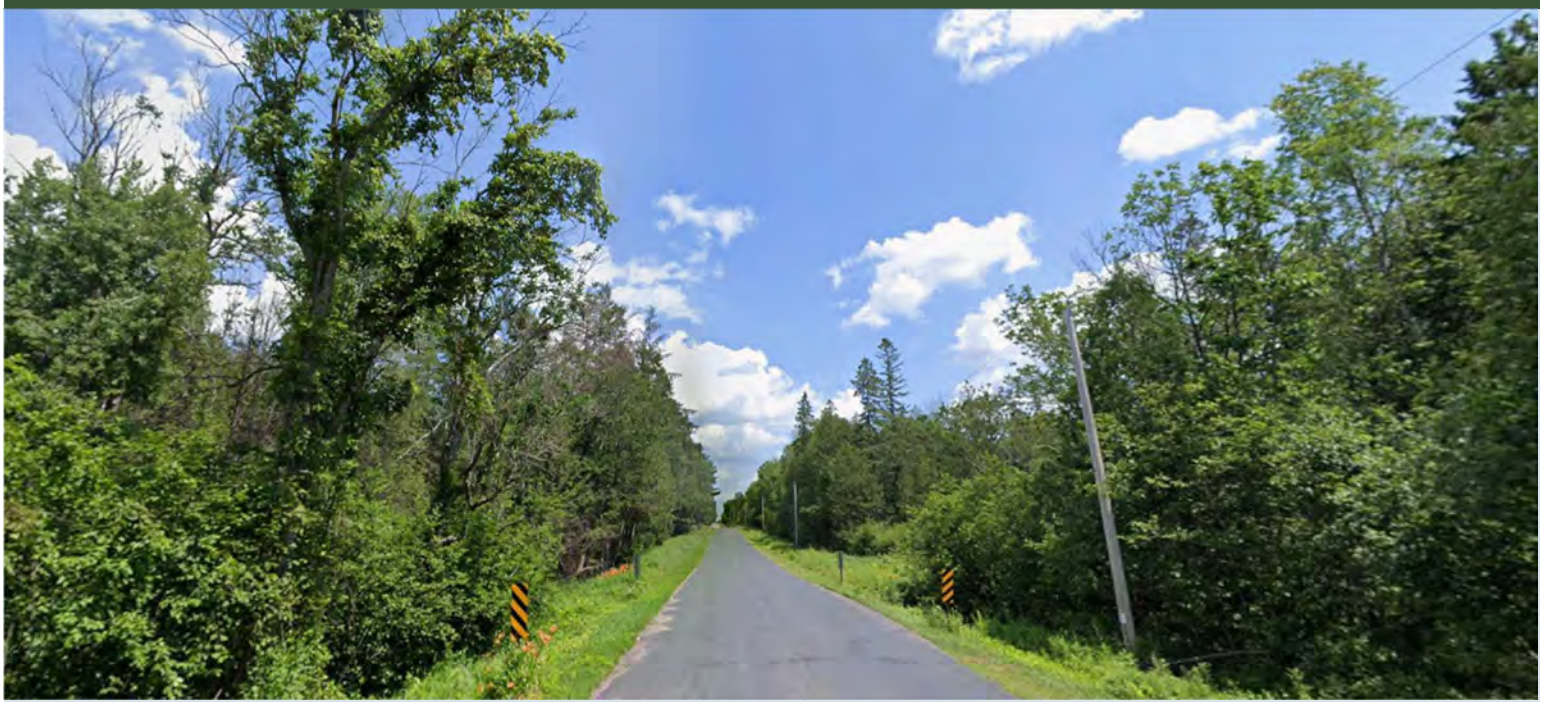


# Town of Norrie Comprehensive Plan

## 2026



# *Town of Norrie*

## Board of Supervisors

Sid King, Chair

Robert Strupp

Jordan Liethen

Carla Georgi, Clerk

Laura Hable, Treasurer

## Town Plan Commission

Jordan Liethen, Chair

Dave McFarlane

Lynn Goheen

Mark Thatcher

Thomas Wahl

**ADOPTED: NOVEMBER 9, 2026**

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# Chapter 1

# Demographics

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

## BACKGROUND

The Town is located in the eastern portion of Marathon County. The Town is bounded by the Town of Plover to the north, the Town of Ringle to the west, the Town of Birnamwood to the east (Shawano county) and the Town of Elderon to the south. The Village of Hatley shares a border with the Town in the western portion of the Town. The Town shares a border with the Village of Eland (Shawano County) along the southeast portion of the Town along with the Village of Birnamwood (Marathon County & Shawano County) to the northeast. Development in the Town is dominated by agriculture with pockets of residences and scattered commercial establishments.

### Planning Process

In late 2025, the Town initiated a process to update its plan. The state planning law – 66.1001 – requires that a comprehensive plan be updated every ten years. A variety of Plan Commission meetings were held over the course of 2026 to prepare the plan. A final Plan Commission meeting was held in the Fall of 2026 to review the final draft and recommend adoption of the plan by the Town Board. The plan was adopted by the Town Board at the end of 2026.

### Public Participation

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

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Population and Households

### Historical Trends

According to the latest data from the American Community Survey, the Town of Norrie's population was an estimated 1,103 people in 2023. As shown in Table 1, this represents a 26 percent increase since 2000. In comparison, the populations of Marathon County and Wisconsin both increased by nearly ten percent between 2000 and 2023. The Town has grown steadily over this period, while overall county and state growth has dropped off since 2010.

**Table 1: Population Trends**

| Minor Civil Division | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 2023 | 2000-2023 % Change | 2010-2023 % Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Town of Norrie | 873 | 976 | 1,010 | 1,103 | 26% | 9% |
| Town of Elderon | 569 | 606 | 644 | 622 | 9% | -3% |
| Town of Plover | 675 | 689 | 683 | 646 | -4% | -5% |
| Town of Ringle | 1,431 | 1,598 | 1,540 | 1,511 | 6% | -12 |
| Village of Birnamwood | 780 | 818 | 730 | 688 | -12% | -6% |
| Village of Hatley | 529 | 574 | 648 | 593 | 12% | -9% |
| Village of Eland | 277 | 202 | 199 | 235 | -15% | 18% |
| Marathon County | 125,834 | 134,063 | 138,013 | 138,067 | 10% | 0.0% |
| Wisconsin | 5,363,675 | 5,686,986 | 5,893,718 | 5,892,023 | 10% | 0.0% |

*Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2019-2023*

There were 402 households in the Town of Norrie in 2023, which represents an increase of about 18 percent from the number of households in 2000, as shown in Table 2. During the same period, the number of households in Marathon County increased by 19 percent, while the State experienced a 17 percent increase during the same time period. There was great variation among the surrounding communities, with the fastest growth in the number of households occurring in the Village of Hatley (28 percent), while the Village of Birnamwood experienced a six percent decrease during this time. In 2023, the average household size in the Town of Norrie was 2.73, down from 2.80 in 2010. In comparison, Marathon County's average household size was 2.40 in 2023, down from 2.52 in 2010.

| Table 2: Households | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Minor Civil Division** | **2000** | **2010** | **2020** | **2023** | **2000-2023 % Change** | **2010-2023 % Change** |
| Town of Norrie | 342 | 368 | 398 | 402 | 18% | 1% |
| Town of Elderon | 224 | 245 | 259 | 270 | 21% | 4% |
| Town of Plover | 229 | 250 | 261 | 246 | 7% | -6% |
| Town of Ringle | 477 | 585 | 599 | 562 | 18 | -4 |
| Village of Birnamwood | 309 | 343 | 312 | 292 | -6% | -6% |
| Village of Hatley | 185 | 223 | 252 | 237 | 28% | -6% |
| Village of Eland | 93 | 86 | 81 | 100 | 8% | 23% |
| Marathon County | 47,702 | 53,176 | 56,517 | 56,873 | 19% | 1% |
| Wisconsin | 2,084,544 | 2,279,768 | 2,428,361 | 2,446,028 | 17% | 1% |

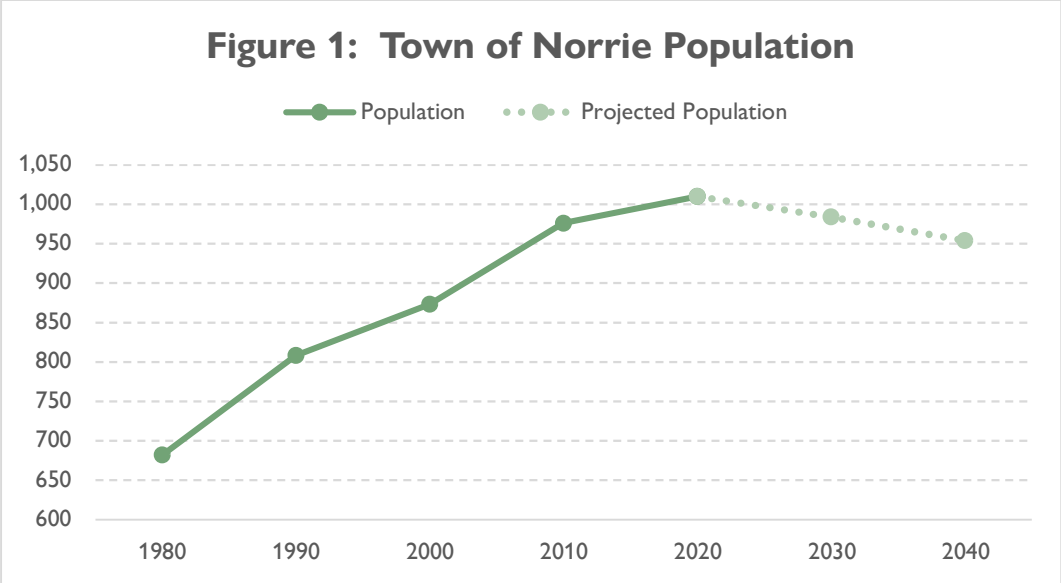
*Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2019-2023*

## Projections

Figure 1 shows population projections for the Town of Norrie and Table 3 compares projected population in the Town to Marathon County, based on projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The Wisconsin DOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin's official population projections. These projections are based on historical population growth in the community, with more recent years given a greater weight. The Town of Norrie is projected to experience a ten percent decrease in population between 2025 and 2050. In comparison, Marathon County is projected to decrease by about six percent during this time.

| Table 3: Population Projections | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2020** | **2025** | **2030** | **2040** | **2050** | **2025-2050 % Change** |
| Town of Norrie | 1,010 | 1,018 | 984 | 954 | 910 | -10% |
| Marathon County | 138,013 | 140,452 | 136,750 | 134,615 | 130,380 | -6% |

*Source: WI DOA Official Population Projections*




*Source: U.S. Census, WI DOA*

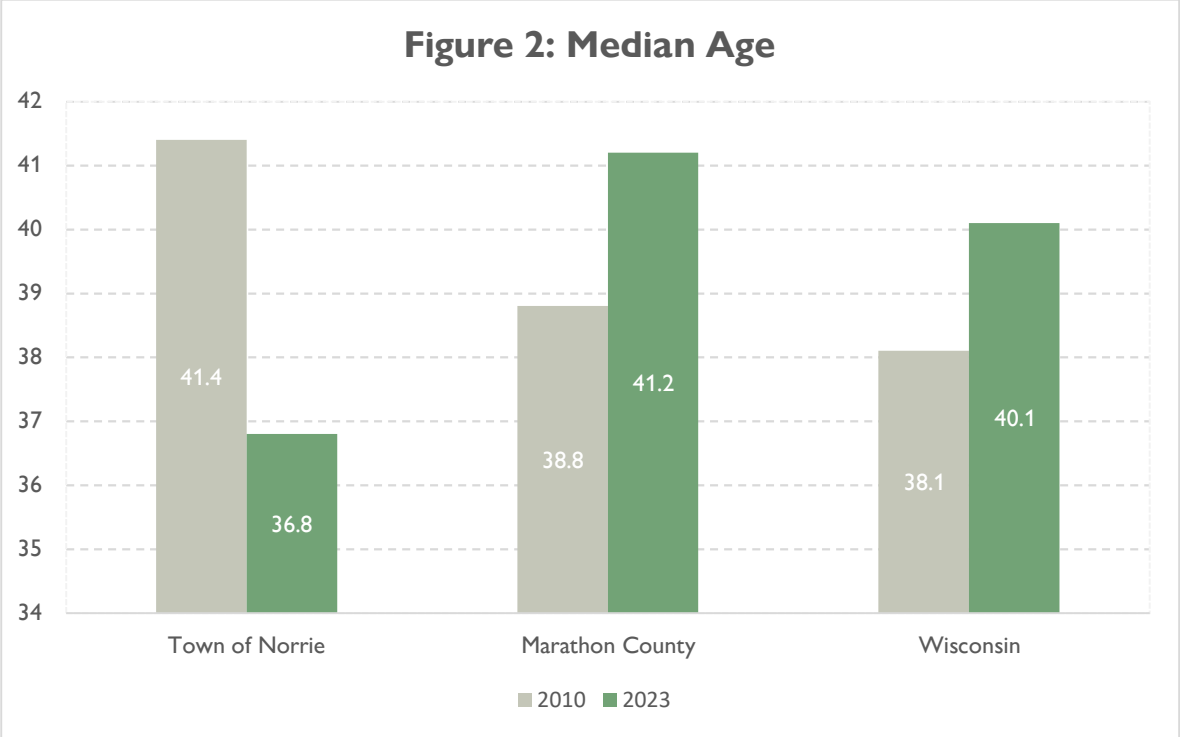
## Age

As shown in Figure 2, the median age in the Town of Norrie was 36.8 in 2023, significantly lower than it was in 2010 (41.4). The Town of Norrie's median age of 36.8 was significantly lower than the median age in both Marathon County (41.2) and Wisconsin (40.1) as a whole in 2023. Two age groups are particularly significant, those 65 and over and those under 18. The population under 18 is a dependent population that requires more services including quality childcare, schools, and specialized health care needs. Those 65 and over may require access to healthcare, transportation, and community services. The U.S. Census provides an age dependency ratio, which is the ratio of dependents (people younger than 15 or older than 64) to the working age population (those ages 16-64). The old age dependency ratio is the number of those over 65 divided by the number working age population and the child dependency ratio is that ratio of those under 16 divided by the working age population.

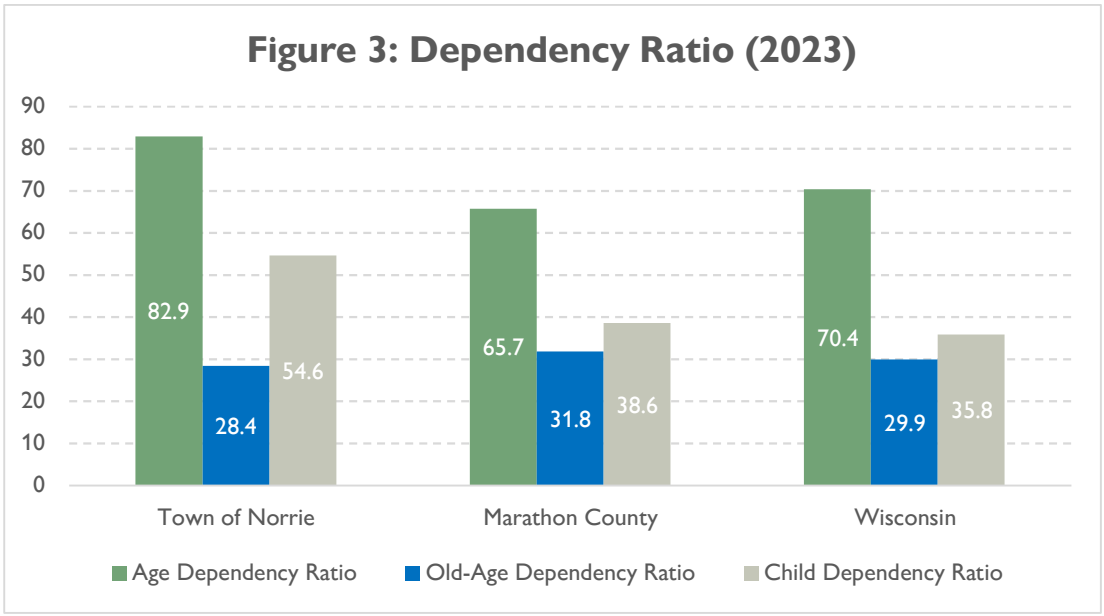
As shown in Figure 3, the Town of Norrie has a higher age dependency ratio, at 82.9, than Marathon County (65.7) and Wisconsin (70.4). In other words, there are over eight dependents for every ten working-aged adults within the Town of Norrie. The Town of Norrie has a significantly higher Child Dependency ratio (54.6) than both the County (38.6) and the State (35.8). The Town of Norrie's Old-Age Dependency ratio of 28.4 is lower than that of Marathon County (31.8) and Wisconsin (29.9). These numbers reinforce the importance of support services in the Town, ranging from accessible healthcare, quality childcare, and social support systems.

Due to longer life expectancy and the size of the Baby Boomer generation, the 65 and older age group is expected to continue to increase in size. The trend is occurring at the state and national levels and to an even greater degree within the rural Wisconsin counties, especially in the

northern one-third of the state. This population trend whereby older age categories increase significantly while younger age categories decline may impact the future labor supply, school system, and health care industry at the national, state, and local levels.



