



# Town of Rock

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Town Planning and Zoning Committee Recommended: April 28, 2008

Town Board Adopted: July 7, 2008





## Summary

### THE TOWN OF ROCK'S VISION 2030

The Town of Rock will retain its agricultural character, which is the heart and soul of the community. In addition to preserving farming, the Town will protect and celebrate its key features, including the Rock River and the village of Afton. At the same time, the Town seeks to promote a mix of high-value new development in carefully planned areas, like near existing development and Highway 51, to ensure fiscal strength. The Town will rely on public involvement, progressive leadership, and intergovernmental and private sector cooperation to achieve this vision.

To carry out this ambitious vision, this *Comprehensive Plan* includes detailed goals, objectives, policies and programs. These are generally organized in chapters according to the required comprehensive plan elements: agricultural, natural and cultural resources; transportation; utilities and community facilities; housing and neighborhood development; economic development; land use; intergovernmental cooperation; and implementation.

The following is a brief summary of the key recommendations of this plan organized by these elements. The Town invites you to read the full *Town of Rock Comprehensive Plan* to explore these recommendations in significantly greater detail.

### Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Recommendations Summary

- ◆ Consider innovative approaches to farmland preservation, such as allowing smaller lots at similar overall densities to what 35 acre minimum lots now allow.
- ◆ Particularly preserve the agricultural economy and farmland west of the Rock River.
- ◆ Stay informed on and facilitate local opportunities to expand the agricultural-based economy, in partnership with nearby cities and economic stakeholders.
- ◆ Work in partnership with other interested parties to preserve and enhance the Rock River and its tributaries as critical natural and community-enhancing features in the Town.
- ◆ Minimize risk to persons and private properties by directing new development away from areas susceptible to flooding and other natural hazards.
- ◆ Enhance the roll of Afton as the Town's cultural center, and improve the appearance of development along Highway 51.



### Land Use Recommendations Summary

- ◆ In general, focus new development east of the Rock River and agricultural preservation west of the River.
- ◆ Limit large lot residential development in long-term agricultural areas, and consider allowing the clustering of a limited number of smaller lots in these areas.
- ◆ Direct housing development to areas where public utilities will be available or to where existing subdivisions are already located. Follow conservation design principles in new subdivisions.
- ◆ Identify the Highway 51 corridor and Afton for economic development and redevelopment following high quality design standards.

### **Transportation Recommendations Summary**

- ◆ Work to control access, maintain the function, and improve the appearance of key roads in the community.
- ◆ Coordinate with Rock County on appropriate upgrades to the airport and on zoning regulations that do not negatively affect the Town or its land owners.
- ◆ Advance planning and development of a north-south recreation trail through the Town.

### **Utilities and Community Facilities Recommendations Summary**

- ◆ Maintain a rural level of service throughout most of the Town.
- ◆ Work with the Town of Beloit to allow sewer connections to future economic development areas on the south side of the Town.
- ◆ Maintain and improve the Town park and Town cemetery over the planning period.



### **Housing and Neighborhood Development Recommendations Summary**

- ◆ Work with property owners on various approaches to maintain and improve the housing stock in the Town.
- ◆ Develop siting standards where limited new homes are allowed in agricultural areas.

### **Economic Development Recommendations Summary**

- ◆ Continue to support farming and related businesses as a cornerstone to the Town of Rock's economy.
- ◆ Promote the establishment of additional small-scale businesses in Afton.
- ◆ Direct larger-scale commercial and industrial development to the Highway 51 and Townline Road areas (see Map 5).
- ◆ Pursue incentives, regulations, and design standards to promote high-quality economic development and redevelopment.



### **Intergovernmental Cooperation Recommendations Summary**

- ◆ Continue to work with the City of Janesville on issues of mutual interest and concern, including possible extension and adjustment of the current cooperative boundary plan.
- ◆ Work with Rock County on issues such as airport improvements and zoning, park and trail improvements, land use planning and regulation, and highways.
- ◆ Discuss issues of interest and concern with the Town of Beloit, including land use compatibility and the potential for additional sewer connections.

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## **Acknowledgements**

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## Introduction

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Located in central Rock County, the Town of Rock is a community noted for its rural lifestyle, agriculture, and beautiful landscapes within close proximity to growing urban areas. The Rock River – along with Highways 51 and 11 – bisect the Town. The Town includes the small unincorporated hamlet of Afton and areas of housing and business development focused particularly along Highway 51. The Town is directly south and west of the City of Janesville, and just a few miles north of the City of Beloit.

The Town has experienced modest growth over the past 20 years. Decisions that are made over the next 20 years will shape the Town's future, particularly in light of expected growth of the Janesville area. Land preservation and planned development in an orderly and predictable manner will protect the Town's agricultural land and other natural features, avoid land use conflicts, provide appropriate jobs and housing, and help maintain the Town's rural atmosphere.

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### Purpose of this Plan

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This *Town of Rock Comprehensive Plan* is intended to:

- ◆ Identify areas appropriate for development and preservation in the Town over the next 20 years;
- ◆ Recommend types of land use for specific areas in the Town;
- ◆ Preserve natural features, agricultural lands, and farming in the community;
- ◆ Identify needed transportation and community facilities to serve future land uses;
- ◆ Direct private housing and economic investment in the Town; and
- ◆ Provide detailed strategies to implement plan recommendations.

This *Comprehensive Plan* is being prepared under the State of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law, adopted in 1999 and contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This *Plan* meets all of the statutory elements and requirements. After 2010, only those plans that contain the following nine required elements and were adopted under the prescribed procedures will have legal standing for zoning and land division decisions:

- ◆ Issues and Opportunities
- ◆ Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
- ◆ Land Use
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Utilities and Community Facilities
- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Intergovernmental Cooperation
- ◆ Implementation



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## Regional Context

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Map 1 shows the relationship of the Town to neighboring communities in the region. The Town is located southwest of and adjacent to the City of Janesville (population 62,998) and north of the City of Beloit (population 36,348). Rock is also bordered by the Town of Janesville on the north, the Town of La Prairie to the east, the Town of Beloit to the south, and the Town of Plymouth to the west. The Town is 50 miles south of Madison, 80 miles southwest of Milwaukee, and 25 miles north of Rockford, Illinois. The Town of Rock's location among these growing cities, close to Interstate 39/90, and along two major highways and the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport, has a major influence in the Town's future.

The Town of Rock and the City of Janesville prepared comprehensive plans concurrently. The Town and City hired the same planning consultant and collaborated throughout the process.

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## Selection of the Planning Area

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The Town of Rock encompasses approximately 30 square miles. The planning area includes all of the land within the Town, with recognition of lands outside Town boundaries when making recommendations, particularly those in the City of Janesville.

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## Organization of the Plan

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The remainder of this *Comprehensive Plan* is organized in nine chapters containing all of the required elements listed above. Each chapter begins with background information on the element (e.g., land use, transportation, economic development), followed by an outline of the Town's policy desires related to that element, and ends with detailed recommendations for the element. The final chapter (Implementation) provides recommendations, strategies, and timelines to ensure the implementation of this *Plan*.

## **Map 1: Jurisdictional Boundaries**



## Chapter One: Issues and Opportunities

This chapter reviews demographic trends and background information necessary to understand recent changes in the Town of Rock and their influence on the future. This chapter includes data on population and household trends and forecasts, age distribution, educational attainment levels, and employment and income characteristics. It also includes an overall vision and goals to guide future preservation, development, and redevelopment over the 20-year planning period.

### Population Trends and Forecasts

Figure 1 compares the Town of Rock’s population trends between 1970 and 2000 with several neighboring communities, the County, and the State. After significant population growth in the 1970s, the Town of Rock’s population has stabilized. Between 1980 and 1990, the Town’s population declined, while from 1990 to 2000 it increased. The Towns of La Prairie and Janesville both experienced population decline since 1980, while the populations of the Cities of Janesville, Beloit, and Rockford have increased. The State Department of Administration estimates the Town’s 2007 population at 3,326, a slight percent decrease since 2000.

#### SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ Agriculture should remain the prominent land use west of the Rock River.
- ◆ New neighborhood development should be directed to areas with existing development.
- ◆ Local business development in Afton and along Highway 51 will serve residents and contribute to the tax base.
- ◆ Urban growth pressures, particularly from Janesville, will continue to influence the Town’s future.
- ◆ Natural resources and recreation - particularly associated with the Rock River – are a key part of the Town’s future.

**Figure 1: Historic Population of Area Communities, 1970 – 2000**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Population Change 1980-2000	% Population Change 1990-2000
Town of Rock	3,050	3,399	3,172	3,338	-1.8	5.2
Town of La Prairie	1,086	1,099	943	929	-15.5	-1.5
Town of Janesville	2,700	3,068	3,121	3,048	-0.7	-2.3
Town of Beloit	9,182	8,382	6,778	7,038	-16.0	3.8
Town of Plymouth	1,246	1,267	1,189	1,270	0.2	6.8
City of Janesville	46,426	51,071	52,210	60,200	17.9	15.3
City of Beloit	35,729	35,207	35,571	35,775	1.6	0.6
City of Rockford	147,248	139,712	139,426	150,115	7.4	7.7
Rock County	131,970	139,420	139,510	152,307	9.2	9.1
State of Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,642	4,891,769	5,363,675	14.0	9.6

*Source: U.S. Census 1970-2000*

Future population growth will depend on market conditions, attitudes toward growth, and development regulations. Figure 2 shows two different forecast scenarios for the future Town population increase:

- ◆ **Department of Administration.** The State Department of Administration forecasts an annual population growth rate for the Town of 0.12 percent over the period. This may be low given recent residential growth trends, access to transportation networks, and the natural, educational, cultural, and other amenities of the Janesville/Rock area.
- ◆ **15-Year Percentage Projection.** This scenario was calculated by determining the average annual percent change between 1990 and 2005, in which the Town's population growth averaged 0.4 percent per year, and projecting that forward for the next 25 years. This growth rate would result in a population of 3,701 by 2030.

**Figure 2: Population Projection Scenarios, 2000-2030**

	2000 <sup>1</sup>	2005 <sup>2</sup>	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
DOA Population Projection	3,338	3,361	3,377	3,399	3,419	3,440	NA
15-Year Percentage Projection <sup>3</sup>	3,338	3,361	3,426	3,493	3,561	3,630	3,701

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 population estimate

<sup>3</sup> Extrapolated based on the average annual percentage population change from 1990-2005

For the purposes of this *Plan*, the projected population will be based on the **15-Year Percentage Projection** scenario. This means that forecasts for housing and land use demand, included later in this *Plan*, will be based on a forecast population of 3,701 by 2030. Using this scenario will help make sure that sufficient developable land is available to accommodate growth.

### Demographic Trends

Figure 3 shows the Town of Rock's age and sex distribution in 2000, and compares the statistics with those of the surrounding communities, the County, and State. This data suggests that the Town's population is younger than that of many of the surrounding towns, but older than that of the nearby cities and the County as a whole. The proportion of Town residents over the age of 65 has decreased from 14.2 percent in 1990 to 11.0 percent in 2000, which is the reverse of regional and national trends. The proportion of school-age children residing in the Town is average compared to surrounding towns, but lower than that of nearby cities.

**Figure 3: Age and Gender Distribution, 2000**

	Median Age	% Under 18	% Over 65	% Female
Town of Rock	37.4	24.4	11.0	49.0
Town of La Prairie	35.3	27.2	12.1	48.1
Town of Janesville	39.5	22.2	12.6	45.7
Town of Beloit	42.3	23.3	16.8	50.5
Town of Plymouth	38.3	26.1	11.4	49.6
City of Janesville	35.3	26.2	12.9	51.1
City of Beloit	32.7	27.7	13.0	52.1
City of Rockford	34.4	26.5	14.1	51.8
Rock County	35.9	26.5	12.7	50.8
Wisconsin	36.0	25.5	13.1	50.6
United States	35.3	25.7	12.4	50.9

*Source: U.S. Census, 2000*

Figure 4 compares the Town's racial and ethnic composition to neighboring communities, Rock County, Wisconsin, and the United States. The populations of the Town and the surrounding municipalities are mainly white. Still, the Town's percentage of white population was lower than all surrounding towns except the Town of Janesville. Similarly, the Town's black population was higher than all surrounding towns except the Town of Janesville. The Town's (and Janesville area's) population contrasts with the more racially diverse cities of Beloit and Rockford.

**Figure 4: Race Distribution, 2000**

	% White	% Black	% Asian	% American Indian & Alaska Native	% Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	% Some Other Race	% Two or More Races
Town of Rock	95.5	1.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.1	1.3
Town of La Prairie	98.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3
Town of Janesville	93.2	4.7	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.7
Town of Beloit	98.3	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.0	1.0	1.5
Town of Plymouth	98.1	0.0	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.2	1.0
City of Janesville	95.3	1.3	1.0	0.2	0.0	1.0	1.2
City of Beloit	71.9	15.2	1.2	0.4	0.1	4.6	2.8
City of Rockford	72.8	17.4	2.2	0.3	0.0	4.8	2.5
Rock County	89.2	4.6	0.8	0.3	0.0	1.8	1.5
Wisconsin	88.9	5.7	1.7	0.9	0.0	1.6	1.2
United States	75.1	12.3	3.6	0.9	0.1	5.5	2.4

*Source: U.S. Census, 2000*

For U.S. Census 2000, people who identify with the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino categories as well as those who indicate that they are "other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino." The Census does not include Hispanic and Latino people in the racial distribution; they are considered to be an ethnicity. The Town of Rock has slightly higher percentage of "Hispanic or Latino" residents than the surrounding Towns, except the Town of Beloit. Latino populations have likely increased significantly since 2000.

**Figure 5: Latino and Hispanic Distribution, 2000**

	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	Not Hispanic or Latino	White Alone
Town of Rock	2.1	97.9	94.5
Town of La Prairie	0.2	99.8	98.6
Town of Janesville	1.5	98.5	92.5
Town of Beloit	2.6	97.4	88.8
Town of Plymouth	0.6	99.4	97.7
City of Janesville	2.6	97.4	93.9
City of Beloit	9.1	90.9	71.9
City of Rockford	10.2	89.8	68.4
Rock County	3.9	96.1	89.2
Wisconsin	3.6	96.4	87.3
United States	12.5	87.5	69.1

*Source: U.S. Census, 2000*

### Household Trends and Forecasts

Figure 6 compares selected household characteristics in 2000 for the Town of Rock with surrounding towns, the County, and the State. Following national trends, the Town's average household size decreased from 2.7 in 1990 to 2.52 in 2000. The Town's 2000 household size was lower than all the surrounding towns except the Town of Beloit. The Town's median home value was similar to surrounding towns and higher than the cities. The Town had the highest median rent of nearby communities, the County, and the State. Only the Town of Janesville had a higher percentage of owner occupied units.

**Figure 6: Household Characteristic Comparisons, 2000**

	Total Housing Units	Total Households	Average Household Size	Median Home Value	Median Rent
Town of Rock	1,358	1,304	2.52	\$113,900	\$629
Town of La Prairie	352	342	2.72	\$124,000	\$564
Town of Janesville	1,206	1,137	2.67	\$163,100	\$595
Town of Beloit	2,949	2,814	2.50	\$102,000	\$538
Town of Plymouth	454	441	2.83	\$132,300	\$454
City of Janesville	25,083	23,894	2.45	\$100,000	\$567
City of Beloit	14,262	13,370	2.57	\$68,200	\$509
City of Rockford	63,570	59,158	2.46	\$79,900	\$498
Rock County	62,187	58,617	3.03	\$98,200	\$543
Wisconsin	2,321,144	2,084,544	3.05	\$112,200	\$540
United States	115,904,641	105,480,101	2.59	\$119,600	\$602

*Source: U.S. Census, 2000*

**Figure 7: Household Characteristic Comparisons, 2000**

	Percent Single Person	Percent Vacant	Percent Owner Occupied
Town of Rock	22.9	4.0	89.5
Town of La Prairie	16.7	2.8	76.9
Town of Janesville	15.3	5.7	91.1
Town of Beloit	27.4	4.6	85.3
Town of Plymouth	13.2	2.9	88.9
City of Janesville	27.4	4.7	68.2
City of Beloit	27.5	6.3	61.9
City of Milton	17.7	16.9	86.7
City of Rockford	30.7	6.9	61.1
Rock County	25.1	5.7	71.1
Wisconsin	26.8	10.2	68.4
United States	25.8	9.0	66.2

*Source: U.S. Census, 2000*

Figure 8 presents household forecasts based on the 15-Year Percentage Projection scenario described in Figure 2. These projections suggest there will be a moderate increase in the number of households in the Town over the next 25 years. These numbers were considered when preparing land use forecasts for the Town.

**Figure 8: Household Projections, 2005-2030**

	Households 2000 <sup>1</sup>	Projected Households						# of Additional households 2000-2030
		2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	
15-Year Compounded Projection <sup>2</sup>	1,304	1,344	1,371	1,398	1,426	1,455	1,484	180

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census, 2000

<sup>2</sup>Derived from 15-Year Percentage Projection scenario

### Education and Employment Levels

Detailed information on education and employment trends can be found in the Economic Development Chapter of this *Plan*. The Town has one of the lowest higher education attainment levels in the area, which is surprising given the higher education opportunities in the area. The percent of unemployed workers in the Town of Rock is higher than the percentage in the County overall.

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## Summary of Public Participation

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The Town's planning process was guided by several participation events and tools, including regular meetings of the Town's Comprehensive Planning Committee. The Committee was comprised of representatives from the Town Board and Planning and Zoning Committee, along with other citizen members.

### **Kick Off Meeting**

This meeting was held on April 12, 2007 and attended by residents and the Comprehensive Planning Committee. The group was introduced to the planning process and offered their preferred vision for the Town in 2030. Key vision elements included encouraging growth in Afton, maintaining agricultural land uses west of the Rock River, and preserving sensitive natural areas. Preliminary strategies to accomplish these vision elements are listed below.

- ◆ Encouraging Growth in Afton
  - Improve post office
  - Establish gas station/convenience store
  - Take advantage of auto traffic
  - Consider lands south of existing development for growth opportunities
  
- ◆ Maintain Agriculture West of Rock River
  - Designate for farmland preservation
  - Address 35 acre minimum lot size
  - Focus on and understand the difference between “good” and “marginal” farmland
  
- ◆ Preserve Sensitive Natural Areas
  - Recognize the Rock River as a defining feature of the Town
  - Upgrade Bass Creek as a trout stream
  - Participate in clean up of Markham Creek
  - Consider campgrounds or other recreation uses
  - Take advantage of trends for outdoor recreation
  - Explore State and Federal protection programs

### **Community Survey**

To gather citizen perceptions of the Town of Rock and its growth, a written citizen survey was sent to 1,400 property owners in the Town in June 2007. The survey included questions to learn citizen perceptions on existing conditions in the Town of Rock and attitudes on how Rock should grow in the future. The Town received 247 completed surveys, representing a return rate of nearly 18 percent. This is a good response rate for a written survey of its length.

#### *Overview*

In general, the Town of Rock residents are satisfied with their community in terms of services and appearance. Increasing taxes are a primary concern. Residents also value farmlands and natural areas, emphasized through their desire to preserve active farmland, open space, and natural areas, and their desire for the Town to pay special attention to the pace and location of new development. Comments regarding the Town's existing conditions and future development reveal that respondents are concerned about the negative appearance of some areas of the Town. Though there appears to be a general attitude toward limiting growth, respondents have mixed feelings about the promotion of business development in the area.

### *Opinions on Existing Conditions*

The survey attempted to get opinions on existing conditions in the Town of Rock. Responses to such questions are useful to identify features of the community that its citizens value. Out of 15 choices, respondents selected “rural atmosphere” as the number one reason for living in the Town of Rock. “Proximity to Janesville or Beloit” and “natural beauty” were also frequently chosen as reasons for living in Rock. Those surveyed were also given 19 options from which to select their top three challenges facing the Town of Rock. Over 30 percent of respondents selected potential increases in taxes as being the number one challenge facing the Town. Loss of rural character was selected as the second greatest challenge facing the Town. Loss of Town land due to annexation and loss of farmland are other primary concerns of survey respondents.

The majority of respondents also rated Town facilities and services as “excellent” or “good,” with nearly half of respondents rating each service (e.g. ambulance service, snow removal) as at least “good.” Likewise, five major areas of the Town (rural, residential, industrial, lands near the airport, and Afton) received positive appearance ratings, with over half of respondents rating each area as “good” or “excellent.” The Highway 51 corridor rated lower on appearance.

### *Growth and Development Issues*

The survey included several questions to ascertain residents’ attitudes and preferences regarding future growth and development. Nearly three-quarters of respondents say the Town’s population is growing at about the right rate and just over half think that the amount of planning and policies regarding development is about right as well. About 40 percent see the future of the Town of Rock as an area of mainly agricultural land and open space, while nearly the same percentage also see housing in the Town’s future. The majority of respondents want to protect the Rock River and the best agricultural lands, promote farming as part of the Town’s future, and protect the environment, including wetlands.

Those surveyed were presented with an alternative residential development approach called clustering, and over half of respondents agree that this approach should be explored as part of this planning process. Nearly one third of respondents would like residential development in Afton, nearby cities, or near existing subdivisions in the southern parts of the Town of Rock. More than half of respondents prefer future businesses to be near Highway 51, while Afton and other nearby cities are also among preferred locations for business development. Many respondents would like to see neighborhood businesses and restaurants in the future.

### *Demographic Information*

Survey respondents were likely to be older and have lived in the Town longer than the overall adult population of the Town. The vast majority (over 93 percent) of respondents live in the Town of Rock most or all of the year. Over half of respondents have owned property in the Town for more than 15 years. Nearly one third of respondents are over age 65, while about half are between ages 45 and 65. Less than 5 percent of respondents are younger than 35. Less than 20 percent of respondents report persons in the household under 18 years of age. The majority of adults in responding households either work in the City of Janesville or are retired.

### **Community Leader Interviews and Group Meetings**

In Summer 2007, the consultant team conducted interviews with individuals to learn more about the issues confronting the Town. Interview participants represented a broad range of community interests focused on large property owners and business owners. Key themes included preservation of productive agricultural areas, the need for more businesses in Afton that serve local residents, and the desire to maintain the rural character of the Town.

In addition to the interviews, the consultants also facilitated a focus group discussion on June 28, 2007 about natural resources and recreation with representatives from the Rock County Parks Department, Rock Trail

Coalition, and Rock River Coalition. The group discussed the route for an off-street recreation path that is in the planning stages. This path would extend along and near the abandoned railroad right-of-way in the Town south to Big Hill Park in the City of Beloit. The group discussed other potential future recreation opportunities, including a recreation path on the west side of the Town, as well as challenges to recreation. Location of future development was also discussed, with the consensus that lands west of the Rock River should remain agricultural and new development east of the River should be located adjacent to existing development. There was also a suggestion that the Town consider revising its zoning code to encourage low-impact development.

### **Intergovernmental Meetings**

- ◆ Rock County. The Town and its consultants met with Rock County planning, economic development, airport, and parks staff on issues of mutual concern, including airport opportunities and potential issues (including zoning), economic development and redevelopment along Highway 51, and the relationship of Town plans and regulation to County plans and regulation.
- ◆ City of Janesville. The Town and its consultants met with the City of Janesville planning staff on issues of mutual concern, including the Cooperative Boundary Plan, airport opportunities and potential issues, economic development areas, development quality, and the City's extraterritorial density policy.

### **Draft Plan Open House**

On March 11, 2008, the Town held an open house event to gauge the public's opinions on the first complete draft of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

### **Public Hearing**

On July 7, 2008, the Town Board held a public hearing to receive any comments on the public review draft of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

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## **Statement of Vision and Goals**

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Each chapter of this *Comprehensive Plan* includes a set of goals, objectives and policies which will provide the vision and policy guidance that the Planning and Zoning Committee, Town Board, Town residents, and other interested groups and individuals need to guide the future preservation and development of the Town of Rock over the next 20+ years.

Goals, objectives and policies are defined below:

- ◆ Goals are broad statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach development issues during the next 20+ years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.
- ◆ Objectives are more specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.
- ◆ Policies are rules or courses of action used to ensure *Plan* implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. The policies are intended to be used by decision-makers on a day to day basis.
- ◆ Programs are specific projects or services that are advised to achieve plan goals, objectives, and policies. Programs are sometimes included in the same list as "policies" and are sometimes included in the same section as "recommendations," depending on the chapter.

Based on the opportunities facing the Town and public input, below is an overall vision and list of goals to guide the future preservation and development in the Town of Rock over the 20-year planning period.

Objectives, policies, and programs that forward these goals relevant to each element of this *Plan* are presented in subsequent chapters.

#### **VISION STATEMENT**

The Town of Rock will retain its agricultural character, which is the heart and soul of the community. In addition to preserving farming, the Town will protect and celebrate its key features, including the Rock River and the village of Afton. At the same time, the Town seeks to promote a mix of high-value new development in carefully planned areas, like near existing development and Highway 51, to ensure fiscal strength. The Town will rely on public involvement, progressive leadership, and intergovernmental and private sector cooperation to achieve this vision.



#### **OVERALL GOALS**

1. Continue to support farming and agricultural activities in the Town, particularly west of the Rock River.
2. Focus development east of the Rock River or near already-developed areas, especially along the Highway 51 corridor.
3. Preserve and improve water quality and the Town's valued water resources, including the Rock River.
4. Encourage appropriate residential and commercial growth in Afton.
5. Continue to work with surrounding communities on issues of mutual importance, especially the City of Janesville.



## Chapter Two: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

This chapter of the *Plan* contains background data, goals, objectives, policies, and recommended programs for agricultural preservation, natural resource conservation, and cultural resource protection. The information will be used to guide future land use decisions so that these resources may be protected to the greatest extent possible. In addition, the information can help determine areas within the community that may not be suitable for development based on environmental opportunities and constraints, including soils, floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater.

### Agricultural Resource Inventory

The history of the settlement of central Rock County lies in the vast tall grass prairie region that stretches across the Midwestern heart of the United States. It is among the richest agricultural regions on earth. For the Town of Rock and other communities located in this region, the prairie soil was the source of the natural wealth that early settlers used to establish themselves. Without the wealth of the prairie around it, the area would not have developed as it did. Critical to its past, farming is also an important part of the Town's future economic health, character, and land use pattern.

#### Character of Farming

Rock County ranks among the top counties in Wisconsin in corn, soybean and food grade soybean production. The county's agricultural diversity is evident in its production of tobacco, mint, vegetables, nursery and flowers, pheasants, dairy, and hogs. Rock County is home to numerous food processors and agricultural supply companies that support the production of agricultural products.

Within the Town of Rock, the largest areas of farming are west of the Rock River. Some of the more diverse commodities in the County include mint, tobacco, and pheasants. The largest pheasant farm in the world is located in the Town of Rock, with its main facility located between the Airport and the remainder of the City of Janesville. More pheasants were raised in the County in 2002 than all other livestock animals in total, ranking Rock County pheasant quantities first in the State and second in the nation.

