

# **Rock Elm Township Comprehensive Plan**

**2011**



**Adopted May 2011**

## Table of Contents

### Page #

<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>i.</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>ii.</b>
<b>Element 1:Issues and Opportunities.....</b>	<b>1.</b>
<b>Element 2:Housing.....</b>	<b>4.</b>
<b>Element 3:Economic Development.....</b>	<b>10.</b>
<b>Element 4:Utilities and Community Facilities.....</b>	<b>19.</b>
<b>Element 5:Transportation.....</b>	<b>26.</b>
<b>Element 6:Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources.....</b>	<b>36.</b>
<b>Element 7:Land Use.....</b>	<b>54.</b>
<b>Element 8:Intergovernmental Cooperation.....</b>	<b>66.</b>
<b>Element 9:Implementation.....</b>	<b>68.</b>

## Rock Elm Township Preface

The state of Wisconsin enacted comprehensive planning legislation in October 1999. Section 66.1001 Wisconsin Statute was signed into law on May 10, 2000. The Town of Rock Elm adopted a “Comprehensive Plan Commission Ordinance” on August 11, 2008. The goal of the Rock Elm Plan Commission is to develop a Comprehensive Plan that is a flexible guide that attempts to cover all issues of development and growth that may be confronted by the Town of Rock Elm over the coming years. The Plan guidelines will be helpful to reach solutions to short term issues, as well as long term goals for the community. The Plan covers nine “Elements” that Rock Elm Township can use as a guideline for decision making over the next 20 years. These Elements are: Issues and Opportunities, Housing, Economic Development, Utilities and Community Facilities, Transportation, Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources, Land Use, Intergovernmental Cooperation and Implementation.

The Comprehensive Plan is a key element in formulating the approach that a community will take in addressing the issues of land use, public policies toward development, and infrastructure requirements. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework for the governing body to ensure that a course, focused on a common goal, is maintained.

*To achieve this, the Plan should be:*

1. *Comprehensive.* The Plan must address all areas of the community as well as all activities associated with regulating development.
2. *Flexible.* The Plan must be structured to summarize policies and proposals and allow for flexibility to facilitate the ever changing needs of the area.
3. *Provident.* The initial requirements of the Plan are to achieve solutions to short term issues, whereas, the ultimate goal of the Plan is to provide a perspective of future development and predict possible problems as far as 20 years into the future.

In terms of trends associated with Rock Elm Township, this area has enjoyed a strong rural heritage, with dominance in the agricultural sector. But as times and the economy have changed, many farmers are facing a decline in the market value of their products, while government subsidies have been increasing to compensate for their losses. The population of the Township remains virtually unchanged over the past 30 years compared to other townships in Pierce County who have witnessed a greater influx of people moving from the Twin Cities. Nugget Lake County Park, the geological disturbance, special historical areas, and the natural beauty of the area are assets that make this community special. And while Rock Elm Township has the highest percentage of self-employed workers, it also bodes the highest rate of poverty in Pierce County. This Comprehensive Plan confronts these issues and provides a basis for the policies that will shape the community in the future.

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **The Comprehensive Plan**

The future course of development for Rock Elm Township is contained in this Comprehensive Plan. This long-range guide brings together many planning elements, and coordinates them to maintain an environment that is attractive, efficient, and pleasing to area residents. Each element sets a desired development direction consistent with the goals and policies that have been established to maintain and enhance the quality of the community.

The Comprehensive Plan is general in nature, allowing for flexibility. It is comprehensive because it considers many elements and their inherent relationship with each other. The Plan is properly balanced and blended, giving emphasis to desired characteristics.

The Plan has evolved through a careful, deliberate process of data collection, analysis of potential alternatives, and goal formation—each stage being a step toward refining the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan will provide a service to the community if the goals, objectives, recommendations, and policies of the Plan are followed. These guidelines are important to elected and appointed officials during the course of administering the Plan. Understanding by private interest groups of these guidelines will assure conformance with Plan objectives.

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide. It can accommodate the uses that have been selected to continue, and enhance the wellbeing of the community and natural resource base. Each of the proposed uses has been measured to promote a well ordered, functioning community, which is both attractive and satisfying to its citizens. The Plan is not a zoning Plan, yet it does show desired uses for certain sectors of the community that, in some instances, may be interpreted as zoning proposals. The Plan is a guide to be used by officials in initiating changes in zoning to achieve desired land use goals, and as a basis for evaluating requests from individuals.

## **Citizen Participation Plan: A Visioning Process**

The Smart Growth law requires each plan to include a comprehensive citizen participation plan. A good participation plan should offer citizens a range of participation options in order to encourage meaningful input into the process. Effective public input is critical for plan implementation. The more broad-based and committed the community support, the easier it will be to implement the Plan.

## **Community Vision Statement**

Rock Elm Township will remain largely a rural community during the next twenty years. Many farming operations will be large scale. However, some smaller organic and specialty farms will continue or become established. It is our goal that the rural character of the area will remain, and the quality of our natural resources will continue to improve. Sustaining and preserving our streams, waterways, cropland, woodlands and entire ecosystem is a priority. Our agricultural growth will benefit from good, sustainable land practices and conservation minded principles.

Historic and current trends show that Rock Elm Township suffers from an unusually high rate of poverty per capita. An emphasis will need to be placed on addressing this challenge. Also, we will need to allow for housing development with standards that are suitable to our area. A high priority of lowering property taxes for all home owners throughout Rock Elm is an important goal for the community. If trends continue, we believe property tax levels may put limits on determining future growth. We need to work with all taxing bodies to ensure reasonable tax policy.

The need for farm based industry or a farmers market (a market could be established near the town garage property on Highway 72) are options that would best fit our area. Using a “buy local” focus will assist us in understanding the types and style of businesses that would fit core community needs. Also, with many essential items such as ambulance, fire protection, and assisted living in adjacent villages or towns, we have an opportunity to grow agriculture and other industries in Rock Elm.

For this vision to be realized, it will take the efforts of town officials working together with its citizens, local farmers, developers, public sector partners and others. The collaboration and strength of all parties involved will allow Rock Elm Township to survive and thrive in the future.

## **Explanation of Terms**

The following terms used in the Rock Elm Township Comprehensive Plan carry specific meanings. These meanings need to be understood in order to properly apply the recommendations described in the 9 Elements. The terms are as follows:

1. Recommend/encouraged: A recommended or encouraged practice is one that will have its permit expedited and should encounter no serious questions. It may qualify for state or federal grants and /or reduced county fees.

2. Not recommended/discouraged: A practice described using one of these terms is not specifically prohibited but will require a written explanation to the appropriate board or commission as to why it is being considered rather than a recommended practice.
3. Prohibited: These practices are specifically prohibited by state law, county or town ordinance.
4. All of the following terms are equivalent: the Plan; the Rock Elm Township Plan; and the Rock Elm Township Comprehensive Plan
5. All of the following terms are equivalent: Town; Township; and Rock Elm Township

#### Rock Elm Charts

##### Population Growth 1980-2000

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Town Of Rock Elm	654	519	504
Pierce County	31,149	32,765	36,804
Wisconsin	4,705,642	4,891,599	5,363,675

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

##### Population Trends

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Town of Rock Elm	706	638	654	519	504
Pierce County	22,503	26,652	31,149	32,765	36,804

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census*

##### Population Projections 2000-2025

	<u>2000 census</u>	<u>2005 projected</u>	<u>2010 projected</u>	<u>2015 projected</u>	<u>2020 projected</u>	<u>2025 projected</u>
Town of Rock Elm	504	497	495	489	485	485
Pierce County	36,804	38,194	39,818	41,190	42,368	44,368
Wisconsin	5,363,704	5,563,896	5,751,470	5,931,386	6,110,878	6,323,692

*Source: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration January 2004*

##### Population Age Distribution (by percent)

	<u>0-5</u>	<u>6-10</u>	<u>10-14</u>	<u>15-19</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>25-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45-54</u>	<u>55-59</u>	<u>60-64</u>	<u>65-74</u>	<u>75-84</u>	<u>85 plus</u>
Rock Elm	5.0 %	7.7 %	9.9 %	9.5 %	5.8 %	11.7 %	15.7 %	13.7 %	4.0 %	4.2 %	7.7 %	3.8 %	0.4 %
Pierce Co.	5.7 %	6.7 %	7.4 %	10.4 %	11.2 %	12.1 %	16.0 %	13.3 %	4.2 %	3.4 %	4.8 %	3.5 %	1.3 %

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce-Bureau of the Census*

##### Housing Trends

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% change 1970-80</u>	<u>% change 1980-90</u>	<u>% change</u>
<u>1990-00</u>							
Town of Rock Elm	180	203	194	193	12.8%	-4.4%	-0.5%
Pierce County	7,826	10,354	11,536	13,493	32.3%	11.4%	17.0%

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce-Bureau of the Census*

##### Housing Projections 2000-2025

	<u>Census 2000</u>	<u>2005 projected</u>	<u>2010 projected</u>	<u>2015 projected</u>	<u>2020 projected</u>	<u>2025 projected</u>
Town of Rock Elm	178	180	183	185	186	188
Pierce County	13,015	13,825	14,782	15,656	16,539	17,339

*Source: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration January 2004*

### Average Household Size

	<u>Owner-occupied Units</u>	<u>Renter-occupied Units</u>
Town of Rock Elm	2.81	2.94
Pierce County	2.79	2.26

*Source: U.S. Census 2000*

### Household Poverty Trends

	<u>1979</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1999</u>
Town of Rock Elm	110 (16.82%)	115 (21.26%)	96 (18.2%)
Pierce County	3,226 (10.36%)	3,183 (10.42%)	2,652 (7.7%)

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce-Bureau of the Census*

### School Enrollment

Population 3 and over enrolled in school	137	100%
Nursery school, preschool	9	6.6%
Kindergarten	9	6.6%
Elementary school (Grades 1-8)	68	49.6%
High school (Grade 9-12)	38	27.7%
College or graduate school	13	9.5%

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce-Bureau of the Census 2000*

### Employed civilian population 16 years of age and older

#### Occupation

Management, professional, and related occupation	30.7%
Service occupations	10.0%
Sales and office occupation	13.2%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	10.0%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupation	10.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	26.1%

#### Industry

Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining	30.7%	86
Construction	4.6%	13
Manufacturing	20.0%	56
Wholesale trade	1.8%	5
Retail trade	2.5%	7
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	5.4%	15
Information	0.0%	0
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	3.6%	10
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	6.1%	17
Education, health and social services	16.4%	46
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services	4.6%	13
Other services (except public administration)	2.9%	8
Public administration	1.4%	4
Total	100%	280

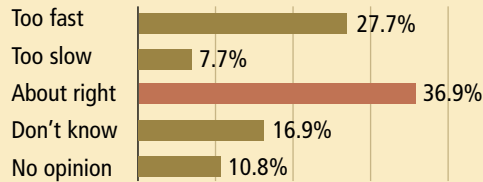
Class of worker

Private wage and salary workers	58.6%
Government workers	11.1%
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	27.5%
Unpaid family workers	2.9%

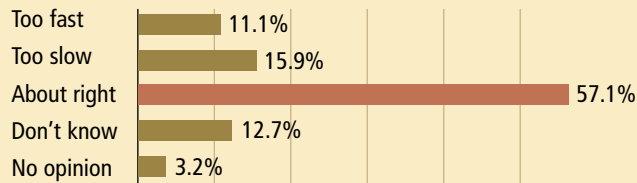
*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce-Bureau of the Census*



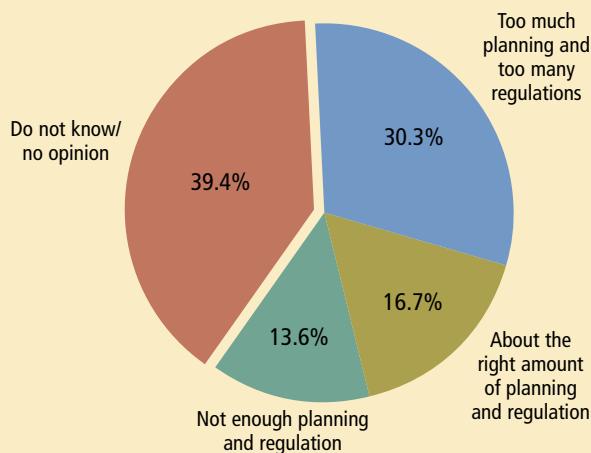
How would you describe the pace at which development is occurring in PIERCE COUNTY?



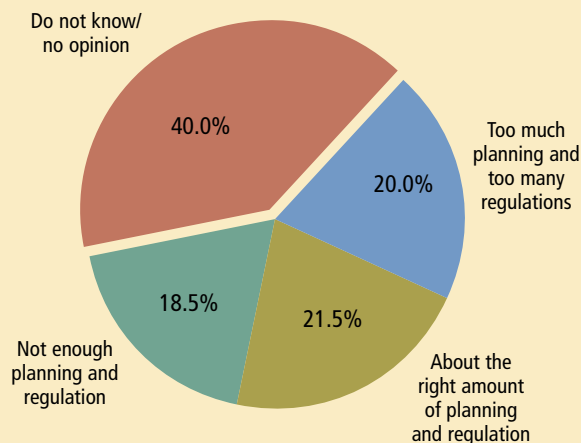
How would you describe the pace at which development is occurring in the TOWN in which you live?



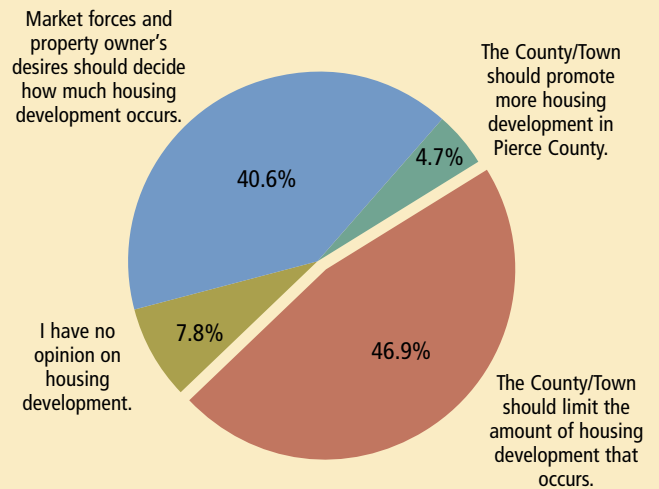
How would you rate current efforts by PIERCE COUNTY to regulate and guide development?



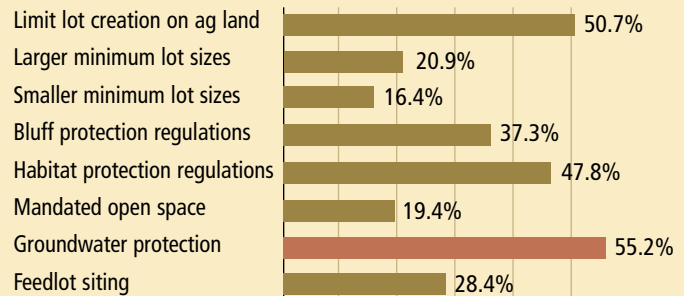
How would you rate current efforts by your TOWN to regulate and guide development?



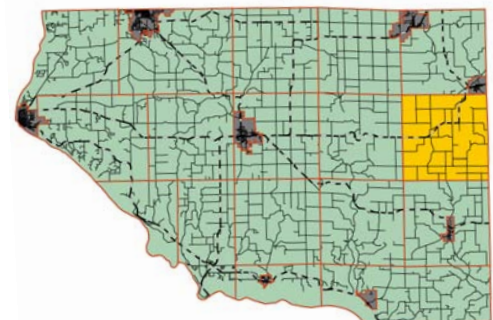
Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion of where new housing should be located in the County?



What additional land use regulation would you support?



NOTE: Results are based on Town data only – survey excluded cities and villages.



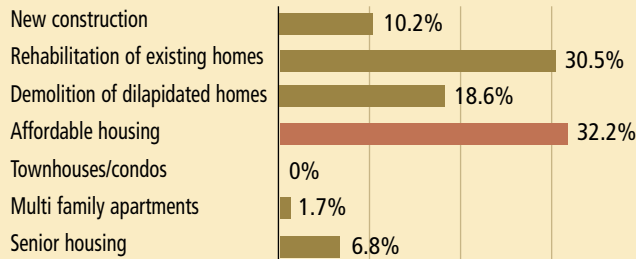
## Town of Rock Elm

Number of surveys mailed: 216

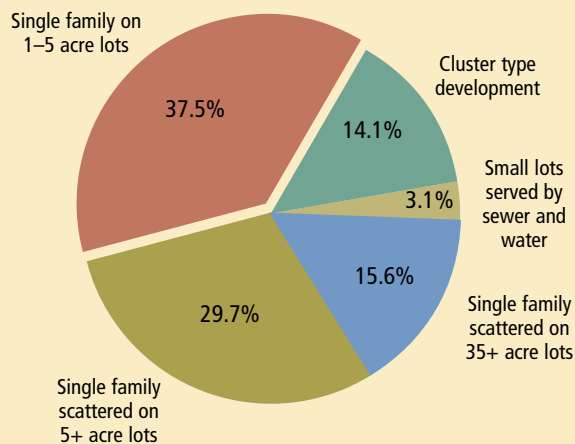
Number of surveys returned: 69

Response rate: 31.9%

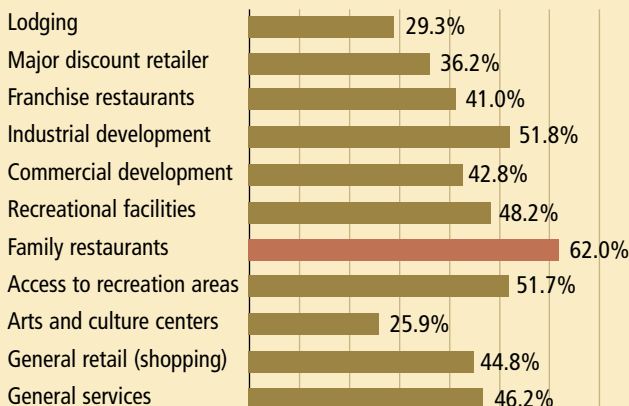
## What do you feel is the major housing need in the community? RANK 1 RESPONSES:



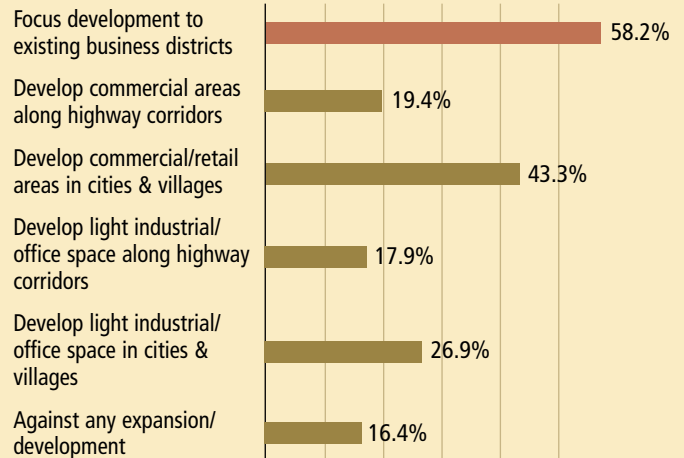
## Which of the following options best describes your ideas on the optimal size of parcels for new residential development?



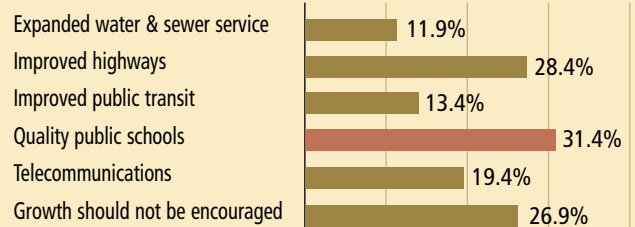
## Do you feel there is a need for more: PERCENTAGE OF "YES" RESPONSES:



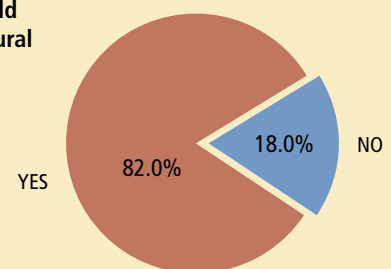
## What is your opinion of expanding/developing additional areas for commercial/industrial/retail use? (check all that apply)



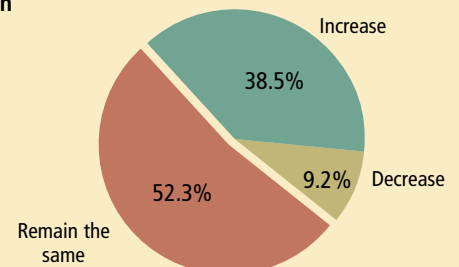
## If you feel growth should be encouraged, which of the following do you think would most help in bringing about growth?



## Pierce County should encourage agricultural expansion and agri-development.



## Should tourism in Pierce County:



## **Element 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A community completes a comprehensive plan in order to develop long-range guidelines for the physical development of the community that is broad in scope. When combined with implementation tools, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, or open space preservation programs, the comprehensive plan can more effectively meet community needs for planning and action.

Rock Elm's comprehensive planning process includes community planning meetings, analyses of population, Town resources and land use, and recommendations for Plan implementation. The community's 2024 vision, drawn from public meetings, will project an image of productive farmlands, woodlands, natural areas, and recreational areas surrounding homes and businesses.

