

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law



Across the State of Wisconsin, communities are developing Comprehensive “Smart Growth” Plans to ensure that they may continue to have a say in land use issues after 2010. The “Smart Growth” Law defines comprehensive planning and establishes uniform content for a comprehensive plan. The following are the nine elements that each plan must include:

1. **Issues and Opportunities** - the goals, objectives and policies to guide future growth.
2. **Housing** – the adequacy of the existing housing stock to meet future demand along with the policies and programs needed to provide suitable housing for all income and age levels.
3. **Transportation** – the infrastructure needs and their relationship to county and state highways, the interstate system, local arterials, mass transit systems and airport master plans.
4. **Utilities and Community Facilities** – the future community facilities needs including sewers, water supply, solid waste management, etc.
5. **Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources** – the policies and programs for effective management of natural resources, recreational/cultural areas and sites requiring special environmental protection.
6. **Economic Development** – the goals and programs needed to expand the economic base including workforce needs and redevelopment of underutilized or environmentally contaminated properties.
7. **Intergovernmental Cooperation** – methods that can be used for joint planning, decision-making and conflict resolution between multiple governments as well as school districts.
8. **Land Use** – plans for future land uses (20-year) including redevelopment and utility service areas.
9. **Implementation** – a description of how the above elements will be integrated, how progress can be measured, and how the plan can be updated as needs change in the future.

The Little River Planning Process

Working under the framework of the “Smart Growth” Law, the Town of Little River Plan Committee has spent the last two years (1999 – 2001) developing this Comprehensive Plan. In addition, residents of the Town have been actively involved in the planning process through a series of Saturday morning workshops, a community survey, and participation in the public hearing.

The Town of Little River Comprehensive Plan addresses all nine required elements. Each chapter of the plan is dedicated to a different element. Within each chapter is an inventory of existing conditions, an assessment of future needs, and a series of goals and objectives to help address the anticipated these needs. The plan also includes a series of maps illustrating the Town’s natural features, transportation network, soil associations, existing land uses, and zoning. The plan concludes with two future Land Use Plan Maps (2010 and 2010) which will serve as a guide for decision-makers over the next 20 years.

The Town’s Future Vision

The Town of Little River Comprehensive Plan was developed with the following vision in mind:

In the year 2020, the Town of Little River will have retained its rural atmosphere by encouraging an optimal mix of farming and residential development. Residents will enjoy the town’s abundant recreational opportunities. Undeveloped, natural areas and wide-open scenic vistas will be an integral part of the landscape – supported by development options designed to preserve and protect these areas from future development pressures. New commercial and industrial development will be located near the City of Oconto and along the USH 41 corridor, where utilities and services are more readily available, but in locations that are still accessible to town residents.

Critical Planning Areas

The Town of Little River Comprehensive Plan focuses in three areas which are considered critical by the Plan Committee and residents to achieve the desired future. The following must remain a focus of future planning efforts to ensure an economically viable community that realizes its goals and is a great place to live and raise a family.

Rural Character. The Town takes great pride in its rural character. As a result, maintaining and enhancing rural character is a major priority of the Town of Little River Comprehensive Plan. Efforts in this respect include the



preservation and protection of farmland and undeveloped areas.

Recreation and Natural Features.

Preservation of natural resources, including DNR and Oconto County properties east of USH 41, streams and sloughs, the Bay of Green Bay and the Little River corridor, is very important to the Town of Little River. These areas contribute significantly to the quality of life and are important to the local economy because of the tourism activities these areas support. Therefore, the plan includes provisions to protect existing recreational areas and natural features. Specific strategies include the use of conservation subdivisions and conservancy areas adjacent to prominent natural features.



USH 41. In 2009, WisDOT will expand USH 41 through the Town of Little River from 2 to 4 lanes. The potential impact of this expansion on the Town (i.e. potential for increased development) was the motivation behind the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan encourages the Town to develop ordinances to ensure that future development adjacent to the USH 41 corridor will complement the Town’s rural character. In addition, the plan encourages open communication between the Town and WisDOT to ensure that the completed corridor supports the Town Vision.



Implementation of the Town of Little River Comprehensive Plan

To transform the Town’s Vision into reality, the Town of Little River Planning Commission will have to work toward the successful achievement of the objectives provided in the plan. Each objective includes a milestone date to track planning progress. There is a lot to do over the next 20 years and the goals and objectives provide the critical path for plan implementation. If the objectives are consistently pursued, the planning efforts will result in orderly and cost-effective development through 2020.