

TOWN OF LAONA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Adopted
March 2011**

Prepared by
**North Central Wisconsin
Regional Planning Commission**

TOWN OF LAONA

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- A. Public Participation Plan
- B. Plan Adoption Documentation

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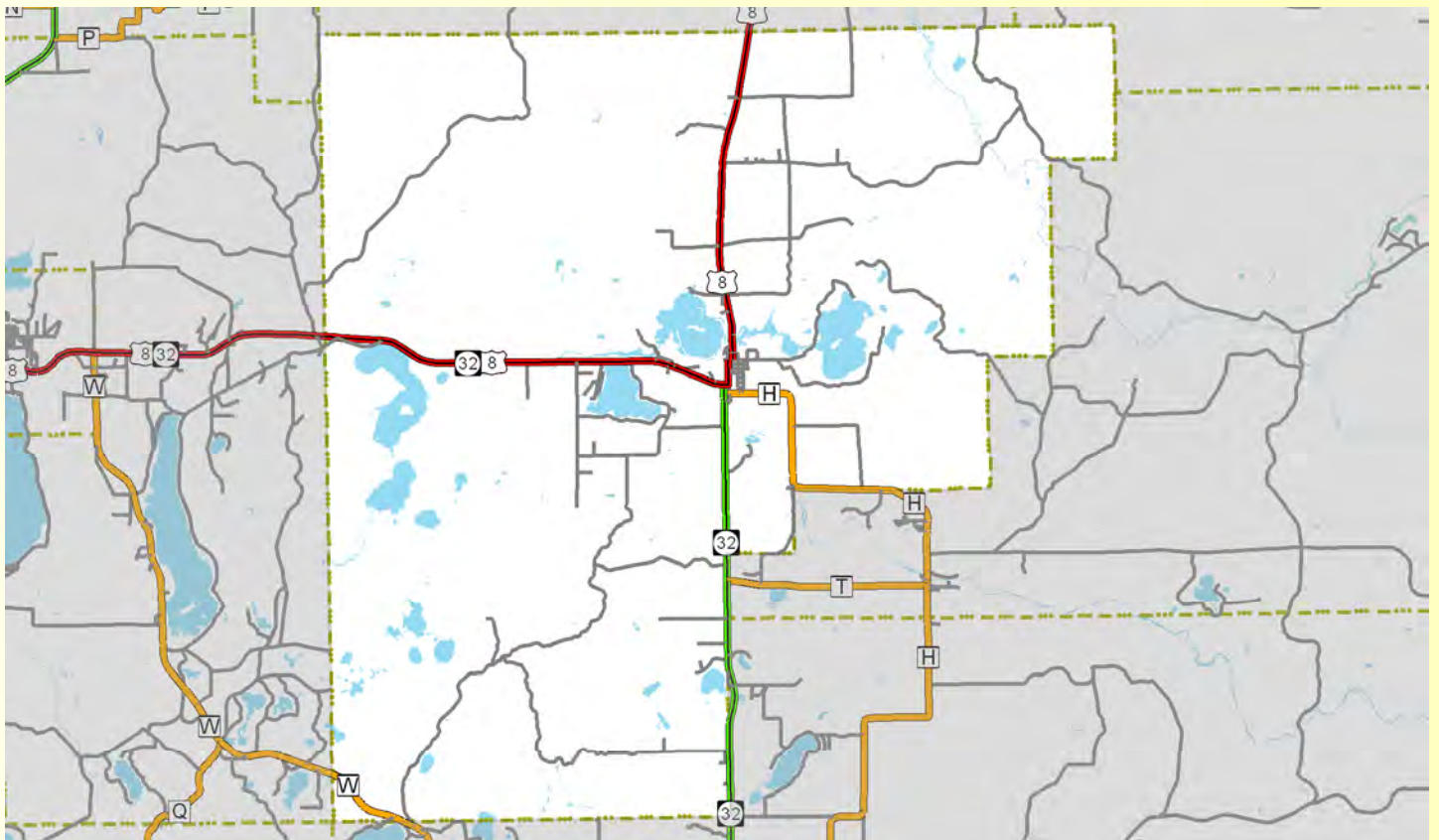
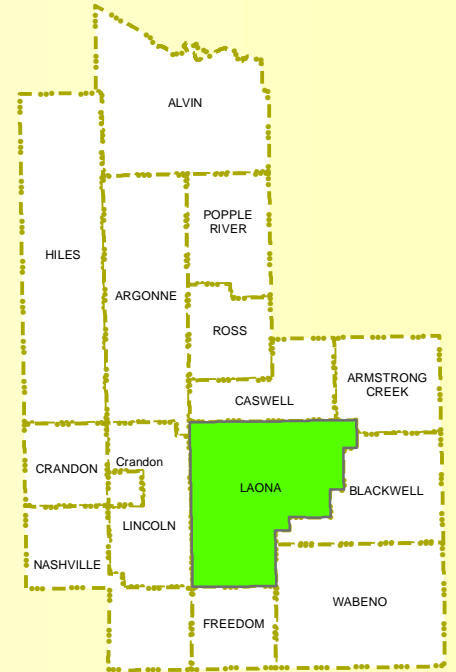
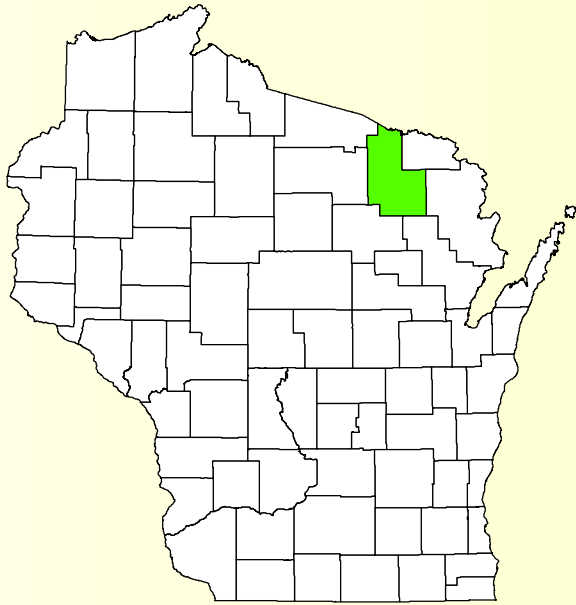
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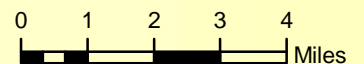
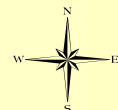
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Prepared By:
**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



CHAPTER 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter, the first of nine chapters of the Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan, explores potential issues that may have an effect on the development of the Town over the 20-year planning period of the plan. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001(2)(a) Wis. Stats.], this chapter contains trends and forecasts with jurisdictional comparisons for some basic demographics including: population, households, employment, age, education, and income. Although forecasts should typically cover the 20-year planning period, in some cases, the only acceptable sources had lesser time periods for their forecasts. Official sources are used for data and forecasting, including the WDOA Demographic Service Center, and the U.S. Census Bureau.

In addition to this review of basic town statistics, a variety of tools are utilized to identify issues, including a review of past plans, brainstorming by the planning committee, a public hearing, and observations of the NCWRPC professional planning staff.

This chapter closes with a vision statement; and some goals, objectives, and policies. The vision statement was crafted from the Town's discussion of their issues, and the direction they want the Town to travel over the next 20 years. Goals, objectives, and policies were developed as a blueprint for the Town to follow when guiding future development over the 20-year plan horizon.

Plans are required to be updated every 10 years, roughly corresponding to the decennial census and fresh community data. This is the minimum amount of time between extensive review and update of issues and related objectives, policies, and goals.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS

In 2000, 1,367 people lived in Laona. Between the 1990 and the 2000 Censuses, the Town of Laona's population decreased by a -1.4%, see TABLE 1. Both the County and the State grew faster than Laona, with growth rates of 14.2 and 9.6 percents respectively. Laona lost 16 people from 1990 to 2005. According to the 2007 population estimate of 1,396 people living in Laona, another 29 people were added since the 2000 Census.

TABLE 1 displays the total population for the Town of Laona, the neighboring towns, the County, and the State. Although Laona has grown slower than the County and the State, towns surrounding Laona have grown at very different rates. The Town of Lincoln grew the fastest from 1990 to 2005 at an overall

change of 62.9 percent. The slowest rate of growth was recorded in the Town of Blackwell, which lost 13.5 percent of its residents.

**Table 1:
Population Trends**

	1990	2000	Estimate 2005	% Change 1990-00	% Change 2000-05	% Change 1990-05
Town of Laona	1,387	1,367	1,371	-1.4%	0.3%	-1.2%
Town of Caswell	94	102	99	8.5%	-2.9%	5.3%
Town of Armstrong Creek	460	463	467	0.7%	0.9%	1.5%
Town of Blackwell	384	347	332	-9.6%	-4.3%	-13.5%
Town of Wabeno	1,012	1,264	1,295	24.9%	2.5%	28.0%
Town of Freedom	296	376	391	27.0%	4.0%	32.1%
Town of Lincoln	630	1,005	1,026	59.5%	2.1%	62.9%
Forest County	8,776	10,024	10,213	14.2%	1.9%	16.4%
Wisconsin	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,580,757	9.6%	4.0%	14.1%

Source: US Census, and WDOA Demographic Services Center

Population projections in TABLE 2 show the Town of Laona declining by 1.2 percent over the next 20-year period between 2005-2025. Lincoln is projected to have 32.7 percent total growth over the next 20 years. Freedom is projected to have 9.5 percent growth; Wabeno is projected to grow by 8.7 percent; Caswell is projected to grow by 2.0 percent; but Blackwell and Armstrong Creek both have projected declines from 2005-2025 of -17.8% and -7.7% respectively. Forest County is projected to have a 2.6 percent growth rate, but the State is still projected to grow overall by 12.4% between 2005-2025.

Further analysis of population change can be found in other chapters of this Plan, particularly in the Housing chapter and the Land Use chapter.

**Table 2:
Population Estimate 2005 and Population Forecasts to 2025**

	Estimate 2005	Projection 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025
Town of Laona	1,371	1,321	1,292	1,255	1,221
Town of Caswell	99	103	103	102	101
Town of Armstrong Creek	467	455	449	439	431
Town of Blackwell	332	319	305	289	273
Town of Wabeno	1,295	1,343	1,373	1,391	1,408
Town of Freedom	391	403	414	421	428
Town of Lincoln	1,026	1,173	1,245	1,305	1,361
Forest County	10,213	10,350	10,448	10,465	10,482
Wisconsin	5,580,757	5,751,470	5,931,386	6,110,878	6,274,867

Source: WDOA Demographic Services Center

2. HOUSEHOLD TRENDS AND FORECASTS

The 1,367 (year 2000) residents of the Town of Laona formed 564 households. Total households are projected to increase to 573 by 2025, see TABLE 3. This reflects the population growth projected in TABLE 2. Average household size in Laona was 2.42 people in 2000, which is lower than the 2.50 State average. TABLE 3 reflects an overall trend of fewer people per household, and projected population changes.

Further analysis of housing unit change can be found in other chapters of this Plan, particularly in the Housing chapter and the Land Use chapter.

**Table 3:
Households**

	Total 2000	Projection 2005	Projection 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025
Town of Laona	564	568	580	583	579	573
Town of Caswell	41	42	44	45	46	46
Town of Armstrong Creek	207	211	216	219	219	220
Town of Blackwell	45	34	31	32	29	18
Town of Wabeno	497	526	562	591	612	631
Town of Freedom	158	168	180	190	198	205
Town of Lincoln	404	449	502	548	587	624
Forest County	4,043	4,206	4,434	4,613	4,729	4,811
Wisconsin	2,084,556	2,190,210	2,303,238	2,406,789	2,506,932	2,592,462

Source: US Census, and WDOA Demographic Services Center

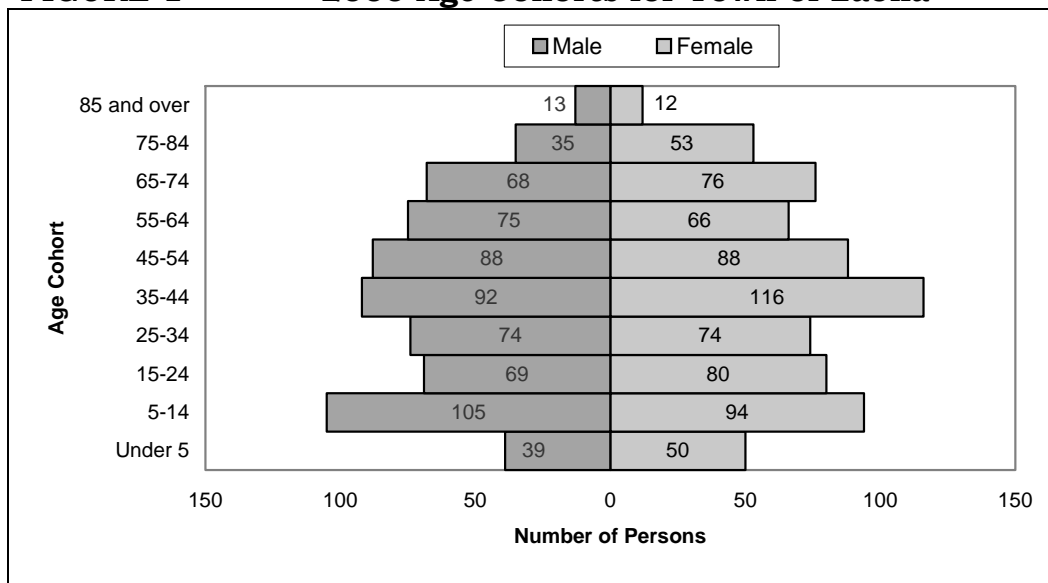
3. AGE DISTRIBUTION

Population distribution by age is important in the planning process. Two age groups are examined here: 1) people 5 to 17 years old, and 2) people 65 years and older. These two age groups are often referred to as dependent populations and have different needs. The younger group requires schools, and the older group is retiring from the workforce. TABLE 4 shows each of these groups in 1990 and 2000.

In 1990, the median age of Laona's population was 36.9 years. At that time, residents of the County had a lower median age (35.7 years). Both the Town and the County had populations older than the State (32.9 years) as a whole. The Town of Laona had about the same proportion of population (19.5%) in school (5-17 age class) as the County (19.5%), and the State (19.0%). Laona's older population (65+ age class) percentage of 19.9 is higher than both the County (18.9%), and the State (13.3%).

By 2000, the median age of Laona's population had advanced by 2.8 years to 39.7; which is less than the County (4.2 years) and State (3.1 years). The Town's median age is slightly higher than the State's. All of the surrounding towns except Wabeno and Blackwell have much higher median ages than the State. The Town of Laona's school age population (5-17 age class) increased to 19.6 percent in 2000, which is about the same proportion of the population as the County (19.6%), and the State (19.1%); both of which remained about even from 1990 to 2000. Laona's older population (65+ age class) percentage of 18.8 is slightly higher than the County, which rose slightly (19.3%), and the State, which stayed almost even (13.1%).

FIGURE 1 2000 Age Cohorts for Town of Laona



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A shifting age structure affects a variety of services and needs within the community including transportation, housing, elderly care, and schools. It will become increasingly important to retain or attract younger age groups in order to provide for service demands and maintain the workforce.

The Town of Laona population pyramid shows a balanced population of all the age groups. Laona has a large school age population (5-14 years), but the 15 to 34 age groups are smaller, indicating that residents leave town to seek a higher education or employment after high school.

**Table 4:
Age Distribution 1990 to 2000**

		Percent of Population				Median Age
		<5	5-17	18-64	65+	
Town of Laona	1990	7.3%	19.5%	53.3%	19.9%	36.9
	2000	6.5%	19.6%	55.1%	18.8%	39.7
Town of Caswell	1990	7.4%	18.1%	60.6%	13.8%	35.0
	2000	1.0%	28.4%	54.9%	15.7%	39.5
Town of Armstrong Creek	1990	6.1%	17.0%	51.3%	25.7%	42.7
	2000	4.5%	18.8%	52.5%	24.2%	45.6
Town of Blackwell	1990	2.9%	22.7%	56.0%	18.5%	20.6
	2000	2.0%	18.4%	59.4%	20.2%	20.9
Town of Wabeno	1990	9.2%	21.8%	51.8%	17.2%	33.5
	2000	7.8%	23.8%	53.6%	14.8%	35.7
Town of Freedom	1990	9.5%	15.5%	60.8%	14.2%	35.0
	2000	3.7%	16.8%	60.1%	19.4%	47.8
Town of Lincoln	1990	8.4%	19.7%	56.8%	15.1%	34.4
	2000	6.8%	19.5%	54.9%	18.8%	39.9
Forest County	1990	7.6%	19.5%	54.0%	18.9%	35.7
	2000	5.7%	19.6%	55.4%	19.3%	39.9
Wisconsin	1990	7.4%	19.0%	60.3%	13.3%	32.9
	2000	6.4%	19.1%	61.4%	13.1%	36.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

4. EDUCATION LEVELS

The educational attainment level of persons within a community is often an indicator of the overall income, job availability and well being of a community.

In 1990, 68.4% of the Town of Laona's population age 25 and over were high school graduates, compared to 64.1% in the County and 78.6% in the State. By 2000, the percentage of high school graduates had risen significantly to 84.5% in the Town, and also rose significantly in both the County at 78.5% and the State at 85.1%. See TABLE 5 for details.

The number of residents in Town who are 25 and older and have four or more years of college has increased in Town from 85 people in 1990 to 93 in 2000. Both the County and State percentages also rose from 1990 to 2000 as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:
Education Levels**

	Town of Laona		Forest County		State of Wisconsin	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less than 9 th Grade	110	45	846	428	294,862	186,125
9-12 Grade / No Diploma	176	92	1,166	1,011	367,210	332,292
High School Diploma	420	418	2,177	2,859	1,147,697	1,201,813
College / No Degree	78	194	658	1,403	515,310	715,664
Associate Degree	36	43	332	322	220,177	260,711
Bachelor Degree	64	72	303	478	375,603	530,268
Graduate/Professional Degree	21	21	126	193	173,367	249,005
Total Persons 25 & Over	905	885	5,608	6,694	3,094,226	3,475,878
Percent high school graduate or higher	68.4%	84.5%	64.1%	78.5%	78.6%	85.1%
Percent with bachelors degree or higher	9.4%	10.5%	7.6%	10%	17.7%	22.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

5. INCOME LEVELS

In 1990, the median household income for the Town was 7.6% higher than the County, and about 61% lower than the state. On a per capita basis, the income of Laona's residents was 0.9% higher than that of the County, and about 57.8% lower than the state in 1990.

Between 1990 and 2000, Town of Laona's median household income expanded nearly 74.1%, which narrowed the gap with the County to 0.5% less than the County. On a per capita basis, Laona's income grew 86%, but continues to trail the state by 35.9%, see TABLE 6.

**Table 6:
Income Levels**

	1990			2000		
	Town of Laona	Forest County	State of Wisconsin	Town of Laona	Forest County	State of Wisconsin
Median Household Income	\$18,292	\$16,907	\$29,442	\$31,852	\$32,023	\$43,791
Per Capita Income	\$8,414	\$8,339	\$13,276	\$15,652	\$16,451	\$21,271

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

6. EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS, TRENDS AND FORECASTS

According to the Census, the civilian labor force (population 16 and over) living in the Town of Laona was approximately 586 workers in 2000. Of these, 27 were unemployed for an unemployment rate of 4.6%. The unemployment rate for the County was 7.7% in 2000.

The primary occupation of Laona residents in the labor force is: *Production, transportation, & material moving*, see TABLE 7. The leading industry sectors of employed Town residents are: *Manufacturing*; and *Education, health, & social services*; with each industry sector employing over 110 people, see TABLE 8.

Historically, *manufacturing* has been the strongest industry sector county-wide, with 881 workers in 1990, but declined by 24.1% to employ only 669 people in 2000. *Education, Health and Social Services* has jumped ahead 51.3% as the dominant industry sector in 2000 by employing 755 people county-wide, and is also a dominant industry sector in Laona.

These figures are all based on the number of workers residing in the Town and what they do for employment not where they are actually employed.

Information regarding the number of jobs available in the Town of Cassian itself is not readily available.

**Table 7:
Occupation of Employed Workers**

	Town of Laona		Forest County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Management, professional & related	106	126	603	831
Service	75	105	492	855
Sales & office	109	112	600	799
Farming Fishing & Forestry	29	29	274	179
Construction, extraction & maintenance	52	47	252	472
Production, transportation & material moving	200	140	973	908

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Employment forecasts are difficult to come by and not available at the town level. However, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD) prepares workforce projections by industry for its multi-county service regions. The current projections, released August 2006, cover 2004-2014. The projections for the North Central Workforce Development Area cover Forest County and include eight other counties. These projections show increases in all occupations. *Production*; and *Farming, fishing, & forestry* occupations both are projected to gain less than 30 positions each for the whole region. The following occupations are all projected to need over 600 replacement workers each: *Production*; *Office & administration*; *Sales*; and *Food preparation & serving*. Town residents commute to jobs, of which 17% travel out of Forest County for employment, so the Town of Laona can expect to take advantage of some of this projected employment.

Another way to look at future employment is to examine the labor force and unemployment rates. In 1990, the labor force in the Town was 620 people with an unemployment rate of 6.1%. By 2000 the labor force had decreased 5.5% to 586 with 4.6% unemployment. The degree to which this available workforce is actually employed is dependant on external economic factors reflected in the unemployment rate.

**Table 8:
Industry Sectors**

	Town of Laona		Forest County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	48	53	199	303
Construction	27	26	174	303
Manufacturing	165	117	881	669
Wholesale Trade	10	10	53	57
Retail Trade	88	41	553	402
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	56	47	239	256
Information	N/A	4	N/A	49
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	21	21	80	119
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Mgmt Services	17	9	163	136
Education, Health and Social Services	97	114	499	755
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	5	66	34	527
Public Administration	22	40	205	300
Other Services	26	11	147	168

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

B. ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

1. REVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Demographic change is a principle factor in predicting future community growth. Population characteristics relate directly to the community's housing, education, utility, recreation, and facility needs, as well as future economic development. Over time, fluctuations in local and regional economies can influence population change.

