



City of Mellen

**Comprehensive
Plan: 2006 to 2025**

Policy Document

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Acknowledgements

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City Board

Joseph Barabe, Mayor
Kenneth Kritz, 1st Ward Alderman
Ervin Young, 1st Ward Alderman
Peter Russo, 2nd Ward Alderman
Jerry Parker, 2nd Ward Alderman
Todd Scribner, 3rd Ward Alderman
Ron Brendalen, 3rd Ward Alderman

Comprehensive Plan Committee

Jeff Ehrhardt
Tim Lee
Tana Turonie

Other City Officials

Tina Wohlgemuth, City Clerk/Treasurer
Becky Scriber, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

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Vierbicher Associates, Inc.; Madison, Wisconsin



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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 county-wide 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, its 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.

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

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.

Public Participation and Adoption Process

Prior to starting the planning process, the City council adopted a public participation plan, consistent with state requirements (§66.1001(4)a, Wis. Stats), to document the ways city 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 City council 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 city's plan commission, which by statute must adopt a resolution recommending it to the city board. The plan commission reviewed the draft as prepared by the committee and made changes prior to sending it to the city board with its recommendation. The city council 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 chapter entitled "General Provisions".

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 city clerk.



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Previous Local Planning Efforts

The City of Mellen has not had a plan prepared specifically for their use.

Statewide Plans

A number of statewide and national forest 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. State and National Plans: 1994 to 2004

State Plans	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
National Plans:	Agency	Year
<i>Chequamegon - Nicolet National Forest Land & Resource Management Plan</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture & Forest Service	2004



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 City Council and the various City 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 City's vision as shown in the inset box is a description of what the City 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 City of Mellen

We envision Mellen with a diversified economic base and a bustling downtown. We see tree-lined streets, a riverwalk, and well-maintained parks. We would have a K-12 school, as well as a community and recreation center. There would be medical services (local) for the citizenry, along with clear air, clean water, and a view of the stars.

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.



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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. Agriculture
5. Natural Resources
6. Cultural Resources
7. Economic Development
8. Intergovernmental
9. Land Use
10. Community Involvement
11. Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

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

The City 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 City. Churches, civic organizations, the school district, and community leaders, for example, can and do affect the quality of life for City 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 number 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.

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



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Goal #1 – Housing: Provide for a variety of housing choices that promotes affordable housing for all City residents.

Objectives:

1. Improve the quality of the City'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 housing types and prices in order to meet the needs of the residents.
4. Minimize the environmental impact of residential growth.
5. Increase the residential growth rate to .3 percent per year. Between 1990 and 2000 the City experienced a population decline of 1.4 percent annually and the City would like to see return to growth.

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 City 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 County and state agencies to build awareness of housing programs available to City residents.
6. Match land use intensity with available infrastructure.
7. Match new land uses to adjacent existing uses, structuring transitions between land use types that minimize any potential conflicts.
8. Housing development will be encouraged to meet population needs of the City.
9. Encourage the use of new housing units for year-round occupancy.
10. Encourage the preservation of existing housing structures to protect the City's rural character and enhance community health, safety, and welfare.
11. Encourage maintenance of identified historical housing structures to preserve the City's heritage.
12. Manage the location of residential growth.
13. 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.
14. Enforce existing housing regulations on a consistent basis.
15. Encourage municipal boundary expansion to provide residential development opportunities.
16. Create a City-regulated mobile home park.
17. Create an ordinance limiting new housing to structures housed on a foundation.
18. Mobile homes older than ten (10) years old must be located in an approved mobile home designated area.



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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 City'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
3. Address the issues of housing and rental unit availability and affordability.	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission, Ashland County Housing Authority
4. Establish community-wide design standards.	X				Plan Commission
5. Draft, adopt, and consistently enforce a blight ordinance.	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission
6. Establish a permitting program for the remodeling of existing homes at a cost of \$5.00 per permit with a longevity of 12-months with cause for renewal after expiration of the 12-month period.	X				City Council

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. Enhance the City's transportation network for industrial, commercial and recreational use.

Policies

1. New City roads shall be built to Department of Transportation standards for industrial, commercial and recreational use.
2. Where feasible, new development shall provide for the potential of recreational modes of transportation.
3. New City 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 on all recreational routes (especially for ATV designated areas).
5. Compatibility between public and private transportation services will be promoted.
6. Compatibility of local, regional and state transportation policies and plans shall be promoted.
7. All driveway culverts shall meet Department of Natural Resources standards.
8. 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 Department of Transportation road design standards.
9. Encourage Ashland County Aging Unit to continue to pursue alternative methods of providing transportation to the elderly population.
10. Work with area recreational/interest groups to produce and distribute recreational maps.



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11. Work with the Ashland County Land Conservation Department, the Ashland County Highway Department, WisDOT, and the DNR to implement BMPs when doing transportation work.
12. Pursue state and federal grant funding for recreational trails.
13. Involve the public in planning for new recreational trails and in repairing and restoring damaged areas.
14. Work with local and regional officials to produce area hiking and biking maps.
15. Investigate alternative sources of elderly transportation to accommodate additional routes

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006 to 2010	2011 to 2015	2016 to 2020	2021 to 2025	
1. Plan and budget for the repair and maintenance of existing City roads.	X	X	X	X	City Council
2. Investigate the need for preparing both a motorized and a non-motorized recreational trail master plan for the City.	X				City Council
3. Create a citizen committee as a means of soliciting input when planning for recreational trails.		As needed			City Council
4. Expand the trail that follows the river along Butler Road up to Wilderness Drive.		X			City Council
5. Widen shoulder of County road 169 to allow for more pedestrian and bike use.	X				City Council
6. Investigate the methods of traffic calming that could be used on Fayette Avenue.	X				City Council

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

Objectives:

1. Enhance the maintenance of existing public recreational facilities and trails in the City.
2. Increase coordination of the siting, building, and redevelopment of public facilities and the sharing of public services when possible.
3. Improve and expand utilities to all City residents.

