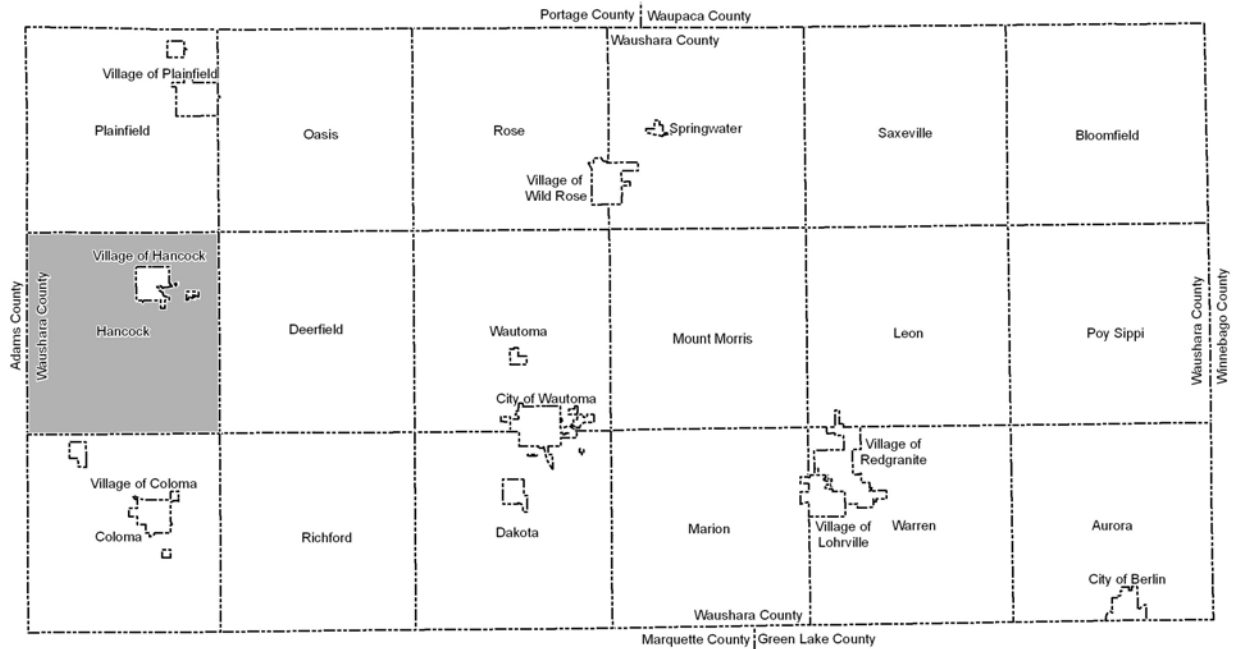


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Location

Waushara County is located in central Wisconsin and is surrounded by the counties of Portage and Waupaca to the north, Winnebago to the east, Green Lake and Marquette to the south and Adams County to the west. The county is essentially six towns in width and three towns in height. The Town of Hancock is situated in the center of the western tier of towns and is approximately 36 square miles in size. It shares common borders with the towns of Plainfield, Oasis, Deerfield, Richford, Coloma and the Village of Hancock in Waushara County; and the towns of Leola, Colburn, and Richfield in Adams County. I-39 runs north-south through the Town of Hancock and offers access to Westfield, Portage, Madison, Stevens Point, Wausau and southern and northern Wisconsin.

Figure ES-1. Town of Hancock, Waushara County Wisconsin



The Town of Hancock offers residents a small town atmosphere while providing nearby access to many services and amenities (schools, libraries, post offices, etc.) offered in urban areas. Large farming operations are found in the western half of the Town, while the eastern half consists of a tapestry of smaller farms, woods, and commercial and residential development.

Planning Purpose

A comprehensive plan is created for the general purpose of guiding a coordinated development pattern. This will result in land use decisions that are harmonious with both the overall vision of the community's future and will ensure the future sustainability of the local natural resource base. Developing a comprehensive plan is a proactive attempt to delineate the ground rules and guidelines for future development within a community. Comprehensive planning decisions evaluate existing facilities and future needs; promote public health, safety, community aesthetics, orderly development, and preferred land use patterns; and foster economic prosperity and general welfare in the process of development.