From Part A—Background Information—a number of issues and opportunities facing the Town of Laona can be identified:

- ✓ The Town of Laona is currently in a period of declining population.
- ✓ Household formation is driven by the decline in average household size or persons per household, and a growing retirement population.

- ✓ A shifting age structure affects a variety of services and needs within the community including transportation, housing, elderly care, and schools.
- ✓ Laona has a middle-aged population, which is similar to surrounding communities and the county.
- ✓ Median household income of Town residents rose from 1990 to 2000, and only trails the county median by 0.5 percent in 2000.
- ✓ The unemployment rate among Town residents decreased by 1.5 percentage points from 1990 to 2000.

2. PLANNING ISSUES

The following issues have been identified by the citizens, land owners, Plan Commission, and Town Board during the planning process:

1. National Forest Lands that are not taxable and permanently reserved (i.e. not sustainably harvested) limits the amount of tax base for the Town and school district, which results in limited financial resources as well as area for development into the future. The National Forest 25% Fund only pays a small fraction of the taxes that would be recovered if the land was developed or privately owned. Payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) funding from the National Forest has never been funded. The resulting limited tax base and limited population does not provide enough revenue for the school district or town to meet demand for services or improvements. At this current time the Laona School District is nearing bankruptcy and dissolution of the district.
2. The Wisconsin Managed Forest Law (MFL) provides tax breaks to landowners in return for timber stand management to produce forest products and recreational use of the land. This law results in limiting financial resources as well as areas for development into the future. The resulting limited tax base and limited population does not provide enough revenue for the school district or town to meet demand for services.
3. Water and sewer infrastructure over and through undevelopable land is uneconomical and results in high cost per acre for the remaining developable land. The current sewer service area covers a large amount of undevelopable land.
3. There are very limited employment opportunities to retain local people and children following high school graduation. Along with this, there are very limited housing developments or building lots commercially

available for those who remain to build on or for development of business opportunities.

4. Retention and further development of a centralized business district will provide opportunities for residents to buy locally, and for tourists to stop in Laona. Downtown development in the Town of Laona has been steadily decreasing since the 1950's and the remaining businesses are spread out. Small lot sizes and scattered ownerships of those lots restrict business development in the sites best suited for business development.
5. The Town of Laona's main industry has revolved around logging and the lumber industry since the establishment of the Town in 1903. A strong connection with the forest industry remains, but harvesting on National Forest lands has declined sharply for decades. As a result, the economy and employment opportunities in the Town of Laona have declined.
6. Recreation opportunities and tourism businesses revolving around the use of the National Forest have potential. The major tourism related draws are hunting and fishing which are seasonal activities in this area. Motorized recreation including snowmobiling and ATVing has a good potential to increase use and economic benefits, especially with the creation of the Nicole State Trail.
7. Original land plats created lot sizes that are inadequate for modern commercial development. Grouping and redeveloping these plots are another challenge to providing developable land.
7. Invasive Species including aquatic invasive plants, aquatic invasive fish and wildlife, terrestrial invasive plants and animals threaten the natural ecosystems, which provide recreational opportunities and in turn tourism and economic benefits for the Town of Laona.
8. A centralized area near the Town Hall is necessary for activities and events in the Town of Laona. A majority of the activities held (i.e. the Lions Community Soup and VFW Corn Boil) occur at Silver Lake Beach which results in limited economic impact or utilization of the downtown area. Other events including the 4th of July celebration have an impact that is limited to the time of the parade. The fireworks show also has a limited impact because of location. There is no centralized main street community center to provide for activities that would benefit the businesses of Laona.
9. A chamber of commerce in Laona could organize events, which bring in business. There once was a chamber, but chamber members were few. As a result there is no connection between event organization and

businesses that are established, and no cross promotion of business development.

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, & PROGRAMS

Each of the following chapters of this comprehensive plan includes a set of goals, objectives and policies, which the Town Board will use to guide the future development of the Town over the next 20 years.

For purposes of this plan, goals, objectives, and policies are defined as follows:

- ✓ **Goals:** Broad statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach development issues during the next 20 years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.
- ✓ **Objectives:** More specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. Accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.
- ✓ **Policies:** Rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Decision-makers use policies on a day-to-day basis.

Each chapter also includes a listing of possible programs that the Town might implement in order to advance the goals and objectives of this plan. The listing does not imply that the Town will utilize every programs shown, but only that these programs are available to the Town and may be one of many possible ways of achieving the Town's goals.

CHAPTER 2: NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter, the second of nine chapters of the Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan, is based on the statutory requirement [§66.1001(2)(e) Wis. Stats.] for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under §295.20(2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.

A. PAST PLANS

All planning efforts need to examine relevant previous plans about the community and the surrounding county. Those plans are discussed below:

Forest County Land and Water Resource Management Plan 2006-2011

This Plan provides a framework for local/state/federal conservation program implementation efforts. Implementation of this plan will help protect and improve the valuable water and soil natural resources in Forest County. Some of the plan's recommendations include replacing failing septic systems, reducing pollutants entering the waterways, and protecting and managing the area forests. A copy is available in the Forest County Land Conservation Department.

Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2007-2011

The primary purpose of this recreation plan is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreation needs of the County. This direction takes the form of an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities followed by establishing recommendations to meet identified needs. Adoption of this plan and its subsequent acceptance by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) allows for continued eligibility for financial assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON), the Stewardship Fund, and many other federal and state funding programs. Some of the recommendations of this plan include: continued expansion of non-motorized and multiple purpose trails, refurbishing the Otter Springs springhouse, and relocation consideration of the county fairgrounds. A copy is available in the Forest County Forestry Department.

Forest County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2006-2020

The mission of the County Forest is to manage, conserve and protect the natural resources within the county forest on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. The Plan contains information about forest resource planning, outdoor recreation planning, silvicultural practices, aesthetic management zones, trails and access control, biological communities, and wildlife species that exist within the county forest. A copy is available in the Forest County Forestry Department.

B. WATER RESOURCES INVENTORY

1. SURFACE WATER

Surface water resources support the area's economy by drawing tourists, and providing a good quality of life for residents.

Laona is part of several watersheds. The northern 1/3rd of the Town of Laona is located in the Upper Peshtigo River watershed, the middle 1/3rd lies within the Otter Creek and Rat River watershed, and the southern 1/3rd lies in 2 watersheds—Lily River, and Lower North Branch Oconto River. All of these watersheds drain into Lake Michigan.

Forest County Shoreland Zoning is in effect. Actual shoreland jurisdiction measurements are coordinated through the County Zoning Department. Refer to Natural Resources Map for water bodies in the Town.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERWs) share many of the same environmental and ecological characteristics. The primary difference between the two is that ORWs typically do not have any direct point sources discharging pollutants directly to the water. In addition, any pollutant load discharged to an ORW must meet background water quality at all times. Exceptions are made for certain types of discharge situations to ERWs to allow pollutant loads that are greater than background water quality when human health would otherwise be compromised.

Two area water bodies are listed as ORWs—Otter Creek (T36N R14E Sec 18 area), and the Peshtigo River. Five other area water bodies are listed as ERWs—all of Camp Eight Creek (T36N R14E Sec 10 area), Johnson Creek (T36N R14E Sections 17 & 20), Gruman Creek (T36N R15E Sec 5), Stoney Creek (T35N R15E Sec 3 area), and Camp Twenty Creek (T35N R15E Sec 7).

Impaired Waters

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop a list of impaired waters, commonly referred to as the "303(d) list." A water body is

considered impaired if a) the current water quality does not meet the numeric or narrative criteria in a water quality standard or b) the designated use that is described in Wisconsin Administrative Code is not being achieved. A documented methodology is used to articulate the approach used to list waters in Wisconsin. Every two years, states are required to submit a list of impaired waters to EPA for approval.

No water bodies in Town are listed as not meeting the standards set under the U.S. Clean Water Act, Section 303(d).

Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Forest County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. These species out compete native species and degrade habitats possibly by decreasing biodiversity from having less plant and animal species. Birch Lake (T36N R15E Sec 29) and Silver Lake (T36N R14E Sec 35) both have a boat launch in town, and both lakes have rusty crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*). Contact the County Land Conservation Department for public outreach education strategies.

2. WETLANDS

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of the hydrologic cycle and local ecological systems. In terms of hazard mitigation, they act as water storage devices in times of high water. Like sponges, wetlands are able to absorb excess water and release it back into the watershed slowly, preventing flooding and minimizing flood damage. As more impermeable surfaces are developed, this excess capacity for water runoff storage becomes increasingly important.

Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants ranging from pesticides to animal wastes. Calm wetland waters, with their flat surface and flow characteristics, allow particles of toxins and nutrients to settle out of the water column. Plants take up certain nutrients from the water. Other substances can be stored or transformed to a less toxic state within wetlands. As a result, the lakes, rivers and streams are cleaner.

Wetlands that filter or store sediments or nutrients for extended periods may undergo fundamental changes. Sediments will eventually fill in wetlands and nutrients will eventually modify the vegetation. Such changes may result in the loss of this function over time. Eradication of wetlands can occur through the use of fill material. This can destroy the hydrological function of the site and open the area to improper development. The WDNR has promulgated minimum standards for managing wetlands.

The wetlands shown for the Town of Laona were created from the WisDNR Wetlands Inventory. See the Natural Resources Map.

3. FLOODPLAINS

A floodplain is generally defined as land where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any year. The primary value of floodplains is their role in natural flood control. Flood plains represent areas where excess water can be accommodated whether through drainage by streams or through storage by wetlands and other natural detention/retention areas. Specific areas that will be inundated will depend upon the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, the areas shown on a map as floodplains should be able to handle the severest (regional) flood, i.e. those that have a probability of occurring once every one hundred years.

The 100-year floodplain was developed from the most current FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. See the Natural Resources Map.

4. GROUNDWATER & GEOLOGY

Groundwater is water that occupies void spaces between soil particles or cracks in the rock below the land surface. It originates as precipitation that infiltrated into the ground. The type of soil and bedrock that a well is drilled into often determines water's pH, saturation index, and the amount of hardness or alkalinity in water. The type of soil and bedrock in a region also determines how quickly contaminants can reach groundwater.

The majority of the Town lies within a glacial drift aquifer, which is the major source of ground water in most of the county. Large yields of ground water are available where the thickness of the saturated drift is at least 50 feet. Precambrian crystalline rock underlying the county is not considered a significant source of water. The availability of water from the bedrock is difficult to predict and is probably less than 5 gallons per minute. The glacial drift aquifer above the bedrock is the best source of ground water.

Susceptibility of groundwater to pollutants is defined here as the ease with which a contaminant can be transported from the land surface to the top of the groundwater called the water table. Many materials that overlie the groundwater offer good protection from contaminants that might be transported by infiltrating waters. The amount of protection offered by the overlying material varies, however, depending on the materials. Thus, in some areas, the overlying soil and bedrock materials allow contaminants to reach the groundwater more easily than in other areas of the state. Groundwater contamination susceptibility in Forest County is "most susceptible" based upon soil characteristics, surficial deposits, depth to water table, depth to bedrock, and type of bedrock.

Many land use activities have the potential to impact the quality of groundwater. A landfill may leach contaminants into the ground that end up contaminating groundwater. Gasoline may leak from an underground storage tank into groundwater. Fertilizers and pesticides can seep into the ground from application on farm fields, golf courses, or lawns. Leaking fluids from cars in junkyards, intentional dumping or accidental spills of paint, used motor oil, or other chemicals on the ground can result in contaminated groundwater.

Well yields within Forest County vary greatly from a few gallons to 1,000 gallons per minute.

Groundwater quality in Forest County and the Town of Laona is generally good. The aquifer water is principally a calcium magnesium bicarbonate type that is moderately hard or hard. A high content of iron is a problem in many wells, but it is not a health hazard.

The Laona Sanitary District does not have a wellhead protection plan or a wellhead protection ordinance.

Wellhead protection plans are developed to achieve groundwater pollution prevention measures within public water supply wellhead areas. A wellhead protection plan uses public involvement to delineate the wellhead protection area, inventory potential groundwater contamination sources, and manage the wellhead protection area. All new municipal wells are required to have a wellhead protection plan. A wellhead protection ordinance is a zoning ordinance that implements the wellhead protection plan by controlling land uses in the wellhead protection area.

C. LAND RESOURCES INVENTORY

1. FORESTS

Forests play a key role in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas like steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. Expansive forests provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development.

The pre-settlement composition of forestland in the Town of Laona was a mix of conifer and deciduous tree species that included white pine, red pine, yellow birch, sugar maple, hemlock, and beech.

All forests are dynamic, always changing from one stage to another, influenced by natural forces and humans. Changes can be subtle and occur over long periods, or can happen in seconds from a timber harvest, windstorm, or fire.

The Town of Laona contains parts of the Nicolet National Forest, which covers about half of Forest County.

Laona School District has a 63-acre school forest in Town (N1/2 NW1/4, Sec 6 T35N R15E). A school forest is an outdoor classroom on land owned or controlled by a public or private school, and is used for environmental education and natural resource management, which is registered through the state community forest program.

Some private woodlands in the county are enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL). This program provides a low annual tax rate per acre and requires a management plan for the property that must include some harvesting along with allowing some public uses based on acreage thresholds. When timber is harvested from MFL properties, a harvest tax is also assessed. This provides an incentive to keep woodlots in active production and allows some community access to the site in exchange for greatly reduced taxes. See the programs section at the end of this chapter for more detail on this program.

2. METALLIC & NON-METALLIC MINERAL RESOURCES

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources estimates that there could be no more than five metallic mineral mines developed in Wisconsin over the next twenty years (1997-2017). This includes the Flambeau Mine now in operation, the Crandon Project now owned by two tribes, the Lynne Project is being reconsidered in 2009, the Bend Project (west of Tomahawk) known but not yet under consideration, and one additional ore body not now known. This estimate is based on the current state of knowledge about the geology of northern Wisconsin and the steps necessary to discover an ore body and the time it takes to complete the regulatory requirements.

There are a number of quarries throughout the Town of Laona, as well as a few closed or inactive sites.

3. SOILS & PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS

According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook*, the Town of Laona between 1991-1993 was 5.6 percent agricultural, 75.2 percent forested, and 18.6 percent wetlands. The town's total land area is 103.4 square miles. Of the total land area, no land was used for row crops, 2.0 percent was used for foraging, and 3.6 percent was grassland.

In terms of farming trends, the town has lost 4.7 percent of farmland acreage on tax rolls between 1990 and 1997. According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook* there were 10 farms, none of which were dairy farms in 1997. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs and results in the least damage to the environment, see Natural Resources Map.

4. ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Environmentally sensitive areas are typically defined by the local jurisdiction and often include many of the areas referred to in this section such as special groundwater protection areas, threatened or endangered species habitat, floodplains, wetlands and other unique or special resources where encroachment or development could have negative consequences. The Town of Laona has not established a specific guideline for defining environmentally sensitive areas, however, some potentially sensitive areas are discussed below.

Steep slopes have a slope of 20 percent or greater, and are considered unsuitable for all types of urban development as well as for most types of agricultural uses. Steep slopes were identified from a digital USGS 30-meter digital elevation model (DEM).

Another type of area which might fall under the environmentally sensitive designation is contaminated or potentially contaminated sites in part because they may need special care or monitoring to prevent further environmental degradation or hazard to human life. The WDNR Internet database known as the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) lists 26 sites. The following sites were listed as “closed”:

- ERP Site: Connor Forest Ind Pit #2, NE ¼ SW ¼ Sec 33 T36N R1
- ERP Site: Connor Forest Ind Pit #4, N Birch Lake
- ERP Site: Connor Forest Ind Pit #1, Bellin
- ERP Site: Connor Forest Ind Pit #5, Section 22
- ERP Site: Connor Forest Ind Pit #3, Wabikon Lake
- ERP Site: Laona, Connor Mill Rd, Connor Mill Rd.
- LUST Site: Yaeger Oil, Hwy 32 & Hwy 8
- LUST Site: USFS Laona Station, Hwy 8 W
- LUST Site: Laona Tn Maintenance Shed, 4834 Birch St
- LUST Site: Nicolet Fuels, 4910 Mill St
- LUST Site: GTE North, Inc., Beech St
- LUST Site: Laurence Bud (Former) Excavating, CTH H
- LUST Site: Laona State Bank, 5308 Beech St
- LUST Site: Yaeger Oil Company, Inc., 4905 USH 8 & STH 32
- LUST Site: Yaeger Oil, USH 8 & Beech St SW corner
- Spill Site: On Grounds of GTE Telephone
- Spill Site: Hwy 8 & 32, HWY 8 & 32 Laona to Crandon
- Spill Site: Yaeger Oil, Hwy 32 & Hwy 8
- Spill Site: Wisconsin Public Service Corp., 4954 Mill St
- Spill Site: Sams Lake House, 5654 USH 8

LUST sites have contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer causing substances.

Spill sites are a discharge of a hazardous substance that may adversely impact, or threaten to impact public health, welfare or the environment.

ERP sites are sites other than LUSTs that have contaminated soil and/or groundwater.

All of these sites were remediated to DNR standards, and are available for use.

5. RARE SPECIES & NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The Town of Laona has 38 sections with occurrences of endangered resources (rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants & animals, and high-quality natural communities) as identified in the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory.

Wisconsin's biodiversity goals are to identify, protect and manage native plants, animals, and natural communities from the very common to critically endangered for present and future generations. Knowledge, appreciation, and stewardship of Wisconsin's native species and ecosystems are critical to their survival and greater benefit to society.

The Wisconsin Land Legacy Report 2006-2056, compiled by the WDNR, is a comprehensive inventory of the special places that will be critical to meet future conservation and outdoor recreation needs for the next fifty years. The report focused on identifying what areas of our state or regionally significant green infrastructure remains to be protected. Two Land Legacy Areas that exist in the Town of Laona are summarized below with 5 stars representing the highest level for that category:

LH Laona Hemlock Hardwoods

Size	Small	Protection Remaining	Substantial
Protection Initiated	Limited	Conservation Significance	☆☆☆☆☆
		Recreation Potential	☆☆

CN Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

Size	Large	Protection Remaining	Limited
Protection Initiated	Substantial	Conservation Significance	☆☆☆☆☆
		Recreation Potential	☆☆☆☆☆

The Laona Hemlock Hardwoods (LH) are locally known as the Connor Forest. It is interesting to note that the Connor Forest (Laona Hemlock Hardwoods) has been managed longer than the Nicolet side of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

6. HISTORICAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

A number of buildings in the Town appear on the Wisconsin Architectural History Inventory, including:

- Dutton House (5362 Linden St);
- Camp Five Farmstead (5466 Connor Farm Rd);
- Laona Ranger Dwelling (T36N R14E Sec 36); and

Camp Five Farmstead, now a museum, is on the Wisconsin and National Registers of Historic Places.

D. PROGRAMS

Natural, agricultural, and cultural resource programs available to the town are identified below. The following list is not all-inclusive. For specific program information, the agency or group that offers the program should be contacted.

Aquatic Habitat Protection Program: The WDNR provides basic aquatic habitat protection services. Staff members include Water Management (Regulation) Specialists, Zoning Specialists, Rivers (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission-FERC) Specialists, Lakes Specialists, Water Management Engineers, and their assistants (LTEs). The program assists with water regulation permits, zoning assistance, coordination of rivers, lake management, and engineering.

County Conservation Aids: Funds are available to carry out programs for fish or wildlife management projects as per §23.09 (12), Wis. Stats. and NR 50, Wis. Adm. Code. Projects related to providing improved fish or wildlife habitat or projects related to hunter/angler facilities are eligible. Projects that enhance fish and wildlife habitat or fishing and hunting facilities have priority. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Drinking Water and Groundwater Program: This WDNR program is responsible for assuring safe, high quality drinking water and for protecting groundwater. This is achieved by enforcing minimum well construction and pump installation requirements, conducting surveys and inspections of water systems, the investigation and sampling of drinking water quality problems, and requiring drinking water quality monitoring and reporting. A team of specialists, engineers, hydrogeologists, and a program expert and program assistants staff the program. WDNR staff provide assistance to public and private well owners to help solve water quality complaints and water system problems. They also provide interested citizens with informational or educational materials about drinking water supplies and groundwater.

Wisconsin Fund is a program by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Safety and Buildings Division. Grants are provided to homeowners and small commercial businesses to help offset a portion of the cost for the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing failing Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS). Eligibility is based upon several criteria, including household income and age of the structure. 66 counties out of Wisconsin's 72 counties, the City of Franklin, and the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin participate in the program. County government officials assist interested individuals in determining eligibility and in preparation of grant applications. A portion of the money appropriated by the state government for the program is set aside to fund experimental POWTS with the goal of identifying other acceptable technologies for replacement systems.

Endangered Resources Program: The WDNR's Endangered Resources staff provides expertise and advice on endangered resources. They manage the Natural Heritage Inventory Program (NHI), which is used to determine the existence and location of native plant and animal communities and Endangered or Threatened Species of Special Concern. The NHI helps identify and prioritize areas suitable for State Natural Area (SNA) designation, provides information needed for feasibility studies and master plans, and maintains the list of endangered and threatened species. All management activities conducted by Wildlife Management and Forestry staff must be reviewed to determine the impact on NHI-designated species. A permit for the incidental take of an Endangered or Threatened species is required under the State Endangered Species Law. The Endangered Resources Program oversees the permit process, reviews applications and makes permit decisions. Funding for the Endangered Species Program comes from a number of sources, including tax checkoff revenue, license plates, general program revenues (GPR), gaming revenue, Natural Heritage Inventory chargebacks, wild rice permits, general gifts and Pittman Robertson grants.

Fisheries Management Program: The WDNR funds this program primarily through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. The program assists with fishery surveys, fish habitat improvement/protection, and fish community manipulation. This program may also be used to fund public relations events and a variety of permitting and administrative activities involving fisheries.

