

# 4 UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Town of Onalaska's Utilities and Community Facilities Plan provides a guideline to ensuring an efficient, affordable and quality public services and facilities to meet the needs of all Town residents.

**Goal 1: Ensure Town residents and businesses are adequately served by desired public utilities and facilities in a cost-effective way and in a manner that promotes a high quality of life.**

## Objectives, Policies & Actions

1-1: Continue to maintain low public service and facility costs in the Town.

- Action 1-1a:** Create and refine mechanisms to ensure that future development projects pay their own way. Some existing and possible future mechanisms include:
- Establishing impact fees (e.g., transportation system improvements).
  - Significantly increasing development review fees.
  - Amend Town ordinances to require evaluation of development impacts on the provision of public services and facilities, including the fiscal impacts of providing new or expanded services and facilities.
  - Evaluate costs of providing services and facilities with growth and development in the Town at least every five (5) years and adjust fees accordingly.
- Action 1-1b:** Coordinate land use planning and capital improvements planning. Infrastructure improvements and expansion should serve the Town's growth, land use, and environmental goals, not vice versa.
- Action 1-1c:** Encourage compact and efficient development patterns in the Town, and more intensive levels of development in and around the City of Onalaska and Village of Holmen to reduce the Town's costs of providing public services and facilities.
- Action 1-1d:** Carefully monitor the Town's growth rate to ensure that new development does not overburden the ability of the Town and other service providers to provide a desired level of services to Town residents and businesses.

- Action 1-1e:** Consider establishing a building permit limitation program based on the impacts and capacity of public utilities and services, impact on the School District(s), etc.
  - Action 1-1f:** Continue to seek grants, state and federal loans, and alternative methods of funding improvements.
  - Action 1-1g:** Encourage service providers, businesses, and developers to promote energy conservation practices in the Town.
  - Action 1-1h:** Encourage infill development, and reinvestment in and/or redevelopment of existing areas of the Town where services and facilities are already provided.
  - Action 1-1i:** Consider hiring a Town administrator. The Town's size and complexity of issues may warrant such an administrator. The administrator would improve the efficiency of Town government; provide professional advice on a number of issues; apply for grants and other county, state and federal funds; etc.
- 1-2:** The Town of Onalaska will continue to work cooperatively with La Crosse County, the Holmen and Onalaska School Districts, the Village of Holmen, the City of Onalaska, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Army Corps of Engineers, and other jurisdictions to ensure efficient, economical, and quality provision of community services and facilities.
- Action 1-2a:** Maintain an on-going integration of Town Planning and School District committees in order to address issues of mutual concern.
  - Action 1-2b:** Work cooperatively with the School Districts and integrate the districts into the long-term planning for the Town.
  - Action 1-2c:** Refer development and land division applications to the School Districts for their review and comments as part of the Town's review of development and land division applications. The purpose of this action is to both inform the School Districts about potential developments in the Town as well as to gain a better understanding of the proposed development's impacts on the School District.
  - Action 1-2d:** Pursue agreements between the Town and all other infrastructure and service providers to ensure coordination and cooperation in the planning and installation of all future infrastructure and service improvements so that such improvements further the community's goals, particularly those related to land use, growth, and the environment.

- Action 1-2e:** Participate on regional boards, commissions, committees, etc. to jointly plan for and coordinate the provision of utilities and community facilities.
- Action 1-2f:** Encourage participation by all citizens and use a variety of methods to allow citizens to participate including, but not limited to, public meetings and hearings, email, telephone calls, letters, and website responses.
- Action 1-2g:** Involve all relevant agencies making utilities and community facilities decisions such as the DNR, USFWS, and others and provide timely notice of meetings, events, and pending Town decisions.

**1-3:** The provision of public services and facilities will improve the quality of life of Town residents, property owners, businesses and visitors.

- Action 1-3a:** By involving the public in facility and utility expansion decisions, whenever possible, by asking for public comments and placing citizens on appropriate boards.
- Action 1-3b:** Continue to monitor the public's satisfaction with the provision of public services and facilities in the Town through efforts such as conducting surveys and inviting input at annual Town meetings.
- Action 1-3c:** Establish a new Town Hall to allow better participation in government and community activities.