Similar to the agricultural industry overall, Town of Rock farmers face many challenges including increased operating costs, shortage of interest in farming in the next generation, and continued pressure from urban sprawl.

#### Assessment of Farmland Viability

The Natural Resources Conservation Service groups soils based on their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants based on criteria that include the soil's salinity, capacity to hold moisture,

#### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- ◆ Particularly preserve the agricultural economy and farmland west of the Rock River.
- ◆ Consider innovative approaches to farmland preservation, such as allowing smaller lots at similar overall densities to what 35 acre minimum lots now allow.
- ◆ Stay informed on and facilitate local opportunities to expand the agricultural-based economy, in partnership with nearby cities and economic stakeholders.
- ◆ Work in partnership with other interested parties to preserve and enhance the Rock River and its tributaries as critical natural and community-enhancing features in the Town.
- ◆ Minimize risk to persons and private properties by directing new development away from areas susceptible to flooding and other natural hazards.
- ◆ Enhance the role of Afton as the Town's cultural center, and improve the appearance of development along Highway 51.

#### KEY SURVEY RESULTS

88% of respondents agreed that farming is an important part of the Town's future.

potential for erosion, depth, and texture and structure, as well as local climatic limitations. Under this system of classification, soils are separated into eight classes. Generally, Class I and Class II soils are the best suited for the cultivation of crops.

Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use. These soils can sustain a wide variety of plants and are well suited for cultivated crops, pasture plants, range lands, and woodlands. Class II soils have moderate limitations that restrict the types of plants that can be grown or that require simple conservation practices or soil management techniques to prevent deterioration over time. However, these practices are generally easy to apply, and, therefore, these soils are still able to sustain cultivated crops.

Soils in Class III have severe limitations that, under natural circumstances, restrict the types of plants that can be grown, and/or that alter the timing of planting, tillage, and harvesting. However, with the application and careful management of special conservation practices, these soils may still be used for cultivated crops, pasture plants, woodlands, and range lands.

Soils in capability classes IV through VIII present increasingly severe limitations to the cultivation of crops. Soils in Class VIII have limitations that entirely preclude their use for commercial plant production.



Map 2 depicts the locations of Class I, II, and III soils in the Town of Rock. Generally, Class I soils are located in the southern portion of the Town along Bass Creek and in the northwestern corner and comprise approximately 4 percent of the total land area. Class II soils are located throughout the Town and account for approximately 60 percent of the total land area.

### **Farmland Preservation Efforts**

Town of Rock farmers can participate in several federal, State, and County programs and initiatives intended to preserve long-term farming activities. The 2002 Farm Bill reauthorized several federal programs, including:

- ◆ The **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**, which provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.
- ◆ The **Wetland Reserve Program**, which provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts.
- ◆ The **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program**, which provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to landowners to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat on their property.
- ◆ The **Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative**, which focuses on providing technical assistance to help new grazers begin using rotational grazing methods. Trained grazing specialists work one-on-one with farmers, developing grazing plans, including seeding recommendations, fencing and watering plans.
- ◆ The **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**, which provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers who promote agricultural production and environmental quality. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue offers two important farmland preservation programs, the Farmland Preservation Credit Program and the Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program. It should be noted that claims for both of the Farmland Preservation Credit and the Farmland Tax Relief Credit are documented for the municipality in which the claimant lives, which may not be where the farm is actually located.

The Farmland Preservation Credit Program strives to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and provides property tax relief to farmland owners. To qualify for the credit, farmland must be 35 acres or more and zoned for exclusive agricultural use or be subject to a preservation agreement between the farmland owner and the State. In addition, all program participants must comply with soil and water conservation standards set by the State Land Conservation Board. In 2005, the Town of Rock had 15 Farmland Preservation Credit claims totaling \$8,674.

The Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program provides direct benefits to all farmland owners with 35 or more acres. The credit is computed as a percentage of up to \$10,000 of property taxes, with the maximum credit of \$1,500. In 2005, the Town of Rock had 22 Farmland Tax Relief Credit claims totaling \$4,951.

In an effort to maintain an environment conducive to farming, the Town established exclusive agricultural zoning which, as of the date of *Plan* drafting, sets a minimum lot size of 35 acres for any new residential construction. The Town's participation in exclusive agricultural zoning aids its farmers in participating in the State's preservation programs.

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## Agricultural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies

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### **Goal:**

1. Preserve agricultural land resources and farming as a viable occupation in the Town of Rock.

### **Objectives:**

1. Preserve productive farmlands for continued agricultural use where planned to continue.
2. Limit the amount and guide the placement of non-agricultural uses in planned agricultural areas.
3. Promote allowable homesites on smaller lots and within groups of other homes in planned agricultural areas.
4. Support appropriate opportunities for farmers to obtain non-farm income from the farm parcel.

### **Policies:**

1. Designate most of the Town in a planned Agricultural Preservation Area (see Map 5), with most of those lands zoned A-1 Agricultural.
2. Consider limiting the number of houses in the Agricultural Preservation Area by following a one home per 35-acre density policy, described in more detail in the Land Use chapter.
3. Direct new subdivisions and other major non-agricultural developments away from planned agricultural areas, except where consistent with the density policy.
4. Guide the placement of homes, driveways, and other uses in agricultural preservation areas to less productive soils and the edges of agricultural fields, as described in more detail in the Land Use chapter.
5. Consider changes to the Town zoning ordinance to promote the clustering or grouping of homesites in planned agricultural preservation areas, consistent with a "1 home per 35 acres" policy. Work with the State Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection if the Town decides to pursue this direction.
6. Consider changes to the Town zoning ordinance to promote the division of smaller lots in the agricultural preservation areas (e.g., 1 - 3 acres), rather than larger homesites (e.g., 35+ acres), provided that the

number of homesites does not exceed a “1 home per 35 acres” policy, described in more detail in the Land Use chapter.

7. Allow home occupations and farm family businesses on farm parcels to supplement farming income, following allowable uses and standards in the Town’s zoning ordinance
8. Support farmland tax credits, use value assessments, reform in federal farm laws, and other programs that encourage the continued use of land for farming.
9. Explore innovative approaches to farmland preservation such as Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs.
10. Work with farm service organizations (e.g. Pork Producers, Beef Producers, Sheep Producers, Seneca Foods, Dairy Promotion Council, and Agri-business Council) in the marketing of agricultural products grown in the Town of Rock.

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### **Agricultural Resource Recommendations and Programs**

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Expanding on the planning policies listed above, the following strategies will help to preserve the Town’s farmland and agricultural economy:

#### **Minimize Nonagricultural Development in Existing Farming Areas**

A large amount of residential development in agricultural areas makes farming extremely difficult to continue. There are numerous conflicts between such uses, including, noise, odors, use of roads, and hours of operation. Further, the intrusion of nonagricultural uses in farming areas brings a sense of impermanence, which discourages further investment by remaining farmers. To avoid this situation, the Town advocates minimizing the amount of residential development in the Town’s farming areas. As described in greater detail in Chapter Three: Land Use, most land in the Town west of the Rock River is mapped as an *Agriculture Preservation Area*. This future land use category is intended to preserve large tracts of agricultural land through establishing maximum densities of development of 1 new home per every 35 acres and encouraging farm and comparable business investment. The most effective farmland preservation can be achieved when development occurs at a density less than 1 new home per every 35 acres.

#### **Promote the Continuation of the “Family” Farm**

In Wisconsin, 99% of dairy farms are family-owned. Farmers and local governments have little control over the price for agricultural products, which are set by federal policy and price subsidies. However, interested parties can work locally on a variety of efforts to improve farm family income. These may include:

- ◆ Working with UW-Extension and County staff to increase efficiency in farm operations, provide technical assistance including exploring alternative farming techniques (e.g., grazing), promote agricultural co-operatives, and provide advice on other financial and technical support opportunities.
- ◆ Promoting flexibility in zoning regulations to allow non-farm home businesses which have little to no impact on surrounding farm properties, and value-added production facilities on farm properties.

### **Advance Direct Marketing of Farm Products to Consumers**

Protecting farmland alone will not ensure viable agricultural operations in the future. The Town encourages farmers to expand and develop markets for agricultural products. This will bring more income to farm families, and could mean more home-based businesses, value-added onsite processing, organic food production, direct marketing, and agricultural tourism in the area. The Town intends to work with the Cities of Janesville and Beloit, local farmers, and UW-Extension and DATCP to identify ways to add value to local agricultural products. Ideas to explore include organic agriculture, niche farming, direct marketing to consumers, and new uses for agricultural products. Some direct marketing techniques include:

- ◆ Farmers markets, which provide an outlet for locally-produced food, contribute to the local economy, and enhance a community's sense of place and downtown activity. The Town could host a farmers market in Afton, in addition to markets in nearby communities. The Beloit Downtown Redevelopment Plan recommends establishing a public market in the Downtown area. Such a market could showcase artisan wares and other merchandise. The food offerings at a public market should represent the array of fresh food and value-added products available in the region.
- ◆ Farm tours or special events, can enhance the bottom line for farmers, and provide educational and recreational opportunities for visitors. Local farms could hold special events such as "Summer Saturday Breakfasts" to generate enthusiasm for their products and potentially reduce labor costs for pick-your-own events.
- ◆ Community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, in which farmers sell shares of their products to consumers in advance of the growing season. This cooperation can provide healthful food choices that support local farms, while relieving some of the burdens and uncertainties of conventional marketing.
- ◆ Restaurants, which are finding new marketing opportunities by promoting locally grown produce and meats on their menus. Local restaurants could be encouraged to buy local food products, and use it as a marketing strategy to attract local residents and visitors.
- ◆ Schools, hospitals, and other institutions, which purchase large quantities of food. Institutions could purchase directly from local producers or grower cooperatives for seasonally available meat and produce items. Eating fresh, in-season produce could be promoted more widely for the health of students and the elderly.

#### **STATE OF WISCONSIN**

##### **WORKING LANDS INITIATIVE**

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was developed in response to the trend of loss of farms and forest land across the State of Wisconsin over the last decades. This initiative was driven by the value of working lands as economic, environmental, and quality of life assets to the State. The focus of the Steering Committee's work was updating existing policies and recommending new policy directions to help protect the State's working farm and forest lands, and strengthen the State's economy.

One of the recommendations of the Committee was to develop a Statewide program to provide matching grants to local units of government and non-profit organizations to purchase easements (or development rights) on working farmland. The recommendations included:

- ◆ Careful prioritization of lands to protect
- ◆ Use of PDR in tandem with other farmland preservation strategies, such as exclusive agricultural zoning, use value assessments, and comprehensive planning
- ◆ State support, assistance, guidance, and financial support for local programs
- ◆ All programs voluntary in terms of landowner support and local government participation
- ◆ Statewide program designed to qualify for funding under the federal Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program

- ◆ Grocery stores, which can take advantage of larger farms and grower cooperatives that produce reliable quantities of consistently high quality food. Forward-thinking market buyers can provide the freshest food products to their customers, support local farms, and ensure an increasingly wary public of the quality of its food products. The fact that Woodman's is a locally-owned company may provide an entrance into a local foods market that is not available in other communities. Basics Natural Food Market in Janesville could be another outlet for local foods.

### **Support Regional "Food Cluster" Industries**

The Cities of Janesville and Beloit have been and will continue to be attractive homes for industries processing agricultural products for food, including Seneca Foods, Frito Lay, and Kettle Foods. The growing number of such industries also will help attract others to a growing "food cluster." Helping existing food cluster businesses grow and attracting new businesses to that cluster should be a cornerstone to the County's economic strategy. The Town is well positioned to supply raw materials for these industries.

### **Consider Participating in the Economy Focused on "New Uses" for Agricultural Products**

Advances in technology are opening up new markets for traditional agricultural products. The "new uses" economy is focused on finding new ways to use and process corn, soybeans and other carbohydrate-rich farm products into plastics, fuel, and even pharmaceuticals. At the same time that production costs are declining to process these carbohydrate-base materials, environmental regulations and "green" economic incentives are increasing the cost of other hydrocarbon- or petroleum based products.

The Town of Rock can supply raw materials for the "new uses" economy. "New uses" economic clusters are being developed near the Town in Janesville, Beloit, Milton, and Monroe. For example, the City of Beloit's Comprehensive Plan explores options for positioning Beloit as a center of sustainability and the "new uses" economy including the development of an alternative fuel and/or bio-products production facility, relying on surrounding agriculture and the by-products of existing businesses and even municipal waste. The City of Milton supports the development of industrial activities related to agricultural processing, similar to existing ethanol production operations in the City. Additionally, the Riverside Energy Center near the southern border of the Town in the Town of Beloit could present opportunities for alternative fuel production in the future. The Town's proximity to these cities and facilities lends itself to production of a variety of plant material inputs – called "feedstocks" – for these operations.

## **Map 2: Soil Suitability for Agriculture**



## **Natural Resources Inventory**

Understanding the extent and location of the Town's natural features suggests possible advantages for particular land uses. It is also essential to understand the location of environmentally sensitive areas where development is not appropriate. This will prevent severe developmental or environmental problems that may be difficult or costly to correct in the future. Maintenance of these natural features is also important for community appearance and for the functions they perform for natural communities. Map 3 depicts the Town's environmentally sensitive areas and key natural resource areas, some of which are described in more detail below.

### **Topography**

The Town of Rock is part of the Southeast Glacial Plains ecological landscape – home to some of the world's best examples of continental glacial activity. The topography in and around the Town was shaped over 10,000 years ago by Wisconsin's most recent period of glacial activity. The landscape is characterized by gently rolling moraines and drumlins that were formed by material deposited along the edges of the ice sheet during the glacier's retreat.

### **Metallic and Non-Metallic Minerals**

Glacial deposits consist of soil, subsoil, sediment, sand, gravel, and/or stone and are characterized by a variety of depths and patterns throughout the Town. Furthermore, the Town's bedrock and glacial deposits provide valuable non-metallic minerals such as granite, sand, and gravel that are used for road construction, housing, and commercial developments. One active non-metallic mining operation is located in the Town of Rock, on Tracey Road south of Tripp Road. Currently, there are no active metallic mining activities anywhere in Rock County because metallic minerals are not present in high quantities.

### **Groundwater**

Groundwater is comprised of the portion of rainfall that does not run off to streams or rivers and that does not evaporate or transpire from plants. This water percolates down through the soil until it reaches the saturated zone of an aquifer. Groundwater supplies all of the water for domestic use in the Town of Rock, and Town residents generally rely on private wells for their water supply. The exceptions are residents and businesses near the City of Janesville east of the River that have connected to City water subject to future annexation.

The quality of groundwater in the Town is generally good. However, groundwater contamination is of concern due to the characteristics of the bedrock and surficial geology found in some parts of the Town. Areas with permeable soils and a high water table are the most susceptible to contamination from specific land uses.

In rural areas, the most common groundwater contaminant is nitrate-nitrogen, which can come from improperly functioning on-site wastewater systems, animal feedlots, livestock waste facilities, sludge and septage application, lawn and agricultural fertilizers, and decaying plant debris.

### **Watersheds and Surface Waters**

The entire Town of Rock is located in the Lower Rock River Basin, which is divided into several watersheds. The eastern portion of the Town of Rock is located in the Blackhawk Creek Watershed. The western side of the Town is located in the Bass Creek Watershed. Bass Creek traverses the southwestern sections of the Town and Markham Creek runs through northwestern sections. Both creeks draw into the Rock River. There are other major drainageways in the Town that connect

#### **KEY SURVEY RESULTS**

83% of respondents "strongly agreed" that the Rock River should be protected as an important natural feature in the Town.

with the Rock River. County shoreland zoning regulations require a 75 foot building setback and vegetation protection along navigable waterways.

### **Floodplains**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplains, which are subject to County zoning control. These are areas predicted to be inundated with flood waters in the 100-year storm event (e.g., a storm that has a 1 percent chance of happening in any given year). Development within floodplains is strongly discouraged so as to limit property damage. FEMA completed an exercise to re-map floodplains in 2007. Map 3 depicts the nearly 3,400 acres of land in the Town classified as floodplain, comprising approximately 19 percent of the Town's total land area. Floodplains in the Town of Rock are located along the Markham and Bass Creeks and the Rock River. The Rock River is subject to seasonal flooding as a result of spring thaws, extended periods of heavy rains, and downstream ice jams.

### **Wetlands**

According to the Wisconsin DNR's Wetland Inventory Maps, wetlands comprise approximately 4.8 percent (856 acres) of the Town's total land area, not including small tracts of wetland that are less than five acres. Approximately 82 percent of these wetlands are forested. Wetlands play significant roles in maintaining the quality of groundwater and surface water and provide valuable habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife. The County's Zoning Ordinance regulates the filling or modification of wetlands within 300 feet of navigable streams and 1,000 feet of lakes, ponds, and flowages. Additionally, state and federal regulations limit the alteration of wetlands of all sizes. Due to the number of dams on the Rock River it is considered a "flowage" and shoreland regulations are applied within 1,000 feet. Within these areas, the types and intensity of development allowed are limited and special regulations regarding clearance of natural vegetation, structures, and water run-off are established to protect surface water quality.



### **Soils**

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. Problems that limit development on certain soils include slumping, poor drainage, erosion, steep slopes, and high water tables. The soils in the Town include seven major types:

- ◆ The *Kidder-St. Charles* association covers a small portion of the northern area of the Town. This association is characterized by deep, generally well drained soils with a clay loam subsoil over sandy loam glacial till. Where level, these soils are very productive for agriculture and have few limitations for on-site wastewater treatment (septic) systems. Where on steep slopes, these soils are susceptible to erosion and are generally wooded.
- ◆ The *Dresden-St. Charles-Warsaw* association covers the west-central area of the Town. This association is characterized by generally deep, generally well drained soils with a clay loam subsoil over sand and

gravel. Where level, these soils are good for agricultural production. Where steep, they are generally wooded. The substratum for these soils is very porous, resulting in the potential for groundwater contamination from standard septic systems.

- ◆ The *Plano-Warsaw-Dresden* association covers much of the eastern side of the Town. This association is characterized by deep, generally well drained soils with a clay loam subsoil over sand and gravel. When undeveloped, these soils are very productive for agriculture. The substratum for these soils is very porous, resulting in the potential for groundwater contamination from standard septic systems.
- ◆ The *Sebewa-Kane* association covers parts of the western and southern areas of the Town of Rock. This association is characterized by moderately deep, poorly drained gently sloping soils that have a mainly clay loam to loam subsoil over stratified sand and gravel. In places where these soils are drained, the areas can be used for agriculture. Undrained areas are suitable for pasture or wildlife habitat. Sebewa-Kane soils are subject to flooding, posing a threat of groundwater contamination from septic systems.
- ◆ The *Pecatonica-Ogle-Durand* association covers the northwestern corner of the Town of Rock. This association is characterized by deep, well-drained nearly level soils that have a silty clay loam to sandy clay loam subsoil. In generally level areas, these soils have few limitations. In areas of steeper slope, these soils are susceptible to erosion. This association is generally used for agriculture.
- ◆ The *Edmund-Rockton-Whalan* association covers the central area of the Town, as well as the southwestern corner. This association is characterized by shallow and moderately deep, well-drained, nearly level to very steep soils that have a mainly clay and clay loam subsoil. These soils pose a danger for groundwater contamination from septic systems. Steep areas are in pasture or woods and level areas are used for agriculture.
- ◆ The *Colwood-Sebewa* association covers the area surrounding the Markham Creek in northwestern Rock. This association is characterized by deep, poorly drained, nearly level soils that have a mainly clay loam subsoil over stratified silt and sand and gravel deposits. In places where these soils are drained, the areas can be used for agriculture. Undrained areas are suitable for pasture or wildlife habitat. Colwood-Sebewa soils are subject to flooding, posing a threat of groundwater contamination from septic systems.

### **Steep Slopes**

As shown on Map 3, steep slopes exceeding a 12 percent grade are concentrated in the southern half of the Town, along Bass Creek, and along the Rock River. Generally, slopes that have between 12 percent and 20 percent grade present challenges for building site development, and slopes that exceed a 20 percent grade are not generally appropriate for any disturbance or development.

### **Other Limited & Environmentally Significant Areas**

These areas include other lands that are limited for development or environmentally sensitive due to features such as hydrology, steep slopes, areas of native pre-settlement vegetation, and kettle and depressional areas. These types of areas have been designated by Rock County as part of its open space planning efforts, and are presented on Map 3.

### **Rare Species Occurrences/Natural Areas**

WisDNR's Natural Heritage Inventory program maintains data on the general location and status of threatened or endangered plant and animal species and natural communities and species and communities of special concern. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR), there are occurrences of aquatic and terrestrial endangered species in many areas of the Town, particularly along waterways. Detailed information regarding the types of endangered animals, plants, and natural communities can be found at the Department of Natural Resources' website: [http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/nhi/CountyMaps/pdfs/Rock\\_County.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/nhi/CountyMaps/pdfs/Rock_County.pdf).

### **State Natural Areas/Wildlife Areas**

There are no State Natural Areas or Wildlife Areas located in the Town of Rock, although WisDNR does own conservation lands along the Rock River.

### **Land Legacy Places**

In the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, the DNR identified those key places around the state that are critical to meeting Wisconsin's conservation and outdoor recreation needs over the next 50 years. One of the places in Rock County is the Lower Rock River, which flows through the Town of Rock. The river and its major tributaries slowly wind through relatively flat terrain with reasonably long stretches of undeveloped shoreline, much of which is forested or open wetland. The Yahara River and Turtle Creek, major tributaries to the Lower Rock, both support rich and diverse mussel and fish populations.

### **Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning**

In September of 2004, the Rock County Planning, Economic and Community Development Agency, in cooperation with the Rock County Emergency Management Agency, prepared the Rock County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Rock County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan was created to eliminate or reduce the long-term risk to human life and property from natural disasters before they occur, or more commonly, reoccur. Mitigation seeks to permanently reduce exposure of lives and property through a redesign of the physical environment or establishment of programs and policies that promote behaviors that reduce the likelihood of damage or risk. In doing so mitigation reflects the quality of what communities collectively learn from disasters, and their willingness to act on what they have learned.

The Rock County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan consists of two documents: The Rock County Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning Manual (Planning Manual) and The Rock County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (Mitigation Plan). The Planning Manual provides an overview of Rock County, identifies and analyses major hazards and the vulnerability of the County to these hazards, and the available resources that may be of assistance in mitigation efforts. The Mitigation Plan identifies steps that could be taken to reduce the county's vulnerability to a prioritized list of hazards. Hazards identified as priorities in the County include the following: flooding, high winds, snow/ice/extreme cold, heat waves, forest and wild fires, earthquakes, landslides/subsidence/sinkholes, fog, and agricultural drought. Both the Planning Manual and the Mitigation Plan will be incorporated into the Rock County Comprehensive Plan.

The Rock County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is complimentary to the goals of the State of Wisconsin Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. By creating a hazard mitigation plan in accordance with the State Plan, the County is eligible for assistance from state and federal agencies when disasters befall its communities. Although the Rock County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan currently only addresses natural hazards, the Plan is anticipated to evolve and eventually include man-made hazards, including both intentional and accidental disasters. The Plan is scheduled to be updated by 2010.

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## **Natural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies**

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### **Goal:**

1. Protect the unique natural and environmentally sensitive features of the Town, including wetlands, rivers, creeks, woodlands, wildlife habitats, open spaces and groundwater resources.

### **Objectives:**

1. Protect surface water and shoreline quality along the Rock River, Bass Creek, and Markham Creek.
2. Direct development away from environmentally sensitive areas – particularly wetlands, floodplains and other flood prone areas, and sensitive soils.

3. Provide areas for new development in the Town, mainly east of the Rock River, while maintaining the integrity of the natural resources base.

### **Policies:**

1. Protect environmental corridors (shown on Map 5) as a composite of the Town's most sensitive natural areas, including wetlands, floodplains, especially adjacent to future development areas.
2. Carefully review placement of new buildings on slopes greater than 12 percent.
3. Protect groundwater quality through the proper placement of new on-site wastewater treatment systems, maintenance of older systems, and avoidance of an over-concentration of both new and old systems in one place.
4. Protect surface water quality (rivers, creeks, wetlands) by supporting streambank management, natural shoreline restoration, erosion control, river clean-up initiatives, proper agricultural practices, stormwater management, and use of vegetated buffers.
5. Support efforts to minimize the vulnerability and impact of flooding on developed properties and guide new development away from flood prone areas.
6. Continue to follow the Rock County Hazard Mitigation Plan and seek funds and assistance as necessary according to its recommendations.
7. Work with the County, neighboring Towns, and WisDNR on the protection and enhancement of Bass Creek as a trout stream and the clean up of Markham Creek.
8. Prohibit the use of holding tanks for new development in the Town.
9. Encourage soil conservation practices related to agricultural activities, forest products, and other development.
10. Carefully review proposals for mineral extraction operations, and the reclamation of existing mineral extraction sites.
11. Identify and promote educational programs that support water quality protection, wildlife (particularly threatened and endangered species), wetland, and woodland management.
12. Work to preserve other natural resource features on Map 3 by requiring their inventory at time of development.

## **Natural Resource Recommendations and Programs**

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Expanding on the planning policies listed above, this section of the *Plan* provides specific recommendations for conserving the Town's environmentally sensitive areas, woodlands, surface and ground water quality, and natural habitat areas.

### **Protect Environmental Corridors and Other Environmentally Significant Areas**

Environmental corridors are a composite of important individual elements of the natural resource base. They have immeasurable environmental, ecological, passive recreational, stormwater management, groundwater protection and recharge, erosion control, wildlife, timber, and scenic value. Environmental corridors also have severe limitations for development; therefore, minimizing development in these areas also protects private property. Environmental corridors generally occur in a linear (corridor) pattern on the landscape (see Map 5 for *Environmental Corridor* delineations). Environmental corridors include the following areas:

- ◆ Wisconsin DNR-identified wetlands as mapped in the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory and subject to existing zoning control. This layer may not include all wetlands that are subject to State and/or federal disturbance rules. Protection from development should be provided to these areas as well as those identi-

fied through more detailed field surveys to preserve the significant natural functions that wetlands provide.

- ◆ Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) designated floodplains subject to existing zoning control. These general floodplain delineations represent the areas potentially subject to the 100-year flood. All areas subject to flooding are not necessarily reflected in mapped floodplains (or within the environmental corridor delineation). The Town intends to protect areas within the 100-year floodplain as shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps and more detailed surveys from development to avoid damage to property and the health, safety and welfare of the community.
- ◆ Lands with steep slopes of 12 percent or greater. Due to the instability of these soils and erosion concerns, development (including buildings and driveways) on these steep slopes should be carefully considered.
- ◆ Buffers between potential incompatible uses on Map 5: Future Land Use. In an effort to minimize land use conflicts, the Town intends to require a vegetative buffer between incompatible future land uses (e.g. between General Industrial and Single Family-Exurban uses near Townline Road).