Forest Management Program:

Funding for the forestry program is supported primarily by a fixed rate mill tax on all property in the State of Wisconsin. Other support is received from the federal government, from recreation fees, from sale of forest products, from sale of state produced nursery stock, forest tax law payments, and other miscellaneous sources. All activities of the Forestry Program help support efforts to promote and ensure the protection and sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests.

Private Forestry: The WDNR's goal is to motivate private forest landowners to practice sustainable forestry by providing technical forestry assistance, state and federal cost-sharing on management practices, sale of state produced nursery stock for reforestation, enrollment in Wisconsin's Forest Tax Law Programs, advice for the protection of endangered and threatened species, and assistance with forest disease and insect problems. Each county has at least one Department forester assigned to respond to requests for private forestland assistance. These foresters also provide educational programs for landowners, schools, and the general public. Both private and industrial forest landowners have enrolled their lands under the Managed Forest Law.

Managed Forest Law (MFL): The purpose of the MFL is to promote good forest management through property tax incentives. Management practices are required by way of an approved forest management plan. Landowners with a minimum of 10 contiguous acres (80% must be capable of producing merchantable timber) are eligible and may contract for 25 or 50 years. Open lands must allow hunting, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and sight-seeing, however, up to 80 acres may be closed to public access by the landowner. There is a 5% yield tax applied to any wood products harvested. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Program: This WDNR program is currently undergoing restructuring and being gradually replaced by short-term grants that will address specific projects rather than focusing on entire watersheds. The goal of this voluntary program is to improve and protect the water quality of surface waters and groundwater within the watershed. Landowners are encouraged to control nonpoint pollution on their properties through cost sharing of Best Management Practices. This program will be replaced by Targeted Runoff Management projects (TRM). These are projects that are more specific in nature and may last up to three years. They are scored on a competitive basis, based on the amount of pollutant control they will achieve and the degree of impairment of the location. One nonpoint source coordinator is located in the Rhinelander WDNR Service Center. This coordinator administers and oversees the priority watershed program and will also assist with the TRM grants. The coordinator also provides nonpoint source pollution advice to counties that are implementing their land and water plans.

Parks and Recreation Program: The WDNR gets its authority for administering the Parks and Recreation Program from Chapter 27 Wisconsin Statutes. This program provides assistance in the development of public parks and recreation facilities. Funding sources include: the general fund, the Stewardship Program, Land and Water Conservation fund (LAWCON), and the recycling fund, and program revenue funds.

Stewardship Grants for Nonprofit Conservation Organizations:

Nonprofit conservation organizations are eligible to obtain funding for the acquisition of land or easements for conservation purposes and restoration of wildlife habitat. Priorities include acquisition of wildlife habitat, acquisition of lands with special scientific or ecological value, protection of rare and endangered habitats and species, acquisition of stream corridors, acquisition of land for state trails including the Ice Age Trail and North Country Trail, and restoration of wetlands and grasslands. Eligible types of projects include fee simple and easement acquisitions and habitat restoration projects. All projects must be in a WDNR approved outdoor recreation plan. Contact the WDNR or NCWRPC for further information.

Wastewater Program: The Department of Natural Resources provides this program to address point and non-point source pollution control. Operating funds for this program come from the federal government's Clean Water Act funding as well as state general program revenues. The core work of this program involves the issuance of wastewater discharge permits that discharge directly to surface or groundwater and enforcing the requirements of these permits. The program closely monitors the impacts of industry, septic tanks, sludge, and stormwater on the environment. Pretreatment plants for wastewater are offered economic assistance and provided with plan review services before the facility is established.

Watershed Program: The WDNR seeks to protect wild and domestic animals, recreational activities, natural flora and fauna, agriculture, business, and other land uses through watershed management. Funds to run this program are provided by the federal government through Clean Water Act and through state general program revenues. The program assists with watershed planning, water quality monitoring and modeling, and development of water quality standards and policy.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP): The purpose of the WRP is to restore wetlands previously altered for agricultural use. The goal of the WRP is to restore wetland and wildlife habitats. Lands that have been owned for at least one year and can be restored to wetland conditions are eligible. Landowners may restore wetlands with permanent or 30-year easements or 10-year contracts. Permanent easements pay 100% of the agricultural value of the land and 100% cost-sharing; 30-year easements pay 75% of the agricultural value and 75% cost sharing; 10-year contract pays 75% cost share only. Permanent or 30-year easements are recorded with a property deed, however 10-year contracts are not. Public access is not required. Contact the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for further information.

Wildlife Management Program: The WDNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management oversees a complex web of programs that incorporate state, federal and local initiatives primarily directed toward wildlife habitat management and

enhancement. Programs include land acquisition, development and maintenance of State Wildlife Areas, and other wild land programs such as State Natural Areas. Wildlife Staff work closely with staff of state and county forests to maintain, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat. Wildlife Management staff conduct wildlife population and habitat surveys, prepare property needs analysis's, develop basin wildlife management plans and collaborate with other WDNR planning efforts such as Park, Forestry or Fishery Area Property Master Plans to assure sound habitat management. Funding comes from the federal government in the form of Endangered Species grants and Pittman-Robertson grants and from state government in the form of hunting and trapping license revenues, voluntary income tax contributions, general program revenue and Stewardship funds.

Wisconsin Historical Society, Office of Preservation Planning (OPP): The OPP can provide information on how to protect and preserve your own historic property, to implement grassroots strategies for preserving and protecting historic properties, and on state or federal laws and regulations that may be applicable to a given case.

D. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Goals:

1. Enhance and promote sustainable multiple use forest management to benefit the forest industry and improve opportunities for tourism based industry.
2. Conserve the unique “Northwoods” Character of the town while providing opportunities for development and use of the land to benefit industry, population growth, and economic opportunities.
3. Conserve the limited amount of economically productive agricultural land while providing for residential development needs.
4. Preserve, protect and enhance surface water quality within the Town by protecting shorelands and wetlands which provide the natural filters for surface water and protecting from invasive aquatic species introductions. Provide for proper and adequate accesses to lakes and streams for their tourism value. Preservation of water quality will preserve the tourism value of the water resources and maintain future potential of this industry.
5. Preserve and protect cultural, historic and archaeological sites for their historical value and potential for tourism based industries.

6. Preserve recreational areas for future uses and promote public accesses to these areas to benefit the tourism industry.
7. Preserve wildlife species population especially game species including white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, and black bear to benefit the tourism industry that they create.

Objectives:

1. Encourage **proper** forest management on National Forest Lands, Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Lands and Industrial Forest Lands within the Town of Laona. Maintain raw material supply by promotion of sustainable cutting levels **to the calculated annual allowable cut** on the National Forest Lands to support and promote growth in the established timber industry.
2. Encourage **multiple use** forest management on all forest land including uses such as standard multiple uses including hunting, fishing, hiking, and biking as well as wildlife management for game species and motorized recreation including snowmobiles and ATV's to create opportunities to diversify our economy into the tourism based industries.
3. Discourage forest management set-asides which limit raw material supply and limit recreational value of lands. Examples of these forest management strategies include non-motorized areas, wilderness areas, ecosystem comparative areas, or other set-aside management options.
4. Encourage withdrawal of MFL lands and promote natural resource friendly development in forest land areas which have proper infrastructure such as areas with developed town roads, water and sewer, and established electric and phone services to benefit permanent population development. This practice will also natural resources in areas without infrastructure.
5. Discourage forest fragmentation in areas without infrastructure and discourage small lot development in large tract forested areas to retain the "Northwoods" Character of these areas. This practice will also maintain raw material supplies from Industrial and MFL Lands.
6. Discourage subdivision and development of our limited amount of productive agricultural land to preserve future productive needs for food sources from local markets.
7. Promote preservation of limited amounts of remaining undeveloped shoreland while maintaining property owner rights and development

value. Support Wisconsin Wetland Laws and Codes to protect wetland filtration values.

8. Provide adequate, natural resource friendly water access points to all lakes and streams and landings to maintain public use of water resources and maintain the tourism industry value.
9. Discourage introduction of aquatic invasive species by providing education and support to lake associations in their efforts to limit this disturbance to the surface waters.
10. Identify cultural, historical, and archaeology resources within the Town including study and identification of their historical significance Protect significant cultural, historical, and archaeology resources and utilize data on these resources to benefit the tourism industry.
11. Identify areas within the Town which have inherit recreational value for future generations. Protect these areas for public use while maintaining property owner rights. Develop accesses to these areas to promote the tourism industry.
12. Encourage natural resource management practices that have a positive impact on game species and all wildlife species to their tourism values.

Policies:

1. Establish and approve at a Town Board Meeting and Town Annual Meeting an official request to National Forest, Industrial Forest Land, and Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Land owners in the Town of Laona requesting that any and all management decisions maintain harvest levels on their lands at the calculated annual allowable cut for sustainable forestry to benefit a sustained raw material flow for industry in the Town of Laona. Establish a requirement for any and all land management plans to be provided, reviewed, and approved by the Town of Laona Plan Commission. Work cooperatively with the County Board to include these policies in the County record.
2. Establish and approve at a Town Board Meeting and Town Annual Meeting an official request to National Forest and Industrial Forest Land owners in the Town of Laona requesting that any and all management decisions provide for active multiple use management with emphasis on timber production and recreational forest use including hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, snowmobiling, ATVing, and wildlife management for game species to benefit the tourism industry in the Town of Laona. Establish a requirement for any and all land management plans or plan changes to be

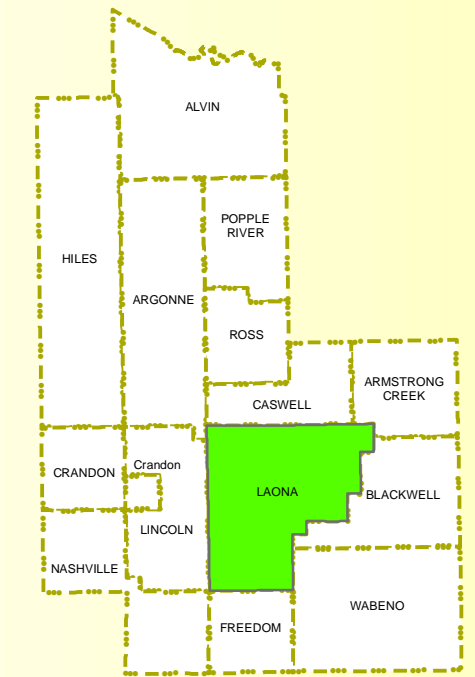
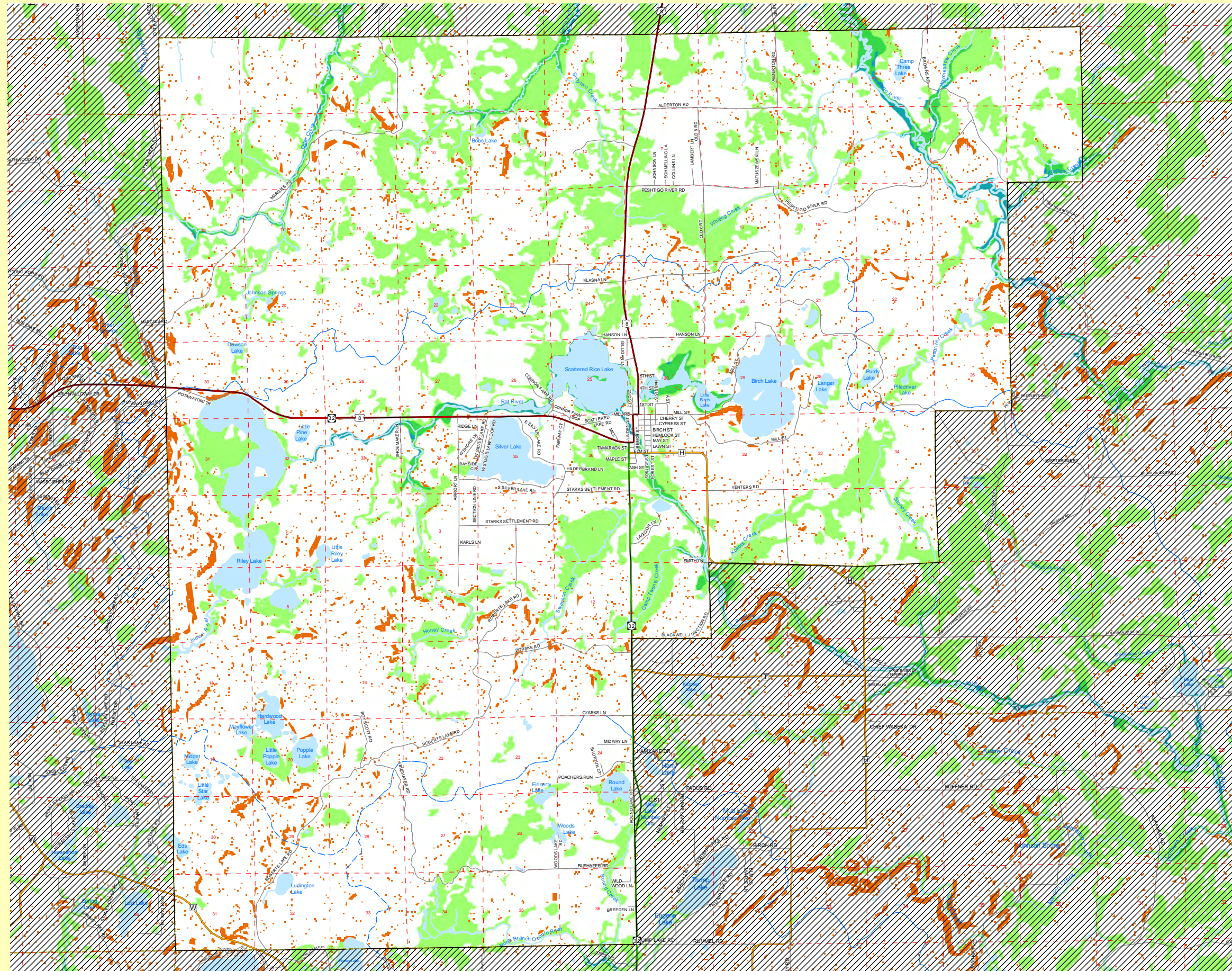
provided, reviewed, and approved by the Town of Laona Plan Commission. Work cooperatively with the County Board to include these policies in the County record.

3. Establish and approve at a Town Board Meeting and Town Annual Meeting an official policy for the Town of Laona to officially stand against any land management practices on the Nicolet National Forest or Industrial Forest Land in the Town of Laona which limits raw material timber supply or limits recreational value of land including but not limited to establishment of non-motorized areas, establishment of wilderness areas, establishment of ecosystem comparative areas, or any other management option which limits raw material timber supply or motorized use within the Town of Laona.
4. Identify Wisconsin Managed Forest Law lands within the Town of Laona which have established infrastructure including a minimum of 3 of the following within ½ mile of the property: paved Town Roads or County Roads, electrical service, phone service, water and sewer, school bus service, or garbage collection. Establish and approve at a Town Board Meeting and Town Annual Meeting an official request to Wisconsin Managed Forest Law land owners within these areas approving withdrawal of these lands for subdivision and development and promotion of natural resource friendly development. Establish an official policy to stand against any additional MFL enrollments within these areas during the MFL application process.
5. Identify areas outside of the area as established in #4 above and establish a land division policy which limits forest fragmentation in these areas by requiring lot sizes greater than 5 acres and deed restrictions against MFL enrollment for subdivided property. Allow subdivision of less than 5 acres if subdivision has deed restrictions on a minimum habitable structure size of 1500 square feet or more. Promote forest management by education of landowners and establish required review and approval for forest management plans in these areas by the Town of Laona Planning Commission. Provide information to landowners in these areas on the Wisconsin Managed Forest Law to promote proper forest management.
6. Identify areas of established agricultural areas. Discourage subdivision of these properties if there are more than 5 lots available for sale within 1 mile of these areas. Provide information for the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative for the landowners of these agricultural lands to preserve these lands.
7. Identify undeveloped shorelands within the Town of Laona that have the potential for development. Develop a prioritized plan for acquisition of

these lands to preserve them for public use. Research grant opportunities for these potential acquisitions.

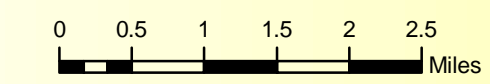
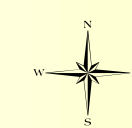
8. Identify wetlands and wetland soils within the Town of Laona. Review building permits and subdivision for presence of wetlands and provide information on requirements of Wisconsin Wetlands Law for owners of wetland areas.
9. Identify lake and stream access points currently utilized by the public. Identify the ownership of the land where there are established access points. Develop a prioritized plan for acquisition of these lands to preserve them for public use. Research grant opportunities for these potential acquisitions. Establish landings and access points that account for preservation of water quality in their design. Provide support to lake associations to educate the public on invasive aquatic species.
10. Identify known cultural, historical, and archaeology resources within the Town of Laona by checking with the State Historical Society and the USFS. Develop a plan for the study of the significance of all sites within the Town of Laona to determine their importance for protection. Identify ownership of land with significant sites that are not under the protection of the National Historic Preservation Act. Develop a prioritized plan for acquisition of these lands to preserve them for their historic value. Research grant opportunities for these potential acquisitions. Establish interpretive trails and buildings which capitalize on the historic value of these properties and support the tourism industry.
11. Identify un-established recreation sites including but not limited to picnic sites, trails (motorized and unmotorized), camping sites and potential camp sites and waterfowl hunting areas, currently utilized by the public. Identify the ownership of the land where there are established access points. If the lands are in private ownership, develop a prioritized plan for acquisition or development of these lands or work with the landowners and public agencies to preserve these sites for public use. Research grant opportunities for these potential acquisitions and development. If the lands are in public ownership, request development of these sites to support the tourism industry.
12. Establish and approve at a Town Board Meeting and Town Annual Meeting an official policy for the Town of Laona to support land management practices on the Nicolet National Forest, Industrial Forest Land or any other land in the Town of Laona which provide for habitat improvements for white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, black bear and waterfowl. Support efforts to improve wildlife habitat by organizations including but not limited to the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Wild Turkey Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, and Trout Unlimited which improve wildlife

habitat while promoting active forest management. Establish a policy to provide Town buildings to these organizations at no cost for fund raising activities. This practice will support both the timber and tourism industry.



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Section Lines
- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Water
- Steep Slopes
- Wetlands
- Watershed Boundaries
- Flood Plain



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, FEMA

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

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CHAPTER 3: HOUSING

This housing chapter is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001 (2)(b) Wis. Stats.], this chapter provides a basic housing stock assessment and identifies policies and programs that promote the development of housing for all residents of the Town including a range of choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups and special needs; that promotes the availability of land for low-income housing; and that maintains the existing housing stock.

A. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ANALYSIS

The housing affordability analysis is done to give an idea of how many households are spending more than is expected on housing. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), affordable housing are houses, mobile homes, apartments, or condominiums available for rent or purchase at 30 percent or less of annual income.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition assembles a yearly list of estimates of the income required to afford housing using this "cost-burden" standard for localities across the country. This report focuses on rental housing, but can be broadly applied to owner-occupied housing as well. The report calculates that for the state as a whole, a full-time worker must earn \$12.80 an hour in order to be able to afford a two-bedroom apartment. A full time worker in Forest County must earn \$11.38 per hour to afford the two-bedroom apartment. For a worker earning the average wage of \$6.96 an hour, this means working 65 hours every week to afford the apartment.

Laona has 19.8% of renters who are paying 30% or more of their household income on rent and utilities, as compared with 32.3% at the state level. About 20.5% of home owners in Laona are paying 30% or more of their household income on monthly home ownership costs, as compared with 7.0% at the state level. These numbers show that rent is affordable in Laona, but affordable home ownership is more difficult to achieve.

B. HOUSING STOCK ASSESSMENT

1. AGE CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 9 indicates the age of the housing stock in the Town of Laona area that is based on the year the structures were built as reported in the 2000 Census. About 22 percent of Laona's housing units were built before 1940, and again between 1940-1960. Housing was constructed up and down in the decades following 1959, with about 20 percent of housing being built in the 1970s.

Many surrounding towns have a smaller percentage of their housing remaining from before 1940 than Laona, except for Wabeno with 33% built before 1940.

	1939 or earlier	1940-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-2000
Town of Laona	186	190	78	160	85	134
Town of Blackwell	21	38	8	8	22	25
Town of Wabeno	282	129	56	95	92	193
Town of Armstrong Creek	73	129	42	53	41	101
Town of Caswell	30	46	26	8	7	38
Town of Lincoln	38	165	75	158	172	405
Town of Freedom	44	110	73	66	39	109
Forest County	1,524	1,608	820	1,425	994	1,951
Wisconsin	543,164	470,862	276,188	391,349	249,789	389,792

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2. OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 10 breaks down the occupancy status of housing units in the Town of Laona. About ¼ of the homes in Laona are seasonally used, which is no surprise since this area is known as Up North to visitors statewide. Owner occupancy is about 51% of housing in Laona, with surrounding towns rates of 31% in Blackwell, 45% in Wabeno, 44% in Armstrong Creek, 23% in Caswell, 34% in Lincoln, 33% in Freedom, and 38% countywide.

TABLE 10 Residential Occupancy Status, 2000

	Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant Units	
					Seasonal (Part of Vacant Units)
Town of Laona	850	437	127	286	225
Town of Blackwell	116	36	9	71	64
Town of Wabeno	845	378	119	348	296
Town of Armstrong Creek	422	187	20	215	184
Town of Caswell	156	36	5	115	105
Town of Lincoln	998	338	66	594	574
Town of Freedom	435	144	14	277	266
Forest County	8,322	3,188	855	4,279	3,856
Wisconsin	2,321,144	1,426,361	658,183	236,600	142,313

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3. STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The vast majority of housing units in the Town of Laona are of single-family homes (83.5%); see TABLE 11. There is also a small variety of multiple unit housing within the Town (7.1%), with Wabeno having the same percentage. Laona and Lincoln have the same percentage (8%) of mobile homes, which is less than forest county as a whole.