**Goal 2:** Avoid environmentally sensitive areas when extending and constructing new utilities and community facilities.

### Objectives, Policies & Actions

**2-1** Consult the Environmental Features Map and relevant agencies before making decisions regarding location of new utilities or community facilities, and encourage development and redevelopment practices that will maintain or improve the natural environment.

- Action 2-1a:** Require recreational facilities (active, passive or an appropriate combination) or impact fees from developers as part of new developments for parks and recreation mitigation for new residents. Amend the Land Division Ordinance to reflect such mitigation.
- Action 2-1b:** Implement the Brice Prairie Watershed Storm Water Management Plan as well as the Sand Lake Coulee Creek and Halfway Creek watershed management plans.

- Action 2-1c:** The Town should consider the land use planning implications of the COMM 83 rules. Specifically, the Town should understand that the COMM 83 regulations will probably allow development to occur in areas where private, on-site waste disposal systems were previously not feasible due to poor soil conditions.
- Action 2-1d:** The Town should develop a stormwater management ordinance to prevent soil erosion and protect water quality.
- Action 2-1e:** The Town should encourage residents to properly maintain private, on-site waste disposal systems to prolong the useful life of those systems and avoid groundwater contamination.
- Action 2-1f:** The Town should maintain an accurate, detailed list of septic system information in the Town. The list should include the year the system's were installed or replaced, failures, etc.
- Action 2-1g:** The Town should limit expansion or construction of public infrastructure where such developments would cause subsurface contamination or result in contaminated surface runoff that is allowed to infiltrate into the shallow water table.
- Action 2-1h:** Develop a policy to prevent discharge of pesticides, herbicides, soap, oil, paints, septic systems, or other hazardous material into Lake Onalaska, the Mississippi River, Halfway Creek, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Action 2-1i:** Encourage (and require where appropriate) designs and landscaping patterns that promote the retention of natural vegetation (to control erosion and runoff) for all new development within the Town of Onalaska.
- Action 2-1j:** Work in partnership with local and regional agencies (La Crosse County Planning & Zoning, the DNR, Citizens to Protect Brice Prairie, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Mississippi Valley Archeology Society and other relevant groups) to develop educational materials and model ordinance language for erosion control and site planning for all new development.
- Action 2-1k:** Do not extend or develop new utilities and facilities in floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, or other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Action 2-1l:** Amend the Town's Land Division Ordinance to address development in and around environmentally sensitive areas, such to create buffers, etc. between development and such areas.

**Goal 3: Continue to provide and improve outdoor recreational facilities for active uses (e.g. ball games) and natural areas for passive uses (e.g., birdwatching).**

**Objectives, Policies & Actions**

**3-1** Recreational facilities and programs should be planned to serve both local residents and tourists and should be designed at a scale appropriate to the intended use and the surrounding environment. Recreational uses and facilities should also be consistent with the other goals and objectives identified in this plan, especially those related to land use, transportation and the environment.

**Action 3-1a:** Require recreational facilities (active, passive or an appropriate combination) or impact fees from developers as part of new developments for parks and recreation mitigation for new residents. Amend the Land Division Ordinance to reflect such mitigation.

**Action 3-1b:** Create a town parks and recreation master plan with public input to guide the purchase and development or preservation of parks and recreation areas; to identify locations for picnic and playground facilities; to determine whether additional boating access, hunting areas, and campgrounds are needed.

**Action 3-1c:** Expand shoreline fishing opportunities through obtaining the appropriate fishing access points.

**Action 3-1d:** Work with the USFWS, the Mississippi Valley Conservancy and other organizations to realize the goal of constructing a nature center, District office, refuge headquarters, cultural center, preserve, etc. on Brice Prairie.

**Action 3-1e:** Work with all environmental groups in the coulee region to help preserve the area's natural heritage and make the area's environmental values known to its citizens and tourists as top recreation destinations in the region and state.

**Action 3-1f:** Pursue joint projects with other municipalities, agencies and/or non-profit organizations to increase and enhance public community facilities within the Town (e.g. boat landings and trail access).