



Town of Harris Comprehensive Plan

Initial Adoption: August 16, 2005

Updated: July 2016



2005

Planning Assistance by:



Vandewalle & Associates
Planning - Creating - Rebuilding

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TOWN BOARD:

Glen Thalacker, Chair
Dennis Kekow, Supervisor
Jim Kronschnabel, Supervisor

TOWN PLAN COMMISSION

Planning and Design Assistance by:

MDRoffers Consulting
www.mdoffers.com

Osterberg Planning

Marquette County Staff:

Thomas Onofrey, Zoning Administrator

Jerol Smart, Surveyor

Megan Stalker, Land Information Technician

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Intergovernmental Cooperation	5
<i>Map 1: Jurisdictional Framework.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Chapter Two: Issues and Opportunities	13
<i>Figure 1: Historic Population, 1950 - 2000</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Figure 2: Population Trends, 1970 - 2000.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Figure 3: Population Forecasts, 2005 – 2025.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Figure 4: Age and Gender Distribution, 2000.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Figure 5: Marquette County Age Cohort Forecasts, 2000 to 2020.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Figure 6: Household Characteristic Comparisons - 2000.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Figure 7: Town of Harris Labor Force Characteristics, 2000.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Figure 8: Jobs in Marquette County, 1997 - 2001.....</i>	<i>18</i>
Chapter Three: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources	26
<i>Figure 9: Soil Suitability for Agriculture</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Figure 10: Examples of Conventional and Cluster Development (Rural Lands).....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Map 2: Natural Areas.....</i>	<i>33</i>
Chapter Four: Land Use	48
<i>Figure 10: Existing Land Use Totals – Town of Harris</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Map 3: Existing Land Use.....</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Figure 11: Equalized Land Values for Marquette County, 1980 - 2000.....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Figure 12: Projected Rural Residential Land Use Demand</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Map 4: Planned Land Use.....</i>	<i>66</i>
Chapter Five: Transportation.....	68
<i>Map 5: Planned Transportation and Community Facilities</i>	<i>76</i>
Chapter Six: Utilities and Community Facilities	78
<i>Figure 13: Fire and Ambulance District Boundaries (2004).....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Figure 14: Westfield School District Enrollment, 1997 - 2003.....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Figure 15: Timetable to Improve or Enhance Utilities and Facilities.....</i>	<i>86</i>
Chapter Seven: Housing & Neighborhood Development	89
<i>Figure 16: Housing Types: 1990- 2000.....</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Figure 17: Comparison of Housing Stock Characteristics - 2000.....</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Figure 18: Age of Town of Harris Housing as a Percent of the Total 2000 Housing Stock.....</i>	<i>92</i>
<i>Figure 19: Example of Conservation Neighborhood Development Compared to Conventional Development.....</i>	<i>94</i>
Chapter Eight: Economic Development	97
<i>Figure 20: Town Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Figure 21: Westfield Interchange Existing Conditions Assessment.....</i>	<i>101</i>
Chapter Nine: Implementation.....	105
<i>Figure 22: Recommended Implementation Actions</i>	<i>107</i>

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The purpose of the *Town of Harris Comprehensive Plan* is to help inform and guide local decision-making by providing direction to some major planning themes, including:

- § Identify areas appropriate for development and preservation over the next 20 years;
- § Recommend types of land use for specific areas in the town;
- § Identify needed transportation and community facilities to serve future land uses;
- § Provide detailed strategies to implement plan recommendations.

This *Plan* was prepared under Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" legislation contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This legislation requires that a comprehensive plan include the following nine elements: 1.) **Intergovernmental Cooperation**, 2.) **Issues and Opportunities**, 3.) **Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources**, 4.) **Land Use**, 5.) **Transportation**, 6.) **Utilities and Community Facilities**, 7.) **Housing and Neighborhood Development**, 8.) **Economic Development**, and 9.) **Implementation**. This legislation also describes how a comprehensive plan must be prepared and adopted (see sidebar). Zoning and subdivision decisions undertaken by the Town that affect land use will have to be consistent with this Plan, or later amendments.

This Plan is organized in nine chapters containing all of the required elements listed above. Each chapter begins with background information, followed by the Town's goals, objectives and policies related to that element, and ends with detailed recommendations. The final chapter (**Implementation**) provides an "action plan" of recommendations, strategies, and timelines to ensure the implementation of this Plan.

EARLY 2000S PLANNING PROCESS

Marquette County's and the Town of Harris' multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning process involved work done simultaneously at both the local and county level. Much of the initial public input in the countywide planning process was obtained through an opinion survey conducted in early 2002, with more local input provided during a series of visioning workshops held in each of the participating towns, villages and city from 2002 to early 2004.

Much of the data collection and inventory mapping for this multi-jurisdictional project was completed at the County level, with supplemental information and more detailed maps prepared for each of the local participating communities. An opportunities analysis was also conducted to identify "big picture" influences in the region, from which each local community could advance specific goals or strategies to take advantage of these unique opportunities. Each local community had a chance to review the background data, opportunities analysis, and inventory maps. The Town of Harris customized the information in this plan document to address specific local issues and concerns.

PLAN ADOPTION PROCESS

Preparation of a "comprehensive plan" is authorized under § 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. Before adoption, a Plan must go through a formal public hearing and review process. The Planning and Zoning Committee adopts by resolution a public hearing draft of the Plan and recommends that the County Board enact an ordinance adopting the Plan as the County's official comprehensive plan. Following Planning and Zoning Committee approval, the County Board holds a public hearing to discuss the proposed ordinance adopting the Plan. Copies of the public hearing draft of the Plan are forwarded to a list of local and state governments for review. A Class 1 notice must precede the public hearing at least 30 days before the hearing. The notice must include a summary of the Plan and information concerning where the entire document may be inspected or obtained. The Board may then adopt the ordinance approving the Plan as the County's official comprehensive plan.

This formal, well-publicized process facilitates broad support of plan goals and recommendations. Consideration by both the Planning and Zoning Committee and County Board assures that both bodies understand and endorse the plan's recommendations.

To ensure that each planning document prepared under this process was “speaking the same language,” each community worked from the same menu of land use categories to draft their individual planned land use map. When brought together, these local planned land use maps formed the basis of Marquette County’s planned land use map. Each participating community, as well as the County, distributed a draft and final version of their *Comprehensive Plan* document to surrounding jurisdictions, and each jurisdiction followed all of the required procedures to formally adopt a comprehensive plan as prescribed in Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning legislation

2016 PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

In early 2016, Marquette County completed an update to the County’s 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan update also incorporated an updated County Farmland Preservation Plan, replacing a 1982 vintage plan. The County Comprehensive /Farmland Preservation planning process took over a year to complete and provided multiple opportunities for public involvement, at the County and Town levels, including six open house events held at strategic intervals during the planning process, town meetings with County Zoning Department staff, and a public hearing before the Marquette County Planning and Zoning Committee.

As part of the County Comprehensive Plan update process, each municipality in Marquette County had the opportunity to review, and if desired, update the Planned Land Use map from its mid-2000s plan. The Town of Harris participated in this review and returned a revised Town Planned Land Use map for the County to include in the updated Marquette County Comprehensive Plan.

In 2016, Marquette County facilitated a process to assist each interested town update its individual comprehensive plan to reflect the newly updated County Comprehensive Plan. Given limited population and land use changes in the County since adoption of the initial comprehensive plans, the town comprehensive plan update process was more condensed and strategic than the early 2000s planning process described above.

The 2016 Town of Harris Comprehensive Plan update includes:

- § Updated demographic information contained in Chapter Two: Issues and Opportunities to reflect the latest information available from the U.S. Census and State of Wisconsin.
- § Adjustments to Chapter Four: Land Use to incorporate changes to the Planned Land Use map that have occurred since adoption of the Town’s original Comprehensive Plan, including those made during the County’s recent plan update process, but not yet incorporated into any town plans. Due to limited population growth the remainder of Chapter Four, including population projections, remains unchanged.
- § Revisions Figure 25 in Chapter 9: Implementation to include the Town’s role in implementing initiatives in the updated Marquette County Comprehensive Plan and to remove older initiatives that have been completed or are no longer applicable.

Due to the limited scope of the 2016 Town Comprehensive Plan update and Town input in the County’s recent Comprehensive Plan update, other Plan chapters were generally not updated and public participation was more condensed. The Town of Harris Plan Commission reviewed and recommended approval of the updated Comprehensive Plan and following a properly noticed public hearing; the Town Board reviewed and approved the recommended Plan update.

CHAPTER ONE: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

I. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The Town of Harris developed this *Comprehensive Plan* as part of a countywide, multi-jurisdictional planning effort. To provide a regional framework for this *Plan*, this chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, and covers all information required under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

A. EXISTING REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

The following is a brief description of the units of government operating in and around the Town of Harris, as well as a description of other regional and state jurisdictions in the area. Map 1 shows the boundaries of these various jurisdictions.

1. TOWN OF HARRIS

The **Town of Harris** is one of 14 civil towns in Marquette County. Civil towns are units of government in Wisconsin's rural areas which, like a city and county, have elected representatives and the ability to tax and regulate within its borders. The Town, encompassing about 34 square miles, is located in the north-central portion of the county and had an estimated 2004 population of 749 residents. **Harrisville**, located along Harris Lake, is the Town's only unincorporated "village" (or hamlet). The Town shares its boundary with the Village of Westfield in the far northwest corner; and the City of Montello is located near its southeast corner. The Town has adopted County zoning rules. At the time this plan was written, the Town is not party to any plans or agreements under §66.0307 or §66.0309, Wisconsin Statutes. The Town is party to general cooperative agreements for fire, rescue, road maintenance, and other services with the Village of Westfield, neighboring towns, or the County under §66.0301.

2. SURROUNDING TOWNS

Harris is adjacent to the Town of **Westfield** to the west, **Newton** to the north, **Shields** to the east, and **Packwaukee** to the south. All Towns bordering Harris (except Westfield) began preparing plans in 2003 in coordination with other Marquette County communities under the Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning program. All neighboring Towns received draft and final versions of this *Plan* document to identify potential conflict areas or issues. There are no apparent existing or potential conflicts among this *Plan* and the long-range plans for adjoining towns.

3. MARQUETTE COUNTY

Marquette County covers 455 square miles and is located in the south central part of Wisconsin. The County is situated about 50 miles north of Madison, 110 miles northwest of Milwaukee, and 200 miles northwest of Chicago. The County's estimated 2004 population is 15,051 residents. The County is made up of 19 local units of government: 14 towns, 4 villages, and 1 city. All of these local jurisdictions are populated with less than 2,000 people, with only a few exceeding 1,000 people. The County has a sizeable seasonal population, with nearly a quarter of its housing stock listed as "seasonal". It is also home to several public and private summer camps. The County has an adopted farmland preservation plan, outdoor

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Intergovernmental cooperation is a hallmark element of Marquette County's countywide planning process. The County's towns, cities and villages not only share common boundaries, but also school attendance areas, watersheds, bike routes, fire protection services, emergency medical services, roads, lakes, rivers, recycling programs, and rural-based economies. These jurisdictions have been working together for years to provide more efficient and cost-effective delivery of services.

Recognizing the wisdom and benefit in joint planning, the Town of Harris and its neighboring communities along with the County agreed to work together to develop individual comprehensive plans under the state's Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant program.

This **Town of Harris Comprehensive Plan** was prepared to meet all of the requirements of the state's comprehensive planning legislation (§66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes).

recreation plan, land and water resources management plan, erosion control plan, zoning ordinance, land division ordinance, exclusive agricultural zoning district, and highway access control plan. The County is preparing its first-ever comprehensive plan, in coordination and cooperation with other local units of government and under the Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant program. There are no apparent existing or potential conflicts between the long-range plans of the County and this *Plan*.

4. VILLAGE OF WESTFIELD

The **Village of Westfield** serves as trade center for its surrounding townships, including Harris. The Village (1,227 estimated residents) has grown by about 1 percent since the 2000 census. The Village began updating its comprehensive plan in 2003 in coordination with other Marquette County communities under the Smart Growth Planning Grant program. The Village has an adopted zoning and subdivision ordinance to regulate development. The Village participated with adjoining Towns—including Harris—in the County’s planning process. There are no apparent conflict between the Village plan and this Town *Plan*.

5. REGIONAL PLANNING JURISDICTION

The Town of Harris is in the **East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission’s** (ECWRPC) planning jurisdiction, although Marquette County is not an official member. The ECWRPC is the comprehensive planning agency for the counties of Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Menominee, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago. In 2001, The ECWRPC began developing a region-wide framework plan for the 10 counties that it represents. The plan’s focus is to identify issues of regional significance and to develop best practice examples to help guide future land use decisions within the region. It is scheduled for completion in 2005. The plan’s inventory information and maps for the region was compiled in the ECWRPC’s *State of the Region Report*, prepared in 2003. There are no apparent existing or potential conflicts between the long-range plans of ECWRPC and this *Plan*.

6. IMPORTANT STATE AGENCY JURISDICTIONS

There are several state agencies that affect planning in the Town of Harris and all of Marquette County. The Town is located within the Wisconsin **Department of Transportation’s** (WisDOT) District 4 Region, with its regional office located in Wisconsin Rapids. The Town is located in the Wisconsin **Department of Natural Resources’** (WisDNR) Northeast Region, with its regional office in Green Bay and its service center located in Wautoma. The **University of Wisconsin Extension** office is located in the City of Montello and serves as an educational resource for town residents. The Town recognizes the importance of working with these state agencies during the course of this plan preparation process; particularly in data gathering and discussing specific planning issues. There are no apparent existing or potential conflicts between the long-range plans of these agencies and this *Plan*.

7. SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Residents in the Town of Harris are served by the **Westfield School District** (serving the north and northwest part of Marquette County). The Town of Harris is within the Madison Area Technical College (MATC) District which offers education in liberal studies and over 100 other fields. There are no apparent existing or potential conflicts between the long-range plans of these districts and this *Plan*.

B. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION GOAL, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Goal: Create and build on mutually beneficial intergovernmental relations with surrounding and overlapping governments.

Objectives:

- a. Work with surrounding local governments, Marquette County, local school districts, and state agencies on land use, natural resource, transportation and community development issues of mutual concern.
- b. Cooperate with neighboring governments, school districts, Marquette County and State agencies on providing shared services and planning for future public facility and service needs.
- c. Participate in County-level transportation, land use and economic development efforts.
- d. Work with surrounding communities to encourage an orderly, efficient land use pattern that preserves rural character and minimizes land use conflicts.

Policies and Programs:

1. **Provide copies** of this *Comprehensive Plan* to all surrounding government jurisdictions.
2. **Cooperate with other units of government**, including lake organizations, the County, and State Department of Natural Resources on preservation of natural resources (as discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three), for instance:
 - § Stay informed and involved in WisDNR management and consideration of dam maintenance, repair and removal programs.
 - § Work with the state, lake organizations, local businesses and private property owners to procure support for lake management activities and river clean-up programs..
 - § Work with WisDNR to ensure protection of groundwater, support woodland management efforts, promote best management practices for logging activities, protect rare species and wildlife habitat, and monitoring of large-scale livestock operations.
3. Cooperate with the County and surrounding communities **on a comprehensive survey of historic and archeological sites** throughout Marquette County (as discussed in Chapter Three).
4. **Work with the County and State Department of Transportation on maintaining and improving the Town's transportation system** (as discussed in detail in Chapter Five), including:
 - § Town road upgrades and road signage maintenance
 - § Promote standards for bicycle signage
 - § Update design and layout standards for new town roads.
 - § Develop Town or County-level driveway ordinance
5. **Participate with other units of government on joint facility and community utility concerns**, including working with the County and other communities in northwestern Marquette County on exploring options to improve EMS service delivery (as discussed in Chapter Six).
6. Work with the County to **identify grant sources to rehabilitate housing and residential areas** in the Town (as discussed in Chapter Seven).

7. Participate with Marquette County and other communities on an **economic development initiative to promote a balanced rural economy** for the area – including initiatives related to entrepreneurship, forestry and agricultural production, and resource-based tourism (as discussed in Chapter Eight).
8. Work with the County and other communities in the County on **changes to the County zoning and subdivision ordinances** to further policies and recommendations of this Plan. These changes are discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine.
9. **Provide input to Westfield School District** regarding long term district operations planning. At the time this plan was written, the District is not anticipating increased enrollment and, therefore, there are no new or expanded facilities under consideration.
10. **Continue intergovernmental discussions** with neighboring towns and villages and consider an intergovernmental boundary and land use agreement with the Village of Westfield. More details on this topic are provided in the next section.

C. PROCESS TO RESOLVE POTENTIAL CONFLICTS

The Town of Harris and Village of Westfield may consider entering into a formal intergovernmental agreement covering community development issues of mutual concern. These issues may include municipal boundaries, extraterritorial rights, economic development, rural development, growth management, sanitary sewer provision, or even shared revenues from new development. An agreement such as this would help the communities minimize competition for development, share both the costs and benefits of economic development, make sure that future development is of high quality, provide all parties with a greater sense of certainty on the future actions of others, and promote municipal efficiency in an era of diminishing government resources.

There are two main formats for intergovernmental agreements under Wisconsin Statutes. The first is available under Section 66.0301, which allows any two or more communities to agree to cooperate for the purpose of furnishing services or the joint exercise of any power or duty authorized under State law. While this is the most commonly used approach, a “66.0301” agreement is limited by the restriction that the municipalities must be able to exercise co-equal powers. Another format for an intergovernmental agreement is a “cooperative plan” under Section 66.0307 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This approach is more labor intensive and ultimately requires State approval of the agreement, but does not have some of the limitations of the “66.0301” agreement format.

The following is a summary of issues that an intergovernmental agreement could cover. Often, intergovernmental agreements are executed after a year or more of meetings, research, consideration of options, writing, and legal review. The Town Board needs to pay special attention to items *a* through *f*.

- a. ***Municipal Boundary Changes:*** Intergovernmental agreements between villages and towns frequently suggest limits to long-range municipal annexation, generally in exchange for some compromises from the Town. Such compromises may include the town’s agreement not to legally contest any annexation petition that is within the agreed annexation area and/or to limit town development in the possible future annexation area. Where there are annexations, responsibilities for road maintenance and upgrades can be confusing or controversial. Provisions for future maintenance, upgrades, or extensions of roads are often covered in intergovernmental agreements.
- b. ***Utility Service Area Boundaries:*** Some intergovernmental agreements include provisions that define where public sewer services may be extended and where they may not over the term of the agreement. These areas largely define where fairly intensive urban (public sewer) growth may occur or existing rural development areas that might require sewer. Some agreements include provisions that do not allow further intensive development with on-site waste disposal systems in such designated utility service areas.

These areas may extend beyond current municipal limits, for example into areas where future municipal boundary changes are agreed to.

- c. ***Future Land Use Recommendations:*** Frequently, intergovernmental agreements include maps or descriptions that specify future land uses or development densities considered acceptable or unacceptable in areas that concern both communities. For example, the agreement may specify certain areas that both communities agree should remain in open space or at least maintain an open space character as limited development occurs. Some agreements also include provisions that the communities will then amend their comprehensive plans to be consistent with the future land use recommendations negotiated in the agreement, or to not amend their comprehensive plans in a manner that would be inconsistent with the agreement.
- d. ***Joint Economic Development Efforts:*** An intergovernmental agreement provides a potential tool to establish joint economic development or marketing efforts to the mutual benefit of each community. Some of the more innovative agreements include provisions on sharing property tax revenue from new development or mitigating tax losses resulting from annexation. For example, an agreement may include a provision specifying that participating communities would share property tax revenue from certain types of new developments (e.g., commercial or industrial). This tends to minimize competition for development, increases development quality, and equalizes municipal “winners and losers” resulting from new development. State annexation law requires a city or village annexing town land to pay the town, for five years, an amount equal to the amount of property taxes the town imposed on that area in the year in which the annexation was final. This requirement does not apply to areas where other agreements, such as a cooperative plan or intergovernmental agreement already exist.
- e. ***Shared Programs or Services:*** The most common types of intergovernmental agreements focus on shared services or programs between communities. Many communities in Marquette County already have such agreements with respect to fire and EMS services. The management of recreational lands and programs is another service that is occasionally shared across municipal boundaries.
- f. ***Agreement Term and Amendments:*** An intergovernmental agreement should specify the length of time that it is applicable. Twenty years is a typical timeframe (e.g., through 2025), as this corresponds with local comprehensive planning time horizons. Occasionally, agreements have provisions for automatic extensions if neither party decides to withdraw. Most agreements also include provisions for periodic review and possible amendments if both parties agree. This keeps the agreement fresh in people’s minds and allows adaptability as conditions change.

Map 1: Jurisdictional Framework

CHAPTER TWO: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

II. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter provides the baseline data necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding of the changes taking place in Harris. It includes population, household and employment trends and forecasts, age distribution and education levels, and employment and income characteristics. It also includes a statement on the Town's overall vision to guide the future preservation, and development over the 20-year planning period.

A. POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS

The Town of Harris has experienced **moderate population growth** over the past 50 years. Figure 1 shows the Town's census population from 1960 to 2010, and compares it to Marquette County's historic population rate and the proportion of the County total that lived in a town, village or city. Overall, the Town's population remained steady during the 1950s and 60s, but the 1970s saw strong growth, when the entire nation experienced a "rural renaissance" as manufacturing firms moved into rural areas and city residents sought out nearby recreation and retirement areas to escape urban problems. Most of the new migrants moving into the Town during the 1970s were not necessarily going into farming or farm-related activities; rather, they were seeking recreational or retirement homes along lakeshores or woodlots. The Town's population continued to grow in the 1990s and 2000s and reached a population of **790 residents** by the 2010 census.

Figure 1: Historic Population, 1960 - 2010

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Town of Harris	402	429	657	715	729	790
Marquette County	8,516	8,865	11,672	12,321	14,555	15,404
<i>Town Population</i>	<i>5,380 (63%)</i>	<i>5,733 (65%)</i>	<i>8,219 (70%)</i>	<i>8,668 (70%)</i>	<i>10,512 (72%)</i>	<i>11,146 (72%)</i>
<i>City and Village Population</i>	<i>3,136 (37%)</i>	<i>3,132 (35%)</i>	<i>3,459 (30%)</i>	<i>3,653 (30%)</i>	<i>4,043(28%)</i>	<i>4,258 (28%)</i>

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1960 - 2010

Figure 2 compares Harris's population trends over the past 30 years to trends in neighboring towns and the Village of Westfield in the County's northwest quadrant, as well as the County and State. From 2000 to 2010, the Town's growth rate of about 8.4 percent was lower than the Village of Westfield, all the other northwest quadrant towns, with the exception of Newton, the County, and the State.

Figure 2: Population Trends, 1980 - 2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Pop. Change*	% Change*
Town of Harris	657	715	729	790	+61	+8.4
Town of Newton	460	470	550	547	-3	-0.5
Town of Westfield	538	520	689	866	+177	+26
Town of Springfield	501	480	628	830	+202	+32.2
Town of Shields	419	408	456	550	+94	+21
Village of Westfield	1,033	1,125	1,217	1,254	+37	+3.0
Marquette County	11,672	12,321	14,555	15,404	+849	+5.8
Wisconsin	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	+323,311	+6.0

Sources: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1980 - 2010

Figure 3 shows the Town's projected population in five-year increments over the next 25 years based on forecasts prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Administration in 2013. Forecasts for the Village of Westfield, the County, and the State are also shown for comparison. According to these forecasts, the Town's population is projected to grow to **885 residents by 2035**.

These forecasts will be useful for long-term Town land use, housing, and community facility planning; but the **limitations of these projections** should be recognized. The State bases these projections on historical growth patterns and the composition of the current population base. The reliability of these projections depends on the continuation of the Town's past growth trends. Projecting populations for rural areas such as Harris are subject to error, as minor changes in birth, death or migration rates can significantly impact town growth rates. Given the importance of in-migration rates in the entire County, these projections are particularly vulnerable to external "push" and "pull" factors that determine migration flow. Actual future population will depend on market conditions, attitudes toward growth, and development regulations. Local policies and plans can certainly affect these rates of growth.

