

Town of Big Flats
Adams County, Wisconsin
Comprehensive Plan 2023



Acknowledgements

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This plan was developed by the Town of Big Flats Plan Commission with assistance from the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC)

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Chapter 1: Demographics

This is the first of nine chapters in the Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan. This chapter reviews the demographics of the Town of Big Flats including trends, forecasts, and comparisons for some basic demographics including population, households, employment, age, education, and income. Forecasts typically cover the 20-year planning period, except in cases where the only acceptable data sources had lesser time periods for their forecasts. Official data sources include the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) Demographic Service Center and the U.S. Census Bureau.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Big Flats is an eight-mile by six-mile town with 48 sections located in the center of northern Adams County, Wisconsin. The Town borders the Town of Monroe to the west, the Towns of Strongs Prairie and Preston to the South, the Town of Colburn to the East, and the Town of Rome to the north. In 2021, the Town of Big Flats had an estimated population of 925. Most of the Town consists of lowland hardwoods and conifer swamps with some agriculture and low-density housing. See Maps 1 and 2 for location and planning area.

Previous Comprehensive Plan

The last Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan was adopted in August 2013. Top issues identified through a survey at the time include cleaning up properties and enforcing ordinances, encouraging small business and job growth, and protecting the environment, especially for groundwater and surface water quality. Other issues included addressing outdoor recreation, high taxes, new subdivisions, and preserving the Town's rural character.

Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan explores potential issues that may have an impact upon the development of the Town over a 20-year planning period. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law – 66.1001 – plans must be updated every ten years. The planning process for this comprehensive plan began as a public survey in late 2021, see Attachment F for details. In early 2022, the Town Plan Commission began a review of the survey and past plans and held a variety of Plan Commission meetings throughout 2023 to prepare the plan. A final Planning Commission meeting was held in Summer 2023 to review the final plan and recommend adoption of the plan by the Town Board, which adopted the plan September 2023.

Public Participation

An important part of any planning process is public involvement. Public involvement provides the citizens of the town an opportunity to express their views, ideas, and opinions on issues that they

would like addressed regarding the future development of their town. Local officials use this input to guide policies and decisions with greater awareness of the public’s desires and consensus. See the adopted Public Participation Plan in Appendix A. The Town of Big Flats posted all Plan Commission meetings to invite the public and held a Public Hearing to collect public input.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population and Households

Historical Trends

Table 1 shows 2021 population for the Town, county, and state. The Town grew by 39.3 percent between 1990 and 2010, but the population decreased by 9.1 percent since 2010. Households also grew between 1990 and 2010 (51 percent) but decreased since 2010 (1.4 percent). Though Big Flats’ population and total households grew faster than the county and the state between 1990 and 2010, its population and number of households decreased faster than the county and the state since 2010. It is important to note that Big Flats’ household size is consistently similar to the county’s but smaller than the state’s averages.

Table 1: Demographic Change 1990-2021						
Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2021	1990-2010 % Change	2010-2021 % Change
Total Population						
T. Big Flats	731	946	1,018	925	39.3%	-9.1%
Adams County	15,682	19,920	20,875	20,505	33.1%	-1.8%
State	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,895,908	16.3%	3.7%
Total Households						
T. Big Flats	294	402	444	438	51.0%	-1.4%
Adams County	5,972	7,900	8,666	8,783	45.1%	1.4%
State	1,822,118	2,084,556	2,279,768	2,449,970	25.1%	7.5%
Average Household Size						
T. Big Flats	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.1	-8.0%	-8.3%
Adams County	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.2	-8.3%	0.0%
State	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	-6.9%	-3.3%

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010; ACS 2021

The average household size has been decreasing steadily across the nation over the past few decades. This is due to a multitude of factors including longer life spans, fewer people having children, and people having fewer children.

Projections

Figure 1 shows population projections for the Town of Big Flats and Table 2 compares projected population in the Town to Adams County, based on projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The Wisconsin DOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections. These projections are based on historical population and household growth in the community, with more recent years given a greater weight. The Town of Big Flats is expected to experience an increase in population through 2040 at a rate of 30.3 percent, though the population is expected to peak in 2035 at 1,220. Adams County is expected to experience population increase at a rate of 13.3 percent through 2040.

Figures 1 and 2 and Table 3 include household projections completed by the WDOA. The number of households is expected to increase 37.2 percent for the Town of Big Flats and increase 27.2 percent for Adams County through 2040. This means that the number of households are expected to increase through 2040, even though the total population will decrease slightly. There is an expected higher percent increase in the Town’s population compared to the county, but more total households countywide than in the Town in 2040. Household size has decreased since 1990 and this trend is expected to continue, with the 2021 average household size being 2.11 for the Town of Big Flats and 2.20 for Adams County. A growth in households and decrease in household size reflects the increasing number of empty nesters and retirees as well as fewer children in younger families, which is occurring throughout the state and the country as well.

Table 2: Population Projections, 2025-2040						
	2021	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2021-2040
T. Big Flats	925	1,165	1,210	1,220	1,205	30.3%
Adams Co.	20,505	23,045	23,750	23,700	23,230	13.3%

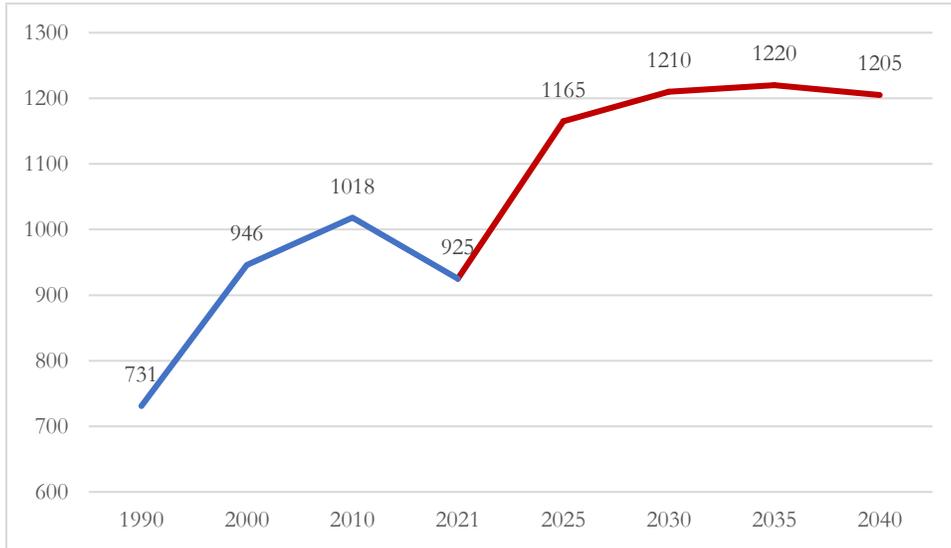
Source: ACS 2021, DOA 2025-2040

Table 3: Household Projections, 2025-2040						
	2021	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2021-2040
T. Big Flats	438	557	586	600	601	37.2%
Adams Co.	8,783	10,555	11,045	11,198	11,170	27.2%

Source: ACS 2021, DOA 2025-2040

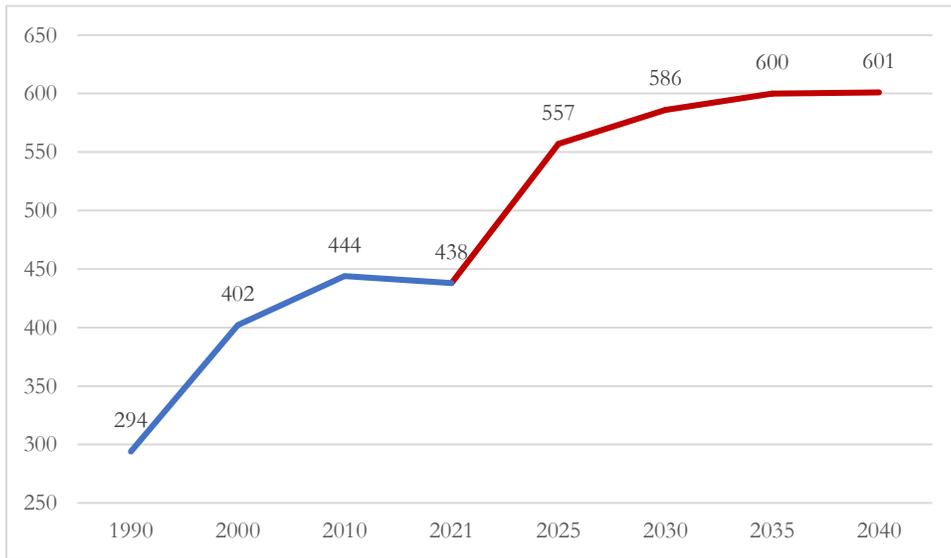
It is important to consider that American Community Survey data is self-reported, and therefore, the Town’s population may be higher in 2021 than 925. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) estimates a population of 951 for 2022, and the U.S. Census counted 948 residents in 2020. Additionally, the Town recorded 690 registered voters in 2023. Therefore, the Town Plan Commission estimates that the population may be as high as 1,100 in 2023.

Figure 1: Town of Big Flats Past and Projected Population



Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, & 2010; ACS 2021; DOA 2025-2040

Figure 2: Town of Big Flats Past and Projected Households



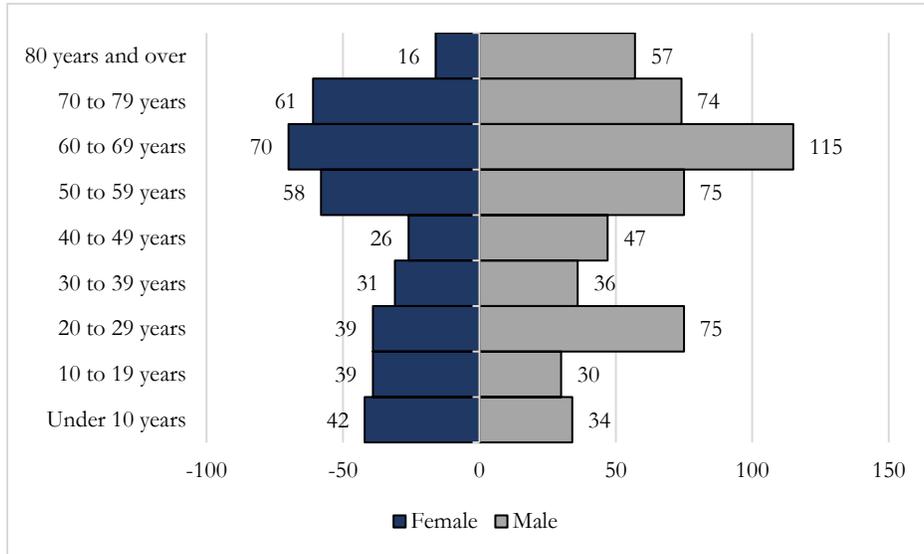
Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, & 2010; ACS 2021; DOA 2025-2040

Age

Figures 3 and 4 compare the distribution of age groups for the Town of Big Flats and Adams County. Adams County's population pyramid has a higher share of residents in older age ranges, with a considerable population between age 50 and 79. Stationary population pyramids like this are characteristic of areas with low birth rates and long life expectancies. This is indicative of slow, steady population growth. In contrast, the Town of Big Flats has a more varied population distribution by

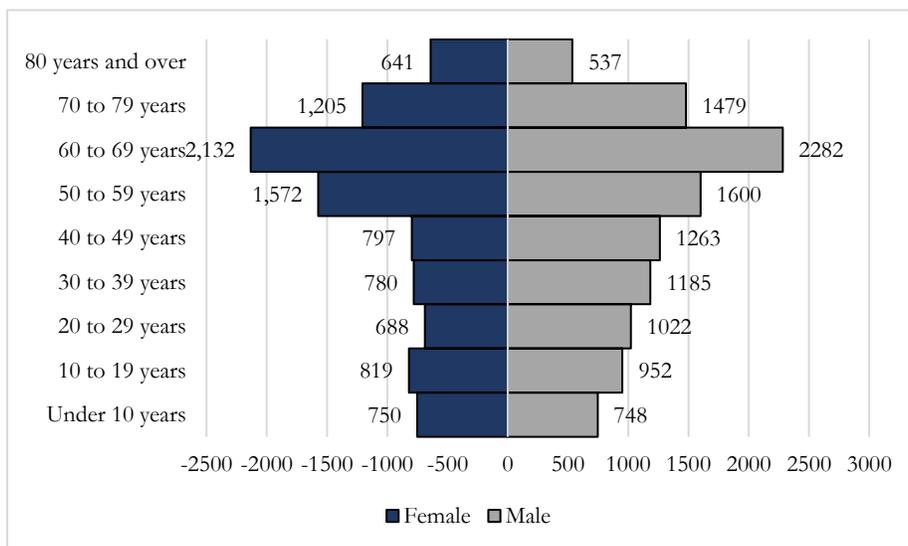
both age and gender, partially due to its smaller population resulting in a smaller sample size. But since the share of those between ages 30 to 49 often is a large share of a community’s labor force, the relatively small size of this age group could impact the availability of workers to fill jobs. Most males and females in the Town are in the 60–69-year-old age category, with over 50% more males than females in this age group. In 2021, the median age in the Town was 54.5 years, up from 48.5 in 2010. The county’s median age was also 54.5 in 2021, up from 47.7 in 2010. The median age for both the Town and the county was significantly higher than the state which had a median age of 40.1 in 2021.

Figure 3: Big Flats Age-Sex Pyramid



Source: ACS 2021

Figure 4: Adams County Age-Sex Pyramid



Source: ACS 2021

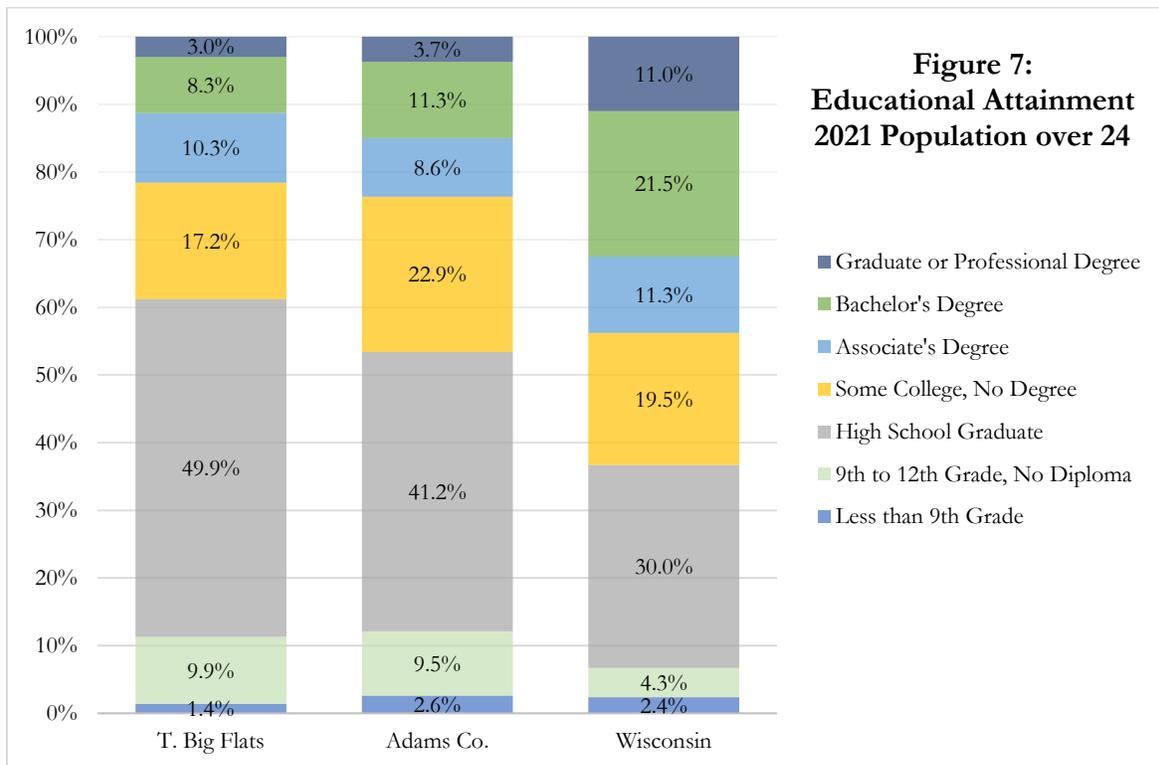
Population distribution is important to the planning process. Two age groups are of note, those 17 years of age and younger and those 65 years of age or older. These are often referred to as dependent populations, but each has different needs. For example, the younger group requires schools and childcare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

From 2010 to 2021, the population of 17 and younger group in Big Flats increased from 14.5 percent of the population to 15.7 percent of the population according to the American Community Survey. The population percentage of those in the 65 and older group increased from 20.9 percent in 2010 to 33.3 percent in 2021. Due to longer life expectancy and the size of the Baby Boomer generation, the 65 and older age group is expected to continue to increase in size. The trend is occurring at the state and national levels and to an even greater degree within the rural Wisconsin counties. This population trend whereby older age categories increase significantly while younger age categories decline will impact the future labor supply, school system, and health care industry at the national, state, and local levels.

Education and Income Levels

Education

Figure 7 compares educational attainment of those in the Town of Big Flats to the county and the state. In 2021, 88.7 percent of town residents ages 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was 0.8 percent higher than the county average and 4.6 percent lower than the state average.



Source: ACS 2021

In 2021, 11.3 percent of Town residents ages 25 years and over had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. This was lower than Adams County at 15 percent and lower than the state at 32.5 percent. Education and how it relates to economic development will be discussed in the economic development chapter.

Income

Median household income and per capita income are two commonly used measures of income. Median household income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, meaning half of all households have income above that amount, and half have income below that amount. Per capita income is the average income earned per person.

