

**CHAPTER 3:  
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses in detail the 20-Year General Plan Design map and supporting land use recommendations for the town of Stiles. The background information and data provided in *Volume II: County Resources* was referenced by Plan Commission members during the year-long preparation of the town’s preferred future land use map. The Town of Stiles 20-Year General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**) reflects the type, location, and density of specific future land uses the town would like to promote during this planning period. The land use inventory conducted in 2017, a detailed list of development strategies, and a series of implementation tools such as county and local zoning ordinances will assist town officials in achieving the 20-General Plan Design.

## 20-YEAR GENERAL PLAN DESIGN

### Land Use Classifications

The following land use classifications support the town of Stiles future land use plan. Utilizing these land use classifications, this section details the suggested type, location and density of development for the Town of Stiles 20-Year General Plan Design. They define those vital land use characteristics that will assist in the preservation of the town’s rural character and promote efficient and orderly growth. The town’s future land use classifications are:

- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Industrial / Light Industrial
- Parks and Recreation
- Governmental / Institutional / Utilities
- Agriculture / Woodlands
- Transportation
- Mineral Resources Overlay
- Environmental Corridors Overlay

### Land Use Recommendations

Utilizing these land use classifications, this section details the suggested type, location and the general density of development for the town of Stiles 20-year planning period.

#### **Residential**

The Residential land use classification is designed to promote orderly and efficient growth patterns that are consistent with adjacent land uses. With Stiles’ diversity in land uses and natural features, residential development in the town of Stiles is categorized into two categories *concentrated residential and rural residential*.

#### ***Concentrated Residential***

The “Concentrated Residential” category is illustrated as “*residential*” on the town’s 20-Year General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**). This residential classification is designated for portions of the town that contain large concentrations of existing development. Concentrated residential encompasses primarily single-family homes within areas designated for denser development.

*Recommendations:*

- **Future concentrated residential development will be directed to designated areas in the southern portion of the town and in the southwest corner of the town within the City of Oconto Falls’ extraterritorial planning area.** This residential classification consists only of single-family residents within areas of the town already experiencing concentrated residential development. Other issues to consider as residential densities increase and expand in these areas of the town include:
  - Integration of varying residential design standards such as conservation by design subdivisions
  - Potential for development of a Sanitary District
  - Location and content of the existing environmental features
  - Existing infrastructure and accessibility to future development
  - Provision of emergency services
  - Preservation of ground and surface water quality (stormwater management plan)
  - Availability of groundwater
  - Location and quality of recreational facilities
  - County and local land Use regulations
- **Concentrated residential development will continue as planned along County Highway I and Stiles Road** at the current size and density.
- **Infill should be maximized within concentrated residential areas whenever possible.** Utilizing infill development will result in limiting the costs to extend infrastructure, minimizing the loss of open space and productive agriculture and woodlands, and decreasing the travel distance between residences and existing services. However, due to the town’s lack of sanitary and stormwater services, it is important that infill development be done in a manner that will continue to protect the town’s surface water features.
- **The rehabilitation of homes** will offer an affordable housing option while adding to the appearance and function of the town.
- **The establishment of a stormwater management plan** will diminish the likelihood of runoff into the flowage or Oconto River.
- **Any development along shorelands must be in compliance with the *Oconto County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance*.** Compliance with the ordinance will provide a layer of protection from future development along the town’s shorelands.
- **Second tier shoreland development should be minimized.** This will minimize the loss of natural shoreland and open space that help buffer developed land uses and offer water filtration from lawns and other impermeable services.
- **The loss of natural shoreland and open space surrounding the town’s surface waters should be minimized.** Lot sizes should be no smaller than those found in rural residential development areas.
- **Multi-family housing will be directed to the neighboring incorporated communities and the Abrams Town Center where services and infrastructure are present.** The town will

consider multi-family housing development only if adequate infrastructure, including a sanitary district, is available. If a sanitary district is developed in the town, multi-family housing will only be allowed in areas that lie within the boundary of that district. The town will make exceptions for smaller multi-family developments, such as town homes, if proof can be provided that the development will be adequately serviced by existing infrastructure. In such situations, it is recommended that these developments occur on larger lots within areas of designated concentrated residential development.