Figure 3: Population Forecasts, 2015 - 2035

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Town of Harris	820	840	870	890	885
Village of Westfield	1,310	960	1,025	1,075	1,100
Marquette County	16,000	16,315	16,970	17,325	17,305
Wisconsin	5,783,015	6,005,080	6,203,850	6,375,910	6,476,270

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013

B. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND FORECASTS

The Town's changing age structure has important implications for education, service, housing and transportation needs. Figure 4 compares the Town's age and sex distribution in 2010 with surrounding communities, county, and state. In general, the Town's **population is aging** with the overall percent of school age residents (under 18) dropping, and the percent of seniors (over 65) slightly increasing. In 2010, the Town's medi-

an age of 50 years was older than the Village, County and State averages. For an historical perspective, the Town's median age in 1990 it was 37.1 and in 2000 it was 43. With prolonged life expectancy and a trend toward declining birth rates, the Town's median age will likely continue to get older over the planning period.

Figure 4: Age and Gender Distribution, 2010

	Median Age	% under 18	% over 65	% Female
Town of Harris	50.0	17.7	25.7	53.7
Village of Westfield	36.8	27.4	15.7	51.8
Marquette County	48.0	20.0	21.1	49.3
Wisconsin	38.5	23.6	13.7	50.4

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2010

Age group projections for the Town of Harris are not available but, according to State agencies, Marquette County's "**baby boom**" and **elderly age groups will increase** over the planning period, while the younger age groups (0 to 19) will decrease. This projected change in age groups in Marquette County will have important planning implications for the future, from school facility planning to elderly housing and transportation in all communities, including the Town of Harris.

Figure 5: Marquette County Age Cohort Forecasts, 2010 to 2030

	Under 5	5 - 19	20-64	65+
2010	801	2,569	8,788	3,246
2015	780	2,470	9,105	3,645
2020	785	2,405	8,730	4,395
2025	775	2,470	8,325	5,400
2030	760	2,475	7,885	6,205

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013

C. HOUSEHOLD TRENDS AND FORECASTS

Figure 6 compares selected household characteristics for Harris with the Village of Westfield, County and State. The Town's average household size was comparable to surrounding populations and the same as Marquette County. The Town's **average household size has declined** over the past thirty years, from 2.73 in 1990, down to 2.48 in 2000 until reaching 2.32 in 2010. The percent of single-person households in Harris was less than compared populations.

Figure 6: Household Characteristic Comparisons - 2010-2014, Estimate

	Total Housing Units	Total Households	Average Household Size	% Single-person Household
Town of Harris	437	331	2.32	23.9
Village of Westfield	578	523	2.40	32.7
Marquette County	9,896	6,571	2.32	27.3
Wisconsin	2,624,358	2,279,768	2.43	28.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Countywide, the average household size dropped from 2.41 in 2000 to 2.32 in 2010. According to forecasts prepared by the State Department of Administration, the Town of Harris's average household size is forecasted to drop to 2.24 in 2015; to 2.20 in 2020; to 2.16 in 2025, and to 2.12 persons per household in 2030. These projected household sizes will be used in projecting future housing unit demand in the Town over the next 20 years. More information on the Town's housing and household characteristics is provided in Chapter Seven: Housing and Neighborhood Development.

D. EDUCATION AND INCOME LEVELS

Educational attainment is the highest degree or level of school completed, and is a variable used when assessing a community's labor force potential. Educational attainment differs by ethnicity, access to higher education, employer expectations and socioeconomic status. According to the U.S. Census 2010-2014 American Community Survey, of the Town's population age 25 and older, **88.8 percent attained a high school level education**. For comparison, the high school graduation rate for Marquette County was 87.8 percent and for the State it was about 90.8 percent. Approximately 10.9 percent of this same age group in the Town had attained a college level education (bachelor's degree or higher).

Another measure of a community's economic well-being is average annual incomes. According to the U.S. Census 2010-2014 American Community Survey, the Town's **median household income was \$48,958**. For comparison, the median household income reported for the entire County during this period was \$46,875, and Statewide it was \$52,738. More information on the Town's income characteristics is provided in Chapter Eight: Economic Development.

E. EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS AND FORECASTS

Marquette County has substantially fewer people employed in sales and office occupational groups than the State. However, a greater portion of the County's labor force is employed in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining; and the Manufacturing occupational groups. About half of the working residents of Marquette County commute to other counties for work. Larger employers in the County's northwest quadrant include Brakebush Brothers (poultry processing), federal prison, and the Westfield school district.

The Town of Harris's primary economic activity is in **manufacturing, education and retail** related employment. The percentage of the Town's labor force employed by sector in 2010 is shown in Figure 7. The largest proportion of the 407 employed persons living in Harris were employed in the manufacturing sector (22.1 percent), followed by the education, health and social services sector (12.0 percent) and Retail Trade sector (11.3 percent). It is important to note that many of the local residents holding down jobs within these sectors **travel outside of Town for work**.

Figure 7: Town of Harris Labor Force Characteristics, 2010-2014, Estimate

Occupational Group	% of Labor Force
Manufacturing	22.1
Education, health and social services	12.0
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7.6
Retail trade	11.3
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	10.3
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	3.4
Construction	4.7
Public administration	4.7
Other services	6.9
Wholesale trade	2.5
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	7.4
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6.4
Information	0.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Additional employment data is available at the County level. The number of jobs in the County decreased by 4% between 2001 and 2013; with a total of 3,653 Marquette County jobs in 2013. The County's job base is centered in the education, health, and manufacturing industries. According to the State's Department of Workforce Development (WisDWD), manufacturing is the largest industry segment within the County. Food Manufacturing comprises the largest industry sub-segment, due to the location of Brakebush Brothers, Inc. within the County. Between 2007 and 2012, the total number of jobs in the Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing and Animal Production industries increased. Fabricated metal product manufacturing grew by 24 jobs, most likely due to growth of TW Design and Manufacturing in the City of Montello. All other reported industries observed a decrease in number of jobs, likely a result of the "Great Recession" that occurred during this period.

As of 2010, the largest private employers in Marquette County included: Brakebush Brothers, Inc. (poultry processing); Gumz Muck Farms LLC (crop farming); Wisconsin Illinois Senior (nursing care); TW Design and Manufacturing LLC (machining shop); Northland Community Services, Inc (individual and family services); and Arimon Technologies Inc. (electric component manufacturing). Greater than half of the residents in the County commute to other counties for work, indicating that many residents find it necessary to obtain employment outside of the Town or County.

Figure 8: Jobs in Marquette County, 2011 - 2014

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Natural Resources & Mining	230	251	262	286

Construction	80	80	77	75
Manufacturing	1,192	1,218	1,206	1,133
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	486	467	501	510
Information	40	41	38	40
Financial Activities	100	102	96	90
Professional & Business Services	133	90	72	74
Education & Health Services	636	666	683	688
Leisure & Hospitality	439	446	419	419
Other Services	93	96	88	86
Public Administration	193	199	183	186
Total	3,621	3,654	3,623	3,587

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2016

While there is no data available on the total number of jobs in the Town of Harris, Figure 8 shows the number jobs in Marquette County from 2011 to 2014. Overall, the number of jobs provided in the County decreased slightly over the three-year period. Certain sectors have gained jobs, while other sectors were negatively impacted by the mid-2000s economic down turn, particularly the Professional and Business Services, and Manufacturing sectors.

Employment projections for the County come from the Department of Workforce Development. The WisDWD sees growth for jobs in the “Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods” 3-digit NAICS code, noticing a growth of 32% in the industry within the County between 2007 and 2012. Another potential area for growth is in animal production, which saw a 10% increase between 2007 and 2012. Gasoline stations, food services, and nursing and residential care facilities saw dramatic decrease – each around 25% - during the same time period.

Additional economic information is available through Economic Modeling Specialists (EMSI), a firm providing comprehensive labor market analysis. EMSI projects that the manufacturing and poultry processing industries will continue to grow between 2013 and 2023, with a total increase of 221 jobs within Marquette County. However, this is somewhat offset by the projected declines in employment in farming, sawmills, and drinking establishments. EMSI projects that the total number of jobs within Marquette County will grow by 8% during this time period.

More information on the Town’s employment characteristics is provided in Chapter Eight: Economic Development.

F. RESULTS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EFFORTS

The Town of Harris, in cooperation with Marquette County, its local units of government and State agencies, conducted several public participation events in the early 2000s to involve and educate public officials and private citizens in the comprehensive planning process. In addition, Town officials and some residents participated in the process to update the Marquette County Comprehensive Plan in 2015, and sought input from Town residents on this Town Plan update in 2016.

The following is a summary of the early 2000s efforts, which will be used to guide the more detailed recommendations of this comprehensive plan.

1. TOWN OPINION SURVEY

In June 2002, the Town of Harris participated in a countywide opinion survey. The purpose of the survey was to obtain input from residents and property owners on local and county land use planning issues and their preferred approaches to addressing those issues. The survey was sent to 559 residents in the Town of Harris, and 182 were returned. This resulted in a response rate of 33% (the overall response rate for the entire county was 32%).

The results of this survey suggest that Town of Harris residents are generally supportive of planning for the community's future. Residents are most concerned with preserving the Town's natural resource base (lakes, streams, rivers and groundwater) while promoting a modest level of economic development. Most residents preferred small- to medium-scale industrial and small-scale retail development. There is support for developing stronger restrictions on the siting of mobile homes. Protecting the Town's groundwater and natural resource base, along with protecting private property rights, were some of the top planning issues identified by survey respondents.

2. TOWN VISIONING

In 2002, the Town created a Vision Planning Committee to coordinate the community's visioning efforts. That Committee was responsible for publicizing and encouraging local participation in three visioning sessions held in Spring 2003 to ensure that this *Plan* is based on the vision of the Town residents. Local residents were informed of these sessions through press releases, flyers, and notices inserted in tax bill mailings. The Town's visioning efforts are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Key Planning Issues Exercise

In May 2003, the Committee organized a session to identify key planning-related issues in the Town. About 15 residents participating in this session identified the following issues:

- § *Housing.* Supplying the regional need for elderly housing could be best addressed in Westfield and Montello where the necessary infrastructure is in place. The Town should set aside designated areas for mobile home parks. Mobile homes should not be mixed with other "stick-built" residential homes in a development. Larger parcels make building a home in the town less affordable for some. Programs are needed to assist the elderly and physically disabled maintain and improve their homes.
- § *Land Use.* The Town is under County zoning. Participants expressed a desire to keep the Town rural and unchanged, while acknowledging that growth is inevitable. Controlling or maintaining a slow level of growth would be most preferable. More restrictive zoning that would require larger parcels for development was identified as one strategy to slow growth in the town.
- § *Economic Development.* Better job opportunities are needed in the area. Industrial parks and other areas along Interstate 39 should be utilized for more jobs. Desired businesses to serve the town population include a cleaning service and grocery store, "big box" stores such as Menards and Target along the Interstate, and home-based or cottage-type businesses and industries. Local businesses and a youth corp could assist people with property maintenance.
- § *Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources.* There is a need to clean up the rivers in the Town to reduce the number of portages and make them more scenic. River improvements are a DNR issue, and could ultimately result in increased use. Town should address water runoff pollution and erosion due to farming activity. Need to improve and restore lake quality. Need to assess impact of human waste and manure distribution in the town. Large farm operations in other towns are renting land in Harris to spread manure. Haulers from other counties are coming into Harris to dump manure.
- § *Transportation.* There is relative satisfaction with the town road system and access to the state and federal highway system. Need to have wider shoulders on some town roads. More traffic enforcement is needed on CTH J. Lower posted speed limits may help save town roads from constant repair. Need better education and signage regarding farming equipment on local roads. Town should assess weight

limits on some local roads. Town should consider the impacts of future residential, commercial, and farming development on local roads. Need to assess impact of shared revenue on town roads.

- § *Utilities and Community Facilities.* Some improvements are needed to the town park, including upgraded bathroom facilities and better lighting around the playground equipment. Need to better utilize the Montello school public forest and address issues related to partying, ATV use and dumping. A parking area and walking trails are potential improvements to the school forest. Some residents expressed interest in natural gas service and improved cell phone service.
- § *Local Government.* There is need for improved communication between residents and town officials. There should be programs or activities that encourage clean-up of property and along main roadways. There is a need for better contact with the Town's elderly residents to address their needs and care.

Visual Preference Survey

In May 2003, workshop participants were asked to view a series of slide images and identify the types of landscapes they would like to see, and the types of images they would not like to see in Harris. Members selected "positive" images that identified various types of rural landscapes, particularly those that emphasized farming and recreational uses. Examples include small, well-kept family owned farms; farm fields and natural areas creating open space and scenic vistas; rolling hills and wooded areas; and buildings and houses separated across the landscape. "Negative" images selected by participants included homes very close to one another; urban sprawl and development; "cookie-cutter" subdivisions; and dense housing patterns. In addition to the visual preference survey, the Town's Vision Planning Committee participated in a photo survey of Harris. Members were given cameras and asked to travel throughout the town and identify "the good, the bad and the ugly" places in Harris. These photographs were posted at the initial visioning workshop for attendees to view and discuss.

Summary of Visioning Efforts

Several common themes emerged from the three visioning exercises, including the following:

- § Town residents feel a sense of security in their community and appreciate the quiet country life in Harris.
- § Residents view their community as having a pastoral setting with a patchwork of farmland, woodland, and wetlands.
- § There is interest in preserving the Town's abundant natural resources so that people visiting or residing in Harris can enjoy biking, hiking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, and boating.
- § Residents value the many services and community services within easy access, including a very active fire and ambulance service, the Lions Club and fireman's park, and school forest.
- § Residents take pride in their community, which extends to significant volunteerism, participation in civic and social activities, and keeping their homes and property in neat appearance.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

In September 2003, the Town Board adopted its Public Participation Strategy and Procedures. This plan was developed to assure that citizens had a variety of opportunities and methods for receiving information about and having input into the Town's planning process and planning related issues. These were carried out through plan commission meetings, an open house, and a public hearing.

- § Monthly Plan Commission Meetings (Fall 2003 – Fall 2004). All Plan Commission meetings to discuss the *Comprehensive Plan* were noticed and held as open public meetings, and provided for a public comment period.

- § Community Open House (Fall 2004). Once complete, the draft comprehensive plan was presented at an open house on December 4, 2004 involving a question and answer period, plan review summaries and displays, and opportunity for oral and written comments. Comments were summarized and made available for public review.
- § Formal Public Hearing (July 2005). The Town Board held a formal public hearing on its comprehensive plan and the adopting ordinance on July 9, 2005. All members of the public had an opportunity to present testimony and offer comments at the public hearing

G. REGIONAL, COUNTY AND LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Harris and all of Marquette County are strategically situated within central Wisconsin's larger regional population and recreational base. This location, coupled with the area's wealth of natural resources and rural lands, offer **unique opportunities** that will help drive future growth and health. These opportunities are based on proximity to growing urban areas, transportation accessibility, abundant and unspoiled natural resources for recreation and relaxation, and clusters of surrounding tourist destinations.

Proximity to Metropolitan Areas

Marquette County and the Town of Harris are within an "urban field," a term used to describe peripheral rural areas that share a strong flow of people, commodities, money, and information with nearby metropolitan magnets. Rural places in the "urban field" are popular for weekend visits, seasonal recreation, vacation homes, and retirement living. Marquette County lies within a 1-to 4-hour drive from the Madison, Milwaukee, Fox Valley, and Chicago areas. Wausau, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids are also within an hour.

This flow of people and goods will undoubtedly increase as the surrounding metropolitan areas become more populated and congested. Over the next 30 years, the Chicago seven-county metro area is projected to increase by almost 30% or by 2.4 million people, reaching a projected population of slightly over 10.6 million people. Similarly, the Milwaukee four-county metro area is projected to grow 11% by 2040 to a population of 1.7 million people. Dane County is projected to grow 24% by 2040 to reach a population of 606,620 people. Today, nearly one half of Marquette County's workforce commutes outside of the County for work. This trend will likely continue as job opportunities expand in the Madison and Fox Valley metropolitan areas.

Good Access and Connections

Interstate 39, with its connections to major urban centers including Madison and Chicago (and Milwaukee and Minneapolis/Saint Paul via Interstate 94), provides excellent access to Marquette County and the Town of Harris. State Highways 22 and 23 provide access to and from adjacent communities and regional markets such as the Fox Valley area, the Lake Puckaway/Green Lake area, and the Wisconsin Dells/Baraboo area. This access to regional markets supports traditional forms of economic development (e.g., industrial parks), continued tourism growth, and the ability of two-wage earner families to live in Marquette County and each work in a different metro area within an hour's drive.

The County also has excellent access to high-speed internet service, based largely on investments by a rural cooperative. Strong internet access cannot be underestimated as an economic asset. It allows business growth in industries dependent on high-speed data transmission. It also enables telecommuting and good connections for visitors, retirees, and educational service delivery.

Abundant Outdoor Recreation Areas

Marquette County's open lands, trout streams, lakes, river impoundments and woodlands make it a popular destination for residents, seasonal hunters, fishermen, boaters, hikers, campers, and tourists. The County offers four seasons of outdoor recreational opportunities and greater than 12,000 acres in public ownership available for recreation.

Some of the most popular outdoor activities in the County include hunting and fishing. The impact of the State. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, hunting related expenditures in Wisconsin totaled \$2.5 billion in 2011 and fishing related expenditures totaled \$1.4 billion. In 2011, there were approximately 1.6 million hunters and anglers in Wisconsin, who spent an average of \$29 per day during a fishing or hunting trip. As the region's population base grows over the next 20 to 30 years, use of County lands for fishing and hunting will likely increase, along with increased expenditures in local sporting goods stores, accommodations, restaurants, guides, and other service-related establishments.

The Fox River provides another unique regional opportunity. It enters the County from Columbia County and flows through to Green Lake County. The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Water Trail has been designated by the National Park Service as a National Recreation Trail. The purpose of this river parkway between Portage and Green Bay is to highlight unique cultural, historical, recreational and natural resources. Along the Upper Fox River portion of the parkway, State and federal plans suggest opportunities to promote designated canoe routes that re-trace the discovery route of Marquette and Joliet, early French explorers. Land-based trail systems along the corridor are also envisioned.

Unique History

Marquette County's natural resources also have a unique and colorful history. The boyhood of John Muir, a naturalist considered the "Father of our National Parks," was spent on his 160-acre homestead in Marquette County. Much of Muir's land ethic and philosophy came from his time near Ennis Lake. He later moved to California where he helped establish Mount Rainier, Petrified Forest, and Sequoia National Parks. In 1892, Muir helped found the Sierra Club, which has since become one of the nation's leading conservation organizations. The County's scenic beauty and unique outdoor recreation opportunities have led to the development of outdoor festivals, landscape preservation, and other events that, over time, will enhance the County's identity.

2. COUNTY AND LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Harris and Marquette County's unique assets make it an attractive place to visit or live. Marquette County and the Town of Harris will recognize, improve, and market the varied resources and amenities found in the Town and County through the following priority initiatives.

Attract and Retain Residents

Marquette County and the Town of Harris have an abundant supply of another resource often overlooked in assessing economic development opportunities: small town atmosphere. Marquette County's communities offer opportunities to live a slower pace, find affordable housing, be within short walking or biking distance to schools and shops, and be in proximity to the recreational and entertainment assets of the region. The County will seek to attract new residents, from young families to commuters to "urban refugees" to retirees—all seeking a quality, affordable, living environment.

Marquette County desires to proactively address (and hopefully reverse) the County's aging demographic and limited population growth, capitalizing on the unique quality of life offered in Marquette County and on new efforts to improve it. A "Marquette Life" theme is advanced throughout the County's Comprehensive Plan "Marquette Life" encompasses a set of initiatives and programs to improve the quality of life and opportunities for existing residents, prospective residents, and visitors (who sometimes become residents).

Grow Tourism .

Tourism is one of Wisconsin's top three industries. In 2013, travelers spent nearly \$10.6 billion in the state (with an estimated \$20.2 million in Marquette County, an increase of over 4% from 2012). Travelers to Marquette County contributed \$2.5 million in State and local taxes and the County's tourism industry employed 291 people in 2013. With its proximity to growing metropolitan areas, the County is poised to take advantage of this trend for years to come. With greater access, careful management and thoughtful preservation, the multitude of outdoor activities available – have the capacity to expand the County as a center for nature based-tourism. These include biking, hiking, climbing, canoeing, boating, hunting, camping, nature viewing, and fishing. For example, the County's blue-ribbon trout streams draw fishermen from across the State and region. There are opportunities to cooperatively develop and market these recreational activities with other counties and cities in the region to a growing, eager market in nearby metro areas.

The tourist entertainment destinations surrounding the County, including the hotels and water parks located in the Dells area, the weekend flea market in Princeton, and the hotels and vacation homes in Green Lake County, provide an opportunity to create a market niche. This niche should complement the events and activities going on around the region and take advantage of the County's natural assets. The continued growth potential for this niche, if carefully planned, will provide a significant growth opportunity for the County. Finally, the co-marketing of the nature based-tourist activities, cultural destinations, and local festivals in conjunction with the tourist entertainment activities will create a unique tourist destination with the capacity to meet a wide range of needs and interests.

Preserve Agriculture as an Economic Activity

Preservation of the County's agricultural uses and heritage is an important component of the future growth, both economic and physical. The changing national market for agricultural products, including the demand for local and organic products, value-added agriculture, niche and specialty crop markets, and the role for agriculture in biotechnology, create an opportunity for agriculture-based economic growth. The existence of an economic driver for agricultural preservation creates a secondary, though equally important, result. This is the preservation of the rural character and scenic views, which are valued by residents and visitors alike.

Agricultural tourism provides another opportunity to add value to the local agricultural economy. In conjunction with other heritage-based tourism activities in the area, local farmers' markets, day-on-the-farm and pick-your-own programs, the Marquette County fair, brat festivals, miniature horse fairs, and other local festivals provide families with a variety a day-tripping activities for both residents and visitors.

H. STATEMENT OF OVERALL VISION

Each chapter of this *plan* includes a set of goals, objectives and policies and programs which will provide the vision and policy guidance that the Town Plan Commission, Town Board, town residents and landowners, and other interested groups and individuals need to guide the future preservation and development of Harris over the next 20+ years.

Goals, objectives and policies are defined below:

- § **Goals** are broad statements that express general public priorities about how the county should approach development issues during the next 20+ years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.
- § **Objectives** are more specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.
- § **Policies** are rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. The policies are intended to be used by decision-makers on a day to day basis.

§ ***Programs*** are specific projects or services that are advised to achieve plan goals, objectives, and policies. Programs are sometimes included in the same list as “policies” and are sometimes included in the same section as “recommendations,” depending on the chapter.

The overall vision statement to guide the future preservation and development in the Town of Harris over the 20-year planning period. Goals, objectives, policies and recommendations for each plan element are provided in the corresponding chapter. This Chapter does not discuss specific objectives, policies, and programs which are instead included in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

III. AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter contains a compilation of background data, goals, objectives, policies, and recommended programs for agricultural preservation, natural resource conservation, and cultural resource protection, as required by §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

A. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

The following is a brief overview of the character, location, and viability of farming activity in the Town of Harris as of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

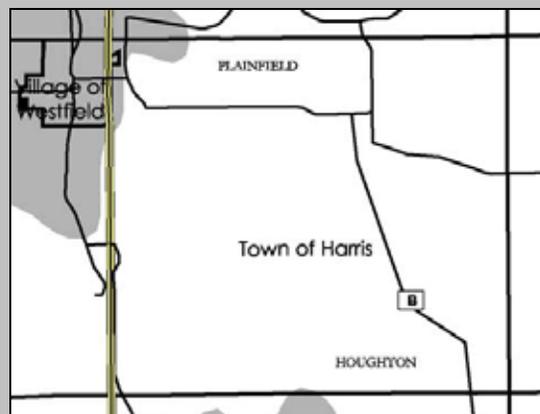
1. CHARACTER OF FARMING

According to the 2003 land use inventory, approximately **41 percent** of the Town is used for farming, including row crops, forage land, and grazing land. As of 1997, there were 26 active farms operating in the Town of Harris, which was down from 29 farms back in 1990. Of the 26 farms, 11 were dairy operations. There was about 7,200 acres of farmland on the Town's tax rolls in 1997, which amounts to 37 percent of the Town's land area. Countywide, trends in farming mirror the region and state, with an overall decline in the number of full time farm operators and a drop in average farm sizes. According to the ECWRPC, the number of farms in Marquette County decreased from 540 in 1990 to 530 in 1999. Over that same time period, the average farm size in the County decreased from 278 to 257 acres.