The tables below show median and per capita income, and the median household income for Town of Big Flats residents was \$37,500 in 2021. Table 4 shows that this was considerably lower than Adams County and the State of Wisconsin incomes. In 2010, the Town of Big Flats median income was lower than the county and state, and incomes in the Town have not grown as much as the county or the State since then. When adjusted for inflation, the median household income in the Town has risen 2.82 percent between 2010 and 2021. This was behind the county at 30.1 percent and the state at 30.1 percent but could be a result of the large share of older households retiring and living on fixed income.

Table 5 illustrates that income per capita in the Town of Big Flats was \$27,428 in 2021, which was lower than the county and the state, whereas incomes in 2010 between the three were more similar. Per capita income in the Town has risen at a rate of 29.5 percent from 2010 to 2021. This rate of increase is lower than both the state at 39.8 percent and the county at 33.8 percent. According to usinflationcalculator.com, there has been a cumulative inflation rate of 24.3 percent between 2010 and 2021, meaning that the median household income in Big Flats is likely not keeping up with the cost of living, but the per capita income is. Although wages grew more slowly than countywide and statewide figures, this does not account for Big Flats’ relatively low cost of living.

Table 4: Median Household Income				
	2010	2021	Net Change	% Change
T. Big Flats	\$36,472	\$37,500	\$1,028	2.8%
Adams County	\$39,885	\$51,878	\$11,993	30.1%
Wisconsin	\$51,598	\$67,125	\$15,527	30.1%

Source: ACS 2010, 2021

Table 5: Per Capita Income				
	2010	2021	Net Change	% Change
T. Big Flats	\$21,178	\$27,428	\$6,250	29.5%
Adams County	\$21,917	\$29,327	\$7,410	33.8%
Wisconsin	\$26,624	\$37,221	\$10,597	39.8%

Source: ACS 2010, 2021

Employment Characteristics

Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Town of Big Flats in 2010 and 2021. The “employed population” includes those that are 16 and older, and it decreased by 7.4 percent during this time. There was a decrease of 32 people in the labor force from 2010 to 2021 in the Town. This is likely due to the rise in the median age, whereby more people are entering retirement. This decline contrasted with the marginal labor force growth seen in the state at 0.9 percent. The decline was similar for the county, which had a negative 8.5 percent change in the labor force from 2010 to 2021.

Labor force participation indicates the percentage of those 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate decreased by 4 percent in the Town of Big Flats from 2010 to 2021. There was also a decrease in the county and state during this period, partially due to a statewide trend of a rising median age and increase in retirements.

Minor Civil Division	Labor Force			Labor Participation Rate	
	2010	2021	2010-2021 % Change	2010	2021
T. Big Flats	434	402	-7.4%	55.1%	51.1%
Adams County	9,139	8,366	-8.5%	50.9%	46.7%
Wisconsin	3,078,465	3,105,191	0.9%	69.0%	65.1%

Source: ACS 2010, 2021

In 2010, the Town of Big Flats had an employed population of 382 people. This number decreased by 10 people to 372 by 2021, for a decrease of 2.6 percent. From 2010 to 2021, the employed population decreased in the county at a rate of 5.5 percent and increased 4.2 percent in the state. The U.S. census classifies individuals as unemployed if they are not working, actively seeking work, and available to accept a job. The unemployment rate in the Town was 7.5 percent in 2021. This was lower than both the county at 5.7 percent and higher than the state at 3.5 percent.

Minor Civil Division	2010	2021	2010-2021 % Change	2021 Unemployment Rate
T. Big Flats	382	372	-2.6%	7.5%
Adams County	8,354	7,893	-5.5%	5.7%
Wisconsin	2,869,310	2,991,136	4.2%	3.5%

Source: ACS 2010, 2021

As shown in Table 8, in 2021 most Big Flats residents were employed in the areas of production, transportation, and material moving occupations. This is similar to 2010, though numbers have shifted slightly between occupations. In 2021, the second sector most represented was management, business, science, and arts occupations, the occupation sector that saw the highest increase in jobs since 2010.

In addition to this sector, production, transportation, and material moving occupations were the only sector that added jobs since 2010, with the remaining sectors employing fewer workers in 2021 than in 2010.

Table 8: Resident Occupations 2010-2020		
Occupation Sector	2010	2021
Management, business, science, and arts	44	76
Service occupations	72	60
Sales and office occupations	91	59
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	70	60
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	105	117
Total employed	382	372

Source: ACS 2010, 2021

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Demographic Snapshot

- The population and number of households has increased since 1990, with a slight decline since 2010. The average household size is lower than 1990, which is in line with county and state trends.
- The Town of Big Flats is expected to experience a slight increase in population through 2040, with the number of households growing faster than the rate of population growth.
- There are many people in the older age categories and the median age in Big Flats and Adams County is considerably higher than the state average.
- The median age rose 6 years from 48.5 in 2010 to 54.5 in 2021.
- In 2021, 88.7 percent of Town of Big Flats residents aged 25 and over had a high school diploma or higher and 11.3 percent of residents had a bachelor's degree or higher. The Town had a higher rate of high school graduates than the county but lower than the state. Big Flats and Adams County had considerably lower levels of college graduates than the state.
- Both the 2021 average household income of \$37,500 and per capita income of \$27,428 were lower than the state and the county. The Town's Cost of Living is lower than the state's.
- The labor participation rate is higher than the county but lower than the state. The unemployment rate is higher than both the county and the state.
- Most people working in the Town of Big Flats work in the areas of production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

Planning Issues

Citizens, Plan Commissions, and Town Board members have identified a variety of issues during the planning process, which are discussed in each chapter. Overall, the Town's distance from nearby clinics, hospitals, grocery stores, and lack of senior housing is expected to be a challenge as retirees continue to age.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

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

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

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

Examples of typical Comprehensive Plan goals include:

- Protect and improve the health, safety, and welfare of residents in the Town of Big Flats.
- Preserve and enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Town of Big Flats.
- Protect and preserve the community character of the Town of Big Flats while allowing development where it is appropriate.

Several chapters include a listing of possible programs that the Town might implement to advance the goals and objectives of the plan. The listing does not imply that the Town will utilize every program shown, but only that these programs are available to the Town and may be one of many possible ways of achieving the Town's goals.

Chapter 2: Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources

This chapter 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 NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PLANS AND STUDIES

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

Adams County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2016-2025

This plan provides a framework for local/state/federal conservation program implementation efforts. This plan aims to protect valuable water and soil resources within Adams County. The plan identifies seven goals: 1. Create a culture where landowners take ownership of their impact on the environment, 2. Protect and improve groundwater quality and quantity as well as surface water quality, 3. Reduce wind erosion, 4. Promote working forests and farms, 5. Improve forest silviculture for multiple uses, 6. Manage wildlife conflicts, and 7. Control invasive species.

Adams County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2019-2023

The primary focus of this recreation plan is to protect and promote the health, safety, prosperity, and general welfare of the community and to provide a quality county-wide recreation system. The plan aims to guide and coordinate a harmonious county recreation system and provides direction for recreation management and policy. This includes direction for short and long-term community recreation decisions, an inventory of existing recreation systems and services, and a practical action program for future improvements. The Town operates the 5-acre Rabbit Rock Park on STH 13 that includes rock formations, picnic tables, and a parking lot. Currently, no outdoor recreation facility improvements are proposed in Big Flats.

NCWRPC Regional Livability Plan, 2015

This regional plan for the 10-county North Central Wisconsin region identifies natural resources as both enhancing the local quality of life but also as an economic development tool as outdoor recreation attracts workers to the region.

NATURAL RESOURCES

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

Land Resources

The Town of Big Flats is located in the center of northern Adams County, Wisconsin, which borders Columbia, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Waushara, and Wood Counties. The Town is among destinations for outdoor recreation and seasonal housing, especially near Petenwell, Arrowhead, Camelot, and Sherwood Lakes. Sand Valley and Lake Arrowhead's golf courses, Dyracuse and Bentley Hills ATV parks, and several boat landings are some of the major attractions in the Town of Rome immediately to the north.

Climate

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

Topography and Geology

Adams County lies in two ecological landscapes in Wisconsin. Most of the county is in the Central Sand Plains, with the southeast corner of the county in the Central Sand Hills. The Town of Big Flats lies entirely within the Central Sand Plains ecological landscape. The Central Sand Plains are underlain by sandstone containing shale and dolomite. Since the Town was covered by Glacial Lake Wisconsin, soils are generally sandy, nutrient-poor, and well-drained. They are a result of outwash and glacial lake deposits as glaciers melted during the last ice age. Rabbit Rock is a butte that is one of several sandstone "islands" that stand above the former lakebed. Beyond Rabbit Rock, the terrain is relatively flat, containing extensive wetlands and woodlands.



Soils

Soils occur in an orderly pattern that is related to the physical geography, climate, and natural vegetation. Each kind of soil is associated with a particular kind of landscape or segment within the landscape. By observing the landscape within an area, by reviewing soil maps, and by understanding what is possible with each soil type, relationships can be created to determine the most productive use for an area.

The soils of Adams County are primarily sandy and have many low-lying wetland areas. Many wetlands were drained in the 1900s and now are used for agriculture. Overall, there are 10 soil types, known as soil associations, in Adams County. See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan and wi.dnr.gov for more information.

Forests

Woodlands and forests cover approximately 25,187 acres, or about 81.9 percent of the Town. Forests play a key role in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas like steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. Expansive forests provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development. All forests are dynamic, always changing from one stage to another, influenced by natural forces and human behavior. Changes can be subtle and occur over a long period or can happen in short spans of time from activities such as timber harvest, a windstorm, or a fire. For example, in 2005, a fire burned 3,410 acres in the Town roughly following a path along Big Roche-a-Cri creek.

Woodlands and prairies dominate the Town’s landscape, followed by wetlands in the northern and southeaster parts of the town as well as several streams. Common tree species include pine, oak, and

aspen. Tamarack and Black Spruce are also found in wetland areas. Forested and non-forested wetlands and peatlands are common in the area, as well as some managed cropland and grassland.

Most forestland in the Town of Big Flats is privately owned (about 48 percent), including approximately 15,692 acres in Managed Forest Law (MFL) program as of 2023. This program has been established to preserve and protect woodlands through practicing proper management techniques in exchange for a reduction in property taxes. Within the MFL program, some, but not all lands are open for public use. An updated map of open lands and access points is found on the Wisconsin DNR's website. Additional woodland that is not in the MFL program (and therefore not open to the public) also exists on private land. There are no state or county-operated forests in the Town of Big Flats, but the DNR owns approximately 280 acres of donated land on two sites that are open for hiking, fishing, hunting, and trapping. See Map 8.

Agricultural Areas

Agriculture has a presence in Adams County, and according to the recent 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 308 active farms in the county, covering about 117,206 acres of land. Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and/or sweet potatoes was the produce category with the highest sales total, followed by grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and/or dry peas. Only 8.5 percent of the Town is agricultural and there are no prime soils within the Town's limits according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). About 345 acres, or 1.12 percent of the Town is considered "open lands."

Five century farmsteads are found in Big Flats. A century farmstead is recognized by the Wisconsin State Fair as having maintained family ownership for at least 100 years. Known farms include:

- Herbert L. Peterson Farm (now owned by a relative, Peggy Werner). 200 acres in T19N R6E Sec 25 settled in 1880.
- Thayne A Henningsen Farm (currently owned by Henningsen Trust). 40 acres in T19N R6E Sec 24 settled in 1875.
- Eldon Henningsen Farm (owned by Eldon Henningsen Ranch, LLC) on 40 acres in T19N R6E Sec 25 settled in 1875.
- Anna Lee Landen on 40 acres in T19N R6E Sec 25 was settled in 1875.
- Peter Hendricksen on 80 acres in T19N R6E Sec 15 was settled in 1874.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Mining

There are no known nonmetallic mines or metallic deposits in the Town. Note that non-metallic mines used to be referred to as gravel pits or quarries.

Environmentally Remediated Areas

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

Rare Species and Natural Communities

Wisconsin's National Heritage Inventory Program (NHI) is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare, threatened, and endangered species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the State. The program's database, on the Wisconsin DNR website, identifies species and natural communities that are currently tracked by the NHI. As of March 2023, NHI tracked the following wildlife species in Adams County with state endangered status:

- Bald Eagle
- Blachard's Cricket Frog
- Eastern Massasauga
- Eastern Ribbonsnake
- Forster's Tern
- Incurvate Emerald
- Kirtland's Warbler
- Peregrine Falcon
- Slender Glass lizard

The following endangered plants listed by the state also exist in Adams County:

- Brook Grass
- Cut-leaved Anemone
- Lake Cress
- Netted Nutrush
- Pale False Foxglove
- Purple Milkweed
- Square-stem Spike-rush

These threatened wildlife species listed by the state are found in Adams County:

- Buckhorn
- Cerulean Warbler
- Frosted Elfin
- Greater Prairie-Chicken
- Henslow's Sparrow
- Hooded Warbler
- Northern Long-eared Bat
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Wood Turtle

These state-listed threatened plants exist in Adams County:

- Brittle Prickly-pear
- Cliff Cudweed
- Dwarf Milkweed
- Roundstem Foxglove

Finally, the following species are listed by the state as being of special concern, with protection under state or federal laws:

- Karner Blue Butterfly (Federally listed as endangered)
- Four-toed salamander
- American Bittern
- Common Nighthawk
- Eastern Whip-poor-will
- Grasshopper Sparrow
- Lake Sparrow
- Purple Martin
- Red-headed woodpecker
- Short-eared Owl
- Vesper Sparrow
- Western Meadowlark

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

Water Resources

The Town of Big Flats, as well as the whole of Adams County, contains an assortment of natural surface water features, including creeks, lakes, and wetlands. This section discusses the characteristics of the major surface water features located within the Town.

Watersheds

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

The Town of Big Flats is included in three watersheds:

- Little Roche-a-Cri Creek
- Big Roche-a-Cri Creek
- Petenwell Lake-Wisconsin River

Adams County Shoreland Zoning is in effect. The county has authority over lands 300 feet from a river or stream and 1,000 feet from a lake. Actual shoreland jurisdiction measurements are coordinated through the County Planning and Zoning Department

Surface Water

Streams and wetlands are the dominant surface water feature in the Town. Named streams include the Big Roche-a-Cri Creek, Carter Creek, Dead Horse Creek, and Dry Creek. Several unnamed streams also exist in the Town.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

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

Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERWs) share many of the same environmental and ecological characteristics. The primary difference between the two is that ORWs typically do not have any direct point sources discharging pollutants directly to the water. In addition, any pollutant load discharged to an ORW must meet background water quality at all times. Exceptions are made for certain types of discharge situations to ERWs to allow pollutant loads that are greater than background water quality when human health would otherwise be compromised. There are no ORWs or ERWs in the Town of Big Flats.

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. Big Roche-a-Cri Creek is listed as impaired due to elevated water temperature and unknown nonpoint source pollutants according to WDNR. Additionally, Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS) have become a growing concern throughout the state. Policies and practices continue to emerge regarding PFAS, and the Town may monitor information about this topic as it is released.

Aquifers

Wisconsin is home to four main aquifers, two of which are below Adams County: the sandstone and dolomite aquifer and the crystalline bedrock aquifer. The sandstone and dolomite aquifer is one of the most reliable sources of groundwater for much of Wisconsin, and the crystalline bedrock aquifer is deeper and more difficult to access. Because of its porosity, the sand and gravel aquifer is susceptible to pollutants.

Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Adams County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. Invasive species can alter the natural ecological relationships among native species and affect ecosystem function, economic value of ecosystems, and human health. Eurasian watermilfoil is a known aquatic invasive species in Big Roche-a-Cri Creek.

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 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. See Map 3: Natural Resources.

Wetlands that filter or store sediments or nutrients for extended periods may undergo fundamental changes. Sediments will eventually fill 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 using fill material. This can destroy the hydrological function of the site and open the area to improper development. The DNR has promulgated minimum standards for managing wetlands.

Floodplains

A floodplain is generally defined as land where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any year. The primary value of floodplains is their role in natural flood control. Floodplains represent areas where excess water can be accommodated whether through drainage by streams or through storage by wetlands and other natural detention/retention areas. Specific areas that will be inundated will depend upon the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, the areas shown on a map as floodplains should be able to handle the most substantial (regional) flood, i.e., those that have a probability of occurring once every one hundred years. Due to the nature of the geography and hydrology, floodplain mapping may have accuracy issues in this area. The presence and exact location of floodplains must be verified by field survey, and applicable permits obtained prior to any land disturbing activity.

Groundwater

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

in water. The type of soil and bedrock in a region also determines how quickly contaminants can reach groundwater.

The source of all drinking water in Adams County is groundwater, and it supplies some agricultural and industrial processes as well. Nationally, groundwater is a limited resource, and both its quality and quantity are important factors. These factors are primarily influenced by local geology and local land use. Groundwater can also be vulnerable to poor management, drought, or other factors.

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

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

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

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

Resources

Historic structures and cultural areas provide a sense of place, enhance community pride, and reinforce social and cultural enrichment. The identification of existing historic structures and cultural areas are an important consideration in all town planning efforts, as these features are critical to defining a community's look and character. There are currently no structures in the Town are on the Wisconsin Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI).

NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS

There are a variety of programs available to the Town related to natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Some of these are identified below. The following list is not all-inclusive. For specific program information, the agency or group that offers the program should be contacted.

Private Forestry

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

Managed Forest Law (MFL)

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

Parks and Recreation Program

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

Stewardship Grants for Nonprofit Conservation Organizations

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

Nonpoint Source Program (NSP)

Wisconsin's NPS Program, through a comprehensive network of federal, state, and local agencies working in partnership with other organizations and citizens, addresses the significant nonpoint sources in the state. This program combines voluntary and regulatory approaches with financial and technical assistance. Abatement activities include agriculture, urban, forestry, wetlands, and hydrologic modifications. The core activities of the program — research, monitoring, data assessment and management, regulation and enforcement, financial and technical assistance, education and outreach and public involvement — work to address current water quality impairments and prevent future threats caused by NPS pollution. Contact the WDNR for more information.

