

NCWRPC NEWS

The official newsletter of North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC).

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Serving: Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, and Wood counties since 1973.



Director's Note

Spring is in full swing and things are very busy around here. Several comprehensive plans have recently been completed, and many more are winding down. In fact, over the last several years the NCWRPC has assisted 56 towns, 8 cities, 7 villages and five counties develop comprehensive plans. As a result of our efforts and the hard work of our communities the NCWRPC was recently presented a recognition award from the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association for promoting planning in our region.



Meanwhile several new planning efforts are just beginning, such as county bike plans, downtowns plans, and regional planning efforts, including coordinating a statewide airphoto project to coincide with the 2010 Census. Although, there are many projects underway, feel free to contact our office if you need assistance. Our mission is to help the communities of north central Wisconsin.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate Erhard Huettl, Betty Nall, and Maurice Mathews for being reelected as the NCWRPC's Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary-Treasurer respectively. All three are strong supporters of thinking regionally, and they provide strong leadership to our organization, as well as the communities they serve.

As always, please feel free to call me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (715) 849-5510, Extension 304, or at dlawrence@ncwrpc.org.

Dennis Lawrence, AICP
Executive Director

City of Adams Awarded \$600,000 EDA Grant

The City of Adams (Adams County) was recently awarded \$600,000 for the development of the Adams South Business Park from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The grant will allow the City to build a 28 acre business park, which is expected to create over one hundred jobs and generate \$3 million in private investment. The Adams South Business Park will be built along Highway 13 near the southern limits of the city.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) prepared the grant application on behalf of the City. Over the years the NCWRPC has assisted many communities in securing grants to spur economic growth. This project originated from the 2008 Flood Recovery Plan and the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

For more information about this project or how the NCWRPC can assist your community secure economic development funding, contact Matt Schreiber at (715) 849-5510, Extension 308, or at mschreiber@ncwrpc.org.

"Quarterly Quote"

"Good plans shape good decisions. That's why good planning helps to make elusive dreams come true."

Lester Robert Bittel, Writer

Commission Meetings
See our website for future dates and locations.
The public is always welcome.

Smart Growth @ 10 Time for Implementation

By: Steve Hiniker, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin

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Just ten years ago, Wisconsin had no statewide plan for land use and we were all paying the price. From 1950 to 1990, we lost nearly 4 million acres of farmland (that's larger than the entire state of Connecticut). We added over 10,000 miles of roads and more than doubled the miles we drive each year (almost 60 billion miles annually in Wisconsin). Over the same time period, our land area in southeastern Wisconsin expanded 17 times faster than the rate of population growth.

In northern Wisconsin, undeveloped lakes became an endangered species. Since the 1960s, about 60 percent of previously undeveloped lakes 10 acres and larger have been developed with one or more dwellings. Development pressure on the larger lakes has increased by 800% over the same time period. According to a study conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, unless we change our development patterns, all currently undeveloped lakes over ten acres will be developed by 2025.

In 1970, most people had never heard of forest fragmentation. Today it is one of the biggest threats to our northern boreal ecosystem. Forest fragmentation is disrupting the natural ecology of wooded areas throughout our northern forests.

By 1990, the land of Leopold, Nelson and Muir was slowly losing its identity, seemingly destined to become a sprawling exurb sandwiched between Chicago and Minneapolis.

In spite of all of these threats, the state had no plans for managing that growth. Nor did it have any organization trying to promote a rational strategy to address growth.

Things started to change in 1996. A group of activists, frustrated by inaction at the state level, were determined to direct growth in ways that benefited the state and individual communities. They eventually created an organization, called it 1000 Friends of Wisconsin and went to work.

1999 – Planning Comes out of the Closet

In three short years that small group had made a huge difference. By working collaboratively with municipalities, counties, builders and realtors, 1000 Friends was able to spearhead the successful effort to pass Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law in 1999.

