

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	1-1
State Planning Legislation	1-1
HOW TO USE THIS PLAN	1-2
PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	1-3
Plan Amendment.....	1-4
Public Participation Process.....	1-5
VISION STATEMENT	1-9

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This comprehensive plan for the Town of Lena was prepared to address the varied land use issues that will impact the town's efforts to preserve its productive agricultural lands and natural resources during the next 20 years. The plan is to serve as a guide to ensure consistent decisions are being made in regards to environmental protection, farmland preservation, transportation expansion, housing development, location of public services, and sound economic development. The *Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* is a legal document that provides the policy framework from which the town officials will base their future land use decisions.

The cornerstone of this plan is the future land use map, referred to in this document as the General Plan Design (GPD), **Map 3.1**. This desired land use map will be achieved through the implementation of a number of goals with detailed objectives, policies, and programs that provide a roadmap for officials and residents to follow as they work to implement the town's comprehensive plan. The plan and GPD shall be used in conjunction with the Oconto County's zoning ordinances, local land use ordinances, supporting planning materials, and other implementation tools to guide future decisions on where and how the Town of Lena should be developed as well as preserved during the next 20 years.

State Planning Legislation

The *Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* was prepared to appropriately address the following required nine elements of a comprehensive plan as outlined in s. 66.1001, Wis. Stats.

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

Comprehensive Planning legislation s. 66.1001, Wis. Stats. further states:

“Beginning on January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit engages in any of the following actions, those actions shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan:

- (a) Official mapping established or amended under s. 62.23 (6).
- (b) Local subdivision regulation under s. 236.45 or 236.46.
- (c) County zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 59.69.
- (d) City or village zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 62.23 (7).
- (e) Town zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61 or 60.62.
- (f) Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands under s. 59.692, 61.351 or 62.231.”

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The *Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* consists of eleven chapters presented in two volumes along with an appendices. **Volume I: Town Plan** is comprised of Chapters 1 through 4. The content of these four chapters meet all the requirements outlined in s. 66.1001, Wis. Stats. The appendix to **Volume I** consists of planning materials generated during the preparation of the *Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*. **Volume II: County Resources** contains Chapters 5 through 11, along with an appendix that details countywide background information and data.

Volume I: Town Plan: This volume describes how the Town of Lena envisions itself developing during this 20 year planning period. It includes detailed background information and data, development strategies, land use projections, a General Plan Design (future land use map), and a plan implementation schedule.

Chapter 1: Introduction - contains an overview of the purpose of the plan; the planning legislation; plan development process; and vision statement.

Chapter 2: Inventory, Trends, and Forecasts - extrapolates town specific background information and data compiled at the county level in chapters 5 through 11; notes land use issues and conflicts; acknowledges continued land use trends; projects future land use allocations for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural needs; and identifies Smart Growth areas.

Chapter 3: Future Land Use Plan - illustrates a desirable future land use plan through a General Plan Design; designates areas for farmland preservation; and defines the characteristics of the future land uses through a series of land use recommendations.

Chapter 4: Implementation - details a work plan to implement the development strategies (goals, objectives, policies, and programs) of the comprehensive plan with identified stakeholders and projected dates for completion.

Appendices: Town Plan - contains town public participation materials; nominal group results; survey results from the joint town and village community survey conducted in 2004; intergovernmental cooperation workshop results; and other relevant input and materials generated or gathered during the plan development process.

Volume II: County Resources: The volume contains countywide background information that served as a basis in the development of the town's development strategies and General Plan Design.

Chapter 5: Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources - provides a detailed description of the county's unique physical features.

Chapter 6: Population and Housing - presents countywide historic demographic information along with future population and housing projections.

Chapter 7: Economic Development – highlights labor force statistics; economic composition; and provides an analysis of existing and future economic conditions for the town and Oconto County.

Chapter 8: Transportation - describes the county’s existing multi-modal transportation system.