Drinking Water and Groundwater Program

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

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

Aquatic Habitat Protection Program

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

Endangered Resources Program

The DNR's Endangered Resources staff provides expertise and advice on endangered resources. They manage the Natural Heritage Inventory Program (NHI), which is used to determine the existence and location of native plant and animal communities and Endangered or Threatened Species of Special Concern. The NHI helps identify and prioritize areas suitable for State Natural Area (SNA) designation, provides information needed for feasibility studies and master plans, and maintains the list of endangered and threatened species. All management activities conducted by Wildlife Management and Forestry staff must be reviewed to determine the impact on NHI-designated species.

A permit for the incidental take of an Endangered or Threatened species is required under the State Endangered Species Law. The Endangered Resources Program oversees the permit process, reviews applications and makes permit decisions. Funding for the Endangered Species Program comes from a number of sources, including tax checkoff revenue, license plates, general program revenues (GPR), gaming revenue, Natural Heritage Inventory chargebacks, wild rice permits, general gifts and Pittman Robertson grants.

Fisheries Management Program

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

Wildlife Management Program

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

NRCS Conservation Programs

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

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

- Working Lands for Wildlife

Wetlands Reserve Program

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

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

Discovery Farms Program

Discovery Farms is a program administered by UW-Extension that works with over 40 farmers across the state of Wisconsin. The program's mission is to "develop on-farm and related research to determine the economic and environmental effects of agricultural practices on a diverse group of Wisconsin farms; and educates and improves communications among the agricultural community, consumers, researchers and policymakers to better identify and implement effective environmental management practices that are compatible with profitable agriculture." On-Farm projects fall under one the following categories: Nitrogen Use Efficiency, Tile Monitoring, Leachate Collection Systems, Watershed water quality, and Edge-of-Field Runoff Monitoring.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants

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

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

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

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Protect natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, ponds, woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources.
2. Protect economically productive forests and discourage their conversion to other uses.
3. Ensure that all new development in the Town is compatible with surrounding uses and will not negatively impact environmental resources or adjoining property values.
4. Protection of economically productive farmlands.
5. Preserve cultural, historic, and architectural sites.
6. Preserve glacial stone outcroppings in the Town of Big Flats for scenic enjoyment.
7. Prevent residential intrusion to allow farming to continue, and respect Century farmsteads in the Town.
8. Encourage sustainable farming.

Objectives:

1. Discourage new development in the Town that negatively impacts natural resources.
2. Minimize impacts to the Town's natural resources from non-metallic mineral mining.
3. Encourage and support the preservation of natural open spaces that minimize flooding such as wetlands and floodplains.
4. Promote development that minimizes groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems and other sources.
5. Support diversification of farming types and practices to maintain agriculture as a viable economic activity.
6. Existing agricultural uses and buildings should be taken into consideration when locating new development to avoid conflicts.
7. Preserve productive farmland for long-term agricultural uses.
8. Support road rules that minimize agriculturally intensive impacts on roads, such as planting of windbreaks.

9. Provide guidance in the identification and protection of historic and cultural resources by working with the Adams County Historical Society and others.

Policies:

1. Discourage new development from areas shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, loss of farmland, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
2. Allow expansion of existing non-metallic mining operations or development of new sites only on lands where the expansion will not conflict with preexisting development.
3. Reclaim non-metallic mining sites to conform to the land use plan map.
4. Discourage the draining or filling of wetlands.
5. Encourage forestland owners to maintain and enroll their property in the state Managed Forest Law program.
6. Encourage non-farm development, particularly subdivisions, in areas away from intensive agricultural activities, in order to minimize farm & non-farm conflicts due to noise, odors, nitrates in well water, pesticides, farm/vehicle conflicts on roadways, late night plowing, etc.
7. Consider the use of such tools as transfer of development rights (TDR) or purchase of development rights (PDR) to protect sensitive areas. This occurs when a developer sends money to a parcel that is to be preserved in exchange for being able to develop another parcel at a higher density, as long as the two parcels add up to the maximum density that zoning allows for.
8. Encourage landowners with existing forestry to keep the land in timber production, and to develop forest management plans and enroll in the managed forest law program.
9. Post roads that commonly have farm implement traffic with slow moving vehicle signs.
10. Encourage fallow land to be sown with a cover crop to minimize erosion, use of sustainable farming to reduce the usage of water and fertilizers, or return to forestry/MFL if abandoned as cropland.
11. Encourage planting of windbreaks along roadways and along fields of 80 acres or more.
12. Continue to enforce the Town's clearcutting ordinance.
13. Review development proposals relative to the potential impacts to the historical and cultural resources of the town.

Chapter 3: Housing

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

PREVIOUS HOUSING PLANS AND STUDIES

Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan

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

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

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

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

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

ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2020

This report, developed by the United Way, described the 30 percent of households in Adams County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or

“ALICE” households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). For reference, 23 percent of Wisconsin households are considered ALICE households, meaning that there is a higher share of ALICE residents in Adams County than the statewide average. These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the “household survival budget,” which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, childcare, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

- The ALICE report shows that 56 percent of Big Flats households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, indicating that the average household in Big Flats is slightly less financially prosperous than the average Adams County State of Wisconsin household at-large. This is based on 2018 data, so affordability is likely a larger challenge as housing prices and inflation have increased since then.

HOUSING ASSESSMENT

Housing Type and Tenure

In 2021, the Town of Big Flats had approximately 989 total housing units, only 44.2 percent of which were occupied year-round, see Table 9. Of the occupied units, 85.4 percent of them were owner-occupied. The Town of Big Flats had a higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than both Adams County and the State of Wisconsin, at 83.9 percent and 67.4 percent, respectively.

The relatively low share of occupied housing units reflects the area’s tourism-based economy and presence of seasonal homes. Of the total number of vacant housing units, 88.9 percent of them were for “seasonal, recreational, or other occasional use” in the Town, compared to 86.4 percent in the County and only 57.3 percent statewide.

The average household size of 2.11 was lower than the county (2.20) and lower than the state (2.39). In 44.1 percent of households the householder lived alone, and 56.4 percent of households had an individual age 65 or older. The lower average household size and higher number of households with those 65 and over, when compared to the county and state, suggest that there are more one- or two-person families without children or with grown children in the Town of Big Flats.

Over 59 percent of all housing units were single-family, detached housing units, and another approximately 40 percent were mobile homes. While these housing units fit the rural setting of the community, an aging population may increase more demand for more senior-friendly housing options such as twin homes or condominiums with barrier-free design. A high proportion of single-family homes may also impact housing affordability, especially for seniors who typically live on fixed income.

	T. Big Flats	Adams County	Wisconsin
Total Housing Units	989	16,797	2,718,369
Total occupied housing units	438	8,783	2,401,818
Vacant Housing Units	551	8,014	316,551
Seasonal Housing Units	490	6,926	181,395
Owner occupied housing units	374	7,368	1,619,704
Renter occupied housing units	64	1,415	782,114
Average household size	2.11	2.20	2.39
% owner occupied	85.4%	83.9%	67.4%
% householder living alone	44.1%	31.7%	30.3%
% with individuals 65 or over	56.4%	48.5%	29.6%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Structural Characteristics

Tables 10 and 11 detail the number and percentage of housing units by type. Housing in the Town of Big Flats is overwhelmingly single-family detached housing (59.6 percent) and mobile homes (40.1 percent), with no multifamily housing. Adams County is also comprised mainly of single-family housing but does have more of a variety of housing types. This is due mainly to a balance of clustered and rural communities throughout the county. In Adams County, single-family detached homes account for 73.8 percent of housing units, followed by mobile homes, which account for 19.1 percent of housing. A greater variety of housing styles would better accommodate those at various income levels and from different economic backgrounds.

Community	1- Detached	1- Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
T. Big Flats	589	0	0	0	0	397	3	989
Adams Co.	12,389	225	99	62	779	3,207	36	16,797
Wisconsin	1,808,977	115,708	170,039	97,856	438,357	86,592	840	2,718,369

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Community	1- Detached	1- Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
T. Big Flats	59.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.1%	0.3%	100.0%
Adams Co.	73.8%	1.3%	0.6%	0.4%	4.6%	19.1%	0.2%	100.0%
Wisconsin	66.5%	4.3%	6.3%	3.6%	16.1%	3.2%	0.0%	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Age Characteristics

The age of a community’s housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. The age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1960s for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have increased. This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Adams County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units. With smaller households and higher construction and land costs, this trend could reverse to a greater variety of smaller units in the future.

Table 12: Year Structure Built, 2021

Community	2020 or later	2010 to 2019	2000 to 2009	1990 to 1999	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1950 to 1959	1940 to 1949	1939 or earlier
T. Big Flats	3	59	152	194	113	228	125	75	3	37
Adams Co.	16	600	3,188	2,649	2,476	4,042	1,529	807	346	1,144
Wisconsin	2,706	145,182	331,651	372,427	262,162	394,778	263,031	288,415	149,150	508,867

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Table 13: Year Structure Built (Percentage), 2021

Community	2020 or later	2010 to 2019	2000 to 2009	1990 to 1999	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1950 to 1959	1940 to 1949	1939 or earlier
T. Big Flats	0.3%	6.0%	15.4%	19.6%	11.4%	23.1%	12.6%	7.6%	0.3%	3.7%
Adams Co.	0.1%	3.6%	19.0%	15.8%	14.7%	24.1%	9.1%	4.8%	2.1%	6.8%
Wisconsin	0.1%	5.3%	12.2%	13.7%	9.6%	14.5%	9.7%	10.6%	5.5%	18.7%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Tables 12 and 13 outline build dates of housing units throughout the Town, county, and state based on 2021 American Community Survey data. Most housing stock was constructed in the Town of Big Flats between 1970 and 1979 (23.1 percent). The next most significant periods of housing construction in the Town were from 1990 to 1999 (19.6 percent) and from 2000 to 2009 (15.4 percent). Fewer housing units have been constructed within the Town since 2010 (6.3 percent). Construction in the county increased significantly after 1970, perhaps due to the rise in popularity of vacation homes. Statewide home construction occurred more consistently throughout the decades, with most occurring between 1970 and 1979. The percentage of housing units built since 2010 is equal for the Town and statewide, but lower in the county. Home supply has not been constructed to meet demand since the Great Recession of 2008 in the town, county, or the state, leading to increased competition and higher prices.

Value Characteristics

Table 14 details housing values in owner-occupied homes throughout the Town, county, and state. In 2021, the median housing value was \$78,000 in the Town of Big Flats. This is lower higher than the county (\$150,000) and state (\$200,400). The largest concentration in home values (42.5%) is in the \$50,000-\$99,999 range, with few options above \$300,000.

Community	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 or more	Median Value
T. Big Flats	16.0%	42.5%	16.6%	8.6%	11.5%	4.8%	\$78,000
Adams County	11.7%	20.1%	18.2%	17.3%	19.2%	13.5%	\$150,000
Wisconsin	4.3%	10.2%	16.7%	18.7%	25.2%	24.9%	\$200,400

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Housing Affordability

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

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban (HUD) development recommends that housing costs do not exceed 30 percent of monthly income. If housing costs exceed 30 percent of monthly income, a household is considered cost burdened. HUD also indicates that lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is no greater than 31 percent of the monthly household income. Low-income households that pay more than 30 percent of their income toward rent may have difficulty affording other household necessities such as food, childcare, and healthcare costs. Severely cost-burdened households are at risk of becoming homeless.

Table 15 shows that the percentage of households in the Town of Big Flats that pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs is higher than both the county and state with those that have a mortgage, but lower than the county and state for those without a mortgage. Table 16 shows that the proportion of renter-occupied households that are cost burdened was 25 percent, which is substantially less than the county or the state, however there are relatively few for-rent housing units.

Table 15: Owner-Occupied Housing Affordability (Median Selected Owner Costs)				
Community	With mortgage	% Cost burdened	No mortgage	% Cost burdened
T. Big Flats	\$1,146	33.6%	\$400	9.5%
Adams County	\$1,217	33.5%	\$475	15.4%
Wisconsin	\$1,491	21.8%	\$578	11.9%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

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

Table 16: Renter-Occupied Housing Affordability (Median Selected Renter Costs)		
Community	Median Gross Rent	% cost burdened
T. Big Flats	\$583	25.0%
Adams County	\$679	37.7%
Wisconsin	\$916	42.6%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

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

Specialized Housing

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Adams County is based in the Village of Friendship. The ADRC supports seniors, caregivers, and adults with disabilities. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services and the United Way of South Wood and Adams Counties (based in Wisconsin Rapids in Wood County) maintain information about specialized housing options throughout the county. The Adams County Housing Authority, based in the City of Adams, administers several subsidized low-income housing programs. As the number of elderly persons increases in the coming years, there will most likely be a greater need for a wider variety of housing options, especially with accessibility features that benefit seniors.

Senior Housing

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

According to research by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, most seniors prefer to “age in place,” or remain in their home throughout retirement. This can be difficult for those in rural areas such as Big Flats, as the ability to access medical care and necessary goods and services can become burdensome. This highlights the importance of senior transportation services and universal design (home design that creates access for all people). Most senior housing within the county is located in the Cities of Adams and Wisconsin Dells. The area surrounding the Town of Big Flats will likely need additional housing options for seniors in upcoming years.

Summary of Housing Characteristics

The Town of Big Flats is abundant with single-family homes and most residents work outside the Town than within the Town, many of whom work in production, transportation, and material moving occupations. The Town has a rural character, consisting of wooded areas near outdoor recreation and tourism.

Most housing consists of single-family and mobile home detached housing that is owner occupied. Most housing was constructed since 1970, and the greatest share of housing falls into lower-valuation ranges. Some population growth is expected in upcoming years, and the community would benefit from a wide range of housing options. Consistent with statewide trends, new housing construction over the past decade has stalled, as only 6.3 percent of homes in the Town have been constructed since 2010. There is a need for construction of additional housing units to accommodate demand. It would be desirable to construct housing in a variety of styles to create affordability and more adequately meet the needs of those at various income levels and desiring a range of amenities. Affordability is an issue for some renters and homeowners within the Town, particularly for homeowners. Seasonal residents may be competing for housing with locals who live and work in the Town year-round.

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

HOUSING PROGRAMS

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

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Discourage residential development in or adjacent to productive farmland areas.
2. Allow adequate affordable housing for all individuals consistent with the rural character of the community.
3. Minimize locating housing near natural hazards.

Objectives:

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

Policies:

1. Work with developers to provide a variety of housing types for all income and age groups.
2. Guide housing growth to locations where it will not conflict with farming. For example, discourage the creation of lots of only a few acres adjacent to large, open tracts of farmland.
3. Guide housing growth away from areas where housing units are prone to hazards such as flooding or wildfires.
4. Investigate options for hotel and/or room taxes

Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities

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

The efficient utilization of these resources is one of the basic principles of comprehensive planning. Existing 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 does not acknowledge or integrate 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 likely not the best use of public resources. The Utilities and Community Facilities Map provides detailed information about the inventory throughout the Town.

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

Adams County All Hazards Mitigation Plan, 2020

This plan examines general conditions, including an inventory of utilities, community facilities, and emergency services throughout Adams County. Risk assessment is at the heart of the all-hazards mitigation program. To mitigate the risks, it is 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 identified hazards. Counties and incorporated municipalities are required to adopt such plans with updates every five years.

Adams County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2019-2023

The primary purpose of the Adams County Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces Plan is to guide and accomplish a coordinated and harmonious county recreation system. It serves as a guide for the decision making of recreation providers, elected officials, and stakeholders for the five-year planning period. This enables the highest and best use of county resources, including natural resources, manufactured resources, and financial resources.

Big Flats-Monroe Community Wildfire Protection Plan

This plan meets the definition of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan under the 2003 Healthy Forest Restoration Act. It states goals on reducing wildfire risks and strategies on preparing for wildfire hazards.

UTILITIES

Water Service

The Town of Big Flats does not have a public water supply system. Instead, private wells supply the water for public and private facilities within the Town. Concerns exist over water quality as properties continue to develop. Overall, there are 23 high-capacity well locations and no surface water withdrawal locations in the Town.

Wastewater

There is no public sewer system in the Town of Big Flats. Therefore, all development in the Town uses on-site septic systems that discharge to underground drainage fields and may include conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, or sand filter systems. There has been concern about development in the northeastern portion of the Town where water tables are high. Wisconsin Administrative Code regulates these on-site wastewater treatment systems. The Adams County Planning and Zoning Office administers the program locally and issues permits, as well as inspection.

Solid Waste and Recycling

Adams County operates a 500-acre sanitary landfill in the Town of Strongs Prairie, which is expected to last 25 years. It is considered a full Materials Recovery Facility and it serves the entire county. There are 19 transfer stations, including one in the Town of Big Flats on 11th Ave, where Town residents can deposit garbage to be transferred to the landfill.

Energy and Telecommunications

Electric and Natural Gas

Electric service is provided by Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative, and there are no natural gas service providers. As a result, many residents rely on propane. There are three known communication towers located within the Town.

Cable/Internet

Bug Tussel Wireless, Frontier Communications, HughesNet, United States Cellular Corporation, Viasat, and VSAT Systems, LLC, provide wireline internet service to the Town. AT&T, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon Wireless provide mobile wireless service to the Town. As broadband internet

infrastructure expands statewide, additional infrastructure may be installed in Adams County in the coming years.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Town Operations

Town Hall

The Big Flats Town Hall is located at 1104 County Rd C, Arkdale, WI 54613. Governing bodies include the Town Board and Plan Commission. The Town Board consists of a Chair, two Supervisors, a Clerk, and a Treasurer. The Clerk and Treasurer positions were recently changed to being appointed positions. The Town Board meets once per month. There is also a Town Assessor, Fire Chief, Assistant Chief, and additional Fire department staff, and a Zoning Administrator. Adams County has a Building Inspector who issues building permits in the Town. The Town Plan Commission meets as needed. Voter Registration, Elections, Dog Licensing, and Tax Payments are other services provided at this location.



Post Office

Big Flats residents use four different Post Office locations. They are located at 1568 State Road 21 in Arkdale, 127 West North Lake Street in Hancock, 1001 Market Street in Nekoosa, and 315 Main Street in Friendship.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

The Adams County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement protection in the Town of Big Flats. They patrol all county roads and respond to 911 calls. In addition, the Wisconsin State Highway Patrol provides some patrol, mainly on state and federal highways.

