

Chapter 6: Economic Development

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

A.) Labor Force and Economic Base Analysis

According to the 2024 ACS, the population aged 16 years and older was 4,450, and 2,213 of these people were in the labor force for a participation rate of 49.7. The unemployment rate is a low 1.8 percent, and there was an increase of 4.1 percent in the number of employed Town residents between 2010 and 2024. But since the labor force participation rate fell by 5.1 percent and the unemployment rate fell by 2.2 percent during this time, finding workers to fill jobs remains a challenge. This decrease in participation is partially due to an increase in the Town’s median age, which translate to an increase in retirements. Those who are not looking for work are not considered to be participating in the labor force, such as retirees or stay-at-home parents. See Table 18.

Oneida County and Wisconsin saw similar trends- a decreasing unemployment rate and a decreasing labor force participation rate between 2010 and 2024, despite a slight increase in the total number of people in the workforce.

Table 18: Labor Force Characteristics

Category	T. Minocqua			Oneida Co.			Wisconsin		
	2010	2024	% Change	2010	2024	% Change	2010	2024	% Change
Population 16+	3,967	4,450	12.2%	30,529	32,608	6.8%	4,458,387	4,805,425	7.8%
Labor Force	2,174	2,213	1.8%	18,886	17,812	-5.7%	3,078,465	3,136,600	1.9%
Employed	2,088	2,174	4.1%	17,802	17,462	-1.9%	2,869,310	3,031,042	5.6%
Unemployment Rate	4.0%	1.8%	-2.2%	5.5%	2.0%	-3.5%	6.7%	3.2%	-3.5%
Participation Rate	54.8%	49.7%	-5.1%	61.9%	54.6%	-7.3%	69.0%	65.3%	-3.7%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010 % 2024

The primary occupation of Minocqua residents in the labor force in both 2010 and 2024 was Management, professional, & related. This field has also grown since 2010, along with sales and office occupations as well as production, transportation, and material moving occupations. Service occupations and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations decreased during this time. See Table 19.

Table 19: Occupation of Employed Workers

	T. Minocqua		Oneida Co.	
	2010	2024	2010	2024
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	775	906	5,220	6,258
Service occupations	465	275	3,184	2,616
Sales and office occupations	431	620	4,687	3,745
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	318	164	2,299	1,881
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	99	209	2,412	2,962

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010 & 2024

The leading industry sector in the Town was educational, health care, and social assistance services for both 2010 and 2024, but the number of residents employed in this industry decreased by about one-third during that time. This is also the leading sector countywide, and though the sector also decreased countywide, it did not decrease nearly as much as it did for the Town. See Table 20.

Table 20: Industry Sectors of Employed Workers

	T. Minocqua		Oneida Co.	
	2010	2024	2010	2024
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	66	2	383	216
Construction	271	179	1,843	1,303
Manufacturing	110	61	2,028	2,195
Wholesale trade	9	45	428	490
Retail trade	194	349	2,613	2,546
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	54	148	780	708
Information	54	49	435	290
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	93	122	802	1,071
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	137	109	1,228	1,506
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	630	419	4,080	3,619
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	379	339	1,851	1,599
Other services, except public administration	41	135	679	1,069
Public administration	50	217	652	850

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010 & 2024

These figures are all based on the number of workers residing in the Town and what they do for employment, not where their job is located. Information regarding the number of jobs available in the Town of Minocqua itself is not readily available.

Commuting patterns provide one way to estimate the number of jobs within a community. The 2023 commuting data from U.S. Census-on-the-Map shows a total of 2,474 workers traveling to the Town of Minocqua for work, while another 667 workers both live and work in the Town. An estimated 1,467 workers live in Minocqua but commute outside of the Town to a job somewhere else. Workers who commute into Minocqua come from places such as Rhinelander (104), Woodruff (79), and Lac du Flambeau (46). In contrast, 104 residents of the Town travel to Lac du Flambeau for work while 92 go to Rhinelander and 72 go to Woodruff.

B.) Assessment of Local Conditions

REVIEW AND UPDATE WITH PLAN COMMISSION: The Town has identified a need to promote job growth in the Minocqua area and established an economic development taskforce to work on that goal. The Taskforce, with the support of the Town Board and Plan Commission, has identified the categories or types of business desired by the Town to include: non-polluting light manufacturing, high technology businesses and other eco-friendly business, as well as hotels, restaurants and family friendly attractions. The Town is currently looking at revitalizing the downtown area through a variety of initiatives including enhancement of the lakeshore as well as pedestrian and bicyclist safety and amenities.

