Town of Polar Comprehensive Plan 2019

Town of Polar

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North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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Chapter One

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Introduction

The Town of Polar is located in southern Langlade County in Northeastern Wisconsin. The Town of Polar offers a diverse living environment for its citizens, with rich soils that support a prosperous farming community, and close proximity to the City of Antigo that provides its citizens quick access to the City's amenities, shops, medical facilities, etc. The Town of Polar has a strong agricultural presence, mainly due to the presence of the official State Soil *Antigo Silt Loam.*

Today, the Town of Polar continues to identify its community development needs and desires of residents. As part of the overall planning process, a vision statement for the Town was created to assist in providing direction in developing this comprehensive plan. Polar's vision statement reads: To preserve and enhance the rural character of the Town of Polar by protecting its natural resources, forestry, and farmland through planned growth and compatible business development.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to guide future growth and development in the Town over the next 10 to 20 years. A comprehensive plan provides the vision and direction for natural resource protection, housing and economic development, transportation and community facilities, land use, intergovernmental relations, and other factors that together form the community's future. Comprehensive planning was enacted to encourage long-range planning for communities and provide consistency in land use decision making. The Comprehensive Plan is a guide that elected officials, residents, and business owners can use for directing growth and redevelopment in the community. The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range policy document consisting of goals, objectives, and policies prepared to meet the State's definition of a comprehensive plan as defined under Section 66.1001. This plan is an update of a previous plan that was adopted in 2007.

Plan Process

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Plan law requires municipalities to adopt written procedures that are designed to foster a wide range of public participation throughout the planning process. The main goal is to make all Town residents aware of how and when this plan is being created, so residents can make suggestions during this

process. The Town of Polar adopted a Public Participation Plan for use in the overall development of the Town of Polar Comprehensive Plan, which can be viewed in **Appendix A**.

Throughout the planning process the public was afforded several opportunities to participate directly in the development of the comprehensive plan. Meetings of the plan commission/committee were posted and open to the public. The recommended draft comprehensive plan was distributed to all adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions and others required to receive the plan by statute and made available to the public via hard copy (library, Town Hall) and Internet. A public hearing on the final draft of the comprehensive plan was held prior to adoption by the Town. **Appendix B** contains documentation on plan adoption by the Town.

Demographics

This section describes existing demographics and identifies the major demographics trends that will impact Polar over the next few decades. A variety of demographic information is examined in this chapter, including total population, age distribution, households, educational levels, income levels, poverty, and resident employment data. Langlade County and the State of Wisconsin as a whole are listed as well for comparison.

The data in this chapter, as well as the chapter on housing mainly utilizes data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey, as well as the Wisconsin Department of Administration. With the exception of some tables, data is provided mainly for 2000 and 2010, as well as 2017 from the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. Census and the American Community Survey are both produced by the U.S. Census Bureau; however the census is a count of the American population conducted every ten years while the American Community Survey is an estimate of the population released on a yearly basis.

The American Community Survey evolved from the "long form" that a random subset of the population used to receive with the census. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau started releasing American Community Survey data for all populations on a yearly basis, including the Town of Polar. However, small populations, such as Polar, are often difficult to survey and the census is not perfect count of the population; producing data is not always completely accurate or consistent. As such, there are instances where the Census and the American Community Survey provide slightly different data for the year 2010. These examples are discussed for the readers throughout these sections.

Population & Households

Table 1.1 displays the total population for the Town of Polar, the neighboring towns, Langlade County, and the state of Wisconsin. Total population in the Town of Polar has decreased by 7 percent since 2000, a slightly lower rate of decrease than experienced in Langlade County (7.5%) during this time. Most of the surrounding towns also experienced decreases in population during this time, with the Town of Price being the only Town to experience an increase in population.

Table 1.1: Population Trends					
	2000	2010	2017	% Change 2000-17	% Change 2010-17
Town of Polar	995	984	925	-7.0%	-6.0%
Town of Antigo	1,487	1,412	1,352	-9.1%	-4.2%
Town of Norwood	918	913	862	-6.1%	-5.6%
Town of Evergreen	468	495	443	-5.3%	-10.5%
Town of Price	243	228	261	7.4%	14.5%
Langlade County	20,740	19,977	19,190	-7.5%	-3.9%
Wisconsin	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,763,217	7.4%	1.3%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

State population projections were completed in 5-year increments between 2015 and 2040, as shown in **Table 1.2**. According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA), the population in the Town of Polar will experience a 5.4 percent increase in population between 2020 and 2040. In comparison, Langlade County is projected to decrease by 2.2 percent during the same time period. The Town of Polar has the highest rate of projected population increase among the communities being compared, as only the Town of Evergreen is also projected to increase in population during this time.

The WDOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin's official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96. The WDOA projections are based on the historical population trends of individual communities; however, more recent years carry a greater weight in the WDOA's population projections.

Table 1.2: Population Projections						
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2020-40
Town of Polar	1,015	1,050	1,075	1,085	1,070	5.4%
Town of Antigo	1,400	1,420	1,420	1,400	1,350	-3.6%
Town of Norwood	915	930	945	940	910	-0.5%

Town of Evergreen	500	515	525	525	515	3.0%
Town of Price	220	220	215	210	200	-9.1%
Langlade County	19,915	20,210	20,340	20,140	19,470	-2.2%
Wisconsin	6,005,080	6,203,850	6,375,910	6,476,270	6,491,635	8.1%

Source: WDOA

Historical Trends

The 2018 population estimate for the Town of Polar created by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) is 998. **Figure 1** displays the population trends in the Town of Polar from 1970 to projected populations in 2040. Population within the Town is projected to increase over time, as the Town is projected to increase to 1,070 residents in 2040, up from a population of 925 residents in 2010. The Town is projected to reach its peak population of 1,085 residents in 2035.

Figure 1: Population Trends
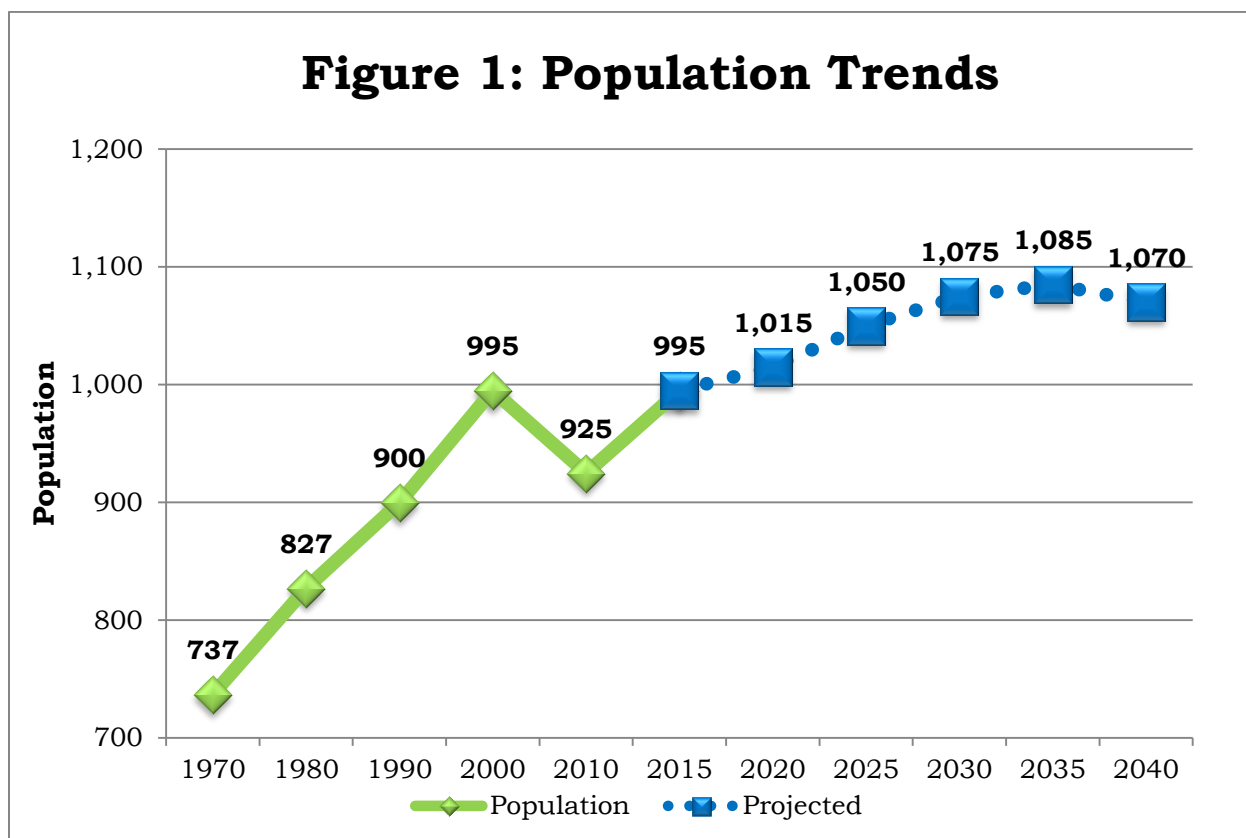
Household Characteristics

There were 388 households within the Town of Polar in 2017, about a 10 percent increase from the total number of households of 354 in 2000, as shown in **Table 1.3**. In comparison, the number of households in Langlade County increased by about 2

percent during this time. Average household size in the Town of Polar was 2.38 persons, down from an average household size of 2.81 persons in 2000. In comparison, Langlade County had an average household size of 2.22 in 2017, down from an average household size of 2.42 in 2000.

Table 1.3: Households					
	2000	2010	2017	% Change 2000-17	% Change 2010-17
Town of Polar	354	384	388	9.6%	1.0%
Town of Antigo	550	580	555	0.9%	-4.3%
Town of Norwood	332	360	346	4.2%	-3.9%
Town of Evergreen	181	209	188	3.9%	-10.0%
Town of Price	92	94	103	12.0%	9.6%
Langlade County	8,452	8,587	8,646	2.3%	0.7%
Wisconsin	2,084,544	2,279,768	2,328,754	11.7%	2.1%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Like population, household projections were completed in 5-year increments between 2010 and 2040, as shown in **Table 1.4**. The number of households was calculated by dividing the total population for each 5-year increment by the projected average persons per households.

Like the population projections, the WDOA household projections are recognized as Wisconsin's official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96 and are based on the historical population trends of individual communities. Assuming a conservative rate of growth, the number of households is projected to increase by 46 households, or 11 percent between 2020 and 2040. This is faster than the County and slightly slower than the State in terms of percent increase.
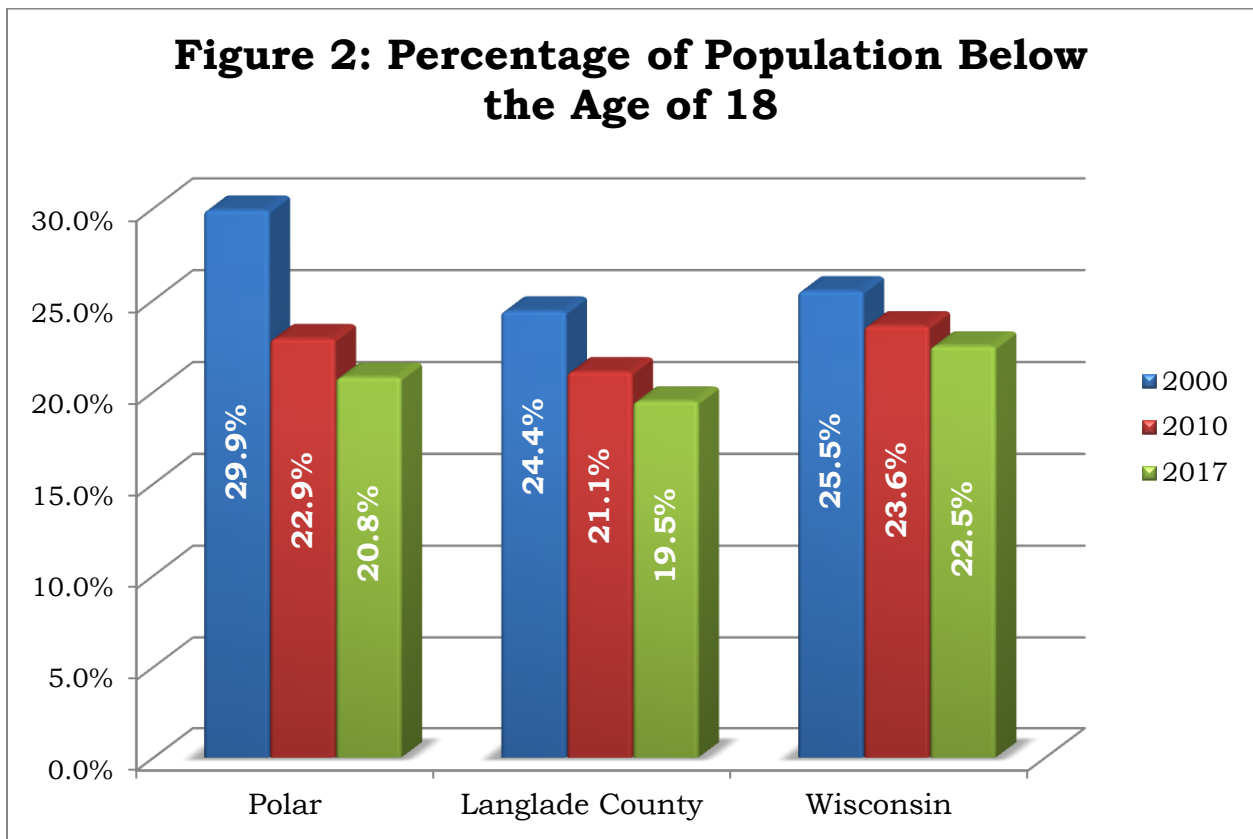
Table 1.4: Household Projections						
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2020-40
Town of Polar	413	434	450	459	459	11.1%
Town of Antigo	599	618	625	624	610	1.8%
Town of Norwood	376	388	399	402	395	5.1%
Town of Evergreen	220	230	238	241	239	8.6%
Town of Price	95	96	95	94	91	-4.2%
Langlade County	8,913	9,177	9,337	9,337	9,126	2.4%
Wisconsin	2,491,982	2,600,538	2,697,884	2,764,498	2,790,322	12.0%
Source: WDOA						

Age Distribution

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

During the 2000's, the number of children 17 and younger, as a percentage of the population, for the Town of Polar decreased from 29.9 percent in 2000 to 20.8 percent in 2017, as shown in **Figure 2**. The percentage of population below the age of 18 also decreased in Langlade County and Wisconsin as well during this time. This trend may be partly explained by the 2008 economic recession and difficult financial circumstanced for young families.

Figure 2: Percentage of Population Below the Age of 18

	Polar	Langlade County	Wisconsin
2000	29.9%	24.4%	25.5%
2010	22.9%	21.1%	23.6%
2017	20.8%	19.5%	22.5%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Between 2000 and 2017, the number of adults ages 65 and older, as a percentage of the population, for the Town of Polar increased from 12.4 percent in 2000 to 17.4 percent in 2017, as shown in **Figure 3**. The percentage of population ages 65 and older also increased in Langlade County and Wisconsin during this time.

Figure 3: Percentage of Population Ages 65 and Older

	Polar	Langlade County	Wisconsin
2000	12.4%	18.8%	13.1%
2010	14.4%	20.0%	13.7%
2017	17.4%	22.2%	15.6%
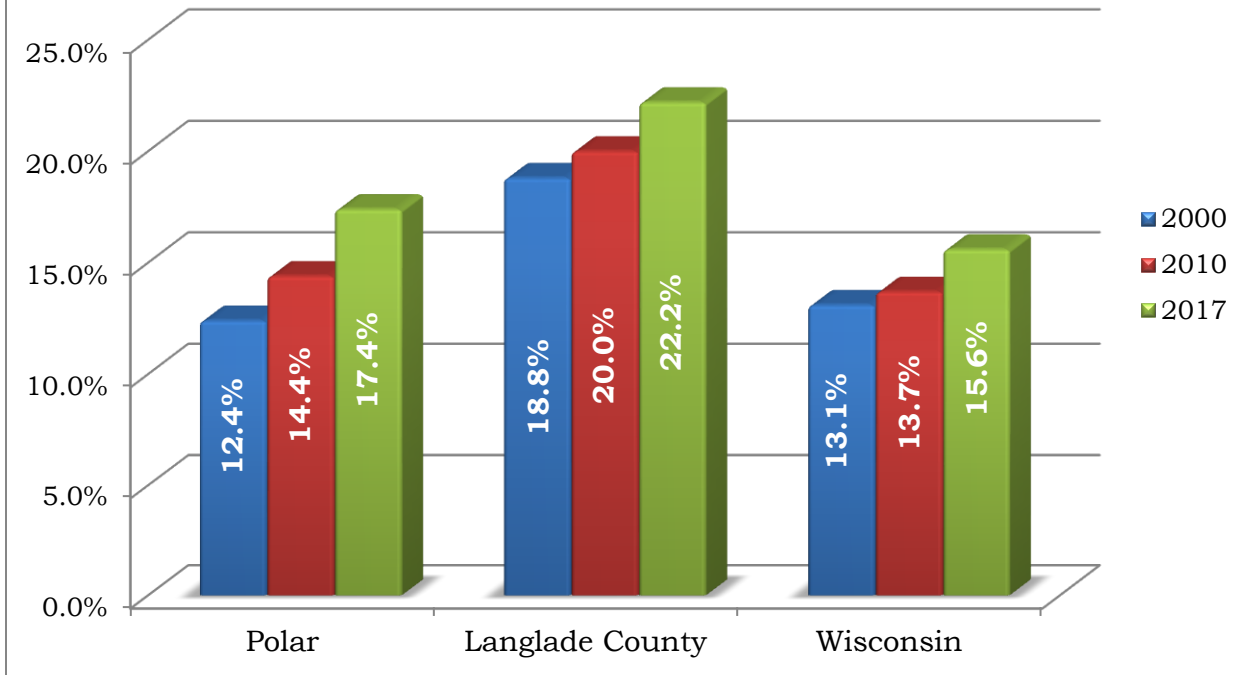
*Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017*

The estimated median age in Polar in 2017 was 49.4, which is higher than the median age in Langlade County (47.6) and significantly higher than in Wisconsin (39.2), as shown in **Figure 4**. The median age of 49.4 in the Town of Polar reflects the concentration of the age cohorts between the ages of 45 and 64 and smaller numbers of children under the age of 15 years.