Fire

The Town operates a Fire Department with a Fire Station is located at 1104 County Rd C, Arkdale, WI 54613.

Ambulance

The Town of Big Flats contracts with the Town of Rome to the north for ambulance service known as Lifestar.

Medical Services

The nearest hospital is Gundersen Moundview Hospital in Friendship. Additionally, Riverview Aspirus Hospital in Wisconsin Rapids, and Necedah Family Medical Center in Necedah serve the area. As the Town's population continues to age, transportation for seniors to medical clinics and hospital will become a growing challenge.

Cemeteries

Wisconsin Statute 157.70 provides for the protection of all human burial sites, including all marked and unmarked burials and cemeteries. There are two known cemeteries in the Town as depicted on the Utilities and Community Facilities Map. Minimum acreage requirements exist for cemeteries established on or after November 1, 1991, unless a cemetery is owned by a religious association, or the Town enacts an ordinance allowing new cemeteries of less than 20 acres to be constructed.

Childcare Facilities

There are no licensed childcare facilities located within the Town of Big Flats.

Education

Primary and Secondary Schools

The entire Town is within the Adams-Friendship Area School District. The district has an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school, all located in the City of Adams. Adams-Friendship Elementary is located at 500 N Pierce St, Adams-Friendship Middle School is located at 420 N Adams St, and Adams-Friendship High School is located at 1109 E North St. There is also a K-12 virtual school option. In total, there were 1,315 students enrolled for the 2022-2023 school year.

Post-Graduate Education

Mid-State Technical College operates a campus at 401 N Main St in Adams. There are no four-year universities in Adams County, and the closest campus is the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point.

Libraries

There are no libraries in the Town of Big Flats, but the Lester Public Library of Rome is located nearby at 1157 Rome Center Dr., Nekoosa, WI 54457.

Recreation

Parks

The Town operates Rabbit Rock Park at 1159 STH 13. It is a 5-acre former wayside that surrounds Rabbit Rock Butte, a sandstone rock formation. Facilities include picnic tables, parking lot, and open space. The Town maintains seasonal access to this site between May 1 and November 1. Additional forest and conservancy land owned by Adams County and a local nonprofit are also open to the public. According to the County's Outdoor Recreation Plan, there are no proposed new park facilities in Big Flats at this time.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
2. Continue to provide ambulance, volunteer fire and first responder services to residents.
3. Encourage recycling by residents.
4. Encourage development of high-speed internet access.

Objectives:

1. Make information available to residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems.
2. Consider the potential impacts of development proposals including high-capacity wells on groundwater quality and quantity.
3. Explore opportunities to develop integrated, multi-use trail systems and recreational facilities.
4. Share equipment and services across town boundaries, where possible.

Policies:

1. Work with adjoining towns, the county, the state, and individual landowners to address known water quality issues.
2. Consider the feasibility of wastewater collection and treatment systems in major developments.
3. Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Plan for major equipment purchases.
4. Maintain convenient access to recycling containers at the transfer site.
5. Initiate communication with the local telephone cooperative about resident desires for high-speed internet access.

Chapter 5: Transportation

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

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)

This current federal transportation program authorizes up to \$108 billion to support federal public transportation programs, including \$91 billion in guaranteed funding. It also reauthorizes surface transportation programs for FY 2022-2026 and provides advance appropriations for certain programs. Major goals include improving safety, modernizing aging transit infrastructure and fleets, investing in cleaner transportation, and improving equity in communities with limited transportation access.

Other federal legislation that frames transportation planning includes the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA); the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and the Clean Air Act. Environmental Justice is an applicable executive order that attempts to ensure that transportation planning and programming includes underrepresented groups such as minority and low-income populations.

Connect 2050: Let's Connect Wisconsin

Connections 2050 is the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) long-range transportation plan for the state. Adopted in 2022, the plan addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. It replaces Connections 2030.

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

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

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

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

Locally Developed, Coordinated Public Transit – Human Service Transportation Plan, 2019-2023

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

Adams County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2013

This plan evaluates existing infrastructure and identifies areas where improvements should be made to enhance safety and connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians throughout the county. Within the Town of Big Flats, it recommends paved bike lanes and/or paths on STH 13 to improve safety for users since the highway’s speed limit is 55 and alternative routes on Town roads are too far out of the way.

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2018

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

State Trails Network Plan

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

ROAD NETWORK

Classification

Functional

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

The functional classifications are generally defined as:

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

Jurisdictional

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

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

Ownership is divided among the federal, state, and local governments. States own over 20 percent of the national road network. The federal government has responsibility for about 5 percent, primarily

in national parks, forests, and Indian reservations. Over 75 percent of the road system is locally controlled.

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

The road system within the Town of Big Flats is a network of state highways, county highways and local roads. The jurisdictional and functional breakdown is shown in Table 17.

Jurisdiction	Arterial	Collector	Local	Totals
State	6.01	0.00	0.00	6.01
County	0.00	8.05	0.00	8.05
Town	0.00	0.00	90.09	90.09
Totals	6.01	8.05	90.09	104.15

Source: WisDOT

Major Road Facilities

The following is a brief description of the major road facilities located in the Town of Big Flats. All major roads are summarized by functional classification, jurisdiction, and annual average daily traffic (AADT), when available. Map 4 Transportation provides detailed transportation information for the Town.

Looking at AADT over time can provide some insight into roads that may need upgrading or increased maintenance in the future. Table 18 shows AADT in 2004 and 2021. CTH C west of STH 13 had a considerable decrease in traffic of 37.8 percent, compared to STH 13 south of CTH C, which only decreased by 2.8 percent.

Location	2004 AADT	2021 AADT	2004-2021 % Change
CTH C West of STH 13	900	560	-37.8%
STH 13 South of CTH C	3,600	3,500	-2.8%

Source: WisDOT

County Highway C

County Highway C is a collector that bisects the Town in half, forming an east-west route extending beyond the Town’s boundaries. AADT has decreased by 340 between 2004 and 2021.

State Highway 13

State Highway 13 is an arterial that runs from the Wisconsin Dells to the south shore of Lake Superior. AADT has only decreased slightly since 2004 (-100 AADT).

In general, traffic generated and attracted by any new land use can increase congestion on the roadway system. Even without creating new access points, changes in land use can alter the capacity of the roadway. Uncontrolled division of land tends to affect highways by increasing the amount of turning traffic into and out from intersecting driveways, therefore impairing safety, and impeding traffic movements. Although Big Flats' population decreased slightly since 2010, an increase of new housing or businesses in the future could increase AADT counts in the future.

Road Maintenance

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

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

Table 19 shows a summary of Town road pavement conditions in the Town of Big Flats. Note that these totals only include local roads, so County and State Highways are excluded. Town roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. The roads that display a surface rating of “good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions.

Only 47.9 percent of roads in Big Flats are rated “good” or better, with 19.1 percent rated “poor” or “very poor.” Combined with 32.9 percent of roads in the “fair” category, there will likely need to be several significant road projects in the coming years.

Table 19 also shows road surface type. Approximately half of the Town's roads are asphalt, followed by another 29 percent of roads having a seal coated surface. The remainder of the Town's roads are gravel or unimproved.

Table 19: Road Network AADT		
Condition	Miles	Percent
Very Poor	9.19	10.2%
Poor	8.06	8.9%
Fair	29.68	32.9%
Good	29.99	33.3%
Very Good	1.23	1.4%
Excellent	11.93	13.2%
Total	90.09	100.0%
Surface Type	Miles	Percent
Unimproved	13.26	14.7%
Gravel	5.73	6.4%
Sealcoat	26.11	29.0%
Asphalt	44.99	49.9%
Total	90.09	100.0%

Source: WisDOT

Trucking

STH 13 is a Long Truck Route within the Town as designated by WisDOT. Local truck routes often branch out from these major corridors to link local industry with the main truck routes as well as for the distribution of commodities within the local area. Local issues such as safety, weight restrictions, and noise impacts play significant roles in the designation of local truck routes.

Rail

There is no rail service in the Town according to the 2021 DOT Wisconsin Railroads and Harbors Map. The nearest rail line is owned by Union Pacific, which connects the City of Adams with the Village of Necedah (Juneau County) and Village of Oxford (Marquette County).

Air Transportation

There are no airports in the Town, but the Adams County Airport - Legion Field is a medium general service airport located in the Village of Friendship. Airports in La Crosse (LSE), Mosinee (CWA), and Madison (MSN) provide the nearest passenger service. Alexander Field in the City of Wisconsin Rapids (Wood County) frequently brings in tourists using private aircrafts who visit Sand Valley Golf Resort in the neighboring Town of Rome. There are no known private airstrips in the Town of Big Flats.

Transportation Services for Specialized Populations

The Aging and Disability Resource Center provides information on transportation services for those that are elderly and for those with disabilities. Rides are provided for shopping, medical appointments, or to other locations as needed. Bus transportation is provided on weekdays and is equipped with a wheelchair lift.

Bicycling and Walking

All roads in the Town are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel. Adams County coordinates trail planning through the county, and county and regional plans depict future bicycle routes in the county.

Recreational Vehicles

There is an extensive snowmobile trail system throughout Adams County that includes the Town of Big Flats. Several clubs maintain the trails, including the nearby Rome Sno-Bandits and Monroe Center Winter Pals. There is also an extensive ATV/UTV system throughout Adams County, with some designated ATV trails in the Town of Big Flats. ATVs may use Town roads designated on the County's ATV Route Map, but they are prohibited on State Highway 13 and County Highway C. Speed limits are 10 miles per hour in residential areas and 35 miles per hour elsewhere.



Example ATV Map

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Encourage development of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
2. Provide an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system affording mobility, convenience, and safety, and that meets the needs of all town residents.
3. Utilize PASER software to inventory and rate the local roads.
4. Improve existing roads before constructing new roads.

Objectives:

1. Support and maintain a safe and efficient Town road system.
2. Promote the development of multi-use trails, trail linkages, or wide shoulders as part of new development proposals, where appropriate. Currently, all Town roads are open to ATV/UTV use except for CTH C.

Policies:

1. Prepare and update a 5-year Road Improvement Plan.
2. Discourage land uses which generate heavy traffic volumes on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
3. Better space roadway access along the existing Town road network to increase safety and preserve capacity.
4. Consider future road locations, extensions or connections when reviewing development plans and proposals.
6. Accommodate access requirements for emergency services (fire, EMS, ambulance, etc.) as well as school buses and snowplows on all Town roads.

Chapter 6: Economic Development

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

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

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

North Central Wisconsin Regional Recovery Plan, 2022

The purpose of this plan is to guide economic stabilization, recovery, and resiliency efforts within the North Central Wisconsin Region in the face of the current pandemic as well as future events that cause economic shocks. The goal of this plan is to develop a set of strategies that will help the Region's local economies recover from and become more resilient to economic shocks by identifying best-practice strategies that help spur economic stabilization and recovery in the wake of economic shocks and that will help build local economic resilience. Helping local recovery and resiliency efforts will help the regional economy as a whole recover and grow back even stronger than before the disaster struck. A dashboard that monitors the status of economic metrics for broadband, childcare, housing, transportation, workforce and talent attraction, tourism, hospitality, economic indicators, and social indicators is found on NCWRCP's website.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2021

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

Regional Livability Plan (RLP), 2015

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

- **Available Labor Force and Employment.** Businesses need a workforce with the proper education to meet the demands of an ever-changing job market. High labor needs combined with an older workforce preparing for retirement will result in a labor force shortage and inability to meet the workforce needs of area businesses. The future availability of a quality labor force is a major concern for the business community.
- **Living Wage.** Over the past ten years, the region’s cost of living (i.e. home prices and rent) have increased faster than per capita and household incomes. Consequently, many working adults must seek public assistance and/or hold multiple jobs to meet the basic needs of their families. Occupations paying a living wage provide families resources for savings, investments, education, and the purchasing of goods which improves the local economy and increases the quality of life of the region’s population.
- **Broadband –** High-speed broadband connections are crucial for government services, healthcare, education, library systems, private businesses, and residents. Improving the region’s telecommunication network can assist existing businesses, attract new businesses, and allow residents to access education opportunities.

ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2020

This report, developed by the United Way, described the 30 percent of households in Adams County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or “ALICE” households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the “household survival budget,” which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, childcare, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

The ALICE report shows that 56 percent of Big Flats households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, indicating that the average household in Big Flats is more financially strained than the average Adams County (30 percent) and State of Wisconsin household (23 percent).

Adams County Comprehensive Plan, 2018

The Adams County Comprehensive Plan analyzes labor patterns, the economic base, employment projections, and existing facilities. The plan outlines the following goals:

- Maintain, diversify, and expand the economy in the County, while maintaining the rural character of the County.
- Preserve and enhance the quality of life by promoting compatibility with economic development.
- Encourage the coordination of economic development, including tourism efforts, throughout the County and the region.

Adams County Economic Development Strategy, 2016

The Strategy identifies demographic, housing, labor force, and transportation trends throughout Adams County that pertain to the economy. The Strategy also includes a comprehensive assessment of economic indicators for industry earnings, employment projections, location quotient analyses, and cluster analyses. Goals and objectives include fostering and growing entrepreneurship, coordinating economic development and tourism, educating and training the workforce, retaining, expanding, and attracting businesses, improving infrastructure, supporting unique industries, improving livability and quality of life, and increasing visibility of Adams County Economic Development (ACED).

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

County Economic Environment

Adams County’s economic base primarily relies on tourism and hospitality, natural resources, education, healthcare, trade, transportation, and utilities. Much of the tourism-related economy is due to Petenwell and Castle Rock Lakes, the Wisconsin Dells area, and in the Town of Rome. The Town of Rome borders the Town of Big Flats and it features Sand Valley Golf Resort, several lakes and golf courses, and extensive waterfront homes.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Economic Sectors

Table 20 details employment by sector for the Town of Big Flats. In 2021, there were 372 persons employed in the ten basic economic sectors in the Town, down 2.6 percent since 2010. Between 2010 and 2021, three fastest growing sectors in the Town were:

1. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (138.5 percent);
2. Transportation and warehousing, and utilities (136.4 percent); and
3. Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (96.3 percent).

In terms of total employment, the largest segments of the economy were:

1. Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (53 employed);
2. Educational services, and health care and social assistance (52 employed); and
3. Transportation and warehousing, and utilities (52 employed).

In Adams County there were 7,893 persons employed in 2021, down 5.5 percent since 2010. Most people were employed in educational services, and health care and social assistance (1,292), manufacturing (1,239), and retail trade (1,002). The area that experienced the most significant downward trend was construction.

Sector	Town of Big Flats			Adams County		
	2010	2021	% Change	2010	2021	% Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	13	31	138.5%	324	326	0.6%
Construction	38	40	5.3%	710	523	-26.3%
Manufacturing	78	27	-65.4%	1,230	1,239	0.7%
Wholesale trade	6	0	-100.0%	209	166	-20.6%
Retail trade	64	35	-45.3%	1,177	1,002	-14.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	22	52	136.4%	611	504	-17.5%
Information	0	3	N/A	86	76	-11.6%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	9	12	33.3%	336	373	11.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	27	53	96.3%	384	463	20.6%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	51	52	2.0%	1,351	1,292	-4.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	47	34	-27.7%	1,255	981	-21.8%
Other Services, except Public Administration	18	19	5.6%	312	480	53.8%
Public Administration	9	14	55.6%	369	468	26.8%
Total	382	372	-2.6%	8,354	7,893	-5.5%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2021

Labor Force Analysis

Labor Force

Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. Consistent with the Town’s population decrease from 2010 to 2021, the number of people in the labor force has declined slightly. There was one less person over age 16 in 2021 than there was in 2010, for a loss of 0.1 percent. Within this group, 402 were in the labor force, which was 32 fewer people than in 2010, for a decrease of 7.4 percent. This could be due to retirements as the Town’s median age has increased. Adams County saw almost no change (0.0 percent) in working age residents over age 16 during this time, but its labor force decreased by 8.5 percent. Statewide, there was a 6.1 percent increase of those age 16 and older, but a 1.6 percent increase in the state’s labor force. See Table 21.

Table 21: Labor Force									
Category	Town of Big Flats			Adams County			Wisconsin		
	2010	2021	% Change	2010	2021	% Change	2010	2021	% Change
Population 16 years and over	788	787	-0.1%	17,938	17,930	0.0%	4,458,387	4,731,836	6.1%
Labor Force	434	402	-7.4%	9,139	8,366	-8.5%	3,078,465	3,127,362	1.6%
Employed	382	372	-2.6%	8,354	7,893	-5.5%	2,869,310	3,014,612	5.1%
Unemployed	49	30	-38.8%	768	473	-38.4%	204,600	109,017	-46.7%
Unemployment Rate	11.4%	7.5%	-34.2%	8.4%	5.7%	-32.1%	6.7%	3.5%	-47.8%
Participation Rate	55.1%	47.3%	-14.2%	50.9%	46.7%	-8.3%	69.0%	66.1%	-4.2%

Source: ACS 2010 & 2021

Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and total persons employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not considered part of the labor force. In 2010, the Town of Big Flats had 11.4 percent unemployment, and in 2021 unemployment was down to 7.5 percent, which is still historically low. The unemployment rate was higher than in both Adams County (5.7 percent) and the State of Wisconsin (3.5 percent) in 2021.