2. ASSESSMENT OF FARMLAND VIABILITY

A very small portion of the Town's land area contains soils that have good textures, moderate permeability, adequate depth, low erodability, and are free from flooding. **Class I and II soils shown in gray** in Figure 9 are located in the far northwest corner of the Town near the Village of Westfield. (A more detailed soils map and information for the township is available in the **Soils of Marquette County Manual**.) The U.S. Soil Conservation Service ranks soil suitability for different uses into eight capability classes, with Class I soils being considered prime farmland when drained, and Class VIII soils being useful for recreational purposes or natural habitat areas only. Class III and IV soils (which include Plainfield and Houghton soils) cover most of the Town's land area and these soils have moderate to severe limitations which reduce the number and type of crops that can be grown and require special conservation practices to prevent erosion.

Figure 9: Soil Suitability for Agriculture



3. FARMLAND PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Town of Harris farmers can participate in federal, state, and local programs and initiatives that are intended to **preserve long-term farming activities**. The 2002 Farm Bill reauthorized several federal programs, including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that protects sensitive farmland; the Wetland Reserve Program that restores wetlands, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program that improves wildlife and fishery habitat; Grazing Lands Conservation Incentive that provides cost-sharing to improve grazing lands; and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program that cost-shares conservation practices (this program is a partnership between the USDA Farm Service Agency and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service).

Marquette County farm operators can enroll in the **State's Farmland Preservation Program**, which provides income tax credits to property owners who agree to keep their land in agricultural use. Land enrolled in this program must be either zoned for exclusive agricultural use or enrolled by contract. As of 2002, approximately 14 percent of Marquette County's property owners eligible for this program claimed credits in their 2001 tax returns. There are no participating Harris landowners in this program.

B. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal: Preserve productive farmland areas for continued agricultural use

Objectives:

- a. Protect farm operations from incompatible land uses and activities that may adversely affect the capital investment in agricultural land, improvements, and equipment.
- b. In productive farming areas, limit the amount of non-farm uses.
- c. Work to preserve farming as a viable occupation and way of life within the Town.

Policies:

1. Utilize this *Plan* and zoning and subdivision rules to **minimize nonagricultural development in productive farming areas**, while still providing limited opportunities to divide off lots.
2. **Promote the continuation of the "family" farm** by supporting agriculture-support businesses, and providing families with opportunities for small non-farm businesses to supplement farm income.
3. **Encourage long-term farmers to participate in the State's Farmland Preservation Program.**

C. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

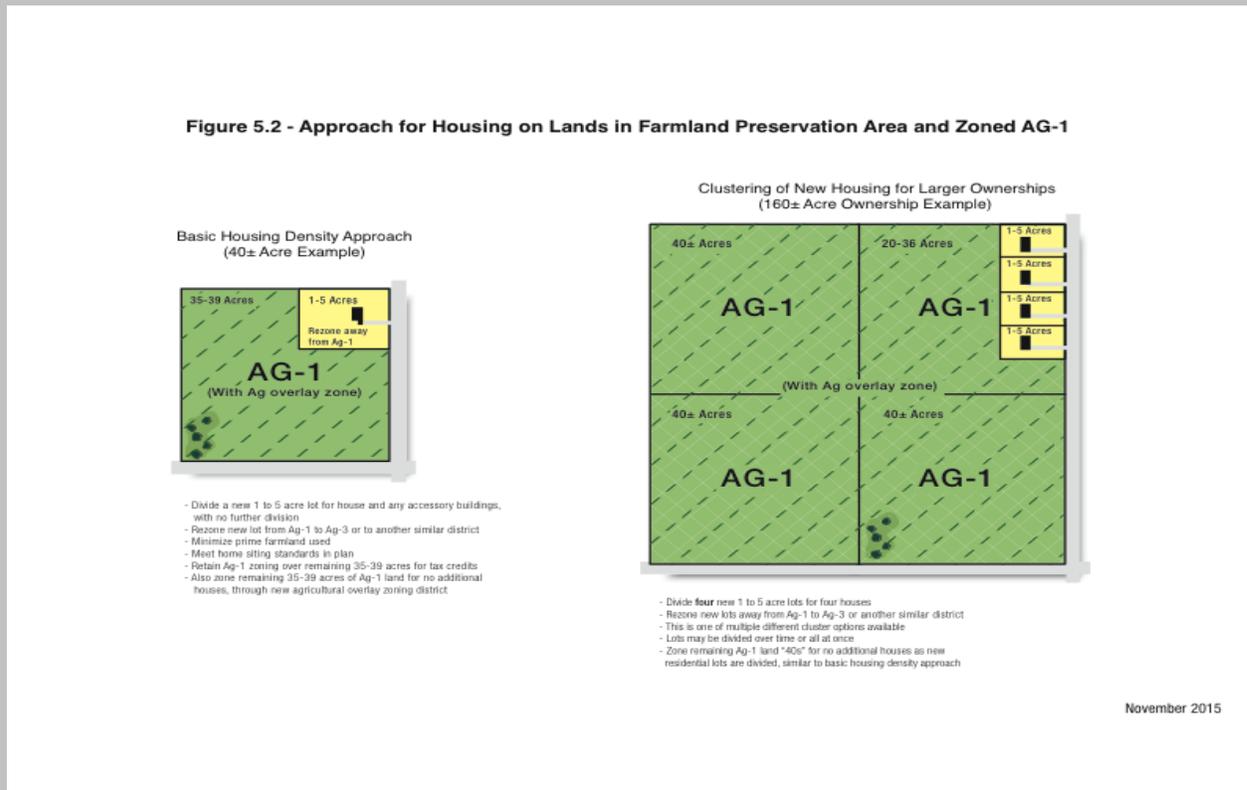
Expanding on the local planning policies listed above, this *Plan* advises the following strategies to preserve the Town's farmland:

1. MINIMIZE NONAGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN PRODUCTIVE FARMING AREAS

As noted earlier in this chapter, there is a small portion of Harris containing prime (Class I and II) farmland soils. However, there are several active dairy and row crop farm operations in the town. This *Plan* recommends that the Town **support the continuation of productive farming operations** by seeking to minimize the amount of non-farm development in and around these farmlands. A large amount of residential development in agricultural areas makes farming extremely difficult to continue. There are numerous conflicts between such uses, including, noise, odors, use of roads, and hours of operation. Further, the intrusion of nonagricultural uses in farming areas brings a sense of impermanence, which discourages further investment by remaining farmers. To avoid this situation, this *Plan* advocates an approach to minimize the amount of residential development in the Town's productive farming areas.

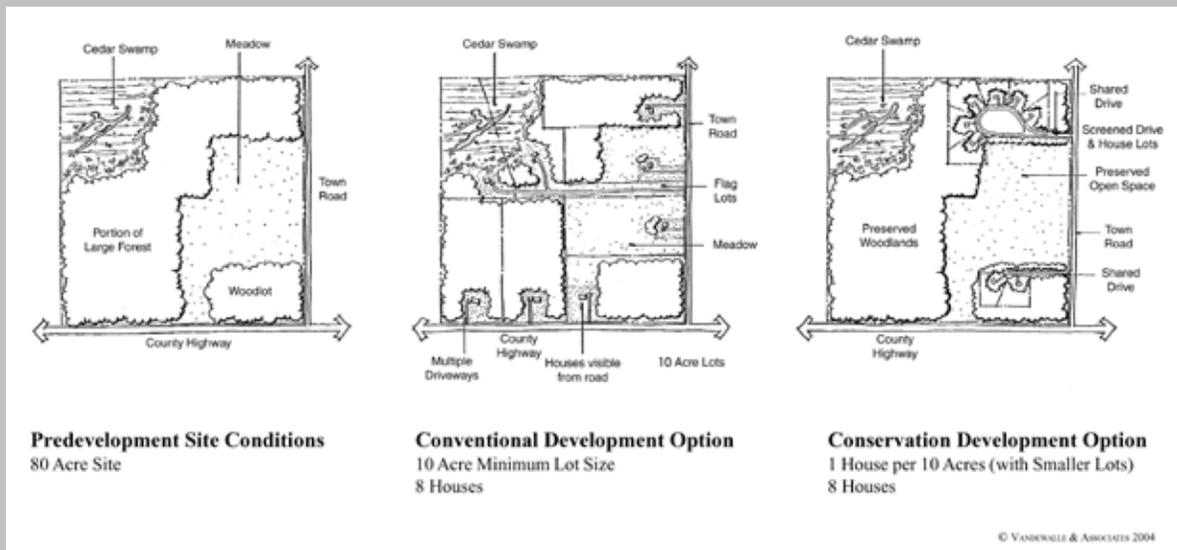
As described more fully in Chapter Four: Land Use, the Town mapped the Farmland Preservation Area planned land use designation over areas where farming activity is best suited. This designation allows a range of agricultural uses and only very low-density housing (one home per 40 acres). Marquette County’s Prime Agricultural (AG-1) zoning district is a compatible district to guide development in the Town’s Farmland Preservation Areas.

Figure 10: Potential Development Options in Farmland Preservation Areas



The Town mapped the *Rural Lands* designation over areas where agricultural soils might be less productive, or where farming has been more of a marginal land use activity. This designation allows a range of agricultural uses and low-density housing (one home per 10 acres). This designation does not, however, necessarily promote 10 acre lot sizes; rather this *Plan* advocates smaller residential lot sizes in rural areas. For example, while the *Rural Lands* designation allows one home per 10 acres, those **homes could be clustered on small lots**, such as two or three acres (see graphic on following page). This clustering concept also advocates guiding available home sites away from productive farm soils—perhaps in an adjacent woodlot, at the edge of a tilled field, or on other soils with low productivity. These techniques avoid the breaking up of large farm parcels, while still providing some non-farm economic return for the landowner. This *Plan* also recommends **limiting commercial and industrial development in *Rural Lands*** areas to only those uses that support farming activities, such as home occupations, implement dealerships, feed operations, greenhouses, garden centers, and the sale or display of farming products.

Figure 11: Examples of Conventional and Cluster Development (Rural Lands)



Marquette County's General Agricultural (**AG-2**) zoning district is a compatible district to guide development in the Town's *Rural Lands* area. A complete discussion of these and other types of tools to implement this recommended *Rural Lands* designation is discussed in Chapter Nine: Implementation.

2. PROMOTE THE CONTINUATION OF THE "FAMILY" FARM

The Town planning process showed support for the "family farm," and general reluctance to promote large "factory" farm operations. Farmers and local governments have little control over the price for agricultural products, which are set by federal policy and price subsidies. However, interested parties can work locally on a variety of efforts to **improve farm family income**. These efforts may include:

- § Working with UW-Extension and County staff to increase efficiency in farm operations, provide technical assistance including exploring **alternative farming techniques** (e.g., grazing), and provide advice on other financial and technical support opportunities.
- § Working to promote specialty agriculture, directed primarily to providing food and products for the local market. On the demand side, the community and farmers could work with local stores to promote sales of local products and help develop Farmers Markets. Strategies to **promote value-added agriculture**, directly market farm products to consumers, participate in the Agricultural Development Zone Program, and promote agricultural-based tourism are provided in Chapter Eight: Economic Development.
- § Work with the County to continue to allow "cottage industries" and other **farm family businesses** in the County's agricultural zoning districts, and modify those districts to provide additional opportunities as appropriate.

3. ENCOURAGE FARMERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

In the 2013 tax year, around 30 Marquette County farmers claimed farmland preservation tax credits, totaling only \$30,000 in Wisconsin tax dollars being returned to the County's farmers and economy each year. This figure is dwarfed by the several hundred thousand in credits being returned to farmers in nearby counties. Increasing the credits received in Marquette County would enhance farm income, promote farm facility and equipment investments, and boost spending in the County.

The level of awareness of the currently opportunities and obligations under the tax credit program could be improved. As the Town does not administer the program itself, it intends to work with Marquette County, DATCP and other State agencies to engage in an educational effort to:

- § Inform Town farmers of the \$7.50 per acre tax credit available, if planned as a “farmland preservation area” and zoned AG-1. Some farmers may still believe that the formula is more complex and tied to farm income, as it was before 2009.
- § Educate farmers on the conservation requirements associated with tax credit eligibility, including linking them with providers of and funding for conservation and nutrient management plans, and opportunities for self- certification to prepare their own plans.

D. NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

The Town of Harris’s rural landscape is defined not only by rolling farm fields and farmsteads, but also by its wetlands, lakes, streams, woodlots, hills, and other natural features. Map 2 depicts the Town’s key natural resources, some of which are described in more detail below.

1. LANDFORMS/TOPOGRAPHY/NON-METALLIC RESOURCES

Harris’s landforms and topography are characterized by several **glacial advances and retreats** that took place over northeastern and central Wisconsin some 15,000 to 25,000 years ago. As a result of this activity, numerous unique geologic and topographic features emerged such as escarpments, outwash plains, lake plains, terminal moraines, ground moraines, and drumlins. Each of these features has its own unique qualities that relate to land use planning, including: structural suitability, groundwater interaction, and the provision of non-metallic minerals to serve growing development in the town. The entire County lies in a very significant region geologically, home to several stone quarries and masonry industries.

Extensive deposits of sand and gravel are found in several areas of the County and available for **non-metallic mining**. Under State Statutes (295.20), landowners who want to register their property as a nonmetallic mining deposit are required to notify each county, city, village and/or town that has zoning authority over their property. Registrations must be recorded at the County Register of Deeds in the County where the mineral deposit is located. State law limits the ability of a municipality or a county to rezone or otherwise interfere with the future extraction of a mineral resource from a registered nonmetallic mineral deposit. It is important to note that zoning changes prohibiting mining on land registered as a marketable nonmetallic mining deposit cannot take effect during the registration period. Registration is effective for 10 years and renewable for an additional 10 years. In addition, registration on property with active mining operations can be renewed for as long as mining is ongoing. Zoning changes may take affect after the registration has expired.

County zoning allows nonmetallic mining, or quarrying, operations as a conditional use within the following zoning districts: Agricultural – Residential District (AG-3); General Agricultural District (AG-2); Prime Agricultural District (AG-1); General Purpose District (GP), and; and Rural Center District (RC). At the time this plan was written, Marquette County does not have a register of marketable mineral deposits. However, the County does maintain a list of active and inactive nonmetallic mine sites. Six of these sites are actively mined. There are no active quarries located in Harris.

2. GENERAL SOILS INFORMATION

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. As defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, the soils in Marquette County are of eight major types: *Plainfield-Gotham*, *Houghton-Adrain*, *Oshtemo-Gotham*, *Delton-Briggsville-Mundelein*, *Granby-Tedrow-Moundville*, *Lapeer-Pardeeville-Metea*, *Gotham-Mecan*, and the *Mecan-Metea* associations. The following is a summary of the five most common soil associations found in the Town of Harris.

- § The *Plainfield-Gotham* association is found in the western portion of Harris. Most of the areas in this association remain in woodland, but some areas have been cleared and are used for agriculture. The steeper soils are used mainly for pasture and maintained as woodland. This soil association poses few limitations for development and on-site sewage disposal.
- § The soils found in the *Granby-Tedrow-Moundville* association are poorly drained and include the Yahara and Keowns soils. This association is distributed mostly in the southeast portion of Harris and occupies low lying areas and terraces and outwash plains. This soil association poses moderate to severe limitations for development and on-site sewage disposal.

Map 2: Natural Areas

- § The *Houghton-Adrain* association covers much of Sections 2 and 11 northeast of Harris Lake, and includes organic soils underlain by stratified loamy and sandy soils at about three feet. These soils are very poorly drained. Most of the areas in this association remain in native vegetation of sedges, grasses and reeds. In some areas the soils have been drained and cultivated. These soils are generally unsuitable for development or on-site sewage disposal.
- § Much of the Town east of the Montello River is covered by the *Oshtemo-Gotham* soil association, which includes soils which are loamy underlain by sandy material at about three feet. These soils are well drained. This soil association poses few limitations for development and on-site sewage disposal.
- § The far southwestern part of Town (Sections 29, 30, 31, and 32) is covered by *Mecan-Metea* soils. Most of the areas in this association are well drained and suited for farming. This soil association poses slight to moderate limitations for development and on-site sewage disposal.

3. DRAINAGE BASINS

Marquette County is divided into seven major watersheds, all of which lie within the Upper Fox River Basin. Most of the Town of Harris lies in the **Montello River Watershed**, which drains the northwest part of the County and is the largest in the County covering 126 square miles of agriculture, forestland, and the developed areas of Westfield, Harrisville and parts of the City of Montello. This watershed flows in a southeast direction toward Montello. Map 2 shows the watershed divides in the area.

4. GROUNDWATER

Groundwater supplies nearly all of the water for domestic, commercial and industrial uses in Marquette County. In the Town of Harris, groundwater is primarily used for rural domestic, irrigation, and stock watering uses. In general, groundwater use has increased in the County and throughout the region as urban areas continue to grow and require significant quantities of water for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The increase in rural housing developments, each with their own private well, also places demands on the existing aquifer system. According to a recent report by the U.S. Geological Survey, there are 2.5 million gallons of groundwater used every day for municipal, private well domestic and agricultural uses in Marquette County. The **quality of the Town's groundwater is relatively good**. According to data from the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center in 2002, of the 560 private wells sampled in Marquette County, 7 percent tested with a nitrate-N level over the health standard of 10 milligrams per liter. This was one of the lower percentage readings in the entire East Central region. From the same data source, of the 652 private wells sampled for bacteria, 12 percent tested positive—which are results that are similar to surrounding counties in the region. A statewide model was developed by WisDNR to assess the potential for groundwater contamination for the entire East Central Region based on a number of geologic, soil, and aquifer conditions. **The highest susceptibility for contamination exists in areas with sandy soils, thin soils, or fractured bedrock, which includes most of the Town of Harris.**

2002 Town Survey Results

When asked to identify the important future planning issues facing the township, residents chose “protecting groundwater and the lakes, rivers, and streams...” Residents wish to maintain or improve the present quality of ground and surface water.

5. SURFACE WATERS

The most prominent water feature in Harris is **Harris Lake**, which has residential development along its western shore and undeveloped land on its northern and eastern shores. The hamlet of Harrisville is located on the southwest corner of the lake. Important rivers and creeks in the Town include Montello River and Klawitter Creek. There are five functioning dams and one abandoned dam in the Town of Harris. Four of the functioning dams are privately owned and located along the Montello River. The largest is the **Harrisville Dam** which is owned by the Town. This 15-foot high dam creates the 245-acre Harris millpond. In the state of Wisconsin, dams are classified as having a “low,” “significant,” or “high” hazard rating. The Harrisville Dam, which also includes a privately-owned sluiceway and power plant, is

rated as a “high” hazard, meaning that if it failed it would put lives at risk. The state’s hazard rating is no based on the physical attributes, quality or strength of the dam itself, but rather the potential for loss of life or property damage should the dam fail. The Harrisville Dam was last inspected in January 2003.

6. FLOODPLAINS

In Wisconsin, **floods are one of the most common types of natural disasters** and each year communities suffer millions of dollars in flood damages. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplain areas in the state. These are areas predicted to be inundated with flood waters in the 100-year storm event (e.g., a storm that has a 1% chance of happening in any given year). The State requires County regulation of development in floodplains. Map 2 shows the general boundaries of mapped floodplains in Harris in dark blue. The National Flood Insurance Program maps produced by FEMA should be referenced for official delineation and elevations of floodplain boundaries. Development is strongly discouraged in floodplains to avoid both on-site and up- and downstream property damage.

7. WETLANDS

Wetland areas cover about 22 percent of the Town’s land area. These wetlands are important for aquifer recharge, groundwater and surface water quality improvement, and wildlife habitat, and serve social functions such as open space, recreation, and aesthetics. Historically, the greatest threats to wetlands in the County, region and state have been agricultural drainage and urban development. The larger wetland areas in the Town are found along the Montello River and the Westfield and Klawitter creeks. All known wetland areas over 2 acres have been identified and mapped by WisDNR through its Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory, which was used to create the wetland layer on Map 2. Generally, County zoning permits development in these areas, but construction must be set back 75 feet from a wetland edge.

8. WOODLANDS

According to the 2003 existing land use inventory, approximately **32 percent of the Town is covered by woodlands**. The uplands contain mostly Oak, Pine and Central Hardwoods; while the lowlands contain mostly tamarack, black spruce and bottomland hardwoods. Countywide, the majority of woodland is made up of poor quality “scrub oak” that has low value as timber.

As of September 2003, there were over 972 acres of privately-owned forestland in the Town of Harris enrolled in either the Forest Crop Law (FCL) or Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, both administered by WisDNR (see sidebar for more information on these state forest programs). Unlike the FCL program, MFL landowners are not required to keep their land open for public recreational use. As a result, none of the acreage enrolled in MFL program are “open” for hunting, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and sight-seeing.

9. ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES

The Town lies in an ecological region known as the “**Central Sand Hills.**” This region at the eastern edge of the old Glacial Lake Wisconsin and contains a series of glacial moraines and partially covered glacial outwash. Pre-settlement vegetation consisted of oak forests, oak savanna, and a variety of prairie types. According to the County’s 1999 *Outdoor Recreation Plan*, there is one oak savanna site in the county, the Black Oak Savanna east of the Village of Westfield.

STATE FOREST PROGRAMS

The Forest Crop Law (FCL) program, enacted in 1927, allows private landowners to defer tax payment on timber until after the harvest, or when the contract is terminated. FCL enrolled parcels must be at least 40 acres of contiguous forestland and be open to the public for hunting and fishing. Permanent houses are not allowed on these parcels. New enrollment for this program terminated in 1986.

To qualify for the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, which was enacted after 1986, forest land must be at least 10 contiguous acres and participating landowners must adopt a forest management plan. In exchange, their land is assessed for tax purposes at a rate below the state average.

10. RARE SPECIES OCCURRENCES

WisDNR's Natural Heritage Inventory program maintains data on the general location and status of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species in the state. This data is obtained through field inventory. As of September 2003, there were several documented occurrences of rare or threatened species in Harris. Map 2 shows that these occurrences were reported somewhere in Sections 11, 12, 14, 20, 25, 26, 34, 35, and 36 of the Town. More specific information on location and type of specie is available from the WisDNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources. The **Karner blue butterfly**, added to the Federal Endangered Species list in 1992, is found in the northern half of Marquette County. On public rights of way where the protected blue butterfly existing, town and county highway departments engaging in mowing and maintenance need to get a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

E. NATURAL RESOURCE GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal: Protect the Town's natural features

Objectives:

- a. Preserve the Town's groundwater, lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and open spaces to the extent practical.
- b. Protect and enhance surface water, ground water, and shoreline quality within Harris.
- c. Direct development away from environmentally sensitive areas and productive forest lands.
- d. Pursue opportunities that support both natural resource protection and rural economic development.
- e. Encourage the use of soil conservation practices and the management of woodlands.

Policies:

1. **Protect "environmental corridors"** (shown on Map 4) as a composite of the Town's most sensitive natural areas, including wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes.
2. **Monitor dam maintenance, repair and removal proposals** in the Town.
3. **Cooperate with other units of government** and non-profit land conservation agencies on preservation of natural resources which are under shared authority or cross government boundaries.
4. **Protect surface water quality** (e.g., waterways, drainage channels, lakes, ponds, and wetlands) by supporting streambank management, natural shoreline restoration practices, erosion control, river clean-up initiatives, proper agricultural practices, stormwater management and use of buffer areas.
5. Work to **protect rare species and wildlife habitat areas**.
6. **Protect groundwater quality** through the proper placement and dispersion of new on-site wastewater systems, appropriate maintenance and replacement of older systems, and minimizing excessive irrigation practices.
7. **Support long-term woodland management efforts**, encourage forest landowners to enroll in the State's Managed Forest Land Program, and promote best management practices for forestry activities.
8. **Build on the Town's natural resources to promote** local economic development.
9. **Carefully review proposals for mineral extraction sites and operations**.
10. **Support efforts to educate citizens** on the tools, programs, and incentives that protect the natural environment.

F. NATURAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Expanding on the local planning policies listed above, this section of the *Plan* provides specific recommendations for conserving the Town's natural areas.

1. MAP AND PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDORS

The Town should protect environmental corridors which are, in effect, a composite of important individual elements of the natural resource base. They have immeasurable environmental, ecological, passive recreational, stormwater management, groundwater protection and recharge, erosion control, wildlife, timber, and scenic value. Environmental corridors also have severe limitations for development; therefore, minimizing development in these areas also protects private property. Environmental corridors generally occur in a linear (corridor) pattern on the landscape (see Map 4 for *Environmental Corridor* delineations). The environmental corridors depicted in Map 4 are necessarily general and should be used to identify general areas where development may not be appropriate. As mapped within Harris, environmental corridors include the following areas:

- § Wisconsin DNR-identified wetlands as mapped in the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory and subject to existing County zoning. Wetlands of five acres or greater are included. This layer may not include all wetlands that are subject to state and/or federal disturbance rules.
- § Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) designated floodplains subject to existing County zoning. These general floodplain delineations represent the areas potentially subject to the 100-year flood. All areas subject to flooding are not necessarily reflected in mapped floodplains (or within the environmental corridor delineation). A flood shadow map is available for reference in the Township Community Room.
- § Lands with steep slopes of 20 percent or greater. Due to the instability of these soils and erosion concerns, development on these steep slopes is not advisable.