Figure 4: Median Age

	2000	2010	2017
Polar	37.3	44.8	49.4
Langlade County	40.5	45.7	47.6
Wisconsin	36.0	38.5	39.2
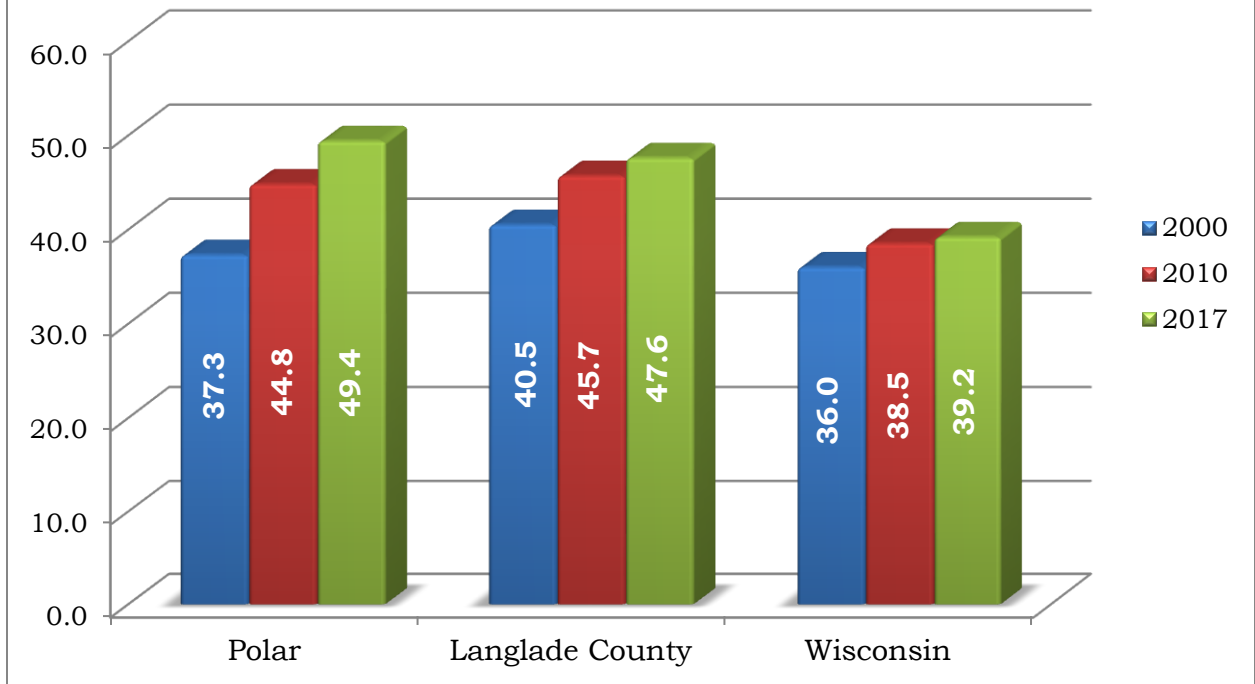
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Figure 5 shows the population distribution broken down into age categories or cohorts for the Town of Polar in 2017. A large percentage of residents that live in Polar are between the ages of 45 and 69. Polar also has a large 5-9 age group, which shows a strong component of young families in the Town. The drop in residents that are between the ages of 15 and 34 probably indicates that people are leaving the Town for employment or higher education opportunities after high school.

Figure 5: Town of Polar Population Pyramid, 2017
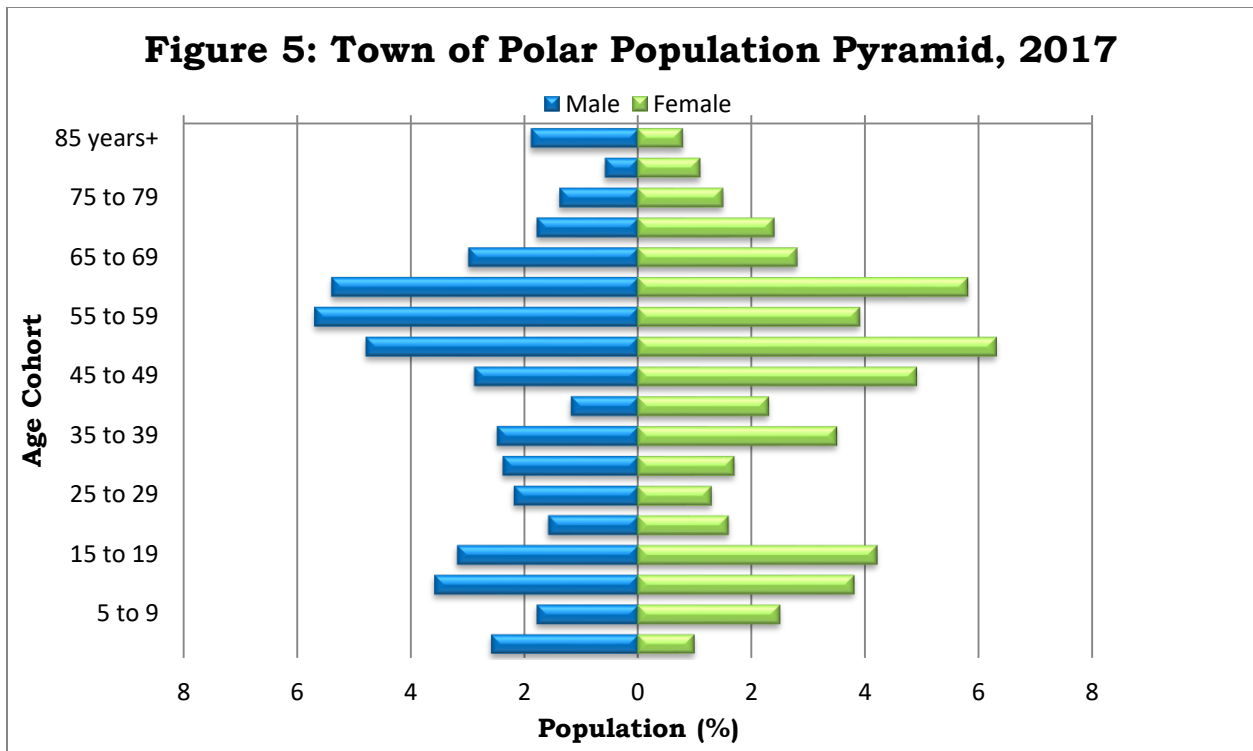
Education & Income Levels

The educational attainment levels in a community are often an indicator of the overall income, job availability and well-being of a community.

Educational attainment in the Town has increased since 2000. The percentage of population ages 25 and older with a high school education increased from 82.3 percent in 2000 to 91.1 percent in 2017. The percentage of those with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased from 12.5 percent in 2000 to 17.8 percent in 2017. These increases were in line with those experienced in Langlade County. The proportion of people with less than a high school education in the Town of Polar is lower than that of Langlade County and is slightly higher than that of the state. **Figure 6** displays a comparison between Polar, Langlade County, and Wisconsin for all educational attainment categories for the year 2017, and **Table 1.5** compares educational attainment in terms of those with a high school graduate or higher and those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

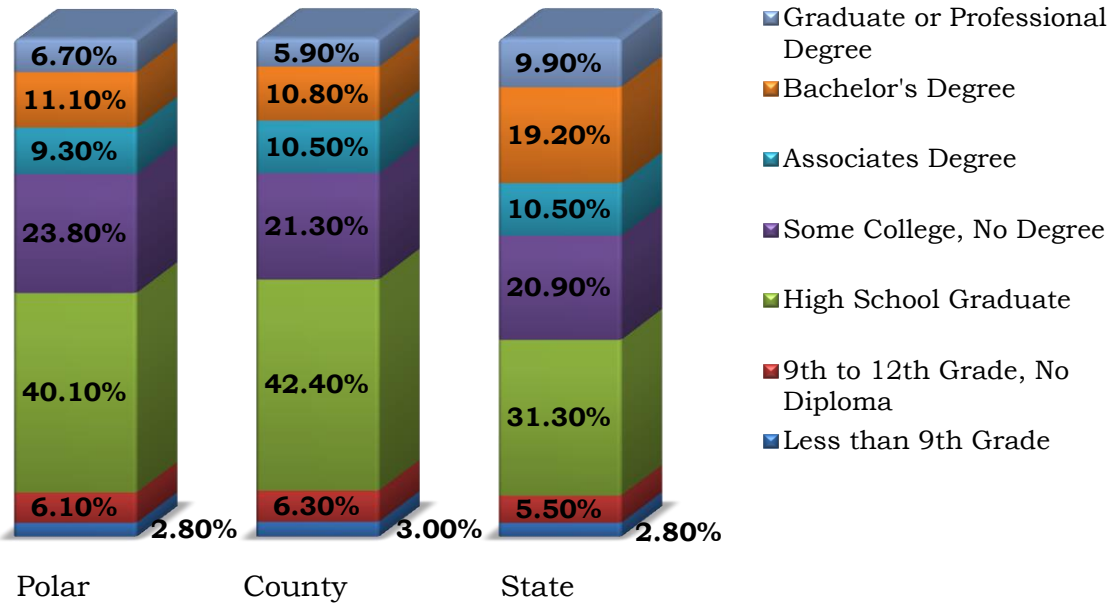## Figure 6: Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Older, 2017

Table 1.5: Educational Attainment Change, 2000-2017									
	Town of Polar			**Langlade County**			**Wisconsin**		
Educational Attainment	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017
% high school graduate or higher	82.3%	88.0%	91.1%	80.9%	87.3%	90.7%	85.1%	89.4%	91.7%
% bachelor's degree or higher	12.5%	17.6%	17.8%	11.7%	12.9%	16.6%	22.4%	25.8%	29.0%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Table 1.6 shows median household income for the Town of Polar. The median household income for Town of Polar households was $63,036 in 2017, up from $41,477 in 2000. However, after adjusting for inflation, real median household income actually increased at a much slower rate, as the inflation-adjusted median household income for the Town of Polar in 2000 was $51,320. Langlade County experienced a slight increase in median household income when adjusted for inflation, while Wisconsin experienced a 9 percent decrease. The Town's median household income of $63,036 is higher than the median household income for both Langlade County at $44,132 and the state at $56,759.

Table 1.6: Median Household Income					
Minor Civil Division	2000*	2010*	2017	Adj. Net Change	% Change*
Town of Polar	$59,041	$62,529	$63,036	$3,995	6.8%
Langlade County	$47,213	$46,127	$44,122	-$3,091	-6.5%
Wisconsin	$62,335	$58,002	$56,759	-$5,576	-8.9%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017
: Value Adjusted for inflation in 2017 dollars.

Table 1.7 shows per capita income for the Town of Polar. Per capita income is the average obtained by dividing aggregate income by the total population of an area. Since 2000, the Town's per capita income increased by nearly 30 percent when adjusted for inflation, significantly faster than both Langlade County and Wisconsin.

Table 1.7: Per Capita Income					
Minor Civil Division	2000*	2010*	2017	Adj. Net Change	% Change*
Town of Polar	$24,400	$30,600	$31,697	$7,297	29.9%
Langlade County	$24,142	$24,759	$25,142	$1,000	4.1%
Wisconsin	$30,278	$29,928	$30,557	$279	0.9%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017
: Value Adjusted for inflation in 2017 dollars.

Poverty

In 2017, 7.2 percent of the Town's population was under the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). This is significantly lower than Langlade County (14.8%), and is also significantly lower than the state (12.3%), and national (14.6%) averages. Poverty rates within the Town of Polar have slightly increased since 2000, as 7.0 percent of Town residents were under the FPL in 2000. Comparisons of poverty rates can be found in **Table 1.8**.

Table 1.8: Poverty Rate			
Minor Civil Division	2000 Poverty Rate	2010 Poverty Rate	2017 Poverty Rate
Town of Polar	7.00%	6.20%	7.20%
Langlade County	10.10%	11.00%	14.80%
Wisconsin	8.70%	11.60%	12.30%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Race & Ethnicity

According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 99.1 percent of the population in Polar is White, about the same proportion as it was

in 2000 and 2010. About 0.4 percent identified as "American Indian", while about 0.2 percent identified as Black or African American.

Employment Characteristics

According to the 2013-2017 ACS, the 522 members of the Polar labor force had median earnings of $42,000, while the mean earnings of full-time, year-round workers were $56,212. Median earnings are generally higher as education increases, ranging from $25,125 for those with a high school degree to $59,000 for those with a graduate or professional degree.

Between 2000 and 2017, the number of employed residents within the Town of Polar decreased from 498 employed residents in 2000 to 479 employed residents in 2017. **Table 1.9** compares the number of employees and trends of employment among residents in the Town of Polar with those in Langlade County and Wisconsin.

Table 1.10 shows the breakdown of occupations by sector of the employed population in the Town of Polar in 2017. The Educational services, and health care and social services industry accounted for 23 percent of jobs held by Town of Polar residents, the most of any industry. The Educational services, and health care and social services industry was also the top industry in Langlade County and Wisconsin as well in 2017.

Table 1.9: Total Employed					
	2000	2010	2017	% Change 2000-2017	% Change 2010-2017
Polar	498	510	479	-3.8%	-6.1%
Langlade County	9,703	9,622	8,872	-8.6%	-7.8%
Wisconsin	2,734,925	2,869,310	2,939,880	7.5%	2.5%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Table 1.10: Occupation by industry, Percent of Workforce, 2017			
	Polar	Langlade County	Wisconsin
Agriculture. Forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	13.6%	7.7%	2.4%
Construction	8.1%	7.2%	5.5%
Manufacturing	12.1%	14.5%	18.4%
Wholesale trade	1.0%	2.1%	2.7%
Retail trade	12.9%	14.6%	11.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.0%	4.7%	4.4%
Information	0.8%	2.0%	1.6%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.8%	4.7%	6.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	4.2%	5.0%	8.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.0%	21.8%	23.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	6.3%	8.1%	8.7%
Other services, except public administration	6.5%	4.1%	4.1%
Public administration	1.7%	3.4%	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2013-2017

Demographic Trends

Demographic change is a principle factor in predicting future community growth. Population characteristics relate directly to the community's housing, education, utility, recreation, and facility needs, as well as future economic development. Over time, fluctuations in local and regional economies can influence population change. The following is a list of demographic trends that the Town of Polar has experienced or is projected to experience.

- The Town of Polar has increased in population over the last 50 years, greatly increasing in population between 1970 and 2000, with population declining between 2000 and 2010. Population is projected to steadily increase between 2015 and 2035 before slightly declining between 2035 and 2040.

- Total households within Polar have increased since 2000, as the number of households increased between 2000 and 2010, and slightly increasing between 2010 and 2017. The number of households within the Town of Polar is projected to increase steadily through 2035 before leveling off between 2035 and 2040.

- When adjusted for inflation, median household income has increased at a significantly faster pace in Polar than in Langlade County and Wisconsin.

- Educational attainment has grown at similar rates to Langlade County and Wisconsin. The percentage of Polar residents with higher educational attainment (bachelor's degree or higher) is slightly higher than the Langlade County percentage and is lower than the state percentage.

Chapter Two

Natural 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 administered at the County, State, or Federal level. Thus an overview of recent county-wide natural resource planning efforts is described below, followed by a description of local natural resource conditions. Of particular interest are geographic areas of the landscape encompassing valued natural resource features grouped below by resource type, including soil and biological resources.

Previous Plans and Studies

In the last decade, several plans were prepared by Langlade 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.

Langlade County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2015

The Langlade County Land Conservation Committee to satisfy the state legislature's mandate for a reevaluation of the state's non-point pollution control programs directed creation of the first plan by the Langlade County Land Conservation Department in January 1998. Enabling legislation was passed allowing the creation of county land and water resource management plans throughout the state. The conservation plan lists areas of resource concern that include: loss of agricultural lands and open spaces; fragmentation of habitat and loss of corridors for wildlife; surface water pollution; decline in riparian habitats and shoreline erosion; & illegal dumping of waste products. The plan provides an extensive inventory of the County's natural resources and a series of goals and objectives intended to improve and protect these resources in the future.

The 2015 Land and Water Resource Management Plan identifies two primary goals. These are:

- Protect and improve surface water and groundwater quality; &
- Promote working forests and farms

Langlade County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2017

The primary focus of this recreation plan is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreational needs of the country. This plan provides an inventory and analysis of existing outdoor recreational facilities, and provides recommendations to meet identified needs. Specific park and forest parcel improvement lists exist within the plan.

