



Town of Spencer Comprehensive Plan 2017



Town of Spencer, Marathon County

Town Board

Dennis Dieringer - Chairman

Dennis Foth - Supervisor

Carl Hoff - Supervisor

Dennis Gonnering - Clerk

Joan Meyer - Treasurer

Plan Commission

Dennis Dieringer

Bob Mayer

Janet Ammons

Pete Hoff

Jerry Schmitz

Adopted 2017

Photo Credits: Town Plan Commission

Prepared by: North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Maps iv

Plan Introduction1

Demographics..... 3

Natural and Agricultural Resources..... 9

Cultural Resources 17

Housing19

Utilities and Community Facilities 25

Transportation 33

Economic Development 39

Land Use 47

Intergovernmental Cooperation 55

Implementation57

Appendix A: Plan Resolution and Ordinance 63

Appendix B: Public Participation Plan 67

LIST OF MAPS

Locational	2
General Soils	15
Natural Resources	16
Utilities and Community Facilities	31
Transportation	38
Existing Land Use	53
Future Land Use Plan	54

PLAN INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Town of Spencer Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide town and county decision makers on a variety of issues over the next twenty years. This plan documents existing conditions in the Town and identifies primary issues or concerns to address in the future and identifies policies and actions to address those concerns. It includes information that assists in making decisions about such topics as future development, land use, transportation, housing, and economic development.

Some key findings include:

- The Town of Spencer is located in the southwest corner of Marathon County, Wisconsin. It has seen rapid population increase (+60%) over the past 30 years. From 2000 – 2010, the Town’s population increased 18%. Population growth is expected to continue into the future.
- The landscape of the Town is still relatively rural in nature. The Town of Spencer adopted its first comprehensive plan in 2005. Marathon County regulates zoning within the Town of Spencer.
- Housing within the Town consists primarily of single family, detached residences. These homes are scattered throughout the Town.
- Residents utilize septic systems for on-site wastewater treatment. The nearest municipal sewer and water systems are located in the City of Marshfield, located on the Town’s southeastern border, and the Village of Spencer, in the northwest portion of the Town.
- Town roads are generally in good repair. Growth in the Marshfield area has increased traffic on Town roads.
- Most of the employment offered within the Town is agriculture and some manufacturing. Most Town residents work outside of the Town.

Public Participation

Public participation is an important part of the planning process. Allowing and encouraging public involvement in the planning process provides the citizens of the town an opportunity to express their views, ideas, and present issues that they would like addressed of the future development of the town. Local officials should use this input to guide the policies and

decisions made. A robust public engagement strategy will lead to a better plan that has broader support from the people of the town. During the development of this plan, public meetings were held that allowed the public to provide their input. The plan was available for anyone to view at various draft stages throughout the process on the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) website and the Town of Spencer website. NCWRPC staff members were also available to receive comments throughout the process.

Goals, Objectives, Policies

Goals and objectives have been developed relative to each of the plan chapters. For each of the goals and objectives, specific policies, strategies and/or actions are recommended to enable the community to achieve them. Definitions are provided below to clarify the purpose and intent of each category.

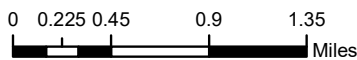
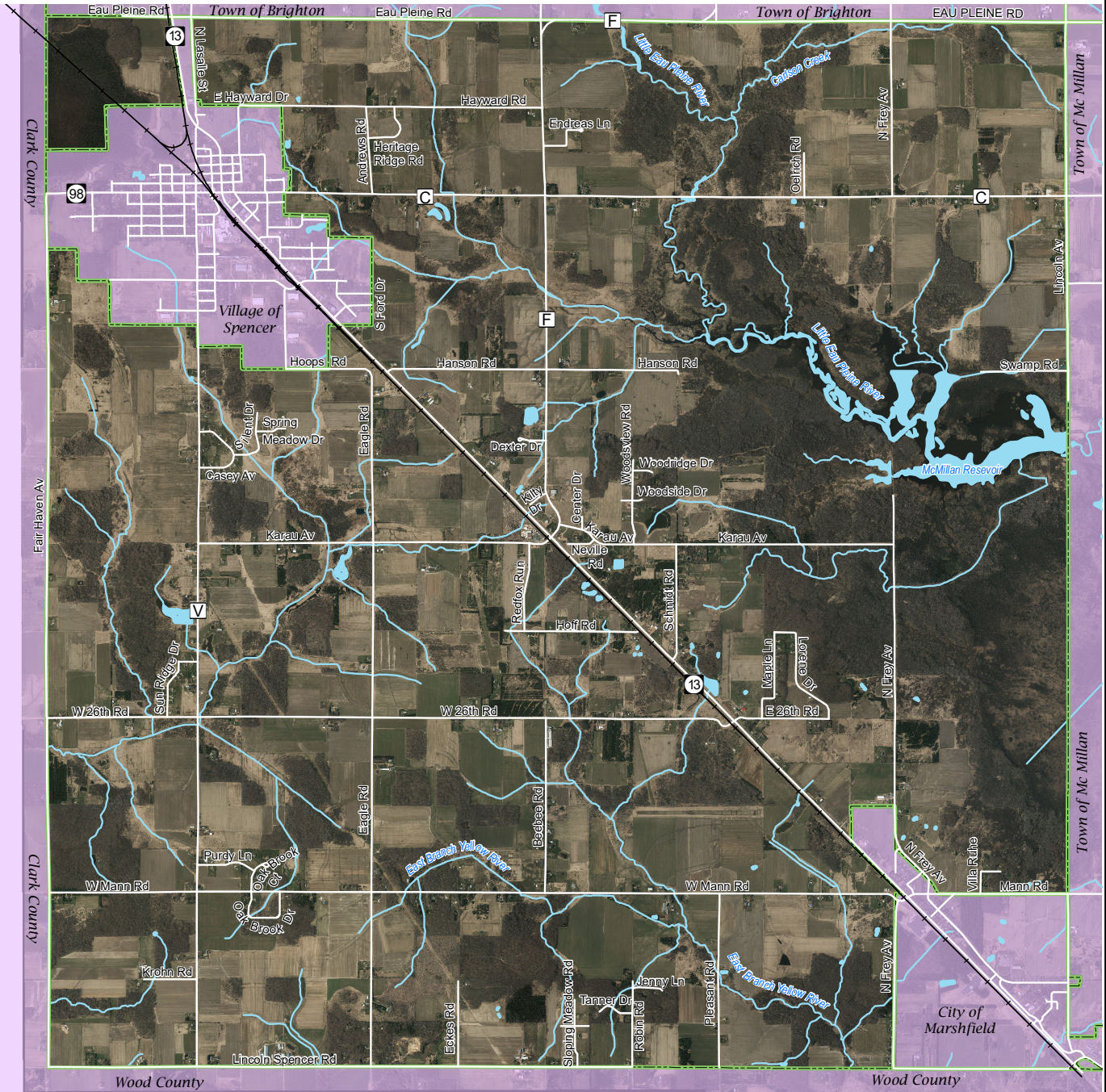
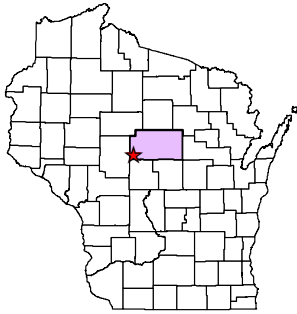
Definitions:

Goal: A goal is a statement that describes a desired future condition. The statement is broad in scope and describes general concepts or things the community hopes to accomplish.

Objective: An objective is a statement that describes a specific course of action to achieve a goal or address an issue.

Policy: A policy is a general course of action or rule of conduct to be followed to achieve community goals and objectives.

Map 1 Locational Town of Spencer Marathon County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

DEMOGRAPHICS

This analysis is intended to describe the existing demographics of the Town of Spencer and identify the major demographic trends impacting Spencer over the next few decades. Both Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin are also listed for comparison.

Population and Households

Historical Trends

Population

The 2015 population estimated by the Wisconsin Department of Administration in the Town of Spencer is 1,615 people. The total population in the Town of Spencer increased by 59.9% percent between 1980 and 2010, while the rate of growth from 2000-2010 was 17.9%. Total households increased by 15.8 percent during this same ten year period. The increase in total households over the past 30 years was substantially higher than the increase in population. This is due to a decrease in the average household size by 12.3% over the 30 year period, which reflects the national trend of declining household sizes.

The population of Marathon County grew from 125,834 in 2000 to 134,063 in 2010, an increase of 6.5 percent, compared to a 6.0 percent increase in the state and 9.7% in the United States. Population growth in Marathon

County has been concentrated in the urbanized area surrounding Wausau. Most towns experienced modest percentage growth over the last two decades. Most of the communities with very high percentage growth also have relatively small populations. Five towns, as well as one city and one village, had negative population growth between 1990 and 2010.

Households

The average household size in Spencer has been declining, following trends in the county, state, and nation as a whole. Spencer's household size of 2.86 is higher than the both the county at 2.49 and state at 2.43. The larger average household size in Spencer may be attributable to a larger proportion of children under 18.

Age

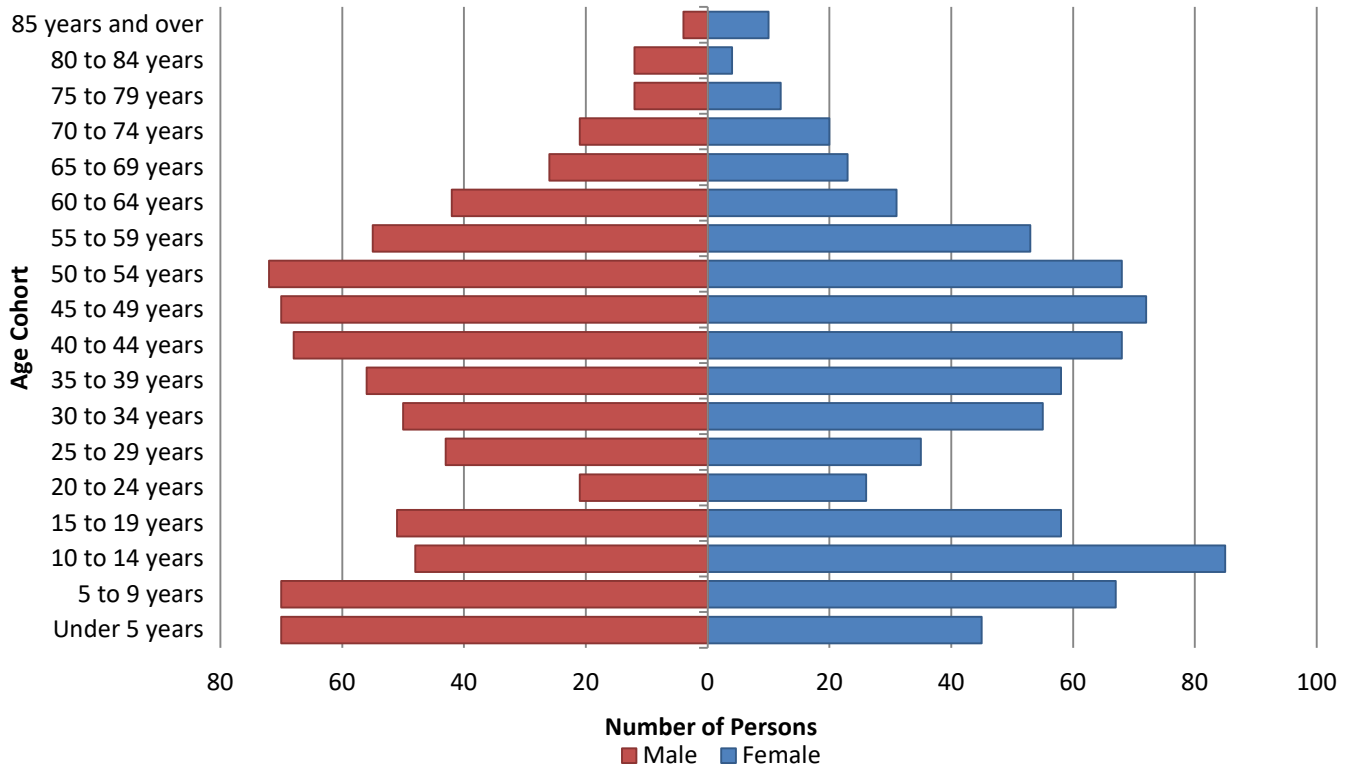
The median age in the town is 37.8, which is slightly lower than both the state at 38.5 years and the county at 39.4 years. This is an increase of nearly three years over the last decade for each jurisdiction, reflective of an aging population in the state. As displayed in **Figure 2-1**, there is a large proportion of children under 18 in Spencer, as well as a large proportion of adults from 35 to 54 years old. **Figure 2-2** shows that Marathon County has a more evenly distributed age pyramid.

Table 2-1: Demographic Change, 1980-2010

Minor Civil Division	1980	1990	2000	2010	1980 - 2010 % Change	2000 - 2010 Net Change
Total Population						
Spencer	989	1,036	1,341	1,581	59.86%	17.90%
County	111,270	115,400	125,834	134,063	20.48%	6.54%
State	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	20.85%	6.03%
Total Households						
Spencer	303	337	475	550	81.52%	15.79%
County	37,865	41,534	47,402	53,176	40.44%	12.18%
State	1,652,261	1,822,118	2,084,544	2,279,768	37.98%	9.37%
Average Household Size						
Spencer	3.26	3.07	2.82	2.86	-12.27%	1.42%
County	2.85	2.75	2.6	2.49	-12.63%	-4.23%
State	2.77	2.61	2.50	2.43	-12.27%	-2.80%

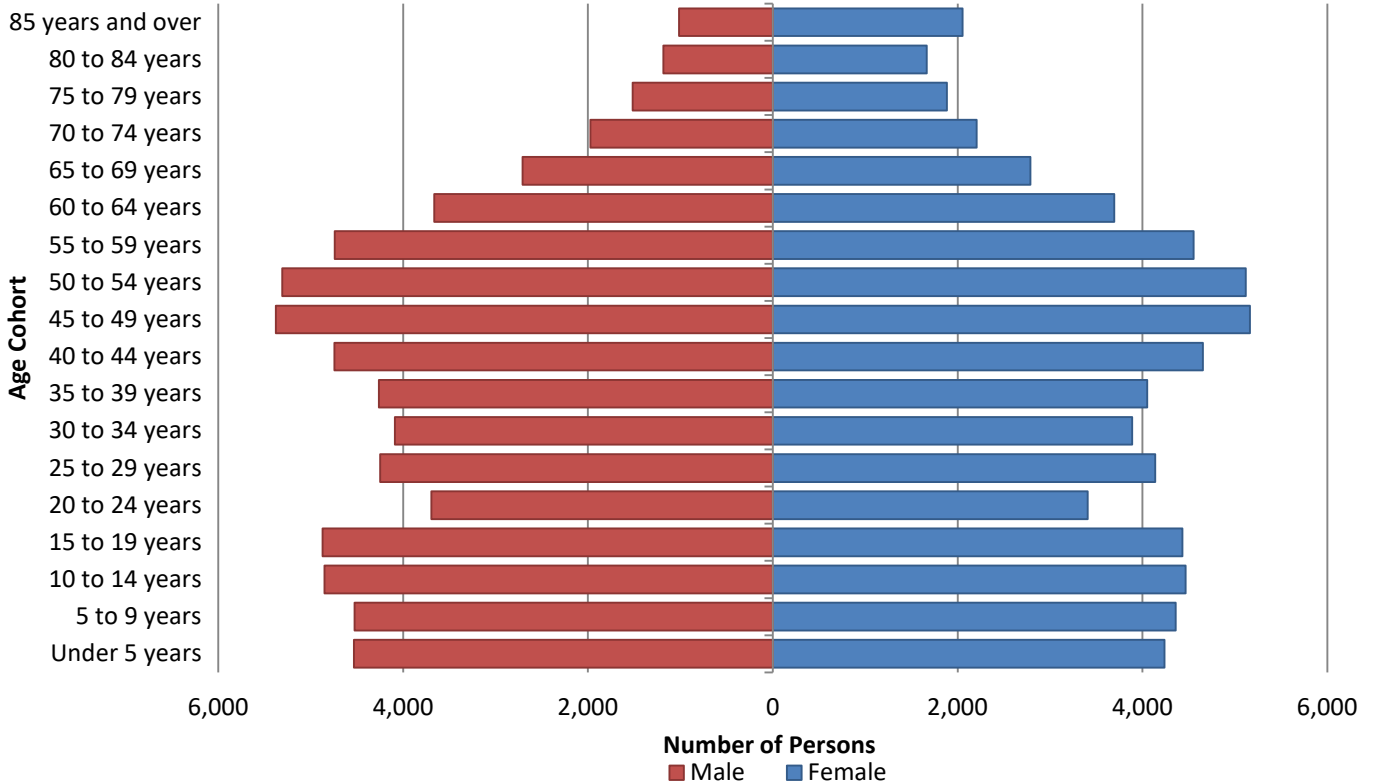
Source: US Census. Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Figure 2-1: 2010 Town of Spencer Age Cohorts



Source: 2010 Census, DPDP1

Figure 2-2: 2010 Marathon County Age Cohorts



Source: 2010 Census, DPDP1

These factors, along with a smaller proportion of 65 and older adults, is keeping the median age in Spencer at a lower age than the county and state.

Population Projections

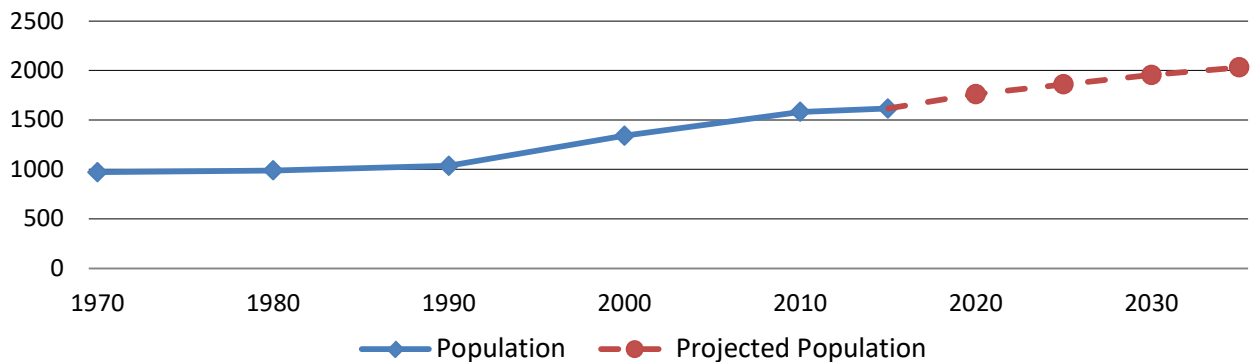
Table 2-2 and **Figure 2-3** show population projections completed by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center. The WDOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96. These projections are based on historical population and household growth in the community, with more recent years given a greater weight. Population growth is expected in Spencer through the year 2040, with a 32% growth rate over the 30 year period. This compares to the expected 14% growth rate in Marathon County. Growth is projected to occur more rapidly in the early years and slow significantly as the year 2040 approaches.