- **New residential development types are encouraged to minimize the co-location or adjacent location of incompatible uses.** Conflicting size or type of development may detract from existing properties.
- **Encourage development techniques which maintain a balance between the natural environment and new development.** It is recommended that various development techniques such as conservation subdivisions are utilized in these areas in an effort to protect surrounding environmental features, preserve open space throughout residential areas, and protect woodlands and wildlife habitats within the town.
- **Future residential development should maximize the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.** Environmentally sensitive areas (i.e. woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, etc.) located in areas of proposed residential development should be preserved in order to minimize soil erosion and damage to surface waters.
- **The single family residential zoning district will be the primary zoning district of choice for any proposed residential development** in areas shown as concentrated residential. The town may also consider the use of the rural residential zoning district on a limited basis when the use of that district better aligns with existing residential development.

### ***Rural Residential***

The “Rural Residential” category is illustrated as “*Agriculture / Woodlands*” on the town’s 20-Year General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**) and encompasses single-family residences located in areas predicted not to experience concentrated residential development. This category focuses on individual single-family residences built on predominately larger lots within agricultural, wooded, and open space land use designations. The town’s vision is to protect productive farmland and existing natural areas (vegetated areas and/or open space views) from development that will cause fragmentation of such features.

### ***Recommendations:***

- **Low density development is promoted to help maintain the town’s visual and environmental integrity.**
- **New residential development should conform to surrounding uses** in order not to detract from or conflict with existing properties.
- **The rehabilitation or redevelopment of existing rural housing structures** will be encouraged to offer a more affordable housing option for town residents and to improve the general look and housing conditions within Stiles.
- **The establishment of natural or man-made buffers between residential development and farming operations** will help reduce land use conflicts.

- **Access controls are encouraged to limit the number of driveways** along the primary corridors in order to improve safety and reduce road maintenance costs.
- **The rural residential zoning district will be the primary zoning district of choice for any proposed residential development** while the town may also consider the single family residential zoning district on a limited basis when a smaller lot size would further the towns intent of preserving woodlands and agricultural lands.

## Commercial

The Commercial land use classification includes retail, professional, and service sector businesses. The town of Stiles has a variety of businesses within these categories that provide a number of local services and jobs. There are several in-home businesses operating throughout the town, and more such businesses are expected to become established in the future. The town is directing most of its commercial business growth to areas along the highway corridor. The highway intersection at USH 141 and State Highway 22 has experienced business activity over the years. In-fill and expansion of commercial development is anticipated to occur in these areas and along the access roads during this 20 year planning period and beyond.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Existing businesses should maintain a crisp appearance**, while new commercial developments should contain similar scale and not detract from the character of the surrounding properties.
- **It is expected that commercial development will locate along the USH 141 and STH 22 highway corridors in a linear pattern.** The intent is to locate these developments in areas that will give future commercial developments the most exposure and allow for easy traffic access.
- **Future business sites should allow for essential uses that accommodate current residents along with transient demands**, allowing ample room for parking and drive-thru services.
- **The maintenance and implementation of the detailed corridor development plan will include consistent design standards** and address signage, transportation, land use, and design issues for businesses locating along the corridor.
- **The establishment of a TIF (Tax Incremental Finance) District may be an opportunity to generate revenue to attract businesses.** Currently, the legislation limits the type of businesses activities eligible for TIF assistance.
- **The town should continually monitor the capacities of the existing infrastructure and community facilities needed to accommodate new industrial development.** If the infrastructure in a particular area requires expensive improvement to accommodate new growth, the town should carefully study and compare costs of these improvements to their overall benefit to the community.
- **The establishment of buffers is recommended to prevent incompatibilities with existing land uses.**

- **The location of future development should not be detrimental to the surrounding area** by reason of dust, smoke, odor, degradation of groundwater, or other nuisance factors.
- **Home-based businesses are envisioned to remain a segment of the town’s economic development base.** The town should continually monitor the operations of approved in-home business to ensure they are not comprising or conflicting with adjacent land uses. For any home based businesses that grow to a level that requires a change in zoning, the town should first determine if the business will negatively impact the surrounding land uses. If a change in zoning is required to permit the business, the town may consider utilizing the restricted commercial or neighborhood commercial zoning districts.

