

TOWN OF ONALASKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



2022 - 2041



PREPARED BY:

*Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
in collaboration with the Town of Onalaska Plan Commission
and the Town of Onalaska Town Board*



Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan 2022-2041

The Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan 2022-2041 responds to and is consistent with the State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law as defined in Sections 66.1001(1)a and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes. The comprehensive plan is made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the Town that will in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.

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A special thanks to members of the public who took the time to fill out the survey, offer online feedback on the goals and objectives, and/or attended a public meeting. Thank you to the stakeholder groups who took the time to speak with Town staff members and share their interests, concern, and ideas for the Plan.

ADOPTED BY ORDINANCE #38-19 September 13th, 2022

By the Town of Onalaska Town Board

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Onalaska is in the Great Mississippi River Valley and the Driftless Area. It consists of dramatic bluffs and coulees with the metropolitan area of La Crosse to its south. It partially surrounds rapidly growing communities of the Village of Holmen and City of Onalaska, is south of the Town of Holland, and north of the City of La Crosse and Town of Campbell. The Town is home to magnificent natural and cultural resources, long-term working farms, strong neighborhoods, and successful business.

The Town has experienced significant growth and development over the past 50 years, with the highest growth rates occurring from 1960 – 1980. The Town's location and natural beauty continue to attract new residents and businesses, particularly as La Crosse metropolitan area cities and villages reach closer to the limits of their development areas.

This Plan aims to balance new growth and development with preservation of existing neighborhoods, natural and cultural resources, and good farmland. There is a concern among many Town residents that unplanned and uncoordinated development will rapidly erode the community's rural character, damage natural and cultural resources, and cause a significant increase in property taxes. There is also a concern among residents that landowners should not be able to develop their properties any way they desire.

This Plan provides a guide for planned development in a timely, orderly, and predictable manner to preserve the community's unique qualities, avoid land use conflicts, and provide housing and employment opportunities.

Vision & Goals

Vision

Our Town embodies the spirit of rural Wisconsin and the Upper Mississippi River Valley. Our most important assets are the active and involved people who care deeply about their community and its rich cultural history. Our residents will enjoy a high quality of life in a community with productive working farms and exceptional natural resources that include a variety of rivers, streams, wetlands, prairies, bluffs, and woodlands, as well as Lake Onalaska and portions of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Our Town will be known for its outstanding schools, great neighborhoods, and abundant recreational opportunities, along with diverse, environmentally-friendly economy. Our government will be open, responsive and efficient; and our Town will enjoy cooperative relationships with neighboring communities and La Crosse County.

Collectively, the goals below establish a vision for the future of our Town.

Goals

Our Town will:

- Balance growth and development with natural resource, agricultural and scenic vista preservation.
 - Preserve the Town's rural character.
 - Protect quality farmland.
 - Ensure economic development efforts are consistent with community character and natural resources.
 - Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as woodlands, prairies, wetlands, and floodplains

- Ensure high quality surface and ground water through fiscally prudent actions.
- Ensure that growth, development and preservation benefit the Town, property owners, and existing residents.
- Expand and support natural resource-based recreation amenities and opportunities.
- Inform and involve citizens in all Town affairs to improve the level of trust that exists within the Town.
- Improve the overall safety, efficiency, and affordability of public facilities and services, including the transportation system.
- Continue to work cooperatively with neighboring communities and the County on regional issues to strengthen regional relationships and to reduce costs of providing services.
- Coordinate with the School District and adjacent municipalities to maintain and improve the highest quality of K-12 education for Town residents.
- Maintain and enhance a high quality of life for residents.

Plan Purpose and Use

The Town of Onalaska's Comprehensive Plan establishes an overall strategy for the growth and conservation of the Town. It updates and replaces the Town's 2005 *Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan: 2005 – 2025*. This Comprehensive Plan guides short- and long-range growth, development and preservation decisions. The purposes of this Comprehensive Plan are to:

- Identify areas appropriate for development and preservation over the next 20 years and serve as a reference for development application reviews.
- Recommend types of land uses for specific areas of the Town.
- Preserve natural and cultural features and prime farmland for future generations.
- Provide a basis for intergovernmental cooperation.
- Identify needed transportation and community facilities to serve existing and future land uses.
- Guide the preparation of annual Town budgets.
- Communicate the Town's desired future to the Town Board, commissions and committees, staff, residents, landowners, developers, neighboring communities, and others.
- Protect the public health, safety, and welfare.
- Maintain and improve the current quality of life for Town residents.

This Plan has been prepared under the State of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Law, adopted in 1999 and contained in § 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. It meets all of the Law's elements and requirements. It is important to note that the law requires all Town land use decisions be consistent with this Plan.

Additionally, the Plan is a working document and is intended to be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years. The review will serve as a checkpoint to ensure that the document is providing clear direction and that it remains consistent with community goals, values and needs.

Comprehensive Plan Format

The Plan, this document, contains the Town of Onalaska's goals, objectives, policies, recommendations and actions for the next 20 years. It contains the following eight (8) elements:

- Housing Element
- Transportation Element
- Utilities and Community Facilities Element
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element

- Economic Development Element
- Intergovernmental Cooperation Element
- Land Use Plan
- Action Element

This plan describes current and past conditions, planning efforts, opportunities, and issues to be addressed in each of the required plan elements. There is an additional appendix containing relevant maps.

Planning Process

The planning process has involved extensive public input throughout. The following formal public participation activities have been conducted. All public meetings and events have been properly noticed.

1. Town Survey
2. Open House #1
3. Open House #2
4. Public Meetings with Plan Commission and Town Board
5. Public Hearing

1. Town Survey

The Town of Onalaska assembled questions about a variety of topics that exist within the community including housing, transportation, and land use. These questions were then incorporated into a Town Survey for two reasons: 1) to facilitate a community discussion about long-term issues related to these topics; and 2) to collect community sentiment concerning these topics. The survey was performed as part of the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan. Results of the survey were incorporated into this Plan and used to help generate goals and objectives to determine actions for implementation. The list of survey responses can be found in [Appendix A](#).

2. Open House #1

The Town of Onalaska offered an open house to facilitate public engagement. The Town presented Town goals, visions, and policies to gauge public input. Comments from Open House #1 were used to determine action plans, revise goals, and incorporate public opinion into the Plan.

3. Open House #2

The Town of Onalaska offered a second open house in July 2022 to facilitate public engagement in the mapping process. The Town presented land use maps and asked for public opinion.

4. Public Meetings with Plan Commission and Town Board

The Plan Commission met monthly, offering the opportunity for public engagement at each meeting. MRRPC staff presented at these meetings on progress of the Plan. The Town Board received recommendations from the Plan Commission to pass resolutions and ordinances regarding the plan.

5. Public Hearing

The Town of Onalaska held a public hearing on August 15, 2022 at the Town Hall to gather input from residents on the final draft of the Plan. Comments from the Public hearing were used to revise the final draft of the plan. The information for the meeting posting can be found in [Appendix D](#).

2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section of the plan will provide information on the demographic trends and projections that are taking place in the Town of Onalaska. The information has been gathered from various sources, including township level data when possible. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, which is contained in Section 66.1001 of Wisconsin Statutes, requires this element to include a statement of overall goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the 20-year planning period. It also requires household and employment forecasts that are used to guide the development of this plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, education levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the governmental unit.

Population Trends and Forecasts

The Town of Onalaska surrounds two of the fastest growing municipalities in the Region, the Village of Holmen and Town of Holland, and experiences considerable development pressure and population growth. As is true of many Wisconsin towns in similar circumstances, historical trends in population growth reflect the impact of past annexation agreements as well as an increase in the number of town residents. These competing impacts should be considered when examining historical population trends and the projections derived from them.

Table 2.1 documents population trends and projections for the Town of Onalaska and surrounding comparable communities. From 2020 to 2030, the population of the Town of Onalaska is predicted to increase by 5.26%, this is an increase of approximately 32 new residents per year. Table 1.1 shows the Wisconsin Department of Administration's (DOA) projections through 2040 based on historical population growth rates.

Table 2.1 Population Projections

	Year						
	2010	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2020-2030 Projected Change %
Town of Onalaska	5,623	5,990	6,150	6,305	6,390	6,485	5.26%
Town of Farmington	2,061	2,235	2,325	2,410	2,475	2,535	7.83%
Town of Hamilton	2,436	2,655	2,780	2,895	2,975	3,065	9.04%
Town of Holland	3,701	4,355	4,675	4,985	5,240	5,500	14.47%
Village of Holmen	9,005	10,560	11,370	12,120	12,770	13,400	14.77%

City of La Crosse	51,320	52,550	52,750	52,700	52,300	51,850	0.29%
City of Onalaska	17,736	19,860	20,950	21,950	22,770	23,570	10.52%
La Crosse County	114,638	120,447	123,404	128,120	129,830	131,500	6.37%

Source: US Census Bureau 2010, 2020 estimates from WI DOA and Esri forecasts

Age and Gender

The median age for the Town is 42.1 years old, which is higher than the County median age of 35.9. Table 1.2 outlines the age distribution for the population of Town of Onalaska residents. Just over 45% of residents in the Town are between 20 and 59 years old. 28% of Town of Onalaska residents are under age 20, which is lower than the nearby Village of Holmen, but is much higher than the rest of La Crosse County. 38% of Town of Onalaska residents are 50 years old or older, which is higher than the 34percent of County residents. When considering gender, 53% of the residents are male. For La Crosse County, only 49% of residents are male.

Table 1.2 Median Age

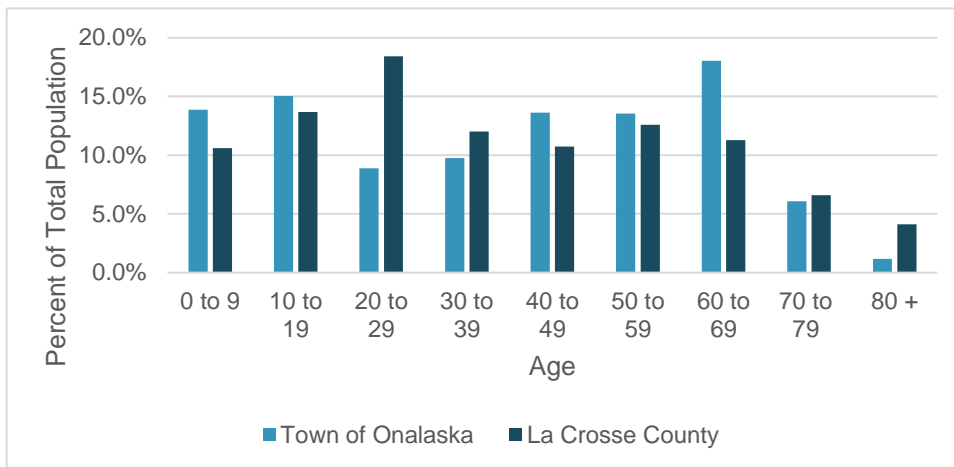
Municipality	Median Age	0 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 +
Town of Onalaska	42.1	795	863	510	560	782	776	1034	349	67
Town of Farmington	39	270	393	220	246	266	362	258	113	60
Town of Hamilton	45.2	355	253	211	271	333	501	366	189	39
Town of Holland	37.5	612	671	196	532	487	642	365	138	1.5
Village of Holmen	37	1481	1392	972	1496	1348	1105	948	817	295
City of La Crosse	29.3	4362	7328	14706	6051	4274	5149	4837	2815	2144
City of Onalaska	40.6	1919	2540	2453	2267	2174	2564	2064	1497	1214
La Crosse County	35.9	12508	16135	21710	14150	12664	14833	13292	7769	4833

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Figure 2.1 contrasts the age distribution of the Town of Onalaska with that of La Crosse County. The Town's population distribution is more consistent with the statewide population distribution than with La Crosse County. There are many more individuals between the ages of 20 and 29 at the County level than in the Town; this could be due in part to the presence of 3 institutions of higher education in the

City of La Crosse which drives countywide figures for this age group. It is also clear from Figure 2.1 that the Town of Onalaska has a significantly larger proportion of individuals' aged 60 to 69 than the County.

Figure 2.1 Age Groups as a Percentage of Total Population, 2019



Race

The Town of Onalaska is predominately White (94.7%), followed by Asian (1.35%), and American Indian (0.38%). 3% of the population is two or more races.

Housing Trends and Forecasts

Over a third of the homes in the Town of Onalaska were built between 1980 and 1999. The largest build-out in the Town occurred between 1960 and 1999 when nearly 75% Of the Town's existing housing units were constructed. Table 2.3 itemizes the housing stock in the Town of Onalaska according to the year the structure was built.

Table 2.3 Town of Onalaska Housing Stock, 2019

Year Structure Built	Number	Percent of Total
2014 or later	17	0.8%
2010 to 2013	45	2.1%
2000 to 2009	189	9.1%
1980 to 1999	827	39.3%
1960 to 1979	763	36.3%
1940 to 1959	149	7.1%
1939 or earlier	113	5.4%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Year Estimates, 2019

Housing tenure refers to whether a particular housing unit is owned or rented by the occupant. Table 2.4 indicates that over 93% of the hosing in the Town is Owner-Occupied. Owner occupancy has increased since 1990 but not substantially.

Table 2.4 Town of Onalaska Housing Tenure, 2019

	Number	Percent
Occupied Housing Units	2,103	-
Owner Occupied Housing Units	1,956	93.1%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	147	6.9%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Year Estimates, 2019

Table 2.5 lists the housing units in the Town of Onalaska by type. Of the 2,103 housing units in the Town, 90.9% are single-family detached homes, and another 3.6% are 2-unit or duplex homes. Only 1.2% of the housing in the Town of Onalaska is in multi-family structures, defined as 3 or more units per structure.

Table 2.5 Housing Units by Type, Town of Onalaska, 2019

Units per Structure	Structures	Percent
1-unit, detached	1,912	90.9%
1 unit, attached	73	3.5%
2 units	75	3.6%
3 or 4 units	21	1.0%
5 to 9 units	5	0.2%
10 or more units	0	0.0%
Mobile home	17	0.8%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Year Estimates, 2019

Tables 2.6 and 2.7 estimate future housing growth for the Town of Onalaska based in part on projections of persons per housing unit. Table 2.6 projections for housing growth were determined by using DOA population and housing unit trends (2010-2019) assuming a constant linear trend in population per housing unit.

Table 2.8 show housing demand in acreage of residential area. These predictions were determined by La Crosse County using US Census population data, land use patterns, projected population growth, and a market adjustment. The amount of acreage shown depicts the additional acreage needed to accommodate additional housing units.

Table 2.7 Projected Housing Units 2020 to 2040

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Town of Onalaska	2,247	2,401	2,566	2,742	2,930
La Crosse County	50,388	51,968	53,262	54,159	54,929

Source: DOA 2013, American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Year Estimates, MRRPC

Table 2.8 Projected Additional Residential Land Use in Acreage, 2020 to 2040

	2030	2040
Town of Onalaska	540	1,080
La Crosse County	5,489	10,979

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Year Estimates, La Crosse County Land Records

Employment Characteristics and Forecasts

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires this element to address Employment forecasts in the governmental unit over the 20-year planning period.

Town of Onalaska residents primarily work outside the Town, but within the greater La Crosse Metropolitan Statistical Area. The State of Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development's "Occupations with Largest Growth 2000-2010" provides insight into the regional employment forecast for the Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon County area.

The following forecasts and statistics are divided into two broad categories: occupations and industries. It is common that several occupation groups are related closely to certain industries. For example, the U.S. Bureau of the Census uses the following description to describe the differences: operators of transportation equipment, farm operators and workers, and healthcare providers accounts for major portions of their respective industries of transportation, agriculture, and health care. Industry categories, however, include people in other occupations. For example, people employed in agriculture include truck drivers and bookkeepers; people employed in the transportation industry include mechanics, freight handlers, and payroll clerks; and people employed in the health care industry include occupations such as security guard and secretary.

The Table 2.9 shows the occupational structure of the Town of Onalaska residents in 2019. A majority, 30.7%, were employed in "educational services, healthcare, and social service." This is followed by 13.4% in "retail trade" and 11.6% in manufacturing.

Table 2.9 Town Occupations by Industry

Industry	Employees	Percent
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Mining	16	0.5%
Construction	200	6.6%
Manufacturing	353	11.6%
Wholesale Trade	140	4.6%
Retail Trade	407	13.4%
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	159	5.2%
Information	96	3.2%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	125	4.1%
Professional/Scientific/Tech	154	5.1%
Educational Services/Healthcare/Social Service	932	30.7%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Accommodation/Food Service	152	5.0%

Other Services (Excluding Public)	102	3.4%
Public Administration	195	6.4%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Year Estimates, 2019

Table 2.10 lists the top 5 occupations experiencing the largest growth rates in the region, many of the occupations relate to the goods producing industry. The top two professions listed fall within major areas of employment for Town residents. For a more complete listing of Occupational growth projections see Chapter 7.

Table 2.10 Occupations with the Largest Projected Growth in Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon Counties, 2018-2028

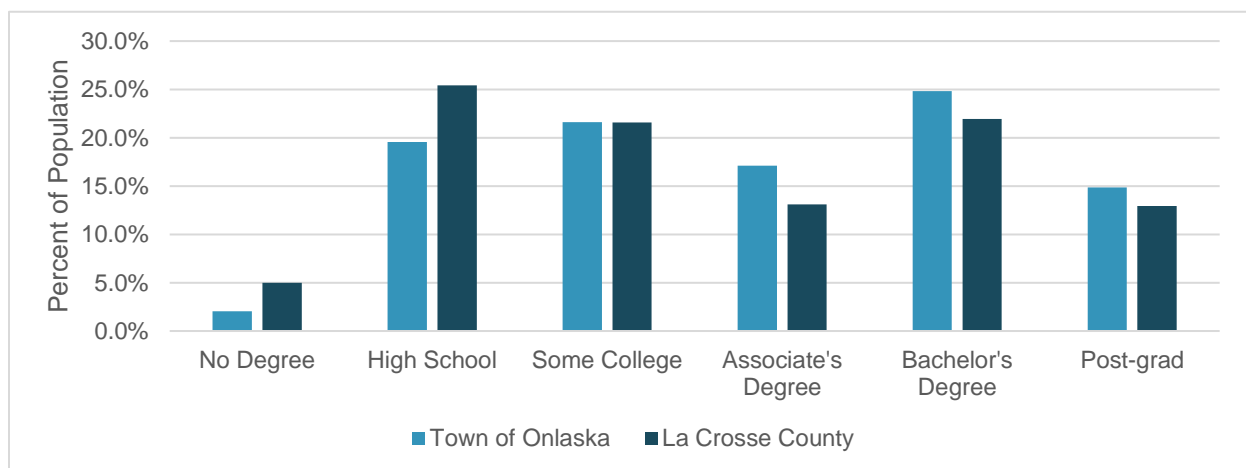
Occupational Title	Number	Percent Change
Community and Social Services Occupations – Unclassified	12	30.8
Personal Care and Service Occupation – Goods Producing	11	19.6
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations – Goods Producing	14	14.3
Construction and Extraction Occupations – Good Producing	571	14.3
Management – Goods Producing	268	12.2

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, 2018

Educational Attainment

Based on the following figure (Figure 2.2), the Town of Onalaska is comparable to the County in educational attainment (within 6% of each degree). 78.4% of the population of the Town of Onalaska has attained or pursued a degree beyond high school. This is above the County at 69.6%. 98% of the Town of Onalaska residents have a minimum of a high school diploma.

Figure 2.2 Education Attainment as a Percent of Total Population, 2019



Income Levels

As shown in Table 2.11 income levels for Onalaska residents are higher in all categories than are income levels for the Village of Holmen, and La Crosse County. Both median family and median household incomes are higher in the Town of Onalaska than in the City of Onalaska, but the City of Onalaska has a higher per capita income than the Town.

Table 2.4 depicts three measures of income for the Town and surrounding communities.

- Per Capita Income is the total income of the area divided by the total population.
- Median Household Income considers income for all people who occupy a housing unit- related or not.
- Scaled income levels based on per household income

Per capita income in the Town of Onalaska is higher than the County and Village of Holmen. Median household income is significantly higher in the Town at \$93,151 compared to the County at \$60,905.

Table 2.11 Median Family Income, Median Household Income, and Per Capita Income 2015 & 2019

	2015			2019		
	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income
Town of Onalaska	\$76,027	\$78,071	\$31,971	\$86,675	\$88,438	\$39,526
Village of Holmen	\$58,852	\$78,934	\$25,9977	\$70,159	\$96,848	\$31,074
City of Onalaska	\$53,737	\$70,288	\$33,249	\$61,429	\$85,784	\$39,101
La Crosse County	\$50,539	\$69,353	\$27,550	\$58,921	\$81,513	\$32,933

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Year Estimates, 2015 & 2019

Employment Characteristics

Based on Table 2.12, the majority of Town residents work in a white-collar industry. The highest percentage of workers are in a professional job (26%). 24.2% work in a blue-collar job and 14.0% in services.

Table 2.12 Employment Characteristics

	Percent of Workforce
White Collar	61.8%
• Management/Business/Finance	10.6%
• Professional	26.0%
• Sales	8.2%
• Administrative Support	16.9%
Services	14.0%
Blue Collar	24.2%
• Farming/Forestry/Fishing	0.8%

• Construction/Extraction	3.8%
• Installation/Maintenance/Repairs	6.3%
• Production	6.1%
• Transportation/Material Moving	7.2%

Source: US Census 2010

Employment Forecasts

From 2015 to 2020, jobs increased by 1.6% in La Crosse County, WI from 74,498 to 75,690. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 6.2%, a -4.6% disparity. Figure 2.3 below shows a projected increase in jobs from 2020 to 2025 in La Crosse County.

Figure 2.3 Job Projections La Crosse County

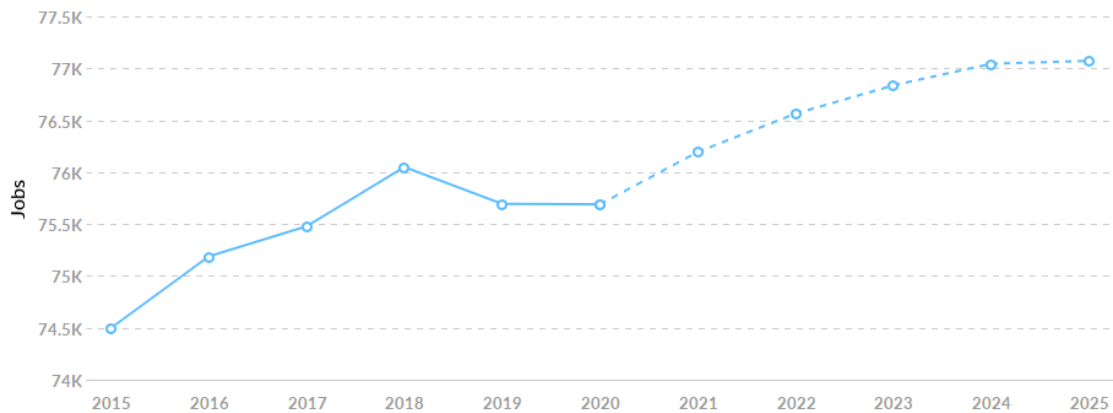


Figure 1.2 Source: BLS's Occupational Employment Statistics (OES), Emsi Q4 2020 Data

3. HOUSING ELEMENT

It is important for a community to provide adequate and safe housing for all its residents, with an emphasis placed on the creation of well-designed, functional neighborhoods. As stages of life, health, family, marital status, and financial circumstances change, so do housing needs. Persons that live and work in the community should not be forced to look outside the community for housing.

Housing is a major land use category and like all land use categories, housing generates demand for services. While population density may determine the aggregate level on demand, the configurations and location of dwelling units will determine how, where, and at what cost services may be delivered. Sewer, water, schools, streets, traffic, and noise regulation, and police and fire protection are among the services that typically must be provided to residential areas. Because local governments can regulate land-use, they are able to influence, and to some extent, pattern the effective demand and cost for these services.

Major themes/issues that emerged from the Town Survey relating to housing include:

- Promoting development near existing rural concentrations of homes
- A desire to retain rural character
- The encouragement of cluster development (a developer plots homes on smaller lots adjoining large tracts of land permanently protected as open space)
- To discourage overdevelopment in rural areas

GOAL 1

The Town of Onalaska will contain a variety of quality housing choices for all residents, including different age, income, and special needs.

Objective 1-1: Support the construction of new housing that is affordable for people who live or work in the Town.

- Action 1-1a: Work with La Crosse County to update Zoning and Land Division Ordinances, maps, and related administrations (i.e. fees) to provide for a variety of lot sizes and housing types in appropriate locations to provide opportunities for development or redevelopment of low-to-moderate income housing. This increased mix in housing stock and lot sizes should create a range in the prices of housing that can satisfy the needs and preferences of a variety of Town residents while maintaining the single-family detached dwelling as the basic form of housing.
- Action 1-1b: Encourage multi-family, higher density single family, and senior housing to be developed in or adjacent to the City of Onalaska, Village of Holmen, or developed areas with convenient access to daily or frequent necessities and urban services, and transportation facilities.
- Action 1-1c: Consider allowing “granny flats” or small apartments (studio or 1-bedroom) with single family homes to provide affordable housing choices for elderly residents, individuals, or small families.

- Action 1-1d: The Town should monitor the regional availability of housing for various income levels, age groups, and persons with special needs.
- Action 1-1e: Allow home occupations with specific standards to allow people to use their residences for multiple, compatible uses while also ensuring health and safe neighborhood conditions.

Objective 1-2: Encourage investment in existing housing units to maintain and enhance the Town's supply of housing.

- Action 1-2a: Encourage neighborhood (subdivision) designs and locations that protect residential areas from infringement by incompatible land uses, promote connectivity of road and environmental systems, and preserve rural character.
- Action 1-2b: Direct interested residents to area organizations that provide loan information and assistance on home maintenance programs.
- Action 1-2c: Promote the preservation of historic properties in the Town and consider creating or participating in local historic preservation programs.
- Action 1-2d: Consider creating a property maintenance ordinance that allows for the effective control of dilapidated structures or properties.
- Action 1-2e: Consider impacts on the housing units when planning for public improvement.
- Action 1-2f: Ensure that housing units have adequate access to public services and facilities; for example, streets serving residential areas are adequately designed and maintained.

Objective 1-3: Ensure new housing maintains the Town's rural character.

- Action 1-3a: Only allow developments that are adequately designed with respect to topography and drainage conditions of the proposed area.
- Action 1-3b: Provide open spaces with new residential developments to transition between developed and rural areas.
- Action 1-3c: Provide open spaces within residential developments to preserve areas and/or environmental quality.
- Action 1-3d: Support higher density housing to be located in urban areas such as in or immediately adjacent to the Village of Holmen and City of Onalaska.
- Action 1-3e: Require new developments to be clustered near adequate utilities and roads.

Housing Units

Table 3.1 depicts the number of housing units within the Town of Onalaska. In 2019, there were 2,270 housing units in the Town – 86.2% owner occupied, 6.5% renter occupied, and 7.3% vacant. The annual rate of change in housing units since 2015 is 3.1%. This is higher than the estimated annual growth rate of the County (1.7%), the City of Onalaska (1.95%), and the Village of Holmen (0.92%).

Table 3.1 Housing Occupancy, 2019

	Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant Units
Town of Onalaska	2,270	86.2%	6.5%	7.3%
Village of Holmen	3,816	68.5%	27.8%	3.7%
City of Onalaska 1.95	8,135	63.4%	33.9%	2.7%
La Crosse County	50,304	59.5%	34.9%	5.6%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Housing Characteristics

A “household” is an occupied housing unit. Table 3.2 outlines the average size of both households and families within the Town. It also identifies the percentage of households that consist of family versus non-family households. The average household in the Town of Onalaska consists of 2.73 people, while the average family in the County consists of 2.37 people. The majority, 81.8%, of households in the Town consist of related families.

The Town has the largest household size compared to the Village of Holmen and La Crosse County. The Town also has the most family households compared to the respective two municipalities.

Table 3.2 Household Characteristics, 2019

	Average Household Size	Average Family Size	Family Households (2+ people)	Non-family Households
Town of Onalaska	2.73	3.30	81.8%	18.2%
Village of Holmen	2.68	3.27	69.7%	30.3%
City of Onalaska	2.34	2.95	59.7%	40.3%
La Crosse County	2.37	2.95	57.9%	42.1%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Type of Housing Unit

Table 3.3 outlines the composition of housing unit type, by number of units. In the Town of Onalaska, single family detached homes are the most common type of housing. The Town of Onalaska has the highest percentage of 1-Unit Detached homes compared the surrounding municipalities and County.

Table 3.3 Type of Unit in Structure by Percentage, 2019

	Total Occupied Units	1-Unit Detached	1-Unit Attached	2 Units	3 or 4 Units	5 to 9 Units	10 or More Units	Mobile Home
Town of Onalaska	2,270	91.4%	3.2%	3.5%	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%	0.7%

Village of Holmen	3,816	54.1%	12.4%	4.0%	1.3%	4.2%	10.2%	13.8%
City of Onalaska	8,135	58.2%	11.4%	5.5%	2.5%	4.9%	13.6%	4.0%
La Crosse County	50,304	61.2%	6.6%	5.7%	4.3%	4.3%	13.6%	4.3%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Age of Housing Structures

Table 3.4, below, represents the percentage of homes that were constructed within each decade over the past eighty years. Over 15% of the homes in the Town of Onalaska have been constructed within the past twenty years. To compare, just fewer than 18% of homes throughout the County constructed in the past 20 years. The Village of Holmen has the newest housing stock with over 40% of homes being built in the last 20 years.

Table 3.4 Age of Housing Structures, 2019

	Total Housing Units	1939 or earlier	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2013	2014 or later
Town of Onalaska	2,270	5.0%	1.2%	6.8%	5.5%	30.0%	15.3%	21.1%	11.5%	2.9%	0.7%
Village of Holmen	3,816	3.1%	0.0%	3.5%	4.6%	11.4%	13.7%	20.8%	32.1%	5.2%	5.7%
City of Onalaska	8,135	5.3%	1.7%	5.6%	8.0%	21.9%	13.3%	21.1%	16.7%	3.7%	2.9%
La Crosse County	50,304	17.2%	5.3%	8.9%	8.6%	16.3%	10.7%	15.2%	12.4%	3.0%	2.5%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Housing Values

Table 3.5 (below) outlines the values of owner-occupied housing units within the Town of Onalaska. In 2019, the median home value in the Town was \$206,800. The Town's housing unit median value is \$33,500 higher than the County's. One can surmise that as County values increased so too will the value for Town of Onalaska's housing stock. Over 80% of Town of Onalaska residents spent \$150,000 or more on a home. 56.7% of residents spent \$150,000 to \$299,999.

Table 3.5 Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2019

	Total Owner-Occupied Units	Median (\$)	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,000	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 to \$499,999	\$500,000 or more
Town of Onalaska	1,956	\$206,800	2.0%	1.9%	15.6%	28.2%	28.5%	17.3%	6.4%
Village of Holmen	2,613	\$197,600	10.0%	5.5%	13.6%	22.1%	40.7%	7.5%	0.6%
City of Onalaska	5,161	\$196,600	5.8%	3.5%	15.6%	26.3%	29.5%	14.9%	4.4%

La Crosse County	29,949	\$173,300	5.7%	8.0%	22.6%	23.9%	24.3%	11.9%	3.6%
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Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Housing Projections - DOA

Based on DOA Projections, the Town of Onalaska is projected to need approximately 332 housing units between 2015 and 2040. This will increase the current supply 15.5% between 2015 and 2040. To compare, the Village of Holmen will see a 42% increase in households, while La Crosse County will see an increase of 13%.

The table below outlines the number of households currently in the County as well as the projected growth in households that is expected from 2015 to 2040. The projections provided for the next twenty years have been provided by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The projections have been reached by closely monitoring past growth trends within the Town, County, and surrounding areas.

Table 3.6 Projected Housing Units 2015 to 2040 - DOA

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Town of Onalaska	2,143	2,227	2,304	2,378	2,427	2,475
Village of Holmen	3,750	4,095	4,444	4,768	5,060	5,334
City of Onalaska	7,895	8,432	8,963	9,449	9,868	10,260
La Crosse County	48,658	50,388	51,968	53,262	54,159	54,929

Source: DOA 2013, US Census Bureau 2010

Housing Projections – La Crosse County

La Crosse County made projections for residential area in acreage needed in the next 20 years. This is based on population density in 2020, projected population change from 2020-2030 (DOA), and proposed projections from the steering committee using core values of the La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan 2022. These values have been calculated to adjust for market changes in the next 20 years. The Town of Onalaska is projected to need 1,080 acres for residential units in the next 20 years. This accounts for approximately 23% of the growth in all the town of La Crosse County.

Table 3.7 Projected Housing Units and Acreage – La Crosse County

	2020 population Density (pop./acre)	2030 Population Projected Change	Acres of Residential Land Use Projected Need for 10 Years	20 Year Acreage Projections
Town of Onalaska	3.792	315	270	1,080
Village of Holmen	14.949	1,560	175	702
City of Onalaska	12.593	2,090	219	877
All Towns in La Crosse County	3.366	1,755	1,809	4,648

Source: La Crosse County Planning Department 2021, La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan 2022

Housing Units by Heating Fuel

The majority of households in the County use utility gas (72.3%) as a main heating fuel source. The second most common is electricity at 9.8%. The Town uses the most wood as a heating fuel source compared to the Village of Holmen and La Crosse County. The Town also use less electricity and more bottled, tank, or LP gas as a fuel source than the respective municipalities.

Table 2.8 Housing Units by House Heating Fuel

	Utility Gas	Bottled, Tank, or LP Gas	Electricity	Fuel Oil, Kerosene, Etc.	Coal or Coke	Wood	Solar Energy	Other Fuel	No Fuel Used
Town of Onalaska	72.3%	11.4%	9.8%	2.6%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%
Village of Holmen	71.7%	0.8%	22.4%	3.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%
City of Onalaska	65.6%	1.4%	31.4%	0.9%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
La Crosse County	62.3%	6.0%	26.3%	2.0%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Special Needs Housing

The State of Wisconsin lists fourteen housing locations for persons with special needs within the immediate vicinity of the Town of Onalaska and City of Onalaska.

- Brookdale Onalaska (949 10th Ave. N) – Community Based Residential Facility
- Coulee Care (1106 Main St.) – Adult Family Home
- Coulee Region Adult Day Center (565 Braud St.) – Adult Day Center
- Creative Community Living Services Inc. (837 Main St., N5412 Circle Drive W) – Adult Family Home
- Eagle Crest North Memory Care and Assisted Living (351 Mason St.) – Community Based Residential Facility, Residential Care Apartment Complex
- Knapp Green Bay Street AFH (938 Green Bay St.) – Adult Family Home
- Laurel Manor (108 17th Ave. S) – Residential Care Apartment Complex
- Meadows at Springbrook (861 Critter Ct.) – Community Based Residential Facility
- Onalaska Care Center (1600 Main St.) – Nursing Home
- Onalaska Senior Living (37700 Emerald Dr. E) – Residential Care Apartment Complex
- REM Kristy Lane (1038/1040 Kristy Ln., 3724 Emerald Dr., 3722 Emerald Dr.) – Adult Family Home
- Springbrook Community Assisted Living (861 Critter Ct.) – Residential Care Apartment Complex

4. TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

This element includes a compilation of goals, objectives, and actions to guide the future development and maintenance of various modes of transportation in the Town of Onalaska. Major themes/issues that emerged from the Town Survey relating to transportation include:

- The desire for more hiking and biking trails
- Improved road maintenance
- Improved snow removal

GOAL 1

The Town of Onalaska will work with La Crosse County and Neighboring jurisdictions to provide a safe, efficient, and economically sound transportation system that meets the needs of all its residents, businesses, and visitors.

Objective 1-1: Maintain and improve a balanced, efficient, and low cost transportation system. This system should take advantage of the existing infrastructure and accommodate a variety of transportation choices including driving, walking, biking, and rail.

- Action 1-1a: Prepare and annually update a multi-year transportation improvement plan to identify and prioritize short-term and long-term needs and funding sources for road improvements, new roads, pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails, and other transportation facilities. Allow for public review and comment on the Town's short and long-term transportation system improvement plans.
- Action 1-1b: Work with neighboring jurisdictions to identify vehicular traffic routes that might be impacted by residential and commercial development and expansion.
- Action 1-1c: Contact La Crosse County at least one time each year to provide a list of the Town transportation projects and needs to be included in the County's Capital improvements Program.
- Action 1-1d: Study the need for improved multi-use trail access to Brice Prairie.

Objective 1-2: Improve safety problems at key or busy intersections and existing or potentially hazardous areas.

- Action 1-2a: Identify and prioritize intersections of concern and traffic hazard areas and develop a list of recommendations, budgets, and timelines for these problems to be addressed.
- Action 1-2b: Notify La Crosse County that speeding is the number one traffic safety issue in the Town and work with the County to identify solutions to the problem.
- Action 1-2c: Create alternate access to Brice Prairie for emergency vehicles to avoid train delays.

Objective 1-3: Improve existing Town and regional transportation system to make sure it meets the needs of residents who are elderly or disabled.

- Action 1-3a: Work with surrounding communities to explore strategies for providing cost effective transportation services to transit-dependent and disabled residents.

- Action 1-3b: Work with the City of Onalaska, Village of Holmen, and La Crosse County to evaluate possible extension to shared-ride taxi services to the Town of Onalaska.

Objective 1-4: Accommodate and encourage safe, convenient, non-motorized transportation choices (pedestrian, bicycle, etc.)

- Action 1-4a: Require all new developments to be safe places to walk and bike. This may be accommodated through safe street designs, formal or informal path or trails (on or off street), and connected to existing or planned Town-wide or regional pedestrian or bicycle facilities. This action will require amending Town ordinances to include this requirement as part of the development review and authorization process.
- Action 1-4b: Support County and State plans to provide multi-use trail improvements in the Town, per the discretion of the Town Board.
- Action 1-4c: Work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife service to get an easement to add a trail to the bike path.
- Action 1-4d: Work with neighboring jurisdictions to identify parcels within the Town as areas for potential easement or acquisition for future regional multi-use trail network enhancements.
- Action 1-4e: Work with State, La Crosse County, and the LAPC to create on-road bicycle facilities (i.e. bike lanes and paved shoulders) in conjunction with roadway reconstruction and determine necessary bicycle route signage.
- Action 1-4f: Create the area around Midway as a safe, enjoyable place to walk around.
- Action 1-4g: Identify and create access to the Great River Trail at the mid-point of the trail on Brice Prairie.
- Action 1-4h: Any new or improved roads in the Town should be designed and constructed to accommodate bicycles.
- Action 1-4i: Continue to pursue the following transportation recommendations including:
 - Development of a multi-use trail on the north side of CTH Z which connects the Great River Trail at Lytles Landing that would create a loop to the lake and/or through Brice Prairie to the lake.
 - Development of a multi-use trail from the Village of Holmen which generally follows Halfway Creek to Midway where it would connect to the Great River Trail.
 - Development of a multi-use trail between USH 53 and SH 35 interchange and Sandy Knolls Park.
 - Provision of trails or sidewalks within and between new residential subdivisions.
 - Provision of connecting trails and sidewalks within and between new commercial and residential development around the USH 53 and SH 35 interchange.
 - Widening the shoulder of CH S.