### **A. What Are Goals and Objectives?**

Goals are generally defined as the ultimate aim towards which an effort is directed. The goals outlined below are broad to provide a general framework for which Rock Elm can strive to achieve. Objectives, on the other hand, are defined as an action directed to achieve the stated goal. Recommendations are policies or steps that could contribute to achieving or maintaining an objective or goal.

### **B. Overall Goal for the Town of Rock Elm**

These are several goals of the Comprehensive Plan and they serve as the primary basis for adopting the plan. Decisions made with regard to development should be based on achieving these goals. In order to implement the Town's vision for the future, officials and citizens of the Town of Rock Elm will work to:

1. Maintain and improve the community's quality of life.
2. Promote the comfort, safety, health, prosperity, aesthetics and general wellbeing.
3. Provide for orderly development.
4. Protect the Town's natural resource base.

### **C. Issues and Opportunities—Town of Rock Elm**

Input was received from elected/appointed officials of Rock Elm Plan Commission. This is a summary of issues:

1. A changing face of agriculture from "family" to large "corporate" farms;
  - Environmental quality issues,
  - Compatibility with residential development,
  - Smaller % of residents making part or all of income from farming.
2. Slow transformation of land use;
  - Progressive loss of productive agricultural land,

-Encroachment on and fragmentation of woodlands with its accompanying effects on wildlife and outdoor activities.

3. Zoning issues;
  - Developing an equitable process to allow changing of zoning which balances land owner and community interests,
  - Effective enforcement of current zoning regulations.
4. Maintenance of housing stock;
  - How to encourage and assist maintenance of current housing,
  - Condemnation and demolition of blighted structures.
5. Environmental quality;
  - How to best assist State and Federal agencies in areas of air, water, and land conservation,
  - Watershed contamination due to manure and other farm related run-off,
  - Responsible disposal of human and animal waste, as well as farm-related materials.
6. Economic Development;
  - Encouragement of “cottage industries”
  - Recognizing the potential conflict over “visual pollution” and decreased nearby land value,
  - Encouragement of labor intensive, high value crops,
  - How to best encourage and take advantage of our tourist potential.
7. Essential services;
  - The rapidly rising costs and falling enrollment of the local school system,
  - Disproportionate and burdensome taxation of citizens to fund local school.
8. Infrastructure;
  - Our current infrastructure is an impediment of large scale economic development, but is an opportunity for tourism, general outdoor enjoyment and cottage industry.
  - More rapid deterioration of township roads with larger agricultural equipment.
9. Town Facilities
  - Town hall and shop needing upgrade and or replacement.

## **D. Strengths and Weaknesses -Town of Rock Elm**

### **Strengths**

1. Natural beauty of our area, i.e. tourism hotspot for fall color tours and recreational motorcycling
2. Proximity to Twin Cities

3. High rate of self-employment
4. Nugget Lake County Recreation Area
5. Close proximity to at least 3 fire and ambulance services
6. Red Cedar Clinic (Elmwood branch)
7. Recycle drop site
8. Good number of waste haulers in area
9. Most town roads are in good shape which holds potential for bicycle touring
10. Low crime
11. Sound agricultural economy
12. Diverse population
13. Topography of area lends itself to small nontraditional agriculture operations
14. Close proximity to libraries in towns
15. Close proximity to interstate and federal highways
16. Engaged town government
17. Proximity as a weekend tourist destination and also to other tourist destinations along the Mississippi
18. Geologically interesting area

#### Weaknesses

1. Non-diverse economy
2. 30+ miles to the nearest major commercial center
3. School system with too few students to provide a broad curriculum in a cost effective manner
4. School system with a declining enrollment
5. Lack of infrastructure necessary to attract significant commercial development
6. No competitive demand for large scale residential development
7. Aging housing stock combined with a low median income for residents
8. No nearby overnight accommodations for tourists
9. Unengaged citizenry when it comes to township affairs
10. Burdensome taxes
11. Highest poverty rate in Pierce County
12. Instability of conventional agriculture markets, which could undermine economic stability of area
13. Poor cell phone service and limited internet service
14. Blighted properties
15. Poor condition of town hall and equipment and material storage
16. Some local roads need upgrades
17. Very poor response or enforcement from Pierce County Zoning

## **Element 2: HOUSING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Utilizing the informational resources of demography and surveys provided to us by Pierce County, public input from the township citizens, and collective idea sharing from the Plan Commission, the future development and maintenance of Rock Elm Township's housing stock is a high priority. Rock Elm is, and always has been, a rural, agricultural area. The goal of this Element is to maintain the characteristics of Rock Elm by careful planning of future housing growth, and to plan for the upgrading and maintenance of current housing. This will assist with our growth in the coming years. In addition there are many essential services such as ambulance, fire protection, and assisted living residences in adjacent villages or towns.

The information presented in this Element will provide Rock Elm Town officials with information about the current housing stock as well as identify significant changes which have occurred in the area of housing over the past years, and to provide analysis of housing needs. Information is presented about housing occupancy, and structural and financial housing characteristics. Information is also presented that details substandard housing and projected housing demand. This Element presents a housing strategy to address the Town's housing needs, including priorities, activities to be undertaken, and sources of funding.

Housing is a basic necessity of life and an important part of the comprehensive planning process. The purposes of this Element are to assess the current housing stock and to identify policies and programs that will help meet existing and future housing demands. The housing stock assessment includes age, value, and type (e.g. single-family or multi-family) of existing housing units; as well as occupancy characteristics such as tenure (owner vs. renter occupied), and affordability (the percentage of monthly income residents spend on housing costs). Policies and programs focus on maintaining the quality of the existing housing stock.

### **A. Existing Conditions**

The housing background report, prepared pursuant to Wisconsin Statute section 66.1001 of the Comprehensive Planning law, requires the Housing Element to include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs. Note the source of all the information contained in the following charts was provided by the U.S Bureau of Census 2000. All Pierce County data includes city and village data.

### **B. Housing Occupancy**

Housing occupancy is typically described in terms of a community's housing vacancy rate. The vacancy rate, which is the number of housing units vacant and available divided by the total number of units, is an important measure of whether the housing supply is adequate to meet demand. It is important to note that some amount of vacancy is necessary for a healthy housing market. According to HUD, an overall vacancy rate of roughly 3% is considered best. This rate allows consumers adequate choice.

Table 2.1 **Housing Occupancy 2000**

Towns	Total Housing Units	Owner-occupied		Renter-occupied		Vacant Units
Rock Elm	178	147	82.6%	31	17.4%	0
Pierce County	13,493	9,514		3,501		478

### **C. Housing Characteristics**

Table 2.2 shows Rock elm (2.81) has a larger average owner-occupied household size than the county (2.79).

Table 2.2: **Average Household Size**

Towns	Owner-occupied Units	Renter-occupied Units
Rock Elm	2.81	2.94
Pierce County	2.79	2.26

Table 2.3 shows the distribution of units per structure as a percentage of the Town and County's total housing structures

Table 2.3: **Housing Units by Type**

Towns	Single Family		Two Family		Multi-Family		Mobile Home	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rock Elm	179	93.2%	0	0%	3	1.6%	10	5.2%
Pierce County	10,072	74.6 %	656	4.9%	1,949	14.4%	806	6.0%

Table 2.4: **Housing Stock \* Year Structure Built**

Towns	Pre 1939		1940-59		1960-69		1970-79		1980-89		1990-94		1995-98		1999- March 200	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rock Elm	124	64.6	14	7.3	4	2.1	24	12.5	13	6.8	4	2.1	5	2.6	4	2.1
Pierce County		27.2		10.9		9.6		18.3		14.9		7.2		9.4		2.4

### **D. Housing Values**

Table 2.5 shows that the median value of a residence in Rock Elm is substantially lower than the median value in Pierce County.

Table 2.5: **Housing Trends 8 Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units**

Towns	1980	1990	2000	% change 1980-90	% change 1990-2000
Rock Elm	\$20,600	\$32,500	\$74,200	57.8%	128.3%
Pierce County	\$47,900	\$66,500	\$123,100	36.7%	87.9%

### **E. Affordability of Housing**

Does the supply of housing and its pricing match the ability of households to purchase an affordable home? Tables 2.6 and 2.7 illustrate the percent of income owners and renters apply to

housing costs. A recognized HUD standard for housing expenses is 30% or less of household income.

**Table 2.6: Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of household Income (1999)**

	Less than 15%	15.0-19.9%	20.0-24.9%	25.0-29.9%	30.0-34.9%	35% or more
Towns						
Rock Elm	35.9%	12.8%	17.9%	10.3%	5.1%	17.9%
Pierce County	34.4%	18.1%	18.1%	11.6%	5.5%	12.3%

**Table 2.7: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (1999)**

	Less than 15%	15.0-19.9%	20.0-24.9%	25.0-29.9%	30.0-34.9%	35% or more
Towns						
Rock Elm	20.0%	20.0%	20.0 %	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%
Pierce County	24.2%	19.6%	14.9%	9.2%	5.0%	5.6%

## **F. Housing Projections**

Tables 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10 shows projected household trends based on forecasted populations and average household size.

**Table 2.8: Housing Trends \* Number of Housing Units**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	% change 1970-80	% change 1980-90	% change 1990-2000
Towns							
Rock Elm	180	203	194	193	12.8%	-4.4%	-0.5%
Pierce County	7,826	10,354	11,536	13,493	32.3%	11.4%	17.0%

**Table 2.9: Household Projections \* 2000-2025**

	Census 2000	Projection 2005	Projection 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025
Towns						
Rock Elm	178	180	183	185	186	188
Pierce County	13,015	13,825	14,782	15,656	16,539	17,339

**Table 2.10: Housing Tenure**

	Occupied Housing Units No.	Owner -Occupied units No.	%	Renter-Occupied Units No.	%
Towns	178	147	82.6%	31	17.4%
Rock Elm					
Pierce County	13,015	9,514	73.1%	3,501	26.9%



**Table 2.11: Population Trends**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% change 1960-70	% change 1970-80	% change 1980-90	% change 1990-2000
Towns									
Rock Elm	706	638	654	529	504	-9.6%	2.5%	-20.6%	-2.9%
Pierce County	22,503	26,652	31,149	32,765	36,804	18.4%	16.9%	5.2%	12.3%

**Table 2.12: Year Householder Moved into Unit**

	pre 1969		1970-79		1980-89		1990-94		1995-98		1999 to March 2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Town												
Rock Elm	43	23.5%	28	15.2%	26	14.1%	39	21.2%	35	19.0%	13	7.1%
Pierce County		10.2%		11.0%		16.2%		17.0%		27.6%		18.0%

**Table 2.13: Housing Unit Values \* Owner-Occupied (1999)**

	Under \$50,000	\$50,000- \$99,999	\$100,000- \$149,999	\$150,000- \$199,999	\$200,000- \$999,999	\$300,000- \$499,999	\$500,000- \$999,999	\$1,000,000 or more	Median
Town									
Rock Elm	33.3%	33.3%	28.2%	0%	5.1%	0%	0%	0%	74,200
Peirce County	4.2%	29.3%	36.9%	16.4%	9.5%	3.3%	0.3%	0%	123,100

## **G. Housing Agencies and Programs**

### **-Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)**

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority serves Wisconsin residents and communities by providing information and creative financing to stimulate and preserve affordable housing, small business, and agribusiness. WHEDA offers programs for both single and multi-family units. Below are examples of projects:

1. WHEDA Multifamily Loans.
2. New construction.
3. Acquisition and or rehabilitation of existing properties.
4. Historic preservation.
5. Community based residential facilities.
6. Assisted living facilities.
7. Section 8 properties

### **WHEDA Home Ownership Mortgage Homes (HOME)**

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) provides Home Ownership Mortgage Loans ( HOME ). The objective is to provide low interest, fixed rate mortgage loans to help low and moderate income individuals and families buy a home with below market rate interest. Eligible applicants include first time home buyers, a purchaser of property in a targeted area, or renovation of older homes. The home buyer must meet current income requirements and have stable income and credit history.

### **WHEDA Home Improvement Loans**

WHEDA provides Home Improvement Loans. The objective is to provide affordable home improvement loans to low and moderate income homeowners. Eligible applicants include

homeowners with good employment credit histories whose income is within current guidelines. The loans range from about \$1,000.00 to \$15,000.00 for 1 - 15 years.

### **WHEDA Paint & Fix-up Grant**

WHEDA provides a Paint and Fix-up Grant. The objective of this grant is to provide financial assistance to communities for painting and fixing up homes in specific neighborhoods. Two grants up to \$300.00 each for painting and repair, respectively are available.

### **-Wisconsin Department of Housing and Intergovernmental Relations - Bureau of Housing (DHR-BOH)**

More than \$40 Million is distributed annually to improve the supply of affordable housing for Wisconsin residents. The Bureau of Housing develops state housing policy and provides housing information and technical assistance. The Bureau of Housing is involved in the following programs:

1. Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) and community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
2. Programs for persons with special needs (Homeless)
3. State housing funds through local housing organizations.
4. Assistance programs with those of other state and local housing agencies

## **H. Goals, Objectives and Recommendations**

### **1. Goals:**

- a. Encourage the development of an adequate supply and mix of housing types for individuals of all income and ability levels.
- b. Encourage construction in areas of non-productive agriculture land, while discouraging development that would negatively affect historical or natural features.

### **2. Objectives:**

- a. Encourage reclaiming, upgrading, or reconstruction of current housing.
- b. Encourage removal of dilapidated, falling down structures.
- c. Encourage removal of equipment and materials that are in violation of county zoning ordinances and rules.

### **3. Recommendations:**

- a. Encourage the use of conservation design principles. Conservation developments are those that meet or exceed the following guidelines:
  1. "Shield" development from main roads through natural vegetation and topography.
  2. Provide vegetation buffers between building sites and sensitive environmental areas.
  3. Preserve mature trees, vegetation, and other attributes that relate to the site's history or natural character.

4. Create interconnected networks of streets and trails with connections to the larger community.
  5. Integrate natural resources into the development design as aesthetic and conservation landscape elements.
  6. Restore degraded environmental areas within the development, such as streams and wetlands.
  7. Encourage Best Management Practices, BMPs, for storm and water management. Typical BMPs include overland transfer, natural landscaping to increase infiltration and reduce runoff, bio infiltration systems, residential roof runoff directed to pervious yard area, and minimizing impervious surface ratios for development sites.
  8. Cluster development in a manner so as to maximize visually significant, unfragmented woodlands and open spaces.
  9. Design buildings and driveways on hillsides to follow the natural terrain in a manner that minimizes erosion and soil disturbance.
  10. Place all utilities underground.
  11. Encourage intelligent light design thereby preserving the dark night sky.
- b. Encourage the use of the design guidelines for all development as set forth by the Rock Elm Comprehensive Planning Commission.
1. Land use patterns and site designs shall preserve the hillsides, scenic vistas, woodlands, wildlife habitat, and associated rare features found in the region.
  2. An emphasis is placed on allowing the natural landscape to dominate.
- c. The Town Comprehensive Planning Commission will develop a site plan review process that will be added to the Comprehensive Plan at a later date.

## **Element 3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The economic viability of a community is essential to the quality of life and to the ability of government to finance services needed by residents and businesses. Rock Elm Township is not different from other communities. Agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses return different levels of revenue and require different levels of municipal services.

The area's economy has changed considerably in the last fifty years. Two-income families, the automobile, and accepted commute times have changed who conducts business in the communities and when. The community's future economic vitality and stability will depend upon capitalizing on these positives, creatively working in cooperation with the business community to have a well-balanced and diversified economic strategy.

Technology has brought changes to agricultural and industrial businesses. Through improved waste treatment and best management practices, manufacturing facilities are capable of being as clean as any office complex. In today's world, industries often are evaluated on their use of local skills and talents, their effect on the environment and quality of life, and how they affect municipal services. And any proposed economic development should be judged based on its ability to improve the fiscal health of the Township.

Economic growth means that new businesses will start to pay a share of local property taxes, making the share for agricultural and residential property owners a little less. Economic development also means jobs for residents. In Rock Elm's case, agriculture will continue to dominate the economic sector. A "buy local focus" would also help grow the economy while maintaining its rural integrity.

### **A. Existing Conditions**

This Element contains a compilation of background information required for the Comprehensive Plan. At the end of this Element are goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to attract and retain businesses that are consistent with the overall land use and environmental objectives of the community. As required by Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001.(2)(f), this Element includes an assessment of the new businesses and industries that are desired in the Town. This Element also includes the Town's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and an inventory of environmentally contaminated sites.

### **B. Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified by the Plan Commission during the preparation of the Rock Elm Township Comprehensive Plan.

Table 3.1: **Strengths and Weaknesses of the Town of Rock Elm**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Citizens care about Town's future	Residential development is decreasing and causing some questions for the Town
Rural ambiance	Large areas of property are being divided into smaller lots
Small town atmosphere	Development is not always done with the community as a whole in mind
Open spaces	Infrastructure is set up for slow paced growth, if any
Agricultural landscape and heritage	Taxes are too high and imbalanced
Scenic-rolling hills, forests and coulees	Too many deteriorating and blighted houses and structures in the community
Uncrowded and quiet	Rising costs to maintain infrastructure in Rock Elm
Clean air and streams	Declining and aging population
	There is a broad range of opinions within the community on growth
Wildlife - bird watching, hunting, hiking	Challenges with high poverty rate
Winding back roads	Possible ground water contamination in Rock Elm
Highway 72	
Plum Creek and Nugget Lake	
Interesting Geology	

### **C. Desired New Business**

- Family-owned restaurants

### **D. Labor Force Trends**

The Town's labor force is the portion of the population that is employed or available for work. The labor force includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment.

Table 3.2: **Labor Force Trends**

#### **Town of Rock Elm**

Employed civilian population 16 years and over 100.0%

#### **OCCUPATION**

Management, professional, and related occupations 30.7%

Service occupations 10.0%

Sales and office occupations	13.2%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	10.0%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	10.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	26.1%

#### **INDUSTRY**

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	30.7%
Construction	4.6%
Manufacturing	20.0%
Wholesale trade	1.8%
Retail trade	2.5%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.4%
Information	0.0%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and retail and leasing	3.6%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	6.1%
Educational, health and social services	16.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	4.6%
Other services (except public administration)	2.9%
Public administration	1.4%

#### **CLASS OF WORKER**

Private wage and salary workers	58.6%
Government workers	11.1%
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	27.5%
Unpaid family workers	2.9%

### **E. Economic Base**

The Pierce County economy is supported by many strong employers. Table 6.3 outlines the top employers in both the private and public sectors.

**TABLE 3.3: Largest Employers in Pierce County**

<u>EMPLOYER</u>	<u>NO. OF EMPLOYEES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>INDUSTRY</u>
University of Wisconsin-River Falls	700	River Falls	Education
River Falls School District	450	River Falls	Education
County of Pierce	393	Ellsworth	Government
Ellsworth School District	245	Ellsworth	Education
Thomas & Betts/ Meyer Industries	216	Hager City	Lighting Equipment & Steel Fabrication
Prescott School District	186	Prescott	Education
City of River Falls	151	River Falls	Government
Bergquist Company	145	Prescott	Manufacturing
Spring Valley Health Care	130	Spring Valley	Skilled Nursing Care
Nash Finch - Econo Foods	125	River Falls	Retail
Spring Valley School District	111	Spring Valley	Education
MAI/Genesis Industries	107	Elmwood & Spring Valley	Plastic Molding

Bortoloc Health Care System	100	Ellsworth	Skilled Nursing Care
Elmwood School District	96	Elmwood	Education
Dick's Market	91	River Falls	Retail
Heritage of Elmwood	88	Elmwood	Skilled Nursing Care
Helmer Printing Inc.	75	Beldenville	Printing
Plum City School District	71	Plum City	Education
First National Bank/River Falls	71	River Falls	Banking
St. Croix Care Center	61	Prescott	Skilled Nursing Care
Ptacek's IGA	61	Prescott	Retail
Plum City Care Center	59	Plum City	Skilled Nursing Care
Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery	58	Ellsworth	Dairy Products

Source: Pierce County Economic Development Corporation

## **F. Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment is an important element of a community's labor force. According to the 2000 Census, 46.3% of the Town's population, ages 25 and older, were high school graduates. This compares to 35.0% for Pierce County. The percentage of Town residents, ages 25 and over, holding a bachelor's degree was 11.3%—lower than Pierce County (16.9%).

**TABLE 3.4: Educational Attainment**

	NUMBER	PERCENT
<b>Town of Rock Elm</b>		
Population 25 years and over	335	100.0%
Less than grade 9	31	9.3%
Grade 9–12, no diploma	13	3.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	155	46.3%
Some college, no degree	78	23.3%
Associate degree	13	3.9%
Bachelor's degree	38	11.3%
Graduate or professional degree	7	2.1%
<b>PIERCE COUNTY*</b>		
Population 25 years and over	21,542	100.0%
Less than grade 9	944	4.4%
Grade 9–12, no diploma	1,294	6.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	6,531	35.0%
Some college, no degree	4,854	22.5%
Associate degree	1,612	7.5%
Bachelor's degree	3,646	16.9%
Graduate or professional degree	1,661	7.7%

\*Includes city and village data.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce—Bureau of the Census, 2000

## **G. Commuting Patterns**

Table 3.5 illustrates that 55.7 % of Town workers drive alone to a place of work. The mode of transportation can best be explained since most jobs are not located in Rock Elm and there is no

public transportation. Like the rest of the county, mean travel time to work is in the range of 31.3 minutes.