Beech Apartments is for elderly housing. The building contains 8 units; 4 units with 1-bedroom, and 4 units with 2-bedroom. USDA—Rural Development constructed this building on Beech St in downtown Laona.

_____ Manor Apartments is for family housing. The building contains 16 units. Laona Housing Limited Partnership constructed and manages this building on Cherry St in downtown Laona.

Castle Apartments is for family housing. The building contains 4 units; all of which have 2-bedrooms. USDA—Rural Development constructed this building on Spruce St in downtown Laona.

Harris Street Apartments is for family housing. The building contains 12 units; 2 units with 1-bedrooms, 6 units with 2-bedrooms, and 4 units with 3-bedrooms. USDA—Rural Development constructed this building on Cherry St in downtown Laona.

TABLE 11 Housing Units by Structural Type, 2000

	Single-family	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%	Other	%	Total
Town of Laona	695	83.5	59	7.1	67	8.0	12	1.4	833
Town of Blackwell	90	73.8	2	1.6	28	23.0	2	1.6	122
Town of Wabeno	676	79.8	63	7.4	102	12.0	6	0.7	847
Town of Armstrong Creek	374	85.2	--	--	65	14.8	--	--	439
Town of Caswell	126	81.2	--	--	29	18.7	--	--	155
Town of Lincoln	898	88.7	21	2.1	81	8.0	13	1.3	1,013
Town of Freedom	381	86.4	8	1.8	52	11.8	--	--	441
Forest County	6,807	81.8	392	4.7	1,055	12.7	68	0.8	8,322

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

4. VALUE CHARACTERISTICS

The year 2000 median value of housing stock in the Town of Laona is below Forest County's median. See TABLE 12 for more details. About half of Laona house values are in the \$50,000–\$99,999 range; which is similar for Wabeno.

TABLE 12 Housing Values, 2000

	<\$50,000	\$50,000 to 99,999	\$100,000 to 149,999	\$150,000 to 199,999	\$200,000 to 299,999	\$300,000 and up	Median Value
Town of Laona	29.4%	49.9%	10.7%	6.5%	3.0%	0.6%	\$67,200
Town of Blackwell	57.1%	28.6%	14.3%	--	--	--	\$45,000
Town of Wabeno	31.1%	50.9%	11.1%	5.2%	1.7%	--	\$63,800
Town of Armstrong Creek	34.1%	45.5%	17.0%	--	3.4%	--	\$61,500
Town of Caswell	--	78.9%	10.5%	--	10.5%	--	\$86,300
Town of Lincoln	8.3%	41.7%	22.7%	11.2%	14.5%	1.6%	\$100,000
Town of Freedom	11.6%	47.7%	22.1%	12.8%	4.7%	1.2%	\$91,100
Forest County	22.9%	48.3%	16.3%	6.3%	5.4%	0.7%	\$77,400
Wisconsin	6.5%	35.4%	30.6%	15.5%	8.5%	3.5%	\$112,200

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

C. PROGRAMS

Various organizations offer a variety of programs to assist with the purchase, rehabilitation, or construction of housing. Many of these programs are listed below:

North East Wisconsin Community Action Program (NEWCAP) is a non-profit organization headquartered in Oconto, but with a branch in Crandon. NEWCAP administers the Section 8 (housing voucher) program for the County, as well as WHEAP (energy assistance), and a weatherization program that performs roughly thirty energy-efficiency improvement projects for qualified homeowners every year in Forest County. NEWCAP also administers a homeownership and rehabilitation revolving loan program. Zero percent down-payment loans are available. The loans are repaid when the property is sold and the money can be loaned out again. Loans are also made for rehabilitation projects. NEWCAP has recently been accredited by HUD to provide foreclosure counseling, as well.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) can be used to provide affordable housing. Rural communities and non-urban counties can receive grants through the Department of Administration, Division of Housing & Intergovernmental Relations (DHIR) if their requests conform to the State Consolidated Housing Plan. States set their own standards for awarding CDBG funding, but are required to award at least 70 percent of these funds for activities that will benefit low-and-moderate-income persons. Communities are allowed great latitude in how CDBG funds can be used, including land acquisition, housing rehabilitation, and in certain circumstances new construction, direct assistance to homeowners such as down-payment assistance or revolving loan funds for first-time buyers, concentrated building code enforcement, and planning and administrative expenses. There is a range of programs that can be utilized in the form of CDBG grants to foster affordable housing.

Multi-Family Housing Rentals: The USDA Rural Development Department subsidizes over 15,000 section 515 rural multi-family apartment complexes throughout the 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. Properties are classified as Elderly or Family and provide unit sizes from studio to 4 bedroom. The properties are serviced by approved Management Agencies who provide required annual tenant certification processing for their residents. There are 9 rental properties developed under this program in Crandon, Laona, and Wabeno.

Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Grant: This program is administered by the Rural Housing Service of the USDA Rural Development Department. Seniors aged 62 and older may obtain a grant for rehabilitating their home provided they are below 50% of the area median income and are unable to procure affordable credit elsewhere.

Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Loan: Also administered by USDA, this program is a loan for rehabilitation provided applicants meet the same standards as the grant above.

Rural Housing Guaranteed Loan: USDA also offers this loan that is used to help low-income individuals or households purchase homes in rural areas. Funds can be used to build, repair, renovate or relocate a home, or to purchase and prepare sites, including providing water and sewage facilities.

Rural Housing Direct Loan: USDA-Rural Development also offers this loan to provide financing at reasonable rates and terms with no down payment. The loan is intended for low-income individuals or households to purchase homes in rural areas. Funds can be used to build, repair, renovate or relocate a home, or to purchase and prepare sites, including providing water and sewage facilities.

Rural Housing Direct Loan: USDA-Rural Development uses this program to help very low- and low-income households construct their own homes. The program is targeted to families who are unable to buy clean, safe housing through conventional methods.

HUD's FHA Loan: This program is administered by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department and offers a low down payment of 3% mortgage loan for home purchase or construction for selected applicants under certain income limits.

HUD Insured Loans for Condominiums, Energy Efficiency, Special Credit Risks, and Rehabilitation: These programs are administered by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department. HUD will insure selected applicants under certain income limits when procuring loans for rehabilitation or for rehabilitation at the time of purchase.

FHA HUD 203(k) Home Rehabilitation Loan Program: Whereas HUD desires to see current housing stock rehabilitated, this program provides owner occupants of existing homes, or intended owner occupants who are looking to purchase a home, readily available mortgage money to refinance/rehabilitate or purchase/rehabilitate their homes, respectively.

VA Home Loans: These loans, administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, are often made without any down payment at all, and frequently offer lower interest rates than ordinarily available with other kinds of loans. These loans may be used for purchase or construction up to \$240,000.

HOME Loans: The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) offers federal HOME Investment Partnership Program loans with a low, fixed interest rate to help low- and moderate-income individuals and families buy a home.

D. Goals, Objectives, & Policies

Although the town has not historically played a role in housing, it supports equal opportunity housing, and understands the importance of sound housing stock for its residents and the community as a whole. A review of housing stock assessment information has led to the establishment of the following housing policy statement:

Goals:

1. Promote housing development that provides a variety of housing choices for residents of all income levels, age groups, and people with special needs.
2. Promote the availability of development land for residential development and promote development of permanent residences to increase the population and moderate the work force.
3. Promote maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housings as appropriate.
4. Promote housing quality by providing assistance in removal of substandard buildings and unsafe buildings.
5. Improve infrastructure for establishment of residential housing and multiple family housing units where appropriate.

Objectives:

1. Identify land within the Town of Laona more than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from commercial and industrial lands which have established infrastructure including a minimum of 3 of the following within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the property: paved Town Roads or County Roads, electrical service, phone service,

water and sewer, school bus service, or garbage collection. Promote housing developments within these areas by establishment of a land use map to promote these developments. Discourage non-housing development areas best suited for housing.

2. Identify areas within walking distance of the commercial district which are large enough to develop multiple family residences. Identify these areas on a land use map as multiple family zones. Promote development of multiple family development by development companies and pursue and support grant opportunities for development of these areas.
3. Identify original plat map lots which are substandard size for residential construction. Promote combination of substandard sized lots by contacting land owners and providing incentives for combining lots.

Policies:

1. Identify areas with highest potential for residential development and designate those areas as residential on future land use map.
2. Promote housing programs that assist residents with maintaining or rehabilitating existing housing units.
3. Encourage withdrawal of MFL lands and subdivision of those lands in high value residential areas.
4. Encourage residential developers to provide multiple family residential development in areas best suited and identify these areas on future land use maps.
5. Provide developers information about residential development which is natural resource friendly.
6. Provide developers information on Wisconsin Wetland Laws.
7. Identify homes with substandard exteriors and provide information on grant programs for home improvement to the owners of these properties.
8. Identify residences which do not meet code or are vacant and non-livable. Provide possible assistance to landowners for removal of these homes which in turn will provide building sites.

CHAPTER 4: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This is the fourth of nine chapters of the Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan. It is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide future development of utilities and community facilities. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001(2)(d) Wis. Stats.], this element inventories existing public utilities and community facilities and assesses future needs for such services including those beyond the control of the Town located outside the community and/or under another jurisdiction.

A. INVENTORY & ANALYSIS OF EXISTING FACILITIES

1. WATER AND WASTEWATER FACILITIES

The Town of Laona has a public water supply system and sanitary sewer service that cover downtown Laona. The remainder of town relies on individual private wells and private on-site septic systems. Neither a wellhead protection plan, nor a wellhead protection ordinance exist for the municipal water supply. See the Utilities map to view the general area serviced by sewer and water.

3. SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING FACILITIES

Laona maintains a waste & recycling transfer site that is located south of Elm Street and next to, but screened from, the Nicolet State Trail.

4. POWER, FUEL, AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES

Electrical service is provided by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation. Liquid petroleum (LP gas) is available for home and business delivery from several vendors. Natural gas service is available throughout Town.

The American Transmission Company (ATC) was created in 1998 by a consortium of Wisconsin electric utility companies to own and manage transmission infrastructure in the state. Needs and limitations in ATC's transmission network are assessed in an on-going basis to provide reliable electric transmission to all customers.

Laona is in the Northern Zones Umbrella Plan, which is divided into two phases. Phase 1 projects are ATC's most effective means to address needs and issues from both system performance and cost perspectives. The conceptual Phase 2 projects are what ATC believes will meet the long-term needs in the area, but will require further analyses.

Phase 2 projects in Laona:

- Construct a new 345 kV transmission line between power plants in Wausau and Presque Isle. The potential path through Forest County could parallel USH 8.
- Rebuild or construct a new 69 kV or 138 kV line between Goodman and Laona.

Telephone service is provided by CenturyLink, and Charter Communications. DSL broadband telecommunication service exists within much of Laona. Cable television service is provided by Packerland.

5. PARKS, AND RECREATION

The Town of Laona maintains the following parks **in bold**:

Silver Lake Park is a 3-acre park located on the northeast side of Silver Lake. Facilities in the park include: a swimming beach, basketball court, two shelters with picnic tables, volleyball court, restrooms, benches, and grills.

Laona Town Park is a 2-acre picnic area located on the north side of downtown, along the east side of USH 8, and south of Mill Road.

Centennial Park is next to the Town Hall, and contains a shelter, grills, benches, a centennial time capsule, and a playground.

Heritage Park is a ball field next to the Nicolet State Trail on Highway H.

Fireman's Memorial is private lot with a memorial to firefighters on it, along with boulders, and a gazebo for the public to use.

Shooting Range is in the former Laona dump at the end of Klasna Lane, north of downtown.

An unimproved boat landing exists on private land that allows public access to Scattered Rice Lake at the Rat River and Connor Farm Road. One boat landing on the west side of Silver Lake in Laona is maintained by the Town.

Laona School Complex in downtown Laona has a baseball field, football field, and two tennis courts on the east side of the property. The west side of the school has basketball courts, and a playground that is used by the whole community during non-school hours. The Laona library is within the school.

Laona School Forest is a 63 acre parcel south of downtown that is used by high school classes for environmental education.

Nicolet Country Club includes an 18-hole golf course, driving range, practice green, putting green and professionally stocked pro-shop on USH 8 and accessible from Fairway Court. Most of the golf course operates on land is owned by the Town of Laona through a 20-year lease.

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, within Laona, has one canoe landing, one boat landing, and the following trail:

- Ed's Lake Trail—This trail is located on County Highway W in the southwest corner of Laona. Groomed cross country ski trails, and hiking and mountain biking trails exist.

In addition to designated trails, all logging roads and undesignated/unmarked trails within the National Forest are open to non-motorized public use unless otherwise posted.

6. EDUCATION

The Nicolet Technical College, located in Rhinelander, serves the town.

Laona Public Library is located within the Laona school buildings in downtown.

The Laona area has approximately 1 regulated group child care center.

The Laona School District serves the town and residents in the adjoining towns of Caswell, Ross, and Popple River.

6. EMERGENCY AND MEDICAL SERVICES

Police protection in the Town of Laona is provided by the Laona Police Department, and the Forest County Sheriff's Department.

The Wisconsin State Patrol, located in Wausau, has statewide jurisdiction on all public roads but operates mainly on State and U.S. highways as a matter of general practice to enforce traffic and criminal laws, and help motorists in need. They also help local law enforcement by reconstructing traffic accidents; inspecting trucks, school buses, and ambulances; and helping local agencies with natural disasters and civil disturbances.

The Laona Volunteer Fire Department station is also the Laona Senior Citizens Center in upper town on Main Street (west side of USH 8, just south of Mill Road). The fire department cooperates with the Forest Service to cooperatively cover all lands in Laona, and mutual aid exists with all surrounding communities and Goodman. Caswell contracts with Laona for fire department service. Downtown Laona in the water district currently holds an ISO rating of __ for fire response, with the rest of town having an ISO rating of __. An ISO

rating of 1 represents the best protection and 10 represents an essentially unprotected community.

Rescue service is provided by volunteers with Laona Rescue Inc., and the rescue vehicle is located in the fire department station.

St Mary's Hospital in Rhinelander provides 24-hour emergency service and critical care to Laona residents.

Laona Clinic, on Mill Road and USH 8, is used by Laona residents.

7. OTHER GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

The local road system is the most significant public facility maintained by the Town and is covered in the Transportation Element.

The town hall is located at the intersection of Pine and Linden Streets. The town garage is on Beech Street. The municipal center is on Linden Street, just south of Mill Road. The municipal building is attached to the fire department. There is a meeting room, kitchen, and rest rooms within the municipal building that the Laona Senior Citizens use as a meal center. There is a need for a larger community room, and a trail head facility for the new Nicolet State Trail that now passes behind the Town Hall.

Laona Cemetery, on Cemetery Lane, is maintained by the town. Plenty of land remains for over 20 years of future use.

A U.S. Post Office exists in uptown Laona, just north of USH 8 on Linden Street, facing the front doors to the grocery store. A sign on USH 8 pointing toward the post office would assist visitors with finding it.

Historically, there was a district heating system of steam pipes in the downtown area that was a precursor to natural gas service. A biomass boiler burned wood waste at the mill to create steam for electricity and for heating the local hospital, all the houses at that time, and the mill (now WD Flooring & Nicolet Hardwoods).

B. PROGRAMS

Providing public infrastructure—roads, sewer and water service, schools, police and fire protection—is one of the major functions of local government. In addition to these public services, both public and private entities provide electricity and telephone service as well as such specialized services as child-care, health-care, and solid-waste disposal. Taken together these constitute the utilities and community facilities that represent much of the backbone of

modern life. Beyond what these facilities do for us, they also represent a huge investment of public and private resources.

The efficient utilization of these resources is one of the basic principles of comprehensive planning. Already in-place infrastructure is a public asset that must be safeguarded for the future, both to conserve and protect environmental values and to maximize the benefits of economic growth. Development that bypasses or ignores existing infrastructure resources is wasteful of the public investment that they represent. Development patterns that require the extension of utilities and the expansion of public facilities while existing facilities go unused at other locations is probably not the best use of scarce public resources.

Both the state and federal governments offer programs that assist communities with the development of critical infrastructure and facilities. These programs are listed in more detail in the Economic Development chapter of this plan.

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

Goals:

1. Provide and improve public services (waste management, road maintenance, fire service, rescue service, and police service) to meet existing and future demand for residential, commercial, and industrial landowners.
2. Provide and improve town equipment including roads equipment, park maintenance equipment, fire equipment, police equipment, and rescue equipment. These improvements will insure reliability of service and will promote maintenance of a quality work force to provide services.
3. Provide and improve trails and sidewalks, parks and recreational sites, storm water management system, community cemetery, and building facilities to meet existing and future demand for uses. These improvements will promote the tourism and timber industries as well as make the Town of Laona more desirable for permanent residential development and increased permanent populations.
4. Improve and update water and sewer facilities to improve water quality and sewer reliability. Expand water and sewer size and area to benefit larger area, increase the number of customers, protect surface water quality, promote residential development, and provide services for a larger industrial area.

5. Research and promote development of biomass and other renewable energies to benefit the timber industry which has potential of being a major fuel supplier.
6. Cooperate with electric utility providers and request utility expansion when and where needed.
7. Cooperate with cable TV and internet service providers to provide high quality service and broadband internet service to promote technology business development.
8. Maintain current cooperative agreements for service (fire and rescue with Caswell) and equipment sharing with neighboring towns and Indian Tribes and proceed with potential expansion of those agreements into other areas including potential of road maintenance, police service, and park and trail maintenance.

Objectives:

1. Continue operation of curb side garbage pick-up and recycling center, local road maintenance crew, park maintenance crew, local fire department, local rescue unit, library and local community police department at current or increased level for current and future populations as long as services are economically feasible.
2. Provide improvement of road conditions by increasing annual paving to meet deterioration rates. Establish a system for tree maintenance in right-of-ways including pruning, maintenance, and removals. Increase paving thickness in areas of industrial development to meet road demands.
3. Increase waste management services to include demolition waste site and brush and yard waste site on Town property to meet demands of the residents and protect the forest land from illegal dumping.
4. Maintain current equipment level including town road maintenance equipment, park maintenance equipment, police equipment, and rescue equipment. Create a system to continually replace and improve equipment reliability and quality to insure reliable service and maintenance of quality people to operate the equipment and reduce repair costs
5. Provide paved trails or sidewalks that allow pedestrian and bicycle access to local businesses, school and parks from all parts of the established town. Provide a paved trail or sidewalk that allows

pedestrian and bicycle access between the established Town, the Camp 5 Depot, Silver Lake Inn Motel and Silver Lake Beach. These trails will promote healthy lifestyles, walking, and bicycling to utilize Town recreational facilities as well as promote the tourism industry.

6. Provide unpaved ATV and Snowmobile access from all parts of the Township to local businesses and residences. Work cooperatively with landowners and trail clubs to establish this trail system.
7. Maintain current established parks and make improvements as funding allows. Establish a system for tree maintenance in the parks including pruning, maintenance, and removals. Establish a rotation for tree replacement and plantings of un-utilized areas. Establish additional parks on identified recreational sites and shorelands where funding allows. Establish additional boat landings and lake and river access points where possible and where funding allows.
8. Maintain and improve current storm water management system. Establish a storm water management plan to protect water quality for new projects. Improve current storm water system to utilize seepage ponds and overland flow to reduce surface water quality degradation.
9. Maintain and improve community cemetery. Establish official cemetery regulations for placement of permanent plants and statues. Establish a system for tree maintenance in the cemetery including pruning, maintenance, and removals. Establish a rotation for tree replacement and plantings of un-utilized areas prior to lot sales. Establish a computerized system to track cemetery lot ownership including computerized mapping of lots established.
10. Maintain and improve Town buildings including installation of energy efficient windows and doors as well as energy efficient appliances and heating systems. Investigate renewable energy systems for Town buildings including solar, wind, or biomass systems. Improve handicap accessibility for all Town buildings.
11. Pursue construction of a new community building to provide a centralized, handicap accessible building of adequate size to meet current demand for fund raising, weddings, reunions and events to alleviate the need for utilization of the current fire station for these events. This building location should have adequate parking, be visible from the highway, accessible by automobile, accessible by pedestrian traffic and accessible by recreational trails to allow for maximization of use and potential. Ideal location would also have close access to established parks and playgrounds for outside event possibilities.

12. Maintain and update current water and sewer facilities. Inventory current system and update system needs. Create a wellhead protection plan and ordinance to protect the current water supply, establish a secondary wellhead to insure supply. Create a plan for expansion of the water and sewer system into new areas to increase the number of customers.
13. Promote development and establishment of biomass fuel plant, biomass electric generation plant, wind generation facility, or solar generation facility to become more self sufficient on energy production and promote the potential fuel sources in our area.
14. Continue cooperation with electric providers in location of transmission lines. Identify additional needs to the electric utility as they become apparent.
15. Continue to cooperate with cable TV and internet service providers in location of lines on right-of-ways. Promote expansion of broadband internet service and fiber optic services in the Town of Laona.
16. Continue current cooperative agreements for service (fire and rescue with Caswell) and equipment sharing with neighboring towns and Indian Tribes as the potential arises. Contact neighboring towns as possible to promote potential expansion of those agreements into other areas including potential of road maintenance, police service, and park and trail maintenance.

Policies:

1. Review costs of services provided every year at the Annual Town Budget Meeting. Establish as policy at the Annual Town Meeting to provide all services until no longer economically feasible. Rank service requirements in the following order: #1 Fire and Rescue, #2 Roads Maintenance, #3 Police Department, #4 Park Maintenance, #5 Recycling Center, #6 Park Maintenance, #7 Library, #8 Curb-side garbage pick-up as funding becomes limited with higher cost, make cuts at the lowest ratings first. Pursue grant funding, cost share programs, or cost saving measures to maintain all services.
2. Establish a policy at the Annual Town Meeting to maintain current budgeting level in the capital expense line item- road repair to provide a budget for a minimum of 1 mile of pavement replacement per year with a minimum pavement thickness of 2” as long as the Town can meet the State mandated levy cap. This policy should also include reducing the length of the road required for roads with industrial traffic and when those

roads require pavement replacement install a minimum pavement thickness of 4". Pursue grant funding, cost share programs, or cost saving measures to maintain road quality and meet road demands.

