



Town of Winchester Comprehensive Plan 2021



Town of Winchester, Vilas County Wisconsin

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Chapter 1

Demographics

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

Population and Households

Historical Trends

The estimated 2018 population for the Town of Winchester provided by the American Community Survey is 329 people. As shown in Table 1A, the Town experienced a substantial increase in population from 1990 to 2000. However, from 2000 to 2018 there has been steady decline. From 1990 to 2010, the percentage increase of 8.19 percent was much less than Vilas County and the State of Wisconsin as a whole at 21.03 percent and 16.26 percent respectively. From 2010 to 2018, the population decreased substantially at a rate of 14.10 percent, whereas the county and state levelled off during this time. In contrast to the Town's decrease, the county and state had slight gains of 0.76 percent and 1.61 percent respectively.

Table 1A: Demographic Change 1990-2018						
Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2018	1990-2010 % Change	2010-2018 % Change
Total Population						
T. Winchester	354	454	383	329	8.19%	-14.10%
County	17,707	21,033	21,430	21,593	21.03%	0.76%
State	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,778,394	16.26%	1.61%
Total Households						
T. Winchester	160	214	190	184	18.75%	-3.16%
County	7,294	9,066	9,658	10,914	32.41%	13.00%
State	1,822,118	2,084,544	2,279,768	2,343,129	25.12%	2.78%
Average Household Size						
T. Winchester	2.21	2.12	2.02	1.79	-8.60%	-11.39%
County	2.40	2.32	2.22	1.96	-7.50%	-11.71%
State	2.61	2.5	2.43	2.40	-6.90%	-1.23%

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

Growth in the number of households followed the same trend with a dramatic upswing from 1990 to 2000. This was true to a great extent in the Town of Winchester, where there was an 18.75 percent increase in the number of households from 1990 to 2010. Vilas County had a 32.41 percent increase in the number of households and Wisconsin had an increase of 25.12 in the number of

households from 1990 to 2010. The number of households levelled from 2010 to 2018 which was consistent with the stabilization in population. Winchester had six fewer households in 2018 than in 2010, for a decrease of 3.16 percent. This was in contrast to an increase in number of households in the county and state, at 13.00 percent and 2.78 respectively.

The average household size has been decreasing steadily across the nation over the past few decades. This is due to a multitude of factors including longer life spans, less people having children, and people having fewer children. In the Town, the average household size has decreased fairly steadily in the past few decades, from 2.21 average people per household in 1990 to 1.79 in 2018, for a decrease of 0.42 persons per household. This decrease is less than the county which has dropped from 2.40 in 1990 to 1.96 in 2018, for a total of .44 persons per household. However, it is greater than the state which has gone from 2.61 in 1990 to 2.40 in 2018, for a net reduction of 0.21 persons per household on average.

In addition to the year-round population shown in Table 1A, a significantly large portion of the Town’s economy is centered around the recreation and tourism industry. Consequently, there are a considerable number of seasonal residents. The summer season is identified as the most popular time for recreational tourists, although fall and winter recreational opportunities are continuing to increase in popularity. It is important to identify the number of seasonal residents as this population creates an increased demand on public services including roadways, outdoor recreation spaces, and public utilities.

Table 1B displays the peak summer population for the Town of Winchester in 2018. Of the total peak summer population, 90 percent of residents are seasonal and 10 percent are year-round residents. Some of these seasonal visitors own or rent second homes including houses, cabins, and cottages that are typically utilized for a few months of the year. These residents often own year-round homes in other parts of the state or neighboring states. Therefore, these residents make the Town of Winchester their “home away from home” for a portion of the year.

Table 1B: Peak Summer Population Town of Winchester 2018										
2018 Population	Hotel Rooms	x 2.2 persons	Campsites	x 3.5 persons	Seasonal homes	x 4 persons	Day visitors	Total	% year-round pop.	% seasonal pop.
329	48	106	0	0	619	2,476	300	3,211	10%	90%

Source: U.S. Census, DATCP Recreational Facility Licenses 2018

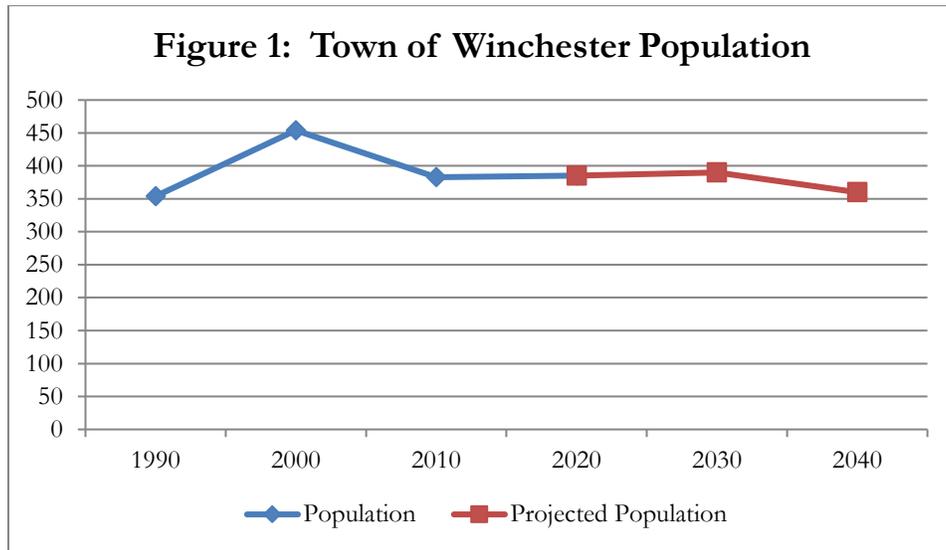
In addition to those utilizing seasonal homes, there are a high number of seasonal visitors. These visitors utilize resorts, hotels, and cabin rentals in the Town for a period of days or weeks. There are two resorts within the Town that each have six units each available for rent, there are also several small scale operations with fewer than five units.

Projections

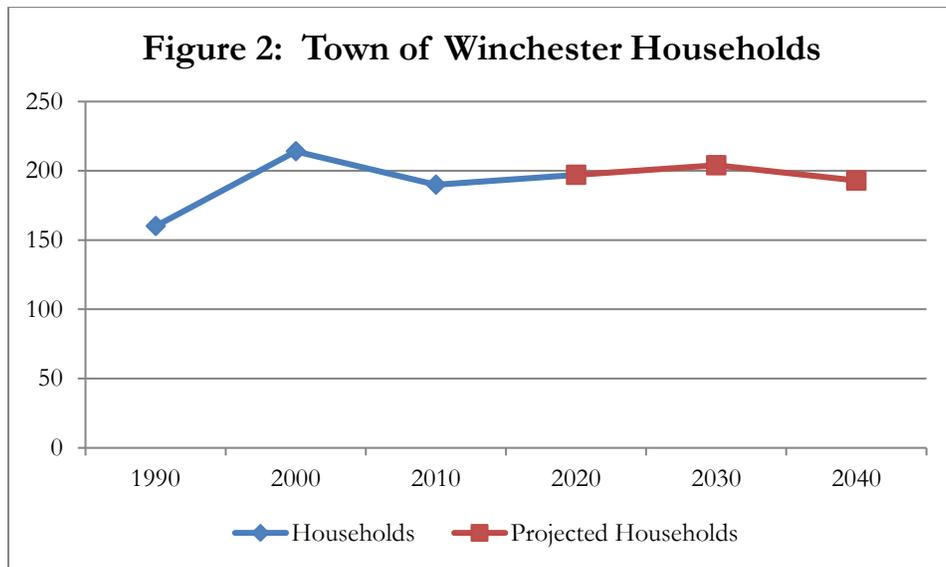
Figure 1 shows population projections for the Town of Winchester and Table 2 compares projected population in the Town to Vilas County, based on projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The Wisconsin DOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections. These projections are based on historical population

and household growth in the community, with more recent years given a greater weight. The Town of Winchester is expected to experience a decrease in population through 2040 at a rate of 6.01 percent. This is in contrast to Vilas County as a whole which is expected to grow at a rate of 11.48 percent through 2040. This is likely due to the aging baby boomer population and the county being a desirable retirement location.

Figure 2 and Table 3 include household projections completed by the WDOA. Projections indicate that although both population and number of households are expected to increase somewhat in the Town through 2030, they are expected to decrease from 2030 to 2040. Household size has been steadily decreasing through the past few decades and this trend is expected to continue. The average household size was 2.02 in 2010 and is expected to decrease to 1.87 by 2040. Growth in the number of households is expected to continue for Vilas County through the year 2040.



Source: U.S. Census, WI DOA



Source: U.S. Census, WI DOA

Table 2: Population Projections, 2010-2040								
Total Population by Year								
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% change 2010-2040
T. Winchester	383	385	385	390	390	380	360	-6.01%
Vilas County	21,430	21,840	22,535	23,645	24,395	24,305	23,890	11.48%

Source: WI DOA Population Projections, 2013

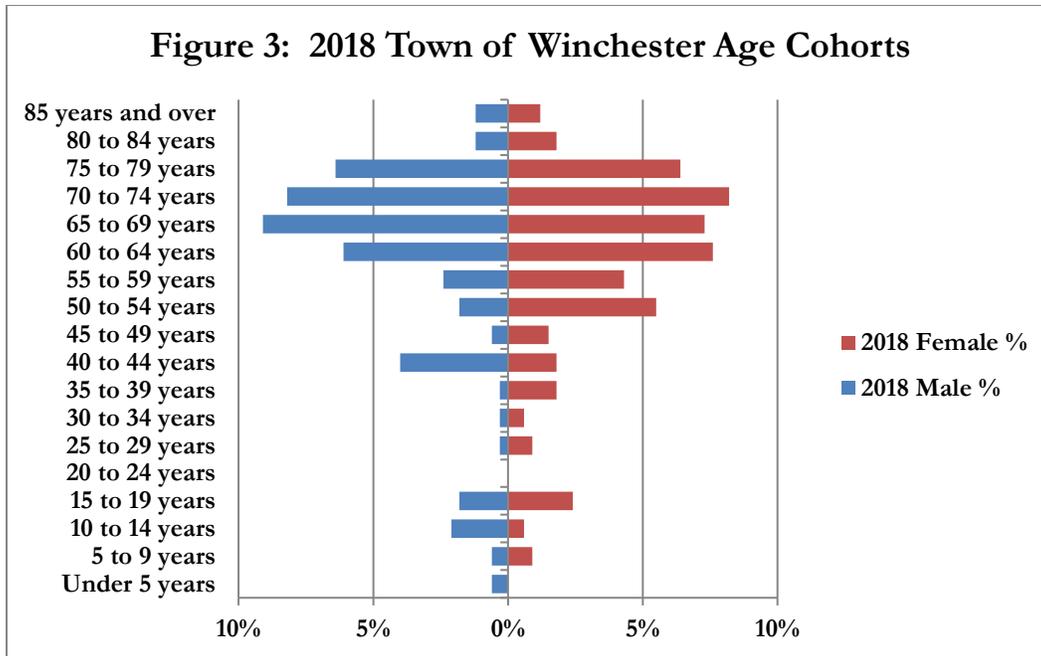
Table 3: Household Projections, 2010-2040								
Total Households by Year								
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% change 2010-2040
T. Winchester	190	195	197	202	204	201	193	1.58%
Vilas County	9,658	10,056	10,470	11,071	11,513	11,596	11,518	19.26%

Source: WI DOA Household Projections, 2013

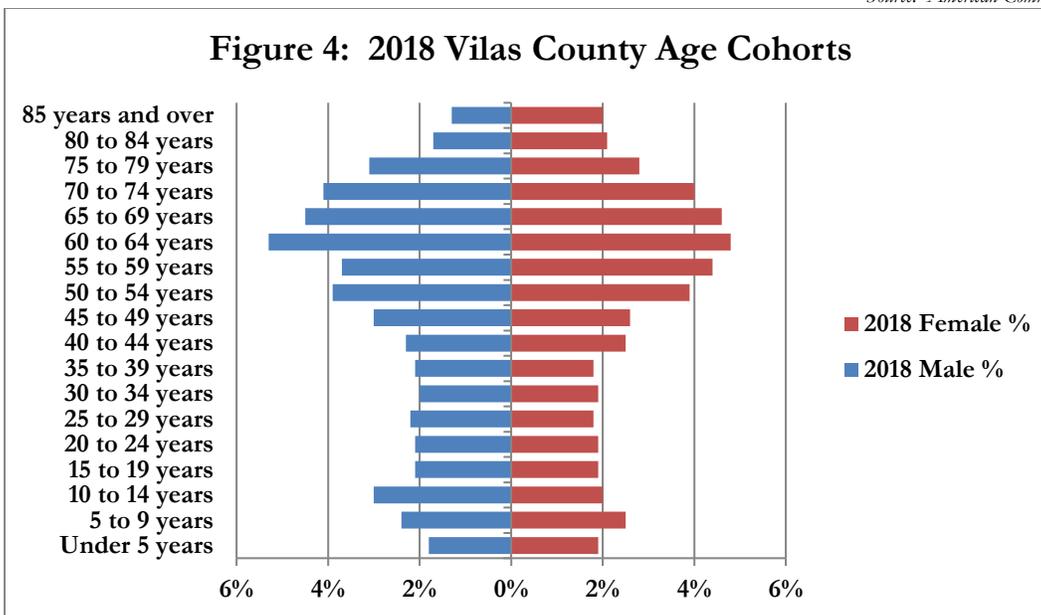
Age

Figures 3 and 4 compare the distribution of age group for the Town of Winchester and Vilas County. Vilas County’s population pyramid is highly constrictive with far greater numbers in the higher versus lower age ranges. This is indicative of aging populations with slow population growth. Similarly, the Town of Winchester also has a highly constrictive population pyramid with very few residents in the younger age categories. For example, in the 20-24 year age range there are no reported males or females. Most males in the Town are in either the 65-69 year old age category or the 70-74 year old age category, and most females are in the 70-74 year old age category.

In 2018, the median age in the Town was 65.3 years, up from 59.9 in 2010. The county’s median age was 54.1 in 2018. The median age for both the Town and the county was significantly higher than the state which had a median age of 39.6 in 2018.



Source: American Community Survey



Source: American Community Survey

Population distribution is important to the planning process. Two age groups are of particular note, those 17 years of age and younger and those 65 years of age or older. These are often referred to as dependent populations, but each have different needs. For example, the younger group requires schools and child care and the older group requires increased levels of medical care.

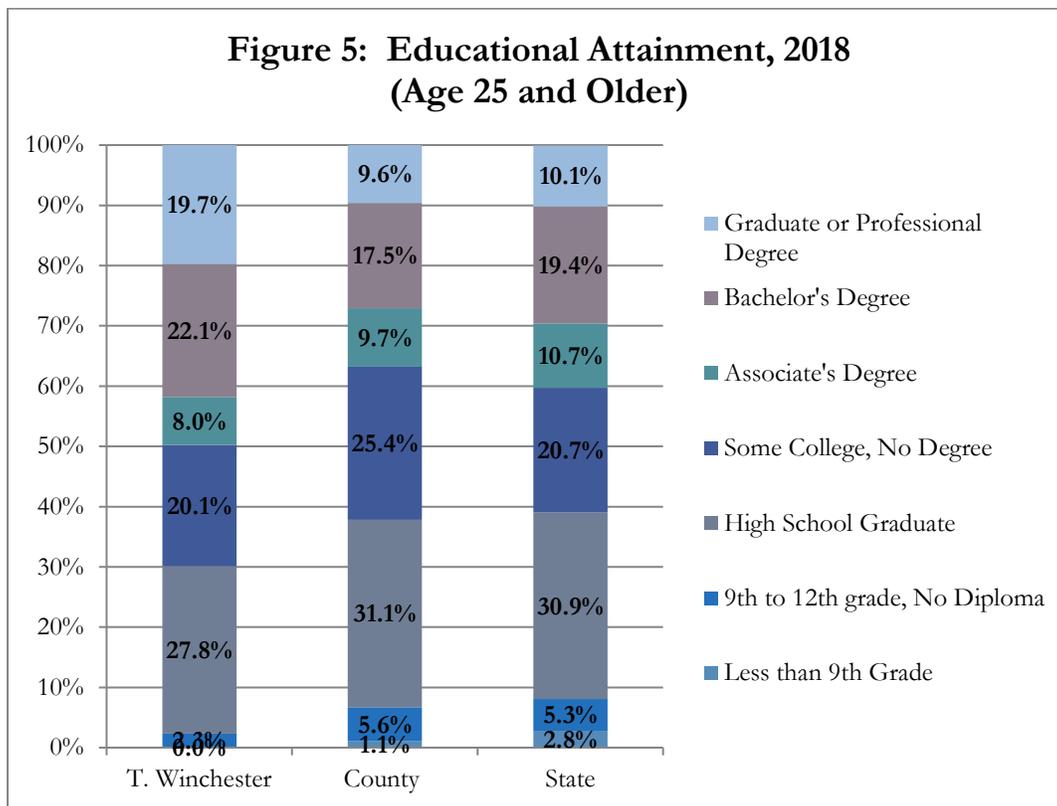
From 2010 to 2018, the population of 17 and younger group in Winchester decreased from 11.5 percent of the population to 6.4 percent of the population. In short, this was a net loss of 23 people from this age cohort. From 2010 to 2018, the population percentage of those in the 65 and older

group increased from 36.8 percent in 2010 to 51.1 percent in 2018, with a net gain of 27 people. Due to longer life expectancy and the size of the Baby Boomer generation, the 65 and older age group is expected to continue to increase in size. The trend is occurring at the state and national levels and to an even greater degree within the rural Wisconsin counties. This population trend whereby older age categories increase significantly while younger age categories decline will impact the future labor supply, school system, and health care industry at the national, state, and local levels.

Education and Income Levels

Education

Figure 5 compares educational attainment of those in the Town of Winchester to the county and the state. In 2018, 97.7 percent of town residents age 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was 4.4 percent higher than the county average and 5.8 percent higher than the state average.