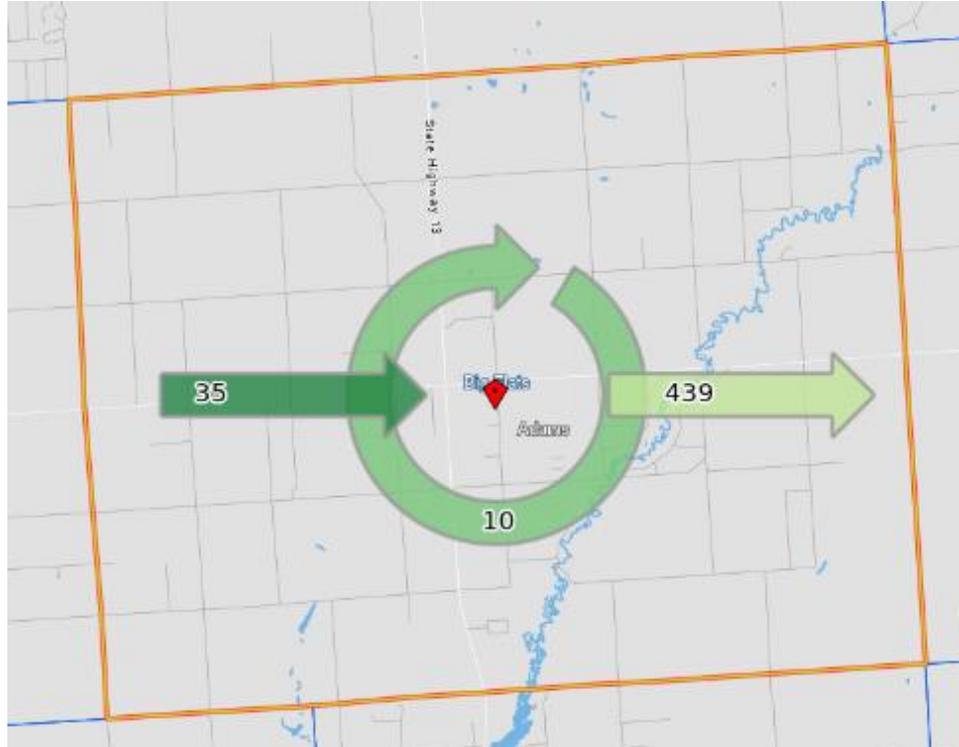
Workforce Participation

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 stay home with children, or are simply not looking for work. In 2010, 55.1 percent of Big Flats' population over the age of 16 was in the labor force. By 2021, that percentage decreased to 47.3 percent. This is similar to Adams County and the state, which both saw a decrease in labor participation rates during the same time. The state participation percentage was 66.1 percent in 2021, while Adams County's participation rate was 46.7 percent in 2021. Lower participation rates compared to the state average could reflect both Big Flats and Adams County's higher proportion of retirees.

Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2020, approximately 10 of the 45 total jobs within the Town of Big Flats were filled by Big Flats residents. About 35 workers traveled to Big Flats during the average workday. There were 439 Big Flats residents that commuted to locations outside of the Town for work, indicating that Big Flats' laborshed extends beyond its municipal boundaries. This is typical in rural areas with limited commercial or industrial areas. Figure 6 shows the inflow-outflow patterns of the Town's laborshed.

Figure 6: Inflow/Outflow Analysis Town of Big Flats, 2019



Source: U.S. Census on the Map 2020

In-Migration

In-commuters come to Big Flats from all over, with 95.6 percent of commuters being the only person commuting from their respective location. The City of Wisconsin Rapids supplies the highest number of commuters with a total of 2, or 4.4 percent of commuters. All other locations supply only 1 worker each. 60 percent of in-commuters come from other communities in Adams County. The great variety of locations commuters come from, some of which are from Chicago suburbs, may be a result of seasonal homeowners who may occasionally work from a seasonal home rather than their primary residence in another location.

Out-Migration

Big Flats residents work in a variety of locations. 39 residents, or 8.7 percent, commute to the City of Adams for employment. This is followed by the Village of Friendship (26 residents, 5.8 percent) and the City of Wisconsin Rapids (20 residents, 4.5 percent). Only 28.5 percent of Big Flats residents work in Adams County; top counties that are employment destinations are Wood, Sauk, and Juneau Counties. Several even commute to locations much farther away including Brown (Green Bay) and Dane (Madison) Counties.

Occupations

Table 22 identifies the five main occupational categories by number and percentage and provides a comparison with the Town, county, and state.

Production, transportation, and material moving occupations are the largest component of the labor force in the Town (31.5 percent). This is followed by management, business, science, and arts occupations (20.4 percent) with similar shares of the remaining occupations. In both the county and the state most workers are in the fields of management, business, science, and arts occupations, followed by sales and office occupations. In Big Flats, there is a considerably higher percentage (16.1 percent) of residents with natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations than countywide (12.2 percent) and statewide (8.9 percent) totals.

Occupation	T. Big Flats		Adams Co.		Wisconsin	
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	76	20.4%	1,787	22.6%	1,180,744	39.5%
Service occupations	60	16.1%	1,648	20.9%	443,972	14.8%
Sales and office occupations	59	15.9%	1,763	22.3%	569,596	19.0%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	60	16.1%	966	12.2%	265,809	8.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	117	31.5%	1,729	21.9%	531,015	17.8%
Total	372	100%	7,893	100%	2,991,136	100%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2021

Economic Development Strengths and Weaknesses

Economic development is an organized process to expand the number and types of businesses, increase employment levels and opportunities, and increase the tax base. A part of the process to prepare for economic development is to identify local strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to promote strengths and address weaknesses.

Residential Strengths and Weaknesses

The Town's strength for attracting and retaining residential development is its rural atmosphere. In addition, the Town provides the basic services needed to support residential growth, such as emergency services and roadways.

The most significant weakness in attracting residential development includes the lack of infrastructure such as water, sewer, and broadband. It is also important to balance residential development with existing woodland uses and natural resources, such as lakes and wetlands.

Business Strengths and Weaknesses

The Town is dominated by residential uses with some home occupation related businesses. Some commercial development is scattered, especially along CTH C and STH 13. There are no industrial parks in the Town.

Weaknesses in attracting commercial or industrial uses are lack of municipal sewer and water, lack of broadband, and lack of suitable land. Commercial and industrial growth are not necessarily desired uses in the Town as they often compete with its natural setting, but the County is actively pursuing Broadband expansion which could help work-from-home employees.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

There are several economic development programs available to businesses and local governments in Adams County. The following is a partial list of those programs.

County

Adams County Chamber of Commerce

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

Adams County Economic Development

ACED is a non-profit organization that promotes the economic development of Adams County, Wisconsin, and its respective cities, villages, and towns. It is comprised of area businesspersons, citizens, local government, utility company representatives, state agencies and elected officials,

educational institutions, and other organizations essential to the growth of Adams County. ACED is prepared to serve the needs of new businesses coming to the area as well as to assist existing companies. ACED administers the Adams County Revolving Loan Fund to assist local businesses.

Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative (ACEC) Revolving Loan Fund

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

Regional

Centergy, Inc.

Centergy, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to assist area counties and communities in their efforts to recruit and retain businesses, stimulate new job creation and to foster an environment conducive to entrepreneurial growth. It was created to foster cooperation among economic development partners and foster economic growth efforts in Adams, Lincoln, Marathon, Portage, and Wood Counties.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The Town is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, as are all local governments in Adams County based on county membership. Membership brings with it a variety of planning benefits and services. Benefits include participation in the Economic Development District, including eligibility for a variety of grants administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. In addition, resulting in membership with the NCWRPC, the county is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation which manages a revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing.

Central Wisconsin Economic Development (CWED) Fund

Revolving loan funds are available to entrepreneurs and their lenders to structure financing packages for start-up and expanding businesses to encourage economic growth in the area. CWED 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.

State

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation is the state's primary department for the delivery of integrated services to businesses. Their purpose is to 1) foster retention of and creation of new jobs and investment opportunities in Wisconsin; 2) foster and promote economic business, export, and

community development; and 3) promote the public health, safety, and welfare through effective and efficient regulations, education, and enforcement. WEDC manages a variety of programs intended to assist businesses and communities, including:

- Brownfield Program
- Capacity Building Grants (CB)
- Certified Sites
- Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- Business Opportunity Loan Fund
- Workforce Training Grants
- Idle Industrial Sites Redevelopment Program
- The Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program
- Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program
- Fast Forward Program

Wisconsin Office of Rural Prosperity (ORP)

As part of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), the Office of Rural Prosperity seeks to foster vibrant, prosperous, and resilient rural communities across Wisconsin. ORP functions as a one-stop shop to help rural stakeholders navigate programs and resources serving rural communities and businesses. ORP's website contains a list of available grant programs, grant writing consultants, and grant writing training opportunities.

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.

The Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC)

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

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

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

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

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

Wisconsin Fast Forward

This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, is a nationally recognized, innovative talent development solution driven by Wisconsin businesses to train and retain highly skilled workers. Grant funds support employer-led worker training projects that:

- Encourage increased collaboration between Wisconsin businesses and workforce training partners.
- Fill current and ongoing skill requirements of Wisconsin employers.
- Place workers in long-term positions with opportunities for professional growth and economic advancement.

Federal

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

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

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

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

Small Business Administration (SBA)

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

Rural Partners Network (RPN)

RPN is a newly created all-of-government program that includes Adams County. It functions as a “one-stop shop” for rural communities to find resources and funding related to creating jobs, building infrastructure, and supporting long-term economic sustainability.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal:

1. Build community identity by revitalizing community character and enforcing building standards.
2. Promote the stabilization of the current economic base.
3. Discourage large scale development that may create excessive traffic flow through residential areas.
4. Encourage new retail, commercial & industrial development to locate adjacent to county or state highways.
5. Prevent industrial development from negatively impacting environmental resources or adjoining property values.
6. Encourage creation of new ordinances that establish minimum aesthetic standards to reduce commercial, industrial, and agricultural property with excessive debris, blight, and dilapidated buildings.

Objective:

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

Policy:

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

Chapter 7: Land Use

Land use analysis is a means of broadly classifying how land is used. Each type of use has its own characteristics that can determine compatibility, location, and preference to other land uses in the Town. The land use plan brings together consideration for both the physical development as well as the social characteristics of the town. Land use mapping and related information is used to analyze the current pattern of development and serves as the framework for formulating how land will be used in the future.

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

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

Adams County Comprehensive Plan, 2018

The Adams County Comprehensive Plan will likely soon be revised for a 2023 or 2024 update. Its chapter on land use analyzes patterns of development, existing land use, and future land use. The 2018 plan sets the following land use goals:

- Encouragement of land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs.
- Provide adequate infrastructure & public services, and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and other uses.
- Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.
- Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
- Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.

EXISTING LAND USE

The Town of Big Flats covers 30,757 acres in the northern portion of Adams County. The Town is bounded by the Town of Rome to the north, the Town of Colburn to the east, the Towns of Strongs Prairie and Preston to the south, and the Town of Monroe to the west.

Knowledge of the existing land use patterns within a town is necessary to develop a desired “future” land use pattern. The Existing Land Use Map was developed using air photos from a countywide flight in 2020, with updates by residents in 2023. Nine basic categories were used to classify the various existing land uses. The categories include Agriculture, Commercial, Governmental/Institutional, Open Lands, Outdoor Recreation, Residential, Transportation, Water, and Woodlands.

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

Existing Land Use Classifications

Map 6 outlines the existing land use pattern throughout the Town. The intent of an existing land use map is to illustrate the location of existing land use categories within the Town for planning purposes. Land use classifications are grouped by the use most central to each parcel. For example, lands classified as residential may also have a barn or home-based business on site.

Existing land use classifications and acreage totals are presented in Table 23. As can be observed, woodlands are the largest land use category, with almost 82 percent or 25,185 acres in the Town. Agriculture follows with a total of 2,613 acres or 8.5 percent. Residential properties occupy 1,341 acres, or 4.4 percent of the town, but there are only 59 acres of commercial property (0.2 percent). Most residences are spread throughout the town, mainly in low density, consisting of seasonal and secluded homes. There is a very limited amount of commercial development scattered throughout the Town, and no industrial land use in the Town.

Table 23: Existing Land Use		
Classification	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	2,613	8.5%
Commercial	59	0.2%
Government/Institutional	36	0.1%
Open Lands	345	1.1%
Outdoor Recreation	4	0.0%
Residential	1,341	4.4%
Transportation	1,060	3.4%
Water	115	0.4%
Woodlands	25,185	81.9%
Total	30,758	100.0%

Source: NCWRPC

Managed Forest Law (MFL) & Public Lands

There are 15,692 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, which are subject to a substantial reduction in property taxes. There are no county forests in the Town, however, Adams County is planning to purchase land in Sections 8 and 9 in the Town for the County’s Forestry Program. Additionally, the WDNR owns approximately 200 acres of forest at the southwest corner of 8th Drive and Buttercup Avenue, and approximately 80 acres north of Beaver Avenue near its intersection with 14th Avenue. There is extensive forest land with Forest Legacy Program easements owned by the Sand Valley Restoration Fund, LLC, located between 13th and 16th Avenues and Badger and Browndeer Avenues.

Land Supply and Demand

The population and number of households in the Town of Big Flats has increased since 1990. DOA population and household projections predict an increase in population through 2035, which then levels off and slightly declines by 2040. There are a limited number of commercial uses and no industrial uses throughout the Town, and this is not expected to change significantly. As shown by the existing land use inventory, a substantial portion of the Town is undeveloped woodlands, so the supply of land available for development appears to be adequate. However, the Town must balance long-term development and growth against priorities for preservation of woodland properties, determining the most desirable residential parcel sizes, and appropriate development patterns for both residential and commercial uses.

Table 24 shows the estimated land demand in acres between now and 2040. These use the population projections from the Wisconsin DOA described in chapter 1. However, because DOA’s population projection for 2020 was 1,100, but ACS’s estimated population was 925, this table subtracts 175 people from each WDOA population projection in the future for an “adjusted” population projection.

Using the current residential density of 1.45 acres per person, an expected 173 acres are needed for residential development altogether by 2035. Using the same projections and 0.06 existing acres of commercial development per person, an expected 7 acres of commercial land are needed by 2035. 2035 is when the population is expected to peak, and the totals for each year are cumulative. It is expected that much of this development will occur on land that is currently agriculture, open lands, or woodlands, since these areas have abundant acreage and few barriers to development. There was no known industrial land use in the Town as of 2023, and therefore, no industrial acreage is projected to be needed.

Table 24: Estimated Land Demand in Acres				
Category	2025	2030	2035	2040
Adjusted projected population	990	1,035	1,045	1,030
Agricultural/Open Lands/Woodland	-98	-165	-180	-158
Residential (1.45 ac/person)	94	158	173	151
Commercial (0.06 ac/person)	4	7	7	6
Industrial (0 ac/person)	0	0	0	0

Source: Wisconsin DOA, NCWRPC

Land Values

Table 25 displays the assessed land values in the Town of Big Flats. It is important to note that lands that are tax exempt, such as Town Hall or Rabbit Rock Park, would not have a taxable value to report. Additionally, industrial uses are absent, resulting in no taxable land in the manufacturing category. Overall, land value per acre for non-tax-exempt land in the Town is valued at about \$6,781 per acre based on assessed land values from Adams County tax information. Commercial properties have the highest value per acre, followed by “other” land. Note that total acres is calculated much differently by using parcel boundaries, rather than by air photos as in Table 23. Uses like water or transportation are not reported in Table 25 like they are in Table 23. Therefore, acreage totals vary greatly between the two methods of calculation used for Tables 23 and 25.

Table 25: Town of Big Flats Land Values, 2022			
Land Classification	Total Value of Land and Improvements	Total Acres	Average Value per Acre
Residential	\$79,803,800	5,213	\$15,309
Commercial	\$2,287,900	60	\$38,132
Manufacturing	\$0	0	#DIV/0!
Agricultural	\$310,200	2,472	\$125
Undeveloped	\$582,700	656	\$888
Ag - Forest	\$526,100	406	\$1,296
Forest	\$14,872,900	5,796	\$2,566
Other	\$806,100	24	\$33,588
Total	\$99,189,700	14,627	\$6,781

Source: Wisconsin DOR, NCWRPC

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Much of the Town is wooded and undeveloped, and some developed areas may not meet current development standards or may have fallen into disrepair since they were initially developed. Some of these properties may need rehabilitation rather than needing a comprehensive redevelopment strategy. Revitalizing existing developed properties minimizes the need for new infrastructure to serve new development while retaining the Town’s rural character. As the Town’s population ages, there may be a need to encourage uses like clinics, small grocery stores, or senior/ADA-accessible housing as fewer people will be able to drive for these basic services.

Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Existing land uses include agriculture, commercial, government and institutional, open lands, outdoor recreation, residential, transportation, woodlands, and water. Note that outdoor recreation differs from woodlands and open lands in that it identifies developed, active recreation like ball fields or golf courses. Conflicts include a seasonal population that is greater than the year-round population and the impacts that vacation rental homes have on housing availability and affordability for year-round residents.

Although there is an abundance of undeveloped land and stable land ownership, pressure to convert it to residential use may conflict with the Town’s desire to retain its wooded character. A lack of public water and sewer facilities helps limit excessive development in the Town.

FUTURE LAND USE

Map 7 is the Future Land Use Plan Map, which illustrates the desired arrangement of preferred land uses for the future of the Town of Big Flats. The Future Land Use Map is general in nature and was developed as a guide for future development in the Town. Although the future land use plan map indicates appropriate future land uses, it is not a zoning map. In many areas the existing zoning districts already reflect the desired future land uses; while in other areas, zoning map or text changes may be required to meet some desired future land use.

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

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

Future Land Use Map Classifications

Agriculture

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

Commercial

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

Forestry

Identifies areas of large woodlands within the county, including commercial forest.

Governmental/Public/Institutional

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

Preservation and Open Space

Identifies those areas to be maintained as permanent or semi-permanent open space. The three buttes in the town should be preserved for the visual enjoyment of all. Two buttes are located adjacent to creeks in sections 12 & 34. The other is located in Rabbit Rock Park, operated by the Town in section 29.

Residential

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

Rural Residential

The rural residential classification is designed to provide for low-density, single-family residences located in natural forested, rural settings using larger lot sizes. Development may be clustered which could preserve longer stretches of forest and reduce the amount of infrastructure needed to serve rural properties.

Transportation and Utilities

Identifies the existing road network along with the recommendations for safe and improved traffic movement within the Town, as well as locations of facilities that serve utility networks.