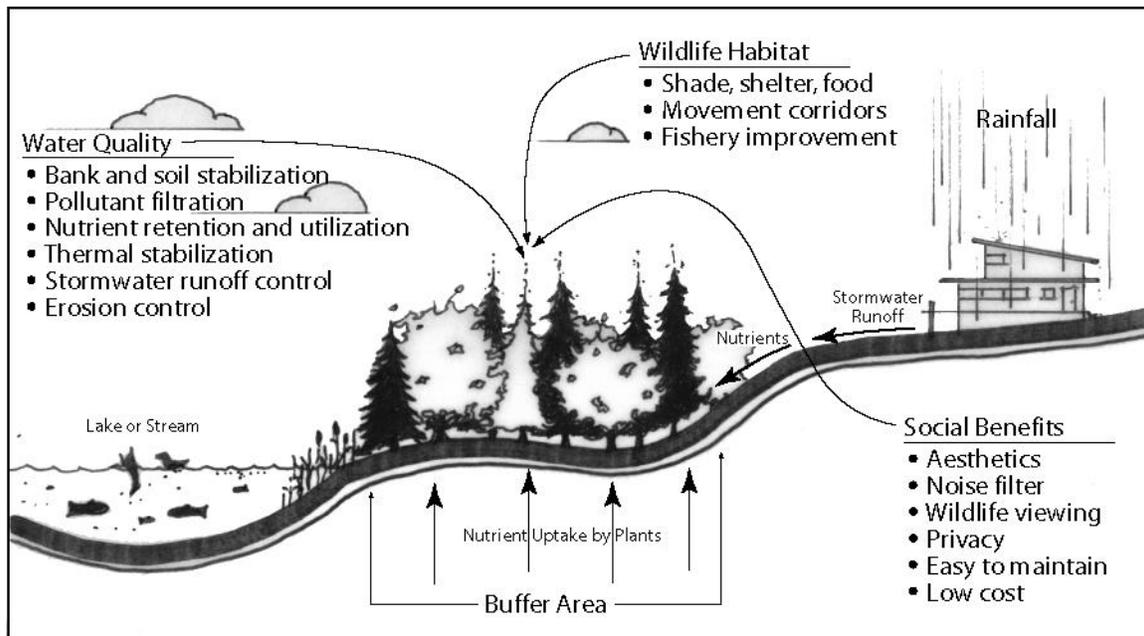
New development should generally be discouraged in environmental corridors. Development types should be limited to those which will not impair the resource, and which are compatible to existing and proposed uses on surrounding lands. New homes and other buildings should not be placed in these areas if other, more appropriate, building sites are available outside the environmental corridor. Sensitivity to surrounding natural resources should be the guiding principal when reviewing the appropriateness of development in mapped environmental corridors. The Town will encourage developers to minimize the “footprint” of any construction in corridor areas.

The environmental corridors depicted on Map 5 are necessarily general and should be used to identify general areas where development may not be appropriate. Lands within that designation may be removed under one or more of the following circumstances:

- ◆ More detailed study reveals that the characteristic(s) which originally resulted in its designation as an environmental corridor no longer exists, never existed, or exists in a different location or configuration on the site, or
- ◆ Approvals from appropriate agencies are granted to alter a property so that the characteristic which resulted in its classification as an environmental corridor will no longer exist, or
- ◆ A mapping error has been identified.

### **Protect Surface Water Quality**

As development in the Town continues, construction site erosion control and ongoing stormwater management are increasingly important issues. Although water quality in the Town’s watersheds is generally good, soil erosion can quickly compromise this water quality. Unmanaged construction sites are one of the greatest contributors to off-site sediment runoff. Under State law, construction site erosion control plans are required for all sites over 1 acre in area. The Town intends to work to promote ongoing stormwater management for subdivisions and other larger projects. Techniques include natural drainage swales, retention and detention basins, rain gardens on individual lots, and vegetative buffers adjacent to water bodies and other sensitive resources (see Figure 9). These techniques control the quantity and improve the quality of water run-off during storms. Again, these techniques are critical in shoreland areas and may serve as important within ground-water recharge areas.

**Figure 9: Benefits of Vegetative Buffers**

The Town intends to preserve surface water quality in existing high-quality watersheds and improving water quality in watersheds with the greatest water quality problems currently and in the future. Therefore, continued water quality assessment will be critical. To maintain and improve the stability in streams, flowages, and rivers, the Town will work cooperatively with the County and WisDNR. The Town intends to make the WisDNR brochure “Benefits of Vegetative Buffer Zones” available at Town Hall. In cooperation with the County, the Town may seek funds from State programs designed to assist in efforts to protect and enhance surface water quality in key areas, including:

- ♦ The WisDNR Targeted Runoff Management Program, which provides financial assistance to communities to either construct best management practices themselves or contract with individual landowners to install such practices.
- ♦ The WisDNR River Protection Grant Program, which aims to prevent the deterioration of water quality, fisheries habitat, and natural beauty as the number of homes, recreational activities, and other uses increases along rivers. Grant dollars may be used for river organization development; information and education; assessments of water quality, fish, and aquatic life; nonpoint source evaluations; purchase of land or easements; development of local ordinances; and habitat restoration.

### **Protect Groundwater Quantity and Quality**

Groundwater is the source for all of the Town’s drinking water supply. If groundwater is removed from an aquifer more quickly than it is recharged, the amount of water available in the aquifer is reduced. This may be of particular concern where water tables are dropping from groundwater use in portions of the Town with high concentrations of dwelling units. In addition, groundwater recharges local rivers and streams. For these reasons, groundwater protection is critical. Through this *Plan* the Town supports several efforts to protect groundwater quality and quantity, including the following:

- ♦ *Minimize new development in areas susceptible to groundwater contamination.* In portions of the Town more highly susceptible to groundwater contamination, the Town will limit the location of commercial or other uses with the potential to emit pollutants into the soil or groundwater. Examples include gas stations or other uses that store fuel or other potential contaminants.

- ◆ *Maximize groundwater infiltration when new developments are proposed.* Where the Town reviews new subdivisions and commercial development proposals, it will seek to minimize impervious surface areas and maximize the amount of water that can be infiltrated on site. This is a preferred approach to directing water off-site, both to replenish the groundwater supply and minimize surface water contamination.
- ◆ *Ensure the proper placement and maintenance of on-site waste treatment (septic) systems.* Improper placement and maintenance, particularly of both old systems and chemical and biological treatment systems allowed under the new “COMM 83” law, can result in groundwater contamination. In addition, an over-concentration of on-site septic systems can increase the probability of groundwater pollution. On-site system recommendations are addressed more completely in Chapter Six: Utilities and Community Facilities.
- ◆ *Remain informed and involved in decisions pertaining to high-capacity wells.* Permits for high capacity wells (those withdrawing more than 100,000 gallons per day) must be registered with and permitted by WisDNR. The DNR will not approve wells that impair public water utility supplies, and has authority to deny applications for high-capacity wells should they have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Wells drawing more than 2 million gallons per day are evaluated in terms of whether they impair public water rights, future water use plans, or cause adverse groundwater effects. Should potential new sites be proposed in Rock over the planning period, the Town will strive to remain informed and involved in any WisDNR decision regarding high-capacity wells. One way to stay involved is through regular communication and providing public comment during Environmental Impact Statement review periods. The Town could also consider participating in cooperative groundwater management plans with municipalities, industries, local and regional planning agencies, and State agencies where appropriate, should special groundwater protection priority areas be delineated in the future.

### **Work to Upgrade Bass Creek as a Trout Stream**

Bass Creek, which runs through the southern part of the Town, is an excellent natural resource with potential for trout fishing. Trout habitat is threatened by siltation from erosion, decreased groundwater flow from irrigation, drained wetlands and poor watershed management. High oxygen demand from organic pollution, channelization, cattle grazing, and increased temperatures from both man-made and beaver-constructed dams and impoundments are other common causes of trout habitat deterioration.

However, streams in their natural state can be improved to greatly increase their capacity for producing trout. The Town does not have the resources to take on a project like this on its own. The Town will entertain working with WisDNR, the Rock River Coalition, and others on potential restoration activities such as fencing banks to keep cattle out, protecting banks with rock and vegetation, providing shelter in the stream and along stream banks, and brushing stream banks to encourage grassy vegetation that stabilizes undercut banks. Studies have shown that pools and permanent cover are important ingredients for trout welfare. It is not unusual to find trout numbers increasing two or three times their previous levels as a result of stream habitat improvement. Funding for habitat restoration is available from WisDNR through the sale of trout stamps.



### **Implement Natural Resource Identification Standards**

The identification and mapping of natural resources on a site should be the first step in planning any site development, and a prerequisite for receiving development approval. This includes detailed mapping of productive farmland, woodlots, environmental corridors, and their component features (e.g., wetlands, floodplains, surface waters).

The Town of Rock will consider amending its zoning ordinance, and working with the County to amend its subdivision ordinance, to require a site assessment checklist be completed and evaluated for preliminary subdivision plats, certified survey map submittals, rezonings, and with site plans for larger commercial and industrial projects. The site assessment checklist should include a description of the natural resource characteristics of the land, and/or mapping of those characteristics. These assessments should also identify which natural resource features are proposed to be disturbed, and any mitigation which is planned for the disturbed areas. Figure 10 includes a sample of the site assessment checklist.

**Figure 10: Sample Portion of a Site Assessment Checklist**

## SITE ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

ITEM OF INFORMATION	YES	NO
I. Land Resources. Does the project site involve:		
A. Changes in relief and drainage patterns (Attach a topographical map showing, at a minimum, 2-foot contour intervals)		
B. A landform or topographical feature including perennial streams		
C. A floodplain (If “yes,” attach 2 copies of the 100-year floodplain limits.)		
D. An area of soil instability—greater than 12% slope and/or hydric or alluvial soils, as depicted in the applicable “County Soils Survey”		
E. An area of bedrock within 6 ft. of the soil surface as depicted in the “County Soils Survey” or a more detailed source		
F. An area with groundwater table within 5 feet of the soil surface as described in the “County Soils Survey” or a more detailed source		
G. An area with fractured bedrock within 10 feet of the soil surface as depicted in the “County Soils Survey”		
H. Prevention of future gravel extraction		
I. A drainage-way with a tributary area of 5 or more acres		
J. Lot coverage of more than 50 percent impermeable surfaces		
K. Prime agricultural land as depicted in the adopted farm land preservation plans		
L. Wetlands as depicted on DNR wetland inventory maps or more detailed sources		
M. Environmental corridors, as mapped by the City or county		
II. Water Resources. Does the project involve:		
A. Location in an area traversed by a navigable stream, intermittent stream, or dry run		
B. Impact on the capacity of a stormwater storage system or flow of a waterway within 1 mile		
C. The use of septic systems for on-site waste disposal		
D. Lowering of water table by pumping or drainage		
E. Raising of water table by altered drainage		
F. Frontage on a creek, river, or other navigable waterway		

**Carefully Review Proposals for Mineral Extraction Sites and Enforce Reclamation**

There is currently one mineral extraction (e.g., gravel pit) operation in the Town. Over the planning period, the Town intends to make itself aware of and carefully review any proposals for new extraction activities. Mineral resources have potentially significant economic, community, and environmental impacts. Wisconsin now has administrative rules on the reclamation of nonmetallic mines (NR 135), but these do not cover many aspects of their operation. The Town will work to assure that applications for approval of extraction operations present a clear picture of proposed activities, through submittal of a complete description, a detailed site/operations plan map(s), and a reclamation plan.

In its review of proposals for new or expanded mineral extraction operations, the Town intends to consider the following issues:

- ◆ The site will be developed and operated according to the site/operations plan.
  - ◆ Spraying of the site and driveways should be considered to control dust.
  - ◆ Requirements of a buffer area protecting adjacent land uses, restricting operations from occurring within 100 feet of a property line and restricting accessory buildings within 100 feet. Berms of a sufficient height, width and mass should be used for screening operations from neighboring land uses.
  - ◆ On-site bulk fuel storage and appropriate places for fueling of equipment (e.g., above the water table) should be addressed to minimize the potential for groundwater contamination.
- A photograph showing a construction site. In the foreground, there is a dirt area with a red safety fence. In the middle ground, there is a large pile of light-colored gravel or sand. To the right, there is a concrete foundation or structure. The background shows a flat, open landscape under a clear sky.
- ◆ While excavation is in progress, the operator shall take effective steps to control erosion of all disturbed land surface areas – including planting, mulching, screening, stabilization, or other cover.
  - ◆ Require each operator to prevent any surface water of seepage from damaging the cut face of any excavations of the slope face of a hill. Operators should also drain any surface waters that are or might be concentrated as a result of a fill or excavation to a natural watercourse.
  - ◆ Access should only be through services points designated as entrances on the site/operations plan.
  - ◆ Hours of operation may be limited if the extraction site is close to residential properties.
  - ◆ Expectations for any blasting, drilling, screening and hours should be clearly understood.
  - ◆ If blasting or drilling is requested, additional standards may be applied with relation to frequency, noise and vibration levels, notice to neighbors, pre-inspection of neighboring basements and wells, and claims procedures. Maximum permissible noise levels for a site shall be no louder than 90 decibels at the nearest dwelling unit.
  - ◆ Unless the extraction site is very inaccessible, it should be completely enclosed by a safety fence or maintained at a gentle slope. Fencing should be provided around any site being actively mined.
  - ◆ Evaluation of impact of increased traffic volumes is required.
  - ◆ The petitioner should have to furnish a certificate of insurance before operations commence. The Town should be listed as an “additional named insured” on the liability insurance policy.
  - ◆ Provisions for the upgrade, repair, and maintenance of Town roads may be appropriate. Posting a bond for such work may be required.
  - ◆ Require a site rehabilitation and reclamation plan.

In the case of inactive or sites anticipated to become inactive over the planning period, the Town will work with the operator and County to require a proper reclamation plan is prepared and followed. The Town may intend these areas for different land uses over the planning period. See Chapter Three: Land Use for more details.



### **Map 3: Natural Features**



## Cultural Resource Inventory

The Town of Rock and the entire region were once home to the Mound Builders and Winnebago Native American tribes. The Town was established on February 17, 1842, with its first elections later that year. Settlers from Rensseler County, New York arrived in the Town in 1850 and began farming. At one time the Town had five villages including Wisconsin City, Koshkonong, Rock-port, Monterey, and Middledale. The first four were gradually absorbed by the City of Janesville. The U.S. Post Office requested that the citizens of Middledale change this name as it conflicted with many other villages in the State. At a meeting in May, 1855 to decide the name, it was customary to begin the meeting with a prayer and song. The song was called “Flow Gently Sweet Afton” and after singing, Afton was unanimously chosen as the new name for the (unincorporated) village. Early businesses included a grocery store, post office, blacksmith shop, wagon and reaper shop, grist mill, and a Baptist church.

Each generation of residents has added to the cultural, religious, and architectural flavor of the region. Preservation of these historic and cultural resources fosters a sense of pride, improves quality of life, and provides an important feeling of social and cultural continuity between the past, present, and future. The following sections describe the Town of Rock’s significant historic and archeological resources.

### WHAT ARE CULTURAL RESOURCES?

Cultural resources are the essential components of what makes each community a unique place. They include historic and archaeological sites, buildings, and districts. These historic resources tell a story about the community’s past, and suggest future opportunities for preservation, reuse, and celebration. Cultural resources also include community gathering and recreational spots, educational and interpretive opportunities, and entertainment destinations and events. They vary from community to community and often reflect a place’s unique heritage and character.

### Historic Resources

The Wisconsin Historical 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, school houses, and turn-of-the-century homes – that create Wisconsin’s distinct cultural landscape. The AHI includes 33 documented properties in the Town of Rock. Listed properties include Willowdale School, Austin School, Bass Creek School, and the Hayner House. There are no properties in the Town listed on the National or State Historic Registers.

### Archeological Resources

There are 20 archeological sites within the Town of Rock designated by the Wisconsin State Historical Society. These sites include cemeteries/burial sites, effigy mounds, and campsites/villages. All human burial sites, including cemeteries and Indian mounds, are protected under State law. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to insure that their actions do not adversely affect archeological sites on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Archeological sites can be protected during the course of State agency activities if the sites have been recorded with the Office of the State Archeologist.

### Other Cultural Resources

In addition to historic and archeological sites, a community’s culture can include important gathering places, activities, and events that make it unique. In the Town of Rock, businesses like the Friendly Village restaurant and the Pub and Park are part of its culture. Even the Post Office contributes to Afton’s “sense of place”. The Town’s park, located west of Afton, and local taverns provide a variety of recreational opportunities. In addition, the Town’s close proximity to the City of Janesville provides opportunities for cultural events.

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## Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies

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**Goal:**

1. Preserve the Town's scenic, historic, and rural character.

**Objectives:**

1. Identify and promote the preservation of key historic, archeological, and cultural resources in the Town.
2. Promote the hamlet of Afton as the Town's community center.
3. Preserve blocks of agricultural lands, river corridors, wetlands, and open space that contribute to Rock's rural way of life.

**Policies:**

1. Enhance the role of Afton as the Town's activity hub, balancing the preservation of the historic character of Afton with revitalization, improvement and new development.
2. Encourage the cultural development of Afton as the Town's activity hub through sponsoring community events, establishing wayfinding signage, accommodating community-serving commercial uses, and encouraging business development or expansion.
3. Encourage private landowner voluntary protection and rehabilitation of historic and archaeological sites.
4. Consider participating in a countywide survey of historic resources.
5. Work with the County to maintain and promote activities in Happy Hollow Park that draw people to the area.
6. Work to retain the unique identity of the Town in light of proximity of neighboring communities including Janesville and Beloit.
7. The Town does not have, and does not intend to adopt a historic preservation ordinance over the planning period.

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## Cultural Resource Recommendations and Programs

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Expanding on the planning policies listed above, the Town of Rock intends to preserve and celebrate its important cultural resources by pursuing the following strategies:

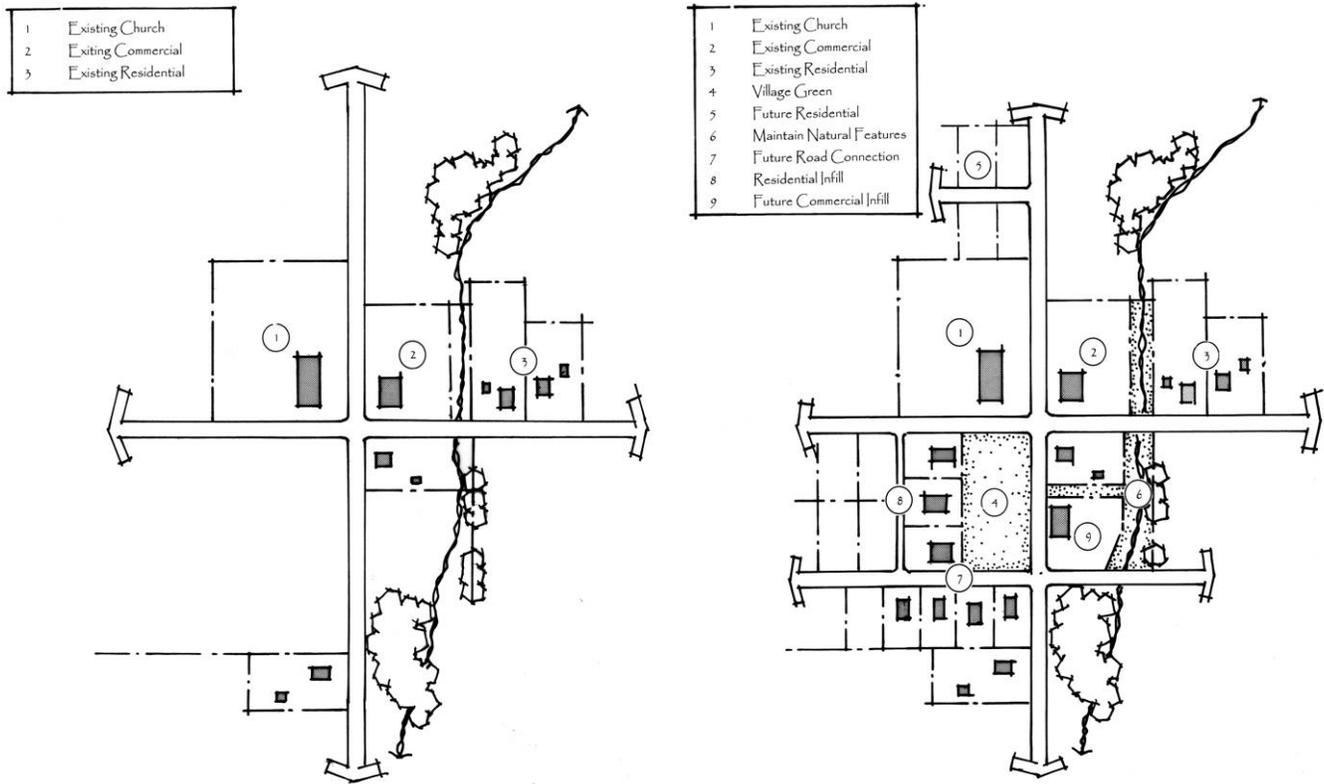
**Promote Afton as a Community Gathering Place**

Afton currently serves as a community gathering place near the center of the Town for meetings, dining, and recreation. The Town intends to promote Afton as the "Town center", with an enhanced mix of residential, business, recreation, and civic uses. The Town supports the appropriate expansion of Afton through the use of the following principles of rural hamlet planning:

- ◆ Plan for small-scale commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential uses in the central area, surrounded by low-density residential uses.
- ◆ Promote the close spatial relationship of key community gathering areas (such as the town hall and restaurant/tavern) to housing.
- ◆ Arrange land uses to fill in the areas around the center with development served by new roads, rather than developing further out in strips along current roadways (see Figure 11).
- ◆ Establish community entry signs at the north and south ends of Afton, highlighting its relationship with the Town of Rock, and wayfinding directional signs to points of interest including Town Hall, the Post Office, area businesses, the Town park, Rock River access, and future trail access.
- ◆ Provide pedestrian/bike facilities oriented towards the center of the hamlet.

- ◆ Encourage appropriate new uses such as a gas station/convenience store.
- ◆ Establish a public boat launch in the Afton area as a means to increase recreational and business activity.

**Figure 11: Conceptual Hamlet Expansion Layout**



*Example of Current Conditions*

*Example of Desired Future Conditions*

**Improve the Image of the Town**

Scenic beauty is a very important cultural resource in the Town of Rock. There are numerous local areas that offer expansive views of the landscape, key landmarks (e.g., hills), and bodies of water. Areas identified as having high scenic value through the special places photo exercise include the Town’s rivers, creeks, wetlands, and open spaces and agricultural land.

The lands along Highway 51 offer a very different landscape—characterized by several poorly maintained properties, vacant buildings, and entertainment uses—that is inconsistent with the Town’s desired character. Travelers’ impressions of the Town are defined by this corridor. The Town intends to explore options for addressing this issue including design standards and redevelopment opportunities for older buildings or incompatible uses. See Chapter Three: Land Use and Chapter Seven: Economic Development for detailed recommendations.

**Retain the Town’s Unique Identity**

The Town of Rock is adjacent or near to growing metropolitan areas including the cities of Janesville and Beloit. As these cities expand, the Town needs to take steps to retain its unique identity. Key features of the

Town include Afton, environmental resources such as the Rock River and Bass Creek, and productive agricultural lands. The Town intends to cultivate its strong sense of community identity by celebrating its unique characteristics, promoting a “hard edge” between city and country in collaboration with the City of Janesville, and supporting community separation between Janesville and Afton.

One possibility for a Town event would be a farming heritage festival. This event could be held in Afton with activities such as farming demonstrations, activities for children, a pie eating contest, and a parade. Additionally, given the number of long standing farm families in the Town, the Town should consider a program to mark and recognize those farms that have been in a family for 150 year or more (e.g. “Sesquicentennial Farms”), working with interested farm families.

### **Protect and Rehabilitate Known Historic and Archeological Sites**

This *Plan* identifies known historic and archeological sites that are included in the Wisconsin Archeological Site Inventory (ASI) or State Historical Society databases. Archeological sites in Rock are predominantly cemeteries. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from intentional disturbance. The Town may make a specific request to the State Historical Society for more detailed information when a development proposal is offered on land in an area where a historic or archeological site has been mapped.

Very little of Rock County’s total land area has been surveyed for the presence of archaeological sites and cemeteries, and there has never been a comprehensive survey of historic resources in Rock County. At least as many historic or archeological sites are lost to ignorance of their significance than to intentional acts. The Town will consider cooperating with the County and other local governments on a countywide survey of historic and archeological resources.

## Chapter Three: Land Use

This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide the future preservation and development of lands in the Town of Rock. It features a map showing existing land uses and recommended future land uses to guide future zoning and other land use decision making.

### Existing Land Use

#### Existing Land Use Map Categories

Map 4 divides existing land uses in the community into several categories. These categories are representative of existing (2007) land use and do not necessarily reflect the current zoning district designations or the desired future land use pattern.

- ◆ **Agriculture/Rural:** Agricultural and related uses, cropland, farmsteads, operations, and single family residential development with maximum development densities of 1 dwelling unit per 35 acres;
- ◆ **Single Family Residential:** Exurban: single family residential development on private well and on-site treatment systems, generally at densities between 1 dwelling unit per acre and 1 dwelling unit per 35 acres;
- ◆ **Single Family Residential:** Urban: publicly sewered single family residential development;
- ◆ **Two-Family/Townhouse Residential:** Attached single family, two-family, and walk-up townhouse residential development;
- ◆ **Mixed Residential:** A variety of residential units including single-family, duplex and multiple-family housing (3+ unit buildings), manufactured home parks, and mobile home parks;
- ◆ **Commercial:** Indoor commercial, retail, institutional and service uses;
- ◆ **Office:** Office, institutional, research, and office-support land uses;
- ◆ **Mixed Use:** A mix of office or commercial and residential uses in one building, generally with the office or commercial uses occupying the ground floor and residential uses above;
- ◆ **Community Facilities:** Large-scale public buildings, airports, hospitals, youth and elderly service facilities, and special-care facilities. Small community uses may also be in other land use categories;
- ◆ **Parks and Open Spaces:** Park and public open space facilities devoted to playgrounds, play fields, trails, picnic areas, and related recreational activities, and conservation areas;
- ◆ **Light Industrial:** Indoor industrial land uses and controlled outdoor storage areas;

#### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- ◆ In general, focus new development east of the Rock River and agricultural preservation west of the River.
- ◆ Limit large lot residential development in long-term agricultural areas, and consider allowing the clustering of a limited number of smaller lots in these areas.
- ◆ Direct housing development to areas where public utilities will be available or to where existing subdivisions are already located. Follow conservation design principles in new subdivisions.
- ◆ Identify the Highway 51 corridor and Afton for economic development and redevelopment following high quality design standards.

#### KEY SURVEY RESULTS

When asked how they wished the Town of Rock to look 20 years from now, 40 percent of respondents chose “mostly agricultural and open lands” from among options tending towards more development.