Objective 1-5: Coordinate the provision and improvement of transportation infrastructure with land use and development in and adjacent to the Town.

- Action 1-5a: Consider creating traffic and access circulation criteria that all new development must meet the Town Board approval prior to issuance of a building permit, such as:
 - Each lot, structure, or other land use within the new development has adequate access to a public street.
 - The proposed development, vehicular access point, and parking arrangement do not create traffic congestion or safety concerns on the roads surrounding the

proposed development, or such surrounding roads are proposed to be improved to accommodate development.

- Areas of historical pedestrian or recreational trail use, improvements of or connections to the bicycle and pedestrian trail system, and adequate significant public lands and waterways are provided through dedicated public trail easements and are proposed for appropriate improvements and maintenance.
- The proposed development will support a range of transportation choices including the potential for extended transit services, where such service is available or planned.
- Each lot, structure, or other land use within a new development has adequate access to a public street and can be serviced by emergency vehicles (per appropriate review, such as by the Holmen Area Fire Department Chief and/or Town Board).
- Action 1-5b: Prioritize and implement land use policies that implement the Coulee Vision plan, especially those objectives that contribute to alternative transportation options.
- Action 1-5c: Plan for infrastructure improvements, recreational trail corridors, and other transportation-related facilities and services when making land use decisions.
- Action 1-5d: Protect environmentally sensitive areas and working farms when considering transportation infrastructure improvements.

Objective 1-6: Implement the Future Transportation Plan Map.

Objective 1-7: Continue to participate in the La Crosse Area Planning Committee's (LAPC) planning efforts, our region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO).

- Action 1-7a: Appoint advisory committee members (technical and bicycle) to advocate for transportation policies and projects consistent with this plan.
- Action 1-7b: Support regional transportation policies and projects that reflect the Coulee Vision plan.
- Action 1-7c: Review and recommend changes to LAPC documents, policies, and projects to enable implementation of this plan, including County highway functional classifications, long-term transportation plans, and transportation improvement projects.
- Action 1-7d: Encourage Plan Commission and Board discussion of LAPC-related activities and identify issues and concerns to raise at LAPC planning meetings.

GOAL 2

The Town's transportation will be designed to protect the rural character of the Town and minimize impacts on the natural environment to the greatest extent possible.

Objective 2-1: Where feasible, new and expanded roads and driveways should be aligned to conform to the natural contours to minimize required earthwork (cuts and fills) and avoid environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands.

- Action 2-1a: The layout of new or expanded roads shall be adapted to the topography, unique natural features, and environmental constraints of the site.
- Action 2-1b: Disturbance for the construction of roads should be kept to a minimum. For example, existing farm/rural roads should be incorporated into the design of the proposed development to alleviate the need for additional site disturbance.

- Action 2-1c: Roads and streetscapes (the areas along the roadways) shall be attractively designed to maintain or enhance the character of the area in which they are constructed. For example, narrow roads are appropriate for rural areas of the Town, and wider roads with amenities such as crosswalks are appropriate for the Town Center area or industrial park area near OT.
- Action 2-1d: Identify appropriate locations and create attractive gateways to the Town.

GOAL 3

Improve traffic circulation on Town roads throughout the Town and on those roads connected to neighboring communities.

Objective 3-1: A logical street network of interconnected streets shall be provided.

- Action 3-1a: New streets proposed to be created as part of any development proposal shall be integrated and interconnected closely with existing street networks. For example, new subdivisions shall be designed to connect to existing subdivisions where possible.
- Action 3-1b: The use of cul-de-sacs and other roadways with a single point of access shall be minimized because they force traffic onto a limited number of through streets. However, the use of cul-de-sacs will be permitted to preserve environmentally sensitive areas or significant open space.

This section is divided between the movement of people and goods, with the movement of people organized by trip type. Within the movement of people, first reviewed is regional travel – the interstate system and state routes, airport, intercity transit, and passenger rail service. This section then examines local transportation opportunities, County and local streets, local transit services, bicycling facilities, and pedestrian facilities.

Movement of Goods

According to the 2018 State Freight Plan, there are six freight-dependent sectors and their composite industries comprised almost 40% of Wisconsin's employment and 44% of the state's GDP. The six sectors are 1) wholesale and retail, 2) manufacturing, 3) agriculture and forestry, 4) construction, 5) transportation, information, and utilities/energy, and 6) mining. The convergence of highway, rail, and water cargo facilities in La Crosse County provides the opportunity for a fully intermodal terminal for freight distribution. The County's closest intermodal terminals are in Minneapolis/St. Paul and Chicago.

Highways

State Highways 35 and 53 travel through sections of the Town of Onalaska in addition to eight county highways.

Water

Direct water access for waterborne freight is available through both public and private terminals in the City of La Crosse and the Town of Campbell. The Port of La Crosse serves incoming and outgoing barge traffic on the Mississippi River. The port handles nearly 1.3 million metric tons of commodities annually and offers connections to the Upper Midwest and the world, including China, Russia, Spain, South

America, Mexico, and other countries. For information regarding the future of Wisconsin Commercial Ports Association (WCPA), refer to the WCPA strategic plan.

Rail Freight

La Crosse County has rail cargo service through three Class I railroad companies, all of which provide direct access to Chicago and connections to eastern points. The Canadian Pacific Railway connects La Crosse to Milwaukee and Minneapolis/St. Paul. This company provides service, or potentially could provide service, to Rockland, Bangor, West Salem, and the north side of La Crosse. The Union Pacific Railroad operates with trackage rights on the Canadian Pacific between Tomah and Winona. The Burlington Northern & Santa Fe operates in the far western part of the County in a north-south orientation and provides service to industries on the south side of La Crosse and Onalaska. The Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2030 indicates shipments by rail and trucking freight are anticipated to grow through year 2030. Forecasts from the Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2030 are listed below:

- Increase in weight of freight rail commodities by over 16%
- Increase in value of freight rail traveling *in* Wisconsin by 18%
- Decrease in value of freight rail traveling *from* Wisconsin

Air Cargo

The La Crosse Municipal Airport serves as an air cargo facility. The airport is not one of the state's six primary air cargo airports, but it does function as a feeder air service. Rather than maintain and operate a fleet of small aircraft, the integrated express carriers contract for on-demand service with a variety of aircraft operators. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 forecasts for all-cargo aircraft operations at La Crosse Municipal Airport to continue to grow. In 2020, state forecasts predicted that the La Crosse Municipal Airport will have the second highest aircraft operations by commercial air cargo carriers, second to General Mitchell International in Milwaukee, but that the La Crosse Municipal Airport's share of the state's air cargo operations will be less than 12%. This prediction held true and is anticipated to grow in the following years.

Movement of People - Regional

Highways

State Highways 35 and 53 travel through sections of the Town of Onalaska in addition to eight county highways. WisDOT constructed a bypass on STH 53 in 1992, making the La Crosse area convenient for work, shopping, travel, entertainment, and services. Onalaska is also fortunate to be located immediately north of Interstate 90, which serves long-distance traffic from Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota and areas west, and areas to the east including Madison, WI and Chicago, IL. [Map 4.1](#) shows roadways in the Town of Onalaska.

Air Transportation

The La Crosse Regional Airport, located south of the Town, is one of nine Wisconsin airports that have commercial air passenger service on a year-round basis. The airport is located on French Island and it serves passenger air travel through connections to regional hubs. The La Crosse Regional Airport is served by American Airlines and Delta Air Lines with three daily non-stop hubs. These include Minneapolis-St. Paul, Chicago, and Detroit. The airlines process nearly 90,000 enplanements and 180,000 total passengers annually. At the airport, the multimodal connection opportunities are to rent a vehicle from four national car rental companies (Avis/Budget, Enterprise, Hertz and National/Alamo), or to use local city bus Route 4 (French Island/Industrial Parks).

The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 forecasts an increasing number of enplanements. The plan forecasted 109,960 thousand enplanements in 2010 and 122,570 enplanements in 2030. This is a 0.5% increase from 2010 to 2030, the same as the state average over this time period.

Passenger Rail

Intercity passenger rail is available through Amtrak service in the City of La Crosse. The Amtrak Empire Builder serves La Crosse, with regional connection to Chicago, Milwaukee, Columbus, Portage, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah, Winona, Red Wing, and St. Paul. The Empire Builder also connects to the West Coast (Seattle, WA and Portland, OR). Through a connection in Chicago, the national Amtrak network is available. The passenger rail station is located at St. Andrew and Caledonia Streets (601 St. Andrew Street in the City of La Crosse).

WisDOT has been studying ways in which Wisconsin's intercity passenger rail system could be expanded and developed into a more robust component of the state's overall transportation system. WisDOT, along with Amtrak and eight other Midwestern state DOTs, is currently evaluating the Midwest Regional Rail System, a proposed 3,000-mile, Chicago-based passenger rail network in the Midwest. The regional rail system would provide 6 round trips at peak times between Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, La Crosse, and St. Paul. Modern trains operating at peak speeds of up to 110-mph could produce travel times competitive with driving or flying.

Bus

Intercity passenger bus service in the La Crosse area was provided by Greyhound Lines; however, in August 2004, Greyhound discontinued service to the La Crosse area as part of its route restructuring. Intercity bus transportation is now provided by Jefferson Lines, a connecting carrier to Greyhound Bus Lines. Jefferson Lines runs daily scheduled bus service that connects to Greyhound's national service in Madison and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The intercity bus terminal is located at 601 St. Andrew Street in the City of La Crosse.

Movement of People – Local

Local Roadway Network

The street network shapes access and circulation through the Town. Public streets in the area are classified by their primary function, as described in the following table.

Table 4.1 Functional Street Classification for the Town of Onalaska

Classification	Description	Onalaska Streets
Principal Arterials	Serve longer intra-urban trips and traffic traveling through urban areas. They carry high traffic volumes and provide links to major activity centers.	US 53
Minor Arterials	Provide intra-community continuity and service to trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials. The minor arterial system interconnects with the urban arterial system and provides system	STH 35 CTH OT (from CTH ZN to CTH SN) CTH SN CTH ZN (from CTH Z to CTH OT) Main Street (Village of Holmen)

	connections to the rural collectors.	
Collectors	Provide both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. These facilities collect traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it onto the arterial system. In the central business district, and in other areas of like development and traffic density, the collector system may include the street grid which forms the basic unit of traffic circulation.	CTH D CTH OT (CTH ZN to STH 35) CTH XX CTH ZN (from CTH ZB to CTH Z) CTH Z (from STH to northern intersection with CTH ZN) CTH M CTH ZB CTH W CTH S (from CTH SN to Hauser Road) East Avenue North (City of Onalaska)
Local Streets	Local streets primarily provide direct access to adjacent land and access to higher order systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility and through traffic movement on this system is usually discouraged.	All Town of Onalaska streets not otherwise classified above.

Source: La Crosse County Land Information and Zoning Office

Table 4.2 Traffic County Profile Town of Onalaska

Distance (miles)	Street	Closest Cross-Street	Year of Count	Count (Average Daily Traffic)
0.85	SH 35	Holmen Dr S (0.04 miles NW)	2016	140
0.89		(0.0 miles)	2016	3,500
1.08	CTH OT	Filler Ct (0.05 miles W)	2011	990
1.20	STH 35	Evergreen Way (0.16 miles S)	2017	8,500
1.21	USH 53	Briggs Rd (0.47999999 miles NW)	2007	12,500
1.22	CTH XX	Remus Rd (0.08 miles SE)	2011	1,400
1.51	Co. Rd. OT	Josie St (0.03 miles S)	2011	2,900
1.51	USH 53	Briggs Rd (0.1 miles NW)	2019	16,700
1.77	Co. Rd. OT	Ann St (0.1 miles NW)	2017	4,300
1.86		(0.0 miles)	2017	1,100
1.94	Co. Rd. ZN	Lumber Pl (0.40000001 miles E)	2014	3,200
1.94	CTH OT	Paula Dr (0.03 miles E)	2017	9,100
1.95	CTH OT	Corporate Dr (0.05 miles W)	2005	6,600
1.97	CTH OT	Hwy 53 (0.03 miles W)	2005	9,200
2.01	CTH OT	Sandpiper Dr (0.02 miles E)	2017	7,300

2.03		(0.0 miles)	2017	4,900
2.07		(0.0 miles)	2017	1,000
2.13		(0.0 miles)	2017	4,600
2.15	Co. Rd. Z	Co Rd Zn (0.25 miles S)	2011	3,200
2.17	Co. Rd. Z	Co Rd Zn (0.25 miles SE)	2011	2,100
2.21	CTH ZM	Co Hwy Z (0.22 miles S)	2002	610
2.37	CTH D	Co Hwy W (0.37 miles S)	2011	1,000
2.41	STH 35	Westview Dr (0.04 miles N)	2017	8,400
2.48	CTH Z	Co Hwy Zm (0.07 miles NW)	2011	2,000
2.52	Co. Rd. Z	Co Rd Zn (0.25999999 miles N)	2011	1,000
2.54	USH 53	East Ave N (0.20999999 miles SE)	2002	21,800
2.56	Co. Rd. ZN	Lake PkDr (0.07 miles W)	2011	1,100
2.75	CTH ZZ	Hawthorne St (0.02 miles S)	2002	280
2.97	Rylla St.	Kurt Blvd (0.06 miles S)	2000	50
3.06	N. Shore Dr.	Prairie Ln (0.08 miles NW)	2011	550

Source: Kalibrate Technologies (Q4 2021)

Public Transportation and Transit

While the Town of Onalaska has no formal public transportation services, there are two services located in La Crosse County, one is the La Crosse Municipal Transit and the other is the Onalaska/Holmen Public Transit Taxi. Rideshare opportunities are also available in the area.

The La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU), operated by the City of La Crosse, provides the only standard mass transit service in the County. Ten bus routes serve City of La Crosse, some surrounding townships, with a connection to the City of La Crescent.

The Onalaska/Holmen Public Transit Taxi Program is a demand response door-to-door transportation system. The shared ride taxi service provides transportation to all citizens and meets Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. The program is administered by the Onalaska City Council, and it contracts with a private transit company to provide the service.

Paratransit

Paratransit, in its broadest sense, includes all modes of “public” or “mass” passenger transportation systems other than privately driven automobiles or regularly scheduled bus/train service. La Crosse County Department of Aging contracts with a private operator to provide “mini-bus” service to all residents of La Crosse County age 60 or over, or 18 and over who are self-defined disabled, or otherwise unable to use conventional mass transit if it is available. In the Town of Onalaska this service is available certain days of the week on a demand response door-to-door, with a hierarchy of trip purposes determining the priority for space and time.

To meet the special needs of persons with disabilities and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, MTU operates lift-equipped buses on its regular fixed route system. MTU also provides complementary Paratransit Service. Disabled persons who, by reason of their disability cannot get to a bus stop from their home, from the bus stop to their destination, or who require more assistance in using transit service than that provided by a driver operating a lift equipped MTU bus, may qualify for ADA Paratransit Service.

Pedestrian/Multi-Use Transportation

The Town of Onalaska has access to multiple off-road multipurpose facilities. The Coulee Vision 2040 describes in detail each of the off-road bicycling facilities. Off-road multipurpose facilities have both local and state significance and take advantage of abandoned railroad alignments and scenic views.

Bicycle facilities in the Town consist of a large segment of the Great River Trail along the Mississippi River and many roads with low traffic counts and paved shoulder that allow for bicycle transportation. [Trails Map 4.2 in Appendix C](#) shows bike lanes, sharrows (shared lane marking on street), shoulders, and trails developed in the Town of Onalaska.

Table 4.3 Comparison of Bike Lane Miles, 2015 and 2018

Community	Lane Miles 2015	Lane Miles 2018	Percent Change
La Crosse	12.3	17.6	43.1
Onalaska (C)	6.7	10.6	58.2
La Crescent	4.5	4.5	0.0
Shelby	3.2	3.2	0.0
Onalaska (T)	2.3	2.3	0.0
Holmen	0.6	0.6	0.0
Campbell	0.0	0.6	100.0
West Salem	0.6	0.6	0.0
Total	30.2	40.0	32.5

Source: LAPC GIS

Town of Onalaska residents are fortunate to have access to the Great River Trail, a large section of which runs directly through the Town. The trail is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as part of its extensive State trail system. The 24-mile trail runs along the Mississippi River between Onalaska and Trempealeau, offering year-round recreational opportunities and spectacular views of the surrounding area. Annual trail passes may be purchased at numerous businesses throughout the region, however, pedestrian use of this trail is free of charge.

The Great River Trail links with the La Crosse River State Trail in Onalaska. The La Crosse River State Trail connects to the Sparta-Elroy trail, offering another 76 miles of beautiful biking trails. Town residents are situated in an excellent location for regional bike trail access. A map of the trail can be found on [Map 4.3 in Appendix C](#).

Pedestrian facilities are not mapped by most local governments in La Crosse County, including the Town of Onalaska. The Beyond Coulee Vision 2040 summarizes information on sidewalks as follows:

Sidewalks offer the most efficient and effective means for making short trips in urban areas and for safely accessing transit stops. They run parallel to roadways, providing equivalent connections between origins and destinations as the roadways themselves. The development of sidewalks is addressed by municipalities in their municipal codes, identifying where and how wide sidewalks must be if required at all. Table 13 summarizes the sidewalk requirements for communities with provisions in their municipal codes. All but the town of Campbell require sidewalks or trails on at least one side of arterial and collector streets.

Only 29% of the centerline miles in the urbanized area have sidewalks on both sides of the street. An additional 9% of the centerline miles have sidewalk on one side and 4% have trail on one side, totaling 13% of the centerline miles with accommodations on only one side. More than 57% of the centerline miles in the urbanized area have no sidewalks or trail. Figure 35 shows how roads with sidewalks on both sides are concentrated in the core areas of the cities and villages.

The LAPC planning area has over 87 miles of trails—of which about 12 miles are for walking only. The nearly 76 miles of shared trails include about 22 miles of the unpaved Great River State Trail and La Crosse River State Trail. These trails are managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and require a state trail pass for bicyclists 16 and older. Walkers, cross-country skiers, and snowshoers do not need to purchase a trail pass. Funds from snowmobile registration fees allow snowmobilers to use the trails without purchasing a trail pass.

The remaining 54 miles of shared trails only allow bicyclists and pedestrians. Table 4.4 summarizes the trail miles of shared-use and walking trails for the planning area communities with trails. Trail miles increased about 13% since 2015 (Coulee Vision 2040), with 57% of the trail development occurring in the cities of Onalaska and La Crosse. The Town of Onalaska has 9.99 miles of shared-use trails and 1.07 miles of walking trails.

Table 4.4 Trail Miles in the LAPC Planning Area

Community	Shared-Use Trails (miles)	Walking Trails (miles)
Dresbach	2.41	-
La Crescent	1.99	1.22
Hamilton	8.06	-
Holland	5.67	-
Holmen	2.77	-
La Crosse	23.46	2.97
Medary	6.22	-
Onalaska (C)	10.56	5.35
Onalaska (T)	9.99	1.07
Shelby	3.30	1.02
West Salem	1.42	-
Planning Area	78.85	11.63

Source: LAPC GIS 2021

Water

The Port of La Crosse’s Plan inventory of harbor facilities contains a number of facilities in the Town of Onalaska. They are included in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Port of La Crosse, River Use inventory: Town of Onalaska Inventory, 2011

Name of Site	Site Location	Description	Other Site Information
Lytle's Canoe Access	Adjacent to Great River Trail at north end of CTH Z in Town of Onalaska.	Canoe carry-in to Black River complex. Small parking area serves both access to Great River Trail and river access. Vault toilets serve this facility.	Owned by Wi DNR.
Tubes Walk-In (Homestead Landing)	On the black River. At the end of North Shore Dr. opposite Town park in the Homestead Addition.	Walk-in canoe access via a 66 foot wide right-of-way. Playground apparatus, picnic tables, limited street-side parking. The river at this point is shallow and cannot accommodate large craft.	Town of Onalaska holds USACE lease for shoreline.
Brice Prairie Channel Walk-In	8217 CTH ZB, Brice Prairie.	Developed and landscaped primarily for ice fishing access	This is a lot owned by Wi DNR.
Upper Brice Prairie Landing	CTH ZB, across road from Swarthout Park, Brice Prairie.	Two lane concrete boat ramp with courtesy dock and 50 car paved parking lot, two double stall vault toilets. Sufficient shoreline for bank fishing access and picnic area. Access is to Lake Onalaska. Handicapped fishing facility.	Town of Onalaska maintains landing on shoreline leased from USACE.
Clearwater Walk-In	7605 CTH ZB, adjacent to Clearwater Cabins, Brice Prairie.	Unimproved access for canoes, small craft, and ice fishing via 66 foot right-of-way. Ice fishing access.	Town of Onalaska maintains landing on shoreline leased from USACE.
Red Pines Bar & Grill	W7305 CTH Z, Brice Prairie.	Private paved boat launch.	
Schaefer's Boat Livery	W7221 North Shore Lane, Brice Prairie.	Public daily boat rental. Commercial resort (bait shop, rental cabins and	

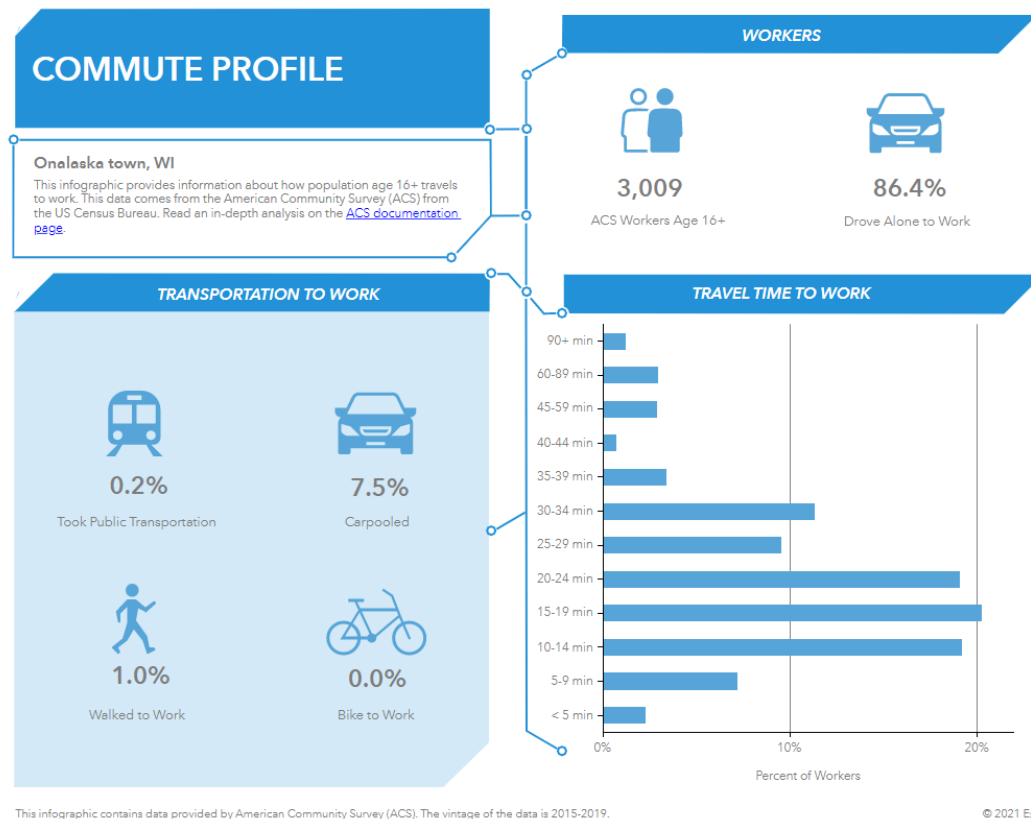
		rental boats and slips; cabin renters have access to slips for their own or rental boats).	
Mosey's Landing	Adjacent to Schaefer's Boat Livery, North Shore Lane near CTH Z, Brice Prairie.	Two lane paved boat ramp, 11 car parking area. Drive in ice fishing access. Closest access to Rosebud fish habitat area in Lake Onalaska.	Town of Onalaska leases land from US FWS.
Fisherman's Walkdown	Sunset Vista Road, (behind Marge's Restaurant), N5135 Hwy 35.	Primarily ice fishing access to Lake Onalaska. Walk-down pedestrian access to shoreline. Steep wooded stairway from parking area to shoreline precludes easy carrying of boats or canoes. Blacktop bike path to bike trail from 80-car parking lot.	Parking area is maintained by County Highway Department. Ownership and maintenance of stairway is not clearly defined. Shoreline is leased by Town from USACE.

Source: Port of La Crosse, Wisconsin, Harbor Plan 2011

Commuting Patterns

86.4% of workers in the Town of Onalaska drive alone to work as shown in Figure 4.1. 39.5% of workers have a commute time between 10 and 19 minutes, which is similar to that of the surrounding Towns, Villages, and the County as a whole. The mean travel to work time was 22.1 minutes. The second most common way to travel to work was by carpool, 7.5% of workers traveled in this fashion.

Figure 4.1 Town of Onalaska Commute Profile



State and Regional Transportation Plans

Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2021

Wisconsin is currently involved in a variety of long-range transportation planning activities for all modes of transportation. WisDOT, in partnership with its stakeholders, has developed the State Highway Plan 2020, a 21-year strategic plan which considers the highway system's current condition, analyzes future uses, assesses financial constraints and outlines strategies to address Wisconsin's preservation, traffic movement, and safety needs. The plan is updated every six years to reflect changing transportation technologies, travel demand and economic conditions in Wisconsin. One project is listed for the Town of Onalaska from 2021-2026, found in the WisDOT Six Year Highway Improvement Program.

WisDOT Six Year Highway Improvement Program: 2021-2026

The Town of Onalaska is scheduled to have construction/bridge replacement in April of 2022. This is located at Halfway Creek Bridge, B-32-0240 with an estimate cost of \$500,000-\$749,999.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 (1998)

The role of this plan is to ensure an interconnected transportation system across government boundaries and highway jurisdictions that can safely work for bicyclists to achieve the goals of the plan. The goal is to increase the levels of bicycling throughout Wisconsin and to reduce the number of crashes involving bicyclists and motor vehicles.

Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy plan 2020 (2002)

This plan was created by the DOT and was established to make pedestrian travel a viable, convenient and safe transportation choice in Wisconsin. While the plan primarily aims to minimize the barrier to pedestrian traffic flow from major road expansion improvements, it provides guidance to local communities on how to encourage pedestrian travel through the creation of pedestrian plans, increasing enforcement of pedestrian laws, adopting and implementing sidewalk ordinances, and addressing pedestrian issues through the public participation component of Comprehensive Smart Growth planning. The plan makes no specific recommendations for the Town of Onalaska.

La Crosse Area Planning Committee (MPO)

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the La Crosse, WI-MN urbanized area, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) is required to develop a transportation plan with a 20-year-or-more planning horizon that includes “both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.” The MPO has addressed land use and transportation goals for the area that can be found in the Beyond Coulee Vision 2040 Plan. The LAPC goal analysis of long-range transportation planning with the Town of Onalaska can be found in [Appendix B](#). A most recent list of improvements within the MPO area is listed in the 2022-2025 Transportation Improvement Program.

Programs for Local Government

WisDOT administers a variety of state and federal programs, including:

- Airport Improvement Program (AIP)
- Connecting Highway Aids
- County Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance
- Federal Discretionary Capital Assistance
- Freight Rail Infrastructure Improvement Program (FRIIP)
- Freight Rail Preservation Program (FRPP)
- General Transportation Aids (GTA)
- Highways and Bridges Assistance
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance
- Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP)
- Local Transportation Enhancements (TE)
- Railroad Crossing Improvements
- Rural and Small Urban Public Transportation Assistance
- Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) Rustic Roads Program
- Surface Transportation Discretionary Program (STP-D)
- Surface Transportation Program – Rural (STP-R) & Urban (STP-U)
- Traffic Signing and Marking Enhancement Grants Program
- Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

5. UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

This element includes goals, objectives and actions to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the Town of Onalaska. Major themes/issues that emerged from the Town Survey relating to utilities and public facilities include:

- Fire protection needs improvement
- Desire for more recreational areas

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 higher quality of life.

Objective 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 (i.e. transportation system improvements).
 - Significantly increase 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 the new development does not overburden the ability of the Town and other service providers to provide a desired level of service 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: Create alternate access to Brice Prairie for emergency vehicles to avoid train delays.

GOAL 2

Avoid environmentally sensitive areas when extending and constructing new utilities and community facilities.

Objective 2-1: Consult the environmental features maps and relevant agencies before making decisions regarding location of new utilities or community facilities. 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 encourage residents to properly maintain private, on-site waste disposal systems to prolong the useful life of those systems and avoid groundwater contamination.
- Action 2-1e: 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 2-1f: 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 2-1g: 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 2-1h: Work in partnership with local and regional agencies (La Crosse County Planning and Zoning, WiDNR, the La Crosse Areas 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 2-1i: Do not extend or develop new utilities and facilities in floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, or other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Action 2-1j: 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 (i.e. ball games) and natural areas for passive uses (i.e. birdwatching).

Objective 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 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 an outdoor recreation 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 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 3-1e: Pursue joint projects with other municipalities, agencies and/or non-profit organizations to increase and enhance public community facilities within the Town (i.e. boat landings and trail access).

Water Supply

The Town of Onalaska does not provide municipal water services to its residents. Water in the Town generally comes from private wells or small community wells that serve a few homes in a subdivision. Such wells are not considered to be public systems under Wisconsin Statutes. CTH OT is currently the boundary agreed upon for public utility by the City of Onalaska and the Village of Holmen, the two potential providers. At this time, the City and the Village are re-evaluating the agreed upon boundary but those entities to areas currently within the boundaries of the Town.

Sanitary Sewer

The Town of Onalaska has no public sanitary sewer district. CTH OT is currently the sewer service boundary agreed upon by the City of Onalaska and the Village of Holmen, the two potential providers. At this time, the City and the Village are re-evaluating the agreed upon boundary for sewer service provision as part of their respective comprehensive planning efforts. Some areas of the development in the Town of Onalaska lie immediately adjacent to existing sewer lines while other developing areas would require more engineering and construction. The City of Onalaska provided for utility line access under the USH 53 freeway when it was built.

Sanitary sewer lines provided by the City of Onalaska ultimately rely on the City of La Crosse Water Treatment plant as outlined in the City of Onalaska's *Agreement for Sewer Conveyance and Treatment* with the City of La Crosse. The City of Onalaska administers its sewer system through a user charge and pays the City of La Crosse a user fee based on flow.

The disposal of wastewater in the Town of Onalaska, outside of the areas served by the City of Onalaska or Village of Holmen sanitary sewer is handled through the use of individual on-site wastewater disposal systems, often referred to as septic systems. Septic systems discharge wastewater to underground drainage fields or septic tanks. There are currently six types of on-site disposal system designs authorized for use in the state: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, and sand filler systems.

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce (COMM) regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site sewage systems. Recent changes to the State's Plumbing Code (COMM 83) allow both conventional and advanced pre-treatment systems for residential development. These changes present local communities with new land use challenges. The COMM 83 changes allow properties that have soil depths or soil types that were once unsuitable for conventional septic systems to now be developed and serviced by advanced pre-treatment sewage systems. This could result in widespread areas of scattered non-farm related residential development in the Town unless sound land use planning principles and policies are followed. Scattered non-farm residential development is both costly and inefficient to serve and it significantly degrades the Town's unique rural character. Further, such scattered non-farm development often leads to increased conflicts between agricultural operations and non-agricultural uses.

On-site sewage disposal systems, especially in areas where housing densities are greater than one house per acre, can significantly pollute groundwater. During this 20 year planning horizon, the Town anticipates private on-site sewage treatment will continue. However, the Town will continue discussions with the City of Onalaska and Village of Holmen pertaining to provision of sewer service by those entities to areas currently within the boundaries of the Town. Map 5.1 of Town utilities can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities

The Town contracts with Hilltopper Rubbish Service, Inc. to provide for the collection of solid waste and recyclable material. Glass, aluminum, tin, and newspapers are collected for recycling and all other solid waste is disposed of at the Xcel Energy Island Waste to Energy Incinerator. Leaves and grass are not permitted to be deposited by individuals into the solid waste stream but may be brought to a collection site at the Town Shop where a local farmer currently uses them for mulch at no cost to the Town.

La Crosse County provides public management of an integrated solid waste disposal system that is provided through public/private partnerships. This system is utilized by several counties in Wisconsin and Minnesota. The system accepts residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional wastes. The disposal system processes solid waste into refuse derived fuel which is then utilized in generating electricity. The county provides oversight of a landfill complex which includes: sanitary landfill, ash monofil, construction and demolition landfill, clean wood waste processing, and yard waste disposal. La Crosse County provides these services to manage the environmental liability for disposal of these wastes for the protection of La Crosse County.

In total, La Crosse County handled 138,133 tons of solid waste in 2020 – up from 123,274 tons in 2007 (+12.1%), and up from 129,673 tons in 2019 (+6.5%). The COVID pandemic caused substantially higher citizen usage of the County solid waste system, which explains the increased amount of solid waste generated in 2020. Economic recession may explain the relatively low quantity of solid waste generated in 2009 and the subsequent increasing trend.

Of the total solid waste handled in 2020, 63.0% was deposited into the landfill, 20.8% was incinerated to produce electricity, and 16.2% was recycled. Roof damage caused by storms resulted in large quantities of shingles being received by the County solid waste system in 2020, which explains the increased quantity of recycled material. The 2020 total diversion rate (i.e., the sum of the percent incinerated, and the percent recycled) was 37.0%, down from 41.4% in 2007, but up from 33.5% in 2019. Waste from La Crosse County incinerated at French Island was used to produce an estimated 19.6 million kWh of electricity in 2020, enough to supply approximately 2,153 households.

La Crosse County adopted a Master Land Use Plan (MLUP) for the landfill to guide land use decisions for the site. The most recent plan was created in 2015 and includes short-, medium-, and long-term goals to achieve a balance of economic, social, and environmental land use objectives. For more information on this plan, refer to the Master Land Use Plan for the La Crosse County Landfill.

The Household Hazardous Materials (HHM) Program located at 6502 State Road 16 in La Crosse opened its doors in October 2001. The HHM facility collects hazardous household materials from La Crosse County residents free of charge and for a minimal fee for individuals who reside outside of La Crosse County.

Stormwater Management

In 2006, the Town adopted the Brice Prairie Master Plan. The Plan represents a comprehensive storm water management plan for the proposed Brice Prairie Watershed Area. It will serve as a comprehensive guide for the development of a storm water management system within the Brice Prairie Watershed Area. The Plan incorporates several storm water management elements: storm water, quantity, storm water quality, infiltration/hydrogeology, and ecological resources. The plan will provide a basis for local flood control planning and design, water quality improvements and design, infiltration, groundwater recharge and protection, and improve and mitigate the current degradation of existing ecological resources, as well as guide for proceeding with final engineering and design.

The primary objectives of the Plan are to enhance, protect, and preserve the unique environmental and ecological characteristics of Lake Onalaska, Black River, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, and existing wetlands by utilizing wet detention basins, grass, and prairie grass infiltration systems, and existing wetlands in order to:

- Reduce to the maximum practical extent, the public and private capital expenditures for construction, operation, and maintenance necessary to control excessive volumes and rates of storm water runoff and constituent pollutant discharges as the Brice Prairie area develop and grows.
- Prevent increases in storm water runoff and downstream flooding.
- Minimize water quality and ecological degradation and pollutant discharge loads.
- Improve and preserve water quality in all water bodies.
- Reduce erosion, sedimentation, habitat, and ecological loss.
- Maintain natural base flows, promote and protect groundwater discharge by encouraging creating and cost effective storm water infiltration methodologies.
- Protect and enhance biological, fish, and wetland habitat.
- Minimize the negative impacts to wetlands and wildlife habitat.
- Provide opportunities for multiple use of drainage and storm water management facilities.
- Enhance the natural beauty of the landscape by providing economical, safe, and aesthetically pleasing and socially acceptable drainage facilities within proposed new developments.
- Protect and enhance recreational opportunities.
- Secure other benefits associated with the proper management of storm water runoff.

In addition to the Plan discussed above, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires an erosion control plan and permit for all projects that disturb five or more acres of land. The landowner is required to ensure that a site specific erosion control plan and stormwater management plan are developed and implemented at the construction site.

The Town of Onalaska is also currently under La Crosse County Zoning. According to the La Crosse County Subdivision and Platting Ordinance the subdivider is required to provide; a soil erosion plan

subject to Chapter 21 of the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances and a storm water management plan which meets the appropriate post-construction water quality requirements of NR151 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the water quality requirements set forth in the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances.

The La Crosse Stormwater Group is taking on the goal to slow down the rush of rain and snowmelt that pollutes rivers. The Town of Onalaska is working with the Group to educate residents and small business owners, about what runoff is, why it is bad, and how to fix it. The Town's goal is to protect water resources and prevent erosion. The Soak It Up Project Award is given to community members who have finished a stormwater management project on their property and their projects are then shared so others can be inspired to do the same on their properties.

Telecommunication Facilities

CenturyLink Inc. (Lumen Technologies) provides the County with local telephone service; long distance service is available through several providers. Charter Communications provides cable television service and both CenturyLink Inc. and Charter Communications offer high-speed Internet access.

High-speed internet access and fiber optic connections are available in the Town of Onalaska. The region is connected to the Midwestern fiber optic network via CenturyLink. Fiber optics allow for the high-quality transmission of large volumes of information at an affordable rate. However, this technology is not available throughout the entire Town and certain residents in rural areas within the Town have limited capabilities for high-speed Internet services.

