



# Town of Eau Pleine Comprehensive Plan 2022

# Town of Eau Pleine Comprehensive Plan

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Prepared with the Assistance of the:

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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# Chapter 1

## Demographics

This chapter reviews the demographics of the Town of Eau Pleine and identifies the major trends impacting the town over the next few decades. Both Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin are presented for comparison.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Town is located in the west central portion of Marathon County. The Town is bounded by the Town of Frankfort to the north, the Town of Brighton to the west, the Town of Cleveland and Village of Stratford to the east and Town of McMillan to the south. Development in the Town is dominated by agriculture with pockets of residences and scattered commercial establishments.

### **Planning Process**

In the summer of 2021, the Town initiated a process to update its plan. The state planning law – 66.1001 – requires that a comprehensive plan be updated every ten years. A variety of Planning Commission meetings were held over the course of 2021 to prepare the plan. A final Planning Commission meeting was held in the spring of 2022 to review the final draft and recommend adoption of the plan by the Town Board. The plan was adopted by the Town Board in the summer of 2022.

### **Public Participation**

An important part of any planning process is public involvement. Public involvement provides the citizens of the town an opportunity to express their views, ideas, and opinions on issues that they would like addressed regarding the future development of their town. Local officials use this input to guide policies and decisions with greater awareness of the public's desires and consensus. See the adopted Public Participation Plan in Appendix A. The Town of Eau Pleine posted all Planning Commission meetings to invite the public and held a Public Hearing to collect public input.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Population and Households

### Historical Trends

According to the U.S. Census, the population for the Town of Eau Pleine was 769 persons in 2020, which is lower than the 910 persons estimated by the Census’ annual American Community Survey. As shown in Table 1, the Town has experienced stable, steady population growth since 1990, with a substantial increase from 2010 to 2019 (17.8%). The Town’s population growth (12.4%) was slightly lower than the county (16.2%) and state (16.3%) from 1990 to 2010. Population growth has increased considerably since 2010, especially compared to the county and the state. From 2010 to 2019, the county and state saw very little change in population, with the state population increasing at only a rate of 1.8 percent and the county at a 1.0 percent rate.

Table 1: Demographic Change 1990-2019						
Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2019	1990-2010 % Change	2010-2019 % Change
<b>Total Population</b>						
T. Eau Pleine	688	750	773	910	12.4%	17.8%
County	115,400	125,834	134,063	136,396	16.2%	1.0%
State	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,790,716	16.3%	1.8%
<b>Total Households</b>						
T. Eau Pleine	225	275	298	351	32.4%	17.8%
County	41,534	47,402	53,176	55,466	28.0%	4.3%
State	1,822,118	2,084,544	2,279,768	2,358,156	25.1%	3.4%
<b>Average Household Size</b>						
T. Eau Pleine	3.06	2.73	2.59	2.59	-15.4%	0%
County	2.75	2.60	2.49	2.41	-9.5%	-3.2%
State	2.61	2.50	2.43	2.39	-6.9%	-1.6%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Population growth in Marathon County has been concentrated primarily in the urbanized area surrounding Wausau. Most towns in the county have experienced modest percentage growth over the last two decades. Most of the communities with a very high percentage growth also have relatively small populations. Five towns, as well as one city and one village, had population decline between 1990 and 2010.

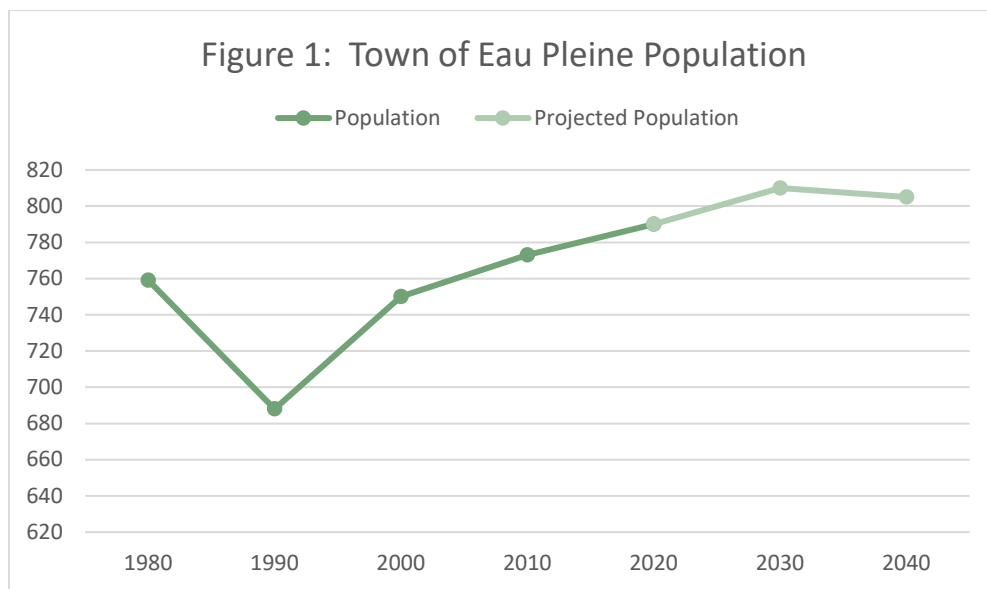
Growth in the number of households has followed a steady increase since 1990. This growth was substantial from 1990 to 2010 at a rate of 32.4 percent, with a slight decrease to 17.8 percent from 2010 to 2019. Marathon County followed the same pattern and increased at a rate of 28.0 percent from 1990 to 2010, but only 4.3 percent from 2010 to 2019. The state also followed with a high rate of increase in the number of households at a rate of 25.1 percent from 1990 to 2010, and a much smaller increase of 3.4 percent from 2010 to 2019. This high rate of growth in population and

households was experienced in Eau Pleine, the county, and the state from 1990 to 2010. Growth in the county and state has stabilized since 2010, but growth in population and households has continued to a great degree since 2010 in Eau Pleine.

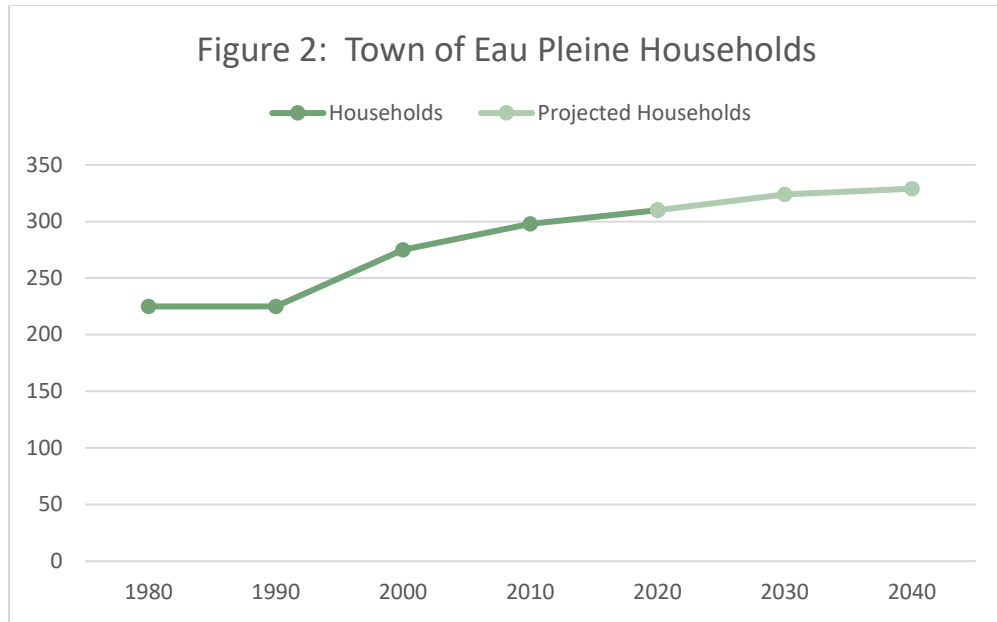
The average household size has been decreasing steadily across the nation over the past few decades. This is due to a multitude of factors including longer life spans, less people having children, and people having fewer children. In the Town, the average household size has decreased fairly steadily in the past few decades, from 3.06 average people per household in 1990 to 2.59 in 2019, for a decrease of 0.47 persons per household. This decrease is more substantial than in the county which has dropped from 2.75 in 1990 to 2.41 in 2019, for a total of 0.34 persons per household. The state household size dropped, but not to the extent of the Town or the county. The state went from an average household size of 2.61 in 1990 to 2.39 in 2019, for a net reduction of 0.22 persons per household.

### Projections

Figure 1 shows population projections for the Town of Eau Pleine and Table 2 compares projected population in the Town to Marathon County, based on projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The Wisconsin DOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin's official population projections. These projections are based on historical population and household growth in the community, with more recent years given a greater weight. The Town of Eau Pleine is expected to grow steadily, at a rate of 4.1 percent through 2040. More growth is expected for Marathon County as a whole, which is expected to grow at a rate of 14.0 percent.



Source: U.S. Census, WI DOA



Source: U.S. Census, WI DOA

Figure 2 and Table 3 include household projections completed by the WDOA. Projections indicate that although both population and number of households are expected to increase, the number of households is expected to increase at a faster rate. This is consistent with the recent downward trend in household size. The percent growth of households within Marathon County is expected to outpace the Town, at a rate of 19.8 percent compared to 10.4 percent. The average household size in the Town was 2.59 in 2010 and is expected to decrease to 2.45 by 2040.

**Table 2: Population Projections, 2010-2040**

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2010-2040
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	773	770	790	805	810	810	805	4.1%
<b>County</b>	134,063	136,510	142,200	146,595	150,130	152,120	152,790	14.0%

Source: WI DOA Population Projections, 2013

**Table 3: Household Projections, 2010-2040**

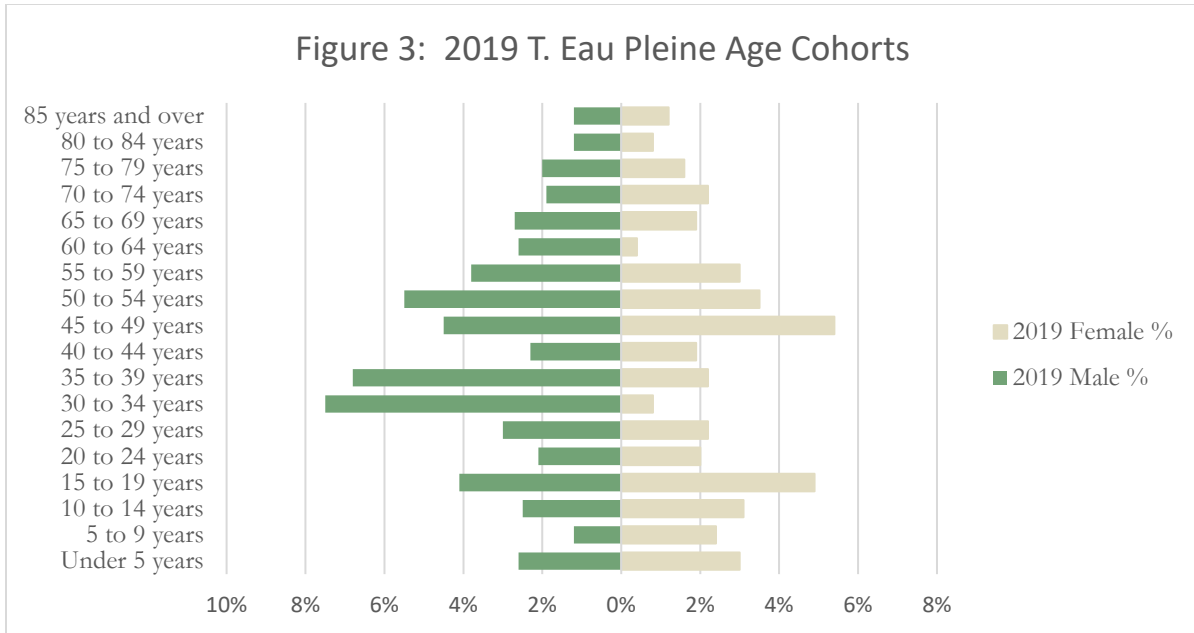
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2010-2040
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	298	300	310	319	324	328	329	10.4%
<b>County</b>	53,176	54,657	57,394	59,611	61,524	62,958	63,730	19.8%

Source: WI DOA Household Projections, 2013

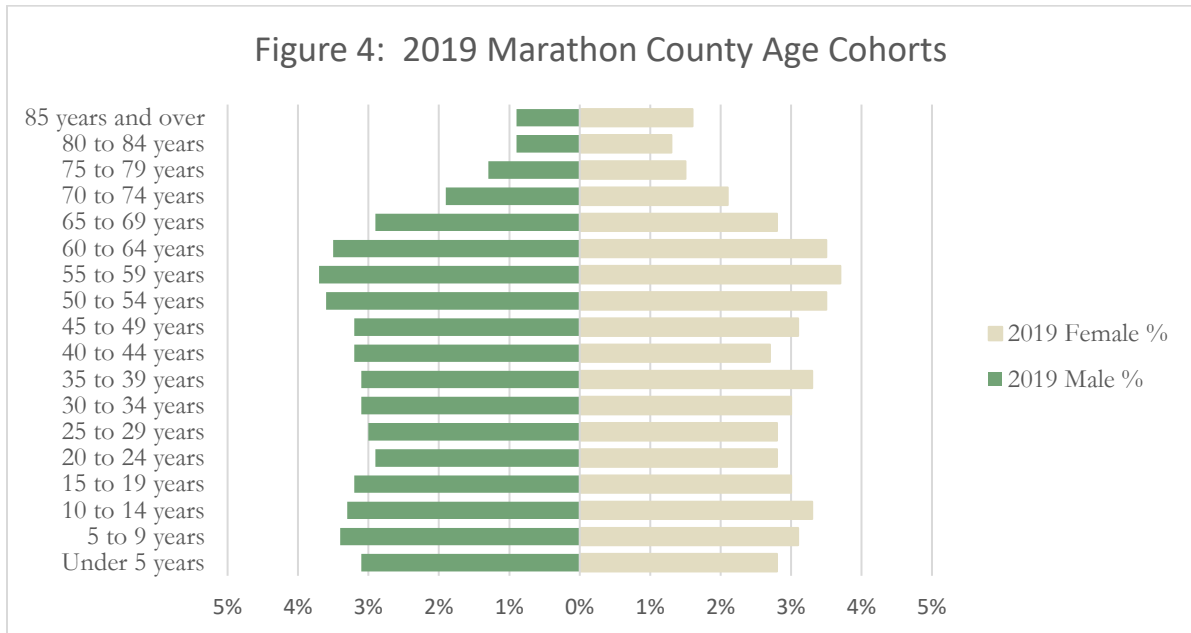
### Age

Figures 3 and 4 compare the distribution of age group for the Town of Eau Pleine and Marathon County. Marathon County’s population pyramid is slightly expansive showing slow and stable

growth. The Town of Eau Pleine has a constrictive population pyramid with greater numbers in the middle age range verses the higher and lower age ranges. This is indicative of aging populations with slow population growth. However, there are exceptions. For example, the Town of Eau Pleine had proportionately more males in the 30 to 34 and 35 to 39 year age ranges than the county. Most males in the Town are in the 30 to 34 year age category, and most females are in the 45 to 49 year old age category.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



In 2019, the median age in the Town was 38.9 years, down from 41.9 in 2010. The county’s median age was 39.4 in 2010. Both the Town and county’s median age were higher than the state at 38.5 in 2010.

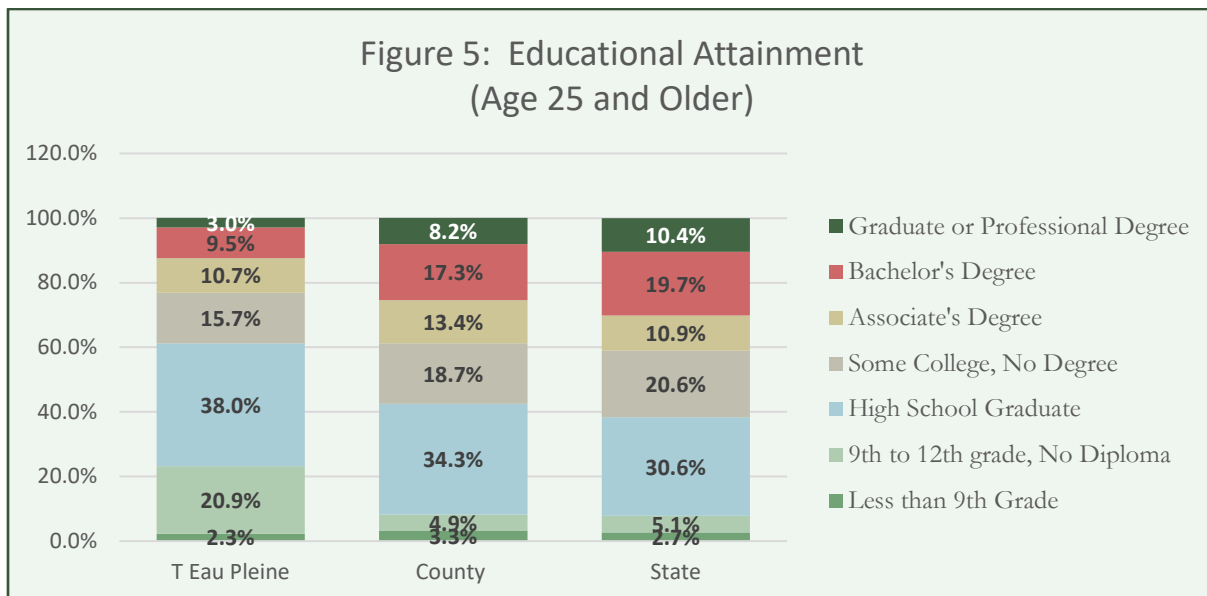
Population distribution is important to the planning process. Two age groups are of particular note, those 17 years of age and younger and those 65 years of age or older. These are often referred to as dependent populations, but each have different needs. For example, the younger group requires schools and child care and the older group requires increased levels of medical care.

From 2010 to 2019, the population of 17 and younger group in Eau Pleine declined from 25.0 percent of the population to 22.3 percent of the population. In short, this was a net gain of 10 people from this age cohort, due to the overall increase in population. From 2010 to 2019, the population percentage of those in the 65 and older group remained relatively stable, with a slight increase from 16.3 percent in 2010 to 16.7 percent in 2019, with a net gain of 26 people. Due to longer life expectancy and the size of the Baby Boomer generation, the 65 and older age group is expected to continue to increase in size. The trend is occurring at the state and national levels and to an even greater degree within the rural Wisconsin counties. This population trend whereby older age categories increase significantly while younger age categories decline will impact the future labor supply, school system, and health care industry at the national, state, and local levels.

## Education and Income Levels

### Education

Figure 5 compares educational attainment of those in the Town of Eau Pleine to the county and the state. In 2019, 76.8 percent of town residents age 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was 15 percent less than the county average and 15.4 percent less than the state average. The Town of Eau Pleine also has less bachelor’s degree recipients (9.5%) and graduate/professional degree recipients (3.0%) than the county and state as well.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Income

Median household income and per capita income are two commonly used measures of income. Median household income is the income for the middle point of households, meaning half of all households fall below that income, and half are above. Per capita income is the measure of average total income per person.

Median household income for Town of Eau Pleine residents was \$56,406 in 2019. Table 4 shows that this was lower than Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin. In 2010, Eau Pleine was higher than the county and the state. When adjusted for inflation, median household income in the Town decreased at a rate of 17.9 percent from 2010 to 2019. The county experienced a slight increase at 0.8 percent and the state increased at a rate of 3.0 percent.

Table 5 illustrates that income per capita in the Town of Eau Pleine was lower than the county and state in 2019 and higher than the county but lower than the state in 2010. When adjusted for inflation, per capita income dropped 6.7 percent from 2010 to 2019. This was in contrast to both the county and state, which rose at rates of 10.3 percent and 7.9 percent respectively.

