

# Chapter 5

## Transportation

The transportation system in the town includes all the state, county and local roads. The local transportation network is an important factor for the safe movement of people and goods, as well as for the physical development of the town. There is no transit, rail, air or water transportation service within the Town's jurisdiction.

### Previous Plans and Studies

#### 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.

#### Adams County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan 2013

This plan is intended to be utilized in developing a safe bicycle and pedestrian friendly transportation network throughout Adams County. There are three goals that were identified to achieve this end, to make all roads safe to walk or bike, to provide parking for schools. To achieve a safe bicycle and pedestrian friendly transportation network, the following three goals were identified:

- Make all roads safe to walk or bike
- Provide bicycle parking
- Provide Safe Routes to School

#### Adams County Locally Developed, Coordinated Public Transit – Human Service Transportation Plan 2024-2028

The purpose of this coordinated planning process is to have stakeholder involvement in the assessment of elderly and disabled transportation. This assessment identified that evening and weekend services are limited, a lack of volunteer drivers, transportation options, funding, and service to remote areas and for basic

needs. The plan also identified a need for a mobility manager to serve as a hub to coordinate and guide the program. The plan identifies a five-year work program to prioritize and address the gaps identified.

### **North Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan 2025**

The 2025 Regional Comprehensive Plan (RPC) is the most recent update of a plan adopted by the NCWRPC in 1981. The RPC looks at transportation in all ten counties that make up the North Central Region, including Adams. It looks at general trends within the Region and recommends how county and local government can address transportation issues. Transportation goals in this plan include:

1. Provide and improve transportation access to people of all ages and abilities to ensure lifelong mobility and accessibility.
2. Fund the maintenance and expansion of the transportation system.
3. Enhance the Regional economy by supporting airports, freight rail, and intermodal freight opportunities.

### **North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2018**

This plan is a regional effort to improve bicycling and walking across communities throughout the north central Wisconsin region. The Plan assesses existing conditions related to bicycling and walking, identifying other potential trail and route user groups, identifying routes and describing policies and programs to assist local governments in improving bicycling and walking to promote connectivity between communities and destinations throughout North Central Wisconsin.

### **Connections 2050**

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.

### **State Trails Network Plan 2003**

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**

The road system in the Town of New Chester plays a key role in development by providing both access to land and serving to move people and goods through the area. The Town utilizes the WisDOT PASER computer program to maintain an inventory of its local roads and monitor conditions and improvements of its roads. Types and intensities of land uses have a direct relationship to the traffic on roadways that serve those land

uses. Intensely developed land often generates high volumes of traffic. If this traffic is not planned for, safety can be seriously impaired for both local and through traffic flows. See Map 5.

The Town of New Chester road network consists of roughly 6.0 miles of state highway, 19.7 miles of county highway and 62.5 miles of local roads. The Town utilizes the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) to maintain an inventory of local roads and monitor conditions and improvements of its roads. This system enables the town to budget and keep track of roads that need repair.

## Jurisdictional and Functional Classification

### Functional Classification

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 (principal arterials, for example), are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas at the lower limits are those local roads and streets that emphasize access.

The functional classifications are defined by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as follows:

- **Principal Arterials** – The principal function is to serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel. They connect urban areas with populations greater than 25,000 and provide an integrated network of continuous routes.
- **Minor Arterials** – The principal function is to link cities and larger towns (and other major destinations such as resorts capable of attracting travel over long distances), and form and provide intrastate and inter-county service. They are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, so that all developed areas within Wisconsin are within a reasonable distance of an Arterial roadway. They provide service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those served by Collectors and Local Roads.
- **Major Collectors** – The principal function is to provide service to any county seat not on an Arterial route, to the larger communities not directly served by an Arterial and to other traffic generators of equivalent intra-county importance such as consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks and other important rural industry locations. They serve the most important intra-county travel corridors (arterials or other major collectors).
- **Minor Collectors** – The principal function is to provide service to smaller communities not served by an Arterial or Major Collector, and to link locally important traffic generators with surrounding rural areas. They are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from Local Roads and bring all developed areas within reasonable distance of a Collector.
- **Local Roads** – provide access to homes and businesses. They have low speed limits and offer limited mobility for through traffic.

Using roadway classifications, the Town of New Chester has the service of four collectors: CTH G, CTH A, GTH B, and CTH E. All other roads in Town are local roads.

**Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction refers to governmental ownership, not necessarily responsibility. For example, some state-owned roads are maintained by local jurisdictions. Additionally, the designation of 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 the road eligible for Federal-aid construction and rehabilitation funds.

Ownership is divided between the federal, state, and local governments. States own over 20 percent of the national road network. The Federal Government has responsibility for about five percent, primarily in national parks, forests and Native American reservations. Over 75 percent of the road system is locally controlled. As of September 2026, there were 76.03 total miles of roadways in the Town under both the jurisdiction of the Town of New Chester and Adams County.

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 Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Road mileage by jurisdiction for the Town of New Chester is indicated in Table 17.

| Table 17: Road Mileage by Jurisdictional and Functional Class 2026 |          |           |       |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|--------|
| Jurisdiction                                                       | Arterial | Collector | Local | Totals |
| State                                                              | 0        | 0         | 0     | 0      |
| County                                                             | 0        | 18.86     | 0.48  | 19.34  |
| Town                                                               | 0        | 0         | 56.69 | 56.69  |
| Totals                                                             | 0        | 18.86     | 57.17 | 76.03  |

Source: WisDOT 2026

In addition to these main classifications, a road or segment of road may hold other designations, such as forest road, rustic road, emergency or evacuation route, truck route, bike route, etc. For example, Ember Drive, which begins at the border of the Town of New Chester and extends west into the Town of Easton, is designated by WisDOT as a rustic road.

