

TOWN OF FOREST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2009-2030



**Adopted December 08, 2009
Amended November 2013**

TOWN OF FOREST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2009-2030

VISION STATEMENT

In the year 2030, we envision that the Town of Forest will continue to offer the quiet, rural, scenic country setting, small-town atmosphere, and well rated quality of life that it does today.

Clean water resources, farmlands, forests, and scenic open spaces will continue to offer residents the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty and resources of our community. Agriculture will remain an important economic activity, with an emphasis on encouraging future agricultural markets. Development will be planned in a manner which considers and finds balance with our natural resources and quiet, scenic, rural character. Appropriate commercial development will be promoted in the Hamlet of Forest. The Town will have a working relationship with St. Croix County to ensure that only uses that belong in a rural setting are located in the Town.

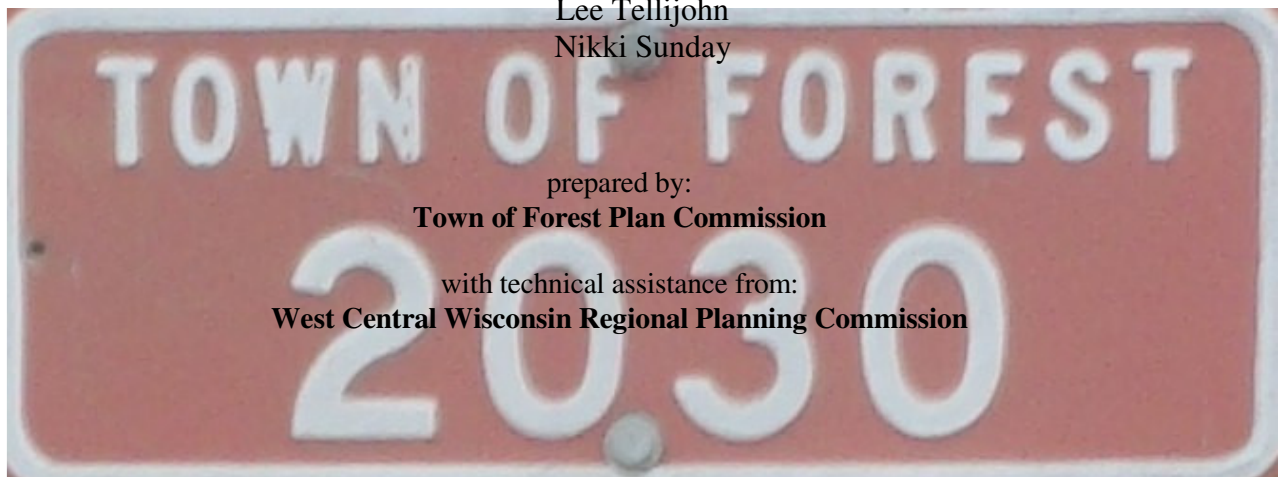
We will achieve this vision by maintaining an open and responsive Town government, which balances the interests of residents with those characteristics of our community that make it a healthy and good place to raise a family, enjoy its quiet and scenic environment, and operate a business.

TOWN BOARD

Jaime Junker, Chair
Rick Steinberger, Town Supervisor
Pat Scepurek, Town Supervisor

PLAN COMMISSION

Rick Steinberger, Chair
Kyle Overby
Matt Radentz
Todd Ostberg
Rick Tiberg
Lee Tellijohn
Nikki Sunday



prepared by:
Town of Forest Plan Commission
with technical assistance from:
West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING TOWN BOARD ADOPTION OF
THE TOWN OF FOREST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 02-2009

WHEREAS, the Town of Forest has determined the need and propriety for a comprehensive plan with the general purpose of guiding, directing and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the Town, 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; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Forest Plan Commission has prepared the Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan 02-2009 pursuant to s 66.1001 and s 62.23, Wisconsin Statutes, which contains plan documents, maps and other materials in the nine comprehensive plan elements required by s 66.1001 (2), Wisconsin Statutes and is dated

Nov 12, 2009; and

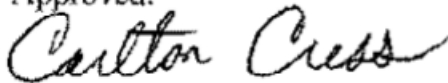
WHEREAS, the Town of Forest has participated in a multi-jurisdictional planning process during which the Town of Forest Conditions and Trends Report, dated August 2008, was prepared which contains statistics, demographic data and other information for the nine comprehensive plan elements required by s 66.1001 (2), Wisconsin Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Forest Plan Commission pursuant to s 66.1001 (4) (b), Wisconsin Statutes may recommend governing body adoption of the comprehensive plan by adoption of a resolution to that effect by a majority of the entire Plan Commission.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Town of Forest Plan Commission officially recommends adoption of the Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan 02-2009, dated Nov 12, 09 and the Town of Forest Conditions and Trends Report, dated August 2008, by the Town of Forest Town Board.

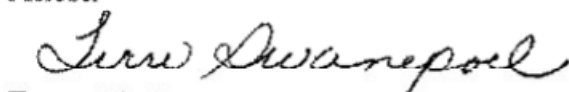
Adopted this 5th day of November, 2009 by the Plan Commission of the Town of Forest.

Approved:



Plan Commission Chairman

Attest:



Town Clerk

Ordinance No. 02-2009

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE
TOWN OF FOREST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Forest, Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

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

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

SECTION 3. The plan commission of the Town of Forest by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of a comprehensive plan consisting of the documents entitled "TOWN OF FOREST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 02-2009 dated November 5, 2009 and TOWN OF FOREST CONDITIONS AND TRENDS REPORT dated August 2008 together containing all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

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

SECTION 5. The town board of the Town of Forest, Wisconsin, does by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the documents entitled "TOWN OF FOREST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 02-2009 and "TOWN OF FOREST CONDITIONS AND TRENDS REPORT", pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

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

ADOPTED this 8th day of December 2009.


Town Board Chairman

Posted: December 10th 2009

Attest: Laura Swanepoel
Town Clerk

Resolution No. 2013-

RESOLUTION OF TOWN OF FOREST PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDING
ADOPTION OF
THE "TOWN OF FOREST AMENDED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2013 - 2033"

WHEREAS, the Town of Forest is authorized to prepare, amend and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in sections 66.1001(1) (a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Forest Plan Commission, St. Croix County, Wisconsin is authorized to review and recommend amendments to the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Forest; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Forest Plan Commission has prepared a proposed Amended Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Forest which contains all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Amended Comprehensive Plan also contains graphs, tables, and charts related to demographic and U.S. Census data, and maps and other information related to land use, infrastructure, and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board and the Town Plan Commission have held a properly noticed joint meeting at which they conducted a public hearing on the proposed Amended Comprehensive Plan;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Wis. Stat. 66.1001 (4)(b), the Town of Forest Plan Commission may recommend that the governing body adopt the proposed Amended Comprehensive Plan by adoption of a resolution to that effect by a majority of the entire Plan Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Forest Plan Commission does hereby recommend that the Town Board adopt the proposed Amended Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan 2013-2033, incorporating revisions, if any, that are deemed necessary as a result of the public hearing.

Resolution adopted on this 21st day of November, 2013.

YES 4 NO 2 ABSTAIN _____ ABSENT _____

Rick Steinberger
Rick Steinberger, Plan Commission Chair

Attest

Marilyn Benson, Town Clerk

Nikki Sunday - Acting

Town of Forest - St. Croix County
Ordinance No. 2013-_____

An Ordinance regarding the adoption of the Amended Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Forest, St. Croix County, Wisconsin.

The Town Board of the Town of Forest, St. Croix County, Wisconsin, does ordain as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to Sec. 60.22(3) Wis. Stats. and Sec. 62.23(2) and (3), Wis. Stats., the Town of Forest is authorized to prepare, amend and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in Sec. 66.1001(1)(a) and Sec. 66.1001(2), Wis. Stats.

Section 2. The Town Board of the Town of Forest, Wisconsin has adopted written procedures to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by Sec. 66.1001(4) (a), Wis. Stats.

Section 3. The Plan Commission of the Town of Forest, by a majority vote recorded in its official minutes dated November 21, 2013, has adopted a resolution recommending to the Town Board the adoption of the amended document entitled A Town of Forest Amended Comprehensive Plan 2013 - 2033@ containing all of the elements specified in Sec. 66.1001(2), Wis. Stats.

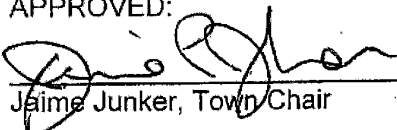
Section 4. The Town Plan Commission discussed the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan at properly noticed public Plan Commission meetings. In addition the Plan Commission and Town Board have held at least one public hearing on this ordinance and Amended Comprehensive Plan in compliance with the requirements of Sec. 66.1001(4) (d), Wis. Stats. on November 21, 2013 at 7:00 pm at the Forest Town Hall, 1895 Hwy D, Emerald, WI 54013.

Section 5. The Town Board of the Town of Forest, Wisconsin does, by enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the amended document entitled, A Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan 2013 - 2033@, pursuant to Sec. 66.1001(4) (c), Wis. Stats.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members of the Town Board and publication as required by law.

Adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Forest this 21st day of November, 2013.

APPROVED:


Jaime Junker, Town Chair

ATTEST:


Marilyn Benson, Town Clerk

Adopted: _____, 2013
Published: _____
Effective: _____

Acting Clerk NIKKI Sunday

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Executive Summary | 1 |
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 1.1 Planning Authority and Scope | 3 |
| 1.2 The West Central Wisconsin Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Effort | 4 |
| 1.3 The Town of Forest Planning Process | 5 |
| 2. Issues and Opportunities | 7 |
| 2.1 Existing Conditions Transition Report | 7 |
| 2.2 Previous or Related Planning and Regulatory Efforts | 12 |
| 2.3 Key Issues | 13 |
| 2.4 Vision Statement | 14 |
| 3. Housing | 16 |
| 3.1 Housing Goals, Objectives, and Strategies | 16 |
| 4. Transportation | 18 |
| 4.1 Transportation Goals, Objectives, and Strategies | 18 |
| 4.2 Comparison with Other Transportation Plans | 19 |
| 5. Utilities and Community Facilities | 21 |
| 5.1 Review of Existing Facilities | 21 |
| 5.2 Assessment of Future Needs | 22 |
| 5.3 Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives, and Strategies | 22 |
| 6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources | 24 |
| 6.1 Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goals, Objectives, and Strategies | 24 |
| 7. Economic Development | 27 |
| 7.1 Local Economic Development Plans and Programs | 27 |
| 7.2 New Businesses or Industry Desired | 27 |
| 7.3 Strengths and Weaknesses | 28 |
| 7.4 Opportunities for Brownfield Redevelopment | 29 |
| 7.5 Designation of Sites | 29 |
| 7.6 Economic Goals, Objectives, and Strategies | 29 |
| 8. Intergovernmental Cooperation | 31 |
| 8.1 Growth Trends and Planning Activities in Adjacent Communities | 31 |
| 8.2 Intergovernmental Plans, Agreements, and Relationships | 32 |
| 8.3 Potential Issues and Opportunities | 32 |
| 8.4 Intergovernmental Goals, Objectives, and Strategies | 33 |
| 9. Land Use | 34 |
| 9.1 Existing Land Uses and Land Use Trends | 34 |
| 9.2 Opportunities for Redevelopment | 35 |
| 9.3 Land Use Conflicts | 35 |
| 9.4 Land Use Goals, Objectives, and Strategies | 35 |

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 9.5 | Land Use Projections | 38 |
| 9.6 | Planned Land Use Map | 41 |
| 10. | Energy and Sustainability | 43 |
| 10.1 | Energy and Sustainability Goals, Objectives, and Strategies | 43 |
| 11. | Implementation | 45 |
| 11.1 | Action Plan..... | 45 |
| 11.2 | Plan Integration and Consistency | 48 |
| 11.3 | Plan Monitoring and Evaluation..... | 49 |
| 11.4 | Plan Amendments and Updates..... | 49 |

Appendices

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----|
| Appendix I: | Public Participation Plan..... | 50 |
| Appendix II: | Vision Survey Results..... | 52 |
| Appendix III: | Existing Land Use Map | 61 |
| Appendix IV: | Future Land Use Map | 63 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This comprehensive plan was developed as part of a multi-jurisdictional planning effort of West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, three counties, and 21 communities that successfully procured State grant funding for its development. The Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan, together with the related *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report*, meets the requirements of the State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law (1999 Wisconsin Act 9). The *Conditions and Trends Report* provides a demographic and programmatic overview for the Town of Forest and St. Croix County as a whole, while the *Comprehensive Plan*, is the policy document focused on the Town of Forest. This Executive Summary focuses on the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Between September 2008 and November 2009, the Town of Forest Plan Commission held ten working meetings facilitated by West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to develop the plan recommendations. All meetings were open to the public and the Town encouraged public participation by distribution of a community survey in November 2008. The Town also had two open houses prior to two different Plan Commission meetings. In 2001, the Town distributed a survey to residents to get a better understanding of the views and conditions within the Town.

The result of these meetings and other resident input are plan goals, objectives, and strategy recommendations carefully crafted by the Plan Commission for the community through an information gathering and consensus-building process. The Plan is organized by the nine required planning elements, plus an Energy and Sustainability Element, each section guided by the general vision valued by community members - preservation of rural character, protection of water resources, agriculture, and forests, protection of natural environment, and planning for orderly development.



Typical rural view in Town of Forest

During the planning process, substantial focus was spent on the strategy recommendations of the Land Use Element and the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element. Changes to the Town activities were recommended to protect the community from the visual, environmental, and fiscal impacts of intensive land uses. Future agricultural markets including specialty or niche farms are encouraged to locate in the Town to help increase economic development opportunities, provide opportunities for families to live in the Town, and reduce the impact on water resources.

However, adoption of this Plan is only a beginning. As described in the Implementation Section, many Plan strategies require additional action, such as the development and adoption of related ordinances, each with additional public hearings. The strategy recommendations within this Plan are often generalized so additional time could be spent by the community on specific issues and definitions during ordinance development. As such, the *Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan* provides a general direction and vision for the future of the community for planning and decision-making. But the Plan recommendations should be applied flexibly and amended as needed to account for specific or changing conditions. It should be noted that the Town is using the word strategies interchangeably with the word policies in regards to goals, objectives, and strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Authority and Scope

Planning is an orderly, open approach to determining local needs, setting goals and priorities, and developing a guide for action. In 1999, the State Legislature created a new framework for community planning in the State of Wisconsin—1999 Wisconsin Act 9.

Beginning on January 1, 2010, any program or action of a local government which regulates land use (e.g., zoning, subdivision regulations, agricultural preservation programs) must be consistent with that government's comprehensive plan. According to Wisconsin Statutes, the comprehensive plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the community 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.

1999 Wisconsin Act 9, often referred to as the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning and Smart Growth Law, provides additional guidance regarding what must be included in each community plan and how the plan should be developed. Each plan must include address nine key elements:

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

The Town of Forest's Plan also includes an Energy and Sustainability Element. Further, each plan must incorporate 20-year land use projections and encourage public participation during the planning process.

In addition, 1999 Wisconsin Act 9 made available comprehensive planning grants to local governments to assist in the preparation of these plans. The smart growth grants for comprehensive planning efforts encourage local governments to address multi-jurisdictional issues and promote smart growth policies which encourage efficient development patterns and minimizes local government and utility costs.

The *Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan*, when combined with the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report*, includes ten elements and meets the requirements of 1999 Wisconsin Act 9.

