

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 291
A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF ERIN

Chapter IV
(Formerly Chapter VII)

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the issues and opportunities element is to define a desired future for the Town and provide an overall framework for development of the comprehensive plan. A vision statement was developed by the Town to express the preferred future and key characteristics desired by the Town.

Section 66.1001 (2) (a) of the *Wisconsin Statutes* requires that the Issues and Opportunities Element include a "statement of the overall objectives, policies, goals, and programs of the governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the governmental unit over the planning period." Although not defined in the *Statutes*, the Wisconsin Department of Administration has provided the following definitions of those terms:

Goals: Broad and general expressions of a community's aspirations, towards which the planning effort is directed. Goals tend to be ends rather than means.

Objectives: More specific targets, derived from goals and necessary to achieve those goals. While still general in nature, objectives are more precise, concrete, and measurable than goals.

Policies: Rules or courses of action necessary to achieve the goals and objectives from which they are derived. They are precise and measurable.

Programs: A system of projects or services necessary to achieve plan goals, objectives, and policies.

The comprehensive planning law also requires that the Issues and Opportunities Element include demographic information and population, household, and employment projections. Demographic information for the Town is presented in Chapter III, along with population and household projections for 2035. An employment projection is set forth in Chapter X.

VISION STATEMENT 2035

Visioning Process

To develop a vision statement for the Town, Washington County University of Wisconsin – Extension (UWEX) staff examined the opinions generated by the public during the input opportunities carried out as part of the comprehensive planning process, along with the Town's existing planning and zoning documents, and identified recurring "key concepts" that could be appropriate for the Town's vision. UWEX staff then met with the Town Plan Commission and Town Board on May 17, 2007, to review the key concepts and determine which ones might best describe the Town's future. The most supported concepts were subsequently used to draft a vision statement that was brought back to the Town on June 21, 2007, for approval.

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Vision Statement

“In 2035, the Town of Erin is a community known for its natural beauty and unique heritage. Traditional and alternative forms of agriculture are encouraged while allowing quality residential development at densities and locations compatible with the Town’s rural character. The Town takes protection of the environment seriously and works cooperatively with neighboring communities for the benefit of all.”

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following public participation events were held to obtain input from Town residents and identify the Town’s issues and opportunities.

Comprehensive Planning “Kickoff” Meeting

A comprehensive planning “kickoff” meeting was held in the Town on March 28, 2006. The meeting was an opportunity for Town residents to learn about the comprehensive planning process and participate in a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) assessment. A total of 80 people attended the meeting. The following are the issues identified as being most important by SWOT analysis participants.

Strengths: Something that makes a community stand out when compared to other communities; resources or capabilities that help a community be successful/strong.

- Topography
- Wildlife (other than deer)
- Rural character/rustic roads/people take care of the rural quality
- Identity/ethnic history/heritage/generations of families
- Small town
- Natural beauty/scenic
- Quiet
- Lakes
- Woodlands
- Close enough to cultural/city amenities
- Friendly and charming
- Presence of farms
- Good school system and youth programs
- Recreation - Holy Hill, ski hill, Ice Age Trail, and golf course

Weaknesses: Deficiencies in resources for a community to be successful.

- Lack of strategy and/or effective land use vision to fight annexation
- Public apathy
- Special interests
- Lack of ground water data
- Lack of affordable housing/lack of elderly housing/limited home ownership opportunities for young families
- Lack of social services/minimal provisions for the elderly

Opportunities: Something that could be done to improve a community; factors or situations that can affect a community in a favorable way.

- Keep Town rural
- Sense of identity
- Controlled growth
- Community involvement
- More hobby farms and horse farms

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- Increase quality of life to attract wealthy homeowners (hiking trails, bike paths) and single-family homeowners with a vested interest in preserving rural character
- Good future road planning and bicycle trails
- Preserve and enhance current lands in conservancy - Holy Hill area, Lowe Lake, Ice Age Trail

Threats: Anything that could jeopardize the future success of a community; factors or situations that can affect a community in a negative way.

- Loss of land owner rights
- Population growth
- Misuse of development rights
- Strip malls/“Big Box” mentality
- Traffic and poor transportation plan/accessibility for emergency services
- Loss of farms (rural character) and agrarian economy
- Annexation
- Loss of affordable housing
- Airports
- Loss of wildlife
- Sewer and water (City of Hartford)

Comprehensive Planning Visioning Workshop

A comprehensive planning visioning workshop/open house was held in the Town on September 26, 2006. The event was an opportunity for Town residents to review the inventory chapters of the comprehensive plan, map future land use on an interactive Smart Board using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, review existing Town goals, share opinions on development preferences, and develop a vision statement for the Town. A total of 11 residents attended the workshop and the majority wanted to preserve wetlands, agricultural land, natural areas, and open space. Residents in attendance also discussed development appropriate for the Town. It was determined from this discussion that rural density residential development is appropriate for the Town and multi-family homes, industrial development, and commercial development are not appropriate.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives are overall goals that should guide the protection of natural resources and future development and redevelopment in the Town through the plan design year of 2035. The overall goals are general and provide the framework for more specific goals in the following chapters. Because they are intended to be general rather than specific, no policies or programs are associated with the general goals and objectives presented in this chapter. Policies and programs are presented in each of the following eight element chapters, in association with the more specific element goals and objectives.

A meeting was held with the Town Plan Commission and Town Board on June 21, 2007, to develop goals and objectives for the comprehensive plan. The meeting was facilitated by UWEX staff. The following goals and objectives were developed for the Town comprehensive plan:

Goal: To preserve both the rural character and economic base of the Town.

