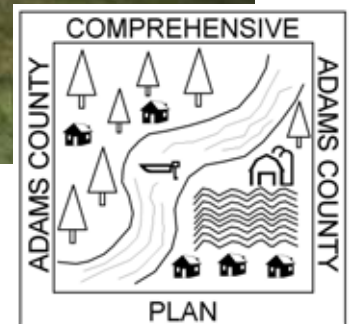


**TOWN OF EASTON
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

ADOPTED 2006



Prepared by:

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

TOWN OF EASTON

Town Board

Thomas Morgan, Chair

Gary Miller, Supervisor

Dan Breene, Supervisor

Judith Bieri, Clerk

Plan Commission

Thomas Morgan, Chair

Dan Breene

Jim Gately

Frank Schnolis

Larry Heitman

Photo Credits: Town Plan Commission

Draft August 2004
Revised Draft February 2005
Revised Draft May 2006
Revised Draft August 2006
Adopted December 2006

This plan was funded by a grant from the
Wisconsin Department of Administration and Adams County.

Town of Easton Ordinance #**ORDINANCE TO ADOPT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
Adams County
Town of Easton**

SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE

The title of this ordinance is the Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Easton to lawfully adopt a comprehensive plan as required under s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION II – AUTHORITY

The town board of the Town of Easton has authority under its village powers under s. 60.22, Wis. stats., its power to appoint a town plan commission under ss. 60.62 (4) and 62.23 (1), Wis. stats., and under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Easton must be in compliance with s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats., in order for the town board to adopt this ordinance.

SECTION III – ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE

The town board of the Town of Easton, by this ordinance, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and roll call vote by a majority of the town board present and voting, provides the authority for the Town of Easton to adopt its comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., and provides the authority for the town board to order its publication.

SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The town board of the Town of Easton has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by s. 66.1001 (4) (a), Wis. stats.

SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Plan Commission of the Town of Easton, by a majority vote of the entire commission, recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of the Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

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

SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Easton the enactment of this ordinance formally adopts the document entitled Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan Ordinance under pursuant to s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY

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

SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

The town clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

Adopted this 18th day of Dec. 2006.

Thomas Morgan
Chairman

[Signature]
Supervisor

[Signature]
Supervisor

Attest: Judith Bieri
Clerk

66.1001 (4) (b) * Resolution by plan commission to recommend adoption of comprehensive plan.

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Town of EASTON
Adams County

The Plan Commission of the Town of EASTON, Adams County, Wisconsin, by this resolution, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and by a roll call vote of a majority of the town plan commission present and voting resolves and recommends to the town board of the Town of EASTON as follows:

[Choose one of the alternatives below]

✓ (ALTERNATIVE ONE) Adoption of the Town of EASTON Comprehensive Plan.

(ALTERNATIVE TWO) Amendment of the Town of _____ Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of EASTON Plan Commission, by this resolution, further resolves and orders as follows:

All maps and other materials noted and attached as exhibits to the Town of EASTON Comprehensive Plan are incorporated into and made a part of the Town of EASTON Comprehensive Plan.


The vote of the town plan commission in regard to this resolution shall be recorded by the clerk of the town plan commission in the official minutes of the Town of EASTON Plan Commission.

The town clerk shall properly post or publish this resolution as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

Adopted this 17 day of AUGUST 2006

[Signatures of plan commission members]

Attest: [Signature of plan commission clerk]



Larry Heitman
Frank Schnobels



Thomas C. Drago
Thomas C. Drago, Ch.

TOWN OF EASTON
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ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Adams County Plan Process
- B. Public Participation Plan
- C. 2000 Census Summary
- D. Population, Household, Employment, & Land Use Projections
- E. County Comprehensive Plan Map Excerpts
- F. County Survey Summary
- G. Addendum to Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan

Map 1 Location Map

1. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Background

The Town of Easton is a somewhat irregularly shaped town consisting of 34 full sections and seven partial sections but the total area is just over the standard thirty-six square miles. Located in the central part of Adams County, Wisconsin. The Town of Adams to the north, the Town of New Chester to the east, the Town of Quincy to the west, and the Town of Springville to the south bound the town. It is one of the seventeen towns in the county. See the locational reference map.

Over the years the town has been dominated by forestry and scattered agricultural uses. However, recently, more and more non-farming uses, mainly scattered residential development, have been locating in the town.

Additional information on many of the topics within this town's comprehensive plan is described in more detail within the respective element in the Adams County Comprehensive Plan.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan for more detailed information.

The Planning Process

The Town of Easton joined with all the local units and Adams County to apply for funding to complete a comprehensive plan. An application was prepared and submitted in 2002 and approved in 2003. The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has coordinated this effort and is assisting with the development of these plans.

A Planning Committee was created to oversee the development of the plan. The working group met to analyze and discuss information that was gathered and presented by the NCWRPC.

A three-phase process over a three-year period was developed for the completion of the Adams County Comprehensive Plan and all of the local unit plans (except for the Town of Rome, which completed a plan in 2002). Phase one was the inventory stage where data was collected, information was reviewed and maps were prepared. The second phase was the development of the 18 local unit plans, including this one. Finally, phase three was the creation of the County Comprehensive Plan, where the local unit plans were merged together to form a county level plan.

Draft local plans were provided to all local units in August 2004. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff met with each local unit over the fall and winter to review the draft text and maps. Revised drafts were prepared and distributed to the Towns in February 2005. See Attachment A for more detailed information.

Public Participation

An important part of any planning process is public involvement. Public involvement provides the citizens of the town an opportunity to express their views, ideas, and opinions on issues that they would like addressed on the future development of their town. Local officials use this input to guide policies and decisions with greater awareness of the public's desires and consensus. See sample Public Participation Plan in Attachment B.

The Town of Easton did not conduct a community survey, but held public meetings and an open house meeting to collect public input. The Town is also utilizing the scientifically random survey conducted by the county. A copy of the survey is included as Attachment F.

Relationship to County Plan

As mentioned earlier, this plan is part of a county-wide planning effort. The Adams County Comprehensive Plan contains much of the detailed background information that is briefly mentioned throughout this document. Although this plan refers to the County Plan, there is no change in the existing relationship between the Town of Easton and Adams County.

Town Demographics

A. Population

The Town's population has increased over the last ten years according to the Census. As displayed in Table 1, the Town experienced a 45 percent increase between 1990 & 2000. Meanwhile the county grew at the rate of 27 percent over the same time period. All but one of the surrounding towns had a smaller percent change than Easton. Between 1990 and 2000, Easton added 370 residents. The town is about 6 percent of the total population of the county.

Annually, the Wisconsin Department of Administration publishes population estimates for all minor civil divisions. These numbers vary slightly from the U.S. Census information. For the 2003 estimates, all of the towns, including the county were expected to grow.