New development should generally be discouraged in environmental corridors, and is very limited by existing State-mandated county zoning. Development types should be limited to those which will not impair the resource, and which are compatible to existing and proposed uses on surrounding lands. Generally appropriate uses include open space, agriculture and forestry activities using Best Management Practices. New homes and other buildings should not be placed in these areas if other, more appropriate, building sites are available outside the environmental corridor. Sensitivity to surrounding natural resources should be the guiding principal when reviewing the appropriateness of development in mapped environmental corridors.

2. MONITOR DAM MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR PROPOSALS

There are two functioning dams in Harris along the Montello River System. Over the planning period, any change in water surface level or water flow due to dam repair or removal can have significant impacts not only the water resource, but also the enjoyment and use of the resource by local residents and visitors. This *Plan* recommends that the Town be kept notified and involved in any decisions involving dam maintenance, repair, or removal.

The Town should work closely with the WisDNR to consider dam management options. Aging dams or those in need of repair may be community safety hazards and cause environmental degradation. Owners of dams in a high hazard condition have the option of repairing the dam to meet standards or abandoning the dam and removing it from the waterway. When repair is deemed less desirable from a financial, safety or ecological standpoint, dam removal may be an option. Decisions to remove or repair deteriorating dams in Harris should be based on a careful analysis of economic, social, and environmental factors.

Dam repair is often much more costly than removing a deteriorating dam structure. The WisDNR is required to review and approve all applications for dam abandonment and removal. The WisDNR’s role is to help the public understand the various management options and the benefits of dam removal, and assisting with funding to buyout an owner’s interest in the dam. The decision to remove an unsafe or abandoned dam can be made only after an established protocol is followed. This process generally consists of:

- § Inspection of dam by a certified engineer
- § Contact and notification to dam owner of any problems or hazards that exist
- § An official order to repair the dam to meet standards, or dam removal
- § Public information session to gain public input
- § Notification and/or opportunity for public hearing prior to WisDNR action (Chapter 31 of Wisc. Stats)
- § If dam removal is pursued, an Environmental Assessment may be required

State, and federal resources for dam removal and associated local improvements that communities can pursue include:

- § Dam Maintenance, Repair, Modification, and Removal Grant program funds a maximum of 50% of eligible project costs that include dam repair, reconstruction, modification or abandonment, or removal. Funding priority is determined by the size of the dam, downstream hazard rating, downstream zoning, dam repair costs, and the financial need of the community.
- § Small and Abandoned Dam Grant Removal Program assists communities, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, and private dam owners can to remove small or abandoned dams. The DNR will fund 50 percent of eligible project costs, with a maximum grant award of \$50,000. Eligible project costs include labor, materials, and equipment directly related to planning the actual removal, the dam removal itself, and the restoration of the impoundment.
- § State Assistance is available through the Wisconsin Stewardship Program for improvements associated with dam removal

3. PROTECT SURFACE WATER QUALITY

The 1999 *Marquette County Land and Water Resource Management Plan* advocated many recommendations designed to protect and enhance water quality in Marquette County. It recommended an update to the County’s 1994 Animal Waste Storage Ordinance to incorporate updated standards and specifications, and the on-going commitment to promote landowner participation in state and federal grant programs.

DAM REMOVAL PROCESS

Wisconsin communities have several options for becoming involved in this process, but ultimately it may hinge on regular communications with the WisDNR. Some communities have chosen to be involved in decisions to repair or remove unsafe dams within their jurisdiction by.

- § Pursuing assistance from the WisDNR to develop a removal plan. In addition to removing the structure, this plan may develop parkland within former impoundment areas. The DNR can work with the community to establish a re-vegetation plan and reconstruct channels. Some communities have created extensive park areas with trails, canoe launches, athletic fields, and other public amenities.
- § Engaging in community visioning and public involvement to create a public forum for discussion of the dam removal and a cooperative, future-oriented approach to planning for the site
- § Using dam removal to spur revitalization efforts including river-related development such as wayside parks, an area dedicated to the history of the dams and the river, a river walkway, and the revitalization of their riverside historic district.
- § Extending benefits to the local economy by encouraging activities and local businesses associated with river recreation such as canoeing, kayaking, and fishing.

Several efforts at the State level have also been undertaken in recent years that impact water quality planning and regulation. In 2002, WisDNR and DATCP established administrative rules to address nonpoint pollution sources (i.e. where contaminants do not come from a pipe or other easily identifiable sources). Much of the work for implementing the rules will fall on county land and water conservation staff. This *Plan* does not seek to cover all of these efforts in depth. Instead, general recommendations designed to support the objectives of protecting the quality of the Town's water resources are offered below.

River Clean Up Program

Cleaning up the Town's rivers to reduce the number of obstacles (e.g., downed tree limbs) and to make them more scenic was identified as a key planning issue in Harris. The Town should organize and sponsor a river or stream clean-up program for local residents who want to learn more about and improve the quality of the Town's water resources. The Town could utilize the support, information materials, "how-to" packets, press releases, and potential sponsor lists from Wisconsin's Water Action Volunteers---a program coordinated through a partnership between WisDNR and UW Extension. The Town could seek out citizens, civic groups, 4-H clubs, and other volunteer groups to participate in the clean-up program. The effort could be held in conjunction with the National River Cleanup Week, which is traditionally held during the second or third week in May. More information on the state's Water Action Volunteers and River Clean Up program is available from WisDNR.

Lake Quality Assessment

The Town of Harris should support a countywide effort to adopt and implement a lakes classification system. Lakes classification is a management tool that helps protect an area's lakes by applying protection strategies based on certain characteristics. By tailoring strategies for lake management and protection by class, rather than each individually, a community can achieve standards of management sensitive to the unique characteristics of an individual lake. Lake classification systems generally consider the type, size, shape, and location of a water body and the intensity of surrounding development or land use activities. Lakes can be grouped based on hydrology, average depth, surface area, shoreline configuration, susceptibility to pollution, and sensitivity to recreational use.

Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Plans

Construction site erosion control and ongoing stormwater management are increasingly important issues in Marquette County. Unmanaged construction sites are one of the greatest contributors to off-site sediment runoff. Under a recent change to State law, erosion control plans are required for all construction sites over 1 acre in area. The Town and County should also work to promote ongoing stormwater management for subdivisions and other larger projects. Techniques include natural drainage swales and retention and detention basins. These techniques control the quantity and improve the quality of water run-off during storms. These techniques are particularly critical in shoreland areas and may serve as important groundwater recharge areas. All plans are to be submitted to the County Conservationist and Zoning offices for review and comment.

4. PROTECT GROUNDWATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY

Groundwater is the source for nearly all of the Town's drinking water supply. If groundwater is removed from an aquifer more quickly than it is recharged, the amount of water available in the aquifer is reduced. This may be of particular concern where water tables are dropping rapidly resulting from growth-induced groundwater use, which could be the case near the Village of Westfield over the planning period.

Groundwater protection is critical. This *Plan* supports several efforts to protect groundwater quality and quantity, including the following:

- § *Avoid planning for new development within about ¼ mile of open and closed landfills.* To protect drinking water quality, the WisDNR requires a separation of 1,200 feet (a little less than ¼ mile) between open or closed landfills and nearby private water supply wells. This separation is measured from the edge of the nearest exaction area or, if unknown because it's a filled site, from the site's property line. Map 4 shows the 1,200 foot buffer around the closed landfill site in Section 14.

- § *Work with the County to ensure the proper placement and maintenance of on-site waste disposal (septic) systems.* Improper placement and maintenance, particularly of both old systems and chemical and biological treatment systems allowed under the new “COMM 83” law, can result in groundwater contamination. In addition, an over-concentration of on-site septic systems can increase the probability of groundwater pollution. On-site system recommendations are addressed more completely in Chapter Six: Utilities and Community Facilities”.
- § *Remain informed and involved in decisions pertaining to high-capacity wells.* At the time this plan was written, permits for high capacity wells (those withdrawing more than 100,000 gallons per day) must be registered with and permitted by WisDNR. The DNR will not approve wells that impair public water utility supplies. Wells drawing more than 2 million gallons per day are evaluated in terms of whether they impair public water rights, future water use plans, or cause adverse groundwater effects. Should potential new sites be proposed in Harris over the planning period, the Town should remain informed and involved in any WisDNR decisions regarding high-capacity well decisions through regular communication and providing public comment during Environmental Impact Statement review periods.
- § *Work with the Village of Westfield to promote groundwater recharge in areas with significant new development.* The Town could also consider participating in cooperative groundwater management plans with municipalities, industries, local and regional planning agencies, and state agencies where appropriate, should Groundwater Protection Areas or Groundwater Management Areas be formed in the future.

FOREST COOPERATIVES

Encouraging land owners to form and participate in forest landowner cooperatives is another way the Town of Harris can promote the preservation of its woodland resources. The objective of forest cooperatives is to help small landowners benefit from their woodlands, while encouraging ecologically sound management principles. Forest cooperatives can facilitate information sharing, cooperative management planning, joint marketing, and promote value-added processing and marketing of forest products.

Forest owner cooperatives are set up as a member-controlled business, carrying out its activities in a manner that returns a net profit to landowners based on their share of the wood harvested and processed. To minimize upfront costs and promote sustainable forest management, these cooperatives can provide the following services to its members: education, identification of forestry professionals to assist with management plans and other forestry services, processing and marketing wood, sawing contracts, and drying and milling information.

There are several resources available to help interested landowners form forest cooperatives including WisDNR, Cooperative Development Services, and the Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives.

5. SUPPORT LONG-TERM WOODLAND MANAGEMENT EFFORTS

The woodlands of Harris Township provide timber resources, wildlife habitat, soil retention, improved water quality, and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. It is recommended that landowners utilize all available knowledge and resources possible in the management of their woodlands to maintain or increase the size and improve the quality of their timber. Technical, and sometimes financial, help is available from WI DNR, Consulting Foresters, UW-Extension, and the Farm Service Agency. Wisconsin Woodland Owners is an association that often holds field days and informational seminars on a wide variety of forestry subjects.

The Managed Forest Law is a State program designed to retain woodland as productive forests. It is available to owners of ten or more contiguous wooded acres. Lands that qualify for entry are taxed at a reduced rate for the duration of a 25- or 50-year contract. In return for the lower taxes, the owner must comply with a DNR approved management plan that outlines the forestry operations to be done during the contract period. It is a complicated law and contains penalties for early withdrawals or contract violations. Details and applications are available from the WIDNR Forester serving the County.

6. PROMOTE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR LOGGING ACTIVITIES

This plan recommends that before any logging activities commence in the Town of Harris, the landowner prepare, or have prepared, a management plan that covers the WI DNR's Best Management Practices for road construction, timber harvesting, and site preparation. These forestry BMPs are designed to reduce the amount of erosion due to logging activities and protect water quality specific to the site. Most reputable loggers are familiar with the basic Best Management Practices and are willing to implement them into their operations near streams or lakes. The DNR forester serving Marquette Co. can work with landowners to develop a forest management plan and he also has information on BMPs.

7. PROTECT RARE SPECIES AND WILDLIFE HABITAT AREAS

Preservation of wildlife habitat and rare plant and animal species has many benefits. It enhances the quality of residents' lives, preserves rural character, increases pride and stewardship in private land ownership, and enhances recreation and tourism. Preserving habitat and protecting rare species at the local level may also minimize the potential that a species will officially become "threatened" or "endangered," thereby requiring federal intervention under the Endangered Species Act.

The WisDNR—Bureau of Endangered Resources maintains a database entitled the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI). Map 2 shows all sections in the Town where rare plant or animal species and natural communities have been documented in that database, but does not identify the specific location in that section. NHI data is collected in the field on a continuous basis by biologists. However, it is important to note that not all sections of the Town of Harris have been inventoried for the presence of rare species. Because rare species are vulnerable to collection and intentional destruction, the exact locations and type of rare species is not made readily accessible. However, this data is available through submittal of a "Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory Request Form."

The Town should continue to properly manage its road right-of-ways in compliance with USFWS rules intended to protect the Karner blue butterfly, which was added to the Federal Endangered Species list in 1992. Within the butterfly's habitat area (which includes much of northern Marquette County), examples of potential disturbance activities that require a USFWS permit include highway and utility corridor construction and maintenance such as mowing and prescribed burning.

8. BUILD ON THE TOWN'S NATURAL RESOURCES TO PROMOTE TOURISM

As identified and described in Chapter Two, the possibility for expanding Marquette County as a center for nature-based tourism provides the opportunity for residents to enjoy financial benefits of increased economic development while simultaneously preserving the area's unspoiled environment. These opportunities are particularly well-suited for the Town of Harris, given its proximity to growing urban areas, transportation accessibility, abundant and unspoiled natural resources, and clusters of surrounding tourist destinations. Bike and snowmobile maps are available from various county offices and businesses.

The area's abundant natural areas are particularly well-suited to attract the growth in wildlife watching. In particular, birding has become big business and there is a movement to establish The Great Wisconsin Birding Trail, a proposed statewide auto trail that would lead people to parks, historic sites, rivers, lakes, and biking trails in Wisconsin. This trail system and accompanying trail map is envisioned to serve all types of visitors from the die-hard birding enthusiast to the curious visitor looking for something different. This *Plan* recommends that the Town, working with the County, chambers of commerce, and private organizations, identify potential sites or a countywide "Trail Loop" system for nomination on The Great Wisconsin Birding Trail.

9. CAREFULLY REVIEW PROPOSALS FOR MINERAL EXTRACTION SITES

While there are no mineral extraction (e.g., quarry) operations in Harris, over the planning period the Town should be aware of and carefully review any proposal for such land use activity. Mineral resources have potentially significant economic, community, and environmental impacts. Mineral resources are placed in two general categories—nonmetallic (e.g., sand and gravel) and metallic (e.g., gold, silver, cop-

per). Wisconsin now has administrative rules on the reclamation of nonmetallic mines (NR 135). The rules require virtually all nonmetallic mines operating on or after September 1, 2001 to obtain a nonmetallic mine operation and reclamation permit. The new State standards address the reclamation of mineral extraction sites after extraction operations are complete. The Town should work with the County to assure that applications for approval of extraction operations present a clear picture of proposed activities, through submittal of the information listed below before approvals are issued.

The applicant should submit a written statement containing the following information:

- § General description of the operation.
- § The types and quantities of the materials that would be extracted.
- § Proposed dates to begin extraction, end extraction, and complete reclamation.
- § Geologic composition and depth to the mineral deposit.
- § Existing use of the land; existing natural and archeological features on and adjacent to the land.
- § Where extracted materials would be hauled and over what roads.
- § Types, quantities, and frequency of use of equipment to extract, process, and haul.
- § Whether blasting, drilling, crushing, screening, or washing would be performed on site.
- § Any proposed temporary or permanent structures (e.g., scales, offices).
- § Proposed hours of operation.
- § Proposed use after reclamation.
- § Any special measures that will be used for spill and dust prevention and control.

The applicant should also submit a detailed site/operations plan map, drawn to scale by a qualified professional, and showing the following information:

- § Boundaries of the extraction site.
- § Existing contour lines.
- § Existing roads, driveways, and utilities.
- § Existing natural features, including lakes, streams, floodplains, and wetlands.
- § Proposed erosion control and stormwater management strategies and areas.
- § All residences within 1,000 feet of the extraction site.
- § Location of the proposed extraction operation, staging areas, and equipment storage areas.
- § Proposed location and surfacing of roads, driveways, and site access points.
- § Proposed phasing plan, if any (recommended for larger sites).
- § Proposed fencing of property and gating of driveways, and type of screening berms and landscaping.
- § Proposed locations of stockpiles.
- § Proposed temporary and permanent structures, including scales and offices.
- § An erosion control plan prepared by a qualified engineer.

In its review of new mineral extraction proposals, the Town should consider the following issues:

- § The site will be developed and operated according to the site/operations plan.
- § Spraying of the site and driveways should be considered to control dust.
- § On-site bulk fuel storage and appropriate places for fueling of equipment (e.g., above the water table) should be addressed to minimize the potential for groundwater contamination.
- § Access to the site should only be through points designated as entrances on the site/ operations plan; such access points should be secured when the site is not in operation.
- § Hours of operation may be limited if the extraction site is close to residential properties.
- § Expectations for any blasting, drilling, and screening should be clearly understood, and separate acceptable hours for these activities may be specified.

- § If blasting or drilling is requested, additional sets of standards should be applied with relation to frequency, noise and vibration levels, notice to neighbors, pre-inspection of neighboring basements and wells, and claims procedures.
- § Unless the extraction site is very inaccessible, it should be completely enclosed by a safety fence or maintained at a gentle slope.
- § The Town should be listed as an “additional named insured” on the liability insurance policy, which should remain in effect until reclamation is complete. The petitioner should have to furnish a certificate of insurance before operations commence.
- § Provisions for the upgrade, repair, and maintenance of Town roads may be appropriate depending on the intensity of the operation and the existing condition and capacity of such roads. Posting a bond for such work may be required.

G. CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

Marquette County and the entire region was once home to several tribal Native American groups. The three prominent Native American tribes in the region were the Menominee, Chippewa, and the Ho-Chunk (or Winnebago). In 1673 French Jesuit priest Jacques Marquette and explorer Louis Joliet were the first Europeans to travel the entire length of the Fox River from Green Bay to Portage and onward down the Wisconsin River. Waves of European immigrants arrived in the region in the mid-1800s, with British and Irish settlers particularly favoring Marquette County. A large influx of German immigrants also settled the county. By 2000, about 52 percent of the Town’s population reported **German ancestry**, followed by 13 percent reporting English ancestry. Each succession of ethnic groups and each generation of residents have added to the cultural, religious, and architectural flavor of the region. Preservation of these historic and cultural resources fosters a sense of pride, improves quality of life, and provides an important feeling of social and cultural continuity between the past, present and future. The following sections describe the Town’s significant historic and archeological resources. (A family historical account prepared by Phyllis Ingram and others may be available upon request.)

1. HISTORIC RESOURCES

There are five sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Marquette County, but none are located in the Town of Harris. While not on any national list, there are numerous properties in the Town listed as local historic resources in the State Historical Society’s database. The Society’s Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) contains data on a wide range of historic properties throughout the state—such as round barns, cast iron bridges, commercial buildings, school houses, and turn-of-the-century homes—that create Wisconsin’s distinct cultural landscape. The AHI includes 13 documented properties in the Town of Harris. These properties include older homes, farmsteads, and cabins/out buildings. To preserve and promote these historic resources, the **Marquette County Historic Society Museum**, located in Westfield, showcases an extensive collection of artifacts, dating from the area’s earliest pioneering days through the mid-twentieth century.

2. ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

According to the State Historical Society, there are **six archeological sites** in Harris. The section where these sites have been identified are shown on Map 2. These sites include cemeteries, campsites, and Native American burial mounds. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to insure that their actions do not adversely affect archeological sites on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. All human burial sites, including cemeteries and Indian mounds, are protected under state law.

H. CULTURAL RESOURCE GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal: Preserve cultural, historic and archeological sites and scenic character

Objectives:

- a. Identify and promote the preservation of the Town’s cultural, historic, and archeological resources.
- b. Preserve large blocks of woodlands, hunting land, wetlands, and open space that contribute to Harris’s rural character and way of life.
- c. Protect the winding, lightly-traveled roadways that contribute to the Town’s scenic quality and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Policies:

1. Encourage private landowners to **protect and rehabilitate known historic and archeological sites**.
2. **Promote “heritage tourism”** (e.g., local festivals, fairs, farm tours, and markets) that celebrates the Town’s heritage and rural setting.
3. **Preserve and celebrate the scenic landscape and byways** in the Town.

I. CULTURAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Expanding on the local planning policies listed above, this *Plan* encourages the Town of Harris to preserve and celebrate its treasured cultural resources by pursuing the following strategies:

1. PROTECT AND REHABILITATE KNOWN HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

This *Plan* identifies known historic and archeological sites that are included in the Wisconsin Archeological Site Inventory (ASI) or State Historic Society databases (see Map 2). Mapped archeological sites in Harris are predominantly cemeteries, Native American burial mounds, or campsites. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from intentional disturbance. This *Plan* advises that the Town make a specific request to the State Historical Society for more detailed information when a specific development proposal is offered on land in an area where a known historic or archeological site has been mapped, if its location is not readily apparent.

2. PROMOTE HERITAGE TOURISM

The Town should cooperate with other communities to promote tourism opportunities that celebrate and take economic advantage of the area’s historic, archeological and scenic resources. This type of tourism—often called “Heritage Tourism”—will become increasingly popular as the baby boom generation eases into retirement. Heritage tourism may focus on museums and cultural centers, vibrant rural communities, historic architecture, historic settlement patterns and the Town’s considerable and diverse natural amenities and views. Agricultural tourism highlighting both traditional agriculture and organic farms has also been successful in the region, such as seasonal farm events with pumpkin patches, sleigh rides, corn mazes or tours of organic farms. The Town, along with Marquette County and its Economic Development Corporation, should explore state grant opportunities to study, establish, and fund a heritage tourism program. The establishment of the old schoolhouse (Town Hall) as an historic museum of Harrisville showing early settlements, farms, and lifestyles might be explored.

3. PRESERVE AND CELEBRATE THE SCENIC LANDSCAPE

Scenic beauty is a very important cultural resource in the Town of Harris. The region offers a very diverse landscape of glacial hills, lakes, rivers, and agricultural areas. There are numerous local areas that offer stunning views of the landscape, key landmarks (e.g., hills), and bodies of water. Scenic drives in the town include segments of Ember Lane, Evergreen Lane and 11th Road.

New development should be designed, located, and landscaped in a manner that does not detract from these scenic views or byways. Chapter Seven: Housing and Neighborhood Development provides additional guidance on minimizing the visual impact of development.

State and federal “rustic road” and “scenic byway” programs are also techniques to preserve and celebrate particularly scenic road corridors. State “rustic roads” designations are best suited for scenic town roads. To qualify, a roadway must be substantially undeveloped and have outstanding natural features—including native vegetation, abundant wildlife, open areas, or agricultural vistas—that make the area unique.

4. PARK, OPEN SPACE, RECREATIONAL AND COMMUNITY DESIGN RESOURCES

The planning goals, objectives, policies, maps and programs related to park, open space, and recreational resources in Town of Harris are presented in Chapter Six: Utilities and Community Facilities. Goals, objectives, policies, maps, and programs related to community design are presented in Chapter Four: Land Use and Chapter Eight: Economic Development.

CHAPTER FOUR: LAND USE

IV. LAND USE

This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide the future preservation and development of lands in the Town of Harris. The chapter includes maps that show existing land uses and recommended future land uses, and provides other related land use data and analysis as required under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

A. EXISTING LAND USE

An accurate depiction of the Town's *existing* land use pattern is the first step in planning for a desired *future* land use pattern. The Town's planning consultant conducted an inventory of existing land uses in Summer 2003 using data from WISCLAND, aerial photography, spot field checks, and local official review.

1. EXISTING LAND USE MAP CATEGORIES

Map 3 divides existing land uses in Town of Harris into several categories. These categories include:

Agriculture & Rural Lands: land used primarily for open space, farming, farmsteads, nurseries, and farm-support activities, and limited single-family residential development, generally with densities at or below 1 dwelling unit per 40 acres, and small-scale institutional uses such as cemeteries, churches and town hall buildings. Also includes grasslands, shrubland and sandy or barren land;

Wetlands: Wetlands over two acres identified through the Wisconsin DNR "Wisconsin Wetland Inventory," a copy of which should be found in the town records;

Public Open Space: publicly-owned land designated as state parks and scenic areas; state conservation areas; conservancy land owned by non-profit agencies; county parks and recreation areas; town parks, city parks, or other recreational facilities owned by the public or private utility companies;

Forest: privately-owned forest land, in certain cases including private recreational uses or single-family residential development generally with densities at or below 1 dwelling unit per 40 acres, covered with coniferous, broad-leaved deciduous, and mixed deciduous trees;

Surface Water: lakes, rivers and perennial streams;

Single Family Residential - Rural: groupings of predominantly single family housing, generally at lower densities (between 1 dwelling unit per acre and 1 dwelling unit per 40 acres), and typically served by on-site waste disposal systems;

Single Family Residential - Sewered: Single-family housing typically served by a public or group sanitary sewer system at densities between 1 and 6 dwelling units per acre;

Two Family Residential: groupings of two-family and attached single-family housing;

Mixed Residential: groupings of a variety of residential units (including apartments and senior housing);

Commercial Recreation: privately-owned lands designated as recreation areas, such as for-profit campgrounds, private golf courses, mobile home parks, fish farms, and waterfront businesses;

General Business: indoor commercial, office, telecommunication facilities, and occasional outdoor display land uses, generally with moderate landscaping and signage;

Downtown: pedestrian-oriented indoor commercial, office, institutional, and residential uses with streetscaping and low-key signage;

2002 TOWN SURVEY RESULTS

When asked to indicate their support for putting restrictions on different land use activities in Marquette County, most respondents chose "locations of mobile homes, manufacturing plants, and large-scale commercial farms" as their top choices.