Chapter 9: Utilities and Community Facilities - inventories all local and countywide utilities and facilities including schools and emergency services.

Chapter 10: Intergovernmental Cooperation - lists the results of three cluster level intergovernmental cooperation workshops as well as programs to facilitate joint planning and decision making processes with other government units.

Chapter 11: Land Use Controls and Inventory – provides a detailed inventory of existing land uses for each community and the county as a whole.

Appendices: County Resources - contains a countywide inventory of natural resources information; economic SWOT results; a detailed list of available housing, economic development, and transportation financial and technical resources; existing countywide land use inventory; a glossary of definitions; and other relevant input and materials generated or gathered during the plan development process.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Town of Lena was one of sixteen communities to enter into an agreement with Oconto County to submit a multi-jurisdictional application to the Wisconsin Department of Administration in 2005 for grant funding to assist in covering the cost of completing or updating their comprehensive plans. The application was successful and an award of \$263,000 was made to Oconto County in April 2006. Participating communities and the county were required to match the state grant with local dollars. Oconto County contracted the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC) to prepare each community’s comprehensive plan as well as the county’s plan.

The 36 month multi-jurisdictional planning process was divided into three separate planning phases:

First Phase: Inventorying countywide background information to be used for preparation of the county resource document.

- Countywide background data was collected, analyzed, and presented for review.
- Oconto County Planning Advisory Committee (OCPAC) and communities within the three planning clusters reviewed and provided input on the countywide background materials.
- Three (3) Open Houses were conducted, one in each of the county’s three Planning Clusters (Southern, Central, and Northern). These Open Houses were held in May and June 2007 to allow the public to review countywide background materials, ask questions, and provide feedback.
- A draft of *Volume II: County Resources* was prepared to be used as reference during the completion of the local and county comprehensive plans.



Second Phase: Completion and adoption of the local comprehensive plans and *Volume II: County Resources*

- The Town of Lena Plan Commission held its initial planning meeting with BLRPC staff in June 2007. Three alternates were appointed to serve on the commission for additional input and expertise in the development of the town’s plan.
- Public meetings were held on a monthly basis to review materials and facilitate a number of activities such as the mid-point open house on January 10, 2008 to gather additional input from residents and landowners.
- The town’s vision statement was developed along with the land use goals, objectives, policies, and programs by using results from the various issue identification workshops and background data.
- A preliminary General Plan Design was prepared along with the recommended land use strategies to guide future development and conservation of the town over the next 20 years.
- The Oconto County Planning and Zoning Committee and OCPAC finalized *Volume II: County Resources* document. The resource document was distributed for the thirty-day review process and adopted by the Oconto County Board of Supervisors on August 21, 2008.
- The required thirty-day review of the town’s plan was held during the month of June 2008 to allow citizens, landowners, neighboring communities, and other interested parties to review the completed draft of the *Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*.
- Lena’s second open house was held on July 9, 2008 to allow the public to review the planning materials and provide input as to the contents of the draft plan.
- The required Public Hearing on the *Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* was held on July 9, 2008, and the Plan Commission made recommendation for adoption of the plan following the public hearing. Any input received during the review, open house, and public hearing was considered and included in the town’s comprehensive plan as appropriate.
- The *Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* was completed on August 14, 2008 with its adoption as an ordinance by the Lena Town Board.

Third Phase: Completion and adoption of the *Oconto County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*

- The Oconto County Planning and Zoning Committee and OCPAC utilized the background information and data gathered during the first planning phase, along with the adopted local comprehensive plans and county resource document completed during the second phase, to prepare the *Oconto County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*.

Plan Amendment

The first amendment of the Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan began in 2018 with assistance from Oconto County Planning. The updated Town of Lena 20-Year Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2021. The focus of this amendment was to update the existing land use data, general plan design, land use recommendations, goals, policies, and implementation schedule.