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.



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4. Encourage residents to volunteer for the fire department, as EMTs for the EMS team, and other non-profit organizations or events.
5. Encourage the development of child care services in the City.
6. Continue to work with the school district to ensure that school facilities are open to the public.
7. Increase City sewer and water service capacity to provide for all city residents.
8. Seek accessible medical services for the community.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006 to 2010	2011 to 2015	2016 to 2020	2021 to 2025	
1. Investigate options for promoting recreational opportunities, including identifying funding source for future acquisitions.	X				City Council
2. Write a letter to the school district in support of their goal of doubling the capacity of their fiber optics	X				City Council
3. Explore grant opportunities that would allow the city to improve current water and wastewater problems and expand the water and sewer services to all City residents.	X				City Council, Public Works Department

Goal # 5 – Agricultural and Natural Resources: Preserve and protect the City's natural resource base from potential degradation and contamination.

Objectives:

1. Increase protection of the surface and groundwater resources in the City.
2. Preserve the rural landscape.

Policies:

1. Create an inventory of the City's natural resources.
2. Support the efforts of state and federal agencies to protect threatened or endangered species if found within the City limits.
3. Promote an understanding of and appreciation for the area's historic and cultural landscape.
4. Support the County's efforts to develop an educational program that includes designing new trail signage to minimize environmental damage from motorized uses.
5. Encourage the area school district to work with the DNR, and the UWEX to maintain, plan, and manage school forests.
6. Fully consider the impacts of new development on all natural resources.
7. Support and assist when appropriate, existing natural resource preservation groups and associations.



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8. Encourage the active involvement of the Ashland County Land Conservation Department in the development review process at both the county and local level.
9. Encourage and assist with the planning for and wise management of the City's natural resource base.
10. Protect floodplains, wetlands, riparian slopes from development, filling, and extractive activities.
11. Protect aquifers.
12. Improve City road maintenance and construction practices to reduce non-point water pollution.
13. Promote the maintenance of existing public recreational facilities and trails in the City.
14. Support the formation and participation in river associations.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. Continue to have a working relationship with local recreation groups and organizations to establish and maintain trails so as to protect both the environment and the safety of those who use them.
18. Preserve the rural landscape.
19. 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

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to	to	to	to	
	2010	2015	2020	2025	
1. Meet with DNR land managers periodically to understand and assist with the management of the protected areas.			As needed.		City Council

Goal #6 - Cultural Resources:

Promote and preserve the City's cultural resource base.

Objective:

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

Policies:

1. Support the identification and designation of eligible national, state, and local historic properties.



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2. Encourage the preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
3. Inventory, promote and protect local cultural resources.
4. Continue to value the City's ethnic diversity.
5. 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.
6. Support the City's Historical Society.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006	2011	2016	2021	
	to	to	to	to	
	2010	2015	2020	2025	
1. Contact and meet with the local and/or State Historical Society representatives to better understand programs and opportunities.	X				Plan Commission

Goal #7 - Economic Development: Develop and maintain a strong 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.
3. Increase the number of over-night visitors to Mellen.
4. Expand the number of rental units in the City.

Policies:

1. Encourage business retention and when feasible assist with expansion.
2. Promote job-training programs to enhance the existing local workforce.
3. Allow home occupations in residential areas provided they fit into the character of the neighborhood.
4. Assist and facilitate economic development planning and coordination between local and regional partners.
5. Promote economic development and redevelopment opportunities that fit into the community's vision as articulated in this plan.
6. Work to promote needed health care and child care facilities.
7. Ensure that new development is compatible with maintaining scenic views and local character, and have a low impact on the environment.
8. Encourage development of farm production, forestry, home-based businesses, and cottage industries.
9. Promote development of public recreational opportunities in City.
10. Utilize local natural resources to produce value-added products to support sustainable home-based businesses.



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11. Improve and develop partnerships with other communities and state agencies that share the same customers.
12. Market information available for home-based businesses.
13. Work with the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College and local businesses to retrain local employees.
14. Maintain Mellen's rail connections for future industry needs.
15. Expand the tourism economy in the City.
16. Determine what the infrastructure and work force requirement of desired industries are and tailor future infrastructure accordingly.
17. Develop and market the infrastructure needed to service ATVs and snowmobiles
18. Utilize extra TIF capacity and expand current TIF district or create new TIF district to eliminate blight or revitalize downtown.
19. Further market Mellen as the gateway to Copper Falls State Park, Chequamegon National Forest, Whitecap Mountains Ski Resort, waterfalls, hunting grounds, Bad River Reservation, and other nearby attractions.
20. Determine if any other retail or full-service restaurant establishments could be supported by Mellen's current customer base—both locals and tourists. Recruit businesses that are desirable to the City and that can be supported.
21. Create innovative methods to continuously communicate with the tourism industry and other stakeholders about existing and new programs.
22. Attract a hotel/motel to locate in Mellen.
23. Ensure that proposed future hiking trail plans coordinate with any plans associated with the tourism industry, including City retail and lodging establishments.
24. Encourage creation of more service orientated businesses to better support future mining industry.

