

9 IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires this element to include a compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in the Plan. In addition, the element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan shall be updated no less than once every 10 years. However, this Plan should be reviewed and, if needed, updated every five (5) years because of the rapidly growing and changing region.

By law and beginning on January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit engages in any of the following actions, those actions shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan:

- Official mapping.
- Local subdivision regulation.
- County zoning ordinances.
- Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands.

The Town of Onalaska's Comprehensive Plan establishes a 20-year growth, development and preservation strategy. It has been created with significant public input, including neighboring jurisdictions and La Crosse County, and provides a sound direction for the Town's future. The Plan will be measured in terms of the degree to which we achieve our goals.

The implementation of the Plan is of primary importance, and implementation depends on both private and public action. Public action includes making policy decisions, adopting specific plans, administering regulations, and budgeting and financing public and/or private improvements.

The Plan Commission should be the primary body responsible for implementing, monitoring, and recommending updates to this Plan. The Commission should be supported by the Town Board, staff, and other appointed boards and commissions.

The greatest number of decisions impacting the Town's future will be made by private citizens and businesses through private actions. Thus, it is essential that the public be aware of, understand and support the Plan. The public has

been involved in creating this plan and will continue to be involved in all Town planning efforts.

9.1 The Role of Implementation in the Comprehensive Planning Process

This plan will only be as good as its implementation. The Town of Onalaska has worked hard to develop this plan as a vision for its future. Whether or not that vision is realized depends upon the degree to which the elements of the plan are put into action.

This element looks at tools already in place to help the Town's Plan Commission and Board make decisions to implement this Plan. The tools in place are primarily Town and County ordinances, but also include City and Village plans and ordinances because of the extra-territorial review authority granted to them by the State of Wisconsin.

It should be stated at the outset that this plan cannot be implemented using existing tools and regulations, such as the County's existing Zoning Ordinance. Implementation of this Plan will require the commitment of multiple governmental entities, private citizens and businesses.

9.2 Development Control Ordinances

One of the most important tools of plan implementation is the authority to control development of private land. Most jurisdictions have a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, including the Town of Onalaska and La Crosse County which provide specific land use restrictions and development standards. Since the early 1920's, when the concept of land development control was initiated in the United States, development control techniques have been expanded, refined and subjected to all levels of judicial scrutiny. As the purview of municipal authority has changed along with new land development techniques, so have the development control ordinances.

However, as times and conditions change, so do regulatory systems, and two of the central recommendations of this Plan are for the Town to work with La Crosse County to significantly update its Zoning Ordinance, and to update its Land Division Ordinance.

9.2.1 Zoning Regulations

Careful application of modern zoning controls can go far in assisting the Town in accomplishing the goals of this Comprehensive Plan. However, the Town is under La Crosse County zoning and therefore has minimal control over the zoning of lands within its jurisdiction.

The Zoning Ordinance establishes definitions, standards and procedures for administrative and legislative bodies to review and approve specific land developments. The existing Zoning Ordinance should be significantly updated to reflect the Plan's recommendations.

9.2.2 Land Division Regulations

Instituting development standards for land subdivision is another regulating measure of importance in community development. It is essential that the opening of new residential and other areas, by the platting for sale of lots, be at a level that will not be a liability to the public now or for future generations. Land division, or subdivision, regulations serve an important function by ensuring the orderly growth and development of unplatted and undeveloped land.

Good subdivision controls include minimum or maximum standards for improvements such as street widths, lot sizes, block sizes, street grades and utility easements. In addition, such conditions as dead-end streets, offset intersections and the relationship of streets to adjacent neighborhoods should be regulated in a reasonable manner and in the public interest. The Town's land division ordinance should include clear statements of development policies. These policies should detail the developer's responsibilities for providing public improvements.

It is important that the Town's Plan Commission and Board give careful attention to the enforcement of these regulations and general standards. Each preliminary plat should be reviewed thoroughly to assess the compatibility of the proposed street pattern with adjoining land. It is important that the proposed development plan follow recommended land planning standards and it is essential that the engineering design of streets, storm drainage facilities, conform to adopted criteria and requirements. An engineering and planning review is important as the Plan Commission reviews and makes decisions on development proposals.

The areas to be platted should also be compared with the Comprehensive Plan to determine what, if any, attention should be given to future school sites, park sites, roads, changes in land use, cluster/conservation subdivision design and other elements of the plan.

9.2.3 Official Mapping

The official map is another tool for land use control that can be used to preserve the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan and to regulate future growth. Chapters 60 and 62 of the Wisconsin Statutes provide for the establishment of an official map to indicate all existing and planned streets, parks and other public uses. The official map enables the Town to prevent

private development from occurring in areas designated for other uses. At the time of this writing, the Town does not have an official map.

9.2.4 Codes

Building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and fire prevention codes provide sound standards for the safe construction, use and occupancy of buildings. These codes should be considered implementation devices of the plan for a variety of reasons. First, use of the codes ensures that the high quality of development sought as an objective of the plan is, in fact, carried out via the permit and inspection requirements of the codes. Secondly, through the same permit requirements, government is providing a check-off point to insure that the land uses proposed are in accordance with the proposed uses embodied in the plan and permitted by the appropriate zoning district. Finally, use of the codes provides a mechanism that insures that, following the construction of the building to the required standards, it is maintained in an acceptable fashion over time.

