

Comprehensive Plan

Town of Wheaton Chippewa County, Wisconsin

December 8, 2009

Adopted on December 8, 2009 by Ordinance 12-08-09



ORDINANCE # - 12-08-09
AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
OF THE TOWN OF WHEATON, WISCONSIN

The Town Board of the Town of Wheaton, Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to sections 62.23(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, the Town of Wheaton is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 2. The Town Board of the Town of Wheaton, Wisconsin, has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by section 66.1001(4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 3. The Plan Commission of the Town of Wheaton, Wisconsin, by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the Town Board the adoption of the document entitled "Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan," containing all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

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

SECTION 5. The Town Board of the Town of Wheaton, Wisconsin, does, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the document entitled, "Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan" pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 6. This ordinance shall take effect upon the passage by a majority vote of the members-elect of the Town Board and publication/posting as required by law.

ADOPTED this 8th day of December 2009

Paul A. Krumenauer
Paul Krumenauer, Town Board Chair

Published: December 10, 2009
Posted: December 10, 2009

Approved: [Signature]

Attest: Mark Christenson
Mark Christenson, Town Clerk

Acknowledgements

Town Board

Paul Krumenauer, Chair
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Al Solberg
Bob Sworski

Planning Commission

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The individuals above, along with many other Town staff and community leaders were instrumental in the creation of this Plan. The Plan was partially funded through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Many of the photos throughout this document were taken in the Town of Wheaton by town resident Alon Coppens.

Chippewa County created several maps and provided background information that was essential in the development of this Plan.

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission created many of the maps in this document. They also prepared an Existing Conditions Report for Chippewa County which was used as a resource for this plan.

Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH[®]) was retained by the Town to assist in developing this Comprehensive Plan. SEH is a multidisciplined, professional services firm comprised of 650 engineers, architects, planners and scientists in a full range of transportation, civil, environmental and structural engineering services; urban design, community planning and architectural design; and technology and GIS services.

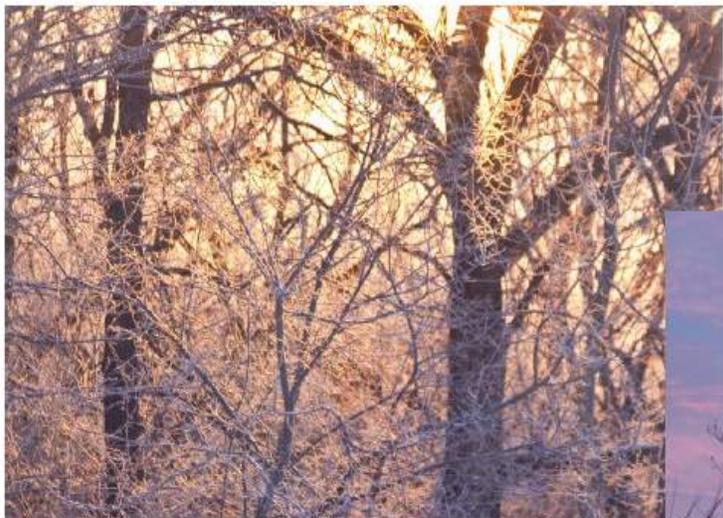


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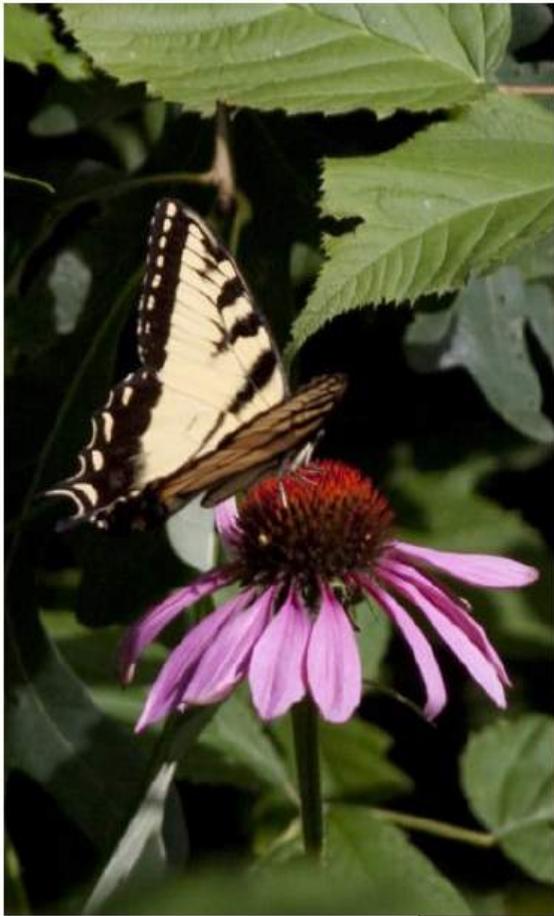
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Appendix A
Survey Results



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

1.2 The Town of Wheaton Planning Effort

1.3 The Town of Wheaton Planning Process and Public Involvement

The Town of Wheaton is situated in the southwestern portion of Chippewa County on State Highway 29. The Town is adjacent to the City of Chippewa Falls which serves as the governmental center of Chippewa County. Besides Chippewa Falls to the east, Wheaton is bordered by the Towns of Tilden and Howard to the north, the City of Eau Claire and the Town of Union to the south, the Village of Lake Hallie on the southeast and the Town of Elk Mound to the west.



Geese on the Chippewa River

The land use within Wheaton is primarily utilized for agricultural production. According to the 2000 Census, less than 1 percent of the Town's land is water.

Nearby major urban areas include the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls area to the southeast, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area to the west.

Several regional transportation corridors run through the Town: State Highway 29 runs east-west through the middle of the Town. U.S. Highway 53 cuts through a very small area in the northeast corner of the Town, and U.S. Highway 12 cuts through a very small area of the southwest portion of the Town.

The process of completing this plan has been thorough, and involved numerous residents and countless hours of effort from the Plan Commission.

1.1 Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

The 1999 Wisconsin Legislative Act 9 created a framework in the State of Wisconsin for community planning. There are nine elements of a Comprehensive Plan that must be addressed under the current planning legislation. These nine elements include the following:

1. Issues and Opportunities
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Utilities and Community Facilities
5. Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
6. Economic Development
7. Intergovernmental Cooperation
8. Land Use
9. Implementation

*Comprehensive Planning
Answers Three Questions:*

- 1) *Where has the community been?*
- 2) *Where do we want to be in 20 years?*
- 3) *What will it take to get there?*

According to Wisconsin Statute, the Comprehensive Plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the community. In accordance with existing and future needs, the Comprehensive Plan will promote public health, safety, and the general welfare of the entire community. The Planning Law requires zoning, official mapping, and subdivision regulations be consistent with a Comprehensive Plan by January 1, 2010.

1.2 The Town of Wheaton Planning Effort

The planning process began in the spring of 2008. Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH[®]) was retained to assist the Town of Wheaton in the planning process and the preparation of their Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared through the guidance of the Town Plan Commission. The Commission represents a wide range of interests to ensure that the entire community's values/interests are expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission met periodically during the drafting of this Plan to discuss land use issues, review Plan materials, and ultimately recommend the adoption of the Plan to the Wheaton Town Board.

1.3 The Town of Wheaton Planning Process and Public Involvement

The Town of Wheaton is committed to an open public involvement/outreach program that invites participation from all Town residents at every level in the decision-making process. The Town will continue to engage the community in the development of planning related items and tasks that are discussed in the Comprehensive Plan. Meeting notices for all Plan Commission meetings were advertised and open to the public.

Future public involvement opportunities will include Town Board meetings, Plan Commission meetings, and multi-jurisdictional planning meetings. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a working document that will require periodic reviews and updates as trends and patterns develop across Western Wisconsin, Chippewa County, and the Town of Wheaton.

At the onset, the Town was committed to a highly participatory process. As such, the Town has held many public meetings. The first major public meeting began in July 2008, when the Town held a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) meeting at the Town Hall. Results of the SWOT meeting are contained in Section 2.0 – Issues and Opportunities.

In August 2008, a Plan Commission meeting was held to develop the Town Vision Statement. This statement was utilized as the foundation in developing the necessary elements for the Town of Wheaton's Comprehensive Plan.

With the elements drafted, the Town began a series of meetings identifying Goals, Objectives, and Policies for each of the elements.

Strengths
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats

2.0 Issues and Opportunities

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Key Issues
- 2.3 SWOT Analysis and Vision Statement
- 2.4 Visual Preference
- 2.5 Survey Results

2.1 Introduction

Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(a)
 (a) Issues and opportunities element. *Background information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20-year planning period. Background information shall include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its Comprehensive Plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local governmental unit.*

The Issues and Opportunities section is designed to cover two main issues. First, to provide a demographic context for the development of the Town of Wheaton’s plan. Second, to list the planning goals and objectives for the Town of Wheaton as prepared during the planning process.

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies, as well as the Vision Statement for the Town of Wheaton that were developed as part of the planning process are found in this element.

2.2 Key Issues

Population

Analyzing population size, growth, density, characteristics and distribution trends reveals important facts about the most important component of growth and development in the Town of Wheaton.

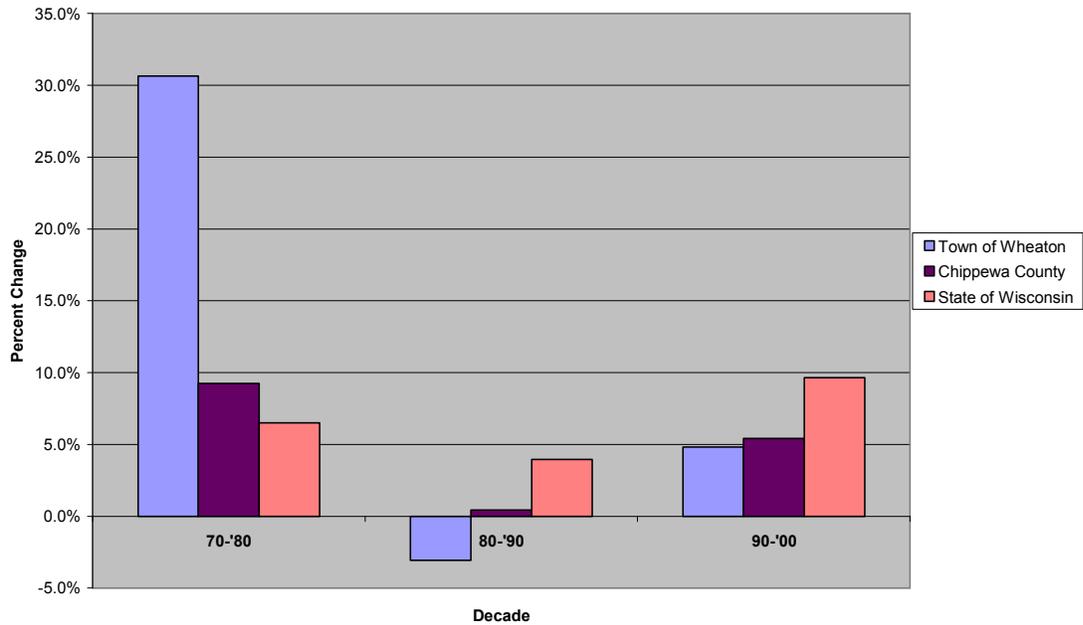
The Town of Wheaton grew by nearly five percent in 1990’s (see Table 2-1). This was nearly half of the average rate for all of the towns in Chippewa County. This was also slightly lower than the County average as a whole, but a higher growth rate than the average of Chippewa County cities and villages.

**Table 2-1
 Historical Population and Population Change - 1970 to 2000
 Chippewa County by Minor Civil Division**

Unit of Government	1970	1980	1990	2000	Percentage Change		
					70-80	80-90	90-00
Town of Wheaton	1,782	2,328	2,257	2,366	30.6%	-3.0%	4.8%
Chippewa County towns	19,994	22,354	22,406	24,201	11.8%	0.2%	8.0%
Chippewa County villages	1,919	2,359	2,470	2,572	22.9%	4.7%	4.1%
Chippewa County cities	20,116	20,947	21,157	21,546	4.1%	1.0%	1.8%
Chippewa County	47,717	52,127	52,360	55,195	9.2%	0.4%	5.4%
State of Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,642	4,891,796	5,363,715	6.5%	4.0%	9.6%

Source: U.S. Census

**Figure 2-1
Population Change Town of Wheaton - 1970-2000**



Source: U.S. Census

Historically, the Town of Wheaton’s population has fluctuated between decades. The 1970’s saw over a 30 percent increase, while the 1980’s saw a three percent loss.

Population Projections

Population projections have long been used to assess development prospects and community facility needs created by population growth. Small area population forecasts can be used to evaluate potential residential development and 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. This estimate of future growth is also valuable information for establishing management techniques in order to provide for orderly growth and development.

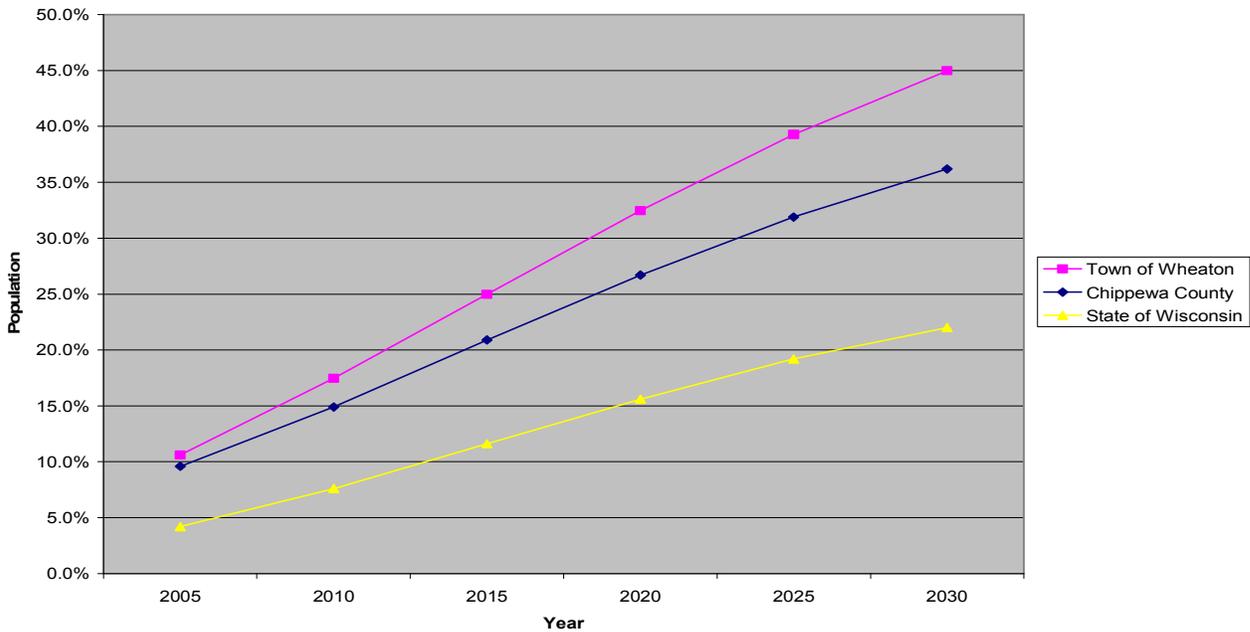
**Table 2-2
Population Projections - 2000 to 2030 - Chippewa County by Minor Civil Division**

Unit of Government	Census	Projection						Change 2000-2030	
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Number	Percent
Town of Wheaton	2,366	2,617	2,779	2,957	3,134	3,295	3,430	1,064	45.0%
Chippewa County towns	31,077	28,373	30,004	31,768	33,513	35,075	36,382	5,305	17.1%
Chippewa County villages	2,572	8,320	8,947	9,630	10,313	10,945	11,495	8,923	346.9%
Chippewa County cities	21,546	23,802	24,462	25,311	26,127	26,803	27,275	5,729	26.6%
Chippewa County	55,195	60,495	63,413	66,709	69,953	72,823	75,152	19,957	36.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center, January 2004

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) population projections are, by state statute, the official population projections for Wisconsin. Over the next 25 years, the DOA projections predict a 45 percent increase in the Town of Wheaton’s population, which amounts to 1,064 additional residents (Table 2-2 and Figure 2-2). This projected percentage increase is slightly higher than that of Chippewa County, and more than the average of all the towns and cities in Chippewa County. Villages in Chippewa County are projected to increase by approximately 346 percent from 2000 to 2030. This significant increase is primarily explained by the incorporation of the Village of Lake Hallie. From 2005 to 2030 (after the incorporation was completed), Chippewa County villages are projected to increase at a rate of 38 percent, which is much closer to the County-wide average.

Figure 2-2
Wheaton Projected Population Growth



Source: DOA

Age

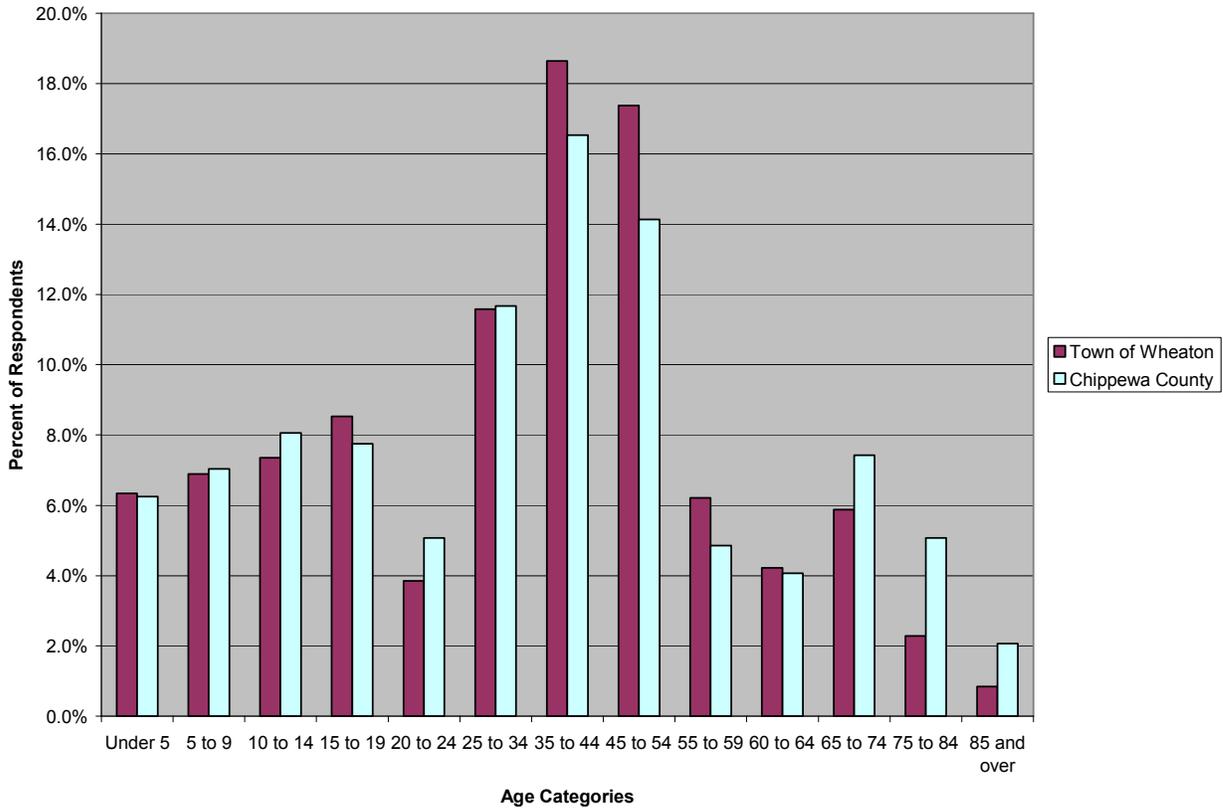
The age of a community is also important in identifying the needs of the community. Table 2-3 and Figure 2-3 show Wheaton and Chippewa County age distributions. Wheaton and Chippewa County’s median ages are nearly identical (37.7 and 37.6, respectively). The Town of Wheaton has a higher percentage of its population in the 35 to 60 year old categories, while Chippewa County has a higher percentage of residents in the 65 and over categories. It is important to take this population into consideration when planning because as they age, they will tend to desire and need different services and amenities to remain living comfortably in the Town.

**Table 2-3
Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County Age Distribution**

	Wheaton		Chippewa County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	150	6.3%	3,451	6.3%
5 to 9	163	6.9%	3,882	7.0%
10 to 14	174	7.4%	4,448	8.1%
15 to 19	202	8.5%	4,282	7.8%
20 to 24	91	3.8%	2,800	5.1%
25 to 34	274	11.6%	6,444	11.7%
35 to 44	441	18.6%	9,128	16.5%
45 to 54	411	17.4%	7,801	14.1%
55 to 59	147	6.2%	2,676	4.8%
60 to 64	100	4.2%	2,246	4.1%
65 to 74	139	5.9%	4,099	7.4%
75 to 84	54	2.3%	2,799	5.1%
85 and over	20	0.8%	1,139	2.1%
Median Age	37.7		37.6	

Source: U.S. Census

**Figure 2-3
Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County Age Distribution**



Source: U.S. Census

Labor Force

As shown in Table 2-4, in 2000, the labor force in Wheaton had declined by four percent since 1990. Chippewa County's labor force participation rate decreased by over six percent during this same time period.

**Table 2-4
Wheaton and Chippewa County Labor Force**

Town of Wheaton	1990	2000
Persons Age 16 and over	1,518	1,802
In Labor Force	1,205	1,359
Percent in Labor Force	79.4%	75.4%
Employed	1,120	1,300
Unemployed	85	54
Percent Unemployed	7.1%	4.0%
Chippewa County	1990	2000
Persons Age 16 and over	39,171	42,499
In Labor Force	25,439	28,970
Percent in Labor Force	64.9%	68.2%
Employed	23,870	27,582
Unemployed	1,569	1,353
Percent Unemployed	6.2%	3.2%

Source: U.S. Census

The number and percentage of labor force participants who are unemployed, however, has declined significantly from 1990 to 2000. In 1990, the unemployment rate was just over seven percent, and by 2000 was down to four percent. This is slightly higher than Chippewa County's averages for these time periods, but the fact that it is declining is a positive aspect for the Town.

The increase in older residents will significantly impact the area labor force since older residents have lower participation rates than middle-aged residents. The 2000 participation rate of 75 percent has slipped from the rate in 1990 of 79 percent. Even though there is a short-term possibility that participation among older residents could increase, there is a stronger probability that the labor force has already reached a maximum level.

Employment

The current growth of the area's economy is a major contributor to the employment opportunities available to residents of Wheaton. The principal economic factors that influence an individual's quality of life and provide a choice of residential options are employment opportunities and income.

Chippewa County and Wheaton residents are experiencing an increase in commute times. As seen in Table 2-5, the number of Wheaton residents working at home was nearly cut in half from 1990 to 2000. The number of commuters driving 90 or more minutes to work on a daily basis doubled. In fact, every category of a 45 or more minute commute increased. This is

important in part because it is one indicator of the use of the existing transportation infrastructure. It also provides an important economic factor. As people experience longer commutes, they are driving more, resulting in higher fuel consumption and costs.

Table 2-5
Commuting Times - 1990 to 2000 - Town of Wheaton

	1990	2000	Change from 1990 to 2000	
			Number	Percent
Did not work at home:	935	1,213	278	29.7%
Less than 5 minutes	34	64	30	88.2%
5 to 9 minutes	96	96	0	0.0%
10 to 14 minutes	157	167	10	6.4%
15 to 19 minutes	187	259	72	38.5%
20 to 24 minutes	251	332	81	32.3%
25 to 29 minutes	74	113	39	52.7%
30 to 34 minutes	77	107	30	39.0%
35 to 39 minutes	12	6	-6	0.0%
40 to 44 minutes	10	6	-4	-40.0%
45 to 59 minutes	11	16	5	45.5%
60 to 89 minutes	12	19	7	58.3%
90 or more minutes	14	28	14	100.0%
Worked at home	150	77	-73	-48.7%
TOTAL	1085	1290	205	18.9%

Source: U.S. Census

From viewing the 1990 and 2000 Census, it can be seen in Table 2-6 that Wheaton residents working within Chippewa County decreased by nearly five percent between 1990 and 2000, while Wheaton residents working in other Wisconsin counties rose. Wheaton residents working outside of the state of Wisconsin more than doubled.

Table 2-6
Place of Work - 1990 to 2000 - Wheaton

Place of Work	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Chippewa County	525	48.4%	566	43.9%
Other Wisconsin County	547	50.4%	688	53.3%
Outside Wisconsin	13	1.2%	36	2.8%
TOTAL	1085	100.0%	1290	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census

Educational Attainment

The Census provides information on educational attainment levels, which are summarized in Table 2-7. Wheaton residents, on average, have a higher level of education than residents of the County as a whole, and the State of Wisconsin. In 2000, Wisconsin had 85.1 percent of residents 25 years and over with a high school diploma or higher. Comparatively, Chippewa County is near the state average, but Wheaton is slightly ahead of the curve, with nearly 92 percent of persons 25 years and over having at least a high school diploma. This percentage rose almost nine points from 1990 to 2000, indicating more emphasis being given to education.

Table 2-7
Education Level - Persons 25 years and over - Wheaton and Chippewa County - 1990 and 2000

Highest Education	Wheaton		Chippewa County	
	2000		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than high school diploma	146	8.8%	5,718	15.7%
High school graduate	571	34.5%	14,885	41.0%
Some college, no degree	314	19.0%	7,029	19.3%
Associate Degree	189	11.4%	3,370	9.3%
Bachelor's Degree	335	20.3%	3,757	10.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	99	6.0%	1,571	4.3%
High School Graduate or higher	1,508	91.2%	30,612	84.3%

Source: U.S. Census

Since 1990, more Wheaton residents have pursued an education beyond high school. In fact, in 2000, over 56 percent of Wheaton residents, and 43.2 percent of Chippewa County residents had attended a post-secondary institution, compared to 50.6 percent of all Wisconsin residents.

Schools

Wheaton residents are served by a variety of schools at the primary and secondary levels. Three public school districts serve Wheaton residents, including the Chippewa Falls School District, the Eau Claire School District, and the Elk Mound School District. Table 2-8 shows the enrollment for schools and school districts that serve the Town of Wheaton.

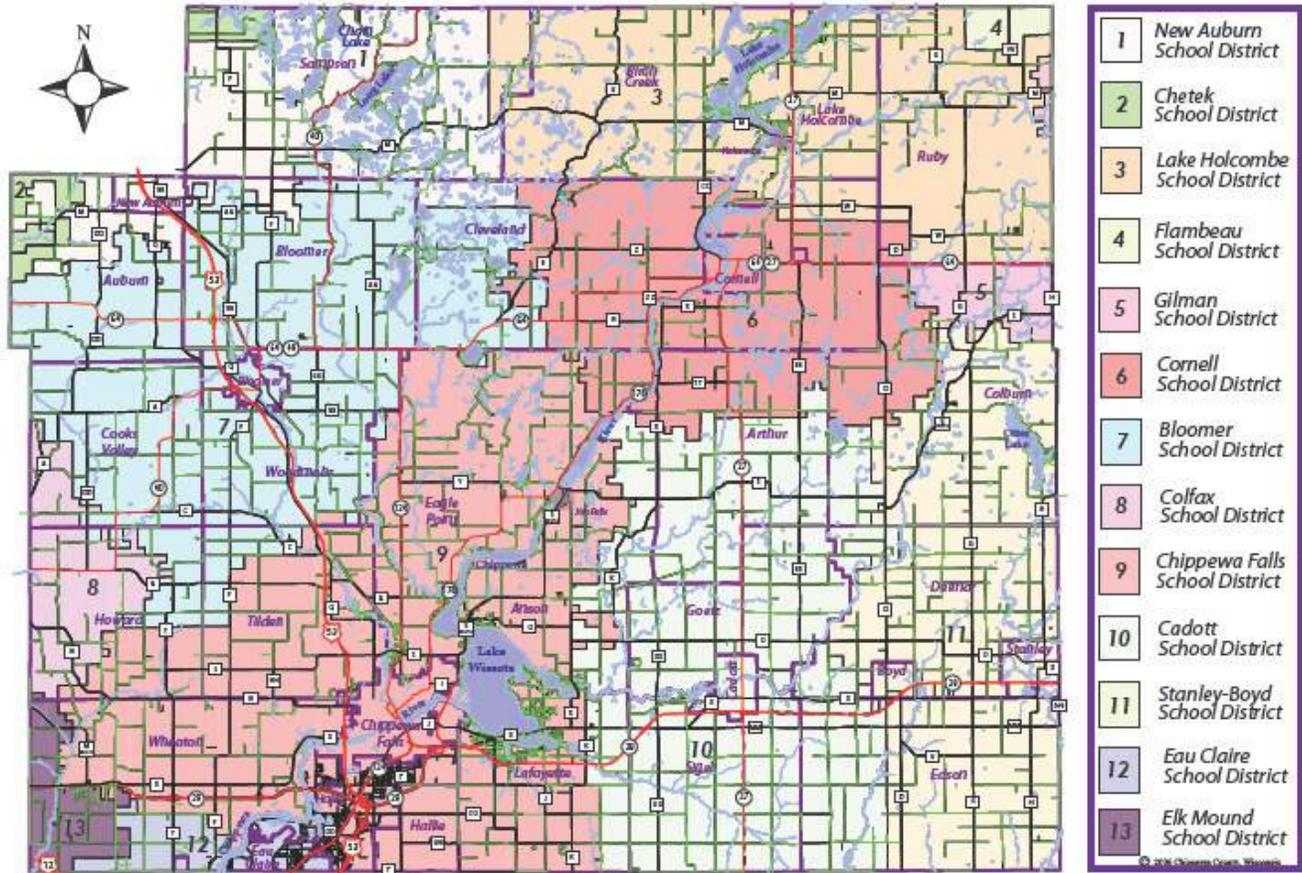
Table 2-8
Town of Wheaton School District Enrollment

District	2008 State Rank (District)	County Name	School	Grades	2001 Enrollment	2008 Enrollment	Change 2001-2008	
							Number	Percent
Chippewa Falls Area School District	31	Chippewa	Halmstad Elementary	KG 5	351	357	6	1.7%
		Chippewa	Hillcrest Elementary	KG 5	353	383	30	8.5%
		Chippewa	Jim Falls Elementary	KG 5	94	152	58	61.7%
		Chippewa	Parkview Elementary	KG 5	517	492	-25	-4.8%
		Chippewa	Southview Elementary	K4 5	273	622	349	127.8%
		Chippewa	Stillson Elementary	KG 5	329	383	54	16.4%
		Chippewa	Chippewa Falls Middle	6 8	996	1,029	33	3.3%
Elk Mound Area School District	198	Dunn	Mound View Elementary	K4 4	403	447	44	10.9%
		Dunn	Elk Mound Middle School	5 8	195	299	104	53.3%
		Dunn	Elk Mound High School	9 12	270	316	46	17.0%
Eau Claire Area School District	8	Eau Claire	Sherman Elementary	KG 5	312	426	114	36.5%
		Eau Claire	Roosevelt Elementary	KG 5	251	249	-2	-0.1%
		Eau Claire	DeLong Middle School	6 8	1,042	924	-118	-11.3%
		Eau Claire	North High School	9 12	1,719	1,554	-165	-9.6%
			TOTAL		8,565	9,231	666	7.8%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Total enrollment for the schools that serve the Town of Wheaton increased by nearly eight percent from 2001 to 2008. Figure 2-4 shows the school district boundaries that support Chippewa County children.

Figure 2-4
School District Boundaries



Source: Chippewa County

There are also several private schools that serve residents whose children would otherwise attend public schools, as shown in Table 2-9.

**Table 2-9
Private Schools for Wheaton Public School Districts**

Public School District Area	Private Schools	Grades Served	2008 Enrollment
Chippewa Falls Area	Christ Lutheran School	KG through 8th	57
	Holy Ghost Grade School	4th through 6th	99
	Liberty Christian School	KG through 12th	30
	McDonell High School	9th through 12th	208
	Notre Dame Middle School	7th through 8th	67
	St. Charles Borromeo School	K4 through 3rd	170
	St. Peter Grade School	1st through 8th	54
	Bethel Christian School	1st through 12th	23
Eau Claire Area	Case – St. James the Greater Grade School	KG through 5th	122
	Crestview Academy	KG through 8th	191
	Eau Claire Academy	4th through 12th	104
	Eau Claire Lutheran School	PK through 8th	79
	Immaculate Conception Grade School	KG through 5th	223
	Immanuel Lutheran Hi	9th through 12th	101
	Messiah Lutheran School	KG through 8th	105
	New Hope Christian School	K4 through 12th	18
	Regis High	9th through 12th	232
	Regis Middle	6th through 8th	172
	St. Mark Lutheran School	K4 through 8th	130

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Some children throughout Chippewa County and the Town of Wheaton are also homeschooled. There are just over 700 children that are homeschooled, who would qualify for enrollment in one of the school districts with territory in Chippewa County. This is roughly equivalent to 4.4 percent of the current public school enrollment, as indicated in Table 2-10. For the districts that serve the Town of Wheaton, there are just over 400 children that are homeschooled.

**Table 2-10
Chippewa County and Wheaton School District Homeschooling**

School District	Number Homeschooled	Percent of District Enrollment
Chippewa Falls	98	2.0%
Eau Claire Area	251	2.3%
Elk Mound	40	3.8%
Chippewa County Total	713	4.4%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Chippewa County school district average ACT scores are presented in Table 2-11. The average for all public school districts with territory in Chippewa County is slightly below the state average in all categories. In all subjects, this is less than a 1.2 point difference. However, there are several school districts throughout the County that have scores that exceed the state average in all of the subject areas, including the Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire Area School Districts.

Table 2-11
2007-2008 ACT Scores by School District

	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Chippewa Falls	22.4	23.6	23.1	23.6	23.3
Eau Claire Area	22.5	22.5	23.0	22.7	22.8
Elk Mound	20.5	20.6	22.0	21.1	21.1
Chippewa County Average	20.9	21.2	21.9	22.0	21.6
Wisconsin Average	21.6	22.3	22.5	22.3	22.3

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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

The education facilities not only provide children a place to learn, but also provide recreational opportunities with playgrounds, and a source of employment for many Chippewa County adults.

Income

Personal income includes net earnings by place of residence; dividends, interest, and rent; and personal current transfer receipts received.

Personal income is derived primarily from employment wages. An individual’s occupation determines 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.

Per capita personal income is the amount of income each individual in that geographic unit would receive if all of the income were divided equally amongst the entire population.

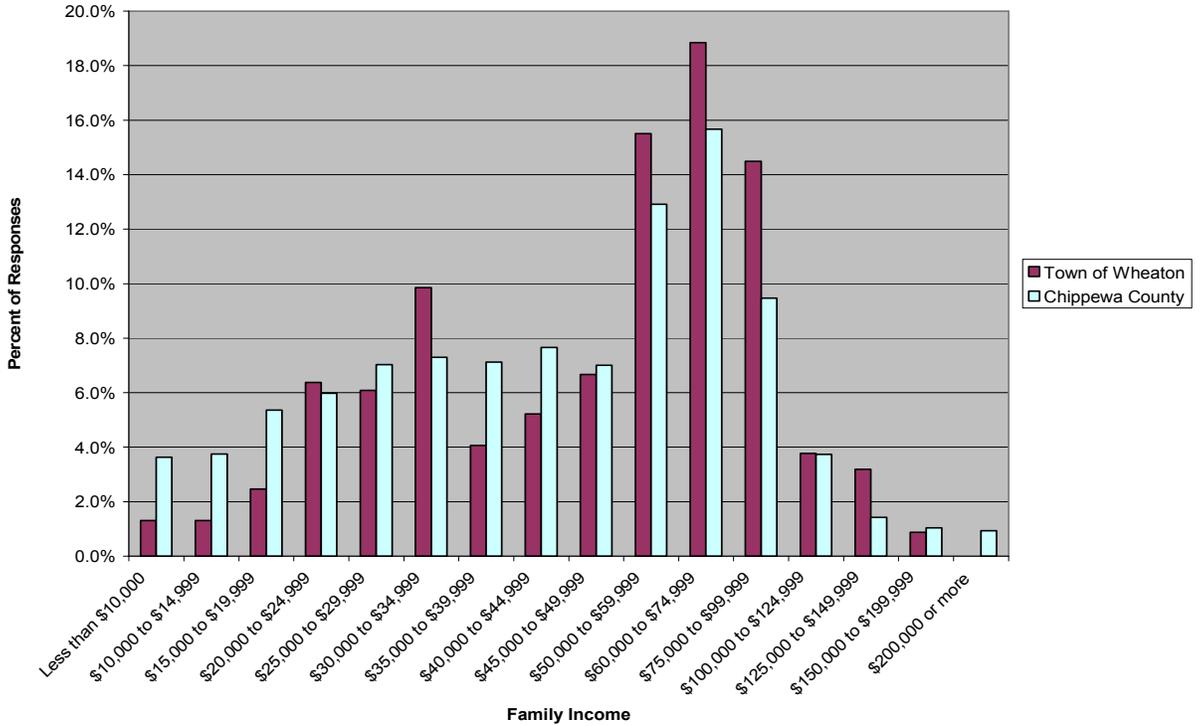
Overall, Wheaton has a higher percentage of families earning \$50,000 or more annually, and a lower percentage of families earning less than \$50,000 annually compared to Chippewa County’s average. The Town of Wheaton’s median family income is nearly \$9,000 higher than Chippewa County’s. Per capita income is also nearly \$2,000 higher for the Town of Wheaton. This is shown in Table 2-12 and Figure 2-5.