Table 1: Population

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2003	1990 - 2000 % Change	1990 - 2000 Net Change
Easton	824	1,194	1,221	45%	370
Adams	1,170	1,267	1,282	8%	97
New Chester	1,675	2,141	2,072	28%	466
Springville	785	1,167	1,221	49%	382
Quincy	927	1,181	1,242	27%	254
Adams County	15,682	19,920	20,452	27%	4,238

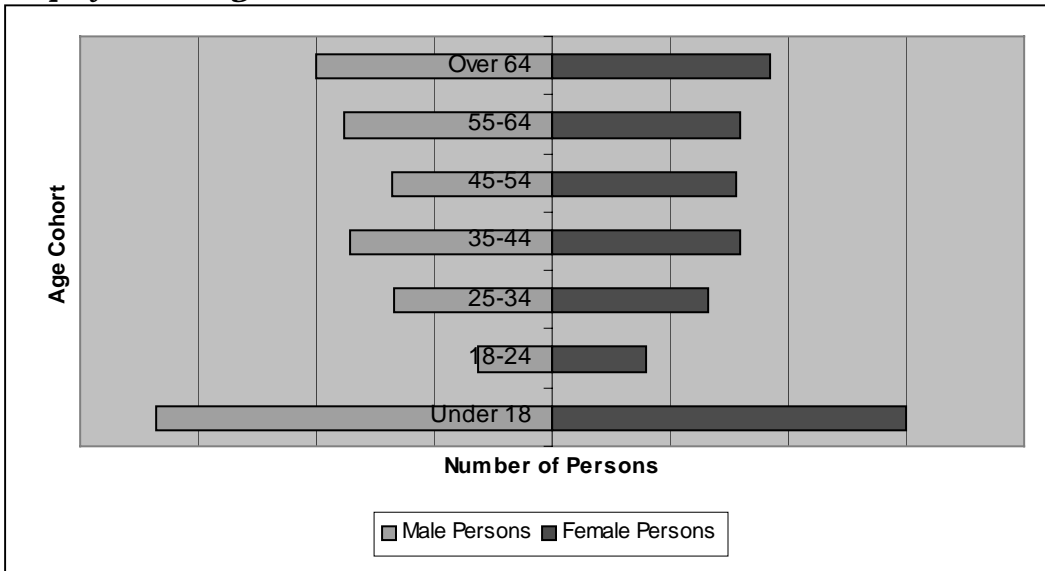
Source: U.S. Census, DOA 2003 estimate

If the ten-year growth trend were maintained, the town would expect about a 45 percent increase in population over the next ten years. Thus, 537 additional residents would reside in the town. However, if the town grew at the same pace as the county it would expect about 322 additional residents in ten years. See Attachment D for population projections.

B. Age

The number of people aged 65 and older that lived in the community increased from 172 in 1990, to 192 in 2000, an increase of 11.6 percent. Meanwhile the number of persons 5 and under increased by 54.7 percent that same period from 53 in 1990 to 82 in 2000. Both percentages indicate a steady or slowly aging population in Easton. According to the U.S. Census in 1990, Easton’s median age was 38 and in 2000 the median age was 39. Compared to Adams County, in 1990 the median age was 40 and in 2000 the median age was 44. Over the decade, Easton’s median age has only increased by 1 year and still remains well below the county’s median age by six years. Display 1 shows the largest cohort of the population in 2000 to be in the under 18 range, which has a number of ages under one classification. The 35-44 year range with a ten-year increment bulges out compared to the other categories and may be a reason why the town’s median age is so low.

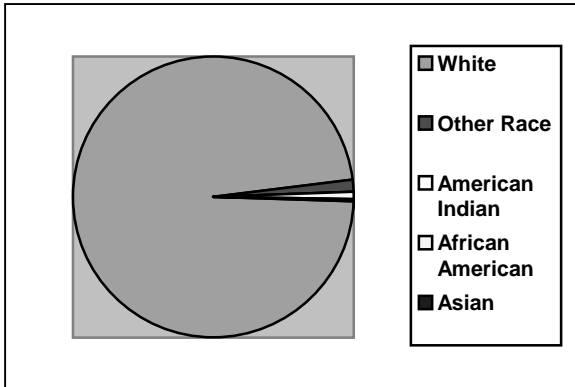
Display 1: 2000 Age Cohorts



Source: U.S. Census

C. Race

Display 2: 2000 Race Makeup



In 1990, 822 of the Town's 824 residents were white, 1 was African American and 1 was Asian. In 2000, 1,165 of 1,194 residents listed themselves as white, 2 as American Indian, 2 as Asian, 10 as African American, and 15 as some other race. Display 2 shows the percentage of race among the residents in Easton.

Source: U.S. Census

D. Educational Level

Educational levels in 1990 showed that 360 had completed high school and of those 360, 65 had some college, 18 had an associate degree, 17 had a bachelor degree and 5 had a graduate or professional degree. The 2000 Census showed that 621 had completed high school and of those 621, 192 had some college, 30 had an associate degree, 29 had a bachelor degree and 12 had a graduate or professional degree. Only those 25 years of age and older are reflected in these statistics. Table 2 provides a summary of educational attainment in Easton, Adams County, and the State.

Educational Attainment Level	Town of Easton	Adams County	State of Wisconsin
Less than 9 th Grade	6.1%	7.0%	5.4%
9 th to 12 th Grade, no diploma	16.6%	16.4%	9.6%
High School Graduate	44.6%	41.9%	34.6%
Some College, no degree	23.9%	19.9%	20.6%
Associate Degree	3.7%	4.9%	7.5%
Bachelor's Degree	3.6%	6.5%	15.3%
Graduate or Professional	1.5%	3.4%	7.2%

Source: U.S. Census

The Town of Easton has a higher percentage of residents compared to the state with an educational attainment of those with a 9th to 12th grade level with no diploma, those with only a high school diploma and those with some college but no degree. The town's percentages are below both the state and the county with residents that have a degree.

E. Households

The number of households in the town has grown by 49.1 percent, from 326 in 1990 to 486 in 2000. Of the 486 total households, in 2000, 66.9 percent were family households, while the other 33.1 percent were non-family households. Almost fifty-four percent were married couple households. See Attachment D for household projections.

Thirty percent of all households included someone 65 years old or older, while thirty-two percent included someone 18 or younger. The average household size was 2.46 people.

F. Employment

Between 1990 and 2000 the town's employed residents increased 50.8 percent, from 319 to 481. The top three employment sectors, Retail Trade, Manufacturing and Construction made up fifty percent of the jobs in the Town of Easton. That changed in 2000, with Educational and Health & Social Services, Manufacturing and Arts & Entertainment as the top three employers. Retail Trade was the fourth most employed sector and Construction was fifth. Over the decade, the percentage of unemployed went down in Easton. In 1990, 36 people reported they were unemployed, for a 5.3% of unemployed and in 2000, 37 people reported they were unemployed, for a 4.1% of civilian labor force unemployed. See Attachment D for employment projections.

Table 3: Total Employed

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	1990-2000 % Change
Easton	319	481	50.8%
Adams	500	632	26.4%
New Chester	262	377	43.9%
Springville	282	524	85.8%
Quincy	316	434	37.3%
Adams County	5,640	7,847	39.1%

Source: U.S. Census

G. Household Income

The 1999 median household income (MHI) in the town was \$30,469, which was less than both Adams County and the State, which were \$33,408 and \$43,791 respectively.

Of the 493 households in the town, 196 reported incomes less than \$24,999 and 13 had an income above \$100,000. The 2000 Census indicates that poverty is concentrated among individuals over 65 years. Nine percent of this population is below the poverty level.

