

Town of Port Edwards

Wood County, Wisconsin

Comprehensive Plan 2024



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Photos source: Google Maps

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 1: Demographics | 4 |
| Chapter 2: Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources | 14 |
| Chapter 3: Housing | 27 |
| Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities | 36 |
| Chapter 6: Economic Development | 50 |
| Chapter 7: Land Use | 64 |
| Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation | 73 |
| Chapter 9: Implementation | 78 |
| | |
| Map 1: Planning Area..... | 85 |
| Map 2: Natural Resources | 87 |
| Map 3: Prime Farmland | 89 |
| Map 4: Soil Limitations | 91 |
| Map 5: Cranberry Production..... | 93 |
| Map 6: Utilities and Community Facilities | 95 |
| Map 7: School District Boundaries | 97 |
| Map 8: Transportation | 99 |
| Map 9: Existing Land Use..... | 101 |
| Map 10: Land Ownership..... | 103 |
| Map 11: Future Land Use..... | 105 |
| Map 12: County Forest Maps | 107 |
| | |
| Attachment A: Public Participation Plan..... | 109 |
| Attachment B: Planning Committee Resolution..... | 111 |
| Attachment C: Public Hearing Notice..... | 112 |
| Attachment D: Town Board Ordinance | 113 |

Chapter 1: Demographics

This Comprehensive Plan begins by reviewing the demographics of the Town of Port Edwards including trends, forecasts, and comparisons for some basic demographics including population, households, employment, age, education, and income. Official data sources include the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) and the U.S. Census Bureau/American Community Survey (ACS).

Background

The Town of Port Edwards is in the center of southern Wood County, Wisconsin, where it borders the City of Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, Towns of Cranmoor, Remington, Saratoga, and Seneca, as well as the Towns of Armenia and Finley in Juneau County and Town of Rome in Adams County. The Town of Port Edwards is approximately 9 miles east-to-west at its widest point by 6 and a half miles north-to-south, forming an irregular shape around the City of Nekoosa and bordering the Wisconsin River on its east side. In 2022, the Town of Port Edwards had an estimated population of 1,302. Most of the Town consists of wetlands, agriculture, and low-density housing. See Maps 1 and 2.

Previous Comprehensive Plan

The last Town of Port Edwards Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2008. Top issues identified through a survey at the time include managing growth from the City of Nekoosa and Village of Port Edwards while minimizing conflicts. There was also a desire to improve existing housing stock and promote limited commercial development while protecting the Town's rural character.

Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan explores potential issues that may have an impact upon the development of the Town over a 20-year planning period. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law, 66.1001, plans must be updated every ten years. In Spring 2024, the Town Planning Committee began a review of the survey and past plans and held a variety of Planning Committee meetings throughout the year to prepare the plan. A final Planning Committee meeting was held in November 2024 to review and recommend the plan by resolution, and the Town Board reviewed and adopted the plan by ordinance.

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. See the adopted Public Participation Plan in Appendix A.

Demographics

Population and Households

Historical Trends

Table 1 shows 2022 population for the Town, county, and state. The Town grew by 5.6 percent between 1990 and 2010, but the population decreased by 8.8 percent since 2010. Households also grew between 1990 and 2010 (28.5 percent) but decreased since 2010 (15.7 percent). Though Port Edwards' population and total households grew faster than the county and the state between 1990 and 2010, its population and number of households decreased faster than the county and the state since 2010. It is important to note that Port Edwards' household size is consistently larger than the county and state averages.

| Table 1: Demographic Change 1990-2022 | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Minor Civil Division | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2022 | 1990-2010 % Change | 2010-2022 % Change |
| Total Population | | | | | | |
| T. Port Edwards | 1,351 | 1,465 | 1,427 | 1,302 | 5.6% | -8.8% |
| Wood County | 73,605 | 75,555 | 74,749 | 74,138 | 1.6% | -0.8% |
| State | 4,891,769 | 5,363,675 | 5,686,986 | 5,882,128 | 16.3% | 3.4% |
| Total Households | | | | | | |
| T. Port Edwards | 460 | 530 | 591 | 498 | 28.5% | -15.7% |
| Wood County | 27,473 | 30,131 | 31,979 | 31,887 | 16.4% | -0.3% |
| State | 1,822,118 | 2,084,556 | 2,279,768 | 2,425,488 | 25.1% | 6.4% |
| Average Household Size | | | | | | |
| T. Port Edwards | 2.94 | 2.75 | 2.53 | 2.61 | -13.9% | 3.2% |
| Wood County | 2.65 | 2.47 | 2.34 | 2.29 | -11.7% | -2.1% |
| State | 2.61 | 2.50 | 2.43 | 2.37 | -6.9% | -2.5% |

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010; ACS 2022

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

Projections

Tables 2 and 3 show the state's official population projections for the Town of Port Edwards and Wood County, which were created by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). These projections are based on historical population and household growth in the community, with more

recent years given a greater weight. DOA predicts an increase in population by 4.5 percent and an increase in households by 18.1 percent between 2020 and 2040.

When comparing the 2022 estimated total of 1,302 people and 498 households, there is a difference of 118 people and 82 households when compared to DOA’s projections for the year 2020, which were originally projected to be 1,420 people and 588 households. Since the DOA’s population projections are over a decade old, Figures 1 and 2 depict “adjusted” projections that use DOA projections and subtract this difference in actual growth compared to what was initially projected.

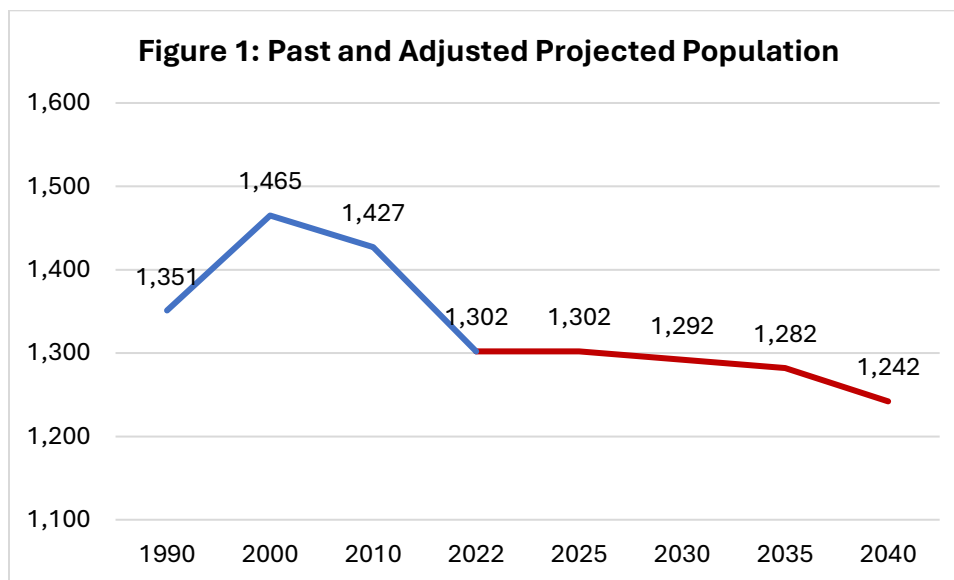
| Table 2: Population Projections, 2025-2040 | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| | 2022 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | % Change 2020-2040 |
| T. Port Edwards | 1,302 | 1,420 | 1,410 | 1,400 | 1,360 | 4.5% |
| Wood Co. | 74,138 | 74,370 | 73,930 | 73,270 | 71,150 | -4.0% |

Source: ACS 2022, DOA 2025-2040

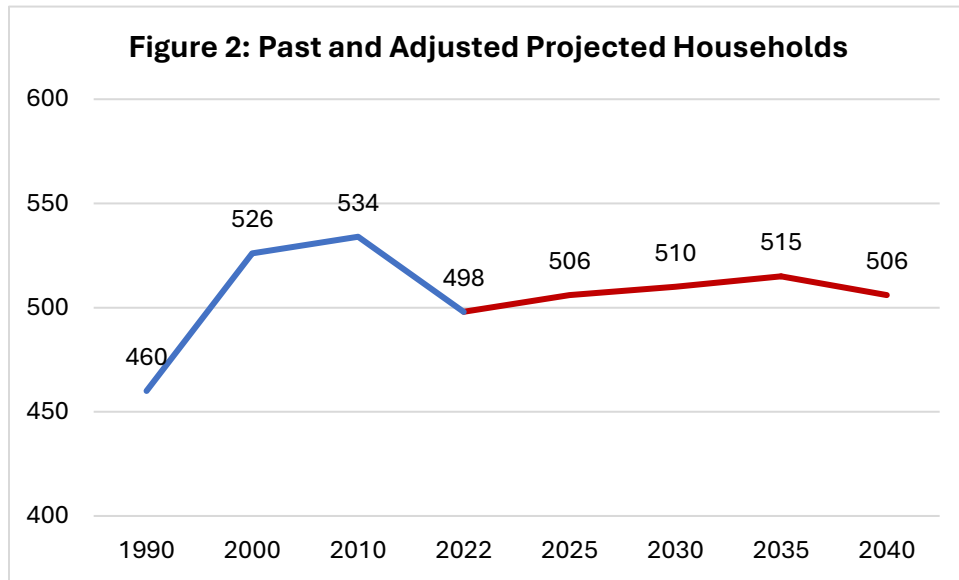
| Table 3: Household Projections, 2025-2040 | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| | 2022 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | % Change 2020-2040 |
| T. Port Edwards | 498 | 588 | 592 | 597 | 588 | 18.1% |
| Wood Co. | 31,887 | 32,861 | 33,043 | 33,175 | 32,561 | 2.1% |

Source: ACS 2022, DOA 2025-2040

It is important to consider that American Community Survey data is self-reported, and therefore, the Town’s population may be higher in 2022 than 1,302. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) estimates a population of 1,346 for 2023.



Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, & 2010; ACS 2022; DOA 2025-2040

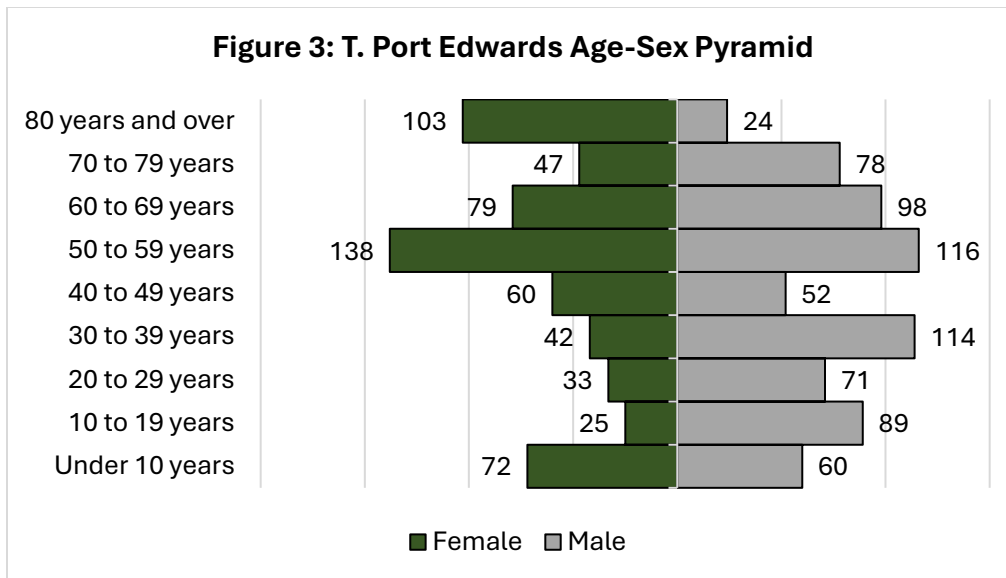


Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, & 2010; ACS 2022; DOA 2020-2040

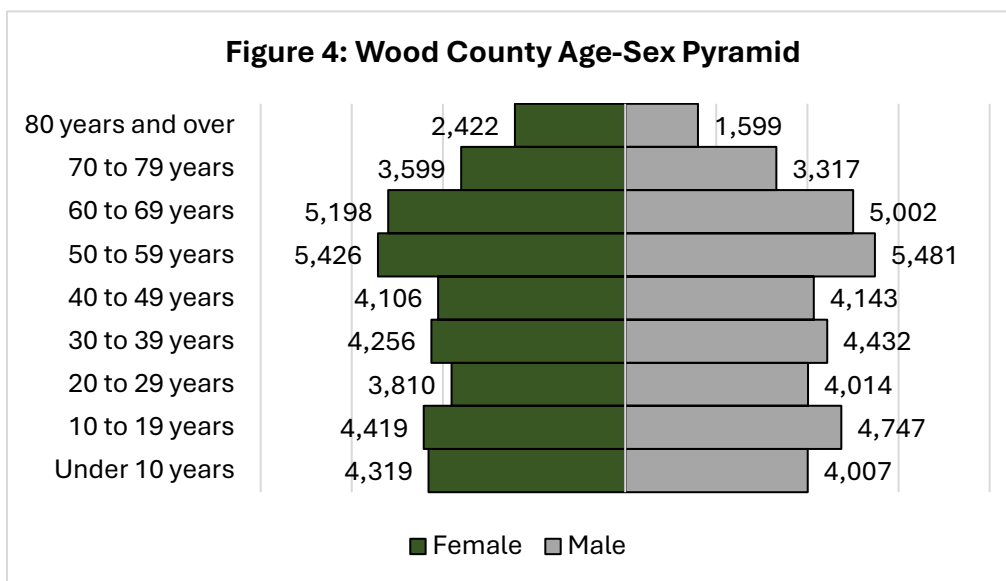
Age

Figures 3 and 4 compare the distribution of age groups for the Town of Port Edwards and Wood County. Both the Town of Port Edwards and Wood County show a relatively even distribution of people among each age category. These figures are known as age-sex pyramids because, until recently, the younger age groups typically outnumbered the older age groups. But changes in household size and longer life expectancies have made these figures resemble squares, rather than pyramids, in recent years.

There are far fewer females between the ages of 10 and 39 in the Town of Port Edwards compared to males, and far more females aged 80 and over than males. Overall, the Town's age distribution is more skewed between sexes than the County's because of its smaller population. The group between ages 50 and 59 is the largest, followed by the age group of 30 to 39 years old. This indicates that, despite an aging population, households at an age that are typically raising children are also well-represented. Overall, the Town's median age of 52.0 was higher than the County's (43.9) and state's (39.9). It also increased much more quickly from the age of 44.5 in 2010 compared to the county (42.0 in 2010) and state (38.1 in 2010).



Source: ACS 2022



Source: ACS 2022

It is important to analyze the following two age groups: those 17 years of age and younger and those 65 years of age or older. These are often referred to as dependent populations since they are less likely to be in the workforce. The two groups have differing needs: the younger group requires schools and childcare, and the older group requires increased levels of medical care.

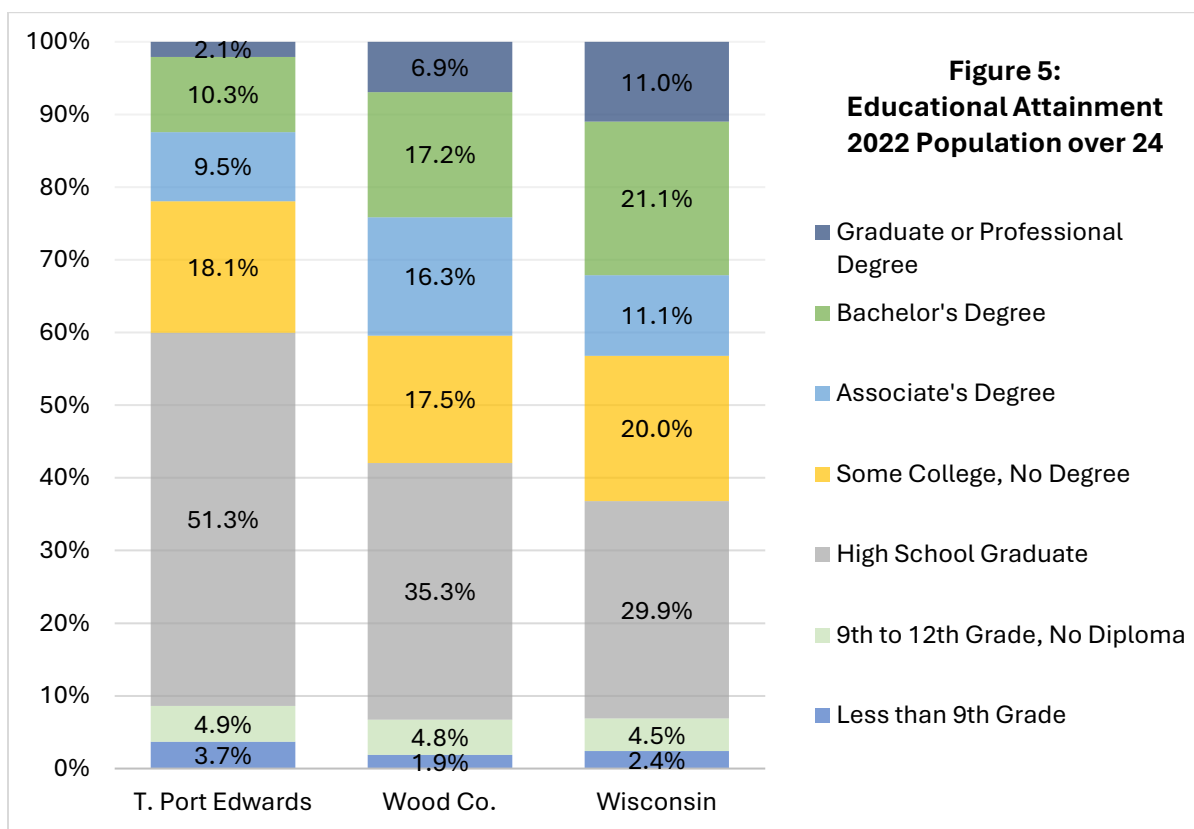
From 2010 to 2022, the population of 17 and younger group in Port Edwards decreased from 21.4 percent of the population to 17.5 percent of the population according to the American Community Survey. The population percentage of those in the 65 and older group increased from 13.6 percent in

2010 to 24.5 percent in 2022. 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 county, state, and national levels, especially in rural Wisconsin counties. This will impact the future labor supply, school systems, and health care industry.

Education and Income Levels

Education

Figure 7 compares educational attainment of those in the Town of Port Edwards to the county and the state. In 2022, 91.3 percent of the Town aged 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was 1.9 percent lower than the county average and 1.8 percent lower than the state average.



Source: ACS 2022

In 2022, 12.4 percent of Town residents aged 25 years and over had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. This was lower than Wood County at 24.1 percent and the state at 33.1 percent. Support for education ensures that a skilled workforce will meet the Town's future needs.

Income

Median household income and per capita income are two commonly used measures of income. Median household income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups,

meaning half of all households have income above that amount, and half have income below that amount. Per capita income is the average income earned per person.

The median household income for the Town of Port Edwards was \$66,500 in 2022, and the per capita income was \$37,372. These are both slightly higher than Wood County's income figures, but lower than the state's. However, this is partially offset by a lower cost of living, as reflected in the housing costs discussed in Chapter 3. Note that the Town and the County's incomes have risen more slowly than statewide incomes. See Tables 4 and 5.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there has been a cumulative inflation rate of 44.1 percent between 2010 and 2022, meaning that the median household income in Port Edwards is likely not keeping up with the cost of living, but the per capita income is. Additionally, a higher share of residents over age 65 in 2022 compared to 2010 could mean more seniors are living on fixed income, rather than working full time, affecting income.

| Table 4: Median Household Income | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | 2010 | 2022 | Net Change | % Change |
| T. Port Edwards | \$55,078 | \$66,500 | \$11,422 | 20.74% |
| Wood County | \$47,204 | \$63,273 | \$16,069 | 34.04% |
| Wisconsin | \$51,598 | \$72,458 | \$20,860 | 40.43% |

Source: ACS 2010, 2022

| Table 5: Per Capita Income | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | 2010 | 2022 | Net Change | % Change |
| T. Port Edwards | \$25,734 | \$37,372 | \$11,638 | 45.22% |
| Wood County | \$24,893 | \$36,712 | \$11,819 | 47.48% |
| Wisconsin | \$26,624 | \$40,130 | \$13,506 | 50.73% |

Source: ACS 2010, 2022

Employment Characteristics

Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Town of Port Edwards in 2010 and 2022. The labor force includes those that are 16 and older who are working or seeking work, and it decreased by 6.5 percent during this time. There was a decrease of 47 people in the labor force from 2010 to 2022 in the Town. This is likely due to the rise in the median age, where more people are retiring. This decline contrasted with the marginal labor force growth seen in the state at 1.7 percent. The decline was similar for the county, which had a negative 5.4 percent change in the labor force from 2010 to 2022. Note that these figures are the number of residents who have a job, not the number of jobs within the Town's boundaries.