Power Plants, Electricity, and Transmission Lines

Xcel Energy and Riverland Energy Cooperative provide electric power in the Town. Xcel offers natural gas to locations in the Town. The La Crosse-Madison Transmission Line Project, also known as the Badger Coulee Project, was completed and energized in December 2018. The approximately 180-mile, 345 kilovolt (kV) line runs between the Briggs Road Substation north of La Crosse and the Cardinal Substation in northern Dane County. The route was approved by the PSC in April 2015. Under the State regulations, the power company is required to pay an "environmental impact fee" to all municipalities that the power line traverses. This route parallels the CapX2020 route. The CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line project was energized on September 16, 2016. Town utility lines can be seen on [Map 5.2](#).

It is important to note that overall, according to Wisconsin's Citizen Utility Board, the electrical system in western Wisconsin is congested. As the area considers energy needs over this planning horizon, it will be important to coordinate their transmission planning with Minnesota and also to consider opportunities for utilizing alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar.

Libraries

The Town of Onalaska is serviced by the La Crosse County Public Library System. These libraries serve residents throughout the County. A main branch is located in the City of La Crosse and five other branches are located throughout the County. The Holmen Public Library is located at 121 Legion St. West in Holmen. Each of the five communities has designated a Library Commission or Committee to handle the annual expenses and budget concerns of the library facility they provide. These are often elected officials, but they are also Village, Town or City government appointments with little or nothing to gain by the significant contribution they make with their time and talents. All of the La Crosse Libraries belong to the Winding Rivers Library System which gives residents access to a seven-county

interlibrary loan system including: Buffalo; Jackson; Juneau; La Crosse; Monroe; Trempealeau; and Vernon Counties.

Schools

The Town of Onalaska is served by the Holmen School District. The Holmen School District serves six (6) municipalities, including: the Village of Holmen, the Town of Holland, and parts of the Town of Farmington, Town of Hamilton, Town of Onalaska, and the City of Onalaska.

The Holmen School District operates the Oak Grove Family Learning Center (in the Town of Onalaska) for adult education, early childhood and preschool. The four (4) elementary schools: Viking Elementary School; Sandlake Elementary School; Prairie View, and Evergreen Elementary School serve K-5. The Holmen Middle School serves 6-8, and the Holmen High School serves 9-12. The district is considering plans for adding a middle school and an elementary school. [Map 5.3](#) of school districts in the Town can be found in Appendix C.

In addition, the County has 16 private schools that provide additional educational choices for residents. Within the County, town residents also have access to several post-secondary education schools, including the following:

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse was founded in 1909 and is now one of the 13 four-year campuses in the University of Wisconsin System with enrollment of around 10,000 students. UW-L has joined the City's other two institutions of higher education and the region's medical facilities to form a consortium to bring cutting-edge health care to the region, along with a state-of-the-art health research and education facility for professionals and students.

Western Technical College is a public two-year college with a focus on technical education. The college has an annual enrollment of approximately 9,400 credit students and 12,900 non-credit students. The average age of WWTC's credit and non-credit student is 33.

Established in 1890, Viterbo University is a co-educational Catholic University founded in the Franciscan tradition. Viterbo offers undergraduate and graduate degrees and has an enrollment of approximately 2,700 students. It offers over 40 academic programs at the associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level.

Child Care Facilities

The childcare options within the Town of Onalaska are limited to private home-based childcare facilities. Additionally, the La Crosse County Family Resource Center helps to connect parents and children to childcare providers. La Crosse County has 26 regulated full day family childcare centers and 59 regulated full day group childcare homes. 55 childcare facilities offer infant care. The earliest select care facilities open is 5:00 am and close at the latest at 6:30 pm.

Health Care Facilities

No health care facilities are located in the Town of Onalaska. The nearest health care facilities to the Town are located in the City of Onalaska and the Village of Holmen. Gundersen Health System and Mayo Clinic Health System are two large medical centers that operate in the region, each with a hospital and large clinic in the City of La Crosse. In addition, both Gundersen and Mayo operate health care facilities in the city and village.

A health care education consortium that includes Viterbo University, Western Wisconsin Technical College, and the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse exists in the region.

Fire Protection and Rescue/Emergency Medical Services

The Town of Onalaska is served by both the Village of Holmen and the City of Onalaska Fire Departments.

The Holmen Area Fire Department is staffed by three full-time employees and twenty seven paid-on-call volunteer firefighters. The Fire Department has nine trucks: three engines, three tankers, one rescue, one quick response, and one brush truck. The Holmen Fire Board is comprised of two members of the Town of Onalaska, the Town of Holland, and the Village of Holmen.

The Onalaska Area Fire Department is staffed by eight full-time employees; the remaining twenty eight firefighters are part-time, paid-on-call employees.

Emergency Medical Service on Brice Prairie is provided by the Brice Prairie First Responders. The Prairie is cut off from other emergency response providers by the at-grade rail crossings on both CTH Z and CTH ZN (the sole access roads onto the prairie). Brice Prairie First Responders formed to address the lengthened response times. Emergency response in the remainder of the Town is provided by the Tri-State Ambulance Service and Holmen Area Fire Department. All of La Cross County is served by 911 Emergency Dispatch.

Law Enforcement

The Town of Onalaska is served by the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department, which is located in the City of La Crosse.

Parks and Recreation

Table 5.1 lists the parks located in the Town of Onalaska. Swartout Park, on Brice Prairie, is a County park facility with one shelter. There are also three baseball diamonds on Brice Prairie: Mulder, Roth, and the diamond adjacent to the Oak Grove School. The Town also maintains two boat landings on Brice Prairie. Parks and local facilities can be found on [Map 5.4](#) in Appendix C.

Additionally, a section of the upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is located in the northwest section of the Town of Onalaska. The Refuge, which is the longest of its kind in the Continental U.S., extends 261 miles along the Mississippi River from the Chippewa River in Wisconsin to Rock Island, Illinois. The Refuge was established in 1924 for the purpose of providing a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds, fish, and other wildlife and plants. The 242,400 acre refuge lies within Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Upper Mississippi Refuge is divided into four management districts. The Refuge contains look-out platforms for wildlife observation.

Refuge-managed areas surround Brice Prairie and include Lake Onalaska (Pool 7), Black River bottoms, Halfway Creek Marsh, and the Mathy and Midway Railroad Prairies. Lake Onalaska is one of the most significant outdoor resources available to residents and visitors. Excellent opportunities for boating, canoeing, sailing, fishing, hunting, birdwatching, or simply enjoying wildlife abound. The 7,00-acre lake has depths to 40 feet with an average depth of 8 feet. The Lake was formed in 1937 when the U.S Army Corps of Engineers finished the Dresbach, MN Lock and Dam 7. Lake Onalaska provides critical habitat for bald eagles, tundra swans, and canvasback ducks.

Table 5.1 Parks in the Town of Onalaska

Name of Site	Location of Site	Size (acres)	Facilities
Homestead Park	N. Lake Shore Drive (CTH ZB)	1	Playground equipment, picnic tables
First Prairie Park	Eric and Fairview Streets	2.32	Ballfield with backstop, picnic tables, playground equipment
Roth Field	W. side of Eric St. between Tower and Woodview Streets	3.52	Ballfield with bleachers, backstop, dugouts, outfield fence, half-court basketball, open shelter, picnic tables, playground equipment
Mulder Field	Prairie Drive, Park Street, Elm Street (off CTH Z)	1.25	Ballfield with backstop, bleachers, outfield fence, open shelter, picnic tables, playground equipment
Swarthout Park	Access from Upper Brice Prairie boat landing	5.22	Large enclosed shelter, volleyball court, picnic tables, horseshoe pits, basketball court, playground equipment
Prairie Heights	End of Prairieview Drive off Filler Court	1.2	Ballfield with backstop, playground equipment, picnic tables
Meadow Estates	CTH XX and Evergreen Way	0.75	Picnic tables, playground equipment
Terrace Heights (Circle Park)	S. of Westview Drive, east of STH 35	1	Picnic tables, playground equipment
Strawberry Commons	Strawberry Road and Abby Road	3.52	Ballfield with backstop, basketball court, playground equipment, picnic tables
Heritage Hills	End of Sugar Lane off Hilltop Drive and STH 35	1.7	Full basketball court, playground equipment, picnic tables
Sandy Knolls	CTH SN and Reef Road	2.91	Open shelter, picnic tables, playground equipment, ballfield with backstop
Thunderbird Hills	TH SN and Mohican Trail	1.92	Open shelter, picnic tables, playground equipment, volleyball court
Apple Valley	Schilling Road and Park Drive	3.34	2 open shelters, hand water pump, tennis court, ballfield with backstop, picnic tables, playground equipment
Sobkowiak Park	Between CTH S and Sobkowiak Road	1.5	Basketball court, picnic tables, playground equipment
Sun Valley Park (Rocky Top)	CTH D (Sun Valley Subdivision)	2.52	Playground equipment, picnic tables
Mesa Grande Park	CTH Z (Mesa Grande subdivision)	3.01	Picnic tables, playground
Lake Park	On Schaller Drive	0.98	Picnic tables, playground equipment
Town Hall	In Midway-corner of Second Street and CTH OT		Playground equipment, picnic tables

Timetable for the Expansion of Utilities and Community Facilities

An important part of this planning process is to determine what upgrades or expansions to the Town's utilities and community facilities are needed, and when. This analysis will be completed throughout this planning process and upgrades and expansions will be identified as needed.

Sources:

- La Crosse County, Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Plan, 1980 –Amended in 2014
- La Crosse County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 1998 – Amended in 2020
- La Crosse County Land & Water Resource Management Plan, 1999 – Amended in 2020
- Storm Water Management Review Plan for Drainage Issues 2019
- Zoning Ordinance – Comprehensive Revision in 2012
- Land Division Ordinance

6. AGRICULTURE, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

This element includes an analysis of existing agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in and around the Town of Onalaska. The chapter presents goals, objectives and policies for the conservation and promotion of effective management of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in the Town. The Town Survey revealed many important elements for consideration. These include:

- A desire for the Town to purchase green space for preservation
- Natural resource protection should be made a high priority for the Town
- A desire for the Town to promote farmland protection
- Cultural and historic site preservation should be a priority for the Town

GOAL 1

Preserve the Town of Onalaska's natural and agricultural resources – including productive agriculture land, the bluffs, scenic views, waterways, wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitat.

Objective 1-1: Protect environmentally sensitive areas to preserve natural resources, support and grow the local economy, maintain a high quality of life, and promote the Town's identity as a wonderful place to live and visit.

- Action 1-1a: Require the protection of existing vegetation on new development sites to the greatest extent possible to minimize soil erosion during and after construction. This includes protecting existing stands of mature trees.
- Action 1-1b: Work with La Crosse County and relevant agencies to continue to update environmental features maps to show environmentally sensitive areas such as threatened and endangered species habitats, wetlands, lakes, rivers, streams, floodplains, woodlands, remnant prairies/grasslands, steep slopes, and bluffland. Require these features to be accurately depicted on all site plans, certified survey maps, and preliminary plats and final plats.
- Action 1-1c: Promote conservation, contract development, especially in the coulee areas and on Brice Prairie protecting environmentally sensitive areas.
- Action 1-1d: Support other levels of government and private entities in preserving and acquiring natural features for appropriate public use and protection.
- Action 1-1e: Discourage disruptive development on ridge tops, which is visible for many miles and damages the scenic character of the Coulee Region. Where development does occur near ridgelines, the development should take place on the lowest portion of the parcel and in the area with the least slope.
- Action 1-1f: Work with the DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and conservation groups to identify the locations where sensitive species and/or habitat occur within the Town of Onalaska and cooperate with these agencies to create maintenance plans and development guidelines to protect these species.
- Action 1-1g: Preserve special landscape features, including Lake Onalaska, Sand Creek, Halfway Creek, Brice Prairie, the coulees and bluffs.
- Action 1-1h: Encourage the preservation and enhancement of areas needed to support local wildlife.

- Action 1-1i: Support local conservation club organization efforts to preserve, protect, or restore natural areas in the Town.
- Action 1-1j: Develop strategies to protect areas of high concentration of turtles, including but not limited the areas of CTH Z, CTH ZN, and CTH S.
- Action 1-1k: Establish an “environmental impact assessment checklist” for all new land divisions, rezones, special exception/conditional-use permits, variances and structures to be constructed.
- Action 1-1l: Create an environmentally sensitive area overlay zoning district to require all new development to avoid such areas to the greatest extent possible.
- Action 1-1m: Work with the County to amend its zoning and subdivision regulations as necessary to incorporate low-impact development and conservation design techniques that:
 - Limit total impervious area;
 - Minimize site disturbance and soil compaction to preserve natural topography and minimize soil erosion;
 - Ensure sound water quality and run-off controls while minimizing the use of storm water drain pipes (this includes allowing, where applicable, the use of rain gardens, permeable pavements, etc.);
 - Require adequate buffer areas and setbacks to minimize encroachment and preserve the natural character and scenic quality of sensitive resources including the bluffs and coulee slopes; and
 - Utilize native vegetation in new plantings.
- Action 1-1n: Work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others to implement relevant proposed elements and projects from the Environmental Pool 7 Plan. This plan was endorsed by the River Resources Forum, St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; developed by the Forum’s Fish and Wildlife Group; and included the FWS’s draft Upper Miss Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, 2017.

Objective 1-2: Ensure high quality and sufficient quantity of water in the Town; protect ground water, aquifers, and surface water in the Town.

- Action 1-2a: Encourage land use patterns and practices that are environmentally sensitive and that do not disrupt the natural hydrologic system, including the balance between ground and surface waters.
- Action 1-2b: Encourage best Management practices to control erosion and sediment during construction.
- Action 1-2c: Discourage the regrading of large areas that alters natural topography and drainage patterns.
- Action 1-2d: Work with la Crosse County and relevant agencies to protect floodplain areas and natural drainageways from being filled or altered in any way that reduces their function.
- Action 1-2e: Promote business and industry in the Town that will not adversely affect water quality or quantity.
- Action 1-2f: Preserve wetlands as essential components of the hydrologic system and as valuable wildlife habitat.
- Action 1-2g: To protect groundwater quality, avoid the over concentration of onsite waste disposal systems and consider requiring the submittal and implementation of nutrient and/or manure management plans for high-density agricultural operations expected to have large numbers of animals in any part of the Town.
- Action 1-2h: Avoid intensive development within designated groundwater recharge areas and steep slope areas to protect groundwater and surface water quality.
- Action 1-2i: Support the Village of Holmen’s creation and implementation of wellhead protection ordinances and districts.

- Action 1-2j: Create a groundwater overlay protection district.
- Action 1-2k: The Zoning Ordinance currently requires a Conditional Use permit in Agricultural Districts for feedlots when more than 200 animal units are involved, or when the feedlot is within 500 feet of the residence of someone other than the feedlot owner, his agent, or employee. Determine if this number of animals is sufficient to evaluate the impact of high density feedlots on ground quality, and determine if any animal type and lot size should also be criteria.

Objective 1-3: Agriculture on productive and potentially productive farmland in the Town of Onalaska should be preserved and protected from, depending on the location, any development or premature development.

- Action 1-3a: Work to achieve a balance between the Town's desire to protect rural character and agriculture lands, and private property owners' interests. For example, encourage the use of conservation subdivisions for residential developments in agriculturally important areas within the Town of Onalaska.
- Action 1-3b: Support private landowners who wish to protect their land by using conservation easements and other land protection tools.
- Action 1-3c: Work with La Crosse County and neighboring jurisdictions to encourage the orderly, efficient development pattern that protects productive agricultural land and minimized conflicts between urban and rural uses.
- Action 1-3d: To preserve agricultural land and avoid potential conflicts between agricultural and residential uses, the Town should discourage placement of a residence in the middle of a productive agricultural field.
- Action 1-3e: Continue to educate new homeowners in the Town about living in agricultural areas, such as creating a pamphlet, and posting information on the Town's website.
- Action 1-3f: Support agricultural-related businesses in the Town to ensure the long-term financial stability of farmers.
- Action 1-3g: Promote quiet activities and businesses in the Town to maintain the rural lifestyle. Consider creating a noise ordinance; evaluate development proposals based on anticipated noise generated; and promote quiet sports and recreational activities. Farming operation should be exempt from the noise ordinance.

GOAL 2

Enhance public access, use, and enjoyment of the community's natural and recreational resources.

Objective 2-1: Work with La Crosse County, the Village of Holmen, the City of Onalaska, agencies, private landowners, developers, and others to establish and maintain an efficient system of parks, trails, pedestrian pathways, bicycle routes, and greenways to provide access and linkage to natural and recreational resources.

- Action 2-1a: Ensure the public recreational use of natural resources is enhanced in a manner that is compatible with the resource.
- Action 2-1b: Support the provision of new parks within and near areas where significant residential development is occurring.
- Action 2-1c: Promote public access for recreational use of Lake Onalaska. Identify specific locations for new boat landings, lakeshore fishing access, and viewing areas.
- Action 2-1d: Emphasize the value of the Town's natural resource areas as focal points of natural beauty and recreation that contribute to the community's identity, and as economic benefits to the Town, region, and State.

GOAL 3

Identify, conserve, and protect the Town's cultural, historical, and archeological resources.

Objective 3-1: encourage the preservation of the Town's rural historic character.

- Action 3-1a: Preserve and protect existing buildings and structures of historic significance as identified in the State of Wisconsin's AHL.
- Action 3-1b: Work with the County to enforce property maintenance codes to maintain rural residential quality.
- Action 3-1c: Encourage local festivals, fairs, farm tours, farm breakfasts, and markets that celebrate the Town's farming, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, and biking heritage and rural way of life.

Objective 3-2: Identify and protect cultural, historic, and archeological resources, sites, and building in the Town.

- Action 3-2a: Encourage the preservation of historically and archeologically significant structures/districts and archeological resources in the Town , such as the Midway Archeological District, the Midway Village Site, the Sand Lake Archeological District, the Midway Village Site, and the Sand Lake Site. Continue to work with MVAC, the County, and the State to update records and mapping to; fully document these resources.
- Action 3-2b: During public development projects that have federal, state, or local government involvement, continue to be aware of applicable laws to protect archaeological and cultural resources, including:
 - Section 106 of the Natural Historic Preservation Act for federal projects
 - Wisconsin Statute § 44.40 for state projects
 - Wisconsin Statute § 66.1111 for local projects
 - Wisconsin Statute § 120.12 (21) for projects involving schools
- Action 3-2c: Aggressively protect areas that may have important artifacts.
- Action 3-2d: Work with Mississippi Valley Archeology Center (MVAC) to identify archeological sites and seek national Registry for such sites for their permanent protection.

Objective 3-3: Reduce light pollution into neighboring properties and degradation of night sky (i.e. strongly encourage "downlighting" fixtures or retrofits on all outside lighting).

- Action 3-3a: Enact a light pollution ordinance and include specifications for lighted billboards/signs.
- Action 3-3b: Work with adjacent communities to address lighting issues.

Objective 3-4: Recognize the importance of mining activities to the local economy and current development. It is important, however, that mining operations do not detract from the Town's rural and scenic landscape or degrade its natural resources. The Town shall consider the following information and criteria when reviewing an application for a quarry or gravel pit.

- Action 3-4a: Discourage further defacement of the areas where mining and extracting metallic and non-metallic minerals has occurred. Defacement does not include tillage that meets soil erosion control standards of the NRCS conservation farm plan. Defacement also does not include logging conducted in compliance with Forest Practice Guidelines for Wisconsin.
- Action 3-4b: The Town should submit directly to the Town copies of all documents required by La Crosse County and the State of Wisconsin, including but not limited to:
 - All project descriptions
 - Site plan

- Typical cross sections showing the extent overburden, extent of sand and gravel deposits, and the water table.
- A map showing access routes between property and the nearest public road.
- Erosion control plan prepared by a state-licensed civil engineer.
- Operation plan, including the date operations are expected to cease, and hours of operation.
- Reclamation plan according to State requirements.
- Action 3-4d: The proposal will have assurances that the site will be developed and operated according to the site and operational plans.
- Action 3-4e: Criteria to evaluate a proposed mining operation shall include but not be limited to:
 - i. Expanding or establishing a new evacuation will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, and general welfare.
 - ii. Establishing, maintaining, and operating a mining extraction site shall in no way impair or diminish the other permitted uses, values, and enjoyment of property in the vicinity.
 - iii. The evacuation site will not negatively impact the future development or use of neighboring property.
 - iv. Adequate access roads, drainage, and other necessary site improvements are provided on the site.
 - v. The evacuation site will not have an adverse impact on traffic on public roads or on the roads themselves.
 - vi. To prevent tracking mud onto public roadways, driveways shall be paved within a certain distance of the public roadway.
 - vii. To control dust, spraying the site and driveways, when appropriate, shall be considered.
 - viii. The evacuation site will not negatively impact environmentally sensitive areas identified in the Township.
 - ix. The excavation will not result in mining conducted below the seasonal high-water table.
 - x. The evacuation site will be reclaimed to appropriate conditions as required under state and local regulations.
 - xi. All associated processing operations shall be terminated with the final phase of mining and the mining operation will not be prolonged to serve as an industrial site.
 - xii. The size and operation of the proposed mining activity is of appropriate scale to the landscape of the Township. It is not the intent of the plan to establish another substantial mining area within the Town of Onalaska. Proposed establishment of these uses may require an additional public review of their associated environmental, social, and economic factors.
 - xiii. If the extraction site is close to residences, limit the hours of operation.
 - xiv. Expectations for any blasting, drilling, and screening should be clearly understood, and, if allowed, specify separate hours for these activities.
 - xv. If blasting or drilling is requested and allowed, additional sets of standards shall be applied with relation to frequency, noise and vibration levels, notice to neighbors, pre-inspection of neighboring basements and well, and claim procedures.
 - xvi. Commercial and industrial uses on site should be limited to those directly related to mineral extraction, such as concrete or asphalt plants. Such ancillary uses should be used to process minerals extracted on site. Careful review of air and water quality impacts from such uses should be included. Proposed establishment of these uses

- may require an additional public review of their associated environmental, social, and economic factors.
- xvii. Unless the extraction site is very inaccessible, it should be completely enclosed by a safety fence or maintained as a gentle slope.
 - xviii. The Town shall be listed as an “additional names insured” on the liability insurance policy, which should remain in effect until the reclamation is complete. The petitioner shall furnish a certificate of insurance before operations commence.
 - xix. There shall be specified provisions to upgrade, repair and maintain Town roads, depending on the intensity of the operation and the existing conditions and capacity of such roads. Posting bond for such work may be required.
 - xx. Address depths to groundwater.

Agricultural Lands

There are 7,349 acres of farmland (*based on La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan 2021-2050*), within the Town of Onalaska. This accounts for over a quarter of all the land within the Town. Farming is a key part of the local economy and is also a way of life for many residents. Town of Onalaska Agricultural Land Use [Map 6.1](#) and Cropland [Map 6.2](#) depict where these uses are located and how these agricultural lands are utilized.

The Town of Onalaska has a 1,647-acre Agriculture Enterprise Area (AEA) called Halfway Creek Prairie AEA. [Map 6.3](#) shows the location of the AEA. AEAs are community led efforts establishing designated areas important to Wisconsin’s agricultural future. More specifically, an AEA is an area of productive agriculture that has received designation from the state at the request of landowners and local governments. As a part of the state’s Farmland Preservation Program, AEAs strive to support local farmland protection goals.

AEAs can help communities preserve agricultural land for the future while promoting the local agro-economy and investing in local land and water resources. An AEA enables landowners to sign a farmland preservation agreement. By signing a farmland preservation agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, a landowner agrees to keep land in agricultural use for 15 years and to meet state soil and water conservation standards. In return, the landowner may claim the farmland preservation tax credit annually.

Agricultural Statistics

With 7,349 acres of farmland and 1,313 acres of pasture, a portion of this land is rented in the Town. Average prices for rent of non-irrigated cropland in La Crosse County in 2020 were \$139.00 per acre, \$1 above the State average of \$138.00 per acre. Average cash rent paid for pasture in La Crosse County in 2020 was \$28.50 per acre, below the State average of \$35.00 per acre.

In 2019, the overall cost agricultural land averaged \$5,491 per acre in the Town. Based on Table 6.1, the number of farms in La Crosse County has decreased by 9.13%. This is more than the State average decline in farms of 7.11%. Though the number of farms has decreased, the overall market value of agricultural land has drastically increased in the County by 52.05%. This is far above the State average increase of 32.22%. The largest changes are in sizes of farms from larger farms (in acreage) to smaller farms.

Table 6.1 La Crosse County Agriculture Summary

	2012	2017	% Change 2012-2017
Farms (#)	734	667	-9.13
Land in farms (acres)	158,718	144,334	-9.06
Estimated market value of land and buildings (\$)	709,760	1,079,187	52.05
Estimated market value of all machinery and equipment (\$)	88,617	83,104	-6.22
Farms by size			
1 to 9 acres	30	49	63.33
10 to 49 acres	147	150	2.04
50 to 179 acres	300	218	-27.33
180 to 499 acres	196	185	-5.61
500 to 999 acres	63	51	-19.05
1,000 acres or more	17	14	-17.65
Total cropland	671	575	-14.31
Irrigated land (# of farms)	20	26	30.00

Source: USDA Ag Census 2012, 2017

Soil Types

The geology of the area is of the Cambrian System and the Prairie du Chien group of the Ordovician System. The geology is comprised of sandstone with some dolomite and shale.

The soils in the Town are mapped and described in the USDA's *Soil Survey of La Crosse County Wisconsin*. Soils in the area are characterized as forested and silty. Soil types are highly variable and include:

- Hixton sandy loam
- Meridian sandy loam
- Plainfield fine sand
- Dakota sandy loam
- Richwood silt loam
- Trempe loamy fine sand
- Trempealeau fine sandy loam
- Waukegan silt loam

Soil Suitability

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. Soil types and capability also help determine the viability of land for agricultural purposes. Soil suitability classes for agriculture range from Class 1 to Class 8, with 1 being most suitable and 8 being the least suitable soils for agriculture. [Map 6.4](#) depicts soils by class in the Town of Onalaska.

Table 6.2 Soil Suitability La Crosse County

Soil Classification	Acres	Description
Class 1	7,697	Soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.
Class 2	35,921	Soils have moderate limitations that restrict the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.
Class 3	49,246	Soils have severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require special conservation practices, or both.
Class 4	43,389	Soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require very careful management, or both.
Class 5	0	Soils are subject to little or no erosion but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that restrict their use mainly to pasture, rangeland, forestland, or wildlife habitat.
Class 6	60,189	Soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuitable for cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to pasture, rangeland, forestland, or wildlife habitat.
Class 7	74,261	Soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuitable for cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to grazing, forestland, or wildlife habitat.
Class 8	38	Soils and miscellaneous areas have limitations that preclude commercial plant production and that restrict their use to recreational purposes, wildlife habitat, watershed, or esthetic purposes.
Water	17,920	

Source: USDA Soil Survey 2017

Groundwater

Groundwater in the Onalaska area is abundant and is obtained from a sand and gravel aquifer. The groundwater is easy to locate and drill into but has a potential contamination because the sandstone bedrock is not very effective in filtering surface waters that permeate it. A variety of land uses can release contaminants that travel through the sandstone to the water table, potentially causing problems with the drinking water supplies.

The groundwater under Brice Prairie, in the western part of the Town, is especially vulnerable to contamination. The Brice Prairie Master Plan, adopted in 2006, notes that the quality of the shallow groundwater is generally good, and most private wells are located within the sand and gravel aquifer. However, the shallow depth to groundwater, higher permeability of the aquifer and the potential for rapid infiltration and vertical groundwater flow combine to make groundwater under Brice Prairie highly vulnerable to contamination from surface sources and upgradient water bodies.

Contaminated groundwater has significant environmental, health, economic, and social impacts. For example, contaminated groundwater has considerable financial impacts as contaminated wells adversely impact home values. It is therefore important to incorporate good planning practices to protect groundwater in Brice Prairie and the rest of the Town.

Several documented contaminated sources have the potential to impact groundwater and surface water quality in the Brice Prairie area. These include:

- Onalaska Municipal Landfill Superfund Site at the northern tip of Brice Prairie;
- Metallica, Inc. on CTH Z near the southern end of the prairie; and
- Blount Inc., Outer Operation and Kanesh Prairie market leaking underground storage tanks (LUST) sites.

Wetlands

Wetlands are a valuable wildlife habitat and contribute greatly to the aesthetic appeal of the area. Wetlands are protected by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The wetland in and around the Town of Onalaska are mapped by the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory of DNR. Wetlands are located along portions of Halfway Creek and on much of Brice Prairie.

Wetlands are defined in Wisconsin Statutes 23.32 as areas where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions. Wetlands are environmentally sensitive due to the many values and functions they provide, including:

- Filtering and replenishing groundwater.
- Flood protection – wetlands act like sponges by storing and slowly releasing rainfall and runoff, which reduces flood peaks and flood recovery costs.
- Filters for certain kinds of wastes and soluble contaminants generated from runoff, which protects water quality.
- Food and habitat for many plants and animals, which benefits hunting, fishing, sightseeing, and other recreational or tourism interests.
- Shoreline protection – wetlands protect shorelines from erosive wave action and enhance the quality of life by providing spacious and scenic open spaces.

Floodplains

Floodplains are identified and mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as areas prone to flooding during a 100-year storm event. According to FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Map, designated floodplains are adjacent to Halfway Creek and Sand Lake Creek. This area of special flood hazard is approximately 50 to 60 feet wide on both sides of the creeks. Base flood elevations for Halfway Creek and Sand Lake Creek are delineated on FEMA maps. Much of Brice Prairie is also located within a designated FEMA floodplain, particularly the area between the railroad tracks and CTH XX. It is important to note that not all areas of the Town subject to flooding are necessarily reflected on FEMA maps.

The Nation's annual flood recovery costs are high and the human hardship beyond this is immeasurable. It is for this reason that the federal, state, and local governments encourage hazard mitigation planning that discourages floodplain development. Counties, cities, and villages are responsible for administering floodplain zoning in accordance with regulatory standards of Chapter NR 116 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the standards of the National Flood Insurance

Program. The state requires county regulation of development in floodplains. Development in these areas is strongly prohibited to avoid both on-site and up/downstream property damage.

Drainage Basins and Watersheds

The Town of Onalaska is located in the Lower Black River Watershed, which is in the southern part of the Black River Basin. The basin encompasses approximately 2.5 million acres and is home to around 80,000 people. Almost 600,000 acres of the county, state, and federally-owned public land and 300,000 acres of wetlands are found within the basin. The landscape is considered to be some of the roughest terrain in the state.

The Halfway Creek and Sand Lake Coulee watersheds are located within the Lower Black River Watershed, and are encompassed almost entirely within the Town of Onalaska's boundaries. Halfway Creek is comprised of two primary sub-watersheds, Long Coulee and Halfway Creek. The total watershed encompasses approximately 22,944 acres. As of 2020, 7,349 acres were agricultural use, 8,834 acres were wooded, 1,766 acres were developed and the remaining 223 acres were classified as parks and recreation.

Stream Corridors

About 3,500 miles of streams and 82 lakes and impoundments make up the water resources of the Black-Buffalo-Trempealeau Basin. Of these total stream miles, 604 miles are designated cold-water streams that are capable of supporting, to some degree, a trout fishery. Halfway Creek runs through the Town from northeast to southwest and is stocked with brown and brook trout. Sand Lake Creek also runs through the Town and generally flows east to west.

The transition of native vegetation to cropland and increasing urban development in the Lower Black River watershed has created flooding and environmental degradation along Halfway Creek from stormwater runoff. A study of the watershed recommended the construction of wet detention basins, infiltration water basins, stream bank and shoreline stabilization, grassed channels and waterways, and construction of wetlands. Nonstructural recommendations include drafting a construction site erosion control ordinance, a stormwater management ordinance, a wellhead protection ordinance, undertaking batch basin sumps and cleaning, street and parking lot sweeping, agricultural best management land practices and a public education and information program.

Surface Water

The primary surface water bodies in the area are the Mississippi River, Black River, Lake Onalaska, Halfway Creek, and Sand Lake Creek. One of the most significant outdoor resources available to residents and visitors is Lake Onalaska. Excellent opportunities for boating, canoeing, sailing, fishing, hunting, birdwatching, or simply enjoying wildlife abound. The 7,000 acre lake has depths to 40 feet, but the average depth is just 8 feet. The lake was formed in 1937 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finished the Dresbach, MN Lock and Dam 7.

Woodlands

The Town of Onalaska is located in a region of the country known as the Prairie-Forest Border, which forms the transition zone between the plains to the south and west and the forests to the north and east. Before European settlement and the resulting fire suppression, the vegetation in this region consisted of oak savanna and southern oak forest. The remaining forest cover is generally broad leaved deciduous forest. Woodlands comprise much of the land in the eastern part of the Town.

The State's Managed Forest Law (MFL) program is available to landowners with 10 or more contiguous acres of forestland. Participating landowners must agree to a forest management plan that includes harvesting at least 80% of the forest area. In exchange, their land is taxed at a rate below the state average. The Town has 2,163.89 acres enrolled in the MFL program.

Open Spaces, Environmental Corridors, and Environmentally Significant Areas

There are an abundance of open spaces and environmental corridors in the Town. Open space/environmental corridors are continuous systems of open space that include environmentally sensitive lands, floodplains and wetlands, natural resources requiring protection from disturbance and development, and land specifically designated for open space and recreational use. Important natural areas that are suitable for preservation include Halfway Creek Valley, the bluffs, the coulees, and the important wildlife habitats located throughout the Town.

Apple Valley Bluff is land protected by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy. It consists of 26 acres of Mississippi River Blufflands east of the Mississippi River in the Town of Onalaska, east of County Road SN. The property is accessible from an access road to the north off of Shilling Road.

Apple Valley Bluff contains six of Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory's recognized natural communities. The communities are: dry prairie, dry cliff, oak opening, and southern dry, dry-mesic, and mesic forest. According to the WI-DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources, dry prairie is considered globally rare and oak opening is considered globally imperiled. Public access is allowed for a variety of recreational and educational activities on the land such as hiking, birding, nature photography, hunting, and trapping.

Another significant open space and environmental corridor in the region is the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The Refuge is the western border of the Town of Onalaska. The refuge was established in 1924 and is one of the country's largest and most visited refuges with 3.5 million visitors annually. Lake Onalaska is part of this refuge, which hosts more than 265 species of birds, 57 species of mammals, 35 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 100 species of fish. The entire refuge encompasses nearly 200,000 acres and is over 260 miles long.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Center has a Visitor's Center located on Brice Prairie. The purpose of the Visitor's Center and adjoining land is to provide educational opportunities that demonstrate sand prairie restoration, maintenance and management, especially for grassland birds; energy conservation; stormwater management; and other wildlife dependent recreational uses.

Topography

The Slope Map, [Map 6.5](#), in Appendix C illustrates the topography based on average slope in the Town. The Town of Onalaska elevations vary greatly from 640 to 1,133 feet above sea level. The western part of the Town is located on relatively flat, lowland that is adjacent to the Mississippi River, whereas steep, high elevation slopes exist in the eastern part of the Town.

The Town and County lie in the heart of the driftless area, which covers southwestern Wisconsin, southeastern Minnesota, and northeast Iowa. This area was missed by the most recent glacial advance but was highly dissected by the glacial melt water created 11,000 years ago by the retreating glacier. The scenic ridges and valleys created by this melt water were named coulees by early French settlers resulting in this area becoming known as the "Coulee Region." Many of the ridges have bluffs of exposed limestone outcroppings.

The Town of Onalaska has significant slopes throughout the eastern half of the Town with some exceeding 75%. Steep slopes are environmentally sensitive from a water quality perspective because

increased erosion and stormwater runoff occurs when these slopes are developed. The detrimental effect of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as rooftops and driveways increase greatly when such surfaces are constructed on steep slopes. La Crosse County has many creeks, some of which support trout fisheries. All of these creeks, as well as the larger rivers and lakes, are or could be recipients of runoff from development on steep slopes. The water quality of these rivers and creeks provides biologic, recreational, and aesthetic benefits. The creeks classified as trout streams make handling of runoff from development on steep slopes especially critical if these sensitive aquatic environments are to be maintained or enhanced.

To protect the area's rivers, lakes, and streams from excessive stormwater runoff, the County Land Conservation Department and Committee enforce a construction site erosion control ordinance that calls for approval of an erosion control plan prior to construction activity taking place. This ordinance also prohibits construction activity from occurring on slopes of 30% or greater. Increased erosion control measures are called for in this ordinance when slopes of 20% or greater are to be disturbed. The Town of Onalaska restricts building on 20% or greater slopes. In addition, the nearby Village of Holmen has stricter standards than the County and prohibits construction on slopes of 12% or greater.

In addition to erosion, sedimentation, and water quality problems, development on steep slopes can impair the natural beauty and viewsheds in the area. When development occurs on steep slopes, or on top of these steep slopes at higher elevations, it greatly impacts the visual character of the area as the development can dominate the viewshed.

Wildlife, Rare, Threatened, and Endangered

There are 6 species in La Crosse County that are currently endangered or threatened. These species include mammals, birds, reptiles, mussels, and insects. Over the last few decades, the communities within the County have experienced changes in the composition of their animal and plant life. Historically most changes occurred through human encroachment and consequent disturbance to the wildlife and its habitat. Land uses that have drastically altered the natural environment such as the cutting of forests, wetland drainage, agriculture, and increased urbanization have resulted in the reduction of the quantity and quality of habitat for many species. This reduction in habitat has also resulted in the near extirpation of some species.

The U.S. government, to protect biological resources, enacted the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. The Act essentially prohibits the taking of a threatened or endangered species or its habitat. Wisconsin, in accordance with the ESA, has developed the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Working Lists. The Wisconsin Natural Heritage Working Lists contains species known or suspected to be rare in the state. The list and a map depicting the general location of these rare species can be viewed on the DNR website.

Table 6.4 Threatened and Endangered Species – La Crosse County

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
Mammals		
<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Northern long-eared bat	Threatened
Birds		
<i>Grus americanus</i>	Whooping crane	Experimental population
Reptile		
<i>Sistrurus catenatus</i>	Eastern massasauga	Threatened

Mussels		
<i>Lampsilis higginsii</i>	Higgins eye pearlymussel	Endangered
<i>Plethobasus cyphus</i>	Sheepnose	Endangered
Insects		
<i>Bombus affinis</i>	Rusty patched bumble bee	Endangered

Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service 2019

Mining and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

There are 18 registered non-metallic mine sites within La Crosse County.

Historical Structures and Places

The Town has a unique collection of historic or architecturally significant building sites. The State Historic 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, schoolhouses, and turn of the century homes that help shape Wisconsin's distant cultural landscape. The AHI lists 32 documented properties in the Town of Onalaska. The properties include older houses and outbuildings, farmsteads, cemeteries, and bridges.