Household Projections

Household projections were completed in 5-year increments between 2010 and 2040. As the population projections, the WDOA household projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96 and are based on the historical population trends of individual communities. **Table 2-3** includes household projections completed by the WDOA.

These projections show that the number of households is expected to grow more quickly than the population, reflecting historic trends for decreasing household sizes. The average household size was 2.86 in 2010 and was expected to decrease to 2.69 by 2040. Household growth is expected to continue through the year 2040 for both the county and the town.

Figure 2-3: Town of Spencer Population



Source: U.S. Census, WI DOA

Table 2-2: Population Projections, 2010-2040

Total Population by Year								
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% change 2010 - 2040
Spencer	1,581	1,640	1,760	1,860	1,955	2,030	2,080	32%
County	134,063	136,510	142,200	146,595	150,130	152,120	152,790	14%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration Population Projections, 2013

Table 2-3: Household Projections, 2010-2040

Total Households by Year								
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% change 2010 - 2040
Spencer	550	576	624	665	705	741	766	39%
County	53,176	54,657	57,394	59,611	61,524	62,958	63,730	20%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration Household Projections, 2013

Education and Income Levels

Education

According to 2008-2012 American Community Survey data, 90.4% of town residents have a high school education or higher, an increase from 2000 when it was 86.1%. This compares to 89.2% for the county, and 90.2% for the state. In the town, 15.8% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, up from 11.7% in 2000. This is lower than the proportion of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher in the county at 21.9%, and lower than the state with 26.4 percent. The proportion of people with an associate's degree in the town is slightly higher than the state and

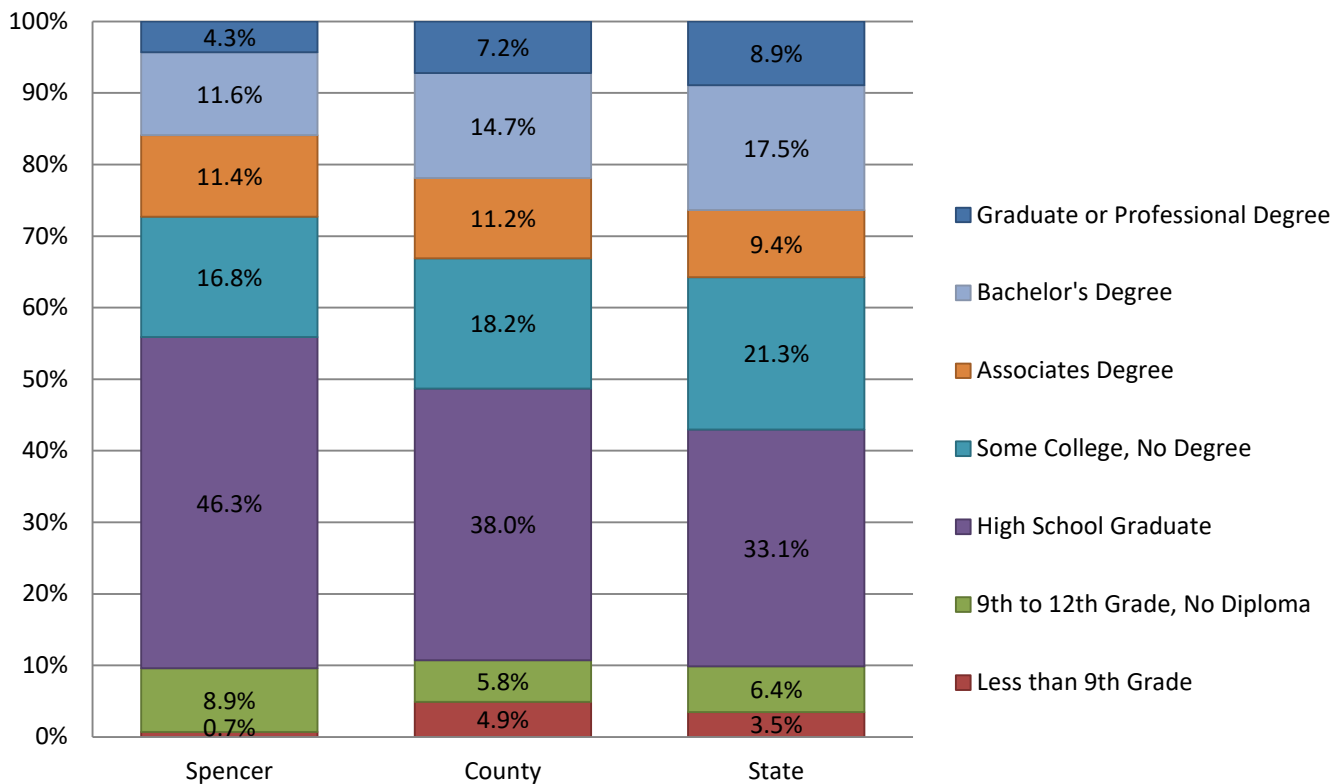
about equal to the county. These statistics include only residents that are 25 years of age or older.

A comparison of educational attainment between the Town of Spencer, Marathon County, and Wisconsin is provided in **Figure 2-4**.

Income

Median household income for town residents was \$59,643 in 2010, as shown in **Table 2-4**. This is higher than Marathon County, with a median of \$53,762, and higher than the state overall at \$52,627. Per capita income in Spencer is lower than both the State and the County, as shown in **Table 2-5**. Spencer's larger

Figure 2-4: Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Older, 2010



Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey S1501

Table 2-4: Median Household Income

Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	*Net Change	*% Change
Town of Spencer	\$47,315	\$59,643	-\$3,442	-5.46%
Marathon County	\$45,165	\$53,762	-\$6,456	-10.72%
Wisconsin	\$43,791	\$52,627	-\$5,759	-9.86%

Source: U.S. Census, 2008-2012 ACS & NCWRPC.
*Adjusted for inflation in 2012 dollars.

Table 2-5: Per Capita Income

Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	*Net Change	*% Change
Town of Spencer	\$17,702	\$26,318	\$2,716	11.51%
Marathon County	\$20,703	\$27,173	-\$430	-1.56%
Wisconsin	\$21,271	\$27,426	-\$935	-3.30%

Source: U.S. Census, 2008-2012 ACS & NCWRPC.
*Adjusted for inflation in 2012 dollars.

average household size may lead to more earning power per household, while the higher proportion of children under 18 helps to explain why per capita income is lower and median household income is higher than the county and state. Median household income in all jurisdictions declined over the last ten years after adjusting for inflation, while per capita income increased in Spencer and decreased slightly in the county and state.

Employment Characteristics

Table 2-6 illustrates general employment characteristics of the employed population in Spencer. The “employed population” is defined as people living in the town who are 16 years and older and had a job at the time of the Census. In 2010, the town had an employed population of 722, a decline of 40 people since 2000. Concurrently the unemployment rate increased from 5.0% to 8.6%. Approximately 11% of

employed residents work within the Town of Spencer. Approximately 5% of employed residents work from home and 1% (7 people) walk to work. About 1% of employed residents do not have access to a vehicle. About 11 percent work within the Town of Spencer, while the remainder of residents commute outside of the town for work. The average travel time to work is 19.7 minutes, shorter than the 21.6 minute state average but longer than the 18.7 minute county average.

Despite the decline in employment, Table 2-7 shows that the Town of Spencer has a higher labor force participation rate than both the county and the state, meaning a higher proportion of the population is actively working or seeking work. Labor force participation has declined in all three jurisdictions between 2000 and 2010, one of the lingering effects of the Great Recession.

Table 2-6: Employment

Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2000-2010 % Change	Unemployment Rate
Town of Spencer	762	722	-5.25%	8.6%
Marathon county	66,550	69,248	4.05%	7.3%
Wisconsin	2,734,925	2,856,318	4.44%	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Table 2-7: Labor Force

Minor Civil Division	Labor Force			Labor Force Participation rate	
	2000	2010	2000-2010 % Change	2000	2010
Town of Spencer	802	790	-1.50%	78.6%	73.2%
Marathon county	69,216	74,779	8.04%	74.7%	71.1%
Wisconsin	2,872,104	3,090,671	7.61%	69.1%	68.5%

Source: U.S. Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

It is important to consider the patterns and inter-relationships of natural resources on a broader scale because they do not follow geo-political boundaries. In addition, many of the programs for protecting or mitigating impacts to natural resources are administered at the County, State or Federal level. Thus, an overview of recent county-wide natural resource planning efforts is described below, followed by a description of local natural resource conditions. Of particular interest are geographic areas of the landscape encompassing valued natural resources features grouped below by resource type, including water, soil and biological resources.

Recent Planning Efforts Related to Natural and Agricultural Resources

In the last decade, several plans were prepared by the County specifically to address protection and management of natural resources. These plans may be used as resources to guide local policy and decision making regarding resource management and protection. In addition to the plans listed below, Marathon County and several local communities have adopted park and outdoor recreation plans that discuss natural resource based recreational facilities and protection strategies. These are described in more detail in the Parks section.

Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2010

The Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Marathon County from 2010 to 2020. The Land Conservation and Zoning Committee identified the following long-term program outcomes for the natural resource protection efforts in Marathon County:

- Land Use activities are well planned to enhance community development, minimize conflicts, maximize infrastructure investments, and protect rural character.
- Maintain the soil and water resources as productive assets through topsoil and organic matter conservation.
- Marathon County agriculture and woodlot producers are economically strong.

Marathon County encompasses portions of 22 watersheds. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ranked these watersheds

according to water pollution impacts and designated five as “priority” watersheds to receive special planning and funding through the voluntary, State-funded Priority Watershed Program. The County’s Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning (DCPZ) works with the WDNR to implement the program. Program funding is used to hire staff to assist in developing management plans for each watershed and to provide cost sharing to landowners for implementation of “best management practices” (BMPs) to achieve the program objectives.

Marathon County Groundwater Protection Guide, 2001

This guide is an extension of the efforts established with adoption of the Marathon County Groundwater Plan in 1988. It is intended to guide local and County officials in setting policy. It also serves as a resource of information about groundwater and other natural resources and recommends strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection.

Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2006-2020

This plan includes recommendations to guide management of forest land in Marathon County in accordance with the County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department’s mission to manage and protect the County forest on a sustainable basis for ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future generations. It provides substantial information on existing forest resources and as well as information regarding the roles of the various agencies and regulatory framework related to forest management.

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2013 - 2028

The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan is required under Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The purpose of this plan is to guide and manage growth and development in a manner that will preserve the rural character; protect the agricultural base and natural resources; and contribute to the County’s overall goal of promoting public safety, health and prosperity within the County. This plan is the primary policy document in directing preservation of agricultural production capacity, farmland preservation, soil and water protection, and future land development while respecting private property rights and individual units of government.

Natural Resources

Water Resources

Marathon County contains abundant water resources. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state and others are in need of focused efforts to improve water quality. Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) designations are derived from an amendment to the U.S. Clean Water Act, which directed states to identify waters that were largely unaffected by pollution and should remain that way. States were required to develop “anti-degradation” policies to protect these waters from pollution. As a result, wastewater entering an ORW must be as clean as the water in the “outstanding” water body. The anti-degradation policies only apply to point sources of pollution, such as an industrial discharge pipe. However, Wisconsin has other programs in place to control non-point source pollution, such as animal waste and pesticides in farm runoff, urban runoff, and failing septic systems.

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board also wanted to extend higher levels of protection to top trout waters. As such, the WDNR established a second category of waterways to be protected under the anti-degradation policy; these are the ERW. Wastewater entering ERW must meet minimum clean water standards, although higher standards are encouraged where feasible. There are no ORW or ERW in the Town of Spencer.

Water resources that have been significantly degraded are identified as “impaired waters”. Four of the 22 watersheds in Marathon County have been identified as “impaired waters” on the “303 (d) list” of the U.S. Clean Water Act. The list identifies waters that do not meet current water quality standards and merit water quality improvement and protection. Impaired water resources near the Town of Spencer include:

- Upper Yellow River in the Town of Spencer
- Upper Big Eau Pleine in western Marathon County

Resource management plans for these watersheds and the Lower Big Rib River watershed have been completed as part of the Priority Watershed Program, a State-funded, voluntary program administered by the County. The County’s resource management planning efforts are described in more detail in the *Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan*. Additionally, the Little Eau Pleine River is currently being considered as an addition to the 303d list under the U.S. Clean Water Act.

Streams/Rivers

The Little Eau Pleine River runs through the northern third of the Town. Two tributaries of the Yellow River flow through the west and south part of the Town. State Highway 13 divides the Town into two watersheds; the area to the north and east is in the Little Eau Pleine River watershed and the area to the south and west in the Upper Yellow River Watershed, which is considered an Impaired Waters.

Floodplains

A significant area adjacent to the Little Eau Pleine River and a tributary are within the 100-year floodplain. Floodplains consist of land likely to be covered by floodwater during the regional (100-year) flood. Floodplain areas are based on information compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). The floodplain includes the floodway and the flood fringe.

Wetlands

Wetlands in Wisconsin were defined by the State Legislature in 1978 as: “an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions.”



The McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area

There are various programs at all three levels of government - local, State and Federal – that regulate activities in wetlands. There are dozens of wetland types in Wisconsin, characterized by vegetation, soil type and degree of saturation or water cover.

A large area of wetlands adjoins the Little Eau Pleine River, extending into the McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Area, which covers a significant amount of the northeast portion of the Town. This wetland complex consists of a mix of forested, scrub/shrub and emergent/wet meadow type wetlands. Wetlands also exist adjacent to the other creeks and tributaries in the Town. The WDNR maintains a dike that controls the marsh. The City of Marshfield has two wells in the marsh.

Groundwater

Depth to groundwater varies from shallow to moderately deep. Marathon County groundwater usage has increased recently, mostly due to increases in irrigation and industrial use. Water quantities are generally sufficient for domestic uses and scattered urban development. However, residents report poor water quality with high iron content.

Soil Resources

Soil Types

Most soils in the Town are in the Loyal-Withee-Marshfield. Soils in the Cathro-Seelyeville association are located along the Little Eau Pleine River, and in the McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Area.

Soil Erosion

Soil erosion can lead to the loss of prime farm soils and the degradation of water quality due to nutrient runoff. Susceptibility for soil erosion is similar to the average soil loss experienced by Marathon County as a whole, which is two tons lost per acre per year. Three to five tons per acre per year is considered “tolerable,”

Prime Farm Soils

The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) designates prime farmland soils within the county. This system establishes a basis from which one parcel of land can be compared to another. It rates soils on their ability to produce food, feed, forage, and fiber crops. It is based upon the knowledge that soil properties affect yields. The system is non-biased, defensible, and can be consistently applied. Additional information on Marathon County FPP can be obtained from Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning (CPZ) Department.

Wildlife Resources and Habitat

Wildlife resources include a variety of game and non-game species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians that typically live in Marathon

County. Common types of wildlife include deer, wild turkeys, raccoon, squirrels, songbirds, waterfowl and raptors. Wildlife resources are abundant in the many undisturbed sanctuaries, refuges, reserves, and scattered habitats located throughout the County. Numerous other species of migrating birds use habitat in Marathon County for food, shelter, and resting stops during seasonal migration.

There is a significant amount of wildlife habitat in Marathon County. In addition to County parks and forest units, major wildlife habitat areas include: the George W. Mead Wildlife Area, the McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Management Area, Cherokee Park, and Rib Mountain State Park.

Endangered Species

Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern species must be considered when analyzing the feasibility of a development proposal. Resources are available for project specific data from the Wisconsin DNR. There are some endangered, threatened, or special concern species within the Town. These include:

- Northern Wet Forest Community - These weakly minerotrophic conifer swamps, located in the North, are dominated by black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and tamarack (*Larix laricina*). Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) may be a significant canopy component in certain parts of the range of this community complex. Understories are composed mostly of sphagnum (*Sphagnum* spp.) mosses and ericaceous shrubs such as leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*), Labrador-tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), and small cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*) and sedges such as (*Carex trisperma* and *C. paupercula*). The Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) has split out two entities, identified (but not strictly defined) by the two dominant species (see Black Spruce Swamp and Tamarack Swamp).
- Open Bog Community - These non-forested bogs are acidic, low nutrient, northern Wisconsin peatlands dominated by *Sphagnum* spp. mosses that occur in deep layers, often with pronounced hummocks and hollows. Also present are a few narrow-leaved sedge species such as (*Carex oligosperma* and *C. pauciflora*), cotton-grasses (*Eriophorum* spp.), and ericaceous shrubs, especially bog laurel (*Kalmia polifolia*), leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*), and small cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*). Plant diversity is very low but includes characteristic and distinctive specialists. Trees are absent or achieve very low cover values as this community is closely related to and intergrades with Muskeg. When

this community occurs in southern Wisconsin, it is often referred to as a Bog Relict.

- Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) – A special concern semi-terrestrial turtle that spends most of its time in a variety of wetlands, deep and shallow marshes, sedge meadows, wet meadows, and backwaters of rivers.
- Small Forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*) – A special concern annual/perennial flowering plant that is found in cold, clear forested streams.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – A special concern large songbird. Alteration of wetland habitats for agriculture or urban development threatens the viability of the species.

Agricultural Resources

Marathon County ranks first among Wisconsin's 72 counties for the value of milk and dairy products, second for the value of crops and hay, and third in total value of agricultural products sold. Agriculture is clearly an important part of Marathon County.



A farm in the Town of Spencer

The Town of Spencer is located in the agriculturally rich western portion of Marathon County. Agriculture is the dominant land use in Spencer and is an important portion of the economy. A large portion of the land in the Town of Spencer is designated as Farm Preservation Area in the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan 2013-2018. The Farm

Preservation Area designation by itself does not allow farmers to participate in the farmland preservation tax credit program, but it the first step required to develop farmland preservation zoning and agricultural enterprise areas that allow landowners to claim farmland preservation tax credits

Nearly 20,000 acres of farmland have been converted to other uses since 2000 in Marathon County. The number of farms has declined while the average farm size has increased. The number of dairy herds and total number of cows has decreased. As farmland has been fragmented and converted to residential uses, more conflicts occur between rural residents and farm operators.

Issues

- Preservation of Rural Character - Preservation of rural character was identified by Town residents as a significant concern.
- Agricultural / Residential Conflicts - There are some conflicts with agricultural and residential uses. These include transportation conflicts, noise, odor, and others. The Town wants to balance between the management of land use to prevent conflicts and keep the cost of Town services low with the ability of property owners to decide how their land is used.
- Water Quality - There are areas in the Town that have water quality concerns.
- Changes in Climate – Local impacts of a changing climate may include changes in the growing season, increased likelihood of droughts and fires, and higher frequency of strong storms and flooding. These changes will impact the health of the community by changing agriculture, increasing diseases borne by food, water, and wildlife, and increasing levels of some air pollutants. It is important for the Town to adapt to these changes by avoiding development in floodplains, wetlands and other areas that can pose a hazard to humans or wildlife and by managing stormwater and erosion.
- Invasive Species - Diseases and non-native invasive pests such as Emerald Ash Borer and Oak Wilt have the potential to devastate the stock of trees in the Town. While Emerald Ash Borer has not yet been found in Marathon County, it has been found in the nearby Counties of Portage, Wood and Oneida and has spread rapidly.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain and enhance water quality throughout the Town.