The participation rate is the percentage of those 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate decreased by 4.3 percent in the Town of Port Edwards from 2010 to 2022. There was also a decrease in the county and state during this period, partially due to a statewide trend of a rising median age and increase in retirements.

| Table 6: Labor Force | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|-------|
| Minor Civil Division | Labor Force | | | Labor Participation Rate | |
| | 2010 | 2022 | % Change | 2010 | 2022 |
| T. Port Edwards | 726 | 679 | -6.5% | 64.3% | 60.2% |
| Wood County | 39,534 | 37,413 | -5.4% | 66.5% | 62.5% |
| Wisconsin | 3,078,465 | 3,129,606 | 1.7% | 69.0% | 65.7% |

Source: ACS 2010, 2022

In 2010, the Town of Port Edwards had an employed population of 667 people. This number decreased by 13 people to 654 by 2022, for a decrease of 1.9 percent. From 2010 to 2022, the employed population decreased in the county at a rate of 2.9 percent and increased 5.3 percent statewide. The U.S. census classifies individuals as unemployed if they are not working, actively seeking work, and available to accept a job. It doesn't include people such as stay-at-home parents or retirees. The unemployment rate in the Town was 3.7 percent in 2022. This was lower than both the county at 4.2 percent and higher than the state at 3.4 percent.

| Table 7: Employment | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------------------|
| Minor Civil Division | 2010 | 2022 | % Change | 2022 Unemployment Rate |
| T. Port Edwards | 667 | 654 | -1.9% | 3.7% |
| Wood County | 36,924 | 35,858 | -2.9% | 4.2% |
| Wisconsin | 2,869,310 | 3,020,890 | 5.3% | 3.4% |

Source: ACS 2010, 2022

As shown in Table 8, in 2022 most Port Edwards residents were employed in the areas of natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. This is unlike 2010, when more residents worked in production, transportation, and material moving occupations. In 2022, the second sector most represented was management, business, science, and arts occupations, compared to 2010, when the second largest sector was sales and service occupations. The two largest sectors in 2022 were also the sectors that gained the most jobs since 2010, whereas the remaining sectors all have fewer employees in 2022 compared to 2010.

| Table 8: Resident Occupations | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Occupation Sector | 2010 | 2022 | Change (Total) | % Change |
| Management, business, science, and arts | 104 | 159 | 55 | 52.9% |
| Service occupations | 110 | 100 | -10 | -9.1% |
| Sales and office occupations | 152 | 79 | -73 | -48.0% |
| Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations | 108 | 171 | 63 | 58.3% |
| Production, transportation, and material moving occupations | 193 | 145 | -48 | -24.9% |
| Total employed | 667 | 654 | -13 | -1.9% |

Source: ACS 2010, 2022

Issues

Demographic Snapshot

- The population and number of households has increased since 1990, with a slight decline since 2010. The average household size is lower than 1990, which is in line with county and state trends.
- The Town of Port Edwards is expected to experience relatively flat population growth through 2040, with the number of households growing faster than the rate of population growth.
- There are many people in the older age categories and the median age in Port Edwards and Wood County is considerably higher than the state average.
- The median age rose 7.5 years from 44.5 in 2010 to 52.0 in 2022.
- In 2022, 91.3 percent of Town of Port Edwards residents aged 25 and over had a high school diploma or higher and 12.4 percent of residents had a bachelor's degree or higher. The Town had a slightly lower rate of high school graduates than the county and state. Port Edwards and Wood County had lower levels of college graduates than the state.
- Both the 2022 median household income of \$66,500 and per capita income of \$37,372 were lower than the state and higher than the county. The Town's Cost of Living is also lower than the state's.

- The labor participation rate is lower than the county's and the state's. The unemployment rate is higher than the state's, but lower than the County's.
- Most people working in the Town of Port Edwards work in the areas of natural resources, construction, maintenance, management, business, science, and arts occupations.

Planning Issues

Citizens, Planning Committee, and Town Board members have identified a variety of issues during the planning process, which are discussed in each chapter. Overall, the Town's distance from nearby clinics, hospitals, grocery stores, and lack of senior housing is expected to be a challenge as retirees continue to age. There is a desire to support development without impacting the Town's rural character.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

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

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

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

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

Chapter 2: Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources

This chapter describes local land and water conditions in detail as well as agricultural resources and cultural heritage, which often extend beyond the Town's boundaries. An overview of recent countywide natural resource planning efforts is described below, followed by a description of local natural resource conditions, as well as a list of programs related to these resources.

Previous Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resource Plans and Studies

The following plans may be used as resources to guide local policy and decision-making regarding resource management and protection:

NCWRPC Regional Livability Plan, 2015

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

Wood County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The County's comprehensive plan addressed several issues: invasive species, loss of farmland, crop damage from wildlife, protection of natural resources and habitat, protection of groundwater, preservation of historic structures, and support for outdoor recreation and cultural amenities that benefit County residents.

Wood County Land & Water Resource Management Plan, 2015

The plan provides an inventory of the County's natural resources and a series of goals and objectives intended to improve and protect these resources in the future. This plan identifies a variety of issues, including water quality concerns from urban and rural uses, impacts of unplanned development, erosion, and pollution concerns, and addressing impaired waters. This Plan is updated every five years.

Wood County Soil Survey

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is a federal agency that produces the Wood County, Wisconsin Soil Survey. The survey contains predictions of soil characteristics for selected land uses and highlights the limitations and hazards inherent in the County's soils. A series of detailed maps identifying the location of soil types in Wood County accompanies the survey.

State of the Central Wisconsin River Basin, 2002

This Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) report provides a snapshot of ecological conditions and prioritized management needs for the Wisconsin River, along with work planning, budget decisions, and management recommendations.

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

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

Wood County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2019-2023

This plan identifies outdoor recreation opportunities in Wood County and qualifies the County to receive funding for parks and outdoor recreation facilities. It is currently being updated and will include a list of potential upgrades to parks and recreation facilities. Currently, the County operates one park in the Town: Wood County Intensive Use ATV Area. The 400-acre area includes 10 miles of ATV trails, restroom facilities, a wash down station, loading/unloading ramp, playground equipment, open shelter, and an enclosed shelter. Proposed improvements in the existing outdoor recreation plan include adding a drinking fountain, paving the parking lot, installing countertops and outlets in the picnic shelter, creating a primitive camping area, and adding trails in the adjacent County Forest.

Wisconsin Historic Preservation Plan 2016-2025

This plan, created by the Wisconsin Historical Society, has five goals to advance historic preservation in Wisconsin: develop educational opportunities, increase awareness and support of historic preservation, increase funding sources, cultivate partnerships, and expand digital data and access.

Issues

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.

Inventory

The Town of Port Edwards is in the center of southern Wood County, Wisconsin, where it borders the City of Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, Town of Remington, and Town of Seneca, as well as the Towns of Armenia and Finley in Juneau County and Town of Rome in Adams County. The Town is rural

in character and features relatively flat topography with high water tables. The Town's landscape is primarily woodland, agriculture, grassland, and wetlands.

Existing Conditions

Climate

The climate in Wood County is continental, characterized by large seasonal and daily ranges in temperature. Winters are usually cold and snowy, and summers are generally warm with periods that are hot and humid. Precipitation on average is adequate for agricultural purposes, although soil moisture varies based on the water table and time of year. Prevailing winds are generally from the west and northwest in winter, and from the south in summer.

Geology, Topography, and Soils

The Town is entirely within the Central Sand Plains ecological landscape. The Central Sand Plains are underlain by sandstone containing shale and dolomite. The terrain is relatively flat, containing extensive wetlands and woodlands.

Since the Town was covered by Glacial Lake Wisconsin, soils are generally sandy and nutrient-poor. They are a result of outwash and glacial lake deposits as glaciers melted during the last ice age. Soil drainage characteristics vary across this landscape, with some sandy areas draining well, and other low-lying areas forming wetlands. Only 2 percent of the Town is rated by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as prime farmland.

The parts of the Town of Port Edwards with the deepest water table are the most conducive to structural development. They are (beginning at the southern part of the town) the areas to the East of County Highway G to the Wisconsin River with some exceptions. As you follow County Highway G to the north through the Town, structural development becomes more conducive to acres east and west, north, and south of the Highway.

Natural Resources

Forests

Woodlands cover about 17,334 acres, or approximately 69 percent of the Town. Forests play a key role in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas like steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. Expansive forests provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development. All forests are dynamic, always changing from one stage to another, influenced by natural forces and human behavior. Changes can be subtle and occur over long periods or can happen in short spans of time from activities such as timber harvest, a windstorm, or a fire.

Common tree species include pine, oak, and aspen. Tamarack and Black Spruce are also found in wetland areas. There are approximately 5,614 acres of County Forest in the Town and an additional 3,285 acres of privately-owned forest in the state's Managed Forest Law program. This program has been established to preserve and protect woodlands through practicing proper management

techniques in exchange for a reduction in property taxes. Within the MFL program, some, but not all lands are open for public use. An updated map of open lands and access points is found on the Wisconsin DNR's website. Additional woodland that is not in the MFL program (and therefore not open to the public) also exists on private land.

Agricultural Areas

Most of the Town, 98.0%, is rated as “not prime farmland.” About 2% (517 acres) is rated as “prime farmland.” See Map 3. Most soils with a “prime” rating are in the eastern part of the Town in the area of the floodplain of the Wisconsin River. A few of those “prime” acres are also found in the far northeast corner of the Town. Although soils are not conducive to traditional agricultural uses, the Town of Port Edwards is still a strong agricultural community. Presently, irrigated vegetable crops and cranberries play a major role in the local community and continue to grow. See Map 5. Aerial application of agricultural chemicals is an acceptable practice within the Town if aerial application complies with Wisconsin Administrative Code, Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, Chapter 29, and other applicable state and federal regulations. Many other acres are dedicated to supporting residences and associated uses. Small and hobby farms are also present in some areas throughout the Town. It is the desire of those responding to the community planning survey that the agricultural character of the Town of Port Edwards be preserved.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Mining

Nonmetallic mining has a presence throughout Wood County, which involve “sites” or “quarries” where rock, sand, and other aggregates are extracted. There are two known nonmetallic mines or metallic deposits in the Town.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are often unsuitable for development since they are constantly in a state of erosion due to wind and rain. Development on these surfaces would be subject to unstable foundations and exacerbate the erosion process. Steep slopes are nearly nonexistent in the Town, with a few exceptions, such as the small ridge that is parallel to the Wisconsin River.

Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife Habitat in the Town includes grasslands, marshes, waterways, and woodlands. Present species include deer, turkey, rabbits, grouse, geese, ducks, beavers, squirrels, red foxes, woodchucks, pheasants, muskrats, gray wolves, badgers, coyotes, opossums, otters, minks, raccoons, skunks, sandhill cranes, weasels, and other various birds, raptors, and migratory waterfowl. Fish such as walleye, northern pike, perch, bass, and assorted panfish are also found in aquatic habitats. Public lands that preserve natural features and wildlife habitat are scattered throughout the county. Although there are no state or federal lands in the Town, part of the County forest is located in the southeastern portion of the Town. Careful management of these areas ensures continued habitat for wildlife as demand for land for development and other uses continues.

Development sometimes encroaches on wildlife habitat, often destroying former homes or breeding areas for wildlife. Port Edwards officials and residents recognize the value of wildlife in residence, and through this planning process will establish development densities that will assure protection of wildlife habitat.

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 common 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. As of 2024, there is one closed site in the Town of Port Edwards on the BRRTS map, the Town Garage.

Rare Species and Natural Communities

Wisconsin's National Heritage Inventory Program (NHI) is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare, threatened, and endangered species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the State. The program's database, on the Wisconsin DNR website, identifies species and natural communities that are currently tracked by the NHI. As of April 2024, NHI tracked the following species in Wood County with state endangered status:

- Blanchard's Cricket Frog
- Little Goblin Moonwort
- Red-necked Grebe
- Eastern Massasauga
- Black Tern
- Incurvate Emerald
- Kirtland's Warbler
- Peregrine Falcon

The following threatened species listed by the state also exist in Wood County:

- Wood Turtle
- Redfin Shiner
- Greater Prairie-Chicken
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Frosted Elfin
- Dwarf Milkweed
- Pale Green Orchid
- Henslow's Sparrow
- Northern Long-eared Bat
- Little Brown Bat
- Big Brown Bat

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

Water Resources

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

Watersheds

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

Surface Water

Streams and wetlands are the dominant surface water feature in the Town. Named streams include Cranberry Creek, Lynn Creek, Moccasin Creek, and the Wisconsin River. There are several unnamed creeks that are tributaries of these streams, many of which have been channelized for agricultural purposes.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

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

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

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. The Wisconsin River is

listed as impaired due to degraded biological communities and PCB contamination according to WDNR. Additionally, Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS) have become a growing concern throughout the state. Policies and practices continue to emerge regarding PFAS, and the Town may monitor information about this topic as it is released.

Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Wood County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. Invasive species can alter the natural ecological relationships among native species and affect ecosystem function, economic value of ecosystems, and human health. Reed Canary Grass, Zebra Mussel, and Rusty Crayfish are listed by WDNR as invasive aquatic species that are present in the Town of Port Edwards.

Floodplains

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines floodplains as lands where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any year. These areas store excess water during flood events and often feature wetlands and high water tables. The degree to which floods occur depends on the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, mapped floodplains should be able to contain the most substantial (regional) flood, i.e., those that have a probability of occurring once every one hundred years. Due to the nature of the geography and hydrology, floodplain mapping may have accuracy issues in this area. The presence and exact location of floodplains must be verified by field survey, and applicable permits obtained prior to any land disturbing activity.

Shorelands

Shorelands are sensitive areas near surface water bodies, and disturbing them causes erosion, runoff, and other issues that affect water quality and aesthetics. The Wood County Planning and Zoning Department administers Shoreland Zoning for lands 300 feet from a river or stream and 1,000 feet from a lake.

Wetlands

Wetlands are an important part of the hydrologic cycle and local ecological systems. They absorb excess water and release it back into the watershed slowly, preventing flooding and minimizing flood damage. This helps with stormwater management, especially as development increases impervious surfaces. Wetlands also store and filter pollutants such as pesticides and animal wastes before it enters ground or surface water, since their slow movement allows pollutants to settle.

Wetlands that filter or store sediments or nutrients for extended periods may undergo fundamental changes. Sediments will eventually fill wetlands and nutrients will eventually modify the vegetation. Such changes may result in the loss of this function over time. Eradication of wetlands can occur using fill material. This can destroy the hydrological function of the site and open the area to improper development. To address this, WDNR has minimum standards for managing wetlands, and local zoning ordinances regulate the impact of development on wetlands.

Aquifers

Wood County's groundwater originates in two aquifers: the sand and gravel aquifer, and the crystalline bedrock aquifer. The sand and gravel aquifer is a result of glacial deposits, and it is the closest to the surface. Most wells use this aquifer as it is easier to drill into and produces faster flow rates compared to the crystalline bedrock aquifer, which is deeper. Because the gravel-sand aquifer is closer to the surface, it is more vulnerable to contamination.

Groundwater

Groundwater is water that occupies void spaces between soil particles or cracks in the rock below the land surface. It originates as precipitation that infiltrated the ground. The type of soil and bedrock that a well is drilled into often determines the pH, saturation index, and the amount of hardness or alkalinity in water. The type of soil and bedrock in a region also determines how quickly contaminants can reach groundwater. Groundwater can also be vulnerable to poor management, drought, or other factors.

The Town of Port Edwards is characterized by water table depths ranging from 0 inches to 137 inches where data is available. Most of the areas with high water tables lie to the west of County Highway G. Some areas lying closer to the Wisconsin River also have a high water table, and are in the river's floodplain. Drinking water and agriculture both rely on groundwater in the Town.

Groundwater quality can be impaired by a variety of pollutants including leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs), landfills, septic tanks, over-application of pesticides and fertilizers, and spills of hazardous chemicals. The most common contaminants found in Wisconsin's groundwater are pesticides, nitrates, nitrogen, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These contaminants come from a multitude of sources including nitrogen-based fertilizers, septic systems, animal waste storage, feedlots, municipal and industrial wastewater discharges, and sludge disposal.

Groundwater contaminants can affect the health of humans, livestock, and wildlife. Because groundwater seeps more slowly than surface runoff, pollution that occurs today may not become evident for several years. Once polluted, the groundwater is very difficult to purify and may take many years to clean itself by the dilution process.

The DNR has developed a groundwater contamination susceptibility model. This model identifies groundwater contamination susceptibility by measuring the ease with which water (and any contaminant carried in the water) travels from the land surface to the top of the groundwater layer. Five characteristics are used to obtain the composite measurement: bedrock depth, bedrock type, soil characteristics, surficial deposits, water table depth, and contaminated source waters.

High-Capacity Wells

Numerous high-capacity wells are located throughout the County. According to the DNR there are 62 active high-capacity wells located in the Town. A high capacity well is a well that has the capacity to withdraw more than 100,000 gallons per day, or a well that, together with all other wells on the same property, has a capacity of more than 100,000 gallons per day. Residential wells and fire

protection wells are excluded from the definition of a high capacity well, and their pumping capacities are not included in the calculation of a property's well capacity. These wells extract water from considerable depths and may impact water quantity in aquifers.

Historical and Cultural Resources

A cultural resource is a broad term that can encompass many aspects of heritage. Cultural resources may include archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to Native Americans or other cultural groups. Cultural resources are part of the Town's heritage. Cultural resources include buildings, sites, and landscape that help communities retain their sense of identity over time. There are currently no structures or sites in the Town listed in the Wisconsin Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI).

Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resource Programs

There are a variety of programs available to the Town related to natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Some of these are identified below. For specific program information, the agency or group that offers the program should be contacted.

Private Forestry

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

Managed Forest Law (MFL)

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

Parks and Recreation Program

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

Stewardship Grants for Nonprofit Conservation Organizations

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

Nonpoint Source Program (NSP)

Wisconsin's NPS Program, through a comprehensive network of federal, state, and local agencies working in partnership with other organizations and citizens, addresses the significant nonpoint sources in the state. This program combines voluntary and regulatory approaches with financial and technical assistance. Abatement activities include agriculture, urban, forestry, wetlands, and hydrologic modifications. The core activities of the program, which are 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. Specialists, engineers, hydrogeologists, program experts, and program assistants assist public and private well owners to address water quality complaints and water system problems. They also provide citizens with informational materials about drinking water supplies and groundwater.

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

Aquatic Habitat Protection Program

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

Endangered Resources Program

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

Fisheries Management Program

This WDNR 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 state, federal and local initiatives 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 using federal funding.

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. Programs include:

- 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
- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
- 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. Landowners enter an agreement with USDA to restore wetlands on their property in exchange for various payments and/or easements.

Discovery Farms Program

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

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants

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

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

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



Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Avoid development in natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, ponds, and groundwater resources.
2. Ensure that all new development in the Town is compatible with the Town's existing rural character.

Objectives:

1. Discourage new development in the Town in places not suited for development (floodplains, wetlands, and areas with high water tables as mapped in this plan).
2. Promote development that minimizes groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems and other sources.
3. Support agriculture and forestry that enhances the Town's economy.
4. Utilize guidance from Wisconsin Historical Society and others when historic or cultural sites and structures are encountered.