Source: American Community Survey, 2018

In 2018, 41.8 percent of Town residents had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. This was substantially higher than both the county and the state at 27.1 percent and 29.5 percent respectively. Education and how it relates to economic development will be discussed in the economic development chapter.

Income

Median household income and per capita income are two commonly used measures of income. Median household income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, meaning half of all households have income above that amount, and half have income below that amount. Per capita income is the average income earned per person.

Median household income for Town of Winchester residents was \$56,563 in 2018. Table 4 shows that this was significantly higher than Vilas County, but lower than the State of Wisconsin. Similarly, in 2010, the Town of Winchester median income was lower than the state, but higher than the county. When adjusted for inflation, the median household income in the Town has risen considerably over the past several years. This was not the case in the county, where median income dropped, or the state, where median income stagnated when adjusted for inflation.

Table 5 illustrates that income per capita in the Town of Winchester is higher than the county and the state. This was not true in 2010, where per capita income in the Town was slightly lower than the county and the state. Per capita income in the Town has increased 33.7 percent when adjusting for inflation from 2010 to 2018. This rate of increase is higher than both the state at 6.2 percent and the county at 0.6 percent.

Minor Civil Division	2010	2018	*Net Change	*% Change
T. Winchester	\$42,917	\$56,563	\$7,470	17.4%
Vilas County	\$41,631	\$44,285	-\$3,336	-8.0%
Wisconsin	\$51,598	\$59,209	\$186	0.4%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018
*Adjusted for inflation in 2018 dollars

Minor Civil Division	2010	2018	*Net Change	*% Change
T. Winchester	\$25,488	\$37,732	\$8,576	33.7%
Vilas County	\$27,128	\$31,206	\$174	0.6%
Wisconsin	\$26,624	\$32,108	\$1,653	6.2%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018
*Adjusted for inflation in 2018 dollars

Employment Characteristics

Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Town of Winchester in 2010 and 2018. The “employed population” includes those that are 16 and older. There was a decrease of 21 people in the labor force from 2010 to 2018 in the Town. This is likely due to the rise in median age, whereby more people are entering retirement. This decline was in contrast to the labor force growth seen the state. The decline was also greater than in the county where the labor force has decreased, but to a lesser degree since 2010.

Labor force participation indicates the percent of those 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate decreased 8.7 percent in the Town of Winchester from 2010 to 2018. There was a decrease in the county and state during this period also, but to a lesser degree.

Table 6: Labor Force					
Minor Civil Division	Labor Force			Labor Participation Rate	
	2010	2018	2010-2018 % Change	2010	2018
T. Winchester	138	117	-15.2%	46.6%	37.9%
Vilas County	10,718	9,907	-7.6%	58.1%	53.8%
Wisconsin	3,078,465	3,092,330	0.5%	69.0%	66.7%

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

In 2010, the Town of Winchester had an employed population of 138 people. This number decreased 24 people to 114 by 2018, for a decline of 17.4 percent. From 2010 to 2018, the employed population decreased in the county at a rate of 6.0 percent, and increased 3.3 percent in the state. The U.S. Census classifies individuals as unemployed if they are not working, actively seeking work, and available to accept a job. The unemployment rate in the Town was 2.6 percent in 2018. This was lower than both the county and the state at 7.3 percent and 4.0 percent respectively.

Table 7: Employment				
Minor Civil Division	2010	2018	2010-2018 % Change	Unemployment Rate
T. Winchester	138	114	-17.4%	2.6%
Vilas County	9,764	9,182	-6.0%	7.3%
Wisconsin	2,869,310	2,964,540	3.3%	4.0%

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

As shown in Table 8, in 2018 most Winchester residents were employed in the areas of management, business, science and the arts. This is a shift from 2010, when most residents were employed in sales and office occupations. In 2018, the second sector most represented was the area of service occupations followed by sales and office occupations. From 2010 to 2018, the most significant increase was seen in management, business, science, and arts positions. The most significant decrease during this time period was in production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

Table 8: Resident Occupations 2010-2018		
Occupation Sector	2010	2018
Management, business, science, and arts	13	48
Service occupations	24	23
Sales and office occupations	45	21
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	24	10
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	32	12
Total employed*	138	114

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey
**Total employed represents employed civilian population 16 years and over*

Demographic Snapshot

- The population and number of households have increased until 2000, and have been steadily decreasing since that time. There has been a notable decline in household size.
- The Town of Winchester is expected to experience marginal increase both in terms of population and in the number of households through the year 2030, after which point both are expected to decrease.
- There are a large number of people in the older age categories and the median age is higher than the county and the state.
- The median age rose 5.4 years from 59.9 in 2010 to 65.3 in 2018.
- In 2018, the Town of Winchester has a very high number of those with a high school diploma or higher (97.7%) or a bachelor’s degree or higher (41.8%), significantly more than the county or the state.
- The 2018 average household income of \$56,563 was lower than the state, but higher than the county. The 2018 per capita income of \$37,732 was higher than the county and the state.
- The labor participation rate is substantially lower than the county or the state, and the unemployment rate is lower than either the county or the state.
- Most people working in the Town of Winchester work in the areas of management, business, science, and the arts.

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Chapter 2

Natural, Cultural, and Agricultural Resources

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

It is in the best interest of the community to plan for, preserve and protect natural, historic and cultural resources as these resources serve as a catalyst for many who desire to live and own property in the northwoods. Additionally, these resources have more than aesthetic and recreational value, they are essential to long-term human survival and general welfare.

PREVIOUS NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL, & CULTURAL RESOURCE PLANS AND STUDIES

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

Vilas County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2015-2024

This plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Vilas County from 2015 to 2024. The County Land and Water Conservation Department, in partnership with the NCWRPC, identified the following goals for Vilas County's natural resource protection efforts:

- Goal 1: Increase the publics' level of natural resource knowledge and stewardship
- Goal 2: Protect aquatic and terrestrial environments from non-point source pollutants
- Goal 3: Protect aquatic, terrestrial, and wetland ecosystems from invasive species
- Goal 4: Organize sites of concern within watersheds, wetlands, lakes, and forests
- Goal 5: Attend to state and local conservation funding and policy issues

Vilas County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2015

The Vilas County Farmland Preservation Plan is required under Chapter 90 of Wisconsin Statutes. The Plan's Purpose is to guide and manage farmland preservation and agricultural production capacity from 2015 to 2030. The plan identifies portions of the county as designated farmland preservation areas and existing farmland preservation areas.

- Farmland Preservation Areas are also located throughout the Town.

Vilas County Forestry Plan

The Vilas County Forestry Plan, updated in 2017, is a management guide for the Vilas County Forest and is updated every decade. The mission of the plan is to manage and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for ecological, economic, educational, and research needs of present and future residents throughout Vilas County.

USGS Protecting Wisconsin's Groundwater through Comprehensive Planning

In a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the University of Wisconsin System, and the United States Geological Survey, a website was made available with data and information on geology, general hydrology, and groundwater quantity and quality. The website was developed to aid government officials in their comprehensive plans, including this plan.

The most recent data available for Vilas County was public in 2007. The full Vilas County report can be found at their website: https://wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/find/vilas/index_full.html.

NATURAL RESOURCES

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

Land Resources

The Town of Winchester is located in the northwest portion of Vilas County. The Town is bounded by the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to the north, Iron County to the west, the Town of Manitowish Waters to the south and Town of Presque Isle to the east. The Town of Winchester covers approximately 34,631 acres of land. Winchester is primarily a forestry and recreational community. Approximately 81 percent of the land in the Town is covered by forest land, including public, private, and industrial-owned forest land, while another 10 percent of the Town is comprised of surface water.

Topography and Geology

Vilas County is in the Northern Highland physiographic region of Wisconsin. This region has some of the highest elevations in the state. Elevations range from about 1,560 feet above sea level in an area along Squaw Creek in the southwest corner of the county to 1,845 feet Muskellunge Hill.

There are three geographic regions in Vilas County. The drumlins and ground moraines in the eastern portion of the county are characterized by low, smoothly rounded, elongated, and oval ridges that are nearly level to moderately steep, and are interspersed with long, narrow drainage ways. The second area is an outwash plain characterized by a rolling or hilly topography with many enclosed basins and depressions. The Town of Winchester is located in the third area, the Winegar moraine area, a major end moraine that is dominantly undulating to steep, which extends across the northwest portion of Vilas County. This area is characterized by short, steep slopes and ridges, and by numerous wet depressions, most of which have no outlets.

According to the Soil Survey of Vilas County, the secondary drainage system is rather poorly defined, and includes the Town's numerous lakes which drain into the river systems through shallow, crooked drainageways. Glacial meltwater was unable to establish a system of deeper channels in the glacial topography of the area. In addition, many of the lakes do not have any outlets.

The soils of Vilas County are primarily sandy and loamy soils which are suited to, and do support, forested/woodland uses. Due to the sandy and droughty nature of the soils, most are of relatively low agricultural value. In addition, the growing season in the county is relatively short. The soil in the Town of Winchester is made up primarily of the Gogebic-Sarona-Whitbeck association. The soil is the Au Gres-Croswell-Kinross association in the southwestern section of the Town. Some eastern sections of the Town are the Padus-Pence-Greenwood association.

Forests

Forests are the predominant land cover within the Town of Winchester, covering approximately 81 percent of the Town's total area. Forests are an important resource in the Town. Forests provide protection for environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. In addition, expansive forests provide recreational opportunities aesthetic benefits, and economic development.

The DNR publication, Wisconsin Biodiversity as a Management Issue, reported that prior to widespread human habitation, the Town of Winchester forests consisted of predominately coniferous species including both the white and red pine. This type of pine forest was extremely limited in the State, with Oneida and Vilas Counties containing the most extensive block. From the mid-1800's to early 1900's, much of the forest areas in Wisconsin were cut over. The early logging concentrated on the white pine and to some extent the red pine. This practice, in addition to purposeful or unintentional fires, almost eliminated the white pine seed from the northern forest area. Efforts to replant over 500,000-acres of forestlands in Wisconsin from 1956 to 1968 met with mixed success. However, from 1968 to 1982 nearly every tree species increased in overall volume throughout the state. At present, Vilas County is characterized by well-developed secondary growth forests with a mixture of hardwoods and conifer stands that cover 81 percent of the county.

Woodlands in the Town are owned by a variety of entities including public, conservation/educational organizations, private industrial forest, and other private owners. Many private landowners have property enrolled in WDNR managed programs. As of January 2019, there are approximately 6,089 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program and approximately 602 acres in the Forest Crop Law (FCL) program. Some, but not all of this land is open to public access. These programs have been established to preserve and protect woodlands through practicing proper management techniques.

There are 7,491 acres of state owned land located within the Town. Most of this state land is part of the Northern-Highland American Legion (NHAL) State Forest, which includes 7,449 acres within the Town of Winchester. The NHAL State Forest was established in 1925 and covers over 232,000 acres and in Vilas, Oneida, and Iron Counties. Within the Winchester section of the NHAL State Forest are two State Natural Areas:

- **Nell Lake State Natural Area** (designated in 2013)
The lake features old-growth red pine, hemlock, and black spruce. This is a 26 acre seepage lake surrounded by an acidic conifer swamp. An old heron rookery occurs within one of the swamp islands and a floating fen mat supports pine bog orchids.
- **Toy Lake Swamp State Natural Area** (designated in 2007)
This is a large wetland complex of hardwood swamp, white cedar swamp, and alder thicket surrounding a basin containing a shallow, drained lake with dense aquatic and wetland vegetation. The extensive forested wetland contains white cedar, black ash, and alder. Upland islands support large white pine, hemlock, yellow birch, white spruce, and balsam fir.

The 42 acres of remaining state acreage include the:

- **Mary Lake State Natural Area** (designated in 1999)
Three acre Mary Lake is one of very few known meromictic lakes in Wisconsin. Meromixis, the permanent thermal stratification of the water, results from the lake having an extremely small surface area in comparison to the depth. Mary Lake has a small 3 acre surface and a disproportionately very deep 67 foot depth. Therefore, Mary Lake never “turns over” and circulates as the water temperature changes in the spring and fall as is typical of most other Wisconsin lakes. Instead, the lake stays stratified creating unusual chemical and biological layers.

In addition to managed forest land and state land, the Town owns 165 acres of land.

Agricultural Areas

There is a relatively small amount of privately owned farmland within the Town. However, the amount of farmland is very limited, as the soil generally is not conducive to agriculture.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

There are no active metallic mines in the Town, nor are there any known deposits. There are a number of non-metallic mining sites located within the Town. All are shown on the Natural Resources Map.

Environmentally Remediated Areas

Brownfields are commercial or industrial properties that contain or may contain hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. Expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of these properties can be especially difficult. The Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) is an online database that provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and clean-up of properties with contaminated soil and/or groundwater.

Contaminated sites are not uncommon as all communities with commercial and industrial development have the potential for air emissions, groundwater contamination, soil spills, and surface water contamination. Contaminated sites originate when a property is used for such activities as a gas station, industrial processing facility, a landfill, or a laundromat. There is one open listed site in the Town of Winchester. It is a leaking underground storage tank (LUST) on CTH W and has been open since 1991.

Rare Species and Natural Communities

Wisconsin's National Heritage Inventory Program (NHI) is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the State. A natural community is an assemblage of different plant and animal species, living together in a particular area, at a particular time, in a specific habitat. The program's database, on the Wisconsin DNR website, identifies species and natural communities that are currently tracked by the NHI. Natural communities are tracked when deemed significant because of their undisturbed condition, size, what occurs around them or for other reasons. As of April 2019, NHI tracked eighteen species or communities in the Town of Winchester. Of the eighteen species tracked by NHI, four are birds, ten are communities, one is a plant, one is an insect, one is a bird rookery, and one is an animal, the Wood Turtle.

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

Water Resources

The Town of Winchester, as well as the whole of Vilas County, is characterized by numerous natural surface water features, including rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state and others are in need of focused efforts to improve water quality.

This section discusses the characteristics of the major surface water features located within the Town.

Watersheds

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

A majority of the Town of Winchester lies within the Upper Chippewa River Basin, including the Flambeau Flowage Watershed, Montreal River Watershed, and Manitowish River Watershed. All surface water and groundwater discharge moves through this water shed and ultimately enters the Chippewa River. A section in the northern portion of the Town lies within the Lake Superior Basin, Presque Isle River watershed. Surface water in this area ultimately discharges to the Presque Isle River, then on to Lake Superior.

Surface Water

The Town of Winchester contains approximately 3,615 acres of surface water, including lakes and streams, which account for approximately 10.4 percent of the Town's total land area.

Lakes

The Town of Winchester contains 34 named lakes and 29 unnamed lakes, which range in size. Table 9 contains an inventory of all lakes within the Town that are 50 acres or greater in size. Major lakes

include North Turtle Lake (359 acres), South Turtle Lake (466 acres), Birch Lake (506 acres), and Harris Lake (534 acres). The Town also shares several lakes with neighboring Towns, including Papoose Lake located along the southeastern border of Town.

Lake Name	Area	Maximum Depth	Lake Association	Invasive Species
Adelaide Lake	57 acres	69 feet	No	Yes
Birch Lake	506 acres	45 feet	Birch Lake Association	No
Circle Lily Lake	218 acres	35 feet	No	Yes
George Lake	82 acres	51 feet	No	Yes
Harris Lake	534 acres	57 feet	Harris Lake Association	Yes
No Man’s Lake	230 acres	31 feet	No	No
North Turtle Lake	359 acres	58 feet	Turtle Lakes Chain Association	Yes
Papoose Lake	422 acres	65 feet	Papoose/Rosalind Lake Association	Yes
Rainbow Lake	148 acres	36 feet	Rainbow Lake Association	No
Rock Lake	120 acres	18 feet	No	Yes
South Turtle Lake	466 acres	40 feet	Turtle Lakes Chain Association	Yes

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Lake associations have become increasingly popular over the past few decades, particularly as the presence of aquatic invasive species has increased. In addition to evaluating and reducing the presence of invasive species, they also assist with monitoring residential and commercial development along shorelines. In addition to the individual lake associations, the Town of Winchester has a Town Lakes Committee that meets regularly with representatives from the lake associations throughout the Town.

In addition to the numerous lakes in the Town, there are several creeks, some of which interconnect lakes within the Town. The most significant streams in the Town are the Turtle River in the west which drains North and South Turtle Lakes, Papoose Creek which drains the southeast portion of the Town, and Harris Creek in the north. No Man’s Creek in the northwest portion of the Town of Winchester connects No Man’s Lake with Rock Lake, and Rainbow Creek in the central portion of Town connects North Turtle Lake with Rainbow Lake.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

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

protection, and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) which have excellent water quality and valued fisheries but receive or may receive water discharges.

Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERWs) share many of the same environmental and ecological characteristics. The primary difference between the two is that ORWs typically do not have any direct point sources discharging pollutants directly to the water. In addition, any pollutant load discharged to an ORW must meet background water quality at all times. Exceptions are made for certain types of discharge situations to ERWs to allow pollutant loads that are greater than background water quality when human health would otherwise be compromised. Although much of the surface water throughout the Town is clear and of high quality, there are no DNR classified ORWs or ERWs within the Town of Winchester.

Impaired Waters

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

Five water bodies in the Town of Winchester are listed as not meeting the standards set under the U.S. Clean Water Act, Section 303(d). The impaired waters in the Town of Winchester include North Turtle Lake, South Turtle Lake, Rock Lake, Rock Creek, and Circle Lily Lake. North Turtle Lake had phosphorus levels too high for healthy plant, bug and fish communities in 2020. An assessment of South Turtle Lake in 2018 showed excess algal growth and that although conditions for fish and aquatic life was excellent, conditions for recreation were poor. Circle Lily Lake was placed on the impaired water list in 2016 for excess algal growth.

Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Vilas County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. Invasive species can alter the natural ecological relationships among native species and affect ecosystem function, economic value of ecosystems, and human health. It is recommended that the Town continue to work with the County Land and Water Conservation Department to develop public outreach education strategies. It is also beneficial that lake districts and associations continue to work with the DNR and property owners to manage invasive aquatic species within lakes and waterbodies throughout the Town of Winchester.

Wetlands

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

Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants ranging from pesticides to animal wastes. Calm wetland waters, with their flat surface and flow characteristics, allow particles of toxins and nutrients to settle out of the water column. Plants take up certain nutrients from the

water. Other substances can be stored or transformed to a less toxic state within wetlands. As a result, the lakes, rivers and streams are cleaner.

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

Wetlands comprise approximately 8,137 acres in the Town of Winchester, or 24 percent of the Town's total land area. These wetlands include a wide diversity of wetland types ranging from emergent/wet meadow to scrub/shrub, to deciduous and coniferous forested. These areas should be protected and development should be encouraged away from these environmentally sensitive areas.

Floodplains

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

Groundwater

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

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

The Wisconsin DNR in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin Extension, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and USGS, analyzed the ease whereby contaminants can be carried through overlying materials to groundwater. Variables relevant to this are depth to bedrock, type of bedrock, soil characteristics, depth to water table, and characteristics of surficial deposits.

Nearly all of Vilas County including the Town of Winchester has been identified as being susceptible to groundwater contamination.

The water quality throughout the Town is generally good. Local differences in quality are the result of the composition, solubility, and surface of the soil and rock through which the water moves, and the length of time that the water is in contact with these materials. The main constituents in the water are calcium, magnesium, and bicarbonate ions. Mainly in the moraines, the water is hard. A high content of iron is a problem in many wells, but it is not a health hazard.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

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

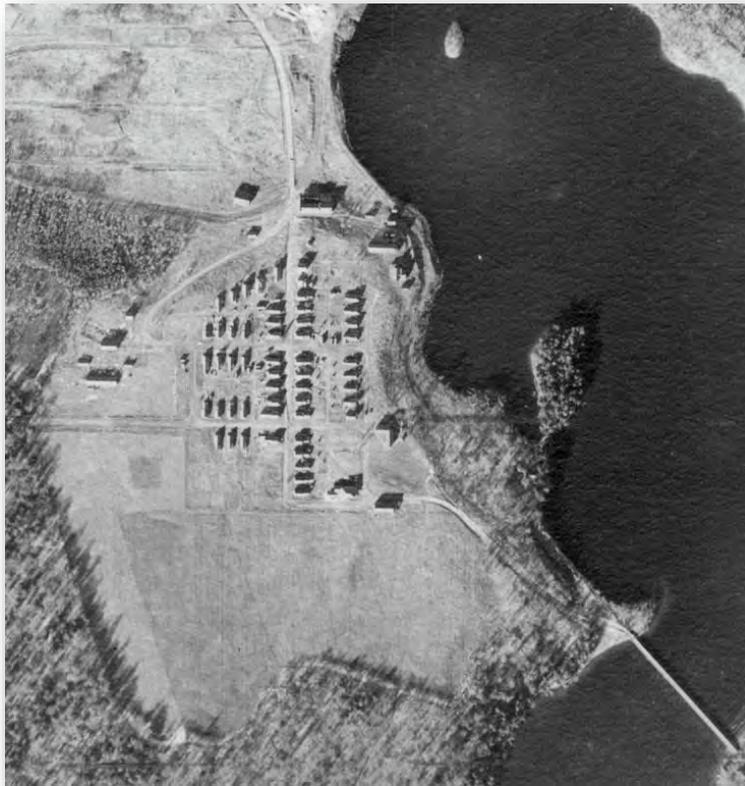
Community History

In 1893, George Buck and son, Fayette came to the narrows between North and South Turtle Lakes and started the Divide Resort. The Divide Resort included a main dining hall, general office and store building, and 15 residential cottages. Amenities included sailing, canoeing, yachting, bowling, tennis, and billiards. Guests also had fishing access to outlying lakes including No Man's Lake, George Lake, Rock Lake, Birch Lake, and Harris Lake. A rustic bridge over the divide allowed guests to access a dance pavilion on South Turtle Lake.

In 1899, George married Anna Seymour. Shortly thereafter a school was established in one of the cottages and a post office was added, with a postal address of Divide, Wisconsin. In 1917, George left Anna, his four children, and the Divide Resort. Anna Buck successfully raised her four children and ran the resort until 1940 when it was sold.

During this time the Turtle Lake Lumber Company was formed in 1902. Walter Winchester was the president of the company and since that time, the Town has held the same name. In 1906 logging began and a saw mill was built. This mill later became a shingle mill and the main mill was built on the northwest shore of South Turtle Lake near the river. A small community developed here including 55 homes, a community building, a town hall, and a two-room school. The two-room school was constructed in 1910 and is now the Winchester Community Building and Public Library. Winchester remained an active logging community until 1926.





Resources

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

There are no properties within the Town on the National or State Register of Historic Places. The town will monitor sites that have historic significance to the town and decided if they should be registered with the State Register of Historical Society.

Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources Programs

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

Private Forestry

The WDNR's goal is to motivate private forest landowners to practice sustainable forestry by providing technical forestry assistance, state and federal cost-sharing on management practices, sale of state produced nursery stock for reforestation, enrollment in Wisconsin's Forest Tax Law Programs, advice for the protection of endangered and threatened species, and assistance with forest disease and insect problems. Each county has at least one Department forester assigned to respond to requests for private forestland assistance. These foresters also provide educational programs for landowners, schools, and the general public. Both private and industrial forest landowners have enrolled their lands under the Managed Forest Law.

Managed Forest Law (MFL)

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

Parks and Recreation Program

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

Other Programs

Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)

The purpose of the Stewardship Incentive Program is to assist landowners in more actively managing, protecting, and enhancing their forest lands and related resources through cost-sharing. The program aims to keep forest lands productive and healthy for both present and future owners, and to increase the economic and environmental benefits of these lands. Private landowners may enroll 10 to 1,000 acres of woodland in the program, and must maintain a 10-year contractual commitment.

Nine general categories of management practices are eligible for cost-sharing under SIP, including forestry management plan development, tree planting, forest improvement, windbreaks and hedgerows, soil and water protection, riparian and wetland protection, fisheries habitat enhancement, wildlife habitat enhancement, and forest recreation enhancement. Sixty-five percent of the actual cost of each practice is covered, with maximum limits as established by the WDNR. The practices available in individual counties may vary. Public access is not required. This program is administered by the WDNR, USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), and County Land Conservation Departments.

Forestry Incentive Program (FIP)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Forestry Incentive Program, in association with the WDNR, which was initiated to provide cost-sharing to private landowners for implementing forestry management practices. Landowners with 10 or more acres are eligible to enroll in the program, and agree to maintain the practices for an estimated life span. The development of a management plan is required which establishes the practices to be performed including tree planting, site preparation for natural regeneration, timber stand improvement, etc. Public access on the property is not required.

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program which was established to restore wetlands on lands which were previously altered for agricultural use. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in consultation with the Farm Service Agency and other federal agencies.

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

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for private landowners who wish to establish or improve wildlife habitat on their land, with a primary emphasis on re-establishing declining species and habitats. Both technical assistance and cost sharing are provided to help develop, maintain, and/or improve fish and wildlife habitat through management practices. Lands which are eligible for program participation include woodlots, agricultural and non-agricultural land, pastures, and streambanks which are generally at least 5 acres. Landowners are required to prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan which includes cost-share eligible practices to be conducted including fencing, seeding, limited tree planting, instream structures, burning, etc. Up to 75% of costs are reimbursed, generally not to exceed \$10,000; other organizations may provide the remaining 25% of the cost-share or provide expertise to help complete a project. The normal contract duration is 10 years at a minimum to maintain wildlife

habitat. Public access is not required under this program. The program is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Maintain and enhance the aesthetic, ecological quality, function, and other values of the town's land and water resources.

Objectives:

1. Discourage development within environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, lowlands, and steep slopes.
2. Evaluate lakeshore development impacts in the Town of Winchester.
3. Maintain natural buffers and building setbacks between intensive uses and lake, stream, creek, and wetland areas.
4. Promote public health rules for on-site sewage systems.
5. Protect wetlands and control erosion in shoreland areas.
6. Encourage and provide assistance in the development and maintenance of lake associations and districts.
7. Develop and coordinate partnerships and cooperative efforts to address documented water quality degradation in town lakes and streams.
8. Encourage and support the development of comprehensive stream and lake management plans which include surveys, assessment and monitoring, and recommendations for restoration and improvement.
9. Encourage site management practices (e.g., limit/phase clearing and grubbing), erosion control, and other measures designed to prevent rather than treat sediment and other pollutants from land disturbing activities and storm water runoff.
10. Educate residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems, shoreland areas, and water conservation.
11. Protect water resources including lakes, streams and wetlands.

Goal: Preserve Forestry Integrity.

Supporting Objectives:

1. Classify and designate forest resource lands for the long-term commercial production of timber products.
2. Encourage retaining large, contiguous forestry tracts in the town.
3. Encourage land owners to develop forest management plans.
4. Examine population density standards for forested areas consistent with forestry management practices.
5. Evaluate cluster development to reduce forest fragmentation.
6. Develop a Forest Management Plan for parcels of forest under Town ownership.

Chapter 3

Housing

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

PREVIOUS HOUSING PLANS AND STUDIES

Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan

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

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

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

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

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

Vilas County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The Vilas County Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the County's Land Use Planning Committee and Zoning & Planning Committee, with assistance from the NCWRPC. The plan closely examines the state of housing throughout Vilas County, examining housing issues and qualities such as age of housing units, housing value, housing types, seasonal housing, and general housing characteristics. The identified goal in the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan as pertains to housing is as follows:

- Provide opportunities for a broad range of housing choices that will meet the needs of all residents while maintaining the predominantly rural forested and lakeshore residential character of Vilas County.

HOUSING ASSESSMENT

Housing Type and Tenure

In 2018, the Town of Winchester had approximately 184 occupied housing units, 98.4 percent of which were owner occupied, see Table 10. The Town of Winchester had a significantly higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than Vilas County or the State of Wisconsin as a whole. There were 21.9 percent more owner-occupied homes than in Vilas County and 31.5 percent more than in Wisconsin. The average household size was low at 1.79, even lower than the county (1.96) and significantly lower than the state (2.40). In 29.9 percent of households the householder lived alone and 71.2 percent of households had an individual age 60 or older. The number of households that included someone age 60 or older was significantly greater in the Town of Winchester (71.2%) when compared to the county (53.5%) and the state (39.7%).

	T. Winchester	Vilas County	Wisconsin
Total occupied housing units	196	10,914	2,343,129
Owner occupied units	181	8,354	1,568,040
Renter occupied units	15	2,560	775,089
Average household size	1.79	1.96	2.40
% owner occupied	98.4%	76.5%	66.9%
% householder living alone	29.9%	31.6%	29.2%
% with individuals 60 or over	71.2%	53.5%	39.7%

Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates & Town of Winchester Plan Commission

Seasonal Housing

In the Town of Winchester, a majority of the housing stock is used seasonally. As shown in Table 11, in 2018, 619 of the 877 total housing units were seasonal housing units, for a total of 70.6 percent. This was substantially higher than the statewide average of 7.3 percent. However, it was even notably higher than the Vilas County average of 50.7 percent. The large number of seasonal housing units presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities for the Town. Homeowners of these units typically reside in their homes during summer months only. There is an economic benefit combined with a demand on amenities and infrastructure within a confined time period.

Table 11: Percentage of Seasonal Housing, 2018

	Total Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units	% Seasonal Housing Units
T. Winchester	877	619	70.6%
Vilas County	25,691	13,028	50.7%
Wisconsin	2,681,232	194,810	7.3%

Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Structural Characteristics

Tables 12 and 13 detail the number and percentage of housing units by type. Housing in the Town of Winchester is almost exclusively single-family detached housing. The only exceptions are a small number of attached single family units and mobile homes. Vilas County is also comprised mainly of single family housing, does have some variety in housing types, but to a much smaller degree than the statewide average. One exception is mobile homes, which account for 4.7 percent of Vilas County housing stock, compared to only 3.5 percent throughout the state. There is a need for additional diversity in housing styles within the Town and the county. This would better accommodate those at various income levels and from different economic backgrounds.

Table 12: Housing Units by Structural Type, 2018

	1- Detached	1- Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
T. Winchester	841	1	0	0	0	35	0	877
Vilas County	22,521	218	787	216	705	1,208	36	25,691
Wisconsin	1,785,339	113,291	172,688	99,630	416,560	93,043	681	2,681,232

Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 13: Housing Units by Structural Type (Percentage), 2018

	1- Detached	1- Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
T. Winchester	95.9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4.0%	0%	100%
Vilas County	87.7%	0.8%	3.1%	0.8%	2.7%	4.7%	0.1%	100%
Wisconsin	66.6%	4.2%	6.4%	3.7%	15.5%	3.5%	0%	100%

Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Age Characteristics

The age of a community's housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1960's for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have increased. For example, average homes constructed in the later part of the previous century and the first decade of the millennium are typically much larger than housing built in previous decades. This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Vilas County.

Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Tables and 14 and 15 outline build dates of housing units throughout the Town, county, and state based on 2018 American Community Survey data. The housing in the Town of Winchester is very new. Over 45 percent of the housing was constructed in 1990 or later. This is higher than both Vilas County at 34.2 percent and Wisconsin at 29.5 percent. The greatest increase in the Town was seen from 1990 to 1999, when 236, or 26.9 percent of housing units were constructed. Only 22.1 percent of homes in the Town were built prior to 1960. This is lower than the county at 24.2 percent and the state at 36 percent. The housing stock in the Town is comparatively newer than the county and state.

Table 14: Year Structure Built, 2018

	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 or later
T. Winchester	97	49	48	87	117	78	236	154	11
Vilas County	2,414	1,675	2,131	2,221	5,111	3,333	4,186	4,046	574
Wisconsin	523,371	149,246	293,236	261,113	394,062	266,845	372,967	341,400	78,992

Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 15: Year Structure Built (Percentage), 2018

	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 or later
T. Winchester	11.1%	5.6%	5.5%	9.9%	13.3%	8.9%	26.9%	17.6%	1.3%
Vilas County	9.4%	6.5%	8.3%	8.6%	19.9%	13.0%	16.3%	15.7%	2.2%
Wisconsin	19.5%	5.6%	10.9%	9.7%	14.7%	10.0%	13.9%	12.7%	2.9%

Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Value Characteristics

Table 16 details housing values in owner-occupied homes throughout the Town, county and state. In 2018, the median housing value of \$315,000 in the Town of Winchester was nearly double that of the State of Wisconsin, and it was over 50 percent greater than Vilas County. When compared to the state and county, there are a far greater number of homes valued at \$300,000 and over in the Town of Winchester. In addition, there are also far fewer homes valued under \$200,000 in the Town, when compared to the county and the state.

There is a need for housing availability within a broader range of values. A shortage of workforce housing is a problem throughout Wisconsin. This clearly is a problem throughout the Town of Winchester and Vilas County as well. It would be beneficial for the Town to explore avenues to encourage the construction of housing within a wider range of values.

Table 16: Housing Values Owner Occupied, 2018							
	\$99,999 and under	\$100,000 to \$149,000	\$150,000 to \$199,000	\$200,000 to \$299,000	\$300,000 to \$499,000	\$500,000 or more	Median Value
T. Winchester	3.9%	7.7%	7.2%	27.1%	34.3%	19.9%	\$315,000
Vilas County	16.6%	16.5%	15.3%	21.5%	19.0%	11.1%	\$206,900
Wisconsin	18.5%	20.6%	19.9%	23.1%	13.5%	4.5%	\$173,600

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Summary of Housing Characteristics

The Town of Winchester is regarded as a desirable location for year-round residents, seasonal residents, and seasonal visitors. The Town is abundant with natural resources, recreational opportunities and historic northwoods character. The vast majority of the housing is single-family detached housing. Most year round homes are owner-occupied. Housing is generally newer and much more costly than the county or state on average. There are many housing units that people use on a seasonal basis only.

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

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

Housing Programs

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

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

These grants are administered by the Department of Administration, Division of Housing & Intergovernmental Relations (DHIR). Communities are allowed great latitude in how CDBG funds can be used, including land acquisition, housing rehabilitation, and in certain circumstances new construction, direct assistance to homeowners such as down-payment assistance or revolving loan funds for first-time buyers, concentrated building code enforcement, and planning and administrative expenses. There is a range of programs that can be utilized in the form of CDBG grants to foster affordable housing.

Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Grant or Loan

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

Rural Housing Guaranteed Loan

USDA also offers loans used to help low-income individuals or households purchase homes, construct homes, or secure financing in rural areas.

HUD's FHA Loan

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

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

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

FHA HUD 203(k) Home Rehabilitation Loan Program

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

VA Home Loans

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

HOME Loans

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

North East Wisconsin Community Action Program (NEWCAP)

This is an organization serving twelve counties providing assistance in the area of housing, emergency services, and employment & training among others. In Vilas County the agency provides housing assistance for the Section 8 - housing voucher program and homebuyer and rehabilitation program.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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

Goal: Promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low- and moderate-income housing.

Goal: Maintain and rehabilitate existing housing as appropriate.

Objectives:

1. Direct residential development to areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Work with local builders and developers to encourage and provide a wide range of housing types and styles.

Chapter 4

Utilities and Community Facilities

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

Utilities and community facilities play an important role in the economy and livability of a community.

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

Vilas County All Hazards Mitigation Plan, 2019

This plan examines general conditions, including an inventory of utilities, community facilities, and emergency services throughout Vilas County. Risk assessment is at the heart of the all-hazards mitigation program. In order to mitigate the risks, it is necessary to assess their relative importance. The report looks at a series of mostly weather-related disasters; how they have affected the county in the past and how future instances are likely to affect the county and how local government should respond to such occurrences.