Langlade County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2014

This plan inventories and analyzes the agriculture related resources of Langlade County, including components such as farmland, utilities and infrastructure, communications, and land use. It describes programs available to help maintain and preserve productive farmland and woodlands. This plan also discusses the importance of the agriculture industry to the local economy. It establishes the goal of promoting working forests and farms, and includes a number of objectives and policies to meet this goal, as well as criteria for designating farmland preservation areas. The Town of Polar is included in a farmland preservation area.

Farmland Preservation Areas - Parcels that meet the Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) mapping criteria. Landowners in this area may apply for farmland preservation income tax credits. No non-agricultural development is planned in the next fifteen years for those areas identified.

Criteria for Farmland Preservation Areas:
- Lands depicted on the Soils Map as farmlands.
- Lands depicted on the Land Use Map as agriculture, cranberry bog, open lands, or woodlands.
- Lands depicted on the Future Land Use Map that allow agriculture or forestry to occur

Lands are excluded if they are any of the following:
- Local, county, state, and federal lands
- "Planned Out" lands on Map 5 of the FPP
- Parcels less than 5 acres
- Tax exempt land

Farmland preservation areas cover a majority of the Town of Polar. Existing agricultural areas within the Town are located mainly in the central and southern portions of the Town.

<u>USGS Protecting Wisconsin's Groundwater through Comprehensive Planning</u>

In a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the University of Wisconsin System, and the United States Geological Survey, a website was made available with data and information on geology, general hydrology, and groundwater quantity and quality. The website was developed to aid government officials in their comprehensive plans, including this plan.

The most recent data available for Langlade County was public in 2007. The Langlade County report can be accessed here: *https://wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/index.html*.

Natural Resources Inventory

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

The Town of Polar is about 22,731 acres in size and contains six named lakes, several creeks, and numerous unnamed water bodies. Much of the Town is forested. Polar is part of the Northern Highland geomorphic region with a glacial landscape that includes gently rolling, rounded, forested hills rising above adjacent marshy areas.

Water Resources

Langlade County contains abundant water resources. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state and others are in need of focused efforts to improve water quality. Surface water resources help replenish the groundwater as part of the hydrologic cycle. Under natural conditions, the aquifers generally receive clean water from rainfall percolating through the overlying soils. Protection of these groundwater reserves is necessary to ensure adequate water to domestic, agricultural, and commercial uses. If groundwater is not protected, contamination could result, endangering the quality and supply of water in the Town.

Groundwater

Residents of the Town depend on groundwater pumped from glacial sand and gravel deposits for the bulk of their water needs. Groundwater quality in Langlade County and the Town of Polar is generally considered to be good.

The majority of the Town lies within the hilly area part of a glacial feature known as a moraine. This moraine feature is comprised of poorly sorted material ranging from clay to boulder size deposited directly by glacial ice at the melting ice margin.

Yields of 10 to 20 gallons-per-minute (gpm) are sufficient for domestic purposes and can be obtained almost anywhere in the County.

The relatively rapid movement of groundwater within the aquifer is a concern from a potential contamination standpoint. Nitrates are not only a concern due to the agricultural activity, but can result from wastewater discharge from non-agricultural growth.

In general, groundwater drainage basins parallel surface water drainage basins. The Wolf River drains the northern and eastern portions of the County. However, in 1987 a detailed study of Langlade County's groundwater showed that there is a displacement of the groundwater divides with respect to surface water drainage basins. This displaced groundwater divide underlies the Antigo Flats area draining some of the groundwater southeast to the Wolf River rather than following surface water drainage southwest to the Eau Claire River.

Surface Water

The principal stream corridor in the Town of Polar is the Rabe/Deer Creek, as discussed under Environmentally Sensitive Areas, above. Drew Creek is another stream that feeds the wetlands complex in Section 24 & 25. Especially Rabe and Deer Creeks are prime trout fishing streams as well.

The majority of the Town of Polar is part of the Wolf River watershed, which in turn is a sub-watershed of the Fox River. A small section of the Town drains to the Eau Claire River. The sub-watersheds found within the Town are shown in the **Natural Resources Map**. There are several lakes within the Town of Polar.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

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

Drew Creek is the only Outstanding Resource Water listed within the Town, while Rabe Creek, Goto Creek and various unnamed creeks are listed as Exceptional Resource Waters.

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.

There were no waterbodies within the Town of Polar that were listed as an impaired water body in the most recent Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list.

Wetlands

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

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

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

The wetlands shown were mapped from the WisDNR Wetlands Inventory. Wetlands in the Town are associated with Rabe/Deer Creek and Drew Creek.   There are also

scattered small wetlands mostly near lakes. Wetland types in the Town are organic peats and mucks and very poorly drained mineral soils. Wetlands are important in flood control, water quality and wildlife habitat.

Flood Plains

A floodplain is generally defined as land where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any year. The primary value of floodplains is their role in natural flood control. Flood plains represent areas where excess water can be accommodated whether through drainage by streams or through storage by wetlands and other natural detention/retention areas. Specific areas that will be inundated will depend upon the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, the areas shown on a map as floodplains should be able to handle the severest (regional) flood, i.e. those that have a probability of occurring once every one hundred years. The 100-year floodplain was digitized by the NCWRPC from FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps

The 100-year floodplain was digitized by the NCWRPC from FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps, for planning purposes only. Floodplains are relatively narrow and follow the courses of Rabe, Deer and Drew Creeks.

Aquatic Invasive Species

One threat to lake health is invasive species. Wisconsin Statute Section 23.22 (1)(c) officially defines invasive species as "nonindigenous species whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health."

As of 2018, there were 53 lakes within Langlade County that had one or more aquatic invasive species in them. Mueller Lake is the only lake within Polar with a documented case of invasive species. Invasive species present in Mueller Lake include Banded Mystery Snail, Chinese Mystery Snail, and Curly-Leaf Pondweed.

Land Resources

Topography and Geology

The Town is located in the Northern Highland physiographic region of Wisconsin, which has some of the highest elevations in the state. Elevations range from approximately 1,380 feet above sea level in the southeastern portion of the Town to about 1,700 feet in the northeastern portion of the Town. Relief in the areas is generally low, with most elevations being between 1,400 and 1,600 feet above sea level.

The landscape in the Town of Polar includes drumlins and ground moraines, and is characterized by low, smoothly rounded, elongated, and oval ridges that are nearly level to moderately steep and are interspersed with long, narrow drainageways. The primary drainage system includes the Town's numerous rivers and creeks, including Rabe Creek, and Drew Creek.

Forests

Forest cover provides many vital functions, which are diverse in nature; forested lands provide for recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, economic commodities (timber products), wildlife habitat, as well as protection of sensitive environmental areas. Calculations from the NCWRPC GIS database show that of the 22,731 acres of land in Polar, 58.3 percent or 13,250 acres are forested. Tree cover is essential, especially for erosion control and to reduce effluent and nutrient flows into surface water bodies and stream courses.

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

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

The Town also contains a portion of the Langlade County Forest, totaling about 203 acres of forest. Portions of the Langlade County Forest also border the Town's eastern border with the Town of Evergreen and the northern border with the Town of Price.

Logging sleigh in county forests

The Town was originally heavily forested.

Metallic & Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

There are a number of quarries throughout the Town, as well as a few closed or inactive sites. Active gravel pits will be under the "Quarry" overlay district of the Langlade County Zoning ordinance. The soil characteristics of the area are such that the entire Town is an excellent source of sand and gravel, which precludes the mapping of any key areas.

Langlade County has seen active mineral exploration in the past; however, there are no known discoveries of metallic mineral deposits within the Town of Polar. Langlade County has an ordinance regarding metallic mineral exploration, mining and reclamation.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

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

defining environmentally sensitive areas, however, some potentially sensitive areas are discussed below.

- Rabe Lake Fishery Area is an important location for fish habitat
- Woods Flowage Fishery Area is an important location for fish habitat
- Statewide Spring Ponds contains several important fish habitat locations

One type of area that might fall under the environmentally sensitive designation is contaminated or potentially contaminated sites in part because they may need special care or monitoring to prevent further environmental degradation or hazard to human life. The WDNR Internet database known as the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) lists four sites.

- No Action Required: 6901 W STH 64, Polar Service Garage
- Closed Site: N3705 5th Ave Rd, Alliant Entergy Spill
- Closed Site: STH 64 & CTH S, Spring Brook Dairy Spill
- Closed Site: SERVCO FS Cooperative Spill

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

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

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

No Action Required: There was, or may have been, a discharge to the environment and, based on the known information, the DNR has determined that the responsible party does not need to undertake an investigation or cleanup in response to that discharge.

Closed Site: Activities where investigation and cleanup of the contamination has been completed and the state has approved all cleanup actions. Not applicable to activity types of "General Property" and "No Action Required".

While not listed in the BRRTS database, it is important to note that there are two old dump sites located within the Town, both along Polar Road.

Rare Species & Natural Communities

The Town of Polar has six sections with occurrences of endangered resources (rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants & animals, and high-quality natural

communities) as well as township-wide occurrences, as identified in the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory. As of August, 2018, there were 5 natural communities and 0 species listed as threatened or endangered by the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory. The five natural communities listed include:

- Northern Mesic Forest
- Northern Wet Forest
- Northern Wet-Mesic Forest
- Spring Pond
- Springs and Spring Runs, Hard

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.

Parks and Open Space

Park or park-like facilities within the Town include the following areas according to the current County Outdoor Recreation Plan: Mueller Lake Park, which includes boat landing, picnic and sanitary facilities and a swimming beach; Polar Recreation Park, a 13-acre park that includes an open shelter, a kitchen, bathrooms, and running water; and the Gartzke Flowage County Park, which has boat access and fishing along with hiking and cross-county ski trails. The Town also hosts their own annual event; Old Time Plow Days, an event where people can show off antique tractors, and enjoy food and refreshments, music, and a petting zoo.

Recreational Resources

Popular recreational activities in the area include fishing and swimming, wild life observation, hunting and trapping.

Public lands (or easements) available for visitors within the Town include: three fishery management units (Woods Flowage Fishery Area, Rabe Lake Fishery Area, and Statewide Spring Ponds) that offer visitors excellent trout fishing opportunities; a portion of the Langlade County Forest System that offers visitors hiking, hunting, and wildlife viewing opportunities; and a portion of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail runs through the Town as well.

The National Park Service has been developing plans for the further development of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail within Langlade County. The Trail seeks to follow significant glacial landforms such as the end moraine and several pothole lakes such

as Goto Lake. There is an existing section of the trail in the northern section of the Town, within the County Forest. The proposed section of the Trail will link the existing trail with another existing section in Marathon County.

Agricultural Resources

Soils & Productive Agricultural Resources

Soil is composed of varying proportions of sand, gravel, silt, clay and organic material. The soils in the Town primarily result from glacial till, glacial outwash, or glaciolacustrine deposits, and a few formed from organic material.

A detailed study of all of the soils in Langlade County was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. As part of that study, soils were identified in terms of both generalized soil associations, or predominant soil patterns, and specific detailed soils.

As indicated earlier, agriculture is a prominent land use in the Town covering about 44% of the land area for a total of 10,096 acres. A significant portion of soils in the Town (roughly 75% of land in agricultural use) are classified as prime farmland by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS, formerly SCS) as identified in the *Soil Survey of Langlade County, Wisconsin*.

There are two distinct agricultural areas in the Town. The northwest corner is in the Antigo Flats and is the site of large irrigated fields where potatoes are the principle cash crop. Langlade County ranks third in the state for potato production. In the hillier parts of the Town crops is mostly corn, oats and hay. Outside of the Flats agriculture is in decline. There are several dairy operations still working, including one large operation with over 1,000 head, but these are also reduced from past decades.

Data from the latest U.S. Census of Agriculture in 2017 shows that agriculture operations within Langlade County have been on the decline since 1997. For example, in 1997 there were 537 farm operations that operated on a total of 134,768 acres. By 2017, those numbers had dropped to 432 farming operations that operated on 116,386 acres of land.

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's)

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's) are increasing nationwide. The U.S. Department of Agriculture states that CAFO's congregate animals, feed, manure and urine, dead animals, and production operations on a small land area. To be classified as a CAFO, the farming operation must have more than 1,000 animal units (an animal

unit is defined as an animal weighing 1,000 pound or more) confined on site for more than 45 days during a given year. CAFO's are capable of producing large quantities of a desired product, but also produce large quantities of waste. Because of this, it is important to plan for potential CAFO's within the Town due to their impacts on the environment. CAFO's can produce large amounts of urine, feces, and gases such as ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, and methane. Often times the amount of waste produced by CAFO's is more than the surrounding land and crops can handle. Finding proper places to spread all of the manure produced from CAFO's is an important challenge for the long-term health of the Town's natural features such as air quality, water quality, and viability of plant and animal life.

There are two CAFO's located within Langlade County, one of which is located in the northwestern corner of the Town of Polar. Potential impacts these CAFO's could have on the Town include a decline in water quality; bright-green algae blooms in ditches and streams (which could lead to fish kills); a decline in air quality noticeable by strong odors and the presence of methane, ammonia, and hydrogen sulfide gases; and land contamination including soil contamination caused by runoff from the spreading and storage of manure.

Historical & Cultural Resources

In 1877 Moritz Mueller made the trip from Shawano into the wilderness of what is now Langlade County settling on the north shore of the lake that now bears his name. Mueller later moved "into the wilderness" and established a provision camp that eventually became the Town's first store. When a post office was established Mueller became the first postmaster. Originally the settlement was known as Mueller Lake and was a part of the Town of Langlade in Oconto County. The Town was separated in 1879, and when Langlade County was created in 1883 Polar was one of the original six towns. For a short period the Town was known as Sylvan Lake, finally an election was held and the Town was named for pioneer settler Hiram Polar.

In the early days Polar was covered with virgin forests. This timber was cut down for lumber and fields cleared for farming. The first industrial facility in Polar was erected by Webster Manufacturing of Menasha in 1888. In 1898 the mill was purchased by T. D. Kellogg Lumber & Manufacturing Co. The planning mill burned in 1918 and was never rebuilt.

At one time there were seven schools in the Town.   In the early 1920s Polar was described this way:

> "Polar of today is much improved. There are three stores, two repair shops, an ice cream parlor, cheese factory, blacksmith shop, a large and beautiful park known as The Soldier and Sailors' memorial park, and a

large three-room school house. Polar is located on a state graded road. There are many large and well cultivated farms and many beautiful homes and orchards in Polar. On every farm there is stock. Most of the old settlers have full blooded stock. Agriculture and mill work are the chief occupations."[1]

There are no National Register of Historic Places listings within the Town. There are no sites in the Town listed on the Architectural History Inventory.

Natural, Agricultural & Cultural Resources Programs

Programs available to the Town of Polar to achieve their goals and objectives with regard to agricultural, natural and cultural resources are identified below. The following list is not all-inclusive. For specific program information, the agency or group that offers the program should be contacted.

Aquatic Habitat Protection Program: The WDNR provides basic aquatic habitat protection services 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.

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

Drinking Water and Groundwater Program: This DNR 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. DNR 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.

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[1] Drew, Leila, "Polar District No 4 (Polar)", Daily Journal, May 12, 1921

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.

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

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

Managed Forest Law (MFL): The purpose of the MFL is to promote good forest management through property tax incentives. Management practices are required by

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

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

Parks and Recreation Program: The DNR 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 conservation fund, and the recycling fund, program revenue funds and federal grants.

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.

Wastewater Program: The Department of Natural Resources provides this program to address point and non-point source pollution control. Operating funds for this program come from the federal government's Clean Water Act funding as well as state general program revenues. The core work of this program involves the issuance of wastewater discharge permits that discharge directly to surface or groundwater and

enforcing the requirements of these permits. The program closely monitors the impacts of industry, septic tanks, sludge, and stormwater on the environment. Pretreatment plants for wastewater are offered economic assistance and provided with plan review services before the facility is established.

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

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

Wildlife Management Program: The 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.

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

Natural Resources Issues

Large Scale Farming Operations

With large scale farming operations becoming more common, the Town will need to prepare for the possibility of large scale farms, such as a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO), moving into the Town. Large scale farming operations such as CAFO's are capable of producing large quantities of a desired product, but also produce large quantities of waste, which can have severe impacts on the environment, making it crucial for the Town to have a plan in place to help mitigate the potential impacts of these farms.

In regards to large scale farming, local government regulations cannot exceed state standards for the siting or expansion of large livestock facilities. If a locality within the state wants to regulate a CAFO differently than the state government, either through zoning or some other measure, it must qualify for an exemption. The criteria for exemption are:

- The political subdivision is authorized to adopt the standard under other applicable laws;
- The more stringent standards were in place before an application for an expansion was received;
- The more stringent standards are based on "reasonable and scientifically defensible" findings; and they are adopted by the political subdivision; and
- The "reasonable and scientifically defensible" findings clearly demonstrate that the more stringent standards are necessary to "protect public health or safety."

Instead the Town could focus on operational aspects of the farm. The Town could enact more stringent standards based on "reasonable and scientifically defensible findings of fact" that "clearly show that the standards are needed to protect the public health or safety". The Town could pass a 1-year moratorium on possible new CAFO's to allow more time for study of the potential impacts on groundwater, similar to the actions taken by the Town of Sylvester in Green County.

The Town could also consider taking action on practices such as manure spraying, or manure storage. It is important to note that Langlade County recently passed a Manure Storage Ordinance that requires that each permit application within Langlade County will need to include a Manure Storage Facility Plan and a Nutrient Management Plan in addition to the criteria specified in NRCS Technical Standards 313 and 590.

