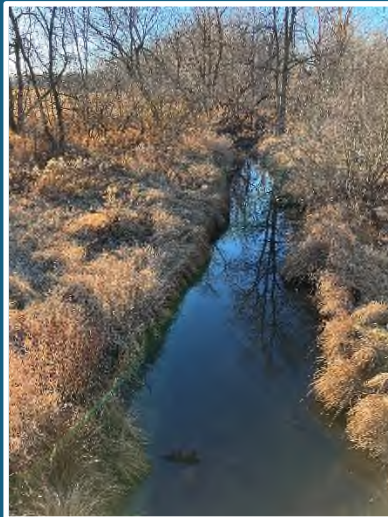


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Town of Rock Wood County, Wisconsin 2026

Prepared by:
Town of Rock Plan Commission



With the Assistance of:
Wood County Planning and Zoning
Department



Town of Rock Comprehensive Plan

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The Town of Rock and the Wood County Department of Planning and Zoning would like to thank all who participated in the planning process

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** Pictures in this plan were taken throughout the winter and fall of 2025 and spring of 2026*

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APPENDIX C. Town of Rock Community Survey Summary

1. Introduction

Background

The Town of Rock adopted their first zoning ordinance in 1976. The vision of the Town of Rock is to create a plan that can be amended by the Town as the need arises. On December 23, 2009, the Town of Rock Board adopted a Coordination Resolution. The resolution invokes the Town's legal standing and authority to coordinate with and insist on coordination by units and agencies of federal and state government claiming jurisdiction over lands and/or resources located within the jurisdiction of the Town of Rock pursuant to the federal and state constitutions, statutes and regulations. The 2009 Coordinated Land Use Plan was built using the nine elements of a comprehensive plan as a guideline. The Town of Rock will be developing the Comprehensive Plan using the Coordinated Land Use Plan as a parameter for developing the Goals, Objectives, and Policies. Welcome to the *Town of Rock Comprehensive Plan – 2026*.



Public Participation

To ensure public participation in the comprehensive planning process, the Town of Rock Plan Commission developed the following:

- A survey was conducted in 2020; the results were used during the development of the goals, objectives, and policies.
- Local citizens were encouraged to attend any or all planning sessions for updates. All meeting times and dates were posted at the official posting places and in compliance with the open meeting laws.
- Local citizens were encouraged to attend both the public informational meeting and the public hearing to be informed about progress and to offer comments/criticisms in an open forum.
- Local citizens were encouraged to access copies of drafts approved by the Town's Plan Commission which were posted on the Town's website. www.townofrock.com. Copies are available at Town Hall.

Purpose

Comprehensive planning stems from the core responsibility of the Town of Rock to protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community. This comprehensive plan is the most fundamental planning document that can be prepared by the town. It is designed to guide current and future development of the community and provides the foundation for zoning and land

use regulation decisions. This includes a vision for the future with realistic goals, objectives, policies, and programs that will provide direction over the next 10 to 20 years. Moreover, proper planning helps organize efforts, financial resources, and time, creating efficiency. This plan is intended to serve the Town of Rock Board of Supervisors, town committees, and most importantly the town residents.

Statutory Basis

This plan was prepared pursuant to § 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

According to statute, the Town of Rock may adopt, prepare or amend a plan “made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.”

There are (9) nine elements that a comprehensive plan shall address as defined by the comprehensive planning law:

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

Furthermore, the comprehensive planning law identifies consistency requirements. Beginning on **DATE**, if the Town of Rock “enacts or amends” any of the following ordinances, the ordinances shall be consistent with the town’s comprehensive plan.

1. Official Mapping
2. Zoning
3. Land-Subdivision
4. Shoreland or Wetland

Plan Organization

- **Section 1. Introduction:** Provides an overview of the purpose, planning process and timeframe for the development of the *Town of Rock Comprehensive Plan – 2026*.
- **Section 2. Issues and Opportunities Element:** Presents important community facts and insights into the past and present, to conceptualize how the Town of Rock might be in the future.
- **Section 3. Housing Element:** Assesses the Town's current housing stock and analyzes housing needs, to ensure an adequate housing supply that meets current and future demands.
- **Section 4. Transportation Element:** Reviews the Town's transportation system components and discusses current and future changes/additions to that system.
- **Section 5. Utilities and Community Facilities Element:** Provides an overview of applicable utilities, community facilities and government services in the Town. Framework is presented to help guide future town-level services.
- **Section 6. Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element:** Analyzes important town landscape characteristics and resources to effectively manage future community development, while preserving the functions of agricultural, natural and cultural resources.
- **Section 7. Economic Development Element:** Analyzes the Town's labor force, economic base and the types of businesses and industries that are desired. Additionally, this section identifies state, regional and county economic development resources available to the town.
- **Section 8. Intergovernmental Cooperation Element:** Assesses current cooperative activities and relationships with other public agencies, to identify opportunities for joint planning and decision making.
- **Section 9. Land-Use Element:** Presents an inventory of the existing land uses in the Town. Additionally, this section analyzes land use trends, supply, demand, conflicts, and contains a future land use map guiding future land use decisions.
- **Section 10. Implementation Element:** Compilation of specific actions necessary to effectively implement the overall vision, goals, objectives, policies, and programs identified in the nine elements of the plan.
- **Section 11. Appendices:** Contains supplementary reference material that is helpful in providing a more comprehensive understanding of information presented in the plan.

Planning Process

The planning process for the *Town of Rock Comprehensive Plan – 2026* spanned a few years due to available staff and turnover, starting in the fall of 2023. Initially, the Town of Rock requested assistance from the Wood County Department of Planning and Zoning for planning services and the preparation of a complete update of the Town's comprehensive plan. The planning process involved multiple phases.

The primary function of the Town Plan Commission was overseeing and preparing updates to the plan's nine elements. The commission met biweekly and was responsible for reviewing data, prioritizing needs, and determining goals, objectives, and policies based on information gathered from the public. Subsequently, the commission recommends adoption of the plan to the Town Board.

An extensive review of the 2011 Coordinated Land Use Plan was performed to see what had occurred since the last plan update. Updated information and data were collected on the physical and social characteristics of the Town of Rock and their relationship to current and future development. There was regular and meaningful public involvement throughout the planning process. Goals, objectives, policies, and programs were updated to provide direction over the next 10 to 20 years.

The planning process is not finished with the completion or adoption of this plan. The Town of Rock will be responsible for ensuring that implementation of the plan is consistent with its overall vision, goals, objectives and recommendations.

Public Participation

The Town of Rock recognizes public participation as one of the most important aspects of the planning process. Public involvement is important to ensure that the plan continues to truly reflect community needs and input from the public. Consequently, the Town Board adopted public participation procedures early in the planning process to ensure public input is responded to and incorporated into the plan. This is a requirement of § 66.1001(4)(a) Wis. Stats.

High importance was placed on fostering public participation in every stage of the plan update. This included a community survey, public meetings, public hearings, and other public outreach activities. Most public input for the plan update came from a community survey. The Community Survey Summary is presented in the appendix of this plan for reference purposes. In August 2020, the Plan Commission mailed out 422 community surveys to all residents and landowners. The mailing package contained a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and a pre-paid postage return envelope. 206 completed surveys were returned by mail with a completion/response rate of over 48%.

All surveys were reviewed, and the data was compiled into a survey summary report. The summary presents numeric tabulation and graphic representation for each question in the survey. Data presented in the summary document is incorporated throughout this plan.

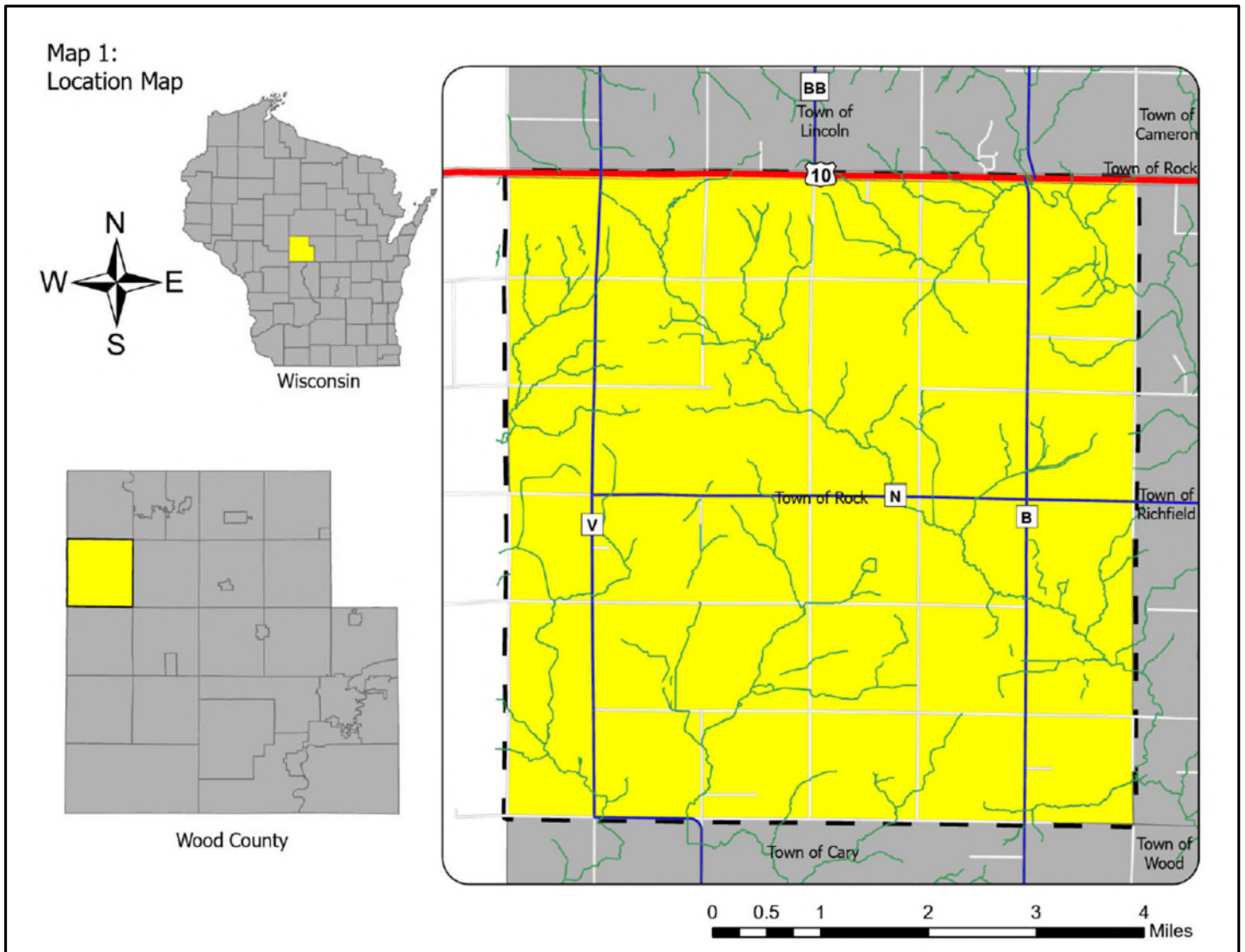
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2. Issues and Opportunities

This section presents important community facts and insights into the past and present, to conceptualize how the Town of Rock might be in the future. This background information provides a community profile of the town. The overall plan's vision, goals, objectives, policies, and procedures were defined through public participation and trends identified in this element. This provides a basis for the town to make current and future development decisions over a 20-year planning period.

Location

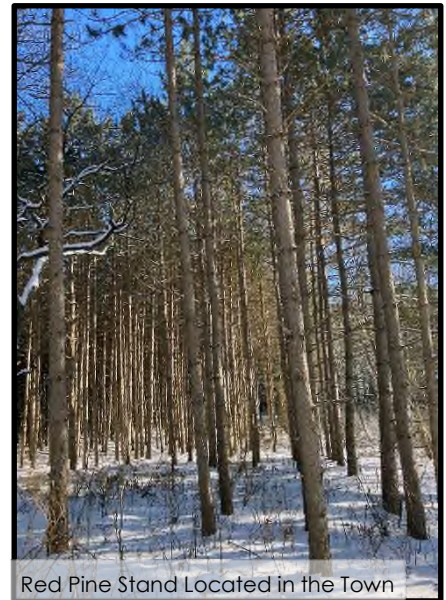
The Town of Rock is situated in the north-west corner of Wood County, Wisconsin (Map 1). The Town consists of 34.5 square miles (22,114.8 acres), measuring approximately 5.95 miles from north to south and 5.83 miles from east to west. The Town is located southwest of the City of Marshfield. There are four towns surrounding the Town of Rock, Lincoln to the north, Richfield to its east, Cary to its south, and the Town of Lynn, Clark County to the west.



History

The Town of Rock was first surveyed in the summer of 1851. That fall, a crew walked the woods and waded through the swamps to mark all the interior corners in the Town of Rock. The Town was created by detaching land from Lincoln town to the North. The first record of landownership in the town dates to 1852, with heavy settlement beginning after 1855. The Town was officially established in 1878; the first meeting of the Town of Rock Board of Supervisors was held in April of that year.

The Town of Rock had historically consisted of a three-member board but was expanded to five-member board in approximately 1993. The board's expansion was a result of a need for a 5-member board with alternating terms as an entire board was replaced in a single year. In addition to the Town Board, the town also elects a Clerk. The town Treasurer became a hired position in 2020, and the board hired an assistant Clerk/Treasurer in 2022. Duties of positions are described under Wisconsin Statutes.



Red Pine Stand Located in the Town

Demographic Information & Social Characteristics

Demographic data and social characteristics information was appropriated from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA).

Population

According to the most recent census (2020), the town had a total population of 787. From 1990 to 2010 the town's population increased by 91 residents. In the 2020 Census we saw a reduction of 68 residents. Rock experienced what many communities that are located next to growing cities experienced; suburban growth between 1990 and 2010. During this period, suburban growth from the City of Marshfield to nearby unincorporated towns increased. From 2010 to 2020 the town experienced a negative growth rate. (Table 1)

Table 1 TOWN OF ROCK POPULATION	
YEAR	RESIDENTS
1970	607
1980	745
1990	764
2000	856
2010	855
2020	787
Source: U.S. Census Bureau	

Population Trends and Change

Recent population estimates from 2010 to 2020 indicate that the Town of Rock has experienced relatively flat population growth. Populations from prior years are presented in (Table 1). At the same time, Wood County, in general, experienced a similar trend. Among neighboring communities, except for the Town of Lincoln, all have a negative percent change in population from 2010 to 2020. Additionally, knowing the Town of Rock is approximately 34.5 square miles, the overall density of the Township in 2020 is approximately 23 persons per square mile.

Table 2 Population Trends (of Residents)					
Town Name	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2020
Rock Township	856	855	787	-0.1170%	-8.6404%
Lincoln Township	1,554	1,564	1,593	0.6394%	1.8205%
Richfield Township	1,523	1,628	1,628	6.4496%	0.0000%
Cary Township	398	424	406	6.1321%	-4.4335%
Lynn Township	834	861	834	3.1359%	-3.2374%
Wood County	75,555	74,749	74,207	-1.0783%	-0.7304%

Demographics Service Center

Population Projections

Projections of the anticipated future population of the Town of Rock are presented in (Table 3). Again, these projections are not a statement of what will happen, but a presumption of what might happen if patterns and trends hold true. Based on population projections from 2020 to year 2035, the town will continue to decrease in population.

Table 3 Population Projections (of Residents)							
	Census Year 2020	Projection 2030	Projection 2040	Projection 2050	% Change 2020-2030	% Change 2030-2040	% Change 2040-2050
Rock Township	787	753	716	674	-4.5%	-5%	-6%

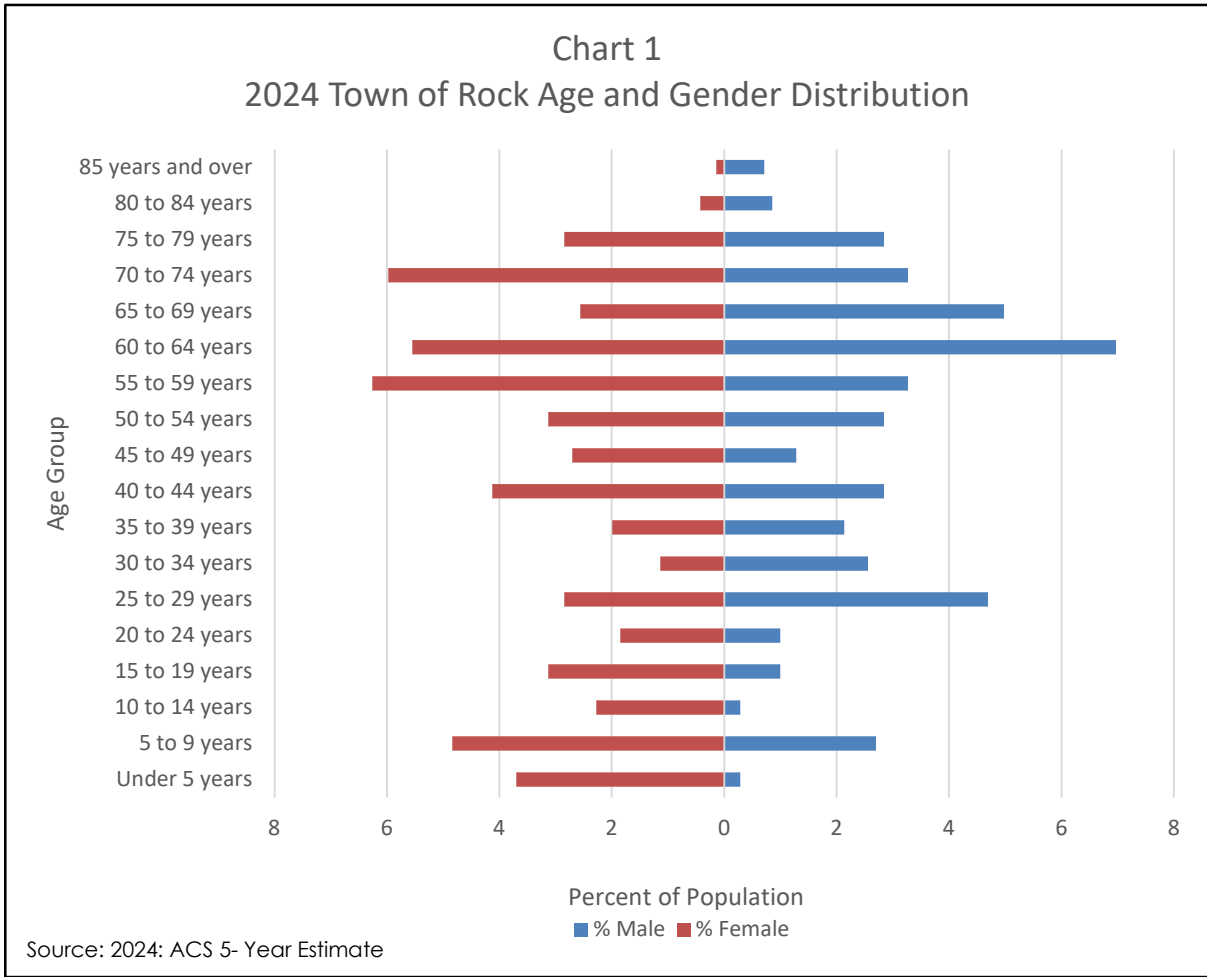
Source: WDOA Demographics

Age and Gender Distribution

Table 4 illustrates the aging population in the Town of Rock since 2010 through 2020. Rock's current estimated median age is 54.7. The Median age for Wood County is 43.7 but the State's Median age is 40.5. This illustrates that the town of Rock's Median age is getting older while the broad Median age is getting younger in the state. This is a trend indicated that we have a population that continues to increase in age over time in the township of Rock. Between 2010 and 2020, there has been a 50% increase in the 85 years or older, and a noticeable decrease in the age groups representing 5 to 24 years old.

The 2020 Census shows that Rock's population is approximately 47.2% Male and 52.8% Female. Visualized in Chart 1 is data from the 2024 ACS 5 Years estimate on the age and gender of the Town's populations. As stated above, it shows an overall aging population along with an increasing population of younger females and decrease in males.

Table 4 TOWN OF ROCK POPULATION PROFILE 2010-2020					
	2010	Percent (%)	2020	Percent (%)	Percent Change (2010-2020)
Under 5 years	54	5.8%	56	7.3%	1.85%
5 to 9 years	76	8.2%	53	6.9%	-43.4%
10 to 14 years	40	4.3%	33	4.3%	-21.2%
15 to 19 years	87	9.4%	41	5.4%	-112.2%
20 to 24 years	33	3.6%	9	1.2%	-266.7%
25 to 34 years	66	7.1%	72	9.4%	8.3%
35 to 44 years	172	18.5%	85	11.1%	-102.4%
45 to 54 years	194	20.9%	121	15.8%	-60.33%
55 to 59 years	53	5.7%	103	13.5%	48.54%
60 to 64 years	69	7.4%	54	7.1%	-27.8%
65 to 74 years	40	4.3%	99	12.9%	59.6%
75 to 84 years	38	4.1%	27	3.5%	-40.7%
85 years and over	6	0.6	12	1.6%	50%
Total	928	100.0%	765	100.0%	-21.3%
Male	453	48.8%	361	47.2%	-25.5%
Female	475	51.2%	404	52.8%	17.6%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau					



Race

Shown in (Table 5) the Town of Rock has a population that is predominantly White (98%), according to the 2020 U.S. Census. A very small percent of residents are: Asian (1%); African American (0.9); Some Other Race (0.3); and American Indian and Alaska Native (0.1). This trend is similar to that of Wood County as a whole.

Table 5 TOWN OF ROCK POPULATION BY RACE 2020	
Race	Percent (%)
White	95%
Black or African American	3.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0%
Asian	0.3%
Some Other Race	0%
Source: Census Reporter	

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is a term commonly referring to the highest degree of education an individual has completed. Educational attainment data for the Town of Rock, Wood County and State of Wisconsin are presented in (Table 6). The Town of Rock in the past, specifically before the 2000's, had educational attainment at higher levels that lagged behind the state and county. However, since 2000 Rock's proportion of high school graduates has increased and is consistent with the State and County. The amount of higher education attainment is consistent with Wood County, however, is still generally lower than the state except for Graduate or higher degrees. This trend may be partially attributed to a large medical employment base located in the City of Marshfield.

Table 6 Education Levels (% of Residents)						
	Town of Rock		Wood County		Wisconsin	
	2000	2020	2000	2020	2000	2020
High School Diploma	41.6%	37%	41%	38%	34.6%	29%
College/No Degree	16.8%	30%	18.8%	33%	20.6%	30%
Bachelor's degree	4.80%	12%	11.8%	16%	15.3%	22%
Graduate/Professional Degree	3.6%	16%	5.1%	8%	7.20%	12%

Income and Poverty

(Table 7) lists the income levels for Rock, Wood County and Wisconsin. It is interesting to note that Rocks' household, and per capita income levels are significantly higher than the county and state in both 2010 and 2020. Higher income levels typically translate to a desire for larger homes, a fact that Rock must consider when developing land use regulations in the town.

The percentage of individuals at or below the poverty level in 2020 is shown in (Table 8) for Rock, Wood County and Wisconsin. Of all families in the town for the 2020 census, 7.4% had incomes below the poverty figure. This is lower than both the county and state.