1.2 West Central Wisconsin Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Effort

The West Central Wisconsin Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Effort consists of one region, three counties, two cities, six villages, and 13 towns. The multi-jurisdiction comprehensive planning project, which includes the following 25 jurisdictions, represents a grass-roots effort by local, county, and regional government officials to coordinate local planning efforts and to address cross-jurisdictional issues and concerns.

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Barron County | Village of New Auburn |
| Town of Dallas | City of Bloomer |
| Town of Lakeland | City of Stanley |
| Town of Maple Grove | St. Croix County |
| Town of Oak Grove | Town of Cady |
| Village of Cameron | Town of Emerald |
| Chippewa County | Town of Forest |
| Town of Eagle Point | Town of Richmond |
| Town of Lafayette | Town of Star Prairie |
| Town of Wheaton | Village of Deer Park |
| Town of Woodmohr | Village of Woodville |
| Village of Boyd | West Central Wisconsin RPC |
| Village of Cadott | |

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (RPC) served as the lead community in a process to generate interest among the communities to participate in a multi-jurisdiction comprehensive planning project. The RPC invited communities within Barron, Chippewa, and St. Croix counties that had not begun their comprehensive planning process to approve the required resolution to authorize participation in a multi-jurisdiction comprehensive planning project. Realizing that intergovernmental cooperation is important, the Town of Forest was one of the communities that decided to take part in the planning process.

In 2008, a comprehensive planning grant was awarded by the Wisconsin Department of Administration for the West Central Wisconsin Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Effort. The multi-jurisdictional planning process began with a kick-off meeting in July 2008 led by the RPC. Communities decided on their respective consultant or to complete the plan on their own. The Town of Forest decided to work with the RPC to complete their plan.

For this process, the WCWRPC created Condition and Trends Reports for all seven counties in the region. The *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report* was used by St. Croix County and a variety of communities in St. Croix County for their planning process. This list includes the Town of Forest. Then, in consideration of these existing conditions, each participating municipality developed its individual comprehensive plan which is a policy-oriented document focusing on issues, goals, and action plans specific to each community.

Each community participating in the West Central Wisconsin Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Effort will receive their respective county's Conditions and Trends Report that contains background information for all of their County. The comprehensive plan for each community will then in total

equal the Conditions and Trends Report and community plan document. This document, the *Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan*, represents the plan policy document for the Town.

Following public hearings and local plan adoption, the Conditions and Trends Report and the individual community plans were reviewed for consistency with the State Comprehensive Planning Law; and the Comprehensive Planning Grant Program Closeout Form was completed. The Wisconsin Department of Administration then certified that all requirements of the grant program had been met.

1.3 The Town of Forest Planning Process

The overall planning process for this project started in 2008 with the success of the planning grant from the State of Wisconsin. The creation of the plan, which included the goals, objectives, and strategies began on March 25, 2009 after the presentation of the *Local Conditions and Trends Summary* and *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report*. Each of the subsequent planning activities and meetings for the Town of Forest is summarized below. The Town has been active since 2001 in planning. In 2001, the Town distributed a comprehensive survey. The survey results and variety of open meetings for the public helped pave Town Board and Plan Commission activity over the next few years.

The Town of Forest planning process offered ample opportunities for public input. All meetings were open to the public, properly noticed, and met the requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meeting's Law. To promote resident participation in the process, a community survey was distributed to all land owners and two separate open houses were held in 2009. The dialogue from the open houses and survey responses were used by the Plan Commission to better understand the community's issues and concerns.

September 04, 2008 Meeting #1: Project Introduction

The Plan Commission meeting consisted of the project identification. Activities included: review of local data summary, timeline, and discussion of the survey.

October 02, 2008 Meeting #2: Issues and Opportunities

The Plan Commission identified issues and opportunities and finalized the community survey questions.

February 05, 2009 Meeting #3: Visioning Workshop

The Plan Commission reviewed the data from the community surveys and held a visioning workshop.

April 02, 2009 Meeting #4: Land Use and Resources Goals and Objectives

The Plan Commission discussed land-use and resource trends and survey results. A draft vision was discussed. Draft goals and objectives were established.

- May 07, 2009** **Open House**
The 30 minute open house allowed residents to come and learn more about the survey results, data and trends, steps that had been taken to date, and learn about the comprehensive planning process.
- May 07, 2009** **Meeting #5: Land Use and Resources Strategies**
The Plan Commission discussed land-use and resource trends and survey results. Vision was finalized. Draft goals, objectives, and strategies were established. The Land Use Map was discussed.
- June 04, 2009** **Meeting #6: Housing, Transportation, and Community Facilities**
The Plan Commission discussed related trends and survey results. Draft goals, objectives, and strategies were established. The Land Use Map was finalized.
- July 02, 2009** **Meeting #7: Economic Development, Intergovernmental Coordination, and Energy and Sustainability, Land Use Map**
The Plan Commission discussed related trends and survey results. Draft goals, objectives, and strategies were established.
- August 06, 2009** **Meeting #8: Implementation**
The Implementation tools were reviewed, discussed, and finalized.
- September 03, 2009** **Meeting #9: Initial Draft Plan Review**
Reviewed the draft plan. Public hearing process discussed and scheduled.
- November 05, 2009** **Open House and Public Hearing**
December 08, 2009 **Local Adoption**
Upon recommendation by resolution of the Plan Commission on November 05, 2009, the *Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan* was adopted by the Town Board by ordinance on December 08, 2009. Copies of the adopting resolution and ordinance are included at the beginning of this document.

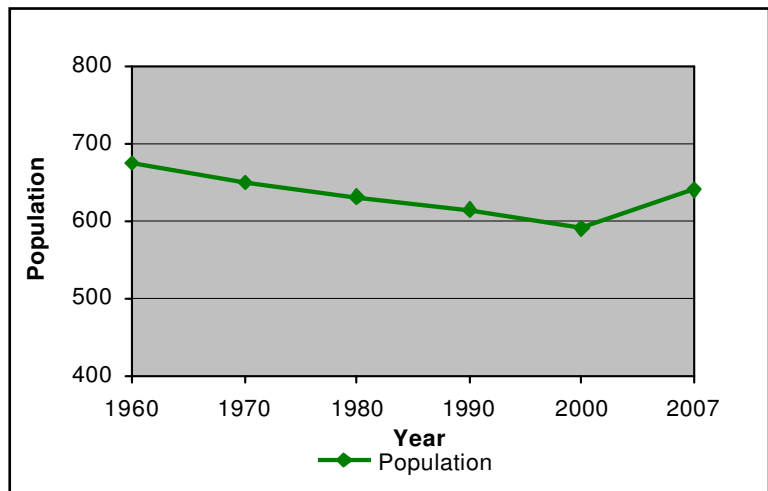
2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 Existing Conditions Transition Report

The *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report* provides a compilation of background information for the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. While that report identifies significant information and trends, it often does so in the broad context of greater St. Croix County and does not always identify trends specific to individual communities. Hence, the introduction of the individual community's comprehensive plan requires a transition be made from the *Conditions and Trends Report* with a brief synopsis of the trends discovered therein specific to the community. The reader can review the *Conditions and Trends Report* if desiring a more detailed look into the community than is provided by the identified trends below.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

- The Town's population steadily declined from 1960 to 2000. The Town experienced a decrease in population of 84 people between 1960 and 2000 (a 12.5 percent decrease) making it the town with the fastest decreasing population in St. Croix County during that period.
- Wisconsin Department of Administration estimates that the 2007 population for the Town of Forest was 640, which is 50 more people than the 2000 Census.
- The Wisconsin Department of Administration population projections predict the Town will continue to increase from its populations in the late 1990s. The projections show that the population will increase to 773 by 2030. The 2010 Census will be an important tool in determining how the population has changed and a possible course it will take.
- The Town of Forest population increased significantly in median age from 31.1 years in 1990 increasing to 36.8 years in 2000; St. Croix's County's median age in 2000 was 35.0 years.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the Town of Forest saw a slight increase in individuals that are 65 years of age and older. In 1990, 10.9 percent of the individuals fit into this category, while in 2000, 11.4 percent were 65 years of age and older. Even though the median age of the Town is significantly increasing, the amount of individuals of retired age in the Town stayed relatively the same.
- Town of Forest residents saw considerable improvements in educational attainment with 88.1 percent of residents over 25 years of age in 2000 having at least attained a high school diploma as compared to 77.2 percent in 1990.



- By 2000, approximately 21.9 percent of Forest residents over 25 years of age had at least some post-secondary education compared to 24.9 percent in 1990.
- In 2000, 8.3 percent of persons and 4.3 percent of families in the Town of Forest were below the poverty level.
- The Town had 71 students in grades 1-8 and 59 students in grades 9-12, in 2000. In 1990, there were 161 students in grades 1 - 12. This is a decrease of 31 students.

HOUSING INFORMATION

- While the Town's population decreased by four percent between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units increased by 5.8 percent.
- In 2000, only 17 percent of the Town of Forest's housing stock was built before 1970, while 39 percent was built since 1990.

Housing Characteristics - 1980 to 2000

| Year | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|
| Total Housing Units | 199 | 207 | 218 |
| Total Seasonal | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Total Vacant | 10 | 12 | 15 |
| Total Occupied Units | 189 | 195 | 203 |
| Owner Occupied Units | 163 | 169 | 188 |
| Renter Occupied Units | 26 | 26 | 15 |
| Single Family Units | 188 | 189 | 201 |
| Multi-Family Units | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Mobile Homes | 11 | 18 | 14 |

Source: U.S. Census.

Housing Value of Specified Owner Occupied Units - 2000

| Less than \$50,000 | \$50,000 - \$99,999 | \$100,000 - \$149,000 | \$150,000 - \$199,999 | \$200,000 - \$299,999 | \$300,000 - \$499,999 | \$500,000 or more | Town Median Value | County Median Value | State Median Value |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 9 | 36 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | \$81,700 | \$139,500 | \$113,400 |

Source: U.S. Census

Contract Rent (Renter Occupied Units) - 2000

| Less than \$200 | \$200 - \$299 | \$300 - \$499 | \$500 - \$749 | \$750 - \$999 | \$1,000 or more |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 0 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

Source: U.S. Census

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

| Less than 15% | 15.0% - 19.9% | 20.0% - 24.9% | 25.0% - 29.9% | 30.0% - 34.9% | 35.0% or more | Town % not affordable | County % not affordable |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 40 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1.7% | 17.6% |

Source: U.S. Census

Note: U.S. HUD defines affordable housing as 30% or less of monthly or annual income.

Renter Occupied Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income-• 1999

| Less than 15% | 15.0% - 19.9% | 20.0% - 24.9% | 25.0% - 29.9% | 30.0% - 34.9% | 35.0% or more | Town % not affordable | County % not affordable |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 30.7% |

*Source: U.S. Census**Note: U.S. HUD defines affordable housing as 30% or less of monthly or annual income.****TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION***

- The major transportation function in the Town is maintaining the local road system with the PASER system for Town road pavement management.
- U.S. Highway 63 comprises the western border of the Town of Forest. State Highway 64 travels through the southern portion of the Town. Two County highways (CTH Q and P) also transverse the Town of Forest. U.S. Highway 63 on the western edge of the Town experienced a 25 percent increase in traffic between 1997 (3,200) to 2006 (4,000). State Highway 64 in the southeastern corner of the Town had an average daily traffic count of 1,500 in 2006, which was an increase of 400 or 36 percent.
- With the future construction of the Stillwater Bridge, U.S. Highway 63 and State Highway 64 would more than likely experience a significant increase in traffic volume.
- Crashes on public roads in the Town have decreased with 24 in 1998 with 18 in 2007. Since 1998, the Town has averaged 23 reported crashes a year.
- Of employed residents in 2000, 28.2 percent worked within the Town of Forest, 27.6 percent commuted to locations outside the Town, but within St. Croix County. 15 percent commuted to locations in nearby Polk County. 20.9 percent commuted to Minnesota.
- Of the 348 workers 16 years and over in 2000, 64.4 percent drove alone to work, with the remaining carpooling, walking, or using other means. 20.9% worked at home. Mean travel time to work was 35.4 minutes.
- The 2008 St. Croix County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan designates County Highway Q as a shared roadway bike route. In addition, a route starting at the unincorporated hamlet of Forest north along 270th St., east along 210th Ave., then north along 280th St. to Q is proposed as a shared roadway bike route. 265th St. in the northwestern portion of the Town is designated to be a shared roadway bike route, if improved. In addition, a stretch of US Highway 63 between Q and H is designated to be a paved shoulder bike route, if improved.

UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES INFORMATION

- The Town Hall is the primary community facility located within the Town of Forest.
- The Forest Sanitary District #1 provides community sewer for a portion of the community. All other buildings and homes are served by private, on-site septic systems. No municipal water is available in the Town.
- The Town of Forest lies within the Boyceville Community, Clear Lake, and Glenwood City school districts.
- Ambulance and fire emergency services are provided by the Clear Lake and Glenwood ambulance and fire districts.

- Many community facilities (e.g., library, parks) and other services used by residents are located south in Clear Lake and Glenwood City.

AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION

- Agricultural assessed acreage in the Town of Forest declined by 24.2 percent between 1990 and 2007, decreasing from 20,108 to 15,238 acres. This is below the 26.6 percent County-wide decline in agricultural acres for the same time period. The Town ranked third in the county in total number of assessed agricultural acres in 2000.
- The majority of soils in the Town of Forest are classified as prime farmlands. The southeastern corner of the Town has limited prime farmlands.
- The Town is in both the Lower Chippewa River Basin (eastern half) and the St. Croix River Basin (western half). The South Fork Hay River Watershed is located in the Lower Chippewa River Basin and the Upper Willow River Watershed is located in the St. Croix River Basin.
- Designated floodplain is limited in the town and is located mostly along waterways.
- The Town has very few wetlands. The majority of wetlands are located along the several creeks in the Town.
- There is a concentration of steep slopes in the southeastern portion of the Town.
- A small percentage of the soils in the Town have the potential for sand and/or gravel deposits. These soils are spread throughout the Town.
- There are seven historic structures in the Town of Forest on the State of Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, though none are on the National Register of Historic Places. Three are houses, three are churches, and one is an industrial building.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

- The number of Forest residents in the labor force increased from 314 to 348 from 1990 to 2000. Unemployment stayed the same changing only .1 percent from 3.5 percent to 3.6 percent during this timeframe.
- In 2000, the largest percentage of working Town residents were employed agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining sector (27.1 percent). This was 46.5 percent in 1990. The manufacturing sector at 24.1 percent made up the next largest percentage of employment by industry in 2000.
- There has been a significant increase in the percentage of the workforce in the Town that is employed in the retail industry from 4.6 percent in 1990 to nine percent in 2000.
- In 2000, 32.8 percent of the Town's working residents were employed as management, professional, and related occupations and 24.7 percent were employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations.
- Most of the Town's workforce (73.2 percent) were employed by private firms. Self-employed workers in a non-incorporated business constituted 17.8 percent, 5.7 percent were employed by government entities, and 3.3 percent were unpaid family workers. In 1990, 36.6 percent of workers were self-employed.

- In 1990, 45.8 percent of the workforce walked or worked at home. In 2000, this number dropped to 25.2 percent.
- The median household income in the Town of Forest increased 82 percent between 1989 and 1999, well above the County and State average increases of 49.6 and 47.1 percent, respectively. The median household income in 1989 was \$27,937 and in 1999 it was \$50,833, compared to the 1999 County average household income of 54,930. In constant 1999 dollars, the Town's median household income increased from \$37,535 to \$50,833, or 35 percent.