### **Industrial / Light Industrial**

The Industrial/Light Industrial land use classification specifically accommodates manufacturing businesses which creates or changes raw or unfinished materials into another form or higher valued product. Since industrial manufacturing can occur at various intensities, the inclusion of light industrial accommodates less intense operations. The town does not view itself as a community that would attract large industrial operations during the 20 year planning period and have not identified any areas for industrial development on **Map 3.1**. Industrial uses are generally expected to locate within nearby communities that have adequate infrastructure, while light industrial uses may be considered in areas designated for commercial development on **Map 3.1** or in other areas where commercial businesses may be considered.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Industrial or Light Industrial uses in the town should be compatible with the character of the town.** Any new industrial or light industrial uses must be consistent with the scale of the town and be environmentally friendly.
- **Control the appearance of industrial or light industrial businesses** by reviewing designs, signage, and landscaping of future establishments through building scale and appearance. Any new industrial or light industrial business development should be directed away from environmental sensitive areas (shown as “Environmental Corridors” on Map 3.1).
- **Development of new industrial or light industrial spaces should be carefully planned in order to minimize the impacts on existing infrastructure.** Proposals for new development should consider the adequacy of existing infrastructure to accommodate the needs of that area. New development should minimize the costs of utility and road extensions. Additionally, the presence of truck traffic, noise, and other impacts of industrial activity should be minimized when located near residential areas. When necessary, buffers should be created to minimize impacts between residential and light industrial land uses.
- **The location of home-based businesses should be carefully scrutinized to ensure their operations do not interfere or compromise surrounding land uses or the rural integrity of the town.** For any home based businesses that grow to a level that requires a change in zoning to light industrial, the town should first determine if the business will negatively impact the surrounding land uses.

### **Mixed Use**

The Mixed Use land use classification includes areas with a mix of existing residential and commercial land uses. It is the intent of this classification to promote the continued development

of commercial uses within these areas, as they are located along the STH 22 corridor or other prominent crossroad areas within the town. It is not the intent of the town to promote significant residential development within these areas.

*Recommendations:*

- **Mixed use development is planned near the USH 141 and CTH I intersection and the STH 22 corridor.** These locations are envisioned to contain primarily commercial, retail, and service related businesses that will be widely used by the town’s residents and visitors along with some existing residential uses and some limited new residential uses.
- **New businesses should be compatible with the character of the town.** The town encourages new businesses to feature attractive, well-maintained buildings that include appropriate signage and lighting so not to detract from the rural character of the community and the mixture of uses within the planned mixed use area.
- **New development should be directed away from environmentally sensitive areas** (shown as “Environmental Corridors” on Map 3.1).
- **Development of new commercial spaces should be carefully planned in order to minimize the impacts on existing infrastructure.** Proposals for new development should consider the adequacy of existing infrastructure to accommodate the needs of that area. New development should minimize the costs of utility and road extensions. Additionally, the presence of truck traffic, noise, and other impacts of commercial activity should be minimized when located near residential areas. When necessary, buffers should be created to minimize impacts between residential and business land uses.
- **Residential uses within these mixed use areas are anticipated to continue, however it is not the intent of the town to promote significant residential development within these planned mixed use areas.** The town will utilize the single family residential zoning district for the limited new residential uses as needed.
- **The general commercial zoning district will be the primary zoning district of choice for any proposed commercial proposals.** When a commercial proposal within one of the designated mixed use areas is situated amongst existing residential uses the town may wish to utilize the restricted commercial or neighborhood commercial zoning district.

