

The Town of Woodland, located in the far northwestern part of Sauk County, is a rural and recreational place characterized by its small town atmosphere and a strong sense of community pride. The Town is rich in natural and recreational resources including the Baraboo River and Dutch Hollow Lake. This setting and atmosphere has resulted in steady growth in the Town of Woodland. This trend, which is expected to continue, makes planning for the Town's future important as a way to retain the characteristics valued by the community and to ensure a successful future for the Town of Woodland.

1.0 Purpose Of This Plan

The purpose of the Town of Woodland Comprehensive Plan is to help guide local decision-making by:

- Identifying areas appropriate for development and preservation;
- Establishing and assigning future land use districts based on desired land uses;
- Identifying needed transportation and utility provisions to serve existing and new development;
- Including provisions that emphasize economic development that is locally and recreationally based and is compatible with the rural town character;
- Providing opportunities to preserve open space land for ecological, recreational, and aesthetic reasons.

The drafting and amendment of this Comprehensive Plan were prepared in accordance with Wis Stat § 66.1001. The initial drafting was the culmination of 15-months of work on the part of a 13-member Comprehensive Planning Committee. The amendment was done over a 7-month period with members of the Town Board and Plan Commission. Input from numerous other citizens of the Town and knowledgeable people from throughout Sauk County were incorporated into the final Comprehensive Plan. The Plan itself is comprised of nine primary elements, as noted below, however this Plan has rearranged some elements or portions thereof to allow for a greater level of analysis based on some of the more important issues in the Town. For example, Natural Resources and Agriculture have been separated into two individual sections, while Cultural Resources has been included with Utilities and Community Facilities. Additionally, the 'Issues and Opportunities' element has been expanded to include an in-depth analysis of a Community Survey and Vision Session.

For each of these redefined elements, broken into chapters, minimum requirements of the comprehensive planning legislation are met and in many cases exceeded. In this Plan, a description of each element is provided under the purpose statement of each chapter, along with a primary goal, objectives and identified policies. Each chapter is accompanied by a series of charts, tables and maps to illustrate both background information and the intent of the identified goals, objectives and policies.

In addition to the nine required elements, the comprehensive planning legislation also set forth 14 goals for communities to reach both throughout and at the completion of their planning processes. Although these goals are not required, this Plan and planning process has accomplished them.

The nine elements and 14 goals of the comprehensive plan are noted below:

➤ **Nine Elements**

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

➤ **Fourteen Goals**

1. Promoting redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures
2. Encouraging neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices
3. Protecting natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes and woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources
4. Protecting economically productive areas, including farmland and forests
5. Encouraging land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state government and utility costs
6. Preserving cultural, historic and archeological sites
7. Encouraging coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government
8. Building community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels throughout each community
10. Providing adequate infrastructure, public services and a supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses
11. Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals
13. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied unique urban and rural communities
14. Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience, and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

To guide the development of goals, objectives and policies, planning participants developed an overall Vision of how the Town should look and feel in the future. The input for the development of the Town's Vision was gathered through a 'Visioning Session', as well as through feedback from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. In addition to aiding with the development of the Plan's goals, objectives, and policies, the Vision is meant to assist the Town with the actual implementation of the Plan through the years. The Vision is primarily meant to serve as a grounding point for future decisions. It broadly and effectively addresses the needs, desires, and thoughts of residents and landowners in Woodland.

The highlight of the planning process was its reliance on extensive public participation and input, far exceeding the requirements of the comprehensive planning legislation. The legislation requires, at a minimum, one town-sponsored public hearing when the draft plan is ready for adoption. In contrast, this planning process focused heavily on public input to formulate a plan that best represents all interests in the Town. The process began with the appointment of a representative Comprehensive Planning Committee, a community-wide survey and vision session, an open house and numerous public meetings.

1.1 Statement of Vision, Goals, Objectives and Policies

Each Chapter in this Comprehensive Plan includes a primary goal followed by objectives and policies, which will provide future direction to the Town. Visions, goals, objectives and policies are defined as follows:

- A ***Vision*** is the expression of a community's overall desired future direction. The vision statement serves as the foundation for setting goals, objectives and policies.
- ***Goals*** are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach preservation and development issues. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the Town and are derived from the future Vision of a Town.
- ***Objectives*** suggest future directions in a way that is more specific than goals. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of the goal. While achievement of an objective is not always easily measured, objectives are usually attainable through policies and specific implementation activities.
- ***Policies*** are rules, courses of action, or programs used to ensure Plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives of a Plan. Town decision-makers should use policies, including any housing density policy, on a regular basis. Success in achieving policies is usually measurable.

