



Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan Update 2021-2041

Adopted by ordinance May 11, 2021

Planning assistance provided by:



604 Wilson Street
Menomonie, WI 54751

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan Update 2021-2041

Prepared by:
Town of Wheaton Plan Commission

Adopted by:
**Town of Wheaton Town Board
May 11, 2021**

Planning Assistance Provided by:

**Cedar Corporation
604 Wilson Avenue
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 235-9081**



The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan Update 2021-2041

Prepared Under the Direction of:

Plan Commission

Alice Droske, Chair
Gary Bodenbarg, Secretary
Dale Hayden, Deputy Secretary
Mike, McGinley, Member
Scott Morris, Member
Thomas Piercy, Vice Chair
Chuck Wood, Member

Town Board

Mark Blaskowski - Town Chair
Ken Books, Supervisor
Alice Droske, Supervisor
Wayne Miller, Supervisor
Bob Sworski, Supervisor

Table of Contents

Vision Statement

Chapter 1	The Town of Wheaton and Comprehensive Planning	Page
	♦ Introduction	1-1
	♦ Comprehensive Planning Law	1-1
	♦ Goals of the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law	1-3
	♦ Benefits to Planning	1-4
	♦ Public Participation	1-4
	♦ Formulating Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations.....	1-5
	♦ Note on Comprehensive Plan Limitations	1-5
 Chapter 2	 Issues and Opportunities	
	♦ Introduction	2-1
	♦ Historic Population.....	2-1
	♦ Population Forecasts.....	2-2
	♦ Household Forecasts.....	2-2
	♦ Age Distribution	2-3
	♦ Labor Force	2-4
	♦ Place of Work.....	2-5
	♦ Commuting.....	2-5
	♦ Education Levels	2-6
	♦ Household Income	2-6
	♦ Employment by Occupation	2-8
	♦ Employment by Industry.....	2-8
	♦ Employment Opportunities in the Town of Wheaton.....	2-9
	♦ Survey Results	2-10
	♦ Summary	2-12
 Chapter 3	 Housing	
	♦ Introduction	3-1
	♦ Housing Tenure.....	3-1
	♦ Units in Structure	3-1
	♦ Year Structure Built.....	3-2
	♦ Home Heating Characteristics	3-3
	♦ Housing Value Characteristics	3-4
	♦ Year Householder Moved Into Unit.....	3-5
	♦ Housing Affordability Assessment	3-5

♦ Survey Results Related to Housing	3-6
♦ Potential Housing Needs.....	3-8
♦ Housing Regulations	3-8
♦ Housing Programs	3-8
♦ Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations	3-9

Chapter 4 Transportation

♦ Introduction	4-1
♦ Modes of Transportation	4-1
♦ Local Roads and Highway.....	4-1
♦ Bridges	4-2
♦ Transit	4-4
♦ Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure.....	4-4
♦ Railroads.....	4-5
♦ Air Transportation.....	4-5
♦ Truck Transportation	4-6
♦ Water Transportation	4-6
♦ Snowmobile and ATV Trails	4-6
♦ Relationship to State and Regional Transportation Plans	4-6
♦ Transportation Expenditure Planning.....	4-7
♦ Other Sources of Transportation Funding	4-7
♦ Survey Results Related to Transportation	4-9
♦ Goals, Objectives, Recommendations	4-10

Chapter 5 Community Facilities and Utilities

♦ Introduction	5-1
♦ Community Facilities.....	5-1
♦ Utilities	5-5
♦ Survey Results Related to Community Facilities and Utilities	5-7
♦ Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations	5-8

Chapter 6 Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

♦ Introduction	6-1
♦ Agriculture	6-1
♦ Soils	6-2
♦ Topography	6-2
♦ Bedrock Geology	6-2
♦ Surface Geology	6-5
♦ Mineral Resources	6-5
♦ Water Resources	6-5
♦ Floodplains	6-8

♦ Wetlands	6-8
♦ Groundwater	6-9
♦ Steep Slopes	6-9
♦ Forests and Woodlands	6-10
♦ Grasslands and Prairies	6-10
♦ Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat and Open Space	6-15
♦ Rare and Endangered Species and Natural Communities	6-15
♦ Cultural Resources	6-16
♦ Survey Results Related to Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources	6-16
♦ Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations	6-17

Chapter 7

Economic Development

♦ Introduction	7-1
♦ Workforce	7-1
♦ Economic Base	7-2
♦ Strengths and Weaknesses for Retaining or Attracting Businesses	7-5
♦ Assessment of Future Conditions	7-5
♦ Economic Development Sites	7-6
♦ Redevelopment Opportunities	7-6
♦ Survey Results Related to Economic Development.....	7-6
♦ Economic Development Programs and Agencies	7-9
♦ Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations	7-10

Chapter 8

Intergovernmental Cooperation

♦ Introduction	8-1
♦ Benefits of Intergovernmental Cooperation	8-1
♦ Adjacent Communities.....	8-1
♦ School Districts.....	8-2
♦ County and Regional Agencies.....	8-2
♦ State Agencies and Organizations	8-5
♦ Conflict Resolution Procedures.....	8-6
♦ Growth Trends and Planning Activities in Adjacent Communities	8-6
♦ Existing and/or Potential Conflicts.....	8-6
♦ Potential Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities.....	8-7
♦ Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations	8-7

Chapter 9

Land Use

♦ Land Use vs. Zoning.....	9-1
♦ Purpose of the Land Use Element.....	9-1
♦ Existing Land Use Inventory Map and Land Use Categories.....	9-2

♦ Future Land Use	9-4
♦ Survey Results Related to Land Use.....	9-4
♦ Future Land Use Needs and Land Use Regulations	9-7
♦ Future Development Considerations.....	9-8
♦ Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Eau Claire	9-8
♦ Future Land Use Map.....	9-10
♦ Future Development Principles	9-12
♦ Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations	9-13

Chapter 10

Plan Implementation

♦ Introduction	10-1
♦ Potential Implementation Tools	10-1
♦ Roles and Responsibilities.....	10-1
♦ Plan Updates	10-2
♦ Plan Consistency	10-2
♦ Plan Integration and Measuring Achievement	10-2
♦ Implementation Recommendations and Schedule	10-2

Maps

Map 1-1	Town of Wheaton	1-2
Map 4-1	Road Classifications & AADT	4-3
Map 4-2	Official Snowmobile Trials	4-8
Map 5-1	Community Facilities.....	5-2
Map 6-1	Existing Farmland.....	6-3
Map 6-2	Soil Classifications	6-4
Map 6-3	Existing Non-Metallic Mines	6-6
Map 6-4	Environmental Corridor	6-7
Map 6-5	Measured Nitrate Levels.....	6-11
Map 6-6	Groundwater Contamination Susceptibility	6-12
Map 6-7	Steep Slopes.....	6-13
Map 6-8	Forests and Woodlands	6-14
Map 8-1	ETZ Boundaries	8-3
Map 8-2	School District Boundaries.....	8-4
Map 9-1	Existing Land Use	9-3
Map 9-2	Future Land Use	9-11

Tables

Tab 2-1	Historical Population – Town of Wheaton & Surr. Municipalities.....	2-1
Tab 2-2	Population Forecasts– Town of Wheaton & Surr. Municipalities	2-2
Tab 2-3	Household Forecasts– Town of Wheaton & Surr. Municipalities.....	2-3
Tab 2-4	Sex and Age – Town of Wheaton.....	2-3
Tab 2-5	Employment Status – Town of Wheaton.....	2-4
Tab 2-6	Place of Work – Town of Wheaton	2-5
Tab 2-7	Commuting to Work – Town of Wheaton	2-5
Tab 2-8	Travel Time to Work – Town of Wheaton	2-6
Tab 2-9	Educational Attainment – Town of Wheaton.....	2-6
Tab 2-10	Income and Benefits – Town of Wheaton	2-7
Tab 2-11	Occupation – Town of Wheaton.....	2-8
Tab 2-12	Industry – Town of Wheaton	2-8
Tab 2-13	Employees – Town of Wheaton.....	2-9
Tab 3-1	Housing Tenure – Town of Wheaton.....	3-1
Tab 3-2	Units in Structure – Town of Wheaton	3-2
Tab 3-3	Year Structure Built.....	3-3
Tab 3-4	Housing Heating Fuel	3-4
Tab 3-5	Owner-Occupied Home Values.....	3-4
Tab 3-6	Year Householder Moved into Unit.....	3-5
Tab 3-7	Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Gross Household Income	3-6
Tab 3-8	Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income.....	3-6
Tab 3-9	Opinion About the Need for Additional Housing Types in Town of Wheaton	3-7
Tab 4-1	Opinions about Recreation Facilities and Trails.....	4-9
Tab 4-2	Opinions about Transportation Issues.....	4-10
Tab 4-3	Opinions about Railroads and Shared Ride Van Services	4-10
Tab 5-1	Opinions about Community Facilities and Services in the Town of Wheaton	5-7
Tab 5-2	Opinions about Recreation Facilities and Trails.....	5-7
Tab 6-1	Importance for Town of Wheaton to Protect and Preserve Natural Resources	6-17
Tab 7-1	Class of Worker	7-2
Tab 7-2	Occupational Employment Projections West Central WDA 2016-2026	7-3
Tab 7-3	Total and Per Farm Overview – Chippewa County.....	7-3
Tab 7-4	Farms by Size – Chippewa County	7-4
Tab 7-5	Economic Development Opinions	7-7
Tab 7-6	Energy Alternatives Opinions.....	7-8

Tab 7-7	Importance Given to Types of Businesses or Industries in the Town of Wheaton	7-8
Tab 9-1	Existing Land Use – Town of Wheaton	9-4
Tab 9-2	Opinions about Uses of Productive Agricultural Land	9-7
Tab 9-3	Land Use Opinions	9-7
Tab 9-4	Future Land Use Needs in 5-Year Increments – Town of Wheaton	9-8
Tab 10-1	Short Term Recommendations (1 to 5 Years).....	10-3
Tab 10-2	Mid Term Recommendations (6 to 10 Years).....	10-3
Tab 10-3	Long Term Recommendations (11 to 20 Years).....	10-3
Tab 10-4	Ongoing	10-3

Figures

Fig 2-1	Age – Town of Wheaton	2-4
Fig 2-2	Income and Benefits – Town of Wheaton	2-7
Fig 3-1	Year Structure Built	3-3
Fig 3-2	Owner-Occupied Home Values.....	3-5
Fig 3-3	Preference for Housing Layout	3-7
Fig 4-1	Recommended Bicycle Routes.....	4-5
Fig 5-1	Willing to Pay More Taxes for Park and Recreation Opportunities and Facilities	5-8
Fig 6-1	Floodplains.....	6-8
Fig 7-1	Where Chippewa County Residents Work.....	7-2
Fig 7-2	Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA) 2013 – 2018 Chippewa County.....	7-4
Fig 7-3	Preferred Location of Commercial or Industrial Building and Activities.....	7-7
Fig 9-1	Most Important Reasons to Live in the Town of Wheaton	9-5
Fig 9-2	Minimum Lot Size for Rural Residential Development.....	9-6
Fig 9-3	Preference for Housing Layout	9-6
Fig 9-4	City of Eau Claire Sewer Service Boundary	9-9
Fig 9-5	City of Eau Claire Sewer Service Area Plan: Town of Wheaton.....	9-10

Appendix: Town of Wheaton Community Survey

Addendum: Existing Town Agreements

Vision Statement

Town of Wheaton

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan strives to maintain the integrity and quality of life characterized by the preservation of the Town's agricultural, recreational, and natural resources and supports future residential, business and industrial growth that compliments these and enhances the enjoyment of the area for Wheaton residents.

The Comprehensive Plan will protect the integrity of the Town's borders and rights of the residents and landowners as it considers the impact of surrounding growth including extraterritorial plat review rights exercised by neighboring communities and will be cognizant of all future development by identifying logical locations to accommodate the needs of residents, businesses and agriculture.



Chapter I

The Town of Wheaton and Comprehensive Planning

Introduction

The Town of Wheaton is located in the southwestern corner of Chippewa County in western Wisconsin (see Map 1-1). The 2019 estimated population is 2,812 residents. Agriculture has shaped the Town's landscape but the proximity to larger urban areas and highly traveled transportation corridors has led to growing residential, commercial and industrial development.

The Town of Wheaton shares its border with the City of Chippewa Falls, Village of Lake Hallie, City of Eau Claire, Town of Tilden, Town of Howard, Town of Union and Town of Elk Mound. In general, the area's population is growing. Many Town residents commute to work in the urbanized areas.

State Truck Highway (S.T.H.) 29 provides a major transportation corridor running east and west through the Town and United States Highway (U.S.H.) 53 running north and south in the northeastern corner of the Town. U.S.H. 12 touches the northeastern corner of Wheaton.

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport, located in the City of Eau Claire, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, only 1 ½ hours away in the Bloomington, MN, provides easy access to air transportation services.

The proximity to growing urban areas and major transportation corridors provides the need planning to ensure the future growth of the Town of Wheaton happens in a thoughtful way that meets the needs of the community and protects the qualities of the Town that residents value.

Comprehensive Planning Law

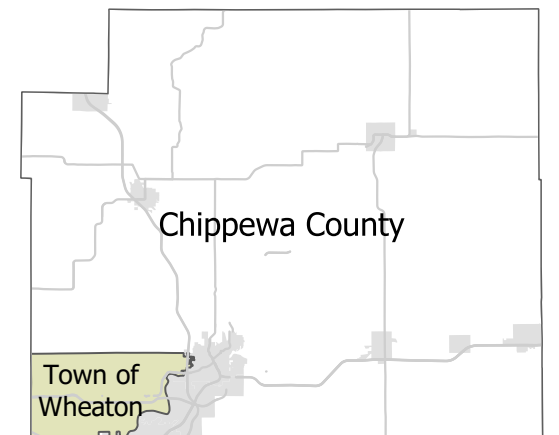
The Town of Wheaton adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 2009. It complies with the requirements of Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001. The Statute states that beginning January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit enacts or amends an official mapping ordinance, subdivision ordinance, zoning ordinance, or shorelands zoning ordinance, the ordinance shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan.

The term "consistent with" means that it furthers or does not contradict the objectives, goals, and policies contained in the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan, by itself, is not considered a law.

The Town of Wheaton worked with Short Elliot Hendrickson to create and adopt the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan in 2009. This update will incorporate portions of the original document that are still relevant and revised portions of each chapters that need to be revisited.

Town of Wheaton

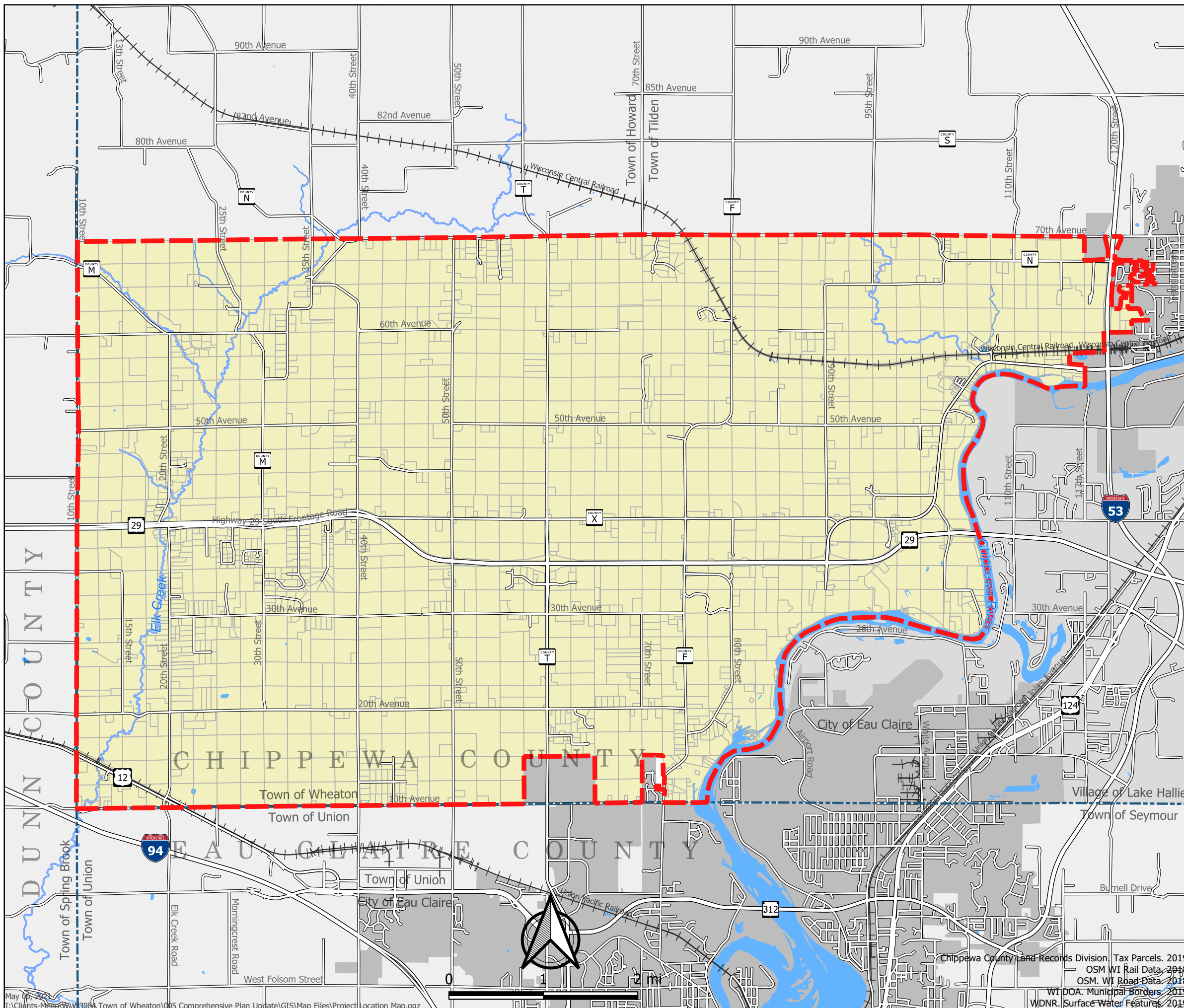
Chippewa County, WI



Cedar
corporation



Map 1-1



The Town's Comprehensive Plan is designed to act as a guide to the physical, social, and economic development of Wheaton. The Comprehensive Plan must address nine (9) elements, each focusing on a unique sector of the community. The elements required by the Wisconsin State Statutes are:

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Implementation

Each element is addressed in a manner that provides fluidity and consistency with the other elements, existing local and regional plans, and local and regional objectives.

Goals of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law or "Smart Growth" Law was designed to confront the social, environmental, and economic challenges resulting from urban sprawl. A Comprehensive Plan must be created with these goals in mind.

1. Promotion of redevelopment of land with existing infrastructure and public services, and maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitat, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
5. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and low costs.
6. Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.
7. Encouragement of cooperation and coordination among nearby units of government.
8. Building community identity by revitalizing main streets & enforcing design standards.
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels within the community.
10. Providing infrastructure, services & developable land adequate to meet market demand residential, commercial and industrial uses.
11. Promoting expansion or stabilization of the economic base and job creation.
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests & goals.
13. Planning & developing land uses that create or preserve unique urban & rural communities.



Benefits to Planning

A Comprehensive Plan can provide numerous benefits to any community. These include:

- Coordinating community activities to reduce costs
- Understanding the past and present to plan for the future
- Allowing a community to be proactive rather than reactive
- Preserving local control
- Promoting economic development
- Promoting intergovernmental cooperation
- Protecting cultural, agricultural, and natural resources

The most important benefit of a Comprehensive Plan is that it provides information so that Town officials can make consistent decisions. It also provides a vision that residents, committees, business owners, and developers can utilize when pursuing their own projects.

Public Participation

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires public participation at every stage of planning. At a minimum, the law calls for the adoption of a Public Participation Plan to provide for a diverse range of opportunities for the public to help shape their community, making copies of the proposed plan available for the public to review, and holding at least one public hearing prior to adopting the comprehensive plan.

The Town of Wheaton adopted a Public Participation Plan that included conducting a Community Survey in 2019 to get the opinions of residents and business owners on a wide range of development issues. The adopted Public Participation Plan is found in Appendix A.

Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations in a wide variety of chapters integrate this perspective and reinforce the historic pride and sense of place that the Town of Wheaton is determined to maintain, strengthen, and build upon.

Formulating Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations

Goals, objectives, and recommendations are found at the end of each chapter. These provide guidance and direction for the growth and development of the Town of Wheaton and can be used to evaluate the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. A definition of each is provided below.

Goals:

Goals are statements of desired outcomes or achievements. They are general in nature.

Objectives:

Objectives are more specific and are measurable.

Recommendations:

Recommendations are specific actions to be taken to achieve the objectives and meet the goals.

The goals, objectives, and recommendations identify the direction and priorities the Town has identified and will implement over time.

Note on Comprehensive Plan Limitations

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to act as a guide for the future growth and development of the Town of Wheaton. It should be noted that although the Comprehensive Plan looks out over a 20-year period, the Town should review and revise the Comprehensive Plan on a periodic basis to adjust for deviations from population and other growth forecasts and unforeseen variables. At a minimum, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed every ten years.

Maps and tables found within the Comprehensive Plan are a compilation and reproduction of various sources and data. The maps are intended to be used for general reference purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for an accurate site survey. When referring to the Comprehensive Plan during the decision making process, the intent of the Comprehensive Plan as a whole should be considered.

Chapter 2

Issues and Opportunities

Introduction

The Issues and Opportunities chapter is designed to provide a general overview of the Town of Wheaton's residents related to age, income, employment, educational attainment, etc. as well as the population and household forecasts of the community. It also takes into account the Community Survey results to identify demographic trends and changes affecting the Town that may create **issues** that can be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan or provide **opportunities** that the Town can utilize to improve the community.

Historic Population

Analyzing historic and forecasted population will help the Town of Wheaton to anticipate land needs to accommodate future growth and to consider what other effects the growth may have on infrastructure, parks, and services that residents and businesses utilize.

Table 2-1 looks at the historic population in the Town of Wheaton and surrounding municipalities. All municipalities grew between 1970 and 2010 but many of the Towns experienced the most growth. The Town of Wheaton's population grew by 51.6% during this time period. The Village of Lake Hallie has limited historic population because it was not incorporated until 2003.

Much of the population growth can be attributed to the proximity to larger urban areas adjacent to the Town where many employment opportunities are available which retain and draw people to the area. The Towns provide space for residents who prefer rural living but who can easily commute to jobs in the urban areas.

Table 2-1: HISTORIC POPULATION - Town of Wheaton and Surrounding Municipalities

Local Unit of Government	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1970-2010
Town of Wheaton - Chippewa Co.	1,782	2,328	2,257	2,366	2,701	51.6%
Town of Howard - Chippewa Co.	643	660	625	648	798	24.1%
Town of Tilden - Chippewa Co.	963	1,088	1,079	1,185	1,485	54.2%
Village of Lake Hallie - Chippewa Co.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,448	n/a
City of Chippewa Falls - Chippewa Co.	12,351	12,270	12,749	12,925	13,661	10.6%
Town of Elk Mound - Dunn Co.	455	668	749	1,121	1,792	293.8%
Town of Union - Eau Claire Co.	2,355	2,689	2,456	2,402	2,663	13.1%
City of Eau Claire - Chippewa and Eau Claire Cos.	44,619	51,509	56,806	61,704	65,931	47.8%

Source: *U.S. Census and 2014 Wisconsin Demographic Services Center *U.S. Census



Population Forecasts

Population forecasts have long been used to assess development prospects and community facility needs created by population growth. Population forecasts can be used to evaluate potential residential development needs, economic conditions, and the level of demand for public facilities and services. Businesses, schools and units of government frequently use these forecasts to determine the future needs or design of public facilities or services.

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) population forecasts are, by state statute, the official population projections for Wisconsin. Between 2020 and 2040, the Town of Wheaton and all surrounding municipalities, except for the City of Chippewa Falls, are forecasted to have population growth and the percentage of growth is fairly consistent in comparison (see Table 2-2).

Table 2-2: POPULATION FORECASTS - Town of Wheaton and Surrounding Municipalities

Local Unit of Government	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2020-2040
T. of Wheaton - Chippewa Co.	2,701	2,795	2,935	3,060	3,165	3,245	3,295	12.3%
T. of Howard - Chippewa Co.	798	815	855	890	920	940	955	11.7%
T. of Tilden - Chippewa Co.	1,485	1,550	1,650	1,735	1,815	1,880	1,925	16.7%
V. of Lake Hallie - Chippewa Co.	6,448	6,900	7,395	7,845	8,245	8,580	8,835	19.5%
C. of Chippewa Falls - Chippewa Co.	13,661	13,720	13,940	14,070	14,110	14,050	13,880	-0.4%
T. of Elk Mound - Dunn Co.	1,792	1,930	2,035	2,155	2,245	2,320	2,395	17.7%
T. of Union - Eau Claire Co.	2,663	2,780	2,920	3,060	3,180	3,280	3,375	15.6%
C. of Eau Claire – Chippewa/Eau Claire Cos.	65,931	67,445	69,225	70,895	72,255	73,095	73,770	6.6%

Source: *U.S. Census and 2014 Wisconsin Demographic Services Center *U.S. Census

Household Forecasts

More households, the result of population growth, will require more housing, jobs, and services. Between 2020 and 2040, the Town is forecasted to have 205 additional households. The number of persons per household is decreasing, which results in less people per dwelling.

Table 2-3 shows that all municipalities are forecasted to have more households by 2040. The impact these new households have on a municipality will vary based on preferences, ordinances, land costs and other factors.

Table 2-3: HOUSEHOLD FORECASTS - Town of Wheaton and Surrounding Municipalities

Local Unit of Government	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2020-2040
T. of Wheaton - Chippewa Co.	1,001	1,054	1,116	1,176	1,233	1,285	1,321	18.4%
T. of Howard - Chippewa Co.	292	303	321	338	354	367	378	17.8%
T. of Tilden - Chippewa Co.	546	580	622	662	701	738	765	23.0%
V. of Lake Hallie - Chippewa Co.	2,447	2,663	2,879	3,088	3,288	3,478	3,626	25.9%
C. of Chippewa Falls - Chippewa Co.	5,896	6,028	6,182	6,310	6,403	6,470	6,461	4.5%
T. of Elk Mound - Dunn Co.	589	652	700	755	798	838	876	25.1%
T. of Union - Eau Claire Co.	983	1,041	1,104	1,166	1,218	1,265	1,303	18.0%
C. of Eau Claire – Chippewa/Eau Claire Cos.	26,803	27,892	28,909	29,821	30,586	31,128	31,442	8.8%

Source: *U.S. Census and 2014 Wisconsin Demographic Services Center *U.S. Census

Age Distribution

The age of a community is also important in identifying the needs of the community. Table 2-4 and Figure 2-1 compares the Town of Wheaton's age distributions in 2010 and 2018.

The Town of Wheaton's population is getting older with the increase in residents ages 45 and older. This may be due to these people moving to Wheaton as they age. The number of the youngest age residents is declining, confirming that population growth is likely due to in migration by adults with children moving to Wheaton. The median age of a resident has increased from 40.7 in 2010 to 43.7 in 2018.

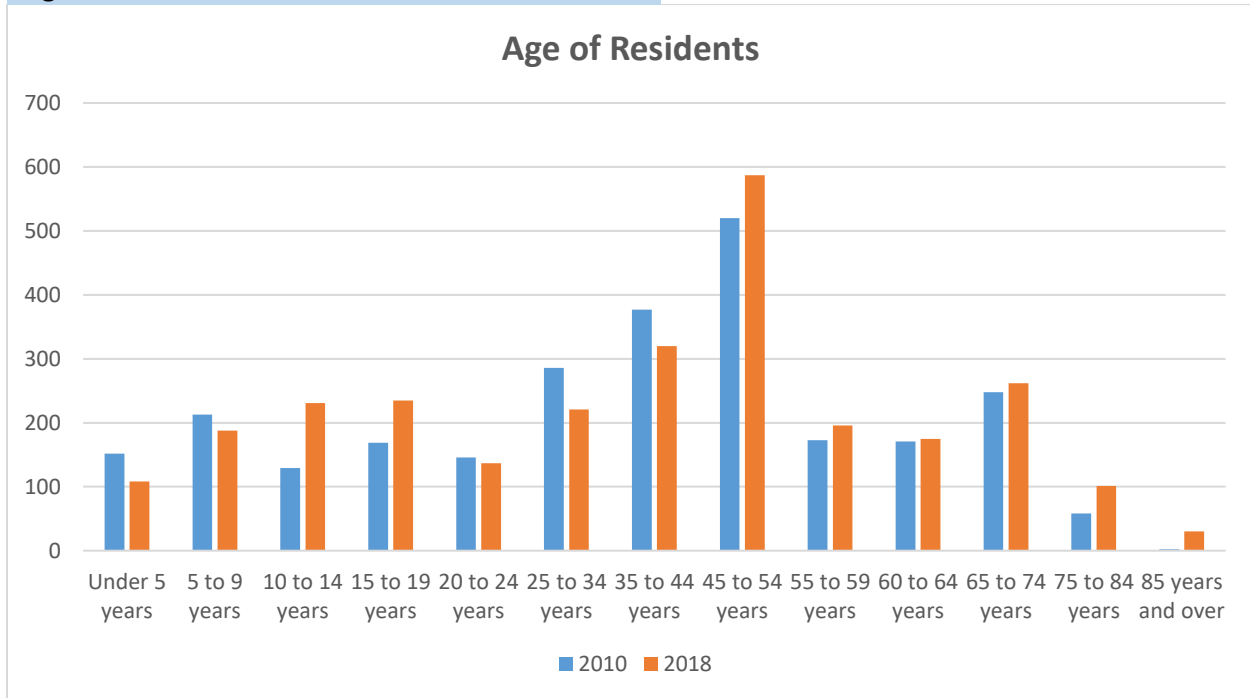
Table 2-4: SEX AND AGE – Town of Wheaton

	2010	Percent	2018	Percent
Under 5 years	152	5.7%	108	3.9%
5 to 9 years	213	8.1%	188	6.7%
10 to 14 years	129	4.9%	231	8.3%
15 to 19 years	169	6.4%	235	8.4%
20 to 24 years	146	5.5%	137	4.9%
25 to 34 years	286	10.8%	221	7.9%
35 to 44 years	377	14.3%	320	11.5%
45 to 54 years	520	19.7%	587	21.0%
55 to 59 years	173	6.5%	196	7.0%
60 to 64 years	171	6.5%	175	6.3%
65 to 74 years	248	9.4%	262	9.4%
75 to 84 years	58	2.2%	101	3.6%
85 years and over	2	0.1%	30	1.1%
Median age (years)	40.7	(X)	43.7	(X)
Total population	2,644	100.0%	2,791	100.0%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Figure 2-1: AGE – Town of Wheaton



Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

An aging population will have different needs for housing, recreation and transportation that other age groups may not have.

Labor Force

Table 2-5 shows that 73.2% of residents are in the labor force and 71.5% being employed. Residents not in the labor force may be retired, disabled or stay-at-home parents. As stated earlier, Wheaton has an aging population, which means declining numbers of residents in the workforce. Currently, most businesses will say they have difficulty finding employees.

Table 2-5: EMPLOYMENT STATUS – Town of Wheaton

Employment Status	Number	Percentage
Population 16 years and over	2,209	100.0%
In labor force	1,617	73.2%
Employed	1,579	71.5%
Unemployed	38	1.7%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%
Not in labor force	592	26.8%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Place of Work

Table 2-6 shows workers residing in the Town of Wheaton and their place of work. About a third of workers have jobs in Chippewa County. Other nearby counties, such as St. Croix, Eau Claire and Dunn, also provide job opportunities and it is likely that many residents work in those counties as well. A small number of workers work outside of Wisconsin. Some may commute to jobs in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Table 2-6: PLACE OF WORK – Town of Wheaton

Workers 16 years and over	1,550	100.0%
Worked in state of residence	1,542	99.5%
Worked in county of residence	547	35.3%
Worked outside county of residence	995	64.2%
Worked outside state of residence	8	0.5%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Commuting

Table 2-7 shows that 88.1% of workers drive alone to work. About 5% stated they carpooled or worked from home. The high percentage of workers driving alone may be influenced by the distance to their employment or the lack of transportation alternatives.

Table 2-7: COMMUTING TO WORK – Town of Wheaton

Mode	Number	Percentage
Workers 16 years and over	1,550	100.0%
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	1,365	88.1%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	74	4.8%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0	0.0%
Walked	12	0.8%
Other means	27	1.7%
Worked at home	72	4.6%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	20.9	(X)

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-8 shows that about 82% of workers are commuting to jobs 29 minutes or less from their homes. This would indicate that there are good employment opportunities within a reasonable distance.

Table 2-8: TRAVEL TIME TO WORK – Town of Wheaton

Less than 10 minutes	219	14.1%
10 to 14 minutes	260	16.8%
15 to 19 minutes	324	20.9%
20 to 24 minutes	312	20.1%
25 to 29 minutes	157	10.2%
30 to 34 minutes	124	8.0%
35 to 44 minutes	37	2.4%
45 to 59 minutes	22	1.4%
60 or more minutes	95	6.2%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Education Levels

Table 2-9 shows that 96.4% of Wheaton residents were high school graduates or higher, up from 93.0% in 2010. Twenty-five percent of residents achieved a bachelor's degree or higher, up from 19.8% in 2010.

Higher educational attainment can provide for more work choices for residents. It also provides potential workers for businesses that need a varied and highly skilled workforce.

Table 2-9: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – Town of Wheaton

	Number	Percent
Population 25 years and over	1,892	100.0%
Less than 9th grade	24	1.3%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	44	2.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	615	32.5%
Some college, no degree	370	19.6%
Associate's degree	366	19.3%
Bachelor's degree	333	17.6%
Graduate or professional degree	140	7.4%
High school graduate or higher	1,824	96.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	473	25.0%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Household Income

Personal income is derived primarily from employment wages. An individual's education level and occupation can determine the range of that wage scale and influences their personal standard of living. A comparison of the occupations of those employed in the labor force helps to determine the economic effect of the employment opportunities available to area residents and the ability to increase their standard of living.

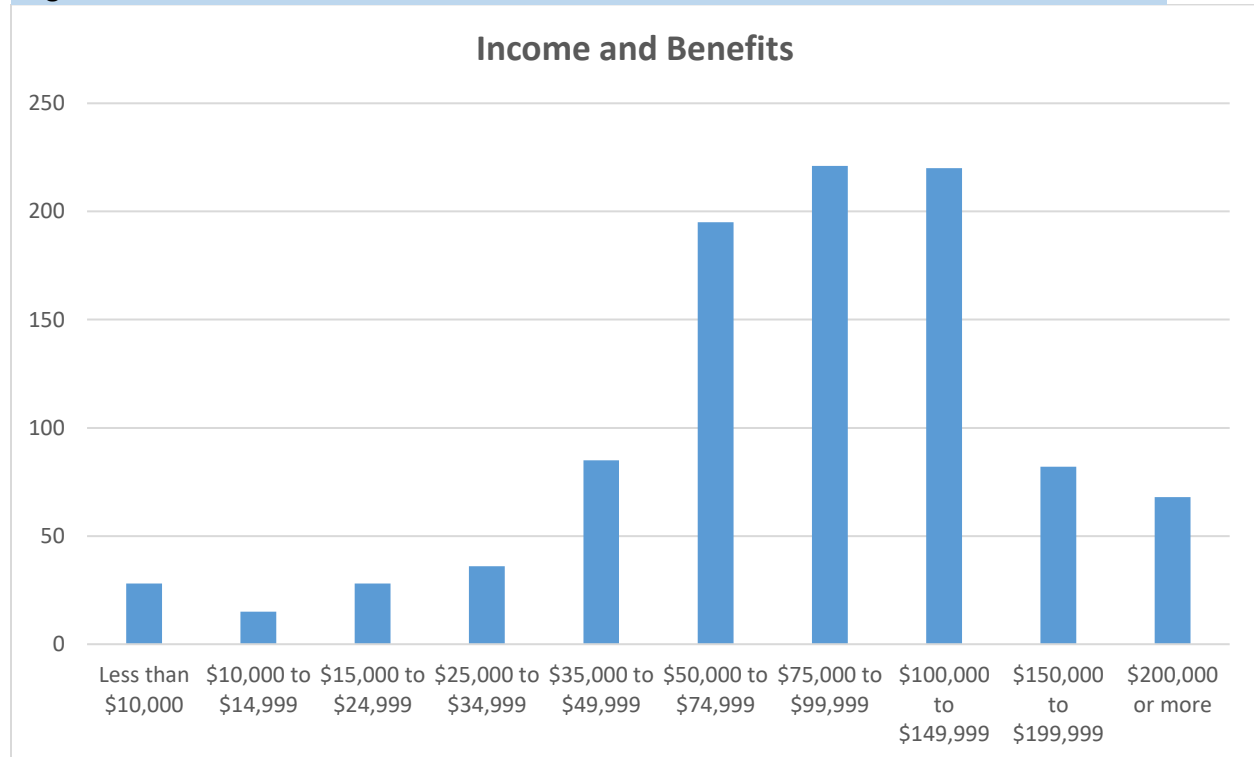
Sixty-five percent of Town of Wheaton households earn between \$50,000 and \$149,999 annually (see Table 2-10 and Figure 2-2). The median household income is \$83,636 compared with \$66,705 in 2010. Median family income is \$86,800 compared with \$80,400 in 2010.

Table 2-10: INCOME AND BENEFITS– Town of Wheaton

Total households	978	100.00%
Less than \$10,000	28	2.90%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	15	1.50%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	28	2.90%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	36	3.70%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	85	8.70%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	195	19.90%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	221	22.60%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	220	22.50%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	82	8.40%
\$200,000 or more	68	7.00%
Median household income (dollars)	83,636	(X)
Median family income (dollars)	86,800	(X)

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2-2: INCOME AND BENEFITS– Town of Wheaton



Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year

Employment by Occupation

Table 2-11 shows that almost a third of civilians, 16 years and over, are working in management, business, science, and arts occupations. Twenty-four percent are working in production, transportation, and material moving occupations. Seventeen percent are working in sales and office occupations. Most of these occupations are located outside of the Town of Wheaton.

Table 2-11: OCCUPATION – Town of Wheaton

Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,579	100.0%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	532	33.7%
Service occupations	226	14.3%
Sales and office occupations	275	17.4%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	163	10.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	383	24.3%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Employment by Industry

Industry refers to the type of business where the occupations are located. Table 12-2 shows that the top three industries where residents work are educational services, health care, and social assistance (27% of residents), manufacturing (18%) followed by retail trade (14%). Similar to occupations, many of these industries are located outside of the Town of Wheaton.

