

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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## PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Town of Townsend 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* is a legal document providing the policy framework from which town officials will base their future land use decisions. This comprehensive plan was prepared to address the anticipated land use issues that will face the Town of Townsend in the future. This plan is to serve as a guide when making decisions regarding environmental protection, recreation improvements, transportation expansion, housing development, location of public services, and sound economic development. Utilization of this plan as a tool for making land use decisions will ensure the town's vision will be carried out in an appropriate and consistent fashion.

The town's 20-year vision, which is located at the end of this chapter, is best illustrated by the General Plan Design (GPD). The General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**) designates areas of the town for preferred land use activities with a list of applicable land use classifications that are supported by detailed recommendations that define the type of development within those classifications. The GPD 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 Townsend over the next 20 years.

### **State Planning Legislation**

The *Town of Townsend 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* was prepared to meet the requirements outlined in Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001 by addressing the following nine elements:

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

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 Townsend 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 Townsend 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** describes and illustrates the Town of Townsend’s 20-year vision for future development. It includes detailed background information and data, land use projections, recommended strategies for guiding future development, the town’s General Plan Design (including a future land use map), and a framework for implementation.

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

***Chapter 2: Inventory, Trends, and Forecasts*** provides town specific demographic information and data as well as housing and population projections for the future; 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 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 of the comprehensive plan.

***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** contains countywide inventory and demographic information that served as a basis for developing the town’s 20-Year vision for future development.

***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 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, 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**

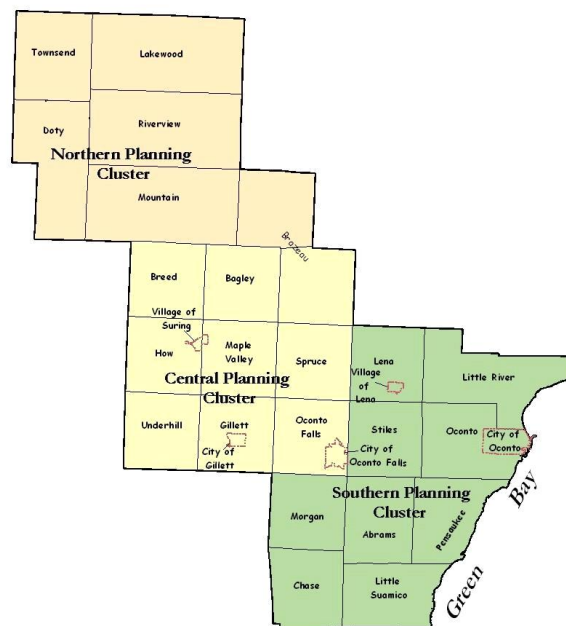
The Town of Townsend was one of sixteen communities to enter into an agreement with Oconto County to submit a multi-jurisdictional application to the Wisconsin Department of Administration in 2005 for grant funding to offset the cost of completing/or updating their comprehensive plans. The application was successful, and an award of \$263,000 was made to Oconto County in April 2006. The comprehensive planning grant required recipients to put forth a local match, which could be distributed over a three year period. Oconto County contracted with the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC) to assist in the preparation of the local plans as well as the county’s comprehensive plan.

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

**First Phase → Inventory of countywide information to be used in developing the local and county plans.**

- 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 in each of the county’s three Planning Clusters (Northern, Central, Southern). These Open Houses were held in May and June 2007 to allow the public to review countywide background materials, ask questions, and provide feedback.

Oconto County Planning Clusters



- A preliminary draft of *Volume II: County Resources* was prepared to assist with 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.***

- Town of Townsend data was analyzed to identify existing and potential conflicts.
- 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, background data, and a community survey completed by the town in 2004.
- A preliminary General Plan Design (GPD) along with recommended land use strategies were drafted to guide future growth, development and conservation within the town over the next 20 years.
- Oconto County Planning and OCPAC finalized *Volume II: County Resources*. It was adopted by resolution by the Oconto County Board of Supervisors on August 21, 2008.
- The final public review and Open House were conducted on July 19, 2008 to present the *Town of Townsend 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 when appropriate.

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

- Oconto County Planning 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 Townsend 20-Year Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2020. The focus of this amendment was to update the existing land use data, general plan design, land use recommendations, goals, policies, and implementation steps.

## **Public Participation Process**

### **Public Participation Plan**

A major element of the town’s comprehensive planning process is gathering input from the public. In accordance with s. 66.1001(4), Wis. Stats., the Town of Townsend approved “*Procedures for Adoption or Amendment of the Town of Townsend Comprehensive Plan.*” A copy of the Public Participation Plan is included in 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. 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 a meeting of the Northern Planning Cluster held in August 2006, members of the Town of Townsend Plan Commission members participated in a Nominal Group Exercise. The purpose of this exercise was to identify issues and concerns regarding future development in the Town of Townsend and the northern portion of Oconto County.

Relevant feedback was considered during the development of the goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the town's comprehensive plan. Top issues from the Northern Planning Cluster nominal group exercise include:

- Stronger county rules on older grandfathered septic systems
- Shoreland zoning
- Preservation of the rustic integrity of the area
- Protection and maintenance of recreational resources (i.e. trails)
- County services being more accessible
- Improvement of and an increase in law enforcement in northern portion of county
- Provision of senior care facilities and programs

All results collected at the three Nominal Group Exercises held as part of this multi-jurisdictional planning process can be found in Appendix B of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

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.

### **Visioning Exercise**

A visioning exercise was conducted with the Town of Townsend Plan Commission to describe the future of various elements discussed in the town's comprehensive plan, including natural resources, recreation, and housing. The visioning process was used to provide a foundation for developing the Town of Townsend 20-Year vision statement and to generate development strategies to guide implementation of the *Town of Townsend 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*. The town's vision statement is included later in this chapter

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshop**

An Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshop was conducted in April 2008 with the Oconto County Northern Planning Cluster. 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, pertinent state and federal agencies, and other entities and departments that may be directly impacted by 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 Townsend 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**

Three (3) “Open houses” were conducted at different points throughout the planning process to present background information and plan recommendations to the public. The first open house was held for communities in the northern portion of Oconto County to present countywide information that was to develop *Volume II: County Resources* of the *Town of Townsend 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*.

The second open house was held exclusively for the Town of Townsend. The purpose of this public meeting was to gain input on the 2007 Town of Townsend land use inventory. Attendees were introduced to the land use inventory process and were asked to provide any recommendations for changes to the land use inventory map.

The third open house was held exclusively for the Town of Townsend on July 19, 2008. It was conducted at the conclusion of the second phase of the planning process. The purpose of this open house was to allow residents of the town 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 Townsend adopted 20-Year Vision Statement:

***“The Town of Townsend is defined by its natural character, featuring beautiful lakes and streams, vast woodlands, large open spaces, and scenic views. Future planning in the town should continue to promote preservation of these natural features and development that does not conflict with these resources, so the town can continue to provide its residents and visitors with ample recreation opportunities, clean water and air, and the rustic character to which they have become accustomed. New development and improvements are also encouraged to maintain an affordable tax base, promote local job opportunities, be supportive of cooperative efforts of surrounding communities, and provide town residents with appropriate services to fit their needs.”***