Archeological Resources

The Town of Onalaska is an attractive place to live and has been for many centuries. Native Americans from the Winnebago (now the Ho Chunk Nation) and the Oneota Tribes inhabited the area for several centuries prior to the arrival of the first white settlers. Several areas around Long Coulee, Brice Prairie, and Sand Lake Road have been excavated and the existence of Oneota villages has been documented. Burial grounds, remnants of long houses and an established farming community including an elaborate irrigation system were excavated by the Mississippi Valley Archeological Center (MVAC). Mastodon bones dating back 12,000 years were also found in excavations. The MVAC has documented significant cultural artifacts on Brice Prairie, dating from between 1300 and 1400 AD, which is the earliest phase of the Oneota Tradition.

Four archeological sites in the Town of Onalaska are listed on the National Register of Historic places. Those sites include:

- Midway Village Site
- Midway Archeological District
- Sand Lake Archeological District
- Sand Lake Site

As of 2020, over 1,000 archaeological sites have been recorded in La Crosse County, and 24 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Under Wisconsin law, Stat. 157.70 all burial sites, including Native American mounds, and both marked and unmarked burials, are protected from encroachment by any type of development. [Map 6.6](#) in Appendix C shows the distribution of archeological sites throughout the County.

Cultural Agencies and Programs

Wisconsin Historical Society

The Society serves as the archives of the State of Wisconsin. It collects books, periodicals, maps, manuscripts, relics, newspapers, and audio and graphic materials as they relate to Wisconsin. It maintains a museum, library, and research facility in Madison, as well as a statewide system of

historic sites, school services and area research centers. It administers a broad program of historic preservation and publishes a wide variety of historical materials, both scholarly and popular. The historical society can also aid with various state and federal programs.

National Park Service

The National Park Service administers the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to honorific recognition, listing in the National Register provides:

- Consideration in planning for Federal, federally licensed, and federally assisted projects
- Eligibility for certain tax provisions
- Qualification for Federal grants for historic preservation, when funds are available

National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit organization with more than 200,000 members. The Trust provides leadership, education, and advocacy training to support efforts to save America's historic places.

Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation (WTHP)

The WTHP, established in 1986, is a private non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the historical, architectural, and archaeological heritage of Wisconsin. The Trust advocates for legislation and policies designed to encourage statewide historic preservation. Examples of some of the programs they initiate are:

Wisconsin Main Street Program

A comprehensive program designed to revitalize designated downtowns and give new life to historic business districts.

Heritage Tourism Initiative

The Heritage Tourism Initiative has helped develop grassroots heritage tourism organizations by encouraging Wisconsin communities to use their unique features to tap into the mushrooming heritage tourism market -- and protect that heritage at the same time.

Recreation Resources

Recreational resources in the Town of Onalaska include the parks and recreation facilities identified in the Utilities and Community Facilities element. However, it is important to note that the community considers many of its natural resources as passive recreational uses such as wildlife viewing and bird watching, as well as active recreational activities such as boating, canoeing, fishing, and hunting.

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic development element includes goals, objectives, and actions to help guide the development of economic resources within the Town. This element also includes an assessment of local strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses. The Town Survey identified a desire for increased economic development in the Town. Preferred types of development include:

- Retail stores (coffee shops, salons, boutiques, etc.)
- Agriculture/Agriculture businesses
- Grocery store

GOAL 1

Encourage economic opportunities that enhance the quality of life for Town residents, are appropriate for the levels of public services and facilities in the Town, and are environmentally sensitive.

Objective 1-1: Protect and enhance Onalaska’s scenic and environmental character as an economic asset to the Town and the region.

- Action 1-1a: Promote economic development that is committed to and has minimal environmental impact.
- Action 1-1b: Protect the Town’s economic interests over the long term by continuing to work with La Crosse County, neighboring jurisdictions, and relevant agencies and non-profit organizations to preserve and possibly restore scenic vistas, bluffs, prairies, wetlands, and other unique natural areas. The economic interests of preserving and/or restoring these areas will maintain or increase property values, and be attractions for visitors and tourists.
- Action 1-1c: Explore options to sustain and possibly increase tourism and recreation businesses in the Town through development of biking trails, cross country ski trails, parks, walking trails, wildlife refuges, and/or nature sanctuaries. Ensure these businesses do not negatively impact the rural character of the Town, nor harm the Town’s outstanding natural resources.
- Action 1-1d: Promote the Town’s unique natural resources and recreation opportunities and encourage development of tourism-based businesses to capture these economic opportunities. Such businesses may include bed and breakfasts; outdoor supply stores; restaurants; delis/cafes; and canoe, bike, cross country ski, golf and other quiet sports rental companies.
- Action 1-1e: Consider promoting the Town’s rustic roads as a way of attracting economic development. This may include proposing to the State of Wisconsin that roads be designated as “Rustic Roads.”

Objective 1-2: Support business developments the Town can efficiently , cost effectively, and financially afford to provide services and utilities to; encourage reinvestment in existing commercial areas; and promote improvements to highly visible commercial areas.

- Action 1-2a: Require substantial projects to submit an independent impact analysis so the Town can better assess the full effect of these projects on public services and facilities, including the long-term operational and maintenance costs of new or expanded public services and facilities. The definition of a “substantial project” should be defined by the Town.

- Action 1-2b: Require new businesses to implement measures to minimize the impacts new businesses have on existing residential areas. For example, require substantial screening and/or buffering between new businesses and adjacent residential areas; and prohibit light, noise, and air pollution onto existing adjacent residential properties.
- Action 1-2c: Consider working with the City of Onalaska to create a sub-area plan for the business/light industrial district between and around the Great River Road, STH 35 and STH 53.
- Action 1-2d: Promote reinvestment into the business/light industrial district between and around the Great River Road and STH 53, and the redevelopment of under utilized properties.
- Action 1-2e: Promote local businesses through wayfinding signage, especially along the Great River Road.
- Action 1-2f: The commercial properties abutting the Great River Road represent an image of the Town of Onalaska. Create design guidelines with the City of Onalaska for commercial building sites, signs, landscaping, etc. to address the appearance of properties abutting this road. The design guidelines should be implemented as properties redevelop along this corridor.
- Action 1-2g: Work with property owners to rezone industrial zoned land in the Town to a less intensive zoning district.
- Action 1-2h: Discourage heavy industrial development in the Town, and establish guidelines for appropriate light industrial site design to mitigate potential negative environmental impacts associated with such development.
- Action 1-2i: Determine the threshold(s) for development including economic; environmental; public facilities; facilities and services; agricultural sustainability; quality of life; and archeological resources.

GOAL 2

The Town of Onalaska will encourage economic development that supports agriculture, and serves Town residents and visitors.

Objective 2-1: Focus on economic health of production agriculture in Onalaska.

- Action 2-1a: Support economic health of production agriculture in Onalaska.
- Action 2-1b: Consider applying for state and federal farmland protection programs and money.
- Action 2-1c: Support other forms of agriculture including: value-added agriculture; organic agriculture; vineyards; orchards; research farming; community supported agriculture; businesses engaged in hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation activities; production of niche agricultural products.
- Action 2-1d: Ensure Town roads serve agricultural needs.
- Action 2-1e: Inform new Town residents about existing impacts of the agricultural areas in which they live, including noise, odor, and other farming operations.
- Action 2-1f: Assist local business owners by directing them to resources such as the UW-Extension *Promoting Agricultural and Business Competitiveness and Sustainable Environment* Issue Team, the UW-Extension Center for Community Economic Development, the UW-Extension Small Business Development Center, UW-Extension programs on agribusiness and farming and other similar programs.

Objective 2-2: Encourage new economic development that supports residential areas and meets the needs of local residents, while respecting the Town's rural character.

- Action 2-2a: Prohibit "strip" commercial development along roadways. Strip commercial development can generally be described as businesses that are engaged in auto-oriented commercial activity and

are arranged in a line, usually along an arterial street. Strip commercial developments are often only one lot in depth with minimal standards for landscaping and design.

- Action 2-2b: Consider creating redevelopment standards for business development to promote high-quality site design, building design, signage and landscaping for all new nonresidential developments. Timeless designs and quality materials support building for long-term use.
- Action 2-2c: Direct commercial development to areas surrounding STH 53 and STH 35 and, other locations identified on the Future Land Use Map.
- Action 2-2d: Plan for the development of existing commercial districts to ensure appropriate site design and uses consistent with the needs of Town residents and the Town's rural character.
- Action 2-2e: Provide opportunities for citizen input on desirable commercial development.
- Action 2-2f: Collaborate with adjoining municipalities in the planning and timing of the location and form of all commercial and/or industrial development proposed in and/or adjacent to the Town.
- Action 2-2g: Encourage establishment of proposed businesses that are compatible with the Town's status as a rural, residential, agricultural community that serves as a recreational getaway to the Upper Mississippi River national Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

Education of Labor Force

Table 7.1 outlines the highest education attained by adults over age 25 in the Town. Just over 90% of all Town residents have completed high school. Over 39% of Town of Onalaska adults over the age of 25 have a bachelor's or graduate/professional degree, which is similar to the County average of 34.8%.

Table 7.1 Education Levels, 2019

	Less than 9 th grade (%)	9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma (%)	High School graduate – includes equivalency (%)	Some college, no degree (%)	Associate degree (%)	Bachelor's degree (%)	Graduate or professional degree (%)
Town of Onalaska	1.4	0.6	19.6	21.6	17.1	24.8	14.8
Village of Holmen	1.6	2.3	27.8	21.2	15.6	19.9	11.6
City of Onalaska	2.2	3.3	22.5	22.9	13.6	21.6	13.8
La Crosse County	1.8	3.2	25.4	21.6	13.1	21.9	12.9

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Participation in Labor Force

Over 70% of the population over 16 years old is involved in the work force in the Town of Onalaska. Of those that are active in the labor force, 0.9% are currently unemployed. The Town's unemployment rate is lower than surrounding areas and the County's as a whole.

Table 7.2 Workforce Participation, 2019

	Population 16 years and over	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employed	Unemployment Rate
Town of Onalaska	4,377	70.2%	69.2%	0.9%
Village of Holmen	7,495	68.0%	64.3%	3.7%
City of Onalaska	15,009	64.8%	62.8%	1.9%
La Crosse County	97,122	66.8%	64.4%	2.4%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Employment Statistics

Town of Onalaska's labor force is largely employed through private companies. Statistics for the Town are very similar to that of the County and Village of Holmen as found in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Employment by Employer Type

	Private Company	Government	Self-Employed	Unpaid Family Worker
Town of Onalaska	81.1%	15.0%	3.8%	0.0%
Village of Holmen	84.5%	13.3%	1.9%	0.4%
City of Onalaska	85.9%	11.3%	2.9%	0.0%
La Crosse County	83.9%	12.4%	3.5%	0.2%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

The industries with the largest increase in number of jobs from 2015 to 2020 in La Crosse County include Utilities (20%), Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (15%), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (12%). The highest earning industry in the County is Utilities with an average of \$130,670 per worker as depicted in Table 6.4.

Over 30% of employees are participating in education/health care/social assistance occupations, which is also the most common occupation type within La Crosse County as found in Table 7.5. Retail trade is the second most common occupation, with just over 13% of Town residents participating in related occupations. Over 10% of the Town is in manufacturing which is like the Village of Holmen and La Crosse County.

Town of Onalaska residents have the second highest average household income (\$109,072) compared to the Village of Holmen (\$112,985) and La Crosse County (\$79,532) in Table 7.6. The per capita income in the Town (\$39,526) is also the highest shown in Table 7.6.

Table 7.4 La Crosse County Industries and Earnings

Industry	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2020 Earnings Per Worker
Utilities	368	442	74	20%	\$130,670
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,699	1,387	-312	-18%	\$82,175
Information	928	878	-50	-5%	\$81,098

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,915	2,136	221	12%	\$79,945
Finance and Insurance	3,178	3,543	365	11%	\$78,408
Health Care and Social Assistance	14,306	15,098	792	6%	\$72,241
Wholesale Trade	3,511	3,451	-60	-2%	\$70,930
Transportation and Warehousing	2,570	2,861	291	11%	\$70,446
Construction	3,035	3,159	124	4%	\$67,024
Government	9,864	9,353	-511	-5%	\$64,479
Manufacturing	7,784	8,107	323	4%	\$63,711
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	813	799	-14	-2%	\$49,040
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,724	2,419	-305	-11%	\$41,483
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	144	115	-29	-20%	\$36,894
Educational Services	1,757	1,825	68	4%	\$33,303
Retail Trade	8,366	8,069	-297	-4%	\$32,218
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,677	4,131	454	12%	\$29,432
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,033	1,185	152	15%	\$23,136
Accommodation and Food Services	6,814	6,728	-86	-1%	\$18,065

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) 2020

Table 7.5 Employment by Occupation

	Town of Onalaska(%)	Village of Holmen (%)	City of Onalaska (%)	La Crosse County (%)
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	0.5	1.0	0.6	1.1
Construction	6.6	2.5	3.8	4.2
Manufacturing	11.6	10.7	16.9	11.7
Wholesale Trade	4.6	5.9	2.7	3.2
Retail Trade	13.4	15.0	14.9	13.7
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	5.2	5.4	4.2	4.4
Information	3.2	1.8	3.2	1.9
Finance/Insurance/ Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	4.1	5.8	6.8	6.0
Professional/Scientific/Tech./Management	5.1	8.8	5.7	6.7
Educational Services/ Health Care/Social Assistance	30.7	25.7	28.6	29.6
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/ Accommodation/Food Services	5.0	8.8	6.3	10.3
Other Services (Excluding Public)	3.4	4.8	3.7	4.1
Public Administration	6.4	3.8	2.7	3.2

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Table 7.6 Households by Income

	Town of Onalaska (%)	Village of Holmen (%)	City of La Crosse (%)	La Crosse County (%)
<\$15,000	0.3	1.0	3.2	8.8
\$15,000-\$24,999	1.9	1.7	0.9	8.6
\$25,000-\$34,999	0.6	8.4	5.4	10.4
\$35,000-\$49,999	7.7	12.9	13.4	14.9
\$50,000-\$74,999	26.3	14.9	21.3	20.0
\$75,000-\$99,999	21.2	19.6	14.7	13.2
\$100,000-\$149,999	24.3	30.3	18.9	14.4
\$150,000-\$199,999	10.4	4.6	11.5	4.8
\$200,000+	7.2	6.7	10.8	4.8
Median Household Income	\$88,438	\$89,486	\$85,784	\$57,882
Average Household Income	\$109,072	\$96,848	\$112,985	\$79,532
Per Capita Income	\$39,526	\$31,074	\$39,101	\$32,565

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Economic Base

When considering economic base, it is important to look at regional economic drivers. Table 7.7 lists the top fifteen employers for La Crosse County in 2021.

Table 7.7 Top Employers in La Crosse County

Company	Number of Workers
Kwik Trip Inc.	1,000+
Gundersen Health System	1,000+
Mayo Clinic Health System	1,000+
Trane Inc.	1,000+
Reinhart Food Service	1,000+
Rottinghaus Company	1,000+
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse	1,000+
Dairyland Power Cooperative	500-999
Bethany St. Joseph	500-999
Logistics Health, Inc.	500-999
City Brewery	500-999
School District of La Crosse	500-999
Western Technical College	500-999
Walmart	500-999
JF Brennan Company Inc.	500-999

Source: Data Axle Reference Solution 2021, Emsi 2021

Commercial and Industrial Building Trends

Table 7.8 outlines where the industrial and business parks are located in La Crosse County. The table also provides the size of the parks and land availability as of 2020. There are currently no industrial parks located in the Town of Onalaska. The nearby Village of Holmen has 113 acres of land available for commercial and light industrial use.

Table 7.8 La Crosse County Industrial Parks 2020

County	Community	Name of Site	Date	# of Acres	Acres Sold	Acres for Sale	Zoning	Utilities to Site	Year Utilities Installed	Absorp. Rate acres/yr.
La Crosse	V Bangor	Bangor Indus. Park	2003	80	15	65	Industrial	No		<5
La Crosse	V Holmen	Holmen Indus. Park	1975	50	50	0	Industrial	Yes	1975	< 5
La Crosse	V Holmen	N Star Bus. Park	1997	21.5	21.5	0	Commercial	Yes	1997	< 5
La Crosse	V Holmen	Holmen Bus. Park	2000	7	7	0	Commercial	Yes	2000	< 5
La Crosse	V Holmen	Cedar Crossing Ind. Park	1991	25	20	5	Commercial	Yes	1991	< 5
La Crosse	V Holmen	McGilvray Park	2017	30	5	25	Commercial	Yes	2017	<5
La Crosse	V Holmen	Kings Bluff Business Park Phase 1	2018	25	10	15	Light Industrial	Yes	2018	>5
La Crosse	V Holmen	Bluffview Business Park Phase 1	2019	40	12	28	Light Industrial	Yes	2019	>5
La Crosse	V Holmen	Bluffview Business Park Phase 2	2020	15	10	5	Commercial	Yes	2020	>5
La Crosse	V Holmen	Hawkeye Business Park	2020	40	5	35	Commercial	Yes	2020	>5
La Crosse	C La Crosse	Airport Indus. Park	1988	98	98	0	Industrial	Yes	1988	< 5
La Crosse	C La Crosse	Airport Interstate Park	1984	32	32	0	Industrial	Yes	1984	< 5
La Crosse	C La Crosse	Interstate Indus. Park	1970	92	92	0	Industrial	Yes	1970-83	<5
La Crosse	C La Crosse	Int'l Business Park	1998	77.8	41.67	36.13	Industrial	Yes	1998-99	5-10
La Crosse	C Onalaska	Valley Vue Bus. Park	1985	0.69	0	.69	Reg. Business	Yes	1985	<5
La Crosse	C Onalaska	Elmwood Bus. Ctr.	1992	15.86	0.69	15.17	Reg. Business	Yes	1992	<5
La Crosse	V West Salem	W. Salem Indus. Park	1972	60	60	0	Lt Indus.	Yes	1972	< 5
La Crosse	V West Salem	Lakeview Indus. Park	1997	160	75	85	Industrial	Planned	2000-01	< 5

Source: Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission 2020

Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires communities to evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintains a list of contaminated sites, or brownfields. The DNR identifies brownfields as “abandoned or under-utilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination.”

As of January 2022, thirty sites in the Town and City of Onalaska were listed on the Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Trading System (BRRTS). A complete list can be found on the Wi DNR website under “Environmental Cleanup & Brownfields Redevelopment BRRTS on the Web.”

Employment Projections

The State of Wisconsin’s Department of Workforce Development’s “La Crosse County Workforce Profile” provides insight into the regional employment forecast for the County. This section illustrates employment forecasts for the La Crosse County area. Table 7.9 lists the top 10 occupations experiencing the fastest growth rates and the most job openings in La Crosse County. Many of the fastest growing occupations fall into either the Architecture and Engineering, Computer and Mathematical, and Personal Care Service categories, followed by Business and Financial Operations.

Table 7.9 Growing Occupations La Crosse County

Occupation	Change in Jobs 2015-2020	% Change in Jobs 2015-2020
Production	767	14%
Educational Instruction and Library	473	11%
Business and Financial Operations	366	14%
Personal Care and Service	298	15%
Healthcare Support	295	8%
Computer and Mathematical	251	19%
Management	181	6%
Architecture and Engineering	180	21%
Construction and Extraction	137	5%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	76	1%

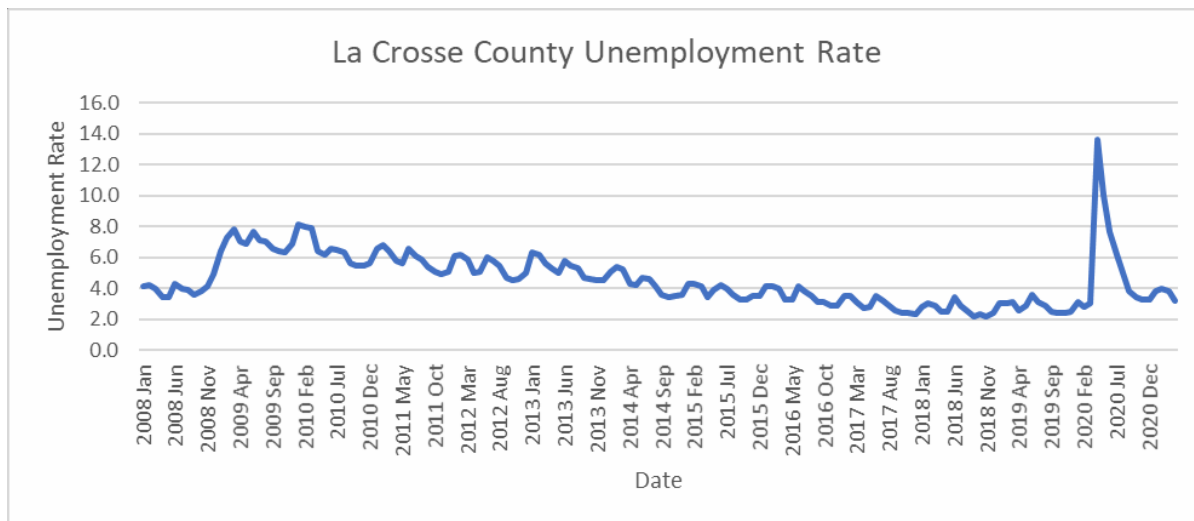
Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Bureau of Workforce Information, Emsi Report 2020

Coronavirus Impact Planning

In addition to its impact on public health, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has caused a major economic shock. The nation has experienced the highest rates of unemployment since the Great

Depression. La Crosse County had its highest unemployment rate in April 2020 at 12.3% while the State was at 13.6%.

Figure 6.1 La Crosse County Unemployment Rates



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics – Local Area Unemployment Statistics) Concerns have recently arisen regarding unemployment rates and the impact of COVID Pandemic unemployment programs on labor participation rates.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an economic recession, as many businesses were forced to close their doors and people were forced to completely change their consumption patterns. This brought some immediate impacts such as business closures and increased unemployment rates, but it also brought significant uncertainty, and we will need to wait to see what shifts in consumption patterns will be more long-term. For example, many employees were forced to make a transition to working from home. Some have found that it works for them, and some have found that it does not – but over the next year or two we will see how demand for commercial office space will be different based on that shift. This may also then have ripple effects on other industries that capitalized on the concentration of workers in central business districts. There are also predictions that mid-sized communities like La Crosse County, could have increased attractiveness for many who are not as comfortable living in large metropolitan areas anymore – especially as they may have more freedom to work remotely. So, this could present economic development opportunities for our region.

The Town of Onalaska is home to 145 businesses employing 1,520 individuals (2014-2018 American Community Survey). In the midst of the pandemic, 95% of residents have access to internet at home allowing the option for virtual work and online education. This does not mean all internet is high speed or broadband access. Access to high speed internet remains an issue for rural communities. In potential individuals in the at-risk category for health and economic impacts of COVID-19 (based on Esri 2020 forecasts key indicators) include:

- 1,133 individuals based on age (65+)
- 0.8% of individuals without health insurance
- 6 household within the community are without a registered vehicle
- 399 households have an individual with a disability
- 54 households are below the poverty line

Various organizations have created grants and programs for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES Act Funding). These organizations include but are not limited to:

- Coulee Cap
- Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development
- U.S. Economic Development Organization
- U.S. Small Business Administration
- Wisconsin Economic Development Organization
- Wisconsin Small Business Development Center
- Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation

Strengths and Weaknesses for Fostering Economic Growth

Fostering economic development is always challenging to rural towns due to lack of public sewer and water facilities and minimal institutional economic development resources. The Town of Onalaska has these same deficiencies but is at an advantage as the Town is located near the regional business center (La Crosse and Onalaska).

The Town’s strengths for fostering its desired economic focus in the future are:

- Interested and involved citizenry;
- Diverse local economy;
- Well-educated workforce;
- Commitment to open space;
- Interest in creative solutions to land use issues;
- Natural and Recreational resources;
- Rural, isolated character;
- Strong intergovernmental relationships; and
- Transportation access.

The Town’s weaknesses in achieving its desired economic goals include:

- Development pressure;
- Rapid growth;
- Internal divisions over type, location, and quantity of preferred development;
- General environmental and groundwater degradation; and
- Transportation and access (also a strength).

County, Regional, and State Economic Development Programs

Numerous county, regional, and state economic development programs apply to the Town of Onalaska. The following is a list of selected programs that could be beneficial to economic development in the Town of Onalaska.

County Programs

- La Crosse Business Fund

Regional Programs

- Western Wisconsin Technology Zone

- Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs administered through Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (ex. Public Works and Economic Development Programs, Economic Adjustment Program, etc.)

State Programs

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Funding
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation Local Transportation Enhancements Program (TE)
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation Local Transportation Economic Assistance Program (TEA)
- Value Added Dairy Initiative (Grow Wisconsin)
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce Enterprise Development Zone Program
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Program
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce Entrepreneurial training Grant
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Programs (Business Attraction, Export, Entrepreneur, Mainstreet Bounceback Grants etc.)

8. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

This element of the Comprehensive Plan analyzes the relationship of the Town of Onalaska in terms of planning and decision making to adjacent local governmental units and quasi-public, regional, state, and federal governmental entities. It provides goals, objectives, and actions to increase intergovernmental cooperation and involvement.

The Town of Onalaska commenced the comprehensive planning process, deliberately, at a time when the County was undergoing a comprehensive planning update. The Town's intent was to formally join the discussion already underway over directions for future land use and development in the region and ensure a fully coordinated planning process. Further, the Town wanted to ensure the planning process would consider the larger regional context and involve through communication neighboring governmental jurisdictions, planning organizations, agencies, stakeholders, and strong cross-boundary public participation.

GOAL 1

The Town will maintain good relationships with governmental units and around the region.

Objective 1-1: Establish and maintain excellent communication with other government officials (staff, elected and appointed officials) both formally (on committees, etc.) and informally (telephone calls, emails, etc.); and continue to build and establish new relationships.

- Action 1-1a: Provide a copy of this Comprehensive Plan and any proposed Plan updates or amendments to governmental units in and around the region.
- Action 1-1b: Inform other governmental units and agencies about the Town's website and promote it as a source of current information about the Town.
- Action 1-1c: Maintain links on the Town's website to other relevant units of government such as La Crosse County, the Village of Holmen and City of La Crosse.
- Action 1-1d: Consider holding an open house or informal social event annually that invites and involves other governmental officials.
- Action 1-1e: Introduce new elected or appointed Town officials to adjacent community leader and appropriate staff and encourage neighboring communities to do the same.

GOAL 2

Participate in regional planning efforts and coordinate all planning activities with neighboring communities, La Crosse County, and relevant agencies.

Objective 2-1: Participate regional planning efforts and coordinate planning efforts (e.g. comprehensive, land use, transportation, and natural resource protection), regulations, and specific land use decisions with neighboring communities, La Crosse County, and other relevant districts and agencies, such as the Holmen Area Fire Board, school districts, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- Action 2-1a: Participate in regional or joint planning committees and commissions.
- Action 2-1b: Continue to involve the school districts in long range planning efforts and in reviewing current development proposals.

- Action 2-1c: Participate in technical resource committee meetings facilitated by La Crosse County to include planning and zoning administrators and staff from area cities, villages, and towns.
- Action 2-1d: Continue to participate in the La Crosse County Household Hazardous Waste Program.
- Action 2-1e: Support regional economic development efforts that are consistent with the Town's vision and goals.
- Action 2-1f: Continue to coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions on planning efforts (e.g. comprehensive, land use, transportation, and natural resource protection), regulations, and specific land use decisions.
- Action 2-1g: Support regional efforts to provide affordable housing for the existing and the growing population.
- Action 2-1h: Support regional efforts to expand transportation choices through such measures as expanding transit service and connecting multi-use trails to neighboring communities and the regional trail networks.
- Action 2-1i: Encourage and participate in efforts to establish the Great River Road as an outstanding scenic gateway to and corridor through the Town with high quality public and private building, streetscape, landscape, and road designs; signage guidelines; and scenic views to the Mississippi River Valley. Encourage the State, County, LAPC and/or others to initiate this effort.
- Action 2-1j: Refer Development applications that will impact other governmental entities to the appropriate government, agency or staff in a timely manner, and ask for and consider their comments during the Town's decision making process. In particular, the Town should consider referring development applications to the City of Onalaska, Village of Holmen, or Holmen School District if these entities will be impacted by a development in either the short or long term.
- Action 2-1k: Identify and possibly formalize a process for resolving conflicts in non-aggressive/non-confrontational manners to the greatest extent possible with any/all units of government.
- Action 2-1l: Maintain, improve, or expand existing successful intergovernmental cooperation efforts such as the Fire Department.
- Action 2-1m: Work together with the Village of Holmen, City of Onalaska, surrounding towns and La Crosse County to develop compatible land use and zoning regulations.
- Action 2-1n: Work collectively to protect bluffs, water quality, and prime farmland.

Objective 2-2: Establish intergovernmental agreements with the Village of Holmen, City of Onalaska, and La Crosse County.

- Action 2-2a: Create an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Holmen to include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - i. An agreement that will guide and achieve a coordinated and harmonious development pattern and conservation practices of the Town and the Village that will meet existing and future needs of the two communities; and best provide for the public health, safety, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of both communities and their residents.
 - ii. Future boundaries that are compatible with the characteristics of the comprehensive plans of both communities, taking into consideration present and potential transportation, sewer, water, and storm drainage facilities, and other infrastructure, fiscal capacity, and the preservation of farmland, environmentally, and culturally important lands. The boundaries should take into consideration orderly urban growth and efficient delivery of municipal services.
 - The Village's western boundary should be County Trunk XX.
 - The Village's eastern boundary should be identified and addresses as part of the agreement.

- iii. Establish a joining review committee or process, or referral process for development applications on properties in or near the agreed upon future boundaries.
- iv. The protection and preservation of the Village's wellhead protection area, the Town's groundwater quality and quantity, and farmland, bluffs, and environmentally important areas.
- v. The provision or sale of public utilities without annexation.
- vi. Formal methods of resolving disputes such as arbitration.
- vii. The period for which the agreement will remain in effect and intervals in which either or both communities can call for the agreement to be amended or re-negotiated.
- viii. Create criteria/standards on which to base annexation decisions. The criteria/standards should address:
 - Economic impacts
 - Social impacts
 - Environmental impacts
- Action 2-2b: Create an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Onalaska to address issues such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - i. An agreement that will guide and achieve a coordinated and harmonious development and conservation of the Town and the City that will meet existing and future needs of the two communities and best provide for the public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and the general welfare of both communities and their residents.
 - ii. Future boundaries that are compatible with the characteristics of the comprehensive plans of both communities, taking into consideration present and potential transportation, sewer, water and storm drainage facilities, and other infrastructure, fiscal capacity, and the preservation of agriculture, environmentally and culturally important lands.
 - The boundaries should take into consideration orderly urban growth and efficient delivery of municipal services. For example, the Town islands within the City, and other areas difficult or expensive in which to provide public utilities or services to also be addressed.
 - iii. A detailed land use plan, including addressing the provision of public utilities and services as well as the protection of private wellhead concerns or Town groundwater quality and quantity.
 - iv. Establish a joint review committee or process, or referral process for development applications on properties in or near the agreed upon future boundaries.
 - v. The protection and preservation of farmland, bluffs, and environmentally important areas.
 - vi. The provision or sale of public utilities without annexation.
 - vii. Formal methods of resolving disputes such as arbitration/mediation.
 - viii. The period for which the agreement will remain in effect and intervals in which either or both communities can call for the agreement to be amended or re-negotiated.
 - ix. The mechanisms(s) and/or forum(s) for representatives of the City and the Town to discuss and plan for the orderly development or conservation of lands within the agreement's boundaries.
 - x. Create criteria/standards on which to base annexation decisions. The criteria/standards should address:
 - Economic impacts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social impacts • Environmental impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> xi. Revenue sharing and financial participation in the provision of public park, trails, recreation, and other public facilities in both communities. xii. If necessary or desirable, coordinate zoning and other applicable development regulations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action 2-2c: Create/maintain an intergovernmental agreement with La Crosse County to address issues such as, but not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identification of opportunities to cost effectively provide existing, new, or expanded public services in a cost effective manner to Town residents and businesses. ii. Update zoning classifications and standards that will specifically implement this Plan. iii. The protection and preservation of farmland, bluffs and environmentally sensitive areas.
<p>GOAL 3</p> <p>Coordinate with neighboring communities, La Crosse County, other relevant agencies and districts, and non-profit organizations to provide high quality services in the most cost effective manner possible.</p> <p><i>Objective 3-1:</i> Continue to work cooperatively with neighboring communities to lower costs of providing public services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action 3-1a: Share information, resources, facilities, technology, services, and possible revenue streams that have cross-jurisdictional applications. ○ Action 3-1b: Identify opportunities to jointly provide expanded or new services such as additional recreational programs, transit programs, and bicycle or park facilities with neighboring communities. ○ Action 3-1c: Jointly plan and pursue public utilities and services improvements with neighboring communities and willing partners. ○ Action 3-1d: Identify opportunities to avoid duplication in the provision of public services with other governments, including the school districts. ○ Action 3-1e: Identify areas of the Town that are expensive to provide public services to and explore opportunities to reduce costs. For example, the Town might contract with the City of Onalaska to serve the Town islands within the City limits or agree to provide the similar service to an area of the City that it more efficient for the Town to serve. ○ Action 3-1f: Seek to resolve all conflicts in non-aggressive manners to limit costly litigation.

Introduction

As the regional context map depicts in [Appendix C](#), the Town of Onalaska, located in La Crosse County, is bordered by the cities of Onalaska and La Crosse, the Village of Holmen, and the towns of Holland, Farmington, Hamilton, and Medary.

The Town of Onalaska is served primarily by the Holmen School District, and partially by the Onalaska School District and Melrose-Mindoro School District. Portions of the Town are served by the La Crosse Sewer Service Area and also by the Village of Holmen water system, sanitary sewer system, and wastewater treatment plant. Maps of these locations can also be found in [Appendix C](#).

La Crosse County

La Crosse County encompasses 481 square miles and is located in western Wisconsin along the Mississippi River. The County's 2019 population was estimated at 118,016. La Crosse County is approximately 150 miles southeast of Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, 175 miles from Waterloo, Iowa, and 145 miles from Madison, WI. The County is comprised of 18 local units of government: 12 towns, 4 villages, and 2 cities. Interstate 90 and the La Crosse River bisect the County from east to west. Trempealeau and Jackson County border La Crosse County to the north, Monroe County lies to the East, Vernon County lies to the south, and the Mississippi River and Minnesota lie to the west. The County is currently working on an updated Comprehensive Plan, which is an update to the County's existing plan, the La Crosse County Development Plan 2020. In addition, the County has adopted numerous other plans, studies, and ordinances that provide policy and direction to local communities, such as Onalaska, including:

- La Crosse County, Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Plan, 1980 –Amended in 2014
- La Crosse County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 1998 – Amended in 2020
- La Crosse County Land & Water Resource Management Plan, 1999 – Amended in 2020
- La Crosse County Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2020
- Zoning Ordinance – Comprehensive Revision in 2012
- Land Division Ordinance

La Crosse County is also party to general cooperative agreements for fire, police, rescue, road maintenance, solid waste, recycling, and other services with several towns, villages, and cities in the County. The Town will submit this Plan to the County for review and inclusion into its comprehensive plan and will participate in the creation and updates of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Surrounding Municipalities

Village of Holmen

The Town of Onalaska surrounds much of the Village and the majority of the Town is currently served by the Holmen School District. The Town of Holland and the Village of Holmen also operate a joint fire department with the Town of Onalaska. The City of Onalaska, Village of Holmen, and Town of Onalaska entered a boundary agreement in March of 2016.

The Village updated and adopted their Comprehensive Plan in 2016. The Village has goals to work with neighboring towns and the county to:

1. Work cooperatively and maintain excellent relations with all governmental units in and around the region.
2. Protect productive agricultural areas outside planned growth areas of the Village, and in any other locations where economically or culturally important agricultural or natural areas exist.
3. Work with neighboring communities to lower the costs of providing services.
4. Collaborate with the City of Onalaska, Town of Onalaska, Town of Holland, and La Crosse County to implement their Comprehensive Plan.

Town of Holland

The Town of Holland borders the northwestern portion of the Town of Onalaska. The towns of Onalaska and Holland operate a joint fire department with the Village of Holmen and the Town of Holland contracts with the Town of Onalaska for street maintenance.

The Town of Holland updated and adopted their Comprehensive Plan in 2021. The Town has goals to work with neighboring towns and the County to:

1. Maintain good relationships with governmental units in and around the region.
2. Participate in regional planning efforts and coordinate all planning activities with neighboring communities and La Crosse County.
3. Coordinate with neighboring communities and La Crosse County to provide high quality services in the most cost-effective manner possible.

City of Onalaska

The City of Onalaska and the Town of Onalaska have a productive and cooperative relationship. Portions of the Town are located in the Onalaska School District.

The Town and the City will establish a regular means of communication for all land use decisions including informing each of the impending land use decisions, coordinating on amendments to land use designations and continue to exchange ideas on issues confronting each community.

The Town of Onalaska has identified future areas for cooperative agreements with the City of Onalaska including: creation of a joint planning committee to direct regional growth; regional cooperation on a Purchase Development Rights or PDR program; shared equipment agreements; development of a shared park and recreation service and maintenance agreement between the Town of Onalaska, the City of Onalaska, and the Village of Holmen; and creation of a stormwater management committee which would include the Village of Holmen. The City of Onalaska, Village of Holmen and Town of Onalaska entered a Boundary Agreement in March of 2016.

City of La Crosse

The City of La Crosse is located south of the Town beyond the City of Onalaska. The Town of Onalaska shares a water boundary with La Crosse. Portions of the Town are also located within the La Crosse Sanitary Sewer Service Area.

Regional Planning Jurisdiction

The Town of Onalaska is located within the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission's (MRRPC) jurisdiction. The MRRPC prepares and adopts regional or county-wide plans and represents Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pierce, Pepin, Trempealeau, and Vernon Counties. The RPC was established to:

- Carry out comprehensive and intergovernmental planning;
- Have jurisdiction throughout the seven-county area, including incorporated and unincorporated areas;
- Meet area-wide requirements so local jurisdictions could receive federal grants;
- Provide an organization to receive federal grants.

The Town is also located within the Western Wisconsin Technology Zone which allows up to \$5M in state income tax credits and is administered by the MRRPC. The MRRPC also administers the La Crosse County Business Fund.