Minor Civil Division	2010*	2019	Net Change	% Change
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	\$68,674	\$56,406	-\$12,268	-17.9%
<b>Marathon County</b>	\$62,114	\$62,633	\$519	0.8%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$59,938	\$61,747	\$1,809	3.0%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

\*Adjusted for inflation in 2019 dollars

Minor Civil Division	2010*	2019	Net Change	% Change
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	\$30,283	\$28,269	-\$2,014	-6.7%
<b>Marathon County</b>	\$30,078	\$33,189	\$3,111	10.3%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$30,927	\$33,375	\$2,448	7.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

\*Adjusted for inflation in 2019 dollars

## Employment Characteristics

Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Town of Eau Pleine in 2010 and 2019. The “employed population” includes those that are 16 and older. There was an increase of 56 people in the labor force from 2000 to 2019 in the Town. This is likely due to proportionate increase in overall population during the same time period.

Labor force participation indicates the percent of those 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate decreased slightly at 0.3 percent in the Town of Eau Pleine from 2010 to 2019. This was a proportionately small decrease then the county or the state at 3.9 percent and 2.5 percent respectively.

**Table 6: Labor Force**

Minor Civil Division	Labor Force			Labor Participation Rate	
	2010	2019	2010-2019 % Change	2010	2019
T. Eau Pleine	510	566	11.0%	76.0%	75.7%
Marathon County	74,962	73,789	-1.6%	72.2%	68.3%
Wisconsin	3,078,465	3,097,113	0.6%	69.0%	66.5%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In 2010, the Town of Eau Pleine had an employed population of 501 people. The number increased 54 people, to 555 by 2019, for a 10.8 percent increase. Employment increased in both the county and state during this time, at a rate of 2.5 percent and 3.9 percent respectively. The U.S. Census classifies individuals as unemployed if they are not working, actively seeking work, and available to accept a job. The unemployment rate in the Town was 1.9 percent in 2019. This was 1.7 percent lower than the state and 0.9 percent lower than the county.

**Table 7: Employment**

Minor Civil Division	2010	2019	2010-2019 % Change	Unemployment Rate
T. Eau Pleine	501	555	10.8%	1.9%
Marathon County	69,980	71,727	2.5%	2.8%
Wisconsin	2,869,310	2,982,359	3.9%	3.6%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

As shown in Table 8, in 2019 most residents were employed in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. The second sector most represented was the area of management, business, science, and arts, followed by production, transportation, and material moving. From 2010 to 2019, the most significant increase was seen natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. The most significant decrease during this time period was observed in sales occupations.

**Table 8: Resident Occupations 2010-2019**

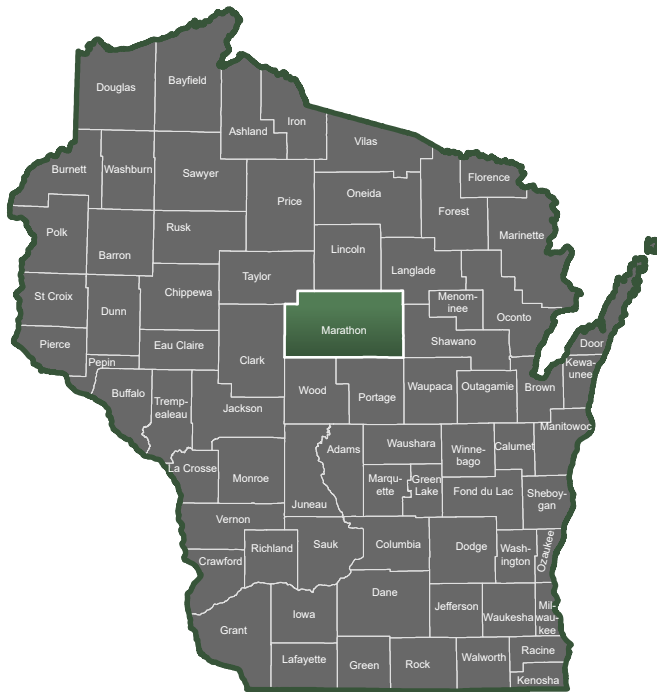
Occupation Sector	2010	2019
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	120	142
Service occupations	52	40
Sales occupations	110	72
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	84	203
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	135	98
Total employed*	501	555

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

\*"Total Employed" represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

## Demographic Snapshot

- The population and number of households have grown steadily since 1990. There has been a notable decline in household size.
- The Town of Eau Pleine is expected to level off both in terms of the number of people and the number of households through 2040.
- There are a large number of people in the middle and older age categories. In 2010, the Town's median age of 41.9 was higher than the county at 39.4 and the state at 38.5.
- The median age dropped three years from 41.9 in 2010 to 38.9 in 2019.
- The Town of Eau Pleine has a lower proportion of residents with a high school diploma, bachelor's degree, or graduate/professional degree than the county and state.
- Both the average household income of \$56,406 and per capita income of \$28,269 are lower than the county and the state.
- The labor participation rate is higher than the county or the state, and the unemployment rate of 1.9 percent in 2019 is lower than the state and the county.
- Most people in the Town of Eau Pleine work in the areas of natural resources, construction, and maintenance.



The Town of Eau Pleine is located in the west central portion of Marathon County. The Town is bounded by the Town of Frankfort to the north, the Town of Brighton to the west, the Town of Cleveland and Village of Stratford to the east and Town of McMillan to the south. Development in the Town is dominated by agriculture with pockets of residences and scattered commercial establishments.

Settlement occurred in the Town of Eau Pleine in the 1870's when a sawmill was built near March Rapids in 1877. The Town was organized in 1884. Other development was linked to the settlement of Stratford, which grew up as a company town around the sawmill operated by lumberman Robert Connor.



**Population:**  
Total: 910  
Median Age: 38.9



**Income:**  
Median Income: \$56,406  
Per Capita Income: \$28,269



**Recreation:**  
March Rapids Park  
Big Rapids County Park  
Snowmobile Trails



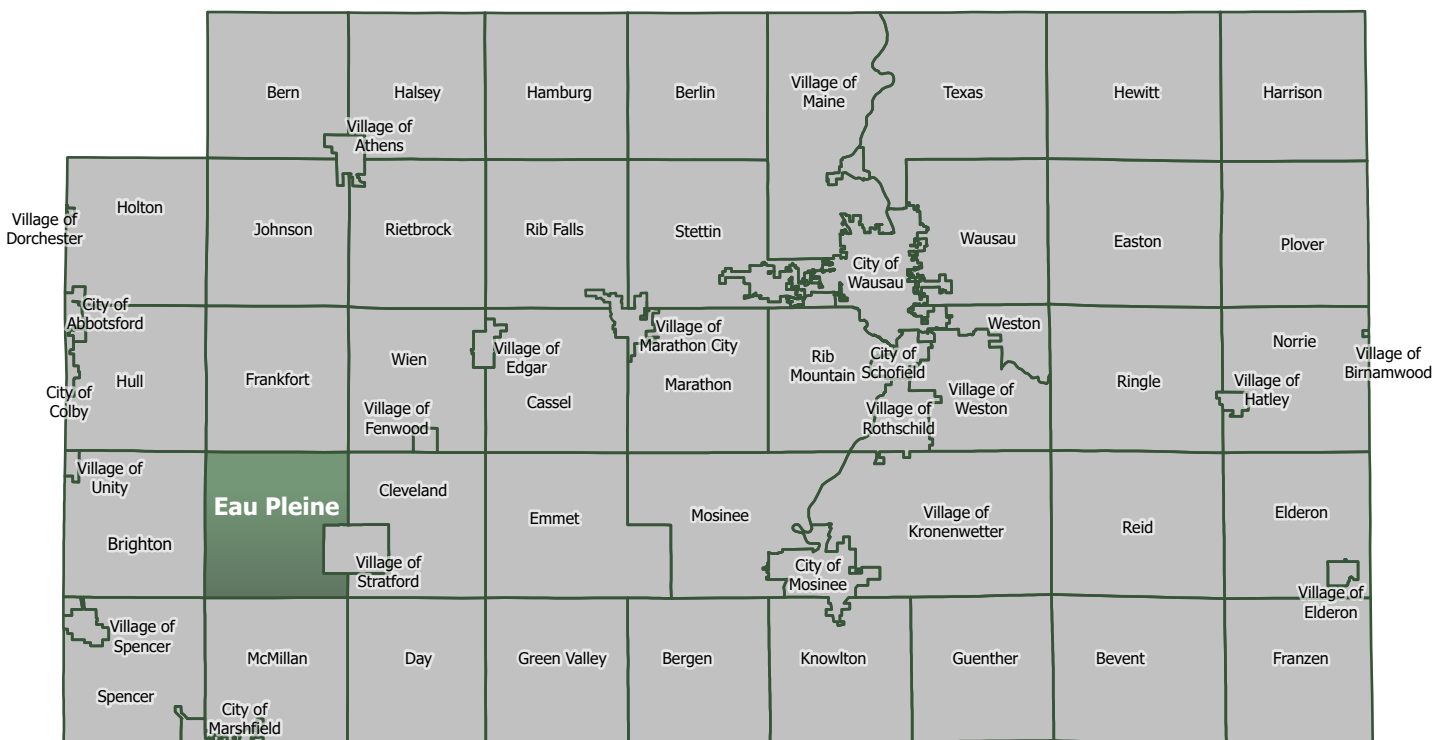
**Housing Units:**  
Total: 360  
Occupied: 351



**Employment Data:**  
Town Labor Force: 566  
Residents Employed: 555  
Unemployment: 1.9%



**Major Roadways:**  
STH 97      CTH E  
STH 153    CTH P



# Chapter 2

## Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources

This chapter describes local land and water conditions in detail as well as agricultural resources and cultural heritage. It is important to consider the patterns and interrelations of natural resources on a broader scale because they do not follow geo-political boundaries. In addition, many of the programs for protecting or mitigating impacts to natural resources are administrated at the county, state, or federal level. Thus, an overview of recent county-wide natural resource planning efforts is described below. Natural resources covered in this chapter include biology, geology, and geography including terrain, soils, water, forests, wetlands, wildlife, and habitat.

Cultural resources include a community's heritage, archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to indigenous peoples or other cultural groups. Cultural resources also include arts and the way of life in a community. Cultural resources are those elements around us that signify our heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinct.

### PREVIOUS NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL, & CULTURAL RESOURCE PLANS AND STUDIES

In the last decade, several plans were prepared by the county specifically to address protection and management of natural resources. These plans may be used as resources to guide local policy and decision-making regarding resource management and protection.

#### **Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2010**

The Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Marathon County from 2010 to 2020. The Land Conservation and Zoning Committee identified the following long-term program outcomes for the natural resource protection efforts in Marathon County:

1. Land Use activities are well planned to enhance community development, minimize conflicts, maximize infrastructure investments and protect rural character.
2. Improve and protect the surface and ground water assets to enhance public health and safety, recreational opportunities and economic development.
3. Maintain the soil and water resources as productive assets through topsoil and organic matter conservation.
4. Marathon County agriculture and woodlot producers are economically strong.

#### **Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2013-2028**

The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan is required under Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The purpose of this plan is to guide and manage the preservation of farmland and agricultural production capacity. There are an abundance of agricultural areas in the Town, making this program of overall importance to the county in general and may have an impact on Town residents, for example, related to emerging trends such as the local foods movement.

#### **Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Use Plan, 2006-2020**

The Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Use Plan is a management guide for the Marathon County Forest and is updated every ten years. The mission of the plan is to manage and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for the ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future residents throughout the county. The report includes a number of recommendations for timber management, wildlife habitat and game management, land acquisition and forest boundary management, biodiversity management, watershed management and tourism.

#### **Marathon County Groundwater Protection Guide, 2001**

The Groundwater Protection Guide was an extension of a 1988 groundwater plan. In April 2001, the guide was created to assist county and local officials in setting policy related to groundwater. It also serves as a resource for information about groundwater and strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection. The County is considering a new groundwater planning effort.

#### **USGS Protecting Wisconsin's Groundwater through Comprehensive Planning, 2007**

In a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin System and the U.S. Geological Survey, a website has been made available with data and information on geology, general hydrology and groundwater quantity and quality. The website was developed to aid government officials and planners in addressing groundwater in their comprehensive plans. The most recent data available for Marathon County was published in 2007. The full Marathon County report is available on the website: <https://wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/find/marathon/index.html>.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Examining the natural environment is essential to the planning process. For instance, soils, topography and geology can pose limitations to certain types of development, while an inventory of surface water resources, vegetation types, environmentally significant areas, and historical features identify those resources and areas which should be protected from over-development. This section of the plan identifies both the land and water resources of the town.

### **Land Resources**

The Town is located in the southwest portion of Marathon County. The Town is bounded by the Town of Frankfort to the north, the Town of Brighton to the west, the Town of Cleveland and Village of Stratford to the east and Town of McMillan to the south. The Town of Eau Pleine covers 21,240 acres of land.

## Topography and Geology

Marathon County's terrain is primarily the result of glaciation. The western areas of Marathon County consist of broad, nearly level to sloping ground moraines. Pre-settlement this area was dominated by wetlands, which were drained to make way for agriculture. This area is characterized by a flat to gently rolling landscape, with large tracts of contiguous farmland and forest in the wetter areas and along streams.

Most of the soils found in Marathon County are best used for cropland and woodlands. The soils of Marathon County are primarily derived from the weathering of glacial drift, outwash, and bedrock. There are two soil associations in the Town of Eau Pleine. Most soils in the Town are within the Loyal-Withee-Marshfield association. A portion of the northeast corner of the Town contains soils within the Fenwood-Rietbrock-Rozellville association.

The primary concerns with soil erosion are the potential loss of productive farm soils and the impact of sediment and nutrient runoff on water quality. To maintain soil productivity, an average soil erosion rate of three to five tons per acre per year for cropland is considered allowable or tolerable ("T" level). The average soil loss rate for Marathon County is two tons per acre per year. To preserve water quality, the county's goal is to keep soil erosion rates below "T" levels, particularly in water quality management areas.

## Forests

According to land cover maps, approximately 5,871 acres, or 28 percent of Eau Pleine is covered by woodlands. These woodlands are an important resource in the Town. Forests provide protection for environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. In addition, expansive forests provide recreational opportunities aesthetic benefits, and economic development.

Some woodlands in the Town are owned by private property owner and some are owned publicly. There are 178.51 Marathon County acres within the Town and no state or federal acreage.

Privately owned forestland includes approximately 3,346 acres enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, as 2019. Some, but not all, of this land is open to public access. These programs have been established to preserve and protect woodlands through practicing proper management techniques.

## Metallic and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

Non-metallic mining is a widespread activity throughout the State of Wisconsin. There are two active non-metallic mines located within the Town.

## Environmentally Remediated Areas

Brownfields are commercial or industrial properties that contain or may contain hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. Expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of these properties can be especially difficult. The Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) is an online database that provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and clean-up of properties with contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Contaminated sites are not uncommon as all communities with commercial and industrial development have the potential for air emissions, groundwater contamination, soil spills, and surface water contamination. Contaminated sites originate when a property is used for such activities as a



gas station, industrial processing facility, a landfill, or a laundromat. There are no listed open sites on the BRRTS currently in the Town of Eau Pleine.

### Rare Species and Natural Communities

Wisconsin's National Heritage Inventory Program (NHI) is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the State. The program's database, on the Wisconsin DNR website, identifies species and natural communities that are currently tracked by the NHI. As of November 2020, NHI tracked three species and one community in the Town of Eau Pleine. They are listed below:

- Yellow Bumble Bee
- Yellowbanded Bumble Bee
- Greater Prairie Chicken
- Northern Mesic Forest (which provide important habitat for wildlife and plants across large portions of Wisconsin)



**Yellowbanded Bumble Bee**  
Source: Jay Watson, WDNR

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.

### Water Resources

Marathon County contains abundant natural surface water features, including rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands. The Town of Eau Pleine contains some of these rivers and streams within its boundaries. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state and others are in need of focused efforts to improve water quality. This section discusses the characteristics of the major surface water features located within the Town.

#### Watersheds

A watershed is an area of land in which water drains to a common point. In Wisconsin, watersheds vary in scale from major river systems to small creek drainage areas and typically range in size from 100 to 300 square miles. River basins encompass several watersheds. There are 32 river basins in Wisconsin, which range in size from 500 to over 5,000 square miles.

Marathon County is geographically located in the Central Wisconsin Basin, which is a subset of the entire Wisconsin River corridor located in Central Wisconsin. The Central Wisconsin River Basin is comprised on 29 watersheds, 17 of which are all or part in Marathon County. The vast majority of the Town of Eau Pleine lies in the Upper Big Eau Pleine Watershed. Most of the southern portion lies in the Little Eau Pleine River Watershed and a small section in the southeast corner lies within the Lower Big Eau Pleine River Watershed.

## Surface Water

Marathon County has 202 lakes with a total surface area of 28,322 acres. Many lakes lie in kettle holes left by the retreat of the glaciers. Seepage lakes are the most common type of lake in the county. These lakes do not have any surface outflow but depend on underground movement of water through highly permeable glacial soils for drainage. Most lakes are quite shallow, with depths ranging from less than one foot to a maximum of 34 feet. The county has 356 rivers and streams with a surface area of 3,748 acres. The interconnected network of rivers and streams that cross Marathon County is characteristic of a landscape influenced by glacial impacts. The Town of Eau Pleine contains 194 acres of surface water, including streams and rivers which comprise approximately one percent of the Town's total land area.

## Rivers

The main river that runs through the Town is the Big Eau Pleine River. Noisy Creek runs through the center of the Town. There are various other rivers and creeks throughout the Town.

## Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

The Wisconsin DNR classifies major surface water resources. These classifications allow water bodies of particular importance to be identified because of their unique resource values and water quality. The DNR has two categories which include Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) which have the highest quality water and fisheries in the state and are therefore deserving of special protection, and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) which have excellent water quality and valued fisheries but receive or may receive water discharges.

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. There is one ERW within the Town, which is Noisy Creek. There are no ORW's within the Town.

## 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.

The Big Eau Pleine River is listed as an impaired water body due to low dissolved oxygen and high levels of bacteria.

## Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Marathon County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. Invasive species can alter the natural ecological relationships among native species and affect ecosystem function, economic value of ecosystems, and human health. It is recommended that the Town continue to work with the Marathon County Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning to develop public outreach education strategies. It is also beneficial that lake districts

and associations continue to work with the DNR and property owners to manage invasive aquatic species within lakes and waterbodies throughout the Town of Eau Pleine. The Big Eau Pleine River does have invasive species present including Aquatic Forget-me-not and Purple Loosestrife.

### **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.

Wetlands in Eau Pleine are associated with the river, creek, and tributaries throughout the Town. These areas should be protected and development should be encouraged away from these environmentally sensitive areas.

### **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. Floodplains 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 most substantial (regional) flood, i.e. those that have a probability of occurring once every one hundred years.

### **Groundwater**

Groundwater is water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand, and rock. It is replenished by rain and snow melt that seeps down into cracks and crevices beneath the land's surface. 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. Wells are drilled 20 to 200 feet deep to yield 5 to 50 gallons per minute, but yields of 200 gallons per minute are possible. Shallow wells in these deposits are subject to pollution.

Groundwater is the major source of water consumption in Marathon County. All public and private water supplies and most domestic, industrial, and agricultural water supplies in the county rely on

groundwater. As residential development continues to expand in the rural areas of the county and agricultural methods intensify, the concern for groundwater protection grows. Depth to groundwater in most of the Town of Eau Pleine ranges from 0 to 20 feet. However, there are scattered areas that range from 20 to 50 feet. Over the past few years, the concern for groundwater quantity has increased.

Contamination of groundwater typically is the result of land uses associated with modern development. 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.