Objectives

- Work with Marathon County and the WDNR to identify critical groundwater zones, such as groundwater recharge areas, and update applicable Town ordinances.
- Work with Marathon County, UW-Extension and other applicable agencies to reduce fertilizer and chemical runoff.
- Coordinate with Marathon County, the WDNR, and UW-Extension to keep up to date on new private on site wastewater treatment systems.
- Investigate participating in wastewater treatment districts in surrounding areas, such as the Village of Spencer and the City of Marshfield.

Policies

- Discourage development in areas critical to the maintenance of the groundwater supply.
- Use wetland maps to guide the Town decision making process.

Goal 2: Protect wetland and floodplain areas.

Objectives

- Identify and utilize existing WDNR guidelines for development located near wetland areas including type and use, and actively enforce these regulations.
- Identify and utilize existing WDNR perimeters around wetland areas where development is discouraged, and actively enforce these regulations in the town.

Policies

- Discourage development from occurring in or around wetland areas where it may negatively impact the Town's groundwater resources.
- Require that all future developments maintain the same level of storm water runoff before, during, and after development, unless there is a proven benefit to the Town or neighborhood in modifying storm water levels.

Goal 3: Preserve and protect sensitive environmental areas in the Town, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, woodlands, and groundwater resources.

Objectives

- Identify important or sensitive natural resources to preserve, such as the McMillan Marsh, the Little Eau Pleine River and the Yellow River.
- Consider using tools, such as transfer of development rights and purchase of development rights, to protect sensitive natural areas and areas that are subject to hazards such as flooding and erosion.

Policies

- Discourage development from occurring in and around sensitive environmental areas, including floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes to reduce impacts to natural resources and natural hazards that negatively affect human health and property.
- Encourage future growth and development to locate in close proximity to existing developed areas to minimize the impacts on natural resources and lower the cost of providing services to these developments.
- Direct future growth to areas contiguous to existing developed areas.
- Monitor the spread and threat of diseases and pests and inform residents and landowners of the potential impacts and methods to counter these threats.

Goal 4: Protect natural resources that are economically productive, such as farmlands and commercial forests.

Objective

- Ensure that concentrated animal feeding operations are located within agricultural areas and maintain a buffer from existing residential subdivisions, municipal boundaries, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

Policies

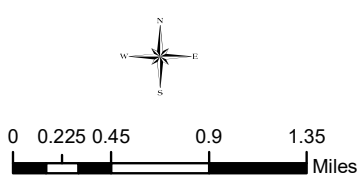
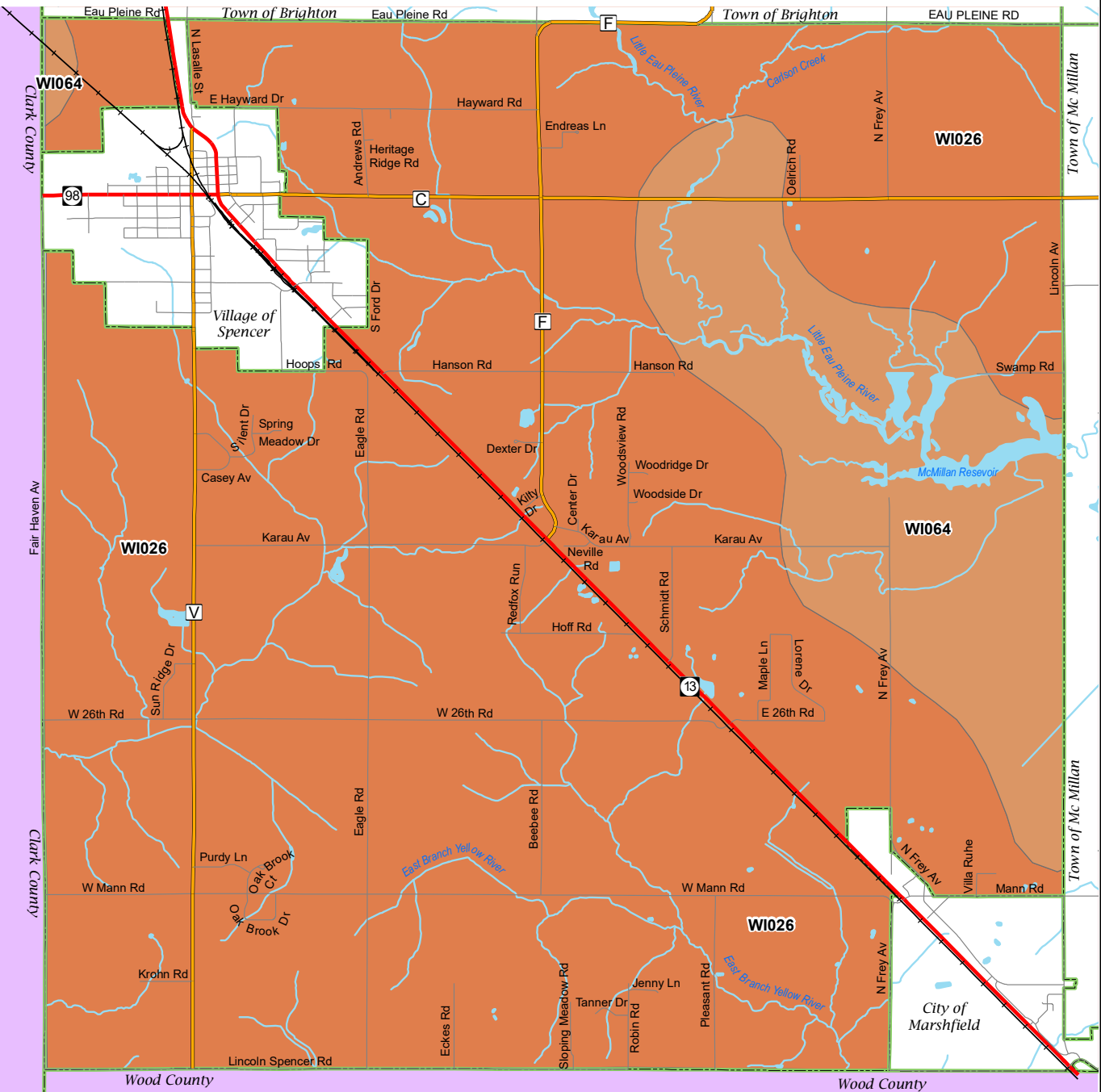
- Support the diversification of farming types and practices to maintain agriculture as a viable economic activity.

- Take into consideration existing agricultural uses and buildings when locating new development to minimize potential conflicts.
- Encourage and support owners of woodlands to develop forest management plans and enroll in the Managed Forest Law program.
- Encourage local farmers to participate in the Farmland Preservation Program to preserve farmland for long-term agricultural use.


Map 2 General Soils Town of Spencer Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  US Highway
-  MARKEY-SEELYEVILLE-CATHRO (WI064)
-  State Highways
-  WITHEE-LOYAL-MARSHFIELD (WI026)
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Railroad



Source: WI DNR, NCRWPC, Marathon Co, NRCS
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCRWPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

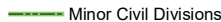

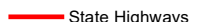
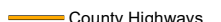
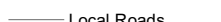

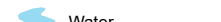



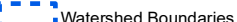


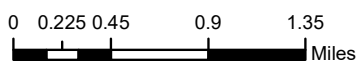
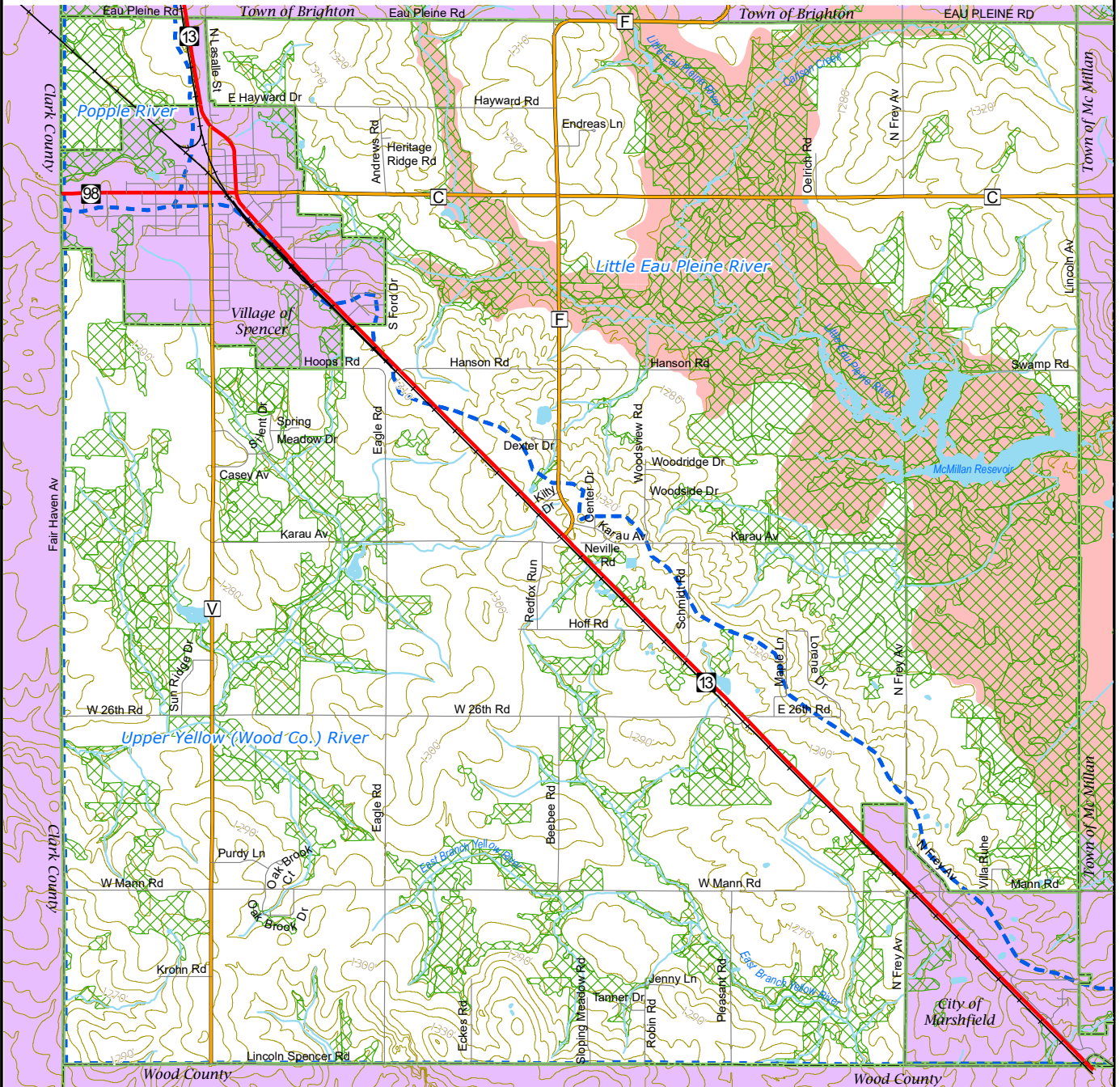
**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**
 210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Map 3 Natural Resources

Town of Spencer Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  US Highway
-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Railroad
-  Water
-  Contours 10 ft
-  Wetlands
-  Floodplains
-  Watershed Boundaries



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co., FEMA

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources can encompass many aspects of our heritage. Cultural resources may include archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to Native Americans or other cultural groups. Cultural resources are those elements around us that signify our heritage and help to evoke a sense of place that makes an area distinctive. Cultural resources include buildings, sites and landscapes, including the layout of a town, that help communities retain their sense of identity in an increasingly homogenized society.

Brief History of the Town of Spencer

The Town of Spencer was formed in 1876. Prior to this, it was part of the Town of Brighton. When it was originally formed, the Town was nearly twice its current size, taking in most of the current Town of McMillan, until 1888. The first election in the Town of Spencer was held in 1877 at the House of William Waters.

Spencer began as one of several towns that grew as a result of the Wisconsin Central Railroad construction in the 1870s. The Town was developed by Civil War veterans who helped build the railroad and decided to stay. Spencer was located in the white pine belt, and James Robinson's first sawmill opened in the Village of Spencer on what is now Mill Street in 1874. Like other early logging communities, Spencer transitioned into a dairy economy.

One of the earliest settlers to this area was John Gardiner, who made homestead entry in 1871. John K. Hayward, the first Town Chairman, was also the Town's first postmaster. The first post office was located in his home

Historic Properties and Sites

There are no properties in Spencer listed on the NRHP. The Town does not have a local historic preservation commission.

The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains the Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory (AHI) that identifies any properties that may have been surveyed in the past; the Inventory does not convey special status and may not be current. The inventory may be reviewed at www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/index.html. There are no historic properties in Spencer that have been previously surveyed and included in the AHI.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has identified no archaeological sites or historic cemeteries in the Town of Spencer.

There are no known cemeteries in the Town of Spencer. Wisconsin Statute 157.70 provides for the protection of all human burial sites, including all marked and unmarked burials and cemeteries. There are currently 133 cemeteries and burial areas identified in Marathon County, and it is likely that other cemeteries and burials may be present. Suspected burial mounds or unmarked burials must be reported to the State Burial Sites Preservation Office. If human remains are uncovered during excavation, all work must cease pending review of the Burial Sites Preservation Office. All cemeteries and burials in Marathon County should be catalogued under Wis. Stat. 157.70 to provide maximum protection of these sites.

Issues

- Lack of Current Information - Although a countywide historic properties survey was carried out in 1975-77, there has been no update. Many properties identified at that time may be gone, while other properties not previously surveyed may now be evaluated in a new context. It is necessary for the County to have current information about cultural resources in order to maximize planning and make the best use of historic properties.
- No Recognition Process - In the Town of Spencer there is no process to recognize historic buildings or begin to plan for their protection. Once historic properties are identified, many towns and villages do not have an established mechanism for recognizing them or integrating them into ongoing planning processes.
- Rural Character and Historic Resources - In Marathon County, residents have expressed a strong desire to preserve the rural character of the County and raised concerns about increasing ex-urban development and the decline of working farms. An important part of rural character is the rural landscape and the buildings that convey that sense of place. While it is important to address the location and type of new development, there is also a need to preserve some visible reminders of rural character, including working farms. Without preserving some of the existing resources, including farmsteads and farmlands, the very characteristics that attract residents and visitors will increasingly be lost.

- Protection of Archaeological Sites and Cemeteries – Cultural resources planning includes identification and protection of archaeological sites and historic cemeteries. The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains a list of reported sites and cemeteries, representing a fraction of sites that are actually present. This information is often overlooked and should be incorporated into the planning process for local communities.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain historically significant structures and places in the community.

Objectives

- Work with the state and county historical societies to identify historically significant buildings and sites that are unique in the town.
- Identify historic grounds such as cemeteries.

Policy

- The Town of Spencer encourages the preservation of historic sites and structures.

Goal 2: Encourage and support cultural resources in surrounding communities.

Objective

- Work with the Village of Spencer and the City of Marshfield to support local cultural resources and activities.

Policy

- Support the ongoing development of local cultural resources in the Village of Spencer and the City of Marshfield.

Goal 3: Preserve the rural character of the Town of Spencer

Objective

- Consider establishing visual criteria for front yards for new developments that face high volume roads.

Policy

- Consider the visual impact of new developments and work to maintain a rural atmosphere.

HOUSING

The housing section is an inventory and analysis of housing conditions in the Town of Spencer. Housing is an important component of comprehensive planning.

Data contained in this section reflect three methodologies of data collection employed by the U.S. Census. Data from the 2000 Census: SF [Summary File]-1 or 2010 Census are collected through a household-by-household census and represents responses from every household within the country. To get more detailed information in 2000, the U.S. Census also randomly distributed a long-form questionnaire to 1 in 6 households throughout the nation. Tables utilizing this sample data are identified in the footnote below each table and are labeled “SF-3”. The third method was employed by the Census Bureau to replace the long form in 2010, called the American Community Survey. These numbers are a sample of the population similar to the long form, but data is collected annually and compiled into a 5 year rolling average, which is represented by the label, i.e. 2008-2012 American Community Survey. Numbers may differ for similar statistics between each method, due to survey limitations, non-response, or other attributes unique to each form of data collection.

Recent Plans and Studies Related to Housing

Regional Livability Plan

Housing is one of four elements included in the Regional Livability Plan, adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2015. The Housing Assessment Report, a component of the Plan, looks in detail at the housing stock and the affordability of housing throughout the 10-county region and identifies trends and issues facing housing.

The Regional Livability Plan addresses two issues: the type of housing stock and housing affordability. The housing goal of the Plan is as follows:

- Goal 1: Promote a variety of safe and affordable housing options that meet the needs of all community members.

Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan

The Consolidated Housing Plan is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the application process required of the State in accessing formula program funds of Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter Grants, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS. The State Consolidated Housing Plan (CHP) is primarily focused on how government action can address special needs, not on the workings of the private housing market.

Housing Inventory

Housing Type and Tenure

Housing growth generally followed household growth between 2000 and 2010, increasing from 496 units to 574 units, nearly a 16% increase. **Table 5-1** shows that 550 of these units are occupied and 512 (or 93%) units are owner-occupied. The town has an average household size of 2.86 persons. 15% of all households are classified as being one person households. 16% of town households include someone 65 years or older and 41% have individuals under 18 in the household.

Table 5-1: Number of Housing Units by Type and Tenure

Area	Spencer	Marathon County	Wisconsin
Total Housing Units	574	57,734	2,624,358
Total Occupied Housing Units	550	53,176	2,279,768
Owner Occupied Units	512	39,090	1,551,558
Renter Occupied Units	38	14,086	728,210
Average Household Size	2.86	2.49	2.43
% Owner Occupied	93.1%	73.5%	68.1%
% 1 Person Households	14.5%	25.8%	28.2%
% With Someone 65 years or older	16.4%	24.4%	24.0%

Source: 2010 Census DPDP1

Changes in Housing Stock

Table 5-2 notes changes in the housing stock between 2000 and 2010 according to U.S. Census and American Community Survey data. Total housing units have increased by 44 and the number of occupied housing units rose by 61. Vacancy decreased from 5% to 3%. The number of owner-occupied housing units increased by 69 units or 16%. The census reports a 109 unit increase in the number of single-family units.

Housing Age

The age of a community's housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1940s, for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have continuously increased. This can be seen in both the rural and more

urban environments of Marathon County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 5-3 shows housing age in the community. There has been relatively consistent housing growth over the past several decades. Recent housing growth from the 2000s makes up approximately 29% of the total housing stock. That is significantly higher than overall percentages for the county and the state. The Census reports that homes built in the 2000s make up only 16% of the county's overall housing stock and 13% of the state's housing stock.