Policies:

1. Discourage new development from areas shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
2. Discourage the draining or filling of wetlands.
3. Support landowners who engage in forestry or agriculture in the Town.
4. Refer residents to the County Forester and/or Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for information regarding tree diseases, invasive species, and other similar concerns.

Chapter 3: Housing

This Chapter analyses trends and characteristics of the Town’s housing stock and the current housing market. Housing affects how public facilities, services, and transportation infrastructure should be managed. Understanding the factors affecting people’s ability to meet their own housing needs provides a basis for reinforcing community ties, fostering economic development, and improving the quality of life.

Previous Housing Plans and Studies

Wood County Rural Economic Development Plan (REDI)

In 2021, Wood County completed this plan to respond to unique challenges like a stagnating population, workforce shortage, and challenges as its population ages. Recommendations include building technology infrastructure, creating a housing plan, branding, and marketing, promoting cultural amenities, improving tourism access to natural features, establishing an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and collaborating on economic development.

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 funding from its various programs. The Plan provides the framework to identify housing, homeless, community, and economic development needs and resources and to tailor a strategic plan for meeting those needs.

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies several issues affecting community livability related to housing: an aging population, smaller household sizes, a lack of housing options, and an increase in housing costs related to income.

ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2020

United Way created this report to describe “ALICE” households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed). These are households that are working and have a higher income than the poverty rate, but still struggle to afford a basic “household survival budget”, which leaves them with no savings. According to this report, 29 percent of Town’s households are either ALICE or below the poverty level, compared to 40 percent countywide and 34 percent statewide. The report states that

many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, childcare, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

Wisconsin Realtors Association's (WRA) Workforce Housing Report

The association released a study in 2019 finding a lack of workforce housing throughout the State of Wisconsin. The claim is backed by the falling number of building permits being issued for new home construction, the rising cost of new home construction, a decline in home ownership and a continued decline in overall affordability. The report can be found on the WRA's website.

Wood County Comprehensive Plan

The 2009 Wood County Comprehensive Plan found that housing was affordable for most people at the time, and although single family homes were most common, multifamily housing was increasing in supply. Urbanized areas were growing more quickly than rural areas, and housing in unincorporated areas had higher values for new housing construction. Homeownership was more affordable than homeownership in cities and villages, but renting was more affordable in towns. Goals included providing sound, healthy, and affordable housing for all income levels, providing more senior housing for an aging population, and increasing sustainable housing that features environmentally friendly materials and low energy bills.

Housing Assessment

Housing Type and Tenure

In 2022, the Town of Port Edwards had approximately 548 total housing units, 90.1 percent of which were occupied year-round. Of the occupied units, 84.3 percent of them were owner-occupied. The Town of Port Edwards had a higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than both Wood County and the State of Wisconsin, at 73.0 percent and 67.7 percent, respectively.

The average household size of 2.61 was higher than the county (2.29) and the state (2.51). In 24.1 percent of households the householder lived alone, and 36.9 percent of households had an individual age 65 or older. The larger average household size and lower share of householders living alone suggests that the Town has many families with children, but the Town also has a relatively high share of households with someone aged 65 or over. See Table 9.

| Table 9: Housing Units by Type and Tenure, 2022 | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
| | T. Port Edwards | Wood County | Wisconsin |
| Total Housing Units | 548 | 34,558 | 2,734,511 |
| Total occupied housing units | 498 | 31,887 | 2,425,488 |
| Vacant Housing Units | 50 | 2,671 | 309,023 |
| Seasonal Housing Units | 21 | 572 | 164,033 |
| Owner occupied housing units | 420 | 23,287 | 1,641,590 |
| Renter occupied housing units | 78 | 8,600 | 783,898 |
| Average household size | 2.61 | 2.29 | 2.51 |
| % owner occupied | 84.3% | 73.0% | 67.7% |
| % householder living alone | 24.1% | 31.7% | 30.8% |
| % with individuals 65 or over | 36.9% | 35.2% | 30.4% |

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Structural Characteristics

Tables 10 and 11 detail the number and percentage of housing units by type. Housing in the Town of Port Edwards is overwhelmingly single-family detached housing (88.3 percent) and mobile homes (11.3 percent), with no multifamily housing. Wood County is also comprised mainly of single-family housing but does have more of a variety of housing types. This is due mainly to a balance of clustered and rural communities throughout the county. In Wood County, single-family detached homes account for 75.1 percent of housing units, followed by multifamily structures with 5 or more units, which account for 12.0 percent of housing.

An aging population may increase demand for more senior-friendly housing options such as twin homes with barrier-free design. A high proportion of single-family homes may also impact housing affordability, especially for seniors who typically live on fixed income. A greater variety of housing styles would better accommodate those at various income levels, but structures with more than one or two housing units are difficult to create using well and septic systems.

| Table 10: Housing Units by Structural Type, 2022 | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|---------|--------|-----------|-------------|-------|----------------|
| Community | 1- Detached | 1- Attached | 2 | 3 or 4 | 5 or more | Mobile Home | Other | Total Occupied |
| T. Port Edwards | 484 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 62 | 0 | 548 |
| Wood County | 25,939 | 953 | 1,646 | 371 | 4,143 | 1,504 | 2 | 34,558 |
| Wisconsin | 1,818,114 | 116,442 | 168,357 | 96,643 | 448,394 | 85,538 | 1,023 | 2,734,511 |

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

| Table 11: Housing Units by Structural Type (Percentage), 2022 | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Community | 1- Detached | 1- Attached | 2 | 3 or 4 | 5 or more | Mobile Home | Other | Total Occupied |
| T. Port Edwards | 88.3% | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 11.3% | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| Wood County | 75.1% | 2.8% | 4.8% | 1.1% | 12.0% | 4.4% | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| Wisconsin | 66.5% | 4.3% | 6.2% | 3.5% | 16.4% | 3.1% | 0.0% | 100.0% |

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Age Characteristics

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

| Table 12: Year Structure Built, 2022 | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Community | 2020 or later | 2010 to 2019 | 2000 to 2009 | 1990 to 1999 | 1980 to 1989 | 1970 to 1979 | 1960 to 1969 | 1950 to 1959 | 1940 to 1949 | 1939 or earlier |
| T. Port Edwards | 0 | 16 | 42 | 92 | 108 | 119 | 45 | 48 | 15 | 63 |
| Wood County | 587 | 2,267 | 3,425 | 3,782 | 3,607 | 6,123 | 2,915 | 4,587 | 1,574 | 5,890 |
| Wisconsin | 9,984 | 165,816 | 333,032 | 365,107 | 263,915 | 394,115 | 262,836 | 287,354 | 147,777 | 504,575 |

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

| Table 13: Year Structure Built (Percentage), 2022 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Community | 2020 or later | 2010 to 2019 | 2000 to 2009 | 1990 to 1999 | 1980 to 1989 | 1970 to 1979 | 1960 to 1969 | 1950 to 1959 | 1940 to 1949 | 1939 or earlier |
| T. Port Edwards | 0.0% | 2.9% | 7.7% | 16.8% | 19.7% | 21.7% | 8.2% | 8.8% | 2.7% | 11.5% |
| Wood County | 1.7% | 6.5% | 9.9% | 10.9% | 10.4% | 17.6% | 8.4% | 13.2% | 4.5% | 16.9% |
| Wisconsin | 0.4% | 6.1% | 12.2% | 13.4% | 9.7% | 14.4% | 9.6% | 10.5% | 5.4% | 18.5% |

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Tables 12 and 13 outline build dates of housing units throughout the Town, county, and state based on 2022 American Community Survey data. Most housing stock was constructed in the Town of Port Edwards between 1970 and 1979 (21.7 percent). The next most significant periods of housing construction in the Town were from 1980 to 1989 (19.7 percent) and from 1990 to 1999 (16.8 percent). Few housing units have been constructed within the Town since 2010 (2.9 percent). Home supply has not been constructed to meet demand since the Great Recession of 2008 leading to increased competition and higher prices.

Value Characteristics

Table 14 details housing values in owner-occupied homes throughout the Town, County, and state. In 2022, the median housing value was \$157,800 in the Town of Port Edwards. This is higher than the county (\$156,600) and lower than the state (\$231,400). The largest concentration in home values (24.5%) is in the \$150,000-\$199,999 range, with few options above \$500,000. Overall, housing costs in the Town are much lower than they are statewide because of the lower cost of living. However, those shopping for a home to rent or buy might not be able to afford the options that are currently listed.

| Table 14: Housing Values Owner Occupied, 2022 | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Community | Less than \$50,000 | \$50,000 to \$99,999 | \$100,000 to \$149,999 | \$150,000 to \$199,999 | \$200,000 to \$299,999 | \$300,000 to \$499,999 | \$500,000 or more | Median Value |
| T. Port Edwards | 7.1% | 17.6% | 20.7% | 24.5% | 22.6% | 5.5% | 1.9% | \$157,800 |
| Wood County | 7.0% | 17.6% | 22.8% | 18.9% | 21.6% | 10.1% | 1.9% | \$156,600 |
| Wisconsin | 4.0% | 7.2% | 12.9% | 16.7% | 26.7% | 23.4% | 9.0% | \$231,400 |

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Housing Affordability

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

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

Tables 15 and 16 show that the percentage of households in the Town of Port Edwards that pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs is similar to countywide and statewide rates for both homeowners and renters.

| Table 15: Owner-Occupied Housing Affordability (Median Selected Owner Costs) | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Community | With mortgage | % Cost burdened | No mortgage | % Cost burdened |
| T. Port Edwards | \$1,135 | 20.7% | \$472 | 11.7% |
| Wood County | \$1,169 | 18.4% | \$496 | 12.4% |
| Wisconsin | \$1,602 | 22.1% | \$624 | 12.1% |

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

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

| Table 16: Renter-Occupied Housing Affordability (Median Selected Renter Costs) | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| Community | Median Gross Rent | % cost burdened |
| T. Port Edwards | \$729 | 41.7% |
| Wood County | \$887 | 45.1% |
| Wisconsin | \$992 | 43.1% |

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

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

Specialized Housing

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

Senior Housing

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

According to research by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, most seniors prefer to “age in place,” or remain in their home throughout retirement. This can be difficult for those in rural areas such as Port Edwards, as the ability to access medical care and necessary goods and

services can become burdensome. This highlights the importance of senior transportation services and universal design (home design that creates access for all people). The nearest senior housing is in the Cities of Nekoosa and Wisconsin Rapids.

Summary of Housing Characteristics

Most housing consists of single-family and mobile home detached housing that is owner occupied. Most housing was constructed since 1970, and the greatest share of housing falls into middle-valuation ranges. Consistent with statewide trends, new housing construction over the past decade has stalled, as only 2.9 percent of homes in the Town have been constructed since 2010. Affordability is an issue for some renters and homeowners within the Town, particularly for renters. Mobile homes and duplexes are a feasible way to allow for more entry-level housing in the Town.

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

Housing Programs

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

Wisconsin Department of Administration

- Community Development Block Grant-Housing Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program
- Community Development Block Grant-Small Cities Housing Program
- Homeless Programs (EHH Program)
 - Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
 - Housing Assistance Program (HAP)
 - Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP). Collectively, these three programs are referred to the
- HOME Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Program
- HOME Rental Housing Development (RHD)
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA)
- Housing Cost Reduction Initiative Program (HCRI)

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

- Housing-Related Consumer Protection Services

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

- Advantage Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP)
- Housing Tax Credit (HTC)
- Wisconsin Bipartisan Housing Legislation Package 2023
 - Infrastructure Access Loan
 - Restore Main Street Loan
 - Vacancy-to-Vitality Loan
 - Home Repair and Rehab Loan
- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers
- Foreclosure Prevention
- Advantage Conventional Loan
- FHA Advantage Loan
- First-Time Home Buyer Advantage
- Foundation Grant Program
- Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) Program

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

- Section 502 Homeownership Direct Loan Program
- Section 502 Mutual Self-Help Housing Loans
- Section 504 Very-Low-Income Housing Repair Program
- Section 515 Multi-Family Housing Loan Program
- Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance Program
- Section 523/524 Rural Housing Site Loans
- Section 533 Rural Housing Preservation Grants
- Single Family Home Loan Guarantees

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- Hazard Mitigation Assistance Programs

Other Programs

- Central Wisconsin Community Action Council
- The Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- Historic Homes Tax Credit

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Encourage home improvements and development standards that will enhance the overall appearance of the Town's housing, while increasing the structural quality of homes.
2. Promote development at a density that is considered much lower than many suburban communities through its comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

Objectives:

1. Encourage homeowners to participate in paint-up/fix-up events.
2. Encourage volunteers or civic organizations to help those who are physically unable to maintain their property.

Policies:

1. Develop zoning standards that promote development at a density that is considered much lower than many suburban communities, yet allow for the 2-acre lot size that makes the land affordable for homeowners.
2. Educate property owners about the Town zoning ordinance and other ordinances that may affect them, including activities that may require permits. The Town will work with Wood County to help make information available to town residents.

Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities

Utilities and community facilities, provided by either public or private entities, are critical for community development. Utilities include things such as electrical service, natural gas, telephone, cable, and internet. Community facilities include local government buildings, libraries, educational facilities, and maintenance and storage facilities, as well as services like law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency medical services. Integrating these utilities and facilities in comprehensive planning ensures that resources are used efficiently as development occurs. The Utilities and Community Facilities Map near the end of this Plan provides detailed information about the inventory throughout the Town.

Previous Plans and Studies

American Transmission Company: 10 Year Transmission System Assessment, 2023

The American Transmission Company manages transmission infrastructure in the state. See ATC's website for a detailed list of projects that are planned to improve flexibility, reliability, economic factors, connectivity, and performance.

Wood County Broadband Plan, 2024

This assessment involved a survey of Wood County residents and their attitudes towards broadband expansion in the County. Generally, there was strong support to expand broadband throughout the County and use it as an economic development tool. This Plan helps Wood County utilize Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding to expand its infrastructure.

Wood County All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2020

This document is required for local governments to be eligible for certain disaster mitigation programs. An inventory of utilities, community facilities and emergency services form the background for understanding how the County should respond to a disaster. Examples of hazards include floods, tornadoes, winter storms, drought, fire, and hazardous materials accidents.

Wood County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The existing Wood County plan was adopted in 2009. The plan highlighted issues related to protecting groundwater supply and quality, promoting redevelopment and infill to maximize existing infrastructure, maintaining education and health in the County, and providing adequate infrastructure while protecting private property values. As of 2024, this plan is being updated.

Wood County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2018-2022

The County's Outdoor Recreation Plan is updated every 5 years to allow the county to receive funding under various state programs to improve outdoor recreational facilities. Goals of this plan include identifying policies, projects, strategies, guidelines, maintenance program, and Capital Improvement Plan for the County Park System. A list of proposed improvements to the County's park system is contained in this plan, which is being updated in 2024.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2019-2023

To help with planning for outdoor recreation, the WDNR updates the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years. The purpose of the SCORP is to offer a sourcebook and overall guide for providers of recreational activities/facilities. The SCORP identifies issues such as changing demands on recreational resources, how new recreational activities compete for the same limited recreation resources as the traditional ones, and the effect of surrounding land uses on recreational areas. According to a statewide survey, over ninety percent of respondents indicated that walking for pleasure was their most common recreational activity. Hiking, bicycling, and nature study/bird watching are enjoyed by over half of the survey participants. These results emphasize the importance of planning recreational trails.

Wood County REDI Plan, 2021

The Wood County Rural Economic Development (REDI) Plan identifies a need for broadband and cellular service expansion as well as upgraded childcare infrastructure to remain economically competitive. There are currently implementation teams addressing both topics.

Utilities

Water Service

The Town of Port Edwards does not have a public water supply system. Instead, private wells supply the water for public and private facilities within the Town. Concerns exist over water quality as properties continue to develop. Overall, there are 62 high-capacity well locations and an estimated surface water withdrawal locations in the Town, which are mainly used for agricultural purposes.

Wastewater

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

Solid Waste and Recycling

There are no solid waste or recycling facilities in the Town of Port Edwards, but there are four solid waste landfills licensed in Wood County. Waste Management, a private hauler, contracts with Town residents to pick up solid waste and recycling. Wood County maintains a list of businesses on its website that provide various recycling or waste disposal services for specific items like scrap, lightbulbs, electronics, and more. Year-round recycling is also available through Marathon County Solid Waste northeast of Wood County.

Energy and Telecommunications

Electric and Natural Gas

Electric service is provided mostly by Alliant Energy, and some areas are served by Oakdale Electric Cooperative. There are no power generation stations in the Town. Wisconsin Gas provides natural gas service. Areas with no gas lines present often rely on propane storage tanks.

The Enbridge Group also operates four pipelines that travel in a north-south direction through the Town; No leakage problems have occurred along this segment of the transmission pipelines, but an emergency response manual is in place should an event occur.

Telephone

Telephone and Data Systems Inc. and Solarus provide landline service to the Town. Cellular coverage is provided by AT&T, Sprint, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon. See Map 6: Utilities and Community Facilities for locations of known communication towers in the Town.

Cable/Internet

Bug Tussel Wireless, Charter Communications, Inc., Solarus, T-Mobile, TDS Telecom, United States Cellular Corporation, Verizon, and WIN, LLC provide wireline internet service to the Town. Mobile wireless coverage is provided by AT&T, Sprint, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon. As broadband internet infrastructure expands statewide, additional infrastructure may be installed in Wood County in the coming years.



Community Facilities

Town Operations

Town Hall

The Port Edwards Town Hall is located at 2000 County Rd G, Nekoosa, WI 54457. Governing bodies include the Town Board and Planning Committee. The Town Board consists of a Chair, two Supervisors, a Clerk, and a Treasurer. There is also a Road Superintendent and a Town Assessor. Wood County has a Building Inspector who issues building permits in the Town. The Town Planning Committee meets as needed. Voter Registration, Elections, Dog Licensing, and Tax Payments are other services provided at this location.

Post Office

Port Edwards residents use two different Post Office locations. They are located at 160 Market Ave in the Village of Port Edwards and 1001 Market Street in the City of Nekoosa.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

The Wood County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement protection in the Town of Port Edwards. They patrol all county roads and respond to 911 calls. In addition, the Wisconsin State Highway Patrol provides some patrol, mainly on state and federal highways. The Town's former comprehensive plan notes that a relatively small population does not support the creation of its own police department.

Fire and Ambulance

The Town is served by the City of Nekoosa and Village of Port Edwards Fire Departments, which have a mutual aid agreement. The Town also contracts with the City of Wisconsin Rapids to provide ambulance service.

Medical Services

The nearest hospital is Aspirus Riverview in the City of Wisconsin Rapids. Nearby clinics include Aspirus Riverview Clinic – Nekoosa, Aspirus Walk-In Clinic in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin Rapids Veterans Affairs (VA) Clinic, and Marshfield Clinic – Wisconsin Rapids. Marshfield Clinic's main hospital is located only 35 miles away in the City of Marshfield. As the Town's population continues to age, transportation for seniors to medical clinics and hospital will become a growing challenge.

Cemeteries

Wisconsin Statute 157.70 provides for the protection of all human burial sites, including all marked and unmarked burials and cemeteries. There is one known cemetery in the Town as depicted on the

Utilities and Community Facilities Map. Minimum acreage requirements exist for cemeteries established on or after November 1, 1991, unless a cemetery is owned by a religious association, or the Town enacts an ordinance allowing new cemeteries of less than 20 acres to be constructed.

Childcare Facilities

As of 2024, there are two known licensed childcare facilities located within the Town of Port Edwards: Chahk Ha Chee Head Start at 4910 Winneshiek Ln and Little Hoots Daycare at 4278 State Highway 173. The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) maintains an up-to-date directory of childcare locations on its website.