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				City Council
2. Identify extra TIF capacity and expand current TIF districts or create a new TIF district to encourage the development of more businesses	X				City Council
3. Survey existing businesses to determine what the City can do to retain and promote expansion of these businesses.	X				City Council
4. Survey existing businesses to identify needed workforce-training programs.	X				City Council
5. Complete a market analysis to determine if a hotel/motel chain or restaurant is feasible in the City.	X				City Council, Consultant
6. Work with Ashland and Bayfield County Tourism Departments and other outside sources to market the City of Mellen.	X				City Council, Ashland and Bayfield County Tourism, Consultant



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7. Survey existing businesses to determine if any are interested in completing a market feasibility study if grant money or matching funds are available to them.	X				City Council
8. Utilize economic development funding to help new or existing businesses complete a feasibility study.	X	X	X	X	City Council, grant funding

Goal #8 – 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.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006 to 2010	2011 to 2015	2016 to 2020	2021 to 2025	
1. Invite area governments and school districts to participate in facility planning meetings on an annual basis.	X	X	X	X	City Council, School District, Surrounding Jurisdictions
2. Send copies of draft plan amendments to surrounding jurisdictions to allow the opportunity to review and comment on proposed amendments.	As needed				City Council
3. Develop an accurate inventory of all active and terminated intergovernmental agreements.	X				City Clerk
4. Initiate joint Plan Commission meetings with the Town of Morse and other neighboring jurisdictions on an annual basis to discuss issues of common concern and common services that could be shared.	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission



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Goal #9 – Land Use: Create a pattern of development that preserves forests and agriculture as important land uses, and supports forestry practices and forest-based activities.

Objectives:

1. Minimize the negative effects of incompatible land uses.
2. Maintain a well-balanced mix of land uses within the City.
3. Develop land use guidelines.

Policies:

1. Promote the use of existing land designated for urban uses before permitting development within or adjacent to forested lands.
2. Promote land uses, densities, and regulations that result in the protection of valued resources and recognize existing physical limitations (e.g., slope, woodlands, water).
3. Encourage the use of natural resources as visual and physical amenities for development.
4. Rezoning proposals should be consistent with this plan.
5. Require buffers between incompatible land uses to minimize potential negative effects.
6. Development proposals shall reflect the Future Land Use Plan.
7. New lots and building sites shall be located and designed to protect environmental resources and reflect the character of the City.

Implementation Action Items	Schedule				Responsible Entity
	2006 to 2010	2011 to 2015	2016 to 2020	2021 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, City Council
2. Develop standards for buffering between incompatible land uses.	X				Plan Commission, City Council

Goal #10 – 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 within this community.
2. Increase citizen involvement and interest in the functions of City 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 City.
3. Work with the League of Women Voters to encourage residents to get out and vote.



Community Vision and Plan Implementation

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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.

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

Goal #11 – Plan Monitoring and Evaluation: Keep this comprehensive plan relevant, useable, and timely.

Objectives:

1. Keep the plan up-to-date.
2. Annually appoint a planning commission and compensate appropriately.

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.

Schedule			
2006	2011	2016	2021



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Implementation Action Items	to 2010	to 2015	to 2020	to 2025	Responsible Entity
1. Every 12 months, the Plan Commission will prepare and present a report to the City Council summarizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the plan was used to direct major spending, regulatory, and construction decisions; • How development and redevelopment did or did not coincide with the guidelines of this plan; • How the City has changed in ways that may call for amendments to the plan. 	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission
2. Review the adopted comprehensive plan and revise as necessary (minimum once every 5 years following adoption).	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission
3. Plan for and anticipate costs for amending this plan.	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission, City Council, Office Staff
4. Plan for and anticipate costs to implement identified activities in the comprehensive plan.	X	X	X	X	City Council
5. Monitor the rate of growth on a yearly basis, and submit this information to City Council in a timely manner.	X	X	X	X	Plan Commission
6. Annually review the capital expenditure budget to ensure that infrastructure will meet the anticipated growth.	X	X	X	X	City Council



Issues and Opportunities

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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 for a long time. 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 city 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 city's long-term vision.

Chapter Contents	
◆	Introduction
◆	Identification of Issues and Opportunities
–	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
–	Community Survey
–	Public Meetings
–	Comparative Analysis
◆	Economic Development Approach
–	Desirable Businesses
–	Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses

Identification of Issues and Opportunities

In fall 2003, a public meeting was conducted to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Mellen. Over the course of the planning process additional ideas were also generated. Input from that brainstorming session and subsequent input is shown in Exhibit 3-1.

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 in the Town, or whether it is stable with little movement anticipated.



Issues and Opportunities

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Exhibit 3-1. Issues and Opportunities

Issues:

- ◆ Zoning (get rid of trailers or put them where they belong)
- ◆ More businesses
- ◆ Preserving wetlands and forest
- ◆ More jobs
- ◆ New sidewalks
- ◆ Community involvement (pride in our community)
- ◆ Fire/Police
- ◆ Growth in population
- ◆ Growth in non-forest product industry
- ◆ Improve youth programs, swimming, soccer, and skate rink
- ◆ River walking trail
- ◆ Winter Recreation, snowmobile access
- ◆ General zoning
- ◆ State Park
- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Floodplain
- ◆ Economics
- ◆ Population loss
- ◆ Senior citizens
- ◆ Housing Rehab \$\$
- ◆ Declining population
- ◆ Unsightly buildings
- ◆ Small School playgrounds
- ◆ ATV
- ◆ Property Tax

Opportunities:

- ◆ Mini Hill Tower
- ◆ Hunting Fishing Bars
- ◆ Tourism
- ◆ We have manufacturing jobs
- ◆ High School
- ◆ We have lakes, streams, beauty
- ◆ Fairly pristine river
- ◆ Parks
- ◆ Affordable EMS
- ◆ Water quality
- ◆ Rec. Vehicle Use
- ◆ Non-productive farmland



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Community Survey

A community survey was sent to a sample of households in the city 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. This document is available by contacting the City Clerk. Input from that survey is incorporated here and elsewhere in this plan as appropriate.