**TABLE 3.5: Transportation • Journey to Work, 2000**

**Town of Rock Elm**

**MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND CARPOOLING PERCENT**

Workers 16 and over	100.0%
Car, truck or van	68.2%
Drove alone	55.7%
Carpooled	12.5%
In 2-person carpool	8.2%
In 3-person carpool	2.1%
In 4-person carpool	2.1%
In 5- or 6-person carpool	0
In 7- or-more-person carpool	0
Workers per car, truck, or van 1.12 persons	
Motorcycle	0
Bicycle	0
Walked	7.1%
Worked at home	24.6%

**TRAVEL TIME TO WORK**

Workers who did not work at home	100.0%
Less than 19 minutes	14.7%
10 to 14 minutes	7.6%
15 to 19 minutes	9.0%
20 to 24 minutes	7.1%
25 to 29 minutes	9.5%
30 to 34 minutes	10.0%
35 to 44 minutes	15.2%
45 to 59 minutes	15.2%
60 to 89 minutes	8.5%
90 or more minutes	3.3%
Mean travel time to work (minutes 31.3 minutes)	

**TIME LEAVING HOME TO GO TO WORK**

Workers who did not work at home	100.0%
5:00 to 5:59 a.m.	13.7%
6:00 to 6:29 a.m.	11.8%
6:30 a.m. to 6:59 a.m.	7.6%
7:00 to 7:29 a.m.	13.3%
7:30 to 7:59 a.m.	6.6%
8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m.	4.3%
8:30 to 8:59 a.m.	1.9%



9:00 to 11:00 a.m.	12.3%
12:00 to 3:59 p.m.	12.8%
All other times	15.6%

**PIERCE COUNTY\***

**PERCENT**

**MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND CARPOOLING**

Workers 16 and over	100.0%
Car, truck or van	86.7%
Drove alone	75.1%
Carpooled	11.6%
In 2-person carpool	9.2%
In 3-person carpool	1.1%
In 4-person carpool	0.5%
In 5- or 6-person carpool	0.3%
In 7- or-more-person carpool	0.5%
Workers per car, truck, or van	1.08 persons
Public Transportation	0.4%
Bus or trolley bus	0.2%
Taxicab	0.1%
Motorcycle	0.1%
Bicycle	0.3%
Walked	6.5%
Other means	0.4%
Worked at home	5.6%

**TRAVEL TIME TO WORK**

Workers who did not work at home	100.0%
Less than 19 minutes	23.8%
10 to 14 minutes	11.3%
15 to 19 minutes	10.6%
20 to 24 minutes	10.5%
25 to 29 minutes	5.7%
30 to 34 minutes	10.6%
35 to 44 minutes	8.5%
45 to 59 minutes	11.7%
60 to 89 minutes	5.6%
90 or more minutes	1.8%
Mean travel time to work (minutes 25.1 minutes)	

**TIME LEAVING HOME TO GO TO WORK**

**PERCENT**

Workers who did not work at home	100.0%
5:00 to 5:59 a.m.	12.1%
6:00 to 6:29 a.m.	10.9%
6:30 a.m. to 6:59 a.m.	11.2%
7:00 to 7:29 a.m.	12.5%
7:30 to 7:59 a.m.	11.4%

8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m.	7.6%
8:30 to 8:59 a.m.	3.4%
9:00 to 11:00 a.m.	6.3%
12:00 to 3:59 p.m.	11.4%
All other times	13.2%

*\*Includes city and village data.*

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce—Bureau of the Census, 2000*

## **H. Employment Projections**

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's "Pierce County Workforce Profile" provides insight into the regional employment forecast for the County. This section illustrates employment forecasts for Pierce County and for the entire State of Wisconsin. Table 6.6 lists the top 20 occupations experiencing the fastest growth rates and the most job openings in Western Wisconsin. Many of the fastest growing occupations fall into either the "management, professional or related occupations" category or the "service" category, and there are particular growth trends in computer software, support occupations, and medical support occupations. The areas with the most openings are generally "service occupations," with some exceptions.

**TABLE 3.6: Occupation Projections for West Central Wisconsin • 2002–2012**

### **Top 20 Occupations with Most Jobs in 2012**

OCCUPATION TITLE	EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATE		PERCENT CHANGE	EDUCATION TYPICALLY REQUIRED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE
	2002	2012			
Retail Salespersons	5,550	6,300	13.5%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$21,836
Cashiers	5,520	6,230	12.9%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$15,547
Registered Nurses	3,010	3,940	30.9%	Bachelor's or Assoc. degree	\$47,381
Comb Food	3,200	3,880	21.3%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$14,782
Prep/Serv Wrk/Incl Fast					
Nursing Aides/ Orderlies/Attendants	3,060	3,790	23.9%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$21,243
Waiters/Waitresses	3,300	3,760	13.9%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$15,646
Truck Drivers/ Heavy/Tractor-Trailer	2,840	3,450	21.5%	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$33,761
Team Assemblers	3,430	3,220	-6.1%	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$24,751
Janitors/Cleanrs	2,830	3,220	13.8%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$21,870
Ex Maids/Hskpng					
Labrs/Frght/Stock/ Matrl Movers/Hand	3,000	3,100	3.3%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$20,460
Office Clerks/General	2,750	2,990	8.7%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$21,285
Bookkeep/Account/ Auditing Clerks	2,410	2,520	4.6%	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$25,215
Secretaries/ Ex Legal/Medical/Exec	2,440	2,300	-5.7%	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$25,125
Customer Service Reps	1,880	2,260	20.2%	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$27,788
Stock Clerks/Order Fillers	2,240	2,230	-0.4%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$20,553
Sales Reps/Whlsl/Mfg/ Ex Tech/Sci Prod	1,880	2,230	18.6%	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$48,927
General and Operations Mgrs	1,790	2,080	16.2%	Bachelor's degree or more, plus work exp.	\$81,908
Elemen Schl Tchrs Ex Special Ed	1,840	2,030	10.3%	Bachelor's degree	\$41,498
Bartenders	1,820	1,940	6.6%	Short-term on-the-job training	\$16,880
Executive Secretaries/ Admin Assts	1,770	1,890	6.8%	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$28,740

*Source: DWD, Office of Economic Advisors, September 2004*

## **I. Economic Development Programs**

### **State of Wisconsin Economic Development Plans and Programs**

#### ***Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)***

This program helps towns, cities, and villages in Wisconsin attract industrial and commercial growth in underdeveloped and blighted areas. A city or village can designate a specific area within its boundaries as a TIF district and develop a plan to improve its property values. Taxes generated by the increased property values pay for land acquisition or needed public works. A more limited TIF is available to towns.

#### ***The Early Planning Grant Program (EPG)***

This program helps individual entrepreneurs and small businesses throughout Wisconsin obtain the professional services necessary to evaluate the feasibility of a proposed start up or expansion.

#### ***WHEDA-Linked Deposit Loan Subsidy (LIDL)***

This program helps women and minority-owned businesses by offering low interest loans through local lenders. The LIDL Program can be used for expenses including land, buildings and equipment.

#### ***WHEDA-Small Business Guarantee Program***

This program offers a pledge of support on a bank loan. Loan proceeds can be used to expand or acquire a small business. It can also be used to start a day care business.

#### ***Wisconsin Financing Alternatives***

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce is an active partner with new, existing, and start-up businesses and offers financing and incentive programs. Most of the programs are low interest loans that are repaid to a local unit of government. On a limited basis, the Department of Commerce offers programs that are structured as grants or as forgivable loans.

#### ***Small Business Administration (SBA) Financing***

The Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation (WBD) is a private, non-profit corporation serving the long-term credit needs of small business. WBD is certified by the SBA as a “development company,” thereby enabling it to package certain SBA loan programs that are blended with bank loans and a down payment from the business owner.

## **J. Environmentally Contaminated Sites**

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires communities to evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program (ERP) maintains a list of contaminated sites. The WDNR identifies “brownfields” as “abandoned or under-utilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination.” Properties listed in the WDNR database are self-reported and do not represent a comprehensive listing of possible brownfields in the community. WDNR has not identified any brownfield sites in the Town.

## **K. Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations**

### **1. Goals:**

- a. Define the types of business growth that are desired and appropriate in Rock Elm that will improve our fiscal strength while preserving the rural character and natural beauty of our area.

### **2. Objectives:**

- a. Define, preserve and enhance the unique aspects of Rock Elm that contribute to the overall quality of life.
- b. Discourage strip commercial development.
- c. Encourage and promote diverse agribusiness in appropriate locations, and environmentally friendly recreational and small tourism businesses.
- d. Encourage various forms of agriculture through land use policies.
- e. Establish standards and support home-based and rural business, while maintaining a clean, rural environment.
- f. Limit commercial development to geographic areas that have access to major roads, are served by public utilities, and have minimal environmental constraints.
- g. Help foster “buy local” programs.
- h. Identify growing industries within the township and within the region.

### **3. Recommendations:**

- a. Promote sustainable development, energy conservation, and green building techniques in new commercial development.
- b. Promote small commercial “cottage” businesses and encourage the sourcing of local goods and services.
- c. Emphasize agricultural, recreational, and small business as the basic economic development focus of the Town.
- d. Protect viable agricultural operations from land use conflict arising from non-farm residential encroachments into actively farmed areas. This can be facilitated by sound land use planning and by protecting productive agricultural areas from premature conversions to non-agricultural uses.
- e. Promote and encourage the installation of high speed internet service.

## **Element 4: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The term “community facilities” and “utilities” are composed of both public and private services provided by a community. Some of the following services are discussed in this Element: sheriff and fire departments, refuse disposal, recycling sites, phone service and education.

Community services are often viewed by residents with notable interest since traditionally many of them are provided by local government. These services are often a measure of the quality of lifestyle within a community. Thus the manner in which they are provided typically reflects on the community as a place to live and/or work.

These are the community resources that may at times be most susceptible to so-called “growing pains” as a community evolves. For example recreational areas, schools, and protective services must be closely examined in relation to the community’s needs over time. Care should be taken to not overextend or fail to foresee needed expansion of such services, which is an important consideration for future development. As a part of the comprehensive planning process, the Town’s public facilities were reviewed and considered at the present time to be in a condition to meet the current needs of the community.

Regarding the Town’s future, in order to maintain a high level of public services, the community may need to upgrade or expand its existing facilities. The recommendations contained in this Element are based on general long-range planning considerations. They should not be substituted for detailed studies required before expending substantial community resources and undertaking specific public works projects.

### **A. Existing Conditions**

The purpose of this section is to inventory, map and forecast utilities and community facilities in the Town. Utilities and community facilities, often referred to as public works, consist of the physical infrastructure that allows a community to function and grow. Community facilities may include libraries, municipal offices, schools, police stations, fire stations, parks, etc.

It is expected that the population in the Town of Rock Elm will decline slowly over the next 20 years. Decreasing population will put greater financial burden and impact on remaining citizens and community. Needs of the Town will vary according to growth pressure and to current community requirements.

#### **1. Water Supply**

The Town of Rock Elm currently has no public water service for its residents. Water supplied to Town residents is made possible by private wells.

#### **2. Sanitary Sewer Service**

The disposal of wastewater in the Town of Rock Elm is handled through the use of individual on-site wastewater disposal systems, often referred to as septic systems. Septic systems discharge wastewater to underground drainage fields or septic tanks. There are currently six types of on-site disposal system designs authorized for use in the state: 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. Recent changes to the state's plumbing code (COMM 83) allow for both conventional and advanced pre-treatment systems for residential development. The changes allow properties with soil depths or soil types, that were once unsuitable for conventional septic systems, to now be developed and service by advanced pre-treatment sewage systems. If not properly located or maintained, on-site sewage disposal systems can significantly pollute groundwater.

### **3. Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities**

Recycling is provided by the Town through the county recycling program. Garbage collection is provided through private suppliers or disposal at the Town drop-site for a fee.

**Table 4.1: Recycling drop-off Site**

Rock Elm	Hwy 72
----------	--------

**Table 4.2: Private Solid Waste Haulers/Recyclers -Pierce County**

P.I.G.	PO Box 155, W9724 Hwy, 35 Hager City, WI 54014
Onyx	PO Box 90, 100 Packer Dr. Roberts, WI 54023
Durand Sanitation	W5456 Cty. Rd. V, Durand, WI 54736
Waster Management Inc.	PO Box 143, 250 <sup>th</sup> Summit St., River Falls, WI 54022
Veit Disposal Systems	14000 Veit Place, Rogers, MN 55374
RCD-River City Disposal	314 State Road 35, River Falls, WI 54022
Murtha Sanitation	471 Highway 63, Baldwin, WI 54002

### **4. Telecommunication Facilities**

Nelson Telephone, CenturyTel and Spring Valley Telephone provide local telephone service. Long distance service is available through several providers. Cellular service is also available in the Town through a variety of providers.

### **5. Power Plant, Electricity, and Transmission Lines**

Dunn County Co-op, Pierce-Pepin Co-op, and Xcel Energy provide electricity.

### **6. Libraries**

The Pierce County Books-by-Mail program provides library service for those rural residents unable to get to libraries in Elmwood, Plum City, Ellsworth, Red Wing or Pepin.

**Table 4.3 Pierce County Public Libraries**

Name	Address
Ellsworth Public Library	312 W. Main St., Ellsworth, WI 54011
Elmwood Public Library	111 N. Main St., Elmwood, WI 54740
Plum City Public Library	611 Main St., Plum City, WI 54761
Prescott Public Library	800 Borner St. N., Prescott, WI 54021
River Falls Public library	140 Union St., River Falls, WI 54022

Spring Valley Public Library	E121 S. 2 <sup>nd</sup> St., Spring Valley, WI 54767
------------------------------	--

## 7. Public Buildings

Table 4.4: **Town Facilities**

Rock Elm Town Hall/Garage	Town Hall	N5412 170 <sup>th</sup> St	
---------------------------	-----------	----------------------------	--

## 8. Cemeteries

Table 4.5: **Cemeteries**

Farm Hill Catholic Cemetery
Poplar Hill Cemetery
Rock Elm Cemetery

## 9. Schools

### Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education Facilities

Table 4.6 lists the various primary and secondary public and private school facilities serving the county. The tables list 2005-06 enrollment and capacities of each facility.

TABLE 4.6: **Public School Facilities • Pierce County**

Type	Enrollment 2005-06	Building Capacity
Recommended Range		
<b>Elmwood School District</b>		
Elmwood High School	120	250–350
Elmwood Middle School	64	250–350
Elmwood Elementary School	206	250–350
<b>Plum City School District</b>		
Plum City High School	223	200–250
Plum City Elementary School	160	200–250
<b>Spring Valley School District</b>		
Spring Valley High School	270	*
Spring Valley Middle School	113	*
Spring Valley Elementary School	372	*

*SOURCE: Pierce County School Districts, 2005*

*\*No response (information requested from the school district was not provided).*

## 10. Public Fire and Rescue

Pierce County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to the Town of Rock Elm. Fire protection is provided by the Elmwood Fire Department.

Table 4.7 : **Ambulance Service Providers –Pierce County**

Name	Address	Service Level
Ellsworth Are Ambulance Service	151 S. Plum St., Ellsworth	EMT-Paramedic
Elmwood Are Ambulance Service	223 N. Woodworth St., Elmwood	EMT-Basic
Maiden Rock/Plum City/Stockholm EMS	509 E. Maple Ave., Plum City	EMT-Basic
Prescott Emergency Medical Service	1603 Pine St., Prescott	EMT-Basic
River Falls Area Ambulance Service	175 E. Cedar St., River Falls	EMT-Intermediate
Spring Valley Area Ambulance	407 S. Newman Ave., Spring Valley	EMT-Basic

### 11. Health Care Facilities

Health facilities are located throughout the county with no facilities located in the town. Care facilities are located in Plum City, Pepin, and Red Wing. The closest hospitals are in River Falls, Red Wing, Eau Claire, Menomonie and the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

TABLE 4.8: **Health and Medical Services**

### CHIROPRACTORS

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NAME</u>
<b>Ellsworth</b>	Ellsworth Chiropractic Nyeggen Chiropractic
<b>Elmwood</b>	Family Chirocare-Elmwood Branch
<b>Prescott</b>	Prescott Chiropractic Williamson Chiropractic Office
<b>River Falls</b>	Advanced Chiropractic Back & Neck Pain Center Ltd Chiropractic Family Health Center DC Haines, Art Lehl Chiropractic Kinnikinnic Chiropractic Clinic River Falls Chiropractic Health Center
<b>Spring Valley</b>	Spilde Chiropractic Clinic

### DENTISTS

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NAME</u>
<b>Ellsworth</b>	Health Centered Dentistry Palmquist, Gary A
<b>Prescott</b>	Gatzke, Gerald O DDS LaVenture, Patrick J DDS Toninato, Michael J DDS
<b>River Falls</b>	Barnes & Smilanich Family Dental Practice



Johnson, Kenneth A Dr  
 Knotek, Tim  
 Nelson, David E DDS

## **HEALTH CLINICS**

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NAME</u>
<b>Elmwood</b>	Red Cedar Clinic - Mayo Health System
<b>Ellsworth</b>	Ellsworth Medical Clinic
	Interstate Medical Center
<b>Prescott</b>	Regina Medical Center
<b>River Falls</b>	River Falls Medical Clinic Ltd
<b>Spring Valley</b>	Spring Valley Clinic

## **HOSPITALS**

<b>River Falls, Wisconsin</b>	River Falls Area Hospital
<b>Red Wing, Minnesota</b>	St. John's Regional Health Center
<b>Twin Cities, Minnesota</b>	Children's Hospital of St. Paul
	Regions Hospital - St. Paul
	St. Joseph's - St. Paul
	University-Fairview – Minneapolis
<b>Menomonie, Wisconsin</b>	Red Cedar Medical Center

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NAME</u>
<b>Ellsworth</b>	American Red Cross
<b>Pierce County</b>	Pierce County Child Support Agency
	Pierce County Family Community Partners
<b>River Falls</b>	Kinship
	PATH 186

*Source: Pierce County Economic Development Corporation*

## **12. Childcare Facilities**

TABLE 4.8: **Childcare Facilities • 2005**

LOCATION NUMBER OF FACILITIES

Rock Elm 0

*Source: Pierce County Health and Human Services*

## **13. Parks and Recreation Facilities**

Rock Elm has one park within the town (Nugget Lake County Park). Also, numerous recreation opportunities exist within a short driving distance throughout Pierce County.

## **B. Utilities and Community Agencies and Programs**

There are a number of programs to assist communities with public works projects. Below are brief descriptions of various agencies and programs. To find out more specific information or which program best fits a community's needs, contact the agency directly.

## **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)**

### **1. Bureau of Community Financial Assistance (DNR-CFA)**

The Bureau of Community Assistance administers a number of grant and loan programs. The Bureau supports projects that protect the public health, the environment and provide recreational opportunities. The Bureau has three major programs:

1. *Environmental Loans*: This is a loan program for drinking water, and wastewater projects.
2. *Environmental Financial Assistance Grants*: This is a grant program for non-point source runoff pollution, recycling, lakes, rivers, municipal flood control and well compensation.
3. *Land & Recreation Financial Assistance Grants*: This is a grant program for conservation, restoration, parks, stewardship, acquisition of land and easements for conservation purposes, recreational facilities and trails, hunter education, forestry, forest fire protection, gypsy moth, household hazardous waste collection, dam rehabilitation and abandonment, dry cleaner chemical remediation, and urban wildlife damage.

### **2. Wisconsin Well Compensation Grant Program**

Another program available through the Wisconsin DNR is the Well Compensation Grant Program. To be eligible for a grant, a person must own a contaminated private water supply that serves a residence or is used for watering livestock. Owners of wells serving commercial properties are not eligible, unless the commercial property also contains a residential unit or apartment. The Well compensation grant program provides partial cost sharing for the following:

- Water testing if it shows the well is contaminated
- Reconstructing a contaminated well
- Constructing a new well
- Connecting to an existing private or public water supply
- Installing a new pump, including the associated piping
- Property abandoning the contaminated well
- Equipment for water treatment
- Providing a temporary bottled or trucked water supply

## **Wisconsin Department of Commerce**

### **1. Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant Program Public Facilities (CDBG-PF)**

This program is designed to assist small communities with public facility improvements. Eligible activities would include publicly owned utility system improvements, streets, sidewalks, disability accessibility projects, and community centers. Local governments including towns, villages, cities, and counties are eligible. Entitlement cities, over 50,000 in population, are not eligible. Federal grant funds are made available on an annual basis. The maximum grant for any single applicant is \$750,000. Grants are only available up to the amount that is adequately justified and documented with engineering or vendor estimates.

## **2. Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant Program Public Facilities (CDBG-PFED)**

This program helps underwrite the cost of municipal infrastructure necessary for business development. This program requires that the result of the project will ultimately induce businesses, create jobs, and invest in the community. More information is available from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

## **C. Goals, Objectives and Recommendations**

### **1. Goals:**

- a. Coordinate development of community facilities and utilities to match the changing needs of the Town population (e.g. recreation, senior/child care facilities, town-owned facilities).