The Town has a number of strengths that may be helpful in attracting or retaining business. These include an active, high-visibility business area with many developable sites available (51 S. corridor), recreational amenities, natural "Northwoods" environment, large number of lakes for waterfront living and a wide range of recreational activities, quality health care facilities, schools, low levels of crime and pollution.

Some weaknesses in attracting or retaining business and industry include a lack of highspeed / wireless internet capacity, gaps in cellular coverage, power grid fluctuations, limited sewer and water infrastructure, high speed limits on Highway 51 S. corridor, limited workforce and job training / educational opportunities. There are a number of potential locations for commercial sites within the Town. Map 7 (see Chapter 7, Land Use) identifies areas planned for potential commercial or industrial use in the Town of Minocqua.

Reuse of environmentally contaminated sites, or brownfields, is an important emphasis in Wisconsin. The Town supports the reuse of such sites provided that the Town is secure of liability issues. Sites listed in the WDNR Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) database for the Town of Minocqua are mentioned in Chapter 2, Natural Resources. The Town is also interested in the reuse of three former Town dump / land fill sites for economic development or other community benefit.

C.) Economic Development Programs

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

Local:

Tax Increment Financing

The Town of Minocqua has one TIF district which facilitates new residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Let's Minocqua Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce

This organization offers information on local business, tourism, and industry by promoting events and programs for the business community.

County:

Oneida County Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC)

Founded in 1989, the Oneida County EDC was created as a partnership between business and industry with the responsibility of growing new and existing businesses Countywide. Contact OCEDC for a current list of revolving loans and other programs related to Economic Development.

Regional:

Central Wisconsin SCORE

Central Wisconsin SCORE consists of a team of experienced entrepreneurs who volunteer their experience and knowledge to help small business professionals start, develop, and grow businesses. SCORE offers free business advice, business training, and numerous templates and tools. SCORE also offers the opportunity to be connected with mentors and provides business education tools such as events, online courses, recorded webinars, and a startup roadmap.

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.

Grow North

Grow North 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 Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, and Vilas Counties.

The GRID (Guiding Rural Innovation and Development)

The GRID acts as a one-stop connection to a wide-ranging list of business resources for entrepreneurs and small businesses in Northern Wisconsin.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The county is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, as are all local governments 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.

Manufacturing Outreach Center (MOC)

UW-Stout's Manufacturing Outreach Center provides operations assessments, technology training, and on-site assistance to help firms in Northern Wisconsin modernize and streamline manufacturing processes.

State:

Impact Seven Business Lending Loans

This program provides flexible, affordable loans to a wide variety of business types, specializing in commercial and mixed-use real estate and affordable housing. From large catalytic development projects to Main Street businesses, Impact Seven invests in the people and places that build community.

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 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 (see below)
- Wisconsin Investment Fund
- Technology Development Loan Program

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.

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 Department of Children and Families (DCF)

DCF has partnered with the nonprofit First Children's Finance to finance small business loans to childcare entrepreneurs. They work with other lenders, community partners, economic developers, and directly with childcare businesses to provide financing.

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.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

WHEDA administers a variety of programs to support small businesses, with several programs designed specifically for agribusiness.

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 Business Development Center (SBDC)

The UW-Stevens Point 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 businesses in Wisconsin.

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 the acquisition of real estate, buildings, or equipment; construction, expansion, or remodeling; and working capital for inventory and direct labor.

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)

WWBIC makes loans to small and micro businesses up to \$350,000. They work with both women and men in analyzing their business' financial needs and guiding them through the loan process

Federal:America's Seed Fund:

SBIR & STTR Through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, America's Seed Fund provides technology-focused entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses with funding to develop their ideas and a pathway to commercialization. Powered by a network of federal agencies, entrepreneur support organizations, and the Small Business Administration, America's Seed Fund advances federal missions and fosters a culture of innovation in the United States.

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

This Planning Grant from the Federal Communications Commission, administered by Wisconsin Public Service, enables eligible entities to opt-in to receive formula funding to participate in broadband planning activities that will inform the state Five-Year Action Plan which will guide broadband deployment and implementation of the BEAD program.

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.

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.

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

The USDA Rural Development program is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life 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.