Physical Housing Characteristics

Table 5-4 looks at several select measures of physical condition and compares them to figures for Marathon County and Wisconsin. The median home size in the Town of Spencer is similar in size compared to the overall figures for the County and State, as measured by number of rooms. Nearly 90% of the community's

Table 5-2: Changes in Housing Stock

	2000	2010	# Change	% Change
Total Housing Units	512	556	44	9%
Occupied Housing Units (Households)	479	540	61	13%
Vacancy %	6%	3%	-3%	-52%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	429	498	69	16%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	50	42	-8	-16%
Owner Occupied Housing Units as percent of Total	90%	92%	2%	2%
Number of Homes for Seasonal/Rec Use	0	0	0	0%
Number of Single Family Homes	389	498	109	28%
*Detached	389	495	106	27%
**Attached	0	3	3	-
Number of Duplexes	4	4	0	0%
Multi Family Units 3-9 units	22	4	-18	-82%
Multi Family Units 10+	0	0	0	0%

2000 Census SF-3, 2008-2012 American Community Survey DP04

* This is a 1-unit structure detached from any other house

**In row houses (sometimes called townhouses), double houses, or houses attached to nonresidential structures, each house is a separate, attached structure if the dividing or common wall goes from ground to roof.

Table 5-3: Age of Housing Stock

Total Units	Year Built								
	2010 or later	2000 to 2009	1990 to 1999	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1950 to 1959	1940 to 1949	1939 or earlier
556	3	159	100	86	80	19	7	27	75
	.5%	28.6%	18%	15.5%	14.4%	3.4%	1.3%	4.9%	13.5%

2008-2012 American Community Survey DP04

Table 5-4: Physical Housing Stock Characteristics

Community	Median Rooms	Characteristic (% of Total Units)			
		1 unit, detached or attached	In buildings with 10 or more units	Lacking complete plumbing facilities	Lacking complete kitchen facilities
Spencer	6.5	89.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Marathon County	5.9	76.8%	6.5%	0.5%	0.8%
Wisconsin	5.5	70.9%	9.9%	0.5%	0.9%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey DP04

housing stock is classified as being a single family home. That is much higher than overall figures for the County or State. As of the most recent American Community Survey, no units within the Town were within structures with more than 10 units. Census data indicates that all homes in the Town have complete plumbing facilities and 3 units lack complete kitchen facilities, although this is within a 5 unit margin of error.

Housing Values

Median Value

Table 5-5 shows home value statistics for the town, county and state. Specifically, the column to the right shows the median (or middle value) of select owner-occupied homes for each specified area. This value includes only single-family houses that are located on less than 10 acres. Additionally, this statistic only considers homes without a business or medical office on the property. Census data indicates that the Town of Spencer has a median home value above that of the county and the state.

Table 5-5: Median Housing Value

	Median Value (dollars)
Spencer	\$171,600
Marathon County	\$142,600
Wisconsin	\$169,000

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey DP04

Range of Values

Table 5-6 shows the range of housing values that exist in the community. Compared to overall percentages for Marathon County, the Town of Spencer has a similar range of housing values, with a larger proportion in the \$150,000 to \$199,999 range.

Table 5-6: Range of Housing Values

Number of Houses per Housing Value Category	Spencer	Marathon County
< \$49,999	28	1,970
%	5.6%	5.0%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	52	7,476
%	10.4%	19.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	87	11,699
%	17.5%	30.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	182	8,117
%	36.5%	20.8%
\$200,000 or more	149	9,784
%	29.9%	25.1%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey DP04

Housing Affordability

Several factors impact the levels of housing affordability in Marathon County. These factors include rent and mortgage payments, maintenance expenses, lot size, and required or desired amenities for the home. Household size and income are also key factors contributing to what housing options are available and accessible to residents. Transportation costs, while not considered a part of housing costs, are also directly affected by the location of housing relative to employment options.

Statistically speaking, those spending in excess of 30% of their total household income on housing costs may be facing affordability difficulties. These households are considered “cost burdened.” The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends that rental-housing costs not exceed 30% of the monthly income. HUD also indicates that mortgage lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is less than 29% of the

monthly household income. Severely cost-burdened households are at a higher risk of becoming homeless.

Table 5-7 shows housing affordability information in Spencer, Marathon County, and Wisconsin among owners and **Table 5-8** shows the same information among renters. The percentage of households in the Town of Spencer that pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs is similar to that of the county and state among owner-occupied households.

Additionally, the **Table 5-7** and **Table 5-8** shows that select town median owner-occupied costs, both with and without a mortgage, are similar to median figures for Marathon County. Median renter costs are higher in the county than the town, but the proportion of renters that are cost-burdened by housing is higher in the town than the county. Technical documentation from the Census states that contract rent is the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings, utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included. For vacant units, it is the monthly rent asked for the rental unit at the time of enumeration. Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid by or for the renter. (U.S. Census STF 3 Technical Documentation Guide)

Special Housing

Senior and Special Needs Housing

In Marathon County, housing for seniors and populations with special needs is primarily provided in the urbanized areas in and around Wausau. The Marathon County Aging and Disability Resource Center, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and the Marathon County United Way all maintain a list of these housing options throughout the County. As the number of elderly persons increases in the coming years, there will most likely be an increased need for these types of housing options. This trend will be seen throughout Marathon County, the State of Wisconsin, and the Nation.

The southwestern portion of Marathon County is served primarily by housing options in the Villages of Stratford and Spencer, and the City of Marshfield. Other senior housing options are in the Cities of Abbottsford, Colby, and Wausau.

According to research by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the overwhelming majority of seniors prefer to “age in place” or remain in their home throughout retirement. This can be difficult in rural areas for many residents that are no longer able to access the necessary goods and services or keep up with the property maintenance of larger parcels.

Strategies that promote and allow aging in place can reduce the need for senior housing by allowing seniors to stay in their homes longer. These strategies include

Table 5-7: Owner Occupied Housing Affordability

	Median selected monthly owner costs (in dollars)			
	With mortgage	% cost burdened*	No Mortgage	% cost burdened*
Spencer	\$1,348	36.6%	\$482	7.1%
Marathon County	\$1,313	28.8%	\$474	12.5%
Wisconsin	\$1,460	33.2%	\$523	16.3%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

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

Table 5-8: Renter Occupied Housing Affordability

	Median Selected monthly renter costs (in dollars)		
	Median Contract rent	Median Gross rent	% cost burdened*
Spencer	\$444	\$544	51.8%
Marathon County	\$562	\$685	42.4%
Wisconsin	\$624	\$749	48.2%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

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

strengthening transportation access to services and goods such as health care, assistance with household care and maintenance, and designing housing to serve the needs of the resident throughout their life, such as visitable design and universal design. For new housing these standards may be incorporated into the zoning code, or negotiated in a developer agreement. For retrofitting existing housing, the Town can provide assistance to residents that need to upgrade their homes to continue living in them. There are a variety of personal care assistance providers that serve Marathon County that can help residents age in place. More support for these programs can also help seniors in the Town.

Homeless Services

There are several services for homeless citizens of Marathon County. Most of these shelters are located in the Wausau metro area, with some services also located in Marshfield. Catholic Charities operates a shelter in Wausau that serves about 10 persons per night. The Salvation Army and The Women's Community provide emergency shelter as well.

The efforts of most organizations working on homeless issues in Marathon County are directed towards preventing people from becoming homeless. Preventing homelessness is the preferred means of intervention, as it is less costly to all involved, and it helps maintain household stability. It is also widely recognized that homelessness is often the result of other problems such as unemployment, mental illness, domestic abuse, housing discrimination and drug addictions. As such, providing an integrated network of support is essential to address this complex issue. In some cases, better quality basic services such as schools, employment services, transportation, and grocery stores can prevent homelessness. To address these issues the Marathon County Housing and Homelessness Coalition was created in 2012. Their mission is to raise awareness, find solutions, and eradicate homelessness.

Migrant Worker Housing

Spencer and other communities in Marathon County have identified concerns about providing adequate housing for migrant workers, particularly in the western half of the county. Currently, many of these migrant workers pass through to work on large agricultural operations. Based on anecdotal evidence, these workers are often housed at their work site, sometimes in temporary housing. Many rural communities have expressed concerns about the quality and availability of housing for migrant workers.

Assistance Programs

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

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

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

Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Housing

- Housing Grants and Loans
- Shelter for Homeless and Transitional Housing Grants
- Wisconsin Fresh Start
- Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness
- Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Program
- Rental Housing Development Program
- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program
- Emergency Solutions Grant Program
- Continuum of Care Supportive Housing Program
- Housing Rehabilitation Program – Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- CDBG Emergency Assistance Program
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program

- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA)

**Wisconsin Department of Administration,
Division of Energy Services**

- Home Energy Assistance Program
- Low Income Weatherization Program

**Housing-Related Consumer Protection Services
(Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade
and Consumer Protection [WDATCP])**

The Trade and Consumer Protection Division is responsible for the investigation of unfair and deceptive business practices and handles individual consumer complaints involving landlord/tenant complaints, and home improvement transactions.

Issues

- Rural Residential Development – The Town will most likely see continued rural residential development.
- Senior Housing – There is an increased need for a variety of senior housing opportunities in the region.
- Affordable Rental Housing – There is a need for more affordable rental housing options for the high proportion of cost burdened renters in the Town.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Improve access to senior housing.

Objectives

Coordinate with Marathon County, Wood County, the City of Marshfield, and the Villages of Spencer and Stratford to promote the development of additional senior housing units.

Direct new residential growth to appropriate areas.

Policies

Support the development of additional senior housing in the region.

Encourage the use of universal design in new housing.

Support aging in place by encouraging the retrofitting of existing housing with universal design features.

Goal 2: Ensure adequate affordable housing exists in the Town of Spencer.

Objective

Ensure codes do not prevent the development of housing affordable to local workers.

Policies

Support the development of affordable housing that is compatible with the rural nature of the Town.

Ensure adequate workforce housing exists for workers in the town, to support the agricultural industry and other local industries.

UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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

Utilities

Private Utilities

Most unincorporated areas of Marathon County use private on-site waste disposal systems for sewage disposal and obtain potable water from private wells. The Town of Spencer does not provide public sewer or water service. All development is on private wells and septic systems. The Town, which has County zoning, requires a minimum lot size of 40,000 sq.ft. for installation of individual septic systems and wells.

On-Site Waste Disposal Systems

Chapter 15 of the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County requires private sewage systems on all premises intended for human habitation or occupancy that are not served by public sewer. The County Code incorporates by reference rules, regulations, and laws in the Wisconsin Statutes and Wisconsin Administrative Code governing private sewage systems.

Types of Systems – Under the revised Comm 83 /SPS 383 standards, property owners have a wider array of system options than previously available. Septic tanks can be steel, concrete, fiberglass or plastic, but they all must now be equipped with a filter to prevent the movement of solids out into the soil absorption component. In addition, rock in drainfields may now be substituted with specifically engineered foam peanuts bound in mesh or plastic chambers.

On-site waste disposal systems generally fall into four categories:

- Conventional Systems – these systems include an absorption field that is buried under the natural ground level. These systems cannot be built in areas where soils do not allow percolation due to high clay content or bedrock where groundwater is too near the surface, or where soils percolate too rapidly and thus pose problems for groundwater contamination.
- Mound Systems – these systems include an absorption field that is constructed above ground,

creating a “mound”. This type of system is generally used where clay soils, groundwater, rapid permeability or bedrock prevent construction of conventional systems.

- Mechanical Treatment Components – these generally replace or augment the septic tank component and may include aerobic treatment tanks and/or self-contained artificial media or sand filters to clean the effluent prior to its discharge into the soil absorption component.
- Holding Tanks - Holding tanks are considered the system of last resort and are only allowed if other types of septic systems cannot be used. Temporary holding tanks (e.g., less than 2 years) are sometimes allowed in areas where public sewer is approved for installation in the near future.

Permit Requirements – The Marathon County Department of Conservation, Planning, and Zoning reviews and issues permits for private sewage systems. Soil and site evaluations are required to determine if the proposed septic system is suitable for the specific property and location before a permit will be issued. If deemed necessary, floodplain and/or wetland delineation may also be required prior to permit issuance. In addition, a maintenance agreement must be submitted prior to permit issuance. All septic tanks installed on or after July 1, 1980, are required to be pumped at least once every three years.

Water Supply

Water Wells: All development in Spencer receives water from private wells. The most common contaminants found in groundwater in Wisconsin are nitrate-nitrogen, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and pesticides. Given the widespread presence of agricultural land in the Town and the scattered development pattern with residences mixed with agricultural land, well contamination is a possibility. Some areas of Spencer are more susceptible to groundwater contamination, generally around the Little Eau Pleine River.

Most private well testing data available from the Wisconsin DNR between 1985 and 2004 shows levels of nitrate and nitrogen below two milligrams per liter in Spencer. Some wells towards the southwestern border of the town have showed slightly higher concentrations of between two and ten milligrams per liter, indicating that nearby land use has affected groundwater quality. Ten milligrams per liter is considered the upper

limit for safe drinking water. These levels should be monitored over time to determine if action needs to be taken to reduce groundwater contamination. The use of agricultural best management practices can reduce the likelihood of groundwater contamination.

Surface Water Management

Marathon County adopted a Land and Water Resource Management Plan. The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Marathon County and outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources.

The county is particularly concerned about nonpoint sources of pollution, including failing septic systems, urban runoff, and issues often identified with rural areas such as soil erosion, animal waste and pesticides. Nonpoint pollution is best addressed at a watershed level. Marathon County encompasses portions of 22 watersheds. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ranked these watersheds according to water pollution impacts and designated five as “priority” watersheds to receive special planning and funding through the voluntary, State-funded Priority Watershed Program. Preparation of resource management plans for the following watersheds is currently underway:

- Springbrook in the Town of Harrison
- Upper Yellow River in the Town of Spencer
- Upper Big Eau Pleine in western Marathon County
- Lower Big Eau Pleine in the south-central part of the County.
- Lower Big Rib River

The Town has very poor drainage. Most of the Town is flat and there is very little place for runoff to go.

Electrical Utilities

Most of the southern portion of the Town of Spencer receives electric power from Marshfield Utilities. Northern States Power provides electricity in the northwest portion and the Clark Electric Cooperative provides electricity to the remainder of the Town.

Gas Utilities

The Town of Spencer is within the Wisconsin Gas service area. Gas service is not necessarily available to households in the Town of Spencer.

Telecommunication Facilities and Services

- Television/Cable providers: Charter Communications provides cable services to some areas of the Town of Spencer that are adjacent to the City of Marshfield and the Village of Spencer.
- Internet Service Providers: Charter Communications provides wired broadband services over its cable network in some areas adjacent to the City of Marshfield and the Village of Spencer at advertised download speeds up to 1 gigabyte per second. Frontier provides DSL broadband services in some areas of the town at advertised download speeds of up to 1.5 megabytes per second. There are a number of fixed wireless providers and mobile wireless providers in the town that vary in speed. A portion of the Town of Spencer is within the Federal Communications Commission “Connect America Fund” subsidized area.
- Cell towers: there is one cell tower in the Town

Solid Waste Management

The Town of Spencer recently started providing weekly curbside garbage collection to residents. Municipal, commercial and industrial waste is accepted at the Marathon County Landfill. User fees collected at the landfill defray the cost of landfill operations.

The Marathon County Solid Waste Management Department is in charge of waste management for non-hazardous solid waste. It consists of the 575-acre landfill, recycling programs, composting, and waste-to-energy. The Department opened a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in May 1997, where County residents can drop off hazardous waste free of charge.



Town of Spencer Recycling Center

Recycling

Curbside recycling pick-up is provided by the Town of Spencer every other week.

Community Facilities and Services

This section describes the schools, libraries, parks and other community facilities for the Town of Spencer.

Schools

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Spencer is served by the Spencer School District. The Spencer School District has a combined elementary, junior, and senior high school at 300 School Street in the Village of Spencer. The student population in the Spencer district is in gradual decline, and current facilities meet future needs. The 2014 enrollment was 769 students. There are a variety of other educational facilities nearby, including: Marshfield Christian, Immanuel Lutheran, Sacred Heart Catholic, Our Lady of Peace, Columbus High School, Holy Family Middle, and St. John's Catholic. All Catholic Schools listed fall under the Marshfield Area Catholic School District and offer PreK-12 programming.

Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

University of Wisconsin – Marathon County (UW-MC), located in Wausau, offers lower level (freshman/sophomore) college classes, leading to a baccalaureate degree. Associate Degrees are offered in Arts & Sciences, and Bachelor's Degrees (through collaborative degree programs with UW Oshkosh and UW Stevens Point) offered in Business Administration, General Studies, and Nursing. Enrollment in 2014-2015 was approximately 1,100 students.

University of Wisconsin – Marshfield/Wood County - The University of Wisconsin-Marshfield/Wood County campus is one of the 13 campuses statewide that comprise the UW Colleges - the freshman-sophomore campuses of the University of Wisconsin System. Enrollment was approximately 620 in 2014-2015.

Northcentral Technical College (NTC) - NTC, located in Wausau, offers 40 one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields. Enrollment for 2013-2014 was approximately 17,000 people. There are also many satellite campuses including one in the Village of Spencer.

Libraries

The Town of Spencer is served by the Marathon County Public Library system. The Spencer Branch Library is located on Park Street in the Village of Spencer. The Spencer Branch Library has 2,072 square feet of space holding over 16,400 volumes, including books, magazines, and other materials. The Wausau Headquarters Library, located on First Street in downtown Wausau, completed an expansion to 82,000 square feet in 1995. The main Wausau Library is open seven days a week and offers over 555,800 volumes, as well as facilities including Internet access. Many residents also utilize the Marshfield Public Library for a fee.

Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Local Parks, Trails and Open Space

The Town of Spencer owns 5 acres in section 11, surrounded by the McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area. This area is used as a shooting range. School Forest is also highly utilized.

County and State Parks, Forest and Trails

There are no Marathon County parks in the Town of Spencer, however the Marathon County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2013 identifies the area between Spencer and Marshfield as an area where a service deficiency exists. The closest Marathon County parks to the Town are Big Eau Pleine Park and Big Rapids Park. Cherokee Park is also within close proximity.

- Big Eau Pleine is the County's largest park, at 1,450 acres, located on a peninsula on the north shore of the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir. Half of this park is in the Town of Green Valley and the other half in Bergen. Active recreation areas are concentrated in two main sites on the shores of the reservoir. Park facilities include: campgrounds, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-era shelters, drinking fountains, boat launches, swimming beaches, play equipment. The extensive trail system allows for cross-country skiing, mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding and nature walks. Fishing is a popular activity.
- Big Rapids Park is a 33-acre park located on the Big Eau Pleine River in the Town of Eau Pleine. The river is impounded in the park to create a swimming area and fishing opportunities. Facilities include picnic tables, grills, restrooms, changing rooms, a shelter, play equipment, and hiking trails.