### **2. Objectives:**

- a. Expand Town services only as development warrants such expansion and as Town residents and taxpayers request higher levels of service.
- b. Develop guidelines that require utilities that service new development to use subsurface installation (including phone, electricity, etc.).
- c. Coordinate efficient and cost-effective delivery and access of quality public services with orderly development options, to ensure a well-designed community.
- d. Encourage broadband development services (or its equivalent) in the Town.

### **3. Recommendations:**

- a. Consistent with the desires of Town residents, the Town of Rock Elm should continue to provide a limited number of basic facilities and services to its residents and businesses. The planning process did not identify the need nor the desire to significantly increase the level of services or facilities provided to Town residents and businesses by the Town at this time.
- b. The Town should carefully monitor its growth rate to ensure that new development in the Town does not overburden the ability of the Town and other service providers to provide a basic level of services to Town residents and businesses.
- c. The Town should consider the land use planning implications of the new COMM 83 rules. Specifically, the Town should understand that the new COMM 83 regulations will probably allow development to occur in areas where private, on-site waste disposal systems were previously not feasible due to poor soil considerations.
- d. The adequacy of existing Town government facilities should be reviewed.

## **Element 5: TRANSPORTATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A transportation system represents a key element in the operation and livability of a community. Of particular importance, especially for smaller communities, is the local road system, which local governments are charged to maintain.

A wisely conceived road system can result in many benefits and long term cost savings for a community. Being an integral aspect of the community, it plays a major role in the efficiency, safety, and overall desirability of the community as a place to live and work.

### **A. Existing Conditions**

This Element includes a compilation of background information, maps and programs to guide the future development and maintenance of various modes of transportation in and immediately around the Town of Rock Elm. This Element also reviews state and regional transportation plans and programs as required under Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 66.1001.

In analyzing the road system, several aspects and factors can be examined in an effort to discern possible shortcomings as well as plans for future needs. Analysis of traffic patterns, input from individuals at the local, county, and state levels, and a field survey of the roads can all aid in providing recommendations that would address future transportation needs in the Township.

To begin the analysis of Rock Elm, an examination of the existing configuration or pattern of the road system is in order. The road system is composed of three levels of government jurisdiction. It includes the local roads maintained by the Town, the County system of trunk highways and the State and Federal highway systems. The County trunk highways and local roads comprise the greatest mileage.

#### **1. Existing Transportation Facilities**

A variety of transportation facilities serve the area and its surrounding environs. These include the local street network, trails, rails, access to air and water transport, and other facilities.

#### **2. Local Roadway Network**

The street network shapes access and circulation through the County. Public streets in the area are classified by their primary function, as described below:

**a. Principal Arterials** – Serve longer intra-urban trips and traffic traveling through urban areas. They carry high traffic volumes and provide links to major activity centers.

**b. Minor Arterials** – Provide intra-community continuity and service trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials. The minor arterial system interconnects with the urban arterial system and provides system connections to the rural collectors.

**c. Collectors** – Provide both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. These facilities collect traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it onto the arterial system. In the central business district, and in other areas of like development and traffic density, the collector system may include the street grid that forms the basic unit of traffic circulation.

**d. Local Streets** – Local streets primarily provide direct access to adjacent land and access to higher order systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility.

### 3. Highways

One main roadway, STH 72, supports the Town of Rock Elm, which is a two lane highway. Currently two lane highways can accommodate 13,500 vehicles per day.

### 4. County Roads

County roads in Rock Elm include CC, S, G, P, PP, and HH.

### 5. Town Roads

Rock Elm has 42.45 miles of town roads.

### 6. Rustic Roads

The Town of Rock Elm has no Rustic Roads.

**TABLE 5.1: Functional Classification and Mileage of Local Roads**

	Gross Miles	County Miles	Municipal Miles	<u>COUNTY JURISDICTION</u>			<u>MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION</u>		
				Arterial	Collector	Local	Arterial	Collector	Local
Towns									
Rock Elm	60.56	18.11	42.45	0	14.57	3.54	0	0	42.45
Pierce County	248.38			7.78	194.26	46.34	0	0	

*SOURCE: State of Wisconsin, Department of Transportation, 2005*

### 7. Water

The Town of Rock Elm has one seasonal recreational dock at Nugget Lake County Park.

### 8. Rail Freight

There is no rail system in Rock Elm. The closest rail station is in Red Wing Minnesota. A two-line rail system follows along the river through Pierce County. Between 15 and 40 freight trains use the tracks in a 24-hour period.

**TABLE 5.2: Railway Service • Pierce County**

<u>NAME OF RAILWAY SERVICE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Burlington Northern	Prescott, WI
Burlington Northern Inc.	Depot Bay City, WI
Chicago North Western Transportation Co.	Hastings, MN
St. Croix-Tower Milwaukee-Burlington	Hastings, MN
Wisconsin Central Ltd.	New Richmond, WI

## 9. Air Transportation

The nearest airport supporting the Town of Rock Elm is the Red Wing Airport. The new expansion included a 5,000 ft. runway that is capable of handling corporate jets. There are no plans to expand or change the runways or services to accommodate commercial aircraft.

TABLE 5.3: Airports • Pierce County and Vicinity

<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SCHEDULED SERVICE</u>
<u>AIRPORTS</u>		
Red Wing Regional Airport	Bay City, WI	No
St. Paul Downtown	St. Paul, MN	No
Chippewa Valley Regional	Eau Claire, WI	Yes
Mpls./St. Paul International	Bloomington, MN	Yes
Menomonie	Menomonie, WI	No

## 10. Passenger Rail

Passenger service is provided by Amtrak in Minneapolis/St. Paul and Red Wing, Minnesota.

## 11. Biking

Currently there are no bike trails in the Town

TABLE 5.4: Transportation • Journey to Work, 2000

	<u>PERCENT</u>
Town of Rock Elm	
<u>MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND CARPOOLING</u>	
Workers 16 and over	100.0%
Car, truck or van	68.2%
Drove alone	55.7%
Carpooled	12.5%
In 2-person carpool	8.2%
In 3-person carpool	2.1%
In 4-person carpool	2.1%
In 5- or 6-person carpool	0
In 7- or more-person carpool	0
Workers per car, truck, or van	1.12 persons
Walked	7.1%
Other means	0
Worked at home	24.6%
<u>TRAVEL TIME TO WORK</u>	
<u>PERCENT</u>	
Workers who did not work at home	100.0%
Less than 19 minutes	14.7%
10 to 14 minutes	7.6%

15 to 19 minutes	9.0%
20 to 24 minutes	7.1%
25 to 29 minutes	9.5%
30 to 34 minutes	10.0%
35 to 44 minutes	15.2%
45 to 59 minutes	15.2%
60 to 89 minutes	8.5%
90 or more minutes	3.3%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	31.3 minutes

<u>TIME LEAVING HOME TO GO TO WORK</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Workers who did not work at home	100.0%
5:00 to 5:59 a.m.	13.7%
6:00 to 6:29 a.m.	11.8%
6:30 a.m. to 6:59 a.m.	7.6%
7:00 to 7:29 a.m.	13.3%
7:30 to 7:59 a.m.	6.6%
8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m.	4.3%
8:30 to 8:59 a.m.	1.9%
9:00 to 11:00 a.m.	12.3%
12:00 to 3:59 p.m.	12.8%
All other times	15.6%

PIERCE COUNTY\*

<u>MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND CARPOOLING</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Workers 16 and over	100.0%
Car, truck or van	86.7%
Drove alone	75.1%
Carpooled	11.6%
In 2-person carpool	19.2%
In 3-person carpool	1.1%
In 4-person carpool	0.5%
In 5- or 6-person carpool	0.3%
In 7- or-more-person carpool	0.5%
Workers per car, truck, or van	1.08 persons
Public Transportation	0.4%
Bus or trolley bus	0.2%
Taxicab	0.1%
Motorcycle	0.1%
Bicycle	0.3%
Walked	6.5%
Other means	0.4%
Worked at home	5.6%

<u>TRAVEL TIME TO WORK</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Workers who did not work at home	100.0%
Less than 19 minutes	23.8%
10 to 14 minutes	11.3%
15 to 19 minutes	10.6%
20 to 24 minutes	10.5%
25 to 29 minutes	5.7%
30-34 minutes	10.6%
35 to 44 minutes	8.5%
45 to 59 minutes	11.7%
60 to 89 minutes	5.6%
90 or more minutes	1.8%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	25.1 minutes

<u>TIME LEAVING HOME TO GO TO WORK</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Workers who did not work at home	100.0%
5:00 to 5:59 a.m.	12.1%
6:00 to 6:29 a.m.	10.9%
6:30 to 6:59 a.m.	11.2%
7:00 to 7:29 a.m.	12.5%
7:30 to 7:59 a.m.	11.4%
8:00 to 8:29 a.m.	7.6%
8:30 to 8:59 a.m.	3.4%
9:00 to 11:00 a.m.	6.3%
12:00 to 3:59 p.m.	11.4%
All other times	13.2%

\*Includes city and village data.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce—Bureau of the Census, 2000

**TABLE 5.5: Trucking Companies • Pierce County**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>TRUCKING COMPANIES</u>	
Betterndorf Transfer Inc.	River Falls, WI
Conzemius Co.	Prescott, WI
DEM Federated Co-Op Transport	Ellsworth, WI
Daniel Miller Trucking	Prescott, WI
Frazier LJ Trucking	Ellsworth, WI
HDL Transport	Maiden Rock, WI
Hager City Express	Hager City, WI
K & D Transport	Spring Valley, WI
Knudsen Trucking Inc	Hager City, WI
	Ellsworth, WI
Madison Freight Systems, Inc.	River Falls, WI
Mid States Express	River Falls, WI
Moelter Grain Inc	River Falls, WI



Monson Trucking Inc	Ellsworth, WI
Morrison Trucking	Hager City, WI
Murphy CW Freight Line Inc	Hager City, WI
Peterson Trucking	Ellsworth, WI
R & F Co	River Falls, WI
Ship It Express Inc.	Prescott, WI
St. Croix Valley Transport Inc.	Prescott, WI
TMW Transport Inc	River Falls, WI
Wilson Dedicated Services	Bay City, WI

TABLE 5.6: 2004-2009 **Six Year Highway Improvement Program • Pierce County**

Project Title	Year	<u>Project Description</u>
Hastings-Prescott (St. Croix RV BR-847-0040)	2005	This project will repair and upgrade the electrical, mechanical and hydraulic systems on the St. Croix River bascule bridge.
SHRM-Prescott-Ellsworth (STH 29-USH 63)	2005	Diamond grind the existing concrete pavement to provide a safer and smoother riding surface.
HES:USH 10, CTH C Intersection	2005	This safety project will improve intersection geometrics and construct bypass and turning lanes.
River Falls-Spring Valley (Van Buren Rd-Cleveland St.)	2006	Construct paved pedestrian/bike path adjacent to STH 29
River Falls-Spring Valley (USH 63-CTH CC)	2005	Mill to remove old roadway surface and replace with new asphaltic pavement.
SHRM-Prescott-River Falls (US 10-Cemetery Rd.)	07-09	Diamond grind the existing concrete pavement to provide a safer and smoother riding surface.
Nelson-HAGRCTY (So. Maiden Rock-385th)	07-09	This project will repair or Reconstruct retaining walls adjacent to the highway.
Red Wing-Ellsworth (Mississippi River-USH 10)	07-09	Resurface existing roadway with new asphaltic pavement.

HES:USH 63, CTH VV & 150th Ave. Intersection	2005	This safety improvement project will construct dedicated turning lanes and install signal lights.
HES:Red Wing-Ellsworth (STH 35 Intersection)	2005	This project will improve intersection safety by adding turning lanes and traffic signals.
Ellsworth-River Falls (Cairns St.-920th St.)	2006	This safety project will improve intersection geometrics and construct bypass and turning lanes.

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2005*

## **B. Transportation Programs**

### **1. State and Regional Transportation Plans**

Wisconsin Statutes §66.1001(2)(c) requires communities to compare the local governmental units objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. It also requires communities to incorporate applicable state, regional and other transportation plans into their Comprehensive Plan. This section satisfies this statutory requirement. This Element's goals, objective, policies, and programs are consistent with and implement all relevant sections of the following plans and programs:

### **2. Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) completed the Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 in 1998. This Plan 2020 establishes WisDOT goals, objectives, and policies for both intercity and urban and suburban bicycling. It recommends strategies and actions for WisDOT, local governments, and others to take to implement the Plan 2020. The two primary goals of the Plan 2020 are to double the number of trips made by bicycles and to reduce bicyclist-motorist crashes by at least 10 percent by the year 2010. More specifically, it seeks to improve bicycle access to major destinations along arterial and collector streets.

### **3. 2002–2008 Transit Improvement Program**

The TIP must be consistent with the region's long-range transportation plan, include all transportation projects in the metropolitan area that are proposed for federal funding, and include at least three years of programming.

### **4. The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020**

The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020, created by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), was established to make pedestrian travel a viable, convenient and safe transportation choice throughout Wisconsin. While the Policy Plan primarily aims to minimize the barrier to pedestrian traffic flow from State Trunk Highway expansions and improvements, it provides guidance to local communities on how to encourage pedestrian travel.

through the creation of pedestrian plans, increase enforcement of pedestrian laws, adopt and implement sidewalk ordinances.

### **5. Connections 2030: Wisconsin's Long-Range Transportation Plan**

WisDOT is currently developing a long-range transportation plan for the state called "Connections 2030." This Plan will address all forms of transportation over a 25-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. The overall goal of the planning process is to identify a series of policies to aid transportation decision-makers when evaluating programs and projects.

### **6. The Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP)**

This program assists local governments in improving seriously deteriorating county highways, town roads, and city and village streets. The competitive reimbursement program pays up to 50% of total eligible costs with local governments providing the remaining balance. The program has three basic components: County Highway Improvement (CHIP); Town Road Improvement (TRIP); and Municipal Street Improvement (MSIP).

## **D. Pavement Surface Evaluation & Rating**

Software tools help jurisdictions to prioritize their transportation projects. Information collected as part of the **PASER** (Pavement Surface Evaluation & Rating) system helps establish budget parameters, select possible projects, and evaluate the implications of maintenance decisions. This information is submitted to WisDOT every two years and is integrated into the state's **WISLR** (Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads) database.

## **E. Planning For Capital Improvements**

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) can assist in planning for major project costs by creating a multi-year scheduling plan for physical public improvements including transportation. The schedule is based on the projection of fiscal resources and prioritization of improvements five to six years into the future. Capital improvements include new or expanded physical facilities that are relatively large in size, expensive, and permanent.

## **F. Pierce County Bicycle Plan 2003–2023**

This Plan is the result of a cooperative planning effort between Pierce County and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. The Plan's purposes is to document existing bicycling conditions in Pierce County and develop a plan of action for improving bicycling opportunities and safety.

## **G. Programs for Local Government**

WisDOT administers a variety of state and federal programs, including:

- Airport Improvement Program (AIP)
- Connecting Highway Aids
- County Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance

- Federal Discretionary Capital Assistance
- Freight Rail Infrastructure Improvement Program (FRIIP)
- Freight Rail Preservation Program (FRPP)
- General Transportation Aids (GTA)
- Highways and Bridges Assistance
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance
- Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP)
- Local Transportation Enhancements (TE)
- Railroad Crossing Improvements
- Rural and Small Urban Public Transportation Assistance
- Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP)
- Rustic Roads Program
- Surface Transportation Discretionary Program (STP-D)
- Surface Transportation Program – Rural (STP-R) & Urban (STP-U)
- Traffic Signing and Marking Enhancement Grants Program
- Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

## **H. Goals, Objectives and Recommendations**

### **1. Goals:**

- a. Develop a safe and efficient transportation system that serves all Town residents.

### **2. Objectives:**

- a. Establish policies and standards for new roads within developments that will be paid for by developers.
- b. Our transportation system needs to enhance safety and aesthetics. Rural roads are much less safe than they seem. Reengineering them is probably beyond our financial means so appropriate speed limits, proper signs and safe driveway accesses are needed. Planning for new Town roads should consider environmentally sensitive areas, and protect historic, scenic, and cultural sites.
- c. Develop a system for regular maintenance of all Town roads, signage, and management of right-of-way vegetation according to current and future design standards.
- d. Enable aging residents to remain in their homes as long as possible. New ideas on supporting their transportation needs should be developed.
- e. Encourage recreational road use by bicycles and motorcycles by designating, publicizing, and providing appropriate road signs if funding and personnel are available.
- f. Gradually upgrade our roads to carry the increased demands of traffic as funding becomes available. Any upgrades to existing roads will be done to its greatest potential.
- g. Designate load appropriate transit routes to accommodate load and travel frequency of large farm equipment, meanwhile discouraging their use of lesser roads. As funding becomes available, transit routes could be upgraded to accommodate increased loads

### **3. Recommendations:**

The following recommendations are designed to maintain the Town's existing transportation infrastructure and to minimize the need for any new transportation facilities or expansions.

- a. Limit the construction of new or extended Town roads as long as the existing agricultural and low-density residential development zoning districts remain in place.
- b. Ensure that Pierce County includes Town projects in its Capital Improvements Program.
- c. Maintain Town roads and rights-of-way to limit visual obstacles and encourage the County to maintain roads under its jurisdiction in the same manner.
- d. On an annual basis, continue to review and upgrade the roads under Rock Elm's jurisdiction based on safety, level of service, signage and pavement condition criteria.
- e. When new roads are required, they need to be designed with maintenance and accessibility in mind. New driveways shall continue to be regulated to ensure sufficient emergency vehicle access and to maintain safe driveway spacing standards.
- f. Strongly encourage that the Town Board look at roads and road conditions to determine whether road restrictions and road weight limits are required.

## **Element 6: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This Element seeks to preserve Rock Elm Township's heritage for present residents and future generations by preserving prime farmland, protecting watersheds, streams, wetlands, wildlife habitat, parks, cultural, archeological, and historically significant sites.

Natural resources and physical features in Rock Elm are assets to the entire community. They provide criteria on which sound planning decisions are made. Soils, topography, and ground and surface waters are both assets and constraints. For example, by identifying those soils that can support roads and structures, communities designate where residential, commercial, and industrial growth may occur. Soils identified as unsuitable for building often serve other functions, such as ensuring groundwater quality, flood control, or conservation habitat. Land is deemed suitable for agriculture based on soils, parcel size, location with reference to urban services and existing land use.

This Plan acknowledges the rich agricultural heritage of Rock Elm Township and the importance of evaluating environmental impacts and the potential effect they may have on adjacent properties or on the area as a whole. It attempts to forestall potential conflicts arising from incompatible or inappropriate land uses. By giving consideration to the natural environment, this Plan encourages the community to live within its means by making planning decisions that are environmentally sound and reasonably beneficial to the entire community.

### **A. Existing Conditions-Agricultural Resources**

Per the Wisconsin comprehensive planning legislative requirements, this Element includes goals, objectives, policies and programs for the conservation and promotion of effective management of agricultural, natural, historical and cultural resources in the Town of Rock Elm. These resources define Rock Elm's identity. Town residents understand that these resources are irreplaceable and are dedicated to their preservation. This first section provides the background information for this Element.

#### **1. Resource Inventory**

Traditional family farms continue to exist. Farm enterprises include dairy herds, grain crops (soybean, oats, and corn), beef and hog operations, organic farms and alternative crops.

Historically agriculture has been the largest and most important industry in the community. It is a very important export industry for the area. It brings in dollars from outside the community and has formed much of the basis for other sectors of the area's economy. Farming has supported many agriculture related businesses and services. The size of the agricultural sector is not likely to increase and most of the new income and employment in the area has come from the expansion of the private non-farm wage and salary sector.

Statewide the number of farms and farm residents has been decreasing. The average farm operation is typically larger now than in the past and much more capital intensive. It appears that the cost-price squeeze is tighter now than in the recent past, making farming a more difficult venture. On the other hand organic and other specialized farming is making it possible for small family farms to remain viable.