LAND-USE INFORMATION

- The Town of Forest consists of 68 percent agricultural land and 22 percent forest.
- The number of assessed agricultural parcels decreased from 564 to 538 (or -4.6%) between 1990 and 2007. Assessed agricultural acreage decreased from 20,108 to 15,238 acres (or -24.2%).
- The number of assessed forest parcels increased from 127 to 296 (or 133%) between 1990 and 2007. Assessed forested acreage increased from 2,434 to 4,999 acres (or 105%). These numbers include newly defined AG forest assessed acreage.
- The Town has 1.8 percent of its land assessed as residential. The lack of residentially assessed land is due in part to the distance and lack of accessibility to a major route to an employment sector. The Town of Forest experienced a 72 percent increase in improved residential parcels since 1990 and a 124 percent increase (+224 acres) in assessed residential acreage.

Land-use Acreage and Assessed Value Per Acre - 2007

| | Agricultural | Forest | Ag. Forest | Undeveloped | Residential | Commercial | Manufacturing | Other | Total |
|----------------|--------------|---------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|---------------|----------|---------|
| Acres | 15,238 | 2,504 | 2,495 | 1,397 | 404 | 29 | 0 | 197 | 22,264 |
| Value per Acre | \$137 | \$1,833 | \$959 | \$678 | \$50,474 | \$26,641 | n/a | \$62,153 | \$1,950 |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

2.2 Previous or Related Planning & Regulatory Efforts

Town of Forest Plans and Regulations

This is the first comprehensive planning effort that focuses on the Town of the Forest. The Town has previously adopted a Subdivision Ordinance and Utilities Ordinance that provide some local land use direction. The Town of Forest has not adopted St. Croix County Comprehensive Zoning.

Applicable St. Croix County Plans and Regulations

The Town has been encompassed within previous St. Croix County planning efforts, such as the *2000 St. Croix County Development Management Plan*, which included the following recommendations for the Town of Forest:

- the entire Town was labeled as a rural planning area.
- average of eight dwelling units per 40 acres.
- protect the best farmland and environmentally sensitive areas.

Other Applicable Plans & Regulations

The *Inventory of Plans, Programs, and Land Use Policies in West Central Wisconsin* reviews a number of additional plans, programs, and regulations which are related to this planning effort. The Town of Emerald is also in the same comprehensive planning process as part of the multi-jurisdictional grant application. The towns of Clear Lake and New Haven are in the process or have completed a town plan. The issues and recommendations from these other plans should be considered as the Town of Forest develops its own Plan and key issues and opportunities highlighted in the intergovernmental cooperation element later in this document.

2.3 Key Issues

The key issues of the community were developed by using a community survey. This survey was developed by the Survey Research Center at University of Wisconsin – River Falls. The community was able to amend the survey to add specific questions that pertained to the Town of Forest. Of the 285 surveys that were mailed to property owners, 165 (58 percent) were returned. These results provided the majority of the information for issue prioritization for the plan. The following data are highlights data from the surveys. The results of the survey are located in Appendix II.

- 92% rated the quality of life as good or excellent
- Near family and friends, small town atmosphere, and agriculture are the top three reasons for living in the Town of Forest
- Direct mailings (83%) and newsletters (55%) ranked as the most effective way that the Town could provide information
- Groundwater (93%), lakes, rivers, and streams (84%), and farmland (83%) ranked highest as essential or important to use taxes/regulations to preserve.
- 48% agree or strongly agree that affordable housing is needed
- 43% agree or strongly agree that starter homes are needed
- 28% agree or strongly agree that large scale farms with 500+ animal units should be allowed to expand anywhere in the Town.
- 38% agree or strongly agree that large scale farms with 500+ animal units should be allowed to expand nowhere in the Town.
- 41% agree or strongly agree that landowners should be allowed to develop land any way that they want.
- 77% agree or strongly agree that visual impacts of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development
- 46% think the minimum lot size should be 1-5 acres. 24% think the minimum lot size should be 6-10 acres.
- 74% agree or strongly agree that alternative modes of transportation are important.
- 46% agree or strongly agree that there should be designated areas along Highway 64 for commercial development. 42% thought the same for industrial development.
- 57% agree or strongly agree that commercial and industrial development should be centralized around the Hamlet of Forest.
- Agricultural related businesses (62%) and home based businesses (22%) ranked the highest being essential or very important to the Town.
- Wind energy (75%) and solar energy (70%) both had high percentages of agree or strongly agree that alternative forms of energy should be used in an economic development strategy. Bio-fuels (46%) also had a higher percentage agreeing than disagreeing.
- Protect agricultural resources (65%), ensure public safety (59%), and protect environmental/cultural resources (53%) had the highest rankings for the top three functions of the Town government

As a result of these survey results, there were several issues which were closely scored considerably higher than the other issues. There are also numerous relationships between many of the issues that will need to be considered and balanced during the planning process.

2013 Update: The 2010 recall election and 2011-2012 elections and subsequent development of a town wind energy system ordinance and zoning ordinance show that a majority of town residents do not support large industrial or utility sized wind energy systems or multi-turbine wind farms as an

economic development tool or as an appropriate land use within the Town. References to the survey are still included in the Amended Comprehensive Plan for historical purposes, but are not considered an accurate current reflection of the Town's vision, goals, and objectives for the future, with respect to development of large industrial and utility sized wind farms.

2.4 Vision Statement

A vision statement defines the future that a community wants, but does not define how it gets there. Visioning helps build consensus, can emphasize community assets, identifies any desirable change, and provides direction and context for the planning goals and policies later in the process.

*The process by which
a community defines
the future it wants.*

During the fall and winter of 2008, the Town conducted a community survey. The survey was created by University of Wisconsin – River Falls and was amended to meet the requests of the Plan Commission. The survey, which had a 58 percent response rate, allowed the Plan Commission to view what was important to the citizens of the community. A survey was distributed in 2001 and the data from that survey were similar to the data received in 2008. In addition, the Plan Commission took part in a visioning questionnaire.

During the visioning questionnaire, the following were qualities or characteristics that the group thought should be part of the vision:

- Small commercial activity encouraged in the Hamlet of Forest
- The introduction of future agricultural economies in the Town
- Clean water resources

During the visioning questionnaire, the following are qualities, characteristics, or trends that are present in the community, but were not part of the vision for the community.

- Dilapidated barns, silos, and other farm structures.
- Junk accumulations – mostly in the Hamlet of Forest

The above responses and survey results were not only important for creating the vision statement, but provided valuable direction for establishing Plan goals, objectives, and strategies later in the Plan. Overall, there was a consensus that community members liked the qualities and characteristics of the Town of Forest as it exists today and wished to maintain and preserve these qualities and characteristics for future generations.

The results of the vision questionnaire are found in Appendix II. Based on the survey results and visioning exercise, the following vision statement for the Town of Forest was developed, and then finalized at the May 07, 2009 Plan Commission meeting:

Town of Forest Vision Statement

Vision Statement – An idealized statement that articulates the future a community wants.

In the year 2030, we envision that the Town of Forest will continue to offer the rural country setting, small-town atmosphere, and well rated quality of life that it does today.

Clean water resources, farmlands, forests, and scenic open spaces will continue to offer residents the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty and resources of our community. Agriculture will remain an important economic activity, with an emphasis on encouraging future agricultural markets. Development will be planned in a manner which considers and finds balance with our natural resources and rural character. Appropriate commercial development will be promoted in the Hamlet of Forest. The Town will have a working relationship with St. Croix County to ensure that only uses that belong in a rural setting are located in the Town.

We will achieve this vision by maintaining an open and responsive Town government, which balances the interests of residents with those characteristics of our community that make it a healthy, beautiful, and good place to raise a family, enjoy its environment, and operate a business of a size, scale and characteristics that will be consistent with the quiet, rural and scenic character of the Town .

3. *HOUSING*

Housing costs are the single largest expenditure for most Wisconsin residents. However, affordability is just one reason a community may plan for housing. A variety of local housing issues and demands can be addressed through planning, such as type (e.g., single-family, rental, manufactured), condition (e.g., age, aesthetics, rehabilitation), and safety (e.g., codes, disaster preparedness, accessibility). Housing policies should meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups, and other special needs. This element identifies the housing goal, objectives and policies for the Town of Forest.

3.1 Housing Goal, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal:

Encourage housing that meets existing and future demands in the Town of Forest. Manage residential development in a manner that allows for affordable and quality housing choices consistent with the rural nature of the community. Promote sustainable techniques that limit residential energy use.

Objective 1

Collaborate with neighboring municipalities to plan for a range of housing that meets the needs of area residents of various income levels, age, and health status.

Strategies:

- 1) Discourage development of multi-family apartment buildings and special needs housing in the Town and encourage it inside urban areas, where there is easier access to public services and facilities to support such development.
- 2) Provide information at the Town Hall on available public and non-profit home ownership and rehabilitation programs.

- 48% agree or strongly agree that **affordable housing** is needed
- 43% agree or strongly agree that **starter homes** are needed

Objective 2

Ensure that homes are built and maintained according to levels deemed safe by industry standards.

Strategies:

- 1) Continue to enforce State and local building regulations to encourage safe, quality housing.
- 2) Enforce nuisance regulations to prohibit the accumulation of junk and debris.

Objective 3

Retain farmsteads and single-family residences as the preferred type of housing in the Town of Forest.

Strategies:

- 1) Promote farm based residences throughout the Town, including housing for family members of farm owners and for employees working on farms.
- 2) Develop regulations for mobile homes.



Objective 4

Encourage all housing to be designed environmentally sustainable and in a manner consistent with our rural character.

Strategies:

- 1) Work with the appropriate agencies and organizations to help educate home owners and builders on more sustainable building and lot design techniques. This can include Focus on Energy, UW-Extension, and other public and non-profit agencies.
- 2) Promote building sites on areas that are not environmentally sensitive, do not destroy natural habitat, or eliminates prime farmland.

4. *TRANSPORTATION*

Transportation can directly influence a community's growth, or it can be used a tool to help guide and accommodate the growth which a community envisions. Like the other elements in the Plan, transportation is interconnected, especially with land use. Economic, housing, and land use decisions can increase or modify demands on the various modes of transportation (e.g., highways and roads, air, rail, pedestrian). Likewise, the transportation decisions, such as the construction of new roadways or a bypass, can impact accessibility, land values, and land use. The Town has 46.25 miles of Town roads.

This section of the *Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan* identifies a goal, objectives, and strategies for the transportation infrastructure of the Town. These objectives and strategies are then compared with those of other local, regional, and State transportation plans.

4.1 Transportation Goal, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal:

Provide a safe and efficient multi modal, transportation network for all residents, farmers, area businesses, and emergency vehicles.

Objective 1

Transportation system should serve community needs in a manner consistent with the rural character of the community while protecting our natural and cultural resources

Strategies:

- 1) Work with landowners/developers during the site planning process to ensure a safe and efficient transportation network, which meets Town standards and to preserve adequate right-of-way for roads and utilities.
- 2) Work with landowners/developers during the site planning process to ensure a safe and efficient transportation network, which meets Town standards and to preserves natural and cultural resources.
- 3) Work with St. Croix County and investigate the possibility of reducing the speed limit in the Hamlet of Forest.
- 4) Inventory all signage in the Town and implement any needed signage into the capital improvements plan.
- 5) Explore the possibility of instituting Rustic Road designation for applicable roads in the Town.

- 82% agree or strongly agree that the **road network** meets their needs.
- 74% agree or strongly agree that **alternative modes of transportation** are important.
- Any changes to **U.S. Highway 63 and STH 64** could impact traffic volume and development pressure in the Town.
- The construction of the new **Stillwater Bridge** could increase traffic volume and development pressures.

Objective 2

Manage the Town's road system in a cost-effective manner.

Strategies:

- 1) Continue to use PASER and WISLR systems to inventory and manage improvements.
- 2) Require developers to pay costs associated with new or upgraded roads.
- 3) Require shared driveway entrances for clustered development and subdivision development.

- 4) Integrate future roadway improvements and road maintenance equipment into a multi-year capital improvements plan.

Objective 3

Coordinate transportation projects with neighboring municipalities and St. Croix County.

Strategies:

- 1) Work with adjoining towns to plan, construct and maintain those roads that affect both jurisdictions including cost sharing where appropriate.
- 2) Work with St. Croix County on the implementation of the 2008 St. Croix Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Objective 4

Explore the establishment of bicycle routes and recreational trails in the Town.

Strategy:

- 1) Inventory possible corridors and locations for pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian recreational trails in the Town.



Unpaved town road.

4.2 Comparison with Other Transportation Plans

The related transportation plans discussed in the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report* were reviewed and the above transportation goal, objectives, and policies for Town of Forest were determined to be compatible with the other related transportation plans. As a whole, the goals and policies of these other plans are not expected to have impacts on the community that requires action within the scope of this planning effort. The foreseen projects that will impact the Town are any new improvements and/or widening of U.S. Highway 63 and State Highway 64 and the completion of a new bridge at Stillwater, MN, along State Highway 64. It is anticipated that these projects would increase traffic along U.S. Highway 63 and State Highway 64.

U.S. Highway 63 travels along the western side of the Town. This road is scheduled to be widened from two lanes to four lanes. In addition, the interchange with State Highway 64, which travels west and east in the southern portion of the Town, is planned for improvements. This proposed construction will undoubtedly alter the existing interchange. State Highway 128 travels north from Glenwood City to State Highway 64. The road then becomes County Highway P, which then connects to U.S. Highway 63, north of the Town. County Highway D, Q, and S are also located in the Town. The Town will continue to cooperate with St. Croix County on planning and access controls for these facilities.



ATV route connecting St. Croix
County and Polk County

The Town currently allows ATVs on all Town roads pursuant to Ordinance No. 01-2009. Portions of County highways in the Town of Forest have been identified in the *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* as having positive conditions for bicycling. The Town also contains one established County snowmobile route. These recreational transportation activities are not inconsistent with this Plan, though the Town expresses an interest to participate in the planning and review of any future recreational trails and transportation routes.

5. UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Utilities and community facilities provide the foundation on which a community is built and maintained. Utilities may include sanitary sewer, storm water, and water systems, as well as electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and solid waste disposal. Community facilities can vary greatly by community, but typically include parks, schools, libraries, cemeteries, and various health and safety providers (e.g., police, fire, ambulance, hospitals). Special services deemed to be vital to a community, such as day care, may also be included as a community facility.

Utilities and community facilities can also be used to guide growth, encourage development, or help establish community identity. Combined with roads, the construction, maintenance, and operation of public utilities and community facilities often constitute the largest proportion of a community's budget.

5.1 Review of Existing Facilities

Other than roads, as discussed in the transportation section, community facilities in the Town of Forest are limited.

A sanitary sewer district is located in the Hamlet of Forest. The system is at 75 percent capacity. No municipal utilities (e.g., water, stormwater) exist within the Town. The Town lies within the Boyceville Community, Clear Lake, and Glenwood City school districts. Emergency services are adequately provided by the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department and the Clear Lake and Glenwood ambulance and fire districts.