- ◆ **General Industrial:** Manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office uses, sometimes with open outdoor storage areas;
- ◆ **Extraction:** Quarries, gravel pits, clay extraction, peat extraction and related land uses;
- ◆ **Transportation/Rights-of-Way:** Publicly-owned land for roads, highways, and railroads.

### **Existing Land Use Pattern**

An accurate depiction of the Town's *existing* land use pattern is the first step in planning for a desired *future* land use pattern. The Town's land use pattern is characterized by large tracts of land designated as *Agricultural/Rural* on the Existing Land Use map, especially west of the Rock River. *Single Family Residential* development is focused along County Highway D, in Afton, along Avalon Road, and near the southeastern corner of the Town. *Commercial* and *General Industrial* development is located along the southern parts of Highway 51 in the Town; the Rockvale Mobile Home Park is also located in this area. Smaller *Commercial* uses can be found in Afton and near the intersection of Highways 11 and 51. Large areas of land are designated as *Community Facilities*, including the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport (recently annexed to Janesville), Blackhawk Technical College, and Rock Valley Correctional Facility. Other *Community Facilities* such as churches and cemeteries are in the central part of the Town. Happy Hollow Park, owned by Rock County, is located north of the Rock River in the southern portion of the Town.

**Figure 12: Existing Land Use Totals, 2007**

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture/Rural	15,025	81
Single Family Residential – Exurban	1,441	8
Single Family Residential – Urban	83	< 1
Mixed Residential	87	< 1
Commercial	173	< 1
Office	5	< 1
Mixed Use	0.6	< 1
Community Facilities	1,101	6
Parks & Open Space	428	2
General Industrial	52	< 1
Extraction	40	< 1
Transportation/Right-of-Way	118	< 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,555</b>	

*Source: GIS Inventory, Vandewalle & Associates, 2007*

### **Land Development Trends**

A review of historical land development trends provides a foundation for projecting the demand for housing and land for future development. There were 118 building permits issued between the years of 1995 and 2006 for new single family residences in the Town of Rock. This means approximately 10 permits for new homes were issued per year during this timeframe within the Town. There was also commercial development activity during this period, mostly focused along Highway 51.

## **Map 4: Existing Land Use**



### **Land Market Trends**

Figure 13 shows the equalized value of all property in the Town of Rock and Rock County from 1999 to 2006. Town land values have increased at a fairly similar rate to the County during the period shown. Total equalized land value during this seven-year period has increased by 52 percent in the Town and by 55 percent in the County. The Town's total land value fluctuated significantly during the eight year period and experienced the most substantial increase in land value during the year 2005 (10.9 percent).

**Figure 13: Equalized Land Values, 1999-2006**

Year	Town Equalized Land Value	Percent Increase	County Equalized Land Value	Percent Increase
1999	85808400	--	4391355500	--
2000	90385300	5.3	4663352900	6.2
2001	99989100	10.6	4882033300	4.7
2002	101214100	1.2	5183932600	6.2
2003	107246800	6.0	5450605500	5.1
2004	109166700	1.8	5801386400	6.4
2005	121034700	10.9	6317781700	8.9
2006	130467100	7.8	6810643400	7.8

*Source Wisconsin Department of Revenue, 1999-2006*

### **Existing and Potential Conflicts**

Current land use conflicts within the Town of Rock are fairly limited. The Town has a good relationship with the City of Janesville, which is the location of most of the more dense residential and commercial development in the area. Some conflicts have been identified between agricultural and extraction uses and nearby residential developments, particularly associated with trucking. The Airport currently results in some noise conflicts in the Town, but there is relatively limited housing development near the Airport. Other land use conflicts include current non-residential and entertainment-based uses along Highway 51 that are not consistent with the current or desired future character of the Town.

The Town seeks to avoid potential *future* land use conflicts through thoughtful and comprehensive land use planning at the local level, considering this individual planning effort in the broader intergovernmental context. Proposed County airport zoning regulations may result in future conflicts between Town and County desires for future land uses in the Airport area. Other potential future land use conflicts within the Town revolve around ensuring that new development is compatible with or enhances the natural and rural character of the community. Single-family residential uses are projected to require the most conversion of agricultural land in the next 20 years, and finding a balance between residential uses and those agricultural, natural, and rural characteristics that define the Town of Rock will be important. Even limited residential development in close proximity to agricultural and sensitive habitat areas can negatively impact these uses and consume more land than is necessary if not carefully planned. Additionally, the Town encourages the redevelopment and clean up of certain properties along Highway 51 as a means of decreasing conflict.

### **Projected Land Use Supply and Demand**

This *Plan* includes projections of land use demand over the 20-year planning period, in five-year increments, for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses. Projected demand, presented in Figure 14, is then

compared to the potential supply of land to meet that demand. The projections are based on the following data and assumptions:

- ◆ **New dwelling units per year:** Residential land use projections in the Town of Rock are based primarily on the number of new homes that are expected to be built in the Town in the next 20 years. The number of new homes expected was derived by using the projected number of new residents from the 15-Year Percentage Projection scenario presented in Chapter One: Issues and Opportunities. This **scenario suggests that a total of 135 additional housing units will be built between 2005 and 2030.**
- ◆ **Residential lot size:** The amount of land required to accommodate new homes will vary depending on the lot size on which the homes are located. The projection assumes an average lot size of 1 acre, which is similar to existing residential development and the requirements of existing ordinances.
- ◆ **Non-residential development ratio:** Projected non-residential (commercial and industrial) development in the Town is between six and seven acres per each 5-year period through 2030.
- ◆ **Flexibility factor:** Because the market for land is not only driven by demand, but is also dictated by the motivations and desires of land owners and developers, it is important to factor in an allowance for uncertainty. In other words, a given parcel of land may not be available for development when the market is ripe for development. Therefore, incorporating a flexibility factor into the projections ensures that the supply of areas designated as appropriate for development will accommodate future demand. These projections utilized a 100% flexibility factor (i.e. total projected land use needs were doubled).

**Figure 14: Projected Land Use Demand, 2005-2030**

	2005-2010	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025	2025-2030	Total Demand
Projected Number of New Residents	65	67	68	69	71	340
Projected Additional Housing Units	26	26	27	27	28	135
Projected Residential Land Use Acreage Demand	26	26	27	27	28	135
Projected Non-Residential (Commercial and Industrial) Land Use Demand	6	7	7	7	7	34
Total Land Use Acreage Demand	32	33	34	34	35	168
Total Land Use Acreage Demand w/ Flexibility Factor	65	66	67	69	70	<b>337</b>

*Source: Vandevalle & Associates Note: Projections are for development on lands to remain in the Town. Lands that will be annexed and developed in the City are not reflected in this table.*

This projection suggests that the Town should anticipate that an additional 168 acres of land will develop over the period between 2005 and 2030 in the Town and that about double that acreage (337 acres) should be made available for possible development. This is the equivalent of about 2/3 of a section of land, although of course not all of this development will occur in one place.

## Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies

### **Goals:**

1. Preserve large blocks of land for agricultural use, particularly west of the Rock River, directing more intensive development to lands east of the River and in the Afton area.

2. Promote an energy- and Town budget-efficient, sustainable, and high-quality land use pattern that is consistent with the Town's rural/agricultural character.

**Objectives:**

1. Plan for a sufficient supply, mix, and location for new development to meet Town objectives and projected demand for residential and non-residential development.
2. Protect agricultural operations and sensitive natural areas when considering new development approvals.
3. Focus on the design and placement of new development to protect and enhance the visual quality of the Town.
4. Direct new non-farm development to areas of existing development, the Afton area, the Highway 51 corridor, and nearby cities.
5. Work in tandem with the City of Janesville, Rock County, and other area governments to jointly achieve land use objectives.

**General Policies:**

1. Continue to refine and enforce policies that are designed to preserve the long-term future of agriculture in the Town, including exploring the reduction of large-lot homesites in agricultural areas.
2. Promote redevelopment and compact new developments that utilize existing infrastructure and utilities wherever practical, and that are located near existing areas of development and roadways wherever practical.
3. Direct intensive urban development into existing and future Urban Service Areas, where a full array of municipal services are available.
4. Follow the land use recommendations mapped and described in this *Plan* when reviewing new rezoning and land division requests and making other detailed land use decisions.
5. Consider modifying the Town's zoning ordinance and consider a Town land division ordinance to implement the goals, objectives, and recommendations in this *Plan*, minimize potential land use conflicts, guide growth and development, ensure high-quality site development, and adequately protect water quality.
6. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to require applicant submittal and Planning and Zoning Committee approval of a complete site and building plan approval before any commercial, institutional, industrial, or multiple family residential use is allowed to be established or expanded. A complete site and building plan submittal would likely include a site inventory, site layout plan, landscape plan, exterior lighting plan, signage plans, and building elevation sheets.
7. Work to maintain a hard edge between farmland and planned Town and City development areas, as opposed to scattered and leap frog development patterns. Where clustered lots are allowed near agricultural areas, ensure the proper siting to minimize farm and visual impacts.
8. Ensure that incompatible land uses are not located close to one another, or are buffered through screening where nearby locations are unavoidable. Work through new development and redevelopment proposals to minimize land use conflicts that presently exist.
9. Enforce existing regulations designed to discourage incompatible uses (e.g. junk vehicle storage), particularly in and around residential areas.
10. Work with the City of Janesville to coordinate plans for future land use in line with and advancing the cooperative boundary planning between the two communities.

11. Work with Rock County to assure that County land use approvals properly consider the recommendations of this Town *Comprehensive Plan*. Support efforts to update Airport zoning regulations to the extent that they improve safety without compromising Town economic development objectives.
12. Assure that new developments are sustainable and positive for the community from a fiscal, transportation, economic, building quality, and environmental perspective, requiring developers to demonstrate this during the development approval process.
13. In light in recent flooding events, reevaluate these land use recommendations once detailed information is available.
14. Practice and promote best practices for treatment of sanitary waste water, particularly where new development is concerned.

### PRESERVING AND ENHANCING TOWN CHARACTER

“Community Character” is a term often used to describe the way a community looks, feels, and functions. A community’s character is a function of the relationships between the built environment, the natural environment, and the people who live in, work in, or visit the community. It’s much more than just where different land uses are located. Communities are usually comprised of different, but ideally compatible, components (historic downtown, residential neighborhoods, employment or shopping districts, etc.) that make up their overall character.

As Rock continues to change in the future, it will be important for the Town to establish and enforce standards that help ensure that new development and redevelopment projects have a positive impact on the way the community looks and feels to residents and visitors. Such standards should specifically address aesthetic components of development such as building quality, the careful relationship of agricultural and open spaces to new non-agricultural development, and the preservation of community entryways and historic or culturally significant buildings and places.



Many Town residents recognize the value of living in a community that has retained its agricultural character, while, at the same time, having sustainable development opportunities and reasonable access to urban amenities and services. As Rock experiences growth opportunity, the community will be challenged to maintain and enhance its character and rural flavor. Identifying the characteristics that make Rock a desirable places to live will help the Town better protect and build upon its assets.

The Town of Rock will strive for new development that is integrated with the landscape versus dominating it. The following guidelines will help to achieve this goal:

- ◆ Retain large blocks of productive agricultural areas and “century farms”, especially west of the Rock River.
- ◆ Maintain clear separation between developed areas and long-term farming areas.
- ◆ Focus new development in compact configurations, including “clustering” of allowable homesites at low overall densities in mostly agricultural areas.
- ◆ Use existing vegetation and additional landscaping to screen and soften new development.
- ◆ Limit placement of development in environmental corridors.
- ◆ Integrate development with existing topography and landscape patterns.
- ◆ Minimize the number of driveways on public roads.
- ◆ Reinforce Afton as the civic heart and gathering place for the Town.
- ◆ Concentrate new development and redevelopment in Afton, along the Highway 51 corridor, or infilling or at edges of other existing development areas.

## Land Use Recommendations, Specific Policies, and Programs

### **Future Land Use Recommendations**

Map 5 presents recommended future land uses over the 20-year planning period for the Town of Rock. Map 5, along with the recommended policies and programs listed in this Chapter, will be used to guide Town decision-making on future land use changes, including changes to the Town's zoning map.

The future land use map shows more than enough developable acreage to accommodate projected population and land use demands. Changes from the existing land use pattern to realize this future land use pattern may occur if and when private property owners make requests for rezoning, subdivisions or land divisions, conditional use permits, or other development approvals in accordance with appropriate phasing and availability of public services as determined by the Town. As such, not all land identified for development on Map 5 will be



appropriate for rezoning or development approval immediately following adoption of this *Plan*. Instead, the Town will consider the best timing to achieve the recommended future land use pattern over the 20-year planning period.

**Map 5 uses numerous future land use categories to describe the Town's desired type and future location of different land uses over the 20-year planning period. Desired future land use categories shown on Map 5 in the Town of Rock are described below, along with descriptions of where these land uses should be promoted in the Town, policies related to each future land use category, and approaches for preserving and enhancing overall Town character.**

## Residential Future Land Use Categories

### **Single Family – Exurban**

**Description:** As mapped on Map 5, this future land use category is intended for mainly single-family housing, potentially with groupings of two or more duplexes. New housing in lands mapped in the *Single Family-Exurban* category will generally be served by individual or group on-site waste treatment (septic) systems. As depicted on Map 5, it is recommended that new *Single Family-Exurban* development generally be located adjacent to existing areas of single family housing in the Town over the planning period.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category in areas on Map 5 where this category is shown:



1. In an effort to direct as much future housing development as possible away from farming areas, allow well-planned residential development in the planned *Single Family-Exurban* areas.

2. Consider certain types of small-scale non-residential uses such as churches, day care centers, parks and walking trails as generally appropriate within *Single Family-Exurban* areas.
3. When considering future rezoning requests, the Town will work with the developer to determine which zoning district(s) is most appropriate to implement this future land use category. For properties where there is an intent to keep animals, the Town's A-3 Agricultural zoning district will generally be most appropriate. For residential subdivision plats, the Town's R-1 Residential zoning district is usually most appropriate.
4. Do not "pre-zone" lands for development within the *Single Family-Exurban* area in advance of development proposals. Instead, require the submittal and detailed understanding of specific development proposals before approving the rezoning of lands to the appropriate development-based zoning districts.
5. Consider adopting a Town Land Division Ordinance to give the Town approval authority over all subdivision plats and certified survey maps in the Town, and to address unique issues, concerns, and desires of the Town that are not addressed in the County's Land Division Ordinance. This may include specifications to encourage conservation neighborhood design, to require completion of a site assessment checklist and inventory prior to platting, and to identify natural resource protection standards.
6. Avoid the creation of long cul-de-sacs and permanent dead-end streets wherever possible. Where a cul-de-sac is required, lengths of 1,000 feet or less are promoted.
7. Enforce minimum lot size standards in the Town's zoning ordinance. In addition, lots for residential building sites of over three acres will generally not be allowed.
8. When designing new neighborhoods/subdivisions, the developer should refer to the policies in the Housing and Neighborhood Development chapter.
9. Strongly discourage placement of new buildings in wetlands, floodplains, shoreland setback areas (depicted as *Environmental Corridors* on Map 5), and in other sensitive environmental areas (depicted as *Other Limited and Environmentally Significant Areas* on Map 3).
10. Carefully review placement of new buildings on slopes greater than 12 percent.
11. For new development adjacent to waterways and public natural areas, require the provision of public access at regular intervals as part of the subdivision plat. The developer should mark these areas in the field with a permanent sign and the area should be maintained by either a homeowners' association or the Town for perpetual public access.
12. Require new developments to incorporate progressive stormwater management, erosion control, and flood protection practices.
13. For lands designated as *Single Family-Exurban* in the developed portions of Afton, the Town will consider rezoning to allow appropriate small businesses without requiring a *Plan* amendment if the policies in the *Local Commercial* land use category area followed.

### **Two Family/Townhouse Residential**

**Description:** This category is primarily intended to allow groupings of duplexes which would be served by individual or group on-site waste treatment (septic) systems. Single-family detached housing and attached single family residences with individual entries (e.g., townhouses, rowhouses) may also be built within this category. As depicted on Map 5, it is recommended that new *Two Family/Townhouse Residential* development be lo-



cated north of Townline Road, between planned single family and industrial areas.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category in areas on Map 5 where this category is shown:

1. In addition, to single family houses, duplexes, and rowhouses, consider certain types of small-scale non-residential uses such as churches, day care centers, parks and walking trails as generally appropriate within *Two Family/Townhouse* residential areas.
2. When considering future rezoning requests, the Town will work with the developer to determine which zoning district(s) is most appropriate to implement this future land use category. The Town's R-2 Residential zoning district is generally the most appropriate to implement this future land use category.
3. For new residential projects in the Town's *Two-Family/Townhouse Residential* category, require that minimum design standards presented in the Housing and Neighborhood Development Chapter and under Town ordinances are met.
4. Consider requiring connection to public sewer for new *Two-Family/Townhouse Residential* development.
5. Policies for the *Single Family-Exurban* future land use category are also applicable to the *Two-Family/Townhouse* future land use category.

### **Mixed Residential**

**Description:** The *Mixed Residential* future land use category is intended to allow a variety of residential units, including single-family homes; rowhouses; townhouses; duplexes; multiple-family housing (3+ unit buildings), including condominiums, apartments, and senior housing developments; and manufactured home parks or pre-existing mobile home parks. *Mixed Residential* areas are mapped on Map 5 over existing areas of multiple-family residential or mobile home park development.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category in areas on Map 5 where this category is shown:

1. In addition, to single family houses, duplexes, rowhouses, and apartments, consider certain types of small-scale non-residential uses such as churches, day care centers, parks and walking trails as generally appropriate within *Mixed Residential* areas.
2. When considering future rezoning requests, the Town will work with the developer to determine which zoning district(s) is most appropriate to implement this future land use category. The Town's R-2 Residential and MHP Mobile Home Park zoning districts are generally the most appropriate to implement this future land use category.
3. Promote the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the existing mobile home park in the Town. Limit the land expansion or new locations for *mobile* home parks, instead considering *manufactured* home parks that include upgraded building and site design standards. Town zoning regulations may need to be modified to implement this policy.
4. Consider revising the zoning ordinance to require site plan submittal for all new mixed residential development and include specific standards for all new and expanded uses mapped in this future land use cate-



gory for lighting (dark sky provisions), landscaping, parking and loading (number and placement of spaces), and building and sign design and layout.

5. Generally limit new building sizes to less than 8 housing units per building to maintain the existing small-community character of the Town.
6. Consider requiring connection to public sewer for new *Mixed Residential* development.
7. Policies for the *Single Family-Exurban* and *Two-Family/Townhouse* future land use categories are also applicable to the *Mixed Residential* future land use category.

## Non-Residential Future Land Use Categories

### **Local Commercial**

**Description:** This future land use category is designed to accommodate smaller-scale and neighborhood supporting retail, service, office, and ancillary residential uses that preserve the neighborhood character of the area. As depicted on Map 5, *Local Commercial* uses are planned for areas in Afton and between Highway 51 and nearby residential areas.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category in areas on Map 5 where this category is shown:

1. Within lands shown under this future land use category, limit the type, scale, and design of commercial uses to those that are compatible with their residential surroundings. Within Local Commercial areas, do not allow large-scale buildings or new high-impact uses like auto repair, contractor shops, and restaurants with drive through lanes. Approval of the development proposal should be based on a complete site and building plan submittal, and on the degree to which the project fulfills the goals, objectives and policies of this *Plan*.
2. The existing Town zoning district that is generally most appropriate to implement this future land use category is B-1 Local Commercial.
3. Consider broadening the conditional use list in the B-1 Local Business District to allow for new residences above the first floor of a building, and in places where housing is included as part of a multi-building development approved by the Town.
4. Consider zoning ordinance revisions to permitted and conditional use lists in the Town's commercial zoning districts, reconfiguring the current very specific uses into broader categories that are more flexible to changes in common types of businesses over time. For example, consider listing "in-vehicle sales and service uses" as a conditional use instead of trying to imagine and list all the specific types of operations within this more general type.
5. Follow the design standards for new commercial and industrial uses in the Economic Development chapter of this *Plan*. Consider revising the zoning ordinance to require site plan submittal for all new commercial development and include specific standards for all new and expanded uses mapped in this future land use category for lighting (dark sky provisions), landscaping, parking and loading (number and placement of spaces), and building and sign design and layout.



6. Consider amending sign regulations to allow for reasonable advertising of new business uses without promoting sign clutter or competing signs. Consider limiting the erection of off-premise advertising signs to commercial zoning districts only, and include specifications for minimum spacing between such signs.
7. Prohibit the unscreened outdoor storage of equipment or materials within Local Commercial areas.

### **Large Scale Commercial**

**Description:** This future land use category is intended for and mapped in areas appropriate for indoor commercial, retail, service, tourism-oriented, office, and community facility uses, excluding manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses. *Large Scale Commercial* areas are generally planned along the Highway 51 corridor.

#### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category in areas on Map 5 where this category is shown:

1. Within lands shown under this future land use category, allow a broad range of types and scales of commercial uses. New and expanded commercial uses in these areas should be characterized by generous landscaping, screened storage areas, modest lighting and signage, and high building quality. Approval of the development proposal should be based on a complete site and building plan submittal, and on the degree to which the project fulfills the goals, objectives and policies of this *Plan*.
2. The existing Town zoning district that is most appropriate to implement this future land use category is B-2 Large Scale Commercial.
3. Consider zoning ordinance revisions to permitted and conditional use lists in the Town's commercial zoning districts, reconfiguring the current very specific uses into broader categories that are more flexible to changes in common types of businesses over time. For example, consider listing "in-vehicle sales and service uses" as a conditional use instead of trying to imagine and list all the specific types of operations within this more general type.
4. Follow the design standards for new commercial and industrial uses in the Economic Development chapter of this *Plan*. Consider revising the zoning ordinance to require site plan submittal for all new commercial development and include specific standards for all new and expanded uses mapped in this future land use category for lighting (dark sky provisions), landscaping, parking and loading (number and placement of spaces), and building and sign design and layout.
5. Consider amending sign regulations to allow for reasonable advertising of new business uses without promoting sign clutter or competing signs. Consider limiting the erection of off-premise advertising signs to commercial zoning districts only, and include specifications for minimum spacing between such signs.
6. Promote the redevelopment of aging commercial and residential properties, particularly along Highway 51. Pursue the expansion of public sewer service via the Beloit Sanitary District to encourage redevelopment and more intense commercial development than would otherwise be possible with development on private well and septic systems.
7. Adhere to standards for highway access control, shared driveways, and cross access that are described in the Transportation chapter.



- Require buffers between new commercial development and nearby existing or future residential uses to reduce conflicts such as traffic noise and light pollution.

### **Light Industrial**

**Description:** This future land use category is intended for and mapped in areas appropriate for indoor assembly, warehousing, distribution, and office uses. It can be mapped in areas near residential developments, so potential conflicts such as heavy truck traffic should be avoided through residential areas. *Light Industrial* areas are generally planned along Highway 51 and Avalon Road.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category in areas on Map 5 where this category is shown:

- Within lands shown under this future land use category, allow a limited range, types, and design of industrial uses. New and expanded industrial uses in these areas should be characterized by generous landscaping; screened storage areas; modest lighting and signage; limited trucking, noise, and emissions; and high building quality. Approval of the development proposal should be based on a complete site and building plan submittal, and on the degree to which the project fulfills the goals, objectives and policies of this *Plan*.
- The existing Town zoning district that is generally most appropriate to implement this future land use category is M-1 Light Industrial.
- Follow the design standards for new commercial and industrial uses in the Economic Development chapter of this *Plan*. Consider revising the zoning ordinance to require site plan submittal for all new industrial development and include specific standards for all new and expanded uses mapped in this future land use category for lighting (dark sky provisions), landscaping, parking and loading (number and placement of spaces), and building and sign design and layout.
- Ensure that future industrial development is appropriately buffered from existing and planned residential development areas. Allow outdoor storage areas only when fully screened from nearby roadways and residential properties with combinations of walls/fences and landscaping.
- Adhere to standards for highway access control, shared driveways, and cross access that are described in the Transportation chapter.



### **General Industrial**

**Description:** This future land use category is intended for and mapped in areas appropriate for manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office uses, which may include outdoor storage areas. *General Industrial* areas are generally planned on Townline Road, across from the power plants in the Town of Beloit and along the rail line.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category in areas on Map 5 where this category is shown:

1. Within lands shown under this future land use category, allow a broad range, type, and design of industrial uses. Approval of the development proposal should be based on a complete site and building plan submittal, and the degree to which the project fulfills the goals, objectives and policies of this *Plan*.
2. Attract and direct development to areas identified as *General Industrial* that may require rail access, that would benefit from proximity to a power plant, and/or that would process farm products to enhance the local agricultural economy (see also Economic Development chapter).
3. The existing Town zoning district that is generally most appropriate to implement this future land use category is M-2 General Industrial.
4. Consider revising the zoning ordinance to require site plan submittal for all new industrial development and include specific standards for all new and expanded uses mapped in this future land use category for lighting (dark sky provisions), landscaping, parking and loading (number and placement of spaces), and building and sign design and layout.
5. Adhere to standards for highway access control, shared driveways, and cross access that are described in the Transportation chapter.
6. Require preservation of a 100 foot wide landscaped and bermed buffer along the northern edge of the planned *General Industrial* area to minimize any potential adverse impacts of situating heavy industrial uses close to existing and planned residential development. The berm should be sized and designed to minimize the impact of noise, odor, light, vibrations, and parking and loading areas on adjacent residences. There should not be road access between these future industrial and residential areas.



7. Consider requiring connection to public sewer for new *General Industrial* development.

### **Institutional and Airport**

**Description:** This future land use category is intended for and mapped in areas with larger-scale public buildings, including Blackhawk Technical College; smaller institutional uses such as churches, and Airport lands that remain in the Town. Some of the Town's existing institutional uses have been identified within this land use category on Map 5.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category:

1. The existing Town zoning district that is most appropriate to implement this future land use category is IN Institutional. Smaller institutional uses may be located within other zoning districts. Approval of a proposal to develop or expand an institutional use should be based on a complete site and building plan submittal, and the degree to which the project fulfills the goals, objectives and policies of this *Plan*.
2. Consider revising the zoning ordinance to require site plan submittal and include specific standards for all new and expanded uses mapped in this future land use category for lighting (dark sky provisions), landscaping, parking and loading (number and placement of spaces), and building and sign design and layout.
3. Should additional *Institutional* uses be necessary, locate them (and promote their location) in areas accessible to Town residents, and for larger uses amend this *Plan* in accordance with the approved locations.
4. Ensure that all land use decisions related to the *Institutional* category are in coordination with the recommendations in the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter.

## Rural/Environmental Future Land Use Categories

### **Agricultural Preservation Area**

**Description:** The *Agricultural Preservation Area* future land use category is established and mapped on Map 5 to preserve productive agricultural lands in the long-term, protect existing farm operations from encroachment by incompatible uses, promote further investments in farming, and maintain farmer eligibility for farmland preservation incentive programs.