The Wisconsin DNR in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin Extension, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and USGS, analyzed the ease whereby contaminants can be carried through overlying materials to groundwater. Variables relevant to this are depth to bedrock, type of bedrock, soil characteristics, depth to water table, and characteristics of surficial deposits. Most areas in western Marathon County, including the Town of Eau Pleine, have been identified as being less susceptible to contamination.

## **AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

Agriculture has played a dominant role in the culture and economy of Marathon County for the past century. A significant number of people throughout the county are employed in agricultural-related industries and the economic health of many rural communities is directly tied to agriculture. Agriculture in Wisconsin has experienced several changes in the past decades including relying more upon technological advances to farm successfully and conversion of significant amounts of cropland to non-farm uses. This has created more recognition of the need for meaningful farmland preservation programs.

### **Farmland Resources**

Farmland is much a part of the history, culture and economy of the Town of Eau Pleine. Croplands constitute the most sizeable land use category within the Town. Preservation and attention to these resources is and will continue to be a priority.

#### **Agriculture**

According to land cover maps, agricultural lands comprise 13,454 acres (63%) of the Town. Agriculture in the Town is mostly dairy and associated crops. There are several large dairy farms located throughout the Town. Most operations have fewer than 300 animal units, one has between 300 and 1,000 animal units, and three have 1,000 animal units or more.

#### **Farmland Preservation**

Farmland preservation is available to landowners within the Town of Eau Pleine and throughout Marathon County, as it impacts local economy and culture. The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan details county policies and strategies with the goal of supporting and sustaining

active farms. The Farmland Preservation Plan identifies and distinguishes farm preservation areas from non-farm preservation areas and future development areas. A majority of the Town is designated as Farmland Preservation Areas.

Property owners in farm preservation areas may participate in the Farmland Preservation Program, an income tax credit program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The goals of the program are twofold: to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and to provide property tax relief to farmland owners. Landowners can receive a state income tax credit in exchange for keeping land in agricultural use. These tax credits are intended as an incentive to keep land in active farming and meet soil conservation standards. Property owners determine if they would like to participate in farmland preservation practices.

## **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

A cultural resource is a broad term that can encompass many aspects of heritage. Cultural resources may include archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to Native Americans or other cultural groups. Cultural resources are those elements that signify heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinctive. Cultural resources include buildings; sites and landscape that help communities retain their sense of identity in an increasingly homogenized society.

### **Community History**

Settlement occurred in the Town of Eau Claire in the 1870's when a sawmill was built near March Rapids in 1877. The Town was organized in 1884. Other development was linked to the settlement of Stratford, which grew up as a company town around the sawmill operated by lumberman Robert Connor. Stratford was located on the Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Railroad, built from Wausau to Marshfield by the 1890's. Boarding houses near the mill provided shelter and Connor scrip or tokens served as cash at the company-owned stores. As in the other logging communities in the county, the decline of lumbering was followed by the rise of the dairy industry and establishment of the Stratford Cooperative Creamery Company in 1919. There were as many as seven cheese factories operating in the area in the 1930's.

### **Resources**

Historic structures and cultural areas provide a sense of place, enhance community pride, and reinforce social and cultural enrichment. The identification of existing historic structures and cultural areas are an important consideration in all town planning efforts, as these features are critical to defining a community's look and character.

There are no properties within the Town on the National or State Register of Historic Places or on the Wisconsin Architectural History Inventory. However, there are 78 homes in the Town that were constructed in 1939 or earlier, many of which are farmsteads. This demonstrates the historical significance that agriculture had on the early development of the Town.

## Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources Programs

There are a variety of programs available to the Town related to natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Some of these 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.

### **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.

### **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 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. Contact the WDNR for further information.

### **Nonpoint Source Program (NSP)**

Wisconsin's NPS Program, through a comprehensive network of federal, state and local agencies working in partnership with other organizations and citizens, addresses the significant nonpoint sources in the state. This program combines voluntary and regulatory approaches with financial and technical assistance. Abatement activities include agriculture, urban, forestry, wetlands and hydrologic modifications. The core activities of the program — research, monitoring, data assessment and management, regulation and enforcement, financial and technical assistance,

education and outreach and public involvement — work to address current water quality impairments and prevent future threats caused by NPS pollution. Contact the WDNR for more 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.

The Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center allows residents in the Town of Eau Pleine and other areas in central Wisconsin to determine the safety of their well water by providing the opportunity to have their well water tested. Residents can send in water samples of their well water to any state-certified testing laboratory, including the Water and Environmental Analysis Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, which houses the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center.

### **Aquatic Habitat Protection Program**

The WDNR provides basic aquatic habitat protection services through their staff. 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.

### **Endangered Resources Program**

The DNR'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.

### **Wildlife Management Program**

The DNR'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 DNR 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.

### **NRCS Conservation Programs**

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. NRCS provides funding opportunities for agricultural producers and other landowners through these programs:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by USDA's Farm Service Agency
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Small, Limited, and Beginning Farmer Assistance
- Working Lands for Wildlife

### **Wetlands Reserve Program**

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program which was established to restore wetlands on lands which were previously altered for agricultural use. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in consultation with the Farm Service Agency and other federal agencies.

Land is eligible for enrollment in the WRP if the landowner has owned that land for at least one year, and the land is restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. Landowners may choose to restore wetlands with a permanent or 30-year easement, or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with the USDA. If a permanent easement is established, the landowner will receive payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100% of the wetland restoration costs. The 30-year easement payment is just 75% of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site, and 75% of the restoration costs. Voluntary cost-share restoration agreements are generally for a minimum of 10 years, and 75% of the cost of restoring the land to wetlands is provided. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land.

### **Discovery Farms Program**

Discovery Farms is a program administered by UW-Extension that works with over 40 farmers across the state of Wisconsin. The program's mission is to "develop on-farm and related research to determine the economic and environmental effects of agricultural practices on a diverse group of Wisconsin farms; and educates and improves communications among the agricultural community, consumers, researchers and policymakers to better identify and implement effective environmental



management practices that are compatible with profitable agriculture.” On-Farm projects fall under one the following categories: Nitrogen Use Efficiency, Tile Monitoring, Leachate Collection Systems, Watershed water quality, and Edge-of-Field Runoff Monitoring.

### **Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants**

The Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) provides funding to producer-led groups that focus on nonpoint source pollution abatement activities through the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program (PLWPG). The goal is to improve Wisconsin's soil and water quality by supporting and advancing producer-led conservation solutions by increasing on the ground practices and farmer participation in these efforts.

### **Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Wisconsin Historical Society**

This office is part of the Wisconsin Historical Society and serves as the principal historic preservation agency in the state. In partnership with communities, organizations and individuals, the SHPO works to identify, interpret and preserve historic places for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Marathon County Historical Society is available to assist Town of Eau Pleine residents with preserving their own history, and artifacts that also build upon the history in Marathon County. Their mission is to collect, preserve, and exhibit materials related to the history of Marathon County, and to use those materials to help people learn about North Central Wisconsin, connect with their roots, and explore their own historical connections.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

**Goal 1: Maintain and enhance the aesthetic, ecological quality, function, and other values of the town's land and water resources.**

### Objectives:

1. Discourage development within environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, lowlands, and steep slopes.
2. Protect wetlands and control erosion in shoreland areas.
3. Seek to create a balance between economic development, sustainability, and environmental protection.
4. Develop and coordinate partnerships and cooperative efforts to address documented water quality degradation in town streams and rivers.
5. Educate residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems, shoreland areas, and water conservation.
6. Protect water resources including streams, rivers, and wetlands.

### Policies:

1. Work with Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning to enforce existing regulations of septic systems to protect groundwater.

**Goal 2: Support economically productive farming and forestry.**

### Objectives:

1. Support diversification of farming types and practices to maintain agriculture as a viable economic activity.
2. Consider existing agricultural structures and uses when considering new development.
3. Encourage retaining large, contiguous forestry tracts within the Town.

### Policies:

1. Encourage landowners to develop forest management plans.
2. Explore the possibility of adding culverts to ensure safer farming operations.

# Chapter 3

## Housing

Housing characteristics and trends are important components of comprehensive planning. The physical location of housing can determine the need of many public facilities and services. Furthermore, understanding dynamics in the market likely to affect housing development in the future provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate transportation facilities with a sustainable pattern of residential development. Understanding the factors affecting people's ability to meet their own housing needs provides a basis for reinforcing community ties, fostering economic development and environmental sustainability, and improving the quality of life.

### PREVIOUS HOUSING PLANS AND STUDIES

#### **Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan**

The Consolidated Housing Plan is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the application process required of the states in accessing formula program funds of Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter Grants and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

“The Consolidated Plan provides the Framework for a planning process used by states and localities to identify housing, homeless, community, and economic development needs and resources and to tailor a strategic plan for meeting those needs.”

#### **Regional Livability Plan, 2015**

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development and land use. The RLP identifies a number of issues affecting community livability related to housing:

- Aging population
- Smaller household sizes
- Lack of housing options
- Increase in housing costs related to incomes

#### **ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2020**

This report, developed by the United Way, described the 22 percent of households in Marathon County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or “ALICE” households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the “household survival budget,” which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, child care, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

- The ALICE report shows that 29 percent of Eau Pleine households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, indicating that the average household in Eau Pleine is relatively less financially prosperous than the average Marathon County household at-large.

## HOUSING ASSESSMENT

### Housing Type and Tenure

In 2019, the Town of Eau Pleine had approximately 351 occupied housing units, 80.3 percent of which were owner occupied, see Table 9. The Town of Eau Pleine had a significantly higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than both Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin, at 72.2 percent and 67.0 percent respectively. The average household size of 2.59 was slightly higher than the county (2.41) and the state (2.39). In 21.7 percent of households the householder lived alone and 26.2 percent of households had at least one individual age 65 or older, this number was higher in both the county and the state. The higher average household size and lower number of households with those 65 and over, when compared to the county and state, suggest that there are more younger families with children in Eau Pleine when compared to the county and state.

	<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	<b>Marathon County</b>	<b>Wisconsin</b>
<b>Total occupied housing units</b>	351	55,466	2,358,156
<b>Owner occupied units</b>	282	40,048	1,580,939
<b>Renter occupied units</b>	69	15,418	77,217
<b>Average household size</b>	2.59	2.41	2.39
<b>% owner occupied</b>	80.3%	72.2%	67.0%
<b>% householder living alone</b>	21.7%	26.2%	29.5%
<b>% with individuals 65 or over</b>	26.2%	29.3%	28.4%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

### Structural Characteristics

Tables 10 and 11 detail the number and percentage of housing units by type. Housing in the Town of Eau Pleine is overwhelmingly single-family detached housing and a sizable portion of mobile home units. Marathon County is also comprised mainly of single family housing but does have a variety of housing types. This is due mainly to a balance of urban and rural communities throughout the county. In Marathon County, single-family detached homes account for 73.9 percent of housing units, followed by apartment style homes with five or more units, which account for 12.3 percent of housing.

There is a distinct need for a variety of styles within the Town. This would better accommodate those at various income levels and from different economic backgrounds.

**Table 10: Housing Units by Structural Type, 2019**

	1- Detached	1- Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	295	0	4	0	0	61	0	360
<b>Marathon County</b>	43,838	2,155	3,151	1,239	7,314	1,621	17	59,335
<b>Wisconsin</b>	1,792,563	112,861	173,453	99,396	423,045	92,487	722	2,694,527

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

**Table 11: Housing Units by Structural Type (Percentage), 2019**

	1- Detached	1- Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	81.9%	0%	1.1%	0%	0%	16.9%	0%	100%
<b>Marathon County</b>	73.9%	3.6%	5.3%	2.1%	12.3%	2.7%	0%	100%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	66.5%	4.2%	6.4%	3.7%	15.7%	3.4%	0%	100%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

### Age Characteristics

The age of a community’s housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1960’s for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have increased. For example, average homes constructed in the later part of the previous century and the first decade of the millennium are typically much larger than housing built in previous decades. This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Marathon County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Tables 12 and 13 outline build dates of housing units throughout the Town, county, and state based on 2019 American Community Survey data. There is a substantial amount of housing stock in the Town that was constructed prior to 1940 (21.7%). However, most housing stock within the Town is relatively new with 49.7 percent of the Town’s housing stock constructed from 1980 to 2009. Construction levelled off substantially from 2010 to the present. This similar pattern was seen throughout the county and state with a similar percentage of homes constructed from 2000 to 2009 and a slightly greater percentage since 2010. However, home supply has not been constructed to meet demand since the Great Recession of 2008 in the Town, county or the state.

**Table 12: Year Structure Built, 2019**

	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 or later
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	78	26	28	16	33	67	60	52	0
<b>Marathon County</b>	10,772	3,178	6,095	4,846	9,538	6,047	8,351	8,192	2,316
<b>Wisconsin</b>	519,745	148,357	290,392	262,431	394,472	267,314	374,275	337,436	100,105

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

**Table 13: Year Structure Built (Percentage), 2019**

	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 or later
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	21.7%	7.2%	7.8%	4.4%	9.2%	18.6%	16.7%	14.4%	0%
<b>Marathon County</b>	18.2%	5.4%	10.3%	8.2%	16.1%	10.2%	14.1%	13.8%	3.9%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	19.3%	5.5%	10.8%	9.7%	14.6%	9.9%	13.9%	12.5%	3.8%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

**Value Characteristics**

Table 14 details housing values in owner-occupied homes throughout the Town, county and state. In 2019, the median housing value was \$159,000 in the Town of Eau Pleine. This was higher than Marathon County, at \$156,300 and lower than the State of Wisconsin, at \$180,600. Half of the homes within the Town (50%) are valued between \$100,000 and \$199,999. There is housing across a broad spectrum of valuations in the Town.

**Table 14: Housing Values Owner Occupied, 2019**

	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 or more	Median Value
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	6.0%	11.0%	24.8%	25.2%	20.9%	12.0%	\$159,000
<b>Marathon County</b>	4.0%	16.4%	26.4%	21.5%	19.3%	12.5%	\$156,300
<b>Wisconsin</b>	4.6%	12.6%	19.6%	19.6%	23.9%	19.7%	\$180,600

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

**Housing Affordability**

Several factors contribute to the affordability of housing in Marathon County. These factors include rent and mortgage payments, maintenance expenses, lot size, and required or desired amenities for the dwelling. Household size and income are key factors contributing to what housing options are available and accessible to residents.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban (HUD) development recommends that housing costs do not exceed 30 percent of monthly income. If housing costs exceed 30 percent of monthly income, a household is considered cost burdened. HUD also indicates that lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is no greater than 31 percent of the monthly

household income. Low income households that pay more than 30 percent of their income toward rent may have difficulty affording other household necessities such as food, child care, and healthcare costs. Severely cost-burdened households are at risk of becoming homeless.

Table 15 shows that the percentage of households in the Town of Eau Pleine that pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs is similar to the county and state in households with a mortgage, but more in cases with no mortgage. Table 16 shows that the proportion of renter occupied households that are cost burdened was 8.3 percent, substantially less than the county or the state.

<b>Table 15: Owner-Occupied Housing Affordability (Median Selected Owner Costs)</b>				
	<b>With mortgage</b>	<b>% cost burdened*</b>	<b>No mortgage</b>	<b>% cost burdened*</b>
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	\$1,309	20.7%	\$478	15.5%
<b>Marathon County</b>	\$1,254	20.9%	\$493	11.2%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$1,430	22.8%	\$553	13.3%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

\*Cost burdened means a household is paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs

<b>Table 16: Renter Occupied Housing Affordability (Median Selected Renter Costs)</b>		
	<b>Median Gross Rent</b>	<b>% cost burdened*</b>
<b>T. Eau Pleine</b>	\$936	8.3%
<b>Marathon County</b>	\$758	36.9%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$856	44.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

\*Cost burdened means a household is paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs

## Specialized Housing

In Marathon County, housing for seniors and populations with special needs is primarily provided in the urbanized areas in and around Wausau. The Marathon County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and the Marathon County United Way all maintain a list of these housing options throughout the county. As the number of elderly persons increases in the coming years, there will most likely be a greater need for a wider variety of housing options.

### Senior Housing

Housing for seniors typically consists of a range of housing options that provide a spectrum of assistance starting with individual units or homes with little or no assistance, independent living communities for seniors that remain independent, assisted living facilities for those who are no longer able to live on their own, and nursing homes for those that need skilled medical care.

According to research by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the overwhelming majority of seniors prefer to “age in place,” or remain in their home throughout retirement. This

can be difficult for those in rural areas such as Eau Pleine, as the ability to access medical care and necessary goods and services can become burdensome. This highlights the importance of senior transportation services and universal design (home design that creates access for all people). The closest senior housing facilities are located in the greater Wausau region. The area surrounding the Town of Eau Pleine will likely need additional housing options for seniors in upcoming years.

## Summary of Housing Characteristics

The Town of Eau Pleine is abundant with homes and farmsteads and many residents live and work within the Town, particularly in the area of agriculture. The Town itself has an overriding rural character, and is abundant with natural resources, agricultural resources, and cultural resources.

Most housing consists of single-family detached housing that is owner occupied. A substantial amount of the Town's stock housing was constructed between 1980 and 2009 and falls into mid-valuation ranges. Some population increase is expected in upcoming decades and the community would benefit from a wide range of housing options. Consistent with the state as a whole, new housing construction over the past decade has stalled, and no homes in the Town have been constructed since 2010. There is a need for construction of additional housing units to accommodate demand. It would be desirable to construct housing in a variety of styles to create affordability and more adequately meet the needs of those at various income levels and desiring a range of amenities. Affordability is more commonly an issue for owners, rather than renters in the Town.

There are a large number of residents nearing retirement age in the Town. Seniors typically desire housing that is smaller, accessible, and near needed healthcare services and amenities. This need will continue throughout the upcoming decades. These are important considerations when looking at future housing policy and planning.



## HOUSING PROGRAMS

There are a variety of state and federal housing programs geared at addressing a variety of housing issues. Grants and low interest loans are available for counties, communities, or individual homeowners and renters. The following are some housing resources administered through the state using state or federal funds that are available to participants.

### **Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)**

- Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)
- Rental Assistance (Section 8) Programs
- Multifamily Loan Fund
- National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling
- WHEDA Advantage
- FHA Advantage
- First-Time Home Buyer Advantage
- WHEDA Tax Advantage
- WHEDA Foundation Grant Program

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

- Single Family Direct Home Loans
- Single Family Home Loan Guarantees
- Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grants
- Rural Housing Site Loan
- Housing Preservation & Revitalization Demonstration Loans & Grants
- Housing Preservation Grants
- Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans
- Multi-Family Housing Loan Guarantees
- Multi-Family Housing Rental Assistance

### **State of Wisconsin Department of Administration Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR)**

- Housing Grants and Loans
- Homelessness Assistance and Prevention
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- HOME Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Program
- HOME Rental Housing Development (RHD)
- Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program
- Housing Cost Reduction Initiative Program (HCRI)
- CDBG – Small Cities Housing and Revolving Loan Program

**The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

- The HUD Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program
- The HOME Investment Partnership Program
- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers
- CDBG – Small Cities Program

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

**Goal 1:       Locate new residential development in appropriate areas.**

**Objectives:**

1.     To discourage development in natural, undeveloped areas.
2.     To guide new housing to locations where the extension of service provision will be minimally impacted.

**Policies:**

1.     The Town of Eau Pleine discourages development in natural, undeveloped areas.
2.     The Town of Eau Pleine will guide residential development to areas where the extension of services will be minimally impacted.
3.     Identify areas where housing development would be appropriate.
4.     Ensure that housing development is guided to appropriate areas.

**Goal 2:       To encourage low-density residential development.**

**Objectives:**

1.     To enforce proper residential development as stated under current County zoning.
2.     To explore developing a subdivision ordinance to control residential development in areas where land is subdivided.