- The McMillan Marsh is a 4,172 acre State Wildlife Management Area, which straddles the Town line between McMillan and Spencer. A bicycle and hiking trail provides access to the McMillan Marsh on an abandoned railroad right of way. The area is used for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and biking.
- The George W. Mead Wildlife Area is a very large Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) conservation and recreation area in the southeast portion of the Town of Day, extending across Green Valley and into the Town of Bergen, creating a conservation area of approximately 20,000 acres. Much of the area is wetland surrounding a series of lakes and flowages connected by the Little Eau Pleine River. Portions of the Mead Wildlife Area are open for hiking, hunting, and fishing.
- Nine-Mile Forest Unit, located in Rib Mountain and the Town of Mosinee, is known as a recreation area with many miles of hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country ski trails. Skiing is promoted with a ski chalet and over 25 kilometers of one-way loops. The forest is open to hunting and snowmobiling. Nine Mile has 4,755 acres of mixed uplands, marshes, and water impoundments.
- The Burma Road Forest Unit is located in the towns of Mosinee and Emmet. The 1,473-acre forest is a mix of aspen and northern hardwood, with recreational opportunities including an ATV trail, hunting, snowmobiling, and camping.
- Rib Mountain State Park is located within the Town of Rib Mountain. The park's main feature is Rib Mountain, which at 1924 feet above sea level is one of the highest elevations in the State of Wisconsin. The park surrounds the mountain and has the following facilities: a picnic area with 65 tables, a camping area with 31 developed sites, 3 hiking trails, a nature trail, and a downhill skiing area with 12 runs.
- Cherokee Park is located in Colby. Facilities include an enclosed shelter: kitchen, 5 tables, electricity, water pump, and fireplace. Covered wing: grills attached & fireplace, 6 tables. Outside: vault toilets, open field, swimming area, playground equipment, gazebo, scattered grills & tables, horseshoe pits, dumpster, walking trails/paved path, small open shelter.

Park System Needs

Bike Plan – The Town would like to see an update to and implementation of the Marathon County Rural Area Bicycle Route Plan for the Town of Spencer.

- Trail – The Town would like to investigate a possible bike/pedestrian trail to Marshfield.
- Campground - Many residents feel there should be a campground in the area, similar to Monster Hall in the Town of Brighton.
- Lack of Park Space – The lack of park space in the Town requires residents to drive to other communities to use parks. As the Town continues to grow and residential development expands, demand for different types of parks is likely to increase. Providing parks space may increase the demand for residential development in Spencer, so this must be balanced with the agricultural roots of the Town.

Police

Police protection and law enforcement are provided by the Marathon County Sheriff's Department.

Fire

The Town is part of a joint fire district including the Village of Spencer, the Town of Brighton, the Town of Sherman [Clark County], and the Town of Unity.

Emergency Response

The Town is part of a formal emergency response agreement with the Village of Spencer, the Town of Brighton, the Town of Sherman [Clark County], and the Town of Unity.

E-911 Dispatch Service

The Marathon County Sheriff's Department Communications Division provides E-911 Dispatch for all Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies in Marathon County. The Communications Division services 85 user agencies and also provides alert paging support for the Emergency Management Office, District Attorney, and Medical Examiner's Office.

The users are served by a microwave linked voted repeater radio system, consisting of a control center at the Sheriff's Department, and remote radio tower sites spread throughout the County. The system is also utilized by the Marathon County Highway Department and the Wausau Fire Department to support their radio communications.

Hospitals

St. Joseph's Hospital is located in Marshfield and offers a full array of services, specialty services and a complete rehabilitation unit. Most Town residents use this facility due to the close proximity.

There are two major hospitals in Marathon County, Wausau Hospital at 425 Pine Ridge Boulevard in Wausau and St. Clare's Hospital in Weston. The Wausau Hospital facility is a multi-specialty regional health center.

Child Care

There are no regulated child care providers in the Town of Spencer that are listed with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. The Village of Spencer has three regulated providers and the City of Marshfield has numerous regulated providers.

Issues

- Soil Suitability for Septic Systems – Nearly all of the soils in the town are not suitable for conventional on-site sewer systems. This impacts development costs in the Town.
- Gas Main - A high pressure gas main runs through the Town from Marshfield to the Village of Spencer.
- Pipelines - Enbridge has four pipelines that run through the Town, three carrying crude oil and one carrying diluent.
- Park deficiencies - The lack of park facilities, especially for young children in the Town of Spencer, requires residents to drive to other communities for parks. This is part of the balance that must be considered between the agricultural roots of the Town and the growing residential component.



Town of Spencer Town Hall and Garage

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain current provision of services.

Objectives

To perform annual budget allocations that fund public services.

Find methods of cost sharing, such as equipment sharing, with surrounding municipalities to increase the efficiency by which services are provided.

Policies

Continue to perform the annual budgeting process to maintain the current provision of services.

Goal 2: To extend priority utilities, including natural gas and cable TV to subdivisions.

Objective

To work with public utilities to investigate the feasibility of extending these services to Town residents.

Policies

Support the extension of natural gas and cable services to existing subdivisions.

Ensure new developments are contiguous with existing development to improve the feasibility of utilities.

Goal 3: Provide effective public safety services.

Objectives

Work with the Marathon County Sheriff Department, the Village of Spencer and the surrounding towns (Sherman, Unity and Brighton) to continue to provide effective police, fire and EMS services.

Meet with the Village of Spencer, the City of Marshfield, and the Marathon County Sheriff's Department to enhance police protection for Town residents.

Policy

Work with surrounding communities and Marathon County to enhance existing services to ensure police, fire, and EMS services.

Goal 4: Support and maintain existing community facilities.

Objectives

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

Continue to rent out the Town Hall for community activities.

Set aside money for future building improvements for the Town.

Budget for future improvements to the Town Hall, as needed.

Policies

Maintain the Town Hall as a seat of local government and meeting space.

Support the continued operation of the local NTC branch.

Use regulatory tools to encourage contiguous development for cost effective services.

Goal 5: Support local campgrounds.

Objective

Encourage use of existing campground facilities in the area.

Policy

Support the use of existing campground facilities in the area.

Goal 6: Provide adequate park space for residents.

Objectives

Work with adjacent communities and school districts to improve and maintain park and playground access for Town residents.

Consider developing a local community park.

Invite stakeholders to attend Town meetings to discuss the preservation of the McMillan Marsh.

Policies

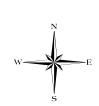
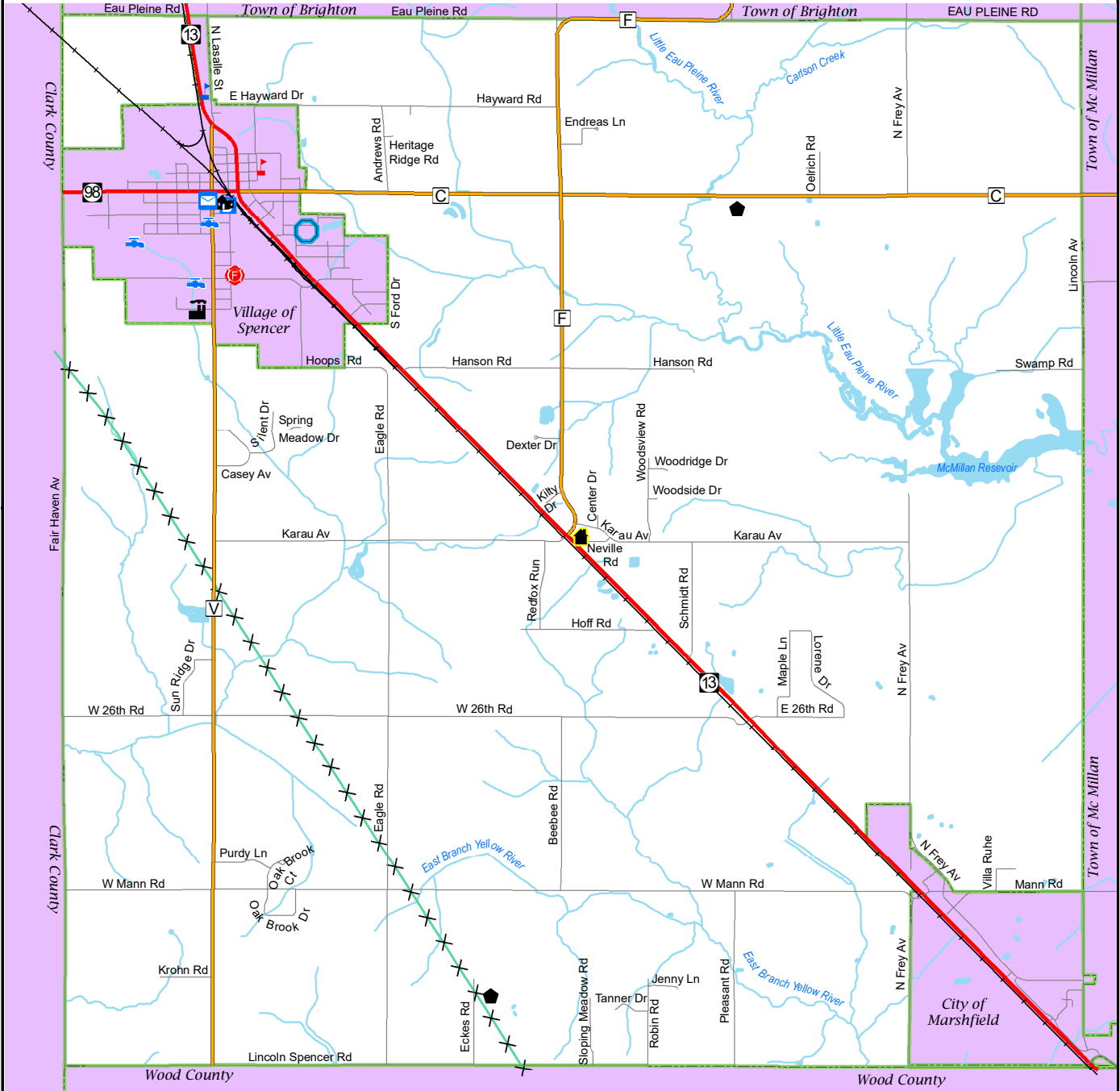
Support the school forest and school playgrounds.

Support the preservation of the McMillan Wildlife Area.

Map 4 Utilities & Community Facilities Town of Spencer Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Public Water Supply
- Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Gas & Oil Pipeline
- Fire Station / Ambulance
- Former Landfill
- Industrial Park
- Library
- Post Office
- School
- Tech School
- Town Hall
- Village Hall / Police Station



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

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 facilities for pedestrians (e.g., sidewalks), bicyclists (e.g., trails), railroads, airports, and in more urban areas, public transit. This section describes the transportation system in the Town of Spencer and related improvements or issues affecting the system.

Recent Plans and Studies Related to Transportation

Transportation planning in Marathon County is coordinated between Marathon County Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning (DCPZ) staff and the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); the body designated by the Federal Department of Transportation to be responsible for transportation planning in the Wausau metropolitan area. Marathon County provides staff for the Wausau Area MPO. The County also does transportation planning for areas outside the Wausau metropolitan area.

County transportation planning efforts are presented in various plans and studies. Findings and recommendations presented in these plans should be integrated into local community planning efforts when relevant and appropriate. Recent transportation plans prepared by Marathon County include:

Connections 2030

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

Regional Livability Plan

Transportation is one of four elements included in the Regional Livability Report, 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 through the 10-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 Plan are as follows:

- Goal 6: Provide and improve transportation access to people of all ages and abilities to ensure lifelong mobility and accessibility.
- Goal 7: Fund the maintenance and expansion of the transportation system.
- Goal 8: Enhance the regional economy by supporting airports and freight rail.

Transportation Improvement Program 2016-2019

The TIP includes all programmed transportation projects receiving Federal and/or State funds. The TIP is updated every two years.

State Trunk Highway 29 Corridor Land Use Review

This plan was prepared by a multi-departmental team working with communities along the STH 29 corridor in the western part of Marathon County. The primary goal was to identify recommendations to allow local communities to protect STH 29 from impacts related to unplanned growth.

Marathon County Functional / Jurisdictional Highway Classification Study

This plan identifies and groups classes of roadways that provide similar levels of service. The plan recommended that the unit of government having the greatest basic interest in the roadway's function would carry out the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the classified roadways.

Road Network

Classification

The road network is broken down into its functional classification and its jurisdictional classification. A functionally classified road system is one in which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. At the upper limit of the system (principal arterials, for example), are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas at the lower limits are those local roads and streets that emphasize access.

The functional classifications are generally defined as:

- Principal Arterials serve corridor movements having trips 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, 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 arterials through the area to the local streets. The collectors also collect traffic from the local streets and channel 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 then highest level of access, but the lowest level of mobility.

The second method of classifying roads is by jurisdiction. Jurisdiction refers to governmental ownership, not necessarily responsibility. For example, some State owned roads are maintained by local jurisdictions. Additionally, the designation of a 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 five percent, primarily in national parks, forests, and Native American 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.

Major Road Facilities

Following is a brief description of the major road facilities located in the Town. Functional classification, jurisdiction, and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), when available, are summarized for all major roads. WisDOT Traffic counts are adjusted for day of week and seasonal factors.

- STH 13 is a principal arterial that runs diagonally through the Town providing connections to the Village of Spencer to the north and the City of Marshfield to the south. The 2001 AADT volume just north of W. 26th Road was 8,800 in 1998, 9,000 in 2001, and 9,800 in 2013.
- CTH C, near the north Town border, is an east-west major collector connecting to STH 97 to the east and to the Village of Spencer and STH 13 to the west. West of CTH E the 1998 and 2001 AADT volumes were 1,100 and 1,700, respectively, an increase of 500 vehicles per day. The 2010 AADT was 1,400, a 300 vehicle per day decline since 2001.
- CTH V is a north-south major collector originates from the Village of Spencer and connects to U.S. Highway (USH) 10 to the south in Wood County. The AADT volume south of the Village of Spencer was 1,200 in 2001.
- CTH F runs north and south and is classified as minor collector north of CTH C and a local road south of CTH C. The road connects to STH 13 to the south where it terminates. The 1998 and 2001 AADT volumes on CTH F north of CTH C was 650 and 680, respectively, while AADT declined to 360 vehicles by 2010.

County road traffic volumes do not suggest capacity problems.

Road Maintenance

The Town has approximately 42.5 miles of roads. The Town has completed a Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) analysis that is used to evaluate roadway conditions. However, it is not used for budgeting purposes. There are some concerns regarding the effects of heavy equipment traffic on the gravel roads in the Town, as well as the increased demand for more durable paving materials that accompanies increased residential development.

WISLR – The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) requires all incorporated communities to prepare a pavement rating system for their local roads. The data from these plans is intended to provide the foundation for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), a computer resource that enables communities and the State to assess Wisconsin’s local roadway system.



A road paved with blacktop

Land Use and Transportation

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

Access Management

Wisconsin was one of the first states to recognize the relationship between highway operations and the use of abutting lands. Under Chapter 233, the WisDOT was given the authority to establish rules to review subdivision plats abutting or adjoining State trunk highways or connecting highways. Regulations enacted by WisDOT establish the principles of subdivision review. They require new subdivisions to: (1) have internal street systems; (2) limit direct vehicular access to the highways from individual lots; (3) establish building setbacks; and (4) establish access patterns for remaining unplatted land.

Marathon County issues driveway permits and implements access restrictions on all properties fronting a lettered County road. The County Trunk Highway Access - Driveway Policy addresses the requirements regarding culverts, access width, slope,

visibility and spacing. The policy is available through the Marathon County Highway Department.

STH 29 Access – STH 13 provides direct access to STH 29, a four-lane east-west expressway connecting to the interstate system through the State.

Other Transportation Modes

Pedestrian

There are no sidewalks in the Town. Routes tied into Marshfield would be useful. Wider paved shoulders can improve the safety of rural roads that may see both pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Bicycle

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan for the Non-Urbanized Area of Marathon County, Wisconsin, 1996 identified suggested bicycle routes in Marathon County. These routes were based on traffic counts and condition of pavement. Formal action has not occurred to adopt these as designated bicycle routes. The Marathon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan identified CTH V, CTH C and CTH F north of CTH C as recommended bike routes within the Town of Spencer. However, the latest version of the Wisconsin Bicycle Map produced in 2015 indicates that bicycling conditions on these highways have deteriorated since the adoption of this plan in 1996. County Highway V is shown as “high volume, undesirable” and County Highway E and a large portion of County Highway C are designated as “moderate condition” for bicycling.

Transit

There is no public transit available in the Town. Elderly, needy, and disabled transit service is provided throughout the County through North Central Health Care (NCHC). The services include semi-fixed routes that are scheduled, and demand services available with a 48-hour notice. Information and services are available by calling 848-4555.

Rail

Two railroad lines run through Spencer, parallel to STH 13 from Marshfield. One line diverts at the Village of Spencer into Clark County and connects to Superior, Wisconsin, the other line runs through Abbotsford to Medford.

Airports

There are two primary airports in the area.

The Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) is a joint venture of Marathon and Portage Counties. It is the only airport

within Marathon County or neighboring counties that provides scheduled air passenger services. The CWA is located east of Mosinee and accessible via I-39. The terminal has been modernized and highway access reconstructed to be more convenient. Since 1982 more than \$24,000,000 has been spent to keep the airport ready to serve the needs of the region. Service is provided through Mesaba/Northwest, United/United Feeder Service and Skyway/Midwest Express, offering 24 flights per day that connect through Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit and Milwaukee. There are also nine air freight and express flights daily.

Marshfield Municipal Airport (Roy Shwery Field) has four runways, a weather monitoring system, and a radio communications outlet. The airport also offers fuel sales, maintenance facilities, and car rentals.

Issues

- Road Maintenance – Identifying, prioritizing and funding road maintenance needs and road improvements, including blacktopping will be a priority in future Town budgets.
- STH 13 Corridor – Continued development in the STH 13 corridor could create traffic flow problems on this arterial (i.e. potential need for frontage roads)
- Bike Facilities – There is a need for wider shoulders on the roads for bicyclists.
- Paving Roads – Some residents would like to see more paved roads. While this will improve the transportation system, it could also lead to increased development pressure and maintenance costs.
- Changing Transportation Systems – New technologies including electric vehicles (EVs), plug-in hybrids, and autonomous (driverless) vehicles have been rapidly advancing and growing in popularity. Experts predict that vehicles will have limited autonomy in 5-10 years and be highly automated within 10-20 years, well within the horizon of this plan. It is necessary to adapt to these changes.



A gravel road in Spencer

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain the Town's transportation system.

Objectives

Utilize the Town's PASER analysis to schedule and prioritize road maintenance through the Capital Improvement Plan.

Develop a policy to address whether or not to pave existing roads.

Refine the mechanisms to require new developments to cover the costs for blacktopping roads and ensure the paving is completed in a timely manner.

Policies

Schedule and prioritize maintenance of the Town transportation system.

Use WISLR to inventory and rate town roads.

Reserve right of way space to connect roads between subdivisions and potential future development, minimizing the use of permanent cul-de-sacs and dead ends.

Goal 2: Develop a long-range plan for the future of STH 13.

Objectives

Work with WisDOT, the Village of Spencer, the City of Marshfield, Marathon County, Wood County, and other appropriate agencies to develop a long-range plan for STH 13.