9.2.5 Capital Improvement Plan

A method by which the public related components of the Comprehensive Plan can be implemented is through capital improvements programming (CIP). A CIP provides an orderly sequence of funding, prioritization and project status. It furnishes a means of assuring that projects will be carried out in accordance with the community's ability to pay without creating an excessive tax burden.

A capital improvement may be defined as a major expenditure of public funds, beyond maintenance and operating costs, for the acquisition or construction of a needed physical facility such as a new Town Hall. Salaries, supplies and other overhead expenditures are considered maintenance and operating costs and should be provided for elsewhere in the annual budgetary process. Improvements or acquisitions of a permanent nature representing a long-term investment of public funds are considered a capital improvement.

A capital improvement program is simply a method of planning for major capital expenditures and scheduling them over a period of years in order to maximize the use of public funds. It is a means of attempting to coordinate a physical development plan with the jurisdiction's current and anticipated financial resources.

The capital improvements program is generally a five-year plan of major improvements. The overall purpose of assigning years to proposed projects is to provide a short-range outline for action, and a long-range schedule of project completion for an accurate picture of needed capital improvement projects and resources.

The first year phase of the program presents the most comprehensive and detailed picture of those projects scheduled for immediate action. This phase of the program, known as the capital improvement budget, is presented with a detailed list of anticipated expenditures and sources of funding.

The second phase of the capital improvements program includes those projects specified as being necessary but not of an urgent or immediate nature to warrant inclusion into the first year of the program. This phase does not require a detailed cost breakdown, however, estimates of capital costs should be provided. The capital improvements program provides continuity by addressing long-range projects and therefore minimizing duplication or conflicts with other improvements.

It is important to note that the capital improvements program should be reviewed and updated each year. Those projects that were scheduled but were not undertaken should be re-evaluated and rescheduled in the capital improvements program as determined by the needs, desires and financial characteristics of the community. This is a tool that should be utilized and updated by the Town.

9.2.6 Citizen Involvement

Public support is a principal tool in the planning process, and the Town welcomes public input from citizens, businesses, and other public, private and non-profit entities. First, citizen participation is essential during plan preparation to ensure that issues addressed and proposals offered reflect local desires and attitudes. The Town's Plan Commission created this Plan based on public input.

Second, public involvement is critical to implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Many of the plan's recommendations will require years of effort and financial commitment. Only with community support can such efforts be maintained. Accordingly, the Town's citizens, businesses, and organizations should be informed of and understand the plan.

9.3 Consistency Among Plan Elements

Section 66.1001(2)(i) of the Wisconsin Statutes requires that this element include a discussion of how the elements will be made consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Because the elements of this plan were prepared simultaneously and by the same Town Plan Commission and consultant, this ensures that there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different elements of this Plan. Additionally, the implementation program relies heavily on Town's Plan Commission, committees, and Board to complete the work. The work of these bodies will be interactive and complementary, thereby integrating elements of the plan and ensuring their consistency.

9.4 Plan Adoption, Monitoring, Amendments and Update

The Plan Commission will be responsible for monitoring progress in achieving the goals, objectives, policies, recommendations and actions of the Comprehensive Plan.

9.4.1 Plan Adoption

The first official action toward plan implementation is the adoption of the plan document as the general statement of public policy on land development and preservation within the Town. After the Plan Commission recommends for approval to the Town Board by resolution, the Board must adopt the plan by ordinance. This action formalizes the plan document as the current basic frame of reference on general development patterns over the next 20 years. The plan, thereby, becomes a tool for communicating Onalaska's land use policy and for coordinating various individual decisions into a consistent set of actions to harmoniously shape the Town's continued growth in the desired manner.

9.4.2 Plan Amendments

The Comprehensive Plan is considered to be a flexible guide to decision making rather than an inflexible blueprint for development. Decisions regarding the location of different land uses were based on existing knowledge of the characteristics and expressed priorities of Town leaders and its residents, and anticipated growth and development patterns. As this knowledge or comprehension of these and other factors expands and makes existing proposals undesirable, the plan should be amended.

Amendments should be made only after a realistic evaluation of existing conditions and the potential impact of such a change is made. Amendments should not be made merely to accommodate the daily pressures of development and/or government. It is important to recognize that planning is a process that should occur on a continuing basis if the Town is to take advantage of new opportunities as conditions change.

9.4.3 Plan Update

Although not truly an implementation device, the importance of plan monitoring and review to the implementation of the plan should be noted. The plan is based on variables that are dynamic and whose future direction cannot always be accurately predicted. Accordingly, such variables as population and metropolitan development characteristics should be periodically compared against the plan's assumptions and recommendations (at least every 5 years). The process for updating the plan should include public input through a public hearing procedure as required by State Law.

An effective planning program should be continually reviewed and updated to reflect the processes of actual development and the changing attitudes and priorities of the community. Resource information should be gathered and studied to determine trends and reevaluate projections, forecasts and plans. In five years, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed in depth to make any necessary policy and recommendation changes in relation to the direction and character of community development at that time.