town's roadways and scenic views to the greatest extent possible
2. Enhance the Town's transportation network for recreational use.

Policies

1. New Town roads shall be built to Town standards.
2. Where feasible, new development shall provide for the potential of recreational modes of transportation.
3. New Town road development should occur in accordance with local, state, and county transportation plan schedules.
4. Appropriate marking, signage and protective devices should be installed where they are needed (especially for ATV designated areas).
5. Compatibility of local, regional and state transportation policies and plans shall be promoted.
6. All driveway culverts shall meet Town standards.
7. Any driveway that accesses a lot of record which either becomes a subdivision or is subsequently divided into five or more lots must convert said driveway into a road meeting all Town road design standards.
8. Encourage Ashland County Aging Unit to continue to pursue alternative methods of providing transportation to the elderly population.
9. Work with area snowmobile clubs to produce and distribute snowmobile maps.
10. Work with the Ashland County Land Conservation Department, the Ashland County Highway Department, WisDOT, and the DNR to implement BMPs when doing transportation work.
11. Pursue state and federal grant funding for snowmobile trails.
12. Involve the public in planning for new ATV and snowmobile trails and in repairing and restoring damaged areas.
13. Continue to work with the National Forest on road maintenance issues.



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Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to	to	to	to	
	2010	2015	2020	2025	
1. Develop guidelines to maintain forest buffers along roads		X			Town Board
2. Plan and budget for the repair and maintenance of existing Town roads.	X	X	X	X	Town Board
3. Create a citizen committee as a means of soliciting input when planning for ATV and snowmobile trails.		As needed			Town Board
4. Work with the County to submit Town road repair requests in a format that is acceptable to the County Highway Commissioner.	X				Town Board, Road Supervisor

Goal #3 – Utilities and Community Facilities: Ensure adequate provision of public services by encouraging development within the Town's capacity to provide such services.

Objectives:

1. Enhance the maintenance of existing public recreational facilities and trails in the Town.
2. Increase coordination of the siting, building, and redevelopment of public facilities and the sharing of public services when possible.
3. Increase use of the book mobile.

Policies:

1. Continue coordination with adjacent jurisdictions to expand upon and/or develop shared facilities and services as needs arise and where cooperation results in cost savings and efficiencies for participating entities.
2. Promote regular coordination meetings with adjacent and nearby municipalities to discuss issues related to facilities and services currently being shared, and to identify other opportunities for beneficial partnerships and sharing of facilities and services.
3. Provide or support basic rural utilities and community facilities that can be economically and efficiently delivered in a rural environment.
4. Encourage residents to volunteer for the fire department and as EMTs for the EMS team.
5. Encourage the development of child care services in and near Glidden.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to	to	to	to	
	2010	2015	2020	2025	
1. None					



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Goal # 4 – Natural Resources: Preserve and protect the Town's natural resource base from potential degradation and contamination.

Objectives:

1. Increase the preservation and protection of environmental corridors for wildlife, water quality values, habitat protection, ecosystem and ecology purposes.
2. Increase collaboration with the Bad River Watershed Association on various projects.
3. Increase protection of the surface and groundwater resources in the Town.
4. Maintain the natural beauty of the Town's roadways and scenic views.

Policies:

1. Support the efforts of state and federal agencies to protect threatened or endangered species if found with the Town limits.
2. Support rural landscapes through agricultural land preservation, conservation development, and other sensitive land use measures.
3. Support the preservation of wetlands for their ecological and hydrological functions.
4. Promote an understanding of and appreciation for the area's historic and cultural landscape.
5. Prevent development in floodplains to protect public safety and water quality, and reduce public costs from flood damage.
6. Support the County's efforts to develop an educational program that includes designing new trail signage to minimize environmental damage from motorized uses.
7. Encourage the area school districts to work with the DNR, and the UWEX to maintain, plan, and manage school forests.
8. Promote and encourage private forestland owners to participate in the Master Woodland Steward Program.
9. Fully consider the impacts of new development on all natural resources.
10. Work with the DNR to help educate the public about the spread of invasive species (esp. Eurasian Water milfoil).
11. Support and assist when appropriate, existing natural resource preservation groups and associations.
12. Encourage the active involvement of the Ashland County Land Conservation Department in the development review process at both the county and local level.
13. Encourage and assist with the planning for and wise management of the Town's natural resource base.
14. Protect floodplains, wetlands, riparian slopes from development, filling, and extractive activities.
15. Protect aquifers.
16. Improve Town road maintenance and construction practices to reduce non-point water pollution.
17. Promote the maintenance of existing public recreational facilities and trails in the Town.
18. Support the formation and participation in lake and river associations.
19. Identify, inventory, and increase the understanding of hydrogeology of the Town.
20. Coordinate with the DNR and the Ashland County Land Conservation Department to ensure that BMPs are being utilized in critical areas that are in need of stabilization and in areas where habitat needs to be preserved.



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21. Work in cooperation with the Ashland County Land Conservation Department to implement its water quality and conservation programs locally, encouraging their use by local residents and property owners.
22. Build a working relationship with local snowmobile and ATV clubs to establish and maintain trails so as to protect both the environment and the safety of those who use them.
23. When reviewing new development, consider the impacts on all natural resources including the potential impacts to:
 - Water quality
 - Habitat and reproduction
 - Ecosystems
 - Movement corridors
 - Endangered and threatened species
 - Aesthetic values
24. Encourage the county to adopt a stormwater and erosion control ordinance to preserve and protect soils and water quality.
25. Explore opportunities for reclamation of abandoned gravel pits.
26. Assist in applying Ashland County's non-metallic mining ordinance to ensure the wise use of available resources incorporating reclamation procedures that will allow for a safe and reusable site.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to	to	to	to	
	2010	2015	2020	2025	
1. Send a letter to the County requesting that the Town have a part in the County's plat review process.	X				Town Board
2. Meet with DNR land managers periodically to understand and assist with the management of the protected areas.			As needed.		Town Board

Goal #5 - Cultural Resources:

Promote and preserve the Town's cultural resource base.

Objective:

1. Increase awareness of local historic properties.
2. Maintain the natural beauty of the Town's roadways and scenic views.