Public Participation Process

Public Participation Plan

The key to drafting and adopting a comprehensive plan that fits the town's future planning needs is gathering input from residents land owners at all plan development stages. In accordance with s. 66.1001(4), Wis. Stats., the Town of Lena approved "Procedures for Adoption or Amendment of the Town of Lena Comprehensive Plan" at its Town of Lena Town Board meeting on October 12, 2006 to maximize the opportunities to gain valuable public input on this very important planning document. The town public participation is included as Appendix A of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

The Public Participation Plan details the individual steps that were designed to encourage and gain involvement from town residents and landowners throughout the 13 month planning process. Monthly planning meetings, posted and open to the public, were held to review background data, finalize the individual plan elements, and create the General Plan Design. In addition to the monthly planning meetings, the following steps were used to gather additional input for the plan.

Community Surveys

The Town of Lena conducted two community surveys in preparation of completing their comprehensive plan. The first one was completed in 2001, and the second survey was conducted jointly in 2004 with the Village of Lena. The surveys were created and tabulated with assistance from Oconto County's UW-Extension Department. They were designed to solicit feelings residents and landowners had toward existing services and amenities and to gain their insight on what they thought the town and village would look like in the year 2025. The surveying process provided the input necessary to create the vision statement; the background for drafting the goals, objectives, policies, and programs; and a general consensus on where and what type of development the area would experience in the future. Summaries of the results for both surveys are highlighted below. Full results from the 2004 survey results can be found in Appendix B of *Volume I: Town Plan*. Please contact Town Officials for a copy of the full results from the 2001 community survey.

Summary of 2001 Community Survey Results Town of Lena

Key Responses:

- Concern over the level of development over the next 20 years
- Town should be involved in land use decisions
- Strict protection of the natural resources
- Farmer's right to farm
- Discourage residential development next to agricultural facilities
- Mixed response on residential lot sizes
- Encourage economic development in town...light manufacturing
- Ensure orderly development
- Minimize loss of agriculture land
- Promote border development with village

Summary of 2004 Community Survey Results Village and Town of Lena

Key Responses:

- Land uses governed by local ordinances
- Quiet, peaceful, low crime
- Clean and neat appearance
- Endorse moderate housing development
- Preferred smaller lot sizes of two acres or less
- Promote Farmer's Right to Farm
- Desire expansion of existing farming operations
- Protect private property rights
- Protect agriculture land
- Encourage community participation in planning
- Intergovernmental cooperation
- Establishment of boundary agreements
- Desire moderate to small industry and farming operations
- Need activities for the youth

Nominal Group Exercise

On August 1, 2007, five members of the plan commission participated in a Nominal Group Exercise to identify some of those issues most important for the town to address during this 20 year planning period. To address those issues most important to the town, each member was given three votes and asked to vote and prioritize the issues. The following are the top five issues and concerns facing the town according to those individuals participating in this issue identification process. All issues on the list were considered while drafting goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the town's comprehensive plan.

1. Clustering + Lot Size Limits with Green Space to Maintain a Sense of Community
2. Agriculture Operation Buffer Zone
3. Farmers' Right to Farm
4. Commercial and Industrial Development along Highway Corridor
5. Utilization of Natural Resources for Recreation-Trail System (Hiking/Biking)

As part of the plan amendment process that began in 2018, the town reviewed and discussed these prior nominal group results as well as county nominal group results. These results and the additional discussion assisted the town in the plan update process.

A complete list of the Nominal Group Exercise can be found in Appendix C of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshop

An Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshop was conducted on April 16, 2008 for communities located in the southern region of Oconto County. Representatives from each of the communities within the planning cluster were invited to attend the workshop, along with neighboring municipalities, school districts, civic and recreational clubs, Oconto County staff, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and other entities

and departments that have an interest in and/or direct impact on the implementation of the area's comprehensive plans.