Industrial: indoor industrial land uses and occasionally outdoor storage areas, generally with moderate landscaping and signage;

Extraction: sites in active use as a quarry, gravel pit, clay extraction, peat extraction and related land uses;

Institutional: large-scale public buildings, hospitals, airports/landing strips, non-profit campgrounds, and special-care facilities. Small institutional uses may be in areas designated in other land use categories.

2. EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN

The Town of Harris's existing land use pattern is primarily rural, with scattered pockets of farmland, and woodlots throughout the entire area. Large tracts of *Agriculture & Rural Lands* are found throughout the Town. Large *Wetland* areas cover Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, and 26 of the Town. There are large tracts of *Forest* land found everywhere, but particularly in the central and southeastern part of Town. There are pockets of *Single Family Residential- Rural* development located in Harrisville, and in rural subdivisions along Elk Road, Elk Drive, Fawn Avenue, and Edgewood Court. There are *Commercial* uses in Harrisville. There is one closed or inactive landfill site in the town, located in Section 14. Figure 12 shows the amount, type, and intensity (or percentage) of each land use in Harris as of 2003.

Figure 12: Existing Land Use Totals – Town of Harris

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture & Rural Lands	8,048	41%
Wetlands	4,387	22%
Public Open Space	52	<1%
Forest	6,270	32%
Surface Water	261	1%
Single Family Residential - Rural	577	3%
General Business	22	<1%
Institutional	23	<1%
Extraction	40	<1%
TOTAL	19,680	100%

Source: GIS Inventory, VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES, 2003

Map 3: Existing Land Use

3. LAND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

According to the Marquette County Zoning Department, between 1992 and 2002, there were 56 new parcels created in the Town of Harris through either land divisions or certified survey maps. This means that there were, on average, 6 new parcels created on an annual basis in Harris. Much of this land platting activity resulted in residential development.

Countywide, most land development has resulted in new homes. According to data provided by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, the amount of land assessed as “residential” increased 11 percent over the past decade in Marquette County, from 24,347 acres in 1990 to 27,062 acres in 2000. (It is interesting to note that the amount of land assessed as “agriculture” decreased during the 1990s by about this same rate.) Meanwhile, the amount of land assessed as “commercial” dropped by 84 acres, and the amount of land assessed as “manufacturing” dropped by 10 acres over this time period.

4. LAND MARKET TRENDS

Town land market trend data is available from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue’s Fielded Sales System (see sidebar for more information on this system). According to data from the Fielded Sales System, there were 1,102 acres of agricultural land sold in Harris from 1990 to 1997. On average, an acre of agricultural land sold during this time period was \$564. Of the 1,102 acres of agricultural land sold over those seven years, 170 acres were converted to non-agricultural uses. When land was converted out of agricultural use, the sales value increased to \$618 per acre.

There are no sales data for forest land available on the town level, but at the county level there were 5,940 acres of forest land sold in from 1998 through 2001. The value of the average acre of forest land sold between 1998 and 2001 in Marquette County was \$1,546. Of the total acreage of forest land sold during this time period (819 acres) about 14 percent of this land area was converted to other uses. Recent land sales tracked in local newspapers show land selling for as much as \$2,500 to \$5,000 per acre in Harris.

For countywide trends, Figure 13 shows the equalized value of all property in Marquette County for 1980, 1990 and 2000. The highest increases in land value occurred in the residential and swamp and wasteland real estate categories. The increase in swamp and wasteland resulted in a change in real estate classification and a change in market perceptions. In 1980, swamp and wasteland was seen as having little market value. By 2000, real estate classified as swamp and wasteland become popular, as more individuals began purchasing this land for hunting and other recreational purposes.

WISCONSIN’S FIELDED SALES SYSTEM

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue’s Fielded Sales System tracks sales of agricultural, forest, and swamp and waste parcels for all counties in the state. For agricultural parcels, data is collected at the time of sale and includes those parcels that will remain in agricultural land use, as well as those converted to different uses. It should be noted that the system only tracks the sales of land that exceed a certain size. In 1990 the minimum size included all parcels over 20 acres. In 1997, it included all parcels over 35 acres. As a result, any parcel sold in recent years less than 35 acres in size was not reported in the system.

The Department defines forest land as forested acres that are being managed or set aside to grow tree crops for “industrial wood” or to obtain tree products such as sap, bark or seeds. Areas primarily held for hunting, trapping, and the operation of game preserves are also classified as forest land. Orchards and Christmas tree farms are classified as agricultural.

Figure 13: Equalized Land Values for Marquette County, 1980 - 2000

	Residential	Commercial	Manufacturing	Agricultural	Swamp & Waste & Other	Forest Land	Total
1980	\$51,162,100	\$3,623,200	\$254,400	\$78,933,900	\$8,728,100	\$37,924,800	\$180,626,500
1990	\$64,229,450	\$4,613,020	\$329,100	\$47,300,032	\$8,715,330	\$32,392,135	\$157,579,067
2000	\$154,786,562	\$9,073,275	\$549,600	\$30,318,824	\$30,432,440	\$55,785,770	\$280,396,871

Source: East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, 2003

5. EXISTING AND POTENTIAL LAND USE CONFLICTS

As growth occurs throughout Marquette County, there will likely be increasing land use conflicts. Residential, commercial and industrial land use development will require the conversion and possible fragmentation of more farmland, woodlots and open fields in the countryside. Conflicts between non-farm residential development and surrounding farms could become increasingly common in Harris. This *Plan* seeks to avoid potential *future* land use conflicts through thoughtful and comprehensive land use planning at the township and county level. Potential land use conflicts along community borders have been minimized through the County's multi-jurisdictional planning process, which calls for formal intergovernmental discussions and sharing of draft and final plan maps before plan adoptions at the local and county level. In particular, Harris and the Village of Westfield have coordinated in the preparation of their plans of shared revenue for the Interstate 39 interchange in the northwest corner of Town to try to minimize future land use conflicts.

6. PROJECTED LAND USE SUPPLY AND DEMAND

This *Plan* projects land use demand over the 20-year planning period (in five-year increments) for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses. Projected demand is then compared to the potential supply of land to meet that demand, as presented in Figure 12.

Residential land use projections in Harris are based on year-round population, household size, and housing unit forecasts prepared by the Department of Administration and discussed in Chapter Two: Issues and Opportunities. Using these forecasts, and assuming that the average future residential home site in Harris will be 10 acres, Figure 14 shows the amount of year-round residential acreage needed to accommodate future growth in five-year increments based on DOA forecasts. Figure 14 does not account for seasonal home development. Actual future growth may be of the Town's year-round population may be somewhat higher.

Figure 14: Projected Rural Residential Land Use Demand

	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025	Totals 2000-2025
Projected Number of New Residents	4	6	3	-5	-2	8
Projected Household Size	2.35	2.29	2.23	2.17	2.17	na
Projected Number of New Housing Units	2	4	2	0	0	8
Projected Residential Land Use Demand	20 acres	40 acres	20 acres	0 acres	0 acres	80 acres

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration; Vandewalle & Associates

Future residential development shown on Map 4 and allowed under the policies of this *Plan* will provide more than enough capacity to accommodate this expected year-round residential land use demand (80 total acres) through the year 2025. This is because the large supply of *Rural Lands* and *Single Family Residential – Rural* plan designations can accommodate homes at different densities. These designations also allow seasonal home development. Based on an analysis of historic growth rates, this *Plan* estimates that the anticipated demand for commercial and industrial land uses can be accommodated within the existing and planned *General Business* areas shown on Map 4. It is the Town’s policy to remain primarily rural and residential in character, with newly planned commercial and industrial uses near the Interstate only.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue’s Fielded Sales System, which tracks sales of agricultural, forest, swamp and waste parcels in Harris, approximately 170 acres of agricultural land in Harris were converted out of agricultural use from 1990 to 1997, a loss of approximately 24 acres per year. If this trend continues, the amount of agricultural land in active use in the Town will decrease by about 120 acres every five years over the 20-year planning period. The Town seeks to minimize the amount of farmland conversion to the greatest extent possible.

B. LAND USE GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal: *Promote a future land use pattern consistent with Harris’s rural character.*

Objectives:

- a. Promote a desirable and compatible mix of land uses consistent with the Town’s rural character.
- b. Plan for a sufficient supply and mix of new development to meet Town objectives.
- c. Direct intensive new housing development (e.g., subdivisions) away from agricultural areas and into planned single family residential land use areas.
- d. Minimize the visual impact of new development on the landscape.
- e. Identify areas suitable for non-residential development and long-term open space preservation.

Policies:

1. When making land use decisions, **follow the land use recommendations** mapped and described in this *Plan* (see Map 4).
2. **Promote the grouping or clustering** of allowable home sites in the rural portions of Harris as an option to preserve farmland and open space, protect natural resources, and reduce development visibility.
3. Assure that **incompatible land uses are not located close to one another** or require appropriate separation and screening.
4. When **changes in zoning** are proposed that would permit nonresidential development on a parcel of land, the **Town should require the submittal of a specific development proposal** (comprised of a detailed site plan) before approving the rezoning. Approval of the development proposal will be based on the degree to which the project fulfills the goals, objectives, and policies of this *Plan*.
5. Actively **participate in County zoning and subdivision review processes**.
6. **Coordinate with the Village of Westfield** on a mutually beneficial land use pattern in the Interstate 39 interchange area. (Refer to Chapter 1, Section C.)
7. **Guide intensive new development** requiring higher levels of municipal utilities and services to the Village of Westfield or City of Montello.

C. LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

Map 4 presents recommended future land uses over the 20-year planning period for the Town of Harris. The map shows more than enough developable acreage to accommodate projected population and land use demands. Changes from the existing land use pattern to realize this planned land use pattern may occur if and when private property owners make requests for rezoning, subdivisions or land divisions, conditional use permits, or other development approvals. Map 4, along with the recommended policies and programs listed in this chapter, should be used to guide Town decision-making on future land use changes.

Map 4 uses numerous planned land use designations to describe the desired type and future location of different land uses in Harris. These planned land use designations were prepared in a joint effort with other towns, villages, cities, and Marquette County and reflect the range of economic and geographic conditions in the region. The following is a description, programs and policies for each mapped planned land use designation in Harris shown on Map 4:

1. FARMLAND PRESERVATION AREA

Description: The Farmland Preservation Area planned land use category is the second most common designated mapped in Harris. The Farmland Preservation Area accommodates primarily agricultural uses or agricultural-related uses (e.g., implement dealerships), and focuses on areas actively used for farming, with productive agricultural soils, with topographic conditions suitable for farming, and with long-term (15+ year) farming suitability. This category is also intended to:

- § Preserve productive agricultural lands, rural character, and undeveloped natural resources of lands so designated in the long-term;
- § Protect existing farm operations from encroachment by incompatible uses;
- § Minimize non-farm development, allowing via rezonings away from the County's AG-1 zoning district a maximum residential development density of one residence per 40 acres of land, as further described by the policies and programs below;
- § Accommodate a range of agricultural practices and intensities, forest management, farmsteads, home occupations, family businesses, and other uses compatible with farmland preservation and identified as permitted and special exceptions in implementing zoning districts.
- § Provide equity and fairness to owners of land with similar resource and location characteristics;
- § Maintain farmer eligibility for farmland preservation incentive programs, such as State income tax credits. The *Farmland Preservation Area* is the only planned land use category laid out in this chapter that is intended for certification by the State Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

Policies and Programs:

- § **Appropriate Implementing Zoning Districts.** The AG-1 Prime Agricultural zoning district is the preferred zoning district to implement Farmland Preservation Area policies. Additional zoning districts that may be used, usually in limited amounts, within Farmland Preservation Areas include RP Resource Protection, AG-2 General Agricultural, AG-3 Agricultural-Residential, and REC Recreational (for open space uses). Other zoning districts may be utilized on an occasional basis, particularly based on pre-existing land use and zoning patterns. Further, Marquette County may create a new variation of the AG-3 zoning district (e.g., 4 acres) to limit further division of 4-5 acre lots that are divided in accordance with the density policy below.
- § **Agricultural Use and Related Businesses Encouraged.** Encourage a range of agricultural uses and agricultural-related businesses that support farmers, including farm-scale businesses in the AG-1 zoning

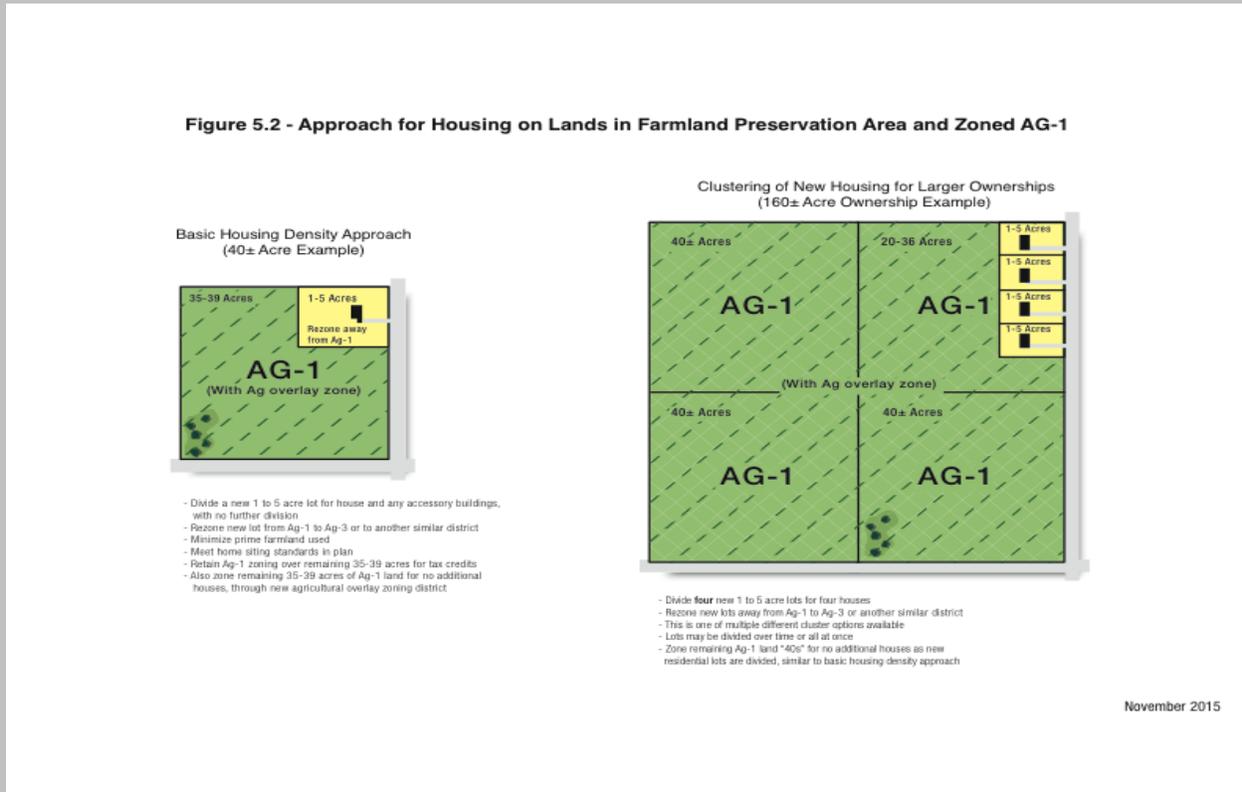
district (meeting statutory requirements as applicable) and larger-scale operations by special exception permit or rezoning.

- § Preexisting Residences May Remain in AG-1 District. Allow residences legally established before January 1, 2014 (and their replacements) to remain as permitted-by-right uses within the AG-1 zoning district when historically zoned in that manner, except where new land divisions are required or farm consolidations are proposed (see below).
- § General Rezoning Criteria. Whenever land is proposed for rezoning from the AG-1 Prime Agricultural district, require that the following criteria are met:
- The land is better suited for a use not allowed in the AG-1 zoning district.
 - The rezoning is consistent with the Town and County comprehensive plans, including
the farmland preservation plan component of the Marquette County Comprehensive Plan.
 - The rezoning will not substantially impair or limit current or future agricultural use of surrounding parcels of land that are zoned for or legally restricted to agricultural use.
- § Conversion of Prime Farmland Limited. Minimize the conversion of prime farmland (Class I-III soils), as shown on Map 4: Soil Suitability for Agriculture of the Marquette County Comprehensive Plan, for residences and other nonfarm development. The Town of Harris and County Planning and Zoning Committee will consider creation of new residential lots on prime farmland only if they determine that no available non-prime farmland exists on the parcel of record or that placement of lots on prime farmland provides better protection of land, environmental, and habitat resources than a non-prime location. In addition, per Section 91.46(2) of Wisconsin Statutes, new development may not convert prime farmland from agricultural use or convert land previously used as cropland, other than a woodlot, from agricultural use if on the farm there is a reasonable alternative location or size for a nonfarm residential parcel or nonfarm residence; or significantly impair or limit the current or future agricultural use of other protected farmland.
- § Maximum Residential Development Density. Within parts of the Farmland Preservation Area also zoned in the County's AG-1 Prime Agricultural district, rezonings for single family residences are subject to the following density criteria:
- The owner of each 1/4 1/4 section of land (standard tax parcel of 40± acres), and other parcels that are between 40 and 79 acres, shall be able to rezone AG-1 zoned land for one single family residence, and can maintain any preexisting residence on the parcel (see left panel in Figure 15).
 - The owner of each smaller parcel of land zoned AG-1, if legally created before January 1, 2014, shall be able to rezone such parcel for one single family residence, and can maintain any preexisting residence on the parcel.
 - The owner of at least two contiguous 1/4 1/4 sections of land, and other lands in contiguous common ownership that are at least 80 acres, shall be able to rezone AG-1 zoned land for cluster(s) of single family residential lots at a density of one lot for every 40 full acres, including any preexisting residence (see 160 acre example in right panel of Figure 15). Landowners may develop one or more clusters, if acreage allows. Clusters may be located adjacent to other clusters on adjoining parcels in different ownership.
- § Rezoning Required for New Residences and Farm Divisions. The Town and County will require rezoning away from the AG-1 zoning district, along with a new lot created by land division, for all farm division residences and new residences. (A "farm division residence" is defined as a residence that existed before January 1, 2014 and all of its accessory buildings, but which is no longer connected to

the farm operation as a result of the sale of adjacent lands.) The rezoning will be to AG-2, AG-3, or to another zoning district that allows single family residences. As depicted in Figure 15, the balance of the acreage used to enable the approval of a single family residential lot will be limited to agricultural or open space uses via a new Agricultural Overlay zoning district applied to that balance. The County intends to create this Agricultural Overlay district in 2016. Land in that Agricultural Overlay district cannot be used together with other land not in the overlay district to achieve the acreage normally necessary to build another single family residence. The County may relax the requirement for creation of a new residential lot where the residence is proposed on a sub-40 acre parcel legally created before January 1, 2014.

- § Residential Lot Size and Siting Standards. The Town and County will apply the following policies, along with those depicted on Figure 15, for siting new residences in the Farmland Preservation Area in conjunction with the rezoning of land away from the AG-1 zoning district:
- Each residence must be on a newly divided lot of between one and five acres created by a land division (e.g., CSM), except that the County may relax this requirement where the residence is proposed on a sub-40 acre parcel legally created before January 1, 2014.
 - Each newly created residential lot must abut a public road, or have a suitable access easement.
 - The new residence will not adversely affect agricultural operations in surrounding areas or be situated such that future inhabitants of the residence might be adversely affected by agricultural operations in surrounding areas.
 - The new residence and the new driveway needed to serve the residence will not divide existing farm fields, but instead will be beyond the farm field or towards the edge of a farm field where a location beyond the field is not practical.
 - The proposed location of the new residence is not well suited for agricultural use by virtue of being wooded, having unfavorable topography for farming, an odd shape for farming, unsuitable soil characteristics, or other factors that limit its agricultural suitability.

Figure 15: Approach to Housing in Farmland Preservation Area



- § Right-to-Farm Notice on Residential Divisions. Protect the rights of farmers by requiring that the following language be included on new subdivision plats and certified survey maps (CSMs) that enable new residential development in the Farmland Preservation Area, to notify future residents of the potential effects of nearby farming activities on their property: “Through Section 823.08 of Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Legislature has adopted a right to farm law. This statute limits the remedies of owners of later established residential property to seek changes to pre-existing agricultural practices in the vicinity of residential property. Active agricultural operations are now taking place and may continue on lands in the vicinity of this plat/CSM. These active agricultural operations may produce noises, odors, dust, machinery traffic, or other conditions during daytime and evening hours.”
- § Policy towards Potential Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs). Support landowner applications to DATCP to establish new Agricultural Enterprise Areas that meet the following criteria:
- The AEA is located within portions of the Farmland Preservation Area particularly suited for long-term agricultural enterprise development.
 - The AEA is consistent with DATCP criteria for such designation and with this Plan.
 - There is sufficient interest among area farmers.
- § Policies for Lands Also Mapped as Environmental Corridors. The Environmental Corridor includes wetlands, floodplains, and slopes of 20% or greater. See subsection 7 below for additional policies affecting lands that are both in a Farmland Preservation Area and Environmental Corridor.

2. RURAL LANDS

Description: This is the most common designation mapped in Harris, and includes farmland, privately owned undeveloped lots, small woodlots, grasslands, forestland and open lands. Continued open space uses (including farming and forestry) are recommended for mapped *Rural Lands* areas, in addition to seasonal and permanent single family homes generally with a density of between 1 new residence per 10 gross acres and 1 new residence per 40 gross acres, associated home occupations and small family businesses which do not interfere with the interests of nearby property owners, small-scale forest production and processing, public access motorized and non-motorized recreational uses where permitted by the Forest Crop Law or Managed Forest Law programs, and the keeping of animals in numbers appropriate to the size of the lot.

Policies and Programs:

- § When considering future rezone requests, the Marquette County zoning district most compatible with the *Rural Lands* designation is the **General Agricultural (AG-2) district**, which requires a minimum lot size of 10 acres.
- § **Discourage the placement of buildings and driveways within mapped *Environmental Corridors*** shown on Map 4.
- § Encourage new development to be designed, **located in a manner that does not detract from Harris' rural character**, and which may be easily served by Town and emergency services. New roads or driveways should be placed along existing contours, property lines, fencerows, lines of existing vegetation, or other natural features wherever possible.
- § **Consider certain types of small-scale non-residential uses** such as churches, day care centers, parks and walking trails as generally appropriate within *Rural Lands* areas.
- § **Encourage home occupations and home-based businesses** within mapped *Rural Lands* areas that do not impact neighboring properties.

3. SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL – RURAL

Description: This designation includes single family detached residential development, generally at densities between 1 dwelling unit per 30,000 square feet to 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres, and served by individual on-site waste disposal (septic) systems. In the Town of Harris, Map 4 shows a *Single Family Residential – Rural* area in the hamlet of Harrisville, along Klawitter Creek, 8th Drive, Elk Drive, Elk Road, and Fawn Avenue.

Policies and Programs:

- § In an effort to direct as much future housing development as possible away from rural lands and farming areas, **encourage development in the planned *Single Family Residential – Rural* areas.**
- § When considering possible rezone requests in the future, the Marquette County zoning districts most compatible with the *Single Family Residential – Rural* designation are the **Agricultural – Residential (AG-3) district** and the **Residential (R-1) district**. The AG-3 districts requirement a minimum lot size of 2 acres; the R-1 district requires a minimum lot of 30,000 square feet. Soil suitability, natural resources (e.g., woodlands), and the character of the surrounding area should be considered when deciding on the most appropriate zoning district.
- § For *Single Family Residential – Rural* areas planned along **Klawitter Creek and the Montello River**, all new development will need to meet the County's shoreland setback requirements and possibly floodplain ordinance restrictions, depending on location
- § Consider allowing lot sizes smaller than 30,000 square feet in mapped *Single Family Residential – Rural* areas if a **group waste disposal system** is approved. See Chapter Six for a more completed discussion of group waste disposal systems.