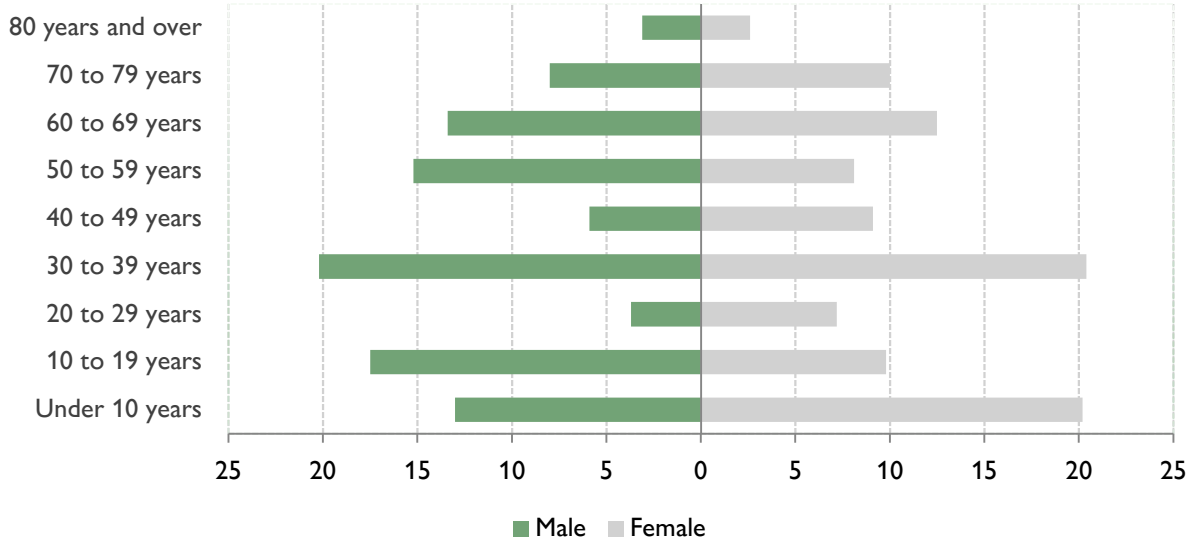

*Source: ACS 2010 & 2023*




*Source: ACS 2023*

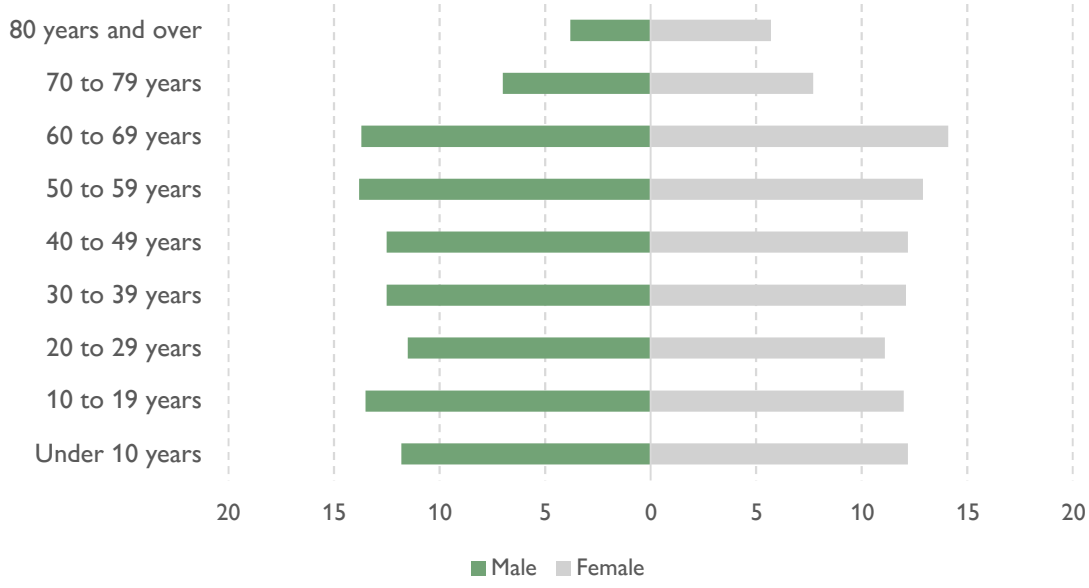
Figures 4 and 5 compare the distribution of age groups for the Town of Norrie and Marathon County. Marathon County's population pyramid is slightly expansive, showing slow and stable growth. In comparison to Marathon County, the Town of Norrie has a larger proportion of the population in the lower age ranges, a lower proportion of the population in the middle age ranges (specifically the 20 to 29 age range), and a similar proportion of the population in the higher age range.

**Figure 4: Town of Norrie Population Pyramid**




*Source: ACS 2023*

**Figure 5: Marathon County Population Pyramid**

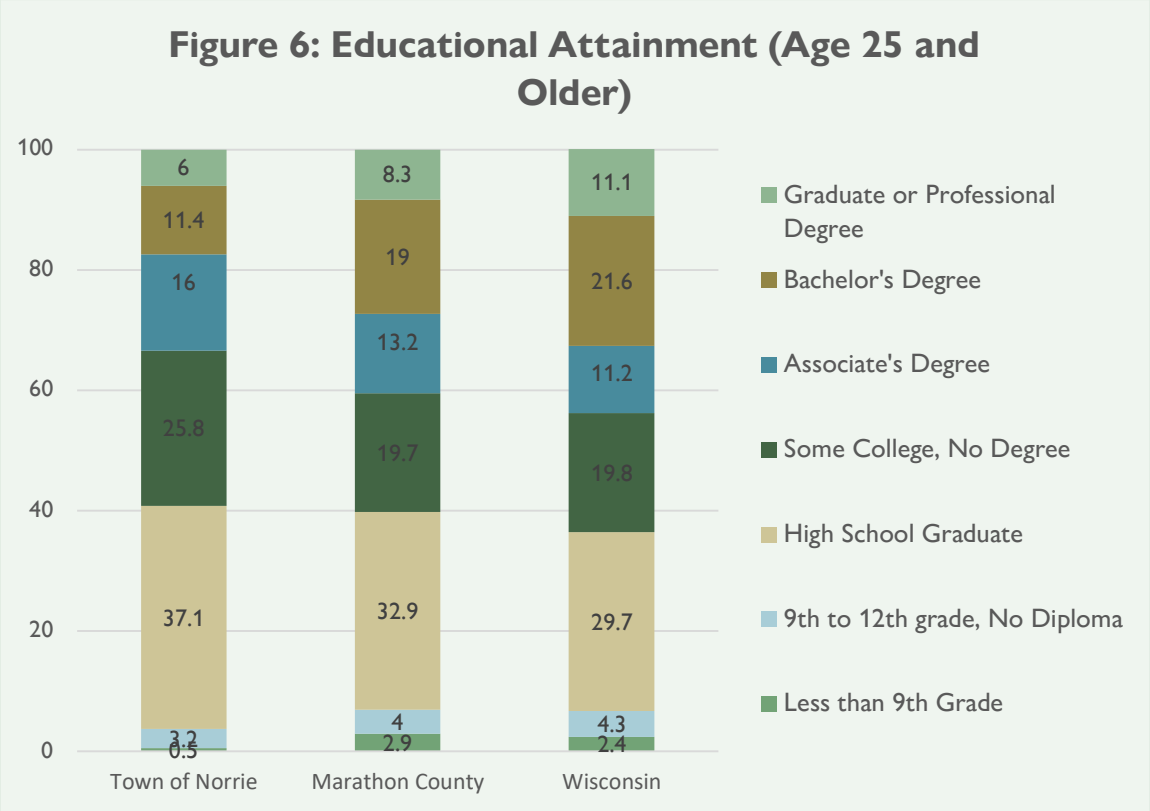



*Source: ACS 2023*

## Education and Income Levels

### Education

Figure 6 compares educational attainment of those in the Town of Norrie to the County and the State by showing the highest level of education completed by residents ages 25 and older. In 2023, 96.3 percent of town residents ages 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was higher than the County and State averages. In the Town of Norrie, 17.4 percent of the population held bachelor's or other advanced degrees compared to 27.3 percent of County residents and 32.7 percent of State residents.




*Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

### Income

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

Median household income for Town of Norrie residents was $97,222 in 2023. Table 4 shows that this was higher than Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin. When adjusted for

inflation, median household income in the Town increased by almost 70 percent between 2010 and 2023. During this time, Marathon County experienced a slight increase in median household income of 6.2 percent while median household income in Wisconsin increased by 9.3 percent.

Table 5 illustrates that income per capita in the Town of Norrie was lower than both the County and the State in 2023. When adjusted for inflation, per capita income in the Town of Norrie increased by 72.1 percent between 2010 and 2023. This was a significantly faster increase than both the County and State, which rose at rates of 54.4 percent and 57.8 percent, respectively.

**Table 4: Median Household Income**

| Minor Civil Division | 2000* | 2010* | 2023 | % Change 2000-23 | % Change 2010-2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Town of Norrie | $85,908 | $57,578 | $97,222 | 13.2% | 68.9% |
| Marathon County | $76,758 | $71,764 | $76,185 | -0.7% | 6.2% |
| Wisconsin | $74,423 | $69,250 | $75,670 | 1.7% | 9.3% |

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2019-2023)
*: Adjusted for inflation to 2023

**Table 5: Per Capita Income**

| Minor Civil Division | 2000* | 2010* | 2023 | % Change 2000-23 | % Change 2010-23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Town of Norrie | $37,803 | $22,695 | $39,055 | 3.3% | 72.1% |
| Marathon County | $35,185 | $25,893 | $39,970 | 13.6% | 54.4% |
| Wisconsin | $36,150 | $26,624 | $42,019 | 16.2% | 57.8% |

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2019-2023)
*: Adjusted for inflation to 2023

## Employment Characteristics

Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Town of Norrie in 2010 and 2023. The "employed population" includes those that are 16 and older. Between 2010 and 2023, the Town's labor force increased by 44 persons. This is likely due to the increase in overall population during the same time period.

Labor force participation indicates the percentage of those 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate slightly decreased within the Town of Norrie from 2010 to 2023. This resembles the County and the State, where labor force participation rates also decreased during this time.

| Table 6: Labor Force Characteristics | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Minor Civil Division | Labor Force | | | Labor Participation Rate | |
| | 2010 | 2023 | 2010-2023 % Change | 2010 | 2023 |
| Town of Norrie | 529 | 573 | 8.3% | 73.4% | 70.1% |
| Marathon County | 74,962 | 74,270 | -0.9% | 72.2% | 67.2% |
| Wisconsin | 3,078,465 | 3,125,057 | 1.5% | 69.0% | 65.5% |

*Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2019-2023)*

In 2010, the Town of Norrie had an employed population of 520 people; see Table 7. Employment within the Town of Norrie increased to 570 people by 2023, representing a 9.6 percent increase. Employment increased in Marathon County during the same period, increasing by 3 percent. The State experienced a 5.2 percent increase in employment from 2010 to 2023. The U.S. Census classifies individuals as unemployed if they are not working, actively seeking work, and available to accept a job. The unemployment rate in the Town was 0.5 percent in 2023, lower than Marathon County's rate of 2.9 percent and the State's rate of 3.3 percent.

| Table 7: Employment | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Minor Civil Division | 2010 | 2023 | 2010-2023 % Change | Unemployment Rate |
| Town of Norrie | 520 | 570 | 9.6% | 0.5% |
| Marathon County | 69,980 | 72,092 | 3.0% | 2.9% |
| Wisconsin | 2,869,310 | 3,018,918 | 5.2% | 3.3% |

*Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2019-2023)*

| Table 8: Occupation of Employed Workers | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Occupation | Town of Norrie | | Marathon County | |
| | 2000 | 2023 | 2000 | 2023 |
| Management, Professional & Related | 120 | 175 | 19,745 | 26,665 |
| Service | 51 | 42 | 8,127 | 10,749 |
| Sales & Office | 112 | 96 | 17,457 | 14,242 |
| Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance | 60 | 125 | 6,716 | 6,473 |
| Production, Transportation, and Material Moving | 122 | 132 | 14,505 | 13,963 |
| Total | 480 | 570 | 66,550 | 72,092 |

*Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2019-2023) & WI DOA (2000)*

As shown in Table 8, most residents in the Town of Norrie are employed in Management, Professional and Related occupations. The second sector most represented was the Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations. From 2000 to 2023, the most significant increase in employment was seen in Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance

occupations, while Sales & Office and Service occupational groups experienced a decrease in employment among Town residents.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

- The Town of Norrie has experienced an increase in population and an increase in the number of households since 2010. In 2023, the average household size in the Town of Norrie was 2.73, down from 2.80 in 2010.

- The Town of Norrie is projected to decrease in terms of the number of people through 2050.

- There are a large number of people in the lower age categories. The median age decreased from 41.4 in 2010 to 36.8 in 2023. In 2023, the Town's median age of 36.8 was lower than Marathon County's median age of 41.2 and Wisconsin's median age of 40.1.

- The Town of Norrie has a higher proportion of residents with a high school diploma, but a lower proportion with a bachelor's degree or graduate/professional degree than the County and State.

- The Town of Norrie's median household income of $97,222 in 2023 was significantly higher than the median household incomes of Marathon County and Wisconsin. Additionally, per capita income within the Town was lower than both the County and State in 2023. This is likely due to the Town having a higher average household size than Marathon County and Wisconsin.

- The labor participation rate is slightly higher than the County or the State, and the unemployment rate of 0.5 percent in 2023 is lower than the State and the County.

- Most people in the Town of Norrie work in Management, Professional, and Related occupations.

# Chapter 2

# Natural Resources

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

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

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

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

**Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2021-2030**

The Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Marathon County from 2021 to 2030. The Land Conservation and Zoning Committee identified the following long-term program outcomes for the natural resource protection efforts in Marathon County:

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

4. Marathon County agriculture and woodlot producers are economically strong.

**Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2024-2033**

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

**Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Use Plan**

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

**Marathon County Groundwater Protection Guide, 2001**

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

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

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

# NATURAL RESOURCES

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

## Land Resources

The Town is located in the eastern portion of Marathon County. The Town is bounded by the Town of Plover to the north, the Town of Ringle to the west, the Town of Birnamwood to the east (Shawano County) and the Town of Elderon to the south. The Village of Hatley shares a border with the Town in the western portion of the Town. The Town shares a border with the Village of Eland (Shawano County) along the southeast portion of the Town along with the Village of Birnamwood (Marathon County & Shawano County) to the northeast. The Town of Norrie covers about 22,500 acres of land.

## Topography and Geology

Marathon County's terrain is primarily the result of glaciation. The eastern areas of Marathon County consist mainly of nearly level to steep outwash plains and stream terraces and undulating to very hilly moraines and kettle lakes. The area is characterized by smaller tracts of forested and agricultural lands.

Most of the soils found in Marathon County are best used for cropland and woodlands. The soils of Marathon County are primarily derived from the weathering of glacial drift, outwash, and bedrock. The Town of Norrie is covered primarily by the Kennan-Hatley soil group, with major areas of Chetek-Rosholt-Oesterle along the Plover River, in the east central section and in the south-central area along STH 29. The Town experiences, on average, a soil loss of 1.0 – 2.0 tons/acre/year. Susceptibility for soil erosion is similar to the average soil loss experienced by Marathon County as a whole and is not a major concern.

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

## Forests

According to land cover maps, approximately 11,094 acres, or about 49 percent of the Town of Norrie is covered by woodlands. These woodlands are an important resource in the Town. Forests provide protection for environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. In addition, expansive forests provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development.

Privately owned forestland includes approximately 2,218 acres enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, as of 2025. None of these lands are currently open to public access. These programs have been established to preserve and protect woodlands through practicing proper management techniques.

## Metallic and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

Non-metallic mining is a widespread activity throughout the State of Wisconsin. There are currently a number of quarry sites located throughout the Town.

## Environmentally Remediated Areas

Brownfields are commercial or industrial properties that contain or may contain hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. Expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of these properties can be especially difficult. The Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) is an online database that provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and clean-up of properties with contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Contaminated sites are not uncommon as all communities with commercial and industrial development have the potential for air emissions, groundwater contamination, soil spills, and surface water contamination. Contaminated sites originate when a property is used for such activities as a gas station, industrial processing facility, a landfill, or a laundromat. There are no open (active) sites on the BRRTS currently in the Town of Norrie while there are seven past spill sites listed as closed.

## Rare Species and Natural Communities

Wisconsin's National Heritage Inventory Program (NHI) is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the State. The program's database, on the Wisconsin DNR website, identifies species and natural communities that are currently tracked by the NHI. As of November 2025, NHI tracked 5 species and 8 communities in the Town of Norrie.

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

## Water Resources

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

### Watersheds

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

Most of Marathon County is geographically located in the Central Wisconsin Basin, which is a subset of the entire Wisconsin River corridor located in Central Wisconsin. The Town of Norrie is part of the Central Wisconsin Basin and Wolf River Basin. The Town of Norrie is partially within the Plover and Little Plover Rivers Watershed (Central Wisconsin Basin) and the Middle and South Branches of the Embarrass River Watershed (Wolf River Basin).

### Surface Water

Norrie has a large number of lakes, specifically Bohnes Lake, Mud Lake, Mayflower Lake, Norrie Lake, Go-To-It Lake, and Bass Lake. Development has occurred on Mayflower, Norrie and Bass Lake; the others appear to be mostly undeveloped. Public access is available to Mud, Mayflower, Bass, and Norrie Lakes, while the others are surrounded by private property.

Four of Norrie's lakes, Mayflower, Bass, Norrie, and Mud, are included in the Eastern Lakes Project, a partnership of citizens, eastern Marathon County communities, Marathon County government, and the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. The project studies and assesses the lakes of eastern Marathon County and plans for lake management and protection.

The Town of Norrie contains about 486 acres of surface water, including streams and rivers which comprise about two percent of the Town's total land area.

### Rivers and Streams

Two main waterways cross Norrie, the Plover River and Norrie Brook. Plover tributaries are designated as ERW. The Plover River is an important resource, and in the Town of Plover to the north of Norrie, the WDNR has purchased large tracts of land along the river to prevent

development. Also, the Wisconsin River Valley Trout Unlimited (WRVTU) has targeted the Plover River for projects related to trout habitat enhancement and stream improvement. Continued projects included planting trees, fencing, and installing an eco-friendly cattle watering area along the Plover River. Land along the Plover River in Norrie is primarily in private ownership. The WRVTU holds a vast majority of easements on these private properties.

## Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

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

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

## Impaired Waters

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop a list of impaired waters, commonly referred to as the "303(d) list." A water body is considered impaired if a) the current water quality does not meet the numeric or narrative criteria in a water quality standard or b) the designated use that is described in Wisconsin Administrative Code is not being achieved. A documented methodology is used to articulate the approach used to list waters in Wisconsin. Every two years, states are required to submit a list of impaired waters to EPA for approval.

Mayflower Lake had been previously listed as an impaired water for the atmospheric deposition of mercury identified in fish tissue. However, it was removed as of the 2024 edition of the list.

## Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Marathon County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. Invasive species can alter the natural ecological relationships among native species and affect ecosystem function, economic value of ecosystems, and human health. It is recommended that the Town continue to work with the Marathon County Department of

Conservation, Planning and Zoning to develop public outreach education strategies. It is also beneficial that lake districts and associations continue to work with the DNR and property owners to manage invasive aquatic species within lakes and waterbodies throughout the Town of Norrie. The Town currently has documented cases of Banded Mystery Snail, Chinese Mystery Snail, Curly-Leaf Pondweed, Purple Loosestrife, and Rusty Crayfish in several lakes and rivers.

## Wetlands

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

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

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

Wetlands are scattered throughout the Town of Norrie, primarily associated with lakes and stream drainage ways. Notable areas of wetland are located in the central area between Hatley and Norrie Lake and between Mud Lake and Mayflower Lake extending south. Much of these wetlands coincide with floodplains. Wetlands are shown in Map 2 – Natural Resources.

## Floodplains

A floodplain is generally defined as land where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any year. The primary value of floodplains is their role in natural flood control. Floodplains represent areas where excess water can be accommodated whether through drainage by streams or through storage by wetlands and other natural detention/retention areas. Specific areas that will be inundated will depend upon the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, the areas shown on a map as floodplains should be able to handle the most substantial (regional) flood, i.e. those that have a

probability of occurring once every one-hundred years. Floodplains are shown in Map 2 – Natural Resources.

### Groundwater

Groundwater is water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand, and rock. It is replenished by rain and snow melt that seeps down into cracks and crevices beneath the land's surface. The type of soil and bedrock that a well is drilled into often determines water's pH, saturation index, and the amount of hardness or alkalinity in water. Wells are drilled 20 to 200 feet deep to yield 5 to 50 gallons per minute, but yields of 200 gallons per minute are possible. Shallow wells in these deposits are subject to pollution.

Groundwater is the major source of water consumption in Marathon County. All public and private water supplies and most domestic, industrial, and agricultural water supplies in the county rely on groundwater. As residential development continues to expand in the rural areas of the county and agricultural methods intensify, the concern for groundwater protection grows. Groundwater within the Town is shallow over most of Norrie and is available in adequate volumes for farming, irrigation, and domestic use.

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

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

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

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

significant amounts of cropland to non-farm uses. This has created more recognition of the need for meaningful farmland preservation programs.

### Farmland Resources

According to land cover maps, agricultural lands comprise 7,892 acres (35%) of the Town. Farmland is much a part of the history, culture, and economy of the Town of Norrie. Croplands constitute a sizeable land use category within the Town, second only to woodlands. Preservation and attention to these resources is and will continue to be a priority.