Table 8 PERCENT IN POVERTY 2020	
Community	% of Individuals
Town of Rock	7.40%
Wood County	9.30%
Wisconsin	10.70%
<i>Source: Census Reporter</i>	

Table 7 INCOME LEVELS 2010-2020				
Community	2010		2020	
	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
Town of Rock	\$58,625	\$33,451	\$80,893	\$56,592
Wood County	\$47,204	\$24,893	\$35,055	\$66,461
Wisconsin	\$51,598	\$26,624	\$41,785	\$74,631
<i>Source: census reporter</i>				

Employment Characteristics

Table 9 illustrates the general employment characteristics for the Town of Rock.

The vast majority travel outside of the township to work with 73% of residents driving themselves with a mean Travel time to work of 20.8 minutes. 13% of town residents have a job that they can work from home and 13% of town residents take advantage of the ability to carpool.

Noticeable changes occurred in the population of the Town of Rock that was employed in certain industry sectors between 2010 and 2020 as displayed in the table 10 below from the U.S. Census Bureau. Most of the negative change is likely due to a population decrease or a failure to report between the two years. However, the information and finance and insurance, and real estate, rental and leasing held steady or slightly increased. This may be because of the Town's proximity to the City Marshfield and expanding finance and real estate businesses within the city.

Table 9 TOWN OF ROCK COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS (2023 Estimates)	
Means of Transport	Percent (%)
Drove alone	73%
Carpooled	13%
Public Transit	0%
Bicycle	0%
Walked	0%
Other	1%
Worked from Home	13%
Mean Travel Time to Work	20.8 Minutes
<i>Source: Census reporter</i>	

**Table 10
TOWN OF ROCK EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
(2010-2020)**

INDUSTRY	2010	2020	
	Number Employed	Number Employed	Percent Change
Employed persons 16 years and over	567	391	-45.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	34	19	-78.9%
Construction	37	29	-27.6%
Manufacturing	111	88	-26.1%
Wholesale trade	13	16	18.7%
Retail trade	42	16	-162.5%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	56	18	-211.1%
Information	4	7	42.9%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	16	18	11.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	18	17	-5.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	170	120	-41.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	49	11	-34.5%
Other services, except public administration	13	25	48.0%
Public administration	4	7	42.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Employment Projections

Information on employment forecasts is unavailable at the township level. However, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development produces projections of industry employment at a regional level. Table (11) listed below examines ten-year employment forecasts for North Central Wisconsin over the 2022 to 2032 time period. The Town of Rock is located within this region. The largest percentage of change falls in the mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction. There are active non-metallic mining operations within the Town of Rock and stresses the importance of its value of agricultural land in relationship to the necessity of non-metallic mining operations.

Table 11: Wisconsin Long Term Industry Employment Projections, 2022-2032(1)

Industry	2022 Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Employment Change (2022-2032)	Percent Change (2022-2032)
Total All Industries	3,162,331	3,387,402	225,071	7.1
Goods Producing	652,063	691,269	39,206	6.0
Natural Resources and Mining	44,399	47,530	3,131	7.1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	41,422	44,031	2,609	6.3
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	2,977	3,499	522	17.5
Construction	130,865	145,415	14,550	11.1
Manufacturing	476,799	498,324	21,525	4.5
Services Providing	2,348,104	2,517,114	169,010	7.2
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	555,679	587,138	31,459	5.7
Information	44,412	46,961	2,549	5.7
Financial Activities	158,323	168,735	10,412	6.6
Finance and Insurance	131,209	138,845	7,636	5.8
Professional and Business Services	326,200	360,419	34,219	10.5
Education and Health Services	675,933	722,573	46,640	6.9
Leisure and Hospitality	271,202	303,335	32,133	11.9
Other Services (except Government)	150,414	161,571	11,157	7.4
Government	165,941	166,382	441	0.3
Self Employed Workers, All Jobs	162,164	179,019	16,855	10.4

Department of workforce development

Household Characteristics

A household includes all people who occupy a housing unit. A housing unit is a structure, i.e., single-family home, duplex, four-plex, etc. The Town of Rock currently has 315 Housing units located in the township. There are about 10% of the housing units currently listed as vacant. Vacant doesn't necessarily mean the unit is abandoned, it can also relate to a seasonal dwelling, hunting cabin, or home currently on the market. 95% of the housing units in the township are single family dwellings with 5% listed as mobile homes. The number of households in the Town of Rock is 283 with each household having an average of 2.5 people residing.

The number of households in the Town of Rock currently is decreasing, the Town had 291 households in the township in 2010. That is a reduction of 34 households over a 10-year span. Prior to this decrease the Town had been seeing an increase in households in the township. The average

number of people per household has continuously decreased over the same time period. In 2000 the Town had an average household size of 2.94. The Town is currently below the projected number of people in the households within the township for 2030 to be at 2.62. Large families of the past have been the norm whereas the Town is seeing a decline in the size of the families. The trend for more households and fewer people per household is likely to continue throughout the planning period, although at a slower rate than in past years.

Housing Projections

The number of households is a function of population and population per household. Table 12 outlines Rock's projected household growth and persons per household expected over the next 30 years. As just noted above, the population and total households are expected to continue to slightly increase in the town while the number of people living in each household is expected to continue to decline.

Table 12 TOWN OF ROCK HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS 2020-2050			
Year	Population	Households	Persons Per Household
2020	787	283	2.5
2030	753	286	2.3
2040	716	289	2.1
2050	675	292	2.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Wisconsin Department of Administration

The Town of Rock's Vision Statement

The Town of Rock seeks to maintain a sustainable rural community while providing dependable town services, an excellent quality of life, and a safe and supportive community where the residents can enjoy a peaceful rural lifestyle.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats Analysis (SWOT)

This SWOT Analysis identifies perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that either promote or inhibit the prosperity, safety, health, and general welfare of Rock residents. Components of the list often identify what needs to be done and puts problems into perspective. The SWOT Analysis aided in the development of an overall "vision" that will provide broad, long-range guidance for the Town of Rock for the next 10 to 20 years.

STRENGTHS

Location: Close proximity to the City of Marshfield, proximity to schools and places of worship, quality natural resources/physical environment, undeveloped land, low density housing

Town Character: Rural character, simple, high-quality appearance of housing, quiet, woodland and wildlife, peaceful, safe and supportive community

Livability: Quiet, high quality of life, happy residents, safe and supportive community, access to full school system (Marshfield and Pittsville School District), low taxes, low traffic, desirable place to live, outdoor recreation opportunities

Town Services: Dependable town services, strong and active town board, zoning administration, basic road infrastructure, ditch and road maintenance, Lindsey Park, school forest, Town Hall, Town of Rock and Lincoln Cemetery.

OPPORTUNITIES

Preserve Identity: Maintain rural character, maintain existing agricultural land, conservation of natural resources, well-planned development, and maintain housing density

Land Use and Development: Maintain basic infrastructure, maintain zoning ordinance

Access to Services: Expand use of Town properties, recruit volunteers for fire department, utilize Marshfield's services/resources, and improve town communication with residents

WEAKNESSES

Community Involvement: Low resident involvement in community government

Quality of Life: Funding, low frequency of recycling pickup,

THREATS

Future Development: Overdevelopment, maintaining tax base, lack of ordinance enforcement, funding/budgets, US 10 expansion, renewable energy developments

Trends: Aging population, less small dairy farms/more large dairy farms, more housing development, lack of citizen involvement

Safety and Security: Volunteers for fire department, law enforcement

Goals, Objectives & Policies

A major component of the comprehensive planning process is the identification of goals, objectives and policies. They provide the foundation on which the planning process is built. Most importantly, they provide the framework for guiding current and future development in the Town of Rock. Furthermore, the vision statement serves as overall policy for the Town of Rock as well as the foundation for its goals, objectives and policies. The Town Plan Commission developed the goals, objectives and policies of this plan.

Goals: describe general desired outcomes, conditions and/or achievements to strive toward in the future.

Objectives: describe specific targets/tasks that should be achieved in an effort to advance towards accomplishing a goal. Objectives are a subset to goals.

Policies: describe a specific approach or recommendation to achieve an objective of a specific goal.

Elected officials, government leaders, staff, stakeholders, and individual citizens must work together cooperatively to accomplish the goals, objectives and policies of this plan.

3. Housing

Housing costs are most likely the largest expenditure for most Rock and Wood County residents. Residential housing is the largest source of taxable property in the Town of Rock. By effectively planning for housing, the town can take a proactive role in shaping the nature of future housing development to better meet its needs.

Introduction

This section presents an analysis of information about the Town of Rock's housing situation. This analysis is known as a "Housing Needs Assessment". The assessment considers the town's current and projected housing supply, demand and development environment. By considering housing issues now, Rock will be prepared to meet their future housing needs. This information provides a basis for the town to make current and future development decisions over a 20-year planning period.

"66.5% of survey respondents rated Rock's housing quality and appearance as good-excellent."

Source: 2020 Town of Rock Community Survey

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

Housing Needs Assessment

The following is a summary of historical housing trends and current housing data for the Town of Rock. A majority of the data was appropriated from the U.S. Census Bureau and the 2023 American Community Survey or ACS.

Housing Units

The Town of Rock experienced growth with 336 residential units in 2010 increasing to 379 total housing units in 2020. Since that time, the Town of Rock has been showing a gradual decrease in population and growth. According to ACS there were an estimated 315 housing units in 2023.

Table 13 TOTAL HOUSING UNITS 2010-2020			
Civil Division	2010	2020	Percent Change
Town of Rock	336	379	12.8%
Wood County	33,838	35,247	4.0%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau			

It is interesting to note, according to the 2020 Town of Rock Community Survey: 15.9% of survey respondents would like to see the town's population stay "about the same"; 17.9% of respondents want residential growth to some degree.

Age Characteristics

Almost 30% of housing stock in the Town of Rock was constructed between 1980 and 1999. In comparison, 21.2% in Wood County, and 22.4% in the state of Wisconsin, through this same time period. The growth of the housing during these years may be due to multiple factors. One may be the availability of new building materials, such as synthetic siding and revisions to building code regulations such as energy codes. Also, the Marshfield Clinic constructed a new building at the current location greatly surpassing the previous size in 1975 along with additions in 1983. Due to the Town's proximity to the Clinic, this also could have been a driving force for new housing. After 1999, the growth of housing stayed mostly steady at 20-30 houses per decade. Given the 2023 estimate, there were only 2 new homes built in the 3 years since 2020. Given that number remains consistent, there will only be 6 new homes constructed up to 2030. Time will tell, but the data shows an apparent decline since 1999.

Table 14 TOWN OF ROCK - AGE OF HOUSING (Estimates) 2023		
Year Built	Housing Units	Percent of Total
2020 or later	2	0.7%
2010 to 2019	21	7.4%
2000 to 2009	33	11.7%
1980 to 1999	81	28.6%
1960 to 1979	49	17.3%
1940 to 1959	32	11.3%
1939 or earlier	65	23.0%
TOTAL	306	100%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		

Value Characteristics

The value of housing units in the town is a factor in its age, its location and the local economy. It is also an indication of the current housing demand. Shown below (table 15) are the Town of Rock

owner occupied housing unit values in comparison to Wood County and Wisconsin in 2023. According to the Wisconsin Realtors Association’s January 2025 home sales report, “middle income housing” is placed around \$320,000 to \$340,000. Although this is an estimated number for the State, it falls consistently with the Town’s median home value. Indicating most homes within the Town are “middle income” families at almost 42% of the housing is between \$300,000 and \$500,000.

According to the 2023 ACS, the Town of Rock has a \$325,000 median value on housing. When compared to Wood County and the state, Rock has a substantially higher median housing value.

Table 15 TOWN OF ROCK – HOUSING VALUES (Estimates) 2023		
Value	Housing Units	Percent of Total
Less than \$50,000	1	0.9%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	0	0.0%
\$100,000 to \$299,999	51	43.6%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	50	42.7%
\$500,000 to \$749,999	6	5.1%
\$750,000 to \$999,999	7	6.0%
\$1,000,000 or more	2	1.7%
Median - Rock	\$325,000	--
Median – Wood Co.	\$174,000	--
Median-Wisconsin	\$258,000	--
<small>Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates</small>		

Tenure Characteristics

Tenure refers to whether a housing unit is owner-occupied or renter occupied. Information on tenures is important because the town should have a sufficient supply of units to satisfy the needs of both renters and owner-occupants. According to the most recent ACS (2023): 92% of Rock's housing was owner occupied; 7% renter occupied; and 10% of housing units were vacant. Table 16 represents previous tenure statistics within the Town. When compared to the previous 2020 survey, the number of vacant properties has significantly decreased. It is fair to note that the vacancy category does not include there are abandoned properties within the Township. It can indicate available units for rent or even seasonal homes or hunting cabins. The 10% vacancy rate indicates that housing in the town is meeting supply and demand. In contrast, the decrease in vacancies from 2020 to 2023 also indicates a recent shift in occupancy within the Town.

Table 16 TOWN OF ROCK - HOUSING OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS 1980-2020				
Year	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant	Total Housing Units
2020	271 (72%)	43 (11%)	65(17%)	379
2010	296 (88%)	31 (9%)	9 (3%)	336
2000	*	*	*	*
1990	215 (86%)	35 (13%)	46 (1%)	296
1980	208 (82.9%)	11.2%	15 (5.9%)	251

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
*1980-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Building

The Uniform Dwelling Code (UDC) is the statewide building code for one- and two-family dwellings built since June 1, 1980. This uniform building code applies in the Town of Rock and across the state. Its purpose is to have minimum standards for fire safety; structural strength; energy conservation; erosion control; heating, plumbing and electrical systems; and general health and safety in new dwellings. UDC building permit numbers are presented in (Table 17). A total of 26 UDC permits have been issued since 2016. This information provides additional insight into new housing development in Lincoln.

Table 17 TOWN OF ROCK - BUILDING PERMITS (UDC: 1 & 2 Family Dwellings) 2016-2025	
Year	Number of Permits
2016	2
2017	1
2018	6
2019	2
2020	1
2021	3
2022	4
2023	2
2024	2
2025	3

Source: Town of Rock

Housing Sanitary/Septic Permits

Housing structures in the Town of Rock are served by Private Onsite Waste Treatment Systems (POWTS). Most of these systems are holding tanks, but there are some alternative systems that utilize

more space than a holding tank. Because of the private septic systems, it is likely that the type of housing structures will continue to be mainly single-family. Yearly sanitary permit totals for new and replacement private septic systems are presented in (Table 18). Over a period of 10 years the town has averaged 4 new and 4 replacement private septic systems per year. This information provides insight into new housing development and rehabilitation in the town.

Table 18 TOWN OF ROCK – SANITARY/SEPTIC PERMITS 2010-2020		
Year	New	Replacement
2010	5	1
2011	3	6
2012	4	2
2013	2	7
2014	5	1
2015	3	4
2016	5	4
2017	1	3
2018	4	0
2019	2	4
2020	5	3

Source: Wood County Department of Planning and Zoning

Housing Accessibility

The number of households with at least one disabled resident increases as the population ages. As discussed in (Section 2), the town, state and nation are substantially aging. Rock has a median age of 54.7 years. Nearly 25% of its residents are 65 and over. This is an important fact the town needs to recognize. People generally have the desire to age in their own home and live there comfortably. Few single-family detached homes, like those in Rock, are accessible to those with mobility limitations. Key features for accessibility are a zero-step entrance, a bathroom or half bath on the entry level, interior doors with at least 32 inches of clearance, and may also include lever-style door handles, electrical controls that are in reach and other features. Such features make a home accessible for both the resident who has physical limitations and for visitors with physical disabilities. It is suggested that constructing accessible homes, under either a mandatory ordinance or voluntary program, costs less than retrofitting existing homes. It is further suggested that there are economic benefits to society in general if the aging population can remain in their homes longer before moving into an institutionalized setting, many of which are financed by public programs like Medicaid and Medicare. Neither the State of Wisconsin nor the Town of Rock has mandatory accessibility building standards currently. Encouraging even the basic features described above would be worthwhile and may make Rock even more attractive as a place to live.

Real Estate Availability

Information gathered from Wood County Real Estate Recon

Below shows all the Land Only property sales in the last six years. The number of sales in the last few years has significantly decreased and the average price has increased by \$641 per acre in the last three years.

Table 19

Sale Years 2023-25	Total Acres	Sale Price	Price per Acre
2025	40	\$190,000.00	\$4,750.00
2025	47	\$232,000.00	\$4,936.17
2025	40	\$132,000.00	\$3,300.00
2025	88	\$44,145.00	\$501.65
2025	108	\$382,500.00	\$3,541.67
2024	15	\$22,000.00	\$1,466.67
2024	40	\$140,000.00	\$3,500.00
2024	30	\$102,850.00	\$3,428.33
2024	30	\$102,918.00	\$3,430.60
2024	133	\$580,000.00	\$4,360.90
2024	40	\$100,000.00	\$2,500.00
2024	40	\$125,000.00	\$3,125.00
2024	40	\$140,000.00	\$3,500.00
2024	30	\$95,000.00	\$3,166.67
2023	80	\$320,000.00	\$4,000.00
2023	48	\$163,000.00	\$3,395.83
2023-2025 Average price per Acre			\$3,141.38

Sale Years 2020-22	Total Acres	Sale Price	Price per Acre
2022	43	\$125,000.00	\$2,906.98
2022	80	\$80,000.00	\$1,000.00
2022	40	\$175,000.00	\$4,375.00
2022	5	\$8,700.00	\$1,740.00
2022	144	\$650,000.00	\$4,513.89
2022	20	\$50,000.00	\$2,500.00
2022	40	\$155,000.00	\$3,875.00
2022	120	\$390,000.00	\$3,250.00
2022	144	\$650,000.00	\$4,513.89
2022	34	\$35,000.00	\$1,029.41
2022	68	\$205,000.00	\$3,014.71
2021	40	\$120,000.00	\$3,000.00
2021	40	\$120,000.00	\$3,000.00
2021	40	\$40,000.00	\$1,000.00
2021	40	\$200,000.00	\$5,000.00
2021	9	\$20,000.00	\$2,222.22
2021	113	\$300,000.00	\$2,654.87
2021	36	\$100,000.00	\$2,777.78
2021	40	\$56,000.00	\$1,400.00
2021	40	\$56,000.00	\$1,400.00
2021	40	\$120,000.00	\$3,000.00
2021	10	\$15,000.00	\$1,500.00
2020	80	\$120,000.00	\$1,500.00
2020	40	\$60,000.00	\$1,500.00
2020	15	\$22,500.00	\$1,500.00
2020	131	\$580,000.00	\$4,427.48
2020	70	\$23,500.00	\$335.71
2020	120	\$205,000.00	\$1,708.33
2020	38	\$227,226.00	\$5,979.63
2020	40	\$26,000.00	\$650.00
2020	40	\$10,000.00	\$250.00
2020-2022 Average price per Acre			\$2,500.80

Housing Affordability

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) identifies a commonly accepted standard of affordable housing. Affordable housing is defined as housing for which a household pays no more than 30 percent of their annual income, including the cost of a mortgage or rent and homeowner's or renter's insurance. (Table 20) provides a look into housing affordability in Rock. Using the 30 percent of annual income definition, it shows that 66 percent of homeowner housing is affordable to those living in them.

Table 20 TOWN OF ROCK (SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME)	
Total housing units with a mortgage	146
Less than 20.0 percent	70
20.0 to 29 percent	27
30 percent or more	40
<small>Source: U.S. Census Bureau *2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates</small>	

According to the 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the median household income in Rock was \$61,786. Using the household income, and the 30 percent standard, the monthly amount a family can afford for housing can be calculated. This equates to \$1,544 a month. Table 21 presents monthly homeowner costs. Again, it shows that over 50 percent of homeowner housing is affordable to those living in them.

Overall, applying HUD definitions and standards related to affordable housing in Rock to single family homes indicates that home payments are on par with that standard, if not, slightly higher.

Table 21 TOWN OF ROCK (SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS)	
Housing units with a mortgage	352
Less than \$600	0
\$600 to \$799	14
\$800 to \$999	17
\$1,000 to \$1,499	54
\$1,500 to \$1,999	28
\$2,000 to \$2,499	18
\$2,500 to \$2,999	11
\$3,000 or more	4
Median (dollars)	\$1,389
<small>Source: U.S. Census Bureau *2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates</small>	

Housing Assistance

Several federal, state and local housing programs are available to assist local communities and individuals. Housing rehabilitation programs can help maintain adequate housing stock. Presented below is a partial listing of resources available to Rock residents.

Community Development Block Grant Program – Central Housing Region

This is a program for ensuring the community's ability to conserve, rehabilitate and improve residential properties occupied by low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents.

Eligible Rehab Activities

- Repairs that bring the unit to decent, safe and sanitary condition using HQS Inspection/Evaluation of property.
- Examples include but are not limited to: Roofs, Siding, Windows, Plumbing, Electric, Septic, Well, etc.

Wood County Housing Repair Program

Wood County's CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds are available to assist low-income households make necessary repairs to their homes. The funds are available as a 0% simple interest 30-year deferred loan, which is also due upon sale of the home, or you no longer live in the home.

Wood County CDBG funds are also available to assist income-eligible first-time homebuyers with down payment & closing cost assistance and rehabilitation of the property purchased. These funds are again available as a 0% simple interest 30-year deferred loan, which is due upon sale of the home or if it is no longer your primary residence.

Eligible Rehab Activities

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Roof replacement | • Plumbing |
| • Door & window repair/replacement | • Electrical |
| • Siding replacement | • Heating system replacement |
| • Foundation repair | • Water heater replacement |
| • Handicap accessibility accommodations | • Lead Hazard reduction measures |
| • Wells & septic systems | • Other measures can be considered on a case-by-case basis |

North Central Community Action Program – Housing Programs

EHAF-Emergency Housing Assistance Fund

Housing & Homeless Prevention -- Rapid Re-Housing and Transitional Housing

Capistry Town Homes -- Marshfield

Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) provides assistance for heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations. Operating with federal and state funding, the program provides assistance to approximately 230,000 Wisconsin households annually.

Most types of fuel are eligible to receive assistance. Whether you use wood, propane, natural gas, electricity, or fuel oil to heat your home, energy assistance is available if you qualify. The amount of the assistance benefit varies depending on a variety of factors, including the household's size, income, and energy costs. In most cases the assistance benefit is paid directly to the household energy supplier.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Rural Development

USDA Rural Development is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. They offer programs to help rural residents buy or rent safe, affordable housing and make health and safety repairs to their homes. Additionally, they offer loans, grants and loan guarantees to help create jobs and support economic development and essential services such as housing, health care, first responder services and equipment, and water, electric and communications infrastructure.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) offers and manages a variety of financial resources and assistance programs available to Town of Rock residents.

Future Housing Needs

The Issues and Opportunities Element (Section 2) provides some insight on what to expect in the future regarding demographics. Understanding demographic trends will help the town know what to expect in the future regarding housing needs. In general, Rock's population will decrease and total households are projected to increase over the next 20 years.

In many cases determining future housing needs is based off population projections. In communities where most of the homes are utilized as primary residences there is a clear connection between population and the number of housing units. In the Issues and Opportunities Element (Table 3) shows the projected population for the Town of Rock. Rock's population is projected to slightly decrease over the next 10-20 years. However, the household size is projected to decrease, indicating the need for housing may remain the same, but with smaller families residing in the home.

Why Residents Choose to Live in the Town of Rock

Although the 2020 Community Survey served the broader purpose of gathering public opinions for the comprehensive plan, it also provides some insight into why residents choose to live in the Town of Rock. In the Community Survey when residents were asked in question 2 what the top two reasons you choose to live in Rock, there were a lot of responses that were very common. Common responses included:

- Rural/Country Character
- Born/Grew-up/Family in the town
- Low Taxes
- Low-density housing
- Nature/wildlife
- Agriculture/Farming

Housing Goals, Objectives & Policies:

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal 1: Maintain the rural character of the Town of Rock.