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Policies:

1. Support the identification and designation of eligible national, state, and local historic properties.
2. Encourage the preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
3. Promote and protect local cultural resources.
4. Work with local, regional and state tourism promotional groups such as the Ashland & Bayfield County Tourism, the State Heritage Tourism Council, and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to promote and protect local cultural resources.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to 2010	to 2015	to 2020	to 2025	
1. Contact and meet with the local and/or State Historical Society representatives to better understand programs and opportunities.	X				Plan Commission
2. Develop a sign ordinance to help protect the Town's scenic views.	X				Town Board

Goal #6 - Economic Development: Develop and maintain a strong regional economy that supports residents and the community with services, opportunities, and amenities consistent with the vision of rural living in our scenic area.

Objectives:

1. Expand joint effort marketing programs.
2. Maintain and improve existing home-based businesses.

Policies:

1. Encourage business retention and assist when feasible with expansion.
2. Encourage the expansion of Butternut's and Glidden's industrial park and the creation of jobs there.
3. Promote job-training programs to enhance the existing local workforce.
4. Allow home occupations in residential areas provided they fit into the character of the neighborhood.
5. Assist and facilitate economic development planning and coordination between local and regional partners.
6. Promote economic development and redevelopment opportunities that fit into the community's vision as articulated in this plan.
7. Support needed health care and child care facilities in more urbanized areas.
8. Encourage development of home-based businesses.
9. Encourage development of forestry and cottage industries.
10. Promote businesses that use local natural resources to produce value-added products.
11. Promote job-training programs to enhance the existing local workforce.



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12. Improve and develop partnerships with other communities and state agencies that share the same customers.
13. Explore the viability of an automobile repair business.
14. Promote those businesses that can use existing and planned infrastructure.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to	to	to	to	
	2010	2015	2020	2025	
1. Explore available educational and financial resources and programs which will promote home-based businesses.	X				Town Board

Goal #7 – Intergovernmental Cooperation: Achieve a high level of cooperation and consistency among local units of government.

Objectives:

1. Improve communication with nearby municipalities, school districts, special districts, and other government entities.
2. Increase coordination of the siting, building, and redevelopment of public facilities and the sharing of public services when possible.
3. Enhance coordination/communication with state agencies.
4. Minimize costs and maximize services for residents by working more effectively with other units of government.

Policies:

1. Maintain existing service sharing agreements with neighboring communities and explore opportunities to create new alliances.
2. Maintain regular contacts, both formal and informal, with surrounding jurisdictions and school districts.
3. Provide surrounding jurisdictions the opportunity to review and comment on proposed amendments to this plan as required by state law.
4. Cooperate with adjoining jurisdictions to save money and create efficiencies in the provision of public services by sharing resources, facilities, and services.
5. Maintain an accurate inventory of all active and terminated intergovernmental agreements.



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Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to	to	to	to	
	2010	2015	2020	2025	
1. Invite area governments and school districts to participate in facility planning meetings.			As needed		Town Board
2. Send copies of draft plan amendments to surrounding jurisdictions to allow the opportunity to review and comment on proposed amendments.			As needed		Town Board
3. Develop an accurate inventory of all active and terminated intergovernmental agreements.	X				Town Clerk
4. Initiate joint Plan Commission meetings with surrounding jurisdictions on a periodic basis to discuss issues of common concern.	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission

Goal #8 – Land Use: Create a pattern of development that protects forests and supports forestry practices and forest-based activities.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the integrity and viability of forestry and practices.
2. Minimize the negative effects of incompatible land uses.
3. Minimize conflicts between forest and non-forest related uses.
4. Maintain a well-balanced mix of land uses within the Town.

Policies:

1. Before approving the change of forestland to another land use, determine the impacts on the community, ecological systems, and local economy.
2. Retain large, contiguous tracts of forestland.
3. Use existing land designated for urban uses before permitting development within or adjacent to forested lands.
4. Promote the long-term utilization of productive forestland.
5. Promote land uses, densities, and regulations that result in the protection of valued resources and recognize existing physical limitations (e.g., slope, woodlands, water).
6. Protect scenic vistas from inappropriate development.
7. Encourage the use of natural resources as visual and physical amenities for development.
8. Support private and public initiatives to protect natural features through the use of conservation strategies such as easements, covenants, and deed restrictions.
9. Rezoning proposals should be consistent with this plan.
10. Require buffers between incompatible land uses to minimize potential negative effects.
11. Development proposals shall reflect the future land use plan.



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12. New lots and building sites shall be located and designed to protect environmental resources and reflect the character of the Town.
13. Identify scenic vistas, natural resources, and large tracts of forest or agricultural lands that should be protected.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to 2010	to 2015	to 2020	to 2025	
1. Review each request for rezoning and development proposal for consistency with this plan, and for its impacts on the community, ecological system, and local economy.	Ongoing				Plan Commission, Town Board
2. Develop standards for buffering between incompatible land uses.	X				Plan Commission, Town Board

Goal #9 – Community Involvement: Encourage every household to be involved in the affairs of the community.

Objectives:

1. Increase the number of families and individuals who volunteer their time.
2. Increase citizen involvement and interest in the functions of Town government.

Policies:

1. Seek out and use the skills and expertise of residents to serve on volunteer committees.
2. Provide opportunities for resident involvement in the functions and operation of the Town.
3. Encourage residents to get out and vote.
4. Provide residents with the opportunity to review draft plans, propose plan amendments, and participate in the development of rules and regulations.
5. Encourage each household to become involved in their community.
6. Support the creation of programs in area schools to promote volunteerism and mentoring.
7. Support the creation of programs in area schools and neighborhoods that foster pride in the community.



Community Vision and Plan Implementation

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Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006 to 2010	2011 to 2015	2016 to 2020	2021 to 2025	
	1. Develop a Town newsletter to involve residents in community events and issues.	X			
2. Install a media message board by the Town Hall and/or other locations to disseminate local government notices.	X				Town Clerk
3. Create a program to annually recognize the contributions of individuals and groups who help make the Town a great place to live.	X				Town Board

Goal #10 – Plan Monitoring and Evaluation: Keep this comprehensive plan relevant, useable, and timely.

Objectives:

1. Keep the plan up-to-date.

Policies:

1. Conduct a formal review of the plan at least once every 5 years consistent with state requirements.
2. Prepare annual reviews of the plan.
3. Amend the plan in a timely fashion.
4. If actual growth and development is significantly below the forecasts contained in this plan, amend this plan as appropriate to account for lower than expected growth and/or adjust those factors that may be inhibiting growth.
5. If actual growth and development exceeds the forecasts contained in this plan, adopt appropriate growth management strategies to bring growth in line with the desired growth rate or amend this plan to account for the additional growth.



