

Town of Onalaska Stakeholder Interview Results, Spring 2004

As part of the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Planning process, Schreiber Anderson Associates (SAA) conducted a series of stakeholder interviews to identify issues, opportunities, threats, the type and location of future development, and overall 20-year visions for the Town. SAA interviewed the following stakeholders, in alphabetical order:

Dan Anderson, Town of Onalaska Farmer
Dave Balduzzi, Business Owner
Jim Brush, Business Owner
Gary Fisher, Resident
Fred Frick, Superintendent of Holmen School District
Charlie Handy, La Crosse County Planner
Phillip Johnson, Town of Onalaska Farmer
Dave Harter, Business Owner
Ted Johnson, Business Owner
Gary Kately, Owner-Clearwater Cabins
Leif Marking, Brice Prairie Conservation Association
Steve Mathy, Owner-Mathy Construction
Dean McHugh, Owner-McHugh Excavating
Jim Nissen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Cynthia Olmstead, Mississippi River Conservancy
Earl Pedretti, Brice Prairie Farmer
Residents of Highway S (Todd Smith will provide)
Richard Sarazin, Business/Property Owner
John Schaller, Brice Prairie Farmer
Doug Schfelbine, Business Owner
Marc Schultz, Lake Onalaska Protection District
Jim Thompson, DNR State Trail Manager
Dave Tilton, Resident
Paula Oeler, Resident

All stakeholders were asked the same seven (7) questions. Their responses are below and **not** in the order in which they are listed above. Stakeholder interview participants were ensured that individual responses will **not** be revealed to preserve the integrity of the process.

1. What are the most important issues in the Town?

- Control development.
- Asphalt plant-lack of planning and awareness.
- Planned development and maintenance of resources (Great River State Trail).
- Sprawling development.
- River management.
- Air quality issues from MN-Winona (upriver).
- Traffic control-how will increased traffic impact recreation?
- If asphalt plant occurs-limited crossings will be crucial.
- New town board – no guidelines/plan.
- Paralyzed town gov't.
- Planning/plan needed to facilitate development.

- Stormwater management an issue.
- Town anti-growth right now. Have always been elements of it, but now that faction in control.
- Anti growth movement might shut down growth/development.
- Growth and development.
- Misinformation that initial land use planning had changed zoning.
- Understanding the positive and negative impacts of development on Town schools, roads, services.
- Town struggling to find balance between development/services, how do you pay for it?
- Urban growth/boundary issues.
- Private utility vs. public sanitary sewer/water.
- Dense urban growth with public or private septic/wells (Brice Prairie).
- Rural subdivisions.
- Farmland/open space protection.
- Housing is the biggest issue.
- Private/public utilities-state versus local.
- Need to balance private property rights with the public good.
- Taxes, because commercial taxed excessively high.
- Preserving groundwater. Need signs that say "Groundwater-we drink it".
- Stormwater.
- Smart growth-need good planning. Not opposed to slow, smart housing development.
- Need land uses in areas where they're compatible.
- Asphalt plant-smokestack, visual pollution.
- Need another road to Brice Prairie-transportation access. Old plan said there would be a new road on top of Midway Hill.
- A long train can block both accesses to Brice Prairie at the same time-emergency access issue.
- Need to coordinate planning-increase lot size. People worried about losing greenspace, but increasing minimum lot size from 20,000 to 30,000 square feet doesn't save greenspace.
- City sewer/water services.
- Need a third road to Brice Prairie.
- Concerned with large lots-if sewer ever comes, will be an issue.
- Doesn't want drainage easements/detention ponds on property when developed- they're hazardous to children, waste of land.
- How do you deal with the people that want to ban spreading of manure/pesticides, but don't want the land developed either-contradiction.
- Anti-development group says there are bad wells on the prairie-where are they?
- Environmentalists claim new development costs the Town money-where is the fair treatment for agricultural/open space landowners who have to pay taxes on the land?
- Inconsistencies in lot size requirements-some 20-acre minimums some are .75-acre lots.
- Wants to develop land, but Town says it must remain as agriculture-property rights issue.
- Method of governing in the Town. A few squeaky wheels drive the process.
- Diversity of Town Board-each related to a different faction of the population.
- History of violent reaction. Residents get involved, and then drop out.
- Us vs. Them attitude.
- Local minority of residents want to be isolated-don't work with County, City, Village, etc.
- School funding-need to add commercial development to tax base.
- Town needs more experienced board-needs to access information from those who are more experienced (e.g. Town Chair in Holland).
- Growth. Where is town going? Need organized growth/plan.
- Growth needs to be better planned east of Holmen.
- Transitional agriculture zoning isn't strict enough to protect agricultural land.
- Scattered development bad.
- Traffic problems with new development on D and W.