Table 2-12: INDUSTRY – Town of Wheaton

Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,579	100.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	85	5.4%
Construction	81	5.1%
Manufacturing	288	18.2%
Wholesale trade	22	1.4%
Retail trade	223	14.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	95	6.0%
Information	31	2.0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	51	3.2%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	84	5.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	421	26.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	85	5.4%
Other services, except public administration	57	3.6%
Public administration	56	3.5%

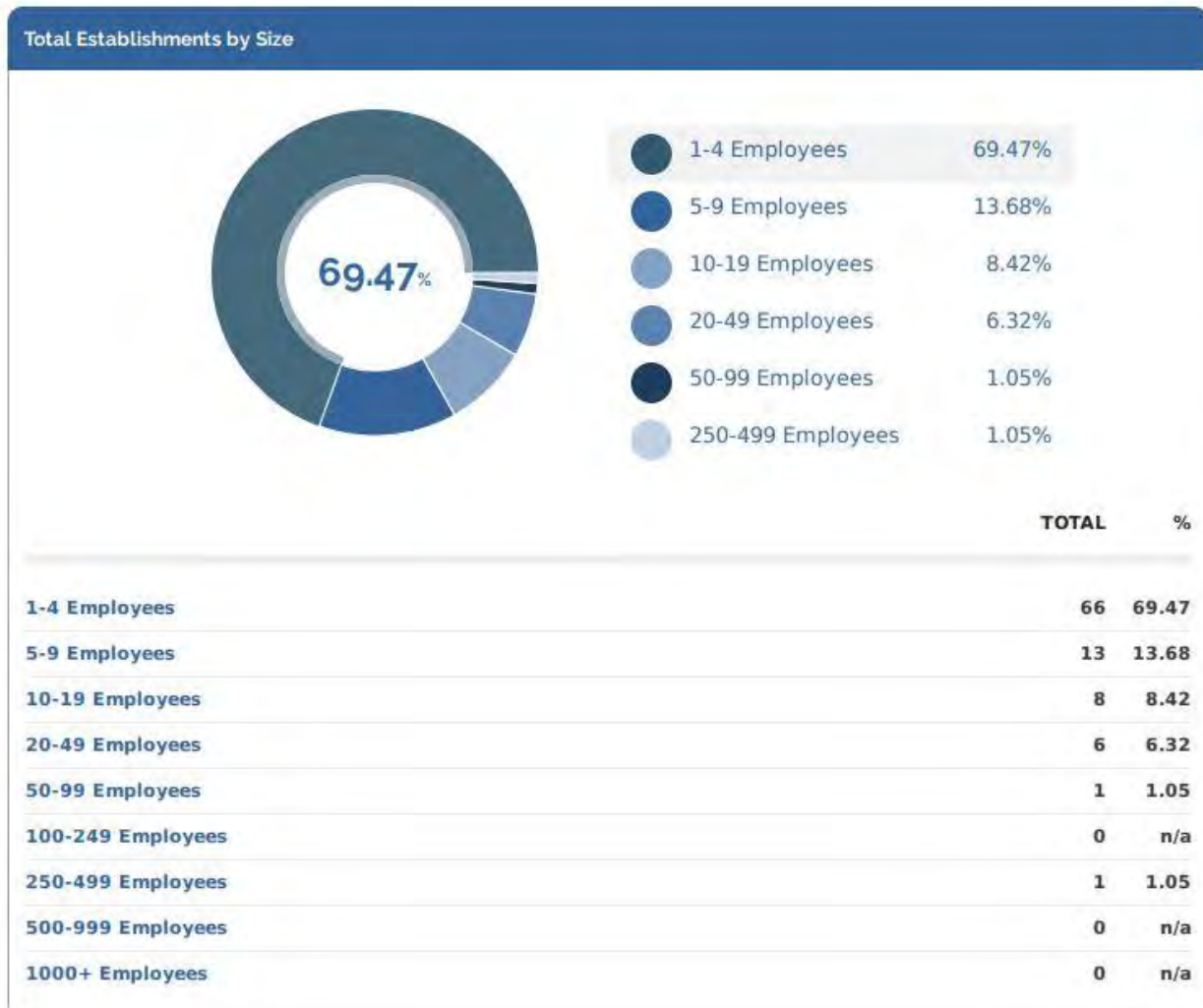
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Employment Opportunities in the Town of Wheaton

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation estimates that there are ninety-five businesses in the Town of Wheaton that provide employment opportunities for residents. About 70 percent of these businesses have 1 to 4 employees (see Table 2-13) and about 17% have 5-9 employees (see Table 2-13).

Table 2-13: EMPLOYEES – Town of Wheaton



Source: WEDC 2020

Survey Results

To gather input from residents to help update the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the Town contracted with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to create and mail surveys to all 1,145 Town of Wheaton households and non-resident property owners for which mailing addresses were available. The initial mailing contained a cover letter describing the purpose of the survey, a questionnaire, and a postage-paid return envelope.

The target response for accuracy of estimates to within +/-5% with 95 percent confidence for the Town of Wheaton population was 288 surveys or a 25% response rate. **Out of 1,145 surveys distributed, the SRC received 590 completed surveys.** Sixteen survey packets being returned as non-deliverable. The response rate was 52%.

With 590 completed surveys, the results provided in the full report found in the Appendix are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 2.8 percent with 95 percent confidence.

The questionnaire contained nine topical sections related to the update of the Town's comprehensive plan: quality of life, community facilities and services, recreation, natural and cultural resources, housing, transportation, agriculture and land use, economic development, and communication.

The following are key observations from the survey results:

Quality of Life

- The top four reasons Town of Wheaton respondents give for choosing to live in the Town are rural character, home lot size, natural beauty, and to be near family/friends.

Community Facilities and Services

- All community services and facilities listed on the survey are rated highly (good or excellent) by a majority of respondents (fire protection, recycling programs, law enforcement services, signage, ambulance service, cemetery services, and storm water management). It should be noted that the survey was conducted before the Town of Wheaton created its own fire department.

Recreation

- Substantial percentages of survey respondents have no opinion about the recreational facilities and trails asked about in the survey. Of those with an opinion, snowmobile trails received the highest rating. A strong majority would not be willing to pay more taxes to fund park and recreational opportunities and facilities.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Most Wheaton respondents place a very high level of importance on the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resource base of the Town. Groundwater, rivers and streams, air quality, and forested lands are supported particularly strongly (99% rated these resources as essential, very important, or important).



Housing

- When asked what types of housing are needed in the Town, a strong majority say there is a need for more single family housing. Respondents support the use of cluster design for the layout of rural housing lots. At the same time, written comments revealed a pattern of concern that the rural atmosphere of the Town will be lost due to residential development.

Transportation

- Wheaton respondents are largely satisfied with the condition of its roads. Although more than one-half strongly agree or agree that walking and biking are important modes of transportation, they are less enthusiastic about the need for more walking/biking trails along public roadways in the Town. Respondents are generally satisfied with overall road conditions and snow removal in the Town, and they are less willing to pay more taxes for snow removal or road maintenance in the Town.

Agriculture and Land Use

- Wheaton respondents almost unanimously agree that agricultural land should be used for agricultural purposes. However, they disagree that large-scale farms (500+ animals) should be allowed to expand. Nearly all respondents agree or strongly agree that driveways should be required to meet emergency service standards. Most respondents also feel that it is important to consider visual impacts when evaluating development proposals. A majority (91%) of Wheaton respondents feel there should be a minimum lot size for rural residential development. Sixty-eight percent (68%) believe that it should be the current 5-acre minimum and 23% believe it should be less than five acres.

Economic Development

- Agricultural related businesses received the highest level of support as an appropriate type of business in the Town, although smaller majorities find numerous other types of businesses to be appropriate as well. A majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that the Town should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry. Respondents indicate that they are in favor of wind and solar energy as forms of economic development. They are not as supportive of using ethanol for this purpose.

Communication

- The most effective methods of receiving information from the Town regarding comprehensive planning for this group of respondents are direct mailings and newsletters.



Summary

The Town of Wheaton's population is forecasted to continue to grow and this growth will influence how land is used, the need for expanded services and the need for more public infrastructure to serve residents.

Wheaton's proximity to larger urban areas makes it an attractive place to live. Residents enjoy the rural character and can commute a short distance to a variety of employment opportunities, many which pay good salaries.

The median age of residents is rising. This can present challenges to provide housing, recreational opportunities and transportation options that allow older residents to stay in Wheaton if they choose.

The rural character of the Town is a draw for many residents who also feel strongly about the protection of its natural resources such as streams, air quality and forested lands. Residents also feel strongly about the preservation of agricultural land for agricultural purposes.

More detailed information can be found in the individual chapters that will explore ways to meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan as they are identified.

Chapter 3

Housing

Introduction

Housing is an essential component to healthy and vibrant communities and striving to provide safe and affordable housing is a common community goal but also a challenge today. Housing also contributes to the tax base that helps pay for things such as streets, parks, staff and facilities that serve residents. An analysis of housing conditions will help the Town of Wheaton gain a better understanding of the state of existing housing and demographic trends that may influence future needs. This information will create a foundation from which decisions regarding future housing development and housing needs can be based. Demographic information presented in the Issues and Opportunities element is not repeated here.

Housing Tenure

Like many Towns, the Town of Wheaton housing supply is predominantly single family owner-occupied. Table 3-1 shows that almost 91% of housing units are owner-occupied compared to 67% in the State of Wisconsin. About 9% of housing units are renter-occupied. Many of the rental units are single family homes.

Table 3-1: HOUSING TENURE – Town of Wheaton

Occupied Housing Units	978	100.0%
Owner-Occupied	886	90.6%
Renter-Occupied	92	9.4%
Average Household Size of Owner-Occupied Unit	2.89	(X)
Average Household Size of Renter-Occupied Unit	2.43	(X)

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Units in Structure

Table 3-2 shows that the majority of housing units in the Town of Wheaton (92.4 %) are one-unit detached structures commonly referred to as single family homes. Detached housing units are one-unit structures that are detached from any other house, with open space on all four sides. Structures are considered detached even if they have an attached garage. Attached housing units are one or more unit structures that have one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating them from adjoining structures. Two-unit dwellings account for 3.0% of housing and mobile homes account for 3.7% of housing in the Town of Wheaton. Currently, there are no housing units with more than two dwelling units in the Town.



Table 3-2: UNITS IN STRUCTURE – Town of Wheaton

Total housing units	1,065	100.0%
1-unit, detached	984	92.4%
1-unit, attached	10	0.9%
2 units	32	3.0%
3 or 4 units	0	0.0%
5 to 9 units	0	0.0%
10 to 19 units	0	0.0%
20 or more units	0	0.0%
Mobile home	39	3.7%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Year Structure Built

The age of the local housing stock is an important element to view when preparing for the future. If there is a significant amount of older housing units among the housing supply, they may need to rehabilitation to accommodate the needs of the owners or residents. Allowing for residential development also requires planning regarding infrastructure, land availability, community utilities, transportation routes, and a variety of other public services to address community needs that are affected by new development.

Table 3-3 and Figure 3-1 show that approximately 47% of all housing units in the Town of Wheaton were built since 1980. This is an indicator that the average housing stock in the Town of Wheaton is newer, which should result in relatively low maintenance and rehabilitation costs in the near future for homeowners.

Homes built in 1980 or earlier may have structural, mechanical, or other conditions that may make them expensive to maintain, heat/cool, inaccessible to handicapped residents, or may have an impact on a person's health. Typical conditions of an aging housing stock include:

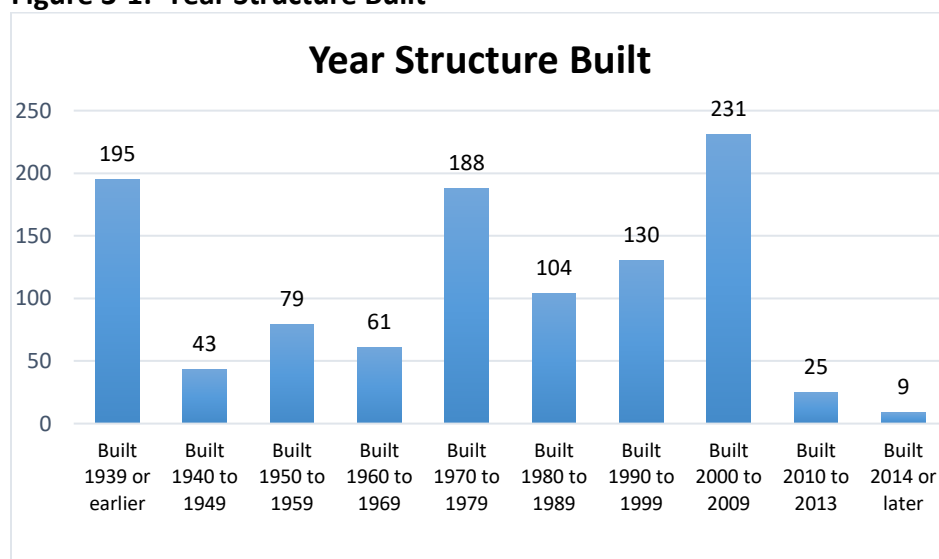
- Lead paint
- Asbestos in building materials
- Inefficient heating and cooling systems
- Old water and sanitary sewer systems
- Inadequate insulation and inefficient windows
- Steps into the home and bedrooms and bathrooms on the 2nd floor
- Narrow hallways and stairs and overall small rooms

The information found in Table 3-3 and Figure 3-1 does not tell us if a home has been remodeled or updated.

Table 3-3: Year Structure Built

Total housing units	1,065	100.0%
Built 2014 or later	9	0.8%
Built 2010 to 2013	25	2.3%
Built 2000 to 2009	231	21.7%
Built 1990 to 1999	130	12.2%
Built 1980 to 1989	104	9.8%
Built 1970 to 1979	188	17.7%
Built 1960 to 1969	61	5.7%
Built 1950 to 1959	79	7.4%
Built 1940 to 1949	43	4.0%
Built 1939 or earlier	195	18.3%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3-1: Year Structure Built

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Home Heating Characteristics

The heating of a dwelling unit accounts for about 40% of home energy use. This has continued to go down as the efficiency of furnaces and improvements in home building materials (windows and insulation) and building code requirements have improved home efficiencies reducing heating costs. The cost to heat a dwelling unit will also be impacted by the type of fuel being used.

Table 3-4 shows that 66.5% of residents use bottled, tank or LP gas for heating. As utility gas becomes available, more homes may utilize that option. Currently, 11.5% of dwelling units use utility gas, 9.2% percent use wood, 7.6% use fuel oil and 3.4% use electricity as their main heating source.

Table 3-4: Housing Heating Fuel

Utility gas	112	11.5%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	650	66.5%
Electricity	33	3.4%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	74	7.6%
Coal or coke	0	0.0%
Wood	90	9.2%
Solar energy	0	0.0%
Other fuel	14	1.4%
No fuel used	5	0.5%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Value Characteristics

An owner-occupied housing unit is a unit in which the owner or co-owner lives, even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. The U.S. Bureau of the Census determines value by the survey respondent's estimates of how much the property (house and lot, mobile home and lot, or condominium unit) would sell for if it were for sale. The figures presented may differ from assessed housing values as calculated by an assessor.

Table 3-5 and Figure 3-2 shows that the median value of owner-occupied housing units in 2019 was \$197,000. This is almost double the \$104,900 median value in 2000 but similar to the 2010 median value of \$189,300. About 64% of homes in the Town of Wheaton are valued between \$150,000 and \$299,999.

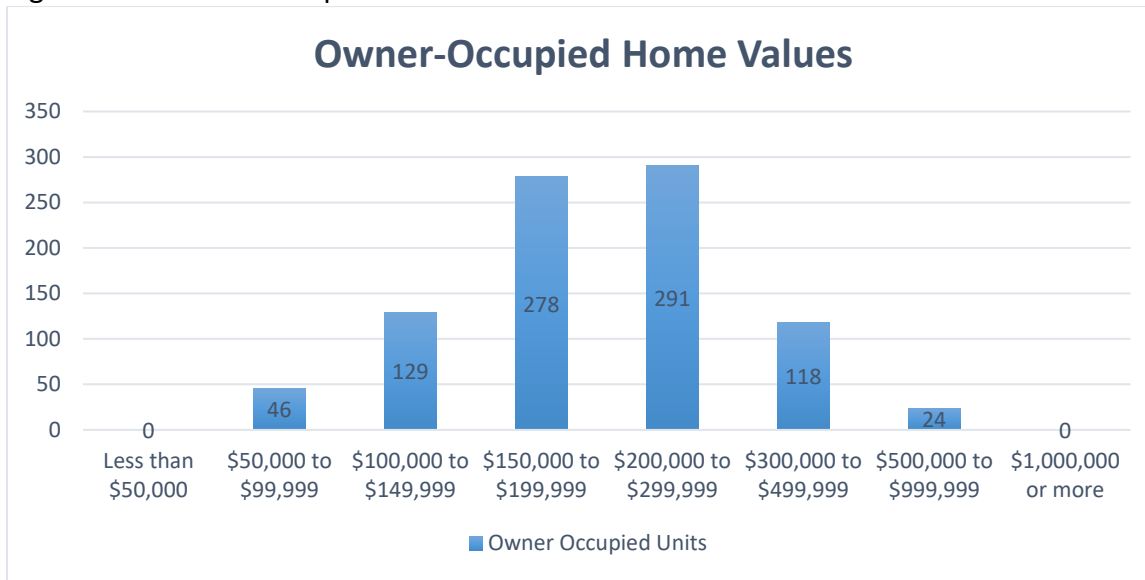
Table 3-5: Owner-Occupied Home Values

Less than \$50,000	0	0.00%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	46	5.20%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	129	14.60%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	278	31.40%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	291	32.80%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	118	13.30%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	24	2.70%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.00%
Median (dollars)	\$197,900	(X)

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Figure 3-2: Owner-Occupied Home Values



Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Year Householder Moved Into Unit

The year a householder moved into their home can show a changing age dynamic in a community. Table 3-6 shows that almost 55% of people stated they moved into their dwelling unit between 2000 and 2019. This could indicate new homes being constructed and people moving into Wheaton or residents staying in Wheaton but moving into a different home.

Table 3-6: Year Householder Moved Into Unit

Occupied housing units	978	978
Moved in 2017 or later	18	1.8%
Moved in 2015 to 2016	48	4.9%
Moved in 2010 to 2014	160	16.4%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	310	31.7%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	225	23.0%
Moved in 1989 and earlier	217	22.2%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Affordability Assessment

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as housing and related costs (insurance, utilities, taxes, etc.) that does not cost a household more than 30 percent of their monthly or annual income. This affordability benchmark does not address the ability to pay for housing. Households may choose to pay more to get the housing they need or want. However, according to HUD standards, people should have the choice of having decent and safe housing for not more than 30 percent of their household income.

Table 3-7 shows selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, selected monthly owner costs are calculated from the

sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees. When combined with income, we can determine the percentage of these costs in comparison to household income.

Table 3-7 shows that almost 81% of owner-occupied households in the Town of Wheaton pay less than 30 percent of their household income towards housing costs. This shows that HUD mostly considers housing “affordable”.

Table 3-7: Selected Monthly Owner Costs As A Percentage Of Gross Household Income

Housing units with a mortgage	574	100.0%
Less than 20.0 percent	319	55.6%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	90	15.7%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	55	9.6%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	32	5.6%
35.0 percent or more	78	13.6%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 3-8 shows that about 49% of renters are paying less than 30% of their gross income on rent and related expenses but almost 51% are paying 30% or more of their gross income on rent and related expenses. This high percentage may be due to lower income residents who pay higher portions of their income on rental or rental costs being higher than in urban areas because many rentals are single family homes and there are not multi-family dwelling units (3 units or more) in the Town of Wheaton.

3-8: Gross Rent As A Percentage Of Household Income

Occupied units paying rent	79	100.0%
Less than 15.0 percent	15	19.0%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	18	22.8%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	0	0.0%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	6	7.6%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	13	16.5%
35.0 percent or more	27	34.2%
Not computed	13	(X)

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Survey Results Related to Housing

In the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Report, 2019, residents were asked what types of housing are needed in the Town.

Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion responses”) 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the need for more single family housing in the Town of Wheaton (see Table 3-9). A slight majority, 53% strongly agree or agree that more elderly housing is needed. Conversely, a slight majority of respondents (52%) strongly disagree or disagree that more



affordable housing is needed in the Town and strong majorities (90% and 72%, respectively) were opposed to more multiple family units (apartments and duplexes).

Table 3-9: Opinions About the Need for Additional Housing Types in the Town of Wheaton

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Single Family Housing	15%	485	38%	47%	11%	5%
Affordable Housing	21%	449	13%	35%	25%	27%
Elderly Housing	24%	431	11%	42%	28%	19%
Duplexes	13%	488	3%	25%	34%	38%
Apartments	12%	494	2%	8%	32%	58%

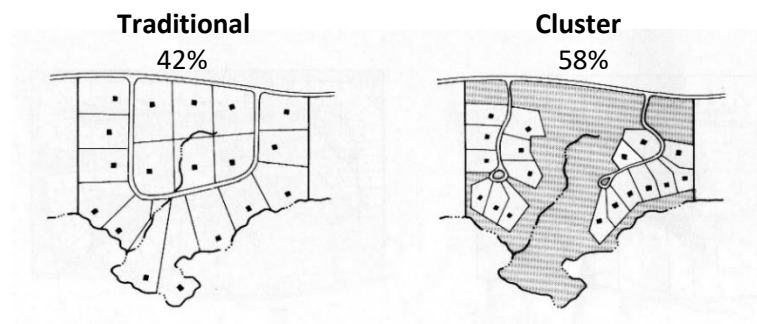
Source: UW-River Falls Survey Research Center 2019

Other survey observations related to housing include:

- A higher proportion of respondents 45 and above and respondents with household incomes of less than \$75,000 see a need for more elderly housing, more affordable housing, and more duplexes in the Town of Wheaton.
- Respondents with no children in their households see a higher need for more affordable housing and elderly housing in the Town of Wheaton.

Respondents were asked their preference for the layout of housing lots. They were shown diagrams of a traditional housing development with large individual lots and a “cluster” development with smaller lots and preserved common open space (see Figure 3-3). Cluster development, sometimes referred to as conservation subdivisions, maintain a significant portion of a development site in common open space by minimizing individual lot sizes, while maintaining the overall density of development specified by the zoning ordinance. A cluster development is designed around the area proposed to be preserved in open space. A majority of survey respondents prefer the cluster design to the traditional design. The cluster design would be appropriate for major subdivisions (5 or more lots).

Figure 3-3: Preference for Housing Layout



Source: UW-River Falls Survey Research Center 2019

There were a number of statistically significant differences demographically, in terms of the type of residential development preferred.

- **Cluster Design:** The cluster design, while still preferred by a majority, had significantly higher levels of support from younger (<45 years old) respondents, respondents with children in their household, and respondents living in the Town for less than 25 years.
- **Traditional Design:** Respondents 45 and above, respondents without children in their household, and respondents living in the Town 25+ years were more likely to prefer a traditional design for housing layouts.

Potential Housing Related Needs

Traditionally, rural towns such as Wheaton have a high percentage of single family homes, often with few other housing options available. However, as new residents move in and the population ages, other types of housing may need to be considered that will provide an assortment of housing types to meet the needs and demands of area residents.

- Older residents who want to remain in the Town of Wheaton may want to live in senior housing or an apartment where they would not be responsible for building maintenance, lawn care or snow removal.
- Residents, especially younger than 45 years of age, preferred the cluster design for residential development that provided smaller lots but more preservation of open space.
- There is a trend for “age in place” type home construction, which includes design elements such as wider doors and hallways, no steps, levers for door handles and walk in showers.

Housing Regulations

There are state, county and local regulations that affect housing. The Uniform Dwelling Code regulates home construction. Zoning determines the type of housing allowed, minimum lot size building and setbacks. A Subdivision or Land Use Ordinance dictates review requirements, road construction standards, and utilities. Other ordinances regulate stormwater runoff and development near wetlands or shorelands. Adjacent cities and villages can exercise extraterritorial zoning or plat review authority that may impact how development occurs in the Town of Wheaton. These regulations, and how they affect Wheaton, will be discussed in more detail in the Land Use Chapter.

Housing Programs

There are a number of housing programs available to low to moderate-income residents or disabled residents to purchase a home, renovate an existing home or provide rental assistance. This list is not exclusive but provides a list of common programs or agencies used by people in need. Many of these agencies implement a wide range of assistance programs for different needs.



Chippewa County Housing Authority:

Chippewa County Housing Authority is a public housing authority that provides a variety of housing resources and services for low and moderate-income households. All of their programs are income based and income limits vary by program.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA): WHEDA works closely with lenders, developers, local government, nonprofits, community groups and others to implement low-cost financing programs. Since 1972, WHEDA has financed more than 75,000 affordable rental units, helped more than 130,000 families purchase a home and made more than 29,000 small business and agricultural loan guarantees.

USDA-Rural Development: Rural Development administers federal funds to help secure loan options to assist low- to moderate-income families with home purchase and rehabilitation. Rural Development generally funds individuals who cannot obtain conventional financing.

Property Tax Deferred Loan Program (PTDL): The Wisconsin Property Tax Deferral Loan Program allows low to moderate-income elderly homeowners and veterans to convert home equity into income to pay property taxes. The program provides cash income to individuals who have little disposable income and a significant amount of home equity. Loans help pay property tax bills, thereby helping owners remain in their homes.

Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal 1: The Town of Wheaton will work with Chippewa County to review, amend, create and enforce housing related ordinances as needed.

Objectives:

1. Maintain a high standard of housing and property maintenance in the community.
2. Keep housing regulations up to date with housing trends and resident needs.

Recommendations:

1. Review and amend housing related ordinances, when needed, to allow for a range of housing and subdivision options identified in the comprehensive plan, community survey or public input.
2. Support the use of Chippewa County's Planned Unit Development Zoning District or Flexible Zoning options to allow development and provide for the protection of open space, water, and natural resources.

Goal 2: The Town of Wheaton supports and encourages the development of a full range of housing options for current and future Town residents.

Objectives:

1. Increase housing options that allow residents to live in the Town of Wheaton as they age.
2. Collaborate with developers to meet local housing needs.

Recommendations:

1. Consider the development and rezoning of property for the construction of senior housing.
2. Support the use of Chippewa County's Planned Unit Development Zoning District or Flexible Zoning to allow development and provide for the protection of open space, water, and natural resources.
3. Communicate the housing desires in the Town of Wheaton to developers.

Chapter 4

Transportation

Introduction

Transportation planning is multi-faceted. A community must balance a transportation system that allows for the free movement of automobiles and trucks yet allows for safe travel of bicyclists and pedestrians. It also must take into account the needs of citizens who are disabled or do not drive.

Like the other chapters in this Plan, transportation is not “stand alone” and is interconnected to other aspects of the community, especially with land use. The Town of Wheaton’s transportation system is largely focused on vehicular travel, but more residents wish for options that allow them to safely walk or bike in the Town.

Modes of Transportation

The movement of people and goods is accomplished through a variety of transportation modes. These modes include car, truck, rail, public transportation, ship, air, bicycle, and sidewalks/paths. For the most part, each mode fits a particular need. Automobiles function as the dominant mode for the movement of people. Trucks provide for the rapid movement of goods and products over the highway network. Air travel helps to move people and lightweight products quickly over long distances. The railroad functions primarily for the movement of bulk commodities over long distances, while bicycle paths and sidewalks provide for the movement of people.

Local Roads and Highways

Roads can be generally classified into three categories:

1. Arterials
2. Collectors
3. Local Roads

A road’s classification is determined by the type of service it provides. Typically, arterials provide the least amount of access and highest level of mobility while local streets provide the most access and lowest level of mobility. Collector roads provide a combination of access and mobility. Map 4-1 shows the road network in the Town of Wheaton, functional classification, and average daily traffic counts for county, state, and U.S. highways.

The Town of Wheaton is served by approximately 117 miles of roads under County (34 miles) and local (83 miles) jurisdictions. The Town is served by three major highway: S.T.H. 29 running east and west through the middle of the Town, U.S.H. 53 running north and south on the eastern edge of the Town, and U.S.H 12, which crosses the southwest corner of the Town. S.T.H. 29 and U.S.H. 53 are classified as backbone routes in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s (WisDOT) Corridors 2020 Plan. The backbone system is a collection of



multilane highways, including the interstate system and much of the state trunk highway system that serve longer, interregional trips within and beyond the State of Wisconsin.

S.T.H. 29 and U.S.H. 53 are classified as arterial routes since they are designed to provide a high level of mobility between communities. Approximately 35 miles of roads within the Town are under Chippewa County jurisdiction. About 2.2 miles of C.T.H. T from the southern Town border to S.T.H. 29, are classified as arterial routes.

About 23 miles, including the remainder of C.T.H. T, C.T.H.s M, N, and F, as well as U.S.H. 12, 20th Street, and Business Highway 29 are collector routes. The remaining 77 miles of roads under County and Town jurisdiction are classified as local routes.

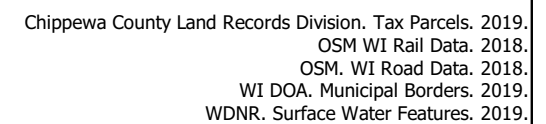
U.S.H. 53 averages about 18,900 vehicles per day but only a short portion of the highway is in the Town of Wheaton. U.S.H. 12 averages about 3,300 vehicles a day through the southwest corner of the Town. S.T.H. 29 averages about 14,100 vehicles a day and travels the entire width of the Town. Because of the high number of vehicles and importance of this principal arterial, the long-range plan for S.T.H. 29 through the Town of Wheaton is to convert it to a freeway. The plan includes the closure of public road at-grade intersections via either a cul-de-sac or grade separated crossings. Grade separated crossings are planned for 10th Street and 40th Street. WisDOT does not currently have scheduled projects that would complete the freeway conversion and it would likely be accomplished through several projects. Existing at-grade intersections are monitored and evaluated for safety and addressed individually as needed. Currently no specific intersections have seen significant increases in crashes that would trigger a safety project.

Since most long-range transportation planning pertains to high traffic roads under the jurisdiction of federal, state, or county government, the Town of Wheaton can also explore Town development policies that effect the flow of traffic on local roads such as identifying through-corridors and limiting the number of cul-de-sacs.

Bridges

According to WisDOT, the Town of Wheaton is responsible for the maintenance of eight bridges. State and local bridges are inspected at least once every two years. WisDOT is responsible for all inspections of bridges along the state highway system. Municipalities complete the inspections for bridges along the local roadway. Bridges are rated and categorized in terms of their functional and structural condition. A functionally obsolete bridge is typically older and no longer meets geometric standards, such as having narrow lanes or shoulders. However, this classification does not mean the bridge is unsafe. A structurally deficient bridge generally has an element that needs attention, such as potholes or rust.

One bridge in the Town of Wheaton is rated as structurally deficient. Chippewa County owns the bridge on C.T.H. X over Elk Creek. This structure was built in 1937 and is rated now as structurally deficient.



The WisDOT Local Bridge Program helps cost share when rehabilitating or replacing the most seriously deteriorating existing local bridges on Wisconsin's local highway and road systems. Typically, the Town of Wheaton would be responsible for 20% of these costs.

Transit

The Town of Wheaton does not operate any public transportation systems.

The Chippewa County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) can arrange transportation opportunities if a resident meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Over the Age of 60
- An adult with a temporary or permanent disability
- Must reside at home
- No access to transportation
- No funding sources to provide transportation

Transportation services are available for medical appointments. Rides can also be provided for shopping and social and personal business purposes based on available funding. The ADRC of Chippewa County contracts with various transportation agencies to help meet transportation needs based on eligibility.

The Chippewa County Department of Human Services: Transportation Program has a Volunteer Caregiver Transportation Program which serves all of Chippewa County. The Volunteer Caregiver Program provides volunteers with a number of service opportunities including transportation to needed medical appointments.

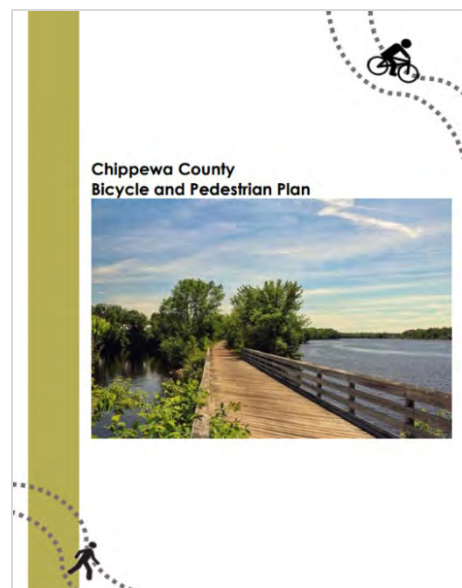
Taxi services can change frequently but Town of Wheaton residents can contact them to see if service is available.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

There is one bicycle and pedestrian path in the Town of Wheaton. There is an approximately 1,300' of paved trail on the north side of S.T.H. 29 from the Chippewa River to 103rd Street in the Town.

In 2019, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission worked with Dunn County, Chippewa County, and Eau Claire County to create individual Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans that connects the three counties.

Generally, it is more difficult for rural areas to provide off-road paths and trails because they are cost prohibitive. Figure 4-1 shows the recommended bicycle routes through



the Town of Wheaton identified in the Chippewa County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The Wheaton Town Park also has 1.5 miles of walking/hiking/running trails for the public.

Figure 4-1: Recommended Bicycle Routes



Source: Chippewa County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Railroads

There are two railroads that travel through portions of the Town of Wheaton. Canadian National operates a freight rail line running through the Town of Wheaton's northeast corner. This line travels through New Richmond, Chippewa Falls, and Stanley and provides rail access to Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, and beyond.

Union Pacific operates a freight rail line running through the Town of Wheaton's southwest corner. This line travels through Eau Claire, Elk Mound, and Hudson. This line provides rail access to the Twin Cities area and Chicago.

Air Transportation

Chippewa County has two publicly owned airports. A Basic Utility-A (BU-A) airport is located in Cornell, approximately 36 miles northeast of Wheaton. This type of airport is designed to accommodate aircraft of less than 12,500 pounds in gross weight, with approach speeds below 121 knots and wingspans of less than 49 feet.

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport, located in the City of Eau Claire, provides scheduled passenger and freight air transit to Chicago twice a day via United Airlines. This airport is rated

as an Air Carrier/Cargo (AC/C), meaning it is designed to accommodate virtually all aircraft, up to and including wide body jets and large military transports.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport is the nearest international airport and is approximately 90 miles from the Town of Wheaton.

Truck Transportation

According to the WisDOT Wisconsin Long Truck Operator's Map, S.T.H. 29 traveling east and west through Wheaton, U.S.H. 12 crossing Wheaton's southwest corner, and U.S.H. 53 crossing the northeast corner of Wheaton are designated long truck routes. These are routes that are safe to operate vehicles and combinations of vehicles with overall lengths that cannot be limited.

Water Transportation

The nearest multi-modal ports are in Superior, Wisconsin on Lake Superior (144 miles away) and La Crosse, Wisconsin on the Mississippi River (100 miles away).

The Town and the WDNR provide a public boat landing on the Chippewa River for recreational purposes. The Town is responsible for the maintenance of this boat landing located at 3001 106th Street, Chippewa Falls, WI.

Snowmobile and ATV Trails

There are nearly 20 miles of snowmobile trails throughout the Town of Wheaton. Map 4-2 shows the existing state snowmobile corridors and locally maintained trails in the Town of Wheaton. Snowmobile clubs work with property owners to gain access to land for trails. These connect to a greater network throughout the area. In 2018, the Wheaton Town Board voted against establishing ATV routes in the Town in part due to no group sponsorship, signage costs, no existing routes at the border in adjacent Towns, Town liability, and challenges to the Chippewa County Sheriff's Department of enforcing regulations for operator age, speed, complaints, and hours of operation.

Relationship to State and Regional Transportation Plans

Several state and regional organizations and agencies have developed plans and programs for the management and systematic update of transportation facilities in the area. The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan 2020-2040 supports or does not contradict the goals in these transportation related plans or organizations.

- State Highway Plan 2020
- State Airport System Plan 2030
- Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020
- Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020
- Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020
- Rail Plan 2030

- State Freight Plan
- Connections 2050
- West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition
- Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Plan 2020-2024
- Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Improvement Plan 2015-2045

Transportation Expenditure Planning

Transportation infrastructure eventually needs to be maintained or expanded. A sound transportation system plan should attempt to foresee and plan for future upgrades and improvements. Two ways of doing this is by developing a road improvements plan and maintaining and monitoring PASER ratings.

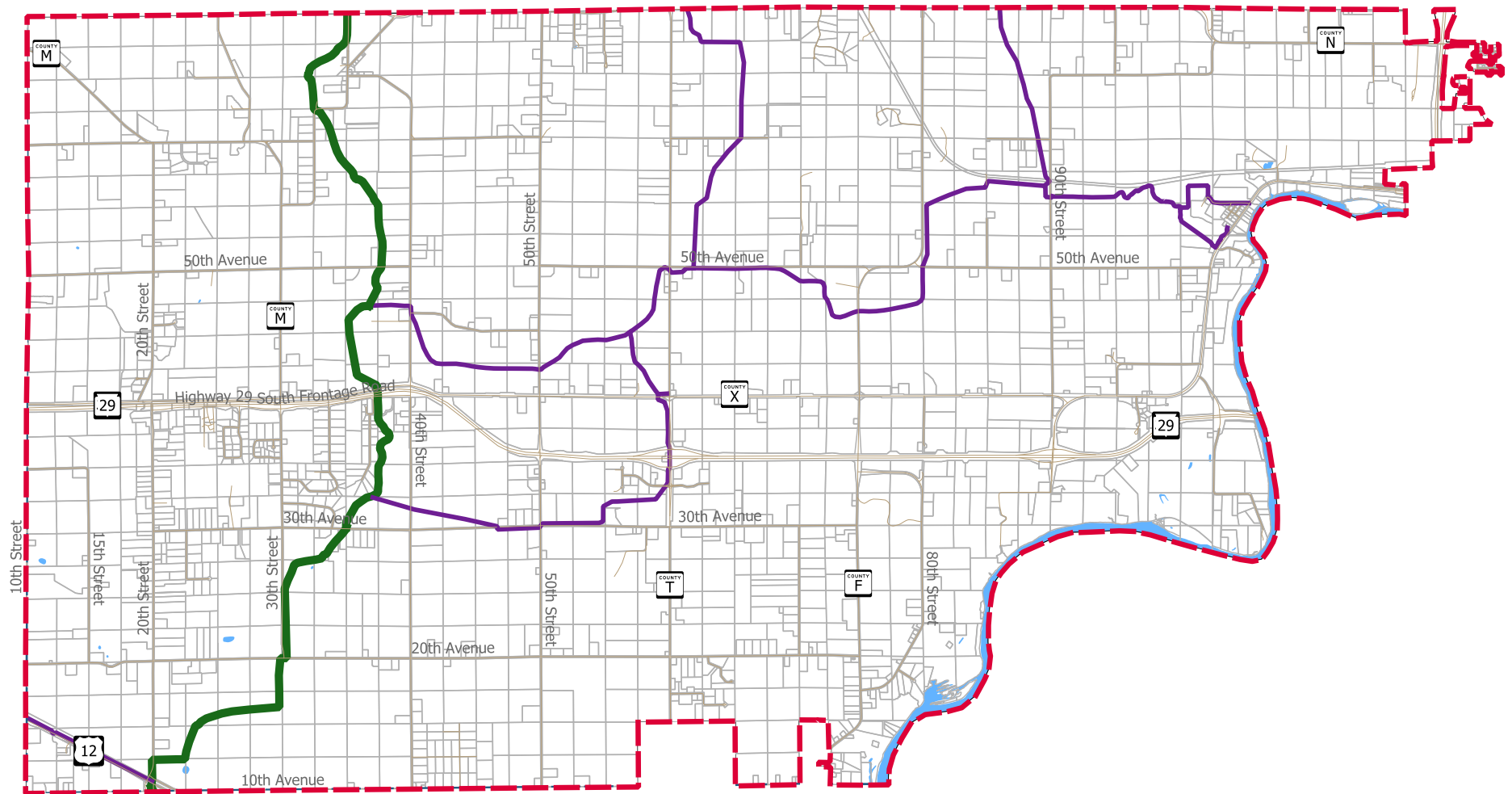
A Five-Year Capital improvement Plan includes identified transportation infrastructure projects, priorities, and estimated costs. It can be updated yearly.