Table 2-12
Family Income - 2000

Earnings	Town of Wheaton		Chippewa County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	9	1.3%	546	3.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	9	1.3%	564	3.7%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	17	2.5%	807	5.4%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	44	6.4%	900	6.0%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	42	6.1%	1,059	7.0%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	68	9.9%	1,098	7.3%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	28	4.1%	1,072	7.1%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	36	5.2%	1,154	7.7%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	46	6.7%	1,056	7.0%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	107	15.5%	1,945	12.9%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	130	18.8%	2,361	15.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	100	14.5%	1,426	9.5%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	26	3.8%	563	3.7%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	22	3.2%	213	1.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6	0.9%	155	1.0%
\$200,000 or more	0	0.0%	141	0.9%
TOTAL	690	100.0%	15,060	100.0%
Median Family Income (dollars)		\$55,061		\$46,460
Per Capita Income (dollars)		\$20,023		\$18,243

Source: U.S. Census

Figure 2-5
Family Income - 2000 - Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County



Source: U.S. Census

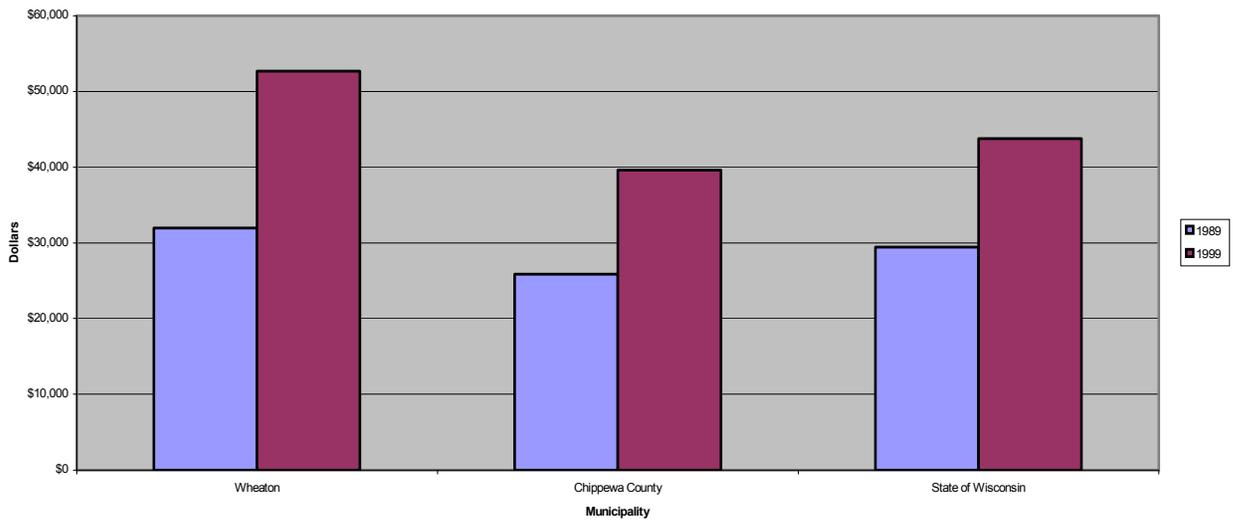
Household median incomes in Wheaton rose significantly from 1989 to 1999. As of 1999, Wheaton’s median household income was significantly higher than the State of Wisconsin and Chippewa County median household incomes, as shown in Table 2-13 and Figure 2-6.

Table 2-13
Median Household Income - 1989 and 1999 - Chippewa County

Municipality	1989	1999	Change	
			Number	Percent
Wheaton	\$31,981	\$52,692	\$20,711	65%
Chippewa County	\$25,858	\$39,596	\$13,738	53%
State of Wisconsin	\$29,442	\$43,791	\$14,349	49%

Source: U.S. Census

Figure 2-6
Median Household Income - 1989 and 1999



Source: U.S. Census

Employment and Wages

Table 2-14 shows Wheaton’s employment by industry sector. Over one-fifth of Wheaton’s employed population works in the Manufacturing industry. The other prominent industry is education, health, and social services, with nearly 20 percent of Wheaton’s employment.

**Table 2-14
Wheaton Employment by Industry - 2000**

Employment by Industry	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting & mining	81	6.2%
Construction	119	9.2%
Manufacturing	273	21.0%
Wholesale Trade	21	1.6%
Retail Trade	152	11.7%
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	80	6.2%
Information	3	0.2%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental & leasing	39	3.0%
Professional, scientific, management, administration and waste management services	89	6.8%
Educational, health and social services	252	19.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	75	5.8%
Other services, except public administration	61	4.7%
Public Administration	55	4.2%
Total Employment (16 years and over)	1300	100.0%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Table 2-15, below, shows what types of occupations Town of Wheaton residents hold. One-third of Wheaton workers are in an administrative, professional, or technical occupation.

**Table 2-15
Wheaton Employment by Occupation**

Occupation	Number	Percent
Executive, administrative and managerial, professional and technician	431	33.2%
Administrative support, including clerical, and sales	266	20.5%
Service	129	9.9%
Farming, forestry, fishing	7	0.5%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	196	15.1%
Precision production, craft and repair, machine operators, assemblers and inspectors, transportation and material moving, handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers and laborers	271	20.8%
Total Employment (16 years and over)	1300	100.0%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Table 2-16, below, indicates the number of establishments for industries in Chippewa County, of which the Retail Trade industry has the most.

Table 2-16
Chippewa County Establishments by Industry - 1998 to 2006

Industry Code	1998			2006			1998-2006 Percent Change		
	Establishments	Employees	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)	Establishments	Employees	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)	Establishments	Employees	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)
Forestry, fishing, hunting, and agri. support	11	suppressed	suppressed	16	66	1,994	45.50%	suppressed	suppressed
Utilities	7	suppressed	suppressed	8	55	5,737	14.30%	suppressed	suppressed
Construction	142	608	31,329	215	905	57,188	51.40%	48.80%	82.50%
Manufacturing	120	5,652	167,776	130	5,619	202,295	8.30%	-0.60%	20.60%
Wholesale Trade	50	688	20,890	56	723	33,797	12.00%	5.10%	61.80%
Retail Trade	204	2,730	46,266	236	3,205	68,015	15.70%	17.40%	47.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	65	565	13,036	99	727	22,598	52.30%	28.70%	73.40%
Information	14	201	5,466	17	373	10,076	21.40%	85.60%	84.30%
Finance and Insurance	68	385	8,571	74	456	12,466	8.80%	18.40%	45.40%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	29	94	950	33	133	3,314	13.80%	41.50%	248.80%
Professional, scientific & technical services	57	324	8,532	87	621	28,311	52.60%	91.70%	231.80%
Management of companies & enterprises	9	155	8,354	4	41	1,911	-55.60%	-73.50%	-77.10%
Admin., support, waste mgmt., remediation	33	666	11,145	55	467	10,248	66.70%	-29.90%	-8.00%
Educational services	8	147	2,208	8	116	2,403	0.00%	-21.10%	8.80%
Health care and social assistance	88	2,684	55,768	115	2,590	82,297	30.70%	-3.50%	47.60%
Arts, entertainment & recreation	20	428	5,446	24	306	3,303	20.00%	-28.50%	-39.30%
Accommodation & food services	130	1,364	9,869	148	1,423	13,017	13.80%	4.30%	31.90%
Other services (except public administration)	143	629	8,190	160	784	13,637	11.90%	24.60%	66.50%
Unclassified/Auxiliary establishments	9	1	45	12	1	105	33.30%	0.00%	133.30%
TOTAL	1,207	17,406	407,139	1,497	18,611	572,712	24.00%	6.90%	40.70%

Source: U.S. Census

The average annual wage of \$41,337 for the manufacturing industry, as shown in Table 2-17, is the highest in the county and is 90 percent of the wage earned by manufacturing workers in Wisconsin.

Table 2-17
Average Annual Wages by Industry

Industry	Chippewa County							Percent Change	State of Wisconsin
	Year						2001-2006		
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006		2006	
Natural Resources	\$24,226	23,129	\$23,213	\$23,769	\$23,631	\$24,546	1.3	\$28,301	
Construction	\$34,317	\$34,218	\$35,292	\$37,233	\$38,419	\$38,772	13	\$44,682	
Manufacturing	\$36,596	\$38,690	\$40,718	\$41,930	\$40,877	\$41,337	13	\$45,952	
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	\$22,318	\$23,195	\$23,129	\$24,816	\$25,113	\$25,564	14.5	\$31,935	
Financial Activities	\$24,755	\$25,769	\$26,411	\$26,852	\$28,272	\$29,348	18.6	\$48,859	
Education & Health	\$26,185	\$27,474	\$28,046	\$28,465	\$28,203	\$28,313	8.1	\$38,492	
Information	suppressed	\$21,921	\$22,229	\$22,213	\$22,075	\$22,419	2.3 ('02-'06)	\$45,704	
Leisure and Hospitality	\$8,118	\$7,789	\$8,085	\$8,184	\$8,311	\$8,416	3.7	\$13,058	
Professional & Business Services	\$29,563	\$27,579	\$27,481	\$29,526	\$29,348	\$28,499	-3.6	\$42,612	
Other Services	\$14,194	\$15,183	\$15,535	\$14,257	\$16,684	\$17,711	24.8	\$21,228	
Public Administration	\$27,640	\$28,369	\$30,642	\$31,660	\$33,839	\$34,911	26.3	\$38,294	
All Industries	\$27,315	\$28,058	\$28,909	\$29,566	\$29,545	\$29,901	9.5	\$36,830	

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Slightly more than half of the manufacturing jobs in the Eau Claire-Chippewa metropolitan area are in Chippewa County. The trade, transportation and utilities industry is the second highest generator of jobs. Employers in trade, transportation, and utilities provide a large amount of the jobs in the county, as do the education (both private and public) and health services employers. However, the average annual wage for education and health services workers of \$28,313 is considerably higher than the \$25,564 in trade industry even though workers in the trade industry earn closer to their statewide counterparts than education and health workers. An increase in the education and health care industry of 1.5 percent in 2004 lagged the increase for the state of 3.9 percent while the 7.3 percent increase in the trade sector exceeded the state increase in the sector of 4.1 percent. Wage increases in most industry sectors for the County lagged increases in the state, including the 2.3 percent increase for all industries that was less than the 4.0 percent in Wisconsin.

Over half of the 5,318 manufacturing jobs in Chippewa County are with employers in the three manufacturing industry groups on the prominent industries list, including the largest industry group, Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing.

Table 2-18
Top 10 Employers in the Town of Wheaton

Establishment	Product or Service	Size (Nov. 2009)
Loopy's, Inc.	Drinking Places	10-19 employees
Circle M Nursery, Inc.	Nursery and Tree Production	10-19 employees
Northern Crossarm Co., Inc.	Wood Preservation	10-19 employees
D & D Hawkins Farms, Inc.	Dairy Cattle and Milk Production	10-19 employees
Echo Brook Freight, Inc.	General Freight Trucking	10-19 employees
Sandy Acres Dairy	Dairy Cattle and Milk Production	10-19 employees
Badgerland Printing USA, Inc.	Commercial Lithographic Printing	10-19 employees
Elk Creek Farms, Inc.	Dairy Cattle and Milk Production	5-9 employees
Chippewa Valley Grn. & Prcssn, Inc.	Other Animal Food Manufacturing	5-9 employees
Solberg Farms, LLC	Dairy Cattle and Milk Production	5-9 employees

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

The data in Table 2-18 is compiled from a self-reported form businesses complete. Data reporting errors could occur due to Wheaton not being recognized as a postal address (in Wheaton, Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire and Elk Mound are used) or if a corporate headquarters reports for all company offices. Other prominent Wheaton businesses include Applied Data Technologies, A-1 Redi Mix, Sleep Inn, and the Eau Claire Travel Center.

Many of the Town's largest employers are in the agricultural sector. The largest Wheaton employers differ significantly from the top industries in Chippewa County (see Table 2-19).

Table 2-19
Prominent Industry Sectors of Chippewa County

Industry Sector	Establishments (2005)	Employees	Numeric Changes in Employees	
			2005-2006	2001-2006
Computer and Electronic Product Mfg.	13	1,728	-27	-740
Educational Services	12	1,426	-18	-27
Food Services and Drinking Places	103	1,393	0	126
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	21	1,026	-120	-449
Executive, Legislative, and General Government	32	910	2	-109
Hospitals	*	*	N/A	N/A
Machinery Manufacturing	17	823	31	19
General Merchandise Stores	53	731	164	304
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	94	723	-32	-11
Specialty Trade Contractors	12	720	-63	-28

Notes: * Data suppressed for employer confidentiality
No County level employment info for AG was available
Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Employers in the two largest industry groups have an average of 135 workers per establishment but the third largest group includes many smaller employers who together provide nearly 1,300 jobs in the county. The average number of workers per establishment in food services and drinking places is 12.5. Overall, the average number of workers per establishment in Chippewa County is 14.4. Employers with more than 100 workers make up only 2.5 percent of all establishments, but provide over 41 percent of all jobs in the

County. On the other hand, 85 percent of all establishments have fewer than 20 workers and provide 28 percent of all jobs.

Employment Projections

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) put together a publication in 2003 that projects future employment. The long range projections cover the years from 2006 to 2016. However, this data is only available on a regional basis. The region that Chippewa County is included in is considered the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area (WDA). Along with Chippewa County, Polk, Barron, St. Croix, Pierce, Pepin, Eau Claire, Dunn, and Clark Counties are also in this region.

The West Central Wisconsin WDA employment by industry projections are shown in Table 2-20. The industry in this region expected to have the highest growth rate is Construction, Mining, and Natural Resources, with an expected increase of nearly 18 percent. All manufacturing fields are projected to see declines in employment numbers. Food and beverage stores are also expected to see a small decline in employment.

**Table 2-20
West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area Industry Projections**

Industry	2006 Estimated Employment	2016 Projected Employment	Change	
			Number	Percent
Total - Non-Farm Employment	178,630	192,050	13,420	7.5%
Construction/Mining/Natural Resources	8,380	9,880	1,500	17.9%
Manufacturing	33,590	33,010	-580	-1.7%
Food Manufacturing	5,410	5,310	-100	-1.8%
Machinery Manufacturing	4,000	3,770	-230	-5.8%
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	3,800	3,070	-730	-19.2%
Trade	29,910	30,400	490	1.6%
Food and Beverage Stores	4,810	4,730	-80	-1.7%
Transportation and Utilities (Including US Postal)	8,570	9,670	1,100	12.8%
Financial Activities	7,430	8,180	750	10.1%
Education and Health Services (Including Government)	38,900	44,520	5,620	14.4%
Educational Services (including state and local government)	16,240	16,930	690	4.2%
Hospitals (Including government)	7,710	9,140	1,430	18.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	17,840	19,850	2,010	11.3%
Information/Professional Services/Other Services	21,210	24,080	2,870	13.5%
Government (Excluding US Postal, State and Local Education and Hospitals)	12,910	13,270	360	2.8%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Table 2-21 goes a step further and looks at the occupation employment projections for the West Central Wisconsin WDA. The occupation expected to make the largest increase is healthcare support (21.4 percent increase expected), followed closely by healthcare practitioners and technical occupations (20.9 percent growth expected). Again, this reflects the needs of an aging population. No specific occupations are expected to decline through the year 2016. We can also see in this table, that food preparation and serving related occupations have the most average annual openings. As seen, this is a low paying occupation that does not typically require a lot of training, so

persons filling these positions tend to be very mobile when better opportunities present themselves. Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations are predicted to remain very constant through 2016.

Table 2-21
Occupation Employment Projections for West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area - 2006 to 2016

Occupational Title	Estimated Employment				Estimated Average Annual Openings			Estimated Salary and Wages (2006)		
	2006	2016	Change	Percent Change	New Jobs	Replacements	Total	Average Annual Salary	Entry Level Hourly Wage	Experienced Hourly Wage
Management Occupations	6,290	6,440	150	2.4%	20	150	170	\$75,048	\$17.80	\$45.22
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	6,180	6,910	730	11.8%	70	110	180	\$49,764	\$14.66	\$28.56
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	2,170	2,520	350	16.1%	40	50	90	\$56,244	\$17.18	\$31.97
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	3,450	3,470	20	0.6%	<5	80	80	\$56,612	\$16.97	\$32.34
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,410	1,570	160	11.3%	20	30	50	\$51,170	\$15.39	\$29.21
Community and Social Services Occupations	2,190	2,520	330	15.1%	30	40	70	\$39,857	\$13.02	\$22.24
Legal Occupations	660	730	70	10.6%	10	10	20	\$66,469	\$15.28	\$40.30
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	11,150	11,870	720	6.5%	70	230	300	\$40,542	\$10.89	\$23.79
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	1,780	1,890	110	6.2%	10	50	60	\$32,966	\$8.70	\$19.43
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	9,140	11,050	1,910	20.9%	190	170	360	\$53,903	\$12.33	\$32.71
Healthcare Support Occupations	6,310	7,660	1,350	21.4%	140	70	210	\$23,966	\$9.12	\$12.72
Protective Service Occupations	3,340	3,560	220	6.6%	20	100	120	\$34,478	\$9.64	\$20.04
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	17,360	19,270	1,910	11.0%	190	590	780	\$17,154	\$6.44	\$9.15
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	5,500	6,110	610	11.1%	60	100	160	\$22,666	\$7.49	\$12.60
Personal Care and Service Occupations	4,730	5,530	800	16.9%	80	110	190	\$19,846	\$7.01	\$10.81
Sales and Related Occupations	18,310	18,910	600	3.3%	60	600	660	\$28,466	\$7.11	\$16.98
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	27,340	28,450	1,110	4.1%	110	590	700	\$27,672	\$8.91	\$15.50
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	340	360	20	5.9%	<5	10	10	\$24,535	\$8.78	\$13.30
Construction and Extraction Occupations	7,210	7,890	680	9.4%	70	130	200	\$40,695	\$12.91	\$22.89
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	6,540	7,020	480	7.3%	50	110	160	\$35,821	\$11.28	\$20.19
Production Occupations	21,920	22,330	410	1.9%	40	450	490	\$29,587	\$9.71	\$16.48
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	15,350	15,990	640	4.2%	60	340	400	\$27,171	\$8.55	\$15.32
Total, All Occupations	178,630	192,050	13,420	7.5%	1,340	4,100	5,440	\$32,996	\$8.23	\$19.68

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Household and Housing Unit Projections

Housing projections are helpful to estimate how much land will be consumed by future development. As households and housing units increase, there is an increased demand for public facilities and services.

From 2000 to 2030, Wheaton is expected to see a household increase of just over 500, or nearly 60 percent, as shown in Table 2-22. This is double the average expected household increase of Chippewa County towns, and about 35 percent more than Chippewa County is expected to see as a whole.

Table 2-22
Household Projections - 2000 to 2030 - Chippewa County by Municipality

Municipality	2000	Estimate	Projections					Change 2000-2030	
		2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Number	Percent
Wheaton	852	960	1,043	1,128	1,211	1,288	1,359	507	59.5%
Towns	11,154	10,426	11,285	12,145	12,976	13,747	14,456	3,302	29.6%
Villages	1,046	3,172	3,483	3,807	4,117	4,415	4,695	3,649	348.9%
Cities	9,156	9,530	10,043	10,568	11,068	11,508	11,887	2,731	29.8%
Chippewa County	19,077	22,821	23,553	25,030	26,364	27,550	28,302	5,481	28.7%

Source: U.S. Census and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Housing unit projections are intended to provide an estimate of the number of housing units that will be developed through the year 2030. There are a couple of assumptions that must be considered when looking at projections. First, the population projections presented earlier need to be reasonable, as do the household projections in Table 2-23. Second, the occupancy rate will remain constant throughout the planning period.

Table 2-23
Housing Unit Projections - 2000 to 2030

Municipality	1990	2000	Projections					Change 2000-2030		
			2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Number	Percent
Wheaton	794	874	984	1,069	1,156	1,241	1,320	1,393	519	65.4%
Chippewa County	19,077	22,821	24,613	26,404	28,222	29,969	31,575	33,030	10,209	53.5%

Source: U.S. Census and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Based on the existing conditions, it is projected that from 2000 to 2030, Wheaton will see an increase of over 500 housing units, or approximately 65 percent. This amounts to just over 17 new units per year to accommodate the increasing population and households.

2.3 SWOT Analysis and Vision Statement

On October 30, 2008, the Town of Wheaton Plan Commission came together to create a Vision Statement for the town. Based upon the work completed as part of the SWOT meeting, the Plan Commission prepared the following statement.

Town of Wheaton in 2030

The Town of Wheaton maintains the integrity and quality of life characterized by country living, open space, agricultural land uses, and active participation by residents in the Town.

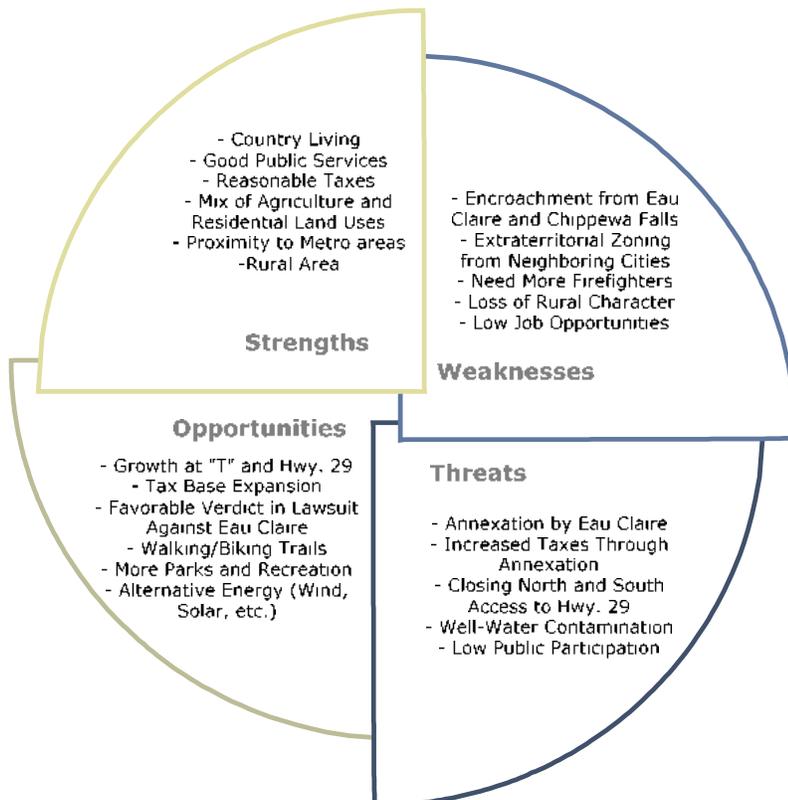
The integrity of the Town borders and rights of the residents and land owners are protected in a manner beneficial to the Town and its residents.

The Town, through an open and participatory process, provides desired public services while remaining fiscally responsible.

Tax base expansion is supported through well-planned development.

On What is the Vision Statement Based?

On July 15, 2008, more than 45 residents gathered to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) facing the Town of Wheaton. The complete list identified and prioritized is attached at the end of this document. It is from this effort that the Vision Statement was developed.



These questions illustrate how the SWOT analysis related to the Comprehensive Plan.

How can we use our Strengths?

How can we minimize our Weaknesses?

How can we take advantage of our Opportunities?

How can we protect ourselves from Threats?]



Ruby-Throated Hummingbird on Bee Balm

What does the Vision Statement and SWOT Analysis say about the Town?

There are several themes that run through the SWOT Analysis – themes that cross over from the each of the four categories. Those themes form groupings of issues to be addressed through the Comprehensive Planning Process.

Quality of Life in the Town is Good – and Needs to be Protected

Quality of Life issues received very high ratings in several categories. In the strengths category, quality of life issues had five of the top six vote getters, including Country Living (19 percent of total vote), Mix of Agriculture with Residential (13 percent of vote), Proximity to Metro Areas (7 percent of vote), Rural Area (6 percent of vote) and Growth Potential (5 percent of vote). In addition, the number one weakness was also a quality of life issue - Encroachment from Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls, receiving 23 percent of the weakness votes. Four more quality of life issues made it into the top seven of the weaknesses category, including Loss of Rural Character, Low Job Opportunities, 5-Acre Lot Sizes, and Increased Traffic Volume. The biggest threat, Annexation by Eau Claire, received 40 percent of the threat votes, and has the potential to heavily impact the Town of Wheaton’s quality of life. Extraterritorial Zoning from Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire also received significant votes in threats (6 percent) and weaknesses (19 percent).

Public Services are Important – as are Reasonable Taxes

The second highest strength was the Town’s current taxes being reasonable (15 percent of strength votes). Good Public Services and a Strong Financial Base also received votes in the strengths category, and when combined, good government issues were the second highest vote getter. However, rising school and property taxes received votes in the weaknesses category. The second highest opportunity category vote recipient was expanding the tax base, with 11 percent of the vote. Similarly, the second most significant threat was increased taxes through annexation, receiving 9 percent of the vote. Police and Fire protection received mixed votes amongst the categories. Fire Protection received 4 percent of the strength votes. However, 2 percent felt that fire protection needs to be improved, 5 percent of opportunity category votes said that Fire Department and EMS equipment needs to be upgraded, and the need for additional firefighters received 6 percent of the weakness category votes. Well-water contamination received 7 percent of the threat category votes.

Business Growth Is Important

While businesses did not receive a significant amount of votes in the strengths category, it is apparent that new businesses are desired by the Town. Many opportunities revolved around business expansion, including Growth at “T” and State Highway 29 (11 percent of the vote), More Small Businesses (6 percent of the vote), Alternative Energy development (6 percent) and Commercial Growth in County Highway T corridor (4 percent of the vote). 29 Pines, a small multi-business center, also received just fewer than 3 percent of the strengths vote.

Additional Recreational Opportunities are Desired

Town of Wheaton residents identified that there is a lack of recreational facilities, and some opportunities that can be utilized in offering more recreational options. River Accessibility was the only recreational issues identified that received a vote in the strengths category. However, Better Parks and Recreation received 4 percent of the votes in the weaknesses category. Walking and Biking Trails received 6 percent of the opportunities votes. Nature preserve received recognition in the opportunities category, while the loss of wildlife habitat received nearly 5 percent of threat category votes. It should also be noted that Wheaton Park received nearly 4 percent of opportunity votes as well, so while it is a nice facility, perhaps it could be expanded to provide additional opportunities.

How does this Relate to Planning?

If Quality of Life Matters, we will:

- Discuss and develop tools for cooperational border control.
- Review development proposals and evaluate options to ensure that the rural feel and amenities are protected.

If Public Services and Reasonable Taxes Matter, we will:

- Support new growth and development with appropriate services.
- Continue to provide needed services in a cost-effective manner.
- Manage increasing service costs with appropriate funding sources.

If Business Growth Matters, we will:

- Identify locations for businesses to locate that will benefit the business and maintain the rural character of the Town.

If Additional Recreational Amenities Matter, we will:

- Identify desired recreational activities.
- Implement appropriate recreational resources on current Town lands.
- Proactively seek and evaluate potential sites suitable for additional recreational development.

How the Vision Statement Relates to the Comprehensive Plan

The vision is developed to provide the guidance for the Comprehensive Plan in the form of a broad overriding theme. The goals, policies, objectives and programs identified in the Plan should support the vision.

- A. **Goal** – A distinct long-term end toward which programs or activities are ultimately directed, but might never be attained. It represents a general statement which outlines the most preferable situation which could possibly be achieved if all the objectives and policies supporting it were developed to their fullest extent. Goals are the community’s desired destination.
- B. **Objective** – A specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress toward a goal. Objectives are the strategic steps required to reach the community’s desired destination. There are alternative objectives capable of effecting a goal.

The goals and objectives have been framed by the following considerations:

- 1. Desirability – what the community wants as an end state
 - 2. Feasibility – what can be done to realize that end state within the existing or altered political and administrative framework
 - 3. Timing – when each desired outcome is possible and can be realized
- C. **Policies** – The way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve an identified objective or goal. They are courses of action selected to guide and determine present and future decisions. Policies are the tactical steps which define the actions necessary to accomplish the strategic steps (objectives) toward the community’s desired destination (goals).

Policies have been developed for the Comprehensive Plan. These policies designate the actions the Plan Commission feels are necessary to move the community toward the vision and the realization of the goals and objectives in light of planning process results.

How was the Vision Statement Prepared?

- We discussed the themes from the top issues from each of the SWOT categories.
- Using groupings of the issues from the SWOT categories, several 2-3 paragraph draft statements were written that described the Town and its future.
- The Plan Commission reviewed all of the draft vision statements and created one single vision statement describing the Town and its future.

How was the SWOT prepared?

Phase I

We broke into eight separate groups. Each group evaluated four separate areas – What are the Strengths of the Town of Wheaton? What Weaknesses does the Town of Wheaton have? What Opportunities exist for the Town of Wheaton? And what are the Threats that face the Town of Wheaton? For each item, we followed the same four steps.

- Silent generation of ideas in writing
- Recorded round-robin listing of ideas on chart
- A very brief discussion and clarification of each idea on the chart
- Preliminary vote on priorities: silent, independent

Phase II

- At this time participants asked questions, received clarification of issues identified by other groups.

Phase III

- We combined all topics that received votes from each group into one set of master sheets – one for Strengths, one for Weaknesses, one for Opportunities and one for Threats. We discussed and clarified the issues. Then, the entire group voted to prioritize the items. This list, with vote totals, is attached at the end of this document.

Complete Vote Tally

Strengths	Votes
Country Living	25
Reasonable Taxes	19
Mix of Ag with Residential	17
Proximity to Metro Areas	10
Rural Area	8
Growth Potential	7
Fire Protection	6
School Districts	4
Mix of People and Neighbors	4
Open Government	4
Good Road Maintenance	3
29 Pines	3
Low Crime	3
Small Community Feeling	3
Good Services	2
Nature	2
Agriculture	1
Natural Resources	1
River Accessibility	1
Small Government	1
County Zoning	1
Recycling	1
Strong Financial Base	1
Good Public Services	1
Good Town Board	1
Green Companies	1
Teamwork	0
Business Tax Base	0
Family Ideals	0
Good Roads	0
Excellent Highway Access	0
Recreational Opportunities	0
Central Access	0

Weaknesses	Votes
Encroachment from Eau Claire/ Chippewa Falls	29
Extraterritorial Zoning from Eau Claire/ Chippewa Falls	24
Need More Firefighters	8
Loss of Rural Character	8
Low Job Opportunities	7
5-Acre Lot Size	6
More Traffic Volume	6
Better Parks and Recreation Needed	5
Landfill on County Highway F	4
Wild Animals	4
Rising School and Property Taxes	4
Too Much Government	3
Junk Cars	3
Response Times of Law Enforcement	2
Land Development Use	2
Need Additional Ordinance – Mining, etc.	2
Limited Access to Utility Infrastructure	1
Stop Annexation	1
No Town Webpage	1
Speeders	1
Problems of Population Growth	1
Pressure on Farming	1
Snow Plowing	1
County Highway T 4-Lanes	1
Degradation of Roads	0
Too Close To Major Cities	0
Eating Establishments	0
Rodent Control	0
Low Tax Base	0
No Public Transportation	0
Sprawling Land Development	0

Opportunities	Votes
Growth at County Highway T and State Highway 29	14
Tax Base Expansion	14
Favorable Verdict in Lawsuit Against Eau Claire	13
Walking/Biking Trails	8
Alternative Energy	8
More Small Business	8
Utilities Tax Base	7
Nature Preserve	7
Upgrade Fire Department and EMS Technology	6
Town Website	5
Wheaton Park	5
Commercial Growth – County Highway T Corridor	5
Park River Development	3
Better Town Meeting Attendance	3
Control Building and Expansion	3
Enhance Recycling	3
Selective Zoning	3
Having a Comprehensive Plan	2
“Green” Companies	2
Improve Fire Protection Services	2
Locations for Family/Community Events	2
Preserve Agricultural Base	2
Development of Residential Areas	1
Right to Vote	1
Youth Sports	1
County Highway T 4-Lanes from State Highway 29 South to Eau Claire	1
Animal Shelter	0
Diversified/“Niche” Crops	0
Organize a Volunteer Base	0
Major Divided Highway	0
River Frontage	0

Threats	Votes
Annexation by Eau Claire	50
Increased Taxes Through Annexation	11
Closing North and South Access to Hwy. 29	10
Water Contamination	9
Low Public Participation	8
Extraterritorial Control – Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls	8
Loss of Wildlife Habitat	6
Random Development	6
Loss of Family Farms	4
Demolition Dump on F	3
Keep 5-Acre Lot Sizes	2
Over Development	2
Increased Government Control	2
Non-Farm/Rural Residential Value Conflict	1
Dangerous State Highway 29 Crossing	1
Increased Crime	1
Weakening Tax Base	1
Power Plant Growth	1
Airport	0
Large Commercial Farms	0
Economy Slowdown	0
Oil Shortage	0
Rising Energy Costs	0
Shared Services	0
Lawsuits Town Could Incur	0
Rising Cost of Road Material	0
Growth to the South (Menards Expansion)	0
Undesirable Business Near Borders	0
Large Dairy’s	0

Note: Each participant had three votes within each category – thus the vote totals exceed the number of participants



2.4 Visual Preference

Several members of the Wheaton community were asked to identify features, or aspects of their Town that they thought were visually pleasing, and assets to their community. Participants were also asked what roads in the Town they used most frequently, which can help identify potential transportation patterns as well.

Roads Frequently Traveled

There are a few key roads that are traveled on a regular basis by a majority of the respondents. The main roads that the participants indicated they traveled on a regular basis are County Highway N/70th Avenue along the northern border of the Town, County Highway T which connects to the City of Eau Claire, State Highway 29 and Business Highway 29 which are useful connectors to the City of Chippewa Falls. The following north-south roads were indicated as being relatively frequently used: County Highway M/30th Street, 20th Street and 40th Street. U.S. Highway 12, County Highway F, 50th Avenue, and 20th Avenue also were indicated by multiple individuals as being used on a frequent basis.

Community Assets

Participants were asked to identify pleasant community features that they use on a regular basis, believe are an asset to the community, or are visually appealing. Several participants included the same items, which are explained below.

The most frequently indicated community assets were the Town of Wheaton Park, the Town Fire Department, the boat landing for the Chippewa River, and the 29 Pines business development.



Town Park



Wheaton Fire Station



Chippewa River boat landing



29 Pines/River Country

Several other popular community features were indicated as being very important, such as the Town Hall, the Winery, Elk Creek, Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church, the Chippewa River, Old Albertville, the Recycling Center, and Loopy's. A-1 Ready-Mix and Wild Bill's Saddle Club were also indicated as community assets.



Wheaton Town Hall



Riverbend Vineyard and Winery



Elk Creek



Loopy's

Some natural features of the land were also noted by participants as being very positive aspects of the community. Farm land is appreciated and there is certainly a desire to protect it. Additionally, there is a bike easement along County N that is appreciated, as well as a boat landing and bicycle trail near the Chippewa River.



Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church



Wheaton Farm



Wild Bill's



Wheaton Recycling Center

Negatives/Desires

So, the question remains, if the residents enjoy all of these aspects of their community, where are improvements desired? What things do community members feel are underutilized, underdeveloped, or unpleasant? The majority of participants concerns revolve around additional development potential. Several items of concern are presented below.

One of the biggest desires that was identified during this process is more development along the T-corridor, from State Highway 29 south towards Eau Claire. There was also some desire indicated for business development south of Business Highway 29 heading into the City of Chippewa Falls. Potential development opportunities were also indicated south of 20th Avenue, and along the Chippewa River. Additional recreational opportunities are also desired. Multiple participants indicated a desire to have a recreation opportunity along the Chippewa River, as well as marking the current Town Park as having room for improvements as well. A potential site for camping was indicated as a desire near the boat landing for the Chippewa River.

Other areas that were indicated by participants as being unpleasant are the landfill on County Highway F and the trailer park area off of the State Highway 29 frontage road. Interestingly, the boat landing and recycling center were indicated by multiple participants as having room for improvement. These two items also were indicated by multiple participants as being positive assets, so there are some mixed feelings about these community features.

2.5 Survey Results

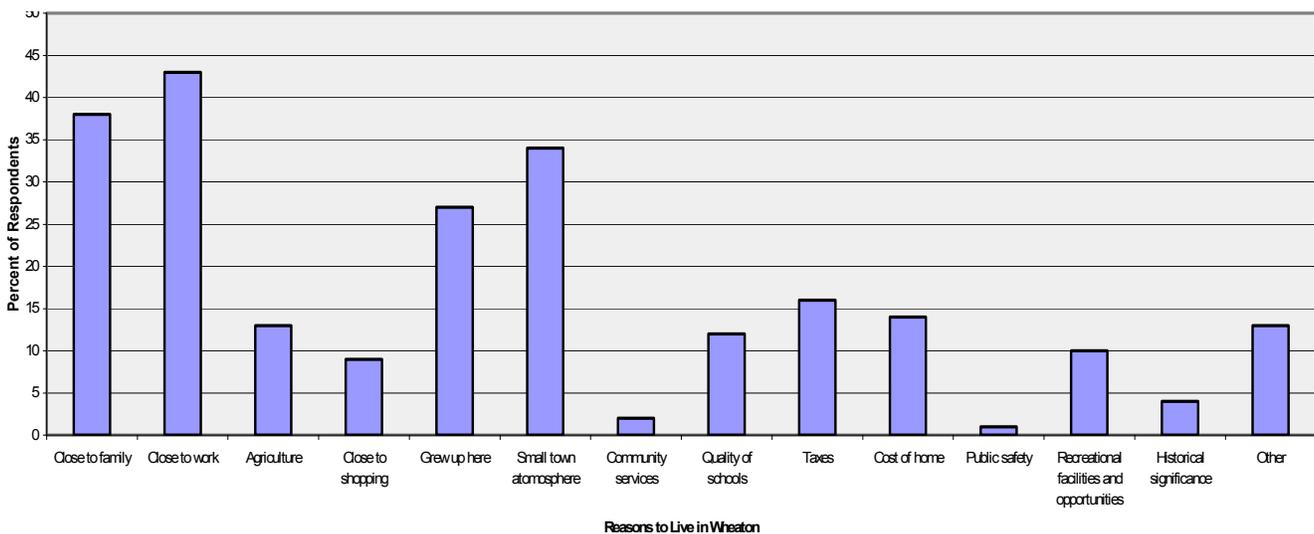
A community survey was conducted as part of the Comprehensive Planning efforts. Surveys were distributed at the November 2008 election, and were available on-line as well. A total of 91 responses were received.

Over 80 percent of the respondents are year-round residents in the Town. Every respondent indicated living in a single-family home, while over 90 percent indicated owning their home. Three percent are renters. In addition, almost seven percent indicated owning undeveloped land in the Town, and another eight percent indicated that they own a farm. Eight percent indicated farming all of their land. Another five percent indicated farming a portion of their land, while nearly 17 percent indicated leasing their land out to be farmed.

The average length of time having lived in Wheaton is over 21 years. Fewer than 10 percent of respondents are under the age of 35. Over half are employed full-time, but 23 percent were retired. Most employed persons work in the cities of Chippewa Falls or Eau Claire, and the average commute time for all respondents is 18 minutes. Less than 40 percent of respondents have children in their household. Over 50 percent of respondents reported household incomes of between \$25,000 and \$75,000.

When asked why they chose to live in Wheaton, the answer receiving the most responses was being close to work (18 percent), followed by being close to family (16 percent) and living in a small-town atmosphere (14 percent).

Figure 2-7
What are the Top 3 Reasons You Chose to Live in the Town?



Source: SEH

Respondents were then asked to rate Town services and characteristics. Most of the Town provided services received a significant number of good and excellent votes. The areas receiving the least of these votes were bicycle paths, codes enforcement, job opportunities, and area entertainment. Rummery and McCombs Cemeteries did not receive many good or excellent ratings, but they each had over 65 percent indicating “Don’t Use.”