The report concludes with suggested mitigation measures that might be taken by local governments to reduce the risk from identified hazards. Counties and incorporated municipalities are required to adopt such plans with updates every five years.

Vilas County Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP), 2019-2023

The primary purpose of the CORP is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreation needs of Vilas County. This direction takes the form of an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities followed by establishing recommendations to meet identified needs.

Proposed recreational projects listed in the plan within the Town of Winchester include enhancements to Winchester Community Park, improvements to public boat landings, and addition of a bicycle trail to connect Winchester to Presque Isle.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Town Operations

Town Hall

The Town of Winchester's administrative facilities are located at the Winchester Town Hall at 7229 Highway W, Winchester. The Town Hall is used for Town business and monthly Town meetings are held the first Monday at 7:00 p.m.



Winchester Town Hall
Source: winchesterwi.com

The administrative staff for the Town consists of three elected Town Board members (a chair and two supervisors), a Town Clerk, and a Town Treasurer. There is a seven member Plan Commission that meets once per month. There is a six-member Town Library Board and library staff consists of a Library Director and Library Assistant. The Town relies on volunteers to staff the numerous Town-related functions.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement services are provided by the Vilas County Sheriff's Office, located at 330 Court Street, Eagle River. The Vilas County Sheriff's Office utilizes a 911 enhanced system that automatically prints the address and telephone number of the caller onto the dispatch screen. Citizens with hearing and speech impairments can directly reach 911 through a TDD answering service installed into the E911 software.

Fire

The Town of Winchester has a Volunteer Fire Department that services the Town of Winchester. Additionally, all fire departments within Vilas County operate with mutual service agreements, as well as with surrounding counties.

The Town should continue to invest in and maintain fire protection equipment to ensure the protection of the resident's public health and safety as population and housing growth will increase service demands. Fire equipment should be continually updated and replaced, and periodic training

of officers should continue. The Town should also encourage participation in the volunteer fire department so the department continues to meet the needs of the Town.

Emergency Medical Services and Medical Facilities

The Town of Winchester has an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program in conjunction with their Volunteer Fire Department. In addition, they provide ambulance services and have an Ambulance Director.

The Town does not have any medical facilities within the Town proper. The major medical facility providers for the Town of Winchester are: Marshfield Medical Center located 32 miles away in Minocqua, Wisconsin, Howard Young Medical Center, located 30 miles away in Woodruff, Wisconsin, and Aspirus Ironwood Hospital, located 33 miles away in Ironwood, Michigan.

Although the Town is very rural, the medical facilities discussed above currently meet the needs of the Town.

Cemeteries

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

- Winchester Memorial Cemetery – Harris Lake Road



Winchester Memorial Cemetery
Source: winchesterwi.com

Child Care Facilities

There are no licensed child care facilities located within the Town of Winchester.

Education

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Winchester is located within the Lakeland School District. At the elementary level, students from the Town attend North Lakeland Elementary School, located at 12686 County Road

K in Manitowish Waters. The school serves students in grades K4-8, and 160 students were enrolled during the 2019-2020 school year. The original building was constructed in 1969, but has had several additions since that time.

Throughout grades 9 through 12, students attend Lakeland Union High School (LUHS), located at 9573 WI-70 in Minocqua. LUHS had 737 students enrolled during the 2019-2020 school year. The original school building was constructed in 1957 and has had several modification and additions since that time. Both schools are considered to be in excellent condition.

Post-Graduate Education

Nicolet College is the closest option for post-graduate education. Nicolet College is a public two-year technical college located in Rhinelander. They also offer online classes and programs throughout the Nicolet College District which includes the Town of Winchester. In 2017-2018, there were 1,849 total students enrolled. The Nicolet College District covers approximately 4,000 square miles and has a population of about 92,000 people.

Libraries

The Winchester Public Library was opened in 1986, after much work and fundraising led by the Winchester Women’s Civic Club. In 2015, the library moved to its current home, which is the 1910 two room school. In 2015, the two room school underwent an extensive renovation and now houses the library, a community room, and a history display of the Winchester area. The library provides an extensive collection including popular fiction, informational books, audio books, DVD movies, and local newspapers. Additionally, patrons have access to a wealth of resources from library systems throughout the state through interlibrary loan. There are also computers available and Wi-Fi access.



Winchester Library and Community Building
Source: winchesterwi.com

The Winchester library building serves as an “Emergency Warming and Cooling Center” in times of power outages and weather related events. A generator provides power and all are welcome.

Recreation

Winchester Community Park

This park is located on Townsite Road along the Turtle River. The facility includes new picnic tables, two ADA pavilions, basketball and volleyball courts, playground equipment, and ADA fishing pier, and ADA restrooms. One of the pavilions was erected in 2004 by the Town and Winchester Lions. It contains a food prep area with appliances donated by the Lake Association. A sandbox was installed in spring 2008. Future plans for the park include adding a Fireman's game area, an ice skating rink, additional landscaping, additions to the pavilion, and roofed outdoor grill building.

Winchester Memorial Garden

The 75 foot by 100 foot garden is located adjacent to the Community Building and has benches for seating.

Public Boat Landings

The Town owns and maintains boat landings at:

- South Turtle Lake
- Harris Lake
- Birch Lake
- Rock Creek
- Noseeum Lake

Future plans include new boat docks at the three main boat landings (Turtle Lake, Harris Lake and Birch Lake), boat launch improvements including placement of picnic tables, grills, and landscaping improvements. Long-term planning includes additional new docks.

Biking/Hiking Trails

The Presque Isle –Winchester Bike Route is a paved trail that connects the Presque Isle Community Center to the Birch Lake boat landing in the Town of Winchester. Map 4 details the existing and proposed bike routes and trails within the Town.

Additionally, the WinMan Trails are located on CTH W at the intersection of CTH J, in the northwest section of the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest. The trails are available for mountain biking, trail running and hiking in the warm seasons, cross-country skiing (classic and skate), snowshoeing and single-track fat tire biking in winter.



Section of Presque-Isle Bike Route
Source: Vilas County Tourism



Win Man Trails
Source: NCWRPC



Win Man Trails
Source: NCWRPC

UTILITIES

Water Service

The Town of Winchester does not have a public water supply system. Instead, private wells supply the water for public and private facilities within the Town. The Town is not aware of any water problems in the Winchester area that might affect the drinking water supply.

Wastewater

There is no public sewer system in the Town of Winchester. Therefore, all development in the Town uses on-site septic systems that discharge to underground drainage fields and may include: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, or sand filter systems. Wisconsin Administrative Code regulates these on-site wastewater treatment systems.

Solid Waste and Recycling

Refuse collection for the Town of Winchester residents is presently provided by the Town through the transfer station/recycling center on CTH W, next to the Municipal Building. To view current hours of operations visit the Town of Winchester's website. The refuse is transported to the Highway G Landfill in Eagle River.

The Town is a member of the Vilas County Landfill Venture Group, which is an organization of all Vilas County municipalities (sans Land O' Lakes) commissioned to construct and operate the Vilas County Landfill. In 2019, the Wisconsin DNR approved removal of 72 acres of county forest to expand the landfill. This expanded landfill will meet the needs of the Town of Winchester and all other Vilas County communities.

Energy and Telecommunications

Electric and Natural Gas

The power facilities for the Town are provided by Xcel Energy (electrical) and We Energies (natural gas). Three phase power service runs along CTH W from the Town border in the south central portion of the Town, and follows CTH W north to Mud Lake Road. Natural gas lines are located primarily along CTH W north from the southern Town border to CTH O, where they stop at East Rock Lake Road. Gas lines are also located on Old Highway O heading west to Townsite Road, where they run south. Gas and power utility expansion is typically customer driven based on user density.

Cable/Internet

Cable and internet services are provided by a choice of satellite or DSL providers.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Provide a safe and healthy environment to live, work and play.

Objectives:

1. Provide high quality public services (roads, fire and rescue) to meet existing and future demand.

Goal: Enhance and develop year round recreational opportunities in the Town.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the Town's existing parks, beaches and natural resources, and provide for recreation facilities.
2. Maintain existing public access to waterways.

Policies:

1. Annually review the Town's recreational facilities.
2. Monitor state and federal funding programs which could aid in the development and/or acquisition of Town recreational facilities.
3. Recognize the need to accommodate all age groups in recreational pursuits.

Goal: The town will partner with providers to expand affordable and reliable telecommunication and broadband services throughout the town when possible.

Objectives:

1. Identify areas of poor internet access, especially wired broadband, and work with service providers to upgrade service to those areas
2. Identify areas of poor cellular service and work with service providers to upgrade service to those areas
3. Prioritize expansion of broadband to the more densely developed areas of the Town
4. Promote options for other sources to provide high-speed internet connections in areas where fiber extension is less financially feasible

5. Secure grants and other resources to expand broadband in business parks and throughout the community
6. Implement a joint trench use policy to reduce the number of repeated excavations for the installation and maintenance of communications and utilities infrastructure in public rights-of-way
7. Require coordination between road and utility construction projects, and restrict the frequency of road excavations
8. Strive to coordinate better cellular service throughout the Town

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Chapter 5

Transportation

The transportation system includes all state, county and local roads. The local transportation network is an important factor in the safe movement of people and goods, as well as in the physical development of the Town. There is no transit, passenger rail, or water transportation service within the Town's jurisdiction.

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), prepared by NCWRPC, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies three major transportation issues

- **Modes of Transportation to Work:** The Region's workforce is extremely dependent on the automobile. In 2012, over 80 percent of the Region's workforce drove alone to work on a daily basis. Another ten percent carpooled, leaving less than ten percent for the non-automobile methods such as walking, biking, and using transit. The average commute time in Vilas County was 19.6 minutes.
- **Age of Drivers in the Region –** The Region is seeing a change in the number of licensed drivers by age groups. Between 2004 and 2013, the Region saw a 20 percent decrease in the number of drivers 17 and age 19. During the same years, the Region had a 20 percent increase in drivers over age 65. These changes mean communities increasingly need multimodal options for those who are either unable or choose not to drive.
- **Transportation Costs –** It is expensive to maintain the transportation infrastructure in the Region. The current reliance on fuel tax and registration fees is inadequate, unstable, and may soon be outmoded. The inability to fund improvements, and maintenance on transportation infrastructure will impact the ability to transport goods and provide safe, reliable, and efficient roads. Additionally, transportation accounts for a large portion of the average household's budget, and is greatly affected by housing location. Many low income and fixed income families are unable to afford the cost of owning and maintaining vehicles, thereby limiting employment opportunities.

Connections 2030

This is WisDOT's latest long-range, statewide, multimodal transportation plan. It identifies a series of system-level priority corridors that are critical to Wisconsin's travel patterns and the State economy.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2018

This 2018 plan is a regional effort to improve bicycling and walking across communities in north central Wisconsin. The plan, written by NCWRPC, assess existing conditions related to bicycling and walking, identifying other potential trail and route user groups, identifying routes and describing policies and programs to assist local governments in improving bicycling and walking to promote connectivity between communities and destinations throughout the Region.

The Regional Plan recommends on-road bicycle routes running along CTH O, CTH W, and CTH J in the Town of Winchester. It also recommends off-road bicycle routes from the CTH J/CTH W intersection to Papoose Lake and from Papoose Lake to Birch Lake.

Vilas County Countywide Bike/Ped Route & Trail Plan, 2011

The Vilas Area Silent Sports Association (VASSA), in conjunction with the local area trail groups around Vilas County and assistance from NCWRPC, prepared this plan to establish a fresh blueprint for its efforts and the efforts of other agencies and organizations with intersecting trails and routes within Vilas County. The Trails and routes recommended within this plan would connect people to destinations.

The Plan recommends proposed on-road bicycle routes running along CTH O, CTH W, and CTH J (as echoed in the Regional Plan prepared by NCWRPC).

Vilas County Shared Use Trail Study, 2018

The Vilas County Shared Use Trail Study was conducted after shared interest among different trail-user groups in potential routes within Vilas County. The goal of the Vilas County Shared Use Trail Study is to: “Assist government entities, route & trail interest groups and individual trail users within Vilas County in working together to plan, develop and maintain a comprehensive and sustainable route and trail network for diverse outdoor recreation”. Existing and proposed routes for five different trail-uses are identified as part of this study.

ROAD NETWORK

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

The Town of Winchester road network consists of 18.12 miles of county highway, and 43.19 miles of local roads. The Town’s road configuration does not follow the typical rural roadway pattern of primarily north-south and east-west roads. Rather, the abundance of natural features in the Town, including its many lakes, creeks, and forested areas tend to direct roadway patterns.

Jurisdictional and Functional Classification

Public roadways are generally classified by two different systems, the jurisdictional and functional. The jurisdictional class refers to which entity owns the facility and holds responsibility for its operations and maintenance. The road system in the Town of Winchester is composed of two levels of jurisdiction: the Town system encompassing local roads and the county system of trunk highways.

The functional class refers to the role the particular segment plays in moving traffic within the overall system. Each is described in more detail below. The jurisdictional breakdown is shown in Table 17. All road mileage totals listed under the jurisdiction of the Town are submitted to WisDOT for local road funding.

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

- **Principal Arterials** – The principal function is to provide the most efficient movement for relatively large volumes of traffic at increased speeds. Movement to and from other road facilities is limited to controlled interchanges. Regional movement of traffic contributes an increasing portion of the traffic counts.
- **Minor Arterials** – The principal function is to provide efficient traffic movement for larger volumes of traffic. Little or no direct access is strived for with non-local destinations comprising a major portion of the traffic.
- **Major Collectors** – The principal function is to provide an intermediary link between efficient movement of arterials and accessibility of local roadways. They serve to funnel or collect traffic from local roadways to arterials. More efficiency of movement is strived for in favor of accessibility.
- **Minor Collectors** – The principal function is to provide traffic with access to and from property. It is the grass roots classification where accessibility for vehicles and pedestrians is emphasized and efficiency of movement is secondary.
- **Local Roads** – provide direct access to residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

Using the roadway classifications, the Town of Winchester has the service of four major collectors, including CTH W, CTH O, CTH J and CTH K. As illustrated in Map 4, CTH O follows the North Turtle Lake shoreline, and CTH W follows the South Turtle Lake shoreline, dissecting the Town into a western half and eastern half. CTH W provides for larger volumes of traffic moving through the Town. CTH O provides access to and from Michigan. CTH J connects to USH 51 in Iron County. CTH K provides access to towns as far east as Phelps.

In addition to the above named major collectors, there are several local roads located within the Town. As part of their jurisdictional ownership and responsibilities, the Town conducts maintenance, including snowplowing, on all town roads located within its boundaries. Road mileage by jurisdiction for the Town of Winchester is indicated in Table 17.

Jurisdiction	Arterial	Collector	Local	Totals
Federal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
State	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
County	0.00	18.12	0.00	18.12
Town	0.00	0.00	43.19	43.19
Totals	0.00	18.12	43.19	0.00

Source: WisDOT

In addition to these main classifications, a road or segment of road may hold a number of other designations, such as forest road, rustic road, emergency or evacuation route, truck route or bike route. Based on GIS information from Vilas County Mapping and Town verification of road mileage there are about 20 miles of private and other roads included within the transportation system of the Town.

Pavement Conditions

WisDOT requires all local units of government to submit road condition rating data every two years as part of the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) program and WISLR are tools that local governments can use to manage pavements for improved decision making in budgeting and maintenance. Towns can use this information to develop better road budgets and keep track of roads that are in need of repair.

Surface Type	Miles
Unimproved	0.33
Sealcoat or Gravel Road	11.85
Asphalt	30.84
Surface Condition Rating	Miles
Very Poor	0.44
Poor	1.48
Fair	13.02
Good	17.69
Very Good	5.24
Excellent	5.16
Total	43.03

Source: WisDOT 2020

A summary of pavement conditions in the Town of Winchester can be found in Table 18 (note: Road Mileage Total Disparities are due to a difference in WISLR’s inventories of the Town’s functional classifications and road ratings). Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “Fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. Roads that display a surface rating of “Good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. Most Town roads are in relatively good condition, as about 4.5% of roads rate as “Poor” or “Very Poor” and about 95.5% of roads rate as “Fair” or better.

Traffic and Safety

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts are measured and calculated on selected high traffic roads and highways every three-, six-, or ten years (depending upon functional classification) by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). Monitoring these counts provides a way to gauge how traffic volume is changing in the Town of Winchester.

There are several traffic count sites located throughout the Town, with three located along CTH W, one along CTH J, and one along CTH O. Map 4 identifies the site locations with the most current count information for all sites. Table 19 illustrates that traffic levels on CTH W have decreased on the whole, while traffic levels on CTH O and CTH J have increased considerably from 2010 to 2019.

Intersection:	2010	2019	% Change
CTH O at Vilas County Michigan State line	360	450	25.0%
CTH W east of CTH O	840	790	-6.0%
CTH W north of CTH J	1,400	1,300	-7.1%
CTH W north of CTH K	1,300	1,300	0.0%
CTH J east of Iron-Vilas County line	280	350	25.0%

Source: WisDOT

Although some traffic volumes have decreased in the past several years, it remains important to balance planned land use with existing roadway infrastructure. Land use type and intensity has a direct relationship on traffic volumes, with higher density and intensity of land use generally leading to higher traffic volumes. To maximize safety, proposed land use should be considered in conjunction with the existing road network.

Increased traffic volume, congestion concentrated in certain areas, and even the types of vehicles travelling to and from a site can be impacted depending on land use. Mitigation is possible through measures such as creation of new access points, changes in circulation patterns, and general roadway modifications. Uncontrolled division of land tends to affect highways because of the increased intensity, which impairs safety and impedes traffic movements.

As development continues and land use changes, increased cost with maintaining roadway infrastructure must be considered. More traffic requires more maintenance and expansion of the local road system.

Additionally, safety regarding balancing different roadway usage must be considered. The entire road system in the Town of Winchester is open by state law to pedestrian and bicycle travel, although some traffic volumes may make such travel unsafe.