- Problem with residential neighbors dumping clippings, trees, brush, garbage on agricultural land. Also, tearing down fences, damaging property, etc.
- So much pressure with farmlands developing-pressures farmers who want to farm to develop too because residential neighbors complain about agricultural noise, smell, etc.
- Asphalt plant-good example of a lack of planning.
- Sprawl.
- Surface water management. County/Town/developer requirements all different.
- Not necessarily meeting EPA requirements for water management with new construction. Overland flow not calculated correctly.
- Road paving-oil, pebbled street gets dusty, difficult to walk on road.
- Access to Sobkowiak Park a big issue.
- Access road to Holmen's water supply not plowed/maintained.
- Annexations from City of Onalaska.
- Wildlife management-especially deer. Developments become refuge for deer, nuisance to vegetation, gardens, traffic accident issue-how do we manage this? Problem areas include: Sandlake Road north of vet clinic, reservoir on CTH S, and curve on S.
- Impossible to get a burning permit. Should be able to get after work hours-maybe have them available at grocery stores, online, etc.
- Growth-almost every month a new development proposal comes in.
- Many developments that are scheduled to take 7-8 years are happening in 3-4 years, difficult for the schools to keep up.
- There are four geographic areas, each with their own issues. The asphalt plant on Brice Prairie, Hwy D and the 390-acre farm proposed for development, Greens Coulee/Sand Lake areas have a lot of development.
- Controlling urban sprawl. There are houses everywhere-where do you draw the line?
- Conflicts between agricultural/residential uses and complaints about smells.
- Preventing development on Brice Prairie that threatens our vulnerable groundwater, creates the need to improve access to HWY 35 and make other traffic infrastructure improvements, requires providing expensive urban services on the prairie such as sewer and water and 24-hour emergency services, threatens the health and the quality of life of prairie residents, and risks environmental damage to the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.
- Channeling development to areas where the necessary infrastructure (e.g. roads, sewer & water, emergency services, etc.) can be more easily and economically provided.
- Keeping the Town rural. More development requires more services. More services means bigger government. Bigger government means more taxes. Urban levels of development require urban levels of service and may result in annexation.
- Industrial zoning on Brice Prairie. Industrial land uses are inappropriate for Brice Prairie. Alternatives/options (e.g. PDR) should be provided for the owners of the industrial-zoned land.
- High taxes. The Town has one of the highest growth rates of any Town in the county and yet our taxes are very high. The Town needs to take a hard look at future development and make sure that it does not cost more to provide the necessary infrastructure and services (e.g. adequate roads, sewer and water, emergency services, schools, etc.) than it generates in taxes.
- Heritage Preservation. Protecting the significant Native American cultural resources and artifacts on Brice Prairie and in other parts of the Town.
- Groundwater protection and storm water management.
- Preserving quality of life.
- Establish Lake Onalaska viewing opportunities
- Restore sand prairies.
- Connect potential new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Brice Prairie to Lake Onalaska with a bike and pedestrian trail system.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not want to build on Brice Prairie and then be surrounded by commercial and industrial development similar to their current facility.

- Inadequate septic systems on Brice Prairie along the lakeshore.
- Need to protect the headwaters to Brice Prairie's water supply.
- Try to keep small farmers operating in the Town – a tough question to determine how to deal with it.
- Brice Prairie is healthy the way it is now and it needs to continue to be healthy.
- Need to control highways – the roads are at capacity, and telling builders and property owners the roads are at capacity.
- Need to work with the school on capacity issues – don't want to grow too fast and put undue pressures on the school district.
- Establishing a mix between recreation, the environment and residential.
- Preservation of Brice Prairie - a natural area critical to the health of the River and Lake Onalaska.
- Restoration and stabilization of Lake Onalaska through the Lake Onalaska Protection District. Provides a basis for integrated planning for the River. The area is a national wildlife refuge and area of international importance relating to bird migration.
- Maintain open space
- Protect groundwater and surface water
- Keep storm water on the surface not in pipes
- Look out for the public good
- Natural functions of the land must be maintained, they have life-giving value and economic value.
- The Town must be involved and have a voice in surrounding land use decisions
- The Town must develop in a smart way that will benefit all existing residents and farmers
- Farmers and homeowners are both relying on land values for their retirements
- Smart development should consider: property value; taxes; environment; infrastructure needs vs. tax rates.
- Bluff land preservation
- Watersheds/water quality (Sand Lake & Half-Way Creeks)
- Foster a more positive attitude between residents and large land owners,
- Need to find common ground between development rights and preservation advocates
- High-end housing being created for people moving from the City of Onalaska
- The existing industrial park doesn't need any more competitors
- Don't need any other businesses except retail
- All residential right now, not dense, but it should be spread out more – don't want to jam too many people in.
- Needs a nice restaurant
- Need a fire department
- Need to be concerned about schools, don't use all the land for housing
- Some important employers – e.g. Skogen's
- Need to protect the bluffs and views
- Address the road situation so land is properly used on the prairie otherwise it will be fragmented.
- Who will pay for the roads.
- Don't like seeing small cut-up parcels – prefer city lots for housing with common open space over 2-3 acre parcels with no rhyme or reason – with the right infrastructure this can be done
- Not fair for farmers to not sell
- Road system cannot accommodate new growth
- Need another access to the prairie. If there were an alternate access, improvements to existing roads may not be necessary. Existing roads cannot handle truck traffic.
- School.
- Property tax and insurance – the overhead for a small business is huge.
- Zoning laws and related variances.
- Need to see local people do their own governing – don't want people from Madison telling us what we want and do not want.