This category focuses on lands actively used for farming, with productive agricultural soils, with topographic conditions suitable for farming, and with long-term suitability for farming. This category also includes scattered open lands and woodlots, farmsteads, agricultural-related uses, such as implement dealerships, associated home occupations and small family businesses. The largest blocks of contiguous lands shown in the *Agricultural Preservation Area* category on Map 5 are in the western parts of the Town.

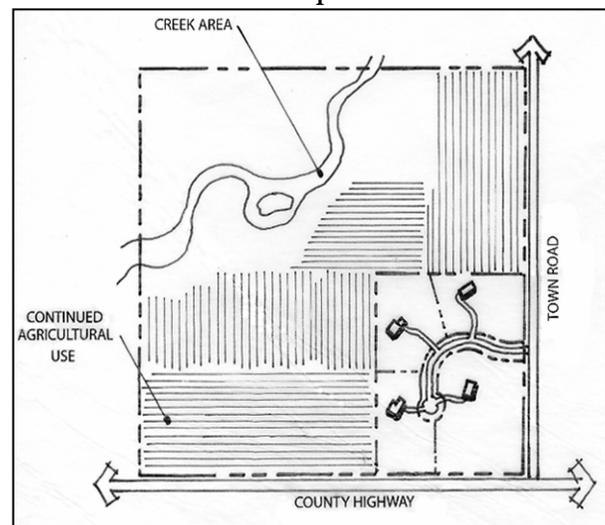


### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category, in areas on Map 5 where the category is shown:

1. **Appropriate Zoning:** The Town's A-1 Agricultural zoning district is generally the most appropriate zoning district for lands within the *Agricultural Preservation Area* future land use category. However, there are some scattered parcels in this area that are already zoned in different zoning districts. Also, if the Town chooses to implement the density policy outlined in this section, rezoning to other non-A-1 zoning districts may be necessary for certain lands in the *Agricultural Preservation Area*.
2. **Zoning Text and Map Changes:** The Town may revise the A-1 Agricultural zoning district text to make it clear that the construction of new homes in that zoning district would be allowed only for an individual earning substantial income from the farm operation. The individual may be required to demonstrate that fact to the Town before obtaining a building permit. The Town may then require rezoning to another, non-A-1 zoning district before it allows construction of any new residences for other individuals. The Town will use the policies in this section in its consideration of the rezoning and associated land division requests.
3. **Density Policy:** Within the *Agricultural Preservation Area* as shown on Map 5, the Town will limit housing to a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 35 acres. Presently, this policy requires each new lot to be at least

**Figure 14: Conceptual Conservation Development**



This figure depicts the conceptual build out of a 155-acre property in the *Agricultural Preservation Area*. With a 4-lot cluster, it would still have an overall density of 1 home per 35 acres ( $155/35=4.4$ , rounded down to 4).

35 acres in size. However, the Town may consider moving towards an approach that keeps the overall yield of houses in the *Agricultural Preservation Area* the same, but allows that same number of houses to be clustered on smaller lots, as illustrated in Figure 14. If the Town pursues this approach, the Town would limit new development to a maximum overall density of one new residential dwelling unit per every 35 acres that was held in contiguous single ownership as of July 7, 2008, the date of Town Board adoption of this *Comprehensive Plan*. The following example standards are intended as a starting point to guide the Town in its consideration of the density policy. Under this proposed density policy, the standards may be refined through possible changes to the zoning ordinance.

- a. Determining Gross Land Area: For the purposes of the density policy, the Town would need an accurate calculation of the gross land area that will be subject to a calculation. The term “contiguous single ownership” is important to define to determine gross land area. Lands in “contiguous single ownership” may be defined as any combination of legal parcels, tax parcels, or lots that abut one another or are opposite of a public road, railroad, or navigable waterway from each other, and that are held in single ownership. “Single ownership” may mean any combination of lands owned by one individual, jointly owned by a married couple including that individual, or owned by a partnership or corporation in which the individual owns at least a 50% stake. Single ownership lands that meet at only one point are usually considered to be contiguous. *Environmental Corridors* on Map 5 are usually not considered to break up contiguity of underlying single ownership lands, and such *Environmental Corridor* lands will be used in the calculation of gross land area to implement the density policy. When measuring land area, lands to the centerlines of undedicated streets are generally also included in the measurement of gross land area.
- b. Determining Allowable Dwelling Units: In similar systems in other Towns, the approach to calculate allowable residential dwelling units on lands held in contiguous single ownership as of the date of adoption of this *Comprehensive Plan* is often determined as follows: Divide the gross land area that was in contiguous single ownership as of the date of *Plan* adoption by 35, then round up if there is any fractional remainder amount over 0.5. The result is the total number of housing units that may be constructed on the lands, from the date of adoption of this *Comprehensive Plan* going forward. Next, subtract any housing units that were constructed on the lands between the date of adoption of the *Comprehensive Plan* and the date of the particular development request, except for any housing units that replaced a housing unit existing before *Plan* adoption. This result is the number of remaining housing units that may be built on the lands.
- c. How to Address Uses Other than Single Family Dwelling Units: Again, if the Town elects to pursue this density-based approach, changes to the zoning ordinance will define the Town’s selected approach. Duplexes and two-flats are usually counted as two dwelling units for purposes of this density policy. A commercial or industrial use requiring a rezoning away from A-1 Agricultural and a free-standing telecommunication tower approved by the Town after the date of adoption of this *Plan* are usually considered the equivalent of one dwelling unit for the purpose of this density policy.
- d. Keeping Track of Remaining Dwelling Units: Any time a rezoning or division of land is approved which results in the ability to construct new dwelling units, most towns with similar approaches require, as part of the approval, that a notice be added to the deed of the original contiguous single ownership lands indicating the number of dwelling units that may still be built on such lands under then-current adopted town policies. All such notices could be subject to removal or alteration only if approved by the town board, in light of a relevant future change to the town’s comprehensive plan. If the Town decides to pursue this density-based approach, the Town may wish to include provisions in the zoning ordinance and a possible new Land Division ordinance that specifically authorize the Town to limit future overall density through deed restrictions.
- e. Effect of Future Land Sales: Under these types of systems, changes and reconfigurations in all or parts of contiguous single ownership lands do not trigger new allotments of potential future dwelling units per the density policy. When land is sold or consolidated, towns often use the following ap-

proaches to determine how many (if any) potential future dwelling units were transferred along with the land:

- i. Towns often encourage property owners to make clear in sales contracts how many potential future dwelling units (if any) are being transferred along with the land. If provided to the town with the development review application, the town then uses such a sales contract or similar document when considering the application.
  - ii. In the absence of a clearly understood sales contract or similar document, the town then attempts to learn from all affected property owners the intent (in writing). That written intent statement or affidavit is then recorded against the deeds to all affected properties, as part of the development approval.
  - iii. In the absence of a clearly understood sales contract or statement of intent, the town board usually attempts to make a determination based on the best available evidence.
4. **Treatment of Parcels of Less than 35 Acres.** Within the *Agriculture Preservation Area*, for legally created lots or parcels of less than 35 acres without contiguous land in the same ownership, a total of one single family residence will be allowed to be constructed. Where there is already a residence or commercial use on such lot or parcel, a second residence will not be allowed. No further divisions of such lots or parcels will be permitted while such land remains designated as *Agricultural Preservation Area*.
  5. **Development Design and Layout.** The Town intends to establish standards for the design and layout of residential development. See the Housing and Neighborhood Development chapter for specific policies.
  6. **Mineral Extraction Operation and Wireless Communication Facility Standards:** These two types of land uses commonly seek locations in areas mapped as *Agricultural Preservation Areas* on Map 5. In such areas, the Town will consider applications for approval of such facilities in light of the recommendations of this section and more specific *Plan* recommendations included in the Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter.

### **Agricultural Urban Transition Area**

**Description:** The *Agricultural Urban Transition Area* future land use category is established and mapped on Map 5 to identify certain lands in proximity to the City of Janesville, to be preserved in mainly agricultural uses until such time as more intensive development utilizing municipal sewer and water services is appropriate. The City of Janesville would likely be the provider of such utility services in the areas identified in this future land use category. Per City policy and the Town-City cooperative boundary agreement, annexation would either immediately or eventually be required when sewer and water service is provided. The areas shown in the *Agricultural Urban Transition Area* on Map 5 are generally in line with past City and Town plans and agreements for these areas.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category, in areas on Map 5 where the category is shown:

1. Within the Agricultural Urban Transition Area, limit new development in accordance with all policies applicable within the Agricultural Preservation Area, until such time as that land is provided with municipal sewer and water services. Some exceptions to these policies for already-developed lands within these areas may be necessary.
2. Require all permitted non-farm development projects to be designed in a manner to not impede the orderly future development of the surrounding area with more intensive development with municipal sewer and water services in the future.

3. Continue to engage with the City of Janesville and applicable property owners on joint plans and agreements to further determine the type, timing, and other aspects of future development within the Agricultural Urban Transition Area. The Intergovernmental Cooperation chapter contains more detailed guidance on future plans and agreements with Janesville.

### **Environmental Corridor**

**Description:** The *Environmental Corridor* future land use category is mapped over generally continuous open space systems based on lands that have sensitive natural resources and limitations for development. This designation includes Wisconsin DNR identified wetlands subject to existing State-mandated zoning, FEMA designated floodplains, shoreland setback areas, and slopes of 12 percent or greater. This category also includes vegetative buffers, all publicly-owned land designated as public parks, and conservation areas. *Environmental Corridor* areas in the Town of Rock are generally located along Rock River and Bass Creek.

### **Policies and Programs:**

The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use category:

1. Discourage new development in mapped *Environmental Corridor* areas unless the underlying features which led to its designation do not exist in the places shown or appropriate approvals are granted to alter the land (see more detailed criteria for changing Environmental Corridor boundaries in the Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources Chapter).
2. Consider allowing development on slopes of 12 percent or greater which will not negatively impact the environment or create safety concerns for private property.
3. If development is proposed in areas where environmental corridors have been mapped or are adjoining, the landowner or developer will be responsible for hiring professionals to determine the exact boundaries of the *Environmental Corridor* based on the particular wetland, floodplain, steep slope, or shoreland setback feature.
4. Continue to allow existing agricultural uses (cropping, grazing, or other preexisting agricultural uses) within *Environmental Corridors*.
5. Permit recreational activities, such as passive-use parks and trails, in *Environmental Corridors* where compatible with natural resource protection and farmland preservation.
6. Work collectively with surrounding local governments, Rock County, and the State on the protection and preservation of the *Environmental Corridors*.
7. In the Town zoning ordinance and a possible Town Land Division ordinance, consider including standards for detailed identification and protection of environmental corridors, to ensure that new development provides appropriate access to waterways and adjoining public lands, and to require park and recreational facilities, or fees in lieu of such facilities.
8. Design future planned neighborhoods around and with access to *Environmental Corridors* without negatively affecting them from an environmental standpoint.
9. The *Environmental Corridors* future land use category depicted on Map 5 does not necessarily include all lands with environmental constraints. See Map 3 for other areas of environmental significance.





**Map 5: Future Land Use**



## Chapter Four: Transportation

This chapter includes background information, goals, objectives, policies, and recommended programs to guide the future development and maintenance of various modes of transportation in the Town of Rock over the 20-year planning period. Given the Town's rural surroundings, the primary focus is on highways, local roads, and paths. The chapter compares the Town's transportation policies and programs to State and regional transportation plans.

### Existing Transportation Network

The Town is relatively well connected to the region through the existing roadway network. This section describes the Town's existing transportation facilities.

#### Roadways

The Town of Rock is served by U.S. Highway 51, which, along with Interstate 39/90, link the Town with the region's major cities. The eastern boundary of the Town is just 1 ½ miles from Interstate 39/90 where it intersects with State Trunk Highway (STH) 11.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), which records average daily traffic volumes for roadways, traffic on Highway 51 increased by about 12 percent in the Town between 2001 and 2003. Highway 51 is four lanes wide through the Town.

The Town of Rock is also served by STH 11 which runs through the northeast section of the Town and experienced a 13 percent increase in traffic at its intersection with Highway 51 between 2001 and 2003. STH 11 is on a bypass alignment, completed in the late 1990s. Two traffic lanes are currently provided, with room in the right-of-way for two additional lanes.

The Town's rural areas are served by County trunk highways (CTHs), which are usually collector roads that serve rural land uses and distribute traffic to the regional arterial system. CTHs in Rock include G and D. Traffic on CTHs D and G increased by just 3 percent between 2001 and 2003.

Town roads are an important component of the transportation system. Major east-west town roads include Hanover, Plymouth Church, Avalon, Tripp, O'Leary, Cemetery, Happy Hollow, and Noss Roads. Major north-south roads include Murray, Hayner, Oakley, Kessler, and Tracey Roads. Town roads serve local development and farming areas. The Town contracts with Rock County for road maintenance.

#### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- ◆ Work to control access, maintain the function, and improve the appearance of key roads in the community.
- ◆ Coordinate with Rock County on appropriate upgrades to the airport and on zoning regulations that do not negatively affect the Town or its land owners.
- ◆ Advance planning and development of a north-south recreation trail through the Town.

#### ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Throughout Wisconsin, all local, county, State and federal transportation routes are classified in categories under the "Roadway Functional Classification" system.

As identified by WisDOT, the functional classification system groups roads and highways according to the character of service they offer, ranging from rapid through access to local land access. The purpose of functional classification is to enhance overall travel efficiency and accommodate traffic patterns and land uses by designing streets to the standards suggested by their functional class. The three main rural roadway functional classes include:

- ◆ **Arterials** that provide primary access to and through an area (Highway 51)
- ◆ **Collectors** that disperse traffic within an area (CTHs G and D)
- ◆ **Local** streets that provide access to individual properties (Tripp Road)

### **Bridges**

There are 7 State-maintained bridges in the Town of Rock, some located on STH 11 and the Rock River. The State and County maintain condition reports for these bridges.

### **Airports**

The Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport is located at 4004 South Oakhill Avenue in Janesville, on land recently annexed from the Town of Rock through an intergovernmental agreement. This municipal airport has three multi-directional runways, each over 5,000 feet with an average of 189 flights per day. It is home to the annual Southern Wisconsin AirFEST, which features leading aviation performing groups such as the Blue Angels. The airport also supports a wide range of aviation activity, including the delivery of automotive parts into Janesville, and outbound shipments to locations throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

Larger air carrier and passenger facilities are located approximately an hour's drive to the north in Madison at the Dane County Regional Airport, to the south in Rockford at the Chicago Rockford International Airport, to the northeast in Milwaukee at the General Mitchell International Airport, and at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago.



### **Water and Truck Transportation**

There is no waterborne freight movement in the Town and none is anticipated. Most freight shipments in the Town of Rock occur by truck on Highways 51 and 11. A significant amount of trucking is also generated by the local quarry, which follows a designated truck route.

### **Rail**

Two rail lines traverse the Town of Rock. The Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co. operates a line running through northern Rock to Janesville and beyond to the Milwaukee area. The Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad Corporation operates a line from Janesville through Beloit to Illinois which extends north-south through the Town.

### **Recreational Trails**

The South Connector Trail, a paved off-street path, extends 4 miles along the north side of STH 11, from west of the Rock River to Read Road. Hanover, Tripp, and Afton Roads are designated as on-street bike routes. Additionally, there are snowmobile trails through the Town.

At the time of writing, efforts were underway to establish a recreation trail from Janesville to Big Hill Park in Beloit through the Town of Rock.



### **Paratransit and Public Transit**

Paratransit is specialized transit service to specific segments of the population that require more accessible vehicles and flexible routing. While the Town does not have its own paratransit service, Rock County provides specialized transportation services which are

designed for use by elderly or disabled persons. To be eligible for specialized transit services, an individual must be at least 55 years of age or be disabled. Transportation services are provided to all areas within Rock County in wheelchair-accessible vans. In addition, the Council on Aging offers the Rock County RIDES Program which provides transportation to medical appointments through volunteer drivers who offer their time and use of their own car.

Also, there are bus routes between Janesville and Beloit through the Town and there are bus routes that go to Blackhawk Technical College in the Town.

### **Review of State and Regional Transportation Plans**

The following are State and regional transportation plans and studies relevant to this *Plan*. There are no conflicts between these State and regional plans and this Town *Plan*, except perhaps the airport plans and initiatives that may involve broader airport zoning regulations outside of airport boundaries.

- ◆ **Rock County Transportation Improvement Plan** The Rock County Public Works Department maintains an ongoing list of transportation improvements. In the Town of Rock, the County plans on replacing the bridge on Hayner Road over Markham Creek in 2011.
- ◆ **Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport Plan.** Rock County prepared the Rock County Airport Master Plan Update in 2000. The County was working with Mead and Hunt to update the plan in 2008. At this time this Plan was drafted, the County was also working to adopt stricter airport zoning regulations regarding land uses, beyond the airport boundaries.
- ◆ **Wisconsin Southwest Region Highway Improvement Program.** WisDOT maintains a six-year improvement program for state and federal highways within the Region. Wisconsin has 112,362 miles of public roads, from Interstate freeways to city and village streets. This highway improvement program covers only the 11,753-mile state highway system that is administered and maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). The other 100,609 miles are improved and maintained by the cities, towns, counties, and villages in which the roadways are located. The state highway system consists of 750 miles of Interstate freeways and 11,010 miles of state and US-marked highways. There are no projects related to the Town.
- ◆ **Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020.** This plan focuses on the 11,800 miles of State Trunk Highway routes in Wisconsin. The plan does not identify specific projects, but broad strategies and policies to improve the State highway system over the next 20 years. Given its focus, the plan does not identify improvement needs on roads under local jurisdiction. The plan includes three main areas of emphasis: pavement and bridge preservation, traffic movement, and safety. There are no recommendations related to the Town.
- ◆ **Translinks 21: A Multimodal Transportation Plan for Wisconsin's 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** This plan provides a broad planning “umbrella” including an overall vision and goals for transportation systems in the State for the next 25 years. This 1995 plan recommends complete construction of the Corridors 2020 “backbone” network by 2005, the creation of a new State grant program to help local governments prepare transportation corridor management plans to deal effectively with growth, the provision of State funding to assist small communities in providing transportation services to elderly and disabled persons, and the development of a detailed assessment of local road investment needs. At the time of writing this Comprehensive Plan, WisDOT is in the process of updating the Translinks Plan in *Connections 2030*.
- ◆ **Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020.** This plan presents a blueprint for improving conditions for bicycling, clarifies the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's role in bicycle transportation, and establishes policies for further integrating bicycling into the current transportation system. The plan reports that, according to a University of Wisconsin survey conducted in August of 1998, more than one-third of all Wisconsin households included someone who took at least one bike trip in the previous week. There are no recommendations related to the Town.

- ◆ **Wisconsin Pedestrian Plan 2020.** This plan outlines Statewide and local measures to increase walking and to promote pedestrian comfort and safety. The plan provides a policy framework addressing pedestrian issues and clarifies WisDOT’s role in meeting pedestrian needs. Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, walkways, streetscapes, crosswalks, traffic controls, signals, overpasses and underpasses, bridges, multi-use paths, curb cuts and ramps, transit stops, and paved shoulders. Few of these types of facilities are found in the Town.
- ◆ **Wisconsin State Airport Improvement Program (2007-2011).** The Airport Improvement Program combines federal, state and local resources to help fund improvements to over 100 public-use airports throughout the state primarily owned by counties, cities, towns and villages. Improvements may include runway construction and reconstruction, land acquisition, navigational aids, and lighting. The plan anticipates recommended improvements to the runways, hangers, terminal, and other facilities at the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport over the next five years, as well as funding assistance for updating the airport zoning ordinance.
- ◆ **Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020.** This plan includes a general inventory of existing airport facilities in the State and provides a framework for the preservation and enhancement of a system of public-use airports to meet the current and future aviation needs of the State. It includes general state-wide recommendations to upgrade existing facilities through runway extensions and replacements and facility improvements, but does not identify any new locations for airports to meet future needs.
- ◆ **Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report.** This report summarizes critical rail transportation issues identified during a public outreach effort. The report serves as a point of departure for the rail component of the upcoming Connections 2030, WisDOT’s next multimodal transportation plan set for completion in 2006. The report identifies the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad Corporation line as “higher density” carrying more than 3 million gross tons annually. These “higher density” lines are less likely to require financial assistance in order to preserve rail service and avoid abandonment of track.

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## Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

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### **Goal:**

1. Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of multiple users and minimizes impacts on landowners and farming.

### **Objectives:**

1. Maintain and require an interconnected road network.
2. Ensure that transportation system improvements are coordinated with land use desires.
3. Participate on multi-jurisdictional transportation system improvements and maintenance in the Rock area.
4. Support facilities and services for biking, walking, and other modes of transportation.
5. Improve the safety of key roads in the community.

### **Policies and Programs:**

1. Consider establishing a Capital Improvement Program to provide for the phased upgrading of Town roads and other functions and equipment.
2. Upgrade existing Town roads to current standards to the extent practical when repaving or reconstructing those roads.

3. Discourage use of certain Town roads for through traffic with techniques such as signage, speed zones, and weight limits.
4. Enforce weight restrictions on existing town roads and consider weight limits on new Town roads when reviewing development proposals.
5. Work with the County, adjacent communities, and WisDOT to improve the appearance of and along Highway 51.
6. Require a reasonable minimum setback for all buildings, parking, signs, and other improvements (aside from landscaping) along County and State highway rights-of-way to maintain the function of these highways and preserve future highway expansion area.
7. When the State plans upgrades to Highway 51, remain involved in the design process from start to finish to represent Town interests.
8. Preserve the capacity and efficiency of Highway 51 by minimizing curb cuts and driveway access points on this corridor, and encourage the closure of some existing access points when redevelopment occurs.
9. Plan for a network of interconnected new roads in planned development areas to control highway access, preserve rural character, and improve access to deeper parcels.
10. Consider implementing Town road impact fees for any new development projects that place a burden on or require the upgrading of Town roads, or otherwise require developments that impact nearby Town roads to upgrade them.
11. Accommodate bicycle traffic on less traveled Town and County roadways, such as Afton Road.
12. Promote joint driveways to achieve traffic safety and rural character goals.
13. Support additional transportation options for those without access to an automobile, including the elderly, disabled, and children.
14. Work with Rock County to ensure that the operation of Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport continues with minimal impact on Town residents, businesses, and land owners.
15. Continue to participate on appropriate state, regional, and county transportation planning efforts that may have an impact on the Town and its transportation system, including initiatives related to water, rail, and truck transportation.
16. The Town does not have, and does not intend to adopt an official map over the planning period.



### Transportation Recommendations and Programs

Expanding on the local planning policies listed above, the Town of Rock intends to retain the effectiveness of its transportation system by pursuing the following strategies:

### **Work with the County and State to Maintain Highways**

Rock County maintains a short-term plan (5 to 7 years) for road improvements within the County. The County also maintains Town roads and has historically included maintenance of such roads in its five-year road plan. The Town will work with the County Highway Department to incorporate road projects into this short-term County-wide road plan as desired by the Town. Ideally the Town would provide road condition ratings, maintenance, and improvement desires to the County on an annual basis.

The Town will also work to maintain, upgrade, and ensure safety on roadways that serve the Town by:

- ◆ Discouraging the use of local Town roads for through and truck traffic by designating weight limits where appropriate.
- ◆ Ensuring maintenance of roads to meet acceptable standards for safe cycling, such as by removing obstacles and encouraging paved shoulders where appropriate. (e.g. on County highways).
- ◆ Identifying and addressing problem intersections through techniques like signage and reconstruction.
- ◆ Supporting applications to federal and state programs and funding sources, such as the Transportation Enhancement Grant program, available to the County and the Town for transportation projects. Additional information on these programs is available from the WisDOT Southwest Region office in Madison and from the University of Wisconsin Transportation Information Center.
- ◆ Working with the State when upgrades are planned for Highway 51. As described in other chapters of this *Plan*, the Highway 51 corridor is a critical part of the Town's future, both in terms of community development and community image. The Town intends to be involved in any Highway 51 projects to ensure that Town interests are represented and to add local knowledge. Key issues include property owner involvement, access controls and consolidation of existing access where possible, setbacks, driveway spacing, visibility, turning or passing lanes, shared parking opportunities, road and right-of-way appearance, and cross access between properties to minimize curb cuts and traffic on the highway.

### **Consider Establishing a Town Driveway Ordinance**

A Town driveway ordinance ensures suitable dimensions and design for emergency vehicles, guides driveway placement, promotes access control to adjacent roads, and protects rural character. The Town will consider establishing a driveway ordinance to include the following provisions:

- ◆ Include width, design, clearance, address signage, and slope standards to ensure access by emergency vehicles. To effectively provide safe access for emergency equipment, the maximum length of driveways should generally be three hundred feet. Driveways lined with dense vegetation and longer driveways should provide for a turn-out to accommodate two-way traffic and a turnaround near the home. Physical conditions (e.g. wetlands) may require a driveway to be longer than 300 feet, in which case the driveway may exceed this length, but only by the minimum distance necessary.
- ◆ Specify driving surface requirements, alignment, and marking.
- ◆ Specify the number of driveway accesses to the road allowed for each property.
- ◆ Specify the minimum distance between two driveways.
- ◆ Encourage shared driveways between adjacent developments. If two or more landowners wish to construct a shared driveway, they should be required to enter into a private road agreement and the agreement should be recorded against both parcels with the County Register of Deeds. A private road agreement stipulates important details including maintenance responsibilities, which reduces the potential for future conflict between the current and future driveway users.
- ◆ Require "no vehicular access" areas on subdivision plats or certified survey maps where driveways connecting to the public road would not be safe.

- ◆ Address visual clearance, guiding the placement of driveways relative to each other and road intersections, and to protect sight distances for vehicles leaving the property.
- ◆ Avoid placement of driveways that interfere with forestry and agricultural practices.
- ◆ Include culvert, width, slope, and grade specifications.

This type of ordinance typically requires, before a driveway may be constructed, submittal of a plan that shows the location, slope, cross-section, retaining walls or bridges or culverts (if necessary), erosion control and drainage management approaches. Model town driveway ordinances are available from the Wisconsin Towns Association.

### **Coordinate with Partners on Recreational Routes**

At the time of writing, efforts were underway to establish a recreational trail through the Town along the Rock River, depicted on Map 6. Cooperation among property owners, local governments, WisDNR, and other agencies will be necessary to implement this idea. The Town intends to coordinate with the City of Janesville, County, State, and residents on this conceptual trail, enhancing existing routes, improving the marking of recreational routes in the Town, and establishing wayfinding signage to the new trail in Afton. Various funding sources are available through WisDNR and WisDOT to fund trail construction. In addition, the Town supports paving four to five foot wide shoulders on all State and County highways when they are reconstructed. Town roads have low enough traffic volumes where paved shoulders are generally not necessary.

### **Continue to Work with the County on Airport-related Issues**

At the time of writing, Rock County was contemplating an ordinance to potentially limit land uses on lands surrounding the airport. The Town recognizes the importance of the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport to the health of the area and supports ongoing maintenance and upkeep. However, the Town has concerns over proposals by Rock County to institute land use restrictions for lands in the Town. The Town finds current height limitations acceptable, and will continue to monitor the progress of this effort.