### Prime Farm Soils

Prime farmland soils cover a significant area of the Town of Norrie. These class designations refer to the quality of soils for growing crops and are based on United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifications. Class 1 soils are the best soils in Marathon County for growing all crops. Class 2 soils are also very good agricultural soils, however, they may be prone to wetness and are therefore less desirable than Class 1 soils. It should be noted that not all prime farm soils are used for farming; some have been developed with residential or other uses. The "prime farm soils" designation simply indicates that these soils are good productive farmland.

### Farmland Preservation

Farmland preservation is available to landowners within the Town of Norrie and throughout Marathon County, as it impacts local economy and culture. The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan details county policies and strategies with the goal of supporting and sustaining active farms. The Farmland Preservation Plan identifies and distinguishes farm preservation areas from non-farm preservation areas and future development areas.

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

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

A cultural resource is a broad term that can encompass many aspects of heritage. Cultural resources may include archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes,

historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to Native Americans or other cultural groups. Cultural resources are those elements that signify heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinctive. Cultural resources include buildings; sites and landscape that help communities retain their sense of identity in an increasingly homogenized society.

### Community History

The Town of Norrie was named after Gordon Norrie, a former longtime treasurer of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Railroad [MLSWR]. The Town began to grow after the MLSWR (later Chicago & Northwestern [CNW]) was built through the Town on its way to Wausau in 1880. Sawmills were constructed and logging was carried out for the next two decades in the area. As logging declined, farmers moved in, principally German, Scandinavian and Polish immigrants. Norrie's many small lakes also attracted wealthy Wausau families, who built homes on the lakeshores. A hotel in Norrie also served the resort trade.

### Cultural Resources

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

There are three houses within the Town listed on the Wisconsin Architectural History Inventory – one that has been demolished. Additionally, a significant proportion of the Town of Norrie's housing units were constructed in 1939 or earlier, many of which are farmsteads. This demonstrates the historical significance that agriculture had on the early development of the Town.

## NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS

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

### Private Forestry

The WDNR's goal is to motivate private forest landowners to practice sustainable forestry by providing technical forestry assistance, state and federal cost-sharing on management practices,

sale of state produced nursery stock for reforestation, enrollment in Wisconsin's Forest Tax Law Programs, advice for the protection of endangered and threatened species, and assistance with forest disease and insect problems. Each county has at least one Department forester assigned to respond to requests for private forestland assistance. These foresters also provide educational programs for landowners, schools, and the general public. Both private and industrial forest landowners have enrolled their lands under the Managed Forest Law.

## Managed Forest Law (MFL)

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

## Parks and Recreation Program

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

## Stewardship Grants for Nonprofit Conservation Organizations

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

## Nonpoint Source Program (NSP)

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

impairments and prevent future threats caused by NPS pollution. Contact the WDNR for more information.

## Drinking Water and Groundwater Program

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

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

## Aquatic Habitat Protection Program

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

## Endangered Resources Program

The DNR's Endangered Resources staff provides expertise and advice on endangered resources. They manage the Natural Heritage Inventory Program (NHI), which is used to determine the existence and location of native plant and animal communities and Endangered or Threatened Species of Special Concern. The NHI helps identify and prioritize areas suitable for State Natural Area (SNA) designation, provides information needed for feasibility studies and master plans, and maintains the list of endangered and threatened species. All management activities conducted by Wildlife Management and Forestry staff must be reviewed to determine the impact on NHI-designated species. A permit for the incidental take of an Endangered or Threatened species is required under the State Endangered Species Law. The Endangered Resources Program oversees the permit process, reviews applications and makes permit decisions. Funding for the Endangered Species Program comes from a number of sources, including tax checkoff revenue, license plates,

general program revenues (GPR), gaming revenue, Natural Heritage Inventory chargebacks, wild rice permits, general gifts and Pittman Robertson grants.

## Fisheries Management Program

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

## Wildlife Management Program

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

## NRCS Conservation Programs

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

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

## Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program which was established to restore wetlands on lands which were previously altered for agricultural use. The program is administered

by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in consultation with the Farm Service Agency and other federal agencies.

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

## Discovery Farms Program

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

## Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants

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

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

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

The Marathon County Historical Society is available to assist Town of Norrie residents with preserving their own history, and artifacts that also build upon the history in Marathon County.

Their mission is to collect, preserve, and exhibit materials related to the history of Marathon County, and to use those materials to help people learn about North Central Wisconsin, connect with their roots, and explore their own historical connections.

# NATURAL RESOURCES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ISSUES

- **Preservation of Natural Environment** - Elements of the natural environment are key features of the rural character of the Town of Norrie. Norrie residents are very concerned about preservation of natural areas (lakes, streams, wetlands, woodlands, prime agricultural areas, etc.) in the face of continued development pressure. They want to identify important natural areas and methods that could be used to preserve these areas and protect them from development. There is also interest in restoring native vegetation in areas along rivers and marshes to enhance rural character and protect water quality.
- **Preservation of the Plover River** - The Plover River is an important resource that Norrie residents want to preserve. There is concern about encroaching residential development or other development that would affect the natural setting around the river. Residents support initiatives by the Wisconsin DNR and the Wisconsin River Valley Trout Unlimited to enhance the Plover River.
- **Pressure on Recreational/Water Areas** - Based on increased use (boating, fishing, swimming, recreational camping, etc.) at Mayflower Lake and certain other small water bodies in the community, Norrie is concerned about development pressure on the lakes, both from both an aesthetic and environmental perspective. Because of the level of development, Mayflower Lake is a concern because of susceptibility to pollution as a result of extensive development and the high number of individual waste disposal systems in the area. For all lakes, there is concern that bogs and marshlands are encroaching on lakes and reducing the water quality.
- **New Large Scale Land Uses** - The Town is concerned about the potential for new types of large-scale development that use a lot of land, such as solar or wind farms and data centers, and the resulting impact on the Town's natural environment and rural character. The Town currently has few tools in place to address these concerns. Marathon County continues to develop responses, primarily through county zoning.
- **Invasive Species** – Norrie is concerned about the impacts of invasive plants, animals and pests on its lakes, streams, and landscapes. They want to work with the county and state to slow the spread of invasive species to protect the environment and economy.
- **Private On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS)** – There has been some concern about the status of wastewater treatment systems and the potential impact on water quality based on the age of much of the housing stock within the town and the density of residential development in some sensitive areas of the town, like lakes.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

### *Goal 1: Protect and enhance the aesthetic and environmental qualities of the lakes and streams in the Town of Norrie.*

**Objectives:**

- To minimize intensive development around the Town of Norrie's lakes and streams in order to protect views, water and shoreline quality, habitat and natural vegetation.
- To support efforts that enhance lakes and streams including restoration of native vegetation.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages the protection and enhancement of local lakes and streams.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Provide information to residents about conservation easements.
- Support UW-Extension, County, and WDNR efforts to implement conservation buffers and native vegetation restoration.
- Provide information to residents about shoreland zoning and related permit requirements.
- Provide information to residents about outstanding and exceptional resource waters in the town.
- Support Implementation of the Eastern Lakes Management Plan.

### *Goal 2: Protect wetlands from development activity.*

**Objectives:**

- To cooperate with the WDNR and Marathon County to ensure appropriate preservation of wetlands.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie discourages development in areas that will negatively affect wetlands.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Provide information to residents about wetland preservation and management and the permitting requirements for projects that impact wetlands.

### *Goal 3: Protect and enhance the woodlands in the Town of Norrie.*

**Objectives:**

- To encourage use of the Managed Forest Law (MFL) to prevent fragmentation of large sections of woodland and to encourage good forest practices.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages the protection and enhancement of local woodlands.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Provide information to residents about the Managed Forest Law program and good forest management practices.

### *Goal 4: Protect and preserve prime farmland for agricultural production.*

**Objectives:**

- To encourage Farmland Preservation to keep land in agricultural uses.
- To encourage use of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce soil erosion, decrease sedimentation into surface waters, and increase proper nutrient crediting to protect surface resources.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages the preservation of farmland for agricultural production.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Support UW-Extension, Marathon County, and NRCS efforts to implement and monitor farmland conservation practices, including BMPs.
- Explore implementation of the Farmland Preservation Program in the Town of Norrie with Marathon County.

### *Goal 5: Preserve historically significant buildings and sites.*

**Objectives:**

- To ensure that any known cemeteries, human burials, archaeological sites or other known locally significant historic or cultural sites are protected from encroachment by roads or any development activities.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages the preservation of historic sites and buildings

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Provide information to residents about historic or culturally significant sites within the town.
- Work with the County Historical Society to identify historic resources so they can be considered in future planning.

# Chapter 3

# Housing

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

## PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

**Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan**

The Consolidated Housing Plan is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the application process required of the states in accessing formula program funds of Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter Grants and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) "The Consolidated Plan provides the Framework for a planning process used by states and localities to identify housing, homeless, community, and economic development needs and resources and to tailor a strategic plan for meeting those needs."

**Regional Comprehensive Plan, 2025**

The 2025 Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), addresses issues in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development and land use. The RCP identifies a number of issues affecting community livability related to housing:

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

**ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2023**

This report, developed by the United Way, described the 20 percent of households in Marathon County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household

necessities, or "ALICE" households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the "household survival budget," which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, childcare, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

- The ALICE report shows that 23 percent of Town of Norrie households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, indicating that the average household in the Town of Norrie is slightly less financially prosperous than the average Marathon County household at-large. This is based on 2021 data, so affordability is likely a larger challenge as housing prices and inflation have increased since then.

# HOUSING STOCK ASSESSMENT

## Housing Type and Tenure

In 2023, the Town of Norrie had 402 occupied housing units, nearly all of which were owner-occupied, as shown in Table 9. The Town of Norrie had a significantly higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than Marathon County (73 percent) and a significantly higher percentage than the State of Wisconsin (68 percent). The average household size of 2.73 was significantly higher than both the County (2.40) and the State (2.35). Over 28 percent of households within the Town were occupied by a single householder and about 45 percent of households had at least one individual age 60 and older.

**Table 9: Housing Units by Type and Tenure**

| | Town of Norrie | Marathon County | Wisconsin |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Housing Units | 440 | 60,296 | 2,750,750 |
| Total Occupied Housing Units | 402 | 56,873 | 2,446,028 |
| Vacant Housing Units | 38 | 3,423 | 304,722 |
| Seasonal Housing Units | 24 | 787 | 175,681 |
| Owner-occupied Housing Units | 381 | 41,754 | 1,660,505 |
| Renter-occupied Housing Units | 21 | 15,119 | 785,523 |
| Average Household Size | 2.73 | 2.40 | 2.35 |
| Percent Owner-occupied | 94.8% | 73.4% | 67.9% |
| Percent Householder Living Alone | 28.4% | 28.4% | 31.8% |
| Percent with Individuals 60 or Over | 45.7% | 45.7% | 42.5% |

*Source: American Community Survey 2019-2023*

## Structural Characteristics

According to the 2019-2023 American Community Survey data, almost all of the housing units in the Town of Norrie are classified as single-family, as shown in Table 10. Both the Town of Norrie and Marathon County have a housing stock with a higher percentage of single-family housing than the State as a whole. The lack of multi-family housing in the Town contrasts with Marathon County and the State as about 19 percent of housing units in Marathon County are multi-family and about 26 percent of housing units in Wisconsin are multi-family.

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

| | Single-Family | | Multi-Family | | Mobile Home | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Town of Norrie | 424 | 96.4% | 0 | 0% | 16 | 3.6% | 440 |
| Marathon County | 47,013 | 78% | 11,680 | 19.4% | 1,544 | 2.6% | 60,296 |
| Wisconsin | 1,945,331 | 70.8% | 719,925 | 26.1% | 84,443 | 3.1% | 2,750,750 |

*Source: American Community Survey 2019-2023*

## Age Characteristics

The age of a community's housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1940's for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have increased. For example, average homes constructed in the later part of the previous century and the first decade of the millennium are typically much larger than housing built in previous decades. This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Marathon County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 11 outlines build dates of housing units throughout the Town, County, and State based on 2023 American Community Survey data. Over 21 percent of the Town of Norrie's housing units were built before 1950, compared to about 21 percent of housing units in Marathon County and about 23 percent of housing units statewide. About 25 percent of housing units within the Town of Norrie were built between 1960 and 1990, a lower proportion than both Marathon County (33 percent) and Wisconsin (33 percent). Housing growth has slowed significantly over the past decade, as only about seven percent of the Town's housing stock has been built since 2010, a trend that is also being experienced within Marathon County and Wisconsin. Nationwide, home supply has not been constructed to meet demand since the Great Recession of 2008, leading to increased competition and higher prices.

| Table 11: Year Structure Built | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Town of Norrie | | Marathon County | | Wisconsin | |
| Before 1939 | 73 | 16.6% | 10,172 | 16.9% | 498,159 | 18.1% |
| 1940-1949 | 21 | 4.8% | 2,974 | 4.9% | 147,973 | 5.4% |
| 1950-1959 | 28 | 6.4% | 5,969 | 9.9% | 286,285 | 10.4% |
| 1960-1969 | 28 | 6.4% | 4,910 | 8.1% | 263,412 | 9.6% |
| 1970-1979 | 41 | 9.3% | 8,956 | 14.9% | 394,381 | 14.3% |
| 1980-1989 | 44 | 10.0% | 5,819 | 9.7% | 262,147 | 9.5% |
| 1990-1999 | 91 | 20.7% | 7,764 | 12.9% | 355,183 | 12.9% |
| 2000-2009 | 84 | 19.1% | 9,154 | 15.2% | 338,275 | 12.3% |
| 2010-2019 | 30 | 6.8% | 3,926 | 6.5% | 182,928 | 6.7% |
| 2020 or later | 0 | 0.0% | 652 | 1.1% | 22,007 | 0.8% |
| Total | 440 | 100% | 60,296 | 100% | 2,750,750 | 100% |

*Source: American Community Survey 2019-2023*

### Value Characteristics

Table 12 details housing values in owner-occupied homes throughout the Town, County, and State. In 2023, the median housing value was $233,100 in the Town of Norrie. This was higher than Marathon County's median housing value of $205,500, and lower than the State of Wisconsin's median home value of $247,400. Almost three-quarters of the homes within the Town (about 72.4 percent) are valued over $200,000. There is housing across a broad spectrum of valuations in the Town.

| Table 12: Housing Values of Owner-Occupied Units, 2023 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Less than $99,999 | $100,000 to $149,999 | $150,000 to $199,999 | $200,000 to $299,999 | $300,000 to $499,999 | $500,000 or More | Median Value |
| Town of Norrie | 8.7% | 12.6% | 6.3% | 56.2% | 9.2% | 7% | $233,100 |
| Marathon County | 12.4% | 16.4% | 19.4% | 29.4% | 16.6% | 6% | $205,500 |
| Wisconsin | 9.8% | 11.2% | 15.1% | 27.1% | 25.7% | 11.1% | $247,400 |

*Source: American Community Survey 2019-2023*

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

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

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

Table 13 shows that the percentage of owner-occupied households in the Town of Norrie that are cost-burdened is lower than the County and the State for those with a mortgage and higher for those without a mortgage. Table 14 shows that none of the renter-occupied households in the Town of Norrie are cost-burdened, compared to more than 37 percent of renters in both the County and the State.

**Table 13: Housing Affordability (Owner-Occupied Units)**

| | With Mortgage | Percent Cost-Burdened | No Mortgage | Percent Cost-Burdened |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Town of Norrie | $1,442 | 13.4% | $488 | 12.6% |
| Marathon County | $1,444 | 15.1% | $574 | 9.6% |
| Wisconsin | $1,652 | 20.6% | $647 | 7.1% |

*Source: American Community Survey 2019-2023*

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

**Table 14: Housing Affordability (Renter-Occupied Units)**

| | Median Gross Rent | Percent Cost-Burdened |
|---|---|---|
| Town of Norrie | $850 | 0% |
| Marathon County | $950 | 37.3% |
| Wisconsin | $1045 | 38.5% |

*Source: American Community Survey 2019-2023*

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

# SPECIALIZED HOUSING

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

### Senior Housing

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

According to research by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the overwhelming majority of seniors prefer to "age in place," or remain in their home throughout retirement. This can be difficult for those in rural areas such as the Town of Norrie, as the ability to access medical care and necessary goods and services can become burdensome.

Eastern Marathon County is served by senior housing options in several communities. The Village of Wittenberg is home to several facilities, while the Village of Birnamwood, the City of Antigo, and the Wausau area also provide nearby senior housing options.

## HOUSING PROGRAMS

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

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

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

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

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

- Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans
- Multi-Family Housing Loan Guarantees
- Multi-Family Housing Rental Assistance

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

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

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

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

## HOUSING ISSUES

- **Nuisance Ordinances** – There have been issues raised regarding dilapidated buildings and refuse (junk) being left around. Norrie has both junk and animal control ordinances. Norrie may want to consider the status of nuisance issues in the town and determine if more needs to be done regarding nuisance concerns.
- **Mobile Home Ordinance** – Norrie residents have expressed interest in a mobile home ordinance, and the town has been working on an ordinance for health and safety purposes. Any such ordinances would need to adhere to all state and federal statutes and regulations, including the Fair Housing Act.
- **Anticipated Residential Development** – Close proximity to Wausau and easy access via Highway 29 make Norrie desirable for new residential development.
- **Zoning** – The town does not have general zoning but currently has a 2-acre minimum lot size. Some in the town have expressed concern that without zoning, the town has no ability to control major developments or ensure protections for rural character, water quality, etc. There is interest in exploring zoning options for the town.
- **Aging Septics** – There has been some concern about the status of wastewater treatment systems and the potential impact on water quality based on the age of much of the housing stock within the town and the density of residential development in some sensitive areas of the town, like lakes.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

***Goal 1: Plan for rural residential development to address concerns about waste disposal systems, adequacy of water supply and other services, and to preserve rural character in the Town of Norrie.***

**Objectives:**

- To encourage housing development in areas that can best be served with infrastructure including water capacity, road access and other appropriate services.
- To locate new residential units in areas that will have minimal impact on farmland.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports adequate and thorough planning for residential development.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Identify and map areas within the Town that have limited water supply.
- Work with Marathon County on implementation of the POWTS monitoring and maintenance program.
- Identify and map service area boundaries for internet, phone, power, etc.
- Identify areas that are preferable for new rural residential development based on availability of services.

***Goal 2: Ensure the safety of mobile home units.***

**Objectives:**

- To cooperate with the County to ensure that mobile homes are properly reviewed for health and safety requirements before being placed on a site.
- To ensure that mobile homes have identified addresses and fire numbers for emergency service provision.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages the safety of mobile home units.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Review all mobiles homes for addresses / fire numbers and work with Marathon County to ensure numbers are assigned as appropriate.
- Adopt mobile home ordinance for the Town of Norrie.

### *Goal 3: Continue to support enforcement of the uniform building code.*

**Objectives:**

- To continue to maintain a building inspector in the Town of Norrie to ensure safe and appropriate construction.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports the use of the uniform building code.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Maintain a contract for building inspector services for the Town of Norrie.

# Chapter 4

# Transportation

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

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

## PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

**Regional Comprehensive Plan, 2025**

The Transportation element of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2025 assesses the transportation network throughout the ten-county region and identifies trends and issues facing transportation. The RCP establishes three main transportation goals as follows:

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

**Locally Developed, Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, 2024**

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

**Connections 2050**

Connections 2050 is the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) long-range transportation plan for the state. Adopted recently, the plan addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. WisDOT is currently updating several of the modal plans.

**Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

This 2018 plan is a region-wide effort to improve bicycling and walking across the communities. 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.