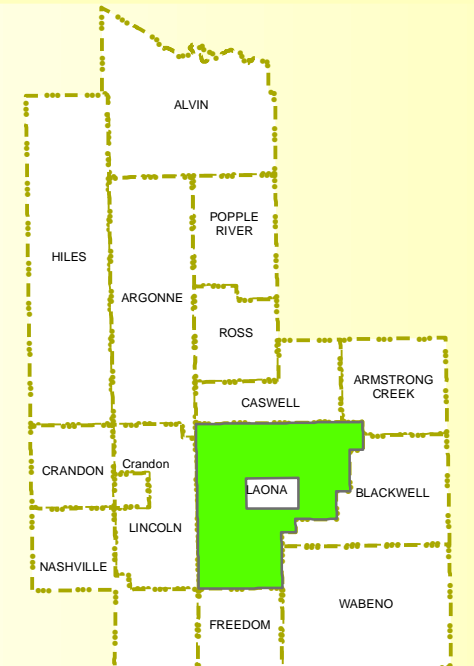
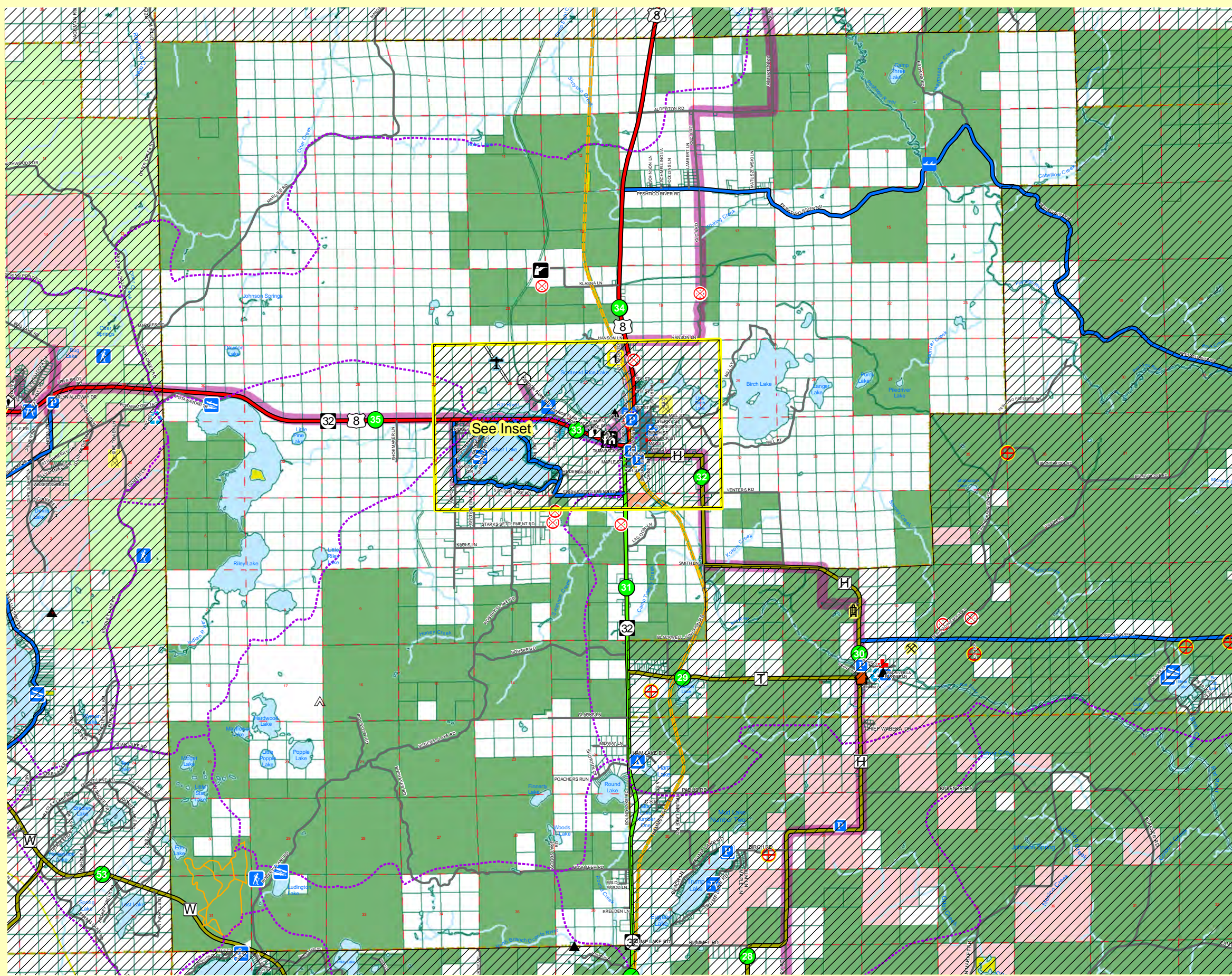
3. Research the potential and requirements of establishing a demolition and brush and yard waste site on Town of Laona land. Complete feasibility study to see if the Town can capture costs of running such a site by charging fees for loads from within the Town and from outside of town. Pursue grant funding and cost share programs to establish this service.
4. Establish a policy at the Annual Town Meeting to maintain current budgeting level in the capital expense line item to provide for regular replacement of town equipment as long as the Town can meet the State mandated levy cap. Policy should prioritize equipment in the following order: Dump Trucks 1 per 5 years rotating between the two trucks, Police Car 1 per 5 years with rotation extended until current vehicle reaches 175,000 miles, Fire Trucks 1 per 8 years until oldest fire truck is a 2003 model and then extend to 1 per 12 years, Loader 1 per 10 years, Grader 1 per 20 years. Purchases can be advanced as funding allows. Smaller purchases can be budgeted on an as needed basis. Pursue grant funding, cost share programs, or cost saving measures when available to replace and upgrade equipment and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.
5. Research potential to create paved trails or sidewalks that allow pedestrian and bicycle access to local businesses, school and parks from all parts of the established town. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs or donations will cover at least 70% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.
6. Research potential to create a paved trail or sidewalk that allows pedestrian and bicycle access between the established Town, the Camp 5 Depot, Silver Lake Inn Motel and Silver Lake Beach. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs or donations will cover at least 70% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.
7. Research potential to provide unpaved ATV and Snowmobile access from all parts of the Township to local businesses and residences. Work cooperatively with landowners and trail clubs to establish this trail system. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs or donations will cover at least 70% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.
8. Create a park commission to oversee the management of local parks. The goal of the park commission will to check maintenance of established parks, recommend improvements on parks, recommend additional park construction and pursue park funding from grant and cost share

programs. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs will cover at least 50% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.

9. Create a tree board to determine tree pruning, maintenance and removal requirements in the park areas, on the right-of-ways, and on private property. Establish a municipal tree ordinance to require removal of hazard trees that threaten neighboring property. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs will cover at least 50% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.
10. Establish additional parks on identified recreational sites and shorelands where funding allows. Establish additional boat landings and lake and river access points where possible and where funding allows. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs will cover at least 50% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.
11. Pursue a study to review the current storm water management system and establish a maintenance program for that system. Establish a storm water management plan to protect water quality for new projects. Establish Town policy to require consultation with WDNR storm water management on development projects that require permits. Improve current storm water system to utilize seepage ponds and overland flow to reduce surface water quality degradation where funding allows. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs will cover at least 50% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.
12. Establish official cemetery regulations for placement of permanent plants and statues. Establish a system for tree maintenance in the cemetery including pruning, maintenance, and removals. Establish a rotation for tree replacement and plantings of un-utilized areas prior to lot sales. Establish a computerized system to track cemetery lot ownership including computerized mapping of lots established. The cemetery board will oversee this process.
13. Pursue a study and energy audit on Town buildings to check the feasibility of the installation of energy efficient windows and doors as well as energy efficient appliances and heating systems. Investigate renewable energy systems for Town buildings including solar, wind, or biomass systems. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs will cover at least 50% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.
14. Pursue the design and construction of a new community building to provide a centralized, handicap accessible building of adequate size to meet current demand for fund raising, weddings, reunions and events to alleviate the need for utilization of the current fire station for these events.

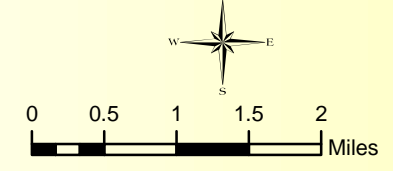
Create a community building committee to oversee this project. Complete this project if grant funding or cost share programs will cover at least 50% of the cost and the Town can meet budgetary restraints.

15. Maintain and update current water and sewer facilities. Inventory current system and update system needs. Create a wellhead protection plan and ordinance to protect the current water supply, establish a secondary wellhead to insure supply. Create a plan for expansion of the water and sewer system into new areas to increase the number of customers.
16. Promote development and establishment of biomass fuel plant, biomass electric generation plant, wind generation facility, or solar generation facility to become more self sufficient on energy production and promote the potential fuel sources in our area.
17. Continue cooperation with electric providers in location of transmission lines. Identify additional needs to the electric utility as they become apparent.
18. Continue to cooperate with cable TV and internet service providers in location of lines on right-of-ways. Promote expansion of broadband internet service and fiber optic services in the Town of Laona.
19. Continue current cooperative agreements for service (fire and rescue with Caswell) and equipment sharing with neighboring towns and Indian Tribes as the potential arises. Contact neighboring towns as possible to promote potential expansion of those agreements into other areas including potential of road maintenance, police service, and park and trail maintenance.
20. Inform residents affected by utility right-of-way expansion of their right to retain title to all trees cut by the utility per 182.017(7)(e) Wisconsin Statutes.



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- - - Section Lines
- ▭ Parcels
- ▬ Principal Arterial
- ▬ Minor Arterial
- ▬ Major Collector
- ▬ Minor Collector
- ▬ Local Roads
- ▬ Hiking / Biking Trail
- ▬ Hiking Trails
- ▬ Snowmobile Trails
- ▬ Primary 144 Service
- ▬ Sewer & Water
- ▬ Water
- ▲ Dams
- 📶 Communication Towers
- Traffic Counts *
- 🏞 Park
- 🏖 Picnic Area
- 🚤 Canoe Access
- 🚤 Boat Launch
- 🏕 Campgrounds
- 🚶 Trail Head
- 🌲 Nicolet National Forest
- 🇺🇸 State of Wisconsin
- 🌲 Forest County
- 🏠 Tribal Lands
- 🏠 School Forest
- ⊗ Abandoned Landfill
- ⊕ Abandoned Non-Metallic Mines
- ✈ Air Strip
- 🏠 BSA Summer Camp
- ⚰ Cemetery
- 🚒 Fire Station
- 🏥 Health Services
- 🏥 Hospital
- 🏢 Job Corps Center
- 📖 Library
- 🏛 Museum
- ⚡ Non-Metallic Mines
- 📬 Post Office
- 👮 Ranger Station
- ♻ Recycling Center
- 🎓 School
- 🏹 Shooting Range
- 🏠 Town Hall
- 🏠 Tribal Administration

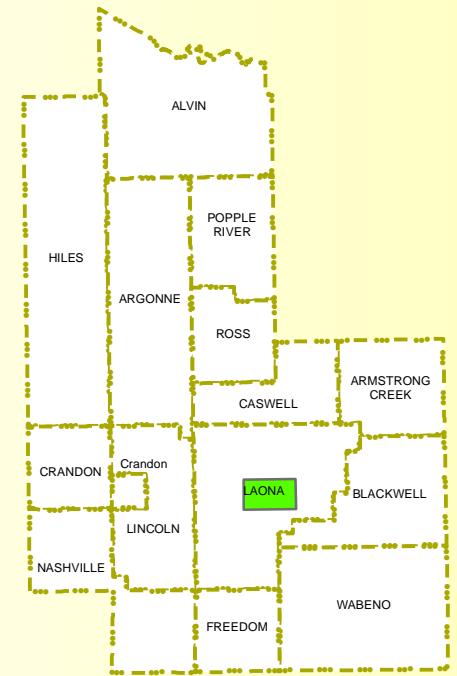
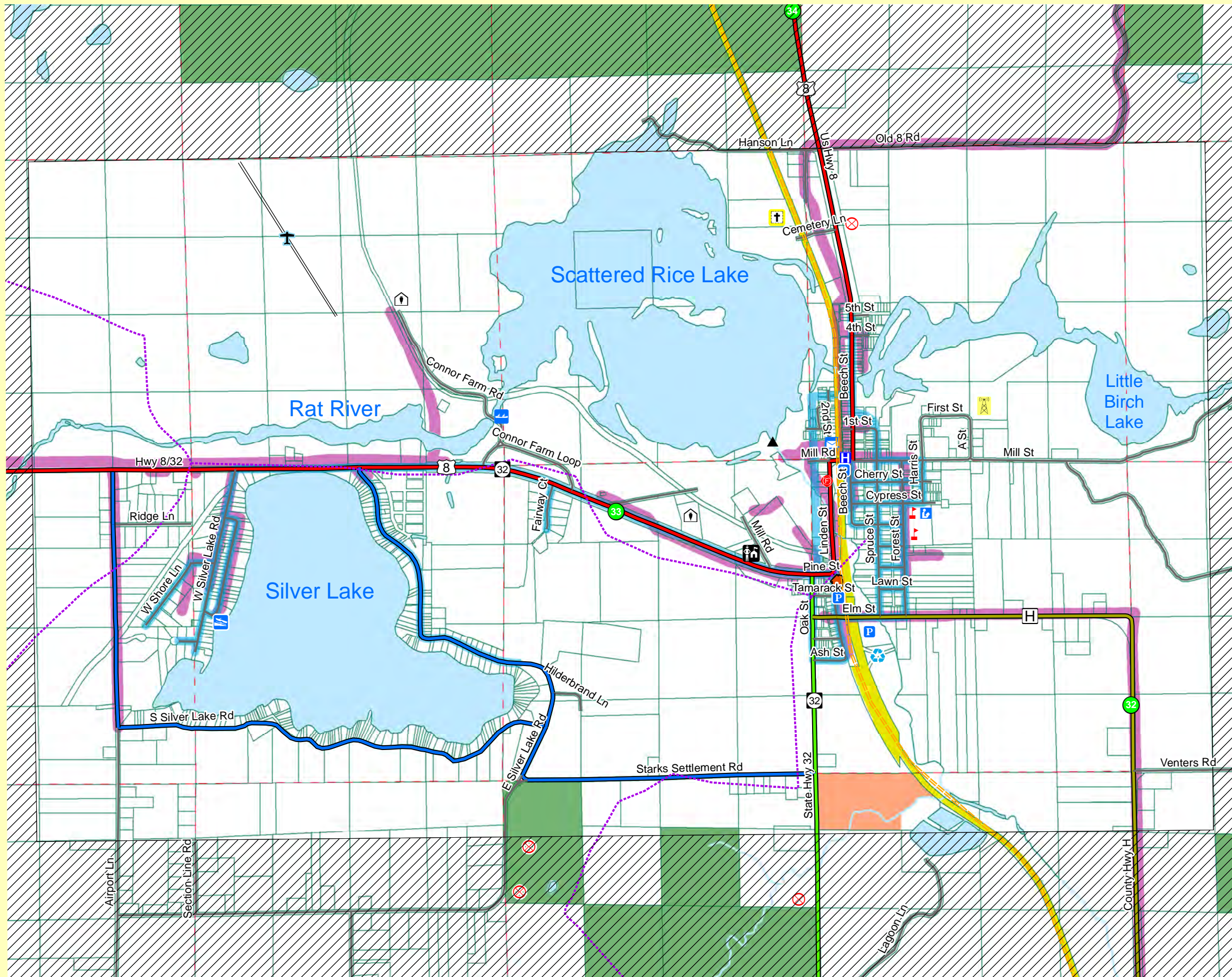


Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, ATC
 * See table for traffic counts

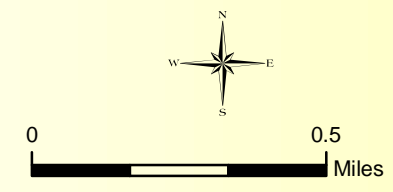
This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

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- Legend**
- Minor Civil Divisions
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 - Water
 - Dams
 - Communication Towers
 - Traffic Counts *
 - Park
 - Canoe Access
 - Boat Launch
 - Nicolet National Forest
 - State of Wisconsin
 - School Forest
 - Abandoned Landfill
 - Air Strip
 - Cemetery
 - Fire Station
 - Hospital
 - Library
 - Museum
 - Post Office
 - Ranger Station
 - Recycling Center
 - School
 - Town Hall



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, ATC
 * See table for traffic counts
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CHAPTER 5: TRANSPORTATION

This chapter, the fifth of nine chapters of the Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan, is based on the statutory requirement [§66.1001(2)(c) Wis. Stats.] for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. This element compares the Town's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element also identifies highways within the Town by function and incorporates state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the Town of Laona.

A. REVIEW OF STATE & REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS & PROGRAMS

This section contains a review of state and regional transportation plans and how they affect the Town of Laona.

Corridors 2020

Corridors 2020 was designed to enhance economic development and meet Wisconsin's mobility needs well into the future. The 3,200-mile state highway network is comprised of two main elements: a multilane backbone system and a two-lane connector system. All communities over 5,000 in population are to be connected with backbone & connector systems.

This focus on highways was altered in 1991 with the passage of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which mandated that states take a multi-modal approach to transportation planning. Now, bicycle, transit, rail, air, and other modes of travel would make up the multi-modal plan. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) response to ISTEA was the two-year planning process in 1994 that created TransLinks 21.

TransLinks 21

WisDOT incorporated Corridors 2020 into TransLinks 21, and discussed the impacts of transportation policy decisions on land use. TransLinks 21 is a 25-year statewide multi-modal transportation plan that WisDOT completed in 1994. Within this needs-based plan are the following modal plans:

- State Highways Plan 2020
- Airport System Plan 2020
- Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020
- Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020
- Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report
- No plans exists for transit or local roads.

Connections 2030

Connections 2030 will be a 25-year statewide multi-modal transportation plan that is policy-based. The policies will be tied to “tiers” of potential financing levels. One set of policy recommendations will focus on priorities that can be accomplished under current funding levels. Another will identify policy priorities that can be achieved if funding levels increase. Finally, WisDOT may also identify critical priorities that we must maintain if funding were to decrease over the planning horizon of the plan. This plan will not conflict with the Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan, because the policies are based upon the transportation needs outlined in TransLinks 21. Recommendations will be presented in "multimodal corridors." The Town of Laona is in part of the North Country (USH 8) corridor.

State Trails Network Plan

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) created this plan in 2001, to identify a statewide network of trails and to provide guidance to the DNR for land acquisition and development. Many existing trails are developed and operated in partnership with counties. By agreement the DNR acquires the corridor and the county government(s) develop, operate, and maintain the trail. There are two potential trails that would run through Laona.

Two potential trails cross Laona:

Segment 2—Forest Co. to Michigan, Nicolet Trail (Northern Region) is the Nicolet State Trail that has been acquired by the DNR from Gillett to the Michigan border.

Segment 13—Dresser to Michigan is a possibly abandoned rail corridor that would connect Rhinelander due east through Forest County. It would link with the proposed Hiles to Crandon snowmobile trail in Forest County. The use of roadways in Oneida and Forest counties are an alternative to the rail line.

Regional Comprehensive Plan

The Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) titled “A Framework for the Future”, adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in December of 2003, is an update of a plan adopted by NCWRPC in 1981. The RCP looks at transportation in all ten counties that make up the North Central Region, including Oneida. It looks at general trends within the Region and recommends how county and local government can address transportation issues.

The RCP recommends a variety of strategies to address a variety of transportation issues such as growing traffic volumes, congestion and the increase of drivers aged 65 and over. Two such strategies include corridor planning and rural intelligent transportation systems. Corridor planning is one way to relieve some of the need for additional direct capacity expansion by comprehensively managing critical traffic corridors. Rural ITS applications have the potential to make major improvements in safety, mobility, and tourist information services

B. TRANSPORTATION MODE INVENTORY

1. HIGHWAYS AND TRUCKING

a.) Functional and Jurisdictional Identification

Public highways are generally classified by two different systems, the functional and the jurisdictional. The jurisdictional class refers to which entity owns the facility and holds responsibility for its operations and maintenance. The functional class refers to the role the particular segment plays in moving traffic within the overall system. Each is described in more detail below.

In addition to these main classifications, a road or segment of road may hold a variety of other designations including county forest road, rustic road, emergency route, truck route, etc. There are no rustic roads, or county forest roads within the Town of Laona. Truck routes are discussed at the end of this section, under Trucking.

The highway system within the Town of Laona is a network of federal, state and county highways together with various local roads and streets, see MAP 2. The jurisdictional breakdown is shown in TABLE 13. U.S. Highway 8 is a Principal Arterial. State Highway 32 is a Minor arterial. CTHs H, and W are Major Collectors. Peshtigo River Rd is a Minor Collector. The remainder of roads within the Town are classified as "Local."

TABLE 13 ROAD MILEAGE BY JURISDICTION, AND FUNCTIONAL CLASS

JURISDICTION	FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION			TOTALS
	ARTERIAL	COLLECTOR	LOCAL	
State*	17.70			17.70
County		4.55		4.55
Federal Forest			6.70	6.70
Town		11.06	54.15	65.21
TOTALS	17.70	15.61	60.85	94.16

Source: WisDOT & NCWRPC.

* WisDOT has jurisdiction over interstate and federal highways.

The Town of Laona is served by U.S. Highway (USH) 8, and State Highway (STH) 32.

USH 8 is designated a Corridors 2020 Connector Route by WisDOT. According to WisDOT, which records average daily traffic volumes (number of vehicles) for major state roadways, traffic on USH 8 on the east-west segment has decreased about 15.6% between 1994 and 2003, but on the north-south road segment, traffic has increased about 3.7%. See Table 14 for specific traffic counts.