Pavement ratings can be used for planning maintenance and budgets for local roadways. Municipalities and counties are required to assess the physical pavement condition of their local roads. A required method of doing this is referred to as Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating or PASER. PASER rates roadways from Failed (needs total reconstruction) to Excellent (no visible stress). PASER allows for better allocation of resources, a better understanding of pavement conditions, and allows for long term planning. PASER ratings are updated every two years by Town staff.

Other Sources of Transportation Funding

Local multi-modal transportation projects can be funded through different sources. Some of the most common sources that are or could be used are:

- State Shared Revenue
- Local General Funds
- Community Development Block Grants
- WDNR Stewardship Grants
- WDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grants
- Private Foundations
- Corporate Foundations



0 1 2 mi

- Town of Wheaton Limits
- Snowmobile Trail
- State Corridor

May 06, 2021

I:\Clients-Meno\W\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\Recreation.gqz

Map 4-2: Official Snowmobile Trails



Survey Results Related to Transportation

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Report, 2019 contained three groups of questions that included or focused on transportation options in the Town of Wheaton.

As shown in Table 4-1, of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), snowmobile trails received the highest rating and was rated excellent or good by 85% of respondents. Ratings for bike trails were relatively low (32% good or excellent). Males were slightly more satisfied with bike trails (35% excellent/good ratings vs. 27% for female respondents). Respondents could write-in other recreation facilities and topics. “Other” responses included ATV trails.

Table 4-1: Opinions About Recreation Facilities and Trails

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Park and Recreation Facilities	21%	450	22%	57%	16%	4%
Snowmobile trails	43%	324	22%	63%	13%	2%
Boating and River Facilities Access	39%	348	6%	57%	30%	7%
Bike trails	56%	254	4%	28%	34%	34%

A section of the survey asked respondents two groups of questions regarding transportation issues in the Town of Wheaton (see Table 4-2). The first questions asked about road conditions and maintenance. Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), Town of Wheaton residents are largely satisfied with the overall road network in the Town (90% strongly agree/agree that the condition of local roads and streets in the Town are adequate for intended uses). Nearly every respondent had an opinion about the condition of the Town’s roads and streets.

A high percentage (87%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with snow removal on Town of Wheaton roads. While survey respondents were generally satisfied with local roads and streets and snow removal in the Town, they were much less willing to pay more taxes for such services.

Although nearly one-half of survey respondents believe that biking and walking are important modes of transportation in the Town (55% strongly agree/agree), a lower percentage (43% agree/strongly agree) see a need for more biking and walking lanes along public roadways in the Town of Wheaton.



Table 4-2: Opinions About Transportation Issues

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Satisfied w/snow removal on Town roads	4%	555	22%	65%	11%	3%
Condition of local roads/streets in the Town is adequate for intended uses	1%	564	16%	74%	7%	2%
Should be more biking/walking lanes along public roadways in the Town	15%	486	16%	27%	40%	17%
Biking/walking are important modes of transportation in the Town	14%	496	12%	43%	35%	9%
Willing to pay more taxes for snow removal/road maintenance in the Town	9%	520	3%	24%	49%	24%

The second set of questions related to transportation asked respondents to rate railroads and shared ride van services in the Town of Wheaton (see Table 4-3). Many respondents said they had no opinion about these two services. Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), a substantial majority of respondents (74% out of 255 respondents with an opinion) rated railroads as good or excellent, and 66 percent out of 128 respondents with an opinion rated shared ride van services as fair or poor. Respondents could write-in and rate other transportation issues. “Other” responses included park n’ rides, and truck routes.

Table 4-3: Opinions About Railroads and Shared Ride Van Services

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Railroads	55%	255	11%	63%	22%	3%
Shared Ride Van Services	78%	128	4%	30%	36%	30%

Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal 1: The Town of Wheaton will guide the development, maintenance, and improvement of local transportation systems to meet the needs of the Town’s residents and businesses with regard to safety, accessibility, traffic flow, and maintenance costs.

Objectives:

1. Increase transportation options for residents.
2. Increase vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian education and awareness.
3. Reduce the cost of transportation infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to coordinate bicycle and pedestrian planning and improvements with the City of Chippewa Falls, Village of Lake Hallie, City of Eau Claire, Chippewa County and Eau Claire County.
2. Evaluate future Town, County and State road projects to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian improvements such as expanded or paved shoulders, striping or adding safe areas at grade separated highway crossings based on the County’s or Town’s plans.



3. Explore grants and other sources of funding to improve and increase bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure when feasible.
4. Consider developing a process to evaluate new roads when site plans incorporate cul-de-sacs. The process could take into account adjacent future land uses, natural and other barriers, and development density that would limit the ability to extend a road in the future.
5. Consider developing a policy that would evaluate proposed roads and could require a developer to plat an area for a future right-of-way so a road could be expanded in the future to maintain/improve vehicular traffic flow in the Town.
6. Continue to utilize the Town road PASER reports and Capital Improvement Planning to prioritize road maintenance projects and align possible grants to offset costs.
7. Continue to work with the Chippewa County Sheriff's Department to maintain/improve traffic safety and traffic ordinance enforcement.
8. As development occurs, identify locations for park-n-ride areas.
9. Evaluate the need for additional types of safe transportation options and related infrastructure as the demand develops.
10. Continue to apply for grants to offset the cost of road and trail improvements.



Chapter 5

Community Facilities and Utilities

Introduction

The types of facilities a community can offer its residents and the capacity and quality of its utilities are important factors affecting a community's growth. For the town of Wheaton, a full range of services are difficult to provide because of low population density and limited budgets. At the same time, the proximity to urban areas may lend itself to the cost effective and efficient extension of some services and utilities that can benefit Town residents.

The Community Facilities and Utilities chapter will provide a general overview of the existing facilities and utilities available to the Town of Wheaton residents and future opportunities to provide expanded services.

Community Facilities

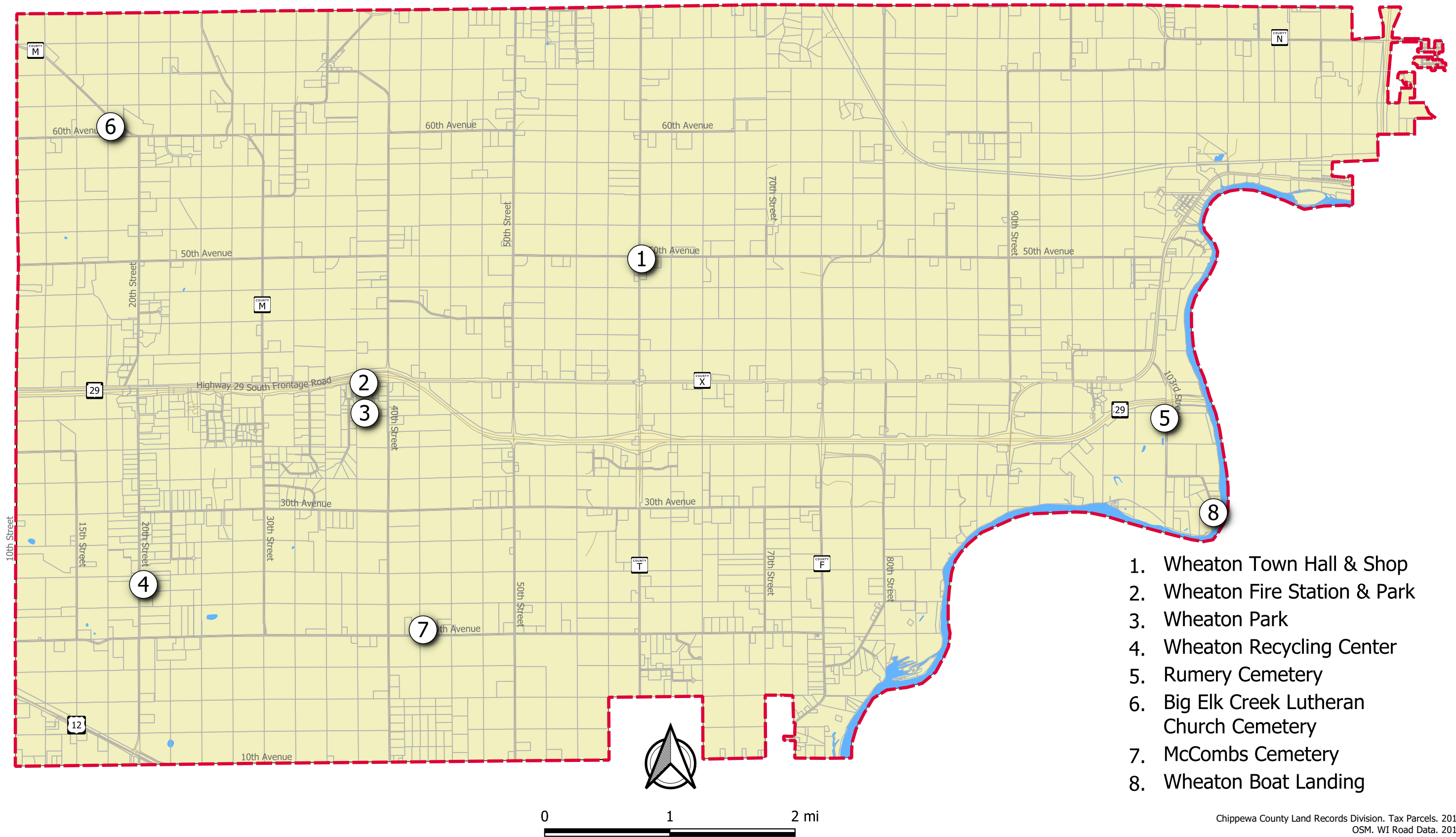
Solid Waste Disposal: Town of Wheaton residents and businesses contract with private solid waste disposal services in the area. The Town does not have any plans to create its own solid waste disposal service.

Recycling Center: The Town of Wheaton Recycling Center is located at 2429 20th Street, Elk Mound, WI (see Map 5-1). It is open Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings to mid-afternoons. Residents can take household garbage, recyclables, appliances, demolition materials, metals and tires. Many of these items require a fee. The Recycling Center does not take electronics, hazardous materials, yard waste, or brush.

Wheaton Town Hall: The Town Hall is located at 4975 C.T.H. T., Chippewa Falls, WI (see Map 5-1). The building has a restroom, clerk's office, kitchen and conference room. It is used for Town Board meetings, elections and can be rented by the public for functions such as reunions and memorials. The building is in good condition. The Town garage is connected to this facility.



Wheaton Town Hall and Garage



1. Wheaton Town Hall & Shop
2. Wheaton Fire Station & Park
3. Wheaton Park
4. Wheaton Recycling Center
5. Rumery Cemetery
6. Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church Cemetery
7. McCombs Cemetery
8. Wheaton Boat Landing

May 06, 2021
 I:\Clients-Memo\W\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\Municipal Facilities.qgz

Chippewa County Land Records Division. Tax Parcels. 2019.
 OSM. WI Road Data. 2018.
 WI DOA. Municipal Borders. 2019.
 WDNR. Surface Water Features. 2019.

Community Facilities

Town of Wheaton
 Chippewa County, WI



Map 5-1
 Community Facilities

Town Garage: The Wheaton Town Garage is a single-story metal-frame building. The building uses steel panels for façade and roof element protection along with open insulation. This facility is connected to the Town Hall. There are currently no storage space needs.

Law Enforcement: The Chippewa County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency in the Town of Wheaton. Continued cooperation between the Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County regarding local crime will continue to be monitored to address local concerns. In Chapter 8 Intergovernmental Cooperation, there is a recommendation to explore the need for a paid position to enforce ordinances.

Fire and Rescue: Wheaton Fire & Rescue relies on a volunteer fire department. There are approximately 25 volunteers at the Wheaton Fire Station located at 3900 38th Street, Elk Mound, WI (see Map 5-1). Wheaton Fire & Rescue provides fire protection to Town residents and businesses and mutual aid to surrounding communities. Wheaton Fire and Rescue has a goal to increase the number of volunteers to 30. Currently, the Town has contracted with the City of Chippewa Falls and City of Eau Claire for EMS services.



The current Wheaton Fire Station is a single-story metal-frame building constructed with 8" CMU block and open insulation. The building uses steel panels for façade and roof element protection. Wall insulation is open to the interior. Currently, storage appears to be sufficient but secured storage is needed to better organize the equipment. The building is well maintained. The Fire Commission, Wheaton Plan Commission and Parks Commission use the Fire Station's conference room for meetings.

Parks and Recreational Areas: The Town has a number of park and recreational facilities. Located around the Wheaton Fire Station, Wheaton Park consists of 63 acres with a large portion being wooded and has many amenities including updated playground equipment, tennis court, basketball court, gaga ball, ball fields, batting cages, sledding hill, an ice-skating rink, trails with different terrains, snowmobile trailer parking with trail access, and reservable pavilions. Wheaton Park is located at 3900 38th Street Elk Mound, WI with a second entrance located across the street from 3601 40th Street Elk Mound, WI.

The Wheaton Park Trail System has 1.5 miles of finished trails for hiking, running, walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and biking.

The Elk Creek State Public Fishing Area is in the northwestern corner of the Town of Wheaton. This is an area of over 80 acres that is owned by the State of Wisconsin and open to the public for fishing. Elk Creek is a Class 1 trout stream. The Town also maintains a public boat landing on the Chippewa River.

The Wheaton Parks Commission has a Park Improvement List 2030 that identifies future maintenance and development projects.

Cemeteries: The Town of Wheaton owns and maintains two cemeteries. Rumery Cemetery is located south of S.T.H. 29 off 103rd Street and McCombs Cemetery is located on 20th Avenue between 40th and 50th Streets. Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church also has a cemetery located at 6118 C.T.H. M. (see Map 5-1). There are no current plans to expand the Town cemeteries.

Medical and Health Care Facilities: There are no hospitals in the Town of Wheaton. Residents have several options for medical care nearby including:

- Luther Hospital - Eau Claire
- Oak Leaf Surgical Hospital-Eau Claire
- HSHS Sacred Heart – Eau Claire
- Marshfield Medical Center – Eau Claire
- Mayo Clinic Health System – Eau Claire
- Mayo - Red Cedar Medical Center - Menomonie
- St. Joseph’s Hospital - Chippewa Falls

It is not anticipated that medical facilities will be developed in the Town in the next 20 years.

Libraries: There are no libraries located in the Town of Wheaton. For library services, Wheaton residents may use several libraries including the City of Chippewa Falls Public Library, the Colfax Public Library in Colfax, WI, Village of Elk Mound Public Library, and the L.E. Phillips Memorial Library in Eau Claire. All these libraries provide internet access, books, magazines, newspapers, videos and books on tape. There is also a Library Books by Mail program that is run by the Indianhead Federated Library System that can send books to residents that have difficulty leaving their homes.

It is not anticipated that the Town of Wheaton will develop its own public library. Continued coordination between the Town and the public libraries is necessary to ensure existing facilities and possibly other options are available for residents and property owners desiring library services.

Schools: The Town of Wheaton is served by a number of educational facilities at the elementary, primary, secondary, vocational, and postsecondary levels. In addition, some facilities offer preschool, kindergarten, special education, religious, business, industrial, trade and vocational training.

Wheaton students are served by three public school systems.

- Chippewa Falls School District
- Elk Mound School District
- Eau Claire School District

Several adult education centers that offer higher education and continuing education classes and programs are located in the area including the Chippewa Valley Technical College, University of Wisconsin – Stout, and University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire.



Senior Care Facilities: The Town of Wheaton is served by two senior care facilities. Westridge is located at 3841 96th Street, Chippewa Falls, WI. It is an adult family home with a capacity of four individuals. Aurora Residential Alternative is located at 6939 C.T.H. T and has capacity for four senior adults.

Senior care facilities are becoming an increasingly important regional asset to meet the changing needs of our aging population in a manner that permits residents to age comfortably and in their community. The private sector will be the driving force in establishing senior care facilities. As Town residents age, however, they may wish to remain in the Town, and it will be increasingly important to have adequate facilities to provide care for these members of the community.

Child Care Facilities: Wisconsin law requires a person who provides care and supervision for four or more children under the age of seven for less than 24 hours a day to obtain a license to operate a child care center from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

There are two licensed childcare providers in the Town of Wheaton. Building Blocks Family Daycare is located at 4873 C.T.H. T and has a capacity of eight children. One Two Three Look at Me Learning Center is located at 2964 C.T.H. F and has a capacity of 45 children. There are numerous licensed childcare facilities in the surrounding communities as well.

Over a 20-year planning horizon, the Town does not anticipate the establishment of a large number of childcare providers.

Utilities

Sanitary Sewer Service: The Town of Wheaton does not have a municipally owned sanitary sewer service. At this time, it is not anticipated that the Town will install this type of infrastructure in the near future. However, as the Town of Wheaton continues to develop, the potential for service lines to be extended to serve higher density developments and growing business and industry may occur or be desirable.

The Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site sewage treatment systems in the state. Chippewa County regulates on-site sewage treatment systems in the Town of Wheaton through sanitary codes.

Stormwater Management: Because the Town of Wheaton is in a Census-defined urbanized area (the Eau Claire urbanized area), it is required by State and Federal law to develop a storm water program with goals, required permitting, and education efforts for municipal-owned stormwater systems to discharge into public waters. Currently, the Town does not have a storm water management plan in place but falls under the WDNR jurisdiction for projects that disturb more than one acre of land. Chippewa County also has a stormwater management ordinance addressing construction site erosion control and post-construction runoff.



There is a potential for the amount (quantity) and rate (velocity) of runoff to increase because of additional development. This may adversely affect local water resources as sediment and nutrients are discharged to receiving water bodies. Managing stormwater to reduce or eliminate direct discharge to surface waters is an important step that can be taken to protect surface water quality in the future. County Shoreland Zoning standards provide some level of water quality protection for areas that fall within the Shoreland Overlay Zoning District. However, this overlay district only regulates areas within 1,000 feet of a lake or protected wetland and 300 feet from a navigable river or stream.

Stormwater management is likely to become more of an issue as continued development occurs. The Town of Wheaton must work cooperatively with the WDNR, Chippewa County, the Cities of Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls and Elk Mound, the Village of Lake Hallie, the Towns of Tilden and Howard, and other resource agencies and organizations to mitigate the adverse impacts of storm water runoff and ensure that environmental resources are adequately protected.

Water Supply: Town of Wheaton residents currently receive their water from private wells. Because of this, it is important that the Town's water resources and aquifers continue to be protected from contamination. The Town of Wheaton does not anticipate developing a municipal water system in the next 20 years. Town property owners are encouraged to protect surface and ground waters from contamination. Chippewa County also has a wellhead protection plan in place for public wells. The Town of Wheaton, however, is not affected by the wellhead protection plan. Chippewa County has studied groundwater quality over the past several decades, and it is briefly discussed in the Natural Resources Element.

Telecommunication Services: There is a wide range in the availability and quality of telephone, wireless, and internet services service available to residents and businesses in the Town of Wheaton. Some areas of the Town on the west side have broadband internet access, while other areas only can receive dial-up internet services at this time. In addition, some areas of the Town can only receive television via satellite. Small portions of the Town near urbanized areas are served by cable television providers. Over the air digital signals are available for Town residents with digital antennas.

Power Plants and Transmission Lines: Dairyland Power Cooperative has a power plant in Wheaton located at the corner of C.T.H. X and 50th Street. Xcel Energies also has a power plant in Wheaton located off 80th Street just east of C.T.H. F. Electrical transmission lines cross several areas within the Town.

Electric Utilities: There are two primary electric companies with territory in the Town of Wheaton. These are Xcel Energy and local provider Dunn Energy. The Town is likely to continue utilizing these providers for electric service in the future.

Natural Gas/LP Gas: Xcel Energy provides natural gas service to some locations in the Town of Wheaton in the west portion of the Town along 40th , 20th Avenue, and Town Line Road. Many



residents rely on LP Gas. The Town will likely continue to utilize Xcel Energy for natural gas service in the future.

Survey Results Related to Community Facilities and Utilities

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Report, 2019 contained two groups of questions focused on community facilities/services and parks/recreation in the Town of Wheaton. The first set of questions were focused specifically on the level of community facilities and services offered to residents (see Table 5-1).

Substantial numbers of respondents said they had no opinion about the community services asked about in the survey, particularly cemetery services (68%), and storm water management (51%). Town of Wheaton respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with the community facilities and services listed on the survey. Substantial majorities said all the facilities and services are good or excellent: 90% for fire protection, 88% for ambulance, 81% for signage, 81% for recycling programs, 79% for law enforcement, and 64% for stormwater management. It should be noted that the survey was conducted before the Town of Wheaton created its own fire department.

Table 5-1: Opinions About Community Facilities and Services in the Town of Wheaton

Facilities and Services	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Fire Protection	22%	454	42%	48%	9%	1%
Recycling program	13%	503	32%	49%	15%	5%
Law Enforcement	24%	439	22%	57%	18%	3%
Signage	24%	430	17%	64%	16%	3%
Cemetery Service	68%	185	15%	57%	24%	4%
Ambulance Service	24%	436	14%	74%	11%	2%
Storm Water management	51%	275	8%	56%	25%	11%

Town of Wheaton respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with local recreation facilities and trails though substantial numbers of respondents said they had no opinion about the items on the list.

As shown in Table 5-2, snowmobile trails received the highest rating and was rated excellent or good by 85% of respondents followed by park and recreation facilities (79%) and boating and river facilities access (63%). Ratings for bike trails were relatively low (32% good or excellent). “Other” responses included ATV trails and ball fields.

Table 5-2: Opinions About Recreation Facilities and Trails

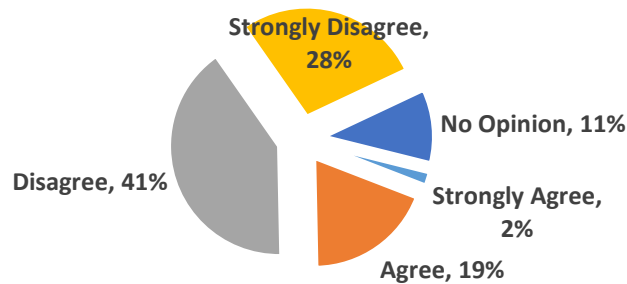
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Park and Recreation Facilities	21%	450	22%	57%	16%	4%
Snowmobile trails	43%	324	22%	63%	13%	2%
Boating and River Facilities Access	39%	348	6%	57%	30%	7%
Bike trails	56%	254	4%	28%	34%	34%



The last question in the recreation section asked respondents' opinions regarding respondents' willingness to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town of Wheaton. Figure 5-1 indicates that 69% of respondents would not be willing (disagree and strongly disagree) to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities.

Figure 5-1: Willing to Pay More Taxes for Park and Recreation Opportunities and Facilities

**Willing to Pay More Taxes for Park and Recreation
Opportunities and Facilities in the Town of Wheaton**



Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal 1: Support regulations that address stormwater impacts related to new development.

Objectives:

1. Increase communication and education related to stormwater impacts on water resources.

Recommendations:

1. Support WDNR regulations and Chippewa County Stormwater Management Ordinance and their enforcement.
2. Support Chippewa County's Shoreland Ordinance and its enforcement.
3. Consider the development of a local stormwater management ordinance if the Town of Wheaton develops its own stormwater infrastructure such as ponds and stormwater systems.
4. Support low impact development strategies such as the use of swales, ditches, and rain gardens, to reduce the need and cost of providing stormwater infrastructure.

Goal 2: Identify areas where municipal utilities may benefit the Town of Wheaton.

Objectives:

1. Provide options for utilities for new development that are not currently available in the Town of Wheaton.

Recommendations:

1. Discuss with neighboring communities the idea of extending municipal utilities into the Town of Wheaton where areas of higher density development are appropriate.

Goal 3: Periodically evaluate facilities and equipment to ensure they are safe and meet the needs of residents and the people who use them.

Objectives:

1. Maintain adequate facility space to serve the Town's needs.
2. Maintain safe facilities and amenities that serve Town residents.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct a Needs Assessment for Town buildings and equipment when the need or opportunity arises.
2. Participate in Chippewa County's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan updates or create a separate Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that addresses the park and recreation needs of the community.
3. Identify grant programs that can be used to offset costs of maintaining, expanding or building new Town facilities and amenities.

Goal 4: The Town will encourage increased community involvement to improve public safety.

Objectives:

1. The Town will maintain fire and rescue services.

Recommendations:

1. The Town will support and encourage the formation of neighborhood watch (or similar) groups.
2. The Town will encourage continued training opportunities for local firefighters in cooperation with local universities, technical colleges, and other area fire departments.
3. Create a 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan to identify and prioritize Wheaton Fire & Rescue needs and identify grants to offset costs.

Chapter 6

Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

Introduction

The Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources chapter provides an overview of the Town of Wheaton's resources and explores ways to promote and preserve these resources to benefit the community.

The Town's agricultural, natural, and cultural resources are an important part of its identity and uniqueness. Wheaton's natural resources can positively affect resident's health, provide wildlife habitat, increase property values, and spur economic growth. Cultural resources tell the story of early inhabitants, describe events that shaped the development of the area, and provide educational experiences for residents and visitors. Agriculture, a strong symbol of life in Wisconsin, is increasingly seen as a way to meet the food needs of local consumers.

As the Town of Wheaton grows, the protection and promotion of these resources will have a positive impact on the community in many ways.

Agriculture

Agriculture is an important part of the social and economic characteristics of Wheaton, Chippewa County and the State of Wisconsin. Much of Wheaton's land is devoted to farming.

Changes in agriculture due to socio-economic conditions and development pressures to convert agricultural land to other uses can have profound impacts on Chippewa County and its communities. The 2017 Census of Agriculture for Chippewa County provides a snapshot of the state of agriculture and trends. Below are some of the main characteristics of farming in Chippewa County highlighted in the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

- The number of farms and the amount of land in agriculture has decreased since 2012.
- The average farm size has increased since 2012.
- Net case farm income has decreased since 2012.
- Thirty-five percent of farms had sales less than \$2,500.
- Twenty-six percent of farms had sales of \$100,000 or more.
- About 68% of farmland is cropland.
- About 46% of farms are practicing no till or reduced till farming.
- The most popular crops grown are corn, soybeans and forage.
- Milk, cattle/calves and poultry/eggs have the highest sales in the Livestock, Poultry and Products category.
- There are over four times the number of turkeys in Chippewa County than cattle.

As some farms grow larger to better meet their economic needs, smaller farms are growing to support local food needs and develop agritourism.



Map 6-1 shows the general pattern of land used for agriculture in the Town of Wheaton. Farmland can be found throughout the Town. Areas not being farmed typically have a characteristic not conducive to farming (steep slopes, wetlands, etc.) or have been developed over time. Agriculture will remain an important way of life in Wheaton, even as it evolves.

Soils

The Chippewa County Soil Report indicates there are four typical soils in the Wheaton area. The primary soil type is the Elkmound-Plainbo-Eleva association. These soils are characterized as being shallow and moderately deep, gently sloping to very steep, well to excessively drained, loamy and sandy soils on uplands, outwash plains, and stream terraces. The second most extensive soil association in Wheaton is Billet-Rosholt-Oesterle, characterized as being deep, nearly level to sloping, well to somewhat poorly drained, loamy soils on outwash plains and stream terraces. The Menahga- Friendship soil association is seen primarily along the Chippewa River, and is deep, nearly level to sloping, excessively to moderately well drained, sandy soils on outwash plains and stream terraces. The northeast area of the Town also contains Seaton-Gale association soils, which are deep to moderately deep, nearly level to steep, moderately well to well drained, silty soils on uplands.

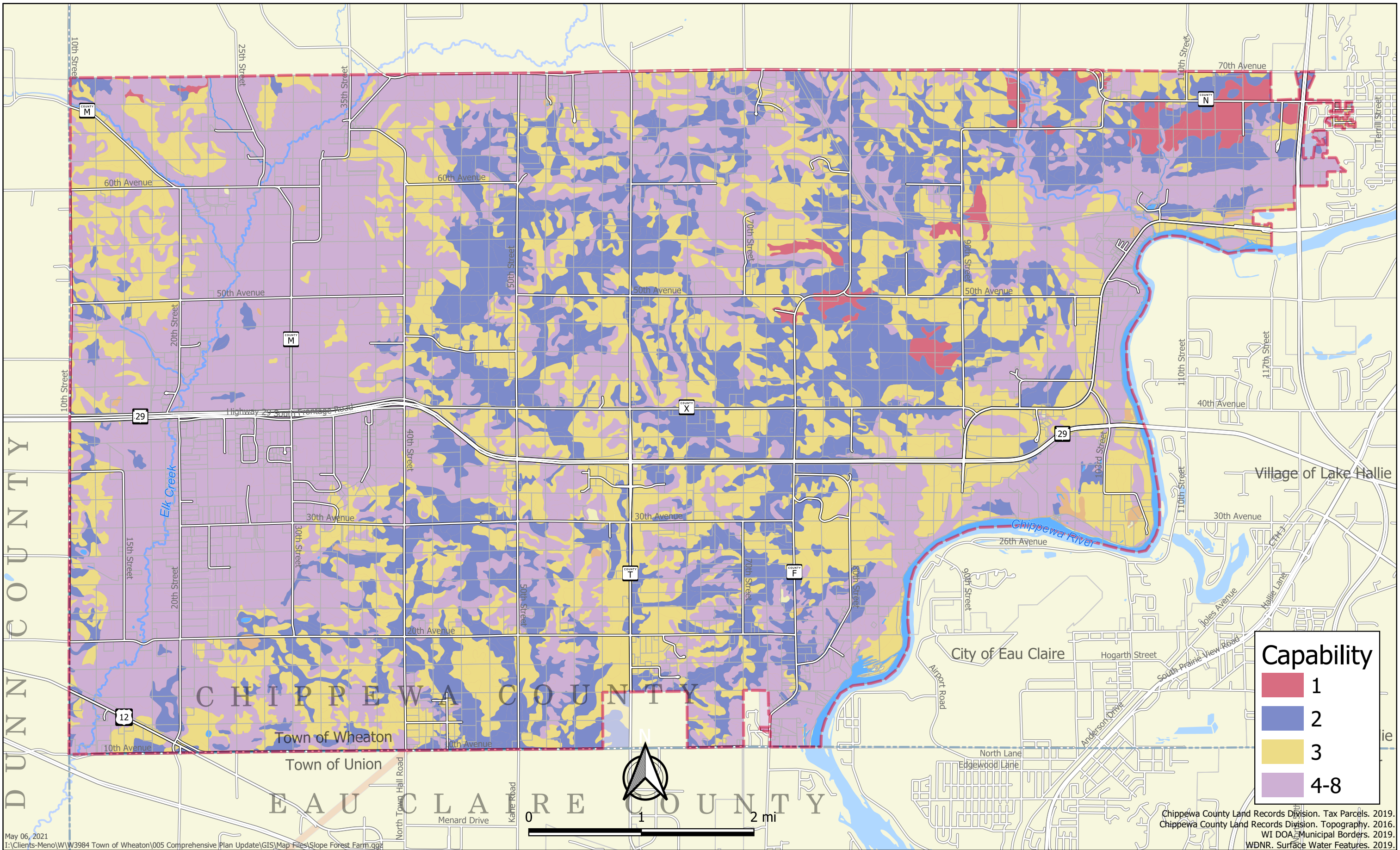
Soils are also divided into classes to evaluate if farming is a viable use of the land. Soil classes I-III are considered to be the land best suited for farming, while soils IV-VIII have features that make farming difficult, if not impossible (see Map 6-2).

Topography

The topography of the Town of Wheaton area is relatively flat. Elevations range from 795 feet to 1,123 feet above sea level. Surface features have been formed or modified by two distinct periods of glaciation. Pitted glacial outwash covers portions of the County, resulting in many lakes, wetlands, and areas of uneven topography. Major water bodies in the Town of Wheaton include the Chippewa River, Elk Creek, Big Elk Creek, Sherman Creek, Trout Creek, and Beaver Creek.

Bedrock Geology

The Town of Wheaton is underlain by nearly all Cambrian sediments, which overlie an ancient broad plain of granite bedrock. The formations consist of beds, or strata, of sandstones, siltstones, and shales, which vary considerably in thickness and other characteristics.



May 06, 2021
I:\Clients-Memo\W\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\Slope Forest Farm.gg

Soil Classifications

Town of Wheaton
Chippewa County, WI



Map 6-2
Soil Classifications

Surface Geology

The surface geology of Chippewa County is primarily the result of glacial deposition over bedrock. The modern landscape was most strongly influenced by the glaciers that invaded the county from about 25,000 years ago, and by a glacier that moved into the County from the west about 12,000 years ago. Since the last period of glacial activity, the landscape has been further sculpted by naturally occurring and man-induced erosion and drainage activity.

Mineral Resources

There are no metallic mines in the Town of Wheaton but there are eight non-metallic mines that are regulated under Chapter NR 135 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code (see Map 6-3). Non-metallic mines are permitted through Chippewa County.

Water Resources

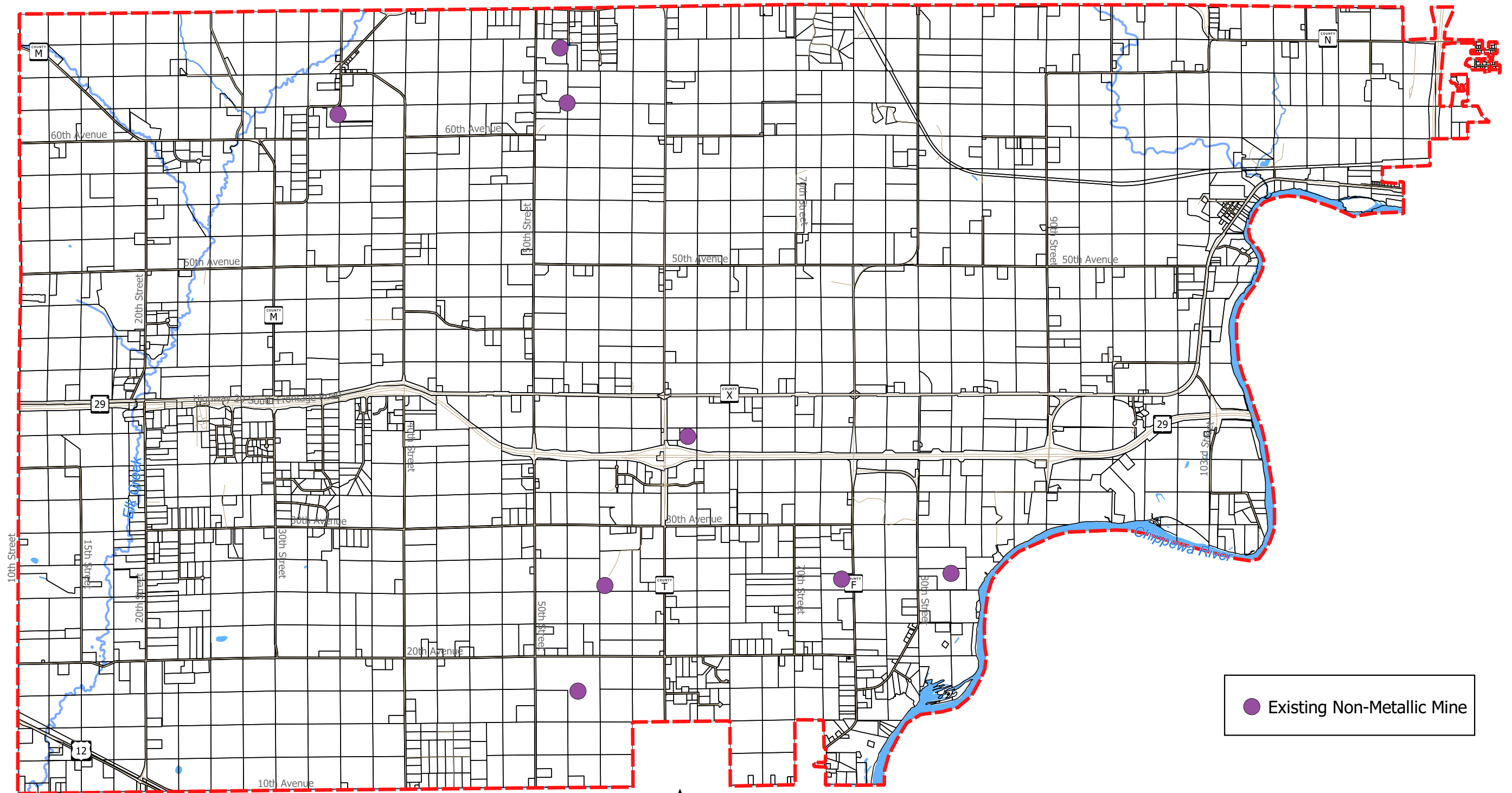
Protection of water resources is critical to maintaining the water quality and diversity of wildlife. This can be complicated because water resources do not adhere to political boundaries.

A watershed is an area of land that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet such as a river, pond, or lake. Development and land use practices in and around the Town of Wheaton within the watersheds should take into account the impact on the function of natural systems, and address potential pollution problems through the use of best management practices such as shoreland buffers, stormwater ponds, swales and the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.