Langlade County's requirement of a Nutrient Management Plan can be beneficial in avoiding harmful impacts from large scale farming operations. Nutrient Management

Plans can help farmers avoid nutrient over-application; know what nutrients crops need; save money and increase farm profitability; improve soil stability, structure, and water holding capacity; and improve surface and groundwater water quality. Langlade County requires all farms in the county to have and follow a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) in order to apply nutrients to any field if they are participating in the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP), are offered cost-share for developing a NMP, accept manure storage cost-share, if applying nutrients to fields is regulated under a local ordinance for manure storage or livestock siting, if they farm is regulated under a WI pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, or if the farm is issued a Notice of Discharge for causing a significant discharge. The Town could also encourage areas in the Town not actively participating in the FPP to participate, which would make a Nutrient Management Plan a requirement for any farms who wish to apply nutrients to their soil in those areas.

Odor Pollution

Odor pollution is often an issue cited with larger dairy operations. Odor pollution can make for an unpleasant experience for people to travel through the Town. Odor pollution also indicates a decrease in air quality, which can help lead to a decline in quality of life.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Conserve the Town's major agricultural, cultural and natural resources.

> Objectives and Policies:
>
> 1. The location of new residential development will be restricted from areas in the Town shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, loss of prime farmland, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
>
> 2. Lot sizes of a 2 acres minimum will be required for new development, in order to preserve the Town's rural character and to protect groundwater resources from the impacts of higher density development. An exception may be made for ag-related use (i.e.: farm family or worker) as provided in the Land Use and Implementation Chapters of this plan.
>
> 3. Land use practices, such as Planned Unit Development (PUD), which protect air, land, and water quality, as well as the scenic value of the Town will be encouraged or required where possible.

4. Conservancy Zoning/PUD concepts will be utilized to protect important or fragile environmental areas including navigable lakes and streams, shorelands, wetlands, drainage ways, floodways, steep slopes, and woodlands recognizing their value for flood control, wildlife habitat, protection of water quality, and in providing recreational opportunities.

5. Conservation of natural and cultural resources in the Town will continue to be overseen by various government entities; i.e. Langlade County (Gartzke Flowage and County Forests), DNR (wetlands, lake water for irrigation, and licensing for high-volume wells), and the Town of Polar (Mueller Lake Park and facilities).

Goal 2: Preserve the productive farmland in the Town for long-term farm use and maintain agriculture as an important economic activity and way-of-life.

Objectives and Policies:

1. Nonfarm development, particularly subdivisions, will be encouraged in areas away from intensive agricultural activities, in order to minimize farm - nonfarm conflicts due to noise, odors, nitrates in well water, pesticides, farm/vehicle conflicts on roadways, late night plowing, etc.
2. The unnecessary conversion of good agricultural lands will be avoided. Nonfarm development will be directed to those areas specifically designated for such use.
3. The Town will establish an area as the most suitable for any potential location of new livestock facility siting in keeping with s.93.90 Wisconsin Statutes.

Goal 3: Allow for needed non-metallic mining (i.e.: sand and gravel extraction) while balancing the need for this resource with the interests of adjacent landowners and the Town as a whole.

Objectives and Policies:

1. Reclamation of non-metallic mining sites should conform to the land use plan map in regard to the reclaimed use. The Town will work with the County Board of Adjustment to ensure adequate reclamation of sites.

Chapter Three

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 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*

Langlade County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The Langlade County Comprehensive Plan closely examines the state of housing throughout Langlade County, examining housing issues and qualities such as age of housing units, housing value, housing types, seasonal housing, and general housing characteristics. The identified goals in the Langlade County Comprehensive plan as pertains to housing are as follows:

- Encourage an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout the community
- Discourage residential development in unsuitable areas
- Encourage adequate affordable housing for all individuals consistent with the rural character of the community
- Promote the maintenance and renovation of the existing housing stock as a source of affordable housing

It should be noted that Langlade County is currently in the process of updating their comprehensive plan.

Housing Assessment

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 1940'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 Langlade County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 3.1 indicates the age of the housing stock in the Town of Polar area that is based on the year the structures were built as reported in the 2013-2017 American Community Survey. About 21 percent of Polar's housing units were built before 1940, lower than the percentage in Langlade County (25%). About 39 percent of housing units within Polar were built after 1990, similar to the Towns of Norwood and Evergreen, and significantly higher than in Langlade County.

Table 3.1: Year Structure Built, 2017									
	1939 or earlier	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010 or later
Polar	100	9	37	33	60	45	87	79	19
Antigo	127	26	33	43	114	77	93	49	9
Norwood	133	9	15	13	44	37	84	56	25
Evergreen	27	9	14	33	66	32	48	45	16
Price	35	12	11	9	17	28	6	21	6
Langlade County	3,090	1,000	1,014	844	1,751	1,312	1,711	1,488	263

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Occupancy Characteristics

Table 3.2 examines the occupancy status of housing units in the Town of Polar. About 13 percent of the homes in the Town of Polar are seasonal housing units. This compares to 0 percent in the Town of Antigo, 11 percent in the Town of Norwood, 31 percent in the Town of Evergreen, and 20 percent in the Town of Price. Owner occupancy accounts for about 85 percent of occupied housing in Polar, higher than in Langlade County and Wisconsin.

Table 3.2: Residential Occupancy Status				Vacancy Status	
	Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Total Vacant	Seasonal
Town of Polar	469	331	57	81	59
Town of Antigo	571	513	42	16	0
Town of Norwood	416	303	43	70	44
Town of Evergreen	290	172	16	102	89
Town of Price	145	75	28	42	29
Langlade County	12,473	6,632	2,014	3,827	3,111
Wisconsin	2,668,692	1,559,308	769,446	339,938	190,794

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Seasonal Housing

Of the 469 housing units in the Town of Polar in 2017, 388 units were occupied, while the remaining 81 units were vacant. About 73 percent of vacant units within the Town are classified as seasonal housing units. Seasonal housing units account for about 13 percent of all housing units within the Town, as shown in **Table 3.3**. This compares to about 25 percent of housing units in Langlade County being classified as seasonal,

and 7 percent for the state. The percentage of seasonal homes in Polar is higher than the percentages for the Towns of Antigo and Norwood, and is lower than the Towns of Price and Evergreen.

Table 3.3: Percentage of Seasonal Housing, 2017			
	Total Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units	% Seasonal Housing Units
Town of Polar	469	59	12.6%
Town of Antigo	571	0	0.0%
Town of Norwood	416	44	10.6%
Town of Evergreen	290	89	30.7%
Town of Price	145	29	20.0%
Langlade County	12,473	3,111	24.9%
Wisconsin	2,668,692	190,794	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Structural Characteristics

The vast majority of the housing in the Town of Polar is made up of detached single-family units, see **Table 3.4**. Duplexes make up 1.3% of the housing stock and apartments make up another 2.6%. Mobile homes comprise 6.0% of the housing stock, slightly less than Langlade County. There is an elderly apartment facility, Job's Haven, in the southwest corner of the Town near Kennedy Lake.

Table 3.4: Housing Units by Structural Type, 2017								
	1, detached	1, attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
Polar	420	3	6	12	0	28	0	469
Antigo	543	6	6	0	0	16	0	571
Norwood	372	7	0	0	11	24	2	416
Evergreen	233	0	0	0	0	57	0	290
Price	137	0	1	0	0	7	0	145
Langlade County	10,162	59	337	204	815	866	30	12,473

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Value Characteristics

In 2017, median value of housing stock in the Town of Polar is significantly higher than the median housing stock value in Langlade County. **Table 3.5** displays median home values for the Town of Polar as well as the surrounding towns. About 5 percent of homes in the Town of Polar have house values below $100,000. About 7 percent of

all homes in the Town of Polar have house values over $300,000, a higher percentage than the percentage of homes in Langlade County (5.1%).

Table 3.5: Housing Values. 2017							
	<$50,000	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 to $149,999	$150,000 to $199,999	$200,000 to $299,999	$300,000 and up	Median Value
Town of Polar	4.8%	21.1%	21.1%	23.9%	22.1%	6.9%	$154,200
Town of Antigo	7.4%	31.4%	19.5%	19.9%	16.6%	5.3%	$130,000
Town of Norwood	7.3%	23.4%	24.1%	16.5%	22.4%	6.3%	$139,900
Town of Evergreen	15.7%	24.4%	22.7%	12.8%	22.7%	1.7%	$119,300
Town of Price	10.7%	30.7%	22.7%	26.7%	8.0%	1.3%	$118,100
Langlade County	10.6%	36.9%	19.1%	15.1%	13.2%	5.1%	$106,200
Wisconsin	5.5%	14.1%	21.3%	20.3%	22.5%	16.4%	$169,300

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Housing Affordability

Rent and mortgage payments, maintenance expenses, lot sizes, and required or desired amenities are a few of the factors which influence housing affordability. Available housing options are further refined by household size and income. Affordability is particularly an issue for the elderly, disabled, and low-income residents of a community.

Median monthly costs for homeowners, with and without a mortgage, and for renters are shown in **Table 3.6**. For homeowners with a mortgage, costs are higher in Polar than in Langlade County. For homeowners without a mortgage, costs are slightly higher in Polar than in Langlade County. Polar also had a higher median gross rent cost in 2017 than Langlade County.

The percent of a community paying more than 30 percent of their household income on housing is a common measure of housing affordability. The more money spent on housing, the less disposable income is available to spend on education, food, retail, and recreation. In Polar, 14.2 percent of homeowners and 48.3 percent of renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. The percentage of homeowners who pay more than 30 percent of household income in Polar is slightly lower than that of Langlade County. The percentage of renters in Polar who pay more than 30 percent of their household income for rent is slightly lower than that of Langlade County.

Table 3.6: Housing Affordability, 2017					
Municipality	Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs			Median Selected Monthly Renter Costs	
	With Mortgage	Without Mortgage	30%+*	Median Gross Rent	30%+*
Town of Polar	$1,181	$462	14.2%	$654	48.3%
Town of Antigo	$960	$411	10.6%	$784	68.6%
Town of Norwood	$1,250	$427	23.6%	$812	45.0%
Town of Evergreen	$1,112	$386	23.8%	$600	21.4%
Town of Price	$1,167	$392	9.5%	$833	63.6%
Langlade County	$991	$402	21.6%	$609	49.1%
Wisconsin	$1,399	$540	21.6%	$813	45.7%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Housing Programs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HUD Officer- and Teacher-Next-Door Program: Police officers and teachers may qualify for a 50 percent discount on a HUD-owned, one-family home in a designated Revitalization Area.

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

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

Langlade County Housing Authority: The Langlade County Housing Authority oversees owner occupied housing rehabilitation programs, rental rehabilitation programs, homeowner opportunity programs, Section 8 Housing Assistance, and revolving loan funds. The Housing Authority also operates multiple subsidized and low income housing units, primarily within the City of Antigo.

Housing Issues

Subdivisions

The Town currently has several subdivisions that are not filled. Future development within the Town should be prioritized in these areas before the creation of new subdivisions.

Junk Properties

Junkyards pose concerns about negative impacts on the Town's aesthetics and character as well as potential water contamination from inadvertent leakage. Cooperating with Langlade County to improve enforcement of junkyards is a priority for the Town.

Goals, Objectives, & Policies

Goal 1: Promote development of housing for residents of the Town and promote a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs.

> Objectives and Policies:
>
> 1. The Town will direct residential development to areas designated on its Future Land Use Plan Map. The Town will discourage residential development in productive agricultural and forestry areas.
>
> 2. The Town will require a two (2) acre minimum lot size for new residential development in order to protect groundwater resources from the impacts of higher density development and to provide the spacing necessary to maintain the rural character and density of the community.

Goal 2: Maintain and rehabilitate the existing housing stock as appropriate.

> Objectives and Policies:
>
> 1. The Town will promote, via this Plan, programs to assist residents in maintaining or rehabilitating existing housing units.

Goal 3: Develop a set of guidelines for potential new subdivision developments to follow.

<u>Objectives and Policies:</u>

1. The Town will pass an ordinance requiring developers to put roads, utilities, and other features in place before developing can begin in new subdivisions.
2. New housing development should be focused in subdivision areas that are currently not filled.

Chapter Four

Utilities & Community Facilities

Utilities and community facilities, provided by either public or private entities, are critical for community development. Utilities include electrical service, natural gas, telephone service, and cable communications, among others. Community facilities include local government buildings, libraries, educational institutions, parks and recreational facilities, and maintenance and storage facilities, as well as services like policing service, fire protection, and emergency medical services.

Previous Plans and Studies

Langlade County All Hazard Mitigation Plan

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's necessary to assess their relative importance. The report looks at a series of mostly weather-related 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 the identified hazards. Counties and incorporated municipalities are required to adopt such plans with updates every five years, and the Langlade County program includes the Town of Polar.

Inventory

Utilities and community facilities provided by the Town of Polar or by other public or private entities are inventoried and evaluated as to their present condition and adequacy to meet the current and future needs of the Town. Many of the major facilities are identified on the **Utilities and Community Facilities Map.**

Water and Wastewater Facilities

The Town of Polar has no public water supply system or sanitary sewer service. For the Town, itself, water supply is via individual private wells. The drilling, use and abandonment of private water supply wells is regulated by the Wisconsin Department

of Natural Resources. The Town also some "high capacity" wells in the northwestern section that lies within the Antigo Flats, and are primarily for irrigation.

The disposal of wastewater is also handled by private on-site septic systems that discharge wastewater to underground drainage fields and which may include: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank and sand filter systems. These on-site wastewater treatment technologies are regulated by both Wisconsin and Langlade County.

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities

Private haulers provide "curbside" pick up of garbage and recycling for residents in the Town of Polar. The Town maintains a dumpster available to residents at the site of the former Town landfill on Polar Road. Recycling is also available at this site.

Power and Telecommunication Facilities

Electrical service is provided by Alliant Energy in most of the Town, although some areas closer to Antigo are served by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation. City Gas Company of Antigo provides natural gas distribution in the Polar area, primarily along major roads.

Telephone service is provided by Frontier and Cirrinity. The service has digital switches, links to fiber optics and digital microwave network. A cellular communications tower has recently been erected along Groth Road in the Town of Polar.

Broadband internet access within the Town is provided by the following companies: Frontier Communications, Cellcom, U.S. Cellular, Cirrinity, AT&T, Verizon, and HughesNet. Some of these companies also offer TV services or telecommunication services as well.

Youth Facilities

According to the state, the Town of Polar has no regulated child care providers, however there are ten state licensed family providers and six state licensed group providers in the City of Antigo, and one state licensed group provider in Phlox.

The Town belongs to the Unified School District of Antigo. There are currently five public schools within the district; including three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. There are also two private schools. There are no schools located within the Town. The Northcentral Technical College Antigo campus is in the City of Antigo.

The Antigo Public Library is jointly owned and maintained by the City and Langlade County. A baseball field located on Town property and available to the public and provides a venue for Little League games as well as adult softball.

Emergency Services

Police protection in the Town of Polar is provided by the Langlade County Sheriff's Department. The Town is a part of a multi-town fire department with the Towns of Antigo and Price, including sharing rescue and first responders, equipment, and volunteers. The Town of Polar has their own equipment and maintains a tanker and a pumper truck at a garage attached to the Town Hall. EMS/ambulance services are provided through a contract with the City of Antigo. Mutual aid agreements exist with the City of Antigo and all other town/rural fire departments in the County, as well as few in surrounding counties. Maintaining necessary staffing levels is an ongoing issue for the volunteer Department.

The nearest medical facility is Aspirus Langlade Hospital located in Antigo. This hospital provides 24-hour emergency service and critical care.

Other Government Facilities

The local road system is the most significant public facility maintained by the Town and is covered in the **Transportation Chapter**. The Langlade County Airport is another major public facility also covered under the transportation element. The Town Hall is located along STH 64 just west of Polar Road, and also houses a branch of the Fire Department. The Town Hall serves as a meeting room available for Town residents use and includes a kitchen and restrooms. There are three cemeteries located within the Town, one of which is owned by the Town. The other two are associated with local churches

Utilities and Public Facilities Programs

Providing public infrastructure – roads, sewer and water service, schools, police and fire protection – is one of the major functions of local government. In addition to these public services, both public and private entities provide electricity and telephone service as well as such specialized services as child-care, health-care and solid-waste disposal. Taken together these constitute the utilities and community facilities that represent much of the backbone of modern life. Beyond what these facilities do for us, they also represent a huge investment of public and private resources.

The efficient utilization of these resources is one of the basic principles of comprehensive planning. Already in-place infrastructure is a public asset that must be

safeguarded for the future, both to conserve and protect environmental values and to maximize the benefits of economic growth. Development that bypasses or ignores existing infrastructure resources is wasteful of the public investment that they represent. Development patterns that require the extension of utilities and the expansion of public facilities while existing facilities go unused at other locations is probably not the best use of scarce public resources. Both the state and federal governments offer programs that assist communities with the construction of critical infrastructure and facilities. These programs are listed in more detail in the Economic Development Chapter of this plan.

Issues

Broadband/Internet Accessibility

There is a general lack of reliable internet access throughout the Town, with some areas experiencing zero internet access. Enhancing internet access throughout the Town should be a priority moving forward.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Provide adequate levels of utility and community facilities to meet the existing and future needs of Town residents.

<u>Objectives and Policies:</u>

1. Support development of a comprehensive regional emergency medical services plan that will integrate volunteer support with full time operations.

2. Explore efforts to work cooperatively with other local governments on groundwater protection.

Goal 2: Work with internet providers to help improve broadband/internet accessibility for residents.

Chapter Five

Transportation

Transportation is necessary for the effective movement of people and goods within and with connections outside of the Town. Transportation is also critical to development and land use. This chapter provides an inventory of the existing transportation facilities and services within the Town.