**Pavement Conditions**

WisDOT requires all local units of government to submit road condition rating data every two years as part of the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) program and WISLR are tools that local governments can use to manage pavements for improved decision making in budgeting and maintenance. Towns can use this information to develop better road budgets and keep track of roads that need repair. A summary of pavement conditions in the Town of New Chester can be found in Table 18. Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary.

The roads that display a surface rating of “good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. Most Town roads are in relatively good condition, as about 1.2% of roads rate as “Poor” or “Very Poor” and about 98.8% of roads rate as “Fair” or better. However, there is room for improvement as 64.9 percent of roads are considered “fair,” meaning there could be significant road projects in the coming decade.

| <b>Table 18: Surface Condition</b> |              |                |
|------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Surface Condition Rating</b>    | <b>Miles</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| Very Poor                          | 0.1          | 0.1%           |
| Poor                               | 0.6          | 1.1%           |
| Fair                               | 36.7         | 64.9%          |
| Good                               | 16.0         | 28.2%          |
| Very Good                          | 0.0          | 0.0%           |
| Excellent                          | 3.2          | 5.7%           |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>56.6</b>  | <b>100.0%</b>  |

Source: WisDOT

## Traffic and Safety

### Traffic Volumes

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts are measured and calculated on selected high traffic roads and highways every three, six, or ten years (depending upon functional classification) by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). Monitoring these counts provides a way to gauge how traffic volume is changing in the Town of New Chester.

| <b>Table 19: Average Daily Traffic Counts</b> |             |             |               |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>Location:</b>                              | <b>2011</b> | <b>2021</b> | <b>Change</b> |
| CTH E East of CTH B                           | 910         | 770         | -15.4%        |
| CTH G North of CTH E                          | 380         | 450         | 18.4%         |
| CTH G South of CTH E                          | 530         | 520         | -1.9%         |
| CTH B Between CTH A & Ember Dr                | 930         | 930         | 0.0%          |
| CTH B Between CTH A & Evergreen Ct            | 930         | 810         | -12.9%        |
| CTH A East of CTH B                           | 320         | 670         | 109.4%        |
| CTH A Between CTH G North and South           | 530         | 730         | 37.7%         |
| CTH A East of CTH G                           | 400         | 660         | 65.0%         |
| CTH G Between CTH A and Fawn Ct               | 320         | 410         | 28.1%         |

Source: WisDOT

There are nine 2011 and 2021 state traffic count sites located in the Town, see Map 5. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) increased substantially at the site located on CTH A east of CTH B in New Chester from 2011

to 2021, at a rate of nearly over 109 percent. The site at CTH A east of CTH G also saw a 65 percent increase. Three sites saw a slight decrease in traffic, and the rest of the sites saw slight increases in traffic.

It remains important to balance land use with existing roadway infrastructure. Land use type and intensity has a direct relationship with traffic volumes, with higher density and intensity of land use generally leading to higher traffic volumes. To maximize safety, proposed land use should be considered in conjunction with the existing road network.

Increased traffic volume, congestion concentrated in certain areas, and even the types of vehicles travelling to and from a site can be impacted depending on land use. Mitigation is possible through measures such as creation of new access points, changes in circulation patterns, and general roadway modifications. Uncontrolled division of land tends to affect highways because of the increased intensity, which impairs safety and impedes traffic movements.

### **Evacuation Routes**

The Town should meet with the Adams County Sherriff's Office to discuss a plan for evacuation of residents and visitors in the town. Areas of high population concentration like campgrounds and other high-density developments should have plans for efficient evacuations in times of emergencies.

## **Alternative Transportation Modes**

### **Airports**

There are no airports in the Town, but the Adams County Airport – Legion Field is a medium general service airport in the Village of Friendship. Regular commercial air and freight service is available at the Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, the Central Wisconsin Airport in Mosinee, and the La Crosse Municipal Airport in La Crosse.

### **Bus/Transit**

No local or intercity bus services are provided within the Town of New Chester. The nearest stops to access inter-community bus services are at Mauston, Plover or Portage with connections to Appleton/Green Bay, Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and other communities along those lines. The bus services that serve some of these cities include Coach USA Van Galder, Greyhound, Jefferson Lines, and Flix.

### **Rail**

Union Pacific Railroad freight trains pass through the Town of New Chester enroute between Minneapolis and Milwaukee/Chicago, but there are not depots or railyard in the Town, with the City of Adams and Village of Oxford being the nearest stops. Canadian National has freight connections in Necedah and New Lisbon with their main line between the Twin Ports of Duluth/Superior and Milwaukee/Chicago. Passenger rail service is provided by Amtrak, which runs along the Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway line with stops in Tomah and Wisconsin Dells.

### **ATV/UTV**

ATV/UTV All-terrain and utility terrain vehicles are becoming increasingly popular. More communities are allowing these vehicles on local roadways. A Town Board has the authority to open roads to these types of vehicles and can designate some or all the Town's roads. The Town of New Chester has adopted an ATV ordinance allowing them on all Town roads.

### **Pedestrian/Bicycle**

All roads within the Town are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel. The 2013 Adams County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan identified opportunities that include the Town of New Chester. A proposed bike route, Segment 12, would connect the Brooks area to the lakes in the Town of Jackson where it would continue into Oxford. It would also extend west to neighboring communities, providing an alternative to State Highway 82. Altogether, proposed routes in this plan would connect Adams-Friendship to Castle Rock, Quincy Rock to Grand Marsh, and Castle Rock to Oxford.