Table 4: Median Household Income

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	Adj. Net Change*	% Change*
Easton	\$19,559	\$30,469	\$4,700	18.2%
Adams	\$20,994	\$34,286	\$6,626	24.0%
New Chester	\$19,821	\$28,750	\$2,635	10.1%
Springville	\$19,400	\$34,531	\$8,971	35.1%
Quincy	\$17,540	\$26,533	\$3,424	14.8%
Adams County	\$21,548	\$33,408	\$5,019	17.7%

Source: U.S. Census & NCWRPC. *Adjusted for inflation

Table 5: Per Capita Income

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	Adj. Net Change*	% Change*
Easton	\$9,134	\$15,011	\$2,977	24.7%
Adams	\$9,331	\$18,225	\$5,931	48.2%
New Chester	\$12,444	\$14,727	-\$1,668	-10.2%
Springville	\$11,266	\$16,145	\$1,302	8.8%
Quincy	\$10,029	\$16,460	\$3,247	24.6%
Adams County	\$11,945	\$17,777	\$2,039	13.0%

Source: U.S. Census & NCWRPC. *Adjusted for inflation

Table 6: Poverty Rate (%)

Minor Civil Division	1989 Poverty Rate (%)	1999 Poverty Rate (%)
Town of Easton	17.5%	11.2%
Adams County	14.4%	10.4%
State of Wisconsin	10.7%	8.7%

Source: U.S. Census

H. Community Issues

There are a variety of influences in the town, from population growth, to residential development, to the future of farming. These issues are critical to the long-term success of the town. A four page summary from the U.S. Census is included as Attachment C.

The following sections of the document examine the many issues that impact the town.

Population in the Town of Easton was up 45 percent during the 1990s. Whether the town continues to grow at that rate, it is likely it will enjoy considerable growth over the next twenty years. How that growth will be accommodated over the coming decades is the question that the Town must decide as part of the planning process.

More than 45 percent of the housing units in the town are mobile homes according to the 2000 Census. In the past there have been cases where mobile homes on small lots or in mobile home parks have not been well maintained and this has led to other problems that

have created issues for surrounding landowners. There is some resistance within the community to continuing this form of development into the future for fear that it will degrade the quality of the rural experience which has drawn many new residents to the town.

Although the median age is lower and the percentage of residents under 18 years of age is higher than in some of the surrounding towns, there is some consensus that the bulk of new residents of the town are not families, but people who have originally established seasonal residences with the long-term goal of retiring to Easton. More than a third of housing units in the town were described as seasonal in the 2000 Census. Whether growth over the coming decades is made up mainly of families or of retirees could make a difference in the size and type of properties that are in demand, and thus on the amount of land required to meet that demand.

It seems likely that much of the land in agricultural use will remain in farming. Much of this land is in large-scale irrigated agriculture. As development pressure grows in the town and with changes in the agricultural economy it is possible that at some point in the future landowners will come to the conclusion that some form of residential development is the highest and best use of their property. If this happens it will open up new areas to development, which would have a significant effect on the type of development within the town.

Over the coming years the Town will have to reach a consensus on the type of controls that it wishes to place on development. *Minimum lot sizes, as expressed through the County's Zoning Ordinance, may be the best vehicle for expressing this consensus.* In examining future land use within the town care must be taken to safeguard delicate environmental areas, such as wetlands, that are inappropriate for residential development, and to protect the viability of existing agricultural operation. Based on the anticipated level of growth in the town, decisions must be made on the appropriate density of development on the remaining land that is seen as appropriate for development.

2. NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. NATURAL

The town lies in the mid-latitude continental climatic zone, which is characterized by long, snowy winters and short, warm summers. Spring and fall are often short with rapid changes from summer to winter and winter to summer. Annual precipitation, throughout the area, averages about 32 inches. About one-half to two-thirds of the annual precipitation falls between May and September. Snowfalls range between 45 and 80 inches annually, with a continuous snow cover from November to early April.

In terms of the physical landscape, the protection of certain natural features is necessary for the environment and for future generations. Certain environmental features and assets have more than merely aesthetic and leisure-time activity values. They are essential to long-term human survival and the preservation of life, health, and general welfare. As such, the protection and/or management of these environmental features and assets clearly are in the public's best interest.

The environmental features and assets that were examined in this plan include soils, wetlands, floodplains, water and woodlands.

1) Water, Wetlands & Floodplains

Together the ponds, lakes, streams and wetlands total about 1,641 acres in the town or 7.1 percent of the total acres. The major water bodies are Easton Lake, Campbell Creek, Fairbanks Creek and Risk Creek, which all join together to form White Creek. These surface water resources replenish the groundwater as part of the hydrologic cycle. See the Water Features Map.

Under natural conditions, the aquifers generally receive clean water from rainfall percolating through the overlying soils. However, contamination of groundwater reserves can result from such sources as percolation of water through improperly placed or maintained landfill sites, private waste disposal located near the water table, leaks from sewer pipes, and seepage from some types of mining operations into the aquifer. Runoff from livestock yards and urban areas and improper application of agricultural pesticide or fertilizers can also add organic and chemical contaminants in locations where the water table is near the surface. Protection of these groundwater reserves is necessary to ensure adequate water to domestic, agricultural and commercial uses. If groundwater is not protected, contamination could result; thus, endangering the quality and supply of the water in the town.

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of the hydrologic cycle, and local ecological systems. In a natural condition, they control floodwater by moderating peak flows, and some may act as groundwater recharge sites. All wetlands have valuable water purification capabilities and make significant contributions to surface and groundwater quality. They act as settling areas for inflowing streams as well as functioning in the reduction of water nutrients through uptake of these compounds into plant tissues. They also have a buffering affect on

water acidity or alkalinity and are helpful in the elimination of harmful bacteria, which may be found in surface or groundwater. They also serve as breeding and nesting grounds for waterfowl and many other animals that depend on aquatic habitats; they are an important recreational, educational, and aesthetic resource. In many instances, wetlands serve as the combined roles of flood moderation, water purification and aquatic habitat, wetlands are important to the maintenance of downstream habitat as well. See the Water Features Map.

Wetlands generally occur in areas where water stands near, at, or above the soil surface during a significant portion of most years. Vegetation is generally aquatic in nature and may vary from water lilies and rushes in marsh areas to alder and tamarack in lowland forest. Swamps, bogs, marshes, potholes, wet meadows, and sloughs are all wetlands. The soils in these areas are usually saturated during the growing season within a few inches of the surface.

When drainage of wetlands occurs, or drainage patterns are altered, the water table is locally lowered and soils are exposed to oxidation at depths usually saturated. Nutrients held in the wetland soils can then be leached away. Heavy siltation can occur downstream as water previously held by the soils is swept away. Wildlife population and habitat in drained areas and downstream locations may be negatively affected, lowering the recreational and educational value. Eradication of wetlands can also occur in urban locations through the use of fill material. This can destroy the hydrologic function of the site and open the area to improper development. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) has delineated the location of wetlands and has standards for managing wetlands. There is one lake in the Town, Easton Lake, which is an impoundment of Cambell Creek, running east to west through the town. Risk Creek runs east to west through the central part of the town and joins with Fairbanks Creek that runs south from a large wetland in the northwest corner of the town. This stream combines with Cambell Creek to form White Creek, which flows into the Wisconsin River.

Floodplains are a natural feature not conducive to development. Inappropriate location of roadways in floodplains can result in serious flood damage. Periodic roadbed saturation and embankment washing eventually lead to an increase in road maintenance costs. In addition to roads, floodwaters can create a number of problems by damaging foundations of homes, electrical equipment, heating units, etc. Basements constructed on permeable sands and silts of floodplains are especially susceptible to damage resulting from seepage through walls. Thus, it is advisable to restrict development in such areas. In the town, the areas that are designated as floodplains by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are mainly adjacent to the several creeks that run through the town. See the Water Features Map.

