

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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## PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Town of Spruce 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* is a legal document that provides the policy framework for which town officials will base their development decisions. Over the next 20 years, the town will need to address a number of land use issues that will likely have an impact on various aspects of community. This comprehensive plan will serve as a guide to ensure decisions regarding future land uses are consistent and take into account housing development, provision of public services, environmental protection, transportation expansion, and economic development.

The General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**) designates areas of the town for preferred land use activities and is the desired goal to be achieved through the implementation of this comprehensive plan. The General Plan Design, along with the town's development strategies, shall be used in conjunction with Oconto County's zoning ordinances, local land use ordinances, supporting planning materials, and other implementation tools to make informed land use decisions in the Town of Spruce over the next 20 years.

### **State Planning Legislation**

As outlined in the Comprehensive Planning legislation, s.66.1001, Wis. Stats., the *Town of Spruce 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* addresses the required nine plan elements.

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

The 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 Spruce 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* is made up of two volumes containing a total of 11 chapters. **Volume I – Town Plan** consists of Chapters 1 through 4 along with an appendices section for the community’s plan. **Volume II – County Resources** contains Chapters 5 through 11, along with an appendix that details countywide and town specific background information and data.

**Volume I: Town Plan:** This volume describes how the Town of Spruce envisions itself developing over the next 20 years. It includes detailed background information and data, development strategies, land use projections, a 20-Year General Plan Design (future land use map), and a plan implementation guide.

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

***Chapter 2: Inventory, Trends, and Forecasts*** - identifies town specific background information and data assembled at the county level; inventories existing town land uses; details land use issues and conflicts; acknowledges continued land use trends; and projects future land use allocations.

***Chapter 3: Future Land Use Plan*** - illustrates the town’s recommendations for future land uses through a 20-Year General Plan Design; designates area for farmland preservation; and defines the characteristics of the future land uses through a series of land use recommendations.

***Chapter 4: Implementation*** - contains a guide to implement the development strategies (goals, objectives, policies, and programs) of the comprehensive plan with identified stakeholders and priority projects.

***Appendices: Town Plan*** - Contains town public participation materials; nominal group results; intergovernmental cooperation workshop results; existing town land use inventory; and other relevant input and materials generated or gathered during the plan development process.

**Volume II: County Resources:** This volume contains countywide background information and data that served as a basis in the creation of the town’s development strategies and 20-Year General Plan Design.

***Chapter 5: Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources*** - provides a detailed description of the county’s unique features that comprise its physical landscape.

***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 local communities 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 the 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 Oconto County.

**Appendices: County Resources** - Contains a countywide inventory of natural resources information, endangered and threatened species; 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 Spruce was one of sixteen communities to enter into an agreement with Oconto County to develop comprehensive plans utilizing a *three phase* multi-jurisdictional planning process:

**First Phase:** Inventorying countywide background information to be used for completion of the local and county plans

- Collection and presentation of countywide background data.
- Oconto County Planning Advisory Committee (OCPAC) provided edits and other input on countywide background data.
- Conducted three (3) Open Houses. One in each of the county’s three Planning Clusters (Southern, Central, and Northern). These Open Houses allowed the public to review countywide background materials, ask questions, and provide feedback.
- Created the preliminary *Volume II: County Resources* document to assist with the completion of the local and county comprehensive plans.

**Second Phase:** Completion and adoption of the local comprehensive plans

- Commenced work on the 16 local comprehensive plans, including Town of Spruce
- Analyzed Town of Spruce data to identify existing and potential conflicts.
- Developed the town’s vision statement along with the land use goals, objectives, policies and programs by using results from the various issue identification workshops and background data.



- Created a preliminary General Plan Design and recommended land use strategy to guide future growth, development and conservation within the town over the next 20 years.
- Oconto County Planning and OCPAC finalize Volume II: County Resources document.
- Public review and Final Open House conducted to present the Town of Spruce 20-Year *Comprehensive Plan* to the citizens of the community as well as nearby municipalities and government organizations for their feedback. Comments were considered and included in the town’s comprehensive plan where appropriate.

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

- Oconto County Planning and OCPAC utilize the background information and data gathered in the first phase, along with the adopted local comprehensive plans completed during the second phase, to create a generalized future land use plan for Oconto County.

### **Plan Amendment**

The first amendment of the Town of Spruce 20-Year Comprehensive Plan began in 2018 with assistance from Oconto County Planning. The updated Town of Spruce 20-Year Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 20XX. 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**

A major element of the town’s comprehensive planning process is gathering input from citizens and land owners. In accordance with s. 66.1001(4), Wis. Stats., the Town of Spruce approved “Procedures for Adoption or Amendment of the Town of Spruce Comprehensive Plan”. A copy of these written procedures is included in Appendix A of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

The town held public meetings monthly or as posted to review background data, finalize each plan element, and create the 20-Year General Plan Design. In addition to these planning meetings, issue identification exercises (i.e., Nominal Group and Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshop) and open houses were used to gather extra input from the public.

#### **Nominal Group Exercise**

In August 2006, the Town Plan Commission members participated with surrounding municipalities in a Nominal Group Exercise to identify issues and concerns regarding future development in the Town of Spruce and the central portion of Oconto County. The following are the priority planning issues generated during the discussion. Relevant issues were considered during the development of the goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the town’s comprehensive plan. Top issues from the nominal group exercise include:

- Preservation of agriculture and forestry
- Development of business/industrial parks
- Regulate developers seeking to subdivide land
- Maintain agricultural heritage in county
- Develop and assist small businesses (less than 20 employees)

- Preserve county forestlands
- Preserve agricultural land-protect from infringement
- Prevent fragmentation-keep agriculture and forest lands together – promote preservation as well
- Promote development of businesses in cities and villages so as not to tax surrounding communities – promote small business as well

As part of the plan amendment process that began in 2018, the town reviewed and discussed these prior 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 B of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

### **Visioning Exercise**

A visioning exercise was conducted with town residents to describe the future of various elements discussed in the town’s comprehensive plan, including natural resources, housing, economic development, etc. The visioning process was used to provide a foundation for the development of the Town of Spruce 20-Year vision statement, and generate development strategies (i.e., goals, objectives, policies, and programs) to implement the *Town of Spruce 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*. The town’s vision statement is displayed later in this chapter

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshop**

An Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshop was conducted in April 2008 for communities located in the central 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, or direct impact on, the implementation of the area’s comprehensive plans.

The workshop collected input on any existing or potential conflicts or positive relationships between the communities and their surrounding government jurisdictions. Participants were also asked to provide potential resolutions to the identified issues or concerns. The items applicable to the Town of Spruce were addressed during the comprehensive plan development process or incorporated into the implementation portion of the comprehensive plan. The list of issues and conflicts, and resolutions from the Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshop are displayed in Appendix C of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

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 conducted during the planning process to present background information and plan recommendations to the public. The first open house was held for communities in the central portion of Oconto County to display countywide background

information and data to be used in the development of the local comprehensive plans.

The second open house, held exclusively for the Town of Spruce, was conducted at the conclusion of the planning process to allow residents and other interested individuals the opportunity to review and comment on the town's completed draft plan.

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 of Spruce 20-Year Vision Statement as prepared by members of the Plan Commission:

*“Town of Spruce is defined by its rural atmosphere and scenic beauty while working in the future to:*

- *Make good use of our agricultural lands while protecting them for future families.*
- *Promote business that is beneficial to the town.*
- *Promote the preservation of our scenic beauty and peaceful environment.*
- *Promote Kelly Lake as the towns' recreational area and development area for residents and visitors.”*