

11 Preferred Land Use Development Strategy

This section describes the strategy used in the development of the Town of Washington Year 2020 Preferred Land Use Map. Planning involves the integration of multiple information sources, all applied to the end product, each important to the process of developing a sound, logical plan. In many cases, the process of planning holds equal importance to the product.

The Town of Washington development strategy included analysis of the past development patterns, thorough examination of current issues, trends and conditions, and vision for the future acquired through extensive community involvement and learning. The Town of Washington development strategy is discussed below.

11.1 Selected Land Use Planning Criteria

The process of planning for future land uses can most realistically be accomplished through evaluation of existing conditions as compared to the town's future vision. The framework and building process of the Year 2020 Preferred Land Use Map is based upon several different planning criteria, each representing a critical piece of land related information. Each planning criteria is an information "chapter" in a land use story about the Town of Washington. The incorporation of "chapters" creates the text for study, which affords the town the ability to evaluate land use in terms of what is desired compared to what they have. The selected planning criteria are discussed below.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping

GIS mapping technology incorporates land information into a computerized, digital format that allows the ability to view and analyze information in layers. Existing land uses (Map 9-1) were inventoried and mapped by the Town of Washington Land Use Planning Forum. Existing zoning districts (Map 9-2) from the Vilas County Zoning Ordinance were mapped and overlaid onto the land use map to view how the land use is regulated, and to correlate existing versus permitted uses. The resource protection map (Map 8-3) was overlaid on the land use and zoning maps to determine land protection areas within general ownership patterns. Wetlands and county regulated shoreland zones were then overlaid to define undevelopable areas and areas of environmental sensitivity. The GIS mapping allowed the Town of Washington Land Use Planning Forum to analyze land use interactively through evaluation of existing conditions and regulations in the town and how they relate to both existing and proposed development.

Incorporation of Public Input

The planning process depends on public involvement. The 1999 Town of Washington Community Planning Survey (see Appendix 2-1) and the series of collaborative learning workshops were key public involvement tools to incorporate community driven attitudes and opinions relative to land use

development and community growth. The survey and workshops were constantly referenced during the planning process. In addition three public informational meetings were held (see Section 2, Public Participation Process) to update, demonstrate, review, report, and solicit input. All meetings of the Town of Washington Land Use Planning Forum were open to the public and conformed to the requirements of the open meetings law. Direct input from the residents, property owners, the Town of Washington Town Board, and from the Land Use Planning Forum to ensure community opinion was the basis for plan development.

Incorporation of Vision, Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives outlined in Section 3 of this report were the guiding principles of the planning process. The vision, goals and objectives were based on the Town of Washington Collaborative Learning Workshops, Community Planning Survey, Land Use and Planning Issues Workshop, and direct input from the residents, property owners, Town Board, and the Planning Forum. The vision statement, 12 goals and 78 objectives were created during a two meeting process. The Land Use Planning Forum also hosted a public informational meeting to present and discuss results. The Forum periodically reviewed the goals and supporting objectives to facilitate the process of plan development.

Consideration of Needs Analysis

Recommendations and planned improvements identified in Section 5, Community Facilities and Services and in Section 7, Transportation, were analyzed relative to the associated impact and location of planned projects or improvements. Residential and commercial acreage need projections developed in Section 10, Growth Forecasts, were also incorporated in to planning decisions relative to potential acreage demands of growth and the area allocations dedicated for it. The needs analysis was incorporated where planned improvements or recommendations clearly affected future land use and would have to be accounted for in the long term.

11.2 Land Use Trends

The following existing and future land use trends were developed based on the analysis of background data which was presented in previous sections of this report. These trends identify the characteristics which are likely to be experienced within the town throughout the planning period, and also provide direction for the development of the Year 2020 Preferred Land Use Map.

The trends imply major ramifications to land use in the Town of Washington. The trends generally identify impacts on or that can be attributed to land such as increasing housing demands, residential permit activity, increased tourism activity, demands for rural development with urban-type services, and conversions of resorts to condominium or single family use. The trends were evaluated for impact and served the purpose of stimulating thought. Most of all, the trends demonstrated the

need to plan for change and to be proactive in the face of a changing landscape. The trends are highlighted in Table 11-1.