◆ Public Meetings

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. These meetings were held with the local Comprehensive Plan Committee, and were open to the public. The purpose of these meetings was to gather information about the community, and develop a comprehensive plan that was tailored to the needs of the Town.

◆ Issues and Opportunities

Exhibit 3.2 provides an extensive list of identified issues and opportunities within the City of Mellen. The list is broken up into categories, and within each category is an assortment of items that deal with that particular topic. The City has identified the level of importance of each item, and indicated whether the importance of the issue was growing in the community, or declining. The dots following each item indicate the rank of importance with an up arrow indicating increasing importance, while a down arrow indicates decreasing importance. An item with a dash means that the item is neither increasing nor decreasing in importance.



Issues and Opportunities

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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 city 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	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
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 City	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
Absentee landowners	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
Predominance of increasing 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

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Transportation	Importance								Trend	
	Low							High		
Level of truck traffic on city 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 (eg. Parks, shelters, trails, etc.)	●	●	●	●	●					▲
Energy supply	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			▲
Electrical distribution	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			▲
Need for more City hall or other municipal building space (eg. 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 City	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—
Decline in local farm economy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
Decline in local forestry economy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—
Growing opportunities for home occupations	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
Comparatively low household income as compared to others in region	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
Intergovernmental Cooperation											
Annexation (if applicable)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—
Relationship with County forest representatives (if applicable)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
Relationship with National Forest (if applicable)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
Relationship with State Park or State Forest (if applicable)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
Relationship with Bad River Tribe	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	▲
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

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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.



Issues and Opportunities

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Economic Development Approach

This section documents in general terms the city’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 city’s long-term vision. It then identifies the city’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 city.

◆ Desirable Businesses

As part of the planning process, we asked the question: “What types of economic activities are consistent with the city’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 city’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

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ▪ Landscaping (Soil, compost) | ▪ Light Manufacturing |
| ▪ Cellular Reception (Tower) | ▪ Flooring Manufacturing Mill |
| ▪ Chip/Particle Board | ▪ Reuse of Recyclables |

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"> ▪ A larger population base ▪ The ability to start up small, in-home businesses ▪ Innovative marketing techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A lack of population density (customers) ▪ Distribution of goods is limited to the roads and some expandable railroad lines



Introduction

This chapter presents each of the four 20-year 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 set of 20-year forecasts for employment.

Chapter Contents	
◆	Introduction
◆	Regional Population Change
◆	Population Forecasts
◆	Housing Forecasts
◆	Employment Forecasts
◆	Land Use Forecasts

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.

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	15	15	15	15	60
Additional households	13	12	13	14	52
Additional housing units	15	14	15	16	60
Additional land (acres) ²					
Commercial	4	4	4	4	16
Industrial	6	6	6	6	24
Residential	46	41	46	50	183
Total	56	51	56	60	223
Additional employment (jobs)					
Total	154	154	154	154	616

Notes:

1. The total population includes those living in an institutional setting and those living in households.
2. 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

Recognizing that the City of Mellen can influence the rate of population growth in the coming years and is not strictly bound by historical trends, the community decided to reverse the declining trend experienced between 1990 and 2000. After evaluating a number of growth rates and looking at potential consequences of each, an annual average growth rate of 0.3 percent was selected and is used throughout this plan. This rate is consistent with the City's long-term vision and is a realistic assessment.

Table 4-3 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, approximately 60 new residents are anticipated.

Because a certain percentage of the population may be living in an institutional setting (e.g., nursing home, group home), forecasts were also prepared showing the population living in a household setting (Table 4-3). This step is needed to accurately estimate the number of acres needed for residential purposes. For the purpose of this plan, it is assumed that the total population will be living in a household situation over the next 20-year period.

Table 4-3. Population: 2006 to 2025

Time Period	Total Resident Population ¹	Population In Households
2005	846	812
2006	815	815
2007	818	818
2008	821	821
2009	824	824
2010	827	827
2011	829	829
2012	832	832
2013	835	835
2014	838	838
2015	841	841
2016	844	844
2017	847	847
2018	850	850
2019	852	852
2020	855	855
2021	858	858
2022	861	861
2023	864	864
2024	867	867
2025	870	870
Number Added During Period		
2006 – 2010	15	15
2011 – 2015	15	14
2016 – 2020	15	14
2021 - 2025	15	15
2006 - 2025	60	58

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 City 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 Mellen. From 1990 to 2000, the average household size in the City declined from 2.39 to 2.15. It is anticipated this trend will continue throughout the planning period, but at a slower rate of decline, and cause the figure to drop to about 2.0.