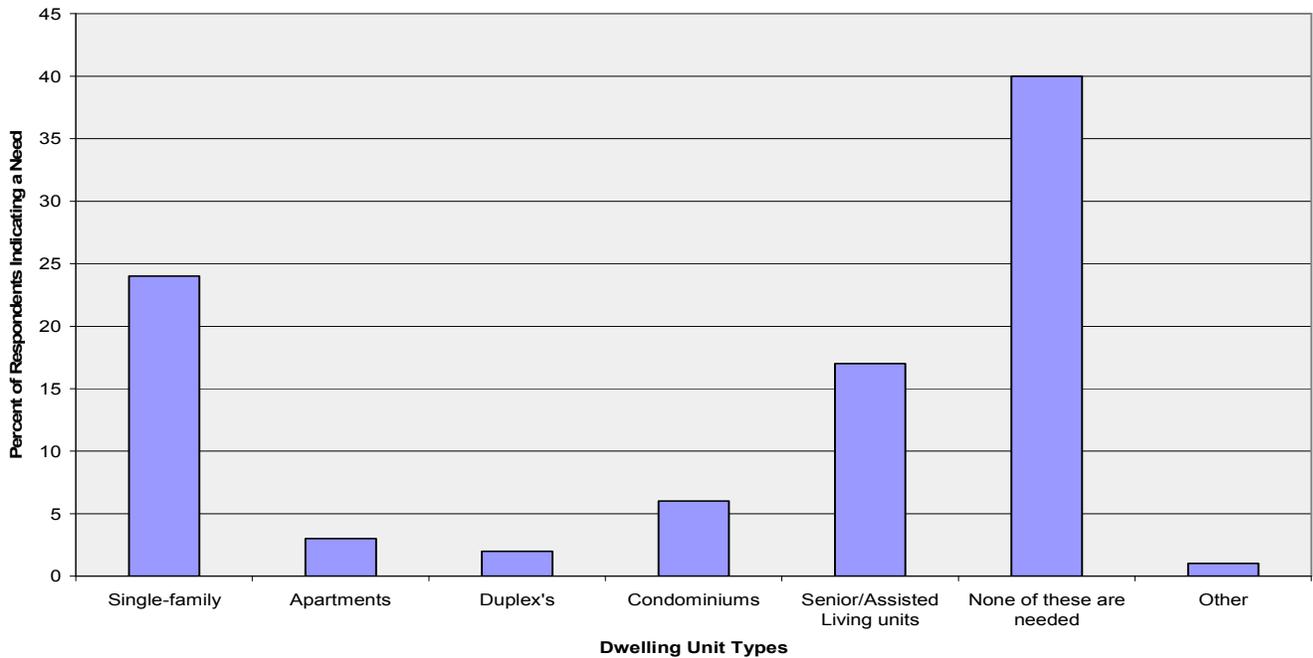
When asked how important it is to provide services, residents indicated a strong desire for the Town to provide fire protection and waste collection. However library, healthcare facilities, sidewalks, low-income housing, public transportation, and water or sewer systems all received over 50 percent of responses in either the “Not Important” or “Don’t Provide” categories.



Waxwing

When working with surrounding communities and organizations, participants indicated that growth agreements and annexation issues will need the most attention and improvement. Over 37 percent indicated they felt the Town has grown too fast over the last ten years. When asked to identify important areas to address in the next 20 years, preservation of agricultural lands received a large number (83 percent) of important or very important responses, as did protection from extraterritorial land controls (78 percent), protection from annexation (81 percent), preservation of open space (83 percent), and developing alternative energy (72 percent). The areas receiving the most not immediately important or not important at all responses were developing new residential (29 percent), non-motorized trail system (32 percent), motorized trail system (37 percent), and expanding recreational facilities (27 percent). However, when asked what land uses they would like to see increase, over 47 percent indicated recreational. When asked what room tax money should be used for, over 50 percent of responses indicated recreational facilities. If recreational facilities are developed, river and water access, non-motorized paths, and playgrounds are the most desired amenities.

Figure 2-8
What, if any, Types of Dwelling Units does the Town Need More of?



Source: SEH



Giant Swallowtail

If commercial uses are developed, agriculturally-related businesses are desired most (19 percent), followed by family/sit-down restaurants, independently owned retail businesses, and home-based businesses (each with 13 percent). If residential development occurs, many respondents do not wish to see apartments or condominiums. The most preferred subdivision layout is a conventional subdivision of single-family home. The preferred minimum lot size is 5 acres, which is the current Town standard. However, 43 percent of respondents indicated that there are no particular types of dwelling units that are needed in the Town.

Many community residents are concerned about annexation. Over 70 percent indicated that if they were approached with a petition for annexation they would not sign it. Only six percent indicated they would sign one. The largest reason for not signing one is the tax rate incorporated communities often have (41 percent).

Additional survey results are available in Appendix A.



3.0 Housing

3.1 Existing Conditions

3.2 Assessment of Future Needs

3.3 Housing Programs

3.4 Housing Goals, Objective and Policies

Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(b)
 (b) Housing element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs of the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the age, structural, value and occupancy characteristics of the local governmental unit's housing stock. The element shall also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the local governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs, policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing, and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental unit's existing housing stock.

"There are social and economic benefits from housing. Socially, "studies have shown that in addition to being a place to sleep, relax, and keep possessions, decent shelter is important for one's self-respect; people who take responsibility and pride in their homes are more likely to also participate in community and civic activities." Housing also affects economies significantly as well, through the generation of taxes for governments, and providing many jobs. (Ohm, Brian, et al. Housing Wisconsin, June 2003.)

Housing is an essential component to healthy and vibrant communities, and striving to provide safe and affordable housing is a common community goal. An analysis of housing conditions will help the Town gain a better understanding of the changes that have occurred over the past 20-25 years. It will also provide insight into future changes that can be anticipated. This information will create a foundation from which decisions regarding future housing development can be based. Demographic information presented in the Issues and Opportunities element is not repeated here. Below is a summary of the existing housing conditions in the Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County.

3.1 Existing Conditions

The way of life in Wheaton is enjoyed by the residents who live there. While change and development are desired to some extent, it will be important for the Town to manage this growth and maintain the rural character of the community. Country living was the number one strength according to the SWOT meeting. The largest threats identified during this meeting revolve around encroachment and extraterritorial control from neighboring cities.

Housing Units

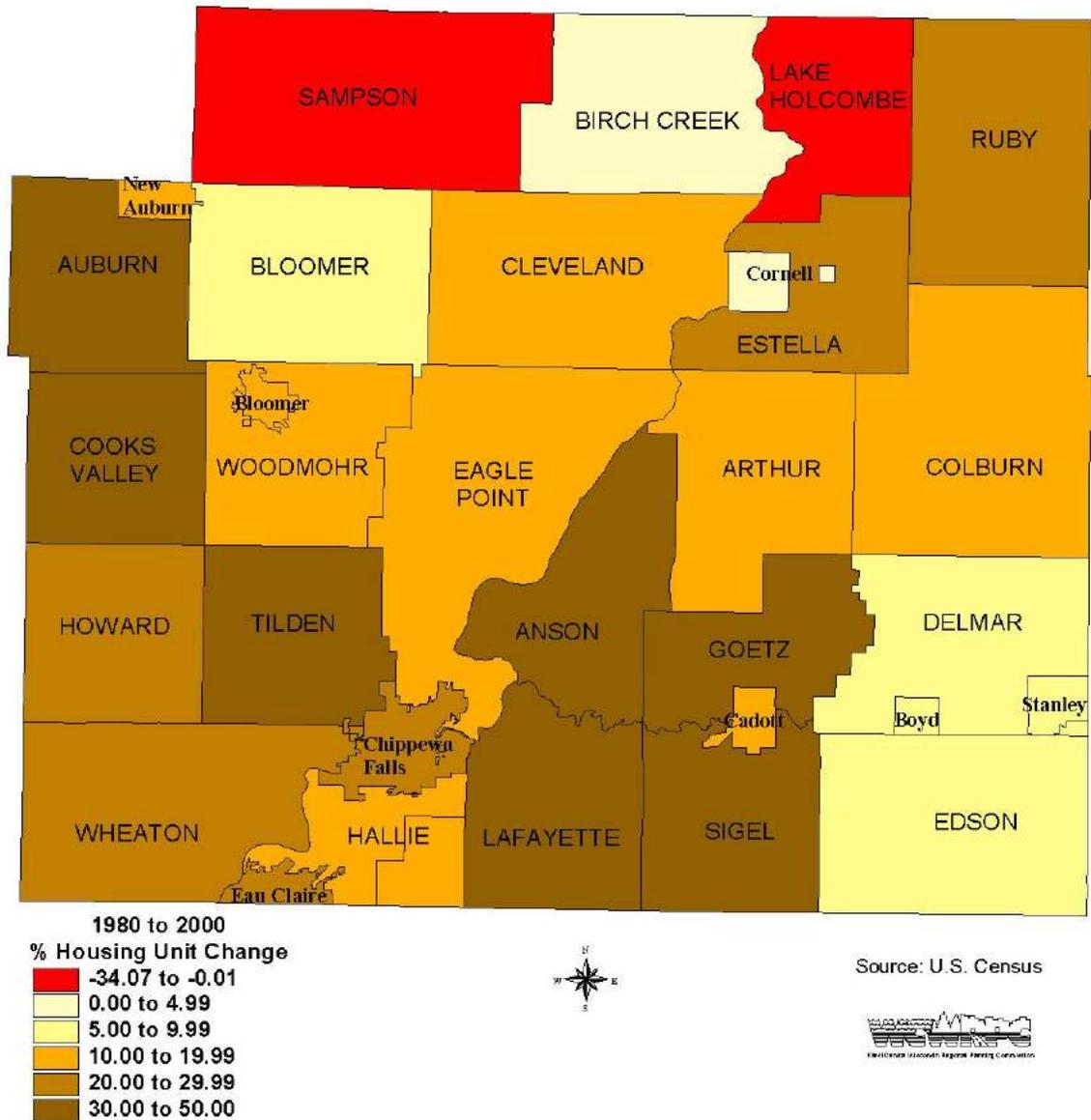
According to the U.S. Census, in the year 2000 the Town of Wheaton had 874 residential housing units – an increase of over 20 percent from 1980. Chippewa County as a whole experienced an increase in housing units, with an 18.8 percent increase between 1980 and 2000, as shown in Table 3-1. In addition, the average growth for Chippewa County towns from 1980 to 2000 was only 17 percent. Therefore, Wheaton has been growing at a faster rate than the County, and the average for all Towns in Chippewa County.

Table 3-1
Housing Units - 1980 to 2000

Municipality	1980	1990	2000	Change 1980-2000	
				Number	Percent
Town of Wheaton	709	794	874	165	23.3%
Chippewa County Towns	10,320	11,323	12,109	1,789	17.3%
Chippewa County	19,203	21,024	22,821	3,618	18.8%

Source: U.S. Census

Figure 3-1
Chippewa County Housing Unit Change by Municipality - 1980-2000



Source: U.S. Census
 Map Produced By: West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Seasonal Units

Seasonal units are housing units used or intended for use only in certain seasons, or for weekend or occasional use during the year. They typically demand fewer public services than housing units that are occupied throughout the year. Included in the seasonal unit calculations are units used for summer or winter sports or recreation, such as beach cottages or hunting cabins. Seasonal units may also include housing used for seasonal workers, such as loggers. As shown in Table 3-2, in 2000 the Town of Wheaton contained zero seasonal units. In comparison, the City of Chippewa Falls,

which borders Wheaton and is in Chippewa County, had 18 seasonal units, or .3 percent of the total housing units. Chippewa County has about three percent of its housing stock defined as seasonal units.

**Table 3-2
Seasonal Units - 2000**

Municipality	Total Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units	
		Units	Percent of Total
Town of Wheaton	874	0	0.0%
City of Chippewa Falls	5,905	18	0.3%
Chippewa County	22,821	694	3.0%

Source: U.S. Census

Age Characteristics

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 be replaced, rehabilitated, or abandoned for new development within the planning period. Allowing for a new housing supply 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.

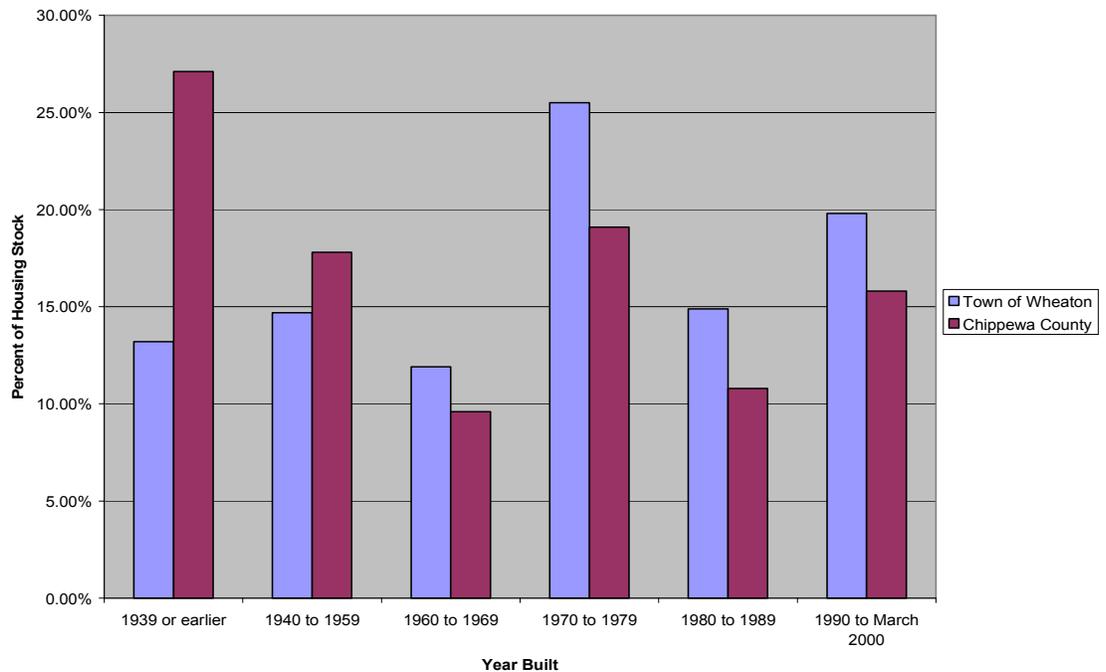
**Table 3-3
Year Structure Built - 2000**

Municipality	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to March 2000
Town of Wheaton	114	127	103	221	129	171
Chippewa County	5,779	3,793	2,041	4,071	2,307	3,365

Source: U.S. Census

Approximately 60 percent of all housing units in the Town of Wheaton were built since 1970, compared to 46 percent for all of Chippewa County. This is an indicator that the average housing stock for the Town of Wheaton is newer than that of the County as a whole, which should result in relatively low maintenance and rehabilitation costs in the near future for homeowners.

**Figure 3-2
Year Structure Built - 2000**



Source: U.S. Census

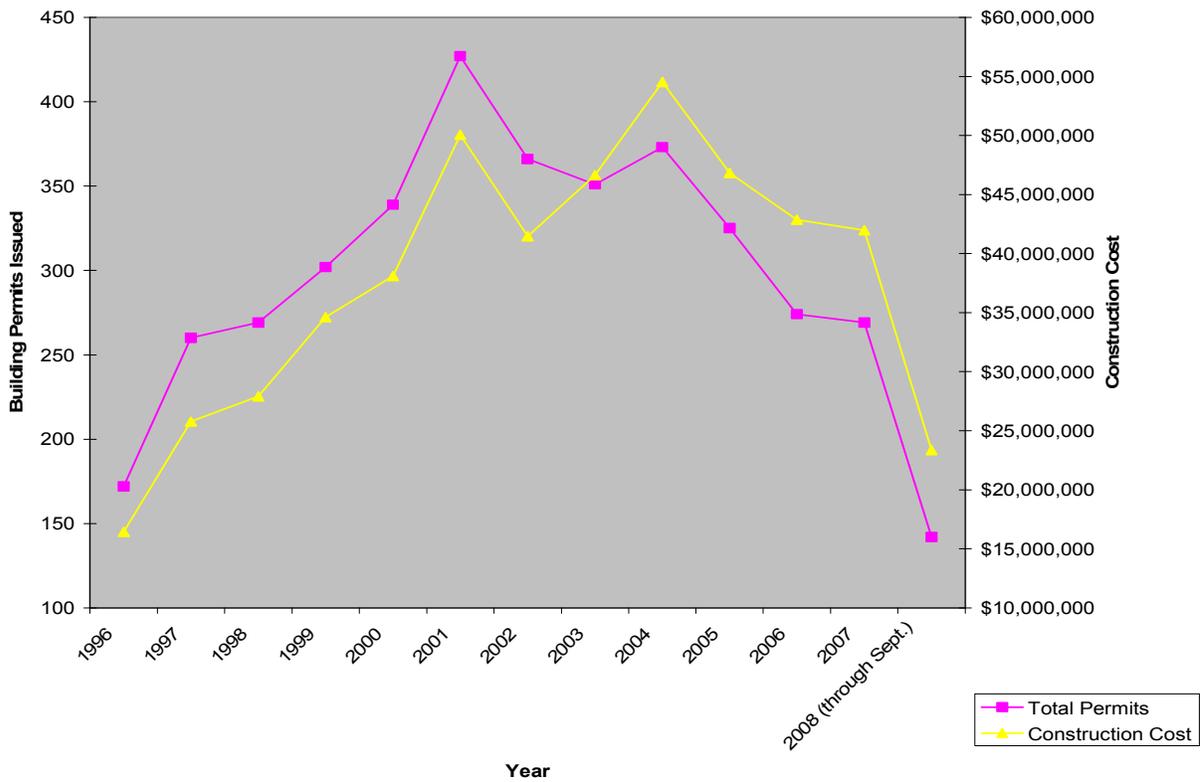
**Table 3-4
Building Permits Issued for New, Privately-Owned Residential Units - Unincorporated
Chippewa County - 1996 to 2007**

Year	Single Family		Two Family		Three and Four Family		Five or More Units		Total Permits	Total Units	Construction Cost
	Permits	Units	Permits	Units	Permits	Units	Permits	Units			
1996	157		12	24	3	12			172	193	\$16,433,900
1997	234		25	50			1	12	260	296	\$25,764,278
1998	254		14	28	1	4			269	286	\$27,919,850
1999	289		13	26					302	315	\$34,614,293
2000	335		4	8					339	343	\$38,099,600
2001	385		37	74	5	20			427	479	\$50,043,300
2002	366								366	366	\$41,444,770
2003	325		26	52					351	377	\$46,627,500
2004	326		47	94					373	420	\$54,535,500
2005	288		36	72			1	9	325	369	\$46,831,000
2006	246		28	56					274	302	\$42,862,400
2007	251		18	36					269	287	\$41,964,500
2008 (through Sept.)	117	117	25	50					142	167	\$23,539,000

Source: U.S. Census

Building permits issued can provide a great deal of information on the amount of new construction occurring within a community. This not only reflects market demand for new housing, but is also an indicator of economic conditions. Building permit information is only available for unincorporated communities at the County level.

**Figure 3-3
New Residential Building Permits and Construction Costs Unincorporated Chippewa County -
1996-2007**



Source: U.S. Census

As seen by Table 3-4 and Figure 3-3, the number and construction costs of permits issued for new residential construction for unincorporated Chippewa County have been in steady decline since 2004. In fact, the 2007 permits and costs have declined by more than 50 percent from the 2004 numbers. With the current mortgage and credit troubles, similar trends are being seen throughout the state and country.

Occupancy and Structural Characteristics

Housing occupancy is a measure to determine whether the housing supply is adequate to meet demand. A stable housing market is one where the availability of new and existing housing units roughly matches the needs of the population. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an overall vacancy rate of three percent is considered to be optimal. Vacancy rates under the three percent standard may imply a tight housing market where demand exceeds supply, causing housing prices to rise. Conversely, a vacancy rate greater than three percent may indicate an over-supply of housing units, causing stagnation in housing prices.

Housing vacancy rates have been stable in the Town since 1990, and close to the standard set by HUD. In 1990, approximately 3.8 percent of the housing units in Wheaton were vacant (see Table 3-5). In 2000, just 2.7 percent of the housing units in the Town were vacant, which is just below the optimal three percent standard set by HUD. Chippewa County had vacancy rates of 3.8 percent in 1990, and 6.4 percent in 2000. Vacancy rates this high, and that have been increasing in recent years, could indicate housing stagnation, and result in lower housing values.

Table 3-5
Housing Characteristics - 1980 to 2000

Town of Wheaton	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	794	865
Total Seasonal	4	0
Total Vacant	30	23
Vacancy Rate	3.8%	2.7%
Total Occupied Units	764	842
Owner Occupied Units	677	743
Renter Occupied Units	87	99
Percent Owner-Occupied	88.6%	88.2%
Single Family Units	699	803
Multi-Family Units	2	23
Mobile Homes	65	37

Source: U.S. Census

Also shown in Table 3-5, are the occupied housing units, 88 percent were owner-occupied in 2000. This is comparable to the 1990 numbers, indicating a stable housing market for renters and homeowners.

Table 3-6 displays the number of units per structure for the Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County in 2000. The majority of housing units in Wheaton (96.4 percent) 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 or contain a business unit. Attached housing units are one or more unit structures that have one or more walls extending from ground to roof departing them from adjoining structures. Chippewa County also has a majority of single-family homes, but also significantly more structures with two or more units.

Table 3-6
Units in Structure - 2000

Municipality	1-Unit Detached		1-Unit Attached		2 Units		3-4 Units		5 or more Units	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Wheaton	796	96.4%	7	0.8%	12	1.5%	8	1.0%	3	0.4%
Chippewa County	16,127	80.4%	480	2.4%	1,250	6.2%	907	4.5%	1,301	6.5%

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Value Characteristics

Providing affordable housing which meets the needs of current and future Town residents is an important element in planning for the future. A lack of quality affordable housing has impacts on population migration patterns, economic development, and the tax base.

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 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.

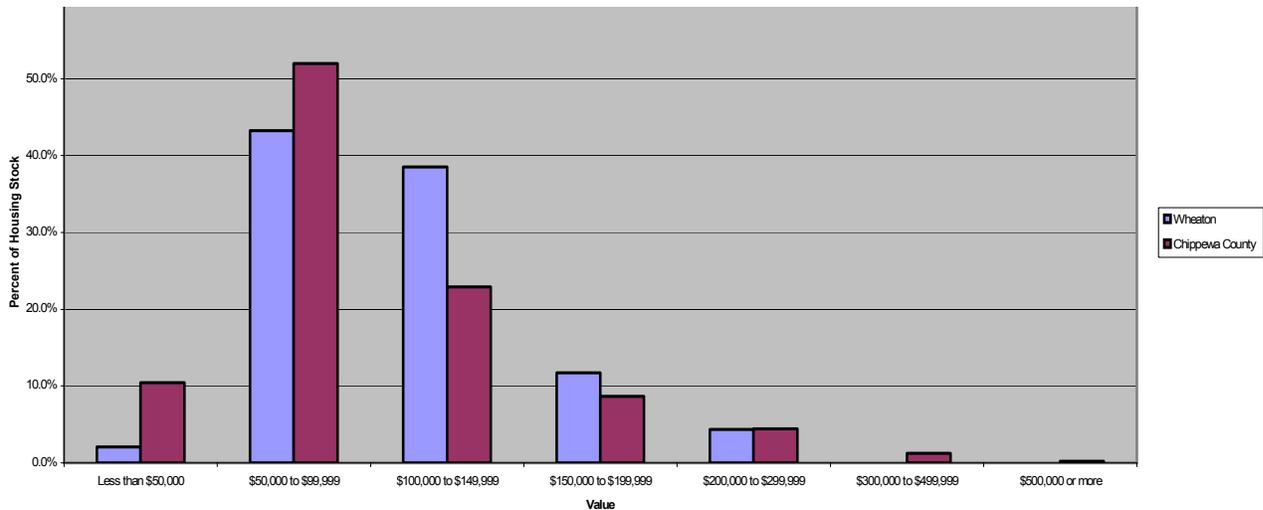
The median value of owner-occupied housing units in 2000 was \$104,900 for the Town of Wheaton and \$88,100 for Chippewa County, as shown in Table 3-7. Figure 3-4 graphically illustrates the housing value differences between Wheaton and Chippewa County. We can see that Chippewa County has a much higher percentage (62.5 percent) of its houses valued under \$100,000 compared to Wheaton (45.4 percent). This could be, in part, due to Wheaton having a newer housing stock than Chippewa County as a whole.

Table 3-7
Housing Value of Specified Owner Occupied Units - 2000

Municipality	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$149,000	\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$300,000 - \$499,999	\$500,000 or more	Median Value
Town of Wheaton	11	228	203	62	23	0	0	\$104,900
Chippewa County	1,232	6,113	2,692	1,022	526	148	25	\$88,100

Source: U.S. Census

Figure 3-4
Housing Values



Source: U.S. Census

Housing Affordability

“Over time, policy analysts have come to use ‘30 percent’ as a standard to assess the affordability of housing. The belief is that households who have to pay more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing may be forced to forego other important needs.”
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as that housing which does not cost a household more than 30 percent of their monthly or annual income. This affordability benchmark is not an underwriting standard; it 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.

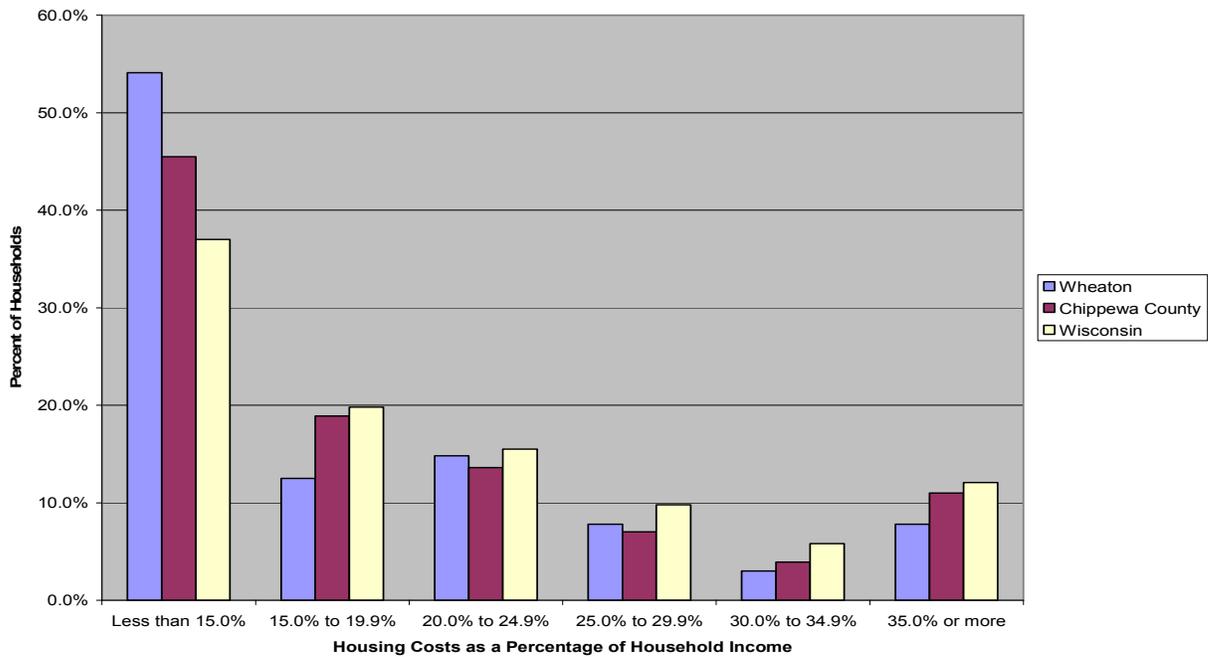
As shown in Table 3-8 and Figure 3-5, a majority (89.2 percent) of owner-occupied households in Wheaton pay less than 30 percent of their household income towards housing costs. Chippewa County also has most owner-occupied households paying less than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs (85 percent).

Table 3-8
Owner Occupied Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income - 1999

Unit of Government	Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income					
	Less than 15%	15.0% to 19.9%	20.0% to 24.9%	25.0% to 29.9%	30.0% to 34.9%	35.0% or more
Town of Wheaton	285	66	78	41	16	41
Chippewa County	5,319	2,209	1,593	823	456	1,282
State of Wisconsin	413,452	220,825	173,620	109,833	64,892	135,075

Source: U.S. Census

**Figure 3-5
Owner Occupied Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income - 1999**



Source: U.S. Census

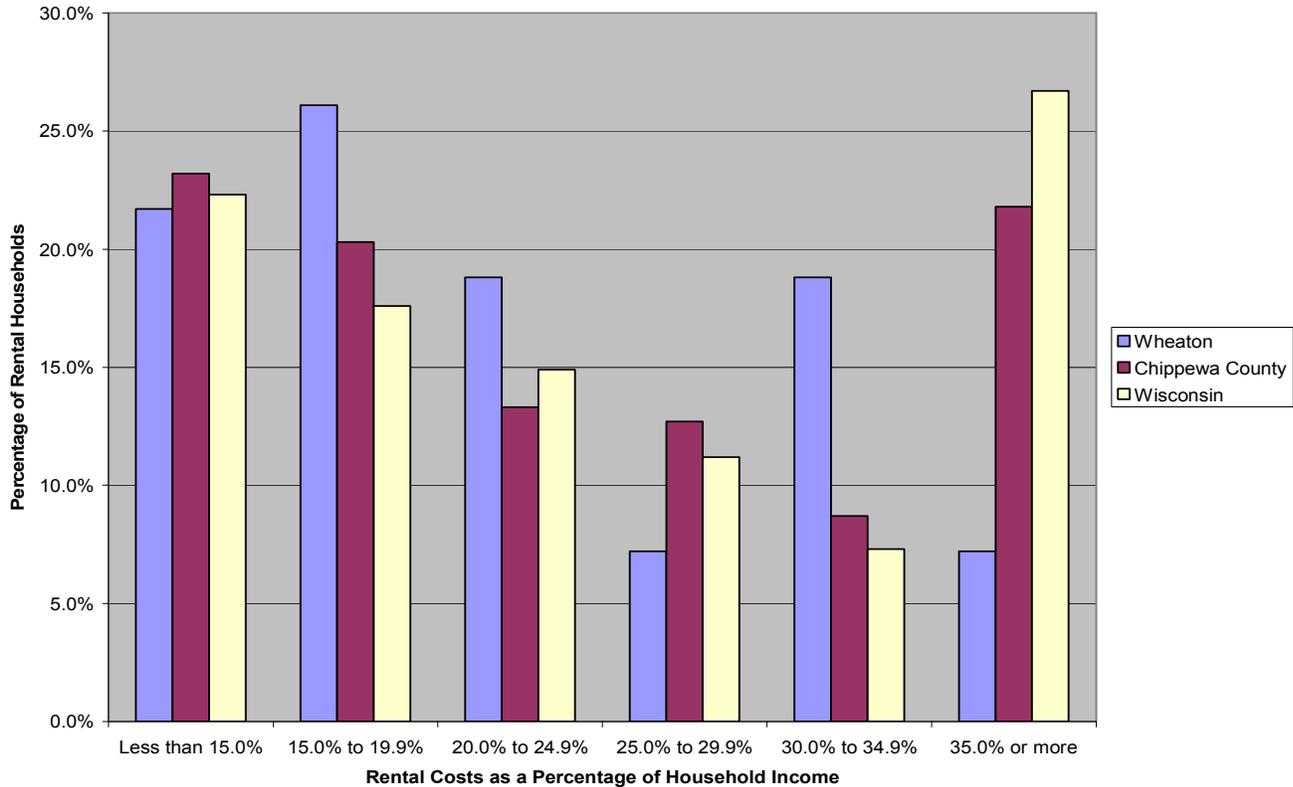
A much higher percentage of rental housing is experiencing housing cost burdens. As shown in Table 3-9 and Figure 3-6, 26 percent of Wheaton rental households are paying 30 percent of more of their monthly income for housing costs. Over 30 percent of Chippewa County rental households are paying over 30 percent of their income for housing costs.

**Table 3-9
Renter Occupied Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income - 1999**

Municipality	Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income					
	Less than 15 Percent	15.0 to 19.9 Percent	20.0 to 24.9 Percent	25.0 to 29.9 Percent	30.0 to 34.9 Percent	35.0 Percent or more
Town of Wheaton	15	18	13	5	13	5
Chippewa County	1,065	933	609	581	399	1,001
State of Wisconsin	135,380	106,965	90,934	67,926	44,573	162,669

Source: U.S. Census

Figure 3-6
Renter Occupied Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income - 1999



Source: U.S. Census

3.2 Assessment of Future Needs

Housing unit and household projections were presented in the Issues and Opportunities Element, and will not be repeated. But to summarize, Wheaton is expected to gain 507 households and 519 housing units by 2030. Traditionally, rural towns such as Wheaton have a high percentage of single-family homes, often with few other housing types 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. This is particularly true in towns where a large proportion of the population has been long-time residents. In such communities, there is a desire for these residents to remain in the Town during their retirement years. This appears to be the case in Wheaton. However, the Town does not have areas that are served by municipal services, which are often required to support alternative housing choices (i.e. senior housing, apartments, etc.). It is not feasible, from an economic perspective, for the Town of Wheaton to develop these alternative housing choices, but rather allow private developers to determine if a market need is present, and explore the ability to establish these facilities. If and when a need is present, the Town should be willing to consider the development of an assortment of housing alternatives over the next 20 years.

Several important factors will influence the housing market in Wheaton over the next 20 years. As previously stated, the demographics of the residential composition of the community will be important. As long-time residents age, it is important that there are a variety of housing options that cater to their needs.

Border control and development regulations are important issues facing the Town now, and will continue into the future. Several concerns were brought up with regards to the threat of annexation to the cities of Eau Claire or Chippewa Falls. Additional extra-territorial control from these neighboring incorporated municipalities limits the Town's ability to influence land development. With good communication and planning, annexation discussions can take place effectively and efficiently with neighboring cities, resulting in outcomes that can be mutually beneficial.

Several residents also identified the loss of the Town's rural character as a problem in the community. While growth has been identified as being needed, there are particular areas that residents would like to see this happen in, and for the most part, would like to see their community remain rural in nature. While growth and land use will be discussed in more detail in later elements, it is important to identify that housing development and growth will have to be managed and guided to preserve the community character.

3.3 Housing Programs

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning legislation requires governments completing plans compile a list of programs available to help provide an adequate supply of housing that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in their jurisdiction. Below is a partial listing of programs that are available.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Rehabilitation

Housing rehabilitation funds are made available through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG program provides grants to local governments for housing rehabilitation initiatives that benefit low- and moderate-income households.

Section 8 Program

This federal program provides rent assistance to eligible low-income households based on family size, household income, and fair market rents. Typically, a tenant's share of the total rent payment does not exceed 30 percent of his/her annual income.

Property Tax Deferred Loan Program (PTDL)

This state program offers loans to low- and moderate-income elderly homeowners (65 years old with a spouse at least 60 years old, unless one is disabled) to help pay local property taxes so the elderly can afford to stay in their homes.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority serves Wisconsin residents and communities by working with others to provide creative financing resources and information to stimulate and preserve affordable housing, small business, and agribusiness.

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.

Community Options Program (COP)

Community Options programming is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services through the health and social services departments of each County. This program helps people who need long-term care to stay in their homes and communities with cost-effective alternatives to expansive health care in institutions and nursing homes. Elderly and serious long-term disabled individuals receive funds and assistance to find services they are not going to be able to receive through other programs.

Chippewa County Housing Authority

Chippewa County Housing Authority was founded in 1971 to address various housing issues throughout the County. Among the many issues they deal with are shortages in large (three to four bedroom) rental houses, affordable elderly homeownership condos and affordable elderly housing in the mid-range price (non-subsidized, but still moderately priced, with tenants having to pay less than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs). Chippewa County Housing Authority runs a variety of programs to address housing problems.

Housing Choice Vouchers

Chippewa County Housing Authority was able to fund all 382 vouchers for rental and homeownership assistance from April 1, 2007 to March 21, 2008. They provided 4,451 subsidy payments over this 12-month period serving 580 different families. Renters select their own units. Assistance is provided in every municipality in the County.

Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)

Under a State of Wisconsin pilot program and in coordination with Starting Points, Inc., the Authority established a tenant based rental assistance program. The Authority coordinates the rental assistance portion of the program and Starting Points, Inc. provides the in-home case management services. The program is designed to assist 45 families for an 18-month period who are experiencing a housing crisis. The goal is to stabilize the housing situation while assisting them to address their other socioeconomic needs. Many participants transition from TBRA to the long term Housing Choice Voucher program where they continue to receive the rental assistance without case management services.

Emergency Rental Assistance

The Homeless Emergency Loan Program (HELP) provides security deposits and/or one month's rental assistance to households. Loans of up to \$500 are used to help those households who are already evicted or those facing evictions to maintain their housing. Using the homeless central intake system managed by Starting Points, Inc. the Authority is often able to combine its funds with other funding resources avoiding duplication of services and reducing fraud.

Participants repay the assistance they receive in small monthly payments and the Authority uses that revolving loan fund to assist additional households.

Emergency Homeownership Assistance

During the last year the Authority has seen a dramatic increase in the number of mortgage foreclosure postings. According to the Chippewa County Sheriff's Department, as of August 1st, 2008, there had been 59 foreclosure sales during the year. In 2007, there was a total of 100 foreclosure sales. The 2007 and 2008 figures were estimated by the department to be two to three times higher than they had seen in previous years. Tax foreclosures remain about the same. Unfortunately due to a lack of funding, the Authority was unable to provide any assistance loans this year. They are counting on revolving loan funds to accumulate over the next year so that they can once again provide assistance. In addition, there is a grant pending application for funding.

The program, unique to this County, is designed to assist families to avoid a foreclosure. After extensive housing and budget counseling, a recovery plan is designed that includes payments being made by the participant and matching payments by the Authority. When the participant's mortgage or property taxes are brought current, they begin repaying the Authority for the assistance. This program also requires that if their first mortgage holder does not require a property tax escrow, the participant must establish his or her own escrow account for future taxes.

Rental Rehab Program

The Rental Rehab Program offers low interest loans to owners of rental properties who are willing to rent to low-income tenants for at least five years and keep their rents affordable during the same period. The Authority loans 75 percent of the repair costs and the owner must contribute the other 25 percent using his or her own funds. As the owner repays the loan to the Authority, the funds are then used to loan out to new owners.

Vision

Volunteers in Service in Our Neighborhoods (VISION) is a volunteer based minor home repair program funded by the Authority, Chippewa County and the City of Chippewa Falls. The homeowner pays for the materials and community volunteers provide the labor.

Lead Reduction Grant

The Authority was invited to participate in a Lead Reduction Program to help the State Department of Administration meet contract goals for a grant program that was struggling to be completed. To facilitate the Lead Grant funds, the State also awarded additional HOME funds to supplement the federal Lead Grant dollars.

The Authority completed 14 projects in nine months helping to reduce the lead in 16 owner and renter occupied dwelling units.

First Time Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance

This program provides a no-interest, deferred payment loan to low-income renters to be used for down payment and/or closing costs, called gap financing, to help them purchase their first home. Gap financing is needed primarily when conventional lending sources are unwilling to assume 100 percent of the lending risk.

An important component of the program is homebuyer education. Participants receive information on how to obtain the most advantageous terms to their purchase mortgage, how to inspect and evaluate the quality of the home they are buying and education on maintaining their home after purchase.

Lease to Purchase Program

The Lease to Purchase Program was created to assist low-income renters to become homeowners. It is designed to assist renters who do not qualify for conventional financing. They may need time to clean up some poor credit or reduce their debt load. Perhaps they need to lengthen their employment history.