- Many of the people who move out into the country do not know what a property line is and they do not want neighbors. There is too much influence when people's noses go across the property line to somebody else's property.
- For many people, their farm is their retirement and they should be able to sell a few acres – maybe 5 acres – for a house.
- There should be a reasonable tax on land that is not developable and for green space. For example, woodlands are over taxed and you cannot get anything from them – and the taxes go up every year. Even people that build a house – their property should not be over taxed.
- Big issue for farmers is whether they continue to afford to farm the land.
- Hate to see a farmer who got pushed out – couldn't afford to farm anymore, sell the property and then somebody else come in and develop the property.
- The Town needs to have the approach of working with people – not just say “no you can't do it.” There needs to be a good reason for not being able to do something such as for safety reasons.

2. Describe the Town in the next 20 years.

- Planned development-good balance.
- Town needs to look at long term value of how property is developed-what is it going to be like in 100 years based on today's decisions? Can see this around the country (look at older parts of east coast).
- Lots of open space.
- The Town needs good guidance, especially with natural resources. People think the river is the only resource, and everything else can be paved. Not true-green space is necessary too.
- Cities can't gobble town.
- Village of Holmen will continue to grow.
- Talk about not letting agricultural land uses end, but IS farmer's retirement. Shouldn't regulate, isn't fair to farmer.
- Would like farmers to be able to develop farms as they want to.
- Lot restrictions can effectively stop development because reduces cost effectiveness.
- Some areas of town should be controlled, if development is not appropriate for that area.
- Hopeful for the future.
- PDR program.
- Model town for region for finding balance between natural resources and growth.
- Development carefully placed, open space, farms, bluffs.
- Harmonious with City and surrounding towns.
- Environmentally beautiful Town-want to preserve that.
- Beyond anyone's control.
- Should not force people into doing things.
- More urbanized, in general.
- Growth along City/Village boundaries.
- Private property rights preserved.
- Less development further out in the Town because: creates traffic problems, disrupts peacefulness and rural character.
- Development in high concentration areas.
- More urbanized outside of Brice Prairie.
- Development along D and W because low traffic counts now. But, will have traffic problem in 20-25 years.
- Mixed-use housing for different demographics, natural resources/agriculture protection, transportation issues.
- Need to consider service centers (small commercial/residential growth areas). Potential areas include grocery store area on Brice Prairie and Midway.

- Need for commercial and jobs (light or heavy industrial). Brice Prairie an appropriate location because of rail corridor, recreation/tourism possibility.
- Would like to see conservation subdivisions in areas of Town besides Brice Prairie.
- More consideration for forestry. Currently, fragmented forest lots of 5-10 acres.
- Maintain large tracts of forestland.
- PDR for forestland.
- Scenic value of Town preserved.
- Brice Prairie will probably develop because too valuable for housing to be entirely preserved.
- Need toolbox for developers: PDR, CREP, CRP, covenants for conservation subdivisions, etc.
- Some agriculture.
- Buy portions of development rights from Brice Prairie agriculture land-Town divided on this.
- More C-3 in the Town to increase tax base, as long as it's compatible with adjacent uses.
- Open spaces in Brice Prairie and east side of Town.
- Likes conservation subdivision concept.
- Industrial needs to go someplace, but land uses should be isolated.
- Denser housing needed.
- Need a good plan.
- Keep county A-1 zoning, smaller residential lots, sewer needed.
- Brice Prairie will hook into Holmen sewer someday.
- Does not think PDR would work.
- Brice Prairie developed-industrial, residential .75-acre lots preferred.
- Brice Prairie soil isn't great for farming-won't last there.
- Landowners should be able to decide what they want to do with their land.
- Urban area in 20 years-logical thing to happen.
- Holmen and Onalaska will close together-infrastructure extended into Town.
- Industry will grow as close to major arterials as possible-35/53-where it belongs.
- Wish growth had stopped at Village boundary years ago-too late for that.
- Would like to keep agricultural land in production.
- Need town board members from the east side of the Town.
- East of Holmen should be part of Farmington.
- Wants to preserve country feel through buffers, easements, traffic control, zoning, etc.
- City should take advantage of redeveloping Main Street and waterfront area-not focusing development near Best Buy, etc.
- Like Clearwater Farm idea.
- No large changes in the Town.
- No construction in coulees or tops of bluffs.
- Preserve bluffs-restrictions on building over a certain grade.
- Restrictions on lot size. Lower density in rural areas.
- No big chain store type developments.
- Architectural control committee should review development for "small-town country feel".
- Development patterns that can accommodate mass transit.
- Cooperate with larger communities.
- Design review of commercial-much more emphasis on site plans/landscaping, architecture. New development in Onalaska is ugly-need to fix it. Set a tone for high quality, which sets tone for morale, pride of residents, builds community, etc.
- Services the Town offers residents are based on tax base.
- If more development-want smaller b2 commercial family-oriented, within walking distance.
- Maybe an outdoor theater-now limited to "chain-type" family entertainment.
- Bring family together through recreation, entertainment, local ice cream/candy stores, etc.
- Need archaeology area/preservation area for major finds-studies should be done.