D.) Economic Development Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Promote the stabilization and expansion of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities.

Objectives and Policies:

1. Work to revitalize the downtown area through initiatives to enhance the lakefront, pedestrian safety and comfort, business climate, etc. in order to make it a more attractive, tourist friendly destination. Encourage upkeep and improvements to exteriors of commercial buildings.
2. Identify and promote new areas for the development of commerce within the Town.
3. Encourage eco-friendly, non-polluting light manufacturing and high technology businesses.
4. Develop business park and encourage high-tech / green (eco-friendly / low pollution) themes.
5. Coordinate efforts to promote job growth with private interests, neighboring governments, & local economic development organizations.
6. Develop options for providing water and sewer infrastructure necessary to support new commercial and industrial development.
7. Promote telecommunications infrastructure and other technology development and expansion. In particular, bring high-speed internet access to a majority of the Town.
8. The architecture and character of new commercial and industrial development should be consistent with materials and architectural traditions of the "Northwoods". The use of wood, native stone, brick and other natural materials is encouraged.
9. Industrial and commercial development should enhance environmental resources or adjoining property values.
10. Encourage economic development through more appropriate speed zones on Hwy 51 between the Island and the Town of Hazelhurst and through use of traffic control devices where appropriate.
11. Accommodate home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or would otherwise negatively impact the surrounding areas.
12. Encourage & promote use of local suppliers and contractors.

Chapter 7: Land Use

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

A. Existing Land Use Inventory

Current land use activity (See Map 6: Existing Land Use) in the Town is characterized by large blocks of forest land with residential development mainly along the lakeshores. More intensive use can be found around the Minocqua chain of lakes, particularly the Highway 51 and island "downtown" commercial core. The Town is home to a wide range of land uses from small, "mom and pop" tourist shops to super Walmart. Much of the commercial development is tourist oriented including many hotels and restaurants. There are large sections of woodlands with limited access, much of which is industrial forest. Such large contiguous woodland blocks are necessary to maintain economically viable forests.

Table 21 presents the current breakdown of land-use types within the Town. The majority of the Town is woodlands at about 85,730 acres or almost 80%. Water covers about 11% of the Town. The next most significant land use type is residential at about 6% with 6,670 acres. The other land uses combined use only about 3.4% of the total land area.

Table 21: Existing Land Use 2024

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Agriculture	50	0.0%
Commercial	959	0.9%
Governmental	219	0.2%
Industrial	59	0.1%
Mobile Home Park	36	0.0%
Open Lands	593	0.6%
Outdoor Recreation	591	0.5%
Quarry	135	0.1%
Residential	6,670	6.2%
Transportation	1,103	1.0%
Utility	7	0.0%
Water	11,410	10.6%
Woodlands	85,730	79.7%
Total	107,561	100.0%

Source: NCWRPC 2024

B. Land Use Trends

1. Land Supply

As shown by the existing land use inventory, the majority of the Town is "undeveloped" woodlands, so the supply of land "available" for development appears to be adequate. Much of this undeveloped area is large block industrial forest, which is most productive if roads are not cut into it and subdivided. Nevertheless, even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of Minocqua is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years for all use categories. But areas served by public water and sewer utilities, along with areas near water or other amenities, will likely be in highest demand for development despite having the most limited availability.

2. Land Demand

Based on the population projections discussed in Chapter 1, Table 22 summarizes the projected land demand based on the current acres of each land use per person:

Wisconsin DOA Projections indicate that just over 121 acres are needed for development by 2030, but a projected decrease in population after 2030 means declining demand for land.

NCWRPC Projections indicate that, with continued population growth through 2050, around 300 acres of developable land are needed per decade between 2020 and 2050, for a total demand of 920 acres.

Table 22: Land Use Demand in Acres

Projection	Category	2020-2030	2030-2040	2040-2050
Wisconsin DOA	Projected new residents	37	-145	-241
	Year-round Residential (1.32 acres/person)	49	-191	-318
	Seasonal Residential (1.32 acres/person)	49	-191	-318
	Commercial (0.19 acres/person)	7	-28	-46
	Industrial (0.01 acres/person)	0	-1	-2
	Total		105	-412
NCWRPC	Projected new residents	106	108	110
	Year-round Residential (1.32 acres/person)	140	142	145
	Seasonal Residential (1.32 acres/person)	140	142	145
	Commercial (0.19 acres/person)	20	21	21
	Industrial (0.01 acres/person)	1	1	1
	Total		300	307

Source: Wisconsin DOA & NCWRPC

Though the DOA’s population projections are considered the official state projections, the Town’s large seasonal population and increase in outdoor recreation and tourism means that land demand will likely exceed these projections. Additionally, retirees who have visited Minocqua as tourists may continue to move to the Town as their retirement destination, increasing the year-round population. Therefore, the NCWRPC projections predict an alternative scenario that could result from these factors.