The Town of Wheaton is located in the Muddy Creek, Elk Creek and Duncan Creek Watersheds. There are several bodies of water that flow through the Town of Wheaton, including the Chippewa River, Elk Creek, Big Elk Creek, Beaver Creek, Trout Creek, and Sherman Creek (see Map 6-4). Best Management Practices (BMP) designed to control stormwater runoff rates, volumes, and discharge quality can be used to protect water resources in the Town. To protect these surface waters, buffer zones along the shores restrict what development activities can occur in these zones. Shorelands are vital components to the relationship between the land and the water. Shoreland areas serve as environmental buffer zones that catch pollutants and filter runoff before it enters the waterway. Shorelands provide valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation, and also act as buffers and thus serve to protect water quality. However, shorelands are also considered prime residential building areas because of their scenic beauty. Recognizing this conflict, and in order to maintain the environmental, recreational, and economical quality of our water resources, the State of Wisconsin requires counties to adopt and enforce a shoreland ordinance.

As required by the State, shorelands are defined as all land within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a lake, pond or flowage or all land within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a river or stream or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever is greater.





● Existing Non-Metallic Mine



0 1 2 mi

Chippewa County Land Records Division. Tax Parcels. 2019.
OSM WI Rail Data. 2018.
OSM. WI Road Data. 2018.
WI DOA. Municipal Borders. 2019.
WDNR. Surface Water Features. 2019.

May 06, 2021
I:\Clients-Meno\W\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\Groundwater Wells Mines.qgz

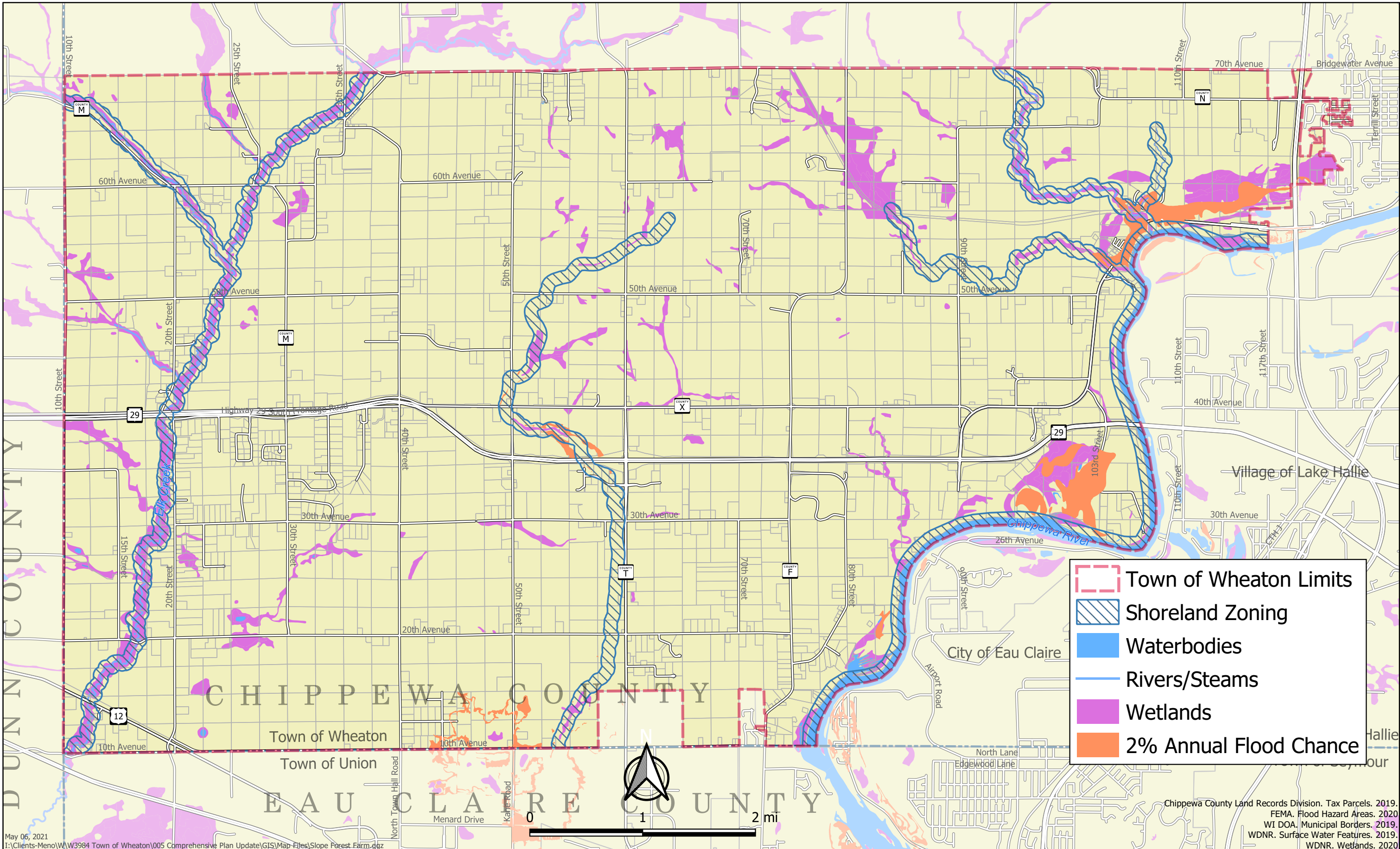
Existing Non-Metallic Mines

Town of Wheaton
Chippewa County, WI



Map 6-3

Existing Non-Metallic Mines

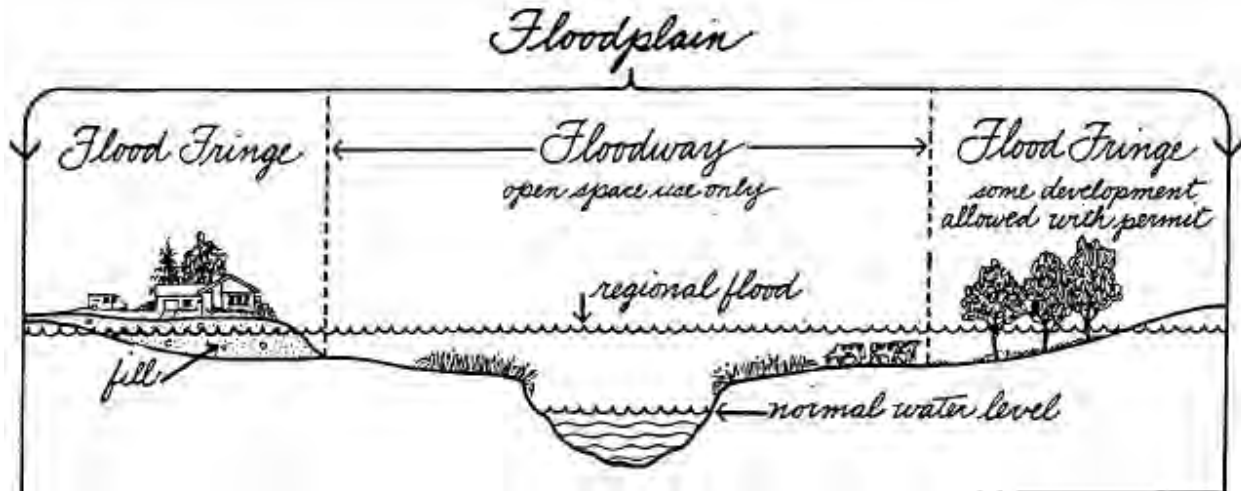


Floodplains

Floodplains are areas, which have been, or may become inundated with water during a regional flood. Floodplains are comprised of two components, the floodway and floodfringe. Floodways are areas, which directly adjoin the channel of a stream and are characterized by deep, fast moving water. The floodway is typically the most dangerous part of a floodplain, and uses in this area should be limited to conservation areas or open space.

The floodfringe is generally associated with standing, or slow flowing water adjacent to the floodway. Development within the floodfringe is generally accepted, provided adequate flood proofing measures are in place. Wisconsin statutes direct all Wisconsin counties, cities, and villages to adopt floodplain zoning ordinances. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has mapped flood plains in the planning area. These maps delineate the entire flood plain boundary, and do not distinguish between floodway and floodfringe.

Figure 6-1: Floodplains



Source: Wisconsin DNR

There are a few areas of floodplains throughout the Town, most of which are located along a creek or river (see Map 6-4). It is important to remember that the floodplain maps are no substitute for site specific analysis. Natural and man-made changes in the landscape, and the age and accuracy of flood insurance maps have in some cases limited their reliability for the identification and designation of floodplains.

Wetlands

There are a number of wetland areas within the watersheds that can affect water levels of rivers and creeks flowing through Chippewa County.

Wetlands are defined by the State Statute as “an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions.” Wetlands may be seasonal or

permanent and are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants, replenish groundwater supplies, store floodwaters and maintain stream flows.

There are some wetland areas in the Town, primarily located adjacent to a stream or river (see Map 6-4).

Groundwater

The source of nearly all potable water is groundwater. Groundwater condition in Chippewa County and Wheaton is generally good. However, there are a few wells that have recorded high nitrate levels. Recent testing has indicated that about ten percent of wells throughout Chippewa County are above the standard for nitrates. But, according to the Chippewa County Land Conservation Department, there is no apparent geographic explanation or trend for these levels.

Map 6-5 shows well test sites in Wheaton and their associated nitrate levels. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources indicates that water naturally consists of less than 1 milligram of nitrate-nitrogen per liter. Higher levels may indicate that the water has been contaminated. Common sources of contamination include fertilizers, animal wastes, septic tanks, and decaying plant debris. Although the Town of Wheaton does not have public drinking water, the maximum allowable nitrate-nitrogen level in public drinking water is 10 milligrams per liter. The State of Wisconsin does not require periodic testing of private wells and new wells are only tested for bacteria levels. The Chippewa County Land Conservation Department should be contacted for more information about specific well tests and results.

Map 6-6 shows the groundwater contamination susceptibility in the Town of Wheaton. Groundwater contamination potential is influenced by soil characteristics such as chemistry, permeability, slope, and the ability of the unconsolidated materials overlying bedrock to filter contaminants (attenuation capacity).

Steep Slopes

It is generally more desirable, both environmentally and economically, to avoid steep slopes and disrupting natural drainage ways with construction and land development. Problems with erosion and runoff pollution can occur with development on steep slopes, and flooding and wet basements can occur with drainage way disruptions.

Steep slopes are areas with 13 percent or more grade (each percent of slope is measured as one unit of elevation for every 100 horizontal units).

Development on slopes of 13 to 20 percent could cause direct runoff into lakes, rivers, or streams. In order to minimize any negative effects, construction should follow state approved site erosion control standards, and institute best management practices to control runoff and pollution. Land with slopes over 21 percent represents a limiting environmental condition.

Development of these sites will result in high construction costs and severe erosion, often having negative impacts to surface and ground waters. Map 6-7 shows that there are several areas of steep slopes that run through the central and western portions of Wheaton, often near rivers or streams. Additional care should be taken when approving developments on these sites to limit erosion, runoff, and pollution.

Forests and Woodlands

Forests and woodlands provide a wide range of benefits to the Town of Wheaton and its residents. These benefits include:

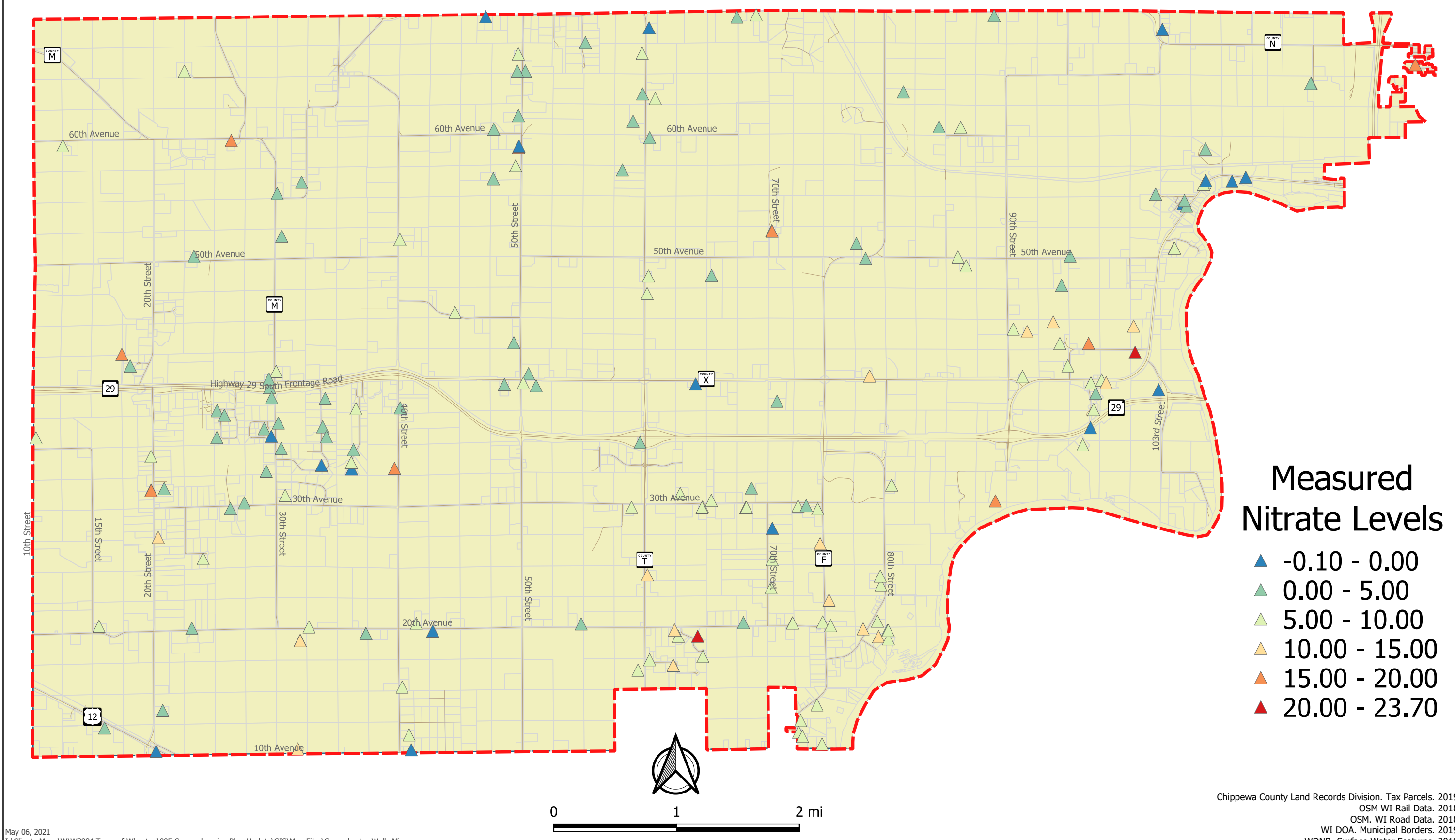
- Harvesting and turning into products and sold. Then replanting
- Providing areas for hiking and camping
- Providing wildlife habitat
- Reducing energy consumption in homes by providing shade and cooling
- Reducing the heating of asphalt and concrete surfaces
- Improving air quality
- Reducing greenhouse gases
- Preventing soil erosion
- Providing food
- Provide wood for heat

Map 6-8 shows the existing forests and woodlands in the Town of Wheaton. These areas are typically near water resources, steep slopes and other areas where it is difficult to farm or build.

Grasslands and Prairies

A small amount of Chippewa County was originally covered by prairie, most of which does not remain today. Prairie is the term used to describe the grassland type which dominated Wisconsin prior to Euro-American settlement. Prairies are dominated by grasses and sedges, lack trees and tall shrubs, and are home to a rich variety of plants and animals. Within the prairie designation there are variations due to soils and climate.

There are several areas scattered throughout the Town of Wheaton that have been classified as grasslands. As these areas have been disappearing throughout Wisconsin, prairies are a threatened plant community in Wisconsin. Many species of plants and animals associated with Wisconsin prairies are endangered, threatened, or of special concern. Grasslands can be restored and maintained by preserving open space for this type of land cover as development occurs



May 06, 2021
I:\Clients-Memo\W\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\Groundwater Wells Mines.qgz

Chippewa County Land Records Division. Tax Parcels. 2019.
OSM WI Rail Data. 2018.
OSM. WI Road Data. 2018.
WI DOA. Municipal Borders. 2019.
WDNR. Surface Water Features. 2019.

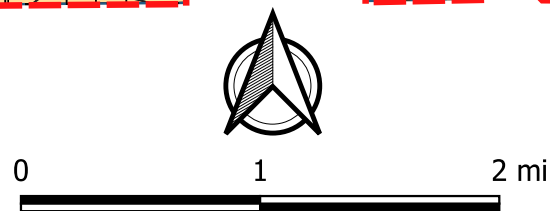
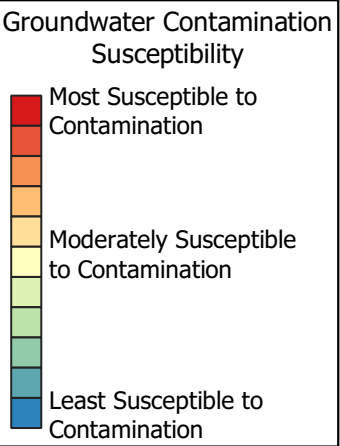
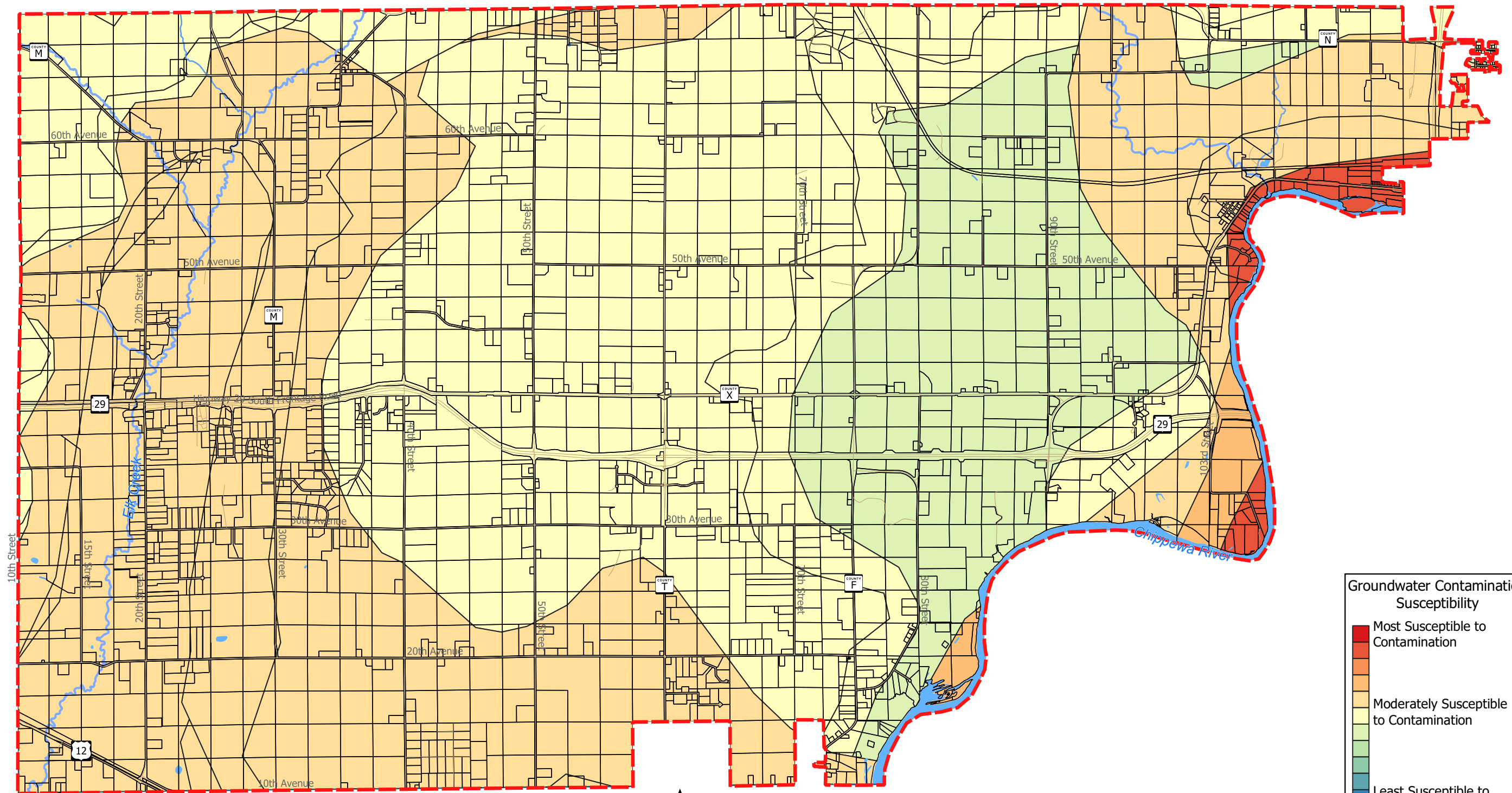
Measured Nitrate Levels

Town of Wheaton
Chippewa County, WI



Map 6-5

Measured Nitrate Levels



Chippewa County Land Records Division. Tax Parcels. 2019.
 OSM WI Rail Data. 2018.
 OSM. WI Road Data. 2018.
 WI DOA. Municipal Borders. 2019.
 WDNR. Surface Water Features. 2019.

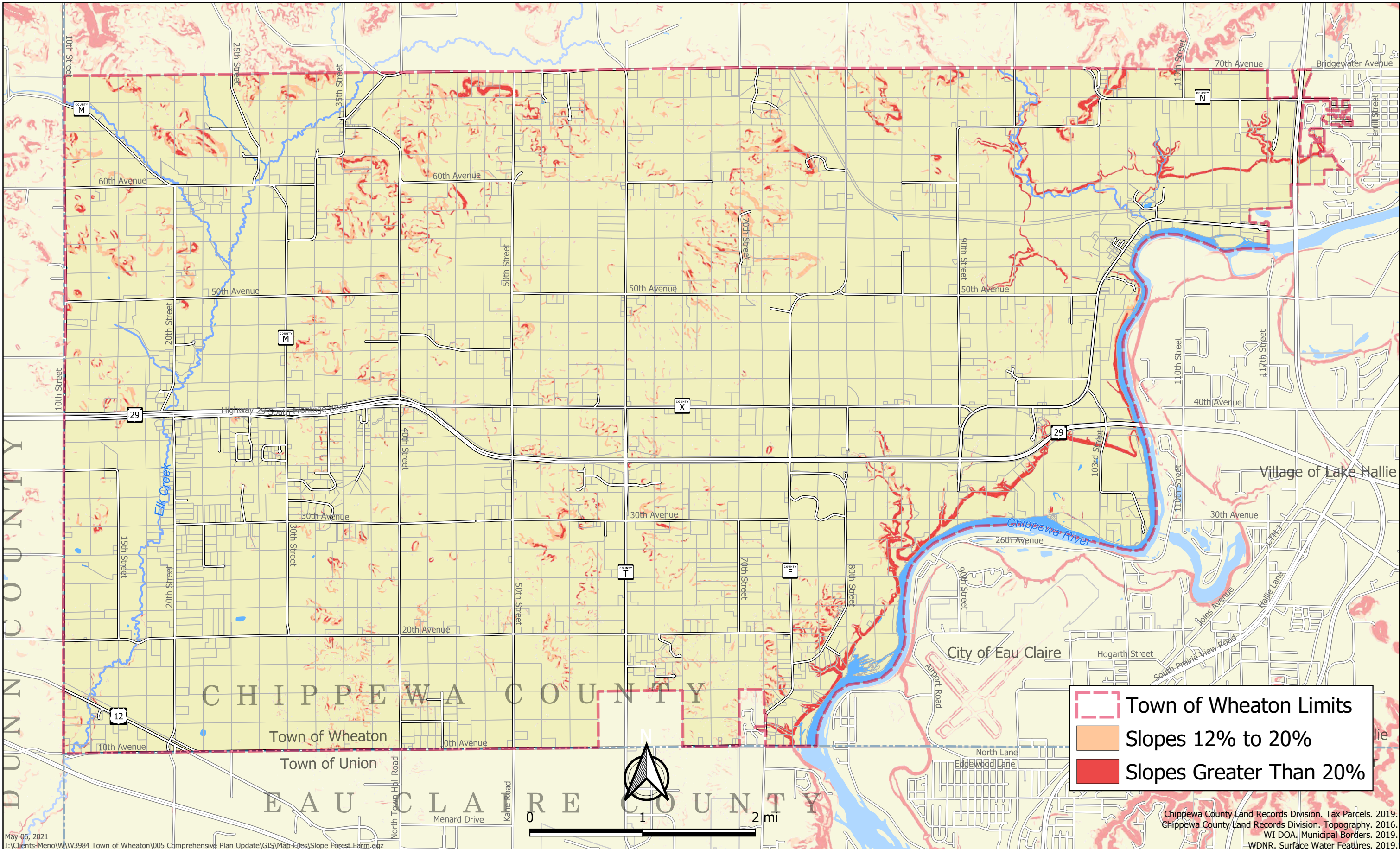
May 06, 2021
 I:\Clients-Meno\W\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\Groundwater Wells Mines.qgz

Groundwater Contamination Susceptibility

Town of Wheaton
Chippewa County, WI

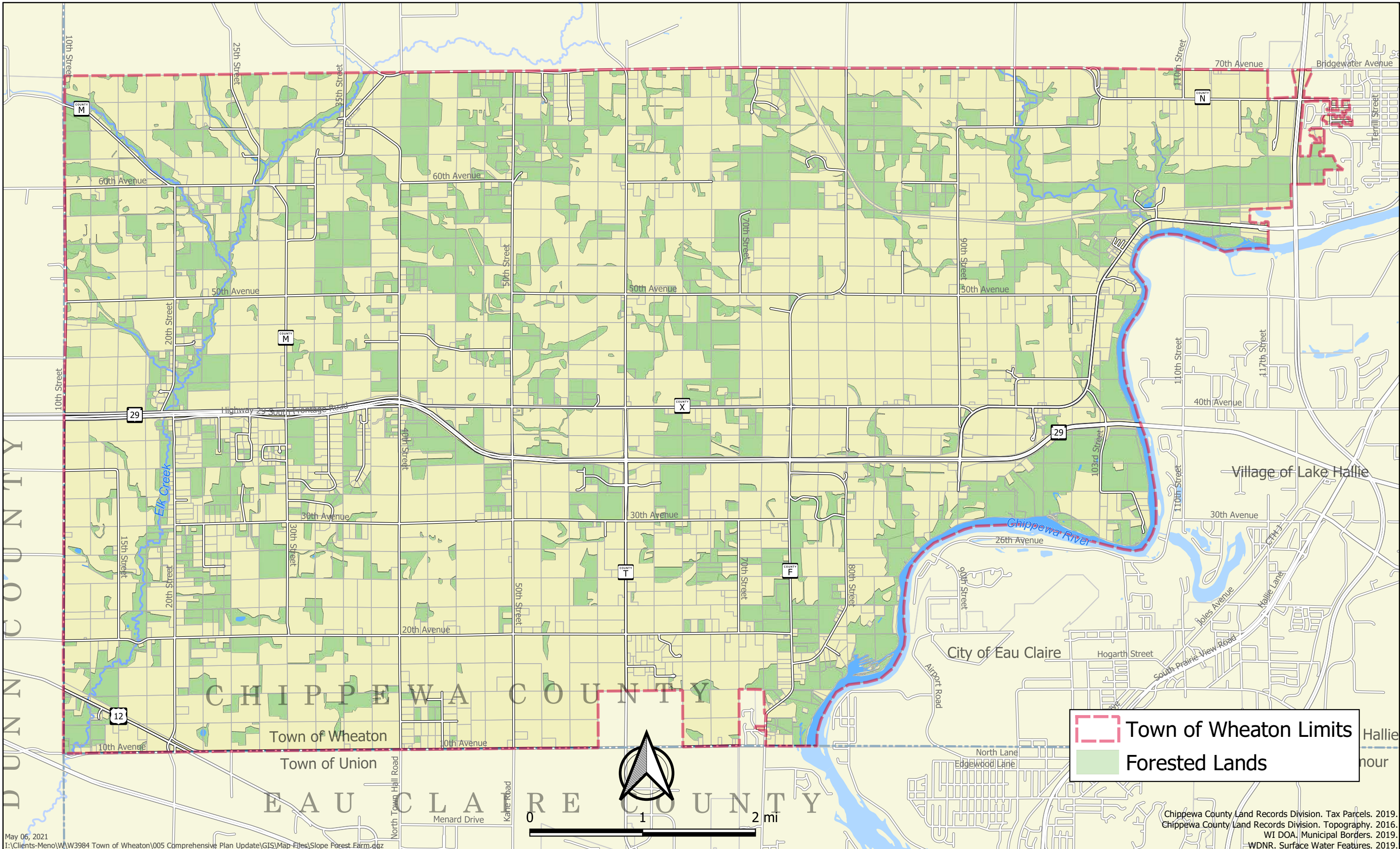


Map 6-6
Groundwater Contamination
Susceptibility



May 06, 2021
I:\Clients-Memo\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\Slope Forest Farm.dgz

Chippewa County Land Records Division. Tax Parcels. 2019.
Chippewa County Land Records Division. Topography. 2016.
WI DOA, Municipal Borders. 2019.
WDNR. Surface Water Features. 2019.



May 06, 2021
I:\Clients-Memo\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map-Files\Slope Forest Farm.dgz

Forests and Woodlands

Town of Wheaton
Chippewa County, WI



Map 6-8
Forests and Woodlands

Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat and Open Space

Scattered throughout the Town of Wheaton are various federal, state and local wildlife, fishery, natural and scientific areas, including private conservancy areas. These often encompass one or more of the sensitive land areas discussed previously (e.g., wetlands, forests, shorelands, prairies). These areas are managed as open space to provide important feeding, breeding, nesting, cover and other habitat values to a wide variety of plant and animal species. Agricultural lands can also provide important open space and wildlife habitat, while maintaining the rural character of the area.

Rare and Endangered Species and Natural Communities

According to the WDNR Natural History Inventory, Chippewa County is home to 39 animal species, 27 plant species, and 19 natural communities that can be considered rare or endangered.

The Town of Wheaton lies within multiple town ranges within Chippewa County. The DNR has identified specific species and communities in danger within each town range. The areas where Wheaton lies have been identified as having the following endangered species and natural communities:

- *Asclepias ovalifolia* (Dwarf Milkweed)
- *Clemmys insculpta* (Wood Turtle)
- *Cumberlandia monodonta* (Spectacle Case)
- *Cyclonaias tuberculata* (Purple Wartyback)
- *Eleocharis robbinsii* (Robbins' Spikerush)
- *Emydoidea blandingii* (Blanding's Turtle)
- *Gentiana alba* (Yellow Gentian)
- *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (Bald Eagle)
- *Lanius ludovicianus* (Loggerhead Shrike)
- Northern wet-mesic forest (Northern Wet-mesic Forest)
- *Platanthera hookeri* (Hooker Orchis)
- Sand prairie (Sand Prairie)
- *Speyeria idalia* (Regal Fritillary)
- *Talinum rugospermum* (Prairie Fame-flower)
- *Lycaides Melissa samuelis* (Karner Blue)

The Karner Blue Butterfly is an endangered species with Federal protection status. The Spectacle Case is a candidate for Federal protection status.

Review of endangered species and natural communities by the WDNR occurs when ground disturbance of over one-acre is proposed.

Cultural Resources

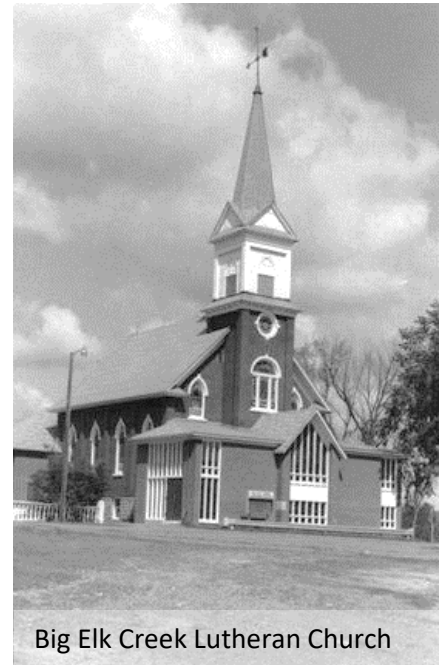
Historical and archeological sites can tell us many things about our past. They add value to your community by providing educational, aesthetics, and economic benefits. The Wisconsin Historical Society estimates that 80% of our state's archeological sites have been severely damaged or destroyed. Currently, Town projects that are state or federally funded must go through a review process to ensure that these sites, if within a project area, are not disturbed.

To protect the sites and landowner rights the locations of archaeological sites are exempt from public disclosure. Under state law it is illegal to remove objects or artifacts or conduct archaeological research of any kind on state and municipal lands (County, Civil Town, City, and Village) without a permit from the State Archaeologist. The law also applies to the bottomlands of lakes and rivers owned by the state or municipal governments and also covers submerged sites such as shipwrecks.

The Town of Wheaton is rich in history. There are 13 items on the Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. This list is a collection of structures, sites, objects, and historic districts in Wisconsin. Included in this list are houses, barns, schools, and churches.

The Chippewa River also played an important in the lives of the Native American population before European settlement. Archeological sites are protected by the State of Wisconsin. Development projects typically have to have their projects reviewed to determine if they will have an impact on historical and archeological sites in the Town.

The Chippewa County Historical Society collects records and artifacts related to the County's history. By identifying and preserving historical and archeological sites in the Town of Wheaton, the Town can add to its identity and create opportunities for education.



Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church

Survey Results Related to Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Report, 2019 contained one questions focused on the protection and preservation of natural resources in the Town of Wheaton (see Table 6-1).

Respondents were presented with a list of ten natural resource items and asked how important it is to protect and preserve each resource. Based on responses from those with an opinion (excluding the "no opinion" responses), Town of Wheaton respondents gave a high level of importance to the protection of all natural resources on the list; large majorities said that it is essential, very important, or important to protect every resource listed. Groundwater, rivers

and streams, air quality, and forested lands were supported particularly strongly (99% rated these resources as essential, very important, or important). This substantial level of agreement was uniform across all demographic groups. There were only minor variations in the high level of importance that each group placed on the protection of these natural resources in the Town. Female respondents were more likely to say that the protection/preservation of air quality, farmland, and forested lands are “essential.”

Table 6-1: Importance for Town of Wheaton to Protect and Preserve Natural Resources

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Groundwater	1%	568	71%	21%	7%	1%
Rivers and Streams	2%	561	53%	33%	13%	1%
Air Quality	1%	564	49%	34%	15%	1%
Wildlife Habitat	3%	557	43%	31%	23%	3%
Forested Land	2%	561	40%	38%	21%	1%
Farmland	2%	564	38%	36%	21%	4%
Wetlands	3%	562	37%	27%	29%	8%
Rural Character	3%	555	35%	36%	25%	3%
Scenic Views and Undeveloped Hills	4%	548	32%	33%	27%	9%
Historic Resources and Cultural Sites	9%	518	12%	26%	49%	13%

Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations

Goal 1: The Town of Wheaton will support continued agriculture and the expansion of small market farms and agritourism.

Objectives:

1. Protect the best farmland from development.
2. Increase the number of young farmers and farms that produce local food.
3. Increase access to healthy locally produced food.

Recommendations:

1. Guide development away from the best farmlands.
2. Avoid the fragmentation of farmland.
3. Consider the use of the PUD Zoning District or Flexible Zoning for major subdivisions to minimize the loss of productive agricultural lands.
4. Explore options such as creating a policy allowing for the buying and selling of development rights to preserve farmland.
5. Support agricultural programs that provide incentives for no till farming, cover crops and other methods that reduce the use of herbicides and pesticides and improve the soil quality and protect water resources.



Goal 2: The Town of Wheaton will support development that recognizes and protects the Town's natural resources.

Objectives:

1. Increase awareness of the Town's natural resources and their importance.
2. Maintain or increase the number of acres of land that support wildlife such as deer, birds, butterflies, and bees.
3. Increase awareness of best management practices that promote water resource and groundwater protection.

Recommendations:

1. Encourage residents to regularly test their private wells for nitrates.
2. Support agricultural programs that provide incentives for no till farming, cover crops and other methods that reduce the use of herbicides and pesticides and improve the soil quality and protect water resources.
3. Encourage new development to minimize the removal of trees, prairies and grasslands and incorporate them into their design.
4. Continue to support regulations that limit development in shorelands, wetlands and floodplains.
5. Create an informational page on the Town's website listing its natural resources and how to protect them.
6. Support intergovernmental cooperation to identify ways to protect the area's natural resources.
7. Maintain the policy to minimize the use of persistent pesticides on public lands and near public buildings in the Town of Wheaton.
8. Support efforts to remove invasive species in the Town.
9. Consider the creation of a sign acknowledging a resident's or business' use of a best management practice to protect or improve the Town's natural resources.
10. Support the regulation and monitoring of the use of high capacity wells or industries with high water usage to protect the groundwater supply.
11. Support the enforcement of the Town's Ordinance to Improve Outdoor Lighting.

Goal 3: The Town of Wheaton will support the continued documentation and preservation of sites and structures of historical and archeological importance.

Objectives:

1. Reduce the loss of buildings of historical or architectural importance.
2. Increase awareness of historical and archeological sites.

Recommendations:

1. Provide a page on the Town's website to promote local history.
2. Work with the State Historical Society to identify, promote and preserve important archeological sites.

3. Support the work of the Chippewa County Historical Society to document and display local history.

Chapter 7

Economic Development

Introduction

Economic development is about working together to maintain a strong economy, which provides a good standard of living for residents and a reliable tax base for Town government. The economic development element should reflect the values of the community and must be carefully linked to the goals, objectives, and policies of the other plan elements since they are often intertwined. Towns may have a different approach to economic development since they do not always have the same infrastructure a village or city has to offer.

This element shall assess particular types of new businesses and industries desired by the Town of Wheaton, assess strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses, and identify economic development programs that can be used to assist business and industry in the Town.

Workforce

The workforce is that portion of the population that is 16 years or older who are employed or unemployed but actively seeking employment opportunities. As a business, it is helpful to know information about the population that will be depended on to fill open positions in the future.

In Chapter 2 Issues and Opportunities, the following demographics provide information on the workforce living in the Town of Wheaton.

- About 73% of the population (1,617 residents) is in the workforce.
- About 35% work in Chippewa County and 99.5% worked in Wisconsin.
- About 5% indicated they worked at home.
- About 80% commuted 29 minutes or less to their job.
- About 96% had a high school education or higher and 25% had a bachelor's degree or higher.
- About 34% had management, business, science, or arts occupations and 24% had production, transportation, and material moving occupations.
- About 27% worked in the educational services, healthcare, and social assistance industries, 18% worked manufacturing.
- About 5% worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining industries.
- There are 95 businesses in the Town of Wheaton

Table 7-1 shows that 84.1% of workers were private wage and salary workers.