This demographic trend suggests that even if the population of the City 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 4-4 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 City, it is necessary to determine the number of housing units that will be needed to house them. The number of housing units will 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 it is not occupied for any number of other reasons. For the purpose of this plan, it is assumed that 2 percent of the housing units will be vacant at any point in time. The calculated number of housing units is also shown in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4. Housing: 2006 to 2025

Year	Households	Housing Units
2005	383	443
2006	386	446
2007	388	449
2008	391	452
2009	393	455
2010	396	458
2011	398	460
2012	400	463
2013	403	466
2014	406	470
2015	408	472
2016	411	475
2017	414	479
2018	416	481
2019	418	483
2020	421	487
2021	424	490
2022	427	494
2023	429	496
2024	432	500
2025	435	503
Number Added During Period		
2006 – 2010	13	15
2011 – 2015	12	14
2016 – 2020	13	15
2021 - 2025	14	16
2006 - 2025	52	60

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



Employment Forecasts

As shown on the future land use map, land is allocated to accommodate new commercial and industrial enterprises. Using employment ratios based on acreage, the number of potential new jobs by type was calculated (Table 4-5). During the first five-year increment, it is anticipated that the land designated for commercial and industrial land uses could support 106 additional jobs.

Table 4-5. Anticipated Number of New Jobs: 2006 to 2025

	2006 to 2010	2011 to 2015	2016 to 2020	2021 to 2025	Total 2006 to 2025
Retail / service / Office	22	22	22	22	88
General industrial (e.g., manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution)	84	84	84	84	336
Total	106	106	106	106	424

Notes:

1. 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.

Land Use Forecasts

In Chapter 2, there is a set of objectives that are intended to help guide the housing mix of new residential development in the coming years, which are used to determine the number of housing units by type.

The land area requirements for each of these housing types was calculated by applying an average density to each of the categories. These values were then adjusted upward to account for infrastructure (e.g., roads, smaller community parks). Each of these values were then adjusted upward to allow consumers a choice between different competing housing developments. Table 4-6 shows the number of acres needed for each of the housing types for each of the five-year increments. A total of 183 acres should be shown on the future land use map for residential purposes intended to occur over the next 20 years.



Plan Based Forecasts

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It should be noted that these data are intended for planning purposes only. It is important to keep tabs on actual development levels and update these forecasts based on more current information and to account for actual development activity and shifts in the housing market.

Table 4-6. Housing Type: 2006 to 2025

	2006	2011	2016	2021	Total
	to 2010	to 2015	to 2020	to 2025	2006 to 2025
Additional Dwelling Units					
1/2 acre	2	1	2	2	7
3/4 acre	2	2	2	2	8
1 acre	2	2	2	2	8
1-3 acre	9	8	9	10	36
Total	15	13	15	16	59
Land Area Requirements (Acres)					
1/2 acre	1	1	1	1	4
3/4 acre	3	3	3	3	12
1 acre	3	3	3	3	12
1-3 acre	39	34	39	43	155
Total	46	41	46	50	183



Future Conditions

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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 City'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. As documented elsewhere in this plan, the aging population of 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 City of Mellen 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, and premature loss of agricultural farmland, among other potential problems.

In the background report, environmental constraints for development were identified and mapped, including wetlands and floodplains. These factors are carried forward in this document and are portrayed on a development factors map. 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 City 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 foundation for sound decision making is a clear land use plan based upon sound planning principles and the community's vision for its future.



Future Conditions

*City of Mellen
Comprehensive Plan - Policy Document*

The future land use map included in this chapter is intended to illustrate this vision and guide the future growth and development of Mellen over the next 20 years and beyond. It will serve as a guide for the plan commission and City 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 within Ashland County.

The following list of land use districts are meant to correspond to the future land use map. This chart provides an outline of what each district consists of.

Land Use Districts

Base Districts	General Description
Residential	This district supports residential uses at specified densities. Public facilities such as parks and trails are also allowed.
Commercial	Uses in this district are characteristically auto-oriented. Development may be in a linear strip development pattern located adjacent to main roadways. Typical uses include auto sales and service, small retail stores of various kinds, restaurants, and offices of various types.
Government and Institutional	This district includes governmental and institutional uses, some of which occupy a significant land area. Examples include educational facilities, public parks, municipals buildings, and hospitals.
Heavy Industrial	This district is intended to accommodate a wide array of uses including manufacturing, warehousing, processing of raw materials, and the like.
Park and Open Space	This district includes a variety of different types of parks and open spaces ranging from public land developed for active recreational use to privately owned land that is intended to remain in an undeveloped state. Some of the uses within this district are state, county, or local parks, wildlife management areas, and private conservation lands.
Base 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 with 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.



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There are a wide range of factors that will ultimately affect future land use in Ashland. These factors were taken into consideration when developing the future land use plan, which is shown in Map 5-3. The future land use map illustrates potential growth over the next 20 years based upon existing conditions, discussions at public meetings, goals of this plan, and direction from local committees.

Particularly in Ashland County, there are many natural restrictions that must be considered when developing the future land use map. Floodplains, wetlands, and forest land account for a large portion of the County. Farmland must also be considered for preservation, as the County has seen an overall dramatic decline of active agricultural land in the past ten years. The Bad River Indian Reservation extends over many acres in the County, and the potential of a future mine must be considered as well.