Water

Identifies surface waterbodies.

LAND USE TOOLS

The principal land use program in Wisconsin is the comprehensive planning program. The primary land use tools are zoning, subdivision ordinance, and official mapping.

Zoning

Under Wisconsin Statutes, counties and local units of government are authorized to adopt zoning ordinances. Zoning is a method for implementing or carrying out the land use plan by predetermining a logical pattern of land use development. The Town of Big Flats recently adopted its own Zoning Ordinance in 2022.

A zoning ordinance consists of a map and written text. The zoning map arranges the community into districts or zones, such as agriculture, residential, commercial, or industrial. Within each of these districts, the text of zoning ordinance specifies the permitted land uses, the size of buildings, yard/lot dimensions, and other prerequisites in obtaining permission to develop. The goal of the zoning ordinance is to set a reasonable development pattern by keep similar and related uses together and separating dissimilar, unrelated, incompatible uses, particularly in relationship to transportation facilities, utilities and public services and facilities.

Shoreland Zoning

Shoreland Zoning is administered by Adams County. All counties are mandated by Wisconsin law to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates development in shoreland and floodplain areas for the entire county outside of villages and cities in accordance with state shoreland zoning standards.

Towns may apply their own zoning in shoreland areas as long as it does not impose requirements on matters regulated by a county.

Land Division

At present, land division within the Town of Big Flats is regulated by the Land Division Ordinance #35 of the Town's Code of Ordinances. Subdivision regulation relates to the way in which land is divided and made ready for development. A community can control the subdivision of land by requiring a developer to meet certain conditions in exchange for the privilege of recording a plat. While imposing conditions restricts the use of private property, the cumulative effect of land subdivision on the health, safety, and welfare of a community is so great as to justify public control of the process.

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

The Town's land division ordinance provides the Town with the means to review and regulate new divisions of land to ensure consistency with the vision, goals, objectives, land protection criteria, and other recommendations of an adopted plan. This requires administration and enforcement by the Town, involving Town funding and an layer of government involved in regulating proposals for land divisions.

Official Mapping

An Official Map is a map adopted by a municipality that specifies locations of future roads and other utilities or public facilities, along with right-of-way widths and other specifications. When a land division is approved, it must accommodate dimensions for future facilities according to the Official Map. Currently, the Town of Big Flats does not have an official map.

Other Tools

Additional tools and approaches can be utilized by the Town to achieve the goals of the plan. These include but are certainly not limited to the following: fee simple land acquisition, easements (purchased or volunteered), deed restrictions, land dedication, and ordinances or programs regulating activities such as impact fees, land division, building permits, and erosion control.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Promote the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and maintain and rehabilitate existing residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial structures.
2. Encourage land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
3. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services to meet existing and future market demand for residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial uses.
4. Plan and develop land uses that preserve the rural community.
5. Reduce the risks associated with wildfires.

Objectives:

1. Maintain orderly, planned growth which promotes the health, safety and general welfare of residents and makes efficient use of land and efficient use of public services, facilities, and tax dollars.
2. Prevent new development from negatively impacting the natural environment or existing property.
3. Provide for a mix of land uses within the town.
4. Promote new land development that is consistent with this plan.
5. Encourage the CWPP Plan Commission to develop and prioritize an annual list of mitigation projects.

Policies:

1. Maintain the comprehensive plan, which will serve as a guide for future land use decisions. Permit new development based on consideration of this Plan, as well as other Town, County, Regional, and State plans and regulations.
2. Minimize both the loss of productive farmland and the potential for conflicts between existing and proposed land uses by encouraging proper land uses and building locations.
3. Encourage land uses and building locations that minimize fragmentation of large, contiguous forest tracts.
4. Encourage conservation easements and other tools to protect environmentally sensitive or unique resources.

5. Update existing land use regulations to be consistent with this plan.
6. Annually select which priority mitigation projects to implement from the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or the CWPP Plan Commission.

Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation

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

OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

- A local government’s financial situation
- 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.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

School Districts

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Big Flats is served by the Adams-Friendship Area School District and has a good standing relationship with the district. There are no school district facilities located within the Town.

Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

Mid-State Technical College is a public two-year technical college with locations in Adams, Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids. There are no four-year campuses in Adams County, and the nearest is the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. The main form of interaction with both school and college districts are through payment of property taxes, which help to fund district operations. The Town has had no participation in issues pertaining to administration or siting of new facilities. All school and college board meetings are open to the public.

Town Services

The Town of Big Flats provides Fire and contracted EMS services. See Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities for more details.

Adjoining Units of Government

There are no known conflicts with adjoining units of government at the time of this plan’s adoption.

Adams County

Adams County directly and indirectly provides several services to the Town, and the Town enjoys a good working relationship with many of the responsible departments. These departments include law enforcement through the Sheriff’s Office, 911 dispatch services, maintenance, and improvement of county highways, planning and permitting oversight regarding shoreland, wetland and floodplain regulation, and private sewage system regulation.

In many cases where state and federal agencies require area-wide planning for various programs or regulations, Adams County sponsors a county-wide planning effort to complete these plans and

include each individual local unit in the process and resulting final plan. Examples of this include the County Outdoor Recreation plan which maintains the eligibility for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources administered park and recreation development funding of each local unit that adopts it, and All Hazard Mitigation Plans which are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in order for individual local units of government to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funding. Other plans, though not required by law, may apply to the whole County. For example, in 2013, the County created a Countywide Bike/Ped Route Plan.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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

State and Federal Government

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

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland, lakes, and other wildlife habitat areas, while Wisconsin Department of Transportation is responsible for the planning and development of state highways, railways, airports, and other transportation systems. State agencies make several grant and aid programs available to local units of government like the Town of Big Flats. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Plan (LRIP) and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also several mandates passed down from the state that the Town must comply with, such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). Most federal programs are administered by the states, so the Town should work with the responsible state agency regarding federal programs and regulations.

EXISTING OR POTENTIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICTS

The Town has a good working relationship with other governmental agencies. 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 Big Flats will continue to meet with governmental entities when significant issues of mutual concern arise.

PROGRAMS

Wisconsin State Statutes provide a variety of options for local government to work with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions to achieve various planning goals. These programs help overcome intergovernmental barriers and challenges communities have when addressing land use issues or providing adequate public services.

Intergovernmental Cooperation (Wisconsin Statute 66.0301)

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

Intergovernmental agreements prepared in accordance with §66.0301, formerly §66.30, are the most common forms of agreement and have been used by communities for years, often in the context of sharing public services such as law enforcement, 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 must be accomplished through the normal annexation process.

Municipal Revenue Sharing (Wisconsin Statute 66.0305)

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

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

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Encourage coordination and cooperation among nearby units of governments.

Objectives:

1. Promote communication with other units of government, including adjoining towns, the county, the state, and federal government.
2. Provide services in a more cost-effective manner by joining with other units of government.

Policies:

1. Identify alternative solutions to existing or potential land use, administration or policy conflicts that may hinder intergovernmental cooperation.
2. Meet periodically with adjoining units of government to discuss issues of mutual concern.
3. Review on a regular basis existing shared service agreements and explore additional agreements.

Chapter 9: Implementation

A primary reason for a community to prepare a comprehensive plan is to establish a framework for the future, especially as it relates to decisions regarding growth and regulation of development to protect and maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the community. A plan also helps to set priorities for public expenditures. To be effective, this plan should be actively used as a tool to guide decisions concerning:

- The implementation and enforcement of regulatory ordinances based on the goals and objectives identified in this plan.
- The development of programs and support systems that further the goals and objectives set forth in this plan.
- The location of specific land uses as identified in the comprehensive plan and based on goals and objectives.
- The establishment and support of a continued planning process providing for periodic review and updates to this plan and other land use control measures.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Having the appropriate tools to implement the recommendations in this comprehensive plan is critical. Zoning ordinance and subdivision (or land division) regulations are used to protect existing development and guide future growth and development as identified in this comprehensive plan. There are also non-regulatory approaches to implementing the comprehensive plan. These generally involve decisions about how the community will spend its limited funding resources on capital improvements, staffing and maintenance. These decisions will affect the development demand and the location of development in the Town.

The state planning law requires certain programs and/or actions that affect land use must be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan. Following the adoption of this comprehensive plan update, the Town of Big Flats should evaluate and update, as necessary, its related ordinances to ensure meeting this requirement.

Zoning Ordinance and Map

The Town of Big Flats Zoning Ordinance and Map are the primary land use regulations for the Town. Zoning is used to manage and control how land is used and developed. The County Zoning Ordinance establishes detailed regulations concerning how land may be developed, including setbacks, the density or intensity of development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose of zoning is to minimize undesirable externalities from development by segregating and/or buffering incompatible uses and by maintaining standards that ensure development will not negatively impact the community's character or environment. The Zoning Ordinance also controls the scale and form of development, which heavily influences how people will interact with their environment and their neighbors.

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

Subdivision (Land Division) Ordinance

Land division within the Town of Big Flats is regulated by Adams County Land Division and Parcel Modification Ordinance. Subdivision regulations are an important tool ensuring the orderly development of unplatted and/or undeveloped land. These regulations may regulate lot sizes, road access, street design, public utilities, storm water drainage, parks and open space, and other improvements necessary to ensure that new development functions with its surroundings.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

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

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

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

The preparation of a CIP is normally a joint responsibility between the Town Board, Plan Commission, staff, and citizen committees. The preparation of a capital improvement program may vary from community to community depending on local preferences, the local form of government and available staff. The proposed capital improvement plan should be reviewed considering the priorities outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Annual Operating Budget

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

Brownfield Redevelopment

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

CONSISTENCY AMONG PLAN CHAPTERS

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

PLAN ADOPTION, AMENDMENTS, UPDATES, AND MONITORING

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

Plan Adoption

The first step in implementing this plan involves adoption of the plan by local officials. The formal review and adoption process involves plan review by the Plan Commission which must recommend the plan to the Town Board via resolution. The Plan Commission recommendation is forwarded to the Town Board who must adopt the plan by ordinance. A public hearing is required to allow public comment on the ordinance during a 30-day review period prior to final action to adopt the plan. Adoption formalizes the plan document as the framework to guide local development decisions over the next 20 years. The adopted plan should also be recognized as a tool for communicating the community's land use policy and goals and objectives regarding coordination of growth and development.

Plan Amendments

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

The following criteria shall be considered when reviewing plan amendments:

- The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
- The change is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan.
- The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
- Development resulting from the change does not create an undue impact on surrounding properties. Such development shall be consistent with the physical character of its surrounding environment or would upgrade and improve its viability.
- The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
- The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment that cannot be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.
- There is a change in town actions or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
- There is a community or regional need identified in the comprehensive plan for the proposed land use or service.

- The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration, or dedication.
- The change does not adversely affect water quality and the overall health of residents.

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

Plan Updates

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

Plan Monitoring

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

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

This plan should be evaluated at least every five years and updated at least every ten years. Members of the Town Board, Planning Commission, and any other local decision-making bodies should periodically review the plan and identify areas that might need to be updated. The evaluation should involve first reviewing the goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires. Then the strategies and actions should be reviewed and refined to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate.

Recommendations:

1. The Town Board should use the Plan as a guide when making decisions, especially those that relate to growth and development. The Plan Commission and any other official committee of the Town should also use the Plan in their efforts as well.
2. The Town should encourage citizen awareness of the comprehensive plan by making copies available, making reference to it at public meetings and Town newsletters, and displaying a copy of the future and use plan map in the Town Hall. Neighboring local units of government and others will receive copies of the Plan.
3. The Town has recently adopted a zoning ordinance to supplement the shoreland areas covered under county zoning. Beyond that, there are some additional tools and approaches that can be utilized by the Town to achieve the goals of the Plan. These include but are certainly not limited to the following: land division, official mapping, fee simple land acquisition, easements, deed restrictions, land dedication, and ordinances or programs regulating activities such as building permits, erosion control, or septic pumping, etc. The Town should consider these tools as needed.
4. Amendments to this Plan may include minor changes to the plan text or maps, and/or major changes resulting from periodic review. Wisconsin Law requires that the same process used to adopt the Plan to be used to make any amendments. The steps are outlined below:
 - An amendment or change may be initiated by either the Town Board or Plan Commission, a request from a resident, or may result from a regular review of the Plan.
 - The Plan Commission prepares the specific text or map amendment being considered, holds a public meeting and votes to recommend approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment, by resolution to the Town Board.
 - A copy of the proposed Plan amendment is sent to all affected government units, including Adams County.
 - Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town Board public hearing on the proposed changes.
 - The Town Board conducts the public hearing and votes to either approve, disapprove, or approve with changes.

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

5. Periodic updating of the Plan is necessary to ensure that it reflects the desires of the Town's residents. The Plan Commission should review the Plan on an annual basis and conduct an in-depth review of the plan every five years. At a minimum the Plan must be updated every ten years. The annual review should compare how decisions made during the year, especially land use decisions, are

related to the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan. If decisions are inconsistent with the Plan, changes need to be made. The update should consider the following to maintain consistency in the land development process:

- Revision should be made to bring decision-making back in line with the Plan's goals, objectives, and policies.
- The goals, objectives, and policies should be reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and worthwhile in the Town.
- New implementation tools should be considered to gain more control over decisions.

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

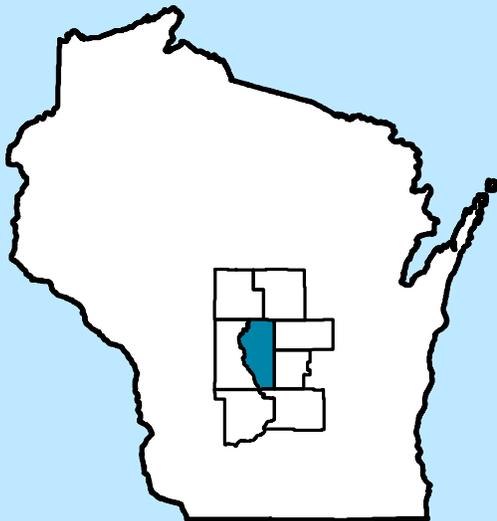
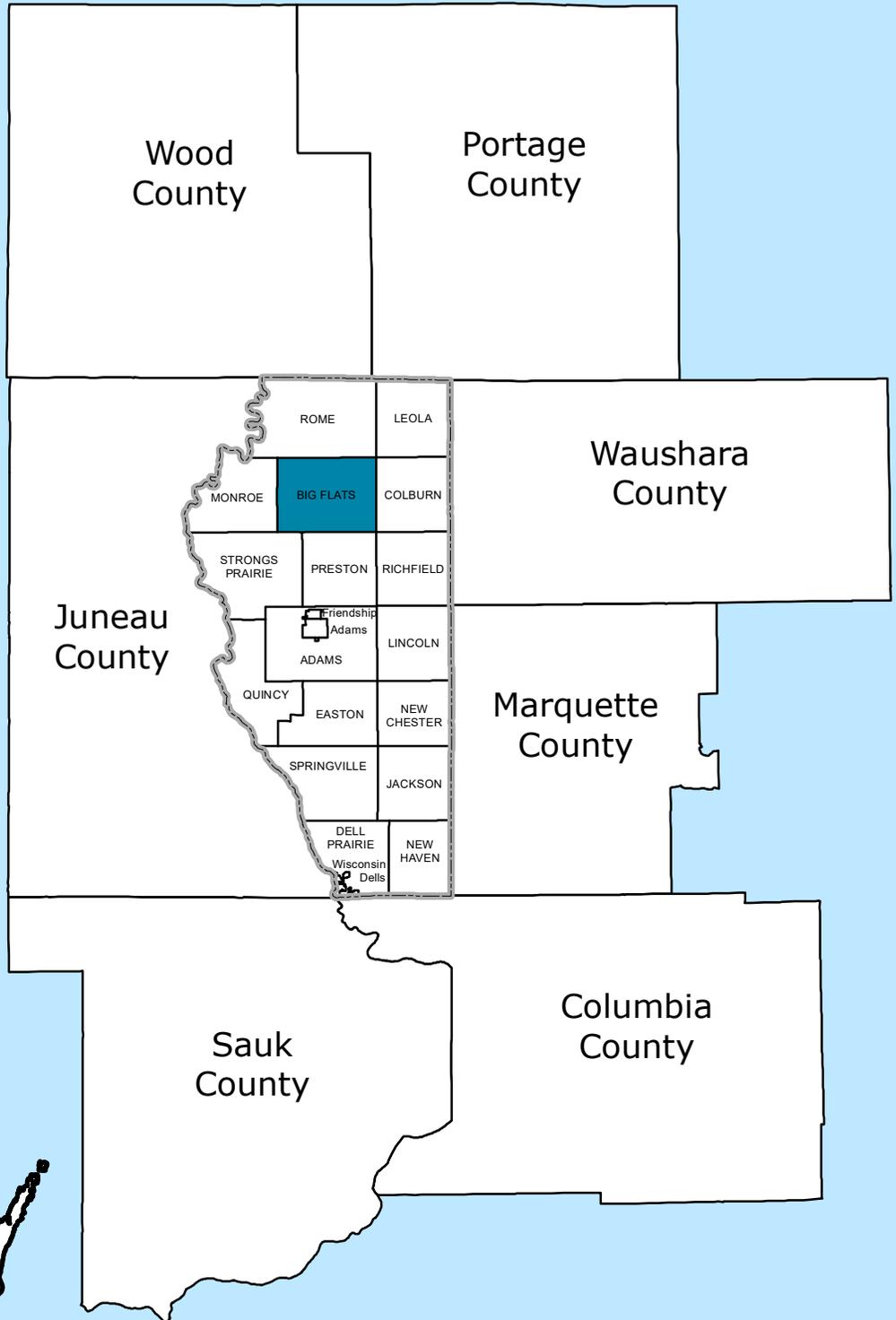
Consistency Among Plan Elements

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

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Location

Town of Big Flats
Adams County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC

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.