The goal of the workshop was to gather input on any current land use issues or conflicts that need to be addressed during the development of the local comprehensive plans as well as the county's plan. Some examples of positive working relationships and current and future issues and conflicts are listed below. Those in attendance were also asked to provide potential resolutions to those land use problems. Examples of some of the resolutions discussed during the meeting are also listed below. A comprehensive list of positive working relationships, current or future land use issues and conflicts, and potential resolutions are attached as Appendix D of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

Positive Working Relationships

- Shared services (emergency-mutual aid)
- Extra territorial planning area between Oconto Falls and Stiles
- Trans-county and town agreements for road maintenance and snow plow
- Agreements for joint sanitary with Little Suamico and Pensaukee and Oconto (future)
- Cluster meetings – good source of information-education
- Mar-Oco landfill – good working relationship with Marinette County
- County recently updated 911 system – has mutual aid with surrounding communities/counties to help with disaster response
- Coordination between county and local zoning
- Economic Development: countywide and county funded OCEDC
- Mutual aid agreements on wildland fire suppression between WDNR and many town and village fire departments
- Support summer recreation programs

Existing or Potential Land Use Conflicts

- Potential conflict of town ordinances with county ordinances
- Surrounding agricultural land (possibility of rezoning/annexation)
- Increased residential development can negatively impact important environmental features
- Increased recreational demands may lead to conflicts
- This region is extremely important environmentally and future development should be planned with that in mind
- Development of Hwy 141 corridor
- Keep water ways free (keep housing off water ways)
- Enforcement of ordinances and/or conditions in conditional use permits
- Initiatives/incentives for commercial to locate in town but yet, promote preservation of farmland – some type of incentive
- No central government building results in communication barrier. Residents seeking information on planning, information being given, information not properly communicated to town planning

Resolutions

- Sharing of information between communities (e.g. meeting minutes)
- Informal get-togethers to share information between towns and county
- Information discussions between incorporated communities and towns re: extraterritorial

planning areas

- Inter and Intra communication
- Shared planning
- Standardize ordinances – consistency with county – remove duplication and unnecessary items
- Sharing information on troubles between neighbors – local meetings
- Locate funding sources – to continue these meetings and planning processes
- Communities place own ordinances on a website so public can access
- Get town websites out to public – make people aware that they are out there – also promote county websites – utilize newspapers to promote
- Coordination between towns and county to find more efficient ways to implement and enforce ordinances – let county help as much as they can

As part of the plan amendment process that began in 2018, the town reviewed and discussed these prior intergovernmental cooperation workshop results. These results and the additional discussion assisted the town in the plan update process.

Open Houses

Two “Open Houses” were held during the planning process. The first was held close to the planning mid-point on January 10, 2008 at the Lena Town Hall. Approximately 15 residents, landowners, and other interested parties attended the event. Several displays and informational pieces were available for review, including:

- A 2007 Land Use Map
- A draft General Plan Design
- A draft vision statement
- An overview of the town and county planning processes
- The 2004 town Air Photo
- A comprehensive planning summary
- A list of draft goals
- Planning vs. Zoning handout

Those in attendance were encouraged to attend future meetings and provide input as to the contents of the plan. They were offered the opportunity to provide written comments on the displays and the overall planning process.

The second open house was held on July 9, 2008 at the Lena Town Hall. It was held at the conclusion of the planning process to allow the residents and other interested persons the opportunity to review the completed draft plan and give input as to its contents and scope.

As part of the plan amendment process, an open house was held to provide residents and any interested persons an opportunity to review the updated plan materials and give input as to its contents and scope. Plan update materials were also made available on the Oconto County website throughout the plan update project.

VISION STATEMENT

The following is the town's 20-Year Vision Statement as prepared by members of the Plan Commission:

“The Town of Lena remains unified in its efforts to protect the environment, while supporting a strong agriculture community and promoting the organized growth of high quality residential, commercial, and light industry development through the ongoing application of best management and planning practices. Through continued implementation of mutual development goals with the Village of Lena, the area is attracting an increasing number of residents who are willing to invest the necessary resources to maintain a quality school district, a thriving local economy, and a wide variety of recreational opportunities.”