Transportation is a crucial component of livability and provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate transportation facilities with a sustainable pattern of development. The existing network needs to be coordinated to maximize efficiency for the overall system. The connection between home and work is an important part of any transportation system. A range of transportation alternatives should be supported, including walkability wherever possible.

Previous Plans and Studies

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies three major transportation issues.

- Modes of Transportation to Work – The region's workforce is extremely dependent on the automobile. In 2012, over 80 percent of the region's workforce drove alone to work on a daily basis. Another 10 percent carpooled, leaving less than 10 percent for the non-automobile methods such as walking, biking, and using transit. The average commute time in Langlade County, was 19.1 minutes.

- Age of Drivers in the Region – The region is seeing a change in the number of licensed drivers by age groups. Between 2004 and 2013, the region saw a 20 percent decrease in the number of drivers age 17 and age 19. During the same years, the region also had a 20 percent increase in drivers over age 65. These changes mean communities will have a need for multimodal options for the younger ages and options to increase safety as drivers age.

- Transportation Maintenance Cost – It is expensive to maintain the transportation infrastructure in the region. The current reliance on fuel tax and registration fees is

inadequate, unstable, and may soon be outmoded. The inability to fund improvements and maintenance on transportation infrastructure will impact the ability to transport goods and provide safe, reliable, and efficient roads.

Connections 2030

This is Wisconsin's latest long-range, statewide, multimodal transportation plan. It identifies a series of system-level priority corridors that are critical to Wisconsin's travel patterns and the state economy.

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

This 2018 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

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

Road Network

The system of connected roads and highways form the physical network for the community. Not only is the road network important for transportation, but various public infrastructure is located within the right-of-way as well.

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

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

The highway system within the Town of Polar is a network of federal, state and county highways together with various local roads and streets. The jurisdictional breakdown is shown in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Road Mileage by Jurisdictional and Functional Class				
Jurisdiction	Functional Classification			Totals
	Arterial	Collector	Local	
State	8.63	0.00	0.00	8.63
County	0.00	8.07	0.11	8.18
Town	0.00	0.48	49.27	49.75
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS	8.63	8.55	49.38	66.56

Source: WisDOT & NCWRPC.

The only state trunk highway serving the Town is STH 64. STH 64 is the primary east-west traffic artery serving the Town. STH 64 links the City of Merrill to the west, the Village of White Lake and ultimately the City of Marinette (and Menominee, MI) to the east.

State Highway 64 is the primary traffic artery, running east-west through the Town. According to WisDOT, which records average daily traffic volumes (number of vehicles) for major state roadways, traffic on STH 64 within the Town has increased west of County Highway S since 2005 and has decreased east of County Highway S during the same time period.

The Town is served by two county trunk highways (CTHs). These roads serve rural land uses and distribute local traffic to the regional arterial system. They serve an important role in linking the area's agricultural resources to the major highways and urban centers. County highways serving the Town are F and S.

Traffic on County highways in the Town has slightly decreased. Traffic on CTH S has been monitored at four sites. Two of these sites have historical data to compare to; one just south of the intersection with Gruenberg Road, where in 2002 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) was 1,300, and in 2009 was 1,200. The site to the south of the intersection with CTH F had an AADT count of 1,200 in 2002 and an AADT count of 1,100 in 2009. The most recent AADT Traffic Counts are displayed in the **Transportation Map**.

Corridors 2030 was designed to enhance economic development and meet Wisconsin's mobility needs well into the future. The 3,200-mile highway network was comprised of two elements: a multilane backbone system and a two-lane connector system.

The backbone system is a 1,650-mile network of multilane divided highways interconnecting the major population and economic centers in the state and tying them to the national transportation network. The connector system is 1,550 miles of high-quality highways that link other significant economic and tourism centers to the backbone network. All communities over 5,000 in population are to be connected to the backbone system via the connector network. Within Langlade County, USH 45 is the only highway designated as part of the Corridors 2030 system.

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

The current functional classification system used in Wisconsin consists of five classifications that are divided into urban and rural categories. Functional classifications are used to determine eligibility for federal aid. For purposes of functional classification, federal regulations define urban as places of 5,000 or greater population, so the rural classifications apply throughout the Town. **Table 5.2** summarizes the rural functional classification system.

Table 5.2: Rural Highway Functional Classification System	
Principal Arterials	Serve interstate and interregional trips. These routes generally serve all urban areas with populations greater than 5,000. The rural principal arterials are further subdivided into 1) Interstate highways and 2) other principal arterials.
Minor Arterials	In conjunction with the principal arterials, they serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intra-regional and inter-area traffic movements.
Major Collectors	Provide service to moderate sized communities and other inter-area traffic generators and link those generators to nearby larger population centers or higher function routes.
Minor Collectors	Collect traffic from local roads and provide links to all remaining smaller communities, locally important traffic generators, and higher function roads. All developed areas should be within a reasonable distance of a collector road.
Local Roads	Provide access to adjacent land and provide for travel over relatively short distances. All roads not classified as arterials or collectors are local function roads.

Source: WisDOT

Road Maintenance

The Town of Polar 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 on a scale of 1 to 10. This scale is broken down as follows:

- "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 5.3 shows a summary of pavement conditions in the Town of Polar. 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.

Table 5.3: Summary of Pavement Conditions, 2017	
Surface Type	**Miles**
Unimproved	0.00
Sealcoat or Gravel Road	8.16
Asphalt or Concrete	41.58
Surface Condition Rating	**Miles**
Very Poor	0.49
Poor	5.60
Fair	20.70
Good	19.07
Very Good	2.01
Excellent	1.87
Total	49.74

Source: WisDOT 2019

Trucking

STH 64 is the principal truck route within the Town as designated by WisDOT. This route operates as a feeder to USH 45 designated by Corridors 2030 as a connecting route, linking to the Backbone highway system and facilitating the movement of goods between the Antigo area and the rest of the state/nation

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

A number of private trucking companies are available in the area. Distributors Limited, Jim Lund Transport and Prince Brothers Incorporated are all located nearby in the Town of Antigo, and Dave Zarda and Ed Brandt both of whom have trucking operations in the Town of Polar.

Transit and Transportation Facilities for the Disabled

Intra-community transportation services include public taxi options and transit service for specific populations, as well as added service to Aspirus Langlade Hospital in 2017. Menominee Regional Public Transit offers a Red Robin bus service throughout Langlade County. The Menominee Regional Public Transit also provides ADA Para-Transit Service which picks-up and discharges passengers at the curb in front of their origin and destination. North Central Caravans LLC also provides non-emergency medical transport.

The nearest intercity bus access is available in downtown Wausau or in Wittenberg, both provided Jefferson Lines and Lamers Bus Lines to Minneapolis, Green Bay, Madison and Milwaukee.

Bicycle and Walking

Langlade County adopted a new Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 2019 with assistance from the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. This plan established a number of scenic, on-road bicycle routes throughout the County. One recommendation of the plan is to establish an on-road corridor between Antigo and White Lake. The proposed corridor between Antigo and White Lake passes through the Town of Polar with stretches along the following roads: Crestwood Road, Polar Road, Fifth Avenue, and State Highway 64.

The Town of Polar contains a portion of one of the county's bike routes: Moose Lake Route. Roads within the Town of Polar that make up portions of the Moose Lake Route are Forrest Avenue, Orchard Road, and Hill Road.

The Langlade County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommends improving shoulders to accommodate bikes on designated routes, particularly in areas of rolling hills where line-of-sight may be a concern. Upkeep and maintenance including repair of potholes, cracksealing and shoulder grooming is also recommended. The plan asks WisDOT to

consider paved shoulder expansion to accommodate bikes on all state highways within Langlade County.

ATV/UTV

All-terrain and utility terrain vehicles are becoming increasingly popular. More and more communities are allowing these vehicles on local roadways. As a result of the increasing popularity of ATV's and UTV's, all local roads within the Town are open for ATV use.

Railroads

There is no rail service in proximity to the Polar area. Shipments needing rail service would have to be trucked to nearby cities with rail access such as Merrill, Rhinelander or Wausau.

Air Transportation

The Langlade County Airport is the major airport for the County. This is a general utility airport. General utility airports are intended to serve almost all small general aviation single and twin-engine aircraft, piston or turbo prop, with a maximum takeoff weight of 12,500 pounds or less. These aircraft generally have approach speeds below 121 knots and wingspans of less than 79 feet. Typically, these aircraft are used for business and charter flying and for personal use. Airports in this category normally have a primary runway length of 3,700 to 4,100.

Terminal Building at Langlade County Airport.

Total aviation operations (take-offs and landings) at the Langlade County airport are projected to remain stable around 13,500 per year. The airport is served by Antigo

Air, LCC, a full service fixed-base operator. The airport has approximately 22 based aircraft and includes a two runways and a variety of hangars and associated facilities.

Issues

Lack of Transportation Funding

Reduced funding for the upkeep of the Town's transportation network means that the Town will have to find a way to do more with less to uphold their standard for maintaining their roads.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Support and maintain a safe and efficient Town road system.

<u>Objectives and Policies:</u>

1. Land uses that generate heavy traffic will be avoided on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.

2. Roadway access will be better spaced along the existing Town road network to increase safety and preserve capacity.

3. Future road locations, extensions or connections will be considered when reviewing development plans and proposals.

4. Update street signage to improve visibility for all Town residents.

5. All Town roads must accommodate access requirements for emergency services (fire, EMS, ambulance, etc.) as well as school bus and snowplow.

Chapter Six

Economic Development

The condition of the local economy directly influences local growth and development, and therefore must be considered when planning for a community's future. 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.

Previous Plans & Studies

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2019

Langlade 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 address three issues: the disparity between the available labor force and employment, the need for a living wage, and broadband access. The four economic development goals of this plan are as follows.

- *Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce.*
- *Support and develop a diverse economic base ensuring economic growth and resiliency.*
- *Support infrastructure needed for economy development.*
- *Develop tourism and knowledge-based economy into leading economic sectors.*

ALICE Study of Financial Hardship: Wisconsin

This report, developed in part by Northwoods United Way in Rhinelander, described the 42 percent of households in Langlade 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 by 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 from these jobs.

- *The ALICE report shows that 28 percent of Town of Polar households are either below the federal poverty level or are ALICE Households, indicating that the average household in Polar is relatively more financially prosperous than the average Langlade County household at-large.*

Langlade County Comprehensive Plan, 2019

The Langlade County Comprehensive Plan covers economic development in both the inventory and plan recommendation sections. The inventory information is a brief overview of labor force, commuting patterns, economic base, environmentally contaminated sites, and economic development programs. Goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are provided in the plan recommendation section. Some of the recommendations relate to site availability, desired economic focus, reuse of environmentally contaminated sites and design standards.

Town of Polar Economic Analysis

Economic Sectors

In 2017, there were 479 residents employed in the thirteen basic economic sectors in the Town of Polar. Employment among Polar residents has decreased 3.8 percent since 2000, as shown in **Table 6.1**.

Between 2000 and 2017, the three fastest growing sectors were Other Services; Finance and Insurance; and Retail Trade. In terms of total employment, the Educational Services and Health and Social Assistance sector is the largest segment of the economy, followed by the Retail Trade and Natural Resources & Mining sectors. 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.

Table 6.1: Town of Polar Employment by Sector				
Sector	2000	2010	2017	Percent Change
Natural Resources & Mining	74	104	65	-12.2%
Construction	31	27	39	25.8%
Manufacturing	114	66	58	-49.1%
Wholesale Trade	15	13	5	-66.7%
Retail Trade	40	52	62	55.0%
Transportation and Utilities	30	44	19	-36.7%
Information	0	4	4	*
Finance and Insurance	17	25	28	64.7%
Professional Services	22	15	20	-9.1%
Educational Services, and Health and Social Assistance	88	113	110	25.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services	39	11	30	-23.1%
Other Services	14	20	31	121.4%
Public Administration	14	16	8	-42.9%
Total	498	510	479	-3.8%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Labor Force Analysis

Labor Force

Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. Overall, the Town of Polar labor force has dropped from 522 in 2000 to 490 in 2017. That represents a decline of 6.1 percent, compared to a decrease of 7.6 percent in Langlade County and an increase of 7.5 percent in Wisconsin. In 2000, 498 members of the labor force were employed and that number decreased 3.8 percent to 479 employed members in 2017, as shown in **Table 6.2**. Similar to the Town of Polar, Langlade County saw employment decrease by 8.6 percent during the same time period, while Wisconsin saw employment increase by 7.5 percent.

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 to be part of the labor force. In 2000, the Town of Polar had 3.2 percent unemployment, and unemployment was estimated to be 1.4 percent in 2017, lower than Langlade County, and lower than the state as a whole.

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 2000, 69.8 percent of the population over the age of 16 in Polar was in the labor force. By 2017, that percentage decreased to 63.3 percent. The state participation percentage was 66.9 percent, and the Langlade County participation percentage was 59.8 percent.

Table 6.2: Town of Polar Labor Force				
	2000	2010	2017	Percent Change
Population 16 years and over	748	805	774	3.5%
Labor Force	522	549	490	-6.1%
Employed	498	510	479	-3.8%
Unemployed	24	39	11	-54.2%
Unemployment Rate	3.20%	4.80%	1.40%	-56.3%
Participation Rate	69.80%	68.20%	63.30%	-9.3%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2015, only about 7 - or 8.8 percent - of the 80 jobs throughout Polar were filled by residents of Polar. About 73 workers traveled to Polar during the average work day. In contrast, 461 Polar residents commuted to locations outside of the Town for work, indicating that Polar's laborshed extends beyond its municipal boundaries. **Figure 6.1** shows the inflow-outflow patterns of the Town's laborshed.

In-Migration
The majority of in-commuters live in close proximity to the Town of Polar. The largest percentage of workers commuting into the Town of Polar comes from the City of Antigo (10%).

Out-Migration
Town of Polar residents commuting outside of the Town's boundaries travel across Wisconsin. About 468 Town residents are employed outside of the Town's boundaries. Like in-commuters, the majority of employed residents work in nearby communities. The largest percentage (42.1%) of workers leaving Polar for work travel to the City of Antigo, followed by the City of Wausau where 6.0 percent of workers travel for work.

Figure 6.1: Town of Polar Laborshed
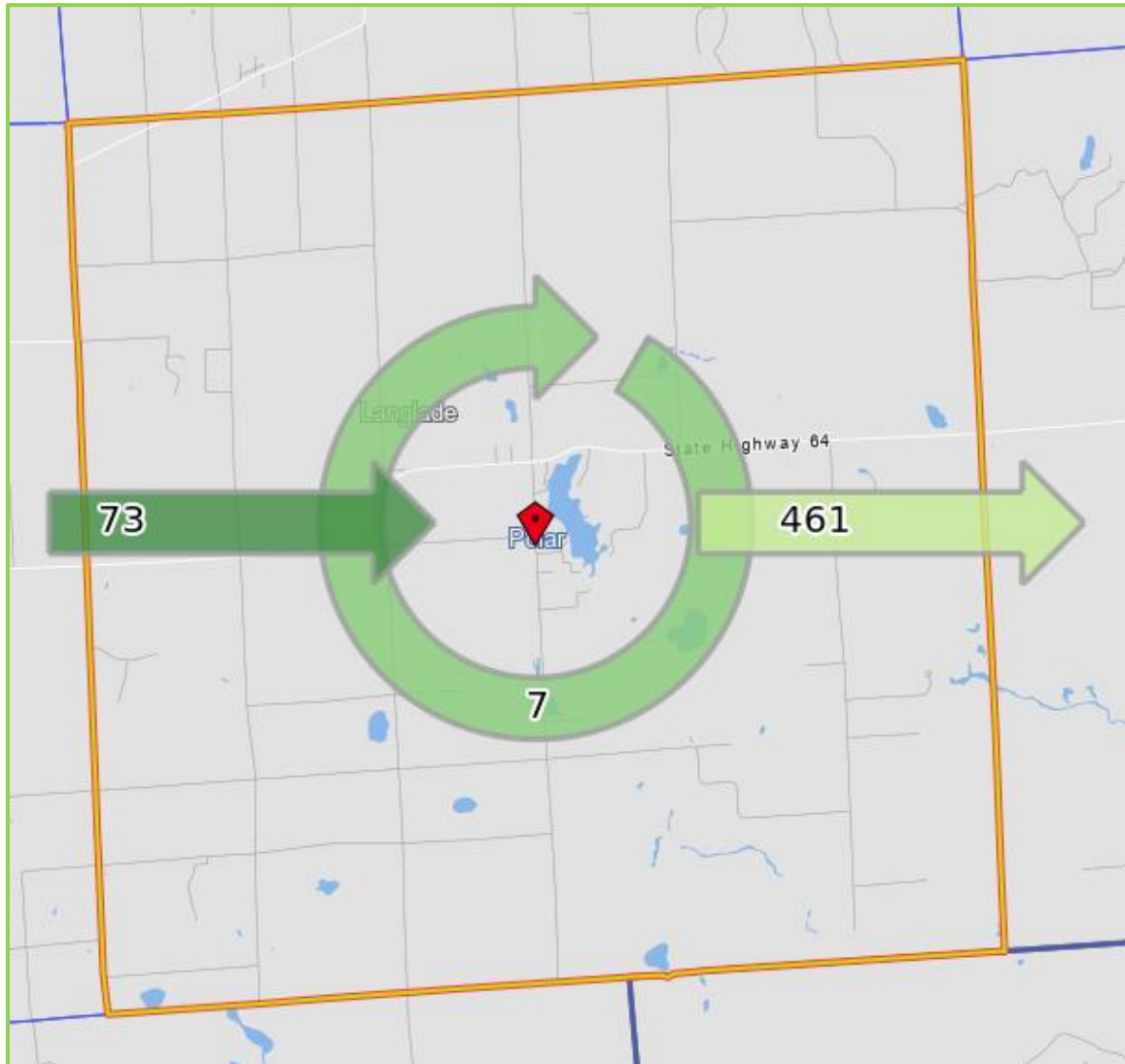
Source: U.S. Census on the Map

Assessment of Local Conditions

Based on the mixed forestry and agricultural character of the community, the Town supports the development of small businesses in the Town such as the Langlade Springs water bottling company that was founded in 2006. Christmas tree growing is also seen as a potential business that could prosper in the Town without significant negative impacts. It was suggested that it would be nice if operations at the Sawco, Inc./Brink Properties, LLC, which has been in the Town for over a century, were able to increase its production. After producing components for the wood products industry for many years the mill has recently been reduced to very small scale operations.