Important State and Federal Agency Jurisdiction

There are many state and federal agencies that affect planning in La Crosse County. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) District 5 plays a critical role in many aspects of the County's transportation system, from highway design and development to bicycle and pedestrian facilities

and networks. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also has a prominent role in the County because of the many DNR-owned land and facilities that are located here. The Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District is also located in the Town. The University of Wisconsin Extension office is in the City of La Crosse and serves as an educational resource for County residents. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a presence in the County because of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The U.S Army Corps of Engineers also maintains a presence in the County because of their ownership and management of locks and dams along the Mississippi River, which borders the western edge of the County. The County and its local units of government recognize the importance of working with these state and federal agencies and are committed to continuing an ongoing dialogue with these agencies, both during and after the development of this Comprehensive Plan.

School Districts

The Holmen School District comprises most of the Town of Onalaska as well as parts of the Towns of Holland and Hamilton. Portions of the Town are also served by the Onalaska School District and the Melrose-Mindoro School District.

Existing or Potential Conflicts and Processes to Resolve Conflicts

Potential areas of conflict include:

- Discrepancies between the Town of Onalaska's land use plan and the Village of Holmen's land use plan.
- Discrepancies between the land use classifications employed by the individual communities which comprise La Crosse County.
- Differences between the Town's environmental, agricultural, and bluff land preservation objectives and those of neighboring communities.
- School district planning and boundaries. Differences between the Town's priorities for commercial and industrial development and those of neighboring communities, specifically the Village of Holmen's proposals for development along its boundaries moving south toward CTH XX.
- The existence of large tracts of industrial zoned land in the Town.
- Stormwater management practices and natural resource protection.
- The location, type, and extent of housing development in the Town and subsequent impacts on the neighboring communities and the Holmen and Onalaska School Districts.
- The loss of tax base in the Town to annexation.
- The Village of Holmen's, the Cities' of Onalaska or La Crosse exercising their extraterritorial review authority to deny developments and/or failure to purchase or transfer development rights in the Town. This conflict may be with either the Town government and/or property owners. The Town absorbing the adverse financial impacts of implementing for the municipalities' plan(s).
- Annexations that would bisect the Town and create Town islands.

Potential conflict resolution solutions include:

- Maintaining a dialogue between the Town and surrounding communities via joint committees such as the Town Board and Village Board or the Onalaska Common Council and joint plan commission meetings.
- Draft and adopt intergovernmental and/or boundary agreements with neighboring communities (completed in 2016).

- Coordinate long range planning processes such as the comprehensive planning process (and future plan update processes) to identify and resolve incompatible goals, objectives and policies regarding development in the region; transportation plans; parks, recreation, and open space plans; and more.
- Identify a formal method for conflict resolution. Consider contracting with a private firm for mediation/dispute resolution services.
- Improve the exchange of information related to municipal issues and promote regular coordination between municipal staff and government representatives.
- Work with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, La Crosse County and other communities in the Coulee Region to establish Annual Leader's Meetings as described in the *City of La Crosse Confluence Plan*.
- Participate in the La Crosse County Technical Advisory Committee meetings which includes planning and zoning administrators from area cities, villages, and towns to discuss a predetermined subject to avoid conflicts.
- Building relationships through such efforts as cooperating on school district planning, sharing equipment, and staff, as well as identifying the most efficient means of providing public services to area residents and businesses.
- Revenue sharing.
- Participation in regional PDR or Transfer of Development Rights programs.

9. LAND USE

This element of the Comprehensive Plan contains goals, objectives, and actions to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element contains an analysis on opportunities for redevelopment and existing or potential land use conflicts. The element also explains future land use designations and delineates these uses on the Future Land Use Map. The Town Survey revealed many important elements for consideration from respondents. These include:

- New housing should be in and near developed areas
- A desire for more greenspace and less development
- It is a high priority to keep the Town mostly rural
- It is a high priority to for the Town to promote farmland preservation
- To retain rural character, the Town should purchase green space for preservation
- Development should occur in and near developed areas
- It is a high priority for the Town to protect natural resources

The Land Use Plan consists of the following elements:

1. Introduction
2. Goals
3. Objectives
4. Policies and Recommendations
5. Land Use Categories
6. Land Use Districts

Land use categories are the same or similar land uses located in different parts of the Town. For example, the “agricultural preservation” and “conservation residential categories” are located throughout the Town.

Each category has an overall purpose statement and policies that define what is allowable within the category.

Land Use Categories

1. Agricultural Preservation
2. Conservancy
3. Conservation Residential
4. Conservation Mixed Use
5. Urban Mixed Use
6. Residential

Unique geographic planning districts in the Town have been identified. Each district contains policies and standards that are intended to implement the overall land use goals in specific areas depending on existing land use patterns, the transportation system, environmental and archeological features, public input, and the ability to provide cost effective public infrastructure and services. While some descriptions and goals have been incorporated and repeated, the content and goals of the previous seven chapters should also be considered with the Land Use Plan in order to fully implement the Town’s Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Districts

1. Brice Prairie District
2. Great River Road District
3. Halfway Creek District
4. Sand Lake Creek District

GOALS

1. Ensure future growth reflects a sensitivity to the natural environment. Environmentally and archeologically sensitive areas, environmental corridors, and identified natural resource features shall be protected from development.
2. Ensure that new development is consistent with the Town's ability to provide cost-effective infrastructure and services both at the time the development occurs and in the long term and does not overburden existing Town residents and businesses.
3. Guide new development in the Town to planned growth areas, particularly in the Great River Road District.
4. Ensure all Town development and preservation regulations, standards, and programs implement this Plan.
5. Protect private property rights while at the same time promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare.
6. Protect the most productive agricultural lands in the Town by discouraging the introduction of non-compatible uses.
7. Encourage intergovernmental cooperation with the City of Onalaska, Village of Holmen, surrounding Towns and La Crosse County with respect to land use and preservation issues.
8. Protect and enhance the unique rural character of the Town by establishing and enforcing maximum density standards for all non-farm development as well as by enforcing design standards that require appropriate and quality designs for all new commercial, industrial, and institutional development in the community.
9. Allow a limited amount of planned, high-quality non-farm commercial, light industrial, business, and mixed-use development provided that such development is located in the designated pre-mapped areas.
10. Ensure high quality and sufficient quantity of water in the Town; protect groundwater aquifers and surface waters.

Land Use Objectives

1. Make land use decisions based on the Future Land Use and Map.
2. Work with La Crosse Count staff and officials to update zoning classifications and standards that will specifically address unique needs and recommendations in the plan.
3. Comprehensively review and update this Plan and Map at least every five years to ensure it continues to reflect current community values.
4. Ensure consistency between the Plan and implementing mechanisms.
5. Create incentives and programs to compensate private property owners for the protection of agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.
6. Promote infill and redevelopment in the Great River Road District.
7. Encourage higher density developments to be located in and immediately adjacent to urban areas.
8. Involve the public in Town planning efforts.

9. Create intergovernmental agreements to implement the Future Land Use Plan and Maps.
10. Participate in regional planning efforts to achieve a well planned regional land use pattern.

Land Use Policies & Recommendations

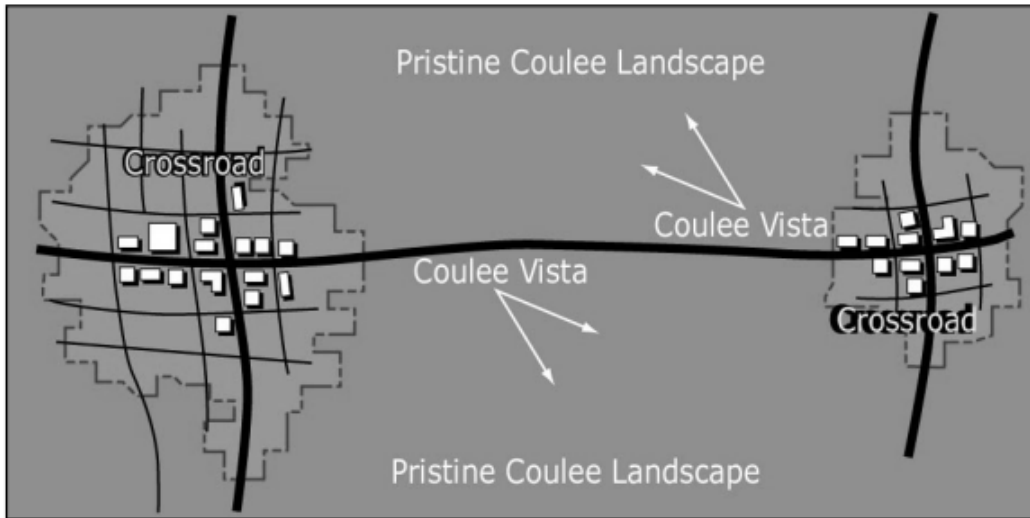
1. Create a Purchase of Development Rights Program and conduct a referendum.
2. Participate in local, regional, state and federal land protection programs.
3. Work with La Crosse County to update zoning ordinance for the Town of Onalaska either as a set of new zoning classifications or as a temporary measure between the time this Plan is adopted and the completion of the updated La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan.
4. Create a conservation subdivision ordinance to implement the Conservation Residential Category and the Conservation Mixed-Use Category.
5. Update development review procedures as described below.
6. Update land division ordinance to implement this Plan.
7. Prohibit development on slopes greater than 20 percent.
8. Consider hiring full or part-time land use/planning staff or contracting with a public/private, or non-profit entity to provide current planning services to the Town, to apply for grants and to coordinate with other municipalities on a daily basis.
9. Create intergovernmental agreements with the Village of Holmen, City of Onalaska, and La Crosse County.
10. Consider the financial impacts of new developments during the review process. Consider impact fees on new developments.
11. Implement Storm Water Management Plans.
12. Create a Storm Water Utility District.
13. Require new developments to retain a 100-year flood event on-site.
14. Implement the following conservation principles to the greatest extent possible in the Brice Prairie, Halfway Creek, and Sand Lake Creek Districts:
 - a. Cluster development in a manner to preserve water quality, working farms, unfragmented wildlife corridors, and woodlands.
 - b. Attempt to “hide” development from main roads to extent possible through natural topography, vegetation (e.g. tree lines, wooded edges, and setbacks). Minimize placement of lots in open fields.
 - c. Preserve mature trees, stone rows, fence lines, tree lines, and agricultural structures such as farmsteads, barns, and silos wherever possible.
 - d. Arrange lots so houses are not placed on exposed hill tops or ridge lines.
 - e. Include an interconnected network of streets. Lots shall be configured to minimize the amount of road length required to serve the development.
 - f. Design streets and lot layouts to blend with natural land contours.
 - g. Back lots onto County and State highways, designing deeper lots and landscape buffer yards into the areas.
 - h. Discourage creation of cul-de-sacs excepts in limited situations, such as where topography, environmentally sensitive areas or the pre-existing development pattern in the area necessitates their use.
 - i. Integrate natural resources into the subdivision design as aesthetic and conservation landscape elements. Minimize exotic landscaping, the size of building footprints, and

the amount of impervious surface devoted to roadways. Allow the natural landscape to dominate.

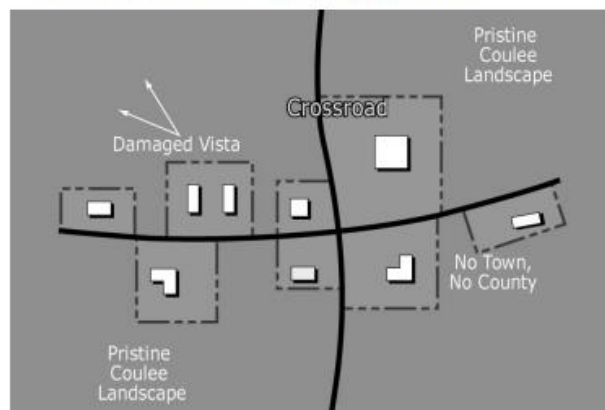
- j. Restore the quality and continuity of degraded environmental areas within the subdivisions, such as streams and wetlands.
- k. Encourage stormwater management treatment systems that focus on Best Management Practices (BMPs) rather than conventional engineering strategies. BMPs may include overland transfer, natural landscaping to increase infiltration and reduce runoff, bio-infiltration systems, residential roof runoff directed to pervious yard areas, and maximum impervious surface rations for development sites.
- l. Provide wide areas for public access to parks and common open spaces.
- m. Maximize preservation of common open space in the neighborhood through public dedication and/or private management of open space through a homeowner's association with conservation easements.
- n. Create pedestrian trails through open space areas, allowing for future connections to other areas.
- o. Land use patterns and site designs shall preserve the bluffs, scenic vistas, woodlands, wildlife habitat and associated rare features found only in the Driftless Area.
- p. Nestle structures below ridgelines and within the fold of the bluffs.
- q. Prohibit ridgetop "sky lining" that alters the natural land profiles with built structures or siting structures on ridgelines.
- r. Construct fences that are wildlife-friendly.
- s. Limit privacy fencing to areas immediately adjacent to the home.
- t. Place all utilities underground.
- u. Restrict or shield lighting so as to restrict horizontal and vertical light spillover, thereby preserving the dark night sky.
- v. Establish setback minimums to provide buffer space between common open space areas and buildings on private lots.

- w. Provide vegetative buffers between building sites, wetlands, and streams.

Recommended Rural Development Pattern



Discouraged Rural Development Pattern



Land Assessment

There are just over 27,000 acres of land within the Town of Onalaska's boundaries. About one third (32.4%) of the land is currently woodlands, 26.9% is agriculture and 30.1% is water. Residential uses in the Town account for nearly 5% of the total land. Commercial uses less than 1% of the total land within the Town. The Existing Land Use [Map 9.1](#) depicts this data.

Table 9.1 Land Use Town of Onalaska 2020

Existing Land Use	Total Acres	Percent of Town Land (%)
Agricultural	7,349	26.9
Commercial	64	0.23
Industrial	83	0.30

Parks & Recreation	223	0.81
Public	875	3.20
Residential	1,619	5.93
Woodland	8,834	32.4
Water	8,224	30.1
Other	0	0
2021 Subtotal	27,272	

Source: La Crosse County Farmland Preservation Plan 2021-2050

Development Density

The Town of Onalaska has an average density of 155 people per square mile. Within the Town there are 61.4 housing units per square mile. The Town of Onalaska's density is less than La Crosse County which has an average of 266.6 people in 113.5 housing units per square mile.

Table 9.2 Population and Household Density 2019

			Area in Square Miles			Density (sq. miles of land area)	
	Population	Housing Units	Total Area	Water Area	Land Area	Population	Housing Units
Town of Onalaska	5,736	2,270	44.9	7.9	37.0	155.0	61.4
Village of Holmen	9,854	3,816	7.26	0.0	7.26	1,394.4	525.6
City of Onalaska	18,662	8,135	10.9	0.6	10.3	1,811.4	789.8
La Crosse County	117,894	50,304	480	28	452	266.6	111.3

Source: America Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019, Density = Pop/land area, Housing units/land area

Intensity of Commercial and Light Industrial Districts

Intensity refers to height, bulk, and use associated with non-residential development. In the Town of Onalaska, this is regulated through the County Zoning ordinance. Previously the County Zoning ordinance excluded residential use in Commercial and Industrial Districts. Current zoning offers additional options of authorized Residential Districts within Commercial and Industrial Districts. The following Commercial and Light Industrial Zoning Districts are located throughout the Town and are illustrated in the Town of Onalaska Existing Zoning [Map 9.2](#).

The Commercial District authorizes Residential District "C" and commercial use. Commercial use includes retail, wholesale, offices, and service industry businesses. It also includes warehouses under 100,000 square feet (not to exceed 2), commercial animal establishments, bed and breakfast, and transient residential uses. Non-residential structures shall be a maximum height of 45 feet.

Authorized uses in the Light Industrial areas include any use authorized in the Commercial District: light manufacturing and assembly, distribution businesses, warehouses, and truck terminals and freight houses.

Land Use Trends

There are several notable trends related to the supply, demand, and sale of land within the Town of Onalaska. As the center of these trends is the fact that the Town of Onalaska is located in a highly desirable, growing region. As residential, commercial, office, tourism, and industrial growth pressures increase, the Town of Onalaska must define its role in the region and its policies to address local and regional growth.

Land Supply

An abundant amount of agricultural and open space land remains throughout the Town of Onalaska. Much of this land could potentially be available for development purposes. While many portions of the Town offer lands physically suited for development, the land use plan, and related land use regulations remain important considerations in determining the ultimate availability of land for different types of users.

Land Use Demand

From 2011-2021 the Town of Onalaska annexed 14 housing units and 41 residents of the Town to the Village of Holmen or City of Onalaska. This was a loss of 1003.34 acres with an average loss of 91.21 acres per year being annexed. There were 35 building permits acquired from 2016-2021. This is an average of 5.83 houses built per year in the Town.

The demand for residential land in the Town and region continues to grow. According to census records, the Town saw the construction of 116 new housing units from 2010 to 2020. This is an estimated average of 10.5 new homes built per year (higher than the actual value seen from Town records).

Aside from residential demand, there has been increasing growth in lodging, eating, and drinking establishments. Many of these developments are tied to tourism growth related to the natural resources in the area. These resources include the rivers, lakes, bluffs, and the Great River State Trail.

Land Prices

One method to analyze comparative land prices is to look at the cost of farmland for Towns in the area. Table 9.4 shows average farmland sales for the Towns of Holland and Onalaska and the average of all towns in La Crosse County from 2014 to 2018. The Town of Onalaska averaged a lower agricultural land value per acre compared to the Town of Holland and higher than the average of La Crosse County townships. Thirteen parcels of farmland were sold from 2014 to 2018 in the Town of Onalaska with a change in land value increasing 49.3%. This was a greater increase in sales price compared to the average of all La Crosse County townships (26.2%) and more than the increase the Town of Holland experienced at 27.3%. According to Wisconsin Agricultural Land Sales, La Crosse County sold 19 parcels, 966 acres, with an average cost of \$6,946 in 2019. UW Extension estimated farmland values to be at \$5,491 per acre in 2019 compared to the Town of Holland at \$5,253 per acre.

Table 9.3 Average Farmland Sales for Selected Towns in La Crosse County, 2014-2018

	Number of Parcels Sold	Total Acres	2014 Average Land Value per Acre (\$)	2018 Average Land Value per Acre (\$)	Change in Land Value per Acre 2014-2018 (%)
Town of Onalaska	13	669	3,500	5,225	49.3
Town of Holland	9	272	5,025	6,397	27.3
All La Crosse County Towns	121	3,696	3,845	4,852	26.2

Source: DOR 2014-2018

Future Land Use Projections

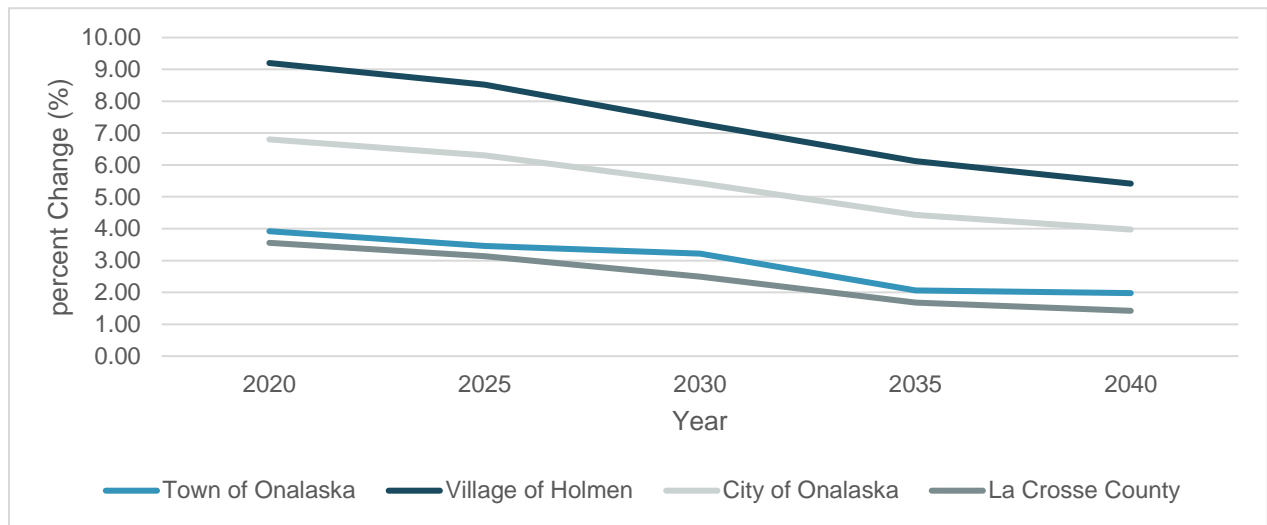
From 2010 to 2019, the Town of Onalaska has, on average, increased housing units 24.7 units or 1.4% per year. As discussed in the Housing Section, the Town of Onalaska is projected to need approximately 332 housing units between 2015 and 2040. This will increase the current supply 15.5% between 2015 and 2040. To compare, the Village of Holmen will see a 42% increase in households, while La Crosse County will see an increase of 13%. Based on data from Table 9.5, 5-year projections were determined for growth depicted in Figure 9.1. From 2020 to 2025, housing is predicted to increase by 3.5% and from 2025 to 2030, 3.2% in the Town of Onalaska.

Table 9.4 Projected Housing Units 2015 to 2040 - DOA

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Town of Onalaska	2,143	2,227	2,304	2,378	2,427	2,475
Village of Holmen	3,750	4,095	4,444	4,768	5,060	5,334
City of Onalaska	7,895	8,432	8,963	9,449	9,868	10,260
La Crosse County	48,658	50,388	51,968	53,262	54,159	54,929

Source: DOA 2013, US Census Bureau 2010

Figure 9.1 Housing Unit Trends 2020-2040



Source: DOA 2013, US Census Bureau

Single Family, Multi-Family, and Mobile Home Residential land use accounts for 1,051 acres of land in the Town in 2020. In 2020, there were approximately 1,577 homes in the Town. On average, a residential unit is on 0.66 acres based on this data. The majority of land in the Town of Onalaska is classified as Woodlands (34.2%), Wetlands (27.9%), and Agriculture (24.1%) (Table 8.1). As the Town is projected to need more residential area, approximately 170 acres is needed from 2020 to 2030 to account for the projected housing increase while maintaining an average of 0.66 acres per housing unit.

La Crosse County made projections for residential area in acreage needed in the next 20 years. This is based on population density in 2020, projected population change from 2020-2030 (DOA), and proposed projections from the steering committee using core values of the La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan 2022. These values have been calculated to adjust for market changes in the next 20 years. The Town of Onalaska is projected to need 1,080 acres for residential units in the next 20 years. This accounts for approximately 23% of the growth in all the town of La Crosse County.

Table 9.5 La Crosse County Acreage Projections for Residential Area

	2020 Population Density (pop./acre)	2030 Population Projected Change	Acres of Residential Land Use Projected Need for 10 Years	20 Year Acreage Projections
Town of Onalaska	3.79	315	270	1,080
Village of Holmen	14.95	1,560	175	702
City of Onalaska	12.59	2,090	219	877
All Towns in La Crosse County	3.366	1,755	1,809	4,648

Source: La Crosse County Planning Department 2021, La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan 2022

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Opportunities for redevelopment primarily occur on lands near or adjacent to the U.S. Highway 53 and the State Trunk Highway 35, identified in the Land Use Plan as the Great River Road District. The Brice Prairie Master Plan, adopted in 2006, notes areas for new development accounting for environmental conflicts and current residential and agricultural lands. The Brice Prairie Master Plan assesses three measures of capacity – environmental, emergency service response time, and transportation. Recommendations for development and goals from the plan have been incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan Update and Future Land Use Map.

Existing or Potential Land Use Conflicts

The following land use conflicts should be considered in the planning process:

- Future use for the industrial zoned property in Brice Prairie
- Considering the role of PDR and TDR programs in the Town
- Ongoing conflicts between the desire to protect scenic areas, rural character, and agricultural lands with increased development pressure and private property owner's interests
- Areas of water retention, flooding, and water related hazards pose a threat to existing residential areas and make it more difficult to plan for new development

Land Use Categories

Land Use Categories
<p>This section outlines all the planned future land use areas for the Town of Onalaska. Each area contains an overall purpose statement and detailed policies that define what is allowable in each area. Additional policies and standards that are specific to a geographic area in the Town are included in the latter section and are meant to supplement these policies, as directed. Each category may consist of multiple related zoning districts.</p>
<p><i>Agricultural Preservation Category</i></p>
<p><i>Purpose</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preserve productive agricultural land.2. Preserve productive farms by preventing land use conflicts between incompatible uses.3. Maintain a viable agricultural base to support agricultural processing and service industries.4. Reduce costs for providing services to scattered non-farm uses.5. Create solutions to maintain the agricultural base and limit rezoning from agricultural zoning districts to non-agricultural districts.
<p><i>Policies:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lands to be included in this category are those areas with productive farm operations including lands historically exhibiting good crop yields or capable of such yields; lands which have been demonstrated to be productive for dairying, livestock raising and grazing; other lands which are integral parts of farm operations; land uses for the production of specialty

crops such as mint, sod, fruits and vegetables; and lands which are capable of productive use through economically feasible improvements such as irrigation.

2. Non-farm related commercial and industrial uses shall not be permitted in this planning category.
3. Purchase development rights or conservation easements should be a priority in this category.
4. Support conservation efforts and best management practices to protect air and water quality on and adjacent to agricultural lands.
5. Rezoning Criteria: The Town Plan Commission and Town Board should consider each of the following criteria in reviewing rezoning applications from an agricultural zoning district to a non-agricultural zoning district.
 - a. Rezone is consistent with the adopted Future Land Use Map and related policies outlined in the Plan.
 - b. Land proposed for rezoning does not have history of productive farming activities or is not viable for long-term agricultural use.
 - c. The activity allowed by the proposed rezone will not limit the surrounding land's potential for agricultural use.
 - d. Land is too small to be economically used for agricultural purposes or is inaccessible to the farm machinery needed to produce and harvest agricultural products.
 - e. The land is located such that there would be minimum conflicts with surrounding agricultural uses.
 - f. The land does not include important natural features such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, significant woodlands which would be adversely affected by non-farm development.
 - g. The lay of the land will allow for construction of road or driveway that is suitable for emergency vehicle travel. Safe access from the road or driveway onto existing roadways shall be required.
 - h. There is a demonstrated need for additional non-farm development in the Town.
 - i. Only land that is comprised of soils that are suitable for on-site septic system shall be considered for rezoning.
 - j. Provision of public facilities to accommodate the proposed development will not place an unreasonable burden on the ability of the Town of Onalaska to provide those facilities. The petitioner must demonstrate to the Town that the current levels of services in the Town (including but not limited to school capacity, transportation system capacity, emergency services, parks and open space availability) are adequate to serve the proposed use.
 - k. The land proposed for rezoning is suitable for development and will not result in undue water or air pollution, cause unreasonable soil erosion or have an unreasonable adverse effect on rare or irreplaceable natural areas (such as floodplains, wetlands, bluffs, steep slopes, and woodlands).

Conservancy Category

Purpose

1. To preserve environmentally sensitive and archeological areas, including but not limited to wetlands, 100 year floodplain, wet soils, steep slopes, wildlife corridors, and archeological

sites. This category does not prevent existing uses, such as agriculture, from being continued.

Policies

1. Recognize that the 100 year floodplain, wetlands, wet soils, and steep slopes are sensitive environmental features that are extremely important in preserving groundwater quality.
2. New development in these areas shall be limited and these areas should not otherwise be altered unless such alteration would result in an enhancement of the natural resources being restores.
3. Recognize that these environmentally sensitive areas have soils with a limited capability of supporting development.
4. Minor additions (up to 10 percent increase in gross floor area in width) and tear down/rebuilds of existing structures are permitted.

Conservation Residential Category

The conservation residential category identifies areas in which new residential development can occur near or adjacent to naturally or archeologically important areas.

Purpose

1. To provide opportunities for conservation developments that allows single family residential development near or around open spaces. Specifically, these open spaces will provide for the continuation of existing or expanded agricultural operations, natural resource preservation, archeological preservation and/or recreation in these areas. A conservation development is defined by both its design and process by which it is created.

Policies

1. Evaluate new conservation residential developments based on the conservation design principles described in Land Use Policies and Recommendation 14. Provide the list of conservation design principles to prospective developers and property owners considering a conservation residential development so they are incorporated into the design at the start of the process to the greatest extent possible.
2. It is anticipated that new developments should generally maintain a minimum of 60% of the gross acreage as open space. No more than 50% of the required open space may consist of water bodies, ponds, floodplain, wetlands, or archeological sites.
3. Ensure the level and/or type of development does not require major expansion of roads or provision of services.
4. Conservation Development Creation Process: The conservation development ordinance shall generally include the following steps that are necessary to create a conservation development.
 - a. Initial Conference: Before submitting an application for a conservation development, the applicant shall meet with Town staff or representatives of the Town Plan Commission to discuss the process and requirements for a conservation subdivision. This will allow the Town a more proactive role in discussing any developments and reduce the costs of development.

- b. Initial Application: The applicant shall prepare a site analysis showing sensitive natural features, prime farmland, hydrological characteristics, existing land cover, current land use, known critical habitat areas, site views and viewsheds, geological resources, cultural resources.
 - c. Determine Amount of Development Allowed: The applicant shall then submit information showing the maximum number of dwelling units that would be permitted under the current zoning ordinance, consistent with all standards.
 - d. Site Analysis and Concept Plan: Using the number of lots allowed as identified in the previous step, the applicant will then submit a concept plan (or “sketch plan”) identifying open space and natural areas to preserve and those that will be disturbed, general street and lot layout, number and type of housing units, preliminary development envelopes showing areas for lots, and a general location map for all of these features. In this example the applicant could place 8 lots in various clusters, depending on site conditions.
 - e. Review Initial Application: Town Plan Commission will provide comment on the submitted concept plan.
 - f. Preliminary Plan Review: Following review and comment of the Plan Commission on the concept plan, the applicant shall file a preliminary plat for review, as currently required.
 - g. Final Plan Review and Approval: Based on approval of the preliminary plat, the Town will then review and approve the final plat, as with other subdivision developments.
5. **Lot Requirements**: Lots should generally meet the following minimum standards of the zoning district and Town ordinance. More restrictive standards may be necessary depending upon the detailed review of soil conditions.

Conservation Mixed-Use Category

The conservation mixed-use district identifies areas in which conservation-based mixed-use developments can locate.

Purpose:

- 1. To provide a compatible mix of uses in a development(s) that preserves and enhances the Town’s rural character and resources while also providing places to live, work, recreate, and more.
- 2. To create attractive, vibrant mixed-use areas in the community based on community values and traditional Town planning principles. These principles:
 - a. Encourage compact development (buildings closer together than in rural parts of the Town) designed to encourage walking and biking.
 - b. Create distinct transitions from urban to rural areas.
 - c. Establish well-defined town centers which serve as both community gathering places and commercial centers, and also include other compatible uses described below.
 - d. Facilitate transportation/street systems based on the concept of providing alternative routes and modes for getting from place to place.

- e. Integrating appropriately scaled commercial areas, parks, open space, and public and recreational facilities within close proximity to town centers.
3. To provide an alternative development option for the existing industrial zoned properties on Brice Prairie.

Policies

1. New developments should generally maintain a minimum of 60% of the gross acreage as open space. No more than 50% of the required open space may consist of water bodies, ponds, floodplain, wetlands, or archeological sites.
2. The mix of compatible uses and development standards should be established in a new Conservation Subdivision Ordinance. In general, the uses should be compatible internally within the Town Center or development, and externally with existing and surrounding uses. In general, appropriate uses include:
 - a. Public and non-profit
 - b. Office
 - c. Commercial
 - d. Recreation
 - e. Residential
 - f. Open Space
 - g. Education
 - h. Agriculture
3. The physical design of any development in this district should primarily be based on the principles described for Conservation Residential development.
4. The process by which any conservation mixed use development is created and reviewed should be the same as the Conservation Residential category.
5. Ensure that the level and/or type of development does not require major expansion of roads or provision of services.

Urban Mixed Use Category

The urban mixed use category is primarily the same as the Great River Road District described in the Great River Road District Section. This category identifies lands near or immediately adjacent to the Village of Holmen and City of Onalaska, primarily on the west side of the Village and City boundaries, that will likely be annexed into the municipalities in the future or are likely to be served with urban infrastructure and services. The District also includes Midway Town Center.

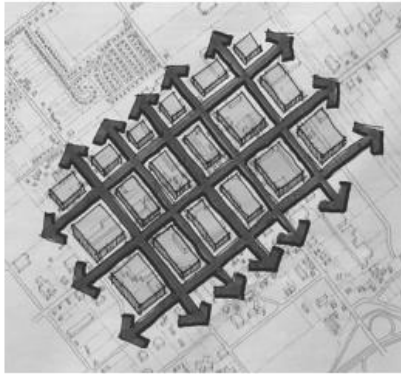
Purpose:

1. To efficiently use land and energy resources by promoting compact building forms and infill development.
2. To fully utilize urban infrastructure and services.
3. To create attractive, vibrant mixed-use areas, including a variety of housing choices, employment areas, civic uses, small-scale retail options, and recreation and open space amenities.
4. To provide different transportation options, including the automobile, transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

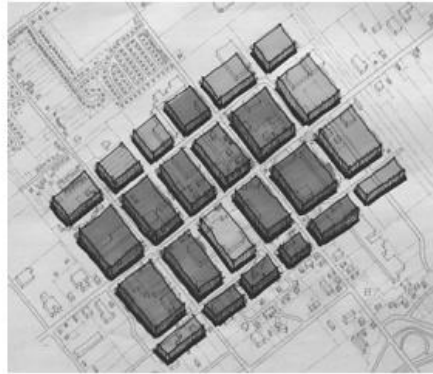
Policies

1. Areas within this category are intended to accommodate the following general mix of uses:
 - a. Public and non-profit
 - b. Office
 - c. Commercial
 - d. Light industrial/manufacturing
 - e. Recreation
 - f. Residential
 - g. Open Space
 - h. Education
 - i. Agriculture
2. Support infill and redevelopment, particularly along the Great River Road, and consider providing incentives to encourage redevelopment of key properties.
3. Encourage higher densities and intensities of land use and development in appropriate locations – depending on issues such as topography, transportation access, and availability of urban services and infrastructure.
4. Work with the County to create appropriate mixed-use zoning district for this land use category, which allows a variety of compatible land uses and design standards.
5. Implement the following general design principles for the Urban Mixed Use Category. These principles, which are illustrated below, include the following:
 - a. Develop a network of streets.
 - b. Plan for an integrated mix of complementary land use.
 - c. Design streets as public amenities.
 - d. Orient buildings to the street.

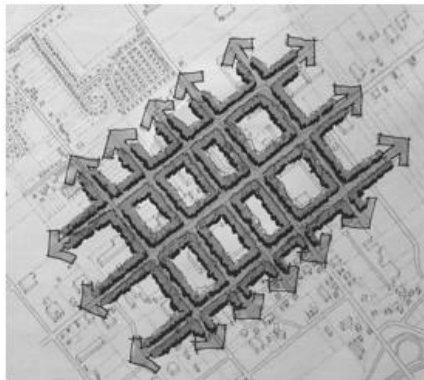
**Design Principles:
Develop a Network of Streets**



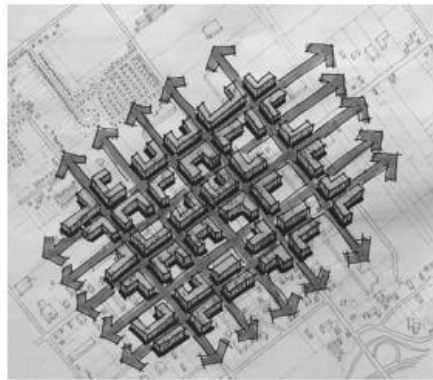
**Site Design Principles:
Plan for an Integrated Mix Of
Land Uses**



**Site Design Principles:
Design Streets as Public
Amenities**



**Site Design Principles:
Orient Buildings to the Street**



O

Residential Category

The residential category identifies areas in which existing and new neighborhoods should be located. This category recognizes existing residential development within the Town and designates some potential traditional residential development adjacent to the urban service areas of the Village of Holmen and City of Onalaska. All other potential residential subdivisions within the Town shall be designated and developed as Conservation Residential.

Purpose:

1. To protect existing neighborhoods and create new neighborhoods as high quality places to live.

Policies

1. Ensure that new, non-agricultural uses do not adversely impact residential areas.

2. Build quality neighborhoods, not just subdivisions. Neighborhoods are engaging places where people want to live because they can enjoy convenient access to open spaces and recreational amenities. Enhance existing neighborhoods by expanding access to open spaces and recreational amenities.
3. New neighborhoods should be located on lands immediately adjacent to existing developments with priority given to infill development or redevelopment.
4. New neighborhoods should include public spaces such as parks.
5. The street network shall form a generally connected pattern and be integrated into the Town-wide road system when possible.
6. Neighborhood street patterns should incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the neighborhood and provide connections to existing trails, bicycle routes, and trail systems.
7. Street patterns should be designed to respect and follow existing terrain as much as possible, to minimize earthmoving and disruption of existing topography.
8. Neighborhood layout and street patterns should preserve existing significant natural features.
9. Prohibit incompatible uses near existing or planned neighborhoods.
10. Encourage the creation of buffer areas between neighborhoods and existing incompatible uses.
11. Provide and incorporate common areas within clusters of homes.

Planning Districts

Brice Prairie District

Goals and Objectives:

1. Promote conservation, agriculture, and limited conservation-based development as preferred land uses.
2. Explore policies, programs, and compensation mechanisms that will allow for alternatives to industrial uses for undeveloped properties with that zoning definition.
3. Prohibit the rezoning of Exclusive Agricultural Zoning Districts.
4. Ensure that zoning is brought into consistency with the Town's Land Use Plan designations.
5. Protect and enhance Brice Prairie's status as a recreational gateway to the Great River State Recreational Trail, Lake Onalaska, the Black River Bottoms, and other areas within the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.
6. Encourage redevelopment opportunities to focus land use conservation design principles.

Policies:

1. Planned Land Uses: As illustrated on the future land use plan map, the following new uses are planned for Brice Prairie planning area in the locations specified:
 - Agriculture Preservation
 - Conservancy
 - Conservation Residential
 - Conservation Mixed Use
 - Residential

All densities, intensities, design standards, and processes described in each of these districts shall apply unless otherwise noted as specific policy for Brice Prairie.