Table 11-1
Town of Washington
Anticipated Trends

1. The persons per household ratio is expected to decline from 2.48 (1980) to 2.14 (2015), while the demand for larger lot sizes will increase resulting in greater acreage needs to accommodate future growth.
2. Utilizing the building permit activity trends, it is projected that Washington will have 2,258 total housing units by the year 2015, an increase of 459 units (25.5%) from the estimated number of housing units in the town in 1998 (1,799). In contrast, the WDOA data projects the town will have 1,697 total housing units, a decrease of 102 units (5.7%) over the same planning period. The projections vary by 561 housing units.
3. According to a 1990 Wisconsin Department of Administration population forecast, the town was to expect a population decrease of 2.4% between 1990 and 2015 (1,189 to 1,161). The town will exceed that projection based on the 1998 estimated population 1,301, a 9.4% growth since 1990.
4. The town will likely experience an increase in the development of home occupational businesses spawned by the advancements in computer technology and access to global information (the Internet).
5. The town will continue to experience significant seasonal population increases.
6. Seasonal housing units will be continue to be converted to permanent housing units.
7. Lakeshore and river front property will continue to receive the bulk of development pressure responding to market demands; however, off-water, larger-lot development will be an ever-increasing percentage of the total development.
8. Seasonal and permanent housing demands will increase development pressure along shoreland property.
9. Demand for higher density developments on lakefront properties may increase even more as limited lakefront properties become developed.
10. The town's economic strength is expected to remain in the service sector related to the tourism/recreational industry.
11. Projected traffic volumes will increase significantly along STH 70 and USH 45.

12. Demand may increase for commercial property and development along STH 70 and USH 45.
 13. The town will experience increased traffic on local roads which will in turn require additional road maintenance and construction costs.
 14. Increased lakeshore development may result in a loss of natural vegetative structure resulting in a reduction in wildlife and fish spawning habitats.
 15. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, all undeveloped lakes in private ownership in the “northwoods” could be developed within the next 20 years if present development rates exist.
 16. Pressure to withdraw lands currently enrolled in forest management programs will increase to accommodate the demand for future large lot residential developments.
 17. The Town of Washington will continue to be a popular seasonal recreation destination to accommodate outdoor activities such as snowmobiling, hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, boating, canoeing and wildlife viewing. These activities will generate user conflicts which will likely require the intervention of local government.
 18. The cost of services will continue to increase to match the demand.
 19. Expansion or construction of essential community facilities such as a combined community center, and town hall/administrative building may be needed to accommodate increased demands placed by an expanding population.
 20. Increased developer interest in condominium development adjacent lakes and waterways will likely occur to accommodate seasonal and retirement housing demands.
 21. The town should anticipate an increase in the demand to provide additional and “more improved” water access sites to accommodate an expected increase in fishing pressure and the use of larger “more specialized” fishing boats.
 22. The town should anticipate a nationwide trend toward motorized recreation and high impact tourism.
 23. There will an increased demand for larger parcels to accommodate growing recreational land demands.
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11.3 Vilas County Lakes Classification System

The Vilas County Lakes Classification System is a way of grouping lakes into separate classes based on their sensitivity to development impacts, while recognizing existing levels of development. A lakes classification system is used to establish zoning and other management strategies to accommodate a level of development and growth compatible with a lake's capacity to support that development. The Vilas County General Zoning and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, as adopted in May 1999, incorporates the Vilas County Lakes Classification System for management of land use for properties with direct frontage on lakes and other regulated surface water. The Vilas County Lakes Classification System will regulate densities of the shoreland areas typically at higher density than indicated by the preferred land use classification as discussed in Section 12. The Town of Washington's preferred land use classifications will direct the use of property of *all* lands in the town, including shorelands.

11.4 Preferred Land Use Classifications

The final element used to develop the comprehensive land use plan are preferred land use "classifications". The classifications identify what the town feels are the best and most appropriate land uses, both in the lands' present condition and desired future condition of use. When building the preferred land use map, proposed land uses were discussed based on the types of uses that the town felt were of consistent character, use, density, and location relative to the existing development pattern and uses that occupy land. The Land Use Planning Forum evaluated all the planning criteria discussed above and developed the preferred land use classifications, as listed below, each with preferred permitted and conditional uses. The preferred land use classifications are discussed in detail in Section 12 of this report.

1. Lakeshore Residential
2. Rural Residential
3. Wooded Residential
4. Forestry and Recreation
5. Parks and Recreation
6. State Highway Commercial
7. On-Chain Mixed Use
8. Government/Institutional
9. Agriculture