The Town has a number of strengths that may be helpful in attracting or retaining business and industry. The rural atmosphere of the Town is seen as the major asset, along with lakes and forests, and a number of outdoor activities such as fishing and hunting, skiing and snowmobiling. Most of these were identified in the planning survey including: "country living, close to the city", nice, rural/open setting, good fire department, town board and roads, and the airport.

Some weaknesses in attracting or retaining business and industry include: slow growth rates, lack of sewer and water, lack of rail access, and proximity to city / full service industrial parks.

The Town's Future Land Use Plan Map designates adequate space for business sites. Existing land use inventory data shows 85.6 acres of land used for commercial and industry.

Langlade County Economic Analysis

Due to the amount of economic activity which takes place exclusively within the Town of Polar and the truth that the local workforce is primarily employed outside the Town, this section will look at the economic activity within Langlade County.

Economic Sectors

Overall, in 2017, there were 7,456 persons employed in the basic economic "supersectors" in Langlade County. That is a decrease of about 5 percent since 2000. **Table 6.3** displays employment by economic supersector for Langlade County for the years 2000, 2010, and 2017.

Table 6.3: Langlade County Employment by Supersector					
NAICS Sector	2000	2010	2017	2000-17 Net Change	2000-17 % Change
Natural Resources & Mining	470	437	406	-64	-13.6%
Construction	305	209	207	-98	-32.1%
Manufacturing	1,730	1,470	1,375	-355	-20.5%
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	1,922	1,869	2,103	181	9.4%
Information	*	*	54	*	*
Financial Activities	250	240	309	59	23.6%
Professional & Business Services	180	201	291	111	61.7%

Education & Health Services	1,399	1,507	1,404	5	0.4%
Leisure & Hospitality	895	763	698	-197	-22.0%
Public Administration	493	473	416	-77	-15.6%
Other Services	235	355	193	-42	-17.9%
Totals	**7,879**	**7,524**	**7,456**	**-423**	**-5.4%**

Source: WI Dept. of Workforce Development; QCEW ES202 Results; 2000, 2010 and 2017 & NCWRPC
*Data suppressed - some federal employees not reflected in totals

Between 2000 and 2017, the only four supersectors that experienced increases in employment were the Professional & Business Services; Financial Activities; Trade, Transportation, & Utilities; and the Education & Health services supersectors. In terms of total employment, the Trade, Transportation & Utilities supersector is the largest segment of the economy, followed by the Education & Health Services supersector.

It should be noted that the number of employees in certain sectors, particularly those workers engaged in agriculture, forestry & fishing, may be understated because this information utilizes Department of Workforce Development data; those who are self-employed or work in family businesses are not reflected in this data.

Labor Force Analysis

Overall, the labor force has decreased from 16,386 in 2000 to 15,912 in 2017, which represents a decrease of about 3 percent, which is less than the state's growth rate of 6 percent. **Table 6.4** displays labor force trends in Langlade County between 2000 and 2017. The labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, that are employed of searching for employment. Persons over sixteen who are students, homemakers, retired, institutionalized, or unable/willing to seek employment are not considered part of the labor force. In 2000, 9,703 Langlade County residents were employed, with the number of employed residents in Langlade County dropping to 8,872 in 2017, which represents a decrease of about 8.6 percent.

As discussed in the Demographics Chapter, Langlade County, along with the Town of Polar, has experienced a significant amount of aging (median age increased by 17.5% in Langlade County between 2000 and 2017). In 2000, about 24.8 percent of the Langlade County population was below the age of 18, while the percentage of residents ages 65 and older was 18.8 percent. By 2017, only about 18.8 percent of Langlade County residents were below the age of 18, while the percentage of residents age 65 and older grew to 22.2 percent. These population trends create issues for the expansion of the local labor force, and also help explain the decreases in Langlade County's labor force and employment totals.

Table 6.4: Langlade County Labor Force				
	2000	2010	2017	Percent Change
Population 16 years and over	16,386	16,399	15,912	-2.9%
Labor Force	10,298	10,406	9,513	-7.6%
Employed	9,703	9,622	8,872	-8.6%
Unemployed	595	784	641	7.7%
Unemployment Rate	5.80%	4.80%	4.00%	-31.0%
Participation Rate	62.80%	63.50%	59.80%	-4.8%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Forecasts

Employment forecasts are difficult to come by and not available at the town level. However, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WisDWD) prepares workforce projections by industry for its multi-county services regions. The current projections for the North Central Workforce Development cover Langlade County and include eight other counties. These projections show increases in all employment sectors except Other Services (1% decline).

The other sectors increase within a range from 0.3% (Manufacturing and Public Administration) to 21% (Information). Residents of both the Town of Polar and Langlade County travel throughout the North Central Workforce Development Region.

Tourism

Tourism is a major component in Langlade County's economy as thousands of visitors travel to the area to take advantage of the county's diversity of recreational resources such as public forest access, trails, and the many lakes within the county. In 2017, Langlade County ranked 43rd among the 72 counties in Wisconsin for total traveler expenditures. According to annual estimates prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, travelers to Langlade County spent $47.7 million in 2017, up 2.7% from 2016. This level of expenditures is estimated to directly and indirectly support 494 full-time equivalent jobs and provide over $10.9 million of resident income.

Economic Development Programs

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

Langlade County Economic Development Corporation (LCEDC): A city - county funded organization that promotes the economic development of Langlade County. The organization is comprised of area businesspersons, citizens, local government, utility company representatives, state agencies and elected officials, educational institutions and other organizations essential to the growth of Langlade County. The purpose of the LCEDC is to serve the needs of new businesses coming to the area as well as to assist existing companies.

Regional:

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

State:

Rural Economic Development Program: This program administered by Wisconsin Department of Commerce provides grants and low interest loans for small business start-ups or expansions in rural areas, such as Langlade County. Funds may be used for "soft costs" only, such as planning, engineering, ad 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.

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

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA): This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, provides immediate assistance for the cost of transportation improvements necessary for major economic development projects.

Other State Programs: Technology development grants and loans; Customized Labor Training grants and loans; and Major Economic Development Project grants and loans.

Federal:

U.S. Dept. of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA): EDA offers a public works grant program. These are administered through local units of government for the benefit of the local economy and, indirectly, private enterprise.

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

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

Goals, Objectives, & Policies

Goal 1: Expand the range of opportunities and increase local incomes.

Goal 2: Maintain the current agricultural and forest products economic base.

Goal 3: Identify opportunities for non-traditional, agriculture-related, or alternative businesses to supplement family income.

Objectives & Policies:

1. To maintain the current agricultural economic base, the Town will promote the protection of prime farmland, discourage conflicting land uses on farmland, protect the farmer's right to farm, and help provide information on agricultural programs.

2. To improve and supplement family income and expand economic opportunities, the Town will support the development of non-traditional or alternative agriculture-related businesses, including production of specialty

or niche farm products, value-added farm products, organic farming, pick-your-own, beekeeping, produce stands, poultry products, vineyards, tree farms, nurseries, orchards, agriculture-based tourism, all subject to Langlade County zoning laws and other existing regulations.

3. In addition, home based professional offices, shops, bed and breakfasts, kennels, stables, game farms and others, and cottage industries will be supported by the Town, again subject to County zoning and other rules.

4. Support the recommendations of the Langlade County Economic Development Strategy, scheduled to be completed in 2020.

5. The Town of Polar will review on a case-by-case basis the establishment and expansion of commercial and industrial uses in designated areas.

6. Promote forestry-related, value-added businesses that capitalize on the Town's productive woodlands.

Chapter Seven

Land Use

The Town of Polar is located in southern Langlade County. The Town covers an area of approximately 22,731 acres. To the north is the Town of Price, to the east is the Town of Evergreen, to the south is Menominee County and the Town or Norwood, and to the west is the Town of Antigo.

Land use is a crucial component of livability and quality of life in the community. Overall, the area has population and housing densities well below the state average, which in turn places more reliance on automobiles to get to and from work, shopping and other activities. As such, land use and the transportation network are critical to a thriving community.

Previous Plans and Studies

Comprehensive Plan 2007
In 2007, the Town adopted a comprehensive plan for the community. A variety of reasons led to the development of that plan including a concern for the community's future, to prevent land use conflicts, and to promote economic development. That comprehensive plan serves as the foundation of this update effort.

Regional Livability Plan
Land use is one of four elements included in the Regional Livability Plan, adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2015. The Land Use Assessment Report, a component of the Plan, looks in detail at the land uses through the 10-county region and identifies trends and issues facing land use. The Regional Livability Plan addresses two issues: housing density and farmland preservation. The two land use goals of the Plan are as follows:

Goal 9: Preserve and protect the region's landscape, environmental resources, and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.

Goal 10: Manage and reduce vacant land and structures.

Land Use Inventory

Current land use activity in the Town is characterized by farming in the northwest corner of the Town and scattered residential development stripped along the road

system, although a few small subdivisions have begun to form in wooded areas. This scattering of residential land use results primarily from parceling off pieces of larger forested or agricultural tracts. As the Town continues to grow, this development trend will continue and threaten to enclose interior parcels, restricting access and hindering future development.

There is some scattered commercial and industrial (primarily sand & gravel pits) development in the Town. Most residential development is spread along the roads with a concentration along STH 64 and in the area around Mueller Lake. There is a concentration of agriculture in the northwest corner of the Town, in the Antigo Flats, and scattered agriculture primarily in the southern section of the Town.

Table 7.1, below, presents the current breakdown of land-use types within the Town. The majority of the Town is woodland at about 13,250 acres or 58%. The next most significant land use type is agricultural land at 27% or about 6,166 acres. Residential use takes up only 4.0% of the Town's land area at about 908 acres. The other land uses combined use 2,407 acres or 10.6% of total land area. The **Existing Land Use Map** displays the existing land use within the Town.

Table 7.1: Existing Land Use 2015		
Land Use	**Acres**	**%**
Agriculture	6,166	27.1%
Commercial	100	0.4%
Governmental / Institutional	12	0.1%
Industrial	0	0.0%
Open Lands	1,681	7.4%
Outdoor Recreation	16	0.1%
Quarry	26	0.1%
Residential	908	4.0%
Transportation	315	1.4%
Utility	0	0.0%
Water	257	1.1%
Woodlands	13,250	58.3%
Total	22,731	100.0%

Source: NCWRPC GIS

Analysis of Trends

Land Supply and Demand

As shown by the existing land use inventory, the majority of the Town is "undeveloped" agricultural and woodlands, so the supply of land "available" for development appears to be more than adequate. However, more than a third of this undeveloped area is prime agricultural land, which should be conserved (see Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element). That leaves the woodlands category to provide the bulk of land supply for development. A portion of this undeveloped woodland area is wetland, floodplain or otherwise undevelopable. Nearly 11,500 acres remain potentially "available" after deducting this undevelopable acreage. Even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of Polar is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years.

Land Values

Table 7.2 displays the assessed land values in the Town of Polar. It is important to note that lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law programs and other exempt lands are not included in values for Table 7.2. In 2018, the assessed value of land and improvements was $79,517,500. Overall, land value per acre in the Town is valued at about $4,580 per acre. Properties classified as "Residential" have the highest value per acre followed by properties classified as "Other" and "Manufacturing".

Table 7.2: Assessed Land Value (per acre), 2018		
Land Classification	Total Value of Land and Improvements	Total Value per Acre
Residential	$58,793,600	$45,053
Commercial	$502,200	$27,900
Manufacturing	$1,059,000	$32,091
Agriculture	$1,091,400	$153
Undeveloped	$1,539,900	$680
Forest	$9,076,300	$1,941
Agricultural Forest	$1,668,700	$939
Other	$5,786,400	$42,236
Total	$79,517,500	$4,580

Source: WI Department of Revenue, NCWRPC

Opportunities for Redevelopment

There are few properties that are significantly degraded or completely abandoned in the Town. Unless a serious public nuisance situation develops, the Town feels that such matters are a private property issue. If a nuisance situation develops, the Town will rely on the County's nuisance ordinance and work with the County to remedy the situation.

There are currently is one brownfield site within the Town: Polar Manufacturing, which includes a leaking underground storage tank and a site requiring environmental repair.

Quarries have a built-in redevelopment mechanism via reclamation regulations. Most existing quarries within the Town have a number of years of life left. Reclamation to a useable state is required upon closure of any quarry.

Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

There are two main areas of land use conflict within the Town of Polar at this time. These include; agricultural activity versus residential development, and quarry activities versus residential development. This Plan seeks to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned buffers and public information and education components.

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 and manage future development of the Town.

To create the Future Land Use Plan, eight basic land use categories were created. The majority of the classifications generally correspond to the districts within the Langlade County Zoning Ordinance, to ease future implementation of the plan. Again, the classifications are not zoning districts and do not have the authority of zoning. However, the preferred land use map and classifications are intended to be used as a guide when reviewing lot splits, re-zoning requests, and revisions to the Town Zoning Map is necessary. A general description of each classification follows:

- Agricultural Areas - These lands are productive agricultural areas of prime farmland soil. These areas should be protected from non-farm residential development or other land uses that may conflict with farm operations, raise agricultural property taxes or cause lands to be permanently converted from

productive agricultural status. Exclusive agricultural designation is required to maximize State farmland tax credits.

- Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) - Portions of the Town of Polar are included in the Antigo Flats Agricultural Enterprise Area. Designation of Antigo Flats AEA identifies this area as valuable for current and future agricultural use. Eligible farmers within the Antigo Flats AEA can receive income tax credits per an agreement with DATCP. General eligibility requirements for an AEA are:

  o Five eligible land owner participants
  o All land in the proposed AEA area must be in the farmland preservation area
  o Land must be contiguous
  o Land must be primarily in agricultural use

  The primary benefit of the AEA designation is that the land is identified as important for agricultural preservation. This designation provides reassurance about future farmland use and may encourage investment in agriculture.

- Commercial- Areas where more intensive commercial activity may take place.

- Residential - Areas where new residential development may occur. The forestry areas may also be designated for rural estate type of residential development.

- Forestry Areas – These areas are generally available for forestry and private outdoor recreational uses such as hunting. The forestry areas may also be designated for rural estate type of residential development when applicable.

- Preservation & Open Space - These areas are primarily wetland and floodplain areas that should be protected from development due to their sensitive nature and the environmental benefits they provide.

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

- Governmental/Public/Institutional - Identifies existing or planned government/public/institutional facilities within the Town, including recreational facilities and the Town Hall.

Using the previous future land use plan and examining the existing land use, the various land use changes, and demographic trends the new map was created. The goal was to produce a generalized land use plan map to guide the Town's growth in the next decade.

Land Use Regulations

General Zoning

Zoning within the Town of Polar is currently regulated by the Langlade County Code of Ordinances.

Shoreland Zoning

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

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. See the **Langlade County Farmland Preservation Plan** for more information.

Forest Crop Law (FCL) and Managed Forest Law (MFL)

In Wisconsin, over 2.5 million acres are enrolled under the FCL and the MFL programs. Land set aside under the FCL required at least 40 acres in one quarter-quarter section and the MFL requires at least 20 acres (as of October 216) of contiguous forest land. Landowners may close to the public up to 320 acres of their forest lands set aside under the MFL. The remaining program acres must be open to public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing, and cross-country skiing. Landowners choose a 25 or 50 year contract and pay an Acreage Share Amount as part of their tax bill in lieu of taxes. Voluntary participation in these programs requires that landowners follow "sound forestry practices" as prescribed in a formal management plan, or a management commitment. Some activities not permitted under the law include motorized vehicles, permanent tree stands, picking berries or mushrooms, and trapping.

Land Use Programs

A number of different programs directly and indirectly affect land use within the Town. The principle land use programs include the County General and Shoreland Zoning ordinances, the County Subdivision and Platting Ordinance. The Town is generally satisfied with the County regulations and the way that they are administered. Input is sought from the Town. The County is sensitive to the wishes of the Town and tends not to approve applications that are not favored by the Town.

Land Use Issues

In discussions with the Planning Commission two basic, and inter-related land use issues were identified. The first is the need to balance to control development with the rights of property owners to use their property as they see fit. Put another way, this is a question of closing the door on all further growth or leaving it wide open for whatever development might happen. One advantage of clear development regulations is that developers and landowners know in advance what is expected of them if they intend to develop land.