2. Existing Land Uses to Continue: As illustrated on the future land use map, existing residential and business uses have been designated either as Residential or Conservation Mixed Use land uses. Existing residential and business uses shall continue based on their current zoning and other applicable standards:
 - Single Family Residential
 - Businesses (Commercial and Industrial) in existence as indicated in the County's land use inventory as of the date of the adoption of this Plan.
3. Detailed Site Plan: Any detailed site plan prepared, as recommended in previous Town Plans, shall be based on the general land use pattern illustrated on the Future Land Use Map, a document that has been created with public input for this area.
4. Existing Industrial Zoned Lands: The Town, County, public and property owners should collectively work toward an agreeable development/conservation plan for this property south of the rail road tracks. This Plan designates the areas as Conservation Mixed Use. The Plan for these properties should include a mix of complimentary uses such as public, recreation, commercial, housing, and open space designed in a way that protects environmental and archeological resources (if such resources exist), is cost-effective for the Town to provide services to, and is in an appropriate scale for the area. In addition, some of the development rights or land may be purchased.
5. Agricultural Transition Zoning District: The existing zoning ordinance states that properties currently zoned "Agricultural Transition" shall be reviewed as to whether or not the lands shall be transferred to another zoning district at a minimum of every 5 years. The adopted land use plan shall be considered a significant determining factor regarding the transition of those lands. Lands currently zoned Agricultural Transition and currently identified as non-agriculture planned land use in the adopted Comprehensive Plan shall be considered for transition to a corresponding zoning district, (provided all applicable standards in the plan and supporting ordinances are met) to match the master plan of Brice Prairie.

Lands currently identified to remain in "Agricultural Preservation" in the Plan shall not be considered appropriate for transition, until such a time that the Comprehensive Plan is amended to allow for such a use. Such an amendment will be considered a major plan amendment and shall require for full public review and comment on the proposed zoning change before any formal plan amendment takes place. The plan amendment shall be necessary before changes to zoning occur except for rezoning to Exclusive Ag. or Conservancy.

6. Protect the ability of Brice Prairie to function within its current infrastructure by ensuring that development does not trigger a requirement to provide expanded roads, sewer and water, and other services.

Actions:

1. The Town should create and use a PDR Program to buy development rights for properties in environmentally and archaeologically sensitive areas and agricultural preservation areas on Brice Prairie.
2. Create a new multi-use trail, parallel to the Great River Trail, from intersection CTH Z/ZN to the Black River with connections to the Great River Trail and CTH Z.
3. Develop a second bike trail through Brice Prairie running along major subdivision and connect to Great River bike trail.

4. Black River Environmentally Sensitive Area: The lands at the far western end of Brice Prairie should be protected and should be considered a priority area for Purchase of Development Rights Program and/or create a 10-20 acre park and/or natural conservancy open space recreational area compatible with the nearby and adjacent refuge land and potentially contiguous with Town owned lands (old land fill).
5. Prohibit new development between the rail road tracks and CTH XX.
6. Avoid non-native vegetation.
7. Work to preserve parking areas south of County Road Z across from Metallics to continue to serve Mosey Lane users and/or identify and acquire alternative parking.
8. Work to increase and enhance public access to Lake Onalaska and Black River.

Great River Road District

The Great River Road District is the Town's identified "Smart Growth Area."

Goals and Objectives:

1. Maintain a connection between the two sides of the Town, preserving it as one community in identity even if/when the lands within the district are annexed into the City or Village.
2. Establish the Great River Road corridor as a showcase area in the region with high quality visual character and outstanding getaways into the Town. The corridor should contain a mix of vibrant land uses, dramatic views, and attractive and safe streetscape features.
3. Enhance the visual character (such as burying overhead utility lines) and identity of this corridor.
4. Encourage urban development with higher densities and more intensive levels of development (size, use, impact) along the U.S. Highway 53 and STH 35 corridors.
5. Encourage infill and redevelopment in areas served by or in close proximity to existing urban infrastructure and services.
6. Provide jobs and housing close to transportation corridors.
7. Enhance the Midway areas as a mixed-use hamlet and gateway to Brice Prairie.

Policies:

1. Planned Land Uses: As illustrated on the Future Land Use Map, the following new uses are planned for the Great River Road District.
 - Conservation Mixed Use
 - Urban Mixed Use
 - Residential
2. Priority to any rezoning or substantial construction activity, Town should coordinate the development review process with the appropriate adjacent municipality – the Village of Holmen and/or the City of Onalaska – to address such issues are the following.
 - a. Require and review a detailed site design plan, which should also be referred to the County, Village and/or City, for comments. This site design plan would address location of buildings; open spaces; landscape design; sidewalks – trails or walkways; signage; access; internal traffic circulation; water and sewer service; lighting; and parking areas.
 - b. Compliance with the Village or City's Comprehensive Plan and the Town's plan.
 - c. Compliance with the Town's Stormwater Management Ordinance.

- d. Provision of public infrastructure and services, and development standards.
 - e. The mix and location of land uses, intensities and densities.
 - f. Transportation and open space connections to existing systems in both communities. Areas of new construction are located to preserve natural resources, cultural features and scenic vistas. Modification of existing topography should be minimized to the greatest extent possible.
3. New or redevelopments between CTH XX and U.S Highway 53 should achieve the following principles:
- a. Preserve the natural topography and significant vegetation to the greatest extent possible.
 - b. “Hides” development along the bluff to the greatest extent possible through appropriate building height, color (natural tones), outdoor lighting (downcast), and landscaping.
 - c. Preserves or provides scenic vistas of Brice Prairie and the Mississippi River Valley.
 - d. Does not adversely impact environmentally sensitive area in the Town between CTH XX and the railroad.
 - e. Does not encourage significant volumes of automobile or truck traffic on CTH XX; traffic should be directed to the Village of Holmen and major transportation facilities such as the Great River Road and/or U.S. Highway 53 rather than cut-through traffic to Midway.
 - f. Complies with or exceeds the standards contained in the Town’s Stormwater Management Ordinance.
4. The land area bordered by STH 35 on the east, CTH OT on the south, Filler Court on the west, and U.S. Highway 53 on the north is recommended for mixed use commercial (e.g. commercial, office, service, restaurant, retail, hospitality).
5. Provide for safe and convenient automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit options (transit may not be available in all areas of the district).
6. Conventional strip commercial development (isolated, low scale, minimal landscaping and architecture features, parking dominated property frontage) is prohibited.
7. Support infill and redevelopment throughout this District.
8. Consider creating a general plan to enhance Midway as an important town center. This plan may include locations for new buildings, general design guidelines, and desired uses.
9. Rezone areas within the “urban mixed use” category with a flexible, mixed-use zoning district.
10. Encourage physical connections that connect both sides of the Town across this District. For example, banners, streetscape features, etc. could be provided along CTH OT to connect the Town as this area redevelops.
11. Encourage the development of a bike trail from Holmen that would generally follow Halfway Creek to Midway where it would connect with the Great River Trail.
12. Enhance Midway as a Town Center and the Gateway to Brice Prairie.
- a. Direct a limited amount of development and infill development, but not larger-scale expansion. Limited infill housing or commercial development that is consistent with the prevailing character of Midway. Basic site and building design guidelines may be desirable for infill development.
 - b. Midway is identified as a “Conservation Mixed Use Area.” Desired uses include small scale commercial, residential, and eco-tourism based businesses. New

businesses should be of the same size and scale of what exists at the adoption of this plan.

Actions:

1. Work with the City of Onalaska and Village of Holmen on the Great River Road (State Highway 35) wayfinding signage and guiding tourists toward local businesses.
2. Where feasible, consolidate private access drives into shared drives that serve multiple commercial and industrial properties.
3. Improve internal circulation within and between commercial and industrial properties through use of shared parking areas and access drives where appropriate.
4. Consider the use of rear access drives to facilitate internal circulation in commercial areas and between commercial areas and adjacent residential or employment centers.
5. Create high quality gateways into the Town at the following intersections:
 - a. CTH OT
 - b. CTH Z
 - c. CTH D
 - d. CTH S
6. Require landscaping or decorative fencing to screen parking areas where they abut the corridor streets.
7. Parking areas shall incorporate lighting, landscaping, and pedestrian walkways.
8. Remove, relocate, bury, or screen overhead power lines wherever possible, in conjunction with street reconstruction or redevelopment.
9. Promote the removal of billboards and other large signs.
10. Encourage the development of the Halfway Creek recreational trail between the Holmen Village Park to Midway where it would connect with the Great River Trail.
11. Create an attractive entrance to the Midway Town Center.
12. Work with the City of Onalaska and Village of Holmen to determine the most cost effective method of providing services to Town islands within the City, or areas of the Town that are inefficient to provide services to in the City and Village.

Halfway Creek District

Goals and Objectives:

1. Maintain the existing character by allowing only conservation residential and agricultural uses in the district.
2. Establish a common long-term vision and plan for the district with the Village of Holmen (this should occur as part of creating an intergovernmental agreement between the two communities).
3. New multiple lot developments should be created in an orderly fashion in/from the Village of Holmen to the east where a full range of public services can more economically be provided.
4. Protect farmland and environmentally sensitive areas; and create policies, programs, and compensation mechanisms to preserve agricultural lands and operations, and environmentally sensitive areas.
5. Limit the rezoning of Exclusive Agriculture lands and ensure that any such rezonings of Exclusive Agriculture lands meets the criteria described in the "Agricultural Preservation" category. Rezonings in the Town should be limited to "Conservation

Residential” development unless the Plan is amended to reflect other land uses in this district.

Policies:

1. Planned Land Uses: As illustrated on the future land use plan map, the following uses are planned for the Halfway Creek District in the locations specified on the map:
 - Agriculture Preservation
 - Conservancy
 - Conservation Residential
 - Residential
2. Coordinate development review processes with the Village of Holmen for properties within the Village’s extraterritorial jurisdiction.
3. Implement the conservation design principles previously described in this section.
4. Support only new developments that are contiguous to the Village of Holmen or existing neighborhoods. Do not approve “leap frog” development – new development which is separated from existing development by substantial vacant land. This scattered development pattern costs more to serve with existing and new public infrastructure and services than compact or contiguous development patterns.
5. Consider requiring transportation impact studies for new developments with more than 5 dwelling units because of limited access to this district, impacts on adjacent communities, and costs of providing services (e.g. snow plowing, emergency).

Actions:

1. Development proposals within the Village of Holmen’s extraterritorial jurisdiction (1.5 miles beyond Village limits): Town and Village staff/officials should discuss the consistency of the proposal with each community’s comprehensive plan and respective desired future land use(s) for the property. The Town should refer development application to the Village for review prior to the Town’s consideration of the application. The Town should only approve development applications in this boundary if the Village approves/does not object to the proposal.
2. Consider creating a system of connected open spaces and trails within this district and connected to surrounding towns, the City and Village, and regional open space and trails.
3. Create and implement a PDR Program in this district to buy development rights for farms, and environmentally and archeologically sensitive areas.
4. Take measure to protect Halfway Creek and its tributaries from development by utilizing vegetative buffers for protection and monitoring erosion control plans for new developments.

Sand Lake Creek District

Goals and Objectives:

1. Maintain the existing character by allowing only conservation residential and agricultural uses in this coulee district, except the existing light industrial use that will likely be annexed into the City of Onalaska.

2. New multiple lot conservation developments should be created in an orderly fashion in/from the City of Onalaska to the north/east and/or extension of existing neighborhoods.
3. Protect viable farmland, wooded areas, and steep slopes to the greatest extent possible.
4. Limit the rezoning of Exclusive Agriculture lands.

Policies:

1. Planned Land Uses: As illustrated on the future land use plan map, the following uses are planned for the Sand Lake Creek District in the locations specified on the map:
 - Agriculture Preservation
 - Conservancy
 - Conservation Residential
 - Residential
2. Coordinate development review processes with the City of Onalaska for properties within the City's extraterritorial jurisdictions.
3. Implement the conservation design principles as described in this section.
4. Consider creating a system of connected open spaces and trails within the district and connected to surrounding towns, the City and Village, and regional open space and trail systems.

Actions:

1. Refer development applications to the City of Onalaska for review and comment prior to the Town's consideration of the application.
2. Create and implement a PDR Program in this district to buy development rights for farms and wooded areas.
3. Monitor the viability of farming in this district, which is likely to become challenging and constrained with the combination of additional development and environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. steep slopes and significant woodlands). If the viability of farming decreases, the Town should consider purchasing development rights or amending the Plan to provide conservation residential development.
4. Implement the Storm Water Management Ordinance to protect Green Coulee Creek and Sand Lake Creek from becoming a major storm water drainage channel by utilizing vegetative protection and monitoring erosion control plans for new developments.

Future Land Use

Map 9.3 Future Land Use is the Land Use Plan for the next 20-year planning period. This map accompanies this element to provide visual determinations for land use decision making.

10. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan involves decision-making by both public officials and the citizens of the community. These decisions will be measured by the concern for the welfare of the general community, the willingness to make substantial investments for improvement within the community, and the realization that certain procedures must be adhered to for the continued high-quality environment found within the Town. Suggested implementation measures include:

- The implementation and enforcement of regulatory ordinances and non-regulatory activities based on the goals and objectives identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
- The development of programs and support systems that further the goals and objectives set forth by the Town in this Plan.
- The establishment and support of a continued planning process providing for periodic review and updates to the Plan and land use control measures.
- The support of committees and local organizations to carry out specific community improvements as identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

9.1 *Regulatory Measures*

Regulatory measures used to guide development are an important means of implementing the recommendations of a comprehensive plan. Various examples, including the County zoning ordinance and Onalaska subdivision regulations, comprise the principal regulatory devices used to protect existing development as well as help to guide future growth and development as identified in this Plan. The Town, County or State officially adopts these regulatory and land use control measures as ordinances (or as revisions to the existing ordinances).

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.

9.2.1 **Zoning Ordinance**

Zoning is used to guide and control the use of land and structures on land. In addition, zoning establishes detailed regulations concerning the areas of lots that may be developed, including setbacks and separation for structures, the density of the development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose for zoning is to avoid undesirable side effects of development by segregating incompatible uses and by maintaining adequate standards for individual uses.

The establishment of zoning districts is generally conducted after careful consideration of the development patterns indicated in the Plan. Amending zoning district boundaries has the overall effect of changing the plan (unless amendments correspond to changes within the plan), therefore,

it is reasonable to assume that indiscriminate changes may result in weakening of the plan. La Crosse County controls the content of the zoning ordinance and the Town of Onalaska along with the County determine the local district map. These decisions are preceded by public hearings and Plan Commission recommendations.

9.2.2 Land Division Regulations

Instituting development standards for land subdivisions 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 and 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 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 Maps

An official map shows the location of areas which the municipality has identified as necessary for future public streets, recreation areas, and other public grounds. By showing the area on the official map, the municipality puts the property owner on notice that the property has been reserved for future taking for a public facility or purpose. The municipality may refuse to issue a permit for any building or development on the designated parcel; however, the municipality has one year to purchase the property upon notice by the owner of the intended development.

There are no immediate plans for the Town to draft an official map. However, should local officials want to ensure consistency of the Future Land Use Plan with capital improvements, an official map should be drafted.

Action: Adopt an official map if, or at which time, changes in the rate of development require increased long-term infrastructure planning.

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, government is providing a check-off point to ensure 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

This is an ongoing financial planning program intended to help implement planning proposals. The program allows local communities to plan for capital expenditures and minimize unplanned expenses. Capital improvements or expenditures are those projects that require the expenditure of public funds for the acquisition or construction of a needed physical facility.

Capital improvement plans list proposed projects according to a schedule of priorities over the next few years. It identifies needed public improvements, estimates their costs, discusses financing options, and establishes priorities over a 3-to-5-year programming period. Improvements or acquisitions considered a capital improvement include:

- Public buildings
- Park acquisition and development
- Roads and highways
- Utility construction
- Joint school and other community development projects
- Fire protection equipment

A capital improvement plan or program is simply a method of financial planning for these types of improvements and scheduling the expenditures over a period of several years in order to maximize the utility of public funds. Each year the capital improvement program should be extended one year to compensate for the previous year that was completed. This keeps the improvement program current and can be modified to the community's changing needs.

Preparation of a Capital Improvement Program

The preparation of a Capital Improvement Program is normally the joint responsibility between the community administrator or plan commission, municipal staff, governing body, and citizen commissions. The preparation of a capital improvement program may vary from community to community depending on local preferences, the local form of government and available staff. In communities that have a community development plan or comprehensive plan, a planning agency review of the proposed capital improvement program is desirable.

The Town of Onalaska does not currently prepare a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). It is not likely that the Town will need to develop a CIP in the near future, but over the 20-year life of this plan the need for more formalized capital improvements planning may become evident.

Action: When formalization of multiple infrastructure projects is forecast, develop a CIP to plan and earmark funding for public facilities development and spending.

9.3 Consistency Among Plan Elements

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the implementation element describe how each of the nine elements will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. Since the Town of Onalaska completed all planning elements simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist. Further, the Action Plan at the end of this chapter consolidates actions and policies from throughout the plan reducing overlap and ensuring consistency.

This Comprehensive Plan references previous planning efforts, and details future planning needs. To keep consistency with the Comprehensive Plan the Town should incorporate existing plans as components to the Comprehensive Plan and adopt all future plans as detailed elements of this Plan.

The Town of Onalaska will continue to make educated decisions based upon available information and public opinion. Planning will occur consistent with the 20-Year Planning Vision (page 1-1, Introduction) and decisions will incorporate a comprehensive outlook based on all nine elements in this plan.

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.

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The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the implementation element describe how each of the nine elements will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. Since the Town of Onalaska completed all planning elements simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist. Further, the Action Plan at the end of this chapter consolidates actions and policies from throughout the plan reducing overlap and ensuring consistency.

This Comprehensive Plan references previous planning efforts, and details future planning needs. To keep consistency with the Comprehensive Plan the Town should incorporate existing plans as components to the Comprehensive Plan and adopt all future plans as detailed elements of this Plan.

The Town of Onalaska will continue to make educated decisions based upon available information and public opinion. Planning will occur consistent with the 20-Year Planning Vision (page 1-1, Introduction) and decisions will incorporate a comprehensive outlook based on all nine elements in this plan.

9.4 Plan Adoption, Monitoring, Amendments and Update

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

9.4.1 Plan Adoption

In order to implement this Plan, it must be adopted by the Town Plan Commission. After the Commission adopts the Plan by resolution, the Town Board must adopt the Plan by ordinance. This action formalizes the Plan document as a frame of reference for general development decisions over the next 20 years. Once formally adopted, the Plan becomes a tool for communicating the community's land use policy and for coordinating legislative decisions.

9.4.2 Plan Amendments

The Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan may be amended at any time by the Town Board following the same process to amend the plan as it originally followed when it was initially adopted (regardless of how minor the amendment or change is).

Amendments may be appropriate throughout the lifecycle of the Plan, particularly if new issues emerge or trends change. These amendments will typically be minor changes to the Plan’s maps or text. Large-scale changes or frequent amendments to meet individual development proposals should be avoided or the Plan loses integrity. Any proposed amendments should be submitted to the Plan Commission for their review and recommendations prior to consideration by the Town Board for final action.

9.4.3 Plan Update

Although not truly and 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 plan. In five years, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed in depth to make any necessary changes in relation to the direction and character of the community development at that time.

9.5 5-Year Action Plan

The plan implementation table on the following pages provides a detailed list of major actions that the Town should complete as part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan over the next 5-year period. It should be noted that many of the actions require considerable cooperation with others, including the citizens of the Town of Onalaska, Town staff, and local/state governments.

The 5-Year Action Plan was designed to provide direction to the Plan Commission, Town Board, and interested parties to start implementing this Plan. To do this, certain actions were selected from each of the nine comprehensive planning elements based on the perceived necessity of timely implementation. Many are ordinance or planning-related updates that will better prepare XX for development in coming years. In five years, when this plan is reviewed, the 5-Year Action Plan should be updated to reflect new priorities and accomplishments. At that time, some actions listed in Table 9.5 may carry over into the next 5-year planning period, while those that were accomplished should be replaced with other actions prioritized by the Plan Commission through a public process.

Table 9.5: 5 Year Action Plan

Action by Planning Element	Who is Responsible?
Housing	
Work with La Crosse County Human Services Department to provide additional programming, housing options, and assistance for senior citizen populations.	Town Board

Provide open space in new residential developments to transition between developed and rural areas.	Plan Commission
<hr/> Transportation <hr/>	
Establish periodic (3-5 year) development and update of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to forecast future spending based on infrastructural needs.	Town Board, Plan Commission
Create and adopt a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.	Park Committee, Town Board, Plan Commission
Explore establishing an ad hoc committee to determine preferred routes for bicycle travel on existing roadways to connect neighborhoods and schools. This committee could also examine the best place to make connections between recreation facilities and other destinations for trail users. Ideas should be articulated into a multi-year transportation improvements plan.	Park Committee, Ad Hoc Committee
<hr/> Utilities and Community Facilities <hr/>	
Work with the DNR to monitor water quality and provide regular reports.	Town Board
<hr/> Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources <hr/>	
Create a committee to explore natural and agricultural preservation programs such as purchase of development rights (PDR) or transfer of development rights (TDR).	Town Board, Ad Hoc Committee
<hr/> Economic Development <hr/>	
Support the economic health of productive agriculture in XX through development siting protections.	Plan Commission
Collaborate with adjoining municipalities in the planning, timing, location, and form of all commercial and/or industrial development proposed in and/or adjacent to the Town.	Plan Commission
<hr/> Intergovernmental Cooperation <hr/>	
Assist in the development of La Crosse County's Comprehensive Plan Update.	Plan Commission
Provide a copy of this Comprehensive Plan and any proposed updates or amendments to all governmental units adjacent to Town of Onalaska.	Town Clerk
<hr/> Land Use <hr/>	
Make this Comprehensive Plan available to Plan Commissioners and other decision-makers, including the Town Board and La Crosse County.	Town Clerk
Limit dense residential development to those areas that can best be accommodated by public services. Prioritize areas that offer pressurized water systems or sewer service areas for urbanized development.	Plan Commission
<hr/> Implementation <hr/>	

Increase onsite stormwater retention planning as part of the development application and review process.	Plan Commission
Review and evaluate this Plan on an annual or biennial basis, making necessary changes through the amendment process	Plan Commission

11. DEFINITIONS

To provide a common ground for understanding for the words used in this Plan, the terms below have been defined according to *A Glossary of Zoning, Development, and Planning Terms (The Glossary)* (Planning Advisory Service Report 491/492), edited by Michael Davidson and Fay Dolnik. Some of the definitions have been altered to meet the Town's needs. These definitions are only intended to be general descriptions of the uses above.

Agriculture – The employment of land for the primary purpose of obtaining a profit in money by raising, harvesting, and selling crops, or feeding (including grazing), breeding, managing, selling, or producing livestock, poultry, fur-bearing animals or honeybees, or by dairying and the sale of dairy products, by any other horticultural, floricultural or viticultural use, by animal husbandry, or by any combination thereof. It also includes the current employment of land for the primary purpose of obtaining a profit by stabling or training equines including, but not limited to, providing riding lessons, training clinics, and schooling shows.

Commercial – The purchase, sale, or transaction involving the disposition of any article, substance, commodity, or service; the maintenance or conduct of offices, professions, or recreational or amusement enterprises conducted for profit and also including renting of rooms, business offices, and sales display rooms and premises.

Education – Use of land or building(s) as or for an institution not for profit but for the establishment and maintenance of a public or private educational institution for the academic instruction.

Light Industrial/Manufacturing – Research and development activities, the manufacturing, compounding, processing, packaging, storage, assembly, and/or treatment of finished or semifinished products from previously prepared materials, which activities are conducted wholly within an enclosed building. Finished or semifinished products may be temporarily stored outdoors pending shipment.

Non-profit – Any person(s), partnerships, association, corporation, or other group whose activities are conducted for unselfish, civic, or humanitarian motives, or for the benefit of others, and not for the gain of any private individual or group may include, but shall not be limited to, patriotic, philanthropic, social service, welfare, benevolent, educational, civic, fraternal, cultural, charitable, scientific, historical, athletic, or medical activities. It is also an organization exempt from taxation under Section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986 organized or incorporated in this state or another state or having a principal place of business in this state or in another state.

Office – A room, suite of rooms, or building in which a person transacts the affairs of a business, profession, service, industry, or government.

Open Space – Land and water areas retained for use as active or passive recreation areas or for resource protection in an essentially undeveloped state.

Public – Anything owned or operated by the federal government, state government, local government, school district, or other public agency or entity. This includes land, buildings, facilities, and areas.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) – A public program to pay landowners the fair market value of their development rights in exchange for a permanent conservation easement that restricts development of the property. PDR programs are strictly voluntary and are usually funded by the sale of bonds or property tax revenues.

Recreation – The refreshment of body and mind through forms of play, amusement, or relaxation. The recreational experience may be active, such as boating, fishing, and swimming, or may be passive, such as enjoying the natural beauty of the shoreline or its wildlife.

Residential – Activities within land areas used predominantly for housing.

12. APPENDIX A: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation Plan

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

for the Update of the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan 2021-2022

1. Introduction

Section 65.1001(4)(a) of Wisconsin Statutes requires the governing body of the local government unit to adopt written procedures designed to foster public participation, including open discussions, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice is provided, in every stage in the preparation of the updated comprehensive plan. These written procedures contained within this Public Participation Plan have been developed to meet this requirement. This Plan will guide public participation throughout the Town's Comprehensive Planning Update Process.

This Public Participation Program offers all citizens, businesses, other units of government, and other parties a range of opportunities to participate through the planning process in a meaningful way to shape the future of the Town. Effective public input is critical for the success of this planning process because it is the citizens, businesses, and other organizations that will experience the results of the objectives, policies, goals and programs of the Comprehensive Plan in the future.

The participation program is designed to be inclusive. It encourages people to participate in the process and to maximize the effectiveness of their contributions. The opportunities are open to everyone.

Our public participation process will:

- Ensure all planning decisions are open to public comment;
- Produce better planning decisions;
- Support and add credibility to all Town decision-making processes
- Provide opportunities to disseminate information about the Plan and process to all segments of the Town;
- Strengthen the relationship between our decision makers, residents, and stakeholders.

2. Public Participation Methods and Opportunities

The Town of Onalaska has established the following list of public participation methods and opportunities.

a. Open Plan Commission Meetings

Plan Commission meetings scheduled during the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan update process will have an agenda item providing the opportunity for any public comment on or regarding the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan.

b. Review and Distribution of the Planning Documents

During the Comprehensive Plan update process the public may review and obtain copies of proposed, alternative, or amended elements of the Town's Comprehensive Plan from the Town upon request. This information may also be distributed through the Town's website.

c. Website

The Town will post on its website information related to the Town Comprehensive Plan update planning process. This information may include agendas, minutes, draft plan elements, amendments, reports, maps, and photographs.

d. Written Comments

The Town will always welcome and consider written comments and will respond either in writing or by public comment during public meetings and/or through the media.

e. Meeting Notices

The Town will post meeting notices for each meeting and event in a timely manner at accessible locations, and the notices will meet the requirements for proper notification regarding purpose of meeting, date, time and location.

f. Public Hearing

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires local units of government to hold at least one (1) formal public hearing with a Class 2 public notice prior to adoption of a revised Comprehensive Plan' resolution or ordinance. Prior to adoption of the revised Comprehensive Plan, the Town will conduct this required public hearing.

g. Plan Recommendation Resolution

The Plan Commission or other body of the Town that is authorized to amend the Town Comprehensive Plan may recommend the adoption or amendment of the Comprehensive Plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission or other body. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the committee or other body. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive material that relate to one or more elements of a comprehensive plan. Upon adoption of the plan amendment, the Plan and its resolution shall be distributed by the Town to recipients listed in Section 66.1001(4)(b) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

i. Plan Adoption by Ordinance

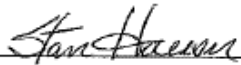
No comprehensive plan that is recommended for adoption or amendment under above may take effect until the Town Board enacts an ordinance that adopts the comprehensive plan or amendment. Upon adoption of this ordinance, it shall be filed with at least all of the entities specified in Section 66.1001(4)(b) of the Statutes.

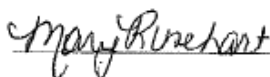
j. Other

Planning is a continuous process that does not end with the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. Since new issues and unforeseen circumstances will always arise the Town may amend its Comprehensive Plan with proper public input and in accordance with Town policies and State Statutes at any time.

3. Adoption

Town of Onalaska adopted this Public Participation Plan on this 9 day of November, 2021.

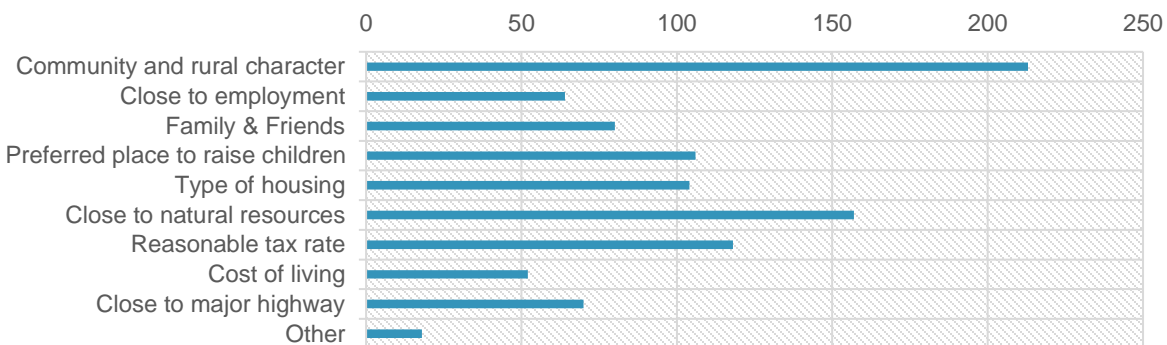

Stan Hauser, Town of Onalaska Board Chair


Mary Rinehart, Town of Onalaska Town Clerk

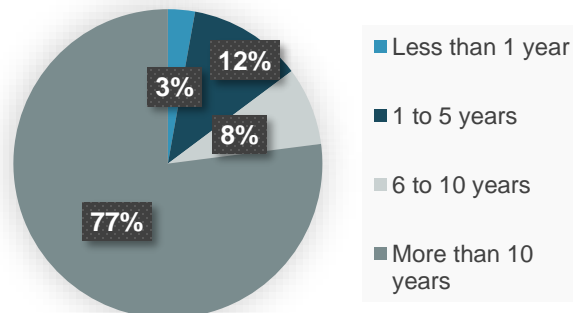
Town of Onalaska Survey

The Town of Onalaska assembled questions about a variety of topics that exist within the community including housing, transportation, and land use. These questions were then incorporated into a Town Survey for two reasons: 1) to facilitate a community discussion about long-term issues related to these topics; and 2) to collect community sentiment concerning these topics. The survey was performed as part of the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan. Results of the survey were incorporated into this Plan and used to help generate goals and objectives to determine actions for implementation. A total of 316 surveys were returned. This is a little under 15% of the households in the Town of Onalaska responding to the survey.

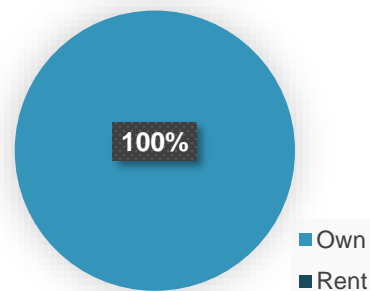
1. Why do you choose to live in the Town of Onalaska?



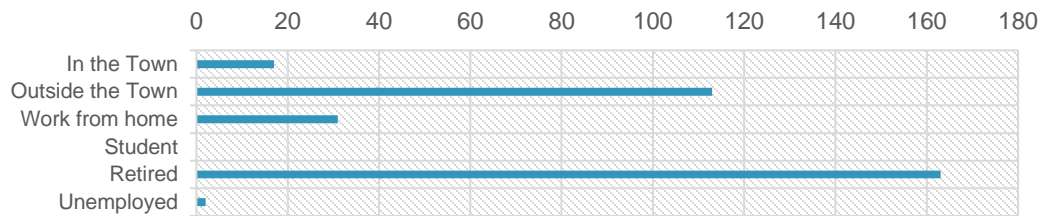
2. How long have you resided in the Town?



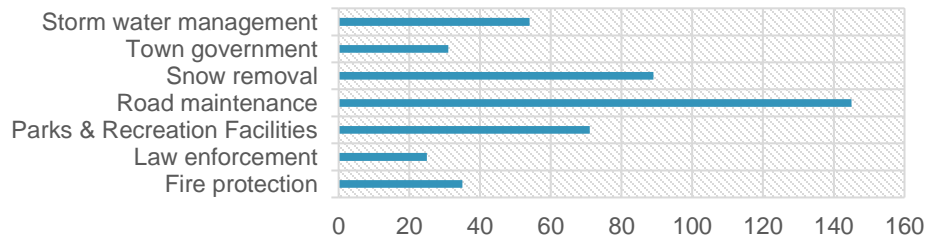
3. Do you own or rent the property where you reside?



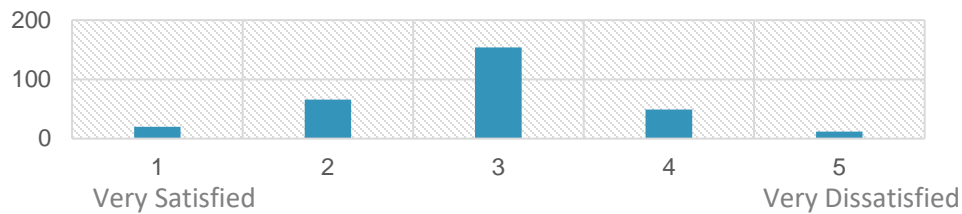
4. Where do you work?



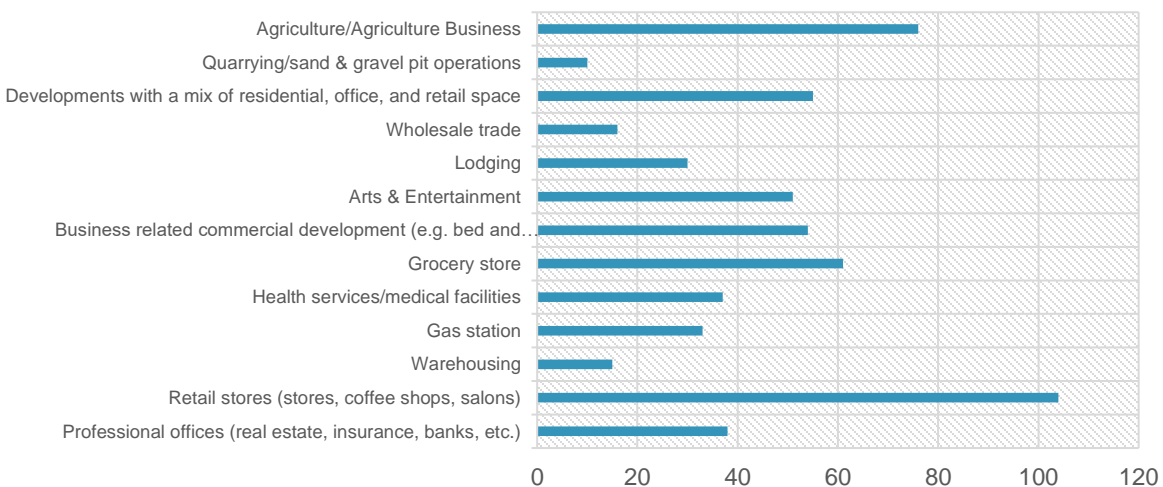
5. Which of the following public services and facilities needs improvements?



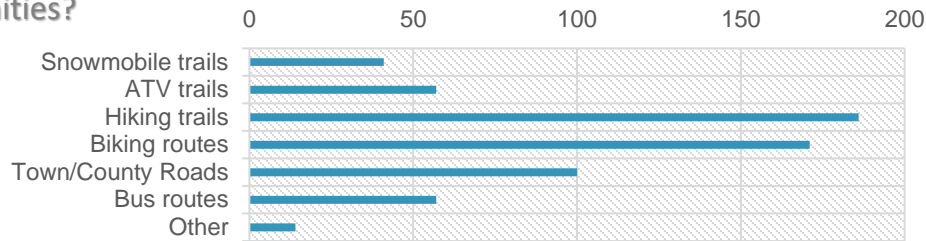
6. How would you rate the current efforts of the Town to regulate and guide development?



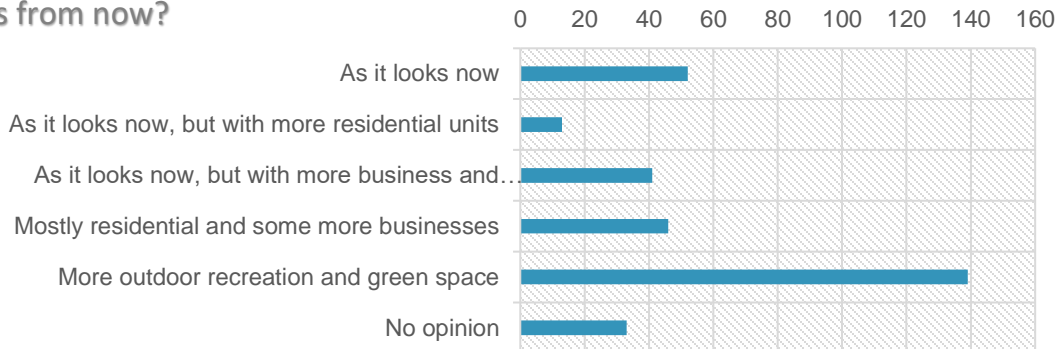
7. Which of the following types of new businesses would you like to see developed in the Town in the future?



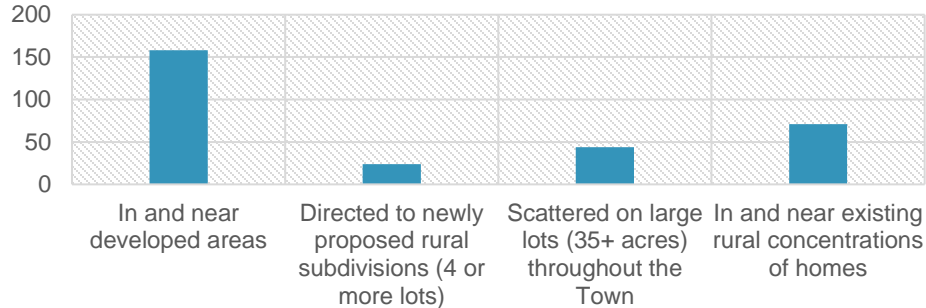
8. Would you support the creation or expansion of the following transportation opportunities?