**TABLE 6.1: Dependence on Agriculture (2000 Population Census)**

	<u>Population Living On Farms:</u>			<u>Employed Adults Working On Farms:</u>	
	Population	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Rock Elm	504	188	37.3%	56	15.5%
Pierce County	16,701	1,524	15.1%	792	8.4%

*SOURCE: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies (PATS), UW-Madison*

**TABLE 6.2: Conversion Rates of Farmland to Non-Farm Uses •**

**Agricultural Land Sold (1990–2002)**

	1990–1994	1995–1999	2000–2002
	Acres	Acres	Acres
<b>Pierce County</b>			
Land kept in farming (annual average)	4,402	2,759	1,441
Land converted to non-ag uses (annual average)	2,117	1,628	609
Total farmland sold (annual average)	6,518	4,388	2,050
Percent of land converted (annual average)	32%	37%	30%
<b>State of Wisconsin</b>			
Land kept in farming (annual average)	323,828	203,452	137,916
Land converted to non-ag uses (annual average)	76,560	66,206	59,981
Total farmland sold (annual average)	400,388	269,657	210,430
Percent of land converted (annual average)	19%	25%	29%

*SOURCE: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies (PATS), UW-Madison*

**TABLE 6.3: Average Value of Farmland Sold • \$/acre (1990–2002)**

	1990–1994	1995–1999	2000–2002
<b>Pierce County</b>			
Land kept in farming (annual average)	\$786	\$1,079	\$1,894
Land sold for non-ag uses (annual average)	\$989	\$1,650	\$2,920
Total farmland sold (annual average)	\$821	\$1,290	\$2,231
Premium paid for non-ag uses	126%	153%	154%
<b>State of Wisconsin</b>			
Land kept in farming (annual average)	\$850	\$1,254	\$2,038
Land sold for non-ag uses (annual average)	\$1,993	\$1,993	\$3,312
Total farmland sold (annual average)	\$1,350	\$1,350	\$2,509
Premium paid for non-ag uses	149%	159%	163%

*SOURCE: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies (PATS), UW-Madison*

**TABLE 6.5: Agricultural Land Sales • Pierce County (2003)**

	Number of Transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars Per Acre
Agricultural land continuing in agricultural use	15	1,754	\$2,514
Agricultural land being diverted to other uses	24	1,061	\$4,855
Total of all agricultural land	39	2,815	\$3,396

*\*Includes land with and without buildings and other improvements.*

**TABLE 6.6: Total Land in Crops • Pierce County (1990–2002)**

	Pierce County	State of Wisconsin
Total land area (acres)	368,971	34,531,634
Total acreage of all major crops:		
1990	161,400	9,086,900
1999	164,400	8,956,100
2002	157,500	8,728,550
Net change 1990–1999	3,000	–130,800
Percent change 1990–1999	2%	–1%
Net change 1999–2002	–6,900	–227,550
Percent change 1999–2002	–4%	–3%
Major crops as a percentage of total land area:		
1990	44%	26%
1999	45%	26%
2002	43%	25%

*SOURCE: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies (PATs), UW-Madison*

## **B. Existing Conditions-Natural Resources**

As the Town continues to change, it is vital to consider its future in conjunction with its natural resources. It can be very challenging for rural communities to allow new development, at the same time protecting the natural environment, and preserving the character of the area. At first, development may have only a limited impact on the natural landscape, but as it continues, the visual and environmental impacts become increasingly apparent. Natural resources are materials occurring in nature and are essential or useful to sustain life. In order to protect natural resources for the future, it is crucial to be aware of existing natural resources, such as water resources, geologic resources, forests and woodlands, wildlife habitat, parks and open space, air and light, and wetlands. They are combined into the recognized systems in which we exist. These systems, or combinations of natural materials can be referred to as “natural environments,” “ecosystems,” “biomes,” and “natural habitats,” among others. Humans and their activities impact all natural resources. Conversely, whether obvious or not, human impacts to the natural environment can have significant adverse impacts on the human and natural communities.

Rock Elm has many natural resources within its borders. Besides agriculture, there is Nugget Lake County Park, several watersheds, floodplains, and wetlands, plus many woodlands and an abundance of wildlife. The water quality of Nugget Lake and all watersheds is affected by runoff from farms, farm fields and non-agricultural uses. Nugget Lake is in the DNR’s list for mercury contamination. The contamination of wetlands, streams, and lakes also has a great effect on our drinking water supply. Many of the wells in the area of the Rock Elm Disturbance have poor water quality due to the very high mineral content.



The Town of Rock Elm fully supports the state performance standards for NR151. This is a set of non-point source pollution rules. The goal of the standard is to protect lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater from being contaminated by farm fields and other non-point source pollution run-off.

### **NR151 Non-Agricultural Performance Standards**

Construction Sites >1 acre – must control 80% of sediment load from sites

#### Storm water management plans (>1 acre after 10/1/04)

- A. Total Suspended Solids
- B. Peak Discharge Rate
- C. Infiltration
- D. Buffers around water

#### Developed urban areas (>1000 persons/square mile)

- A. Public education
- B. Yard waste management
- C. Nutrient management
- D. Reduction of suspended solids

### **NR151 Agricultural Performance Standards**

#### For farmers who grow agricultural crops

- A. Meet “T” on cropped fields.
- B. Starting in 2005 for high priority areas such as impaired or exceptional waters, and 2008 for all other areas, follow a nutrient management plan designed to limit entry of nutrients into waters of the state.

#### For farmers who raise, feed, or house livestock

- A. No direct runoff from feedlots or stored manure into state waters.
- B. No unlimited livestock access to waters of the state where high concentrations of animals prevent the maintenance of adequate or self sustaining sod cover.
- C. Starting in 2005 for high priority areas, and 2008 for all other areas, follow a nutrient management plan when applying or contracting to apply manure to limit entry of nutrients into waters of the state.

#### For farmers who have or plan to build a manure storage structure

- A. Maintain a structure to prevent overflow, leakage, and structural failure.
- B. Repair or upgrade a failing or leaking structure that poses an imminent health threat or violates groundwater standards.
- C. Close a structure according to accepted standards.
- D. Meet technical standards for a newly constructed or substantially-altered structure.

#### For farmers with land in a water quality management area (defined as 300 feet from a stream, or 1,000 feet from a lake or areas susceptible to groundwater contamination)

- A. Do not stack manure in unconfined piles.

- B. Divert clean water away from feedlots, manure storage areas, and barnyards located within this area.

## **1. Resource Inventory**

### **a. Geological and Mineral Resources**

#### ***Non-Metallic Mine Reclamation***

In June of 2001, all Wisconsin counties were obligated to adopt an ordinance for nonmetallic mine reclamation. The purpose of the ordinance was to achieve an approved post-mining land use, which would be in compliance with uniform reclamation standards. Uniform reclamation standards address environmental protection measures including topsoil salvage and storage, surface and groundwater protection, and concurrent reclamation to minimize acreage exposed to wind and water erosion.

There is one active gravel pit in Rock Elm Township, one non-operating gravel pit, and one active sandpit west of fire number W1674 on highway 72.

### **b. Water Resources**

Water resources (both surface and groundwater) are some of the most commonly used natural resources, serving essential functions in the community. Plants, animals, and people all consume water on a daily basis. Over 70% of all Wisconsin communities (that is, every two out of three citizens) rely on groundwater not only for domestic use, but also for agricultural, industrial and recreational purposes. All county residents have groundwater for domestic water use. Water is one of the most easily contaminated resources. Because of its mobile nature, contaminants can travel far from their source through the water cycle. Contaminants in the water cycle coming from a variety of sources are commonly known as non-point source pollution (NPSP). Non-point source pollution comes from many diffuse sources such as agriculture runoff, leaking septic systems, road salt and road building, parking lots, lawns, and golf course runoff, all of which directly impact water resources. Point source pollution comes from identifiable sources such as a single factory, manure storage facility or farmyards. Residential development many times alters natural drainage routes, destroying the land's ability to store and retain water. Wetlands are then filled or drained and paved. Runoff and erosion problems develop. Subsequent flooding and sedimentation occurs in drainage ways, necessitating costly repairs or control devices to retard overflow and pollution hazards.

Responsible water resource management by local government is necessary to protect the community's natural systems. Utilizing appropriate development in accordance with land capabilities is the first step in effectively ensuring future public health and safety.

#### ***Watersheds***

There are two watersheds in Rock Elm Township, the Plum Creek Watershed and the Eau Galle watershed. Best management practices that reduce the total volume of runoff by increasing filtration would benefit the streams of the Eau Galle River and Plum Creek Watershed.

### **-Plum Creek Watershed (LC02)**

A 1991 stream bank erosion survey of Plum Creek undertaken as part of the DNR Lakes Planning Grants Program showed that 17 percent of the bank area along Plum Creek above Nugget Lake is eroding. Elevated bacteria levels at the mouth of Rock Elm Creek (part of the overall Plum Creek Watershed) have been recorded following major storm events. This contributes to elevated bacteria levels at the Nugget Lake swimming beach area after heavy rains. There is a high rate of sedimentation occurring at the lake. The northern portion of the lake is rapidly filling with approximately 1.76 acre-feet of sediment per year. Nugget Lake experiences frequent algal blooms, dense aquatic plant growth in shallow areas, and a high sedimentation rate near the inlet. The lake's problems stem from watershed erosion, stream bank erosion, and feedlot runoff. Fish advisories have been issued for Nugget Lake due to elevated levels of mercury.

To combat the water quality problems at Nugget Lake the Pierce County Land Conservation Department and Committee in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service ran a special watershed project for landowners located in the 11,000 acre Nugget Lake Watershed (a sub-watershed of the larger Plum Creek Watershed) from 1995-1998. The majority of the funding for this project came through Pierce County's conservation cost-sharing account. Approximately \$100,000 of federal, state, county, and individual landowner funds were utilized to install 12 grade stabilization structures, 5 grassed waterway projects, 1 barnyard runoff control project, and 1 stream bank stabilization project. Nugget Lake was drawn down and dredged in the winter of 2007-2008. Also an emergency alarm system to detect a dam breach was installed. While the primary function of Nugget Lake is for flood control purposes, the recreational benefits are also very important to Pierce County.

A 1999 fish survey showed the Plum Creek downstream from Nugget Lake to the Pepin County line to be a Class I trout fishery. This stream improved from a Class II trout stream designation from a 1993 survey. Plum Creek could improve further with restoration of severe bank erosion and upland land use practices to reduce overland flow.

Pierce and Pepin Counties are participating in a watershed project through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The entire Plum Creek Watershed - split almost equally between the two counties - received \$1.34 million of EQIP funds from 1998-2003. The major thrust of the EQIP program in the Plum Creek Watershed Project is to reduce sediment delivery to surface waters by reducing sheet and rill and gully erosion. Conservation practices that are used include nutrient management planning, conservation cropping rotations at or below "T-value", and pasture management.

### **-Eau Galle River Watershed (LC03)**

Polluted runoff from barnyards and feedlots, stream bank grazing, and flooding threaten trout streams in the Eau Galle River watershed which includes eight sections of the North East corner of Rock Elm Township. When the streams flood, large amounts of sediment are moved and the high flows scour the streambeds.

### ***Wetlands***

Wetlands serve a variety of functions, including playing an important role in storm water management and flood control, filtering pollutants, recharging groundwater, providing a habitat for many wildlife species and plants, and offering open space and passive recreational opportunities. Wetlands include all marshes, swamps, fens, bogs, and those areas excluded from cultivation or other uses because they are intermittently wet. Wetlands serve a multiplicity of environmental functions. They trap sediments and nutrients, protect against drought by serving as groundwater recharge areas, and provide habitat for wildlife and vegetation. These fragile lands are continually exposed to polluted materials from runoff and sedimentation.

### ***Groundwater***

Groundwater is the source of drinking water for residents of Pierce County. Groundwater is also important for supplying cold, fresh water to rivers and streams. Contamination of groundwater by human activity can be a severe problem because contaminants generally travel unnoticed, are difficult to remove, and may persist for decades. Water percolating through the soil can pick up human-made pollutants and transport them to the groundwater. Contaminants may also enter the groundwater through unused wells that are not properly sealed. Groundwater contamination comes from a variety of sources including leaking underground petroleum pipes and tanks; use and storage of road salt; improper use, disposal, and storage of hazardous materials; and mismanagement of fertilizers, pesticides, and animal waste.

The Department of Natural Resources basin plans rank watersheds for groundwater based upon available data on the presence of contaminants and the evaluation of different land uses and the susceptibility of groundwater contamination associated with those land uses. Groundwater watershed rankings for Pierce County are reported in Table 1. A score below 20 is low. A score of 20 or more is considered medium. At 30 or greater, the score is considered high for groundwater contamination potential. All Pierce County watersheds are ranked high for groundwater contamination potential.

<sup>19</sup> DNR basin plans. Revised November 2003.

**Table 1. Groundwater Ranking for Watersheds in Pierce County.**

<b>Basins</b>	<b>Watersheds Included</b>	<b>DNR ID</b>	<b>Numerical Ranking<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>Qualitative Ranking</b>
St. Croix	Kinnickinnic	SC01	82	High
Lower Chippewa	Plum Creek	LC02	34	High
Lower Chippewa	Eau Galle River	LC03	41	High
Mississippi	Rush River	LC22	47	High
Mississippi	Trimble River and Isabelle Creek	LC23	46	High

### **-Groundwater Contamination**

It is important to keep the groundwater resource in mind for many areas of comprehensive planning. Ultimately, what takes place above ground directly affects

groundwater below. For instance, restricting access to abandoned mines or quarries helps prevent these areas from becoming source points for groundwater contamination. There are a variety of other activities that impact water resource quality that include but are not limited to:

- On-site septic systems
- Pesticide and Fertilizer Applications
- Sewage Treatment Plants
- Surface Waste Water Discharge
- Road Salt
- Household Cleaners & Detergents
- Sanitary Landfills
- Unsewered Subdivisions
- Underground Storage Tanks (known and unknown)
- Gas Stations (previous)
- Feedlots
- Chemical Spills
- Junkyards
- Abandoned Wells
- Leaking Sewer Lines

Pinpointing pollution sources can be made easier by identifying the location and extent of groundwater recharge areas, as well as the extent of the local watershed, so communities can plan where and how much development can take place, with the least amount of impact to water resources. A watershed is the land area from which all surface water and groundwater drains into a stream system. Groundwater aquifers can be contained within a single watershed or can be so large that several watersheds are within the aquifer. Potential contaminants are nitrates, chloride, sodium, bacteria, viruses, and hazardous farm and household chemicals. Identifying such pollutants is part of a wellhead protection plan. A wellhead protection plan aims at preventing contaminants from entering the area of land around well(s). This area includes the surface or subsurface area surrounding a water well or well field supplying a public water system, through which contaminants are reasonably likely to move toward and reach such well or well field.

### **-Groundwater Supply**

A water supply is impacted as communities grow, bringing increased demand to supply water to new homes, businesses, and industries. High capacity wells and an increasing number of wells, both private and public, can reduce the amount of recharge to surface waters, causing stream flow reduction, loss of springs, and changes in wetland vegetative communities. At the time of the last groundwater survey, Rock Elm Township was found to be relatively free from groundwater contamination.

### ***Storm Water Management***

Storm water management is intimately linked to environmental conservation. The most effective and efficient method of controlling storm water runoff and its associated erosion and sedimentation, is the use of natural systems for storage and filtration. Those areas identified as

drainage corridors are often natural conservation corridors. The wetland, streams, swales and lakes should not be disrupted in their function of storing, filtering and eventually releasing storm water. These spaces can then serve their hydraulic function while providing scenic area, wildlife habitat, and community open space.

Using those principles the following practices are discouraged:

- A. Development in floodplain areas.
- B. Filling of wetlands or obstructions of natural drain ways.
- C. Channeling of drainage from developments directly into an existing lakes or streams.
- D. Excessive runoff during construction.

Development should be encouraged to conform to the natural contours of the land to the maximum extent possible in order to control runoff. As much of the natural vegetation as possible should be maintained.

Specific prohibitions for storm water management are found in the Peirce County Management Plan in the navigable waters/wetlands/floodplains/shore land areas.

### ***Floodplains***

A floodplain is a low area of land adjacent to a stream or other watercourse that is subject to flooding and holds the overflow of water during a flood. They are often delineated on the basis of the 100-year storm event—the area that would be covered by water during a flood so big it only happens (theoretically) every 100 years. However, flooding can occur in any year.

#### **c. Environmental Corridors**

Environmental corridors refer to areas that contain groupings of natural resource features. Areas of concentrated natural resource activity, such as wetlands, woodlands, prairies, lakes, and other features, become even more functional when linked by environmental corridors. Fish and wildlife populations, native plant distribution, and even clean water all depend on movement through environmental corridors. For example, wildlife populations isolated in one wooded location can overpopulate, die out, or cause problems for neighbors if there are not adequate corridors to allow the population to move about freely.

#### **d. Light, Air, and Noise**

Lighting ordinances recognize the benefits of appropriate outdoor lighting and can provide clear guidelines for installation, helping to maintain and complement a community's character. Improper night lighting or light pollution affects the night sky. The most common air pollutants (dust, pollen, fuel fumes, ash, odors etc.) come from industrial, automotive, and agriculture sources.

A number of land uses can contribute to noise pollution, such as train whistles, vehicle noise from highways, or airport noise. Repetitive excessive noises like those from cars, loud stereos, powered lawn and garden equipment, farm and construction activities have been shown to have serious health consequences, not to mention problems between neighbors.

#### **e. Wildlife**

Biodiversity is the full spectrum of life forms and the many ecological processes that support them. Protecting the biodiversity is essential to core values such as maintaining clean air and water, providing adequate habitat for flora and fauna, maintaining a vibrant economy and providing recreational opportunities. Protecting biodiversity depends on the sustainability of diverse ecosystems, such as the mosaic of forests, agricultural lands, grasslands, bluffs, coastal zones and aquatic communities. It also depends upon the conservation of each ecosystem's basic components – the natural communities, plants and animals within them. Ecosystems contain a variety of species that are unique in some way and provide value to the diversity of the individual ecosystem and the state overall. It is important to view biodiversity at all levels to ensure the adequate conservation of Wisconsin's environment. At the broadest scale, the State of Wisconsin is divided into distinct "ecological landscapes" based on unique combinations of physical and biological characteristics that make up the ecosystems, such as climate, geology, soils, water, and vegetation. They differ in levels of biological productivity, habitat suitability for wildlife, presence of rare species and natural communities, and in many other ways that affect land use and management.

#### **f. Natural Communities**

Ecological landscapes are comprised of natural communities – the assemblages of plants and animals at specific locations. Because of the biotic and abiotic differences between ecological landscapes, the natural communities within each are typically different as well.

#### **g. Endangered Species**

The Wisconsin Endangered Species Law was enacted to afford protection for certain wild animals and plants that the Legislature recognized as endangered or threatened and in need of protection as a matter of general state concern. It is illegal to

1. take, transport, possess, process or sell any wild animal that is included on the Wisconsin Endangered and Threatened Species List,
2. process or sell any wild plant that is a listed species,
3. or cut, root up, sever, injure, destroy, remove, transport or carry away a listed plant on public lands a person does not own, lease, or have the permission of the landowner to be on. There are exemptions for plant protection on public lands for forestry, agricultural and utility activities. In some cases a person can conduct the above activities if permitted.

The Federal Endangered Species Act (<http://endangered.fws.gov/esa.html>) also protects animals and plants that are considered endangered or threatened at a national level. The law prohibits the direct killing, taking, or other activities that may be detrimental to the species, including habitat modification or degradation, for all federally listed animals and designated critical habitat.

Federally listed plants are also protected but only on federal lands. Implementation of the Endangered Species laws are usually accomplished during the state permit review process, but it is ultimately the responsibility of a project proponent and property owner to ensure that they are not in violation of the laws.

#### **h. Wildlife Habitat and Threatened and Endangered Species**

The Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory program's database was used to determine the status and distribution of endangered resources and to learn what species or natural communities may

exist within the Town of Rock Elm. Rock Elm may contain one or more species whose location(s) are considered to be more sensitive than most species that are tracked. Therefore, the location(s) cannot be disclosed to a level more detailed than the county. For non-WDNR staff, more detailed information is available only through a formal licensing agreement. Rock Elm may contain sensitive elements. Sensitive element locations are not listed at the town and township level. Rock Elm forms a part of a county that contains sensitive elements, but may not necessarily contain all sensitive elements listed here.

**TABLE 6.7: Endangered Resources, Rock Elm Township**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME</b>	<b>COMMON NAME</b>
Community	Moist cliff	Moist cliff
	<i>Southern mesic forest</i>	Southern mesic forest
Plant	<i>Cacalia Muehlenbergii</i>	Great Indian Plantain
	<i>Lithospermum Latifolium</i>	<i>America Gromwell</i>
	<i>Trillium nivale</i>	Snow trillium

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2005*

#### **i. Soils**

Pierce County lies within Wisconsin's Western Upland geographical province. Unlike the counties farther south along the Mississippi River, Pierce is not in the "driftless area," as all or parts of it were covered by two separate glacial episodes. Four other glacial periods directly influenced the county with rock and silt overburdens.

### **C. Existing Conditions-Cultural Resources**

The purpose of this section is to inventory and support the management of cultural resources in the Town of Rock Elm. Many communities often ignore cultural and historic resources in order to deal with real issues facing their community. However, the proper appreciation of these assets is vital to the long-term success of a community. Respecting and utilizing these available resources increases the overall quality of life and provides opportunities for tourism.

Determining what defines cultural and historic resources has been left open to some interpretation. For the purpose of this report, historic resources include historic buildings and sites (as identified by the National Register of Historic Places), museums, churches, cemeteries, old country schools, and other buildings deemed appropriate by the community. The information presented here is to serve as a guide to cultural and historic resources but is not inclusive.

#### **-Threats to Cultural Resources**

Unfortunately, there are many threats to the cultural resources of a community. Whether it is development pressure, rehabilitation and maintenance costs, or simply the effects of time, it is often difficult to preserve the cultural resources in a community. The Plan encourages steps to be taken to identify and preserve them.

#### **-Historical Preservation Ordinances and Commissions**

The possible future establishment of a historical preservation ordinance and commission is one of the most proactive methods a community can take to preserve cultural resources. A historical preservation ordinance typically contains criteria for the designation of records and historic



structures, and procedures for the nomination process. The ordinance further regulates the construction, alteration, or demolition of the exterior of a designated historic site or structure. The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation has more information on this.

The Town of Rock Elm currently does not have such an ordinance, but may wish to consider one in the future. A community with a historic preservation ordinance may apply for Certified Local Government (CLG) status with the Wisconsin State Historical Society. Once a community is certified, they become eligible for

- matching sub-grants from the Federal Historic Preservation Fund,
- use of Wisconsin Historic Building Code,
- and reviewing the National Register of Historic Places nominations allocated to the state.