The Authority purchases homes on the open market that are in need of repair. Necessary repairs are completed using CDBG Home Repair funds. The Authority then selects a family who will rent the home for one year and then purchase the home. AnchorBank is a partner in the program by providing half of the funds needed to purchase the home. The Authority uses grant funding for the rest of the purchase money. Often the family assists by completing some of the needed repairs to the home. After the rental period the family assumes the AnchorBank loan and the CDBG loan. The Authority provides a low interest loan for the grant money used.

3.4 Housing Goals, Objective and Policies

The Town encourages proper placement of housing to limit potential land-use conflicts. Housing developments in the Town should be constructed and maintained in a fashion that is consistent with the rural atmosphere.

The private sector is encouraged to address the needs of all income levels, age groups, and persons with special needs (assisted-living) in the development of safe, affordable, and quality housing in the Town of Wheaton. While it is unlikely that the Town will develop residential units itself, it encourages the private sector to make available an amount of residential housing needed to satisfy housing needs. Affordable housing development, including low-to-moderate income, should be considered to ensure all ranges of family incomes have an opportunity to live, work, and raise a family in the Town.

The Town of Wheaton shall continue to enforce applicable state and local building regulations (building codes) to encourage safe and high quality housing developments, which will be accomplished by working with the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Department.

Housing goals were developed in December 2008, at a Plan Commission meeting. The goals were based upon the previous work completed, in particular the SWOT Analysis and Vision process.

- A. **Goal** – The Town will strive to maintain the balance between agriculture and residential in the Town that exists in 2009.
 - a. **Policy** – The Plan Commission will evaluate other types of subdivision requirements that affect overall density to maintain the current residential-agricultural balance.
- B. **Goal** – The Town will review, maintain and enforce housing related ordinances.
- C. **Goal** – The Town encourages the development of a full range of housing options for current and future Town residents.
 - a. **Policy** – The Town will work with the Chippewa County Housing Authority to accomplish this goal.

- b. ***Policy*** – The private sector will take the lead in developing housing.

4.0 Transportation

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Background Data/Existing Conditions

4.3 Relationship to State and Regional Transportation Plans

4.4 Assessment of Future Needs

4.5 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

4.1 Introduction

Transportation planning can be used to help guide and accommodate the growth which a community envisions. Like the other elements in this Plan, transportation is interconnected, especially with land use. Transportation decisions such as construction of new roadways or upgrading of existing roads can impact accessibility, land values, and land use development.

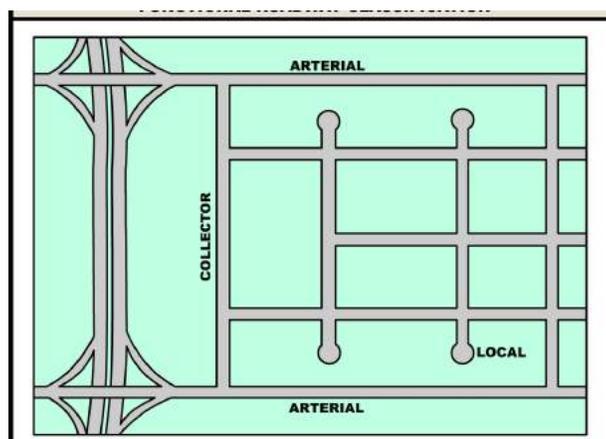
The Town of Wheaton's transportation system is largely focused on vehicular travel. Recently, however, there has been more emphasis given to alternative transportation routes and trails. The Town also has two freight rail lines running through portions of the community.

4.2 Background Data/Existing Conditions

Highways

Roads can be generally classified into three categories – arterials, collectors, and 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. A demonstration of the function of various roadways is shown in Figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1
Roadway Functionality

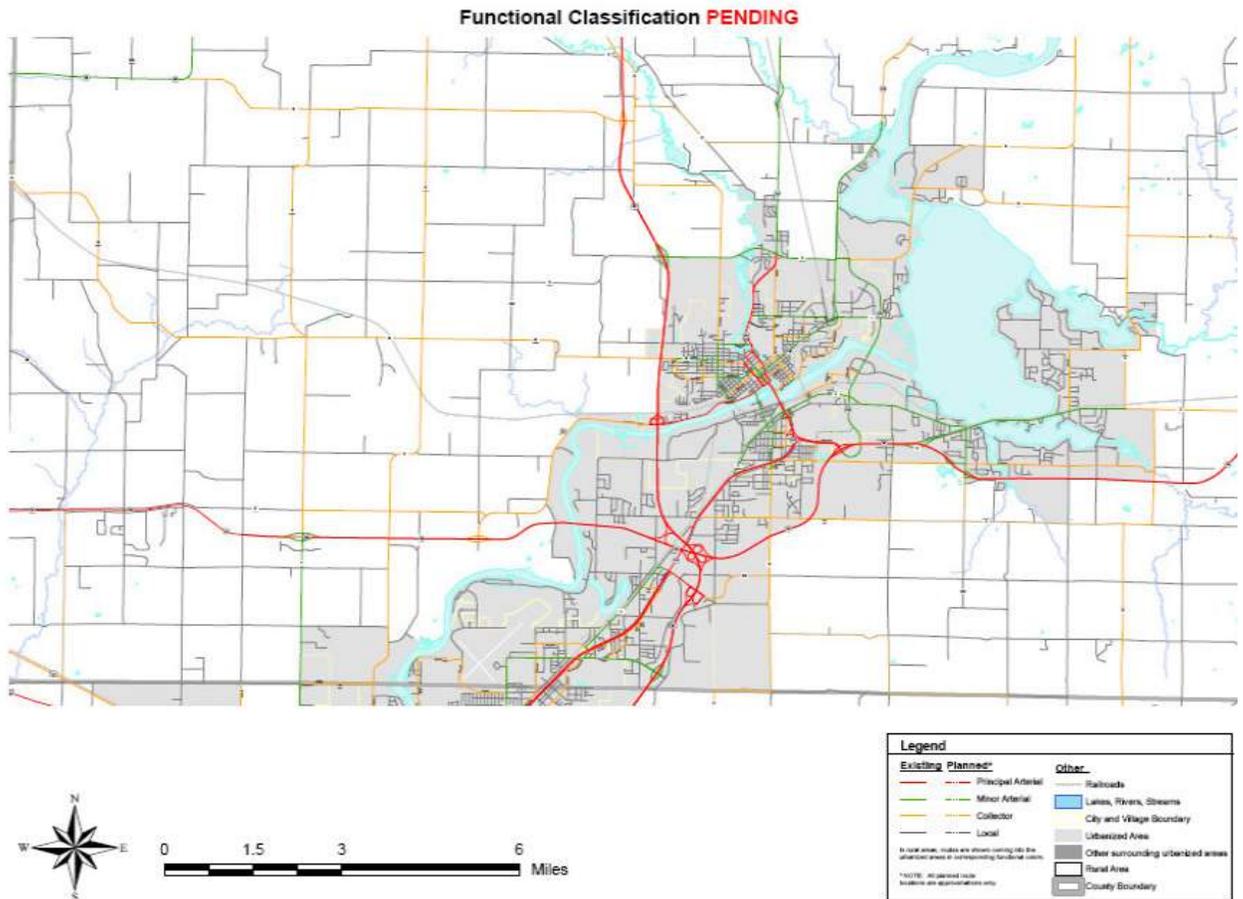


Source: SEH

Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(c)
(c) Transportation element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The element shall compare the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element shall also identify highways within the local governmental unit by function and incorporate state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the local governmental unit.

Wheaton is served by over one-hundred miles of roads under County and local jurisdiction. The Town is served by three major highway facilities: State Highway 29 running east and west through the middle of Town, U.S. Highway 53 running north and south on the eastern edge of the Town, and U.S. Highway 12, which crosses the southwest corner of the Town. State Highway 29 and U.S. Highway 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.

Figure 4-2
Road Classification Eau Claire Urbanized Area



Source: West Central Regional Planning Commission

State Highway 29 and U.S. Highway 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 County Highway T from the southern Town border to State Highway 29, are classified as arterial routes.

About 23 miles, including the remainder of County Highway T, County Highways M, N, and F, as well as U.S. Highway 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.

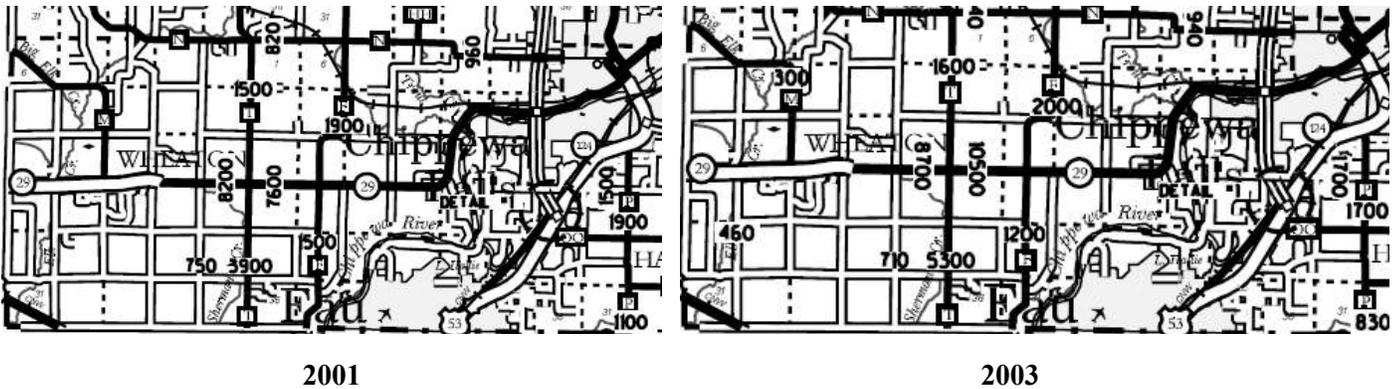
**Table 4-1
Municipal Jurisdiction and Roadway Classification - January 2008**

Municipality	Gross Road Miles	County Miles	Municipal Miles	County Jurisdiction			Municipal Jurisdiction		
				Arterial	Collector	Local	Arterial	Collector	Local
Wheaton	115.43	34.54	80.89	2.17	23.19	9.18		3.37	77.52

Source: WisDOT

According to the 2001 and 2003 traffic counts, the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on State Highway 29 has increased from 2001 to 2003. The AADT on local and collector roads in the Town have also increased slightly. Figure 4-3 below shows that in 2001, State Highway 29 had an AADT of 7,600 east of the County Highway T interchange. In 2003, this was up to 10,500.

**Figure 4-3
2001 and 2003 Town of Wheaton Traffic Counts**



Source: WisDOT

Table 4-2, shows crash data for Wheaton and Chippewa County. In 2007, there were 91 crashes in the Town of Wheaton. In 2005, there were 98 crashes reported in the Town. The lowest number of crashes from 2003-2007 occurring in the Town in one year was 73, which occurred in 2003 and 2006.

**Table 4-2
Wheaton and Chippewa County Highway Crashes - 2003-2007**

Municipality	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change 2003-2007	
						Number	Percent
Wheaton	73	83	98	73	91	18	24.7%
Chippewa County TOTAL	1419	1312	1212	1123	1129	-290	-20.4%

Source: Wisconsin Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory

Bridges

There are 358 bridges in Chippewa County. Of these, 135 are owned by the State of Wisconsin. According to the WisDOT, the Town of Wheaton is responsible for the maintenance of eight bridges, as shown in Figure 4-7.

State and local bridges are inspected at least once every two years. The 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. Once again, however, this does not mean that the bridge is unsafe to travel on.

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

Transit

The Town of Wheaton does not operate any public transportation systems. The Chippewa County Transportation Program, run by the Department of Human Services, provides demand responsive services to the physically, mentally and developmentally disabled and the elderly in the outlying areas of Chippewa County. They operate 12 vehicles, nine of which have wheelchair access. Priority transportation is provided for employment, nutritional, and medical purposes. Social and recreational transportation are available for a per mile fee, depending on vehicle availability.

The Chippewa County Department of Aging provides volunteer drivers for essential transportation (medical, groceries, etc.) on weekdays to residents over 60 years of age. Volunteers own the vehicles, and they are not handicap accessible. Additionally, Trinities Caregivers, Patients Express, and Tender Care Support provide medical transportation services. The Chippewa Valley Airport Service provides transportation to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

A new intercity bus service began in July 2008, offering trips between the Twin Cities area and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There are several stops in between to pick-up and drop-off riders. The service runs once per day, and is funded by a federal grant through the Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program (STRAP), received by the City of Stanley. The closest stop for most Wheaton residents is in the City of Eau Claire.

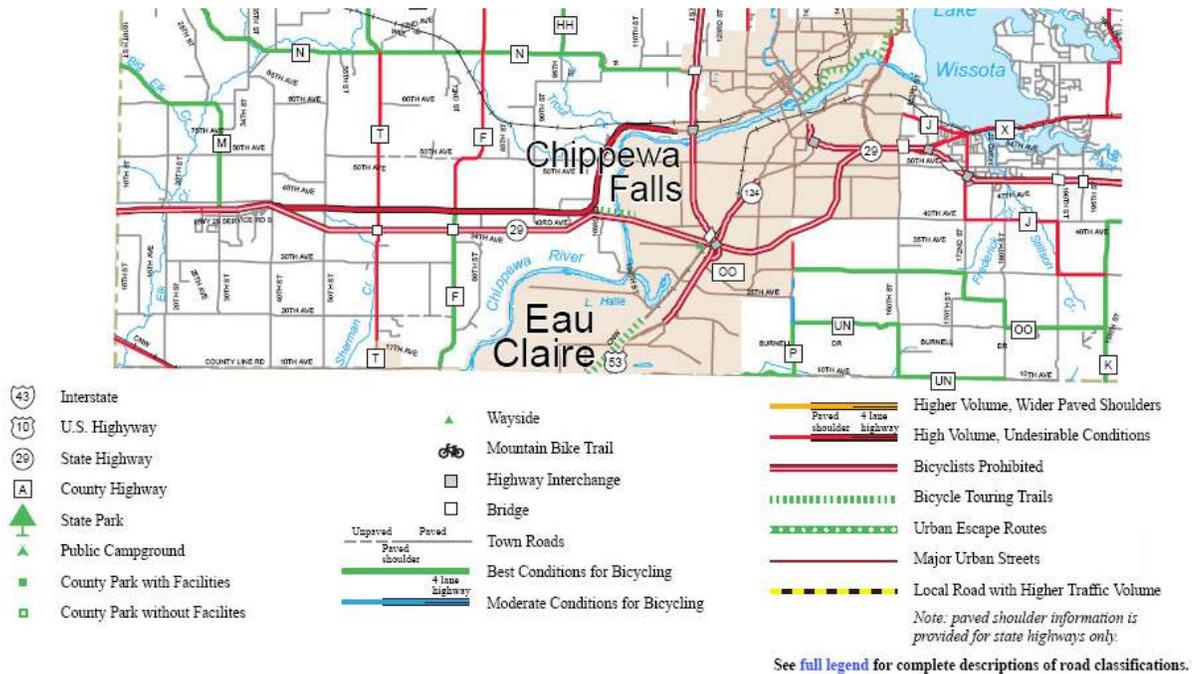
There are several options for taxi service, including Cab 4 U and Courtesy Cab. Both of these companies are based out of Chippewa Falls, but serve Chippewa County and beyond.

Bicycle Facilities

The Town of Wheaton does not have trails that are specifically marked for bicycle use. The only trail intended for bicycle use in Chippewa County is the Old Abe State Trail.

Many of the local roads in Wheaton are wide enough to support bicycle traffic on the shoulder areas of the roadway. WisDOT has identified County Highway F from the southern Town border to Business Highway 29 as having very good conditions for bicycling, as it is a wider road with paved shoulders. County Highway M, north of Business Highway 29 also has been identified as having good bicycle conditions. The bicycling conditions are shown in Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4
Western Chippewa County Bicycling Conditions



Source: WisDOT

Pedestrian Facilities

There are no marked pedestrian routes in the Town. The street network can be used for walking. However, long distances between destinations and a lack of sidewalks may make this undesirable.

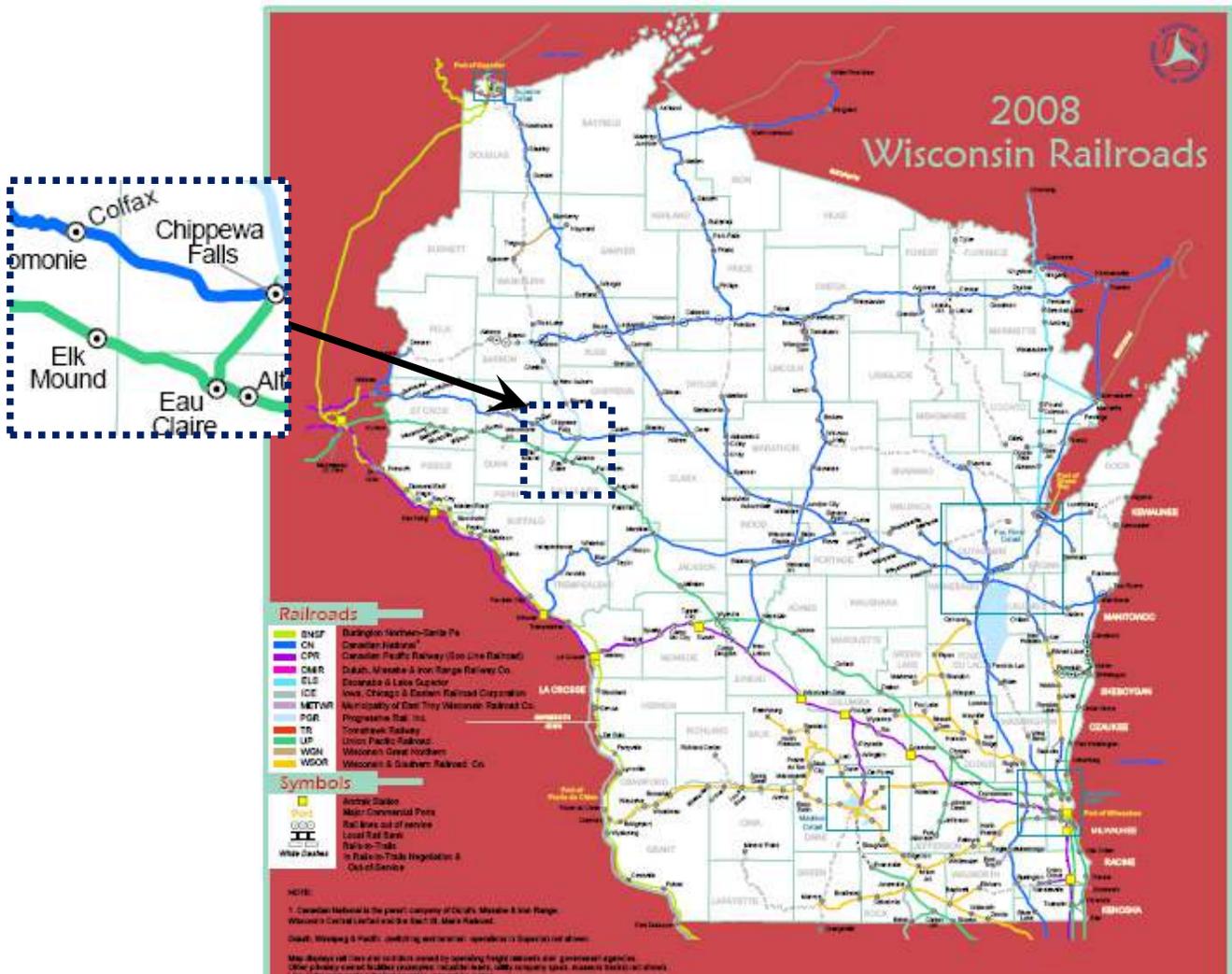
There is a short wooded trail that is partially paved in the Town Park that can be used for recreational walking.

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. From these locations, rail lines lead across the entire country. Figure 4-5 shows 2008 Wisconsin railroads.

Figure 4-5
2008 Wisconsin Railroads



Source: WisDOT

Air Transportation

Chippewa County has two publicly-owned airports. A Basic Utility-A (BU-A) airport is located in Cornell, approximately 36 miles northwest 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 within the city limits of Eau Claire, approximately 10 road miles southeast of Wheaton, provides scheduled passenger and freight air transit for Wheaton residents. 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. Daily arrivals and departures from Rhinelander, WI and Minneapolis, MN are available via Northwest Airlines. Beginning in March of 2010, United Express will take over the daily flights, which will then fly to and from Chicago, IL.

According to the Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020, the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport is scheduled to receive approximately \$12 million in improvements from 2008 to 2012, including runway expansions and terminal improvements.

Trucking

According to the WisDOT Wisconsin Long Truck Operator's Map, created in June 2008, State Highway 29 traveling east and west through Wheaton, U.S. Highway 12 crossing Wheaton's southwest corner, and U.S. Highway 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

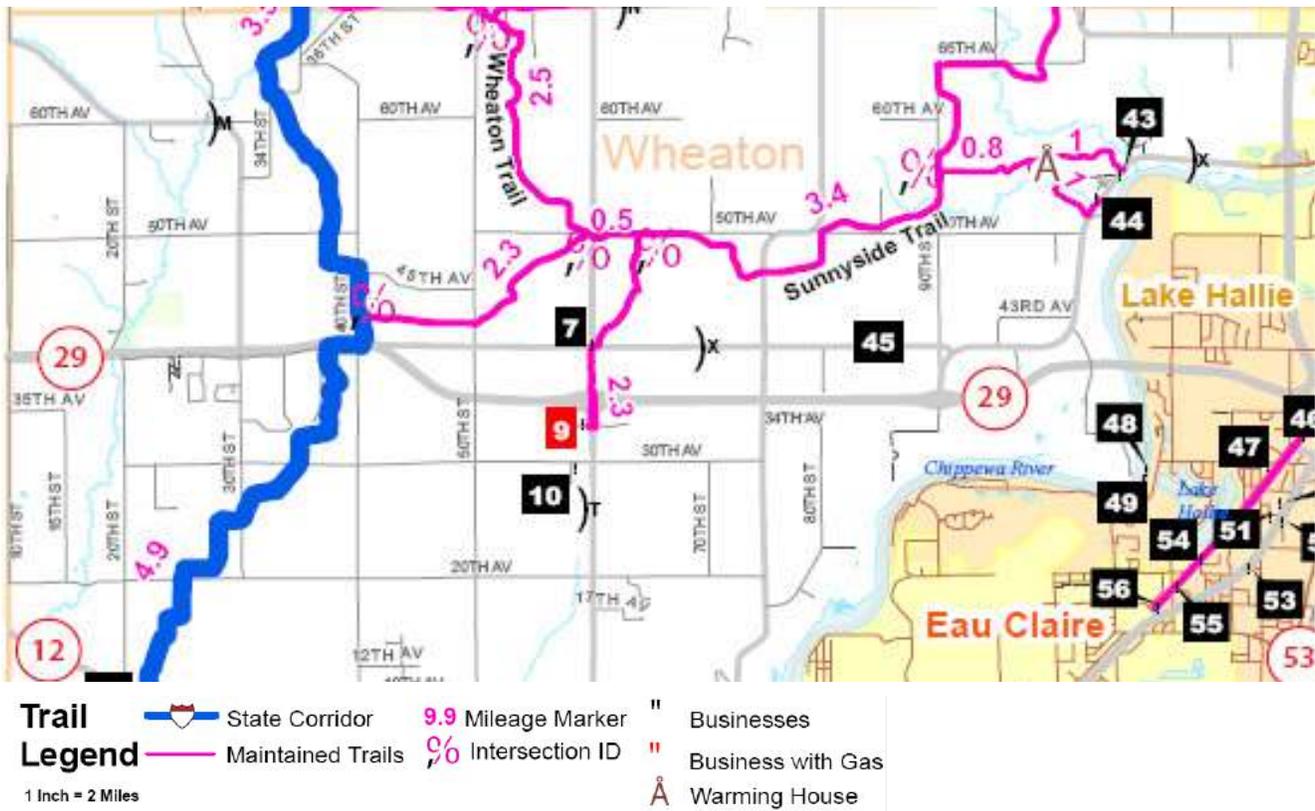
The nearest multi-modal ports are in Superior, Wisconsin (Lake Superior – 144 miles) and La Crosse, Wisconsin (Mississippi River – 100 miles).

The Town and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) provide a public boat landing on the Chippewa River for recreational purposes. The Town is responsible for the maintenance of this boat landing.

Trails

There are nearly 20 miles of snowmobile trails throughout the Town of Wheaton. There is a state trail corridor that runs north-south through the western portion of town, the Sunnyside Trail that runs east-west between 50th Avenue and County Highway X, and the Wheaton Trail, which runs north-south between 50th and 70th Streets.

**Figure 4-6
Town of Wheaton Snowmobile Trails**



Source: Chippewa County Visitor’s Center

4.3 Relationship to State and Regional Transportation Plans

“The planning, design, and construction of road and highways as well as other transportation modes affect existing land uses and plans and proposals for future development. Safe and efficient travel, whether by walking, taking a car, an airplane or a bike is also influenced by the types and patterns of land use” (WisDOT).

Several state, regional and Chippewa County organizations and agencies have developed plans and programs for the management and systematic update of transportation facilities in the area. Based on a review of these plans and programs, no land use conflicts or policy differences were identified.

Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020

The Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020 prioritizes highway construction and improvement needs and investments. It was adopted by the WisDOT in February 2000. Wisconsin’s State Trunk Highway system, consisting of approximately 11,800 miles of roads, is aging and deteriorating at the same time traffic congestion is increasing. In response to this critical issue, WisDOT, in partnership with its stakeholders, has developed the State Highway Plan 2020, a 21-year strategic plan which considers the highway system’s current condition, analyzes future uses, assesses financial constraints and outlines strategies to address Wisconsin’s preservation, traffic movement, and safety needs. The plan is updated every six years to reflect

changing transportation technologies, travel demand and economic conditions in Wisconsin. Currently, the WisDOT has identified that in 2010, the 20th Street intersection with U.S. Highway 12 will be realigned, and the 10th Avenue intersection will be removed. A new railroad crossing will also be installed.

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020

Airports, aviation and aviation-related industries play a significant role in the economic success of Wisconsin communities. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020 provides a framework for the preservation and enhancement of a system of public-use airports adequate to meet current and future aviation needs of the State of Wisconsin. Wisconsin also has a five-year airport improvement program. The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport is scheduled to receive approximately \$12 million in improvements from 2008 to 2012, including runway expansions and terminal improvements.

Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020

The WisDOT developed the Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 to provide a long-range vision addressing Wisconsin pedestrian needs. The Pedestrian Plan is one of several plans recommended in Translinks 21, WisDOT's comprehensive transportation plan released in 1994.

The Pedestrian Plan provides a basic description of existing and emerging pedestrian needs over the next 20 years, with a set of recommendations to meet those needs. WisDOT's efforts ensure that this plan complements both existing and future long-range transportation plans.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

WisDOT encourages planning for bicyclists at the local level, and is responsible for developing long-range, statewide bicycle plans. Guidelines for accommodating travel by bicycles when roadways are reconstructed, or new roads are built, are available and their use is encouraged.

The development of WisDOT's statewide long-range bicycle plan, Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020, involved many people, including an advisory committee. This bicycle planning document is intended to help both communities and individuals in developing bicycle-friendly facilities throughout Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report

The Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report summarizes critical rail transportation issues, suggests opportunities for public sector involvement, and points out areas where additional research is needed. This report reflects input and guidance from a variety of sources including a State Rail Advisory Committee and a Rail Industry and Shippers' Advisory Group.

Midwest Regional Rail System

Nine Midwestern states, including Wisconsin, are working with Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration on proposals for high-speed passenger rail service. The plan, published in 2000, is intended to develop and improve the 3000-mile Midwest Regional Rail System. Under this plan, Eau Claire would have a bus route that would connect individuals to a station directly on a rail line.

Connections 2030

WisDOT is currently developing a long-range transportation plan for the state, called Connections 2030. This plan will address all forms of transportation over a 25-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and transit. The overall goal of the planning process is to identify a series of policies to aid transportation decision-makers when evaluating programs and projects.

Connections 2030 will be the statewide long-range transportation plan through the year 2030, and will work to identify ways to make the individual modes work better as an integrated transportation system.

Connections 2030 will differ from WisDOT's previous planning efforts. Beginning with the release of Translinks 21 in the mid 1990s, the department has prepared a series of needs-based plans for various transportation modes.

Connections 2030 will be a policy-based plan. The policies will be tied to "tiers" of potential financing levels. One set of policy recommendations will focus on priorities that can be accomplished under current funding levels. Another will identify policy priorities that can be achieved if funding levels increase. Finally, WisDOT may also identify critical priorities that we must maintain if funding were to decrease over the planning horizon of the plan.

While the final plan will include statewide policy recommendations, some of these recommendations may differ by specific corridors in the state.

In addition to policies related to each transportation mode, Connections 2030 will also include recommendations on cross-cutting issues such as economic development, land use, transportation, finance, and the environment.

The department's goal is to provide a plan that can aid policy-makers in future transportation decisions. Connection 2030 will be the statewide blueprint for the future.

State Highway 29 Freeway Conversion Study

The majority of the 203 mile State Highway 29 corridor is a four-lane divided highway with a 65 mph speed limit. Currently, STH 29 is classified as a freeway from I-94 in Dunn County to the Bruce Mound Avenue intersection east of Thorp in Clark County.

WisDOT is studying the designation of a 23-mile section running from the Bruce Mound Avenue intersection to the east Clark County line as a freeway. This would give STH 29 freeway designation throughout Dunn, Chippewa and Clark Counties. Additionally, this would limit access and grade separating intersections. Construction of overpasses or other changes would not occur until probably 10-20 years after freeway designation would be made.

West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition

The West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition aims to provide leadership in developing passenger rail service through West Central Wisconsin as part of a regional economic development strategy. This coalition is comprised of a voluntary group of citizens and community leaders.

Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan, 2005-2030

The Town of Wheaton's eastern edge is in the Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). This transportation plan identifies areas for improvement in the MPA dealing with all modes of transportation. A couple of on-street bicycle facilities are shown as being desired in Wheaton along County Highways T, F, and N. Planned highway projects through 2030 in Wheaton are the reconstruction of County Highway T to four lanes from Alpine Road to Old State Highway 29.

Chippewa County Highway Department's Five Year Plan

The Chippewa County Highway Department has a five year plan, currently extending through 2011 that identifies upcoming road maintenance and construction projects. These projects are specifically for County roads and County park areas.

4.4 Assessment of Future Needs

The Town of Wheaton has a variety of transportation alternatives. Trucking and passenger vehicles have very easy access to State Highway 29 and U.S. Highway 53. Having railroad tracks in the Town are an asset that can be used if the need and desire arises. These tracks must be maintained well, however, to ensure the safety of everyone using the Town roads. The Town is bordered on the east by the Chippewa River. While the Town has access to the Chippewa River for recreational use, the river creates a transportation issue as it limits the routes available into the nearby urbanized areas of Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire.

Based on recent traffic patterns, the roadway capacity is adequate for the use the roads are seeing. However, there is some concern from Town residents that as new businesses develop along County Highway T, traffic and accidents will increase on County Highway T south of State Highway 29.

There is also concern that access to State Highway 29 will be limited in the future. Participants of the SWOT workshop recognized that having fewer

north and south access options to State Highway 29 is a threat to the Town. If this happens, users will need to find alternative routes to access this highway, and businesses may need to consider alternate routes for trucking purposes.

There has been some discussion recently of Chippewa County developing a multi-modal trail system that connects communities throughout the County. If this occurs, Wheaton could work with surrounding communities to ensure that the Town is connected to the trail system.

There is a strong desire for additional trails to be developed in the Town as well. During the SWOT meeting, one of the opportunities that received a number of votes was walking/biking trails.

When planning for future needs, it is important to consider the types of traffic that Town roads may see in the future. With rail lines traveling through the Town, the potential could exist to develop a spur in the Town. The Town of Wheaton will also likely continue to see a large amount of traffic that passes through the Town, as State Highway 29 is used to get from the middle and eastern portions of Wisconsin, to the Twin Cities area.

Figure 4-7
Town of Wheaton Transportation Issues and Opportunities Map



Source: National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) and SEH



The aging population also requires attention when planning for transportation facilities. Most of these individuals have driven all of their lives, and for several reasons are often resistant to discontinue driving their personal vehicles. There are a couple of reasons for this, including maintaining independence, staying connected to the outside world and local community, and immediate access to medical and social services. However, as individuals age, their senses become weaker and reaction times become longer, leading to increased potential for accidents. Having forms of public transportation and facilities that can fulfill the needs of the aging population can lead to safer roads for all.

It is important that the Town continue to maintain working relationships with the owners of the multiple transportation systems throughout the community. Having a good transportation infrastructure in place improves the quality of life for residents and increases the attractiveness of the area to businesses. By maintaining cooperative relationships with the railroad companies, transit operators, and roadway owners, the Town can work to maintain a successful transportation network for the future.

A variety of transportation options that allow for the safe and efficient movement of people and vehicles should be encouraged.

4.5 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

Draft transportation goals, objectives, and policies were drafted in January 2009, at a Plan Commission meeting. The goals were based on the information in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the results of the SWOT Analysis, Vision Statement, and Land-Use goal-setting process.

- A. **Goal** – The Town will maintain/improve vehicular traffic flow in the Town.
 - 1. **Objective** – The Town will work with the railroad owners to maintain/improve the safety of track crossings.
 - 2. **Objective** – The Town will work with the Chippewa County Sheriff’s Department to maintain/improve traffic safety and traffic ordinance enforcement.
 - 3. **Objective** – The Town wishes to coordinate with Chippewa County on any County Highway projects within the Town.
 - a. **Policy** – The Town will develop and evaluate options to accommodate increasing traffic volumes on County Highway T south of State Highway 29.

- B. **Goal** – The Town of Wheaton will guide the development, maintenance, and improvement of local transportation systems to meet the needs of the Town, its residents, and its businesses. Some of the considerations to include are safety, accessibility, traffic flow, and economics.
 - 1. **Objective** – When resurfacing, reconstructing, or building Town roads, the Town will evaluate the need for shoulders that are able to safely accommodate bicyclists and motorists.
 - 2. **Objective** – The Town will consider developing and evaluating parking options for park-n-ride areas.
 - 3. **Objective** – The Town will consider evaluating possible designated truck routes through the Town.
 - 4. **Objective** – The Town will consider developing braking and weight limit ordinances for trucks on Town roads.
- C. **Goal** – The Town will review, maintain, and enforce transportation related ordinances.

5.0 Utilities and Community Facilities

5.1 Existing Conditions

5.2 Assessment of Future Needs

5.3 Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives and Policies

Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(d)
(d) Utilities and community facilities element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit such as sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities. The element shall describe the location, use and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the local governmental unit, shall include an approximate timetable that forecasts the need in the local governmental unit to expand or rehabilitate existing utilities and facilities or to create new utilities and facilities and shall assess future needs for government services in the local governmental unit that are related to such utilities and facilities.

In Towns, utilities and community facilities typically include a Town Hall, fire station, maintenance garage, public works space, and parks and recreational facilities. Residents typically receive water via private wells, and utilize on-site septic systems. Generally speaking, it is not efficient or economical for smaller communities that have a wide-spread population to install infrastructure seen in incorporated communities. Utilities may also include sanitary sewer, storm water, and water systems, as well as electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and solid waste disposal. Special services such as daycare centers are also be considered a community facility.

Utilities and community facilities can be used to guide development and encourage growth, as well as establish a community identity. Combined with roads, the construction, maintenance, and operation of utilities and community facilities are often the largest portion of a community's budget.

This element contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, actions or policies, and recommended programs to guide the future maintenance and development of utilities and community facilities in the Town of Wheaton.

5.1 Existing Conditions

The goals, objectives, and policies aimed at providing adequate facilities and services for current and future residents and businesses are very important to this element of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan element will take an inventory of existing community facilities and services, identify current needs of residents, and study the need for community facilities and utilities improvements or new facilities over the next 25 years.

Many of the utilities and/or community facilities discussed in this element are provided by private companies, or located outside of Wheaton. As a result, the Town may have limited ability to make or shape decisions on the future of those facilities or services. The Town will continue to coordinate and cooperate with those who are responsible for making decisions to expand, rehabilitate, or construct new facilities or services to ensure that future needs will be planned for accordingly. Many of the facilities discussed in this element are identified in Figure 4-7 in the transportation element.

“The provision of community facilities and services, such as public sewer and water, has a significant impact on development patterns” (Ohm, Brian. Planning for Natural Resources – An Overview. 2002).

Areas that the community wishes to protect, should be avoided when considering future placement of utilities and services.

Sanitary Sewer Service

The Town does not have a municipally owned sanitary sewer service, nor is it anticipated that the Town will install this infrastructure in the next 25 years. However, as the Town of Wheaton continues to develop, the potential for service lines to be extended to higher-density developments may occur or be desirable, including the development of COMM 83 systems.

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce (COMM) regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site sewage treatment systems in the state. In 2000, the state adopted a revised private system policy called COMM 83 that allows for conventional systems and advanced pre-treatment systems. Under COMM 83, Chippewa County regulates on-site sewage treatment systems in the Town of Wheaton through sanitary codes.

Storm Water 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.

There will be a potential for the amount (quantity) and rate (velocity) of runoff to increase as a result of additional development. This may adversely affect local water resources as sediment and nutrients are discharged to receiving water bodies. Managing storm water 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.