Proposed improvements for the Grand Marsh area include new crosswalks, 6-foot paved shoulders, and a sidewalk connecting the former Grand Marsh Elementary School with existing sidewalks on CTH E.

### **Specialized**

The Aging and Disability Resource Center serving Adams, Green Lake, and Waushara Counties provides transportation services for the elderly and those with disabilities.

## Goals, Objectives, and Policies

### Goal

Town of New Chester maintains local infrastructure to the highest standards to allow safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and services.

### Objectives

1. Provide a multi-modal transportation system to meet the needs of all citizens, including transit dependent and disabled citizens.
2. Support and maintain a safe and efficient transportation network.

### Policies

1. Support a county-wide transit system.
2. Promote the development of multi-use trails, trail linkages, or wide shoulders as part of new development proposals, where appropriate.
3. Prepare and regularly update a 5-year Road Improvement Plan.
4. Work with the County on all county road projects in the Town.
5. Limit heavy traffic volumes and vehicles of very high weight to roads that have been constructed or upgraded for such use.
6. Consider future road locations, extensions, or connection when reviewing development plans and proposals.
7. Consider roadway access on new development proposals with a view to increase safety and preserve capacity.
8. Utilize WISLR to inventory and rate local roads.
9. Maintain local rail spurs and support industrial development along the rail line.

## Chapter 6

# Economic Development

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

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

### Previous Plans and Studies

#### North Central Wisconsin Regional Entrepreneurship Assessment & Strategy 2023

In 2023, NCWRPC surveyed businesses across its ten-county region to assess how business-friendly the region is for entrepreneurs. Included in this report are survey findings, recommendations, and an inventory of all programs and facilities that support entrepreneurship. An Entrepreneurship Portal containing these resources is found on NCWRPC's website.

#### 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 events that cause economic shocks. 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.

#### North Central Region Industrial Park Inventory, Absorption, and Needs Study 2022

NCWRPC conducted a 10-county study of available industrial park acreage, the rate at which it is being developed, and how much acreage is needed in the future. The study includes recommendations for industrial park planning along with up-to-date maps of Adams County's six industrial parks. Using absorption rates from 2000 to 2020, Adams County has an estimated 32 to 48-year supply of available

industrial park acreage. The Town of Jackson Industrial Park is the closest industrial park to New Chester, and it has sufficient available acreage to serve the Town's needs for the foreseeable future.

### **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2026**

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.

### **North Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan 2025**

NCWRPC's regional comprehensive plan has an economic development chapter with the following goals:

1. Support infrastructure needed for economic development.
2. Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce.
3. Support and develop a diverse economic base ensuring growth and resiliency.
4. Develop tourism and the knowledge-based economy into leading economic sectors.
5. Support economic development that ensures a living wage for the Region's residents.

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

This report, developed by the United Way, described the 29 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, child care, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

The ALICE report shows that approximately 51 percent of New Chester households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, compared to 42 percent at the county level, indicating that the average household in New Chester is more financially constrained than the average Adams County household.

### **Adams County Comprehensive Plan 2018**

The Adams County Comprehensive Plan covers economic development in both the inventory and goals, objectives and policies sections. The inventory information is a brief overview of economic sectors, economic analysis, labor force analysis, and economic development programs. Goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are identified. The economic development goals include:

- 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 the compatibility with economic development.

- Encourage the coordination of economic development, including tourism efforts, throughout the county and region.

## **New Chester Area Economic Development**

The Town of New Chester has been an agriculturally based community for generations. Agriculture is a dominant economic sector occurring in the town. Just under one-third of the area's land is used for agriculture.

The Town is adjacent to the Town of Jackson, which is home to the Adams County - South Industrial Park site, located on Highway 82 in the Town of New Chester. As of 2020, there were approximately 56 available acres. The park is close to Highway 13, Interstate 39/51, and Interstate 90/94. An issue regarding the industrial park is the upgrading of an adjacent Town road to handle traffic with higher weight limits.

Scattered throughout the town there are small businesses, other than farms, that employ a few people. These are particularly clustered in the Grand Marsh and Brooks areas. There are several industrial parks and large employment centers in the cities of Portage, Mauston, Wisconsin Dells and Adams as well as the Village of Friendship. Other employment opportunities include the Federal Correctional Institution at Oxford (located in New Chester) and State Correctional facilities at New Lisbon, Portage and Mauston. About three percent of employed New Chester residents work from home. Being a rural community with no legacy industrial sites, there are no major redevelopment areas in the town.

## **Economic Analysis**

### **Economic Sectors**

Table 20 details employment by sector for the Town of New Chester. In 2024, there were 306 people employed in the thirteen basic economic sectors in the Town, down 25.4 percent since 2010. Note that the table measures number of residents within the Town and County with each kind of job, not how many jobs are physically located within the Town or County, as many people commute.

Between 2010 and 2024, the fastest growing sector in the Town was by far professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services, which added 32 jobs between 2010 and 2024. It was followed by finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing, which added 11 jobs during the same time, and retail trade which added 10 jobs.

In terms of total employment, the top sector in which Town residents were employed in 2024 was Manufacturing, with 79 total residents employed. Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services and educational services, health care, and social assistance followed, with each having 37 employees.

The most significant downward trend was seen in both wholesale trade and information, which went from 16 and 11 jobs, respectively in 2010, down to 0 jobs in 2024.