North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission

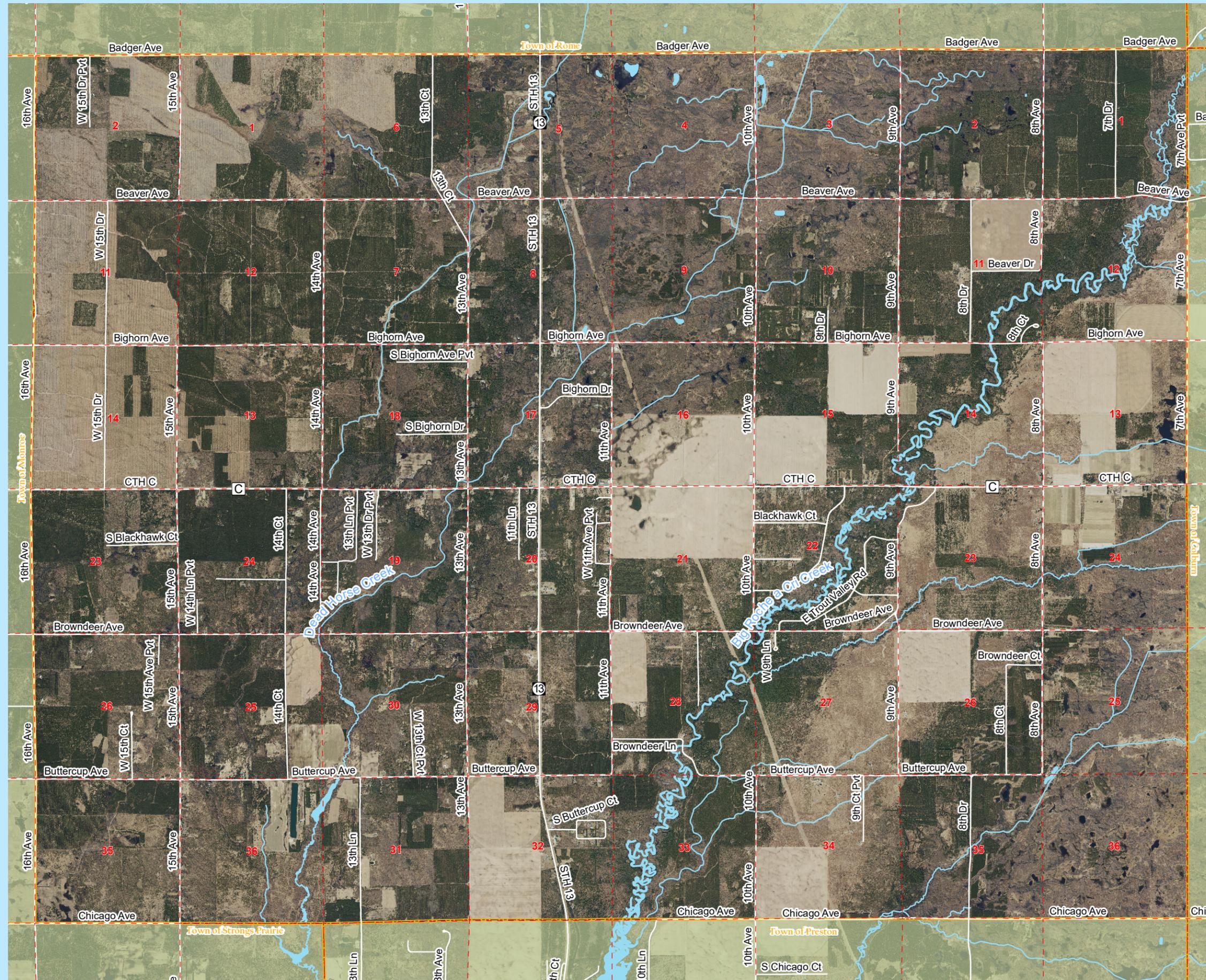
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Planning Area

Town of Big Flats

Adams County, Wisconsin



Legend

-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Section Lines
-  Roads
-  Water



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC
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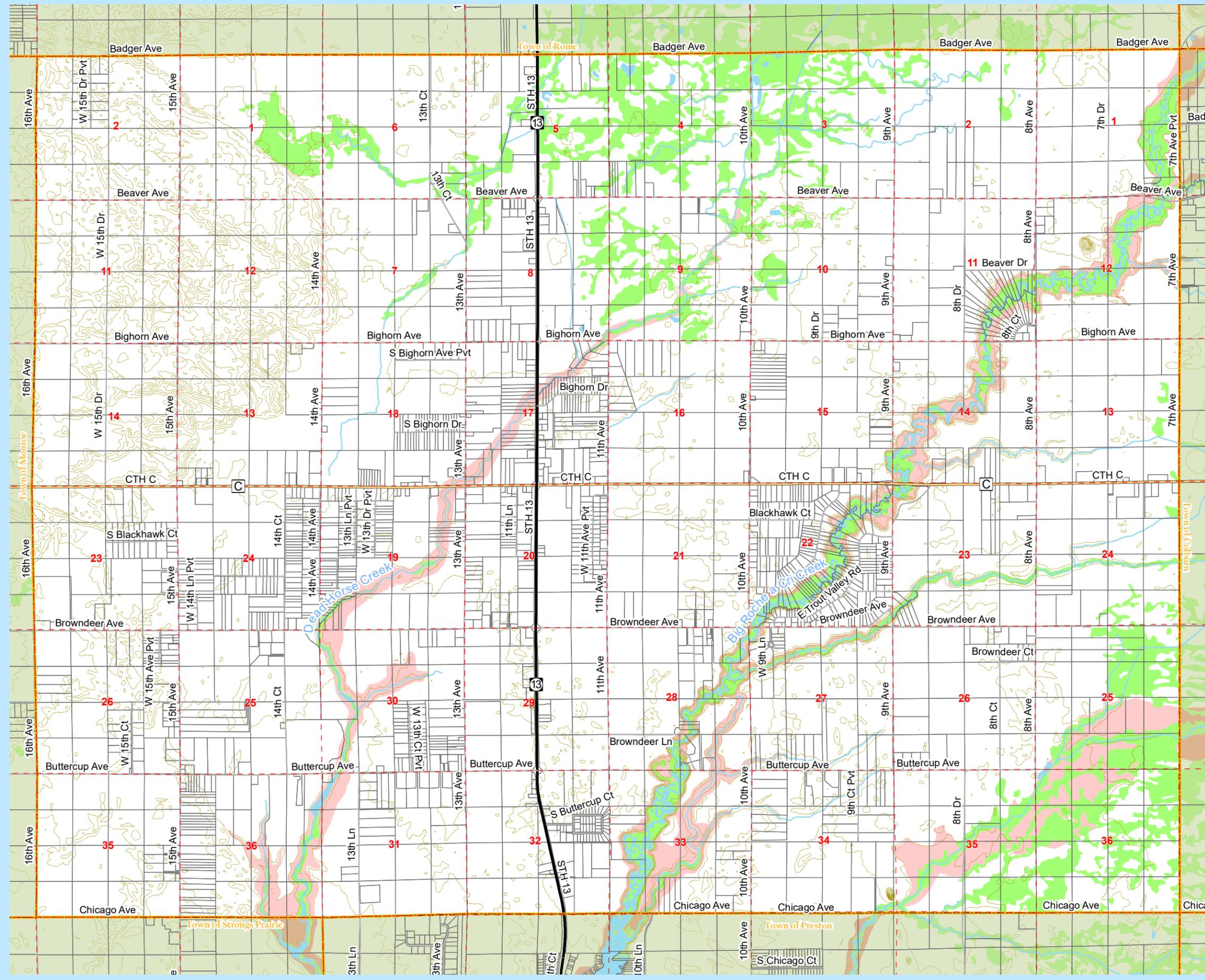
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Natural Resources

Town of Big Flats

Adams County, Wisconsin



Legend

- Section Lines
- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Parcels
- Water
- Contours 10ft
- Wetlands
- Floodplains



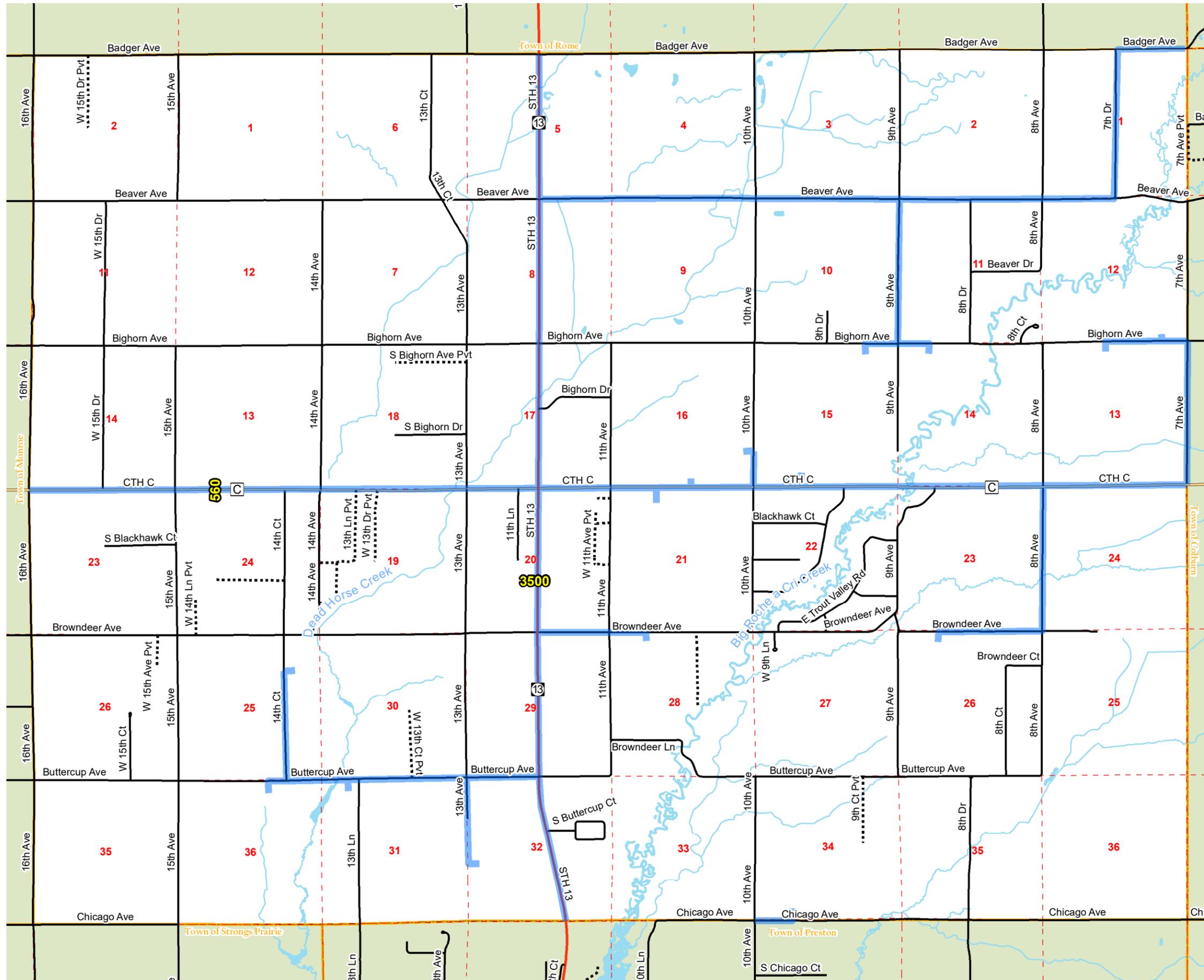
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Legend

-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Private Roads
-  Animal Husbandary Routes
-  Section Lines
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  3500 ADT - 2021



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC
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Community Facilities and Utilities

Town of Big Flats

Adams County, Wisconsin

Legend

-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Private Roads
-  Section Lines
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  Cemeteries
-  Fire Station
-  Former Landfill
-  Landfill
-  Non-Metallic Mines
-  Phone Substation
-  Salt Shed
-  Town Hall
-  Transfer Site
-  Communication Towers
-  Pipeline
-  High_Voltage_Powerline
-  Substations
-  Park

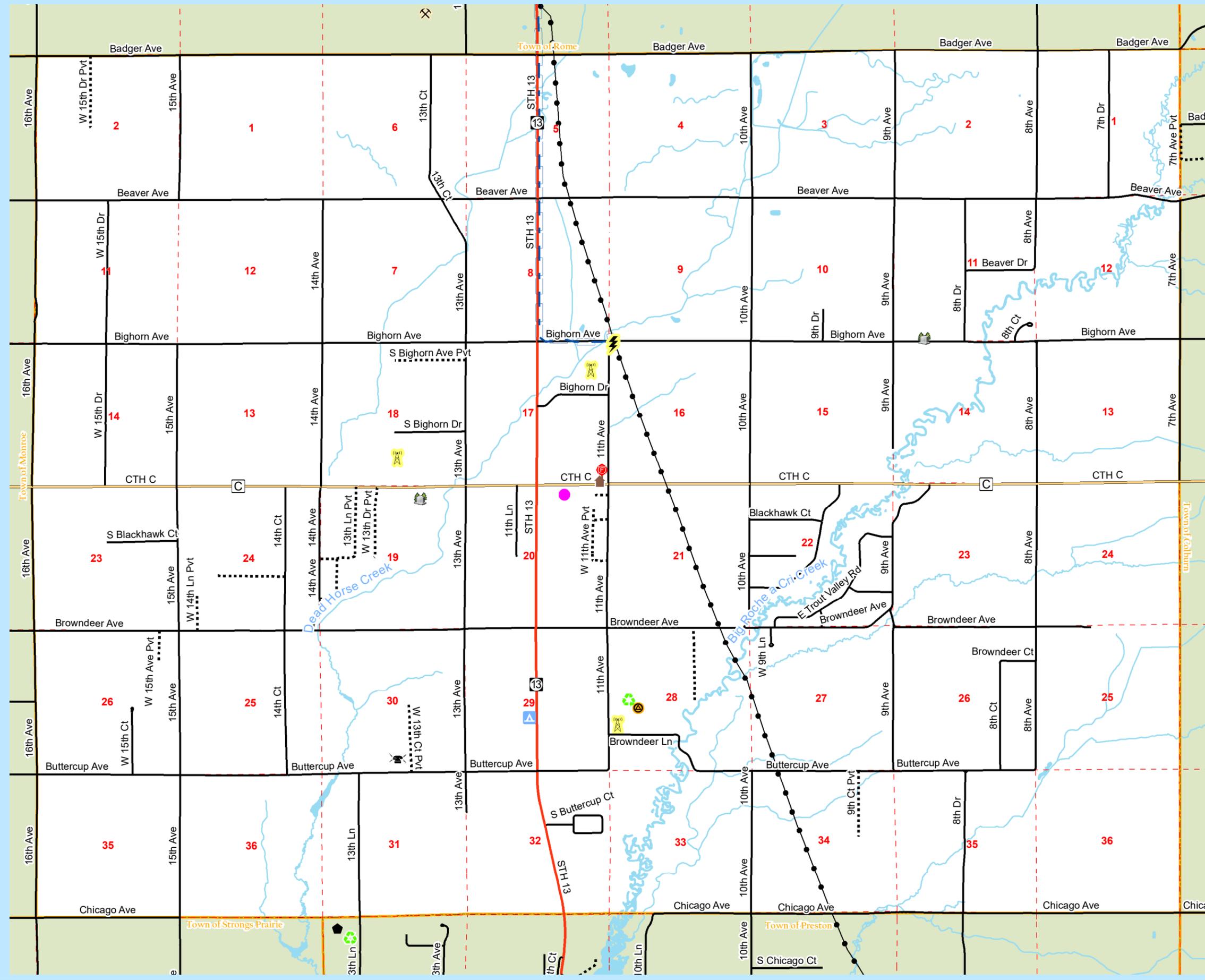


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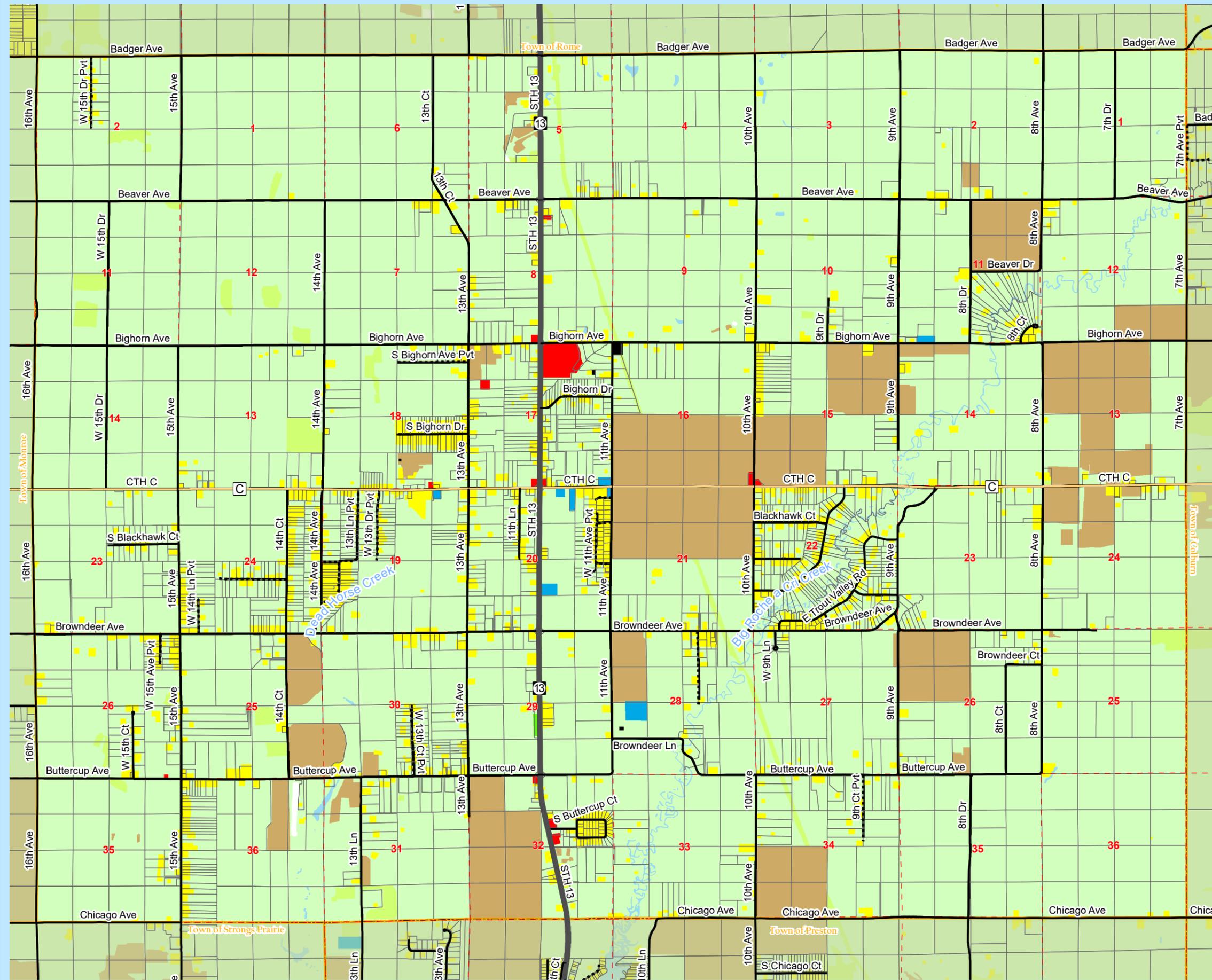