## **1. Resource Inventory**

### **a. Churches**

Churches historically have had a significant impact on the culture of a community. They sometimes are also the only places where rural residents can gather to discuss important issues in their community.

### **b. Cemeteries**

There are three cemeteries located in Rock Elm Township.

TABLE 6.8: **Cemeteries**

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>CEMETERY NAME</u>
<b>Rock Elm</b>	1. Farm Hill Catholic Cemetery 2. Old Rock Elm Cemetery 3. Poplar Hill Cemetery

### **c. Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)**

The Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) is a collection of information on historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and historic districts throughout Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation maintains the inventory. The AHI is comprised of written text and photographs of each property, which document the property's architecture and history. Most properties became part of the inventory as a result of a systematic architectural and historical survey beginning in the 1970s. Caution should be used as the list is not comprehensive and some of the information may be dated, because some properties may have been altered or no longer exist.

It has identified 20 historically and/or architecturally significant sites within the Town of Rock Elm. Included are historic residential, commercial, retail, and institutional sites.

Table 6.9 lists these sites. It is important to note that inclusion in the Architecture and History Inventory conveys no special status or advantage. This inventory is merely a record of the property. The inventory is the result of site reconnaissance conducted by the staff of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

**TABLE 6.9: Architecture and History Inventory- Rock Elm Township**

RESOURCE TYPE	STYLE OR FORM	LOCATION
House (brick)	Gabled ell	CTH PP, S side, .6 mi. W of CTH P
House (clapboard)	Queen Anne	Eisenhower Rd., S side, .7 mi. E of CTH S
House (brick)	One story cube	CTH S, E side, .7 mi. S of STH 72
House (wood shingle)	One story cube	Drum Hill Rd., N side, .3 mi. W of CTH S
Church (drop siding)	Cross gabled	Poplar Hill Rd., N side, at Rock Elm Rd.
Church (clapboard)	Colonial revival	Rock Elm R., W side
House (clapboard)	Side gabled	CTH S, N side, .3 mi. E of Taft Road
House (stucco)	Bungalow	CTH S., W side, .1 mi. S of Truman Road
House (stucco)	Gabled ell	Kennedy Rd., E side, just N of Chimney Rock Rd.
Barn (log)	A stylistic utilitarian building	CTH HH, N side, .3 mi. W of Park Hill Rd.
House (brick)	Two story cube	CTH S., W side, .4 mi. S of CTH X
House	Gabled ell	CTH S, E side, .1 mi. S of CTH X
House (brick)	Gabled ell	STH 72, N side, .2 mi. E of CTH S
House (clapboard)	Two story cube	CTH PP, N side, .5 mi. E of STH 72
House (brick)	Gabled ell	East Farm Hill Rd., N side, .5 mi. E of CTH PP
Retail building (clapboard)	Romanesque Revival	Poplar Hill Rd., S side, at Rock Elm Rd.
House (clapboard)	Gabled ell	Poplar Hill Rd., N side, 1 block W of Rock Elm Rd.
House (brick)	Gabled ell	CTH S, E side, .2 mi. N of Washington Dr.
House (brick)	Front gabled	Adams Rd., and Washington Dr., SE corner
Church (brick)	Front gabled	Adams Rd., and Washington Dr., SE corner

*Source: Wisconsin Historical Society*

#### **d. Archaeological Site Inventory (ASI)**

The Archaeological Site Inventory (ASI) is a collection of archaeological sites, mounds, unmarked cemeteries, marked cemeteries, and cultural sites throughout Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation maintains the inventory. Similar to the AHI, the ASI is not a comprehensive or complete list; it only includes sites that have been reported to the Historical Society. The Historical Society estimates that less than 1% of the archaeological sites in the state have been identified. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from intentional disturbance.

### **D. Programs**

#### **1. Environmental Conservation Programs**

The following is a list of the active conservation programs available in Pierce County. These programs are administered through the cooperative effort of various federal, state, and local agencies.

##### ***CSP Programs***

Purpose: Promote conservation and improvement of soil, air, water, energy, plant and animal life and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working land

##### ***Wisconsin Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed Program (NPS)***

Purpose: to improve and protect water quality.

### ***Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)***

Purpose: to restore drained wetland and protect them with a 30-year or perpetual easement.

### ***Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)***

Purpose: to develop or improve wildlife habitat on privately owned land.

### ***West Wisconsin Land Trust***

Purpose: to provide and maintain a conservation easement on agricultural and undeveloped lands.

## **2. Cultural Resource Agencies and Programs**

### ***Wisconsin Historical Society***

The Society serves as the archives of the State of Wisconsin. It collects books, periodicals, maps, manuscripts, relics, newspapers, and audio and graphic materials as they relate to Wisconsin. It maintains a museum, library, and research facility in Madison, as well as a statewide system of historic sites, school services and area research centers. It administers a broad program of historic preservation and publishes a wide variety of historical materials, both scholarly and popular. The historical society can also provide assistance for various state and federal programs.

### ***National Park Service***

The National Park Service administers the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to honorific recognition, listing in the National Register provides:

- Consideration in planning for Federal, Federally licensed, and federally assisted projects,
- Eligibility for certain tax provisions,
- Qualification for Federal grants for historic preservation, when funds are available.

### ***National Trust for Historic Preservation***

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit organization with more than 200,000 members. The Trust provides leadership, education, and advocacy training to support efforts to save America's historic places.

### ***Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation (WTHP)***

The WTHP, established in 1986, is a private non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the historical, architectural, and archaeological heritage of Wisconsin. The Trust advocates for legislation and policies designed to encourage statewide historic preservation. Examples of some of the programs they initiate are:

### ***Wisconsin Main Street Program***

A comprehensive program designed to revitalize designated downtowns and give new life to historic business districts.

### ***Heritage Tourism Initiative***

The Heritage Tourism Initiative has helped develop grassroots heritage tourism organizations by encouraging Wisconsin communities to use their unique features to tap into the mushrooming heritage tourism market -- and protect that heritage at the same time.

## **E. Plan Goals, Objectives and Recommendations**

### **Plan Commission General Goal:**

To encourage preservation, through the use of this Plan and Best Management Practices, of the sites of agricultural, natural/ecological, historical, cultural, and archeological value for present and future residents of Rock Elm Township.

### **Plan Commission General Recommendations:**

1. Encourage property owners to preserve the natural beauty of their site to conform to surrounding terrain.
2. Encourage preservation of areas near or within geological sites ( i.e. Rock Elm disturbance).
3. Encourage preservation of scenic roadways and natural habitat around and within historical and geological sites.

### **1. Agricultural Goals:**

- a. Wisconsin statutes, agricultural programs, policies, ordinances, and Best Management Practices will be utilized to protect natural resources in conjunction with agricultural lands.
- b. Agricultural policies and programs in the Town should be directed toward the maintenance and development of the agriculture industry through agricultural diversification, protection of economically viable tracts of land and prevention of conflict between agriculture and non-agricultural uses.

### **2. Agricultural Objectives/Recommendations:**

- a. Encourage continued agricultural land use by allowing opportunities for compatible cottage industries.
- b. Promote involvement in programs that require sound resource management practices and provide economic or tax incentives to farmers and landowners (Farmland Preservation, Managed Forest, CRP, etc.).
- c. Encourage agricultural development through its land use policies, including orchards, aquaculture, agriculture enterprises, crops, alternative crops, ag-tourism, and animal agriculture.
- d. Encourage separate residential, commercial and industrial development from agricultural areas in order to decrease traffic, noise, and odor conflicts.
- e. Discourage residential, commercial, or industrial siting that will substantially restrict the agricultural use of large prime tracts of agricultural land.

### **3. Natural Resources Goals:**

- a. Encourage public and private sector actions and efforts to protect floodplains,

wetlands, groundwater, woodlands, prime agricultural soils and the habitats of threatened and endangered species.

- b. Natural and cultural resources policies and programs in the Town should promote a clean and attractive environment through the protection of natural resources, land use, stewardship, and preservation of scenic amenities.

#### **4. Natural Resources Objectives/Recommendations:**

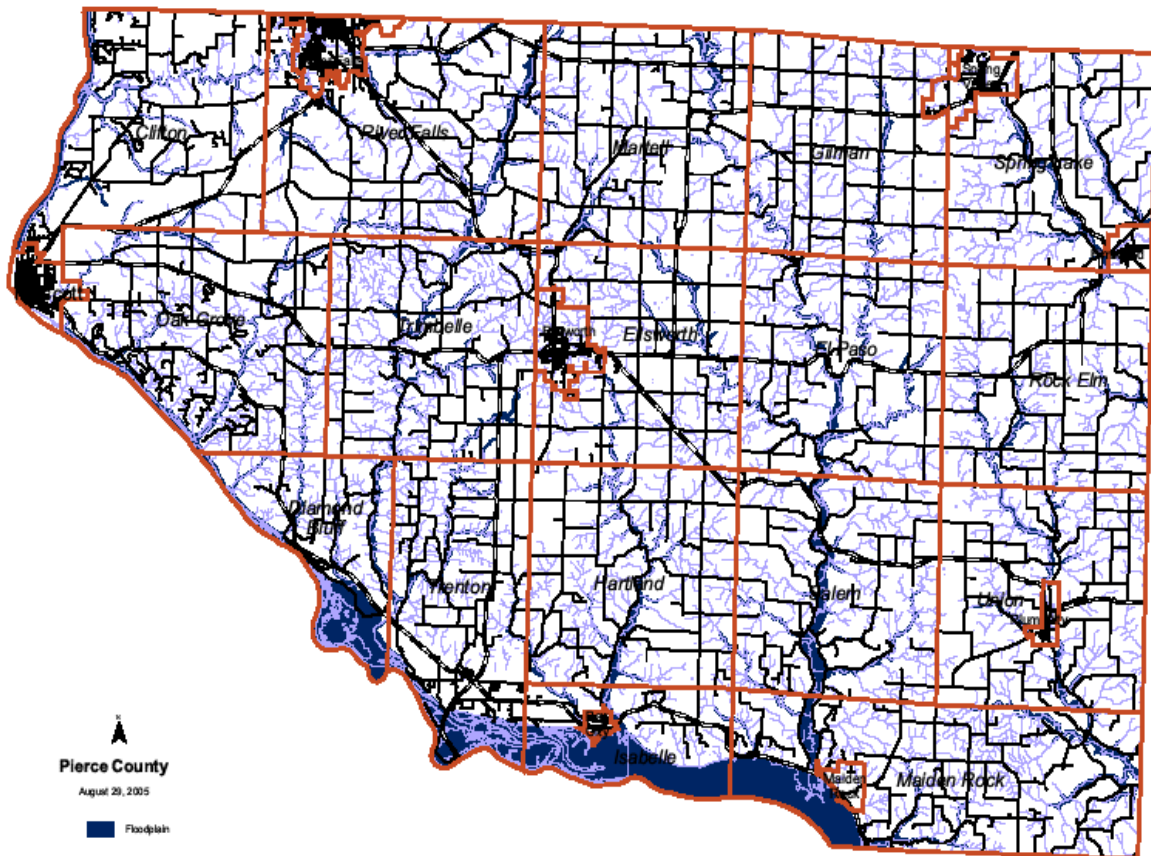
- a. Encourage protection of various environmental resources that help define the Rock Elm area (i.e.: Plum Creek, Eau Galle Watershed and Nugget Lake).
- b. Encourage protection of the aesthetic nature of rural Rock Elm as distinct from the more urbanized areas.
- c. Encourage the management and protection of woodlands and wildlife for their economic, ecological, and environmental importance in the present and future.
- d. Encourage environmentally appropriate land uses that protect all the resources of the Town, including the flood plain, shore land, wetland, and steep slope areas of the Town.
- e. Encourage separate planned residential areas from environmentally sensitive areas.
- f. Encourage new housing sites to be designed to preserve natural resources and the natural beauty of the area.
- g. Encourage all liquid manure to be injected in areas of watershed or adjacent lands that drain into wetlands, streams, or lakes.
- h. Discourage spreading of liquid or solid manure on frozen ground in areas of watersheds or adjacent lands that drain into wetlands, streams, or lakes.
- i. Encourage construction of runoff dams, grass waterways, or stream buffer barriers to help control runoff sediment contamination.
- j. Encourage the separation of residential and other types of construction from streams, wetlands, and floodplains.
- k. Encourage residential or other building sites to be constructed to preserve natural resources as much as possible.
- l. Encourage the preservation of wildlife by protecting wildlife areas.

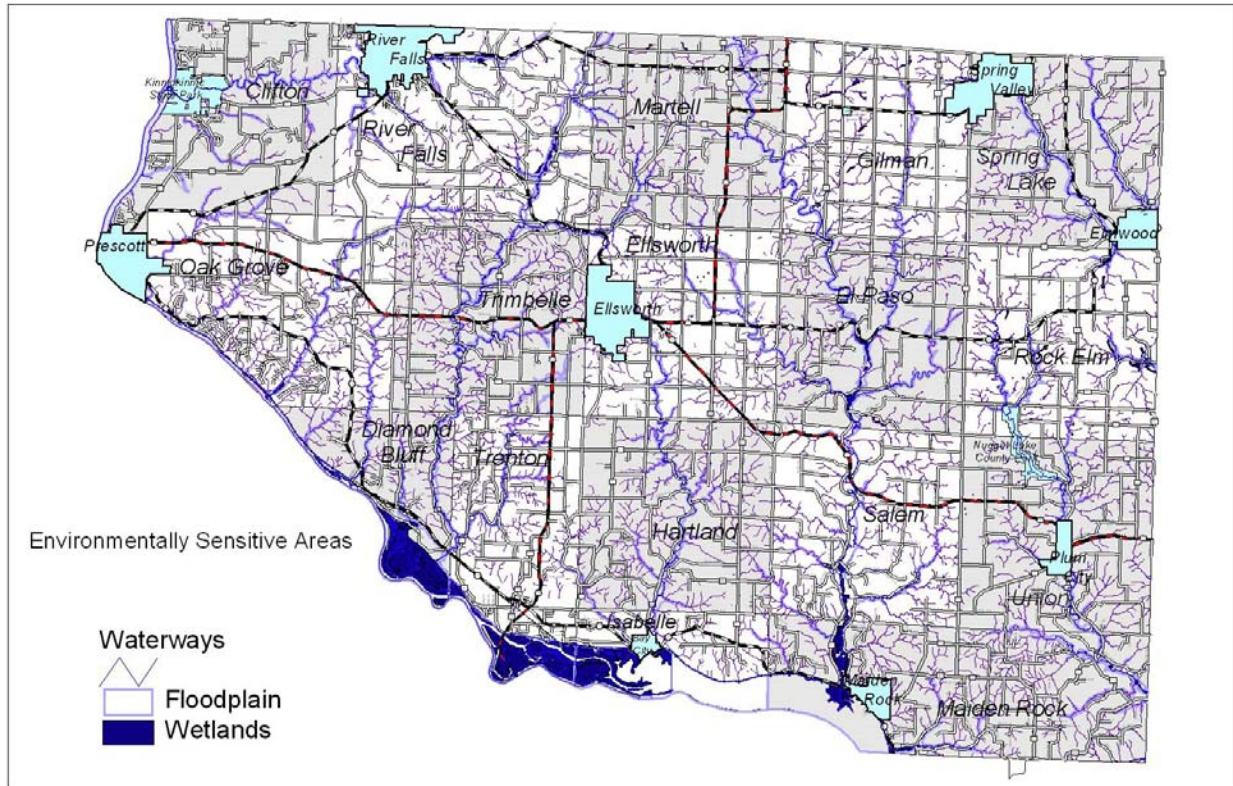
#### **5. Cultural Resources Goal:**

- a. Encourage preservation of cultural, historic, and scenic resources within the Town.

#### **6. Cultural Resources Objectives/Recommendations:**

- a. Encourage preservation of natural and historic areas. Work with the Pierce County Historical Society to identify and record historically significant properties.





## Element 7: LAND USE

### INTRODUCTION

A key consideration in the preparation of the Land Use Element for a community is the identification of the goals that reflect the collective values and attitudes held regarding future development. These goals and the more specific objectives and policies are intended to represent a collective statement expressing what is desirable in relation to future development. Land use is often one of the more controversial issues confronting communities. In many instances, communities were originally platted and land use decisions were made with little regard to natural limitations on development or the interests of the community as a whole. Today, with better knowledge of these limitations, communities are faced with making more intelligent choices as to where future development should occur and possibly limit future land use conflict. Instead of working with a clean slate, however, communities must contend with existing uses and how new development might affect or be affected by them. The land use decisions in this Element are meant to take into account the knowledge and policies of the other Elements of this Plan and therefore analyze how the land in the Town of Rock Elm is currently being used and what constraints to development exist. This section will also discuss the future land use needs in the Town.

### A. Existing Conditions

The Land Use Element was prepared pursuant to Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Section 66.1001 requires this Element to include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of public and private property. Further, the Element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit. The Element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land use conflicts. The Element shall also contain projections based on background information, for 20 years, including five-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The Element shall also include a series of maps that show current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive lands.

### Existing Land Use

TABLE 7.1: Land Use Intensity

	TOTAL ACRES 2002	PERCENT OF LAND AREA 2002	TOTAL ACRES 2005	PERCENT OF LAND AREA 2005
<b>Town of Rock Elm</b>				
Residential	258	1%	271	1%
Commercial	14	<1%	14	<1%
Manufacturing	0	0%	0	<0%
Agricultural	14,509	69%	14,739	71%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue



## **B. Land Use Supply**

The supply of land to support development is based on several factors including physical suitability, local and county regulations, and community goals. Intergovernmental agreements and annexations also become considerations when looking at the available land supply at the community level. Based on physical suitability, there is an available supply of land that could be used to support development in the Town. Local policy will more closely determine how this supply is defined and how it is used. Of particular interest are lands zoned “agriculture residential” as those acres can be converted to other non-agricultural uses. Policy will help determine whether these acres contribute to the supply for planned development in the short and long term.

## **C. Existing Desities**

The entire Town of Rock Elm is zoned primarily Agricultural/Residential (with an allowed density of one dwelling unit per acre), and also has a few commercial sites. The town remains primarily agricultural in nature. Pierce County has an overall density of 64 people per square mile. The Town of Rock Elm has one of the lowest densities per square mile (14) in Pierce County.

TABLE 7.2: **Population Density and Change, 1990–2000**

	Town Population Changes 1990–2000:				Population Per Square Mile, 2000	Percent of 2000 Population That Changed Residence Since 1995:		
	1990	2000	Net Change	% Change		Diff. House	Diff. County	Diff. State
<b>Towns</b>								
<b>Rock Elm</b>	519	504	-15%	-2.9%	14	21.6%	13.1%	5.6%

SOURCE: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies (PATs), UW-Madison

## **D. Land Use Demand**

Limited highway access has made this a less desirable location for industrial or manufacturing growth in the region however it is favorable for local small businesses. Other factors, including proximity to the Twin Cities, may also fuel growth in and around Rock Elm.

TABLE 7.3: **Land Use Permit Applications (1999)**

	Const. Value	Dwelling	Add/Dw	Utility	Add/Util	Garage	Mobile	Busin.	Misc.	Total
<b>Towns</b>										
<b>Rock Elm</b>	\$783,000	6	3	5	0	1	2	0	1	18
<b>County Total</b>	<b>\$24,499,157</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>578</b>

Source Pierce County

TABLE 7.4: **Land Use Permit Applications (2000)**

	Const. Value	Dwelling	Add/Dw	Utility	Add/Util	Garage	Mobile	Busin.	Misc.	Total
<b>Towns</b>										
<b>Rock Elm</b>	\$348,279	1	4	7	0	2	1	0	0	15
<b>County Total</b>	<b>\$29,076,294</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>483</b>

Source Pierce County

TABLE 7.5: **Land Use Permit Applications (2001)**

	Const. Value	Dwelling	Add/Dw	Utility	Add/Util	Garage	Mobile	Busin.	Misc.	Total
<b>Towns</b>										
Rock Elm	\$414,000	4	2	4	0	2	0	0	0	12
<b>County Total</b>	<b>\$35,883,465</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>535</b>

Source Pierce County

TABLE 7.6: **Land Use Permit Applications (2002)**

	Const. Value	Dwelling	Add/Dw	Utility	Add/Util	Garage	Mobile	Busin.	Misc.	Total
<b>Towns</b>										
Rock Elm	\$255,000	2	5	6	1	1	0	0	0	15
<b>County Total</b>	<b>\$38,534,498</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>487</b>

Source Pierce County

TABLE 7.7: **Land Use Permit Applications (2003)**

	Const. Value	Dwelling	Add/Dw	Utility	Add/Util	Garage	Mobile	Busin.	Misc.	Total
<b>Towns</b>										
Rock Elm	\$809,000	7	3	6	0	4		0	0	1
<b>County Total</b>	<b>\$31,575,715</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>530</b>

Source Pierce County

TABLE 7.8: **Land Use Permit Applications (2004)**

	Const. Value	Dwelling	Add/Dw	Utility	Add/Util	Garage	Mobile	Busin.	Misc.	Total
<b>Towns</b>										
Rock Elm	\$123,000	2	4	5	0	0	0	2	0	13
<b>County Total</b>	<b>\$36,247,758</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>507</b>

Source Pierce County

## **E. Land Prices**

Table 7.9 shows the estimated value of all taxable real and personal property in the town and county. The value represents market value as set by the State of Wisconsin (at the time of this writing this appears to be unrealistically high), except for agricultural property, which is based on its use (ability to generate agricultural income) and agricultural forest and undeveloped lands, which are based on 50% of their full (fair market value). Since assessors in different taxing districts value property at different percentages of market value, equalized values ensure fairness between municipalities. The equalized values are used for apportioning county property taxes, public school taxes, vocational school taxes, and for distributing property tax relief. In summary, equalized values are not only used to distribute the state levy among the counties, but also to distribute each county's levy among the municipalities in that county. The WI DOR determines the equalized value. (Source: 2005 Guide for Property Owners, WI DOR)

TABLE 7.9: **Real Estate Equalized Values**

	1980	1990	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Towns</b>							
Rock Elm	\$18,643,500	\$14,158,600	\$24,791,700	\$25,663,900	\$27,420,700	\$27,383,900	\$30,140,000
<b>Pierce County*</b>	<b>\$655,197,100</b>	<b>\$783,354,600</b>	<b>\$1,527,493,000</b>	<b>\$1,712,952,700</b>	<b>\$1,930,160,700</b>	<b>\$2,087,036,400</b>	<b>\$2,350,360,800</b>

\*Includes city and village data.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

## **F. Opportunities for Redevelopment**

The Town is primarily agricultural and rural residential. Currently there are limited commercial/industrial or residential areas available for redevelopment. Some commercial properties are blighted and should be encouraged to be repaired, replaced, or removed.