**State Trails Network Plan**

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

# ROAD NETWORK

The road network within the Town of Norrie is a network of state and county highways together with various local roads. State Highway 29 is an east-west, four-lane divided principal arterial running through the southwest corner of the Town providing access to the Wausau metropolitan area to the west and Green Bay to the east. Marathon County Highway Y is designated a major collector on the west side of Norrie, providing a connection to Hatley and STH 29 to the south. County Highway N coincides with the northern border of Norrie and is an east-west major collector connecting to the Village of Birnamwood to the east and to Wausau to the west. Norrie is also served by county highways D, DD, and OO. The jurisdictional and functional breakdown of the Town of Norrie road network is shown in Table 15.

## Functional Classification

A functionally classified road system is one in which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of the services 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 generally defined as:

- **Principal Arterials** serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. These routes generally serve all urban areas with populations greater than 5,000 or connect major centers of activity. They carry the highest traffic volumes and are designed to accommodate longer trips.
- **Minor Arterials**, like principal arterials, minor arterials also serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators, providing intra-community continuity and service for trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.
- **Collectors** provide both land access service and traffic circulation, within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. The collector system distributes trips from the arterials through the area to the local streets. The collectors also collect traffic from the local streets and channel it into the arterial system.
- **Local streets** comprise all facilities not on one of the higher systems. They serve primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to higher order systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility and high volume through-traffic movement on these streets is usually discouraged.

**Table 15: Road Mileage by Jurisdictional and Functional Class**

| Jurisdiction | Functional Classification | | | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Arterial | Collector | Local | |
| State* | 3.79 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.79 |
| County | 0.00 | 20.30 | 0.10 | 20.40 |
| Town | 0.00 | 1.29 | 33.26 | 34.55 |
| Totals | 3.79 | 21.59 | 33.36 | 58.74 |

*Source: WisDOT & NCWRPC.*

**: WisDOT has jurisdiction over interstate and federal highways*

## Jurisdiction

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

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

As previously noted, these functional classifications are generally equated with the jurisdictional divisions. In the more developed, larger urban communities, this relationship may not be as rigid, whereas the local community constructs and maintains all classes of the roadway system. However, in the typical rural transportation system the jurisdictional and the functional classifications maintain a closer relationship. The greatest emphasis of traffic in rural areas is generally on non-local efficient movement, whereas local access is secondary due to relatively low population densities.

## Major Road Facilities

Functional classification and jurisdiction are summarized below for all major roads within the Town of Norrie.

- State Trunk Highway 29 is an east-west, four-lane divided principal arterial. STH 29 runs through the southwest corner of the Town providing access to the Wausau metropolitan area to the west and Green Bay to the east.
- CTH Y is designated a major collector on the west side of Norrie, providing a connection to Hatley and STH 29 to the south.
- CTH N is on the northern border of Norrie and an east-west major collector connecting to the Village of Birnamwood to the east and to Wausau to the west.
- CTH D is a north-south minor collector on the east side of Norrie, providing a connection to Birnamwood to the north and STH 29 to the south.
- CTH DD is an east-west minor collector that provides a connection between CTH Y and CTH D.
- CTH OO is designated as a minor collector along the east-west segment between CTH D and the boundary with Shawano County.
- Falstad Road between STH 29 and CTH D is designated as a minor collector.

## Local Roads

The Town of Norrie local road network consists of approximately 35 miles of local roads, most of which are paved. As part of the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) the Wis. DOT requires all local units of government to submit road condition rating data every 2 years. 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 monitor roads in need of repair.

## Road Maintenance

The Town of Norrie uses the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system, which was designed by the Transportation Information Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The PASER system is the rating system used by most Wisconsin communities. The PASER system rates road surfaces on a scale of 1 to 10. This scale is broken down as follows:

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

Table 16 shows a summary of pavement conditions in the Town of Norrie. 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. An aggregate of 14.05 miles of roads in the Town, or about 40.6 percent of the Town's roads, are in need of improvement. Approximately 69 percent of roadways in the Town are asphalt roads. Gravel or sealcoat roads account for the remaining 31 percent of the total.

**Table 16: Summary of Pavement Conditions, 2025**

| Surface Condition Rating | Miles | Percent of Total Mileage |
|---|---|---|
| Very Poor | 0.70 | 2.0% |
| Poor | 2.10 | 6.1% |
| Fair | 11.25 | 32.5% |
| Good | 12.17 | 35.2% |
| Very Good | 2.41 | 7.0% |
| Excellent | 5.93 | 17.2% |
| Total | 34.56 | 100.0% |

*Source: WisDOT 2025*

## Trucking

State Highway 29 is the truck route that serves the Town as designated by WisDOT. Local truck routes often branch out from this major corridor to link local industry with the main truck route, as well as for the distribution of commodities within the local area. Local issues such as safety, weight restrictions, and noise impacts play significant roles in the designation of local truck routes.

## Rail

There is no rail access to the Town. The former railroad line has been converted to a multi-use trail for walkers, bikers, and snowmobiles. The trail is maintained by Marathon County.

## Airport

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

## Bus/Transit

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

## Bicycling and Walking

All roads are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel in the Town of Norrie, with the exception of STH 29. No sidewalks exist. Roads that do not have sidewalks may not provide sufficient shoulder areas for safe pedestrian access.

The Mountain-Bay Trail runs through Norrie along an abandoned railroad corridor (Chicago & Northwestern right-of-way). Marathon County's section of the trail opened in 1996. A 50-foot right-of-way is owned by WDNR and maintained by the County. The trail is generally considered an asset to the community and connections to the trail have been suggested.

## Specialized

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

Work which assists Marathon County families/individuals to overcome transportation obstacles between home and work.

# TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

Below is a listing of programs that may be of assistance to the Town with regard to the development of the local transportation system. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is the primary provider of programs to assist local transportation systems. A wide variety of programs are available to serve the gamut of jurisdictions from county down to the smallest town. The programs most likely to be utilized by rural towns such as Rolling include:

- General Transportation Aids
- Flood Damage Aids
- Town Road Improvement Program
- Town Road Improvement Program – Discretionary
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance
- Local Transportation Enhancements
- Traffic Signing & Marking Enhancement Grant
- Rustic Roads

More information on these programs can be obtained by contacting the WisDOT region office in Wisconsin Rapids or on the Internet at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/index.htm.

# TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

- **Rural-Urban Conflict –** As Norrie becomes less agricultural and more ex-urban, there have been some conflicts over expectations of road use and maintenance between rural users and other traffic. As the town seeks to maintain its rural character, residents should expect a balance between a traditional rural transportation system and more urban level of service.
- **Funding –** Future road maintenance and improvement costs and funding options may be limited, depending on State aid availability.
- **Traffic Impacts –** Norrie may need to evaluate traffic impacts on heavily used county and town roads that intersect with STH 29. As more residents are using these roads for commuter traffic, the roads may need to be looked at for safety, including geometry, speed limits, driveway access and other factors.
- **Ride Share –** There are signs that people are parking their vehicles at certain areas of the town and catching rides to points beyond the town. As fuel prices continue to increase, this is a service that more people look for. To address this issue and get ahead of traffic control and parking issues, the town should consult with WisDOT regarding

rideshare planning and programming to organize and promote acceptable rideshare parking location(s) within the town.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

### *Goal 1: Improve traffic safety within the Town of Norrie.*

**Objectives:**

- To work with WisDOT and Marathon County to investigate safety issues such as road geometry, speed limits, driveway access and other factors along heavily used county and town roads that intersect with STH 29.
- To look for opportunities to minimize rural/urban road usage conflicts.
- To evaluate criteria for review of driveway access along Town roads if and when necessary for traffic safety.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie will work to make sure that traffic safety is improved within the Town.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Evaulate and adopt new criteria for driveway permit review if necessary for traffic safety.
- Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and the County Sheriff's Department to educate the public about slow-moving vehicles and other farm/non-farm conflicts.

### *Goal 2: Maintain Town roads.*

**Objectives:**

- To continue the annual road budgeting process so that maintenance and improvements can be programmed and adequately funded.
- To identify criteria to determine when and if roads should be paved at such time that documentation is necessary for efficient planning.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports programs to help maintain the condition of current Town roads.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Develop and document criteria to assist in the decision-making process of whether or not to pave a roadway.
- Meet annually to prioritize and program road repair and improvements.

### *Goal 3: Provide the most cost-efficient, effective services to residents in areas such as road maintenance, snowplowing, or other services.*

**Objectives:**

- To work with adjacent communities where there are potential cost savings in service delivery.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports working with adjacent communities to provide cost savings in road maintenance and services.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Engage with surrounding Towns and the County to discuss road maintenance schedules.
- Engage with surrounding communities to discuss snow-plowing and other service activities.
- Annually develop a plan for any shared road maintenance, including detailed responsibilities and cost-sharing.

### *Goal 4: Improve access management along STH 29.*

**Objectives:**

- To work with surrounding communities, the County, and the State to consider options and assist WDOT in drafting a study regarding future freeway upgrades and development of frontage roads for the section of STH 29 between Ringle (County Q) and Wittenberg (US 45).
- To ensure that development along STH 29 occurs in areas that will have adequate access in the future.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages coordination between local, County, and State entities regarding development and access along STH 29. To ensure that development along STH 29 occurs in areas that will have adequate access in the future.
- The Town of Norrie supports improved access management along STH 29.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Maintain contact with the State, County, and nearby communities regarding any planning to convert to Interstate Highway standards that section of STH 29 running from Ringle to Wittenberg.
- Be sure that the Town of Norrie is represented in any committees or meetings held by the State, WDOT, or other entities on the STH 29 corridor.
- Identify and map areas along STH 29 corridor in the Town of Norrie that are most appropriate for for future development and have appropriate access.

- Use the Town of Norrie future land use map to guide development reviews in the STH 29 corridor.

### *Goal 5: Ensure that new development provides for efficient transportation systems.*

**Objectives:**

- To promote new subdivision road design that can accommodate future expansion.
- To incorporate non-motorized transportation (bicycles, pedestrians) into new subdivision designs where practical.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages more planning for the relationship between roads and new development.
- The Town of Norrie supports the inclusion of provisions for non-motorized transportation into new subdivision designs.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Make future roadway considerations a part of the standard development review.
- Review existing subdivision and road ordinances and utilize when planning for roads and Town road access. Create new ordinances where needed.
- Promote added lane or shoulder width and/or sidewalks along certain roads in new subdivisions, to support bikes or pedestrians.
- Consider guidelines that require developers to finance some of the infrastructure improvements necessary for new development.

### *Goal 6: Ensure that new development near the Mountain-Bay Trail has adequate access.*

**Objective:**

- To specifically review all development proposals near the trail and ensure that no parcels become landlocked because of prohibitions on additional trail crossings.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages the careful review of all development proposals near the Mountain-Bay Trail.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Review existing prohibitions/regulations on additional trail crossings.
- Advise developers of existing regulations regarding the trail.

# Chapter 5

# Utilities and Community Facilities

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

## PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

**Marathon County All Hazards Mitigation Plan**

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

## UTILITIES

### Water Service

The Town of Norrie does not have a public water supply system. Instead, private wells supply the water for public and private facilities within the Town. Concerns exist over water quality as properties continue to develop.

### Wastewater

There is no public sewer system in the Town of Norrie. Therefore, all development in the Town uses on-site septic systems. The Town does not have zoning, but does require a minimum lot size of 2 acres. Generally, these private sewage systems fall into four categories:

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

### Solid Waste and Recycling

The Town of Norrie contracts with a private company for waste management. The Marathon County Solid Waste Management Department is in charge of waste management for non-hazardous solid waste. It consists of the 575-acre landfill, recycling programs, composting, and waste-to-energy.

### Stormwater Management

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

## ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### Electric and Natural Gas

The Town of Norrie receives electric power from Wisconsin Public Services (WPS), Alliant Energy, and Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative. Residents of the Town of Norrie must provide their own LP gas service and storage.

### Solar Energy Potential

The Town of Norrie recognizes the potential impacts on the community of large-scale solar energy projects (100 MW or greater) can be both positive and negative. Since the landscape of the Town offers good conditions for solar energy development, the Town recognizes the need

to encourage the siting of potential solar projects to specific areas that best fit the needs and desires of both the citizens and the agricultural community while minimizing negative impacts on existing land use trends and public interests.

### Wind Energy Potential

The Town of Norrie recognizes the potential impacts on the community from large-scale wind energy projects. Although wind energy can be a very cost-effective source of electricity, wind energy developments do pose potential issues for the Town, mainly regarding visibility, noise, negative impacts on property values, and harmful impacts on wildlife. Since the landscape of the Town offers good conditions for wind energy development, the Town should consider adopting an ordinance on the regulation of wind turbines that complies with local regulatory limitations set by 2009 Wisconsin Act 40.

### Cable/Internet

Several companies currently provide fixed wireline or fixed wireless high speed internet access throughout the Town including Cirrinity, Bug Tussel, Frontier, however, there are still issues with broadband buildout in rural areas such as Norrie. Additionally, several companies provide internet access via satellite or mobile access. Cable service is available through Spectrum. There are currently several communication towers located within the Town.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Town Operations

The Norrie Town Hall is a highly utilized multi-use facility used for reunions, receptions, Town meetings, and various other community functions year-round.

### Schools

Much of the Town of Norrie is served by the Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District. A small portion of the Town, surrounding The the Village of Hatley and the surrounding area are isincluded in the D. C. Everest School District. Residents of Norrie are also served by private schools in the Antigo and Wausau areas.

The Wittenberg-Birnamwood district has two elementary schools and a high school. Residents of Norrie who live in the area served by the Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District attend Birnamwood Elementary at 337 Main Street in Birnamwood, and High School on 400 W Grand Ave in Wittenberg.

D. C. Everest School District, which has seven elementary schools, a charter school, a middle school, a junior high and a senior high school. The senior high school is located in the City of Schofield; its senior high campus off Alderson Street includes the Greenheck Field House. The junior high school, charter school, and three elementary schools are located in Weston. The remaining four grade schools are in Hatley, Ringle, and Rothschild (two). There is also a school forest in Kronenwetter.

## Post-Secondary Education

- **Northcentral Technical College–Wausau Campus** – NTC's main campus is located in Wausau and offers several one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields. Classes are offered for all seven schools, with partnerships with other four-year partners such as UW-Green Bay and Marian University.
- **Northcentral Technical College–Antigo Campus** – located in Antigo, offers several one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields. The Antigo campus is also home to NTC's Wood Technology Center of Excellence.
- **Northcentral Technical College–Wittenberg Campus** – located in Wittenberg, this campus offers a limited number of in-person classes but provides computers for video conferencing for virtual classes. Other services, such as testing and college prep, are offered here as well.
- **University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point (UWSP)** – located in the City of Stevens Point, UWSP was founded in 1894. When combined with its satellite campuses in Wausau and Marshfield, total enrollment is over 8,000. The campus offers 80 baccalaureate degrees, 17 graduate programs, and 90 minors, and is known for its robust fine arts and natural resources programs.
- **University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point at Wausau** – located at the NTC Wausau Campus, it offers courses leading to a baccalaureate degree. They also offer graduate degrees, including Master of Business Administration (MBA), Physician Assistant (in partnership with UW Madison), and Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (in partnership with Northern Vermont University).

## Libraries

The Town of Norrie is served by the Marathon County Library System, as well as a municipal library in Hatley and the Birnamwood Branch of the Shawano County Library. The Marathon County Public Library – Wausau Headquarters serves as the main branch of the library system and is located in downtown Wausau.

## Cemeteries

There are four cemeteries located within the Town. These include St. Philomena Catholic near Birnamwood, Eland on Highway OO, Hillcrest near Norrie Lake, and St. Francis Catholic on Highway D. Wisconsin Statute 157.70 provides for the protection of all human burial sites including marked and unmarked burials and cemeteries. Suspected burial sites must be reported to the State Burial Sites Preservation Office. If human remains are uncovered during excavation, all work must cease pending review.

## Public Safety

- **Law Enforcement** – Police protection for the Town of Norrie is provided by the Marathon County Sheriff's Office.

- **Fire and Emergency Response** – The Town of Norrie is primarily served by the volunteer Birnamwood fire department. Some residents receive service from the Hatley Fire District.

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

## Hospitals and Medical Services

There are three hospitals in proximity to the Town of Norrie. Aspirus Wausau Hospital is located at 425 Pine Ridge Boulevard in Wausau and provides primary, secondary, and tertiary care services as a regional referral center.

Located in Antigo, Aspirus Langlade Hospital has been affiliated with Aspirus since 2008 and provides numerous services. Marshfield Medical Center-Weston (formerly St. Clare's Hospital) also provides advanced hospital services.

Nearby health care facilities include Marshfield Clinic Wittenberg Center and Aspirus Wittenberg Clinic in the Village of Wittenberg, and Aspirus Clinic in the Village of Birnamwood.

## Childcare

The Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Network is a membership organization made up of community-based CCR&R agencies serving the State of Wisconsin.

Marathon County is within Region 6, which is served by Childcaring, Inc., located in Wisconsin Rapids.

CCR&R agencies assist parents in selecting quality childcare, help to increase the supply of childcare in areas that may be lacking sufficient care, offer information and technical support to potential childcare providers, and give technical assistance and support to existing childcare programs. Each agency manages a database of existing childcare providers and programs, collects data about childcare rates, provider and teacher salaries, the number of parents and children using their services, the type of care requested and the children's ages. There are two licensed childcare facilities in the Village of Wittenberg, and six other licensed childcare facilities located within 15 miles of the Town.

# RECREATION

## Parks

The Town of Norrie does not own or operate any public parks. However, the town owns public access locations to Mayflower Lake (off CTH D), Mud Lake and Norrie Lake. There is also a public beach managed by Marathon County at Norrie Lake.

Other nearby County and State parks for use by town residents include:

***Mission Lake Park*** is located in the Town of Reid. Mission Lake is a 122-acre park and has facilities including three shelters, restrooms, picnic tables, grills, children's play equipment, and drinking fountains. The main features are a sandy beach and a boat launch, with fishing a popular activity.

***The Dells of the Eau Claire Park*** is located off CTH Y in Plover. The Dells of the Eau Claire Park surrounds geologic features created by the Eau Claire River. The park is 190 acres in size, bisected by the river. A dam upstream from the falls creates an impoundment that has a swimming beach and changing rooms. A large Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) era shelter is located north of the falls area. Park facilities include picnic tables, grills, drinking fountains, and children's play equipment. There are extensive trails located along both sides of the river, including a portion of the Ice Age Trail.

Wilson Lake County Park is a Shawano County Park. Located to the west of Wittenberg, this 110-acre property which encompasses Wilson Lake, includes a small beach area, fishing pier, and boat ramp. Park facilities include a large shelter, play equipment, restroom building with changing areas, and a rustic trail system., as well as four campsites with picnic tables and fire pits. Water and electricity can be found at the shelter.

***Mountain-Bay State Trail*** is built on a former railroad right-of-way stretching 83 miles from the Village of Weston to Green Bay. The current westernmost trailhead is located in the Village of Weston, where parking and trail passes are available. The trail has a crushed granite surface and passes through the Village of Hatley and rural areas in the Town of Norrie within Marathon County. At Norrie Lake, there is a swimming beach and picnic facility adjacent to the trail.

***Rib Mountain State Park*** is the closest state park to the Town of Norrie. The park's main feature is Rib Mountain, which at 1,924 feet above sea level is one of the highest elevations in the State of Wisconsin. The park surrounds the mountain and contains picnicking amenities, hiking trails, and reservable facilities that include a scenic amphitheater, indoor gathering space, and picnic shelters. The top of the park offers spectacular views of the Wausau area and Wisconsin River. Granite Peak Ski Area is on the north face of the mountain and offers downhill skiing and snowboarding.

# UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ISSUES

- **Aging Septic Sytems and Wells** – There has been some concern about the status of wastewater treatment systems and drinking water wells and the potential impact on water quality based on the age of much of the housing stock within the town and the density of residential development in some sensitive areas of the town, like lakes.
- **Highspeed Internet / Broadband** – Despite a countywide program developing broadband service access across the county, the Town of Norrie is concerned that remote, rural areas like Norrie are being neglected as funding is invested in more densely populated, easier to access areas.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

### *Goal 1: Plan for efficient on-site waste disposal systems in the Town of Norrie.*

**Objectives:**

- To ensure that lot sizes are adequate for private waste disposal systems.
- To ensure that waste disposal systems will not have negative effects on wetlands, rivers, streams or lakes in the Town of Norrie.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages appropriate and efficient use of on-site sanitary waste disposal systems as approved by Marathon County.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Develop and adopt a minimum lot size relative to a certain size of waste disposal systems.

### *Goal 2: Protect the Town's water resources, including potable water.*

**Objectives:**

- Support WDNR and Marathon County efforts to protect critical groundwater recharge areas.
- To encourage residents to conduct regular well testing to ensure that water is safe.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports the maintenance and protection of its water supply.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Identify and map areas within the Town that have limited water supply.
- Support WDNR and County efforts to identify and map critical groundwater recharge areas.

### *Goal 3: Support and maintain existing community facilities.*

**Objectives:**

- To maintain the Town Hall as a seat of local government and community meeting hall.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie recognizes the importance of the Town Hall as a gathering place for the community and as a government center of the Town.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Identify necessary repairs and allocate funds to maintain and/or improve the Town Hall on a regular basis.

### *Goal 4: Ensure sufficient fire and emergency service provision.*

**Objectives:**

- To continue to participate in the Birnamwood Area Fire Department, Inc. and the Hatley Fire Department, and maintain and improve equipment.
- Support an adequate number of trained volunteer fire departments and emergency service staff.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie recognizes the importance of adequate fire and emergency service provisions.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Support improvements or new equipment that is needed by the Birnamwood and Hatley Fire Departments. Prioritize needs.

### *Goal 5: Support the Marathon County park system and nearby facilities available for Town of Norrie residents.*

**Objectives:**

- To encourage adequate funding for maintenance of local Marathon County parks such as the Dells of the Eau Claire and Mission Lake Park, and the county beach area at Norrie Lake.
- To maintain the public access at Mayflower Lake and at Mud Lake.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie recognizes the County and local park systems as an important asset to the community.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Participate in conversations with the County to learn of plans for improvements or maintenance to surrounding parks and facilities including the Mountain Bay Trail and Norrie Lake Beach.
- Work with the County to set up a local volunteer program for any of the parks, to generate local interest in the park and help the County with small maintenance issues (i.e. trash pick-up, trail clearing, etc.)

### *Goal 6: Use the Mountain-Bay Trail to encourage development of other recreational facilities.*

**Objectives:**

- To ensure that other park or recreational development is coordinated with and takes advantage of the Trail.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages complementary recreational development adjacent to the Mountain-Bay Trail.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Initiate conversation with trail officials to help identify areas along the trail that may be suitable for other recreational development.

# Chapter 6

# Economic Development

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

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

## PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

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

**Regional Comprehensive Plan, 2025**

Economic Development is one of the chapters included in the RCP, adopted by the NCWRPC in 2025. The Economic Development chapter assesses the economic health of the ten-county region and identifies trends and issues facing the local economy.

The RCP addresses nine economic development issues:

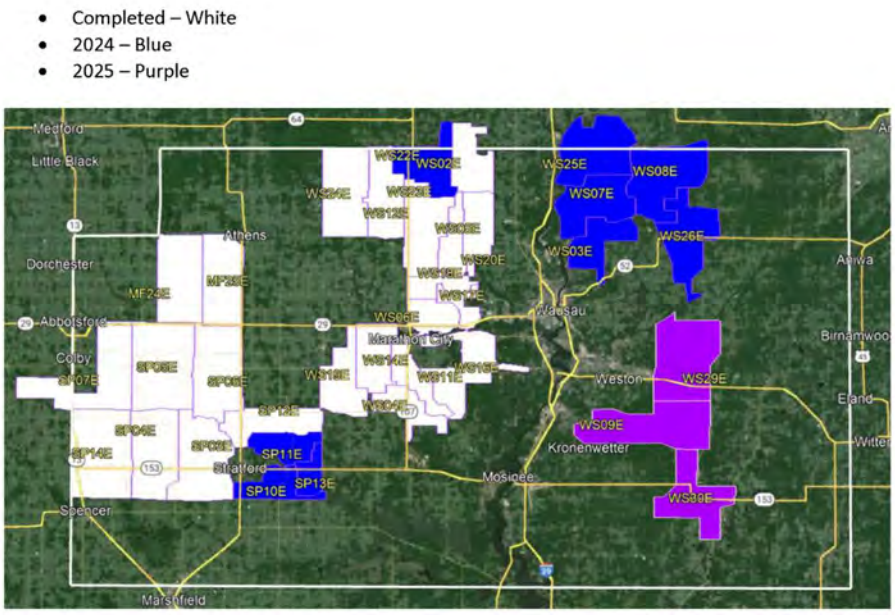
- An aging workforce, retirements, and the need for a skilled and flexible workforce
- Unpredictable weather impacts to agriculture, outdoor recreation, and financial resiliency
- The need for broadband expansion
- Childcare availability and affordability

- Unknown future of the forest products industry
- Limited access to active rail lines
- Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation, and their unknown future impact on the economy
- The increase in flexible, hybrid, and remote work and its impact on commercial real estate, local businesses, community facilities, and job recruitment strategies
- Inflation's impact on businesses, County and municipal budgets, household finances, and growing wealth gaps between households of different income levels

## Broadband Assessment and Planning for Marathon County

In 2019, the Broadband Feasibility Study laid the groundwork for proactive planning for high-speed internet in Marathon County. Marathon County, Wisconsin is working to expand high-speed broadband infrastructure through provider partnerships and federal funding. However, rural buildout faces ongoing coverage gaps and deployment challenges.

**Figure 7: Broadband Expansion Areas in Marathon County**




*Source: Marathon County*

## ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin

This report, developed by the United Way in 2023, described the 20 percent of households in Marathon County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or "ALICE" households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the "household survival budget," which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, childcare, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

- The ALICE report shows that 23 percent of Town of Norrie households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, indicating that the average household in the Town of Norrie is slightly less financially prosperous than the average Marathon County household at-large. This is based on 2021 data, so affordability is likely a larger challenge as housing prices and inflation have increased since then.

# ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

## County Economic Environment

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

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

## Economic Sectors

Table 17 details employment by sector for the Town of Norrie and Marathon County. In 2023, there were 570 persons employed in the thirteen basic economic sectors in the Town, a ten percent increase from the Town's total employment in 2010. In 2023, the leading industry sectors for Town of Norrie employed residents were the Manufacturing, Education, Health, and Social Services sectors.

Overall, there were 72,092 persons employed in the basic economic industry sectors in Marathon County in 2023. Employment within Marathon County has increased by 3 percent since 2010, when there were 69,980 persons employed. The leading industry sectors within Marathon County in 2023 were the Manufacturing; Education, Health and Social Services; and Retail Trade sectors.

Between 2010 and 2023, there were several dramatic shifts in employment throughout industries within Marathon County. Three sectors – the Other Services; Public Administration; and Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Mgmt Services sectors – experienced significant increases in employment between 2010 and 2023, with each of these sectors experiencing increases in employment of over 18 percent. Only four sectors – the Information; Manufacturing; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining; and the Retail Trade sectors – experienced a decrease in employment within the County during this time.

**Table 17: Employment by Industry Sector**

| Sector | Town of Norrie | | | Marathon County | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2010 | 2023 | % Change | 2010 | 2023 | % Change |
| Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining | 54 | 77 | 43% | 2,231 | 2,106 | -6% |
| Construction | 40 | 52 | 30% | 3,891 | 4,029 | 4% |
| Manufacturing | 146 | 165 | 13% | 16,870 | 14,814 | -12% |
| Wholesale Trade | 24 | 13 | -46% | 2,369 | 2,629 | 11% |
| Retail Trade | 28 | 40 | 43% | 7,697 | 7,604 | -1% |
| Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities | 10 | 25 | 150% | 3,116 | 3,247 | 4% |
| Information | 3 | 0 | -100% | 1,026 | 649 | -37% |
| Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing | 24 | 25 | 4% | 5,471 | 5,544 | 1% |
| Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Mgmt Services | 10 | 10 | 0% | 3,865 | 4,576 | 18% |
| Education, Health, and Social Services | 129 | 121 | -6% | 14,895 | 17,437 | 17% |
| Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services | 29 | 11 | -62% | 4,702 | 4,703 | 0% |
| Public Administration | 0 | 4 | | 1,393 | 1,649 | 18% |
| Other Services | 23 | 27 | 17% | 2,454 | 3,105 | 27% |
| **Total** | 520 | 570 | 10% | 69,980 | 72,092 | 3% |

*Source: American Community Survey (2019-2023)*

## Labor Force Analysis

Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. Table 18 compares the labor force of the Town of Norrie with that of Marathon County. Between 2010 and 2023, the Town of Norrie experienced an eight percent increase in the labor force, as the Town's labor force increased from 529 residents in 2010 to 573 residents in 2023. The increase in the Town's labor force during this time is varies from the decrease experienced in Marathon County during the same time period. With a labor force consisting of

74,270 persons in 2023, Marathon County's labor force has decreased by one percent since 2010, when the County's labor force consisted of 74,962 persons.

## Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and total persons employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not considered part of the labor force. In 2010, the Town of Norrie had 1.7 percent unemployment, and the 2023 unemployment rate was lower at 0.5 percent. The Town of Norrie's unemployment rate was lower than Marathon County (2.9%) and higher than the State of Wisconsin (3.3%) in 2023.

**Table 18: Town of Norrie Labor Force**

| | Town of Norrie | | | Marathon County | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2010 | 2023 | Percent Change | 2010 | 2023 | Percent Change |
| Population 16 years and over | 721 | 817 | 13% | 103,816 | 110,587 | 7% |
| Labor Force | 529 | 573 | 8% | 74,962 | 74,270 | -1% |
| Employed | 520 | 570 | 10% | 69,980 | 72,092 | 3% |
| Unemployed | 9 | 3 | -67% | 4,856 | 2,140 | -56% |
| Unemployment Rate | 1.7% | 0.5% | -71% | 6.5% | 2.9% | -55% |
| Participation Rate | 73.4% | 70.1% | 2% | 72.2% | 67.2% | -5% |

*Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2019-2023)*

## Workforce Participation

Workforce participation is a measure expressed in terms of a percentage of persons actively seeking employment divided by the total working age population. People not participating in the labor force may not seek employment due to a variety of reasons including retirement, disability, choice to be a homemaker, or are simply not looking for work. In 2010, nearly three-quarters of the Town of Norrie's population over the age of 16 was in the labor force. In 2023, the Town of Norrie had a slightly lower labor force participation rate, at around 70 percent. The Town's labor force participation rate in 2023 was higher than Marathon County's participation rate of about 67 percent. The Town of Norrie also had a much higher participation rate than the State (65.4%), while Marathon County had a slightly higher participation rate than the State.

## Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2021, there were 85 jobs located within the Town of Norrie, with 81 of these jobs being filled by persons who live outside of the Town. In contrast, there were 385 workers who live in the Town of Norrie that commuted to locations outside of the Town for work, as shown in Figure 8. This indicates that Norrie's laborshed extends beyond its municipal borders.

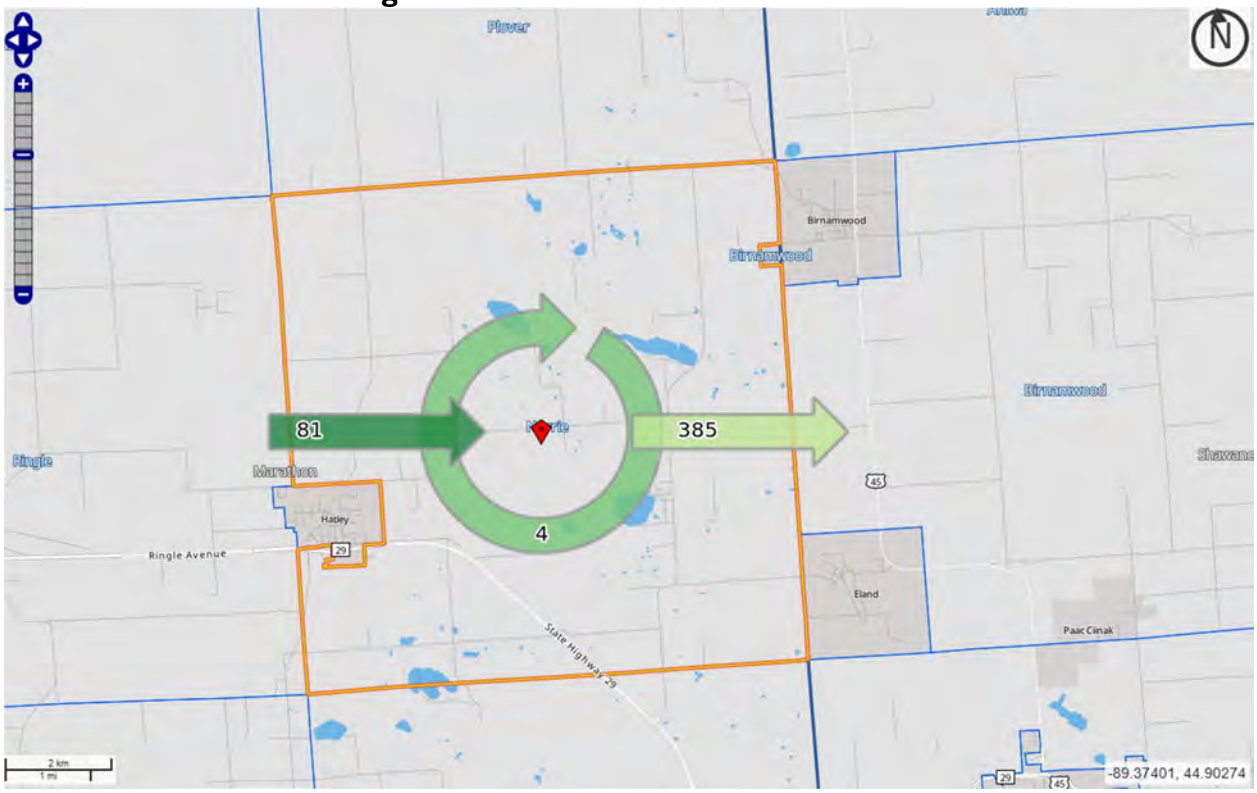
## In-Migration

The majority of workers that commute into the Town for work live in close proximity to the Town, with many of these workers either living within Marathon County or in neighboring Shawano County.

## Out-Migration

The most substantial group of outbound commuters (those who live in the Town but work outside of the Town) travel to the City of Wausau for work. Other common work locations for Town residents include the Cities of Schofield, Antigo, and Marshfield, and the Villages of Weston and Rothschild.

**Figure 8: Town of Norrie Laborshed**




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

## Occupations

As shown in Table 19, most residents in the Town of Norrie were employed in Management, business, science, and arts occupations. The second sector most represented was the area Production, transportation, and material moving occupations. From 2010 to 2023, the most significant increase in employment was seen in Management, business, science, and arts

occupations, while the Service occupational group experienced a decrease in employment among Town residents.

| Table 19: Occupation of Employed Workers | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Occupation | Town of Norrie | | Marathon County | |
| | 2010 | 2023 | 2010 | 2023 |
| Management, business, science, and arts occupations | 123 | 175 | 21,212 | 26,665 |
| Service | 105 | 42 | 9,919 | 10,749 |
| Sales & Office | 83 | 96 | 17,063 | 14,242 |
| Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance | 85 | 125 | 6,970 | 6,473 |
| Production, Transportation & Mineral Moving | 124 | 132 | 14,816 | 13,963 |
| Total | 520 | 570 | 69,980 | 72,092 |

*Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2019-2023)*

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

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

## Local

### Tax Increment Financing

In 2004, the WI State Legislature enacted changes to the state's Tax Increment Financing statutes. One significant change involved allowing townships to establish tax increment districts for specified economic development projects. Tax Increment Financing has been employed by numerous communities throughout the state to promote redevelopment in blighted areas and finance new industrial development.

## County

### MCDEVCO

MCDEVCO acts as an economic development coordinator for all of Marathon County. The purpose of the Corporation is to promote the social and economic welfare of the residents of Marathon County. The primary focus is to lessen the burdens of government by reducing the need for public assistance; and to alleviate unemployment, relieve poverty, and eliminate blighted areas that had surfaced within the County. The organization's fundamental objectives are to bring about civic betterments and social improvements designed to promote the common good and general welfare of Marathon County.

### MCDEVCO Revolving Loan Funds

MCDEVCO's Revolving Loan Funds provide gap financing that can be used to finance acquisition of existing businesses, land, building, and equipment; working capital; or construction/expansion projects. Gap financing builds strong communities for Marathon County. Economic development through gap financing attracts new businesses and allows small businesses to grow.

## Regional

### North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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

### Central Wisconsin Development Fund

The Central Wisconsin Development Fund (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. It is targeted at the timber and wood products industry, tourism, and other manufacturing and service industries.

## State

### Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is the state's primary department for the delivery of integrated services to businesses. Their purpose is to 1) foster retention of and creation of new jobs and investment opportunities in Wisconsin; 2) foster and promote economic business, export, and community development; and 3) promote the public health, safety, and welfare through effective and efficient regulations, education, and enforcement. WEDC manages a variety of programs intended to assist businesses and communities, including:

- Brownfield Program
- Capacity Building Grants (CB)
- Certified Sites
- Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- Business Opportunity Loan Fund
- Workforce Training Grants
- Idle Industrial Sites Redevelopment Program

- The Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program
- Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program
- Fast Forward Program

## Rural Economic Development Program

This program administrated by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) provides grants and low interest loans for small business (less than 25 employees) start-ups or expansions in rural areas. Funds may be used for "soft costs" only, such as planning, engineering, and marketing assistance.

## Wisconsin Small Cities Program

The Wisconsin Department of Administration provides federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to eligible municipalities for approved housing and/or public facility improvements and for economic development projects. Economic Development grants provide loans to businesses for such things as: acquisition of real estate, buildings, or equipment; construction, expansion or remodeling; and working capital for inventory and direct labor.

## University of Wisconsin Extension Office

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

## The Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC)

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

## Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

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

## Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

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

## Federal

### Economic Development Administration (EDA)

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

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

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

### Small Business Administration (SBA)

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

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- **Potential STH 29 Development**—Although Norrie is located adjacent to STH 29, the township does not anticipate any commercial or industrial development except in areas adjacent to Hatley, because of a lack of sewer and water facilities. Should development occur in the future, there may be a need for frontage roads and establishment of sewer and water services.
- **Farm Economy** – The Town of Norrie supports agriculture as a vital part of the local economy and the Town's rural character. However, farming is under increasing pressure from growth and development while young people are having less interest in going into farming.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Although the Town of Norrie has not, historically, played a role in economic development, it supports efforts to stabilize and expand the economic base and employment opportunity for its residents in keeping with its rural character. A review of economic base assessment information has led to the establishment of the following economic development policy statement:

***Goal 1: Strengthen the viability of the local agricultural economy to ensure that existing and future farms are able to remain in agriculture.***

**Objectives:**

- To discourage development of and breaking up of large blocks of farmland.
- To support the creation of niche markets or other opportunities that will help farmers to stay in business.
- To encourage the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for agriculture to increase productivity of farmland.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports agriculture as a prime economic force in the Town.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Participate in regionally-based agricultural forums and programs, and encourage local operators to participate.
- Review Town ordinances to ensure that they encourage appropriate types of secondary agricultural businesses to locate in the Town.
- Consider exclusive zoning of productive farmland as agricultural use only.
- Consider guidelines or ordinances to guide residential development to certain areas, away from active farmland.
- Support UW-Extension, Marathon County, and NRCS efforts to implement farmland conservation practices, including BMPs.