Overall, the Town has an abundant supply of undeveloped land and is expected to be able to meet this demand, but the most desirable locations have the most limited land. For example, the 2025 Oneida County Housing Study found a shortage of housing on or near the island in Minocqua, because older homes that could be considered starter homes are sometimes demolished for higher end housing. This makes it challenging for the seasonal workforce to find housing near work since local incomes are often lower than the incomes of those who visit the Town seasonally, leading to increased competition for housing.

Additionally, shrinking household sizes means that demand for housing can continue even if there is not a population increase, since more housing units are needed to house the same number of people when household sizes decrease. Finally, only a portion of the Town is served by public water and sewer, limiting density beyond this area. For example, it is difficult to construct a multifamily residential building on well and septic. Wetlands, floodplains, and surface water are also abundant in Minocqua's most desirable areas, which act as barriers to new development.

a. Residential

The overall residential demand for land in the Town of Minocqua ranges from a DOA projected increase of 37 year-round residents between 2020 and 2030 and an NCWRPC projected increase of 324 residents between 2020 and 2050. Table 22 shows projected residential land demand based on household projections for the Town and the current 1.32-acre average acres of residential land per capita, resulting in a need for 49 acres of residential land between 2020 and 2030 based on DOA projections, and around 140 acres of land for each decade between 2020 and 2050 based on NCWRPC projections for a total demand of 427 acres by 2050. Additional acreage is likely needed for the growing seasonal population as well as the variety of lodging options in residential settings has increased, known as Tourist Rooming Houses (TRHs).

Seasonal housing comprises nearly half of the total units within the Town. Although some seasonal homes are being converted to full-time permanent residences, it is assumed for planning purposes that there will be roughly one seasonal housing unit for every year-round housing unit. The result is a demand of one acre of seasonal residential housing for every acre of year-round housing projected. This means that there is a combined demand of 98 acres between 2020 and 2030 under DOA projections, and a combined demand of 854 acres between 2020 and 2050 under NCWRPC projections. With smaller household sizes, however, it is possible that the residential acreage per person decrease over time, decreasing the acreage of land needed for housing. This is because older households may choose to downsize into smaller, lower-maintenance housing units and younger households may not need as much space as larger families in the past did. As multifamily housing or smaller housing options are built, they should be designed to complement the Town's Northwoods character while minimizing impacts to surrounding properties.

Changing demographics could drive demand for creative solutions to rehabilitate or repurpose existing housing while retrofitting them with features that allow older adults and those with disabilities to live independently within them longer, such as by adding ramps or telehealth infrastructure.

b. Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural:

Commercial and industrial development is subject to market forces and difficult to predict. Based on existing density and DOA population projections, only 7 acres of commercial land and less than one acre of industrial land are needed between 2020 and 2030, with a decrease in demand after 2030. However, should economic development efforts reverse the projected population decrease after 2030, more land may be needed for this type of development. If trends continue under the NCWRPC population projections, around 20 acres of commercial land and 1 acre of industrial land are needed per decade, for a total of 62 acres and 3 acres by 2050, respectively.

Since it is the Town's intention to promote the preservation of agricultural land, the level of agricultural land within the Town is anticipated to remain stable over the planning period. Some lands are expected to be taken out of agriculture while new areas are likely to come under farming, resulting in minimal net change. Currently, there are nearly 50 acres of agricultural land in the Town.

3. Land Values

Overall equalized land values in the Town have increased about 111 percent over the last six years; however, not all categories of land increased. Residential property values increased by about 110 percent, while manufacturing increased by almost 755 percent. Commercial properties rose by 157 percent, and "other" land uses increased by almost 703 percent. See Table 23, Equalized Land Values, below.