**Policies:**

1.     The Town recommends development of low-density residential properties.

# Chapter 4

## Transportation

A community's transportation system consists of a variety of roads; some are owned and maintained by local officials, others are part of the county or state road systems. In addition to roads, the transportation system includes separate facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, railroads, airports, and public transit. This section describes the transportation system in the Town of Eau Pleine and related improvements or issues affecting the system.

### PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION

#### **Connections 2030**

Connections 2030 is the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) long-range transportation plan for the state. Adopted in 2009, the plan addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. WisDOT is currently in the plan development process to create Connect 2050, which will be an update to this plan.

#### **Regional Livability Plan, 2015**

Transportation is one of four elements included in the Regional Livability Plan (RLP), adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2015. The Transportation Assessment Report, a component of the plan, looks in detail at the transportation network throughout the ten-county region and identifies trends and issues facing transportation.

The Regional Livability Plan addresses three issues: the modes of transportation to work, the age of drivers in the region, and the high transportation maintenance cost. The three transportation goals of the RLP are as follows:

- Provide and improve transportation access to people of all ages and abilities to ensure lifelong mobility and accessibility.
- Fund the maintenance and expansion of the transportation system.
- Enhance the regional economy by supporting airports and freight rail.

#### **Locally Developed, Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, 2019**

Marathon County developed this five-year plan that was facilitated by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The plan analyzes service gaps and needs in public transit and human services transportation and proposes strategies to address the gaps and needs.

### **Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2018**

This plan is a region-wide effort to improve bicycling and walking across communities within North Central Wisconsin. The plan assesses existing conditions related to bicycling and walking, identifies other potential trail and route user groups, identifies routes, and describes policies and programs to assist local governments in improving bicycling and walking to promote connectivity between communities and destinations throughout North Central Wisconsin.

### **State Trails Network Plan**

This 2001 document [revised in 2003] clarifies the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) role and strategy in the provision of all types of trails. The plan identifies a series of potential trail corridors that would link existing trails, public lands, natural features, and communities. This statewide network of interconnected trails would be owned and maintained by municipalities, private entities, and partnerships of the two. Preserving transportation corridors, such as old rail lines, is specifically discussed as a very important strategy in the creation of recreational and alternative transportation corridors.

## **ROAD NETWORK**

### **Classification**

#### **Functional**

A functionally classified road system is one in which street and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. At the upper limit of the system (i.e. principal arterials), are facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), while at the lower limits are local roads and streets that emphasize access over speed and efficiency.

The functional classifications are generally defined as:

- Principal Arterials serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics of an interstate of interregional nature. These routes generally serve all urban areas greater than 5,000 population or connect major centers of activity and the highest traffic volumes and the longest trip desires.
- Minor Arterials, in conjunction with principal arterials, serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators, providing intracommunity continuity and service to trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.
- Collectors provide both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. The collector system distributes trips from the local streets and channel it onto the arterial system.
- Local Streets comprise all facilities not on one of the higher systems. They serve primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to the higher order of systems. Local streets offer the highest level of access, but the lowest level of mobility for automobiles.

## Jurisdictional

Roads are commonly classified in one of two ways: by ownership or by purpose. Jurisdictional responsibility refers to ownership of a particular road, while functional classification, as described above, identifies the road by the level of service it provides.

Jurisdiction refers to government ownership, not necessarily responsibility. For example, some state-owned roads are maintained by local jurisdictions. Additionally, the designation of a public road as a “federal-aid highway” does not alter its ownership or jurisdiction as a state or local road, only that its service value and importance have made that road eligible for federal-aid construction and rehabilitation funds.

Ownership is divided among the federal, state, and local governments. States own over 20 percent of the national road network. The federal government has responsibility for about 5 percent, primarily in national parks, forests, and Indian reservations. Over 75 percent of the road system is locally controlled. In the Town of Eau Pleine, about 33.3 percent of the roads are state or county roads while the remaining 66.7 percent are local roads.

In some cases, local municipalities are responsible for conducting routine maintenance and minor repairs on state and federal highways within their jurisdictional boundaries. In return, the state generally provides financing to those jurisdictions. However, major repairs and reconstruction are generally still the responsibility of the State Department of Transportation.

The road system within the Town of Eau Pleine is a network of county highways and local roads. The jurisdictional breakdown is shown in **Table 17**.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Arterial</b>	<b>Collector</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Federal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
State	4.25	5.87	0.00	10.11
County	0.00	10.53	0.00	10.53
Town	0.00	1.33	39.97	41.30
Totals	4.25	17.73	39.97	61.94

Source: WisDOT

In addition to these main classifications, a road or segment of road may hold a number of other designations, such as forest road, rustic road, emergency or evacuation route, truck route, bike route, etc.

## Major Road Facilities

Following is a brief description of the major road facilities located in the Town of Eau Pleine. All major roads are summarized by functional classification, jurisdiction, and annual average daily traffic (AADT), when available. The **Transportation Map** provides detailed transportation information for the Town.

Looking at AADT over time can provide some insight into roads that may need upgrading or increased maintenance in the future. The AADT count on most roads within the Town of Eau Pleine has declined on most roads over the past decade.

### **State Highway 153**

State Highway 153 is an east-west major collector connecting to State Highway 13 to the west and to the Village of Stratford and State Highway 97 to the east. State Highway 153 had an AADT volume of 1,000 west of County Highway E in 2019 and 1,300 in 2010.

### **County Highway E**

County Highway E is a north-south major collector. The AADT south of State Highway 153 was 1,100 in 2019. North of State Highway 153, the AADT was 780 in 2019 and 640 in 2010.

### **County Highway P**

County Highway P is an east-west minor collector between State Highway 97 and County Highway E and is a major collector west of County Highway E South. Between the County Highway E South and North intersections, County Highway P had an AADT of 390 in 2019 and 400 in 2010. The AADT west of the County Highway E South intersection was 410 in 2019 and 550 in 2010.

### **State Highway 97**

State Highway 97 is a principal arterial serving as Eau Pleine's eastern boundary. State Highway 97 provides connections to Marshfield and State Highway 29. In 2019, the AADT volumes along State Highway 97 ranged from 6,000 (6,800 in 2010) north of County Highway C to 4,000 (4,400) south of County Highway P

## **Road Maintenance**

The Town of Eau Pleine uses the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system, which was designed by the Transportation Information Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The PASER system is the rating system used by most Wisconsin communities. The PASER system rates road surfaces of a scale of 1 to 10.

- "1" and "2" = very poor condition
- "3" = poor condition
- "4" and "5" = fair condition
- "6" and "7" = good condition
- "8" = very good condition
- "9" and "10" = excellent condition

**Table 18** shows a summary of Town road pavement conditions in the Town of Eau Pleine. Town roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below "fair" must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. The roads that display a surface rating of "good" or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. Most Town roads are in relatively good condition, as about 6.4 percent of roads rate as "Poor" or "Very Poor" and about 93.6 percent of roads rate as "Fair" or better. However, there is room for improvement.

**Table 18: Summary of Pavement Conditions, 2021**

<b>Surface Type</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Unimproved	0.14
Gravel Road	41.00
Asphalt	0.13
<b>Surface Condition Rating</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Very Poor	0.13
Poor	2.52
Fair	16.24
Good	16.92
Very Good	0.00
Excellent	5.46
Total	41.27

Source: WisDOT

## Trucking

State Highways 97 and 153 are the truck routes that serve 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 within the local area. Local issues such as safety, weight restrictions, and noise impacts play significant roles in the designation of local truck routes.

## Transportation Services for Specialized Populations

Both the Marathon County Aging and Disability Resource Center and the North Central Health Care (NCHC) provide limited elderly and disabled transport services to Town residents. The services include semi-fixed routes that are scheduled, and demand services available with a 48-hour notice. Demands for these services will increase as the population ages and residents are no longer able to drive themselves.

The nearest intercity bus access is available in Rothschild, providing Lamers Bus Lines to Minneapolis, Green Bay, Madison and Milwaukee.

## LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Land use and transportation have a reciprocal relationship. Both the use and the pattern of land use affects the demand for transportation to and from a geographic area and the viability of the various modes of transportation. Likewise, improved transportation facilities affect land use decisions.

## Access Management

The State of Wisconsin issues STH Connection Permits for driveways, public/private roads or streets, or recreational trails that abut STH right of ways or the highway itself. Marathon County issues driveway permits and implements access restrictions on all properties fronting a county road. The *County Trunk Highway Access-Driveway Policy* addresses the requirements regarding culverts, access width,



slope, visibility and spacing. The policy is available through the Marathon County Highway Department.

The Town requires that all driveways be permitted by the Town; which includes the culvert size, length, and placement.

## **OTHER TRANSPORTATION MODES**

### **Bicycling and Walking**

All roads are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel in the Town of Eau Pleine. No sidewalks exist. Roads that do not have sidewalks may not provide sufficient shoulder areas for safe pedestrian access.

The 2018 North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommends the addition of on-road bicycle infrastructure along State Highway 153, along County Highway P, and along the portion of County Highway E that travels south of State Highway 153.

### **Airports**

Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) is a joint venture of Marathon and Portage Counties and is governed by the Central Wisconsin Joint Airport Board. It is the only airport within Marathon County or neighboring counties that provides scheduled air passenger services. The Central Wisconsin Airport is located east of Mosinee and is easily accessible via I-39. In 2011, the airport underwent a terminal renovation and expansion project which increased operational space, expanded the security checkpoint, increased parking, and relocated rental cars to a separate facility. The airport is currently served by three airlines, Delta, American and United Airlines.

### **Bus/Transit**

There is no public transit service available in the Town. North Central Health Care provides paratransit services for persons over 60 or persons with disabilities who live within Marathon County. The service includes semi-fixed routes that are scheduled, and demand service available with a 48-hour notice. Information and services are available by calling 715-841-5101.

### **Recreational Vehicles**

Several snowmobile trails run throughout the Town, which also includes use of ATV's when the trails are open. However, trails are closed to ATV's when the air temperature is above 28 degrees Fahrenheit. The Town allows the use of ATV/UTVs on Town roads. ATV/UTV use is also allowed on all county highways within the Town of Eau Pleine.

### **Railroads**

There is no rail service in proximity to the Eau Pleine area. Shipments needing rail service would have to be trucked to nearby cities with rail access such as Marshfield or Wausau.

## Specialty

The Aging and Disability Resource Center serves Marathon County residents with a variety of resources including those related to transportation. More details about transportation services for ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents can be found on their website. Some examples include Abby Vans, which provides weekend transportation services county-wide and Wheels to Work which assists Marathon County families/individuals to overcome transportation obstacles between home and work.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

### **Goal 1: Utilize a formal process for road maintenance determination**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Continue utilizing an annual process of roadway analysis, such as PASER, to prioritize maintenance scheduling.
2. Continue to budget roadway improvements in the 5-year Capital Improvements Plan.

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town will utilize a formal process to maintain and update current transportation facilities.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Perform biennial roadway evaluation
2. Explore using free online software through WisDOT to streamline funding allocations for repair.
3. Hold public hearings to discuss roadway condition and determine in-need areas.
4. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan to identify and schedule improvements to transportation facilities.

### **Goal 2: To provide appropriate roadway surfacing on Town roads.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Explore paving some roads as demand increases (especially town roads that extend from McMillan and are already paved).
2. Explore additional funding opportunities for extensive roadway surface improvements.

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town will continue to maintain and update current transportation facilities.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Perform biennial roadway evaluation of gravel roads for possible upgrade.
2. Make improvements to gravel-surfaced roads, including grading and topical applications, to keep the facilities active.
3. Perform a feasibility analysis to determine funding required for paving.
4. Hold a public meeting to determine roads that should be paved and establish a priority ranking.

# Chapter 5

## Utilities & Community Facilities

Utilities and community facilities, provided by either public or private entities, are critical for community development. Utilities include things such as electrical service, natural gas, telephone, cable and internet. Community facilities include local government buildings, libraries, educational facilities, and maintenance and storage facilities, as well as services like police, fire protection, and emergency medical services.

Utilities and community facilities play an important role in the economy and livability of a community.

### PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

#### **Marathon County All Hazards Mitigation Plan, 2017**

This document examines general conditions, including an inventory of utilities, community facilities and emergency services throughout the county. Risk assessment is at the heart of the All-Hazards Mitigation program. In order to mitigate the risks, it is necessary to assess their relative importance. The report reviews a series of weather disasters; how they have affected the county in the past and how future instances are likely to affect the county and how local government should respond to such occurrences. The report concludes with suggested mitigation measures that might be taken by local governments to reduce the risk from identified hazards. Counties and incorporated municipalities are required to adopt such plans with updates every five years.

### UTILITIES

#### Water Service

##### Groundwater Wells

The Town of Eau Pleine does not have a public water supply system. Instead, all development in the Town receives water from private wells. The groundwater supply is generally sufficient for current land uses and water quality is good.

#### Wastewater

##### On-Site Waste Disposal Systems

Chapter 15 of the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County requires private sewage systems on all premises intended for human habitation or occupancy that are not served by public sewer. All development in the Town of Eau Pleine uses on-site septic systems. Marathon County reviews and

issues permits for private sewage systems. Generally, these private sewage systems fall into four categories:

- Conventional systems – these systems include an absorption field that is buried under the natural ground level.
- At-grade systems – consist of a septic tank and soil absorption bed. Treatment begins in the first inch of soil.
- Mound systems – these systems include an absorption field that is constructed above ground creating a “mound”.
- Holding tank systems – these systems are considered a last resort and are only allowed if other septic systems cannot be used. Because of the geology and soil types in the area, most homes in the Town use holding tanks.

## **Stormwater Management**

Surface water management (also referred to as “storm water management”) is one of the key components in efforts to improve water quality. It primarily involves controlling the volume, quality, and storage of runoff. Marathon County is especially concerned about non-point sources of pollution, including failing septic systems, urban runoff, and issues often identified with rural areas such as soil erosion, animal waste and pesticides. Non-point pollution is best addressed at the watershed level.

## **Solid Waste and Recycling**

### **Garbage Pick-Up**

Town residents bring their refuse to the Town Dump and are charged \$1-\$2 per bag. An attendant processes all collections. The Town contracts with GFL Environmental for final disposal. There is a recycling center located within the Town on March Rapids Avenue.

## **Energy and Telecommunications**

### **Electric and Natural Gas**

The Town of Eau Pleine receives electric power from Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS), Clark Electric, and WP & L. Natural gas is contracted for privately and stored in LP tanks.

### **Cable/Internet**

As part of an award from the FCC’s Rural Digital Opportunity Fund program (RDOF) Charter Communications will be providing internet services to a portion of the Town. Currently, internet services are provided by providers Frontier Communications and Country Wireless, and various satellite internet providers. There is one communication tower located within the Town.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This section describes the schools, libraries, and other community facilities for the Town of Eau Pleine. The Eau Pleine Town Hall is located at 111630 Equity Street, just east of County Highway E.

### Schools

#### Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Eau Pleine is served by the Stratford School District. The Stratford School District has an elementary school, and a combined junior and senior high school, all located on Third Avenue in the Village of Stratford. Attendance for the 2020-2021 school year was 330 students at the Stratford Elementary serving pre-kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and 489 students attending the combined junior and senior high school serving 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Additionally, St. Joseph's Catholic School is located within the Village of Stratford, and the Bethany Mennonite Church has a small parochial elementary school held in the church building.

#### Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

**Mid-State Technical College** – located at 2600 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St. Marshfield, is one of 16 regional colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College system, with campuses in Adams, Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids. They offer associate degrees, technical diplomas, and certificates in a wide variety of high demand fields.

**Northcentral Technical College** – located in Wausau, offers several one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields.

**University of Wisconsin Stevens Point (UWSP) at Marshfield** – is located at 2000 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St, and is a satellite campus of UWSP. Here students can work toward a variety of bachelor's degree options including business administration, nursing, and social work.

**University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point at Wausau** – UW Stevens Point at Wausau is located in Wausau offers courses leading to a baccalaureate degree. They also offer graduate degrees including Master of Business Administration (MBA), Physician Assistant (in partnership with UW Madison), and Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (in partnership with Northern Vermont University).

### Libraries

The Town of Eau Pleine is served by the Marathon County Public Library System, which includes nine branches across the county. The Marathon County Public Library System had a total circulation of 784,604 items in 2019. The Stratford Branch Library was constructed in 1995 and is located on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Village of Stratford.

## **Public Protection**

### **Law Enforcement**

Police protection for the Town of Eau Pleine is provided by the Marathon County Sheriff's Office.

### **Fire and Emergency Response**

The Town is a part of a joint Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department with the Village of Stratford.

### **E-911 Dispatch Service**

The Marathon County Sheriff's Office Communications Division provides E-911 Dispatch for all Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies in Marathon County.

## **Hospitals and Medical Services**

There are two major hospitals in Marathon County, Aspirus Wausau Hospital at 425 Pine Ridge Boulevard in Wausau and Ministry St. Clare's Hospital in Weston. The Wausau Hospital is a multi-specialty regional health center.

Marshfield Medical Center is located at 611 Saint Joseph Avenue in Marshfield and offers a full array of services, specialty services and a complete rehabilitation unit.

Two physicians provide pediatric and internal medicine services at the Marshfield Clinic Stratford Center, currently housed in a facility in Stratford's Business and Industrial Park. Stratford Chiropractic and Sport and Spine, located on N. 3rd Avenue, offers physical and occupational therapy to area residents. Treatment programs include post-operative, sports injury, neck and back care, women's health issues, and chronic pain/headache management.

The Stratford Dental Clinic, located at 429 North 3rd Avenue, is a full-service branch of the Dental Clinic of Marshfield. The facility offers general and children's dentistry and orthodontic services.

## **Child Care**

The Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Network is a membership organization made up of community-based CCR&R agencies serving the State of Wisconsin. Marathon County is within Region 6, which is served by Childcaring, Inc., located in Wisconsin Rapids.

CCR&R agencies assist parents in selecting quality childcare, help to increase the supply of childcare in areas that may be lacking sufficient care, offer information and technical support to potential childcare providers, and give technical assistance and support to existing childcare programs. Each agency manages a database of existing childcare providers and programs, collects data about childcare rates, provider and teacher salaries, the number of parents and children using their services, the type

of care requested and the children's ages. There are three licensed childcare facilities in the Village of Stratford.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

### **Local Parks, Trails, and Open Space**

**March Rapids Park** – Located in the Town of Eau Pleine, March Rapids Park contains several picnic tables, a small shelter and privy-type restrooms along with a handpump for water. The Park contains local trails for hiking, canoe access and bicycle areas.

### **County or State Parks, Forest and Trails**

**Big Rapids Park** - Big Rapids Park is a 33-acre park located on the Big Eau Pleine River. The river is impounded in the park to create a swimming area and fishing opportunities. Facilities include picnic tables, grills, restrooms, changing rooms, a shelter, play equipment, and hiking trails.

**Cherokee Park** - Cherokee Park is 69 acres located on the Big Eau Pleine River, with an impoundment that provides for swimming and fishing. A handsome and well-maintained Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-era shelter overlooks the river and provides space for group gatherings. Facilities at Cherokee Park include benches, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, play equipment, and a hiking trail.

**McMillan Marsh** - The McMillan Marsh is a 4,172 State Wildlife Management Area, which straddles the Town line between McMillan and Spencer. A bicycle and hiking trail provides access to the McMillan Marsh on an abandoned railroad right of way.

**George W. Mead Wildlife Area** - The George W. Mead Wildlife Area is a very large Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) conservation and recreation area in the southeast portion of the Town of Day, extending across Green Valley and into the Town of Bergen, creating a conservation area of approximately 20,000 acres. Much of the area is wetland surrounding a series of lakes and flowages connected by the Little Eau Pleine River. Portions of the Mead Wildlife Area are open for hiking, hunting, and fishing.