Community Vision and Plan Implementation

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Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006 to 2010	2011 to 2015	2016 to 2020	2021 to 2025	
	1. Review the adopted comprehensive plan and revise as necessary (minimum once every 5 years following adoption).	X	X	X	
2. Plan for and anticipate costs for amending this plan.	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission, Town Board



Issues and Opportunities

*Town of Gordon
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Introduction

This part of the plan documents the issues that were considered in the preparation of this policy document. The importance of issues can not be overstated. This whole planning exercise and the resultant plan was issue driven.

Issues can be emerging concerns or old unresolved problems. An issue could be addressed one time, never to reemerge. Or, an issue could never really go away and may always need attention. Issues could range from localized concerns to those that are more global and affect many communities throughout the state and nation. Although the town has limited control over global, national, or statewide events, they are included here to ensure that they are considered and factored in the preparation of this plan to the extent appropriate.

The success of this plan in part rests on identifying relevant issues, prioritizing them for action, and adopting appropriate goals, objectives, and policies to address each.

This chapter also identifies those types of businesses that are compatible with the town's long-term vision.

Chapter Contents	
◆	Introduction
◆	Identification of Issues and Opportunities
◆	Economic Development Approach
-	Desirable Businesses
-	Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses

Identification of Issues and Opportunities

The issues and opportunities listed in this chapter were derived over the course of the planning process and were generated in a number of ways. In fall 2003, a public meeting for the town was conducted. During this meeting, attendees participated in an activity that helped to identify various issues and opportunities in their community. This process involved a brainstorming session to generate a working list of the following issues (Exhibit 3-1).

A community survey was sent to a sample of households in the town to better understand their perceptions and preferences on a range of issues. Many of the questions were designed to solicit input on some of the issues identified in the SWOT analysis and were worded to gauge support for or opposition to various options. The survey results were compiled and summarized in a separate document. Input from that survey is incorporated here and elsewhere in this plan as appropriate.

Over the course of the planning project, a number of public meetings were held to help identify and clarify the list of issues relevant to this plan.



Issues and Opportunities

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Exhibit 3-1. Issues and Opportunities: 2004

Issues:	Strengths:
◆ High tax for services we get	◆ Very little change
◆ Declining population	◆ Peace and quiet
◆ Reduced funding from state	◆ Residents do not want change
◆ School funding mechanism no longer functional	◆ Good infrastructure
◆ Towns not able to access TIFs	◆ Excellent state & town roads
◆ Marketing area to outsiders is nearly non-existent	◆ Lakes to attract people & tourism
◆ Variety of housing opportunities	◆ Quality of life
◆ Need to develop for industry	◆ Access to Chequamegon National Forest
◆ Jobs w/better pay	◆ Access to Lake Superior & Apostle Island Lakeshore
◆ Do we want to see more development?	
◆ Enforce zoning	
◆ Develop housing zoning	
◆ Maintain quality of life and develop at same time	
◆ Need a scrap/salvage yard	

Exhibit 3-2 lists the issues and opportunities that were of common concern to those jurisdictions participating in this multi-jurisdictional planning effort. Each issue was ranked using a 10-point scale to help determine its relative importance. Also, each issue was evaluated to determine if it is becoming more important or less important, or whether it is stable with little movement anticipated.



Issues and Opportunities

Town of Gordon
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Exhibit 3-2. Issues and Opportunities: 2004

Governance / Citizen Involvement	Importance								Trend
	Low							High	
Lack of interest in serving in an elected capacity	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		-
Lack of interest in local issues until personally affected	•	•	•	•	•				-
Polarization of public opinion on some local issues	•	•							-
Development of new avenues to inform town residents	•	•							-
Volunteerism and community involvement	•	•	•	•					-
Jurisdiction is receiving proper level of representation at the county level	•								▲
Tax Base									
Loss of state shared revenue	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	▲
Citizens wanting lower local property taxes	•	•	•						-
Over reliance on residential property	•	•							-
Potential negative impacts of growth on local property taxes	•								-
National Forest area	•	•	•	•	•				-
County forest area	•	•							-
Demographics									
Aging of population	•	•	•	•	•				▲
Changing nature of households (more single member households, etc)	•	•							-
Declining household size	•								-
Housing									
Affordability	•	•	•	•					▲
Availability	•	•	•	•	•	•			▲
Housing age/maintenance	•	•	•	•					▲
Few options for housing other than single-family units	•	•	•						-
Few housing options for certain groups (elderly, handicapped) in the Town	•	•	•	•	•	•			▲
Absentee landowners	•	•	•						-
Predominance of seasonal housing	•	•	•	•	•	•			-
Community Character									
Unightly or blighted properties	•	•	•						-
Lack of community identity	•	•							-
Community gathering place/recreation facility	•								-
Crime	•								-
Maintenance of quality of life	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		▲
Historic preservation	•								-



Issues and Opportunities

Town of Gordon
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Transportation	Importance								Trend
	Low						High		
Level of truck traffic on town roads	•	•							-
Number of speeding motorists	•								-
Safety concerns at problem intersections	•								-
Maintenance of local roads	•	•	•	•	•	•			-
Limited specialized transportation for elderly, handicapped	•	•	•	•	•				-
Road maintenance in National Forest area (if applicable)	•	•	•						-
Accessibility of pedestrian or bike trails	•								-
Railroad services	•								-
Bus service	•								-
Proximity to major airport	•								-
Utilities and Community Facilities									
Child care services	•	•	•	•	•				▲
Health care services - availability	•	•							-
Quality of K-12 education	•	•							-
Lack of recreation facilities for youth	•	•	•						-
Lack of recreation facilities for teenagers	•	•	•						-
Lack of recreation facilities for elderly	•	•	•	•					▲
Maintenance of park facilities (if applicable)	•	•	•						-
Provision of more organized sport facilities	•	•							-
Provision of more passive / unorganized recreation opportunities	•	•	•	•					▲
Citizens wanting more public facilities/services (e.g., Parks, shelters, trails, etc.)	•								-
Energy supply	•								-
Electrical distribution	•								-
Need for more Town hall or other municipal building space (e.g., office space, garage, etc.)	•								-
Lack of high-speed Internet access	•	•	•	•	•				▲
Need for improved cellular reception	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		▲