The existing Town Hall, Town softball field, and Town Cemetery are the only Town-owned community facilities. The Town Hall was constructed in 1979 and meets the community needs. There are three cemeteries located in the Town, of which one is a Town cemetery. The Town does not currently contract with private firms for solid waste disposal. Residents have access to the recycling facilities of Clear Lake and Glenwood City. The Town contracts with private firms and St. Croix County for road maintenance and plowing activities.

Utilities and facilities of regional significance (e.g., health care, emergency services, recycling facilities, telecommunications, electric utilities, child care, libraries, parks, and schools) are identified and discussed in the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report*. Most residents travel to Glenwood City and Clear Lake for these services. The Town of Forest has very little or no control

or responsibility regarding the planning and operation of these facilities. This is also true for stormwater management planning, private wells, and private sanitary sewer systems that are regulated by St. Croix County and the State of Wisconsin, and not the Town of Forest.

5.2 Assessment of Future Needs

Other than normal maintenance and the future need to address improvements to or replacement of the Town Hall, no dire future expansion, rehabilitation, or construction needs regarding Town of Forest existing community facilities were identified during the planning meetings. The Town identified the desire for a Town Park to be located on the south side of 205th Avenue at Bolen Creek. The Town will continue to provide maintenance of the Town softball field. Future needs for those utilities and facilities of regional significance and for privately owned facilities are assessed and planned for by the providers and are not considered a normal responsibility of the Town.

It was also recognized during the planning process that the Town may explore acquisition and development of trails. This would require additional planning by the Town and interested parties. Additional opportunities for a more regional approach to the linking of recreational trails are addressed in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element of this plan.

5.3 Utilities and Community Facilities Goal, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal:

Maintain needed community facilities and services in a safe and cost effective manner that is consistent with the Town's vision and that limits environmental impacts.

Objective 1

Community facilities and services will be designed in a cost-effective and appropriate manner to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of community members and landowners, while at the same time analyzing local environmental impacts and costs.

Strategies:

- 1) The Town will periodically reassess the condition and need for all Town facilities.
- 2) When analyzing the benefits and costs of any new facility or the remodeling of an existing facility, local environmental impacts and costs will be examined.
- 3) Integrate future capital improvements into a multi-year capital improvements plan.
- 4) The Town will facilitate, monitor, and continue good and open relationships with applicable police, fire, ambulance, first responders, and emergency management departments.
- 5) Continue to make sure that the Town cemeteries are well-maintained and meet the needs residents.
- 6) The Town will analyze the ability to expand recycling opportunities for residents, businesses, and Town facilities.



Objective 2

Ensure that public and private utilities are constructed and maintained according to professional and governmental standards and do not detract from the scenic, quiet, naturally beautiful rural character of the Town.

Strategies:

- 1) The Town will work on the development of a telecommunication tower ordinance. This will include co-location, stealth technologies, and other techniques to minimize visual impacts.
- 2) The Town will work with Internet providers to ensure that the highest percentage of residents have access to high-speed Internet.

- **Direct mailings** (83%) and **newsletters** (55%) ranked as the most effective way that the Town could provide information
- At 82%, the **Town Hall** had the highest rating for Town services.
- **Protect agricultural resources** (65%), **ensure public safety** (59%), and **protect environmental/cultural resources** (53%) had the highest rankings for functions of the Town government.

Objective 3

New development shall be responsible for corresponding utility and community services costs.

Strategy:

- 1) Require landowners/developers to dedicate needed lands or pay Town costs associated with the improvement of utilities, community facilities, and parks that have a rational and proportional relationship to new development.

Objective 4

Utilities and community facilities shall be installed and maintained in a manner which protects water quality and the natural environment of our community.

Strategies:

- 1) Work with perspective land owners to create a Town Park on the south side of 205th Avenue at Bolen Creek.
- 2) All future construction and improvements of utilities and community facilities including septic and sanitary systems will be designed to protect water quality and the natural environment of the Town.
- 3) Work with St. Croix County to ensure the proper installation of new and the identification of failing private septic systems.
- 4) Continue to provide maintenance of the Town softball field.



6. AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This element presents the goal, objectives, and strategies for three resources important to any community - agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. For the past century, agriculture and forestry have been significant land uses in the Town of Forest. The Town's vision statement recognizes the importance of preserving the rural character and preserving natural resources. Natural resources, such as the various creeks and rivers also add to the rural qualities which local residents promote in their vision. Cultural resources are the important third sub-element that nurtures a sense-of-place. They provide an important context for planning and foster civic pride.



The community surveys emphasized the community's desire for preserving groundwater; lakes, rivers, and streams; and farmland. These issues were the issues that had the highest "essential or important" score in the survey. Due to the high scores, these issues should be addressed when any new policy and/or development is in question. Protecting forested lands, rural character, hunting and fishing, and wildlife habitat rated slightly below the first three issues, but still had higher percentages of "essential or important" than other questions in the survey.

6.1 Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goal, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal:

Protect the quality of our water resources and support the agricultural and natural resource industries in the Town of Forest, while helping to preserve our community's prime farmlands, family farms, natural and managed forests, visual landscape, and cultural assets. The Town will achieve this goal by finding, implementing, and evaluating the working balance between the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in the Town.

Objective 1

Protect and conserve water and natural resources

Strategies:

- 1) Continue to work with St. Croix County in the enforcement of the Floodplain Ordinance, County Sanitation Ordinance, and Shoreland -Wetland Ordinance to protect the

- **Groundwater (93%), lakes, rivers, and streams (84%), and farmland (83%)** ranked highest as essential or important to use taxes/regulations to preserve.
- 28% agree or strongly agree that **large scale farms** with 500+ animal units should be allowed to expand anywhere in the Town.
- 38% agree or strongly agree that **large scale farms** with 500+ animal units should be allowed to expand nowhere in the Town.

natural and agricultural resources of our community.

2) Continue to evaluate development and growth pressures in the Town and subsequently analyze the effectiveness of the Town Subdivision Ordinance.

3) The Plan Commission will maintain knowledge of water quality improvement projects impacting the area and, as needed, work with landowners, lake associations and districts, St. Croix County, and other stakeholders on projects to protect our water quality and other natural resources.

4) Educate residents on our pristine water quality and recommended best practices to protect surface and ground waters. This involves working with St. Croix County Land and Water Conservation Department, Wisconsin DNR, and other applicable entities could include agricultural practices, lake districts/associations, household and business dumping of toxic material, etc.

5) Cooperate with St. Croix County Land and Water Conservation Department, Wisconsin DNR, and other applicable entities to educate residents on the importance of eliminating invasive species in the Town.

6) Encourage, if not require, municipal sanitary sewer service for applicable industrial, commercial, and multi-family residential uses.

7) Work with St. Croix County to identify non-metallic mining potential within the town and consider alternatives to mitigate potential use conflicts.

8) Adopt a large livestock facility siting ordinance to allow community input on the siting of large feedlot operations and the enforcement of State of Wisconsin siting rules.

9) Label, at an appropriate location, any future DNR listed Exceptional or Outstanding Waterway.

10) Do a benefit/cost analysis on using taxes and/or regulations to protect and conserve water resources.



Wetland area in the Town

Objective 2

Promote incentives to maintain the rural character of the Town.

Strategies:

1) Implement those policies in the land use section of this plan which will help preserve the agricultural, natural, scenic, and cultural resources of our community.

2) Investigate options to reduce the number of dilapidated barns, silos, and other farm related structures in the Town



Plaque in Hamlet of Forest

Objective 3

Encourage new agricultural markets like niche farms that include direct market farms, organic farms, and farms that produce non-traditional products and/or bio-energy feedstock.

Strategies:

- 1) Continue to monitor changing State and County agricultural preservation and forestry management rules and regulations. Periodically reconsider Town policies and actions to encourage the preservation of the Town's agricultural and forest lands.
- 2) Promote the Town as a desirable location for new agricultural markets like niche farms that include direct market farms, organic farms, and farms that produce non-traditional products and/or bio-energy feedstock. This could be done through, marketing, etc.

Objective 4

Preserving farming activities while protecting the rural farming character of the Town.

Strategy:

- 1) Consider adopting subdivision and zoning requirements, such as density restrictions, open space requirements that encourage the long term protection and maintenance of open space.

Objective 5

Collaborate with private and public organizations to preserve the Town's cultural and historical resources.

Strategy:

- 1) Work with public and private historical societies to help identify and promote preservation of any cultural sites in the Town that could be registered at the State or Federal levels.

Objective 6

Promote local food production and consumption in the Town.

Strategy:

- 1) Equally promote all food producers in the Town and support the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* movement. Among other ways, this could be done in Town newsletters, postings at the Town Hall, and on the Town website.

Structures on the WI Architecture and History Inventory

- House - U.S. Highway 63 and CTH Q (1870)
- Immanuel Lutheran Church – 330th Ave (1919)
- House – CTH Q near STH 128 (1900)
- Structure – 330th Ave and 40th St. (unknown)
- Industrial building – STH 64 and CTH D (unknown)
- St. John's Lutheran Church – STH 64 (unknown)
- Forest United Methodist Church – CTH D (unknown)

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Through planning, a community can anticipate economic change and guide development to the best of its abilities to achieve the economic vision and objectives for the community. Economic development is about working together to maintain a strong and sustainable economy that provides a good standard of living for individuals and a reliable tax base for the community. A community's economic development plan should reflect the values of the community and must be carefully linked to the goals, objectives, and policies of the other Plan elements.

7.1 Local Economic Development Plans and Programs

The Town of Forest currently has no local economic development plans and programs, but residents and the community do have access to the numerous County, regional, and State economic development programs identified in the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report*.

7.2 New Businesses Desired

The types of new businesses desired were developed during the survey and Plan Commission meetings. It is envisioned that the community will continue to be primarily agricultural in nature, including forestry practices, with many residents continuing to commute to other areas in the region for employment. Other commercial activities that do occur within the community are envisioned to be in-home businesses or local serving businesses that compliment agriculture, forestry, and the rural character of the Town. The Town has a strong desire to promote locally owned businesses, which help keep money spent in the community. The Town also believes that encouraging organic or other sustainable farming operations that produce food to be consumed locally can create a more sustainable Town economy.

Survey results show that residents are split on allowing large-scale farms in the Town, and if they are located in the Town, where they should be located. In-home businesses are termed home occupations and such activity shall not detract from the predominant agricultural, forested, or residential character of the surrounding area. If the commercial activity of a home occupation becomes such that it predominates the use of the property, it would be most desirable to have the establishment move to an appropriate commercial area rather than have the property rezoned to accommodate a use that inappropriately grew in an agricultural, forested or residential area. Hence, incubation of a business can be home-based in the Town, but it shall move to an appropriate site when the business is about to dominate the use of the property. Currently, the Hamlet of Forest is home to a small amount of commercial activity. Overall, other than agriculture, forestry, recreation, and cottage industry consistent with the community's rural nature, no new large-scale businesses or industry is desired in the Town of Forest. Appropriate low impact commercial businesses may be considered in the designated area in the Hamlet of Forest or along State Highway 64, as designated in the Future Land Use Plan Map, if they can be operated consistent with the principles of this Comprehensive Plan and the character of the surrounding area.



7.3 Strengths and Weaknesses

U.S. Highway 63 and state highways 64 and 128 travel through portions of the Town and are transportation arterials, serving tourism-based and commuter traffic. The cities of Glenwood City and Clear Lake are located within 10 miles of the Town. Both, albeit smaller communities, are home to many commercial and industrial businesses, which are serviced by residents in the Town. These are significant economic strengths for a rural community, both for businesses that operate in the Town and for residents who commute to surrounding communities. As shown in the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report*, the Town also has prime farmlands and forestlands, which have historically been significant economic activities in the Town over the past 150 years.

Although there are few tourism opportunities in the Town, the natural environment (streams, woods, fields and hills) makes it attractive for some tourism-related activity, like hunting. Entrepreneurs have access to a diversity of County, regional, and State economic development assistance programs.

The Town's weaknesses for attracting or retaining businesses include having no municipal water utilities which make certain more intensive commercial and industrial uses inappropriate. The Town does not have a significant workforce or railroad access and Town roads are not built to specifications to allow for year-round heavy traffic often associated with commercial and industrial uses. The nearby employment centers and smaller surrounding communities which have small amounts of retail, service, and industrial concentrations offer more economic development opportunities and therefore are difficult to compete against. The planning process has shown that these weaknesses are acceptable for the Town, as these services are not desired within the Town.

itself. It will build on its strengths to remain essentially an agricultural and forested low-density and recreational community with limited supporting commercial development, which focuses on promoting existing businesses with the Town.

7.4 Opportunities for Brownfield Redevelopment

As a rural, unincorporated community, most of the area is not conducive to brownfield redevelopment. However, there are some opportunities for brownfield redevelopment in the Hamlet of Forest, where vacant structures and buildings exist. The Town expects non-metallic mining sites to be reclaimed to a more natural setting and in some cases be made available for residential development once mining activities cease.

7.5 Designation of Sites

The only site that has been identified for future commercial development in the Town of Forest is the area in and immediately surrounding the Hamlet of Forest and west along State Highway 64. Due to U.S. Highway 63 and State Highway 64 being a significant intersection, it is anticipated that some higher intensity development could locate in this area. It is envisioned that prime farmlands will continue to be farmed and forest management will dominate the wooded areas where farming would be marginal at best.

Proposed economic development projects and sites should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Foremost, the proposed project should be consistent with the community's vision and Comprehensive Plan. The question "is it compatible with the rural nature of the community and does it pose a threat to farmland, woodlands, and most importantly surface water and groundwater of the community" should be asked. Also, impacts of the proposed project on local roads and services and the scale and scope of the proposal in character with the scenic, quiet, and peaceful nature of the Town. In addition, any economic development shall be evaluated regarding its impact on the public health, safety and welfare and its consistency with the Town's comprehensive plan.. These examples are the types of inquiries the community will make when reviewing a proposed economic development project.

7.6 Economic Development Goal, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal:

The Town of Forest will focus on developing a diverse and sustainable economic environment. This will include keeping existing businesses and encourage new businesses that are related to agriculture, , home occupations, telecommuting, and any other business that is compatible with the rural nature of the Town and this Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 1

Promote businesses related to sustainable farming, forestry, and other natural resources. . Examples include direct market farms, organic farms.

Strategies:

- 1) Implement the applicable related policies in the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element which promote small scale sustainable agricultural and forestry related practices and businesses.
- 2) Equally promote all food producers in the Town. Among other ways, this could be done in Town newsletters, postings at the Town Hall, and on a future Town website.

Objective 2

Encourage home occupations that compliment the Town's rural character.

Strategy:

- 1) Allow home occupations that are compatible with the rural scenic character of the community.

Objective 3

Encourage locally owned businesses, which do not negatively impact neighboring properties, which are compatible with this Comprehensive Plan, and help keep dollars spent in the community.

Strategy:

- 1) Equally promote all businesses and home occupations located in the Town. Among other ways, this could be done in Town newsletters, postings at the Town Hall, and on a future Town website.

Objective 4

Discourage higher impact commercial development in rural areas and without access to adequate wastewater services.

Strategies:

- 1) Allow higher impact commercial uses only in the Hamlet of Forest and along the STH 64 as designated in the Future Land Use Plan, but only to the extent consistent with the surrounding area, this Comprehensive Plan, and the public health, safety, and welfare.
- 2) Work with St. Croix County to require all higher impact commercial development to be serviced by adequate wastewater services

- 46% agree or strongly agree that there should be designated areas along Highway 64 for **commercial development**. 42% thought the same for **industrial development**.
- 57% agree or strongly agree that **commercial and industrial development** should be centralized around the Hamlet of Forest.
- **Agricultural related businesses** (62%) and **home based businesses** (22%) ranked the highest being essential or very important to the Town.

8. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Advances in technology and improved mobility have resulted in the faster and easier movement of people, money, goods, and other resources across jurisdictions. Many issues cross intergovernmental boundaries, affecting more than one community or governmental unit (e.g., school district). The decisions, plans, and policies of one community can impact neighboring jurisdictions. The environmental, economic, and social health of a community and the region are interconnected.

Through intergovernmental cooperation, communities can anticipate potential conflicts in plans and policies in order to identify potential solutions to mitigate such conflicts. Governmental units may also identify opportunities for cost-sharing, competitive bidding, and other strategies to leverage available resources to everyone's benefit.

8.1 Growth Trends and Planning Activities in Adjacent Communities

The Town of Forest is extremely unique, given that it is located at the St. Croix, Polk, Barron, and Dunn counties point of intersection. Therefore, county policies of four counties could impact the Town. Growth trends for the surrounding St. Croix, Polk, Barron, and Dunn county communities are described in their respective Conditions and Trends Reports. Like the Town of Forest, adjacent towns have not experienced as much growth as the western side of St. Croix County, and in some instances have experienced a loss of population. At the same time there



has been a loss of farmlands, though agriculture remains a significant land use in this area. In St. Croix County, urban development pressure has been greatest along the western portion of the County. However, this pressure is moving east into more of St. Croix County and into southwestern Polk County. These areas are in the Twin Cities commutershed. Although the Town of Forest has not experienced growth at the same rate as the towns in the western portion of St. Croix County, residential growth is expected to increase as a result of the new Stillwater bridge, which will greatly improve access to the Twin Cities area. The towns of Clear Lake, New Haven, Emerald, and Cylon have either completed or are in the process of completing comprehensive plans.

8.2 Intergovernmental Plans, Agreements, & Relationships

Outside the multi-jurisdictional aspect of this comprehensive planning process, the number of existing intergovernmental plans, agreements, and relationships including the Town of Forest are limited. The primary intergovernmental agreements involving the Town of Forest are for emergency services from the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department and the Clear Lake and Glenwood ambulance and fire districts. The Town has maintenance agreements with the towns of Clear Lake, Cylon, Emerald, Glenwood, and New Haven for specific boundary roads and to exchange labor and equipment. The Town has agreements with the St. Croix County Highway Department for materials and work. The Town also cooperates with St. Croix County for emergency government, with the County Clerk for voter registration, and with a variety of other County departments.

The Town of Forest has no cooperative boundary agreements as defined under State Statute 66.0307, and there is no regional master plan as defined under State Statute 66.0309. However, the Town is using assistance from West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to create the comprehensive plan. The Town is part of the Boyceville Community, Clear Lake, and Glenwood City school districts as mapped in the community facilities section of the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report*, but has minimal involvement in school district facilities planning and operations because such facilities or operations are located in incorporated municipalities. The Town does have contacts with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Natural Resources, and with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue for assessment and taxation functions.

The Town is encompassed within a number of St. Croix County plans and ordinances, though Town approval of these documents was not required and ongoing participation is minimal. These plans include, but are not limited to the: *St. Croix County Shoreland/Wetland Zoning, Floodplain Ordinance, Manufactured/Mobile Home Parks Standards, and Non-metallic Mining Ordinance*. General guidance for other specific issues may be acquired from a plethora of other local, regional and State plans regarding natural resource management, farmland preservation, economic development, emergency services, and social programs. Please refer to the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report* for more details on many of these plans.

8.3 Potential Issues and Opportunities

During the planning process, the following potential intergovernmental issues and opportunities were identified:

- 1) The Town of Forest has a good working relationship with the surrounding towns.
- 2) No desire to use St. Croix County zoning regulations. The Town desires to adopt its own town zoning ordinances and has been given authority to do so by the Town Meeting.
- 3) Explore the possibility of working with adjacent towns (even though they are in different counties) with issues that relate to physical environment (watersheds, etc) and similar issues (low growth, desire to stay rural, etc).
- 4) Work with other units of government and respective fire districts regarding junk and storage that could be public hazards.

8.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal:

Maintain communication and working relationships with adjacent and overlapping governmental jurisdictions on issues of mutual interest to the benefit of our community.

Objective 1

Anticipate and identify potential intergovernmental conflicts and work with involved governmental units to seek ways to minimize or resolve such conflicts.

Strategies:

- 1) Provide a copy of the adopted Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan and future plan updates to St. Croix County and surrounding town governments.
- 2) Maintain Town Board membership in the Wisconsin Town's Association and make the newsletter available to Plan Commission members.
- 3) Establish and sustain contacts with unincorporated towns in the area, St. Croix County, and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to stay current on potential land use issues, trends, and regulatory changes.

- 65% think the **schools** are excellent or good.
- 60% think **law enforcement** is excellent or good.
- The **Town borders** five towns and three counties.
- The Town has more **similarities** with adjacent towns in different counties than with the majority of towns in St. Croix County.

Objective 2

Explore opportunities for coordination and cost-sharing of services and facilities with other governmental entities for the financial benefit of all partners.

Strategies:

- 1) Initiate discussion with adjacent and other applicable units of government regarding cost-sharing services and facilities.
- 2) Continually work with neighboring municipalities to identify opportunities for shared services or other cooperative planning efforts.

Objective 3

Participate in intergovernmental discussions and maintain communication with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions including school districts and emergency services on planning, development, and service-related issues.

Strategies:

- 1) Continue to work with St. Croix County in developing town land use regulations. Communicate with appropriate County and State agencies regarding farmland preservation programs, and resource protections as referenced in other elements of this plan.
- 2) Coordinate with St. Croix County, State of Wisconsin, and adjacent jurisdictions, to encourage the connectivity of roads, trails, and other transportation systems, when feasible and consistent with this plan.
- 3) Participate in discussions with St. Croix County and adjacent jurisdictions regarding using watersheds and other physical characteristics as boundaries for planning.
- 4) Work with and initiate discussion with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions including school districts and emergency services on planning, development, and service-related issues.

9. LAND USE

The use of land is a critical factor in guiding the future growth of any community. This section of the Plan identifies a land use goal, objectives, and strategies for the Town of Forest based on current and projected land use trends, as well as local land use issues and conflicts.

9.1 Existing Land Uses and Land Use Trends

Land-use data and trends for the Town of Forest are discussed in the Issues and Opportunities element. This includes a discussion of land supply, demand, and prices in the area. The *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report* also includes a school district map and discusses emergency services areas which are the only service area boundaries for the Town of Forest. The agricultural and natural resources sections and maps in the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report* identify and discuss the area's prime farmlands, floodplains, environmental sensitive areas, and engineering constraints. Recent land use trends by parcel and acreage are summarized in the table below:

| | 1987* parcels | 1987* acreage | 1997 parcels | 1997 acreage | 2008** parcels | 2008** acreage | 1987-2008 Percent Change parcels/aces | 1997-2008 Percent Change parcels/aces | Density (2008 avg. parcel size) |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Agricultural | 565 | 20,158 | 551 | 17,937 | 538 | 15,245 | -4.8/-24.4 | -2.4/-15.0 | 28.3 |
| Forest | 127 | 2,434 | 216 | 4,213 | 298 | 5,050 | 134.6/107.5 | 38.0/19.9 | 16.9 |
| Residential | 84 | 170 | 108 | 266 | 153 | 401 | 82.1/135.9 | 41.7/50.8 | 2.6 |
| Commercial | 13 | 22 | 14 | 23 | 16 | 29 | 23.1/31.8 | 14.3/26.1 | 1.8 |
| Industrial | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0/0 | 0/0 | n/a |
| Undeveloped | 23 | 93 | n/a | n/a | 400 | 1,418 | 1,639.1/1,424.7 | n/a / n/a | 3.5 |
| Other | n/a | n/a | 117 | 257 | 101 | 197 | n/a / n/a | -13.7/-23.3 | 2.0 |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue. 1987, 1997 & 2008 Statements of Assessments.

* 1987 Undeveloped data is labeled as Swamp and Waste

** 2008 Forest data includes both Forest and AG Forest. The AG Forest category did not exist in 1987 and 1998.

The above chart clearly shows the consistent loss of farmland in the Town over the past twenty years, an ongoing concern for residents. While some of this acreage has become residential land, it is apparent that the largest percentage was converted to forestland and some is now being taxed as "undeveloped." Commercial acreage has remained steady and there is no industrial use in the Town over the past 20 years. Increases in residential land have been significant in percentage, but with an increase of 69 parcels in the last 20 years, this is an increase of only 3.5 a year. Residential land accounts for less than two percent of total assessed land in the Town.

Given the Town's desire to encourage low-density residential development, if current population growth rates continue, residential land would increase from 1.7 percent of the Town today to about 2.8 percent in 2030.

However residential development is expected to increase with the construction of the Stillwater bridge.

To ensure that such growth is experienced, it is incumbent on Town officials to review proposed development within the Town based on the policies of the comprehensive plan.

9.2 Opportunities for Redevelopment

As a rural, unincorporated community, opportunities for redevelopment are limited. There are properties in the Hamlet of Forest that are suitable for redevelopment. These properties were used for agricultural and industrial purposes and are not currently used. It is not anticipated that these properties will ever be used for the original purposes. The properties could be used for some commercial and industrial uses. The Town expects non-metallic mining sites to be reclaimed to a more natural setting and in some cases be made available for residential and recreational development once mining activities cease.

9.3 Land Use Conflicts

Early in the planning process, issues facing the Town of Forest were identified, discussed, and prioritized in the survey. Land-use compatibility and conflicts were implied in many of the top ranked items. These consisted of protecting water resources from the adverse impacts of development and agriculture. In addition, a concern was growing conflicts between farming operations and residential growth. Current tax law (Use Value Assessment) with higher rates for non-developed, non-farm land can influence development decisions, thus resulting in conflicts with agricultural practices and State right-to-farm laws. This incompatibility is further increased in the case of factory farms or animal feedlot operations which some believe are more like industrial uses and not only incompatible with nearby residential uses but are inconsistent with the Town's rural



character. Large-scale commercial and industrial uses are seen as conflicts with the existing uses in the Town. This can be seen specifically in the Hamlet of Forest, where there are a few dilapidated buildings with junk and debris on the property. These properties are located adjacent to and/or within eyesight of residential and operating commercial uses. Other potential conflicts were recognized in cases where unplanned or inappropriate land uses may threaten the natural resources and scenic character of the Town, including the forestland and steep hillsides.

9.4 Land Use Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal:

The Town of Forest will encourage development to occur in a manner which preserves the agricultural, scenic, and rural character of our community and protects our water resources, while minimizing potential land-use conflicts and promoting the public health, safety, and welfare.

Objective 1

Maintain local land use control which balances the rights of the individual with the interests and vision of the community.

Strategies:

- 1) Use the Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan as a guide in addressing public decisions regarding land use and future development.
- 2) Systematically review all land divisions submitted to the County or the Town and make recommendations to the Town Board.
- 3) Require the landowner or developer to pay those public costs associated with project development, including studies required as part of plan review, capital expenses (e.g., roads, storm sewer systems), and any accelerated Town services.
- 4) Adopt a town zoning ordinance.

Objective 2

Encourage development to be sited and designed in a manner which is safe, efficient, complements our rural and scenic character, and minimizes land use conflicts.

Strategies:

- 1) Continue to monitor land use trends in the community, and periodically re-evaluate the Town's land use strategy and regulatory approach to determine if the vision and goals of the community are being met. Consider noise and nuisance regulations that may include conducting or requiring on-going monitoring of potentially higher impact land uses to assess impact on surrounding properties and on the public health, safety, and welfare.
- 2) Continue to monitor the impact the Stillwater Bridge may have on the Town.
- 3) Allow home occupations and cottage industries which are compatible with the Town's rural and scenic character.
- 4) Allow for a range of affordable housing opportunities.
- 5) Continue to review all major subdivision proposals and require soil testing of all lots and stormwater management planning for said subdivisions.

- 41% agree or strongly agree that landowners should be allowed to **develop land** any way that they want.

- 77% agree or strongly agree that **visual impacts of development** is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development

- 46% think the **minimum lot size** should be 1-5 acres. 24% think the minimum lot size should be 6-10 acres.

- **Protect agricultural resources** (65%), **ensure public safety** (59%), and **protect environmental/cultural resources** (53%) had the highest rankings for the top three functions of the Town government

6) Use the existing road network to accommodate future development to the greatest extent



possible.

7) The Plan Commission will investigate the potentials of the regulation, through land use policies, of aquifer protection, confined livestock operations, commercial water recycling, large scale irrigation methods, and well water quality.

8) Industrial and Utility scale wind farms and other similar industrial/utility type developments are not consistent with the Town's vision for future development of the Town. The Town anticipates consistent population growth over the next twenty years, which will generate increased demand for residential housing. Large scale industrial and utility type wind farms, if permitted, would create land use conflicts with residential and small scale commercial development such as home occupations, cottage type businesses, which the Town seeks to encourage in this Comprehensive Plan. Further, Utility scale wind farms, if permitted, would inhibit the Town's plans for future residential development by rendering thousands of acres of optimal building sites unsuitable for new residential uses. This will force residential development into areas of the Town where residential use is discouraged such as forestland, prime agricultural land, Environmental Corridors identified in the St. Croix County Development Management Plan, and land unsuitable due to natural features. Development of industrial or utility scale wind farms would also be inconsistent with the Town's goals of preserving the quiet, scenic and natural beauty of the Town.

Objective 3

Development alternatives should be pursued which preserve large tracts of productive agricultural land, forests, open spaces, and does not negatively impact water resources.

Strategies:

- 1) Encourage new development to be designed in a manner which minimizes the fragmentation of intact forest lands and prime farmlands, and prevents conflicts with existing agricultural operations.
- 2) Continue to work with St. Croix County and Wisconsin DNR to limit development in shoreland areas, 100-year floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and other sensitive areas that may directly impact water quality.
- 3) Explore conservation or cluster design subdivision regulations as a way to preserve and protect prime farmlands, consolidated forest lands, and sensitive areas to the greatest extent possible.

Objective 4

Work with St. Croix County and neighboring jurisdictions to encourage only development of small scale, low impact land uses in the Town that preserve the quiet, scenic, rural character of the Town and are consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.

Strategies:

- 1) Maintain communications with St. Croix County and adjacent towns on changes in land use regulations and related multi-jurisdictional issues.
- 2) Limit housing development with more than three units per structures to municipal wastewater systems and discourage “higher impact” and “high water use” commercial and industrial development without access to municipal wastewater systems.

Objective 5

Continue to offer residents and landowners an opportunity to provide input on local land use issues and continue land use education efforts for the plan commissioners and public.

Strategies:

- 1) Encourage Plan Commissioners and Town Board members to take advantage of low cost planning-related educational offerings through University of Wisconsin-Extension and other such sources.
- 2) Provide opportunities for citizen and landowner participation during land use planning, ordinance development, and the development review and permitting processes.
- 3) The Plan Commission will provide opportunities to hear the community’s input regarding creating and administering a Town Zoning Ordinance.

The Plan Commission will provide opportunities to hear the community’s input and weigh the advantages and disadvantages for amending the Town’s Subdivision Ordinance to be consistent with other Town ordinances and with this Comprehensive Plan.