In Adams County there were 8,493 people employed in 2024, up 1.7 percent since 2010. From 2010 to 2024, the fastest growing sector in the county was Public administration, which grew at a rate of 72.1 percent. Manufacturing employed the most residents (1,323) in 2024, followed closely by Educational services, health care, and social assistance (1,322). The sector that experienced the most significant downward trend was Arts, entertainment, recreation, and food services, which saw a decline of 23.3 percent from 2010 to 2024.

| Table 20: Employment by Sector                                                             |                     |            |               |              |              |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
|                                                                                            | Town of New Chester |            |               | Adams County |              |             |
| Sector                                                                                     | 2010                | 2024       | % Change      | 2010         | 2024         | % Change    |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining                                     | 36                  | 28         | -22.2%        | 324          | 279          | -13.9%      |
| Construction                                                                               | 37                  | 13         | -64.9%        | 710          | 574          | -19.2%      |
| Manufacturing                                                                              | 83                  | 79         | -4.8%         | 1,230        | 1,323        | 7.6%        |
| Wholesale trade                                                                            | 16                  | 0          | -100.0%       | 209          | 303          | 45.0%       |
| Retail trade                                                                               | 17                  | 27         | 58.8%         | 1,177        | 1,005        | -14.6%      |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities                                              | 42                  | 7          | -83.3%        | 611          | 571          | -6.5%       |
| Information                                                                                | 11                  | 0          | -100.0%       | 86           | 78           | -9.3%       |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing                              | 0                   | 11         | N/A           | 336          | 391          | 16.4%       |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services | 5                   | 37         | 640.0%        | 384          | 606          | 57.8%       |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance                                | 64                  | 37         | -42.2%        | 1,351        | 1,322        | -2.1%       |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services                   | 64                  | 34         | -46.9%        | 1,255        | 962          | -23.3%      |
| Other services, except public administration                                               | 13                  | 18         | 38.5%         | 312          | 444          | 42.3%       |
| Public administration                                                                      | 22                  | 15         | -31.8%        | 369          | 635          | 72.1%       |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                               | <b>410</b>          | <b>306</b> | <b>-25.4%</b> | <b>8,354</b> | <b>8,493</b> | <b>1.7%</b> |

Source: American Community Survey 2010 & 2024

## Labor Force Analysis

### Labor Force

Labor force is defined as the number of people sixteen and over employed or looking to be employed. Both the Town's population and labor force declined from 2010 to 2024. There were 120 fewer people in the labor force in 2024 compared to 2010, for a loss of 25.1 percent. The percent reduction was more significant than in Adams County as a whole, which experienced a net decline of 747 individuals in the labor force, for a 2.6

percent decrease. The state of Wisconsin had a marginal increase in the labor force from 2010 to 2024, at a rate of 1.9 percent. See Table 21.

| Table 21: Town of New Chester Labor Force |       |       |          |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|
|                                           | 2010  | 2024  | % Change |
| Population 16 years and over              | 2,130 | 1,277 | -40.0%   |
| Labor force                               | 479   | 359   | -25.1%   |
| Employed                                  | 410   | 306   | -25.4%   |
| Unemployed                                | 69    | 53    | -23.2%   |
| Unemployment Rate                         | 14.4% | 14.8% | 2.8%     |
| Participation Rate                        | 22.5% | 28.1% | 24.9%    |

Source: American Community Survey 2010 & 2024

Unemployment

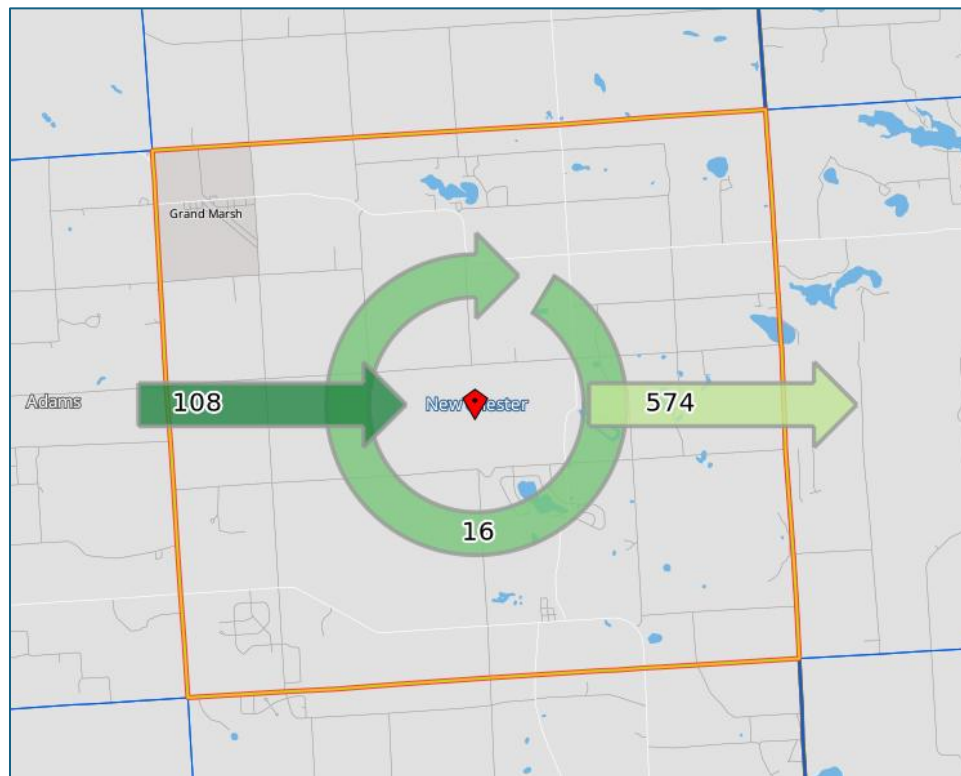
Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and total people employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or people not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not considered part of the labor force. In 2010, the Town of New Chester had 14.4 percent unemployment, and in 2024 that number was up slightly to 14.8 percent. The percent unemployed was much lower in Adams County (4.5%) and significantly lower in the State of Wisconsin (3.2%) in 2024.