# Chapter 7

# Land Use

Land use is a major component of the Comprehensive Plan. Analysis of land use is a means of broadly classifying how land is used across the entire Town. Each type of use has its own characteristics that can determine compatibility and location to other land uses in the Town. Land use information is used to examine the current pattern of development and serves as the framework for formulating how land will be used in the future. There are two primary maps associated with this chapter: the first is a land use map, that examines how land is currently being used, and the second is a future land use map, that lays out desired land use in the future.

## PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

**Regional Comprehensive Plan, 2025**

Wisconsin requires that regional planning commissions develop a comprehensive plan for the area they serve. These plans are advisory only. The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan which serves Marathon County prepared the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) in 2025. One of the chapters in the RCP is Land Use. The plan identifies four land use goals:

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

**Marathon County Comprehensive Plan, 2026**

Marathon County's goal is to make sound land use decisions which balance the needs of agriculture,
recreation, economic development, and growth to wisely maximize the land's potential. Objectives are:

1) Promote the preservation of agricultural land,
2) Promote practices that preserve soil health and land productivity,

3) Encourage revitalization of former residential properties in rural areas, and
4) Provide tools for managing and coordinating growth.

**Town of Norrie Comprehensive Plan, 2016**

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

# EXISTING LAND USE

The Town of Norrie covers about 22,505 acres in the eastern portion of Marathon County. The Town is bounded by the Town of Plover to the north, the Town of Ringle to the west, the Town of Birnamwood to the east (Shawano county) and the Town of Elderon to the south. The Village of Hatley shares a border with the Town in the western portion of the Town. The Town shares a border with the Village of Eland (Shawano County) along the southeast portion of the Town along with the Village of Birnamwood (Marathon County & Shawano County) to the northeast. Development in the Town is dominated by agriculture with pockets of residences and scattered commercial establishments.

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. Eleven basic categories were used to classify the various existing land uses. The categories include Agriculture, Commercial, Governmental/Institutional, Quarry, Open Lands, Outdoor Recreation, Residential, Transportation, Utility, Water, and Woodlands.

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

## Existing Land Use Classifications

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

Existing land use classifications and acreage totals are presented in Table 20. Woodlands accounts for the largest share of the Town's land area at about 49 percent. The next largest land

use category is Agriculture at about 35 percent, followed by Open Lands at about 6 percent and Residential at about 4 percent. Uses such as Commercial, Industrial, Governmental, Transportation and Water occupy the rest of the Town. Table 20b provides a basic density analysis of the existing land use.

| Table 20: Existing Land Use, 2025 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Land Use** | **Acres** | **Percent of Total** |
| Agriculture | 7,892 | 35.1% |
| Commercial | 103 | 0.5% |
| Governmental / Institutional | 8 | 0.0% |
| Industrial | 91 | 0.4% |
| Open Lands | 1,251 | 5.6% |
| Outdoor Recreation | 46 | 0.2% |
| Residential | 915 | 4.1% |
| Transportation | 618 | 2.7% |
| Utility | 0.6 | 0.0% |
| Water | 486 | 2.2% |
| Woodlands | 11,094 | 49.2% |
| **Total** | **22,505** | **100.0%** |

*Source: NCWRPC*

| Table 20b: Existing Land Use Density Analysis | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Land Use** | **Total Acres** | **Exclusion Acres*** | **Net Acres** | **Net Density (persons/acre)**** |
| Agriculture | 7,892 | 626 | 7,266 | 0.14 |
| Commercial | 103 | 13 | 90 | 11.31 |
| Government/Institutional | 8 | 0 | 8 | 127.25 |
| Quarry | 91 | 12 | 89 | 11.44 |
| Open Land | 1,251 | 886 | 365 | 2.79 |
| Outdoor Recreation | 46 | 46 | 0 | 0 |
| Residential | 915 | 79 | 836 | 1.22 |
| Transportation | 618 | 81 | 537 | 1.90 |
| Utility | 0.06 | 0 | 0.06 | n/a |
| Water | 486 | n/a | 486 | n/a |
| Woodlands | 11,094 | 4,422 | 6,672 | 0.15 |

** Wetlands, floodplains and tax exempt acreage not anticipated for development. **Using 2025 pop estimate (1,018).*

*Source: NCWRPC*

## Managed Forest Law & Public Lands

There are 2,218 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program and approximately 182 acres of additional tax-exempt land in the Town. MFL is a voluntary program between willing landowners and the State of Wisconsin.

## LAND SUPPLY AND DEMAND

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

2025 Wisconsin Act 173 requires comprehensive plans to project land demand in five-year increments. Using the official DOA population projections, the NCWRPC created 5-year land demand estimates using existing densities as shown in Table 21, based on the assumption that these existing densities reflect the Town's stated goals of maintaining the current land use pattern. The Town's current 2-acre minimum lot size sets the residential density standard for future residential development in the Town of Norrie. Implementation of town zoning may alter future density standards.

Based on declining population projected by DOA for the Town, residential land demand is anticipated to decrease by 71.31 acres through 2050, while commercial land demand is anticipated to decrease by 7.71 acres. Agricultural land within the Town is expected to remain relatively constant over this time period in keeping with Town goals related to the preservation of agricultural land.

**Table21: Future Land Demand Projections, in acres, by Land Use Type***

| | 2025 - 2030 | 2030 - 2035 | 2035 - 2040 | 2040 - 2045 | 2045 - 2050 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population Change | -13 | -15 | -15 | -22 | -22 |
| Residential (1.22 persons/acre) | -10.65 | -12.30 | -12.30 | -18.03 | -18.03 |
| Commercial (11.31persons/acre) | -1.15 | -1.33 | -1.33 | -1.95 | -1.95 |
| **Total** | -11.80 | -13.63 | -13.63 | -19.98 | -19.98 |

** Agriculture is expected to remain constant over the planning period. There is no existing Industrial w/in Norrie to base a projection on, and no Industrial use is anticipated.*

*Source: WI DOA and NCWRPC*

## Land Values

Table 22 displays the assessed land values in the Town of Norrie. It is important to note that lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law programs and other exempt lands are not included in the values. Overall, land value per acre in the Town is valued at about $7,366 per acre based on assessed land values from tax information submitted to the Department of Revenue. Residential properties have the highest value per acre, followed by those properties designated as commercial and other.

**Table 22: Assessed Land Value (per acre), 2025**

| Land Classification | Total Value of Land and Improvements | Average Value per Acre |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | $113,649,400 | $124,207 |
| Commercial | $3,235,200 | $31,410 |
| Manufacturing | NA | NA |
| Agriculture | $1,998,500 | $253 |
| Undeveloped | $2,573,100 | $2,056 |
| Forest | $18,924,800 | $1,706 |
| Other | $21,768,300 | $28,493 |
| **Total** | **$162,149,300** | **$7,366** |

*Source: WI Department of Revenue and NCWRPC*

## Opportunities for Redevelopment

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

## Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Opportunities and constraints for future development in the Town of Norrie include developable land, access, the Mountain-Bay Trail and the STH 29 / CTH Y interchange. Developable Land - Norrie does not have high bedrock levels preventing development of wells or difficult soils that can make residential development prohibitive. However, it does have numerous wetlands and bogs that can impede development. The numerous lakes in Norrie present the potential for

picturesque development sites, should the land be available. Access - Norrie has excellent access because of STH 29. CTHs N, Y, and D provide connections in all directions through the Town. Mountain-Bay State Trail - The Mountain-Bay Trail runs through Norrie, offering opportunities to provide services or amenities for Trail users, or to enhance adjacent land uses. County Y Reconstruction - Marathon County reconstructed the intersection of CTH Y and STH 29 in 2005. An alternative was selected that bridged STH 29 approximately 400 feet west of the former intersection. The Town is open to working cooperatively with Hatley in planning growth in nearby areas. Such efforts will encourage high-quality development to enhance both Hatley and Norrie.

# FUTURE LAND USE MAP

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

The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. The Future Land Use Map is general in nature and was developed as a general guide for future development in the town. Although general, the future land use plan map indicates appropriate future land uses in the Town.

The identification of desired future land use types through the map does not imply that an area is immediately appropriate for that use. Given service demands and a desire for controlled growth, careful consideration of the timing of land use decisions is essential. At some point, it may be desirable to implement zoning or other land use controls to reflect the planned land use designations.

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.

The map includes 9 land use categories to guide where new residential and non-residential development should be encouraged to locate or where development should be discouraged. Descriptions of each land use category are provided below.

## Future Land Use Map Classifications

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

### Agriculture
Identifies areas designed to foster the preservation and use of agricultural land and related uses including the associated farmsteads. Agriculture areas are those with tilled agriculture and areas of productive farmland as well as fallow, pasture, and undetermined agricultural uses.

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

### Public/Quasi-Public
Identifies existing or planned governmental/public/institutional facilities within the Town, including churches, cemeteries, government buildings, and other infrastructure.

### Quarry
Areas of gravel pits and non-metallic mining operations.

### Recreational
Areas of outdoor recreation including parks, trails and undeveloped spaces such as county forests and DNR wildlife areas.

### Single Family Residential
Identifies areas recommended for residential development typically consisting of one family structures, farm residences, and/or mobile homes. Current density standard at 0.5 residential units per acre – 2 acre minimum lot size.

### Quarry/Single Family Residential
Areas of non-metallic mining operation intended to be reclaimed for residential uses.

### Transportation
Areas dedicated to transportation purposes such as interchange areas, air stripes, etc.

2025 Wisconsin Act 173 also requires future residential densities to be mapped on a comprehensive plan's Future Land Use Map in terms of residential units per acre. Currently, the Town's 2-acre minimum lot size dictates density for future residential within the Residential classification on the Future Land Use Map.

# LAND USE PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

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

## Comprehensive Planning Programming

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law was established in state statutes in 1999. The comprehensive plan is intended to be a local government's guide to community physical, social, and economic development. Comprehensive plans are not meant to serve as land use regulations in themselves; instead, they provide a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year vision for future planning and community decisions.

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law does not mandate how a local community should grow, but it requires public participation at the local level in deciding a vision for the community's future. The uniqueness of individual comprehensive plans reflects community-specific and locally driven planning processes.

While a local government may choose to include additional elements, a comprehensive plan must include at least all of the nine elements below as defined by the Comprehensive Planning Law (s. 66.1001).

- Issues and Opportunities (Demographics)
- Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Housing
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Implementation

## Zoning

Basically, zoning is a set of regulations used to minimize land use conflicts and promote development that supports a community's values. It regulates how property is used and how development occurs as well as the physical placement of buildings on land. Under Wisconsin Statutes, counties and local units of government are authorized to adopt zoning ordinances.

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

The Town does not have general zoning at this time, but is considering the development or adoption of zoning rules in the future if necessary (Note: shoreland zoning administered by Marathon County is in effect in the Town, see below.). Norrie does enforce a two-acre minimum lot size on new lots. There are some areas with smaller lots that have been grandfathered in. Key examples are 40 to 50-foot lots on the south side of Mayflower Lake and 60-foot lots on the east side of Norrie Lake that were part of original Town lots. A minimum buildable lot standard applies in shoreland areas.

## Consistency between Land Use and Zoning

Land use and zoning designations are related, but not necessarily identical. Land use categories tend to be fairly general whereas zoning districts regulate specific land uses and development requirements. Because the land use categories are general it is common for more than one zoning district to correspond to each land use category. It is also possible that some zoning districts might be consistent with more than one land use designation.

Achieving consistency between land use and zoning is required by State Statutes. This generally occurs when a community is considering a proposed zoning change. The decision to approve a zoning change must be based on the adopted comprehensive plan, and specifically, the future land use map. Generally, if the requested zoning is consistent with the land use designation on the property it should be approved, unless unique circumstances indicated the rezoning would negatively impact surrounding properties or the community. If a rezoning request is not consistent with the land use designation, the community should consider denying the rezoning request. Act 173 impacts permitting and rezoning actions.

In situations where a rezoning request is not consistent with the land use designation - but the community believes the requested zoning is appropriate in the specific location and would benefit the community - the zoning change can be approved, however, the land use map should be amended accordingly to establish land use and zoning consistency. The process for amending the land use map is discussed in greater detail in the Implementation Chapter.

## Shoreland Zoning

All counties, including Marathon County, are mandated by Wisconsin law to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates development in shoreland and floodplain areas for the entire county outside of villages and cities in accordance with state shoreland zoning standards. Towns may apply their own zoning in shoreland areas as long as it does not impose requirements regulated by a county.

## Land Division

At present, land division within the Town of Norrie is regulated by Marathon County Land Subdivision Ordinance subject to the Town's 2-acre lot size. 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 restricting 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.

## Official Mapping

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

## Other Tools

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

# LAND USE ISSUES

- **Farmland Preservation –** Norrie is interested in preserving remaining farmland by identifying and supporting options to traditional agriculture. To aid existing farmers and encourage future ones, Norrie supports use of land for other options such as specialty crops, cash crops, truck farming, or farmer's market-type agriculture.
- **Parcel Size and Development Patterns** – Concerns have been raised about the potential for development around certain areas in Norrie and whether the 2-acre minimum lot size is appropriate in all cases. Norrie is also interested in other development patterns and their appropriateness, such as cluster development, subdivision for large parcels, or differing lot sizes and tools for different areas in the Town.
- **Zoning Ordinance** – Residents have considered whether a zoning ordinance is needed to address increasingly complex development issues while preserving the natural environment and rural character of the Town.
- **Pressure on Recreational/Water Areas**—Based on development at Mayflower Lake, and the number of other small lakes in the community, Norrie is concerned about development pressure on the lakes, both from an aesthetic standpoint and from an environmental perspective.
- **Road Crossings of the Mountain-Bay Trail** – The State of Wisconsin has sought to limit additional road crossings over the Trail. As a result, some landowners with larger developable parcels that require new streets may not have adequate access and may find their parcels landlocked if they need access across the Trail.
- **Potential Loss of Tax Base due to Annexation** – Some residential areas on Norrie's fringe may opt to join adjacent villages. Residents adjacent to Hatley, and development around the interchange at STH 29 and CTH Y, may choose to take advantage of Hatley's water and sewer services and be annexed to that community. Some residents along Birnamwood Road may choose annexation by Birnamwood. Annexation to neighboring jurisdictions would result in a loss of tax base to Norrie.
- **Battery, Data, Solar, and Wind Installations** – There are concerns about harmful impacts of commercial battery storage, data center, solar or wind energy developments on farmland and the rural landscape of the Town such as noise, health, aesthetics, loss of productive farmland and negative impacts on property values associated with such developments. There is also concern about reclamation and restoration of these sites at the end of their service life.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

### *Goal 1: Proactively plan for increased demand for rural residential land development.*

**Objectives:**

- To identify areas where different types of residential development, such as large lots or subdivisions, etc. are encouraged.
- To direct residential uses away from sensitive lands such as wetlands, creeks and rivers.
- To ensure that development occurs in areas with adequate road access.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie discourages developments from occurring around sensitive natural resource areas.
- The Town of Norrie encourages new development in areas where road access is adequate.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Carefully consider road access when reviewing development applications.
- Identify and map areas where different residential development types should occur, such as the most appropriate place for large lots, subdivisions, etc.
- Consider methods for protecting identified sensitive areas, such as use of a buffer zone.
- Consider establishing alternative lot sizes based on development type/use and location.

### *Goal 2: Encourage land uses that are consistent with the identity of the community and will maintain the current land use pattern.*

**Objectives:**

- To locate similar land uses in proximity with each other in an effort to prevent future land use conflicts.
- To support single family residential as the preferred type of residential development.
- To manage the impact of new types of land intensive developments on productive farmland and rural character.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports grouping similar land uses together.
- The Town of Norrie supports single family residential as the preferred type of residential development.
- The Town of Norrie supports managing the impacts of short term rentals.

- The Town of Norrie supports managing the impacts of solar and wind farms, battery park energy storage facilities, and data centers.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Consider compatibility with surrounding uses when reviewing development proposals.
- Consider zoning and/or other regulatory tools to maintain land use compatibility.
- Cluster multi family or other residential development in areas more suited for higher densities, and with other buildings of its type.
- Consider regulatory options for short term rentals.
- Develop and implement a regulatory framework for solar and wind farms, battery park energy storage facilities, data centers and other high impact land uses.

### *Goal 3: Provide regulatory tools for managing growth.*

**Objectives:**

- To base land use decisions on the Town of Norrie's adopted plan for future development.
- To consider implementation of zoning to provide tools for land use management and decision-making.
- To consider other tools such as subdivision and conservation subdivision ordinances that will permit development while preserving open space.
- To consider requiring developer financing of improvements in developments and/or subdivisions.
- To review and update the mobile home ordinance as needed.

**Policies**

- The Town of Norrie encourages the use and adoption of regulatory tools to manage new growth.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Use the adopted plan for future development as a tool when reviewing development applications.
- Research options for zoning.
- Research options for subdivision and conservation subdivision ordinances.
- Review the mobile home ordinance and update as needed.

### *Goal 4: Make development decisions that will enable existing or future farms to remain in agriculture.*

**Objective:**

- To encourage residential development to locate away from identified farming areas in order to prevent fragmentation of large blocks of farmland.
- To discourage the placement of non-farm commercial or industrial uses in productive farmland areas.
- To encourage development away from identified farming areas in order to minimize conflicts between non-farm residents and farms and their operating characteristics.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie recognizes the importance of farmland as an important agricultural resource, now and in the future.
- The Town of Norrie supports the minimization of farm/nonfarm conflicts.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- Identify and map major farming areas and prime farmland which the Town feels should remain in production and not be fragmented.
- Consider zoning productive farmland areas for exclusive agricultural use.
- Coordinate with property owners, Marathon County, and UW Extension to direct new agricultural operators to existing operators of prime farmland who wish to sell.
- Support and participate in programs that Marathon County and UW-Extension have to attract new/young farmers into the County.

### *Goal 5: Preserve the rural character of the Town of Norrie.*

**Objective:**

- To consider development regulations that will enhance rural character.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie recognizes its rural character as an important and attractive asset.

**Strategies and Actions**

- Consider conservation subdivisions.
- Maintain guidelines for minimum lot size.
- Guide higher density development to areas that would not greatly compromise rural character.
- Identify and map the areas suitable for higher density development, and those areas that should remain low-density.

***Goal 6: Determine whether nuisance issues (dilapidated buildings, abandoned junk and refuse, animals, etc.) should be further regulated.***

**Objective:**

- To develop ordinances governing nuisance issues in the Town of Norrie as needed.

**Policies**

- The Town of Norrie supports the development and enforcement of nuisance ordinance(s).

**Strategies and Actions**

- Develop a list of the types of things that are currently issues in the Town of Norrie and should be governed via nuisance ordinance.
- Explore options for further development nuisance regulations.

# Chapter 8

# Intergovernmental Cooperation

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

## OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

## School Districts

Much of the Town of Norrie is served by the Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District. A small portion of the Town, surrounding the Village of Hatley is included in the D. C. Everest School District. Residents of Norrie are also served by private schools in the Antigo and Wausau areas.

The Wittenberg-Birnamwood district has two elementary schools and a high school. Residents of Norrie who live in the area served by the Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District attend Birnamwood Elementary at 337 Main Street in Birnamwood, and High School on 400 W Grand Ave in Wittenberg.

D. C. Everest School District, which has seven elementary schools, a charter school, a middle school, a junior high and a senior high school. The senior high school is located in the City of Schofield; its senior high campus off Alderson Street includes the Greenheck Field House. The junior high school, charter school, and three elementary schools are located in Weston. The remaining four grade schools are in Hatley, Ringle, and Rothschild (two). There is also a school forest in Kronenwetter.

## Post-Secondary Education

- **Northcentral Technical College–Wausau Campus** – NTC's main campus is located in Wausau and offers several one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields. Classes are offered for all seven schools, with partnerships with other four-year partners such as UW-Green Bay and Marian University.

- **Northcentral Technical College–Antigo Campus** – located in Antigo, offers several one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields. The Antigo campus is also home to NTC's Wood Technology Center of Excellence.

- **Northcentral Technical College–Wittenberg Campus** – located in Wittenberg, this campus offers a limited number of in-person classes but provides computers for video conferencing for virtual classes. Other services, such as testing and college prep, are offered here as well.

- **University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point (UWSP)** – located in the City of Stevens Point, UWSP was founded in 1894. When combined with its satellite campuses in Wausau and Marshfield, total enrollment is over 8,000. The campus offers 80 baccalaureate degrees, 17 graduate programs, and 90 minors, and is known for its robust fine arts and natural resources programs.

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

## Shared Services

- **Fire and Emergency Response** – The Town of Norrie is served by the Birnamwood fire service and Birnamwood ambulance service. Nearby Hatley will respond as backup responders, if necessary. Some residents adjacent to Hatley have contracted directly to receive service from the Hatley Area District.
- **Law Enforcement & E-911 Dispatch** – The Marathon County Sheriff's Department provides police protection and E-911 dispatch services for the Town of Norrie.

## Surrounding Communities

The Town of Norrie generally has good relationships with the surrounding communities. Residents have indicated that they have good communication and cooperation with the surrounding towns.

- **Road Maintenance and Plowing Agreements –** The Town of Norrie has a road maintenance and plowing agreement with the Towns of Ringle and Elderon.

## Marathon County

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

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

## North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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

### State and Federal Government

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

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

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

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION 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.

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ISSUES (EXISTING OR POTENTIAL CONFLICTS)

**Annexation –** In Wisconsin, neither incorporated municipalities nor towns can initiate annexation. The process is driven by individual property owners (or developers) who petition for annexation into a city or village, often to receive sewer and water service. While towns sometimes view annexation as a means to take their territory, cities and villages usually view annexations as a means to provide a more logical pattern of development and efficient provision of services.

**Intergovernmental Cooperation –** The Town of Norrie and the Village of Hatley should be open to working cooperatively, as needed, on annexation and land use matters particularly in the CTH Y and STH 29 corridors adjacent to Hatley. While Norrie may lose some land to Hatley, well-planned and efficient development will benefit both jurisdictions. A border agreement may be one way for both Hatley and Norrie to anticipate growth and resulting changes to tax base.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

In light of possible future annexations, development along STH 29 crossing several communities, and the reconstruction of CTH Y, the Town of Norrie recognizes the importance of good communication with surrounding communities. It also shares services with other communities. The Town of Norrie's goals and actions indicate its desire to work effectively with other communities.

### *Goal 1: Improve access management along STH 29.*

**Objective:**

- To cooperate with the surrounding communities, the County and the State regarding any future development along STH 29.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages coordination between local, County, and State entities regarding development and access along STH 29.

- The Town of Norrie supports improved access management along STH 29.

**Strategies & Actions:**

- Be sure that the Town of Norrie is represented in any committees or meetings held by the state or other entities on the STH 29 corridor.
- Identify and map areas along the STH 29 corridor in the Town of Norrie that are most appropriate for future development and have appropriate access.
- Share and coordinate future land use maps with surrounding communities.

### *Goal 2: Coordinate planning activities with surrounding communities.*

**Objectives:**

- To communicate with surrounding communities when proposed development is on a boundary or the development could have impacts on the adjacent community.
- To work with surrounding communities in preservation of natural resources.
- To communicate with adjacent communities when planning locations for public facilities that may serve more than one community.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages communication with adjacent communities when new development potentially affects those communities, or occurs on the border with those communities.

**Strategies/Actions:**

- Meet with potentially affected communities to disclose potential impacts and discuss possible mitigation or cooperation as needed.

### *Goal 3: Ensure that annexations proceed in an orderly manner.*

**Objective:**

- To establish communication with the surrounding villages to discuss potential annexations and the need for boundary agreements as necessary.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports active participation with surrounding villages and subject property owners for a cooperative process during any proposed annexation.

**Strategies/Actions:**

- Attend meetings initiated by other surrounding communities.
- Attend regular meetings during any annexation process.
- Participate in discussions with Hatley to discuss any potential annexation.

***Goal 4: Provide the most cost-efficient, effective services to residents in areas such as road maintenance, snowplowing, or other services.***

**Objectives:**

- To explore opportunities to work with adjacent communities where there are potential cost savings in service delivery.
- To continue to coordinate road maintenance with adjacent communities.
- To continue to coordinate with adjacent communities to provide fire and emergency services.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie supports working with adjacent communities to provide cost savings in road maintenance and services.

**Strategies/Actions:**

- Continue to work with surrounding Towns, Villages and the County to coordinate on road maintenance, snow plowing, and other services.

***Goal 5: Encourage participation by Town of Norrie officials and residents in all levels of government.***

**Objectives:**

- To encourage local officials to participate in county and state government activities and organizations.
- To encourage regular participation and feedback from residents through surveys, informational public meetings, newsletters or other activities.
- To continue to communicate with Marathon County and the State on issues for which they are responsible.

**Policies:**

- The Town of Norrie encourages local officials and residents to participate in local planning activities and organizations.

**Strategies/Actions:**

- Invite representatives from county and state activities and organizations to speak at Town of Norrie Board meetings as needed.
- Consider a survey which can be mailed out to residents annually, asking for suggestions or feedback on proposed or recently constructed projects (roads, residential developments, etc.)
- Ask for progress reports from the County and State on specific issues facing the Town for which they are responsible, as needed.

# Chapter 9

# Implementation

This Plan is intended to be used as a guide by local officials, both town and county, when making decisions that affect growth and development in the Town of Norrie. It is also important that local citizens and developers become aware of the Plan.

Some steps taken to implement this Plan include the adoption of written public participation guidelines, Plan Commission formation, a Plan Commission resolution recommending Plan adoption by the Town Board, an open house meeting, a formal public hearing, Town Board approval of the Plan by ordinance, distribution of the Plan to affected government units and ongoing Plan Commission reviews and updates.

## IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

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

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

### Zoning Ordinance and Map

Current zoning within the Town of Norrie is limited to shoreland zoning regulated by Marathon County. Zoning is used to manage and control how land is used and developed. Zoning

ordinances typically establish detailed regulations concerning how land may be developed, including setbacks, the density or intensity of development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose of zoning is to minimize undesirable externalities from development by segregating and/or buffering incompatible uses and by maintaining standards that ensure development will not negatively impact the community's character or environment. The zoning ordinance also controls the scale and form of development, which heavily influences how people will interact with their environment and their neighbors.

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

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

## Subdivision (Land Division) Ordinance

The Town of Norrie is under the County subdivision ordinance, Chapter 18 Marathon County Code of Ordinances. Subdivision regulations are an important tool ensuring the orderly development of unplatted and/or undeveloped land. These regulations may regulate lot sizes, road access, street design, public utilities, storm water drainage, parks and open space, and other improvements necessary to ensure that new development will be a public asset.

## Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

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

- Public buildings (i.e., fire and police stations)

- Park and trail acquisition and development
- Roads and highways (maintenance and new construction/paving)
- Fire and police protection equipment

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

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

### Annual Operating Budget

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

### Brownfield Redevelopment

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

### Other Tools:

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

## CONSISTENCY AMONG PLAN CHAPTERS

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the Implementation Chapter describe how each of the required chapters will be integrated and made consistent with the other chapters

of the plan. Since Norrie completed all planning chapters simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist. It is noted that some overlap naturally exists between the nine plan chapters. Where deemed appropriate, goals, objectives, and policies have been repeated under all applicable chapters to reinforce their importance.

# PLAN ADOPTION, AMENDMENTS, UPDATES AND MONITORING

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

## Plan Adoption

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

## Plan Amendments

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

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

## Plan Updates

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

## Plan Monitoring

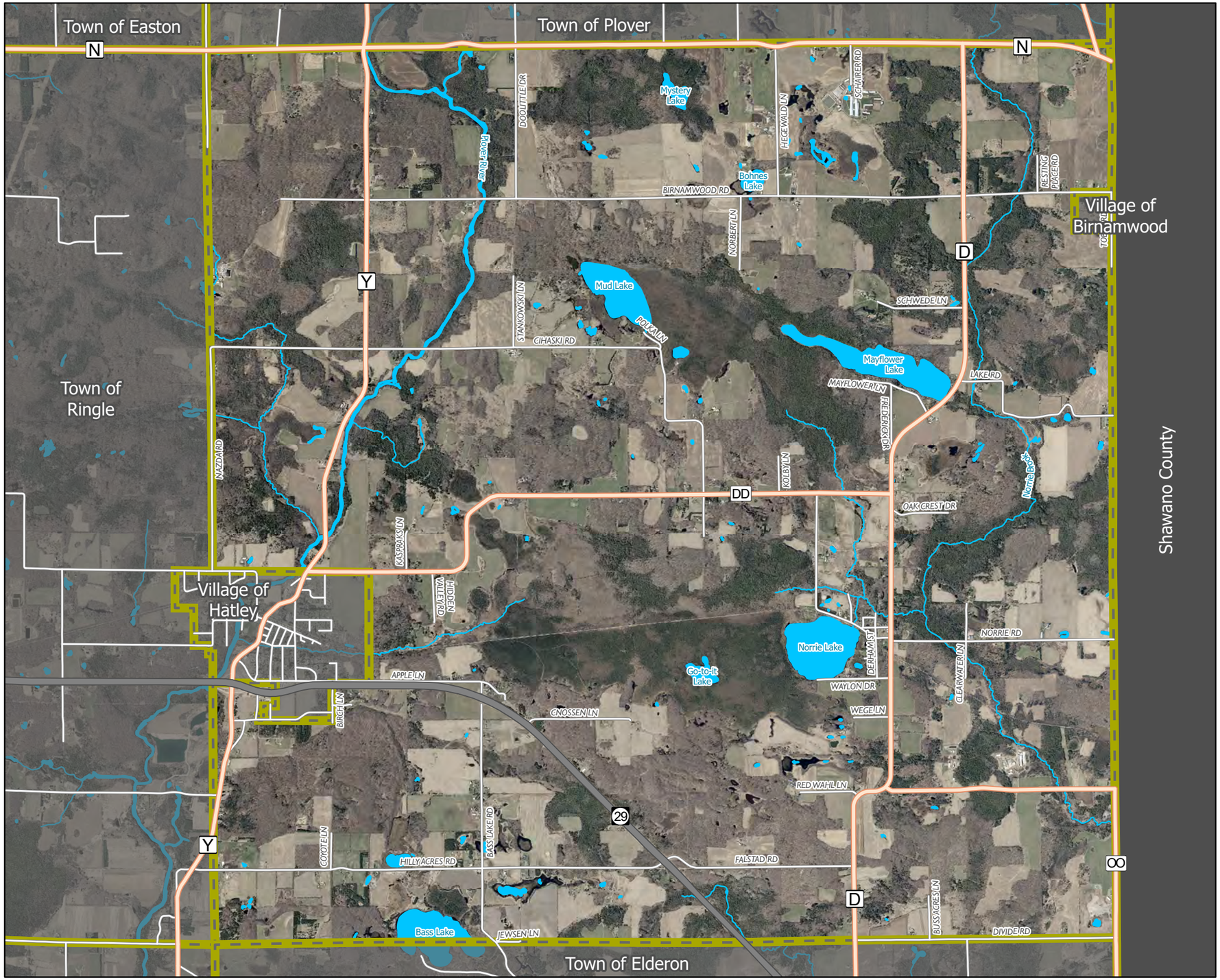
The adopted plan should be used as a tool by Town when making land use and development decisions. Decisions concerning private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions should be consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations outlined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

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

This plan should be evaluated at least every 5 years, and updated at least every 10 years. Members of the Town Board, Plan Commission, and any other local decision-making bodies should periodically review the plan and identify areas that might need to be updated. The evaluation should involve first reviewing the goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires. Then the strategies and actions should be reviewed and refined to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate.

# Maps

# Town of Norrie - Marathon County Comprehensive Plan Map 1




## Planning Area

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

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

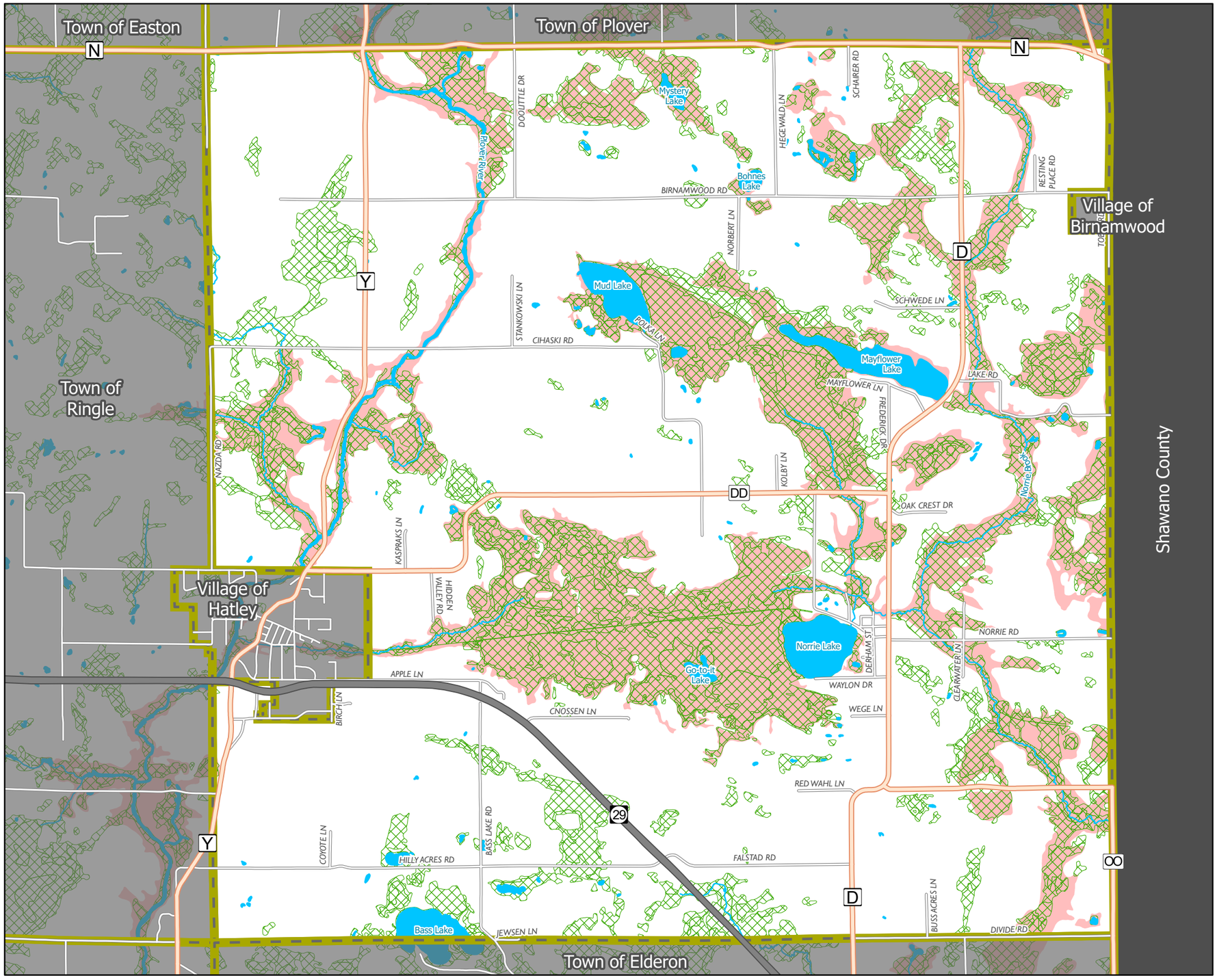
N W E S

Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co

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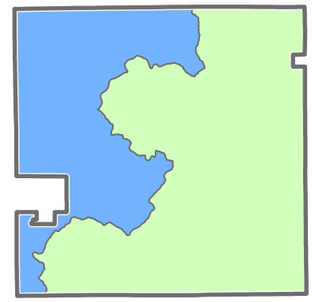
# Town of Norrie - Marathon County Comprehensive Plan Map 2




## Natural Resources

- Minor Civil Division
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Wetlands
- Floodplain
- Water

### Town of Norrie Watersheds



Watershed
- Middle & South Branches Embarrass River
- Plover and Little Plover Rivers

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

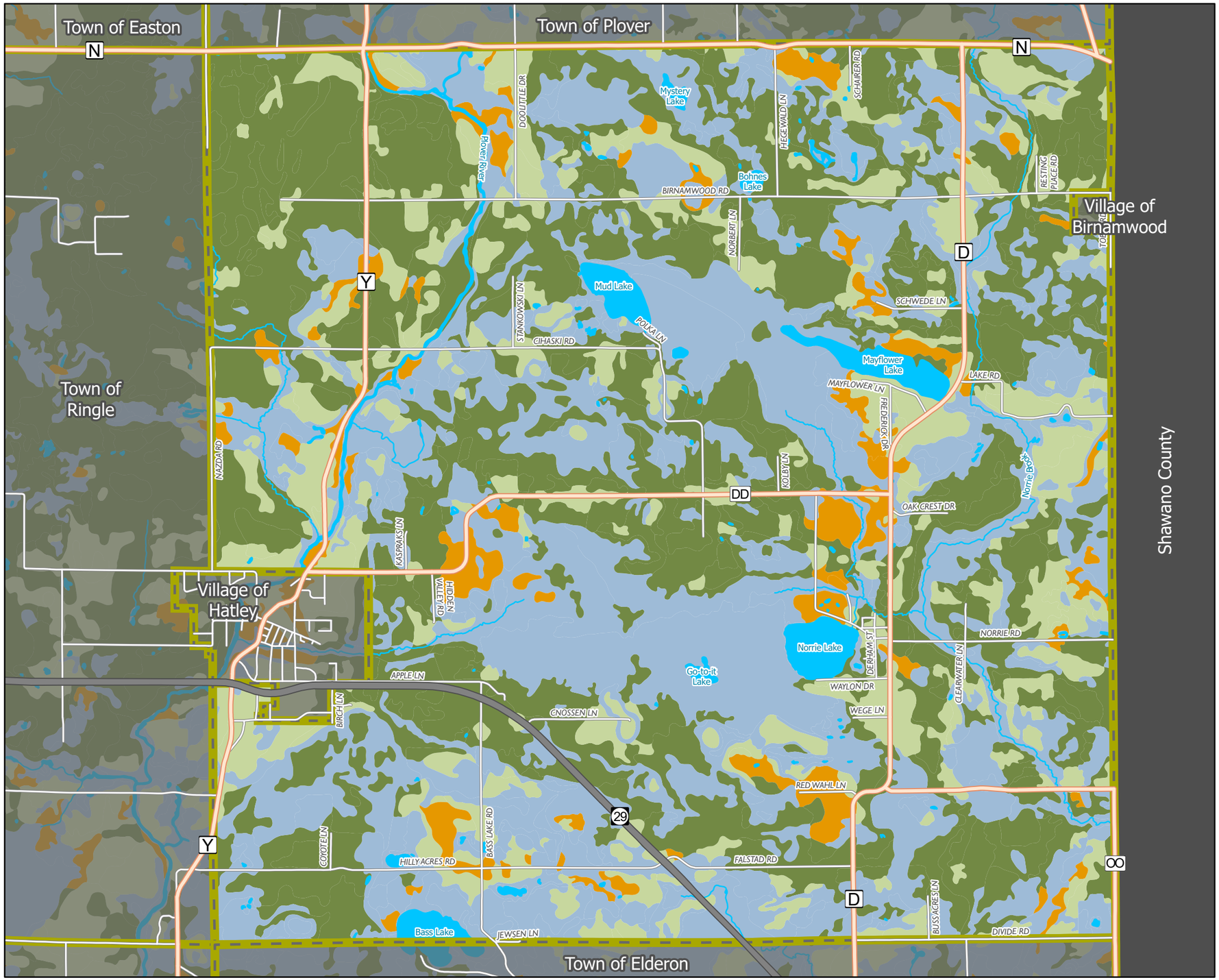
N W E S

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# Town of Norrie - Marathon County Comprehensive Plan Map 3