Evacuation Routes

The town should meet with the Vilas County Sherriff's and Emergency Management Offices to discuss a plan for evacuation of residents and visitors in the town. Areas of high population concentration like campgrounds and other high density developments should have plans for efficient evacuations in times of emergencies.

OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Airports

Air services available to the Town of Winchester residents include the facilities in Manitowish Waters, Minocqua, Boulder Junction and Rhinelander. The Manitowish Waters facility is located about five miles from the Town of Winchester. It is classified as a Basic Utility general aviation airport with no scheduled passenger service. The Lakeland Airport/Nobel F. Lee Memorial Field in Minocqua is located about 30 miles south of the Town of Winchester. The airport is categorized as a local general aviation facility and is owned by the Lakeland Airport Commission. There are two paved runways.

The Boulder Junction Airport is located approximately 20 miles from the Town of Winchester. This facility provides facilities for private air transportation. Turf landing strips suitable for small aircraft. The Eagle River Union Airport is located approximately 47 miles southeast of Winchester. This facility provides charter services, and facilities for private and corporate air transportation. There is also a heliport located at the airport that is used for emergency related flights.

The Rhinelander –Oneida County Airport is located approximately 56 miles south of Winchester. The Airport in Rhinelander is the closest airport to Winchester with regular scheduled passenger service. This airport is an air carrier / air cargo airport, which is designed to accommodate virtually all aircraft.

Gogebic – Iron County Airport is located 33 miles north of Winchester. Scheduled passenger service is provided to Chicago (ORD) and Minneapolis (MSP) airports by Air. Fueling and hangers are available at this airport.

ATV/UTV

All-terrain and utility terrain vehicles are becoming increasingly popular. More and more communities are allowing these vehicles on local roadways. The Town Board has the authority to open its roads to these vehicles. A town can designate some or all of its roads. Signage is critical to informing the public which roads are open or closed. In considering this issue the town can examine cost, safety and other impacts to the town. Roads designated as an ATV route are signed where allowed.

Bicycling/Hiking

Map 4 details the existing bicycle trails and routes expanded upon below. Additionally, there are several proposed trails and routes. At present, there are 28 miles of bicycle routes located within the Town of Winchester.

Presque Isle-Winchester Bike Route

The paved trail connects the Presque Isle Community Center with the Birch Lake boat landing in Winchester. The 10.5 mile paved route winds along Old County W Rd and town roads.

Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail

A small portion of the Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail winds through the Town of Winchester. This system offers over 52 miles of paved trails that connect St. Germain to Mercer. The trail winds through the Northern Highland American Legion Forest and along lakes and rivers. Numerous restaurants, campgrounds and resorts are located along the trail.

WinMan Trails

The WinMan Trails are located in the northwest section of the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest within the Town of Winchester in an area known as the Winger Moraines. This is a relatively new trail system, originating in 2011. The trail system is situated on over 1,300 acres and is suited to a variety of recreational activities including mountain biking, trail running, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and single-track fat biking

Bus/Transit

Northwoods Transit Connections (NTC) provides transportation opportunities to residents of Oneida and Vilas Counties. There are five different routes that serve the two counties, with the Eagle Eye Boulder Junction/Manitowish route running closest to the Town of Winchester. The route runs through Eagle River, Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, and Woodruff.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Vilas County provides a Volunteer Transportation Program for any citizen of Vilas County. Older adults (60 and older) and/or those that are disabled (any age) are eligible. Letters are sent out at the end of each month requesting a donation for the number of miles the passenger was transported. Donations are not required for further service. Reservations are needed one day in advance for this door-to-door service that is provided on weekdays and weekends upon request.

Rail

There is no rail service in close proximity to the Town of Winchester. Shipments via rail would have to be trucked from nearby cities with rail access.

Snowmobile

Snowmobiling has been organized in Vilas County for over 50 years. As a result, the system is well established and completely interconnected. There is very little new route planning, and the system is in more of a “maintenance mode”; annually dealing with reroutes around landowner changes or other issues that arise. Additionally, Eagle River is known as the “*Snowmobile Capital of the World*” and hosts the World Championship Snowmobile Derby every January. There are over 623 miles of snowmobile trails throughout Vilas County. The Town of Presque Isle/Winchester SnoBunnies & Manitowish Waters/Sno-Skeeters maintain and provide trail condition information for 50 miles of snowmobile trails located within the Towns of Presque Isle and Winchester. There are 26 miles of snowmobile trails located within the Town of Winchester.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Provide and maintain a safe and reliable Town transportation network.

Objectives:

1. Maintain and review Town road standards for public and private roads.
2. Implement and preserve access controls along all Town roadways (i.e., driveway permits).
3. Develop and maintain a transportation plan to address long-term needs for road upgrades and new roads.
4. Ensure that new roads can connect to future streets on abutting properties, whenever possible.
5. Develop and plan multi-use trails and routes.



Chapter 6

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. Residents of one community often work in another. Similarly, changes in a major industry can impact jobs and growth far beyond the community where the business is physically located.

It is therefore important to understand a local community's economy in light of its regional context. The following section provides an overview of the greater Winchester area economy in terms of key economic sectors and the regional labor force, employment trends, and commuter patterns. Potential economic development opportunities and/or issues regarding the local economy are also identified

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

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2017

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

Regional Livability Plan (RLP), 2015

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

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

ALICE in Wisconsin: A Financial Hardship Study, 2020

This report, developed in part by Northwoods United Way based in Rhinelander, described the households in Vilas County that are above the federal poverty level but still struggle to afford basic household necessities. These households are considered to be “ALICE” (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) households. “ALICE” households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the “household survival budget,” which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many “ALICE” households work in fields that provide vital services, such as retail, health care, child care, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income from these jobs.

- The “ALICE” report shows that in 2016, 38 percent of Town of Winchester households were either below the federal poverty level or are considered to be “ALICE” Households.

Vilas County Comprehensive Plan, 2019

The Vilas County Comprehensive Plan guides county decision-makers on a wide array of issues. Chapter Six of this plan discusses economic development in Vilas County. The Plan establishes the following goals relating to bolstering economic development in the County.

- Encourage a variety of economic development opportunities appropriate to the resources and character of Vilas County.
- Enhance career opportunities and living wage jobs in an economy that is compatible with our natural resources and reflects the needs of the entire community.
- Enhance and diversify the economy consistent with other Vilas County goals and objectives.

WINCHESTER AREA ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

For the Town of Winchester and other communities in Vilas County, much of the economic base is centered around the tourism industry, local service businesses, and other natural resource-based businesses. The lake-rich area is also attractive for seasonal/recreational homes and serves as a major retirement area.

Key Economic Sectors

Location Quotient

Key sectors of a regional economy can be identified by size, by growth or decline in employment, or by a concentration of the industry in a 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 export a product or service from the local community into the national and international economies. 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 a location quotient is equal to 1.0, then the industry has the same share of its area employment as it does nationally. A location quotient exceeding 1.0 indicates an industry with a greater share of the local area employment than the United States. Industries that have a high location quotient and employ large numbers of people reflect both significant size and importance as businesses that export a product or serve and bring new wealth to the region.

Table 20 displays the location quotients and job numbers for all economic sectors in 2020 for zip code 54557, which includes the Towns of Winchester and Presque Isle. Compared to the nation, greater Winchester industries are comprised of ten economic sectors. Accommodation and food service, construction, administration and support including waste management and remediation services, and other services had the highest concentration of employment when compared to the nation as a whole.

NAICS	Economic Sector	Location Quotient	2020 Jobs
72	Accommodation and Food Service	4.44	73
23	Construction	4.28	47
56	Administration and Support/Waste Management and Remediation Services	1.51	18
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1.18	11
90	Government	0.90	25
52	Finance and Insurance	0.85	<10
51	Information	0.68	<10
48	Transportation and Warehousing	0.35	<10
44	Retail Trade	0.21	<10
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	0.07	<10

Source: EMSI 2020 Zip Code 54557

Tourism

Tourism is a major component in Vilas County’s economy, as thousands of visitors travel to the area to take advantage of the over 1,300 lakes, large public forest lands, and diversity of recreational resources. In 2019, Vilas County ranked 17th among the 72 counties in Wisconsin for total traveler expenditures. According to annual estimates prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, travelers to Vilas County spent \$241 million in 2019, up 3.7% from 2018. This level of expenditures is estimated to directly and indirectly support 2,081 full-time equivalent jobs and provide over \$48 million of resident income.

Accommodations such as motels, resorts and other lodging facilities generate an influx of visitors and business to Winchester. According to licensing information from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, a total of 48 rooms are available in Winchester. When these lodging facilities and the Town’s seasonal homes are full during the peak summer visitor season, an estimated 3,211 day and overnight visitors are utilizing services in the Winchester area, adding significantly to the year-round resident population.

ECONOMIC BASE, LABOR FORCE AND FORECASTS

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

Economic Base

Table 21 displays employment by industry sector for both the town and the county in 2000, 2010, and 2018. The top three industry sectors in 2018 for the town are: Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services; Retail Trade; and Education, Health and Social Services. At the county level, the three largest sectors were Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services; Education, Health, and Social Services; and Retail Trade.

In the Town of Winchester, the top three sectors account for 52 percent of total employment in the Town. The top three sectors in Vilas County represent about 50 percent of total employment in the county.

Industry Sector	Town of Winchester			Vilas County		
	2000	2010	2018	2000	2010	2018
Ag, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	4	0	0	231	222	216
Construction	35	21	14	1,107	1,113	980
Manufacturing	15	20	12	643	512	386
Wholesale Trade	7	0	1	264	164	158
Retail Trade	25	28	18	1,457	1,517	1,361
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	8	6	0	324	357	401
Information	4	0	3	145	243	185
Finance and insurance, and real estate rental and leasing	11	10	3	425	633	445
Professional, scientific, and management and administrative and waste management services	3	6	14	489	600	835
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	34	18	17	1,666	1,684	1,577
Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services	34	11	24	1,536	1,791	1,650
Other services, except public administration	8	8	5	521	460	517
Public administration	11	10	3	460	468	471
Totals:	199	138	114	9,268	9,764	9,182

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Commuter data from 2018 indicates that of the 112 workers ages 16 and over that commuted to work, 66 percent of town residents remained in Vilas County for work, and 89 percent remained within the State of Wisconsin for work. The mean travel time to work was 35.6 minutes.

Residential Strengths and Weaknesses

The Town's strengths for attracting and retaining residential development are its lakes and forests. In addition, the Town provides the basic services needed to support residential growth, such as emergency services and roadways. There are a variety of other amenities in the town as well.

The primary weaknesses for attracting or retaining residents are the lack of employment opportunities, a lack of starter houses for young families, and the general distance to more urban areas and their amenities.

Business Strengths and Weaknesses

The Town has several tourism, service and retail businesses, but is lacking an industrial base.

The vast forests and lakes in the town and the surrounding area are strength for the wood industry, as well as recreational and construction businesses. Some weaknesses in attracting or retaining businesses include: lack of a business park, lack of rail access, distance to other industries and markets, and limited high speed Internet throughout the town.

Labor Force

Labor force is a critical component of economic development. Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. In 2018, of the total 309 residents age 16 and over, 117 were in the labor force. Of those in the labor force, 114 were employed, or 97.4 percent. The unemployment rate in 2018 was 2.6 percent in the Town. The overall labor participation rate was 36.9 percent.

In 2018, the remaining 192 residents were considered not in the labor force. This category encompasses a variety of people including students, housewives, retired workers, seasonal workers who are presently off-season, those in institutions, or those doing unpaid family work. In Winchester, most of those not in the labor force are likely retirees.

The labor force was 9,907 in Vilas County in 2018. The labor participation rate was 49.9 percent. Of the 9,907 members of the Vilas County labor force, 9,182 are employed, which represents about 92.7 percent of the County's labor force.

Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2017, all nine jobs within the Winchester Township were filled by workers from outside the Town. In contrast, there were 143 Winchester residents who commuted to locations outside the Town for work during the same period, indicating that the Winchester laborshed extends beyond its municipal boundaries.

In-migration

There are a total of nine in-commuters that live in a variety of locations within Wisconsin and Michigan. They come from locations ranging in distance including Mercer, Sayner, and Wisconsin Rapids in Wisconsin, and Bessemer City, Michigan.

Out-Migration

Town of Winchester residents commuting outside of the Town's boundaries travel across Wisconsin. Like in-commuters, the majority of employed residents work in a wide range of locations. The largest percentage (6.3%) of workers leaving the Town travel to the City of Eagle River and the Town of Boulder Junction, followed by the Town of Lac du Flambeau (5.6%), City of Marshfield (4.9%), and the City of Wausau, where 4.2% of residents travel for work.

Forecasts

Employment forecasts are difficult to come by and not available at the town level. However, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WisDWD) prepares workforce projections by industry for its multi-county services regions. WisDWD compiles industry employment projections by region and Vilas County is part of the North Central WDA along with eight other counties. These projections show increases in all employment sectors except manufacturing, which is expected to decrease at a rate of 1.3 percent. Sectors expected to experience the most significant increases are self-employed and unpaid family workers (28.2%), education and health services (10.9%), and construction (9.6%). Town residents commute to jobs throughout the North Central WDA nine county area included in the forecasts, which includes Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, and Oneida Counties.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Various organizations at the county, regional, and state level offer a variety of programs to assist with commercial and industrial economic development. Many of these programs are listed below:

County

Vilas County Economic Development Corporation

The Vilas County Economic Development Corporation (VCEDC) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, quasi-governmental organization that was established in 2008. The VCEDC helps public, business and nongovernmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation within Vilas County. The overall goal is to *“Connect resources to the various sector partners of Vilas County to improve economic future of the county and the quality of life for all of its residents.”* The VCEDC's mission is to *“Promote innovative leadership and regional infrastructure to: improve the economic well-being of businesses, communities and residents; promote creation and retention of viable businesses and quality jobs; and provide increased opportunities for education strengthening workforce development.”*

Regional

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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

Grow North

Grow North began in 2004 as a private/public 501(c) (6) organization. Grow North serves an eight-county region in northern and northeastern Wisconsin, and includes Vilas County. Grow North is dedicated to economic development throughout the region, and focuses on forestry and wood products, workforce development, and broadband expansion.

State

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

WEDC is the state's primary department for the delivery of integrated services to businesses. Their purpose is to 1) foster retention and creation of new jobs and investment opportunities in Wisconsin; 2) foster and promote economic business, export, and community development.

Wisconsin Small Cities Program

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

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

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

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

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

Other State Programs

Technology Development grants and loans; Customized Labor Training grants and loans; and Major Economic Development Project grants and loans.

Federal

U.S. Dept. of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA)

EDA offers a public works grant program. These are administered through designated economic development district's and local governments for the benefit of the local economy and, indirectly, private enterprise.

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

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

Small Business Administration (SBA)

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

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Maintain, enhance and diversify the local economy consistent with other community goals and objectives.

Objectives:

1. Support business and industrial development which strengthens and diversifies the economic base; creates family wage jobs; develops and operates in a manner that protects the environment; and uses our natural resources efficiently.
2. Accommodate home-based businesses which do not significantly increase traffic, noise, odor, or detract from the rural character of the surrounding area.
3. Work with and coordinate economic development activities with the Town of Winchester Board.

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Chapter 7

Land Use

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

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

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

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

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

Vilas County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2013

The purpose of this plan is to guide and manage growth and development of land use in a manner that will preserve the rural character, protect the agricultural base and natural resources, and contribute to the safety, health and prosperity of Vilas County's communities. The Farmland Preservation Plan identifies farmland preservation areas for towns throughout the County.

Vilas County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

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

Town of Winchester Comprehensive Plan, 2001

The Winchester Comprehensive Plan is a policy plan that was created in 2001. The Plan describes existing and future land uses, and regulatory tools for land use. The overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide consistency among official mapping, zoning and subdivision ordinances, local plans, and other implementation tools.

EXISTING LAND USE

The Town of Winchester covers an area of about 34,631 acres in Vilas County. The Town is bounded by the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to the north, Iron County to the west, the Town of Manitowish Waters to the south and Town of Presque Isle to the east.

Knowledge of the existing land use patterns within a town is necessary to develop a desired “future” land use pattern. The Existing Land Use Map was developed using air photos from a countywide flight in 2015, with updates by the locals. Ten basic categories were used to classify the various existing land uses. These are: Agriculture, Commercial, Governmental, Industrial, Open Lands, Outdoor Recreation, Residential, Transportation, Water, and Woodlands.

Existing Land Use Map

The intent of an existing land use map is to provide a general snap shot as to the existing uses of land within the Town for planning purposes. The map shows only the dominant or primary use. Obviously, many parcels would have a house (residential), but also could have a business use (commercial) or farming (agricultural) uses. Map 6 outlines the existing land use pattern throughout the Town.

Table 22 presents the current breakdown of land-use types within the Town. The majority of the Town is woodlands, consisting of 27,983 acres, or 80.8 percent of the Town. The next most significant land use type is surface water, accounting for 3,615 acres, or 10.4 percent of the Town.

Land Use Classification	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	24	0.1%
Commercial	61	0.2%
Governmental/Institutional	40	0.1%
Industrial	174	0.5%
Open Lands	44	0.1%
Outdoor Recreation	4	0.0%
Residential	2,410	7.0%
Transportation	275	0.8%
Woodlands	27,983	80.8%
Water	3,615	10.4%
Total Acres	34,631	100.0%

Source: NCWRPC GIS

This data enforces the fact that the character and development of the Town of Winchester is closely tied to its natural resource base. As discussed in the Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources Chapter, publicly owned lands and lands used as industrial forest contribute heavily to this scenario.

The lakeshore areas on the Town’s larger lakes are nearly completely developed with both seasonal and permanent single-family residential. Residential properties account for 2,410 acres, or 7 percent, within the Town. There is strip commercial development along CTH W and Townsite Road. A large percentage of the

existing commercial uses are home-based businesses, or structures that support both a primary residence and a business. Commercial properties account for only 61 acres total, or 0.2 percent of the Town.