There is a large iron ore/taconite resource in the Towns of Morse and Marengo in Ashland County that has not been mined on a commercial scale. When including the Town of Anderson in Iron County, this total resource is 10% of the potentially commercial iron ore/taconite resource known in the United States. The area where the iron ore/taconite is located is known as the Gogebic Iron Range, and a majority of this area is owned by several iron ore land holding companies. These companies have delineated a conceptual iron ore/taconite mining development area that includes land in the Towns of Marengo and Morse in Ashland County. There is also iron ore/taconite resource in Iron County with the majority of the resource being located in Ashland County. The conceptual development area that has been defined encompasses what is envisioned to be the total area in which the iron ore/taconite resource would be mined and processed. This is based on preliminary analysis that includes auxiliary and buffer lands. Not all lands within the conceptual development area would be part of the iron ore/taconite resource development. The iron ore land holding companies are cooperating with the Towns of Marengo and Morse in the preparation of their comprehensive plans as they relate to the iron ore/taconite resource.

The future land use plan portrays the growth in residential units expected within the City of Mellen over the next twenty years. This growth accounts for approximately 375 new acres of residential development in varying densities. Roughly 250 acres are set aside for one to three-acre parcels, The remainder of land will be parcels that are one acre or smaller.

As shown on the future land use map, a large sector of land in the western portion of the City that has been reserved for heavy industrial use. The parcel adjacent to it is currently occupied by a logging industry, and can be expected to expand in the future.

Future Land Use:
2006 to 2025
City of Mellen

Ashland County
Comprehensive Plan Map

Legend

- Future Land Use**
- Residential - 1/2 acre parcels
 - Residential - 1/2 to 3/4 acre parcels
 - Residential - 1 acre parcels
 - Residential - 1-3 acre parcels
 - Residential - no density determined
 - Commercial
 - Government and institutional
 - Industrial - heavy
 - Park
 - Proposed city limits

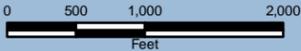
- Overlay Districts**
- 100-year floodplain*
 - Wetlands

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

Note: Existing city limits = 1,184 acres
Proposed city limits addition = 759 acres

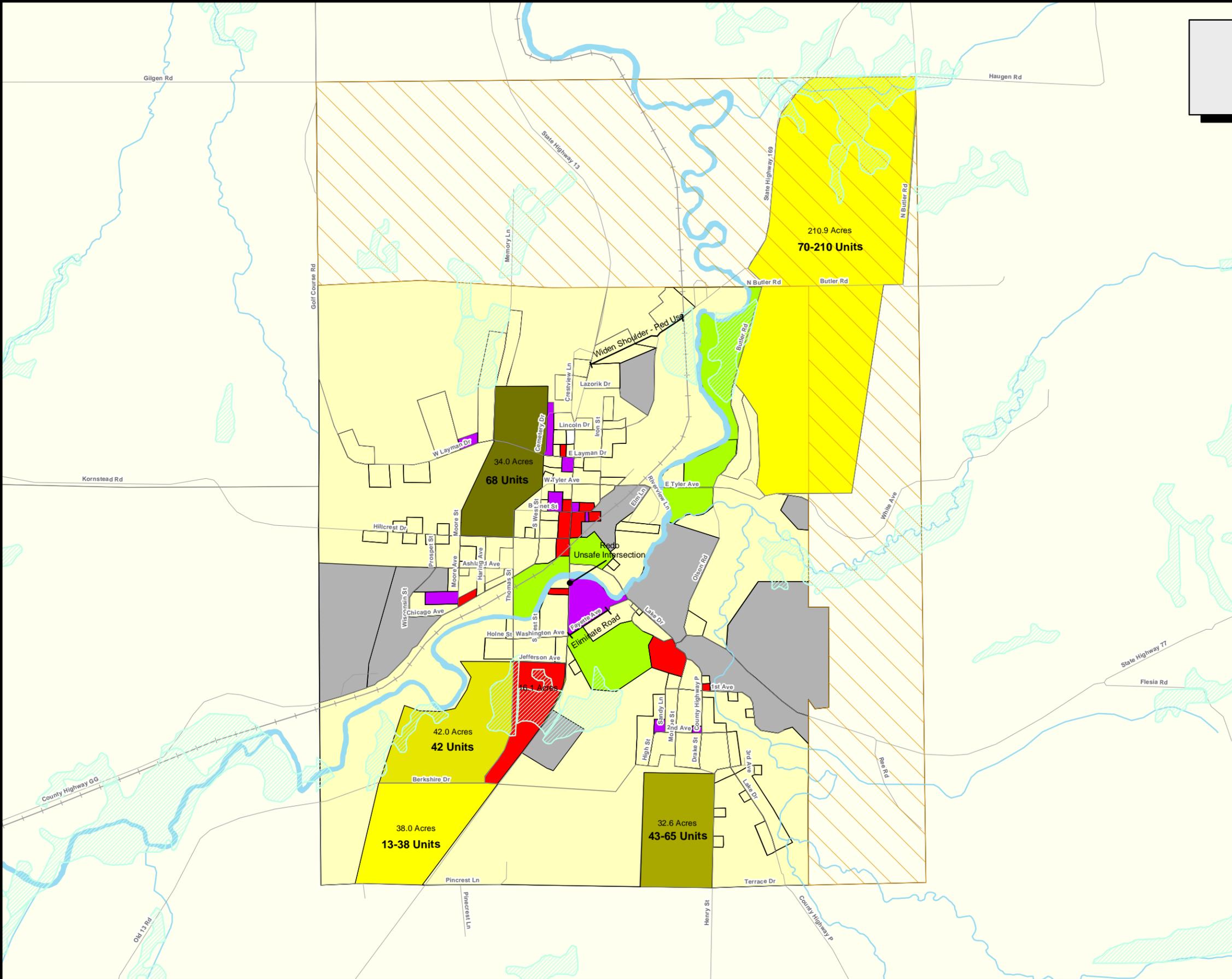
Development Phasing

- A 2006 - 2009
- B 2010 - 2014
- C 2015 - 2019
- D 2020 - 2025



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration & Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Map Created: March, 2004
Map Edited: September 11, 2005