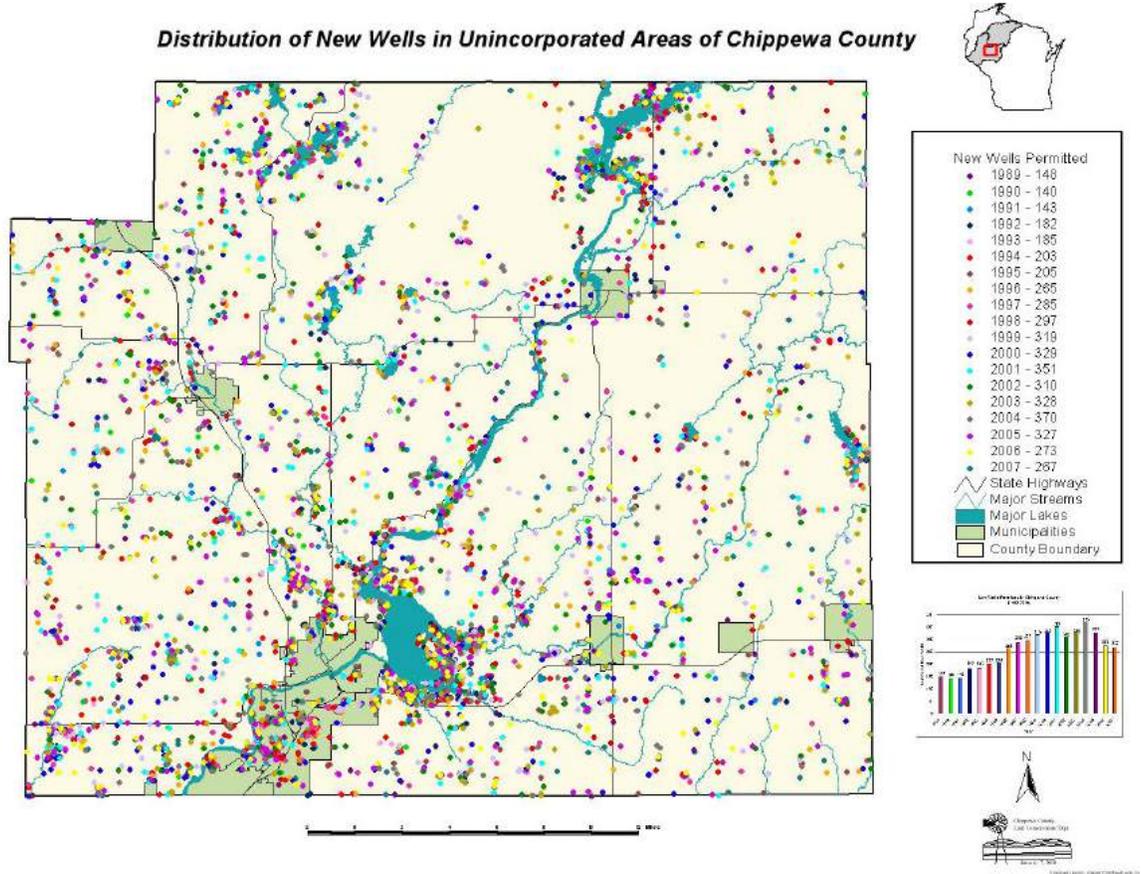
Over the next 25 years, storm water management is likely to become more of an issue as continued development occurs. The Town of Wheaton must work cooperatively with the WDNR, Chippewa County, the Cities of Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls and Elk Mound, the Village of Lake Hallie, the Towns of Tilden and 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

As Town residents currently receive their water via private wells, 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 25 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. This plan restricts some of the uses of these areas to minimize contamination of water sources. Chippewa County has studied groundwater quality over the past several decades, and it is briefly discussed in the Natural Resources Element.

**Figure 5-1
Chippewa County Wells**



Source: Chippewa County Land Conservation Department

Solid Waste Disposal

Solid waste disposal services are contracted by local property owners and private waste providers. The Town will likely continue to utilize the private sector to provide this service.

Recycling Center

The Town does provide a drop-off recycling center for Town residents located at 2429 20th Street. It is open Monday and Wednesday afternoons, and Saturdays. Residents must pay a small fee for dropping off materials.



Wheaton Recycling Center



Wheaton Town Hall

Wheaton Town Hall

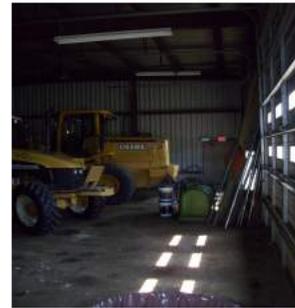
The Town Hall is located at 4975 County Highway T. The structure is wood framed. CMU partition walls separate a toilet room, office, conference room, and closet from the hall area. All walls and furniture are in good condition. The town garage is connected to this facility.

Town Garage

The Wheaton town garage 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, along with open insulation. This facility is connected to the Town Hall. There are currently no equipment or storage space needs.



Wheaton Garage



Wheaton Garage - Interior

Law Enforcement

The Chippewa County Sheriff’s Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency in the Town of Wheaton. Over the next 25 years, it is not anticipated that the Town will develop its own law enforcement department. Continued cooperation between the Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County regarding local crime must continue to be monitored in an effort to address local concerns.

Fire and Rescue

The Town of Wheaton relies on a volunteer fire department that is part of the Chippewa Fire District. The Fire District has four stations located throughout the County, along with a Fire Chief. There are approximately 15 volunteers at the Wheaton Station, located at 3900 38th Street.

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. Storage appears to be sufficient; although, shelving units could be used to better organize the equipment in the garage. The building is well maintained.

The station is well-equipped to handle calls. It has two engines. One is a 1997 Freightliner/Pierce with a 1,500 gallon per minute (gpm) pump and a 1,000 gallon tank. The second engine is a 1979 Mack with a 1,250 gpm

pump and a 500 gallon tank. This station also has a 1963 Kaiser 6X6 Tactical Wildland Assault truck with a 250 gpm pump and a 1,500 gallon tank. The second brush truck is a 1994 Ford F-350 with a 350 gpm pump and a 350 gallon tank. Two larger tankers are also located at this station, along with a portable pump, snowmobile, 8x8 Argo vehicle, and a small boat. There is also an ambulance for rescue calls.



Wheaton Fire Station



Engine 2

Parks and Recreational Areas

The Town has a limited number of park and recreational facilities. Located around the Wheaton Fire Station is a hiking trail, playground areas, tennis and basketball courts, a pavilion, and three baseball fields complete with concession areas. This facility serves as a convenient and safe place to hold events. Playground equipment was updated in 2009 thanks in part to a grant from the Casper Foundation. One of the three ball fields is currently not regulation size for baseball. If the current fence was moved or another fence added, this location would be sufficient for hosting a baseball tournament. A short hiking trail located behind the Fire Station is a beautiful place for an interpretive walk or bike ride. Trail expansion options are being considered.



Town Park



Hiking Trail



Pavilion and Basketball/Tennis Court



Chippewa River Public Boat Landing

"Class 1 trout streams are high quality trout waters that have sufficient natural production to sustain populations of wild trout, at or near capacity."

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The Elk Creek State Public Fishing Area is located 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.

Currently, the Town is developing a plan for their park and recreational facilities. On August 14, 2008, eleven community members, along with Bill Faherty, Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Chippewa Falls, met to develop and prioritize a list of items that the Town would like to address in terms of park and recreational facilities. Prioritized items include dugouts, a sprinkler system, and lighting for the ballfields, updating the playground equipment, and advertising opportunities to help fund the projects, many of which have been started prior to the completion of this plan.

Telecommunication Facilities

A number of companies are available to provide telephone, wireless, and internet services to Town residents. Options include AT&T, Charter Fiberlink, LLC; Clearwire, Closecall America; Powercom Corporation; Sage Telecom, Inc.; Talk America, Inc.; Telephone USA of Wisconsin, Inc.; and West Wisconsin Telcom Coop, Inc.

There is a wide range in the quality of service throughout the Town. Some areas of the Town have fiber internet connections, while other areas only have the ability to receive dial-up internet services at this time. In addition, many areas of the town can only receive television via satellite (DirecTV and DISH Network). Small portions of the town near urbanized areas are served by cable television providers. Over the air digital signals are uniformly available for Town residents.

Power Plants and Transmission Lines

Dairyland Power Cooperative has a power plant in Wheaton, located at the corner of County Highway X and 50th Street. Xcel Energies also has a power plant in Wheaton located off of 80th Street, just east of County Highway F. There has been some interest shown in an additional power plant being developed near the County Highway F and State Highway 29 crossing as well. Electrical transmission lines cross several areas within the Town. Improvements and ongoing maintenance to these transmission lines are occurring and will be expected.

Electric Utilities

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

Natural Gas

Xcel Energy provides natural gas service to Town residents. However, natural gas is not available throughout the entire Town. Many residents rely on LP Gas. The Town will likely continue to utilize Xcel Energy for natural gas service in the future.

Cemeteries

The Town of Wheaton owns and maintains two cemeteries – Rummery Cemetery (located south of STH 29 off of 103rd Street) and McCombs Cemetery (located on 20th Avenue between 40th and 50th Streets). Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church also has a cemetery. The approximate locations of these cemeteries are shown in Figure 4-7.



Rummery Cemetery



McCombs Cemetery

Medical/Health Care Facilities

There are no hospitals in the Town. There are several options for medical care within close proximity to the Town. Luther Hospital in Eau Claire is just a few miles south of the Town of Wheaton in Eau Claire. The Red Cedar Medical Center in Menomonie is the closest hospital for Wheaton residents on the west side of Town (approximately 18 miles Town’s western boundary). Oak Leaf Surgical Hospital and Sacred Heart Hospital are located in Eau Claire, approximately 11 miles from Wheaton, while St. Joseph’s Hospital in Chippewa Falls, is about 12 miles. It is not anticipated that medical facilities will be developed in the Town in the next 25 years.

Libraries

There are no libraries located in the Town of Wheaton. For library services, Wheaton residents may patronize several libraries depending on where in the Town they live, including the City of Chippewa Falls Public Library, the Colfax Public Library in Colfax, WI, and the L.E. Phillips Memorial Library in Eau Claire. All of 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. With continued population expansion, the Chippewa Falls Library may need to look into expanding its facilities in the next 25 years.

**Table 5-1
Town of Wheaton - Library Information**

Public Library Name	Municipal Population 2007	Additional Service Population	Total Service Population 2007	Square Footage of Library
L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library (Eau Claire)	65,202	19,886	85,088	58,000
Chippewa Falls Public Library	13,515	28,514	42,029	18,025
Colfax Public Library	1,164	2,110	3,274	1,800

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Over a 25-year planning horizon, it is not anticipated that the Town 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 local 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: the Chippewa Falls School District, the Elk Mound School District, and the Eau Claire School District. Table 2-8 in the Issues and Opportunities Element shows the enrollment for the schools that Town of Wheaton children attend.

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

Senior Care Facilities

The Town of Wheaton is served by one senior care facility. Westridge, located on County Highway X, is an adult family home with a capacity of four individuals. Adult family homes provide residence for up to four individuals over 18 years of age. They may provide up to seven hours per week of nursing care per resident. Counties certify one and two bed facilities, while the State of Wisconsin certifies three and four bed facilities.

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. 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

There are two licensed childcare providers in the Town. “Building Blocks Family Daycare” is located at 4873 County Highway T, and has a capacity of eight children. “Kids Will Be Kids Daycare” also has a capacity of eight children, and is located at 6974 52nd Street.

Over a 25 year planning horizon, the Town does not anticipate the establishment of a large number of childcare providers. This type of service is typically located within an incorporated community.

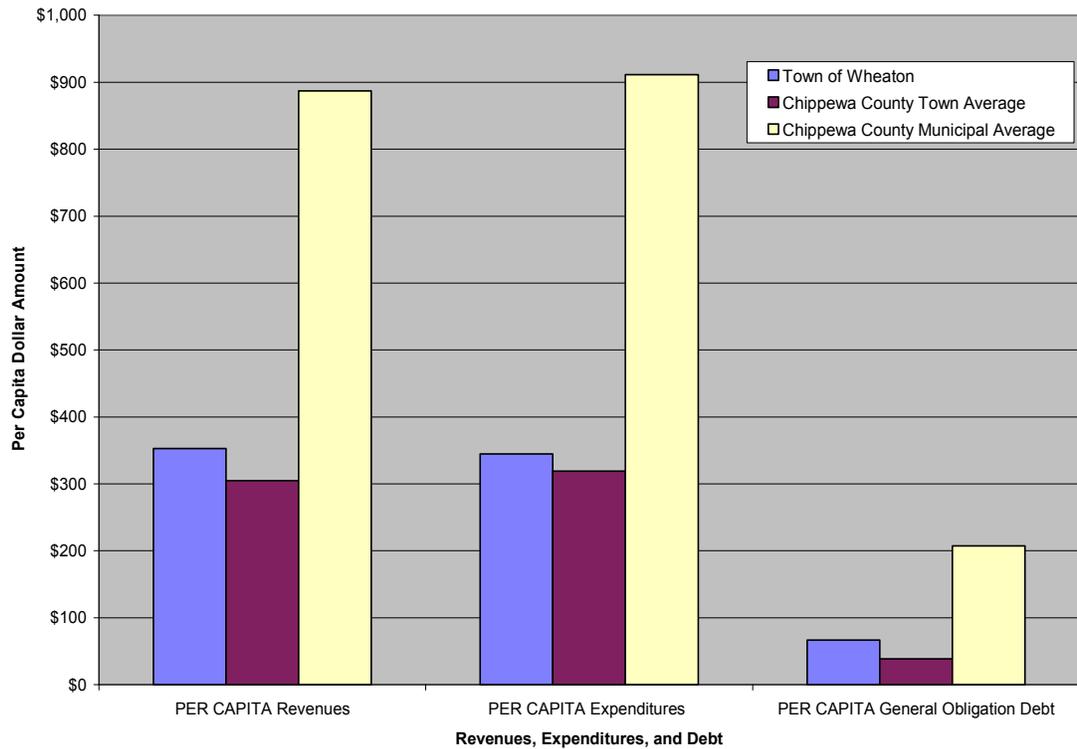
Taxes

While not directly a utility or community facility, a community’s tax revenues will generally be used to fund the development or expansion of a community’s utilities and facilities. While residents and businesses continually demand increased service levels, there becomes an increased burden on budgets and taxpayers. Balancing this is a challenge facing every level of government.

In 2000, the Town of Wheaton had a total fair-market value of \$114,466,200. By 2007, this had risen to \$198,274,500. The Town collected \$544,411 in property taxes in 2007, resulting in a mill rate of \$2.75 per \$1,000 of valuation. In 2000, the Town had a mill rate of \$3.20 per \$1,000 of valuation. In 2007, Chippewa County’s total average municipal mill rate was \$3.16.

Another component that affects taxes is a community’s revenues and expenditures. In 2000, Wheaton had revenues that totaled \$941,800, and expenditures of \$733,200. They also had general obligation debt in the amount of \$191,600. By 2006, Wheaton had seen a small decrease in revenues at \$939,600. The expenditures increased to \$918,500, and their general obligation debt was reduced to \$177,300. Per capita in 2006, the Town received approximately \$353 in revenues, spent \$345, and had general obligation debt in the amount of \$66.60. In 2006, Chippewa County towns had per capita revenues of about \$305, expenditures of \$319, and were in debt by nearly \$39 per person. Chippewa County as a whole saw per capita revenues of \$887, expenditures of \$911, and debt in the amount of \$207 per person in 2006.

**Figure 5-2
Town of Wheaton, Chippewa County Towns, and Chippewa County Per Capita Revenues,
Expenditures, and General Obligation Debt - 2006**



Source: SEH

5.2 Assessment of Future Needs

Much of the infrastructure currently in place in the Town of Wheaton is operated and maintained privately. The development expected in the Town of Wheaton in the next 25-years should not be significant enough to warrant installing new infrastructure that the Town does not currently provide.

The Town should consider developing a stormwater management plan that complies with State and Federal regulations.

As the Town grows and services are expanded, the Town may need to consider additional space in order to effectively provide necessary services.

The Town also wishes to preserve and expand its tax base when reasonably possible. With the substantial amount of agricultural land in the Town, and the restrictions imposed on the taxation of this land, the Town has a limited tax base. By protecting its land and tax base, and avoiding annexation, the Town will maintain the ability to provide services at reasonable costs.

Working cooperatively and maintaining open lines of communication with the operators of public facilities that Town residents utilize is key to ensuring the continuance of shared services. The Town will also need to provide safe and comfortable facilities for its residents when attending meetings and other community events.

5.3 Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives and Policies

Draft Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives and Policies were developed in January at a Plan Commission meeting. The goals were based upon the previous work completed, in particular the SWOT Analysis and Vision process. The following goals were finalized in 2009.

- A. **Goal** – The Town will be conscious of stormwater impacts of future and proposed development.
 - a. **Policy** – The Town will establish a process to review stormwater impacts of proposed development.
- B. **Goal** – The Town will maintain equipment and facilities to ensure they are operating safely and effectively.
 - 1. **Objective** – The Town will consider options for adjusting spatial capacity in the Town Hall according to its use and Town needs.
 - 2. **Objective** – The Town will maintain its current park and recreation facilities.
 - a. **Policy** – The Town will consider options for expanding park and recreation facilities and equipment when the need or opportunity arises.
 - b. **Policy** – The Town will complete and maintain an updated park and recreation plan.
- C. **Goal** – The Town will encourage increased community involvement to improve public safety.
 - a. **Policy** – The Town will support and encourage the formation of neighborhood watch (or similar) groups.
 - 1. **Objective** – The Town will maintain local fire and rescue services.
 - a. **Policy** – The Town will encourage continued training opportunities for local firefighters in cooperation with local universities, technical colleges, and other area fire departments.



6.0 Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

6.1 Existing Conditions

6.2 Existing Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Programs

6.3 Summary of Existing Conditions

6.4 Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goals, Objectives and Policies

*Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(e)
(e) Agricultural, natural and cultural resources element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s. 295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.*

The effects of natural and man-made systems often resonate beyond any one community's borders."

- McKnight Foundation, re: focus: Making Choices for Future Generations.

Understanding the resource base of a community provides an important context for the development of goals, objectives, and policies for the conservation and management of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. Within the following element, various components of the community resource base are examined at a broad level or “planning scale”. The purpose of this examination is to provide the Town of Wheaton with the necessary information to make informed decisions and recommendations about future growth and preservation of these resources.

6.1 Existing Conditions

Agricultural Resources in the Town of Wheaton are important because of the social and economic impact of agricultural businesses. Much of the Town’s land is also used for farming, generating income and jobs for residents.

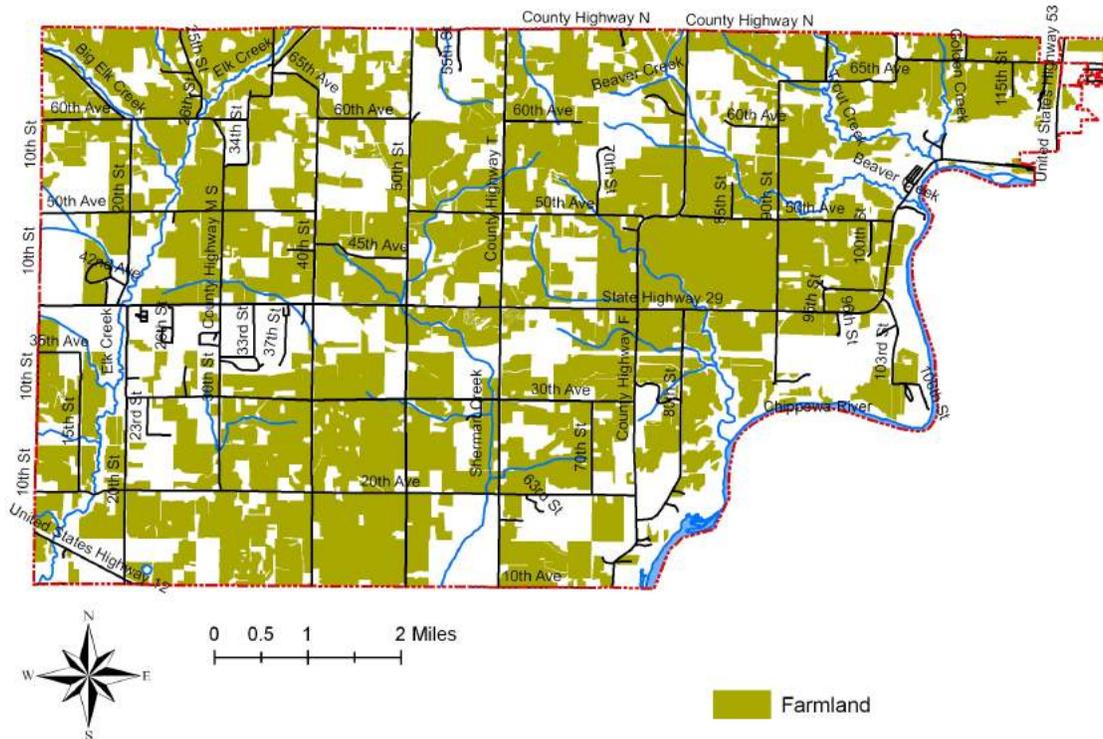
Natural Resources are significant in the Town of Wheaton as they contribute to the health of the residents. Many of these natural resources also act as recreational amenities for residents and landowners, which contributes significantly to the quality of life in Wheaton.

Cultural Resources are important because of the history they hold. These resources are often able to tell stories about past events and residents that have been influential to Wheaton, as well as bringing the community together.

Local Agricultural Industry Trends

Agriculture is an important element of the social and economic characteristics of Wheaton and Chippewa County. Much of Wheaton’s land is devoted to the farming industry.

**Figure 6-1
Wheaton Farmland**



Source: 2005 FSA, CLU

Changes in agriculture due to socio-economic conditions and the development pressures to convert agricultural land to other uses can have profound impacts on Chippewa County and its communities. Chippewa County agriculture is diverse with a wide variety of products being produced. Dairy, field crops, livestock and poultry are the main commodities, as shown in Table 6-1.

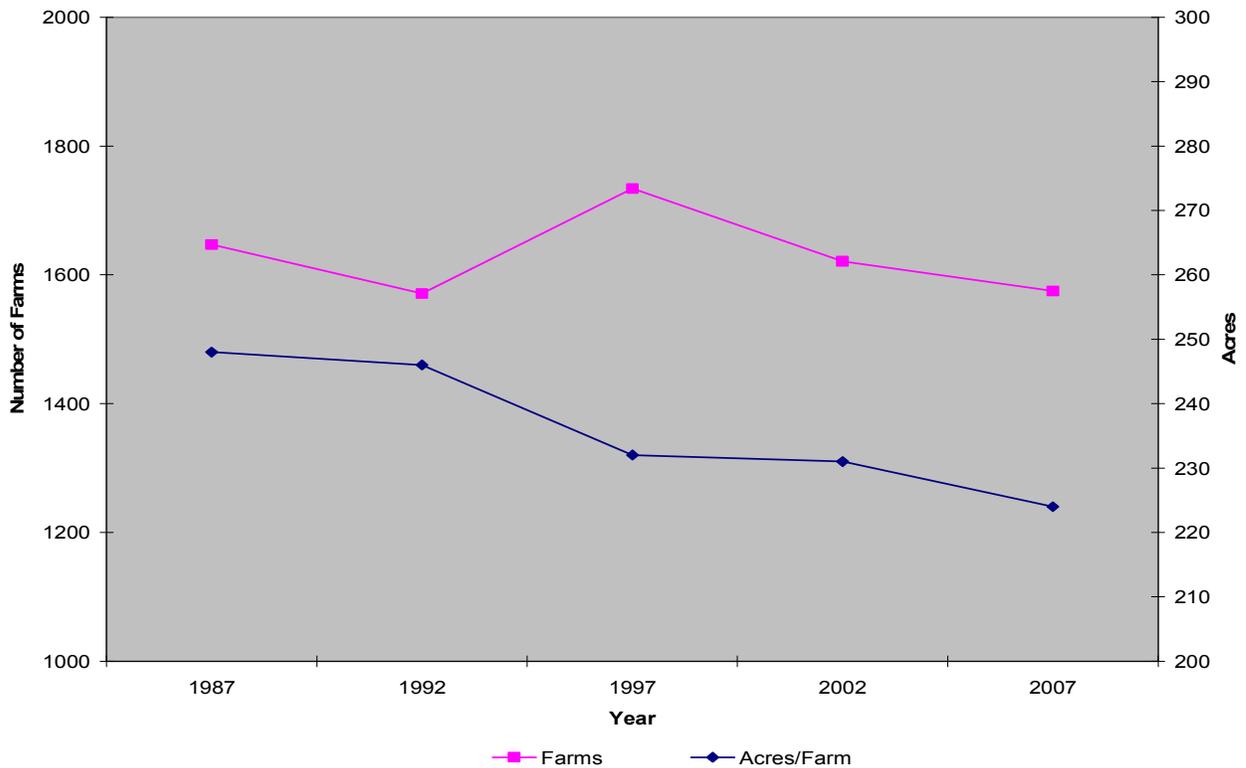
**Table 6-1
Chippewa County's Top Commodities
(sales by dollar value, 2002)**

Milk	\$65.6 million
Grain	\$15.0 million
Cattle & calves	\$13.0 million
Poultry & eggs	\$6.0 million
Hay & other crops	\$2.3 million

Source: University of Wisconsin-Extension

In 2007, there were 72 fewer farms in Chippewa County than in 1987, a 4.4 percent decrease. While the number of farms has fluctuated significantly from 1987 to 2007, the average size of Chippewa County farms has seen consistent decline throughout the same time period. In 1987, the average Chippewa County farm size was 248 acres. By 2007, that number had dropped to 224 acres, nearly a ten percent decrease.

**Figure 6-2
Chippewa County Number of Farms, and Average Farm Size 1987 - 2007**



Source: U.S. Census

The State of Wisconsin saw more significant fluctuations. In 1987 there were 75,131 farms in Wisconsin. By 1997, this number had dropped to 65,602, a 12.7 percent decrease. However, by 2007, the number of farms had increased to 78,463, a 4.4 percent increase from 1987.

Similar to Chippewa County, the average farm size in Wisconsin has been declining. In 1987, the average Wisconsin farm size was 221 acres. As of 2007, the average farm size was down to 194 acres, over a 12 percent decrease. Most of the farms in Chippewa County are owned by individuals or families, as shown in Table 6-2 below.

**Table 6-2
Number of Farms by Farm Ownership - Chippewa County**

Ownership	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007
Individual/Family Farms	1,476	1,395	1,321	1,500	1,401
Partnership	138	131	102	84	119
Corporation - Family	30	41	44	33	48
Corporation - Other	1	2	1	3	4
Other (Co-op, Trust, etc.)	2	2	3	1	3
Total	1,647	1,571	1,471	1,621	1,575

Source: U.S. Census

Table 6-3 indicates that as of 2000, approximately seven percent of Wheaton residents reside on a farm. This is slightly below the County town average of 9.8 percent.

Table 6-3
2000 Population Living on Farms - Chippewa County Towns

Town Name	Population	Population Living on Farms	
		Number	Percent
Wheaton	2,366	170	7.2%
Chippewa County Town Average	31,077	3,037	9.8%

Source: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies - UW-Madison



Wheaton Farm

Similarly, Table 6-4, below, indicates that over six percent of Wheaton employed adults work on farms. This again is slightly lower than the average of all Chippewa County towns at 9.1 percent. The percentage of adults living and working on farms could be similar due to the significant number of individual and family-run farms, as was shown in Table 6-2.

Table 6-4
2000 Farm Employment

Town Name	Total Adults Employed	Employed Adults Working on Farms	
		Number	Percent
Wheaton	1,300	81	6.2%
Chippewa County Town Average	16,196	1,472	9.1%

Source: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies - UW-Madison

Wheaton has seen a decrease of 12 agriculturally assessed parcels from 1990 to 2008, but lost nearly 3,600 acres of agriculture acreage (14.5 percent). There was an increase of over 1,500 residential acres over this time period. Other increases were seen in commercial and industrial acreage as well. In addition, the Town saw total acreage decrease by nearly 1,700 due to annexation. This is a smaller loss than the average of Chippewa County towns, and the County as a whole, and can be seen in Table 6-5.

Table 6-5
Assessed Agricultural Parcels and Acreage - Chippewa County - 1990 and 2008

Town Name	Agricultural Parcels			Agricultural Acres			
	1990	2008	Number Change	1990	2008	Number Change	Percent Change
Wheaton	875	863	-12	24,612	21,050	-3,562	-14.5%
Chippewa County town Total	12,509	11,566	-943	356,568	287,598	-68,970	-19.3%
Chippewa County	12,731	11,848	-883	361,823	291,948	-69,875	-19.3%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

Table 6-6 indicates the amount of Chippewa County agricultural land that was sold from 1996 to 2007. For the most part, agricultural land being sold remains in agricultural use. However, a substantial portion of this land is being converted to other uses. When this is done, we can see that the price paid per acre generally increases, thus resulting in buyers paying a premium for the land being converted to non-agricultural uses.

**Table 6-6
Chippewa County Farmland Sold and Converted to Non-Ag Uses**

Year	All Agricultural Land			Ag. Land Remaining as Ag. Use			Ag. Land Converted to Non-Ag. Uses			Percent of Ag. Land Converted to Non-Ag Uses
	Transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars per Acre	Transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars per Acre	Transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars per Acre	
1996	38	1,503	\$480	29	1,300	\$487	9	203	\$433	14%
1997	39	1,893	\$599	30	1,615	\$539	9	278	\$946	15%
1998	89	5,877	\$1,067	68	4,826	\$1,030	21	1,051	\$1,235	18%
1999	86	5,010	\$1,274	62	3,893	\$1,138	24	1,117	\$1,748	22%
2000	100	6,050	\$1,297	66	4,638	\$1,226	34	1,412	\$1,533	23%
2001	74	3,727	\$1,398	50	3,046	\$1,307	24	681	\$1,807	18%
2002	86	4,446	\$1,732	52	2,676	\$1,627	34	1,770	\$1,889	40%
2003	84	5,492	\$1,598	56	4,573	\$1,460	28	919	\$2,284	17%
2004	81	4,961	\$1,854	60	4,386	\$1,886	21	575	\$1,610	12%
2005	52	2,687	\$2,464	35	1,794	\$2,178	17	893	\$3,038	33%
2006	33	2,573	\$1,983	26	2,149	\$1,838	7	424	\$2,718	16%
2007	51	3,571	\$2,150	48	3,478	\$2,084	3	93	\$4,590	3%

Source: Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service

SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS

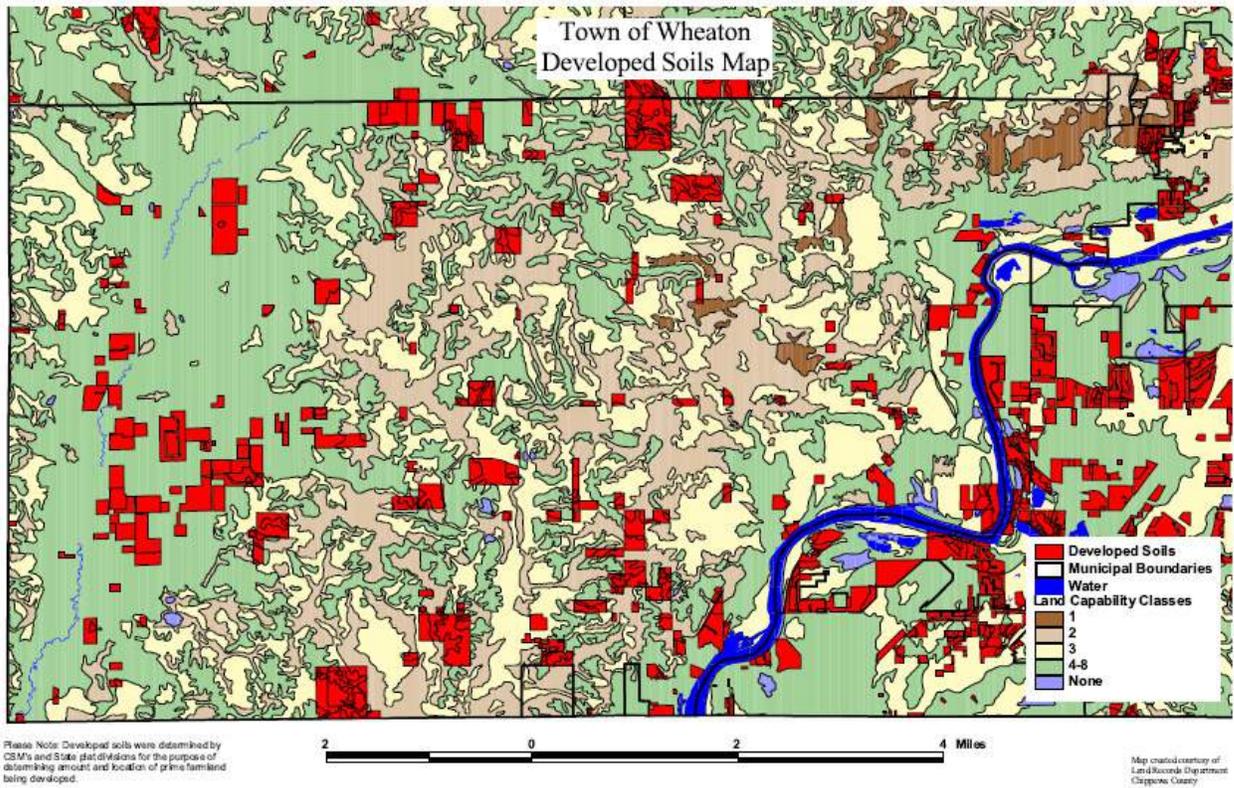
Class I soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.

Class II soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.

Class III soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require special conservation practices.

Soils matter significantly when determining the best use of the land. While soil associations are discussed later, soils are 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.

**Figure 6-3
Wheaton Soil Capability Classes**



Source: Chippewa County



Wheaton Farm

Although the County's agriculture is quite diversified, dairy is prominent. The County ranks fifth in the state in number of dairy herds and tenth in the number of cows. However, dairy production has been decreasing too. Table 6-7 shows the decrease in number of cows and production from 1999 to 2002 in the dairy industry. Chippewa County has had a large productivity loss (500 pounds per cow per year).

**Table 6-7
Chippewa County Dairy Trends - 1999 - 2002**

Place	Number of Cows	Production (1,000 lbs)	Productivity (lbs/cow/year)	Average Heard Size
1999				
Chippewa County	42,500	680,000	16,000	60
Northwest District (includes Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Douglas, Rusk, Polk, Sawyer, and Washburn Counties)	124,000	2,011,150	16,219	59
State	1,365,000	23,071,000	16,902	67
2002				
Chippewa County	33,700	522,350	15,500	59
Northwest District (includes Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Douglas, Rusk, Polk, Sawyer, and Washburn Counties)	104,000	1,666,630	16,025	62
State	1,266,950	21,849,220	17,246	71
Net Change 1999-2002				
Chippewa County	-8,800	-157,650	-500	-1
Northwest District (includes Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Douglas, Rusk, Polk, Sawyer, and Washburn Counties)	-20,000	-344,520	-194	3
State	-98,050	-1,221,780	344	4

Source: Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service

Table 6-8 shows that the number of dairy farms, specifically in the Town of Wheaton, has dropped by 45 percent from 1989 to 2002.

**Table 6-8
Changes in Dairy Farm Numbers**

Town Name	Number of Dairy Farms			Change 1989-2002	
	1989	1997	2002	Number	Percent
Wheaton	51	42	28	-23	-45.1%
Chippewa County towns	1,101	810	570	-531	-46.6%

Source: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies - UW-Madison

The number of dairy farms per square mile, as shown in Table 6-9, helps to reinforce the fact that dairy farms are decreasing. From 1989 to 2002, the number of dairy farms per square mile in the Town of Wheaton dropped from .93 to .51. In all of the towns in Chippewa County, the number of dairy farms per square mile decreased by nearly one-half.

**Table 6-9
Dairy Farms Per Square Mile - 1989-2002**

Town Name	Dairy Farms per Square Mile		
	1989	1997	2002
Wheaton	0.929	0.765	0.510
Total	1.186	0.894	0.633

Source: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies - UW-Madison

Nationally, livestock production is shifting to much larger farms over time. In addition to realizing economies of scale, these larger farms are often more specialized in terms of stage of production, often resulting in increased efficiency and production. This increased productivity and lower operating costs are often passed down to the consumer in lower food prices. Because these larger farms may not participate in all production stages, contracts with other providers are being used more frequently. However, this results in fewer buyers for the farm products.

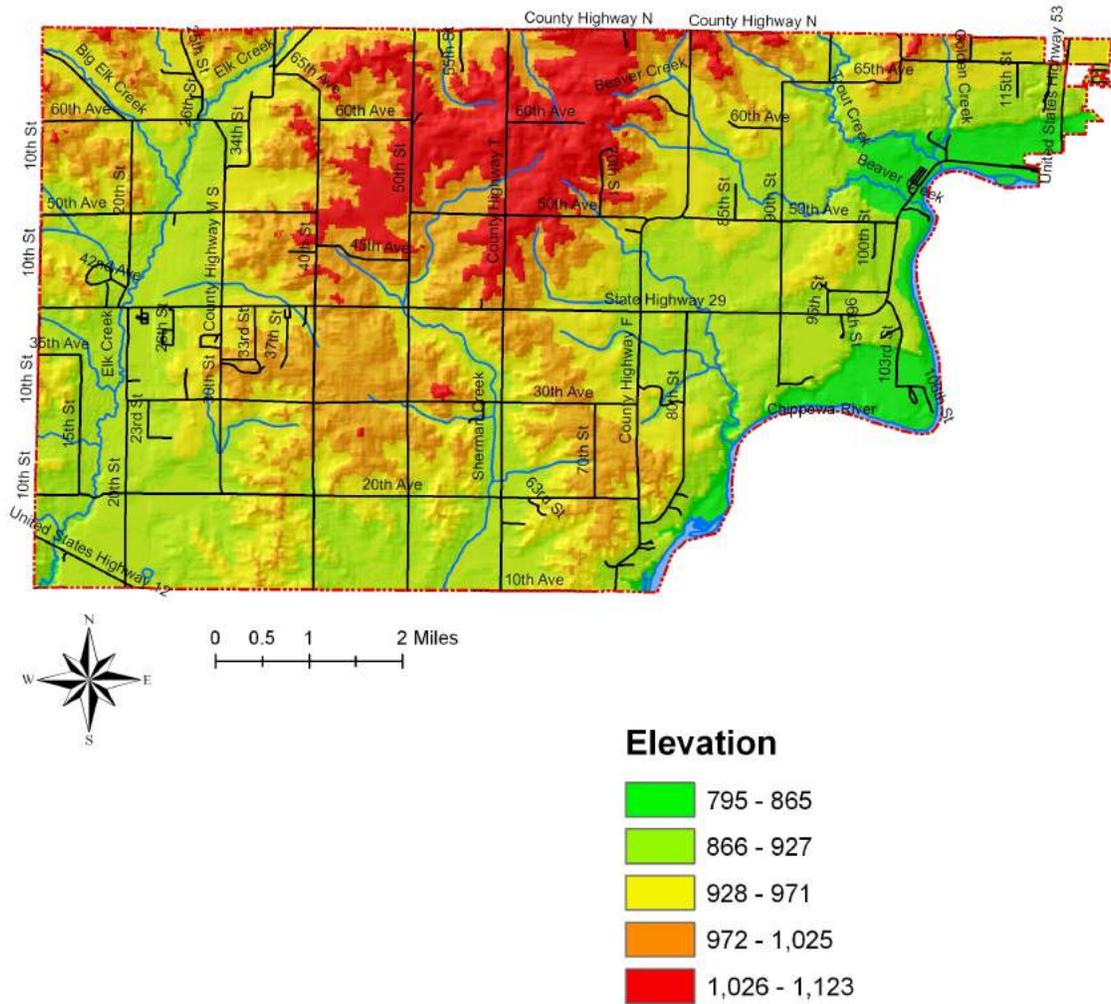
When large farms contain livestock in small areas, it increases the risk of pollution. These farms are also more at risk for animal diseases.

Large farms are often referred to as CAFO's (concentrated animal feeding operations). These farms must have 1,000 or more animal units, and are required to apply for a water quality protection permit. This is calculated based on animal size and type. For instance, about 1,000 animal units are equivalent to approximately 700 mature dairy cows, 2,500 pigs, or 55,000 turkeys. Chippewa County has two permitted CAFO's, one of which is in the Town of Wheaton. D & D Hawkins Farm in Wheaton is a permitted CAFO.

Topography

The topography of the Town of Wheaton area is relatively flat. The County as a whole ranges from 795 feet to 1,550 feet above sea level. The Town of Wheaton ranges 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.