Education

Primary and Secondary Schools

Most of the Town is in the Nekoosa School District, with some northern portions of the Town in the Port Edwards School District and western portions in the Pittsville School District. The Nekoosa School District includes Nekoosa High School, Alexander Middle School, and Humke Elementary School. The Port Edwards School District includes John Edwards Middle-High School and Port Edwards Elementary School. The Pittsville School District includes Pittsville Elementary/Middle School and Pittsville High School. There are also virtual schooling options available online, but there are no known private schools in the Town. See Map 7.

Post-Graduate Education

There are no colleges in the Town, but the nearest campuses are Mid-State Technical College in Wisconsin Rapids and the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point.

Libraries

There are no libraries in the Town of Port Edwards, but the Charles & Jo Ann Lester Library is located in the nearby City of Nekoosa at 100 Park St. It is part of the South Central Library System along with Portage, Adams, Sauk, Columbia, Dane, and Green counties.

Recreation

Parks are discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this Plan. The only park in the Town's Boundaries is the Wood County Intensive Use ATV Area 400-acre area, which includes 10 miles of ATV trails, restroom facilities, a wash down station, loading/unloading ramp, playground equipment, open shelter, and an enclosed shelter. This Park is not funded or operated by the Town.

For outdoor recreation opportunities, town residents currently enjoy recreation facilities in the City of Nekoosa and Village of Port Edwards, as well as area county parks. Wisconsin River Power Company operates two recreational areas on the Wisconsin River off County Road AA. They are the Plank Hill Small Boat Access, a boat ramp and parking area, and the Plank Hill Bank Fishing and Carry-In Boat Access.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Provide utilities and community facilities that are needed, or desired, by Town residents, either through individual Town efforts or as a partner with other communities and agencies.

Objectives:

1. Provide information about the advantages and disadvantages of building in various soils and groundwater conditions and refer potential developers to the appropriate County and State agencies who regulate POWTS and well locations.
2. Work with State and County law enforcement agencies to provide Town residents with a safe place to live.
3. Consider residential, commercial, and industrial development standards that will best meet the needs of the Town while protecting the quality and quantity of groundwater of existing and future residents of the Town of Port Edwards.

Policies:

1. Review development proposals to consider and protect drainage patterns via appropriate setbacks, drainage easements, or similar means.
2. Provide the safest, most efficient fire protection possible by continuing to monitor fire department success, analyze needs for more or different equipment and encourage more Town residents to join the fire department volunteer staff.
3. Continue negotiating for the best ambulance service for Town residents and consider all ambulance options available to the Town when planning for the future.
4. Continue supporting library services for town residents.
5. Work with utility companies and surrounding communities to provide for orderly expansion of needed utilities, while setting safety of town residents and protection of their property values as a high priority.

Chapter 5: Transportation

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

Previous Plans and Studies

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)

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

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

Connect 2050: Let's Connect Wisconsin

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

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

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

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

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

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

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

Wood County Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2023

Wood County's Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan identifies needs and proposes improvements to the County's bicycle and pedestrian network. It serves as an update to the 1995 plan. Wood County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan has an exhaustive list of proposed improvements and new connections throughout the County along with estimated costs and potential funding sources.

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2018

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

State Trails Network Plan, 2003

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

Road Network

Classification

Roads and highways all fall into two classification systems: functional and jurisdictional. Functional classification describes its physical characteristics and jurisdictional classification describes which entity manages the road.

Functional

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

The functional classifications are generally defined as:

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

Jurisdictional

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

Ownership is divided among the federal, state, and local governments. States own over 20 percent of the national road network. The federal government has responsibility for about 5 percent, primarily in national parks, forests, and Indian reservations. Over 75 percent of the road system is locally controlled.

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

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

| Table 17: Road Network Classifications | | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Jurisdiction | Arterial | Collector | Local | Totals |
| State | 3.07 | 2.85 | 0.00 | 5.93 |
| County | 0.00 | 7.96 | 9.64 | 17.60 |
| Town | 0.00 | 1.49 | 39.37 | 40.86 |
| Totals | 3.07 | 12.30 | 49.01 | 64.39 |

Source: WisDOT

Major Road Facilities

The following is a brief description of the major road facilities located in the Town of Port Edwards. All major roads are summarized by functional classification, jurisdiction, and annual average daily traffic (AADT), when available. Map 8: Transportation provides detailed transportation information for the Town. Looking at AADT over time can provide some insight into roads that may need upgrading or increased maintenance in the future. Table 18 shows AADT in 2011 and 2021.

| Table 18: Road Network AADT | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Location | 2011 AADT | 2021 AADT | 2011-2021 % Change |
| STH 173 S of CTH G | 1,500 | 1,700 | 13.3% |
| Cranmoor Rd at CTH G | 2,300 | 2,600 | 13.0% |
| CTH G N of STH 173 | 1,800 | 2,600 | 44.4% |
| CTH G S of STH 54 | 1,600 | 2,500 | 56.3% |
| STH 54 E of CTH G | 2,500 | 3,100 | 24.0% |
| Port Rd N of STH 54-73 | 2,500 | 3,000 | 20.0% |

Source: WisDOT

State Highway 54

STH 54 is a minor arterial that links the Village of Port Edwards to the Town at the Town's northeast corner. Traffic volumes increased between 2011 and 2021 by 24 percent.

State Highway 173

STH 173 is a major collector that links the City of Nekoosa to the Town in an east-west direction. Traffic counts increased slightly by 13.3 percent between 2011 and 2021.

County Highway G

CTH G is a major collector that serves as the Town's primary north-to-south route. Traffic volumes increased along this highway more than anywhere else in the Town between 2011 and 2021, increasing by 44.4 percent and 56.3 percent at its two traffic count locations.

Local Roads

CTH AA, GG, and JJ are minor collectors. No traffic counts are available for these locations. Cranmoor and Port Roads are also noteworthy minor collectors, and they both increased between 2011 and 2021 by 13 and 20 percent, respectively. This could be a result of the popularity of smartphones and other navigation systems which use these roads to route traffic more quickly around the City of Nekoosa and Village of Port Edwards, instead of routing them through slower areas of state highways.

In general, traffic generated and attracted by any new land use can increase congestion on the roadway system. Even without creating new access points, changes in land use can alter the capacity of the roadway. Uncontrolled division of land tends to affect highways by increasing the amount of turning traffic into and out from intersecting driveways, therefore impairing safety, and impeding traffic movements. Future development should consider impacts on traffic patterns.

Road Maintenance

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

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

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

Only 28.7 percent of roads in Port Edwards are rated "good" or better, with 23.7 percent rated "poor" or "very poor." Combined with 46.4 percent of roads in the "fair" category, there will likely need to be several significant road projects in the coming years.

Table 19 also shows road surface type. Almost two-thirds of the Town’s roads are asphalt, with the remainder of the Town’s roads gravel or unimproved.

| Table 19: Road Surface Conditions | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Condition | Miles | Percent |
| Very Poor | 4.92 | 12.0% |
| Poor | 4.78 | 11.7% |
| Fair | 18.97 | 46.4% |
| Good | 3.78 | 9.3% |
| Very Good | 1.59 | 3.9% |
| Excellent | 6.34 | 15.5% |
| No Rating | 0.48 | 1.2% |
| Total | 40.86 | 100.0% |
| Surface Type | Miles | Percent |
| Gravel | 7.66 | 18.7% |
| Asphalt | 26.15 | 64.0% |
| Unimproved | 6.57 | 16.1% |
| Total | 40.86 | 100.0% |

Source: WisDOT

WisDOT Projects

WisDOT highway projects in the Town of Port Edwards as of 2024 include resurfacing STH 54 and STH 173 in 2024. There are additional projects planned for Wood County through 2028, but none of them occur within the Town’s boundaries.

Trucking

STH 54 and 173 are 65-foot Restricted Truck Routes within the Town as designated by WisDOT. Local truck routes often branch out from these major corridors to link local industry with the main truck routes as well as for the distribution of commodities within the local area. Local issues such as safety, weight restrictions, and noise impacts affect the designation of these routes.

Rail

Canadian National provides rail service to the Town in an east-west direction, with a junction in the neighboring City of Nekoosa.

Air Transportation

There are no airports in the Town. Alexander Field – South Wood County airport is the nearest airport, which is classified as Medium General Aviation. This airport frequently brings in tourists using private aircraft who typically visit Sand Valley Golf Resort in the nearby Town of Rome. Airports in La Crosse

(LSE), Mosinee (CWA), and Madison (MSN) provide the nearest passenger service. There are no known private airstrips in the Town of Port Edwards.

Transportation Services for Specialized Populations

Wood County provides elderly and disabled transportation services where riders call ahead and schedule a ride. Rides are provided for shopping, medical appointments, or to other locations as needed. Transit is provided between the Cities of Wisconsin Rapids and Nekoosa and the Village of Port Edwards, along with surrounding areas. Routes and schedules are posted on the County's website.

Bicycling and Walking

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

Recreational Vehicles

There is a snowmobile trail system throughout Wood County that includes the Town of Port Edwards. The Sunset Drifters is a snowmobile club that maintains trails in the Town. There is also an extensive ATV/UTV system throughout Wood County, with ATVs permitted on some state and county highways and prohibited on others; this is subject to change at the county level. At the Town level, all Town roads are open for ATV/UTV use. Maps can change from year to year, so it is important to view the current year's updated maps for snowmobiles, ATVs, and UTVs.



Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Move people as efficiently as possible.
2. Provide residents with safe, efficient, cost-effective access between their homes and places of work, school, parks, shopping and other destination points.
3. Provide a means for travelers to traverse the Town with minimal conflict with local land uses, while enjoying the natural beauty of the Town.
4. Promote existing countywide transportation services to Town residents.

Objectives:

1. Provide choices of transportation for the public.
2. Provide interconnection of transportation systems between municipalities.
3. Provide safe transportation throughout the Town.

Policies:

1. Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wood County, the City of Nekoosa, the Village of Port Edwards, the Ho Chunk Nation, and neighboring towns to encourage and coordinate development of Town roads and bicycle and pedestrian trails and routes.
2. Maintain contact with County and State highway departments to encourage continued improvements to the highways as necessary in the interest of the safety of highway users and efficiency in coordinating local road improvements with those of County and State highways.
3. Develop and maintain an Official Road Map of the Town of Port Edwards, with input from the City of Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, Ho Chunk Nation, adjacent towns, Wood County, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to coordinate street alignments and rail development.
4. Provide for development of future through-streets and street extensions from Nekoosa, Port Edwards, and the Ho Chunk Nation where connections and extensions are logical for interconnections or may be possible to improve traffic movement.
5. Coordinate local street improvements with work on County and State/ Federal highways.
6. Through local zoning and plat review process, monitor the location of access points to assure clear visibility for motorists and bicyclists and to allow sufficient maneuvering space for speed changes and turning.

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. This chapter assesses the Town's economic conditions and provides guidance regarding future development.

Previous Plans and Studies

North Central Wisconsin Regional Entrepreneurship Assessment & Strategy, 2023

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

North Central Wisconsin Regional Recovery Plan, 2022

The purpose of this plan is to guide economic stabilization, recovery, and resiliency efforts within the North Central Wisconsin Region in the face of events that cause economic shocks. Helping local recovery and resiliency efforts will help the regional economy as a whole recover and grow back even stronger than before the disaster struck. A dashboard that monitors the status of economic metrics for broadband, childcare, housing, transportation, workforce and talent attraction, tourism, hospitality, economic indicators, and social indicators is found on NCWRPC's website.

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

NCWRPC conducted a 10-county study of available industrial park acreage, the rate at which it is being developed, and how much acreage is needed in the future. The study includes industrial park planning recommendations along with up-to-date maps of Wood County's six industrial parks. Using absorption rates from 2000 to 2020, it estimates that Wood County has an estimated 15- to 23-year supply of available industrial park acreage.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2021

Wood County is one of ten counties included in the North Central Wisconsin Economic Development District as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The NCWRPC is the agency responsible for maintaining that designation. As

part of the designation, the NCWRPC annually prepares a CEDS. This report summarizes and assesses economic development activities over the past year and presents new and modified strategies to promote growth.

Regional Livability Plan (RLP), 2015

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

- Available Labor Force and Employment. High labor needs combined with an older workforce preparing for retirement will result in a labor force shortage and inability to meet the workforce needs of area businesses. The future availability of a quality labor force is a major concern for the business community.
- Wages. Over the past ten years, the region's cost of living (i.e. home prices and rent) have increased faster than per capita and household incomes. Attracting jobs paying a living wage provides families resources for savings, investments, education, and the purchasing of goods which improves the local economy and increases the quality of life of the region's population.
- Broadband. High-speed broadband connections are crucial for government services, healthcare, education, library systems, private businesses, and residents. Improving the region's telecommunication network can assist existing businesses, attract new businesses, and allow residents to access education opportunities.

ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2023

This report, developed by the United Way, described the 27 percent of households in Wood County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or "ALICE" households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the "household survival budget," which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, childcare, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

ALICE households are in addition to the 13% of households in Wood County that are under the poverty level. This results in a Countywide total of 40 percent of households being either ALICE or under the poverty level, compared to 33 percent statewide. The ALICE report shows that 29 percent of the Town's households are either below the federal poverty level or are ALICE households, indicating that the average household in Port Edwards is less financially strained than the average Wood County and State of Wisconsin household.

Wood County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The Wood County Comprehensive Plan analyzes labor patterns, the economic base, employment projections, and existing facilities. It is being updated in 2024. The 2009 plan outlines the following goals:

- Continue to maintain a strong presence in area economic development organizations.
- Retain local businesses and jobs and help them expand.
- Attract new business to Wood County.
- Continue to improve logistics in Wood County.
- Provide a quality of life that is attractive to young company executives.

Economic Environment

Economic Environment

The Town of Port Edwards is known as a bedroom community, where most workers who live in the Town commute somewhere else for work. Since the Town residents' occupations are influenced by its proximity to urbanized areas like the Cities of Wisconsin Rapids and Nekoosa, and Villages of Port Edwards and Biron, the mix of jobs that Town residents have is similar to Wood County's. Despite the Town's proximity to Adams and Juneau Counties, Portage and Marathon Counties are the second and third most common locations where Town residents work after Wood County. This is due to these counties' relatively high concentration of jobs.

Economic Analysis

Economic Sectors

Table 20 details employment by sector for the Town of Port Edwards. In 2022, there were 654 residents employed in the ten basic economic sectors in the Town, down 1.9 percent since 2010. Between 2010 and 2021, three fastest growing sectors in the Town were:

1. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (221.6 percent increase);
2. Construction (91.2 percent increase); and
3. Retail Trade (86.8 percent increase)

In terms of total employment, top sectors that Town residents are employed in are:

1. Educational services, and health care and social assistance (137 employed);
2. Manufacturing (127 employed); and
3. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (119 employed)

In Wood County there were 35,858 persons employed in 2022, down 2.9 percent since 2010. Most people were employed in educational services, and health care and social assistance (9,412), manufacturing (6,469), and retail trade (4,129). The area that experienced the most significant downward trend was information.

| Table 20: Employment by Sector | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Sector | Town of Port Edwards | | | Wood County | | |
| | 2010 | 2022 | % Change | 2010 | 2022 | % Change |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining | 37 | 119 | 221.6% | 1,411 | 1,123 | -20.4% |
| Construction | 34 | 65 | 91.2% | 2,229 | 2,498 | 12.1% |
| Manufacturing | 193 | 127 | -34.2% | 7,530 | 6,469 | -14.1% |
| Wholesale trade | 10 | 4 | -60.0% | 795 | 686 | -13.7% |
| Retail trade | 38 | 71 | 86.8% | 4,246 | 4,129 | -2.8% |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities | 61 | 28 | -54.1% | 1,983 | 1,943 | -2.0% |
| Information | 55 | 2 | -96.4% | 827 | 573 | -30.7% |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing | 26 | 10 | -61.5% | 1,564 | 1,835 | 17.3% |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services | 6 | 8 | 33.3% | 1,713 | 2,193 | 28.0% |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance | 110 | 137 | 24.5% | 9,695 | 9,412 | -2.9% |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services | 45 | 35 | -22.2% | 2,375 | 2,287 | -3.7% |
| Other Services, except Public Administration | 27 | 9 | -66.7% | 1,732 | 1,658 | -4.3% |
| Public Administration | 25 | 39 | 56.0% | 824 | 1,052 | 27.7% |
| Total | 667 | 654 | -1.9% | 36,924 | 35,858 | -2.9% |

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010 & 2022

Labor Force Analysis

Labor Force

Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. Consistent with the Town's population decrease from 2010 to 2022, the number of people in the labor force has declined slightly. There were an estimated two fewer people over age 16 in 2022 than there was in 2010, for a loss of 0.2 percent. Within this group, 679 were in the labor force, which was 47 fewer people than in 2010, for a decrease of 6.5 percent. This could be due to retirements as the Town's median age has increased. Wood County saw a slight increase (0.8 percent) in working age residents over age 16 during this time, but its labor force decreased by 5.3 percent. Statewide, there was a 5.6 percent increase of those age 16 and older, but a 1.5 percent increase in the state's labor force. See Table 21.

| Table 21: Labor Force | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------|----------|-------------|--------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Category | Town of Port Edwards | | | Wood County | | | Wisconsin | | |
| | 2010 | 2022 | % Change | 2010 | 2022 | % Change | 2010 | 2022 | % Change |
| Population 16 years and over | 1,129 | 1,127 | -0.2% | 59,438 | 59,915 | 0.8% | 4,511,968 | 4,764,779 | 5.6% |
| Labor Force | 726 | 679 | -6.5% | 39,534 | 37,426 | -5.3% | 3,083,811 | 3,129,606 | 1.5% |
| Employed | 667 | 654 | -1.9% | 36,924 | 35,858 | -2.9% | 2,805,102 | 3,020,890 | 7.7% |
| Unemployed | 59 | 25 | -57.6% | 2,537 | 1,555 | -38.7% | 275,359 | 105,086 | -61.8% |
| Unemployment Rate | 8.1% | 3.7% | -4.4% | 6.4% | 4.2% | -2.2% | 8.9% | 3.4% | -5.5% |
| Participation Rate | 64.3% | 60.2% | -4.1% | 66.5% | 62.5% | -4.0% | 68.3% | 65.7% | -2.6% |

Source: ACS 2010 & 2022

Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and the total persons employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not considered part of the labor force. In 2010, the Town of Port Edwards had 8.1 percent unemployment, and in 2022 unemployment was down to 3.7 percent, which is historically low. The unemployment rate was lower than in Wood County (4.2 percent) but higher than the State of Wisconsin (3.4 percent) in 2022.

Workforce Participation

Workforce participation is a measure expressed in terms of a percentage of persons actively seeking employment divided by the total working age population. People not participating in the labor force may not seek employment due to a variety of reasons including retirement, disability, choice to stay home with children, or simply not looking for work. In 2010, 64.3 percent of Port Edwards' population over the age of 16 was in the labor force. By 2022, that percentage decreased to 60.2 percent. This is similar to Wood County and the state, which both saw a decrease in labor participation rates during the same time. The state participation percentage was 65.7 percent in 2022, while Wood County's participation rate was 62.5 percent in 2022. Lower participation rates compared to the state average could reflect both the Town's and County's higher proportion of retirees.

Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2021, approximately 19 of the 288 total jobs within the Town of Port Edwards were filled by Port Edwards residents. About 269 workers traveled to Port Edwards during the average workday. There were an estimated 661 Port Edwards residents that commuted to locations outside of the Town for work, indicating that Port Edwards' laborshed extends beyond its municipal boundaries. This is typical in rural areas with limited commercial or industrial areas. Figure 6 shows the inflow-outflow patterns of the Town's laborshed. According to the 2022 American Community Survey, 79.1 percent of Town residents commuted by driving alone, another 11.3 percent carpooling, and 5.2 percent worked from home.

Figure 6: Inflow/Outflow Analysis Town of Port Edwards, 2021



Source: U.S. Census-on-the-Map 2021

In-Migration

In-commuters come to Port Edwards primarily from neighboring communities and counties. The City of Wisconsin Rapids supplies the highest number of commuters with an estimated total of 22, or 7.6 percent of commuters. This is followed by the Village of Port Edwards (14 commuters, or 4.9 percent of inbound commuters) and City of Nekoosa (11 commuters, or 3.8 percent of inbound commuters). An estimated 47.6 percent of inbound commuters come from somewhere outside the Town's boundaries within Wood County, followed by 7.6 of inbound commuters coming from Jackson County and 5.6 percent coming from Portage County.