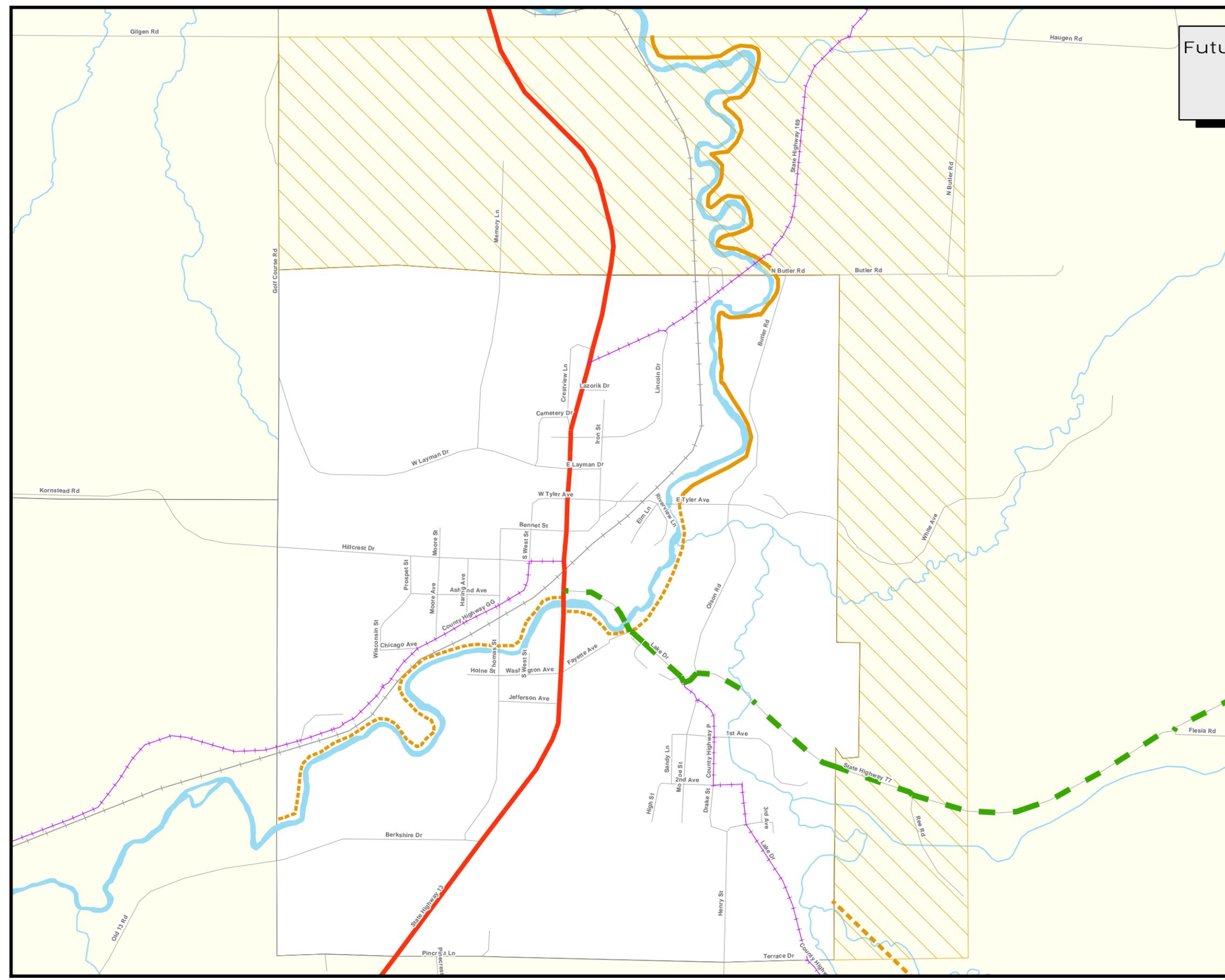


Future Transportation Network:
2006 to 2025
City of Mellen

Ashland County
Comprehensive Plan Map

Legend

-  Principal Arterials - Other
-  Minor Arterials
-  Major Collectors
-  Minor Collectors
-  Existing non-motorized trail
-  Proposed non-motorized trail



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration &
Wisconsin Department of Transportation



Future Transportation Plan

The City currently has a road system that is in good shape. The majority of roads in the City are in 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 City's boundary will not change either.

The future transportation plan for the City of Mellen proposes a new trail extending from the trail that exists in the northern portion of the City. The proposed trail continues south from East Tyler Avenue past Thomas Street, running parallel with the river. In addition, there are currently plans to extend the ATV and snowmobile trail routes throughout the City. Those trail routes are also depicted on the future transportation map.

Future Utilities and Community Facilities

The table found in this chapter (Table 5.1) lists the City's facilities and utilities and shows whether or not there are currently plans to expand, improve, or replace the utility or facility. If the facility or utility is marked 'adequate' this indicates that the City does not see a need to improve the item. If a facility or utility is marked as 'adequate'; however, this does not mean that the City cannot change their assessment of the item in the future. The City reviews the services it provides on a regular basis and will continue to do so in the future.