- Historic marker site at archaeology location-tourism purposes.
- Look at housing types by zones so don't have low quality, cheap housing next to nice housing.
- Vibrant community with diverse population-need careful thought about a variety of housing options for a variety of needs.
- The relationship with the school district and town should continue to grow and become more positive.
- Must resolve water and sewer issues in Brice Prairie. Water and septic problems.
- Problem with overcapacity of Sand Lake Elementary, which will serve Brice Prairie.
- Happy with the way it is now. Want more houses closer to town, which would help with bussing to school, etc.
- The town of Onalaska is a rural community with a light mix of quality residential and commercial areas and a strong commitment to preserving and promoting both working landscapes (crop agriculture, grazing, orchards, etc.) and natural areas (rivers, lakes, prairies, wetlands, woodlands, etc.). New residential and commercial developments blend in with the landscape and incorporate (or provide for) conservancy areas that help preserve scenic beauty, wildlife habitat, the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, protect the environment (especially our precious groundwater resources), and also contribute to the Town's focus on outdoor recreation and tourism.
- Town government is educated about its responsibilities, informed about the Town's issues and opportunities, is responsive to the needs of the people and fosters a culture of public participation in its governance, works closely with Holmen and the City of Onalaska, uses good science in their decision-making process, and has the wisdom and courage to make decisions that are in the best interests of all members of the community.
- Brice Prairie should be as healthy as it is now.
- Green space will be preserved to maintain healthy living – it will be saved and incorporated into new developments.
- Allow a little more industry than existing industrial area in a couple of areas where it is easy to get in/out of the Prairie – near the beginning of the entrance to the Prairie and near the railroad.
- Provide recreational and residential areas.
- Open space and environmentally sensitive areas should be maintained and preserved. Tools like PDR have the potential to achieve results in 20 years.
- The public needs to be an important aspect of the living environment.
- The Town must be a safe area – traffic, bicyclists, air quality, water quality.
- Should be able to see the Prairie in Brice Prairie.
- Still see places where people can buy and move to the Town.
- The Town board should delegate daily duties to make sure good ideas can proceed – don't get bogged down in daily duties – take advantage of all the resources in the Town.
- Develop a good sense of community in the planning process.
- Maintained open space character
- Is able to deliver clean water to the lake in some sort of natural condition, perhaps the wetlands near the lake have been maintained to naturally feed it.
- Abundant natural areas draw tourism to the area.
- Water quality has been maintained so that sediment isn't an issue.
- Unique set of residents – very creative, well-educated
- Only a few places long the River, like Brice Prairie, where you can get to the other side
- Shouldn't be a high-end subdivision for La Crosse.

3. What are the Town's opportunities?

- Asphalt plant-but the current proposed location is too far away from roads, etc.
- More commercial development is needed for an additional tax base. There is a lot of suitable land accessible to water, railroad, roads, etc.

- Opportunities for development, although isn't sure it is appropriate for the Town.
- Important to protect Brice Prairie-people are connected to it, parents from there, hunt there, etc. Doesn't want to see it gobbled up.
- Brice Prairie is isolated (lack of roads, businesses, etc)-thinks people choose that.
- Not sure about PDR-people of town would have to pay-stakeholders (farmers) may not agree because would be paying high share.
- Respect the facilities already there.
- Don't develop everything, need a certain percentage for future conservative use.
- Taking advantage of working with City.
- Taking advantage of grant funding and spending the money on planning.
- Hope for a great land use plan-possibly amended zoning.
- Very good planning process set-representative of citizens.
- Town understands how it fits into the niche of La Crosse County-they want some growth but want to preserve agriculture and tourism.
- Pretty involved citizenry, willing to diversify.
- PDR program-possibility to obtain USDA funding.
- Opportunities for more creative stormwater management in City of Onalaska (with DOT) when STH 16 is redeveloped.
- Educating the Town's residents-already doing a good job of this.
- Town of Holland becoming more progressive-PDR, etc.
- Need new Town Hall with developed recreation (like Town of Holland).
- More commercial/industrial development in Town.
- Community support for trails, forested recreation areas.
- Natural resources-USFWS, Lake Onalaska, important to residents.
- Transportation-industrial land adjacent to railroad-they're encouraging development.
- Waterfront development/ecotourism with City of Onalaska.
- Aesthetic beauty-bluffs/river.
- Education level of residents-well educated and organized. Understand land use issues, interested and involved.
- Intergovernmental cooperation, e.g. household hazardous waste project.
- Some new business-good local business is needed.
- Developable land with access to railroad-rare in La Crosse County.
- High quality agricultural land north of Holmen.
- People can move in and increase the tax base.
- New jobs/businesses.
- Good commercial/industrial development locations.
- Full range of residential services-but won't be a commercial hub.
- Increased residential growth. No more room in La Crosse because geographically/transportation constrained. Onalaska physically constrained.
- Desirable place to live-good schools, people like the area.
- Need commercial growth for taxes-residential doesn't generate enough money.
- Possibility for forest management plan on some land-work with the DNR.
- Tools for land protection a possibility, as long as they aren't too restrictive.
- Want a trail network, especially along the bluffs.
- Large-scale family facilities-physical activity. Tennis, basketball, a "Y", indoor pool (not outdoor)-maybe in the Town. Balance with taxes.
- Cooperative services-makes sense for greater good of the area.
- Look at more tourism opportunities. Preserve what we have for tourism-fish and wildlife in Brice Prairie, e.g.
- Bluffland-can still control preservation of it.