9.5 Land Use Projections

In accordance with State planning law, comprehensive plans must include 20-year land use projections in 5-year increments. The Town of Forest has a year 2030 planning horizon and as such has created 20-year land use projections. The residential land use projections for the Town of Forest are based upon population projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Projections are based on the decreasing average household size in the Town. After analysis of 1980, 1990, and 2000 data, a decreasing household size of .10 was used for every five years. The estimated populations were divided by the respective estimated household sizes to get the projected number of units and acres. (2015 = 2.61, 2020 = 2.51, 2025 = 2.41, 2030 = 2.31) The land use projections are also consistent with the policy recommendations within this Comprehensive Plan.

TOWN OF FOREST LAND USE PROJECTIONS 2007-2030

| | 1990 parcels/ acreage | 2007 parcels/ acreage | 2015 parcels/ acreage | 2020 parcels/ acreage | 2025 parcels/ acreage | 2030 parcels/ acreage |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Residential | 87 180 | 152 404 | 168 484 | 180 544 | 190 594 | 198 634 |
| Agricultural | 564 20,108 | 538 15,238 | 538 15,148 | 538 15,078 | 538 15,020 | 538 14,970 |
| Commercial | 13 21 | 16 29 | 16 29 | 16 29 | 16 29 | 16 29 |
| Industrial | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 |
| Projected/Estimated Population | 614 | 640 (+26) | 687 (+47) | 722 (+35) | 750 (+28) | 773 (+23) |

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Administration & West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The above projections are based on existing trends and assume implementation of the Plan recommendations. However, given the rural nature and small population of the community, one or two large changes in land use can have substantial impacts on these projections. For instance, a major residential subdivision development could dramatically increase the number of homes, while decreasing the average lot size. As such, these projections should be used cautiously.

Residential Use Projections

St. Croix County has experienced the highest percentage of population increase of any county in Wisconsin over the past 20 years, due in large part to growth pressures from the Twin Cities. Urban development pressure has been greatest along the western portion of the county. However, this pressure is moving east into more of St. Croix County. This area is considered part of the Twin Cities commutershed. Residential development is expected to increase upon completion of the Stillwater bridge.

During the period from 2000 to 2030, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) projects that St. Croix County's population will increase by 74,205 residents. For the Town of Forest, estimated population growth from 2000 to 2030 is 31 percent. The DOA projects a population of 773 by 2030.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA), St. Croix County's population and housing projections through 2035 will need approximately 47,000 acres. The DOA projects that an additional 64 square miles of residential land will be used in St. Croix County. In terms of acreage and parcels, the DOA projects that residential land in the Town will occupy 198 parcels or 634 acres in 2030.

The Town anticipates continued population growth and demand for residential housing over the next twenty years. Industrial or Utility scale wind farms which require extensive setbacks from residences to protect public health and safety are not consistent with the Town's vision for future residential development. Utility scale wind farms, if permitted, would inhibit the Town's plans for future residential growth by rendering thousands of acres of optimal building sites unsuitable for new residential uses. This will force residential development into areas of the Town where residential use is discouraged such as forestland, prime agricultural land, Environmental Corridors identified in the St. Croix County Development Management Plan, and land unsuitable due to natural features.

The residential land use projections assume that the development each period will use five acre lots and/or the density standards currently under consideration as part of the proposed town zoning ordinance . It is expected and hoped that the land use policies recommended in this Plan and implemented by ordinance will maintain steady growth of low density residential development, while still protecting forestland, prime agricultural land, Environmental Corridors and land unsuitable due to natural features.

Since the projections are based, in part, on tax assessment data, they typically reflect the principal use(s) of a property. As such, many in-home businesses or cottage industries would also likely be reflected as residential uses.

Agricultural Use Projections

For the Town of Forest, a loss of agricultural land is expected to continue, though it is the community's goal that the rate of decrease be slowed and the loss of prime farmlands be minimized. The decrease in agricultural acres comes directly from the increase in residential acres. Currently, agricultural assessed properties and acreage increased between 2004 and 2008 after a dramatic decrease during the late 1990s and early in the following decade. The impact of Use Value Assessment is apparent with some properties that were previously fallow coming back into agricultural production. Assuming Use Value Assessment continues and residential conversion of agricultural and forested land occurs as predicted there would continue to be slight decreases in agricultural land use over the next 25 years. This loss could be further slowed by implementation of the Plan policies.

Commercial Use Projections

Currently, there are 29 acres in the Town that is assessed as commercial. During the past 20 years, the number of assessed commercial acres in the Town increased by eight. During the same period of time, the number of assessed commercial parcels increased by three. Commercial growth is expected to be minimal for the planning horizon, consisting of primarily self-employed residents. Much of this commercial is expected to be cottage industries or home occupations. Due to the lack of commercial development in the Town, lack of location for commercial uses, fluctuating economy, and close location to Clear Lake and Glenwood City, no change in commercial use is projected for the purpose of this plan. This could change with any new improvements/changes to US Highway 63 and State Highway 64, however, based on the rural location, any significant commercial development is not anticipated.

Industrial Use Projections

Currently, no acreage in the Town of Forest is assessed as an industrial or manufacturing use. There are no indications that this will change in the future. If there is a change in the amount of industrial use, in all likelihood, it will be extremely small. No future industrial development is desired or planned for the community. This could change with new improvements/changes to US Highway 63 and State Highway 64. However, based on the rural location and the goals, objectives, and policies of the Town as expressed in this Comprehensive Plan, any significant industrial development is not anticipated.

9.6 Planned Land Use Map

The community currently has no zoning. However, it is in the process of adopting a zoning ordinance including a zoning map consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. It is important to note that a Planned Land Use map should not be considered a zoning map. While the Planned Land Use Map can generally reflect any future zoning districts, it is intended to be a general guide for development and a basis for applying the goals, objectives and policies. The planning areas describe the predominate uses found there, while it is recognized that there is variation intended within them. Hence, future development will follow the guidance and performance standards and general location provided in this Comprehensive Plan. This guidance includes strategies that promote agriculture, open space, productive forests, low density residential development, and protection of natural resources while minimizing land use conflicts where allowing high-quality and compatible development to occur. Given this approach, identifying the net density of planned land uses by specific location is not possible.

However, based on past trends, low density residential development will continue to be located throughout the Town and not be centralized in one specific area. New commercial development, if any, should be located along State Highway 64 and inside the Hamlet of Forest.

The planned land use map should be used for general planning purposes only. For development management purposes, each specific site, property, or proposed subdivision should be analyzed on a case-by-case basis to determine the actual location and extent of public rights-of-way, surface waters, wetlands, shorelands, floodplains, steep slopes, and other significant features. The planned land use map is presented in Appendix IV.

Agriculture Area

This is a predominately agricultural area, including forestry, intended for maintaining the production of agricultural commodities, including forestry. Productive agricultural and forestry lands are considered the highest and best use. Any development proposed for this area must consider potential negative impacts on agricultural production and community rural and scenic character. When multiple residences are planned, conservation subdivision design principles may be explored.

Generalized “Higher Intensity” Growth Area

This area is located along the State Highway 64 corridor between U.S. Highway 63 and the Hamlet of Forest. It is also located along U.S. Highway 63, just north of State Highway 64 and in the Hamlet of Forest. If any higher intensity commercial or residential development is to occur in the Town,

this location would be the location. Any such development should be serviced by appropriate sewer and water infrastructure and should consider whether the proposed development will have negative impacts on the surrounding area and the public health, safety, and welfare.

Town Park

This 10 acre area is a preferred location for a Town of Forest park. The location is on the south side of 205th Ave and Bolen Creek passes through the western portion. The land is currently privately owned. It is anticipated that the park would include an area for fishing and picnicking.

Wetlands and Floodplains

These areas are designated as areas that are not suitable for development due to existing wetlands and floodplains. More detailed analysis would need to be completed to determine if specific areas are buildable or not.

Steep Slopes

These areas are designated as areas that are not suitable for development due to slopes that are over 20 percent. More detailed analysis would need to be completed to determine if specific areas are buildable or not.

10. ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The discussions of energy and sustainability are important for communities of all sizes. Often, larger communities have more opportunities than smaller communities to reduce their environmental footprint. However, there are many opportunities for rural communities with small populations, and the Town of Forest is no exception. In effect, a community that becomes more sustainable can become a more desirable location to live and do business. In addition, energy and food costs are two of the largest items in a family budget and often these dollars leave the community.

10.1 Energy and Sustainability Goal, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal:

The Town will consider local energy conservation and sustainability considerations in reviewing proposed developments within the Town.

Objective 1

Promote efficiency and conservation within the Town

Strategies:

- 1) Work with Focus on Energy, other government offices, and non-profit agencies to educate homeowners and businesses on ways to conserve energy and be more efficient on energy use.
- 2) Post at the Town Hall and on the Town website efficiency and conservation tips for homeowners and businesses.
- 3) Research the possibility of having a recycling center at the Town Hall.

Objective 2

Utilize sustainability and local food production and consumption and local energy conservation to improve economic development opportunities and quality of life in the Town.

Strategies:

- 1) Promote the Town as a desirable location for organic farms.
- 2) Promote local food producers in the Town at the Town Hall and on a website.

Objective 3

Reduce and if possible eliminate debris, pollutants, runoff, and sediment from entering surface and ground waters.

Strategy:

- 1) Coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies in working with farmers, land owners, and businesses to reduce debris, pollutants, runoff, and sediment from entering surface and ground waters.



Locally grown food and firewood.

Objective 4

Consider small-scale residential sized energy conservation tools such as individual, residential sized wind turbines, solar, hydroponic, geo-thermal energy systems, and similar energy conservation tools that are consistent with the vision, policies, goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan, have little, if any, negative impact on surrounding properties, and are consistent with the public health, safety, and welfare.

Strategies:

1) Adopt appropriate ordinances for regulating installation of individual residential sized wind energy systems to assure they are located, installed, and operated consistent with the policies, goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan and are consistent with the public health, safety, and welfare of the surrounding residents and the Town in general.

2) With the construction of the Stillwater bridge, the Town anticipates significant population growth and demand for residential housing over the next twenty years. Industrial or Utility scale wind farms which require extensive setbacks from residences to protect public health and safety are not consistent with the Town's vision for future residential development. Utility scale wind farms, if permitted, would inhibit the Town's plans for future residential dwellings by rendering thousands of acres of optimal building sites unsuitable for new residential uses. This would force residential development into areas of the Town where residential use is discouraged such as forestland, prime agricultural land, Environmental Corridors identified in the St. Croix County Development Management Plan and land unsuitable due to natural features.

11. IMPLEMENTATION

To achieve the community’s vision, the plan must be put into action. This section of the Plan identifies a timeline of specific actions to be completed in order to achieve the Plan’s vision, goals, and objectives. This includes a description of how each of the Plan’s elements is integrated and consistent with each other.

The Comprehensive Plan must also be a “living” document that considers or allows for change in the community. An evaluation strategy provides a mechanism to measure progress towards achieving all aspects of the Comprehensive Plan and monitors progress in the context of local change. And a process for Plan amendments and updates is described.

11.1 Action Plan

The action plan identifies short-term and long-term priorities for implementation of the plan. Identified timeframes are approximate and implementation of the individual action items is subject to available resources and conditions at the time of implementation. The Town Board has responsibility for implementation of the action plan, though some actions may be delegated to the Town Clerk, Plan Commission, and other Town employees at the Board’s discretion. For instance, the Town Board will often delegate to the Plan Commission the responsibility of drafting new ordinances or code changes for review and approval by the Board.

The Plan Commission will review the action plan annually to evaluate progress on plan implementation and monitor the consistency of ongoing operations and proposed new policies with the vision, goals, and objectives of the plan.

Prior to implementation, the Town will consider and reassess each action item to further determine if each is in the best interests of the community. Changing conditions in the community may necessitate an addition or modification to the implementation actions identified below.

The action plan is organized into the following categories of implementation actions:

- Public Information and Participation
- Planning Activities
- Codes and Ordinances
- Cooperative Efforts

| Public Information and Participation | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1.1 | Continue to monitor governmental procedures to ensure opportunities for community participation during all phases of plan, program, and regulation development and implementation. | ongoing |
| 1.2 | Increase resident knowledge of available St. Croix County housing assistance programs, recycling programs, and other programs by means such as posting flyers at the Town Hall and distribution of information with tax-related mailings. | ongoing |
| 1.3 | Utilize University of Wisconsin-Extension and other available resources to increase resident and Plan Commission understanding of | 2010 and as needed |

| | | |
|------------|--|-------------------------|
| | planning regulations, techniques, and conservation subdivision design. | |
| 1.4 | Work with Wisconsin DNR and St. Croix County, to help educate Town residents on regulations, incentives and methods for the protection of water quality and forest management through the distribution of materials at the Town Hall. | 2010 and ongoing |
| 1.5 | Continue to monitor governmental procedures to ensure opportunities for community participation during all phases of plan, program, and regulation development and implementation | ongoing |
| 1.6 | Increase resident knowledge of local food producers and businesses in the Town through means such as posting flyers at the Town Hall, distribution of information with tax-related mailings, and any future website. | 2010 and ongoing |
| 1.7 | Institute an annual newsletter updating residents on Town issues that pertain to individuals and the Town as a whole. | 2010 |
| 1.8 | Create a Town website that will provide Town, County, and State information for Town residents | 2011-2012 |
| 1.9 | Promote new agricultural markets like niche farms that include direct market farms, organic farms, and farms that produce non-traditional products and/or bio-energy feedstock. This can include promoting the Town at events, conferences, newsletters, website, etc. | 2011 |

| Planning Activities | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| 2.1 | Annually reassess and update 5-year plans for future public facilities, road improvements, and heavy equipment purchases, with the assistance of the WISLR system and database. Ensure basic training in these road management tools by employees and/or Board members. | ongoing |
| 2.2 | Work cooperatively with other area communities in the planning of linked recreational trail systems, strive to include proposed trails into future updates of the St. Croix County Outdoor Recreational Plan and adjacent county plans, and integrate resident participation into this planning process. | 2010 and ongoing as needed |
| 2.3 | The Town, through its Plan Commission, will continually monitor land use changes in the community and assess the compatibility of these changes with the Plan's vision, goals, and objectives. If such changes conflict with the Plan, and a change is needed, the Town will use a public planning process to update the Plan. | annually, and more frequently as needed |
| 2.4 | | 2011 |
| 2.5 | | 2011 |
| 2.6 | Inventory possible corridors and locations for pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails in the Town | 2013 |
| 2.7 | Investigate options to reduce the number of dilapidated barns, silos, and other farm related structures in the Town. | 2011 |
| 2.8 | Complete a benefit/cost analysis on using taxes and/or regulations to protect and conserve water resources | 2010 |
| 2.9 | Develop a Town telecommunication tower ordinance | 2011 |
| 2.10 | Work with the appropriate land owner to purchase a Town Park along | 2010 |

| | | |
|-------------|--|----------------|
| | 205 th Ave, as designated on the Future Land Use map | |
| 2.11 | Continue needed maintenance of Forest Ball Park in the Hamlet of Forest. | ongoing |
| 2.12 | Research the possibility of having a recycling center at the Town Hall. | 2011 |