- § **Consider certain types of small-scale non-residential uses** such as churches, day care centers, parks and walking trails as generally appropriate within *Single Family Residential – Rural* areas, particularly in the Harrisville hamlet area.

4. PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD

Description: This designation includes a 77-acre area along Interstate 39 and the Village of Westfield that should be carefully planned as a unified mixture of predominantly single family residences, combined with uses within one or more of these planned land use designations: *Two Family Residential*, *Mixed Residential*, *General Business*, neighborhood-oriented *Institutional* (churches and day care facilities), and *Public Open Space*.

Policies and Programs:

- § **Coordinate with the Village of Westfield** on a mutually beneficial land use pattern in the Interstate 39 interchange area. Recommended strategies to coordinate this effort are provided in Chapter One: Intergovernmental Cooperation.
- § Any commercial development in this area should be **accessed by town or county roads**.
- § Require that all proposed **commercial projects submit a detailed site plan** showing the proposed location of the building, parking, outdoor storage, loading, signage, landscaping and lighting prior to development approval. For any planned *General Business* areas along Interstate 39, encourage higher standards of development and site design. Recommended **design standards** for commercial development projects near the Interstate are provided in Chapter Eight of this *Plan*
- § Higher density *Two Family Residential* and *Mixed Residential* development would be appropriate adjacent to the interstate.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

Description: *General Business* uses are mapped over existing commercial areas in Harris, as well as new areas—predominately along the Interstate 39 corridor. This designation includes indoor commercial, office, institutional, telecommunication facilities, and outdoor display land uses, with new development adhering to high-quality building design, generous landscaping, modest lighting, and limited and attractive signage.

Policies and Programs:

- § When considering future rezone requests, the Marquette County zoning district most compatible with the *General Business* designation is the **Commercial (CM) district**, which allows a range of commercial uses.
- § All new commercial development should be **accessed by town or county roads**.
- § Require that all proposed **commercial projects submit a detailed site plan** showing the proposed location of the building, parking, outdoor storage, loading, signage, landscaping and lighting prior to development approval.
- § **Coordinate with the Village of Westfield** on a mutually beneficial land use pattern in the Interstate 39 interchange area. Recommended strategies to coordinate this effort are provided in Chapter One: Intergovernmental Cooperation”.
- § For planned *General Business* areas along Interstate 39, encourage higher standards of development and site design. Recommended **design standards** for commercial development projects near the Interstate are provided in Chapter Eight of this *Plan*

6. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Description: This designation includes the Town's existing parkland and the school forest owned by the Montello School District.

Policies and Programs:

- § All park facilities should be **designed and maintained to meet the needs of all residents** of the Town including special groups such as the elderly, the disabled, and pre-school age children.
- § Ensure that all land use decisions related to the *Public Open Space* designation are in **coordination with the Utility and Community Facility recommendations** of this *Plan*.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR

Description: This overlay designation includes generally continuous open space systems based on lands including sensitive natural resources and severe limitations for development. This designation includes the following three component parts: Wisconsin DNR-identified wetlands subject to existing state-mandated county zoning, FEMA designated floodplains subject to existing state-mandated county zoning, and slopes of 20 percent or greater, which if disturbed can result in erosion and unstable building sites.

Policies and Programs:

- § New **development should be avoided** within mapped *Environmental Corridors* whenever more suitable areas for development are available on the same parcel
- § This is an **overlay planning designation**, which means that both the guidelines associated with the *Environmental Corridors* designation and the underlying designation on Map 4 (e.g., *Rural Lands*) should guide Town land use decisions, with the understanding that additional restrictions may be placed on the desired use or development if the parcel is located within an environmental corridor.
- § If development is proposed on parcels where this designation is mapped, the property owner or developer should be responsible for **determining the exact boundaries** of the environmental corridor based on the wetland, floodplain, or steep slope feature that defines the corridor. Refer to Chapter Three: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources" for more information on mapping and protecting *Environmental Corridors*.
- § **Permit cropping and grazing** in mapped *Environmental Corridor* areas, where compatible with natural resource protection and farmland preservation.

8. PRIVATE WELL SETBACK AREA

Description: This boundary depicts the 1,200 foot setback area around closed landfills where the installation of a private drinking well is generally prohibited under WisDNR rules, unless a waiver is granted.

Policies and Programs:

- § The Town should **not plan for any new residential development** within this ¼ mile setback area.
- § Because the landfill site in Section 14 is closed, the 1,200 foot setback should be **measured from the site's property line**.
- § **Work with WisDNR staff to research this landfill** in terms of what impact, if any, it is having on groundwater quality in the long term.

9. OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDEVELOPMENT

This Plan does not identify any specific areas or parcels in the Town of Harris in need of redevelopment, because nearly all of the town is undeveloped.

10. SMART GROWTH AREAS

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law requires comprehensive plans to identify "Smart Growth Areas," which are defined as "areas that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state, and utility services, where practical, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which will have relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs." The Town is required to show these areas on their planned land use map.

This Plan designates the *Single Family Residential – Rural* and *General Business* areas within the hamlet of Harrisville on Map 4 as a "Smart Growth Area". This hamlet has existing development, commercial establishments, institutional uses, and road infrastructure that would make infill and contiguous development efficient and cost-effective.

Map 4: Planned Land Use

CHAPTER FIVE: TRANSPORTATION

V. TRANSPORTATION

This chapter includes a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide the future development and maintenance of various modes of transportation in the Town of Harris. Given the Town’s rural setting, the primary focus is on highways and local roads. The chapter also compares the Town’s transportation policies and programs to county, state and regional transportation plans.

A. EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The Town is well connected to the region through the existing roadway network (see Map 5). This section describes the Town’s existing transportation facilities.

1. ROADWAYS

The Town of Harris is served by Interstate 39, which links residents in the County’s northwest quadrant to the region’s major cities and is vital to the area’s tourism and recreation-based economy. Located on the Town’s western edge, **Interstate 39** serves as Marquette County’s primary traffic artery running north-south through the County. As a principal arterial roadway, this four-lane freeway is designed to keep traffic flowing smoothly across the entire state, and connects Wisconsin’s metropolitan areas in the south to the “northwoods” region (see sidebar for more information on the function of roadways). Traffic has increased on the freeway since the mid-1990s. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), which records average daily traffic volumes (number of cars) for major state roadways, traffic on I-39 increased by about 10 percent from 1996 to 2000.

The Town is served by a network of county trunk highways (CTHs) that function as collector roads to serve rural land uses and distribute local traffic to the regional arterial system. They serve an important role in linking the area’s farm and forest resources to the County’s urban centers and major highways. The **major county highways** in Harris are CTHs B and J. Traffic on both highways has increased in recent years. Between 1996 and 2000, average daily traffic along CTH B south of Harrisville increased 40 percent; traffic along CTH J near 11th Road went up 15 percent.

Town roads serve local development, farming and forest areas. Important town roads in Harris include Elk Avenue, Elk Lane, Elk Road, Ember Drive, Evergreen Road, Evergreen Lane, and the north-south avenues (8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th).

ROADWAY FUNCTION CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Throughout Wisconsin, all local, county, state and federal transportation routes are classified in categories under the “Roadway Functional Classification” system.

As identified by WisDOT, the functional classification system groups roads and highways according to the character of service they offer, ranging from rapid through access to local land access. The purpose of functional classification is to enhance overall travel efficiency and accommodate traffic patterns and land uses by designing streets to the standards suggested by their functional class. The three main functional classes include:

- § Arterials that provide primary access to and through an area,
- § Collectors that disperse traffic within an area, and
- § Local streets that provide access to individual properties.



2. AIRPORTS

There are no airports located in Marquette County. The nearest larger airport is the Portage Municipal Airport in Columbia County, which is classified as a “general utility” airport serving small general aviation single and twin-engine aircrafts. There are also “basic utility” airports used for recreational flying, training, and crop dusting near Wautoma and Friendship. Larger **air carrier and passenger facilities** are located to the south in Madison at the Dane County Regional Airport, and to the east at the Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh and Outagamie County airport in Appleton. There are some small landing strips in Harris.

3. RAIL

There is no rail line running through Harris. In Marquette County, the Union Pacific Railroad runs through the Towns of Buffalo, Montello and Oxford. This rail line connects the cities of Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis and traverses Wisconsin in a roughly diagonal route. This is freight rail route. There is no passenger rail service serving the county.

4. WATER AND TRUCK TRANSPORTATION

Most freight shipments in Marquette County occur by truck or rail. There is no waterborne freight movement in the Town, County or region. Semi-truck shipments are most prevalent along Interstate 39. Most cities and villages in the County have designated specific truck routes within their community to guide truck traffic from the major highways and freeways into industrial parks and business areas.

5. BICYCLE ROUTES

The County’s highly scenic rural roads provide abundant opportunities for bicycling and bike touring. In recognition of this opportunity, a group made up of the Citizens Recreation Committee, County Highway Department, and Marquette County Board cooperatively identified and mapped several **on-road bike route tours** in the county in 1999. As shown on Map 5, the ten identified routes provide approximately 140 miles of bike touring opportunities. A consistent signage program to identify the designated routes is considered a high priority need by the Citizen Recreation Committee. No off-road recreational trails for bicyclists and hikers are available in the Town at the present time.

6. ICE AGE TRAIL

A portion of the **Ice Age Trail** is proposed along a route through the Town of Harris (see Map 5). Tracing Wisconsin’s rich glacial history, the route of the Ice Age Trail passes through Marquette County as it loops through the state some 1,000 miles from Door County to Interstate Park on the St. Croix River. Using a combination of public land, easements across public property, and abandoned rail corridors, the completed trail will be an exceptional resource for recreationalists wishing to hike its entire length or merely a small portion of it. A 10-mile segment of the trail has been designated between Portage and John Muir County Park, considered to be one of the highlights of the trail. The remainder of the trail, which awaits designation, would extend to Montello, Harrisville, Westfield, and north along the Harris-Westfield town line into Waushara County. A newly-formed chapter of the Ice Age Trail in Marquette County was established to assist in the planning and development of this trail.

7. TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED (PARA-TRANSIT)

Para-transit is a **specialized transit service** to specific segments of the population that require more accessible vehicles and flexible routing. The Marquette County Commission on Aging administers a Para-transit program with limited services to county residents for local trips and longer distance trips. The largest proportion of the population served is the frail elderly who are either living in their own homes, in nursing homes or some type of community based residential facility. The County has four vehicles of varying sizes to serve this transportation need. The program is able to meet the current needs of county residents but will be strained over the next 20 years if new vehicles and staffing levels are not increased beyond current levels, as the county’s elderly population grows.

8. REVIEW OF COUNTY, STATE AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The following is a review of county, state and regional transportation plans and studies relevant to Harris. There are no known conflicts between the policies and recommendations set forth in this *Comprehensive Plan*, and those of state, regional and county transportation plans and studies.

County and Town Transportation Improvement Plans

Transportation improvements to the County's highways include relatively minor activities such as resurfacing. The Marquette County Transportation Improvement Program 2001 – 2006 includes projects proposed to be undertaken in the County. In the Town of Harris area, these projects including resurfacing portions of CTH B. The Town allocates money for pavement improvements for its roads in its 5-year plan.

Marquette County Highway Access Control Plan

This plan, prepared in 1991 by the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, documents the need for access control in the unincorporated areas of Marquette County, analyzes options for access regulation, and recommends an access management plan to maintain the safety and protect the carrying capacity of the County's highway network. The major recommendations were:

- § The County should amend its zoning and subdivision ordinances to control access points for county trunk highways in the unincorporated areas that establish spacing standards, number and width of driveways per land use, and other design standards.
- § The Marquette County Highway Department should issue driveway permits for county trunk highways.
- § The County Zoning Department should establish a town road access permit process similar to the County process.
- § The County should prepare an access control map and this map should be posted in the County Highway Department, Zoning Department, and in all towns.

As a follow-up to this access control plan, the County Highway Department established an access permit system for new driveways along county trunk highways. In addition, the County zoning ordinance was amended to include the recommended access spacing, number and design standards.

Wisconsin State Highway Plan and Corridors 2020 Plan

The *Wisconsin State Highway Plan* focuses on the 11,800 miles of State Trunk Highway routes in Wisconsin. The plan does not identify specific projects, but broad strategies and policies to improve the state highway system over the next 20 years. Given its focus, the plan does not identify improvement needs on roads under local jurisdiction. The plan includes three main areas of emphasis: pavement and bridge preservation, traffic movement, and safety. The plan identifies Interstate 39 (USH 51) as a major "Corridors 2020 Backbone" to the state highway network. The state's *Corridors 2020 Plan* identifies portions of the regional highway system that are expected to be either severely congested if no capacity expansion projects are completed over the next 20 years. There are no projects in or near Harris that fall into this category.

Translinks 21: A Multimodal Transportation Plan for Wisconsin's 21st Century

Translinks 21: A Multimodal Transportation Plan for Wisconsin's 21st Century provides a broad planning "umbrella" including a vision and goals for transportation systems in the state for the next 25 years. This 1995 plan recommends complete construction of the Corridors 2020 "backbone" network by 2005, the creation of a new state grant program to help local governments prepare transportation corridor management plans to deal effectively with growth, the provision of state funding to assist small communities in providing transportation services to elderly and disabled persons, and the development of a detailed assessment of local road investment needs. Interstate 39 was identified as a key "backbone" to the statewide network. WisDOT is in the process of updating this 1995 plan in *Connections 2030*, set for completion in Spring 2006.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 (1998) presents a blueprint for improving conditions for bicycling, clarifies WisDOT's role in bicycle transportation, and establishes policies for further integrating bicycling into the current transportation system. The plan map shows existing state trails and future "priority corridors and key linkages" for bicycling along the State Trunk Highway system in Wisconsin. In Marquette County, STH 22 from Montello to Wautoma was listed as a key linkage.

Wisconsin Pedestrian Plan 2020

Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 (2002) outlines statewide and local measures to increase walking and to promote pedestrian comfort and safety. The plan provides a policy framework addressing pedestrian issues and clarifies WisDOT's role in meeting pedestrian needs.

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020 includes a general inventory of existing airport facilities in the state and provides a framework for the preservation and enhancement of a system of public-use airports to meet the current and future aviation needs of the state. It includes recommendations to upgrade existing facilities through runway extensions and replacements and facility improvements, but does not identify any new locations for airports to meet future needs. There are no recommendations related to Marquette County.

Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report (2004)

Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report summarizes critical rail transportation issues identified during a public outreach effort. The report serves as a point of departure for the rail component of the upcoming Connections 2030, WisDOT's next multimodal transportation plan set for completion in 2006. There are no critical rail transportation issues related to Marquette County identified in this report.

B. TRANSPORTATION GOAL, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Goal: Provide and encourage a safe and efficient transportation system.

Objectives:

- a. Provide for adequate roadway capacities and safe conditions in conjunction with the County and State.
- b. Promote the coordination of transportation investments with land use planning and development.
- c. Preserve the scenic value along roadways to protect the Town's rural character.
- d. Support biking, walking, and other alternative modes of transportation.

Policies and Programs:

1. **Work with the County to maintain and, as necessary, upgrade town roads and County Highways.** Marquette County maintains a 5-year plan for road improvements within the County. The County also maintains town roads and has historically included maintenance of such roads in its five-year plan. The Town should continue to work with the County Highway Department to incorporate desired town road projects into this 5-year county-wide plan. The Town could also assist the County Highway Department in maintaining a database on the physical condition of roads and bridges. The County's Plan recommends that the County Highway Department update its 5-year improvement plan annually. If this recommendation is followed, then ideally the Town would provide road condition ratings and maintenance and improvement desires to the County on an annual basis as well.

There are several federal and state sponsored improvement **programs and funding sources** available to the County and local communities for transportation projects. Additional information on these

programs is available in the Marquette County Comprehensive Plan, and from the WisDOT District 4 office in Wisconsin Rapids and University of Wisconsin Transportation Information Center.

2. **Work with the County to ensure safety on the roadways by:**

- § **Improve road signage on certain town roads** in Harris. Sign improvements should be reviewed when the Town Board conducts its annual inspection of town roads.
- § Exploring **speed zones to encourage motorists to reduce their speeds, particularly where there are a significant number of adjacent driveways or curves in the road.** This planning process identified a desire to consider posting a maximum speed limit on all town roads to 45 miles per hour.
- § **Discouraging the use of Town roads for through and truck traffic** by designating weight limits where appropriate.
- § Working with the County to ensure **maintenance of roads to meet acceptable standards for safe cycling, particularly along designated bicycle routes.**

3. **Properly guide land use and transportation decisions at and along Interstate 39 by:**

- § Planning for the frontage road on the east side of Interstate 39 near Westfield, from CTH E to Edgewood Court (as shown conceptually on Map 4)
- § Working with the County and State to revisit standards for the design of and quantity of signs, billboards, and telecommunication towers along the interstate corridor.

4. **Consider working with the County to promote an interconnected system of roads in planned Single Family Residential-Rural areas and in Harrisville, and to update design and layout standards for new town roads where platted.** The Marquette County Comprehensive Plan recommends developing unified road improvement standards in conjunction with the towns. The resulting product would be a Town Road Specifications Manual, which would be in effect for newly platted roads in towns that endorsed or accepted it. The recommended Town Road Specifications Manual could help ensure that roads are built to function properly, to facilitate maintenance and emergency service provision, and to last as long as possible. Pending further discussions following adoption of the comprehensive plans, the manual may also address issues such as road right-of-way width, base course and pavement width and thickness, roadside and internal drainage, intersection design, maximum slopes and curves, logical addressing, and/or non-duplicative road naming.

5. **Consider adopting a town driveway ordinance to ensure suitable dimensions and design for emergency vehicles,** guide driveway placement, promote access control to adjacent roads, and protect rural character. A driveway ordinance could:

- § Include width, design, clearance, address signage, and slope standards to ensure access by emergency vehicles. To effectively provide safe access for emergency equipment, driveways should provide at least 12 feet of unobstructed width and at least 14 feet of unobstructed height. Driveways lined with dense vegetation and longer driveways should provide for a turn-out to accommodate two-way traffic and a turnaround near the home.
- § Specify the number of driveway accesses to the road allowed for each property.
- § Encourage shared driveways between adjacent developments.
- § Require “no vehicular access” areas on subdivision plats or certified survey maps where driveways connecting to the public road would not be safe.
- § Guide the placement of driveways relative to each other and road intersections, and to protect sight distances for vehicles leaving the property.

This type of ordinance typically requires, before a driveway may be constructed, submittal of a plan that shows the location, slope, cross-section, retaining walls or bridges or culverts (if necessary), erosion control and drainage management approaches. Model town driveway ordinances are available from the Wisconsin Towns Association.

6. The Town should continue to work with the county, state, and regional jurisdictions **to support other transportation options**, including:
 - § **Commuter Facilities.** This *Plan* recommends that the Town, Village of Westfield, and County explore the interest in a park-and-ride lot at the I-39 interchange area. One possible arrangement could have WisDOT entering into an agreement with one of the commercial business at the interchange to reserve some parking spaces for a park-and-ride arrangement.
 - § **Para-Transit.** This *Plan* advises continuation and, if needs and funding increases, expansion of para-transit services, particularly to serve the growing elderly population. The Town and County should explore two programs administered by WisDOT which utilize both federal and state funding for transportation assistance for the elderly and disabled populations. These are:
 - *Specialized Transportation Assistance Program for Counties* program, which provides funding for transportation services, purchasing services from any public or private organization, subsidizing elderly and disabled passengers for their use of services or use of their own personal vehicles, performing or funding management studies on transportation, training and the purchase of equipment. This program requires a 20% local match in funding.
 - *Elderly and Disabled Transportation Capital Assistance* program. Eligible applicants include private and non-profit organizations, local public bodies that do not have private or public transportation providers available, local public bodies that are the approved provider of transportation services for the elderly and disabled in their areas. The program provides grants that cover 80% of the cost of eligible equipment.
 - The state also funds the *Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP)*. This program supports the development of transportation services to link low-income workers with jobs, training centers and childcare facilities. Applicants to the program must prepare a Regional Job Access Plan that identifies the needs for assistance. Eligible applicants include local units of government, public transit agencies, tribal organizations, non-profit agencies and metropolitan planning organizations.
7. **Help protect the rural character along scenic roadways.** This may include:
 - § **Working with the County on enforcement of the zoning ordinance** to discourage the accumulation of junk on properties. The County zoning ordinance defines “junkyards” and prohibits them in certain zoning districts. Town officials may consult with the County Zoning Administrator if it believes that certain properties are in violation of the County zoning ordinance,
 - § **Consider adopting a Town property maintenance code** to ensure that properties are kept up to certain basic standards of repair and maintenance;
 - § Where housing is planned, **promoting the placement of new houses in locations that minimize visibility from the road** and preserve vegetation and topographic features.
8. Monitor and participate in pending statewide long-range transportation planning (Connections 2030) for highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit systems.

Map 5: Planned Transportation and Community Facilities

CHAPTER SIX: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

VI. UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This chapter of the plan contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide the future maintenance and development of the Town's utilities and community facilities, as required under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

A. EXISTING UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. TOWN FACILITIES

The Town Hall and garage is located in Harrisville at the intersection of CTHs J and B. The town owns parkland near the town hall building (see below). The Town holds its annual Brat Fest in the park every Labor Day weekend. The Town also owns a 2.3-acre parcel of land in Section 19, and a 40-acre parcel in Section 14 that is now a closed landfill site.

2. COUNTY FACILITIES

Marquette County's government offices operate out of several buildings in Montello; most located in the County's courthouse building on West Park Street. The County Courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other county facilities include the highway department facility, and service center, both located along Underwood Avenue, and the County's Job Center located on West Street. The County Fairgrounds occupies a 40-acre site in the southwestern portion of the Village of Westfield. Facilities include a softball diamond, horse racing track, a grandstand, restrooms, and several livestock and exposition buildings. The County fair is held annually in July.

3. PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

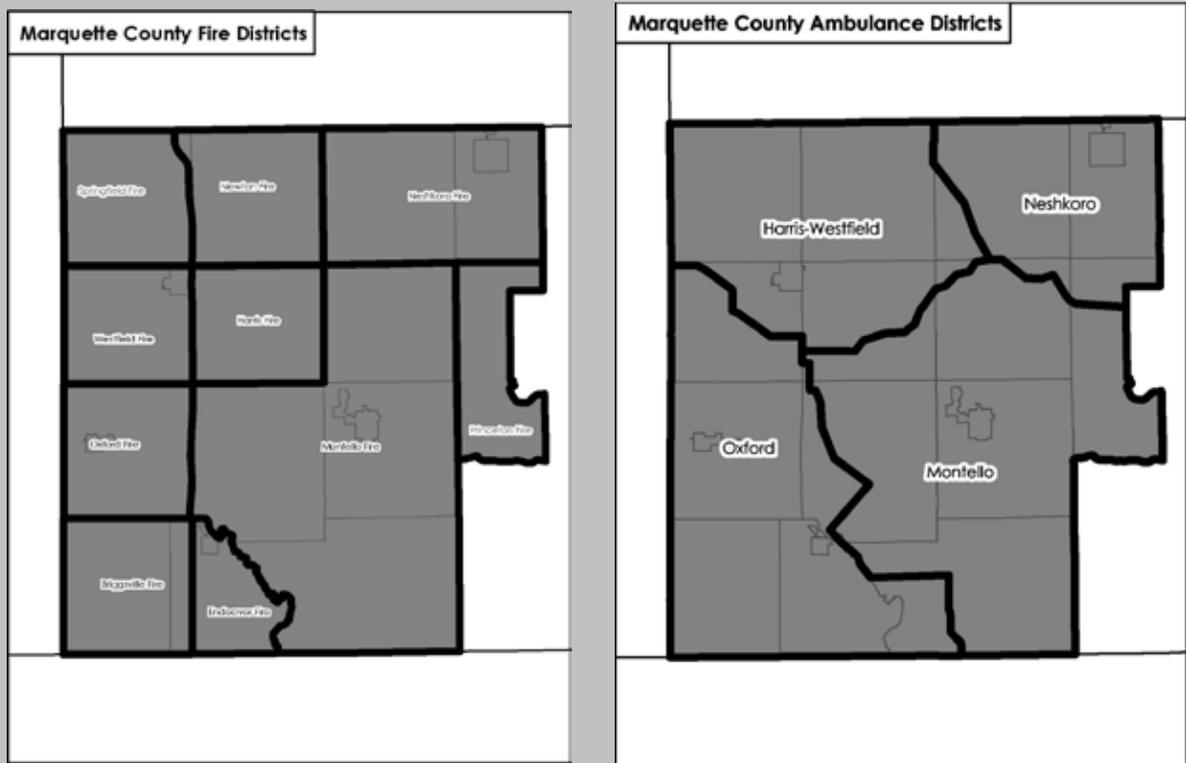
The Harris Fire Department owns **Firemen's Park** and the Town **William Lange Park**, both located near the town hall building. Marquette County owns seven public access points on the County's major lakes and rivers, including two at Harris Lake in the Town of Harris. Private clubs and organizations in Marquette County maintain about 100 miles of public snowmobile trails, some of which are located in Harris. The county's trail network and 60 miles of interconnecting privately-maintained club trails are readily accessible to all portions of the county and links to trails of surrounding counties as a part of a statewide system. Most of the public trails are wintertime easements which cross private property. No public cross country ski trails presently exist in the county.