Table 23: Equalized Land Values 2025

Type of Property	2008	2025	2025 Acres	2025 Value per Acre	% Change
Residential	\$782,312,700	\$1,640,137,200	8,200	\$200,017	109.7%
Commercial	\$99,059,800	\$254,797,400	1,691	\$150,679	157.2%
Manufacturing	\$182,400	\$1,558,900	12	\$129,908	754.7%
Agricultural	\$6,200	\$6,200	125	\$50	0.0%
Undeveloped	\$1,145,700	\$2,211,100	8,907	\$248	93.0%
Ag. Forest	\$35,600	\$27,800	37	\$751	-21.9%
Forest	\$27,716,600	\$19,532,200	9,690	\$2,016	-29.5%
Other	\$8,000	\$64,200	2	\$32,100	702.5%
Total	\$910,467,000	\$1,918,335,000	28,664	\$66,925	110.7%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR)

4. Opportunities for Redevelopment

Properties with known environmental contamination on them are discussed in detail in the Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources and Economic Development chapters, for more details. There are a number of former town dump / landfill sites, including two 40-acre parcels and a ten-acre parcel, that the Town sees potential for reuse in the future. Quarries have a built-in redevelopment mechanism via reclamation regulations. The existing quarries within the Town have several years of life left. Reclamation to a usable state is required upon closure of any quarry.

5. Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

An area of concern is the clear cutting of larger forested tracts for timber or pulpwood, and the subsequent sale and development of these and other large parcels for residential lots. The availability and marketing of these parcels/developments draws more interest in the local land market and has the potential to inflate growth beyond the anticipated projection. This may stress available public facilities and services. Unkempt or poorly maintained buildings and properties including accumulating junk and vehicles have been generally labeled as “eyesores” and identified as a conflict issue by the Town Plan Commission. This Plan seeks to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned use-buffers and public information and education components.

C. Land Use Programs

A number of different programs directly and indirectly affect land use within the Town. The principal land use programs include the Oneida County Zoning and Land Division ordinances. The Town of Minocqua also has its own residential subdivision ordinance, as well as a number of other ordinances contained within its municipal code. Official mapping authority is available but not widely used. See the Implementation Chapter of this Plan for more on these ordinances.

D. Future Land Use

The Future Land Use map (Map 7) represents the long-term land use recommendations for all lands in the Town. Although the map is advisory and does not have the authority of zoning, it is intended to reflect community desires and serve as a guide for local officials to coordinate future development of the Town.

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

Land Use Map Classifications:

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. See Map 7: Future Land Use.

1. Forestry Identifies areas of woodlands and forests with some limited agriculture. Year-round occupancy is not permitted.
2. Commercial Identifies areas recommended for commercial development. Does not include home-based businesses.
3. Single Family Residential Identifies areas recommended for quiet seclusion for single family homes with limited traffic.
4. Rural Residential Identifies outlying areas of low density to preserve rural character.

5. Multi-family Identifies areas appropriate for high-density, multiple family living units.
6. Recreation Identifies areas where recreational based commercial operations co-exist with residential development including multi-family developments.
7. Rural Recreation Identifies areas where recreational based commercial operations co-exist with residential development but does not include high-density multiple family developments.

E. Land Use Goals, Objectives, & Policies

To address competing development concerns, a resource-based land management policy is proposed. This policy utilizes physical characteristics of the land to guide where development should occur. The following land use policy statement is a means of guiding future development and redevelopment within the Town towards a more orderly and rational pattern:

Goal 1:

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

Objectives and Policies:

1. The Town will maintain a long-range Comprehensive Plan, which will serve as a guide for future land use and zoning decisions. New development will be permitted based on consideration of this Plan, as well as other Town, County, and state plans and regulations.
2. Land uses should be planned so that development occurs in an orderly manner and land use conflicts are avoided.
3. New development should not adversely the property value or livability of neighboring properties.
4. Future commercial development should be clustered in planned development districts rather than extended in a strip along the major highway corridors
5. Encourage industry and non-retail commercial development to locate in a business park setting.
6. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial structures.
7. Encourage land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
8. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial uses.
9. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.
10. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve the rural community.

Goal 2:

Promote and regulate development that preserves the rural character of the Town and minimizes groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems and other sources.

Objectives and Policies:

1. The location of new development will be restricted from areas in the Town shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, loss of farmland, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
2. All residential development should be set back from the roads and buffered by either natural vegetation or evergreen plantings.
3. Use-buffer areas may be used as shields to lessen the impacts of potentially conflicting land use types located in relatively close proximity; i.e. rural residential type development should be planned as a buffer between single-family and forestry or agricultural. Landscape buffers should also be used, especially where use-buffers are unfeasible.