**Nine Mile Forest Unit** - Nine Mile Forest Unit, located in Rib Mountain and the Town of Mosinee, is known as a recreation area with many miles of hiking, mountain biking, and crosscountry ski trails. Skiing is promoted with a ski chalet and over 25 kilometers of one-way loops. The forest is open to hunting and snowmobiling. Nine Mile has 4,755 acres of mixed uplands, marshes, and water impoundments. The Burma Road Forest Unit is located in the Towns of Mosinee and Emmet. The 1,473-acre forest is a mix of aspen and northern hardwood, with recreational opportunities including an ATV trail, hunting, snowmobiling, and camping.

**Rib Mountain State Park** - Rib Mountain State Park is located within the Town of Rib Mountain. The park's main feature is Rib Mountain, which at 1924 feet above sea level is one of the highest



elevations in the State of Wisconsin. The park surrounds the mountain and has the following facilities: a picnic area with 65 tables, a camping area with 31 developed sites, 3 hiking trails, a nature trail, and a downhill skiing area.

**Big Eau Pleine Park** – Located in the Town of Mosinee, Big Eau Pleine Park is a sizeable park containing 1,450 acres of second-growth mixed hardwoods forming a two-mile peninsula thrust deep into the waters of the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir. The majority of the park was gifted to Marathon County in 1937 by Consolidated Water Power Company. The park operates two separate campgrounds with a total of 106 sites. Twelve miles of developed trails allow hiking, biking (including 10 miles of groomed snow bike trails) and horseback riding. Visitors can also fish and there are several fishing points near the entrance of the park and adjacent to the three boat landings in the park.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

### **Goal 1: Maintain current provision of services.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. To perform annual budget allocations to fund public services.
2. Continue to find methods of cost sharing, such as equipment sharing, with surrounding municipalities to increase the efficiency by which services are provided.

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town will continue to provide sufficient utilities as desired by a majority of local residents.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Perform annual review of utility provision costs.
2. Communicate with surrounding communities the willingness to share costs.
3. Determine feasibility for updating or installing utilities and earmark funding for incremental improvement.

### **Goal 2: To examine feasibility of additional service provision.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Perform an analysis of service costs to fund additional services such as community-wide curbside garbage pick-up.
2. Hold public hearings to discuss whether additional services should be provided.
3. Explore development of an ordinance that transfers impact fees to developers (especially road development).

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town of Eau Pleine will seek to provide access desired by a majority of residents.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Conduct a feasibility analysis, including collection of bids, for providing curbside garbage and recycling services.
2. Hold a public meeting to discuss service costs and interest in providing services.
3. Collect examples of impact fee ordinances from other communities for local application.
4. Determine a fee schedule for new development that covers costs of utility provisions.

### **Goal 3: Coordinate development of the major utility corridors in the Town.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. To attend all applicable meetings of the Public Service Commission to express concerns, and gain information.
2. To work with local officials and representatives to discourage the development of power lines and major utility corridors through Eau Pleine.
3. To identify studies that cite the dangers of power lines and other major utilities on property values, health, and the environment.

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town of Eau Pleine will work with ATC to minimize conflicts within the Town.
2. The Town of Eau Pleine opposes the splitting of parcels for the installation of high-voltage transmission lines.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Work with appropriate agencies to communicate the Town's desire to participate in the development of any plans for a high-voltage line.
2. Coordinate with property owners and ATC representatives, if a high-voltage line is installed, to minimize the splitting of parcels.

### **Goal 4: Provide effective public safety services.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Work with the Marathon County Sheriffs Department and the Village of Stratford to continue to provide effective police and EMS services.
2. To encourage increased local police presence.

#### **Policies:**

1. Eau Pleine will contract with appropriate entities to provide sufficient emergency delivery.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Participate in long-term facilities and equipment planning with service-providing entities.
2. Annually review contracts with service providers and evaluate delivery of services.
3. Communicate with service providers on a periodic basis to enhance working relationship.

### **Goal 5: Maintain March Rapids Park.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. To continue to provide adequate funding and maintenance levels for upkeep of March Rapids Park.
2. To explore development of a long-term park facilities plan.
3. To encourage increased police monitoring of the park area.

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town will maintain current public grounds and recreational facilities.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Establish a committee charged with developing a long-term plan for March Rapids Park.
2. Solicit community input concerning facilities development (if any) of March Rapids Park.
3. Work with Marathon County and the Wisconsin DNR to identify opportunities for funding.

### **Goal 6: Support the Marathon County park system.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. To encourage proper funding for maintenance of local Marathon County parks.

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town of Eau Pleine will encourage appropriate development of public spaces throughout the region.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Encourage proper maintenance and upkeep of the existing County park system.
2. Communicate desires for recreational facilities and uses to the appropriate entities.

# Chapter 6

## Economic Development

The economic base of the community serves as an important driver for current and future land use. Economic characteristics include such components as the size of the civilian labor force, comparative employment growth, employment by industry, unemployment rates, and commuting patterns. Employment patterns and economic trends generally occur on a regional scale. Residents of one community often work in another. Similarly, changes in a major industry can impact jobs and growth far beyond the community where the business is physically located. It is therefore important to understand a local community's economy in light of its regional context.

Assessment of these components of the economic base provides an important historical perspective on current land use patterns and provides insights that help to predict possible future directions and opportunities for growth of the local economy.

### PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

#### **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2017**

Marathon County is one of ten counties included in the North Central Wisconsin Economic Development District as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The NCWRPC is the agency responsible for maintaining that designation. As part of the designation, the NCWRPC annually prepares a CEDS. This report summarizes and assesses economic development activities over the past year and presents new and modified strategies to promote growth.

#### **Regional Livability Plan (RLP), 2015**

Economic Development is one of four elements included in the RLP, adopted by the NCWRPC in 2015. The Economic Development Assessment Report within the RLP observes in detail the economic health of the ten-county region and identifies trends and issues facing the local economy. The RLP addresses three economic development issues:

- Available Labor Force and Employment – Businesses need a workforce with the proper education to meet the demands of an ever changing job market. High labor needs combined with an older workforce preparing for retirement will result in a labor force shortage and inability to meet the workforce needs of area businesses. The future availability of a quality labor force is a major concern for the business community.
- Living Wage – over the past ten years, the region's cost of living (i.e. home prices and rent) have increased faster than per capita and household incomes. Consequently, many working adults must seek public assistance and/or hold multiple jobs in order to meet the basic needs of their families. Occupations paying a living wage provide families resources for savings, investments, education, and the purchasing of goods which improves the local economy and increases the quality of life of the region's population.

- Broadband – High-speed broadband connections are crucial for government services, healthcare, education, library systems, private businesses, and residents. Improving the region’s telecommunication network can assist existing businesses, attract new businesses, and allow residents to access education opportunities.

**United Way LIFE Report, 2019**

The LIFE Report is a joint effort of Marathon County and the United Way. Its purpose is to provide a reference for the community to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and identify priority issues. The report, which is published every two years, serves as a tracking vehicle to show how the community has changed over time. Two of the sections of the report focus on education and on the economic environment.

The 2019 LIFE Report lists the following strengths:

- Collaboration among organizations and agencies
- People
- Vibrant arts community
- Outdoor recreation with parks and public spaces for all residents to enjoy
- Strong health care
- Quality education
- Centrally located
- Law enforcement partnerships

Calls to action include:

- Alcohol
- Child care
- Diversity, inclusion and belonging
- Drug treatment and recovery
- Housing
- Water quality
- Workforce development

**ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2020**

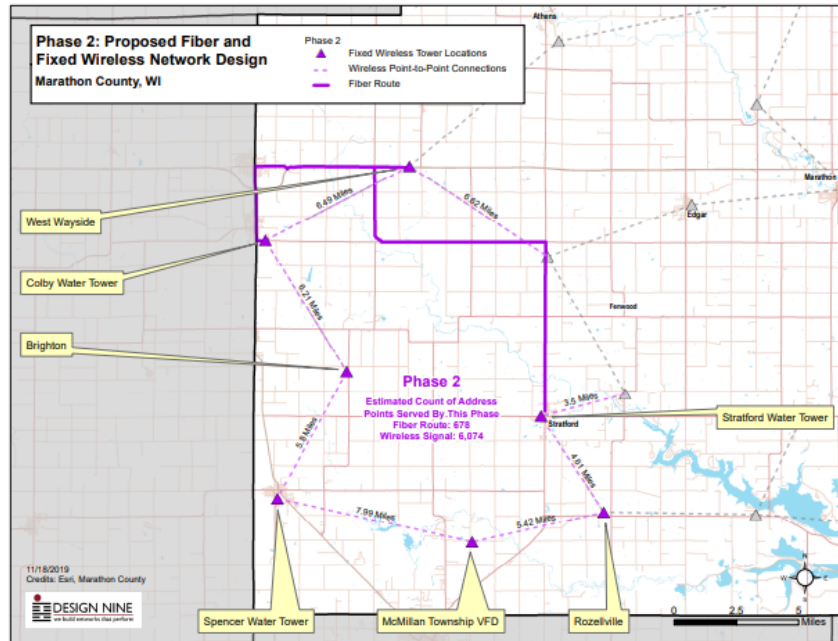
This report, developed by the United Way, described the 22 percent of households in Marathon County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or “ALICE” households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the “household survival budget,” which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, child care, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

- The ALICE report shows that 29 percent of Eau Pleine households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, indicating that the average household in Eau Pleine is relatively more financially strained than the average Marathon County household at-large.

## Broadband for Marathon County - Broadband Assessment and Plan, 2019

The Broadband Feasibility Study is the latest action Marathon County has taken in proactively planning for high speed internet. In the fall of 2018, Marathon County Extension engaged community stakeholders in dialogue about broadband and cellular coverage within the county. Phase two continues building fiber to the west end of the county.

**Figure 7: Phase Two Proposed Fiber and Wireless, Page 71**



## Marathon County Comprehensive Plan, 2016

The Marathon County Comprehensive Plan sets an economic development goal of being the most prosperous county in the state. The plan analyzes education, workforce development, economic development, and sets goals and objectives in these key areas. Goals include:

- Ensuring that every resident has the opportunity to receive a world-class education
- Ensuring that every worker have family supporting job and that every business has a strong workforce
- Ensuring that Marathon County is a diverse economy and place of opportunities where people and businesses can grow to be successful

## ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

### County Economic Environment

Historically, the Marathon County economy was based on forest resources and diversified agriculture. Increased population and infrastructure – railroads, roads and dams for power enabled the area to evolve beyond simple agriculture and logging operations. Resources that once left the area unprocessed were now transformed into finished products in the county, providing employment opportunities and adding value in forest products and agricultural processing. A number of related manufacturing operations grew up in the area, some based on forest products and agricultural products, others supplying the existing industries with fabricated metals products. As these industries progressed, so did industries such as transportation, communications, public utilities, government, trade, finance, insurance, and real estate. The county now enjoys a well-diversified economy.

Marathon County data is presented for comparison, because the Town of Eau Pleine is located within Marathon County. It should be noted that most of the predominant economic data for Marathon County is derived from the Wausau metropolitan region, as most of the Marathon County population is centered in this area.

### Agricultural Economy

Located in the agricultural area of western Marathon County, the economic health and vitality of Eau Pleine is affected by the health and vitality of the agricultural economy. However, the agricultural economy is subject to national and international pressures, creating challenges for rural areas seeking to adapt to the changing economic environment and preserve their rural agricultural heritage.

According to the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan:

“Agricultural practices in the County have changed significantly over the past 30 years. There are numerous reasons for these shifts in agricultural activities and practices including changes in economics, population growth, societal changes, operational practices, support services, and state and national policies. The county’s rapid population increase has played a role in the loss of farmland, most significantly in the Wausau metro areas along the Wisconsin River corridor. Although the rural areas both east and west of the Wausau area remain committed to agriculture, the trends indicate that the face of agriculture requires unique service and program support. Agriculture is very diverse among the six regions identified in this plan. The agricultural industry’s reduction in the number of dairy farms along with the increases in dairy, corn and soybean production are perhaps the most prominent of the changes in agriculture. Even with the changes in the agricultural industry, Marathon County remains one of the top counties in the state in terms of sales of several agricultural commodities.”

Marathon County’s farmers own and manage over 490,628 total acres of land, nearly 50 percent of the land base. Nearly 331,948 acres of this land is cropland and pasture. Dairy is the primary agricultural product in Marathon County, but it also includes more specialty products such as Christmas trees, ginseng, maple syrup, small scale truck farms, and commercial commodity farms.



The agricultural industry contributes approximately 2.54 billion in revenues and nearly 13,650 jobs to the Marathon County economy.

According to the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan, some trends in agriculture that affect the agricultural economy include:

- Dairy herds are becoming fewer and larger.
- A large number of agricultural operators are nearing retirement.
- Increased capital costs and technical education requirements increase the barrier of entry for new farmers.
- Demand for organic farming is growing, meeting organic requirements can be more costly but products can be priced at a premium.
- Soil erosion and water quality concerns are growing due to poor water quality in many areas, particularly the Wisconsin River.
- Farmland fragmentation and nuisance complaints by rural residents are increasing the costs of farming.
- Larger farm equipment damages local roads and farm traffic is increasing.
- Conflicts between various land uses in rural areas are increasing.

Agriculture is an important component within the Town of Eau Pleine as well. The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan identifies eleven farms located within the Town and five along the Town boundary with fewer than 300 animal units. There is one farm with between 300-1,000 animal units and three with over 1,000 animal units. There is one larger farming operation within the Town with 300 to 1,000 animal units. All of these farms are dairy operations.

In 2013, Marathon County adopted the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) to help guide farmland preservation and resource conservation activities through 2028. The primary purpose of the program is to minimize the conversion of farmland to other uses and to protect soil and water resources from the impacts of agricultural runoff. Ideally, Marathon County seeks to minimize conversion to no more than 1,500 acres countywide annually.

Nearly all of the land in the Town of Eau Pleine are within designated 2013 Farmland Preservation Areas. Such a designation is the first step to establish eligibility for Exclusive Agricultural Zoning or Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) tax credits. Most of the Town of Eau Pleine is eligible for both AEA tax credits and Farmland Preservation Zoning.

Marathon County has eighteen plants that process dairy products for local, domestic, and international markets. On-farm employment accounts for nearly 3,155 jobs and 6,190 processing jobs. Over the past decade the presence of immigrant workers has increased, serving as a reliable source of labor. No agricultural processing jobs exist in the Town of Eau Pleine, but with several dairy farms in various size categories comes on-site employment.

## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

### Economic Sectors

Table 19 details employment by sector for the Town of Eau Pleine. In 2019, there were 555 persons employed in the thirteen basic economic sectors in the Town, up 10.8 percent since 2010.

Between 2010 and 2019, there were several dramatic shifts throughout most of the sectors. The two fastest growing sectors were Natural Resources and Mining and Professional and Business Services. In terms of total employment, the Natural Resources and Mining sector contains the most employees followed by Education and Health Services. It should be noted that the number of employees in certain sectors, particularly those workers engaged in Natural Resources and Mining which includes agriculture, forestry and fishing, may be understated in this data set.

In Marathon County there were 71,727 persons employed in 2019, up 2.5 percent since 2010. Most people were employed in the area of Education and Health Services, followed by Manufacturing. The fastest growing sector from 2010 to 2019 was Education and Health Services. The area that experienced the most significant downward trend was Manufacturing.

Table 19: Employment by Sector						
Sector	Town of Eau Pleine			Marathon County		
	2010	2019	% Change	2010	2019	% Change
<b>Natural Resources and Mining</b>	25	178	612.0%	2,231	2,522	13.0%
<b>Construction</b>	38	25	-34.2%	3,891	3,495	-10.2%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	101	100	-1.0%	16,870	14,694	-12.9%
<b>Trade, Transportation, and Utilities</b>	126	55	-56.3%	13,182	13,760	4.4%
<b>Information and Financial Activities</b>	20	30	50.0%	6,497	6,804	4.7%
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	11	26	136.4%	3,865	4,313	11.6%
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	93	119	28.0%	14,895	17,177	15.3%
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	40	12	-70.0%	4,702	4,915	4.5%
<b>Other Services</b>	44	10	-77.3%	2,454	2,498	1.8%
<b>Public Administration</b>	3	0	-100%	1,393	1,549	11.2%
<b>Total</b>	501	555	10.8%	69,980	71,727	2.5%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

## Labor Force Analysis

### Labor Force

Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. Consistent with the growth in the Town’s population from 2010 to 2019, the number of people in the labor force has increased. There were 77 more people in the labor force from 2010 to 2019, for a gain of 11.5 percent. The percent increase was in contrast to Marathon County as a whole, which experienced a net decline of 1,173 individuals in the labor force, for a 1.6 percent decrease. The state of Wisconsin had a marginal increase in the labor force from 2010 to 2019, at a rate of 0.6 percent. Table 20 details the labor force breakdown for the Town.

<b>Table 20: Labor Force</b>			
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Population 16 years and over</b>	671	748	11.5%
<b>Labor Force</b>	510	566	11.0%
<b>Employed</b>	501	555	10.8%
<b>Unemployed</b>	9	11	22.2%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	1.8%	1.9%	5.6%
<b>Participation Rate</b>	76.0%	75.7%	-0.4%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

### Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and total persons employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not considered part of the labor force. In 2010, the Town of Eau Pleine had 1.8 percent unemployment, and in 2019 unemployment was up slightly to 1.9 percent. The unemployment rate was lower than both Marathon County (2.8%) and the State of Wisconsin (3.6%) in 2019.

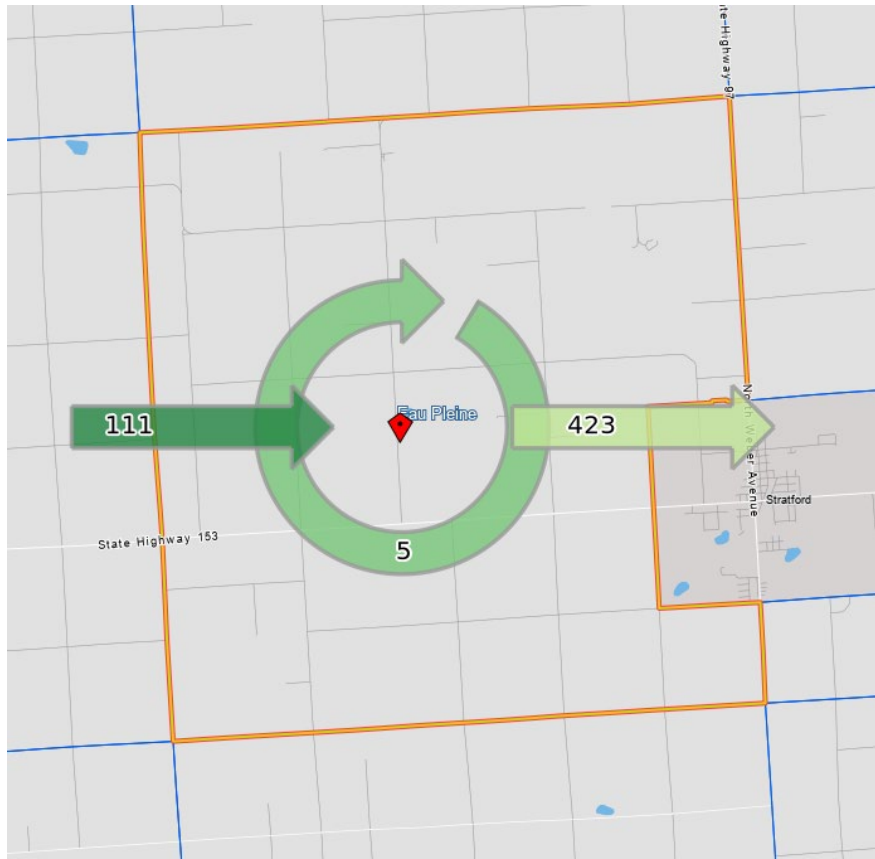
### Workforce Participation

Workforce participation is a measure expressed in terms of a percentage of persons actively seeking employment divided by the total working age population. People not participating in the labor force may not seek employment due to a variety of reasons including retirement, disability, choice to be a homemaker, or are simply not looking for work. In 2010, 76.0 percent of Eau Pleine’s population over the age of 16 was in the labor force. By 2019, that percentage was down slightly to 75.7 percent. The state participation percentage was 66.5 percent in 2019, while Marathon County’s participation rate was 68.3 percent.

### Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2018, approximately 5 of the 116 total jobs within the Town of Eau Pleine were filled by Eau Pleine residents. About 111 workers traveled to Eau Pleine during the average work day. There were 423 Eau Pleine residents that commuted to locations outside of the Town for work, indicating that Eau Pleine’s laborshed extends beyond its municipal boundaries. Figure 8 shows the inflow-outflow patterns of the Town of Eau Pleine’s laborshed.

**Figure 8: Inflow/Outflow Analysis Town of Eau Pleine, 2018**



Source: U.S. Census "On the Map"

### **In-Migration**

The majority of the in-commuters live in close proximity to Eau Pleine. They come from a wide range of various locations, with the largest concentration of 22 workers, or 19 percent, coming from the Village of Stratford. Seven workers commute in from the City of Marshfield and the City of Mosinee. The balance travel from a variety of locations throughout the state.

### **Out-Migration**

The most substantial group of outbound commuters includes 119 residents that travel to the City of Marshfield for work (27.8%). The remaining outbound commuters work mainly in nearby locations including the Villages of Stratford, Marathon City, and Spencer, and the Cities of Wausau, Medford, and Stevens Point.

### **Occupations**

Table 21 identifies the five main occupational categories by number and percentage and provides comparison with the Town, county and state.

Natural resources/Construction are the largest component of the labor force in the Town of Eau Pleine, followed by Management/Business/Science and then Production/Transportation workers.

This is in contrast to both the county and the state, where most workers in in the fields of Management/Business/Science followed by Sales/Office. The smallest number work in Service occupations, compared to the state and county where the smallest number work in Natural Resources/Construction.

Occupation	Town of Eau Pleine		Marathon County		Wisconsin	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
<b>Management/Business/Science</b>	142	25.6%	25,359	35.4%	1,090,763	36.6%
<b>Service</b>	40	7.2%	10,094	14.1%	491,842	16.5%
<b>Sales/Office</b>	72	13.0%	15,282	21.3%	617,112	20.7%
<b>Natural Resources/Construction</b>	203	36.6%	6,584	9.2%	255,493	8.6%
<b>Production/Transportation</b>	98	17.7%	14,408	20.1%	527,149	17.7%
<b>Total</b>	555	100.0%	71,727	100.0%	2,982,359	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

## Economic Development Strengths and Weaknesses

Economic strengths within the Town include an abundance of farmland and a focus on preservation. There is extensive opportunity to continue to develop and grow the agricultural foundation, strengthening the viability of the local agricultural economy.

Economic weaknesses within the Town include limited commercial and industrial development. When there is not a sufficient commercial tax base within the Town, an undue tax burden may exist for the residents who reside there.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

There are a number of economic development programs available to businesses and local governments in Marathon County. Following is a partial list of those programs.

### Regional

#### North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The Town is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, as are all local governments in Marathon County based on county membership. Membership brings with it a variety of planning benefits and service. Benefits include participation in the Economic Development District, including eligibility for a variety of grants administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. In addition, resulting in membership with the NCWRPC, the county is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation which 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.

### **North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation**

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

## **State**

### **Rural Economic Development Program**

This program administered by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) 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, and marketing assistance.

### **Wisconsin Small Cities Program**

The Wisconsin Department of Administration 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.

### **University of Wisconsin Extension Office**

The Center for Community Economic Development, University of Wisconsin Extension, creates, applies and transfers multidisciplinary knowledge to help people understand community change and identify opportunities.

### **The Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC)**

This non-profit organization is located at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater and specializes in new product and invention assessments and market expansion opportunities for innovative manufacturers, technology businesses, and independent inventors.

### **Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**

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

### **Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)**

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

## **Federal**

### **Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

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

### **US Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA – RD)**

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

### **Small Business Administration (SBA)**

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

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

### **Goal 1: Preserve the rural character and support the agricultural industry within the Town.**

#### **Objectives**

- Minimize nonagricultural development on prime agricultural soils.
- Maintain the integrity of agricultural economic clusters.

#### **Policies**

- Support small farms and family farms within the Town of Eau Pleine
- Provide educational outreach on topics such as farmland preservation zoning and Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs).
- Encourage users of the land to be good stewards of the land.
- Support programs that fairly and equitably support a diverse and profitable agriculture.

### **Goal 2: Improve broadband accessibility within the Town of Eau Pleine**

#### **Objectives**

- Identify and secure funding opportunities for expanding quality broadband access throughout the Town of Eau Pleine.
- Identify areas of poor internet access and work with service providers to upgrade service to those areas.
- Promote options for other sources to provide high-speed internet connections in areas where fiber extension is less financially feasible.

#### **Policies**

Strive to coordinate better broadband and cellular service throughout the Town.



# Chapter 7

## Land Use

Land use is a crucial component of livability and provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate a sustainable pattern of development. The existing natural landscape and land use patterns influence future land use and development. Balancing the needs of the community with land use issues requires that each situation be considered individually, and that the community seeks the solution which fits the unique challenges it faces.

To arrive at an optimum plan that will be both effective and implemented, the plan must account for past development activity as well as current market factors and conditions that shape where and how land will be developed. This chapter discusses uses of land in the Town of Eau Pleine. The existing land use types are defined, current land uses are analyzed, and existing and potential land use conflicts are identified.

### PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

#### **Regional Livability Plan, 2015**

Land use is one of the four elements included in the RLP, adopted by NCWRPC in 2015. The Land Use Assessment Report, a component of the plan, looks in detail at the land uses through the ten-count region and identifies issues and trends related to land use: housing density and farmland preservation. The two land use goals of the plan are as follows:

- Preserve and protect the Region’s landscape, environmental resources and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.
- Manage and reduce vacant land and structures.

#### **Marathon County Comprehensive Plan, 2016**

The Marathon County Comprehensive Plan chapter on land use analyzes pattern of development, existing land use, and future land use. The plan sets the following land use goals:

- Minimize scattered rural development and preserve rural character.
- Preserve active farming.
- Encourage redevelopment of under-utilized areas.
- Provide tools for managing and coordinating growth.

#### **Town of Eau Pleine Comprehensive Plan, 2006**

Town of Eau Pleine Comprehensive Plan is a policy plan that describes existing and future land uses, and regulatory tools for land use. The overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide consistency between official mapping, zoning and subdivision ordinances, local plans, and other implementation tools.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The Town of Eau Pleine covers about 21,240 acres in Marathon County and is located in the southwest portion of Marathon County. The Town of Eau Pleine comprises the rural area just to the west of the Village of Stratford.

Knowledge of the existing land use patterns within a town is necessary to develop a desired “future” land use pattern. The Existing Land Use Map was developed using air photos from a countywide flight in 2020, with updates by the local residents in 2022. Eleven basic categories were used to classify the various existing land uses. The categories include: Agriculture, Commercial, Governmental/Institutional, Industrial, Open Lands, Outdoor Recreation, Quarry, Residential, Transportation, Water, and Woodlands.

Land use classifications are groups of land uses that are compatible, and that separate conflicting uses. The classifications are not zoning districts and do not have the authority of zoning, but are intended for use as a guide when making land use and zoning decisions.

### Existing Land Use Classifications

The **Existing Land Use Map** outlines the existing land use pattern throughout the Town. The intent of an existing land use map is to illustrate the location of existing land use categories within the Town for planning purposes. Land use classifications are grouped by the use most central to each parcel. For example, lands classified as residential may also have a barn or home-based business on site.

Existing land use classifications and acreage totals are presented in **Table 22**. The predominant land uses for the Town consist primarily of agricultural lands (63.3%), woodlands (27.6%), and scattered single-family homes that may include farmsteads (residential 3.5%).

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	13,453.73	63.3%
Commercial	54.03	0.3%
Governmental/Institutional	11.25	0.1%
Industrial	34.57	0.2%
Open Lands	346.61	1.6%
Outdoor Recreation	26.68	0.1%
Quarry	13.07	0.1%
Residential	745.64	3.5%
Transportation	488.91	2.3%
Water	194.18	0.9%
Woodlands	5,870.85	27.6%
Total	21,239.53	100.0%

Source: NCWRPC GIS

### MFL & Public Lands

There are about 1,059 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program within the Town, which are subject to a substantial reduction in property taxes. In addition, tax exempt lands include approximately 179 Marathon County acres (not Forest Crop), and another 53 acres of tax-exempt land.

## Land Supply and Demand

As shown by the existing land use inventory, the majority of the Town is "undeveloped" agricultural areas or woodlands, so the supply of land "available" for development appears to be adequate. Even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of Eau Pleine is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years for all use categories.

## Land Values

**Table 23** displays the assessed land values in the Town of Eau Pleine. It is important to note that lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law programs and other tax-exempt lands are not included in values for Table 23. It should also be noted that improvements (structures) are also not included in the values. In 2021, the assessed value per acre in the Town was valued at about \$841 per acre. Properties classified as "Residential" have the highest value per acre within the Town, followed by properties classified as "Commercial" and "Other".

Land Classification	Total Value of Land	Total Value per Acre
Residential	\$3,487,300	\$6,295
Commercial	\$110,400	\$4,416
Manufacturing	\$0	\$0
Agriculture	\$2,499,500	\$215
Undeveloped	\$1,693,500	\$605
Forest	\$3,595,900	\$2,777
Agricultural Forest	\$4,775,100	\$1,399
Other	\$539,300	\$3,719
Total	\$16,701,000	\$841

Source: WI Department of Revenue

## Opportunities for Redevelopment

The vast majority of the Town currently consists of open farmland, wetlands and woodlands, all of which has experienced very little development. Hence the need for "redevelopment" is negligible. Some developed areas may not meet current development standards or may have fallen into disrepair since they were developed. Some of these properties may be in need of rehabilitation by property owners rather than needing a comprehensive redevelopment strategy.

## Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

**Increasing Development Pressure** – there is increasing pressure for housing development, which in turn, increases pressure to develop agricultural lands. Residents would like to preserve farmland, and there is interest from some farmers to purchase more land, but the price of land has risen in response to increased demand for residential development.

**Farmland Preservation** – the Town is zoned Exclusive Agriculture which has worked well to limit new development. At the same time, as the number of active farms continues to decrease there will be a need to reexamine current zoning to determine if Exclusive Agriculture zoning is appropriate in current locations.

## FUTURE LAND USE

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.

The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. The Future Land Use Map is general in nature and was developed as a general guide for future development in the town. Although general, the future land use plan map indicated appropriate future land uses, and as a result shows where rezoning may occur. In many areas the existing zoning districts already reflect the desired future land uses; while in other areas, zoning map or text changes may be required to meet some of the desired future land uses.

The identification of desired future land use types through the map does not imply that an area is immediately appropriate for rezoning. Given service demands and a desire for controlled growth, careful consideration to the timing of zoning decisions is essential. In some places, it may be desirable to rezone land to reflect the planned land use designations as soon as possible. In other cases, it may be appropriate to wait to rezone the area until an actual development proposal is brought forward.

Future land use planning assists local governments with balancing individual property rights and community goals, minimizing conflict between different land uses, and maximizing use of public expenditures. It is essential that future land use planning is ongoing and flexible. Periodic plan updates ensure that the plan continues to reflect future community preferences.

Town of Eau Pleine Plan Commission members participated in a mapping exercise with NCWRPC staff to identify the desired future land uses by using twelve common Land Use Map Classifications, as described below. Town Plan Commission members used their broad knowledge of the Town to draw shapes on a map representing the different land uses. The goal was to produce a generalized land use plan map (future land use) to guide the Town's growth.

## Future Land Use Map Classifications

### **Barren Land**

Unused open land in wooded areas, along streams, and along roadsides.

### **Commercial Services**

Identifies areas that are recommended for commercial and business development, varying in scale and intensity, as well as existing commercial establishments located throughout the Town.

### **Cropland**

Identifies areas designed to foster the preservation and use of agricultural land and related uses including the associated farmsteads. Cropland areas are those with tilled agriculture and areas of prime farmland.

### **Forest Land**

Identifies areas of woodlands within the Town, as well as areas for reforestation.

### **Industrial**

Identifies areas recommended for industrial development, as well as existing industrial uses.

### **Other Agriculture**

Identifies agricultural areas consisting of fallow, pasture and undetermined agricultural uses, power lines and towers, water towers, and municipal wells.

### **Public/Quasi-Public**

Identifies existing or planned governmental/public/institutional facilities within the Town, including churches, cemeteries, government buildings, and recreational facilities.

### **Quarry**

Non-metallic mining operations.

### **Recreational**

Identifies areas for active recreation such as public and private parks, trails, ball fields, golf courses, playgrounds, campgrounds, shooting ranges, etc.

### **Single Family Residential**

Identifies areas recommended for residential development typically consisting of one family structures, farm residences, and/or mobile homes.

### **Transportation**

Identifies the existing road network along with the recommendations for improved and safe traffic movement in the Town.

### **Water and Wetlands**

Open waters, such as lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, creeks, reservoirs, etc.

## Land Use Programs

To implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, there are some basic tools that are available to the Town. There are zoning, subdivision ordinance, and official mapping.

### Zoning

Zoning is a 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 of the community. It has been used throughout the United States and in Wisconsin since the 1920's. Marathon County regulates zoning within the Town of Eau Pleine's borders, including exclusive agricultural zoning.

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. Districts 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 government body to be allowed. All other uses are prohibited.

Zoning regulations are adopted by local ordinance and consist of two major components, 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 Plan and zoning are similar but they are not the same.

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. Following the planning process it is critical that the zoning ordinance be updated to incorporate the findings of the plan.

### Shoreland Zoning

Shoreland, shoreland wetlands, and floodplain regulations are applicable in all geographic areas of the County. Wisconsin law mandates Counties to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land use in shoreland/wetland and floodplain areas for the entire area of the County outside of villages and cities. This ordinance supersedes any Town ordinance, unless a Town ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland/wetland and floodplain area covered under this zoning is the area that lies within 1,000 feet of a lake and within 300 feet of a navigable stream or to the landward side of a floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

### Farmland Preservation Program

The State of Wisconsin has a Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Program. The goals of the program are twofold: to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices, and to provide property tax relief to farmland owners. Landowners keeping land in agricultural use can claim a credit on their state income taxes. There exists a few blocks of land under

Farmland Preservation contracts within the Town. Most are located in the center of Town, there are also a few along the western border. See the [Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan](#) for more information.

### **Forest Crop Law (FCL) and Managed Forest Law (MFL):**

The Forest Crop Law is no longer open to new participants except through the purchase of land currently under this law. The length of the original contracts was for either a 25 or 50 year period. Forest Crop contracts cannot be renewed, however conversion into the Managed Forest Law program is possible. Participants must follow a written management schedule, including mandatory activities of cutting mature timber, and thinning plantations and natural stands. A ten percent yield tax is applied. Public access for fishing and hunting activities must be permitted on Forest Crop land.

The purpose of the Managed Forest Law (MFL) is to encourage sustainable forestry on private woodlands in Wisconsin. The law incorporates timber harvesting, wildlife management, water quality, and recreation to maintain a healthy and productive forest. To be eligible for the MFL program, a landowner must have a minimum of 20 acres, 80 percent of which must be productive forest land. Landowners designate the land “open” or “closed” and commit to a 25 or 50 year sustainable forest management plan. Lands designated as open may be used by the public for hunting, fishing, hiking, sightseeing, and cross country skiing.

The plan sets a schedule for specific forestry practices, and in return participants make a payment in lieu of traditional property taxes. Lands enrolled or renewed as of January 1, 2017, are not eligible if they contain a building or an improvement associated with a building. Mandatory practices during the MFL entry period include harvesting timber, thinning plantation and natural stands, pine release, pre- and post-harvest treatments, and controlling soil erosion.

The benefits of these programs to Eau Pleine include:

- Protection against over timber harvesting;
- Long-term investment in area forestry;
- Encouraged woodland expansion;
- Preservation and management of wildlife habitat;
- Preservation of the Town's “rural character” and;
- FCL and MFL-open lands are available for recreational use by public.

The benefits to the individual property owner include:

- A lower payment in lieu of property taxes;
- Protection against annual increases in property taxes, and;
- Private land forestry technical assistance.

Further participation in these programs by private landowners is a vital component to ensure the preservation of the Town's natural “rural character”. It would be beneficial for the Town of Eau Pleine to continue informing private landowners of the forestry management and preservation

programs as well as other available resource protection programs, and to encourage private landowners to continue to participate in such programs.



## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

### **Goal 1: Preserve prime agricultural land.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Discourage conversion of active farmland to rural residential lots.
2. Explore programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, that seek to maintain prime soils and cropland.

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town will support the preservation of active agricultural lands.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Contact local agencies, including UW-Extension, to acquire pamphlets and other informational materials on agricultural preservation tools.
2. Explore working with Marathon County, or local communities to host a workshop on agricultural preservation.

### **Goal 2: Maintain appropriate zoning regulations.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Examine making changes in exclusive agricultural zoning to better reflect changes in local land use that may be necessitated by the declining farm economy.

#### **Policies:**

1. The Town will work to provide sufficient land use controls.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Discuss making changes in local zoning to allow for greater flexibility.
2. Set a meeting with the Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department to discuss making improvements to the local zoning classifications to protect rural densities.

# Chapter 8

## Intergovernmental Cooperation

The issue of intergovernmental cooperation is increasingly important; since many issues cross over political boundaries, such as watersheds, labor force, commuter patterns, and housing. Communities are not independent of each other, but rather dependent on each other. The effects from growth and change on one spill over to all surrounding communities and impact the region as a whole.

### OVERVIEW

Wisconsin Statute §66.30, entitled “Intergovernmental Cooperation”, does enable local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Unfortunately, there is little public policy in Wisconsin law that encourages, let alone requires, horizontal governmental relationships such as town to town and municipality to county or town. The result is that towns, municipalities, and counties act more as adversaries than as partners.

State-wide, Wisconsin has more than 2,500 units of government and special purpose districts. Having so many governmental units allows for local representation, but also adds more players to the decision making process. In general terms, intergovernmental cooperation is any arrangement by which officials of two or more jurisdictions coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. It can be as simple as communication and information sharing, or it can involve entering into formal intergovernmental agreements and sharing resources such as equipment, buildings, staff, and revenue.

As jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become more aware of one another’s needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to avoid them. Intergovernmental cooperation makes sense for many reasons including trust, cost savings, consistency, and ability to address regional issues. Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust between jurisdictions. It can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. It can lead to consistency of goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions of neighboring communities. Finally, by communicating and coordinating their actions and working with regional and state jurisdictions, local communities are able to address and resolve issues that are regional in nature.

The major beneficiary of intergovernmental cooperation is the local resident. They may not understand, or even care about, the details of a particular intergovernmental issue, but residents can appreciate their benefits, such as cost savings, provision of needed services, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

A variety of factors, some long-standing and others more recent, have brought the issue of intergovernmental cooperation to the forefront. Some of these factors include:

- Local government’s financial situation;
- Opportunity to reduce costs by working together;
- Elimination of duplication of services;
- Population settlement patterns and population mobility; and
- Economic and environmental interdependence.

In addition, as more jurisdictions create and implement comprehensive plans and share them with surrounding communities, new opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation will be identified.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

### School Districts

#### Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Eau Pleine is served by the Stratford School District. The Stratford School District has an elementary school, and a combined junior and senior high school, all located on Third Avenue in the Village of Stratford. Attendance for the 2020-2021 school year was 330 students at the Stratford Elementary serving pre-kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and 489 students attending the combined junior and senior high school serving 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Additionally, St. Joseph’s Catholic School is located within the Village of Stratford, and the Bethany Mennonite Church has a small parochial elementary school held in the church building.

#### Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

**Mid-State Technical College** – located at 2600 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St. Marshfield, is one of 16 regional colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College system, with campuses in Adams, Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids. They offer associate degrees, technical diplomas, and certificates in a wide variety of high demand fields.

**Northcentral Technical College** – located in Wausau, offers several one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields.

**University of Wisconsin Stevens Point (UWSP) at Marshfield** – is located at 2000 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St, and is a satellite campus of UWSP. Here students can work toward a variety of bachelor’s degree options including business administration, nursing, and social work.

**University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point at Wausau** – UW Stevens Point at Wausau is located in Wausau offers courses leading to a baccalaureate degree. They also offer graduate degrees including

Master of Business Administration (MBA), Physician Assistant (in partnership with UW Madison), and Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (in partnership with Northern Vermont University).

The main form of interaction with both school and college districts are through payment of property taxes, which help to fund district 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.

## **Shared Services**

The Town of Eau Pleine is a part of a joint Fire and Emergency Medical Services department with the Village of Stratford.

## **Adjoining Units of Government**

Garbage/recycling pick up as well as fire protection, snowplowing and grading are services provided cooperatively with other municipalities.

## **Marathon County**

Marathon County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to the Town and the Town enjoys a good working relationship with many of the responsible departments. These departments include law enforcement through the Sheriff's Office, 911 dispatch services, access permits, maintenance and improvement of county highways, planning and permitting oversight regarding shoreland, wetland and floodplain regulation, private sewage system regulation, and animal waste and manure management. The county also provides oversight on compliance with county soil and water conservation policy for the Farmland Preservation Program.

In many cases where state and federal agencies require area-wide planning for various programs or regulations, Marathon 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 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources administered park and recreation development funding of each local unit that adopts it, and All Hazard Mitigation Plans which are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in order for individual local units of government to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funding.

The Town of Eau Pleine is under Marathon County zoning. The Town and county have a good working relationship.

## **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. Marathon County is a member of the NCWRPC, which qualifies the Town of Eau Pleine for low-cost 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.

## State and Federal Government

The Wisconsin departments of Natural Resources and Transportation 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 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland, lakes, and other wildlife habitat areas, while Wisconsin Department of Transportation 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 McMillan. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Plan (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 (WISLR).

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.

## 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, and 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.

**66.0305-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 ten years. The agreement must specify 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.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

### **Goal 1: Maintain appropriate tax base to provide minimum service levels.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Work with the Village of Stratford to prevent large annexations that would negatively affect the tax base of the township.
2. Develop boundary agreements with the Village of Stratford to determine the extent of future growth into the township.
3. Analyze future developments for their impact on the community's tax base in relation to the services that they would require.

#### **Policies:**

1. Eau Pleine will seek to maintain sufficient tax base to continue to provide necessary services to its residents.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Stress with the Village of Stratford the importance of communication annexation plans and request with the Town.
2. Determine community support for boundary agreements with the Village of Stratford to help maintain current town boundaries.
3. Perform a feasibility analysis to determine residential property thresholds to maintain sufficient tax generation for provision of services.
4. Analyze new housing developments for their impacts of service provision and infrastructure development.

### **Goal 2: Increase communication with the Stratford Area Fire Department.**

#### **Objective:**

1. Ensure adequate service levels and strategies for decreasing response time.

#### **Policies:**

1. Eau Pleine will institute regular communication with the Stratford Area Fire Department.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Establish a community services committee to communicate with service providers, including the fire department, on a periodic basis.
2. Offer to promote recruitment efforts and distribute materials to strengthen Department services.
3. Remain active in funding and facilities development discussions.

# Chapter Nine

## Implementation

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 the Town of Eau Pleine. It is also important that local citizens and developers become aware of the Plan.

Some steps taken to implement this Plan include the adoption of written public participation guidelines, Plan Commission formation, a Plan Commission resolution recommending Plan adoption by the Town Board, an open house meeting, 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.

### Implementation Tools

Having the appropriate tools to implement the recommendations in this comprehensive plan is critical. The most common implementation tools are the Town official controls or regulatory codes. The zoning ordinance and subdivision (or land division) regulations are used to protect existing development and guide future growth and development as identified in this comprehensive plan. Other regulatory tools include purchase of development rights (i.e., conservation easements), transfer of development rights, and purchasing of ecosystem services. There are also non-regulatory approaches to implementing the comprehensive plan; these generally involve decisions about how the community will spend its limited funding resources on capital improvements, staffing and maintenance. These decisions will affect the development demand and the location of development in the Town.

The State planning law requires certain programs and/or actions that affect land use must be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan. To meet this requirement, Eau Pleine should evaluate and update related ordinances after the adoption of the comprehensive plan update. The Town Board officially adopts these regulatory and land use control measures as ordinances (or as revisions to the existing ordinances). Some of these tools were also discussed in the Land Use Chapter.

### Zoning Ordinance and Map

The Town of Eau Pleine currently is under Marathon County general zoning. Zoning is used to manage and control how land is used and developed. Zoning ordinances typically establish detailed regulations concerning how land may be developed, including setbacks, the density or intensity of development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose of zoning is to minimize undesirable externalities from development by segregating and/or buffering



incompatible uses and by maintaining standards that ensure development will not negatively impact the community's character or environment. The zoning ordinance also controls the scale and form of development, which heavily influences how people will interact with their environment and their neighbors.

The establishment of zoning districts and the zoning map indicates where specific types of development can and should be located. Zoning districts shown on the zoning map should be coordinated with the land use plan and map. While the zoning map and land use map do not need to directly match at the time the land use map is adopted, the intent is that the land use map will serve as a guide indicating how the property should eventually be zoned. Therefore, indiscriminate zoning changes may result in weakening of the comprehensive plan. In fact, changes to zoning district boundaries should only be made if they are consistent with the adopted land use map and the goals of the comprehensive plan.

However, there may be situations where changing the zoning district boundary makes sense and is in the best interest of the community. If changing the zoning would result in a conflict with the future land use map, the land use map should also be changed. However, the future land use map should only be changed if it does not accurately reflect the community's desired land use pattern. Achieving consistency between zoning and land use designation is also discussed in the **Land Use Chapter**.

### **Subdivision (Land Division) Ordinance**

The Town of Eau Pleine adopted the County subdivision ordinance. Subdivision regulations are an important tool ensuring the orderly development of unplatted and/or undeveloped land. These regulations may regulate lot sizes, road access, street design, public utilities, storm water drainage, parks and open space, and other improvements necessary to ensure that new development will be a public asset.

### **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

This is an ongoing financial planning program that allows local communities to plan ahead for capital expenditures and minimize unplanned expenses. A capital improvement plan consists of a list of proposed projects according to a schedule of priorities over a four-to-six year period. It identifies needed public improvements, estimates their costs, and identifies financing methods and sources. Public improvements or expenditures typically considered in a CIP include:

- Public buildings (i.e., fire and police stations)
- Park and trail acquisition and development
- Roads and highways (maintenance and new construction/paving)
- Fire and police protection equipment

A CIP is simply a method of planning for and scheduling expenditures for public improvements over a period of several years in order to maximize the use of limited public funds. Each year the CIP should be reviewed and extended one year to compensate for the previous year that was completed. This keeps the improvement program current and allows for modifications to meet the community's changing needs.

The preparation of a CIP is normally a joint responsibility between the town board, plan commission, staff, and citizen commissions. The preparation of a capital improvement program may vary from community to community depending on local preferences, the local form of government and available staff. The proposed capital improvement plan should be reviewed in light of the priorities outlined in the comprehensive plan.

### **Annual Operating Budget**

The Town prepares a budget each year and it is one of the most important policy documents prepared. It is a statement of the prioritization and allocation of financial resources to achieve certain objectives over a specific time period. The budget is based on the needs of Town residents and priorities set by the Town Board. The budget and the services provided by that budget are instrumental in achieving the goals and objectives of the plan.

### **Brownfield Redevelopment**

Pursuing funding from state agencies for redevelopment of contaminated sites can reduce the uncertainty that otherwise prevents contaminated properties from being redeveloped. Action by the Town to evaluate contaminants or begin remediating the property is often necessary before the private sector is willing to invest in redevelopment. While this may require some upfront investment from the community, as sites are improved and reused they generate tax base.

### **Other Tools:**

Some additional tools that could be utilized by the Town, include: fee simple land acquisition, easements (purchased or volunteered), and impact fees, among others.

### **Consistency Among Plan Chapters**

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the Implementation Chapter describe how each of the required chapters will be integrated and made consistent with the other chapters of the plan. Since Eau Claire completed all planning chapters simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist. It is noted that some overlap naturally exists between the nine plan chapters. Where deemed appropriate, goals, objectives, and policies have been repeated under all applicable chapters to reinforce their importance.

## Plan Adoption, Amendments, Updates and Monitoring

While this comprehensive plan provides a long-term framework to guide development and public spending decisions, it must also respond to changes that occur in the community and region that were not foreseen when the plan was initially adopted. Some elements of the plan are rarely amended while others need updating on a more regular basis. Plan maps should also be updated periodically. In general, key maps, such as the future land use map, should be reviewed annually to make sure they are still current.

### Plan Adoption

The first step in implementing this plan involves adoption of the plan by local officials. The formal review and adoption process involves plan review by the Plan Commission (or other planning committee) who must adopt the plan by resolution of majority vote. The Plan Commission recommendation is forwarded to the Town Board who must adopt the plan by ordinance (of majority vote). A public hearing is required to allow public comment on the ordinance prior to Board final action to adopt the plan. Adoption formalizes the plan document as the framework to guide local development decisions over the next 20 years. The adopted plan should also be recognized as a tool for communicating the community's land use policy and goals and objectives regarding coordination of growth and development.

### Plan Amendments

The Eau Pleine Comprehensive Plan may be amended at any time by the Town Board following the same process described above for initial Plan adoption, regardless of how minor the proposed amendment or change. Amendments may be appropriate throughout the lifecycle of the plan, particularly if new issues emerge or trends change. These amendments will typically consist of minor changes to the plan text or maps. Large-scale changes or frequent amendments to meet individual development proposals should be avoided or the plan loses integrity.

The following criteria shall be considered when reviewing plan amendments:

- The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
- The change is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Town of Eau Pleine Comprehensive Plan.
- The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
- Development resulting from the change does not create an undue impact on surrounding properties. Such development shall be consistent with the physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade and improve its viability.

- The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
- The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment including trees, slopes and groundwater, or the impact could be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.
- There is a change in town actions or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
- There is a community or regional need identified in the comprehensive plan for the proposed land use or service.
- The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration, or dedication.
- The change does not adversely affect water quality and the overall health of residents.

Proposed amendments must be reviewed by the Plan Commission prior to final action and adopted by the Town Board. The public should be notified of proposed Plan changes and allowed an opportunity for review and comment. For major amendments, the Town might consider soliciting public opinion through surveys and/or community meetings prior to the official public hearing.

## Plan Updates

According to the State comprehensive planning law, comprehensive plans must be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to the more routine amendments described above, plan updates often involve re-writing of whole sections of the plan document and significant changes to supporting maps. A plan update should include a thorough examination of the community's goals and objectives based on an analysis of current growth trends and major changes that have occurred since the plan was initially adopted or last amended. Plan updates must be formally adopted following the same procedure described above for initial plan adoption.

## Plan Monitoring

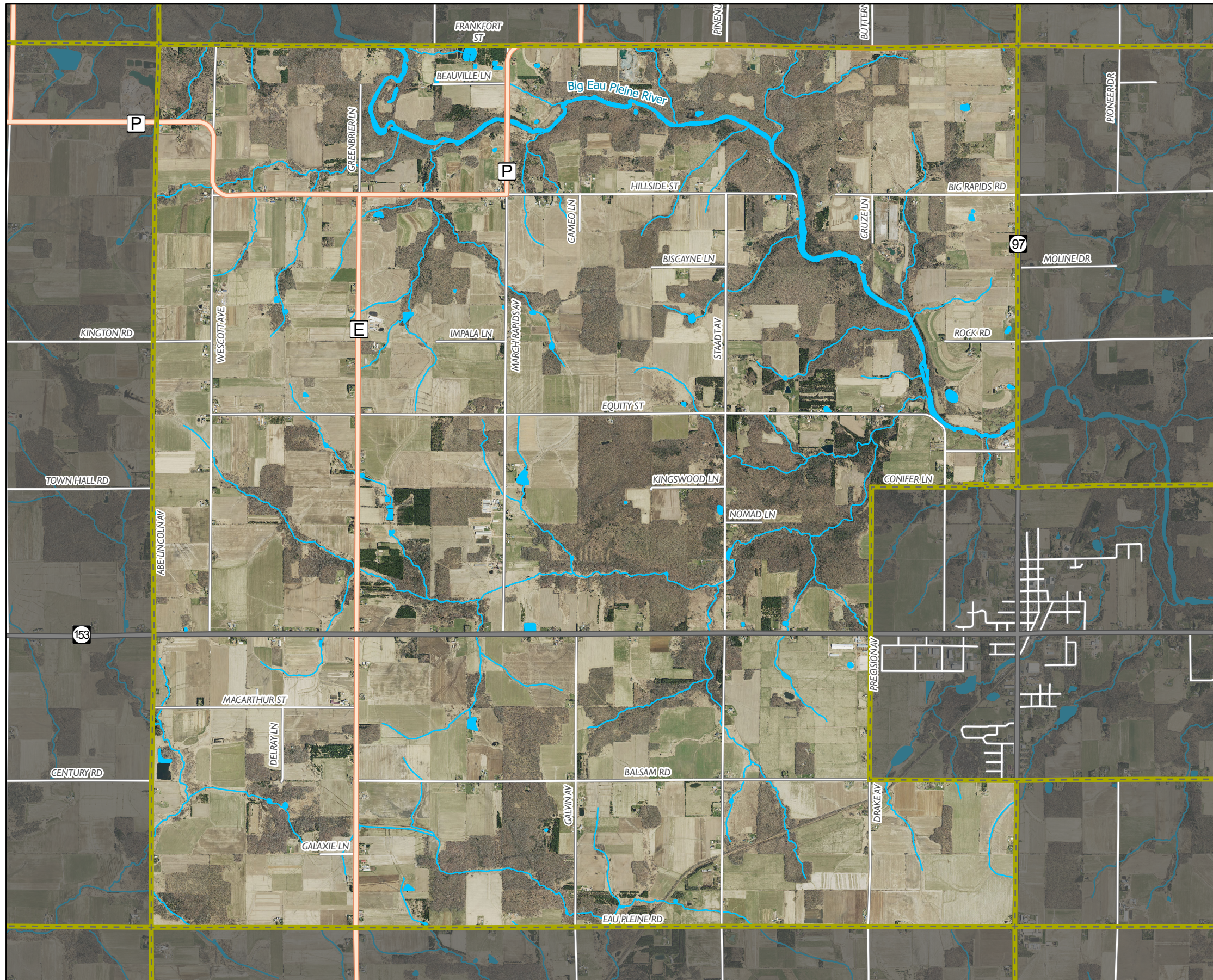
The adopted plan should be used as a tool by Town when making land use and development decisions. Decisions concerning private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions should be consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations outlined in this plan.

Although this plan describes policies and actions for future implementation, it is impossible to predict the exact future condition. As such, the goals, objectives, and actions in this plan should be monitored on a regular basis to maintain concurrence with changing conditions and respond to unanticipated events.

This plan should be evaluated at least every 5 years, and updated at least every 10 years. Members of the Town Board, Plan Commission, and any other local decision-making bodies should periodically

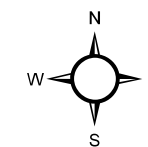
review the plan and identify areas that might need to be updated. The evaluation should involve first reviewing the goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires. Then the strategies and actions should be reviewed and refined to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate.

# Maps



### Planning Area

- Minor Civil Division
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Water

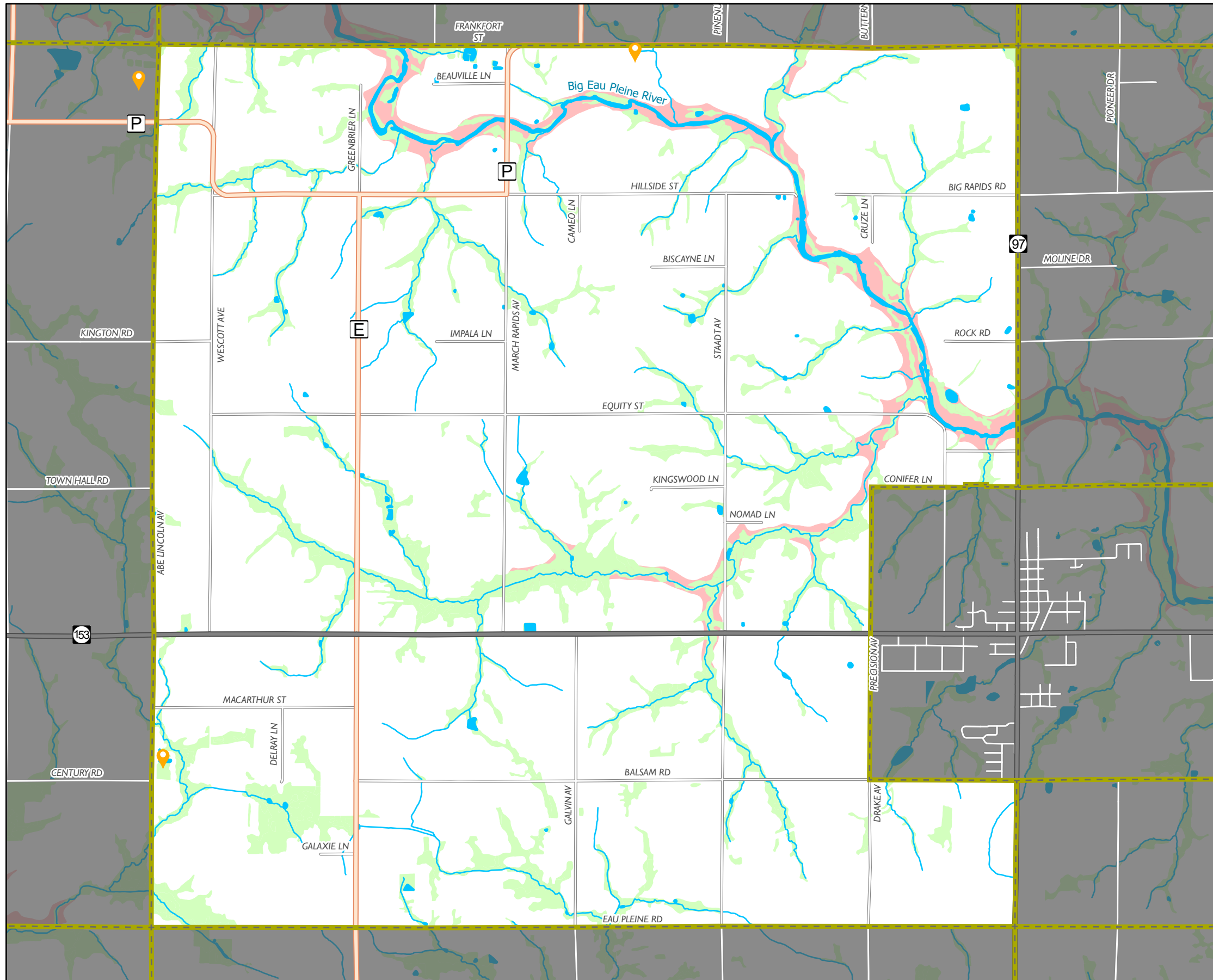


Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co  
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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

