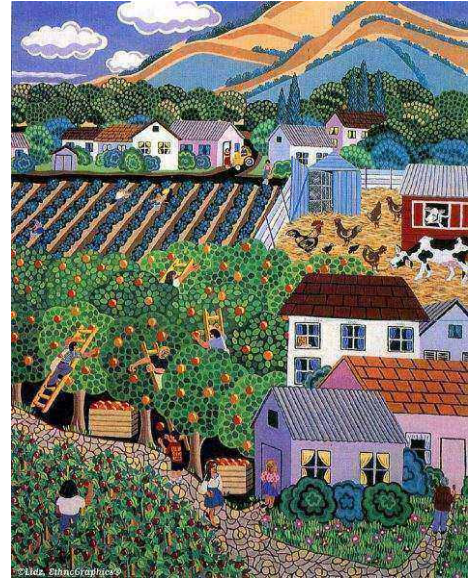


## 2.0 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Introduction

The Issues and Opportunities Element provides the background information on the town and the overall visions to guide future development and redevelopment over a 20-year planning period. Specifically, the Issues and Opportunities Element includes population, household and employment forecasts and demographic trends, age distributions, education levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local government unit. This chapter presents the overall vision for the Town of Center, including a complete assessment of local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The community characteristics and general background information that form the basis for the Issues & Opportunities Element, is included in Chapter 3 Community Profile.



### Visioning Process

To identify community issues and opportunities, a **three-step process** was utilized, which resulted in the development of individual vision statements for each of the nine required smart growth planning elements. This process included: **community SWOT meetings, cognitive mapping and element vision development.** What follows is a description of the activities and the major issues and opportunities identified through the issues and opportunities process.

#### SWOT MEETING

A SWOT meeting is a planning exercise used to get communities thinking about:

- where they have been;
- where they are;
- where they want to be in the future; and
- how they want to get there.

On **February 25, 2002**, the Town of Center Planning Commission participated in a SWOT discussion. The objective of the discussion was to find out how the Planning Commission members viewed various aspects of the town. This could include their feelings on physical things such as roads, utilities, etc., and “quality of life” issues. OMNI Associates, the town’s comprehensive planning consultant, facilitated the exercise.

#### SWOT DEFINITIONS

##### Strength

Something that makes a community stand out when compared to other communities. Something that makes you proud to call the community home. A strength can be a physical asset, a program, an environmental condition or an impression or feeling (i.e. friendly community atmosphere).

##### Weakness

Opposite of a strength. Problem that needs to be addressed.

##### Opportunity

Something that could be done to improve the community. A potential.

##### Threat

A threat may be internal or external. A threat can be anything that could jeopardize the future success of a community.

The Planning Commission and residents in attendance indicated that the Town of Center has several *strengths*:

- Open, undeveloped areas and large open lots
- Well-connected, quality transportation network
- Bicycle-friendly community
- Close proximity to hospitals, shopping and other needed services in Appleton

The Planning Commission collectively agreed upon a few *weaknesses* to address:

- No public school buildings located in the town
- Housing development on 5 acre lots, where 1 acre is maintained and all other land is not maintained

The Planning Commission agreed that the development and implementation of a quality plan was an important *opportunity* the Town of Center should focus on in the immediate the future.

The Planning Commission identified annexation and the naturally occurring arsenic in the water supply as the most pressing *threats* facing parts of the Town of Center.

During the **Mid-Course Meeting on March 27, 2003**, residents in attendance were asked to participate in an **abbreviated SWOT** exercise to identify town strengths and weaknesses. The tables below list the ideas expressed at that meeting. To prioritize the strengths and weaknesses, participants were asked to vote for what they felt was the most important strength and weakness. The numbers correspond to the number of votes each strength and weakness received from residents in attendance.

<b>Strengths</b>	▪ Great Local Fire Department/Fire Protection	3
	▪ Quality Single Family Housing	2
	▪ Local Government	2
	▪ Roads	
	▪ First responders	3
	▪ The People – Service Minded	7
	▪ Ability to Plan and Control the Future	3
	▪ Location	12
	▪ Low Crime Rate	
	▪ Good Farmland	2
	▪ Low Taxes	

<b>Weaknesses</b>	▪ Arsenic-Wells	10
	▪ Old Landfill (Dump)	
	▪ No Public Sewer/Water Available	
	▪ Threat of Annexation	12
	▪ Low Taxes as a Potential to Increase Development and Cause Congestion	
	▪ Quarries	8
	▪ Widening of Roads will lead to more travel and crime	2
▪ Lack of Light Commercial Businesses	2	

## COGNITIVE MAPPING

A cognitive map, or mental map, is a map drawn by a person that geographically locates his or her memories, ideas and thoughts of a particular place. Since cognitive maps are based on individual's preferences and opinions there are no "right" or "wrong" maps. Cognitive maps are used to delineate geographic areas of a community people like, dislike, frequently visit, feel are important, travel through regularly, feel safe, etc.

At the workshop on March 27, 2003, the Planning Commission members and residents were provided two maps of the Town of Center. On the first map, participants outlined portions of the town based on their opinion of aesthetic appeal. The most attractive places were colored in one shade, less attractive another, not attractive in yet another color.