- Stronger Town position on controlled growth. Balance free enterprise with Town goals.
- Want people to develop and raise the tax base.
- Wonderful assets.
- The Town should capitalize on artifacts, recreation areas, wildlife, prairie grass areas, fishing day (for school science unit).
- Could be opportunities for swimming area-should be looked at.
- Building a lookout area for scenic overlook.
- Strong school/community ties.
- Opportunities for big businesses, such as the asphalt plant. More jobs may help decrease housing.
- Do something with the Village for park and recreation. The two should work together on issues, which would be good for the kids on Brice Prairie, but not as good for the kids to the east of the Village. Access is more difficult.
- To investigate whether it is more cost effective for the Town to preserve open space on Brice Prairie than to provide the infrastructure and services necessary to support further development. The Prairie has not yet been developed to the point where it has crossed the critical development capacity thresholds that will require improved access to HWY 35 or urban services. However, it is close. Now is the time to carefully and thoroughly investigate the costs and benefits of preserving open space versus the costs and benefits of further development on Brice Prairie. Once development crosses those capacity thresholds, it will be too late and the Town will have lost this critical opportunity.
- If a cost benefit analysis shows that it is in the best interests of the Town's taxpayers to preserve open space on Brice Prairie, a portion of that benefit can be used to fund a PDR program to purchase conservation easements.
- Enticing Fish & Wildlife to locate on Brice Prairie. Their presence can be a big help in attracting funds to the Town for preserving open space and funding conservation and restoration projects. There is also a great deal of economic benefit enjoyed by communities located near national wildlife refuges.
- Establish Lake Onalaska viewing opportunities
- Restore sand prairies.
- Connect potential new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Brice Prairie to Lake Onalaska with a bike and pedestrian trail system.
- Coordinate the locating of a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with open space and natural resource protection in the Town.
- Create regional attraction with a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service facility.
- The Town should start negotiating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or searching for a site to locate a new facility on Brice Prairie.
- To attract the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Brice Prairie.
- To preserve green space, and to incorporate green space into new developments.
- To protect the headwaters for Brice Prairie's water supply.
- To identify ways to keep farmers in the Town.
- More employment in the area should complement existing small businesses – this will help the Town's economy in the long run.
- People and the environment provide opportunities for the Township.
- Agricultural should not be taken out of the Town's picture completely – should keep some family farms.
- High tech is great for the area – there is plenty of it out there – need to attract these knowledge jobs/individuals – Onalaska is very educated community.
- Development of smaller businesses.
- If U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ends up in the Town, it will provide a beneficial education facility for residents, visitors and students.
- Protect the migratory area for birds – cannot replicate what flies through the Township.
- The River is at such a big scale that it is hard to get people close to it – there is an opportunity and challenge to get people closer to the river.

- A strong focus of the Town should be to work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to bring them to Brice Prairie. This opportunity would create additional opportunities for stewardship of the land, bringing more land trust interest to the area, etc. it creates a snowball effect for additional opportunities.
- There is an opportunity for the Town to be a “showcase” for what can be accomplished with conservation development since there are not a lot of good examples out there. The Town should pursue alternative approaches to development.
- The Town must be willing to spend money to make money – need to take risks.
- This planning process provides an opportunity for the Town to create the framework for conservation developments.
- There is an opportunity to create a tourism-based industry in the Town, particularly in the Midway area with restaurant, ice cream store, etc.
- Need to look at Brice Prairie as this unique place to interact with nature – bike trails, historical components, natural components, etc.
- The River is recognized internationally and the area next to it is also recognized.
- The Lake Onalaska Protection District provides a basis for integrated planning for the River.
- High water quality positively affects land values
- Natural areas, if maintained, will attract tourism to the Town
- PDR/TDR
- Prairie is valuable and the area surrounding it is of national importance
- Many attributes which contribute to high quality of life are present in the Town including: natural areas; open space and integrity of the environment; abundant natural areas, including the national wildlife refuge, impacts air quality; population density also has an impact.
- So many innovative ways of dealing with the Bluffs (e.g. PDR) its possible to use a myriad of different tools for preservation of the Town’s rural character.
- Proximity to City and Village means a lot of people want to move to the Town.
- Plenty of room to expand
- The Town has it all, bluffs, river, transportation – no place more beautiful
- Great place to live and raise children
- Good schools: Luther; Onalaska; Holmen
- People move here for the beauty and the seclusion; and to leave La Crosse because it’s too populated. Hmong people are really populating the City – others relocate to Holmen and the Town of Onalaska.
- Important to have activities for children
- Utilities could be looked at for Brice Prairie.
- Room on prairie for a nice commercial center. Currently a grocery store, but there is room for more businesses to locate there. Shouldn’t be hodge-podge.
- Midway should become more of a commercial center.
- A second commercial center by the general store
- Opportunity to provide 20 jobs with existing B2 – opportunity for growth overall
- Creation of 100 jobs possible with 10 lots zoned B2
- Lake Onalaska not currently being utilized to the fullest extent possible. With a dredging system the waterway could be open again allowing for more B2 in the next few years.
- Road issues – Green’s Coulee offers room for development but another outlet is needed.
- At Midway – 50-100 year old houses are falling apart, the area could be a vibrant commercial center with potential to draw from the bike trail. More investment is possible – could convert residential to commercial with upgrades.
- The lakeshore (Old Town) – could be a vibrant bike trail hub with nice looking older homes
- There are significant opportunities for industrial development along the rail road frontage in the Town – the City of Onalaska and La Crosse are completely out of rail road frontage.
- There are opportunities for campus-types of industrial development in the Town with larger lots near the rail roads, mostly flat land that is developable.