Objective 1: Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive natural resource areas that add character and define the Town of Rock area.

Policy 1: Utilize zoning standards that promote low-density housing development yet allow for lot sizes that make the land affordable for all persons.

Policy 2: Implement land use control measures to protect the Town's environmentally sensitive areas from future growth and development.

Goal 2: Provide safe and affordable housing for diverse population of residents.

Objective 1: Maintain or improve the overall quality and appearance of the Town's housing stock and residential properties.

Policy 1: Encourage home improvements and development standards.

4. Transportation

Transportation options impact the lives of all Town of Rock residents and can be directly linked to land use in the town. It is estimated that 50% of Rock residents commuted outside of the Town for employment in 2020. The ability of residents to get where they need to go, regardless of age and financial ability, plays an important role in where they choose to live, work, shop, attend school, and seek medical and nutritional needs.

Introduction

This element looks at the transportation options available in the Town of Rock, attempts to identify transportation trends, identifies future transportation improvement needs, and establishes goals and objectives to guide transportation going forward. By considering transportation issues now, Rock will be prepared to meet future transportation needs.

Almost 74% of survey respondents strongly agree or agree that the roads in the Town of Rock meet their needs

Source: 2020 Town of Rock Community Survey

Road Network

Rock's transportation system is the network of roads and highways that crisscross through the town. The Town of Rock's internal transportation system consists of approximately 43 miles of town roads, CTH B, CTH N, CTH V and U.S. Highway 10. Although located outside the boundaries of Rock, State Highway 80 also serves town residents.

Functional Classifications

It is important to understand the function of different categories of roadways so you can plan an efficient road system that protects the overall function of the road network.

Roads and highways are grouped into different functional classifications according to the type of service they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility, which is moving vehicles across a community, region or country, to a low level of mobility - providing access to land or individual lots. These functional classifications are also categorized as "urban" or "rural." All of the Town of Rock is under the "rural" functional classification. Below is a brief description of the functions of different levels of roads and highways.

Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(2)(c).

Transportation element:

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

Local Roads

The primary function of local roads is to provide access to individual parcels of land. They typically offer the lowest level of mobility of all the functionally classified roads. Local roads provide access to adjacent land and provide for travel over relatively short distances on an inter-township or intra-township basis. Once you leave these roads, you may turn onto a collector road. All roads in the Town of Rock that are not classified as arterials or collectors are local function roads.



Collector Roads

The function of collector roads is to carry a higher volume of traffic than local roads, provide through traffic, and distribute traffic to even higher function highways. Collector roads may be of a straighter design, often have wider pavement widths with fewer access points (driveways) and may have higher speed limits. Collector roads are further defined as “major” or “minor” collectors.

Collector roads are further defined as “major” or “minor” collectors.

Major collectors provide service to small-to-moderate sized places and other intra-area traffic generators, and link those generators to nearby larger population centers, or higher function routes. The Town of Rock roads that are classified as Major Collectors are CTH N and CTH V.

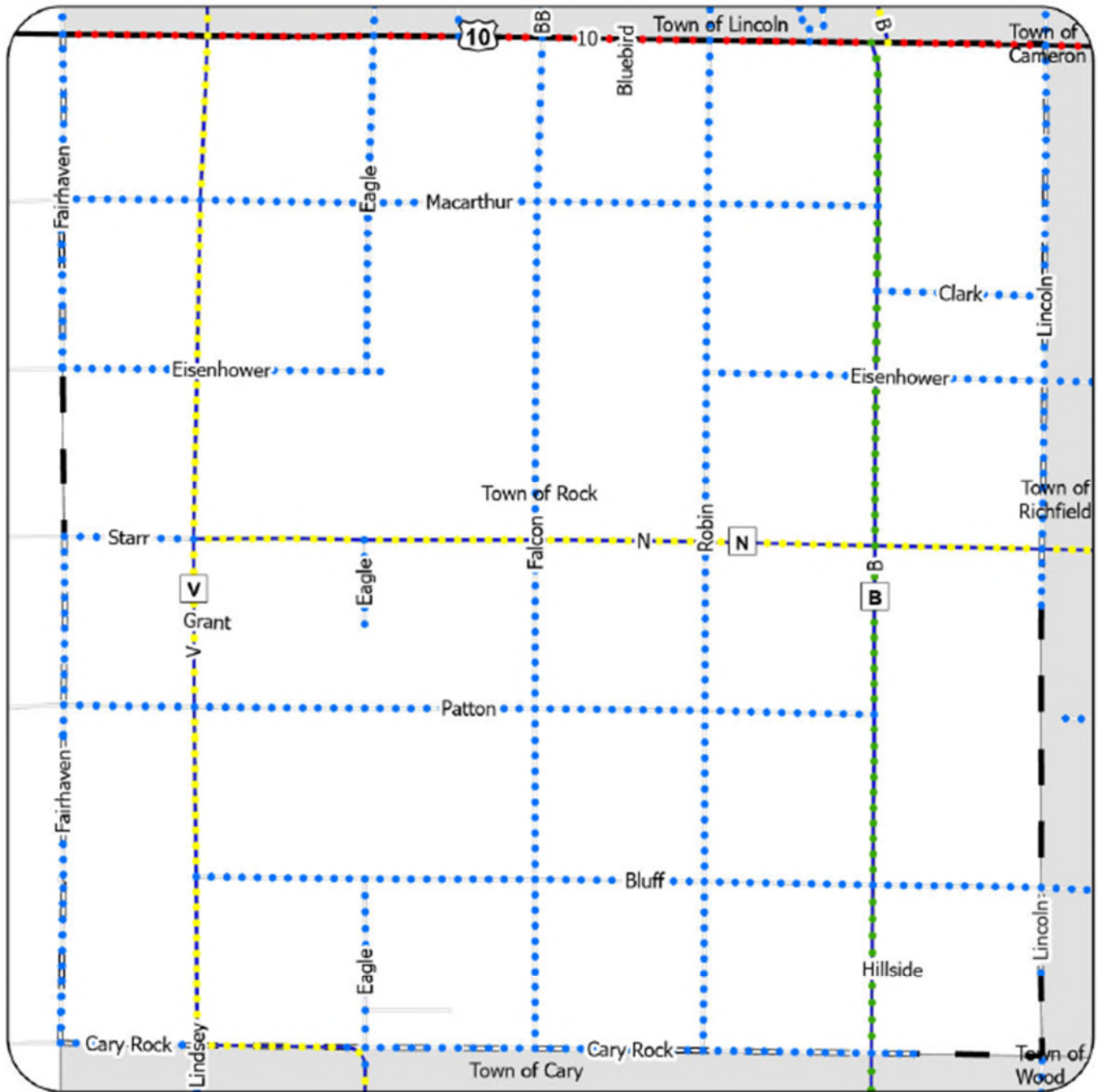


Minor collectors provide service to all remaining smaller places, link the locally important traffic generators with the rural areas, and are spaced consistently with population density to collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road.

Arterial Roads

Traffic from collector roads may move onto even higher volume roads called “arterials.” Arterials typically have higher speed limits and often have more lanes for travel. Like collector roads, arterials are classified as either “minor arterials” or “principal arterials,” depending on the volume of traffic they serve. Minor arterials, in conjunction with principal arterials, serve moderately to large-sized places and other traffic generators providing intraregional and inter-area traffic movements. Principal arterials serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. They also provide a connection between communities. Minor arterials should have even fewer access points than collectors but still provide land access. Principal arterials often have limited or controlled access. Highway 10 is the only principal arterial in the Town.

There are a variety of other designations that a road or segment can hold outside of the main classifications including county forest road, rustic road, emergency route, truck route, etc. There are no Wisconsin designated rustic roads within the Town of Rock.



Road Functional Classifications Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin

Functional Class

- Principal Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Traffic Counts

Traffic counts are important to local officials for future planning for access, for maintenance purposes and to analyze the need for new roadways.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) records traffic counts every few years. The most recent traffic counts in the Town of Rock were conducted in 2021. Traffic counts are reported as the number of vehicles expected to pass a given location on an average day of the year. This value is called the "annual average daily traffic" or AADT and are represented on traffic count or traffic volume maps. The AADT is based on a short-term traffic count, usually 48 hours, taken at the location. This count is then adjusted for the variation in traffic volume throughout the year and the average number of axles per vehicle.

Table 22

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)				
LOCATION	2011	2014	2017	2021
USH 10 BTWN CTH V & EAGLE RD	3600	3300	2800	2800
USH 10 BTWN EAGLE & FALCON	3800	2900	3000	3300
USH 10 BTWN CTH B & ROBIN RD	3900	3700	3100	3500
CTH B SOUTH OF USH 10 ROCK	540			370
CTH V SOUTH OF USH 10 ROCK	710			670
CTH N BTWN FALCON & ROBIN RD ROCK TNSHP	420			300
CTH V SOUTH OF CTH N ROCK TNSHP	450			350

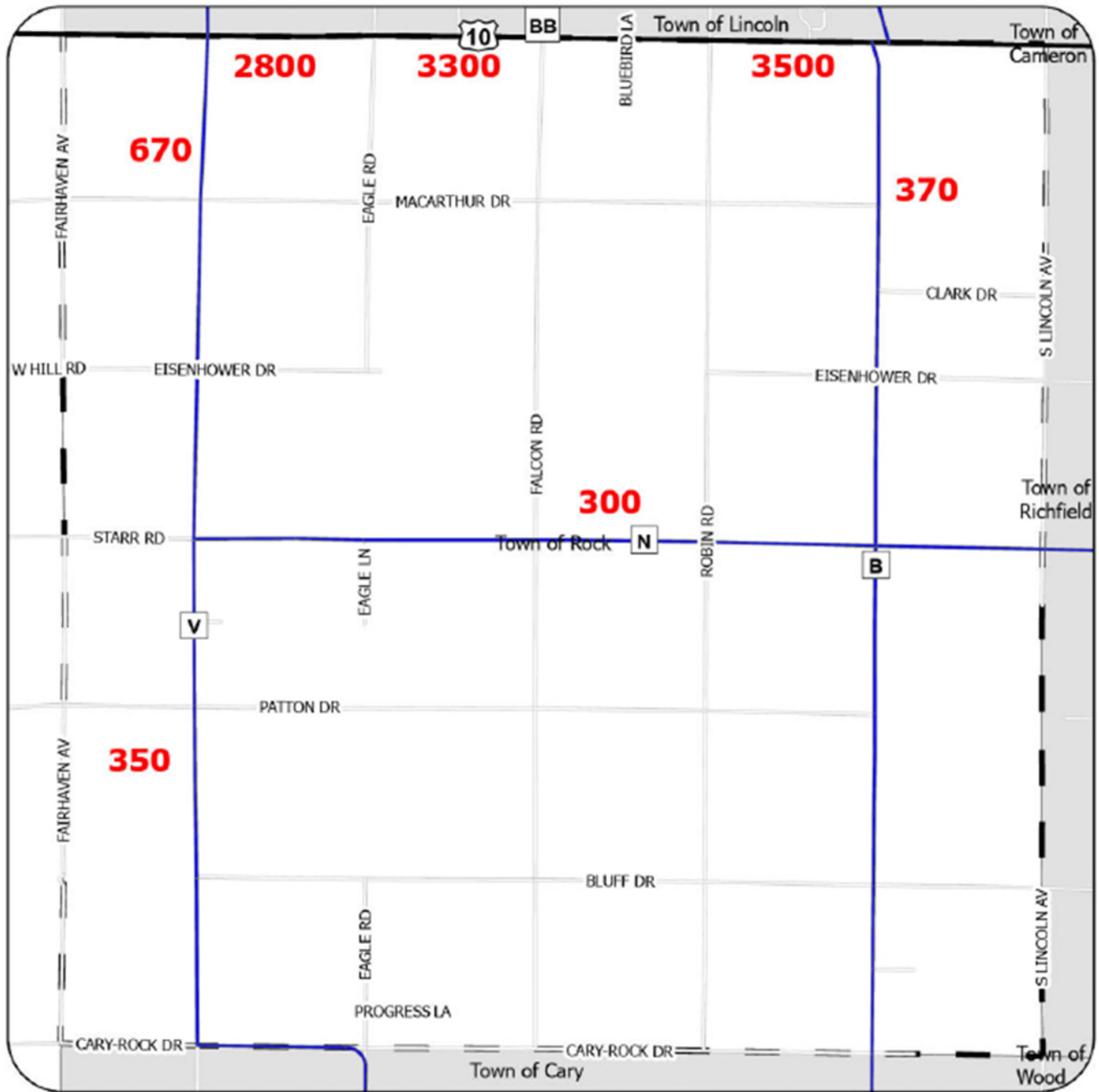
Construction, Maintenance, and Plowing

On an annual basis, the Town of Rock Board of Supervisors reviews local road conditions and any transportation concerns that may arise. It is the goal of the Town to provide safe and efficient roads built to satisfy the needs of local businesses, residents, and emergency services.

Current general specifications for roads built within the Town of Rock are listed below. Specific requirements as determined by the Town of Rock, would depend upon a project's specific characteristics and conditions.

- 28' roadbed
- 6" minimum gravel base
- 20' paved road, 2"-3" average compacted thickness
- 4' shoulders
- Breaker runs

The Town of Rock currently is responsible for maintaining and plowing all local roads. The Wood County Highway Department maintains and plows all county highways in the Town, while maintenance on U.S. highways is through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT).



**Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts
Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin**



2021 AADT



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Transportation Programs

Wisconsin Department of Transportation is the primary provider of programs to assist local transportation systems. The Town of Rock generally utilizes the following programs to finance roadwork in the Town:

- General Transportation Aid
- Town Road Improvement Program (TRIP)
- Tax Levy
- Wood County 50/50 Road and Bridge Aid, where eligible
- Other County or State Aid Programs when available

Other Modes of Transportation

Trucking

USH 10 is the main truck route in the Town as designated by WisDOT. Trucking is allowed on all county highways and most local roads within the Town to transport vital goods and services to local businesses, industry, and residents. Temporary weight restrictions may limit hauling capacity during the spring of each year on county highways and local roads.

Public Transportation

Another part of the town's transportation system is public transportation. Providing for the needs of those who cannot transport themselves has been provided through programs of the County, with the assistance of State and Federal grants. Transportation for older and disabled adults is important so they can access the services and programs they need and remain independent.

Wood County provides bus service for seniors and people with disabilities. Priorities include medical appointments/treatment, nutrition, shopping and social events. The Wood County Volunteer Driver program provides certified drivers to transport Wood County residents who are 55 years or older and prioritizes medical and nutritional purposes. This is a non-emergency service covering the entire State of Wisconsin for medical appointments. Riders must be ambulatory or accompanied by an ambulatory individual and are billed a percentage of the cost of the trip.

The Wood County Human Services Department also has a staff member who coordinates transportation for disabled American veterans of the armed forces. Vans are available to ambulatory veterans only to transport them to VA medical appointments. Vans and transportation are coordinated between Wausau; Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids. All of Wood County is covered, as are Portage and Marathon counties. The van drivers are volunteers, but the Veterans Administration provides funding for fuel, maintenance and liability. Wood County veterans can call the Wood County Transportation Office for arrangements.

The town's interest should be in maintaining communications with the appropriate agencies to ensure that the programs available through those agencies are made available to Rock residents.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails

Bicycle and pedestrian trails are becoming more popular as an alternative means of commuting, as well as for recreation purposes. Wood County adopted a bicycle/pedestrian plan in 2025. The Wood County plan proposed bicycle routes to be established along all the county roads in the town via widened shoulders as the county roads were upgraded and maintained.

The safety of pedestrians is an extremely important consideration in planning transportation networks. Through proper design and planning efforts a variety of transportation options can and should safely be able to coexist with pedestrian traffic. Rural areas face different pedestrian safety challenges than urban areas such as higher vehicular traffic speeds, a reduction in signalized intersections, few or no sidewalks, and in many cases few or no designated bicycle and pedestrian trails. However, it is still possible to make rural areas more walkable. Rural areas can become safer and more pedestrian friendly by reducing speed limits in areas of more pedestrian traffic; design changes of roadways including wider paved shoulders; and signage designating pedestrian crossings and presence of pedestrians.



Other Recreation Trails

Currently, over 270 miles of developed snowmobile trails exist in Wood County. The trail network is effectively meeting the needs of users, and as a result there are no major plans to realign existing trails or add additional mileage. The Town of Rock is supportive of the trail network because of the recreation opportunity that it provides not only for residents, but for visitors who make Wood County a snowmobiling destination. There are approximately 10.2 miles of snowmobile trails in Rock. Local property owners generously allow access to the snowmobilers during the riding season. These trails are maintained by the Bakerville Sno Rovers Club and the Loyal Snow Angels.

In the past few years, local ATV/UTV clubs have been working with local towns to establish ordinances to allow riders to travel on designated roads or routes throughout the county. With ATVs and UTVs using the roads there is a possibility of conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians. Rock currently has no public ATV trails; however, the 43 miles of town roads as well as county highways can be used by ATVs and UTVs.



Relationship of Transportation System to Other Comprehensive Plan Segments

The transportation network of a community is tied to every other element of this comprehensive plan. Generally, a change in the transportation network will affect local utilities and community facilities,

housing, natural resources, economic development, and land use. So, as changes are considered in a community that involves transportation, the total impact of the changes should be considered.

New development also has the tendency to extract land from the valuable agricultural land base. Policies need to be implemented to protect the prime agricultural lands, if it is the desire of the Town of Rock residents to preserve the rural nature of the town.

Other Relevant Transportation Plans

Connections 2030 is the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's long-range transportation plan for the state. This plan addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. Part of Connections 2030 is the identification of a series of system-level priority corridors. These corridors are critical to Wisconsin's travel patterns and support the state's economy. A 60-mile corridor (Marshfield/Rapids Connection Corridor – Abbotsford to Stevens Point) is identified in the plan. Primary highways included in this corridor include US 10, WIS 13, WIS 34, WIS 80, and WIS 54. Local officials need to be aware of current and future activities occurring or proposed to occur in this transportation corridor.

Transportation Goals, Objectives & Policies:

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal 1: To provide a safe, efficient and cost-effective transportation system built to satisfy the needs of local businesses, residents, and emergency services.

Objective 1: Coordinate with state, county, and town governments on local street improvements and all issues concerning transportation in the town.

Policy 1: Conduct an annual review of the condition of all town roads.

Policy 2: Maintain and upgrade existing road infrastructure before considering reconstruction.

Policy 3: Only accept road dedications for roads built to the standards and requirements of the town.

Objective 2: Work with Wood County and neighboring towns to encourage and coordinate development of bicycle and pedestrian trails and routes.

Policy 1: Support the creation of bike and pedestrian routes and trails in the town, especially along county highways.

Objective 3: Provide safe transportation routes throughout the Town.

Policy 1: Coordinate with Wood County regarding speed limit enforcement

Policy 2: Maintain proper road signage with regular upkeep.

Policy 3: Maintain scheduled ditch mowing and brush cutting for visibility and safety.

Objective 4: Make use of funding opportunities made available by Grant funds and Disaster Relief Programs.

Policy 1: Become knowledgeable about changes and opportunities.

Policy 2: Attend Wisconsin Towns Association(WTA) meetings and conferences. Coordinate with Wood County for assistance.

Goal 2: The Town of Rock will provide interconnection of transportation systems between neighboring jurisdictions.

Objective 1: Protect the function and integrity of the Town's transportation system by minimizing conflicts with local land uses.

Policy 1: Encourage usage of Wood County's Transportation Program to veterans, seniors and persons with disabilities.

5. Utilities & Community Facilities

The availability and location of utilities and community facilities play an important role in the future development of a community. Typically, it is not practical or economical for unincorporated towns like the Town of Rock, to provide the same level of utilities, community facilities and services as do larger, more densely developed villages and cities. However, town residents generally have the same types of needs as village and city residents.

Introduction

The purpose of this element is twofold. First, this section will describe the existing utilities, community facilities and services available in the Town of Rock. Second, this section outlines goals, objectives and policies that meet the needs of residents and will help guide future town-level decisions for the next 10 to 20 years. The challenge in the future will be to maintain or improve the quality of services, while maintaining affordable costs to the residents.

Town of Rock Town Hall

The Town Hall houses many town functions including fire and rescue; maintenance; town staff; and others. The Town Hall and the Lindsey Park shelter are available to rent for events and gatherings. The Town Hall also serves as the Emergency Shelter for the township.

Water Supply

All areas of the Town of Rock rely on private wells for their water supply. There are no municipal wells located in the town. Consequently, all development in the Town of Rock is dependent on groundwater availability for private wells. Most of the existing private wells in the town are drilled or driven point wells. Wells are safe, dependable sources of water if sited wisely and built correctly. Unlike public water systems, protection, maintenance and testing of a private well is largely the responsibility of homeowners. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that private wells be tested annually to ensure that the water is safe for consumption and use.

Groundwater is becoming more of a precious resource. Groundwater quantity and quality has been the subject of many discussions and debates at the local and state level. It is important that the groundwater supply and quality be protected from contamination. Possible sources of contamination can include failing septic systems; improper disposal of private sewage; fertilizers; pesticides; improperly abandoned wells; improper land uses; and landfills. Certain types of land uses, or changes in land use can impact groundwater quality and quantity. The Wisconsin Department of

Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(2)(d).

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

Natural Resources (WDNR) Administrative Code (NR 812) establishes uniform statewide standards for the construction and maintenance of water supply systems (wells) and is administered by Wood County Planning and Zoning, NR 812 identifies minimum separation distance requirements for wells from possible sources of contamination.

Wastewater Treatment

All areas of the Town of Rock rely on Private On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS), also known as septic/sanitary systems for wastewater treatment. There is no municipal sewer service available in the town. Any development that occurs in the town must install a POWTS system. All such systems must be approved by the State Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) under the provisions of applicable statutes and the Wisconsin Administrative Code for both installation and maintenance. The Wood County Planning and Zoning Department administers the permitting and management of POWTS on a county-wide basis per the Wood County Private Sewage System Ordinance #702. Most common sanitary systems in Rock are mound systems and holding tanks.

Storm Water Management

The Town of Rock shall work cooperatively with applicable federal, state and local agencies to mitigate the negative impacts of storm water runoff, erosion and flooding in the town. All construction projects where over an acre of land is disturbed are regulated under NR216 subch. 111 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) under a Construction Site Storm Water Runoff General Permit. However, there are agricultural exemptions under the permitting requirements.

Solid Waste Disposal & Recycling

Curbside collection of solid waste, or garbage, is a service provided to all town of Rock residents on a weekly basis. Additionally, curbside collection of recycling is available to all town residents every four weeks. The town contracts with Waste Management Services in cooperation with five other area towns (Lincoln, Cameron, Richfield, Marshfield and McMillan). Community solid waste disposal and recycling needs and methods will continue to be assessed and modified as needed near the end of each contract period.

Town residents can also take advantage of the Wood County Clean Sweep Program. Clean Sweep is a voluntary program for the legal and safe disposal of hazardous wastes from homes, farms and businesses. It is available to all Wood County residents. The Clean Sweep program is funded through contributions from Wood County and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. An annual tire drop is available to our residents through our contract with Northwest Recycling.

Emergency Services

Fire

The residents of the Town of Rock are served by their own volunteer fire department and the fire departments of other towns in the Wood County Emergency Government mutual aid system. There is a continual need for personnel, training, equipment maintenance and upgrading, and storage.

Police

Police service is provided by the Wood County Sheriff's Department.