The other issue is the division of large tracts of land into smaller lots, sometimes known as "parcelization". This can take the form of farms being split up for residential lots. This has been a longstanding problem in many agricultural areas and can actually be the highest and best use for some marginal farmland, but the intermingling of residential with agricultural uses can lead to conflicts that can render agricultural land less viable for farming. It can also take the form of large parcels that have been managed for timber broken into smaller parcels that do not lend themselves to timber production. Since residents expressed a strong desire to protect environmental and rural values in the survey distributed as part of the planning process, and since farmland and large tracts of forest are an essential part of what makes Polar an attractive place to live, it is important to implement policies that will prioritize the areas where development will be encouraged and other areas where farming and timber production will continue.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain orderly planned growth which promotes the health, safety and general welfare of Town residents and makes efficient use of land and efficient use of public services, facilities and tax dollars.

    Objectives and Policies:

    1. The Town will maintain a long-range Land Use and Development plan,

which will serve as a guide for future land use and zoning decisions. New development will be permitted based on consideration of this Plan, as well as other Town, County, Regional, and State plans and ordinances.

2. The Town will actively participate in zoning and subdivision review decisions at the County level, which affect the Town. This includes zoning amendment and subdivision requests acted on by the County Water and Land Use Planning Committee, as well as variance and conditional use requests acted on by the County Zoning Board of Adjustment. This plan will be cited as the basis for all such actions including "disapproval" of proposed zoning amendments under s.59.97(5)3.

3. Small or medium scale commercial development intended to serve local needs will be encouraged.

4. All industrial development proposals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

5. The Town will identify and follow-up on areas of visible "junk" accumulation in accordance with Langlade County Ordinance 3-94 regulating storage and disposal of automobiles, tires, junk, and other misc. waste.

Goal 2: Promote development which minimizes groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems and other sources, and which preserves the rural character of the Town.

Objectives and Policies:

1. The location of new residential development will be restricted from areas in the Town shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, loss of prime farmland, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.

2. Lot sizes of 2 acres (or greater) will be required for new residential development, in order to preserve the Town's rural character and to protect groundwater resources from the impacts of higher density development.

3. Buffer areas will be used as shields to lessen the impacts of potentially conflicting land use types located in relatively close proximity. Landscape buffers should also be used.

Goal 3: Preserve the productive farmland and forest in the Town for long-term use and maintain agriculture and forestry as important economic activities and a way-of-

life.

Objectives and Policies:

1. Marginal lands, not suited to agricultural or forestry uses, should be the focus of development activity in the Town. Land best suited to agriculture or timber production should remain in that use, to the extent possible, and new development should be steered toward land less well adapted to productive use.

2. Nonfarm development, particularly subdivisions, will be encouraged in areas away from intensive agricultural activities, in order to minimize farm - nonfarm conflicts due to noise, odors, nitrates in well water, pesticides, farm/vehicle conflicts on roadways, late night plowing, etc.

3. The Town will consider proposals involving the keeping or raising of livestock or other animals, fish, and fowl on a case-by-case basis in relation to the potential impact on water quality and neighboring land uses, consistent with Wis.Stat. s.93.90.

Chapter Eight

Intergovernmental Cooperation

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.

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. However, 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 financial condition*
- *Opportunity to reduce costs by working together*
- *Elimination of duplication of services*
- *Population settlement patterns and population mobility*
- *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.

The Town of Polar cooperates with neighboring municipalities, the County and the State on a variety of matters ranging from delivery of services to coordination of planning along common boundaries. The Town recognizes that cooperation with its neighbors can improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of services, foster coordinated development and enhance its overall quality of life.

Intergovernmental Relationships

School District

The Unified School District of Antigo serves most of Langlade County including the Town of Polar, as well as parts of Marathon and Shawano Counties. The District consists of 3 elementary schools, 1 middle school and 1 high school. There are also 2 private schools. The District currently serves about 3,000 students and has approximately 375 faculty members.

The main form of interaction with the School District is through payment of property taxes, which in part help to fund the District's operations. The Town has little participation in issues pertaining to administration or siting of new facilities.

Adjacent Local Governments

Town of Antigo

The most significant inter-governmental agreement for the Town of Polar is with the Town of Antigo Volunteer Fire Department to provide fire protection, rescue and first responder service. The Fire Department houses two pieces of equipment in a garage attached to the Town Hall. The Town of Polar also contracts with the City of Antigo for ambulance and EMS service.

Town of Antigo has actively discussed potential planned land use along its common border with the Town of Neva. One area of concern was establishment of a designated or preferred area for the location of confined animal feeding operations (CAFO). Each Town will establish such an area along their common border. This will maintain land use compatibility across their boundaries and "shelter" more residential areas of each town. The northwest corner of Polar, within the Antigo Flats, is already home to such a CAFO and it would be prudent for the Town to involve itself in any process undertaken by adjoining Towns to study these operations can be regulated, especially in light of the recently enacted State rules governing CAFOs.

Surrounding Townships

The Town of Polar is bordered by the Towns of Price to the north, Evergreen to the east, Norwood to the south and Antigo (as noted) to the west. These Towns have a history of meeting when issues of mutual concern need to be addressed. The quarterly meeting of the Langlade unit of the Wisconsin Towns Association provides another opportunity for adjoining towns to discuss areas of mutual concern and share ideas. The Town shares part of its southern boundary with Menominee County, which is also the Menominee Indian Reservation.

City of Antigo

Although not directly adjacent, the Town of Polar contracts with the City of Antigo for ambulance service.

Langlade County

Langlade 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 Highways, Sheriff, and Zoning.

The County Highway Department maintains and plows County, state and federal highways within the Town, and the Town also contracts with the Highway Department for maintenance and plowing it Town Roads. The County Sheriff provides protective services through period patrols and on-call 911 response. The Sheriff also manages the 911 dispatch center, not only for police protection, but ambulance/EMS response and dispatching the Town Fire Department. The County Zoning Department administers zoning in the Town, as well as providing land records and land conservation services.

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

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was formed under s.60.0309 Wis. Stats. as a voluntary association of governments within a ten

county area. Langlade County is a member of the NCWRPC, which qualifies the Town of Polar for low cost local planning assistance. Typical functions of the NCWRPC include (but are not limited to) comprehensive, transportation, economic development, intergovernmental and geographic information systems (GIS) planning and services.

The NCWRPC has prepared plans for the Town of Antigo, Neva and Rolling, as well as, a county-wide economic development strategy, county outdoor recreation plan (w/ on-going 5-yr updates), the Langlade County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, road rating assistance, and various GIS project assistance. The NCWRPC has written or assisted with numerous grants for the County and various units.

Currently, the NCWRPC is assisting Langlade County with the following planning projects: County Comprehensive Plan update, Farmland Preservation Plan update, Outdoor Recreation Plan update, All-Hazard Mitigation Plan update and GIS assistance including rural addressing (E911). All of these projects will directly include or indirectly affect the Town of Polar.

State and Federal Government

The 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 WisDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland and other wildlife habitat areas, while WisDOT is responsible for the planning and development of state highways and other multi-modal transportation systems. State agencies make a number of grant and aid programs available to local units of government like the Town of Polar. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also a number of mandates passed down from the state which the Town must comply with such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads.

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

Existing/Potential Intergovernmental Conflicts

The following are existing and potential intergovernmental conflicts identified in the Polar planning area:

- ✓ Regulation of CAFO operations within the Town.

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

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

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

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

Issues

There are currently no intergovernmental related issues that the Town foresees at this time.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Seek mutually beneficial cooperation with all levels of government.

Objectives and Policies:

1. Investigate cost-sharing or contracting with neighboring towns and Langlade County to provide more efficient service or public utilities.

2. Investigate joint operation or consolidation when considering expanded or new services or facilities.

3. Work with Langlade County on the development of an All Hazards Mitigation Plan and a County Comprehensive Plan.

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 Polar. 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.

Action Plan Recommended to Implement the Comprehensive Plan:

Recommendation 1: Plan Commission -

It is incumbent upon the Town Board that once the Plan is approved, it will be used to guide decisions that affect development in the Town.

The Town of Polar Plan Commission is to review the Plan's effectiveness on an regular basis, and make a comprehensive review of the Plan every five years.

The primary implementation tool for this Plan is the Langlade County Zoning Ordinance, which provides the underlying regulatory framework that supports many of the Plan's policies. Currently the Town Board reviews local zoning petitions and forwards their recommendation to Langlade County for consideration. Although the County makes the decision on the zoning petition, the Town has veto authority over zoning changes approved at the county level. It is recommended that eventually the Polar Plan Commission be given responsibility for reviewing zoning applications and proposed land uses and for making formal recommendations to the Town Board. This would relieve political pressure on the Town Board related to zoning decisions and add credibility to Town recommendations that are forwarded to the County. In addition, the Plan Commission would be most familiar with the Polar Comprehensive Plan and better able to focus on land use issues coming before the Town. This is consistent with a large number of towns across Wisconsin.

Also recommended is that a standard form be used for recording Plan Commission zoning recommendations to the Town Board and Town Board zoning recommendations to the County, including all reasons for the recommendation and each member's vote on the matter, and that it be attached to the original zoning petition and also copied for Plan Commission records.

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

Recommendation 2: Intergovernmental Cooperation -

- ✓ Work with Langlade County and adjacent towns (Neva and Antigo) to develop a county-wide confined animal feeding operation ordinance that meets State Criteria.

- ✓ Work with Langlade County to develop and implement an All Hazards Mitigation Plan for reducing the impacts of natural disasters on the Town and County.

- ✓ Continue to build on the initial framework established in the Inter-governmental Cooperation Elemnt of this Plan

Recommendation 3: Information and Education -

Copies of this Plan should be made available to the public and all materials, maps, programs and information mentioned in the Plan should be assembled at the Polar Town Hall, available for anyone to review at any time.   In addition, the same information should be made available on the internet.

Plan Review and Update

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

- ✓ Appropriate revision should be made to bring decision-making back in line with Plan goals and policies

- ✓ The goals and policies themselves should be reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and worthwhile

- ✓ New implementation tools such as a local land division ordinance or building permit/site plan ordinance should consider gaining more control over land use decisions.

Although a comprehensive plan review every 10 years is required by the State, it is recommended here that a comprehensive review of this Plan by the Plan Commission should take place every 5 years, and that statistical information should be updated when available. An essential characteristic of any planning program is that it reflects the desires of the Town's citizens.

Plan Amendment Procedure

Amendments to this Plan may include minor changes to Plan text or maps or major changes resulting from periodic review. Frequent changes to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the same process used to adopt the Plan will also be used to amend it. Specifically:

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

The Plan Commission prepares the specific text or map amendment being considered, receives public comment and votes to recommend approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment, by resolution to the Town Board.

A copy of the proposed Plan amendment is sent to all affected government units, Langlade County in particular.

Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town Board public hearing on the proposed changes.

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

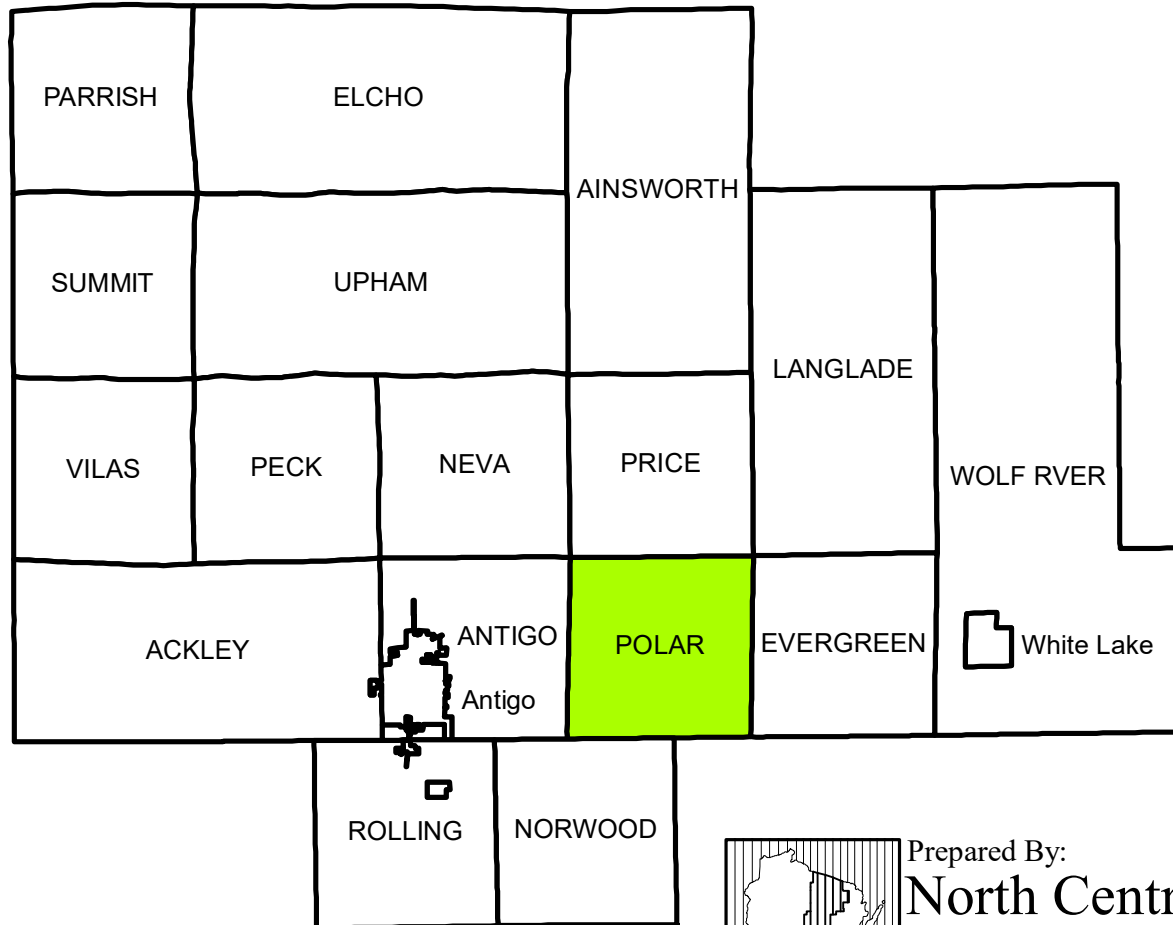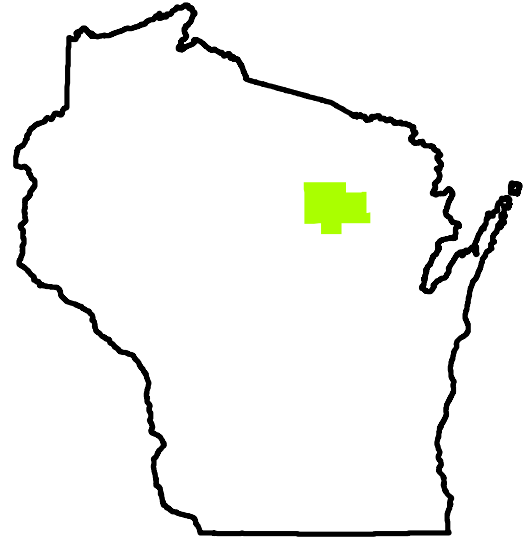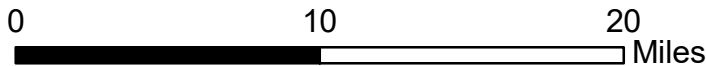Any approved changes are sent to affected government units, Langlade County in particular.
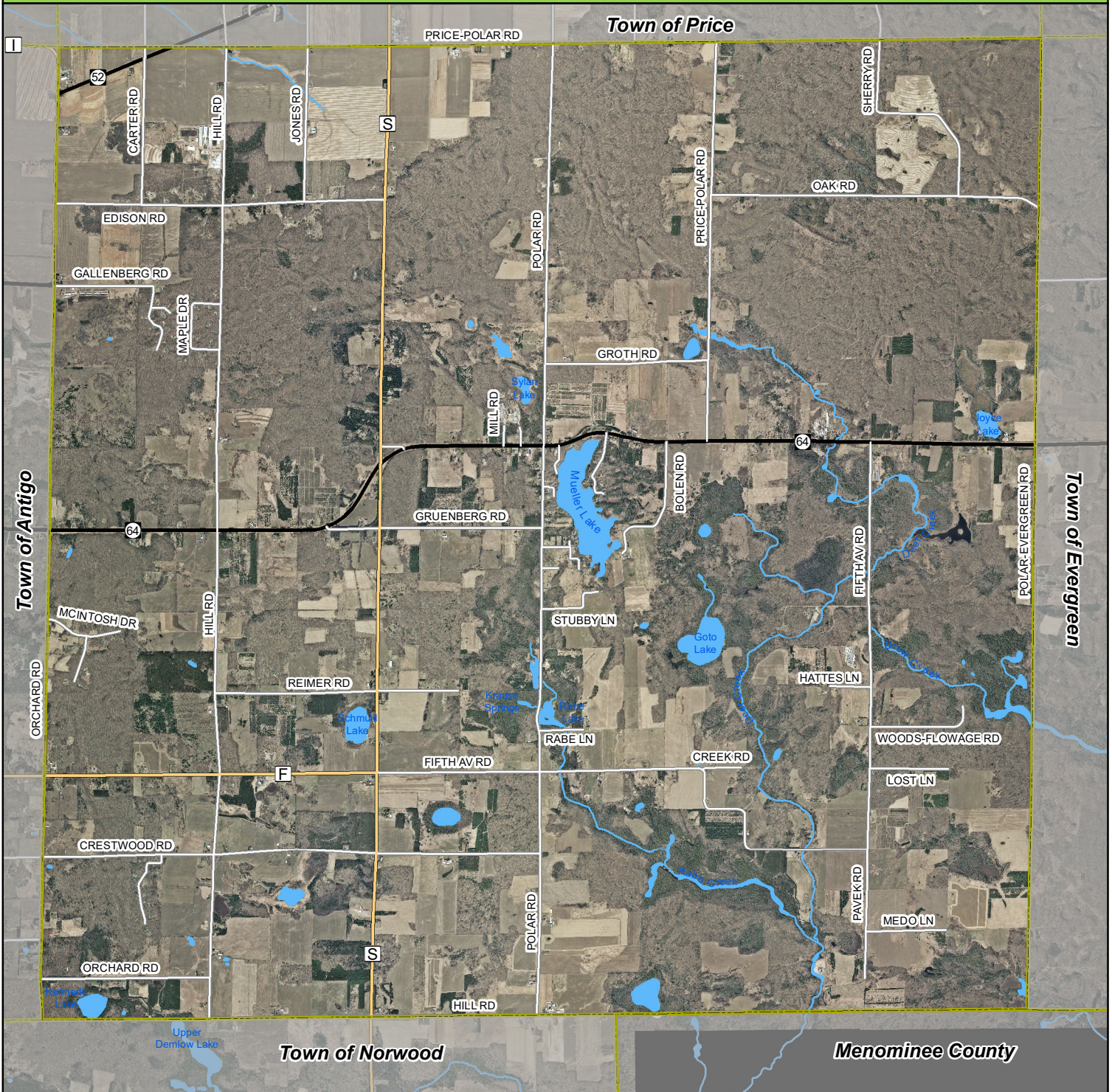
Maps