Workforce Participation

Workforce participation is a measure expressed in terms of the percentage of people actively seeking employment divided by the total working age population. People who are not participating in the labor force may not seek employment due to a variety of reasons including retirement, disability, staying home with children, or they are simply not looking for work. In 2010, 22.5 percent of New Chester’s population over the age of 16 was in the labor force. By 2024, that percentage increased to 28.1 percent. The state participation percentage was 65.3 percent in 2024, while Adams County’s participation rate was 47.6 percent. Lower participation rates compared to the state average could reflect both the Town’s and County’s higher proportion of retirees.

Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2023, approximately 5 of the 124 total jobs within the Town of New Chester were filled by New Chester residents. About 119 workers traveled to New Chester during the average workday. In contrast, 453 New Chester residents commuted to locations outside of the Town for work, indicating that New Chester’s laborshed extends beyond its municipal boundaries. Figure 7 shows the inflow-outflow patterns of the Town of New Chester’s laborshed. According to the 2024 American Community Survey, 71.1% of Town residents commuted by driving alone, another 16.6% carpooled, and 7.3% worked from home.

**Figure 7: Inflow/Outflow Analysis Town of New Chester 2023**

Source: U.S. Census On-the-Map 2023

### In-Migration

Many in-commuters have a considerable commute to New Chester. In 2023, 4.8 percent of the Town's 124 workers came from the City of Reedsburg. The Village of Westfield and City of Adams, which are closer, were each home to 4 percent of inbound commuters.

### Out-Migration

Town of New Chester residents commuting outside of the Town's boundaries mostly travel to nearby communities. In 2023, about 574 residents were employed outside of the Town's boundaries. 7.6 percent of New Chester's out-commuters traveled to the Village of Lake Delton for work, and 7.1 percent commuted to the City of Wisconsin Dells. The Cities of Portage and Mauston attracted 5.1 and 4.4 percent of the Town's commuters, respectively, while the Village of Friendship attracted 4.2 percent. There are several New Chester residents that travel to further away areas, such as the Cities of Madison and Milwaukee. However, some of these workers could also have been working remotely while living in the Town, rather than commuting.

## Occupations

Table 22 identifies the five main occupational categories by number and percentage and provides comparison with the Town, county and state. Production and transportation workers are the largest component of the labor force in the Town of New Chester (31 percent), followed by sales and office workers (30.7 percent). The County and state had a smaller share of workers in these occupations, and a much larger share of workers in management, business, and science occupations.

| Table 22: Resident Occupations 2024 |                     |        |              |        |           |        |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Occupation                          | Town of New Chester |        | Adams County |        | Wisconsin |        |
| Management/Business/Science         | 48                  | 15.7%  | 2,126        | 25.0%  | 1,219,259 | 40.2%  |
| Service                             | 50                  | 16.3%  | 1,697        | 20.0%  | 458,226   | 15.1%  |
| Sales/Office                        | 94                  | 30.7%  | 1,827        | 21.5%  | 568,852   | 18.8%  |
| Natural Resources/<br>Construction  | 19                  | 6.2%   | 972          | 11.4%  | 259,826   | 8.6%   |
| Production/Transportation           | 95                  | 31.0%  | 1,871        | 22.0%  | 524,879   | 17.3%  |
| Total                               | 306                 | 100.0% | 8,493        | 100.0% | 3,031,042 | 100.0% |

Source: American Community Survey 2024

## Economic Development Strengths and Weaknesses

The Town's strengths for attracting and retaining a diverse workforce include its close proximity to the Interstate 90-94 and 39 corridors making it something of a midpoint between larger cities like Madison, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Chicago, and Minneapolis. This transportation linkage impacts employers in the warehousing and transportation industries and allows commuting access for employees. However, there is a lack of employment opportunities within the Town itself, forcing many residents to commute to the several industrial parks and large employment centers in the cities of Portage, Mauston, Wisconsin Dells, Adams, and the Village of Friendship. The Town of New Chester is adjacent to the Town of Jackson, where the Adams County – South Industrial Park site provides some economic opportunity. Grand Marsh and Brooks also feature some local businesses as well.

The Town of New Chester, like many rural areas, is threatened economically by surrounding population centers. Competing with larger communities and their respective amenities and incentive programs is difficult for smaller communities. Businesses and industries often seek locations with a high volume of traffic, easy transit, and a diverse labor force. The Town of New Chester and Adams County are lacking in many of these areas and therefore these areas must be careful that their economic development efforts are not wasted in direct competition with the efforts of larger surrounding communities.

## Issues

### Business & Industrial Development

Although Adams County has sites that are ready for industrial development, not all of these sites can offer the wide range of services necessary to appeal to all types of industrial development. Effective industrial development requires facilities such as sewer, water, and telecommunications facilities as well as easy access to highways and rail.

While Adams County offers many of these in its industrial parks, access to a major interstate highway is located outside the County. This makes enticing businesses to the industrial parks more difficult. Adams County also suffers from lack of diversification in its industrial economy leading to a heavy reliance on only a few industries. Such dependence means that local employment, as well as commercial retail trade, goes up and down with the business cycles for the dominant local industry.

### Recreation & Tourism

The development of the recreation and tourism industry in Adams County has had a generally positive effect on the County, however, the County must be careful to moderate the growth of this industry with its capacity to serve it. Adams County's recreational areas around the Wisconsin Dells, Petenwell and Castle Rock Lakes, and Town of Rome causes a great deal of development pressure. However, the Town of New Chester's lake frontage is minimal compared to tourism-heavy portions of the County. Many people are attracted to Adams County's recreational amenities because of its rural nature.