Goal 3:

Preserve the productive farmland and forest in the Town for long-term use and maintain forestry and agriculture as important economic activity and way-of-life.

Objectives and Policies:

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

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Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation

This chapter is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001(2)(g) Wis. Stats.], the chapter first analyzes the relationship of the Town of Minocqua to school districts, adjacent local governmental units, the Region, the state, and other governmental units; then it incorporates plans and agreements under sections 66.0301, 66.0307, and 66.0309 of Wisconsin Statutes; and finally it concludes with an identification of existing or potential conflicts between the governmental units and a process to resolve such conflicts.

A.) Assessment of Intergovernmental Relationships, Plans, and Agreements

1.) School District

The Town of Minocqua is part of three different school districts including: MHLT (Minocqua, Hazelhurst, Lake Tomahawk) also known as Minocqua J1, Arbor Vitae-Woodruff, and Lakeland Union High School. Refer to the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter for more information. MHLT Elementary School and Lakeland Union High School are located in Minocqua.

The Nicolet Technical College district includes the Town of Minocqua, however it no longer operates any facilities in the Town since the closure of its former Lakeland campus.

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

2.) Sanitary District

The Lakeland Sanitary District supplies water and sewer service around the Minocqua chain of lakes and Highway 51 / island "downtown" commercial core. The District also includes parts of the Towns of Woodruff and Arbor Vitae. The District is administered by an independent Board of Commissioners under state guidelines. Refer to Community Facilities Map for service area.

3.) Adjacent Local Governments

a.) Surrounding Townships

The Town of Minocqua is bordered by the towns of Lynne, Little Rice, Hazelhurst and Woodruff in Oneida County (south and east). To the north in Vilas County, Minocqua is adjacent to the towns of Arbor Vitae and Lac Du Flambeau. Price County and the towns of Fifield and Emery are to the west.

The Town Fire and Police Departments have mutual aid with all surrounding departments. The Lakeland Airport is a cooperative venture between Minocqua and the Towns of Arbor Vitae, Lac Du Flambeau and Woodruff.

b.) Oneida County

Oneida County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to Minocqua. The Town enjoys a good working relationship with many departments, including Finance, Highways, Sheriff, Parks and Zoning.

The County Highway Department maintains and plows County, state and federal highways within the Town. The Town's ambulance coverage is provided by the County, as well. The Sheriff manages the 911-dispatch center, not only for ambulance but also for dispatching the Town Fire Department, EMS and police. The Forestry and Outdoor Recreation Department maintains a countywide park system and county forest system for the use and enjoyment of all residents including the Town of Minocqua. County departments administer zoning in the Town, as well as providing land records and land conservation services.

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

4.) North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was formed under §60.0309 Wis. Stats. as a voluntary association of governments within a ten-county area. Oneida County is a member of the NCWRPC, which qualifies the Town of Minocqua 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.

5.) 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, and other wildlife habitat areas, while Wisconsin Department Of Transportation is responsible for the planning and development of state highways, railways, airports, and other transportation systems. State agencies make a number of grant and aid programs available to local units of government like the Town of Minocqua. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also a number of mandates passed down from the state that the Town must comply with, such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR).

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

B.) Existing / Potential Intergovernmental Conflicts

The following intergovernmental conflicts were identified in Minocqua:

- With WisDOT regarding the speed limit along Highway 51 South business corridor.
- With WisDOT regarding the placement of median along portions of Highway 51 north of the Island.
- With WisDNR regarding NR 115.

The following potential intergovernmental conflicts may arise in Minocqua:

- With Sanitary District re extending sewer service along Highway 51 South business corridor.
- With WisDOT regarding the long-range vision for US 51 corridor.

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

C.) Intergovernmental Programs

66.0301 – Intergovernmental Cooperation:

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

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

Municipal Revenue Sharing:

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

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

Incorporation:

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

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

- Minimum standards of homogeneity and compactness, and the presence of a "developed community center."
- Minimum density and assessed valuation standards for territory beyond the core.
- A review of the budget and tax base in order to determine whether or not the area proposed for incorporation could support itself financially.
- An analysis of the adequacy of government services compared to those available from neighboring jurisdictions.
- An analysis of the impact incorporation of a portion of the Town would have on the remainder, financially or otherwise.
- An analysis of the impact the incorporation would have on the region. Many of the other types of programs typically discussed here are urban fringe city-town in nature and do not apply to a town like Minocqua including boundary agreements, extraterritorial actions, and annexation.