Work with WisDOT to maintain local road access to STH 13.

Encourage the State to improve STH 13 between Spencer and Marshfield to increase safety, access and mobility.

Encourage WisDOT to improve safety and access on STH13 for bicycles and pedestrians, as a direct connection between the Village of Spencer and the City of Marshfield.

Policy

Support the improvement of STH 13 from Marshfield to the Village of Spencer.

Goal 3: Adapt to a changing transportation system.

Objectives

Work with the City of Marshfield and the Village of Spencer to investigate the location of an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station in the Spencer area.

Work with the Village of Spencer and City of Marshfield to ensure adequate park-and-ride and other ride-sharing facilities exist to accommodate commuters.

Policies

Consider the needs of autonomous vehicles, EVs, car-sharing and ride-sharing as road construction occurs and as more information becomes available regarding these technologies and systems.

Goal 4: Develop bicycle and pedestrian routes in the Town of Spencer.

Objectives

Encourage Marathon County to update the 1996 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Non-urbanized Area of Marathon County.

Coordinate and plan with the City of Marshfield, Marathon County, and the Village of Spencer to identify and develop a bicycle-pedestrian route through the Town of Spencer and into the City of Marshfield.

Identify additional funding sources to assist with the development of bicycle and pedestrian routes in the Town.

Policies












Support the creation of bike and pedestrian routes through the Town between destinations and points of interest.

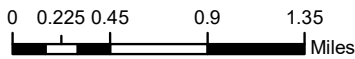
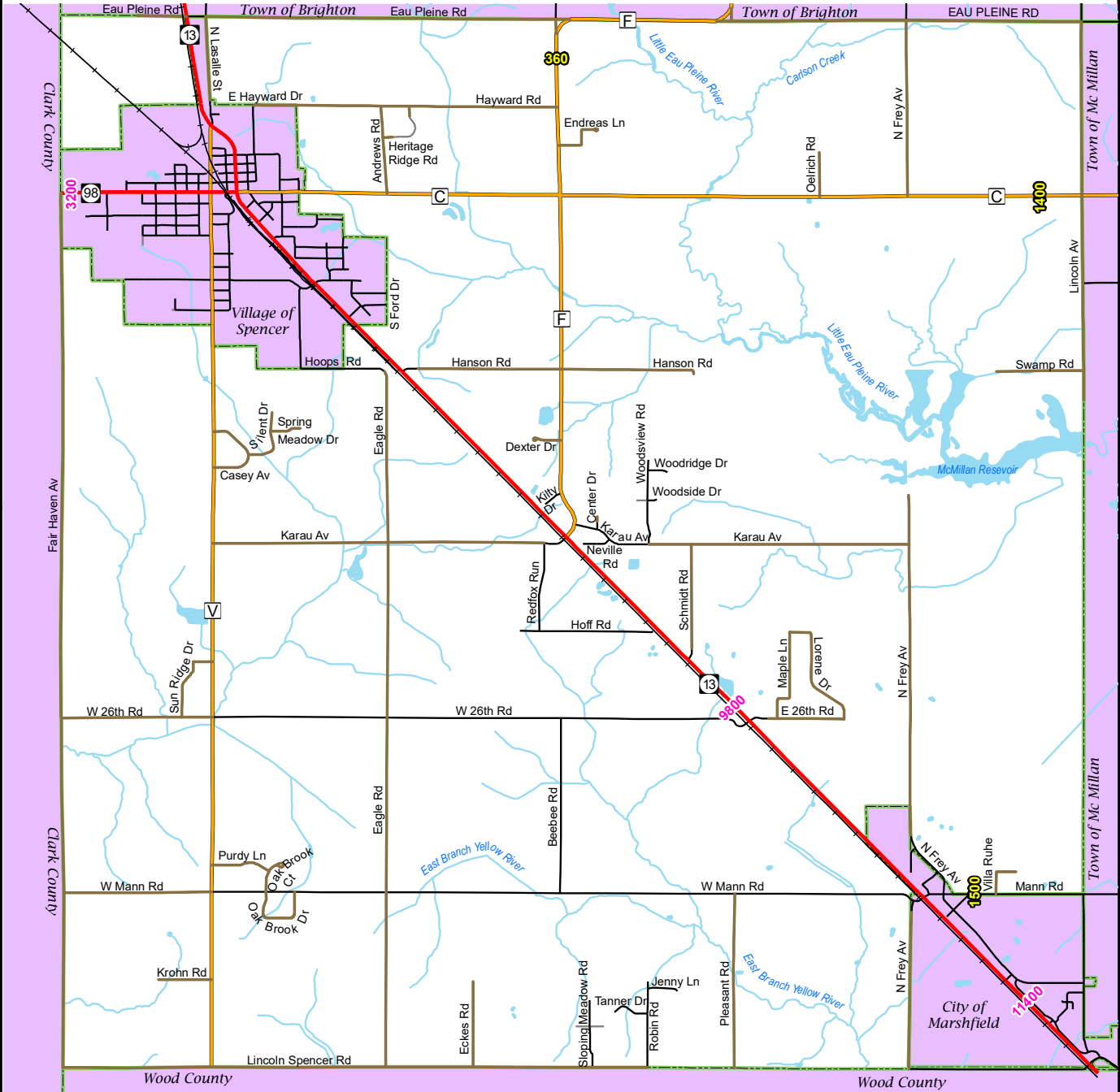
Accommodate bicycles and pedestrians with road maintenance, construction and reconstruction projects by considering expected volume of traffic, amount of truck traffic, and potential bicycle and pedestrian traffic to determine the type of accommodations.

Map 5 Transportation

Town of Spencer Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  US Highway
-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Platted Roads
-  Gravel Roads
-  Railroad
-  Water
-  500 Average Daily Traffic Count, 2013
-  500 Average Daily Traffic Count, 2010



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co., Wis DOT
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The condition of the local economy directly influences local growth and development, and therefore must be considered when planning for a community's future. Employment patterns and economic trends generally occur on a regional scale. Oftentimes residents of one community work in another. Similarly, changes in a major industry can impact jobs and growth far beyond the community where the business is physically located.

It is therefore important to understand a local community's economy in light of its regional context. The following section provides a brief overview of the economy in Marathon County, in terms of key economic sectors and the regional labor force. Also included is a more specific description of employment trends, major local employers or industries, and where most residents of the Town of Spencer work. Potential economic development opportunities and/or issues regarding the local economy are also identified.

Recent Plans and Studies Related to Economic Development

Following is a list of previous plans and studies related to economic development in Marathon County that will affect the Town of Spencer:

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

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

Key components from this regional level plan include an inventory of the physical geography of the Region and its resident population. Labor, income, and employment data are reviewed as well as an in-depth analysis of the economic status of the Region.

Regional Livability Plan (RLP)

The Regional Livability Plan is a comprehensive plan for the 10 county Region by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The RLP identifies ways to address the region's opportunities and weaknesses to increase the region's ability to become more livable for all residents. The Plan addresses four specific areas: housing, economic development, transportation, and land use. The economic development goals of the plan are:

- Foster efficient business expansion and retention to increase employment opportunities and employment in the region.
- Create an innovative atmosphere to foster an entrepreneurially supportive environment.
- Promote and attract new business from outside the region.
- Encourage the reuse of existing commercial and industrial properties and sites for more sustainable economic development.
- Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce prepared to meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries and technologies.
- Meet the full range of business' infrastructure needs with emphasis on transportation, utilities, and communications.
- Promote and increase communication between regional and county economic development, workforce development, and planning organizations.

United Way LIFE Report

The LIFE Report is a joint effort of Marathon County and the United Way. Its purpose is to provide a reference for the community to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and identify priority issues. The report, which is published every two years, serves as a tracking vehicle to show how the community has changed over time. Two of the sections of the report focus on Education and on the Economic Environment.

The Education report tracks Childcare, Kindergarten Readiness, Enrollment by Racial and Economic differences, School District Expenditures, Reading Comprehension, Mathematics Proficiency, High School Graduation Rates, and Higher Education.

Challenges facing education according to the 2013 report include limited access to child care in rural areas, school district revenue cuts, an increase in economically disadvantaged students, and fewer residents attaining post-secondary education relative to state averages.

The Economic Environment report tracks many economic indicators including Employment, Job Satisfaction, Income, Unemployment, Poverty, Economic Impacts of Transportation, and Tourism. Challenges facing the economic environment according to the 2013 report include high unemployment despite employer needs in select industries, resident concerns about jobs providing living wages and career advancement, and a strain on county services to unemployed residents.

Marathon County: A Next Generation Talent Magnet

This report, developed by Next Generation Consulting, addresses the question, “What will it take for Marathon County to be a destination for top talent?” As part of the research process, a “Handprint” for Marathon County was developed to contrast the County’s assets with other communities. According to the study, Marathon County meets or exceeds the standards of its peer regions in five of the seven measured indexes – Vitality, Earning, Cost of Lifestyle, After Hours, and Around Town. The County falls short in two categories – Social Capital and Learning. The report also identifies Nine Priority Areas of Focus to address moving forward. The top four priority areas were: 1) Engage emerging leaders, 2) Create green economy, e.g. industries, 3) Create “next generation” businesses, and 4) Develop a long-term funded plan.

County Economic Environment

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

government, trade, finance, insurance and real estate. The County now enjoys a well-diversified economy.

Agricultural Economy



An agricultural operation in Spencer

Located in the largely agricultural region of western Marathon County, the economic health and vitality of the Town of Spencer is affected by the economic health of the agricultural economy. However, the agricultural economy is subject to national and international pressures, creating challenges for rural areas seeking to adapt to the changing economic environment and preserve their rural agricultural heritage. One method is by consuming products locally. An example of this is the Spencer School District, which sources much of its food for school lunches from local agricultural producers. This not only keeps spending in the local economy, it also provides healthier food options for children in the district.

Other forces that create an environment of change in the rural area:

- Net farm profits are increasingly a function of Federal United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) support payments.
- The average age of the current agricultural owner/operator is nearly 55; a large number are nearing retirement.
- The low entry rate into agriculture reflects the high capital investment needed and low profit margins.

- The number of dairy herds and total cows have decreased, while the average size of dairy herds has increased.
- The immigrant work force associated with industrial farms impacts public services such as schools, social services and law enforcement.
- Crop land and open space are being broken up into smaller fields by rural residences.
- Crop land production is being concentrated into fewer, larger operations.
- Soil erosion is increasing and soil organic matter content is decreasing. Though many farmers are working to correct this.
- Environmental regulation of farms by the State and Federal government continues to increase. Agriculture is identified as a major non-point source of water pollution (sediment and nutrients) in the U.S.
- Larger farm equipment damages local roads and farm traffic is increasing.
- Conflicts between various land uses in rural areas are increasing.

Key Economic Sectors



One of the non-farm businesses in the Town of Spencer

Key sectors of a regional economy can be identified by size; by growth or decline in employment; and by a concentration of the industry in the local area

exceeding the national concentration. An industry that shows a higher concentration of employment than the national average is considered a “basic industry” and is identified by a technique called “Location Quotient” analysis. Basic industries are those sectors that produce more than can be consumed locally and therefore export a product or service from the local community into the national or international economy. They are a critical part of the “economic engine” for a region, affecting the growth and health of many dependent sectors such as retail, transportation, construction, and local services.

If an LQ is equal to 1, then the industry has the same share of its area employment as it does in the reference area (in this case the reference area is the United States). An LQ greater than 1 indicates an industry with a greater share of the local area employment than is the case in the reference area. Industries that have a high location quotient (LQ) and employ a large number of people reflect both significant size and importance as businesses that export a product or service and bring new wealth to the region.

Industries with high location quotients in Marathon County are shown on **Table 8-1**. Industries with high employment are shown in **Table 8-2**. The three top industry subsectors in Marathon County by location quotient are Wood Product Manufacturing, Paper Manufacturing and Animal Production and Aquaculture. However, all three industry subsectors have declined in total employment between 2010 and 2015, by 18%, 17% and 8% respectively. Other industries have grown in employment, including nonstore retailers, fabricated metal product manufacturing and primary metal manufacturing, each with over 30% growth in employment.

Comparing **Table 8-1** and **Table 8-2** demonstrates that industries with the highest location quotient do not necessarily have the highest employment. The top three industries in terms of total employment are local government, ambulatory health care services, and food services and drinking places, each with over 4,000 employees. Many of these industries are not relatively concentrated in Marathon County, but they serve an important function as top employers. Of the top three employment industries, local government is the only industry subsector that declined between 2010 and 2015.

Local Economic Environment

The population of Marathon County grew from 125,834 in 2000 to 134,063 in 2010, an increase of 6.5% compared to a 6.0% increase in the state and a

Table 8-1: Top 10 Economic Sectors by Location Quotient, Marathon County (2015)

Industry Code	Industry Description	Location Quotient	Total Employment	LQ Change 2010-2015
NAICS 321	Wood Product Manufacturing	10.68	2,471	-3.33
NAICS 322	Paper Manufacturing	9.49	2,030	-0.94
NAICS 112	Animal Production and Aquaculture	6.70	626	-0.22
NAICS 327	Nonstore Retailers	5.71	908	0.57
NAICS 333	Machinery Manufacturing	5.10	2,282	0.46
NAICS 332	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	5.08	2,586	0.24
NAICS 524	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	4.83	3,540	0.79
NAICS 424	Primary Metal Manufacturing	3.19	2,330	0.59
NAICS 337	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	2.56	409	-0.59
NAICS 311	Food Manufacturing	2.56	1,578	0.35

Source: EMSI 2015.3

Table 8-2: Top 10 Economic Sectors by Employment, Marathon County (2015)

Industry Code	Industry Description	Employment	Employment Change 2010-2015	Location Quotient
NAICS 903	Local Government	6,553	-154	0.96
NAICS 621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	4,903	2,177	1.38
NAICS 722	Food Services and Drinking Places	4,150	54	0.76
NAICS 332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	3,487	894	4.83
NAICS 524	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	3,293	-480	2.56
NAICS 333	Machinery Manufacturing	2,800	507	5.10
NAICS 424	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	2,442	91	2.38
NAICS 622	Hospitals	2,398	-498	1.01
NAICS 541	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,361	88	0.49
NAICS 238	Specialty Trade Contractors	2,353	392	0.90

Source: EMSI 2015.3

9.7% in the U.S. The most recent estimates show an annual growth rate of 0.4% in Wisconsin and Marathon County, and a 0.7% annual growth in the United States (Wisconsin Department of Administration [WDOA], Demographic Services, 2015, US Census Bureau 2014). Population growth has been concentrated in the urbanized area surrounding Wausau.

In 2010, there were 286 people employed in the Town of Spencer, an 18% decline from the 2000 employment of 349. Approximately 80 of the 286 workers also lived in the Town of Spencer. About 93% of town residents work outside of the town and over 60% of town residents work outside of Marathon County. Most workers travel less than 25 minutes to work, although nearly five percent travel over 60 minutes.

Most residents were employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations with almost 29 percent of the employed population, as shown in **Table 8-3**. Production, transportation, and material moving was second; and sales and office third. **Table 8-4** shows that most working residents, nearly 29%, are employed in the educational services, health care and social assistance industry; while almost 25% of working residents are employed in the manufacturing sector. The next two largest industries are the retail trade at 10% of working residents and the construction industry at 9% of working residents

Table 8-5 shows the industry of work for those that work in the Town of Spencer. Data show that most people were employed in the manufacturing industry, with 50% of the employees. Trailing far behind with

13.6% of the employment is the agricultural, forestry, fishing and mining industry. Third and fourth are the retail trade industry and educational services, health care, and social assistance industry. Residents note there are only 12 remaining dairy farms in the Town.

The jobs offered in the Town of Spencer contrasts with the industries that employ the residents of Spencer. As shown in Chapter 2, most residents are employed by the educational services, health care and social assistance industry, at 29%, while 25% of residents are employed by the manufacturing industry.

Major Local Employers

Spencer is largely agricultural and wooded with very few non-farm businesses located in the town.

According to the American Community Survey, nearly 93 percent of working residents of Spencer work outside of the Town and 62 percent work outside of Marathon County, likely in the surrounding urban areas such as the City of Marshfield.

Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development in Marathon County

Strengths

- Many acres of land zoned for farmland preservation, which strengthens the retention of the agricultural industry. The Town of SPencer does not have farmland preservation zoning.
- Ample open space, woodlands, and natural areas, which adds to the small town living environment

Table 8-3: Employed Resident Occupation, 2010

Sector	Number	Percent
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	206	28.5%
Service occupations	70	9.7%
Sales and office occupations	173	24.0%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	87	12.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	186	25.8%
Total Employed*	722	

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

* "Total Employed" represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

Table 8-4: Employed Resident Industry by Sector, 2010

Sector	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	12	1.7%
Construction	57	7.9%
Manufacturing	178	24.7%
Wholesale trade	14	1.9%
Retail trade	70	9.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	43	6.0%
Information	25	3.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	35	4.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	35	4.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	209	28.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10	1.4%
Other services, except public administration	31	4.3%
Public administration	3	0.4%
Total Employed	722	

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

* "Total Employed" represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

Table 8-5: Town of Spencer Employment by Sector, 2010

Industry	Employed	Percent of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	39	13.6%
Construction	14	4.9%
Manufacturing	143	50.0%
Wholesale trade	6	2.1%
Retail trade	24	8.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	7	2.4%
Information	0	0.0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7	2.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	10	3.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	19	6.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	14	4.9%
Other services, except public administration	3	1.0%
Public administration	0	0.0%
TOTAL	286	

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey B08526

* "Total Employed" represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

sought after by existing/future businesses and their employees.

- A strong base economy made up of a variety of businesses including leaders in papermaking, lumber, insurance, and dairy products.
- Strong support for economic development from the community and economic development organizations

Weaknesses

- The agricultural economy is declining, and exclusive agricultural zoning prevents other industry development in the community.
- Access limitations along highways and frontage roads.
- Lack of design/aesthetics control for commercial and industrial development.

- Competition for industrial development – particularly between urban and fringe areas.

Employment Projections

Due to the small number of jobs in the Town of Spencer, projecting employment for the town alone is difficult. However, employment data is available at the zip code level for the two zip codes that encompass the Town of Spencer, 54449 and 54479. **Table 8-6** shows projections provided by Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) for the two zip codes, show very little change in employment over the planning horizon, approximately a 1.84 percent increase between 2015 and 2025. This rate was used to project employment to 2040.

Table 8-6: Spencer Employment Projections in 5-Year Increments

	Total Employment by Year						
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Jobs in 54479 and 54449	19,407	17,541	17,578	17,864	18,028	18,193	18,360
County	71,535	76,065	78,340	82,744	86,866	86,866	95,736

Source: EMSI 2015.3, 2015.4; NCWRPC

Issues

- STH 13 Commercial Corridor – The Town expects continued commercial corridor development along STH 13 between the Village of Spencer and the City of Marshfield.
- Industrial Location - The Town would like larger, more intensive uses to be located in an industrial park near a larger community such as Marshfield.
- Home Occupations - There is a desire to have some protection, provisions for home occupations located in the Town.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Identify where a commercial / industrial district should be located.