Ambulance and Rescue

Ambulance service is provided through a contract with the City of Marshfield Ambulance Service.

Shared Dispatch

When Town of Rock residents dial 9-1-1 for emergency services, the call is routed to the Wood County Shared Dispatch Center in the Wood County Courthouse in Wisconsin Rapids. The center dispatches for all emergency responders in Wood County – police, fire and ambulance. The location of landline and cell phone calls is mapped by the dispatch center to expedite emergency response. Maps of new roads and new lots are updated on a regular basis by the Wood County Planning & Zoning Department through their land records maintenance program.

United Way 2-1-1

United Way's 2-1-1 is an information referral program that maintains a database of community resources and connects callers with questions to the proper service or organization to meet their human, social and information needs. The program is available free-of-charge, 24/7 and is a partnership of United Way of Inner Wisconsin (Wisconsin Rapids) and the Marshfield Area United Way.

Parks and Recreation

While the Town of Rock does not have any county or state parks, it does maintain its own park facility in Lindsey. This facility includes:

- Covered Pavilion
- Picnic tables
- Restrooms
- Children's playground

The pavilion is maintained by the Town and is available for rent under Town approved guidelines.

Energy Facilities

There are three electric service providers that provide service to the Town of Rock: Alliant Energy, Marshfield Utilities, and Clark Electric Cooperative.

Natural gas is not available to all residences in the Town. Many homes use LP gas to meet their energy needs.

Communication and DSL

There is a communication tower located on Bluff Road that serves government needs. A second tower located near Highway 10 and Falcon Road, serves WE Energy. There are two private wireless providers, Selk and Country Wireless, operating in the Town. Solarus is a phone company that provides wireless the Town. TDS is a phone company that provides wired DSL.

DSL is not available for all areas of the Town. However, Wood County has a Broadband Plan with the purpose of the plan is to offer insights into the current state of broadband deployed in Wood County and to aims to assist local officials in making well-informed decisions in supporting broadband expansion. The Town of Rock will continue to encourage private sector providers to supply DSL services Town-wide.

Cemeteries

The shared Town of Rock and Lincoln Cemetery is located on the corner of Highway 10 and Eagle Road. There is a small cemetery located at the site of the former Town of Progress, found in the middle of Section 33, between Eagle Rd and Falcon Rd.



Libraries

The Town of Rock does not have its own library, but residents have access to the other libraries in the area, the closest two being in the City of Marshfield and Town of Arpin depending on where residents are located within the Township. The City of Marshfield's library is located at 105 S. Maple Ave. Marshfield, WI 54449. The library provides books and other media materials for all ages to utilize. Lester Public Library of Arpin is located at 8091 County Rd. E, Arpin WI 54410. The library also provides books and other media sources for the surrounding areas.

Schools

The Town of Rock is located in two school districts. Between Marshfield and Pittsville Districts, there are nine schools: Marshfield High School, Marshfield Middle School, Grant Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, Madison Elementary, Nasonville Elementary, Washington Elementary, 4-year-old Kindergarten, Pittsville High School, and Pittsville Elementary (4k - 8th grade).

The private schools located in the Marshfield area are Columbus Catholic School System, Immanuel Lutheran School, Marshfield YMCA Preschool, Trinity Lutheran School, and Bethel Junior Academy.

Mid-State Technical College serves the diverse and changing educational needs of central Wisconsin communities offering over 85 in-demand degree programs in addition to an array of certificates, continuing education courses, and apprenticeships. Mid-State Technical College has four campuses: Adams Campus, Marshfield Campus, Stevens Point Campus, and Wisconsin Rapids Campus.

University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point (UWSP) is the closest 4-year university. It is a top-ranking college providing more than 100 program options within 80 baccalaureate degree programs, 90 minors, and 17 graduate programs in the College of Fine Arts and Communication, College of Letters and Sciences, College of Natural Resources and College of Professional Studies at the Stevens Point campus. In the U.S. News and World Report 2024 rankings, UW-Stevens Point placed 12th among regional public universities in the 12 states of its Midwest Region. UWSP has three campuses: Main Campus – UW-Stevens Point, UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield, and UW-Stevens Point at Wausau.

Health Care

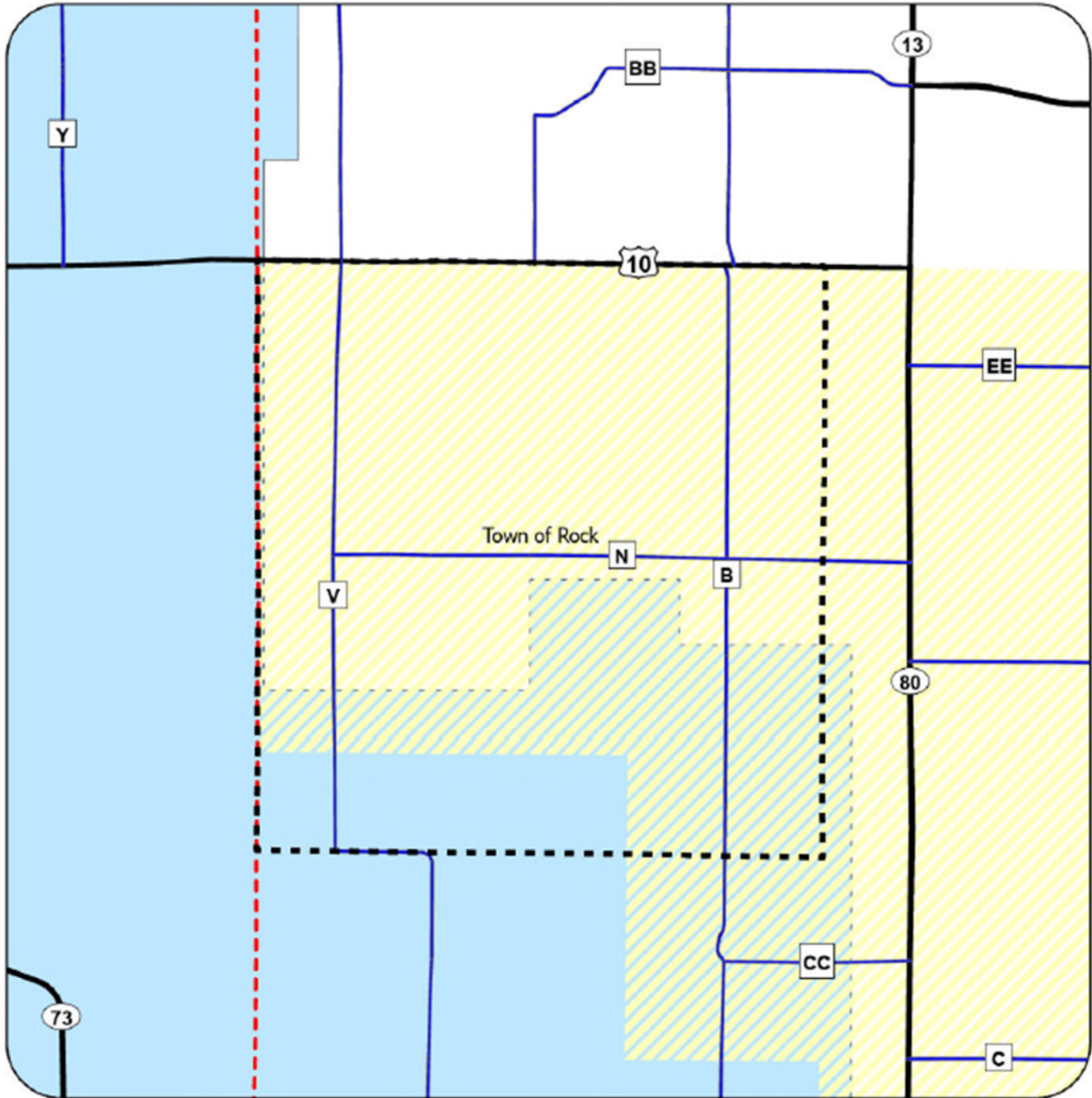
There are no health care facilities located in the Town of Rock. Marshfield Clinic Health Systems is located only minutes away in the City of Marshfield.

Norwood Health Center, located in the City of Marshfield, provides residents of Wood and surrounding counties with high-quality treatment services which include acute, inpatient psychiatric care, skilled long-term care for persons with chronic, severe mental illness, as well as post-acute traumatic brain injury rehabilitation services. Norwood Health Center is owned by Wood County with oversight by the Wood County Health and Human Services Board.

Child Care

There are no advertised or regulated childcare facilities within the Town of Rock. However, there are childcare facilities accessible for Town of Rock residents located in neighboring areas of Marshfield, Pittsville, and Town of Lincoln.

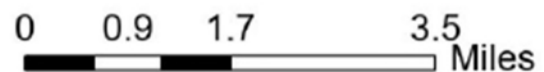
Map 4



Electrical Service Providers Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin

Legend

- Town of Rock
- Wood/Clark County Line
- WISCONSIN POWER & LIGHT COMPANY (ALLIANT)
- CLARK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives & Policies:

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal 1: The Town of Rock will provide infrastructure, utilities, community facilities and public services to meet the needs and desires of town residents.

Objective 1: Maintain and improve existing town services.

Policy 1: Provide the safest, most efficient fire protection possible by working with neighboring communities to contract for Fire Rescue.

Objective 2: Support and maintain current provisions of services and existing community facilities.

Policy 1: Continue to work with State and County law enforcement agencies to provide residents with a safe place to live.

Policy 2: Support DSL and cellular service expansion in the Town.

Policy 3: Maintain the shared cemetery with the Town of Lincoln on the corner of HWY 10 and Eagle Road and continue to provide access to the former Town of Progress cemetery, located in the middle of Section 33, between Eagle Rd and Falcon Rd.

Policy 4: Maintain Town Hall and Lindsey Park Shelter as a public location for community activities.

6. Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources

Agricultural, natural and cultural resources are defining features of the Town of Rock's rural landscape. These resources play an important role in why residents choose to reside in the town. The rural/country character of Rock is important to town residents and significantly contributes to the overall quality of life. Town officials have recognized the importance of responsibly balancing the needs for future development while preserving these community resources.

Introduction

The following element will analyze the Town of Rock's agricultural, natural and cultural resource base. It is important to identify and understand these community resources to effectively balance the needs of future development while also maintaining a healthy environment. Through this analysis, this section will outline goals, objectives and policies that will help guide future town-level decisions for the next 10 to 20 years.

“Roughly 89% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that it is important to maintain the Town of Rock’s rural agricultural landscape.”

Source: 2020 Town of Rock’s Community Survey

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

Agricultural Resources

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines “agriculture” as the science or practice of farming, including growing crops and raising animals for the production of food, fiber, fuel, and other products. Agriculture and farming may be one of the most important components that the Town of Rock needs to address, as is the case for many rural towns in Wisconsin. Agriculture is important in Rock because of its local economic impacts. Additionally, it creates a sense of community and cultural identity in the town. Productive farms and farmland create a landscape that many Rock residents desire, and they play an important role in why most people choose to live in the town.

Agricultural Trends

Agriculture is here to stay in the Town of Rock. However, the continuing loss of agricultural land, economic stresses and increased technology are contributing to the industries constant evolution.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin lost 700 dairy farms in (2018). The number of dairies in the state has fallen more than 20 percent in the last five years. Wisconsin led the nation in Chapter 12 Bankruptcy filings for 2018 but has been surpassed by other states since 2021 according to the USDA Economic Research Service. Yet milk production continues to grow every year.

In Wood County the number of farms and agricultural acreage has declined since 1997, as seen in (Table 23). This trend has been occurring since the early 1960's. With the number of farms decreasing, the average size of farms is beginning to increase. This is likely due to smaller family farms consolidating with larger commercial farms.

**Table 23 WOOD COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND FARMING
1997-2022**

	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	2022
Number of Farms	1,199	1,108	1,114	1,067	1,062	909
Land in Farms	241,722 acres	228,050 acres	221,962 acres	222,730 acres	220,891 acres	216,635 acres
Average Size of Farm	202 acres	206 acres	199 acres	209 acres	208 acres	238 acres
Source: United States Department of Agriculture NASS						

The dairy industry in Wood County will persist for the foreseeable future. Wood County dairy farms are milking more cows than ever. In 2021, Wood County had approximately 17,100 dairy cows, compared to 18,000 in 2016. In 2021 the average dairy cow produced 23,200 lbs. of milk versus 21,880 in 2016. The growth is in the medium to large scale of dairy operations. It is not as profitable for dairy farms to operate on a small scale, so the number of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in the county is projected to increase over the planning period.

Wood County's top agricultural commodities are presented in (Table 24) below.

**Table 24
WOOD COUNTY TOP COMMODITIES
2012**

Commodity	Value
Milk	\$62.0 million
Berries, fruits and tree nuts	\$49.4 million
Grain	\$30.4 million
Cattle and calves	\$11.9 million
Hay and other crops	\$2.9 million
Source: United States Department of Agriculture	

Town of Rock's agricultural industry mainly consists of dairy, field crops/forage and livestock commodities. The Town of Rock's concern about maintaining a strong agricultural community makes

it important to minimize the intrusion of incompatible land uses within agricultural areas. Some conflict commonly exists between agricultural practices and residents, but those conflicts can become more problematic when agricultural processing plants or farms with a large number of livestock create strong odors. Wisconsin farmers are protected against nuisance litigation through the right-to-farm law, which grants farmers immunity from nuisance ordinances for standard farming practices. It is better, however, to avoid situations that would invoke litigation through careful planning of future development, and that is the goal of the Town of Rock comprehensive plan.

Through this document, the Town of Rock adopted goals that work to preserve farmland and protect the rural character of the town. Town residents have supported these goals through their responses in the 2020 community survey. Development policies that minimize conflicts between agricultural operations and residential development will promote an environment where residents can enjoy the aesthetic benefits of an agricultural landscape without interfering with the operation of these vital rural businesses.

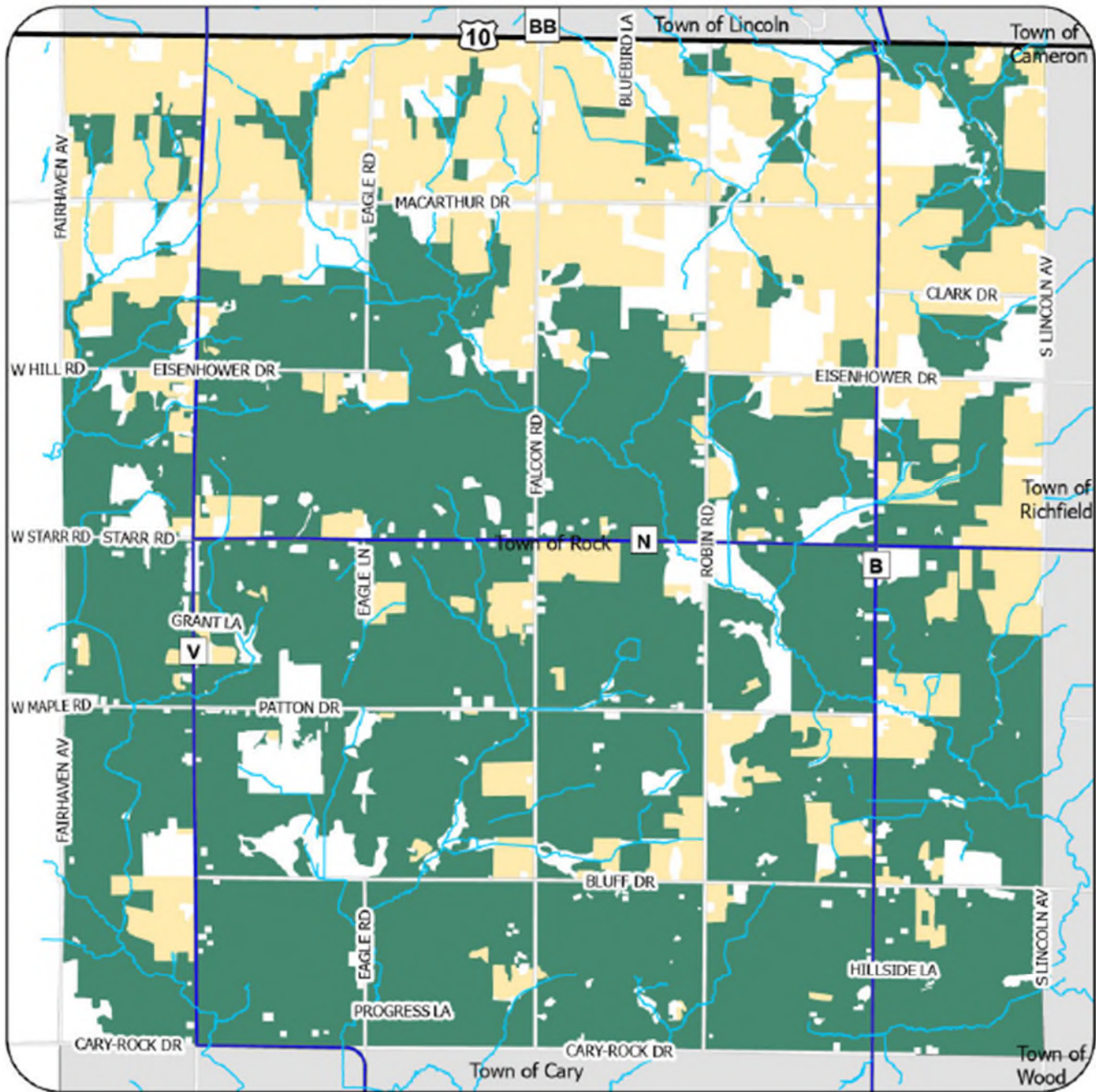
Animal Waste Management

Because agriculture is so prevalent in the Town of Rock, one of the most significant potential groundwater contamination sources is animal waste. Both storage and spreading of animal waste can contaminate groundwater if not done properly. Animal waste storage facilities currently in use range from manure pits dug years ago to newly engineered and installed storage structures. Wood County regulates the location, design and installation of animal waste storage facilities through its Animal Waste and Manure Management Ordinance administered by the Wood County Land and Water Conservation Department. This ordinance ensures that all new, substantially altered and abandoned manure storage facilities are completed in compliance with approved standards and specifications. The ordinance also requires that permitted storage facilities submit and follow an annual nutrient management plan. Additionally, the State of Wisconsin regulates livestock operations with 1,000 animal units or more and those livestock operations with less than 1,000 animal units that have discharges that significantly affect water quality.

Farmland Preservation Program

Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation Program helps farmers and local governments preserve farmland, protect soil and water, and minimize land use conflicts. The program became available to Wood County landowners in 1984. It is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) in cooperation with the Wood County Land and Water Conservation Department. Wood County has a Farmland Preservation Plan. The Town of Rock may adopt farmland preservation zoning in the future.

Map 5



Agriculture and Woodlands Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin

Legend

- Agriculture
- Woodlands



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Topography

The highest elevation found in the Town of Rock is 1,356 feet above sea level, located just south of Nasonville School. The lowest point is at the intersection of Cary-Rock Drive and Eagle Road with an elevation of 1,090 feet above sea level. Total elevation change is 266 feet.

There are three distinct land surface regions in the town of Rock that contribute to the variability of land cover found in the town. The northern tier of sections is comprised mostly of undulating hills with moderately steep slopes. These hills have southern slopes that are used mostly for agriculture. This highland region also extends south along County Road B to the Cary Bluff area. The second distinct region in the town is defined by the hills of Cary Bluff in the southeast corner of the town. The soils in this area are well drained but do not have the fertility of the northern region of the town, and thus have not supported an agricultural community. This area is mostly level with a slight slope from the northeast to southwest. Because this area is much lower than its surroundings, ground water is very near or at the surface. There are a few small farms scattered in this area on higher ground.

Climate

The climate in the Town of Rock is continental, characterized by large seasonal and daily ranges in temperature. Winters are usually cold and snowy and summers are generally warm with periods that are hot and humid. Precipitation on average is adequate for agricultural purposes, although some degree of soil moisture deficiency often occurs during the months of July and August. During the winter months prevailing winds are generally from the west and northwest, and from southerly directions in the summer.

Soils

Most of the soils in the town are loamy soils in one of three soils associations:

- 1) Vesper - Kert Silt Loam series soils are found in the southern three quarters of the township, in upland drainageways and depressions. Slopes are concave, uniform and 100 to 300 feet long. A high-water table is present in the spring and part of summer. The hazard of frost is moderate late in spring and early in fall. These soils were formed under mixed hardwood and coniferous forests. Most of the acreage of these soils has been cleared and is used for corn, small grain, hay and pasture. These soils are severely limited for homesites that use onsite sewage-disposal systems by the seasonal high-water table and slow permeability.
- 2) Veedum Silt Loam series soils are found majorly around Rocky Creek and along other wetland areas within the Township. They consist of deep, very poorly drained soils in upland drainageways and depressions. A seasonal high – water table is at or near the surface in spring and part of summer. Most of the acreage of these soils is in native pasture, wildlife habitat, or woodland.
- 3) Withee Silt Loam series are found in the northern portion of the township. They are somewhat poorly drained nearly level to gently sloping on uplands of the glacial plain. Slopes are slightly convex, uniform, and 100 to 300 feet long. This soil is moderately suitable for intensive farming of crops commonly found in the County.

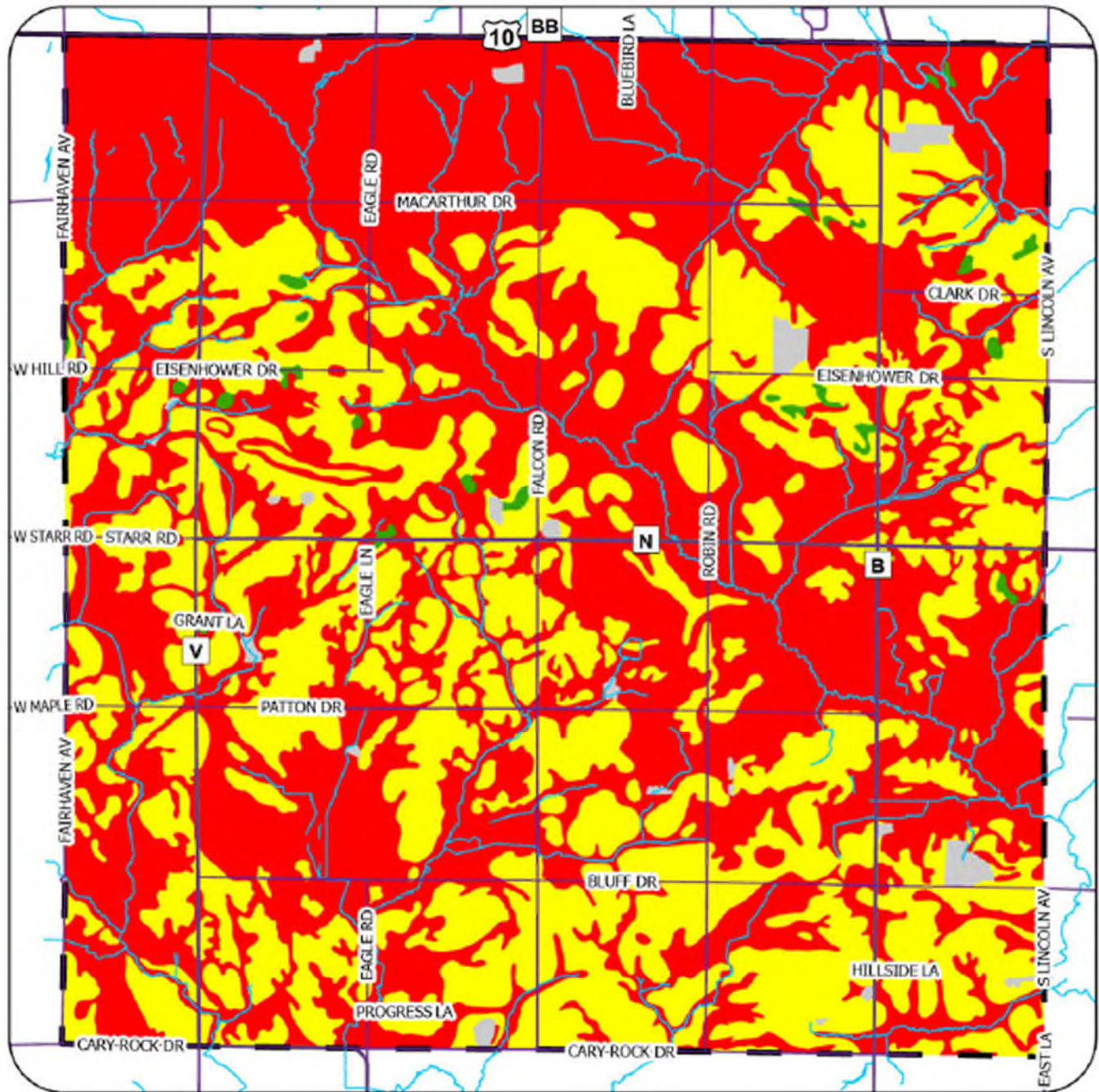
The National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has determined limitations of soil types present within the Town of Rock. Based on Wood County's maps of soil limitation for development of dwellings, some land area within the town has moderate to severe limitations for individual septic tank-soil absorption systems and for dwellings with and without basements. Interpretations of these soil limitations are based on engineering properties which include permeability and depths to bedrock and groundwater. Soil limitations are indicated by the ratings not limited, somewhat limited and very limited.