### Income & Unemployment Levels

Although the County has made progress toward closing the gap over the last twenty years, income levels still are below state and federal levels and the unemployment rate exceeds state and federal levels. These are both issues that have been identified and discussed at various levels throughout the county. Both need to be addressed to make the county a better place to live.

Adams County remains well below the state average in both median household income and per capita income. Fortunately, trends indicate that the county is "closing the gap". The persistence of poverty and unemployment in the City of Adams and Village of Friendship pose a particular challenge especially as an employment center for the County.

The Town of New Chester does not have a high concentration of jobs in a traditional commercial development or industrial park, and many of its residents commute a great distance to find work. This is difficult because of personal transportation costs. FCI Oxford and New Chester Dairy are large-scale facilities that offer employment, but there is still a need to increase access to jobs that pay a living wage for Town residents.

## **Economic Development Programs**

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

### **County**

#### **Adams County Economic Development (ACED)**

ACED is a non-profit organization that promotes the economic development of Adams County, Wisconsin, and its respective cities, villages, and towns. ACED is comprised of area businesspeople, citizens, local government, utility company representatives, state agencies and elected officials, educational institutions and other organizations essential to the growth of Adams County. The organization serves the needs of new businesses coming to the area and assists existing companies.

#### **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 - Columbia Electric Coop (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**

#### **Advance Wisconsin Employment**

Formerly known as the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, this entity was created by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), this entity customizes workforce development programs and initiatives. It is based at 2801 Hoover Road in Stevens Point and serves all of Wood County.

#### **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.

#### **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.

### **Central Wisconsin SCORE**

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

### **Impact Seven Business Lending Loans**

These are flexible, affordable loans for a 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 community-building.

### **North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

The County is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), 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.

## **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
- Enterprise Zone Tax Credit
- 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 Investment Fund
- Talent Recruitment Grant (TRG)
- Technology Development Loan Program

### **Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce Forgivable Loan Program**

The Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce (HWCC) now has a new Forgivable Loan Program designed for new and existing HWCC clients. This program offers loan forgiveness of up to 25% of the approved loan for new clients, and up to 25% of the original loan amount with a maximum of \$10,000 for existing clients (not to exceed \$10,000).

### **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.

### **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 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 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 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.

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

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

#### **Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)**

WWBIC makes loans for 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.

#### **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.

#### **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.

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

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

## **Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

### **Goal**

Town of New Chester has a diverse economy that is a place of opportunity where people and businesses can grow and be successful.

### **Objectives**

1. Promote a diverse, healthy economic base.
2. Encourage commercial and industrial development to locate adjacent to county or state highways.

### **Policies**

1. Encourage new businesses, especially those that are compatible in a rural setting.
2. Develop and maintain a list of available sites and buildings for new businesses.
3. Encourage home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or otherwise negatively impact the surrounding areas.
4. Pursue grant funding to clean-up possible contaminated commercial locations.
5. Review the costs and benefits of a proposed development project prior to approval.
6. Consider developing new ordinances that establish minimum aesthetic standards to eliminate commercial, industrial, and agricultural property with excessive debris, blighted property, and dilapidated buildings.
7. Direct new commercial and industrial development to areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
8. Foster a commercial and/or industrial cluster in Grand Marsh.
9. Establish appropriate minimum/maximum lot sizes for commercial development, taking parking requirements into consideration.

Page intentionally left blank

# Chapter 7

## Land Use

Land use is a crucial component of livability and provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate a sustainable pattern of development. The existing natural landscape and land use patterns influence future land use and development. Much of the region has population and housing densities well below the state average, which in turn places more reliance on automobiles to get to and from work, shopping and other activities. Balancing the needs of the community with land use issues requires that each land use situation be considered individually and that the community seeks the solution which fits the unique challenges it faces.

### Previous Plans and Studies

#### North Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan 2025

Regional land use issues include dispersed land use patterns affecting an aging population's ability to stay in their homes, contamination and blight on some vacant sites, negative development impacts to environmental/landscape features, changes in land demand, and land use concerns for renewable energy. Goals of this plan are:

1. Preserve and protect the Region's landscape, environmental resources, and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.
2. Provide adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
3. Encourage land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, State, governmental, and utility costs.
4. Encourage planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.

#### Adams County Comprehensive Plan 2018

The Adams County Comprehensive Plan includes a Land Use chapter which describes existing and future land uses, as well as regulatory tools for land use. The primary goal of the plan is to guide future development and redevelopment throughout the county. The plan identifies several issues that were discussed as part of the planning process, the issues include:

- Conflicting land uses
- Sustainable agriculture and forestry

- Environmentally sensitive areas
- Location of public facilities and infrastructure
- Community revitalization

Existing Land Use

The Town of New Chester covers an area of about 20,067 acres in Adams County. The area is characterized by thin till and pitted outwash. The typical terrain is rolling and covered with hardwoods or open for agricultural use with drainage in a southeasterly pattern for the eastern portion of the Town and in a westerly pattern for the western portion. The natural resource base of the area is dominated by timber. Agricultural uses of the land are vitally important.