Issues and Opportunities

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Natural Resources	Importance								Trend
	Low						High		
Cumulative environmental impacts	•	•	•	•					-
Air quality	•	•							-
Surface water quality	•	•	•	•	•				▲
Ground water quality	•	•	•						-
Flooding	•	•	•	•	•				-
Stormwater	•	•							-
Lack of, or improper, forest management on private lands	•	•							-
Relationship with private, industrial forest landowners	•								-
Loss of wetlands	•	•	•						-
Development along shores of area lakes and rivers	•	•	•	•	•	•			-
Development on steep slopes	•	•	•						-
Relationship between county, state and national forest offices	•	•							-
Mine (Central Ashland County)									
Effect on community character	•	•	•						▲
Effect on local tax base	•	•	•	•					▲
Effect on natural resources	•	•	•	•	•	•			▲
Effect on employment	•	•	•	•	•	•			▲
Economic Development									
Lack of jobs in the Town	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	▲
Decline in local forestry economy	•								▼
Growing opportunities for home occupations	•	•	•	•	•				-
Comparatively low household income as compared to others in region	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	▲
Intergovernmental Cooperation									
Relationship with County forest representatives (if applicable)	•	•	•						-
Relationship with National Forest (if applicable)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	-
Relationship with State Park or State Forest (if applicable)	•	•							-
Competition for tax base growth with other jurisdictions in region	•	•							-
Opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation	•	•	•	•	•	•			-
Unfunded state and federal mandates	•	•	•	•					-
Relationship with state and federal mandates	•	•							-



Issues and Opportunities

Town of Gordon
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Land Use	Importance								Trend
	Low						High		
Encroachment of incompatible land uses	•	•							-
Existing land use conflicts	•	•							-
Zoning enforcement	•	•	•						-
Brownfield sites	•								-
Inappropriate signage (size, location, etc.)	•	•							-
Cell towers (location, height, appearance)	•								-
Loss of rural character	•	•							-
Scattered commercial uses	•								-
Amount of land in public ownership (federal, state, county, local)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		-
High-voltage transmission lines (existing / planned)	•								-
"Cost" of managing growth	•	•	•	•	•	•			-
"Cost" of not managing growth	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	-
Developing a mechanism to incorporate conservation subdivision design into more residential projects	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	-
Management and use of forest land	•	•	•	•	•	•			-

Key for Trend:

- ▲ The issue is anticipated to become more important in the coming years.
- ▼ The issue is anticipated to become less important in the coming years.
- The issue will likely remain stable in the coming years.

Economic Development Approach

This section documents in general terms the town's approach to economic development. It should be emphasized that this section has a limited scope. It certainly doesn't substitute for a detailed economic development plan or strategic plan. It looks at economic development primarily from the perspective of its relationship to land use. It focuses on what types of economic activity are compatible with the town's long-term vision. It then identifies the town's strengths in attracting and keeping those types of businesses and weaknesses that may be working to keep those types of businesses from coming to the town.



Issues and Opportunities

*Town of Gordon
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◆ Desirable Businesses

As part of the planning process, we asked the question: “What types of economic activities are consistent with the Town’s vision”. The types are shown in Exhibit 3-3, which range from very specific businesses to broad classes of businesses.

◆ Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses

Having identified the types of economic activity that are part of the town’s vision, two questions arise. First, “What will draw them here?” And secondly, “What is keeping them from coming?” The results are shown in Exhibit 3-4.

Exhibit 3-3. Desirable Businesses: 2004

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cell tower▪ Campground & resort▪ Trucking firm▪ Cottage industry | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Home occupations▪ Contractor yard▪ Log yards, timber processing |
|---|---|

Exhibit 3-4. Economic Strengths and Weaknesses: 2004

What will draw / keep the identified desirable businesses here?	What is keeping the identified desirable businesses from coming?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Natural resources and amenities▪ High quality of life▪ Comparatively low property tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Population to sustain them▪ Distance to population centers



Plan-Based Forecasts

Town of Gordon
Comprehensive Plan - Policy Document

Introduction

This chapter presents each of the four forecasts that are fundamental to the preparation of this plan. The smart growth legislation requires that the plan be based on population forecasts over the 20-year planning horizon.¹ The anticipated population base can then be translated into the number of additional housing units that will be needed over the planning period to accommodate the anticipated population base. This same section of the legislation also requires a 20-year employment forecast.

The final set of forecasts relate to future land use and arise out of the foregoing forecasts². The future land use plan must show additional land for development to accommodate the anticipated number of new households and to facilitate the addition of new employment opportunities.

Table 4-1 presents the four sets of forecasts. The following sections in this chapter present background information about each of the forecasts and describe in more detail how they were prepared.

Chapter Contents	
◆	Introduction
◆	Population Forecasts
◆	Housing Forecasts
◆	Employment Forecasts
◆	Land-Use Forecasts

Table 4-1. Plan-Based Forecasts: 2006 to 2025

	2006 to 2010	2011 to 2015	2016 to 2020	2021 to 2025	2006 to 2025
Additional population ¹	33	35	39	42	149
Additional households	16	17	20	21	74
Additional housing units ²	41	44	51	54	190
Additional land (acres) ³					
Agriculture	0	0	0	0	0
Commercial	-	-	-	-	-
Industrial	-	-	-	-	-
Residential	414	463	520	577	1,974
Additional employment (jobs)	15	15	20	20	70

Notes:

1. The total population includes those living in an institutional setting and those living in households.
2. These values include both seasonal homes and full-time homes.
3. The amount of land needed for each of these uses includes public infrastructure. A factor was also applied to increase the supply of land to account for consumer choice.

¹ Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(a)

² Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(h)



Plan-Based Forecasts

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Population Forecasts

After evaluating a number of growth rates and looking at potential consequences of each, an annual average growth rate of 1.7 percent was selected. Table 4-2 shows the year-end population counts and the number of new residents added in each of the five-year increments based on this growth rate. Between 2006 and 2025, 149 new full-time residents are anticipated. For the purpose of this plan, it is anticipated that all of these will be living in a household setting and that none will be in an institutional setting.