Public Lands

Approximately 24 percent of the total land area of the Town of Winchester is state land, comprising 7,491 acres. There is under one acre of federal land within the Town and 13.6 acres of Vilas County acreage. In addition, there are 165 Town-owned acres.

Land Supply and Demand

As shown by the existing land use inventory, the majority of the Town is “undeveloped” woodlands, so the supply of land “available” for development appears to be adequate. Nevertheless, even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of Winchester is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years for all use categories.

Land Values

Table 23 displays the assessed land values in the Town of Winchester. It is important to note that lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law programs and other exempt lands (such as the State lands) are not included in values for Table 23. In 2020, the assessed value of land (not including improvements) was \$151,650,100. Overall, land value per acre in the Town is valued at about \$9,638 per acre based on assessed land values from the Vilas County tax information.

Table 23: Assessed Land Value (per acre), 2020			
Land Classification	Total Value of Land	Percentage	Average Value per Acre
Residential	\$133,945,600	9.8%	\$22,324
Commercial	\$728,000	0.4%	\$15,489
Forest	\$16,976,500	10.4%	\$1,752
Total	\$151,650,100	100.0%	\$9,638

Source: Vilas County Tax Roll and Town of Winchester

Properties assessed as “Residential” had the highest value per acre followed by those assessed “Commercial”. Because of the high demand for lake front property and few available vacant on-water parcels the land value per acres is much higher than off-water residential assessed values of land.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

There are few sites within the Town available for redevelopment. Limited opportunities exist for redevelopment such as converting older residential properties within the Town to commercial businesses, public buildings, museums or non-profit entities. There are also a few commercial properties that may have the potential to serve in another capacity. See the Environmentally Remediated Areas section within the Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources Chapter.

Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Any plan should seek to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned-use buffers, and public information and education components. In order to attain that outcome, it is important to identify the existing or potential conflicts between land uses in the Town.

An example could be an auto salvage yard in proximity to a recreational or natural area, or a home business/occupational, commercial-type use in a single family area that has outgrown its roots. In the other direction, an example of compatible land use could be residential development in association with wooded recreational lands or vacant open space areas. Obviously, with the constraints of existing development and limiting factors on future growth, the most desirable situations are not always possible. What should be strived for is an awareness of incompatible land uses and an effort to alleviate or avoid them where possible.

Home-based businesses are becoming more popular as the workforce is disseminated from the office environment and more people with entrepreneurial spirit are exploring self-employment from their homes. Professional disciplines can be networked to the home office with internet services and overnight mail. This technology is changing the way people work and do business. As a growing home-based business expands it could have the potential to become disruptive to surrounding communities.

FUTURE LAND USE

The primary purpose of the Future Land Use Map is to serve as a flexible guide for local officials to coordinate and manage future development of the community. Since planning is an ever-evolving process, the Town of Winchester Comprehensive Plan 2021 should be viewed as a guide to assist in the town's decision-making process. The plan will have to be reevaluated and adjusted from time to time in accordance with changing trends and conditions. The plan should not be viewed as a rigid document cast in stone, but rather as a flexible guide adaptable to the dynamic conditions and opportunities occurring within the town.

Land Use Map Classifications

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

1. Lake Shore Residential

This land use class was created to maintain the lake shoreline areas with high quality single family residences. Densities would be regulated within the Vilas County Lakes Classification System, and be subject to county shoreland zoning restrictions. Backlot properties (lots which do not front on a navigable body of water or which do not have 50 percent or more of their total area within 200 feet of a navigable body of water) within the classification should have a minimum 1.5 acre lot size. The occurrence of existing commercial uses within the classification are acknowledged and will continue; however, new commercial uses should be limited to protect the property values and character of existing residential uses. New resorts or bed and breakfast establishments are not preferred as the primary use and therefore could be subject to a Town of Winchester conditional use permit process.

2. Rural Residential

The rural residential classification is designed to provide for low-density, single family residences located in natural forested, rural settings. Individual parcels should be 5.0 acres or larger in size. The rural residential classification is intended to be primarily residential but should also conditionally allow limited commercial uses. On-water properties would be allowed to develop residentially at higher densities in accordance with Vilas County shoreland regulations. Cluster development is encouraged through allowing slightly higher densities in exchange for deed restrictions maintaining the remaining area as forest land. All town roads not otherwise classified include a 500 foot (plus or minus) rural residential buffer either side of the road centerline. Additional areas classified as rural residential include lands that were previously platted, had similar lot sizes, or were located spatially in areas that precluded use of a different classification. The objective of this classification is to identify residential areas that are served by the existing town road network, thereby maximizing public roadway investments while facilitating low density, small town character.

3. Rural Mixed Use

The rural mixed use classification is designed to provide for a variety of mixed residential and commercial uses located in rural, natural forested settings. Individual parcels should remain 5.0 acres or larger in size, and require access to a public road. The classification is limited to five areas in the town: sections of CTH W, a portion of Papoose Lake Road, a parcel on Harris Lake Road, and the old Town Site area. The classification is generally designed to be a depth of 500' from the road centerline for areas that possess existing or planned mixed uses. A minimum of 300' frontage could be required on the public road. Numerous commercial and residential uses could be allowed within the classification (Appendix 12-1). Multi-family development could also be allowed and would require the 5.0 acre lot size minimum to increase proportionately 2.0 acres for each additional unit included in the development.

4. Forestry and Recreation

The primary intent of this classification is to encourage the continuation of large tracts of forested areas which are managed to produce forest products and/or maintained in wooded use, in concert with preserving biological and wildlife habitat. Uses may occur within the classification that include active forestry and silver culture or recreational uses such as hunting and snowmobiling. that typically occur on larger tracts of land. Residential uses and limited commercial uses are permitted with new lots and land divisions having to maintain a 10 acre minimum size.

5. Commercial

This classification is designed specifically for CTH W extending approximately from the intersection of CTH J and CTH W on the south to the intersection of Chicago Avenue and CTH W on the north. This class is designed to accommodate both existing and future commercial uses that require road access with limited weight restrictions, 3-phase power, and gas service. The classification also allows for and acknowledges the existing residential development. Residential uses are allowed but are not the primary intent of the land use within the CTH W commercial corridor. Commercial uses could be mixed between highway (tourist dependent) and community service. Commercial development could promote a northwoods character theme, and may be regulated by design review standards to regulate building size and appearance. Density of development along the corridor could have a minimum 3.5 acre lot size with minimum frontage of 200' on CTH W. Light industrial uses could require a conditional use permit.

6. Cluster Commercial

This classification is designed for clustered commercial use for two areas along CTH W. The south cluster area extends from the south town line approximately to the CTH J intersection. The north cluster area extends from Chicago Avenue on the south to Old "O" on the north. The current land use is varied with intermixed commercial and residential uses, with some forested and undeveloped areas. The preferred land use is both new and existing commercial uses and single-family residential. Single-family uses are permitted but are not the primary intent of the classification. Minimum lot size would be 1.5 acres. The intent of clustering on CTH W is to promote infill of commercial uses between existing development and accommodate a diversity of uses while discouraging highway strip-type development through access restriction and design review standards. Restricted highway access would also address vehicle safety with high traffic speeds in the area.

7. Conservancy

This classification is intended to promote land conservation and preservation of natural features, unique landscapes, woodlands, and open spaces on lands designated or used for resource conservation. This classification does not include lands in public ownership; only lands in a non-profit conservation association or other designated management group are included. Wetlands as designated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are also important environmental features and contribute significantly to the rural character, environmental protection, and preservation of open space. Wetlands are also to be considered conservation management tools and no development shall occur within these areas. Wetlands are not included as conservancy as lands can only be designated conservancy through private landowner request. To the extent that development may be permitted in upland areas through the prevailing zoning, it is recommended no development occur within the classification to preserve lands in their natural state. This

classification could allow conservancy-related development such as an interpretive or nature center; the intent to facilitate access and/or promote education, conservation, and the continuance of the property's natural, undeveloped state. Landowner participation in the classification would be voluntary, with inclusion of lands predicated upon landowner request.

8. Forestry Preserve

The intent of the Forest Preserve classification is to maintain and preserve large forestry tracts while still allowing the landowner limited development potential. This classification would permit limited forestry activities and very low density single-family dwellings, with a preferred density of one residential unit per 40 acres, with a maximum buildable area of 1.5 acres within the 40 acre parcel. Landowner participation in the classification would be voluntary, with inclusion of lands predicated upon landowner request. Because the classification intent is to preserve large tracts of forested lands and minimize development, land preservation could be accomplished through deed restrictions thereby limiting parcel splits and perpetuating the forest use.

9. Parks

This classification is designed to allow for the continuation and use of park land and recreational activities in the town. There are no minimum lot size or area restrictions for park use.

10. Government/Institutional

This classification identifies the current location of the municipal building, community building/library, town garage, and recycling center. Essential emergency response resources are provided at the Municipal Building site. The town has discussed in the recent past consolidating the library and other municipal services at one location, possibly the current Municipal Building on CTH W. The existing building arrangement is expected to continue as mapped.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Plan Map represents the desired arrangement of preferred land uses for the future. See the Future Land Use Map. The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. The Future Land Use Map is general in nature and was developed as a general guide for future development in the county. Although general, the future land use plan map indicated appropriate future land uses, and as a result shows where rezoning may occur. In many areas the existing zoning districts already reflect the desired future land uses; while in other areas, zoning map or text changes may be required to meet some of the desired future land uses.

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

One of the goals of this land use plan is to balance individual private property rights with the Town's need to protect property values community-wide, minimize the conflicts between land uses and keep the cost of local government as low as possible. An essential characteristic of any planning program is that it be ongoing and flexible. Periodic updates to the plan are needed to maintain that it is reflective of current trends.

LAND USE PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

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

Zoning

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

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

A county may promulgate a zoning ordinance as described above for the unincorporated areas of the county, that is, outside the corporate boundaries of cities and villages, but it is only effective if a town adopts it for application to its jurisdiction, which the Town of Winchester has done. The Town of Winchester has indicated the preferred zoning option is to continue to be under the county ordinance. In the absence of a county zoning ordinance, towns can adopt their own zoning ordinances, but if there is a county ordinance in place and a town wants to adopt zoning, it must adopt the county ordinance, or have the county approve a separate ordinance for that town. Any ordinance, ordinance revision, or amendment to a "town" zoning ordinance under these conditions must first be approved by the county before it may become effective.

Shoreland Zoning

All counties are mandated by Wisconsin law 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 the town ordinance is more restrictive. The Town of Winchester is regulated by the Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, which regulates minimum lot size and water access for shorelands. 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. The Town of Winchester has adopted a Town-wide 200 foot minimum frontage requirement for shoreland properties, which is more restrictive than Vilas County.

Land Division

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

Of all the land use control devices available, subdivision regulation has probably the greatest potential. When compared with zoning, well-administered subdivision control is more useful in achieving planning goals and its influence is far more lasting. Once land is divided into lots and streets are laid out, development patterns are set. Subdivision regulations can ensure that those development patterns are consistent with community standards. Subdivision regulations can also ensure the adequacy of existing and planned public facilities such as schools, wastewater treatment systems, water supply, to handle new growth. Finally subdivision regulation can help ensure the creation and preservation of adequate land records.

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

A town land division code can provide the town the means to review and regulate new divisions of land to ensure consistency with the vision, goals, objectives, land protection criteria, and other recommendations of an adopted plan. The ordinance would require administration and enforcement by the town. Therefore, local control of divisions of land would require town funding. It also adds a layer of government involved in regulating proposals for land divisions.

The Town of Winchester does not have a land division ordinance at this time and relies exclusively on the Vilas County Zoning and Shoreland Protection Ordinance for land use control. This arrangement has some obvious benefits like full-time, professional administration and enforcement. However, drawbacks include zoning district and permitted uses that may not always match the Town's goals. The Town may adopt their own ordinances, but these ordinances would require local administration.

Lake Associations

Several Lake Associations exist for different lakes within the Town of Winchester. These associations aim to improve, protect and preserve their representative precious water resources by promoting proper lakefront management practices, conducting weed harvesting, and obtaining funds to complete lake studies/lake management plans, and related activities.

- Birch Lake Association
- Harris Lake Association
- Papoose/Rosalind Lake Association
- Turtle Lakes Chain Association

Additionally, the Town has a Town Lakes Committee that includes representative from several area lakes as well as a Town Board Liaison, the Vilas County Invasive Species Coordinator, North Lakeland Discovery Center Water Program Coordinator, and a Committee Chair. The Town Lakes Committee addresses a variety of lake related issues including water quality, invasive species, boat landings, and shoreline erosion.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Provide for a well-balanced mix of residential, business, recreational and forestry uses to serve the future needs of the community and to maintain the Town as a desirable place to live.

Objectives:

1. Complete a land use inventory on the location, amount and type of developed and vacant residential, commercial, industrial, and forestry lands, among others.
2. Designate and maintain suitable lands for future residential, commercial, forestry, and recreational uses in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and public input.
3. Encourage development in areas currently served by public utilities, roads, parks, schools, and other key services.
4. Limit the location of commercial development not associated with the CTH W corridor to areas with existing commercial development or areas which could accommodate necessary convenience-type services.
5. Cluster business, commercial, and light industrial development along CTH W.
6. Ensure that the development patterns provide for a diversity of lot sizes to support various rural lifestyles.
7. Explore the establishment of a Town of Winchester Land Division Ordinance (minimum standards for land divisions) tailored to implementation of Map 7 Future Land Use Map.
8. Develop an ordinance that regulates nuisances and aesthetic standards as identified by the Town.
9. Develop a home-occupation ordinance that addresses home based businesses: definition, location, appropriate uses, signage, outdoor storage, noise, employees, lighting, buffering, etc.

Goal: Retain and preserve the Town of Winchester’s rural character and related quality of life.

Objectives:

1. Manage and direct Town growth to ensure that the primary use of land in the Town relates to rural residential, lakeshore, recreational, and forestry lifestyles. Other uses may be considered, provided they are not incompatible with the primary use of those areas.
2. Continue to monitor and maintain Town of Winchester sign ordinance.
3. Develop Town of Winchester “Identity” signage and other methods of to increase the Town’s aesthetic, vitality and appeal.
4. Manage growth to ensure that it fits within the character of the Town as well as the specific location in which the development is proposed.
5. Direct new development within or adjacent to existing development.
6. Maintain natural buffers where they exist, and require native tree planting or tree replacement in areas without natural buffers to minimize the potential of land use conflicts.
7. Follow the Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to protect lakes within the town.

Chapter 8

Intergovernmental Cooperation

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

OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

- Local government’s financial situation;

- Opportunity to reduce costs by working together;
- Elimination of duplication of services;
- Population settlement patterns and population mobility; and
- Economic and environmental interdependence.

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

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

School Districts

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Winchester is located within the Lakeland School District, but the Wisconsin Open Enrollment program allows children to attend other nearby school districts, provided that the district has the necessary space to accept the student. The elementary school that serves Town of Winchester students is located in the Town of Manitowish Waters, and the high school is in the Town of Minocqua. Additionally, there are several private schools located within driving distance.

Post-Graduate Education

Nicolet College is the closest option for post-graduate education. Nicolet College is a public two-year technical college located in Rhinelander. They also offer online classes and programs throughout the Nicolet College District which includes the Town of Winchester.

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

Adjoining Units of Government

The Town of Winchester is bordered by the Towns of Presque Isle (Vilas County) to the east, Manitowish Waters (Vilas County) to the south, Iron County to the west, and the State of Michigan to the north.

The Town of Winchester Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services throughout the town. They also provide ambulance services throughout the Town.

Vilas County

Vilas County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to the Town and the Town enjoys a good working relationship with many of the responsible departments. These departments include Finance, Highway, Sheriff Office, Forestry, Land Records, and Zoning. County Finance collects local property tax for the Town. The County Sheriff provides protective services through periodic patrols and on-call 911 responses. The Sheriff also manages the 911-dispatch center, not only for law protection, but also for ambulance/EMS response and dispatching the local Fire Departments.

The Forestry and Outdoor Recreation Department maintains a county-wide park system and county forest system for the use and enjoyment of all residents including the Town of Winchester.

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

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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

State and Federal Government

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

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

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

EXISTING OR POTENTIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICTS

No existing or potential intergovernmental conflicts were identified in the Town of Winchester. The process for resolving any conflicts will in part be a continuation of past practices as new mechanisms evolve. The Town will continue to meet with surrounding towns when significant issues of mutual concern arise.

PROGRAMS

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

This section outlines the steps to implement the goals, objectives, and policies contained in the comprehensive plan. These steps are:

1. The Plan Commission should pass a resolution recommending adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The Town Board should hold a public hearing and adopt the plan by ordinance and use it as a guide for decision-making.
3. The Plan Commission should become knowledgeable of the plan and use it to justify recommendations to the Town Board on development issues.
4. The Town's staff should incorporate the goals, objectives and policies of the plan into annual work plans and budgets.
5. The Town should encourage citizen awareness of the plan. It is also important that developers are aware of the plan. An initial step would be to have the document hosted on the Town website.
6. The Town should provide copies of the plan to the surrounding communities and Vilas County.
7. The Plan Commission should review the Future Land Use Map at least annually and make necessary amendment recommendations to the Town Board.
8. The Town should establish a formal review process and review the plan at least every five years, and update the plan at least every ten years.
9. The Town should work closely with Vilas County Zoning.
10. The Town should work closely with the Wisconsin Towns Association to promote positive changes to state laws and programs which present opportunities for the Town to implement goals and objectives.
11. Monitor and report on the effectiveness and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and amend/revise when appropriate.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Seek to establish mutually beneficial intergovernmental relations with other units of government.