## **G. Non-Residential Intensities**

As previously stated, the Town has very little commercial/industrial development, with the exception of agricultural operations (see Table 7.1).

## **H. Future Land Use Projections**

Future land use projections are presented below. These projections represent generalized growth scenarios based on state projections and current densities.

The calculations are based on the following sources and assumptions:

- a) State of Wisconsin—Department of Administration- Population and Household Growth Projections
- b) Residential density is based on number of housing units per acre

TABLE 7.10: **Forecasted Future Land Area Needed Per Land Use Classification**

	FORECASTED ACRES— 2010	FORECASTED ACRES— 2015	FORECASTED ACRES—2020	FORECASTED ACRES—2025
<b>Town of Rock Elm</b>				
Residential	7	5	7	5
Commercial	<1	<1	<1	<1
Manufacturing	0	0	0	0
Agricultural	14,732	14,727	14,720	14,715

## **I. Design Standards**

The following are design standards to be used as criteria when reviewing residential building permit applications. It is recognized that not all of these standards may be achievable in every development project. For this reason, only standards pertinent to the development project will be applied when reviewing a permit application.

### ***Mandatory Guidelines:***

1. Maximum total lot disturbance: 50 percent of lot area or 25,000 square feet, whichever is less. Site disturbance should include all areas disturbed for the purpose of constructing buildings and structures as well as all graded areas and lawns. The total shall include disturbed areas both inside and outside the building envelope.
2. Building envelopes shall not include areas with slopes in excess of 15 percent. (15% or more shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission )
3. Roadways with an access to more than two houses shall follow existing contours to minimize the extent of cuts and fills.
4. The appropriate use of common driveways is encouraged. Where lots will access an off-site public road, common driveways should be used where appropriate to minimize the number of driveway openings.

5. Existing natural drainage ways shall be retained.
6. All land divisions shall contain a map reference to any easement.

***Recommendations:***

1. Building envelopes should be encouraged to be located on the edges of fields.
2. Driveways should be encouraged to follow existing contours to minimize the extent of cuts and fills.
3. Development plans should consider existing linear features such as access roads, tree lines, fence rows, and roadways.
4. Roadways located in open fields should be discouraged.
5. Existing vegetation should be preserved as much as possible in areas where disturbance is not necessary outside the building envelope.
6. Where landscaping is proposed, native species should be encouraged to be incorporated into the design.
7. Encourage a natural color palette for exterior use on residential structures.
8. Encourage the monitoring and removal of invasive plants, trees and noxious weeds.
9. Where building envelopes are located in woodlands, a treed area of at least 30 feet between the building envelope and the common drive or roadway should be encouraged.

## **J. Land Use Implementation Programs**

***Zoning and Sign Regulations***

Careful application of modern zoning controls can go far in assisting the community in accomplishing the goals of this Comprehensive Plan. County zoning ordinances establish definitions, standards and procedures for administrative and legislative bodies to review and approve specific land developments.

***Land Division/Subdivision Regulations***

Instituting development standards for land subdivision is another regulating measure of importance in community development. It is essential that the opening of new residential and other areas, by the platting for sale of lots, be at a level that will not be a liability to the public at a future date. Subdivision regulations serve an important function by ensuring the orderly growth and development of unplatted and undeveloped land.

***Official Mapping***

The official map is another tool for land use control that can be used to preserve the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan and to regulate future growth. Chapters 60 and 62 of the Wisconsin Statutes provide for the establishment of an official map to indicate all existing and planned streets, parks and other public uses. The official map enables the Town to prevent private development from occurring in areas designated for other uses.

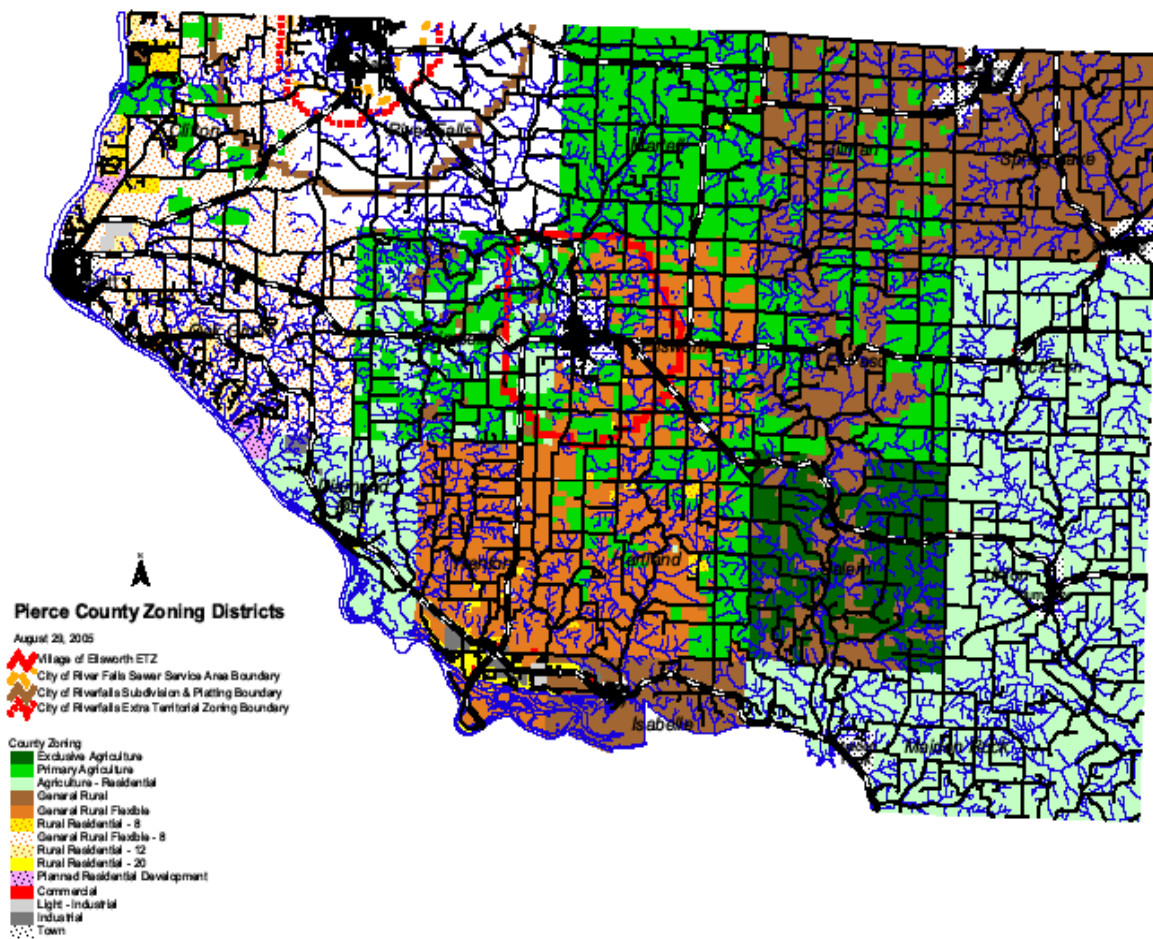
## **K. Goals, Objectives and Recommendations**

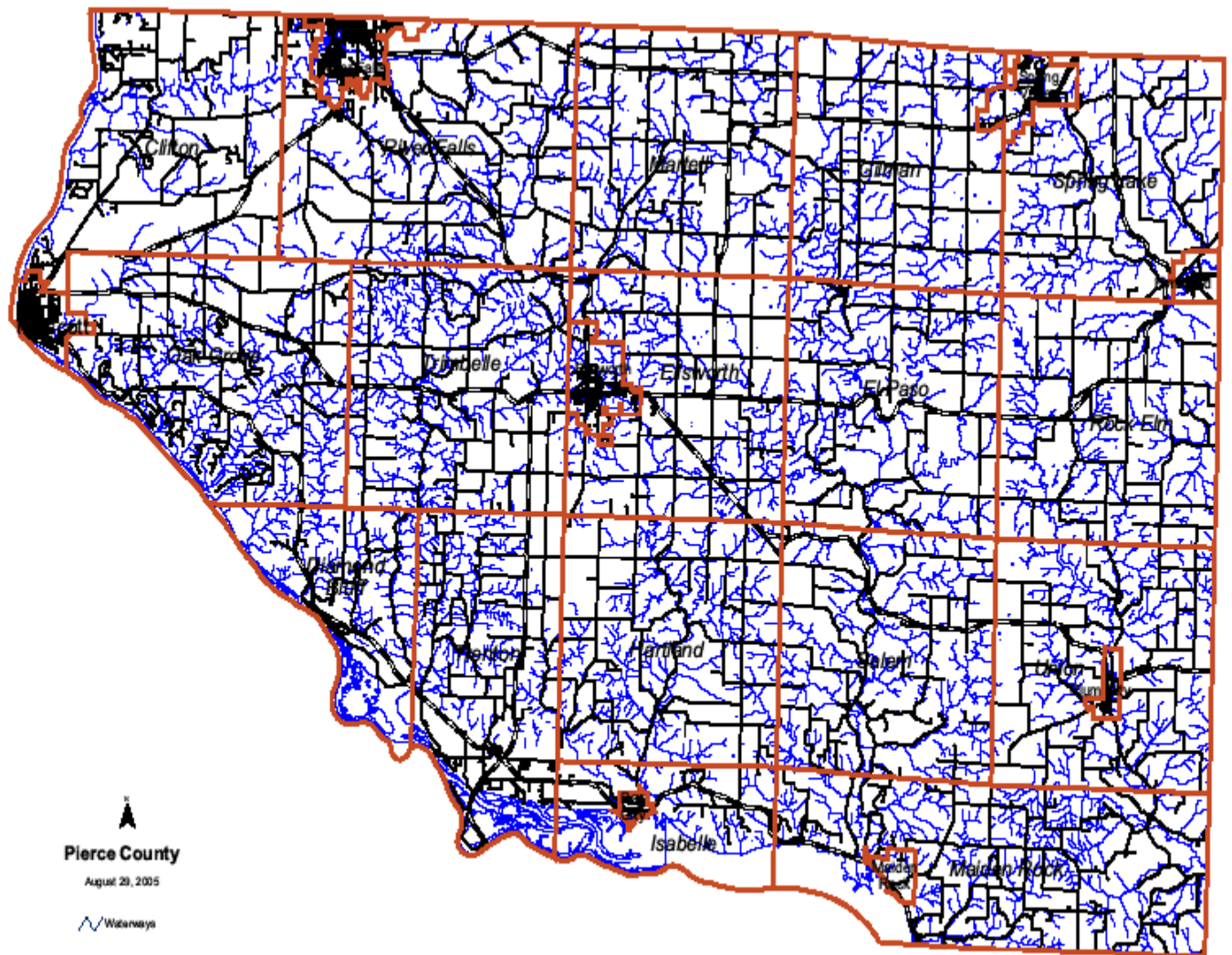
### **1. Goals:**

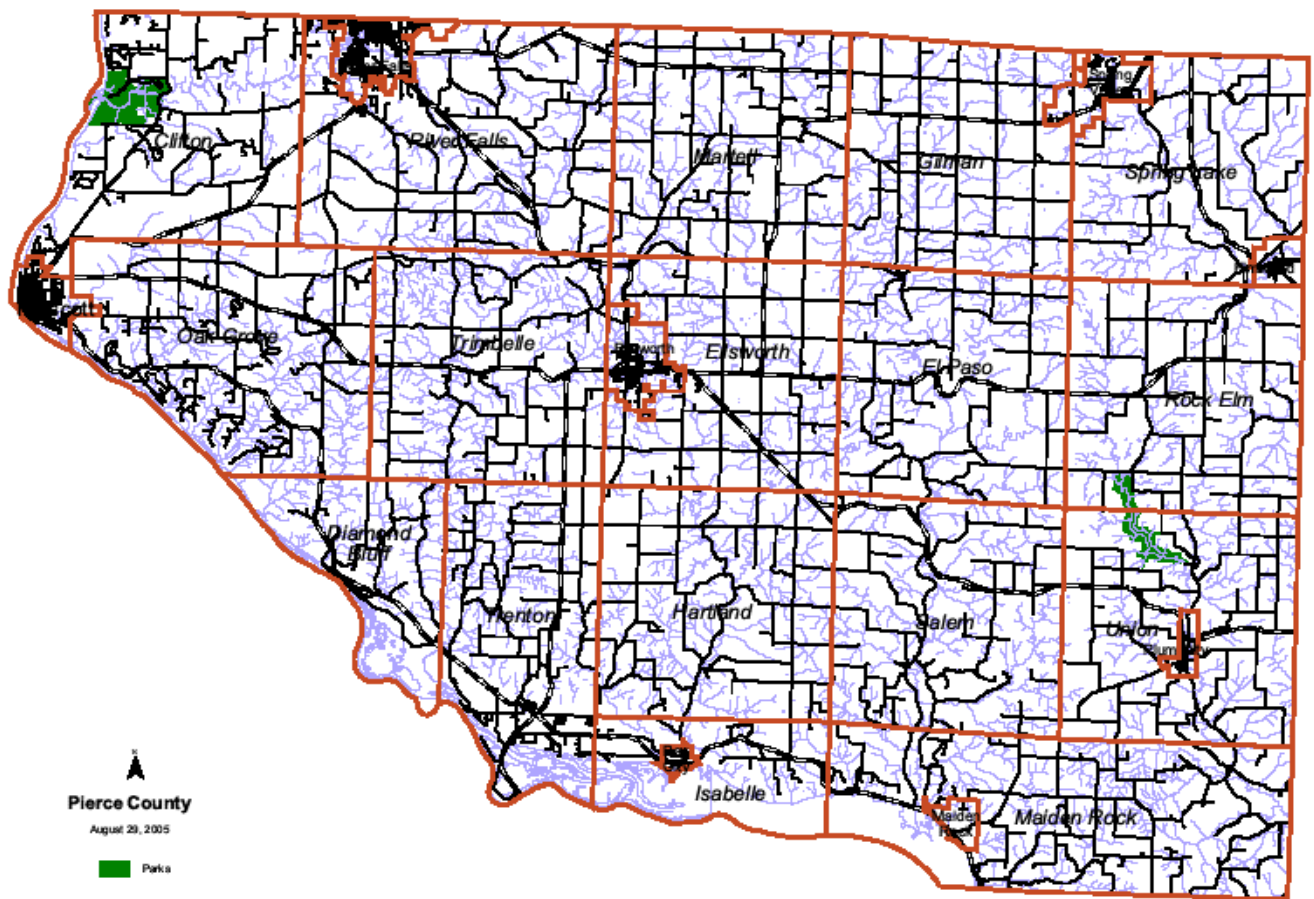
- a. The Town, through the use of this Plan, will promote an overall pattern of development that reflects the vision of the community by maintaining its natural character and farm base as well as continuing to be a visually appealing, safe, enjoyable place and rural environment.

### **2. Objectives/Recommendations:**

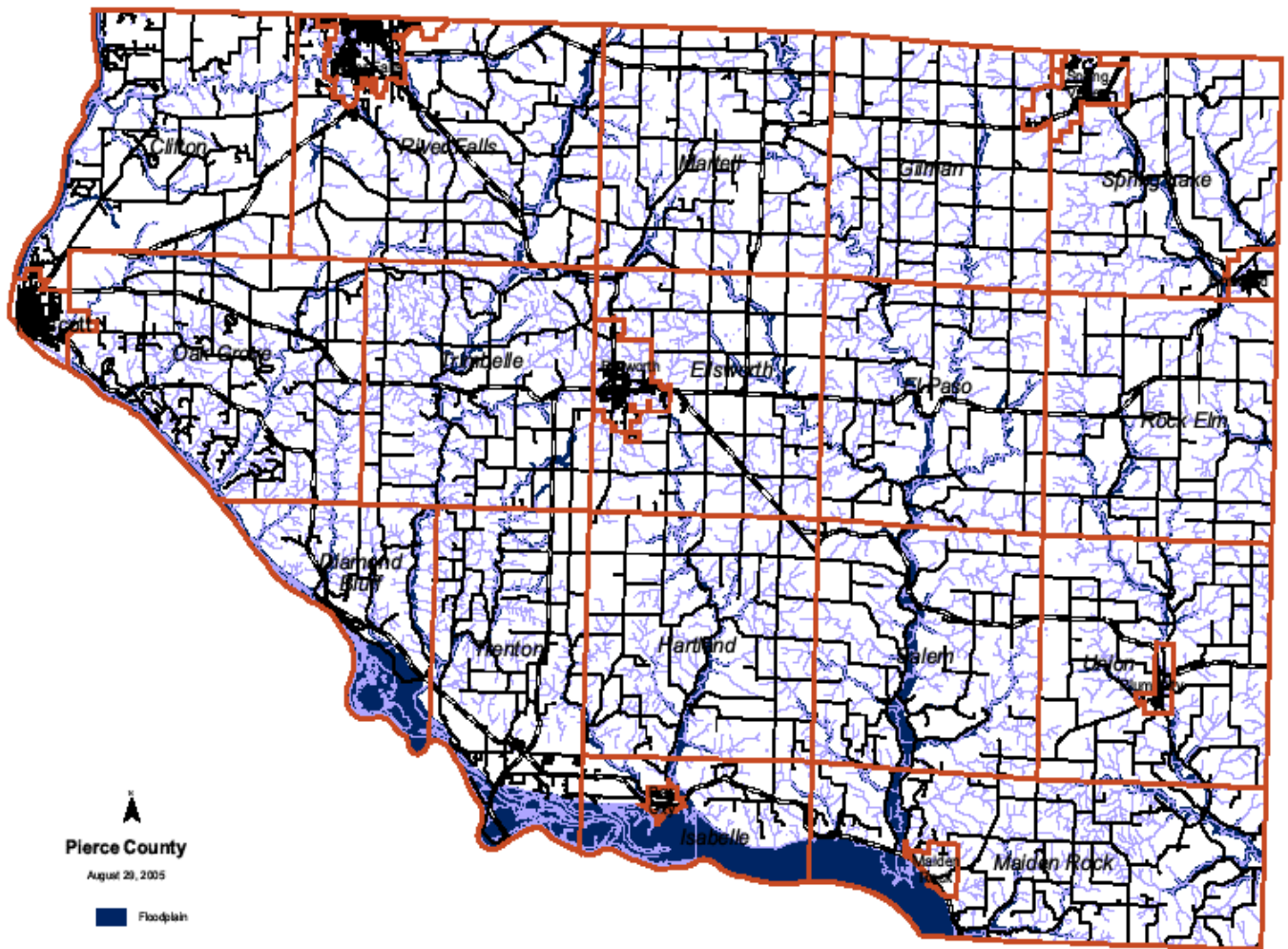
- a. Encourage an organized development pattern that will minimize conflicting land uses and a controlled rate of development.
- b. Direct land uses in an orderly and sustainable pattern to allow for efficient and economical public services.
- c. The Town Planning Commission will review any rezoning petitions, other land use regulation, or special exemptions to the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this review is to check for conformance to the stated objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and report the findings to the Town Board.
- d. Plan to provide limited public services as required in a rural area.
- e. Minimize potential conflict between agricultural and residential areas by separating their placement as much as possible.
- f. All new development will be consistent with this adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- g. Encourage the maintenance of farmsteads to include outbuildings, sheds, barns, housing, and fencing.
- h. Annually review this Plan to evaluate the progress of implementation and consider appropriate amendments based on changes in the Town's conditions.