STH 32 is neither a Corridors 2020 Connector nor a Backbone Route, but it is a significant north-south corridor into Forest County from the south. According to WisDOT, which records average daily traffic volumes (number of vehicles) for major state roadways, traffic on STH 32 within the Town has increased about 16% between 1994 and 2003. See Table 14 for specific traffic counts.

Corridors 2020 was designed to enhance economic development and meet Wisconsin's mobility needs well into the future. The 3,200-mile 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 Forest County, USH 8 is the only highway in the County designated as part of the Corridors 2020 system.

TABLE 14		Traffic Counts	
Count Site*	1994	2003	# and % Change 1994-2003
Site 31	2500	2900	400 / 16.0%
Site 32	490	770	280 / 57.1%
Site 33	4500	3800	-700 / -15.6%
Site 34	2700	2800	100 / 3.7%
Site 35	--	2400	--

Source: Wisconsin Highway Traffic Volume, Department of Transportation & NCWRPC

* Each traffic count site is described on the next page.

Site 31: STH 32, south of Lagoon Rd.

Site 32: CTH H, north of Venters Rd.

Site 33: USH 8, just west of STH 32.

Site 34: USH 8, north of Hanson Ln.

Site 35: USH 8, just west of Shoemaker Ln.

County Highways H, and W serve the Town of Laona. County highways serve rural land uses and distribute local traffic to the regional arterial system. They serve an important role in linking the area's forestry resources to the major highways and urban centers.

Federal Forest roads are constructed and maintained by the Forest Service on National Forest lands to maintain a safe and environmentally sound road network that is responsive to public needs, and affordable to manage.

Some federal forest roads are maintained (graded, brushed, and plowed in winter,) by Laona.

Town roads are an important component of the county-wide transportation system, because they serve local development, as well as the forestry areas. A particular issue of concern with Town roads is that of seasonal weight limits. In Laona, a "no-load" limit applies to all Town roads from March 15 to May 1. Forestry activities within the Town make logging trucks a significant concern.

A **functional classification system** groups streets and highways into classes according to the character of service they provide. This character of service ranges from providing a high degree of travel mobility to providing land access functions.

The current classification system used in Wisconsin consists of five classifications divided into urban and rural categories. Functional classifications are used to determine eligibility for federal aid. For purposes of functional classification, federal regulations define urban as places of 5,000 or more population, so the rural classifications apply throughout the Town. TABLE 15 summarizes the rural functional classification system.

Principal Arterials	Serve interstate and interregional trips. These routes generally serve to connect all urban areas greater than 5,000 population. The rural principal arterials are further subdivided into 1) Interstate highways and 2) other principal arterials.
Minor Arterials	In conjunction with the principal arterials, they connect cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intra-regional and inter-area traffic movements.
Major Collectors	Provide service to moderate sized communities and other inter-area traffic generators and link those generators to nearby larger population centers or higher function routes.
Minor Collectors	Collect traffic from local roads and provide links to all remaining smaller communities, locally important traffic generators, and higher function roads. All developed areas should be within a reasonable distance of a collector road.
Local Roads	Provide access to adjacent land and provide for travel over relatively short distances. All roads not classified as arterials or collectors are local function roads.

Source: WisDOT

b.) Trucking

U.S. Highway 8 is the principal truck route, and STH 32 is a secondary truck route within the Town as designated by WisDOT.

Local truck routes often branch out from these major corridors to link local industry with the main truck routes as well as for the distribution of commodities with the local area. Mapping these local routes is beyond the scope of this study, and local issues such as safety, weight restrictions, and noise impacts play significant roles in the designation of local truck routes.

Several private trucking companies are available in Laona that provide service nationwide.

2. TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES FOR THE DISABLED

The Forest County Commission on Aging coordinates driver-escort service to residents of Forest County, which includes Laona. Escort drivers provide transportation to elderly and disabled residents of Forest County that qualify as a priority trip purpose. Travel includes both in and out of county travel, and generous volunteers have driven any day or time necessary.

There is no intercity bus service within Forest County.

3. BICYCLE AND WALKING

All roads are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel. Sidewalks create the primary pedestrian network. Most sidewalks that exist in downtown are seriously deteriorated, and only one east-west sidewalk exists.

Issues of most concern to pedestrians are missing sidewalk sections, broken or uneven sections, and intersections without curb ramps. Roads that do not have sidewalks may not provide much gravel shoulder to walk on outside of the traffic lanes.

The Town of Laona contains one established and one potential trail as described in section A of this chapter under State Trails Network Plan. Any trails from the State Trails Network Plan are not automatically going to become bicycle and walking trails. The WDNR is more likely to create multi-use trails to provide the most access for a variety of uses.

The Nicolet National Forest has one non-motorized trail area in Laona. Ed's Lake Trail is a 3.5-mile loop cross country ski trail, and 6-mile mountain biking and hiking trail; located on CTH W between Wabeno and Crandon.

4. RAILROADS

Shipments needing rail service can access rail 6 miles north in Caswell. Based upon land plats, it appears that a railroad track existed from the current Camp Five Logging Museum north to Caswell. This former railroad right-of-way has not been a railroad since about 1986, but could connect the mill with an active rail line to the north in the future. The Nicolet State Trail now occupies the other north-south railroad right-of-way in Laona, and formerly connected the mill with the rail line to the north.

5. AIR TRANSPORTATION

The Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport (RHI) in Rhinelander is the closest passenger airport to Laona. RHI is an air carrier / air cargo airport, which is designed to accommodate virtually all aircraft. Airports in this category are

usually referenced by the type of air carrier service provided—RHI is a short haul air carrier airport. This airport serves scheduled, nonstop, airline markets and routes of less than 500 miles. Short haul air carriers typically use aircraft weighing less than 60,000 pounds, and use primary runways with a length between 6,500 to 7,800 feet.

There were about 42,340 total aviation operations (take-offs and landings) in 2000. WisDOT projections show total aviation operations increasing at RHI to 44,040 by 2010, and 45,740 by 2020; an 8 percent increase from 2000.

The Crandon Municipal Airport (Y55) in the Town of Nashville is the closest basic utility airport. In 2010 the airport will undergo a 450-foot runway extension to Runway 11/29, hanger area development, and a possible LPV approach (GPS landing system). After these upgrades are made the airport will be designed to accommodate aircraft of less than 12,500 pounds gross weight, with approach speeds below 121 knots and wingspans of less than 49 feet. Such aircraft can be either single-engine or twin-engine piston. Private planes use this facility on a daily basis.

A private air strip (Heritage Acres) exists north of Silver Lake and west of Scattered Rice Lake.

6. WATER TRANSPORTATION

There is one canoe access site and one boat landing within the Nicolet National Forest, two other boat landings (one improved, and a canoe access) in Laona for recreational enjoyment. No water trails have been designated at this time. No harbors or ports exist within Forest County.

7. RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Several snowmobile trails and ATV trails exist in Town. Two snowmobile clubs maintain the snowmobile trails. There are a variety of roadway segments that may be connected to form ATV or bicycle trails. All town roads are designated as ATV routes. The Nicolet State Trail allows snowmobiles and ATVs.

C. TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

Below is a listing of programs that may be of assistance to the Town with regard to the development of the local transportation system. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is the primary provider of programs to assist local transportation systems. A wide variety of programs are available to serve

the gamut of jurisdictions from county down to the smallest town. The programs most likely to be utilized by rural towns such as Laona include:

- General Transportation Aids
- Flood Damage Aids
- Town Road Improvement Program
- Town Road Improvement Program – Discretionary
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance
- Local Transportation Enhancements
- Traffic Signing & Marking Enhancement Grant
- Rustic Roads

More information on these programs can be obtained by contacting the WisDOT region office in Rhinelander or on the Internet at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/>.

D. GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Support and maintain a safe and efficient Town road system.
2. Provide an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety to meet the needs of all citizens, including disabled citizens.
3. Support recreational trails and water access to promote tourism, and improve the quality of life in Laona.

Objectives:

1. Avoid allowing land uses that generate heavy traffic on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
2. Town roads must accommodate access requirements for emergency services (fire, EMS, ambulance, etc.) as well as school bus and snowplows.

Policies:

1. Update street signage to improve visibility for all Town residents.
2. Reconstruct or add sidewalks when downtown roads are reconstructed.

3. Space roadway access along the existing Town road network to increase safety and better preserve capacity.
4. Consider connecting adjacent developments to share road access when reviewing development plans and proposals, then add those road access connections to the official Town map if those connections are Town roads.
5. Support snowmobile and ATV trails within the Town by continuing to provide access to local businesses.
6. Promote use of specialized transit to Town residents.
7. Promote WisDOT's Tourist Oriented Directional Sign (TODS) Program to provide signs on state highways for qualifying tourist-related businesses, services or activities that are not on state highways.
8. Identify and pursue WisDOT Rustic Road status for town roads with a scenic view to enhance the quality of life in Laona.

CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This is the sixth chapter of the nine chapter Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan. It is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the Town. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001 (2)(f) Wis. Stats.], this chapter analyzes the labor force and economic base, ensures designation of adequate sites for business and industry, evaluates potentially contaminated sites for reuse, and identifies applicable county, regional and state economic development programs.

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF LOCAL CONDITIONS

1. LABOR FORCE

According to the Census, the civilian labor force (population 16 and over) living in the Town of Laona was approximately 586 workers in 2000. Of these, 27 were unemployed for an unemployment rate of 2.6%. The unemployment rate for the County was 7.7% in 2000. Laona's 1990 unemployment rate was 6.1%. The current Forest County unemployment rate is 6.8% (2007).

2. ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

Geographically, the land within the Town is overwhelmingly dedicated to the forestry sector. Over 75% of the land in the Town of Laona is woodland. See the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources and Land Use chapters of this plan for more on the forest cover of the community.

There was a minor occupation shift of Laona residents from 1990 to 2000 as shown in TABLE 16. The number of residents in the *Production, transportation & material moving* declined 30%, and the *Service* occupation gained 40%. Forest County figures have the same trends as Town figures in TABLE 16.

The leading industry sectors in the Town are: *Education, health, & social services*; and *Manufacturing*, with each industry sector employing over 110 people. TABLE 17 also shows that both *Manufacturing*; and *Retail* lost over 45 workers each from 1990 to 2000. *Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services* gained about 60 workers in the same decade. These townwide trends are also reflected in the Forest County figures in TABLE 16.

These figures in TABLES 16 & 17 are all based on the number of workers residing in the Town and what they do for employment not where they are actually employed. Information regarding the number of jobs available in the Town of Laona itself is not readily available.

Commuting patterns provide one way to estimate the number of jobs within a community. The 2000 commuting data shows a total of 633 workers traveling to the Town of Laona for work. The majority (42.5%) of these actually represent residents of the town working at jobs within the Town. The others travel to jobs within Laona from other Forest County towns (40.3%), Oconto County (5.9%), Marinette County (3%), Langlade County (2.8%), Michigan towns (2.7%), and other locations (2.8%).

Table 16 Occupation of Employed Workers 1990–2000

	Town of Laona		Forest County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Management, professional & related	106	126	603	831
Service	75	105	492	855
Sales & office	109	112	600	799
Farming Fishing & Forestry	29	29	274	179
Construction, extraction & maintenance	52	47	252	472
Production, transportation & material moving	200	140	973	908

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 17 Industry Sectors 1990–2000

	Town of Laona		Forest County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	48	53	199	303
Construction	27	26	174	303
Manufacturing	165	117	881	669
Wholesale Trade	10	10	53	57
Retail Trade	88	41	553	402
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	56	47	239	256
Information	N/A	4	N/A	49
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	21	21	80	119
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Mgmt Services	17	9	163	136
Education, Health and Social Services	97	114	499	755
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	5	66	34	527
Public Administration	26	11	205	168
Other Services	22	40	147	300

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3. ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL CONDITIONS

Based on the silvicultural nature of the community, the Town supports the development of forestry and forest-related business. The forested nature of the Town, along with its water resources, also lends itself to tourism and recreation based industries, which the Town is in favor of as well. Beyond that, the Town has no specific preference for categories or types of business desired.

The Town has a number of strengths that may be helpful in attracting or retaining business and industry: a main state highway, a forestry recreational and natural resource base, rural Northwoods living that is in close proximity to multiple urban service centers (downtown Laona and Crandon), a large vacation property base from people traveling "up north," an environmentally friendly community with clean lakes that are well maintained by associations, and reasonably priced land.

Some weaknesses in attracting or retaining business and industry include: deficiencies in energy infrastructure, limited hi-speed internet (fiber optic lines) and limited cellular service, lack of technical skilled labor force, lack of "destination" resorts or identifying events, and a lack of workforce for medium- to large employers.

The loss of raw materials (limited harvesting) from the neighboring National Forest lands increases the need to promote tourism-based businesses.

There may become a lack of workforce, because Forest County's average age the average age was 43.2 years in 2000. By 2020 it is anticipated that the average age of county residents will be 46.3 years, and by 2030 it will be 49 years.

The Existing Land Use Inventory and Future Land Use Plan maps (see MAPS 4 and 5) designate existing and potential space for business sites. Environmentally contaminated sites are discussed in the Ag., Natural & Cultural Resources, and Land Use chapters of this Plan. The Town supports the reuse of such sites provided that the Town is secure of liability issues.

4. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

The Town of Laona administers its own revolving loan fund (RLF) to provide loans to businesses that want to expand.....Who administers the RLF? Are there any stated RLF goals or restrictions on who can apply?

Creating a Chamber of Commerce is another possibility to generally promote development and provide an advocate for businesses and tourism to the community and beyond.

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Various organizations at the County, Regional and State level offer a variety of programs to assist with economic development. Many of these are listed below:

Local:

Laona Revolving Loan Fund

The Town of Laona 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.

Tax Increment Financing: In 2004, the WI State Legislature enacted changes to the state's Tax Increment Financing statutes. One significant change involved allowing townships to establish tax increment districts for specified economic development projects. Tax Increment Financing has been employed by numerous communities throughout the state to promote redevelopment in blighted areas and finance new industrial development.

Regional:

North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation: The North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) manages two revolving loan funds designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing. The fund is targeted to businesses in the ten county region.

North Central Advantage Technology Zone Tax Credits: The 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.

State:

Rural Economic Development Program: This program administered 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. 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 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.

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. Financial programs include support for 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 the agent for the SBA programs that provide financing for fixed asset loans and for working capital.

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

Although the Town of Laona has not, historically, played a role in economic development, it supports efforts to stabilize and expand the economic base and employment opportunity for its residents and the community as a whole.

Goals:

1. Increase forest health.
2. Encourage a variety of economic opportunities related to forests, forestry, and forest-based products.
3. Promote the stabilization of the current economic base.

Objectives:

1. Plan for the expansion of current forest based industries and business, and the possibility of recruiting new forest based industries and businesses.
2. Promote sustainable forestry practices on both private and public lands to maximize residual stand quality and promote abundant regeneration of a range of tree species.
3. Promote healthy and protected forest ecosystems to serve a multitude of ecological roles that include habitat for animal and plant species, and water quality protection.
4. Work in partnership with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest to ensure the ecological, economic, and social benefits of forests for the citizens of Wisconsin now and into the future.
5. Work in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to ensure the ecological, economic, and social benefits of forests on Managed Forest Law lands.
6. Encourage new retail, commercial & industrial development to locate adjacent to county or state highways.
7. Discourage industrial development from negatively impacting environmental resources, or adjoining property values.
8. Encourage businesses that are compatible with 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. Support efforts to promote economic development within the county.
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.
5. Promote Managed Forest Law (MFL) tree farms to exist on all private forest lands within Town.
6. Designate enough land for commercial and industrial development on the Future Land Use Map.
7. Participate on Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) Resource Advisory Committees (RAC).
8. Classify and designate forest resource lands for the long-term commercial production of timber products.
9. Encourage efforts to keep forestry-related jobs in and adjacent to the community, such as working with schools, colleges, and training programs to recruit and retain workers within the community.
10. Identify locations on the Future Land Use Map that can sustain the expansion of industries.
11. Explore development of a business park.
12. Advertise available commercial and industrial sites and buildings online at Location One Information Source (LOIS) from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.
13. Promote creation of sustainable buildings (possibly *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)* certified), and refurbishment of existing buildings.
14. Promote WisDOT's Tourist Oriented Directional Sign (TODS) Program to provide signs on state highways for qualifying tourist-related businesses, services or activities that are not on state highways.

**CHAPTER 7:
LAND USE**

This is the seventh of nine chapters of the Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan. This chapter is based on the statutory requirement [§66.1001(2)(h) Wis. Stats.] for a "compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property". This chapter reviews existing land uses, trends, programs, and future land use.

A. EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY

Current land use activity (see Existing Land Use Map) in the Town is characterized mainly by large blocks of industrial and federal forestland. Residential development generally exists within downtown Laona and around the lakes.

Table 18 presents the current breakdown of land use types within the Town in 2009. The majority of the Town is woodlands that cover about 62,400 acres or 90.66% of the Town. Water covers about 4% of the Town. The next most significant land use types are: *agricultural*, which covers about 1.9% of the Town with 1,308.8 acres; *residential* covers about 1% of the Town with 689.1 acres; and the road network

Table 18: EXISTING LAND USE, 2009 Town of Laona		
Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	1,308.8	1.90
Commercial	34.0	0.05
Government/Institution	76.6	0.11
Industrial	124.4	0.18
Open Land	365.2	0.53
Outdoor Recreation	400.5	0.58
Residential	689.1	1.00
Transportation	575.1	0.84
Water	2,853.0	4.15
Woodlands	62,396.5	90.66
Total	68,823.1	100.00

Source: NCWRPC

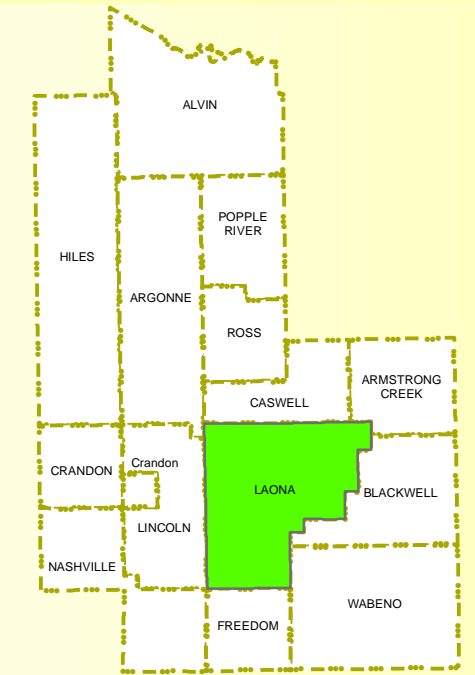
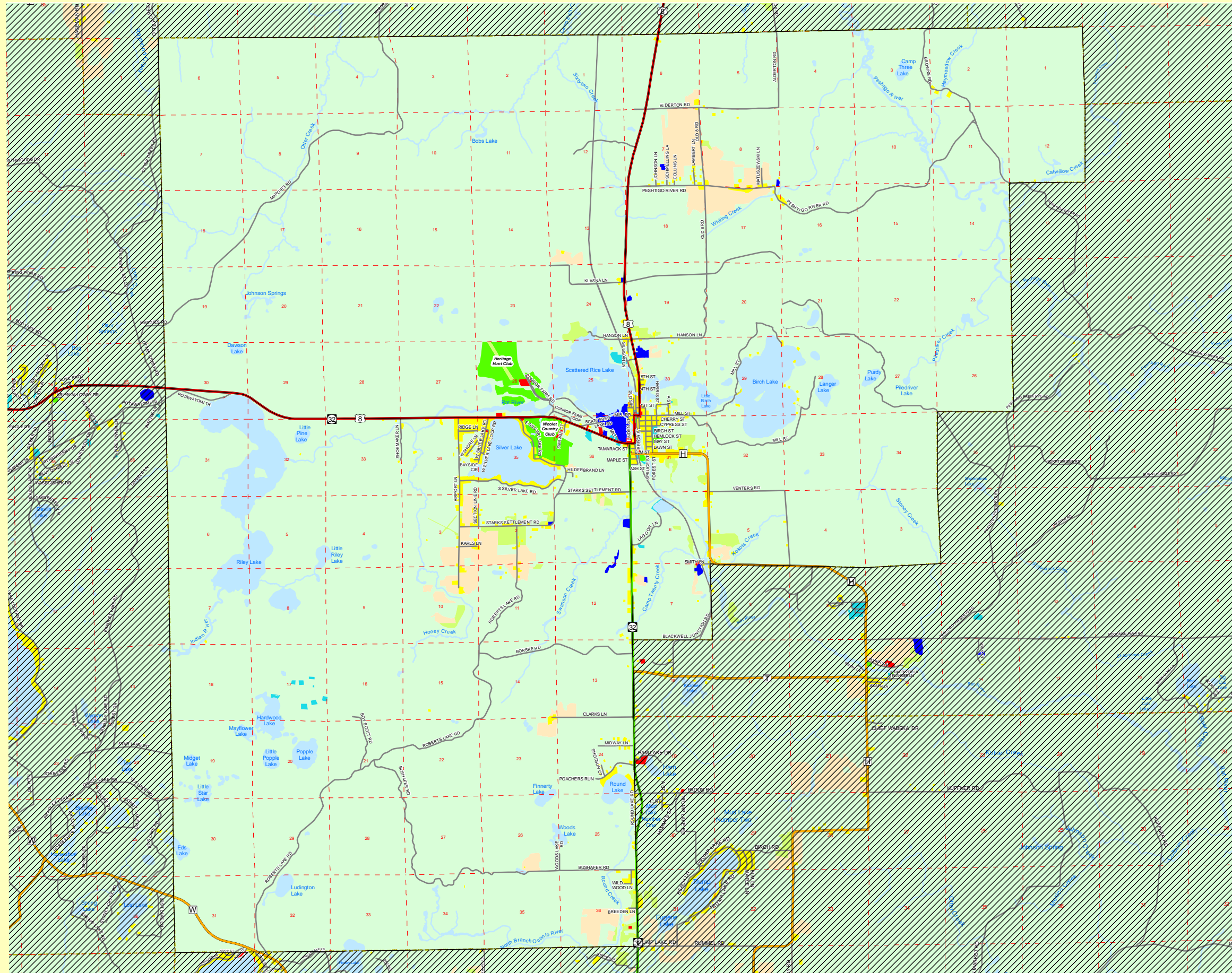
(*transportation*) also covering less than 1% of the Town with 575.1 acres. The other land uses combined use less than 1.45% of the total land area.