4. POLICE, FIRE, EMERGENCY, HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND CHILD CARE FACILITIES

The Marquette County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency for town residents. The department has 35 full-time officers. Based on the County's 2000 jurisdictional population, the county is providing about 2.5 officers per 1,000 people (comparable to the state ratio of 2.4). The department operates out of the courthouse building in Montello. The County Jail is also located in this building. The Towns of Harris and Shields share a town constable for police services.

There are ten fire departments in the County (see Figure 16 for district boundaries), with the **Harris Fire Department** serving local residents. Emergency medical service is provided by the County, which rotates an ambulance on a weekly basis between Westfield and Harrisville to serve the northern half of the county. The County's EMS is staffed with 4 full-time employees and 70 on-call volunteers. Retaining trained staff to provide EMS service was identified as a critical need during the local planning process. There are no major hospitals located in the Town, with the nearest hospital located in Portage. There are day care and child care facilities located in the County's urban areas, but none in the Town of Harris.

Figure 16: Fire and Ambulance District Boundaries (2004)



5. SCHOOLS

School-age kids in the Town are served by the **Westfield Public School District**. The boundaries of this and other public school districts in Marquette County are shown on Map 1. The Westfield School District serves 3,500 households and had a total k-12 enrollment of 1,337 during the 2002/03 school year. Enrollment has been declining since the 1997/98 school year, when about 1,500 students were in attendance (see Figure 17). This district serves the villages of Westfield, Neshkoro and Oxford and the towns of Harris, Newton, Westfield, Harris, Crystal Lake, Neshkoro, Oxford and a portion of Douglas in Marquette County, as well as the city of Coloma and portions of towns in Waushara County. There is a high school, middle school and elementary school located within the Village of Westfield. There is also a district elementary school located in the villages of Oxford and Neshkoro. The district owns a 175-acre school forest. The Montello School District owns a 40-acre parcel in Harris.

Figure 17: Westfield School District Enrollment, 1997 - 2003

	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03
Westfield School District	1,525	1,457	1,390	1,410	1,346	1,337

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2003

6. LIBRARIES

Residents in the Town of Harris are served by Ethel Everhard Memorial Library in the Village of Westfield. This public library, located across the street from the village hall building, was constructed in 1971 with money donated by a local resident. With between 6,000 and 7,000 volumes, this library offers a wide selection of materials to patrons in the Village and residents in surrounding towns. The Montello Public Library also serves Town residents. All of the public libraries in Marquette County are part of the Winnefox Library System, which serves 30 libraries and a population of over 300,000 residents in the east central region. Of the seventeen public library systems in the state, Winnefox ranks number one in the state in per capita circulation.

7. WATER SUPPLY

Residents in the Town of Harris obtain their water supply from private wells. There is no municipal water supply system provided in the neighboring Village of Westfield. Chapter Three provides more detailed information on the quantity and quality of the groundwater supply in the Town and County.

8. SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

There are no open or active landfill sites in the Town of Harris. There is one closed or inactive site located in Section 14.

9. PRIVATE ON-SITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES (POWTS)

In the Town of Harris, the disposal of domestic and commercial wastewater is handled primarily through the use of **private on-site wastewater disposal systems**. These on-site systems, often referred to as septic systems, generally discharge the wastewater to underground drainage fields. There are six types of on-site disposal system designs typically used in rural areas: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, and sand filter systems. The County regulates septic systems through authority granted by the state. The state's Department of Commerce (COMM) establishes the statewide code for siting, design, installation, and inspection of private on-site sewage systems. In 2000, the state adopted a revised private sewage system code called COMM 83. This revised code allows conventional on-site systems and alternative systems, such as those that employ biological or chemical treatment. In some cases, alternative waste disposal systems can be used in areas where conventional systems are not feasible due to unsuitable soil conditions.

10. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT & EROSION CONTROL

Stormwater management has gained more attention statewide in recent years as an environmental concern due to flooding, property damage, and surface water quality issues. Many communities are adopting stormwater management rules and requiring stormwater management plans to control run-off on an ongoing basis, such as establishing maximum impervious surface ratios, requiring that the amount of run-off occurring after development is the same as before development, and setting minimum water quality standards. Controlling run-off during site grading and construction has been viewed as particularly important. Under a recent change to State law, construction site erosion control plans are required for all sites over 1 acre in area.

In rural areas, another method to address stormwater run-off concerns is through a drainage district. In Marquette County, there are four established **Drainage Districts** overseen by commissions of appointed individuals. These districts can: plan, operate, and maintain districtwide drainage and dam facilities, levy assessments against landowners who benefit from drainage, award damages to landowners injured by the construction of drainage facilities, make or recommend modifications to drainage district boundaries, and resolve drainage disputes.

11. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Three telephone companies serve most of Marquette County: Verizon North, Marquette-Adams, and Century Tel. Residents living in the north part of Harris are served by Verizon North; Marquette-Adams serves homes in the southwest part. There is a growing trend in cellular telephone use throughout the county and, with this demand, comes local issues regarding electronic interference, aesthetics, and community impacts associated with this service. At the time this plan was written, there **no cell towers located in Harris**. Fiber optic lines for broadband internet access are provided in the County's three villages and city.

12. ELECTRIC GENERATION AND POWER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

The County is served by three electric power utilities: Pioneer Power and Light (Westfield Electric), Alliant-Wisconsin Power and Light, and the Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative. Most of the Town's west side is served by Alliant; the east side is served by Adams-Columbia. There is a hydropower electrical generating facilities located at Harris Lake. There are no **electronic transmission lines** running through the Town of Harris. There are three hydropower electrical generating facilities in Marquette County, one in the Town of Harris, one in the City of Montello, and one in the Village of Neshkoro.

13. RECYCLING FACILITIES

There is a private recycling drop-off point located south and adjacent to the Town's fire house building. Marquette County adopted its *Recycling Plan* in 1991 to establish a framework for the development of an effective recycling program to serve the entire County.

14. CEMETERIES

There are several public and private cemeteries located in the Town of Harris; some of the named cemeteries include Westfield East, Sheldon, Thalacker, and Harrisville. The locations of most of these sites are available from County plat books and town maps, as well as from the County Historic Society.

B. UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOAL, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Goal: Supply public facilities and services in line with resident expectations and the Town's rural atmosphere.

Objectives:

- a. Coordinate community facilities planning with land use, transportation, and natural resource planning.
- b. Provide the appropriate level of community services and facilities consistent with a low tax levy and the rural orientation of the Town.
- c. Protect the Town's public health and natural environment through proper siting of on-site wastewater disposal systems, erosion control and stormwater management.
- d. Enhance resident access to advanced telecommunication technologies through considering the location of cellular phone towers and broadband/fiber optics.

Policies and Programs:

1. **Work with the County and neighboring communities on forming and revisiting joint service agreements as a means to consolidate and coordinate services, to achieve better services and/or cost savings.** These types of agreements are particularly important in the current era of diminishing government financial resources. The Town should explore or extend joint service agree-

ments with neighboring communities and the County where consolidating and coordinating services can result in cost savings. This type of strategy might be undertaken to improve the service of County Emergency Medical Services (EMS), for instance, which has been identified as a particular issue in northwest Marquette County. EMS discussions may focus on ensuring adequate equipment and training, and to work toward providing better compensation to retain employees. This strategy is also appropriate for improving the area's recycling services.

2. **Work with the Village of Westfield and any interested town homeowners associations to coordinate future land development with planned improvements to public sanitary sewer systems and/or community/group waste treatment systems.** There are three approaches the Town, Village, and private homeowners associations can take to promote long-range waste treatment planning.

§ ***Guide urban development into areas with public sanitary sewer or close to the Village.***

This *Plan* seeks to guide higher density development and more intensive land uses (e.g., commercial and industrial uses) requiring public sanitary service in or close to the Village of Westfield. This approach will maximize the considerable investment that has already been made into these public utilities and result in more compact, higher value commercial and industrial uses. The Town and Village could address the future development of the planned commercial area along the east side of Interstate 39 near the Village, and associated utility extension and municipal boundary issues through an intergovernmental agreement. (Addressed more comprehensively in intergovernmental cooperation chapter).

- § ***Consider creating or exploring new sanitary or utility districts.*** In areas where there is existing or planned development that is some distance from a public sanitary sewer system, perhaps in and around Harrisville, the Town may consider creating a sanitary or utility district. State law grants towns the authority to create such districts. The general process for creating these types of districts includes reviewing a signed petition by at least half of the persons owning land or the owners of at least half of the land within the proposed limits of the sanitary district; holding a town board public hearing on the petition and, if approved, legally file the district with WisDNR and the County Register of Deeds. Once established, the district commission may project, plan, construct and maintain a system of water supply, solid waste collection, and sanitary sewer service.

- § ***Assist property owners establish group or community waste treatment facilities.*** If a Town sanitary district is deemed unfeasible due to distance from public services and/or there are particular problems with the siting or maintenance of on-site systems, another option to serve existing or planned development areas remote from public sanitary districts is a group or community waste treatment system. These systems generally involve providing wastewater or sewage collection with centralized treatment to a group of homes. There are a variety of collection and treatment technologies available for group systems. Group or cluster systems can provide the advantage of allowing higher housing density than would be allowed under normal septic systems, better environmental protection, and the potential for future conversion for discharge to a municipal system. Instead of public ownership, these systems may be owned and maintained by a homeowners association or lake organization. Proper assurances for joint, ongoing maintenance of such facilities is critical, such as through a lake organization or homeowners association.

3. **Work with the County to properly site and monitor private on-site wastewater treatment systems to assure public health and groundwater quality.** Marquette County recently updated its sanitary code to respond to COMM 83. In the future, Marquette County may consider additional updates. The Town should remain informed should these changes occur.

The Town could work with the County to promote the state's grant program, called the **Wisconsin Fund**, to help repair or replace failing septic systems. The County could also promote the use of

community/group waste treatment systems in existing and planned areas of intensive development, where connection to a public sewer system is not feasible. Proper assurances for joint, ongoing maintenance of such facilities is critical, such as through a lake organization or homeowners association.

4. **Explore avenues to assure a high-quality and abundant supply of groundwater.** Private wells draw water from the upper aquifer, which can be susceptible to contamination. Therefore, the Town, in cooperation with Marquette County and other communities, should consider the following steps to protect groundwater:
 - § *Minimize intensive development in rural areas.* There is a low probability of groundwater pollution associated with on-site sewage disposal systems where overall housing densities in an area are less than one house per two acres. There is a higher probability of groundwater pollution at overall densities greater than one house per one acre.
 - § *Minimize impervious surfaces* (e.g., rooftops, paved areas) and promote water infiltration (e.g., stormwater basins) in groundwater recharge areas.
 - § *Direct residential development away from all closed landfills* (1,200 foot radius).
 - § *Continue to support and promote recycling and waste-reduction programs* to decrease waste loads going to landfills in the region.
 - § *Support an effective inspection and required maintenance program* at the County level for all private on-site waste disposal systems.
 - § *Work with the County to limit the use of salt on roads*, and locate and manage snow and salt storage areas to avoid groundwater and stream pollution.
5. **Purchase additional land to expand Fireman's Park.** Properties north and south of the park's borders are potential expansion areas. The Town should also have the first option to acquire the Lions Club building and rent this space out for large gatherings (e.g., weddings, banquets, etc.).
6. **Support the privately-owned and operated recycling center.** The Town should continue to support the private community service and could work with the operator to explore funding sources for any identified improvements over the 20-year planning period, or cooperate with the County to apply for a Solid Waste Management Grant through the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service grants program.
7. **Explore the feasibility of establishing a compost center for town resident's organic waste.** A recommended location for this type of composting operation is the closed town dump in Section 14.
8. **Encourage efforts to retain and improve small community schools and educational services** directed to educating the Town's youth and providing continuing education and training to adults. To make sure they have a voice in school district decision-making, the Town should cooperate with the Westfield School District in long-range planning and decision-making.
9. **Support strategies for enhancing telecommunication capabilities.** In Marquette County, there are fiber optic lines that can support high speed data transmissions in the villages of Endeavor, Oxford, Westfield, and the city of Montello. This Plan supports strategies to enhance telecommunication capabilities for the Town. The Town and the County can **enhance telecommunication facilities** by supporting or encouraging the following efforts:
 - § When roadway improvements are conducted, work with the State, County to ensure fiber optic cables are laid.
 - § Work with local utility providers which maintain easements and right-of-ways, telecommunication infrastructure, and an existing customer base to provide service.

- § A study that includes feasibility of various broadband services, determination of the scope of work to install, return on investment, and projected timelines.
 - § Focus on larger customers in rural areas to determine their need for broadband data transmission. These larger potential customers could provide enough economic incentive to bring service to rural areas where demand may not otherwise justify the expense.
 - § Explore funding for this type of community utility investment available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utility Services or other broadband or exploratory or pilot programs.
10. **Encourage construction site erosion control and ongoing stormwater management for subdivisions and other larger projects to protect water quality and prevent flooding.** Stormwater management techniques include natural drainage swales and retention and detention basins. See Chapter Two for more information.
 11. Generally follow the timetable shown in Figure 18 **to create, expand or rehabilitate** community facilities.
 12. Do not plan for direct Town government involvement in **health care and child care** over the 20-year planning period, as these services will be provided by private and non-profit entities in town and in nearby communities.
 13. Do not plan for direct Town involvement in providing additional or expanded parks, libraries, or cemeteries. The Town expects that **parks, cemeteries, and libraries** in the area will be sufficient to serve residents over the planning period, or other county or private entities will provide these facilities.
 14. Remain informed with any plans related to power/transmission lines in the Town. Because new transmission lines are costly to build and difficult to site, energy providers are increasingly looking to increase capacity along existing routes. This Plan promotes corridor sharing of the use of the transmission line's existing rights-of-way for other facilities. This arrangement reduces impacts by locating linear land uses together and minimizes the amount of new land potentially affected by new easements.

Figure 18: Timetable to Improve or Enhance Utilities and Facilities

Utility or Facility	Timeframe for Improvements	Comments
Water Supply	N/A	All water supplied by private wells; expected to continue.
On-Site Wastewater Treatment (Septic)	Ongoing	Promote the state's Wisconsin Fund to help repair or replace failing septic systems; promote the use of community/group waste treatment systems in areas of intensive development; participate in County code updates.
Solid Waste Disposal	N/A	All landfills in the Town are closed; No new local landfills expected.
Stormwater Management	N/A	County enforces the Erosion Control and Stormwater Runoff ordinance for new subdivisions.
Recycling and Trash Services/Compost	2005 – 2010	Explore improvements / expansions to the Town recycling center and potential funding sources and consider operating a composting center at the closed town dump site.
Law Enforcement Services	2005 - 2010	County provides services and may explore long-range space needs for Sheriff's Department; explore options to expand policing in the Town.
Fire Protection and EMS Services	2005 – 2025	Joint fire services are sufficient to meet current and forecasted needs. Regular equipment upgrades are necessary and should be included in a 5 Year Capital Budget
	2005 – 2010	Consider and implement options to increase full time EMT staff and pay compensations to volunteer EMTs. The Town should consult with other local units of government to explore feasibility of funding and EMT staff coordination options.
Medical Facilities	N/A	Medical facilities in nearby communities appear to meet needs.
Library	N/A	County libraries meet current and forecasted needs.
Schools	2005 – 2025	Work with the Westfield School Districts on long-range planning studies. The Town should encourage community planning curriculum in the classrooms.
Park & Recreation Facilities	2005	Participate in the Countywide update to the 1999 Outdoor Recreation Plan.
	2005-2010	Purchase land to expand Fireman's Park and have the first option to acquire the Lion's Club building to utilize for larger gatherings.
Telecommunication Facilities	2005-2010	Work with the County to explore funding sources, feasibility, and demand for fiber optic/broadband access expansion.
Cemeteries	N/A	No present need to identify future sites or expansions.

Telecommunication Facilities	2005-2010	Work with the County to explore funding sources, feasibility, and demand for fiber optic/broadband access expansion.
Child Care	N/A	No present need to identify future sites or expansions. Private market will provide this service.

CHAPTER SEVEN: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

VII. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs aimed at providing an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in Harris. The chapter covers all of the data and analysis as required under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

A. EXISTING HOUSING FRAMEWORK

1. HOUSING TYPE CHARACTERISTICS

According to 2000 census data, there are 350 housing units in the Town of Harris. As shown in Figure 19, the **Town's housing stock is predominately single-family homes** (86 percent). This proportion of single family homes is larger than the county housing stock (79 percent), the East Central Region's housing stock (75 percent), and the statewide figure (69 percent). About 13 percent of the Town's housing stock in 2000 was comprised of mobile homes, slightly lower than the county figure of 16 percent. According to the State Demographic Services Center's Annual Housing Unit Survey, there were 58 new housing units constructed in the Town between 1990 and 2003. Consistent with County trends, new home construction was most active between 2000-2003, with almost half of the new home construction occurring during this three-year period.

Figure 19: Housing Types: 1990- 2000

Units per Structure	1990 Units	1990 %	2000 Units	2000 %
Single Family	274	75%	300	86%
Two Family (Duplex)	1	0.5%	0	0%
Multi-Family	0	0%	4	1%
Mobile Home	90	24.5%	46	13%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000

Figure 20 compares other 2000 housing characteristics for the Town with the County and State. Sixteen percent of the housing stock classified as "seasonal" by the U.S. Census. Seasonal units are intended for use only in certain seasons or for weekend or other occasional use throughout the year. They include cottages, cabins, time-share units, and temporary work housing for migrant workers. For comparison, seasonal units comprised 26 percent of the units in the County, and 6 percent in the state. The **median value** of an owner-occupied home in the Town in 2000 was \$91,600.

Figure 20: Comparison of Housing Stock Characteristics - 2000

	Town of Harris	Marquette County	Wisconsin
Total Housing Units	350	8,664	2,321,144
Occupancy Rate	82%	69%	89%
% Seasonal	16%	26%	6%
% Owner Occupied	87%	82%	68%
Median Housing Value/Owner Occ.	\$91,600	\$87,000	\$112,200

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000

2. HOUSING AGE AND STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The **overall condition of housing** in the Town can be generally assessed through census data, including structural age, presence of complete plumbing facilities, and overcrowding. Figure 21 illustrates the age of Town's housing stock based on 2000 census data. The Towns experienced its highest building rates during the 1970s and 1990s—which parallels the Town's biggest growth spurts in population. About a third of the Town's homes were built before 1959 and will probably show signs of wear over the planning period, which could increase the interest in housing rehabilitation resources.

From 1990 to 2000, the proportion of occupied housing units that lacked hot and cold water, a flush toilet, or a bathtub or shower in the Town dropped from 4 to less than 1 percent. This trend is similar to county, regional and state trends and percentages. There are no **overcrowded living units** in the Town, as defined as units with more than one person per room, while in Marquette County the figure was 1.75 percent.

3. HOUSING PROGRAMS

The U.S. Veterans Administration provides low-cost loans and other housing assistance to veterans in the county. WHEDA is the most active housing agency in Marquette County and constructed most of the affordable housing for low-income families and seniors. The Wisconsin Department of Administration also provides loans to low and moderate income homebuyers in the county. Rural Development is a nonprofit agency active in central Wisconsin that also provides housing assistance in the form of low-interest loans to low-income homebuyers. Other agencies providing housing services include religious institutions and social service agencies that provide housing services to persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and for seniors. In addition, CAP services, a regional provider of business, housing and social services has a financial assistance program for first-time homebuyers. It provides matching dollars to low-and moderate-income first-time homebuyers for down payment and closing costs. CAP also provides housing rehabilitation and weatherization for owner-occupied and rental housing.

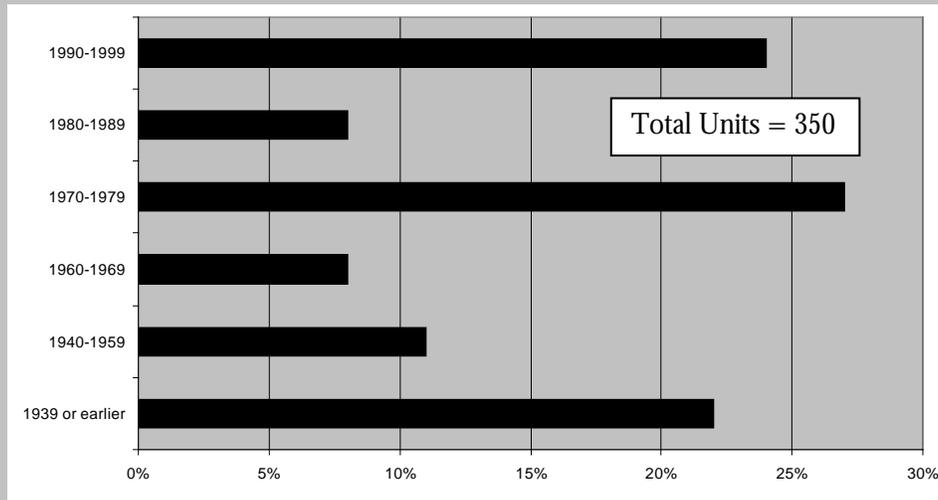
4. SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Special needs or subsidized housing is often needed for individuals who need housing assistance or housing designed to accommodate their needs due to financial difficulties, disabilities, age, domestic violence situations, or drug abuse problems. Throughout Marquette County, several governmental, private and nonprofit agencies provide some form of housing assistance to meet these types of situations. According to the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), there were **116 federally assisted rental units** in the County in 1999. Of these, 91 were elderly units, 21 were family units, and 4 were units for disabled individuals. None of these units are located in the Town of Harris.

2002 TOWN SURVEY RESULTS

*When asked to identify housing needs in Marquette County, most respondents chose “**assisted living housing for the elderly, low to moderate income housing, and single family housing**” as their top choices.*

Figure 21: Age of Town of Harris Housing as a Percent of the Total 2000 Housing Stock



5. HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS

The relationship between housing costs and household incomes is an indicator of **housing affordability**, which is gauged by the proportion of household income spent for rent or home ownership costs. The national standard for determining whether rent or home ownership costs comprise a disproportionate share of income is set at 30 percent of gross household income. Households spending more than 30 percent of their income for housing may be at risk of losing their housing should they be confronted with unemployment, unexpected bills, or other unexpected events. While there is no data available down to the town level, the percentage of homeowners in Marquette County paying a disproportionate share of their income for housing was 21 percent in 1999, which was the highest rate in the East Central Region (averaging 15 percent) and higher than the state average of 18 percent. The percentage of renters in Marquette County paying a disproportionate share of their income for housing was 23 percent, which was lower than the regional and state averages.

The ECWRPC compiled ten variables (including age of occupied units, homeowner and rental vacancy rates, owner-occupied housing values, renter and owner-occupied housing affordability and housing conditions) from the 2000 census to produce a composite map of the region indicating the level of “housing stress” in each jurisdiction. The levels range from “adequate” to “moderate” to “severe”. According to this map, no jurisdictions in Marquette County face “severe” housing stress, but several communities, including the Town of Harris, were identified as having a “**substantial**” level of housing stress.

B. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT GOAL, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Goal: Encourage decent, affordable housing for all Town residents.

Objectives:

- a. Encourage housing to meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups, and special needs.
- b. Encourage high quality construction and maintenance standards for housing.
- c. Encourage home siting that will not result in property or environmental damage, or impair rural character or agricultural operations.

- d. Encourage neighborhood designs and locations that protect residential areas from incompatible land uses, promote connectivity of road and environmental systems, and preserve rural character.