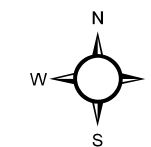
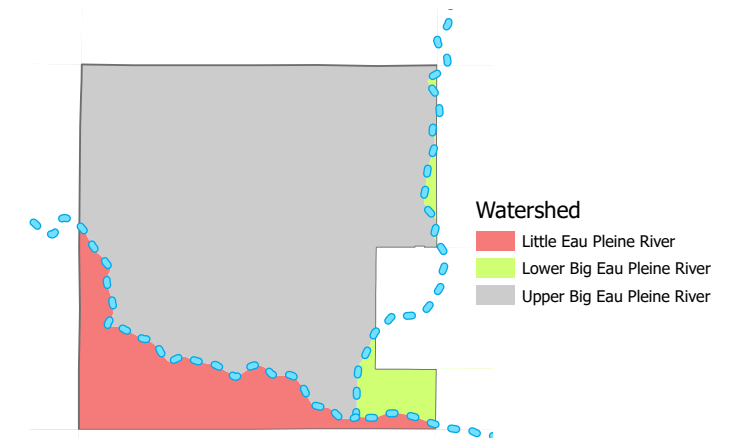
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### Natural Resources

- Minor Civil Division
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Non Metallic Mines
- Wetlands
- Floodplain
- Water

### Town of Eau Pleine Watersheds



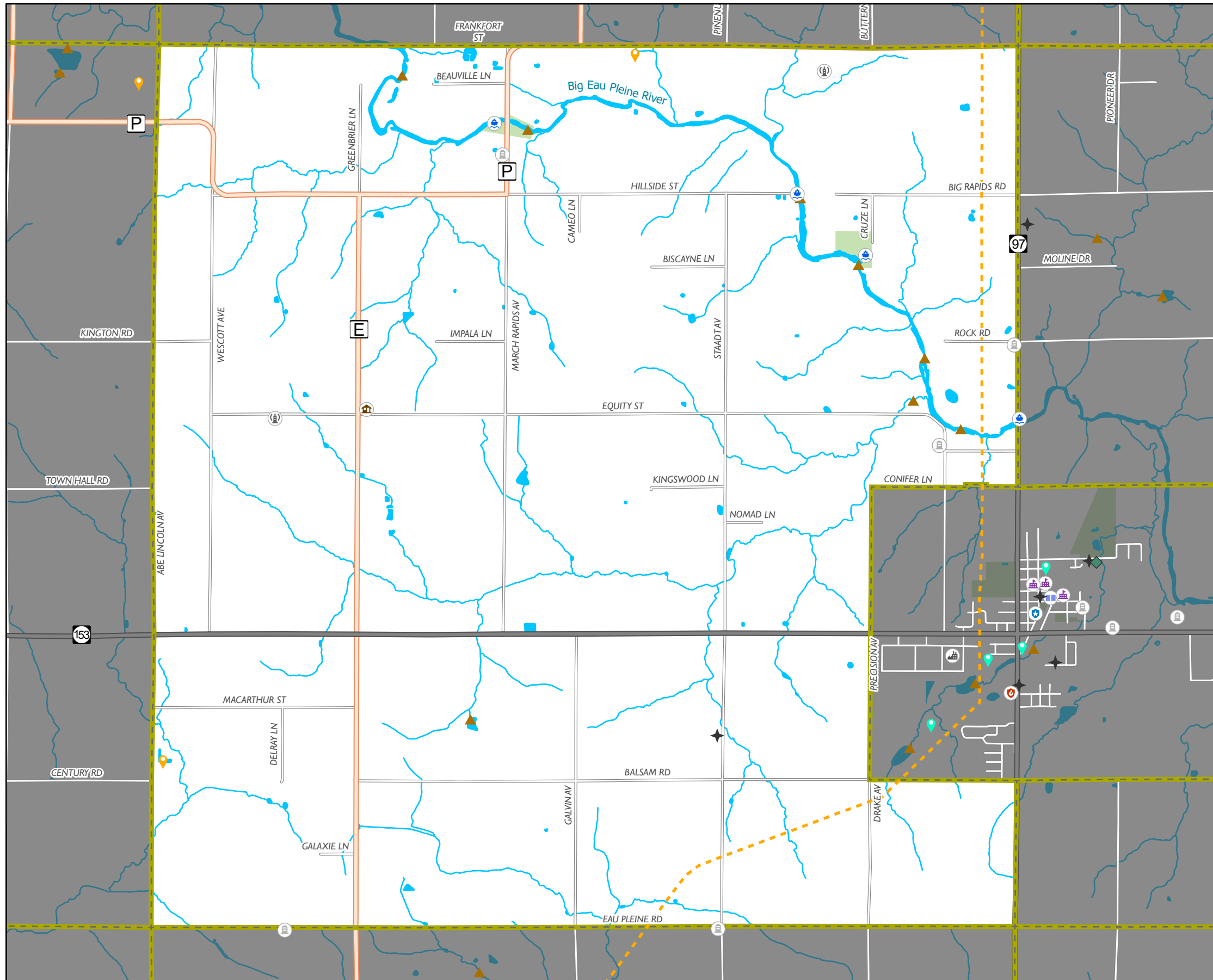
Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co  
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Prepared By:  
**North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

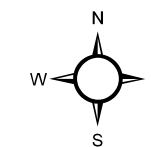
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## Utilities & Community Facilities

- Minor Civil Division
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Boat Landings
- Communication Towers
- Dams
- High Voltage Powerline
- Cemetery
- Child Care Facilities
- Fire Station/Ambulance
- Industrial Park
- Library
- Non Metallic Mines
- Police Station/Village Hall
- School
- Town Hall
- Municipal Water Supply
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Parks
- Water

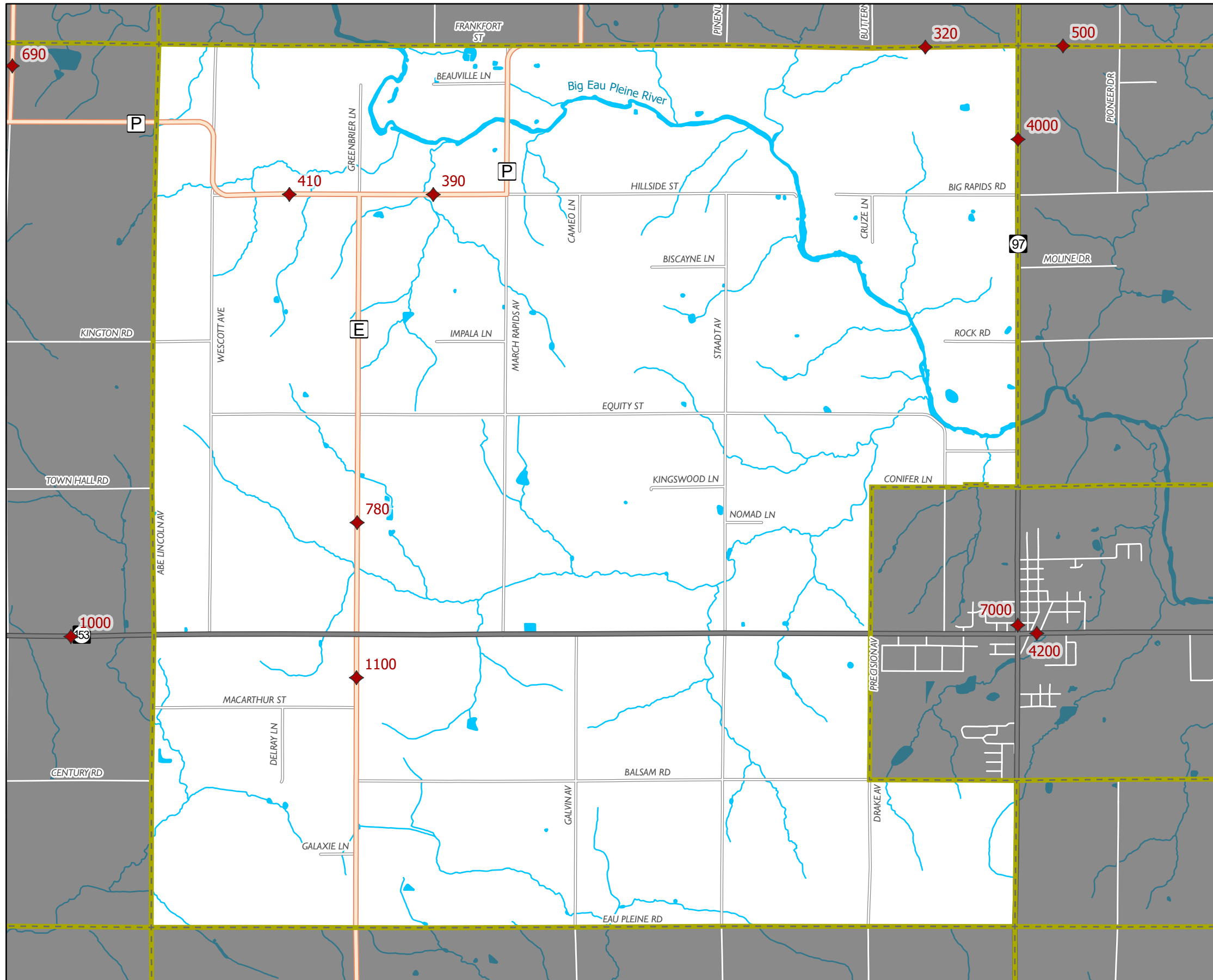


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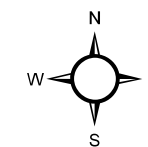
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### Transportation

- Minor Civil Division
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Traffic Counts
- Water

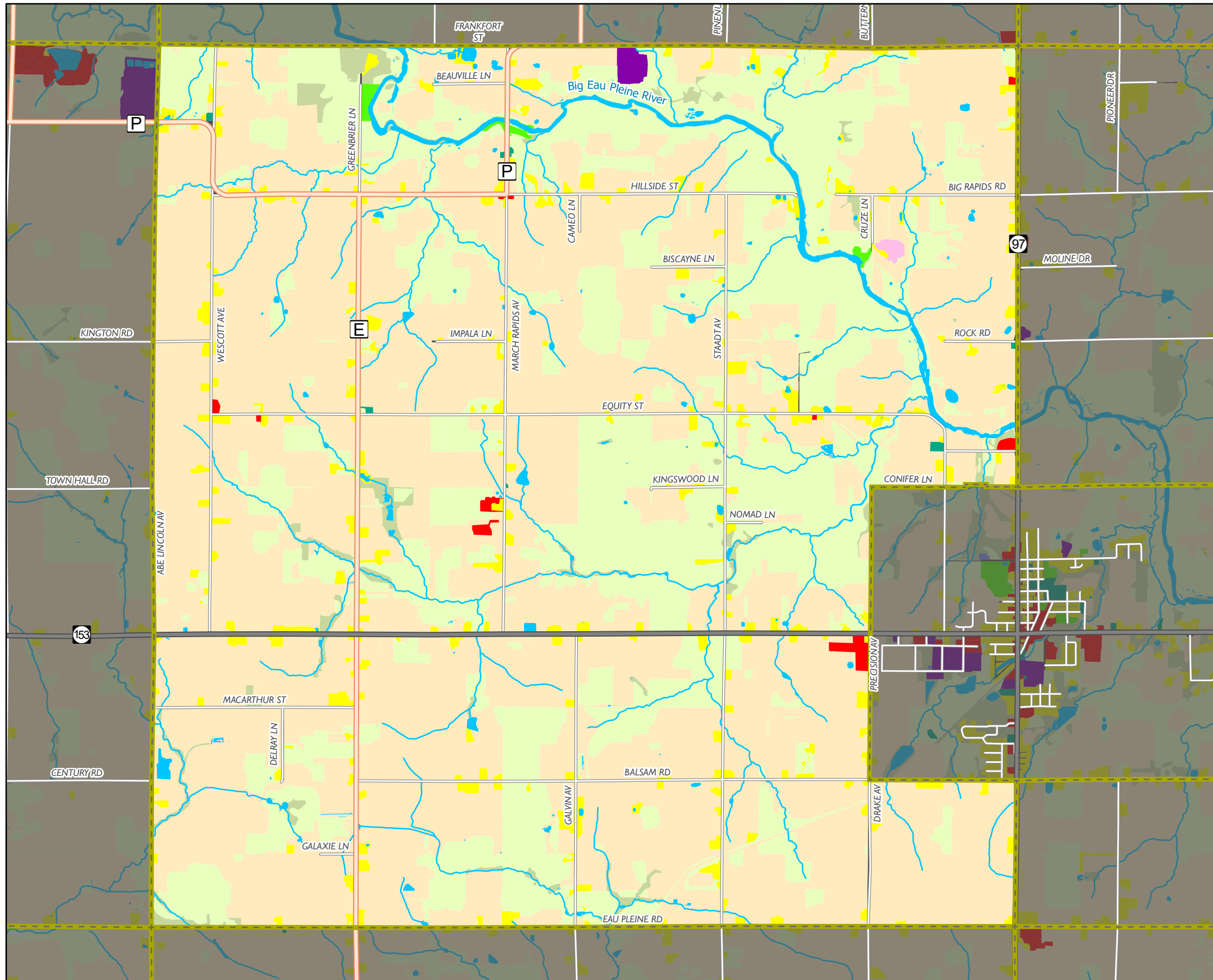


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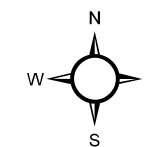
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## Existing Land Use

- Minor Civil Division
  - State Highways
  - County Highways
  - Local Roads
  - Private Roads
- Existing Land Use 2020**
- Agriculture
  - Commercial
  - Governmental / Institutional
  - Industrial
  - Open Lands
  - Outdoor Recreation
  - Quarry
  - Residential
  - Transportation
  - Utility
  - Woodlands
  - Water

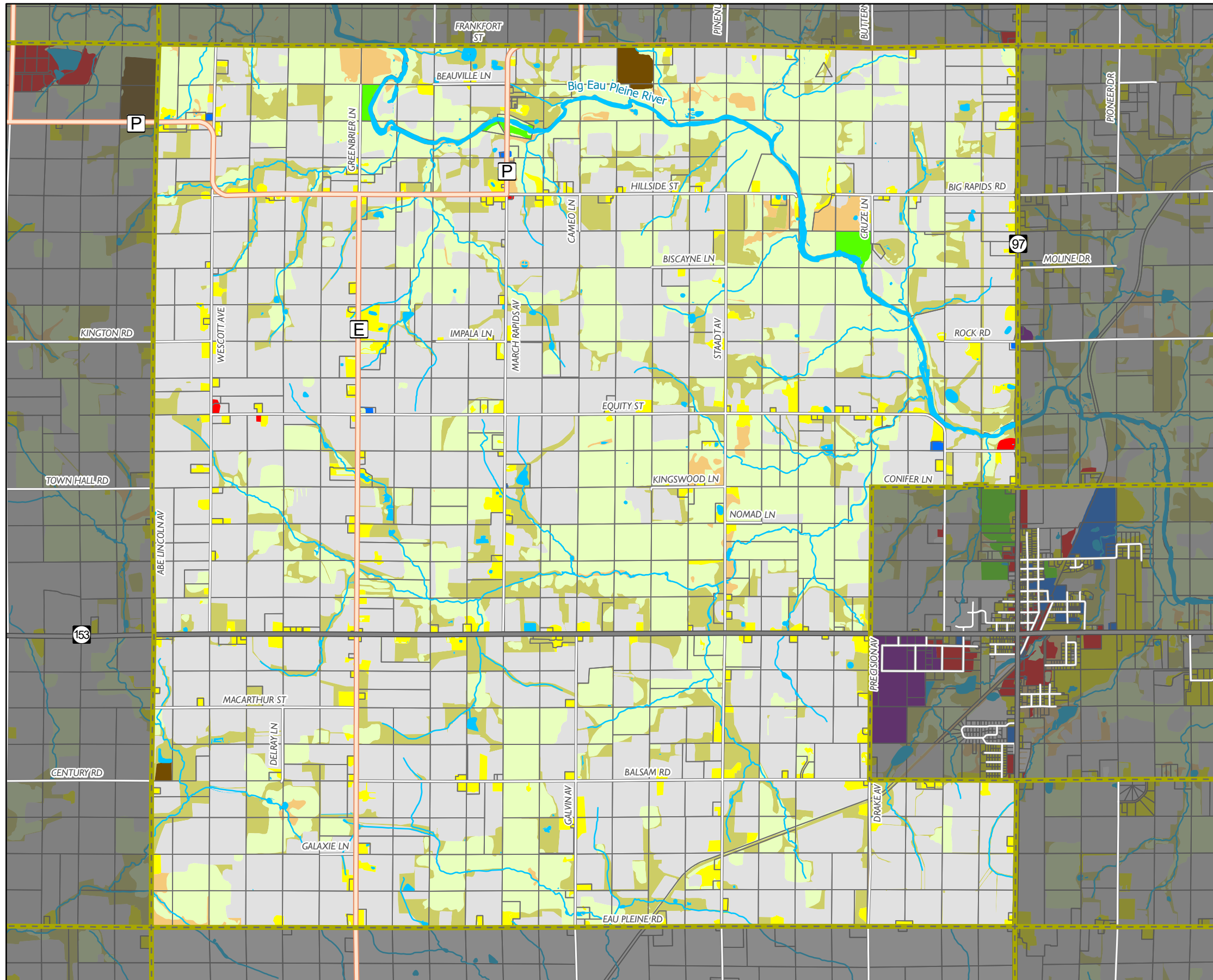


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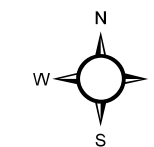
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### Future Land Use

- Minor Civil Division
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Parcels
- Future Land Use**
- Single Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Quarry
- Barren
- Crop Land
- Other Agriculture
- Forest Land
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Recreational
- Water



Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co  
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**Appendix A**  
**Public Participation Plan**

## **Town of Eau Pleine, Marathon County, State of Wisconsin**

### **Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

The Town of Eau Pleine recognizes the importance of public participation in the planning process. As such, a goal during the comprehensive planning process will be to inform and involve the public in the planning process.

#### **I. Plan Development:**

Throughout the plan process, the Plan Commission will provide oversight for the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan Commission will also recommend adoption of the Public Participation Plan to the Town Board.

The public participation plan will incorporate the following:

1. All meetings for the planning process will be posted and open to the public.
2. Plan related materials will be available at the Town Hall for review by the public.
3. The draft plan and maps will be available at the Town Hall for review by the public.
4. A public hearing will be held to solicit comment from the public.
5. The Comprehensive Plan will be distributed as outlined in state statute.

The Plan Commission will review and recommend adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to the Town Board.

#### **II. Implementation, Evaluation & Update:**

The Comprehensive Plan will be used as a general guideline for development in the Town. The plan will support the existing zoning and other regulations that the Town has in place.

As with all plans, it is critical for the Comprehensive Plan to be maintained and updated on a regular basis to keep it current as things change.

**Resolution for the Adoption of a  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)**

THE TOWN OF EAU PLEINE DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the Town is updating its Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as attached to this resolution. Motion made by Mark Radke and seconded by Kurt Schwarze to adopt this PPP. Motion carried.

I, Deanna Landwehr, Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a Town Board meeting, held at the Town Hall on the 14th day of September, 2021, at 8:00 p.m.



Deanna Landwehr, Clerk

**Appendix B**  
**Adoption Resolution**





**Appendix C**  
**Adoption Ordinance**

## TOWN OF EAU PLEINE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ORDINANCE

### ORDINANCE #2022-1

Town of Eau Pleine, Marathon County, Wisconsin

#### SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE

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

#### SECTION II – AUTHORITY

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

#### SECTION III – ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE

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

#### SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

#### SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

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

#### SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

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

**SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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

**SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY**

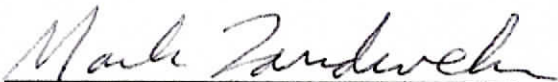
If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision of application, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance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

**SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE**

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

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

Adopted this 14th day of June 2022 by the Town of Eau Pleine Town Board and signed as follows:



Mark Landwehr, Town Chairman



Mark Radke, Town Supervisor



Kurt Schwarze, Town Supervisor

Attest:



Deanna Landwehr, Town Clerk

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**Town of Eau Pleine  
Comprehensive Plan  
2022**