Out-Migration

Port Edwards residents work in a variety of locations. 120 residents, or 17.6 percent, commute to the City of Wisconsin Rapids for employment. This is followed by the City of Marshfield (54 residents, 7.9 percent) and the City of Nekoosa (20 residents, 2.9 percent). An estimated 48.1 percent of Port Edwards residents work in Wood County; top counties that are also employment destinations are Marathon and Portage Counties. Several even commute to locations much farther away including Eau Claire (City of Eau Claire) and Dane (City of Madison) Counties, although these workers could also be working remotely while living in the Town, rather than commuting.

Occupations

Table 22 identifies the five main occupational categories by number and percentage and provides a comparison with the Town, county, and state. Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations are the largest component of the labor force in the Town (26.1 percent). This is followed by management, business, science, and arts occupations (24.3 percent) and production, transportation, and material moving occupations (22.2 percent). In the Town of Port Edwards, there is a considerably higher percentage (26.1 percent) of residents with natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations than countywide (12.0 percent) and statewide (8.7 percent) totals.



Table 22: Resident Occupations, 2022

| Occupation | Town of Port Edwards | | Wood County | | Wisconsin | |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| Management, business, science, and arts occupations | 159 | 24.3% | 11,410 | 31.8% | 1,161,169 | 38.4% |
| Service occupations | 100 | 15.3% | 6,189 | 17.3% | 472,651 | 15.6% |
| Sales and office occupations | 79 | 12.1% | 6,587 | 18.4% | 584,245 | 19.3% |
| Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations | 171 | 26.1% | 4,310 | 12.0% | 261,941 | 8.7% |
| Production, transportation, and material moving occupations | 145 | 22.2% | 7,362 | 20.5% | 540,884 | 17.9% |
| Total | 654 | 100% | 35,858 | 100% | 3,020,890 | 100% |

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2022

Economic Development Strengths and Weaknesses

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

Economic Development Strengths and Barriers

The Town's strengths for attracting and retaining residential development is its rural atmosphere. In addition, the Town has the basic services needed to support residential growth, such as emergency services and roadways. Ongoing efforts to expand broadband make it easier for Town residents to work remotely, which could increase in popularity.

The most significant barrier in attracting residential development includes the lack of infrastructure such as water, sewer, and broadband. In the past, residents indicated a preference for small scale businesses such as retail, restaurants, and hotels instead of larger scale commercial and industrial development that conflicts with the Town's quiet, rural atmosphere. Additionally, the Town does not currently qualify for tax incremental financing under state law due to its lower population and lack of sanitary sewer.

Economic Development Programs

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

Local

Central Wisconsin SCORE

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

Central Wisconsin Tourism Association

This organization is made up of several entities: Visit Marshfield, Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Wisconsin Rapids Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. The organization promotes tourism in Wood and Portage Counties and has staff to assist those wanting to plan a visit to the area.

CREATE

CREATE's mission is to "accelerate creativity, connection, and collaboration to advance vibrant and welcoming communities." This nonprofit organization operates the IDEA Center in Downtown Stevens Point (Portage County), which is a co-working space with conference rooms, studios, 3-D printers, and other rentable equipment and spaces that support the creative economy. The organization operates a "hub" with similar equipment at the McMillan Library in Wisconsin Rapids.

Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce

Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce is an organization of non-profit, educational, government, and small and large businesses. The mission of the Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce is to strengthen the economy and enhance quality of life. The Chamber provides resources, opportunities, and advocacy for the business community in the Wisconsin Rapids area.

Impact Seven Business Lending Loans

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

Wood County

Under the oversight of the Conservation, Education and Economic Development Committee, Wood County participates in several economic development activities. The County administers a revolving loan fund for businesses and industries that create new jobs, investment, or tax base in the County. Depending on the year, grant funding may also be available.

Regional

Centergy, Inc.

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

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The County is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), as are all local governments based on county membership. Membership brings with it a variety of planning benefits and services. Benefits include participation in the Economic Development District, including eligibility for a variety of grants administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

Central Wisconsin Economic Development (CWED) Fund

Revolving loan funds are available to entrepreneurs and their lenders to structure financing packages for start-up and expanding businesses to encourage economic growth in the area. CWED manages a revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed rate, low down payment, low-interest financing.

State

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

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

- Brownfield Program
- Capacity Building Grants (CB)
- Certified Sites

- Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- Business Opportunity Loan Fund
- Workforce Training Grants
- Idle Industrial Sites Redevelopment Program
- The Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program
- Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program
- Fast Forward Program (see below)
- Wisconsin Investment Fund
- Technology Development Loan Program

Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce Forgivable Loan Program

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

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

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

The Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC)

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

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF)

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

Wisconsin Fast Forward

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

- Encourage increased collaboration between Wisconsin businesses and workforce training partners.
- Fill current and ongoing skill requirements of Wisconsin employers.

- Place workers in long-term positions with opportunities for professional growth and economic advancement.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

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

Wisconsin Office of Rural Prosperity (ORP)

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

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

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

Wisconsin Small Cities Program

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

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)

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

Federal

America's Seed Fund: SBIR & STTR

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

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

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

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

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

Small Business Administration (SBA)

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

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

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

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal:

1. Encourage residential and small-scale commercial development. See Chapter 7: Land Use for guidance on the location of these developments.
2. Discourage large scale development.
3. Support job creation and large-scale development to locate in neighboring communities that have public water and sewer.

Policy:

1. Accommodate home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or would otherwise negatively impact the surrounding areas.
2. Ensure new development is compatible with the limitations of well-and-septic systems as well as soil and groundwater characteristics.

Chapter 7: Land Use

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

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

Previous Plans and Studies

Wood County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The Wood County Comprehensive Plan will likely soon be revised for a 2024 or 2025 update. Its chapter on land use analyzes patterns of development, existing land use, and future land use. The 2009 plan sets the following land use goals:

- Encourage local units of government to work with neighboring municipalities to develop comprehensive plans that are consistent with each other.
- Encourage Wood County towns to develop zoning provisions to regulate placement and operation of large corporate farms and new non-farm residential uses.
- Encourage cities and villages to include adequate provisions for multiple family and senior housing facilities in their community comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.
- Increase awareness of officials in towns and small cities and villages of the increased interest in moving into their communities.
- Encourage small cities and villages that have not had much business development to plan for and provide adequate areas for future business growth in their comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.
- Develop a zoning model for telecommunications towers and wind energy facilities that will provide consistency throughout Wood County.

- Encourage planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
- Encourage preservation, restoration and reuse of historically significant buildings referencing success stories from other similar size communities.
- Encourage strong partnerships to develop showcase industrial and business parks and create joint boards to “sell” Wood County to developers.
- Continue to work toward connection of communities and major recreation areas with multi-use trails.

Note that these are the County’s goals, not goals that the Town of Port Edwards created.

Existing Land Use

The Town of Port Edwards covers 25,224 acres in the southern portion of Wood County. The Town is bounded by the City of Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, and Town of Saratoga to the east, the Towns of Cranmoor and Seneca to the North, the Town of Remington to the West, and the Towns of Armenia to the south (Juneau County), the Town of Finley to the southwest (Juneau County), and the Town of Rome to the southeast (Adams County).

Knowledge of the existing land use patterns within a town is necessary to develop a desired “future” land use pattern. The Existing Land Use Map was developed using air photos from a countywide flight in 2020, with updates by residents in 2024. Thirteen basic categories were used to classify the various existing land uses. The categories include Agriculture, Commercial, Cranberry Bog, Governmental/Institutional, Industrial, Open Lands, Outdoor Recreation, Quarry, Residential, Transportation, Utility, Water, and Woodlands.

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

Existing Land Use Classifications

Map 9 outlines the existing land use pattern throughout the Town. The intent of an existing land use map is to illustrate the location of existing land use categories within the Town for planning purposes. Land use classifications are grouped by the use most central to each parcel. For example, lands classified as residential may also have a barn or home-based business on site.

Existing land use classifications and acreage totals are presented in Table 23. As can be observed, woodlands are the largest land use category, with almost 69 percent or 17,334 acres in the Town. Agriculture follows with a total of 3,667 acres or 14.5 percent. Residential properties occupy 1,246 acres, or 4.9 percent of the town, but there are only 98 acres of commercial property (0.4 percent). Most residences are spread throughout the town, mainly in low density, consisting of seasonal and

secluded homes. There is a very limited amount of commercial development scattered throughout the Town, and hardly any industrial land use in the Town.

| Table 23: Existing Land Use | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Classification | Acres | Percent |
| Agriculture | 3,667 | 14.5% |
| Commercial | 98 | 0.4% |
| Cranberry Bog | 828 | 3.3% |
| Governmental / Institutional | 64 | 0.3% |
| Industrial | 5 | 0.0% |
| Open Lands | 853 | 3.4% |
| Outdoor Recreation | 12 | 0.0% |
| Quarry | 36 | 0.1% |
| Residential | 1,246 | 4.9% |
| Transportation | 416 | 1.6% |
| Utility | 0 | 0.0% |
| Water | 665 | 2.6% |
| Woodlands | 17,334 | 68.7% |
| Total | 25,224 | 100.0% |

Source: NCWRPC

Managed Forest Law (MFL) & Public Lands

There are 3,285 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, which are subject to a substantial reduction in property taxes. There are also 5,614 acres of county forest in the Town. There are no state or federal public lands in the Town, though there are some Tribal lands. See Maps 10 and 12.

Land Supply and Demand

The population and number of households in the Town of Port Edwards has increased since 1990. DOA population and household projections predict an increase in the number of households through 2035, which then levels off and slightly declines by 2040. There are a limited number of commercial uses and no industrial uses throughout the Town, and this is not expected to change significantly. As shown by the existing land use inventory, a substantial portion of the Town is undeveloped agriculture and woodlands, so the supply of land available for development appears to be adequate. However, the Town must balance long-term development and growth because areas with soils that support development are limited.

Table 24 shows the estimated land demand in acres between now and 2040. These use the household projections from the Wisconsin DOA described in Chapter 1. However, because DOA's household projection for 2020 was 580, but ACS's estimated number of households was 498, this table subtracts 82 households from each WDOA household projection for each five-year increment.

Using the current residential density of 2.5 acres per household, an expected 42.5 acres are needed for residential development altogether by 2035. Using the same projections and 0.2 existing acres of commercial development per household, an expected 3.4 acres of commercial land are needed by 2035. Finally, little to no industrial land is predicted to be needed in the future as the Town has historically supported this type of development in nearby incorporated areas.

It is important to note that 2035 is when the number of households is expected to peak, and the totals for each year in Table 24 are cumulative. It is expected that much of this development will occur on land that is currently agriculture, open lands, or woodlands, since these areas have abundant acreage and few barriers to development, which is why they are projected to decrease in acreage.

| Table 24: Estimated Land Demand in Acres | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Category | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 |
| Additional projected households | 8 | 12 | 17 | 8 |
| Agriculture/Woodlands | -21.7 | -32.5 | -46.1 | As Needed |
| Residential (2.50 ac/HH) | 20.0 | 30.0 | 42.5 | |
| Commercial (0.20 ac/HH) | 1.6 | 2.4 | 3.4 | |
| Industrial (0.01 ac/HH) | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | |

Source: Wisconsin DOA, NCWRPC

Land Values

Table 25 displays the assessed land values in the Town of Port Edwards. It is important to note that lands that are tax exempt, such as the Town Hall, would not have a taxable value to report. Overall, land value per acre for non-tax-exempt land in the Town is valued at about \$5,767 per acre based on assessed land values from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's annual Statement of Assessment (SOA). Commercial properties have the highest value per acre, followed by residential land.

Note that total acres is calculated much differently by using parcel boundaries, rather than by air photos as in Table 23. Uses like water, public right-of-way for highways, or tax-exempt lands are not reported in Table 25 like they are in Table 23. Therefore, acreage totals vary greatly between the two methods of calculation used for Tables 23 and 25.

| Table 25: Town of Port Edwards Land Values, 2022 | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Land Classification | Total Value of Land and Improvements | Total Acres | Average Value per Acre |
| Residential | \$64,500,000 | 2,197 | \$29,358 |
| Commercial | \$2,564,200 | 68 | \$37,709 |
| Manufacturing | \$78,500 | 37 | \$2,122 |
| Agricultural | \$689,000 | 3,933 | \$175 |
| Undeveloped | \$1,427,300 | 1,977 | \$722 |
| Ag - Forest | \$704,100 | 579 | \$1,216 |
| Forest | \$11,938,600 | 5,871 | \$2,033 |
| Other | \$4,792,600 | 370 | \$12,953 |
| Total | \$86,694,300 | 15,032 | \$5,767 |

Source: Wisconsin DOR, NCWRPC

Opportunities for Redevelopment

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

Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Existing land uses include agriculture, commercial, cranberry bog, government and institutional, industrial, open lands, outdoor recreation, quarry, residential, transportation, utility, woodlands, and water. Note that outdoor recreation differs from woodlands and open lands in that it identifies developed, active recreation like ball fields or tennis courts. Although there is an abundance of undeveloped land and stable land ownership, pressure to convert it to residential use may conflict with the Town's desire to retain its wooded character. A lack of public water and sewer facilities helps limit excessive development in the Town.

Soil Limitations

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan included a map of soil limitations for development on well and septic. This map is included at the end of this document as Map 4. The categories were described as follows: Soil limitations are indicated by the ratings "slight," "moderate," and "severe." A slight limitation means that the soil properties are generally favorable for the rated use; that is, limitations are minor and easily overcome. A moderate limitation means that some soil properties are unfavorable but can be overcome or modified by special planning and design. A severe limitation means that soil

properties are so unfavorable and so difficult to correct or overcome as to require major soil reclamation, special designs or intensive maintenance. In Map 4, transitional ratings of slight-moderate and moderate-severe are also used. In the slight-moderate category, limitations are slight for dwellings without basements and moderate for dwellings with basements. The same holds true for the moderate-severe classification. Those soils have moderate limitations for dwellings without basements and severe limitations for dwellings with basements. Because virtually all structures with bathrooms are served by Private On-Site Waste Treatment Systems (POWTS), it is important for town officials to keep these maps in mind when recommending areas for new development. It is imperative that all POWTS be properly maintained to protect the groundwater that is so close to the surface.

Future Land Use

Map 11 is the Future Land Use Plan Map, which illustrates the desired arrangement of preferred land uses for the future of the Town of Port Edwards. The Future Land Use Map is general in nature and was developed as a guide for future development in the Town. Although the future land use plan map indicates appropriate future land uses, it is not a zoning map. In many areas the existing zoning districts already reflect the desired future land uses; while in other areas, zoning map or text changes may be required to meet some desired future land use.

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

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

Future Land Use Map Classifications

Agriculture

Identifies areas to be preserved for the purpose of general crop farming or the raising of livestock. Residential uses are also permitted in this area.

Commercial

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

Residential

Areas that allow for residential uses only.

Special Purpose

This district is intended to provide for uses that may present special problems, hazards, or other circumstances with regard to the use of land. Land uses with the highest amount of impact to the landscape fall into this category.

Tribal Lands

Includes areas that belong to tribal nations that are not part of the Town's zoning jurisdiction.

Water

Identifies surface waterbodies.

Land Use Tools

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

Zoning

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

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

Shoreland Zoning

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

Land Division

Subdivision regulation relates to the way in which land is divided and made ready for development. A community can control the subdivision of land by requiring a developer to meet certain conditions in exchange for the privilege of recording a plat. While imposing conditions restricts the use of private property, the cumulative effect of land subdivision on the health, safety, and welfare of a community is so great as to justify public control of the process. Currently, Wood County regulates land division in the Town.

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

When a Town chooses to adopt its own subdivision ordinance independent of the County's, considerable effort is needed to create an ordinance and ensure it aligns with the goals, objectives, and policies in a comprehensive plan. This requires administration and enforcement by the Town, involving Town funding and a layer of government involved in regulating proposals for land divisions.

Official Mapping

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

Other Tools

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



Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Recognize that the City of Nekoosa and Village of Port Edwards will influence development pressure in the eastern portions of the Town of Port Edwards, and that the Ho-Chunk Nation will influence development pressure in the south-central portion of the Town of Port Edwards, and that growth in these areas should be managed to maintain the uncongested, rural lifestyle that initially attracted residents to the area.
2. Promote commercial development that is harmonious with existing land uses.
3. Maintain the ‘rural character’ of the Town of Port Edwards by preserving its natural amenities. Future growth should be concentrated along existing road corridors, using existing town roads as collectors to new residential development. Population density should be maintained at a low level with continued implementation of the two-acre residential lot size.

Objectives:

1. Develop and maintain an Official Street Map, as provided by Statute, with input from the City of Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, and Ho-Chunk Nation to minimize any future land use conflicts.
2. Encourage new commercial development to locate near major road intersection to promote clustering of these uses, making them easily accessible.

Policies:

1. Maintain the Town’s current two-acre minimum lot size.
2. Develop zoning codes to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents near proposed commercial developments.
3. Review Conditional Use Permit regulations in the zoning ordinance for compliance with state statutes.

Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation

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

OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

School Districts

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Port Edwards is served by the Nekoosa, Port Edwards, and Pittsville School Districts and has a good standing relationship with these districts. There are no school district facilities located within the Town.

Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

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

Town Services

The Town of Port Edwards contracts with the City of Nekoosa and Village of Port Edwards for fire protection and the City of Wisconsin Rapids for ambulance service. See Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities for more details.

Adjoining Units of Government

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

Wood County

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

In many cases where state and federal agencies require area-wide planning for various programs or regulations, Wood County sponsors a county-wide planning effort to complete these plans and include each individual local unit in the process and resulting final plan. Examples of this include the County Outdoor Recreation plan which maintains the eligibility for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources administered park and recreation development funding of each local unit that adopts it, and All Hazard Mitigation Plans which are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in order for individual local units of government to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funding. Other plans, though not required by law, may apply to the whole County. For example, in 2023, the County created a Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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

State and Federal Government

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

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

EXISTING OR POTENTIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICTS

The Town has a good working relationship with other governmental agencies. The process for resolving these conflicts will in part be a continuation of past practices as new mechanisms evolve and take shape. The Town of Port Edwards will continue to meet with governmental entities when significant issues of mutual concern arise.

PROGRAMS

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

Intergovernmental Cooperation (Wisconsin Statute 66.0301)

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

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

Municipal Revenue Sharing (Wisconsin Statute 66.0305)

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

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

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Cooperate with neighboring municipalities and school districts when such cooperation and shared services are cost-effective and economically feasible.

Objectives:

1. Encourage new development to locate in areas that can be efficiently and economically served by existing and planned streets and public utilities.
2. Support industrial and business development in the Cities of Wisconsin Rapids, Pittsville, and Nekoosa, and the Village of Port Edwards.
3. Consider creating a committee to coordinate municipal leaders in researching and planning for rural emergency service departments.

Policies:

1. Coordinate comprehensive planning with neighboring communities, the County and the Pittsville, Nekoosa, and Port Edwards Public School Districts.
2. Coordinate boundary developments with the Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, and Ho Chunk Nation Plan Commissions.
3. Review contracts and agreements with neighboring communities to determine what changes or additions can be made to make provision of services more cost effective and efficient for Town residents and landowners.
4. Provide the school districts with an opportunity to comment on future proposals.
5. Coordinate the location of public utilities and facilities with projected growth and development patterns.
6. Utilize a collaborative approach with neighboring municipalities to execute emergency services contracts.