| Codes and Ordinances | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------|
| 3.1 | The Town Board, Plan Commission, and employees of the Town of Forest will continue to enforce applicable codes and ordinances. | ongoing |
| 3.2 | Modify Town ordinances to require developers to pay Town costs related to a development (e.g., special studies, roads, parks) and be financially responsible for potential environmental impacts. | ongoing |
| 3.3 | Evaluate whether the Town subdivision process and standards meets Town needs. If necessary, the Town may develop and implement a new land division ordinance. | as needed |
| 3.4 | | 2010 |
| 3.5 | The Town will work with St. Croix County to review development application and review processes and timelines to coordinate decision-making. | ongoing |
| 3.6 | When Town land use ordinances are created or amended, the Plan Commission shall notify the St. Croix County Zoning Office of the changes to Town land use policy. | as needed |
| 3.7 | Research, develop, and enact Town Ordinances regarding identified nuisances and land use issues within Town jurisdiction. | 2011-2013 |
| 3.8 | Research a Town Ordinance regarding permitting, bonding, and arbitration for proposed landfills and non-metallic mining operations. | 2010-2011 |
| 3.9 | | 2010 |
| 3.10 | Work with the Town Board to determine the desire in becoming an eco-municipality, via The Natural Step or a similar process. | 2010-2011 |
| 3.11 | Adopt a large livestock facility siting ordinance to allow community input on the siting of large feedlot operations and the enforcement of State of Wisconsin siting rules. | 2011 |

| Cooperative Efforts | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|
| 4.1 | Establish and maintain communication with the St. Croix County Housing Office, Recycling Program and Emergency Management to increase resident awareness of the County's housing, solid waste, recycling, CleanSweep and hazard mitigation programs. | ongoing |
| 4.2 | Establish and maintain contacts with adjacent units of government, St. Croix County, Wisconsin Town's Association, and the State of Wisconsin to protect the natural resources and interests of the Town, including ongoing membership and active participation in related organizations and regarding the enforcement of applicable regulations. Support efforts which appropriately modifies State tax policy to encourage the preservation of farmlands and forests. | ongoing |

| | | |
|-------------|---|--|
| 4.3 | Maintain ongoing communication with St. Croix County in the enforcement of the County Shoreland-Wetland Ordinance, Floodplain Ordinance, and Sanitary Ordinance. | ongoing |
| 4.4 | Maintain contact with adjacent municipalities and St. Croix County to coordinate and pursue opportunities for the cost-sharing and planning of road projects and the enforcement of access controls. | ongoing, as opportunities arise |
| 4.5 | Maintain contact with adjacent municipalities to coordinate and pursue opportunities for the development of a facility that could be a shared Town Hall and/or community center. | ongoing |
| 4.6 | Provide opportunities for adjacent municipalities to comment on proposed plans and ordinances that may have intergovernmental impacts. Maintain communication with Plan Commissions from adjacent communities to encourage cooperation in the development and sharing of said plans and ordinances. | as opportunities arise |
| 4.7 | Work with adjacent community plan commissions to conduct annual multi-jurisdictional planning meetings to discuss growth trends, issues, ways to plan regarding physical and geographic characteristics, and opportunities for cooperation. | annually; more often if desired |
| 4.8 | Work with the State of Wisconsin and St. Croix County to reduce the speed limit through the Hamlet of Forest. | 2010 |
| 4.9 | Work with Focus on Energy, other government offices, and non-profit agencies to educate homeowners and businesses on ways to conserve energy and be more efficient on energy use | 2010 |
| 4.10 | Work with Internet providers to ensure that the highest percentage of residents have access to high-speed Internet | 2011-2012 |
| 4.11 | Work with St. Croix County on the implementation of the 2008 St. Croix County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan | 2010 and ongoing |

11.2 Plan Integration and Consistency

The Town of Forest Comprehensive Plan has an important role as a guide and determinant for future action and policy decisions in the community. All development proposals and capital expenditures should be reviewed against the conclusions, vision, goals, objectives, and strategies of the Plan for consistency. When the Town is requested to comment on proposed policy changes at a county, regional, State or Federal level, the Plan can provide important guidance to Town officials.

The elements of the Comprehensive Plan are also internally consistent. Indeed, there is much overlap in issues and policy between many of the elements. A review of all Plan data, analysis and conclusions, and of Plan goals and policies has been performed to ensure consistency. As the Plan developed, major consistent themes emerged which moved the Plan toward consistent conclusions and compatible approaches to solving identified problems among the elements. Any future Plan amendments should be evaluated for consistency with the overall Comprehensive Plan.

11.3 Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

Any plan is subject to the passage of time the likelihood its policies and recommendations become obsolete. The Town of Forest Plan Commission is responsible for monitoring changing conditions and Plan implementation to evaluate whether a Plan amendment or update is needed.

The Plan Commission will conduct an annual review and evaluation on: (a) progress of Plan implementation, (b) growth trends in past year, (c) issues and conflicts with the Plan, and (d) any needed Plan amendments. The Plan Commission will report its findings of each annual review to the Town Board.

11.4 Plan Amendments and Updates

Plan monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing process and will, at some time, lead to the realization that the Plan requires an amendment or updating.

Plan Amendments are changes or additions to Plan maps or text as deemed necessary and appropriate. The Town Plan Commission must be given sufficient opportunity to make a recommendation to the Town Board on proposed amendments prior the Town Board decision.

The Plan will be updated at least every 10 years as required by State law, unless a more frequent update is deemed necessary by the Town Board. The Town Plan Commission is responsible for facilitating the Plan update, working within any general guidelines provided by the Town Board.

The adoption process for Plan amendments and Plan updates shall be consistent with state law. Consistent with State law, the Plan Commission shall, by majority vote of the entire Commission, adopt a resolution recommending adoption of the amendments. A public hearing shall be held on the Comprehensive Plan by the Town Board, with notice required under state law. The Town Board will then adopt by ordinance the Plan changes or update.

The Town of Forest will encourage public participation during Plan amendment and update processes. Frequent Plan amendments and updates should be avoided.

APPENDIX I

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
For Initial Adoption of Comprehensive Plan

Public Participation Procedures for the West Central Wisconsin Multijurisdictional Planning Project

INTRODUCTION

§66.1001 (4) (a), Wisconsin Statutes, requires that the governing body of the local governmental unit adopt written procedures designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, at every stage of comprehensive plan preparation, and that such written procedures provide for wide distribution of proposed, alternative or amended comprehensive elements, an opportunity for the public to submit written comments on the comprehensive plan, and a process for the local governing body to respond to such comments.

The governing body of each local governmental unit participating in the West Central Wisconsin Multijurisdictional Planning Project recognizes the need for an open and active public participation process to foster a strong community commitment to the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to guide the community's future growth and development. To ensure that the public has an opportunity to be involved in every stage of the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the participants identify the following actions to promote an active public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing the plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

- Each participating local governmental unit shall have a duly appointed Plan Commission pursuant with §66.23 (1) and/or §60.62 (4), Wisconsin Statutes.
- All Plan Commission meetings are open to the public and are officially posted to notify the public as required by law. A period for public comment is provided.
- One Issues and Opportunities Identification workshop where the Plan Commission and the public will participate in a facilitated session to develop and prioritize key issues to be considered in the planning process, explore community values and problems, as well as strengths and weaknesses in being able to address the issues. The workshop is noticed and the public is invited to participate.
- One statistically valid Community Opinion Survey developed with consideration of the Issues and Opportunities Identification workshop outcome.
- One Community Vision and Development Design workshop where the Plan Commission and the public will participate in roundtable discussions, design preference activities and develop a community vision. The workshop is noticed and the public is invited to participate.
- At least one Open House and Information/Education meeting where information about planning activities and plan products will be presented. The meeting is noticed and the public is invited to participate.
- The governmental units of adjacent or overlapping jurisdiction will be notified of the community's undertaking of the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and their input sought on interjurisdictional issues concerning land use, municipal boundaries and service provision.
- The governing body of the local governmental unit will receive periodic reports from the Plan Commission during the preparation of the plan and will have the opportunity to review and comment on materials developed for incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan.
- Where practicable, provide information about planning activities and plan outcomes on an Internet website. (WCWRPC will assist participants lacking such resources)
- All meetings of the governing body of the local governmental unit are open to the public and are officially posted to notify the public as required by law.
- Draft copies of the recommended Comprehensive Plan will be available at offices of the local governmental unit and other public places for the public to review and to submit written comments.
- A joint Plan Commission and governing body Public Hearing will be conducted on the recommended Comprehensive Plan prior to Plan Commission recommendation and the governing body enacting the plan by ordinance. The Public Hearing will be preceded by Class 1 notice under Chapter 985, Wisconsin Statutes, published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. Additional notice will be provided pursuant to §66.1001 (4) (e), Wisconsin Statutes. The public is invited to comment and submit written comments.
- The governing body will consider and respond to written comments regarding the plan before enacting it by ordinance.
- The adopted comprehensive plan will be distributed to:
 1. Every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the local governmental unit.
 2. The clerk of every local governmental unit that is adjacent to the local governmental unit which is the subject of the plan.
 3. The Wisconsin Land Council.
 4. The Wisconsin Department of Administration.
 5. The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.
 6. The public library that serves the area in which the local governmental unit is located.

APPENDIX II

VISION SURVEY RESULTS

Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question
TOWN OF FOREST COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

PLEASE RETURN BY NOVEMBER 5, 2008

Fill the circle that most closely describes your perspective toward the following statements:

Like this: ● Not like this: ☑ ☒ ☓

QUALITY OF LIFE

1. What are the **three** most important reasons you and your family choose to live in the **Town of Forest**? (● mark 3)

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 44% Agriculture | 19% Low Crime Rate | 16% Quality Schools |
| 1% Community Services | 24% Natural Features | 22% Recreational Opportunities |
| 20% Cost of Home | 53% Near Family and Friends | 46% Small Town Atmosphere |
| 3% Historical Significance | 14% Near Job (Employment Opportunity) | 8% Other: (Please Identify) |
| 10% Property Taxes | 3% Quality Communities | <u>See Appendix B</u> |

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|
| 2. Rate the overall quality of life in the Town of Forest . | 26% | 66% | 8% | 0% |

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

| 3. Rate the following services and programs in our community. | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Not Applicable |
|---|-----------|------|------|------|----------------|
| a. Land Use Regulations | 7% | 62% | 23% | 1% | 6% |
| b. Law Enforcement | 8% | 52% | 27% | 6% | 7% |
| c. Emergency Services (e.g., fire, ambulance) | 17% | 48% | 24% | 3% | 9% |
| d. Economic Development | 2% | 35% | 34% | 15% | 14% |
| e. Roads and Highways | 6% | 48% | 35% | 12% | 0% |
| f. Recreation (e.g., parks, forests, trails) | 8% | 36% | 30% | 9% | 17% |
| g. Elderly Programs | 3% | 20% | 23% | 15% | 39% |
| h. Elderly/Disabled Transportation | 2% | 18% | 20% | 16% | 44% |
| i. Animal Control | 3% | 37% | 38% | 8% | 15% |
| j. Junk Control | 4% | 30% | 31% | 26% | 9% |
| k. Garbage and Recycling | 10% | 45% | 19% | 18% | 8% |
| l. Town Hall and Facilities | 27% | 55% | 11% | 3% | 5% |
| m. Cemeteries | 13% | 50% | 19% | 0% | 19% |
| n. Schools | 15% | 50% | 16% | 0% | 19% |
| o. Town Government Communication | 6% | 41% | 28% | 19% | 6% |
| p. General Town Government Services | 6% | 46% | 27% | 11% | 8% |

COMMUNICATION

4. Fill the circles of the **two** most effective ways that the **Town of Forest** could provide information regarding its services and programs to residents.

| Direct Mailings | Radio | Newspaper Articles | Newsletters | Television | Town Website | Other: (Please identify) |
|-----------------|-------|--------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 83% | 5% | 28% | 55% | 4% | 28% | 4% <u>See Appendix B</u> |

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

| 5. How important is it for the Town of Forest to use tax dollars/regulations to protect the following: | Essential | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important |
|---|-----------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| a. Air Quality | 22% | 41% | 25% | 12% |
| b. Farmland | 35% | 48% | 11% | 6% |
| c. Forested Lands | 32% | 46% | 19% | 3% |
| d. Groundwater | 58% | 35% | 6% | 1% |
| e. Historic and Cultural Sites | 8% | 40% | 39% | 14% |
| f. Open Space | 14% | 45% | 31% | 9% |
| g. Lakes, Rivers and Streams | 33% | 51% | 13% | 3% |
| h. Rural Character | 24% | 51% | 20% | 6% |
| i. Hunting and Fishing | 25% | 48% | 19% | 8% |
| j. Wetlands | 23% | 44% | 25% | 8% |
| k. Wildlife Habitat | 30% | 43% | 22% | 6% |

HOUSING

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

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| 6. Affordable housing is needed in our community (affordable housing = rent/mortgage that is no more than 30% of a household's gross income). | 11% | 37% | 26% | 11% | 14% |
| 7. Elderly housing is needed in our community (elderly housing = housing for those 65+ that accommodates special needs such as wheelchairs). | 14% | 38% | 23% | 7% | 19% |
| 8. Starter (first time buyer) homes are needed in our community. | 6% | 37% | 24% | 12% | 21% |

AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

| 9. Productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for: | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| a. Agricultural Use | 68% | 29% | 1% | 0% | 2% |
| b. Residential Use | 11% | 43% | 29% | 14% | 4% |
| c. Commercial Use | 3% | 21% | 44% | 27% | 5% |

| 10. Large scale farms (500 or more animal units) should be allowed to expand: | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| a. Anywhere in the Town of Forest | 7% | 21% | 41% | 24% | 7% |
| b. Nowhere in the Town of Forest | 18% | 20% | 41% | 13% | 9% |
| c. Outside a 2 mile radius of incorporated areas | 12% | 39% | 19% | 13% | 18% |
| d. Outside a 1 mile radius of incorporated areas | 12% | 18% | 36% | 16% | 18% |
| 11. Landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want. | 15% | 26% | 40% | 15% | 3% |
| 12. The visual impacts (view of the landscape) of development is an important consideration when evaluating proposed development. | 26% | 51% | 15% | 3% | 5% |
| 13. There should be a minimum lot size on residential development in rural areas. | 30% | 49% | 9% | 6% | 5% |

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|--|-----|-----|------------|
| 14. Should the Town of Forest use tax dollars to purchase development rights to preserve prime farmland? (Under such a program the farmer is paid money in exchange for his/her "right" to develop their farmland.) | 21% | 53% | 26% |

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

| Less than 1 acre | 1 to 5 acres | 6 to 10 acres | 11 to 40 acres | 41 or more acres | No Limitation |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| 6% | 46% | 24% | 17% | 2% | 5% |

| 16. In your opinion, how many acres of land are needed to be considered a farm? | Less than 10 | 10 - 20 | 21 - 40 | 40 plus |
|---|--------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 10% | 20% | 19% | 50% |

| 17. How many acres of land do you own in the Town of Forest ? | Less than 10 | 10 - 20 | 21 - 40 | 40 plus |
|--|--------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 20% | 6% | 17% | 57% |

| 18. Is the land you own actively farmed? | Yes | No | Not Applicable |
|--|-----|-----|----------------|
| | 71% | 26% | 3% |

19. Do you think your land will be actively farmed (by you or someone else) in the next (fill all circles that apply):

| 0-5 years | 6-10 years | 11-15 years | 16-20 years | Not Applicable |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| 22% | 32% | 16% | 36% | 25% |