Map 2 Water Features

Map 3 Soils

Map 4 Soil Limitations for Septic Tank Absorption Fields

2) Soils

As with most areas in Central Wisconsin, the Town of Easton has a variety of soil types within the town. According to the 1984 USDA Soil Survey of Adams County, the soil patterns include scattered areas of Adrian Muck (Ad), which is in most of the areas classified as DNR Wetlands and along the creeks and lakes. Newson Loamy Sand (Ne) is also scattered in these same areas and normally border the Adrian Muck. Scattered between the creek and wetland areas is Plainfield Sand [(PfB), (PfC) and (PfD)], Boone Sand (BnD) and Algansee Loamy Sand (AlA), which cannot be used for cultivating crops or construction of houses. Some soils that potentially can be used as farmland include Au Gres Loamy Sand (Au), Billett Sandy Loam (BlA), Boone Sand (BnB), Brems Loamy Sand (BrA), Briggsville Silt Loam (BtB), Wyeville (WeA), Delton Sand [(DsA), (DeA), (DeB) and (DeC)], Coloma Sand [(CoB) and (CoC)], Elkmound Loamy Sand (EvB), Fisk Loamy Sand (Fv), Grays Silt Loam (GrC), Houghton Muck (Hm), Meehan Loamy Sand (MoA), Richford Loamy Sand [(RfA) and (RfB)], Sparta Loamy Sand (SpA), Wautoma Loamy Sand (Wa), and Plainfield Sand (PfA). Billett Sandy Loam (BlA), Boone Sand [(BnB) and (BnC)], Brems Loamy Sand (BrA), Delton Sand [(DsA), (DeA), (DeB) and (DeC)], Grays Silt Loam (GrC), Richford Loamy Sand [(RfA) and (RfB)], Sparta Loamy Sand (SpA) and Coloma Sand (CoB), are also suitable for construction of houses and with special precaution, can also be suitable for private onsite waste water treatment systems. Boone Rock Outcrop Complex (BpF) is found on the Easton Mound and very steep hills and is unsuitable for development and cultivated crops because of the steep elevation.

Soils are an important natural resource. Knowledge of the potential uses and/or limitations of soil types is necessary to evaluate crop production capabilities or when considering construction of buildings, installation of utilities, or other uses of land. Problems that limit development on certain soils include poor filtration, slow percolation, flooding or ponding, wetness, slope, and subsidence. A "severe" limitation indicates that one or more soil properties or site features are so unfavorable or difficult to overcome that a major increase in construction effort, special design, or intensive maintenance is required. For some soils rated severe, such costly measures may not be feasible. See the Soils with Limitations Map.

Map 5 Woodlands

3) Woodlands

Forest cover provides many vital functions, which are diverse in nature; forested lands provide for recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, economic commodity (timber products), and wildlife habitat as well as protection of sensitive environmental areas. From the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook*, of the 23,116 acres of land in Easton, 55.9 percent or 12,921 acres are forests. In regard to the latter, tree cover is essential, especially for erosion control and to reduce effluent and nutrient flows into surface water bodies and courses. See the Woodlands Map.

Some woodlands in the town are being maintained through the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program and the Forest Crop Law (FCL). This tax assessment program is available to landowners willing to manage their forest plot according to sound forestry practices as specified in a management plan. More information exists in the Natural, Agricultural, & Cultural Resources element of the Adams County Comprehensive Plan.

Goals:

1. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, ponds, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
2. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
3. All new development in the town should not negatively impact environmental resources or adjoining property values.

Objectives:

1. New development in the Town should not negatively impact natural resources.
2. Minimize impacts to the Town's natural resources from non-metallic mineral mining.
3. Encourage and support the preservation of natural open spaces that minimize flooding such as wetlands and floodplains.
4. Promote development that minimizes groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems and other sources.

Policies:

1. New development should be discouraged from areas shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, loss of farmland, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
2. Expansion of existing non-metallic mining operations or development of new sites should be allowed only on lands where the expansion will not conflict with preexisting development.
3. Reclamation of non-metallic mining sites should conform to the land use plan map in regard to the reclaimed use.
4. Discourage the draining or filling of wetlands.

B. AGRICULTURAL

According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook*, the Town of Easton between 1991-1993 was 37 percent agricultural. According to this document, 22.2 percent of the town's total land (36.1 square miles) is used for row crops, 3.1 percent is used for foraging and 11.8 percent is grassland, for a total of 37 percent. The report also found that 55.9 percent of the town was in forest cover and 7.1 percent is wetlands.

In terms of farming trends, the town has lost 2.0 percent of farmland acres on tax rolls between 1990 and 1997. According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook* there were 31 active farms in 1997; 3 of those farms were dairy farms. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs and results in the least damage to the environment. Much of the town is determined to contain prime farmland. See the Prime Farmlands Map

See Farmland Preservation Areas Map.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Natural, Agricultural, & Cultural Resources element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goal:

1. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and commercial forest.

Objectives:

1. Support diversification of farming types and practices to maintain agriculture as a viable economic activity.
2. Existing agricultural uses and buildings should be taken into consideration when locating new development to avoid conflicts.
3. Preserve productive farmland for long-term agricultural uses.

Policies:

1. Non-farm development, particularly subdivisions, will be encouraged in areas away from intensive agricultural activities, in order to minimize farm & non-farm conflicts due to noise, odors, nitrates in well water, pesticides, farm/vehicle conflicts on roadways, late night plowing, etc.
2. Consider the use of such tools to protect sensitive areas, such as transfer of development rights (TDR) or purchase of development rights (PDR).
3. Encourage landowners to develop forest management plans and enroll in the managed forest law program.
4. Inconveniences, such as aerial spraying, irrigation, dust, noise, odors, vehicles traffic, etc. that result from agricultural operations that are not a major threat to public health of safety, should not be considered a nuisance.

Map 6 Prime Agricultural Soils

Map 7 Farmland Preservation Areas

C. CULTURAL

There are several original farm homes and farm buildings in the town, but there has been no historical examination of these structures for inclusion on the State Historical Inventory.

One Century Farmstead exists within the town. A century farmstead has maintained family ownership for at least 100 years. The Wisconsin State Fair recognized the Marjorie Y Colby farmstead in 2000.

Easton century farmsteads

- Marjorie Y Colby on 92 acres in T16N R6E Sec 28 was settled in 1852.

The Woolsey Cemetery is owned by the Town. It is located along Elk Avenue east of 9th Avenue and contains a number of Civil War era graves. The Town also maintains both the White Creek and Easton cemeteries.

Several original structures still remain of the White Creek settlement within the Town. Another point of interest is the Easton Dam, which was built in the 1850s. It is still structurally sound, and holds back water from Campbell Creek to create Easton Lake. Lands immediately adjacent to surface waters, but not man-made drainage ditches, may have an abundance of cultural and archeological significance because they were often the location of Native American and early European settlements.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Natural, Agricultural, & Cultural Resources element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goals:

1. Preservation of cultural, historic and architectural sites.
2. Respect Century Farmsteads within town by allowing farming to continue without residential intrusion nearby.

Objective:

1. Work with the Adams County Historical Society and others to provide guidance in the identification and protection of historic and cultural resources.

Policy:

1. Development proposals should be reviewed relative to the potential impacts to the historical and cultural resources of the Town.

3. HOUSING

Background

In 1980, there were 379 housing units in the town. Three hundred twenty-four of these housing units were occupied, 4 were vacant for sale or rent, 37 were vacant for occasional use, and 14 were other vacant housing units. About 82 percent of all occupied housing units in the town were owner-occupied. The average household size was 2.65 people.

The 1990 Census indicates that there were 610 housing units in the town. All but 22 of these units had complete plumbing facilities, 22 lack complete kitchen facilities and 27 of them did not have telephone service. One hundred and thirty-one of these units were built between 1980 and 1989, and sixty-eight units were built before 1939.

In 2000, there were 821 housing units in the town, an increase of 33.4 percent since 1990. Four hundred and eighty-six of these were occupied, while only 39 were vacant. Two hundred and ninety-six units were identified as seasonal. Over 84 percent of all housing units in the town are owner-occupied. The average household size was 2.42 people.

As a result of the projected population increase, the town needs to add at least an additional 240 housing units to accommodate population growth. However, as the persons per household drops the overall number of new units will increase. It is expected that there will be between 10 and 15 new housing starts per year for the next several years. The amount of land consumed by future residential development would vary depending on where the development would take place.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Housing element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goals:

1. Discourage residential development in prime farmland areas.
2. Allow adequate affordable housing for all individuals consistent with the rural character of the community.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that local land use controls and permitting procedures do not discourage or prevent the provision of affordable housing opportunities.
2. Support development of senior and special needs housing within the Town.
3. Direct residential development away from existing agricultural uses and buildings to avoid conflicts.

Policy:

1. The Town should work with developers to provide a variety of housing types for all income and age groups.

4. TRANSPORTATION

Background

The transportation system in the town includes all the state, county and local roads. The local transportation network is an important factor in the safe movement of people and goods, as well as in the physical development of the town. There is no transit, rail, air or water transportation service within the town's jurisdiction.

The Adams County Transit System operates out of Adams/Friendship; the nearest rail service is provided by Union Pacific through Adams; and the nearest commercial air service is available at the Dane County Regional Airport near the City of Madison. The Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells Airport provides the nearest air cargo service. There are no water transportation facilities in the area.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation element for more detailed information on this topic.

State and Regional Transportation Plans:

1. State Plans

Corridors 2020 was completed in 1989. The plan was designed to meet Wisconsin's mobility needs for the future. The 3,200-mile state highway network was comprised of two elements: a multilane backbone system and a two-lane connector system. The backbone system is a 1,650-mile network of multilane divided highways interconnecting the major population and economic centers in the state and tying them to the national transportation network. The connector system is 1,550 miles of high-quality highways that link other significant economic and tourism centers to the backbone network. All communities over 5,000 in population are to be connected to the backbone system via the connector network. Within Adams County, STH 21 is a Corridors 2020 connector route, and the only highway in the County designated as part of the Corridors 2020 system.

Another state plan was *Translinks 21*, completed in 1994. This effort began developing more detailed modal plans that include in-depth analysis of a specific mode and its relationship to the other modes. Completed plans include the *Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020*, the *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020*, the *Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020*, the *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020* and the *Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report*. Each modal plan includes extensive analysis of land use related issues.

Another state level plan related to the highway system is the *Wisconsin Access Management System Plan*. This is a plan for managing access on portions of the State Trunk Highway System that designates 5,300 miles of state highways on which access will be managed through the purchase of access rights or the designation of "controlled access highways". It shows where WisDOT intends to control access points as new development occurs and to consolidate or eliminate existing access as necessary and feasible.

The access management plan is composed of two tiers. Tier 1 consists of the routes that make up the Corridors 2020 system, including STH 21 in Adams County. Access management on these routes is seen as essential to maintaining the required high level of service. Because these highways are generally the main routes between communities and have higher traffic volumes than other state highways, they tend to experience the greatest development pressure. Tier 2 is comprised of other State Trunk Highways that meet specified criteria, including STH 13 and STH 73 in Adams County. These routes are roadways where limiting access is seen as a cost-effective strategy to improve safety, reduce congestion, facilitate planned access to developing land, and delay or avoid future construction expenditures.

2. Regional Plan

The Regional Comprehensive Plan: A Framework for the Future, 2002 – 2020 was adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in 2003. The RCP looks at transportation in all ten counties that make up the North Central Region, including Adams. It looks at general trends within the Region and recommends how county and local government can address transportation issues.

The RCP identifies a number of transportation issues including growing traffic volumes and congestion. Moderate levels of congestion, see MAP 4 are expected by the year 2020 on STH 13 in Adams/Friendship and north of the lakes area in the Town of Rome as well as STH 21 west of STH 13, assuming no capacity improvements. Moderate congestion indicates that speeds and distance between vehicles are reduced, constricting traffic flow. Freedom of drivers to maneuver within the traffic stream or enter the highway is noticeably limited. Minor incidents can result in traffic jams because the traffic stream has little space to absorb disruptions. Traffic volumes continue to swell, especially in summer months due to the local tourism and seasonal housing growth. The RCP shows 72 to 77 percent increase in average daily traffic on major routes in Adams County between 1980 and 2000.

The RCP addresses other modes of travel as well as highways, including bicycle transportation. The North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle Facilities Network Plan is incorporated in the RCP by reference. The plan envisions development of a regional system of new interconnected bicycle facilities for the ten county area including Adams. The proposed network will encompass routes on bicycle paths, bicycle lanes, paved shoulders and wide curb lanes which will link existing and potential traffic generation sites and points of interest, as outlined in the plan, to make bicycling a more attractive and safer transportation alternative. A map displaying highway suitability for bike routes is included in the attachments.

The goals of the regional bike plan are to generate public interest in using existing and developing new bike trails across the Region and state and to provide county and municipal officials with guidance in planning and establishing bike facilities at the local level.

Road Network

The road system in the Town of Easton plays a key role in development by providing both access to land and serving to move people and goods through the area. The interrelationships between land use and the road system makes it necessary for the development of each to be balanced with the other. Types and intensities of land-uses have a direct relationship to the traffic on roadways that serve those land-uses. Intensely developed land often generates high volumes of traffic. If this traffic is not planned for, safety can be seriously impaired for both local and through traffic flows. See the Transportation Map.

The Town of Easton road network consists of roughly 5.64 miles of state highway, 12.71 miles of county highway, and 70.54 miles of local roads. Of the 70.54 miles of town roads, approximately ten miles are unpaved. The town utilizes a WisDOT PASER computer program to maintain an inventory of its local roads and monitor conditions and improvements of its roads. Ideally, this system will enable the Town to better budget and keep track of roads that are in need of repair.

Traffic generated and attracted by any new land-use can increase the volume throughout the highway system and increase congestion on the roadway system keeping property from reaching its full potential value. Even without the creation of new access points, changes in land-uses can alter the capacity of the roadway because more, and possibly different, kinds of vehicles than before, enter, leave, and add to the traffic flow. Uncontrolled division of land tends to affect highways by intensifying the use of abutting lands, which impairs safety and impedes traffic movements.

In terms of traffic volumes, there is the Department of Transportation annual average daily traffic counts for four areas in the town. In 1998, Highway B by Edgewood Avenue had an AADT count of 770 and Highway A between 10th Lane and 11th Drive the AADT count was 430. In 2001, Highway 13 south of Highway A the AADT count was 3,800 and Highway H between 14th Avenue and Highway 13 the AADT count was 380. These counts need to be monitored as a way to gauge the increase of traffic in the town.

Wisconsin was one of the first states to recognize this relationship between highway operations and the use of abutting lands. Under Chapter 233, the Department of Transportation (WisDOT) was given the authority to establish rules to review subdivision plats abutting or adjoining state trunk highways or connecting highways. Regulations enacted by the WisDOT establish the principles of subdivision review. They require new subdivisions to: (1) have internal street systems; (2) limit direct vehicular access to the highways from individual lots; (3) establish building setbacks; and (4) establish access patterns for remaining unplatted land. This rule has recently been suspended.

As development continues and land use changes, the cost of maintaining the road system must be increased. More traffic requires more maintenance and expansion of the local road system.

Goals:

1. Encourage neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
2. Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.
3. Utilize PASER software to inventory and rate the local roads.
4. Widen and improve existing roads before constructing new roads.
5. Limit both town and private road development until existing infrastructure is brought up to a common level.