A not limited means that the soil properties are generally favorable for the rated use; that is limitations are minor and easily overcome. Somewhat limited means that some soil properties are unfavorable, but can be overcome or modified by special planning and design. Very limited means that soil properties are so unfavorable and so difficult to correct or overcome as to require major soil reclamation, special designs or intensive maintenance. Map 6 displays this rating.

The NRCS also provides soil data based on crop productivity, which is generalized for corn. This does not rate the soils based on the anticipated yield but on specific soil characteristics such as PH, organic matter, water at root depth etc. The ratings present in the Town of Rock are moderate inherent productivity, moderately low inherent productivity and low inherent productivity. Moderate inherent productivity indicates that the soil has features that are generally favorable for crop production. Good yields and moderate risk of crop failure can be expected. Moderately low inherent productivity indicates that the soil has features that are generally not favorable for crop production. Low yields and moderately high risk of crop failure can be expected. Low inherent productivity indicates that the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable for crop production. Low yields and high risk of crop failure can be expected. Map 7 displays these ratings in the Town.

If you overlay these two ratings selecting not limited to somewhat limited for dwellings, and moderate productivity for crops to visualize where they overlap; it encompasses most of the town. This is visualized on Map 8 with the red symbolizing where the favorable ratings intersect, yellow is favorable for dwellings and not agriculture and green where agriculture is favorable and not dwellings. It is important for the town to consider this conflict when making decisions about development or when considering farmland preservation.

Map 6



**Soil Limitations For Dwellings
Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin**

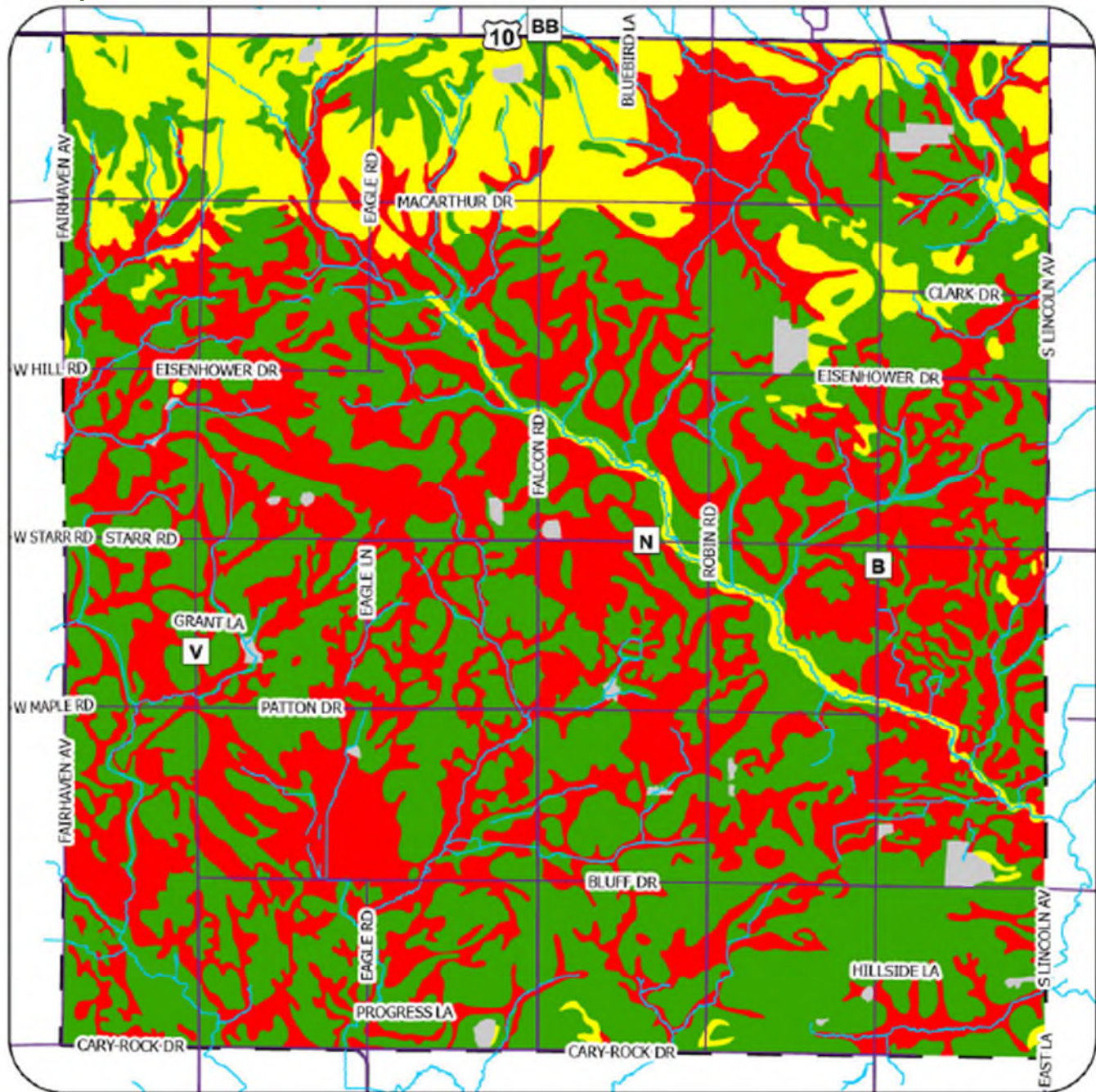
Legend

- Not limited 115 Acres
- Somewhat limited 8,600 Acres
- Very limited 13,159 Acres
- Not rated 219 Acres



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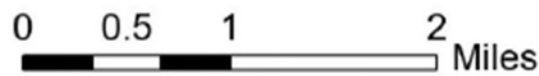
Map 7



**Crop Productivity Based on Soil Type
Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin**

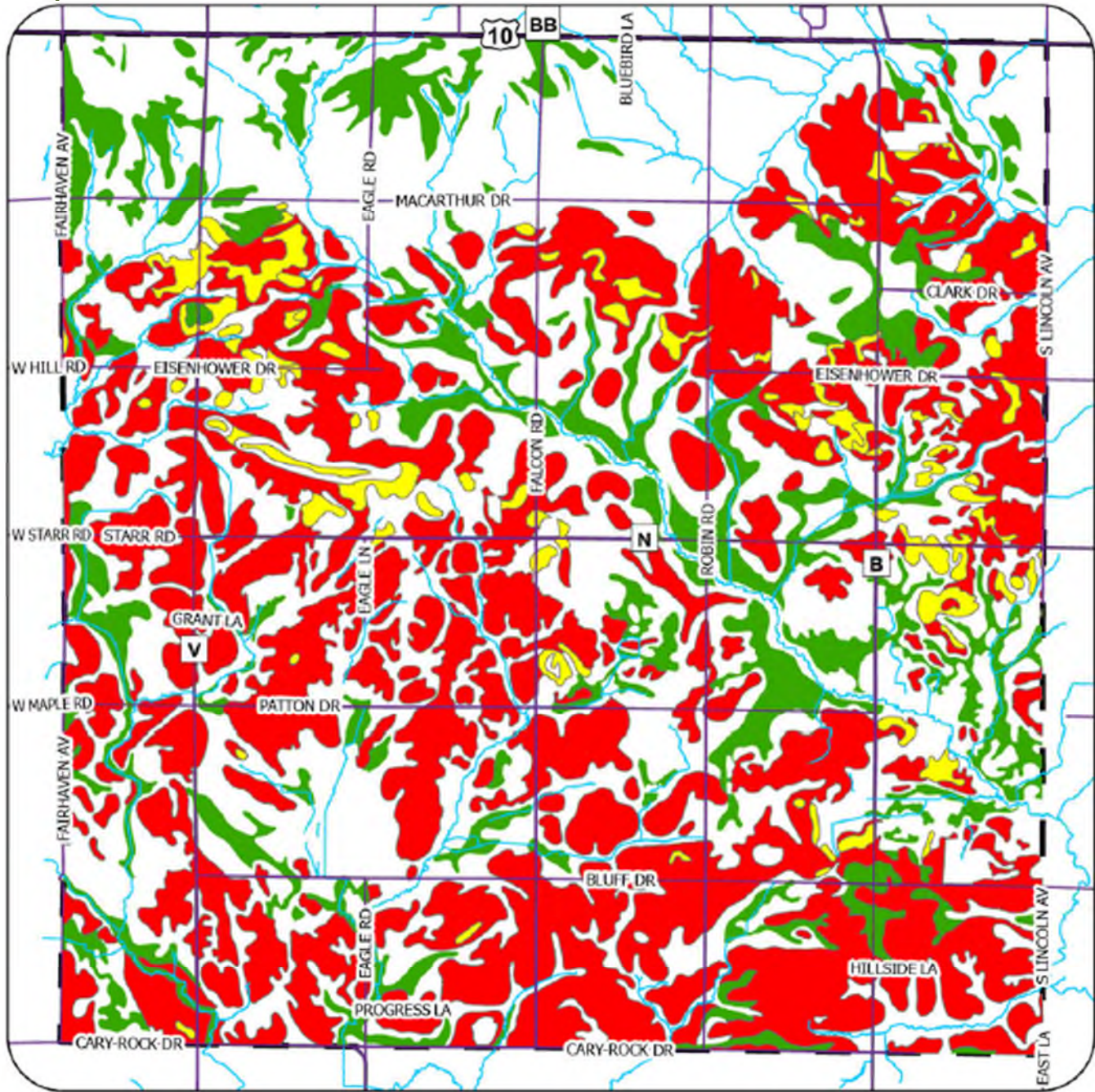
Legend

- Moderate inherent productivity 10,858 Acres
- Moderately low inherent productivity 2,579 Acres
- Low inherent productivity 8,437 Acres
- Not rated 219 Acres



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Map 8



**Agriculture & Residential Conflict Based on Soil Type
Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin**



Legend

- Moderate inherent productivity & not suitable for dwellings
- Somewhat limited or no limitations for dwellings & low productivity
- Conflict area



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Natural Resources

The following sections inventory the present condition of local natural resources in the Town of Rock. Natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas play a direct role in the location of development and certain land use in the town. This inventory will assist the town in determining whether protection, enhancement or restoration is needed over the next 10 – 20 years.

Forests

Much of the land within the Town of Rock is forested. Trees and forests provide important ecological functions, recreation opportunities and economic benefits.

Some private woodlands in the town are enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL). In an effort to promote sustainable forestry practices, the WDNR provides a property tax incentive for private forest landowners under the MFL. Voluntary participation in the program requires that private landowners follow “sound forestry practices” as prescribed in a formal management plan. Management plans for properties generally include some harvesting, along with allowing public uses such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and sight-seeing. Public access is not limitless, however, and up to 80 acres may be closed to public access by the landowner. Forestry assistance is also available for woodland owners through WDNR foresters and private consulting foresters.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally Sensitive Areas, or ESA's, are defined, generally, as those areas that are unsuitable for certain development because of the potential adverse impacts on the natural environment. These areas include, but are not limited to wetlands, shorelands, floodplain, and other such physical constraints. The exact boundaries of environmentally sensitive areas shall be located through field surveys by appropriate regulatory agencies. Many of the ESA's in the Town of Rock are already protected under current laws and ordinances. Any consideration of development within or adjacent to an ESA must be in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and local rules and regulations. The following sections will provide specific information on Town of Rock's ESA's and how they relate to land use planning over the next 10 – 20 years.

Floodplain

Rivers, streams and lakes periodically will overflow their banks and inundate areas of land. These areas are referred to as floodplains. Floodplains serve many important functions related to flood control, erosion control, groundwater recharge, fish and wildlife habitat, and water quality. A floodplain is a natural extension of a waterway and flooding is a natural physical event. When structures are placed in the floodplain, the floodplain's water storage capacity is reduced, causing the next flood of equal intensity to crest even higher than the last, often flooding areas that were previously outside the floodplain. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines floodplains. Floodplains are comprised of the floodway, which is that area that actually carries the floodwaters, and the flood fringe, which is the area that accepts backed-up water for storage until the floodway can carry the water downstream (Figure 9). The flood fringe is sometimes referred to as the “backwater” areas. Floodplain boundaries have been established nationwide to delineate the

100-year and 500-year flood elevations. There is a one percent chance that the 100-year flood will occur in any given year. The majority of the floodplain in the Town is Zone A floodplain which is considered an “unstudied” floodplain, where no base flood elevations are established. Filling, or construction in this zone is unpermitted unless a hydraulic analysis is conducted on the water body. There is a small portion of Zone AE in the northeast portion of the Town where filling or construction is permissible, provided it is done to certain elevation standards and floodproofing.

As required by state law, Wood County adopted and administers a floodplain zoning ordinance so county residents would be eligible to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). FEMA Flood Insurance Maps (FIRMs) identify various floodplain zones. Regulations prohibit development in the floodway, the most dangerous flood area. Development is allowed in the flood fringe, provided it is built above flood levels and otherwise flood-protected. Although allowed, it is wise to restrict development from occurring in the flood fringe as well as the floodway. Any potential development in or near floodplain areas may require permitting and approvals from the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department.

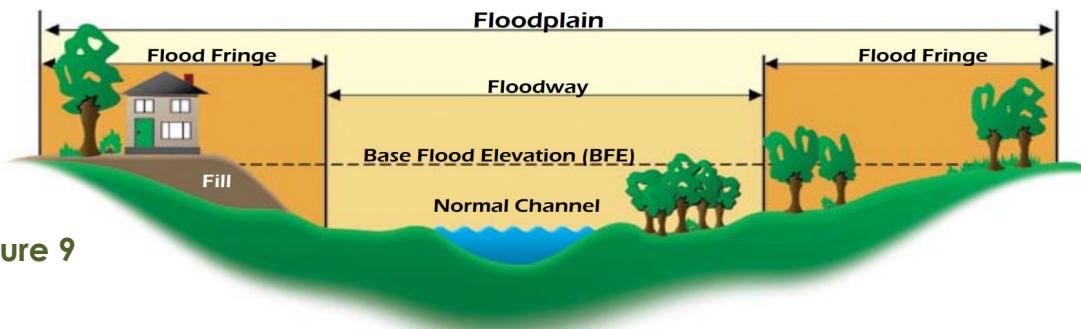
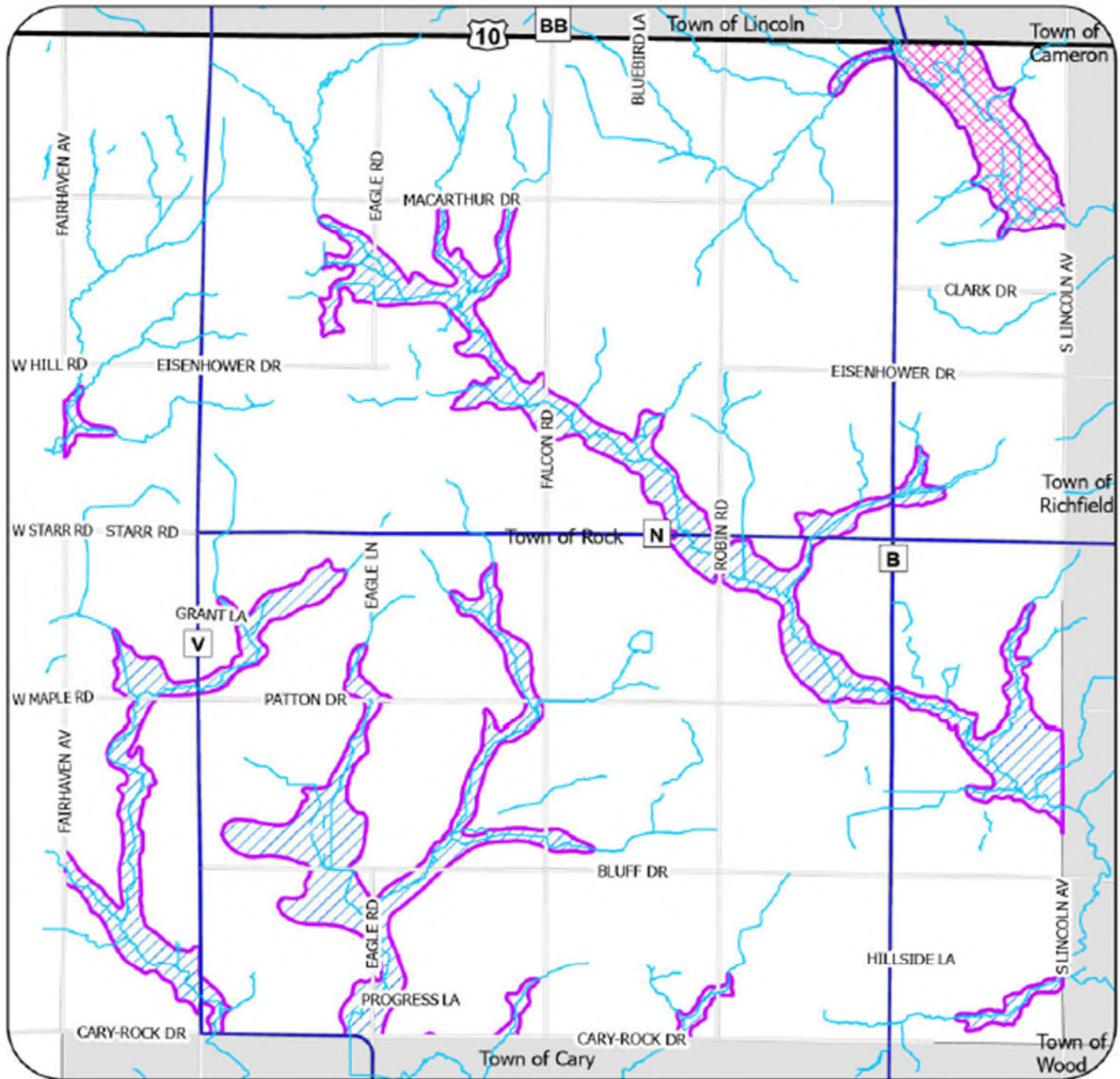


Figure 9

Source: FEMA NFIP Guidebook, 5th Edition, 2009

Map 9



Floodplain Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin

Legend

-  A
-  AE



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Shoreland

Shorelands and floodplains are very closely associated. Like floodplains, shoreland areas are protected under Wisconsin law. Wisconsin statutes define shorelands as lands within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM) of a navigable lake, pond, or flowage and lands within 300 feet or within the floodplain of a navigable river or stream, whichever distance is greater.

Also, like floodplains, the state requires counties to adopt and administer development standards for shorelands in unincorporated areas per Wis. Stat. § 59.692 and Wis. Admin. Code § NR115. Wood County adopted and administers a shoreland zoning ordinance for the following purposes:

- Maintain safe and healthful conditions
- Prevent and control water pollution
- Protect spawning grounds, fish and aquatic life
- Control building sites, placement of structures and land uses
- Preserve and restore shoreland vegetation and natural scenic beauty

Any potential development in shoreland areas may require permitting/approvals from the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department.

Wetlands

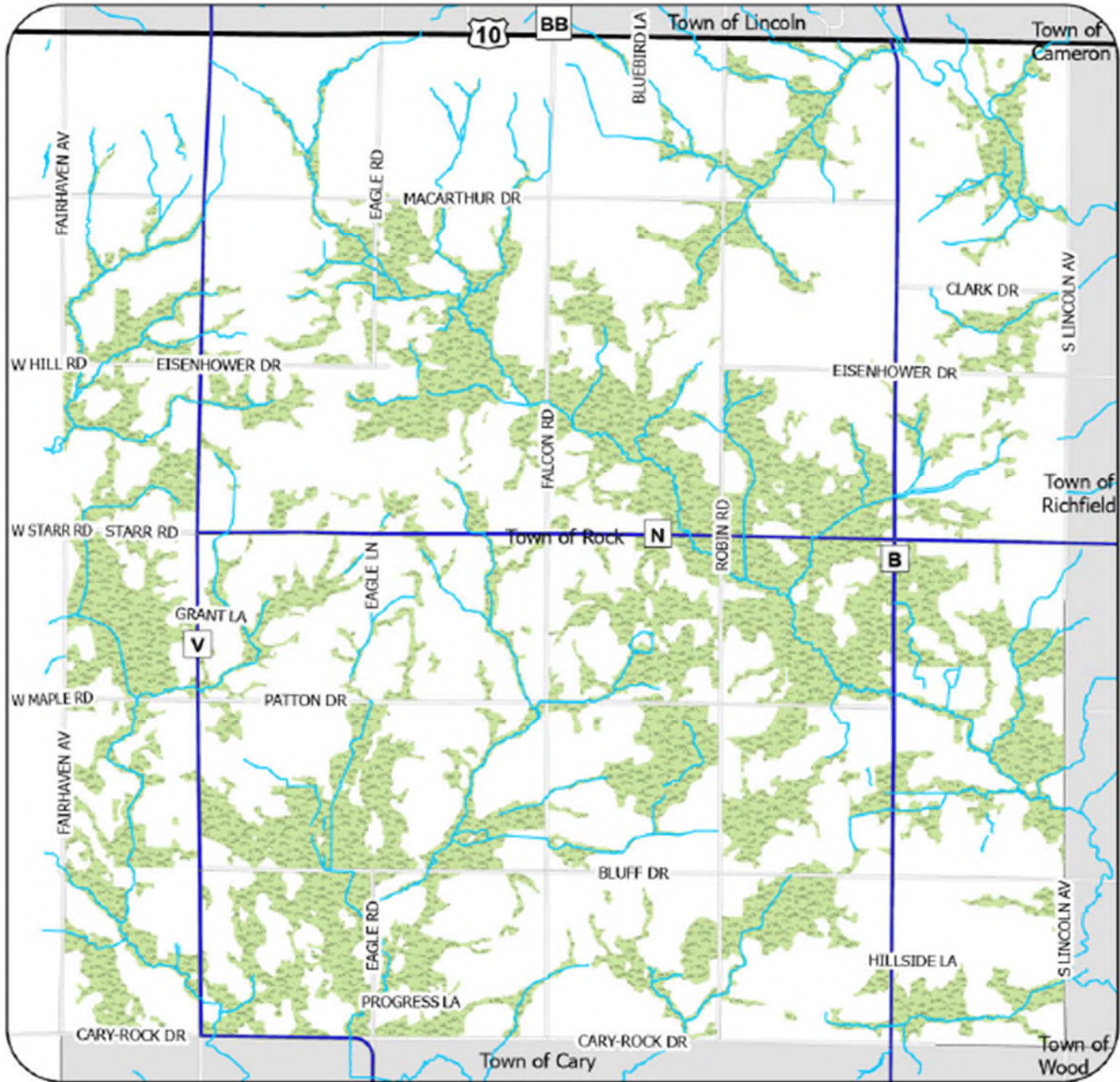
Wetlands are another important natural resource in the Town of Rock. Wetlands serve as a water storage and distribution system, filtering nutrients and purifying the water before it is reintroduced into the groundwater or surface water system. As more impermeable surfaces (rooftops, driveways, patios, roads, etc.) dominate the landscape, the capacity of wetlands to handle excess water runoff becomes increasingly important.