TRANSPORTATION

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| 20. The overall road network (roads, streets, and highways) in the Town of Forest meets the needs of its citizens. | 13% | 69% | 12% | 5% | 1% |
| 21. Alternative modes of transportation, such as ATV, snowmobile, bicycle, and walking are important. | 16% | 58% | 18% | 5% | 3% |
| 22. There should be more biking and walking lanes along public roadways. | 11% | 28% | 42% | 9% | 11% |
| 23. There should be designated areas along Highway 64 for <u>commercial</u> development. | 5% | 41% | 24% | 14% | 15% |
| 24. There should be designated areas along Highway 64 for <u>industrial</u> development. | 6% | 36% | 29% | 15% | 13% |

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| 25. Future commercial or industrial development in the Town of Forest should be centralized in or around the <u>hamlet</u> of Forest (Intersection of Highway 64 and County Road D) rather than dispersed throughout the Town. | 14% | 43% | 23% | 4% | 16% |
| 26. The Town of Forest should use tax dollars to recruit new business and industry. | 4% | 20% | 49% | 14% | 13% |
| 27. The Town of Forest should pursue the following energy alternatives as a form of economic development: | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Opinion |
| a. Bio Fuels (e.g. ethanol, biodiesel) | 11% | 35% | 22% | 12% | 20% |
| b. Solar Energy | 25% | 45% | 16% | 3% | 11% |
| c. Wind Energy | 36% | 39% | 8% | 5% | 11% |
| d. Other _____ | 9% | 3% | 3% | 6% | 80% |

| 28. Rate the importance of the following: | Essential | Very Important | Important | Not Important | No Opinion |
|--|-----------|----------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| a. Agricultural Related Businesses | 26% | 36% | 29% | 4% | 5% |
| b. Commercial and Retail Development | 4% | 13% | 39% | 38% | 6% |
| c. Downtown Development – “Main Street” | 5% | 4% | 33% | 46% | 12% |
| d. Home Based Businesses | 9% | 13% | 50% | 17% | 12% |
| e. Industrial and Manufacturing Development | 2% | 10% | 35% | 41% | 11% |
| f. Tourism and Recreation | 3% | 11% | 33% | 41% | 11% |
| g. Technology related (e.g. biotechnology, computers, etc.) | 1% | 8% | 35% | 38% | 18% |
| h. Service industries (e.g. financial services, health services, etc.) | 3% | 10% | 40% | 33% | 14% |

29. What do you like about living in the **Town of Forest**?

See Appendix B

30. Which **THREE** of the following **Town of Forest** functions do you think are **most important** (• mark 3)?

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 59% | a. Ensure public safety | 36% | b. Provide efficient/effective government |
| 53% | c. Protect environmental/cultural resources | 65% | d. Protect agricultural resources |
| 4% | e. Provide social services | 28% | f. Regulate land use |
| 13% | g. Enhance economic development | 20% | h. Provide effective transportation network |

| | Very Likely | Likely | Unlikely | Very Unlikely |
|---|-------------|--------|----------|---------------|
| 31. How likely are you to attend visioning sessions and other public participation events as related to comprehensive planning? | 7% | 43% | 41% | 9% |

DEMOGRAPHICS: Please tell us some things about you:

| 32. Gender: | Male | Female |
|-------------|------|--------|
| | 64% | 36% |

| 33. Age: | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| | 1% | 8% | 11% | 25% | 28% | 27% |

| 34. Employment Status: | Employed Full Time | Self Employed | Employed Part Time | Unemployed | Retired | Other: <u>See Appendix B</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------|---------|------------------------------|
| | 34% | 28% | 10% | 4% | 24% | 1% |

| 35. Place of Residence: | Own | Rent | Other: <u>See Appendix B</u> |
|-------------------------|-----|------|------------------------------|
| | 97% | 2% | 1% |

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5+ |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 36. Number of Adults (18 or older) in Household: | | 11% | 77% | 11% | 2% | 0% |
| 37. Number of Children (under 18) in Household: | 74% | 11% | 11% | 4% | 1% | 0% |
| 38. Household Income Range: | Less than 15,000 | 15,000 – 24,999 | 25,000 – 49,999 | 50,000 – 74,999 | 75,000 – 99,999 | 100,000 or More |
| | 7% | 14% | 30% | 28% | 7% | 13% |
| 39. How many years have you lived in the Town of Forest? | Less than 1 | 1 – 4 | 5 - 9 | 10 - 24 | 25+ | |
| | 2% | 10% | 13% | 22% | 53% | |
| 40. In what zip code do you live? | <u>See Appendix B</u> | | | | | |

Thank You for Completing the Survey!

Your survey responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by NOVEMBER 5, 2008 to:

Survey Research Center
University of Wisconsin - River Falls
410 S. Third St.
River Falls, WI 54022-5001

TOWN OF FOREST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VISIONING QUESTIONNAIRE

Visioning – The process by which a community defines the future it wants.

1. ***“In the year 2030, we envision that the Town of Forest will continue to be a rural, farming community offering a small town atmosphere, large open spaces, scenic wooded hillsides, and a quiet, safe place to raise a family.”***

Do you agree with this vision? How might this vision be changed?

- Yes.
- Small commercial/industrial development in Hamlet of Forest
- Future agricultural economies will be in the Town.
- Clean water resources

2. ***“In the year 2030, we envision that the Town of Forest will look much like it does today.”***

Do you agree with this vision? How might your vision differ?

- Yes.

What do you see today in your community that is not part of your vision for the future?

- Dilapidated barns, silos, and other farm related structures
- Junk in Hamlet of Forest

Are there any additional characteristics or “assets” in the Town which are part of your vision for the future which has not been previously discussed?

3. **What is your vision for residential housing growth in the community?**

(a) Should different housing types be allowed, encouraged, or discouraged (e.g., duplexes, trailer homes, apartments)? (see survey questions)

- Yes, if municipal services are available.
- Should keep rural character.

(b) In general, where should housing development occur and at what densities? Do you envision new housing to be more clustered, limited to larger lots, or not guided/regulated by lot size or location? (see survey questions)

- Larger lots should be located in rural areas.
- Keep five acre minimum lot size.
- Increased density is ok in Hamlet of Forest.

4. **What is your vision for commercial or industrial development in the community? (see survey questions)**

(a) Should specific types of commercial or industrial development be allowed, encouraged, or discouraged?

- Yes.
- If high intensity commercial or industrial is located, water and sewer is needed.

(b) If allowed, where should such development occur in general?

- Hamlet of Forest
- Along STH 64 between Hamlet of Forest and US Highway 63
- At intersection of STH 64 and US Highway 63

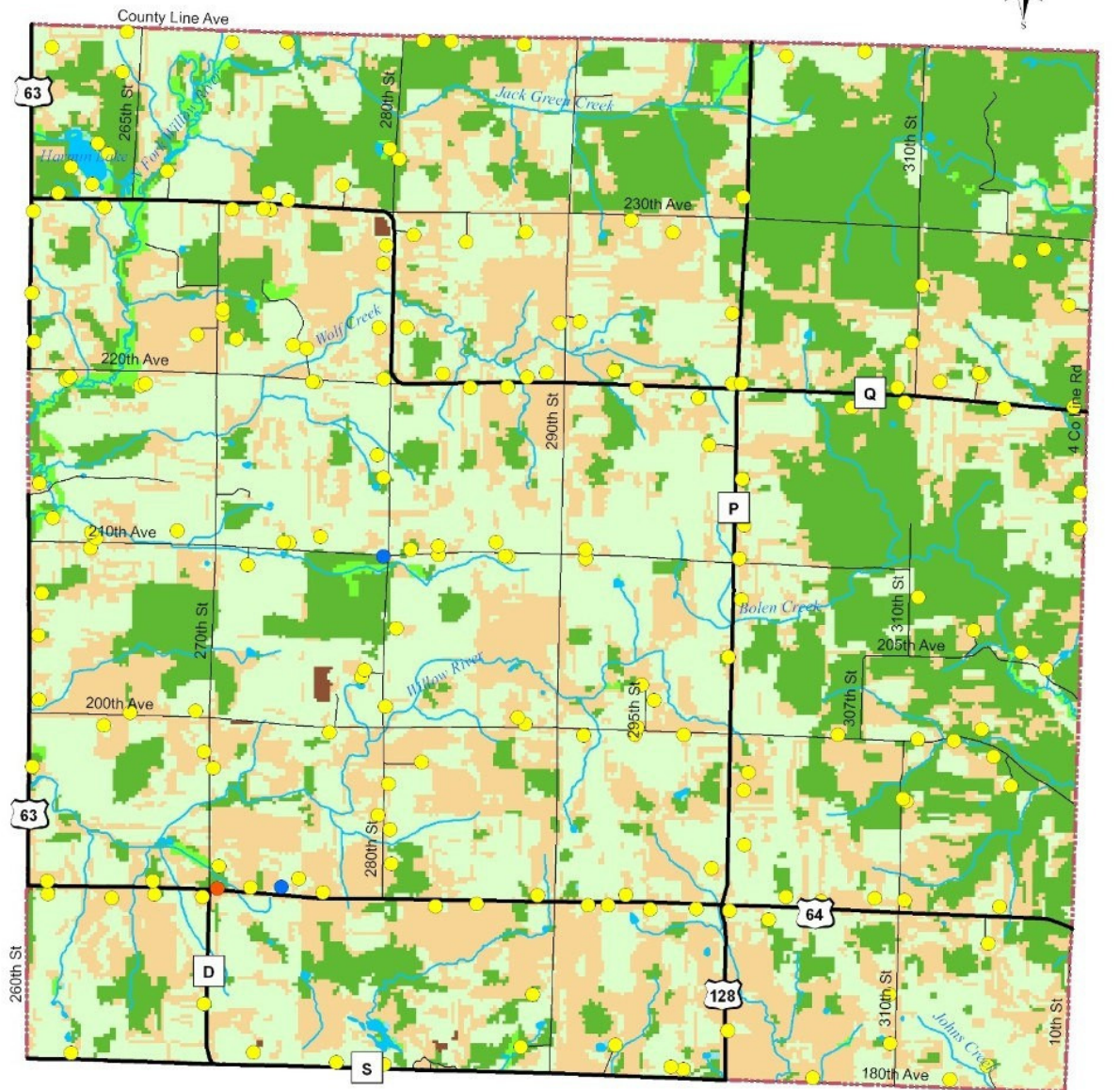
5. Identify any barriers, issues, challenges, or trends which you believe will make it difficult to achieve your vision for the Town of Forest.

- Development that comes with highways 63 and 64 could change the rural character of parts of the Town.
- Lack of interest in farming by the younger generations.
- Dilapidated barns, silos, and other farm-related structures.

APPENDIX III

EXISTING LAND USE MAP

Town of Forest Existing Land Use

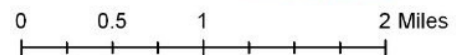


Land Cover

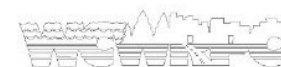
- Agriculture
- Barren
- Forest
- Wetlands
- Grassland
- Open Water

Land Use

- Commercial
- Government
- Residential



Source: WISCLAND 1998, WCWRPC Land Use Survey 1998

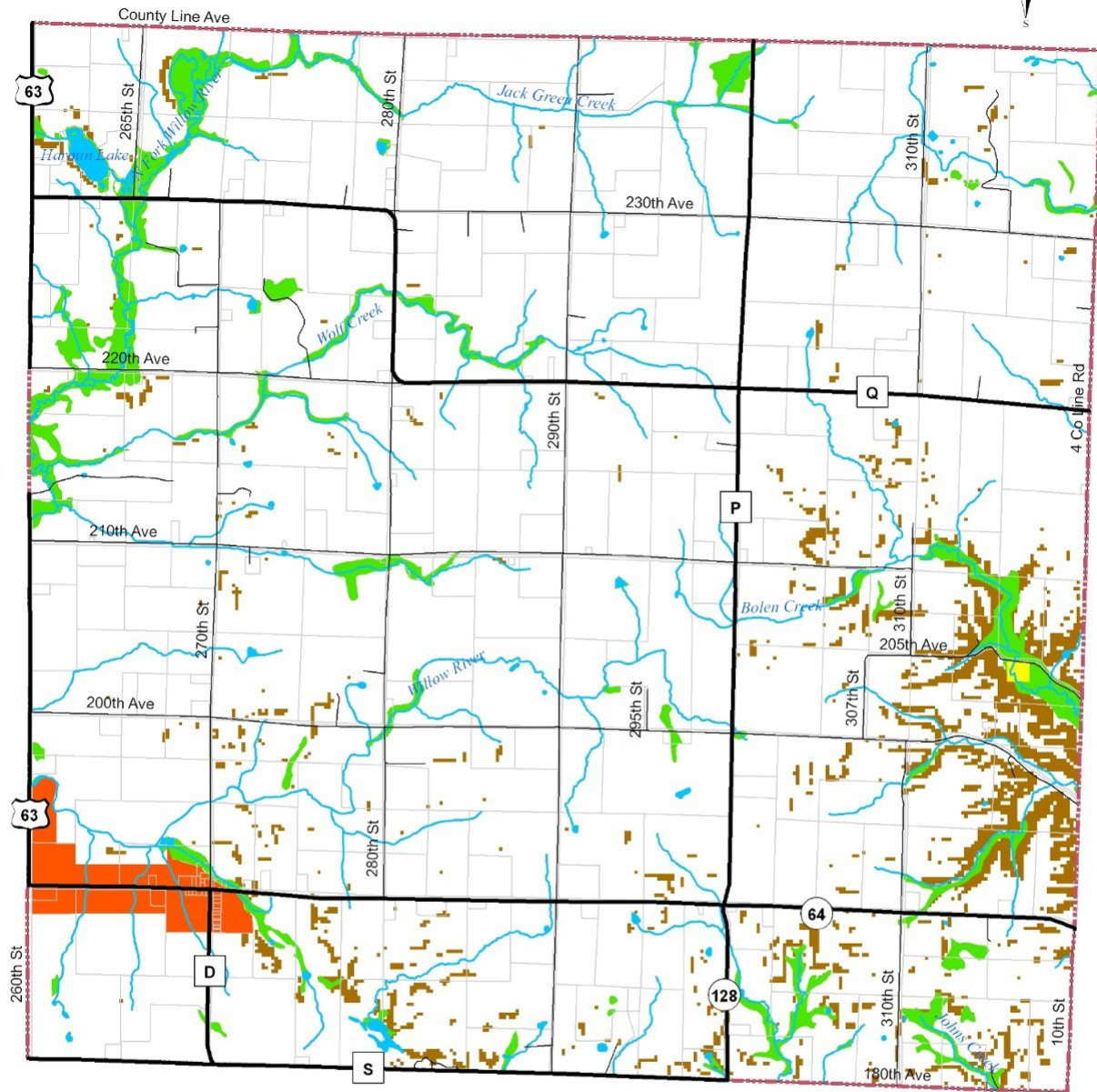


West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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APPENDIX IV

PLANNED LAND USE MAP

Town of Forest Future Land Use



- Major Roads
- Roads
- Surface Water
- Agriculture
- Wetlands and Floodplains
- Steep Slopes (over 20%, may pose development concerns)
- Generalized "Higher Intensity" Growth Area *
- Town Park

* Higher intensity commercial, industrial and residential growth is anticipated to occur near Hamlet of Forest and at the intersection of US Highway 63 and State Highway 64.



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