

**CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION**

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PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This comprehensive plan for the town of Stiles was prepared to address the varied land use issues most likely to impact the town during the next 20 years, including the dense residential development north and south of the Machickanee Flowage creating the possible need for a sanitary district or the extension of municipal services from the City of Oconto Falls. This 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 Stiles 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* is a legal document that provides the policy framework from which 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**. The GPD is ultimately the goal to be achieved through the implementation of this comprehensive plan. A thorough list of development strategies was prepared to assist officials to efficiently work toward achieving the town's desired land use map. This GPD map 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 Stiles should be developed as well as preserved during the next 20 years.

State Planning Legislation

The *Town of Stiles 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 Stiles 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 Stiles 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 Stiles 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 timetable.

Chapter 1: Introduction - contains an overview of the purpose of the plan; the planning legislation; plan development process; and provides the planning 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; identifies land use issues and conflicts; acknowledges continued land use trends; and projects future land use allocations for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural needs.

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; community survey 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: The volume contains countywide background information and data that served as a basis in the creation 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 governmental 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; intergovernmental cooperation meeting results; 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.

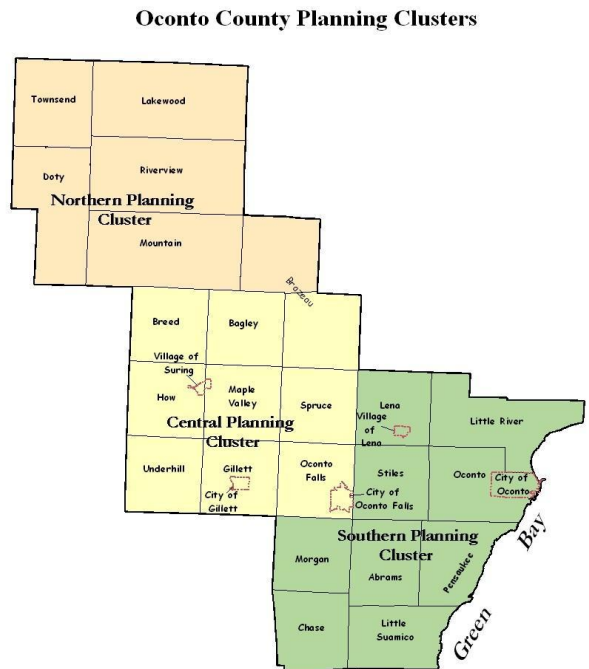
PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The town of Stiles 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 within 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 adoption of *Volume II: County Resources*.

- The town of Stiles Plan Commission held its initial planning meeting with BLRPC staff in July 2007 to begin the process to update the *Town of Stiles 2015 Comprehensive Land Use Plan*.
- Public meetings were held on a monthly basis to review materials and facilitate a number of activities, such as a community survey completed in September 2008 and an Open House held in January 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 created along with recommended land use strategies to guide future growth, development and conservation within 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 Stiles 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*.
- Stiles' second Open House was held on July 12, 2008 to allow the public to review the planning materials and provide input as to the contents of the plan.
- The required Public Hearing on the *Town of Stiles 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* was held on July 21, 2008, and the Plan Commission made recommendation to the Town Board 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 Stiles 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* was completed on September 10, 2008 with its adoption as an ordinance by the Stiles 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 Stiles 20-Year Comprehensive Plan began in 2018 with

assistance from Oconto County Planning. The updated Town of Stiles 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 addresses the town's future planning needs is gathering input from residents and land owners at all plan development stages. In accordance with s. 66.1001(4), Wis. Stats., the town of Stiles approved "Procedures for Adoption or Amendment of the Town of Stiles Comprehensive Plan" at their Town Board meeting on September 14, 2006. A copy of the resolution adopting these written procedures is included as Appendix A of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

Open meetings were held monthly to review background data, finalize each plan element, and create the General Plan Design. In addition to these planning meetings, the following steps were used to gather additional input from the public.

Nominal Group Exercise

In September 2007, the Plan Commission members held a Nominal Group Exercise to identify issues that should be addressed during this plan development process. The following are the priority planning issues generated during the discussion. Each issue was considered during the drafting of the goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the town's comprehensive plan.

- Environmental Concerns - Larger lot sizes to prevent clustering in order to protect water resources and quality.
- Ethanol plants cause concern about water resources and industrial water use (quantity). Area should focus on residential and small commercial uses instead of industrial development.
- Focus on home based businesses along Highway 22 with a few controlled clusters of commercial development along Highway 141.
- There are only approximately five (5) larger area farms so animal numbers and farm sewage and run off are likely not to be an issue. Area will not sustain mega farms.
- Residential development for the area is likely to be 40-acre "farmettes" or smaller sized lots with some subdivisions (must meet land division lot size ordinance).
- Possible sewer district at Machickanee.
- Possible environmental concerns with paper mill discharge. Watch flowage district to keep water clean and recreational area viable.
- Maintain current roadways and enforce subdivision guidelines for new roads.
- Housing limited by lot size. Apartments and multiplex housing may not be an issue in the area because of well and septic. Possible statement or ordinance to limit such to 4 units in size. Focus on single family dwellings.
- Population governed by lot size.

- Recreational areas include one county park, county forest, and Machickanee Flowage. Problems with maintenance and patrolling.
- Stiles supports the Lena and Oconto Falls summer recreation programs by offering a reimbursement rebate of ½ the costs to residents.

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*.

Community Survey

The town of Stiles conducted a community-wide survey in September 2007 to gather ideas and input from residents and land owners to help update the town's comprehensive plan. Approximately 800 surveys were mailed out and 100 completed surveys were returned. The common themes identified from the tabulated surveys are highlighted below. The full survey results are contained in Appendix B of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

- More and better recreational opportunities
 - Public access to water—Machickanee Flowage and Oconto River
 - Parks----camping along river
 - Flowage cleaned-up
 - Hiking and biking trails
- Well maintained roads
- Preservation of historical assets
- Preservation of natural features---open spaces, woodlands, water features
- Clean community void of junk
- Preservation of rural character
 - Single family houses
 - Larger lots
 - Smaller businesses----retail, commercial, light industrial
 - Concentrate development along corridors, town centers, and interchanges
- No changes---leave as is!

Open Houses

Two open houses were held during the planning process. The first was held close to the planning mid-point on January 21, 2008 at the Stiles Town Hall. Approximately 20 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 12, 2008 at the Stiles 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.

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
- 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
- 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.

VISION STATEMENT

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

“The Town of Stiles is taking advantage of its location, infrastructure, and abundance of natural features to build a welcoming and accommodating community for residents, businesses, and visitors. In order to maintain the rural nature of Stiles, town officials continue to make the necessary land use decisions that have enabled Stiles to attract residents, quality businesses for employment and services, and visitors wanting to experience some of Northeast Wisconsin’s most beautiful landscapes and unique historical assets.”