In the Town of Rock, there are 6,875 acres of DNR defined wetlands over 2 acres in size. There are an additional 310 smaller wetland areas under two acres. By percentage, DNR-defined wetlands represent a minimum of 18.6 percent of total land area in the Town of Rock. This number is most likely higher as it does not include the 2 acre or less wetlands or the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) wetlands in cropped farmland.

There are three types of wetlands within the town: emergent/wet meadow, 866 acres, forested, 3,293 acres, and scrub/shrub, 650 acres. The emergent/wet meadow wetland type is what most people think of as wetland because water is present in all but the driest years.

Development should be directed away from all mapped wetlands, both for the protection of the wetland and for the protection of the structures and persons using them. It should be a town policy to protect wetlands from encroachment and destruction so they can serve the function of water runoff storage, wildlife habitat, etc.

Map 10



WDR Wetland Inventory Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin

 Wetlands



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Groundwater

Groundwater is the source of all drinking water in Wood County. The main sources of groundwater in the county are from saturated sand and gravel deposits, fractured Precambrian rock and Cambrian sandstone. Generally, groundwater in the county is acceptable as far as quality and quantity. Regardless of the source, many factors determine the quality of the groundwater supply. Despite this seemingly inexhaustible supply, there are growing concerns about the quality of groundwater in Wood County.

The Town of Rock is in an area of Wood County where soils are characterized by shallow groundwater conditions. Groundwater is closest to the surface adjacent to streams and in drainage swales, where the groundwater is one foot or closer to the ground's surface.

Groundwater quantity and quality has been the subject of many discussions and debates at the local and state level. It is important that the groundwater supply and quality be protected from contamination. Possible sources of contamination can include: failing septic systems; improper disposal of private sewage; fertilizers; pesticides; improperly abandoned wells; improper land uses; and landfills. Nitrate is Wisconsin's most widespread groundwater contaminant and is increasing in extent and severity. Nitrate levels in groundwater are generally below 2 parts per million where pollution sources are absent. Higher levels indicate a source of contamination such as agricultural or turf fertilizers, animal waste, septic systems or wastewater. To obtain a safe water supply, private well owners may opt to replace an existing well with a deeper, better cased well. Nitrate concentrations are poised to further increase as nitrate pollution penetrates into deep aquifers and migrates farther from original source areas. Improved management strategies, technical tools and incentives to promote efficient use of nitrogen are another top priority.

Surface Water

The Town of Rock has no large lakes or rivers, though it is a part of the Mississippi River Basin. In Rock's northeast corner there is the Yellow River which drains into the Wisconsin River, a tributary of the Mississippi River. The East Fork Black River, in the southwest corner of the Town, drains into the Mississippi River. And Rocky Creek, which runs between the two, northwest to southeast, drains into the Yellow River.

Surface water also includes the many ponds in Rock. Most of the ponds are manmade for agricultural or recreational/landscape uses. As mentioned in the previous section, groundwater is at shallow depths in Town of Rock and, therefore, the creation of ponds is relatively easy. It is important to take care not to contaminate the ponds as they are part of the groundwater and surface water system and contamination can migrate to residential wells and recreation areas downstream.

Wildlife

Wildlife and wildlife habitat is abundant in the Town of Rock due to the variety of land types, soils, woodlands and surface water present throughout the Town. Wildlife species present are species

characteristic of northern forested areas, including small and large mammals, upland game birds, predatory birds, song birds, amphibians, snakes, and a variety of fish.

Abundance of wildlife species in a given area depends on the types of timber and stages of tree growth, presence of predators, and availability of food. The abundance of wildlife species in a given area also greatly depends on regulatory philosophy. The misrepresentation of actual wildlife numbers along with over-harvesting or under-harvesting can greatly increase or decrease a particular species in a short time.

In many rural communities, residential development has encroached on wildlife habitat, often eliminating former homes and breeding areas for wildlife. The Town of Rock recognizes the value of its wildlife and is considering development areas and densities that will provide for the protection of wildlife habitat.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Wisconsin's National Heritage Inventory Program (NHI) is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare, threatened, and endangered species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the State. The program's database, on the Wisconsin DNR website, identifies species and natural communities that are currently tracked by the NHI. As of April 2024, NHI tracked the following species in Wood County with state endangered status:

- Blanchard's Cricket Frog
- Little Goblin Moonwort
- Red-necked Grebe
- Eastern Massasuga
- Black tern
- Incurvate Emerald
- Kirtland's Warbler
- Peregrine Falcon

The following threatened species listed by the state also exist in Wood County

- Wood Turtle
- Greater Prairie – Chicken
- Frosted Elfin
- Pale Green Orchid
- Northern Long – eared Bat
- Big Brown Bat
- Redfin Shiner
- Red – Shouldered Hawk
- Dwarf Milkweed
- Henslow's Sparrow
- Little Brown Bat

Non-Metallic & Non-Ferrous Metallic Mining

There are non-metallic mines currently operating in Town of Rock. Non-metallic mining involves the extraction of stone, rock, sand or other similar material from natural deposits. This is a widespread activity in Wood County with the most common examples of nonmetallic mines being quarries and pits.

Materials extracted can range from aggregate for construction; sand, gravel and crushed stone or dolomite for road building; peat for gardening and horticulture; dimension stone for use in buildings, landscaping, and monuments; and



sand that is exported for use by the oil industry. Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 135 requires that all counties adopt and enforce a Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance that establishes performance standards for the reclamation of active and future nonmetallic mining sites, but not sites abandoned prior to August 1, 2001. The Wood County Land Conservation Department administers the reclamation ordinance. Ordinance standards address reclamation, surface water and wetland protection, groundwater protection, topsoil management, grading and slopes, maintenance, and a variety of other issues.

Although the County is required to have a reclamation ordinance that is focused on how the site will be left following the mining operation, siting of nonmetallic operations is dependent on regulation identified in Town of Rock's Zoning Ordinance. The town, through its zoning ordinance, has established Non-metallic Mining Overlay Districts. Conditional Use Permits are required, which may set regulations for hours of operation and safety features such as fencing, and noise thresholds, among other requirements. Also, the Town of Rock, Wood County Nonmetallic Mine Operator's License Ordinance applies to all nonmetallic mining operations and mine sites within the Town of Rock, including processing facilities, at which extraction, processing or transportation of more than 50,000 cubic yards of material occurs in any calendar year.

In the Town of Rock, glacial deposits as much as 300 feet thick overlie Precambrian igneous and metamorphic bedrock. These aggregate sources provide highway and building construction materials to various municipalities, contractors and individuals, including the Town of Rock. However, in the Town of Rock's 2020 community survey, a majority agreed that non-metallic mining in the township should be limited.

There are no active non-ferrous metallic mining operations located in the Town of Rock. Non-ferrous metallic mining involves the extraction of copper, zinc, gold, silver, platinum, nickel, aluminum, lead, etc. from natural deposits. The Wood County Land and Water Conservation Department administers a Non-ferrous Metallic Mineral Mining Land Use and Reclamation Ordinance within all unincorporated areas of the county including the Town of Rock.

Parks, Open Space & Recreation

Public open space lands are important determinants of the quality of life within a community.

The Town of Rock maintains its own park facility in Lindsey. The facility includes a covered pavilion, picnic tables, restrooms, and a fully equipped children's playground.

Hunting is a major recreational activity throughout most of the township. However, the great majority of this property is privately owned. The School District of Marshfield maintains a school forest on highway N, where hunting is available to the



public on a limited basis. The school forest also features a system of scenic trails for hiking and skiing, open to the public.

Historical & Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are those elements that signify heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinctive. Cultural resources include buildings, sites and landscapes that help communities retain their sense of identity in an increasingly homogenized society.

Much of the history of the Town of Rock is evident today. Considered a small, close-knit community, fourth and fifth generations of families continue to reside in the town. Agriculture plays a vital role to the economy. Farms continue to operate in the town. Original railroad beds can be seen throughout the township.

There are no properties within the Town of Rock on the National or State Register of Historic Places or on the Wisconsin Architectural History Inventory. However, there is a small cemetery at the site of the former Town of Progress.

Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources, Goals, Objectives & Policies

Goal 1: To support the Town's agricultural community.

Objective 1: Preserve some of the remaining areas in the Town that are currently in agricultural production.

Policy 1: Protect prime agricultural lands.

Policy 2: Encourage participation in Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation Program.

Goal 2: To preserve and protect its natural resources.

Objective 1: Protect environmentally sensitive areas from unsuitable development to avoid potential adverse impacts on the natural environment of the Town.

Policy 1: Continue utilizing zoning standards that encourage agricultural land uses in productive farmland areas of the Town, while minimizing intrusion of incompatible land uses.

Policy 2: Discourage development in or near wetland, floodplain and shoreland areas.

Policy 3: Minimize impacts to the Town's natural resources from metallic or non-metallic mining.

Objective 2: Maintain high water quality standards within the Town.

Policy 1: Coordinate with Wood County with regard to Private On-Site Waste Treatment Systems (POWTS).

Policy 2: Coordinate with Wood County Land and Water Conservation to support sustainable management of groundwater and surface water quality in the Town.

Policy 3: Review the Town zoning ordinance for appropriate regulations and standards for potential Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOS).

7. Economic Development

Economic development is the process of improving a community's well-being through job creation, business growth, and income growth, as well as through improvements to the social and natural environment that strengthen the local economy. The present condition of the local economy directly influences economic development and the overall quality of life in the Town of Rock. The simple beauty of the town, with its rolling hills and streams, is an attraction to people looking for the peacefulness of rural living, but still only minutes from work, schools and services.

Introduction

The purpose of this element is to provide an analysis of the Town of Rock's current labor force and economic base. From this analysis this section will outline goals, objectives and policies that are intended to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the town over the next 10 to 20 years. To achieve that purpose, this chapter will assess the types of businesses and industries that are desired/not desired in Rock, perceived strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, designate sites for desired business development, and identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the town.

“Over 85% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that larger commercial and industrial development should be located in the City of Marshfield.”

Source: 2020 Town of Rock Community Survey

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

Economic Base

The economy of the Town of Rock is based, in part, on the agricultural economy and, even more so, the economy of the City of Marshfield. Although the town is not the home to major businesses or industries, the town's small businesses and Rock residents play an important role in the area's economy.

Rock has attracted residents who commute to more urban areas for employment. As shown earlier in (Table 9), the average commute town residents travel to a place of employment outside of Rock is

approximately 20 minutes. Because most residents work in Marshfield, the Town Board should take careful consideration of the transportation network to move people to and from the city.

Several small businesses and home occupation businesses are scattered throughout the town. These also play an important role in the area's economy. Given the fact that Rock has attracted skilled populations with its natural amenities, there is an opportunity to create and grow small local businesses. This can be a sustainable strategy for rural economic development.

Rock does not have a municipal water supply and sanitary sewer system. This prevents the town from attracting large industrial or commercial development. Many larger businesses use a lot of water and, as a result, need to dispose of a lot of wastewater. Because all the Town of Rock is on private, on-site wastewater treatment systems, disposal of large quantities of water can be hard on systems and pose a potential of contaminating private drinking water supplies. This can also be a very expensive option for a start-up or expansion business. 50% of the Town of Rock survey respondents indicated they would rather see large commercial and industrial development located in the City of Marshfield.

Labor Force

The Town of Rock has several strengths to offer businesses and industries that are considering locating to or expanding in the Marshfield area. Chief among these is the quality of the labor force. Labor force data is presented in (Section 2) of this plan. This includes but is not limited to educational attainment levels; income levels; employment characteristics and projections; industry characteristics; commuting information and population age. Communities require a quality labor force to stay competitive, to keep existing economic development strong, to keep people in the community, and to enhance overall quality of life.

Area Designated Economic Development Sites

The designated business parks and industrial parks that are near the Town of Rock are all located in the City of Marshfield. The city currently has an available supply of platted lands that have infrastructure and services ready for industrial or business park development. There are currently five (5) industrial and business parks located in Marshfield. The oldest of these is the Marshfield East Industrial Park. This is a 260-acre development that is currently full. A 26-acre business park called the Marshfield Air Business Park is conveniently located near the Marshfield Airport. Approximately 3 acres are available for development. The Mill Creek Business Park is located on U. S. Highway 10 on the city's far south side. This park offers good accessibility from Highway 10 and State Highway 13. It is a 154-acre facility that currently has eight tenants. Multiple properties are still available for development. The fourth park is the 104-acre Yellowstone Industrial Park. This park is near the East Industrial Park and has 60+ acres of developable land yet to begin development. The Yellowstone Industrial Park has excellent access via four-lane roads, rail access and is a Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Certified Site. Finally, the Norwood Industrial Park is a privately-owned 60-

acre industrial park on the city's east side.

The Town of Rock, through their town zoning ordinance, has provided districts for commercial and industrial land use. The town should evaluate economic development sites and projects on a case-by-case basis. It is important for these types of land uses to be consistent with Rock's overall vision of the town, its comprehensive plan, and local ordinances. Currently, there are no sites in the Town of Rock that are being marketed as economic development sites.

Desired Business and Industry

The Town of Rock neither encourages nor opposes small commercial ventures. On the contrary, past policy has been to encourage and support commercial and industrial development in the City of Marshfield. This is one of the town's strengths in the economic development area. Any addition to the job base in Marshfield benefits Rock as well. The town should also consider all agriculturally based enterprises to be relevant to economic development.

Brownfields & Environmentally Contaminated Sites

Brownfields and environmentally contaminated sites can be redeveloped and remediated to promote economic development in a community. Brownfields are abandoned, idle or underused commercial or industrial properties, where the expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination. Brownfields vary in size, location, age, and past use - they can be anything from a five-hundred-acre automobile assembly plant to a small, abandoned corner gas station. The WDNR's Remediation and Redevelopment program has a wide range of financial and liability tools available to assist local governments, businesses, lenders and others to clean up and redevelop brownfields in Wisconsin. The WDNR has a comprehensive database that provides information on brownfields and environmentally contaminated sites.

Economic Development Resources

Economic development efforts in the Town of Rock area are available through a variety of resources, programs and organizations. These include federal, state and local economic development programs. Some of those that are most active are listed in the following paragraphs.

The Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MACCI)

The Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MACCI) receives financial support from annual membership dues from nearly 500 member businesses, local government funding, public and private grants, sponsorships, program revenues and more. MACCI's mission is to provide leadership and support for the economic advancement of our community, while serving as a catalyst for the development of programs and services that benefit our members. Through a host of programs and services, MACCI works to help the Marshfield community and businesses grow and prosper. These efforts benefit Town of Rock residents as well as those in the city and surrounding towns.

Marshfield Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)

The Marshfield CVB is an organization that provides a variety of resources to promote and attract visitors to the Marshfield area. They are directly responsible for tourism in the area, which creates a positive economic impact.

Central Wisconsin Economic Development Fund (CWED)

The Central Wisconsin Economic Development Fund (CWED) Revolving Loan Program works with entrepreneurs and their lenders to structure financing packages for start-up and expanding businesses to encourage economic growth in the area.

Wood County

The Conservation, Education and Economic Development (CEED) Committee is charged with overseeing day-to-day economic development activities in Wood County. The CEED Committee is a standing committee of the Wood County Board of Supervisors. Under the oversight of this committee, Wood County participates in several economic development activities and is represented on various Boards of Directors of area economic development organizations.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC)

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, located in Wausau, provides technical assistance and compiles economic development data for its members. It also administers a regional revolving loan fund on behalf of the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation. The ten counties the NCWRPC serves have also been formally designated as an Economic Development District by the State of Wisconsin and by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. Under this designation, the NCWRPC maintains a continuous process of planning assistance that supports the formulation and implementation of economic development programs designed to create or retain full-time permanent jobs and income. The NCWRPC provides services such as economic research, marketing, financial packaging, evaluation and analysis of public infrastructure needs that support private economic development activity and works with local units of government to maintain eligibility for certain grants.

Centergy

Centergy is the Central Wisconsin Alliance for Economic Development, which was initially created in 1988 and has evolved into the strong regional economic development proponent it is today. This non-profit organization is led by an executive director who has the responsibility of conducting economic development activities and looking after economic development interests of Adams, Lincoln, Marathon, Portage and Wood counties. Centergy has conducted economic opportunity forums and studies for central Wisconsin, which have resulted in cooperative efforts in our region. Each year, Centergy coordinates Central Wisconsin Days in Madison. This two-day event features one-on-one meetings with many Wisconsin legislators and state-level staff members to educate them on the opportunities and needs throughout central Wisconsin. Centergy Board members, private business representatives and local elected officials travel to Madison to represent our area.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Rural Development

USDA Rural Development is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. They offer loans, grants and loan guarantees to help create jobs and support economic development and essential services such as housing, health care, first responder services and equipment, and water, electric and communications infrastructure.

Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA)

The Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to expanding Wisconsin's economy. WEDA's mission is to enhance economic development in Wisconsin through professional development, networking and advocacy. WEDA provides members with resources and tools to strengthen their skills in economic development, help achieve their professional goals, and promote economic growth in communities throughout the state.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Administration (WHEDA)

WHEDA offers and manages a variety of financial resources and assistance programs that can assist small businesses in the Town of Rock. WHEDA's mission is to stimulate the state's economy and improve the quality of life for Wisconsin residents by providing affordable housing and business financing products.

Economic Development Goals, Objectives & Policies:

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal 1: Support and maintain the local economy base.

Objective 1: Encourage and support large commercial and industrial developments in the City of Marshfield where municipal sewer and water services are located.

Policy 1: Cooperate in countywide economic development initiatives.

Objective 2: Promote compatibility between economic development and quality of life.

Policy 1: Strengthen the local agricultural economy by preserving prime agricultural lands.

Policy 2: Consider agriculturally based enterprises to be relevant economic development.

Objective 3: Provide areas for appropriate commercial land uses through the town's zoning map and ordinance.

Policy 1: Evaluate economic development sites and projects on a commercial zoning case-by-case basis.

Policy 2: Promote small businesses that do not require large amounts of water or wastewater treatment services.

Objective 4: Retain existing small businesses and commercial properties.

Policy 1: Support the development of home occupations in the town.

Policy 2: Make referrals to local economic development organizations to provide information on funding resources for new and existing businesses.

8. Intergovernmental Cooperation

Intergovernmental cooperation among communities can lead toward relationships that prosper based on common goals and interests, while putting aside political and boundary differences. By establishing a rapport with adjacent communities, improved communication can lead to a better working relationship that can benefit all of the communities involved. By working together, not only will communities have the potential of providing services at the lowest cost, and most efficient manner, they will be better positioned to address issues of mutual interest.

Introduction

The purpose of this element is to identify existing activities in which the Town of Rock currently participates with other local units of government, the Marshfield and Pittsville Public School Districts, Wood County, and state and federal governments. The inventory will identify important existing cooperative activities and summarize major challenges and issues that have been identified regarding intergovernmental cooperation, including opportunities to reduce or eliminate duplication of services; incompatible goals, policies and development; mechanisms for conflict resolution; and opportunities for joint planning and decision-making. This chapter will also describe area planning issues that will or could impact Town of Rock residents and residents of neighboring communities. Through this analysis, this section will outline goals, objectives and policies that will help guide future town-level decisions for the next 10 to 20 years.

Options for Intergovernmental Cooperation

The desirability of cooperative efforts depends upon a variety of factors like the size of the jurisdiction, the overall economic impact, and advantages and disadvantages of the effort. There is no single agreement that will meet everyone's needs, however, there are a variety of approaches that communities can take advantage of when considering cooperative efforts. Wisconsin law provides flexibility and opportunity when it comes to working with others. The following are some ways that communities can work together to provide services:

- **Voluntary assistance** – Voluntarily providing services to another municipality.
- **Trading services** – Exchanging different pieces of equipment for labor, or labor for labor.
- **Renting equipment** – Renting equipment from neighboring communities could be cheaper than purchasing, and it provides revenue to the community that owns the equipment.
- **Contracting** – Contracting with another community to provide a service.

Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(2)(g).

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

- **Routine county services** – Some county services are already paid for through taxes or fees such as police protection. Through cooperation, areas where improvements are needed can be identified along with ways to cooperatively address them.
- **Sharing municipal staff** – Sharing municipal employees and independently contracted professionals allows communities to reduce staffing costs, while providing the same level of services.
- **Consolidating services** – Communities can work together to provide a service, rather than individually providing the service to their residents. This approach many times makes cost-prohibitive or inefficient services, feasible.
- **Joint use of a facility** – Communities can share use of a public facility.
- **Special purpose districts** – Districts are created to provide a particular service. Special purpose districts are separate and legally independent entities that have their own governing bodies, boundaries, ordinances, and taxing authority.
- **Joint purchase and ownership of equipment** – Communities can agree to jointly purchase and own equipment that may be too costly to otherwise purchase individually.
- **Cooperative purchasing** – Purchasing equipment or supplies cooperatively may allow communities to gain more favorable pricing.