Chapter 9: Implementation

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

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

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

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

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

Zoning Ordinance and Map

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

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

Subdivision (Land Division) Ordinance

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

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

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

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

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

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

Annual Operating Budget

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

Brownfield Redevelopment

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

CONSISTENCY AMONG PLAN CHAPTERS

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

PLAN ADOPTION, AMENDMENTS, UPDATES, AND MONITORING

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

Plan Adoption

The first step in implementing this plan involves adoption of the plan by local officials. The formal review and adoption process involves plan review by the Planning Committee which must recommend the plan to the Town Board via resolution. The Planning Committee recommendation is forwarded to the Town Board who must adopt the plan by ordinance. A public hearing is required to

allow public comment on the ordinance during a 30-day review period prior to final action to adopt the plan. Adoption formalizes the plan document as the framework to guide local development decisions over the next 20 years. The adopted plan should also be recognized as a tool for communicating the community's land use policy and goals and objectives regarding coordination of growth and development.

Plan Amendments

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

The following criteria shall be considered when reviewing plan amendments:

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

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

Plan Updates

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

Plan Monitoring

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

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

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

Recommendations:

1. The Town Board should use the Plan as a guide when making decisions, especially those that relate to growth and development. The Planning Committee and any other official committee of the Town should also use the Plan in their efforts as well.

2. The Town should encourage citizen awareness of the Comprehensive Plan by making copies available, making reference to it at public meetings and Town newsletters, and displaying a copy of the future and use plan map in the Town Hall. Neighboring local units of government and others will receive copies of the Plan.

3. The Town has a zoning ordinance to supplement the shoreland areas covered under county zoning. Beyond that, there are some additional tools and approaches that can be utilized by the Town to achieve the goals of the Plan. These include but are not limited to the following: land division, official mapping, fee simple land acquisition, easements, deed restrictions, land dedication, and ordinances or programs regulating activities such as building permits, erosion control, or septic pumping, etc. The Town should consider these tools as needed.

4. Amendments to this Plan may include minor changes to the plan text or maps, and/or major changes resulting from periodic review. Wisconsin Law requires that the same process used to adopt the Plan to be used to make any amendments. The steps are outlined below:

- An amendment or change may be initiated by either the Town Board or Planning Committee, a request from a resident, or may result from a regular review of the Plan.
- The Planning Committee prepares the specific text or map amendment being considered, holds a public meeting and votes to recommend approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment, by resolution to the Town Board.
- A copy of the proposed Plan amendment is sent to all affected government units, including Wood County.
- Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town Board public hearing on the proposed changes.
- The Town Board conducts the public hearing and votes to either approve, disapprove, or approve with changes.

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

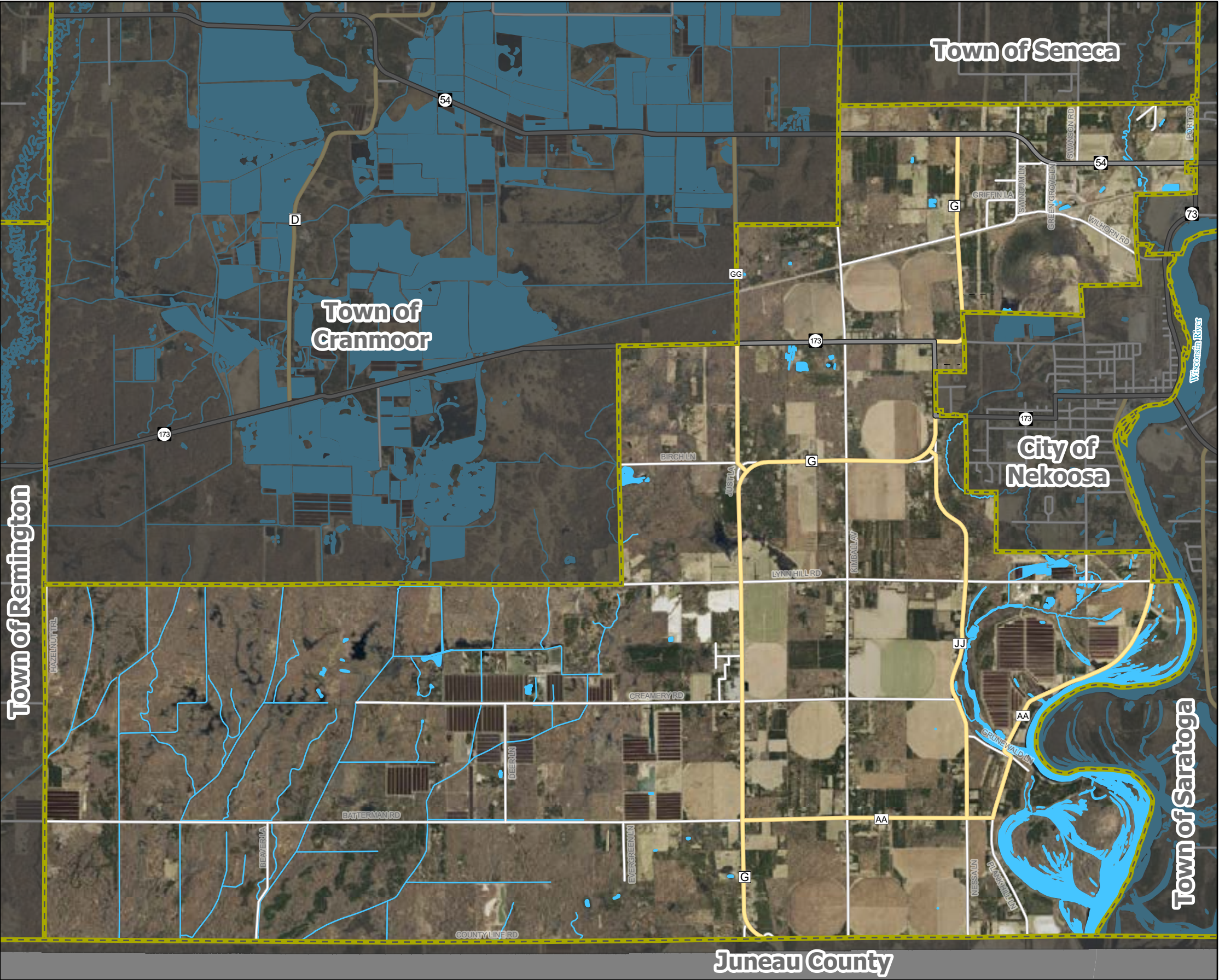
5. Periodic updating of the Plan is necessary to ensure that it reflects the desires of the Town's residents. The Planning Committee should review the Plan on an annual basis and conduct an in-depth review of the plan every five years. At a minimum the Plan must be updated every ten years. The annual review should compare how decisions made during the year, especially land use decisions, are related to the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan. If decisions are inconsistent with the Plan, changes need to be made. The update should consider the following to maintain consistency in the land development process:

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

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

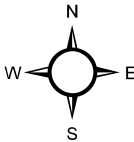
Consistency Among Plan Elements

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



Planning Area

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Water



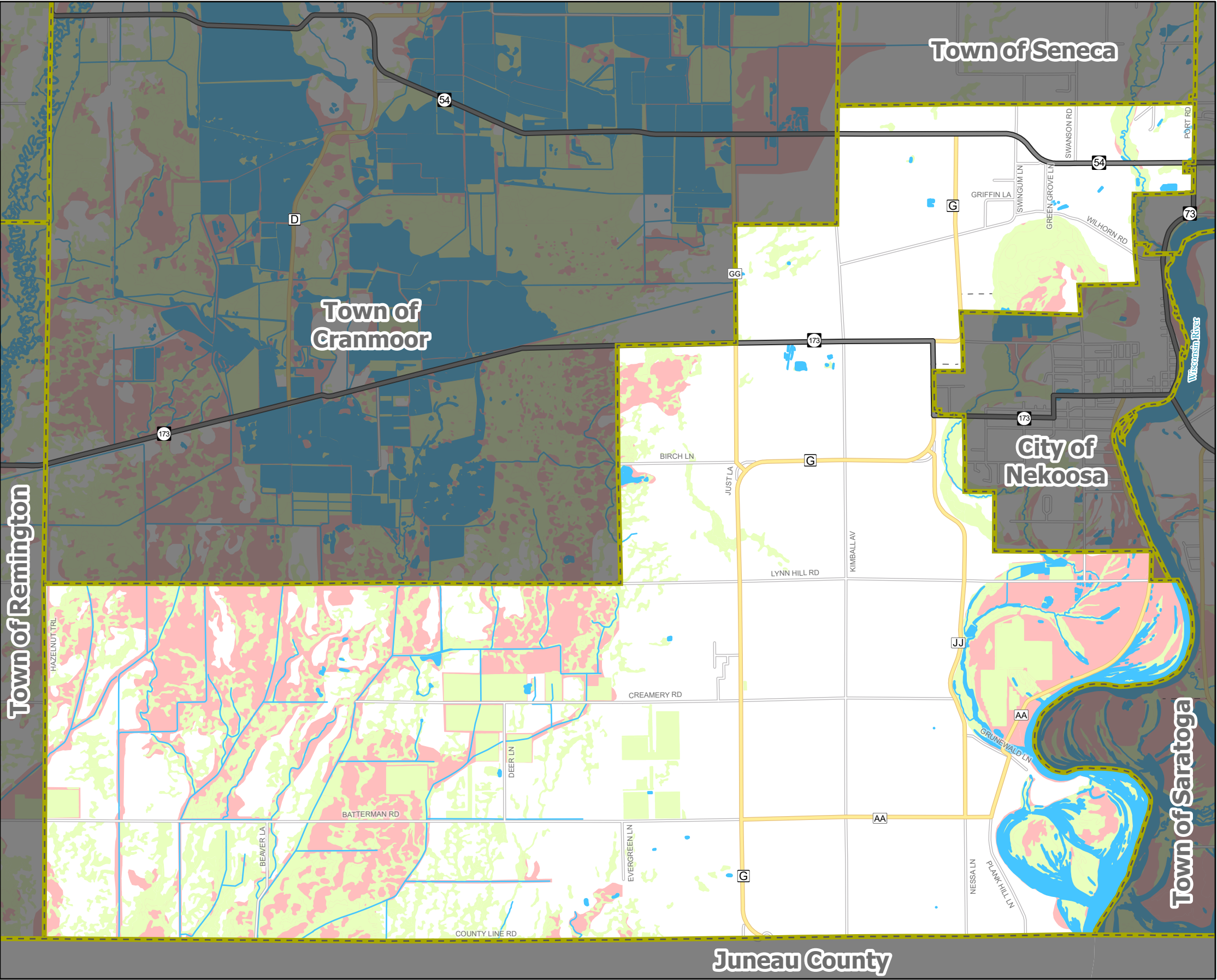
Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood Co
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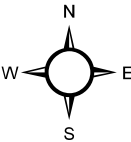
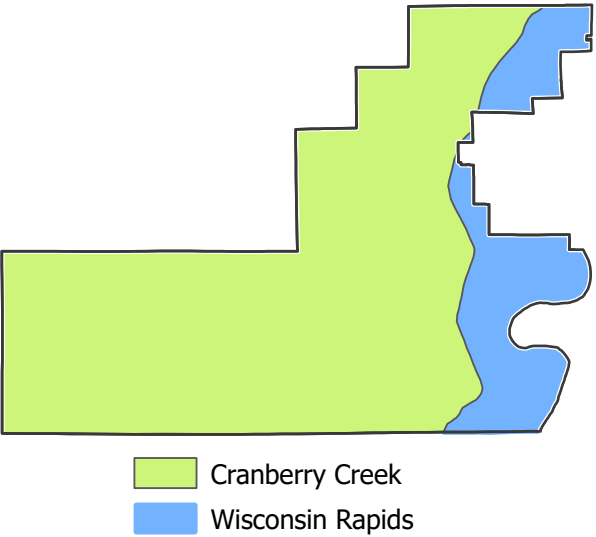
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Natural Resources

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Floodplain
- Wetlands
- Water

Town of Port Edwards Watersheds



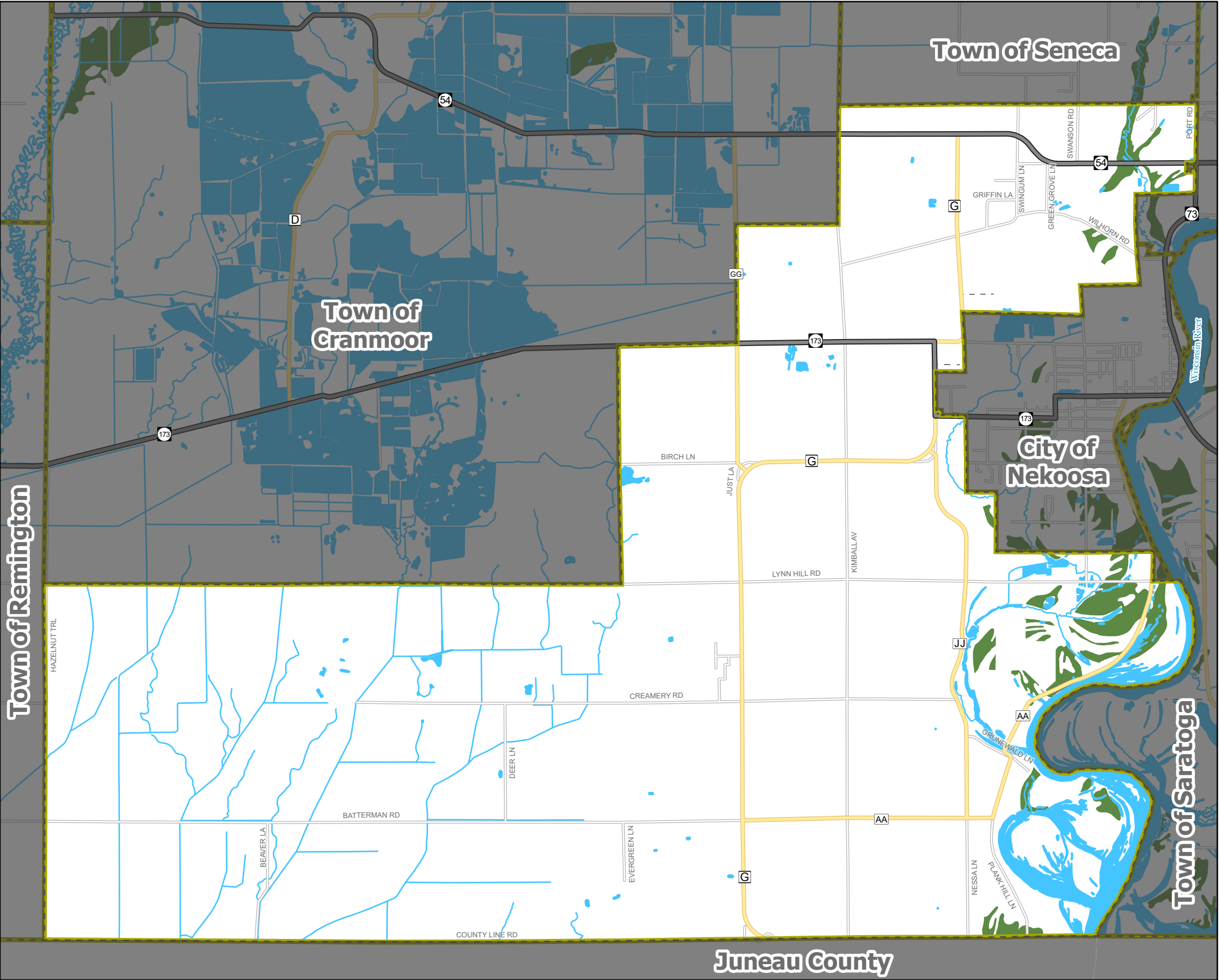
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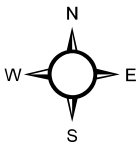
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Prime Farmland

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Prime Farmland
- Water

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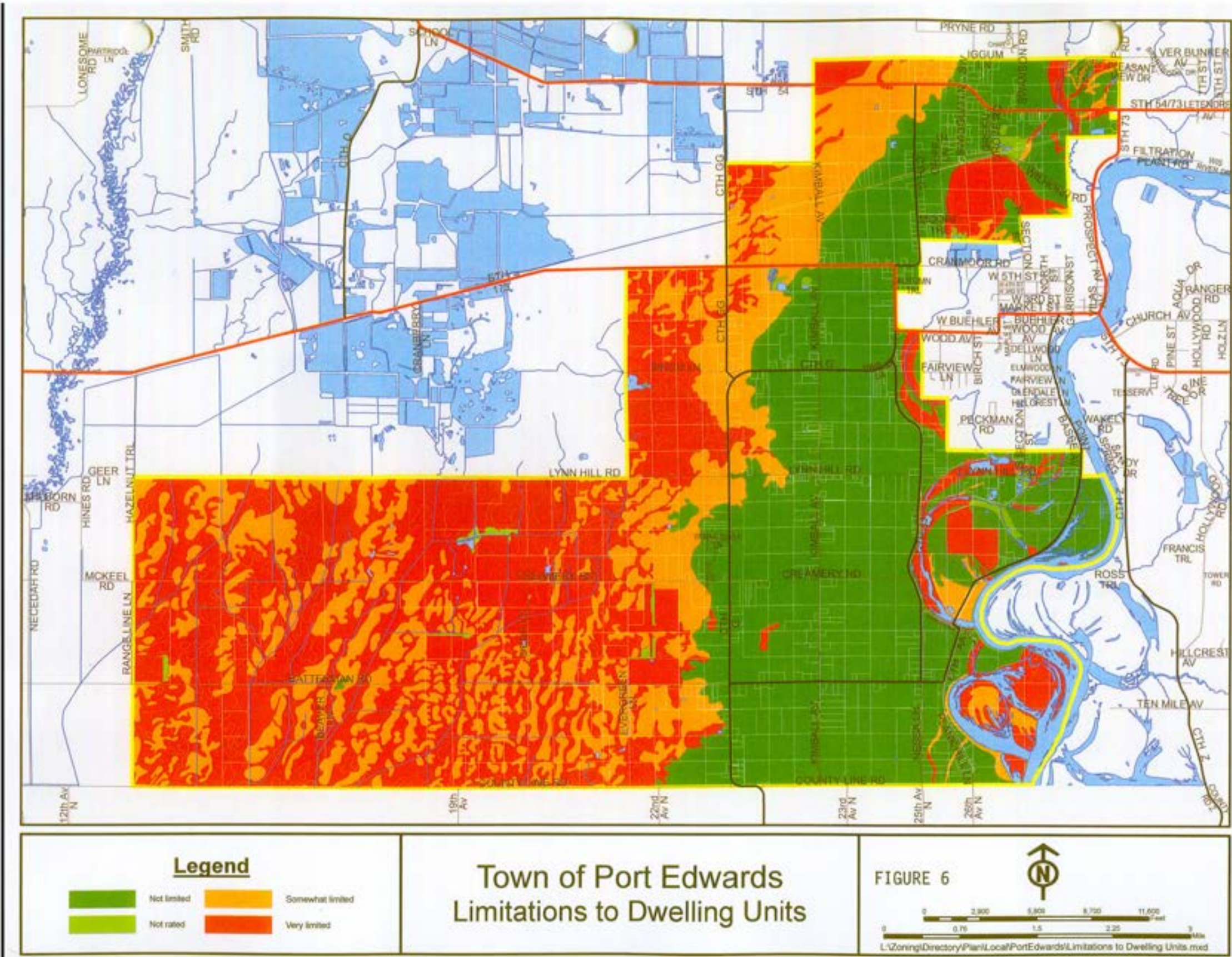
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Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission

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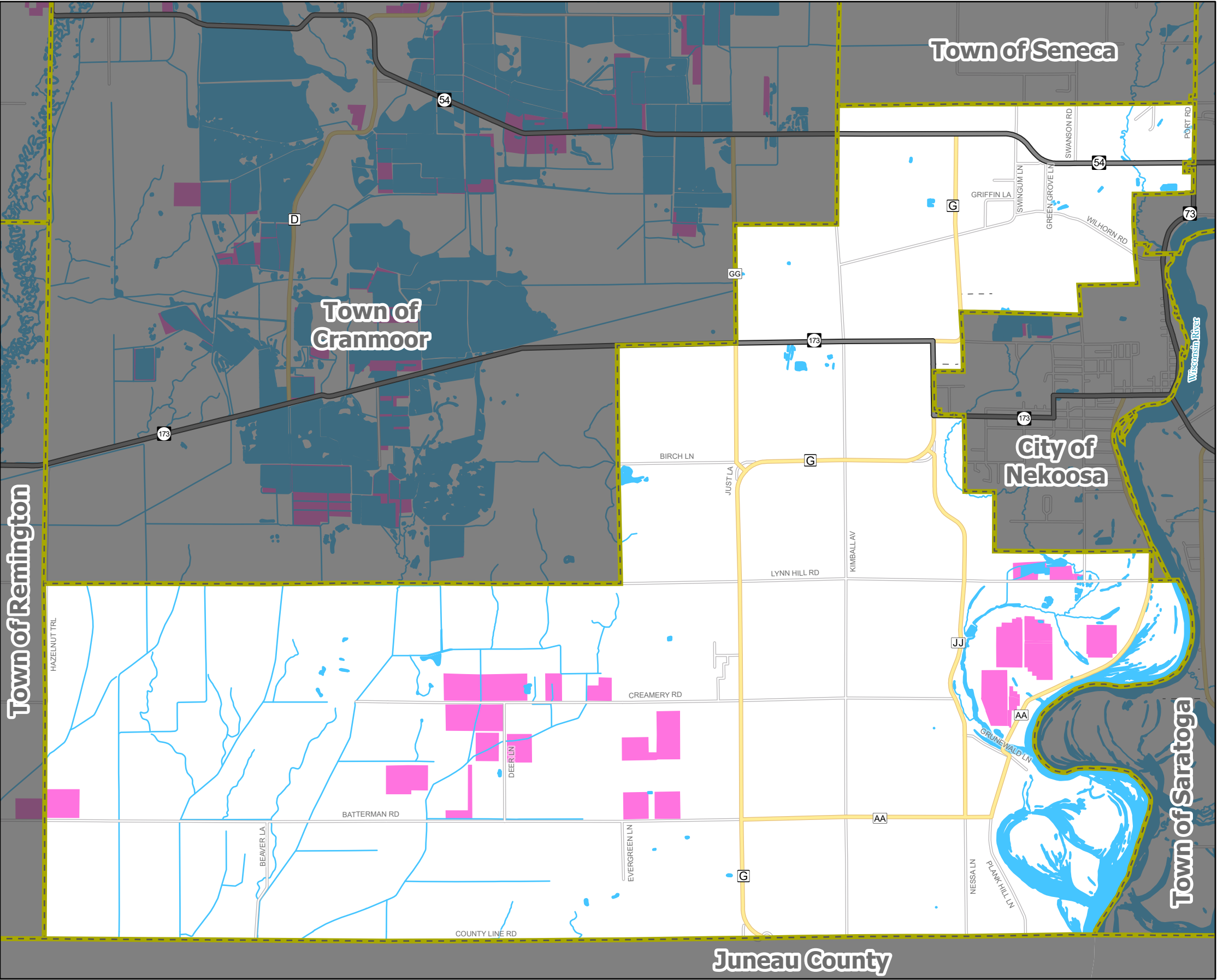


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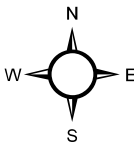
Cranberry Production

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Cranberry Bog
- Water

828 Acres



0 0.5 1 2 Miles



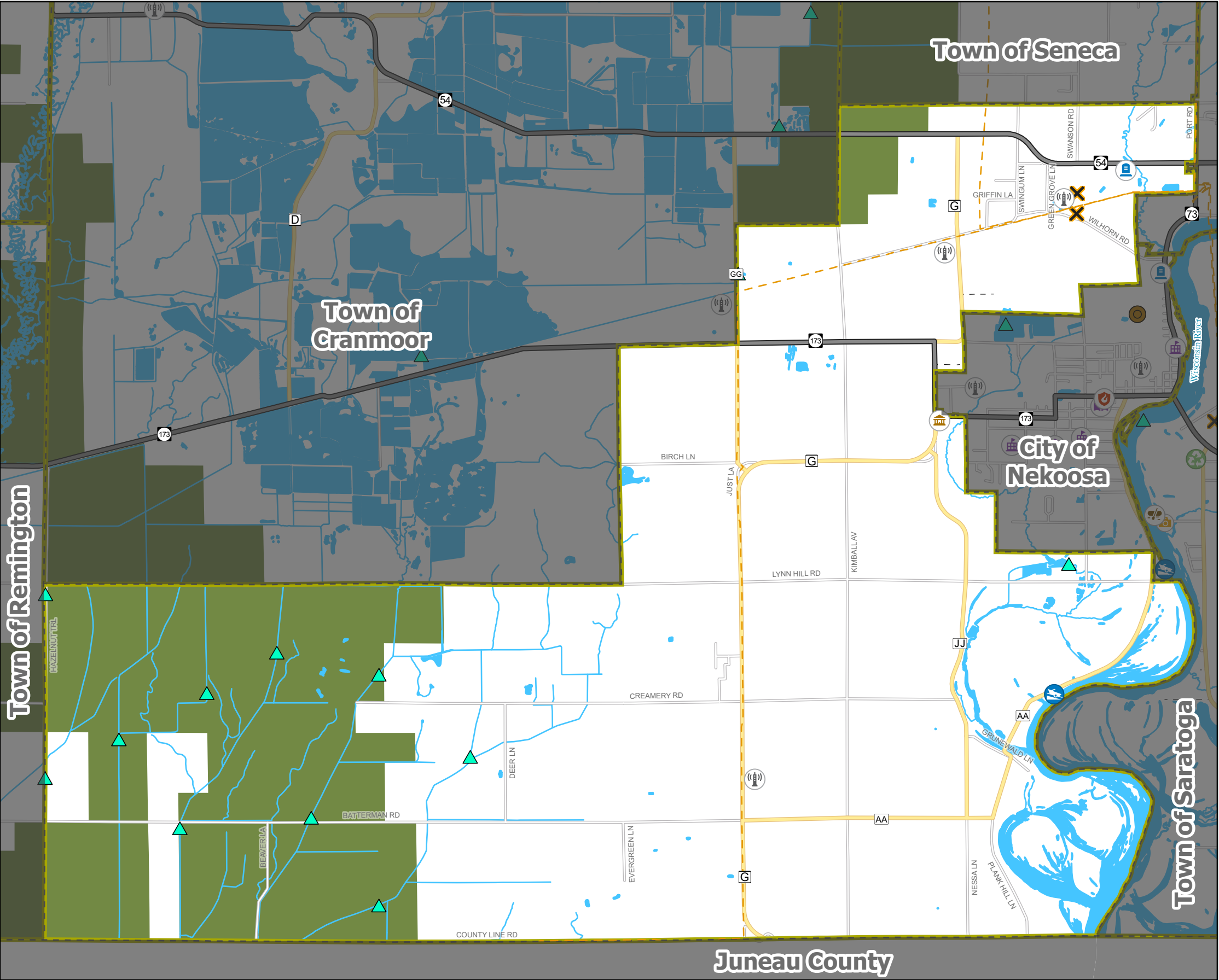
Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood Co
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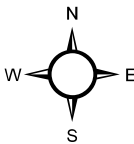
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Utilities & Community Facilities

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- High Voltage Powerline
- County Forest
- Boat Launch
- Canoe Launch
- Communication Towers
- Dams
- Cemetery
- Fire Station
- Historic Places
- Landfill (Closed)
- Library
- Non-Metallic Mine (Closed)
- School
- Town Hall
- Transfer Site
- Water

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



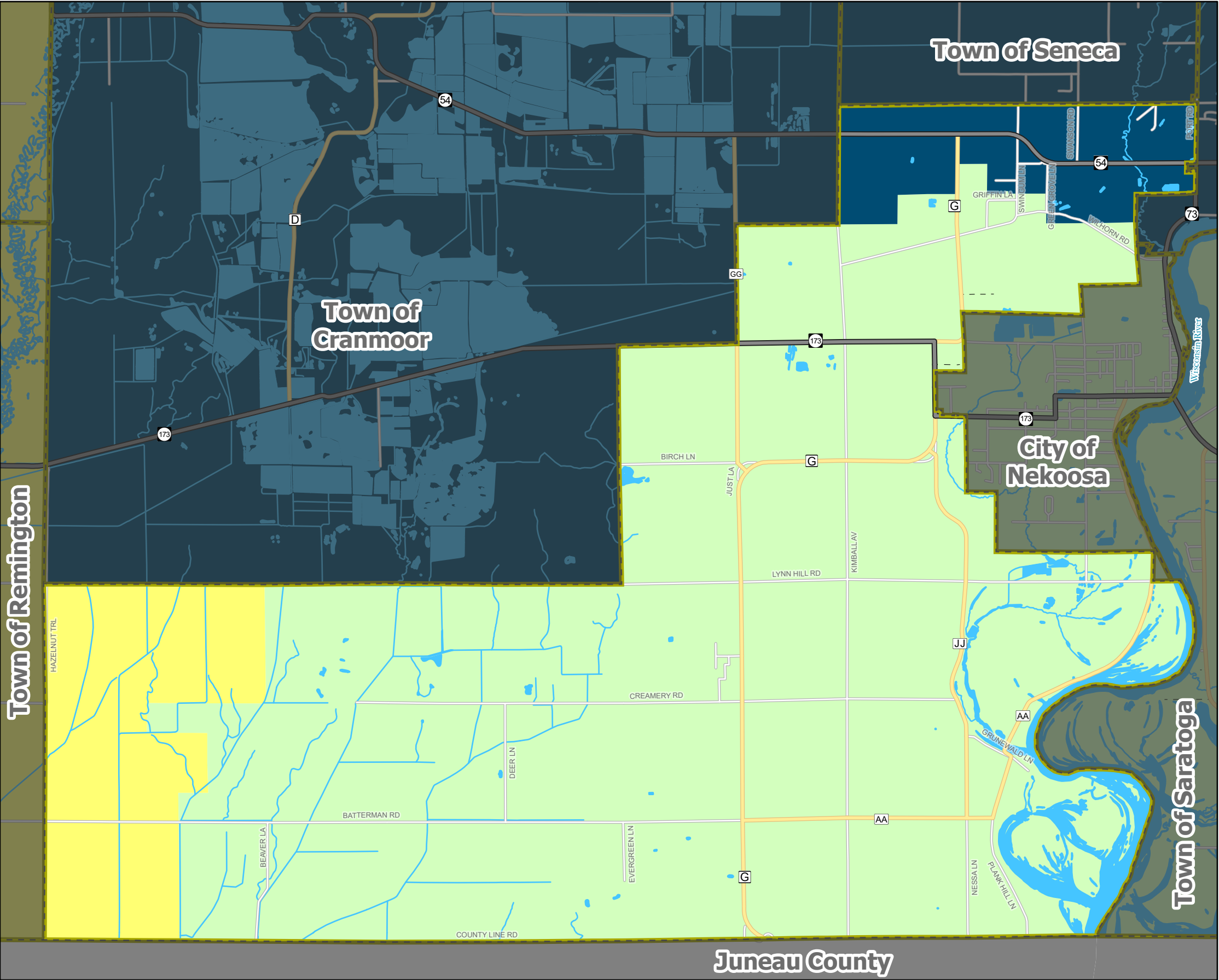
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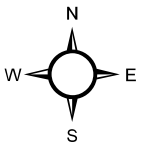
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School District Boundaries

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Water
- School District
 - Nekoosa School District
 - Port Edwards School District
 - Pittsville School District



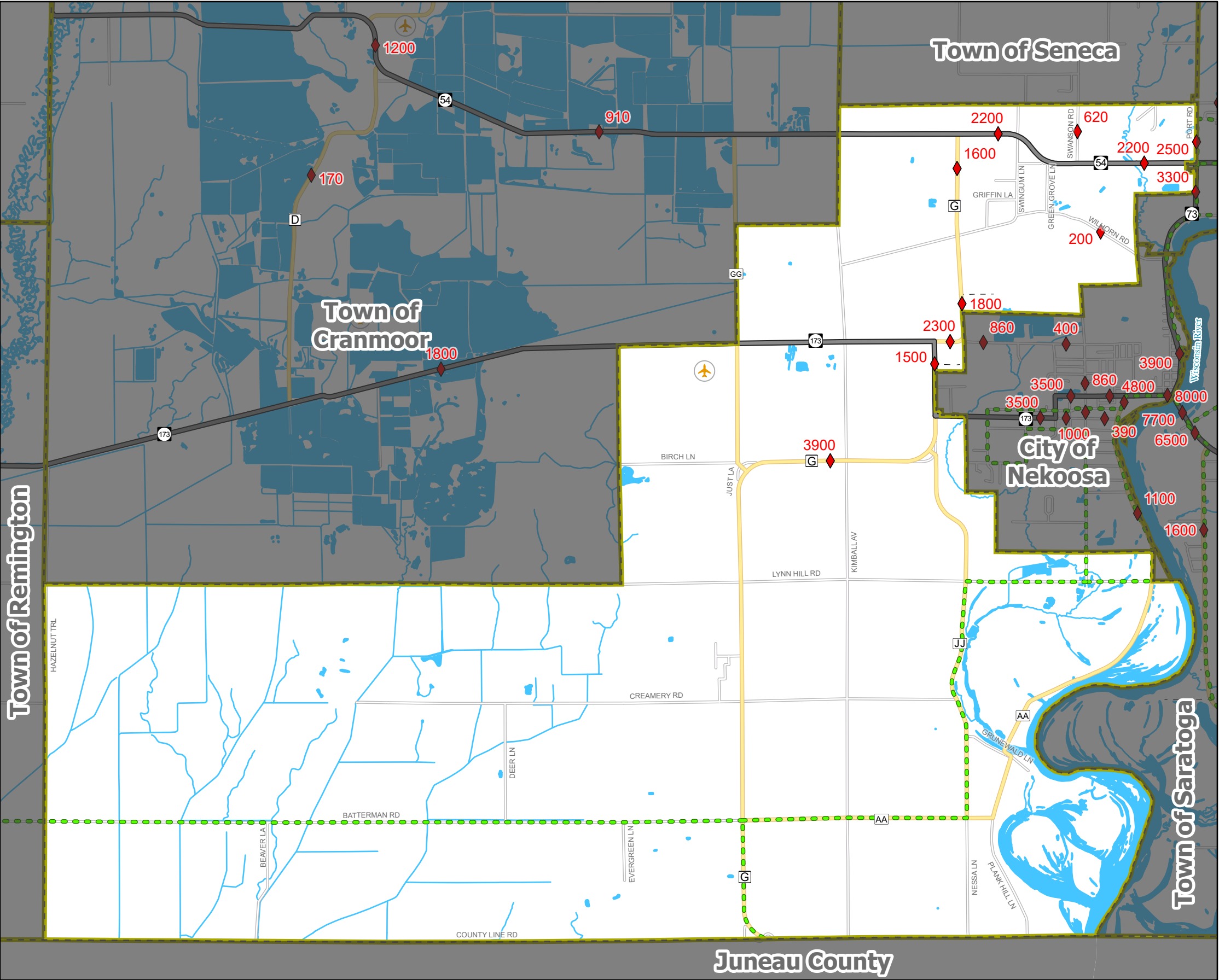
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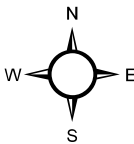
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Transportation

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- HEART Trail Bike Route
- Grass Strip (Private) Airport
- Traffic Counts
- Water



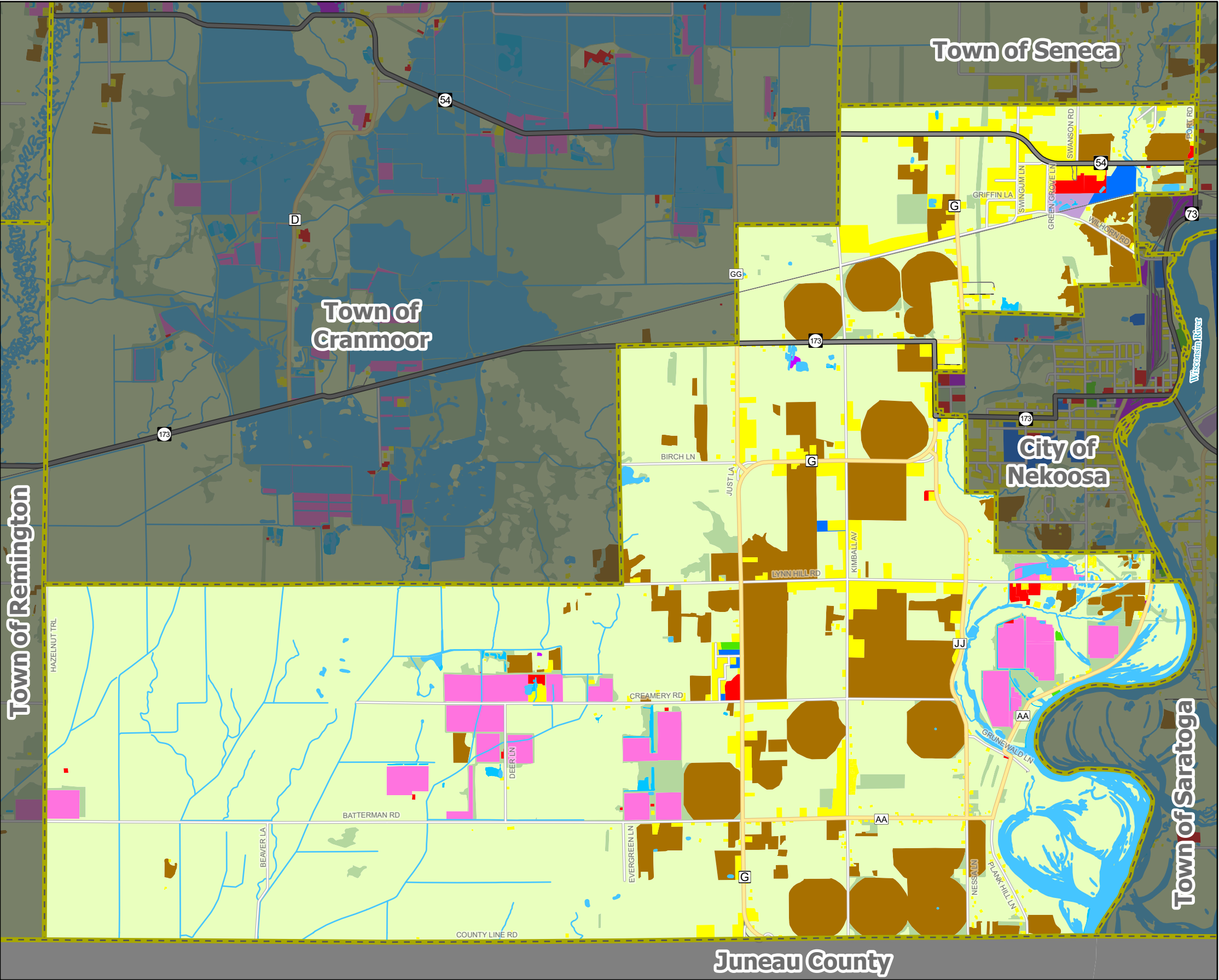
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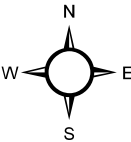
Existing Land Use

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads

Existing Land Use (2020)