Objectives

Direct commercial and industrial development to areas that contain appropriate infrastructure, such as the STH 13 corridor and CTH's F, C, and V.

Zone contiguous land as commercial.

Direct commercial and industrial development to appropriate areas, such as industrial and commercial districts in the City of Marshfield and the Village of Spencer.

Policies

Direct future commercial development to the STH 13 corridor, and CTH F, C, and V.

Direct future industrial development to the Village of Spencer and the City of Marshfield.

Goal 2: Encourage the development of appropriate home occupations

Objective

Identify those home occupations that the Town would like to protect.

Policies

The Town of Spencer encourages the development of appropriate home occupations.

Goal 3: Strengthen the viability of the local agricultural economy.

Objectives

Explore the development of niche markets for agricultural products (e.g. organic/hydroponic).

Encourage secondary business development, such as outdoor markets or canneries, around the agricultural economy.

Work with Marathon County and other agencies such as the UW-Extension, to explore regional approaches to aiding the agricultural economy, such as regional manure digesters, grants, low interest loans, and other incentives.

Policies

Support the agricultural industry in Spencer.

Take an active role in regionally based agricultural forums and programs.

Encourage agricultural operators in the Town to participate in regional programs aimed at improving the agricultural economy.

LAND USE

The Town of Spencer is located in the southwest corner of Marathon County. It comprises the rural area between the Village of Spencer and the City of Marshfield.

Previous Studies

Regional Livability Plan

Land Use is one of four elements included in the Regional Livability Plan, adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2015. The Land Use Assessment Report, a component of the Plan, looks in detail at the land uses through the 10-county region and identifies trends and issues facing land use. The Regional Livability Plan addresses two issues: housing density and farmland preservation. The two land use goals of the Plan are as follows:

- Goal 9: Preserve and protect the region’s landscape, environmental resources, and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.
- Goal 10: Manage and reduce vacant land and structures.

Current Pattern of Land Use

The predominant land uses for the Town consist primarily of agricultural lands, woodlands, and scattered single-family homes including several smaller subdivisions. Spencer has numerous small streams and tributaries, any of which are surrounded by woodlands and open lands. The McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Area covers much of the northeast quadrant of the Town, covering approximately 1,758 acres of Woodland and Open Land. There is also some County owned land adjacent to the State Wildlife Area. Several parcels with commercial uses line STH 13. There is also some limited industrial development and two inoperative quarries in the Town.

Existing Land Use

For purposes of this report, existing land cover was used to represent existing land use. **Table 9-1** describes the various land use categories and Figure 9-1 illustrates the existing land use.

Development Trends

Land Supply

The Town of Spencer has adequate land available to accommodate future development. Unavailable land can include: land that has already been developed,

such as commercial or residential land; land that is enrolled in tax incentive programs or management programs (managed forest law, farmland preservation, forest crop law, or conservation reserve); or land that is publicly owned, such as state wildlife areas or county forests. **Table 9-2** shows publicly owned land in the Town of Spencer.

Affordable agricultural land is in short supply. The land that is available is sold in 5-10 acre lots and is not desirable for agricultural use.

Table 9-1: Land Use, 2015

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	9,004.32	44.44%
Commercial	60.87	0.30%
Governmental / Institutional	3.44	0.02%
Industrial	39.73	0.20%
Open Lands	2,677.88	13.22%
Outdoor Recreation	17.15	0.08%
Residential	1,181.61	5.83%
Transportation	543.77	2.68%
Water	447.45	2.21%
Woodlands	6,283.80	31.02%
Total Acres	20,260.19	100.0%

Source: Marathon County Land Cover, NCWRPC modified 2015

Table 9-2: Public Owned Land, 2002 - 2015

Year	Land Owner (in acres)		
	County	State	Federal
2002	1,641.80	1,717.90	0
2015	1,638.22	1,726.70	0
Change	-3.58	8.80	0
% Change	-0.22%	0.51%	0

Source: Local assessors with Municipal Board of Review and Wisconsin Department of Revenue, 2015 Statement of Assessment

Land Demand

An estimate of land needed for future residential development was based on projected new dwelling units between 2010 and 2040 derived from WDOA household projections and the density of the typical

development in the community. It is predicted that the Town of Spencer will grow by approximately 200 households between 2010 and 2040, and it is estimated that between 400 and 800 acres of land will be needed to accommodate this new residential development through 2040.

Given the small projected increase of employment in the two zip codes that encompass the Town of Spencer, which includes the Village of Spencer and the City of Marshfield, it is not expected there will be high demand for commercial land. If it is assumed that the Town of Spencer employment increase is proportional to the increase in the zip codes 54449 and 54479 and that the ratio of land consumption to employment remains constant, it can be expected that an additional 1.85 acres of land will be needed for commercial and industrial development.

Land Values

Table 9-3 indicates the change in assessed land values between 2008 and 2015 for various types of land use in the Town of Spencer. Over the seven year time period the amount of land assessed as residential and agricultural forest land increased, while the amount of land assessed as agriculture, forest, commercial, other, and undeveloped decreased. Between 2008

and 2015 the number of acres assessed as residential land use increased by 26 acres. At the same time, the amount of land assessed as agriculture decreased by about 160 acres and forest land decreased by over 270 acres. Some of this is accounted for the increase in agricultural forest land, but some was likely converted to development in nearby incorporated municipalities.

Land Use Controls

Comprehensive Plan(s)

The Town of Spencer adopted a plan in 2005. A Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for land use and development and assists the town in making decisions about the location, type, and form of development that takes place.

Zoning

Marathon County regulates zoning within the Town of Spencer's borders. The minimum rural residential lot size is 40,000 sq. ft. Marathon County is currently in the process of a comprehensive revision of its zoning ordinance.

Shoreland Zoning

Shoreland, shoreland wetlands, and floodplain regulations are applicable in all geographic areas of the

Table 9-3: Change in Assessed Land Value (per acre) 2013 - 2015

Land Classification	# of Acres/Land value (dollars per acre)	2008	2015	Change 2008 - 2015	Percent Change 2008 - 2015
Residential	# of Acres	1,753	1,779	26	1.48%
	Value	\$4,246	\$5,061	\$815	19.20%
Commercial	# of Acres	70	65	-5	-7.14%
	Value	\$3,684	\$3,918	\$234	6.36%
Manufacturing	# of Acres	27	27	0	0.00%
	Value	\$1,963	\$4,504	\$2,541	129.43%
Agriculture	# of Acres	9,664	9,503	-161	-1.67%
	Value	\$152	\$176	\$24	15.76%
Forest	# of Acres	1,312	1,040	-272	-20.73%
	Value	\$1,432	\$2,200	\$767	53.58%
Agricultural Forest	# of Acres	1,193	1,330	137	11.48%
	Value	\$741	\$1,206	\$465	62.77%
Undeveloped	# of Acres	2,310	2,314	4	0.17%
	Value	\$329	\$1,206	\$877	266.30%
Other	# of Acres	82	75	-7	-8.54%
	Value	\$4,128	\$5,820	\$1,692	40.99%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Statement of Assessment

County. Wisconsin law mandates Counties to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land use in shoreland/wetland and floodplain areas for the entire area of the County outside of villages and cities. This ordinance supersedes any Town ordinance, unless a Town ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland/wetland and floodplain area covered under this zoning is the area that lies within 1,000 feet of a lake and within 300 feet of a navigable stream or to the landward side of a floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

Farmland Preservation Program

The State of Wisconsin has a Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Program. The goals of the program are twofold: to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and to provide property tax relief to farmland owners.

Forest Crop Law (FCL) and Managed Forest Law (MFL)

With a large amount of forest land in the county, forest tax laws have a major effect on land uses. Because the tax laws require 25- to 50-year contracts, they are a good indicator of the amount of land that is effectively kept from development for the near future.

Major Opportunities and Constraints

- Ample Developable Land — The Town has a lot of land available for development. However, moderate to small lots are in short supply in the Town of Spencer. This drives up land prices for this type of lot.
- Good Access – STH 13 provides excellent access to nearby Marshfield and the Village of Spencer.
- Subdivisions— The Town requires that new subdivisions escrow money for the blacktopping of roads. This requirement has not been enforced consistently in the past and enforcement mechanisms are unknown.
- Natural Land – The McMillan Marsh Wildlife area is an excellent natural resource in the area, providing wildlife habitat and is part of a critical migration route for birds. The topography and soil in the Town also results in many wetlands and floodplains, which serve as habitat and corridors for wildlife.

Issues

- Floodplains – There is a concern that increased development could impact floodplains. If

impervious surfaces are increased, this could lead to increased flooding.

- Wetlands – The Town has numerous wetlands and floodplains, which limit the development potential of the land and increase the susceptibility of adjacent land to impacts from development. These lands also serve as a valuable natural resource, providing numerous ecosystem services, wildlife habitat, and contributing to the rural character of the Town.
- Farmland Fragmentation – Scattered residential development fragments farmland and makes it more difficult and more expensive to farm. When farmland is fragmented then large continuous tracts can be difficult to find, and farmers will have to travel between separate tracts of farmland to cultivate the land. It also increases conflicts with rural residents, which can lead to code enforcement or litigation to deal with those conflicts, wasting public and private resources. Residential development in Spencer has been scattered in the past, and will pose significant problems to agriculture if future projected growth continues in the same pattern.

Future Land Use

The Town of Spencer Future Land Use map illustrates the anticipated future pattern of land uses. The map includes several land use categories to guide where new residential and non-residential development should be encouraged to locate or where development should be discouraged. The Future Land Use shows recommended areas where development should happen; it is not a prediction of what will happen. Future land use will be highly dependent on decisions made by the Town and property owners within the Town. Descriptions of each land use category and the number of acres within each category are provided in **Table 9-4**.

Many factors contribute to future land use decisions, including physical and environmental constraints, regulatory considerations, geographic factors, economic conditions and policy decisions. Examples of these include soil type, wetland and floodplain location, groundwater characteristics, bedrock characteristics, proximity to existing services, location desirability and transportation network features. Areas where existing development precludes additional development are also shown.

Table 9-4: Future Land Use, 2015

Land Use Category	Description	Acres	% of Total Land Area
Residential	Residences including farmhouses, subdivisions, mobile homes, townhouses and apartments	2,185	10.95%
Commercial	Retail stores, taverns, restaurants, truck stops, gas stations, farm coops, farm implement dealerships, automobile dealerships, business offices, motels/hotels, offices, telephone/gas company, apartments	313	1.57%
Industrial	Saw/paper/lumber mills, dairies, industrial parks, trucking operations, distribution centers, quarries and mining	126	0.63%
Agricultural Areas	Tilled agriculture, fallow, pasture, and livestock raising, and limited scattered rural residential or commercial	9,869	49.46%
Government/ Public/ Institutional	Schools, churches, cemeteries, libraries, government, utility facilities and other tax exempt uses	52	0.26%
Woodlands	Privately-owned forested land, including nurseries, paper mill forests, and other wooded land, and limited scattered rural residential or commercial	2,881	14.44%
Outdoor Recreation	Public parks and forests, trails, ball fields, golf courses, playgrounds, camp grounds, shooting ranges, etc.	3,279	16.43%
Water	Open waters, such as lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, creeks, reservoirs, etc.	51	0.26%
Transportation	Airports, highways, road right-of-ways, railroads, logging roads	530	2.66%
Open Land	Non-wooded open land such as wetlands, prairies, and savannahs, limited scattered rural residential or commercial	666	3.34%
Total Land Area		19,954	

Source: Future Land Use map

As indicated in the table, a majority of the land is projected to be used for agriculture (52%) or outdoor recreation (16%). The considerable amount outdoor recreational land includes wetland areas adjacent to and including the McMillan Marsh. Residential land could use up to 11% of the total land area if current development patterns continue (2,185 acres). These figures are estimates based upon historical development characteristics and population and household projections, and may vary based on changing conditions or unforeseen circumstances. Minimum lot sizes range from 1 to 5 acres for rural residential uses under the revised Marathon County zoning code adopted in February of 2016. Existing

lot sizes generally range from 1 acre to over 10 acres per unit. **Table 9-5** shows projections for land use in five year increments if the full buildout shown on the future land use map occurs by the year 2040.

Development Pattern

While the amount of land that is developed in Spencer has an impact on public services, the spatial form that development takes also has an impact. Scattered residential development increases the demand and costs of providing services such as paved roads and can increase the costs and conflicts for farming by fragmenting farmland.

Table 9-5: Land Use Projections, 2020-2040

Land Use Type	Estimated Total Land Used by Year				
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Agricultural	10,083	10,021	9,961	9,907	9,869
Residential	1,759	1,882	2,002	2,110	2,185
Industrial	70	85	100	115	126
Commercial	270	285	295	304	313

Source: NCWRPC

Source: NCWRPC

Consistency between Land Use and Zoning

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

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

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

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Preserve the rural character and natural resources of the Town of Spencer.

Objectives

Explore programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, that protect prime soils, environmental resources and cropland.

Develop design controls, design standards, and guidelines for commercial and industrial development to minimize the negative impact on adjacent property. These could include reviews of traffic generation, light pollution and noise pollution, storm water runoff, and site plan design.

Policy

Support property owner’s participation in programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, which seek to maintain prime soils and cropland.

Goal 2: Encourage coexistence of farm and residential development.

Objectives

Work with Marathon County and UW-Extension to raise awareness of the connection between the rural landscape and the role of active agriculture in maintaining the landscape.

Actively mitigate existing conflict areas.

Work with appropriate entities, such as UW-Extension and Marathon County to develop a public information campaign about the daily activities of agricultural enterprises.

Promote active communication between agricultural entities and their neighbors.

Invite local waste haulers and communities to meet to discuss long-term waste hauling and spreading / injection policies.

Work with Marathon County to include buffer zones between conflicting land uses in the zoning code, such as agriculture and residential land.

Policies

Actively mitigate existing conflict areas between residential and farm uses.

The Town of Spencer will discourage development that could create or exacerbate farm / non-farm conflicts.

Goal 3: Identify where a commercial district should be located.

Objectives

Review and update town ordinances to direct commercial development to appropriate areas along the local highway system.

Zone contiguous land as commercial.

To provide access to commercial development through local roads, preserving the mobility of the State Highway System.

Policies

Direct future commercial development to the STH 13 corridor, and CTH's F, C, and V as it occurs.

Encourage future development to occur adjacent to existing commercial developments.

Goal 4: Ensure an adequate supply of developable land.

Objectives

To implement zoning measures, such as conservation subdivisions, to preserve natural and agricultural areas.

Identify areas where rural residential development is most appropriate and direct growth to that area.

Direct rural residential development near existing residential areas to minimize the possibility of residential / agricultural use conflicts and to maintain the viability of farming.

Policy

Discourage future residential developments from occurring near or adjacent to existing farm operations to minimize the potential for conflicts.

Goal 5: Protect Town lands from future flood events.

Objective

Review and update town ordinances to require that all future developments maintain the same level of storm water runoff before, during, and after development.

Policies

Prevent development of the areas in the Town identified as wetlands by the Wisconsin DNR.

Prevent development from occurring in floodplains as identified on FEMA official Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)

Require that all future developments maintain the same level of storm water runoff before, during, and after development.

Goal 6: Discourage scattered rural residential development.

Objectives

Update town ordinances to direct new residential growth to appropriate areas.

Zone contiguous land as residential.

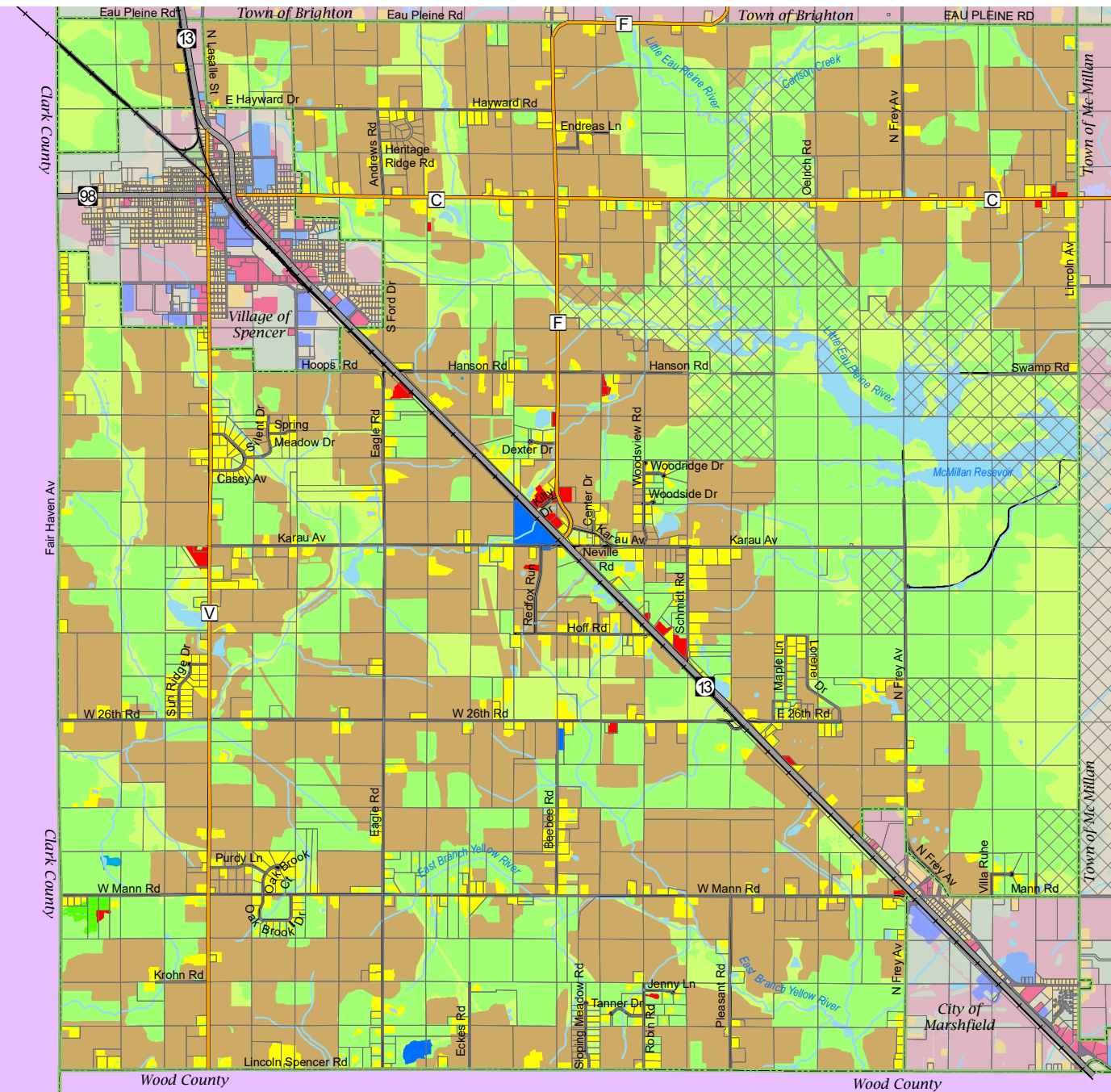
Policy

Direct future residential growth to areas contiguous with existing developed parcels.