On the second map, participants outlined those areas where they would like to see new commercial/industrial development, new residential development, new recreation areas, open space and farmland in the Town of Center.

These maps were used extensively in the development of the *Future Land Use Maps* presented later in this plan. This approach helps to ensure that the *Future Land Use Maps* accurately reflect community concerns and priorities for the future.

## VISION DEVELOPMENT

In **April 2002** a vision assignment was distributed to the Planning Commission. The assignment asked the commissioners to individually answer a series of questions about what they would like to see in the Town of Center in 20 years.

At the **June 2002** meeting, the commissioners worked in small groups to review their individual answers to each of the questions and arrive at a single best answer for each. These answers were then shared with the entire Planning Commission to arrive at a consensus-based answer to each question. OMNNI then used these collective responses to draft vision statements, which the Planning Commission reviewed in August 2002. Each of the final vision statements is provided at the end of this chapter.

## Visions

Rather than develop a series of policy statements, the Planning Commission participated in an extensive visioning process to establish a framework from which to make future land use decisions in the Town of Center. The result of this process was a vision statement for each of the nine required plan elements, including an overall vision statement. This process was critical to establish a unified vision for the Town of Center and provide a direction and focus for the planning effort.

Below are the community vision statements, which represent the broad interests of town residents, elected/appointed officials, business leaders and property owners. These visions establish the planning framework and a direction for subsequent planning efforts and decisions in the town.

Supporting goals, objectives and program initiatives are described in Chapter 12 of this plan.

### **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES (OVERALL VISION)**

The Town of Center offers rural subdivision development opportunities. Residents enjoy access to local trails and parks. Undeveloped natural areas and farms contribute to the Town's rural character and aesthetic appeal. The Town provides basic municipal services to its residents. The Town continues to develop working relationships with the City of Appleton and Outagamie County to obtain additional services, plan for growth, and expand the economic base.

### **HOUSING VISION**

In 2025, the Town of Center offers rural, single-family residential subdivisions located within easy access to the Fox Cities, as the primary choice for residential development. Housing is attractive, planned and well-suited for raising a family. Neighbors support neighbors, especially seniors still living in the Town.

### **TRANSPORTATION VISION**

By 2025, the Town of Center transportation network has expanded to accommodate its growing population. Town roads that existed in 2004 are now collector streets for subdivision developments. The STH 47 and CTH A corridors have been expanded to 4-lanes, with an interchange, to accommodate traffic and maintain the link between the Town of Center and City of Appleton. Trails provide connections from neighborhoods to natural areas throughout the county.

## **UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES VISION**

In 2025, residents enjoy nearby access to a full-range of services, including: medical care, retail, educational facilities and entertainment choices available in the Fox Cities. The Town strives to ensure that property taxes are minimized, without jeopardizing public health and safety.

The provision of town services and infrastructure are closely coordinated, well planned, and do not create unreasonable financial burden for residents. Town residents rely on monitored and treated well water. Municipal water and sewer service is only available in adjacent cities and villages.

## **AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES VISION**

In 2025, Woodlands, wetlands, surface water resources and other natural areas in the Town of Center are protected from development through effective county ordinances. The few remaining farms in the Town are found mainly in the northern 1/3 of the Town. The Town's farmland and natural areas enhance the rural residential character of the community by maintaining some open vistas and buffers between residential areas. The Town strives to maintain enough park space to meet resident expectations. As has been the tradition, cultural and entertainment venues are easily accessible in the Fox Cities.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION**

Through 2025, economic activity has been concentrated primarily around Mackville and Center Valley. Quarry operations are thriving and are considered an important part of the local economy.

Most of the Town's non-residential development has been along the STH 47 corridor in and to the south of Mackville. Activities in this area include: service businesses, shops, and light industrial development. Some of this area has been annexed to the City of Appleton, prior to development, to accommodate business needs for city services (i.e. water and sewer). The area around STH 47/CTH A extending toward Center Valley has grown modestly with a few businesses. Employment opportunities for residents can easily be found within 15 miles of their homes.

## **LAND USE VISION**

By 2025, much of the Town of Center has been developed into rural residential neighborhoods and large rural residential lots to accommodate the growing Fox Valley population. The Town has become a popular suburban area for people seeking larger lots that are accessible to the economic activities in the Fox Cities. Portions of the Town have been annexed by neighboring communities, resulting in water and sewer service for these areas. Limited areas of commercial and light industrial development exist near Mackville (along STH 47) and in Center Valley.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION VISION**

In 2025, the Town of Center and Outagamie County work cooperatively to make sure roads are well maintained and serviced. Annexation is planned, based on service demands, and coordinated in a fashion to ensure that both communities have preserved their community identities.

After much coordination with local school districts, two elementary schools have been built in the town.

Town leaders keep residents informed on all matters pertinent to Town operations and land development issues and pursue opportunities to provide coordinated, cost-effective services with neighboring governments.

## **IMPLEMENTATION VISION**

By 2025, the Town of Center has consistently recognized the importance of planning to build a better community. Effective planning helps the town to prevent incompatible land uses and anticipate capital improvement needs. The Town listens to the opinions of its residents and business owners, while also respecting the responsible efforts of landowners to improve their property and community.