Town of Polar
Langlade County, WI

Locational Map Map 1

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Langlade Co, WI DOT

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

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POLAR

EVERGREEN

White Lake

ROLLING

NORWOOD

Town of Price

PRICE-POLAR RD

Town of Price

SHERRY RD

CARTER RD

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OAK RD

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PRICE-POLAR RD

GALLENBERG RD

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MAPLE DR

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Sylan Lake

MILL RD

Joyce Lake

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Town of Antigo

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GRUENBERG RD

Mueller Lake

BOLEN RD

FIFTH AV RD

Town of Evergreen

POLAR-EVERGREEN RD

STUBBY LN

McINTOSH DR

HILL RD

Goto Lake

HATTES LN

REIMER RD

Schmuth Lake

Krause Spring

RABE LN

WOODS-FLOWAGE RD

ORCHARD RD

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Upper Demlow Lake

Town of Norwood

Menominee County

Minor Civil Divisions

State Highways

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North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

NCWRPC

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Town of Price

PRICE-POLAR RD

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CARTER RD

HILL RD

JONES RD

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Springbrook Creek

SHERRY RD

EDISON RD

OAK RD

PRICE-POLAR RD

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GALLENBERG RD

MAPLE DR

GROTH RD

MILL RD

Sylan Lake

Joyce Lake

64

Mueller Lake

BOLEN RD

Deer Creek

Town of Antigo

64

GRUENBERG RD

West Branch Wolf River

FIFTH AV RD

POLAR-EVERGREEN RD

Town of Evergreen

MCINTOSH DR

HILL RD

STUBBY LN

Goto Lake

Drew Creek

Deer Creek

HATTES LN

REIMER RD

Krause Springs

WOODS-FLOWAGE RD

ORCHARD RD

Schmuh Lake

Rabe Lake

RABE LN

CREEK RD

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FIFTH AV RD

PAVEK RD

CRESTWOOD RD

POLAR RD

Rabe Creek

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ORCHARD RD

Kennedy Lake

HILL RD

Red River

Upper Demlow Lake

Town of Norwood

Menominee County

Legend

——	Minor Civil Divisions	∿	Contours 10ft
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Town of Price

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Sylan Lake

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Joyce Lake

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Mueller Lake

BOLEN RD

FIFTH AV RD

Deer Creek

POLAR-EVERGREEN RD

GRUENBERG RD

Town of Antigo

64

STUBBY LN

Goto Lake

HATTES LN

Drew Creek

MCINTOSH DR

HILL RD

Town of Evergreen

ORCHARD RD

REIMER RD

Krause Springs

Rabe Lake

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Deer Creek

WOODS-FLOWAGE RD

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CRESTWOOD RD

PAVEK RD

Rabe Creek

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POLAR RD

HILL RD

Kennedy Lake

Upper Demlow Lake

Town of Norwood

Menominee County

Legend

- — Minor Civil Divisions
- — State Highways
- — County Highways
- — Local Roads
- Water
- Boat Launch
- Communication Towers
- Dams
- Substations
- Gartzke Flowage Trails
- Cemetery
- Non-Metallic Mines
- Recycling Center
- Town Hall/Fire Dept
- High Voltage Powerline
- Langlade County Forest
- Rabes Lake Fishery Area
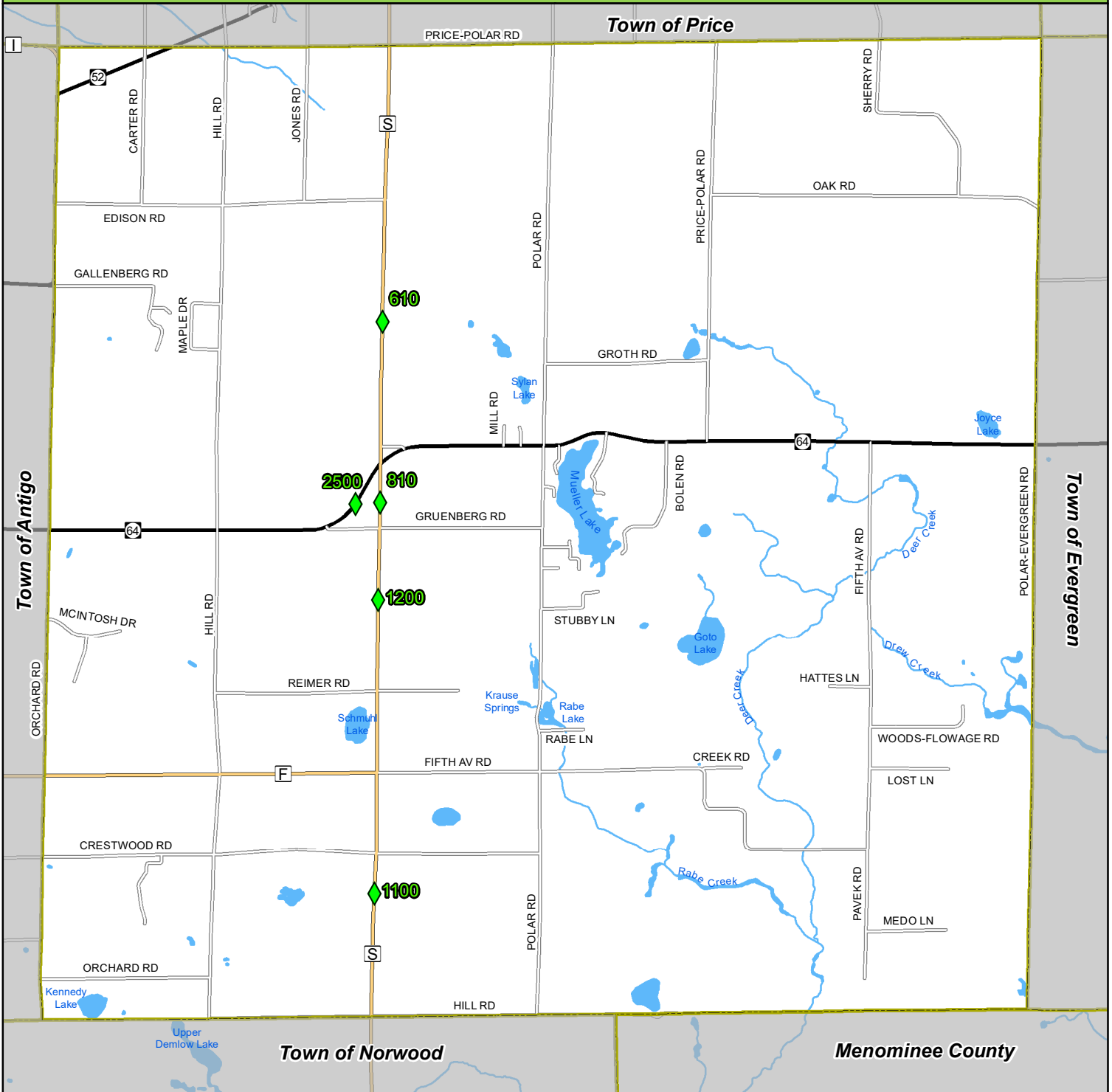- Statewide Spring Ponds
- Woods Flowage Fishery Area

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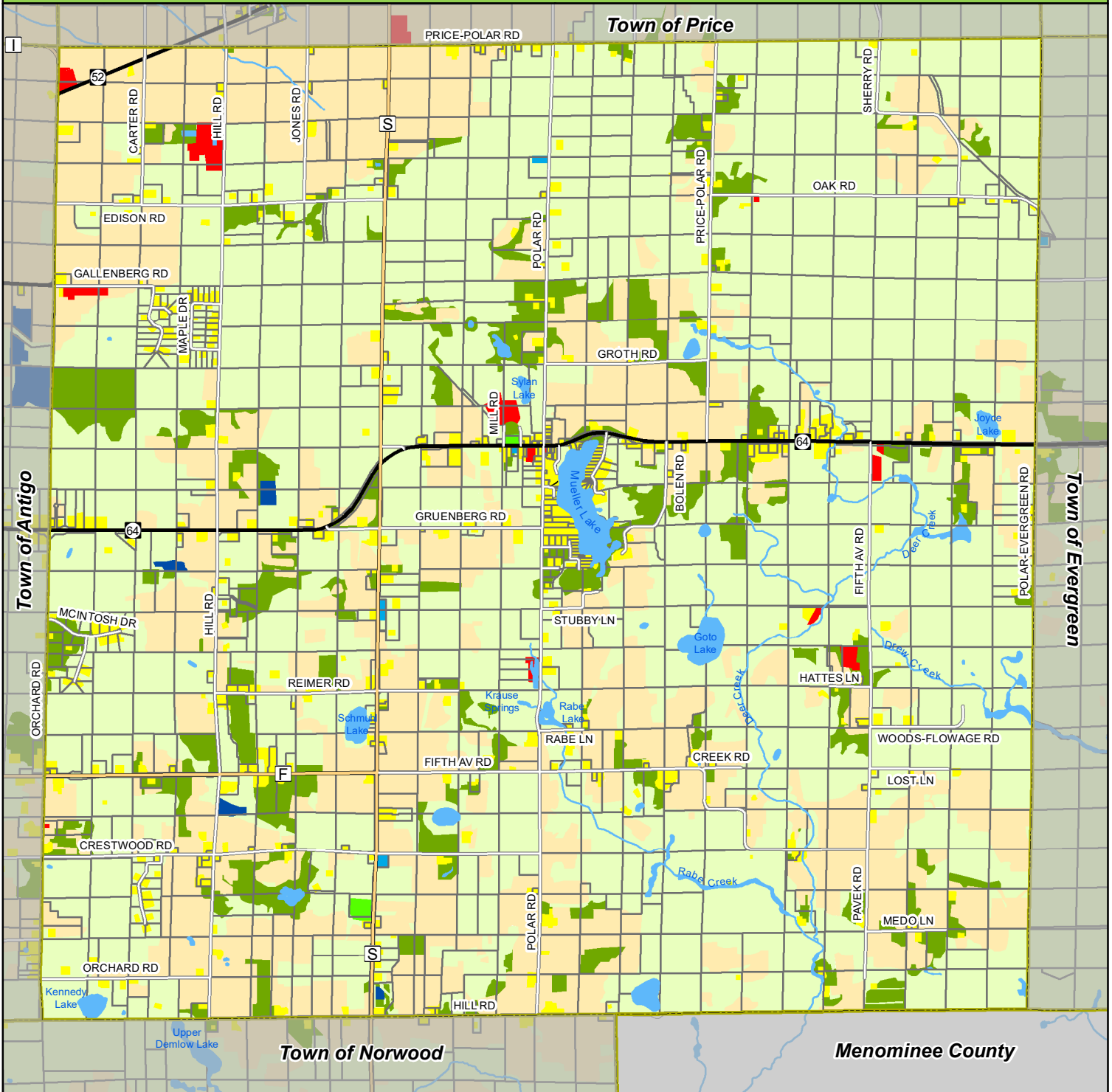
Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, 2015 NAIP

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

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NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

NCWRPC

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Town of Price

PRICE-POLAR RD

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CARTER RD

HILL RD

JONES RD

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SHERRY RD

PRICE-POLAR RD

POLAR RD

OAK RD

EDISON RD

GALLENBERG RD

MAPLE DR

610

GROTH RD

Sylan Lake

MILL RD

Joyce Lake

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Town of Antigo

2500   810

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GRUENBERG RD

Mueller Lake

BOLEN RD

FIFTH AV RD

Deer Creek

Polar-Evergreen RD

Town of Evergreen

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MCINTOSH DR

HILL RD

STUBBY LN

Goto Lake

Deer Creek

Drew Creek

HATTES LN

ORCHARD RD

REIMER RD

Schmuhl Lake

Krause Springs

Rabe Lake

RABE LN

CREEK RD

WOODS-FLOWAGE RD

LOST LN

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FIFTH AV RD

CRESTWOOD RD

Rabe Creek

PAVEK RD

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POLAR RD

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ORCHARD RD

Kennedy Lake

HILL RD

Upper Demlow Lake

Town of Norwood

Menominee County

Legend

Minor Civil Divisions

State Highways

County Highways

Local Roads

Water

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Town of Price

PRICE-POLAR RD

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GALLENBERG RD

MAPLE DR

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GROTH RD

Sylan Lake

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Joyde Lake

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Town of Antigo

GRUENBERG RD

Mueller Lake

BOLEN RD

Deer Creek

POLAR-EVERGREEN RD

Town of Evergreen

MCINTOSH DR

STUBBY LN

Goto Lake

Deer Creek

Drew Creek

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ORCHARD RD

HILL RD

REIMER RD

Krause Springs

Rabe Lake

WOODS-FLOWAGE RD

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FIFTH AV RD

FIFTH AV RD

Rabel Creek

PAVEK RD

CRESTWOOD RD

MEDO LN

POLAR RD

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ORCHARD RD

Kennedy Lake

HILL RD

Upper Demlow Lake

Town of Norwood

Menominee County

Legend

— Minor Civil Divisions
— State Highways
— County Highways
— Local Roads
☐ Parcels
Agriculture
Commercial
Governmental / Institutional
Industrial
Open Lands
Outdoor Recreation
Quarry
Residential
Transportation
Water
Woodlands

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North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

NCWRPC

Town of Price

PRICE-POLAR RD

Town of Antigo

Town of Evergreen

Town of Norwood

Menominee County

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CARTER RD
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JONES RD
EDISON RD
GALLENBERG RD
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Mueller Lake
BOLEN RD
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Joyce Lake
POLAR-EVERGREEN RD
GRUENBERG RD
STUBBY LN
Goto Lake
Drew Creek
HATTES LN
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REIMER RD
Krause Springs
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Schmuh Lake
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PAVEK RD
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Rabe Creek
ORCHARD RD
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Kennedy Lake
HILL RD
Upper Demlow Lake

Legend

- — · — Minor Civil Divisions
- —— State Highways
- —— County Highways
- — Local Roads
- Water
- Parcels
- Agricultural Areas
- Commercial
- Forestry Areas
- Governmental / Public / Institutional
- Industrial
- Preservation & Open Space
- Residential
- Water

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Appendix A
Public Participation Plan

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

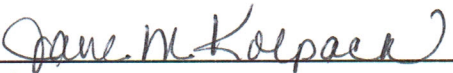THE TOWN OF POLAR DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

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.

I, NAME, Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a Town Board meeting, held at the Town Hall on the 15th day of May, 2019, at 5 :00 p.m.
21

Jane M Kolpack
Clerk

Appendix B
Adoption Resolution

PLAN COMMISSION RESOLUTION

Town of Polar, Langlade County, Wisconsin

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

Adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan.

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

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

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

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

Adopted this ___ day of _____, 2019.

Paul Schuman   _Jim Hane_

Jon W Firs   _Donald Washath_

Attest: _Jane Kolpack_
Jane Kolpack, Plan Commission Clerk

Appendix C
Adoption Ordinance

ORDINANCE FOR PLAN ADOPTION

ORDINANCE # 1910

Town of Polar, Langlade County, Wisconsin

SECTION 1 – TITLE/PURPOSE
The title of this ordinance is the Town of Polar Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Polar 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 Polar 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 Polar 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 Polar, 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 Polar 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 Polar has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every state 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 Polar, 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 Polar Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING
The Town of Polar, 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 Polar, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Polar 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.
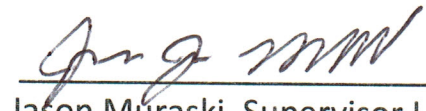
SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

The town clerk shall properly post of publish this ordinance as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.
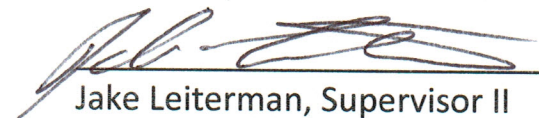
Adopted this __17th__ day of __October__ 20__19__.

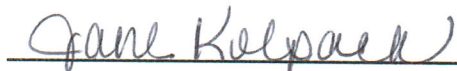_____
Nathan Walrath, Chairman

_____
Jason Muraski, Supervisor I

_____
Jake Leiterman, Supervisor II

Attest:

_____
Jane Kolpack, Clerk

Town of Polar Comprehensive Plan 2019