**Figure 6-4
Wheaton Elevation**



Source: USGS

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.

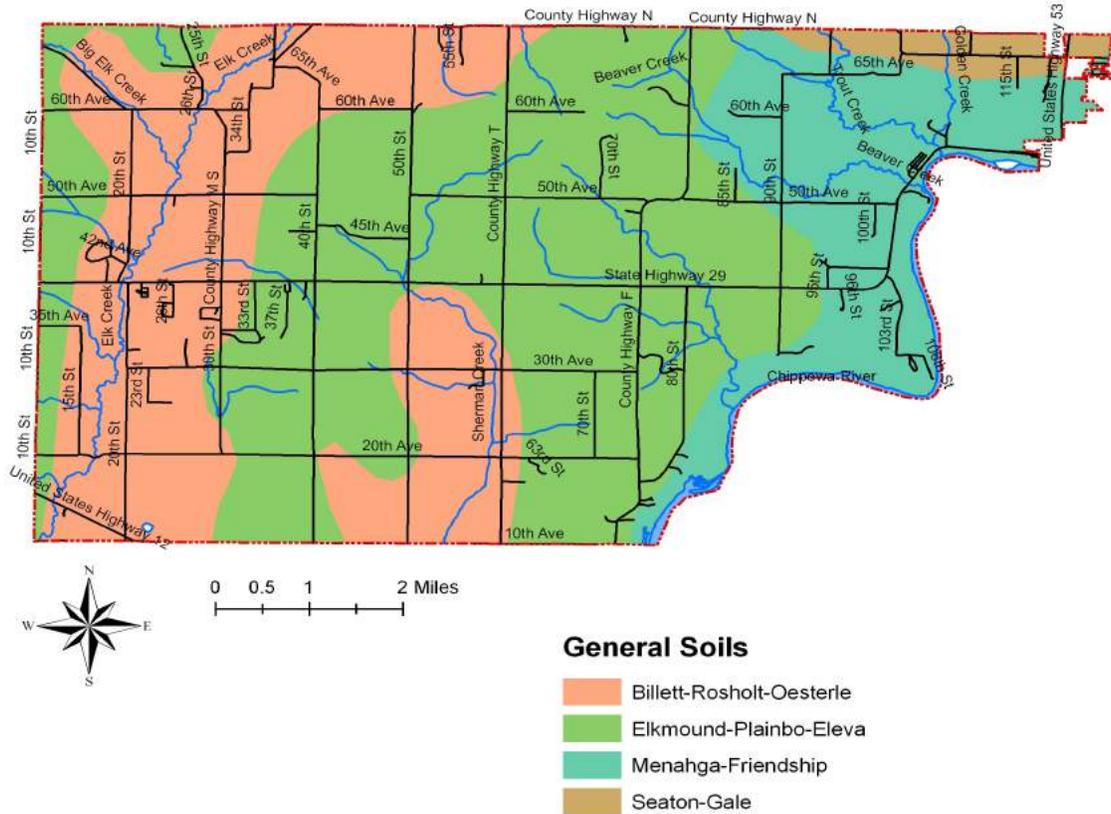
Surface Geology

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.

Soils

The Chippewa County Soil Report indicates that 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 Billett-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.

**Figure 6-5
Wheaton Soils Associations**

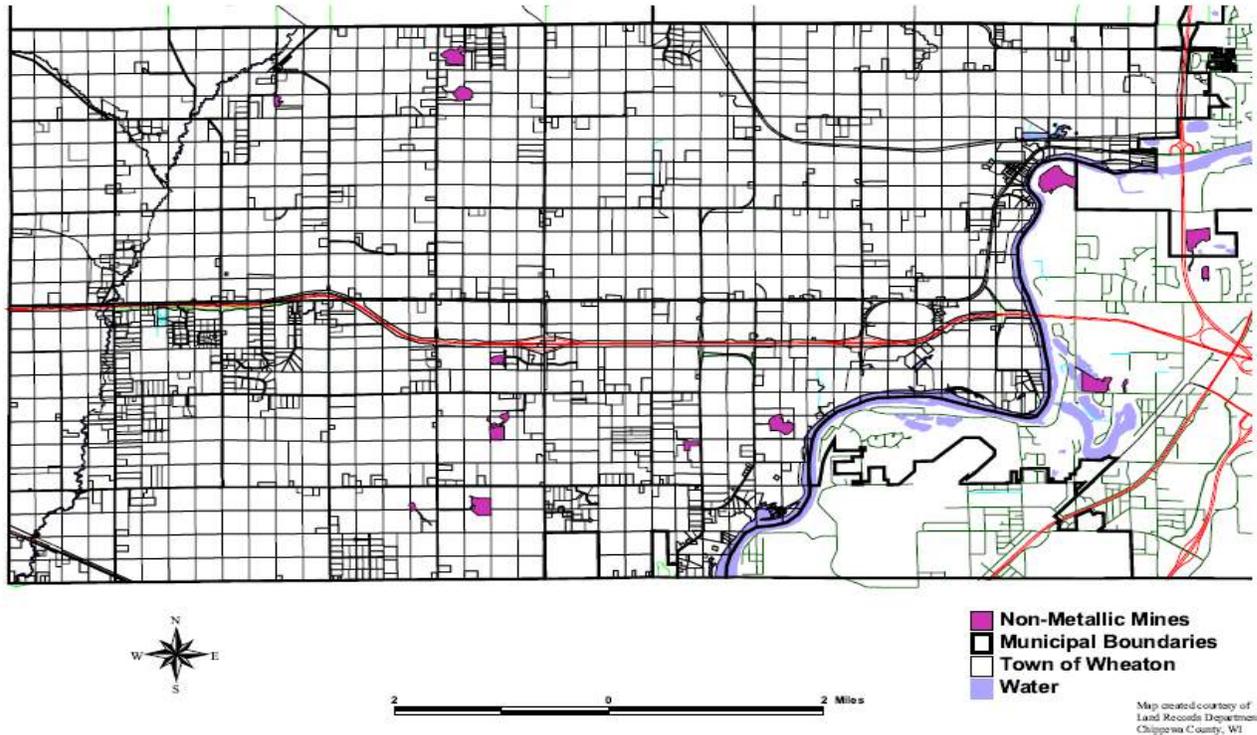


Source: NRCS Soil Survey

Mineral Resources

There are no metallic mining operations in Chippewa County. Chippewa County has approximately 85 operating non-metallic mining sites permitted under Chapter NR 135 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, several of which appear to be in the Town of Wheaton, as shown in Figure 6-6 below.

Figure 6-6
Wheaton Non-Metallic Mines



Source: Chippewa County Land Conservation Department

Watersheds and Surface Water

where the natural drainage ways have been altered by human activity. All of these features have the ability to transport sediment and pollutants, and are affected by their watersheds, the land that surrounds them.

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.

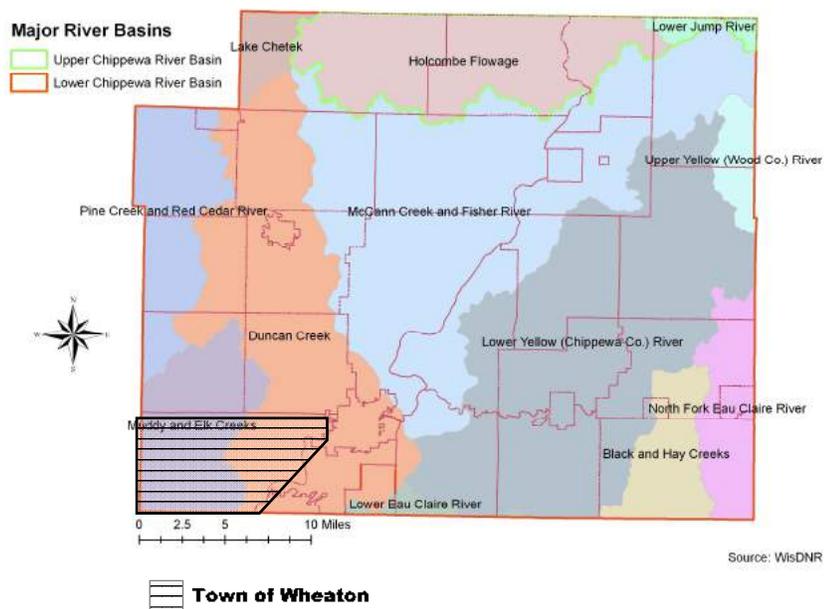
Impaired Waters

Portions of the Chippewa River are on the WDNR list of impaired waters for having high mercury levels in fish tissue. The Chippewa River has also been affected by invasive species, in particular, rusty crayfish.



Cattails

**Figure 6-7
Chippewa County Watersheds**



Source: WDNR

Floodplains

One sensitive land feature that most residents are aware of is the floodplain, the flood-prone lands adjacent to water bodies. Floodplains can be desirable development areas due to the proximity to lakes, rivers and streams, but pose additional problems by possibly putting residents and property at risk. Development in floodplains can also affect the environmental quality of the waterway.

“...wetlands serve a vital role in nature, are part of the balance of nature and are essential to the purity of the water in our lakes and streams. Swamps and wetlands are a necessary part of the ecological creation and now, even to the uninitiated, possess their own beauty in nature.” (The Wisconsin Supreme Court in Just v. Marinette County (1972)).

There are a few areas of floodplains throughout the Town, most of which are located along a creek or river. Development within the floodplain is usually assessed through the use of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

It is important to remember that these 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.



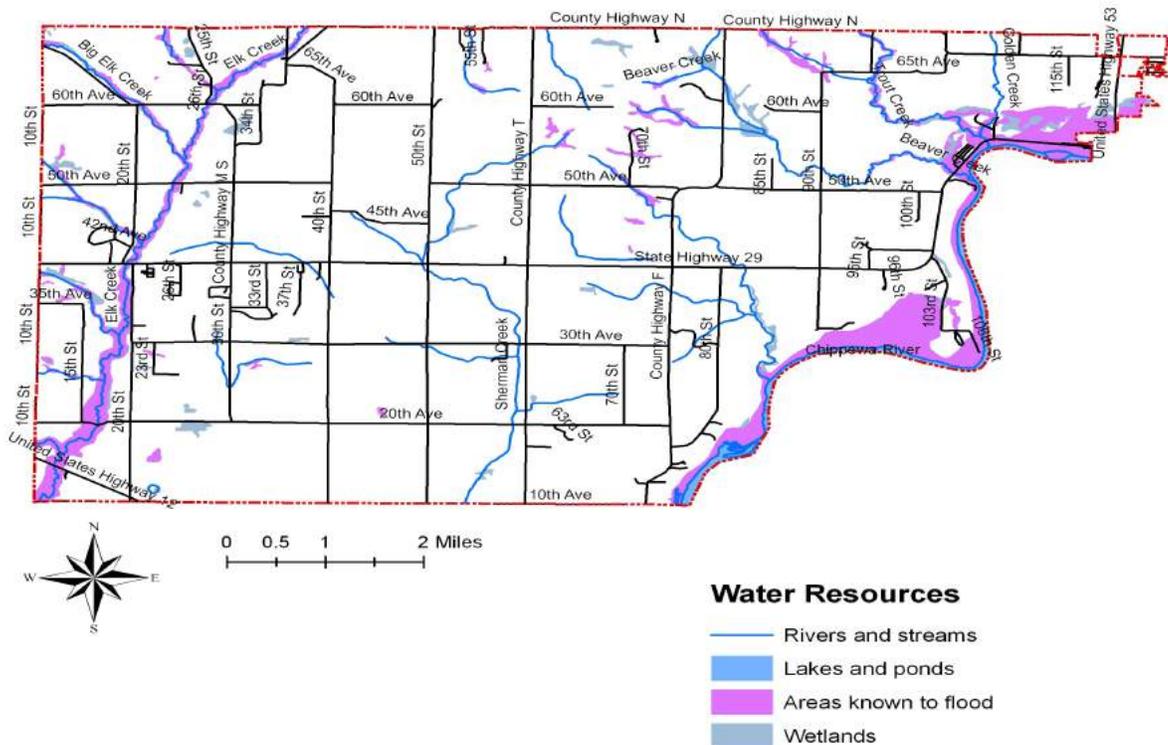
Chippewa River

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 a couple of wetland areas in the Town, primarily located adjacent to a stream or river.

**Figure 6-8
Town of Wheaton Water Resources**



Source: WDNR

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

Through its Wisconsin’s Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters Program, WDNR is working to maintain the water quality in Wisconsin’s cleanest waters. These waters have been classified into outstanding and exceptional waters. Outstanding resource water is defined as a lake or stream which has excellent water quality, high recreational and aesthetic value, and high quality fishing and is free from point source or non-point source pollution. Exceptional resource water is defined as a stream which exhibits

the same high quality resource values as outstanding waters, but which may be impacted by point source pollution or has the potential for future discharge from a small sewer community.



Elk Creek DNR Site

Elk Creek is listed as an outstanding water resource.

Big Elk Creek, Trout Creek and two smaller, unnamed creeks in Wheaton are classified as exceptional waters.

Big Elk Creek, Elk Creek, Trout Creek, Beaver Creek, and two smaller, unnamed creeks in Wheaton have been classified as Class 1 trout streams.

“Class 1 trout streams are high quality trout waters that have sufficient natural production to sustain populations of wild trout, at or near capacity.”

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Point Source Discharges

There are no point source discharges in the Town of Wheaton.

Area Hydrology

The United States Geological Service (USGS) maintains a network of monitoring wells and stream gauge locations in the state to assess long-term surface and groundwater level trends. The closest monitored stream to Wheaton is located on the Chippewa River a little over a mile downstream from the hydroelectric plant in Chippewa Falls. Annual mean stream discharge in 2007 (2,376 cubic feet per second (cfs)) is less than half that recorded in 2003 (5,991 cfs). This reduction in stream discharges could indicate drought conditions.

Area High Capacity Wells

Many western Wisconsin municipalities utilize deeper aquifers for obtaining water supply. Large agricultural operations also use these aquifers for irrigation purposes.

“A high capacity well is any well on a high capacity property. A high capacity property is one property that has or will have one or more wells with a combined capacity of 70 gallons per minute (gpm) or more.”

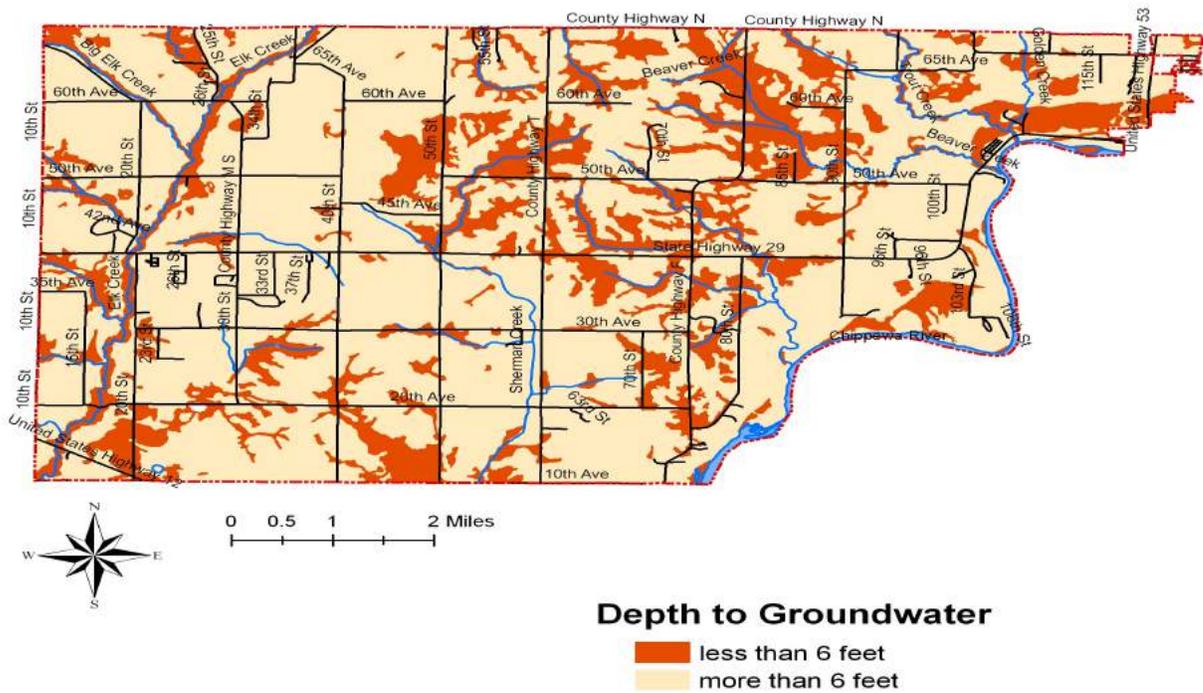
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

There are 15 high capacity wells in the Town of Wheaton that have production rates in excess of 70 gallons per minute. Northern States Power, Dairyland Power, A-1 Redi Mix and L. Reit Properties each have three, the Eau Claire Hotel Group has two, and there is one irrigation high capacity well.

Groundwater

Similar to surrounding counties, 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. Residents throughout the Town have expressed some concern about well contamination at the SWOT meeting. 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.

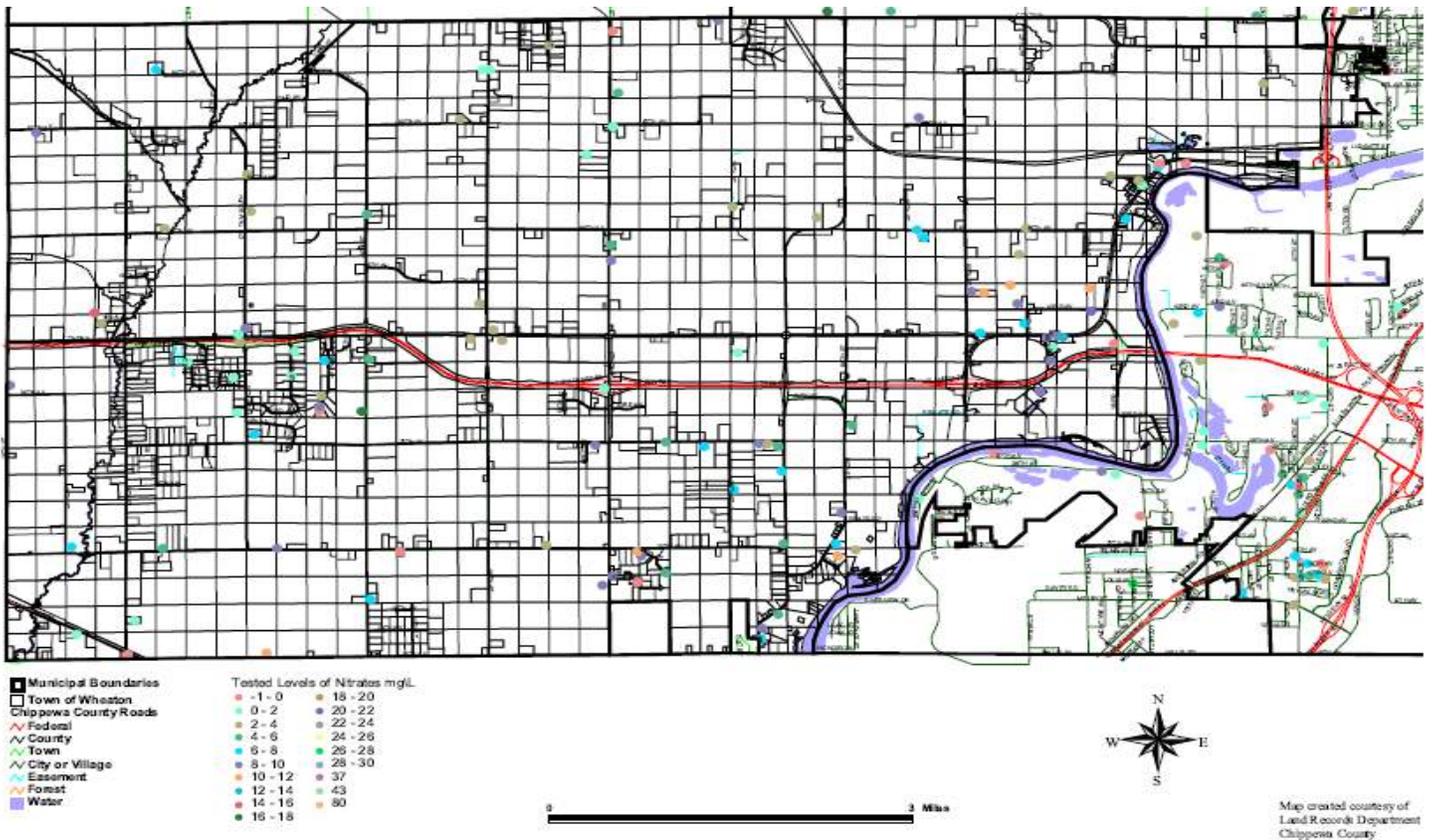
Figure 6-9
Town of Wheaton Groundwater Depths



Source: NRCS Soil Survey

Figure 6-10 shows well testing 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. Figure 6-10 shows well testing sites in Wheaton, and their associated nitrate levels. The Chippewa County Land Conservation Department should be contacted for more information about specific well tests and results.

**Figure 6-10
Wheaton Nitrate Levels**



Source: Chippewa County Land Conservation Department

Shorelands

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.

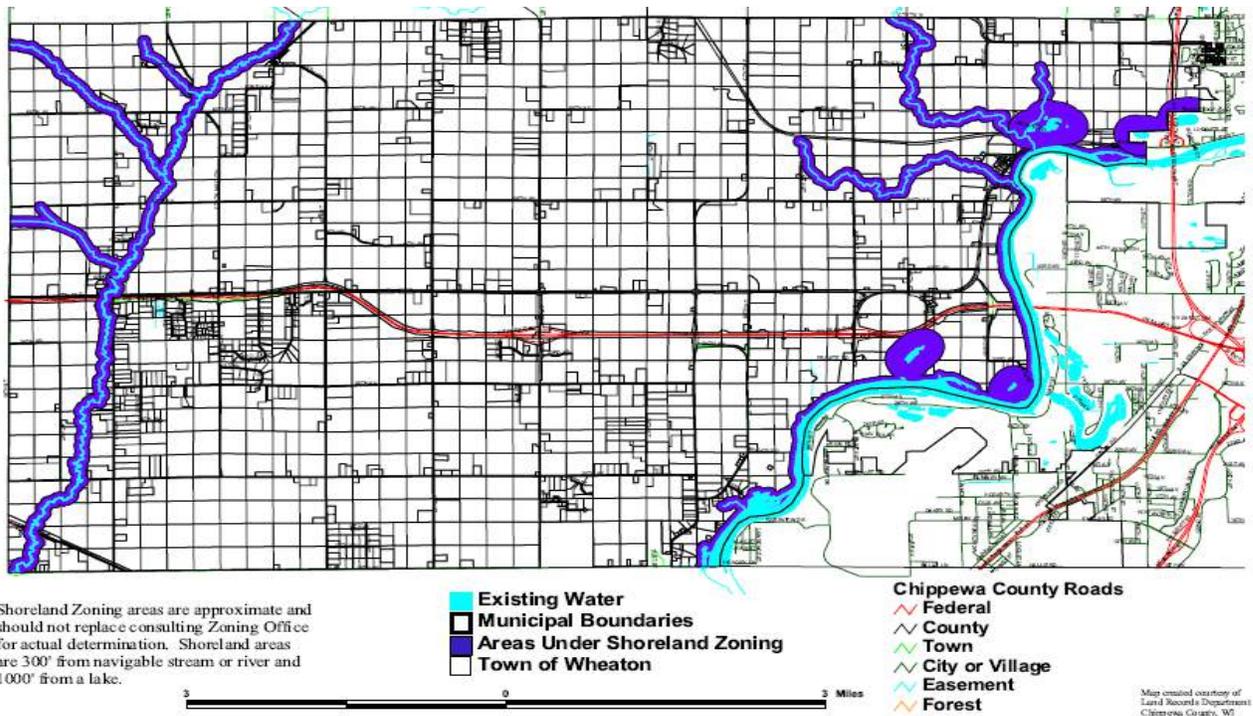
Recognizing this conflict, and in order to maintain the environmental, recreational, and economical quality of our water resources, the State of Wisconsin requires counties to adopt and enforce a shoreland ordinance.

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.

Chippewa County, which currently enforces zoning in the Town of Wheaton, has a shoreland zoning ordinance.

Figure 6-11
Wheaton Shoreland Zoning Areas



Source: Chippewa County Land Conservation Department

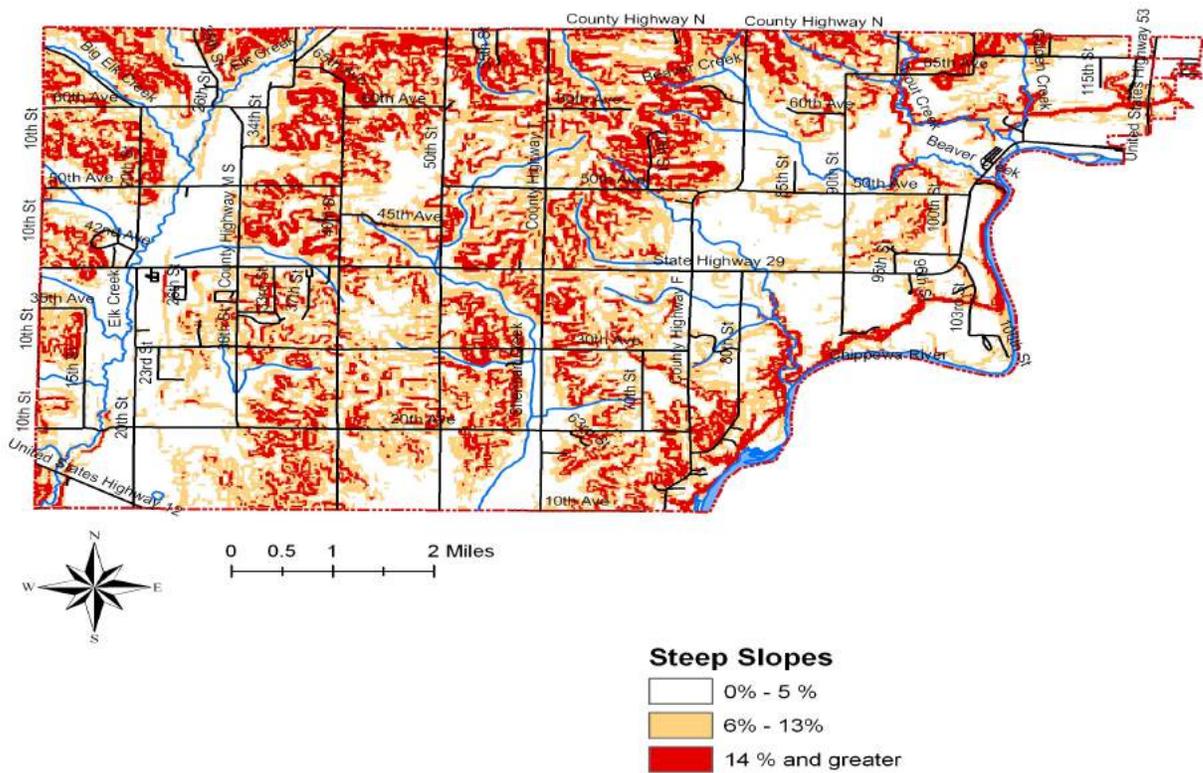
Steep Slopes

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 should be considered 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.

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.

**Figure 6-12
Wheaton Slopes**



Source: USGS

Forest and Woodlands

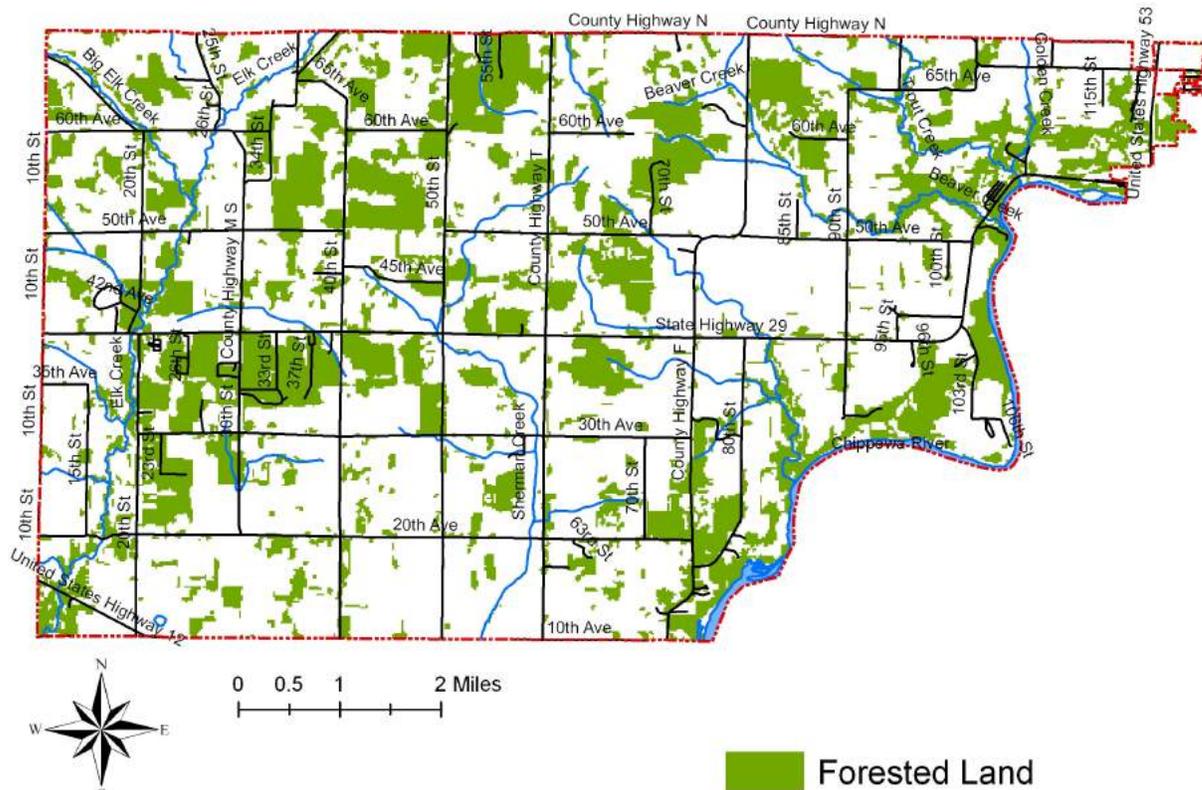


Horsetail

Woodlands are an important feature of Chippewa County. In fact, the forests of Chippewa County are the third most extensive land use and land cover in the County, after agricultural and undeveloped. The largest concentrations of woodlands occur in the northwest and northeast corners of the County.

In 2007, there were 547 parcels and 5,998 acres in the Town of Wheaton that were assessed as forest or ag forest. This is the second most extensive land use, following agricultural, and accounted for about 19 percent of the Town’s acreage. In the past 20 years, the Town has seen an additional 52 parcels assessed forest, but the actual acreage has decreased by about 580, or about nine percent. Figure 6-13 shows Wheaton’s forested lands.

Figure 6-13
Wheaton Forested Land



Source: WISCLAND

Grasslands and Prairie

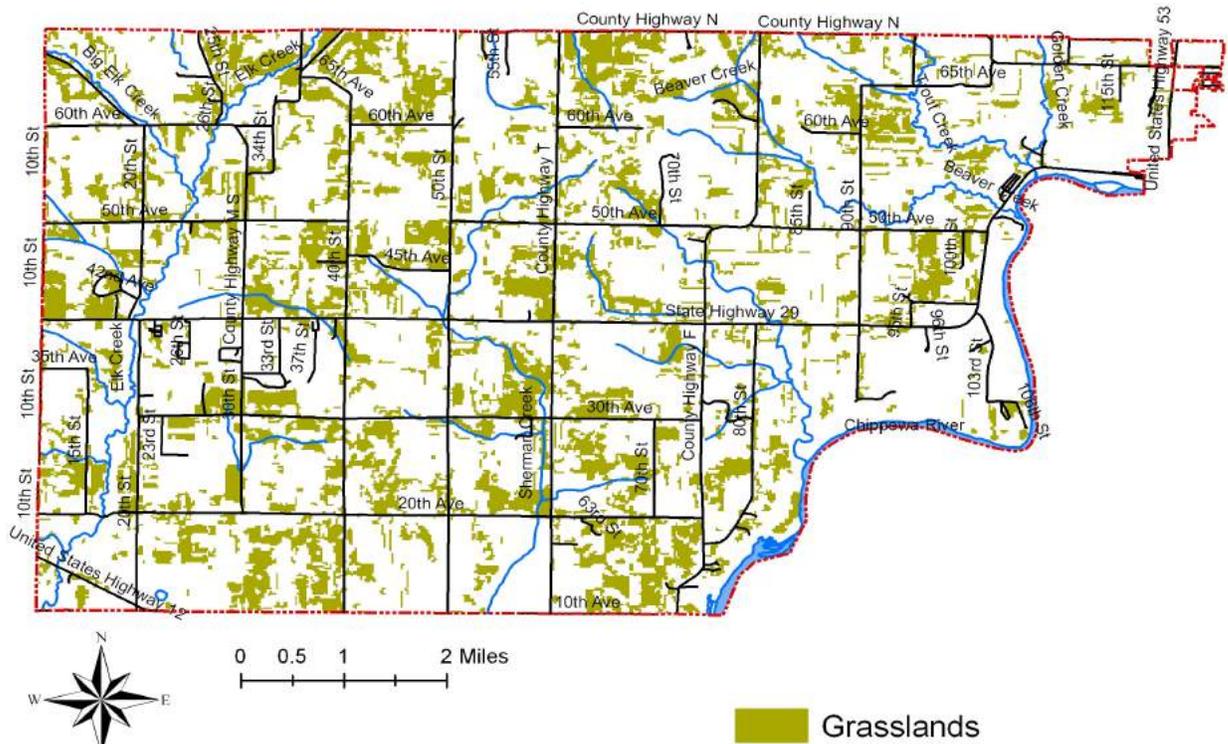
A small amount of Chippewa County was originally covered by prairie, most of which does not remain today. Prairie is the term used to describe the grassland type which dominated Wisconsin prior to Euro-American settlement. Prairies are dominated by grasses and sedges, lack trees and tall shrubs, and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



Lesser Purple Fringed Orchid

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. Figure 6-14 shows Wheaton’s Grassland areas.

**Figure 6-14
Wheaton Grasslands**



Source: WISCLAND



Yearling Buck

Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat and Open Space

Scattered throughout Chippewa County 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.



Spectacle Case
Source: William A. Smith, WDNR

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)
- Lycaeides Melissa samuelis (Karner Blue)



Karner Blue Butterfly
Source: WDNR

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

Cultural Resources Existing Conditions

Chippewa County has many cultural resources and events. The Town of Wheaton is also 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.

**Table 6-10
Wheaton Locations on Wisconsin Architectural and Historical Inventory**

Location	Historic Name	Type	Date Built
North side of State Highway 29, .4 miles east of River Road	Sunnyside School (Current Name – Motosli Sales)	Elementary, Middle, Jr. High, or High	1922
East side of Albertville Road, 30 Yards North of Starr Road	(Current Name - County Church)	Church	Not Available
North side of Starr Road, .2 Miles East of Albertville Road	(Current Name - County School)	Spindled Gable Ornament - Modified Palladian Window Over Porch	Not Available
County Highway M, .1 Miles North of Myhre Road	(Current Name -Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church)	Church	1875
North side of County Line Road, .1 Miles West of County Highway F		House	1903
State Highway 12 Over Elk River	Gerkhing Bridge	Concrete Bridge	1926
Northwest Corner of Wheaton Road and County Line Road	(Current Name - Truax Congregational (UCC) Church)	Church	1895
Northwest Corner of State Highway 29 and Elk Creek Road	(Current Name - Pine Tree Crafts)	Retail Building	1920
Bishop Road		Barn	1900
County Highway T		House	1870
Intersection of County Highway T and 30th Avenue	Menard Farm (Current Name - T and A Family Farm, Inc.)	House	1900
Intersection of County Highway T and 30th Avenue	Menard Farm (Current Name - T and A Family Farm, Inc.)	Barn	1900

Source: Wisconsin Architectural and Historical Inventory

There are not a lot of community-wide events that occur in Wheaton. With easy access to Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, and Menomonie, there are an abundance of events for Wheaton residents to attend throughout the year. The Town does host an annual T-Ball tournament and picnic. There was also a book written about Wheaton, titled “OLD ALBERTVILLE, The Town That Refused to Grow,” by Louis Solberg.

6.2 Existing Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Programs

Numerous Federal, State, Regional, Local, and Private plans and programs exist which contribute to preservation, conservation, or management of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in Chippewa County. Although no list can be exhaustive, a partial list is shown below.

- Farmland Use Value Assessment

This program allows farmland to be assessed based on the land’s ability to produce income from agricultural uses, rather than its potential market value to developers.

- Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program

In Wisconsin counties with a farmland preservation plan, eligible farm owners receive a state income tax credit.

- Forest Land Tax Programs

These programs are run by the WDNR and encourage sustainable forestry on private lands by offering tax incentives to landowners.

- Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits (WPDES)
This DNR operated program regulates municipal and industrial operations discharging wastewater to surface or groundwater.
- Wisconsin Historical Society
The Historical Society was founded in 1846 and helps people to connect with the past by maintaining and collecting stories and items. This organization also has grant funding available to help local communities identify and preserve historical features.
- Wisconsin’s Historical Preservation Plan 2006-2015
This plan outlines specific goals and objectives to protect and enhance the State’s cultural resources.
- Chippewa County Land And Water Resource Management Plan
Each Wisconsin county is required by State law to develop a County Land and Water Plan. It is meant to serve as a guide for local conservation efforts that are administered by various regulatory organizations.
- Chippewa County Ordinances – Zoning, Land Divisions, Shoreland, Sanitation
These ordinances have been adopted to aid in the effort of conserving resources and protecting landowner rights, land values, and public health and safety.

6.3 Summary of Existing Conditions

This Plan provides an important foundation and vision for Town land-use planning and decisions. In addition, numerous programs at the State and County level are available to assist the Town in their planning efforts and in the protection of local agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. Protection of such resources needs to be balanced with, and can be complementary to, other community goals as discussed in the Issues & Opportunities, Land Use, and Economic Development existing conditions elements.

Agricultural Resources - Existing Conditions Summary

Agricultural land use is the dominant land use in the Town of Wheaton. Farming has consistently been a strong industry in the Town, and will likely continue to be in the future. Statewide, regionally, and locally, however, there has been a trend of decreasing agriculture land and production. Wheaton, bordered by two larger urbanized areas, has felt the pressure to develop farmland more than other agriculture communities.

Natural Resources – Existing Conditions Summary

The topography of the area is relatively flat, with some areas of glacial outwash that have created creeks and rivers. These waters are used primarily for recreational purposes, and contribute significantly to Wheaton’s quality of life. Some sources of water have elevated nitrate levels, and residents have expressed concern about water contamination through the SWOT meeting and survey. With increasing development pressure, protecting water resources will be important.