Table 7-1: Class of Worker

Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,579	100%
Private wage and salary workers	1,328	84.1%
Government workers	181	11.5%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	70	4.4%
Unpaid family workers	0	0.0%

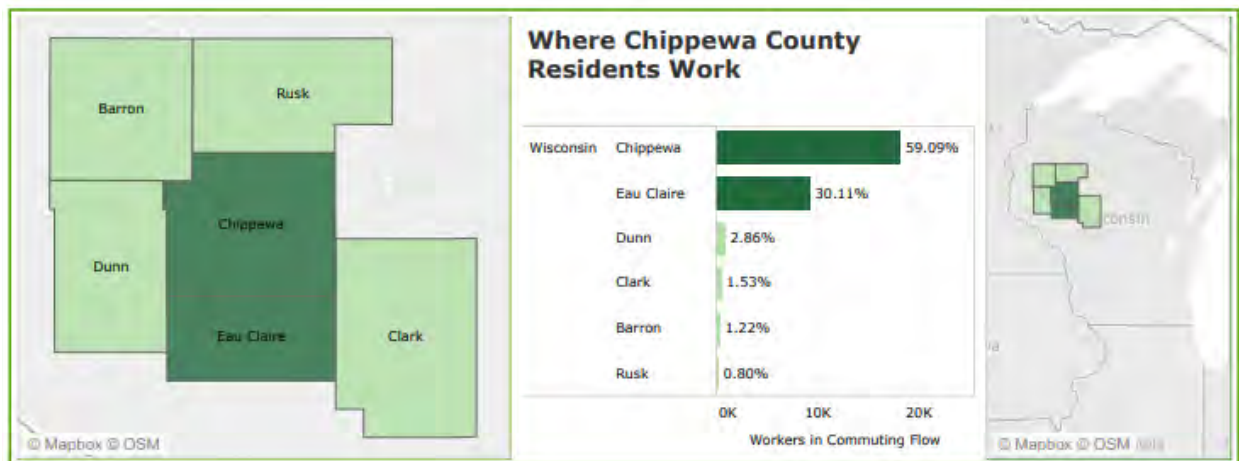
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Economic Base

Information related to specific names of businesses and the number of employees is not readily available from state agencies. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation estimates that there are 95 businesses in the Town of Wheaton that provide employment opportunities for residents. About 70 percent of these businesses have 1 to 4 employees and about 17% have 5-9 employees. It is likely that a majority of workers are employed in the surrounding urban areas such as the City of Chippewa Falls, Village of Lake Hallie, and City of Eau Claire where more employment opportunities are available.

Figure 7-1 shows that a majority of Chippewa County residents work in Chippewa County or Eau Claire County.

Figure 7-1: Where Chippewa County Residents Work



Source: Department of Workforce Development 2019 Workforce Profile-Chippewa County

Table 7-2 shows occupation projections in the West Central Workforce Development Area (WDA). The West Central WDA includes the counties of Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix Counties. All occupations are expected to grow with the highest growth being life, physical, social science occupations (15.4%), computer and mathematical occupations (15.0%), and personal care and service occupations (14.9%).

Table 7-2: Occupational Employment Projections West Central WDA 2016-2026

Occupation Title	2016 Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Occupational Openings	Percent Change (2016-2026)	Annual Growth Labor Force Exits Occupational Transfers
Total, All	212,690	229,550	26,400	7.9%	
Management	11,870	13,150	1,090	10.8%	
Business and Financial Operations	7,330	8,180	780	11.6%	
Computer and Mathematical	2,270	2,610	190	15.0%	
Architecture and Engineering	3,310	3,540	270	6.9%	
Life, Physical, and Social Science	910	1,050	100	15.4%	
Community and Social Service	2,820	3,100	350	9.9%	
Legal	780	810	50	3.8%	
Education, Training, and Library	12,690	13,290	1,130	4.7%	
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	2,500	2,650	270	6.0%	
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	12,050	13,270	800	10.1%	
Healthcare Support	5,980	6,640	780	11.0%	
Protective Service	3,860	3,990	410	3.4%	
Food Preparation and Serving Related	18,250	20,310	3,500	11.3%	
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	6,260	6,800	860	8.6%	
Personal Care and Service	11,890	13,660	2,010	14.9%	
Sales and Related	20,170	21,730	3,040	7.7%	
Office and Administrative Support	27,840	28,590	3,250	2.7%	
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	2,390	2,620	390	9.6%	
Construction and Extraction	9,010	10,070	1,060	11.8%	
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	9,080	10,020	990	10.4%	
Production	25,380	25,750	2,910	1.5%	
Transportation and Material Moving	16,070	17,720	2,210	10.3%	

Source: Department of Workforce Development 2019 Workforce Profile-Chippewa County

Table 7-3 shows the number of farms, acres in farmland, and average farm size in Chippewa County. Although there has been a decline in the number of farms in the County between 2012 and 2017, agriculture is still important to the area's economy.

Table 7-3: Total and Per Farm Overview-Chippewa County

	2,017	% Change Since 2012
Number of Farms	1,409	-20%
Land In Farms (acres)	356,176	-7%
Average Size of Farms (acres)	253	15%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture 2017 Census of Agriculture

Table 7-4 shows the number of farms in Chippewa County and their size in acres. Eighty percent of farms are between 10 to 499 acres in size.

Table 7-4: Farms by Size-Chippewa County

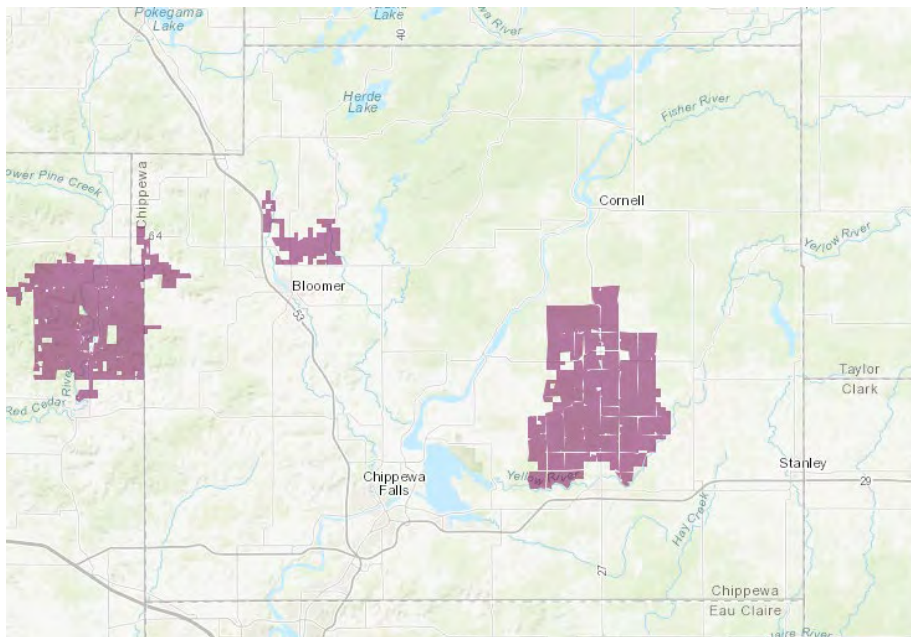
Farms by Size	Number	% of Total
1 to 9 acres	106	8.0%
10 to 49 acres	335	24.0%
50 to 179 acres	469	33.0%
180 to 499 acres	330	23.0%
500 to 999 acres	103	7.0%
1,000+ acres	66	5.0%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture 2017 Census of Agriculture

In Chippewa County, the top agricultural crops are corn for grain, soybeans for beans and forage crops. In the Town of Wheaton, agriculture is still an important industry being the largest land use in the Town.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCAP) provide programs such as Agricultural Enterprise Areas and Farmland Preservation to protect important agricultural land in the State, meet farmland protection goals and protects soil and water while providing tax credits for those who participate. Figure 7-2 shows areas in Chippewa County designated as Agricultural Enterprise Areas.

Figure 7-2: Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA) 2013-2018 Chippewa County



Source: Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Strengths and Weaknesses for Retaining or Attracting Businesses

Below is a list of Wheaton's strengths and weaknesses in attracting and retaining business and industry. It is important that the Town continue to work on strengthening its position to meet future business and industry needs that may arise.

Strengths

1. Environmental Quality (peace and quiet, rural environment, natural resources).
2. Education and Training – Wheaton residents have very high high-school graduation rates and good access to secondary education and training facilities in Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls and Menomonie.
3. Customer base of over 200,000 in the Chippewa Valley.
4. Proximity to the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport
5. Proximity to the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area (slightly over one hour west) with a population of approximately 3 million.
6. Lower wages, lower land costs, and lower industry taxes.
7. Good transportation facilities – access to two rail lines and located on S.T.H. 29 (14,100 vehicles per day), U.S.H 12, and U.S.H Highway 53 (18,900 vehicles per day).
8. Ongoing cooperation with the City of Eau Claire and City of Chippewa Falls.

Weaknesses

1. Town lacks key infrastructure (water, sewer) to support larger businesses and industries and does not own land for commercial and industrial development.
2. Lack of broadband in portions of the Town.
3. Lack of financial resources for development assistance.
4. Workforce age – An increasing age will lead to individuals dropping out of the workforce into retirement. Entry-level workers may become difficult to find for employers.
5. Environmental building restrictions (wetlands and floodplain)

Assessment of Future Conditions

Future commercial and industrial development in the Town of Wheaton is most likely to occur near incorporated municipalities (Eau Claire to the south and east, Chippewa Falls to the east and Lake Hallie to the east). As neighboring communities continue to grow, the pressure for additional commercial and industrial establishments is likely to increase. These pressures will predominantly occur along major thoroughfares, such as C.T.H. T and C.T.H. F from the City of Eau Claire, C.T.H. X and S.T.H. 29 from the City of Chippewa Falls, S.T.H. 29 traveling east-west through the Town, and U.S.H. 53, which travels along the northeast portion of the Town.

New business and industry in the Town will not have access to municipal water or sewer, as the Town currently does not have the infrastructure in place to support these businesses and facilities. In addition, the Town wants to ensure new commercial and industrial development does not jeopardize the rural character and quality of life in the community.



Development pressure is anticipated to continue. A logical economic development growth area is along C.T.H. T from S.T.H. 29 south to the City of Eau Claire. Currently, this area has a number of large businesses and, because of the vehicle traffic through the area, is a good area for future business growth.

Economic Development Sites

Economic development sites and projects should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Of foremost importance is determining if the proposed project is consistent with the Town's vision and Comprehensive Plan. Currently, there are no sites in the Town of Wheaton marketed by the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) although there is privately owned land available for commercial and industrial development. However, when there are sites that the Town would like to develop for commercial or industrial uses, they should contact the CCEDC for assistance in marketing them.

Redevelopment Opportunities

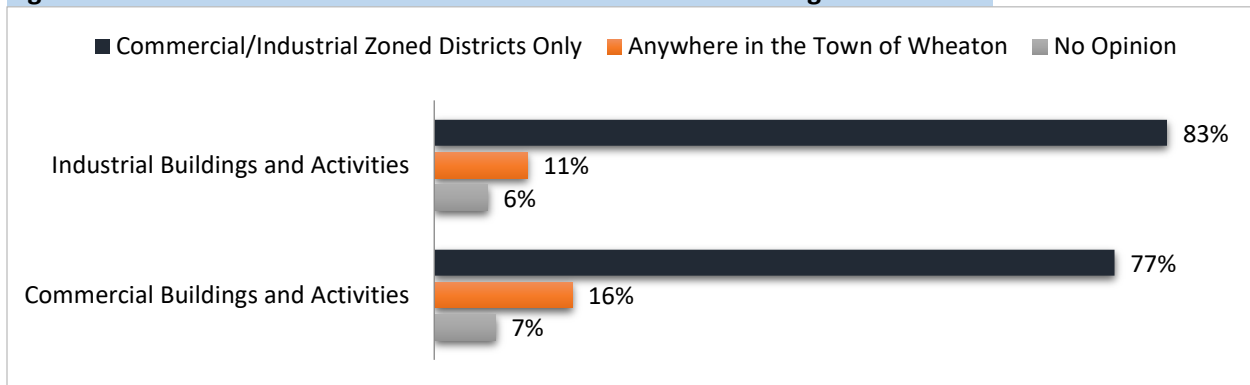
As a rural unincorporated community, few opportunities for brownfield redevelopment were identified during the planning process. A search of the WDNR BRRTS database revealed that Wheaton has 12 sites that have been contaminated. Eight of these sites are "Closed," meaning that the sites have been satisfactorily cleaned according to state standards. There are three "No Action Required" sites which means that based upon the action or site attributes, no action needs to be taken to clean-up the site. Finally, there is one site that is "Open." This means that clean up still needs to occur.

These sites can often be remediated and reused for commercial or industrial businesses. This would allow the Town to reuse these lands and enables the preservation of farmland as businesses can avoid developing greenfield acreage.

Survey Results Related to Economic Development

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Report, 2019 contained four groups of questions focused on economic development in the Town of Wheaton. The first set of questions were focused specifically on commercial and industrial buildings and activities and where they should be located (see Figure 7-2). Large majorities believe commercial buildings and activities should be located in commercial zoned districts only and industrial buildings and activities should be located in industrial zoned districts only.



Figure 7-3: Preferred Location of Commercial or Industrial Building and Activities

There were no statistically significant differences in the responses to these questions among the demographic groups.

Residents were then asked if the Town of Wheaton should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry and if the Town should provide infrastructure (water, sewer, access, etc.) for some industrial and commercial uses (see Table 7-5). Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), 62% agree or strongly agree that the Town should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry. Conversely, 64% disagreed/strongly disagreed that the Town should provide infrastructure for some industrial and commercial uses.

Table 7-5: Economic Development Opinions

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Town of Wheaton should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry.	15%	488	13%	49%	28%	10%
The Town of Wheaton should provide infrastructure (water, sewer, access, etc.) for some industrial and commercial uses.	17%	474	6%	30%	43%	21%

- Respondents 45 and older were more likely to approve of Town working to coordinate efforts to recruit new business and industry.
- Female respondents were more likely to support providing infrastructure for some industrial and commercial uses.

Respondents were asked which types of energy alternatives should be supported by the Town as forms of development (see Table 7-6). Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), a large majority (80%) agreed that the Town should support solar energy as an energy alternative. Nearly 7 in 10 respondents with an opinion said that wind energy should be supported. Less than one-quarter of respondents (24%) said that the Town should support ethanol plants as an energy alternative. Respondents could write-in “other” energy alternatives. “Other” responses included nuclear energy and bio-energy. Appendix B, Question 28 includes the complete compilation of “other” energy alternatives provided by respondents.

Table 7-6: Energy Alternatives Opinions

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Solar Energy	10%	520	27%	53%	9%	11%
Wind Energy	11%	512	23%	46%	16%	15%
Ethanol Plants	18%	468	4%	20%	44%	33%

- Female respondents were more likely to favor the Town supporting solar and wind energy as energy alternatives.

Wheaton respondents were asked to rate the importance of various types of businesses or industries in the Town of Wheaton using a scale of essential, very important, important, not important, and no opinion (see Table 7-7).

Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), agricultural related businesses received the most “essential” or “very important” ratings (68%). The rest of the industries/businesses were deemed “essential” or “very important” by minorities of between 20 and 34 percent of respondents with an opinion.

Table 7-7: Importance Given to Types of Businesses or Industries in the Town of Wheaton

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Agriculture Related businesses	5%	539	32%	36%	27%	4%
Home Based Businesses	11%	506	10%	24%	49%	17%
Tourism and Recreation	8%	514	10%	24%	42%	25%
Commercial and Retail Development	7%	521	6%	17%	40%	37%
Industrial and Manufacturing Development	8%	517	5%	15%	39%	41%

Agricultural related businesses were the most important business or industry for survey respondents regardless of age, length of residency, etc., and there was general consensus among survey respondents of different age groups, residency lengths, etc., in regard to the importance placed on all the business-types asked about in the survey with one exception:

- Tourism and recreation were viewed more favorably as the types of businesses to be encouraged in the Town by respondents who have annual household incomes of at least \$75,000.



Economic Development Programs and Agencies

There are a variety of local, regional and statewide economic development plans and tools available to municipalities to assist them with supporting existing businesses and recruiting new businesses. In addition, there are programs available for individual businesses to assist in start-up and expansion. These programs often change to reflect changes in need. Therefore, the list below acts as a starting point where businesses and individuals can begin seeking out information and assistance.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC): WEDC offers programs that help with many areas of business development, including business planning, initial capitalization, site selection, permitting, regulations, employee-training programs, and expansion programs.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Administration (WHEDA): WHEDA offers many financial assistance programs to assist small- businesses with low-interest loans and grants.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT): WisDOT has many programs that provide grants and loans to businesses and local communities for transportation infrastructure related needs.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP): DATCP's mission is to grow Wisconsin's economy by promoting quality food, healthy plants and animals, sound use of land and water resources, and a fair marketplace. DATCP can assist ag

Transportation Economic Assistance and Development (TEA-Grant) Program: This program, operated by WisDOT offers grant money to communities or private businesses for transportation projects that will attract and retain businesses and jobs in the State of Wisconsin.

XCEL Energy: XCEL Energy offers programs to companies that are looking to expand, relocate, or start-up in their service area. They are willing to customize programs for businesses in order to assist in expansion efforts.

West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development: This regional organization provides industry/sector focus groups, labor market surveys, wage projections, youth employment activities, and job recruitment. This group also serves as the regional coalition for the GROW Wisconsin job creation strategy talked about earlier.

Momentum West: Momentum West is a regional economic development organization serving Barron, Clark, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pierce, Pepin, Polk, Rusk, and St. Croix counties. Momentum West's staff, volunteers and Board of Directors provides their time, expertise and assistance in establishing annual goals and activities including:

- Marketing and Branding West Wisconsin for Business and Talent attraction, development and Retention



- Serve as Economic Development support conduit in West Wisconsin
- Advocate for the Accomplishments of Regional Initiatives

Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC): The Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation plays a large role in the economic development of Chippewa County. CCEDC is a private- non-profit organization that coordinates economic development programs for all the cities, towns, and villages located within Chippewa County, and its investors. The County created the CCEDC to help define the type of businesses and the labor force the County attracts, which in turn will define the County's ability to sustain the quality of life that is so important to the residents of Chippewa County. The primary purpose of the corporation is to continue a public-private partnership that works to create and sustain good paying jobs and to diversify the local economy.

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC): The WCWRPC operates the Regional Business Fund, Inc. (RBF, Inc.). This is a non-profit economic development corporation designed to promote business and economic development in west central Wisconsin. Qualifying businesses in Chippewa County may be eligible for funds if they are creating jobs or increasing tax base. The Downtown Façade Loan Program offers financial assistance to property owners looking to rehabilitate and revitalize downtown buildings. The Micro-Loan program provides loans to start-up or slowly expanding small businesses that may have difficulty accessing lines of credit or financing. Finally, the Technology Enterprise Fund is a revolving loan fund that offers creative financing options to new technology based companies.

Effectively using these tools and programs requires an investment by the Town to provide resources such as staff to organize and manage these tools, foster partnerships, and secure and manage funding. A limited amount of technical assistance is available to municipalities from the State, County, Regional Planning Commission, and other organizations.

Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal 1: The Town of Wheaton will support business growth in targeted areas as identified by the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Objectives:

1. Increase economic development in the Town of Wheaton.

Recommendations:

1. Identify areas where existing commercial and industrial areas are located in the Town and neighboring communities where future commercial and industrial growth would be appropriate.
2. Review surrounding land use when considering future commercial and industrial development to identify land use conflicts and how to mitigate them.

Goal 2: Support the development of agricultural related businesses.

Objectives:

1. Minimize the loss of the best farmland in Wheaton
2. Increase the number of businesses that involve agriculture and agricultural products

Recommendations:

1. Support the creation of Agricultural Enterprise Areas and participation in the Farmland Preservation Program.
2. Support the creation of agriculture related businesses that produce food for the local population such as fresh vegetables, cheese, baked goods, honey, etc. and facilities that allow for the preparation of these.
3. Discourage nonagricultural development in areas of best soils.
4. Support agriculturally based tourism such as wineries, pizza farms, orchards, hayrides, etc. that increase farm revenues.

Goal 3: Support increased economic development in the Town of Wheaton.

Objectives:

1. Increase the tax base.
2. Expand the number of businesses and industries in the Town of Wheaton.
3. Create more employment opportunities in the Town of Wheaton.
4. Increase business diversity.

Recommendations:

1. Work with private landowners to promote economic development in areas identified in the Land Use Chapter.
2. Purchase land for future industrial development.
3. Pursue boundary agreements that allow the Town to keep its developed land for business and industry and other designated areas to preserve its tax base.
4. Create a Sanitary District with neighboring communities that would allow the Town of Wheaton to supply local business and industry with municipal utilities.
5. Explore utilizing Tax Incremental Financing Districts for Towns that allow districts similar to cities and villages when approaching equalized value, population, and sanitary service agreement requirements.

Chapter 8

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Introduction

The Intergovernmental Cooperation chapter examines existing relationships that the Town of Wheaton has with adjacent communities, government agencies, and organizations and how these relationships can be used to implement recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.

Intergovernmental cooperation can be formal or informal agreements between entities to share services, provide mutual aid, conduct natural resource protection, participate in joint planning, or participate in joint purchases. These relationships can be developed over time. This chapter also identifies existing and potential conflicts and provides a process to resolve conflicts and build cooperative relationships.

Benefits of Intergovernmental Cooperation

There are many benefits to engaging in partnerships. The most common are:

- **Cost Savings:** Areas in which services can be shared can be identified and acted upon.
- **Consistency:** Plans and goals may be developed that are consistent with neighboring visions and reduce land use conflicts.
- **Understanding:** Understanding the goals of other governmental agencies lets you anticipate and address potential problems before they happen.
- **Trust and Respect:** Positive experiences lead to trust and respect between jurisdictions and make disagreements easier to work through.

Although limited in number, the Town of Wheaton is involved cooperative arrangements with surrounding communities and governmental agencies.

Adjacent Communities

The Town of Wheaton generally maintains a cooperative relationship with its adjacent municipalities. There have been some disagreements with surrounding incorporated communities in terms of future growth and development. Incorporated communities that border Wheaton include the City of Chippewa Falls to the east, Village of Lake Hallie to the southeast, and City of Eau Claire directly to the south. Each of these communities exercises its extraterritorial plat review authority which extends into the Town (see Map 8-1). The Village of Lake Hallie has a 1.5-mile extraterritorial area extending beyond the Village limits. The Cities of Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire have 3-mile extraterritorial areas beyond their corporate limits. The boundaries automatically change when the Village or Cities annex or purchase land. These powers are often used for subdivision plat reviews. The Village of Elk Mound does not use its extraterritorial plat review authority.

The Town of Wheaton takes care of brush, mowing and signage on a short stretch of 70th Avenue, beginning on 110th Street and going east to its terminus in the Town of Tilden.



On February 16, 2011, the Town of Wheaton and five Towns in Eau Claire County, entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement for Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Policies with the City of Eau Claire. The Intergovernmental Agreement grew out of a Settlement Agreement to resolve disputes between the Towns and the City and generally address land division policies and future development. The initial terms of the agreement were automatically renewed on February 16, 2021.

School Districts

Students in the Town of Wheaton attend public school in the Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, and Elk Mound School Districts (see Map 8-2). The Town's relationship with the school districts can be characterized as cooperative. The relationship with the school districts is important as development is coordinated with school capacity and the growing needs of Wheaton residents.

County and Regional Agencies

The Town of Wheaton is located in Chippewa County. The County enforces zoning in the Town as well as on-site sanitary systems, and the maintenance and improvements of County Trunk Highways in the Town. The Chippewa County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to Wheaton residents. Continued cooperation and coordination with these entities will be important to maintain public safety in the Town.

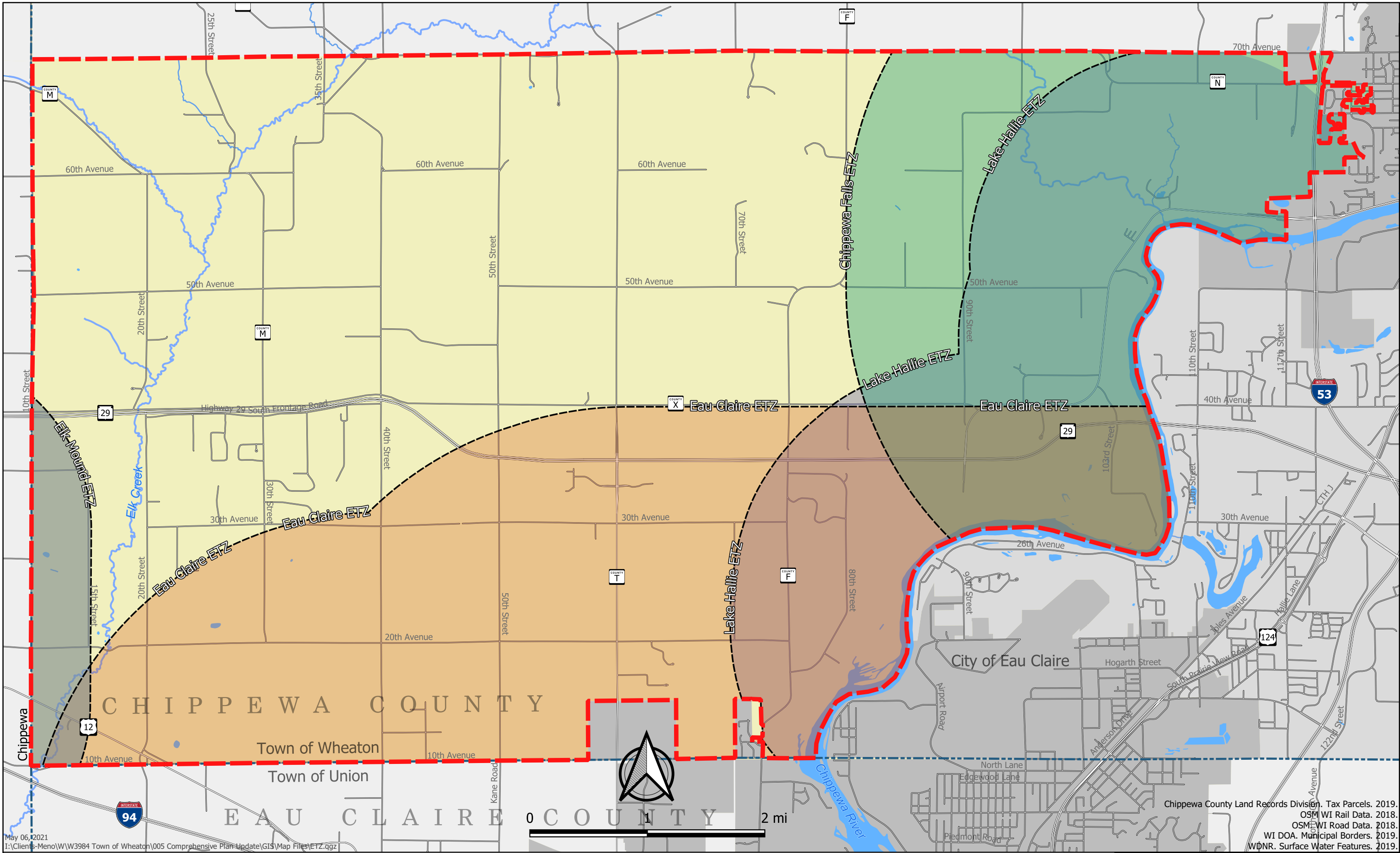
The relationship between the Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County can be characterized as one of general cooperation. The Town would like to see continued communication and coordination with the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Department as this relates to tools that can be used to realize the vision of the Plan.

Wheaton Fire & Rescue provides fire protection in the Town of Wheaton and mutual aid to surrounding communities. The City of Chippewa Falls and City of Eau Claire provide EMS coverage.

Chippewa County and the Town of Wheaton are part of the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC). Regional planning commissions provide planning assistance, assist local interests in responding to state and federal programs, serve as a coordinating agency for programs, and provide other technical and advisory assistance to local governments.

The Town of Wheaton occasionally collaborates with the WCWRPC. Under Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning legislation, each regional planning commission must also develop a Comprehensive Plan. Under this law, regional planning commissions are responsible for developing a plan that takes on a regional aspect. In amendments to this regional plan, it is important that the Town be solicited for input as it related to the Town's Comprehensive Plan.





May 06, 2021
I:\Client\Memo\W\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\ETZ.qgz

Chippewa County Land Records Division, Tax Parcels. 2019.
OSM WI Rail Data. 2018.
OSM WI Road Data. 2018.
WI DOA, Municipal Borders. 2019.
WDNR, Surface Water Features. 2019.

Extraterritorial Plat Review Boundaries

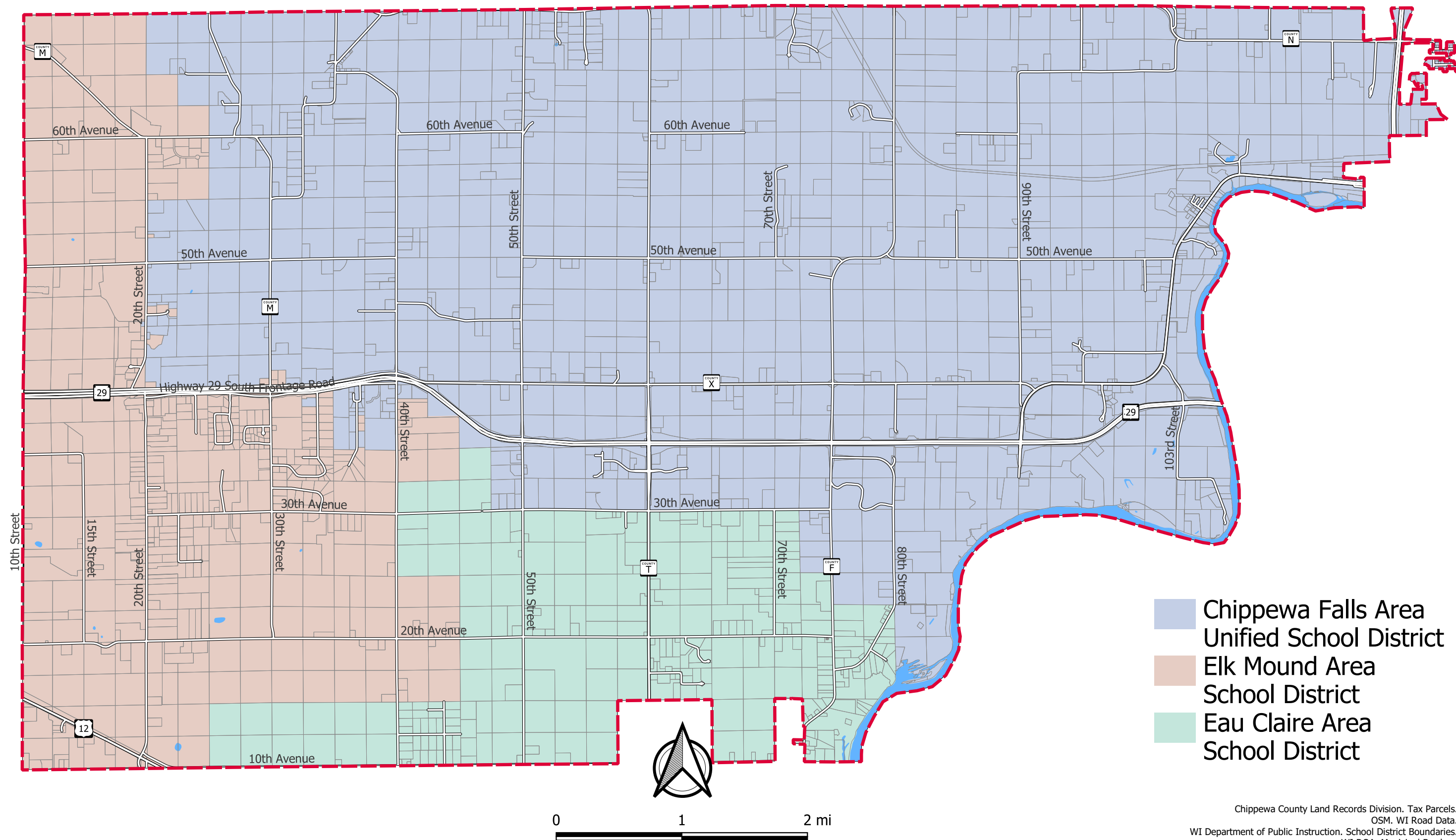
- City of Chippewa Falls
 - City of Eau Claire
 - Village of Lake Hallie
 - Village of Elk Mound*
- *Does not exercise its authority at this time

Town of Wheaton
Chippewa County, WI



Map 8-1

ETZ Boundaries



May 06, 2021
I:\Clients-Meno\W\W3984 Town of Wheaton\005 Comprehensive Plan Update\GIS\Map Files\School Districts.ggz

Chippewa County Land Records Division. Tax Parcels. 2019.
OSM. WI Road Data. 2018.
WI Department of Public Instruction. School District Boundaries. 2019.
WI DOA. Municipal Borders. 2019.
WDNR. Surface Water Features. 2019.

School District Boundaries

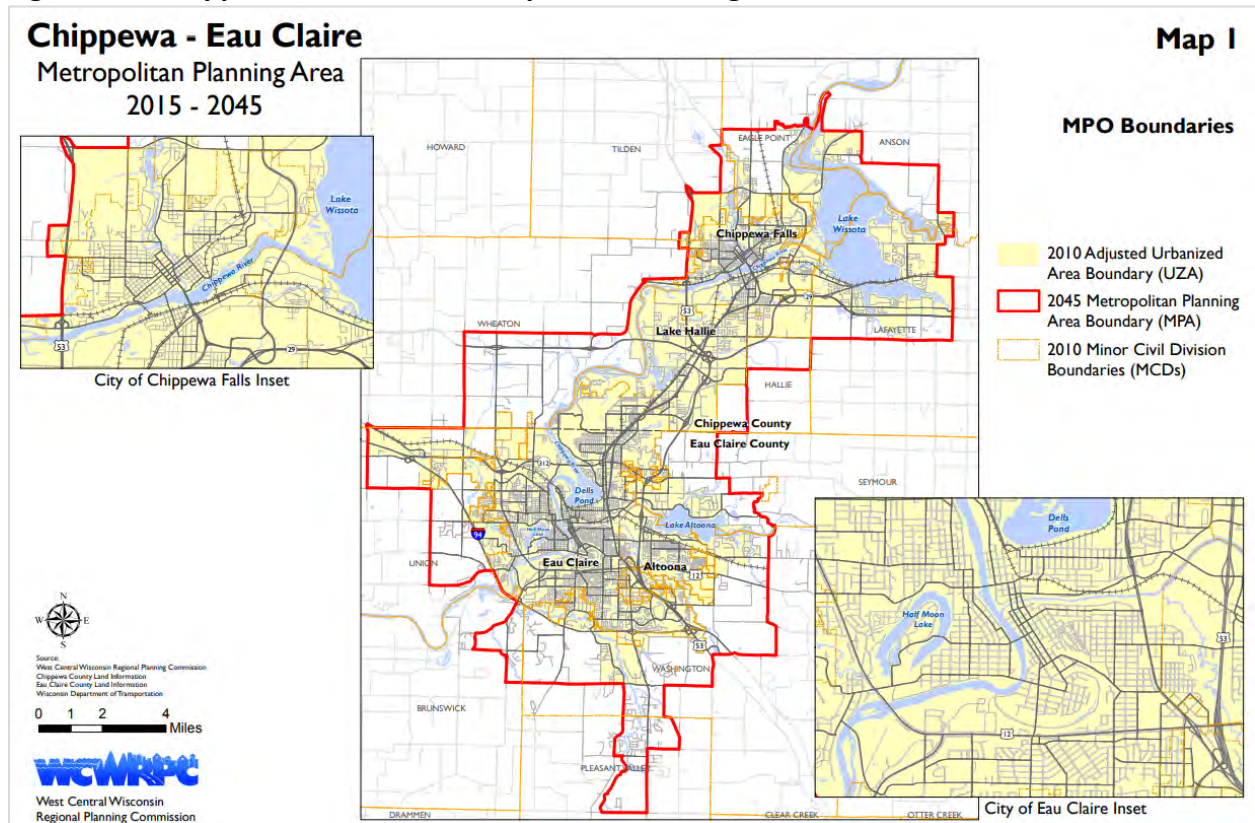
Town of Wheaton
Chippewa County, WI



Map 8-2
School District Boundaries

A portion of the Town of Wheaton lies within the Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Area (see Figure 8-1). The WCWRPC is the administrative organization for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO's purpose is to provide a continual, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process that results in the development of programs and plans that are consistent with the development of the Eau Claire Urbanized Area. Communication is important to ensure the Town's desired growth is reflected in the MPO's future plans.

Figure 8-1: Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Area



Source: West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

State Agencies and Organizations

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) are the primary state agencies the Town of Wheaton must coordinate with to achieve the goals and objectives of this Plan.

WDNR has a lead role in wildlife protection and the protection and sustained management of woodlands, wetlands, waterways and other natural wildlife habitat areas. The activities of the WDNR are discussed further in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element of this Plan. Additional information is also available on-line at www.dnr.state.wi.us.

WisDOT is also a key player in the planning and development of transportation facilities in the Town of Wheaton. WisDOT is responsible for the maintenance of State Highway 29 and State

Highway 12. The Town will continue to coordinate with WisDOT with respect to decisions regarding all roadways under WisDOT jurisdiction. Additional information is also available online at www.dot.state.wi.us.

The Town of Wheaton is a member of the Wisconsin Towns Association, a statewide association that provides education and legal information to town governments.

Open communication and participation in land use and transportation decisions, which may impact the Town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation.

In the future, it is hoped that an open and continuous dialogue between the Town, Chippewa County, and other governmental jurisdictions will result in cooperative and mutually beneficial efforts. These efforts are critical to the future planning and development of public and shared services and open communication. Without the coordination and cooperation of local governmental jurisdictions, decisions critical to preserving and enhancing local and regional characteristics, activities, and natural resources will be compromised.

As growth and land use changes continue in the area, development in the Town of Wheaton will likely be a contentious topic. The Town wishes to see increased development in certain areas, while remaining a rural community. In addition, the growth and development of neighboring incorporated communities should be considered and addressed to minimize conflicting land uses.

Conflict Resolution Procedures

The Town recognizes the importance of coordinating with neighboring communities. If conflicts arise, initial attempts to resolve such conflicts could involve written or face-to-face communication between elected or appointed community officials. If these efforts do not result in a mutually satisfactory agreement, more formal conflict resolution methods should be explored, such as mediation or arbitration. Additional conflict resolution techniques are available in Wisconsin State Statutes 802.12.