**Governmental/Institutional/Utilities**

The Governmental/Institutional/Utilities land use classification addresses the capacity and efficiency of government buildings; emergency services and facilities; utilities and utility sites; cemeteries; and public services provided to the town residents.

*Recommendations:*

- **Town officials should continually monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of all town provided services** to identify the need for improvement, change in policy, establishment of mutual aid agreements, or future capital investments.
- **Future municipal development should be located and signed in a manner to ensure safe access into and out**





of all public buildings and facilities.

- **The need for a Sanitary District should be assessed on a continued basis** to appropriately handle the development pressures within the Machickanee Flowage area.
- **Shared on-site wastewater treatment systems should be promoted where appropriate.** For cluster type developments outside of the sanitary district, discuss shared on-site systems as an option with developers.
- **Town officials should remain aware of changing issues on telecommunication towers and antennas and wind generation facilities** and the siting of such structures.
- **The town is encouraged to maintain regular contact with the Oconto Falls School District** in order to be involved with the long-range plans of the district including the siting of new facilities, improvements to existing structures, recreational facilities, etc.

### Park and Recreation

The Park and Recreation land use classification discusses existing facilities such as the Oconto River Bowmen archery range, two public boat landings with the Machickanee Flowage landing providing a handicapped-accessible fishing dock, and trail to the City of Oconto, as well as future recreational facilities, trails, parks, and open spaces within the town.

*Recommendations:*

- **Future town recreational facilities should be located in areas that can be easily accessed** by either motorized or non-motorized means.
- **Town officials should review subdivision proposals for the inclusion of parks and open space** to serve residents within these more concentrated residential developments.
- **Future town recreational facilities should be built to accommodate all age groups, levels of disabilities, and skills.**
- **Town officials are encouraged to participate in the update of the Oconto County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.** A completed plan would enable the town to seek financial resources through various funding sources to upgrade and build new facilities.

### Agricultural

The Agricultural land use classification encompasses lands being utilized for agricultural purposes within the areas illustrated as “*Agriculture / Woodlands*” on the town’s 20-Year General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**). The agricultural classification is designed to preserve existing lands devoted to the growing of crops and the raising of livestock.

*Recommendations:*

- **The town should encourage the preservation of agricultural lands** and the farmer’s right to farm. Areas that have been designated as farmland preservation areas within the town are shown on **Map 3.30** found in Chapter 3 of *Volume I: County Plan*. The town should verify the location of development proposals in relation to areas designated for farmland preservation when reviewing development proposals in the area illustrated as agriculture/woodlands on the town’s 20-Year General Plan Design.
- **If residential development is permitted in these areas, low density development should**

**be considered.** Future development in these areas should be done in a fashion which is least impactful to the natural environment and ensures fragmentation of quality open space does not occur.

- **Where appropriate, encourage new development techniques and programs which will preserve as much farmland as possible.** The utilization of various development techniques such as conservation by design subdivisions help preserve farmland.
- **The best management practices for agricultural activities will help maintain these valuable agriculture lands from development and natural degradation.** Inappropriate agricultural practices can have an adverse impact on the productivity of the soil as well as the quality of surface water and groundwater unless properly managed.
- **The integration of natural and/or man-made buffers** is encouraged between farming and future non-farming operations in order to lessen conflict between land uses.
- **Large-scale farming operations** are recommended to be located in areas of the town that avoid environmental corridors and surface water features.
- **Town officials are recommended to work with Oconto County** to address the issue of large-scale farming operations.

### Woodlands/Open Space

The Woodlands/Open Space land use classification encompasses lands being utilized for woodland and natural open space and is illustrated as “*Agriculture / Woodlands*” on the town’s 20-Year General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**). The woodland classification is designed to promote the maintenance of private woodlands and open space areas within the town.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **If residential development is permitted in these areas, low density development should be considered.** Future development in these areas should be done in a fashion which is least impactful to the natural environment and ensures fragmentation of quality open space does not occur.
- **The utilization of existing natural areas will help to enhance the character of the town.** The Preservation of large tracts of natural areas and/or features is essential to enhance/retain buffers between incompatible uses while maintaining scenic views of the town.
- **Private woodlands should not be developed with higher densities.** The utilizing of unique development options such as conservation subdivision designs or clustering can help maintain the continuity of woodlands.
- **The application of best management practices will help protect the town’s many natural features and open space areas** that can be better utilized to enhance the town’s recreational opportunities and facilities.

### Transportation

The Transportation land use classification covers both motorized and non-motorized travel. This includes the existing road network; future recreation paths and trails; and recommendations for safety and improved traffic movement in the town.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **To preserve the natural look of the town and to minimize the negative impacts of future residential development along roads**, it is recommended that new residential development be minimally visible from the road.
- **For any new concentrated development proposed within the town, an Area Development Plan should be provided.** This will allow the town to review and ensure that future roads are well designed to promote efficient traffic flow and to avoid unnecessary cul-de-sacs and loops that can increase the town’s future maintenance costs or be disruptive for fire, police or rescue services.
- **The utilization of the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) program** will assist town officials in maintaining the roads in the future and ensure there is a cost effective road management plan in place.
- **Recreational paths and trails such as snowmobile trails should have proper signage and intersection controls** to ensure safe crossing and interaction with vehicles.

**Mineral Resources Overlay**

The Mineral Resources Overlay is depicted on the General Plan Design to ensure active and future quarries are identified within the town. This overlay includes both metallic mining, although extremely rare, and non-metallic mining activities. In most cases, the type of mining to occur in Oconto County will involve extraction of gravel, marl, clay, and similar materials to be conducted for a specified approved period of time. When mining is complete and the site is reclaimed, the overlay shall be removed and the previous land uses allowed to continue.

- **The town should work with Oconto County Officials to monitor existing mining operations.** Any issues involving the mining operation should be brought to the attention of the county officials in a timely manner.
- **The town should adequately review proposed mining operations.** The town should recommend conditional use requirements to the county that ensure the mining operation does not significantly compromise surrounding land uses. The application of setbacks will help alleviate issues with neighboring properties.
- **Mining operations should be sited in areas that will have little negative impact** on the neighboring properties, adverse effects on groundwater, or significant wear on local roads.
- **The town should work with Oconto County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources** to ensure mining operations are properly closed and reclaimed.
- **The town should pursue avenues in which to reclaim mining operations not sufficiently reclaimed.**
- **The reclaimed mining sites will be available for other land uses.** The town will need to determine the land use that best suits the area and needs of the town. (i.e. agriculture, recreational, residential)



**Environmental Corridors**

Environmental corridors contain four components; 100-year floodplain as defined by the Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA), WDNR wetlands, steep slopes of 12 percent or greater, and setback from all navigable waterways as defined by the Oconto County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Together, these elements represent the areas of the town that are most sensitive to development and are intended to be preserved.

*Recommendations:*

- **This plan should serve as a guide for the preservation of environmental corridors.** Using the environmental corridors as a guide when reviewing proposed developments will give the town background information to determine what areas are important to maintaining the rural character and quality of the town’s natural resource base. The corridors are an overlay to the recommended plan (**Map 3.1**) and should be utilized as a reference.
- **Future developments should steer away from environmental corridors as much as possible,** or have them sensitively designed within development which will help minimize the negative effects on water resources, wildlife habitats and the overall character of the town.
- **Development near environmental features in the town should be carefully reviewed in order to maintain ample wildlife corridors.**

**IDENTIFIED SMART GROWTH AREAS**

According to s. 16.965, Wis. Stats., a “smart growth area” is “an area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands within existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low utility and municipal and state governmental costs.”

- Redevelopment and investment within Stiles
- Concentrated development within Stiles Junction (USH 141 and State Highway 22 Interchange)
- Quality commercial development along the highway corridor
- Quality residential and business development within the City of Oconto Falls’ extraterritorial planning area



Map 3.1: 20-Year General Plan Design