### **Continue to Work with the County to Support Other Transportation Options**

Transportation options include commuter facilities, para-transit for the growing elderly and disabled populations and transportation services for lower income workers. Available programs include:

- ◆ *Specialized Transportation Assistance Program for Counties* program, which provides funding for transportation services, purchasing services from any public or private organization, subsidizing elderly and disabled passengers for their use of services or use of their own personal vehicles, performing or funding management studies on transportation, training and the purchase of equipment. This program requires a 20% local match in funding.
- ◆ *Elderly and Disabled Transportation Capital Assistance* program. Eligible applicants include private and non-profit organizations, local public bodies that do not have private or public transportation providers available, and local public bodies that are approved providers of transportation services for the elderly and disabled. The program covers 80% of the cost of eligible equipment.
- ◆ *Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP)*. This program supports transportation services to link low-income workers with jobs, training centers and childcare facilities. Applicants must prepare a Regional Job Access Plan that identifies the needs for assistance. Eligible applicants include local governments and non-profit agencies.

Because the Town's population will continue to age, the Town supports continuation of and access to these programs, as needed.



## **Map 6: Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities**



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## Chapter Five: Utilities and Community Facilities

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This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide the future maintenance and development of utilities and community facilities in the Town of Rock. As a rural town, Rock does not have a large assortment of these types of facilities.

### UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- ◆ Maintain a rural level of service throughout most of the Town.
- ◆ Work with the Town of Beloit to allow sewer connections to future economic development areas on the south side of the Town.
- ◆ Maintain and improve the Town park and Town cemetery over the planning period.

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### Existing Utilities and Community Facilities

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#### **Water Supply**

The Town of Rock does not provide municipal water service to its residents, and has no plans to provide such service. All of the Town's households obtain their water supply from private wells, except for a limited number of uses that are connected to the City's water system between the airport and the main part of the City. Such properties are subject to future annexation under an agreement between the City and the Town.

#### **Waste Water Treatment and Distribution**

The Town of Beloit provides sanitary sewer services in the southeast area of the Town of Rock. The City of Janesville also provides services along portions of Highway 51 in the Town, and between the Airport and the remainder of the City. Connection to the City's system requires either immediate or future annexation to the City, under the terms of the intergovernmental agreement between the City and the Town.

The disposal of domestic and commercial wastewater in the remainder of the Town is handled through the use of individual on-site wastewater treatment systems, often referred to as septic systems, which generally discharge the wastewater to underground drainage fields. There are currently six types of on-site disposal system designs authorized for use today: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, and sand filter systems.

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce (COMM) regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site sewage systems in the State. In 2000, the State adopted a revised private sewage system code called COMM 83. This revised code allows conventional on-site systems and alternative systems, such as those that employ biological or chemical treatment. In some cases, alternative waste disposal systems can be used in areas where conventional systems are not feasible due to unsuitable soil conditions.

#### **Solid Waste Disposal**

Garbage collection in the Town of Rock is provided by private haulers. Recyclables are also collected.

#### **Stormwater Management**

Stormwater management has become a significant aspect of comprehensive planning in recent years due to concerns about flooding, property damage, and surface and groundwater quality issues. Many communities around the State are adopting stormwater management rules to control run-off from both urban and rural land uses.

### **Town Hall and Administration**

The Town Hall is located at 5102 South CTH D in Afton, near the center of the Town. The Hall was constructed in 2000, and is expected to serve the Town's needs over the planning period. It is used primarily for Town administrative functions and meetings. It is also available for rent for private functions and also serves as the local polling place. The Town Clerk/Treasurer is the only administrative employee of the Town, and serves part-time on a contract basis. The Town Constable serves in various capacities for the Town. The Town Board has three members.

### **Law Enforcement and Protection**

The Rock County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency to Town residents, which is expected to continue over the planning period. The Sheriff's Department maintains an office at Blackhawk Technical College.

### **Fire Protection/Emergency Medical Services**

Fire Protection and EMS are provided by the Town of Beloit for properties south of Eau Claire Road. The City of Janesville provides these services for properties north of Eau Claire Road. Mutual aid from other departments – most notably Footville – is often called for the western parts of the Town. These arrangements are generally considered acceptable.

#### **KEY SURVEY RESULTS**

The majority of respondents rated Town facilities and services as “excellent” or “good,” with nearly half of respondents rating each service (e.g. ambulance service, snow removal) as at least “good.”

### **Library**

The Town of Rock is served by the Arrowhead Library System, but it does not have its own library building within the Town. The nearest libraries are in Janesville and Beloit, which is an acceptable proximity for Town residents.

### **Telecommunication and Power Facilities**

Telephone services are available in the Town of Rock through several providers, including AT&T and Verizon. Internet and cable television services are available to Town residents through Charter Communications.

Electric and gas power are provided to the Town by Alliant Energy. High voltage electric transmission lines are provided by the American Transmission Company, with a high-voltage line extending north-south through the eastern side of the Town. Riverside Energy Center, a natural gas-fired, combined cycle power plant, is located just south of the Town of Rock in the Town of Beloit, on Town Line Road. While this plant is located outside of Rock, it is a large facility and visually impacts the Town of Rock.

### **Schools**

The majority of the Town is in the Janesville School District, which is comprised of 18 schools providing pre-kindergarten-12 education for school-aged children in the City of Janesville. The District also has a Charter School for students in grades 9-12. The curriculum of the Rock River Charter School/Janesville Academy for International Studies focuses on global issues and business, international exchanges, and foreign language. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, enrollments remained relatively steady between 2001 and 2006.

The school-aged children on the far western side of the Town attend the Parkview School District, which is comprised of 6 schools providing pre-kindergarten-12 education for school-aged children in seven Rock County towns. The total enrollment in the district in 2006 was 1,059 students.

The Rock County Christian School is located in the Town of Rock on Highway 51, as depicted on Map 6: Transportation and Community Facilities.

**Figure 15: Janesville School District Enrollment, 2001-2006**

Level	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Elementary Schools	4,778	4,645	4,605	4,575	4,495	4,580
Middle Schools	2,453	2,443	2,486	2,373	2,435	2,345
High Schools	3,459	3,490	3,540	3,588	3,576	3,557
Rock River Charter School	48	46	68	81	100	107
District Total	10,758	10,624	10,669	10,667	10,606	10,589

*Source: Janesville School District, 2005-06; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2007*

The Blackhawk Technical College District covers Rock and Green Counties with campuses in Monroe and the Town of Rock. The Rock campus offers associate degree programs in a variety of fields including accounting, culinary arts, information technology, and nursing. Diploma, certificate, and apprenticeship programs are also available.



Founded in 1965, University of Wisconsin - Rock County is located in Janesville at 2909 Kellogg Avenue in the southwest corner of the city, adjacent to the Rock River and the Town of Rock. The University offers an Associate Degree in Arts and Science and collaborative Bachelor's Degree programs with UW-Whitewater, UW-Platteville, UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee where students may earn Bachelor's Degrees from these institutions without leaving the UW-Rock County campus. Fall 2006 enrollment was 930 students. The university experienced a 5.7% increase in students from 2005 to 2006. As a result of an increase in the number of 4-year programs, new campus facilities, and aggressive marketing, the university expects enrollment increases to continue. The University is currently undergoing an extensive facilities expansion project which will significantly increase classroom space.

**Parks and Recreation Facilities**

The Town of Rock is served by the following public and private park and recreation facilities:

- ◆ *Town Park:* This 30-acre park is owned by the Town and includes four baseball diamonds, a refreshment stand, picnic areas, a pavilion, running water, and indoor toilets. Little league, t-ball, and softball activities are held at this park. This site is a closed landfill.
- ◆ *Happy Hollow Park:* This 206-acre County park is located off of Happy Hollow Road and features the only public boat launch in the Town of Rock, a pier, and river frontage. The park also offers a hiking trail, picnic areas, shelter and toilets.



- ◆ *Rockport Park*: This City of Janesville park is accessible to Rock residents. Other City parks and trails are also nearby.
- ◆ Other recreation facilities are available at several taverns in the Town, such as Afton Pub, which offers volleyball and softball.

### **Health and Child Care Facilities**

There are no medical facilities located in the Town of Rock. The Mercy Health System is the main provider of health care services in the Janesville area. The main facility is Mercy Hospital located at 1000 Mineral Point Avenue in Janesville and offers comprehensive health care services with specialties in oncology and plastic surgery. Seven associated clinics providing outpatient and supplementary services are located throughout Janesville. Dean Riverview Clinic & Urgent Care is located at 580 North Washington Street, also in Janesville. This Clinic provides comprehensive health care and urgent care for the Janesville community. The Riverview Surgery Center, conveniently located in the clinic complex, provides outpatient surgery services. Dean Northview Clinic is located at 2540 Humes Road and offers comprehensive family practice care.

HealthNet of Janesville serves the ever increasing need for primary health care and dental services to the uninsured and low-income residents of Rock County. The clinic is located in Downtown Janesville at 23 West Milwaukee Street.

There are no formal child care facilities located in the Town. However, there are seven regulated child care facilities in the City of Janesville.

### **Cemeteries**

There are five cemeteries located in the Town of Rock: on Rockport Road, on Cemetery Road, on Plymouth Church Road, south of Eau Claire Road, and on Highway 51. The Town owns and maintains the cemetery on Cemetery Road.



## **Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives and Policies**

### **Goal:**

1. Supply public facilities and services in line with resident expectations and the Town's rural atmosphere.

### **Objectives:**

1. Coordinate community facilities planning with land use, transportation, and natural resource planning.
2. Provide the appropriate level of community services and facilities consistent with a low tax levy and the rural orientation of the Town.
3. Protect the Town's public health through proper siting and avoiding over-concentration of on-site wastewater treatment systems.
4. Pursue municipal utility service in intensive planned growth areas.

### **Policies:**

1. Implement strategies to assure a high-quality supply of groundwater – e.g. minimizing potential sources of pollutants near wells and recharge areas and maximizing permeable area for infiltration.

2. Monitor and avoid over-concentration of private on-site wastewater treatment (septic) systems to minimize groundwater and soil contamination potential.
3. Encourage construction site erosion control and ongoing stormwater management for any development, particularly subdivisions and other larger projects, to protect surface water quality and prevent flooding. Stormwater management techniques include natural drainage swales and retention and detention basins. See Chapter Two for more information.
4. Consider a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is updated on an annual basis, to manage Town finances and plan ahead for improvements.
5. Support strategies for enhancing telecommunication capabilities, including the siting of cellular communication facilities and broadband/fiber optics accessibility.
6. Support the installation of small individual wind turbines and the use of other home-based energy production subject to conditions and limitations associated with public health, safety, and welfare. The Town will consider amendments to the zoning ordinance regarding wind turbine installation and operation.
7. Continue to work with private companies by contract to provide solid waste disposal and recycling services to the Town.
8. Work with the Town of Beloit to explore the potential for additional connection to the sanitary sewer system within the Town of Beloit Urban Service Area.
9. Working with property owners, explore sewer service options for the Afton area.
10. Consider direct involvement in expanding Town cemetery space as the current facilities may reach capacity over the planning period.
11. Continue to work with other communities to provide community services such as EMS and fire protection.
12. Continue to maintain the Rock Town Hall.
13. Maintain and enhance the Town Park, and consider naming it in such a manner that celebrates the Town's heritage.
14. Explore the establishment of a public boat launch in the Afton area as a means to increase recreational and business activity there.
15. Do not plan for Town involvement in health care and child care over the 20-year planning period, as these services will be provided by private and non-profit entities.
16. Remain informed on the activities and decisions of the School Districts serving the Town to ensure that the needs of the Town for school facilities are met.
17. Continue to cooperate with and rely on the broader region to ensure that Town residents have all the necessary services, including health and child care, police, fire and rescue, recycling and refuse disposal, libraries, cemeteries, and other government facilities.
18. Consider revisions to other ordinances and codes as necessary to implement the recommendations in this *Plan*, including building codes, mechanical codes, housing codes, and sanitary codes.
19. Generally follow the timetable shown in Figure 16 to create, expand or rehabilitate community facilities.

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### Utilities and Community Facilities Recommendations and Programs

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Expanding on the local planning policies listed above, the Town of Rock intends to ensure appropriate levels of service and utility provision by pursuing the following strategies:

### **Explore Options for Additional Sewer Service in the Town**

This *Plan* reflects the Town's desire for future development and redevelopment along Highway 51 as well as new industrial areas along Townline Road. One way to increase the intensity of future development along these corridors would be the availability of sanitary sewer. This service might also encourage redevelopment of certain properties as well.

During the planning process, it was discussed that some private septic systems in Afton would fail over the planning period. These properties often do not have capacity for a replacement system. The Town will consider alternatives for assisting residents with replacing failed systems, potentially including exploration of sanitary sewer service to this area over the planning period.

### **Explore Expansion of the Town Cemetery**

The existing Town cemetery on Cemetery Road will reach capacity over the planning period. The Town will consider acquiring land from an adjoining property owner(s) to provide for future capacity expansion. In general, criteria to consider when selecting a cemetery site include adequate soils, gentle topography, good access, and sufficient size. A cemetery does not need to be at roadway intersections with high exposure or visibility.

### **Maintain and Improve Town Recreational Facilities**

The Town intends to explore the following park and recreational ideas:

- ◆ Improvements and naming of the Town Park
- ◆ Establishing wayfinding signage from Afton to key recreational facilities (described in the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter)
- ◆ Developing a future trail from Janesville to Big Hill Park in Beloit (described in the Transportation chapter)
- ◆ Establishing a canoeing route on the Rock River
- ◆ Establishing a boat launch near Afton
- ◆ Supporting County expansion of Happy Hollow Park into adjacent lands from willing sellers

An effective way for the Town to raise awareness of these ideas and help them be developed is to incorporate them into a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP). This assures that the Town maintains eligibility for State funding for additional parkland acquisition, or for park improvements. The most cost-effective way for a Town to complete a CORP is through participating in and providing input, including desired Town projects, into the next Countywide CORP.

### **Update Standards for Telecommunication Towers in Zoning Ordinance**

In a community that is bisected by two significant highways, the Town will be presented with proposals for telecommunication towers (cell towers). The Town should be prepared with a modern ordinance that promotes the use of tall existing structures in the Town (e.g. silos) and addresses issues such as co-location of multiple carriers on one tower. Many excellent model ordinances are available and could be adopted with minimal adjustment.

### **Stay Informed with any Plans for Power Lines and/or a Substation in the Town**

Because new transmission lines are costly to build and difficult to site, energy providers are increasingly looking to increase capacity along existing routes. The Town promotes "corridor sharing" or the use of the transmission line's existing rights-of-way for other facilities. Corridor sharing reduces the impacts by locating linear land uses together, and minimizes the amount of land affected by new easements. It also reduces the proliferation of corridors and easements such as roads, pipelines, power lines, and other linear features.

**Figure 16: Timetable to Expand, Rehabilitate, or Create New Community Utilities or Facilities**

Town Utilities & Community Facilities	Timeframe	Comments
Water Supply	N/A	Most water supplied by private wells; expected to continue
Sanitary Sewer	2009 - 2011	Work with the Town of Beloit to secure additional sewer service in the southern portion of the Town
	As requested	Explore sewer service as needed in other parts of the Town (e.g. Afton)
On-Site Wastewater Treatment (Septic) Systems	Ongoing	Promote the State's Wisconsin Fund to help repair or replace failing septic systems; promote the use of community/group waste treatment systems in areas of intensive development
Stormwater Management	2009 - 2011	Help implement the recommendations of the current multi-community stormwater study
	2008 - 2010	Consider upgrades to Town ordinances to require progressive erosion control and stormwater management with new development projects
Solid Waste & Recycling	Ongoing	Continue to contract with private companies for waste disposal and recycling
Town Buildings	Ongoing	Support ongoing Town Hall maintenance; no improvements expected to be needed
Parks	2009	Work with the County to include Town priorities in the County's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (e.g. establishment of a regional trail, maintenance of Town Park, expansion of Happy Hollow Park)
Telecommunication Facilities	Ongoing	Support strategies for enhancing telecommunication capabilities
	2008 - 2010	Update standards for telecommunication (cell phone) towers in zoning ordinance (e.g. co-location requirements)
Power Plants/Transmission Lines	Ongoing	Continue to stay informed on plans by ATC for improvements to and location of power lines/transmission stations
Child Care Facilities	N/A	Future needs will be met by the private parties
Health Care Facilities	N/A	Existing and proposed medical facilities in nearby communities appear to meet needs
Schools	Ongoing	Work with the School Districts serving the Town on long-range planning issues
Library	N/A	Area libraries meet current and forecasted needs
Police	Ongoing	Services provided by County are expected to be adequate over the planning period
Fire and EMS	Ongoing	Continue to work with neighboring communities to provide these services
Cemeteries	2008 - 2010	Consider acquiring land to expand Town cemetery



## Chapter Six: Housing & Neighborhood Development

This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs aimed at providing an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the Town of Rock. It also provides standards for neighborhood and subdivision development where planned.

### HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT KEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- ◆ Work with property owners on various approaches to maintain and improve the housing stock in the Town.
- ◆ Establish developing siting standards where limited new homes are allowed in agricultural areas.

### Existing Housing Framework

This section describes the Town of Rock's housing stock characteristics. This section also provides projected housing demand information in Rock and describes housing development and rehabilitation programs available to residents. According to 2000 Census data, the 1,360 housing units in the Town were predominately single-family detached homes. Mobile homes units constituted a significant proportion of the Town's housing stock (31.5 percent). These were mainly located in the Rockvale and Jacobs Mobile Home Parks. Given the rural character of the Town, it is not surprising that there are no multi-family units.

**Figure 17: Housing Types, 2000**

Units per Structure	2000 Units	2000 Percent
Single Family	906	66.6
Two Family (Duplex)	26	1.9
Multi-Family	0	0
Mobile Home or Other	438	31.5

*Source: U.S. Census of Population & Housing, 2000*

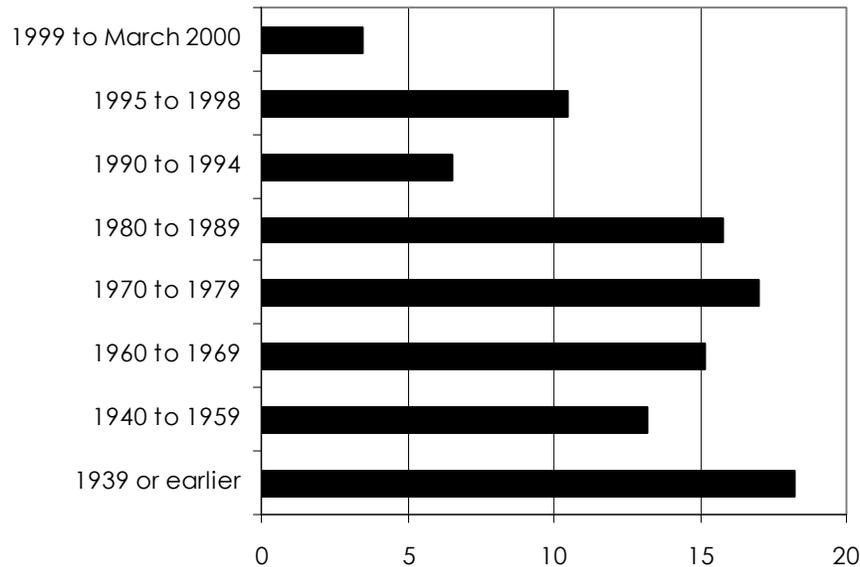
Figure 18 compares the Town's housing characteristics with the surrounding area, Rock County, Wisconsin, and the United States. The Town's owner occupancy rate was higher than neighboring cities and most of the surrounding towns. The Town of Rock's median home value in 2000 was higher than Rock County as a whole, but lower than most of the surrounding towns. Median rent is higher in the Town than in any of the surrounding communities.

**Figure 18: Housing Stock Characteristics, 2000**

	Total Housing Units	Percent Vacant	Percent Owner Occupied	Median Home Value in 2000	Average Assessed Value in 2005	Median Contract Rent in 2000
Town of Rock	1,358	4.0	89.5	\$113,900	\$137,165	\$629
Town of Janesville	1,206	5.7	91.1	\$163,000	\$227,319	\$595
Town of La Prairie	352	2.8	76.9	\$124,400	\$139,654	\$564
Town of Beloit	2,949	4.6	85.3	\$102,000	\$109,560	\$538
Town of Plymouth	454	2.9	88.9	\$132,300	\$144,523	\$454
City of Janesville	25,083	4.7	68.2	\$100,000	\$124,359	\$567
City of Beloit	14,253	6.3	61.9	\$68,200	\$79,664	\$509
City of Milton	2,129	4.5	65.1	\$106,000	\$129,150	\$518
Rock County	62,187	5.7	71.1	\$98,200	\$122,427	\$543
Wisconsin	2,321,144	10.2	68.4	\$112,200	\$161,565	\$540
United States	115,904,641	9.0	66.2	\$119,600	N/A	\$602

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

The age of a community's housing stock is sometimes used as a measure of the general condition of the community's housing supply. Figure 19 illustrates the age of the Town of Rock's housing stock based on the 2000 Census data. Rock has a diverse housing stock in terms of its age, with a fair amount of new construction in recent decades. About 15 percent of the current housing stock was built after 1990. About 30 percent of the Town's homes were built before 1960. During the 20 year planning period, owners of these older homes may be interested in rehabilitation.

**Figure 19: Age of Housing as a Percent of the Total 2000 Housing Stock**

### Neighborhood Development Patterns

Existing neighborhood development in the Town of Rock falls into two basic patterns:

- ◆ Older “side of the road” development on smaller lots in areas like Afton, along Avalon Road, and along River Road.
- ◆ Newer subdivisions with new roads and larger lots, such as Edgewater Estates and the subdivision between Eau Claire and Cemetery Roads.

### Housing and Neighborhood Development Programs

Throughout Rock County, several governmental, private and nonprofit agencies provide some form of assistance to meet the needs of individuals who lack adequate housing due to financial difficulties, disabilities, age, domestic violence situations, or drug abuse problems.

The following housing providers and programs are available to the Town and/or its residents:

- ◆ **Community Action Inc.** of Rock and Walworth Counties is a private, non-profit community service and developmental agency. Services focus on enabling residents to become or remain socially and financially self-sufficient and include emergency shelter for the homeless, assistance with weatherization, free health care services for women, and assistance with child care.
- ◆ **Rock County Habitat for Humanity**, located in the City of Janesville, is an ecumenical, Christian housing ministry that seeks to eliminate substandard housing worldwide, and make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Rock County Habitat works to develop homes sold for no profit on no-interest, 20-year mortgages to partner families who have completed their sweat equity hours.
- ◆ **Rock County Housing and Community Development Department** assists homebuyers with low or moderate incomes purchase and/or rehabilitate homes. The programs can provide loans of up to half of

the down payment and all closing costs for a home purchase, help with needed repairs, and reduce lead hazards on a purchased home.

- ◆ The **U.S. Veterans Administration** provides low-cost loans and other housing assistance to veterans in the County.
- ◆ Other housing programs available to Town residents include home mortgage and improvement loans from the **Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority** (WHEDA) and home repair grants for the elderly from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds down-payment assistance for homebuyers, rental rehabilitation, weatherization-related repairs, accessibility improvements, and rental housing development. The Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) funds activities such as emergency rental aid, homeless prevention efforts, and related housing initiatives. Further information on these programs can be obtained by contacting WHEDA.

Other agencies providing housing services in the County include religious institutions and social service agencies that provide housing services to persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, and seniors.

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## Housing and Neighborhood Development Goals, Objectives and Policies

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### **Goal:**

1. Encourage the provision of an adequate supply of safe, affordable housing and neighborhood environments for all Town residents.

### **Objectives:**

1. Encourage high quality construction and maintenance standards for housing.
2. Encourage home siting that will not result in property or environmental damage, or impair rural character or agricultural operations.
3. Support an adequate supply of housing with a range of housing choices, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups, and special needs.
4. Support efforts to rehabilitate housing in areas where current housing stock is deteriorating.
5. Encourage neighborhood designs and locations that protect residential areas from incompatible land uses, promote connectivity of road and environmental systems, and preserve rural character, and do not interfere with farming operations.

### **Policies:**

1. Plan for a sufficient supply of developable land for a range of different housing types, in areas consistent with Town land use goals, and of densities and types consistent with community service and utility availability. The recommended Future Land Use Map for the Town of Rock (Map 5) will more than accommodate expected housing demand over the 20 year planning period and beyond, within a variety of residential and rural land use designations.
2. Encourage high quality construction and maintenance standards for housing through:
  - ◆ Regulations designed to discourage incompatible uses (e.g. junk vehicle storage) out of residential areas.
  - ◆ Enforcement of Town property maintenance codes to address issues of basic house and lot maintenance.
  - ◆ Promote the use of programs and funds (e.g. Community Development Block Grant) to provide, maintain and rehabilitate housing for all income and age levels. Using CDBG funds, Rock County

- currently provides home purchase and rehabilitation assistance as well as lead hazard control projects.
3. Consider adoption of a subdivision ordinance to promote quality neighborhood design and layout in new residential areas, adhering to appropriate rural standards for roads and other infrastructure, and ensuring proper lot placement in new subdivisions.
  4. When reviewing new housing development proposals, encourage strategies to protect water quality and natural resources, particularly around environmental corridor areas along the Rock River and Bass Creek. Strategies should include techniques like stormwater basins and conveyance routes, rain gardens, landscaping, and other similar innovative techniques.
  5. Support the private market in developing affordable housing (low and moderate income) and housing for the elderly. Several State and federal programs and funding sources are available to assist private developers, Rock County, local governments, and residents meet housing objectives. Examples of these are described earlier in this Chapter.
  6. Direct new residential development to areas easily served by existing infrastructure – highways, streets, electric and gas distribution, and emergency and other services.
  7. Encourage infill residential development in existing vacant lots within existing developed areas.
  8. Promote the upgrading of existing mobile home parks in and near the Town and regulate expansion of mobile home parks. Consider more innovative approaches for modern, high quality manufactured housing.
  9. Encourage new residential development to follow conservation neighborhood design standards (described on next page).

### Housing and Neighborhood Development Recommendations and Programs

Building on the goals, objectives, and policies presented above, the following are strategies for ensuring safe and quality housing and neighborhood options in the Town of Rock:

#### **Promote High Quality Neighborhood Design**

In order to provide an adequate housing supply to meet existing and future needs, the Town endorses high-quality design and layout in all newly planned residential areas in the Town. This includes protecting environmental corridors during the land division and construction phase and providing safe and adequate road access. In areas where Map 5 shows new residential development (the areas designated as *Single Family-Exurban*) the Town supports the following design guidelines:

- ◆ Preserve open space, farmland, woodland, and natural features that define, sustain, and connect rural neighborhoods and enhance rural character.
- ◆ Promote rural character by “hiding” development from main roads through natural topography, vegetation, and setbacks. This could be accomplished by arranging lots behind trees, hills and ridges. Where such features are absent, the use of berms with natural plantings can also be effective.