Statutes Pertaining to Intergovernmental Cooperation

Wisconsin State Statute 66.0301 – Intergovernmental Cooperation

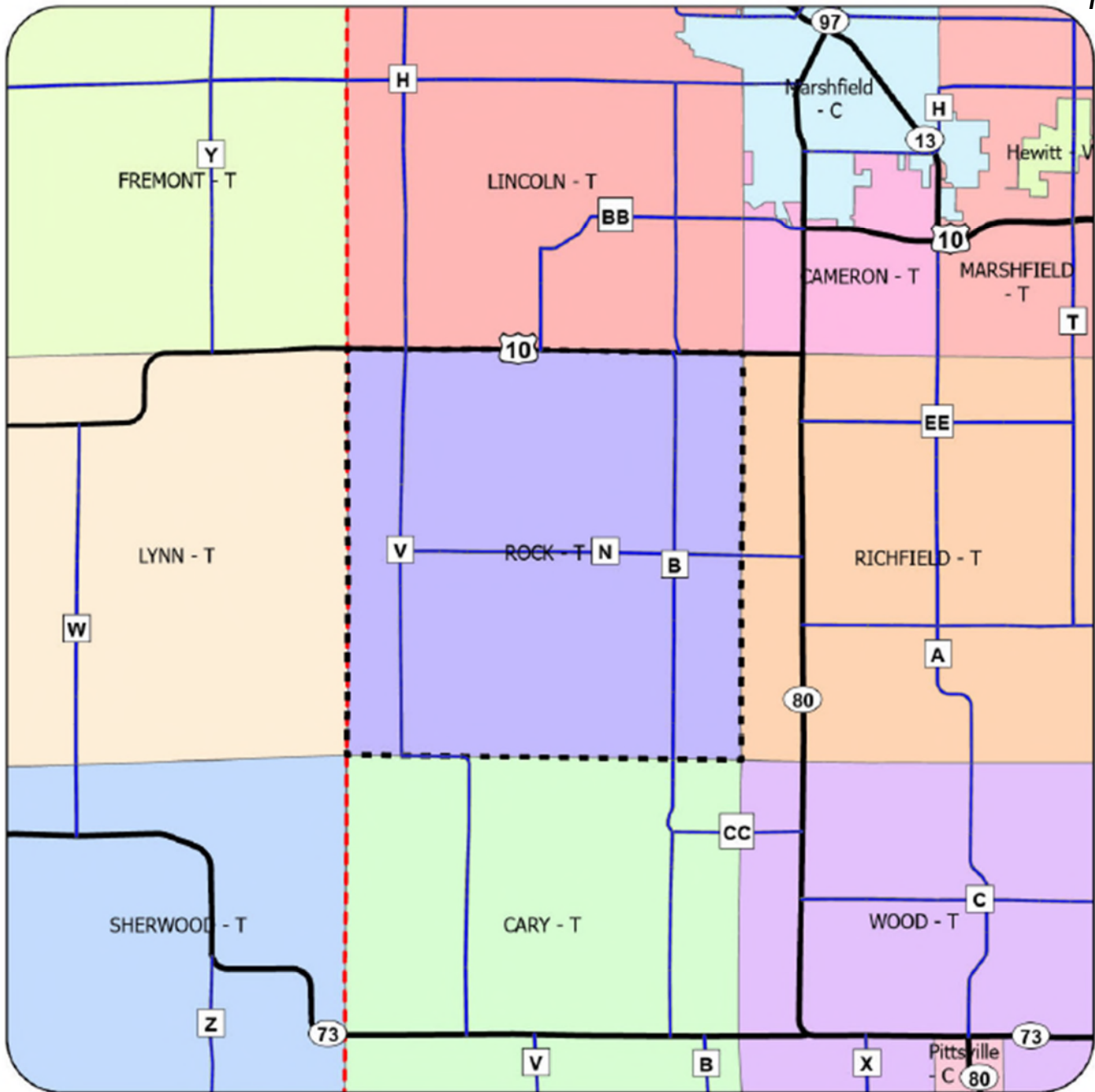
State Statute 66.0301 permits local agreements between the state, cities, villages, towns, counties, regional planning commissions, certain special districts, including school districts, public library systems, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, sanitary districts, farm drainage districts, metropolitan sewerage districts, native American tribes or bands and others.

Wisconsin State Statute 66.0307 – Boundary Plans and Agreements

State Statute 66.0307 permits cities, villages or towns to participate in cooperative boundary agreements. Each municipality that participates must adopt a resolution authorizing its participation in the planning process.



Adjacent Local Government Units

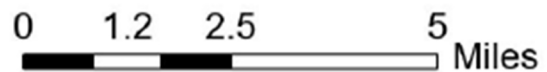
The Town of Rock maintains a cooperative working relationship with adjacent local governmental units. These adjacent local governmental units are shown in (Map 11) on the next page. Existing shared services and cooperative efforts between these communities are further detailed in the next section.



**Intergovernmental Cooperation
Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin**

Legend

-  Town of Rock
-  Wood/Clark County Line



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Existing Shared Services and Cooperative Efforts

The Town of Rock currently has shared services and cooperative efforts with local, county, regional, state, and federal agencies. These services and efforts can be as simple as communicating information, or it can be as complex as entering into formal intergovernmental agreements. Cooperation between governmental jurisdictions can help avoid wasteful duplication of services at the town level. The information presented below is intended to be used by Town of Rock officials to understand existing intergovernmental relationships and successes. This understanding and analysis can be used to improve intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

Neighboring Jurisdictions

The Town of Rock maintains a cooperative working relationship with adjacent local governmental units. The Town of Rock Fire/Rescue Department's primary service area is within Rock. However, the town has mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions. For garbage and recycling services, the town contracts with Waste Management in cooperation with five other area towns (Richfield, Lincoln, Cameron, Marshfield and McMillan). This arrangement has worked well and will likely continue. Rock co-owns a cemetery with the Town of Lincoln. The cemetery is located adjacent to the Town of Lincoln in the Town of Rock. Boundary roads are maintained under formal agreement with adjoining municipalities.



The 22 towns in Wood County meet monthly to discuss common issues and provide ideas others can use to make town operations more efficient. This meeting is the local unit of the Wisconsin Towns Association. State legislators are usually at the towns association meeting to provide information and alerts on activities in Madison and interact with town officials on issues and legislation of concern. Each meeting features a speaker, often from county or state agencies, to provide information on programs or to offer assistance in meeting legislative requirements. This has been a very active, quite successful organization and very valuable to Wood County's towns.

Wood County

Rock maintains a cooperative working relationship with Wood County, which provides a variety of services to the town including: law enforcement, E-911 dispatch services, planning and zoning, maintenance of county highways, and others.

The Town of Rock does not have their own police department. Consequently, the town relies on the Wood



County Sheriff's Department and Wisconsin State Patrol to patrol the town and investigate traffic crashes and crimes. Because the population size of Rock does not support a town police officer, the town will continue to work with state and county law enforcement agencies to provide Rock residents with a safe place to live.

The Wood County Shared Dispatch Center is located in the Wood County Courthouse in Wisconsin Rapids. The center dispatches for all emergency responders in Wood County – police, fire and ambulance. The center receives emergency calls from the Town of Rock and dispatches officers for response. Calls for the Humane Officer are also dispatched through the 911 system.

The Town of Rock has a great working relationship with the Wood County Department of Planning and Zoning. The department provides local planning assistance for the Town of Rock. Rock adopted and administers its own town zoning ordinance. However, Wood County has jurisdiction over land divisions, private onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS), county zoning, shoreland zoning, and floodplain zoning.

Regional Agencies

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) is a regional agency that provides assistance to local governmental units throughout a ten-county region, which includes Wood County and the Town of Rock. NCWRPC provides assistance in areas of land use planning, economic development, geographic information systems (GIS), intergovernmental cooperation, and more.

State and Federal Agencies

The Town of Rock cooperates with several state and federal agencies including, but not limited to: the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. There are several local programs that are mandated by various state and federal agencies. The town cooperates by submitting the appropriate records and reports as prescribed by the specific programs and laws.

Unified School District of Marshfield and Pittsville School District

The Unified School District of Marshfield and the Pittsville School District serve the Town of Rock. Cooperation with the districts includes open communications regarding snow plowing on town roads and other concerns or issues they may have. The Town Board remains open to any discussions or correspondence that the districts may want to approach the town about. Additional information on the Unified School District of Marshfield and Pittsville School District is presented in (Section 5: Utilities and Community Facilities Element) of this plan.

Drainage Districts

Wood County and the Town of Rock are not a part of a drainage district. According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), drainage districts are

local governmental entities organized under a county drainage board for the primary purpose of draining lands for agriculture. A drainage district establishes a legal mechanism for managing drains and related facilities to ensure reliable drainage.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives & Policies:

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal 1: Seek mutual beneficial cooperation with all levels of government and among nearby units of government.

Objective 1: Promote communication with other units of government, including adjoining towns, the county, the state, and the federal government.

Policy 1: Continually evaluate opportunities for improving intergovernmental cooperation to make provision of services more cost effective and efficient.

Policy 2: Investigate contracting with neighboring towns and the County to provide more efficient services or public utilities.

Policy 3: Participate in the Wood County Towns Association.

9. Land Use

The Town of Rock Plan Commission recognizes that land use planning for the future is sound public policy. A study of past and current land use patterns is a good way to understand why a community looks like it does. Land use changes in the town have more often than not, been driven by socio-economic conditions. However, land use can also be effectively guided by political decisions and policy that are the result of desires of community residents. The land use element provides guidance to improve town zoning and land use decision making.

Introduction

The purpose of this element is to analyze past, present and future projected land uses in the Town of Rock; to determine how the town could, or will change, in the future. The land use element uses information gathered from other elements of this plan to understand the types of land uses that are possible or desired in the town. Town officials want to avoid haphazard development that can be costly to taxpayers, while ensuring compatible land uses in the town. This chapter will illustrate various land uses on two types of maps: the Existing Land Use and Future Land Use. Through this analysis, this element will outline goals, objectives and policies that will help guide future town-level zoning and land use decisions for the next 10 to 20 years.

“Nearly 70% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that future land use planning efforts in the Town of Rock should preserve as much woodland and wildlife habitat as possible.”

Source: 2020 Town of Rock Community Survey

Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(2)(h).

Land use element:

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

Historical Land Use and Development

The Town of Rock was first settled as a timber region in the mid 1800's. The timber industry dominated the landscape into the early 1900's, but as the logs diminished, the saw mills closed, and the landscape settled into a pattern very similar to what is present today, with agricultural uses in the north and scattered residential within forest tracts to the south.

Agriculture has been the main industry in the northern half of the town over the past century. While the structure and composition of the farm industry has shifted over time, its impression on the landscape has remained strong.

Residential development in the Town of Rock began increasing in the late 1970's and continues today. Preservation of the rural landscape and balancing of existing agricultural land with new residential development are key planning issues in the township.

Current Land Cover

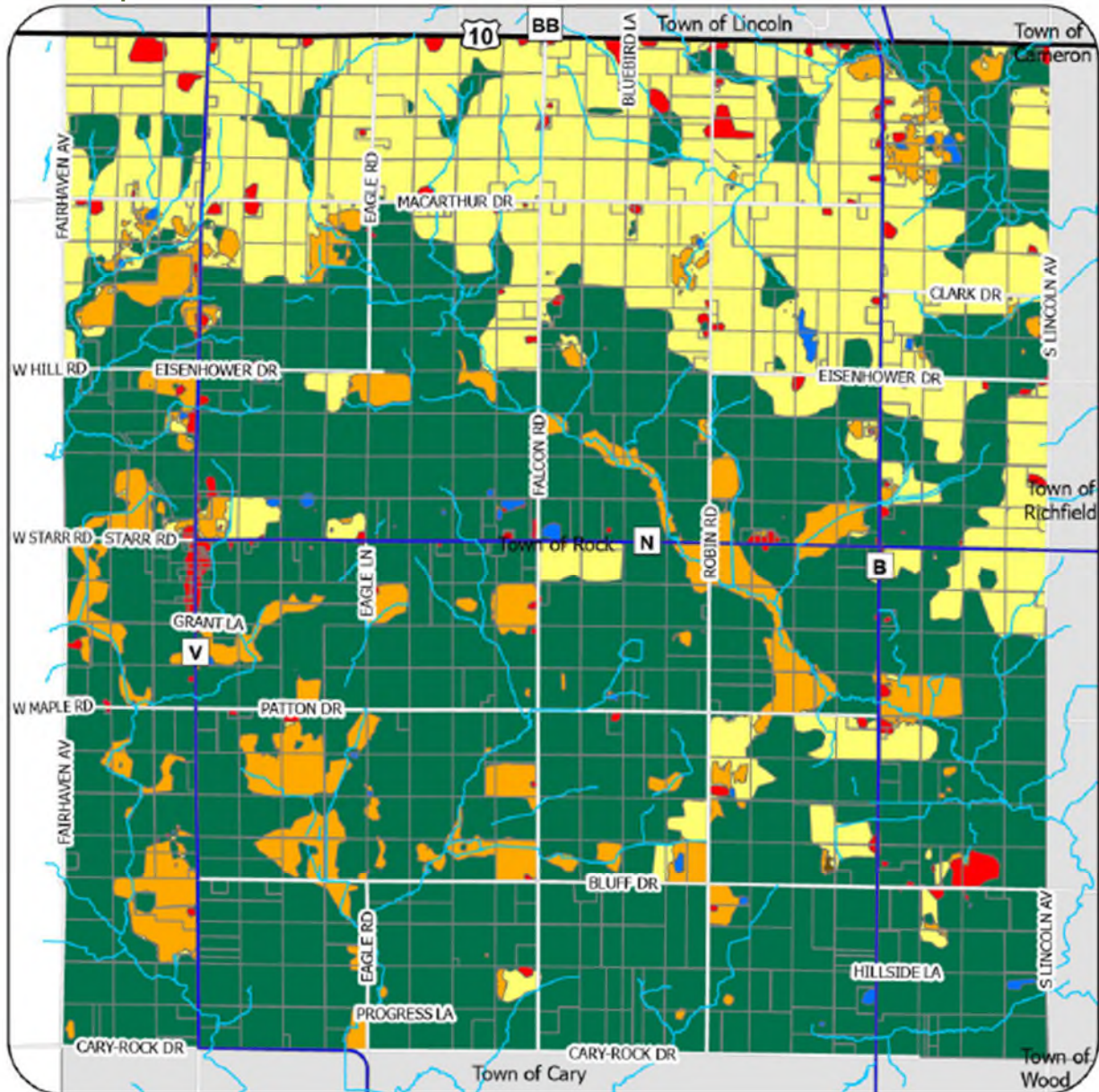
One of the fundamental prerequisites for determining future land use is understanding existing land cover in the Town of Rock.

Forests and farmland define two distinct land cover regions within the town of Rock. Nearly all the land in the northern one-third of the town (Eisenhower Drive to Highway 10) is devoted to cropped fields and pasture. There is a direct relationship between the farmland and the rolling nature of the topography in this area. The land cover in the southern two-thirds of the Town (south of Eisenhower Drive) is mainly forest or meadow with less than 15 percent of the land cover related to agricultural practices. This forest/meadow region of the town is where most of the DNR defined wetlands are located.

In most parts of Wood County, agriculture has become the dominant land use type. In the Town of Rock, this has not been the case. Forests are the most prominent land cover type in the Town with a percentage of the town land area enrolled in some type of forest tax program.

Residential and commercial land uses are scattered throughout the Town of Rock, with the only noticeable concentration near the Village of Lindsey. New development has mainly occurred in the north half of the town along improved roadways.

Map 12



Land Cover
Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin

Legend

- Bare Ground
- Built Area
- Crops
- Rangeland
- Trees
- Water



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Existing Land Use

It is a necessary component of the land use element to identify and analyze current land use conditions in the Town of Rock. Knowing what land use activities currently occur in different locations in a community and the relations between those different uses or activities is essential information for planning future land use. This evaluation is intended to assist town officials when making decisions on future land use needs. Moreover, the goals, objectives and policies of this element are greatly affected by existing land uses and development patterns in Rock. The land use inventory is important for good community management and should be updated regularly to remain current. The land use inventory is not a plan; it is part of the vital data from which plans are made.

Land use inventories are developed in Wood County using aerial photography interpretation, assessment records, field checks, and the Land Based Classification Standards (LBCS). The LBCS was developed by the American Planning Association to provide a consistent method for classifying land uses. Land use maps show the current location of land use types throughout the County, as well as land use classification totals.

Table 25 EXISTING LAND USE TOTALS – TOWN OF ROCK 2019		
Land Use Classification	Acres	% of Total
Agriculture	±5,412	24.5
Natural Areas	±15,378	70.0
Residential	±499	2.3
Industrial	±198	.9
Commercial	±38	.17
Outdoor Recreation	±1	.005
Institutional & Government Services	±5	.02
Transportation	±383	1.7
Utilities	±4	.02

Source: Wood County Department of Planning and Zoning (2020)

Agriculture

The agricultural classification consists of those areas utilized for cultivated crop lands, pasture lands, farm lands, agricultural lands, etc. This includes buildings for which the primary function is agriculture related. The major farming industry in the Town of Rock is dairy production. Operating farms in the Town of Rock are almost entirely confined to the northern two tiers of town sections. Most of the total cropped farmland and pasture in the town is found on the sloping ground in this area. Farms in the southern reaches of the Town are more diversified, with hay and beef production more prominent than dairy.



Natural Areas

The natural areas classification consists of wetlands, woodlands, unused rural lands, etc. This classification in the Town of Rock can be referenced to identify areas of environmentally sensitive lands. These areas often have natural limitations for building site development such as floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands.

Residential

The residential classification consists of any areas used for residential activities including single family, two-family and multi-family. For purposes of this plan, lands committed to residential use but not fully developed yet, have been identified as residential lands. Residential development in the Town of Rock is presently defined almost entirely by single-family residential structures.

Industrial

The industrial classification includes buildings and premises, which are devoted to industrial, manufacturing, production, etc. Areas utilized for the extraction of stone, sand, rock or similar materials from natural deposits (nonmetallic mining) are included in this classification.

Commercial

The commercial classification includes any areas for which the primary function involves retail sales and services. Current commercial activities in The Town of Rock include small repair shops, specific service industries, taverns, and retail sales. The majority of the businesses are located in the village area of Lindsey, and along Highway 10.

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor areas provide opportunities for recreational activities such as golfing, camping, snowmobiling, playfields, playgrounds, etc. and are classified as outdoor

recreation. Lindsey Park provides many recreational activities in the Town of Rock. Also, the School District of Marshfield maintains a school forest in the Town of Rock, open to the public on a limited basis.

Institutional and Government Services

This classification includes governmental and institutional buildings and grounds for which the function involves administration, safety, education, assembly, etc. Cemeteries are also included in this classification. There is a Town of Rock cemetery on Highway 10 and Eagle Road. The Town of Rock Town Hall, located on Highway N, serves as an emergency shelter and houses many town functions including fire and rescue, town administration and town meetings.

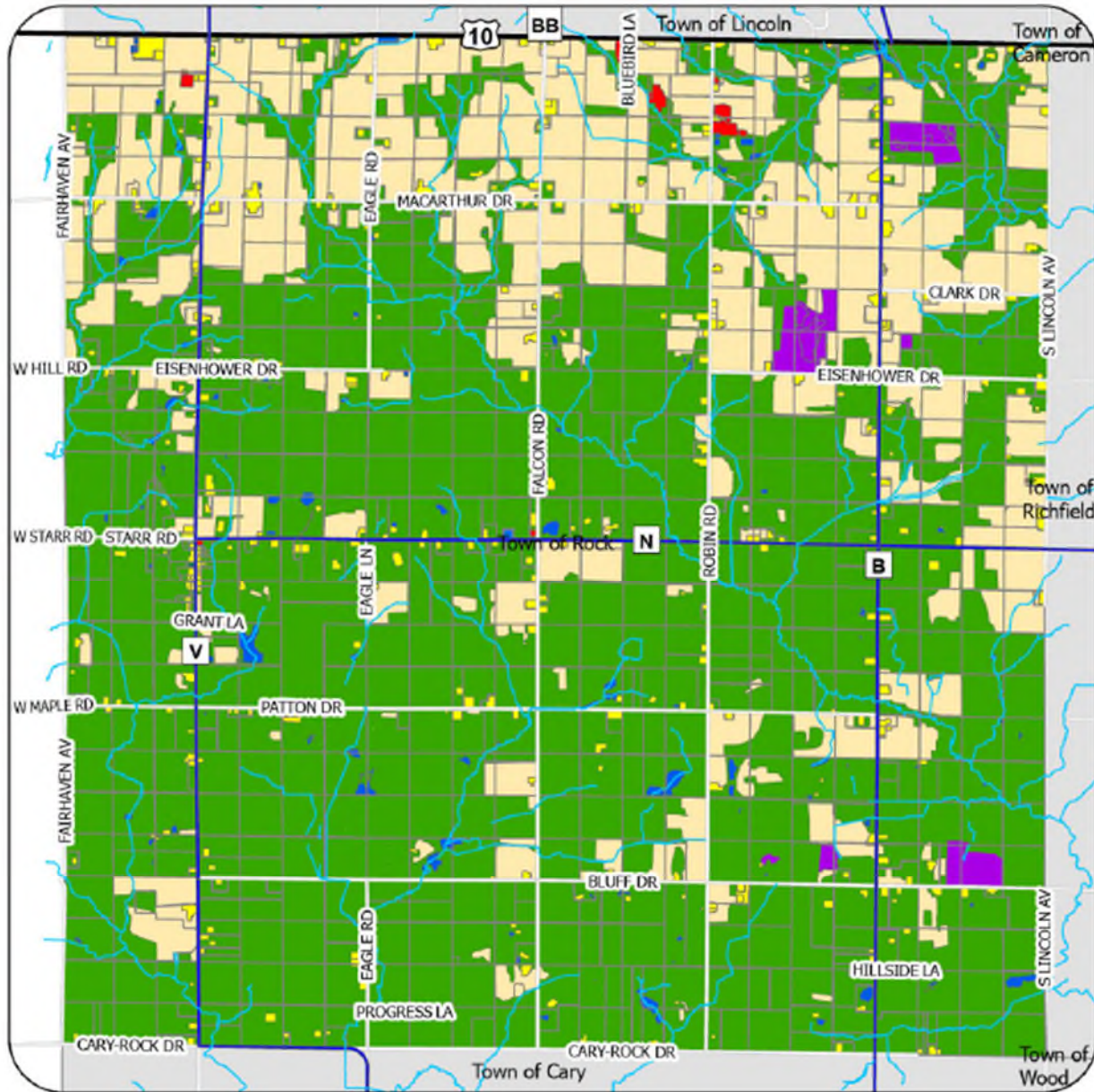
Transportation

The transportation classification delineates all town, county and state roadways, as well as the road right-of-way. The highway system within the town of Rock is composed of a network including U.S. highway 10, county highways and numerous local roads. There are approximately 43 miles of town roads in the Town of Rock.

Utilities

This consists of buildings or premises used for communications, utilities, transmission facilities, etc. Included are underground gas distribution and telecommunication services.

Map 13



Existing Land Use - 2020
Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin

Legend

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Agriculture | Residential |
| Commercial | Transportation |
| Governmental / Institutional | Water |
| Outdoor Recreation | Natural Features |
| Industrial | |



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Future Land Use

The previous portions of this chapter have presented a discussion on historical development trends, existing land cover and existing land use in the Town of Rock. This information, along with information from all of the other comprehensive planning elements and public input, provided the foundation for future land use planning in the town. The Future Land Use Map takes into consideration all of these factors and illustrates graphically how the Town of Rock is planned to grow for the next 20 years. It is a visual guide to future land use. It is important to note that the future land use plan map is not a zoning map, but is a depiction of the desired growth patterns for several years into the future. The town ordinance and zoning map are the actual documents that set standards for each of the land uses, including setbacks, height limitations, minimum lot sizes, etc. It is also important to note that the future land use map is dynamic and can be amended as market trends or the local economy changes. The future land use plan map often shows some areas to be used for purposes other than what the current use may be. That map is a blueprint for development and can be changed. It is dynamic. The following paragraphs, along with information presented throughout this plan, help explain the reasoning behind the future land use plan categories.

Agriculture

Trying to determine the future of the agricultural economy is nearly impossible; however, Wisconsin agriculture will likely stay strong for the foreseeable future. The Town of Rock is concerned about maintaining a strong agricultural community. It is important to minimize the intrusion of incompatible land uses within agricultural areas. Moreover, town officials discourage development of the best agricultural lands in the town. This will promote an environment where residents can enjoy the aesthetic benefits of an agricultural landscape without interference.

Residential

Town officials should continue to provide areas for residential housing to meet future growth expectations. The challenge will be to maintain the rural character of the area as the density of development increases. Establishing an R1 District for low density housing, and an R2 District for Lindsey will help to minimize conflicts between incompatible land uses.