Growth Trends and Planning Activities in Adjacent Communities

The Town of Wheaton will seek to cooperate with all neighboring municipalities, the county, state agencies, and the school districts for mutual benefit. To ensure compatibility with the planning goals and objectives identified in the Town of Wheaton's Comprehensive Plan, the Town will share their plan with adjacent communities and agencies and would like to participate in future planning efforts with these entities as well.

Existing and/or Potential Conflicts

The Town of Wheaton is located in a growing part in the State of Wisconsin adjacent to urban areas where notable growth has occurred in urban and rural areas alike. As Cities and Villages attract residents, businesses, and industries, the need to grow can sometimes not be avoided. The growth of any community often results in land being annexed from surrounding towns.



It is important to engage with neighboring communities to plan for land use, transportation, economic development, agriculture, and other needs so that they can develop in a coordinated and efficient manner. Joint planning can lead to early identification of potential conflicts.

Potential Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

The Town of Wheaton's Comprehensive Plan identifies many recommendations the Town and its residents may take to implement the Comprehensive Plan and attain the vision contained within. Below is a list of several areas where Wheaton may benefit from forming partnerships with surrounding communities, government agencies, and organizations.

- Protecting and promoting natural resources
- Attracting desired business and industry
- Increasing the use and development of renewable energy resources
- Developing transportation options
- Preserving farmland for small market farms and local food production
- Land use planning
- Transportation planning

Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal 1: The Town will encourage open dialogue with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

Objectives:

1. Increase communication and understanding between communities and agencies.

Recommendations:

1. Participate in regularly scheduled joint meetings with the neighboring communities and the school districts to coordinate future growth and development planning.
2. Explore equipment sharing agreements with surrounding communities in order to perform maintenance and other services without having to purchase equipment.
3. Continue to participate in group purchases of items such as salt to reduce the costs of providing services to residents.
4. Continue the good communication between the Town of Wheaton and the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning office.

Goal 2: The Town will monitor public safety services and service providers to ensure that local needs are being met.

Objectives:

1. Improve emergency services and minimize the cost to residents.
2. Increase the number of collaborative efforts used in addressing local and regional emergency planning.

Recommendations:

1. Support continued mutual aid and other types of agreements that are used to provide emergency services to the area.
2. Support continued agreements to enforce ordinances.

Chapter 9

Land Use

Land Use vs. Zoning

The difference between land use and zoning can be confusing. Often, an Existing Land Use map and Zoning map can look very similar, but they convey a different message. An Existing Land Use map depicts what activity is taking place on a parcel of land at a certain point in time regardless of zoning. For example, if a parcel has a home or apartment building on it, the use of that land is for residential purposes regardless of the zoning. It is possible for a parcel of land to have more than one land use on it.

Zoning is a system of classifications and regulations that designate the permitted uses of land. A zoning map shows which zoning classifications are assigned to a parcel of land. The zoning code is the written regulations that describe minimum lot sizes, permitted uses, conditional uses, setbacks, etc. that are associated with a zoning classification.

It is possible for land use and zoning to be different. A parcel of land may be zoned for a single-family home but have a commercial business on it. In this case, we consider this a non-conforming use. In a perfect world, the zoning district associated with a parcel of land would match the use.

Purpose of the Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is intended to provide important background data, analyze development trends, and define future needs related to land use. This information will serve as the foundation for the development of goals, objectives, and recommendations pertaining the physical growth of the Town of Wheaton.

Defining appropriate land uses involves more than making ecological and economical choices. It is also about retaining values, lifestyles, cultural assets, and community character. The planning of future land uses is sometimes perceived as an intrusion on the rights of private property owners. The actual purpose of this activity is to protect rights of the individuals and to give landowners, citizens, and local communities the opportunity to define their own destiny. At the same time, the Town must acknowledge extraterritorial plat review rights that villages and cities are afforded allowing them to have some say into the development of Wheaton. In addition, the Town also has an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Eau Claire that required joint land use planning. This will also play a role in the future development of Wheaton.



Existing Land Use Inventory Map and Land Use Categories

The Existing Land Use map shows historical development patterns in the Town of Wheaton. To create the map, categories of land use were identified that corresponded to the most common uses that were determined using aerial photography. The categories and definitions include the following.

Residential: The Residential land use category includes parcels or portions of parcels where a residence is located. It does not differentiate between single family or multi-family, owner occupied, or renter occupied. If a residence is located on a large parcel, the immediate area around the residence including outbuildings and lawn is included. A residential designation may include agricultural related buildings as well.

Commercial: The Commercial land use category includes parcels or portions of parcels where a business is located. It includes the business, parking area and associated grounds. The Commercial land use category includes, but is not limited to, restaurants, convenience stores, auto body shops, storage units, etc. Typically, businesses where goods and services are bought and sold.

Industrial: The Industrial land use category includes parcels or portions of parcels where an Industry is located. It includes the industry, parking area and associated grounds. The Industrial land use category includes, but is not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing large utility providers, and non-metallic mining areas. Typically, places where raw materials or goods are made for sale and distribution.

Institutional: The Institutional land use category includes parcels or portions of parcels where an Institution is located or is owned by the Town. Institutions are government or non-taxable entities such as Town Halls, Public Works buildings, Fire Departments, churches, etc.

Agricultural: The Agricultural land use category includes parcels or portions of parcels where crops are grown, and associated buildings are located.

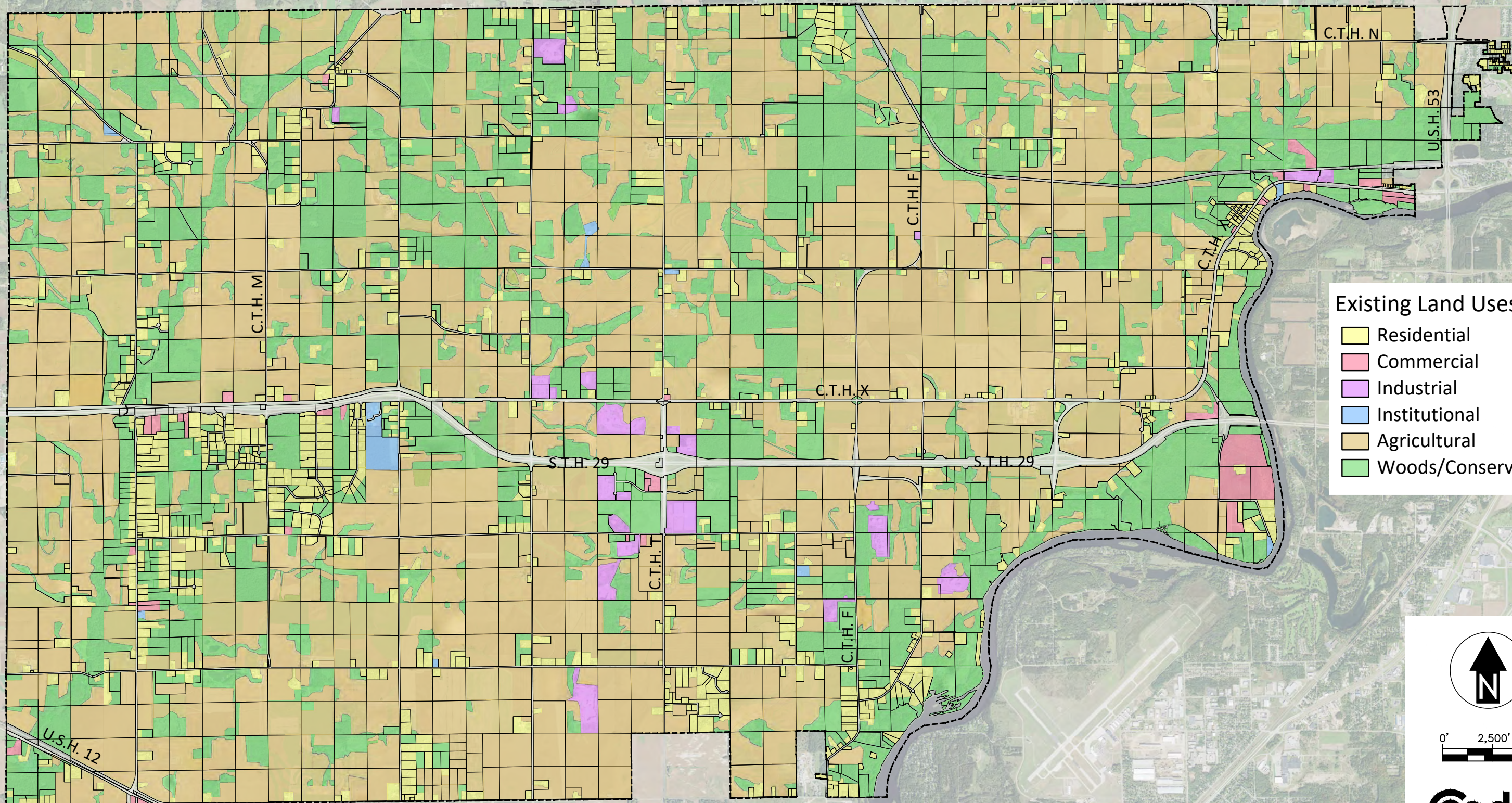
Woods/Conservancy: The Woods/Conservancy land use category includes parcels or portions of parcels where forests, wetlands, and undeveloped lands are located. Typically land in a natural state or used for recreation.

Existing Land Use Patterns

Map 9-1 shows the distribution of land uses in the Town of Wheaton. A majority of land uses are related to agriculture and wood/conservancy. These two uses account for about 85% of all uses (see Table 9-1). Agricultural land uses are found throughout the Town.

Woods/Conservancy land uses are generally found on land adjacent to waterways or where the topography prohibits development. Residential land uses are scattered throughout the Town as well but there are more high-density subdivisions located south of S.T.H. 29. The intersection of S.T.H. 29 and





Existing Land Uses

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Agricultural
- Woods/Conservancy

North arrow pointing up with 'N' below it.

Scale bar: 0' 2,500' 5,000'

Cedar
corporation

C.T.H. T is becoming a hub for Industrial and Commercial land uses as well as C.T.H. X near the City of Chippewa Falls boundary and an area south of S.T.H. 29 near the Chippewa River.

Table 9-1: Existing Land Use – Town of Wheaton

Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Residential	2,728	7.8%
Commercial	302	0.9%
Industrial	341	1.0%
Institutional	92	0.3%
Agricultural	20,138	57.3%
Woods/Conservancy	9,670	27.5%
Road Right-of-Way/Water	1,864	5.2%
Total	35,135	100.0%

Source: Cedar Corporation

Future Land Use

To determine land use needs due to population growth and possible nonresidential development, several factors are taken into consideration such as existing land use patterns, transportation network, community survey results, and agreements with the City of Eau Claire.

Survey Results Related to Land Use

Figure 9-1 shows the reasons residents indicated were the most important to them for living in the Town of Wheaton. Rural Character ranked the highest followed by lot size. Statistically significant differences of opinion among demographic groups with respect to the reasons for choosing to live in the Town of Wheaton include:

- Respondents age 45 and above were more likely to include low crime rate and agriculture in their top choices for living in the Town. Respondents under the age of 45 were more likely to include property taxes and home lot size in their top reasons to live in the Town.
- Respondents living in the Town of Wheaton for less than 25 years were more likely to include natural beauty, property taxes, and home lot size as their top reasons to live in the Town. Longer-term residents (25+ years) were more likely to include being near family/friends and agriculture as their top reasons for living in the Town.
- Respondents from households with less than \$75,000 annual income were more likely to include being near family/friends as a top reason for living in the Town. Respondents with at least \$75,000 annual income were more likely to include home lot size as a top reason to live in the Town.

Respondents with children in their household were more likely to include quality schools, property taxes, and home lot size as their top reasons for living in the Town. Respondents without children in their households were more likely to include agriculture as a top reason to live in the Town.



Figure 9-1: Most Important Reasons to Live in the Town of Wheaton

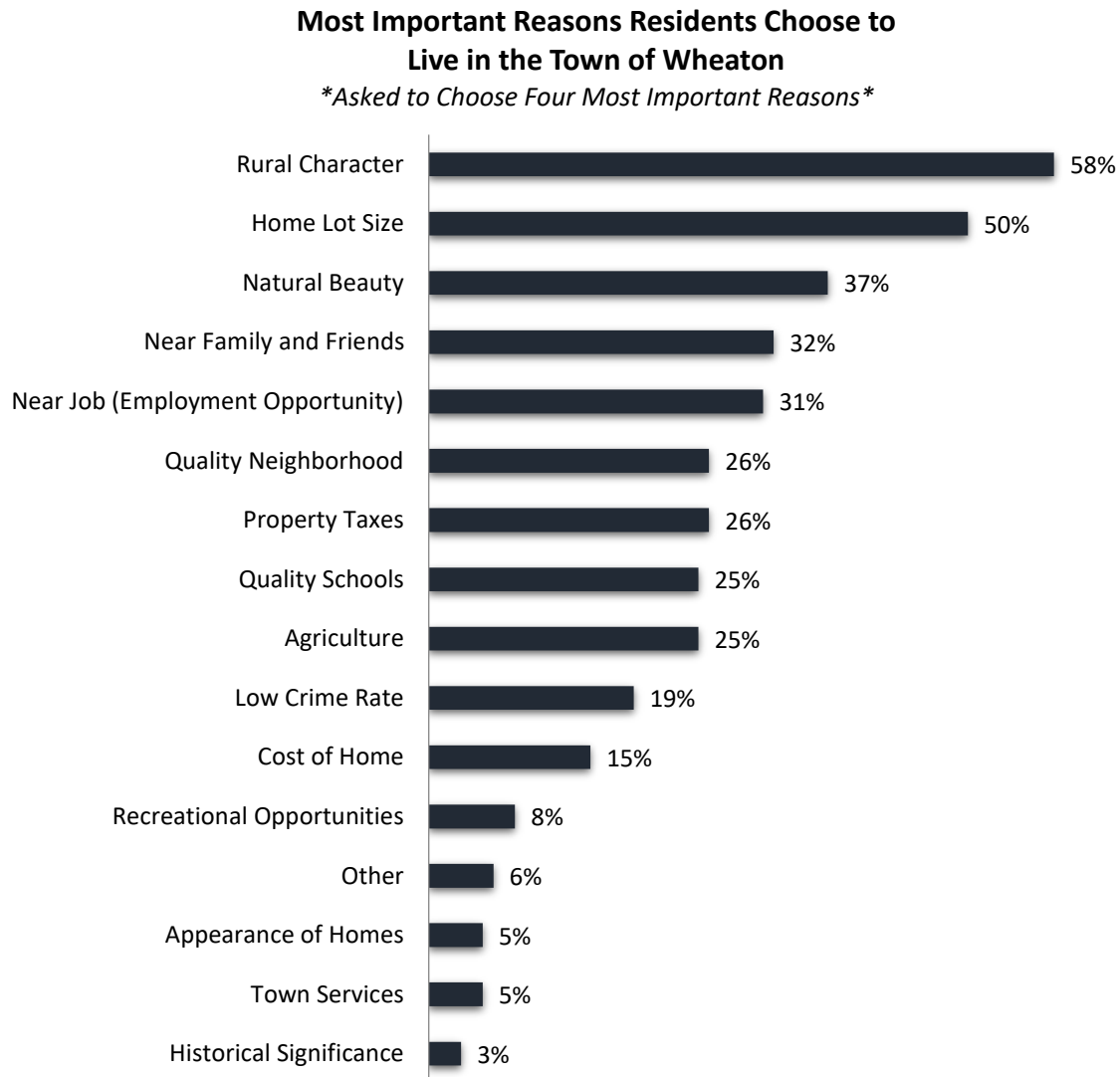


Figure 9-2 shows the results of the question asked residents regarding the preferred minimum lot size in the Town of Wheaton. Currently, most property is zoned Agriculture District. In Wheaton, the minimum lot size for a single-family home in the Agriculture District is 5 acres. Sixty-eight percent of survey responses indicated they supported the current 5-acre minimum. Twenty-three percent indicated they preferred a minimum less than 5 acres.

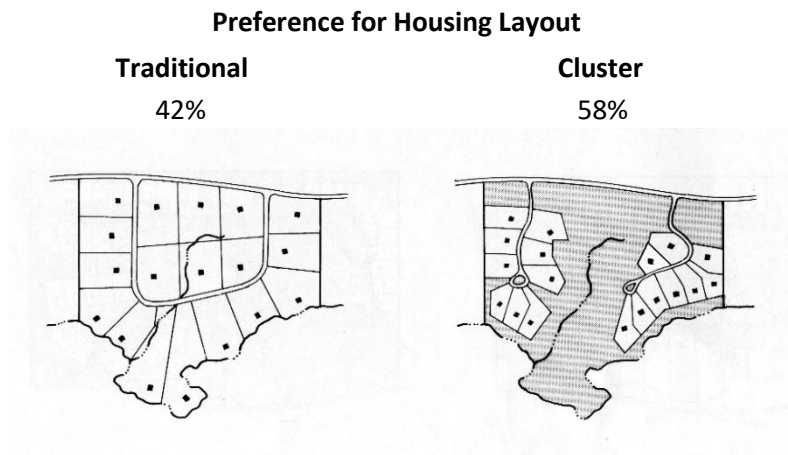
Figure 9-2: Minimum Lot Size for Rural Residential Development

Minimum Lot Size for Rural Residential Development



Although residents preferred the current 5-acre minimum lot size, they also indicated they support the option of a cluster development as a way of allowing development but preserving land (see Figure 9-3). A cluster development allows the same number of lots the zoning would allow but also the ability of have smaller lots to preserve land that may be important as a natural resource or to agriculture.

Figure 9-3: Preference for Housing Layout



- **Cluster design:** The cluster design, while still preferred by a majority, had significantly higher levels of support from younger (<45 years old) respondents, respondents with children in their household, and respondents living in the Town for less than 25 years.
- **Traditional design:** Respondents 45 and above, respondents without children in their household, and respondents living in the Town 25+ years were more likely to prefer a traditional design for housing layouts.

When residents were asked how productive agricultural land should be used for, 99% indicated agriculture which shows the importance of agriculture to the Town's identity and economy, followed by 76% indicating residential use (see Table 9-2). A large percentage of surveys did not support productive agricultural land being used for commercial use or any use.

Table 9-2: Opinions About Uses of Productive Agricultural Land

Use productive farmland for:	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Agriculture Use	2%	555	69%	30%	0%	1%
Residential Use	5%	523	10%	46%	30%	14%
Any use	10%	487	6%	11%	38%	45%
Commercial Use	7%	512	3%	24%	40%	33%

Table 9-3 shows most surveys supported a minimum lot size, having driveways designed to accommodate emergency services, and visual impacts should be considered when evaluating development proposals. At the same time, most surveys did not support landowners being able to develop land any way they want, or the expansion of large-scale farms of 500 animal units or more.

Table 9-3: Land Use Opinions

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Should be a minimum lot size on residential development in rural areas.	4%	552	51%	38%	7%	5%
Driveways should be required to meet standards for providing emergency services.	5%	544	38%	57%	4%	1%
Visual impacts of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development.	5%	537	33%	59%	7%	2%
Landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want.	4%	550	10%	23%	42%	24%
Large scale farms (500 or more animal units) should be allowed to expand.	9%	520	8%	32%	33%	26%

Future Land Use Needs and Land Use Regulations

To determine future land use needs, we can assume that a new household will require a new home but that 10% of these new homes will be constructed on existing lots. Future land needs for commercial or industrial growth will be based on their current number of acres compared to the existing population and then carrying out that ratio using the projected population. It is assumed that land needed for residential, commercial, and industrial development will come from existing agricultural land though woods/conservancy areas may be more attractive for residential development but more difficult to develop.

Table 9-4 shows the housing acreage needed for population growth projected between 2020 and 2040 where it is estimated that the Town of Wheaton will have 205 new households. As



stated above, we will assume that a new household will need a new dwelling. This housing need may be met by constructing homes on vacant lots. Purchasing land for a new home. Converting a home to have an apartment unit or the construction of new subdivisions. For planning purposes, we will assume 10% of those households can find an existing lot to build on, therefore, 185 households will need housing. Using Wheaton's minimum lot size of 5 acres, 925 acres would be needed for new housing. Cluster development, sometimes called a Conservation Subdivision, could potentially require less land for residential development, which would save some land from development in perpetuity.

Table 9-4: Future Land Use Needs in 5-Year Increments – Town of Wheaton

Land Use	2020 Existing Acreage	2025 Existing Acreage	2030 Acreage Needs	2035 Acreage Needs	2040 Acreage Needs	Total Acres
Residential	2,728	231	231	231	231	3,652
Commercial	302	9	9	9	9	338
Industrial	341	11	11	11	11	385
Agricultural	20,138	-251	-251	-251	-251	19,134

These calculations provide a general idea of the land needed for future development. Many factors will affect future development such as building costs, the economy, regulations, housing options and what surrounding communities are doing to either promote growth or slow growth. Based on the calculations shown in Table 9-4, 1,004 acres are needed to accommodate future residential, commercial, and industrial growth.

Future Development Considerations

When evaluating future development proposals, the maps in Chapter 6: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources should be consulted. The maps show a variety of information that will help the Town make an informed decision or make suggestions for revisions to the development concept to minimize potential land use conflicts with adjacent property owners and negatively impacting natural resources.

Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Eau Claire

On February 16, 2011, an Intergovernmental Agreement was signed between six towns, including the Town of Wheaton, adjoining the City of Eau Claire and the City regarding land use and land division policies within the City of Eau Claire's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

As part of the Intergovernmental Agreement, the participating units of government agreed to amend their respective comprehensive plans and land division regulations and jointly request amendment of the Eau Claire and Chippewa County Land Division Ordinances to incorporate the provisions of the Intergovernmental Agreement.

The initial term of the Agreement was for ten (10) years and automatically renewed for a second ten (10) year term when none of the Parties notified the others that it did not desire to renew.



The ETJ land use and land division policies and the Future Land Use Map shown in Figure 9-4 represents the official Future Land Use Map, land use classifications, and policies in this section of the existing Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan Update 2021-2041 with respect to areas within the ETJ. Areas outside the ETJ are unaffected by this required language.

In the Intergovernmental Agreement, the Town of Wheaton recognizes and acknowledges that there are two general classes of land within the ETJ:

1. Areas within both the ETJ and the Sewer Service Area (SSA) delineated by the regional MPO and adopted by WDNR; and
2. Areas within the City's ETJ, but not within the SSA.

The current boundaries of the SSA, as delineated in the City of Eau Claire Sewer Service Area Plan: Town of Wheaton and the City's current ETJ, are shown in Figures 9-4 and 9-5 respectively. The entire document with SSA and ETJ special requirements is located in Appendix B.

Figure 9-4: City of Eau Claire Sewer Service Boundary

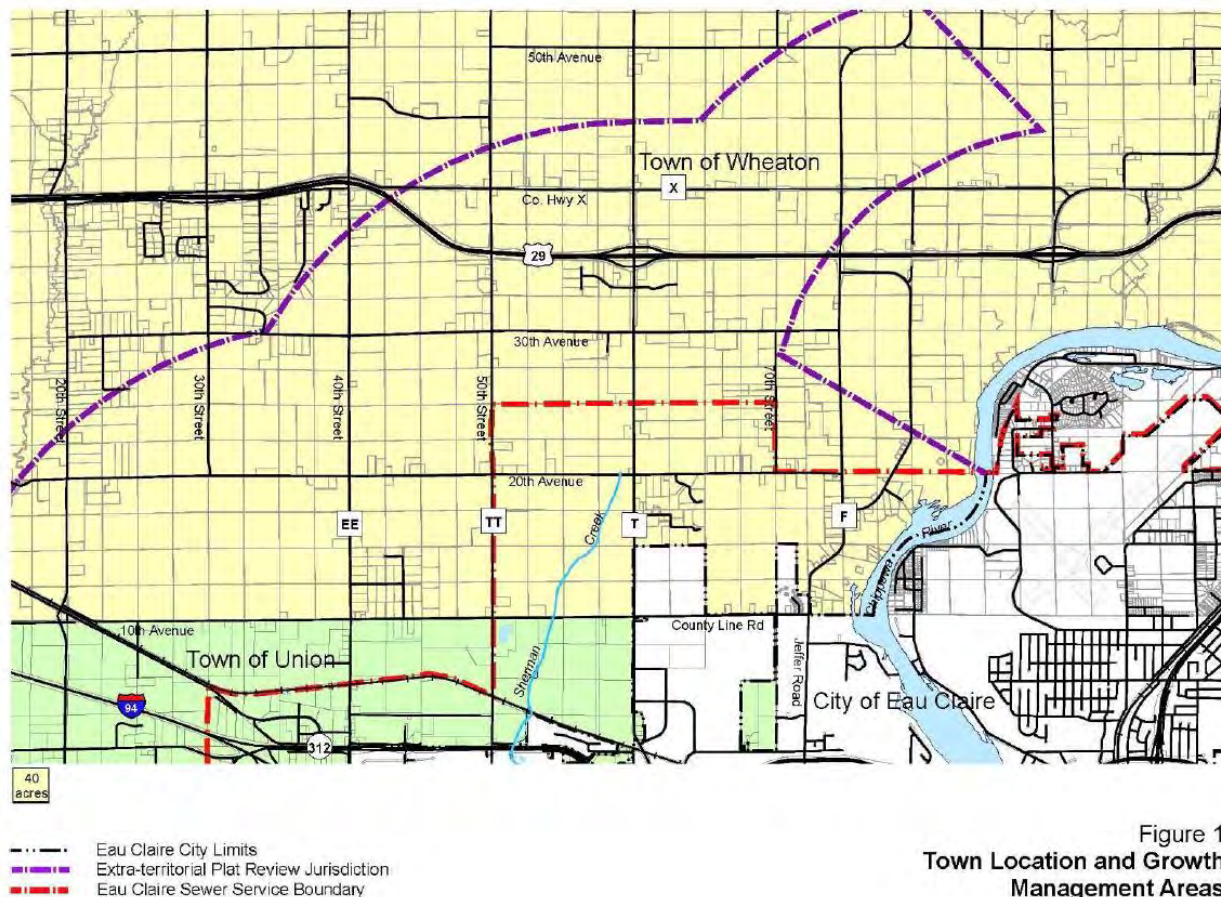
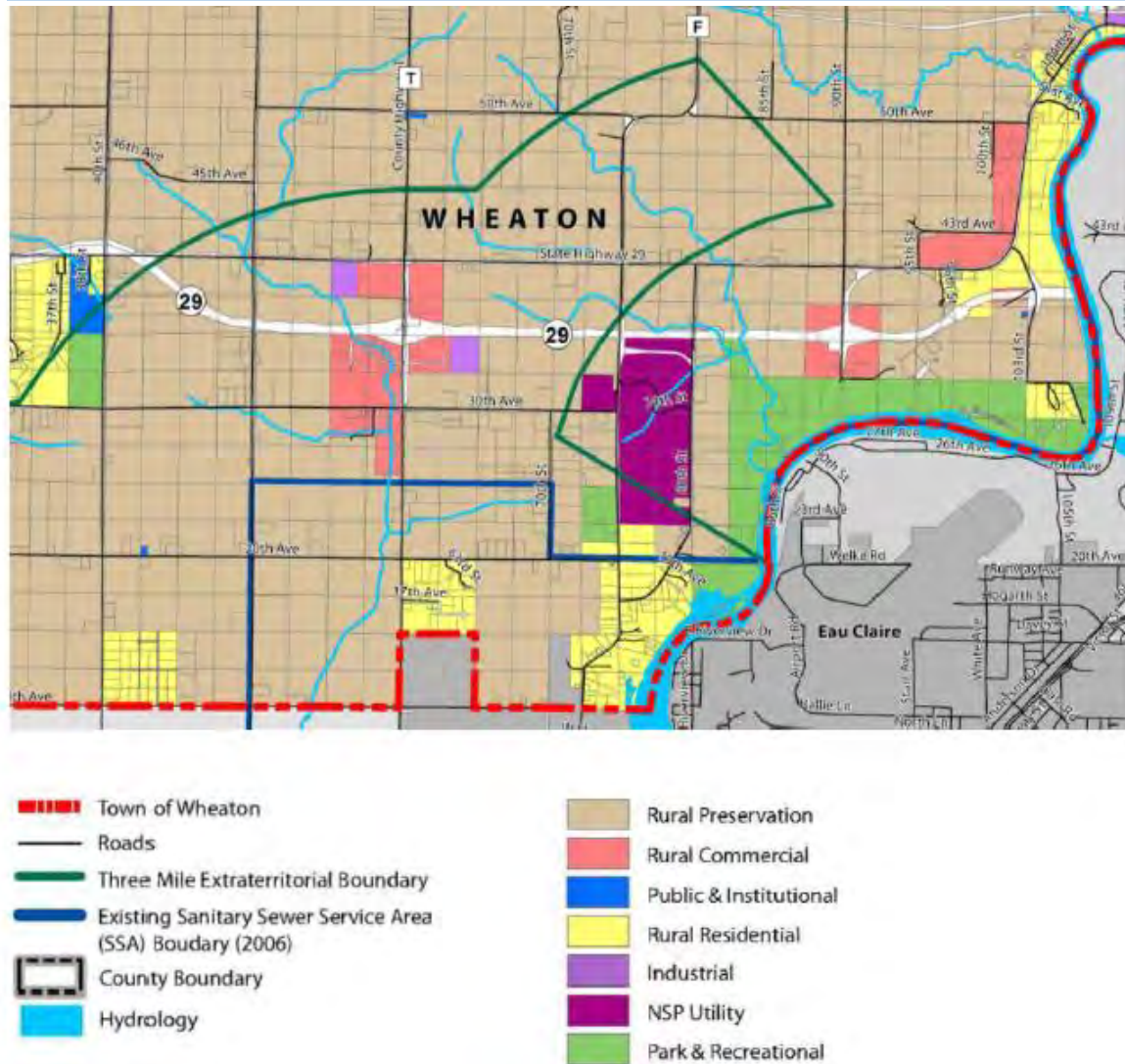


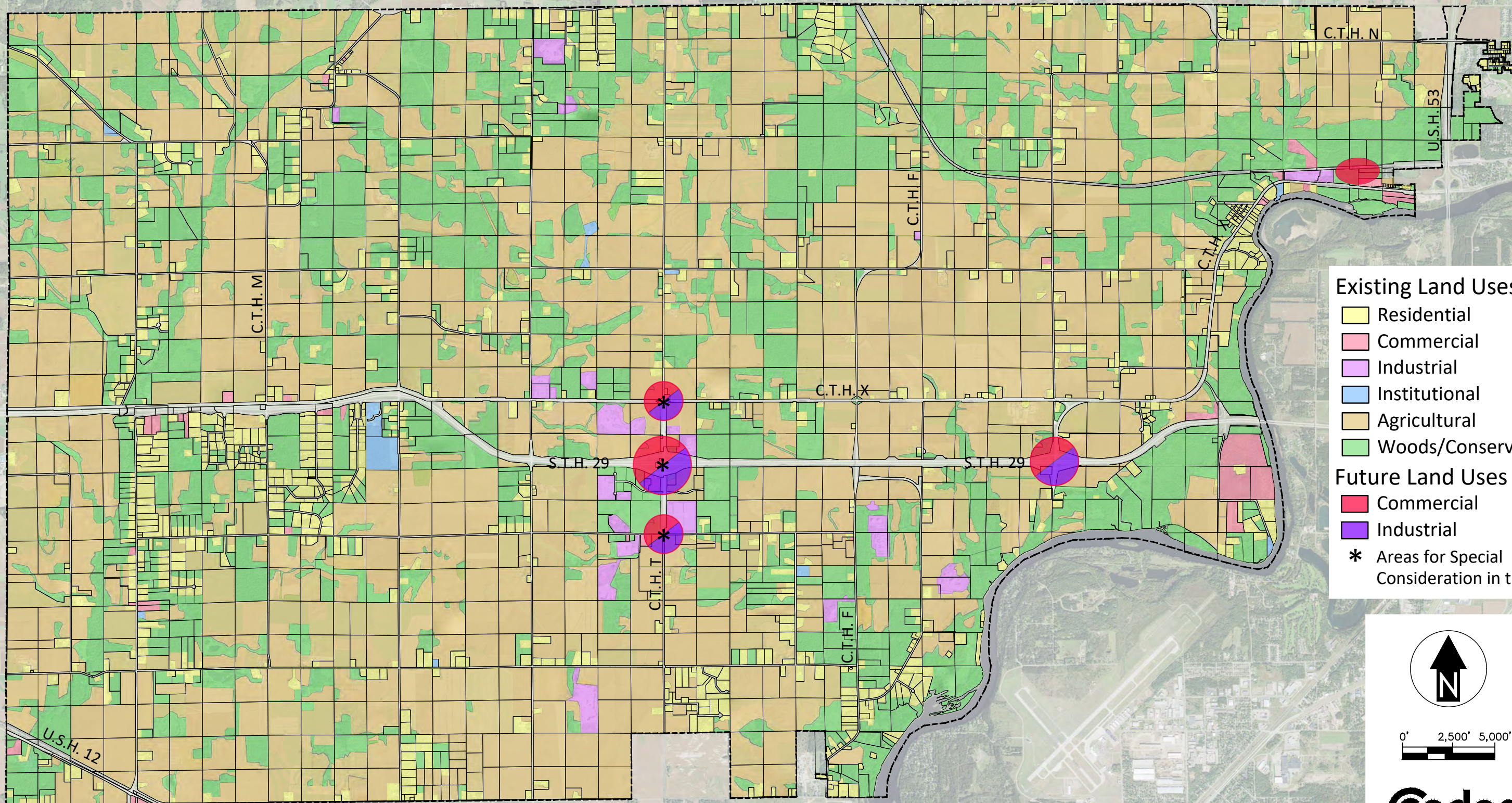
Figure 9-5: City of Eau Claire Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and Wheaton Land Use Map



Source: City of Eau Claire Sewer Service Area Plan: Town of Wheaton January 2013

Future Land Use Map

The Town of Wheaton acknowledges the Future Land Use map shown in Figure 9-5. At the same time, Map 9-2 shows future commercial and industrial land use areas in the Town of Wheaton. Since most of Wheaton is zoned Agriculture, which allows single-family residential development, specific future residential areas were not identified. There are areas identified on Map 9-2 that are conducive to commercial and/or industrial development because of their location on major transportation routes, and existing development that would be attractive to businesses. These areas include C.T.H. X near the City of Chippewa Falls border, intersection of S.T.H. 29 and old S.T.H. 29 and in three locations along C.T.H. T at C.T.H. X, S.T.H. 29 and north of 20th Avenue. The three locations along C.T.H. T are in the City of Eau Claire's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction but the Town of Wheaton wants to identify them as areas for special



Existing Land Uses

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Agricultural
- Woods/Conservancy

Future Land Uses

- Commercial
- Industrial

* Areas for Special Consideration in the ETJ

North arrow pointing up with 'N'.

Scale bar: 0' 2,500' 5,000'

Cedar
corporation

Future Land Use 2020

Town of Wheaton
Chippewa County, WI



Map 9-2
Future Land Use

consideration at the Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Area grows and a C.T.H. T Corridor Study is being completed.

Future Development Principles

When evaluating future development plans that have not been identified in the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town can address them if they are consistent with the goals of this Plan. Future residential, commercial, and industrial development should consider the following development principles.

Residential Development

1. Evaluate requiring transportation options (walking and bicycling) as shown in related planning documents or where similar infrastructure exists.
2. Require safe access to parks, open spaces, institutions, and commercial areas if nearby.
3. Support housing options identified in the Plan.
4. Preserve the natural topography and natural resources and incorporate them into the development's design.
5. Have developers design and incorporate engineering principles to reduce vehicle speeds and create a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians if connecting to similar infrastructure.
6. Require buffers or other design standard that may reduce potential land use conflicts with existing development that may reduce possible traffic, noise, light intrusion, odors, or other conflicts.
7. Review development design to enhance the environmental quality and energy self-sufficiency.
8. Protect important natural and water resources.
9. Consider the use of the PUD Zoning District or Flexible Zoning for major subdivisions to minimize the loss of productive agricultural lands.
10. Encourage new housing that utilizes the existing wood/conservancy areas to "hide" the visual impact of housing.

Commercial Development

1. Consider the hours of operation, traffic generated, and existing development patterns when evaluating potential development proposals.
2. Require lighting fixtures that reduce light pollution.
3. Provide access to a variety of safe transportation modes when options are available in close proximity.
4. Minimize the impact on adjacent residential areas by evaluating the type of proposed business.
5. Protect important natural and water resources.

Industrial Development

1. Consider the hours of operation, traffic generated, and existing development patterns when evaluating potential development proposals.
2. Anticipate potential land use conflicts and mitigate them using buffers, posting designated transportation routes, reducing speed limits, minimizing lighting requirements, or find a more suitable location.
3. Provide safe access for a variety of transportation modes when these options are available in proximity.
4. Evaluate the proposed site plan so that it minimizes the impact on adjacent residential areas.
5. Protect important natural and water resources.

Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal 1: The Town of Wheaton will monitor residential development and its impacts on agricultural land uses, woods/conservancy land uses, groundwater, and the area's natural resources

Objectives:

1. Minimize the effects of housing development on agricultural and natural resources.

Recommendations:

1. Consider the development and rezoning of property for the construction of senior housing that allows elderly residents stay in Wheaton.
2. Promote Chippewa County's conservation subdivision or Flexible Zoning Land Division ordinance that provides for the protection of open space in new subdivisions.
3. Evaluate impacts on agricultural and natural resources when reviewing subdivisions.
4. Evaluate transportation needs as it pertains to residential growth.
5. Support the expansion of broadband, natural gas, and other infrastructure to serve residential needs.

Goal 2: The Town of Wheaton will support commercial and industrial growth in targeted areas as identified by the Future Land Use map.

Objectives:

1. Increase a diverse offering of businesses in the Town of Wheaton.

Recommendations:

1. Support commercial and industrial clusters in areas identified on the Future Land Use map.
2. Use the Future Development Principles when considering commercial and industrial development concepts outside of areas on the Future Land Use map.

3. Continue to participate in discussions and planning with Eau Claire County, Chippewa County, and the City of Eau Claire regarding long-range plans for transportation improvements and development along the C.T.H. T. corridor.
4. Explore development tools such as boundary agreements or sanitary districts to coordinate commercial and industrial development with neighboring incorporated municipalities to jointly plan the future of the area and provide benefits to each party.
5. Support the expansion of broadband, natural gas, and other infrastructure to serve commercial and industrial needs.

Goal 3: The Town of Wheaton supports development that maintains or improves the natural environment.

Objectives:

1. Increase natural resource awareness and protection.

Recommendations:

1. Consult the maps in the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter when evaluating development proposals.
2. Work with Chippewa County and other governmental agencies to monitor the effects of all development on groundwater.

Chapter 10

Plan Implementation

Introduction

Once the Town of Wheaton adopts its amended Comprehensive Plan, it can begin to implement the recommendations prioritized below. There are different “tools” that can be used to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Tools can range from new policies, zoning code amendments, creating committees, task forces, etc. All of these can be used to help implement the recommendations.