*Housing can be designed to blend into the landscape and preserve the rural character of the Town.*

Another method would be to discourage the development of highly-visible “frontage lots” along roadways, as these have the greatest visual and traffic impacts. It should be noted, however, that while minimizing the visual impact of development, it is also critical to maintain safe fire access and appropriate road and driveway markings to ensure fast emergency response.

- ◆ Arrange individual homes in desirable locations, which should consider topography, privacy, and views of open space.
- ◆ Pay careful attention to on-site lighting, including specifications for type, height, brightness, and placement of new exterior lights. In particular, full cut-off or “shoe box” style lights should be used for new street lights along roadways. Homeowners should be encouraged to use low wattage or shielded yard lights if necessary for security.
- ◆ Use the road and possibly a trail network to connect homes to each other, connect streets to the existing road network, and connect the development to adjoining open space and/or nearby public lands. Emphasize the use of natural walking paths and trails.
- ◆ Promote logical placement of rural address signs and mailboxes to encourage visibility but minimize potential for damage.
- ◆ Incorporate greenspace into development areas, particularly to preserve natural resource or environmental features.
- ◆ Consider implementing maximum clearance allowances in wooded areas when development is proposed to ensure that the wooded character of the landscape is preserved.

### **Consider Establishing Development Siting Standards for Individual Homes**

The Town allows only a limited number of home sites in areas planned and zoned for agricultural use. The Town will consider establishing the following development siting standards for the placement of all new homes within mapped *Agricultural Preservation Areas* (see Map 5), and will consider zoning ordinance amendments to fully implement them. Through such zoning ordinance amendments, the Town may require that individuals wishing to construct such new homes first submit and obtain Town approval of a site plan showing the proposed placement of building(s) and driveway(s) on the land, and their relationship to natural features and farmland. A building permit would then be issued only after site plan approval was obtained. Recommended siting standards are listed below; many of the following standards are illustrated in Figure 20.

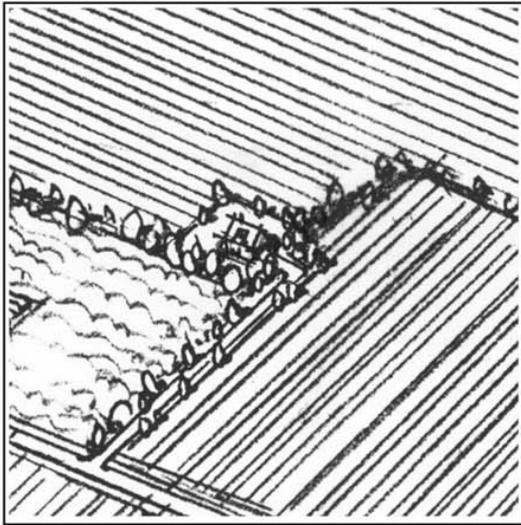


*Vegetation and topography can “hide” development.*

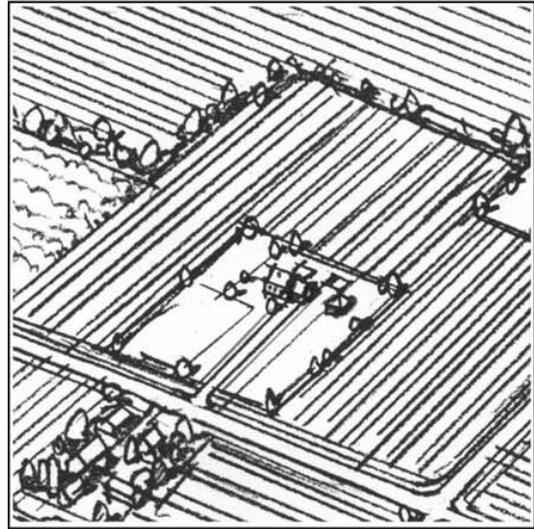
- ◆ Before laying out the lot, identify and map areas potentially worthy of preservation, including woodlots, wetlands, stream banks, lakeshore riparian areas, floodplains, hydric soils, soils with low or very low potential for dwellings with basements, slopes greater than 12 percent, and slopes greater than 20 percent. A sample site assessment checklist is provided in Chapter Two: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources.
- ◆ The maximum buildable area for home siting should be three acres, except where the Town Board determines that buildable areas outside of this range are required given unusual site conditions or to fulfill the goals of this *Plan*.

- ◆ New buildings, streets, and driveways should not be developed on soils classified as Class I or II as shown on Map 2 of this *Plan*, or ideally not within a mapped Environmental Corridor shown on Map 5, unless all soils on the ownership parcel are so classified or unless those maps are demonstrated to contain inaccuracies. In the case of such total restrictions, the Town will work with the property owner to determine the area of the property that if developed would have the least impact on farmland and/or natural areas.
- ◆ Buildings should be sited to minimize visibility from public roads through proper placement with respect to existing vegetation and topographic changes, retention of existing vegetation and topography, and/or planting of new vegetation or berming.
- ◆ New buildings and driveways should be located adjacent to tree lines where available and at the edge of open fields rather than the middle.
- ◆ Existing vegetation, stone rows, fence lines, and tree lines should be preserved and vegetative buffers should be provided between building sites and wetlands and streams.
- ◆ Any new streets or driveways should be placed along existing contours, property lines, fencerows, lines of existing vegetation, or other natural features wherever possible.
- ◆ Where existing vegetation and changes in topography would not adequately screen the development from public roads, and new plantings would be insufficient, the developer should consider arranging development sites in a pattern resembling historic farm building placements (e.g., a group of houses set back from the road, tree lined single drive or street, fence rows).
- ◆ Attempt to “hide” development from main roads to the extent possible through natural topography, vegetation (e.g., tree lines, wooded edges), and setbacks. Minimize placement of lots in open fields.
- ◆ Homes should be sited in such a manner to minimize the potential for incompatibilities with pre-existing uses on both (a) the remainder of the parcel from which the development is proposed and (b) adjoining parcels. These include uses such as agriculture and other business operations. The Town may require that new homes be set back a minimum distance from such uses, or from particular components of such uses, such as animal confinement or loading areas.

**Figure 20: Conceptual Individual House Siting**



*Example of good house siting*



*Example of poor home siting*

## Chapter Seven: Economic Development

This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to promote the retention and stabilization of the economic base in the Town of Rock.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- ◆ Continue to support farming and related businesses as a cornerstone to the Town of Rock's economy.
- ◆ Promote the establishment of additional small-scale businesses in Afton.
- ◆ Direct larger-scale commercial and industrial development to the Highway 51 and Townline Road areas (see Map 5).
- ◆ Pursue incentives, regulations, and design standards to promote high-quality economic development and redevelopment.

### Existing Economic Development Framework

This section details labor force trends, educational attainment, employment forecasts, income data and other economic development characteristics of the Town. The economic base within the Town primarily consists of agriculture, contractors, and other small service businesses.

#### **Labor Force Trends**

The Town's labor force is the portion of the population employed or available for work and includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment. In the Town of Rock, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, this included 2,019 people, or 73.6 percent of the Town's population age 16 or older. Of this population, 145, or just over 5 percent were unemployed. The percentage of unemployed workers in the Town was about the same as the state (5.2 percent) and higher than Rock County (3.9 percent). The percentage of the Town's labor force employed by sector in 2000 is shown in Figure 21. Manufacturing is the dominant sector, encompassing 36.2 percent of the labor force. Most of these jobs are located in Janesville and Beloit. Another 13.9 percent is in the educational, health, and social services sector. Retail trade significantly decreased between 1990 and 2000, while arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service showed significant increase.

Employment projections for the Town are not available. Rock County employment projections were provided by Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., a regional economic and demographics analysis firm. These data predict the County's total employment to grow approximately 28 percent by the year 2030. Over this time period, the most significant increase in jobs is projected to be in the service sector (43 percent). By 2030, the percentage of employees working on farms is projected to decrease by 4 percent.

**Figure 21: Town of Rock Labor Force by Industry Group, 1990 & 2000**

Industry Group	% of Labor Force (1990)	% of Labor Force (2000)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.9	2.9
Construction	4.6	5.3
Manufacturing	35.8	36.2
Wholesale trade	3.3	3.6
Retail trade	19.2	9.0
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.4	8.2
Information	N/A	2.8
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	1.7	0.5
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	3.8	3.3
Educational, health and social services	12.2	13.9
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	0.7	8.4
Other services (except public administration)	5.9	4.6
Public administration	1.3	1.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000

### **Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment is another characteristic of a community's labor force. According to the 2000 Census, more than 74 percent of the Town's population age 25 and older had attained a high school level education or higher. Approximately 5 percent of this same population had attained a college level education (bachelor's degree or higher). This is quite low compared to nearby communities.

**Figure 22: Educational Attainment, 2000**

	High School Graduates (%)	Bachelor's Degree or Higher (%)
Town of Rock	74.6	5.1
Town of La Prairie	83.1	10.2
Town of Janesville	85.3	21.3
Town of Beloit	84.8	11.5
Town of Plymouth	87.4	10.9
City of Janesville	87.0	18.9
City of Beloit	75.6	13.5
City of Rockford	77.8	19.8
Rock County	83.9	16.7
Wisconsin	88.8	25.0
United States	84.2	27.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

### **Income Data**

According to 2000 Census data, the 1999 median household income in the Town of Rock was \$46,151. Over 23.6 percent of households reported an income between \$35,000 and \$49,999, with the next highest percentage of Town households (21.8 percent) earning from \$50,000 to \$74,999. Figure 23 compares the Town's median household income and per capita income with neighboring communities.

**Figure 23: Income Characteristics, 2000**

	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
Town of Rock	\$46,151	\$20,635
Town of La Prairie	\$52,813	\$22,108
Town of Janesville	\$68,567	\$25,656
Town of Beloit	\$47,907	\$21,874
Town of Plymouth	\$57,969	\$23,082
City of Janesville	\$45,961	\$22,224
City of Beloit	\$36,414	\$16,912
City of Rockford	\$37,667	\$19,781
Rock County	\$45,517	\$20,895
Wisconsin	\$58,647	\$24,761
United States	\$55,832	\$25,305

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000*

### **Commuting Patterns**

According to the U.S. Census, 86 percent of workers in the Town of Rock commute to work alone in a personal vehicle. About 8 percent carpool to work, and less than 1 percent use public transportation or non-vehicular means. The mean travel time to work was about 19 minutes, which is relatively low and suggests that most commuting is to Janesville or Beloit.

Of the 16,787 Rock County workers commuting to places outside the County, 30 percent (5,021 workers) commute to Dane County to the northeast. Winnebago County, IL and Walworth County are the second and third most common workplace destinations, drawing 29 and 14 percent of the commuting workforce respectively (4,871 and 2,383 workers). The fourth most common workplace destination was Jefferson County with approximately 8 percent of commuters or 1,262 workers. Nearly 2,250 Rock County workers commute to one of the other nearby counties: Green, McHenry, IL, Boone, IL, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Cook, IL, and Racine. In contrast, about 10,106 workers commute into Rock County for employment.

### **Location of Economic Development Activity**

Map 4 shows the location of current economic development activity in the Town of Rock. These areas are generally shown as the *Commercial* and *General Industrial* land use categories on the map.

### **Environmentally Contaminated Sites**

The Wisconsin DNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Programs maintain a list of contaminated sites, or "brownfields," in the State. The DNR defines brownfields as "abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or

perceived contamination.” Examples of brownfields might include a large abandoned industrial site or a small corner gas station. Properties listed in the DNR database are self-reported, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing of possible brownfields in a community.

As of July 2007, there was one site in the Town listed in DNR’s system. There are three types of sites listed in the database: Spills, Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, and Environmental Repair Sites. The single listing for the Town of Rock was a spill site at Hanover and Johnson Roads in 2002.

Brownfield redevelopment programs seek to return abandoned or underused industrial and/or commercial sites to active use through cleaning up environmental contamination and encouraging redevelopment of the sites. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce and DNR work together to administer a grant program that funds brownfields cleanup. This program provides funds for environmental studies that determine the nature and extent of contamination as well as for the actual remediation of contaminated sites. More information on the requirements a community must meet to receive these grants is available through the Department of Commerce and DNR.

### **Economic Development Programs and Agencies**

The following list provides information on programs designed to stimulate economic development:

- ◆ The **Janesville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau** is a private non-profit organization that promotes the amenities, attractions, and events of Janesville to convention attendees, motorcoach tourists, and other travelers in the area.
- ◆ **Rock County Development Alliance** is a group of economic development professionals and related organizations working within Rock County to implement a cooperative marketing and branding campaign. Working cooperatively is an attempt to maximize resources, leverage countywide and regional opportunities. One of the early successes of the Alliance was the preparation of marketing materials – including a flier highlighting the assets and competitive advantages of the Rock County communities. The group also maintains a web-page and will attend trade shows and call trips. The promotional campaign is targeting the following industries: business services, food processing, industrial machinery automation, logistics, plastics, transportation equipment.
- ◆ **Rock County Economic Development Agency** offers direct support and referrals for various business services including planning, financing, locating, operations, and regulations.
- ◆ The State’s **Community Based Economic Development Program (CBED)** provides funding assistance to local governments and community-based organizations that undertake planning, development and technical assistance projects that support business development. Any Wisconsin municipality or community-based organization is eligible to apply for funding. Funds are available on an annual basis through a competitive application process. Application materials are available from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.
- ◆ The **U.S. Small Business Administration’s Certified Development Company (504) Loan Program** provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. 504 loans can be used to fund land purchases and improvements, grading, street improvements, utilities, parking lots and landscaping, construction of new facilities, or modernizing, renovating or converting existing facilities.
- ◆ The **Wisconsin Department of Commerce** administers several financial assistance programs to communities to promote economic development by linking them to applicable programs within the Department of Commerce or other agencies.
- ◆ The **State Infrastructure Bank Program** is administered through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to provide revolving loans used by communities for transportation infrastructure im-

provements to preserve, promote, and encourage economic development and transportation efficiency, safety, and mobility.

### **Assessment of Desired Economic Development Focus**

The Wisconsin comprehensive planning statute requires that this *Plan* “assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local government unit.” Figure 24 considers strengths and weaknesses for economic development in the Town of Rock. Based on these strengths and weaknesses, the Town’s desired economic focus is reflected in the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations below.

**Figure 24: Town of Rock Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Access to highway/interstate network</li> <li>◆ Proximity to larger metropolitan areas</li> <li>◆ Access to raw materials (e.g. farm products)</li> <li>◆ Close to existing industrial parks</li> <li>◆ Heavy auto traffic between Janesville and Beloit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Lack of water and sewer services in most of the Town</li> <li>◆ Nearby cities more attractive for economic development</li> <li>◆ Smaller population base</li> <li>◆ Inability to provide significant financial incentives</li> <li>◆ Worn appearance of Highway 51 commercial area</li> </ul>

### **Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies**

#### **Goal:**

1. Encourage economic development opportunities appropriate to the Town’s resources, character, and service levels.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Focus economic development efforts on farming and farm-related businesses, small neighborhood-oriented businesses in Afton, and larger-scale commercial and industrial development in the Highway 51 and Townline Road areas.
2. Allow home-based businesses where there will be no impact on surrounding properties.
3. Accommodate high quality employment opportunities in areas planned for commercial and industrial uses on Map 5.
4. Work with adjacent and overlapping governments and agencies to bring more economic development to the area.

#### **Policies:**

1. Plan for a sufficient supply of developable land for commercial and industrial uses, in areas consistent with the future land uses of Local Commercial, Large-Scale Commercial, Light Industrial, and General Industrial shown on Map 5.
2. Promote higher quality design for new economic development projects in the areas of building quality, landscaping, lighting, and signage.
3. Support the economic health of production agriculture in the Town of Rock.

4. Discourage unplanned, continuous strip commercial development along Highway 51.
5. Support opportunities for farm family businesses, home occupations, and agriculturally-related businesses to assist farm families.
6. Encourage businesses that are related to farming, including home occupations and “cottage industries” that are compatible with the rural nature of the area.
7. Investigate incentives for economic development and redevelopment in the Highway 51 and Townline Road areas, especially the possible provision of sanitary sewer to more properties.
8. Encourage a thoughtful mix of compatible residential, community-serving commercial, civic, and recreational uses in the Afton area.
9. Work with private landowners to clean up contaminated, vacant, and run-down sites and buildings that threaten the public health, safety, and welfare.
10. Attempt to capitalize on the location of the airport for airport-related businesses.
11. Direct most heavy industrial and commercial uses requiring urban services to the City of Janesville.
12. Promote the careful placement and design of future mineral extraction sites, wireless telecommunication facilities, and other uses that may have a significant visual, environmental, or neighboring property owner impacts. When reviewing applications for non-metallic mineral extraction sites, refer to the standards listed in the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Chapter.

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### **Economic Development Recommendations and Programs**

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To build on the goals, objectives, and policies outlined in the previous section, the Town intends to pursue the following directions.

#### **Support the Economic Health of Agriculture in the Town**

The Town will support the economic health of production agriculture in the Town. The Town also encourages the exploration of “non-traditional” forms of agriculture, such as vegetable, fruit and nut farms, and other small-acreage farms; grazing; research farming; community-supported agriculture; equine centers; businesses supporting hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities; and production of specialty products such as pheasants which are currently raised in the Town. See the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter for detailed recommendations.

#### **Encourage Businesses that are Related to Farming and Recreation**

These uses, including home occupations and “cottage industries”, are particularly appropriate in rural areas to supplement household income (e.g., farm families). Home-based businesses and services range from those who supplement their income by selling a craft item or repairing a lawnmower to those who are employed by a company, but do most of their work from a home office (commonly called telecommuters). Two major trends have attributed to the rise of home occupations: the increased use of the personal computer and the re-structuring of the corporate workforce (e.g., downsizing, out-sourcing, and “satellite” offices). The Town will consider amending its zoning regulations to accommodate the operation of home businesses and services, and specify appropriate standards to avoid conflicts.

#### **Support the Expansion of Business Activity in Afton**

Afton currently serves as a community gathering place near the center of the Town for meetings, dining, and recreation. The Town intends to promote Afton as the “Town center”, with a mix of residential, business, recreation, and civic uses. Potential uses that foster the Town center idea and capitalize on traffic from High-

way 51 include homes, coffee shop or restaurant, convenience store, and gas station. See the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter for detailed recommendations.

### **Promote the Redevelopment of Certain Sites**

The Town of Rock has a number of sites in need of redevelopment, particularly along Highway 51. Over the planning period the Town intends to promote improvements to these properties including:

- ◆ Ensuring that the property has the appropriate zoning designation
- ◆ Exploring options for sanitary sewer service, as discussed in Chapter Five: Utilities and Community Facilities
- ◆ Exploring possible incentives available to towns including tax incremental financing (TIF)

#### **WHAT IS TAX INCREMENTAL FINANCE?**

Wisconsin's Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) program, first approved by the legislature in 1975, was designed to provide a way for a city or village to promote tax base expansion through its own initiative and effort.

Effective October 1, 2004 towns became eligible to create limited types of TIF districts. Town projects aimed at agricultural, forestry, manufacturing or tourism improvements that would otherwise not have been initiated due to limited funds now may be assisted through the creation of a TIF district.

### **Develop and Implement Design Guidelines for New Development Along Highway 51**

Highway 51 serves as the main thoroughfare through the Town and provides many residents and visitors with their first and lasting impression. Intersections between Highway 51 and roads like Townline Road and Highway 11, serve as gateways to the Town. Lands along Highway 51 in the Town are generally planned for future commercial and industrial use, as depicted on Map 5: Future Land Use. To enhance the image and property values in the Town, future development proposals along Highway 51 should be consistent with this Plan and the design standards and graphics that follow: The Town may incorporate or refer to these design standards into the Town's zoning ordinance, and require Town site plan approval for all new and expanded commercial and industrial development projects before a building permit is issued.

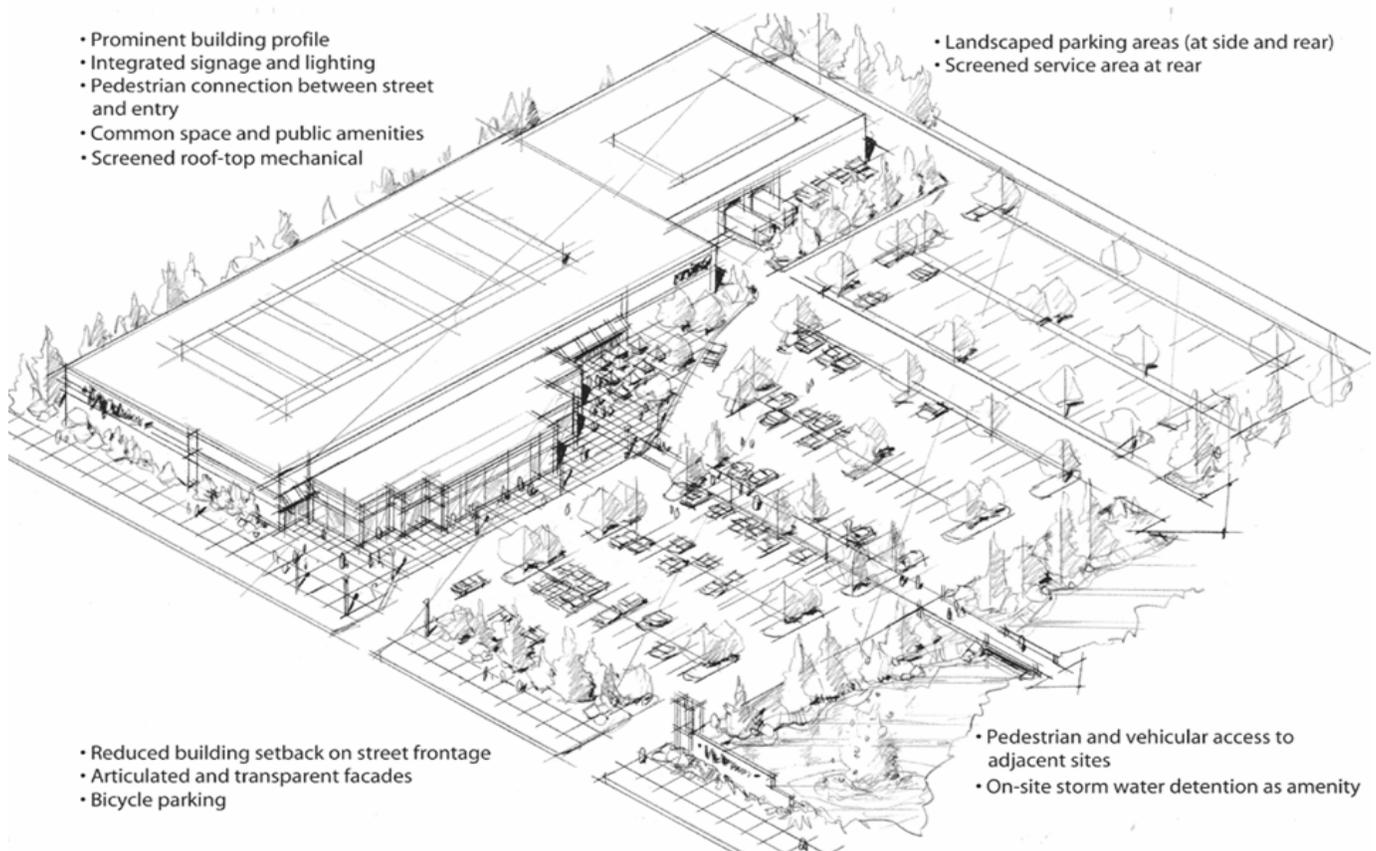
- ◆ *Quality Building Design.* New commercial and industrial development should follow the recommended building and site layout design guidelines presented in the graphics that follow. In particular, new buildings with attractive facades should be encouraged to face and be relatively close to the highway, while still respecting appropriate setbacks. Large-scale development should incorporate architectural design, building materials, and exterior color that enhance the overall image of the corridor.
- ◆ *Sign Control Measures.* A highway corridor cluttered with signs can detract from the natural landscape and the overall image of the Town. The Town will work through potential zoning ordinance changes and with business owners to control the number, height and setback of signage allowed in this corridor as well as removal and replacement of old or abandoned signs where possible.
- ◆ *Landscaping.* Significant amounts of landscaping should be encouraged in all new developed parcels along the corridor. Landscaping should be encouraged around building foundations, in and around paved areas, around areas where screening is appropriate, and in a buffer area between the building and highway. Landscaping materials should be of adequate size to ensure both a high degree of survivability and immediate visual effectiveness. Native plantings that blend into the



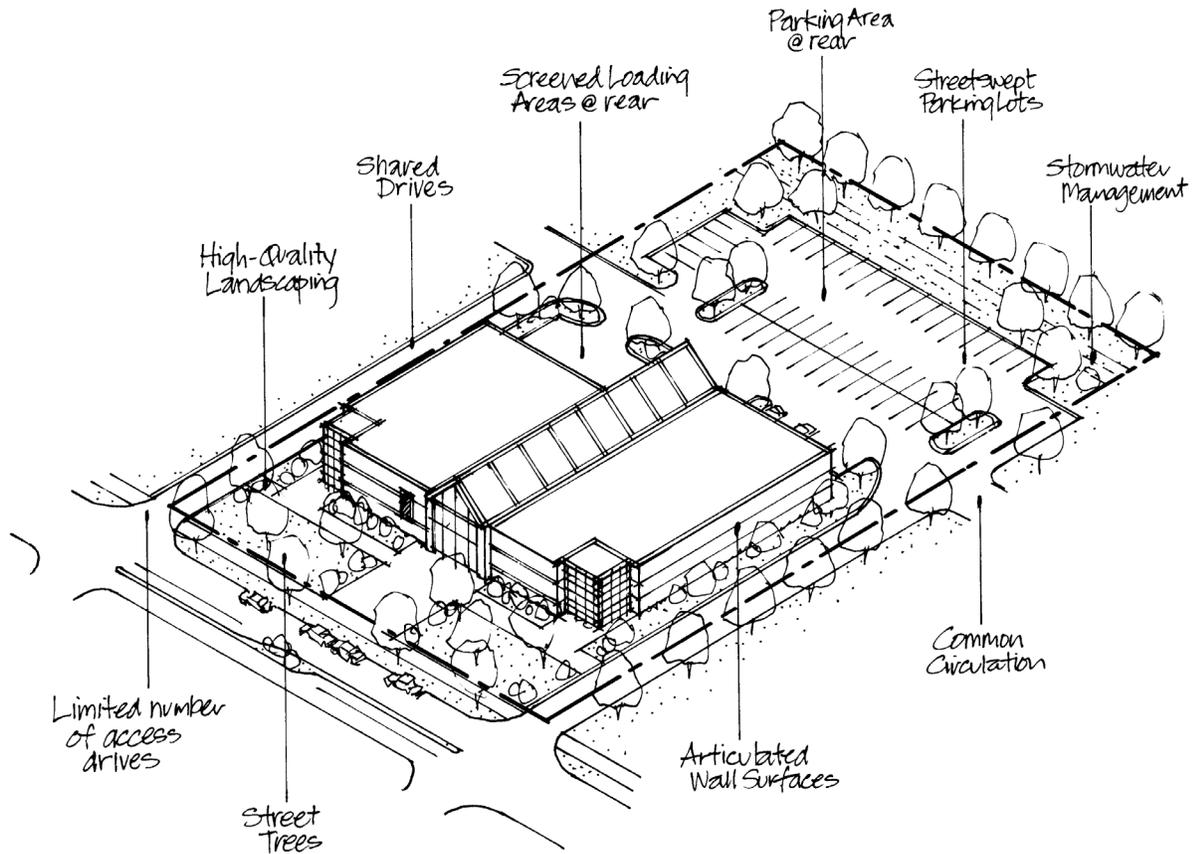
Town of Rock’s current mix of vegetation cover should be encouraged.