There are a few areas with steep slopes in Wheaton. Development on these lands is quite difficult, which makes the land more attractive for other uses. It is from these steep slopes, however, that the bodies of water in the Town receive some of their pollutants. Future activities on these lands should be done in a manner that protects the sensitive environmental features of the Town.

Cultural Resources – Existing Conditions Summary

The Town of Wheaton is rich in history. Several structures and sites appear on Wisconsin’s Architectural and Historical Inventory list. Chippewa County also plays host to several festivals and events that Wheaton residents can enjoy.

6.4 Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goals, Objectives and Policies

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goals, Objectives and Policies were developed at the February 2009 Plan Commission meeting. The goals were based upon the previous work completed, in particular the SWOT Analysis and Vision process.

Agriculture Resource Goals

- A. **Goal** – The Town will strive to protect the rights of its residents to continue the practice of farming.
 - 1. **Objective** – The Town will preserve agricultural land as much as reasonably possible.
 - 2. **Objective** – The Town will support and preserve the right of residents to farm their land.

Natural Resource Goals

- A. **Goal** – The Town will strive to protect its water resources.
 - 1. **Objective** – The Town will strive to protect watershed and surface water quality.
 - 2. **Objective** – The Town will strive to protect, to the extent possible, its groundwater quality for the residents.

- B. **Goal** – The Town will support and promote outdoor recreational opportunities and resources.
- C. **Goal** – The Town will consider the location and potential uses of all natural resource areas in the Town.
- D. **Goal** – The Town will recognize and strive to manage the non-metallic mineral resources of the Town.

Cultural Resources

- A. **Goal** – The Town will encourage the maintenance and protection of architectural and historical sites within the community.
- B. **Goal** – The Town will consider the compilation of a document that details the history of the Town.

7.0 Economic Development

7.1 Existing Conditions

7.2 Assessment of Future Conditions

7.3 Local Plans and Programs

7.4 Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies

Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(f)
(f) Economic development element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

An important factor in economic development is attracting new and retaining current businesses. By providing for local businesses and the residents who make up the workforce, the Town of Wheaton can ensure current and future economic successes. The economic development element is a compilation of goals, objectives, policies, maps, and programs to promote the stabilization, retention, or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities for the Town.

Through planning, a community can anticipate economic change and guide development to achieve the Town's economic vision and objectives.

Economic development is about working together to maintain a strong economy, which provides a good standard of living and a reliable tax base.

An economic development plan should reflect the values of the community and must be carefully linked to the goals, objectives, and policies of the other plan elements.

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 shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. County, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the Town of Wheaton are also identified in the element.

7.1 Existing Conditions

The labor force 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.

As Table 2-1 in the Issues and Opportunities element shows, Wheaton's population has grown at a rate comparable to Chippewa County for the past three decades. The Town is projected to grow at a faster pace than Chippewa County through the year 2030 according to the Wisconsin Department of Administration projections. In 2000, Wheaton had a labor force participation rate of 75.4 percent, which was down from 79.4 percent in 1990. In 2000, Wisconsin had a labor force participation rate of 69.1 percent, and the U.S. as a whole was 63 percent. In December of 2008, Chippewa County had an unemployment rate of 6.8 percent, up 1.5 percentage points from December 2007.

As shown in Table 2-3 in the Issues and Opportunities element, in 2000 nearly 47 percent of Wheaton residents were between the ages of 25 and 54. It can be anticipated that the median age of residents will increase slightly in future years. When residents age, and particularly cross the 60 year-old threshold, they start retiring and moving out of the workforce.

Educational Attainment

A good indicator of the economic potential of an area is the education attainment of its residents. Generally speaking, a population with a higher level of education reflects a more skilled workforce with higher earning potential. A more skilled population can be seen as an attractive quality for businesses relocating as well. Table 2-7 in the Issues and Opportunities element details the educational attainment in Wheaton and Chippewa County. Over 91 percent of Wheaton residents had at least a high-school diploma in 2000. Nearly 57 percent of Wheaton residents had attended some college. These numbers are quite high compared to County, State, and National numbers.

One of the most significant changes in employment that occurred during the last two decades was the shift from goods-producing to service-providing jobs. In tandem with this shift was the increase in demand for professional and technical workers employed in the high-skilled services industries and the aggregation of these jobs in larger metropolitan areas. Wheaton is a rural community bordered on the south and east by larger urban communities. Much of the job growth in high-skilled service jobs occurred in larger metropolitan areas while expansion in more rural economies produced lower-skilled service jobs and goods producing jobs. The main exception in rural areas was job growth in health care and education, two industries with female-dominated professional and technical occupations. Growth of skilled professional and technical jobs in larger metropolitan areas attracts individuals from more rural areas. When students graduate from high school and leave the area for post-secondary education, they settle in areas with more professional and technical job opportunities.

“Small communities are generally worried about three trends: young people moving away, jobs moving to metropolitan areas or other states, and public and private investment gravitating toward metropolitan areas.”
- McKnight Foundation,
re: focus: Making Choices for Future Generations, 2008.

Economic Base

Table 2-18 in the Issues and Opportunities element indicates Wheaton’s largest employers. It is important, however, to keep the self-reporting error in mind when viewing Table 2-18. This error is described in the discussion that follows the table. Table 2-14 shows that 21 percent of Wheaton residents are employed in the manufacturing sector, which is also Chippewa County’s most prominent industry in terms of employees and payroll. Over 19 percent of Wheaton residents are employed in the education, health, and social services industry. Table 2-15 shows that over one-third of Wheaton residents have executive, administrative and managerial, or professional/technical occupations.



Loopy's

In 2000, there were 77 Wheaton residents who indicated they worked from home. Chippewa County businesses employ about 44 percent of Wheaton residents, while another 53 percent work in a different Wisconsin county. Commute times (shown in Figure 2-5 in the Issues and Opportunities element) are generally under 25 minutes for Wheaton residents. This is sufficient to get many residents into Eau Claire (Eau Claire County) or Menomonie (Dunn County) for employment purposes. It is also likely that it is within these more urbanized communities that the majority of shopping and retail trade takes place for Wheaton residents, as there is not a large number of commercial establishments located in Wheaton.

Income

In the Issues and Opportunities element, Tables 2-12 and 2-13 look at income for Wheaton and Chippewa County residents. The median family income in Wheaton is \$55,061, while Chippewa County's is only \$46,460. Household incomes are also quite a bit higher for the Town of Wheaton when compared to Chippewa County and the State of Wisconsin. Wheaton residents in general have higher education levels, which could contribute to residents in the Town having higher incomes than the County and State as a whole.

Employment Projections

Employment projections for the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area are presented in Tables 2-20 and 2-21 in the Issues and Opportunities element. The industry in this region expected to see the largest growth rate through 2016 is Construction, Mining, and Natural Resources, with an expected increase of nearly 18 percent in employment. Manufacturing fields are projected to see declines in employment numbers, as are food and beverage stores. The occupation expected to see the largest increase through 2016 is healthcare support (21.4 percent increase in employment), followed closely by healthcare practitioners and technical occupations (20.9 percent growth in employment).

Economic Strengths and Weaknesses

The following are strengths and weaknesses in attracting and retaining business and industry to the Town of Wheaton. It is important that the community continue to work on strengthening its position to meet future business and industry needs that may arise.

Strengths

- Environmental Quality (peace and quiet, rural environment, natural resources).
- 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.
- Customer base in the Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls metropolitan area of about 150,000 as of the 2000 Census.

- Proximity to the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area (slightly over one hour west) with a population of approximately 3 million.
- Low wage scale, low land costs, and lower business and property taxes.
- Good transportation facilities – access to two rail lines, commercial airport in northern Eau Claire, located on State Highway 29, U.S. 12, and U.S. Highway 53.
- Renewed spirit of cooperation with the City of Eau Claire.

Weaknesses

- Town lacks key infrastructure (water and sewer) to support larger businesses and facilities.
- Lack of financial resources for development assistance.
- 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.
- Environmental building restrictions (wetlands and floodplain)

According to the National Governor’s Association, Center for Best Practices, the seven New Economy Development Strategies are:

- 1) Invest in People
- 2) Build state-of-the-art infrastructure
- 3) Treat citizens as customers
- 4) Streamline taxes and regulations
- 5) Nurture entrepreneurs
- 6) Create hi-tech magnets
- 7) Preserve quality of life



Circle M Nursery

7.2 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, Chippewa Falls 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 County Highways T and F from the City of Eau Claire, County Highway X and Business Highway 29 from the City of Chippewa Falls, State Highway 29 traveling east-west through the Town, and U.S. Highway 53, which travels along the northeast portion of the Town. U.S. Highway 12, which crosses the southwestern portion of the Town is also an area that could see development pressure.

New business and industry to the Town will not require municipal water or sewer, as the Town currently does not have the infrastructure in place to support these businesses and facilities. Also, the Town wants to ensure new developments do not jeopardize the rural character and quality of life in the community, so all new development should fit in with the rural characteristics of the Town.

Designated Economic Development Sites

Development pressure is anticipated to continue. A logical economic development growth area is along County Highway T from State Highway 29 south to the City of Eau Claire. This area has some businesses currently, and because of the customer traffic to and from Eau Claire, it is a good area for future business growth.

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 community’s vision and Comprehensive Plan. Currently, there are no sites in the Town of Wheaton marketed by the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC). However, if and 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.

Brownfield Definition: "...real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, controlled substances, petroleum or petroleum products, or is mine-scarred land."
 -Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Brownfield Redevelopment Sites

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 15 sites that have been contaminated. Nine of these sites are “Closed,” meaning that the sites have been satisfactorily cleaned according to state standards. There are three “No Action” sites which means that based upon the action or site attributes, no action needs to be taken to clean-up the site. Two sites are “Historic,” meaning spills were cleaned prior to 1996. Finally, there is one site that is “Open.” This means that clean-up still needs to occur.

**Table 7-1
 Wheaton Environmentally Contaminated Sites**

Status	Activity Number and Name	Location
Open	02-09-000316 Wheaton TN	20 th Street
Historic	04-09-046202 on NSP Property East of F	NSP Property East of F
Closed	04-09-234425 3008 80 th Street	3008 80 th Street
Closed	04-09-285181 Xcel Energy	3008 80 th Street
Closed	04-09-379946 Xcel Energy	3008 80 th Street
Closed	04-09-506673 Jensen Trucking	County T and County N
Closed	04-09-520068 NSP	Generator Plt.
Closed	04-09-520108 Northern Stated Power Co.	River Rd.
Closed	04-09-533549 Xcel Energy	3008 80 th Street
Closed	04-09-548161 Drees Transportation	County T and STH 29
Historic	04-18-047437 Rt. 2	5052 CTH X
Closed	04-30-542220 WE Energies	32923 75 th Street
No Action	09-09-293569 Dairyland Power Elk Mound Service Center	5052 CTH X
No Action	09-09-295130 Schmidt Farm	Rt. 2 Box 133
No Action	09-09-295752 Wheaton Tn. Fire Station	Hwy. 29 and 38 th Street

Source: WDNR

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.

7.3 Local Plans and Programs

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. At the state level, economic development took on the form of creating a strategic framework that refines the state's priorities, renews commitment to existing programs, and presents new programs. Released by Governor Doyle in September of 2003, the "Grow Wisconsin" initiative focuses on four areas:

- Fostering a competitive business climate to create fertile conditions for growth.
- Investing in people to help families climb the economic ladder.
- Investing in Wisconsin businesses to encourage job creation.
- Making government responsive to reform regulations and unleash the economic power of companies without sacrificing our shared values.

"A comprehensive economic development framework is fundamentally about enhancing the factors of productive capacity – land, labor, capital, and technology – of a national, state or local economy" ("Defining Economic Development," U.S. Economic Development Administration Information Clearinghouse, http://www.osec.doc.gov/eda/html/sa1_whatised.htm).

Tools include tax increment financing (TIF), low-interest business loans, and business incubators. Effectively using these tools requires an investment by the community to provide resources such as staff to organize and manage these tools, foster partnerships, and secure and manage funding. Numerous other economic development plans and programs exist including:

- 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 Commerce (DOC)

Wisconsin (DOC) 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 Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

WisDOT has many programs that provide grants and loans to businesses and local communities for transportation related needs.

- Enterprise Development Zone (EDZ) Program

Operated by the Wisconsin DOC, the Enterprise Development Zone Program provides tax incentives to businesses that are either new or expanding, that will affect depressed areas. These areas are defined as being affected by at least one of the following: high unemployment, low incomes, declining population, declining property values, plant closings or layoffs, and high public assistance reliance.

- **Community Development Zones**
Operated by the Wisconsin DOC, the Community Development Zone program assists start-up businesses, expanding businesses, or relocating businesses. Qualifying businesses can receive tax benefits if they locate in a designated development zone and meet a minimum standard in terms of the quality and quantity of jobs they will bring to the area.
- **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.
- **Dunn County Electric Cooperative**
Dunn County Electric Cooperative sponsors a Youth Leadership Conference and offers high school scholarships.
- **Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC)**
The Chippewa Valley Technical College offers companies with employee training programs. They will come out to the company and offer on-site programs to create more efficient and productive employees.
- **Realtors Association of Northern Wisconsin**
This organization offers guides and links to paperwork and application forms that are required by start-up businesses.
- **West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area**
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.
- **West Central Wisconsin Regional Education Consortium (Synergy Conference)**
This organization consists of public K-12 educational institutions represented by CESA districts, colleges, universities, the Workforce Development Board, Workforce Resource, Inc., and WCWRPC. Each year a conference is held that discusses an education or economic development topic within the region.

- UW-Stout Technology Transfer Institute (TTI)
The TTI promotes technology transfer between UW-Stout and industry.
- I-94 Technology Zone
Eau Claire, Chippewa, Dunn, Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce Counties make up the I-94 Technology Zone. This was created in 2002 due to the high level of coordination between the universities and colleges in technology related research, education, and support programs. The Tech Zone was provided \$5 million in income tax credits for high technology business start-ups and expansions.
- Eau Claire Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau
This group provides information on area happenings for tourists to the area.
- West Central Wisconsin Community Action Agency, Inc. (West CAP)
This organization is a private and public non-profit organization that carries out the Community Action Program, which was founded by the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act to fight poverty by empowering the poor. Many common CAP programs include business loan funds and planning assistance, in addition to health and social services. West CAP also has a Farmer's Market Initiative.
- 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.

- 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.

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.

7.4 Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies

Economic Development goals, objectives and policies were developed at a Plan Commission meeting. The goals were based upon the previous work completed, in particular the SWOT Analysis and Vision process.

- A. **Goal** – The Town of Wheaton will support business growth in targeted areas, as identified by the Town Plan Commission and the Town Board.
- B. **Goal** – The Town will support the development of agriculturally related businesses.
- C. **Goal** – The Town will strive to increase local economic development by utilizing its location along State Highway 29.
 - 1. **Objective** – The Town will encourage the development of at least one nationally-recognized, chain business that will complement existing development. This store should act as an anchor store for the area that will act as a traffic generator and spur additional commercial growth.
 - 2. **Objective** – The Town will encourage reasonable business advertisements along major thoroughfares to get customers off of the highways and into the Town. Reasonable business advertisements would be similar to the photo in the sidebar.
 - a. **Policy** – The Town will work with businesses and WisDOT to coordinate signage acceptability and placement.



“Reasonable Business Advertisement”
- Source: Derse-WHBS



8.0 Intergovernmental Cooperation

8.1 Existing Conditions

8.2 Assessment of Future Conditions

8.3 Growth Trends and Planning Activities in Adjacent Communities

8.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives, and Policies

8.1 Existing Conditions

Intergovernmental Plans, Agreements, and Relationships

The number of existing intergovernmental plans, agreements, and relationships involving the Town of Wheaton are limited. Primary intergovernmental agreements and relationships involving the Town center on subjects including schooling, emergency services, and zoning.

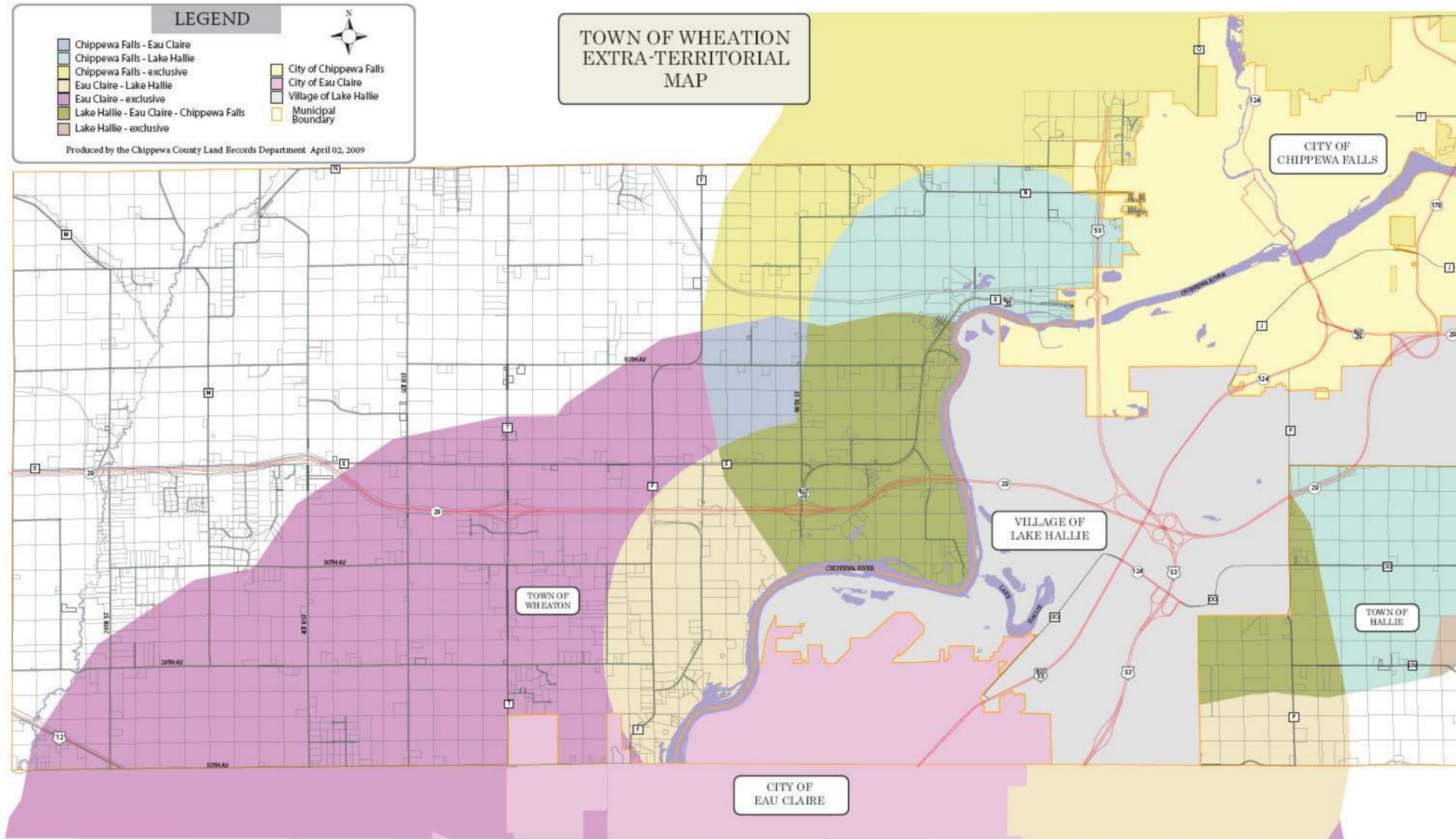
*Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(g)
(g) Intergovernmental cooperation element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element shall consider, to the greatest extent possible, the maps and plans of any military base or installation, with at least 200 assigned military personnel or that contains at least 2,000 acres, with which the local governmental unit shares common territory. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is a party under s. 66.0301, 66.0307, or 66.0309. The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.*

The Town has no cooperative boundary agreements as defined under State Statute 66.0307. An updated regional master plan as defined under State Statute 66.0309 is currently being completed by the WCWRPC. Other indirect relationships exist between neighboring jurisdictions, the Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, and Elk Mound School Districts, Chippewa County, the WCWRPC, WDNR, WisDOT, and several other State agencies/departments. Enhancing the relationship of the Town with all adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions can and will advance dialogue and actions necessary to ready the Town for future changes in land use and growth pressures.

Adjacent Jurisdictions

The Town of Wheaton generally maintains a cooperative relationship with most adjacent municipalities. There have been some disagreements with surrounding incorporated communities. Incorporated communities that border Wheaton include the City of Chippewa Falls on the east, the Village of Lake Hallie to the southeast, and the City of Eau Claire directly to the south. Each of these communities has extraterritorial power areas that extend into the Town, which are shown in Figure 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. These powers are often used for subdivision plat reviews.

Figure 8-1
Overlapping Extraterritorial Subdivision Review Areas



Source: Chippewa County

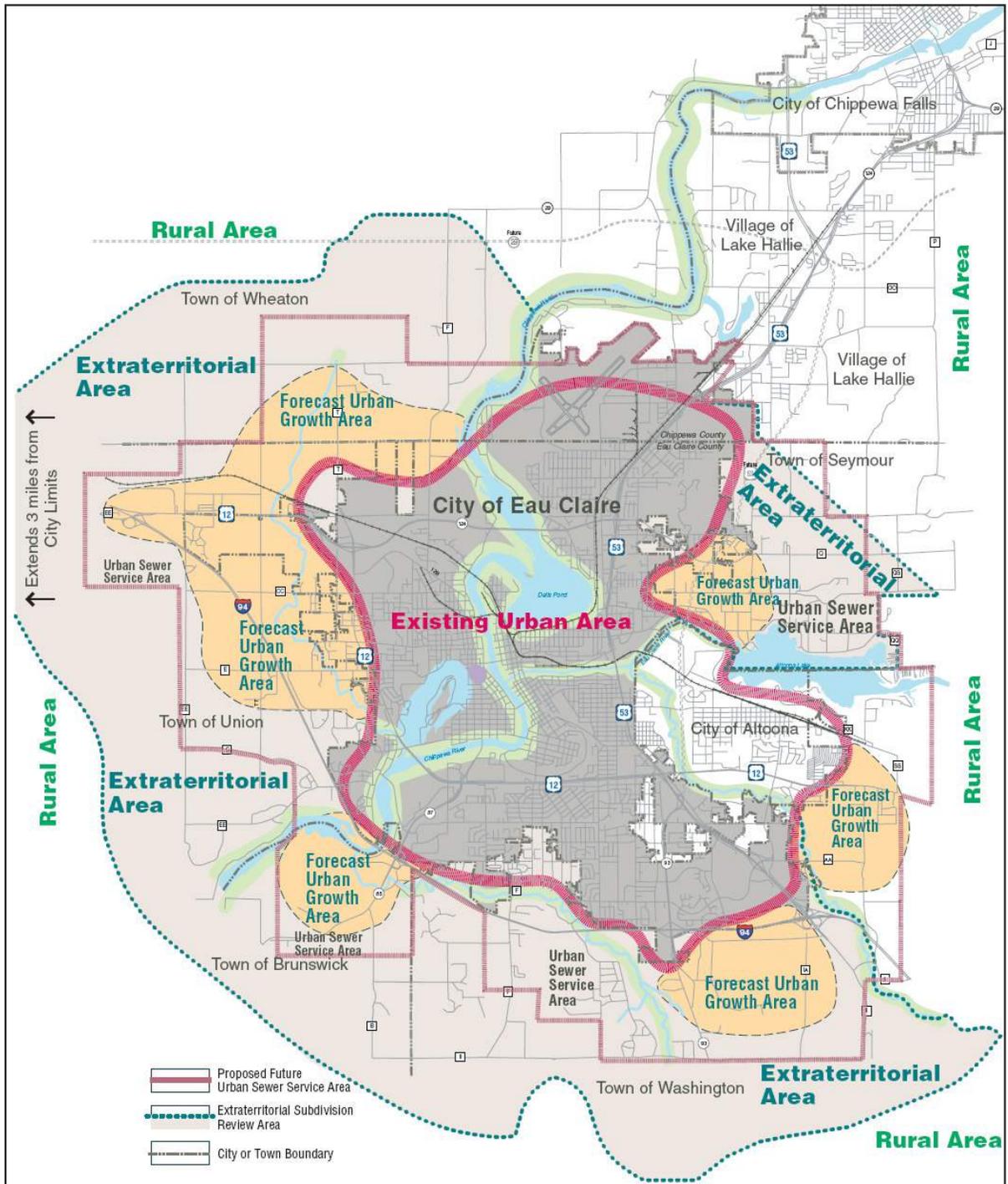
In 2008, the Town of Wheaton, along with the Towns of Brunswick, Pleasant Valley, Seymour, Union, and Washington, all of Eau Claire County, filed a lawsuit against the City of Eau Claire. In the City of Eau Claire's Comprehensive Plan 2005-2025, which was adopted on September 27th, 2005, the City of Eau Claire indicates that they wish to have land in unincorporated communities within their three mile extraterritorial subdivision review area see residential development at a minimum of one unit per ten acres.

Exceptions could be made to this regulation provided that the undeveloped portion of the lot would have conservation easements placed on it until urban sanitary sewer service is extended to the lots and utilized. This would allow minimum lot sizes of one-acre, but a minimum density of one unit per ten acres. Another exception would be granted through a cooperative boundary agreement provided that the average density of the overall parcel is no greater than three acres per lot, with lot sizes between 8,000 and 20,000 square feet. Conservation easements would also be required on the undeveloped area of the land until urban sanitary sewer service is available and utilized.

Commercial development was also heavily restricted in the City's plan for their extraterritorial subdivision review area. Lots for new commercial or industrial developments would be allowed only if they were annexed to the City. In addition, these new lots would be required to be connected to City water and sewer lines. An alternative would be to develop a cooperative boundary agreement between the two communities that might alter some of the regulations.

The City of Eau Claire also prepared a Concept Plan, which was meant to guide the completion of their Comprehensive Plan. The map of the Concept Plan is shown in Figure 8-2 on the following page. This illustrates the areas the City of Eau Claire thinks will see urbanized development.

Figure 8-2
City of Eau Claire Concept Plan



Source: City of Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan

Figure 8-3, on the following page, shows the Planned Land Use Map from the City of Eau Claire's Comprehensive Plan.

Much of the Town of Wheaton within the Eau Claire extraterritorial area is being planned by the City for Agriculture or Very Low Density Housing, Future Neighborhood, and Light Industry. According to the Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan, assorted housing and supportive commercial uses would be allowed in the Future Neighborhood Districts. Light Industry areas would allow offices, business parks and warehousing. Structures would have hidden truck docks and no outdoor storage. Uses allowed in the Agriculture or Very Low Density Housing districts are not detailed.

These land use controls are more restrictive than the Town's current standards. For this reason, the Towns' suit against the City indicated that the regulations put forth in their Comprehensive Plan are too restrictive and are depriving the Towns' of their right to plan their communities.

In March 2009, after several months of discussion, the City passed a resolution approving an intergovernmental cooperation agreement that states land use decisions will be negotiated with the help of professional planners and a mediator. The proposed agreement is currently being reviewed by the Towns involved in the lawsuit. The Towns are also requesting that the City's comprehensive plan be amended. Negotiations are still on-going, but are progressing in an agreeable fashion thus far.

Schools

Students in the Town of Wheaton attend public school in the Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, and Elk Mound School Districts. The Town's relationship with the school districts can be characterized as cooperative. The relationship with the school districts must continue and be strengthened as development is coordinated with school capacity and increased needs from Wheaton.

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 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. In general, the Town would like to see increased communication and coordination with the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Department. Continued coordination and cooperation will be important as it relates to tools to be used that will realize the vision of the Plan.

The Chippewa Fire District serves the Town of Wheaton. The Fire District has three other stations located throughout the southern portion of Chippewa County.

Why Collaborate?

- Provide a wider network of compatible businesses for clustering.
- Provide a greater array of services available to a larger market.
- Create traffic patterns that capitalize on the contributions of multiple communities, while retaining a greater number of dollars within the region.
- Pool government resources to prevent overlapping or duplicative services.
- Consolidate heavy-cost services.
- Pool government resources to achieve volumes necessary to access deep discounts not available individually.
- Share financial resources to protect natural resources.

Source: Wisconsin Economic Development Institute, Inc., A Guide to Preparing the Economic Development Element of a Comprehensive Plan. 2003.

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 has little direct contact with the WCWRPC. However, 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 development of this regional plan, it is important that the Town be solicited for input as it related to the Town’s Comprehensive Plan.

A portion of the Town of Wheaton lies within the Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Area, shown in Figure 8-4 on the following page. The WCWRPC is the administrative organization for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO’s purpose to 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.

State Agencies

WDNR and 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 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 on-line at www.dot.state.wi.us.

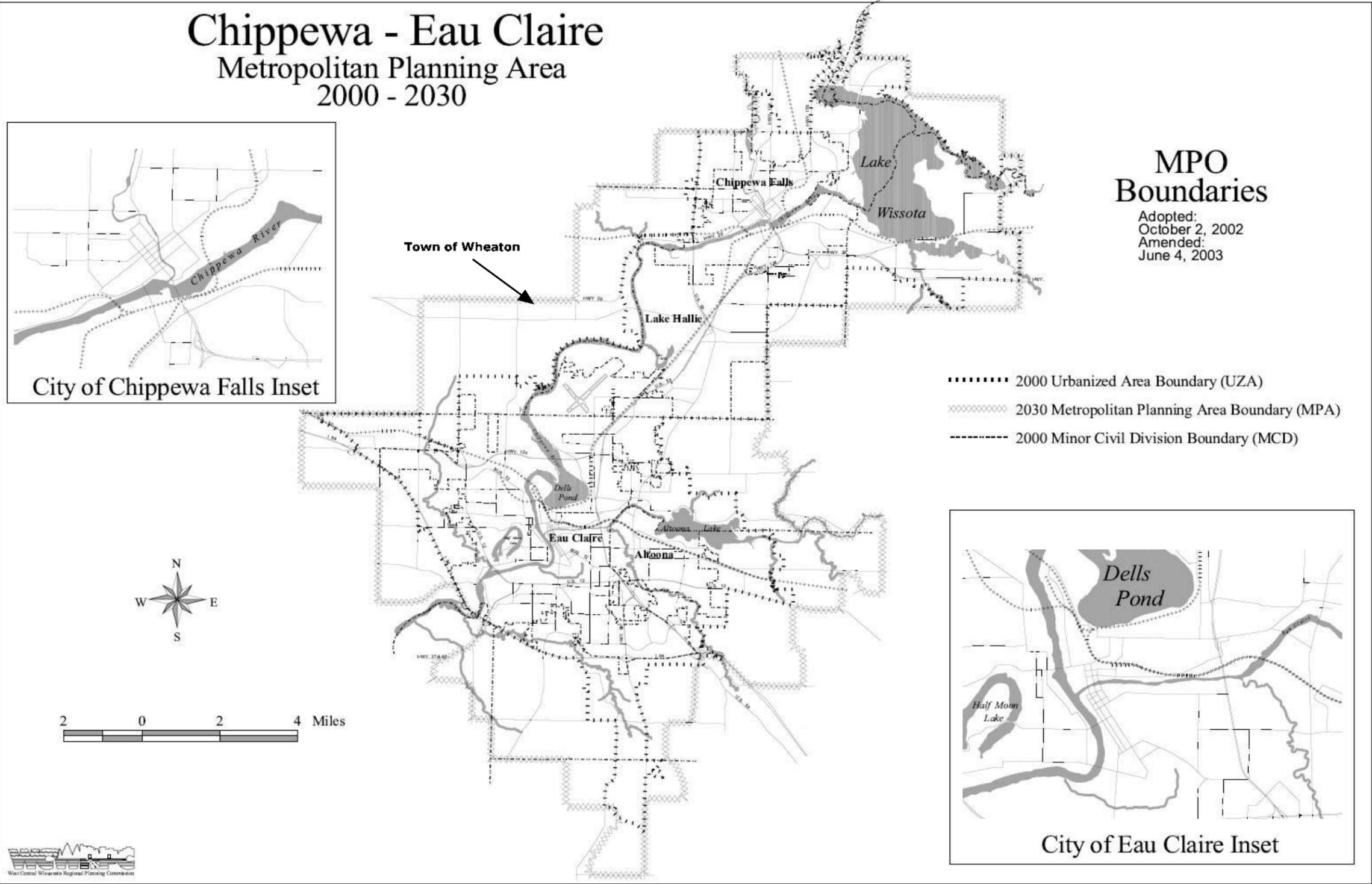
Open communication and participation in land use and transportation decisions, which may impact the Town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

Healthy collaborations:

- Are less competitive than traditional decision-making.
- Are based on joint learning and fact finding.
- Feature opportunities for creative and systemic thinking.
- Encourage parties to participate jointly in the decision-making process.
- Can be ongoing processes that accept new players.
- Structure participant interaction to encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and deliberation.
- Accommodate mutual gain negotiation.
- Address matters of procedure and relationships as well as substance.
- Allocate implementation responsibility across as many parties in the process as the situation warrants.”

Source: Daniels and Walker, Oregon State University.

Figure 8-4
Metropolitan Planning Area Map



Source: West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and SEH

Competition has been shown to be useful up to a certain point and no further, but cooperation, which is the thing we strive for today, begins where the competition leaves off.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

8.2 Assessment of Future Conditions

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 communications. 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.

8.3 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.

8.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Based upon the planning process completed to date, and in conjunction with a discussion at Plan Commission meetings, a list of Intergovernmental Cooperation goals, objectives, and policies were identified.

- A. **Goal** – The Town will encourage additional open dialogue with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.
 - 1. **Objective** – The Town of Wheaton will continue coordination efforts with adjacent municipalities in a way that serves the residents and businesses of the Town.

- B. **Goal** – The Town will monitor public safety services and service providers to ensure that local needs are being met.
- C. **Goal** – The Town will seek increased communication and coordination with the Chippewa County Zoning Department.
 - 1. **Objective** – The Town will explore a more formalized permit process with the Chippewa County Zoning Department.

9.0 Land Use

9.1 Land Use Summary

9.2 Land Use Agencies and Programs

9.3 Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies

*Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(h)
(h) Land-use element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d) will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d) and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.*

The Land Use Element is intended to provide important background data, analyze trends, and define future needs related to land use. This information will serve as the foundation for the development of goals, objectives, policies, and actions. This element must be defined and utilized in conjunction with the other eight planning elements and will serve as a guide to future growth and development in the Town of Wheaton.

Defining appropriate land use 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.

Many rural Wisconsin communities are facing problems due to unplanned growth: pollution, a loss of community character, traffic congestion, and sprawling development. Taxes have reached all-time highs and infrastructure and maintenance costs continue to encumber local units of government. By giving communities the opportunity to define the way they wish to grow and by developing a “vision” to reach that target, the magnitude of these problems can be reduced.

This chapter contains a listing of the amount, type, and intensity of existing uses of land and discusses opportunities for redevelopment within the Town of Wheaton. This chapter analyzes existing trends in the supply, demand, and price of land and contains a future land use map that identifies the Town of Wheaton’s vision for future land uses.

Overall, the intensity and density of all land use activities is quite low due to the rural nature of the Town. Over the next 20-years, it is anticipated that overall density will remain low in the majority of the Town, but will likely increase slightly in southern and eastern areas near the Cities of Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire. The Town of Wheaton follows Chippewa County zoning standards, which determine minimum lot sizes and restrictions for development.

9.1 Land Use Summary

Wheaton is located in the southwestern portion of Chippewa County. Predominantly agricultural in land use, the Town has growing residential, commercial, and manufacturing components, as well as a significant natural resource base.

Good land use planning can:

- Provide a way to make more informed decisions;
- Coordinate individual decisions and actions so that development decisions complement each other rather than detract from one another;
- Provide facts on current conditions and trends;
- Assist communities in evaluating future development proposals in light of community objectives;
- Explore alternatives; and
- Provide a common framework for dealing with community change.

Source: Ohm, Brian. 1999. "Guide to Community Planning in Wisconsin." Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension.

Historically, the Town has been impacted by several major issues – being adjacent to growing incorporated communities on the east (City of Chippewa Falls and Village of Lake Hallie) and the south (City of Eau Claire); being located on three major highway systems: U.S. Highway 53, U.S. 12, and State Highway 29; being located on two railroads; the natural resource base of the Town in rivers and streams; and the abundance of agricultural land.

There has been a growing residential demand in the Town. Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire have impacted the Town directly by annexations of land, which then develops at different densities than would have been allowed in the Town.

Agricultural acreage in the Town, the largest land use in Wheaton, has seen a decrease of about 400 acres (or 1.9 percent) since 2003. While agricultural land use will likely continue to be an important part of Wheaton and Chippewa County, the Town may see a small decrease in this land as development pressure continues and farming costs continue to rise.

Commercial acreage has increased by nearly 42 percent from 2003 to 2008, while manufacturing acreage has quadrupled. There is good access to a large customer base, as well as far-reaching transportation systems available in the Town, which makes commercial and manufacturing acreage valuable. While these land uses will likely continue to stay a small part of Wheaton's total acreage, it is predicted that they will continue to increase. Most of the commercial and/or manufacturing pressure will likely occur in the eastern or southern portions of the Town, near the Cities of Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire, where there lies a large customer base and access to well-developed and far reaching transportation systems.

Existing Land Use

The Town of Wheaton is largely agricultural in land use. According to 2008 assessment records, nearly two-thirds of the Town acreage is agriculture, nearly 19 percent forested, and 11 percent residential. Developed uses (residential, commercial, and manufacturing) equal 11.9 percent of Wheaton's acreage.

**Table 9-1
2003 to 2008 Land Use - Town of Wheaton**

Real Estate Class	2003			2008			2003 to 2008 Change		
	Parcels	Acres	Acres - Percent of Total	Parcels	Acres	Acres - Percent of Total	Parcels	Acres	Acres Percentage Change
Residential	1,069	3,158	9.8%	1,150	3,495	11.0%	81	337	10.7%
Commercial	39	142	0.4%	47	201	0.6%	8	59	41.5%
Manufacturing	2	24	0.1%	4	100	0.3%	2	76	316.7%
Agriculture	829	21,451	66.7%	863	21,050	66.0%	34	-401	-1.9%
Undeveloped	127	890	2.8%	115	839	2.6%	-12	-51	-5.7%
Ag Forest	0	0	0.0%	375	3,700	11.6%	375	3,700	n/a
Forest	539	6,313	19.6%	172	2,298	7.2%	-367	-4,015	-63.6%
Other	93	181	0.6%	93	191	0.6%	0	10	5.5%
Real Estate Totals	2,698	32,159	100.0%	2,819	31,874	100.0%	121	-285	-0.9%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

The largest growth in acres (3,700) was in the ag forest classification, while the forest classification saw a decline of 4,015 acres, the majority of which were reclassified into the ag forest classification. Agricultural land saw a decrease of 401 acres, while residential use saw an increase of 337 acres.

While residential, commercial, and manufacturing growth has been slowly occurring, the equalized valuation of property in the Town has seen a 50 percent increase from 2003 to 2008. The only real estate class that saw a decrease in total valuation from 2003 to 2008 was the forest class, due to the acreage shift to the ag forest classification.