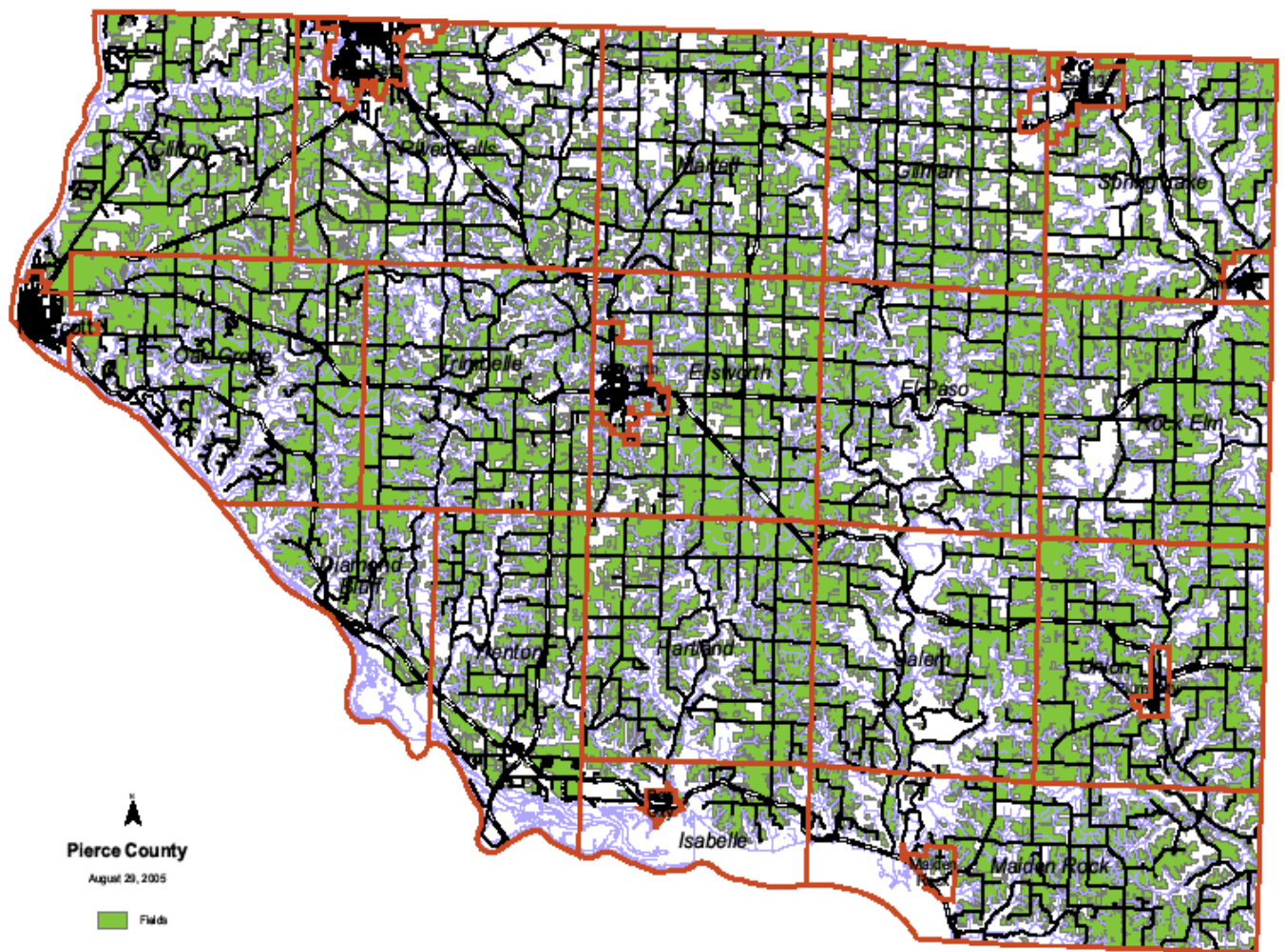


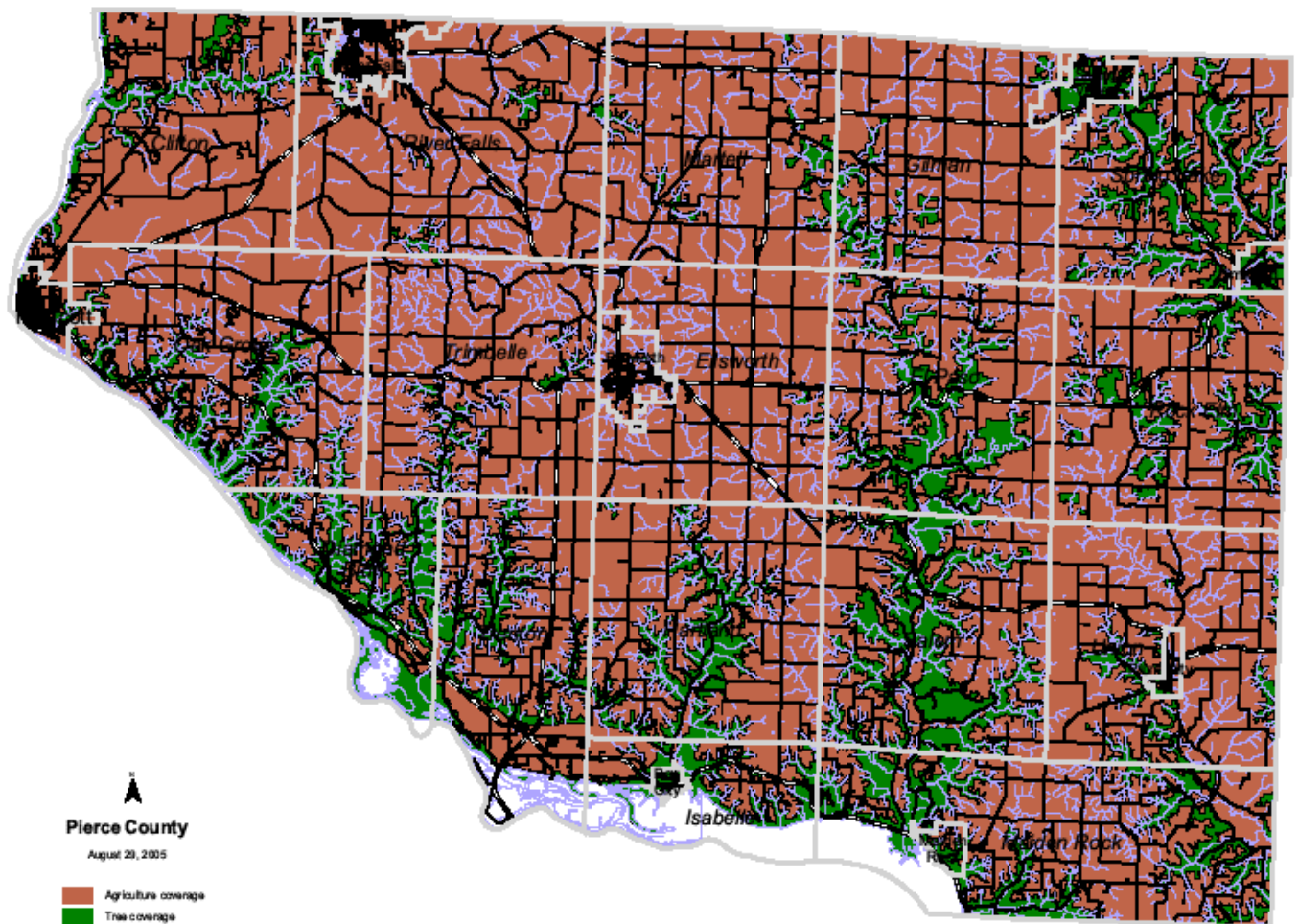












## **Element 8: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many cities, towns, villages, and counties have begun cooperative arrangements to lower costs and promote efficiency. Most arrangements involve only two governmental units, but there are also agreements among multiple units. Intergovernmental cooperation may range from formal joint power agreements to unwritten understandings. For example, two communities may have an unwritten agreement about sharing road repair equipment, or a cluster of cities and towns may have a written agreement concerning snow removal, economic development, fire, or EMT services. The opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation are endless.

Intergovernmental cooperation is an effective way for local governments to respond to changing and diverse needs by working together with their neighbors, while maintaining their own identity. If an agreement can be reached among two or more units of government, services can often be provided with substantial cost savings. Cooperation can also eliminate unnecessary duplication of services or purchasing of equipment.

The successful implementation of recommendations of a comprehensive plan involves a complex set of intergovernmental factors. The Town cannot achieve a common vision on its own. First, the vision extends beyond its existing boundaries into areas for which other units of government also have visions, and usually more authority. Second, even within its boundaries, other units of government have substantial influence (e.g., county, schools, state highways, etc.). Often coordination with other units of government is the only way, or the most effective way, to solve a problem or achieve an objective.

### **A. Existing Conditions**

This Element contains an analysis of Rock Elms current intergovernmental relationships.

#### **Town of Rock Elm Intergovernmental Relationships**

**TABLE 8.1: Analysis of Existing Intergovernmental Relationships**

UNIT OF GOVERNMENT	SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY	County
Pierce County	Satisfactory	
Elmwood School District	Satisfactory	Pierce
Plum City School District	Satisfactory	Pierce
Spring Valley School District	Satisfactory	Pierce
Village of Elmwood	Satisfactory	Pierce
Town of Spring Lake	Satisfactory	Pierce
Town of El Paso	Satisfactory	Pierce
Town of Union	Satisfactory	Pierce
Town of Gilman	Satisfactory	Pierce
Town of Salem	Satisfactory	Pierce
Town of Weston	Satisfactory	Pierce
Town of Eau Galle	Satisfactory	Dunn
Town of Waterville	Satisfactory	Pepin

## **B. Goals, Objectives and Recommendations**

### **1. Goals:**

- a. Intergovernmental cooperation policies and programs in the Town should help foster a governmental operating system that capitalizes on the economies of scale of service provision and develops growth management approaches that improve upon the current governmental relationships. These approaches should strive to balance varying needs of the Town with incorporated and unincorporated municipal neighbors.
- b. Encourage the coordination and cooperation among the Towns, Villages, Pierce County, school districts, and the state to ensure continuity and consistency in current and future planning efforts.
- c. Communicate with the Town's neighbors to explore and establish shared interests and goals for land use, conservation, and development.

### **2. Objectives:**

- a. Continue to keep communication open with between government bodies.
- b. Continue to foster inter-community fire and law enforcement services.
- c. Maintain and improve rural character that is compatible with neighboring communities.

### **3. Recommendations:**

- a. Attempt to coordinate the Towns Comprehensive Plan with the county's Comprehensive Plan to ensure an organized approach to the development of lands in the planning area.
- b. Continue to work with Pierce County, and other neighboring municipalities to identify joint services and facilities where consolidating, coordinating, or sharing services or facilities will result in better services and/or cost savings.
- c. Maintain open relationships with neighboring jurisdictions to build trust among staff and elected and appointed officials. Sharing information and cooperation on issues of mutual interest, can help to identify and resolve potential conflicts at an early stage.
- d. Continue to work with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure consistency of policies and actions; to provide increased predictability in governmental actions; and most importantly, to provide high quality, cost effective service to citizens.



## **Element 9: IMPLEMENTATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared to present a vision of the Town of Rock Elm for future population growth, land development, and infrastructure development. This vision simply identifies an intention—a statement of what the Town would like to achieve. But this statement says very little about how it can be achieved. This Element is intended to provide a link between the vision and the reality, which are the various implementation strategies that can be used to translate the Plan into action.

### **A. The Role of Implementation in the Comprehensive Planning Process**

It has been said that a plan is only as good as its implementation. The people of Rock Elm have worked hard to develop this Plan as a vision of their future. Whether or not that vision is realized depends upon the degree to which the Elements of this Plan are put into place by the local government.

Local governmental bodies (elected and appointed) make decisions that determine whether or not the Plan can be realized. All of this affects how the Plan relates to the future development of the Town. Over the twenty year life of the Plan, hundreds of decisions will be made which will impact its success. Therefore, it is important that each of these decision-making bodies accepts the basic recommendations of this Plan and makes decisions and recommendations based upon it.

This Element looks at those tools already in place to help decision-making bodies in their work.

### **B. The Management of Growth and Change**

The management of growth and change has been defined in a publication of the Urban Land Institute as: *“The utilization by government of a variety of traditional and evolving techniques, tools, plans, and activities to purposefully guide local patterns of land use, including the manner, location, rate, and nature of development.”*

To purposefully guide the management of growth and change requires a clear vision of what the community desires for the future. This vision is described in this Comprehensive Plan. Achieving the vision, or implementing the Plan, almost always requires a community to take a “proactive” position rather than a “reactive” position. However, both proactive and reactive positions must be carried out within the parameters of federal and state constitutional law, and pursuant to local municipal ordinances or duly established procedures.

### **C. Implementation Strategies**

The first and most important recommended implementation strategy is for the Town of Rock Elm to embrace the concept of a proactive, coordinated effort to manage growth and change. This effort should be guided by the adopted Comprehensive Plan, utilizing when appropriate the many specific recommendations described in this Element.

## **1. Organization**

Coordination of all Town services and related local agencies consistent with the Comprehensive Plan is essential. To accomplish this, all elected and appointed officials should be well versed in the Plan and should establish effective communications with their peers regarding actions that influence implementation of the Plan.

Pursuant to the 1999 Wisconsin Act 9: Comprehensive Planning, the Town Board, Plan Commission or a special body appointed by the Town Board, should be responsible for updating the Comprehensive Plan at regular intervals (every 10 years) and for meeting all of the mandatory objectives and criteria of that Act.

## **2. Fiscal Policies**

The fiscal integrity of the Town and other local governmental units (e.g. school district) is directly related to the management of growth and change. For this reason, predictability is an essential feature.

To the extent reasonable, new development should occur at a rate consistent with the community's ability to accommodate it physically (with infrastructure) and financially. Demand for services should be balanced with the supply of high quality services, and public costs should be balanced with public revenues.

## **3. Acquisition of Property**

From time to time it may be appropriate for the Town to acquire property.

For example:

- Town facility sites
- open space
- rights-of-way for bikeways and pedestrian paths, not otherwise available through dedication, conservation, scenic or historic easements (limited rights)

To the extent possible, these expenditures should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

## **4. Infrastructure and Services**

Central to implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is the construction and upgrading of public infrastructure and the provision of community services.

The tendency in many communities is to plan, design, and implement a project or a service to function on its own. Preferred approaches consider the following:

- Always tailor the project or the service to the overall community vision.
- Whenever possible, utilize cooperation to share costs and to maximize benefits.
- Pay careful attention to quality design and service. Good design is good business and not a

luxury.

## **5. Information, Education, and Dialogue**

Effective community development is largely dependent on a well-informed general public, with which there is a constant dialogue. It is recommended that the Town of Rock Elm expand its program of public information and enlist the participation of citizens in the community planning process. Possible options include:

- Community newsletter or a Town newsletter.
- Periodic reports in the local news media.
- A Web site offering some or all of the above information, and inviting citizen comments and suggestions.

## **6. Subdivision and Platting Regulations**

Under Section 236 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, the county government has approval authority over new subdivisions in unincorporated areas, while cities and villages have review over subdivisions within their jurisdictions and in their extraterritorial areas. Towns that have adopted subdivision ordinances also have the authority to review subdivisions within their jurisdictions. However, the current state statutes only require a review of the land division and platting function. The timing and location of development can be controlled by a subdivision ordinance in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan. The timing of the subdivision development can be made dependent upon the development of neighborhood plans, the provision of town services, and other specific development agreements.

## **7. Official Mapping**

In Section 236.46 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, counties are responsible for preparing the official county map that, among other things, identifies the County Trunk Highway System. Cities, villages, and towns can also officially map identified future roadway corridors. Official mapping notifies developers and property owners of the intent to build a road at a future date and can help to preserve the corridor needed for that facility. Official mapping is not property acquisition. The elements of the county's or a municipality's official map should be consistent with the recommendations of this Plan.

## **8. Zoning**

The County zoning ordinance provides the zoning districts/techniques that are needed to implement the Town Plan.

## **9. Codes**

Building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, historical preservation, and fire prevention codes provide sound standards for the safe construction, use, and occupancy of buildings. These codes should be considered implementation devices for a variety of reasons. First, use of the codes



insures that the high quality of development sought as an objective of the Plan is, in fact, carried out via the permit and inspection requirements of the codes. Secondly, through the same permit requirements, government is providing a checkoff point to insure that the land uses proposed are in accordance with the proposed uses embodied in the Plan and permitted by the appropriate zoning district. Finally, use of the codes provides a mechanism that insures that, following the construction of the building to the required standards, the building is maintained in an acceptable fashion over time.

#### **D. Plan Administration**

The Plan is based on variables that are dynamic and whose future direction cannot always be accurately predicted. Accordingly, such variables as population and development characteristics should be periodically compared against the Plan's assumptions and recommendations (at least every 10 years). The updating process should include gathering of most recent demographic information, updated building permit and land use data, analysis and a public hearing before the Plan Commission.

This Comprehensive Plan presents many proposals that are considered reasonable, feasible, and extremely important to the welfare of the entire community. However, the value of the Comprehensive Plan will be measured in terms of the degree of success that the community achieves in accomplishing these proposals. The effectiveness of the comprehensive plan will be directly related to the ongoing recognition of the Plan by the Town Board, and by the appointed boards and commissions. Their future decisions in taking administrative action, particularly those involving applications of provisions in the County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, will determine the degree of success the community achieves in accomplishing the goals set forth in the Plan.

The Plan Commission plays a very critical role in the planning process and must be ever alert to the opportunities and needs of the community; bringing such needs to the attention of the elected bodies or other agencies within the community. The appraisal of local needs and the continuing application of the planning principals set forth herein will assure maximum benefits from the Plan and will result in orderly and economical achievement of the goals which have been established in preparation of this Plan.

Implementation depends upon both private and public action. Public action includes County administration of the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, financial planning, and the review by the Plan Commission of proposals affecting the physical development of the community. The Plan Commission has a continuing responsibility to see that the plan is kept alive, as well as adjusted to conform to changing conditions. It must be realized that a change in one phase of the Plan may affect other parts of the Plan; and therefore, thoughtful consideration should be given to all implications before making a decision.

Administrative personnel, elected and appointed boards and commissions will have the plan to guide them in decision-making. Close cooperation between the Town and neighboring jurisdictions is essential to proper administration of the Plan. Coordination with other

governmental jurisdictions (i.e., county, school district) and agencies is equally important to realizing Plan goals.

The Comprehensive Plan is considered to be a flexible guide to decision making rather than an inflexible blueprint for development. Amendments should be made only after a realistic evaluation of existing conditions is done and the potential impact of such a change is made. Amendments should not be made merely to accommodate the daily pressures of planning and/or government. It is important to recognize that planning is a process that should occur on a continuing basis if the community is to take advantage of new opportunities as conditions change.

## **E. Consistency Among Plan Elements**

Section 66.1001(2)(i) of the Wisconsin Statutes requires that this Element include a discussion of how the Elements will be made consistent with the other Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. All elements of this Comprehensive Plan were prepared simultaneously by the Town Board and Plan Commission, residents, and consultants. All Elements are designed to collectively achieve the Town's vision, which is to continue to maintain the Town's identity as a small, attractive, rural community. There are no known inconsistencies between the different Elements of chapters in this Plan.

## **F. Plan Adoption, Monitoring, Amendments and Update**

### **1. Plan Adoption**

The first official action toward Plan implementation is adoption of the Plan document by the Town Plan Commission. After the Plan Commission adopts the Plan by resolution, the Town Board must adopt the Plan by ordinance. This action formalizes the Plan document as the current basic frame of reference for general development decisions over the next 20 years. The Plan, thereby, becomes a tool for communicating the community's land use policy and for coordinating various individual decisions into a consistent set of actions to harmoniously shape the area's continued growth in the desired manner.

### **2. Plan Use and Evaluation**

The Town of Rock Elm will base all of its land use decisions against this Plan's goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations, including decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions.

Although Rock Elm is a community with a declining growth rate which is expected to continue declining over the life of this Plan, future conditions cannot always be accurately predicted. Despite this, existing variables in the community should be periodically compared against the Plan's assumptions and recommendations.

It is recommended that the Plan be evaluated every two to three years to determine the Town's progress toward implementing the Plan and identifying areas that need to be updated. A joint

meeting of the Town Board and Plan Commission should be conducted every two to three years to perform the evaluation. The evaluation should consist of reviewing actions taken to implement the Plan, including their successes, failures, and costs. It should also include an updated timetable of actions not yet taken and their projected costs.

### **3. Plan Amendments**

This Comprehensive Plan may be amended at any time by the Town Board following the procedures set forth in Wisconsin Statutes § 66.0295(4). Amendments are generally defined as minor changes to the plan maps or text. Amendments may be needed for a variety of reasons including:

- Changes in Town goals, objectives, policies and recommendations
- Unique opportunities presented by private development proposals
- Changes in Town programs and services
- Changes in state or federal laws

Any proposed amendments should be submitted to the Plan Commission for their review and recommendations prior to being considered by the Town Board for final action.

### **4. Plan Update**

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the Comprehensive Plan be updated at least once every 10 years. An update is different than an amendment because the update is often a substantial rewrite of the Plan document and maps. In addition, on January 1, 2010, "any program or action that affects land use" must be consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans, including zoning and land division ordinances. The Town should continue to monitor any changes to the language or interpretations of the State Law over the next several years.

## **FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN**

<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
Development of a maintenance plan for Town Equipment	Town Board	2011–2012
Investigate leasing equipment versus purchasing	Town Board	2011–2012
Explore possibility of county providing some services instead of Town	Town Board	2011
Review 5-year Action Plan every 3 years and Update	Plan Commission	Ongoing
Develop procedure to review all building permits and incorporate site plan review	Plan Commission	2011–2012
Prepare pamphlet explaining site plan review for Distribution	Plan Commission	2011–2012
Discuss procedure for identifying "sensitive areas"	Plan Commission	2011–2012
Investigate joint purchases with County/Towns	Town Board	Ongoing