For the most part, the City provides few utilities. Most are provided by the county or by private service providers. Although most utilities are provided by private entities, they can have an important impact on the City and its residents.

Telecommunication and Fiber Optics

A goal of the school in Mellen is to double the capacity of their current fiber optics availability. The City would also like to see affordable DSL services available throughout the area.

Electrical and Natural Gas

The City has expressed an interest in upgrading and expanding the electrical services that are available to them.

Water

If the City grows in the future, the system will need to expand and make some improvements in order to accommodate the new residents.



Wastewater

If the City population grows, they will need to explore the feasibility of expanding and improving sewer services within the next twenty years. The City currently has the ability to expand services by 25%.

Stormwater Management

The City has acknowledged that sometime in the next twenty year time period they will need to make expansions to their current stormwater system

Recreation Facilities

The City would like to explore the feasibility of adding to the trail that goes out to Copper Falls State Park. The trail is for non-motorized uses only. Also there is a road on the north end of the City that is frequently used by pedestrians. The city would like to widen the shoulders on this road to better accommodate pedestrians.

Library Services

The City will be expanding library services within the next five years, and have taken steps towards encouraging additional library services.

Fire Protection

The City would like to encourage more people to become qualified to offer their services to the fire service. The City would like to expand these services in the future.

EMS

The City would like to encourage more people to become qualified to offer their services to the ambulance service. The City would like to expand these services in the future.

Health Care

There is currently no local doctor within the City of Mellen, although a physician visits the elderly home two times a week. The closest medical facility is a minimum of thirty miles away, and the City would like to see health care services within the City expanded in the near future.



Future Conditions

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Table 7.1 Utility and Community Facility Assessment; City of Mellen Years 2006-2025								
City Facility	(Year 1 – 10)				(Year 11-20)			
	Adequate	Expand	Improve	New/ Replace	Adequate	Expand	Improve	New/ Replace
Tele-communication and Fiber Optics		X				X		
Electrical	X					X		
Solid Waste and Recycling	X				X			
Recreation Facilities	X					X		
Library Services		X				X		
Fire Protection		X				X		
EMS		X				X		
Municipal Buildings	X				X			
Schools	X				X			
Child Care	X				X			
Health Care		X				X		
Cemeteries	X				X			

Source: City of Mellen

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 City of Mellen.
2. *Conformance with Plan.* After January 1, 2010, all city 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 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 Future 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:
 - 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.



General Provisions

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- 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.

Section 2-3. Responsibility for Interpretation.

In the event a question arises concerning any provision, or the application of any provision, of this plan, the plan commission shall develop a recommended interpretation and submit it to the city council, which shall be responsible for rendering the final interpretation. In making such interpretation, the plan commission and city council shall look to the overall intent of the comprehensive plan for guidance. The city council 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. City board;
- b. Plan commission;
- c. any resident of the City;
- d. any person having title to land within the City;
- 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 City clerk 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



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1. *Submittal of Application.* The applicant shall submit a complete application to the city clerk along with the application fee if any (See Sections 3-4 and 3-6).
2. *Transmittal of Application to Plan Commission.* The city 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.
4. *Interdepartmental/Agency Review.* The city clerk shall forward one (1) copy of the application to appropriate city personnel and department heads that would be directly effected 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 City Council 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 City Council. 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. County Clerk for Ashland County,
 - b. North West Regional Planning Commission,
 - c. Wisconsin Land Council,
 - d. Department of Administration, and
 - e. other agencies deemed appropriate.
8. *Public Notice for Public Hearing.* The city 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 city, other notice may be provided.
9. *Public Hearing.* The City Council shall hold at least one public hearing to consider the recommended amendment.
10. *City Council Decision.* After reviewing the application and the plan commission's recommendation, the City Council shall make a decision to either:



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- 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.

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 City Council.

11. *Interagency Notification of Decision.* If the City Council passes an ordinance to amend the plan, the city 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. Surrounding Jurisdictions
- b. County Clerk for Ashland County,
- c. North West Regional Planning Commission,
- d. Wisconsin Land Council,
- e. Department of Administration, and
- f. other agencies deemed appropriate.

If the city board decides to not amend the plan, city clerk shall send a letter, which states the City Board's decision, to each of the following entities:

- a. Surrounding Jurisdictions
- b. County Clerk for Ashland County,
- c. North West Regional Planning Commission,
- d. Wisconsin Land Council,
- e. Department of Administration, and
- f. other agencies deemed appropriate.

12. *Applicant Notification of Decision.* The city 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 City Council'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 City Council passes an ordinance to amend the plan, the city 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.
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 of ten dollars (\$10.00) 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 City board action regarding this plan.

Date	Ordinance Number	Description of Action
____, 2004		City board repeals the City's comprehensive plan and adopts a new comprehensive plan to comply with Wisconsin's Smart Growth Legislation.



Appendices

City of Mellen
Comprehensive Plan – Policy Document

Appendix A:

Adoption Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. 01-06
CITY OF MELLEN, ASHLAND COUNTY, WISCONSIN
AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Whereas, the City of Mellen, 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 City Council 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 City Council 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 City Council the adoption of comprehensive plan, which contains all of the elements specified in §66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Whereas, the City Council 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 City Council 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 City Council (as defined in §59.001 (2m) of the Wisconsin Statutes) and publication as required by law.

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

- a. Mellen 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 18th day of July, 2006.

[Signature]
City Mayor

(Published/Posted): July 26, 2006

Attested: [Signature]
City Clerk



Appendix B:
Plan Commission Resolution