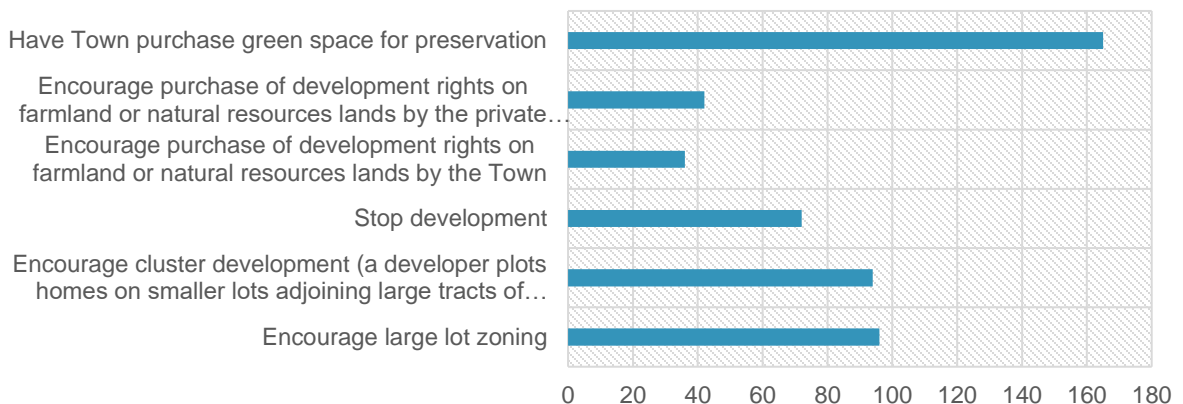
9. Which statement best describes how you would want the Town to look 20 years from now?



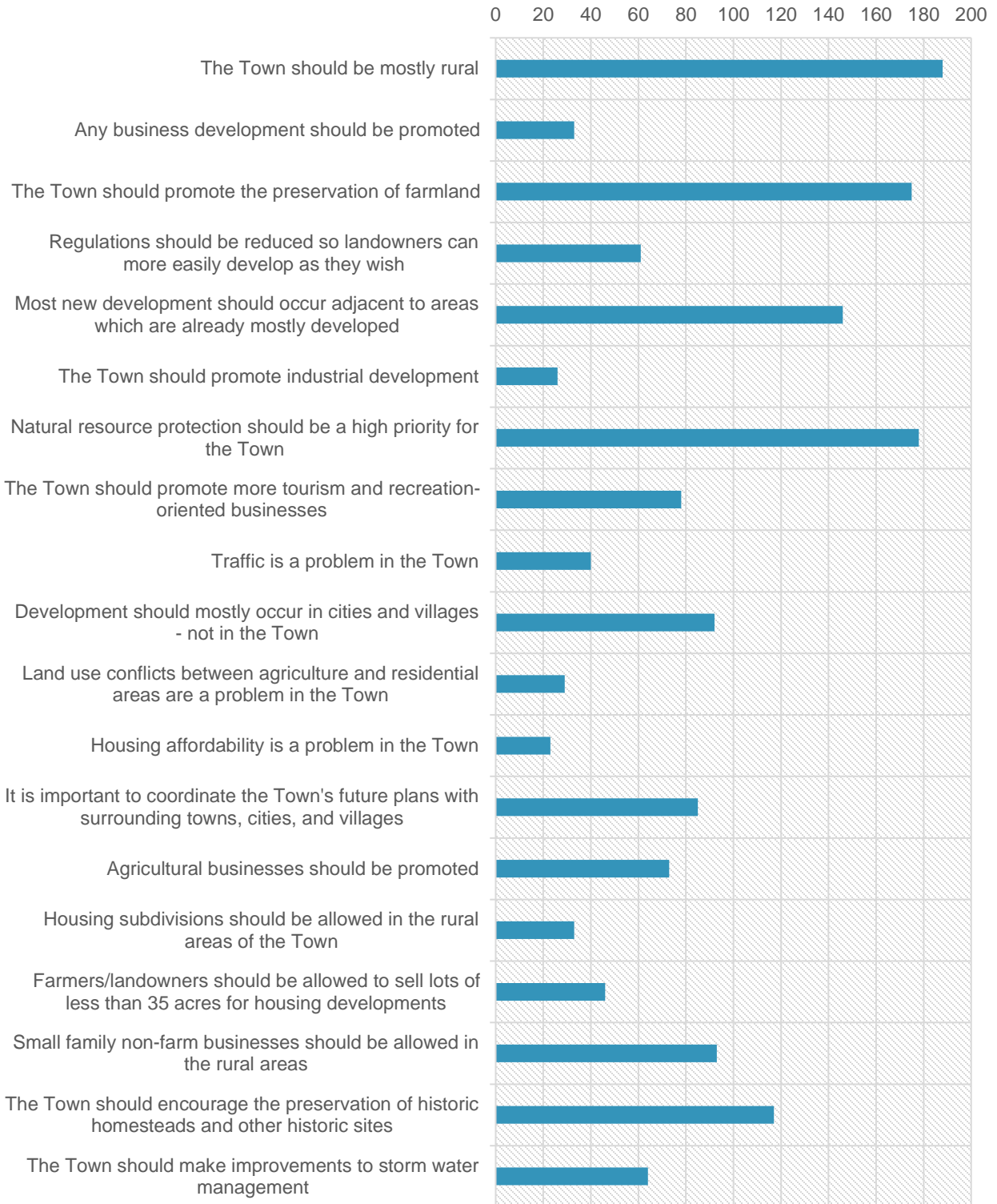
10. Which of the following best describes your idea of where new housing should be located in the Town?



11. If you believe the Town should retain its rural character, what steps do you think the Town should take to keep this rural character?



12. The following are several statements that suggest choices about future directions for growth and development in the TOWN. Please check boxes next to the statements with which you AGREE.



13. In a word or two, what do you believe are the two biggest issues, in order of priority, facing the Town? (**includes most common responses*)

- Road maintenance
- Road safety – including adding a bike lane to existing roads on Brice Prairie
- Unwanted housing developments – urban sprawl
- Preserving farmland and natural resources
- Snow plowing needs improvement
- Water quality
- Lower taxes
- Town yard waste site hours and services
- Regulations on curb appeal and enforcement of these regulations
- Alternate access to Brice Prairie for emergency vehicles (due to train delays)

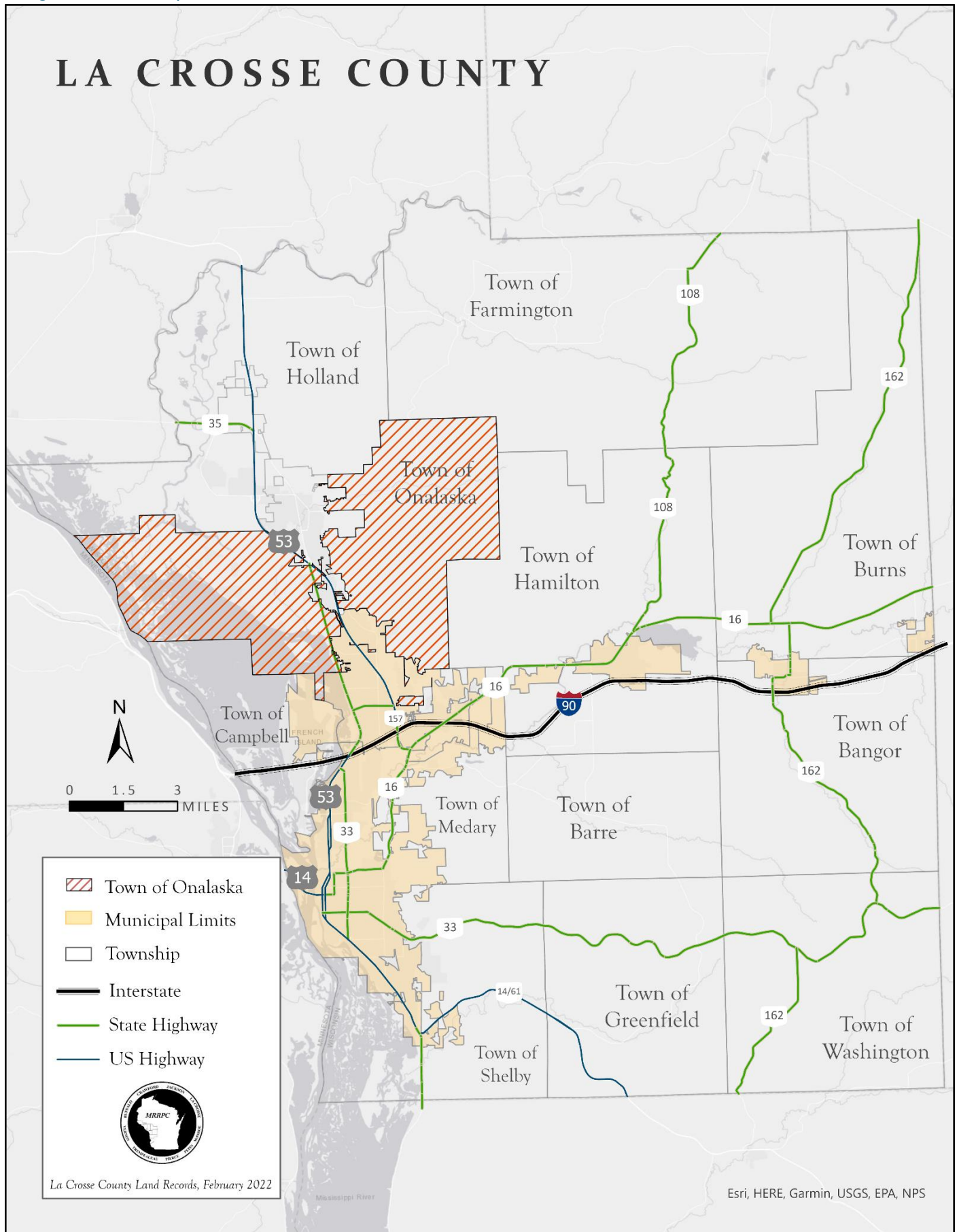
13. APPENDIX B: LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANS

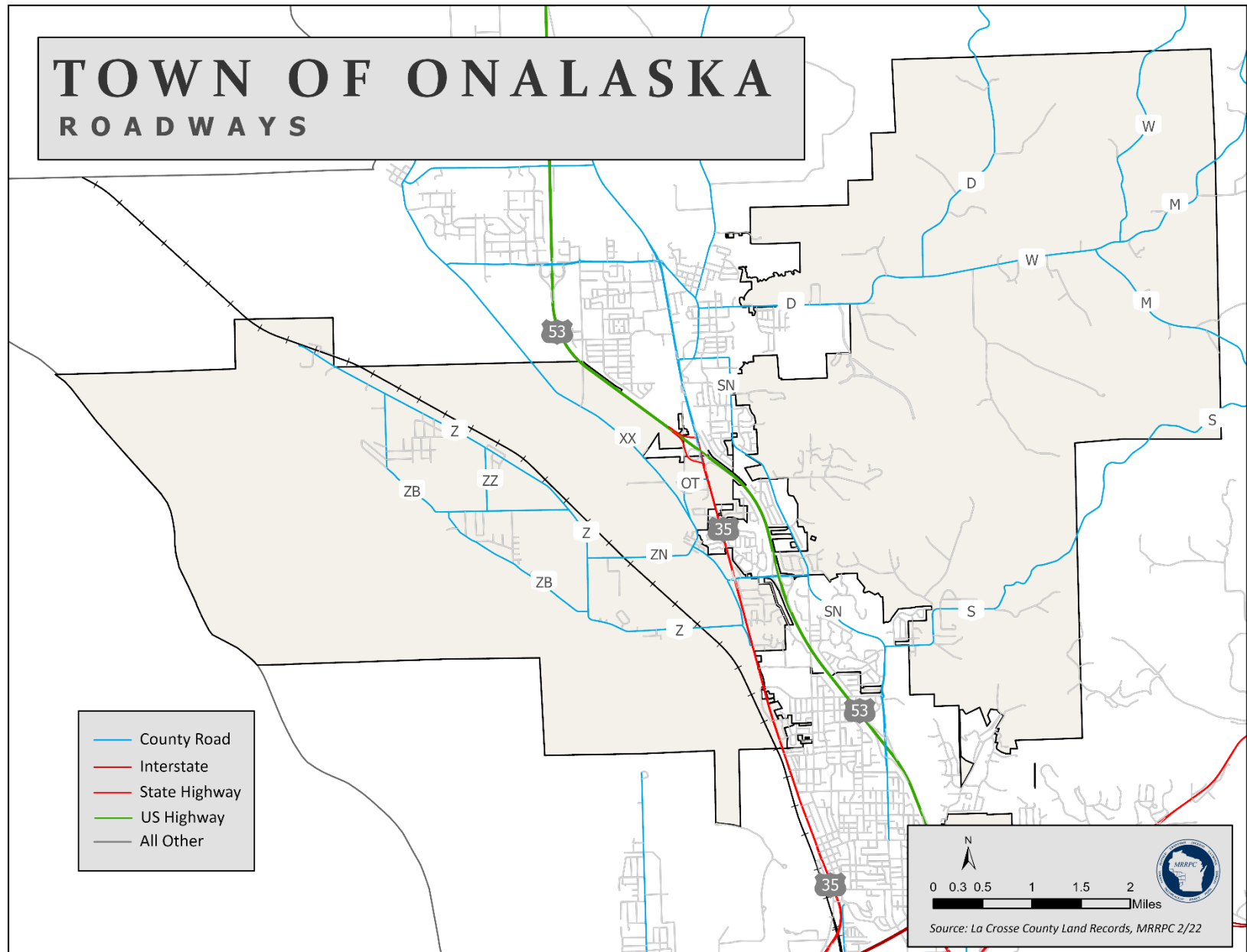
B-1: LAPC Goal Analysis

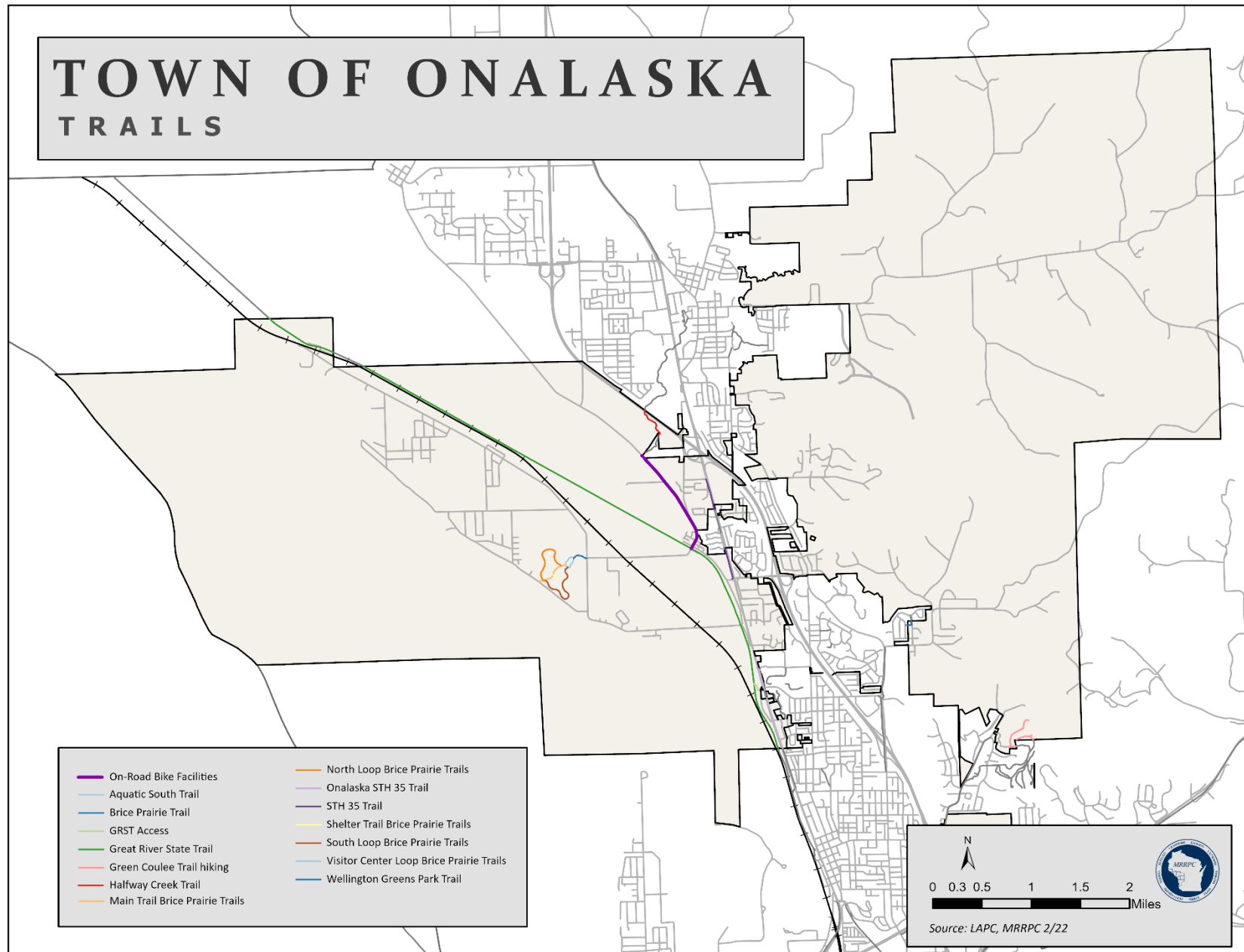
LAPC - Land Use Goals	Not Applicable, Agree, Disagree (state concerns)*
Housing and neighborhoods in the City of La Crosse will attract new investment and more residents, especially through renovation and enhancement of existing housing stock.	
Senior housing options will continue to expand, and new housing intended for residents who remain mobile and active should be located within a 10-minute walk of retail and services.	
New housing will continue to include a range of housing types and lot sizes, including a priority on single family lots smaller than 1/2-acre.	
The region places a high priority on infill development to enhance the utilization of existing urban infrastructure and enhance the concentration of uses so that more residents are within a 10-minute walk of their daily retail needs.	
New buildings and development areas will often include a mix of uses.	
Towns, villages and cities will pursue and approve boundary agreements that allow some growth in unincorporated areas.	
LAPC – Transportation Goals	
New roads for the primary purpose of facilitating regional commuter traffic will generally be avoided – community preference is for expansion of existing roads and transit enhancements instead.	
Road projects will be designed to improve the safety and mobility of all users, with emphasis placed on maintaining neighborhood connections and cohesiveness.	
The region will have a flexible and fully interconnected grid of streets and highways.	
A Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will be created to fund and maintain transportation systems.	

Transit use will increase among all age groups.	
Fixed-route regional transit, such as Bus Rapid Transit, should be actively studied and pursued. Routes should be identified and necessary right-of-way protected (or gradually acquired) until implementation becomes feasible.	
Intelligent transportation systems and mass data gathering technologies will be utilized to the extent practicable to improve the safety and mobility of our transportation networks.	
Growth will be accommodated without a significant increase in congestion through the use of many strategies, including road and highway improvements, traffic signal timing improvements, new/enhanced transit services, enhanced and expanded bike and pedestrian facilities, scheduling adjustments by major employers, and other approaches.	
Truck routes in the region will be efficient and clearly identified, especially including those through the City of La Crosse.	
Mississippi River locks and dams will be upgraded to accommodate modern shipping requirements.	
Interstate passenger rail service to Minneapolis and Milwaukee/Chicago will increase in frequency and reliability.	
Public and private landowners will reduce their subsidy of automobile use through a mix of strategies.	
Bike and pedestrian facilities will be present everywhere.	

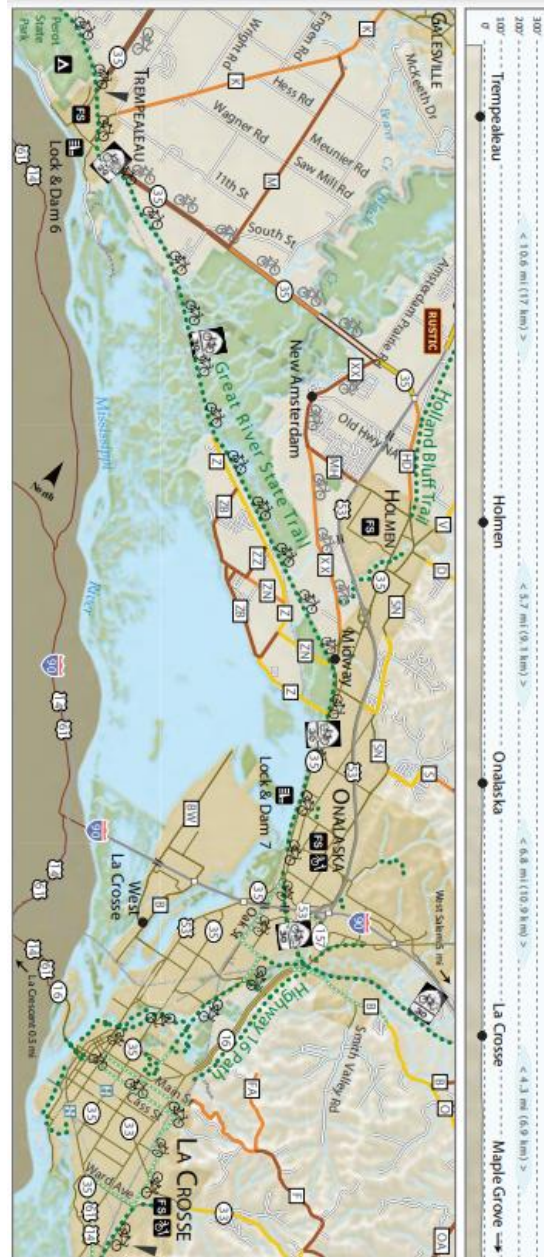
14. APPENDIX C: MAPS







Great River Trail Map 4.3



Section 5 La Crosse



Distance: 23 miles from Trempealeau to La Crosse.

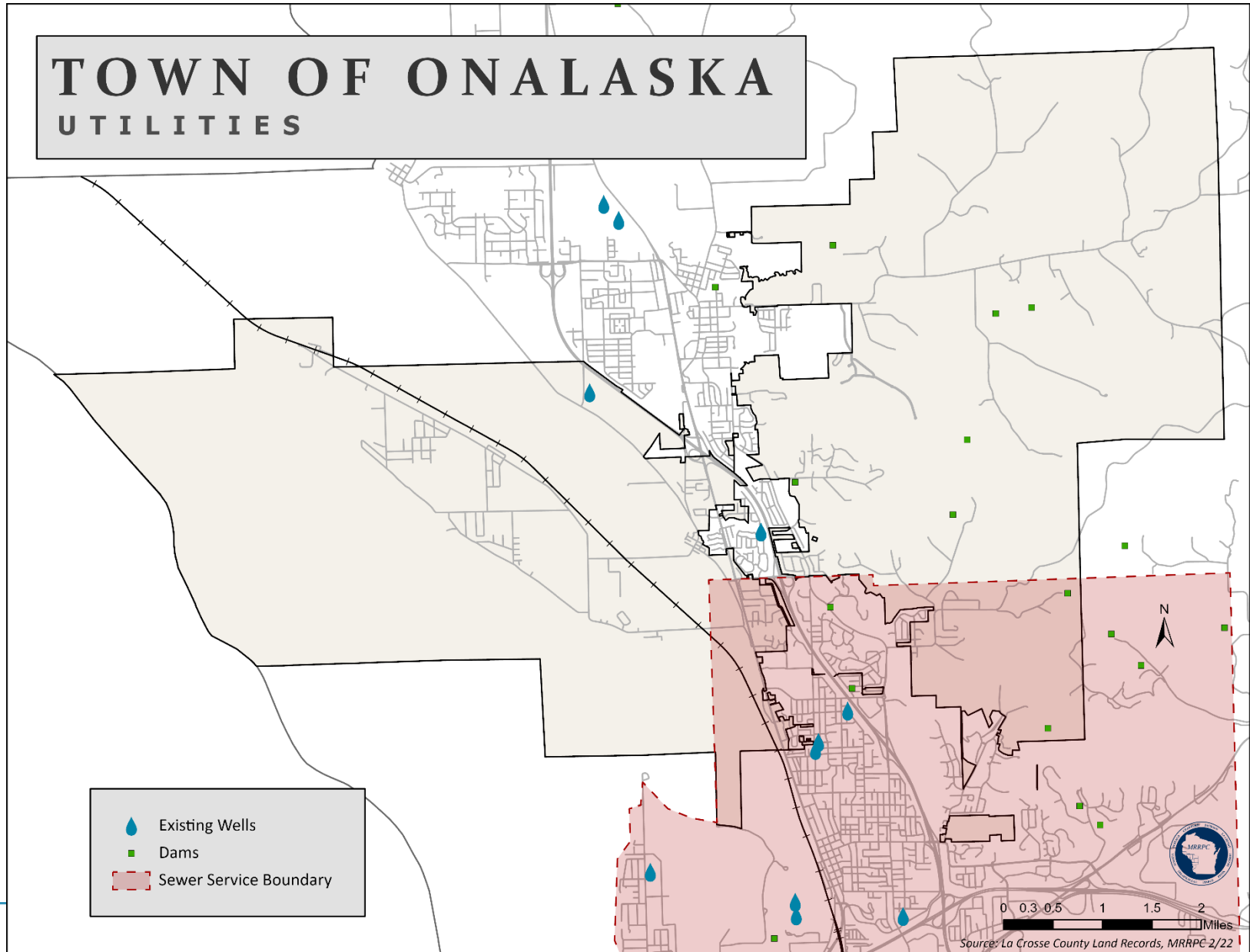
Difficulty: The terrain for this entire length of the route on the panel is flat.

Route Travel Conditions: The Great River State Trail is surfaced with crushed limestone and is suitable for most skinny tires. The alternative route (WIS 35 and County XX) is rated as having best and moderate conditions for bicycling. WIS 35 has fairly high traffic volumes east of Trempealeau, but with wider paved shoulders. Several bridges have no shoulders in this stretch. There will be a mixture of trails, higher volume streets, and lower volume residential streets in La Crosse and Onalaska. The preferred route through La Crosse has cyclists on local roads rather than higher volume highways.

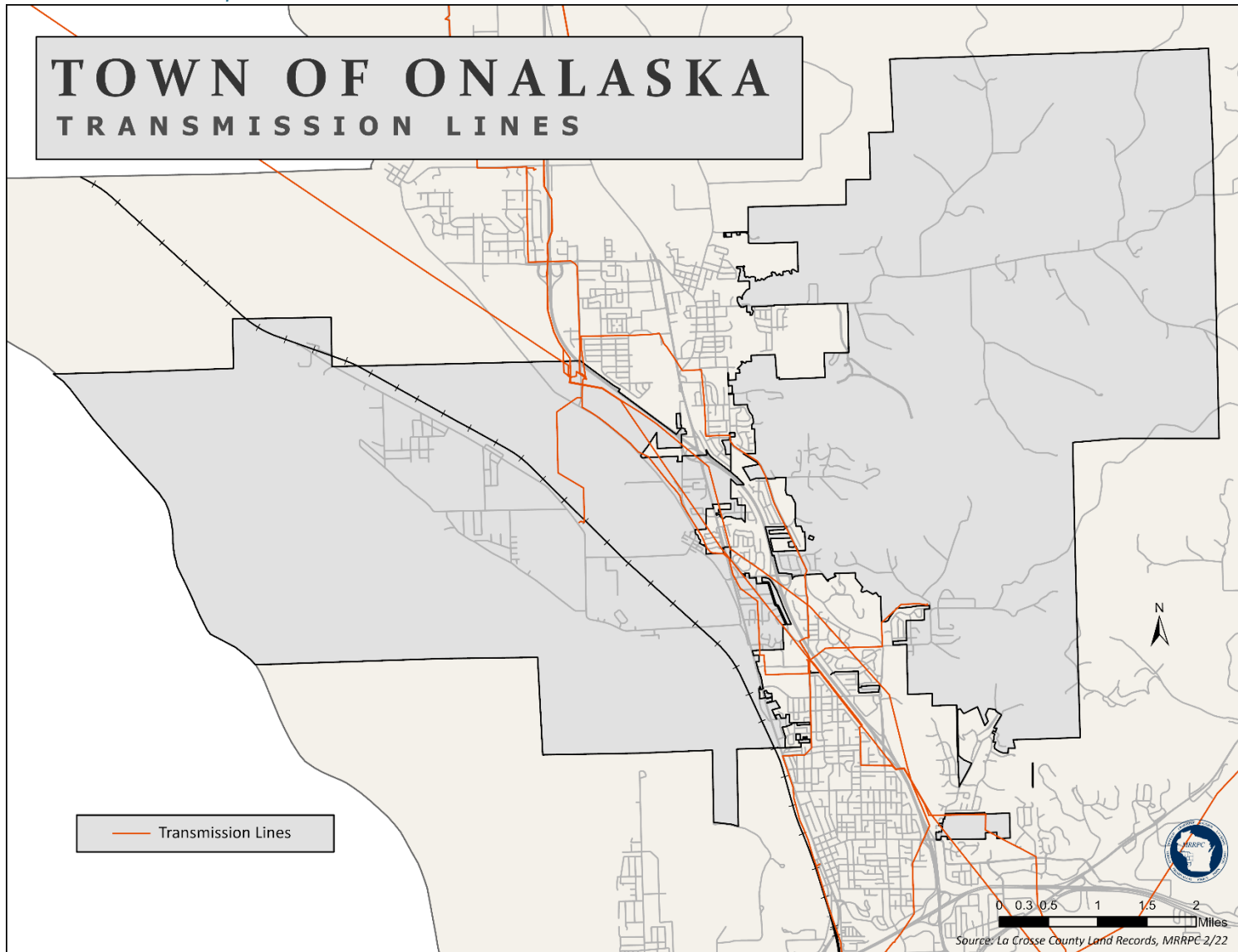
An additional [inset map](#) is available for the La Crosse area.

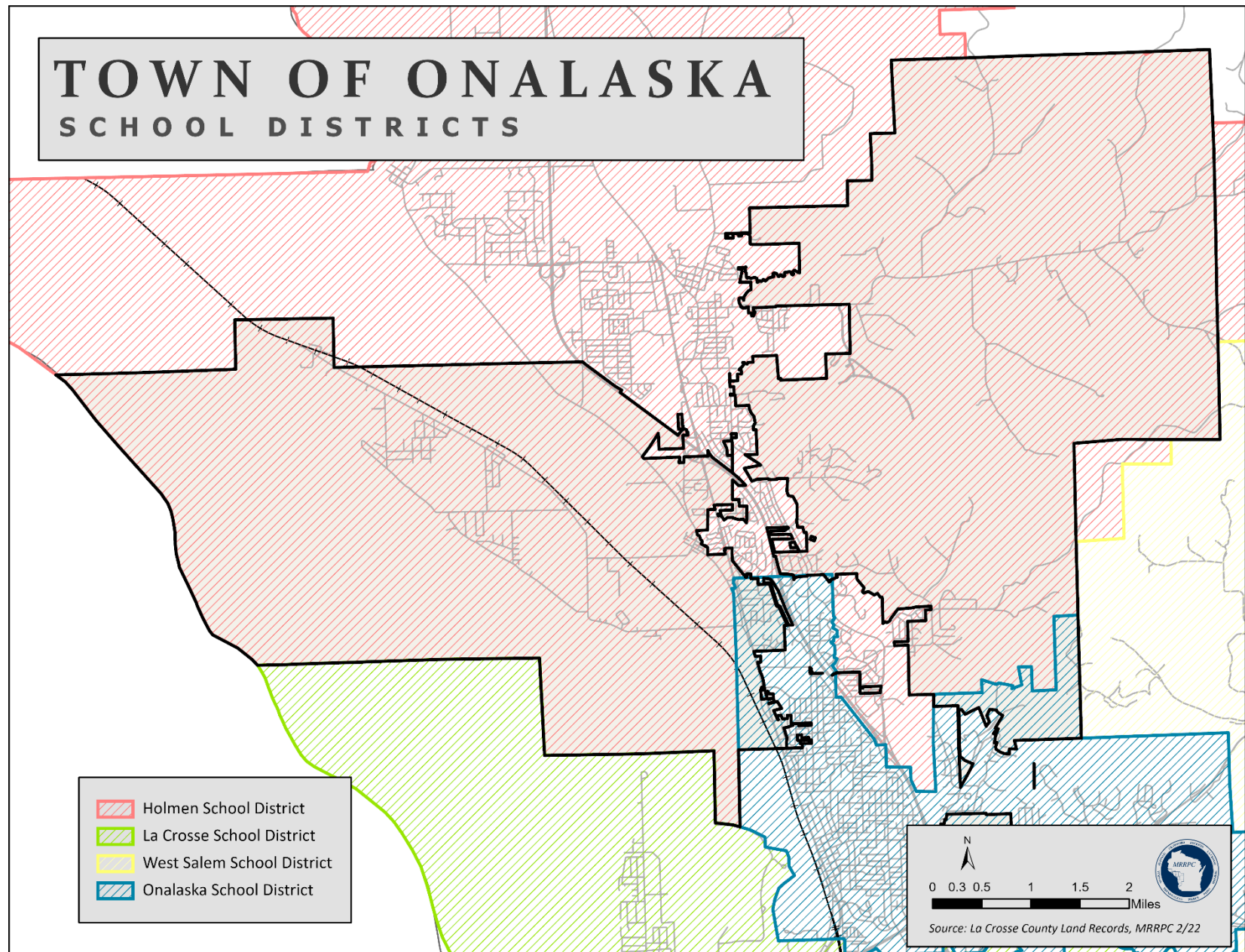
Directions: Southbound: From Trempealeau to Onalaska on the Great River State Trail. Connect to Oak Ave. via Oak Forest Dr. Turn right (south) on Oak. Left on Cunningham St. to Larson/Palace St. Then right on River Valley for about 1 mile to River-Marsh Trail. Take trail to East Ave. or to downtown La Crosse. From downtown La Crosse take Cass St. east to signed on-street bike route including 29th/28th/31st/32nd/33rd streets. 33rd Street connects to Pammel Creek Trail. Take this trail under WIS 35 to begin southbound travel on this highway. Northbound: 33rd St. to Pammel Cr. Trail to signed on-street bike route including 33rd/32nd/31st/28th/29th streets. Left on Cass St. to downtown La Crosse. Take River-Marsh Trail that begins on US 53 just north of the intersection of La Crosse St. in downtown. turn right of east on trail to River Valley Dr. North on River Valley to Palace. Left on Palace. Right on Oak St. Left on Oak Forest Dr. to beginning of Great River State Trail. From Onalaska to Trempealeau take the Great River State Trail.

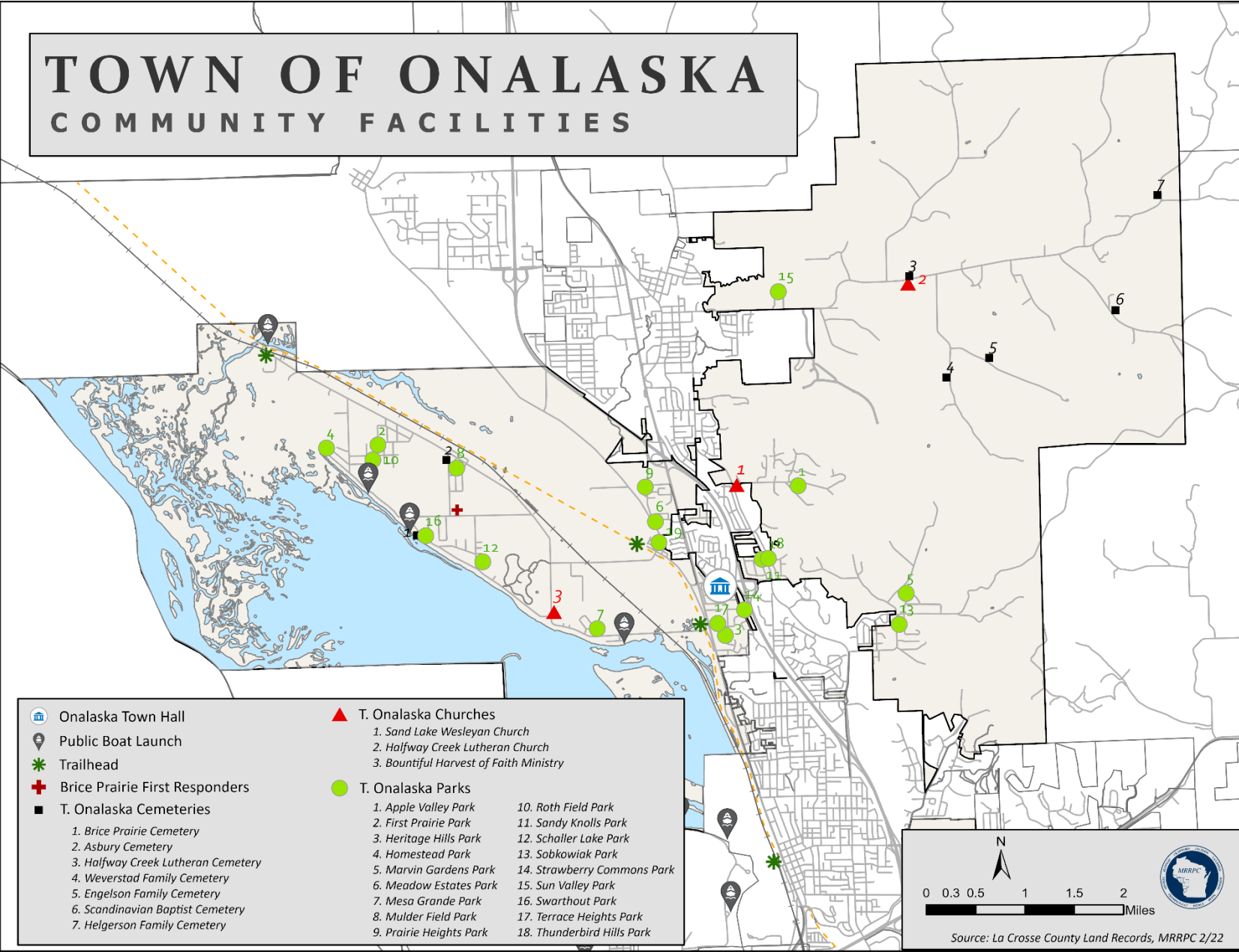
Alternate Highway Route: Southbound From Trempealeau travel on WIS 35 for 6 miles. Turn right or south on County XX for 5 miles to Midway. Intersect with the Great River State Trail (off-road) near intersection of County OT and County ZN in Midway. For on-road option at this point head south or stay right from County XX to County OT. County OT for 1 mile to County ZM. Right on County ZM for 1 mile to County Z and nearby WIS 35. Northbound For on-road option from WIS 35 turn left (west) on County Z to County Z M. Right on County ZM to County OT. Stay left or straight to County OT for 1 mile to County XX. Stay left for County XX. County XX for 5 miles and left on WIS 35. From Great River State Trail in Midway, head north on County OT for 1/2 mile to County XX. Stay left for County XX. County XX for 5 miles. Turn left or west on WIS 35 to Trempealeau.