B. LAND USE TRENDS

1. LAND SUPPLY

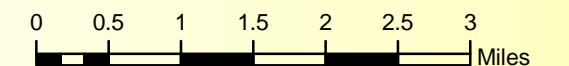
As shown by the existing land use inventory in Table 18, the majority of the Town is forestland that is maintained as industrial and federal forest. Much of the remaining undeveloped area is privately owned forestlands, with some agricultural and open lands.

Even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of Laona is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years for all use categories, which are described below in Land Demand.



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Section Lines
- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Governmental
- Industrial
- Grassland
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Transportation
- Water
- Woodlands



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, 2005 Airphoto Interpretation

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2. LAND DEMAND

Residential:

The overall Town resident demand for housing land in the Town of Laona results from a projected increase of 9 households (2010–2025). This does not account for seasonal home development. TABLE 18 shows projected residential land demand based on household projections for the Town and a half-acre average lot size. Although some of the development will occur on larger or smaller parcels, this is more difficult to predict, and our projection becomes a conservative scenario. Thus, an average of 0.9 acres of residential land is expected to be added in the Town every 5 years to accommodate anticipated population growth by the year 2030. About 7 of the 9 new housing units will probably be built as single-family houses, since 83.5% of all housing stock in Town is single-family dwellings, as shown in the Housing chapter. About 2 (8%) of the 9 new housing units may exist as mobile homes.

Seasonal use of the housing in Laona comprised of 26.5% of all the housing units in 2000. Although the Town's population is projected to decline, the need for additional seasonal housing is expected to rise. Less than 10 houses a year were constructed in Laona from 2001-2009, and most of these houses were for seasonal use (for example: 4 house permits for new constructions were created in 2004, and 9 permits in 2008). While this Plan was developed, the Great Recession occurred, which was caused by a housing glut nationwide. Baby Boomers who are at retirement age may also delay their retirement for a few years as they build back their retirement savings. Therefore, if 4 seasonal houses are built each year in the first 10 years of this Plan and 10 houses per year are constructed in the second 10 years of this Plan, then an additional 140 seasonal homes are projected to be built from 2010 through 2030. These units would consume about 70 acres of land most likely from woodland.

Industrial, and Commercial:

Commercial and industrial development is subject to market forces and difficult to predict. Laona sees two areas of industrial development as desirable to encourage: data storage and biomass fuel production. Data storage needs a reliable supply of electricity to keep computers humming and to cool the computers. American Transmission Company is projecting a long term need for a 345 kV line through Laona. The mill (WD Flooring & Nicolet Hardwoods) had a biomass electrical generation plant as described in the Community Facilities Chapter of this Plan. Wisconsin is focusing on creating enough renewable energy by 2025 to supply 25% of the needs within the state. Biomass generators are planned in several communities, and wood chipping operations will be needed to deliver the fuel to these generators. A new generator could again become operational at the mill in Laona too.

With the potential development of data storage and biomass fuel production coming to Laona, also comes a need for more employees, and a need for

consumer goods and services. Commercial land will need to become redeveloped for new stores and expanding existing stores.

The Town of Laona plans to develop an industrial park south of downtown on 80 acres of land next to the sewage lagoon and school forest that Laona purchased from the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest under P.L. 109-387. Industries looking for a site to construct their facilities prefer to build in areas that are ready to build, therefore only this industrial park will be used for Table 19 projections of land used in the next 20 years for industrial purposes.

Commercial development may follow how many additional workers are hired by the new industries in the industrial park or from existing industrial expansion. With this industrial trend we can predict that 25% more commercial land (9 acres) may be developed. Another possibility is for local entrepreneurs to begin garage-based businesses, as is projected may occur south of the Town Hall between Oak Street and Linden Street. This would convert up to 20 acres from housing to commercial land use. Twenty additional acres are projected to become commercial by 2030 in Table 19.

See the Future Land Use Map for locations chosen by the Town for future development of commercial and industrial sites.

Agricultural:

Agricultural land in Laona that is actively farmed has declined since 1990. The *Wisconsin Land Use Databook, 1999*, lists 2,542 acres of agriculture in 1990, with a slight decrease to 2,422 acres in 1997. An NCWRPC GIS analysis in Table 18 shows that there were 1,308.8 acres of agricultural land in 2009, with an additional 365.2 acres listed as open lands. These 365.2 acres may once have been agricultural lands, which are now fallow. There was a 34% decline in agricultural land from 1990 to 2009. Since there was a decline in agricultural land, and since the Town still sees farmers thriving in Laona, then the current amount of agricultural land is projected to continue as agricultural land through 2030. See the Natural Resources chapter in this Plan for more agricultural statistics.

Table 19 shows the amount of land, in acres, that is projected for future development in 5-year increments.

Table 19 Projected Land Use Demand to 2030					
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030*
Residential Acreage	400	410	420	445	470
Commercial Acreage	34	39	44	49	54
Industrial Acreage	124	144	164	184	204
Agricultural Acreage	1,309	1,309	1,309	1,309	1,309

Source: NCWRPC

*Extension of 2000-2025 trend.

3. LAND PRICES

Overall equalized land values in the Town have increased about 76.8 percent over the last eight years; however, not all categories of land increased. These are prices for land only in each category. *Agricultural* land dropped in value, because *Agricultural Forest* land was removed from this category in 2004, and listed as a separate category. If both agricultural categories were added together as *Agricultural*, then the 2008 land value would have increased by 29.4 percent. *Residential* property values increased by about 80.6 percent. The value of *Undeveloped* land, which was formerly called "swamp and waste," has increased in value, as has *Other*. See Table 20, Equalized Land Values, below.

Type of Property	2000	2008	% Change
Residential	16,932,100	30,582,100	80.6
Commercial	763,800	1,115,300	46.0
Manufacturing	763,800	287,100	-62.4
Agricultural	429,600	243,100	-43.4
Undeveloped	348,900	878,900	151.9
Agricultural Forest	0	313,000	N/A
Forest	3,916,200	6,410,000	63.7
Other	82,800	136,400	64.7
Total Value	22,606,500	39,965,900	76.8

Source: WI DOR, 2000 & 2008

4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDEVELOPMENT

A variety of properties in the Town had environmental contamination on them. All of those properties were cleaned up and are still being used, so there is no redevelopment opportunity related to those properties. See the Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources chapter for a list of sites and what type of contamination existed on each property.

Many businesses in downtown Laona are in buildings that may need upgrading to improve customer comfort, and energy efficiency to improve the owner's bottom lines. Downtown revitalization differs from redevelopment since the focus is not on reuse, but more towards upgrading and appearance. There may be opportunities to make facade improvements, and energy efficiency upgrades to heating & air conditioning systems, building insulation, and exterior & interior lighting. See the Economic Development chapter to review how the Laona revolving loan fund can assist businesses with redevelopment.

Quarries have approved reclamation plans on file with the county as part of the permitting process. Future quarries are planned for development over the 20 years of this plan within the Town. Abandoned non-metallic mines have been closed within the national forest where any reuse of the land is determined by land managers of the national forest.

5. EXISTING AND POTENTIAL LAND USE CONFLICTS

This Plan seeks to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned use-buffers, and public information components. Solutions to these problems exist as goals, objectives, and policies at the end of this and other Plan chapters. The following issues were identified during the planning process:

1. There is limited land available for development, because the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and Managed Forest Law lands completely surround downtown Laona.
2. Land east of downtown Laona may be available for development if it does not become land-locked by houses along Mill Street east of Harris Street, and County Highway T east of Forest Street.

C. PROGRAMS

A number of different programs directly and indirectly affect land use within the Town. The principle land use programs include the Forest County Zoning and Land Division ordinances. The Town of Laona also has a number of other ordinances contained within its municipal code. Official mapping authority is available but not widely used. See the Implementation Chapter of this Plan for more on these ordinances.

D. FUTURE LAND USE 2010-2030

The Future Land Use 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 future development of the Town. Subdivision, zoning, and official map decisions must be consistent (§66.1001(3) WI Stats.) with this map.

Town of Laona Plan Commission members participated in a mapping exercise with NCWRPC staff to identify the desired future land uses by using the Land Use Map Classifications as described below. Town Plan Commission members used their broad knowledge of the Town to draw shapes on an existing land use map that was created from a 2005 airphoto. The goal was to produce a

Future Land Use Map for residents to review that would guide the Town's growth through 2030. See the Future Land Use map.

Table 21 presents the projected breakdown of land use types within the Town from 2010-2030, as is shown on the Future Land Use Map. Most of the land uses that expanded from Table 18 decreased the woodlands area of the Town. The whole town is forested, so this is no surprise.

Table 21: FUTURE LAND USE, 2010-2030 Town of Laona		
Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	1,767.5	2.57
Commercial	167.1	0.24
Government/Institution	89.2	0.13
Industrial	236.2	0.34
Open Land	12,641.3	18.37
Outdoor Recreation	437.8	0.64
Residential	694.0	1.01
Rural Residential	1,109.5	1.61
Transportation	589.6	0.86
Water	2,853.0	4.15
Woodlands	48,238.3	70.09
Total	68,823.1	100.00

Source: NCWRPC

The Town Plan Commission used their broad knowledge of the Town to determine how much land was needed for future development. The Future Land Use Map is the result of this exercise. "LAND DEMAND" listed earlier in this chapter shows how much land (Table 19) is projected as necessary for development, along with some reasons why this may occur, through 2030.

Existing & Future Land Use Map Classifications:

Land use classifications group land uses that are compatible and provide for the separation of conflicting uses. Not all classifications are used on both maps. The classifications are not zoning districts and do not have the authority of zoning, but are intended for use as a guide. Subdivision, zoning, and official map decisions must be consistent (§66.1001(3) WI Stats.) with the Future Land Use Map.

The Existing Land Use Map shows what existed in 2009. The Future Land Use Map is intended for use as a guide when making land use and zoning decisions from the time this Plan is adopted through 2030.

1. Agriculture

Lands that are managed to produce crops or raise livestock.

2. Commercial

Identifies areas that sell goods or services to the general public; such as gas stations, stores, restaurants, professional services, hotels, campgrounds, and car dealerships. Higher density residential development is also allowed here, along with some storage facilities.

3. Governmental/Institutional

Identifies areas where the main purpose of use is for public good facilities, for example: utilities, community non-profit facilities, schools, churches, and governmental buildings.

4. Industrial

Identifies areas that produce goods or services for distribution to commercial outlets, for example: manufacturers and wholesale distributors. Any uses that directly relate to trucking or mining operations are also located in industrial areas.

5. Open Lands

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. This area could include endangered species habitat or other significant features or areas identified by the Town, including cultural area.

6. Outdoor Recreation

Land that is or could become parks or trails. Ball fields, outdoor amphitheatres, and waysides are all included in this designation.

7. Residential

Identifies areas of residential development typically consisting of smaller lot sizes that may be served by municipal water and sewer systems, even if a municipal system is not planned.

8. Rural Residential

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

9. Transportation

Identifies the existing road network along with the recommendations for improved and safe traffic movement in the town, including airports and rail facilities. This classification also includes trails with a permanent right-of-way, like rails-to-trails facilities.

10. Woodlands

Areas of land that are covered with trees and hardly any grass. Single family houses, and hunting shacks may exist in this area on large lots. DNR wetlands that contain many trees, and campgrounds may also exist in this area.

E. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

To address competing development concerns and the land use conflicts identified, the following set of goals, objectives, and policies were created:

GOAL 1: Provide enough land for projected future development, while also making efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Objectives:

1. Identify enough land in each land use category on the Future Land Use Map to serve future development of all types.
2. Consider creating an industrial park.

Policies:

1. Encourage commercial and dense residential development to exist on land that is served by municipal sewer and water.
2. Create an official map (§62.23(6) Wis. Stats.) to preserve future road right-of-ways to maintain access to developable land.
3. Promote infill development to take advantage of land that is served by water and sewer.
4. Provide infrastructure (i.e.: 3-phase power, sewer, and water) in the industrial park.

GOAL 2: Regulate development to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Town residents.

Objective:

- Restrict new development in locations that have a flood hazard, have too steep a slope, or may potentially contaminate the municipal water supply.

Policies:

1. Create a Wellhead Protection Plan and implement a Wellhead Protection Ordinance to protect the municipal water supply.

2. Assess the flood hazard of a dam break, and create a contingency plan if it does.

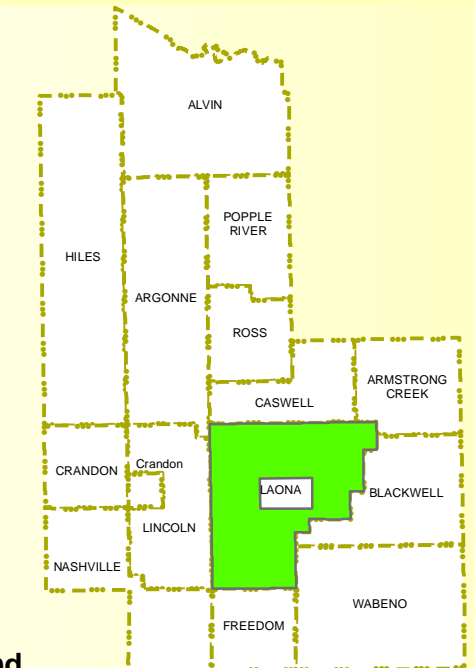
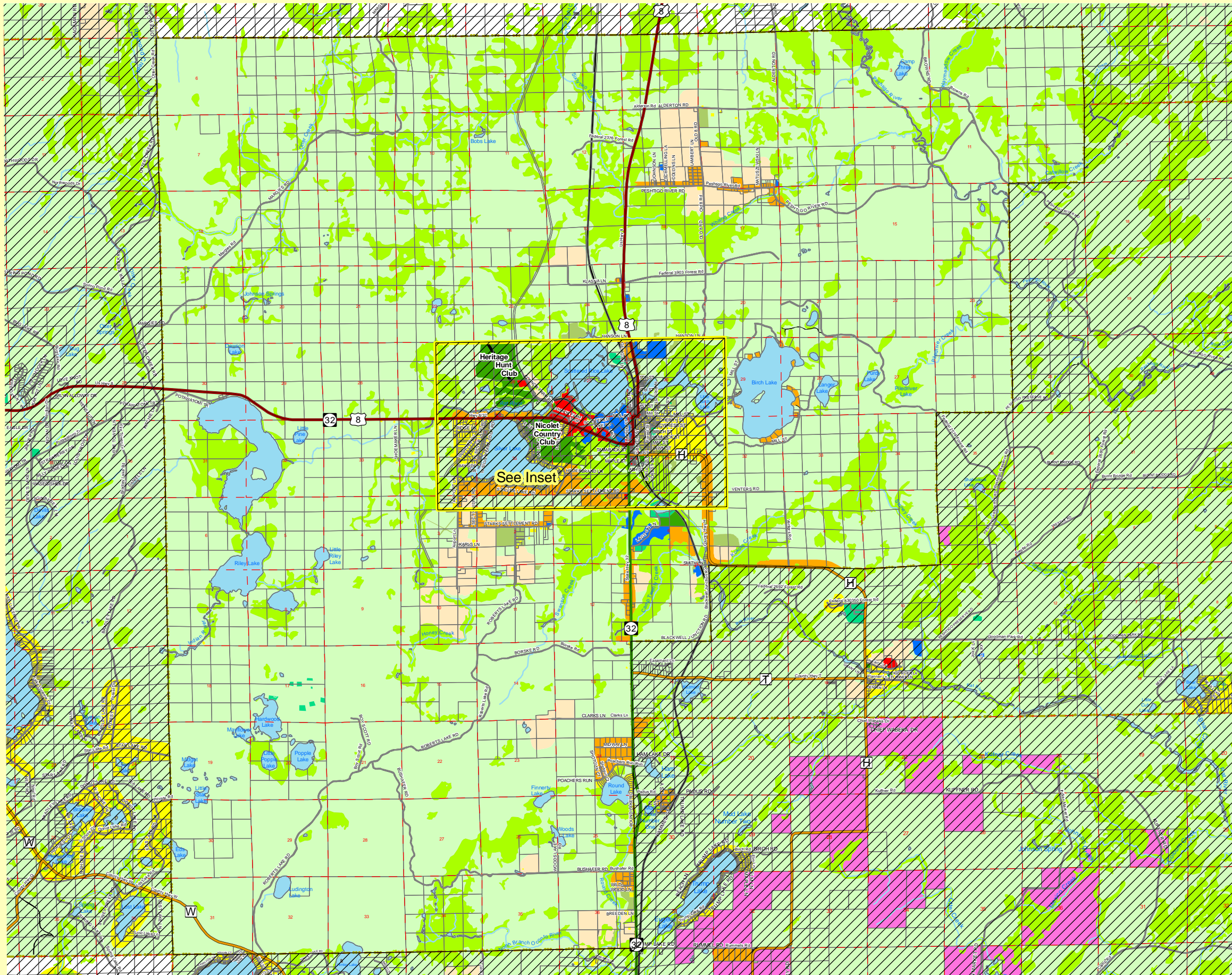
GOAL 3: Promote development that retains the rural character of the Town.

Objectives:

1. Direct industrial and high density residential development to downtown Laona where municipal infrastructure and public services exist.
2. Maintain minimum lot sizes for new development through land division and zoning ordinances to preserve the Town's rural character.

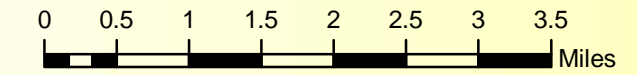
Policies:

1. All rural residential development should be set back from the roads and buffered by either natural vegetation or evergreen plantings.
2. Require that timber harvests appear like natural disturbances, with a jagged harvest pattern and vegetative screen between the harvest area and major through roads.
3. Continue to allow current and new residential development along waterbodies.
4. Encourage development proposal site designs to preserve or enhance the rustic and rural nature of the community.
5. Industrial development will be limited to the industrial area on the Future Land Use map, and non-metallic mines will be conditionally allowed in forested areas on the Future Land Use map.



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- - - Section Lines
- == US Highway
- == State Highways
- == County Highways
- Local Roads
- ▭ Parcels
- Wetlands
- Water
- Agricultural Areas
- Commercial
- Forestry Areas
- Governmental/Public/Institutional
- Industrial
- Preservation and Open Space
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Shoreland Development
- Transportation
- Tribal



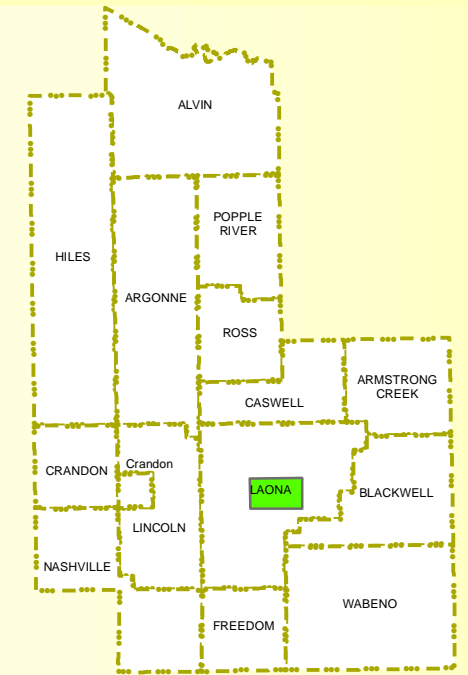
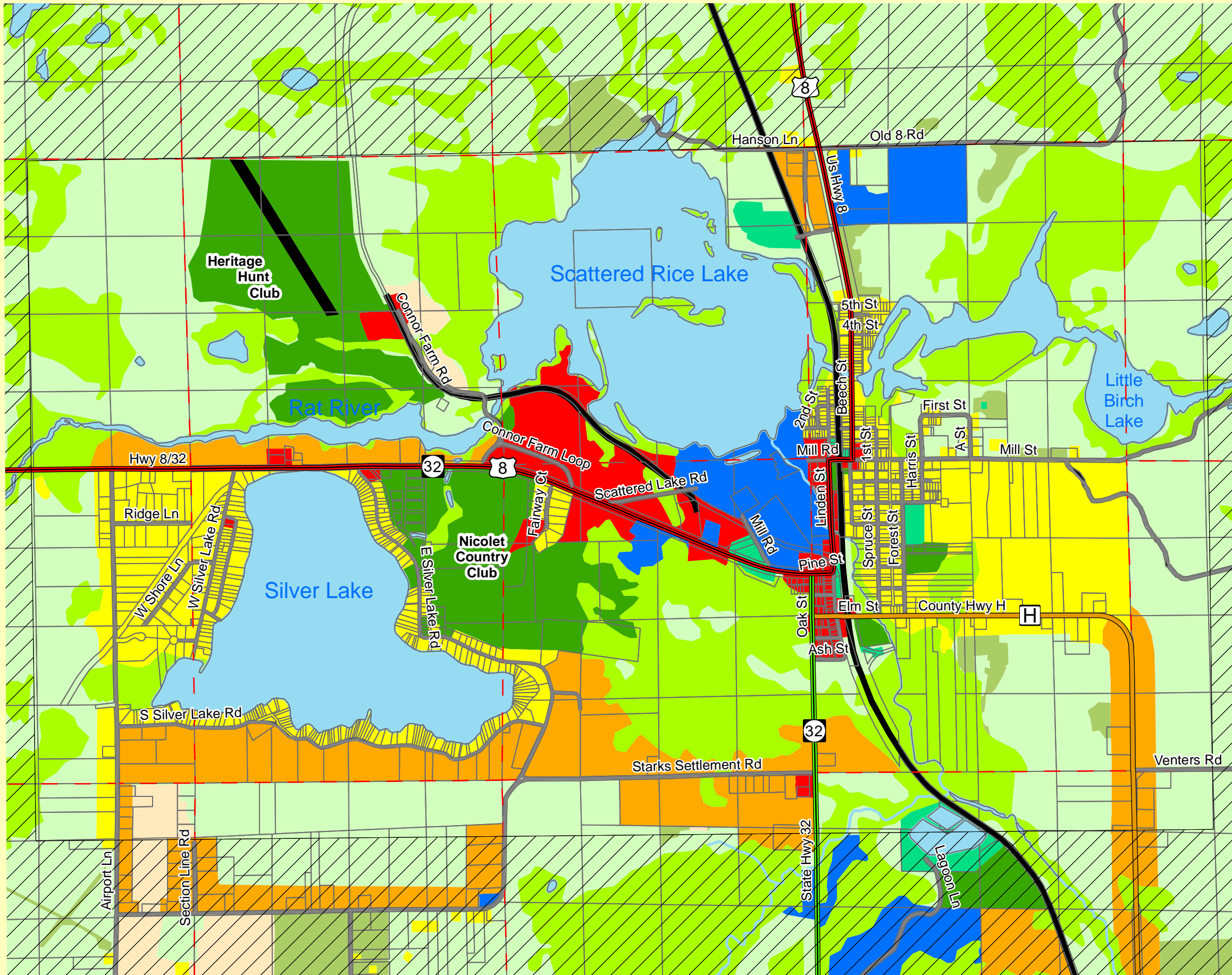
Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC

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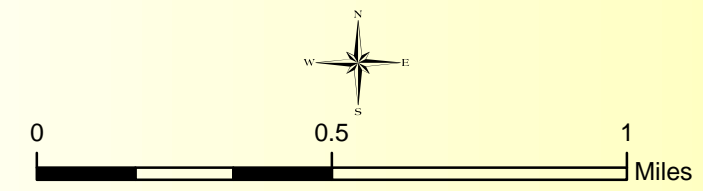


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- Legend**
- Minor Civil Divisions
 - - - Section Lines
 - == US Highway
 - == State Highways
 - == County Highways
 - Local Roads
 - ▭ Parcels
 - Wetlands
 - Water
 - Agricultural Areas
 - Commercial
 - Forestry Areas
 - Governmental/Public/Institutional
 - Industrial
 - Preservation and Open Space
 - Outdoor Recreation
 - Residential
 - Rural Residential
 - Transportation



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC

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North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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CHAPTER 8: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

This chapter is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. This chapter first analyzes the relationship of the Town of Laona to school districts, adjacent local governmental units, the Region, the state, and other governmental units; then it incorporates plans and agreements under sections 66.0301, 66.0307, and 66.0309 of Wisconsin Statutes; and finally it concludes with an identification of existing or potential conflicts between the governmental units and a process to resolve such conflicts.