Objectives:

1. Support and maintain a safe and efficient Town road system.
2. Support the Adams County Transit System.

Policies:

1. Prepare and update a 5-year Road Improvement Plan.
2. The Town should work with the county on any project that affects the Town.
3. Land uses which generate heavy traffic volumes will be discouraged on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
4. Roadway access will be better spaced along the existing Town road network to increase safety and preserve capacity.
5. Future road locations, extensions or connections will be considered when reviewing development plans and proposals.
6. All Town roads must accommodate access requirements for emergency services (fire, EMS, ambulance, etc.) as well as school bus and snowplows.

Map 8 Transportation

5. UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Background

As a small rural town relatively few utilities exist. There is no sanitary sewer, storm water systems, water supply, power plants, major transmission lines, health care facilities, child-care facilities, or libraries. A private wastewater treatment system owned by Tracy Brothers is located on State Trunk Highway 13. Castle Rock Elementary School lies in the community of White Creek. The Town does not provide for curbside refuse collection; however, that service is made available with several private firms who offer curbside refuse and recycling collection for a fee.

The Town of Easton is a member with the Adams County Fire District for fire and first responders; and the town has an agreement with Moundview Hospital to provide ambulance service. A map displaying the fire service areas is included in the attachments. Since the 1960s the Town has not owned any equipment. The Town contracts for all services, such as road maintenance.

Community facilities include only a Town Hall. The building is owned and maintained by the town. The Town Hall functions as a multi-purpose building, which is used as a feeding site for meals for senior citizens. The Town operates a transfer site for recycling at the Town Hall. See the Utilities & Community Facilities Map.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Utilities & Community Facilities element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goals:

1. Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
2. Continue to provide ambulance, volunteer fire and first responder services to residents.
3. Encourage recycling by residents.

Objectives:

1. Make information available to residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems.
2. Consider the potential impacts of development proposals on groundwater quality and quantity.
3. Share equipment and services across Town boundaries, where possible.

Policies:

1. Work with adjoining towns, the county, the state, and individual landowners to address known water quality issues.



Easton White Creek Lions Park

Map 9 Utilities & Community Facilities

6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Background

As discussed in previous sections, the town has been an agriculturally based community for generations. Farming is still the dominant economic sector occurring in the town. Nearly 37 percent of the total land is used for agriculture. According to the *Wisconsin Town Land Use Databook*, there were 31 active farms in the town in 1997.

Scattered throughout the town there are small businesses, other than farms, that employ a few people. Most of the town's residents commute to employment areas outside of the town. There are several industrial parks and large employment centers nearby in the Cities of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin Dells, Stevens Point, Portage, and Adams, as well as the Village of Friendship, and the Town of Rome that provide employment opportunities.

There are no major redevelopment areas in the town.

There are a variety of county, regional, state and federal economic development programs available to businesses in the Town. These programs range from grants to loans, to general assistance.

1. County:

Adams County Rural & Industrial Development Corporation (ACRIDC)

ACRIDC is a non-profit organization that promotes the economic development of Adams County, Wisconsin, and its respective cities, villages, and towns. ACRIDC is comprised of area businesspersons, citizens, local government, utility company representatives, state agencies and elected officials, educational institutions and other organizations essential to the growth of Adams County. ACRIDC is prepared to serve the needs of new businesses coming to the area as well as to assist existing companies.

JAM Development Zone

Adams County was awarded designation as a Wisconsin Development Zone in association with Juneau and Marquette Counties. Known as the JAM Zone (Juneau-Adams-Marquette), Adams County qualifies for special state incentives available to businesses that locate or expand within the Zone. The extent of the credits for any given business is determined during the certification process. This program is administered by the ACRIDC.

Adams County Revolving Loan Fund

A Wisconsin Department of Commerce Economic Development Grant was awarded to Adams County in 1996. This grant enabled Adams County to establish a revolving loan fund in order to assist local businesses and is administered by the ACRIDC.

Adams County Chamber of Commerce

The Adams County Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to the development of the business community in Adams County. The Chamber offers information on local business and industry and also provides a variety of programs designed to assist business development.

Adams - Columbia Electric Coop (ACEC) Revolving Loan Fund

The ACEC established a USDA - Rural Development IRP revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing. It is targeted at the timber and wood products industry, tourism and other manufacturing and service industries.

2. Regional:

North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation

The North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) manages a revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing. It is targeted at the timber and wood products industry, tourism and other manufacturing and service industries.

North Central Advantage Technology Zone Tax Credits

Adams County has been designated a Technology Zone by the Department of Commerce. The Technology Zone program brings \$5 million in income tax incentives for high-tech development to the area. The North Central Advantage Technology Zone offers the potential for high-tech growth in knowledge-based and advanced manufacturing clusters, among others. The zone designation is designed to attract and retain skilled, high-paid workers to the area, foster regional partnerships between business and education to promote high-tech development, and to complement the area's recent regional branding project.

3. State:

Rural Economic Development Program

This program administrated by Wisconsin Department of Commerce provides grants and low interest loans for small business (less than 25 employees) start-ups or expansions in rural areas, such as Adams County. Funds may be used for "soft costs" only, such as planning, engineering, ad marketing assistance.

Wisconsin Small Cities Program

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce provides federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to eligible municipalities for approved housing and/or public facility improvements and for economic development projects. Economic Development grants provide loans to businesses for such things as: acquisition of real estate, buildings, or equipment; construction, expansion or remodeling; and working capital for inventory and direct labor.

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The UW SBDC is partially funded by the Small Business Administration and provides a variety of programs and training seminars to assist in the creation of small business in Wisconsin.

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, provides immediate assistance and funding for the cost of transportation improvements necessary for major economic development projects.

Other State Programs

Technology Development grants and loans; Customized Labor Training grants and loans; and Major Economic Development Project grants and loans.

4. Federal:

U.S. Dept. of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA)

EDA offers a public works grant program. These are administered through local units of government for the benefit of the local economy and, indirectly, private enterprise.

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development (USDA – RD)

The USDA Rural Development program is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in all of rural America. Financial programs include support for such essential public facilities and services as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities, and electric and telephone service. USDA-RD promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. The program also offers technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their member services.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA provides business and industrial loan programs that will make or guarantee up to 90% of the principal and interest on loans to companies, individuals, or government entities for financing in rural areas. Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation acts as an agent for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) programs that provide financing for fixed asset loans and for working capital.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goals:

1. Promote the stabilization of the current economic base.
2. Industrial development must not negatively impact environmental resources or adjoining property values.
3. Discourage commercial and industrial development in prime farmland areas.
4. Encourage new ordinances that establish minimum aesthetic standards to eliminate commercial, industrial, and agricultural property with excessive debris, blighted property, and dilapidated buildings.

Objectives:

1. Encourage new retail, commercial & industrial development to locate in designated areas and adjacent to county or highways.
2. Encourage businesses that are compatible in a rural setting.

Policies:

1. Accommodate home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or would otherwise negatively impact the surrounding areas.
2. Review the costs and benefits of a proposed development project prior to approval.
3. Commercial and industrial development should be directed to designated planned areas consistent with the Future Land Use Map.
4. Intensive industrial uses should be steered to areas that have the service capability to support that development.



Agriculture is an important economic sector.