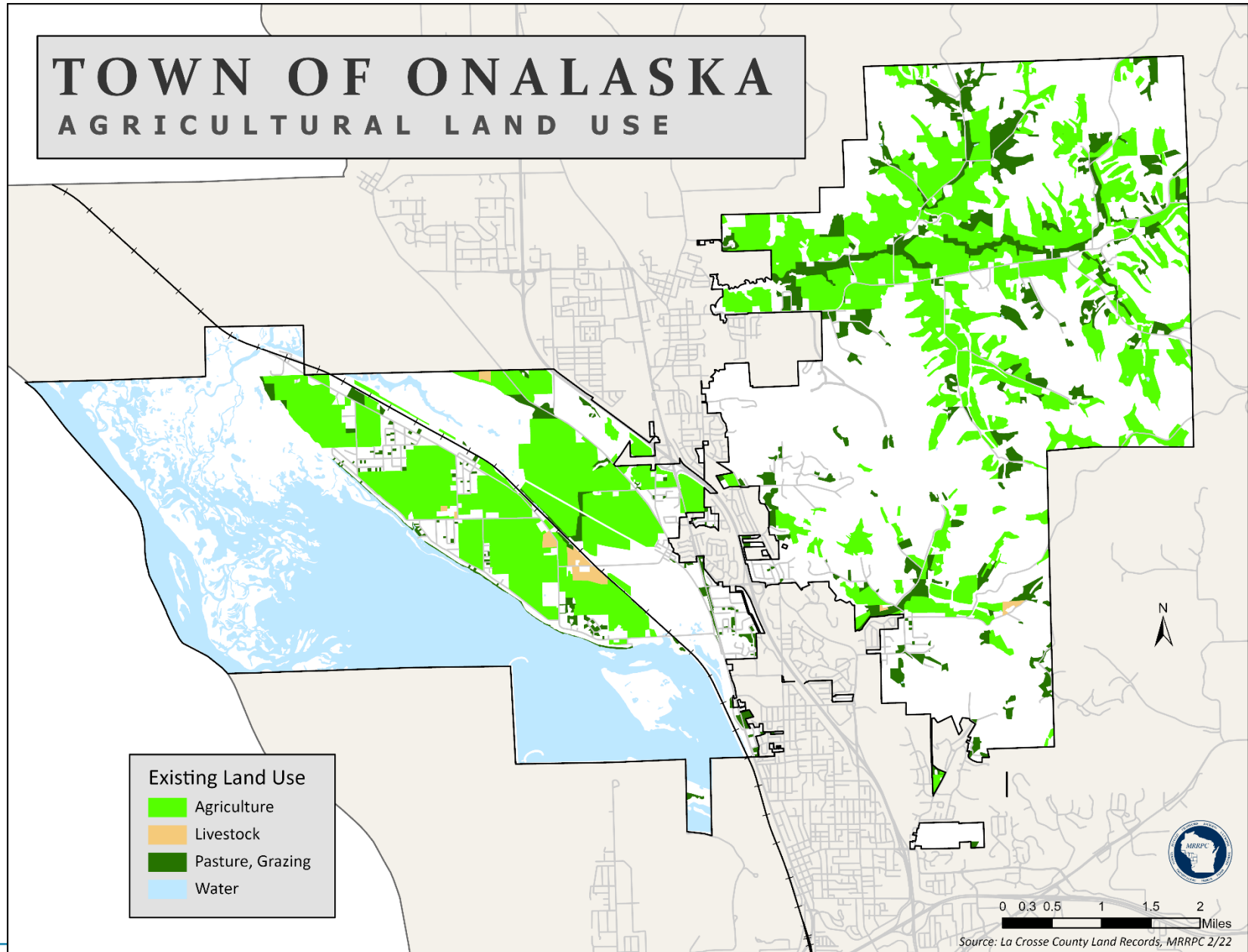


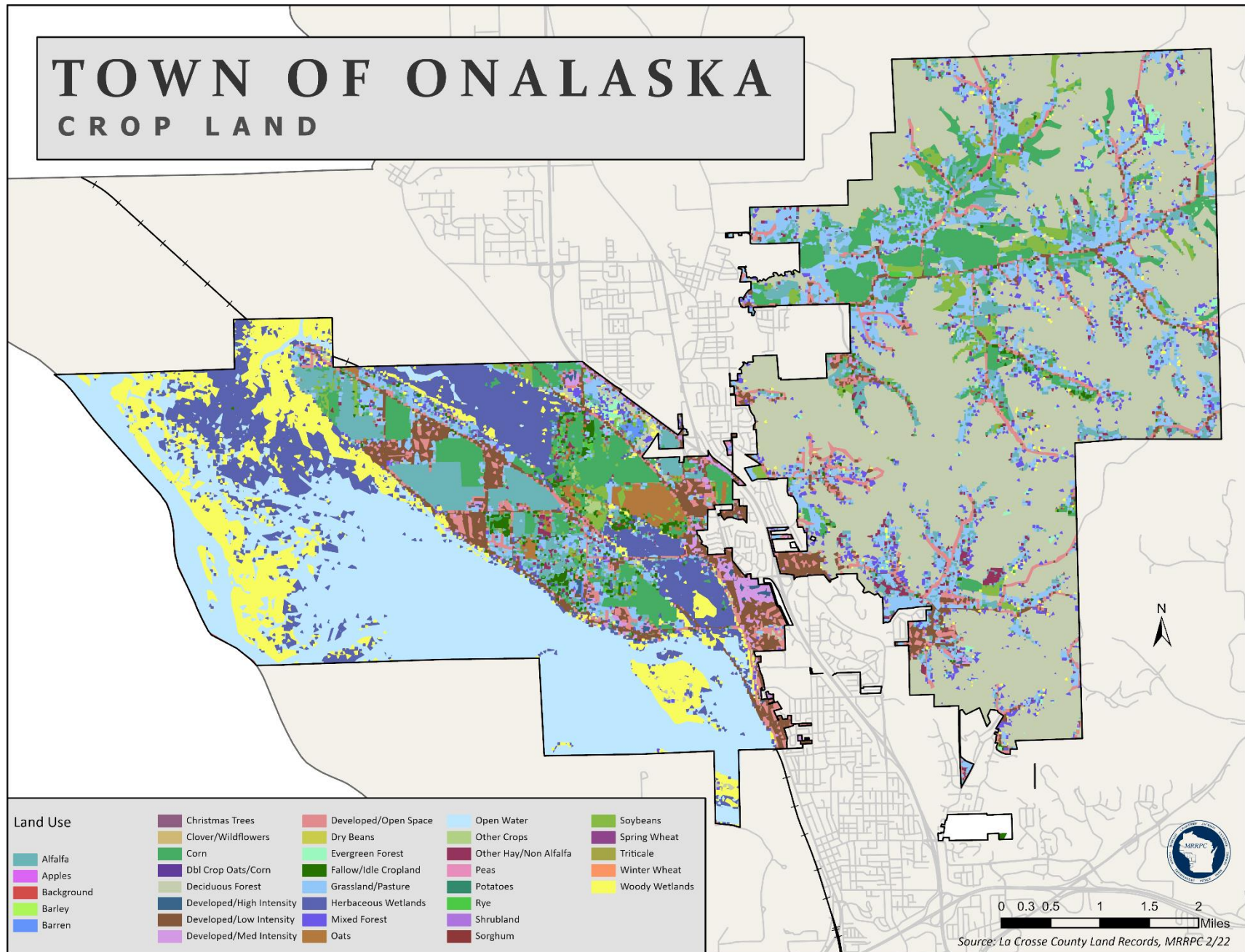
Transmission Lines Map 5.2

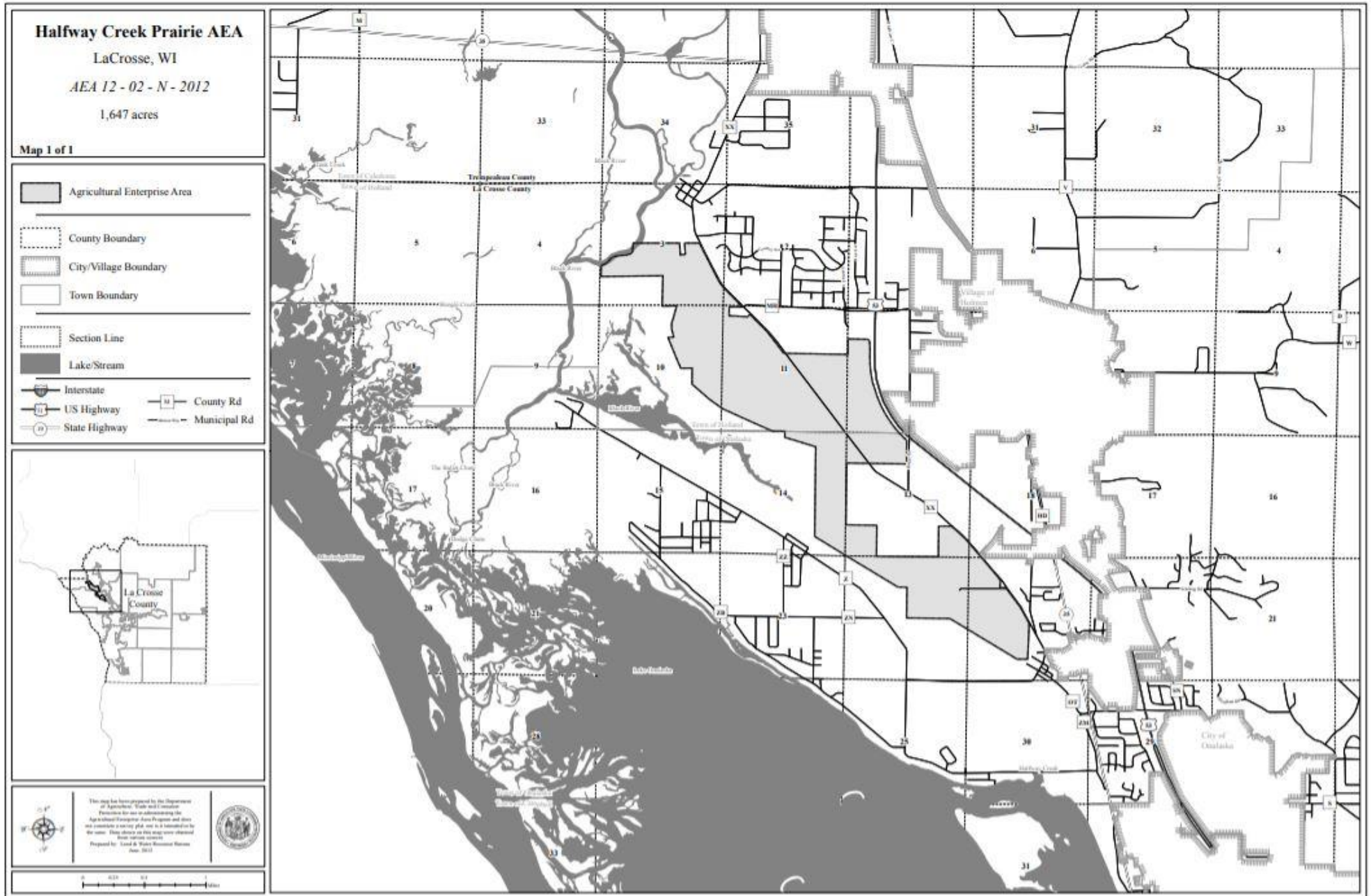


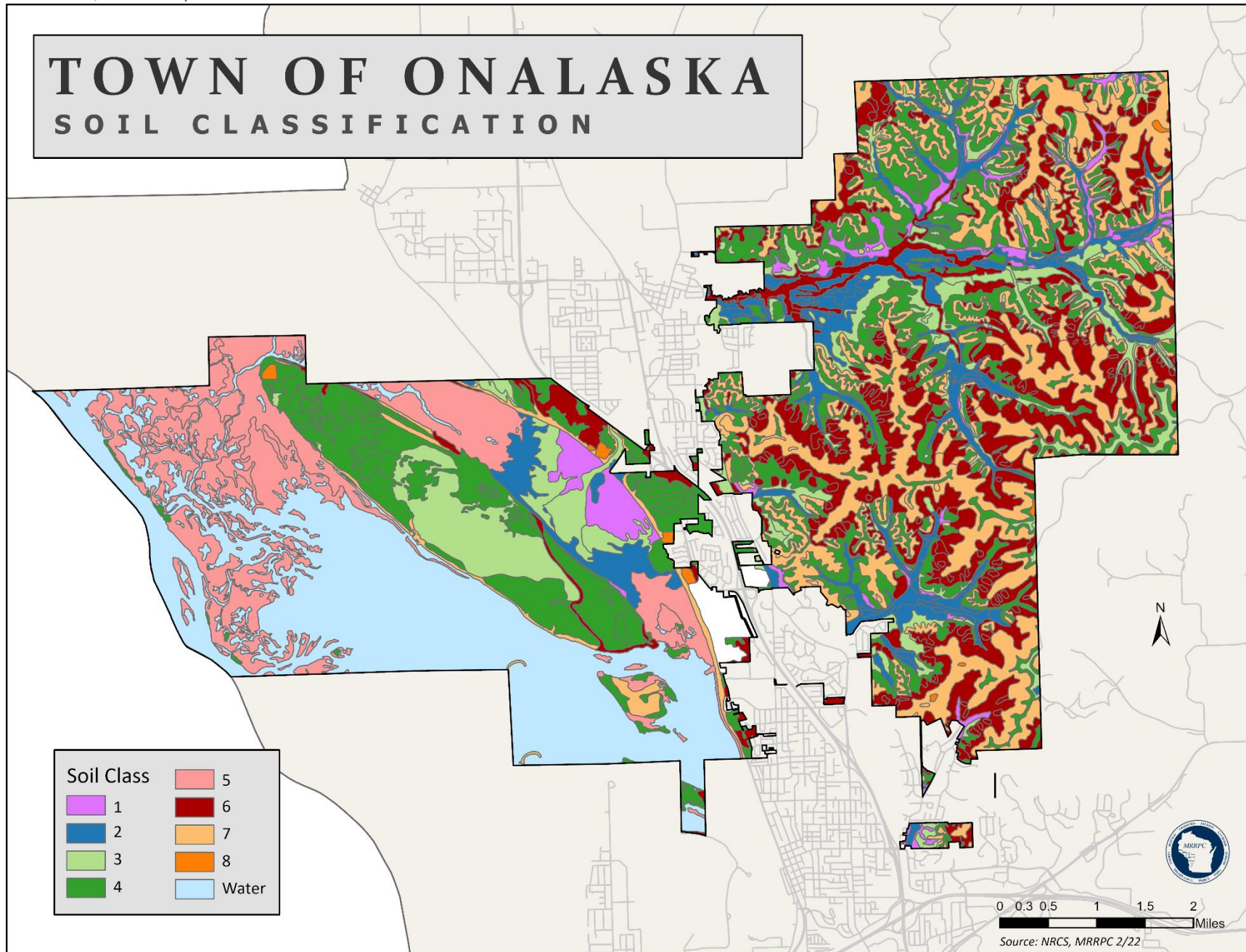


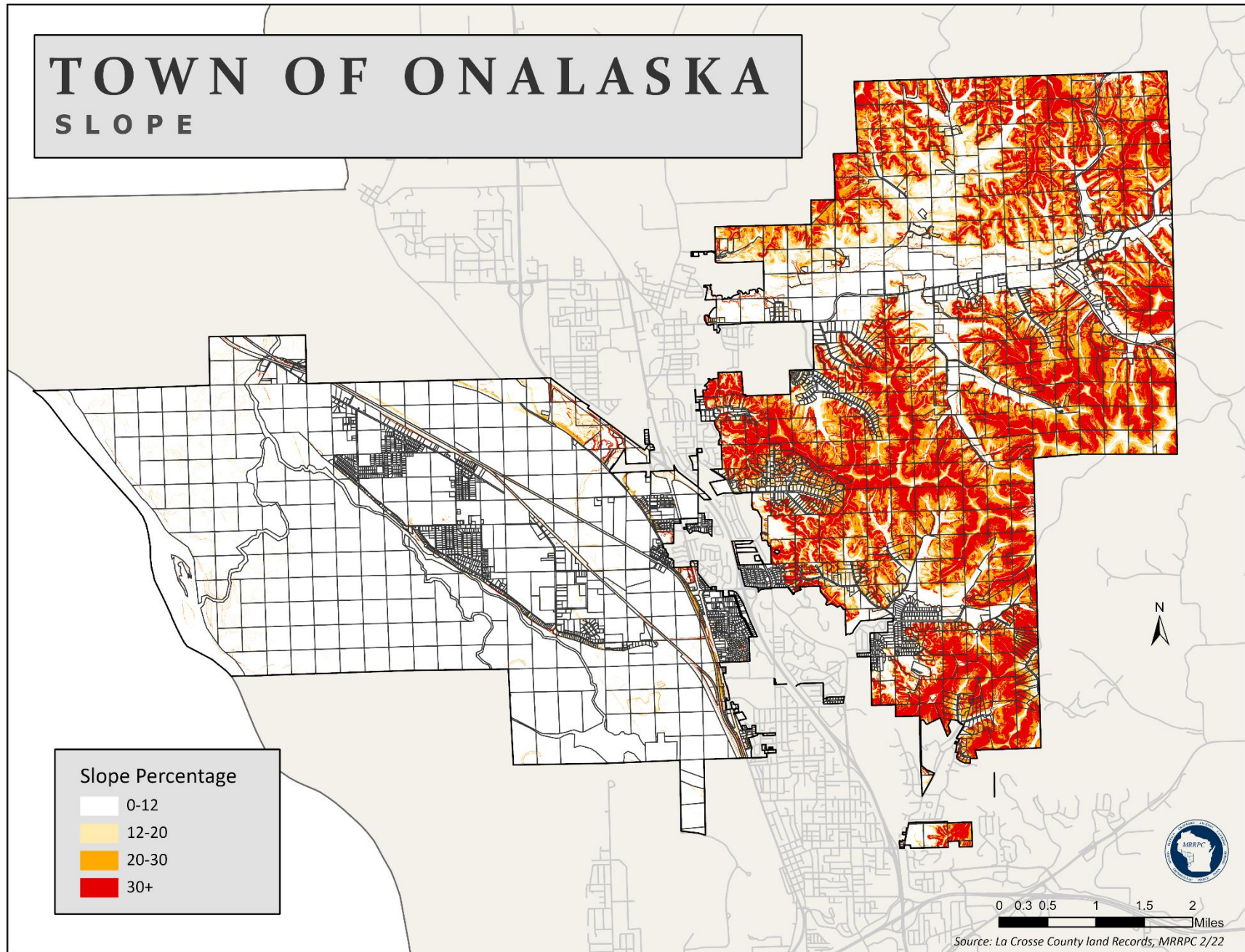




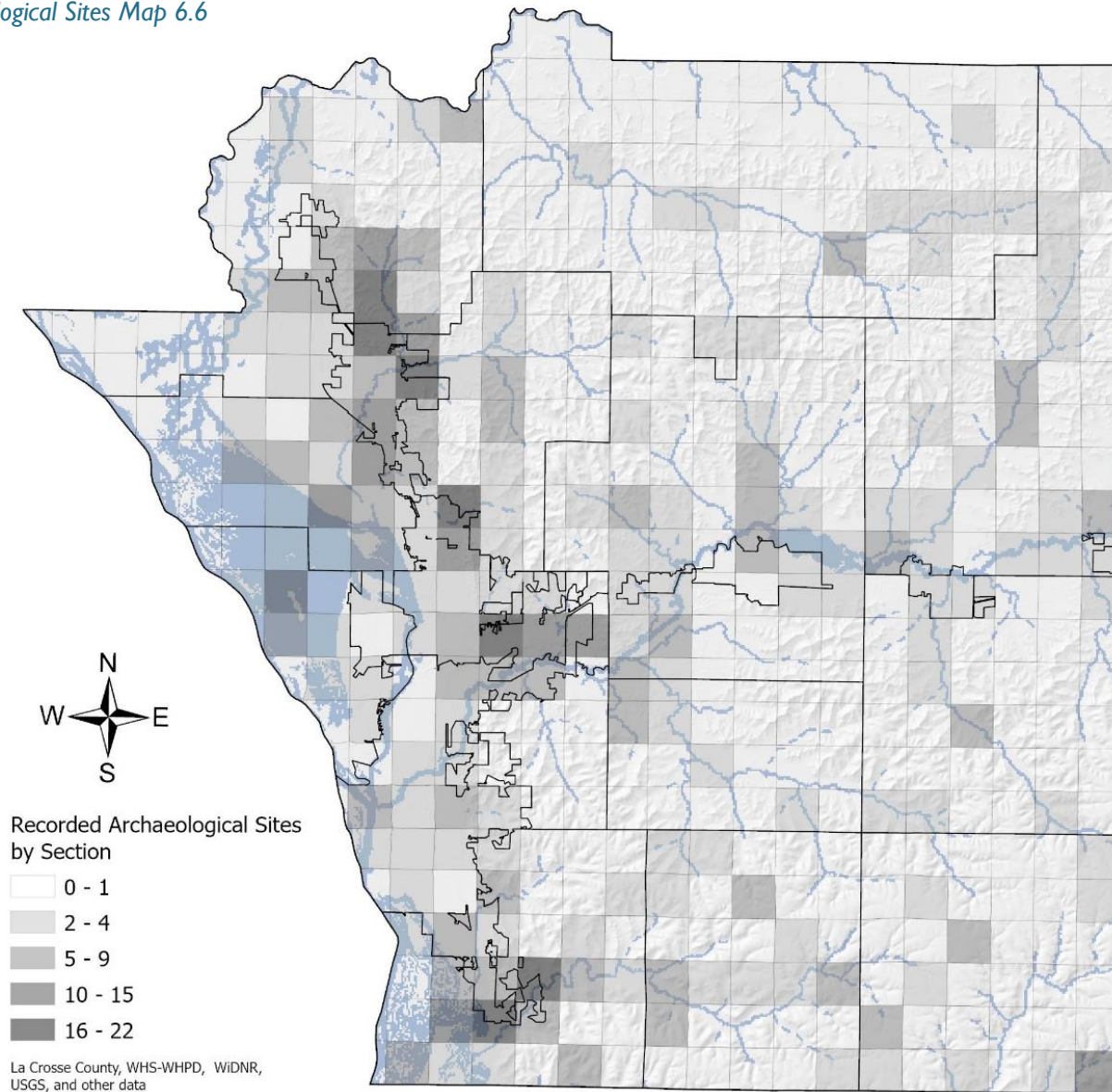


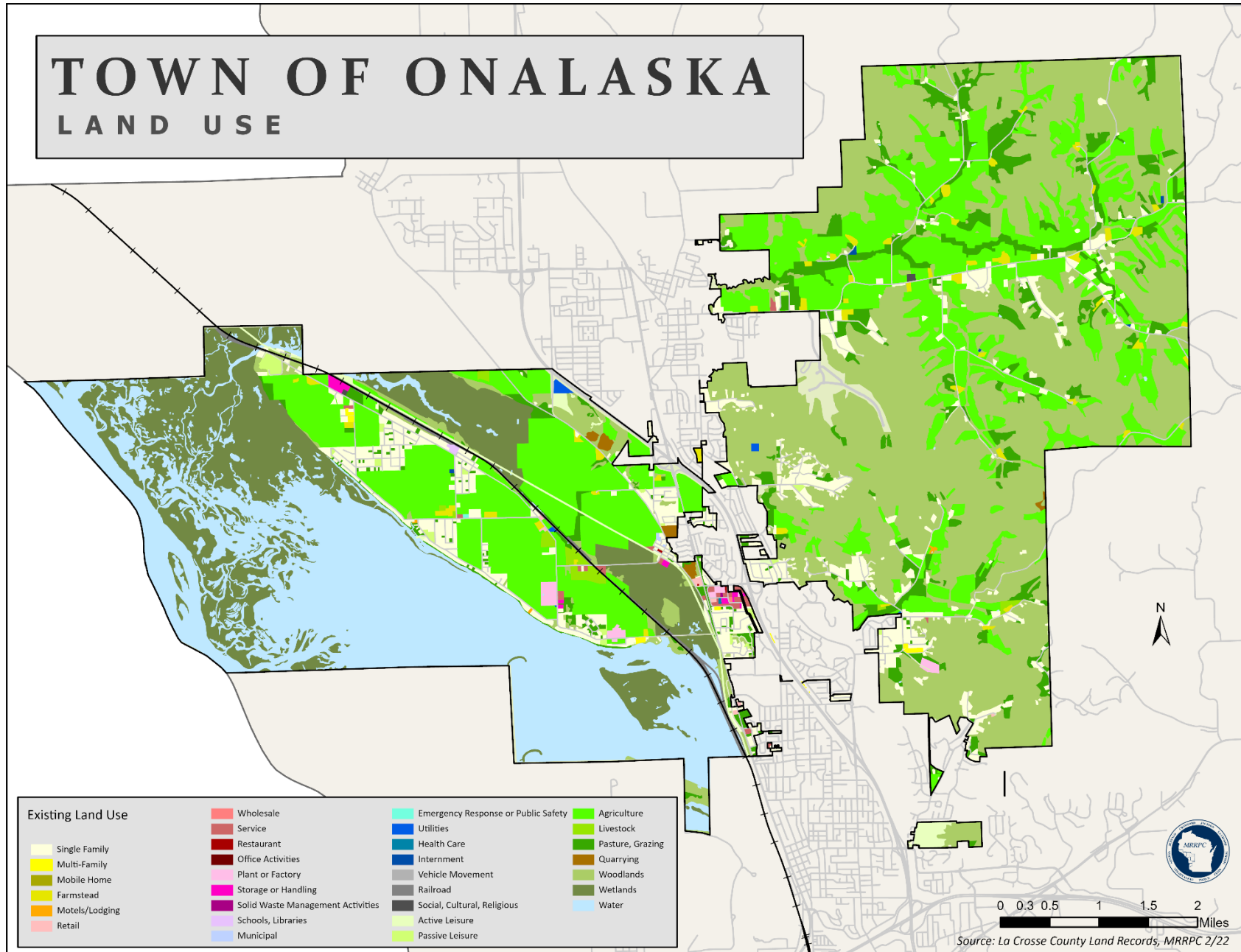


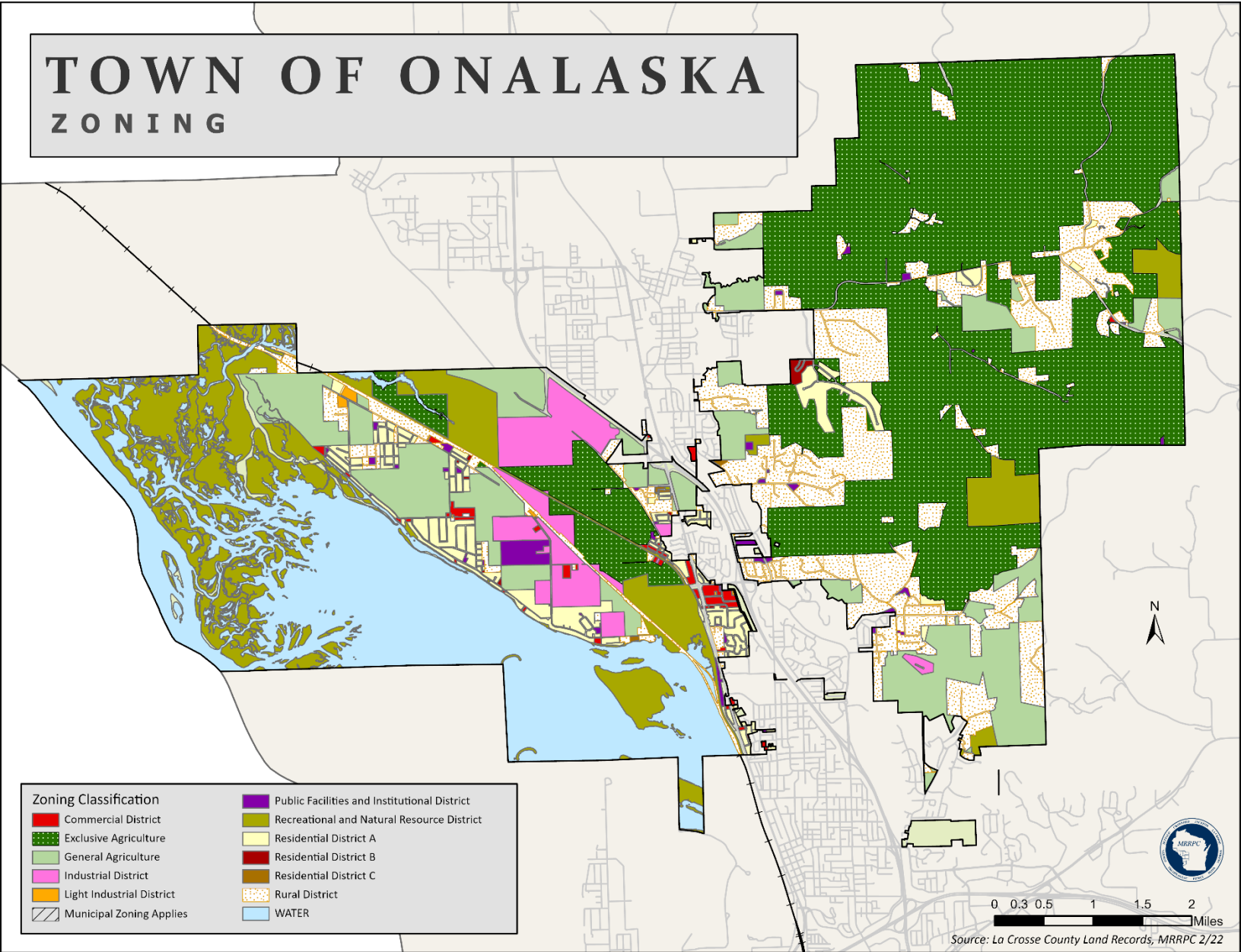


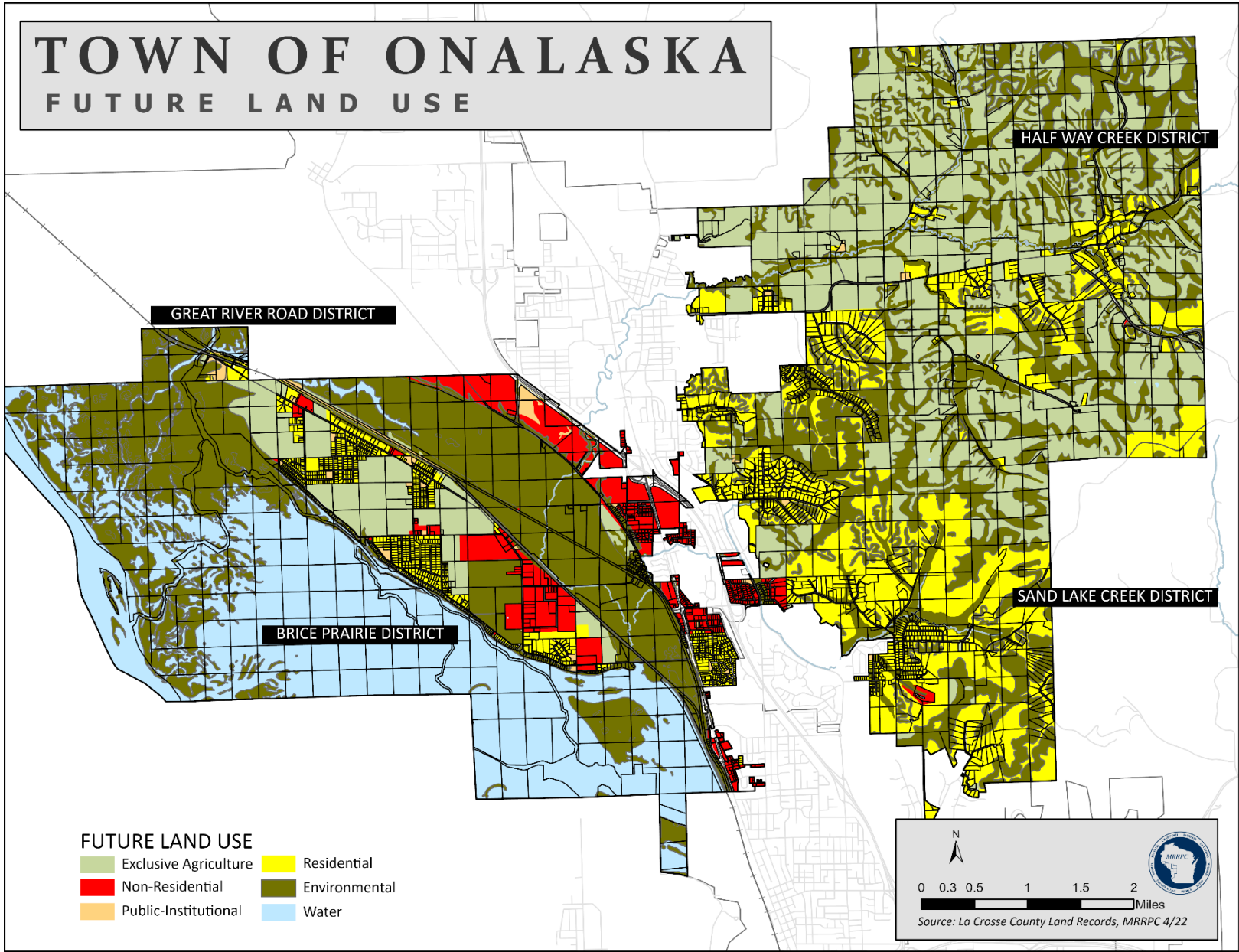


Archeological Sites Map 6.6









15. APPENDIX D

Public Meeting Announcement

TOWN OF ONALASKA: Plan Commission- Public Open House

DATE: August 15, 2022

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

PLACE: Town Hall, N5589 Commerce Road, Onalaska and zoom

PURPOSE: Public Open House for Update of Town of Onalaska, Comprehensive Plan

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89075314371?pwd=RnBtZm4wMUxyZzNOVG81UzhrM0dpQT09>

Meeting ID: 890 7531 4371 Passcode: 353395 One tap mobile +13126266799, *US (Chicago)

There will be an open house for the update of the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission will use the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to make decisions about growth, development and future land use within the Town of Onalaska over the next 10-20 years. The plan can be updated as needed to accommodate major changes that may occur. We are looking for your input regarding the updated final plan.

Members of other town bodies may be in attendance for purposes of information gathering. If so, a quorum of other body members could constitute a meeting under the open meetings law. However, there will not be any separate meeting of any other town bodies, and such bodies will not be discussing or acting upon items on the agenda.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: If you need accommodation to attend this meeting, please call the Town Clerk at 783-4958 as soon as possible.

Agendas are emailed to individual requestors as a courtesy and are subject to change. Check the Town Hall posting for any changes or addendums. <http://www.townofonalaska.org>

DATE NOTICE FAXED/MAILED/EMAILED AND POSTED July 12, 2022

NOTICES E-MAILED TO:

NEWS MEDIA	COUNTY Supervisors	PLAN COMMISSION	TOWN BOARD
La Crosse Tribune	Robert Abraham	Stan Hauser	Stan Hauser
Courier Life	Steve Doyle	Frank Fogel	Jerry Monti
WIZM	Monica Kruse	Jon Zabel	Sandy Thompson
WXOW-TV	Kevin Hoyer	Tim Reagles	Frank Fogel
WKBT-TV	Rick Cornforth	Tom Thompson	Dave Balduzzi
OTHER		Mike Wellik	
		Charlie Lipke	

Recommendation to Adopt Plan

Regular Monthly Plan Commission Meeting September 12, 2022

The meeting of the Town of Onalaska Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00p.m. at the Town of Onalaska Town Hall, N5589 Commerce Road, Onalaska, WI. Members presents were: Stan Hauser, Jon Zabel, Tim Reagles, Tom Thompson, Mike Wellik and Charlie Lipke. Frank Fogel was excused. Mary Rinehart was also present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion made by Zabel; seconded by Reagles to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Gary Fischer W7573 County Road ZB, Lenore Knudson W75210 County Road ZB, and Lee Tabbert N7273 Northshore Lane each spoke regarding Air BNB's within the Town of Onalaska.

Motion made by Lipke; seconded by Thompson to approve minutes of August 15, 2022 meeting and public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on making recommendation to Town Board regarding a Conditional Use Application for Lee Tabbert, N7273 Northshore Lane, dba Tabbert Properties, to operate a short-term rental home (Air-BNB) at tax parcel 10-1083-0, N7269 Northshore Lane (after the fact): Motion by Lipke; second by Reagles to recommend approval of application with a maximum of 6 persons per night. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on making recommendation to Town Board regarding Conditional Use Application for Cale Stetter to conduct business out of existing pole building at W5839 County Road W, tax parcel 10-172-6 (after the fact): Motion by Reagles; second by Wellik to recommend approval contingent upon upgrading building to meet state standard for commercial code. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion with Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission motion approve of updates to the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan land use map identified at August 15, 2022 meeting and discussion with Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and action regarding recommendation to Town Board the adoption of the updated Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan: Motion by Lipke; second by Thompson to recommend approval of the updated Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan 2022-2041 with the updated map to be provided to the Town Board. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn by Zabel; second by Reagles passed unanimously at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Rinehart
Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer

Ordinance to Adopt Plan

ORDINANCE NO. 38-19
AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT
THE TOWN OF ONALASKA
LA CROSSE COUNTY, WISCONSIN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022 - 2041

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Sections 62.23(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, the Town of Onalaska is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in Sections 66.1001 (1)(a) and 66.1001 (2) of Wisconsin Statutes, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Onalaska has committed funding to develop a comprehensive plan for the Town of Onalaska, and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission participated in the preparation of the Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan 2022 – 2041 to guide and coordinate land use decisions and development in the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission held public informational meetings to gather public input during the planning process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Onalaska upon recommendation by the Town Plan Commission adopts the “Town of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan 2022 – 2041.

APPROVED by a vote of: 4 Yes, 0 No

ADOPTED this 13th day of September, 2022.

SIGNED: Stan Hauser
Stan Hauser
Town Chairperson
Town of Onalaska

ATTEST: Mary Ripehart
Mary Ripehart
Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer
Town of Onalaska