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 2025, see Map 6. Woodlands dominate 55.1 percent of the area, followed by Agriculture with 29.3 percent and Residential areas with about 5.3 percent, see Table 23. In general, agricultural, woodlands and residential uses are scattered in a “mixed” pattern. Residential development is distributed fairly evenly along the road network, and clustered development is found in the Grand Marsh and Brooks communities.

| Table 23: Existing Land Use 2025 |        |            |
|----------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Land Use Type                    | Acres  | Percentage |
| Agriculture                      | 5,888  | 29.3%      |
| Commercial                       | 189    | 0.9%       |
| Governmental                     | 256    | 1.3%       |
| Industrial                       | 18     | 0.1%       |
| Open Lands                       | 602    | 3.0%       |
| Outdoor Recreation               | 9      | 0.0%       |
| Residential                      | 1,070  | 5.3%       |
| Transportation                   | 818    | 4.1%       |
| Utility                          | 0      | 0.0%       |
| Water                            | 165    | 0.8%       |
| Woodlands                        | 11,051 | 55.1%      |
| Total                            | 20,067 | 100.0%     |

Source: NCWRPC GIS

Public Lands

There are approximately 2,753 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, which are subject to a substantial reduction in property taxes. In addition, tax exempt lands include approximately 983 federal acres, 326 state acres, 76 Adams County acres (not Forest Crop), and another 441 acres of tax-exempt land.

## Land Supply and Demand

As shown by the existing land use inventory, a significant proportion (46.1%) of the Town is undeveloped woodlands, so the supply of land available for development appears to be adequate. Nevertheless, even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of New Chester is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years for all use categories. Additionally, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) projects New Chester's population and number of households to decline through 2050. Therefore, land demand is expected to occur on an as-needed basis, rather than as a result of projected demand.

## Land Values

Table 24 displays the assessed land values in the Town of New Chester. It is important to note that lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law programs and other exempt lands (such as state lands) are not included in values for Table 24. Overall, land value per acre in the Town is valued at about \$13,003 per acre based on assessed land values from Wisconsin DOA. Manufacturing properties have the highest value per acre (\$101,300), followed by Commercial properties (\$94,390) and "Other" properties (\$90,836).

| <b>Land Classification</b> | <b>Total Value of Land and Improvements</b> | <b>Total Acres</b> | <b>Average Value per Acre</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>         | \$146,158,300                               | 2,222              | \$65,778                      |
| <b>Commercial</b>          | \$4,908,300                                 | 52                 | \$94,390                      |
| <b>Manufacturing</b>       | \$101,300                                   | 1                  | \$101,300                     |
| <b>Agricultural</b>        | \$1,348,100                                 | 6,309              | \$214                         |
| <b>Undeveloped</b>         | \$1,149,700                                 | 1,709              | \$673                         |
| <b>Agricultural Forest</b> | \$1,907,400                                 | 867                | \$2,200                       |
| <b>Forest Lands</b>        | \$15,540,800                                | 3,532              | \$4,400                       |
| <b>Other</b>               | \$23,254,000                                | 256                | \$90,836                      |
| <b>Total</b>               | \$194,367,900                               | 14,948             | \$13,003                      |

Source: WI Department of Revenue

## Opportunities for Redevelopment

Most of the Town consists of open farmland, scrubland, and wetlands, all of which have experienced little development. Some developed areas may not meet current development standards or may have fallen into disrepair since they were developed. Some of these properties may be in need of rehabilitation by property owners rather than needing a comprehensive redevelopment strategy. But overall, there is no large-scale need for redevelopment.

## Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Any plan should seek to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned use-buffers, and public information and education components. To attain that outcome, it is important to identify the existing or potential conflicts between land uses in the Town. There may be some degree of undesirability between many land use combinations, such as a residential development near a particular industrial or commercial development that might conflict with sight, sound, odor, or other undesirable characteristics. Another example could be a new residential neighborhood in proximity to a working farm, where farm equipment, odors, and sounds may not be compatible with dense residential development.

## Future Land Use

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

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

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

### Future Land Use Map Classifications

**1. Residential:**

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

**2. Rural Residential:**

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

**3. Commercial:**

Identifies areas recommended for commercial development, as well as existing commercial establishments located throughout the Town.

**4. Industrial:**

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

**5. Governmental/Public/Institutional:**

Identifies existing or planned government/public/institutional facilities within the Town, including recreational facilities.

**6. Agricultural Areas:**

Identifies areas to be preserved for the purpose of general crop farming or the raising of livestock. These areas may include buildings that pertain to agriculture, including residential.

**7. Forestry Areas:**

Identifies areas of large woodlands within the Town.

**8. Preservation and Open Space:**

Contains sensitive environmental areas, such as 100-year floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, DNR wetlands and steep slopes of 12 percent or greater. This could include endangered species habitat or other significant features or areas identified by the Town.

## Land Use Programs and 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.

A zoning ordinance consists of a map and written text. The zoning map arranges the community into districts or zones, agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, etc. Within each of these districts, the text of zoning ordinances 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 and incompatible uses; particularly in relationship to transportation facilities, utilities and public services and facilities.

A county may promulgate a zoning ordinance as described above for the unincorporated areas of the county, that is, outside the corporate boundaries of cities and villages, but it is only effective if a town adopts it for application to its jurisdiction. Towns can elect to adopt their own zoning ordinances; however, the Town of New Chester is currently under Adams County zoning.

### Shoreland Zoning

All counties are mandated by Wisconsin law to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates development in shoreland and floodplain areas of the 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 their County. Adams County Shoreland Zoning regulates land use within shoreland and floodplain areas throughout the Town.

### Land Division

At present, land division within the Town of New Chester is regulated by its own Land Division Ordinance. 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.

A town land division code can provide the town 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. The ordinance would require administration and enforcement by the town. Therefore, local control of divisions of land would require town funding. It also adds a layer of government involved in regulating proposals for land divisions.

## **Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

### **Goal**

Town of New Chester makes sound land use decisions to balance the diverse needs of the community and to wisely maximize the land's potential.