7. LAND USE

Background

The Town of Easton covers an area of about 23,116 acres in Adams County. The area is characterized by thin till and pitted outwash. The typical terrain is flat with prominent outcroppings and covered with hardwoods or open for agricultural use with a general east to west drainage pattern. The natural resource base of the area is dominated by timber. Agricultural uses of the land are vitally important, ranging from dairy farming to various specialty crops.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Land Use element for more detailed information on this topic.

Existing Land Use 2004

Knowledge of the existing land use patterns within a town is necessary to develop a desired “future” land use pattern. The Existing Land Use Map was developed using air photos from a countywide flight in 1992/1998, with updates by the locals in 2004. Woodlands dominate about 58 percent of the area, followed by Agriculture with about 29 percent and Residential with about 8 percent.

In general, agricultural, forest lands and residential uses are scattered in a “mixed” pattern. Residential development is distributed fairly evenly along the road network. There are scattered parcels of public land located in the western area of the town.

Table 7: Existing Land Use, 2004

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	6,788	29.4%
Commercial	81	0.4%
Governmental	4	0.0%
Industrial	101	0.4%
Open Grassland	128	0.6%
Outdoor Recreation	0	0.0%
Residential	1,784	7.7%
Transportation	876	3.8%
Water	65	0.3%
Woodlands	13,290	57.5%
Total Acres	23,117	100.0%

Source: NCWRPC GIS

Future Land Use 2005-2025

The Future Land Use Plan Map represents the long-term land use recommendations for all lands in the town. Although the map is advisory and does not have the authority of zoning, it is intended to reflect community desires and serve as a guide for local officials to coordinate and manage future development of the town.

The Plan groups land uses that are compatible and to separate conflicting uses. To create the Plan, nine basic future land use categories were created. The majority of the classifications generally correspond to the districts within the Adams County Zoning Ordinance, to ease future implementation of the plan. Again, the classifications are not zoning districts and do not have the authority of zoning. However, the preferred land use map and classifications are intended to be used as a guide when reviewing lot splits, re-zoning requests, and revisions to the town zoning map as necessary.

Map 10 Existing Land Use

Map 11 Future Land Use

A general description of each classification follows:

1. Residential

Identifies areas recommended for residential development typically consisting of smaller lot sizes.

2. Rural Residential

Identifies areas that are recommended for less dense residential development, consisting of larger minimum lot sizes than the residential category. These areas will also allow a mixture of residential uses, and provide a good transition from more dense development to the rural countryside.

3. Commercial

Identifies areas recommended for commercial development, as well as existing commercial establishments located throughout the Town.

4. Industrial

Identifies areas recommended for industrial development, as well as existing industrial areas located throughout the Town.

5. Governmental/Public/Institutional

Identifies existing or planned governmental/public/institutional facilities within the Town, including recreational facilities.

6. Agricultural Areas

Identifies areas to be preserved for the purpose of general crop farming or the raising of livestock.

7. Forestry Areas

Identifies areas of large woodlands within the Town.

8. Transportation Corridors

Identifies the existing road network along with the recommendations for improved and safe traffic movement in the town, including airports and rail facilities.

9. Preservation & Open Space

Contains sensitive environmental areas, such as 100-year floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, DNR wetlands, steep slopes of 12

percent or greater, and open water. This could include endangered species habitat or other significant features or areas identified by the Town.

Using these categories the Land Use Planning Committee participated in a mapping exercise to identify the desired land use. Committee members were asked to indicate their thoughts on a map by drawing shapes or circles to place these different land uses on a map. Specifically, they used their broad knowledge of the town, the series of maps that were prepared as part of the planning process and their interpretation of the current trends. The goal was to produce a generalized land use plan map to guide the town's growth in the next decade. The Year 2025 Land Use Plan Map represents the desired arrangement of preferred land uses for the future.

Future Land Use Plan Map Overview

The future land use plan map has identified approximately 6,429 acres of land for agriculture, 6,217 acres of land for forestry, 1,170 acres of land for preservation & open space, 959 acres for residential development, 7,260 acres for rural residential development, 1 acre of land for government/public/institutional development, 83 acres of land for industrial development, and 57 acres of land for commercial uses. See Attachment D for land use projections.

Most of the active agricultural land in the town is located in a wide swath running northeast to southwest through the center of the town. There are residential clusters across the northern section of the town, several along Edgewood Drive, at the intersection of County Road A and State Highway 13, around Easton Lake, and in the community of White Creek. Scattered large blocks of forestry land are spread around the southeastern part of the town. Much of the area in the central part of the town that is not currently occupied by agricultural use and around White Creek is envisioned for rural residential development.

In the northwestern part of the town and north of White Creek is a large wetland area, stretching into the adjacent Towns of Quincy and Adams. Much of this area has been or is being acquired by DNR or is held by the Nature Conservancy. Some of this land is designated for Preservation & Open Space and much of the rest is designated for forestry use.

There are several small commercial nodes: along Edgewood Drive at 11th Avenue, and State Highway 13; at Highway 13 and County Road A (there is an industrial district adjacent); and in White Creek. There is another large industrial tract that includes the former Town Dump along Evergreen Drive near the intersection with 13th Avenue.

The goal of this land use plan is to balance individual private property rights with the town's need to protect property values community-wide, minimize the conflicts between land uses and keep the cost of local government as low as possible. An essential characteristic of any planning program is that it be ongoing and flexible. Periodic updates to the plan are needed to maintain that it is reflective of current trends

Map 12 Existing Zoning

Zoning

County Shoreline Jurisdiction:

All counties are mandated by Wisconsin law to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land-use in shoreland/wetland and floodplain areas for the entire area of the county outside of villages and cities. This ordinance supersedes any town ordinance, unless the town ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland/wetland and floodplain area covered under this zoning is the area that lies within 1,000 feet of a lake and within 300 feet of a navigable stream or to the landward side of a floodplain whichever distance is greater.

County General Zoning:

Nearly all of the counties in Wisconsin have established a general county zoning ordinance for lands outside of the shoreland jurisdiction. A town can join under this ordinance by resolution.

The Town of Easton is currently under Adams County zoning. Zoning is the major implementation tool to achieve the proposed land uses. Other implementation tools include such things as purchase of land or easements, subdivision ordinance, mobile/manufactured home restrictions, nuisance regulations, design review for commercial and industrial developments, infrastructure improvements (sewer and water, utilities), road construction and maintenance, and public services, among others.

See the Existing Zoning Map.

To achieve the proposed land uses under the existing comprehensive County zoning authority, two basic options are available. Both options however would require County approval for implementation.

1. Utilize existing County zoning ordinance/districts.

The Town could carefully review the existing district descriptions to determine which “best fit” or are most appropriate to each of the proposed land uses. The advantages of this option are that the existing zoning ordinance can be used. County Board approval of proposed zoning map amendments might be easier to achieve. The disadvantages of this option are that the existing zoning districts may not enable the Town to achieve the preferred future condition of the proposed land uses. For example, permitted uses in an existing district may not fit well with the proposed land uses, causing conflicting land uses.

2. Propose new zoning districts or modifications to existing district descriptions for the countywide ordinance.

The Town would need to petition the County for zoning ordinance amendments that would be in effect for the entire county. The advantage of this would be that other towns may be in support of similar modifications and could provide political support for the changes. If approved, the Town would be able to create a better match between the zoning districts and proposed land uses. County staff would continue to administer zoning. The disadvantage

would be that the changes would affect the entire county and may not be politically supported by other towns, the County Planning & Zoning Committee, Zoning staff, or the County Board. More zoning districts may make the existing County ordinance more complex and difficult to administer.

Land Use Vision

The Town of Easton boasts a safe, peaceful, country-style environment as a special place to raise a family. The Town's wish is to ensure a strong family tradition, and preserve and conserve our most valuable natural resources.

Goals:

1. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial structures.
2. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
3. Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial uses.
4. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
5. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve natural resources of the rural community.

Objectives:

1. Maintain orderly, planned growth which promotes the health, safety and general welfare of residents and makes efficient use of land and efficient use of public services, facilities and tax dollars.
2. New development should not negatively impact the natural environment or existing property.
3. Provide for a mix of land uses within the Town.
4. Promote new land development that is consistent with this plan.

Policies:

1. The Town will maintain the comprehensive plan, which will serve as a guide for future land use decisions. New development will be permitted based on consideration of this Plan, as well as other Town, County, Regional, and state plans and other regulations.
2. The Town will actively participate in zoning and subdivision review decisions at the County level, which affect the Town. This plan will be cited as the basis for all such actions including "disapproval" of proposed zoning amendments.
3. Land uses and building locations that minimize both the loss of productive farmland and the potential for conflicts between existing and proposed land uses will be encouraged.
4. Land uses and building locations that minimize fragmentation of large contiguous forest tracts will be encouraged.
5. Use conservancy zoning to protect natural resources in the Town.
6. Encourage conservation easements and other tools to protect environmentally sensitive or unique resources.
7. Update existing land use regulations to be consistent with this plan.

8. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Background

Governmental relationships can best be described as “vertical” relationships, such as between federal, state and local units (county/city/town) are relatively well established in law. Unfortunately, there is little public policy in Wisconsin law that requires, horizontal governmental relationships such as town to town and municipality to county or town. The result is that towns, municipalities, and counties act more as adversaries than as partners.

School districts are one of the most common intergovernmental organizations since they cross-traditional local municipal boundaries. Adams County is served by five school districts. A school district map is included in the attachments.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Intergovernmental Cooperation element for more detailed information on this topic.

Wisconsin Statute s.66.30, entitled "Intergovernmental Cooperation", does enable local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Typically, intergovernmental cooperation and coordination refers to the management and delivery of public services and facilities. It is also dependent upon a defined geographic area within which cooperation and coordination may be feasible. Often the area is a central city and its surrounding area, or several similar towns. It is a collection of local communities in which the citizens are interdependent in terms of their employment, residence, health, and medical care, education, recreation and culture, shopping and other experiences.

A variety of other factors, some long-standing and some of fairly recent origin, are combining to force citizens and local governments in both urban and rural area to confer, cooperate, and in some cases, to join together in a search for better ways to deliver public services in their respective areas. These factors include:

- population settlement patterns;
- local government structure, finance, and politics;
- high population mobility;
- economic and environmental interdependence; and
- high cost, capital-intensive functions.

Adjoining Units of Government

The Towns of Quincy, Adams, Lincoln, New Chester, Jackson, and Springville are in the same stage, as the Town of Easton, of completing their own comprehensive plans.

Goal:

1. Encouragement of coordination & cooperation among nearby units of governments.

Objectives:

1. Promote communication with other units of government, including adjoining towns, the county, the state, and federal government.
2. Join together with other units of government to provide services in a more cost-effective manner.

Policies:

1. Identify alternative solutions to existing or potential land use, administration or policy conflicts that may hinder intergovernmental cooperation.
2. Regularly meet with adjoining unit of government to discuss issues of mutual concern.
3. Periodically review existing shared service agreements, and explore additional agreements.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this Comprehensive Plan depends on local officials. It is also important that local citizens and others become aware of this plan.

Some steps have already been accomplished toward implementing this plan, such as the adoption of written public participation guidelines, the formation of a Plan Commission, hosting an open house meeting, passing a Plan Commission resolution recommending Plan adoption by the Town Board, holding a formal public hearing, and approval of the Plan by ordinance by the Town Board.

The following recommendations are made to further implement this Comprehensive Plan:

Recommendation 1:

The Town Board should use this plan as a guide when making decisions, especially those that relate to growth and development. The Planning Commission and any other official committee of the Town should also use this plan in their efforts as well.

Recommendation 2:

The Town should encourage citizen awareness of the comprehensive plan by making copies available, making reference to at public meetings and Town newsletters, and displaying a copy of the future land use plan map in the Town Hall. Neighboring local units of government and others will receive copies of the plan. A website should be established to allow Internet access to the plan document and maps.

Recommendation 3:

The primary implementation tool for this plan is the Adams County Zoning Ordinance, which provides the regulatory framework that supports many of the Plan's policies. It is important that the Town review the existing zoning and initiate change to achieve consistency between the plan and the zoning ordinance.

The Town Board and or Plan Commission should review local zoning petitions and forward recommendations to Adams County for consideration. Although the County makes the decision on the zoning petition, the Town has veto authority over zoning changes approved at the county level. The Comprehensive Plan should be cited at the basis for all Town zoning actions, including review and recommendations to the County Board and exercise of veto power.

Additional tools and approaches can be utilized by the Town to achieve the goals of the plan. These include but are certainly not limited to the following: land division ordinance, official mapping, fee simple land acquisition, easements, deed restrictions, land dedication, and ordinances or programs regulating activities such as building permits, erosion control, or septic pumping, etc. The Town should consider these tools as needed.

Recommendation 4:

Amendments to this Plan may include minor changes to the plan text or maps, and or major changes resulting from periodic review. Wisconsin Law requires that the same process used to adopt the plan will be used to make any amendments. The steps are outlined below:

- An amendment or change may be initiated by either the Town Board or Plan Commission, a request from a resident, or may result from a regular review of the plan.
- The Plan Commission prepares the specific text or map amendment being considered, holds a public meeting and votes to recommend approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment, by resolution to the Town Board.
- A copy of the proposed Plan amendment is sent to all affected government units, including Adams County.
- Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town board public hearing on the proposed changes.
- The Town Board conducts the public hearing and votes to either approve, disapprove or approve with changes, by ordinance.

Any approved changes are sent to affected government units, including Adams County. Frequent minor changes to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided.

Recommendation 5:

Periodic updating of the plan is necessary to insure that it reflects the desires of the Town's residents. The Plan Commission should review the plan on an annual basis, and conduct an in-depth review of the plan every five years. At a minimum the plan must be updated every ten years.

The annual review should compare how decisions, especially land use related, made during the year relate to the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan. If decisions are inconsistent with plan, changes need to be made.

The update should consider the following to maintain consistency in the land development process:

- Revision should be made to bring decision-making back in line with Plan's goals, objectives, and policies.
- The goals, objectives, and policies should be reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and worthwhile in the Town.

- New implementation tools should be considered to gain more control over decisions.

The above recommendations provide a general process for the Town to best implement the findings of this plan. The process to develop the plan consisted of countless hours of time from elected, non-elected staff and the general public; however, the ability to implement the plan lies with the Town Board. In the end, it is the Town Board's responsibility to uphold and promote this plan.

Consistency Among Plan Elements

The comprehensive planning law requires that the implementation element describe how each of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan shall be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive Plan. The nine sections (elements) of this Plan were prepared simultaneously to achieve integration and eliminate any inconsistencies between the different sections.



Lake – Town of Easton

ATTACHMENT A
ADAMS COUNTY PLAN PROCESS

ATTACHMENT B
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

ATTACHMENT C
2000 CENSUS SUMMARY

ATTACHMENT D

POPULATION, HOUSEHOLD, EMPLOYMENT, & LAND USE PROJECTIONS

ATTACHMENT E

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAP EXERPTS

ATTACHMENT F
COUNTY SURVEY SUMMARY

ATTACHMENT G

ADDENDUM TO TOWN OF EASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN