



# Town of Wabeno Comprehensive Plan 2021



## **Town of Wabeno**

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

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## Attachments

- A. Public Participation Plan & Resolution
- B. Plan Commission Resolution
- C. Adoption Ordinance

# Chapter 1

## Demographics

This chapter explores potential issues that may impact the Town over the 20-year planning period. This chapter contains trends and forecasts with jurisdictional comparisons for basic demographics including: population, households, employment, age, education, and income. Although forecasts should typically cover the 20-year planning period, in some cases, the only acceptable sources had lesser time periods for their forecasts. Official sources are used for data and forecasting, including the WDOA Demographic Service Center and the U.S. Census Bureau.

### Background

The Town of Wabeno is located in the southeast portion of Forest County, See **Maps 1 & 2**. The Town is bounded by the Town of Blackwell to the north, the Towns of Freedom and Laona to the west, Marinette County to the east and Oconto County to the south. Development in the Town is clustered in the southwest and west central portions of the Town along STH 32. There are tribal lands scattered throughout the Town. The population includes all tribal and non-tribal residents in the Town of Wabeno. The Town could be categorized as Northwoods rural.

### Planning Process

In the fall of 2020, the Town initiated a process to update its 2010 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 2020 and 2021 to prepare the plan. A final Plan Commission meeting was held in early 2021 to review the final draft and recommend adoption of the plan by the Town Board.

### 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 Wabeno posted all Plan Commission meetings to invite the public and held a Public Hearing to collect public input.

## Population and Households

### Historical Trends

The estimated 2019 population for the Town of Wabeno provided by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) is 1,155 people. As shown in **Table 1**, the Town population has increased 14.1% since 1990. There was an uptick in Wabeno’s population from 1990 to 2000, after which point there has been steady decline. This is in contrast to Forest County and the State of Wisconsin as a whole, which grew at rates of 4.6% and 19.7% respectively from 1990 to 2019. Surrounding towns outside of Forest County have all increased at a much higher percentage than towns within Forest County. The Town of Silver Cliff in Marinette County has had the greatest population increase, up 95.4% since 1990. The populations in the towns of Blackwell and Laona decreased since 1990.

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2019	1990-2019 % Change	2010-2019 % Change
Town of Wabeno	1,012	1,264	1,166	1,155	14.1%	-0.9%
Town of Blackwell	384	347	332	323	-15.9%	-2.7%
Town of Silver Cliff, Marinette County	259	529	491	506	95.4%	+3.1%
Town of Lakewood, Oconto County	607	875	816	836	37.7%	2.5%
Town of Townsend, Oconto County	715	963	979	964	34.8%	-1.5%
Town of Freedom	296	376	345	347	17.2%	0.6%
Town of Laona	1,387	1,367	1,212	1,194	-13.9%	-1.5%
Forest County	8,776	10,024	9,304	9,183	4.6%	-1.3%
Wisconsin	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,854,594	19.7%	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census, WDOA

There were 435 households in the Town of Wabeno in 2018, about a 13 percent decrease from the number of households in 2000, as shown in **Table 2**. During the same period, the number of households in Forest County also decreased, but to a lesser degree, at 0.3 percent. This was in contrast to the State which experienced about a 12 percent increase during the same time period. There was great variation among the surrounding communities, with the greatest growth in the number of households in the Town of Silver Cliff (13.0%), and the greatest decrease in the number of households in the Town of Laona (-22.3%). In 2018, average household size in the Town was 2.27, down from 2.54 in 2010. The average household size was lower in Forest County on the whole at 2.16 in 2018, down from 2.39 in 2010.

Table 2: Household Trends					
Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2018	2000-2018 % Change	2010-2018 % Change
Town of Wabeno	497	483	435	-12.5%	-9.9%
Town of Blackwell	45	41	44	-8.9%	+7.3%
Town of Silver Cliff, Marinette County	216	218	244	+13.0%	+11.9%
Town of Lakewood, Oconto County	399	398	414	+3.8%	+4.0%
Town of Townsend, Oconto County	436	464	436	0.0%	-6.0%
Town of Freedom	158	151	177	+12.0%	+17.2%
Town of Laona	564	525	438	-22.3%	-16.6%
Forest County	4,043	3,836	4,029	-0.3%	+5.0%
Wisconsin	2,084,556	2,279,768	2,343,129	+12.4%	+2.8%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018

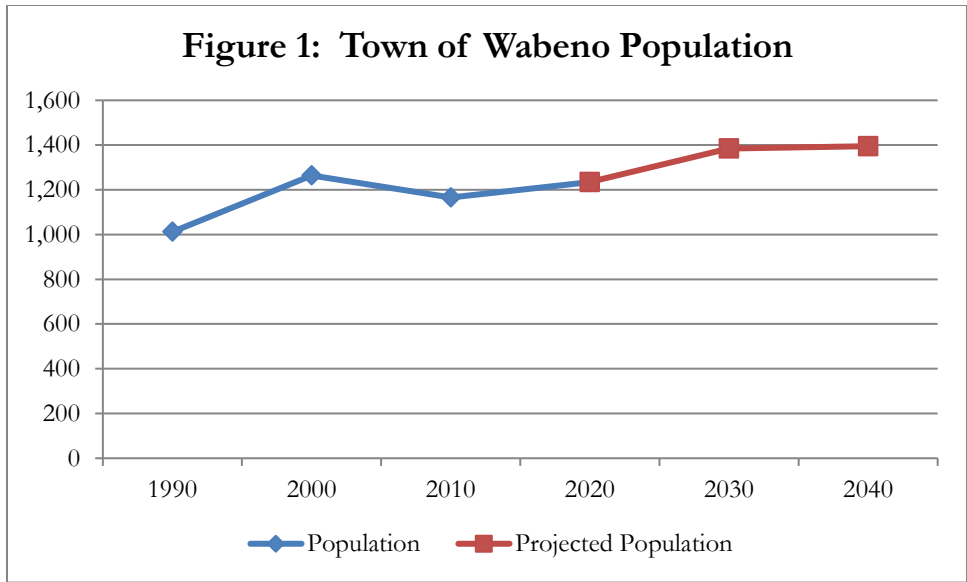
**Projections**

**Figure 1** shows population projections for the Town of Wabeno and **Table 3** compares projected population in the Town to Forest County, based on projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The Wisconsin DOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections. These projections are based on historical population and household growth in a given community, with more recent years given a greater weight. The Town of Wabeno will experience a 13% increase in population between 2020 and 2040. In comparison, Forest County is projected to increase by about 10% during this time. The Town of Wabeno is expected to grow consistently with most surrounding communities.

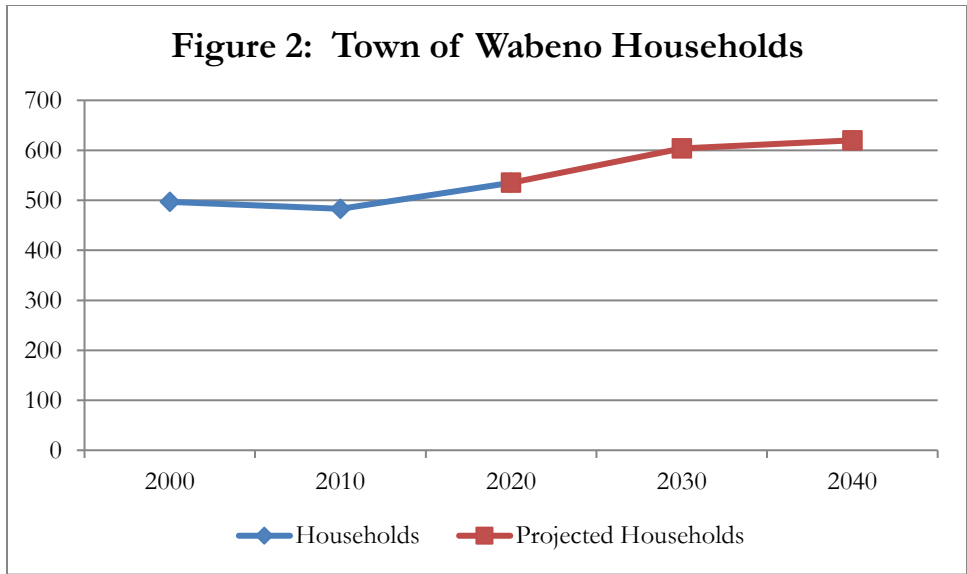
The 2020 population projection for the Town of Wabeno is 1,235. **Figure 1** displays population trends in the Town of Wabeno from 1990 to projected populations in 2040. Population within the Town is projected to have slow, stable increase over time. The Town is expected to increase to 1,395 residents in 2040, up from 1,012 residents in 1990 and from 1,166 residents in 2010.

**Figure 2** and **Table 4** include household projections completed by the WDOA. The number of households in the Town of Wabeno is projected to increase by 85 households, or a 16% increase between 2020 and 2040. This is faster than both the County (11.8%) and the State (12.0%) in terms of a projected increase.

Further analysis of housing unit change can be found in the Housing Chapter and Land Use Chapter of this comprehensive plan.



Source: U.S. Census, WI DOA



Source: U.S. Census, WI DOA

<b>Table 3: Population Projections, 2010-2040</b>						
<b>Total Population by Year</b>						
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>% Change 2010-2040</b>
<b>Town of Wabeno</b>	1,235	1,315	1,385	1,410	1,395	+13.0%
<b>Forest County</b>	9,695	10,245	10,710	10,855	10,655	+9.9%

Source: U.S. Census, & WI DOA Population Projections, 2013

**Table 4: Household Projections, 2010-2040**

Total Households by Year						
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2010-2040
<b>Town of Wabeno</b>	535	572	604	619	620	+15.9%
<b>Forest County</b>	4,180	4,433	4,644	4,715	4,674	+11.8%

Source: U.S. Census, & WI DOA Population Projections, 2013

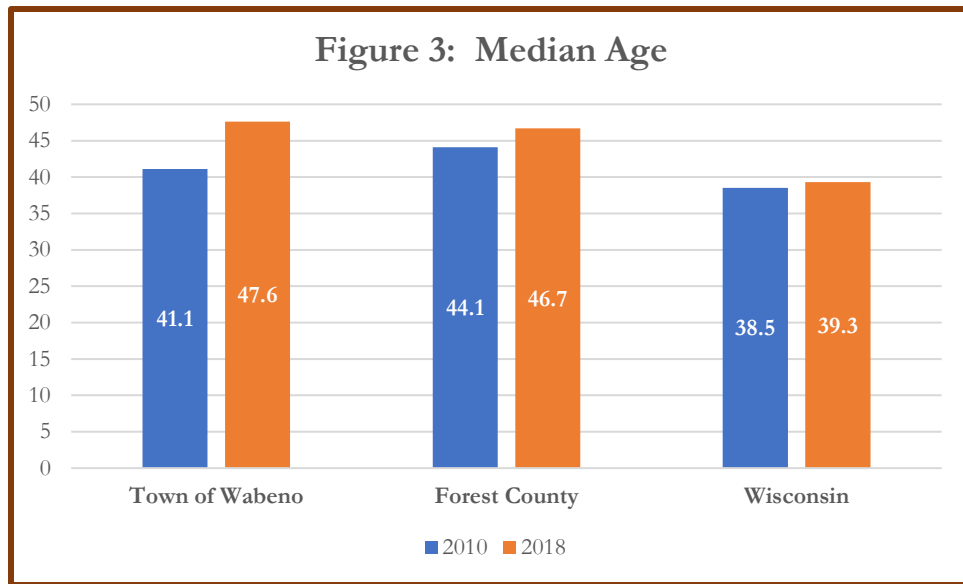
## Age

As shown in **Figure 3**, the median age in the Town of Wabeno was 47.6 in 2018, up from 41.1 in 2010. This is higher than both the county and the state. Population distribution by age is important in the planning process. 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 ratio of those over 65 divided by the working age population and the child dependency ratio is that ratio of those under 16 divided by the working age population.

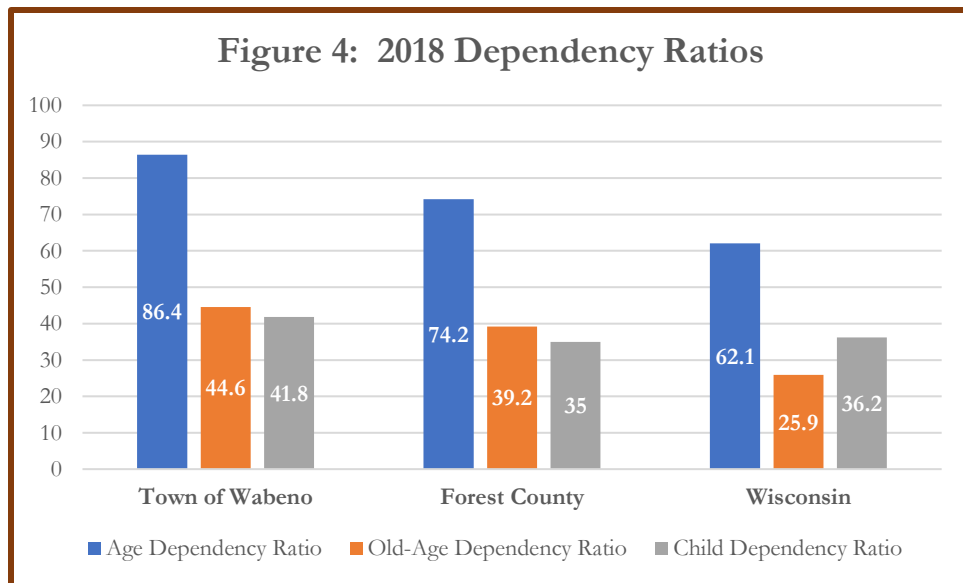
The Town of Wabeno has a very high age dependency ratio, at 86.4, compared to 74.2 in Forest County and 62.1 in the State of Wisconsin. There is nearly one age dependent population member for every working aged adult. There are more dependent residents in the older age categories versus younger. These 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. This population trend whereby older age categories increase significantly while younger age categories decline will impact the future labor supply, school system, and health care industry at the national, state, and local levels.





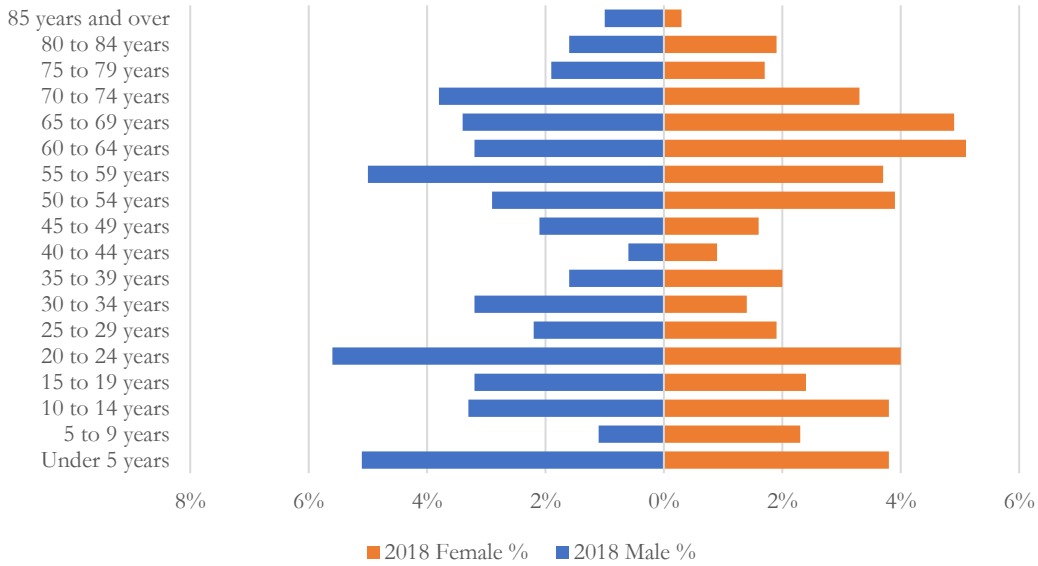
Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

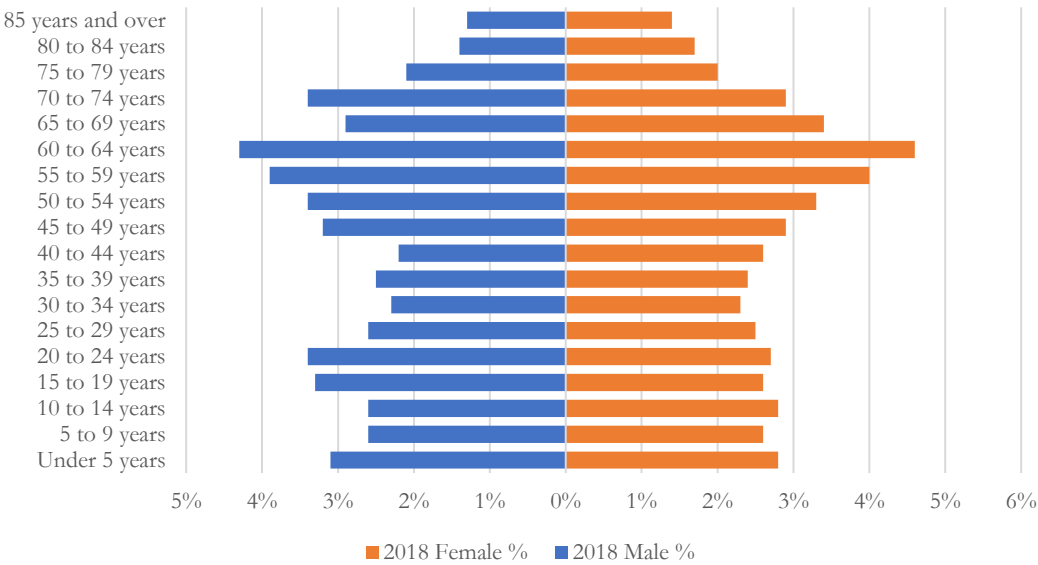
**Figures 5 and 6** compare the distribution of age group for the Town of Wabeno and Forest County. Forest County’s population pyramid is slightly constrictive showing an older population with limited growth. The Town of Wabeno has a slightly constrictive population pyramid with far greater numbers in the higher versus lower age ranges. This is indicative of aging populations with slow population growth. There are some marked exceptions, including those in the under 5 year age category and those in the 20 to 24 year old age category. Most males in the Town are in the 20 to 24 year old age category, and most females are in the 60 to 64 year old age category.

**Figure 5: 2018 Town of Wabeno Age Cohorts**



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Figure 6: 2018 Forest County Age Cohorts**

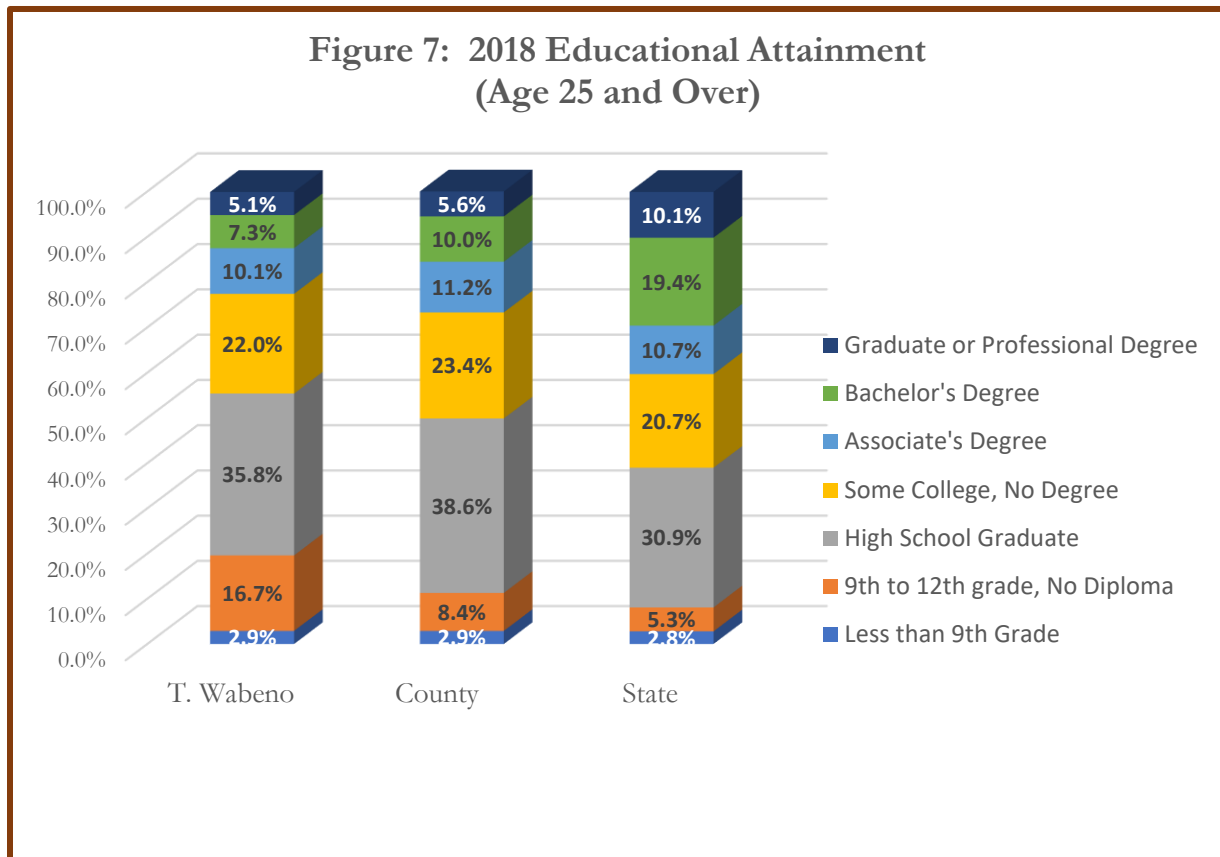


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Education and Income Levels

### Education

**Figure 7** compares educational attainment of those in the Town of Wabeno to the County and the State. In 2018, 80.3 percent of town residents age 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was 8.4 percent less than the County average and 11.6 percent less than the State average. In the Town of Wabeno, 12.4 percent of the population held bachelor's or other advanced degrees compared to 15.6 percent of County residents and 29.5 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 total income per person.

Median household income for Town of Wabeno residents was \$46,528 in 2018. **Table 5** shows that median household income was slightly higher in Wabeno than Forest County on the whole, but lower than the State of Wisconsin. Wabeno household income was substantially lower than the County and the State in 2010 and the gap has closed since that time. The Town, County, and State median household incomes have not kept pace with inflation from 2000 to 2018.

**Table 6** illustrates that income per capita in the Town of Wabeno is slightly higher than the County, but lower than the State. In 2010, the per capita income in Wabeno was lower than both the County and the State. Per capita income in Wabeno rose 5.2% from 2000 to 2018. The rate of change was much higher than the County or the State, which increased at a rate of 2.7% and 2.5% respectively when adjusted for inflation.

<b>Table 5: Median Household Income</b>					
Minor Civil Division	2000*	2010*	2018	*% Change 2000-2018	*% Change 2010-2018
Town of Wabeno	\$55,459	\$33,173	\$46,528	-16.1%	+40.3%
Forest County	\$47,023	\$43,041	\$44,313	-5.8%	+3.0%
Wisconsin	\$64,303	\$59,023	\$59,209	-7.9%	+0.3%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates  
\*Adjusted for Inflation in 2018 Dollars

<b>Table 6: Per Capita Income</b>					
Minor Civil Division	2000*	2010*	2018	*% Change 2000-2018	*% Change 2010-2018
Town of Wabeno	\$24,682	\$19,424	\$25,975	+5.2%	+33.7%
Forest County	\$24,157	\$23,539	\$24,808	+2.7%	+5.4%
Wisconsin	\$31,234	\$30,455	\$32,018	+2.5%	+5.1%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates  
\*Adjusted for Inflation in 2018 Dollars

### Employment Characteristics

**Tables 7 and 8** illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Town of Wabeno in 2010 and 2018. The “employed population” includes those that are 16 and older. There was a decrease of 83 people in the labor force from 2000 to 2018 in the Town. This is likely due to the rise in median age, whereby more people are entering retirement. This decline was consistent with stagnation across the county and state in labor force numbers.

Labor force participation indicates the percent of those 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate decreased 9.5 percentage points in the Town of Wabeno from 2010 to 2018. There was a decrease in the county and state during this period also, but to a lesser degree.

<b>Table 7: Labor Force</b>					
Minor Civil Division	Labor Force			Labor Participation Rate	
	2010	2018	2010-2018 % Change	2010	2018
Town of Wabeno	444	361	-18.7%	55.3%	45.8%
Forest County	4,257	3,972	-6.7%	54.7%	53.7%
Wisconsin	3,078,465	3,092,330	+0.5%	69.0%	66.7%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In 2010, the Town of Wabeno had an employed population of 368 people; see **Table 8**. This number decreased 26 people, to 342 by 2018, for a 7.1 percent decrease. Employment decreased in Forest County during the same period, but to a lesser degree at 4.5 percent. The state experienced a 3.3 percent increase in employment from 2010 to 2018. 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 5.3 percent in 2018. This was 1.4 percent lower than the County and 1.3 percent higher than the State.

<b>Table 8: Employment</b>				
<b>Minor Civil Division</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>% Change 2010-2018</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
<b>Town of Wabeno</b>	368	342	-7.1%	5.3%
<b>Forest County</b>	3,879	3,704	-4.5%	6.7%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	2,869,310	2,964,540	+3.3%	4.0%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<b>Table 9: Resident Occupations 2010-2018</b>		
<b>Occupation Sector</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Management, business, science, and arts occupations</b>	69	76
<b>Service occupations</b>	178	78
<b>Sales and office occupations</b>	17	68
<b>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</b>	24	42
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</b>	80	78
<b>Total employed*</b>	368	342

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

\*Total employed represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

As shown in **Table 9**, most residents were employed in Service occupations, and Production, transportation and material moving occupations in 2018. The Potawatomi casino in Carter is mainly Service occupations. The second sector most represented was the area of Management, business, science, and arts occupations, followed by Sales and office occupations. From 2010 to 2018, the most significant increase was seen in Sales and office occupations, and the most significant decrease was observed in Service occupations.

## Demographic Snapshot

- The population and number of households have steadily decreased since 2000. In addition, there has been a notable reduction in average household size. Usually a reduction in average household size and a flat population increases the number of houses or apartments needed. Since the population also steadily decreased, then a glut of existing housing may exist.
- The Town of Wabeno is expected to continue to grow both in terms of the number of people and the number of households through 2040.
- There are a large number of people in the older age categories and the median age is higher than the County and the State. Moreover, there is a higher age dependency ratio than in the County and the State.
- The median age rose 2 years from 41.1 in 2010 to 47.6 in 2018.
- The Town of Wabeno has a lower proportion of residents with a high school diploma, bachelor's degree, or graduate/professional degree than the County and State.
- Both the median household income of \$46,528 and per capita income of \$25,975 are higher than the county and lower than the state.
- The labor participation rate in the Town of Wabeno is lower than the County or the State, and the unemployment rate of 5.3 percent in 2018 is lower than the County and higher than the State.
- Most people in the Town of Wabeno work in Service occupations or in Production, transportation and material moving occupations.

# Chapter 2

## Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources

This chapter describes local land and water conditions in detail as well as agricultural resources and cultural heritage. It is important to consider the patterns and interrelations of natural resources on a broader scale because they do not follow geo-political boundaries. In addition, many of the programs for protecting or mitigating impacts to natural resources are 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, soils, 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.

### Related Plans and Studies

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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.

#### **Forest County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2018-2027**

This Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Forest County from 2018 to 2027. The Land Conservation / Agriculture and Extension Committee identified the following long-term program goals:

1. Remove and Reverse Lake Eutrophication.
2. Slow the spread of invasive and non-native nuisance species.
3. Increase the amount and quality of information available concerning land and water in Forest County.
4. Reduce phosphorus and nitrogen loading to surface waters.
5. Promote well planned development.
6. Maintain a healthy and vigorous forest.

### **Forest County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2016**

This Plan is required under Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Statutes to guide and manage the preservation of farmland and agricultural production capacity.

### **Forest County Forest Fifteen-Year Comprehensive Use Plan, 2021-2035**

The Forest County Forest Fifteen-Year Comprehensive Use Plan is a management guide for the Forest County Forest and is updated every fifteen years. The mission of the plan is to manage and protect natural resources within the county forest 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.

### **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 Forest County was published in 2007. The full Forest County report is available on the website: <https://wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/find/forest/index.html>

## **NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

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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 southeast portion of Forest County. The Town is bordered by the Blackwell, Laona, and Freedom in Forest County; Townsend and Lakewood in Oconto County; and Silver Cliff in Marinette County.

### **Topography and Geology**

Forest County is located entirely in the Northern Highlands physiographic region, which was glaciated during the Pleistocene Age by the Langelade Lobe.

The elevation in the County generally ranges from about 1,800 feet above sea level in the west and northwest to about 1,300 feet in the southeast. The third highest point in the state, Sugar Bush Hill, is a drumlin east of Crandon. It rises about 1,938 feet above sea level. The west end of McCaslin Mountain is about 1,610 feet above sea level.

Forest County is underlain by igneous & metamorphic bedrock that makes up the southern extension of the Canadian Shield. The bedrock surface is irregular throughout the County and slopes generally



to the east and southeast. Underlying the southeast corner is the Hager porphyry rock and a quartzite and conglomerate rock upland, which includes the prominent relief feature of McCaslin Mountain protruding through the glacial deposits. Bedrock exposed in other areas is typically located in topographic lows surrounded by glaciofluvial deposits, such as the gneiss outcrop on the south shore of Pine Lake.

### **Forests**

Forests are the predominant land cover within the Town of Wabeno. Forests play a key role in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas like steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. Expansive forests provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development.

The pre-settlement composition of forestland in the Town of Wabeno was a mix of conifer and deciduous tree species that included white pine, red pine, yellow birch, sugar maple, hemlock, and beech.

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

About 2/3rds of the Town of Wabeno is in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, and is interspersed with blocks of Forest County Potawatomi Tribal lands.

Wabeno School District has a 40-acre school forest in Town (SE1/4 SW1/4, Sec 16 T34N R15E). A school forest is an outdoor classroom on land owned or controlled by a public or private school and is used for environmental education and natural resource management, which is registered through the state community forest program.

Some private woodlands in the county are enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL). As of January 2021, there were about 2,640 acres enrolled in MFL and 87 acres enrolled in Forest Crop Law (FCL, the predecessor to MFL). This program provides a low annual tax rate per acre and requires a management plan for the property that must include some harvesting along with allowing some public uses based on acreage thresholds. When timber is harvested from MFL properties, a harvest tax is also assessed. This provides an incentive to keep woodlots in active production and allows some community access to the site in exchange for greatly reduced taxes. See the programs section at the end of this chapter for more detail on this program.

### **Agricultural Areas**

The County produces a variety of agriculture products like corn for silage, oats, and forage. The agricultural industry infuses a significant amount of revenue into the county economy through the sale of agricultural products to customers.

The Potawatomi Farm (Bodwewadmi Ktegan) is located in the Town of Wabeno. The farm's mission is to provide a natural, sustainable source of vegetables, fruits, greens, fish and animal proteins to the tribal community. All products are available to the tribal community and general public.

The agricultural industry will continue to be a driver economy for Forest County supporting a variety of additional industries like transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, wholesale trade, and retail and service.

### **Metallic and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources estimates that there could be no more than five metallic mineral mines developed in Wisconsin in the foreseeable future. This includes the Flambeau Mine now in operation, the Crandon Project now owned by two tribes, the Lynne Project in Oneida County, the Bend Project (west of Tomahawk), and one additional ore body not now known. This estimate is based on the current state of knowledge about the geology of northern Wisconsin and the steps necessary to discover an ore body and the time it takes to complete the regulatory requirements.

Frac sand is quartz sand of a specific grain size and shape that is suspended in fluid and injected into oil and gas wells under very high pressure. The type of sand used in this process must be nearly pure quartz, very well rounded, extremely hard, and of uniform size. Frac sand is currently being mined from sandstone formations in much of western and central Wisconsin.

The USDA's Soil Survey of Forest County notes locations where sand and gravel deposits can be found. The Langlade Lobe was the latest advance of glacial ice that moved over the survey area from northeast to southwest. Evidence of this ice movement is the general orientation of drumlins, the long axis of which is parallel to the ice flow. These drumlin features cover a large portion of the county. They are cored with sand and gravel that have been overlain by glacial mudflow sediment.

There are a number of quarries throughout the Town of Wabeno, as well as a few closed or inactive sites. See **Map 3** for their general locations.

### **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.

LUST site has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer causing substances.

The BRRTS database lists no action required sites, spills, and LUSTs. Of those actions, spills existed at facilities that are generally still in use, so there is nothing to redevelop. LUST sites may exist at closed businesses, and therefore may provide opportunities for redevelopment.

The following LUST sites were listed as “closed”:

- LUST Site: Town Recycling Center (formerly: Forest Co. Hwy Dept), Soper Ave
- LUST Site: Adams Garage, 1513 STH 32 S

- LUST Site: Schroeder Bldg. Const., 1695 3<sup>rd</sup> St.
- LUST Site: Georges Self Services, 4497 N Branch St.
- LUST Site: Schrader Oil Co., 4466 Branch St.
- LUST Site: Dales Mobile Service, 4360 N Branch St.
- LUST Site: Piontek Bros. Trucking, STH 32 N
- LUST Site: Geiter Const., 1774 Ogden Ave.

### Rare Species and Natural Communities

The Town of Wabeno has 55 sections with occurrences of endangered resources (rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants & animals, and high-quality natural communities) as identified in the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory.

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.

State natural areas were acquired to protect the state's natural diversity, provide sites for research and environmental education, and serve as benchmarks for assessing and guiding use of other lands in the state. Natural areas are defined as tracts of land or water, which have native biotic communities, unique natural features, or significant geological or archeological sites. These sites do not have much facility development, though there may be a designated trail on the site.

McCaslin Mountain, State Natural Area #307 is a 408-acre natural area located in the southeast corner of Wabeno. McCaslin Mountain is a four-mile long quartzite hill with a local relief of more 200 feet. The hill's shallow soils, numerous rock outcrops, and shaded quartzite cliffs are unusual in this region where most such features are buried under glacial till. The site supports a high quality northern mesic forest of red oak with beech, sugar maple, basswood, aspen, and some white oak. The shrub layer is dominated by beaked hazelnut and maple-leaved viburnum while Pennsylvania sedge, big-leaved aster, and wild sarsaparilla dominated the ground layer. McCaslin Mountain is important habitat for the cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*) a state threatened species that requires large stands of tall trees for nesting.

The Wisconsin Land Legacy Report 2006-2056, compiled by the WDNR, is a comprehensive inventory of the special places that will be critical to meet future conservation and outdoor recreation needs for the next fifty years. The report focused on identifying what areas of our state or regionally significant green infrastructure remains to be protected. The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest is a Land Legacy Area summarized below with 5 stars representing the highest level for that category:

#### **CN** Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

Size:	Large	Protection Remaining:	Limited
Protection Initiated:	Substantial	Conservation Significance:	☆☆☆☆☆
		Recreation Potential:	☆☆☆☆☆

## Water Resources

### Surface Water

Surface water resources support the area's economy by drawing tourists and providing a good quality of life for residents.

Wabeno is mainly within two watersheds, and parts of two other watersheds. A watershed boundary from the northwestern corner of town down toward the southeastern corner generally splits the town in half. The northeastern half of town lies within the Otter Creek and Rat River watershed, with the northeastern corner lying in the Upper Peshtigo River watershed. The southwestern half of town lies within the Lower Northern Branch Oconto River watershed, with the southeastern corner lying in the Upper Peshtigo River watershed. All of these watersheds drain into Lake Michigan.

Forest County Shoreland Zoning is in effect. Actual shoreland jurisdiction measurements are coordinated through the County Zoning Department. Refer to Natural Resources Map for water bodies in the Town.

### Camp One Springs Fishery Area

State fishery areas have been purchased to help preserve and manage headwaters and springs that often form the biological base for stream fisheries. These lands protect and improve spawning grounds for lake fisheries and prevent private blocking of important waterways, game lands, and lakes. Boundary signs posted near parking lots and along borders explain the uses on that parcel.

**Camp One Springs Fishery Area** – About 78 acres, located in the Town of Wabeno along Otter Creek. Hunting and fishing are both allowed.

Local history of the site:

*The ponds were dredged in 1977 to open up the springs and provide a deep coldwater environment necessary for brook trout to survive in the warm summer months. These ponds were full of beautiful trout until about 2012. At that time, a beaver built a dam below the dredged area. The dam stayed in for about three years and the fishing was still good. But as time went on the fishing started to decrease because the trout couldn't get past the dam. So, somebody knocked out the dam which helped the fishing for a while but when the dam was knocked out the water subsided bringing in silt from the shoreline which started to fill in the ponds. The beaver rebuilt the dam, the water came up, it was knocked out again and more silt came in. The first pond that was about 5 feet deep has become a dead pond with only a foot of water in it and the other ponds are starting to fill in. not only that but a new weed appeared in the pond which is extremely thick and is spreading out very quickly choking out other parts of the pond. The weed has been identified as a non-invasive species, but something must be done about it or it will take over the pond. It would be a shame for this fishery to become a dead zone.*

### Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

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

One area water body is listed as an ORW—Peshtigo River (T35N R16E Sec 2 area). Four water bodies are listed as ERWs—Spencer Creek (T35N R15E Sec 20 area), Knowles Creek (T34N R16E Sec 35 area), Indian Creek (T34N R15E Sec 13 area), and the North Branch Oconto 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.

Range Line Lake is the only water body in the Town listed as not meeting the standards set under the U.S. Clean Water Act, Section 303(d). The listing is due to chlorophyll levels that exceeded the thresholds for Recreation. Total phosphorus data were clearly below Recreation use and Fish and Aquatic Life use listing thresholds.

### **Invasive Aquatic Species**

Surface water resources in Forest County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. These species out compete native species and degrade habitats possibly by decreasing biodiversity from having less plant and animal species.

In the Town of Wabeno, Rusty Crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*) has been found in Trump Lake, the North Branch Oconto River, and the Rat River.

Otter Lake has verified area of Banded Mystery Snail (*Viviparus georgianus*) and Chinese Mystery Snail (*Cipangopaludina chinensis*).

Contact the County Land Conservation Department for public outreach education strategies.

### **Wetlands**

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

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

Wetlands that filter or store sediments or nutrients for extended periods may undergo fundamental changes. Sediments will eventually fill in wetlands and nutrients will eventually modify the vegetation. Such changes may result in the loss of this function over time. Eradication of wetlands can occur

through the use of fill material. This can destroy the hydrological function of the site and open the area to improper development. The WDNR has promulgated minimum standards for managing wetlands.

Wetlands in Wabeno are located throughout the Town. Large wetland areas exist north of CTH C and east of Indian Market Road.

### **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. Flood plains represent areas where excess water can be accommodated whether through drainage by streams or through storage by wetlands and other natural detention/retention areas. Specific areas that will be inundated will depend upon the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, the areas shown on a map as floodplains should be able to handle the severest (regional) flood, i.e., those that have a probability of occurring once every one hundred years.

The 100-year floodplains were created from the most current FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. See the Natural Resources Map.

### **Groundwater**

Groundwater is water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand, and rock. It is replenished by precipitation that infiltrates into the ground. 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. The type of soil and bedrock in a region also determines how quickly contaminants can reach groundwater.

The majority of the Town of Wabeno lies within a glacial drift aquifer, which is the major source of ground water in most of the County. Large yields of ground water are available where the thickness of the saturated drift is at least 50 feet. Precambrian crystalline rock underlying the county is not considered a significant source of water. The availability of water from the bedrock is difficult to predict and is probably less than 5 gallons per minute. The glacial drift aquifer above the bedrock is the best source of ground water.

Well yields within Forest County vary greatly from a few gallons to 1,000 gallons per minute. Groundwater quality in Forest County and the Town of Wabeno is generally good. The aquifer water is principally a calcium magnesium bicarbonate type that is moderately hard or hard. A high content of iron is a problem in many wells, but it is not a health hazard.

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.

Wellhead protection plans are developed to achieve groundwater pollution prevention measures within public water supply wellhead areas. A wellhead protection plan uses public involvement to

delineate the wellhead protection area, inventory potential groundwater contamination sources, and manage the wellhead protection area. All new municipal wells are required to have a wellhead protection plan. A wellhead protection ordinance is a zoning ordinance that implements the wellhead protection plan by controlling land uses in the wellhead protection area. The Wabeno Sanitary District has a wellhead protection plan and a wellhead protection ordinance.

## **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

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There are many original downtown buildings, but only those mentioned below are listed in the State and/or National Register of Historical Places.

Wabeno listings on the **State and National Registers of Historical Places:**

- Chicago and Northwestern Land Office ca. 1897 (currently the library, 4556 N Branch St);
- **Minertown – Oneva** is listed on the Wisconsin and National Registers of Historic Places (Reference Number: 09001315). Here is a description of how Minertown – Oneva was established:

Minertown (also known as Oneva) was established in 1899, soon after the Chicago & North Western Railroad expanded into Forest County. Brothers Wilbur (also known as William) and Henry T. Miner from Vernon County, Wisconsin, assisted by their sister Mary, purchased a 4,000-acre tract of land covered with hardwoods from the railroad and began constructing a sawmill. The initial settlement also included a boarding house and company store and, over the next several years, the town grew to include a planing mill, roundhouse, depot, store, a blacksmith shop, a cook shanty, several small four-room houses, and a barn. Many of the original settlers to the community came with the Miners from the Kickapoo Valley, Vernon County; while many of the others were from Kentucky.

From c1901, when the mills began working in earnest, to 1922, when the Oconto Company acquired the facility, the mills produced saw-lumber for at least one company, the Menasha Woodenware Company. Nine years later, on June 11, 1931, a fire attributed to a carelessly discarded cigarette destroyed the mill. Mill workers from Minertown and Carter subsequently moved away, finding work with other lumber companies and by 1939 the town was abandoned.

The **Forest County Potawatomi (FCP)** have lived in Forest County, Wisconsin, since the late 1800s. Around 1880, groups settled in areas near Blackwell and Wabeno and have lived in that area since, as well as in the Carter and Crandon (or Stone Lake) areas.

The **Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)** is a digital source of information on more than 151,000 historic buildings, structures and objects throughout Wisconsin. Each property has a digital record providing basic information about the property and most include exterior images.

The majority of properties listed in the AHI are privately owned and not open to the public. Their inclusion in AHI conveys no special status such as National Register designation, rights or benefits for owners of these properties. Please respect the rights of private property owners when visiting any of these properties.

Wabeno listings on the **State Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)**:

- Grand Plank Hotel, ca. 1904 (4559 N Branch St).
- House, ca. 1908 (4226 River St).
- Larry the Logroller, ca. 1960 (4500 N Branch St).
- Wabeno Logging Museum, ca. 1941 (4500 N Branch St).
- Retail building, ca. 1900 (4541 N Branch St).
- State Bank of Wabeno, ca. 1922 (4519 N Branch St).
- Noer Hospital, ca. 1910 (4377 Branch St).
- Wabeno High School, ca. 1937 (4323 Branch St).
- House, ca. 1938 (4303 Branch St).
- St. Ambrose Catholic Church, ca. 1900 (4265 Branch St).
- St. Ambrose Catholic Church Parsonage, ca. 1910 (4265 Branch St).
- House, ca. 1920 (1788 Elm Ave).
- Jones Lumber Company Steam Powered Log Hauler (The Phoenix), ca. 1900 (4500 N Branch St).

A listing of historical buildings in the Town of Wabeno that are not on preservation lists:

- The McGraw House (Big Easel), ca. 1906 (1784 Maple St), business.
- Wabeno Dime Store, ca. 1930s (4491 N Branch St), business.
- Eagle Saloon, ca. 1909 (4493 N Branch St), business.
- Johnson Grocery Store before 1923 (4501 N Branch St), residence.
- Bandshell, ca. 1939 (4500 N Branch St), structure.
- Brian Pichotta, ca. 1917 (4521 N Branch St), residence.
- Richelieu Hotel, ca. 1915 (4533 N Branch St), flower shop.
- Boehm Building before 1914 (4535 N Branch St), apartments.
- Wabeno Mercantile, ca. 1909 (4541 N Branch St), business.
- Dr. Reddicks, ca. 1889? (4575 N Branch St), residence.
- Padus School, ca. 1897? (moved in 1942 from Padus to 2840 State Highway 32), currently a residence.



### **Historic Compatibility with Modernization**

There are certainly many historic buildings that don't currently meet today's standards for comfort, convenience, and safety. Since the 1990s great strides have been made around the world in the methods of bringing historic buildings into compliance with modern demands without harming their physical structure or their architectural character. Most components for modernization – water and sewer lines, telephone cables, electric wires, and high-speed computer data transmission lines – can be put in place almost invisibly – often underground and in walls – without jeopardizing the individual historic resources or their important context and interrelationships.

Historic preservation has moved from being an end in itself (save old buildings in order to save old buildings) to being a vehicle of broader ends – downtown revitalization, job creation, small business incubation, housing, tourism, and others.

Utilizing historic preservation as a vehicle of broader ends requires the recognition of certain values:

- Major landmarks and monuments need to be identified and protected, *BUT...*
- Historic resources are far more than monuments and often are functional buildings.
- Groups of buildings rather than individual structures are often what is important.
- The vast majority of buildings of "historic importance" have their importance defined by their local significance, not national or international.
- Adaptive reuse of buildings is central to an effective historic preservation as economic development strategy.
- Authenticity is an important element in sustainable historic preservation based success.

## **Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources PROGRAMS**

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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.

See the Economic Development chapter in this plan for historic preservation programs.

### **Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) Program**

The focus of the GNA Program is to assist in implementation of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) Forest Plan, which will provide:

- forest products to the local economy;
- collaboration between federal, state and county forest managers; and
- improved health and resiliency of forestlands and watersheds within Wisconsin.

### **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. Periodically, the Legislature or DNR may modify or amend the Managed Forest Law and its administrative rules. Such changes may apply to lands already enrolled under the law. Landowners with a minimum of 20 contiguous acres (80% must be capable of producing merchantable timber) are eligible. Landowners designate the property as “Open” or “Closed” to public access for recreation, and commit to a 25 or 50-year sustainable forest management plan. Open designation allows public access to the property only for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing and cross-country skiing without additional permission from landowners. MFL land designated as Open must be accessible to the public on foot by public road or from other land open to public access. All land enrolled in the MFL program must meet the access requirements for land designated as “Open”, regardless of enrollment date.

### **Forest Crop Law (FCL)**

The purpose of the FCL is to promote good forest management through property tax incentives. New lands may only be enrolled in the MFL program. FCL lands are open to the public for hunting (not trapping), fishing, hiking, sightseeing, and cross-country skiing only (s. 77.83(2)(a), Wis. Stats.).

### **Parks and Recreation Program**

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

### **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 Wabeno and other areas in northern 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.

### **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.

## Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources

### GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES:

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#### **Goal 1 – Maintain and enhance the aesthetic, ecological quality, function, and other values of the town’s land and water resources.**

##### **Objectives:**

1. Exclude development within environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, lowlands, and steep slopes.
2. Seek to create a balance between economic development, sustainability, and environmental protection.
3. Improve the ecological function of the Camp One Springs Fishery Area due to a re-occurring beaver dam problem.
4. Protect area lakes from invasive species and shoreline erosion.

##### **Policies:**

1. Direct new development of all kinds to areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Work with Forest County Zoning to enforce existing regulations of septic systems to protect groundwater quality.
3. Explore ways to mitigate elevated chlorophyll levels in Range Line Lake.
4. Work with the WDNR to remove the beaver problem and to restore the ecological function of the Camp One Springs Fishery Area.
5. Work with DNR, County Conservationist, and possible lake associations on invasive species and shoreline erosion issues on all Town of Wabeno area lakes.

#### **Goal 2 – Support economically productive forestry and farming.**

##### **Objectives:**

1. Promote retention of large, contiguous forestry tracts in the town.
2. Promote sustainable forestry practices on both private and public lands to maximize residual stand quality and promote regeneration of tree species appropriate for the area.
3. Support diversification of farming types and practices to maintain agriculture as a viable economic activity.
4. Consider existing agricultural structures and uses when considering new development proposals.
5. Encourage local agricultural development and agricultural tourism.

##### **Policies:**

1. Encourage landowners to develop forest management plans.
2. Work in partnership with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest to ensure the ecological, economic, and social benefits of forests for the citizens of Wisconsin now and into the future.

3. Participate on Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) Resource Advisory Committees (RAC).
4. Encourage support for farms in Wabeno to provide agricultural products and possibly experiences (agro-tourism) to those who live in or visit Wabeno.

**Goal 3 – Promote preservation of cultural, historic, and archaeologically important sites.**

**Objective:**

1. Promote economic development within the downtown commercial district. Adaptive reuse of buildings is central to an effective historic preservation as economic development strategy. (See the Economic Development chapter of this plan for more resources.)
2. Promote local knowledge of Wabeno’s history.

**Policies:**

1. Work with the Friends of Wabeno and others to provide guidance in the identification and protection of historic and cultural resources.
2. Review development proposals so they do not deteriorate the historical and cultural resources of the Town.
3. Consider preparing a historical and architectural survey of buildings in Wabeno.
4. Develop sidewalk museum for Minertown-Oneva which is on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

# Chapter 3

## Housing

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

### Issues

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- Many vacant homes exist in the downtown area that may need to be rehabilitated before others would want to inhabit them.

### Related Plans and Studies

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#### **Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan**

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

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

#### **Regional Livability Plan, 2015**

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

- Aging Population
- Smaller household sizes
- Lack of Housing Options
- Increase in Housing Costs related to incomes

## Forest County Comprehensive Plan, 2011

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

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

## Housing Assessment

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### Housing Type and Tenure

#### 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 1960'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 throughout Forest County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

**Tables 10 and 11** outline build dates of housing units throughout the Town, county, and state based on 2018 American Community Survey data. Most housing in the Town of Wabeno was built before 1940. The Town has proportionately more housing constructed prior to 1940 than the surrounding communities, county or the state. Although this provides opportunity for historic preservation, a sense of place, and affordability, it may also create issues with an abundance of properties in need of repair. Steady construction throughout the Town added between 8.8 percent and 14.5 percent of the housing units in subsequent decades. Forest County has also experienced a steady increase in the number of housing units, with most units (17.3%) added between 1990 to 1999.



<b>Table 10: Year Structure Built, 2018</b>								
	<b>1939 or earlier</b>	<b>1940-1959</b>	<b>1960-1969</b>	<b>1970-1979</b>	<b>1980-1989</b>	<b>1990-1999</b>	<b>2000-2009</b>	<b>2010 or later</b>
<b>Town of Wabeno</b>	215	110	77	105	127	97	115	32
<b>T. Laona</b>	114	123	40	153	80	183	118	5
<b>T. Blackwell</b>	22	27	4	23	33	17	37	8
<b>T. Silver Cliff, Marinette County</b>	74	188	113	167	111	311	190	43
<b>T. Lakewood, Oconto County</b>	86	204	170	256	211	267	233	40
<b>T. Townsend, Oconto County</b>	68	177	147	240	192	305	476	101
<b>T. Freedom</b>	43	78	75	57	82	52	114	4
<b>Forest County</b>	1,191	1,427	643	1,496	1,213	1,584	1,387	208
<b>Wisconsin</b>	523,371	442,482	261,113	394,062	266,845	372,967	341,400	78,992

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<b>Table 11: Year Structure Built, 2018 (Percentage)</b>								
	<b>1939 or earlier</b>	<b>1940-1959</b>	<b>1960-1969</b>	<b>1970-1979</b>	<b>1980-1989</b>	<b>1990-1999</b>	<b>2000-2009</b>	<b>2010 or later</b>
<b>Town of Wabeno</b>	24.5%	12.5%	8.8%	12.0%	14.5%	11.0%	13.1%	3.6%
<b>T. Laona</b>	14.0%	15.1%	4.9%	18.8%	9.8%	22.4%	14.5%	0.6%
<b>T. Blackwell</b>	12.9%	15.8%	2.3%	13.5%	19.3%	9.9%	21.6%	4.7%
<b>T. Silver Cliff, Marinette County</b>	6.2%	15.7%	9.4%	14.0%	9.3%	26.0%	15.9%	3.6%
<b>T. Lakewood, Oconto County</b>	5.9%	13.9%	11.6%	17.5%	14.4%	18.2%	15.9%	2.7%
<b>T. Townsend, Oconto County</b>	4.0%	10.4%	8.6%	14.1%	11.3%	17.9%	27.9%	5.9%
<b>T. Freedom</b>	8.5%	15.5%	14.9%	11.3%	16.2%	10.3%	22.6%	0.8%
<b>Forest County</b>	13.0%	15.6%	7.0%	16.4%	13.3%	17.3%	15.2%	2.3%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	19.5%	16.5%	9.7%	14.7%	10.0%	13.9%	12.7%	3.0%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Housing Type and Tenure

### Occupancy Characteristics

**Table 12** examines the occupancy status of housing units in the Town of Wabeno. In 2018, of the 878 housing units within the Town, 336 were owner occupied, 99 were renter occupied and 443 were considered vacant. The “vacant” column represents all housing units that are: 1) vacant and for sale, 2) vacant and for rent, **and** 3) vacant and not listed for rent or for sale. It should be noted that the vast majority of the vacant units within the Town are seasonal homes. This high rate of seasonal homeowners is consistent with the surrounding communities and with Forest County as a whole.

Table 12: Residential Occupancy Status, 2018						
	Total Housing Units	Occupancy Status		Vacancy Status		
		Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant	Seasonally Occupied	Total Vacant
Town of Wabeno	878	336	99	112	331	443
Town of Laona	816	317	121	88	290	378
Town of Blackwell	171	32	12	0	127	127
Town of Silver Cliff, Marinette County	1,197	223	21	22	931	953
Town of Lakewood, Oconto County	1,467	350	64	62	991	1,053
Town of Townsend, Oconto County	1,706	402	34	101	1,169	1,270
Town of Freedom	505	153	24	29	299	328
Forest County	9,149	3,104	925	646	4,474	5,120
Wisconsin	2,681,232	1,568,040	775,089	146,539	191,564	338,103

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Seasonal Housing

Cottages, cabins, or regular houses can all be considered seasonal housing if they are not occupied by permanent residents. **Table 13** examines seasonal housing within the Town. In Wabeno, much of the housing stock is used seasonally. In 2018, 331 of the 878 total housing units were seasonal housing units, for a total of 38 percent. This was substantially higher than the statewide average of 7 percent. However, it was lower than the Forest County average of 49 percent. Over one in three housing units within the Town are for seasonal usage only, compared to nearly one in two housing units for seasonal usage in Forest County.

**Table 13: Percentage of Seasonal Housing, 2018**

	Total Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units	% Seasonal Housing Units
Town of Wabeno	878	331	38%
Town of Laona	816	290	36%
Town of Blackwell	171	127	74%
Town of Silver Cliff, Marinette County	1,197	931	78%
Town of Lakewood, Oconto County	1,467	991	68%
Town of Townsend, Oconto County	1,706	1,169	69%
Town of Freedom	505	299	59%
Forest County	9,149	4,474	49%
Wisconsin	2,681,232	191,564	7%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Structural Characteristics

**Table 14** details the number and percentage of housing units by type. Housing in the Town of Wabeno is predominantly single-family detached housing. There are also a limited number of multi-family units and mobile homes. This is consistent with the surrounding communities. The composition within Forest County is very similar to Wabeno. It is also comprised mainly of single-family housing, does have some variety in housing types, but to a much smaller degree than the statewide average. One exception is mobile homes, which account for 10.0 percent of Forest County housing stock, compared to only 3.5 percent throughout the state. There is a need for additional diversity in housing styles within the Town and the county. This would better accommodate those at various income levels and from different economic backgrounds.

**Table 14: Housing Units by Structural Type, 2018**

	Single Family	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%	Total
Town of Wabeno	736	83.8%	50	5.7%	92	10.5%	838
Town of Laona	669	82.0%	57	7.0%	90	11.0%	816
Town of Blackwell	114	66.7%	12	7.0%	45	26.3%	171
Town of Silver Cliff, Marinette County	961	80.3%	2	0.2%	234	19.5%	1,197
Town of Lakewood, Oconto County	1,188	81.0%	20	1.4%	259	17.7%	1,467
Town of Townsend, Oconto County	1,394	81.7%	0	0.0%	312	18.3%	1,706
Town of Freedom	429	85.0%	22	4.4%	54	10.7%	505
Forest County	7,655	83.7%	572	6.3%	918	10.0%	9,149
Wisconsin	1,785,339	66.6%	802,169	29.9%	93,043	3.5%	2,681,232

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Value Characteristics

**Table 15** details housing values in owner-occupied homes throughout the Town, surrounding communities, county, and state. In 2018, the median housing value of \$128,800 in the Town of Wabeno was slightly lower than the median value in Forest County and substantially lower than the state. The greatest concentration of homes within the Town (20.8%) are valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999. However, what shifts the median value down is that a much greater number of homes in the Town are valued at less than \$50,000 when compared to the county and the state. The Town has a variety of homes across a wide range of values, which offers affordability. However, as discussed earlier many of the homes are older which may indicate a high need for costly repairs.

	<b>Less than \$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000 to \$99,999</b>	<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	<b>\$200,000 to \$299,999</b>	<b>\$300,000 and up</b>	<b>Median Value</b>
<b>Town of Wabeno</b>	19.0%	20.2%	17.3%	17.3%	20.8%	5.4%	\$128,800
<b>Town of Laona</b>	4.4%	29.7%	19.2%	26.2%	13.6%	6.9%	\$133,600
<b>Town of Blackwell</b>	40.6%	12.5%	15.6%	21.9%	3.1%	6.3%	\$112,500*
<b>Town of Silver Cliff, Marinette County</b>	8.5%	30.0%	14.3%	25.6%	16.1%	5.4%	\$141,400
<b>Town of Lakewood, Oconto County</b>	6.6%	18.0%	20.0%	16.0%	24.0%	15.5%	\$163,200
<b>Town of Townsend, Oconto County</b>	7.5%	8.7%	22.9%	23.6%	15.7%	21.7%	\$169,600
<b>Town of Freedom</b>	3.3%	13.7%	27.5%	19.6%	26.1%	9.9%	\$162,500
<b>Forest County</b>	10.1%	25.9%	19.9%	19.1%	16.2%	8.8%	\$130,200
<b>Wisconsin</b>	5.1%	13.4%	20.6%	19.9%	23.1%	17.9%	\$173,600

\*2017 Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Affordability

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

Median monthly costs for homeowners, with and without a mortgage, and for renters are shown in **Table 16**. For homeowners with a mortgage or without a mortgage, costs are slightly lower than in Forest County. Wabeno also has a lower median rent cost than in Forest County.

The percent of a community paying more than 30 percent of their household income on housing is a common measure of housing affordability. The more money spent on housing, the less disposable income is available to spend on education, food, retail, and recreation. In Wabeno, 18.8 percent of homeowners with a mortgage and 16.7 percent without a mortgage spend over 30 percent of their income on housing. Wabeno has fewer mortgage holders paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing than the county and the state. However, Wabeno has more non-mortgage holders paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing than both the county and the state.

More renters in Wabeno pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing than in Forest County. However, the number is less than the state as a whole. When compared to surrounding communities, mortgage costs and rental costs are generally lower in Wabeno.

	Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs				Median Selected Monthly Renter Costs	
	With Mortgage	30%+	Without Mortgage	30%+	Median Gross Rent	30%+
<b>Town of Wabeno</b>	\$906	18.8%	\$393	16.7%	\$481	39.7%
<b>Town of Laona</b>	\$1,195	36.5%	\$480	11.4%	\$573	51.3%
<b>Town of Blackwell</b>	\$1,132	34.7%	N/A	0.0%	\$650	0.0%
<b>Town of Silver Cliff, Marinette County</b>	\$885	39.0%	\$367	8.2%	\$415	0.0%
<b>Town of Lakewood, Oconto County</b>	\$1,028	34.4%	\$392	12.1%	\$725	28.8%
<b>Town of Townsend, Oconto County</b>	\$1,156	31.1%	\$401	23.3%	\$663	10.7%
<b>Town of Freedom</b>	\$1,109	16.4%	\$385	13.2%	\$590	33.4%
<b>Forest County</b>	\$1,063	32.9%	\$413	12.6%	\$495	32.7%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$1,418	24.2%	\$550	14.1%	\$837	45.0%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Summary of Housing Characteristics

The Town of Wabeno is home to year-round residents, seasonal residents and seasonal visitors. The Town is abundant with natural resources and historic Northwoods character. The vast majority of housing is single-family detached housing. Over one in three housing units in the Town are for seasonal use. Most year-round homes are owner-occupied. Housing is typically older than the statewide average and generally affordable.

The housing stock on the whole is older. Benefits of this include affordability, historic value, and a sense of place. However, it is possible that residents may reside in homes in need of costly repairs and upkeep. The Town may want to explore avenues to assist residents with needed housing rehabilitation, whether in the form of providing program information or resources.

There is a need for more variety of housing both in terms of style and value. This would be beneficial both to accommodate those in need of workforce housing and those in need of senior housing. There are a large number of senior residents in the Town. Seniors typically desire housing that is smaller, accessible, and near needed healthcare services and amenities.

The high number of seasonal residents and visitors also present unique challenges and opportunities. These tourists and visitors create opportunities for economic development. However, they do tax infrastructure and natural resources all within a very concentrated timeframe. These are important considerations when looking at future housing policy and planning.

## Housing Programs

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

### **Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Grant**

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

### **Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Loan**

Also administered by USDA, this program is a loan for rehabilitation provided applicants meet the same standards as the grant above.

### **Rural Housing Guaranteed Loan**

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

### **Rural Housing Direct Loan**

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

### **Rural Housing Direct Loan**

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

### **HUD's FHA Loan**

This program is administered by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department and offers a low down payment of 3% mortgage loan for home purchase or construction for selected applicants under certain income limits.

### **HUD Insured Loans for Condominiums, Energy Efficiency, Special Credit Risks, and Rehabilitation**

These programs are administered by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department. HUD will insure selected applicants under certain income limits when procuring loans for rehabilitation or for rehabilitation at the time of purchase.

### **FHA HUD 203(k) Home Rehabilitation Loan Program**

Whereas HUD desires to see current housing stock rehabilitated, this program provides owner occupants of existing homes, or intended owner occupants who are looking to purchase a home, readily available mortgage money to refinance/rehabilitate or purchase/rehabilitate their homes, respectively.

### **VA Home Loans**

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

### **HOME Loans**

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

### **NEWCAP**

The Northeastern Wisconsin Community Action Program offers a number of housing rehabilitation programs, rental rehabilitation programs, homeowner opportunity programs, Section 8 Housing Assistance, and revolving loan funds to assist disadvantaged population groups.

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

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Although the town has not historically played a role in housing, it supports equal opportunity housing, and understands the importance of sound housing stock for its residents and the community as a whole. A review of housing stock assessment information has led to the establishment of the following housing policy statement:

**Goal 1 – Promote housing development that provides a variety of housing choices for residents of all income levels, age groups, and people with special needs.**

**Goal 2 – Promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of housing for employees of local businesses.**

**Goal 3 – Promote maintenance and rehabilitate of existing housing as appropriate.**

### **Objectives:**

1. Direct residential development to areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Discourage residential development in agricultural or silvicultural areas except for related use (i.e. farm families or workers).

### **Policies:**

1. Provide adequate areas for residential development on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Promote housing programs that assist residents with maintaining or rehabilitating existing housing units.
3. Encourage residential developers to provide a variety of housing types for all income and age groups.
4. Consider inventorying vacant houses to assist with improving the housing stock in Wabeno.
5. Consider establishing a construction & demolition landfill to reduce the costs associated with local homeowners interested in demolishing or gutting their homes.
6. With the nearest assisted living home located in Lakewood, consider encouraging the development of an assisted living home in Wabeno.



# Chapter 4

## Utilities and Community Facilities

This section describes the existing conditions and issues relative to utilities and community facilities available to the Town of Wabeno, including sewage disposal, water supply, power supply, and telecommunication facilities and services. It also describes existing conditions with regard to surface water management.

### Issues

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- A lot of housing improvement value exists around Trump Lake. Currently it is very difficult to suppress fires around Trump Lake, especially when the lake is frozen. Establishing dry hydrants all the way around the lake at similar intervals to fire hydrants in downtown Wabeno could reduce homeowner's insurance costs by improving fire suppression capabilities.
- There are a number of current and former industrial sites in Wabeno that could be re-used as a commercially developed solar array to generate electricity. 100-year floodplains may limit buildings but do not limit solar arrays. Under Wisconsin law, a solar array in 2020 pays about \$1,600 annually per megawatt of electricity generated to both the county and town where an array is located. One megawatt of a solar array may need about 13 acres of land.

### Related Plans and Studies

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#### **Forest County All Hazard Mitigation Plan**

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

## Utilities

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### Water and Wastewater Facilities

The Town of Wabeno has a public water supply system and sanitary sewer service that cover downtown Wabeno. The Tribe maintains a public water supply and sanitary sewer service in part of Carter. The remainder of town relies on individual private wells and private on-site septic systems.

Both municipal wells serving the downtown have wellhead protection ordinances to protect the recharge areas from pollution.

Wabeno operates two wells. Well #1 was constructed in 1971 and has a capacity of 349 gallons per minute. Well #2 was constructed in 1993 and has a capacity of 530 gallons per minute.

The primary water distribution system is comprised of 8” and 6” cast iron pipe.

The existing wastewater treatment facility is a system of 2 aerated ponds or lagoons that went into operation in 1972, and was designed to serve a population of about 800 people. There are about 450 people (Census 2000) living in houses connected to the system. The treatment facility discharges treated effluent to the groundwater of the North Branch Oconto River drainage basin through absorption lagoons.

### Storm Sewers

The majority of storm sewer system was constructed in 1972. Catch basins on the system are old and in need of upgrade.

### Electrical Utilities and Natural Gas

Electrical service is provided by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation. Liquid petroleum (LP gas) is available for home and business delivery from several vendors. Natural gas service is available throughout Town.

### Telecommunication Facilities and Services

Telephone and low speed internet are provided by CenturyLink.

Cable communications (TV, high speed internet, and telephone) are provided by Astrea.

Buried fiber optic lines exist along STH 32 through downtown Wabeno.

Satellite internet service is provided by Skycasters, HughesNet, and Viasat Inc.

The whole Town has cellular phone coverage from AT&T, Cellcom, and Verizon. Wooded terrain may decrease cellular availability the farther you get from a state or county highway in Wabeno.

In 2019, the Town financially partnered with the County to establish 17 towers to provide fixed-wireless broadband service to wide stretches of the County. The technology offers high-speed internet access to homes and businesses within a line of sight of the tower, often several miles from each tower. In 2020, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin awarded a Broadband Expansion grant for \$939,200 to Forest County to help make this project a reality. The goal is for a private company to operate the subscription system.

## Solid Waste Management

The Town of Wabeno operates the Recycling Center, located on Soper St, for all households in the community to bring their garbage and recycling. The Town contracts with a waste and recycling hauler to collect what is dropped-off for disposal. The Recycling Center is also a residential drop-off spot for leaves and brush.

## Community Facilities

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Community facilities include an array of services and facilities associated with schools, libraries, public protection, and health care. This section describes the existing community facilities and services located in or used by the Town of Wabeno.

### Town Government Facilities

The town hall, town garage, and fire department are located next to each other in downtown Wabeno. There is a meeting room in the town hall that is available for Town residents to use and includes a kitchen and restrooms.

Three cemeteries and a winter mausoleum are located north of downtown: a Catholic cemetery, a Lutheran cemetery, and Forest Hill Cemetery (maintained by the Town) on Cemetery Road, and Cemetery Lane. Lakeview Cemetery, which is maintained by the Town, is on the south side of Elliot Road in Carter.

### Schools

The Town of Wabeno is served by the Wabeno School District for elementary and secondary school resources. Wabeno High School is on North Branch Street in downtown. Wabeno Elementary School is on Mill Lane, just north of downtown.

The Wabeno School District owns and maintains the school forest listed below. Contact the Wabeno School District for rules of use on school forest lands.

- Wabeno School Forest, 40 acres, SE1/4 SW1/4, S16 T34N R15E.

**Nicolet College** – Nicolet Area Technical College (also Nicolet College) is a public 2-year technical college whose main campus is in Rhinelander.

### Libraries

Wabeno Public Library is located on the west end of downtown Wabeno.

### Child Care

The Wabeno area has 3 regulated child care providers:

- 1 public school (Little Logrollers Daycare);
- 1 licensed group (Wabeno Head Start); and
- 1 certified family (Cynthia Miller, Carter).

## **Emergency Services**

Police protection in the Town of Wabeno is provided by the Forest County Sheriff's Department.

The Wisconsin State Patrol, located in Wausau, has statewide jurisdiction on all public roads but operates mainly on State and U.S. highways as a matter of general practice to enforce traffic and criminal laws, and help motorists in need. They also help local law enforcement by reconstructing traffic accidents; inspecting trucks, school buses, and ambulances; and helping local agencies with natural disasters and civil disturbances.

The Wabeno Volunteer Fire Department station, next to the Town Hall in downtown Wabeno, cooperates with the Forest Service and the DNR to cover the Town for fire service. All land north of CTH C is cooperatively covered with the Forest Service, and all land south of CTH C is cooperatively covered with the DNR. All tribal lands are covered by these cooperative agreements for fire service too. Downtown Wabeno in the water district currently holds an ISO rating of 6 for fire response, with the rest of town having an ISO rating of 9. An ISO rating of 1 represents the best protection and 10 represents an essentially unprotected community. Dry hydrants exist in various rural areas of the Town.

Rescue service is contracted with the Laona Rescue, which also covers Blackwell, Freedom, and tribal lands in Blackwell and Wabeno. Laona Rescue has offices and vehicles in downtown Wabeno.

The Forest County Sheriff's Office Communications Division provides 911 Dispatch for all Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies in Forest County. Since the Town of Wabeno is on the border with Oconto County, some cellular 911 calls may jump to Oconto County's Sheriff Office.

## **Medical Services**

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

NorthLakes Community Clinic–Lakewood provides family practice, chiropractic, dental and behavioral health services.

Bellin Health Clinic is a family practice clinic in Lakewood.

Orthopedic and Spine Therapies is also located in Lakewood.

The Ascension Health Clinic in Crandon is affiliated with Saint Mary's Hospital in Rhinelander.

The Potawatomi Health & Wellness Center in Stone Lake (Town of Lincoln) is open to the public and offers medical, dental and therapy services.

## **Other Governmental Facilities**

The local road system is the most significant public facility maintained by the Town and is covered in the Transportation Chapter.

There is a U.S. Post Office across the highway from the Wabeno Public Library in downtown.

Potawatomi Bingo Northern Lights Casino is located along STH 32 in Carter. Bingo, slots, a restaurant, convenience store & gas station, and a hotel are all part of this facility. The Tribe maintains this facility.

## Parks and Recreation

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### Local Parks, Trails, and Open Space

The Town of Wabeno maintains the following parks **in bold**:

All Town roads are open to ATV/UTV use. Downtown Wabeno has a Nicolet State Trail trailhead for parking and loading/unloading ATV/UTVs.

**Wabeno Legion Park** is a 4-acre park located in downtown with tennis courts, 2 pavilions, an island, playground, restrooms, basketball court, and a barrier free boardwalk and nature trail.

**Firefighter's Grounds** – located in downtown has a variety of expo buildings, restrooms, informal camping area, and accessible nature trail.

**Trump Lake Park** – located on Trump Lake, has a boat launch, picnic area, and restrooms.

**Trump Lake Beach** – located on Trump Lake is separate from Trump Lake Park, has a swimming beach, restrooms, and picnic area.

**Veterans Memorial Park** is about a 10-acre park located north of downtown on Park Avenue. A parking lot leads to war memorials, and an accessible loop nature trail.

Blackwell Park on CTH H is maintained by the Tribe.

Wabeno Elementary School in downtown Wabeno has a playground that is used by the whole community during non-school hours.

Wabeno High School, also located in downtown, has a baseball/softball field, football field, restrooms, shelter, ice skating area, and sledding hill.

Wabeno School Forest is a 40-acre parcel southeast of downtown used by high school classes for environmental education.

The Nicolet State Trail allows ATVs, walking, and bicycling that generally follows STH 32 on an abandoned railroad bed through downtown, and connects downtown to the Wabeno School Forest, about 1 mile southeast of downtown, and farther south to Carter.

Nicolet National Forest has several boat landings within Wabeno, along with the following trail:

- Knowles Creek Interpretive Trail—This is a 1/3-mile interpretive trail that follows the north shore of North Creek impoundment.

In addition to designated trails, all logging roads and undesignated/unmarked trails within the Nicolet National Forest are open to non-motorized public use unless otherwise posted.

## **Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives, & Policies**

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**Goal – Provide sufficient public services (roads, police, fire & rescue, and garbage & recycling) to meet existing and future market demand for agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses.**

### **Objective:**

1. Maintain the current provision of community services.
2. Consider the potential impacts of development proposals on groundwater quality and quantity.
3. Explore opportunities to develop integrated, multi-use trail systems and recreational facilities.
4. Educate residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems and the benefits of recycling.
5. Share equipment and services across Town boundaries, where possible.
6. Explore efficient and affordable method to install solar panels.

### **Policies:**

1. Continue maintaining the Town's roads. See the Transportation Chapter for more details.
2. Continue cooperating with Forest County Sheriff's Office to provide law enforcement services.
3. Continue cooperating with Laona Rescue to provide those services for Town residents.
4. Continue contracting to provide garbage and recycling services to Town residents.
5. Work with Friends of Wabeno, Focus on Energy, Wabeno School District, and Wisconsin Public Service to develop greater use of renewable energy.
6. Encourage development of privately built solar arrays.
7. Consider installing dry hydrants at appropriate locations around Trump Lake to provide 24/7/365 access to non-frozen water in Trump Lake for firefighting purposes.

# Chapter 5

## Transportation

The transportation system in a community consists of a variety of roads; some are owned and maintained by local officials, others are part of the County or State road systems. In addition to roads, the transportation system consists of facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, railroads, airports, and in more urban areas, public transit. This section describes the transportation system in the Town of Wabeno and related improvements or issues affecting the system.

### Related Plans and Studies

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#### **Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway's Corridor Management Plan (CMP)**

The Byway's CMP is a written document authored by the local government sponsor that serves as the coordinating plan by which the scenic, historical, recreational, cultural, archeological and natural qualities on a designated byway are maintained and promoted.

The Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway runs through the Town of Wabeno. See the Byway on **Map 4**.

#### **Wabeno Safe Routes to School Plan, 2020**

In 2019 and 2020 the Town and School District created this plan to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities that encourage healthier lifestyles. Programs can be established to educate students, parents, and the community on the benefits of walking and bicycling to school and provide tips to do so safely.

The Wabeno SRTS Plan has policy and construction recommendations to improve conditions for walking and biking to school.

#### **Forest County Potawatomi Community Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2021**

The Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC) is currently in the process of developing this plan (2020-2021). The plan is intended to help the FCPC improve walking and bicycling within and between the FCPC developments at Stone Lake (Crandon area), Blackwell, and Carter.

The FCPC Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan includes the following:

1. **An inventory of bicycling conditions and sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian crashes with vehicles, and bicycle and pedestrian use areas.** Researching where crashes occurred will show where some problem areas exist. Other problem locations will be found through analysis of the bicycling conditions on each major road.
2. **Locations of potential bicycle routes and recommendations for roadway improvements.** Maps will show where people are riding and where they plan to ride when it is safer to do so. Recommendations may include bicycle lanes in high traffic areas, and possibly no change along roads used more by bicyclists than vehicles (e.g. low volume roads).

3. **Recommend solutions.** The plan will include a combination of *education, encouragement, engineering, and enforcement strategies* to increase walking and biking.

### **Regional Livability Plan, 2015**

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

- Modes of Transportation to Work – The region’s workforce is extremely dependent on the automobile. In 2012, over 80 percent of the region’s workforce drove alone to work on a daily basis. Another 10 percent carpooled, leaving less than 10 percent for the non-automobile methods such as walking, biking, and using transit. The average commute time in Forest County, was 21.7 minutes.
- Age of Drivers in the Region – The region is seeing a change in the number of licensed drivers by age groups. Between 2004 and 2013, the region saw a 20 percent decrease in the number of drivers age 17 and age 19. During the same years, the region also had a 20 percent increase in drivers over age 65. These changes mean communities will have a need for multimodal options for the younger ages and options to increase safety as drivers age.
- Transportation Maintenance Cost – It is expensive to maintain the transportation infrastructure in the region. The current reliance on fuel tax and registration fees is inadequate, unstable, and may soon be outmoded. The inability to fund improvements and maintenance on transportation infrastructure will impact the ability to transport goods and provide safe, reliable, and efficient roads.

### **Connections 2030**

Connections 2030 is the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s (WisDOT) long-range transportation plan for the state. Adopted in 2009, the plan addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit.

### **Locally Developed, Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan**

This five-year plan analyzes service gaps and needs in public transit and human services transportation then proposes strategies to address the gaps and needs.

### **Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

This 2018 plan is a region-wide effort to improve bicycling and walking across communities within North Central Wisconsin. The plan assesses existing conditions related to bicycling and walking, identifies other potential trail and route user groups, identifies routes, and describes policies and programs to assist local governments in improving bicycling and walking to promote connectivity between communities and destinations throughout North Central Wisconsin.

### **State Trails Network Plan**

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

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The road system in the Town of Wabeno plays a key role in development by providing both access to land and serving to move people and goods through the area. The interrelationships between land use and the road system makes it necessary for the development of each to be balanced with the other. Types and intensities of land uses have a direct relationship to the traffic on roadways that serve those land uses. Intensely developed land often generates high volumes of traffic. If this traffic is not planned for, safety can be seriously impaired for both local and through traffic flows. See **Map 4**.

The Town of Wabeno road network consists of roughly 10 miles of State highway, 18 miles of County highway, 73 miles of Town roads, and 10 miles of Tribal roads. The Town utilizes the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) to maintain an inventory of Town roads and monitor conditions and improvements of its roads. This system enables the Town to budget and keep track of roads that are in need of repair.

The Wisconsin Legislature established the Rustic Roads program in 1973 to help citizens and local units of government preserve what remains of Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled country roads.

A loop of roads in Wabeno have been designated by the State as Rustic Road 118 (see **Figure 8**).

**Figure 8: Rustic Road 118**



Jurisdiction	Functional Classification			Totals
	Arterial	Collector	Local	
State	9.51	0.65	0	10.16
County	0	17.77	0	17.77
Town	0	0	72.91	72.91
Tribal	0	0	10.16	10.16
<b>TOTALS</b>	9.51	18.42	83.07	111.00

Source: WisDOT & NCWRPC.

**Map 4** shows how all the state trunk highways (STHs), county trunk highways (CTHs), Town roads, and Tribal roads make up a connected street network. The jurisdictional breakdown is shown in **Table 17**.

Roadway weight restrictions go into effect during the springtime freezing and thawing period, typically from early March until the second week in May. Only STH 32 does not have springtime weight restrictions which affects the types of truck traffic that are allowed during spring thaw.

Town roads are an important component of the countywide transportation system because they serve local development, as well as the forestry areas. A particular issue of concern with Town roads is that of seasonal weight limits. In Wabeno, a 5-ton limit applies to all Town roads during seasonal break-up.

WisDOT measures traffic counts on a limited number of local and County roads classified as collectors. Traffic counts are reported as *annual average daily traffic* (AADT).

Traffic leaving downtown to the west decreased by 25% from 3,900 AADT in 2009 to 2,900 AADT in 2018. Between downtown and Carter, traffic increased by 33% from 3,600 AADT in 2009 to 4,800 AADT in 2015. The most recent AADT Traffic Counts are displayed on **Map 4**.

### **Road Classification**

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

The current functional classification system used in Wisconsin consists of five classifications that are divided into urban and rural categories. Functional classifications are used to determine eligibility for federal aid. For purposes of functional classification, federal regulations define urban as places of 5,000 or greater population, so the rural classifications apply throughout the Town. **Table 18** summarizes the rural functional classification system.

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

Source: WisDOT

## Road Maintenance

The Town of Wabeno 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.

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

**Table 19** shows a summary of Town road pavement conditions in the Town of Wabeno. Town roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. The roads that display a surface rating of “good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions.

Surface Condition Rating	Miles
Very Poor	0.80
Poor	1.02
Fair	5.32
Good	42.42
Very Good	5.84
Excellent	17.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.91</b>

Source: WisDOT 2019

## Trucking

State Highway 32 is a designated long truck route and State Highway 52 is a restricted truck route, as identified by WisDOT. Designated long truck routes permit tractor-semitrailer combinations of up to 75 feet in overall length. Restricted truck routes permit the operation of 53-foot semitrailers.

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

A number of private trucking companies are available in Crandon and Rhinelander.

## Transit and Transportation Facilities for the Disabled

The Forest County Commission on Aging coordinates driver-escort service to residents of Forest County, which includes Wabeno. Escort drivers provide transportation to elderly and disabled residents of Forest County that qualify as a priority trip purpose. Travel includes both in and out of county travel, and generous volunteers have driven any day or time necessary.

Additionally, the Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC) offers a low-cost public transit System, Monday-Thursday, which provides on-demand and fixed transit routes for residents requiring transportation to the surrounding communities of Laona, Wabeno, and Crandon for work, shopping, errands, or medical appointments. This service is not limited to FCPC members only, nor to elders only. The Forest County Potawatomi Community also provides transportation services specifically for Forest County Potawatomi Community elders. This service is available Monday-Thursday and includes transportation to medical appointments within the service area.

Intercity bus service is not available within Forest County or any surrounding counties.

## Land Use and Transportation

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Land use and transportation have a reciprocal relationship. Land use affects the demand for transportation to and from a given geographic area. Likewise, improved transportation facilities can affect land use decisions.

### Access Management

Forest County issues driveway permits and implements access restrictions on all properties fronting a County road. The *County Trunk Highway Access-Driveway Policy* addresses the requirements regarding culverts, access width, slope, visibility and spacing. The policy is available through the Forest County Highway Department.

The Town of Wabeno issues driveway permits on all properties fronting a Town road.

## Other Transportation Modes

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### Air Transportation

The Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport (RHI) in Rhinelander is the closest passenger airport to Lincoln. RHI is an air carrier / air cargo airport, which is designed to accommodate virtually all aircraft. Airports in this category are usually referenced by the type of air carrier service provided—RHI is a short haul air carrier airport. This airport serves scheduled, nonstop, airline markets and routes of less than 500 miles. Short haul air carriers typically use aircraft weighing less than 60,000 pounds, and use primary runways with a length between 6,500 to 7,800 feet.

The Steve Conway Municipal Airport (Y55) in Nashville is a basic utility (BU-A) airport that is designed to accommodate aircraft of less than 6,000 pounds gross weight, with approach speeds below 91 knots and wingspans of less than 49 feet. Such aircraft are typically single-engine piston.

### Bicycling and Walking

All roads in Forest County are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel, but some may not be safe to do so. Sidewalks create the primary pedestrian network. Sidewalks exist in downtown Wabeno. Issues of most concern to pedestrians are missing sidewalk sections, broken or uneven sections, and intersections without curb ramps. Roads that do not have sidewalks may not provide much gravel shoulder to walk on outside of the traffic lanes.

Wabeno contains portions of the **Nicolet State Trail** that generally parallels STH 32. See **Map 4**. The entire trail is open to walking and bicycling, though bicycling is not recommended. The trail may be rough or soft in many sections and walkers and bikers must share the trail with motorized vehicles.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest has one non-motorized trail in Wabeno:

- Knowles Creek Interpretive Trail—This is a 1/3-mile interpretive trail that follows the north shore of North Creek impoundment. See **Map 5**.

In addition to designated trails, all logging roads and undesignated/unmarked trails within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest are open to non-motorized public use unless otherwise posted.

### Recreational Vehicles

ATVs are allowed on all downtown roads 1-block off of the Nicolet State Trail, which also allows ATVs. In winter, the Nicolet Trails allows snowmobiles. Many of the rural town roads east of downtown allow ATVs.

### Railroads

There is no local access to rail service in Wabeno. Shipments needing rail service would have to be trucked to nearby cities with rail access such as Rhinelander, Tomahawk or Wausau.

## **Water Transportation**

There are five boat landing within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Wabeno that are generally used for recreational enjoyment. No water trails have been designated at this time. No harbors or ports exist within Forest County.

## **Transportation Programs**

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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 (WisDOT) 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 Wabeno include:

1. General Transportation Aids
2. Flood Damage Aids
3. Town Road Improvement Program
4. Town Road Improvement Program – Discretionary
5. Local Bridge Improvement Assistance
6. Local Transportation Enhancements
7. Traffic Signing & Marking Enhancement Grant
8. Transportation Economic Assistance Grant
9. Rustic Roads

More information on these programs can be obtained by contacting the WisDOT region office in Rhinelander or on WisDOT's website by searching for: "Local government assistance programs."

## Transportation Goals, Objectives, & Policies

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**Goal – Maintain a safe and efficient Town road system.**

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain road capacity for all the traffic and vehicle types expected on Town roads.
2. Provide for annual maintenance of the Town's roads.
3. Avoid allowing land uses that generate heavy truck traffic on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
4. Improve downtown aesthetics while maintaining efficient travel for all motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation.

**Policies:**

1. Consider connecting adjacent properties with road connections when reviewing development plans and proposals to provide better local access.
2. Support snowmobile and ATV trails within the Town by continuing to provide access to local businesses.
3. When farms or other employers become large enough to generate substantial heavy vehicle traffic, then consider using WisDOT's Transportation Economic Assistance program to help pay for road upgrades.
4. Use the Town Driveway Ordinance to address blind spots, increase safety, and to space out appropriate driveways to preserve road capacity.
5. Continue creating and implementing a 5-year Town road improvement plan.
6. Promote WisDOT's Tourist Oriented Directional Sign (TODS) Program to provide signs on state highways for qualifying tourist-related businesses, services, or activities that are not on state highways.
7. Maintain and upgrade Town roads so they continue to accommodate emergency vehicles, school buses, and snowplows.
8. When STH 32 in downtown Wabeno is reconstructed, then consider:
  - a. Installing energy efficient, decorative, street lighting that does not increase sky-glow;
  - b. Burying electrical lines; and
  - c. Place several empty conduits with pull tape in each conduit under the sidewalk for future uses.
9. Finish sidewalk on north side of N Branch Street (STH 32) from CTH H, west to existing sidewalk.

# 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.

For Wabeno and other communities in Forest County, much of the economic base is centered around areas of forestry and forest-related businesses. The forested nature of the Town, along with its water resources, also lends itself to tourism and other natural resource-based businesses. The abundance of natural resources is also attractive for seasonal/recreational homes and serves as a retirement area. 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.

Data in this chapter comes from a variety of sources, including Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), which uses the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) as its source data; directly from the QCEW; the ACS; and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) through the U.S. Census Bureau's "On the Map" application.

### Related Plans and Studies

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#### **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2019**

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

#### **Regional Livability Plan (RLP), 2015**

Economic Development is one of four elements included in the RLP, adopted by the NCWRPC in 2015. The Economic Development Assessment Report within the RLP observes in detail the economic health of the ten-county region and identifies trends and issues facing the local economy. The RLP addresses three issues: the disparity between the available labor force and employment, the need for a living wage, and broadband access. The four economic development goals of this plan are as follows:



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

### **ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2018**

This report, developed in part by Northwoods United Way in Rhinelander, reports that in addition to the 17 percent of households in Forest County that are below the federal poverty level, an additional 26 percent of households still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or are “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 from these jobs. In 2016, of the 435 households in Wabeno, 38 percent meet the criteria for “ALICE” and/or the federal poverty level.

### **Forest County Comprehensive Plan, 2011**

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

## **Town of Wabeno Economic Environment**

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

### **Labor Force Analysis**

#### **Labor Force**

Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. Overall, the Town of Wabeno labor force has decreased from 905 in 2000 to 789 in 2018. That represents a decrease of 17.8 percent, slightly higher than the decrease of 9.3 percent in Forest County and in contrast to the increase of 12.8 percent in Wisconsin. In 2000, 521 members of the Town’s labor force were employed and that number decreased 34.3 percent to 342 employed members in 2018, as shown in **Table 20**. In comparison, Forest County saw employment decrease by 8.4 percent during the same time period, while Wisconsin saw employment increase by 7.5 percent.

## Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and total persons employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not considered to be part of the labor force. In 2000, the Town of Wabeno had an unemployment rate of 8.4 percent. Unemployment increased sharply to 17.1 percent in 2010, likely due to the Great Recession. However, it is lower now at 5.3 percent than in 2000 or 2010.

## 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 simply are not looking for work. In 2000, 62.9 percent of the population over the age of 16 in Wabeno was in the labor force. By 2018, that percentage decreased to 45.8 percent. The state participation rate was 66.7 percent, and the Forest County participation rate was 53.7 percent. The significant decrease in participation rate in Wabeno is likely due to the substantial increase in median age during this time period and the resultant number of retirees.

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>% Change 2000-2018</b>
<b>Population 16 years and over</b>	905	803	789	-12.8%
<b>Labor Force</b>	569	444	361	-36.6%
<b>Employed</b>	521	368	342	-34.3%
<b>Unemployed</b>	48	76	19	-60.4%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	8.4%	17.1%	5.3%	-36.9%
<b>Participation Rate</b>	62.9%	55.3%	45.8%	-27.2%

Source: American Community Survey 5- Year Estimates

## Economic Sectors

**Table 21** details the occupation of the Town’s employed workers. The overall number of workers in the Town of Wabeno decreased substantially from 2000 to 2018, as did the respective economic sectors. There were 342 residents working in 2018, down 179 total working residents since 2000. Overall, employment decreased by 34.4 percent during this time, with the Sales and Office occupational sector experiencing least amount of decrease, at a rate of 16.0 percent during this time. The most substantial decrease was seen in the Natural Resources, Construction and Maintenance occupations at 53.3 percent decrease. Most Wabeno residents were employed in either Service positions or Production, Transportation and Material Moving positions, with Management, Professional and Related positions following close behind.

**Table 21: Town of Wabeno Occupation of Employed Workers**

	2000*	2010	2018	% Change 2000-2018
Management, Professional and Related	111	69	76	-31.5%
Service	142	178	78	-45.1%
Sales and Office	81	17	68	-16.0%
Natural Resources, Construction and Maintenance	90	24	42	-53.3%
Production, Transportation and Material Moving	97	80	78	-19.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>-34.4%</b>

\*Categories restructured to align with 2010, 2018 data  
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 22: Town of Wabeno Employment by Industry Sector**

	2000	2010	2018	% Change 2000-2018
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Mining	32	5	16	-50.0%
Construction	42	16	9	-78.6%
Manufacturing	63	47	55	-12.7%
Wholesale Trade	6	6	0	-100.0%
Retail Trade	40	32	30	-25.0%
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	36	11	32	-11.1%
Information	8	0	0	-100.0%
Finance, Real Estate, & Leasing	5	3	20	+300.0%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, & Waste Management	14	9	19	+35.7%
Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance	95	75	67	-29.5%
Arts, Entertainment, Accommodation, & Food Services	139	136	56	-59.7%
Other Services	27	11	25	-7.4%
Public Administration	14	17	13	-7.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>-34.4%</b>

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

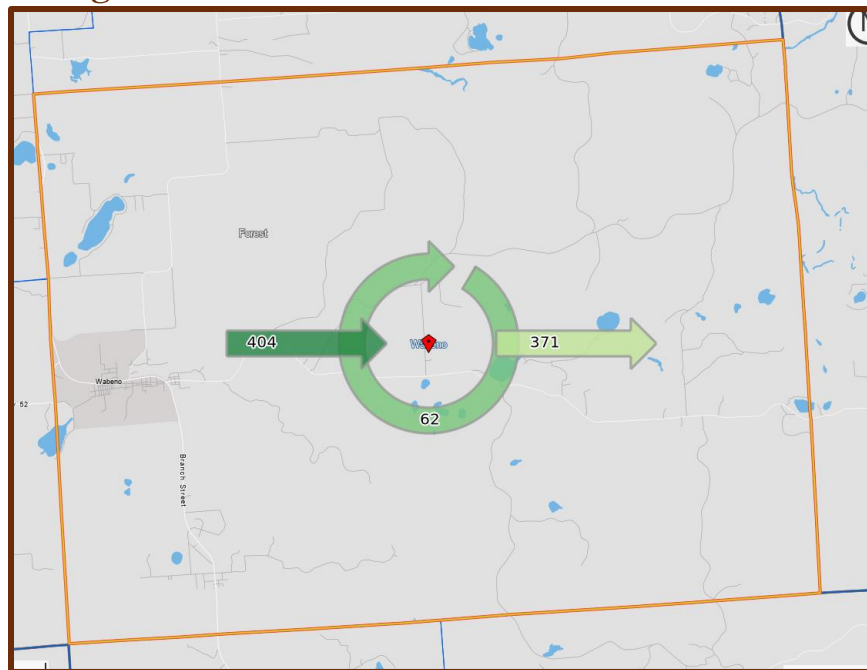
**Table 22** outlines employment in the Town of Wabeno by industry sector. In 2018, the largest sectors in the Town were Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance; Arts, Entertainment, Accommodation, and Food Services; and Manufacturing. These three sectors accounted for about 52 percent of total employment among Town residents. Between 2000 and 2018, the Finance, Real Estate and Leasing sector experienced the fastest rate of increase in employment, by more than tripling in

employment with an increase of 300 percent. Most sectors experienced a decline in employment between 2000 and 2018, which was attributable to the overall decrease in the number overall in the labor force during this time period.

### Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. It should be noted that the numbers in **Tables 21 and 22** are all based on the workers residing in the Town and what they do for employment not where they are actually employed. Instead, **Figure 9** shows how many people commute into the Town for work, how many people remain in the Town for work, and how many residents leave the Town for work. As of 2017, there were 466 jobs located within the Town of Wabeno. Of these 466 jobs, 404 of them were occupied by people who live outside of the Town's boundaries. It is also worth noting that 371 residents leave the Town's boundaries for work, while 62 residents remain within the Town for work.

**Figure 9: 2017 Town of Wabeno Inflow/Outflow**



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

### Assessment of Local Conditions

Employers within the Town include Wabeno Elementary School, Wabeno High School, and the Potawatomi Carter Casino Hotel. There is also an assortment of restaurants, retail/service businesses, and industrial/manufacturing businesses. The Potawatomi Carter Casino Hotel is a gaming facility with two restaurants, conference space and live entertainment. The facility also includes a hotel with 98 rooms and RV parking spaces.

Based on the silvicultural nature of the community, the Town supports the development of forestry and forest-related business. The forested nature of the Town, along with its water resources, also lends itself to tourism and recreation based industries, which the Town is in favor of as well. Beyond that, the Town has no specific preference for categories or types of business desired.

Strengths to attracting or retaining business include access to STH 32 and a forestry recreational and natural resource base. Weakness in attracting or retaining businesses includes an aging workforce and a declining population.

## **Forest County Economic Environment**

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In looking at the prospects for economic development in a local community it is best to place that community in a larger context. By reviewing the changes in economic development in Forest County one can assess the prospects for economic development in the Town of Wabeno. Therefore, this section will look at the economic activity within Forest County.

Crops and Animal Production (NAICS 11), which includes Forestry, is the most significant driver of Forest County's economy. This industry had a location quotient of 2.98 in 2013. The location quotient model compares County employment to the National employment by industry. If a location quotient is greater than 1.00, then it is an exporting sector providing goods and services to consumers both inside and outside of the County. If the location quotient is below 1.00, then the industry is only providing goods and services to its own County.

Specifically, Forestry is the most significant driver of Forest County's economy. Forestry employed 125 people and had a location quotient of 70.77 in 2013. Other Wood Product Manufacturing employed an additional 113 people and had a location quotient of 21.94.

Global demand for wood and wood products continues to support forestry employment in Forest County. The presence of these forests has also led to a demand for a mix of both forest products and recreational uses. Managed properly, the forest resource can support both outdoor recreational pursuits and the continued production of high value timber. Greater access to forests can give rise to an emotional attachment between the visitor and the forest that can be as strong a conservation tool as regulations.

### **Economic Sectors**

Overall in 2018, there were 3,704 persons employed in Forest County. That is a decrease of about 8.4 percent since 2000. **Table 23** displays employment by industry sector among Forest County residents for the years 2000, 2010, and 2018. Between 2000 and 2018, only four sectors within Forest County increased in total employment; Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing; Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Management Services; Education, Health, and Social Services; and Other Services sectors. The Education, Health, and Social Services sector employs the most Forest county residents with 783 residents; followed by the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services sector with 477 Forest County residents employed.

**Table 23: Forest County Employment by Sector**

Industry Sector	2000	2010	2018	% Change 2000-2018
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Mining	303	251	207	-31.7%
Construction	303	309	269	-11.2%
Manufacturing	669	405	482	-28.0%
Wholesale Trade	57	50	39	-31.6%
Retail Trade	402	420	382	-5.0%
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	256	209	212	-17.2%
Information	49	23	48	-2.0%
Finance, Real Estate, & Leasing	119	158	121	+1.7%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, & Waste Management	136	166	219	+61.0%
Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance	755	811	783	+3.7%
Arts, Entertainment, Accommodation, & Food Services	527	653	477	-9.5%
Other Services	300	302	291	-3.0%
Public Administration	168	122	174	+3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,044</b>	<b>3,879</b>	<b>3,704</b>	<b>-8.4%</b>

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Labor Force Analysis

Overall, Forest County’s labor force has decreased from 4,381 in 2000 to 3,972 in 2018, which represents a decrease of about 9 percent, which is less than the State’s growth rate of 6 percent. **Table 24** displays labor force trends in Forest County between 2000 and 2018. The labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, that are employed or searching for employment. Persons over sixteen who are students, homemakers, retired, institutionalized, or unable/willing to seek employment are not considered part of the labor force. In 2000, 4,044 Forest County residents were employed, with the number of employed residents in Forest County dropping to 3,704 in 2018, an 8.4 percent decrease.

**Table 24: Forest County Labor Force**

	2000	2010	2018	% Change 2000-2018
Population 16 years and over	7,815	7,777	7,403	-5.3%
Labor Force	4,381	4,257	3,972	-9.3%
Employed	4,044	3,879	3,704	-8.4%
Unemployed	335	378	268	-20.0%
Unemployment Rate	4.3%	4.9%	3.6%	-16.3%
Participation Rate	56.1%	54.7%	53.7%	-4.3%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Forecasts

Employment forecasts are difficult to come by and not available at the town level. However, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WisDWD) prepares workforce projections by industry for its multi-county service regions. The current projections for the North Central Workforce Development cover Forest County and include eight other counties. These projections show increases in all employment sectors except for Manufacturing which is projected to decline by 1.3 percent.

The other sectors are projected to increase within a range from 0.3% (Information) to 28.2% (Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers). Residents of both the Town of Wabeno and Forest County travel throughout the North Central Workforce Development Region.

## Tourism

Tourism is a major component in Forest County's economy as thousands of visitors travel to the area to take advantage of the County's diversity of recreational resources such as public forest access, trails, and the many lakes within the County. According to annual estimates prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, travelers to Forest County spent \$14.4 million in 2019, up 0.72 percent from 2018. This level of expenditures is estimated to directly and indirectly support 226 full-time equivalent jobs and provide over 3.5 million dollars of resident income.

## Economic Development Programs

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An array of organizations at the county, regional and state level offer a variety of programs to assist with economic development, many of which are listed below.

### Local

#### Friends of Wabeno

The Friends of Wabeno seek to engage in community development activities and improve the quality of life for all residents of Wabeno and neighboring communities. The organization meets monthly, facilitates community activities and provides beautification amenities in the form of signage, decorations and interpretive displays.

#### Wabeno Chamber of Commerce

The Wabeno Chamber of Commerce promotes area businesses, tourism and creates year-round family-oriented activities for residents and visitors.

#### Forest County Economic Development Partnership

The Forest County Economic Development Partnership (FCEDP) aims to increase economic development by supporting small businesses, facilitating community projects, and attracting new industries to the area all while maintaining Forest County's natural resources, heritage, and cultural traditions. FCEDP provides assistance in seeking grant and loan programs through WHEDA's Small Business Guarantee Loan, and numerous Small Business Administration loans. FCEDP also offers small business micro-loans up to \$10,000 and a larger revolving loan fund.

## Regional

### **North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation**

The North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) manages a revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing. The fund is targeted to businesses in the ten-county region.

## 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. These include:

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

### **Wisconsin Small Cities Program**

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

### **Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**

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

### **Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)**

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



### **Wisconsin Fast Forward**

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

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

### **Tax Credits for Historic Building Rehabilitation**

Commercial property owners who invest in the preservation of their buildings may be eligible for state and federal tax credits. Approved costs of 20% for state tax credits and another 20% for federal tax credits may be available for up to a total of 40% eligible tax credits.

Homeowners who invest in the preservation of their houses may be eligible for Wisconsin income tax credits of 25% of approved costs.

## **Federal**

### **U.S. Dept. of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties**

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program encourages private sector investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings. It creates jobs and is one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs. It has leveraged over \$102.64 billion in private investment to preserve 45,383 historic properties since 1976. The National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service administer the program in partnership with State Historic Preservation Office.

A 20% income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings that are determined by the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, to be “certified historic structures.”

A historic preservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement, typically in the form of a deed, that permanently protects an historic property. Through the easement, a property owner places restrictions on the development of or changes to the historic property, then transfers these restrictions to a preservation or conservation organization. A historic property owner who donates an easement may be eligible for tax benefits, such as a Federal income tax deduction. Easement rules are complex, so property owners interested in the potential tax benefits of an easement donation should consult with their accountant or tax attorney.

## **Economic Development Goals, Objectives, & Policies**

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**Goal – Promote expansion of the recreation, retail, and forest products economic base.**

**Objective:**

1. Encourage businesses that are compatible with a rural setting.
2. Promote healthy and protected forest ecosystems to serve a multitude of ecological roles that include habitat for animal and plant species, and water quality protection.
3. Promote the expansion of current forest based industries and business, and the possibility of recruiting new forest based industries and businesses.
4. Promote the expansion of retail in the Town.
5. Promote local training in the building trades.

**Policies:**

1. Work in partnership with the Wisconsin DNR to promote the Good Neighbor Authority in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest to provide forest products to stimulate the local economy.
2. Work with County and Tribal entities to promote economic development throughout the Town and County.
3. Accommodate home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or otherwise negatively impact the surrounding areas.
4. Explore development of a public market style store that sells home-based business products and may have a café element to it.
5. Direct commercial and industrial development to locate adjacent to county or state highways in areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
6. Explore development of a business park.
7. Participate on Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Resource Advisory Committees.

8. Promote WisDOT's Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) Program to provide signs on state highways for qualifying tourist-related businesses, services or activities that are not on state highways, but are within five miles of a state highway.
9. Encourage training to exist in Wabeno for getting into the building trades, possibly in partnership with the Wabeno School District.
10. Consider a town ordinance to restrict residential occupancy on the first floor in the downtown business district to increase small business stock in the downtown area. Current residential uses would be grandfathered in but once the property is sold, first floors in downtown district will be commercial.

# Chapter 7

## Land Use

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

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

### Related Plans and Studies

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#### **Regional Livability Plan, 2015**

Land use is one of the four elements included in the RLP, adopted by NCWRPC in 2015. The Land Use Assessment Report, a component of the plan, looks in detail at the land uses through the ten-county region and identifies issues and trends related to land use: housing density and farmland preservation. The two land use goals of the plan are as follows:

- Preserve and protect the Region's landscape, environmental resources and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.
- Manage and reduce vacant land and structures.

#### **Forest County Comprehensive Plan, 2011**

The Forest County Comprehensive Plan chapter on land use analyzes pattern of development, existing land use, and future land use. The plan sets the following land use goals:

- Encouragement of land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns.
- Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
- Provide adequate infrastructure & public services, and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future demand for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses

- Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.
- Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.

## Existing Land Use

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 (Map 5A & 5B)** was developed using air photos from a countywide flight in 2015, with updates by the Town Plan Commission in 2021.

Land use classifications (**Figure 10**) 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

Current land uses in the Town (see **Existing Land Use Map 5A & 5B**) are characterized mainly by large blocks of federal forestland, significant blocks of private and tribal forest, and agricultural lands. Residential and commercial development generally exists within downtown Wabeno and in Carter.

Existing land use classifications and acreage totals are presented in **Table 21**. The vast majority of land within the Town is *woodlands*. Most of the woodlands are part of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, Forest County Potawatomi tribal lands, and Managed Forest Law enrolled lands. *Water* and *agriculture* both cover about 1% each of the Town. The road network is the *transportation* category, which covers about 0.8% of the Town. All other land uses combined use less than 1% of the total land area in the Town of Wabeno.

<b>Land Use Classification</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agriculture	743	1.1%
Commercial	101	0.1%
Government/Institutional/Utility	40	0.0%
Industrial	99	0.1%
Open Lands	282	0.4%
Outdoor Recreation	96	0.1%
Residential	695	1.0%
Transportation	526	0.8%
Water	803	1.2%
Woodlands	65,923	95.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,310</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Source: NCWRPC GIS*

## Forested Lands – Not State or County Owned

The Managed Forest Law (MFL) program and the Forest Crop Law (FCL) program are landowner incentive programs from WDNR that encourage sustainable forestry on private woodland. In exchange for following sound forest management, the landowner pays reduced property taxes. See the programs section at the end of the Chapter 2 for more detail on this program.

As of January 2021, there were about 2,640 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program and 87 acres enrolled in the Forest Crop Law (FCL) in the Town of Wabeno.

## Land Supply

The Future Land Use map (**Map 6A & 6B**) illustrates the anticipated future pattern of land uses.

As shown by the existing land use inventory (**Map 5A & 5B, and Table 21**), the majority of the Town is forestland that is maintained as part of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, which cannot be taken out of forestry for development purposes. Much of the remaining undeveloped area is privately owned forestlands and tribal lands, with several hundred acres of agricultural and open lands.

Even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of Wabeno is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years for all use categories, which are described below in Land Demand.

## Land Demand

### Residential:

The overall Town resident demand for housing land in the Town of Wabeno results from a projected increase of 85 households (2010-2040) per **Table 4**. This does not account for seasonal home development.

**Table 22** shows projected residential land demand based on household projections for the Town and a half-acre average lot size. The Forest County Potawatomi have room in Carter to build single-family homes for Tribal members, but we cannot accurately predict the percentage of new households in the Town of Wabeno that would be attributed to Tribal growth. With about 112 vacant housing units that are not summer homes, there may be almost no need for new residential land if these vacant units are rehabilitated or occupied.

Although some of the development will occur on larger or smaller parcels, or on redeveloped parcels, all of this is more difficult to predict, and our projection becomes a middle-of-the-road scenario. Thus, an average of 10.6 acres of residential land is expected to be added in the Town every 5 years to accommodate anticipated household growth by the year 2040 in **Table 22**.

**Agricultural:**

In the Town of Wabeno, agricultural land use increased by about 15 acres between 2009 and 2015. In 2009 there were 727.5 acres of agriculture in the Town. NCWRPC GIS analysis now shows 743 acres of agriculture in the Town as of 2015. Open lands increased in the Town from 156 acres in 2009 to 337 acres in 2015. These 337 acres may once have been agricultural lands or were recently cleared forest for additional agriculture. Since about 15 acres of agricultural land was added between 2009 and 2015, then 15 acres of agricultural land is projected to be added in the Town every 5 years to accommodate anticipated growth or consolidation of farms through the year 2040 in **Table 22**.

**Commercial:**

Commercial and industrial development is subject to market forces and difficult to predict. In 1994 the casino and hotel opened in Carter. In 2020, a new convenience store and gas station opened in the out-lot of the casino to replace the c-store and gas station across the street. The old school ball field next to the Town Hall is projected to be sold by the School District over the next decade and possibly become 2 additional acres of commercial development. Between 2009 and 2015, about 10 commercial acres. Therefore, 10 commercial acres are projected for each 5-year increment through 2040 in **Table 22**.

**Industrial:**

Existing non-metallic mines (gravel pits) in Wabeno have a number of years remaining. Two new non-metallic mines were established since 2009 (T.34N.-R.15E. Sec. 8, and T.34N.-R.16E. Sec. 16). These two mines provided all 19 acres of the industrial land use growth between 2009 and 2015. No other industrial uses expanded their footprint since 2009. Since about 19 acres of industrial land was added for 2 mines between 2009 and 2015, then 19 acres of industrial land is projected for each 5-year increment through 2040 in **Table 22**.

<b>Table 22: Estimated Land Demand in Acres</b>				
<b>Category</b>	<b>Projected Total Acreage</b>			
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>
<b>Residential</b>	705.6	716.2	726.8	737.4
<b>Agricultural</b>	758	773	788	803
<b>Commercial</b>	111	121	131	141
<b>Industrial</b>	118	137	156	175

*Source: NCWRPC*

**Land Values**

**Table 23** displays the assessed land values in the Town of Wabeno. It is important to note that exempt lands (such as Federal, Tribal, State, Sewer District, and Town lands) and Managed Forest Law enrolled lands are not included in values for **Table 23**. Overall, land value per acre in the Town is valued at about \$14,165 per acre. Residential properties in the Town have the highest value per acre, followed by other properties, and then commercial properties. The “Other” land classification in **Table 23** represents buildings and improvements; including any residence for the farm operator's

spouse, children, parents, or grandparents; and the land necessary for the location and convenience of those buildings and improvements [per WI State Statues §70.32(2)(c)1m].

<b>Table 23: Town of Wabeno Land Values, 2019</b>			
<b>Land Classification</b>	<b>Total Value of Land and Improvements</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>Average Value per Acre (Land &amp; Improvements)</b>
Residential	\$70,548,400	1,337	\$52,766
Commercial	\$4,739,600	120	\$39,497
Manufacturing	\$621,600	46	\$13,513
Agricultural	\$50,400	370	\$136
Undeveloped	\$309,800	547	\$566
Agricultural Forest	\$433,300	498	\$870
Forest Lands	\$5,418,600	2,903	\$1,867
Other	\$501,200	12	\$41,767
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$82,622,900</b>	<b>5,833</b>	<b>\$14,165</b>

*Source: WI Department of Revenue and NCWRPC*

## Opportunities for Redevelopment

The vast majority of the Town currently consists of woodlands, farmland, and wetlands; all of which has experienced very little development. Hence the need for “redevelopment” is negligible. There are many vacant houses in the downtown area that need redevelopment before they become available for occupation. So, if the cost to rehabilitate these houses is too great vs. tearing them down and building new houses, then these housing lots are the areas in the Town potentially available for redevelopment for new housing.

Many businesses in downtown Wabeno are in buildings that may need upgrading to improve customer comfort, and energy efficiency to improve the owner's bottom lines. Downtown revitalization differs from redevelopment since the focus is not on reuse, but more towards upgrading and appearance. There may be opportunities to make facade improvements, and energy efficiency upgrades to heating & air conditioning systems, building insulation, and exterior & interior lighting.

Quarries have approved reclamation plans on file with the County as part of the permitting process. The existing quarries within the Town have a number of years of life left. Abandoned non-metallic mines were closed before reclamation regulations existed; and the Town sees no need for redevelopment of those areas beyond continuing to allow them to revert to nature.



## Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

This Plan seeks to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned use-buffers, and public information components. The following issues were identified during the planning process:

1. There is limited land available for development, because the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest completely surrounds downtown Wabeno. The Town and private individuals both own land that may be as beneficial to the Forest Service as similar parcels that are limiting development in downtown. An exchange of land may be possible between the Town and the Forest Service to provide additional developable land contiguous to downtown Wabeno.
2. The Wabeno School District is not selling the downtown ball field. Town government needs land for expansion, but also recognizes that limited land exists in downtown for development.
3. Commercial development may occur around the casino in Carter rather than in downtown Wabeno. Tribal sewer and water exist, but any development would need Tribal approval; and lands would come out of the tax base.

## Future Land Use

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The **Future Land Use Map (Maps 6A & 6B)** 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.

Land use classifications (**Figure 10**) group land uses that are compatible and provide for the separation of conflicting uses. Not all land use classifications are used on both the Existing Land Use Map and Future Land Use Map. The classifications are not zoning districts and do not have the authority of zoning, but are intended for use as a guide. Subdivision, zoning, and official map decisions must be consistent (§66.1001(3) WI Stats.) with the Future Land Use Map.

Town of Wabeno Plan Commission members participated in a virtual mapping exercise with NCWRPC staff to identify the desired future land uses by using the Land Use Classifications as described in **Figure 10**, and a digital airphoto map with the 2010 Future Land Use polygons on it as a starting point, and a section grid. Town Plan Commission members used their broad knowledge of the Town to review what exists now and what may be needed for the future of the Town. The goal was to produce a Future Land Use Map for residents to review that will guide the Town's growth over the next 10 years. See the **Future Land Use Map (Maps 6A & 6B)**.

## Figure 10

## Land Use Classifications

**Agriculture** – Lands that are managed to produce crops or raise livestock.

**Commercial** – Identifies areas that sell goods or services to the general public; such as gas stations, stores, restaurants, professional services, hotels, campgrounds, and car dealerships. Higher density residential development is also allowed here, along with some storage facilities.

**Governmental/Institutional/Utility** – Local governmental buildings, utility structures not in road right-of-ways, religious institutions, schools, and cemeteries are all part of this classification.

**Industrial** – Identifies areas that produce goods or services for distribution to commercial outlets, for example: manufacturers and wholesale distributors. Any uses that directly relate to trucking or mining operations are also located in industrial areas.

**Mixed Use** – Areas of land that may be used for industrial and/or residential purposes. This land classification only applies to a parcel of land in Wabeno that is on the west end of the downtown area, as mapped on the Future Land Use Map (Maps 6A & 6B).

**Open Lands** – Contains land without trees that does not appear to be agricultural. Such lands may include 100-year floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, DNR wetlands, and steep slopes of 12 percent or greater.

**Outdoor Recreation** – Land that is or could become parks or trails. Ball fields, outdoor amphitheaters, and waysides are all included in this designation.

**Residential** – Identifies areas of residential development typically consisting of smaller lot sizes, such as in the downtown or around the lake.

**Rural Residential** – Identifies areas that are recommended for less dense residential development, consisting of larger minimum lot sizes than the “Residential” category, generally on septic systems.

**Transportation** – Identifies the existing road network along with the recommendations for improved and safe traffic movement in the town, including airports and rail facilities.

**Woodlands** – Areas of land that are covered with trees and hardly any grass. Single family houses, and hunting shacks may exist in this area on large lots. DNR wetlands that contain many trees, and campgrounds may also exist in this area.

**Water** – Lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds are all part of the surface water designation.

## **Land Use Programs and Tools**

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

### **Zoning**

Under Wisconsin Statutes, counties and local units of government are authorized to adopt zoning ordinances. Zoning is a method for implementing or carrying out the land use plan by predetermining a logical pattern of land use development.

A zoning ordinance consists of a map and written text. The zoning map arranges the community into districts or zones. There may be several zones of a similar land use; for example residential may be divided into R-1 through R-7 zones. Within each of these zones, the zoning ordinance text specifies the permitted land uses, the size of buildings, yard/lot dimensions, and other prerequisites in obtaining permission to develop. The goal of the zoning ordinance is to set a reasonable development pattern by keeping similar and related uses together and separating dissimilar, unrelated and incompatible uses; particularly in relationship to transportation facilities, utilities and public services and facilities.

The Town of Wabeno has agreed to have Forest County administer the zoning within the Town.

### **Shoreland Zoning**

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

### **Farmland Preservation Zoning**

Farmland Preservation Zoning is a voluntary zoning classification that is intended to minimize fragmentation of farmland by imposing development limitations consistent with or more restrictive than the provisions listed in Chapter 91 of WI Statutes. In order to adopt farmland preservation zoning, a municipality must be enrolled in the Farmland Preservation Program. No Forest County jurisdictions have a certified ordinance.

### **Subdivision Ordinance**

Subdivision (or land division) regulations provide the procedures and standards for dividing a large parcel of land into smaller parcels, usually to make them ready for sale and development. Communities can control the subdivision of land by requiring a developer to meet certain conditions in exchange for the privilege of recording a plat.

The Town of Wabeno is within Forest County's subdivision ordinance.

## **Other Tools**

Additional tools and approaches can be utilized by the Town to achieve the goals of this 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 driveway ordinance, impact fees, building permits, erosion control, etc.

## **Land Use**

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

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**Goal 1 – Provide orderly growth for the health, safety, and general welfare of Town residents that also makes efficient use of existing tax dollars.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Maintain the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for future land use decisions.
2. Encourage commercial and dense residential development to exist on land that is served by municipal sewer and water.

#### **Policies:**

1. Permit new development based upon consideration of this Comprehensive Plan.
2. Commercial development in downtown Wabeno will continue to extend in a strip along the major highway.
3. Provide adequate infrastructure (i.e., roads, sewer, & water) and public services (i.e., fire and rescue) and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses compatible in Wabeno.
4. Promote the redevelopment of land within downtown Wabeno.

**Goal 2 – Promote and regulate rural development outside of the downtown to retain the rural character of the Town and minimize degradation of groundwater.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Restrict new development due to flood hazard, steep slopes, potential groundwater contamination of municipal wells, highway access problems, or incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
2. Maintain minimum lot sizes for new development through the Town's land division and zoning ordinances to preserve the Town's rural character and to protect surface and groundwater resources from the impacts of higher density development.

#### **Policies:**

1. All rural residential development should be set back from the roads and buffered by either natural vegetation or evergreen plantings.

2. Use-buffer areas may be used as shields to lessen the impacts of potentially conflicting land use types located in relatively close proximity (e.g., rural residential type development could be planned as a buffer between single-family and forestry or agricultural. Landscape buffers could also be used, especially where use-buffers are unfeasible.
3. Require that timber harvests appear like natural disturbances, with a jagged harvest pattern and vegetative screen between the harvest area and major through roads.
4. Continue to allow residential development along waterbodies.
5. Encourage development proposal site designs to preserve or enhance the rustic and rural nature of the Town.
6. Industrial development will be limited to the industrial area on the Future Land Use map, and non-metallic mines will be conditionally allowed in forested areas on the Future Land Use map.
7. Inform potential industrial developers about the “Class I” air designation.

# Chapter 8

## Intergovernmental Cooperation

This chapter discusses joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. This chapter analyzes the relationship of the Town of Wabeno to school districts and adjacent local governmental units, the State, the Tribe, and other governmental units and incorporates plans and agreements under s.66.0301, 66.0307 of 66.0309 Wisconsin Statutes. This chapter concludes with an identification of existing or potential conflicts between the governmental units and a process to resolve such conflicts.

### **Assessment of Intergovernmental Relationships, Plans, and Agreements**

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#### **School District**

The Town of Wabeno is in the School District of Wabeno.

The Nicolet Technical College, located in Rhinelander, serves the town.

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

#### **Surrounding Towns**

The Town of Wabeno is bordered (refer to Map 1) by the towns of Blackwell, Laona, and Freedom in Forest County; Townsend and Lakewood in Oconto County; and Silver Cliff in Marinette County.

Wabeno has mutual aid relationships with the surrounding towns.

#### **Forest County**

Forest County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to Wabeno residents.

The County Highway Department maintains and plows the County, state and federal highways within the Town. The County Sheriff provides protective services through periodic patrols. The Sheriff also manages the 911-dispatch center, not only for police protection, but also for ambulance/EMS response.

The Forestry Department maintains a county park and forest system for the use and enjoyment of all residents including the Town of Wabeno. The County also provides land records and land & water conservation services.

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

### **Wisconsin Towns Association**

The Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA) is a statewide, voluntary, non-profit and non-partisan association of member town and village governments in the State of Wisconsin controlled by its Board of Directors. WTA's twin purposes are to (1) support local control of government and to (2) protect the interest of towns. In furtherance of those goals WTA provides three types of services for its members: legislative lobbying efforts, educational programs, and legal information.

### **State and Federal Agencies**

The Wisconsin departments of Natural Resources (WisDNR) and Transportation (WisDOT) 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 Wabeno Volunteer Fire Department cooperates with the Forest Service and the DNR to cover the Town for fire service. All land north of CTH C is cooperatively covered with the Forest Service, and all land south of CTH C is cooperatively covered with the DNR. All tribal lands are covered by these cooperative agreements for fire service too.

The WisDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland, and other wildlife habitat areas, while WisDOT is responsible for the planning and development of state highways, 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 Wabeno. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also a number of mandates passed down from the state that

the Town must comply with, such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads.

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.

### **Forest County Potawatomi Community**

Parts of the Forest County Potawatomi tribal lands lie within the Town of Wabeno. The Potawatomi Northern Lights Casino in Carter is on tribal lands in Wabeno. The Town has a good working relationship with the Tribe. The Town and Tribe frequently partner on road projects, grants, etc.

## **Existing or Potential Intergovernmental Conflicts**

---

The following are existing or potential intergovernmental conflicts identified in the Wabeno area:

- ✓ Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) land limits the amount of private land available for development.
- ✓ County Zoning process needs better cooperation between Town and Zoning Committee.
- ✓ Reduction in available timber from CNNF because of new land designation (e.g., wilderness, road less areas, etc.) within the Town.
- ✓ Timber sale litigation has a negative impact on the raw material supply for the timber industry and also reduces the USFS PILT and 25% shared revenue available to the local communities and schools; because this litigation is always directed at preserving the forest from harvest.
- ✓ Reduction in available tax paying land because of inclusions into Federal Trust status.

The Town of Wabeno acknowledges that the Forest County Potawatomi Community may transfer fee lands into Federal Trust status. When fee lands are placed into Federal Trust status, the Town of Wabeno's jurisdiction and taxing ability over the transferred land diminishes, similar to when a city or village annexes town land.

The following potential intergovernmental conflicts may arise in the Wabeno planning area:

- ✓ Potential sale of the school district's ball field in downtown Wabeno.

The process for resolving these conflicts will be a continuation of past practices, and new ideas as they evolve. The Town will continue to meet with various governmental entities when significant issues of mutual concern arise.



## Programs

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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, sewer utility districts, Indian tribes or bands, and others.

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

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

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

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

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

*Many of the other types of intergovernmental programs not discussed here are urban fringe city-town in nature and do not apply to a town like Wabeno including boundary agreements, extraterritorial actions, and annexation.*

## **Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

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**Goal – Seek mutually beneficial cooperation with all levels of government.**

**Objective:**

- Maintain open channels of communication with all levels of government.

**Policies:**

1. Continue participating in the Forest County Towns Association meetings.
2. Continue cooperation with the Forest County Potawatomi Community regarding governmental matters of mutual concern.
3. Continue cooperating with the Laona Rescue to maintain a service that is mutually beneficial to all 4 communities that it serves.
4. Forward issues of Town-wide concern to elected officials at the County and State levels.
5. Continue cooperating with the various Forest County departments and elected officials to the benefit of all County residents.
6. Continue providing timely responses to Tribal staff as needed.
7. Continue providing timely responses to State and Federal agencies and elected officials as needed.
8. Continue partnerships with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest to ensure the ecological, economic, and social benefits of forests for the citizens of Wisconsin now and into the future.

# Chapter 9

## Implementation

The primary reason why a community prepares a comprehensive plan is to provide a vision for the future of their community. Decisions regarding land use that are based upon this comprehensive plan provide a level playing field for everyone to implement the community's vision. Subdivision, zoning, and official map decisions must be *consistent with* (§66.1001(3) WI Stats.) the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Actively using this comprehensive plan by local policy makers assists them with decisions concerning:

- The implementation and enforcement of regulatory ordinances based on the goals, objectives, and policies identified in each chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.
- The development of programs and support systems that further the goals, objectives, and policies set forth in this Comprehensive Plan.
- The implementation of community improvements as identified in this Comprehensive Plan.
- The establishment and support of a continued planning process providing for periodic review and updates to this Comprehensive Plan and other land use control measures.

### Implementation Tools

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Having the appropriate tools to implement the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan are critical. The most common implementation tools are the Town's official controls or regulatory codes. In particular, the zoning ordinance and subdivision (or land division) ordinance are the principal regulatory tools to protect existing development and guide future growth and development as identified in this comprehensive plan. A driveway ordinance is also a useful tool. 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 and staffing.

See the various implementation tools in Chapter 7 – Land Use in this Comprehensive Plan under: [Land Use Programs and Tools](#) for descriptions of the most common tools.

Subdivision, zoning, and official map decisions must be consistent with (§66.1001(3) WI Stats.) the Town's Comprehensive Plan (especially the Future Land Use Map and all goals, objectives, and policies).

## Plan Adoption, Monitoring, and Amendments

---

While this Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide a long-term framework to guide development and public spending decisions, it must also respond to the continuous stream of changes that occur in a community and/or region that may not have been foreseen when the plan was initially adopted. It is appropriate that some elements of this Comprehensive Plan are rarely amended while others are subject to updating more frequently.

### Plan Adoption

The first step in implementing this Comprehensive Plan (“Plan”) involves adoption of this 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. A public hearing is required to allow public comment on the ordinance prior to final action to adopt the plan by the Town Board. That public hearing must be preceded by a class 1 notice that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. The Town Board must adopt the Plan by ordinance (of majority vote). Notice of Plan adoption must be sent to those listed in §66.1001(4)(b) of Wis. Stats.

Adoption formalizes the Plan document as the framework to guide local development decisions over the next 20 years. The adopted Plan is a tool for communicating the community’s land use policy and goals and objectives regarding land use growth and development.

### Plan Monitoring

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

This Comprehensive Plan should be evaluated at least every 5 years, and must be updated at least every 10 years (§66.1001(2)(i) WI Stats.). Members of the Town Board and Plan Commission should periodically review this Plan and identify areas that might need to be updated.

- ✓ **Table 12** provides some criteria to consider when reviewing Plan changes.
- ✓ The evaluation should involve first reviewing the goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires.
- ✓ Then the policies should be reviewed and refined to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate.

**Table 12: Criteria to Consider When Reviewing Plan Changes**

1. The change is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Town of Wabeno Comprehensive Plan.
2. The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
3. Development resulting from the change does not create an undue impact on surrounding properties. Such development should be consistent with the physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade or improve its viability.
4. The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
5. 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.
6. There is a change in Town actions or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
7. The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
8. There is a community or regional need identified for the proposed land use or service.
9. The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration, or dedication.

## **Consistency Between Chapters**

The state comprehensive planning law (§66.1001 WI Stats.) requires that the implementation chapter describe how each chapter of the Plan will be integrated and consistent with the other chapters. Preparing all the chapters of the Town of Wabeno Comprehensive Plan simultaneously has ensured that there are no known inconsistencies between the different chapters of this Comprehensive Plan.

Whenever a goal, objective, or policy is changed, then a review of all other goals, objectives, and policies shall be reviewed to determine if others need revision too.

## Minor Plan Amendments

Amendments to this Comprehensive Plan may include minor changes to plan text or maps or major changes resulting from periodic review. Frequent changes to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided.

The Comprehensive Planning Law (§66.1001 Wis. Stats.) requires that the same process used to adopt the Plan will also be used to amend it, specifically:

- ✓ An amendment or change may be initiated by either the Town Plan Commission or the Town Board and may result from a regular review or a request from a resident.
- ✓ The public should be notified of proposed Comprehensive Plan changes and allowed an opportunity for review and comment (review the Town's Public Participation Plan).
- ✓ The Town Plan Commission prepares the specific text or map amendment being considered, holds a public meeting, and votes to recommend approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment, by resolution to the Town Board.
- ✓ If an amendment is approved by resolution to the Town Board, then the Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town Board public hearing on the proposed changes. As the same time, the Town Clerk also mails this notice to all owners and operators of mines within the Town.
- ✓ The Town Board conducts the public hearing and votes to either approve the Plan amendment by ordinance, disapprove, or approve with changes by ordinance.
- ✓ Any approved changes are sent to:
  - The school district and technical college district that serve the Town;
  - All adjacent town clerks;
  - All adjacent county clerks, and Forest County Clerk;
  - The local library;
  - North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; and
  - Email DOA: [comp.planning@wisconsin.gov](mailto:comp.planning@wisconsin.gov)

## Plan Updates

According to the state comprehensive planning law (§66.1001 Wis. Stats.), 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 whole sections of the Comprehensive Plan document, including its maps. A Comprehensive 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 updated. Plan updates must be formally adopted following the same procedure described above for **Minor Plan Amendments**.

## **Plan Implementation Recommendations**

---

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 Wabeno. It is also important that local citizens and developers become aware of the Plan.

### **Recommendation 1: Town Board**

- Once the Comprehensive Plan is approved, then it is important for the Town Board to use it as a guide for decisions that affect development in the Town.

### **Recommendation 2: Plan Commission**

- The Town of Wabeno Plan Commission is to review the Plan on a biannual basis to measure the Town's progress toward achieving the Plan implementation, and fully review and update the Plan every 10 years.

### **Recommendation 3: Zoning and Subdivision Regulations**

- Wabeno Plan Commission shall review zoning and subdivision applications and make formal recommendations to the Town Board to forward to the County Zoning Committee. The Wabeno Comprehensive Plan is an important consideration in this process. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that a local government's land use related decisions and actions be consistent with that local government's comprehensive plan.

Work with the Forest County Zoning Committee to establish a notification procedure of the Wabeno Plan Commission with any zoning change petitions. This notification could be a standard form used to record Town Plan Commission zoning recommendations to the Town Board and Town Board zoning recommendations to the County. On the form would be reasons for the recommendation, and each member's vote on the matter. The completed form would be attached to the original zoning petition and a copy retained for the Town Plan Commission records.

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

### **Recommendation 4: Information and Education**

- Copies of this Plan should be made available to the public at the Town Hall so it is available for anyone to review when the facility is open or upon reasonable request. In addition, the same information should be made available on the Internet for 24/7 access.

### **Recommendation 5: Town Administrator**

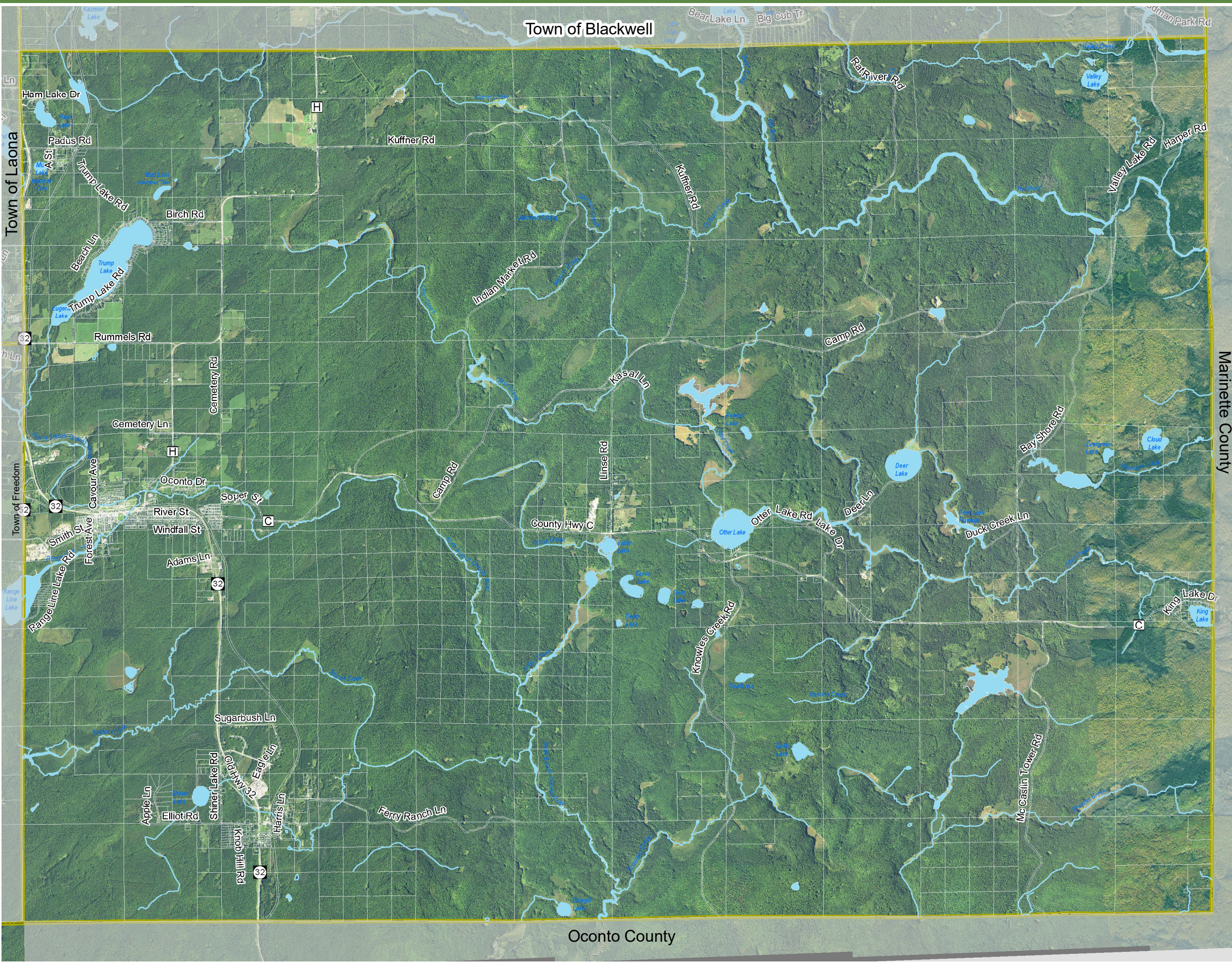
- To implement this Comprehensive Plan, it is a recommendation to consider hiring at least a part time town administrator.

# Maps

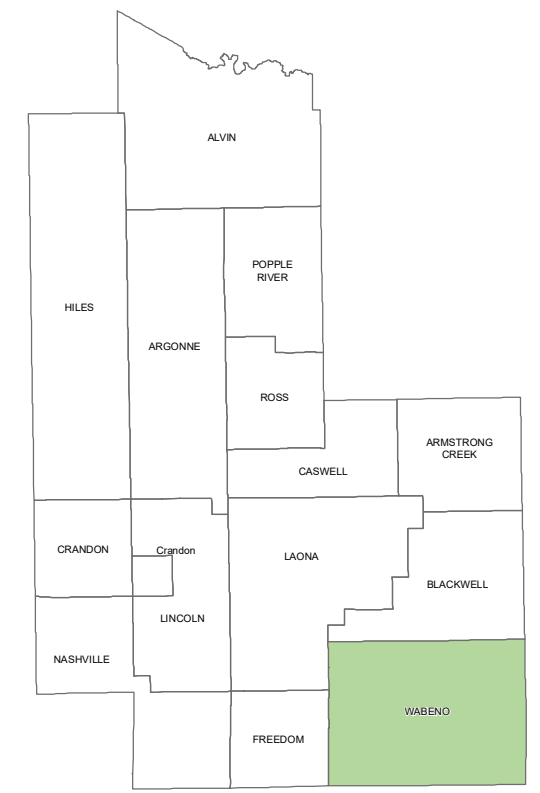


# Planning Area

*Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin*



Marinette County
















**North Central  
Wisconsin Regional  
Planning Commission**

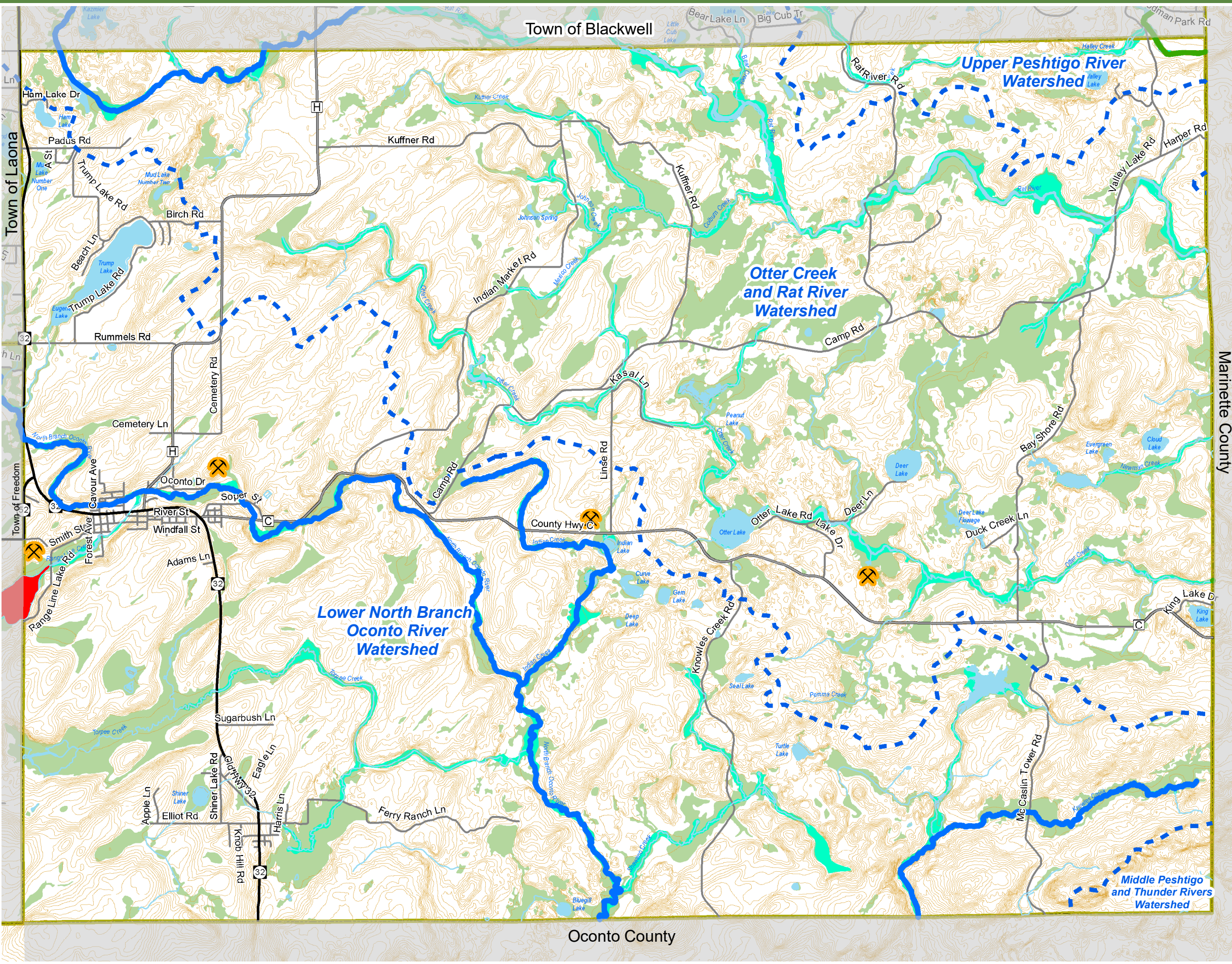
210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403  
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# Natural Resources

Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin

## Legend

-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  Non-Metallic Mines
-  Watersheds Boundary
-  Floodplain
-  Wetlands
-  10ft Contours
-  Exceptional Resource Streams
-  Outstanding Resource Streams
-  303D Waters

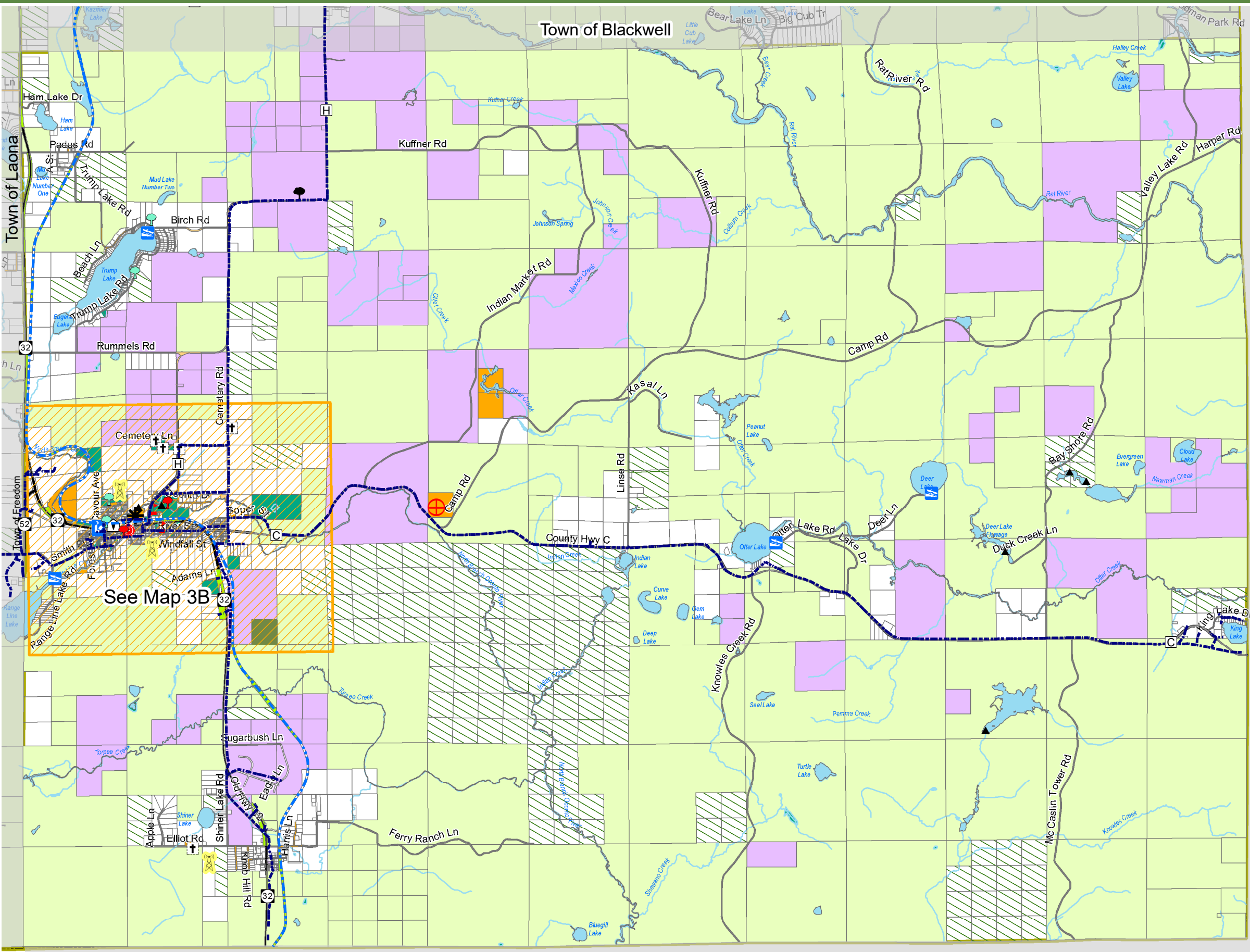


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Utilities & Community Facilities

Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin



Legend

- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Water
- Nicolet State Trail
- Boat Access
- Town Parks
- School Recreation Area
- Tribal Park
- Closed Landfill
- Cemeteries
- Fairgrounds
- Fire Station
- Library
- Museum
- Post Office
- Schools
- Town Hall
- Communication Towers
- 144 kv Power Lines
- Dams
- School Forest Land
- Federal
- State
- County
- Town
- Tribal
- Other Tax Exempt
- MFL
- Inset See Map 3B



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Wisconsin Regional  
Planning Commission

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Town of Laona

Town of Freedom

Town of Blackwell

Marinette County






























Oconto County

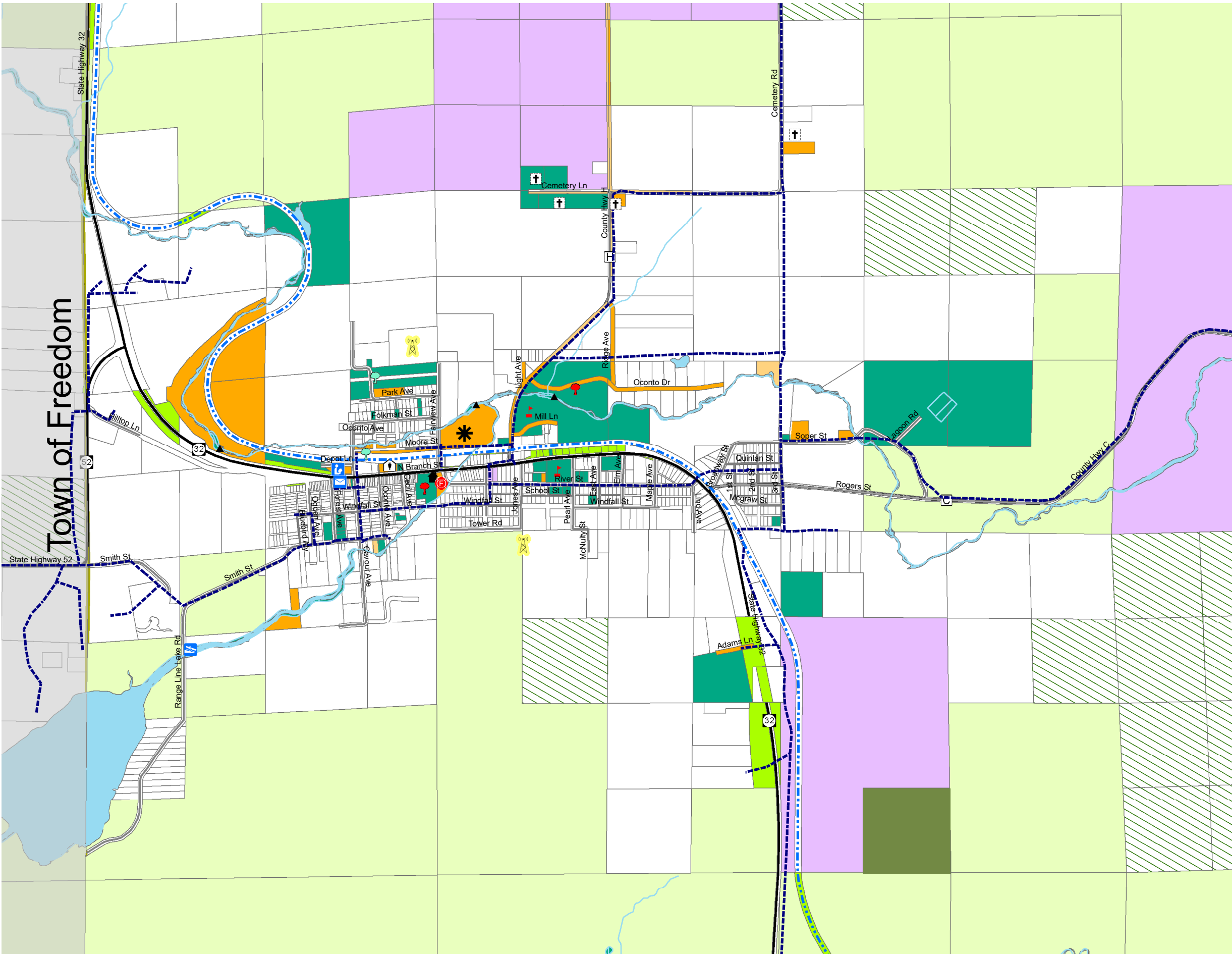
See Map 3B

Utilities & Community Facilities

Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin

Legend

-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  Nicolet State Trail
-  Boat Access
-  Town Parks
-  School Recreation Area
-  Closed Landfill
-  Cemeteries
-  Fairgrounds
-  Fire Station
-  Library
-  Museum
-  Post Office
-  Schools
-  Town Hall
-  Communication Towers
-  144 kv Power Lines
-  Dams
-  School Forest Land
-  Federal
-  State
-  County
-  Town
-  Tribal
-  Other Tax Exempt
-  MFL



North Central  
Wisconsin Regional  
Planning Commission

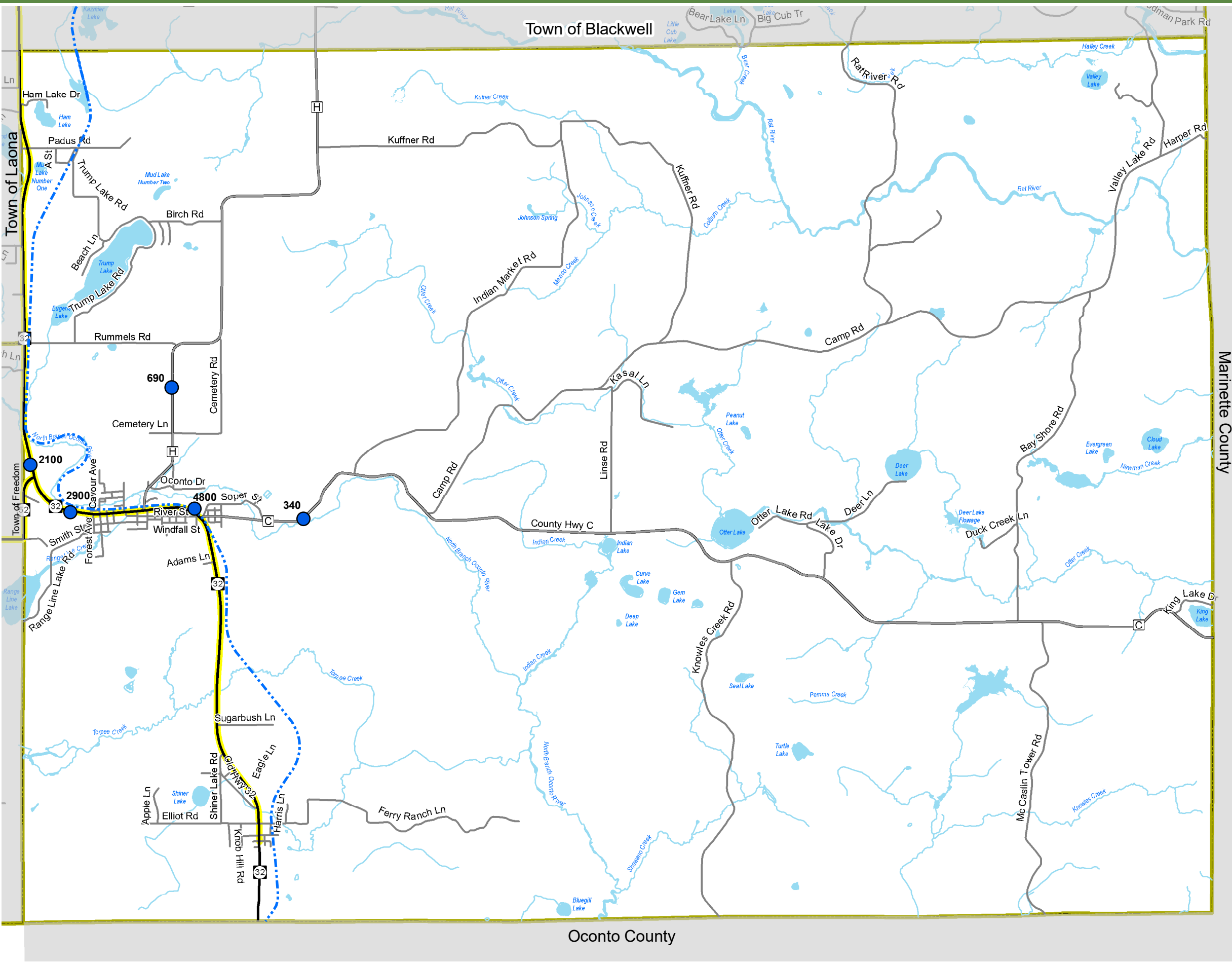
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# Transportation

Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin

## Legend

-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway Route
-  Nicolet State Trail
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  Traffic Counts

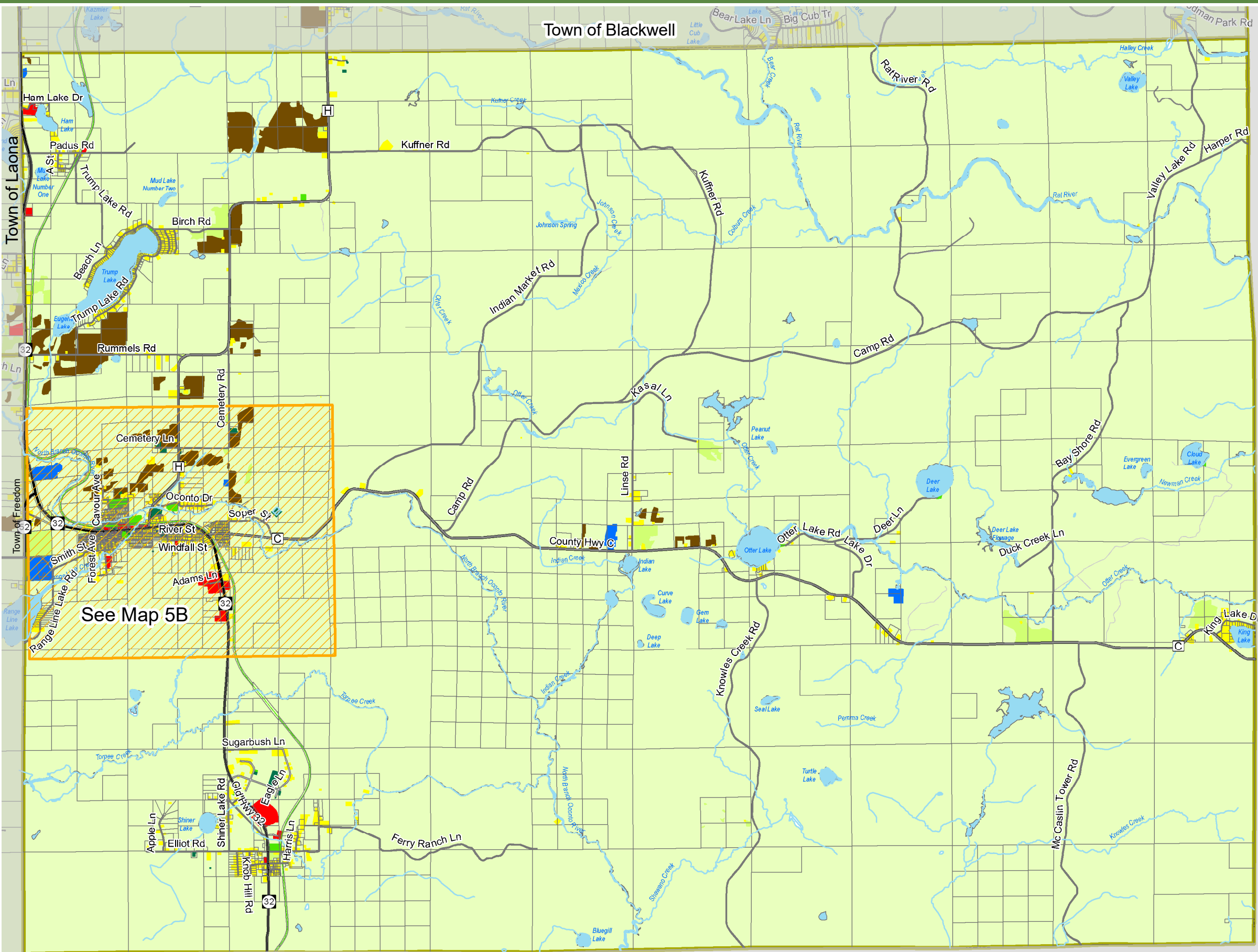


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# Generalized Land Use

Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin



## Legend

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Water
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Governmental / Institutional / Utility
- Industrial
- Open Lands
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Transportation
- Woodlands
- Inset (See Map 5B)




North Central  
Wisconsin Regional  
Planning Commission

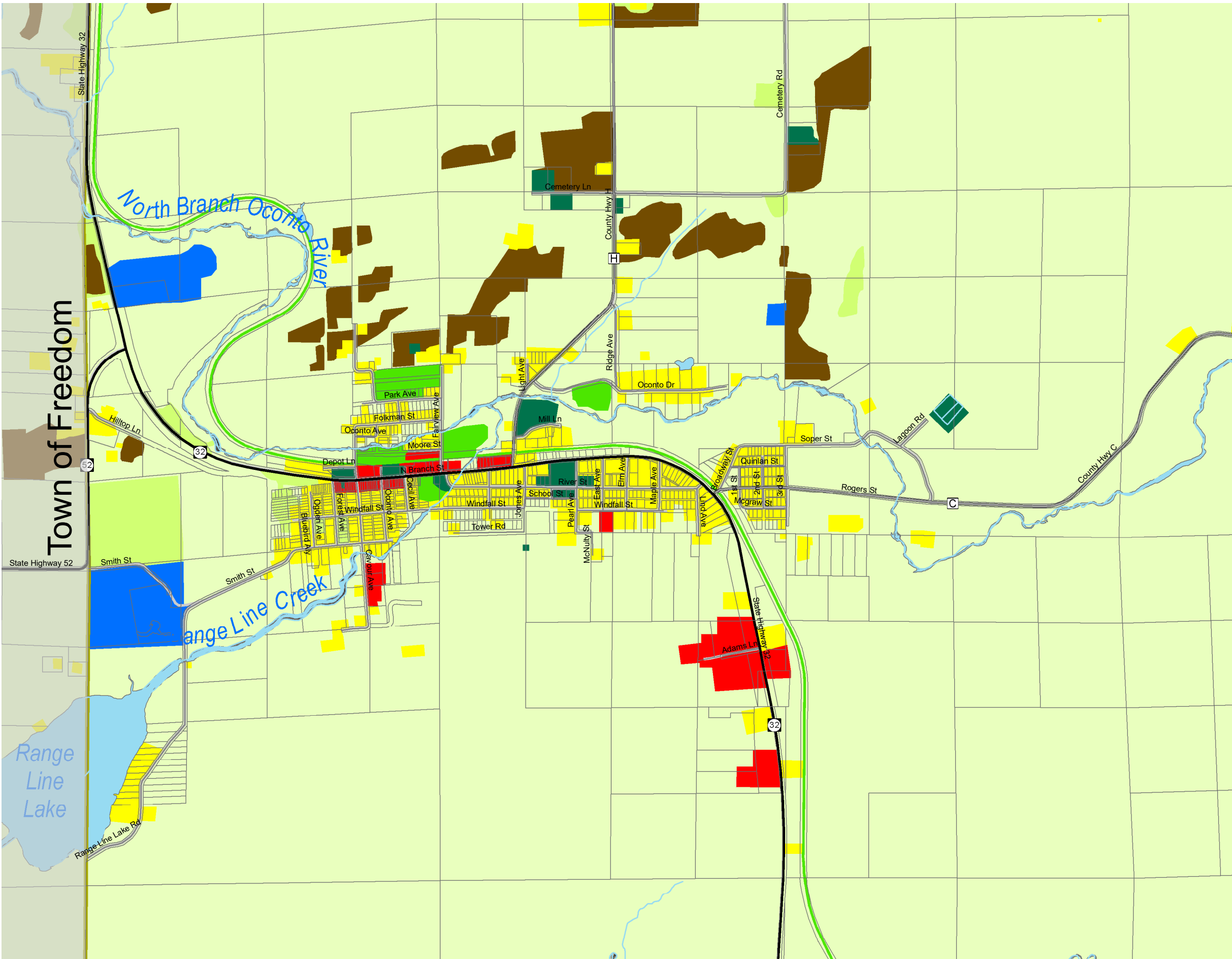
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# Generalized Land Use

Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin

## Legend

-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  Agriculture
-  Commercial
-  Governmental / Institutional / Utility
-  Industrial
-  Open Lands
-  Outdoor Recreation
-  Residential
-  Transportation
-  Woodlands




















North Central  
Wisconsin Regional  
Planning Commission

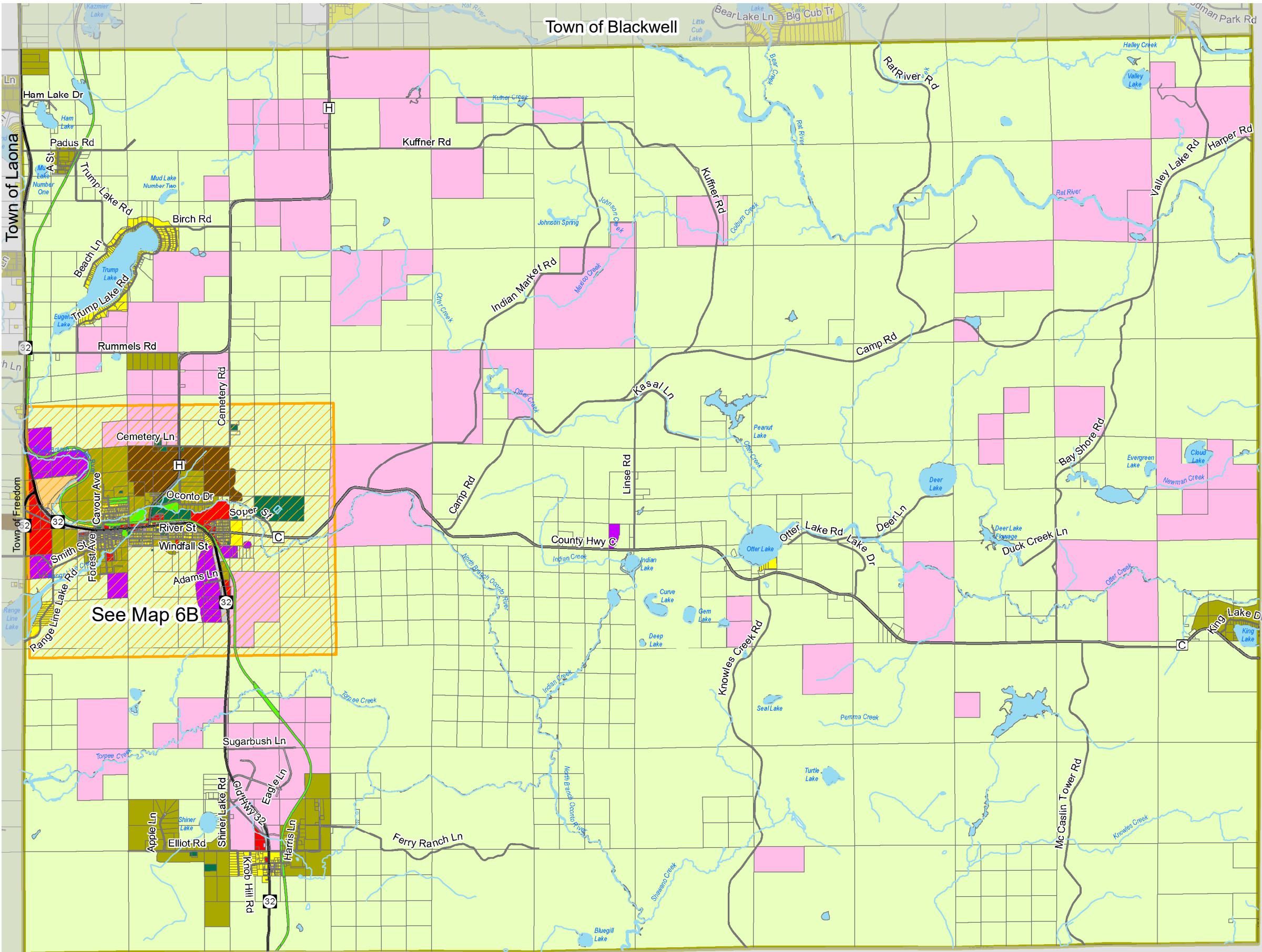
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# Future Land Use

Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin

## Legend

-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  Agricultural Areas
-  Commercial
-  Forestry Areas
-  Governmental/Public/Institutional
-  Industrial
-  Mixed Use
-  Outdoor Recreation
-  Residential
-  Rural Residential
-  Transportation
-  Tribal
-  Inset (See Map 6B)



Oconto County



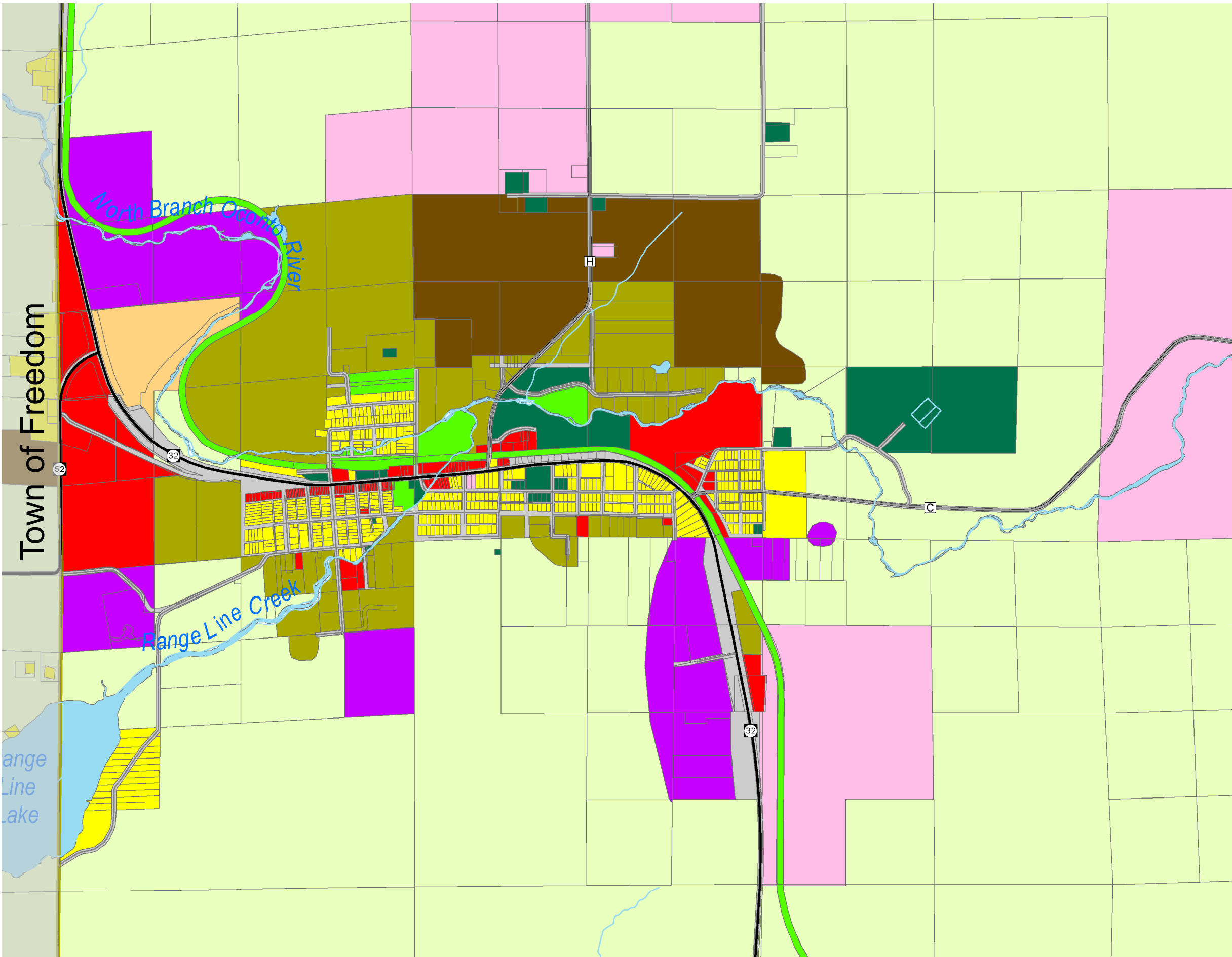
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# Future Land Use

Town of Wabeno - Forest County, Wisconsin



## Legend

- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Water
- Agricultural Areas
- Commercial
- Forestry Areas
- Governmental / Institutional / Utility
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Transportation
- Tribal

Town of Freedom

Range Line Lake

North Branch Oconto River

Range Line Creek



North Central  
Wisconsin Regional  
Planning Commission

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# **Attachment A**

## **Public Participation Plan & Resolution**

## **Town of Wabeno Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

The Town of Wabeno 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 Town Board will hold a public hearing to solicit comment from the public.
4. 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.

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

THE TOWN OF WABENO DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

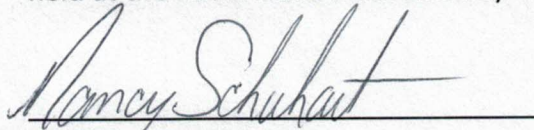
WHEREAS, the Town is updating its Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

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

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Town Board to approve a process to involve the public in the planning effort; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as attached to this resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a Town Board meeting, held at the Town Hall on the 2nd day of February, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

  
Clerk

# **Attachment B**

## **Adoption Resolution**

# PLAN COMMISSION RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION # 20211

Town of Wabeno, Forest County, Wisconsin

The Plan Commission of the Town of Wabeno, Forest 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 Wabeno as follows:

Adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Wabeno 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 Wabeno Comprehensive Plan are incorporated into and made a part of the Town of Wabeno 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 Wabeno Plan Commission.

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

Adopted this 24<sup>th</sup> day of March 2021.

Mary Beck

Mary Beck

Colleen Ansbaugh

Colleen Ansbaugh

Jan Volk

Jan Volk

Rev Howard R. Neider

Howard Neider

Jim Smith

Attest:

P.P. Ramsey Schubert

Mary Beck  
Plan Commission Clerk

**Attachment C**  
**Adoption Ordinance**



## ORDINANCE #21-10-5

Town of Wabeno, Forest County, Wisconsin

### SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE

The title of this ordinance is the Town of Wabeno Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Wabeno 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 Wabeno 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 Wabeno 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 Wabeno, 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 Wabeno 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 Wabeno 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 Wabeno, 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 Wabeno Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

### SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Wabeno, has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, with notice in compliance with the requirements of s. 66.1001 (4) (d), Wis. stats.

### SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Wabeno, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Wabeno Comprehensive Plan Ordinance pursuant to s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

**SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY**

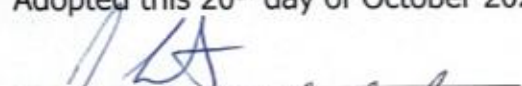
If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision of application, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance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


**SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE**

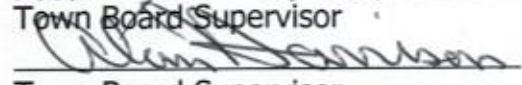
This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

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

Adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of October 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Board Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Board Supervisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Board Supervisor

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Clerk