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

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



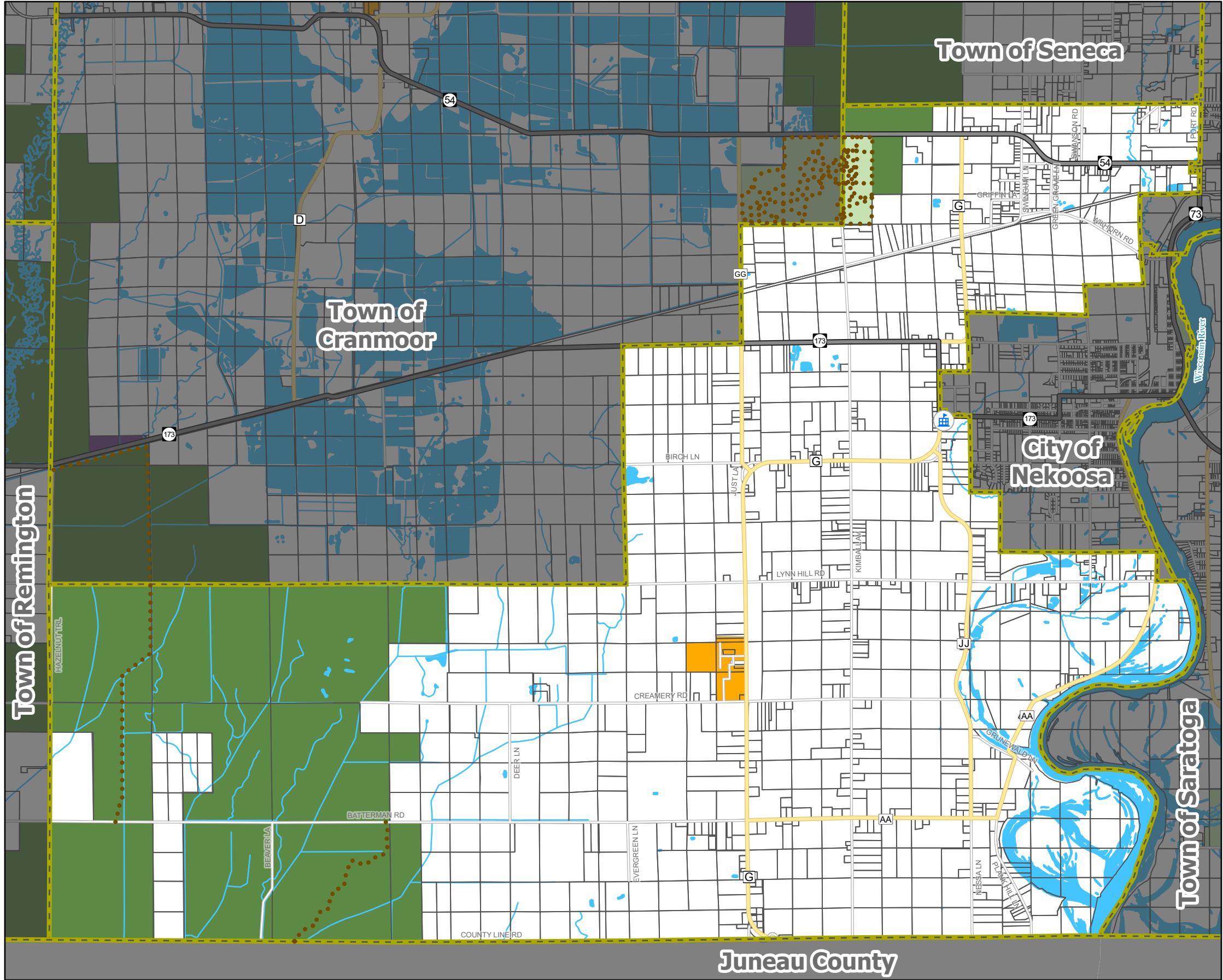
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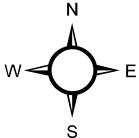
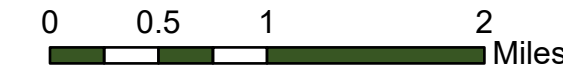
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Land Ownership

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Port Edwards Town Hall
- ATV Trails
- Wood County ATV Park
- County Forest
- Ownership
 - Wood County
 - Ho-Chunk
 - Private
 - Water



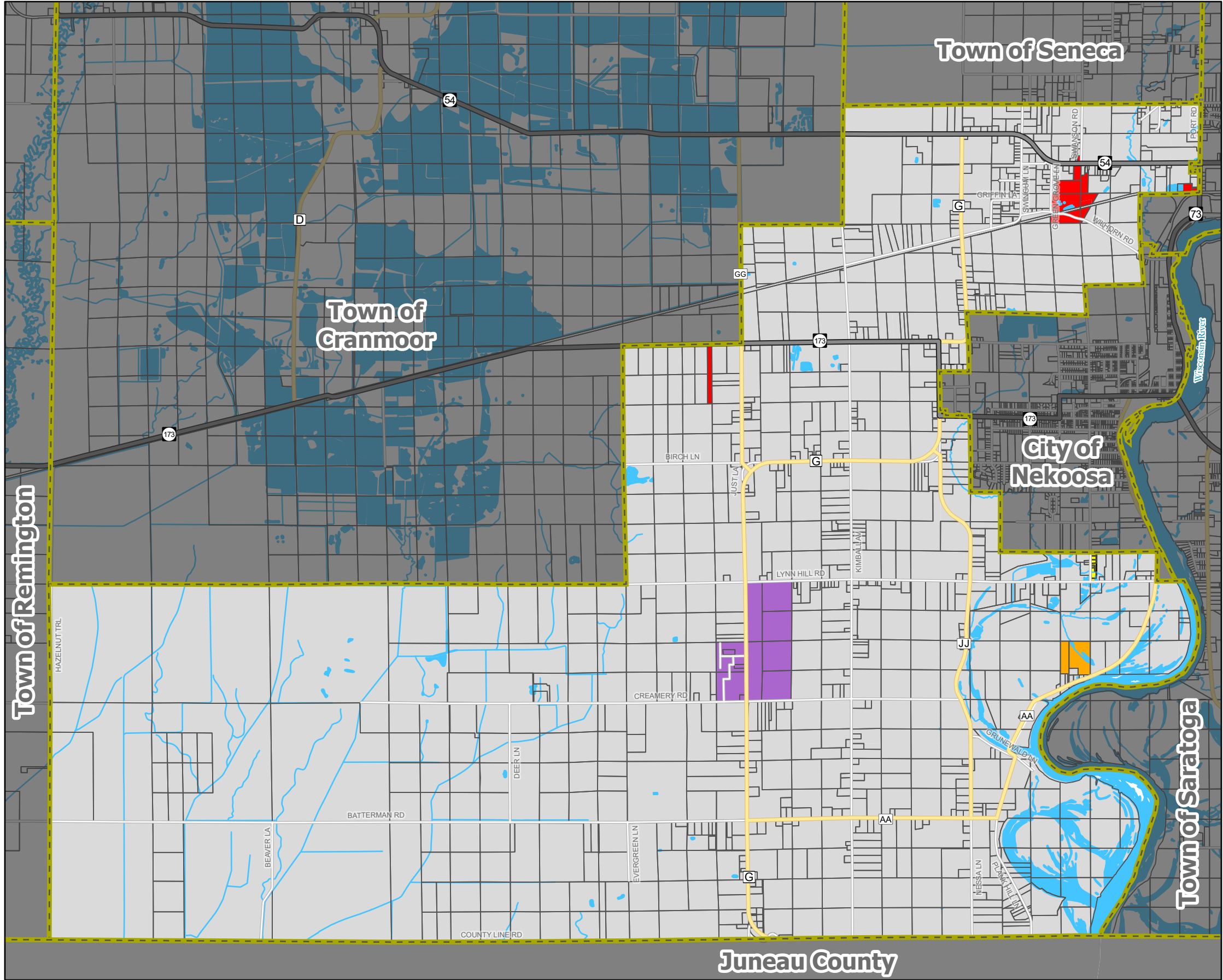
Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood Co
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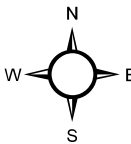
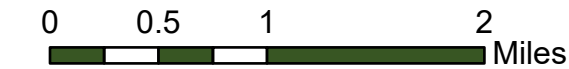
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Future Land Use

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Parcels
- Future Land Use
 - Agriculture
 - Commercial District
 - Residential District
 - Special Purpose District
 - Tribal Lands
 - Water



Source: WisDOT, WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood Co
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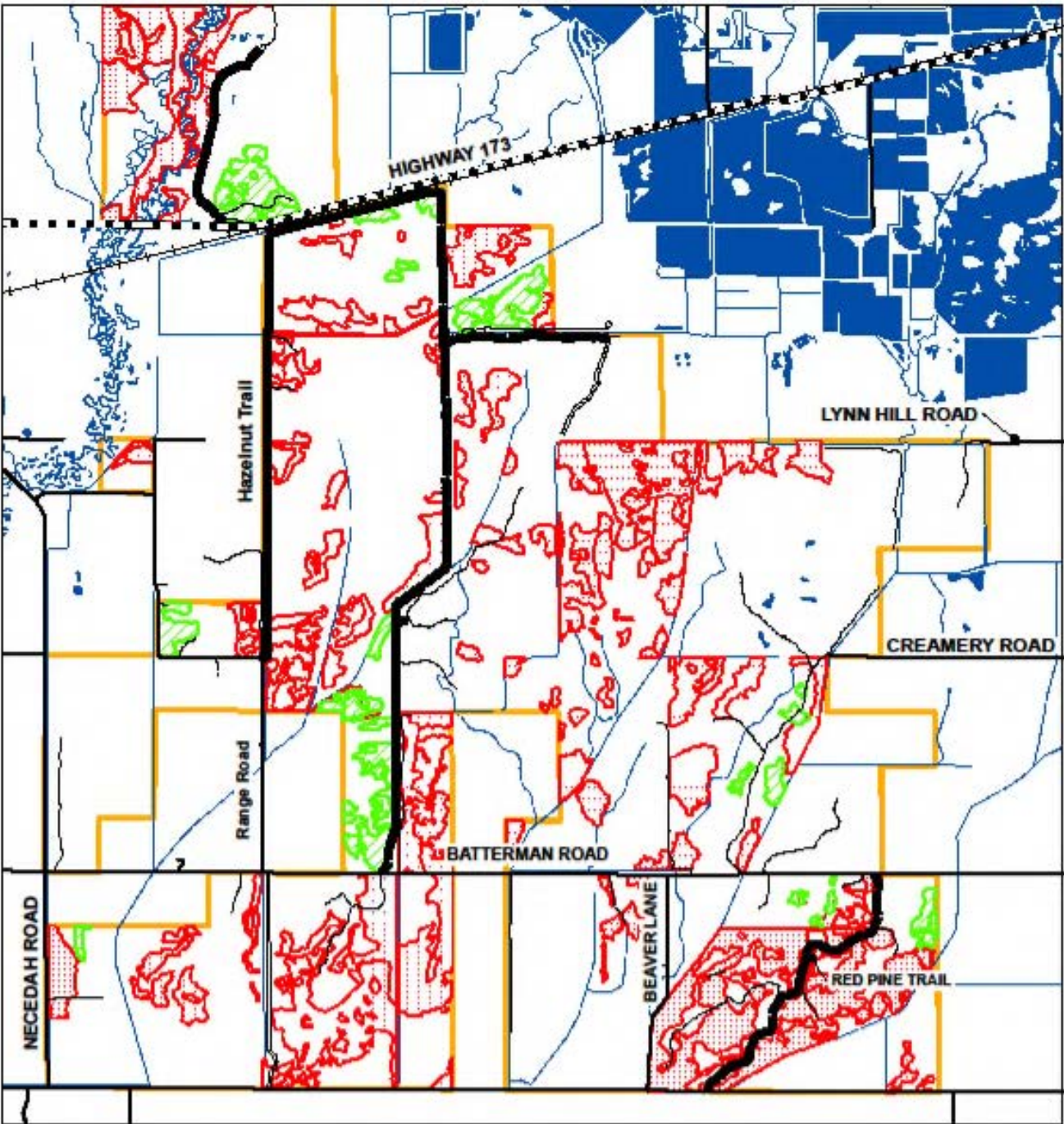
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Map #1000.5.2

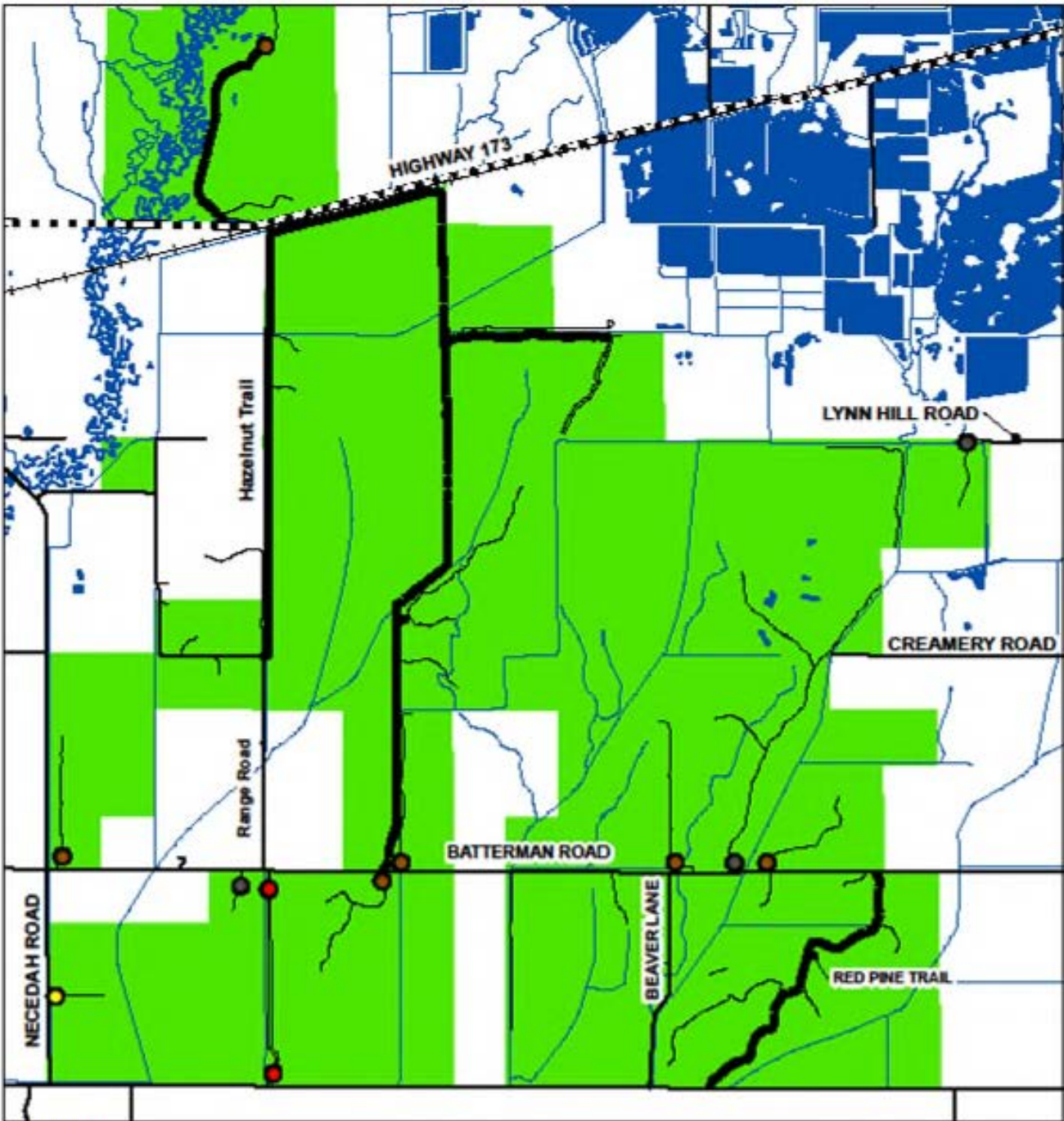
Port Edwards Block
Harvest Areas 2021-3035



- Legend**
- Highways
 - Roads
 - WCF Permanent Primary Roads
 - WCF Permanent Secondary Roads
 - WCF Temporary Roads
 - RR Tracks
 - County Forest Boundary
 - Water Features
 - Regeneration Harvest Areas
 - Intermediate Treatment Stands



Port Edwards Block
Primary and Secondary Roads



- Legend**
- Road Closure Gate
 - Boulder Road Closure
 - Proposed Road Closures
 - Water Features
 - County Forest Boundary
 - Highways
 - Roads
 - WCF Permanent Primary Roads
 - WCF Permanent Secondary Roads
 - WCF Temporary Roads
 - RR Tracks



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Town of Port Edwards Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The Town of Port Edwards 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 Planning Committee will provide oversight for the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Committee will also recommend adoption of the Public Participation Plan to the Town Board.

The public participation plan will incorporate the following:

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

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

II. Implementation, Evaluation & Update:

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

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

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

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

THE TOWN OF PORT EDWARDS DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

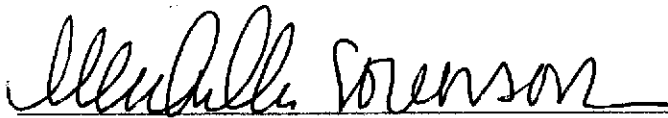
WHEREAS, the Town is updating its Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

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, Michelle Sorenson, Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a Town Board meeting, held at the Town Hall on the 13th day of May, 2024, at 6:00p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michelle Sorenson", written over a horizontal line.

Michelle Sorenson, Clerk

PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #

Town of Port Edwards, Wisconsin

The Planning Committee of Town of Port Edwards, Wisconsin, by this resolution, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and by a roll call vote of a majority of the Town Planning Committee present and voting resolves and recommends to the Town board of the Town of Port Edwards as follows:

Adoption of the Town of Port Edwards Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Port Edwards Planning Committee, by this resolution, further resolves and orders as follows:

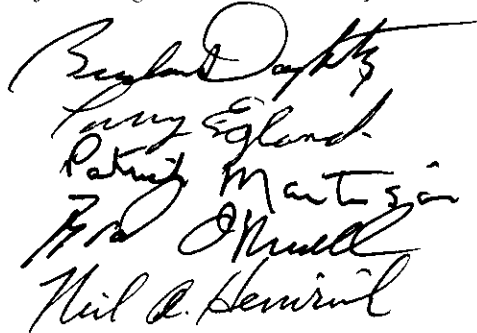
All maps and other materials noted and attached as exhibits to the Town of Port Edwards Comprehensive Plan are incorporated into and made a part of the Town of Port Edwards Comprehensive Plan.

The vote of the Town of Port Edwards Planning Committee regarding this resolution shall be recorded by the clerk of the Town of Port Edwards Planning Committee in the official minutes of the Town of Port Edwards Planning Committee.

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

Adopted this 15th day of August 20 24

[Signatures of Planning Committee members]



Attest:

[Signature of Planning Committee clerk]



PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing for comments on the Recommended Town of Port Edwards Comprehensive Plan shall be held at Town Hall on Monday, 10-14-2024 at 6PM. The proposed comprehensive plan has been distributed as outlined in the statute.

Michelle Sorenson, an employee/representative of the Town, may be contacted to provide a copy of the comprehensive plan and additional information on the proposed plan and ordinance at porttownclerk@solarus.net or 715.886.5540. The plan is also available at www.ncwrpc.org. The Plan may also be viewed in person at the Town Hall at 2000 County Rd G, Nekoosa, WI 54457 by contacting Michelle Sorenson.

NOTE:

Under s. 66.1001 (4) (d), Wis. stats., the hearing must be preceded by a class 1 notice under chapter 985, Wis. stats., that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held.

Town of Port Edwards Ordinance to Adopt the Updated Comprehensive Plan 2024-

ORDINANCE #2024-

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Town of Port Edwards

Wood County

SECTION I: TITLE AND PURPOSE

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

SECTION II – AUTHORITY

The Town Board of Town of Port Edwards has authority under its Town powers under s. 60.22, Wis. stats., its power to appoint a Town Planning Committee under ss. 60.62 (4) and 62.23 (1), Wis. stats., and under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of Town of Port Edwards 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 Port Edwards 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 Port Edwards to adopt its comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., and provides the authority for the Town Board to order its publication.

SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Town Board of Town of Port Edwards 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 PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Committee of the Town of Port Edwards, 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 Port Edwards Comprehensive Plan, which contains all the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

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

SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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

SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY

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

SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

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

Adopted this 11th day of November 2024.

By the Town Board of the Town of Port Edwards, Wood County:



Randy Moody, Chairman



Tim Schmidt, Supervisor



H. Jeffrey O'Donnell, Supervisor

Attest: 

Michelle Sorenson, Clerk