There are goals, objectives, and recommendations at the end of each chapter in the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan. These represent the result that the Town hopes to achieve by implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Though there are many excellent ideas in each chapter, it may be impossible to address them all at the same time. Of course, budgets, time constraints, limited staff, or changes in attitude may cause some of the ideas not to be realized, and others to be expanded upon.

The Plan Implementation chapter will review the goals, objectives, and recommendations at the end of each chapter to determine which recommendations should be implemented and in what time frame. At the same time, just because a recommendation is not in the implementation schedule does not mean it cannot be addressed.

Potential Implementation Tools

Implementation tools can be grouped into regulatory and non-regulatory categories. Regulatory tools can be state, county, and municipal codes that the Town of Wheaton uses to regulate itself. Non-regulatory tools can be actions Town government, groups, or residents voluntarily take to achieve a goal. Examples of how regulatory and non-regulatory tools can be used to help implement the Comprehensive Plan include road maintenance, public education, and trail development. Throughout the Comprehensive Plan, recommendations for achieving the goals have been identified.

Roles and Responsibilities

Residents and Property Owners

The Town of Wheaton encourages continuous input from its residents and property owners. The planning process does not end with the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Views change, regulations are amended, new ideas evolve over time, and with this, the Comprehensive Plan will need to be updated. Therefore, public participation will always be needed and encouraged.

Plan Commission

The Town of Wheaton Plan Commission’s role in the planning process is to review all appropriate information, give input, and make recommendations to the Town Board. The Plan



Commission will use the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for decision-making and will recommend revisions and updates as needed.

Town Board

In order for the Comprehensive Plan to be implemented, the Town Board must formally adopt it. Upon adoption, the Comprehensive Plan becomes a guide for decision making by Town officials. As chief policy makers, the Board is also responsible for establishing and actively supporting a continuation of the planning process and program.

Plan Updates

Ongoing evaluation of the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan is important. The needs of the community today may be different from the needs of tomorrow. Revisions and amendments to the Town's Comprehensive Plan can be done at any time by following the procedures for adopting a Comprehensive Plan required by state statutes. These include publishing a Class I notice, having the Comprehensive Plan available for the public to review for 30 days, and holding a public hearing.

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan 2021-2041 Implementation Schedule should be reviewed each year by the Wheaton Town Board and/or Plan Commission to measure the progress of the plan implementation. By law, the plan is required to be reviewed every 10 years.

Plan Consistency

When drafting a Comprehensive Plan for a community, the possibility exists that the individual pieces of the plan may not support other elements to the extent they should or, in the worst case, contradict other elements. As envisioned and drafted, the elements of this plan fit together into a cohesive direction for future decision making in the Town.

Plan Integration and Measuring Achievement

In order for the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan to be successful, the implementation tools must be in place and reflect the intent of the plan.

After one year of adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the Town Board or Plan Commission should review the prioritization list, evaluate implementation of the recommendations, successes and setbacks, and the use of the plan by the Town government.

Implementation Recommendations and Schedule

There are a number of recommendations throughout the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan. Personnel and budget limitations and available resources can make it difficult to address all of them in a short period of time. The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan 2021-2041 Implementation Schedule should be used as a practical guide to prioritize and schedule implementation recommendations.



The timeframes used for the recommended actions are as follows:

Short Term: 1-5 Years
Mid Term: 6-10 Years
Long Term: 11-20 Years
Ongoing: Ongoing support/action with no definite beginning or end.

Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan 2021-2041 Implementation Schedule

Table 10-1: Short Term Recommendations (1 to 5 years)

Chapter	Recommendation	Potential Lead Group(s)

Table 10-2: Mid Term Recommendations (6 to 10 years)

Chapter	Recommendation	Potential Lead Group(s)

Table 10-3: Long Term Recommendations (11 to 20 years)

Chapter	Recommendation	Potential Lead Group(s)

Table 10-4: Ongoing

Chapter	Recommendation	Potential Lead Group(s)

The Implementation Schedule should be maintained outside of the Comprehensive Plan. Like a Capital Improvements Plan, the Implementation Schedule should be reviewed each year by the Plan Commission who will make recommendations to the Wheaton Town Board to update short term, mid term, long term, and ongoing recommendations. The Town Board should review the recommendations and approve the Implementation Schedule.

Appendix



Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Report, 2019

**Shelly Hadley
David Trechter
Denise Parks**

**Survey Research Center Report 2019/19
December 2019**

Staff and students working for the Survey Research Center at UW-River Falls were instrumental in the completion of this study. We would like to thank Jennifer Pflum, David Foerster, Luke Spaeth, Hannah Nelson, Elizabeth Peretz, and Rebecca Baumgartner. We gratefully acknowledge their hard work and dedication.

The SRC would also like to thank Patrick Beilfuss, Senior Planner with the Cedar Corporation, and Town of Wheaton representatives for their assistance throughout the study.

Finally, we would like to thank the Town of Wheaton residents and property owners who took the time to complete their questionnaires.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Survey Purpose	4
Survey Methods	4
Report and Analysis	5
Methodology: Survey Design, Analysis, & Presentation of Results.....	6
Profile of Respondents.....	7
Quality of Life.....	8
Community Facilities and Services.....	9
Communication.....	10
Natural and Cultural Resources	11
Recreation.....	12
Housing	13
Transportation	14
Agriculture and Land Use.....	15
Economic Development.....	17
Additional Comments	20
Differences Based on Residency	21
Conclusions	22
Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test	23
Appendix B – Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Survey, 2019 - Written Comments..	24
Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question.....	35

Executive Summary

In early October 2019, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to all 1,145 Town of Wheaton households and non-resident property owners for which mailing addresses were available. The initial mailing contained a cover letter describing the purpose of the survey, a questionnaire, and a postage-paid return envelope. The response was so strong that the SRC in consultation with Patrick Beilfuss of the Cedar Corporation and Town representatives decided to forego the postcard reminder. In late October, a second set of questionnaires were sent to non-respondents with a stated deadline of November 8, but the survey end date was extended to November 13 to allow for late responses to be collected.

The target response for accuracy of estimates to within +/-5% with 95 percent confidence for the Town of Wheaton population was 288 surveys or a 25% response rate. **Out of 1,145 surveys distributed, the SRC received 590 completed surveys.** With a total of 16 survey packets being returned as non-deliverable, the response rate was 52%. With 590 completed surveys, the results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 2.8 percent with 95 percent confidence. Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in **Appendix A**, the Survey Research Center concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a significant concern for this survey.

The questionnaire contained nine topical sections related to the update of the Town's comprehensive plan: quality of life, community facilities and services, recreation, natural and cultural resources, housing, transportation, agriculture and land use, economic development, and communication.

The following are key observations from the survey results:

Quality of Life

- The top four reasons Town of Wheaton respondents give for choosing to live in the Town are rural character, home lot size, natural beauty, and to be near family/friends.

Community Facilities and Services

- All community services and facilities listed on the survey are rated highly (good or excellent) by a majority of respondents (fire protection, recycling programs, law enforcement services, signage, ambulance service, cemetery services, and storm water management).

Recreation

- Substantial percentages of survey respondents have no opinion about the recreational facilities and trails asked about in the survey. Of those with an opinion, snowmobile trails received the highest rating. A strong majority would not be willing to pay more taxes to fund park and recreational opportunities and facilities.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Most Wheaton respondents place a very high level of importance on the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resource base of the Town. Groundwater, rivers and streams, air quality, and forested lands are supported particularly strongly (99% rated these resources as essential, very important, or important).

Housing

- When asked what types of housing are needed in the Town, a strong majority say there is a need for more single family housing. Respondents support the use of cluster design for the layout of rural housing lots. At the same time, written comments revealed a pattern of concern that the rural atmosphere of the Town will be lost due to residential development.

Transportation

- Wheaton respondents are largely satisfied with the condition of its roads. Although more than one-half strongly agree or agree that walking and biking are important modes of transportation, they are less enthusiastic about the need for more walking/biking trails along public roadways in the Town. Respondents are generally satisfied with overall road conditions and snow removal in the Town, and they are less willing to pay more taxes for snow removal or road maintenance in the Town.

Agriculture and Land Use

- Wheaton respondents almost unanimously agree that agricultural land should be used for agricultural purposes. However, they disagree that large-scale farms (500+ animals) should be allowed to expand. Nearly all respondents agree or strongly agree that driveways should be required to meet emergency service standards. Most respondents also feel that it is important to consider visual impacts when evaluating development proposals. A majority (91%) of Wheaton respondents feel there should be a minimum lot size for rural residential development. Sixty-eight percent (68%) believe that it should be the current 5-acre minimum and 23% believe it should be less than five acres.

Economic Development

- Agricultural related businesses received the highest level of support as an appropriate type of business in the Town, although smaller majorities find numerous other types of businesses to be appropriate as well. A majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that the Town should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry. Respondents indicate that they are in favor of wind and solar energy as forms of economic development. They are not as supportive of using ethanol for this purpose.

Communication

- The most effective methods of receiving information from the Town regarding comprehensive planning for this group of respondents are direct mailings and newsletters.

Survey Purpose

The purpose for this study was to gather opinions of residents and non-resident property owners about land use and other planning issues as the Town of Wheaton updates its Comprehensive Plan. Public opinion surveys are used to gain input from the community in order to inform the comprehensive planning process. Questions on these surveys generally reflect the different sections of a Comprehensive Plan, including, but not necessarily limited to information on housing, transportation, natural resources, community services, agriculture and land use, and economic development. Patrick Beilfuss of Cedar Corporation in Menomonie, Wisconsin in collaboration with representatives from the Town of Wheaton chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to survey residents and non-resident property owners of the Town of Wheaton about vital planning issues as the Town updates its Comprehensive Plan.

Survey Methods

In early October 2019, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to all 1,145 Town of Wheaton households and non-resident property owners for which mailing addresses were available.¹ The response to this mailing was so strong that the SRC in consultation with Patrick Beilfuss and Town representatives decided to forego the postcard reminder that is normally sent to non-respondents. In late October, a second set of questionnaires were sent to non-respondents with a stated deadline of November 8. The survey end date was extended to November 13 to allow for late responses to be collected.²

The target response for estimates expected to be accurate to within +/-5% with 95 percent confidence for the Town of Wheaton population was 288 surveys or a 25% response rate. Out of 1,145 surveys distributed, the SRC received 590 completed surveys. With a total of 16 survey packets being returned as non-deliverable, the response rate was an exceptional 52%.³ With 590 completed surveys, the results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 2.8 percent with 95 percent confidence.

¹ The Town requested that surveys be made available to non-survey panel members as well. A notation was made in the survey that stated that if any recipient knows of a resident or property owner that had not received a survey, for them to contact the SRC to obtain one. Only one resident, not included in the survey panel, contacted the SRC asking for surveys for themselves and other family members.

² The surveys were completed by participants in printed form. The surveys were mailed back to the SRC and scanned into a database by SRC staff. The closing date was agreed upon by Patrick Beilfuss, Town representatives, and the SRC.

³ On September 28, 2019 a tornado hit the Town of Wheaton. The Town decided not to postpone the survey (first mailing scheduled for early October). Based on a very high response, it appears that participation was not hindered by the tornado.

Report and Analysis

In the analysis to follow, the SRC will summarize the 2019 Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey results and note any statistically significant results among different demographic groups.

To facilitate the analysis, the SRC compared the following demographic groupings:

- those under 45 versus those 45 and above
- those identifying themselves as male versus female
- those reporting annual household incomes of \$75,000 or more versus those with annual household incomes of less than \$75,000⁴
- those who've resided in the Town of Wheaton for 25 years or more versus those with less than 25 years residency
- those identifying themselves as residents versus non-residents
- those with children (<18) in their household versus those without children in their household

The testing methodology used to look at statistically significant differences is discussed below.

*The SRC used statistical tests to identify questions with statistically significant differences across demographic groups. In statistics, a result is **statistically significant** if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Statistical significance is expressed as a probability that the observed difference between two groups' averages is not real. A commonly used probability standard is .05 (5%). Statistical significance at the .05 level indicates there is only a 5 in 100 probability that the average values for the two groups are actually equal. Such a result does not mean the difference is necessarily large, important, or significant in the common meaning of the word. If there are a sufficiently large number of observations, even small differences of opinion can be statistically significant. **Response patterns that vary at statistically significant levels ($p < .05$) are noted in the report.***

⁴ The median household income in the Town of Wheaton, Wisconsin is \$80,868, in 2017 dollars, according to the U.S. Census. In this analysis, comparisons will be made between respondents from households with annual incomes of \$75,000 and above (generally close to the median household income level) to respondents from households with less than \$75,000 annual household income (those below median household income level).

Methodology: Survey Design, Analysis, & Presentation of Results

The Town of Wheaton's survey instrument is almost entirely made up of matrix questions consisting of Likert-type scales (examples: an agreement scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree or a quality scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor). Due to the design of most of the survey's questions, the presentation of results in this report are shown mostly in table format.

For most questions in the survey, a "no opinion" option was available. In the case of the Town of Wheaton survey responses, there are areas where substantial percentages of respondents have no opinion (examples include rating cemetery services or stormwater management, rating railroads or shared ride van services, rating snowmobile trails, etc.).

In order to aid in the analysis, the no opinion responses were dropped from the analysis and the percentages were recalculated for the remaining response categories.

However, the SRC believes it is important to report the "no opinion" responses, especially when they constitute a substantial portion of the responses. For data visualization purposes, "no opinion" responses are included in the report's tables and figures because such responses are both a measure of unfamiliarity or indifference and a measure of potential impact for education/outreach.

Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in **Appendix A**, the Survey Research Center concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a significant concern for this survey. In addition to numeric data, respondents provided additional written answers.

Appendix B contains the written responses. **Appendix C** contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a complete quantitative summary of responses by question.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of respondents to the 2019 Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey.⁵ Where comparable data was available from the Census, they were included to indicate the degree to which the sample represents the underlying adult population in the Town of Wheaton.⁶ The data in Table 1 show that, the proportion of males in the sample was higher than the percentage of males in the total population, and the sample includes lower proportions of younger respondents and higher proportions of older ones than in the Census data. The household income data from the sample closely aligns with Census data. Among the respondents who reported being residents of the Town, nearly all respondents own their residence, and nearly three in four have lived in the Town of Wheaton for ten years or more, while one in ten have been Town residents for less than five years.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents, 2019 Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey							
Gender	Count	Male	Female	Other			
Sample	545	64%	36%				
Census (18 ⁺)	2,039	53%	47%				
Age 18+	Count	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Sample	562	0%	6%	11%	20%	27%	36%
Census (18 ⁺)	2,039	12%	12%	15%	28%	17%	16%
Household Size	Count	0	1	2	3	4	5+
Number Adults	553		17%	71%	9%	3%	1%
Number Children (<18)	510	73%	10%	11%	4%	2%	1%
Place of Residence	Count	Own	Rent	Other			
Sample	563	98%	1%	1%			
Household Income Range⁷	Count	<\$15,000	<\$15- \$24,999	\$25- \$49,999	\$50- \$74,999	\$75- \$99,999	\$100,000+
Sample	417	2%	5%	15%	23%	21%	33%
Census (Total Households)	917	3%	2%	15%	23%	25%	33%
Length of Residency	Count	Non- Resident	<1 Year	1 – 4 Years	5 – 9 Years	10 – 24 Years	25+ Years
Sample	566	4%	1%	9%	9%	30%	47%

⁵ Basic demographic questions 31 through 37, shown in Table 1, were placed at the end of the survey, with more engaging questions placed first, to minimize survey fatigue and optimize response rates. Demographic questions were asked in order to see how respondents reflected the general population of the Town of Wheaton.

⁶ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 – 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

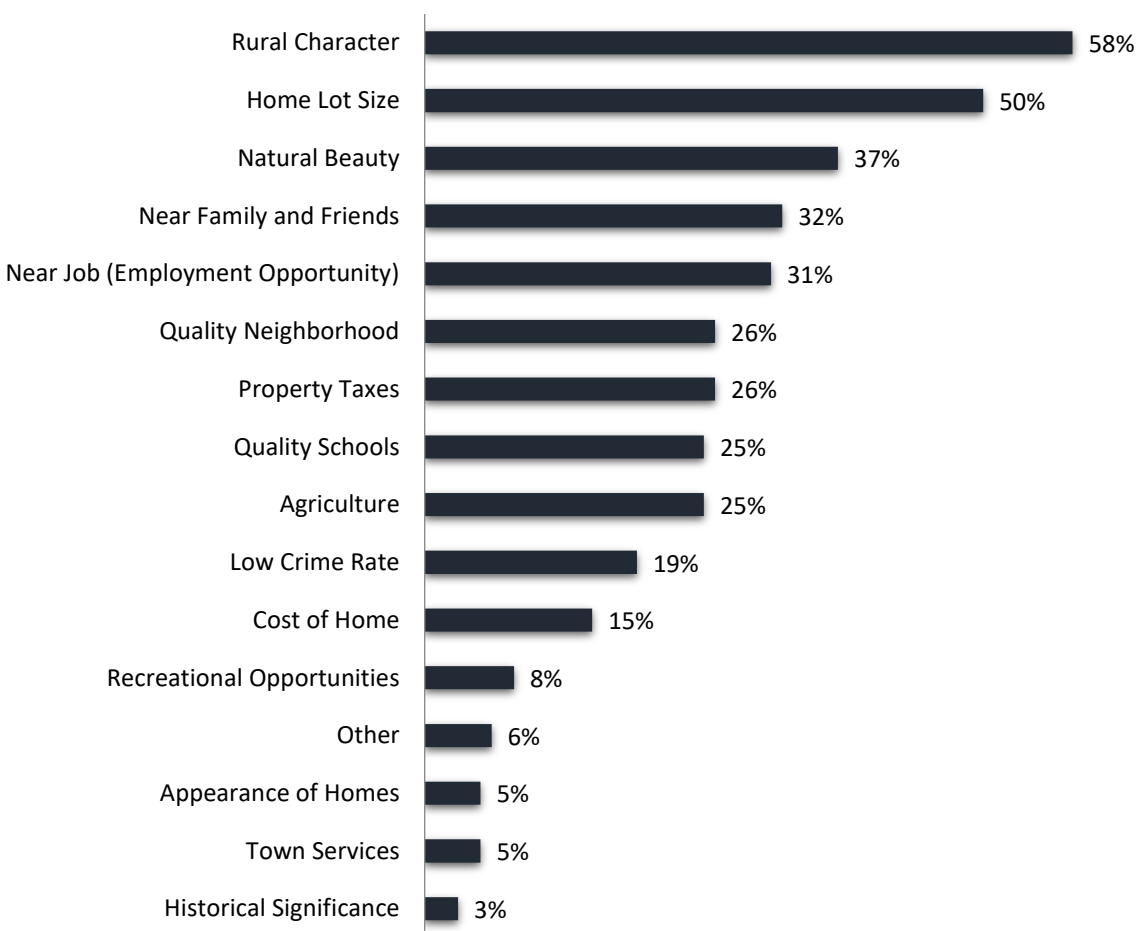
⁷ “Prefer not to answer” responses (25% of respondents) were not included in Table 1 for household income range.

Quality of Life

Respondents were asked to identify the four most important reasons they chose to live in the Town of Wheaton. As shown in Figure 1, at least one-half of the respondents included the rural character and home lot size in their top four reasons, while the natural beauty, being near family and friends, and being near jobs were in the top four for nearly one-third of the respondents. About a fourth of respondents said that property taxes, quality neighborhood, agriculture, and quality schools were among their top reasons to live in the Town. At the other end of the spectrum, fewer than ten percent indicated that recreational opportunities, town services, appearance of homes, and historical significance were among the most important reasons to live in the Town. “Other” responses included growing up in Wheaton and peace and quiet. Appendix B, Question 1 contains the complete list of “other” reasons residents choose to live in the Town.

Figure 1: Most Important Reasons Residents Choose to Live in the Town of Wheaton

Asked to Choose Four Most Important Reasons



Statistically significant differences of opinion among demographic groups with respect to the reasons for choosing to live in the Town of Wheaton:

- Respondents age 45 and above were more likely to include low crime rate and agriculture in their top choices for living in the Town. Respondents under the age of 45 were more likely to include property taxes and home lot size in their top reasons to live in the Town.
- Respondents living in the Town of Wheaton for less than 25 years were more likely to include natural beauty, property taxes, and home lot size as their top reasons to live in the Town. Longer-term residents (25+ years) were more likely to include being near family/friends and agriculture as their top reasons for living in the Town.
- Respondents from households with less than \$75,000 annual income were more likely to include being near family/friends as a top reason for living in the Town. Respondents with at least \$75,000 annual income were more likely to include home lot size as a top reason to live in the Town.
- Respondents with children in their household were more likely to include quality schools, property taxes, and home lot size as their top reasons for living in the Town. Respondents without children in their households were more likely to include agriculture as a top reason to live in the Town.

Community Facilities and Services

Substantial numbers of respondents said they had no opinion about the community services asked about in the survey, particularly cemetery services (68%), and storm water management (51%). This is not surprising since many respondents are not likely to have had occasion to use such services. **As noted earlier in the report, in order to aid in the analysis, the no opinion responses were dropped from the commentary/analysis and the percentages were recalculated for the remaining response categories.** Town of Wheaton respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with the community facilities and services listed on the survey. Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), substantial majorities said all of the facilities and services in Table 2 are good or excellent: 90% for fire protection, 88% for ambulance, 81% for signage, 81% for recycling programs, 79% for law enforcement, and 64% for stormwater management.

Table 2: Opinions About Community Facilities and Services in the Town of Wheaton						
Facilities and Services	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Fire Protection	22%	454	42%	48%	9%	1%
Recycling program	13%	503	32%	49%	15%	5%
Law Enforcement	24%	439	22%	57%	18%	3%
Signage	24%	430	17%	64%	16%	3%
Cemetery Service	68%	185	15%	57%	24%	4%
Ambulance Service	24%	436	14%	74%	11%	2%
Storm Water management	51%	275	8%	56%	25%	11%

Although there were statistically significant differences among the ratings from the various demographic groups, the most frequent difference was in the percentage who said they had no opinion about a particular service on the list. For example, those under age 45 were more likely to have no opinion about law enforcement and fire protection. Female respondents were more likely to have no opinion about ambulance service, cemetery services, storm water management, and law enforcement.

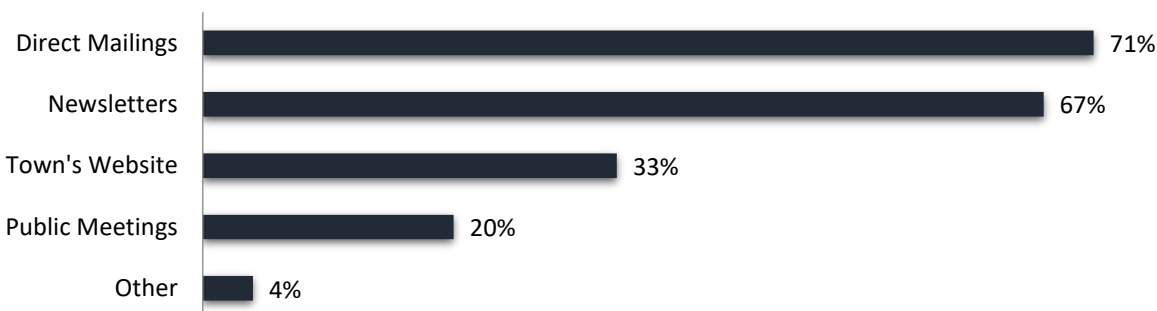
Of those with an opinion,

- Respondents from households without children gave higher ratings to recycling programs (84% excellent + good ratings vs. 69% of respondents with children in their homes).
- Respondents 45 and older gave higher ratings to recycling programs (83% excellent + good ratings vs. 72% of those under the age of 45).

Communication

In this section, respondents were asked the two most effective ways the Town of Wheaton could provide comprehensive planning information to its landowners and residents. Figure 2 indicates that the most effective methods of receiving information from the Town regarding comprehensive planning for this group of respondents are direct mailings and newsletters – roughly two-thirds of the respondents identified these as the most effective communication channels. One-third of respondents believe the Town’s website is one of the most effective ways to receive comprehensive planning information from the Town and one-fifth believe public meetings are effective. “Other” responses include receiving this sort of information electronically through email or Facebook. Appendix B, Question 3 contains the complete compilation of “other” communication methods mentioned.

Figure 2: Most Effective Ways the Town Could Provide Comprehensive Planning Information to Landowners and Residents
Asked to Choose Two Most Effective Sources



Statistically significant differences based on demographic subgroups:

- Direct mailings. Female respondents were more likely to say that direct mailings are an effective way for the Town to provide comprehensive planning information to residents/landowners.

- Newsletters. Respondents 45 and above and respondents with less than \$75,000 annual household income were significantly more likely to say that newsletters are an effective way to receive comprehensive planning information from the Town.
- Public mailings. Respondents with less than \$75,000 annual household income and residents living in the town for 25+ years were more likely to say that public meetings are an effective way to provide comprehensive planning information to residents/landowners.
- Town's website. Respondents with household incomes of \$75,000+, younger respondents (<45), respondents with children in their households, and respondents living in the Town for less than 25 years were more likely to say the Town's website is an effective way for the Town to provide comprehensive planning information to residents/landowners.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Respondents were presented with a list of ten natural resource items and asked how important it is to protect and preserve each resource. In contrast to community facilities and services, most respondents had an opinion about the importance of the natural and cultural resources about which they were asked.

As shown in Table 3, of those with an opinion (excluding the "no opinion" responses), Town of Wheaton respondents gave a high level of importance to the protection of all natural resources on the list; large majorities said that it is essential, very important, or important to protect every resource listed. Groundwater, rivers and streams, air quality, and forested lands were supported particularly strongly (99% rated these resources as essential, very important, or important). This substantial level of agreement was uniform across all demographic groups. There were only minor variations in the high level of importance that each group placed on the protection of these natural resources in the Town. Female respondents were more likely to say that the protection/preservation of air quality, farmland, and forested lands are "essential."

Table 3: Importance for Town of Wheaton to Protect and Preserve Natural Resources						
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Groundwater	1%	568	71%	21%	7%	1%
Rivers and Streams	2%	561	53%	33%	13%	1%
Air Quality	1%	564	49%	34%	15%	1%
Wildlife Habitat	3%	557	43%	31%	23%	3%
Forested Land	2%	561	40%	38%	21%	1%
Farmland	2%	564	38%	36%	21%	4%
Wetlands	3%	562	37%	27%	29%	8%
Rural Character	3%	555	35%	36%	25%	3%
Scenic Views and Undeveloped Hills	4%	548	32%	33%	27%	9%
Historic Resources and Cultural Sites	9%	518	12%	26%	49%	13%

Recreation

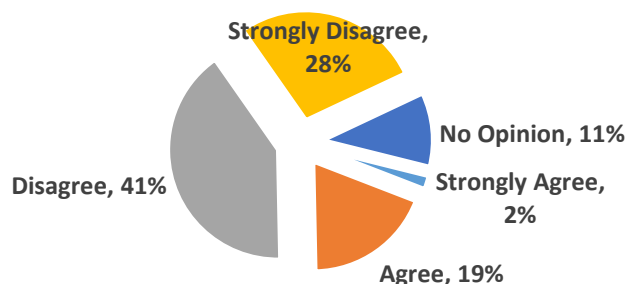
Town of Wheaton respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with local recreation facilities and trails. Substantial numbers of respondents said they had no opinion about the items on the list.

As shown in Table 4, of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), snowmobile trails received the highest rating and was rated excellent or good by 85% of respondents followed by park and recreation facilities (79%) and boating and river facilities access (63%). Ratings for bike trails were relatively low (32% good or excellent). Males were slightly more satisfied with bike trails (35% excellent/good ratings vs. 27% for female respondents). Respondents could write-in other recreation facilities and topics. “Other” responses included ATV trails and ball fields. Appendix B, Question 22 includes the complete compilation of “other” recreation topics mentioned by respondents.

Table 4: Opinions About Recreation Facilities and Trails						
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Park and Recreation Facilities	21%	450	22%	57%	16%	4%
Snowmobile trails	43%	324	22%	63%	13%	2%
Boating and River Facilities Access	39%	348	6%	57%	30%	7%
Bike trails	56%	254	4%	28%	34%	34%

The last question in the recreation section asked respondents’ opinions regarding respondents’ willingness to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town of Wheaton. Figure 3 indicates that 69% of respondents would not be willing (disagree and strongly disagree) to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities.

Figure 3: Willing to Pay More Taxes for Park and Recreation Opportunities and Facilities in the Town of Wheaton



Respondents in the following demographic groups were more likely to strongly agree/agree that they would be willing to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town of Wheaton: those under age 45, respondents with children in their household, and respondents with household incomes of \$75,000+.

Housing

Of those with an opinion, excluding the “no opinion responses, 85 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the need for more single family housing in the Town of Wheaton (Table 5). A slight majority, 53% strongly agree or agree that more elderly housing is needed. Conversely, a slight majority of respondents (52%) strongly disagree or disagree that more affordable housing is needed in the Town and strong majorities (90% and 72%, respectively) were opposed to more multiple family units (apartments and duplexes).

Table 5: Opinions About the Need for Additional Housing Types in the Town of Wheaton

	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Single Family Housing	15%	485	38%	47%	11%	5%
Affordable Housing	21%	449	13%	35%	25%	27%
Elderly Housing	24%	431	11%	42%	28%	19%
Duplexes	13%	488	3%	25%	34%	38%
Apartments	12%	494	2%	8%	32%	58%

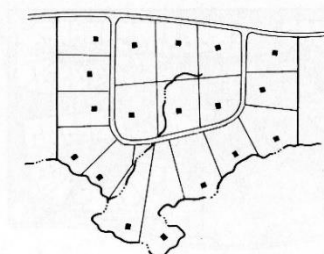
- A higher proportion of respondents 45 and above and respondents with household incomes of less than \$75,000 see a need for more elderly housing, more affordable housing, and more duplexes in the Town of Wheaton.
- Respondents with no children in their households see a higher need for more affordable housing and elderly housing in the Town of Wheaton.

Respondents were asked their preference for the layout of housing lots. They were shown diagrams of a traditional housing development with large individual lots and a “cluster” development with smaller lots and preserved common open space. As shown in Figure 4, a majority of survey respondents prefer the cluster design to the traditional design.

Figure 4: Preference for Housing Layout

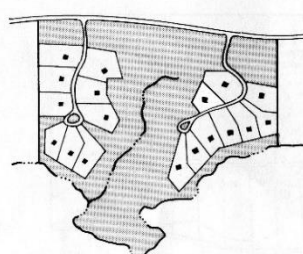
Traditional

42%



Cluster

58%



There were a number of statistically significant differences demographically, in terms of the type of residential development preferred:

- Cluster design. The cluster design, while still preferred by a majority, had significantly higher levels of support from younger (<45 years old) respondents, respondents with children in their household, and respondents living in the Town for less than 25 years.
- Traditional design. Respondents 45 and above, respondents without children in their household, and respondents living in the Town 25+ years were more likely to prefer a traditional design for housing layouts.

Transportation

A section of the survey asked respondents two groups of questions regarding transportation issues in the Town of Wheaton. The first matrix of questions asked about road conditions and maintenance (Table 6). Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), Town of Wheaton residents are largely satisfied with the overall road network in the Town (90% strongly agree/agree that the condition of local roads and streets in the Town are adequate for intended uses). Unlike some earlier questions in the survey that elicited a substantial percentage of no opinion responses, nearly every respondent had an opinion about the condition of the Town’s roads and streets.

A high percentage (87%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with snow removal on Town of Wheaton roads. While survey respondents were generally satisfied with local roads and streets and snow removal in the Town, they were much less willing to pay more taxes for such services. Approximately one-quarter strongly agreed or agreed that they would be willing to pay more taxes for snow removal and road maintenance.

Although nearly one-half of survey respondents believe that biking and walking are important modes of transportation in the Town (55% strongly agree/agree), a lower percentage (43% agree/strongly agree) see a need for more biking and walking lanes along public roadways in the Town of Wheaton.

Table 6: Opinions About Transportation Issues						
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Satisfied w/snow removal on Town roads	4%	555	22%	65%	11%	3%
Condition of local roads/streets in the Town is adequate for intended uses	1%	564	16%	74%	7%	2%
Should be more biking/walking lanes along public roadways in the Town	15%	486	16%	27%	40%	17%
Biking/walking are important modes of transportation in the Town	14%	496	12%	43%	35%	9%
Willing to pay more taxes for snow removal/road maintenance in the Town	9%	520	3%	24%	49%	24%

- There were no statistically significant differences in the responses regarding the condition of local roads and streets among the demographic groups.
- Females respondents were more likely to agree or strongly agree that biking and walking are important modes of transportation in the Town and that more biking and walking lanes are needed along public roadways.
- There were no statistically significant demographic differences regarding the willingness to pay more taxes for snow removal and road maintenance in the Town of Wheaton.

The second set of questions related to transportation asked respondents to rate railroads and shared ride van services in the Town of Wheaton (Table 7). Many respondents said they had no opinion about these two services. Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), a substantial majority of respondents (74% out of 255 respondents with an opinion) rated railroads as good or excellent, and 66 percent out of 128 respondents with an opinion rated shared ride van services as fair or poor. Respondents could write-in and rate other transportation issues. “Other” responses included park n’ rides, and truck routes. Appendix B, Question 21 contains the complete compilation of “other” responses.

Table 7: Opinions About Railroads and Shared Ride Van Services						
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Railroads	55%	255	11%	63%	22%	3%
Shared Ride Van Services	78%	128	4%	30%	36%	30%

- Among the demographic groups, respondents without children in their household were more likely to rate railroads as excellent/good and male respondents were more likely to rate shared ride van services as excellent/good.

Agriculture and Land Use

A section in the questionnaire asked a series of questions about various issues related to agriculture and land use in the Town. (Table 8, next page).

Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), Wheaton respondents were nearly unanimous (99%) in their agreement that productive agricultural land should be used for agricultural use. A slight majority agreed or strongly agreed that productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for residential use. On the other hand, a majority (73%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that commercial uses should be allowed on productive farmland. Nearly eight of ten respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that any use should be allowed on productive farmland.

Table 8: Opinions About Uses of Productive Agricultural Land						
Use productive farmland for:	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Agriculture Use	2%	555	69%	30%	0%	1%
Residential Use	5%	523	10%	46%	30%	14%
Any use	10%	487	6%	11%	38%	45%
Commercial Use	7%	512	3%	24%	40%	33%

- Males were more likely to agree or strongly agree that productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for commercial uses (32% male vs. 16% female).

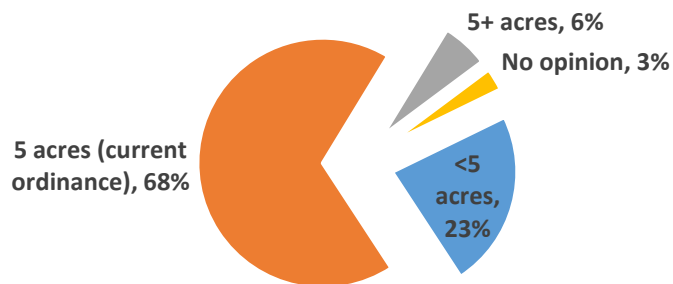
The next group of five questions focused on land use opinions. As shown in Table 9, of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), a majority of Wheaton respondents do not agree that property owners should be allowed to develop their land any way they want (66% disagree/strongly disagree), and do not agree that large scale farms should be allowed to expand (59% disagree/strongly disagree). At the same time, they believe there should be a minimum lot size on residential development in rural areas (89% agree/strongly agree), believe it is important to require that driveways meet standards for providing emergency services (95% agree/strongly agree), and that visual impacts of development are an important consideration when evaluating proposed development (92% agree/strongly agree). Based on the answers to these questions it appears that Wheaton respondents support some degree of local land use regulation.

Table 9: Land Use Opinions						
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Should be a minimum lot size on residential development in rural areas.	4%	552	51%	38%	7%	5%
Driveways should be required to meet standards for providing emergency services.	5%	544	38%	57%	4%	1%
Visual impacts of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development.	5%	537	33%	59%	7%	2%
Landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want.	4%	550	10%	23%	42%	24%
Large scale farms (500 or more animal units) should be allowed to expand.	9%	520	8%	32%	33%	26%

- Female respondents were more likely to agree/strongly agree that visual impact of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development.

Respondents were next asked about the minimum lot size for rural residential development (Figure 5). Two-thirds of the respondents believe that the current ordinance, 5 acres, should be the minimum lot size for rural residential development. This result does not align well with the majority preference for cluster-style housing developments with smaller lots and preserved common open space (see Figure 4). A substantial minority (23%) believe the minimum lot size should be less than 5 acres, 6% said greater than 5 acres, and those with no opinion (3%).

Figure 5: Minimum Lot Size for Rural Residential Development

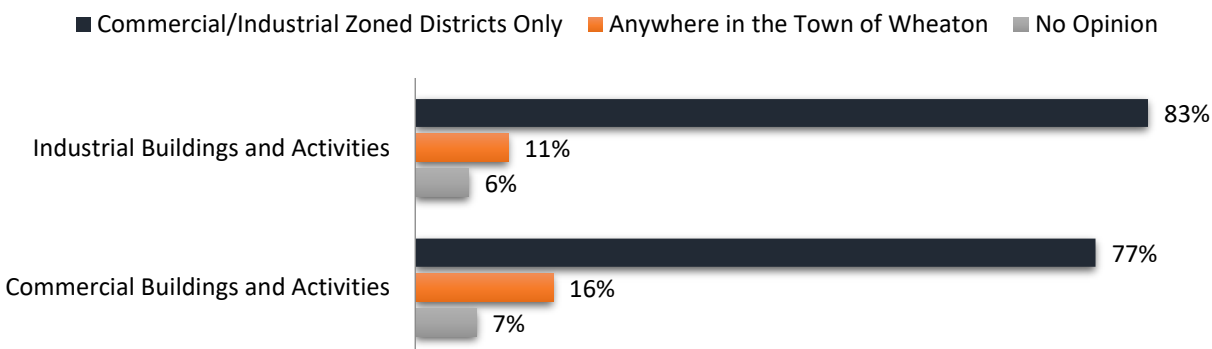


- Long-term residents (25+ years) were more likely to say the minimum lot size for rural residential development should be less than 5 acres.

Economic Development

A section of the survey contained four groups of questions focused on economic development in the Town of Wheaton. The first set of questions in this section focused specifically on commercial and industrial buildings and activities and where they should be located (Figure 6). Large majorities believe commercial buildings and activities should be located in commercial zoned districts only and industrial buildings and activities should be located in industrial zoned districts only.

Figure 6: Commercial or Industrial Buildings and Activities Should be Located in...