- **Objective:** Affirm and encourage traditional and alternative forms of agriculture.
- **Objective:** Allow and attract businesses that support the primary economic activities in the Town: agriculture, tourism, recreation, and residents’ needs.

Goal: To maintain the unique beauty of the Town.

- **Objective:** Recognize that the primary and secondary environmental corridors represent a comprehensive open space system that is the main element defining the rural character and scenic beauty of the Town.
- **Objective:** Recognize and preserve the critical role that farmland, open space, historical architecture, scenic vistas and landscapes, natural resources and features, rustic roads, the Loew Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, the Ice Age Trail, Holy Hill, and the archeological and cultural features play in defining and enhancing the Town’s historic and rural character.

- **Objective:** Nonmetallic mining sites will not negatively impact the environmental features within the Town of Erin or its existing developments.

Goal: To reduce ecological problems by managing development in floodplains, shorelands, and primary environmental corridors of the Town.

- **Objective:** Nonmetallic mining sites will not negatively impact the environmental features within the Town of Erin or its existing developments.
- **Objective:** Protect environmentally sensitive areas that are not suitable for growth.
- **Objective:** Visual character - Locate buildings to minimize the disruption to the lakeshore environment.

Goal: To encourage voluntary conservation measures.

- **Objective:** Recognize that the primary and secondary environmental corridors represent a comprehensive open space system that is the main element defining the rural character and scenic beauty of the Town.
- **Objective:** Recognize and preserve the critical role that farmland, open space, historical architecture, scenic vistas and landscapes, natural resources and features, rustic roads, the Loew Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, the Ice Age Trail, Holy Hill, and the archeological and cultural features play in defining and enhancing the Town's historic and rural character.
- **Objective:** Design to preserve open space.
- **Objective:** Visual character - Locate buildings to minimize the disruption to the lakeshore environment.

Goal: To promote good soil and water conservation practices that preserve water quality in the Town.

- **Objective:** Nonmetallic mining sites will not negatively impact the environmental features within the Town of Erin or its existing developments.
- **Objective:** Protect environmentally sensitive areas that are not suitable for growth.
- **Objective:** Visual character - Locate buildings to minimize the disruption to the lakeshore environment.

Goal: Encourage preservation of historic or cultural structures and archaeological sites.

- **Objective:** Recognize and preserve the critical role that farmland, open space, historical architecture, scenic vistas and landscapes, natural resources and features, rustic roads, the Loew Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, the Ice Age Trail, Holy Hill, and the archeological and cultural features play in defining and enhancing the Town's historic and rural character.

Goal: To limit residential development to densities and in locations compatible with the rural character of the Town, and therefore avoid the need to provide urban facilities and services to such development.

- **Objective:** Limit residential development to densities and locations compatible with the rural character of the Town.

Goal: To avoid the creation of water pollution and public health problems by limiting residential development to soils that are well suited to development when served by on-site sewage disposal systems and private wells.

- **Objective:** Limit residential development to densities and locations compatible with the rural character of the Town.

Goal: To preserve and protect the capacity and safety of the transportation system within the Town.

- **Objective:** Plan ahead for future roadside vegetation.
- **Objective:** Preserve the scenic nature of the Town roads while maintaining safety.
- **Objective:** Build and maintain quality roads.
- **Objective:** Maintain existing Rustic Roads.
- **Objective:** Work with local and state governments to create an efficient arterial to STH 16 or other major highway.
- **Objective:** Plan new roads so that new and existing roads connect wherever feasible.

Goal: Continue to maintain and improve Town roads in a timely and well-planned manner.

- **Objective:** As required by State law, continue to use the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR); continue to update road ratings, as required; and seek outside funds to help with road improvements.

Goal: To promote good stormwater management and drainage practices.

- **Objective:** Require developers to pay their “fair share” for improvements needed to support new development requests.

Goal: To achieve a logical relationship between existing and new land uses.

- **Objective:** Limit residential development to densities and locations compatible with the rural character of the Town.

Goal: In cooperation with neighboring communities, support a range of housing types to serve the varied and special needs of area residents.

- **Objective:** Support appropriate county, private, and church efforts and consider new programs that provide needed assistance for elderly and disabled residents who wish to stay in their own homes.
- **Objective:** Limit residential development to densities and locations compatible with the rural character of the Town.

Goal: To promote intergovernmental communication.

- **Objective:** Work with local and state governments to create an efficient arterial to STH 16 or other major highway.
- **Objective:** Recognize that extraterritorial zoning powers affect the Town of Erin.

Goal: Ensure the Town of Erin’s comprehensive plan remains relevant.

- **Objective:** Routinely consult the comprehensive plan when carrying out Town government functions and developing the Town budget.

ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Within the framework of the overall goals and objectives, more specific goals and objectives were developed through preparation of the remaining eight comprehensive plan elements. Each of the specific element goals relate directly to its element. Each element also includes recommended policies and programs that directly promote the achievement of specific element goals and objectives.

SUMMARY

This chapter has defined a desired future for 2035 through a statement summarizing the desired vision for the future of the Town. Inventory data, projections, and various forms of public input were considered during development of the vision statement.

This chapter also includes overall goals and objectives that support the vision statement and are designed to guide the development and redevelopment of the Town through 2035 as required by Section 66.1001 (2) (a) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. The overall goals and objectives provided the framework for the development of specific goals and objectives for each of the other plan elements. In addition to more specific goals and objectives, each element also includes a set of recommended polices and programs to achieve the goals and objectives.