Objectives:

1. Coordinate and communicate land use planning activities with neighboring towns, Vilas County, and any applicable state and federal agencies to realize individual and shared visions, goals and objectives; to address regional issues that cross political boundaries and jurisdictions; to ensure efficient use of Town resources; and to provide for increased certainty between all levels of government, development and landowners.
2. Coordinate land and water conservation with appropriate resource agencies and private conservation organizations to take advantage of both technical and financial assistance, to promote consistency in preservation and stewardship efforts, to facilitate information exchanges, and to avoid duplication of efforts.

Chapter 9

Implementation

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

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

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

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

The State planning law requires certain programs and/or actions that affect land use must be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan. To meet this requirement, the Town of Winchester should evaluate and update related regulations and ordinances after the adoption of the comprehensive plan update.

Zoning Ordinance and Map

The Town of Winchester relies upon Vilas County for zoning administration. Therefore the Vilas County Zoning Ordinance and Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance are the pervading documents with regard to Town land use regulation. Zoning is used to manage and control how land is used and developed. Zoning ordinances typically establish detailed regulations concerning how land may be developed, including setbacks, the density or intensity of development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose of zoning is to minimize undesirable externalities from development by segregating and/or buffering incompatible uses and

by maintaining standards that ensure development will not negatively impact the community's character or environment. The zoning ordinance also controls the scale and form of development, which heavily influences how people will interact with their environment and their neighbors.

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

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

Subdivision (Land Division) Ordinance

The Town of Winchester does not have a land division ordinance at this time and relies exclusively on the Vilas County Zoning and Shoreland Protection Ordinance for land use control. Subdivision regulations are an important tool ensuring the orderly development of unplatted and/or undeveloped land. These regulations may regulate lot sizes, road access, street design, public utilities, storm water drainage, parks and open space, and other improvements necessary to ensure that new development will be a public asset.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

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

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

A CIP is simply a method of planning for and scheduling expenditures for public improvements over a period of several years 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 among the town board, plan commission, staff, and citizen commissions. The preparation of a capital improvement program may vary from community to community depending on local preferences, the local form of government and available staff. The proposed capital improvement plan should be reviewed in light of the priorities outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Annual Operating Budget

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

Brownfield Redevelopment

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

CONSISTENCY AMONG PLAN CHAPTERS

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

PLAN ADOPTION, AMENDMENTS, UPDATES, AND MONITORING

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

Plan Adoption

The first step in implementing this plan involves adoption of the plan by local officials. The formal review and adoption process involves plan review by the Plan Commission (or other planning committee) who must adopt the plan by resolution of majority vote. The Plan Commission recommendation is forwarded to the Town Board who must adopt the plan by ordinance (of

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

Plan Amendments

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

The following criteria shall be considered when reviewing plan amendments:

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

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

Plan Updates

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

Plan Monitoring

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

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

This plan should be evaluated at least every 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.

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Maps

Map 1

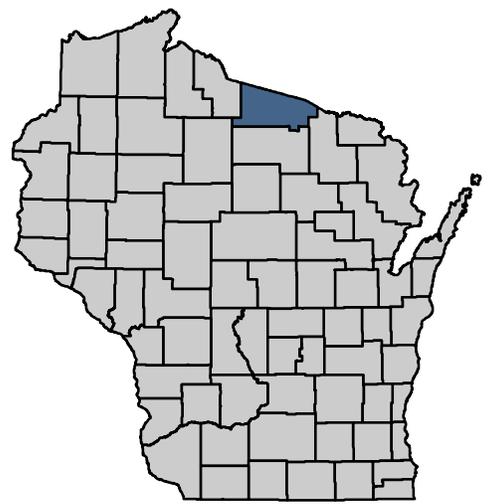
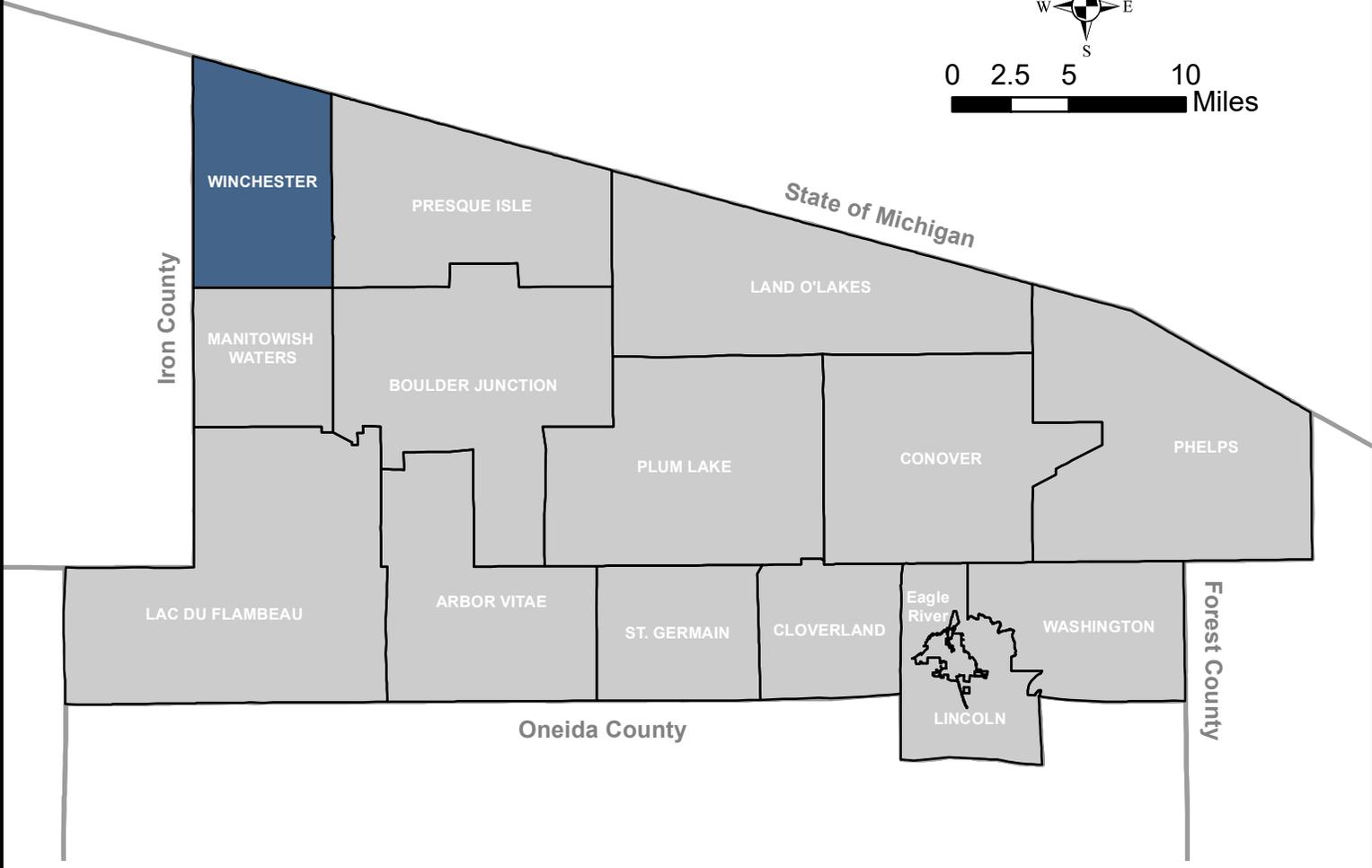
Town of Winchester

Locational Reference

Vilas County, Wisconsin



0 2.5 5 10 Miles



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

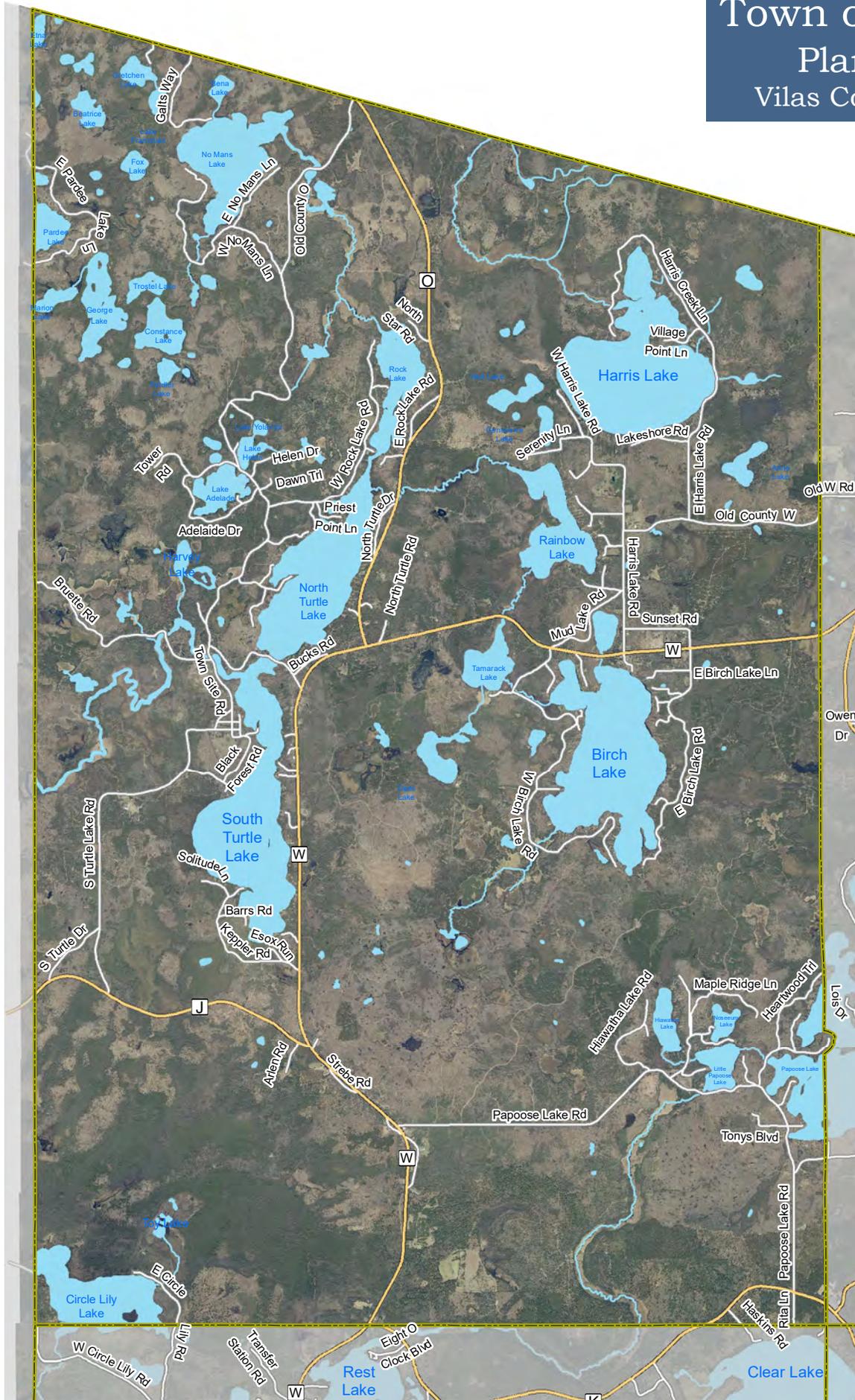
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 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Map 2

Town of Winchester

Planning Area

Vilas County, Wisconsin



Legend

-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  County Highways
-  Roads
-  Water



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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Map 3

Town of Winchester

Natural Resources

Vilas County, Wisconsin



Legend

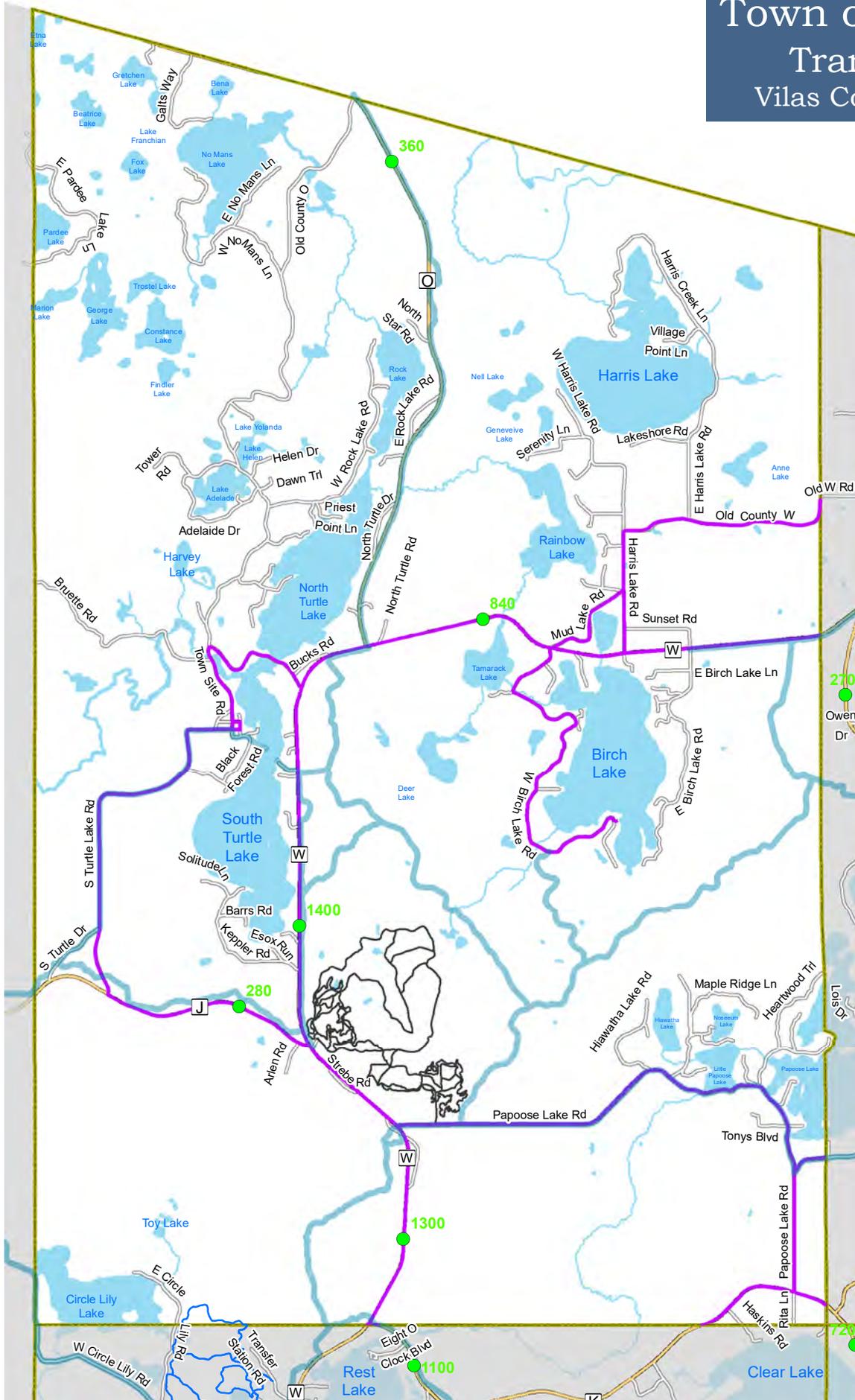
- Minor Civil Divisions
- County Highways
- Roads
- Water
- Non-Metallic Mines
- Watersheds
- Wetlands
- Floodplain



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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Map 4 Town of Winchester Transportation Vilas County, Wisconsin

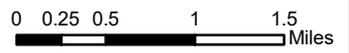


Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- County Highways
- Roads
- Water
- Average Daily Traffic Count (ADT) 2019

Recreation Trails

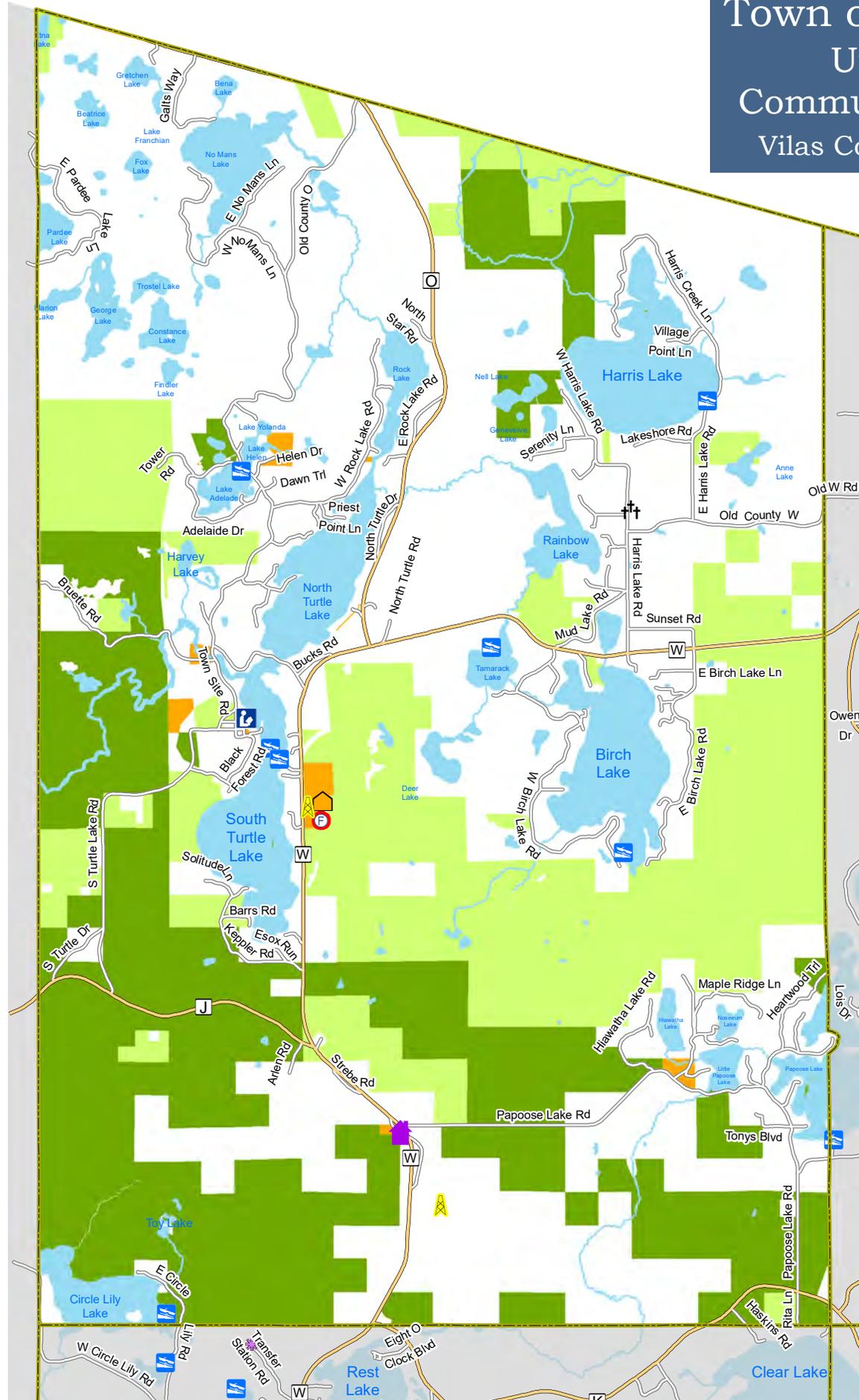
- Other Recreation Trails
- Snowmobile Trails
- Bike Routes
- WinMan Trails