There were no statistically significant differences in the responses to these questions among the demographic groups.

Residents were then asked if the Town of Wheaton should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry and if the Town should provide infrastructure (water, sewer, access, etc.) for some industrial and commercial uses (Table 10). Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), 62% agree or strongly agree that the Town should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry. Conversely, 64% disagreed/strongly disagreed that the Town should provide infrastructure for some industrial and commercial uses.

Table 10: Economic Development Opinions						
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Town of Wheaton should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry.	15%	488	13%	49%	28%	10%
The Town of Wheaton should provide infrastructure (water, sewer, access, etc.) for some industrial and commercial uses.	17%	474	6%	30%	43%	21%

- Respondents 45 and older were more likely to approve of Town working to coordinate efforts to recruit new business and industry.
- Female respondents were more likely to support providing infrastructure for some industrial and commercial uses.

Respondents were asked which types of energy alternatives should be supported by the Town as forms of development (Table 11). Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), a large majority (80%) agreed that the Town should support solar energy as an energy alternative. Nearly 7 in 10 respondents with an opinion said that wind energy should be supported. Less than one-quarter of respondents (24%) said that the Town should support ethanol plants as an energy alternative. Respondents could write-in “other” energy alternatives. “Other” responses included nuclear energy and bio-energy. Appendix B, Question 28 includes the complete compilation of “other” energy alternatives provided by respondents.

Table 11: Energy Alternatives Opinions						
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Solar Energy	10%	520	27%	53%	9%	11%
Wind Energy	11%	512	23%	46%	16%	15%
Ethanol Plants	18%	468	4%	20%	44%	33%

- Female respondents were more likely to favor the Town supporting solar and wind energy as energy alternatives.

Wheaton respondents were asked to rate the importance of various types of businesses or industries in the Town of Wheaton using a scale of essential, very important, important, not important, and no opinion (Table 12).

Of those with an opinion (excluding the “no opinion” responses), agricultural related businesses received the most “essential” or “very important” ratings (68%). The rest of the industries/businesses were deemed “essential” or “very important” by minorities of between 20 and 34 percent of respondents with an opinion.

Table 12: Importance Given to Types of Businesses or Industries in the Town of Wheaton						
	No Opinion	# With Opinion	Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Agriculture Related businesses	5%	539	32%	36%	27%	4%
Home Based Businesses	11%	506	10%	24%	49%	17%
Tourism and Recreation	8%	514	10%	24%	42%	25%
Commercial and Retail Development	7%	521	6%	17%	40%	37%
Industrial and Manufacturing Development	8%	517	5%	15%	39%	41%

Agricultural related businesses were the most important business or industry for survey respondents regardless of age, length of residency, etc., and there was general consensus among survey respondents of different age groups, residency lengths, etc., in regard to the importance placed on all the business-types asked about in the survey with one exception:

- Tourism and recreation were viewed more favorably as the types of businesses to be encouraged in the Town by respondents who have annual household incomes of at least \$75,000.

Additional Comments

Respondents were asked to provide additional comments about living in the Town of Wheaton. The response for this open-ended question was relatively low when compared to the overall survey response, with 162 written comments and 428 left unanswered. The response rate for the qualitative question could have been due to survey fatigue and/or question format. Comments were sorted into 14 categories summarized in Table 13. Comments relating to country/rural living elicited the greatest proportion of the total, with 23 percent. Generally, there were only a few percentage points separating the other categories.

Based on the comments from survey respondents who answered this question, Town of Wheaton residents/property owners enjoy the rural, country living in the Town and do not want it to see its character change. Survey respondents also expressed a wish for less truck traffic and road improvements, specifically the need to have more road markings/lines printed on roads. Respondents also commented on taxation and preserving agricultural land for farming.

Comments include:

"I moved to the country to enjoy country living and I'd like to keep it that way! If people want to live close to each other, move to town!"

"We love the simple lifestyle. Jobs, work, industry somewhere else, and Wheaton is for living."

"We definitely need center or outside lines on roads!!! Please."

"Maintaining the sense of community is important."

"Enjoy living here- but in the 20 years I have been here my taxes have tripled- our pay does not keep up- limits what we would like to do and want to do to our homes and property because of fear of how much our taxes will go up."

"Keep farm land farm. We are not making any more land."

The complete list of comments is included in Appendix B, Question 30.

Table 13: Additional Comments About Living in the Town of Wheaton		
	Count	%
Country/Rural Living	37	23%
Roads/Traffic	21	13%
Positive Sentiments	16	10%
Taxes	16	10%
Farming	12	7%
Multiple Topics	11	7%
Recreation	9	6%
Pollution	7	4%
Other Concerns/Suggestions	7	4%
Emergency Services	5	3%
Town Board	5	3%
Tornado Clean-up	4	2%
Internet Service	3	2%
County Board	1	1%
Miscellaneous	8	5%
TOTAL	162	100%

Differences Based on Residency

In the Town of Wheaton survey dataset, there were four out of 83 variables with statistically significant differences between residents and non-resident property owners. The following bullets indicate areas with a statistically significant relationship ($p < .05$) between survey respondents who are Town of Wheaton residents (96% of the survey sample) vs. non-resident property owners (4% of the survey sample). Because of the small number of responses from non-resident property owners (22), opinions may or may not be accurate reflections of opinions of all non-resident property owners in the Town of Wheaton.

- Non-residents were more likely to have no opinion about snow removal or recycling programs in the Town.
- Residents were more likely than non-residents to say that 5 acres (current ordinance) should be the minimum lot size for rural residential development than non-residents (69% vs. 46%), while non-residents were more likely than residents to say that the minimum lot size for rural residential development should be less than 5 acres (46% vs. 22%).
- Tourism and recreation were viewed more favorably as essential or very important types of businesses in the Town by non-residents than residents (48% vs. 33%).

Conclusions

It is important to note that right before this survey was conducted, a tornado touched down in the Town of Wheaton. Although there may be no “best” time to survey residents and landowners, it is clear that during periods of uncertainty, results are more difficult to interpret. However, based on an exceptionally strong survey response, it appears that the tornado did not hinder survey participation.

The overwhelming theme from the results of this survey is the desire to preserve Wheaton’s rural character. The appeal of the rural atmosphere of Wheaton and its natural surroundings is expressed in various ways in the responses to questions throughout the survey. Wheaton respondents value living in Wheaton because its rural atmosphere, its natural beauty, and to be near their family and friends. Wheaton respondents expressed a strong desire to protect the natural resources of the Town that are the basis for the natural beauty that is so important to them; however, they are not willing to use public funds for additional park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town. The written responses by residents and property owners also emphasized the desire to preserve the Town’s rural character.

For housing developments, Wheaton respondents prefer cluster designs that preserve more open space. There was consensus among survey respondents that single-family homes are the highest priority and apartment and duplexes are a low priority for housing needs in Wheaton. At the same time, written comments revealed a pattern of concern that the rural atmosphere of the Town will be lost due to residential development. When asked about minimum lot sizes a majority of respondents reported that they would prefer having a minimum lot size in place and that it should be 5 acres. A minimum lot size that would not be compatible with cluster-style developments.

Wheaton respondents were satisfied with most community services and facilities. Very few services or facilities received poor ratings. Fire protection was rated the highest among the community services listed on the survey. Town of Wheaton respondents are largely satisfied with the condition of the road network in the Town and snow removal; however, they are generally not willing to pay more taxes for snow removal or road maintenance.

Agricultural related businesses received the highest level of support as an appropriate type of business in the Town, although smaller majorities find numerous other types of businesses to be important as well.

The most effective ways the Town could provide comprehensive planning information to its landowners and residents are through direct mailings and newsletters.

Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test

Any survey must be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. For example, one of the sections in the survey asked respondents to rate local facilities and services in the Town of Wheaton. If those who failed to return their survey were more dissatisfied with such services, the estimates included in this report would overstate the satisfaction of residents regarding Town facilities/services. Non-response bias concerns decline when, as in this study, the response rate is strong.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who return the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who return the second mailing. Those who return the second questionnaire are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing), and we assume that they are representative of that group.

In the Town of Wheaton dataset, there were six of 83 variables tested with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of mail 1 and mail 2 respondents. Early responders were slightly more likely to rate ambulance service and signage higher. Early responders were also more likely to place higher importance on protecting and preserving groundwater. Late responders had higher levels of disagreement with using productive agricultural land for commercial use and were less likely to agree that the Town should support solar energy development.

Table A: Mail 1/Mail 2 Statistically Significant Differences, Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey, 2019				
Variable	Sig.	Mail 1	Mail 2	Meaning
Q2a. Rate: ambulance service	.000	2.61	3.18	Mail 1 higher ratings
Q2f. Rate: signage	.018	2.68	3.01	Mail 1 higher ratings
Q4d. Importance of protecting/preserving groundwater	.004	1.37	1.59	Mail 1 higher importance
Q9a. Productive ag land should be used for: Ag	.009	1.34	1.53	Mail 1 higher agreement
Q9c. Productive ag land should be used for: Commercial use	.042	3.11	3.31	Mail 2 higher disagreement
Q28b. Town should support solar energy development	.042	2.26	2.50	Mail 2 higher disagreement

Based on the small number of variables with statistically significant differences, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for the Town of Wheaton survey sample.

Appendix B – Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Survey, 2019 - Written Comments

Written comments from survey respondents were transcribed verbatim. In some instances, the SRC corrected misspelled words, but have generally not modified comments for grammar or clarity. There were instances where survey respondents wrote “N/A” as a written response. The SRC has excluded N/A comments from the compilations shown below.

Q1: What are the four most important reasons you and your family choose to live in the Town of Wheaton? “Other” Comments (46 Responses)

- Born and raised here (x4)
- Grew up here (x3)
- Country living suggests peace and quiet (x2)
- No subdivisions or industrial development (x2)
- A woman
- Across to 94/Highway 24
- Bought grandfather's farm.
- Brother
- Business friendly
- Close to Chippewa Falls
- Close to Eau Claire
- Close to work
- Convenient location - near stores, church, schools
- Cost of the land 110 acres
- Excellent fire department!
- Fire department and EMS is near by
- Hunting
- I just own farm land
- Land for sale
- Large land parcel
- Maintain family property
- Near Menards
- No close neighbors
- Not seeing other houses is the primary reason full privacy
- Not very many neighbors
- Only have a storage barn on property other lot in city
- Own property
- Owned the land
- Prominent to Interstate Hwy, Eau Claire and Twin Cities
- Quiet
- Quieter neighborhood
- Raised here

- Sought to buy rural lot 1985 to build home.
- To have horses where we lived
- We are a business
- We are a church that's been here over 100 years
- We are free from multi-housing units
- We got our 6 acres cheap and our taxes was cheap. Not now.
- *The following comment was written by a respondent in blank space available around Question 1 of the survey:* But then 4 months after we moved in, they upped \$400! Not happy. My neighbors and I all have school age children and open enroll to Elk Mound. We want to and need bus on 34th Street to Elk Mound.

Q3: Fill the circles of the two most effective ways the Town of Wheaton could provide Comprehensive Planning information to its landowners and residents. "Other" Comments (25 Responses)

- Email (x16)
- Facebook (x3)
- Direct email
- Don't
- Phone
- Referendums
- School
- Website

Q21: Rate the following in the Town of Wheaton: "Other" Comments (19 Responses)

- Park n' Ride (x2)
- Better enforcement of speed limits and "truck route" use on what have become short-cuts on what were residential country roads
- Board members
- Business from large trucks
- Farm truck traffic/speeding
- Garbage service
- Keeping road right of way cleaned
- Lines on road need paint up keep
- Local government
- Motorcycle
- Need better rail services
- Packs
- Power lines (too many, too large)
- Road maintenance, shoulders corners - gravel
- Snowmobile trails
- Truck routes
- We have no share rides
- We live in the country...

Q22: Rate the following in the Town of Wheaton: “Other” Comments (28 Responses)

- ATV Trails (x17)
- Ball Fields (x3)
- Are there bike trails???
- Country- country leave it
- Horse trails
- Road corners
- Sledding hills
- Taxes
- Walking trails
- We are close to these, Wheaton does not need their own

Q28: The Town of Wheaton should support the following energy alternatives as a form of development: “Other” Comments (13 Responses)

- Nuclear (x3)
- Natural Gas (x2)
- B & C after thorough study and unbiased impact report
- Bio energy
- Bio-mass energy
- High voltage lines
- NOT monetarily
- Please don't!! Both are so ugly
- Site a nuclear power plant (could dramatically reduce property taxes)
- Wind energy is a waste of money and supplies.

Q30: Is there anything else you would like to say about living in the Town of Wheaton? (162 Responses)

The SRC grouped most open-ended comments into topical categories based on the overall theme of the comment. However, there were some responses in which a respondent wrote comments touching on a wide range of topics which were challenging to categorize without losing the overall tone and meaning of the commentary. These comments were placed in a “multiple topics” category.

Country/Rural Living (37 Responses)

- As the world becomes crowded, rural land will be more desirable to all.
- Do not like housing development with less than 5 acres. Water and sewer issues will come into place soon. Need to retain our RURAL area not city living. Groundwater is in jeopardy because of all the irrigation. Running when it is raining?!
- I bought my home in the town of Wheaton to be in a rural setting, not a business dept. No more building! Keep Ind. and Com business out!
- I don't like being a zoned township
- I enjoy the space between properties <illegible> areas. If I wanted to live in with more industry/business or closer housing I would live in town.

- I have the feel of living in the township- don't be in a hurry to change it.
- I like the peace and quiet the wild animals coming out to roam the beautiful view I have from my front door, with spring and fall colors. You can't see this in a crowded residential area.
- I live on the county line and have land in Wheaton and Elk Mound. My house and family boarding stable are in Elk Mound. My pastures are in Wheaton.
- I moved to the country to be in the country, leave it country living
- I moved to the country to enjoy country living and I'd like to keep it that way! If people want to live close to each other, move to town!
- It's important that this area stays rural.
- Keep it quiet
- Keep rural, not industrial
- Keep the 5-acre minimum!!!
- Lot sizes do not need to be 5 acres. 1/2 acre minimum would be enough if #1 perk.
- Love our neighbors! Lot sizes are great and keep it from feeling too cramped.
- Love the rural setting
- Nice to have peace and quiet
- People move to Wheaton for the way it is now. STOP trying to add more housing, lessen the lot size and not allow commercial business to expand off Hwy 29. Nobody moves here wanting 100 more neighbors! Net responsibility!
- Removal of abandoned buildings and unpainted properties
- Seems to be taken over by big business that include noise, air, water pollution. Cement companies, gravel companies, and other eyes sores. Expansion prevent of these will drive away resident. NOT enough regs regarding development. We need LESS commercial development. Ugly looking!
- Space, open country, sunsets
- The town of Wheaton is a great place to be because of its rural atmosphere. It is close enough to other larger cities that there is not a need for more industrial or commercial businesses. People live here because they want to be in the country.
- The unique and pleasing appeal to live in the town of Wheaton is the convenience of close to town living with a rural feel. Adding industry large number of homes will take away from that feel.
- We enjoy living in the Town of Wheaton because of its mostly rural, undeveloped character. Alternatives such as commercial, retail, industrial, manufacturing, and more family development are best suited for incorporates municipalities that can provide better infrastructure like water, sewer, curb, gutters, sidewalks, and things of that nature
- We enjoy our rural setting that is near city amenities.
- We enjoy the quiet country living. We like having our privacy without many neighbors and traffic.
- We enjoy the rural life and like it the way it is!
- We like rural living. We don't want to see clusters of houses or people walking on our roads where there is hills these people are hard to see!
- We live here because it's a rural community. Our home is on 2-acres and this is plenty for most homes - but we did purchase an adjacent 2-acre lot to raise some animals. Give people options -

please don't tell us what we can and cannot do - as long as we do not interfere with our neighbors. Let common sense prevail!

- We live in a rural/farm community for a reason. We would like it to stay that way.
- We love living in the country. Love the farm life, deer, turkey. Don't want land bought and rental townhouses by us.
- We love living in the country. Our roads are not taken care of in winter. I expect that to get worse based on all the money that was spent on tornado cleanup.
- We love the simple lifestyle. Jobs, work, industry somewhere else, and Wheaton is for living.
- We love the small-town rural atmosphere - that's why we've lived here 30+ years.
- We primarily moved here for "the country" atmosphere landscape (trees, hills) and no neighbors across the road need to keep lots no smaller than 5 acres. Please!!
- Would like it to remain a rural, country setting. Do not want to see subdivisions and multifamily housing.

Roads/Traffic (21 Responses)

- Cty T - needs right turn lanes or a center left turn lane. There is such an increase of traffic that the through people are inhibited.
- Ditches need to be mowed more often. Finish a job before you start another one. (example) 50th Street heats 2 layers of black top has not been finished yet the road is *<expletive>* in places
- Get rid of SA ordinance. There would be more residents to support roads, etc.
- I despise garbage days with excessive noise and rolling cans, despise obnoxious, loud noises after 9:00 p.m. and before 8:00a.m. speeding traffic is a nuisance on town roads
- I love living here. I do NOT love the amount of large truck traffic on my road. There is no speed limit sign and all vehicles go too fast! My dog was hit and killed. Not safe for walkers/ children.
- Line painting on some of the high use roads should be considered. Especially roads like 20th, 40th, and 50th streets between Hwy 29 and the north crossing. We had lines on 40th street at one time which were excellent. There was a grant from the state that the town of Wheaton received for this.
- Mark center lines on roads after repaving
- More road maintenance
- Please keep Menards truck traffic to 10th St. By adding stop like at "T" and 10th
- Please open town roads to ATV traffic
- Plows need to be more cognate of mailboxes and garbage cans. Speed limit signs, hidden driveway signs, and or shaving at the hills on 30th Ave. Tickle Belly Hill area. Kids and adults are notorious for trying to jump those hills at high speeds. As the area has become more developed - it has become a more dangerous situation.
- The speed limit on HWY F should be careful from 30th Ave. into EX county
- Too much truck traffic from farms that do not respect the speed limits near residential areas with small children, dogs, horses, etc. (Jenson farms) Nobody ever around to enforce the speed limit.
- Too much truck traffic on county road X/ Business 29- Re: Shipping containers from rail terminal across from sewage plant.

- Very happy here, nice place to raise a family, very happy that the town replaced our culvert when the road was re-plowed. Industry is good as long as the impacts becoming of the community is assessed.
- We definitely need center or outside lines on roads!!! Please
- We drive on N. Town Hall Road to get to our home, and the truck (and railroad) traffic between the North crossing and county line road is absolutely terrible. I hope this never happens to Wheaton, but we also hope to make a decent amount of money when we eventually sell our property. Apparently, I am a hypocrite! Thanks for this survey.
- We moved here from Eau Claire in June 2019, so I don't really know about the arm yet. Have not spent a winter hear yet so I can't evaluate the plowing.
- We need yellow and white lines put on our roads! "Safety first in Wheaton"
- Whoever did the roadwork on 50th street did a lousy job. Shoulder such a mess you cannot mow it and weeds grow rampant. Drain pipe installers wrecked several feet of my cement driveway. (Cracked)
- Would like ATV and UTV access on local roadways

Positive Sentiments (16 Responses)

- Great place to live and raise a family (x4)
- Love it! (x2)
- Friendly!!
- Good bunch of people and friends to be around near and know.
- Good community
- Great schools!
- It's fairly nice and safe
- It's great!
- Maintaining the sense of community is important
- We like it just the way it is
- Wheaton is a great place to live. You cannot please everyone or central everything. Remember that people need the freedom to prosper and do not always need to have every convenience given to them.
- When I lived there it was great. Now I only own land

Taxes (16 Responses)

- Taxes are too high (x6)
- Enjoy living here- but in the 20 years I have been here my taxes have tripled- our pay does not keep up- limits what we would like to do and want to do to our homes and property because of fear of how much our taxes will go up.
- Enjoy living in a community that is free of commercial developmental mass housing complexes, we do not need the added taxes, road congestion, and influx of people do to development. Tired of land developers lining their pockets with cash and raising our taxes.
- If it's not broke don't fix it (I don't live in the city of Eau Claire I don't need another confluence project) As for us the question about more tax money for snow plowing if we have a bad snow year and need a little more to cover cost that's ok but only as needed.
- Outrageous home assessments/taxes

- Property taxes too high. Going through Chippewa County zoning for permits sucks. They are rude/arrogant, and it costs too much.
- Residential lot size of 5 acres is too big, makes buying a lot too expensive, decreases new development and tax base
- Schools great! The 5-acre minimum at current prices stops many from home ownership.
<illegible>
- Taxes in the town of Wheaton use a to be very reasonable. It is one of the reasons that we purchased land and built in Wheaton. New taxes are as much or more than living on Lake Wissota
- The township is taxing people out of this township. I pay \$350.00 per month in property taxes. Enough is Enough!
- We vote and pay taxes. I have yet to see what service one provided by the town. The maintenance of our road-65th Ave. is nonexistent.

Farming (12 Responses)

- Driving farm machinery on road is difficult because vehicles are not courteous
- Eliminate or cut back on large animal farms! They are polluting the ground water with this waste and animal drugs. Even if they were in the area first, they have no right to pollute the groundwater.
- Farming is changing and we need to change with it. We need to expand our scope and not just focus on farming. We still need maintain the natural beauty of our township but invite other industries to be part of the fabric of our township.
- I was born and raised in the Town of Wheaton. It makes me frustrated to see people build expensive homes and then not be able to afford them. We need to keep our small-town farms alive.
- It's rural (with access to 3 cities) and we would like to keep it that way. Taxes are high and we are ok with that but keep roads paved and plowed. A BIG no to large scale farms!!!
- Keep farm land in farming. We are not making any more land.
- Keep it rural! Farmland and farms are disappearing. When land is gone it will never return to farmland, forest, parries, stop the CAFO's, too many cattle in one place. Issues with proper manure disposal and runoff into waterways!
- Love to see agriculture keep its place in our township. The "farmers" take care of more than their own families. Let's not lose sight of this!! I feel commercial business can use land that's not "quality" for farming and agriculture.
- No factory farms.
- Should have more enforcement of regulations on farms of more than 300 head of cattle to protect the ground water it is getting worse every year.
- The 5-acre minimum is resulting in a huge loss of usable agriculture land. Residential needs to be 1 1/2 acres!
- This is a largely rural/agricultural township. Let it stay that way. If areas become built up, then they should be done in a way the protects streams/rivers and groundwater

Multiple Topics (11 Responses)

- 1. Let tax payers and not the chairman or board decide 2. More use of ball field and pavilion for adults. Possibly evening travel movies and use of concession stands. How did we lose "Wheaton

Friend Updates" great community event for people to get together? Another great decision by the chairman and board.

- A great place to live. But the tax man is determined to tax us to death. We've seen plenty of housing and commercial development over the years which gives them more tax to use but the services stay the same and our taxes keep rising.
- Business should be along the Hwy 29 corridor not just T and 29. Property taxes too high. Board members and planning committee should be different people. Shouldn't be able to be on both boards.
- Great place for our family. Farmers here first- don't make it more difficult for them. we notice a lot more bikes on the road
- I don't want to see too much overdevelopment, also like low taxes (property) good roads
- It used to be good living here. But it is getting bad. After you took us out of Hallie fire dept. Without finding how the tax payees feel about it! Also, how come our town worker don't do any work? Every time I see them, they are riding around in the trucks burning up gas on roads that are not Wheaton!
- Need more housing and more businesses= jobs. The farmers are not paying a fair share of the taxes, so tax burden falls on homeowners and the five-acre ordinance limits homes in the township. Need more jobs- currenting NONE in the township
- The town is changing from agriculture to more resident Co "T" should be four lanes to 29 from Clairmont
- Town of Wheaton should support commercial and business development as a priority. Town of Wheaton is a family friendly place to live. We are fortunate to have two very good town crew members and currently an excellent town board.
- We bike a lot- where are there any in township? Keep any Commercial/ Industrial development south of Highway 29. Keep lot size @ 5Ac. Keep large commercial dairies to a minimum and protect our ground water!
- With housing development, especially on F; traffic has increased significantly. Speed limit change from 35 to 55 should be moved North on F beyond 20th Ave. Large capacity well development and ag chemical/pesticide/herbicides use has contaminated many wells. Report from Chippewa Land use/zoning?

Recreation (9 Responses)

- We need ATV trails (x3)
- Maybe put in hiking trails
- We need more bike trails!
- We need more bike trails/ lanes. Finish the one that goes over the Chippewa river adjacent to Hwy 29. Make a bike lane down old 29
- We need smaller lots and more homes ASAP!
- We would love horse trails and walking trails that allow dogs.
- We would love more bike/run trails and parks. We love the rural/country feel of Wheaton and the 5-acre ordinance is essential to keeping that.

Pollution (7 Responses)

- Ground water is contaminated with e coli and nitrates
- Having a dump/recycling place is very much appreciated! We have garbage collection service but still use the dump. It is important to avoid trash clutter and provide access to proper disposal. Also, we appreciate the rural and city atmosphere.
- Lifelong resident. Increased runoff through our property as time passes - concerned about potential flooding in the future as climate change continues to occur.
- Need to pay attention to air, surface, and ground water pollution when making comprehensive planning decisions
- Need to regulate liquid manure and application on field and smell. Also monitor mess on roads
- Protect our drinking water. Preserve farmland. I do not understand your new way of plowing our roads.
- Protect water!

Other Concerns/Suggestions (7 Responses)

- Crime rate higher than I like: speeding, poaching, break ins, police response- slow, more trespassers, bullying
- GOOD PLACE TO RAISE FAMILY. Need to stay ahead of drug related crimes and burglaries. Far side of county lack some police. A neighborhood water program would help
- Great township! With that said not all areas of Wheaton fit the questions in this survey. Certain land along Hwy 29 make great commercial opportunities for tax base. Many others along 29 and other lands more suitable for Housing developments.
- I love Wheaton- very good town board- volunteer fire, patrol men- ball field, etc. I do think that the town hall needs a sound system (loud speaker) for us older hard of hearing guys and girls.
- Make commercial signage backlit only
- Mow ditches and cutting brush
- Need daycares, Kwik Trip and bus service to Elk Mound Schools on 34th street. ~10 kids on street are open enrolled there and parents are finding transportation difficult.

Emergency Services (5 Responses)

- Ambulance services comes from Hallie. Which is quite far for some places. Also share rides would be great. No busing for disabled or elderly.
- Emergency services should be dispatched from closer towns, depending on where you live in Wheaton. I am 3.5 miles away from Luther and yet wait for someone to come from Chippewa. We love living here! P.S. more traffic patrol needed on busy roads!
- I get no services, as I live on a county Rd. I would just toss injured people in my car, as I could be @ the Hospital 20 min before any ambulance could get there.
- I would like to commend our Street Dept. for their excellent job removing snow from our road during the very difficult winter last year.
- Moved to Wheaton because of the 5-acre requirement. Response time for ambulance service will probably be better after 2020. With CF and EC both so close, I feel Wheaton doesn't need a lot of separate recreational activities - both cities are close.

Town Board (5 Responses)

- 24 & 25 show objectively and support the ignorance of Plan Com. chair and other members of the Plan Com & town board. This/Wheaton was a good and progressive team pair to current govt.
- XXXXX (town board) is unhelpful, hurtful, and disrespectful. It's one thing to do your job, but it's another to deny help and advice when asked for. We love town of Wheaton and plan to live our lives here for many years to come.
- Our town board and planning committee is made up of people who are very concerned about their own well-being and those who are their relatives or friends. Too many rolling quorum meetings are held outside scheduled legal meetings
- Town board has been receptive and listens to citizens. During the cleanup of the tornado and found help extensively
- Town Representatives are more concerned with personal agenda and less about resident concerns

Tornado Clean-Up (4 Responses)

- Great job with the tornado help! Excellent!!!!
- I appreciate the organized and coordinated response and clean up from the tornado damage.
- Nice little township- were looking forward to living there prior to the tornado taking out all our trees and pole shed.
- The township did a remarkable job assisting residents in recovering from the recent tornado. So proud of everyone who helped with coordination and boots on the ground efforts.

Internet Service (3 Responses)

- Internet services for residential develops! Still waiting after living here 16 years!
- The lack of internet accessibility is sad. There should be no dead zones in this day and age. The internet has been around for 20 years. Businesses cannot survive if there is no access.
- We need affordable TV and internet services that work. We are only 1 1/2 miles from the Eau Claire line and can't get affordable service.

County Board (1 Response)

- I wish we had better representation on the county board.

Miscellaneous (8 Responses)

- I have lived in Wheaton since 1978. It was much more quiet and slow- paced then. My children rode their bikes to friends' houses. Now I do not take my great-grandchildren for a ride in the stroller on my road (20th ST.) The neighborhood is still very scenic with plenty of wildlife and trees. Elk Mound has top notch schools and bus service! "New" Hwy 29 was much needed and is quite loud; win some and lose some! All in all, still a great place to live.
- I have lived in Wheaton since 1988 and am still here
- I only own a Wheaton town lot with a storage unit on it. It cannot have a residence or business that require water and sewer service due to its size.
- In item #8 I selected option B because in theory it better protects our natural resources. However, this is only the case if a formal management plan and protections are developed for the conservancy land. If those plans and protections are in place and followed, then I would be

in favor of the smaller lots with conservancy land. (I am not in favor of smaller lots without conservancy land)

- Not built our house yet. Reside in neighborhood right know
- Our house flooded in March largely due to Chippewa County opening a culvert on the corner of County Road F with no safe route for the water to go. I called the town of Wheaton for assistance to open the culverts and ditches on 80th street and no help was given. I lost half my house due to poor decisions by the town of Wheaton and Chippewa County. I have asked for help to look at how the corner can be modified to prevent this from happening again.
- Question 3, 14, and 15 are related in our minds. The issue for us isn't lot size- rather it is what kind of land the lot sits on. Questions 26 and 17 should be in limited areas.
- Refer to Question #8, I had to select option A traditional design even though I prefer the concept of Option B. Based on town meetings, there is no guarantee that the set aside land will be preserved, and its fate will be up to the discretion of the developer.

Q33: Place of Residence: "Other" Comments (7 Responses)

- Land (x4)
- Family
- Not in Wheaton anymore
- Own farm land

Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question

2019 Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey

Sample, n = 590

QUALITY OF LIFE

The following questions ask your opinion on the quality of life in the Town of Wheaton.

1. What are the four most important reasons you and your family choose to live in <u>the Town of Wheaton</u> ? Choose up to four only.		
25% Agriculture	37% Natural Beauty	8% Recreational Opportunities
5% Appearance of Homes	32% Near Family and Friends	58% Rural Character
15% Cost of Home	31% Near Job (Employment Opportunity)	5% Town Services
3% Historical Significance	26% Property Taxes	6% Other: (Please specify): See Appendix B
50% Home Lot Size	26% Quality Neighborhood	
19% Low Crime Rate	25% Quality Schools	

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

These questions ask your opinion about the community facilities and services in the Town of Wheaton.

2. Rate the following <u>local services</u> .	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
a. Ambulance Service	10%	56%	8%	2%	24%
b. Cemetery Services	5%	19%	8%	1%	68%
c. Fire Protection	33%	37%	7%	1%	22%
d. Law Enforcement Services	17%	43%	13%	3%	24%
e. Recycling Programs	28%	42%	13%	4%	13%
f. Signage	13%	49%	12%	2%	24%
g. Storm Water Management	4%	27%	12%	5%	51%

COMMUNICATION

3. Fill the circles of the **two** most effective ways the Town of Wheaton could provide Comprehensive Planning information to its landowners and residents. Choose **two** only.

Direct Mailings	Newsletters	Public Meetings	Town's Website	Other: (Please specify): See Appendix B
70%	67%	20%	33%	4%

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following questions ask your opinion about the importance of natural and cultural resources **in the Town of Wheaton**.

4. How important is it to protect and preserve the following in the Town of Wheaton:	Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion
a. Air Quality	48%	34%	15%	1%	1%
b. Farmland	37%	35%	21%	4%	2%
c. Forested Lands	39%	37%	21%	1%	2%
d. Groundwater	70%	21%	7%	1%	1%
e. Historic Resources and Cultural Sites	11%	24%	45%	12%	9%
f. Rivers and Streams	52%	32%	13%	1%	2%
g. Rural Character	34%	35%	24%	3%	3%
h. Scenic Views and Undeveloped Hills	30%	31%	26%	8%	4%
i. Wetlands	36%	26%	28%	7%	3%
j. Wildlife Habitat	42%	30%	23%	3%	3%

HOUSING

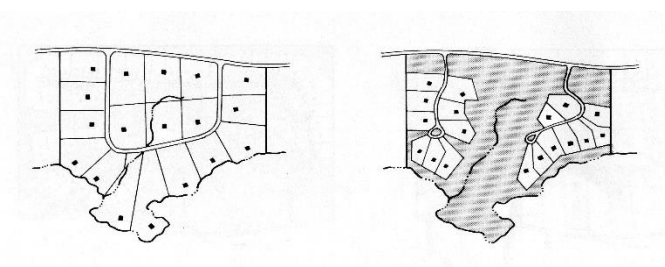
The following questions ask your opinion about the development of housing **in the Town of Wheaton**.

5. The following types of housing are needed:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Single Family Housing	32%	40%	9%	4%	15%
b. Duplexes (2 units)	2%	21%	30%	33%	13%
c. Apartments (3 or more units)	2%	7%	28%	51%	12%
6. Affordable housing is needed in the Town of Wheaton.	10%	27%	20%	21%	21%
7. Elderly housing is needed in the Town of Wheaton.	9%	32%	21%	14%	24%

8. Would you prefer housing built in a traditional design (Option A) or a cluster design (Option B)? Please fill the circle for either Option A or Option B below to indicate your preference.

42% OPTION A

58% OPTION B



AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

The following questions ask your opinion about agriculture and land use **in the Town of Wheaton**.

9. Productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Agricultural Use	68%	30%	0%	1%	2%
b. Residential Use	9%	44%	28%	14%	5%
c. Commercial Use	3%	22%	37%	31%	7%
d. Any Use	6%	10%	34%	40%	10%
10. Large scale farms (500 or more animal units) should be allowed to expand.	8%	30%	30%	24%	9%
11. Landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want.	10%	23%	41%	24%	4%
12. The visual impacts (view of the landscape) of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development.	31%	55%	6%	2%	5%
13. It is important to require that driveways will meet standards for providing emergency services.	36%	54%	4%	1%	5%
14. There should be a minimum lot size on residential development in rural areas.	49%	36%	7%	4%	4%

15. In your opinion, what should the minimum lot size be for rural residential development? Choose **one** only.

Less than 5 acres 23%	5 acres (<i>Current Ordinance</i>) 68%	Greater than 5 acres 6%	No Opinion 3%
--------------------------	---	----------------------------	------------------

TRANSPORTATION

This series of questions asks your opinion about transportation issues.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
16. The condition of local roads and streets in the <u>Town of Wheaton</u> is adequate for intended uses.	16%	74%	7%	2%	1%
17. I am satisfied with snow removal on <u>Town of Wheaton</u> roads.	21%	62%	11%	3%	4%
18. Biking and walking are important modes of transportation in the <u>Town of Wheaton</u> .	11%	37%	30%	8%	14%
19. There should be more biking and walking lanes along public roadways in the <u>Town of Wheaton</u> .	14%	23%	34%	14%	15%
20. I would be willing to pay more taxes for snow removal and road maintenance in the <u>Town of Wheaton</u> .	3%	22%	44%	22%	9%

21. Rate the following in the Town of Wheaton :	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
a. Railroads	5%	28%	10%	1%	55%
b. Shared Ride Van Services	1%	7%	8%	7%	78%
c. Other: See Appendix B	1%	1%	3%	7%	89%

RECREATION

This series of questions asks your opinion about recreation issues.

22. Rate the following <u>in the Town of Wheaton</u> :	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
a. Bike Trails	2%	12%	15%	15%	56%
b. Boating and River Facilities Access	4%	35%	18%	4%	39%
c. Park and Recreation Facilities	17%	45%	13%	3%	21%
d. Snowmobile Trails	12%	36%	8%	1%	43%
e. Other: See Appendix B	2%	2%	1%	13%	83%

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
23. I would be willing to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities <u>in the Town of Wheaton</u> .	2%	19%	41%	28%	11%

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The following questions ask how you view economic development in the Town of Wheaton.

24. Commercial buildings and activities, which may include truck traffic should be located in...? Choose **one** only.

Commercial zoned districts only 77%	Anywhere in the Town of Wheaton 16%	No Opinion 7%
--	--	------------------

25. Industrial buildings and activities, which may include truck traffic should be located in...? Choose **one** only.

Industrial zoned districts only 83%	Anywhere in the Town of Wheaton 11%	No Opinion 6%
--	--	------------------

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
26. <u>The Town of Wheaton</u> should work to coordinate efforts to actively recruit new business and industry.	11%	42%	24%	8%	15%
27. <u>The Town of Wheaton</u> should provide infrastructure (water, sewer, access, etc.) for some industrial and commercial uses.	5%	25%	36%	18%	17%

28. <u>The Town of Wheaton</u> should support the following energy alternatives as a form of development:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Ethanol Plants	3%	16%	36%	27%	18%
b. Solar Energy	25%	48%	8%	10%	10%
c. Wind Energy	20%	41%	14%	14%	11%
d. Other: See Appendix B	5%	4%	2%	4%	84%

29. Rate the importance of the following <u>in the Town of Wheaton</u> :	Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion
a. Agricultural Related Businesses	31%	34%	26%	4%	5%
b. Commercial and Retail Development	6%	16%	37%	34%	7%
c. Home Based Businesses	9%	22%	43%	15%	11%
d. Industrial and Manufacturing Development	5%	13%	36%	37%	8%
e. Tourism and Recreation	9%	22%	38%	23%	8%

30. Is there anything else you would like to say about living in the Town of Wheaton? **See Appendix B**

DEMOGRAPHICS: Please tell us some things about you:

31. Gender:	Male	Female	Other					
	64%	36%	0%					
32. Age:	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and older		
	0%	6%	11%	20%	27%	36%		
33. Place of Residence:	Own		Rent		Other: See Appendix B			
	98%		1%		1%			
			0	1	2	3	4	5+
34. Number of Adults (18 or older) in Household:			X	17%	71%	9%	3%	1%
35. Number of Children (under 18) in Household:			73%	10%	11%	4%	2%	1%
36. Household Income Range:	Prefer Not to Answer	Less than 15,000	15,000 – 24,999	25,000 – 49,999	50,000 – 74,999	75,000 – 99,999	100,000 or More	
	25%	2%	4%	12%	17%	16%	25%	
37. How long have you lived in the Town of Wheaton?	Non-resident	Less than 1 year	1 – 4 years	5 – 9 years	10 – 24 years	25+ years		
	4%	1%	9%	9%	30%	47%		

Addendum

Existing Intergovernmental Agreements

1. City of Eau Claire Sewer Service Area Plan, January 2013
2. Reserved for Future Agreements