The comprehensive plan is a guideline for future development. The plan evaluates what development will best benefit the community's interests in the area while still providing flexibility for land owners and protecting private property rights.

Planning History

Planning in Waushara County started in 1994, with the creation of the Waushara County Land Use Committee. The committee, comprised of elected officials and local citizens, includes representation from each community in Waushara County. Similar to the Community Management Plan that was adopted by the Town of Hancock in 2006, many of the earlier plans that were developed in Waushara County were started before or immediately after the state implemented its current comprehensive planning law and consequently do not conform to the "smart growth" legislation. The Town of Hancock is one of these communities and has therefore prepared this plan as an update to its previously completed community management plan.¹ In total eleven communities (towns of Coloma, Deerfield, Hancock, Leon, Mount Morris, Oasis, Plainfield, Richford, Saxeville, Springwater and the Village of Hancock) participated in a countywide process to update their community/land management plans. Another three communities (villages of Coloma, Lohrville and Plainfield) completed their first comprehensive land use plan. Finally, a countywide plan was created that combines the plans of the various municipalities. The current plans were prepared in compliance with *Wisconsin State Statutes* 66.1001 and utilized a comprehensive planning grant obtained through the Department of Administration.

Enabling Legislation

This plan was developed under the authority granted by s. 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin State Statutes* and meets the requirements of 1999 Wisconsin Act 9 which states "Beginning on January 1, 2010, any program or action of a local governmental unit that affects land use shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan".²

The Town of Hancock should consult this plan when making decisions relative to land use and other issues including:

- Official mapping established or amended under s. 62.23 (6).
- Local subdivision regulation under s. 236.45 or s. 236.46. (If applicable)
- County zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 59.69.
- Town zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61 or 60.62. (If applicable)
- Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands under s. 59.692, 61.351, or 62.231.

Plan Contents

The Town of Hancock Comprehensive Plan is composed of two documents – Volume One and Volume Two. Together, the two volumes contain all information necessary to meet state regulations. The purpose of the two reports is to create a user-friendly plan that separates a majority of the required background material from the Town's goals, objectives, and recommendations. Generally speaking, Volume One serves as the "guide" for decision making

¹ ECWRPC. 2005. *Town of Hancock Community Management Plan*.

² Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. 1997. *Budget Brief 97-6*.

whereas Volume Two provides data and support for actions detailed in Volume One. Specific details are provided below for each volume.

Volume One: “Comprehensive Plan (Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations)”. This volume contains issues, goals, objectives, and recommendations for each of the nine required comprehensive plan elements for implementation over the next twenty years. It describes actions and strategies to achieve the goals and objectives listed in each of the nine planning elements, or chapters, within the plan. This document should be consulted by the Planning Commission and Town Board when managing community resources. It will also be used by Waushara County on matters where a county land use control, such as zoning, is applied within the town.

Volume Two: “Existing Conditions Report”. The second volume of this comprehensive plan contains an analysis of existing conditions within the County. It provides a series of Census and other empirical data available through local, regional, state, and national sources. These data reveal current findings within the Town and how these compare to historical numbers within the Town, County and the State of Wisconsin. These data were primarily used to identify challenges and opportunities in Volume One. The report is a companion document to Volume One and should be used to locate evidence of existing conditions that provide support for recommendations and strategies located in Volume One.

The comprehensive plan contains nine elements that are required by s. 66.1001:

- 1) Issues and Opportunities
- 2) Economic Development
- 3) Housing
- 4) Transportation
- 5) Utilities and Community Facilities
- 6) Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- 7) Land Use
- 8) Intergovernmental Cooperation
- 9) Implementation

In addition, the state requires that Wisconsin’s 14 goals for local planning be considered as communities develop their goals, objectives, and strategies. These goals are:

- 1) Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.
- 2) Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
- 3) Protection of natural features, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources.
- 4) Protection of economically productive farmlands and forests.
- 5) Encouragement of land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs.
- 6) Preservation of cultural, historic, and archeological sites.
- 7) Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
- 8) Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.

- 9) Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community.
- 10) Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
- 11) Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels.
- 12) Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
- 13) Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
- 14) Providing an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience, and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.