Policies and Programs:

1. **Plan for a sufficient supply of developable land** for a range of different housing types, in areas consistent with Town land use goals, and of densities and types consistent with community service and utility availability. The recommended “Planned Land Use Map” for the Town of Harris (Map 4) will accommodate expected housing demand over the 20 year planning period and beyond, within a variety of residential and rural land use designations.
2. **Encourage efforts to maintain housing and residential areas.**
 - § Work with the County to enforce existing regulations designed to discourage incompatible uses (e.g. junk vehicle storage) out of residential areas.
 - § Consider a Town property maintenance code to address issues of basic house and lot maintenance.
 - § Consider working with the County to identify sources of funding to rehabilitate housing that has deteriorated in condition. Using CDBG funds, communities may establish rehabilitation loans or grants to assist owner-occupants with repairs.
3. **Encourage the private market in developing affordable housing** and housing for the elderly. Several state and federal programs and funding sources are available to assist private developers, Marquette County, local governments, and residents meet housing objectives. The Habitat for Humanity program has been increasingly active in Marquette County in recent years. Examples of these are described earlier in this chapter.
4. **Encourage efforts to protect private homes from wildfire hazard through thoughtful home siting and grounds maintenance.** County and local governments can work with private developers and homeowners to educate them on the risk of wildfires and take measures to ensure that emergency responders can safely and adequately fight fires. This measure might involve appointing a board of area residents interested in fire issues, conducting a wildfire hazard assessment, removing trees to promote access along roads and driveways, and scheduling a spring cleaning day to remove flammable woody debris. The Harris Fire Department and WisDNR can assist with these efforts.

In addition, this *Plan* recommends that local fire agencies be provided the opportunity to review and comment on major subdivisions or large-scale non-residential development projects. The location of individual homesites, parks, open recreational lands, roads, trees, and landscaping should also be reviewed with fire protection in mind. A driveway ordinance is another way to provide safe access to homesites. WisDNR has additional information to help educate both newcomers and long-term residents on the hazards wildfires pose on lives and private property.
5. **Promote quality neighborhood design and layout in new residential areas adhering to appropriate rural standards for roads,** other infrastructure, and lot placement in new subdivisions. Details are provided below. Areas planned for new housing are shown in Map 4.

This *Plan* endorses high-quality design and layout in all newly planned residential areas in the Town. This in-

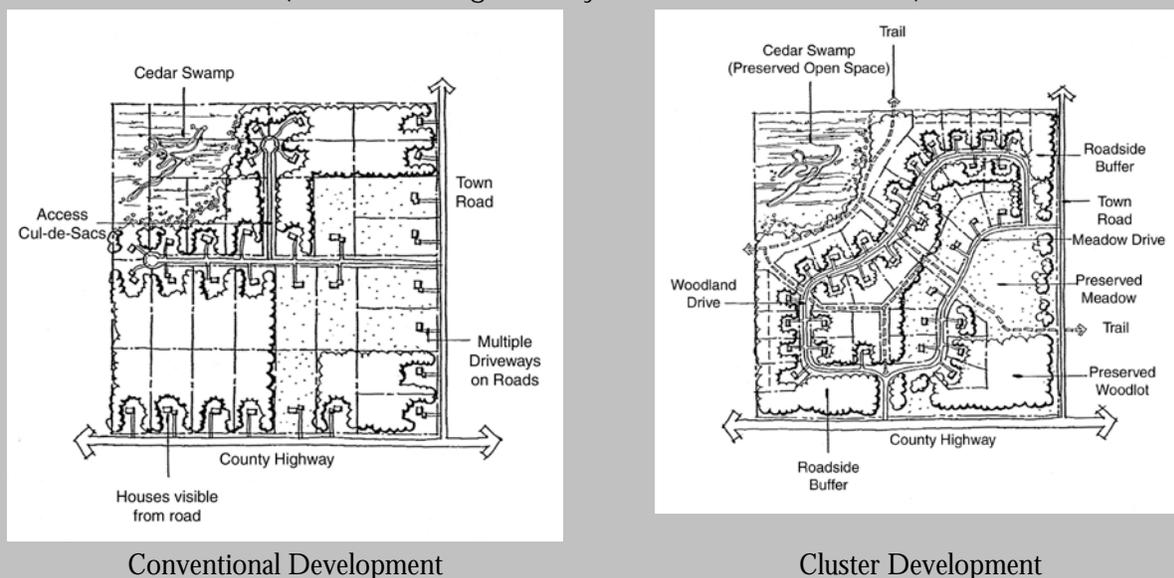


cludes protecting “environmental corridors” during the land division and construction phase and providing safe and adequate road access. In areas where Map 4 shows new residential development (the areas designated as *Single Family Residential – Rural*), this *Plan* encourages the use of “conservation neighborhood design” techniques in the planning and developing of these subdivisions. Conservation Neighborhood Design is an overall approach to designing new residential developments in a manner that achieves many of the goals of this *Plan*. The following “conservation neighborhood design” guidelines described in this section are recommendations, and not mandates:

- § Preserve open space, farmland, and natural features that define, sustain, and connect rural neighborhoods and enhance rural character.
- § Promote rural character by “hiding” development from main roads through natural topography, vegetation, and setbacks. This could be accomplished by arranging lots behind trees, hills and ridges. Where such features are absent, the use of berms with natural plantings can also be effective. Another method would be to discourage the development of highly-visible “frontage lots” along roadways, as these have the greatest visual and traffic impacts. It should be noted, however, that while minimizing the visual impact of development, it is also critical to maintain safe fire access and appropriate road and driveway markings to ensure fast emergency response.
- § Arrange individual homes in desirable locations, which should consider topography, privacy, and views of open space.
- § Use the road and possibly a trail network to connect homes to each other, connect streets to the existing road network, and connect the development to adjoining open space or nearby public lands.
- § Encourage housing on modest sized lots. Smaller lots that are “clustered” in buildable portions of a property will allow for greater protection of natural features and open space in other portions of the land. Often, rural lots can be as small as 1½ acres and still allow for safe disposal of sanitary waste. Figure 22 provides a visual comparison between a conventional subdivision and conservation neighborhood design on the same conceptual site.

Figure 22: Example of Conservation Neighborhood Development Compared to Conventional Development

(In Planned Single Family Residential – Rural areas)



The Town, together with the County, should consider making **strategic amendments to the County subdivision and zoning ordinances** to encourage conservation neighborhood design principles as an option. The rules may be written to provide incentives for this type of development, for example, by allowing slightly more lots than otherwise allowed if conservation design principles are not followed.

Often, conservation subdivisions preserve one-half or more of the land as permanent open space. Who maintains this space is a frequent question. In conservation neighborhoods, the **open space** may be owned and managed by one or a combination of the following:

- § A private individual who holds fee title to the land and manages the land for open space uses (e.g., farming, hunting), often as provided by a conservation easement. This conservation easement could limit any future development in the open space area. This individual could be the original landowner, or a new owner interested in using the land for farming, hunting or other open space uses.
- § A homeowner's association or lake association made up of private property owners within the development. The homeowner's association would own and maintain the common open space through a formal declaration of covenants, conditions and restrictions. This method provides residents with the greatest degree of control over the use and management of the open space.
- § A non-profit conservation organization, such as a land trust, which retains or protects the natural, scenic or open space values of real property to assure the availability of this land for agricultural, forest, recreational or open space uses.
- § A governmental agency which might provide the land as a public recreation area.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VIII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to promote the retention and stabilization of the Town's economic base. As required by §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, this chapter includes an assessment of new businesses and industries that are desired in the Town, an assessment of the Town's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and an inventory of environmentally contaminated sites.

A. EXISTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

1. LABOR FORCE TRENDS

In 2000, The Town's labor force consisted of 368 people. (A community's labor force is the portion of the population age 16 or older that is employed or available for work, and includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment). Of this labor force population, 358 persons were employed and 10 were unemployed; resulting in an **unemployment rate of 1.7 percent**. In June 2004, the unemployment rate for the entire County was 6.5%, and for the state and nation it was around 5%.

2. LOCAL JOBS

Within Marquette County, the number of jobs grew 9 percent from 1996 to 2001 (with a reported 3,821 jobs). The County's job growth has been centered in the **goods-producing industries** rather than service-producing, which is counter to trends happening throughout the rest of the state and nation. According to the state's Department of Workforce Development (WisDWD), manufacturing employment has not been hit as hard in the early 2000s as other parts of the country because most of its products are non-durable goods (e.g., foods and kindred products) which are less prone to fluctuation in typically businesses cycles. Job growth has also been strong in industries that serve the County's growing immigration population, many of whom are retired. Finance, insurance and real estate; and construction of new residential properties are the two fastest growing industries in the County.

3. INCOME DATA

According to 2000 census data, the **median household income** in the Town of Harris in 1999 was **\$37,344**. For comparison, the average household income in Marquette County was \$35,746. The County ranks 51st of 72 counties in median household income and is lower than the state and national average (the state average was \$43,791). Within the county, median household incomes in the 14 towns ranged from \$31,000 to \$43,000, and in the city and four villages from \$30,000 to \$39,000.

4. COMMUTING PATTERNS

Approximately half of Marquette County's workforce is employed outside the County, according to 2000 statistics compiled by WisDWD. Of the 3,236 workers commuting outside the County, **43 percent** (1,398 workers) **commute** to Columbia County to the south. Dane County is the second most common workplace destination, drawing 13 percent of the commuting workforce (423 workers). Nearly 200 or more Marquette County workers commute to one of the other nearby counties: Green Lake, Sauk, Waushara, and Fond du Lac. In contrast, about 1,330 workers commute *into* Marquette County for employment. The average time a County resident travels to work increased from 23 minutes in 1990 to almost 26 minutes by 2000. This data is not available at the town level.

2002 TOWN SURVEY RESULTS

When asked to identify the most important problem facing Marquette County, most respondents chose "increase in taxes and lack of job opportunities" as their top choices.

5. LOCATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Map 3 shows the location of existing economic development activity in the Town of Harris. These areas are labeled under the *Commercial Recreation* and *General Business* land use categories on the map.

6. ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTAMINATED SITES

The Wisconsin DNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintains a list of contaminated sites, or "brownfields," in the state. Properties listed in the DNR database are self-reported, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing of possible brownfields in a community. As of July 2003, there was **one site** in the Town listed in the Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Trading System as a Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) sites, which include sites where a leaking underground storage tank has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum.

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Aside from local economic development initiatives, the following economic development programs and agencies are benefiting, or are available to, the Town, its residents, and Marquette County:

ECWRPC Economic Development Strategy is used to distribute Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for designated projects in each county within the region.

Agricultural Development Zone is a program to attract, promote, retain and encourage the expansion of agricultural businesses in Wisconsin.

Community Assets for People (CAP) was established in the 1960s as a federally designated community action agency for Marquette, Portage and Waushara counties. CAP programs are designed to assist low-income residents address the causes of poverty. Examples of these programs include below market rate loans for low to moderate income entrepreneurs wishing to start or expand a business; an income qualified first-time homebuyers program; a Head Start program to provide daycare and childcare services to low and moderate income residents.

Marquette County Economic Development Corporation established a Strategic Plan in 2004 to identify short- and long-range economic development goals, including building strong partnerships, raising awareness about the EDAC, conducting a countywide economic development assessment, identifying funding sources, and working on programs that enhance business and job creation.

Wisconsin Rural Partners is a nonprofit organization that focuses on rural community and economic development, providing a wide range of services that includes economic development workshops and education.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides distance learning and telemedicine loans and grants which assist in developing technological and/or medical services in rural areas (through the USDA Rural Utilities Service), including a broadband program to assist in installation of internet technology in rural small towns, business loans, tech assistance, and helps establish empowerment zones for rural areas.

Community Based Economic Development Program (CBED) provides funding assistance to local governments and community-based organizations that undertake planning, development and technical assistance projects that support business development.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is available through the State to help underwrite the cost of infrastructure necessary for business development and make improvements to public facilities such as water systems, sewage systems and roads, and which will principally benefit business retention or creation.

U.S. Small Business Administration's Certified Development Company (504) Loan Program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. 504 loans can be used to fund land purchases and improvements, grading, street improvements, utilities,

parking lots and landscaping, construction of new facilities, or modernizing, renovating or converting existing facilities.

For additional information about any of the above programs, see the *Marquette County Comprehensive Plan*.

8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

The Wisconsin comprehensive planning statute requires that the *Comprehensive Plan* “assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local government unit.” According to the 2002 countywide opinion survey and local community visioning efforts, there is desire for small-scale industrial and retail development and tourism development in the county. Figure 23 shows strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries in the Town based on input from the Town of Harris Planning Committee.

Figure 23: Town Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development

Strengths	Weaknesses
Access and Visibility along Interstate 39	Limited Population Base
Natural Resources and Scenic Beauty	No High-Speed Internet Access (there is a fiber optic line along CTH B)
Town Facilities and Events	Property Maintenance Issues
Sense of Security and “Quiet Country Life”	

9. INTERSTATE CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

In October 2003, an assessment of the economic development potential of lands along the Interstate 39 corridor in Marquette County was conducted. The assessment of the diamond interchange in the Village is summarized in Figure 24. Much of the interchange area on the west side has been developed with highway commercial uses. The southeast corner has the greatest opportunity for development in the long term, with opportunities for redevelopment in the northeast corner. The Town can use this information to guide land use and economic development decisions for lands at the major interchanges, and for lands visible from the freeway.

Figure 24: Westfield Interchange Existing Conditions Assessment

Transportation Access		§ Good county highway access § Frontage Road on northeast § CTH E within 1 mile east of ramps § Northwest access best of four corners, includes sidewalk
Interstate Daily Traffic Volumes (2002)		§ 7,100 cars per day southbound § 7,000 cars per day northbound
Cross Hwy Daily Traffic Volumes		§ 2,400 cars per day eastbound on CTH J
Adjacent Land Use/Zoning	NE	§ Commercial sites - (cemetery, used car sales, mini-storage, motel) § Undeveloped commercial sites for sale
	NW	§ Restaurant, motel, fast food, shops, mini-golf, bank, park.
	SE	§ Cropland
	SW	§ Gas station, banks, school
Development Quality		§ Older properties on east side § Newer properties on west side, lot of pavement
Visibility from Interstate		§ Excellent in all Quadrants § Sites located below Interstate
Availability of Public Services		§ Sanitary sewer services available from Westfield
Environmentally Sensitive Areas		§ Dry ground in all quadrants
Soil Suitability for Development		§ Majority of the area has a slight limitation for buildings with foundations and moderate onsite sewage disposal limitations. Along 7th Court, there are areas with clay soils and high water table.
Other Development Opportunities		§ Busy crossroads traffic § Busy trucking activity § Natural stopping point
Other Development Limitations		§ Relatively few large parcels left § Westfield-side completely developed § Road sign clutter

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Goal: Encourage high-quality economic development opportunities appropriate to the Town's resources, character, and service level.

Objectives:

- a. Focus economic development efforts on natural resources, farming, nature and farm-related businesses, and small, community-serving businesses in limited areas.
- b. Seek new economic development opportunities that capitalize on natural resources.
- c. Allow home-based businesses where there will be no impact on surrounding properties.

- d. Discourage unplanned, continuous strip commercial development.
- e. Consider only small-scale industrial uses with no environmental impact.
- f. Promote the careful placement and design of mineral extraction sites, wireless telecommunication facilities, and other uses that may have a significant visual, environmental, or neighboring property owner impact.

Policies and Programs:

1. Plan for a **sufficient supply of developable land** for commercial uses, in areas consistent with the planned land uses shown on Map 4, and of a scale and type consistent with the Town's rural character and service availability. Based on the analysis presented in Chapter Four, the demand for land for these types of uses in the Town is minimal.
2. Direct larger-scale commercial and industrial uses into the **Village of Westfield** where public sewer is available and police, fire, and other services are closer. High quality economic development in the Village of Westfield will benefit Town of Harris residents because the village is in the same school district.
3. Outside of the *General Business* areas shown on Map 4, encourage businesses that are **related to farming and recreation**, including home occupations and "cottage industries" that are compatible with the rural nature of the area. These uses are particularly appropriate in rural areas to supplement household income (e.g., farm families). Home-based businesses and services range from those who supplement their income by selling a craft item or repairing a lawnmower to those who are employed by a company, but do most of their work from a home office (commonly called telecommuters). Two major trends have attributed to the rise of home occupations: the increased use of the personal computer and the re-structuring of the corporate workforce (e.g., downsizing, out-sourcing, "satellite" offices).
4. Cooperate in a county-wide effort to **create a balanced rural economy**. The Town's natural resources provide opportunities for production, tourism, and other nature-based economic development activities. The Town should work with the County on this effort to **seek economic development strategies that capitalize on the Town's natural resource base**. For instance:
 - § Support the economic health of **agriculture and forestry production** in the Town.
 - § Support the exploration of "**non-traditional**" forms of **agriculture and forestry**, such as vegetable, fruit and nut farms, and other small-acreage farms; grazing; research farming; community-supported agriculture; equine centers; businesses supporting hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities; and production of specialty products.
 - § Consider ways to **promote and market farm products** and agriculture-related activities, such as seminars, markets, farm days, and festivals.
 - § The range of **four-season opportunities could be crafted into a County-level** tourism plan that, once implemented, may provide a stable economic base that is able to weather changes in consumer preferences.
5. When reviewing applications for **non-metallic mineral extraction sites**, refer to the standards listed in Chapter Three.
6. When reviewing applications for new **commercial development projects**, the Town should refer to the policies for General Business areas in Chapter Four and the following design standards:
 - § High-quality signage treatment that is based on the area of building frontage, road frontage and façade area. The use of monument signs should be encouraged instead of pole signs.

- § Retention of existing vegetation and high quality landscaping treatment of bufferyards, street frontages, paved areas and building foundations.
- § Intensive activity areas such as building entrances, service and loading areas, parking lots, and trash receptacle storage areas oriented away from less intensive land uses.
- § Parking lots landscaped with perimeter landscaping and/or landscaped islands, along with screening (hedges, berms, trees, and decorative walls) to limit views from streets and adjacent residential uses.
- § Parking to the sides and rear of buildings wherever possible, rather than having all parking in the front.
- § Interconnected parking lots and driveways to facilitate on-site movement.
- § Location of loading docks, dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and outdoor storage areas behind buildings and complete screening through use of landscaping, walls, and architectural features.
- § Illumination from lighting kept on site through use of cut-off, shoebox fixtures.
- § High-quality building materials and architectural details.
- § Canopies, awnings, trellises, bays, and windows to add visual interest to facades.
- § Variations in building height and roof lines.

CHAPTER NINE: IMPLEMENTATION

IX. IMPLEMENTATION

This final chapter provides a roadmap for specific actions necessary to fully implement the *Plan's* recommendations. This chapter generally does not cover day-to-day decisions. Instead, it identifies programs and larger actions that the Town may undertake over the next several years.

A. PLAN ADOPTION

The *Town of Harris Comprehensive Plan* was adopted following procedures specified by Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation. This included extensive public input throughout the process, a Town Plan Commission recommendation, distribution of the recommended *Plan* to affected local, county, and state governments, a formal public hearing, and Town Board adoption of the *Plan* by ordinance.

B. IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 25 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the Town may pursue to implement the *Comprehensive Plan*. Often, such actions will require substantial cooperation with others, including County government and local property owners. Other Town government priorities, time constraints, and budget constraints may affect the completion of the recommended actions in the timeframes presented.

The table has three different columns of information, described as follows:

- § *Category*. The list of recommended actions is divided into six different categories generally based on different chapters of this *Plan*.
- § *Recommendation*. The second column lists the actual actions recommended to implement key aspects of the *Comprehensive Plan*. The recommendations are for Town actions that might be included, for example, in an annual work program or as part of the annual budgeting process.
- § *Implementation Timeframe*. The third column responds to the State comprehensive planning statute, which requires implementation actions to be listed in a "stated sequence." The suggested timeframe for the completion of each recommendation reflects the priority attached to the recommendation. Suggested implementation timeframes can be changed at the Town Board's discretion, depending on the ability to coordinate projects with other units of government, other Town priorities, and available budgetary and personnel resources.

Figure 25: Recommended Implementation Actions

Category	Recommendation	Implementation Timeframe
Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources	Work with Marquette County, WisDNR and neighboring communities to promote local and regional natural resources for tourism.	Ongoing
	Work cooperatively with neighboring governments, lake organizations, the County, WisDNR, Land Conservation Department, and community stakeholders to protect natural resources.	Ongoing
	Remain involved in WisDNR decisions relating to dam maintenance, repair, or removal programs.	Ongoing
	Participate in the update to the Marquette County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, if completed.	2016-2017
	Collaborate with Marquette County to develop and implement a Natural Resource Identification Checklist to help evaluate new development proposals	2017 and Ongoing
	Encourage Town property owners to pursue grants for natural stormwater management projects through the WisDNR Healthy Lakes grant program	Ongoing
	Protect surface water quality by working with Marquette County to require stormwater management for new subdivisions and larger development proposals.	Ongoing
Land Use	Use this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> and Map 4 to guide Town decision-making on future land uses.	Ongoing
	Consider requiring submittal of a site plan for specific development proposals (commercial or industrial) before approving the rezoning of land to the appropriate development-based zoning district	Ongoing
	Help monitor potential contamination of groundwater in the areas with high concentrations of septic systems, such as in Harrisville and develop long-term approaches to sanitary waste treatment.	Ongoing
Transportation	Work with the County to have desired town road improvements listed on the County's five year plan	2016 and Ongoing
	Survey and improve town roadway signage on an annual basis	Ongoing
	Participate in the County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning process to study and improve non-motorized transportation in the Town	2018 - 2020
	Consider adopting a Town driveway ordinance and a Town Road Specifications Manual to implement the recommendations of this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> .	Ongoing
	Explore locally accepted methods of limiting junk accumulation and preserving views along Town roadways – including consideration of a Town maintenance code	2016 and Ongoing
Utilities and Community Facilities	Work with the County and neighboring communities to plan for the future of emergency medical service	2016
	Participate in Marquette County's election equipment and election worker training opportunities.	2017 and Ongoing
	Explore feasibility and funding sources for purchasing additional land to expand Fireman's Park	2016 and Ongoing

Category	Recommendation	Implementation Timeframe
	Support the siting of wireless communication facilities to improve town coverage.	2016 and Ongoing
	Promote the State's Wisconsin Fund to help repair or replace failing septic systems	Ongoing
Housing, Neighborhood, and Economic Development	Work to connect older residents and others in need of housing assistance with available resources to help them update and stay in their homes.	Ongoing
Intergovernmental Cooperation	Provide a copy of this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> and all subsequent amendments to surrounding local governments.	2016 and as amended
	Stay informed on and participate in County-level transportation and economic development comprehensive planning efforts.	2016 and Ongoing

C. PLAN MONITORING, AMENDMENTS, AND UPDATE

The Town should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the recommendations of the *Comprehensive Plan*, and amend and update the *Plan* as appropriate. This section suggests recommended criteria and procedures for using, monitoring, amending, and updating the *Plan*.

1. PLAN MONITORING AND USE

The Town Plan Commission should, on a regular basis, review its decisions on private development proposals over the previous year against the recommendations of this *Plan*. This will help keep the *Plan* a "living document."

The Town should constantly evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions against the recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan*. Before submitting a formal application to the Town and/or County for development approval, the Town urges petitioners to discuss the request conceptually and informally with the Town Plan Commission. Conceptual review almost always results in an improved development product and can save the petitioner time and money.

2. PLAN AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this *Comprehensive Plan* may be appropriate in the years following initial *Plan* adoption and in instances where the *Plan* becomes irrelevant or contradictory to emerging policy or trends. "Amendments" are generally defined as minor changes to the *Plan* maps or text. Frequent amendments to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided.

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the Town use the same basic process to amend, add to, or update the *Comprehensive Plan* as it used to initially adopt the *Plan*. This means that the procedures defined under Section 66.1001(4) Wisconsin Statutes need to be followed. Marquette County staff may also be of some assistance.

3. PLAN UPDATE

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the *Comprehensive Plan* be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to an amendment, an update is often a substantial re-write of the plan document and maps. The Town should complete a full update of its *Comprehensive Plan* before the year 2026 (i.e., ten

years after 2016) at the latest. The Town should continue to monitor any changes to the language or interpretations of the State law over the next several years.

D. CONSISTENCY AMONG PLAN ELEMENTS

The State comprehensive planning statute requires that the implementation element “describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan shall be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan.” Preparing the various elements of the *Town of Harris Comprehensive Plan* simultaneously has ensured that there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different elements of this *Plan*.