Table 4-2. Population, Households and Housing Units: 2006 to 2025

Year	Total	Population	Full-Time Households	Total
	Resident Population ¹	In Households		Housing Units
2005	372	372	163	417
2006	378	378	166	425
2007	384	384	169	433
2008	391	391	172	441
2009	398	398	176	451
2010	405	405	179	458
2011	412	412	183	469
2012	419	419	186	476
2013	426	426	190	487
2014	433	433	193	494
2015	440	440	196	502
2016	447	447	200	512
2017	455	455	204	523
2018	463	463	208	533
2019	471	471	212	543
2020	479	479	216	553
2021	487	487	220	563
2022	495	495	224	574
2023	503	503	228	584
2024	512	512	232	594
2025	521	521	237	607
Number Added During Period				
2006 – 2010	33	33	16	41
2011 – 2015	35	35	17	44
2016 – 2020	39	39	20	51
2021 - 2025	42	42	21	54
2006 - 2025	149	149	74	190

1. The total population includes those living in an institutional setting and those living in households.



Housing Forecasts

Having established the anticipated resident population living within the Town in a household setting, it is possible to forecast the number of housing units that will be needed to accommodate the growing population.

The number of households was estimated by dividing the anticipated population living in a household by the average household size for each of the time periods. Nationally, the average household size has been on a steady downward trend for a number of decades. This trend is also evident throughout much of Wisconsin and in Gordon. From 1990 to 2000, the average household size in the Town declined from 2.33 to 2.3. It is anticipated this trend will continue throughout the planning period, and cause the figure to drop to about 2.2.

This demographic trend suggests that even if the population of the town did not grow, additional housing units would be needed to maintain the same population base to account for a smaller number of people living in each housing unit.

Table 4-2 shows the anticipated number of households over the 20-year planning horizon by year and for each of the 5-year increments. Having established the number of households that will be living in the Town, it is necessary to determine the number of housing units that will be needed to house them. The number of housing units will, more often than not, exceed the number of households in that a certain share of the housing units will be vacant at any point in time. A unit may be vacant because it is not considered a primary residence, because it is for rent or for sale, or is unoccupied for any number of reasons. For the purpose of this plan, it is assumed that 60 percent of the housing units will be vacant at any point in time to account for the large proportion of part-time residents. Over the planning period from 2006 through 2025, 190 new dwellings will likely be added to the town's housing stock. It should be noted that 6 out of 10 units are for part-time residents.

Employment Forecasts

As shown on the future land use map, virtually all of the private land in the town is slated for residential development. Contractor yards and home-based businesses can be located in low density residential settings and will result in an increase in employment. It is anticipated that over the next 20 years, 70 new jobs could result.



Plan-Based Forecasts

*Town of Gordon
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Land-Use Forecasts

The vast majority of new housing units will be single family and will likely occur on larger lots, except around some of the lakes. To accommodate 190 new dwelling units, at least 1,974 acres of land should be shown for this purpose on the future land use map.



Future Conditions

Town of Gordon
Comprehensive Plan - Policy Document

Chapter Contents

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Future Land Use Plan
- ◆ Future Transportation Plan
- ◆ Future Utilities and Community Facilities

Introduction

Among the most effective tools a community possesses to influence its future environment and quality of life is the ability to control and direct future growth patterns. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, but is most commonly accomplished through zoning and land development ordinances, transportation systems, and public utilities.

For many years, transportation planning and land use planning were seen as independent activities. In recent years, however, there has been a growing recognition, especially at the state and federal levels that land use and transportation are linked in that a change in one will undoubtedly have consequences for the other.

As the Town’s population increases in the coming years, it is important to consider what additional utilities and community facilities may be needed to accommodate the additional residents. Although a growing population is an important consideration, it is not the only factor that needs consideration. Other demographics should be considered as well. For example, the aging population in Ashland County will have a profound impact on the types of public services that ought to be available.

This portion of the document is intended to answer a basic question: What type of land uses, transportation systems, utilities and community facilities will be needed to accommodate a growing population and a changing population base?

Future Land Use Plan

Through the zoning powers exercised by Ashland County, the Town of Gordon has the opportunity to guide future growth in a manner that enhances its residents’ quality of life and is consistent with its long-term vision. However, misguided or inappropriate use of these tools can lead to undesirable results including unnecessary land use conflicts, inefficient service delivery, a decreased quality of life, inappropriate development patterns, among other potential problems.

In the background report, environmental constraints for development were identified and mapped, including wetlands and floodplains. Using this information as a point of reference, a number of alternative development scenarios were developed. Each of these were developed and evaluated as the Town crafted its long-term vision. As the vision of the community became more refined, a final land use plan was developed for future land uses.

The future land use map included in this chapter is intended to illustrate this vision and guide the future

The foundation for decision making is a clear land use plan based upon sound planning principles and the community’s vision for its future.



Future Conditions

*Town of Gordon
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growth and development of Gordon over the next 20 years and beyond. It will serve as a guide for the plan commission and Town Board when making land use, zoning, and infrastructure-related decisions. It will also provide direction for private sector property owners and potential developers when making decisions about the future of their properties.

The Town is divided into base districts and 2 overlay districts as depicted on the future land use map and as described in Exhibit 5-1. It should be noted that these districts are established for general planning purposes only. The overlay districts are used to recognize special characteristics of the underlying land that do not occur throughout the entire base district. Overlay districts are used to map wetlands and 100-year floodplains.

Exhibit 5-1. Land Use Districts

Base Districts	
Base Districts	General Description
Residential	This district supports residential uses at specified densities. Public facilities such as parks and trails are also allowed. All of the dwelling units will be served by on-site water and wastewater treatment facilities.
Government and institutional	This district includes governmental and institutional uses, some of which occupy a significant land area. Examples include educational facilities, municipal buildings, and hospitals.
Public resource land	The district recognizes federal and state lands that are managed as parkland and for forestry, resource protection, wildlife management, and other uses consistent with the mission of the controlling agency.
Overlay districts	
Overlay districts	General Description
Wetland district	State law protects wetlands from inappropriate uses and development. This district identifies the approximate locations of wetlands greater than 5 acres in size which the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has identified. All wetlands, both mapped and unmapped, should be protected to the greatest extent possible. The locations shown are approximate and field verification will be needed to determine the location and extent of wetlands on each parcel.
Floodplain district	State and federal law regulates land development activities within defined 100-year and 500-year floodplains. The boundary shown on the future land use map is intended to correspond to the floodplain maps adopted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Note: These descriptions correspond to the districts shown on the future land use map.