Industrial

There are currently no industrial park type properties available for development within the Town of Rock. Town officials have no plans to encourage this type of growth in the future. Typically, these uses are heavy users of utilities, such as water and sewer -

services that are not available within the town. However, there are a number of non-metallic mining operations (gravel pits, sand pits, etc.) active within the Town of Rock. Treating non-metallic mining as a conditional use within the Town will permit the community to review all phases of proposed operations, ensuring that realistic considerations are addressed before any digging begins. By establishing Mining Overlay Districts, the town can allow development in areas away from conflicting land uses.

Commercial

Commercial uses have never been prominent in Town of Rock. The town has not experienced enough non-agricultural residential growth to attract support-type commercial activities, such as convenience stores. The commercial uses that have located in the town, including small repair shops, service industries, taverns, and retail sales, are located mostly near the Lindsey area, and on Highway 10. With an increase in residential development, the potential for additional service businesses may increase. By establishing Commercial zones where businesses already exist, the township can promote efficient commercial development.

Outdoor Recreation

No additional such uses are anticipated during the planning period. Lindsey Park and the Marshfield School Forest are the only outdoor recreation areas.

Institutional and Government Services

No additional such uses are anticipated during the planning period. The Town Hall and Fire Department are the only Institutional and Government Services areas.

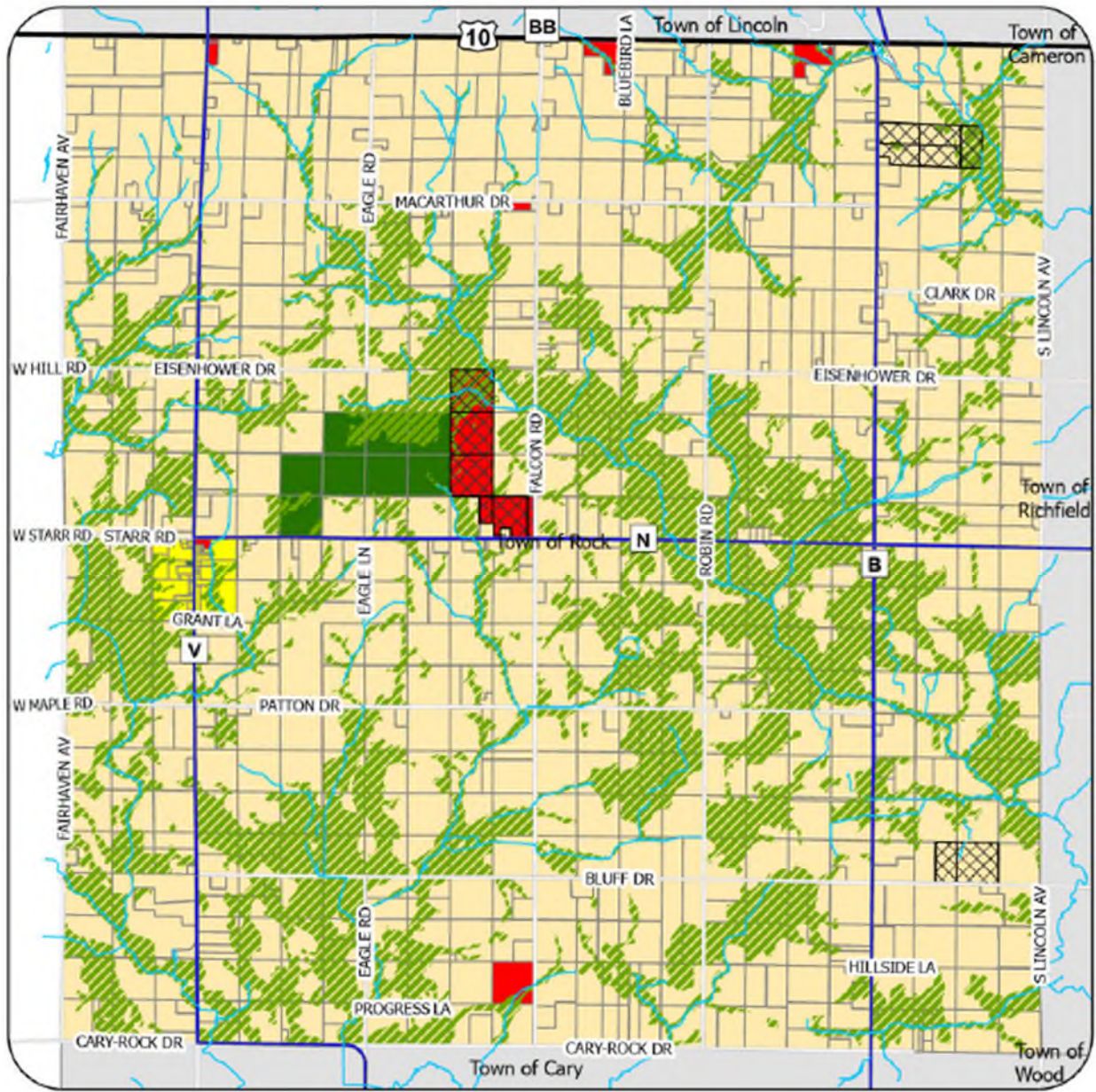
Transportation

No significant increase in roads is anticipated.

Utilities

Internet coverage gaps remain, primarily in rural areas of Town of Rock. The Town Board should be open to facilities that expand broadband access in the town. No other additional uses are anticipated during the planning period.

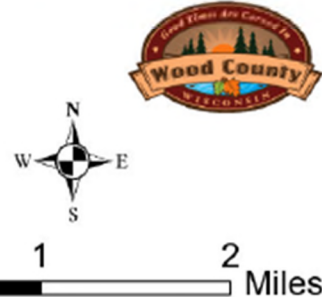
Map 14



**Future Land Use
Town of Rock, Wood County Wisconsin**

Legend

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Outdoor Recreation
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (Wetlands & Floodplain)
- Non Metallic Mining Overlay



Map produced by the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for informational purposes only.

Development Influences and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Some of the development influences and potential land use conflicts in the Town of Rock are listed below, along with a discussion of each and ideas as to how they might be addressed.

Maintaining an Agricultural Community

It is appropriate to make special note about agricultural practices in the Town of Rock. That use, after all, was the very base of the local economy for many years. The dairy industry in the town is declining. Agricultural acreage has been declining since the 1960's and the number of farm operations is down. The average size of the remaining farms, however, has increased, with operators milking more cows and farming more acreage. If the Town of Rock is concerned about maintaining a strong agricultural community, it is important to minimize the intrusion of incompatible land uses within agricultural areas. For example, with residential growth in an agricultural region comes an increase in conflicts between farm- and non-farm uses. Some conflict commonly exists between traditional crop farming and residents, but more intense conflicts occur when strong odors produced by agricultural uses migrate to residential areas. Wisconsin farmers are protected against nuisance litigation through the right-to-farm law, which grants farmers immunity from nuisance ordinances for standard farming practices. However, it is better to avoid situations that would invoke litigation through careful planning of future development. Town of Rock residents and officials can work to preserve the best agricultural land in the town.

Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation Program helps farmers and local governments preserve farmland, protect soil and water, and minimize land use conflicts. Wood County has a Farmland Preservation Plan. The Town of Rock may adopt farmland preservation zoning in the future and encourage farmers to enroll land into the Farmland Preservation Program.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally Sensitive Areas, or ESA's, are defined, generally, as those areas that are unsuitable for certain development because of the potential adverse impacts on the natural environment. These areas include, but are not limited to wetlands, shorelands, floodplain, and other such physical constraints. The exact boundaries of environmentally sensitive areas shall be located through field surveys by appropriate regulatory agencies. Many of the ESAs in Wood County are already protected under current laws and ordinances. Any consideration of development within or adjacent to an ESA must be in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and local rules and regulations. If properly developed, certain land uses can even protect and preserve ESA functions while at the same time maximizing use of the resource.

Management of Private On-Site Waste Treatment Systems POWTS/Septic Systems

All structures in the Town of Rock are served by private onsite septic systems. It is necessary that lots be sized adequately to accommodate the original septic system and alternate system should the original fail while at the same time, providing a legal and safe distance from any private wells that are used for drinking water. State law requires that all septic systems, no matter when they were installed, be inspected every three years and, if necessary, be pumped by a licensed pumper, with waste being disposed of in a legal manner.

Additional demand for more housing in the town can create a conflict in preserving both the natural water resources and providing for the housing needs of those wishing to locate in the town. In Town of Rock, the great majority of on-site sewage systems installed are mound systems or holding tanks.

Land Use Goals, Objectives & Policies

Goal 1: Preserve its strong identity as a rural community.

Objective 1: Preserve the Town's prime agricultural land to the greatest extent possible.

Policy 1: Minimize the intrusion of incompatible land uses between agriculture and non-agricultural uses.

Policy 2: Promote residential growth in areas that do not interfere with agricultural practices and that do not endanger groundwater supplies or other natural resources.

Policy 3: Promote active communication between agricultural operations and their neighbors.

Objective 2:

Preserve the rural nature of the Town by addressing housing density

Policy 1: Protect woodland areas by encouraging low density development

Goal 2: Encourage land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns.

Objective 1:

Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) from unsuitable development to avoid potential adverse impacts on the natural environment of the Town.

Policy 1: Protect woodland and wildlife habitat

Objective 2:

Support large commercial and industrial development in the City of Marshfield while encouraging small businesses within the Town.

Policy 1: Maintain the Town's future land use map and zoning regulations to guide development.

Policy 2: Utilize the Town's future land use map as a guide for approving/denying development.

Policy 3: Encourage developing areas where existing development is located.

Objective 3:

Ensure new development does not adversely affect property value or livability of neighboring uses.

Policy 1: Allow for residential development in those areas best suited for residential development, while strengthening zoning standards near agricultural areas (greater setbacks, buffer zones, low densities, etc.).

Policy 2: Maintain zoning regulations to protect lot sizes while providing housing opportunities in the Town.

10. Implementation

The Town of Rock has been successful over the past several decades implementing public policies that have molded the town into the desirable community it is today. This success can be contributed to several comprehensive plan implementation tools. These tools can consist of regulatory tools, land use design tools, financial tools, incentive-based tools, and others. The success of this comprehensive plan is directly linked to Rock's commitment to follow-through on the goals, objectives and policies identified within.

Introduction

The following element will provide the Town of Rock policy makers a blue-print to guide local level decisions to move this comprehensive plan to action over the next several years. Specific actions and implementation measures are identified to accomplish the goals, objectives and policies that are identified in all nine elements of the plan. Additionally, this element describes how the elements are integrated and consistent with each other and provides mechanisms to measure progress toward achieving all aspects of the plan.

“Over 95% of survey respondents are satisfied with the current zoning and land use services provided by the Town of Rock”

Source: 2020 Town of Rock Community Survey

Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(2)(i).

Implementation element:

A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in pars. (a) to (h).

The element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan under this subsection shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.

Plan Adoption

The first step toward implementation of the comprehensive plan is adoption of the plan by the Rock Town Board. Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 (4) provides specific procedures that are necessary to adopt the plan. As allowed by statute, the Rock Town Board has authorized the responsibility of preparing, maintaining and amending the comprehensive plan to the Rock Plan Commission. Upon completion of the plan, the Plan Commission may recommend the adoption of the comprehensive plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission. Subsequently, the comprehensive plan is forwarded to the Town Board for adoption. The comprehensive plan does not take effect until Town Board enacts an ordinance that adopts the plan and that ordinance cannot be adopted unless the plan contains all of the elements specified by the comprehensive planning statute. At a minimum, the Town Board must hold one public hearing. A class 1 public notice is required to be

published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. The aforementioned is a general overview of the main procedures for adopting comprehensive plans. It is not all encompassing of all the procedures as required by Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 (4), however, all procedures will be complied with.

Implementation Tools & Actions

The intent of this comprehensive plan is to be a useful community planning guide. To ensure that this plan does not just sit on a shelf, the following paragraphs outline implementation tools and actions for the Town of Rock. These implementation tools and actions will assist the town in accomplishing its desired future. In addition, the goals, objectives and policies for each element identify specific future implementation actions.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is the most widely accepted land use control tool that is used in Wisconsin communities. Furthermore, it is one of the best tools to carry out many of the goals and objectives identified in this comprehensive plan. Zoning allows municipalities to determine how different areas of their community will be used (eg. residential, agricultural, commercial, etc.) and authorizes municipalities to regulate the design and placement of structures within various zoning districts. The Town of Rock adopted village powers and obtained county approval, to adopt town zoning. Over time the town has amended the ordinance as needed to reflect changes in development patterns, law changes, and desired/undesired land uses. Rock has actively administered the ordinance since its enactment.

The relationship between the plan and the zoning ordinance is easy to understand if one considers that the plan identifies a general pattern of desired land use development and the zoning ordinance specifies the range of conditions of use that can occur on parcels of land to be "consistent" with the plan. In this relationship, the zoning ordinance is clearly a tool to implement the land use recommendations of the comprehensive plan. Moreover, it is a statutory requirement.

An effective and manageable planning tool, zoning, offers many possibilities for confronting the issues presented in this comprehensive plan. Natural conditions such as geology or geography are very difficult, if not impossible, to alter. Zoning is an acceptable solution because of the characteristics of the land. Fitting compatible uses with suitable natural conditions saves expense for the landowner or homeowner as well as protects natural conditions.

Zoning traditionally creates different zones, or districts, for various land uses. Each district has some clearly permitted uses and other uses requiring approval of the zoning board/planning commission and town board for specific site proposals. Some uses are prohibited. Flexibility can be built into the zoning ordinance to allow for some variance in land use rules. This is important because the unique characteristics of some lands preclude them from being categorized to be used the same as other lands in a specific zoning district. In some cases, mixing of uses may be appropriate where the uses are compatible with one another and with neighboring properties and where neither use creates a nuisance, health hazard, safety hazard or other conflict with other nearby uses.

The Town of Rock will continue to monitor and enforce the zoning ordinance and make any changes the town deems necessary to assure consistency with the other elements of the comprehensive plan. The process to adopt or amend a town zoning ordinance is outlined in Wis. Stat. 60.61 (4). Final approval is required by Wood County Board of Supervisors per Wis. Stat. §60.62(3)(a).

Uniform Dwelling Code – Building Inspections

The Uniform Dwelling Code (UDC) is the statewide building code for one- and two-family dwellings built since June 1, 1980. Its purpose is to have minimum standards for fire safety; structural strength; energy conservation; erosion control; heating, plumbing and electrical systems; and general health and safety in new dwellings. This uniform building code applies in the Town of Rock and all governmental units across the state. The Town of Rock contracts with a state certified building inspector for UDC inspection services. Continued application of the UDC program will help to ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan's goals and objectives.

Farmland Preservation

Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation Program helps farmers and local governments preserve farmland, protect soil and water, and minimize land use conflicts. Owners of farmland who participate in the program receive an income tax credit incentive. Furthermore, farmland preservation zoning is a tool that the Town of Rock can use to implement the county farmland preservation plan and the town's comprehensive plan goals and objectives. This type of zoning restricts the allowable uses in the farmland preservation district to include agriculture and other compatible uses. This is all in an effort to protect farmland and the town's agricultural community for the future. The Town of Rock may adopt farmland preservation zoning in the future and encourage farmers to enroll land into the Farmland Preservation Program. It is recommended that the Town of Rock Zoning Committee, in cooperation with the Town Board, update the town's zoning ordinance to meet the farmland preservation standards outlined in Wis. Stat. 91.

Conservation Design/Cluster Development

The town community survey revealed that town residents want the rural/country character of Rock preserved. This includes agricultural landscapes, forested areas, surface water, wildlife, and similar characteristics.

Open space development standards are designed to permit residential development that result in an enhanced living environment through the preservation and protection of agriculture, environment and rural landscape. The standards encourage innovative and livable housing environments within residential districts through both permanent dedication of open space and a planned reduction of individual lot area requirements. The overall density remains the same as would be found in a traditional development in the underlying zoning district. Increasing residential development of rural areas has produced a need for more environmentally sensitive and cost effective single-family developments. An Open Space Community Overlay District can provide for this need by grouping dwelling units onto part of the parcel in a manner that allows the remaining acreage to be preserved as open lands.

Official Streets Map

As a supporting document to a land use plan and map, the Official Street Map is a valuable tool. The Town of Rock should consider developing and adopting an Official Street Map to aid with future, orderly development. The official map, would help to keep the cost of road improvements to a minimum and would coordinate street location and right-of-way widths. The map could also provide for minimum disruption to existing development that could occur with future development where new streets, parks and other public facilities might be needed.

The Official Street Map is a legal document that must be adopted by the Town Board after a public hearing. According to state law, "The map is conclusive with respect to the location and width of streets, highways, waterways and parkways, and the location and extent of railroad rights-of-way, public transit facilities, parks and playgrounds shown on the map. The official map is declared to be established to conserve and promote the public health, safety, convenience or general welfare."

The state statute also allows the official street map to be used as a planning document. Section 62.23(c), of the law, allows a community to "amend the official map of the city so as to establish the exterior lines of planned new streets, highways, historic districts, parkways, railroad rights-of-way, public transit facilities, waterways, parks or playgrounds, or to widen, narrow, extend or close existing streets, highways, historic districts, parkways, railroad rights-of-way, public transit facilities, waterways,

parks or playgrounds. No such changes may become effective until after a public hearing concerning the proposed change..."

Other Ordinances

The Town of Rock has other ordinances that have been enacted as needed to address local concerns, or to meet the requirements of state statutes. Consistency is needed, but not necessarily required, with the comprehensive plan. A recent example is the town's Utility Ordinance. This ordinance is intended to create a permitting and regulatory process for the construction and installation of the facilities used to furnish or distribute heat, light, water, sanitary sewer service, power, telephone service, internet service, natural gas, or subterranean manure line across or within Town road right-of-way and to ensure the safety of utility lines and structures located within Town roadways and the rights-of-way. A variety of local ordinances can be adopted by the Town of Rock to address the goals and objectives identified in the comprehensive plan and to address the needs of the town's residents for the future. The town should update and evaluate these ordinances yearly.

Town of Rock Planning & Zoning Administration

The Town of Rock has established a hierarchy for their planning and zoning activities. Pursuant to appropriate Wisconsin Statutes, the Plan Commission has been established to prepare and amend the town's comprehensive plan. A citizen group, appointed by the Town Chairman, assists that commission. Plan Commission functions and duties are spelled out in the following paragraphs.

Plan Commission Function

The relationship of the town plan commission and the town board is important. The town board consists of elected officials and is primarily a policy-making body charged with conducting the town's affairs. The plan commission is an appointed body with the main duty of developing the comprehensive plan and implementation measures for recommendation to the town board for adoption. The plan commission should function in a more objective fashion than the town board, but must realize that, in developing plans and ordinances, it operates within a political system where the town board has the final say.

The plan commission can be of great assistance to the town board by involving citizens and developing expertise in planning, which can be a time-consuming and controversial undertaking, thereby freeing the town board to carry out its other functions. Remember, the plan commission should not be viewed as an independent, dictatorial body. Instead, it is an appointed body whose policy-making function is advisory to the town board. If the town board wishes to delegate additional powers to the plan commission, beyond advisory powers, it may do so. For example, the town board may allow the plan commission to issue conditional use permits under town zoning under village powers.

A good working relationship between the plan commission and the town board is essential for implementing land uses that are in the public interest. The existence of an adopted comprehensive plan and implementation measures depends upon both bodies – the plan commission to develop

the proposals with public support and the town board to support the effort and ultimately adopt the policy and implementation programs.

Plan Commission Structure

All towns in Wisconsin are authorized by state statutes to establish a local plan commission. A plan commission is created by town ordinance under s. 62.23, Wisconsin Statutes. The ordinance may create a 7-member commission, or, if the town is under 2,500 population, a 5-member commission. A town under 2,500 population may, by ordinance, change from a 5- to a 7-member commission and vice versa. The town chairperson appoints the members and chooses the plan commission chair. Elected and appointed town officials may be appointed to the commission. There must, however, be at least three citizen members who are not town officials on the 7-member commission and one citizen member who is not a town official on the 5-member commission.

Plan Commission Powers and Duties

The powers and the duties of the plan commission are outlined in state statutes and applicable town ordinances. The primary duty of the commission is to develop the town's comprehensive plan, under the specifications of Chapter 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. Under statutory requirements, the plan commission must solicit citizen participation and intergovernmental communication and coordination in developing the plan. The plan commission must oversee coordination and development of the comprehensive plan and, once completed, forward the plan to the town board by formal resolution.

After the comprehensive plan has been adopted, the zoning ordinance will be amended to reflect the goals, objectives, policies and programs of the plan. The Plan Commission should assure a seamless transition from the comprehensive plan to the zoning ordinance.

The plan commission typically becomes involved in development and administration of other plan implementation vehicles. Specifically, if an official map or subdivision ordinance is developed in the Town of Rock.

Consistency

It is a statutory requirement that the implementation element of the comprehensive plan describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan. Consequently, the town plan commission developed all elements simultaneously and in a coordinated fashion. As seen throughout the plan, overlap of the elements naturally exists. All of the element's goals, objectives and policies are consistent with each other. They do not conflict with any existing or recommended programs and functions of the Town of Rock. Moreover, it is important that the Town of Rock continue to cooperate with the Wood County Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ). DPZ administers several ordinances in the town including: private on-site waste, land subdivisions, floodplain, shoreland, and more.

Plan Amendments, Updates & Monitoring

The amendment process can be as important as the initial development and adoption of the plan. Monitoring those changes and maintaining accurate records about why the changes were, or were not made, is also important. Monitoring changes helps the plan commission, and town board to assure consistency in the application of standards and in proposing changes to either the text or the future land use map.

The comprehensive plan is a dynamic document, that is, as conditions change in the town, the plan will change. In addition, the Wisconsin planning law requires that comprehensive plans that are created under the statute be updated “no less than once every 10 years.” An example of why a comprehensive plan would need to be amended, or updated, might include changing economic conditions in the area – if a new land use chooses to locate in the Town or the City of Marshfield, there may be demands for new housing, new roads or highway access. An aging population demanding different types of housing or a change in the types of municipal services is another example. A major change to the local transportation system is yet another example of when the plan may need to be updated/amended.

Town officials must be ready to react to changing conditions in the community by amending the plan to reflect changes if those changes are in the best interest of the town. Care must be taken, however, not to amend the plan as a routine or the process may lose its importance in the community development process. It is important to establish local planning goals, review those goals on a regular basis and develop objectives that will help the decision makers achieve community planning goals.

The amendment process is outlined in the state statutes. The first step can be either a petition to the plan commission from a town resident or property owner or a proposal by the plan commission or town board. The petition can be for either a change in the plan's text, such as a change in goals or objectives, or a change to the future land use map. Remember, the zoning ordinance must also be consistent with the comprehensive plan and may need to be amended to reflect the change in the comprehensive plan.

The second step is review of the petition or proposal by the plan commission. Their review can include a site visit, meeting with the petitioner to discuss the reason for the request, obtaining professional planning assistance or a legal opinion, or meeting as a commission to discuss the merits of the proposal. Third, the plan commission will make a recommendation, in writing, to the town board. The town board will then publish a notice for a public hearing and hold a hearing on the proposal to get input from any interested persons. They should keep a written transcript or, at the very least, detailed minutes of the testimony. Following the hearing, the town board will make a decision in the form of a motion to amend the comprehensive plan. The board can make a decision immediately following the public hearing or they can set a time to meet later to make the decision, allowing additional time to receive written testimony about the proposal. The board's options are to accept the recommendation, modify it, deny it, or send it back to the plan commission for further study. They should provide the petitioner a copy of the decision in writing. If the petitioner is not

satisfied with the decision, he can submit an entirely new petition, submit a petition with revisions to the original proposal, appeal the decision to the circuit court, or do nothing.