- The rail road company is supportive of a rail road spur in the Town for rail access.
- There transportation impact study for the Brice Prairie Industrial Park shows there is significant available capacity on the local roads to accommodate the traffic, which the State Department of Transportation has confirmed, with some improvements.
- There are opportunities for a third major road access to the Town that avoids the floodplain. Briggs Road should be extended in the Town and across the two sets of rail road tracks to connect to the intersection of County Road Z and ZN.
- Brice Prairie is the economic future of the Town – it's the only place that will sustain any economic development of any size.
- There may be opportunities for the Town to hook up to the Holmen sewer plant – there was once an oral agreement to allow this to happen.

4. What are the Town's threats?

- Development.
- Non-compatible uses-existing traffic corridors/environmental resources should determine growth. Consider impacts to groundwater, etc.
- Unbridled growth/development.
- People think they can do what they want, especially in this part of Wisconsin. Need ethereal ideas of what Onalaska could be like.
- Not wanting to be controlled.
- Quality of river/water quality.
- HUGE development pressure from everywhere.
- New residents want rural living-5-acre farmettes.
- A lot of developable land because of topography/location.
- Long-term effects of development on the environment.
- Deer problem.
- City of Onalaska development on HWY 16-poor stormwater management practices. Should be more creative (landscaping, etc.)
- Mix of jurisdictions that cause problems.
- Need continuity in leadership.
- External factors that the Town can't control-population growth/pressures.
- Will need to address deer issue-planned, restricted hunt possibly.
- Negative attitude of the community. The planning process is looking at negative issues-dangerous.
- People don't want change.
- Survey had negative connotations-first question, e.g.
- Shelby/La Crosse issue. Potential threat to Town of Onalaska with City/Village. Could try to restrict everything within three miles. La Crosse just pushing development out further.
- Demand for housing-tendency is to provide for it. Most current regulations allow this.
- Need to look at housing demand to see if it is inflated.
- No mixed-use/diversity in the housing market.
- Parochialism-necessary, but need to work together as a region.
- Shallow groundwater-some threat for contamination.
- Small businesses should get same tax breaks as big businesses.
- All businesses are scared out right now because of asphalt plant issue.
- Asphalt plant.
- Public safety on roads-transportation, trucks, etc.
- Groundwater pollution.
- Escalating taxes-upgrading/fixing roads.

- Possibility of La Crosse annexing parts of Brice Prairie.
- Need representative/diverse Town Board.
- Anti-development people. Need to protect the water, but don't need to go to extremes.
- Poor land use plan.
- Poor planning.
- Someone in Township needs to sell the plan.
- Deals need to be made-negotiations, etc.
- Board is naïve in thinking public can drive the planning process.
- Township has never had consensus on anything-too many factions.
- Town has historically done a poor job of picking professional advice.
- Town needs strong stance on businesses. Businesses currently sense hostility.
- Traffic a problem when developing east of Holmen.
- Agricultural traffic conflicts with residential traffic.
- Traffic problem coming out of Greens Coulee-already bad. Need a light there.
- Don't want sewer/water/infrastructure in the Town.
- Don't have enough park areas with all the new development.
- Lack of planning/strategy is evident in Brice Prairie.
- Politics. Small town board.
- Lack of coordination with the County. Roads, water, etc.
- Town needs higher design levels for roads-not a 10-yr flood but 50-100 yr flood. Apparent in Apple Valley-25 or 100 year storms happen often.
- Development.
- Rapid growth.
- Migrating birds-the noise and pollution that come with it.
- Tremendous controversy on water/sewer problems-difficult to get the facts on the impact.
- Busy road and rail area issues-traffic concerns.
- Town Board needs to be more diversified. The make-up has changed, used to be more diverse. Most of them are from Brice Prairie and they don't know what's occurring in the rest of the Town.
- Haphazard, unplanned, inappropriate development on Brice Prairie that does not take into account the significant development constraints posed by the Prairie's unique geographical and environmental circumstances and will pollute groundwater, harm the refuge, and cost taxpayers a great deal of money to service.
- A town government that is not responsive to the needs and concerns of the residents and does not take the actions necessary to address the Town's issues or take advantage of its opportunities. Residents are stakeholders.
- Plan for commercial and industrial development on Brice Prairie to dissuade locating a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service facility in the Town.
- Inadequate septic systems on Brice Prairie along the lakeshore.
- Developing too much residential, especially without green space incorporated into it.
- Losing smaller farmers.
- Allowing industries that cost the Town too much to provide services to or raise taxes.
- Need to protect animals and species and their habitats while allowing for new development.
- If additional public services are not available to serve new developments, then the County services should be utilized such as fire and police, and continue to share services with the Village and City.
- Ignorance – residents who don't take the time to learn about the planning process and what the options are, such as being misinformed about what the PDR program does.
- Business as usual.