A. ASSESSMENT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS, PLANS AND AGREEMENTS

1. SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Town of Laona is in the School District of Laona.

The Nicolet Technical College, located in Rhinelander, serves the town.

The main form of interaction with both school and college districts are through payment of property taxes, which help to fund both districts' operations. The Town has little participation in issues pertaining to administration or siting of new facilities. All school and college board meetings are open to the public.

2. SURROUNDING TOWNS

The Town of Laona is bordered (refer to Map 1) by the towns of Blackwell, Wabeno, Freedom, Nashville, Lincoln, Argonne, and Caswell.

Laona has mutual aid relationships with the surrounding towns.

3. FOREST COUNTY

Forest County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to Laona residents.

The County Highway Department maintains and plows the County, state and federal highways within the Town. The County Sheriff provides protective services through periodic patrols. The Sheriff also manages the 911-dispatch center, not only for police protection, but also for ambulance/EMS response. The Forestry Department maintains a county park and forest system for the

use and enjoyment of all residents including the Town of Laona. The County also provides land records and land & water conservation services.

In many cases where state and federal agencies require area-wide planning for various programs or regulations, the County sponsors a county-wide planning effort to complete these plans, and include each individual local unit in the process and resulting final plan. Examples of this include the County Outdoor Recreation plan which maintains the eligibility for WisDNR administered park and recreation development funding of each local unit that adopts it, and All Hazard Mitigation Plans which are required by FEMA in order for individual local units of government to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funding.

4. NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was formed under §60.0309 Wis. Stats. as a voluntary association of governments within a ten county area. Forest County is a member of the NCWRPC, which qualifies the Town of Laona for local planning assistance. Typical functions of the NCWRPC include (but are not limited to) land use, transportation, economic development, intergovernmental, and geographic information systems (GIS) planning and services.

5. STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Wisconsin departments of Natural Resources (WisDNR) and Transportation (WisDOT) are the primary agencies the Town might deal with regarding development activities. Many of the goals and objectives of this plan will require continued cooperation and coordination with these agencies.

The Laona Volunteer Fire Department cooperates with the Forest Service to cooperatively cover all lands in Laona. Mutual aid exists with all surrounding communities and Goodman.

The Forest Service is responsible for managing the national forest to generate jobs, provide outdoor recreation, maintain and improve wildlife and plant habitat, and improve forest health, while continuing to let the forest mature.

The WisDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland, and other wildlife habitat areas, while WisDOT is responsible for the planning and development of state highways, railways, airports, and other transportation systems. State agencies make a number of grant and aid programs available to local units of government like the Town of Laona. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also a number of mandates passed down from the state that the Town must

comply with, such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads.

Most federal programs are administered by the states, so the Town would be dealing with the responsible state agency with regard to federal programs and regulations.

B. EXISTING OR POTENTIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICTS

The following intergovernmental conflicts were identified in the Laona planning area:

- ✓ Nicolet National Forest land limits the amount of private land available for development.
- ✓ Managed Forest Law lands limit the amount of developable land available, and removes excessive land from the tax base.

The following potential intergovernmental conflicts may arise in the Laona planning area:

- ✓ None identified.

The process for resolving these conflicts will in part be a continuation of past practices as new mechanisms evolve. The Town will continue to meet with surrounding towns when significant issues of mutual concern arise.

C. PROGRAMS

66.0301 – Intergovernmental Cooperation: Wisconsin Statute §66.0301 permits local agreements between the state, cities, villages, towns, counties, regional planning commissions, and certain special districts, including school districts, public library systems, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, sanitary districts, farm drainage districts, metropolitan sewerage districts, sewer utility districts, Indian tribes or bands, and others.

Intergovernmental agreements prepared in accordance with §66.0301, formerly §66.30, are the most common forms of agreement and have been used by communities for years, often in the context of sharing public services such as police, fire, or rescue. This type of agreement can also be used to provide for revenue sharing, determine future land use within a subject area, and to set temporary municipal boundaries. However, the statute does not require planning as a component of any agreement, and boundary changes have to be accomplished through the normal annexation process.

Municipal Revenue Sharing: Wisconsin Statute, 66.0305, Municipal Revenue Sharing, gives authority to cities, villages and towns to enter into agreements to share revenue from taxes and special charges with each other. The agreements may also address other matters, including agreements regarding services to be provided or the location of municipal boundaries.

Boundaries of the shared revenue area must be specified in the agreement and the term of the agreement must be for at least 10 years. The formula or other means for sharing revenue, the date of payment of revenues, and the means by which the agreement may be invalidated after the minimum 10 year period.

Incorporation: Wisconsin Statutes, 66.0201 – Incorporation of villages and cities; purpose and definitions, and 66.0211 – Incorporation referendum procedure, regulate the process of creating new villages and cities from Town territory. Wisconsin Statute, 66.0207 – Standards to be applied by the department, identifies the criteria that have to be met prior to approval of incorporation.

The incorporation process requires filing an incorporation petition with circuit court. Then, the incorporation must meet certain statutory criteria reviewed by the Municipal boundary Review Section of the Wisconsin Department of Administration. These criteria include:

- ✓ Minimum standards of homogeneity and compactness, and the presence of a "well developed community center."
- ✓ Minimum density and assessed valuation standards for territory beyond the core.
- ✓ A review of the budget and tax base in order to determine whether or not the area proposed for incorporation could support itself financially.
- ✓ An analysis of the adequacy of government services compared to those available from neighboring jurisdictions.
- ✓ An analysis of the impact incorporation of a portion of the Town would have on the remainder, financially or otherwise.
- ✓ An analysis of the impact the incorporation would have on the area.

Many of the other types of intergovernmental programs not discussed here are urban fringe city-town in nature and do not apply to a town like Laona including boundary agreements, extraterritorial actions, and annexation.

D. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal

- Seek mutually beneficial cooperation with all levels of government.

Objective

- Consider ways to share services with neighboring towns and the County to provide more efficient service or public utilities.

Policies

1. Investigate cost sharing or contracting with neighboring towns and the County to provide more efficient service or public utilities.
2. Work with Forest County on the development of countywide planning efforts.
3. Identify alternative solutions to existing or potential land use, administration or policy conflicts that may hinder intergovernmental cooperation.

CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION

This last chapter (#9 of 9) of the Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan is based on the statutory requirement [§66.1001(2)(i) Wis. Stats.] for a compilation of programs and specific actions to implement the objectives, polices, plans and programs contained in the previous chapters. This chapter includes a process for updating the plan, which is required every 10 years at a minimum.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This Plan is intended to be used as a guide by local officials, both town and county, when making decisions that affect growth and development in Laona. It is also important that local citizens and developers become aware of the Plan.

Steps taken to implement this Plan include adoption of public participation guidelines, Plan Commission formation, Plan Commission resolution recommending Plan adoption by the Town Board, a formal public hearing, Town Board approval of the Plan by ordinance, distribution of the Plan to affected government units, and ongoing Plan Commission reviews and updates.

RECOMMENDATION 1: PLAN COMMISSION

Once the Plan is approved, then it is important for the Town Board to use it as a guide for decisions that affect development in the Town.

The Town of Laona Plan Commission is to measure the Town's progress toward achieving the Plan on an annual basis and make a full review and update of the Plan every 10 years (see: "C – Plan Review & Update" below).

If Laona joins County Zoning, then work with the Forest County Zoning Committee to establish a notification procedure of the Laona Plan Commission with any zoning change petitions. This notification could be a standard form used to record Town Plan Commission zoning recommendations to the Town Board and Town Board zoning recommendations to the County. On the form would be reasons for the recommendation, and each member's vote on the matter. The completed form would be attached to the original zoning petition and a copy retained for the Town Plan Commission records.

The Laona Plan Commission shall review zoning and subdivision applications and make formal recommendations to the Town Board to forward to the County Zoning Committee. The Laona Comprehensive Plan is an important consideration in this process. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that a local government's land use related decisions and actions be consistent with that local government's comprehensive plan.

For any zoning change that the Town Board turns down, or for any zoning change approved by the County but vetoed by the Town, a Town resolution of disapproval shall be passed and filed with the County within 10 days, as required by Wisconsin Statute §59.69(5)(e)3 to exercise Town veto authority. This procedure would strengthen the Town position in any zoning matter.

RECOMMENDATION 2: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Primary plan implementation tools include the Forest County Zoning and Land Division ordinances. These ordinances provide the underlying regulatory framework that supports many of the Plan's policies.

a. Land Division Ordinance

Land or subdivision regulations relate to the way in which land is divided from a section of land (640 acres) for additional people to own and develop. A community can control the subdivision of land by requiring a developer to meet certain conditions in exchange for the privilege of recording a plat. While imposing conditions restricts the use of private property, the cumulative effect of land subdivision on the health, safety, and welfare of a community is so great as to justify public control of the process.

Of all the land use control devices available, subdivision regulation has probably the greatest potential. When compared with zoning, a well-administered subdivision control is more useful in achieving planning goals and its influence is far more lasting. Once land is divided into lots and streets are laid out, development patterns are established. Subdivision regulations can ensure that those development patterns are consistent with community standards. Subdivision regulations can also ensure the adequacy of existing and planned public facilities such as schools, wastewater treatment systems, water supply, to handle new growth. Finally, subdivision regulation can help ensure the creation and preservation of adequate land records.

There is some overlap between zoning and subdivision codes in terms of standards. Both ordinances, for example, can set lot sizes. Both can deal with the suitability of land for development. Implementing important plan techniques such as rural cluster development often requires use of the zoning ordinance and the subdivision ordinance.

Forest County has a land division ordinance (Subdivision Ordinance, Forest County, Wisconsin). It applies to all unincorporated land within Forest County uniformly with limited exceptions.

b. Zoning

Zoning is the major tool used to regulate land uses and implement a comprehensive plan. The zoning ordinance regulates the use of property to advance the public health, safety, and welfare. It has been used throughout the United States and in Wisconsin since the 1920's.

A zoning ordinance creates different use zones or districts within a community. Each district has a list of permitted uses, which are uses that are desirable in a district. Each district may also contain a list of special uses, sometimes called special exceptions or conditional uses, which are allowed under certain circumstances, and require review by a local body to be allowed. All other uses are prohibited.

Zoning regulations are adopted by local ordinance and consist of two basic things, a map and related text. The zoning map displays where the zoning district boundaries are, and the text describes what can be done in each type of district. The Future Land Use map and zoning are similar but they are not the same. Land use categories on the Future Land Use map are more general, while zoning is much more detailed. Zoning is the legal tool to regulate specific land uses. Since the land use categories on the Future Land Use map are generalized it is possible that more than one zoning district would correspond to each of the categories on the Future Land Use map.

Zoning should be derived from, and be consistent with, the policy recommendations adopted in the comprehensive plan. The desired land uses should “drive” the development of specific zoning ordinance provisions including district descriptions, permitted uses, conditional uses and the zoning map. This consistency has been important in upholding legal challenges in the Courts. After the planning process is complete, then updating the zoning ordinance is critical, so that it incorporates the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan.

County Shoreland Zoning

All counties administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land uses in shoreland and floodplain areas of unincorporated land, which is required under Wisconsin law. This ordinance supersedes any town ordinance, unless the town ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland zone is land located within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a lake, pond, or flowage; or within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a river or stream; or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

Zoning should be derived from, and be consistent with, the policy recommendations adopted in the comprehensive plan. The desired land uses should “drive” the development of specific zoning ordinance provisions. This consistency has been important in upholding legal challenges in the Courts.

Therefore, following the planning process it is critical to update the zoning ordinance map for Laona to incorporate the findings of the Laona Comprehensive Plan.

County Zoning

Forest County has had a general zoning ordinance in place since 1987. Four towns are covered under this ordinance.

Laona could have general zoning through the County, if the County would allow additional towns to join County Zoning. If Laona wanted County Zoning, then the Laona Town Board would follow additional procedures. The next steps include:

- Having the Town Board pass a town general zoning ordinance, which includes a map, and related text to describe each mapped zoning district;
- Voters pass a referendum at an annual meeting about allowing town zoning; and
- County Board approval of the Town zoning ordinance.

Town Zoning

The Town could draft and administer its own zoning ordinance. This would require continuation of village powers, and County Board approval. Also, the County Board would continue to have “veto” power over future amendments to the Town’s ordinance [§60.62(2), Wis. Stats.]. The advantages of this option include providing the greatest amount of local control over zoning decisions. The zoning districts and other ordinance provisions could be tailored to best achieve the desired future conditions in each land use area. Administration of this option could be achieved in a variety of ways. The Town could fund its own administration. The County and Town could jointly administer this ordinance by having a Town zoning administrator that is also a County deputy zoning administrator. Another alternative could involve intergovernmental agreements to contract with the County or an adjacent town for zoning administration and enforcement.

The obvious disadvantage would be cost. Creating town enforced zoning would be a more expensive option, as it would require funding zoning administration and enforcement (including legal expenses) at the local level instead of at the county level. The Town would likely need to hire at least a part time zoning administrator, and would need to establish a Board of Appeals. Any revision to the zoning ordinance would require County Board approval. There still would be some areas of overlap between the County and Town ordinances for shoreland and floodplain areas.

RECOMMENDATION 3: OFFICIAL MAP

Official Maps (§62.23(6) Wis. Stats.) are prepared when a town wants to legally provide a specific location for a future street or park. Official maps are not used frequently because few communities plan anything but major thoroughfares and parks in detail in advance of the imminent development of a neighborhood. Following the planning process it is important that the Official Map is reviewed and changes made if needed.

The Town of Laona does not have an official map. Laona is concerned that the limited land available for residential development in its sewer service area may be blocked from development by housing that is riming off this interior land that is just east of the elementary school. Another potential right-of-way to place on the official map is the historic railroad that runs north from the Camp Five Museum so the mill has railroad access in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 4: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The Town of Laona cooperates with neighboring communities and other units of government to minimize intergovernmental conflict. Continued cooperation will ensure that the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan are fully realized. Key recommendations include the following:

- ✓ Work with Forest County to incorporate the Town of Laona Comprehensive Plan into a Forest County Comprehensive Plan and to complete a plan for the entire county.
- ✓ Continue to build on the initial framework established in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Chapter of this Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 5: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Copies of this Plan should be made available to the public and all materials, maps, programs and information mentioned in the Plan should be assembled and displayed at the Town Hall so it is available for anyone to review when the facility is open or upon reasonable request. In addition, the same information should be made available on the Internet.

B. PLAN CONSISTENCY BETWEEN CHAPTERS

The state comprehensive planning law requires that the implementation chapter describe how each chapter of the plan will be integrated and consistent with the other chapters. Preparing all the chapters of the Town of Laona

Comprehensive Plan simultaneously has ensured that there are no known inconsistencies between the different chapters of the Plan.

Whenever a goal, objective, or policy is changed, then a review of all other goals, objectives, and policies shall be reviewed to determine if others need revision also.

C. PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE

An annual review is to be completed by the Plan Commission, comparing how each land use decision made during the year measured up to the goals and policies of the Plan. If a pattern of land use decisions inconsistent with the goals and policies of this Plan is found, the following options are to be considered:

- ✓ Appropriate adjustments should be made to bring decision-making back in line with Plan goals and policies
- ✓ The goals and policies themselves should be reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and worthwhile
- ✓ Possible changes to existing implementation tools such as the zoning or land division ordinance should be considered to ensure the ordinances properly support land use decision-making and plan implementation.
- ✓ New implementation tools should be considered to gain more control over land use decisions.

A comprehensive plan update is required by statute every 10 years. An essential characteristic of any planning program is that it reflects the desires of the Town's citizens.

D. PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

Amendments to this Plan may include minor changes to plan text or maps or major changes resulting from periodic review. Frequent changes to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided. The Comprehensive Planning Law (§66.1001 Wis. Stats.) requires that the same process used to adopt the Plan will also be used to amend it, specifically:

An amendment or change may be initiated by either the Town Plan Commission or the Town Board and may result from a regular review or a request from a resident.

The Town 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.

If an amendment is approved by resolution to the Town Board, then the Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town Board public hearing on the proposed changes. At the same time, the Town Clerk also mails this notice to all owners and operators of mines within the Town.

The Town Board conducts the public hearing and votes to either approve the Plan amendment by ordinance, disapprove, or approve with changes by ordinance.

Any approved changes are sent to:

- The school district, and technical college district that serve the Town;
- All adjacent town clerks;
- All adjacent county clerks;
- The local library;
- North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; and
- WDOA, Division of Intergovernmental Relations, Comprehensive Planning Program.

ATTACHMENT A
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

ATTACHMENT B
PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

TOWN OF LAONA
Public Participation Plan
for Comprehensive Planning

I. Background

The Town of Laona (Laona) recognizes the need to engage the public in the planning process. Therefore, this Public Participation Plan sets forth the techniques Laona will use to provide an interactive dialogue opportunity between citizens, local decision makers, staff, and the NCWRPC.

The creation of the Public Participation Plan is a task required under Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Legislation (§66.1001(4)(a) Wis. Stats.) to foster input from the public.

II. Objectives

The following is a list of objectives for the Public Participation Plan:

- Provide for public involvement to strengthen the sense of community within Laona.
- Inform all residents and landowners with an interest in Laona of the importance of participating in creating the Laona Comprehensive Plan.
- Request input from residents and land owners to represent the broadest range of perspectives and interests in Laona as possible.
- Provide the public with a variety of opportunities to share their input with the Laona Plan Commission and the Laona Town Board, so that it may be carefully considered and incorporated into the comprehensive planning process.
- Allow public access to all Laona Comprehensive Plan chapters and maps created throughout the planning process.

III. Techniques

The public participation plan for the Town of Laona's comprehensive planning process will incorporate the following techniques:

1. All meetings for the comprehensive planning process will be posted by the Town of Laona (Laona), will be open to the public, and will include time for public comment.
2. NCWRPC will create and maintain a web page on the Internet for the Laona Comprehensive Plan. The chapters and maps created will be posted to this web page throughout the planning process.
3. Comprehensive plan meeting handouts will be maintained by Laona's Clerk, and available for review by the public at the Laona Town Hall.
4. NCWRPC will distribute a copy of the draft Laona Comprehensive Plan to all towns that are next to Laona after the Laona Plan Commission adopts a resolution in favor of the draft Laona Comprehensive Plan.
5. After the Laona Plan Commission adopts a resolution in favor of the draft Laona Comprehensive Plan, it will be available at the Town Hall, the Crandon Public Library, the Edith Evans Community Library (Laona), and on the Comprehensive Plan web page.
6. The Laona Plan Commission will provide regular reports to the Laona Town Board.
7. The Laona Town Board will hold a public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan after the Laona Plan Commission adopts a resolution recommending Laona Town Board adoption of the Laona Comprehensive Plan.

Town of Laona

RESOLUTION # _____

For Adoption of a Public Participation Plan

WHEREAS, the Town of Laona is required to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

WHEREAS, public participation is critical for the development of a sound plan; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Town of Laona to approve a process to involve the public in the planning process; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Laona does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as presented.

ADOPTED on the # day of Month Year.

ATTEST: _____
Name, Secretary/Treasurer

The governing body of the Town of Laona has authorized this Resolution, dated today.

ATTEST: _____
Name, Chairperson