Future Transportation Plan

The Town currently has a road system that is adequate for its residents. The majority of roads in the Town are in fairly good condition and those in poorer condition are slated for improvement. Given the low level of new development contemplated in the future land use plan, no new major road improvements have been identified. Likewise, the functional classification of the roads in the Town's boundary will not change either.



Future Conditions

*Town of Gordon
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Future Utilities and Community Facilities

As shown in Exhibit 5-1, the Town's facilities are generally adequate for the next 20 years. The fire association would like to purchase a new fire truck in the near future.

Exhibit 5-2. Utility and Community Facility Assessment: 2006-2025

Facilities & Utilities	Status 2005	Recommendation			
		2006-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020	2021-2025
Telecommunication	Inadequate	Need better cell phone reception.	-	-	-
Electrical Transmission	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Solid Waste and Recycling	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Recreation Facilities	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Library Services	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Fire Protection	Adequate	New fire truck	-	-	-
EMS	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Municipal Building	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Town Garage	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Schools	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Child Care	Inadequate	Need more capacity	Need more capacity	Need more capacity	Need more capacity
Health Care	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Cemeteries	Adequate	-	-	-	-
Stormwater Management	Adequate	-	-	-	-

Future Land Use:
2006 to 2025
Town of Gordon

Ashland County
Comprehensive Plan Map

Legend

Future Land Use

-  Residential - 1-acre parcels
-  Residential - 3-5 acre parcels
-  Residential - 10 acre parcels
-  Government and institutional
-  Public resource land

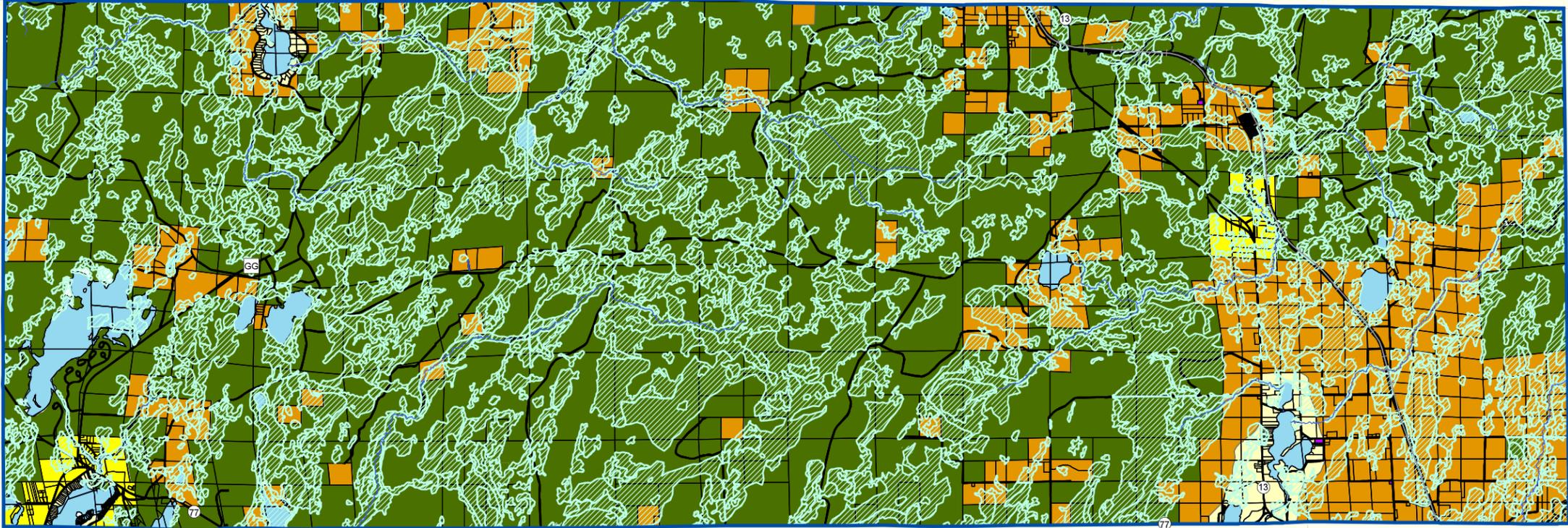
Map Legend

-  Roads
-  Surface water
-  Railroad
-  Municipal boundary

Overlay Districts

-  100-year floodplain*
-  Wetlands

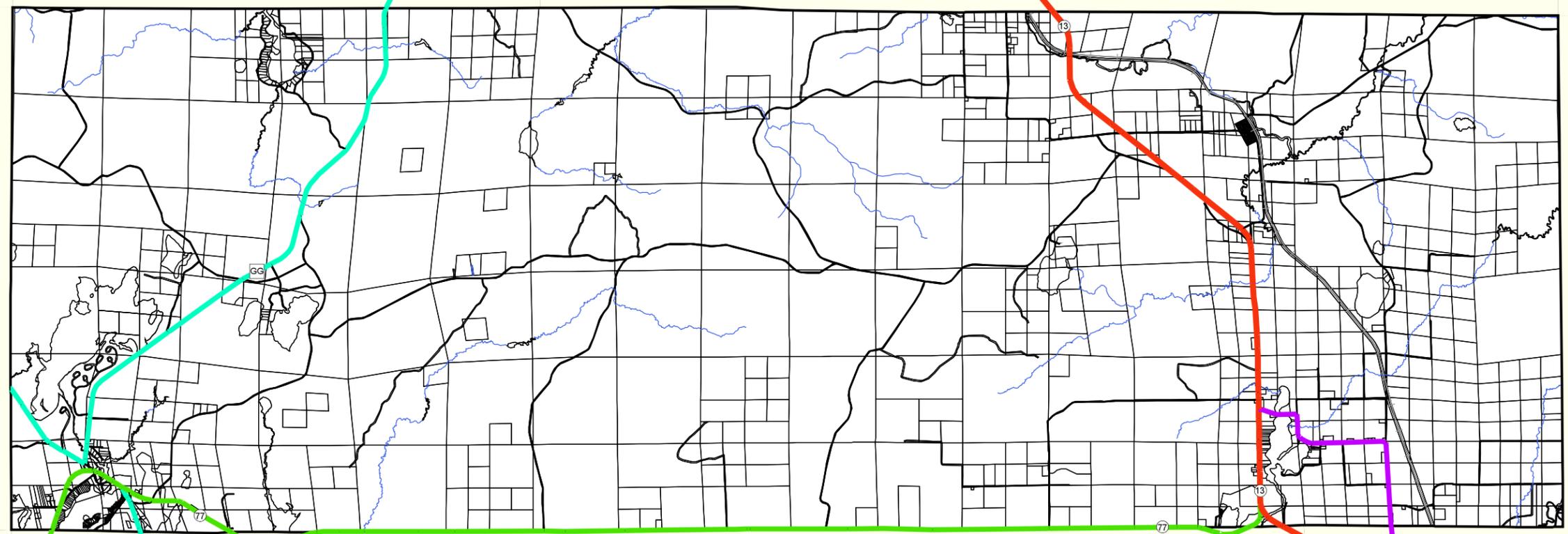
* The floodplain overlay district includes that area depicted as 100-year floodplain on the most recent version of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM).



Base Map: Ashland County

*Future Transportation Network:
2006 to 2025
Town of Gordon*

*Ashland County
Comprehensive Plan Map*



Legend

-  Principal arterials - other
-  Minor arterial
-  Major collector
-  Minor collector
-  Local road
-  Railroad



Base Map: Ashland County

Map Created: October, 2004
Map Edited: January 21, 2005





General Provisions

*Town of Gordon
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PART 1. GENERALLY

Section 1-1. Authority

This plan is enacted pursuant to and consistent with §66.1001, Wis. Stats.

Section 1-2. Applicability

1. *Jurisdictional Area.* The provisions of this plan shall be applicable throughout the Town of Gordon.
2. *Conformance with Plan.* After January 1, 2010, all town programs and actions relating to zoning, subdivisions, and official mapping shall be consistent with this plan. Prior to that date, this plan shall be used as a guideline.

Section 1-3. Repeal of Prior Comprehensive Plan

All comprehensive plans previously adopted prior to the effective date of this plan are hereby repealed when this plan is approved by Ashland County.

Section 1-4. Severability

If a court of competent jurisdiction determines that a section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase in this plan is unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the remaining portions shall continue in full force and effect.

Section 1-5. Effective Date

This plan shall be effective when Ashland County approves this plan or the first day after the date of publication or posting as provided for in §60.80(3), Wis. Stats., whichever occurs later.

Section 1-6. Development Expectations

As outlined in Part 3, this plan is subject to amendment and revision including the future land use map. As such, no special development rights are conferred upon any property by any designation or inclusion on the future land use map.

PART 2. INTERPRETATION

Section 2-1. Interpretation of Boundaries of Base Land Use Districts

1. *Boundary Line Interpretations.* Interpretations regarding base land use district boundaries and designations on the future land use map shall be made in accordance with the following rules:



General Provisions

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- a. *Political Boundaries.* District boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, any political boundary shall be construed as following such line.
 - b. *Property Lines.* District boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, any property line shall be construed as following such line.
 - c. *Section Lines.* District boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, a section line, quarter-section line, or quarter-quarter section line shall be construed as following such line.
 - d. *Centerlines.* District boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, any stream, creek, easement, railroad, alley, road, street, highway or similar feature shall be construed as following the centerline of such feature.
 - e. *Natural Boundaries.* District boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, any natural feature such as a lake, pond, wetland, woodlot edge, floodplain or topographical features such as watershed boundaries shall be construed as following such natural feature as verified by field inspection when necessary.
 - f. *Other.* In instances where a district boundary does not follow one of the lines or features listed above, the line shall be as drawn as provided for in subsection 2.
2. *Division of Parcels.* Where one or more district boundary line divides a parcel into 2 or more areas, the following interpretation of the boundary and designation shall apply:
 - a. *Parcels of 5 Acres or Less.* For parcels of 5 acres or less, the designation of the largest area of the lot shall apply to the entire lot.
 - b. *Parcels Larger than 5 Acres.* For parcels larger than 5 acres, the parcel shall be divided as depicted by the boundary.

Section 2-2. Interpretation of Goals, Objectives, and Policies

1. Recognizing that some of the goals, objectives and policies may advance or serve competing interests in varying degrees, this plan shall be interpreted so as to promote the public interest to the greatest extent.
2. In the construction of goals, objectives and policies, the following shall be observed, unless such construction would be inconsistent with the text or with the manifest intent of the comprehensive plan:
 - a. *Singular and Plural Words.* Words in the singular include the plural and words in the plural include the singular.
 - b. *Tense.* Words in the present tense include the past and future tense and the future tense includes the present tense.
 - c. *Shall or Will.* The word "shall" or "will" is mandatory.
 - d. *May or Should.* The word "may" or "should" is permissive.
 - e. *Include.* The word "includes" or "including" shall not limit a term to the specific examples listed, but is intended to extend its meaning to all other instances or circumstances of like kind or character.



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Section 2-3. Responsibility for Interpretation.

In the event a question arises concerning a provision, or the application of a provision, contained in this plan, the plan commission shall develop a recommended interpretation and submit it to the town board, which shall be responsible for rendering the final interpretation. In making such interpretation, the plan commission and town board shall look to the overall intent of the comprehensive plan for guidance. The town board shall provide such interpretation in writing upon request and keep a permanent record of said interpretations.

PART 3. AMENDMENT

Section 3-1. Initiation

The following may submit an application for a plan amendment:

- a. Town board;
- b. Plan commission;
- c. any resident of the town;
- d. any person having title to land within the town;
- e. any person having a contractual interest in land to be affected by a proposed amendment; or
- f. an agent for any of the above.

Proposals to amend this plan shall be submitted to the town clerk between February 15 and March 15, except those recommended by the town board, which may be submitted anytime during the year.

Section 3-2. Burden of Proof

The person that proposes an amendment to the future land use map shall have the burden of proof to show that the proposed amendment is in the public interest and internally consistent with the remainder of the plan.

Section 3-3. Application and Review Procedure.

1. *Submittal of Application.* The applicant shall submit a complete application to the town clerk along with the application fee if any (See Sections 3-4 and 3-6).
2. *Transmittal of Application to Plan Commission.* The town clerk shall forward one (1) copy of the application to each member of the plan commission.
3. *Preliminary Review.* The plan commission shall review the application at one of its regular or special meetings. No decision shall be made at this time.