**Table 9-2
2008 Valuation**

Real Estate Class	Land Value 2008	Improvement Value 2008	Total Valuation 2008	Total Valuation 2003	Total Valuation Percent Change – 2003 to 2008
Residential	\$30,682,700	\$140,061,500	\$170,744,200	\$115,313,100	48.1%
Commercial	\$1,692,300	\$10,526,100	\$12,218,400	\$2,212,400	452.3%
Manufacturing	\$878,500	\$2,609,200	\$3,487,700	\$859,300	305.9%
Agricultural	\$3,768,100	\$0	\$3,768,100	\$3,245,800	16.1%
Undeveloped	\$681,700	\$0	\$681,700	\$150,000	354.5%
Ag Forest	\$5,457,500	\$0	\$5,457,500	\$0	n/a
Forest	\$7,089,200	\$0	\$7,089,200	\$11,793,300	-39.9%
Other	\$1,050,500	\$9,605,000	\$10,655,500	\$9,436,900	12.9%
Total	\$51,300,500	\$162,801,800	\$214,102,300	\$143,010,800	49.7%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Statement of Assessments, Statement of Changes in Equalized Values by Class and Item

Commercial Land Use

As of the 2008 assessment, there were 201 acres and 47 commercially assessed parcels in the Town, an increase of eight parcels and 59 acres since 2003. This results in a density of about 4.3 acres per commercial parcel.

Manufacturing Land Use

There are four manufacturing properties and 100 manufacturing acres in the Town. This is an increase of two parcels and 76 acres from 2003. This results in a 25 acre per parcel density.

Forested Land Use

There are 2,298 acres and 172 parcels classified forest in the Town. This is a density of 13.4 acres per parcel. In 2003, there were 539 parcels and 6,313 acres of forest classified land. It is likely that most of the decrease in acreage was due to land re-classified to Ag Forest. The Ag Forest classification gained 375 parcels and 3,700 acres from 2003 to 2008.

Residential Land Use

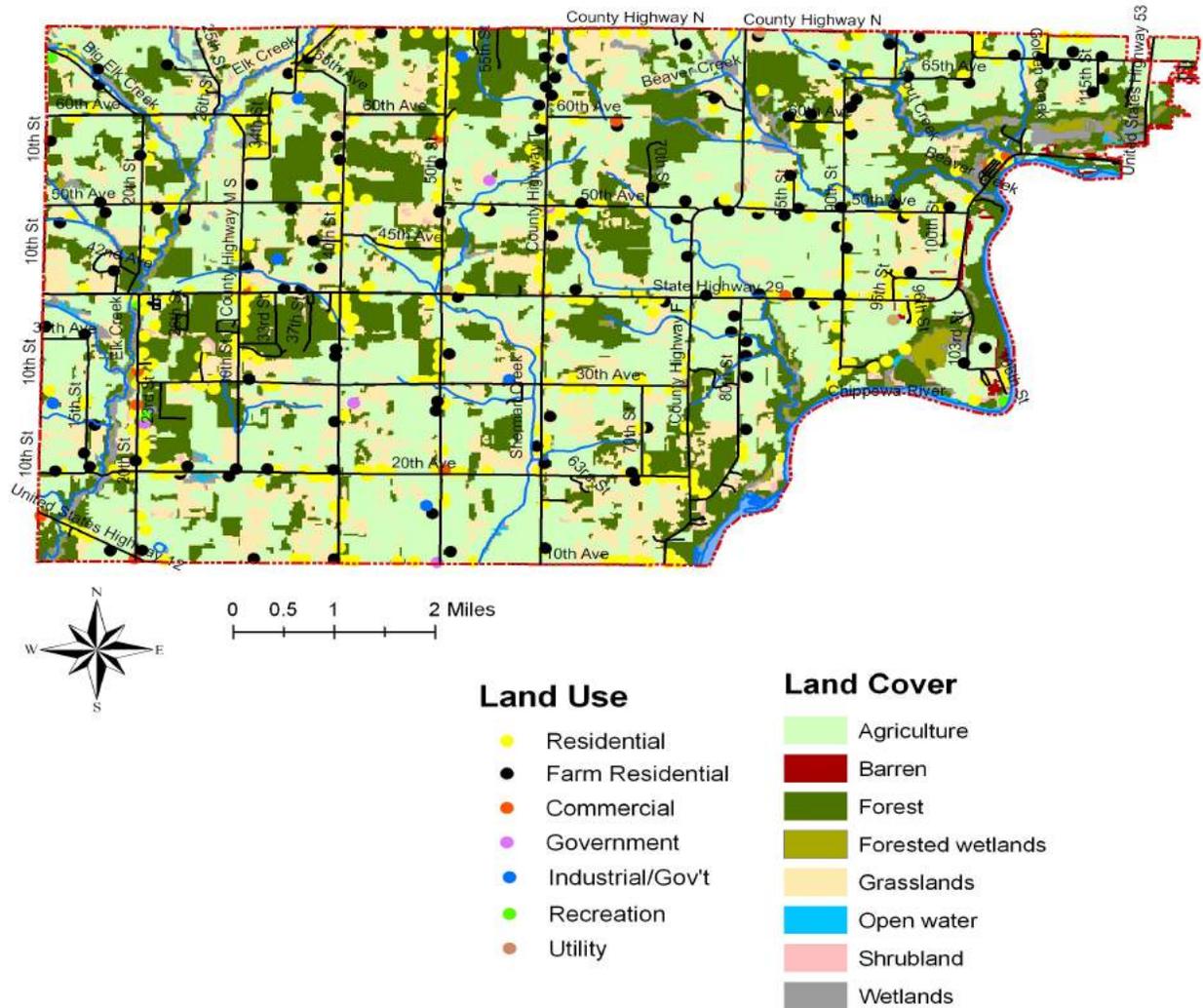
There are 1,150 parcels and 3,495 acres currently devoted to residential land use in the Town. This results in an overall density of three acres per parcel. Currently, the Town has a five-acre minimum lot size. This difference is due, in part, to the fact that the Town has some smaller parcels that were created prior to the five-acre minimum lot size taking affect.

While residential use is only 11 percent of the total Town acreage, the residential land class has the highest valuation in the Town. Nearly 80 percent of the Town's valuation is in the residential land class.

Agricultural Land Use

Agricultural uses in the Town occupy the largest amount of acreage. There are 863 parcels and 21,050 acres assessed agriculture, resulting in an average of about 24 acres per agricultural parcel. There has been a decrease of 401 agricultural acres from 2003 to 2008. More information about the change in farming in the Town and Chippewa County is presented in the Agricultural Resources section.

**Figure 9-1
Existing Land Use**



Source: WCWRPC Land Survey

Public/Other Land Use

The Town owns several parcels in the Town, including the park, Town Hall, and the Town gravel pit. The WDNR also owns several parcels in the Town adjacent to high-quality trout streams, allowing for public access.

Land Demand and Prices

Land sales and prices can indicate changes in economy and land use patterns. Particularly when agricultural and forested lands are sold and converted to alternative land uses, it is important to see if there is a desire to shift some of these lands to more intense uses, such as residential, commercial, or industrial.

Table 6-6 from the Agricultural Resources element shows there is a premium that is paid when buying agricultural land and converting it to other uses. On average since 1996, about 20 percent of Chippewa County agricultural acreage that is sold gets diverted to other uses.

Forest land sales have seen a somewhat similar trend. There were large premiums paid to convert forested land to other uses from 1998 through 2001. From 2005 through 2007, premiums were being paid to purchase forest land remaining in forest use. On average, about 31 percent of the forest land sold annually is being converted to other uses.

When looking at equalized land value per acre, some land use classes are valued more in Wheaton when compared to Chippewa County. For instance, manufacturing, undeveloped, ag forest, forest, and “other” land values per acre are significantly higher in Wheaton than the Chippewa County average. However, residential and commercial land values per acre are significantly lower in Wheaton when compared to Chippewa County. This is shown in Table 9-3. It should be noted that these values do not include the value of any structures placed on the land and are not fair market value. Rather, these are assessed land values.

**Table 9-3
Land Value per Acre**

	Wheaton		Chippewa County	
	2003	2008	2003	2008
Residential	\$5,007	\$8,779	\$18,464	\$28,035
Commercial	\$3,937	\$8,419	\$17,993	\$24,684
Manufacturing	\$2,329	\$8,785	\$5,749	\$8,318
Agriculture	\$151	\$179	\$151	\$180
Undeveloped	\$169	\$813	\$519	\$481
Ag Forest	n/a	\$1,475	n/a	\$943
Forest	\$1,868	\$3,085	\$1,322	\$1,939
Other	\$4,892	\$5,500	\$2,655	\$4,193

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

The Trust for Public Land has documented seven major economic benefits that parks and open space conservation can provide. They include:

- preventing higher cost of unplanned development*
- creating a higher quality of life that attracts tax paying businesses and residents*
- stimulating commercial growth and promoting inner city revitalization*
- boosting local economies by attracting tourists and supporting outdoor recreation*
- protecting agricultural lands safeguarding the future of farm economies and communities*
- preventing flood damage*
- safeguarding the environment, including drinking water, clean air and other environmental goals*

Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space, The Trust for Public Land, 1999.

All land classes in Wheaton saw per acre land values grow significantly from 2003 to 2008. Undeveloped land values per acre decreased on average throughout Chippewa County, but increased substantially in the Town.

Land Use Analysis

The Town of Wheaton is likely to see additional development in the future. The Town is located on U.S. Highway 12 and U.S. Highway 53, State Highway 29 and two rail lines. The Cities of Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire, and the Village of Lake Hallie have all experienced relatively quick growth lately. The Town has also been growing, but at a slower rate than the neighboring incorporated communities.

There are few direct land use conflicts within the Town in terms of incompatible uses located adjacent to one another. However, when residential uses are placed next to agricultural uses, the potential for conflict increases as some residents do not take into account some of the factors of being located next to an agricultural use.

As discussed in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element, the City of Eau Claire’s Comprehensive Plan indicates areas of the Town of Wheaton that it expects will become part of the City at some point. The City has decided to use its extraterritorial powers to influence how development occurs on this land, and as such, has created a conflict with the Town due to lot sizes and density standards. More information, including maps showing future land uses for the City of Eau Claire, can be obtained in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element.

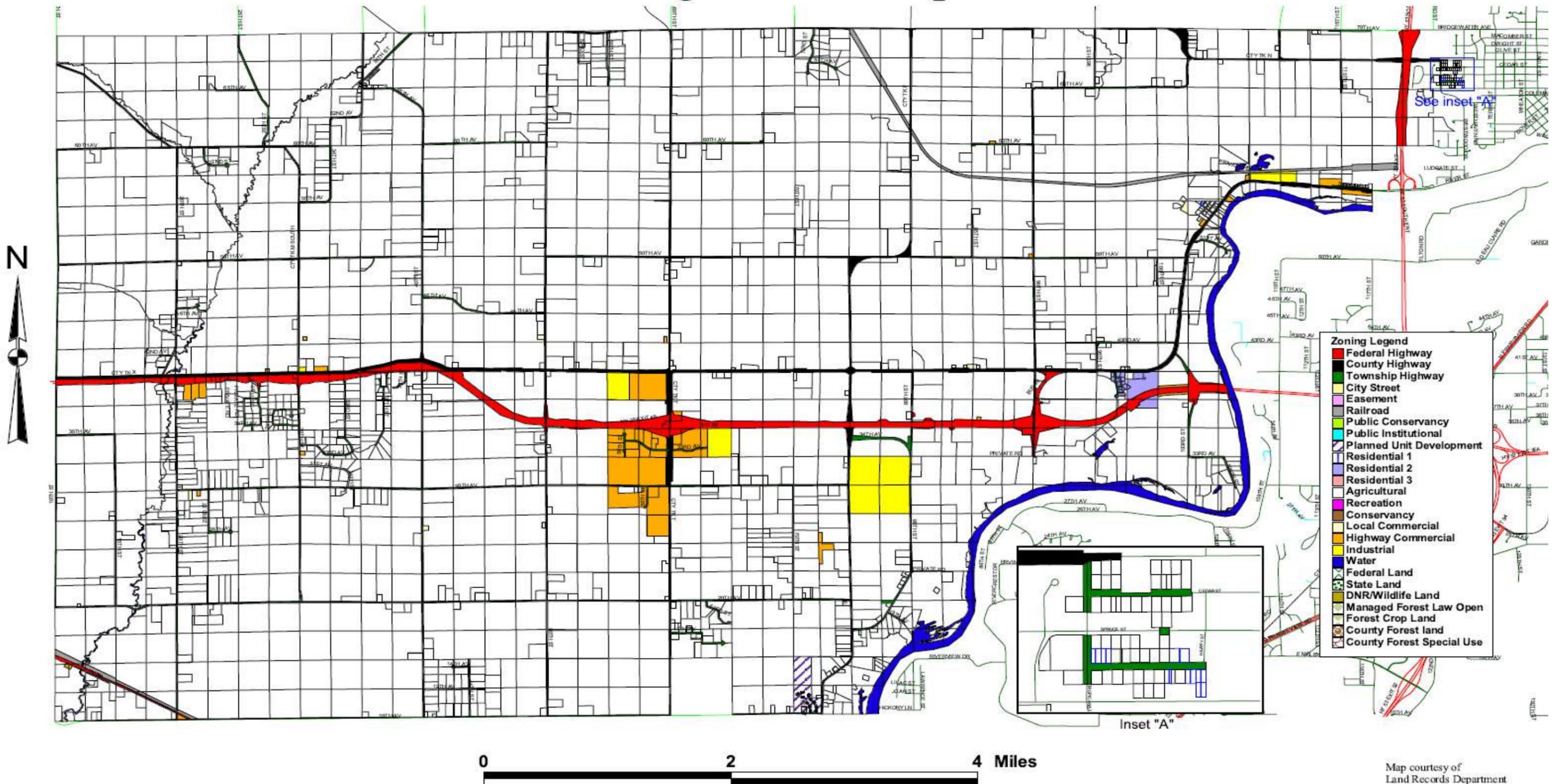
Coordination with the Cities of Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire will be important to ensure that the Town’s visions for the land are compatible with future neighboring uses.

Agricultural land uses dominate Town acreage. Much of the commercial or industrial uses are located on highways or County Roads, which are fairly heavily traveled. It is important to maintain the quality of life that many residents indicated is important to them by not placing incompatible land uses adjacent to one another.

Development Limitations

Wheaton is likely to see additional development pressure due to its location and the nature of its land. There are areas of natural resource limitations, primarily adjacent to water resources, which will be prohibitive to development as seen in the Natural Resources section. There are some areas with flooding concerns along some of the open water bodies, as well as areas that have significant slopes that could be prohibitive to building. Using the information in the Natural Resources element, as well as working cooperatively with Chippewa County, FEMA, and the WDNR, development can be guided in a manner that protects Wheaton’s resource base.

Figure 9-2
Town of Wheaton Zoning



Source: Chippewa County

Map courtesy of
Land Records Department
Chippewa County
Current as of February 6, 2008

Future Land Uses

Future land use in the Town will likely remain dominated by agriculture. Commercial and manufacturing uses will likely increase as the availability of a good highway system and the rail line are promoted.

Based upon the official projections of the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the Town of Wheaton is projected to see a 45 percent increase in population by the year 2030 from the 2000 population. The projected 2030 population is 3,430. The accuracy of this projection will be highly dependent upon what type of development the Town attracts between now and then.

Projected Growth

Land use projections are an important part of a comprehensive plan. They are a “best guess” of the amount of land that will be needed for future development, and are based on population and household projections, community development standards (accepted density or intensity of various land uses) and community desires. Within the Town, there are approximately 31,874 acres of land. Of this, approximately 839 acres are wetlands, leaving approximately 31,035 acres of developable land.

While not a desired component of future land use, it is recognized that annexation has affected the Town in the past. From 2001 to 2008, the Wisconsin Department of Administration recorded that approximately 288 acres of land were annexed into the City of Chippewa Falls or the City of Eau Claire. While there were several years with no annexation activities, this results in an average of approximately 36 Town acres being annexed per year. If this rate were to continue, this would amount to the Town losing 720 acres to annexation over the next 20 years.

As shown in Figure 9-2, most of the Town is zoned for agricultural use. The Town has a minimum lot size requirement of five acres at this time for residential development. The commercial uses in the Town fall into the Highway Commercial district, which has a minimum lot size of 1.66 acres. The Industrial District also has a minimum lot size of 1.66 acres.

Based upon the population projects, the growth of surrounding communities, a potential development push from immediately adjacent areas, and the current economic conditions, by the year 2030 we anticipate development of approximately 324 residential dwelling units (under current five-acre minimum regulations, resulting in a minimum consumption of 1,620 acres), 200 additional acres of commercial, 300 acres of industrial land, lands assessed agricultural will decrease by 1,600 acres, and forest land will decrease by 520 acres. The increments on the next page indicate a running total.

5 years

Over the first five years, we project 70 new residences, 30 additional commercial acres, the conversion of 200 acres of agricultural to other uses, 255 forested acres converted to other uses, and an additional 75 manufacturing acres.

10 years

Within ten years, we project 162 new residences, 100 new commercial acres, conversion of 700 acres of agricultural land and 360 acres of forest land to other uses, and 150 new manufacturing acres.

15 years

In fifteen years, we project 243 new residences, 150 additional commercial acres, 1,200 acres of agricultural land and 390 acres of forest land converted to other uses, and 225 new industrial acres.

20 years

In twenty years, we project 324 new residences, 200 additional commercial acres, 1,600 acres of agricultural land converted to other uses, 520 forest land acres converted to other uses, and 300 additional manufacturing acres.

The figures presented above indicate residential development occurring under the current five-acre minimum lot size regulation. If the Town or Chippewa County zoning were to consider cluster subdivisions, which would allow smaller lot sizes in exchange for maximizing open space, the space consumed by residential development could be reduced. Assuming one-half of new subdivisions in Wheaton are cluster subdivisions with a 2.5 acre minimum lot size, the amount of land consumed could be reduced by over 400 acres over the next 20 years. This is shown in Table 9-4 below.

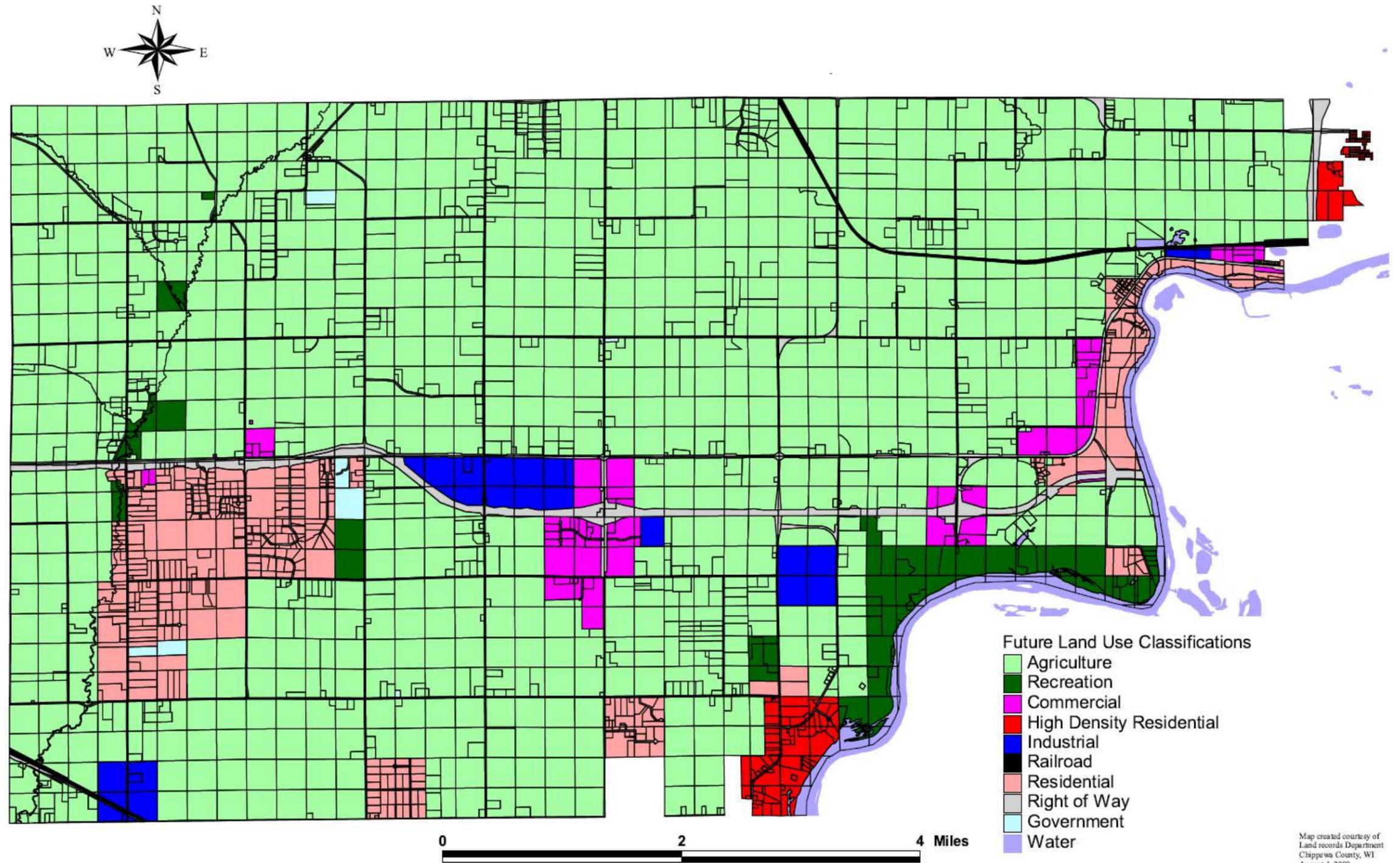
Table 9-4
Land Use Consumption by Residential Subdivision Type

Years	Acres Consumed by Subdivision Type		
	5-Acre Minimum, Conventional Subdivisions	Half 5-Acre Minimum Conventional Subdivisions, Half Cluster Subdivisions (2.5 Acre Min.)	All Cluster Subdivisions (2.5 Acre Minimum)
5	350	262.5	175
10	810	607.5	405
15	1,215	912.5	607.5
20	1,620	1,215	810

Source: SEH

Figure 9-3 on the following page shows the Town of Wheaton's future land use. It is important to note that the Future Land Use map does not change zoning or subdivision regulations that are in place. Rather, this map serves to guide future growth over the next 20 years.

Figure 9-3
Future Land Use Map



Source: Chippewa County

Map created courtesy of
Land records Department
Chippewa County, WI
August 4, 2009

The areas marked High Density Residential are those locations that the Town would be most willing to consider allowing residential uses being located on lot sizes less than five acres in size. However, this would require a change to the Town’s existing zoning ordinance.

9.2 Land Use Agencies and Programs

There are a number of available agencies and programs to assist communities with land use projects. Below are brief descriptions of various agencies and programs.

University of Wisconsin

The UW-Madison, River Falls, Milwaukee, and Stevens Point school systems can provide research and outreach planning services to area communities.

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. For more information, visit www.wcwrpc.org.

Chippewa County

Chippewa County has multiple departments that can aid in specific areas and specialties for land use projects. The Planning and Zoning Department administers on-site septic and well systems, as well as zoning in the Town.

The Land Conservation Department retains information on land and water resources, which should be consulted when considering development. This department also monitors runoff, waste collection, and farmland and woodland preservation.

9.3 Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies

Based on the SWOT Analysis, the Vision Statement Process, and the effort to define key issues, a list of goals, objectives and policies have been drafted.

- A. **Goal** – The Town will strive to guide development in a manner that preserves the rural living and quality of life that residents enjoy.
- B. **Goal** – The Town encourages development designs that promote the preservation of open space and working lands.
- C. **Goal** – The Town will review, maintain, and update as necessary their zoning and subdivision ordinances.
 1. **Objective** – The Town will coordinate with Chippewa County and review County documents, in particular those pertaining to land use and resource management, to consider utilizing them in the Town.

- a. ***Policy*** – The Town will work with the Chippewa County Zoning Department to ensure there are zoning districts to accommodate desired growth.

10.0 Implementation

10.1 Action Plan

10.2 Plan Integration and Consistency

10.3 Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

10.4 Plan Amendments and Updates

This element serves as a “priority” list for implementing and realizing the Plan. It prescribes those actions necessary to realize the visions, goals, and objectives highlighted in previous chapters of the Plan. The Plan addresses many important components critical to sustaining a healthy community while preserving the area’s rural character, natural resources, and history. As change is inevitable, the Plan may need to be amended to appropriately reflect land use changes.

If there is a question regarding a decision that is not clearly conveyed in the details of this Comprehensive Plan, then the decision should be based on the intent of the vision statement listed in the Issues and Opportunities Element of the Plan. All nine elements included in this Plan work to achieve the desired future for the Town of Wheaton.

10.1 Action Plan

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan is intended to help guide decisions within the Town. The Plan is an expression of the Town of Wheaton’s wishes and desires and provides a series of policies for assisting the community in attaining its visions, goals, and objectives. The Plan is not an attempt to predict the future, but rather an attempt to document the Town’s values and philosophies that citizens of Wheaton share. The Plan guides a variety of community issues including housing, transportation, utilities and community facilities, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, and land use.

The Town of Wheaton Planning Commission, Town Board, and citizens in reviewing all proposals pertaining to development in the Town should utilize the Comprehensive Plan. Development proposals should be examined to determine whether they are consistent with Town wishes and desires as expressed in the Plan. As part of the review, a thorough review of the Plan is necessary with particular attention given to the goals and objectives. Where the impact of a proposed development is minimal, the evaluation may simply be a determination of whether or not the Plan provides relevant direction and whether the requested action is in conformance with the Plan. Development proposals with significant potential impacts will require a more detailed analysis in order to determine consistency.

*Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(i)
(i) Implementation element. A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in pars. (a) to (h). The element shall describe how each of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit’s progress toward achieving all aspects of the Comprehensive Plan. The element shall include a process for updating the Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan under this subsection shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.*

Completing the plan document is only one step in the planning process. Getting complete commitment in implementing the plan involves getting all departments and key individuals involved in order to have a unified stance in matters pertaining to the plan.

10.2 Plan Integration and Consistency

Within this implementation element, it is required to “describe how each of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.” As a result of the Comprehensive Plan being developed in a coordinated and simultaneous effort, the planning process has ensured that the development and review of each element is consistent with the others; and based on that analysis, there are no known inconsistencies between the planning elements. In the future, as plan amendments occur, it is important that the Town of Wheaton Planning Commission and Town Board both conduct consistency reviews. Those reviews will ensure the document continues to represent an integrated approach to planning.

To ensure consistency across jurisdictional boundaries, the Town of Wheaton encourages early dialogue between all adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions (towns, villages, cities and counties) as they develop or revise their Comprehensive Plans and ordinances. Where inconsistencies are identified and a resolution cannot be reached, future actions can be developed to bring the parties together to address their concerns.

10.3 Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, a number of goals, objectives, and policy items were developed that when implemented are intended to build stronger relationships and give direction to the Town Board and Wheaton residents. The goals are the “purpose or end” that provides direction for the Town and other governmental organizations, such as Chippewa County. Objectives are statements that are measurable benchmarks the community works to achieve, and the policies are more specific statements that set preferred courses of action to carry out the objectives in the future. While many of the objectives and actions can be accomplished in the short term, several others will be continuous or ongoing and do not have a specific implementation target date. As is stipulated in 1999 Wisconsin Act 9, a Comprehensive Plan must be updated at least once every 10 years. However, in order to ensure that the Town’s Plan is an effective management tool, the Town of Wheaton Planning Commission should review the plan goals and objectives annually to track those activities that have been completed to realize its accomplishments and identify areas where additional resources or actions are needed. Part of this effort, will also include addressing conflicts which may arise between the elements of the Plan.

As a means of measuring progress towards achieving the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, action steps for some of the goals have been developed that propose a timeline that may be followed to implement the goals.

GOAL

The Town will strive to guide development in a manner that preserves the rural living and quality of life that residents enjoy.



Housing

Strategy

- Identify areas of the Town which may be appropriate for housing developments on lot sizes less than five-acres.
- Identify areas of zoning and subdivision ordinances that need to be updated.
- Work with Chippewa County to update zoning ordinance as needed.

Implementation Lead(s)

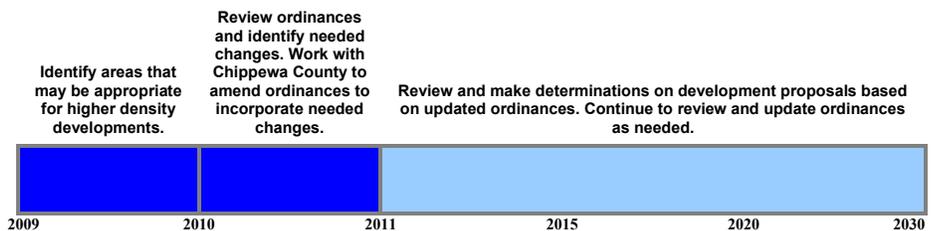
- Wheaton Planning Commission
- Wheaton Town Board

Key Partners

- Town residents
- Chippewa County

Potential Funding Sources

- Town of Wheaton – primarily staff and committee time



ACTION STEPS

GOAL

The Town will evaluate options to accommodate increasing traffic volumes on County Highway T south of State Highway 29.



Transportation

Strategy

- Work with Chippewa County to identify deficiencies and proposed improvements scheduled for County Highway T.
- Identify local needs, including accessibility, traffic flow, economics for businesses, and safety among other things, and evaluate proposed improvements.
- Develop alternatives and offer suggestions to Chippewa County to accommodate any deficiencies.

Implementation Lead(s)

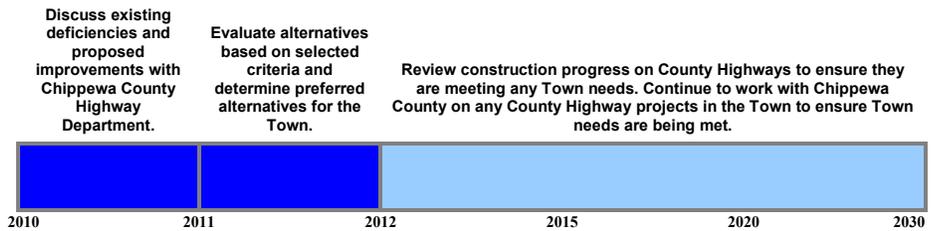
- Wheaton Planning Commission
- Wheaton Town Board

Key Partners

- Chippewa County
- Eau Claire County
- City of Eau Claire
- WisDOT
- Town residents
- Town businesses

Potential Funding Sources

- Town of Wheaton
- City of Eau Claire
- Chippewa County (construction only)
- WisDOT



ACTION STEPS

GOAL

The Town will consider evaluating possible designated truck routes through the Town. The Town will also consider developing braking and weight limit ordinances for trucks on Town roads.



Transportation

Strategy

- Identify problem areas for truck traffic in the Town.
- Develop several preferred routes for trucks through the Town. Determine the need for weight limits and braking ordinances along these routes, and on other Town roads.
- Contact businesses with vehicles that would need to utilize these routes. Get their feedback on the alternatives.
- Select alternative(s) best suited to meet the Town’s needs, including resident and business needs.

Implementation Lead(s)

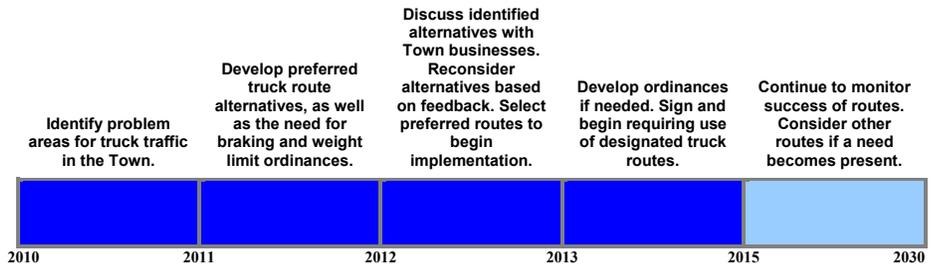
- Wheaton Planning Commission
- Wheaton Town Board

Key Partners

- Town residents
- Town businesses
- Truck operators
- Chippewa County Highway Department
- Chippewa County Sheriff’s Department

Potential Funding Sources

- Town of Wheaton
- Chippewa County



ACTION STEPS

GOAL

The Town will consider options for adjusting spatial capacity in the Town Hall according to its use and Town needs.



Utilities and Community Facilities

Strategy

- Conduct a space needs study for the Town Hall based on projected population and uses.
- Identify and evaluate alternatives for increased space to accommodate the Town’s future needs.
- Evaluate the alternatives based on identified criteria, including but not limited to cost, ability to sell or re-utilize buildings that will no longer be needed by the Town, location in the Town, and opportunities available for future expansion.

Implementation Lead(s)

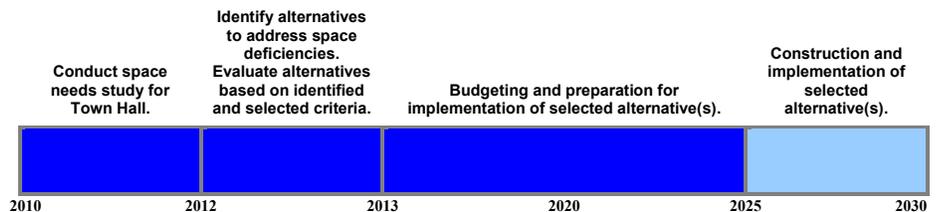
- Wheaton Planning Commission
- Wheaton Town Board

Key Partners

- Wheaton administrative personnel

Potential Funding Sources

- Town of Wheaton
- USDA Rural Development – Community Facilities Direct Loans and Grants (for construction)



ACTION STEPS

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Strategy

- Identify the various marketable non-metallic mineral deposits throughout the Town and maintain an up-to-date list and map of these deposits.
- Develop a plan to evaluate proposals and an approval or denial mechanism for proposals to extract these materials.

GOAL

The Town will identify, recognize and strive to manage the non-metallic mineral resources of the Town.

Implementation Lead(s)

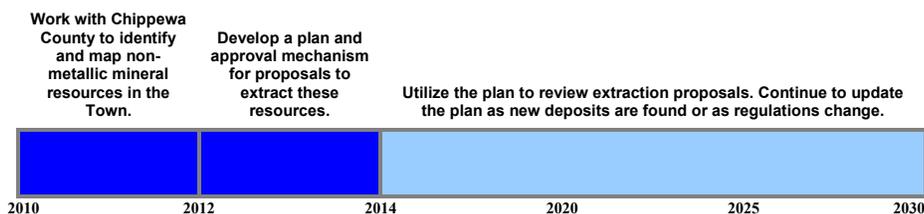
- Wheaton Planning Commission
- Wheaton Town Board

Key Partners

- Town residents
- Chippewa County Land Conservation Department
- Chippewa County Planning and Zoning
- WDNR

Potential Funding Sources

- Town of Wheaton



ACTION STEPS

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Strategy

GOAL

The Town will support and promote outdoor recreational resources.



- Identify outdoor recreational resources in the Town.
- Compile a list of projects that the Town would like to complete to promote these resources.
- Complete or get included into a five-year outdoor park and recreation plan that is approved by the WDNR.

Implementation Lead(s)

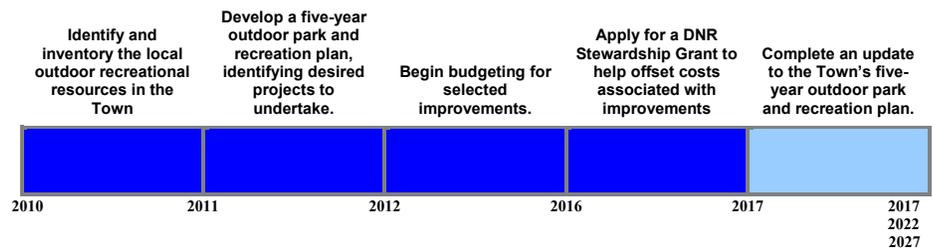
- Wheaton Planning Commission
- Wheaton Park Committee
- Wheaton Town Board

Key Partners

- Town residents

Potential Funding Sources

- Town of Wheaton
- WDNR – Stewardship Program



ACTION STEPS

GOAL

The Town will explore a more formalized permit process with the Chippewa County Zoning Department.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Strategy

- Identify existing areas of permit process that need improvement.
- Develop alternatives that may be used to mitigate existing deficiencies.
- Contact Chippewa County and have a meeting to discuss proposed alternatives. Discuss other ideas Chippewa County may have.
- Together with Chippewa County, tweak alternatives to suit both the Town and County – select most appropriate alternative(s).

Implementation Lead(s)

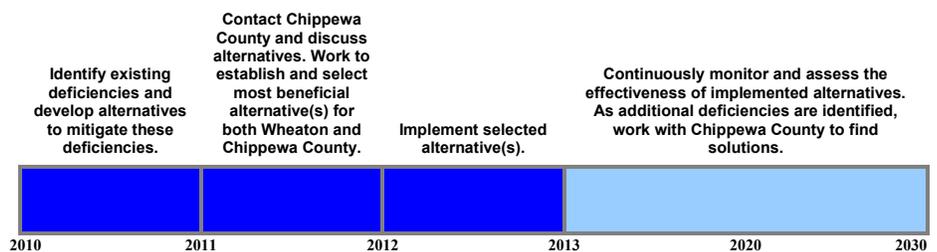
- Wheaton Planning Commission
- Wheaton Town Board

Key Partners

- Chippewa County Zoning Department
- Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Committee

Potential Funding Sources

- Town of Wheaton – primarily staff and committee time
- Chippewa County – staff and committee time



ACTION STEPS

10.4 Plan Amendments and Updates

Evaluating the Comprehensive Plan is an ongoing process and will, at some time, lead to the realization that the Plan requires updating and amendments. The time that elapses between the completion of the Plan and the need to amend the Plan will depend greatly on evolving issues, trends, and land use conditions. Periodic updates will allow for updates to statistical data, and to ensure the Plan's goals, objectives, and actions reflect the current conditions, needs, and concerns. The Comprehensive Planning legislation requires plan updates at least every 10 years. The Town of Wheaton Planning Commission will remain flexible in determining when and how often the Plan should be updated. Generally, a Comprehensive Plan update should not be expected more often than once every 5 years. A tremendous amount of change can occur in a community over just a couple of years and the Town should be prepared to address changing conditions with timely plan updates. Amendments to the plan will follow the requirements of State law and will be evaluated for consistency with the existing plan, including all elements.

To ensure residents are involved in plan amendments, the following process and protocol should be followed to allow public involvement and comment. The Town of Wheaton Planning Commission shall undertake a review of the Plan and shall consider the necessary amendment(s) to the Plan resulting from property owner requests and changes to social and economic conditions. Upon the Planning Commission review, recommended changes to the Plan shall be forwarded to the Town Board. The Town of Wheaton Board shall call a public hearing to afford property owners time to review and comment on recommended Plan changes. A public hearing shall be advertised in accordance with the Town's public meeting notice procedures. Based on public input, Planning Commission recommendations, and other facts, the Town Board will then formally act on the recommended amendment(s).

Appendix

Survey Results