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Generalized Existing Land Use

Town of Big Flats

Adams County, Wisconsin



Legend

- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Section Lines
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Parcels
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Governmental / Institutional
- Open Lands
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Transportation and Utilities
- Woodlands
- Water



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC
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Future Land Use Town of Big Flats Adams County, Wisconsin

Legend

- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Section Lines
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Parcels
- Agricultural Areas
- Commercial
- Forestry Areas
- Governmental/Public/Institutional
- Preservation and Open Space
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Transportation
- Water

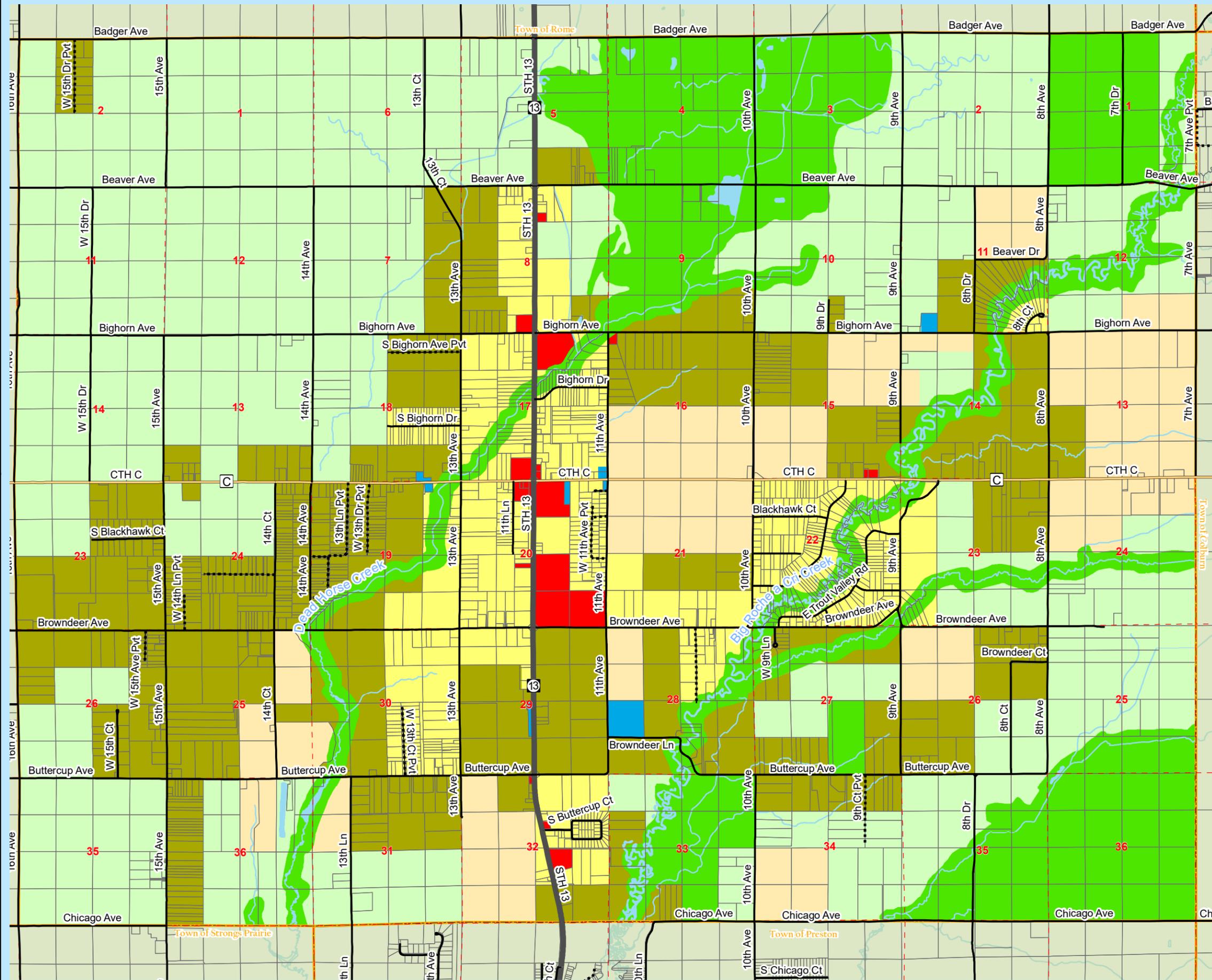


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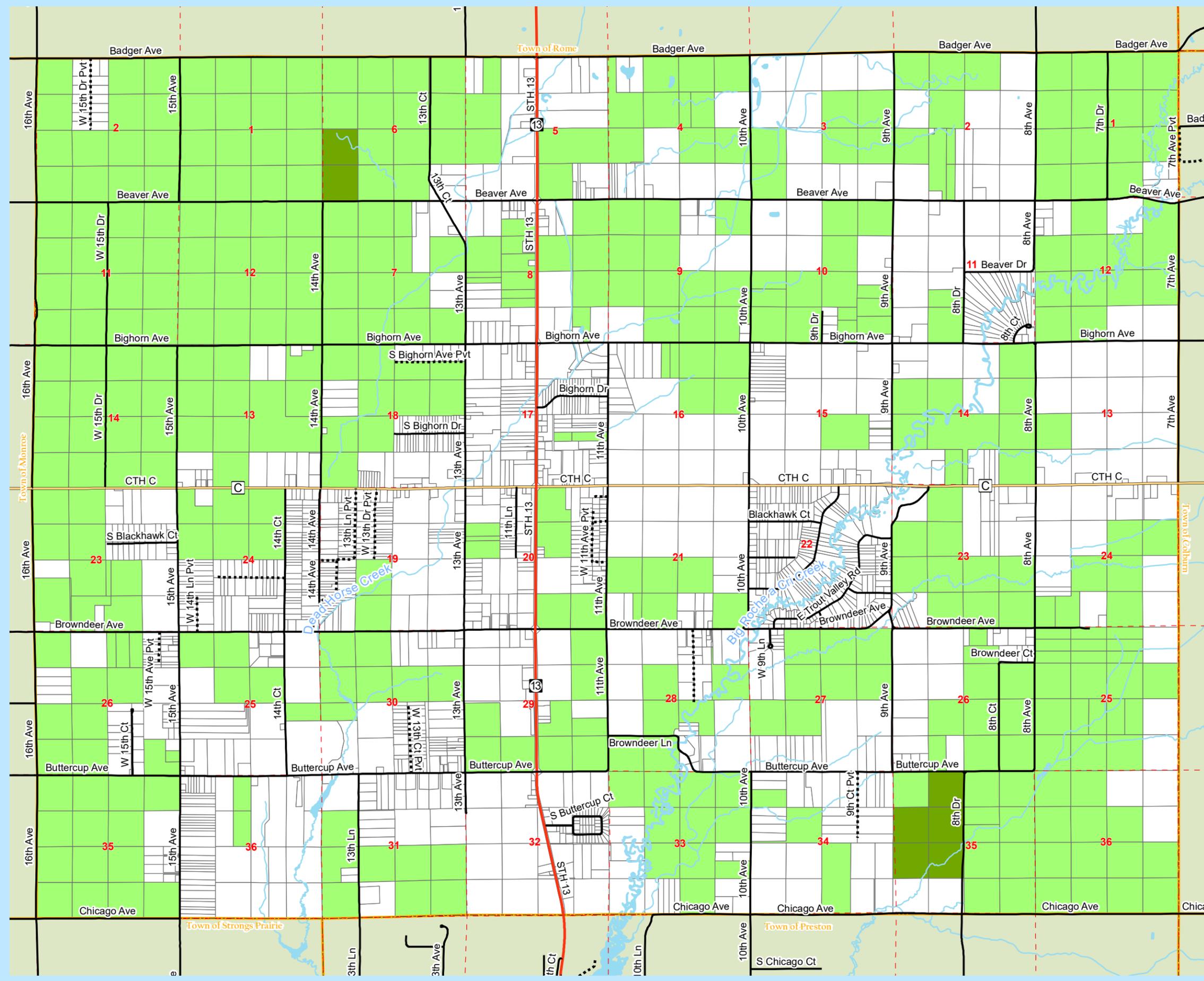


**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
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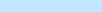
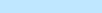
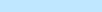
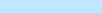
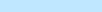
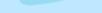
210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org



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Legend

-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Private Roads
-  Section Lines
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  Private
-  MFL
-  State of Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC
 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.



**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

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

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COPY

Town of Big Flats Public Participation Plan (PPP)

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

I. Plan Development:

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

The public participation plan will incorporate the following:

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

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

II. Implementation, Evaluation & Update:

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

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

Any planning process is subject to change, and this public participation plan is no different. Over the planning period the process may vary from that presented.

Resolution 2023-01
Public Participation Plan

COPY

THE TOWN OF BIG FLATS DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

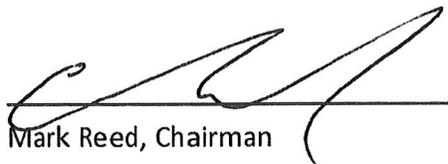
WHEREAS, the Town of Big Flats is updating its Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

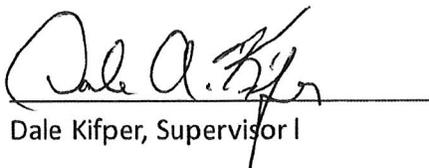
WHEREAS, public participation is critical for the development of a plan; and

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 of Big Flats, Adams County, Wisconsin does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as attached to this resolution.

We, the town board of the Town of Big Flats, Adams County, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted as the Regular Town Board Meeting, held at the Town Hall of Big Flats on this 9th day of May, 2023.


Mark Reed, Chairman


Dale Kifer, Supervisor I


Michael Clark, Supervisor II




Attest, Terri L. Horacek, Clerk

PLAN COMMISSION RESOLUTION
RESOLUTION #2023-02

Town of Big Flats, Wisconsin

The Plan Commission of Town of Big Flats, 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 Big Flats as follows:

Adoption of the Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Big Flats 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 Big Flats Comprehensive Plan are incorporated into and made a part of the Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan.

The vote of the Town of Big Flats Plan Commission in regard to this resolution shall be recorded by the clerk of the Town of Big Flats Plan Commission in the official minutes of the Town of Big Flats Plan Commission.

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

Adopted this 26 day of July 2023.



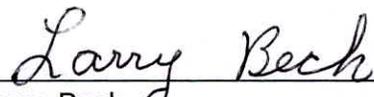
Wendy Goerke



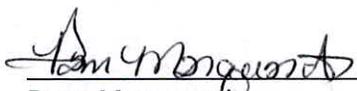
Mark Reed



Michael Clark



Larry Beck



Pam Marquardt

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
Town of Big Flats
Planning Commission

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing for comments on the Recommended Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan shall be held at the Town of Big Flats Town Hall, 1104 County Road C on September 12, 2023, at 6:00 PM. The proposed comprehensive plan has been distributed as outlined in the statute.

Terri Horacek, Clerk for the Town, may be contacted to provide additional information on the proposed comprehensive plan and ordinance at 608-564-7754 or clerk@tn.bigflats.wi.gov during the following times:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

A copy of the comprehensive plan may be reviewed prior to the hearing at the Town Hall during the following times:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

The plan is also available on the Town's website at
www.bigflatswi.com

Printed this 9th day of August, 2023
Terri L. Horacek
Town of Big Flats Clerk

ORDINANCE FOR PLAN ADOPTION

ORDINANCE #2023-01

Town of Big Flats, Wisconsin

SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE

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

SECTION II – AUTHORITY

The Town Board of Town of Big Flats has authority under its Town 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 Town of Big Flats 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 Town of Big Flats 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 Big Flats 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 Town of Big Flats has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by s. 66.1001 (4) (a), Wis. stats.

SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Plan Commission of Town of Big Flats, 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 Big Flats Comprehensive Plan, which contains all the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

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

SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY

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

SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

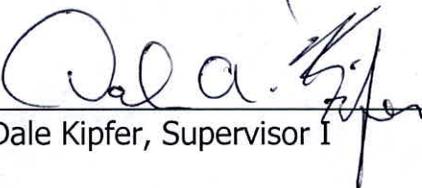
This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

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

Adopted this 12 day of Sept. 2023



Mark Reed, Chairman



Dale Kipfer, Supervisor I



Michael Clark, Supervisor II

Attest:



Terri L. Horacek, Town Clerk



TOWN OF BIG FLATS COMMUNITY SURVEY 2021

*With the approval of the Big Flats Town Board, the Plan Commission is undertaking a community survey to help the town gather information on how it should plan for future growth. This survey will address issues important to the Town, such as existing land uses, environmentally sensitive areas, and the physical appearance of the Town. As part of the data collection, this survey is designed to obtain community opinions and attitudes regarding the Town's future development, and to provide guidance in developing community goals and plan implementation strategies. Your opinions and vision for Big Flats are greatly appreciated. Your answers are confidential, and all responses will remain anonymous. Please complete and return this survey by **December 31, 2021** to: **TOWN OF BIG FLATS, 1104 COUNTY RD C, ARKDALE, WI 54613** (A self-addressed envelope is provided.) Thank you!*

TOWN IMPRESSIONS:

1. What do you like MOST about living in or owning property in the TOWN OF BIG FLATS? See Excel results

2. What do you like LEAST about living in or owning property in the TOWN OF BIG FLATS? See Excel results

3. How long have you lived and/or owned property in the Town of Big Flats?
(84) 5 years or less (60) 6 - 10 years (87) 11-20 years (206) more than 20 years

4. Is there a house on this property? (306) Yes (127) No

5. Which of the following best describes your property in Big Flats?
(162) Primary residence (199) Seasonal residence (70) Non-resident undeveloped (5) Commercial or Ag

6. Do you use your property for camping? (101) Yes (329) No

7. Is your property...
(35) in a subdivision
(212) an individual lot 1 acre to 5 acres in size
(171) an individual lot greater than 5 acres in size (non farm)
(7) a farm
(19) Other

8. Which one of the following statements best describes how you feel about development in the Town of Big Flats. (Development is defined as residential, commercial, or agricultural growth. Please check one)
(76) In general there is too much development in the town of Big Flats
(98) In general, more development is needed in the town of Big Flats
(243) In general, the current pace of development is about right in the town of Big Flats

9. Would you support or oppose additional residential development in the town of Big Flats?
(32) Support (34) Oppose (35) No opinion

10. Would you support or oppose additional small business development in the town of Big Flats?
(300) Support (14) Oppose (72) No opinion

(Please continue on other side)

11. Would you support or oppose large-scale industrial development in the town of Big Flats?

(66) Support (286) Oppose (71) No opinion

12. Would you support or oppose additional large-scale agricultural development in the town of Big Flats?

(64) Support (278) Oppose (79) No opinion

13. Current land use ordinances in the town are:

(169) Adequate (71) Too weak (37) Too strong (143) Don't know

14. Please rate the level of priority of the following land-use issues facing the Town of Big Flats:

A. Water quality (streams and ground water) (351) High priority (75) Medium priority (22) Low priority

B. Preservation of woodlands, wetlands (272) High priority (82) Medium priority (21) Low priority

C. Preservation of farmland (183) High priority (165) Medium priority (58) Low priority

D. Recreational availability (135) High priority (178) Medium priority (55) Low priority

E. Accumulation of junk in yards (240) High priority (79) Medium priority (54) Low priority

F. Jobs in the area (107) High priority (191) Medium priority (71) Low priority

G. High-speed Internet (180) High priority (128) Medium priority (61) Low priority

H. Wildfire Danger Prevention (289) High priority (71) Medium priority (0) Low priority

I. Transfer Site operation (164) High priority (161) Medium priority (44) Low priority

J. Access to town officials/office hours (100) High priority (186) Medium priority (81) Low priority

K. Flood control measures (230) High priority (106) Medium priority (32) Low priority

L. Other _____

15. Would you be in favor of requiring landowners to build a principal structure (house) before they can build a garage or storage building? (97) Support (230) Oppose (98) No opinion

16. The town has implemented a Nuisance Ordinance and a Committee to address nuisances. Would you support the town being more aggressive with enforcement of nuisance/junk complaints?

(214) Support (37) Oppose (55) No opinion

17. How often do you visit the town's website at www.bigflatswi.com?

(23) Often (once a month) (142) Occasionally (56) Never (92) Did not know the town had a website

18. How would you ideally picture the town of Big Flats 20 years from now? (see Excel results)

Thank You for Your Time!

PLEASE RETURN SURVEY to **TOWN OF BIG FLATS, 1104 COUNTY RD C, ARKDALE, WI 54613** by **December 31, 2021**