- ◆ *Lighting.* Inappropriately high lighting levels can have negative impacts on traffic safety, surrounding properties, and the area’s dark sky. The Town supports careful attention to on-site lighting that would include specifications for type, height, brightness, and placement of new exterior lights. In particular, full cut-off or “shoe box” style lights, similar to the photo on the right, should be used in the corridor.

**Figure 25: Desired New Commercial Development Layout**



**Figure 26: Desired New Industrial Development Layout**





## Chapter Eight: Intergovernmental Cooperation

This chapter of the *Plan* contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs for joint planning and decision making between the Town of Rock and other jurisdictions. It also incorporates by reference all plans and agreements to which the Town is a party. Most notably, in 1996 the Town entered a state-authorized “cooperative plan” with the City of Janesville, which will remain in effect through 2016.

### Existing Regional Framework

The following are other local and State jurisdictions operating within or adjacent to the Town:

#### **Town of Janesville**

The Town of Janesville is located north of the Town of Rock. The Town’s population was 3,048 in 2000, a 2.3 percent decrease since 1990. The Town is working with Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency to complete its comprehensive plan.

#### **Town of Plymouth**

The Town of Plymouth is located west of the Town of Rock. The Town’s population was 1,270 in 2000, a 6.8 percent increase since 1990. The Town recently completed its comprehensive plan.

#### **Town of La Prairie**

The Town of La Prairie is located east of the Town of Rock. The Town’s population was 929 in 2000, a 1.5 percent decrease since 1990. The Town is working with Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency to complete its comprehensive plan. The Town of La Prairie, Town of Rock, and City of Janesville were parties to a 1992 agreement on the proposed STH 11 bypass. The 1992 agreement secured mutual support of the Highway 11 bypass.

#### **Town of Beloit**

The Town of Beloit is located south of the Town of Rock. The Town of Beloit’s population was 7,038 in 2000, a 3.8 percent increase since 1990. The Town’s 1997 Master Plan proposes industrial land uses near the Rock River and rural residential uses between CTH D and Walters Road adjacent to the Town of Rock. The Town is currently updating its master plan. In updating its plan, the Town is taking an approach of looking at different parts of the Town on a district-by-district basis. At the time of writing, the Town was preparing a neighborhood development plan for an area between Afton Road and the Rock River, north of Big Hill Park. The Town was also commencing a park and open space system plan.

The Town provides a variety of services to its residents including law enforcement and protection, fire protection, emergency medical services, and portions of the Town are serviced by sanitary sewer district. The Town also has its own zoning and subdivision regulations.

#### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**

- ◆ Continue to work with the City of Janesville on issues of mutual interest and concern, including possible extension and adjustment of the current cooperative boundary plan.
- ◆ Work with Rock County on issues such as airport improvements and zoning, park and trail improvements, land use planning and regulation, and highways.
- ◆ Discuss issues of interest and concern with the Town of Beloit, including land use compatibility and the potential for additional sewer connections.

### **City of Janesville**

The City of Janesville is located northeast of the Town. The City's population was 60,200 in 2000, a 15.3 percent increase since 1990. The City is also working with Vandewalle & Associates to complete its comprehensive plan. At the time this *Plan* was drafted, the City was preparing its future land use map.

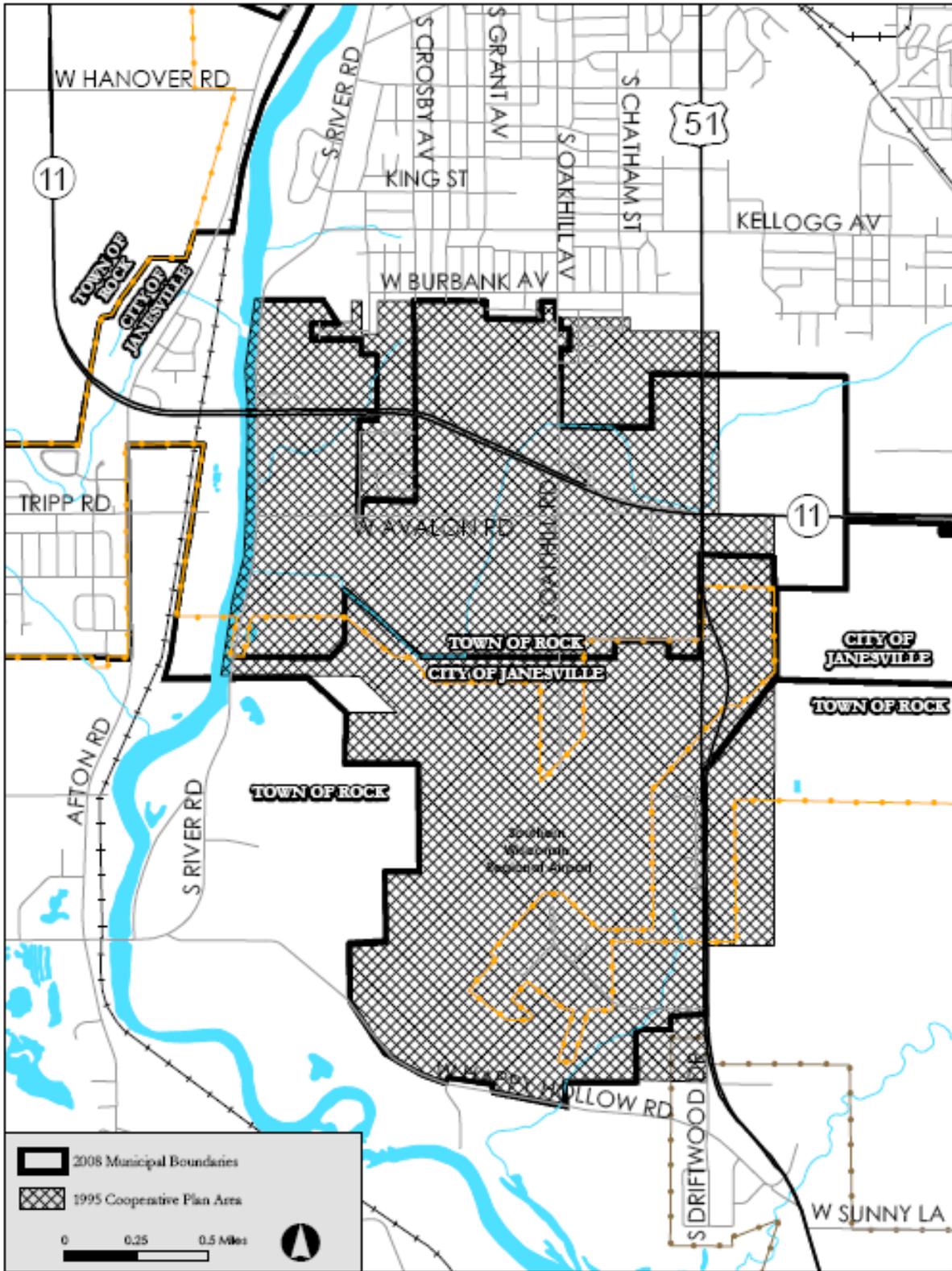
The City and the Town of Rock prepared a cooperative (boundary) plan in 1996 that pertains to approximately 4.17 square miles, depicted in Figure 27, encompassing the Rock County Airport, and developable lands lying between the southern border of the city, the Rock River, and both sides of Highway 51. The boundary plan was a result of the Town of La Prairie, Town of Rock, and City of Janesville agreement on the STH 11 bypass developed in 1992. The 1992 agreement secured mutual support of the proposed Highway 11 bypass, the provision of municipal services to town properties, and addresses the direction and pace of attachment of lands. Key provisions of the 1996 boundary plan as they relate to lands that are presently in the Town of Rock, mainly north of the airport, include the following:

- ◆ Annexation of the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport on June 30, 2007 (completed);
- ◆ Optional annexation of the Jacobs Mobile Home park on or after June 30, 2003 if the owner requests and is supplied with City sewer and/or water service (completed);
- ◆ Other developed residential properties may be annexed after 2006 if the property owner requests and is supplied with City sewer and/or water service;
- ◆ Other developed non-residential properties may be annexed as soon as possible if the property owner requests and is supplied with City sewer and/or water service;
- ◆ Undeveloped properties may be annexed as soon as possible if the property owner requests and is supplied with City sewer and/or water service; undeveloped properties contiguous to the City must be annexed before such services are provided; and
- ◆ The potential for annexation for undeveloped or developed properties not supplied with sewer and water service is limited.

#### **KEY SURVEY RESULTS**

70% of respondents agreed that the Town should seek and continue agreements with neighboring communities.

Figure 27: Cooperation Plan Area Boundary



**City of Beloit**

The City of Beloit is located south of the Town at the Wisconsin-Illinois border. While the City experienced a very small population increase from 1990 and 2000 (35,571 to 35,775), population growth appeared to increase during the early 2000s based on the State's 2005 population estimate of 36,106. The City recently completed its comprehensive plan. As described in the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter of this *Plan*, the City of Beloit's plan explores options for positioning Beloit as a center of sustainability and the "new uses" economy including the development of an alternative fuel and/or bio-products production facility. The City will also continue to be an attractive home for industries processing agricultural products for food. The Town is positioned to provide raw materials for both of these initiatives. Additionally, the Town intends to coordinate with neighboring communities including the City of Beloit on the development of a recreational path from the City of Janesville through the Town to Big Hill Park in the City of Beloit.

**City of Rockford**

The City of Rockford is located south of the Town in Illinois. The City's population was 150,115 in 2000, a 7.7 percent increase since 1990.

**Rock County**

At the time of writing, Rock County was in the process of preparing a comprehensive plan meeting the State's comprehensive planning legislation. The primary purposes of the plan are to generate goals for attaining a desirable development pattern and to devise strategies and recommendations the County can follow to achieve its desired development pattern. County staff is also assisting in preparing nine town comprehensive plans, including those for towns that abut Rock.

The Town of Rock participated in the County's 2005 Agricultural Preservation Plan update. This plan serves as a tool to preserve and protect agricultural areas. It is intended to promote "smart growth" while protecting Rock County's rural landscape from sprawl and the negative effects caused by scattered development.

The Rock County Land Conservation Department is located in the USDA Service Center on Highway 14, east of Janesville, between County Highways A and MM. Aside from the airport administration, all other relevant County offices are located in downtown Janesville.

**Important State Agency Jurisdictions**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Southwest Region office in Madison serves Janesville and all of Rock County. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides service to the Janesville area primarily out of its branch office on Morris Street.

**School Districts**

The eastern portion of the Town of Rock is located within the Janesville School District and the far western portion is within the Parkview School District. These district boundaries are shown on Map 1 and the School Districts are described in the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter of this *Plan*.

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## Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Policies

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**Goal:**

1. Forward mutually beneficial intergovernmental relations with neighboring governments, including neighboring towns, Janesville and other nearby cities, Rock County, and the school districts that serve the Town.

**Objectives:**

1. Work with surrounding local governments, Rock County, local school districts, and State agencies on land use, natural resource, transportation and community development issues of mutual concern.

2. Cooperate with neighboring governments, school districts, Rock County and State agencies on providing shared services and planning for future public facility and service needs where appropriate.
3. Participate in County-level economic development efforts.
4. Encourage a land use pattern that compliments land use objectives of nearby communities.

### **Policies:**

1. Provide copies of this *Comprehensive Plan* and future amendments to surrounding and overlapping governments.
2. Cooperate with other units of government, including the County and WisDNR on the preservation and sensible use of natural resources and on recreational initiatives (as discussed in greater detail in the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources and Utilities and Community Facilities chapters).
3. Work with the County Highway Department and WisDOT in maintaining and improving the Town's transportation system (as discussed in detail in Chapter Four: Transportation).
4. Continue intergovernmental and shared service agreements for public facilities and services and consider additional joint services and facilities where consolidating, coordinating, or sharing services or facilities will result in better services or cost savings.
5. Work with surrounding communities and agencies like the Rock County Economic Development Agency to help advance the economic viability of the agriculture and business economies of the area.
6. Stay informed on activities of the School Districts that serve the Town to ensure the Town has the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect Town residents, such as building improvements, tax issues, and transportation.
7. Cooperate with neighboring communities and other units of government to minimize intergovernmental conflict and ensure that the policies and recommendations of this *Plan* are implemented. If conflicts emerge, the process to resolve conflicts should begin with intergovernmental discussions.

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## **Intergovernmental Cooperation Recommendations and Programs**

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Intergovernmental communication, coordination, and cooperation are critical in implementing many of the recommendations in this *Plan*. This section attempts to coordinate recommendations for adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions, avoid inefficient or conflicting development patterns, and promote intergovernmental cooperation.

The State comprehensive planning law requires that this *Plan* identify existing and potential conflicts between the Town and other governmental units, and describe processes to resolve such conflicts. This planning process has been designed to avoid and minimize potential conflicts, yet some still exist. The following subsections address remaining or potential conflicts areas and potential resolution processes.

### **City of Janesville**

The City of Janesville and the Town of Rock have enjoyed a successful cooperative plan and a good working relationship since 1995. The cooperative plan is set to expire in 2015. The Town of Rock supports updating the plan to reflect changing conditions and community plans. An updated plan could address topics including:

- ◆ Treatment of the remainder of the 1995 plan area boundary that has not been attached to the City; and
- ◆ Future land use and jurisdiction of the area east of Highway 51, north of Sunny Lane, and south of Highway 11 and the lands in the Highway 11 corridor west of the Rock River identified as Urban Agricultural Transition Area on Map 5: Future Land Use.

Such discussion should begin by 2013, if not before, to allow all options to be explored before 2015.

### **Town of Beloit**

The Town of Rock supports working with the Town of Beloit on the following initiatives over the planning period.

- ◆ Land uses near the two Towns' common border will have a direct impact on each community. The Town supports coordinating land use plans along Townline Road to encourage compatibility. Additionally, the fairly intensive development that is planned in the Town of Beloit could have an impact on Town of Rock roads.
- ◆ Map 5: Future Land Use identifies the potential for industrial, commercial, and higher density residential uses in the southeast area of the Town. The Town of Rock would like to explore the possibility of extending Town of Beloit sanitary sewer service to this area.

### **Other Neighboring Towns**

The Towns of Janesville and La Prairie have not yet prepared future land use maps as part of the comprehensive planning process. Larger-scale residential or non-residential developments could significantly impact Rock's roads or rural character. Therefore, Rock's Planning and Zoning Committee will attempt to meet with the Towns of Janesville's and La Prairie's Plan Commission or other Town leaders after land use plans are prepared to share concerns about possible future conflicts.

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## Chapter Nine: Implementation

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Few of the recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan* will be automatically implemented. Specific follow-up actions will be required for the *Plan* to become reality. This final chapter is intended to provide the Town of Rock with a roadmap for these implementation actions.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- ◆ Consider upgrades to the Town zoning ordinance and adoption of a Town subdivision ordinance to more effectively implement this *Comprehensive Plan*.
- ◆ Regularly refer to this *Plan* when making decisions on development requests, Town budgeting, and other important decisions.

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### Plan Adoption

A first step in implementing the 2008 *Town of Rock Comprehensive Plan* is making sure that it is adopted in a manner which supports its future use for more detailed decision making. The Town included all necessary elements for this *Plan* to be adopted under the state's comprehensive planning statute. Section 66.1001(4), Wisconsin Statutes, establishes the procedures for the adoption of a comprehensive plan. The Town followed this process in adopting this *Plan*.

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### Plan Administration

This *Plan* will largely be implemented through an on-going series of individual decisions about zoning, land division, public investments, and intergovernmental relations. The Town of Rock intends to use this *Plan* to inform such decisions under the following guidelines:

#### **Zoning**

Proposed zoning map amendments (rezonings), other actions under the Town's zoning ordinance, and Town recommendations on land divisions should be consistent with the recommendations of this *Plan*. Specifically, the Future Land Use map should be used to guide the application of the general pattern of permanent zoning. However, the precise location of zoning district boundaries may vary, as judged appropriate by the Planning and Zoning Committee and Town Board. Departures from the exact land use boundaries depicted on the Future Land Use map may be particularly appropriate for projects involving a mix of land uses and/or development types, properties split by zoning districts, and/or properties located at or near the edges of future land use areas. In their consideration of rezonings, site plans, land divisions, and conditional use permits, the Planning and Zoning Committee and Town Board will also evaluate the specific timing of the request, its relationship to the nature of both existing and planned future land uses, and the details of the proposed development. Therefore, this *Plan* allows for Town discretion in the timing of rezoning, site plan, land division, and conditional use permit actions, and in the refinement of the precise recommended land use boundaries through the rezoning, site plan review, conditional use, and land division processes.

#### **Land Division**

The Town currently does not administer its own subdivision ordinance. The Town may consider adopting a subdivision ordinance over the planning period.

#### **Public Investments**

Proposed public investment decisions will be guided by the recommendations of this *Plan*. However, the timing and precise location of public investments may vary, as judged appropriate by the Town Board. This *Plan*

allows for the timing and the refinement of the precise recommended public facilities and other public investments as deemed appropriate by the Planning and Zoning Committee and Town Board.

### **Intergovernmental Relations**

Proposed intergovernmental relations decisions, including new and extended intergovernmental agreements, will be guided by the recommendations of this *Plan*, as deemed appropriate by the Planning and Zoning Committee and Town Board. However, in their consideration of intergovernmental decisions and agreements, the Planning and Zoning Committee and Town Board will also evaluate a wide variety of other factors, including specific provisions of the recommended agreements. Departures from the recommendations of this *Plan* shall be resolved by the Town Board through the intergovernmental process.

## **Implementation Recommendations**

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Figure 28 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the Town intends to complete to implement the *Comprehensive Plan*. Often, such actions will require substantial cooperation with others, including county government and local property owners. The table has three different columns of information, described as follows:

- ◆ **Category:** The list of recommendations is divided into six different categories—loosely based on the different chapters of this *Plan*.
- ◆ **Recommendation:** The second column lists the actual steps, strategies, and actions recommended to implement key aspects of the *Comprehensive Plan*. The recommendations are for Town actions, recognizing that many of these actions may not occur without cooperation from others.
- ◆ **Implementation Timeframe:** The third column responds to the state comprehensive planning statute, which requires implementation actions to be listed in a “stated sequence.” The suggested timeframe for the completion of each recommendation reflects the priority attached to the recommendation. Suggested implementation timeframes span the next 10 years, because the *Plan* will have to be updated by 2018.

**Figure 28: Implementation Strategies Timetable**

Category	Program/Recommended Action	Implementation Timeframe
Ordinances	<p>Consider modifying the Town's zoning ordinance and consider a Town land division ordinance or other new related ordinances to implement the goals, objectives, and recommendations in this <i>Plan</i>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Require progressive stormwater management and erosion control.</li> <li>◆ Require completion and evaluation of a site assessment checklist for preliminary subdivision plats, certified survey map submittals, rezonings, and site plans for larger commercial and industrial developments.</li> <li>◆ Allow the clustering of homesites in planned agricultural preservation areas. See the Land Use Chapter for detailed recommendations.</li> <li>◆ Revise the A-1 Agricultural zoning district text to clarify the conditions under which new homes are allowed.</li> <li>◆ Specify that new development in Agricultural Preservation Areas would be limited to one dwelling unit per 35 acres that was held in contiguous single ownership as of a certain date (e.g. the date of Town Board adoption of zoning ordinance amendments to implement this type of change). This type of change would allow the same overall development density as current zoning rules, but would not require 35+ acre lots in order to build.</li> <li>◆ Encourage conservation neighborhood design for new subdivisions.</li> <li>◆ Establish development siting standards and site plan submittal and review requirements for all new individual homes within mapped Agricultural Preservation Areas.</li> <li>◆ Require site plan review for all new land uses within Mixed Residential, Local Commercial, Large Scale Commercial, Light Industrial, General Industrial, and Institutional and Airport areas shown on Map 5.</li> <li>◆ Allow smaller lot sizes in planned agricultural preservation areas. See the Land Use Chapter for detailed recommendations.</li> <li>◆ Develop specific standards for new and expanded Mixed Residential, including lighting (dark sky provisions), landscaping, parking and loading (number and placement of spaces), and building and sign design and layout.</li> <li>◆ Reconfigure the permitted and conditional use lists in the Town's commercial zoning districts into broader categories.</li> <li>◆ Establish design standards for new commercial and industrial development along Highway 51.</li> <li>◆ Allow Town to recover, from the applicant, all costs of professional review of rezonings, conditional use permits, site plans, and other Town development approvals requested by applicants, and then initiate such reviews before Planning &amp; Zoning Committee consideration of such applications.</li> <li>◆ Update standards for telecommunication (cell phone) towers.</li> </ul>	2008-2012

Category	Program/Recommended Action	Implementation Timeframe
Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources	Explore approaches for the Town to actively advance the farm economy.	2011-2015
	Work with partners on potential restoration activities on Bass Creek.	As opportunities present
	Promote Afton as a community gathering place.	2011-2013
Land Use	Over time and as projects present themselves, update the zoning map to correspond with the Future Land Use map.	2008-2018
Transportation	Support updates to the airport zoning regulations without compromising Town economic development objectives.	2008-2009
	Consider establishing a Capital Improvements Program to provide for phased upgrading of Town roads and other functions and equipment.	2008-2010
	Consider adopting a Town driveway ordinance to assure safe and lasting road and driveway design.	2011-2013
Utilities and Community Facilities	See Figure 16 in Chapter Five: Utilities and Community Facilities.	
Economic Development	Investigate incentives for economic development and redevelopment in the Highway 51 and Townline Road areas.	2011-2013
Intergovernmental Cooperation	Coordinate with partners to establish a recreational trail through the Town along the Rock River.	2008-2010
	Continue to work with the County on airport-related issues.	2008-2009
	Provide a copy of this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> and all subsequent amendments to surrounding and overlapping governments.	2008 and as amended

### Plan Monitoring, Amendments, and Update

The Town should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the recommendations of the *Comprehensive Plan*, and amend and update the *Plan* as appropriate. This section suggests recommended criteria and procedures for monitoring, amending, and updating the *Plan*.

#### **Plan Monitoring**

The Town should constantly evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions against the recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

#### **Plan Amendments**

Amendments to this *Comprehensive Plan* may be appropriate in the years following initial plan adoption and in instances where the *Plan* becomes irrelevant or contradictory to emerging policy or trends. “Amendments” are generally defined as minor changes to the *Plan* maps or text. In general, this *Plan* should be specifically evaluated for potential amendments every three years. Frequent amendments to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided.

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the Town use the same basic process to amend, add to, or update this *Comprehensive Plan* as it used to initially adopt the *Plan*. This means that the minimum procedures defined under Section 66.1001(4) and Chapter 91, Wisconsin Statutes, need to be followed. Specifically, the Town should use the following procedure to amend, add to, or update the *Comprehensive Plan*:

1. Either the Town Board or Planning and Zoning Committee initiates the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* amendment. This may occur as a result of a regular Planning and Zoning Committee review of the *Plan*, or may be initiated at the request of a property owner or developer.
2. The Town Board adopts a resolution outlining the procedures that will be undertaken to ensure public participation during the *Plan* amendment process (see Section 66.1001(4)a of Statutes and model resolution included in this *Comprehensive Plan*).
3. The Town Planning and Zoning Committee prepares or directs the preparation of the specific text or map amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan*.
4. The Town Planning and Zoning Committee holds one or more public meetings on the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* amendment. Following the public meeting(s), the Planning and Zoning Committee makes a recommendation by resolution to the Town Board by majority vote of the entire Committee (see Section 66.1001(4)b of Statutes and model resolution in this *Plan*).
5. The Town Clerk sends a copy of the recommended *Plan* amendment (not the entire *Comprehensive Plan*) to all adjacent and surrounding government jurisdictions and the County as required under Section 66.1001(4)b, Wisconsin Statutes. These governments should have at least 30 days to review and comment on the recommended *Plan* amendment. Nonmetallic mine operators, any person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit with the local government, and any other property owner or leaseholder who has requested notification in writing must be informed through this notice procedure. These governments and individuals should have at least 30 days to review and comment on the recommended *Plan* amendment.
6. The Town Clerk directs the publishing of a Class 1 notice, with such notice published at least 30 days before a Town Board public hearing and containing information required under Section 66.1001(4)d, Wisconsin Statutes.
7. The Town Board holds the formal public hearing on an ordinance that would incorporate the proposed *Plan* amendment into the *Comprehensive Plan*.
8. Following the public hearing, the Town Board approves (or denies) the ordinance adopting the proposed *Plan* amendment. Adoption must be by a majority vote of all members. The Town Board may require changes from the Planning and Zoning Committee recommended version of the proposed *Plan* amendment.
9. The Town Clerk sends a copy of the adopted ordinance and *Plan* amendment (not the entire *Comprehensive Plan*) to all adjacent and surrounding government jurisdictions, nonmetallic mine operators, any person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit with the local government, and any other property owner or leaseholder who has requested notification in writing as required under Sections 66.1001(4)b and c, Wisconsin Statutes.
10. The Town Clerk sends copies of the adopted *Plan* amendment to the Rock County Planning, Economic and Community Development Agency for incorporation in the Farmland Preservation Plan and County Comprehensive Plan.

### **Plan Update**

The State comprehensive planning law requires that this *Comprehensive Plan* be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to an amendment, an update is often a substantial re-write of the *Plan* document and maps. Further, on January 1, 2010, all decisions related to zoning, subdivisions, and official maps will need to be consistent with this *Comprehensive Plan*. Based on these two deadlines, the Town intends to update its *Comprehensive Plan* before the year 2018 (i.e., ten years after 2008), at the latest. The Town will continue to monitor any changes to the language or interpretations of the State law over the next several years.

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### Consistency Among Plan Elements

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The State comprehensive planning statute requires that the implementation element “describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan shall be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan.” Because the various elements of the *Town of Rock Comprehensive Plan* were prepared simultaneously, there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different elements of chapters of this *Plan*. The *Plan* was carefully written to balance the various goals and interests in the Town.