Map 6 Existing Land Use Town of Spencer Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Minor Civil Divisions | Agriculture | Outdoor Recreation |
| US Highway | Commercial | Residential |
| State Highways | Governmental / Institutional; Utility | Transportation |
| County Highways | Industrial; Quarry | Water |
| Local Roads | Multi-Family | Woodlands |
| Railroad | Open Lands | |
| Parcels | | |
| Mc Millan Wildlife Area | | |



0 0.225 0.45 0.9 1.35
Miles

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co.,
2015 Airphoto interpretation

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey
and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is
a compilation of records, information and data used for
reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for
any inaccuracies herein contained.



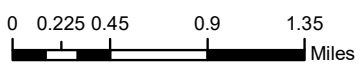
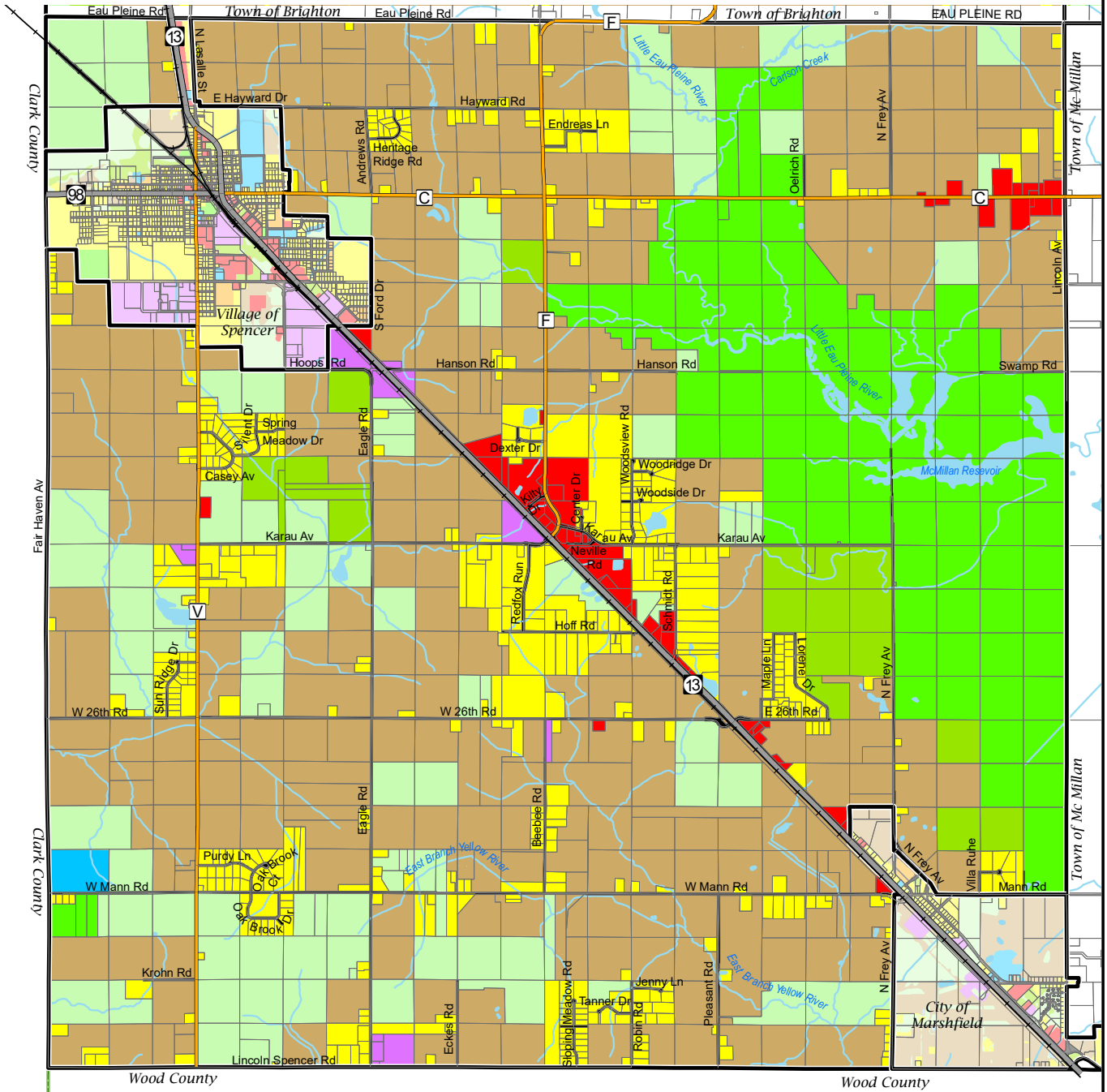
**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- ▭ Parcels
- Railroad
- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Agricultural Areas
- Commercial
- Governmental / Public / Institutional
- Industrial
- Multi-Family Residential
- Open Lands
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Transportation
- Water
- Woodlands

Map 7
Future Land Use Plan
 Town of Spencer
 Marathon County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

This analysis presents an inventory of existing mechanisms that the Town of Spencer uses to coordinate with other units of government, including: Marathon County, adjacent towns, the school district, the State of Wisconsin and the Federal government. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the existing cooperative mechanisms and summarize the major challenges and issues regarding intergovernmental cooperation and regional planning, including:

- Opportunities to reduce or eliminate duplication of services;
- Incompatible goals, policies and development;
- Mechanisms for conflict resolution;
- Opportunities for joint planning and decision-making.

Mechanisms for cooperation and coordination primarily take the form of intergovernmental agreements, leases and contracts, and regulatory authority. These can occur between the Town of Spencer and other local, regional, State or Federal entities. Following is a brief description of the various functional areas and services that require intergovernmental coordination at various levels.

Local and Regional Level Cooperation

Shared Services

Fire and Emergency Response

The Town is part of a joint fire district including the Village of Spencer, the Town of Brighton, the Town of Sherman [Clark County], and the Town of Unity [Clark County]. The Fire and EMS districts are part of a regional Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), and have mutual aid agreements with the City of Marshfield, and the Towns of Lincoln and McMillan.

Cooperative Practices

Surrounding Towns

The Town has good relations with the surrounding Towns, the City of Marshfield, and the Village of Spencer

School District

The Town of Spencer has good relations with the surrounding school districts.

Marathon County

The County provides several services to the Town including: law enforcement through the Sheriff's Department, 911 dispatch service, access permits, maintenance and improvement of County Highways, planning and permitting oversight regarding shoreland, wetland and floodplain regulation, private sewage system regulation, and animal waste and manure management. The County also provides oversight on compliance with County soil and water conservation policy for the Farmland Preservation Program. The Town's relationship with the County is fairly limited.

Regional Agencies

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) provides a variety of regional and local level assistance, including economic development, planning and transportation assistance.

State and Federal Agencies

The Town has little direct contact with State or Federal agencies. However, State agencies regulate certain activities such as access onto State roads, shoreland, floodplain and wetland zoning oversight, navigable waters protection, compliance with water quality standards, farmland preservation tax credits and managed forest tax credit programs. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) owns property in the Town of Spencer.

Goal, Objectives and Policy

Goal 1: Provide effective public safety services.

Objectives

Work with the Marathon County Sheriff's Department, the Village of Spencer, and the City of Marshfield to provide effective police service.

Explore a joint service agreement with the City of Marshfield or the Village of Spencer for police protection.

Policy

Enhance public safety services in the Town.

IMPLEMENTATION

The primary reason a community prepares a comprehensive plan is to establish a framework to influence decisions regarding management of growth and regulation of development to maintain the desired community character, and 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 implementation of specific community improvements as identified in the comprehensive plan.
- The establishment and support of a continued planning process providing for periodic review and updates to this plan and other land use control measures.

Implementation Tools

Having the appropriate tools to implement the recommendations in this comprehensive plan is critical. The most common implementation tools are the Town official controls or regulatory codes. In particular, the zoning ordinance and subdivision (or land division) regulations comprise the principal regulatory devices 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 and staffing.

The State planning law requires that by January 1, 2010 certain programs and/or actions that affect land use must be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan.

Zoning Ordinance and Map

Zoning is used to manage and control how land is used and developed. Zoning ordinances typically establish detailed regulations concerning how land may be developed, including setbacks, the density or intensity of development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose of zoning is to minimize undesirable side effects resulting

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 establishment of zoning districts and the zoning map indicates where specific types of development can and should be located. Zoning districts shown on the zoning map should be coordinated with the land use plan and map. While the zoning map and land use map do not need to directly match at the time the land use map is adopted, the intent is that the land use map will serve as a guide indicating how the property should eventually be zoned.

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

As discussed below, the comprehensive plan (and future land use map) should be periodically reviewed and updated to adjust for unforeseen changes or events that were not considered at the time the initial plan and land use map were developed.

Subdivision (Land Division) Ordinance

Subdivision regulations serve as an important function by ensuring the orderly development of unplatted and/or undeveloped land. These regulations may set forth reasonable regulations for lot sizes, road access, street design, public utilities, storm water drainage, parks and open space, and other improvements necessary to ensure that new development will be an asset. The County subdivision ordinances currently apply in the Town.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

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

financing methods and sources. Public improvements or expenditures typically considered in a CIP include:

- Public buildings (i.e., fire and police stations)
- Park and trail acquisition and development
- Roads and highways (maintenance and new construction/paving)
- Utility system construction/expansion, treatment plants, water towers, wells, etc.
- Joint school and other community development projects
- Fire and police protection equipment

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

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

Plan Adoption, Monitoring, and Amendments

While this comprehensive plan is intended to provide a long-term framework to guide development and public spending decisions, it must also respond to the continuous stream of changes that occur in the community and/or region that may not have been foreseen when the plan was initially adopted. It is appropriate that some elements of the plan are rarely amended while others are subject to updating on a more regular basis. Plan maps should also be updated periodically. In general, key maps, such as the future land use map, should be reviewed annually to make sure they are still current.

Plan Adoption

The first step in implementing this plan involves adoption of the plan by local officials. The formal review and adoption process involves plan review by the Plan Commission (or other planning committee)

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

Plan Use, Monitoring and Evaluation

The adopted plan should be used as a tool by Spencer 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 of Spencer. 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. The Plan Commission can meet regularly to discuss progress on the goals and objectives of the plan and discuss any issues related to planning or development.

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

Plan Amendments

The Spencer 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.

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

Plan Updates

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

The following criteria should be considered when reviewing plan amendments and updates:

- The change is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Spencer 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 should be consistent with the physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade and improve its viability.
- The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
- The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment including trees, slopes and groundwater, or the impact could be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.

- There is a change in Town actions or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
- The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
- 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.

Consistency Among Plan Elements

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the Implementation Element describe how each of the required elements will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. Since Spencer completed all planning elements simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist. It is noted that some overlap naturally exists between the nine plan elements. Where deemed appropriate, goals, objectives, and actions have been repeated under all applicable elements to ensure they do not get "lost".

This Comprehensive Plan also references previous and concurrent related planning efforts (e.g. LRTP, Groundwater Study) to ensure they are considered in planning decisions in conjunction with the recommendations of this Plan. Recommendations from other plans have been summarized and incorporated in this plan as deemed appropriate, to foster coordination and consistency between plans. Some related plans, such as the Marathon County Hazard Mitigation Plan, are incorporated by reference in this plan and are essentially considered appendices of this plan even though they are separate documents.

Table 11-1: Implementation Plan Actions

Action	Who is responsible?	Priority
Natural and Agricultural Resources Actions		
Identify critical zones for the maintenance of the Town’s groundwater supply.	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Update ordinances to ensure that critical groundwater locations in the Town are protected.	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Work with agencies to address uncontrolled runoff from overuse of fertilizers and other chemicals.	Town Board	Short-Term
Meet with surrounding communities (Spencer and Marshfield) to discuss supporting their wastewater treatment plants.	Town Board	Mid-Term
Utilize wetland, soil, and floodplain maps to guide Town decision-making processes and prevent development from occurring in critical areas.	Town Board	Ongoing
Identify important or sensitive natural resources to preserve, such as the McMillan Marsh, the Little Eau Pleine River, and the Yellow River.	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Identify and use tools, such as transfer of development rights and purchase of development rights to protect areas identified as important or sensitive.	Town Board	Long-Term
Ensure that concentrated animal feeding operations are located within agricultural areas and maintain a buffer from existing residential subdivisions.	Town Board	Ongoing
Cultural Resources Actions		
Work with the State and County historical societies to identify and preserve existing historic sites and structures in the Town.	Town Board	Short-Term
Work with local communities and organizations to assist in the support and development of cultural activities and resources.	Town Board	Ongoing
Housing Actions		
Promote the development of senior housing in nearby urban areas.	Plan Commission	Immediate
Encourage residential developments to locate adjacent to existing developments.	Plan Commission	Ongoing
Work with the county to ensure zoning and subdivision codes do not prevent the development of housing affordable to local workers.	Plan Commission	Immediate
Encourage the use of universal design in new housing.	Plan Commission	Ongoing
Utilities and Community Facilities Actions		
Meet with other communities to identify methods of equipment and cost sharing to increase efficiency.	Town Board	Ongoing
Work with utility companies to ensure that their needs are met as they analyze the possibility of extending natural gas and cable to Town residents.	Town Board	Mid-Term

Continue agreements to provide effective Fire, Police, and EMS service to the Town.	Town Board	Ongoing
Make the Town Hall available for community activities.	Town Board	Ongoing
Continue to support the local NTC branch.	Town Board	Ongoing
Budget for needed improvements and maintenance to Town facilities	Town Board	Ongoing
Work with the school district to continue to support the school forest and playgrounds.	Town Board	Ongoing
Discuss the preservation of the McMillan Marsh.	Town Board	Short-Term
Transportation Actions	Who is responsible?	Priority
Develop a policy using objective and measurable criteria (e.g. average daily traffic, % truck traffic, adjacent land uses) to determine the type of pavement (e.g. gravel, asphalt, concrete) used for Town roads.	Town Board	Short-Term
Refine the requirements and mechanisms to require new developments cover the costs of blacktopping roads.	Town Board	Short-Term
Work with WDOT, the Village of Spencer, the City of Marshfield, Marathon County, Wood County, and other appropriate agencies to develop a long-range plan for STH 13.	Town Board	Short-Term
Encourage WisDOT to improve safety and access on STH13 for bicycles and pedestrians.	Town Board	Short-Term
Work with the City of Marshfield and Village of Spencer to accommodate transportation innovations such as electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, and ride-sharing	Town Board	Long-Term
Encourage Marathon County to update the 1996 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Non-urbanized Area of Marathon County.	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Coordinate and plan with the City of Marshfield, Marathon County, and the Village of Spencer to identify and develop a bicycle-pedestrian route through the Town of Spencer and into the City of Marshfield.	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Identify additional funding sources to assist with the development of bicycle and pedestrian routes in the Town.	Plan Commission	Ongoing
Economic Development Actions	Who is responsible?	Priority
Direct commercial and industrial growth to areas with appropriate infrastructure.	Town Board	Ongoing
Allow home occupations.	Town Board	Ongoing
Take an active role in regionally based agricultural forums and programs.	Town Board	Immediate
Encourage agricultural operators in the Town to participate in regional programs aimed at improving the agricultural economy.	Town Board	Ongoing
Work with Marathon County, UW – Extension and other agencies to explore ways to aid the agricultural economy.	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Land Use Actions	Who is responsible?	Priority

Explore and provide information to residents and landowners about programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program that allow voluntary participation to protect farmland and natural areas.	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Develop design standards and controls for commercial and industrial development, including reviews of traffic, light, and noise pollution, stormwater runoff, and site plans to protect the rural character of the Town.	Town Board	Short-Term
Promote active communication between agricultural operators and their neighbors.	Town Board	Ongoing
Invite local waste haulers and communities to meet to discuss long-term waste hauling and spreading / injection policies.	Town Board	Short-Term
Zone contiguous land for commercial uses.	Plan Commission	Ongoing
Direct future residential growth away from prime farmland and toward contiguous residential areas.	Plan Commission	Ongoing
Direct growth away from sensitive lands, including floodplains and wetlands, using official floodplain and wetland maps.	Plan Commission	Ongoing
Intergovernmental Cooperation Actions	Who is responsible?	Priority
Meet with surrounding communities to identify areas where services could be provided jointly to enhance efficiency and service levels.	Town Board	Immediate
Work with the City of Marshfield or the Village of Spencer to develop a joint service agreement for police protection.	Town Board	Short-Term

APPENDIX A: PLAN RESOLUTION AND ORDINANCE

TOWN OF SPENCER PLAN COMMISSION RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #11-2016

Town of Spencer
Marathon County, Wisconsin

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

Adoption of the Town of Spencer Comprehensive Plan.

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

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

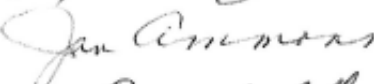
The vote of the town plan commission in regard to this resolution shall be recorded by the clerk of the town plan commission in the official minutes of the Town of Spencer Plan Commission.

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

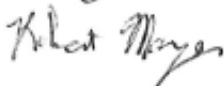
Adopted this 10th day of November, 2016.

Dennis Dieringer: 

Jerry Schmitz: 

Jan Ammons: 

Carl (Pete) Hoff: 

Bob Mayer: 

TOWN OF SPENCER

ORDINANCE FOR PLAN ADOPTION

ORDINANCE

Town of Spencer
Marathon County, Wisconsin

SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE

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

SECTION II – AUTHORITY

The town board of the Town of Spencer has authority under its village powers under s. 60.22, Wis. stats., its power to appoint a town plan commission under ss. 60.62 (4) and 62.23 (1), Wis. stats., and under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Spencer 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 Spencer, 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 Spencer to adopt its comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., and provides the authority for the town board to order its publication.

SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Plan Commission of the Town of Spencer, 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 Spencer Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Spencer, 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.

RECEIVED

JAN 27 2017

NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Spencer, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Spencer 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.

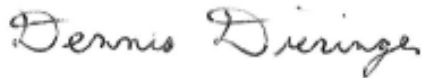
SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

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 10th day of January, 2017.

Chairman: Dennis Dieringer



Supervisor: Dennis Foth

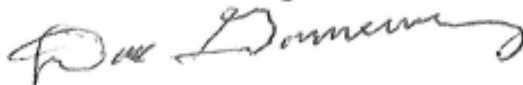


Supervisor: Carl (Pete) Hoff



Attest:

Clerk: Dennis Gonnering



APPENDIX B: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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

THE TOWN OF SPENCER 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;

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, Dennis Gonnering, Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a Town Board meeting, held at the Town Hall on the 9th day of February, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.


Clerk

RECEIVED

MAR 14 2016

NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Town of Spencer Public Participation Plan (PPP)

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

I. Plan Development:

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

The public participation plan will incorporate the following:

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

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

II. Implementation, Evaluation & Update:

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

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

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.

**Town of Spencer
Comprehensive Plan
2017**