## Prime Farmland

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

Farmland Classification

- Farmland of statewide importance
- All areas are prime farmland
- Prime farmland if drained
- Not prime farmland
- Water

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

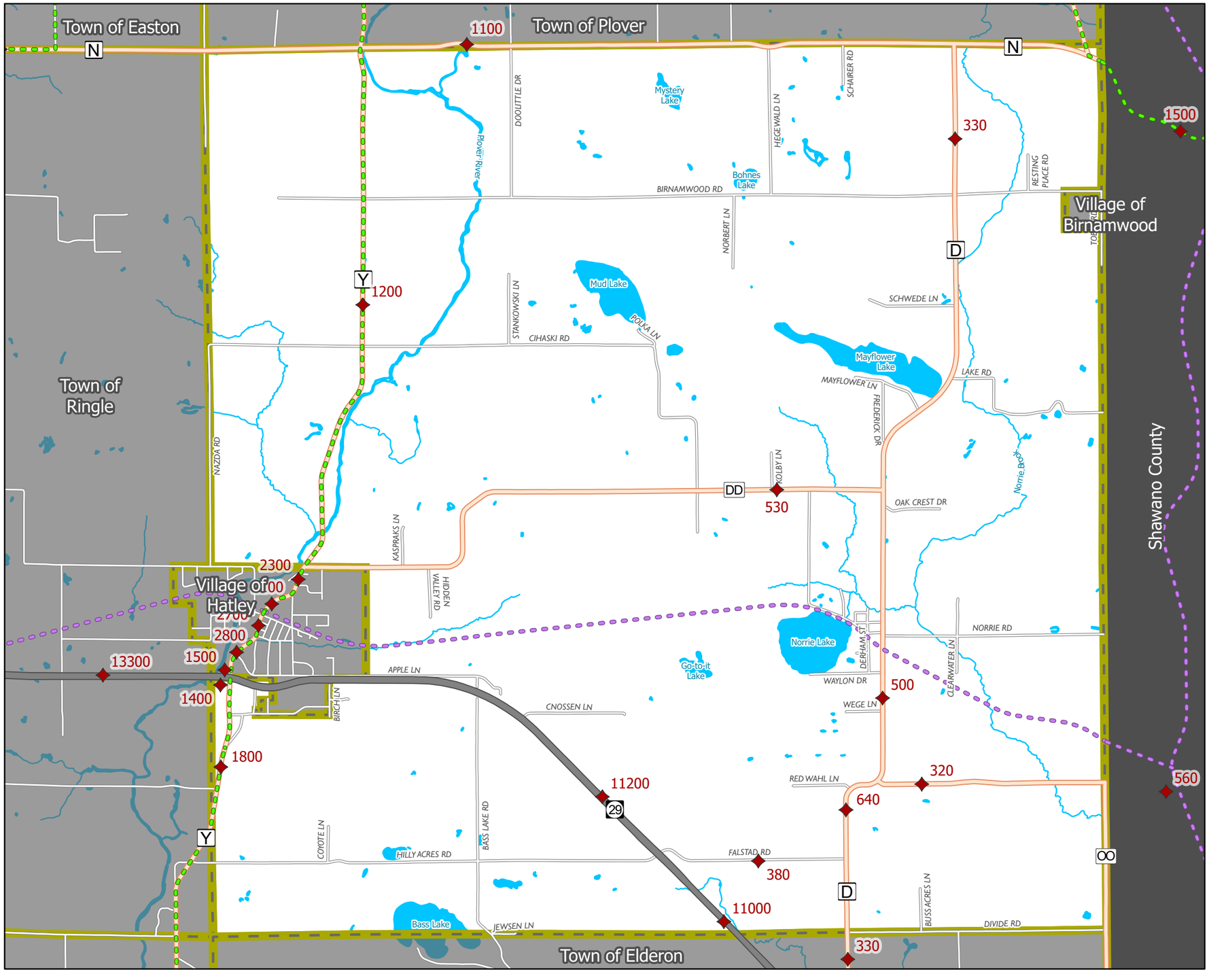
N W E S

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# Town of Norrie - Marathon County Comprehensive Plan Map 4




## Transportation

- Minor Civil Division
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Traffic Counts
- Existing Off Road Trail
- Proposed On Road Bike Route
- Water

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

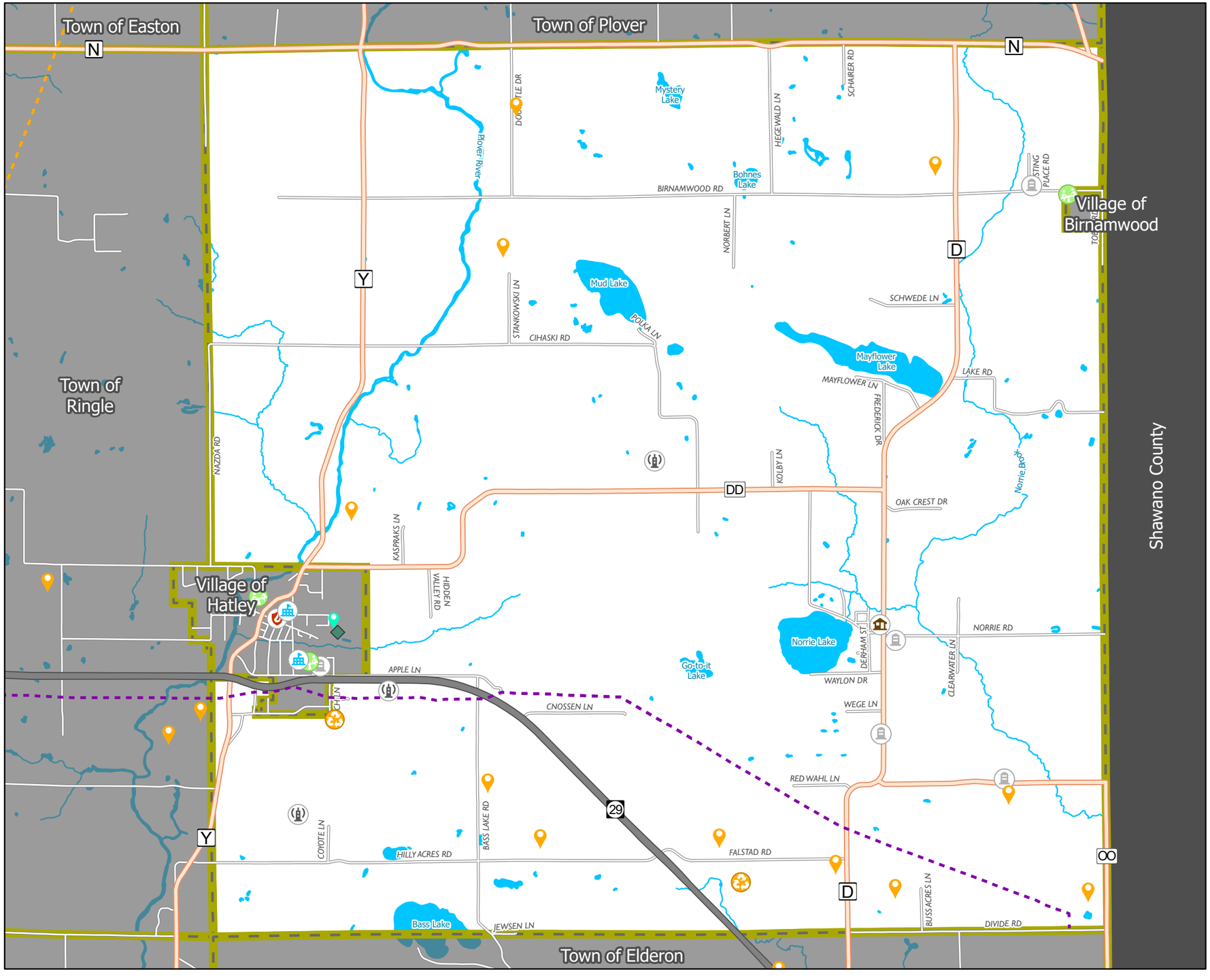
N W E S

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# Town of Norrie - Marathon County Comprehensive Plan Map 5




## Utilities & Community Facilities

- Minor Civil Division
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Gas & Oil Pipeline
- High Voltage Powerline
- Cemetery
- Child Care Facilities
- Fire Station/Ambulance
- Former Landfill
- Non Metallic Mines
- School
- Town Hall
- Communication Towers
- Municipal Water Supply
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Water

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

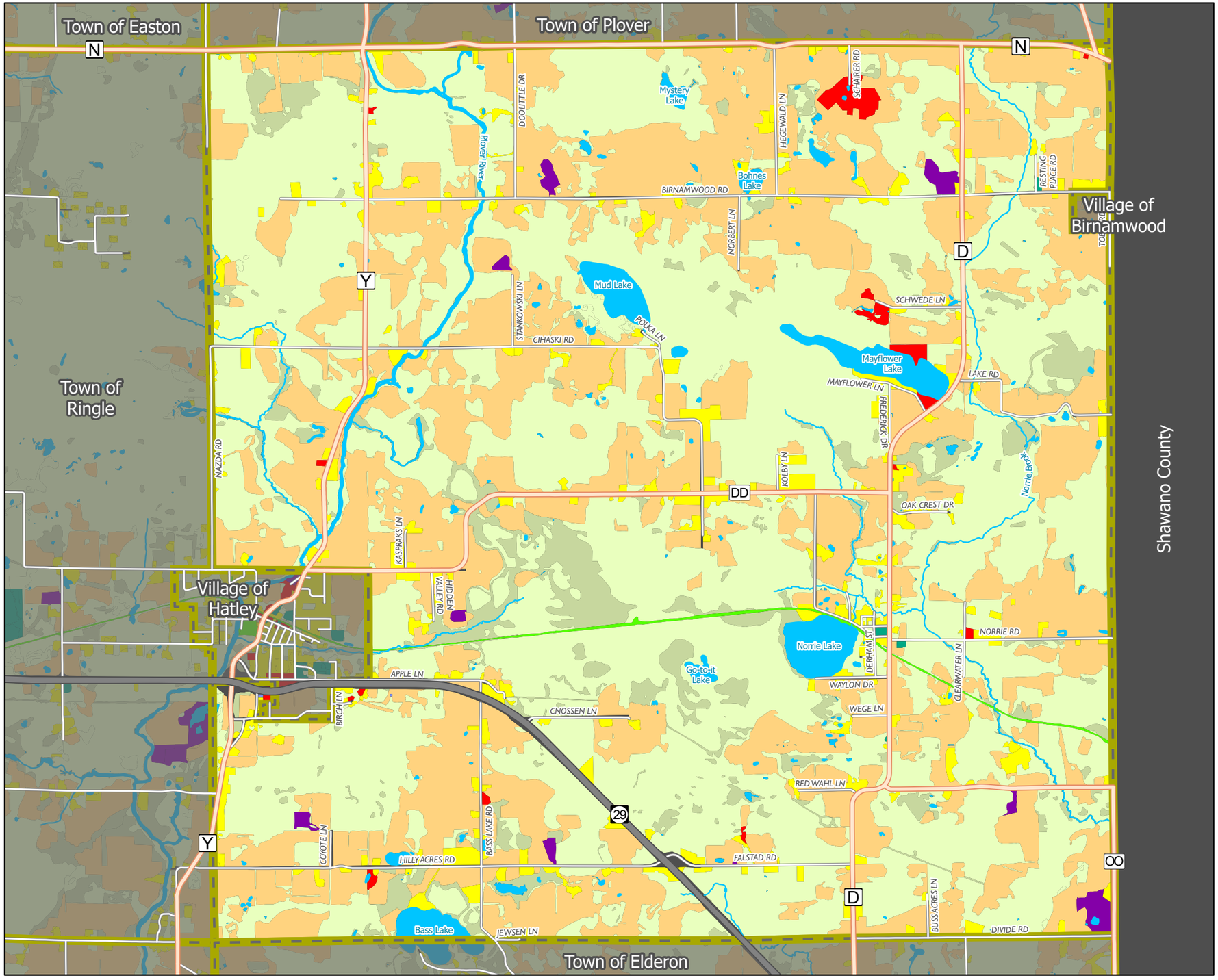
N W E S

Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co

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# Town of Norrie - Marathon County Comprehensive Plan Map 6




## Existing Land Use

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

Existing Land Use 2025

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Governmental / Institutional
- Open Lands
- Outdoor Recreation
- Quarry
- Residential
- Transportation
- Utility
- Woodlands
- Water

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

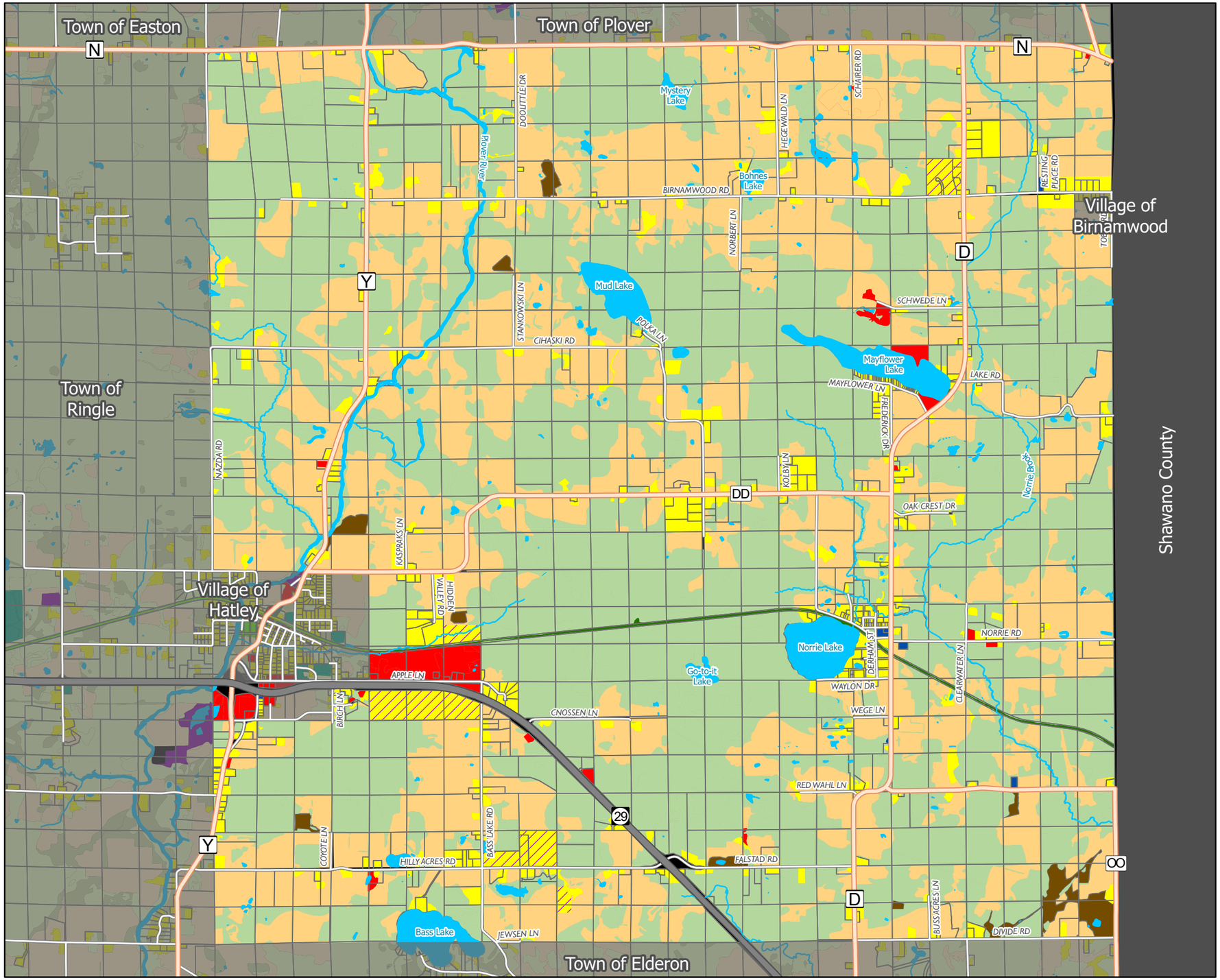
N W E S

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# Town of Norrie - Marathon County Comprehensive Plan Map 7




## Future Land Use

- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Parcels

Future Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Quarry
- Recreational
- Single Family Residential
- Quarry/Single Family Residential
- Transportation
- Forest Land
- Water

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

N W E S

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# Appendix A
# Public Participation Plan

# Town of Norrie
# Public Participation Plan (PPP)

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

## I. Plan Development:

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

The public participation plan will incorporate the following:

1. All meetings for the planning process will be posted and open to the public.

2. Plan related materials will be available at the Town Hall for review by the public.

3. The draft plan and maps will be available on a website for review by the public.

4. A public hearing will be held to solicit comment from the public.

5. The Comprehensive Plan will be distributed as outlined in state statute.

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

## II. Implementation, Evaluation & Update:

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

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

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

# Appendix B
# Adoption Resolution

# RESOLUTION # 1-2026

Town of Norrie, Marathon County, Wisconsin

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

Adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan.

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

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

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

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

Adopted this 14th day of September, 2026.

Attest:

# Appendix C
# Adoption Ordinance

ORDINANCE FOR PLAN ADOPTION

ORDINANCE # 26 Comp.

Town of Norrie, Marathon County, Wisconsin

SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE
The title of this ordinance is the Town of Norrie Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Norrie to lawfully adopt a comprehensive plan as required under s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

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

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

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

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

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING
The Town of Norrie, has held a public hearing on this ordinance, with notice in compliance with the requirements of s. 66.1001 (4) (d), Wis. stats.

SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
The town board of the Town of Norrie, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Norrie Comprehensive Plan pursuant to s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

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

SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE
This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.
The town clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

Adopted this 9 day of November 2026.

Sidney A. Berg
[*Signature Town Chairperson*]

Attest:
Carla Bunge
[*Signature Town Clerk*]