From the very start, the program had strong bi-partisan support. Starting with Republican Governor Tommy Thompson who worked with legislators to create the Smart Growth law, Democratic Governor Jim Doyle rescued the program from a repeal of the law contained in the 2005-07 state budget, which was orchestrated by a small group of legislators who misrepresented how the law worked.

According to the new law, starting in 2000, communities across the state would be required to enlist their residents in an open, comprehensive planning process that would lead to informed choices about where and when future growth would take place. The planning would be open and comprehensive. Plans would have to address land use impacts related to transportation choices, housing, utilities, economic development, agriculture and intergovernmental concerns.

Gone were the days of "developer's choice." Decisions about development would take place openly and with public participation. Land use decisions would be made in a larger context.

There are a total of 1,923 local governments in Wisconsin. The law requires 1,242 communities to develop comprehensive plans by 2010. So far, 940 have final plans. That is, 85% of the communities required to have comprehensive plans have complied and there are another 600 plans underway. That means many of the

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Smart Growth @ 10 continued

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local governments are choosing to do comprehensive planning. That represents a very good record of compliance for a new way of doing business in the state.

2010 – The Teeth Sink in

The focus now shifts to implementation. Until 2010, the plans were advisory. Now, all land use decisions in communities that are required to have plans must be consistent with those plans.

That means that the vision that was created through the comprehensive planning process has a meaning that no other plans have had. Instead of gathering dust on a shelf, comprehensive plans are dynamic documents that will guide land use decisions in a community. The plan represents a vision and the actions of a community will have to make that image a reality.

If a land use decision is not consistent with the plan, either the land use decision is not allowed – or the plan must be amended. That amendment must allow citizen input, ensuring public participation in changes to the plan.

The comprehensive plan is meant to be dynamic – changing with changing times, changing economics and changing demographics. While communities are encouraged to revisit their plans as needed, all communities are required to update their plans at least once every ten years.

All land use decisions carry a certain amount of controversy. Undoubtedly, there will be lawsuits to test the definition of consistency. But, for the first time in the state's history, comprehensive planning with public participation is the law. It may be the state's best chance to hold on to the legacy of Gaylord Nelson, John Muir and Aldo Leopold.



Traffic Counting Services

The NCWRPC will again be offering traffic counting services to member units of government this summer. Last year, traffic counts were completed for the Towns of Ainsworth and Rolling in Langlade County, Town of Scott in Lincoln County, Town of Cassian in Oneida County and the City of Mosinee in Marathon County. Our counter can provide basic traffic counts and average traffic statistics. The equipment can also provide vehicle classification statistics whether it is a car or a truck and even what type of truck. Traffic may also be broken down by time of day. Speed statistics are also possible which may be of assistance in setting speed limits or identifying speeding trouble spots.



If your community is interested in doing some traffic counts or studying vehicle types or speeds please contact the NCWRPC's Transportation Planner Darryl L. Landeau, AICP, at 715-849-5510, Extension 308, or at dlandeau@ncwrpc.org.



NCWRPC Award

The NCWRPC was recently presented a Recognition Award from the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association (WAPA) for promoting comprehensive planning within the region. In all the NCWRPC assisted 75 communities develop plans, for many this was their first ever-planning effort. In addition, the NCWRPC was the first regional planning commission to develop a Regional Plan under the new comprehensive planning law.



Congratulations

Matt Guptail was recently awarded a 2nd place in the Thematic Map category with a Vilas County Forest Map by the Wisconsin Land Records Association (WLIA). WLIA is a state-wide organization representing GIS professionals.



In addition, Matt was recently recognized as a Geographic Information Systems Professional (GISP).

Congratulations Matt!



NCWRPC Commissioners

Adams County

Donald Krahn
Glenn Licitar
Ron Jacobson

Juneau County

Edmund Wafle
Appointment Pending
Appointment Pending

Lincoln County

Robert Lussow
Thomas Rick
Doug Williams

Oneida County

Wilbur Petroskey
Thomas Rudolph
Appointment Pending

Vilas County

Bob Egan
Ralph Sitzberger
Appointment Pending

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Paul Schuman

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Wood County

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