

TOWN OF  
**POLK**

# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum

February 2023

Community Planning & Consulting, LLC  
Appleton, Wisconsin  
[www.communityplanningandconsulting.com](http://www.communityplanningandconsulting.com)





## Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum

# Acknowledgements

### Town Board

Albert Schulteis  
Town Chair

Robert Roecker  
Town Supervisor

Dennis Sang  
Town Supervisor

### Plan Commission

Albert Schulteis  
Chair

Robert Roecker

Dennis Sang

Rodney Bartlow

Charles Nehm

Mark Peters

Randy Rothman

Jennifer Zignego

Former member:  
Tim Weidermeyer

### Town Staff

Lynette Bartlett  
Town Treasurer

Kelly Eschenfelder  
Zoning Secretary /  
Deputy Town Clerk

Dean Kelley  
Zoning Administrator

Alison Pecha  
Town Clerk

Roy Wenninger  
DPW Manager

Tracy Groth  
Former Zoning Administrator

**ORDINANCE 01.2023  
TOWN OF POLK, WASHINGTON COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE TOWN OF POLK  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: ADDENDUM 2023**

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
Town of Polk, Washington County

**SECTION I – TITLE AND PURPOSE**

The title of this ordinance is the Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan: Addendum 2023 Adoption Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Polk, Washington County, Wisconsin, to lawfully adopt an amended comprehensive plan as required under Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4)(c).

**SECTION II – AUTHORITY**

The Town Board of the Town of Polk, Washington County, Wisconsin, has authority under its village powers under Wis. Stat. § 60.22, to appoint a town plan commission under Wis. Stat. §§ 60.62(4) and 62.23(1), and under Wis. Stats. § Chapter 66.1001(4), to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Polk must be in compliance with Wis. Stat. 66.1001(4)(c), Wis. Stats., in order for the Town Board to adopt this ordinance.

**SECTION III – ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE**

This ordinance, adopted by a majority of the Town Board on a roll call vote with a quorum present and voting and proper notice having been given, provides for the adoption by the Town of Polk a comprehensive plan under Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4).

**SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Town Board has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4)(a).

**SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Plan Commission of the Town of Polk, 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 Town of Polk 2023 Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in Wis Stat. § 66.1001(2).

**SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING**

The Town of Polk has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, with notice in compliance with the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4)(d).

**SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Town Board, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan: 2023 Addendum under Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4)(c).



## Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum

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### SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are severable.

### SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

The Town Clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under Wis. Stat. § 60.80, and a copy of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan, shall be filed with at least all of the entities specified under Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4)(b).

Adopted this 14th day of February, 2023.

<u>Albert J. Schulteis</u>	<u>2-14-23</u>
Albert Schulteis, Chair	Date

<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>2-14-23</u>
Robert Roecker	Date

<u>N/A</u>	<u>                    </u>
Dennis Sang	Date

Attest:

<u>Alison Pecha</u>	<u>2-14-23</u>
Alison Pecha, Clerk	Date



# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum



## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES AND PLAN ADOPTION

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### Introduction

The Public Participation Procedures and Plan Adoption describes the means by which the Town of Polk engaged the public in the development of the Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum. The 2023 Addendum was developed within an open, consensus-based process, balancing the needs of individuals with those of the community at large, to achieve the desired future for the Town of Polk.

### Comprehensive Planning Law Requirements

Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4)(a) reads as follows: “The governing body of a local government unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for wide distribution of proposed, alternative or amended elements of a comprehensive plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments.”

### Public Participation Procedures

The Town of Polk, Washington County, Wisconsin, in order to engage the public in the process of developing the 2023 Addendum, adopted the following Public Participation Procedures. It is the intent of these procedures to provide opportunities for the public to be meaningfully involved throughout the process of developing the document. In accordance with the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4)(a), the Town of Polk did:

- Adopt this Public Participation Plan.
- Make available to the public information about the planning process and copies of plan documents.
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings of the Town of Polk Plan Commission to review draft plan elements and maps.
- Formally present the First Draft 2023 Addendum to the public.
- Hold a Public Hearing to solicit testimony from interested parties regarding the recommended comprehensive plan.
- Post relevant plan process information and materials to the Town of Polk website.
- Record meeting attendance through sign-in sheets as part of the plan process record.
- Inform all adjoining municipalities, Washington County, Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and nonmetallic mining interests within the Town of the planning process.

All meetings related to the comprehensive plan were open to the public and posted pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 985.02(2). The required public hearing was published as a Class 1 notice, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 985.02(1), at least 30 days prior to the hearing. The Class 1 notice included the following:



# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum

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## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES AND PLAN ADOPTION

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## ***Our Vision***

*To forge a prosperous, vibrant, and  
resilient future for our community*

## ***Our Mission***

*To support the needs of a growing town  
while preserving the land uses and  
landscapes that define us*

## ***Our Commitment***

*To assist you, the residents, property  
owners, and business owners  
of the Town of Polk, in achieving your  
short- and long-term goals*



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## Introduction

### Town of Polk

The Town of Polk is situated in central Washington County approximately 35 miles northwest of Milwaukee. With an estimated 2021 population of 4,081, it is the eleventh largest municipality in the county. Home to the Potawatomi people before European settlement, it was incorporated in 1846 and derives its name from James L. Polk, eleventh President of the United States.<sup>1</sup> The Town shares boundaries with the Village of Jackson, Richfield and Slinger and Towns of Addison, Hartford, Jackson, and West Bend. Nearby cities include Hartford and West Bend.

Significant natural features include the southwestern extent of the Kettle Moraine, the southern portions of Big Cedar and Little Cedar Lakes, and Cedar Creek. Three-quarters of the Town lies within

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from Town of Polk, Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, Krista Grensavitch, 2016.

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the Milwaukee River Watershed with the remainder in the Rock River Watershed. Major transportation routes include Interstate 41 and State Highways 60, 144, 164, and 175. Freight rail service is available via the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad.

## Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is a document designed to guide the future actions of a community. It presents a vision for the future, with goals and objectives for all land use decisions affecting local government. The plan provides guidance on how to make decisions on public and private land development proposals, the expenditure of public funds, availability of tax policy (tax incentives), cooperative efforts and issues of pressing concern, such as farmland preservation or economic development. Most plans are written with a 10- to 20-year planning horizon, though their functional life tends to wane after five.

## Comprehensive Planning Law

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (Wis. Stat. § 66.1001), requires municipalities that administer zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, or an official map to do so consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan. Under the law, a plan must include nine elements (or chapters) describing existing and desired conditions within the community. These elements include:

- ✦ Issues & Opportunities. Background information on community and demographic data related to population, education, income, and employment, among others.
- ✦ Housing. Assessment of current housing stock and a plan to ensure future housing will meet needs of all residents.
- ✦ Transportation. Description of existing transportation network and plan for providing multi-modal systems to meet future demand.
- ✦ Utilities & Community Facilities. Analysis of current facilities including water and sewer service, stormwater, electricity and natural gas, parks and recreation, healthcare, schools, municipal facilities, and public safety, among others; and strategy to ensure that those facilities are adequate to meet future needs.
- ✦ Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources. Description of community's resource base and efforts necessary to preserve that base in the long-term.
- ✦ Economic Development. Plans and programs to promote the stabilization, retention, diversification, and expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities.
- ✦ Intergovernmental Cooperation. List of existing intergovernmental agreements and identification of opportunities for future coordination and collaboration with adjoining municipalities.
- ✦ Land Use. Description of current land uses, and 20-year plan to guide development.
- ✦ Implementation. Compilation of the programs and specific actions the local government will take to implement the comprehensive plan.

The Planning Law provides a framework for comprehensive planning; though, it is not a regulatory tool. It is a guidance document representing community visions, and provides a road map for future growth and preservation. It must be crafted to reflect the values unique to each municipality; and, its text,



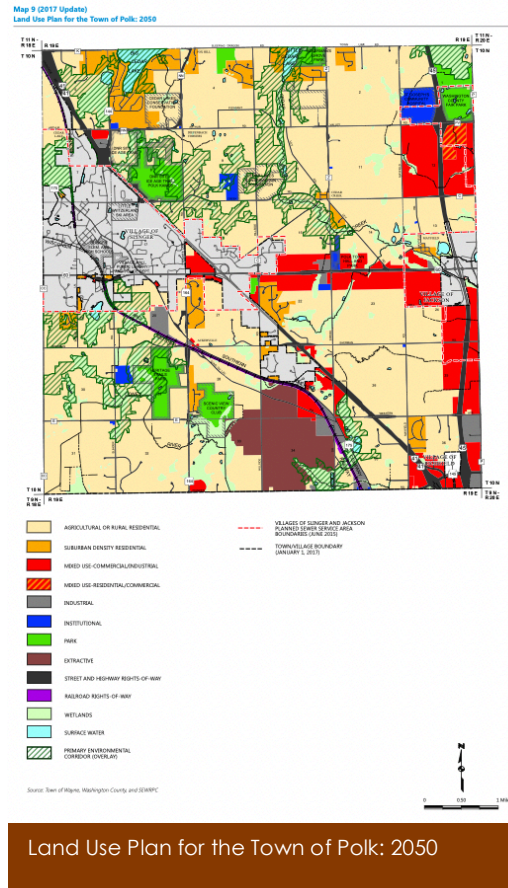
graphics, and maps must present those values within an easily understood document that informs stakeholders, provides direction to developers, and guides decision-makers.

## Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan

### 2009 Plan

In September 2009 the Town of Polk adopted *A Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Polk: 2035*. The plan, developed by Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) was part of a multi-jurisdictional planning effort undertaken by Washington County, the Village of Kewaskum, and the Towns of Addison, Barton, Erin, Farmington, Germantown, Hartford, Kewaskum, Polk, Trenton, and Wayne. The document included fifteen planning goals for the Town of Polk:

- ✦ Preserve rural character and support country living by retaining viable farmland.
- ✦ Restrict building on poor soils or in other areas poorly suited for development.
- ✦ Preserve natural vegetation and cover and promote the natural beauty of the Town.
- ✦ Attain a proper adjustment of land use and development to the supporting and sustaining natural resource base.
- ✦ Encourage preservation of historic or cultural structures and archaeological sites.
- ✦ Support and/or encourage intergovernmental cooperation to provide for adequate transportation, water supply, storm water management, parks, playgrounds, and other public facilities and services.
- ✦ In cooperation with neighboring communities, encourage a range of housing types to serve the varied and special needs of area residents.
- ✦ Secure adequate fire and police protection.
- ✦ The Town of Polk supports small-scale economic development that does not negatively impact the Town's rural character or natural resources.
- ✦ Communicate with existing local businesses and work to retain them, if possible.
- ✦ Manage congestion on local Town roads.
- ✦ Continue to maintain and improve Town roads in a timely and well-planned manner.
- ✦ Further the orderly planning and appropriate use of land.
- ✦ Through policy, prevent damage from flooding, water pollution, disease, and other hazards to persons or properties.
- ✦ Implement the Town comprehensive plan, enforce Town development standards, and consider the recommendations of County, watershed, and regional plans.



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## 2018 Update

In February 2018 the Town adopted *A Comprehensive Plan Updated for the Town of Polk: 2050*. Once again prepared by SEWRPC, the updated plan included a small number of text amendments associated with clarifying existing land use categories and incorporating changes previously approved by the Town Board.

## Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum

This document represents an addendum to, not a rewrite of, the 2009 comprehensive plan and its 2018 update. It is intended to supplement the original text. It includes updated demographic data, a reexamination of each plan element contained in the previous plans, and a completely revised implementation chapter. Where ever a discrepancy exists between plan goals, objectives, and policies it will be those contained within this document that guide decision-making.

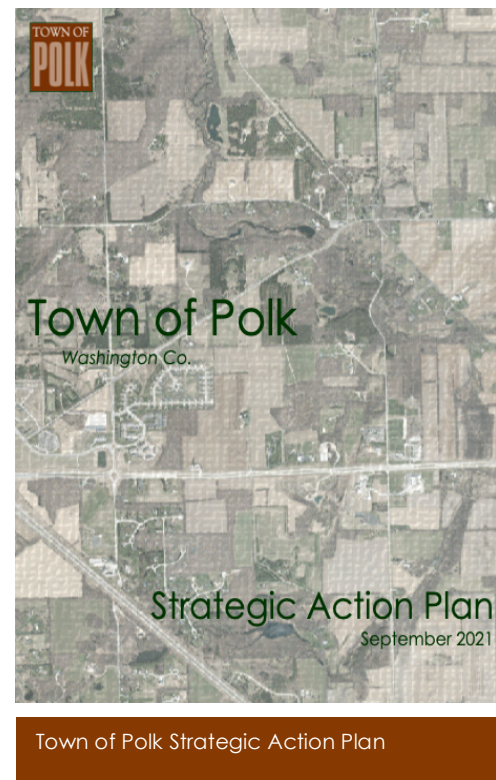
## Community Engagement

### Town of Polk Strategic Plan

In September 2021, the Town of Polk Board of Supervisors approved the *Town of Polk Strategic Action Plan*. The document was the product of a public engagement effort aimed at identifying short- and long-term challenges faced by the community. The resulting recommendations, including updating the comprehensive plan, resulted directly from a 'Community Opinion Survey' released in April followed by a 'Community Engagement Session' in July. The results of each, presented below, guided the development of the 2023 Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.

### Community Opinion Survey

A postcard was sent to each mailing address in the Town of Polk informing residents and business owners of the Community Opinion Survey. Participants had the option of completing the fourteen-question survey online or picking up a paper copy at the Town Hall. Seventy-five people completed the survey, the tabulated results of which are presented below and on the following pages.



### Which of the following best describes your relationship with the Town of Polk?

★ Year-round resident	95.9%	★ Non-resident	1.4%
★ Seasonal resident	2.7%		



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### How long have you lived, owned land, or run a business in the Town of Polk?

★ More than 10 years	77.3%	★ 6 to 10 years	4.0%
★ 1 to 5 years	17.3%	★ Less than 1 year	1.3%

### What is your age?

★ 40 to 46 years	48.6%	★ 26 to 29 years	10.8%
★ 65 to 79 years	36.5%	★ 80 years or older	4.1%

### How satisfied are you with the Town of Polk as a place to live, own land, or run a business?

★ Very satisfied	57.3%	★ No opinion	5.3%
★ Satisfied	17.3%	★ Unsatisfied	1.3%

### What do you most value about the Town of Polk?

★ Agricultural land and open Space	82.7%	★ Access to parks and recreation	34.7%
★ Quality of life	76.0%	★ Sense of community	33.3%
★ Peace and quiet	72.0%	★ Access to Town Board and staff	32.0%
★ Proximity to West Bend, Slinger	53.3%	★ Proximity to Milwaukee	28.0%
★ Family, friends, and neighbors	45.3%	★ Pace of growth	17.3%

### Which of the following pose the greatest risk to Polk's future?

★ Annexation by villages	88.0%	★ Limited high-speed internet	14.7%
★ Growth and development	66.7%	★ Environment, climate change	13.3%
★ Property taxes	29.3%	★ Too much land use regulation	13.3%
★ Traffic, town road quality	28.0%	★ Cost of living	9.3%
★ Cost of land, housing	21.3%	★ Losing young people, families	9.3%

### How adequate is the current availability of the following housing options in Polk?

#### Inadequate or Very Inadequate

★ Housing for seniors	17.3%	★ Affordable owner-occupied	5.3%
★ Affordable rental	13.3%	★ Mid-priced rental	5.3%
★ Condominiums / Townhouses	6.7%	★ Upscale rental	5.3%
★ Mid-priced owner-occupied	6.7%	★ Upscale owner-occupied	0.0%

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## How satisfied are you with the quality/ availability of the following transportation facilities?

### Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied

✦ Bicycle & pedestrian facilities	26.7%	✦ Electric vehicle infrastructure	9.3%
✦ Town roads	20.0%	✦ Equestrian trails	6.7%
✦ Access to rail	13.3%	✦ County highways	0.4%
✦ ATV / UTV access	13.3%	✦ State highways	0.0%

## Addressing which of the following land use issues should be a priority for the Town of Polk?

### First or Second Choice

✦ Agricultural preservation	72.0%	✦ Economic development	18.7%
✦ Natural resource preservation	61.3%	✦ Residential development	13.3%
✦ Loss of Town land base	57.3%		

## Should the Town of Polk consider the following actions intended to preserve farming and agricultural land?

### Yes

✦ Farmland preservation zoning	77.3%	✦ Conservation easements	58.7%
✦ Conservation design	65.3%	✦ Agri-tourism, day camps	42.7%
✦ Value-added operations	64.0%	✦ PDR / TDR	21.3%
✦ Exclusive agriculture zoning	62.7%		

## Should the Town of Polk consider the following actions intended to address the ongoing annexation of land?

### Yes

✦ Boundary agreements	70.1%	✦ Alternative wastewater systems	14.7%
✦ Strategic land acquisition	40.0%	✦ Higher density development	9.3%
✦ Incorporation as a village	26.7%		
✦ PDR / TDR	18.7%		

## Should the Town of Polk consider the following actions intended to protect natural resources and the environment?

### Yes

✦ Conservation Design	81.3%	✦ More parks and recreation areas	38.7%
✦ Cost-sharing for trees, prairies	66.7%	✦ Trails, motorized	24.0%
✦ Conservation easements	65.3%	✦ Zoning overlays	13.3%
✦ Trails, nonmotorized	58.7%		

## Should the Town of Polk consider the following actions intended to encourage residential development?

Yes

- |   |       |                                      |       |
|---|-------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| ✦ Streamline review & approval process    | 37.3% | ✦ Greater diversity of housing types | 17.3% |
| ✦ Create additional residential districts | 24.0% | ✦ Accessory dwelling units           | 14.7% |
| ✦ Marketing & branding plan               | 20.0% | ✦ Increased housing density          | 10.7% |

## How has the Town changed since you first arrived?

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ✦ Annexation               | ✦ More traffic                |
| ✦ Higher taxes             | ✦ More trespassing            |
| ✦ Larger houses            | ✦ More young families         |
| ✦ Less farmland            | ✦ Not much                    |
| ✦ Less serenity            | ✦ Park fees                   |
| ✦ Lost rural character     | ✦ Reduced quality of services |
| ✦ More artificial light    | ✦ Roads are better            |
| ✦ More noise               | ✦ Roads are worse             |
| ✦ More people              | ✦ Smaller lots                |
| ✦ More restrictive rules   | ✦ Too much density            |
| ✦ More subdivisions        | ✦ Too much development        |
| ✦ More theft and vandalism |                               |

## Community Engagement Session

One hundred-twenty people participated in the Community Engagement Session (61 in-person, 59 via the Zoom video conferencing platform). The evening's presentation and discussion focused on the continuing annexation of Town land, a summary of which is presented below. The evening concluded with a discussion of next steps.

- ✦ Many were unaware the Town has a single-family residential zoning district with a 60,000 square-foot minimum lot size. Most believed the minimum lot size throughout the township was five acres.
- ✦ Constituents wanted to know why and how the Village of Slinger blocked the proposed Cedar Creek Subdivision.
- ✦ Discussion arose regarding the process of incorporation. Several participants indicated support to explore the possibility of Polk becoming a Village.
- ✦ Participants asked questions regarding the annexation process. Many were concerned land could be annexed without the owner's approval.
- ✦ Is the Town's requirement for larger lots creating a situation which encourages annexation?
- ✦ There were questions about Extraterritorial Zoning and Plat Review. What criteria do the Villages use in review of Town land divisions?
- ✦ Will the creation of smaller lots overburden the schools?



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- ✦ Explain the Primary Environmental Corridor (PEC). Are there prohibitions to development in the PEC?
- ✦ If high density housing is allowed at the Village Borders, what keeps the Village from annexing the development later?
- ✦ How long are boundary agreements good for?
- ✦ How does the Town deal with manure run-off, specifically liquid manure/municipal sewer sludge being injected into fields?
- ✦ How wide does a conservation easement need to be to protect the town borders?
- ✦ Will we lose agricultural land to Slinger through Boundary Agreements?
- ✦ What areas of the map are “colored” for 60,000 square foot lots?
- ✦ Is the Town’s five-acre minimum lot size leading to annexation of town lands?
- ✦ Are there federal and state grants available for strategic land acquisitions?
- ✦ How can the town provide drinking water and wastewater treatment to high density housing without public sewer and water?
- ✦ How and why does the Village annex lands and not provide sewer/water?
- ✦ Can sewer be brought into the Great Lakes Watershed?
- ✦ Why do developers annex other than to obtain sewer/water?
- ✦ If the Town does not fight with legal options, how long until the town is consumed by neighboring municipalities?
- ✦ Could the Town be physically split in two and still be the Town of Polk?
- ✦ Rural Sprawl is affecting Polk. It is becoming a luxury to live in the countryside.
- ✦ Strongly encourage becoming a Village rather than boundary agreements. The next generation will be victims of such agreements in the future.

## Presentation of First Draft

The first draft of Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum was presented to the Plan Commission on March 3, 2022. The draft document was also posted to the Town of Polk website for review. Following the presentation and discussion at subsequent Plan Commission meetings, the document was revised at the request of the Plan Commission in preparation for the Public Hearing.

## Public Hearing & Adoption

A Public Hearing was held on January 23, 2023 at the Town Hall, and Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum was adopted by the Town of Polk Board of Supervisors on February 14, 2023.

## Intergovernmental Distribution

Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum was distributed to all intergovernmental units, and copies of the document will be maintained for public viewing at the Town Hall, Slinger Public Library, and West Bend Community Memorial Library.



## Ch. 1: Issues & Opportunities

Image courtesy: Washington County Public GIS Viewer

### Introduction

The process of updating the comprehensive plan begins with a description of the people who live and work in the community. The Issues & Opportunities chapter provides a snapshot of the Town as it exists today along with projections for the future. It describes the community using existing demographic data gathered, predominantly, from the United States Census Bureau (hereafter, Census Bureau) and Wisconsin Department of Administration – Demographic Services Center (hereafter, WDOA). Demographic data provides valuable insights about the Town and is critical to forecasting future housing and infrastructure needs, resource allocation, and demand for services. It is a foundational component of each comprehensive plan chapter.

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The purposes of the profiles that follow are to identify trends and patterns that, when compared with neighboring communities, will allow for a clearer understand of the local planning context. Additional demographic data is presented in later chapters.

## The Census

The 2000 Census was the last to utilize a long survey format. Beginning in 2010, the Census Bureau distributed an abbreviated survey instrument, one that collected a more limited volume of data. Due to these limitations, the census is now supplemented with additional data gathered through the annual American Community Survey (ACS). Also conducted by the Census Bureau, the ACS is an expanded statistical survey sent to approximately 250,000 addresses monthly. It gathers information previously contained in the decennial census. Data attributed to 2019 result from the most recent ACS.

## Population Profile

The Town of Polk has sustained a moderate and manageable pace of growth during the past five decades. Since 1970, Polk's population has increased by forty percent for an annual average growth rate of 0.8 percent. By 2040, it is projected to add an additional 407 residents...for an average annual increase of 0.5 percent. The Town's population would be considerably higher were it not for frequent annexation by the Village of Slinger.<sup>2</sup> Table 2 compares Polk's population with that of surrounding communities since 1990. As the data show, each municipality has added to its population during the past 30 years demonstrating the desirability of the area as a place to live. Table 3 projects a continuation of that trend, with all but the Towns of Addison and Hartford showing double digit population increases by 2040.

Table 1: Past & Projected Population

Year	Pop.	Change (previous decade)	
		Number	Percent
1970	2,846	-	-
1980	3,486	640	22.5%
1990	3,540	54	1.6%
2000	3,938	398	10.1%
2010	3,937	-1	0.0%
2020	3,988	51	1.3%
2030	4,455	467	11.7%
2040	4,395	-60	-1.4%

Source: WDOA, 2021

Table 2: Comparison of Past & Current Population

Municipality	Year				Change (1990-2020)		Annual Average
	1990	2000	2010	2020	Number	Percent	
T. Addison	1,161	3,341	3,495	3,464	2,303	198.4%	6.6%
T. Erin	2,817	3,664	3,747	3,825	1,008	35.8%	1.2%
T. Hartford	3,243	4,031	3,609	3,400	157	4.8%	0.2%
T. Jackson	3,172	3,516	4,134	4,629	1,457	45.9%	1.5%
<b>T. Polk</b>	<b>3,540</b>	<b>3,938</b>	<b>3,937</b>	<b>3,988</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
T. West Bend	4,165	4,834	4,774	4,441	276	6.6%	0.2%
V. Germantown	13,658	18,260	19,749	20,917	7,259	53.2%	1.8%
V. Jackson	2,486	4,938	6,753	7,185	4,699	189.0%	6.3%

<sup>2</sup> See *Town of Polk Strategic Action Plan*, September 2021.

V. Richfield	8,993*	10,373*	11,300	11,739	2,746	30.5%	1.0%
V. Slinger	2,340	3,901	5,068	5,992	3,652	156.1%	5.2%

\* These figures represent the Town of Richfield. The entirety of the Town incorporated as a Village in 2008.  
Source: WDOA, 2021

Table 3: Comparison of Projected Population

Municipality	Year			Change (2020-2040)		Annual Average
	2020	2030	2040	Number	Percent	
T. Addison	3,464	3,815	3,720	256	7.4%	0.4%
T. Erin	3,825	4,330	4,320	495	12.9%	0.7%
T. Hartford	3,400	3,810	3,630	230	6.8%	0.3%
T. Jackson	4,629	5,395	5,655	1,026	22.2%	1.1%
<b>T. Polk</b>	<b>3,988</b>	<b>4,455</b>	<b>4,395</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
T. West Bend	4,441	5,260	5,130	689	15.5%	0.8%
V. Germantown	20,917	23,700	24,110	3,193	15.3%	0.8%
V. Jackson	7,185	9,085	9,710	2,525	35.1%	1.8%
V. Richfield	11,739	13,400	13,540	1,801	15.3%	0.8%
V. Slinger	5,992	6,855	7,330	1,338	22.3%	1.1%

Source: WDOA, 2021

Figure 1 compares the population of select age groups for the years 2000 and 2019. The changes that have occurred, and will continue to occur, within these age groups are important for planning purposes since each have differing needs with respect to community services. Characteristics associated with each group are presented in Table 4.

### General Characteristics<sup>3</sup>

In the Town of Polk, as of the 2019 ACS/2020 Census:

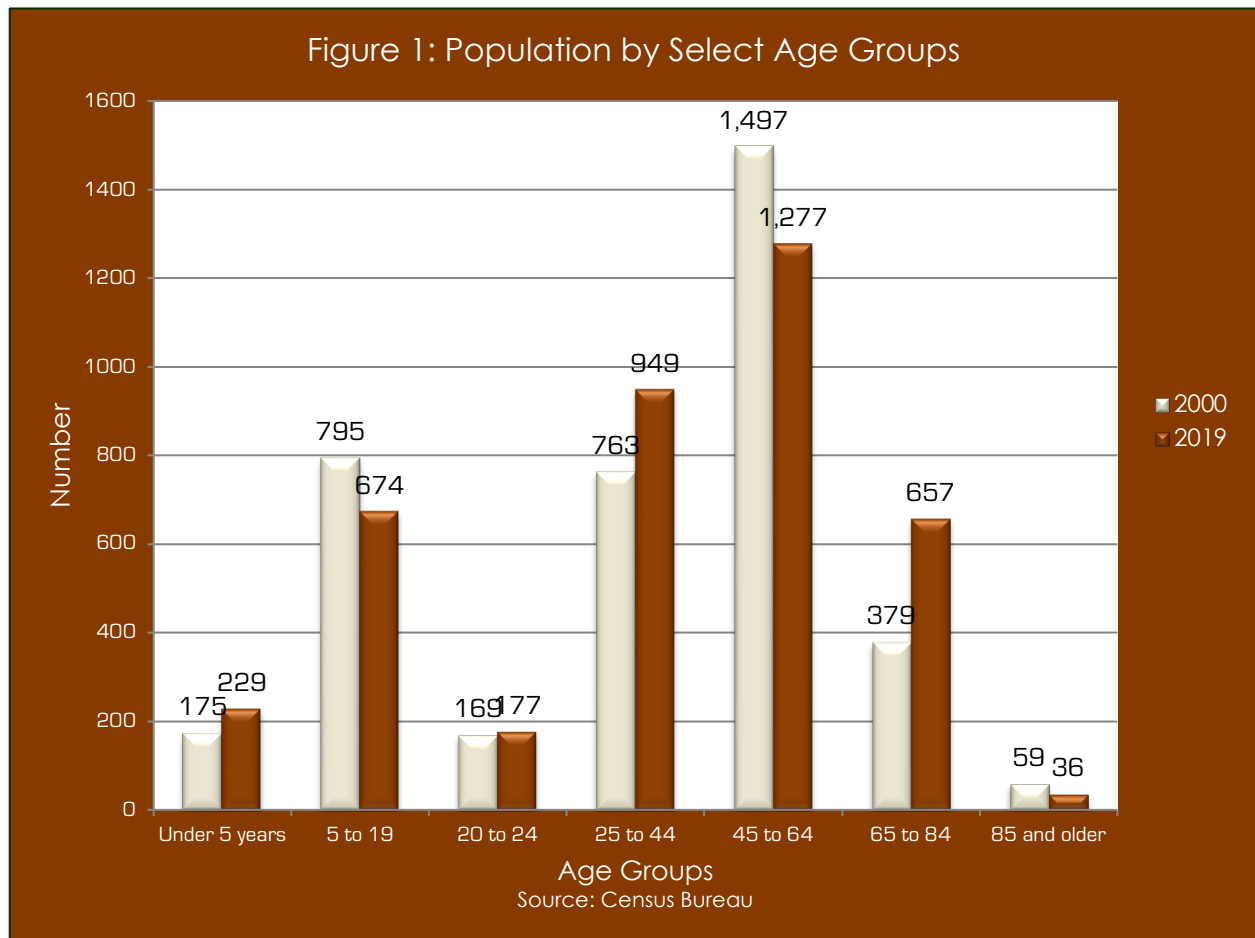
- ✦ Gender Distribution: 51.3% male, 48.7% female.
- ✦ Median Age: 44.1 years (39.3 in 2000).
- ✦ Race: 96.8% identified as one race, 3.2% two or more races

### The Pros and Cons of Growth

Some residents see growth as necessary and beneficial, while others may view it as a threat to community character and identity. Finding a balance between the 'preservationists' and 'pro-growth' advocates is a crucial component of every planning process. The benefits of an increasing population may include an expanded tax base, additional consumer spending at local businesses, employment opportunities related to new home construction, and additional students in local school districts (with resulting increases in state and federal funding). Potential challenges, particularly with respect to unregulated growth, may consist of strains on the current housing supply, increased traffic on Town roads, and negative impacts to the natural landscape.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Census Bureau, 2021.

- ★ One Race: 97.2% identified as White; 1.6% Asian; 0.7% Some Other Race; 0.4% Black or African American; 0.1% American Indian and Alaska Native; 0.05% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.
- ★ Hispanic or Latino: 6.4% (by Census Bureau rule, an ethnic group not a race).
- ★ Marital Status: 68.7% married; 20.3% never married; 5.8% divorced or separated; 5.0% widowed.
- ★ Individuals with Disabilities: 321 (8.1%)
- ★ Veterans: 121 (3.8%)



## Metropolitan Statistical Area

The United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) delineates Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) according to published standards applied to Census Bureau data. The general concept of a MSA is that of a core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core.<sup>4</sup> MSAs provide a

<sup>4</sup> Source: Census Bureau, 2018.



more meaningful measure of population and economic dynamics than what can be achieved by focusing upon individual municipalities. The Town of Polk is located within the Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA. At a 2020 population of 1,586,914, it is the largest in Wisconsin.

**Table 4: Characteristics of Select Age Groups**

Age Group	Description	Status	Community Needs
Under 5 Years of Age	Infants, toddlers, and pre-school.	Entirely dependent upon others.	Healthcare and day care.
5 to 19 Years	School aged children and young adults.	Dependent upon others for lodging, food, education, and most other needs.	Schools, play apparatus and sports fields/courts, safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities; libraries.
20 to 24 Years	Post high school young adults; job and career training (college, trades, military, etc.).	Somewhat dependent upon others for some needs.	Affordable housing, part- and full-time employment opportunities, multi-modal transportation systems, entertainment, coffee shops, high-speed/broadband internet access.
25 to 44 Years	Established adults.	Prime earning and spending years; traditional child-raising years.	Community needs include diversity in housing choices, safety, healthcare, dining alternatives, diverse retail, childcare services, career opportunities, banking and insurance.
45 to 64 Years	Mature adults.	Often "empty nesters".	Community needs are similar to the 24 to 44 group with less emphasis on programs, facilities, and services for youth.
65 to 84 Years	Retirement-age.	Decreased earning, sustained activity level.	Community needs include healthcare, multi-modal transportation opportunities, recreation, senior housing options.
85 Years and Older	Post retirement.	Decreased earning and activity level.	Community needs similar to '65 to 84' with greater emphasis on around-the-clock care.

## Household Profile

The size of households in the US has been declining for more than fifty years. In the Town of Polk, the average household size fell from 2.89 persons in 1999 to 2.71 in 2010. By 2040, average household size is projected at 2.50. The reasons behind the decline, in Polk and elsewhere, include people waiting longer to get married, fewer women choosing to have children, those that do choosing to have fewer children and waiting until later in life to have them, and increases in average life span (resulting in more seniors living alone). The trend is significant since a decrease in household size means that additional housing units may be necessary even if the overall population remains the same.

## General Household Data<sup>5</sup>

- ✦ Total housing units: 1,617 (1,430 in 2000)
- ✦ Total households: 1,459
- ✦ Projected households in 2040: 1,743
- ✦ Owner-occupied housing units: 1,403
- ✦ Renter-occupied housing units: 213

For additional information related to housing in the Town of Polk please see Ch. 2: Housing.

## Education Profile

The level of educational attainment in a community is a key indicator for quality of life. Generally, a high level of educational attainment reflects a skilled population with higher earnings potential. The benefits of higher education extend beyond the individual to society as a whole.

### For individuals:

- ✦ A correlation exists between higher levels of education and higher earnings for all racial/ethnic groups and for both men and women.
- ✦ The income gap between high school graduates and college graduates has increased significantly over time.
- ✦ The earnings benefit to the average college graduate is high enough for graduates to recoup both the cost of full tuition and fees and earnings forgone during the college years in a relatively short period of time.
- ✦ Even a small amount of college experience produces a measurable benefit when compared with no post-secondary education, but the benefits of completing a bachelor's degree or higher are significantly greater.

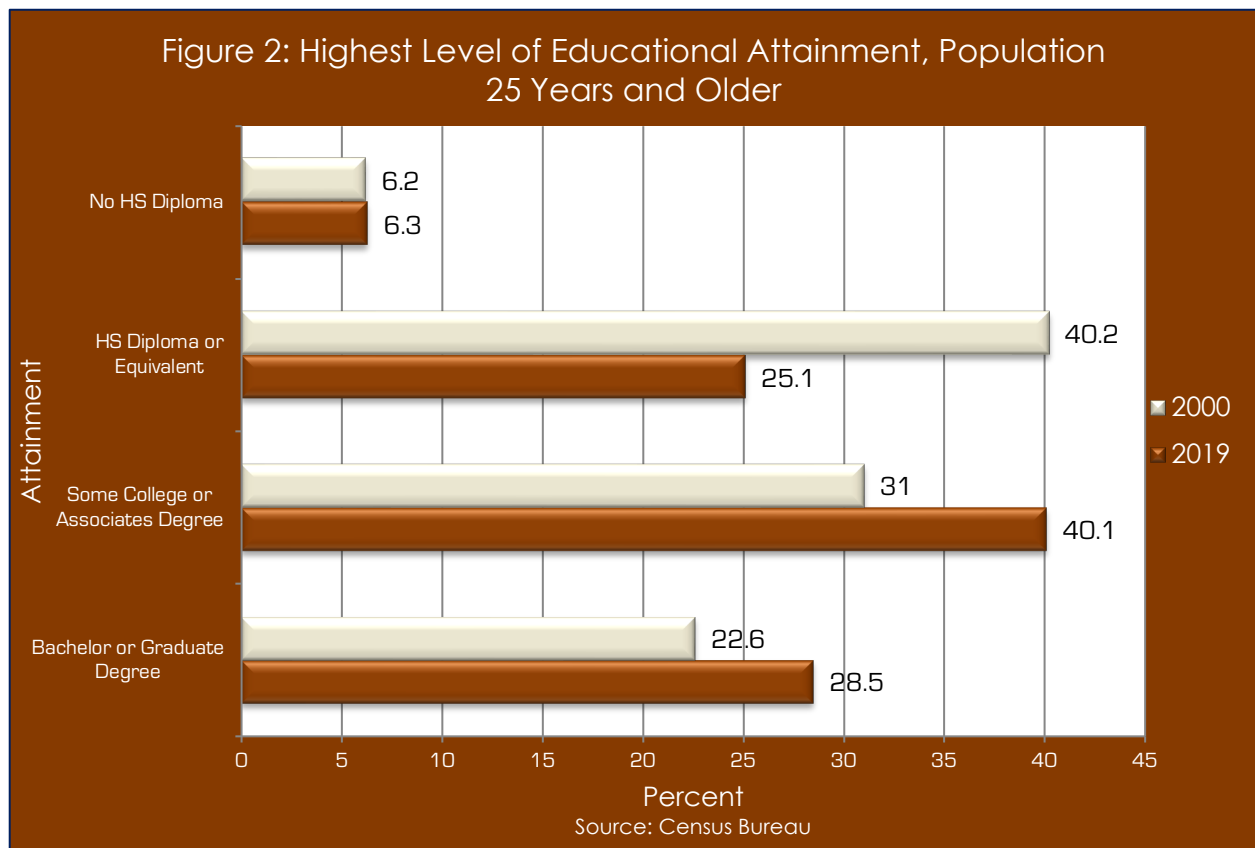
### For society:

- ✦ Higher levels of education correspond to lower levels of unemployment and poverty. As a result, adults with higher levels of education are less likely to depend on social safety-net programs, generating decreased demand on public budgets.
- ✦ College graduates have lower smoking rates, more positive perceptions of personal health, and lower incarceration rates than individuals who have not graduated from college.
- ✦ Higher levels of education are correlated with higher levels of civic participation, including volunteer work, voting, and blood donation.

As Figure 2 shows, the level of educational achievement has increased during the past two decades. Although the percentage of residents 25 years of age and older without a high school diploma has remained constant, the number of residents with some college or a college degree has grown by fifteen percent.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Census Bureau, 2021.



## Employment Profile

This section profiles the local job market by presenting data and examining factors related to employment, income, and poverty rates. The information presented below and on the following pages offers a general description of key economic indicators as they exist today. For a more comprehensive look at the local economy, please refer to the Economic Development chapter.

### Industry Sectors

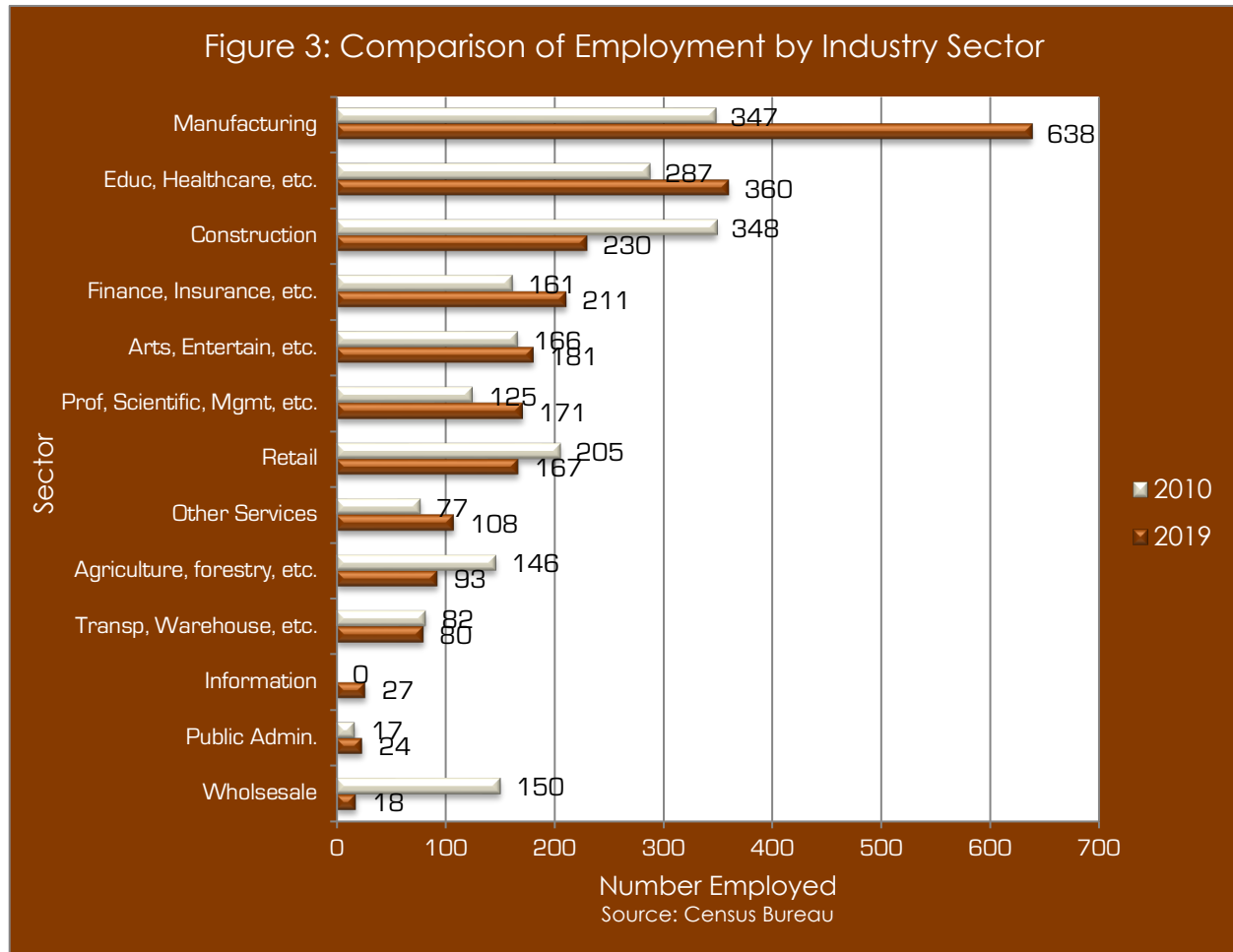
The top five industry sectors for employment of Town residents in 2019 appear in descending order below. Numbers in parentheses indicate where each ranked in 2010.

- ✦ Manufacturing (second)
- ✦ Educational services, and health care and social assistance (third)
- ✦ Construction (first)
- ✦ Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing (fifth)
- ✦ Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (ninth)

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Figure 3 shows the change in employment within each sector between 2010 and 2019, beginning with highest employment sector in 2019. Sectors experiencing the greatest increase during the past 20 years are 'manufacturing' (83.9%), 'other services' (40.3%), 'professional/scientific' (36.8%), 'finance/insurance' (31.1%), and 'education, healthcare...' (25.4%). 'Information' increased from none to 27. The largest declines were experienced in 'wholesale' (733.3%) 'agriculture, forestry...' (57.0%), 'construction' (33.9%), and 'retail' (22.8%).



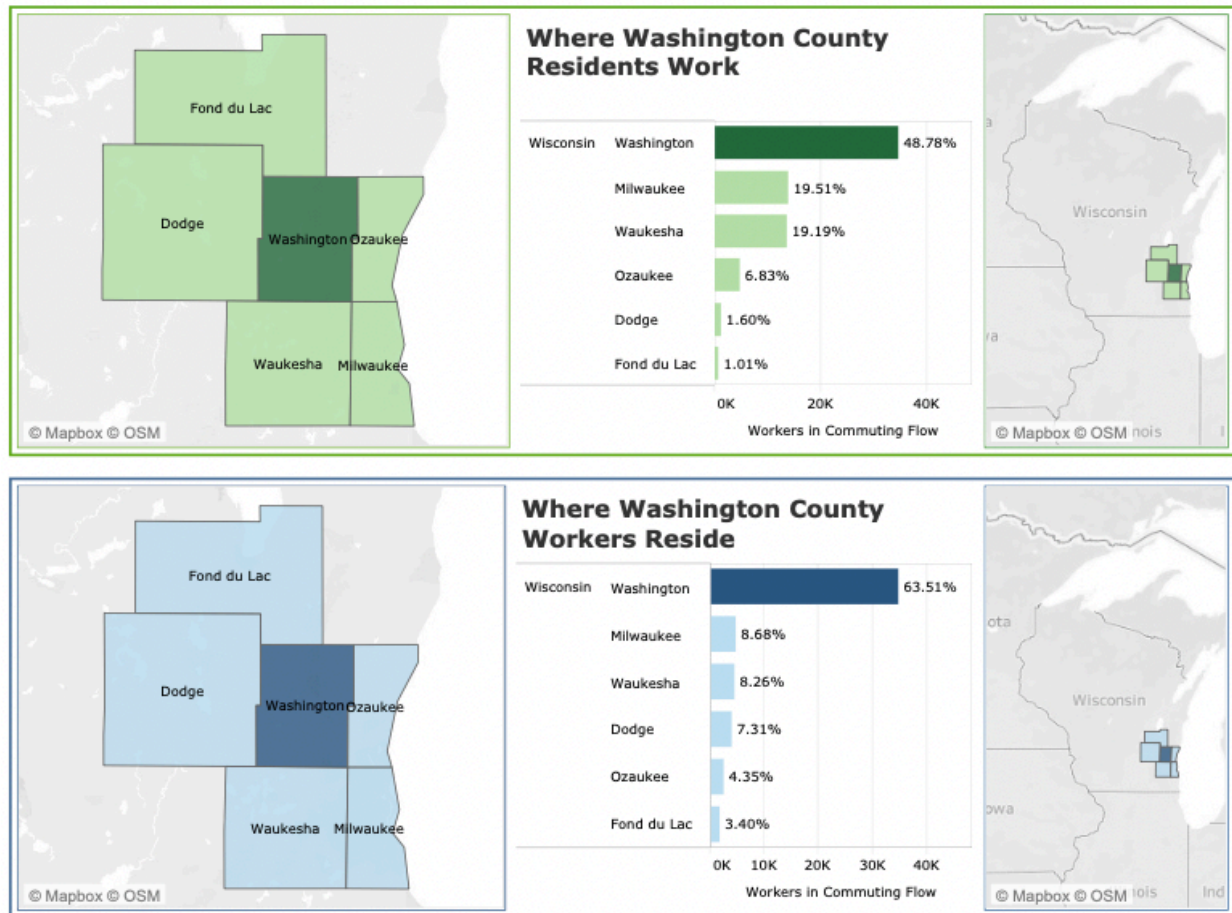
## General Employment and Income Data for Workers 16 Years and Older, 2019<sup>6</sup>

- ✦ Total Number Employed: 2,308
- ✦ Employed by Gender: Male, 1,256; Female, 1,052
- ✦ Median Age of Employed: 45
- ✦ Employed in Local, State, or Federal Government: 112
- ✦ Self-Employed: 140
- ✦ Median Individual Income: \$52,438

<sup>6</sup> Source: Census Bureau, 2021.

- ✦ Median Household Income: \$108,653
- ✦ Households with Income Below \$50,000: 88 (6.0%)
- ✦ Below Poverty: 153 individuals (3.9%); 45 families (3.8%)

## County Live & Work Status



## Employment Projections<sup>7</sup>

- ✦ Regional employment is expected to grow by 8.7% over the 10-year period, or almost 32,000 workers.
- ✦ Growth is expected in almost all industries except manufacturing, which will experience a modest decline.
- ✦ An aging population will increase the need for replacement workers.
- ✦ Business currently having difficulties finding workers will strain to fill new openings.

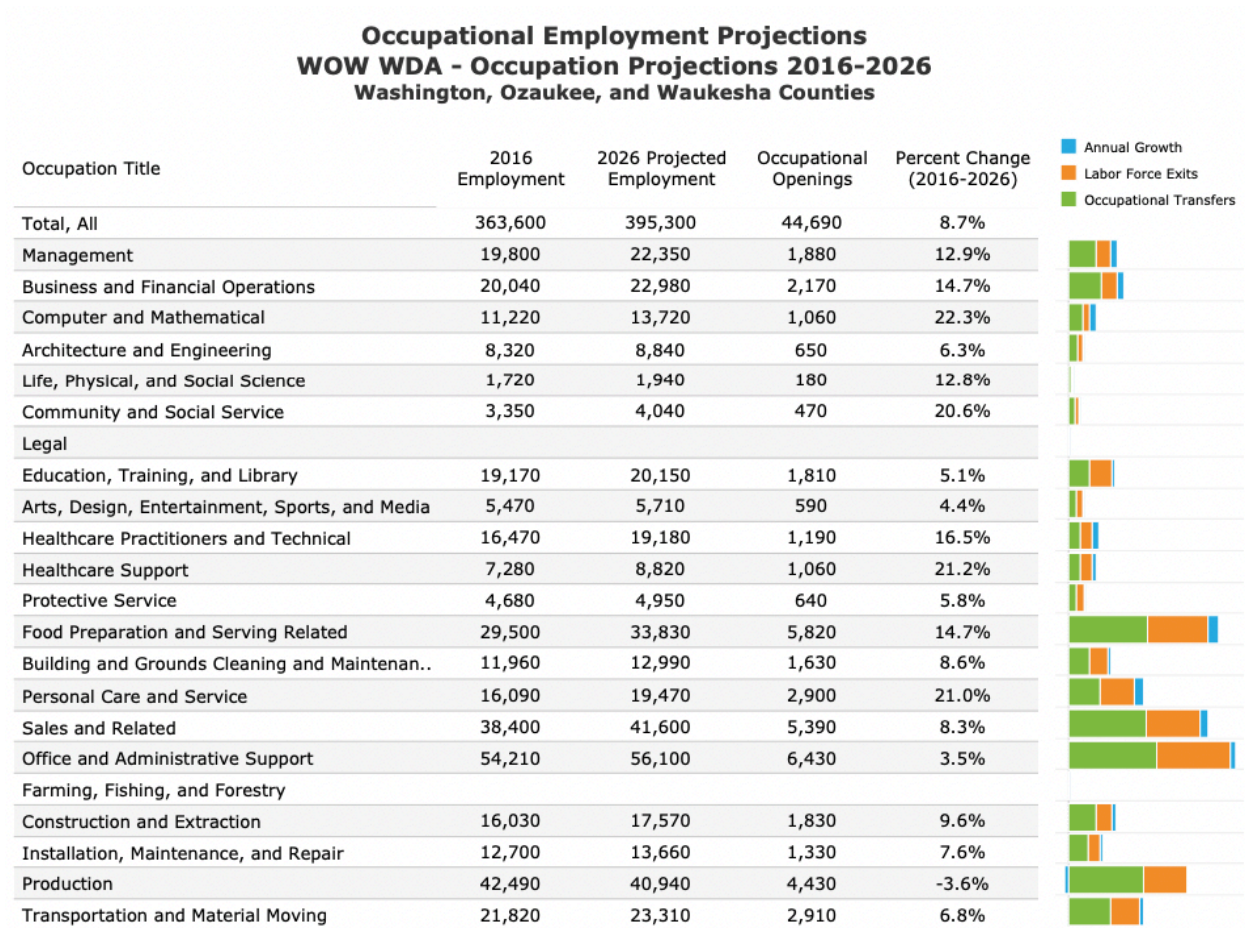
<sup>7</sup> Excerpted from: *2019 Workforce Profile*, Washington County, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2021.



# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum



## 2026 Employment Projections<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Source: 2019 Workforce Profile; Washington County, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2021.



## Ch. 2: Housing

Image courtesy: Coldwell Banker

### Introduction

Housing is a basic human necessity providing shelter from the elements. It is also a prominent feature of the built environment, a driver of transportation patterns, a consumptive good, and an investment for building financial security. It can be an indicator of social interaction and achievement and a symbol of familial connections and personal history. Housing styles may express the values of occupants and physically connect residents to their neighborhoods...and housing preference vary depending on age, income, marital and family status, and geographic location, among others.

## Housing Goals

*Provide a diversity of housing options to meet the present and future needs of residents.*

*Create opportunities for market-based residential land use densities in areas identified on the Future Land Use Map.*

*Ensure adequate, accessible open space is provided within or adjoining all new residential development.*

## Current Housing Stock

### Supply

As of the 2020 Census, there were 1,617 housing units in the Town of Polk (1,430 in 2000). Like most developing rural communities, the Town's existing housing stock is dominated by single-family detached homes. Ninety-four percent are one-unit structures; 87% are owner-occupied. More than a quarter (444 units) have been constructed since 2000. Nearly as many (410 units) were built before 1960 and the advent of modern building codes. Although the age of a structure is not necessarily indicative of its condition, there is an assumption that older homes will require more frequent and costly maintenance.

### Value

As of the 2019 ACS the median value of owner-occupied units in the Town was \$315,600, a 10.4% increase since 2010 (\$285,900) and 45.5% increase from the 2000 figure of \$216,900. The increases occurred despite the Great Recession and housing crash which began in 2007-08.

Table 5: Comparison of Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value

Value	2010		2019		Change 2010-2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$50,000	60	4.5%	37	2.9%	-23	-3.8%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	0	-	30	2.4%	30	-
\$100,000 to \$199,999	255	19.0%	113	8.9%	-142	-55.7%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	403	30.1%	406	32.1%	3	0.7%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	451	33.7%	479	37.8%	28	6.2%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	133	9.9%	165	13.0%	32	24.1%
\$1,000,000 or more	38	2.8%	36	2.8%	-2	-5.3%

Source: US Census, 2021

## Affordability

The most commonly used affordability calculator was developed by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The HUD method compares current income to existing housing costs. Under HUD guidelines, housing is considered affordable when it costs no more than 30% of total monthly household income. Residents should be able to live in safe and decent housing for less than one-third of their household income. Families who pay more than thirty percent are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care, particularly during economic downturns. As of 2019, one in four owner-occupied households spent thirty-percent or more of monthly income on housing.

**Table 6: Percentage of Monthly Income Allocated to Housing, Owner-Occupied Households with Mortgage**

Percent of Income	Number	Percent
Less than 20%	477	52.0%
20% to 29%	203	22.1%
30% or more	237	25.9%
Total (w/ mortgage)	917	100%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2021

## Housing Plan

The number, style, and location of future housing units will be driven by an expanding residential marketplace, the evolving needs and desires of the population, and the Future Land Use map. The demand for housing alternatives will increase along with the number of residents aged 65 years and older. During coming years, the conventional 2,000+ square foot house that has dominated the market since the 1990s will likely give way to smaller homes, secondary suites, townhouses, and well-designed rental units. Although conventional owner-occupied units will remain the predominate option, Polk may see an increase in the condominium ownership model for single- and multi-family units alike. The housing plan includes a number of recommendations intended to diversify the housing stock, including the types of rural-compatible 'missing middle' living options once common in the United States.

### The Missing Middle

Daniel Parolek, founding principal of Opticos Design, coined the term 'missing middle' in 2010 to describe a range of small, multi-family or clustered housing types compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes typically located in a walkable neighborhood. Small-scale missing middle housing such as duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes are generally compatible with and, in some cases, indistinguishable from, single-family homes. These types of residential dwelling units sit right in the middle of a spectrum anchored on one end by detached single-family dwellings and, on the other, multi-family apartment buildings. Once common in the United States, they fell victim to the exclusionary zoning techniques (i.e., single-family zoning), which proliferated in the 1950s. Providing variation in housing types allows a municipality to account for demographic changes, meet the needs of all residents, and protect against economic downturns in a manner consistent with the culture and character of the community.



# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum



## Senior Housing

Wisconsin's senior population is growing. During the next thirty years the number of people over the age of sixty-five is expected to increase by nearly 100%, while those aged 85 and older will increase by 140%. An older population with health and mobility issues will drive demand for home modifications, services to help residents age in place, and housing options that facilitate the delivery of services and help prevent premature entry into nursing homes.<sup>9</sup> Older adults almost universally say they want to age-in-place...meaning, stay in their current community if not their current home.



Senior exclusive housing options. Images courtesy (from top): Cottage Homes Senior Living, Carmel, IN; Sycamore Springs, New Holland, PA; Global Alliance Realty, Tysons Corner, VA

## Multigenerational Housing

The US Census Bureau defines multigenerational families as those consisting of more than two generations living under the same roof. Living in a household with multiple generations is becoming increasingly common. Reasons include cost savings, children over the age of 18 moving back home, and the health and caretaking needs of aging parents. The number of households with three or more generations in Wisconsin increased from 40,000 to 50,000 between 2000 and 2010. A nationwide report by the Pew Research Center suggests that as much as 18% of the population lives in a home with two or more adult generations, double the number from 1980.

<sup>9</sup> Excerpted from *Wisconsin Land Use Megatrends: Housing*, UW-Stevens Point Center for Land Use Education, Summer 2015.





Multigenerational housing. Images courtesy (from left): Invisia and The House Plan Shop

## Condominiums & Townhouses<sup>10</sup>

A condominium is a home ownership model involving a building or complex of buildings containing a number of individually-owned attached or detached units. One of the fastest growing condominium models is that of the detached, single-family dwelling. Detached condos allow for home ownership while transferring the ownership of the property, and all of its maintenance responsibilities, to a condominium association. They also provide municipalities with an attractive alternative to traditional, high-density housing developments.

A townhouse is a single-family dwelling with at least two floors that share a wall with another house. Unlike duplexes or quadplexes, however, each townhouse is individually owned. Unlike a condo, the owners of a townhouse also own a portion of the property upon which the townhouse complex sits.



Condominiums and townhouses. Images courtesy (clockwise from top left): houseplans.pro; Pinterest; Realtor.com

<sup>10</sup> Source: Realtor.com, 2019.

# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum



## Small Multi-Family Units

Small rental units, such as duplexes and quadplexes, offer an affordable housing option for rural communities. Available at market prices, they provide housing alternatives desirable to singles, young families, and seniors. Zoning and subdivision ordinance regulations can ensure structures are compatible with existing housing stock.



Rural duplex. Image courtesy: Ethan Place Country Duplex, [houseplansandmore.com](http://houseplansandmore.com)



ADUs, courtesy (from top): Renaissance Homes, Portland, OR; Strong Towns; San Gabriel, CA; Gordon Bell, Spaces Magazine

## Accessory Dwelling Units<sup>11</sup>

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone (i.e., detached) single-family home. ADUs go by many different names throughout the U.S., including accessory apartments, secondary suites, and granny flats. ADUs can be converted portions of existing homes, additions to new or existing homes, or new stand-alone accessory structures or converted portions of existing stand-alone accessory structures.

Internal, attached, and detached ADUs all have the potential to increase housing affordability (both for homeowners and tenants), create a wider range of housing options within the community, enable seniors to stay near family as they age, and facilitate better use of the existing housing fabric in established neighborhoods.

<sup>11</sup> Excerpted from: *Accessory Dwelling Units*, American Planning Association, 2021.



### Conservation Design for Subdivisions

Residents view the Polk as a special place to live. They do not want to see important natural features lost in order to make way for new development. However, additional homes will be necessary to meet the needs of a growing population. One method that may allow the township to address these seemingly conflicting needs – protecting the natural environment while allowing for additional residential development – is through the use of conservation design for subdivisions.

Conservation subdivisions provide developers with a marketable alternative to conventional subdivision design. They allow for profitable and desirable development while simultaneously preserving the important natural and cultural features present on a given piece of property (woodlands, farmland, historic structures, etc.). In a conservation subdivision, homes are clustered together on smaller lots so that the remainder of the parcel may be permanently preserved as open space or agricultural land. Typically, 40% or more of the site is protected through a conservation easement or similar method. Open spaces are maintained via a homeowners association or similar mechanism. Trails, community gardens, and other amenities are often included in the design of conservation subdivisions.



Summerhill West in the Town of Delafield, WI. Image courtesy: Siepmann Realty

# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum

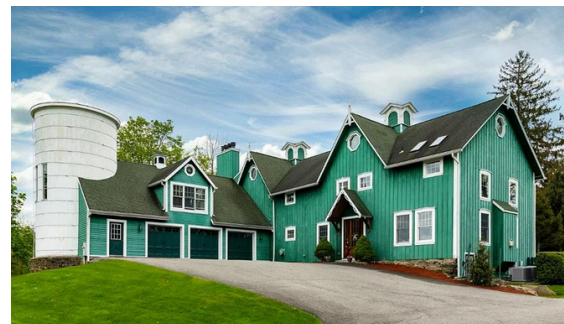


## Live / Work Units

A live/work unit is a structure (e.g., studio, loft, or one bedroom) consisting of both a primary workspace and a residential component, each occupied by the same resident. By combining living quarters with workspace, they reduce fuel consumption and air pollution related to commuting, provide an affordable housing option for small business owners and startups, and supporting mixed-use and infill development.

Distinguished from home occupations in residential zoning districts, live/work units are primarily permitted in commercial and industrial zone districts and are not subject to significant restrictions on hours of operation, types of commercial activities, and number of employees, as is usually the case for home occupations. By outward appearance, such structures may be indistinguishable from adjoining buildings. Live/work units provide both a housing alternative and an economic development option in the community.

A live/work unit example increasingly popular in rural communities is the 'barndominium.' Barndominiums combine a living area, usually built above (or around) a larger interior space used as a barn, a workshop, a shed, or some other hobby requiring extra square footage. It may be a custom-built structure or conversion of an existing barn.



Live/work units. Image courtesy (from top):  
Quadrangle Architects; Zillow

## Manufactured Housing



Modern manufactured home. Image courtesy: Palm Harbor Homes

Manufactured housing offers a means by which to increase the availability of affordable housing in a way compatible with the values of a rural community. Not to be confused with mobile homes, manufactured housing has grown in quality and popularity in recent years. It is considered a viable affordable housing choice when units are similar in size, appearance, and quality to existing housing stock. Manufactured housing units must conform to local building and zoning restrictions.



### Courtyard Cottages<sup>12</sup>

Courtyard housing is a distinct medium-density, multi-family housing typology centered on a shared outdoor open space or garden surrounded by one or two stories of apartment units. This style of housing developed independently in many cultures around the world. Courtyard cottages typically entail a group of small (1 to 1.5-story), detached structures arranged around a shared court visible and accessible from the street. The shared court is an important community-enhancing element and the main entrance to each unit from the shared court. The court replaces the function of a rear yard. Courtyard units may be owner- (condominium/townhouse) or renter-occupied (apartment).



Courtyard cottages. Image courtesy: Missing Middle Housing

<sup>12</sup> Source: The Cottage Court, Missing Middle Housing, 2022.



# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum



## Smaller Single-Family Dwellings

According to the Census Bureau, the average size of an American home was 983 square feet in 1950 and 1,660 square feet in 1973. By 2010, it had increased to nearly 2,400. In spite of the dominance of large homes, demand for smaller single-family dwellings is on the rise. This for a variety of reasons, including: affordability, energy efficiency, lower maintenance costs, and increased open space, among others. At present the minimum allowable size for a single-family dwelling in the Town of Polk is 1,200 sf. with full basement, 1,400 sf. without a basement.



Single-family dwelling designs 950 to 1,100 square feet in size, courtesy (from left): The Plan Collection, The House Designers, Builder Magazine.

## Placement of Residential Structures on Parcels

Properly locating homes on parcels can minimize the impact of new development on the natural environment and its rural setting. The practices listed below may provide opportunities to reduce the visual impact of development and maintain rural character.

- ✦ Residences should be located adjacent to tree lines and wooded field edges, if available. If not, homes should be located on the edge of the parcel, not in its center.
- ✦ Development on hilltops should be discouraged or prohibited.
- ✦ Construction should not occur within woodlands and wildlife habitat or adjacent to wetlands and riparian corridors.
- ✦ Driveways should be as short as possible and follow contours and the lay of the land.
- ✦ Large, structurally sound trees should be left in tact (roads should be outside of the drip line).
- ✦ Onsite drainage patterns should remain intact.

## Housing Programs

### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the federal agency primarily responsible for housing programs and community development. Though many of its programs are directed to larger cities and urban areas, the Town would qualify for some available funds. HUD provides money to non-entitlement communities (i.e., communities with populations fewer than 50,000) through grants. In the state of Wisconsin, the Department of Administration Division of

Housing and Intergovernmental Relations (DHIR) is the agency responsible for the administration of this program. DHIR awards funds through a competitive proposal process.

## U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development

The U. S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development provides a variety of housing and community development programs for rural areas. Support is generally available to communities with populations of 10,000 or fewer. USDA-RD provides support for rental housing development, direct and guaranteed mortgage loans for homebuyers, and support for self-help and cooperative housing development.

## U.S. Department of Agriculture-Farm Labor Housing Direct Loans & Grants

The Farm Labor Housing Direct Loans & Grants program provides affordable financing to develop housing for year-round and migrant or seasonal domestic farm laborers. It assists qualified applicants that cannot obtain commercial credit on terms that will allow them to charge rents that are affordable to low-income tenants. Borrowers must have sufficient qualifications and experience to develop and operate the project. Qualified applicants include:

- ✦ Farmers, associations of farmers and family farm corporations
- ✦ Associations of farmworkers and nonprofit organizations
- ✦ Most State and local governmental entities
- ✦ Federally-recognized Tribes

## HOME Investment Partnerships Program

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provides formula grants to states and localities that are often used in partnership with local nonprofit groups to fund a wide range of activities that builds, buys and/or rehabilitates affordable housing for rent or homeownership or provides direct rental assistance to low-income people.

Participating jurisdictions may choose among a broad range of eligible activities, such as: providing home purchase or rehabilitation financing assistance to eligible homeowners and new home buyers; building or rehabilitating housing for rent or ownership; or for "other reasonable and necessary expenses related to the development of non-luxury housing, including site acquisition or improvement, demolition of dilapidated housing to make way for HOME-assisted development, and payment of relocation expenses." The program's flexibility allows states and local governments to use HOME funds for grants, direct loans, loan guarantees or other forms of credit enhancement, or rental assistance.

## Wisconsin Department of Administration–Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Relations

Beyond the funds distributed through HUD, DHIR administers several state-funded programs that can potentially be used to finance housing improvements. Money available through the DHIR, because it is funded by general-purpose revenue, cannot be used to invest directly in housing development. However, funds can achieve the desired result by helping organizations develop the capacity to

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construct houses or by providing various types of financial assistance to homebuyers or renters through grants to local governments or nonprofit agencies.

## Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) is a quasi-governmental agency that finances housing development through the sale of bonds. Unlike the DHIR, it receives no direct state-tax support. As such, WHEDA can provide mortgage financing for first-time homebuyers and financing for multifamily housing as well. Specific programs evolve and change with the needs of the housing market.

For additional information related to housing, please refer to the 2009 Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan.



## Ch. 3: Transportation

Image courtesy: Google Street View

### Introduction

The transportation network supports the needs of residents, local businesses, visitors, and through-traffic, and is essential to the well-being and prosperity of every community. It connects people and businesses to goods and services, and links them to the region, state, nation, and world. It provides mobility and creates access to opportunity. Like most rural communities, Polk's network is dominated by roads and highways. Safe and convenient access to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, accessible mobility options for seniors, electric vehicle infrastructure, and other such alternatives to cars, trucks, and the like are in short supply. Enhancing and expanding these multi-modal transportation facilities will allow the Town to accommodate current needs while better preparing for the future.

### Transportation Goals

*Provide connectivity, access, and mobility in the transportation system to allow for the movement of people by choice of transportation mode.*

*Expand access to safe and equitable walking, bicycling, senior transit systems.*

*Ensure local destinations are easily accessible via desired modes of transport.*

*Establish a Capital Improvements Plan to assist in funding transportation projects.*

## Transportation Plan

The primary focus of the transportation element is to maintain the existing road network and increase the availability of multi-modal transportation options. Although personal vehicles will remain the dominant means of transportation for years to come, the types of such vehicles will differ from today. They will likely be smaller, more autonomous, and based on systems other than internal combustion engines.

### Transportation for Seniors

The number of adults over the age of 65 in Wisconsin is expected to nearly double over the next two decades. In contrast, the number of children and working age adults will remain relatively constant. By 2040, nearly one in four Wisconsin residents will be over the age of 65. Growth in the elderly population is concentrated in northern Wisconsin and parts of central Wisconsin. Most older adults express a strong desire to age in place. This will present a range of transportation, housing and human service challenges for local governments. Without safe, convenient, and affordable travel options, seniors may face isolation, reduced quality of life, economic hardship, and difficulty accessing services.

For most people, the ability to drive is synonymous with independence. Personal vehicles account for more than 80% of trips made by older adults. Seniors who no longer drive report making fewer trips to the doctor, to shop or dine, and to visit family and friends. Long before older adults stop driving, they often begin to self-regulate...they change where, when, and how frequently they drive. They also stop walking, avoid taking public transportation, and rely increasingly on family and friends to get around. Since safety and disability concerns increase with age, the demand for accessible transportation is expected to grow.

Washington County's Shared-Ride Taxi Service provides public curb-to-curb and door-to-door shared-ride services throughout Washington County and into the northern portion of Menomonee. The service operates seven days per week, excepting major holidays. The County's 'Commuter Express' provides Monday-Friday deluxe motor-coach access to Milwaukee County.

Interfaith Caregivers of Washington County, a non-profit organization with a mission to connect seniors with caring volunteers, provides volunteer-based transportation services to seniors. Service is provided locally and outside of Washington County to all major metro area healthcare facilities.<sup>13</sup> The service was suspended for much of 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic further isolating vulnerable populations.



Senior shuttle and bus. Images courtesy: Washington County Transit Services

<sup>13</sup> Excerpted from Interfaith Caregivers of Washington County website, 2021.



## Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

As is common in rural communities, the Town of Polk does not possess a sidewalk system. Many of the activities that would normally occur on sidewalks, such as walking and bicycling, take place in local roads, either in the driving area or on the shoulder. This poses risks for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. To create a pedestrian and bicycle system that complements the existing road network, the Town may:



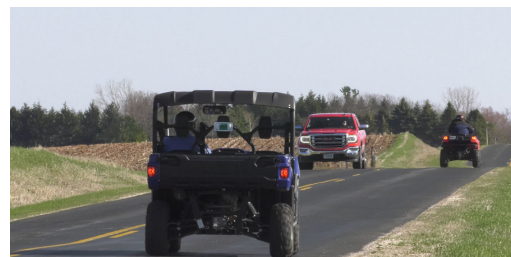
- ✦ Seek funding to add wider, paved shoulders to town roads.
- ✦ Encourage or require the incorporation of trail systems in proposed subdivisions.
- ✦ Work with Washington County, SEWRPC, and other organizations to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities along town roads and county highways when they are repaired or reconstructed.

The primary mechanism for creating a pedestrian and bicycle system is a Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan. Such a plan identifies existing and potential bicycle routes and pedestrian improvements within the Town. It would also identify and prioritize pedestrian/bicycle facility needs and provide references for best practices in planning, designing, implementing, and maintaining those facilities. A Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan would serve as a blueprint for continuous improvement of pedestrian and bicycling conditions throughout the Town of Polk.

## Nontraditional Vehicles

Nontraditional vehicles generally include all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), utility terrain vehicles (UTVs), and golf carts. They are becoming a more common sight on rural roads and subdivision streets and can provide a convenient means of short-distance transportation in addition to a variety of recreational uses.

ATVs are not allowed on Interstate highways, but can access state highways with approval from the DOT within municipalities allowing for their use on local roads. A town, village, city, or county may enact an ordinance under Chapter 23.33(8)(b), Wis. Stats., to designate a highway as an ATV route. Access to roads with a posted maximum speed limit of 35 mph is permissible under the law. Much of the state highway system operates with



Images courtesy (from top): Wisconsin Public Radio; Wisconsin State Journal

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speed limits above 35 mph, and these higher speed roads remain off-limits to ATV use without approval from WisDOT.<sup>14</sup>

## Capital Improvements Plan

A Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) provides the means of planning for major project costs by creating a multiyear schedule for physical public improvements. The schedule is based on the projection of fiscal resources and prioritization of improvements five to six years into the future. Capital improvements include new or expanded physical facilities that are relatively large in size, expensive, and permanent. A transportation-oriented CIP outlines a community's capital item needs and purchase plans, including:

- ✦ Street improvements (e.g., widening, crosswalks, signalization, corridor studies, etc.)
- ✦ Park acquisition and improvements
- ✦ Pedestrian & bicycle facilities
- ✦ Emergency road maintenance and vehicle purchase and replacement

Capital items are generally defined as those that are expensive (cost \$5,000 or more) and will last at least 3-5 years. The CIP also includes improvement projects required for the community's future and the appropriate timeline and funding to be followed to implement the improvements. The CIP process helps to ensure that improvements are made in a logical order and do not surprise local officials or taxpayers. It allows the community to focus on needs and goals and establish rational priorities.

## Transportation Programs

### Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020

The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020, created by WisDOT, was established to make pedestrian travel a viable, convenient and safe transportation choice throughout Wisconsin. While the plan primarily aims to minimize the barrier to pedestrian traffic flow from state trunk highway expansions and improvements, it provides guidance to local communities on how to encourage pedestrian travel through the creation of pedestrian plans, increasing enforcement of pedestrian laws, adopting and implementing sidewalk ordinances, and addressing pedestrian issues through the public participation component of comprehensive planning.

### Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission VISION 2050: A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan<sup>15</sup>

VISION 2050 recommends a long-range vision for land use and transportation in the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region. It makes recommendations to local and State government to shape and guide land use development and transportation improvement, including public transit, arterial streets and highways, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, to the year 2050.

<sup>14</sup> Excerpted from: *All Terrain Vehicles and Utility Terrain Vehicles*, WisDOT, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Source: SEWRPC.

## VISION 2050 Recommendations

- ✦ Encouraging sustainable and cost-effective growth
- ✦ Preserving the Region's most productive farmland and primary environmental corridors, which encompass the best remaining features of the Region's natural landscape
- ✦ Encouraging more compact development, ranging from high-density transit-oriented development to traditional neighborhoods with homes within walking distance of parks, schools, and businesses
- ✦ Significantly improving and expanding public transit, including adding rapid transit and commuter rail, and improving and expanding local and express transit services to support compact growth and enhance the attractiveness and accessibility of the Region
- ✦ Enhancing the Region's bicycle and pedestrian network to improve access to activity centers, neighborhoods, and other destinations
- ✦ Keeping existing major streets in a state of good repair and efficiently using the capacity of existing streets and highways
- ✦ Strategically adding capacity on highly congested roadways, incorporating "complete streets" roadway design concepts to provide safe and convenient travel for all, and addressing key issues related to moving goods into and through the Region

## Washington County Jurisdictional Highway System Plan<sup>16</sup>

The jurisdictional highway system plan was developed in partnership with SEWRPC and provides a review and reevaluation, and recommendations as to which level and agency of government should have jurisdictional responsibilities for each segment of arterial street and highway in Washington County, and identifies which changes in jurisdictional responsibility, or jurisdictional transfers, are necessary to implement the plan. The new jurisdictional highway system plan also constitutes a refinement and amendment of the functional improvements—new arterial facilities and widening of existing facilities—recommended in Washington County under the year 2035 regional transportation plan, as adopted by SEWRPC on June 21, 2006, and is intended to be a functional, as well as jurisdictional, arterial street and highway system plan for Washington County to the design year 2035.

## Purposes of Plan

- ✦ Cope with the growing traffic demands within the County;
- ✦ Adjust the existing jurisdictional highway systems to changes in land use development along their alignment;
- ✦ Maintain an integrated county trunk highway system within the County; Adjust the existing jurisdictional highway system to better serve the major changes in traffic patterns taking place within the County; and
- ✦ Achieve an equitable distribution of arterial street and highway development and maintenance costs and revenues among the various levels and agencies of government concerned.

<sup>16</sup> Excerpted from SEWRPC website, 2021.

## Local Roads Improvement Program

The Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) assists local governments in improving seriously deteriorating county highways, town roads, and city and village streets. The competitive reimbursement program pays up to 50% of total eligible costs with local governments providing the balance. The program has three basic components: County Highway Improvement (CHIP); Town Road Improvement (TRIP); and Municipal Street Improvement (MSIP).

## Highway Safety Improvement Program

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is administered by WisDOT. Funds are used for highway safety projects at locations that have a high crash history. The objective of the HSIP is to develop and implement stand-alone safety projects that will reduce the number and severity of crashes. The funding ratio for this program is 90% federal and 10% local match.

## Transportation Alternative Program

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) allocates federal funds to transportation improvement projects that “expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment.” TAP was authorized in 2012 by federal transportation legislation, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP- 21). TAP combines three previously separate programs: Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program. Eligible projects include:

- ✦ Trail facilities for non-motorized transport.
- ✦ Constructing safe routes for non-drivers.
- ✦ Converting abandoned railroad corridors for non-motorized transportation.
- ✦ Constructing turnouts, scenic overlooks and viewing areas.
- ✦ Community improvement activities.
- ✦ Any environmental mitigation activity.
- ✦ The Recreational Trails Program.
- ✦ The Safe Routes to School Program.
- ✦ Projects in the right of way of former interstate system routes or other divided highways.

All TAP projects are funded 80% federally with a 20% local match. Projects must be completed within approximately six years or will risk loss of funding.

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program is a grant program under TAP that provides funding to construct or plan for bicycle or bicycle-pedestrian facility projects. State statutory language specifically excludes pedestrian-only facilities such as sidewalks and streetscape projects. Construction projects costing \$200,000 or more are eligible for funding, as are planning projects costing \$50,000 or more. Additionally, completed projects must be usable and not staged so that additional money is needed to create a useful project. Project sponsors must pay for a project and then seek reimbursement from



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WisDOT. Federal funds will provide up to 80% of project costs while the sponsor must provide at least the other 20%.

For additional information related to transportation, please refer to the 2009 Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan.





## Ch. 4: Utilities & Community Facilities

Image courtesy: Google Street View

### Introduction

Utilities and community facilities provide the critical infrastructure allowing a community to function. Energy infrastructure (electricity, natural gas, solar and wind, etc.), public safety, road maintenance, and the like are all vital services provided or regulated by local government. These and the other services and facilities presented in this chapter are necessary to allow residents and business owners to thrive. The Town will continue to maintain a high standard of service for those utilities, services, and facilities under its management, and will work with other levels of government and the private sector to continue quality service to our community.

### Utilities & Community Facilities Goals

*Maintain an efficient and cost-effective system of facilities and utilities infrastructure providing for the needs of people, neighborhoods, and businesses.*

*Provide a system of parks, open spaces, and other outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population.*

### Utilities & Community Facilities Plan

Many factors influence a community's ability to adequately serve the facility and utility needs of its constituents, including: timing, location, and construction of new infrastructure; need for increasing levels of services as the community grows and ages; greater economic competition within the region; and fiscal constraints, among others. Opportunities include a steadily growing local population, access to transportation, and proximity to population centers in southeast Wisconsin. Properly designed

public utility systems will provide maximum protection of community health while guiding growth and ensuring the fair and equitable distribution of benefits and costs.

## Maintaining Reasonable Tax Levels

Given long-term uncertainties surrounding Wisconsin's shared revenue program coupled with state-imposed levy limits, the Town of Polk must carefully consider all future capital expenditures. The Town will continue to consider measures to ensure the supply of efficient, cost-effective services, and to reduce the tax burden on landowners. The most commonly used means by which to manage municipal budgets are to closely monitor discretionary spending, restructure existing debt, consider opportunities for shared service agreements with neighboring communities, and establish capital improvements planning. As mentioned in the Transportation chapter, a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is a budgeting tool used to plan for major capital expenditures. Expenditures appropriate under a CIP for utilities and community facilities include sewer & water systems, water systems, stormwater management systems, parks & recreation facilities, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and community facilities (Town Hall, the soccer field, etc.), among others.

## Conventional Onsite Wastewater Treatment

The majority of homes and businesses in the Town are served by personal onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS). The most common of these are septic systems, mounds systems, and holding tanks. Chapter SPS 383 (Wis. Stats.) establishes uniform standards and criteria for the design, installation, inspection, and management of POWTS which are regulated locally under Washington County Chapter 190: Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems. Washington County Fair Grounds, Froedtert Hospital, and Kathy Hospice are served by municipal sewer and water provided by the Village of Jackson.

### Septic Systems

The modern septic system consists primarily of an anaerobic reactor (septic tank) and a soil absorption field. Septic tanks remove most solids and floatable material and function as an anaerobic bioreactor promoting partial digestion of organic matter. Septic tank effluent, which contains concentrations of pathogens and nutrients, is discharged to an absorption field for further treatment through biological processes, adsorption, filtration, and infiltration into underlying soils. Conventional septic systems work well when located in areas with appropriate soils and hydraulic capacities, designed to treat actual incoming waste load, installed properly, and maintained to ensure long-term performance. When not, they become primary sources of groundwater contamination.<sup>17</sup>

### Mound Systems

The mound system is one of a number of POWTS developed to overcome site conditions which limit the use of conventional septic systems. It creates suitable conditions for initial wastewater treatment above the natural soil surface. Following preliminary treatment in a septic tank, effluent flows to a

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<sup>17</sup> Excerpted from: *Onsite Wastewater Treatment Manual*, USEPA, 2002.

dosing chamber and is then pumped to the mound for further treatment before 'discharging' to the underlying soil strata.<sup>18</sup>

Studies have shown that properly-designed and maintained conventional septic and mound systems pose a threat to ground water, particularly in soils with high transivity. Each will eventually fail and require replacement.

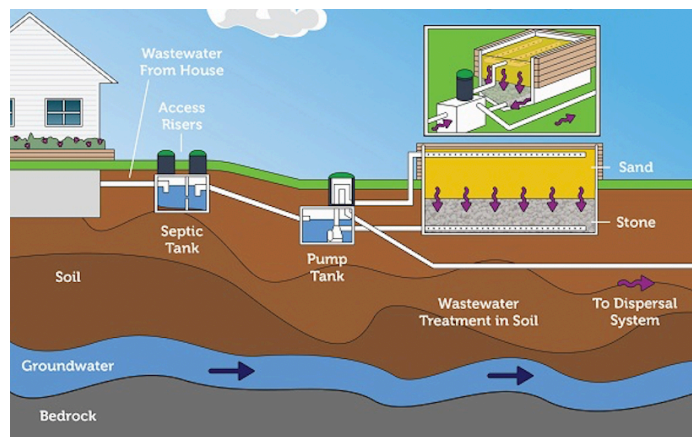
## Alternative Wastewater Treatment Systems

Alternative sanitary facilities can provide wastewater treatment at a cost competitive with conventional onsite systems, particularly when clustered to accommodate multiple homes or businesses.

### Recirculating Sand Filters

Recirculating sand filters (RSF) offer an economically viable, environmentally benign alternative to conventional drain field-based treatment systems. The basic components of a RSF system include an anaerobic reactor, recirculation tank, and sand or gravel filter. Water discharged from the system far exceeds the quality of a conventional system at a fraction of the price.

RSF are a viable alternative to conventional methods when soil conditions are not conducive to the proper treatment and disposal of wastewater through percolation beds. Sand filters may be used on sites that have shallow soil cover, inadequate permeability, high groundwater, and limited land area. RSF systems commonly serve subdivisions, mobile home parks, rural schools, small municipalities, and other generators of small wastewater flows.<sup>19</sup> Studies have demonstrated superior effluent quality for RSFs when compared with septic and mound systems.



Recirculating sand filter system. Images courtesy (from top): USEPA; AJFoss.com

<sup>18</sup> Excerpted from: *Residential Onsite Wastewater Treatment: Mound Systems*, USEPA, 2021.

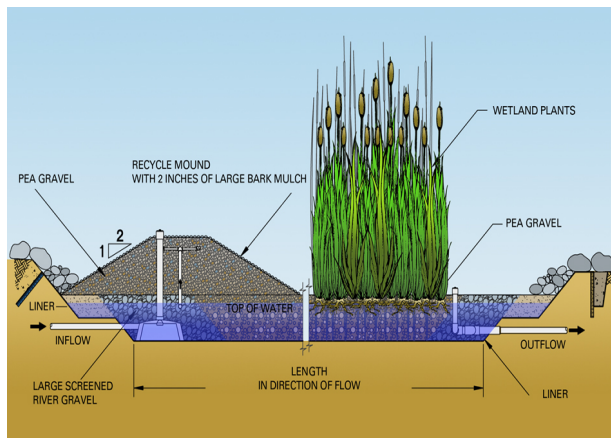
<sup>19</sup> Source: Environmental Technology Institute: *Recirculating Sand Filters*, 1998.

### Recirculating Gravel Filters

A related system is the Recirculating Gravel Filter (RGF). RGF function similarly to, but possess some advantages over, the RSF described above. First, the media (i.e., the gravel), is contained in a watertight vessel either below the surface of the ground or wholly or partially elevated in a containment vessel. They are smaller in size than the RSF. The RGF is also less susceptible to hydraulic and biological overloading as is an intermittent sand filter. This technology is used where size is a constraint and where wastewater strength is moderately greater than what is typically generated in a single-family residence.

### Constructed Wetlands

Constructed wetlands are another system growing in popularity as an alternative to drain field-based systems. They have been used as effective wastewater treatment systems for more than sixty years and have become a dominant POWTS for those communities in the Minneapolis / St. Paul metropolitan region not served by municipal wastewater treatment. The most commonly used such system is a subsurface flow wetland. Subsurface flow wetlands utilize an anaerobic reactor for pretreatment followed by a forced-bed aeration system and wetland treatment cells. Constructed wetlands are designed to achieve tertiary treatment more affordably than conventional POWTS and at a fraction of the cost of a municipal system.



Constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment. Images courtesy (from left): Science for Environmental Policy; San Francisco Chronicle

## Low Impact Development

The term 'low impact development' (LID) refers to stormwater management systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration, or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat. LID is an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater at the source (or as close as possible to the source).



LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features and minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage thereby treating stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product.<sup>20</sup> Common LID techniques include bio-retention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels, and permeable (or pervious) pavements. LID allows stormwater to be managed in a manner which reduces the impact of built areas and promotes the natural water cycle.



Low Impact Development. Images courtesy (from left): Ayres Associates; H-GAC

## Park and Recreation Planning

### Park and Recreation Standards.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) regularly develops outdoor recreation standards based upon national surveying. Such standards can be effective as a guide to determining whether existing facilities and services are sufficient to meet existing (and future) needs. Within communities of similar size, the determination of adequacy may be influenced by a number of variables, including:

- ✦ The culture of the community.
- ✦ The percentage of the population represented by seniors, youth, motorized & silent sports enthusiasts, etc.
- ✦ The availability of natural assets such as lakes, forests, grasslands, and the like.
- ✦ Proximity to state and county parks and recreation facilities.
- ✦ Seasonal fluctuations in non-resident population.

The most effective tool for parks and recreation planning in Wisconsin is the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation plan, or CORP. A CORP is a document that describes current parks, recreation, and open space assets and presents a strategy for meeting future needs. The purpose of the plan is to guide land acquisition, development, and maintenance activities by identifying the general location, character,

<sup>20</sup> Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2016.



and extent of existing and desired parks, playgrounds, and special recreation areas. NRPA's 2021 Field Report recommends municipalities provide one park for every 2,277 residents served and 9.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.<sup>21</sup> The report was drawn from the results of surveys submitted by nearly 1,000 agencies (i.e., municipalities) across the U.S. The data was used to establish typical population-based benchmarks for parks and recreation facilities.



Town of Polk Soccer Field. Image courtesy: Google Street View

### Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The funding of local parkland acquisition and development has become more difficult as a result of reduced state funding and legislation limiting the use of impact fees. As a result, more Wisconsin communities are seeking grant funding to offset the cost of park and recreation development. An adopted CORP is a prerequisite for nearly all state and federal grant funding programs. A CORP must be updated every five years.

### Distributed Energy Production

Distributed energy, also referred to as decentralized energy, is generated or stored by a variety of small, grid-connected devices known as distributed energy systems. Conventional power stations, such as coal-fired, gas, and nuclear power plants, and hydroelectric dams (among others), are centralized

<sup>21</sup> Source: *NRPA Agency Performance Review*, National Recreation and Park Association, 2021.

and often require electricity to be transmitted over long distances. By contrast, distributed systems are decentralized, modular, and utilize flexible technologies. The energy is produced at or near the point of use. Decentralized systems often use renewable energy sources, including, but not limited to, solar, wind, geothermal, small hydro, biomass, and biogas. They increasingly play an important role in the electric power distribution system. A grid-connected device for electricity storage can also be classified as a decentralized system.



Fox Energy Center, Kaukauna, WI. Image courtesy: Green Bay Press Gazette

## Utilities & Community Facilities Programs

### Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program

The Rural Economic Development Loan (REDL) and Grant (REDG) programs provide funding to rural projects through local utility organizations. Under the REDL program, USDA provides zero interest loans to local utilities that are then passed through to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. The ultimate recipients repay the lending utility directly. The utility is responsible for repayment to USDA. Under the RED program, USDA provides grant funds to local utility organizations to establish revolving loan funds. Loans are made from the revolving loan funds to projects that will create or retain rural jobs. When the revolving loan fund is terminated, the grant is repaid to the Agency.

### Rural Utilities Program

A number of programs are available through the Rural Utilities Program as part of the Water and Environmental Programs (WEP). WEP provides loans, grants, and loan guarantees for drinking water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, and storm drainage facilities in rural areas, cities, and towns of 10,000 or less. Public bodies, non-profit organizations, and recognized Indian Tribes may qualify for assistance. WEP also makes grants to nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance and training to assist rural communities with their water, wastewater, and solid waste programs. Available programs include:

- ✦ Water and Waste Disposal Direct and Guaranteed Loans
- ✦ Water and Waste Disposal Grants
- ✦ Technical Assistance and Training Grants
- ✦ Solid Waste Management Grants
- ✦ Rural Water Circuit Ride Technical Assistance

## Broadband Expansion Grant Program

The purpose of the Broadband Expansion Grant Program is to encourage the deployment of advanced telecommunications capability in underserved areas of the state. Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the state. Eligible applicants include an organization, a telecommunications utility, or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Chapter 196.504(1), Wis. Stats.

## Telecommunications Program

The Telecommunications Program improves the quality of life in rural America by providing capital for the deployment of rural telecommunications infrastructure. Funding is available under various grant and loan programs.

## Community Development Block Grant – Public Funds

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Public Funds supports infrastructure and facility projects for communities. Eligible projects include improvements, repairs, or expansions of streets, drainage systems, water and sewer systems, sidewalks, and community centers. Grants are limited to projects that, if implemented, would meet a CDBG National Objective.

## Community Development Block Grant – Public Facilities Economic Development

Grant funds under the CDBG for Public facilities Economic Development are awarded to local governments for public infrastructure projects that support business expansion or retention. Examples of eligible applications include: new or improved water & sewer service and streets that result in business expansion and job opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals.

## Public Service Commission of Wisconsin – Broadband Expansion Grant Program

The Broadband Expansion Grant program provides reimbursement for equipment and construction expenses incurred to extend or improve broadband telecommunications service in underserved areas of the state. An application for a grant may be submitted by any of the following entities:

- ✦ An organization operated for profit or not for profit, including a cooperative.
- ✦ A telecommunications utility.
- ✦ A city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility.

## Clean Water Fund Program

The Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) provides subsidized interest rate loans to municipalities seeking to fund wastewater and stormwater infrastructure projects. The CWFP also includes pilot projects to fund adaptive management and other non-traditional projects to comply with a

municipality's permit limit. Applications for funding are accepted year round as long as funding is available.

## Safe Drinking Water Loan Program

The Safe Drinking Water Loan Program provides subsidized interest rate loans to municipalities seeking to fund drinking water infrastructure projects. Applications are accepted year round when funding is available.

## Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a Federal program administered in all states that encourage creation and interpretation of high-quality, outdoor recreational opportunities. Funds received under this program are split between WDNR projects and grants to local governments for outdoor recreation activities. Grants cover fifty percent of eligible project costs.

## Urban Nonpoint Source & Stormwater Management Grants

This program provides competitive grants to local governments to reimburse costs of planning or construction projects controlling urban nonpoint source and stormwater runoff pollution.

## Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Programs

The Wisconsin Legislature created the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program (KNSP) in 1989 to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation. The conservation and recreation goals of the Stewardship Program are achieved through the acquisition of land and easements, development of recreational facilities, and restoration of wildlife habitat.

Funding for KNSP comes from state general obligation bonds. The State sells bonds to investors to raise funding, then repays the debt over subsequent years. The application deadline is May 1 of each year. Applications should be submitted to the local WDNR Regional Office. KNSP subprograms include:

- ✦ Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks. KNSP sets aside 50% of the funds in the Local Assistance Program for projects that improve community recreation areas and acquire land for public outdoor recreation. Funds are allocated on a regional basis with 70% distributed on the basis of each county's proportionate share of the state population and 30% distributed equally to each county. Applicants compete against other applicants from their region. Funds may be used for both land acquisition projects and development projects for nature-based outdoor recreation. Nonprofit conservation organizations may only apply for funds for land acquisition. They are not eligible for funds for development projects.
- ✦ Acquisition of Development Rights. The purpose of the Acquisition of Development Rights Program is to protect natural, agricultural or forest lands that enhance and/or provide nature-based outdoor recreation. 'Development Rights' are the rights of a landowner to develop their property to the greatest extent allowed under state and local laws.

## Recreational Trails Program

Municipal governments and incorporated organizations are eligible to receive reimbursement for development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Eligible sponsors may be reimbursed for up to 50% of eligible project costs. Funds from this program may be used in conjunction with funds from the state snowmobile or ATV grant programs and Knowles-Nelson Stewardship development projects.

## Acquisition and Development of Local Parks Program

The Acquisition and Development of Local Parks Program provides assistance to local government to buy land or easements and develop or renovate local parks and recreation area facilities for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes (e.g., trails, fishing access and park support facilities). Applicants compete for funds on a regional basis. This grant program is part of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

## Recreational Trail Aids

Municipal governments and incorporated organizations are eligible to receive reimbursement for development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Eligible sponsors may be reimbursed for up to fifty percent of the total project costs. This program may be used in conjunction with the state snowmobile or ATV programs and Stewardship development projects.

## Park Impact Fees<sup>22</sup>

Chapters 236.45, is. Stats. and 66.0617, Wis. Stats. provide for the collection of impact fees allowing Wisconsin municipalities to pay for anticipated capital costs associated with new development. Capital costs refer to the one-time cost of constructing, expanding or improving physical, public facilities such as highways, sewage treatment systems, and outdoor recreation, among others. Prior to developing or imposing an impact fee, a municipality must conduct a detailed needs assessment to determine the portion of facility costs necessitated by the new development.

The impact fee may not be used to pay for inadequacies in the current system. Rather than distributing costs associated with new development among existing property owners (generally in the form of increased property taxes), impact fees are collected from the developer or property owner at the time of building permit. They also do not cover operational or maintenance costs, which can be significant over the lifetime of a facility. Once established, impact fees are typically incorporated within a Land Division & Subdivision Ordinance.

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<sup>22</sup> Source: *Planning Implementation Tools: Impact Fees*, UW Stevens Point Center for Land Use Education, 2008.



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## User Fees

Local government may impose user fees to offset the costs of park improvements, recreation programs, and maintenance. These fees are discretionary and are typically established by the elected body. User fees are more common with certain recreation facilities than others. Examples include RV campgrounds, indoor skate parks, and RC fields, among numerous others.

For additional information related to utilities and community facilities, please refer to the 2009 Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan.



## Ch. 5: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

Image courtesy: Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation

### Introduction

The Town of Polk possesses a diverse natural resource base and retains a strong agricultural sector, albeit, one with a declining land base. Portions of western Polk lie within the Kettle Moraine and retain many of the unique geological and topographical features common to this unique landscape feature including kettles, wetlands, and Wisconsin's second largest cluster of kames, a steep-sided mound of sand and gravel deposited by a melting ice sheet or retreating glacier. Significant surface waters include the southern extents of Big Cedar and Little Cedar Lakes and Cedar Creek.

Increasing development demand has the potential to rapidly and detrimentally change the landscape. The vast majority of new construction occurs on previously undeveloped agricultural lands and open spaces. Without the need to demolish or rebuild existing structures, development costs are much lower in these areas.

## Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources Goals

*Preserve the natural resource base, environmentally sensitive areas, and surrounding agricultural lands, which contribute to maintaining the ecological balance, natural beauty, economic wellbeing, and quality of life of the Town.*

*Partner with landowners, developers, land trusts, and other organizations to preserve environmentally significant areas.*

*Maintain a sustainable and economically viable agricultural sector for the long-term.*

*Expand established procedures to protect water quality and aquatic habitat during the process of development.*

*Identify and preserve the Town's cultural and historic resources.*

## Agricultural Resources Plan

### Organic Agriculture

Organic farming is a particularly attractive farm option given that organic food is the fastest growing segment of the agricultural industry. Products once occupying a boutique marketplace niche are becoming mainstream as consumers seek healthier alternatives to conventional farm produce. Organic and specialty farming counter the notion that farms must become very big or be lost to development. They provide a profitable choice for small, family farmers.

As of 2019, Wisconsin's 1,364 certified organic farms rank second in the nation, accounting for more than a quarter-million acres. The state is fourth to the the states of California, Texas, and New York in producing organic milk and ranks first in organic corn silage, cranberries, and maple syrup.<sup>23</sup>

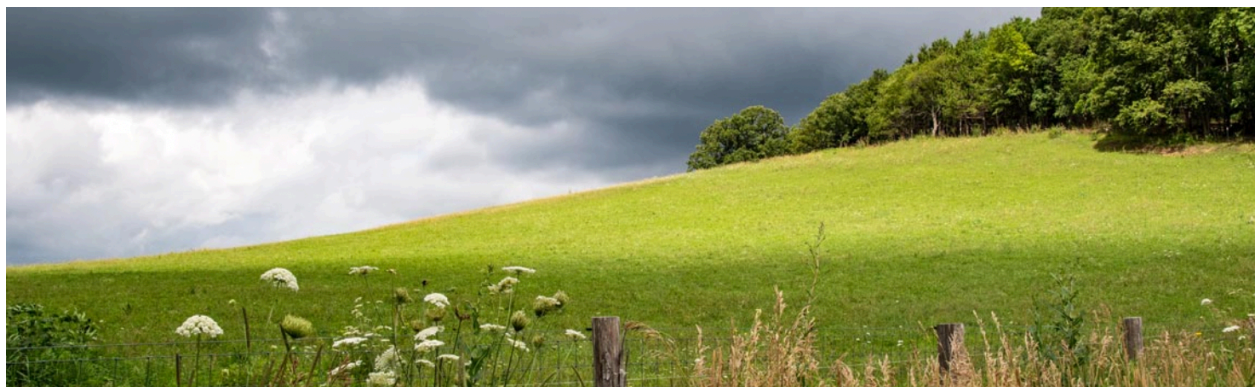


Image courtesy: Gwenyn Hill Farm, Waukesha, WI

<sup>23</sup> Source: *Certified Organic Survey: Wisconsin*, US Department of Agriculture, 2019.

## Community Supported Agriculture<sup>24</sup>

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a system in which a farm operation is supported by shareholders who share both the benefits and risks of food production. CSAs consist of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes the 'community's farm', with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. Typically, members pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive shares in the farm's bounty throughout the growing season, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land and participating directly in food production. Members also share in the risks of farming, including poor harvests due to unfavorable weather or pests. By direct sales to community members, who have provided the farmer with working capital in advance, growers receive better prices for their crops, gain some financial security, and are relieved of much of the burden of marketing.



Image courtesy: Farm Happy, Jackson, WI

## Specialty Farming

On average, nearly 3,000 acres of productive farmland are lost to development in the U.S. each day. Adapting to survive, many farmers have embraced a new paradigm that focuses on agricultural models custom-fit to changing markets and filling local niche markets with specialty produce and value-added products. Specialty (or niche) farming provides an alternative to conventional agricultural practices, particularly for smaller farmers attempting to compete with larger operations. According to Agricultural Census data nearly 300,000 new farms have begun operations since 2005. Compared with all farms nationwide, these new arrivals tend to have more diversified production, fewer acres, lower total-dollar sales, and operators who also work off-farm. Interestingly, many of these operations are located in decidedly urban and suburban areas. The Town's proximity to the Milwaukee metropolitan region provides opportunities for direct marketing of specialty agricultural products to local consumers. Examples of specialty agricultural products include:

- ✦ Agroforestry
- ✦ Aquaculture products
- ✦ Alternative grains and field crops
- ✦ Industrial, energy, and non-food crops

<sup>24</sup> Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, 2020.



- ★ Native plants and ecofriendly landscaping
- ★ Organic milk and cheese
- ★ Organic produce
- ★ Ornamental and nursery crops
- ★ Post-harvest handling and processing
- ★ Medicinal and culinary herbs
- ★ Raising of non-traditional farm animals (llama, ostrich, bison, etc.)
- ★ Seeds and plant breeding
- ★ Specialty, Heirloom and Ethnic Fruits and Vegetables

## Purchase and Transfer of Development Rights

Another means of preserving agricultural (and natural) land is through the establishment of a purchase of development rights (PDR) or transfer of development rights (TDR) program. Such programs 'send' development from farmland and natural resource areas to designated 'receiving' areas within a community. Advantages of these approaches include just and fair compensation for landowners, permanent protection of farmland and natural resources, and voluntary participation.

### Purchase of Development Rights

In a PDR program, a land trust, local government, or other organization offers to purchase the development rights on a parcel. The landowner is free to decline the offer or negotiate a higher price. When the development rights to a farm are sold, the landowner typically receives payment equal to the difference between the fair market value of the land and the price the land would command for agricultural use. Upon payment, a conservation easement is recorded on the property deed. The easement stays with the land in perpetuity.

The landowner retains the right to occupy and make economic use of the land for agricultural purposes, but gives up the right to develop the property in the future. Farmers are not compelled to sell their development rights. The main disadvantage of PDR is cost. Development rights can be expensive, so funding for a PDR program must to be selectively targeted in order to protect the agricultural land that is most worthy of preservation. As a result, not every farmer who wants to sell his or her development rights will be able to do so.

**Table 7: Purchase of Development Rights**

Strengths	Limitations
Permanently protects land from development Landowner is paid to protect land Local governments can effectively target locations Land remains in private ownership and on the tax rolls Program is voluntary	Can be costly for local unit of government, therefore land is protected at a slower rate Land remains in private ownership – typically no public access Since program is voluntary, it may be difficult to preserve large tracts of contiguous land

## Transfer of Development Rights

TDR involves transferring development rights from one piece of property to another. In this approach, a landowner is compensated for selling his/her development rights. However, rather than simply eliminating these rights, they are transferred to another property in the community that is targeted for development. That landowner of the 'targeted property' is free to develop the land and may use the transferred rights to develop at a greater density or intensity (e.g., smaller lot sizes to locate more homes in a single area). This approach preserves farmland and natural areas in designated sending zones while allowing for more intensive development to occur in the receiving zones.

**Table 8: Transfer of Development Rights**

Strengths	Limitations
Permanently protects land from development Landowner is paid to protect their land Local governments can effectively target locations Low cost to local unit of government Utilizes free market mechanisms Land remains in private ownership and on tax roll	Can be complex to manage Receiving area must be willing to accept higher densities Difficult program to establish Program will not work in areas where there is little to no development pressure on the area to be preserved

## Farmland Preservation Program

The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program (Chapter 91, Wis. Stats.) is designed to help local governments and landowners preserve agricultural land, minimize conflicting land uses, and promote soil and water conservation. Under the program, local governments may adopt and have certified a Farmland Preservation zoning ordinance that enables eligible landowners to claim farmland preservation tax credits. The credits are applied against tax liability on an annual basis. Tax credit amounts are as follows:

- ✦ \$5.00 per eligible acre for farmers with a farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009 and located in an agricultural enterprise area.
- ✦ \$7.50 per eligible acre for farmers in an area zoned for farmland preservation.
- ✦ \$10.00 per eligible acre for farmers in an area zoned and certified for farmland preservation and in an agricultural enterprise area, with a farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009.

Certification of a zoning ordinance must be obtained through application to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Landowners must be residents of Wisconsin and their agricultural operations must meet the following criteria:

- ✦ Acres claimed must be located in a farmland preservation area identified in a certified county farmland preservation plan. Eligible land includes agricultural land or permanent undeveloped natural resource areas or open space land that is in an area certified for farmland preservation zoning, and/or is located in a designated agricultural enterprise area and under a farmland preservation agreement.

- ★ Claimants must have \$6,000 in gross farm revenue in the past year or \$18,000 in the past three years. Income from rental receipts of farm acres does not count toward gross farm revenue. However, gross farm revenue produced by the renter on the landowner's farmland can be used to meet this eligibility requirement.
- ★ Claimants must be able to certify that all property taxes owed from the previous year have been paid.
- ★ Farmers claiming farmland preservation tax credits must certify on their tax form that they comply with state soil and water conservation standards. New claimants must also submit a certification of compliance with soil and water conservation standards that has been issued by the county land conservation committee.

## Natural Resources Plan

### Conservation-based Development

Conservation-based development is a tool that is intended to minimize the amount of disturbance to the natural landscape by preserving onsite resources identified during the planning stages of development. Resources commonly targeted for preservation include wetlands, streams and ponds, riparian corridors, natural or sensitive habitat areas, steep slopes, view sheds, and agricultural lands.

The goal is to successfully integrate a development with its environment and unique natural surroundings, rather than having the environment functioning apart from the development altogether. Such an approach minimizes the site disturbance footprint by confining development to within existing open spaces and taking advantage of site topography by constructing roads on natural ridgelines. A conservation-based development typically involves a developer and his/her team of surveyors, engineers, and landscape architects conducting site assessments to identify features of interest to preserve from which a design layout is generated.

The following are components of an effective conservation-based development design:

- ★ Preservation and protection of natural drainage patterns
- ★ Protection of sensitive natural resources
- ★ Maintenance of existing topography
- ★ Clearing and grading as little as possible
- ★ Minimize the amount of impervious cover
- ★ Maintaining a community-determined ratio of preserved open space to developed area

Local governments may implement conservation-based concepts for residential development within the zoning and subdivision ordinances, and for commercial and industrial development through the zoning ordinance and site plan review process.

### Riparian Buffers<sup>25</sup>

Additional strains are placed on aquatic systems with each new home, business, or road constructed in a community. Development in a watershed has direct and predictable effects on streams and wetlands. The implementation of best management practices can protect water quality during construction, road building, and farming. Historically, water quality was degraded by point sources, or direct discharges to lakes and rivers from industry, municipal sewerage districts and the like.

Since the passage of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (the Clean Water Act), the United States had taken dramatic steps to improve the quality of water resources. No longer are industries allowed to discharge untreated waste directly to surface waters.

Today, the greatest threat from a cumulative standpoint to streams and lakes comes through nonpoint-source water pollution. Nonpoint-source water pollution, or runoff, cannot easily be traced to a single point of origin. It occurs when rainwater or snowmelt flows across the land and picks up soil particles, organic wastes, fertilizers, and other contaminants that become pollution when carried to surface and/or groundwater. Nonpoint pollution, in the form of nitrogen, phosphorus and total suspended solids (soil particles), contaminates streams and lakes, increases the growth of algae and harmful aquatic weeds, covers spawning beds and feeding areas, and turns streams into conveyances of stormwater. The main sources of nonpoint pollution include impervious surfaces, agricultural fields, and residential lawns.

Riparian buffers are zones adjacent to water bodies such as lakes, rivers, and wetlands that protect water quality and wildlife, including both aquatic and terrestrial habitat. These zones minimize the impacts of human activities on the landscape and contribute to recreation, aesthetics, and quality of life.

Buffers can include a range of complex vegetation structure, soils, food sources, cover, and water features that offer a variety of habitats contributing to diversity and abundance of wildlife such as mammals, frogs, amphibians, insects, and birds. Buffers can consist of a variety of canopy layers and cover types including: ephemeral (temporary-wet for only part of year) wetlands, ponds, and spring pools; shallow and deep marshes; wetland meadows; wetland mixed forests; grasslands; forests; and prairies. Riparian zones are areas of transition between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that provide numerous benefits to wildlife and people including pollution reduction and recreation. Riparian buffers are widely considered to be the single most effective protection for water resources.

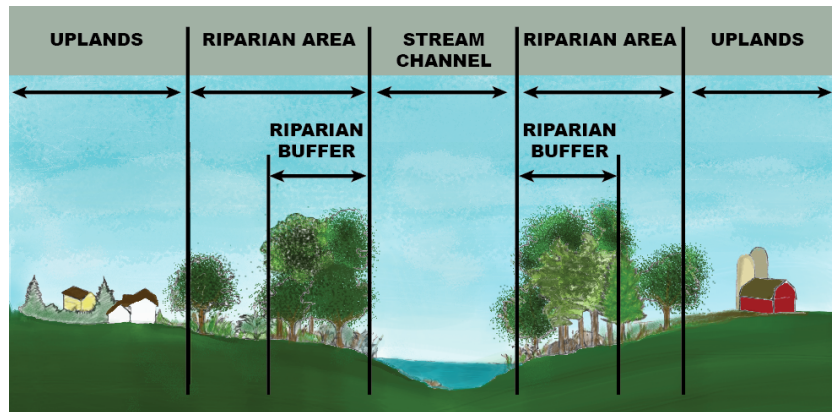


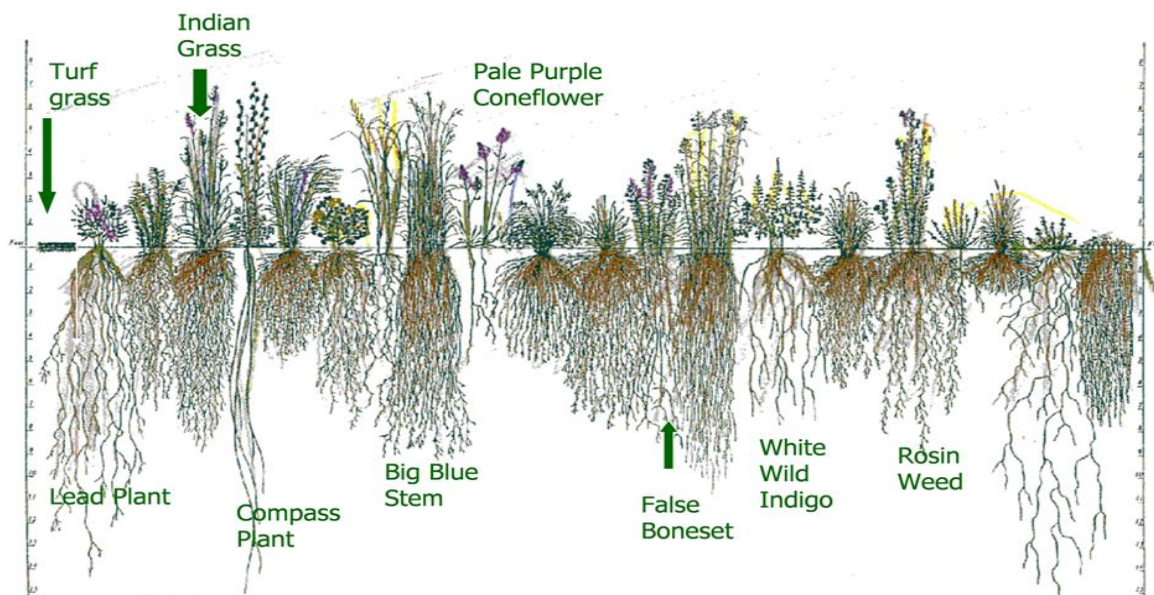
Image courtesy: USEPA

<sup>25</sup> Excerpted from: *Managing the Water's Edge: Making Natural Connections*, USEPA, 2020.



## Native Landscapes

A native landscape is generally defined as one comprised of species that occur naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat, and that were present prior to European settlement. Landscaping with native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees improves the environment. Natural landscaping brings a taste of wilderness to urban, suburban, and corporate settings by attracting a variety of birds, butterflies, and other animals. Once established, native plants do not need fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, or watering, thus benefiting the environment and reducing maintenance costs.<sup>26</sup>



Comparing the root system of typical turf grass (far left) with those of grass and flower species native to Wisconsin. Deeper root systems provide greater opportunities for infiltration of precipitation and snow melt thereby reducing the incidents of flood events. Image courtesy: Conservation Research Institute

The benefits of native landscapes include:

- ✦ **Environmental.** Once native plants are returned to the land, many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and beneficial insects return as well, restoring a vital part of the web of life. Landscaping with natives enriches the soil, decreases water run-off, and filters the pollution caused by nonpoint source pollution from commercial sites, subdivisions, parks, and farms.
- ✦ **Economic.** Over the long term, native landscaping is more cost-effective than traditional landscaping and requires no fertilizers, pesticides, or irrigation. Natives also increase infiltration reducing the need for expensive stormwater management infrastructure (see image above).

<sup>26</sup> Excerpted from: *Landscaping with Native Plants in the Great Lakes Region*, USEPA, 2018.

- ★ Aesthetic. While traditional landscapes use one or two species of grass, native landscape designs can include dozens of species of trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. Each is unique and constantly evolving, and thrives in wet, dry, sunny, and shaded locations.
- ★ Educational. Native landscapes provide hands-on opportunities for people of all ages to learn about habitats and ecosystems.

## Secondary Conservation Areas

As discussed in the Housing chapter conservation subdivisions provide a means by which local government, landowners, and developers may preserve important natural and cultural features present on a given piece of property. They do so by identifying *secondary conservation areas* (SCA) to be preserved during the residential development process. Unlike primary conservation areas (wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes, etc.), SCAs are cultural, natural, and agricultural resources that hold particular value within a given community. Examples of cultural SCAs may include architecturally significant homes, structurally sound barns, fencerows, and windmills, among others. SCAs are determined at the local level based upon local values.

## Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a voluntary but binding legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that limits present and future development of a parcel. Under a conservation easement, the landowner retains ownership of the land (within the terms of the easement, i.e., only for farmland or natural space, not for development) and a land trust or similar organization assumes the responsibility for protecting the land's conservation values.

Donated conservation easements that meet federal requirements can provide significant tax advantages to landowners since their property may be assessed as undevelopable land, which has a much lower tax value than developable or recreation land. Qualified easements may also generate charitable contribution deductions for income and transfer tax purposes.

## Cultural Resources

Although the Town has no resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it undoubtedly hosts places and structures of significance to the community itself, if not the greater region. It is these places that can form the basis for a future historic and cultural Resources inventory.

## Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resource Programs

### U.S. Department of Agriculture

#### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is an offshoot of the Conservation Reserve Program, the country's largest private-land conservation program. Administered by the Farm Service Agency, CREP targets high-priority conservation issues identified by local, state, or tribal governments,

# Comprehensive Plan 2023 Addendum



or non-governmental organizations. In exchange for removing environmentally sensitive land from production and introducing conservation practices, farmers, ranchers, and agricultural landowners are paid an annual rental rate. Participation is voluntary, and the contract period is typically 10–15 years, along with other federal and state incentives as applicable per each CREP agreement.

## Natural Resource Conservation Service – Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years in length. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns, and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. In addition, a purpose of EQIP is to help producers meet federal, state, tribal, and local environmental regulations. Owners of land in agricultural, or forest production or persons who are engaged in livestock, agricultural or forest production on eligible land and that have a natural resource concern on the land may participate in EQIP.

## Natural Resource Conservation Service - Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) - Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

## Natural Resource Conservation Service – Financial Assistance Program

NRCS offers voluntary programs to eligible landowners and agricultural producers to provide financial and technical assistance to help manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. Through these programs the agency approves contracts to provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns or opportunities to help save energy, improve soil, water, plant, air, animal, and related resources on agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land.

## Natural Resource Conservation Service – Landscapes Initiatives Program

The NRCS Landscape Initiatives Program (LIP) is intended to accelerate the results that can be achieved through voluntary conservation programs. All NRCS programs are designed to support farmers, ranchers, and foresters in improving the environment while maintaining or improving a vibrant agricultural sector. Most program delivery is driven primarily by grassroots input and local needs. Landscape conservation initiatives enhance the locally-driven process to better address nationally and regionally important conservation goals that transcend localities. Improving water quality in the eight state Great Lakes region is a priority of the LIP.

## Farm Services Agency – Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

## Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

### Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program – Acquisition and Development of Local Parks Program

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program (KNSP) sets aside fifty percent of the funds in the Local Assistance Program for projects that improve community recreation areas and acquire land for public outdoor recreation. Funds are allocated on a regional basis with seventy percent distributed on the basis of each county's proportionate share of the state population, and thirty percent distributed equally to each county. Applicants compete against other applicants from their region. Funds may be used for both land acquisition projects and development projects for nature-based outdoor recreation.

Under all KNSP programs, eligible local governments are only those towns, villages, cities, counties, and tribal governments that have a DNR-accepted comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or master plan that has been approved by resolution by the local governing unit. Local governments with qualifying plans receive eligibility to apply for grants for up to five years.

### Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program – Urban Greenspace Program

The intent of the Urban Green Space Program (UGS) is to provide open natural space within or in proximity to urban areas; to protect from urban development areas within or in proximity to urban areas that have scenic, ecological, or other natural value; and to provide land for non-commercial gardening for the residents of an urbanized area.

### Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program – Acquisition of Development Rights Program

The purpose of the Acquisition of Development Rights Program is to protect natural, agricultural, or forestlands that enhance and/or provide nature-based outdoor recreation. "Development Rights" are the rights of a landowner to develop their property to the greatest extent allowed under state and local laws.

## Lake Management Grants

Eligible for municipalities that have an approved management plan within five years of the year in which the grant application is submitted for Lake Management Plan Implementation. Focus areas include lake management planning, lake protection and classification, and aquatic invasive species control.



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## Land and Water Conservation Fund Program

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal program administered in all states that encourages creation and interpretation of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities. Funds received by the DNR for this program are split between DNR projects and grants to local governments for outdoor recreation activities. Grants cover fifty percent of eligible project costs. Eligible projects include:

- ✦ Land acquisition or development projects that will provide opportunities for public outdoor recreation.
- ✦ Property with frontage on rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries, and reservoirs that will provide water-based outdoor recreation.
- ✦ Property that provides special recreation opportunities, such as floodplains, wetlands, and areas adjacent to scenic highways.
- ✦ Natural areas and outstanding scenic areas, where the objective is to preserve the scenic or natural values, including wildlife areas and areas of physical or biological importance. These areas shall be open to the general public for outdoor recreation use to the extent that the natural attributes of the areas will not be seriously impaired or lost.
- ✦ Land or development within urban areas for day use picnic areas.
- ✦ Land or development of nature-based outdoor recreation trails.
- ✦ Development of basic outdoor recreation facilities.
- ✦ Renovation of existing outdoor recreation facilities which are in danger of being lost for public use.

## Managed Forest Law

The intent of the Managed Forest Law is to promote forest management practices through property tax incentives. Property must be a minimum of ten contiguous acres of which eighty percent must be capable of producing merchantable timber.

## Wisconsin Forest Landowners Grant Program

The Wisconsin Forest Landowners Grant Program (WFLGP) program assists private landowners in protecting and enhancing their forested lands, prairies, and waters. The program allows qualified landowners to be reimbursed up to fifty percent of the eligible cost of eligible practices. Private landowners are eligible for WFLGP funding if they own at least ten contiguous acres of non-industrial private forest, but not more than five hundred acres within Wisconsin.

## Wisconsin Historical Society

### Historic Home Owner's Tax Credits

The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation (DHP) administers a program of twenty-five percent state income tax credits for repair and rehabilitation of historic homes in Wisconsin. To qualify, the residence must be one of the following:

- ✦ Listed in the state or national register.
- ✦ Contributing to a state or national register historic district.
- ✦ Be determined through the tax credit application process to be eligible for individual listing in the state register.

### Washington County Land Resources<sup>27</sup>

The Land Resources Division of Washington County strives to protect and improve land and water resources and provide a thoughtfully planned future by:

- ✦ Providing exceptional customer service through technical and professional expertise.
- ✦ Implementing local and state laws as a well governed and administered county.
- ✦ Providing education and administering programs to help accomplish the proper management of our natural resources for an improved quality of life.
- ✦ Guiding agricultural businesses to ensure sustainable and economically viable farmland.
- ✦ Engaging the public through conservation programs that provide for the stewardship of our natural resources.
- ✦ Advancing the County's strategic goals & initiatives through collaborative planning.

For additional information related to agricultural, natural, and cultural resources, please refer to the 2009 Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan.

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<sup>27</sup> Excerpted from: Washington County website, 2022



## Ch. 6: Economic Development

Image courtesy: Google Street View

### Introduction

Economic development is the process of encouraging business development to boost the local economy, provide new work opportunities, and improve the quality of life for the entire community. It involves anticipating change, diversifying industries, and redefining opportunities and challenges. Successful economic development programs result from the sustained actions of elected and appointed officials, generally in partnership with the private sector, to promote the standard of living and economic health of a community. Such actions involve multiple areas of the local economy including development of human capital (through higher education and job training), critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, tax base preservation and expansion, and health and safety, among others.

### Economic Development Goals

*Broaden the tax base and grow a vibrant and diverse local economy.*

*Ensure the Town is welcoming to businesses seeking to start, expand, or relocate in the community.*

*Develop the infrastructure necessary to allow local business to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century marketplace.*

*Expand housing options to meet the needs of the future work force.*

*Collaborate with SEWRPC, Washington County, neighboring municipalities, Milwaukee 7, and other organizations to strengthen and expand the regional economy.*

## Current Economy

The Town of Polk is a growing community transitioning from an agricultural land base to one comprised of a wide array of residential, commercial, manufacturing land uses. Although certain categories of commercial development (big box retail, grocers, goods and services, and the like) will tend to locate in nearby incorporated communities (see Reilly's Law below), opportunities for niche retail, healthcare, local services, and dining, along with valued-added manufacturing and other types of industrial development, may find fertile ground in the township. Traditional and new-market agricultural operations and home-based businesses are also likely to begin and expand.

### Reilly's Law of Retail Gravitation<sup>28</sup>

Close proximity to a larger municipality equates to greater competition for the day-to-day goods and services desired by residents. Developed by William J. Reilly in 1931, 'Reilly's Law of Retail Gravitation' states that larger communities will have spheres of influence much broader than smaller ones, meaning that consumers will travel farther to reach a larger city. Two communities of equal size tend to have a trade area boundary midway between the two. When communities are of unequal size, the boundary lies closer to the smaller city, giving the larger one a more expansive trade area. For a small community on the periphery of a metropolitan region, an economic development strategy aimed at providing basic goods and services through conventional retail operations will find it difficult to overcome Reilly's Law.

## Types of Municipal Economies

Five general categories are used to describe the economies of small communities: resource-based, industrial, metropolitanizing, dependent, and lifestyle.<sup>29</sup>

- ✦ Resource-Based. This type of economy is characterized by geographic isolation. They are typically far away from larger cities/metro areas and have limited interstate access. These communities often have an aging population base and lack of opportunities for higher education and local employment.
- ✦ Industrial. The industrial economy is characterized by dependence on yesterday's economic base. Often a community of this type has a single manufacturing or industrial operation that sustains the vast majority of residents.

<sup>28</sup> Excerpted from: *Reilly's Law of Retail Gravitation*, Matt Rosenberg, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Source: *Embracing Change in Small Communities*, Randall Gross, APA National Conference, March 2005.



- ✦ Metropolitanizing. These communities are experiencing a high amount of residential development which causes concern about decreasing land supplies, loss of community identity, maintaining small town character, and avoiding becoming a “bedroom community.”
- ✦ Dependent. Usually, an unincorporated area outside of the suburban ring of development. The economic vitality of this community depends on the economic success of the larger adjacent/nearby community. The primary challenge is handling local residential development pressure.
- ✦ Lifestyle. These communities tend to include university towns, small communities with military bases, and tourist destinations. Residents enjoy their small community setting and quality of living, but are concerned about their long-term dependency on a single economic source.

The Town’s economy is best described as Dependent transitioning towards Dependent-Metropolitanizing

## Economic Development Plan

### Growing from Within

Local ownership of businesses tends to maintain economic diversity because it builds on the loyalty shared between customers, owners, and their community. Local businesses offer connections to place through everyday transactions. They keep money circulating in the community, thereby stimulating the economy and creating new economic niches. Businesses that begin in a community tend to stay in that community. The most effective way to ensure a healthy local economy over time is to offer assistance for those interested in starting their own business and provide the means to relocate within the community when growth merits such a move.

### Economic Gardening

Economic gardening is an entrepreneurial approach to economic development that seeks to grow the local economy from within. Its premise is that local entrepreneurs create the companies that bring new wealth and economic growth to a community in the form of jobs, tax revenues, per capita income, and a vibrant local business sector. Economic gardening seeks to focus on growing and nurturing local businesses rather than focusing on business relocation as a development strategy.

The focus of economic gardening is on providing accurate, timely, and relevant information to local entrepreneurs regarding key areas such as competition, customer base, and industry trends, among others. Armed with this information, a small business owner is better able to make strategic decisions, avoid costly mistakes, and successfully grow his or her enterprise. Economic gardening strategies help local small businesses discover how to reach markets outside the region. In turn, these exporting growth-oriented companies can spur the formation of local business suppliers and service firms to support them. More and better-paid workers also increase the demand for local goods and services, recirculating wealth throughout the local and regional economy.<sup>30</sup> The basic elements of economic gardening include:<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Excerpted from: *Economic Gardening, Growing Local Economies*, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Excerpted from: *Second Stage Entrepreneurs: Economic Gardening, PEERspectives*, 2011.

- ✦ Providing critical information needed by businesses to survive and thrive.
- ✦ Developing and cultivating 'community infrastructure' that prioritizes a high quality of life, a culture that embraces growth and change, and access to intellectual resources, including qualified and talented employees.
- ✦ Developing connections between businesses and the people and organizations that can help take them to the next level, including business associations, universities, roundtable groups, service providers and more.

## Business Retention

The key to a successfully business retention strategy is building trust between business owners and local officials. Communities must identify the specific gaps and niches their economies can fill, and promote a diversified range of specialized industry clusters drawing on local advantages to serve local, regional, and international markets. Local government, business groups, educators, and the public must work together to create a vibrant local economy, through a long-term investment strategy that.<sup>32</sup>

- ✦ Encourages local enterprise.
- ✦ Serves the needs of residents, workers, and businesses.
- ✦ Promotes stable employment and revenues by building on local competitive advantages.
- ✦ Protects the natural environment.
- ✦ Increases social equity.
- ✦ Is capable of succeeding in the local, regional, and global marketplace.

## Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a financing option administered by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) which allows a municipality to fund infrastructure and other improvements through property tax revenue on newly developed land. A municipality identifies an area, the Tax Incremental District (TID), as appropriate for a certain type of development and then identifies transportation, utility, stormwater, and other such projects to encourage and facilitate the desired development. As property values rise, the municipality uses the property tax paid on that development to pay for the projects. After the project costs are paid, the municipality closes the TID.

TIF use varies depending on the project and the municipality. In some cases, the municipality chooses an area it would like to develop or that is unlikely to develop without assistance. Then the municipality designs improvements (ex: roads, sidewalks, sewer systems) to attract growth. In other cases, a developer or company identifies a site where they might locate. A developer may also negotiate with the municipality to use TIF to fund the improvements (ex: demolition, soil clean up, roads, water) the developer requires. The resulting development creates a larger tax base for the municipality and overlying taxing jurisdictions (schools, county, and technical colleges). Generally, when the tax base grows and spending is stable, tax rates go down, decreasing property taxes for everyone (see '*TID Value Growth and Tax Sharing*' illustration below).

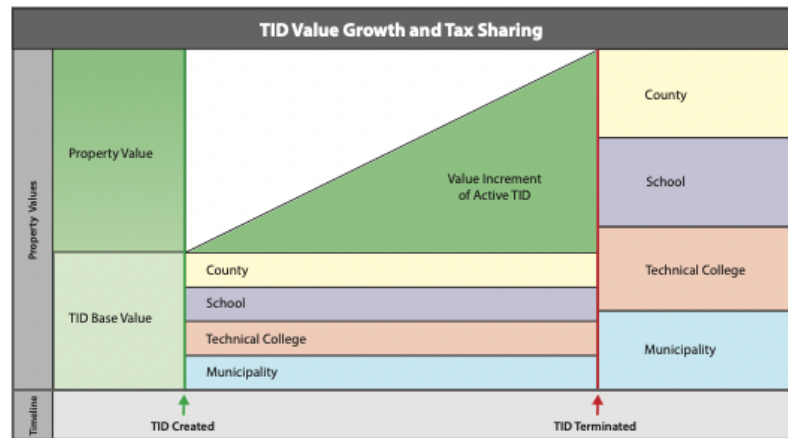
<sup>32</sup> Excerpted from: *Ahwahnee Principles for Economic Development*, Economic Development for the 21st Century, 2021.

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One key basis for the use of TIF is the "but for" requirement. As part of all creation resolutions, a municipality must affirm that the development would not happen 'but for' the use of TIF. The municipality must believe that without TIF the development would never happen. The DOR Joint Review Board (JRB) is tasked with administering TIF in Wisconsin. JRB bases its approval on:

- ✦ Would expected development occur without the use of TIF?
- ✦ Would economic benefits of the TID, as measured by increased employment, business and personal income and property value, be sufficient to compensate for the cost of the improvements?
- ✦ Would benefits outweigh the anticipated tax increments to be paid by the owners of the property in the overlying taxing districts?<sup>33</sup>



Source: *Tax Increment Financing Manual*, Wisconsin Department of Revenue

To utilize TIF, a Town must meet the following criteria:

- ✦ Have a population is more than 3,500.
- ✦ Have an equalized value of all taxable property in excess of \$500 million.
- ✦ The TID must be located in a sewer service area served by a wastewater treatment plant.

Polk's estimated 2020 population was 4,040. The DOR 'Preliminary Statement of Changes in Equalized Values by Class and Item' for the Town of Polk show a total equalized value of 739,863,700 as of July 2021. Planned sewer service areas are shown on the Future Land Use map presented in the Land Use chapter.

## Business Associations

Business associations bring together business owners and provide its members with opportunities to network and share information and resources. While some members of an association may be competitors, they still share certain needs and preferences. Association members can help one another directly with referrals for services such as accounting, building maintenance, recruiting staff and marketing.

<sup>33</sup> Excerpted from: *Tax Increment Financing Manual*, Wisconsin Department of Revenue [R. 11-20].

## Marketing and Place Branding

- ✦ **Marketing.** To attract business, industry, new residents, or visitors, a community must market itself beyond its geographic boundaries. A municipal marketing plan is a comprehensive blueprint that outlines the community's overall marketing efforts. It may include advertising in printed publications, the use of conventional and social media, public relations, promotions etc. Elements commonly addressed within a marketing plan include: business attraction, revitalization, streetscaping, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, tax/utility rates, available land and infrastructure, tax incentives, and branding initiatives, among others.
- ✦ **Place Branding.** In the world of consumer goods, a brand is the sum of all experiences related to a given product or service. Brand perceptions are shaped by opinions related to quality, reliability, etc., as well as emotional experiences associated with the product. Place Branding is no different. Every resident has a perception of his/her community. Through actions and beliefs about their community they express that brand; one created over time and through experience.

## Build a Resilient Economy

Resilience is a measure of the capacity of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. It is the ability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of dramatic changes to economic conditions.<sup>34</sup>

Resilient communities are able to minimize the effects of financial crises, natural disasters, and other major disruptors of economic growth when they have the ability to quickly return citizens to work, reopen businesses, and restore other essential services needed for a full and timely economic recovery. They can do so by actively influencing and preparing for economic, social and environmental change. When times are bad they can call upon the resources that make them a healthy community. A high level of social capital means that they have access to good information and communication networks in times of difficulty, and can call upon a wide range of resources.<sup>35</sup>

The factors most important in building resilience into the local economy include:<sup>36</sup>

- ✦ **People.** Elected and appointed officials must be representative of an engaged public, be visionary, be willing to share power, and be capable of working towards solutions through consensus.
- ✦ **Organizations.** Resilient communities possess a variety of economic development organizations. These organizations serve the needs of the community through working partnerships that lead to ongoing collaborative efforts to sustain the local economy.
- ✦ **Resources.** Access to resources plays an enormous role in community resilience. Employment is the most prominent of all resources in this regard. It is essential that employment is diversified beyond a single large employer and that as many major employers as possible be locally owned. Diversity is key to weathering shifts in the larger environment.

<sup>34</sup> Excerpted from: *Community Resilience*, Rand Corporation, March 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Excerpted from: *Healthy and Resilient Communities: Living the Future Now*, January 2014.

<sup>36</sup> Excerpted from: *What is Community Resilience?*, Canadian Center for Community Renewal, 2013.



## Market Trade Analysis

A Market Trade Analysis (MTA) is a comprehensive study undertaken to better understand the local economy and to identify the ways in which it can more effectively compete in the regional marketplace. It is intended to provide a framework for long-term economic sustainability. The MTA provides elected officials, current and future business owners, and residents with a fundamental description of the industry sectors that are prospering, struggling, or lacking within a community. Once completed, it serves as a roadmap for targeting market-based opportunities for development.

The local marketplace is divided into the elements of supply and demand. Opportunities for business creation or expansion arise when there is a mismatch between the products and services consumers are demanding and those that suppliers are providing. The MTA provides a tool to evaluate existing industry sectors and identify surplus and supply gaps.

The regional market provides competition for goods and services beyond municipal boundaries. When a product or service is unavailable locally, or at a lower cost or higher quality in a nearby community, consumers will travel outside the local market to transact business. In order to effectively evaluate the economic environment of a community, and identify opportunities for future economic development, the MTA incorporates a number of *cohort communities* into the analysis. Cohorts are communities of similar size, demographic composition, economic diversity, and/or geographic location that serve as bases of comparison for the community at the center of the MTA.

## Economic Development Programs

### US Department of Agriculture – Rural Development Grant

The United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Grant (RDG) provides loans, grants and loan guarantees to support essential services such as housing, economic development, health care, first responder services and equipment, and water, electric and communications infrastructure. The RDG promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks, credit unions and community-managed lending pools.

### US Environmental Protection Agency – Revolving Loan Fund

The Revolving Loan Fund provides funding for grant recipients to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. Through these grants, the Environmental Protection Agency seeks to strengthen the marketplace and encourage stakeholders to leverage the resources needed to clean up and redevelop brownfields. When loans are repaid, the loan amount is returned into the fund and re-lent to other borrowers, providing an ongoing source of capital within a community.

## Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC's) Community Development Investment Grant (CDIG) program helps transform communities by supporting local development unique to Wisconsin's communities in Wisconsin. The CDIG supports urban, small city and rural community redevelopment efforts by providing financial incentives for shovel-ready projects with emphasis on, but not limited to, downtown community-driven efforts. Grants up to \$50,000 are available for planning efforts, and grants up to \$500,000 are available for implementation projects. The program operates through a competitive process that occurs two to three times per fiscal year. Grant recipients must demonstrate significant, measurable benefits in job opportunities, property values and/or leveraged investment by local and private partners.

## UW-Extension Center for Community & Economic Development

The UW-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development offers a number of programs intended to assist local governments with economic development activities. They include:

- ✦ Community Preparedness and Resiliency
- ✦ Downtown Revitalization
- ✦ Food Systems Initiative
- ✦ Tourism Development
- ✦ First Impressions Program

## Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC)<sup>37</sup>

Economic development activities in southeastern Wisconsin are conducted by a variety of county and local economic and community development organizations. The Milwaukee 7 (M7) provides a regional, cooperative economic development platform for the seven counties in SEWRPC. The M7 mission is to attract, retain, and grow diverse businesses and talent through export driver industries and emerging business clusters; to strengthen the Region's capacity to innovate; and to enhance the competitiveness of the Region. SEWRPC serves as a resource through its staff, data, and plans to the County economic development organizations (EDOs) and the M7 as they seek to maintain and expand the regional economy. The M7 and SEWRPC also work directly with the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Economic Partnership (REP). The REP includes representatives from the seven county EDOs or staff, the City of Milwaukee, We Energies, M7, and SEWRPC. This group of practitioners operates on an informal basis, and predated the creation of the M7 organization in 2005. The REP meets regularly to coordinate economic development planning with SEWRPC, the M7, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC).

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<sup>37</sup> Source: SEWRPC website, 2020.

## Economic Development Washington County (EDWC)<sup>38</sup>

EDWC has elevated Washington County's reputation statewide by creating and administering a unique, best-in-class revolving loan fund program that benefits lenders, businesses and their communities. Core to its success is unparalleled experience in putting the right deal structure together while navigating loans to full repayment, especially during growth stress and disruptive times. EDWC provides:

- ✦ Program design, accountability & marketing
- ✦ Application & underwriting
- ✦ Loan pricing & terms
- ✦ Collateral & security structure
- ✦ Loan approval & funding decisions
- ✦ Authoring & executing loan documents
- ✦ Servicing
- ✦ Loan amendments & modifications
- ✦ Managing challenging loan situations
- ✦ Portfolio health analysis & reporting

For additional information related to economic development, please refer to the 2009 Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan.

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<sup>38</sup> Excerpted from EDWC website, 2022.



## Ch. 7: Land Use

Image courtesy: Jeffrey Michael George Designs

### Introduction

Land Use is the central element of a comprehensive plan. Its main purpose is to provide a framework for decision makers to guide growth and development. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that land use decisions reached via a zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, or official map be consistent with the comprehensive plan (Chapter 66.1001(3), Wis. Stats.). This chapter will guide the Town Board, Plan Commission, property owners, and developers in decisions regarding the type, location, and density of future development.

Implementation of the comprehensive plan will result from the incremental decisions made by elected and appointed officials during the review and approval of zoning changes, certified survey maps, subdivision plats, site plans, and the like. Through these decisions, the Town will realize its goals and aspirations as they relate to the physical growth and development of the community. Successful implementation will require a sustained effort by the public and private sectors to utilize this chapter,



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and the Future Land Use map contained within it, as the essential decision-making guide for land use in the Town of Polk .

## Land Use Goals

*Utilize the Future Land Use Map to effectively guide policy and make rationale land use decisions.*

*Begin the process of creating a dynamic town core hosting an array of businesses serving the needs of local residents and the regional/global economy; a diversity of housing types at varied densities; and institutional uses, community gathering places, parks, outdoor recreation facilities, and other community gathering spaces serving as the cultural center of the community.*

*Provide for mixed residential land use densities in areas abutting incorporated communities.*

*Avoid 'corridor creep' by concentrating future commercial and industrial land uses within well-planned development nodes located along major transportation routes.*

*Consider all applicable means to preserve viable agricultural land.*

*Ensure that all development occurs in a manner minimizing impacts to the natural landscape.*

*Create multi-modal connections between significant land use nodes.*

*Implement policies supporting sustainable and balanced growth for those land uses necessary to meet the needs of our community.*

## Current Land Use

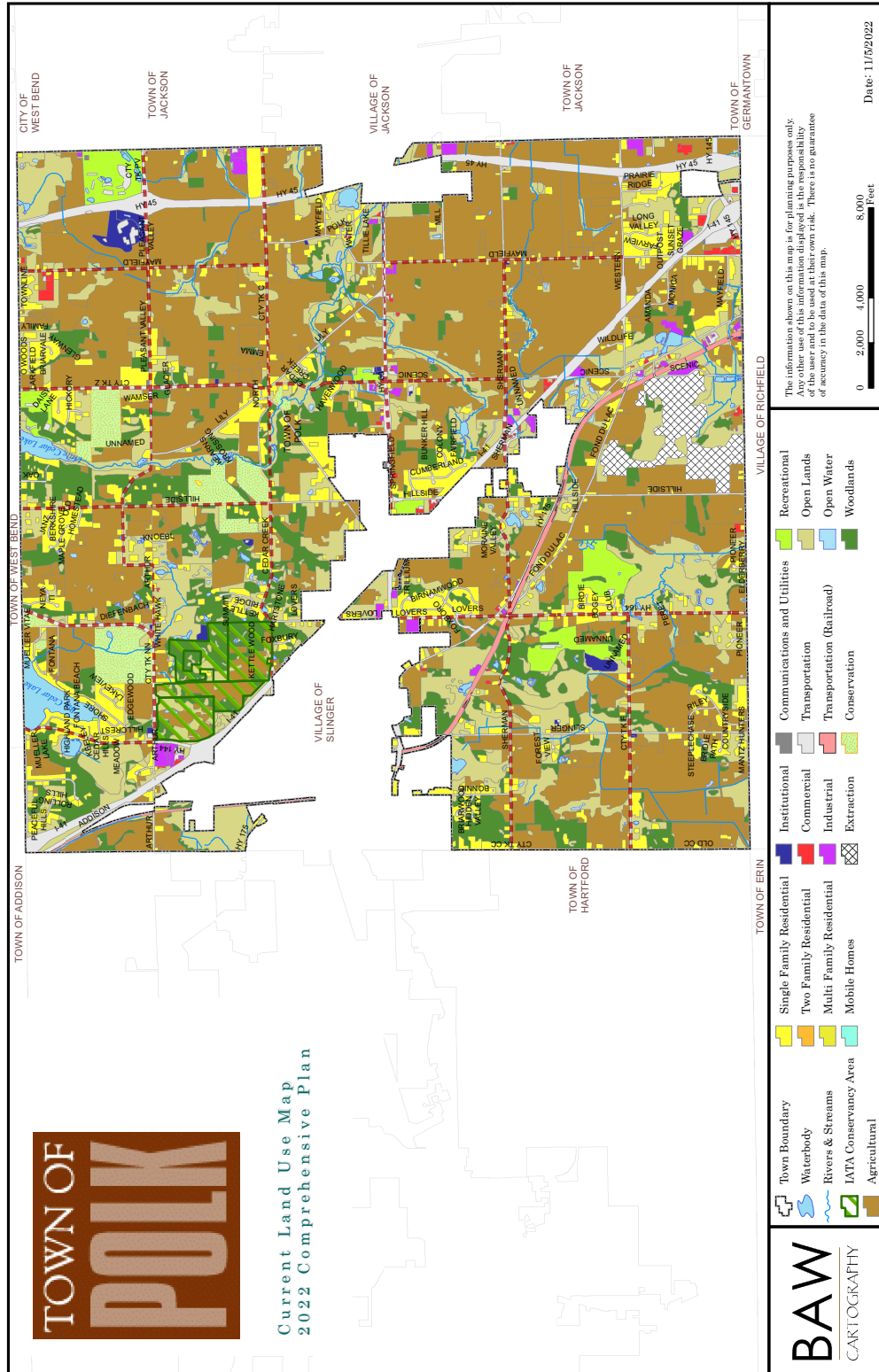
### Land Use Inventory

Table 9 presents the total acreage of existing current land uses in the Town of Polk, along with the percent of the Town's total land base represented by each use. It is based on the Current Land Use map presented on the following page. The map was developed by BAW Cartography utilizing data provided by Washington County, SRWPC, and WisDOT. The purpose of the map is to provide a reasonably accurate 'snap shot' of the community as it exists today.

**Table 9: Current Land Uses**

Land Use	Total Acreage	Percent of Total
Agricultural	8,474	42.4%
Commercial	77	0.4%
Communications and Utilities	6	<0.1%
Conservation	394	2.0%
Extraction	292	1.5%
Industrial	140	0.7%
Institutional	90	0.5%
Mobile Homes	1	<0.1%
Multi Family Residential	0	-
Open Lands	4,016	20.1%
Open Water	286	1.4%
Recreational	368	1.8%
Single Family Residential	1,951	9.8%
Transportation	1,475	7.4%
Transportation (Railroad)	141	0.7%
Two Family Residential	0	-
Woodlands	2,274	11.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,984</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Polk Current Land Use map, 2022.



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## Land Use Equalized Value<sup>39</sup>

Equalized Value is an estimate of the market value of all residential, commercial, manufacturing, productive forest, other (farm sites and farm buildings), and personal property in a municipality as of January 1. The data is certified by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WDOR) on August 15 of each year. Equalized Value also estimates the use-value of agricultural land; 50% of the market value of undeveloped land; and 50% of the market value of agricultural forestland. It is computed independently from the estimate of the local assessor. While both the local assessor and WDOR make estimates, the local assessor estimates the value of each parcel; WDOR estimates the value of the entire town, village, or city.

The annual Equalized Value of each municipality represents DOR's estimate of the total value of all taxable property. Changes in the Equalized Value from year to year are caused by many things; increases or decreases in market prices, annexation gains or losses, new construction, demolition of buildings, relocation of businesses, taxable status of property, and statutory changes in the basis for valuation in various classes of property. Table 10 compares the equalized value in the Town of Polk for the years 2020 and 2021. Statewide, equalized value rose by seven percent in the past year.

Table 10: Comparison of Equalized Value

Category	2020	2021	Change - Number	Change - Percent
Residential	\$637,124,100	\$689,892,400	\$52,768,600	8.3%
Commercial	\$73,299,500	\$76,449,100	\$3,149,600	4.3%
Manufacturing	\$7,932,200	\$8,587,400	\$655,200	8.3%
Agricultural, Forest, and Undeveloped	\$9,152,300	\$8,947,400	-\$204,900	-2.2%
Other	\$12,355,600	\$12,529,200	\$173,600	1.4%
Total	\$739,863,700	\$796,405,500	\$56,541,800	7.6%

Source: Town of Polk 2020 Statement of Changes in Equalized Value by Class and Item, Wisconsin Department of Revenue, 2021.

## Community Design Tools

After the comprehensive plan, the most important tools to achieve land use goals are the Zoning Ordinance, Land Division Ordinance, and Official Map. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (Chapter 66.1001(3), Wis. Stats.) requires that municipalities engaging in zoning, land division regulations, or official mapping do so 'consistent with' an adopted comprehensive plan. The Town of Polk administers general zoning and land division regulations (Washington County administers shoreland zoning). As of yet, Polk has not adopted an Official Map.

<sup>39</sup> Excerpted from: *Wisconsin's Equalized Values*, Wisconsin Department of Revenue, 2022.

## Zoning Ordinance

A zoning ordinance is a local law governing the use of land. Zoning works by dividing a community into districts, regulating uses that are allowed within those districts, and prescribing allowable dimensions such as lot sizes, setbacks and building height. Zoning aids in achieving land use goals by:

- ✦ Protecting public health, safety and general welfare.
- ✦ Promoting desirable patterns of development.
- ✦ Separating incompatible land uses.
- ✦ Maintaining community character and aesthetics.
- ✦ Protecting community resources such as farmland, woodlands, groundwater, surface water, and historic and cultural resources.
- ✦ Providing public services and infrastructure in an economical and efficient manner.
- ✦ Protecting public and private investments.

## Land Division Ordinance

The land division ordinance (also known as subdivision ordinance), governs the manner in which land transitions from one use to another (e.g., from agricultural or open space to residential, commercial, etc.). Land division regulations provide the procedures and standards for dividing a large parcel into smaller parcels for sale or development. Under a land division ordinance, a property owner or developer must meet certain conditions in order to record a certified survey map or subdivision plat. The purpose of land division regulations is to:

- ✦ Ensure accurate legal descriptions of properties.
- ✦ Avoid disputes regarding the sale, transfer or subdivision of land.
- ✦ Prevent substandard development.
- ✦ Ensure new development is adequately served by public facilities (roads, utilities, etc.).
- ✦ Address health and safety issues such as stormwater runoff and emergency access.
- ✦ Promote neighborhood designs that meet the needs of residents (walkable, affordable, etc.).
- ✦ Promote development consistent with a comprehensive plan.
- ✦ Protect community interests.

## Official Map

An official map shows the locations of planned future public lands and facilities such as streets, trails, parks, and open space. It represents and expresses a municipality's interest in acquiring lands for public purposes at some point in the future. Adopted by ordinance or resolution, the official map may show existing and planned streets, railroad rights of way, parks, and utilities, among others. The benefits provided by an official map include:

- ✦ Helping to focus limited financial resources on projects that meet and advance community goals.
- ✦ Connecting and improving the local street network, protecting important natural areas, and providing more green space, recreation facilities, trails, and sidewalks.



- ★ Saving time and money by informing property owners and developers of municipal goals and intentions in advance of proposed development.
- ★ Serving as an effective negotiation tool, helping to ensure that development is compatible with and supportive of public goals.
- ★ Addressing public land and easement acquisition needs that generally cannot be dealt with solely through zoning and subdivision regulations.
- ★ Providing municipalities with a competitive advantage in securing state and federal grant funding.

## Community Design Considerations

Community design is an important component of planning and plays a significant role in determining quality of life. Elements of community design may include culture and history along with architectural standards, open space and natural resource protection, transportation and access, and recreation, among others. Ordinances provide the primary means by which local governments implement community design requirements.

### Property Rights

The issue of private property rights versus community need underlies every comprehensive planning effort. Property rights are ingrained in American jurisprudence. Those rights have been respected, to the greatest extent feasible, throughout the planning effort. This chapter describes and illustrates proposed development patterns for the Town of Polk. It will be used by local officials, landowners, developers, and others to make informed land use and development decisions. Should a landowner disagree with the Future Land Use map, or any other aspect of this plan, he/she has the right to petition the Town Board for an amendment to the document. All amendments will occur through a public process, defined by state law, and will include a public hearing. The process of amending the comprehensive plan is described in the Implementation chapter.

### Community Character

Character is defined differently for each community but includes a blend of natural, built, visual, and cultural characteristics. It represents the sum of the attributes and assets that make a community unique, and that establish a sense of place for its residents. In the Town of Polk, community character means:

- ★ Maintaining a viable agricultural land base.
- ★ A rural lifestyle, exemplified by neighborliness, shared history, and peace & quiet,
- ★ Quality housing.
- ★ Abundant open space.
- ★ Well-planned commercial and light industrial development.

## Explore Municipal Incorporation

Municipal incorporation is the process of creating new cities and villages from unincorporated town territory. It is regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA). The primary reason to incorporate into a village would be to protect Polk's borders from future annexation by the Villages of Jackson, Richfield, and Slinger. The incorporation process begins with determination of the proposed boundaries of the territory to be incorporated and preparation of a map and legal description of the territory. WDOA is required to determine whether the proposed incorporation meets certain standards, including:

- ✦ Characteristics of the Territory
- ✦ Territory Beyond the Core
- ✦ Tax Revenue
- ✦ Level of Services
- ✦ Impact on the Remainder of the Town
- ✦ Impact on the Metropolitan Community

## Community Design Approaches

Community design approaches represent the guiding principles of the comprehensive plan and are integral to the desired future for the Town. Their incorporation into the development review and approval process will ensure new development blends harmoniously with the existing built and natural environment while providing for land use patterns which promote a high quality of living.

## Conservation Design

Preserving rural character is a primary goal of the comprehensive plan. To accommodate future growth while maintaining the integrity of the natural environment, the Town will encourage conservation design principles for proposed development when and where land characteristics warrant. Conservation design will allow Polk to:

- ✦ Protect rural character by maintaining (and restoring) natural areas, woodlands, scenic views, open undeveloped areas and farm fields, while addressing desired residential and commercial development needs.



Conservation Design applied to commercial development. Image courtesy: PMA Landscape Architects, Inc.

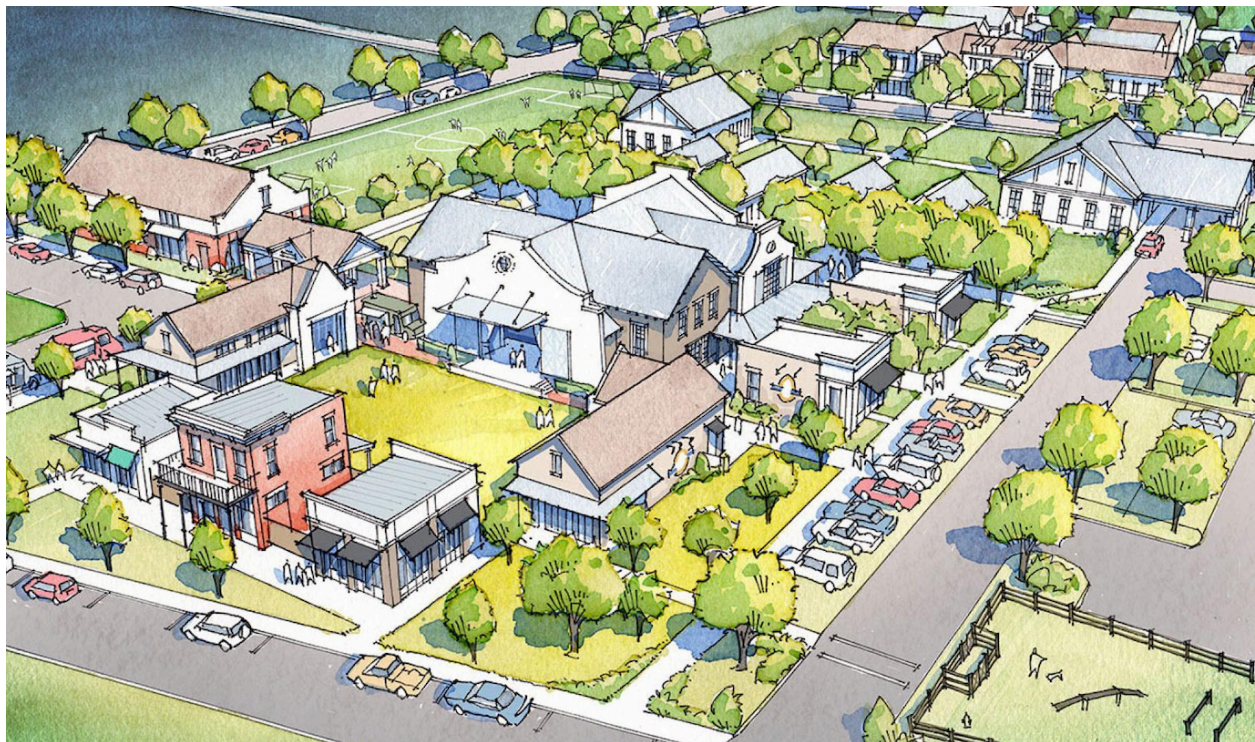
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- ★ Lower the cost of development by reducing the amount of impervious surface, minimizing stormwater management expenditures, shortening permit review times, and addressing the desire for community parks and open space.
- ★ Create natural corridors of green space between developments that can be utilized by wildlife and have the potential to be used as trail or walkway areas to improve connections between development nodes.
- ★ Preserve agricultural lands to ensure that they remain an economically viable component of the landscape.

The principles of conservation design can be applied to rural and urbanized environments and may be incorporated into residential, commercial, and industrial, development as well as parks and municipal properties.

## New Urbanism



Small town center design based on New Urbanist principles. Image courtesy: Thompson Placemaking

New urbanism is a planning methodology intended to reform the design of the built environment. Its goals are to raise the quality of life and standard of living by creating better places to live. New urbanism is the revival of the art of place making, not just developing. It would be applicable within a future town core.



New urbanist areas are characterized by:

- ✦ Walkability. Most things are accessible within a 10-minute walk (1/4 mi.). Pedestrian friendly street designs encourage walking and bicycling as a daily transportation mode.
- ✦ Connectivity. An integrated grid network of streets with limited dead ends and cul-de-sacs.
- ✦ Mixed Uses. A variety of differing land uses within neighborhoods and downtown structures.
- ✦ Housing Diversity. A variety of housing alternatives providing residential living choices for all demographic groups.
- ✦ Quality Architectural and Design Guidelines. Emphasizing beauty, comfort, quality of life, and sense of place.
- ✦ Sustainability. Energy-efficient structures and proximity of residential to commercial that encourages walking and bicycling; development that occurs in harmony with the existing natural and built environment.

## Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law defines traditional neighborhood development as compact, mixed-use neighborhoods where residential, commercial, and civic buildings are in close proximity to one another. TND is based on the principles of new urbanism and promotes a development scheme similar to traditional small towns. It includes:

- ✦ Compact Development. TND areas have a higher density than traditional single-family subdivisions, allowing for greater amounts of preserved open space. Compact development is oriented around people, not automobiles.
- ✦ Mixed Uses. TND includes a mixture of land uses. Nonresidential development is interspersed with residential land uses. Mixed-use development promotes walking and bicycling since many desired destinations are in close proximity to housing. Mixing land uses is also an effective strategy for broadening the tax base in communities that do not desire significant commercial development.
- ✦ Housing Choice. TND promotes varied housing types to accommodate households of all ages, incomes and sizes. This translates into varying lot sizes and varying housing types which may include single-family residences, townhomes, duplexes, housing for seniors or a combination thereof.
- ✦ Multimodal transportation. TND provides for access through an interconnected network of streets, paths and trails to accommodate multiple forms of transportation including walking, bicycling and driving.
- ✦ Cultural and Environmental Sensitivity and Design. TND can foster a sense of community identity. Under TND, the design of buildings and their placement receives special attention. The provision of adequate open spaces, well-planned design guidelines, the use of indigenous vegetation, and the incorporation of environmentally responsive wastewater treatment and stormwater management systems allow for land uses conducive with the landscape.





Residential development based upon Traditional Neighborhood Design. Image courtesy: The Village in Burns Harbor

## Develop a Vibrant Town Center

A town center is a compact, open-air, multi-use development organized around a clearly identifiable public realm where people gather and strengthen community bonds. It is built upon a diversity of land uses including commercial, institutional, recreational, and residential, among others. It serves as a hub of civic activity and provides a vital economic core for the community. The integration of multiple uses with a multilayered system of streets, pedestrian ways, paths, alleys, and parks helps create a memorable environment for both the pedestrian and the patron arriving by car. Common elements include a community focus (such as a park or town square), pedestrian orientation (as opposed to one focused on automobiles), and a higher density of land uses than would otherwise be available (or desirable) within the community. Rural town centers offer basic employment, services, shopping, and housing. They create jobs,



Town center concept drawing. Image courtesy: Richmond Free Press.

incubate small businesses, reduce sprawl, protect property values, provide civic facilities, offer venues for community events, and increase the community's options for goods and services.

For a successful town center:<sup>40</sup>

- ✦ Aim for a multifunctional town core. Successful town cores attract a wide range of individuals and provide housing, employment, shopping, culture, and entertainment, among others, at a scale compatible with the culture of the community.
- ✦ Create partnerships. A thriving core area requires the cooperation of local government, chambers of commerce, the private sectors, civic organizations, and other key institutions.
- ✦ Maintain and develop genuine public spaces. Careful planning can encourage 'on-street' activities such as commerce and dining and widen the public sphere, promoting community. Include gazebos, water features (fountains, ponds, etc.), pocket parks, WI FI hotspots, benches, and other areas for rest and reflection.
- ✦ Make it a community focal point. The town core should be the place to celebrate the Town of Polk through events, performances, farmers' markets, and other opportunities for community gatherings.

## Gateway Features

Gateway features provide a visual sense of place and are often reflective of a community's natural resources, architecture, or history. They identify entry points and, when used in conjunction with a wayfinding system, allow residents and visitors to easily navigate to key destinations.

Thematic landscaping, or landscaping utilizing a consistent design and species mix, when located at entry points and along major transportation routes, provides an effective means of enhancing local identity. This may be particularly important at the periphery of the township where an identifiable landscape feature would aid in informing residents and visitors that they are entering Polk. A unifying landscape theme, based upon regionally native plant species, may provide one component of an identifiable and inexpensive gateway system for the Town.



Gateway feature design for the Town of Three Lakes in Oneida County. Image courtesy: Community Planning & Consulting, LLC & OMNI Associates, Inc.

<sup>40</sup> Excerpted from: Solutions for America, 2009.

## Future Land Use Map

The future land use map is the visual representation of the visions, goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan. It is the principal tool used to guide development. Decisions related to development and governed by the zoning and subdivision ordinances must be made in a manner “consistent” with the map.

The future land use map will guide the Town Board and Plan Commission when making decisions regarding land use. Landowners and developers will consult the plan when making development decisions, and should be confident that an application for development that is consistent with the comprehensive plan will be approved. However, the comprehensive plan is not a static document. It must evolve to reflect current conditions. If not regularly reviewed and amended, it will become less effective over time. Applications for rezoning and development that are inconsistent with the plan must be given due consideration, not rejected out of hand. In some situations, it may be desirable to amend the plan (and maps) to accommodate a compatible, but previously unplanned use.

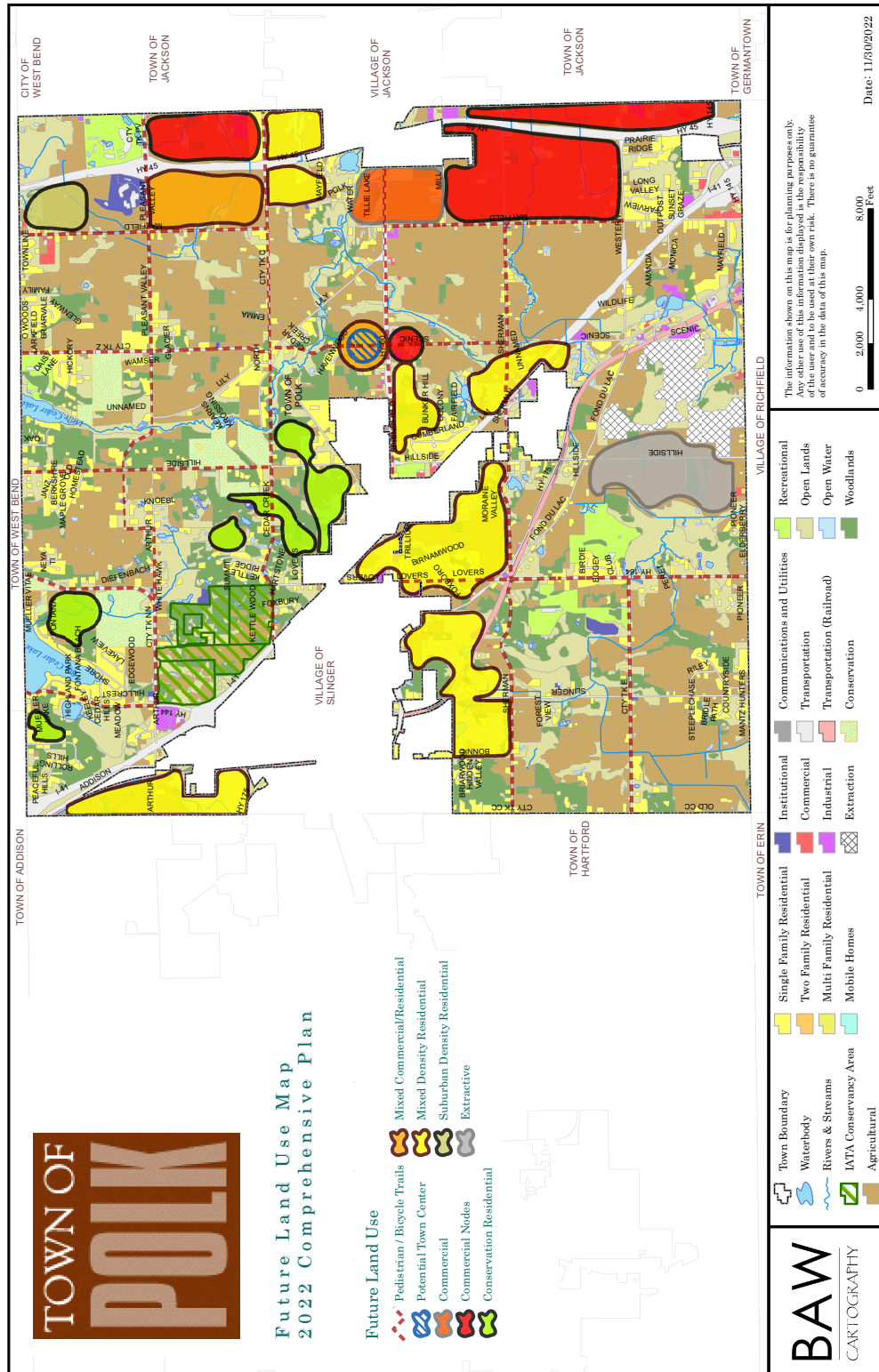
Changes to the plan (including plan maps) must be considered in the context of all nine required plan elements, and reflect the visions, goals, objectives, and policies expressed within the document. If an amendment is to be approved, the process must include a formal public hearing and distribution per the requirements of the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law. Please see the Implementation chapter for additional information regarding amending the plan.

**Table 11: Comparison of Future Land Use, Zoning, & Official Maps**

	Future Land Use Map	Zoning Map	Official Map
Comp Plan Requirement	Yes	No	No
Wisconsin Statutes	66.1001(2)(h)	59.69(5); 60.61(4); 62.23(7)	Chapter 62.23(6)
Local Government Adopts	By ordinance as part of comprehensive plan	By ordinance as part of zoning ordinance	By ordinance or resolution
Parcel-based	Not necessarily	Yes	No
Displays	General land use categories	Zoning districts	Streets, highways, parks, rights-of-way, historic districts, etc.
Use	Visual development guide for the community	Designate height, bulk, and use of land	Establish and preserve location of future streets, highways, parks, waterways

Source: Center for Land Use Education, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, 2004.







## Description of Land Uses

The land use categories presented on the Future Land Use Map are described below.

### Commercial & Industrial

#### Commercial Node

Development consistent with existing, conventional commercial land uses, catering to nearby neighborhoods and the regional marketplace, and located within concentrated development nodes. Linear commercial development, also known as 'corridor creep', should be avoided whenever possible.

#### Extractive

The Extractive land use classifications includes quarries, sand & gravel pits, and other nonmetallic mining operations.

#### Highway Business

Commercial, light industrial, and similar less intense uses compatible with nearby agricultural, institutional, and residential land uses. Areas identified as suitable for a mixture of compatible commercial and industrial land uses allowed on shared or abutting sites. Compatibility will be determined during the site plan review process.

#### Industrial

Higher intensity, manufacturing sites requiring separation from non-industrial uses.

### Infrastructure

#### Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

The proposed pedestrian and bicycle system appearing on the Future Land Use map will link neighborhoods to parks and other key destination nodes and provide increased access for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other non-motorized transportation modes.

#### Transportation

Streets, roads, highways, rail lines, and their associated rights-of-way.

#### Utilities

Public and private owned facilities and structures including electrical substations, telecommunications services, wastewater treatment facilities, municipal wells, and waste management, among others.

## Institutional

Uses including, but not necessarily limited to: Town of Polk municipal buildings and other government-owned structures and facilities; educational facilities, places of worship, and cemeteries; and, hospitals, senior living communities, and other larger-scale healthcare facilities.

## Mixed-Use

### Mixed Commercial / Residential

Proposed mixed-use areas are intended to allow for desirable development and redevelopment implemented through a Mixed-Use Zoning Overlay or similar mechanism. An overlay would not supplant underlying zoning districts, but allow for compatible residential and commercial development as a conditional use on a site-by-site basis. Compatibility will be determined during the site plan review process.

### Town Center

The proposed Town Center allows for compatible residential, commercial, light manufacturing, institutional, and recreation development consistent with an approved town center plan and implemented through a mixed-use zoning district, zoning overlay, planned unit development, or similar mechanism.

## Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

### Existing Parks

Existing public and private parks and outdoor recreation facilities.

### Primary Environmental Corridors

Designated by SEWRPC, primary environmental corridors are concentrations of significant natural resources at least 400 acres in area, at least two miles in length, and at least 200 feet in width.

### Proposed Community Parks

Community parks are generally five or more acres in size and are intended to serve the recreational needs of the greater community. They may be active, passive, or a combination thereof. Amenities within an active park may include athletic fields, play equipment, tennis courts, basketball courts, band shells, pavilions, restrooms, and the like. Passive parks provide opportunities for rest and reflection and interaction with nature. They may include nature trails, hiking and skiing trails, and picnic areas, and tend to include restorative and educational elements such as prairie restoration and reforestation.

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## Proposed Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system and the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Users generally access them on foot or by bicycle and will come from a 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius around the park (approximately a 5 to 10 minute walk). They tend to be 5 acres in size or smaller.

## Riparian Parkway

The boundaries of the proposed riparian parkways would extend 100' from the high-water mark on each side of the selected stream segments (encompassing County shoreland setbacks). The purposes of the parkways will be to provide pedestrian and bicycle access to existing and proposed parks and to improve water quality, preserve wildlife habitat, and mitigate flooding. Riparian parkways would not be imposed upon existing land uses, but implemented upon review of applications for rezones and land divisions.

## Residential

### Conservation Residential

The purpose of the Conservation Residential (CR) category is twofold: to create a transitional buffer between the more densely developed villages to the east and west and the generally agricultural-oriented interior of the township; and, allow for smaller lot sizes in exchange for permanently preserved open space adjoining environmental corridors. The CR allows for market-based residential development consistent with the goal of preserving rural character, agricultural land, and functional open space. Subdivisions within the CR shall be allowed a higher density per acre of developed area in return for setting aside forty percent of the development as permanently preserved open space.

### Mixed Density Residential

The Mixed Density Residential (MDR) classification allows for minimum lot sizes ranging from one-half to one acre in size. The purpose of the MDR is to provide a more market-based alternative to the Suburban Density Residential category so as to better compete the higher density residential development permissible in the villages.

### Suburban Density Residential

The Suburban Density Residential (SDR) category allows single-family subdivision development with minimum lot sizes of 60,000 square feet. Most of the areas shown in this category are existing residential subdivisions, existing residential development in the hamlets of Cedar Creek and Mayfield, and residential areas around the lakes.

## Town Center Neighborhood

The Town Center Neighborhood establishes a desired mix of residential land use types in support of the nonresidential land uses located within the proposed town center. It would include a compatible mix of single-family, two-family, and mid-scale multi-family units oriented around parks and common open space. A preferred ratio of housing types and unit densities is presented in the chart on the following page. Each of the twenty-five squares represents an acre of land.

The number of dwelling units allowable per acre would be as follows:

- ✦ Single-family – two
- ✦ Duplex – four
- ✦ Courtyard cottages – six
- ✦ Triplex/quadplex – eight

At full build-out, sixty housing units would be served by three acres of park and six acres of common open space. Common open spaces would host clustered wastewater treatment systems and low impact stormwater management systems utilizing native prairie plants.

Common Open Space	Single-Family	Single-Family	Common Open Space	Common Open Space
Single-Family	Single-Family	Duplex	Courtyard Cottage	Triplex / Quadplex
Duplex	Park	Park	Park	Duplex
Single-Family	Single-Family	Duplex	Courtyard Cottage	Triplex / Quadplex
Common Open Space	Single-Family	Single-Family	Common Open Space	Common Open Space

Relationship between housing types, parks, and open space in a Town Center Neighborhood development.

## Rural

### Agricultural

Area within which agricultural land and rural uses shall be preserved for as long as is practicable.

### Rural Character

Rural uses include, but are not necessarily limited to: agriculture-related uses; value-added, nonagricultural uses on working farms; limited, large-lot residential development; outdoor recreation uses specified in the zoning ordinance; and, local facilities and services.



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## Water

### Surface Water

Lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams.

### Wetland

Areas designated as wetlands by WDNR.

For additional information related to land use, please refer to the 2009 Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan.



## Ch. 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation

### Introduction

Intergovernmental cooperation may be defined as any arrangement through which two or more municipalities communicate visions and coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. It can include the sharing of information, facilities, and equipment or involve entering into formal intergovernmental agreements.<sup>41</sup> The purpose of the intergovernmental cooperation chapter is to describe current intergovernmental agreements, explore opportunities for future collaboration, and identify potential areas of conflict between the Town of Polk and its governmental neighbors.

### Intergovernmental Goals

*Maintain effective working relationships with neighboring communities.*

*Collaborate with adjoining communities and Washington County to create pedestrian & bicycle facilities linking regional trails with local amenities.*

*Continue to pursue opportunities to coordinate local planning actions with neighboring municipalities and Washington County.*

*Explore potential for shared service and equipment agreements with adjoining villages and towns.*

<sup>41</sup> Excerpted from: *Guide to Preparing the Intergovernmental Element of a Comprehensive Plan*, WDOA, 2002.

## Intergovernmental Cooperation

### Benefits

Intergovernmental cooperation between and among cities, villages, towns, and counties often produces less expensive and more efficient governmental services. Mergers of similar services can provide substantial cost savings when administrative and equipment duplication is reduced. Significant savings may be realized when local governments combine purchasing, planning, and contracted service delivery processes.

Cooperation during comprehensive planning efforts may be the most effective way to collaborate with neighboring communities. It provides opportunities to collectively identify issues, brainstorm ideas, and reach consensus. It also offers an occasion to address critical issues before decisions have been made and before development activities occur that may limit future solutions. Cooperating with planning provides opportunities for jurisdictions to be proactive rather than reactive. Opportunities for collaboration in planning and the sharing of facilities and services between municipal governments include, among others:

- ✦ Water and wastewater treatment facilities
- ✦ Public safety, including police, fire, and rescue
- ✦ Joint economic development efforts
- ✦ Libraries and parks & recreation
- ✦ Solid Waste & Recycling
- ✦ Group purchasing (health insurance, retirements, investments, etc.)
- ✦ Partnerships in pursuit of state and federal funding
- ✦ Sharing of municipal vehicles and equipment (snow plows, mowers, dump trucks, etc.)
- ✦ Sharing of staff

### Challenges

There are often strong desires on the part of elected officials and residents to maintain the independence of existing jurisdictions. Efforts to increase cooperation and collaboration must deal with existing organizational missions and structures that support the independence of each community. The issues to be addressed when entering into multi-jurisdictional partnerships include:

- ✦ Desire for community autonomy
- ✦ Questions regarding the allocation of costs
- ✦ Fear of loss of service quality
- ✦ Creating trust and an effective implementation mechanism

## Intergovernmental Agreements

The Town of Polk is party to the following intergovernmental agreements:

- ✦ Boundary Agreement with Village of Jackson
- ✦ Road Maintenance Agreement with Village of Richfield (Pioneer Road)
- ✦ Road Maintenance Agreement with Town of West Bend (Townline / Sleeping Dragon Roads)

## Intergovernmental Issues

### Annexation

Annexation is the mechanism through which incorporated municipalities (cities and villages) increase their land base. Since cities and villages may not annex land from each other, it is adjoining towns that provide the potential for physical growth. Annexation occurs for a number of reasons: to accommodate current development demand; 'bank' developable acreage for future needs; maximize return on infrastructure investment (sewer, water, roads, etc.); and, expand the tax base. Land owners and developers in abutting towns may petition for annexation to gain municipal services (mainly sewer and water, but also police protection and waste collection, among others), and to achieve desired development densities (i.e., maximum return on investment). Mitigating factors in the town's favor include lower taxes, greater land use freedom, and a more direct relationship with elected officials (perhaps best exemplified by the Annual Meeting).

Areas at particular risk are those near a city or village with good potential for an economically valuable use...properties that would otherwise contribute positively to the town's tax base.<sup>42</sup> Lands most likely to be annexed are large, undeveloped, and unburdened parcels with few landowners located close to existing sewer and water extensions and without significant natural impediments to the extension of services (streams, wetlands, topography, etc.). When annexation occurs, towns lose not only the land but the tax revenue associated with its current (typically agricultural) and future (residential commercial, industrial) uses. Yet the roads serving such lands and the cost associated with maintaining them most often remains in the Town.

### Extraterritorial Zoning

Wisconsin's extraterritorial zoning statutes, Chapter 62.23(7a), Wis. Stats., allows a first-, second- or third-class city to adopt zoning in town territory, three miles beyond a city's corporate limits. A fourth-class city or village may adopt zoning one and one-half miles beyond its corporate limits. Under extraterritorial zoning authority, a city or village may enact an interim zoning ordinance that freezes existing zoning, or if there is no zoning, existing uses while a plan and regulations are developed. The statute provides that the interim zoning ordinance may be for two years. A joint extraterritorial zoning committee must be established consisting of three city or village plan commission members and three town members. The city or village plan commission works with the joint committee in preparing the plan and regulations. The joint committee must approve the plan and regulations by majority vote before they take effect.

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<sup>42</sup> Excerpted from: *The Municipal Annexation Process in Wisconsin*, Legislative Reference Bureau, Volume 4, Number 12, July 2020.

## Extraterritorial Plat Review<sup>43</sup>

The geographical area in which a city or village can exercise its extraterritorial powers is the same as the extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction. However, the process for exercising extraterritorial plat review is very different from the process for exercising extraterritorial zoning. Extraterritorial zoning requires town approval of the zoning ordinance. It is not widely used in the state. Extraterritorial plat review applies automatically if the city or village adopts a subdivision ordinance or an official map. The town does not approve the subdivision ordinance for the city or village. The city or village may waive its extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction if it does not want to exercise it.

The purpose of extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction is to help cities and villages influence the development pattern of areas outside the city/village boundaries that will probably be annexed to the city or village. In addition, it helps cities and villages protect land use near its boundaries from conflicting uses outside the city/village limits. However, since a town and/or the county may also have a subdivision ordinance that applies in the extraterritorial area, if there is a conflict in the requirements of the various ordinances, the proposed subdivision must comply with the most restrictive requirements.

The scope of the extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction has been the subject of several recent court decisions that limit the extraterritorial authority. The Wisconsin Supreme Court has held that a city or village does not have the authority to impose its own requirements and specifications for public improvements (streets and stormwater facilities) as a condition of extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction. A city or village also cannot condition approval of a plat in the extraterritorial area on annexation of the proposed subdivision to the city or village. The Wisconsin Court of Appeals has held that a municipality cannot use its extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction to control the use of property. The court of appeals found this to be a zoning function that can be exercised only through an extraterritorial zoning ordinance.

## Boundary Agreements<sup>44</sup>

Boundary agreements are a valuable tool available to local communities to avoid potentially lengthy and costly litigation conflicts over annexation, incorporation, consolidation, land use, revenue, services, environmental resources and issues, new development, and other intergovernmental issues. Instead of dueling against one another in an adversarial and usually reactive manner, boundary agreements enable communities to proactively develop solutions to benefit the area as a whole and move both communities toward their desired future vision and goals. Three types of boundary agreements are allowed under Wisconsin law:

- ★ Cooperative Boundary Plans (Chapter 66.0307, Wis. Stats.). Long-term or permanent agreements between two or more communities. Requires review and approval by the Department of Administration.
- ★ General Agreements (Chapter 66.0301, Wis. Stats.). Short-term agreements no longer than 10 years between two or more communities. In addition to resolving boundary issues,

<sup>43</sup> Excerpted from: *Guide to Community Planning in Wisconsin*, Brian Ohm, UW Madison, 1996.

<sup>44</sup> Excerpted from: *Boundary Agreements*, Wisconsin Department of Administration website, 2018.



communities also frequently use General Agreements to share municipal equipment, buildings, staff, vehicles, and other service-related items.

- ★ Stipulations & Orders (Chapter 66.0225, Wis. Stats.). Agreements that are used to settle annexation disputes being litigated in court between two communities.

WDOA maintains a list of trained and experienced mediators to assist communities in developing boundary agreements.

## Intergovernmental Programs

### Wisconsin Department of Administration<sup>45</sup>

The Wisconsin Department of Administration Division of Intergovernmental Relations (DIR) provides a broad array of services to the public and state, local and tribal governments. It supports counties, municipalities, citizens, and businesses by providing support services in land use planning, land information and records modernization, municipal boundary review, plat review, demography, and coastal management programs.

### Wisconsin Towns Association<sup>46</sup>

The Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA) is a statewide, voluntary, non-profit and non-partisan association of member town and village governments in the State of Wisconsin controlled by its Board of Directors. WTA's twin purposes are to support local control of government and to protect the interest of towns. In furtherance of those goals WTA provides three types of services for its members: legislative lobbying efforts, educational programs, and legal information. All elected and appointed officials of member governments are welcome to contact the WTA for general legal information relayed in a one-on-one fashion by one of our three attorneys. WTA's staff attorneys also examine requests for WTA to join ongoing cases as an amicus curiae party and also collaborate on an annual conference for town attorneys and others that might be interested in the town law field.

For additional information related to intergovernmental cooperation, please refer to the 2009 Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan.

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<sup>45</sup> Excerpted from: Wisconsin Department of Administration website, 2022.

<sup>46</sup> Source: Wisconsin Towns Association website, 2022.



## Ch. 9: Implementation

### Introduction

The implementation chapter is the “how to” portion of the plan. It describes the actions necessary to realize the visions, goals, objectives, and policies presented throughout this document. The information included within represents the commitment the Town of Polk has made to achieve its desired future.

### Implementation Goals

*Establish the policies necessary to ensure all land use decisions are consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan.*

*Act in good faith to implement the actions identified in this chapter.*

### Responsible Parties

The responsibility for implementing this plan lays primarily with the Plan Commission. The Town Board retains final approval authority over recommended implementation actions. All decisions pertaining to land use and development will be made in accordance with this document. The individuals and groups responsible for each action item are listed within the tables that follow.

## Review & Update Process

The comprehensive plan may be revised at any time. However, state statutes require that a comprehensive plan be updated no less than once every ten years. The Town of Polk will adhere to the following comprehensive plan review timeline:

- ✦ Five-year Review – Within five years of plan adoption, the Plan Commission will undertake a review of the document to determine whether revisions are warranted. The Town Board shall approve the amended plan.
- ✦ Ten-year Update – Within ten years of plan adoption, the Plan Commission will update the plan as required under the planning law.

## Petitions for Plan Revision

Any interested party may petition the Plan Commission for a revision to the comprehensive plan. The process for revising the plan would entail:

- ✦ Submittal of a request to have a petition for revision placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Plan Commission.
- ✦ Plan Commission review of request and recommendation to the Town Board.
- ✦ Town Board approval of opening the comprehensive plan to potential revision.

Once approved for potential revision, the process must adhere to all plan development and adoption requirements under the planning law.

## Implementation Plan

Table 13: Implementation		
Related Chapters	Task	Responsible Party
2023		
Implementation	Ensure comprehensive plan is incorporated into all development review and decision-making processes.	Town Clerk
Housing; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Land Use	Review, and if necessary revise, zoning ordinance and land division ordinance to ensure compliance with the planning law.	Town Board, Plan Commission, Consultant
Transportation; Utilities & Community Facilities	Consider adopting Official Map.	Plan Commission, Consultant

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2024		
Intergovernmental Cooperation	Begin preliminary discussions with villages regarding boundary agreements.	Town Board, Town Attorney
Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources	Adopt Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.	Plan Commission, Consultant
Utilities and Community Facilities; Economic Development	Pursue opportunities to expand access to high-speed, broadband Internet throughout the Town.	Town Board, Plan Commission
Transportation; Utilities & Community Facilities	Develop Capital Improvements Plan to budget for future capital expenditures.	Town Board, Consultant
2025		
Land Use; Economic Development	Consider engaging consultant to prepare Town Center Plan.	Plan Commission, Consultant
Transportation; Utilities & Community Facilities; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources	Pursue grant funding to implement outdoor recreation plan.	Plan Commission, Consultant
Land Use	Research potential for PDR / TDR programs.	Plan Commission, Town Attorney
2026		
Utilities & Community Facilities; Economic Development; Land Use	Consider implementation of Tax Increment Financing	Town Board, Town Attorney
2027		
Implementation	Undertake 'Five-Year Review' of comprehensive plan. Identify necessary updates and desired revisions.	Plan Commission