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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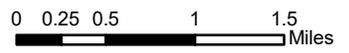
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Map 5 Town of Winchester Utilities & Community Facilities Vilas County, Wisconsin



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- County Highways
- Roads
- Water
- Boat Launch
- Communication Tower
- Cemetery
- Town Garage
- Fire Station
- Library
- Lookout Tower
- Transfer Station
- Town Hall
- Managed Forest Lands
- State Lands
- Town Lands



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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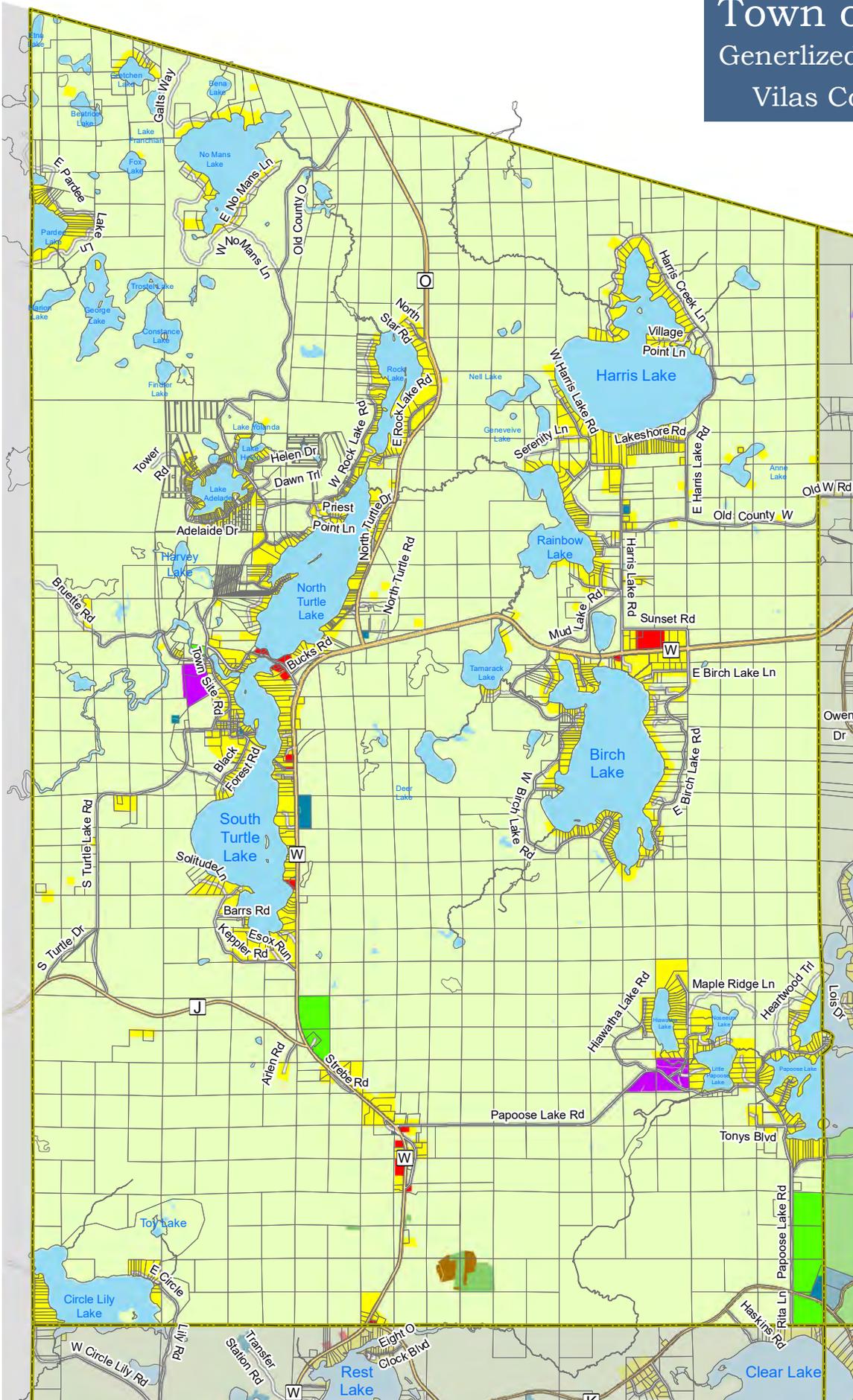
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Map 6

Town of Winchester

Generalized Existing Land Use

Vilas County, Wisconsin



- ### Legend
- Minor Civil Divisions
 - County Highways
 - Roads
 - Agriculture
 - Commercial
 - Governmental / Institutional
 - Industrial
 - Open Lands
 - Outdoor Recreation
 - Residential
 - Woodlands
 - Water
 - Parcels



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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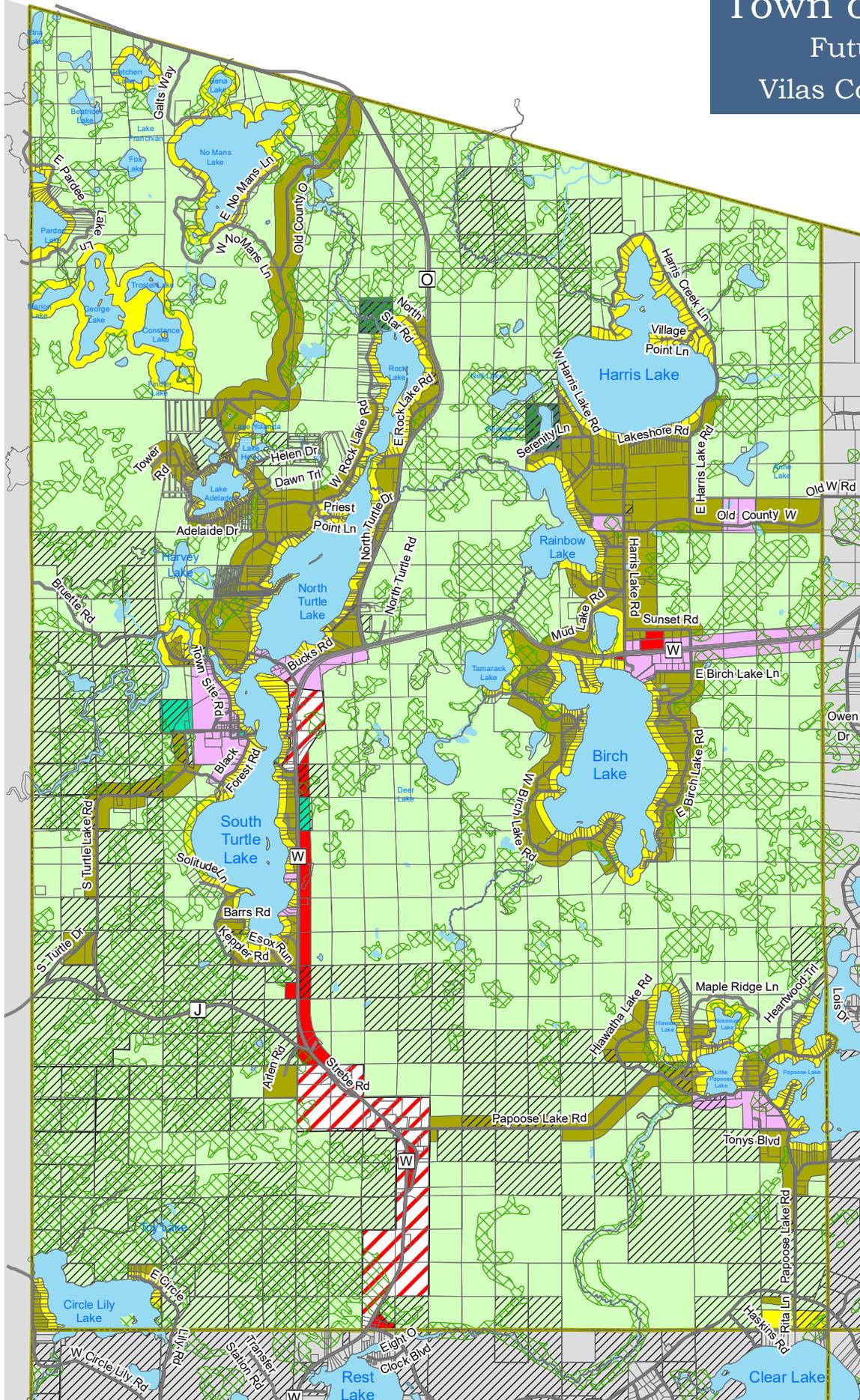
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Map 7

Town of Winchester

Future Land Use

Vilas County, Wisconsin



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Public Lands
- Parcels
- Wetlands
- Cluster Commercial
- Commercial
- Conservancy
- Forestry
- Governmental
- Mixed Use
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Transportation



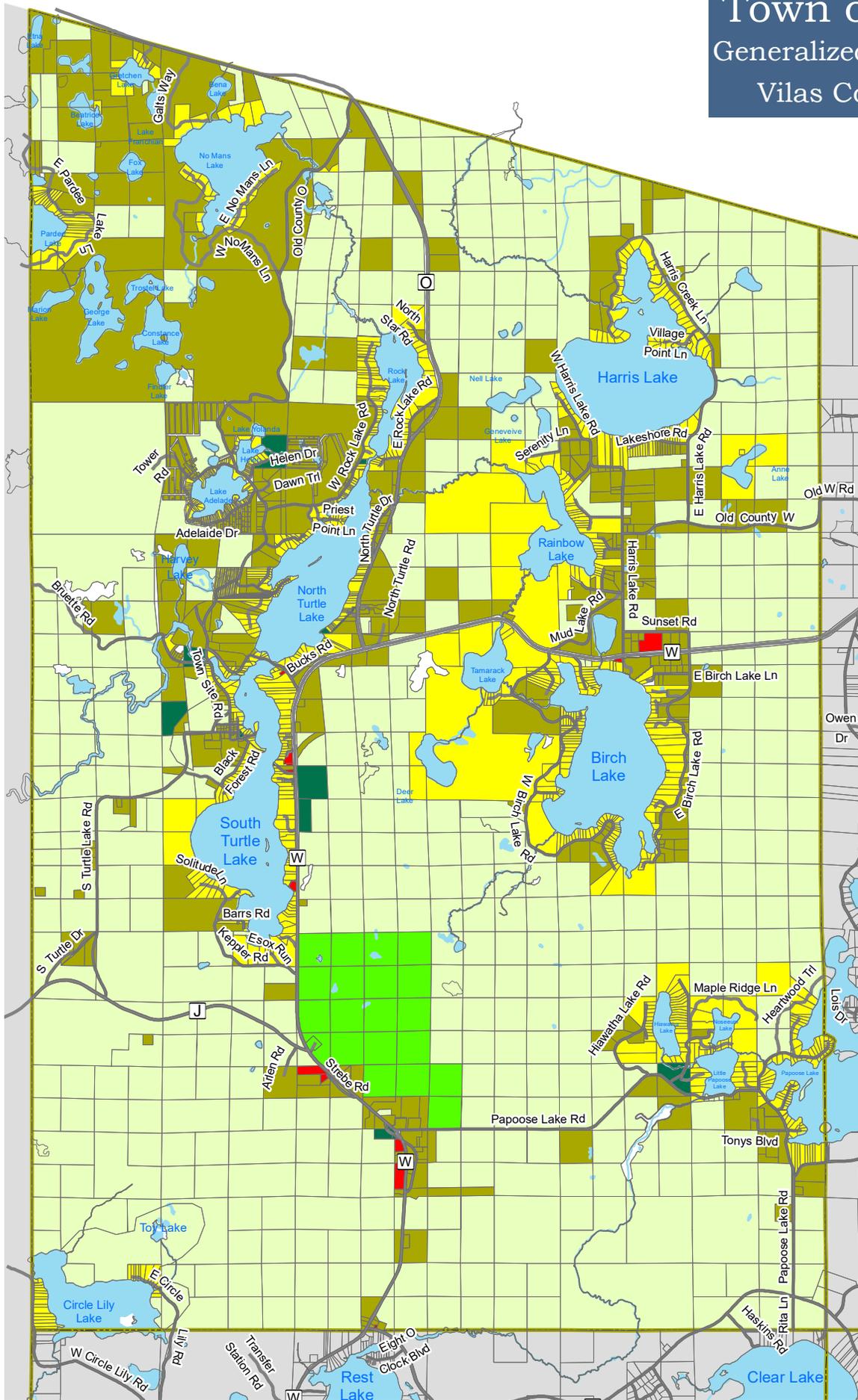
Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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Town of Winchester

Generalized Parcel Assessment

Vilas County, Wisconsin



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Parcels
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Waterfront Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Industrial
- Governmental/Publi...
- Agricultural Areas
- Forestry Areas
- Transportation Corridors
- Outdoor Recreation
- Water



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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Appendix A

Public Participation Plan

Town of Winchester Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The Town of Winchester 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.

Appendix B

Adoption Resolution

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #2021-01

Town of Winchester, Vilas County, Wisconsin

The Planning Commission of the Town of Winchester, Vilas county, Wisconsin, by this resolution, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and by a roll call vote of a majority of the town Planning Commission present and voting resolves and recommends to the town board of the Town of Winchester as follows:

Adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan

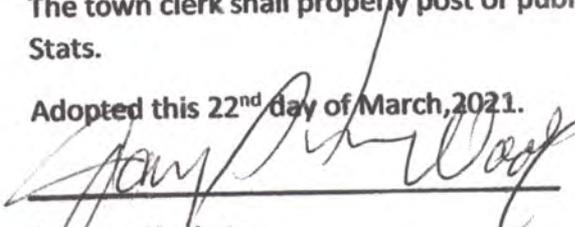
The Town of Winchester Planning Commission, by this resolution, further resolves and orders as follows:

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

The vote of the town Planning Commission in regard to this resolution shall be recorded by the minute-taker of the town Planning Commission in the official minutes of the Town of Winchester Planning Commission.

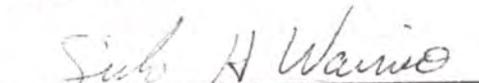
The town clerk shall properly post or publish this resolution as required under s.60.80, Wis. Stats.

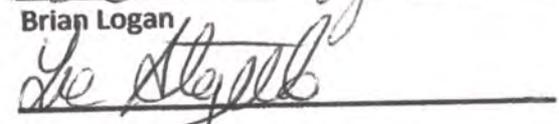
Adopted this 22nd day of March, 2021.

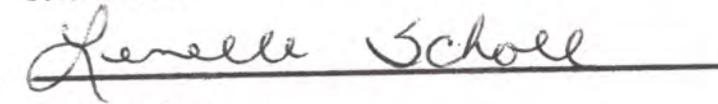

Jay Woolf, Chair

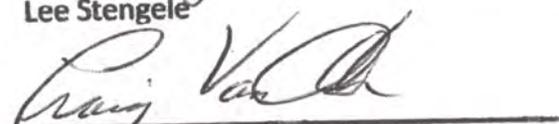

John Melzer


Brian Logan

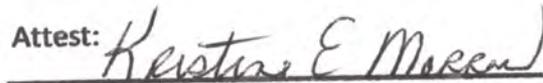

Sulo Wainio


Lee Stengele


Lenelle Scholl


Craig Van Ark

Attest:


Kris Morrow, Minute -Taker

Appendix C

Adoption Ordinance

ORDINANCE 2021-03
ADOPTION OF COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
THE TOWN OF WINCHESTER, VILAS COUNTY, WISCONSIN

A. Title/Purpose

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

B. Authority

The Town Board of the Town of Winchester 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 Winchester must be in compliance with s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. Stats., in order for the Town Board to adopt this ordinance.

C. Adoption of Ordinance

The Town Board of the Town of Winchester, 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 Winchester to adopt its comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. Stats., and provides the authority for the Town Board to order its publication.

D. Public Participation

The Town Board of the Town of Winchester has adopted written procedures designed to foster participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by 66.001 (4)(a), Wis. Stats.

E. Town Plan Commission Recommendations

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

F. Public Hearing

The Town of Winchester, 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.

G. Adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan

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

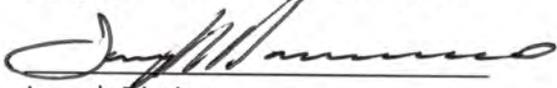
H. Severability

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.

I. Effective Date

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting. The Town Clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under 60.80, Wis. Stats.

Adopted this 7th day of June, 2021



Joseph Discianno
Town Chairperson


Attest: Joan Wainio
Town Clerk

Town of Winchester
Comprehensive Plan
2021