- Missing opportunities such as attracting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Brice Prairie.
- Not having appropriate development in appropriate places.
- Not preserving the quality of groundwater.
- Safety issues such as the bridge behind the school.
- Failing to control growth and not having a fair process.
- Uncooperative La Crosse County.
- The Town has two of the most significant concentrations of good farmland in La Crosse County with high quality soils – not preserving this farmland.
- Density of development
- Natural areas are threatened – losing one small piece can mean losing it all.
- Four constraints: transportation; growth rate; surface water runoff; preservation of open space.
- Shouldn't be a high-end subdivision for La Crosse
- Proximity to City and Village means a lot of people want to move to the Town.
- Free enterprise can drive quality down, the community should stay involved to ensure that quality is prioritized over quantity of development.
- Nationwide shortage of jobs, affecting the Town as well
- The attitude that my house is here, but no one else should be allowed to locate here.
- 2-3 acre lots. Prefer to see decent sized lots in combination with parks and open space.
- Water quality could diminish at Midway as well as Brice Prairie.
- Septic systems at Midway keep it from becoming more of a commercial center.
- Hodge-podge development.
- Most people are not young, need a vibrant town not just an old town.
- Several vocal people in the Town are “no growth.”
- The Town Board is blind to the fact that they need revenue from economic development.
- A source of pollution is farming – the light soil requires heavy fertilization.
- People don't understand that if the development rights are purchased from a property through the PDR program – the property can never be developed – not even far off in the future when it might make good sense to develop it.
- People who are super dominant in the Town now want to throw away the economic future of the Town.

5. Should growth and development occur in the Town? If so, where?

- .5 and .75 acre lots should be allowed adjacent to the Village and City and larger lots should be allowed further into the Town.
- 20-acre lots are too restrictive. Smaller lots should be allowed.
- Most development is good, but not all development.
- Board should respond to this issue—that's why they were elected. They are reasonable people and will make good choices.
- Commercial/industrial businesses may be more likely to go the City/Village or to industrial park. Conflicting land uses (residential/industrial) a problem in areas of the Town.
- Should occur adjacent to areas that have already been developed or in planned development areas.
- Keep a balance.
- Development along Great River State Trail should occur in a sensitive manner.
- Want all of La Crosse County to work together-La Crosse revitalizing downtown neighborhoods.
- Want blocks of area protected.

- Conflicts with suburbanites moving to ranchettes-farm smells, noises, agricultural uses.
- Need a planned look at development-no leap-frog growth.
- Want to protect what's left of Brice Prairie.
- PDR program needed in north and east parts of Town.
- Brice Prairie because flat and development there less disruptive than on bluffs.
- Industry in Brice Prairie now that works/meshes well with residential.
- 70% of the tax base in La Crosse County is residential-this development will continue.
- Room for some growth-smart growth.
- Small businesses must be there for the long term. Need to make a commitment to the Town.
- Possibility for tourism growth.
- Planned, orderly development good.
- Consider sewer system to protect water quality, if development is negatively impacting it.
- New road should be built extending Briggs Road into Brice Prairie. Would help traffic.
- Good development can co-exist next to wildlife, industry next to lake, etc.
- Need more variety of housing for diverse needs.
- Dense development close to Town center-less dense with variety as move away from center.
- Some growth and development with adjacent residents having input-avoid traffic bottlenecks.
- Some small commercial needed for additional tax base.
- Growth in rural service areas (Midway, grocery store area on Brice Prairie).
- Residential is the best development for the area-a mix of single-family and multi-family.
- Some type of commercial okay-corridor commercial, light industrial. But, must be very careful with any development on the Prairie. Service stores/shops could do well there.
- Growth should occur in the Village or in the City, not in the Town.
- Growth should not be scattered along the bluffs.
- Less productive soil areas should be used for development.
- Don't want Holmen to spread. Traffic is horrible there now and it has lost its character because there has been too much housing growth.
- Growth should occur only if it pays its own way (i.e. it will bring in more in taxes than it costs to provide required services).
- Growth should occur in areas adjacent to already developed areas that are serviced by the necessary infrastructure (e.g. adequate roads, sewer and water, emergency services, schools, etc.), or in areas where that infrastructure can be efficiently and effectively extended.
- The preservation of farmland and open space should be a consideration in all development decisions.
- Light industrial development should be allowed if needed, but not the type that costs the Town money.
- Don't want to see the Town all residential.
- The Town does not need a lot of residential and industrial development.
- Cannot develop 10 percent of the Town per year because it will be all developed in 10 years.
- Need incorporate green space into new developments.
- Industrial development should be allowed near the entrance to Brice Prairie and near the railroad to allow large equipment to easily get in and out of the area.
- Focus on developing existing commercial areas. Attract a beauty shop, restaurant/bar and grill, neighborhood grocery store.
- 90 percent of the Town should stay the way it is now over the next 10 years – some farmland should be transitioned from agriculture to residential to allow farmers to retire.