1.2 Planning History

The Town of Woodland created their first comprehensive plan in 2006 with planning assistance from Sauk County. The planning process relied heavily on citizen participation and input to craft Town priorities and direct future Town development. The plan emphasized the rural character of the Town to continue to support the rural agrarian community while supporting small business that complimented the agricultural economy. Residential development was encouraged in areas already subdivided and developed with utilities such as surrounding Dutch Hollow Lake and the Valton hamlet.

1.3 Comprehensive Planning Process Sauk County

As part of the State of Wisconsin's 1999-2000 biennial budget, Governor Thompson signed into law one of the State's most comprehensive pieces of land-use legislation. This legislation is intended to provide local governmental units with the tools to create comprehensive plans, to promote more informed land-use decisions and to encourage state agencies to create more balanced land-use rules and policies. This legislation also includes a substantive definition of a comprehensive plan and provides an essential framework for local land-use decision making. It also helps local officials

determine the likely impacts of their decisions by ensuring that they consider all aspects of community life.

In the summer of 2002, the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department announced that it would apply for a 2003 Comprehensive Planning grant from the State of Wisconsin to facilitate planning processes for municipalities, enabling them to develop and adopt local Comprehensive Plans. As a result of this effort, 21 Sauk County municipalities passed resolutions indicating their desire to be co- applicants to the grant. Woodland was one of these municipalities.

In the spring of 2003, Sauk County announced that the 21 municipalities were awarded a 2003 Comprehensive Planning grant in the amount of \$288,000. Of the total award, Woodland's share was \$10,000. The provisions of the grant required the Town to match the grant award of \$10,000. In an effort to reduce this local match amount, Sauk County agreed to provide \$5,000 of in-kind mapping assistance, bringing the total Town match to not more than \$5,000.

Once the overall grant was awarded, towns in Sauk County could choose to contract with a private consultant or to use Sauk County as a consultant to aid them with the development of their Comprehensive Plans. Seven Towns chose to contract with Sauk County, including the Town of Woodland. Staff limitations prevented Sauk County from working with all seven towns at once. Sauk County held a drawing to determine fairly when each Town would begin its planning process (spring 2003, 2004, or 2005). Woodland elected to begin its comprehensive planning process in the spring of 2005.

In 2024, the Town once again elected to work with the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department to assist in the review and update of their plan. The County assisted the Town through updating demographic data, maps, and leading discussions on chapter reviews. There were minimal changes to the plan with the 2024 update as the Town has experienced only changes and developments since the drafting of the original plan. As such the majority of the updates involved updated data and addressing current land use issues.

1.4 Regional Context

Map 1-1 Regional Context shows the relationship of the Town of Woodland to neighboring communities. The Town is located in the northwestern part of Sauk County and is about 12 miles northwest of the City of Reedsburg. The Town also includes the unincorporated Village of Valton. The Town of Woodland also shares a border with Juneau County to the north, Vernon County to the east and Richland County to the south.

1.5 Jurisdictional Boundaries

Since the 2020 Federal Census population data required Sauk County to redistrict its county supervisory district boundaries to achieve new districts of equal population, the Town of Woodland has been assigned a single supervisory district. Supervisory District 5, which incorporates all of the Towns of Woodlan and Ironton as well as the majority of the Town of La Valle. **Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Map** depicts the exact boundaries of Supervisory District 5 within the Town of Woodland.

The Town of Woodland is split into the three school districts: Weston, Hillsboro and Wonewoc-Union Center. **Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Map** also depicts the locations of these boundaries.

1.6 Emergency Services

Map 1-3 Emergency Services depicts the coverage of emergency service providers for the Town, including fire protection and ambulance services.

1.7 Planning Area

The Planning area covers all lands within the Town of Woodland. As a point of reference, *Map 1-4 Aerial Photography* shows an overlay of tax parcels on an air photo.

In terms of land use-related issues, the Town of Woodland is governed by the following Chapters of the Sauk County Code of Ordinances:

1.7.1 Administered by Sauk County Clerk

- Chapter 1 Supervisory District Plan

1.7.2 Administered by the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department

- Chapter 7 Zoning Ordinance
- Chapter 8 Shoreland Protection Ordinance
- Chapter 9 Floodplain Zoning Ordinance
- Chapter 10 County Parks
- Chapter 18 Rural Identification System
- Chapter 22 Land Division and Subdivision Regulations Ordinance
- Chapter 24 Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance
- Chapter 25 Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Ordinance
- Chapter 26 Animal Waste Management Ordinance
- Chapter 51 Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Ordinance

1.7.4 Administered by the Sauk County Sheriff

- Chapter 27 Animal Control Ordinance