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4. *Interdepartmental/Agency Review.* The town clerk shall forward one (1) copy of the application to appropriate town personnel and department heads that could be directly affected by the proposed amendment.
5. *Plan Commission Meeting.* Allowing for proper public notice, the plan commission shall conduct a meeting to review the application.
6. *Plan Commission Recommendation.* The plan commission shall pass a resolution stating its recommendation to the town board to either:
 - a. deny the proposed amendment; or
 - b. approve the proposed amendment without revision; or
 - c. approve the proposed amendment with those revisions it deems appropriate, provided such revisions are related to the proposed amendment.A resolution recommending the amendment of the plan shall be by majority vote of the entire commission. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the plan commission.
7. *Notification of Resolution.* If the plan commission adopts a resolution to not amend the comprehensive plan, the commission shall send a copy of the resolution to the town board. This action terminates the amendment process. If the plan commission adopts a resolution recommending amendment of the plan, the secretary of the plan commission shall forward a copy of the resolution and those sections of the plan containing the recommended amendments, along with an explanatory cover letter, to each of the following:
 - a. Mellen Public Library,
 - b. Park Falls Public Library,
 - c. Clerk of each adjoining jurisdiction,
 - d. County Clerk for Ashland County,
 - e. Wisconsin Land Council, and
 - f. other agencies deemed appropriate.
8. *Public Notice for Public Hearing.* The town clerk shall provide a class 1 public notice (under Chapter 985, Wis. Stats.) that is published at least 30 days before the date of the scheduled public hearing. At the discretion of the town, other notice may be provided.
9. *Public Hearing.* The town board shall hold at least one public hearing to consider the recommended amendment.
10. *Town Board Decision.* After reviewing the application and the plan commission's recommendation, the town board shall make a decision to either:
 - a. deny the recommended amendment; or
 - b. approve the recommended amendment without revision; or
 - c. approve the recommended amendment with those revisions it deems appropriate, provided such revisions are limited to those matters considered in the public hearing.



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An affirmative vote to amend the plan shall be by majority vote of the members elect (as defined in §59.001(2m) Wis. Stats.) of the town board.

11. *Interagency Notification of Decision.* If the town board passes an ordinance to amend the plan, the town clerk shall forward a copy of the ordinance and pertinent sections of the plan, as amended, along with an explanatory cover letter, to each of the following:

- a. Mellen Public Library,
- b. Park Falls Public Library,
- c. Clerk of each adjoining jurisdiction,
- d. County Clerk for Ashland County,
- e. North West Regional Planning Commission,
- f. Wisconsin Land Council,
- g. Department of Administration, and
- h. other agencies deemed appropriate.

If the town board decides to not amend the plan, the town clerk shall send a letter, which states the town board's decision, to those entities listed in this part.

12. *Applicant Notification of Decision.* The town clerk shall mail the applicant, by regular U.S. mail, the original copy of the decision and notify the plan commission in writing of the town board's decision (if it is not the applicant). If the recommended amendment is denied, the notification shall indicate the reasons for the denial.
13. *Update History of Adoption and Amendment.* If the town board passes an ordinance to amend the plan, the town clerk shall update the table found in Section 3-7 of this chapter.

Section 3-4. Application Content.

1. *Landowner-Initiated Amendment to the Future Land Use Map.* An application submitted by a landowner to amend the future land use map shall include the following:
 - a. a scaled drawing of the subject property;
 - b. a legal description for each of the parcels in the subject property;
 - c. a map of the existing land uses occurring on and around the subject property;
 - d. a written description of the proposed change;
 - e. a written statement outlining the reason(s) for the amendment; and
 - f. other supporting information the applicant deems appropriate.



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2. *Other Amendments.* For all other types of amendments, the application shall include the following:
 - a. a written description of the proposed change;
 - b. a written statement outlining the reason(s) for the amendment; and
 - c. other supporting information the applicant deems appropriate.

Section 3-5. Limitations on Amending the Comprehensive Plan.

Amendments shall be made so as to preserve the internal consistency of the entire plan.

Section 3-6. Application Fees.

1. *Landowner-Initiated Amendments.* For all amendments to the future land use map that are initiated by the owner or another person having a contractual interest in land to be affected by the proposed amendment, an application fee, as set by the town board and on file at the town clerk's office, shall be submitted at the time of application.
2. *Other Amendments.* For all other types of amendments, no application fee shall be assessed.

Section 3-7. Historical Summary of Plan Adoption and Amendments

The table below provides an overview of town board action regarding this plan.

Date	Ordinance Number	Description of Action
November 15, 2006	2006-003	Town board adopts a comprehensive plan to comply with Wisconsin's Smart Growth Legislation.



Appendix

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Adoption Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. 2006-003
TOWN OF GORDON ASHLAND COUNTY, WISCONSIN
AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Whereas, the Town of Gordon, pursuant to §62.23(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in §66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Whereas the Town Board has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation and review of the comprehensive plan as required by §66.1001 (4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Whereas, the Town Board established an advisory committee to develop a draft comprehensive plan, which consists of two documents: the background report and policy document.

Whereas, the plan commission has reviewed the draft comprehensive plan and has, by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, adopted a resolution recommending to the Town Board the adoption of comprehensive plan, which contains all of the elements specified in §66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Whereas, the Town Board has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, in compliance with the requirements of §66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Now therefore, the Town Board adopts those two documents, pursuant to §66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Now therefore, this ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members-elect of the Town Board (as defined in §59.001 (2m) of the Wisconsin Statutes) and publication/posting as required by law.

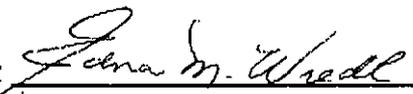
Now therefore, the Town Clerk is directed to send a copy of the adopted comprehensive plan to the following, along with an explanatory cover letter:

- a. ^{North} Park Falls Public Library,
- b. clerk of each adjoining jurisdiction,
- c. County Clerk for Ashland County,
- d. North West Regional Planning Commission,
- e. Wisconsin Land Council, and
- f. Department of Administration.

Adopted this 15 day of Nov, 2006.


Town Chair

(Published/Posted): 11-15-06, 2006

Attested: 
Town Clerk