D.) Intergovernmental Goals, Objectives, and Policies**Goal 1:**

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

Objectives and Policies:

1. Investigate cost sharing or contracting with neighboring towns and the County to provide more efficient service or public utilities.
2. Investigate joint operation or consolidation when considering expanded or new services or facilities.
3. Work with Oneida County to maintain countywide plans such as the All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, County Comprehensive Plan, Land and Water Resource Management Plan, Outdoor Recreation Plan, and more.

Chapter 9: Implementation

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

A. Action Plan Recommended to Implement the Comprehensive Plan

Action Plan Recommended to Implement the Comprehensive Plan

This Plan is intended to be used as a guide by local officials, both town and county, when making decisions that affect growth and development in Minocqua. It is also important that local citizens and developers become aware of the Plan. Some steps taken to implement this Plan include the adoption of written public participation guidelines, a Plan Commission resolution recommending Plan adoption by the Town Board, a formal public hearing, Town Board approval of the Plan by ordinance, distribution of the Plan to affected government units and ongoing Plan Commission reviews and updates.

Recommendation 1: Plan Commission

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

The Town of Minocqua Plan Commission is to measure the Town's progress toward achieving the Plan on an annual basis and make a full review and update of the Plan every 10 years. (See Section B, below.)

The primary implementation tools for this Plan are the Oneida County Zoning and Land Division ordinances. These ordinances provide the underlying regulatory framework that supports many of the Plan's policies. Currently the Town Plan Commission reviews zoning and subdivision applications and makes formal recommendations to the Town Board. Although the County makes the decision on the zoning petition, the Town has veto authority over zoning changes approved at the county level. The Comprehensive Plan should be an important consideration in this process. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that a local government's land use related decisions and actions be consistent with that unit's Comprehensive Plan.

The previous chapters of this Plan contain a compilation of programs the Plan Commission may consider in working to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation 2: Intergovernmental Cooperation

Town of Minocqua cooperation with neighboring communities and other units of government will minimize intergovernmental conflict and ensure that the goals and objectives of this plan are fully realized. Key recommendations include the following:

- Work with Oneida County to incorporate the Town of Minocqua Comprehensive Plan into the 2025 Oneida County Comprehensive Plan.
- Work with Oneida County to maintain the All-Hazards Mitigation Plan for reducing the impacts of natural disasters on the Town and County and maintain the County's Outdoor Recreation Plan to remain eligible for WDNR funding.
- Continue to build on the initial framework established in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Chapter of this Plan.

Recommendation 3: Information and Education

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

B.) Plan Review and Update

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

- Make appropriate revisions to bring decision-making back in line with Plan goals and policies.
- Review the goals and policies to ensure they are still relevant and worthwhile.
- New implementation tools may be considered to gain more control over land use decisions.

A comprehensive plan update is required every 10 years by the State. At a minimum, the Plan Commission should do a detailed review of each element of the plan, and statistical information should be updated. An essential characteristic of any planning program is that it reflects the desires of the Town's citizens.

C.) Plan Amendment Procedure

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

- An amendment or change may be initiated by either the Plan Commission or the Town Board and may result from a regular review or a request from a resident.
- The Plan Commission prepares the specific text or map amendment being considered, 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 government units within the Town (i.e. school and sanitary districts) to adjacent towns and to Oneida County.

- Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town board public hearing on the proposed changes. At the same time, the Town Clerk also mails this notice to all owners and operators of nonmetallic mines within the Town.
- The Town Board conducts the public hearing and votes to either approve by ordinance, disapprove, or approve with changes by ordinance. Any approved changes are sent to:
 - All school districts, and the technical college district that serve the Town;
 - All adjacent Town Clerks;
 - Oneida County Clerk, and Oneida County Planning & Zoning;
 - The local library
 - North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 - WDOA, Division of Intergovernmental Relations, Comprehensive Planning Program

D.) Plan Consistency Between Chapters

The state comprehensive planning law requires that the implementation chapter describe how each chapter of the plan will be integrated and consistent with the other chapters. Preparing all the chapters of the Town of Minocqua Comprehensive Plan simultaneously has ensured that there are no known inconsistencies between the different chapters of the Plan.