- Should be looking at urban services for the Town such as sewer and water lines, stormwater piping, etc.
- A couple more through roads are needed to access Brice Prairie because of the railroad. Bridge Road should be extended from the Holmen High School to the Town – it connects the Town and Village as well as being close to the Town of Holland. This road would also allow utilities to be extended into the Town.
- Extend subdivision east to the Pedretti property.
- If new developments are located near the Village or City, the lots should be $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ acre in size so that it will be coordinated with Village and City developments.
- More smaller developments should be considered such as fabrication or assembly facilities – light industry is needed.
- Need to utilize the entire Township for development – not just Brice Prairie; this applies to the extension or creation of new roads as well.
- Need to coordinate growth and development in the Town with the Village and City – some of the growth should stay in the Town.
- The current road capacity prevent development from going deeper into Brice Prairie.
- There is an opportunity for the Town to be a “showcase” for what can be accomplished with conservation development. The Town should pursue alternative approaches to development.
- There is an opportunity to create a tourism-based industry in the Town, particularly in the Midway area with a restaurant, ice cream store, etc.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service facility should be developed in the Town.
- How can you do any industrial development on Brice Prairie without water, sewer, etc. – can only do very small scale developments.
- Development must be compatible with whatever it is next to and near. Light industrial development is not appropriate and should not be on Brice Prairie. There should not be a bunch of boxes there.
- Should invest in infrastructure along Midway for the tourism industry and for residents – it belongs to everybody.
- Heavy industrial is inappropriate, and any industrial will require additional infrastructure
- Rural focus
- Development should occur in areas already served by infrastructure
- Not in Brice Prairie
- The Town should be conservative and provide for industry as well as housing
- Elderly should be located close to the City
- Across from Menards – should be residential, some nice sized lots (a couple acres) not a wall of houses.
- Shouldn't allow development of every house that it's possible to “squeeze-in,” this would have negative impacts on schools.
- Multi-family should be located along Hwy 53
- Prioritize single dwellings to keep it pretty.
- Start a new City don't keep adding on – set perimeters
- Don't like seeing small cut-up parcels – prefer city lots for housing with common open space over 2-3 acre parcels with no rhyme or reason – with the right infrastructure this can be done
- Room on prairie for a nice commercial center. Currently a grocery store, but there is room for more businesses to locate there. Shouldn't be hodge-podge.
- Industrial vs. light industrial comes down to the state of the roads – prefers light industry
- Beautiful lots similar in size to Holmen
- Road issues – Green's Coulee offers room for development but another outlet is needed.
- Development must not be done hodge-podge.

- Develop property with input from DNR.
- Development of high-end commercial – take advantage of the bike trails and the people that they bring.
- Development should follow transportation routes.
- There should be a transition from farming to development with control of wastewater and waste in general – it would be good for everyone, such as the proposed Mathy development.
- People want to purchase the development rights of property – but the people who purchase the development rights should have the choice of whether they want to develop it or not. If they do not, then they need to maintain it – it cannot become fields of weeds, etc.
- There are a lot of development opportunities on Brice Prairie – it needs industrial development. The City of La Crosse is out of rail access and West Salem only has small rail access – the Brice Prairie rail access is about all that is available and suitable for industrial development.
- Some residential development should also be allowed but other types of development cover the costs of residential development.

6. Other Comments/Questions?

- Feels Town has been okay toward commercial/business interests.
- Variety of factors affect development along State Trail. Prairie, Black River bottom, Trempealeau-small town feel. People want to feel they've "gotten away"-don't want urban feel.
- Glad to see Town is making effort to plan.
- Possible changing use patterns for State Trail-ATV use possible. Will affect area, trail use, development, etc.
- Education is very important.
- Money is tight at all levels-people don't want higher taxes. Development does not solve the tax problem, e.g. recent school referendum.
- Water table issues on Brice Prairie-development is a big deal there.
- Want a win/win situation with the asphalt plant.
- Taxes are very reasonable and have only increased out of necessity.
- Services are great.
- Contamination at the old landfill a problem in past and contributed to higher taxes.
- Good roads, plowing, etc.
- As you develop Brice Prairie, you lose the appeal because more development means more traffic, fewer open spaces, etc.
- People willing to make sacrifices, e.g. Jason Gilman in Onalaska, Village of Holmen-great communication, open to calls/discussion.
- Smart growth law is great for private property rights-gives more local control.
- Residents should use this planning process to get their opinion out there, even if extreme.
- Would sell land to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service instead of developers if paid a fair price.
- Brice Prairie is a problem-need to get everybody involved in the planning process.
- Important to talk to everyone-right now many people are afraid to speak up.
- Businesses won't go out of their way to come to the Town-the County and La Crosse have made extra efforts to be pro-business.
- The town needs to make a concerted effort to encourage public participation in the planning process. This means making sure that public participation opportunities are advertised well in advance (3-4 weeks) of an event, and having citizen committees to be

involved in the town's planning process--both in helping guide the process and in evaluating the plan itself.

- Should coordinate the locating of a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the Town's planning process.
- The Brice Prairie Conservation Club facility is a great asset to the community – it provides space for community events and meetings.
- The soil in Brice Prairie is so pervious – can stick a hose in a hole in the ground and the hole will never create a puddle.
- Interaction between the communities and educational system must occur.
- Need to invest in nature.
- Open space on Brice Prairie is not accessible to a lot of people.
- Need market analysis for other commercial developments; and these developments must be sensitive to ground water. The industrial zoned lands were rezoned against the Town's wishes in the first place.
- Halfway and Sand Lake Creek are two major drainage areas.
- Public process must be thorough, it can be difficult to get people's attention, but it's very important that everyone has a chance to participate.
- If the Town preserves it's natural areas many benefit, especially surrounding communities, who will share the costs?
- Arcadia is a beautiful little city with good schools that aren't too full
- Midway Lumber has grown in volume 10 times in the past 15 years.
- Many of the people in the Town who raise the pollution issue from more development are the polluters from the failing septic systems, the quality soils they built on, etc.
- There is very little wildlife on Brice Prairie.
- People are apathetic overall in the Town, but the Brice Prairie residents turn out the people for the elections.
- La Crosse should consider annexing parts of Brice Prairie – Lake Onalaska is artificial and should not be classified as such. La Crosse supports the industrial development on Brice Prairie.