### **Objectives**

1. Promote efficient development patterns.
2. Provide tools for managing and coordinating growth and development.

### **Policies**

1. Promote new development consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
2. Minimize scattered development and preserve rural character.
3. Promote the redevelopment of land with existing infrastructure.
4. Discourage new developments that would negatively impact the natural environment or existing property.
5. Minimize the loss and/or fragmentation of productive farmland and forest land.
6. Review expansion or new development of nonmetallic mining operations to minimize conflict with preexisting development.
7. Promote a quiet and peaceful community with open spaces and scenic landscapes.
8. Maintain the Comprehensive Plan to serve as a guide for future land use decisions.
9. Participate in zoning and subdivision review decisions at the County level that affect the Town.
10. Encourage conservation easements and other tools to protect environmentally sensitive or unique resources.

Page intentionally left blank

## Chapter 8

# Intergovernmental Cooperation

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

### Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Intergovernmental Relationships**

### **School Districts**

The Town of New Chester is divided between the school districts of Adams-Friendship and Westfield. In addition, the Wisconsin Open Enrollment program allows children to attend other nearby school districts, provided that the district has the necessary space to accept the student. There are no school district facilities located within the Town.

### **Post-Graduate Education**

New Chester Town Hall is located approximately 10 miles from the Mid-State Technical College, City of Adams location. 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.

## **Adjoining Units of Government**

The Town of New Chester borders the Towns of Lincoln, Adams, Easton, Springville, and Jackson in Adams County, as well as the Towns of Springfield, Westfield, and Oxford in Marquette County. The incorporated communities of Oxford, Adams, Friendship, and Wisconsin Dells serve the businesses and social needs of New Chester Township.

### **Adams County**

Adams County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to the Town, and the Town enjoys a good working relationship with many of its departments. These departments include Treasurer, Highway, Sheriff's Office, and Parks and Recreation. The County Treasurer collects local property tax for the Town. The Adams County Sheriff's Office provides primary law enforcement services to all areas not included within municipal police department boundaries, including the Town of New Chester.

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 2023, Adams County created a Broadband Plan and in 2025, the County completed its Housing Study.

### **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 New Chester 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 require continued cooperation and coordination with these agencies.

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

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

### **Existing or Potential Intergovernmental Conflicts**

No existing or potential intergovernmental conflicts were identified in the Town of New Chester. The Town will continue to cooperate with all levels of government on issues of mutual concern, including resource protection, transportation, land use, education, and human services. Cost sharing or contracting with neighboring towns or the county will continue to provide services or public utilities efficiently.

## Programs

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

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

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

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

## Goals, Objectives, and Policies

### Goal

Town of New Chester is a cooperative and collaborative partner with other units of government and organizations to most effectively and efficiently provide services to residents.

### Objective

1. Establish and maintain good working relationships with other units of government, including adjoining towns, Adams County, the State of Wisconsin, and the federal government.

### Policies

1. Promote communication between the Town and other governmental entities.
2. Periodically review existing shared service agreements and explore additional agreements which would benefit the Town.
3. Pursue cooperative agreements regarding boundary agreements, annexation, expansion of public sewer and water services, and growth management between the Village, the City, and the Town.
4. Consider the feasibility of establishing local zoning in conjunction with other neighboring towns and sharing administrative staff.

Page intentionally left blank

# 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 which are mapped and also based on the plan's 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. The most common implementation tools are the Town official controls or regulatory codes. 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 New Chester should evaluate and update, as necessary, its related ordinances to ensure meeting this requirement.

### Zoning Ordinance and Map

The Adams County Zoning Ordinance is the primary land use regulation for the Town. Zoning is used to manage and control how land is used and developed. Zoning ordinances typically establish detailed regulations concerning how land may be developed, including setbacks, the density or intensity of

development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose of zoning is to minimize undesirable externalities from development by segregating and/or buffering incompatible uses and by maintaining standards that ensure development will not negatively impact the community's character or environment. The zoning ordinance also controls the scale and form of development, which heavily influences how people will interact with their environment and their neighbors.

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

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

The Adams County Land Division Ordinance outlines procedures for land division, technical requirements, design standards for plats and certified maps, and outlines required improvements. The county ordinance also includes provisions for cluster developments but provides little guidance for such development design and objectives. Local units of government may elect to have a separate land division ordinance if it is more restrictive than the county ordinance.

### **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 and police 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 commissions. The preparation of a capital improvement program may vary from community to

community depending on local preferences, the local form of government and available staff. The proposed capital improvement plan should be reviewed in light of the priorities outlined in the comprehensive plan.

### **Annual Operating Budget**

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

### **Brownfield Redevelopment**

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

### **Consistency Among Plan Chapters**

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the Implementation Chapter describes how each of the required chapters will be integrated and made consistent with the other chapters of the plan. Since the Town of New Chester 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, Updates, Monitoring, and Amendments**

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 New Chester 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 New Chester Comprehensive Plan.
- The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
- Development resulting from the change does not create an undue impact on surrounding properties. Such development shall be consistent with the physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade and improve its viability.
- The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
- The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment including trees, slopes and groundwater, or the impact could be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.
- There is a change in town actions or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
- There is a community or regional need identified in the comprehensive plan for the proposed land use or service.
- The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration, or dedication.
- The change does not adversely affect water quality and the overall health of residents.

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

## **Plan Updates**

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

## **Plan Monitoring**

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

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

This plan should be evaluated at least every 5 years and updated at least every ten years. Members of the Town Board, Plan Commission, and any other local decision-making bodies should periodically review the plan and identify areas that might need to be updated. The evaluation should involve first reviewing the goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires. Then the strategies and actions should be reviewed and refined to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate.