

Comprehensive Plan Township of Port Edwards

Wood County, Wisconsin



Prepared in 2007 & 2008 by the Planning Committee

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, requires comprehensive planning in each county, city, village, and town that engages in land use regulatory activities, such as zoning or subdivision ordinances. The comprehensive plan must contain nine elements, including 1) an issues and opportunities element, 2) a housing element, 3) a transportation element, 4) a utilities and community facilities element, 5) a natural and cultural resources element, 6) an economic development element, 7) an inter-governmental cooperation element, 8) a land use element, and 9) an implementation element. In addition, by January 1, 2010, all local governments' land use-related actions regarding any ordinance, plan, or regulation will be required to be consistent with its adopted comprehensive plan.

The Town of Port Edwards first enacted a local zoning ordinance in the 1960's, last updating it in 2006. The Town is considering making amendments to the ordinance and, prior to making those changes, has determined that they should first develop a comprehensive plan pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes. This plan was developed under the guidelines and requirements of Chapter 66.1001, Wis. Stats., with further guidance from community-wide survey conducted in 2001.

1. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Local Government Background

The Town is governed locally by a three-member, elected, Town Board. In addition to the Town Board, the Town also elects a Clerk, Treasurer, and Constable. Duties of the positions are prescribed under Wisconsin Statutes.



Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

Future Development Goal #1: Recognize that the City of Nekoosa and Village of Port Edwards will influence development pressure in the eastern portions of the Town of Port Edwards, and that the Ho-Chunk Nation will influence development pressure in the south central portion of the Town of Port Edwards, and that growth in these areas should be managed to maintain the uncongested, rural lifestyle that initially attracted residents to the area.

- Objectives:
 - Develop and maintain an Official Street Map, as provided by Statute, with input from the City of Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, and Ho-Chunk Nation to minimize any future land use conflicts.
 - Maintain the Town's current two-acre minimum lot size.

Future Development Goal #2: Promote commercial development that is harmonious with existing land uses.

- Objectives:
 - Develop zoning codes to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents near proposed commercial developments.
 - Encourage new commercial development to locate near major road intersection to promote clustering of these uses, making them easily accessible.

Protecting the ‘Rural Character’ of the Town of Port Edwards

Goal: Maintain the ‘rural character’ of the Town of Port Edwards by preserving its natural amenities. Future growth should be concentrated along existing road corridors, using existing town roads as collectors to new residential development. Population density should be maintained at a low level with continued implementation of the two-acre residential lot size.

- Objectives:
 - Provide ample space for new residential growth by zoning enough land to accommodate projected growth.
 - Protect wetlands, floodplains, areas of steep slope, and other environmental areas by requiring ample setbacks for structures.

Demographic Trends

Background data for this Plan was gathered from the 2000 census. Where comparisons to other communities or the State of Wisconsin are made, data from the same time frame is used.

Any estimates or projections past 2000 are dated and noted as such.

Population Growth and Distribution

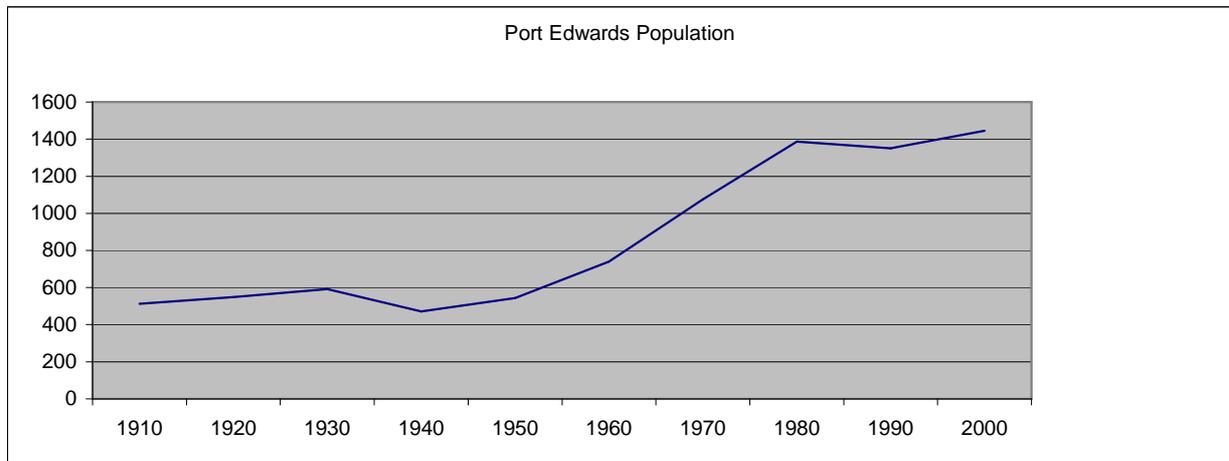
Official census counts from 1910 to 2000 for the Town of Port Edwards are listed in Table 1. During the first half of the 1900’s, the Town of Port Edwards population showed very slow growth with an actual decline of 122 between 1930 and 1940. Beginning in 1950, a more substantial rise in growth occurred. During this time, area paper mills offered increased employment opportunities, and the automobile and better roads made it possible to live further away from the workplace. Population increases peaked at 337 between 1960 and 1970, with a decline in population occurring between 1980 and 1990. Chart 1 graphically represents these changes. The population as of 2000 is 1,446, a 266% increase in population since 1950.

TABLE 1

Town of Port Edwards Population

YEAR	POPULATION	NUMBER CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
1910	513		
1920	548	35	15
1930	592	44	13
1940	470	-122	-3
1950	543	73	7
1960	739	196	3
1970	1076	337	3
1980	1387	311	4
1990	1351	-36	-37
2000	1446	95	15

CHART 1



How does the Town of Port Edwards population change compare to surrounding areas? Table 2 lists 10 area communities and their population numbers for 1980, 1990, and 2000. The Town of Port Edwards ranked 4th, with a population increase of 7%.

TABLE 2

**Wisconsin Rapids Urban Area Growth Trends
1980-2000**

COMMUNITY	1980 POPULATION	1990 POPULATION	2000 POPULATION	PERCENT CHANGE 1990 - 2000	MEDIAN AGE YEAR 2000
Grand Rapids	7,319	7,071	7,801	10.3	38.4
Port Edwards (town)	1,387	1,351	1,446	7.0	36.2
Cranmoor	234	185	175	-5.4	38.3
Saratoga	4,363	4,775	5,383	12.7	38.5
Seneca	1,245	1,133	1,202	6.1	36.9
Remington	299	304	305	0.3	41.3
Biron (village)	698	794	915	15.2	43.3
Port Edwards (village)	2,077	1,848	1,944	5.2	40.1
Nekoosa (city)	2,519	2,557	2,590	1.3	36.6
Wisconsin Rapids (city)	17,995	18,245	18,435	1.0	37.6
AREA TOTAL	38,136	38,263	40,196	5.1	38.7

Population Forecasts

To properly plan for future community services, the Town Board must be aware of the changing age structure of the population and of the numbers that are expected to live in the Town in the future. State agencies study future population expectations for anticipated funding levels of their programs and the town must do the same. Population projections are speculative and no person can forecast a community's future perfectly because of such things as changing economics, physical demands on the environment and changing political climate at all levels. However, using historic data from the community, one can foresee, with some accuracy, what the near future holds for the community as far as expected populations.

Two state agencies, the Wisconsin Department of Administration's (WDA) Demographic Services Center and the University of Wisconsin - Extension's Applied Population Laboratory, spend considerable time developing population projections for counties and municipalities for purposes of estimating future state program and budget needs. Projections by those agencies are often required when a municipality is applying for various State-funded programs.

Referring to Table 3, the WDA has projected population increases for the Town of Port Edwards through the year 2025. From the 2000 census count of 1,446 to the 2025 projection of 1,653, an increase of 207 people is predicted.

TABLE 3

Type and Name of Municipality	Census 1980	Census 1990	Census 2000	Projection 2005	Projection 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025
T PORT EDWARDS	1,387	1,351	1,446	1,491	1,539	1,586	1,627	1,653
WOOD COUNTY	72,799	73,605	75,555	76,420	77,455	78,393	79,072	79,026

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

Age Distribution

It is interesting to note in Table 2 the Town of Port Edwards median age in 2000 was 36.2, the youngest of all the area communities. Table 4 lists the Town of Port Edwards median age compared to Wood County and the State of Wisconsin for 1980, 1990, and 2000. A significant anomaly occurred with the median Town of Port Edwards age of 25.6 years in 1990. With that exception, the median age is about par with Wood County and the State of Wisconsin.

TABLE 4

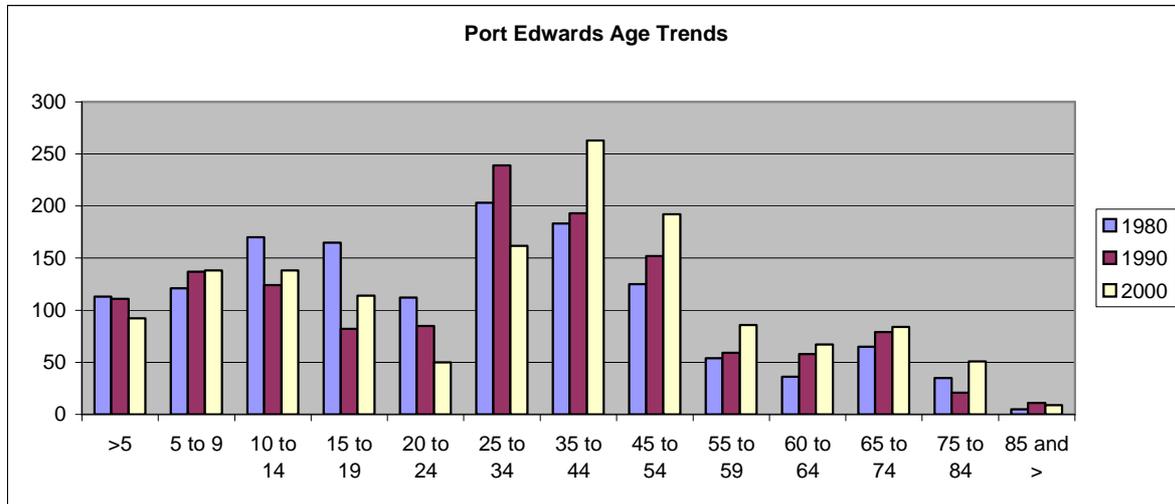
MEDIAN AGE			
	1980	1990	2000
T of Port Edwards	30.5	25.6	36.2
Wood County	28.9	33.3	38.0
Wisconsin	29.4	32.9	36.0

Trends in the Town of Port Edwards age groups are listed in Table 5. As of the year 2000, ages to 19 represent 33% of the total population; ages 20 to 64 represent 57%, and ages 65 and up represent 10% of the total population. Chart 2 graphically represents the numbers in Table 5. Ages to 24, with the exception of ages 5 to 9, have decreased from 1980 to 2000. Ages 25 to 84 have increased, with the exception of age group 25 to 34.

TABLE 5

Port Edwards Age Group Trends			
	1980	1990	2000
>5	113	111	92
5 to 9	121	137	138
10 to 14	170	124	138
15 to 19	165	82	114
20 to 24	112	85	50
25 to 34	203	239	162
35 to 44	183	193	263
45 to 54	125	152	192
55 to 59	54	59	86
60 to 64	36	58	67
65 to 74	65	79	84
75 to 84	35	21	51
85 and >	5	11	9
Total Population	1387	1351	1446

Chart 2



Dependency Ratio

The dependency ratio of a community is defined as the working-age population to the non-working-age population. The non-working-age population is considered to be persons under the age of 18 – still in high school – and those over age 65 – retired persons. The non-working-age population is considered to be “dependent” on the working-age groups to provide services and facilities to the community. This is not to say that others, especially those 65 years and older, do not contribute through equal property taxes and community service.

In the year 2000, 10% of the Town of Port Edwards population was 65 years of age and older. While viewing Chart 2, it is evident that this age group has been steadily increasing since 1980.

The working-age population (those aged 19 to 64) has increased each census period since 1980. Within this group, people aged 20 to 34 have decreased, while people aged 45 to 59 have risen substantially in numbers.

The non-working-age population (to age 18) has shown a decline in population. The 1980, 1990, and 2000 population figures for this age group are 569, 454, and 482, respectively.

As previously stated, the dependency ratio combines the two population groups considered to be outside the working age groups to those of “working age.” In 1980, for every non-working-age person in the Town of Port Edwards, there were 1.06 working-age people. The dependency ratio in 1980 was therefore 1.06:1. In 1990, the dependency ratio was 1.39:1, and in the year 2000, the ratio was 1.31:1. For comparison purposes, the dependency ratio for Wood County in 2000 was 1.44:1.

2. HOUSING

Goals and Objectives

The overall housing goal for the Town of Port Edwards is to encourage development of an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand. The housing supply is to consist of housing units, both owner- and renter-occupied, that meets the needs of the Town of Port Edwards residents for both large and small families of all economic levels.

A community survey was distributed to every town property owner prior to beginning work on the comprehensive plan. **It is an overall objective of the Town of Port Edwards to encourage home improvements and development standards that will enhance the overall appearance of the Town's housing, while increasing the structural quality of homes.**

While respondents to the community survey indicated that all types of housing should be allowed in the Town, most feel the largest need in Town of Port Edwards is for single-family residential homes on large, scattered lots. Most survey respondents said that maintaining Town of Port Edwards' current rural landscape is important. **As an overall housing objective, the Town, through its community plan and zoning ordinance, will promote development at a density that is considered much lower than many suburban communities.**



Housing Assessment

Age of Housing Stock

According to the 2000 census, there are 555 total housing units in the Town. The "Population Growth and Distribution" section noted that residential growth began in the 1960's continuing through today. That suburban growth is verified by the information in Table 6. Twelve percent of Town of Port Edwards housing was constructed prior to World War II. During the next two decades, the number of new housing units was pretty consistent. A big jump in the number of new units occurred during the 1960's when 104 new units were constructed. The number increased again in 1970, and the rate of increase has been declining since.

YEAR BUILT	HOUSING UNITS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
1990 – March 2000	73	13
1980 – 1989	83	15
1970 – 1979	172	31
1960 – 1969	104	19
1940 – 1959	58	10
1939 or earlier	64	12
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	554	100
<small>NOTE: Data in this table is from census sample data and, therefore, does not agree with 100% count. The actual 100% count determined that there were 555 total housing units. Source: U.S. Census of Population, 2000, Table DP-4.</small>		

To summarize, fully three quarter of all housing units in the Town of Port Edwards were built since 1960 when the residential movement started. As this trend continues, there will be additional pressure to convert farmland to residential and possibly, small commercial service areas. It is important for the Town to determine where growth areas should be located and, of equal importance, how agricultural uses will be protected from encroachment of non-farm uses.

Structural Value

The structural value of specified owner-occupied housing in the Town of Port Edwards is listed on the following page in Table 7 for the year 2000. Only 17 percent of housing units were valued at \$50,000 or less. Most homes (76%) in Town Port Edwards are in a "middle-income" range - \$50,000 - \$149,000. Five percent of Town of Port Edwards' homes are valued between \$150,000 and \$199,000, and one percent are valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999. Five are higher than that.

There is a good range in the value of housing units in the Town. One housing objective, presented at the outset of this chapter, is to provide affordable housing and a wide range of housing types. The value of homes in the Town of Port Edwards shows that there are low-income housing opportunities and considerable lower-middle income housing opportunities. While upper-income housing is not widely present, the Town has many areas that would be compatible for this housing type as well.

Table 7 STRUCTURAL VALUE OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS TOWN OF PORT EDWARDS – 2000		
VALUE	NUMBER OF UNITS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Less than \$50,000	78	17
\$50,000 - \$99,999	244	53
\$100,000 - \$124,999	75	16
\$125,000 - \$149,999	34	7
\$150,000 - \$174,999	16	4
\$175,000 - \$199,000	4	1
\$200,000 - \$249,999	0	0
\$250,000 - \$299,000	5	1
\$300,000 +	5	1
Median – Town of Port Edwards	\$50,000 - \$99,000	
Median – Wood County	\$81,400	
Median – Wisconsin	\$112,200	
<i>Source:</i> U.S. Census of Population, 2000, Table DP-4.		

Occupancy Characteristics

The total number of housing units in the Town of Port Edwards has continued to increase at a steady rate. In 1990, there are 15.3% more housing units in the Town than in 1980, and by 2000, the number had grown another 9.9% (Table 8). During the 20-year period from 1980 to 2000, the number of housing units had increased from 438 to 550, an increase of 26.7%.

Table 8 OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS TOWN OF PORT EDWARDS HOUSING STOCK 1980-2000				
Census Year	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant	Total Housing Units
2000	464;88%	62;12%	29;5%	555
1990	404;80%	56;11%	45;9%	505
1980	367; 84%	59;13%	16;4%	438
<i>Source:</i> U.S. Census of Population, (Table DP-1 for Year 2000 data).				

Like most areas, a large proportion (88%) of the housing units in the Town of port Edwards are owner occupied. The proportion of owner-occupied units increased from 80% to 88% between 1990 and 2000. Renter-occupied units have remained stable at 11 to 12%. There was a decline in the number of vacant units from 9% to 5% between 1990 and 2000. The current proportion of vacant housing is considered near perfect to allow for a turnover of housing that is needed on a consistent basis. In addition, a national, statewide, and local goal is to provide an adequate, or fair, share of housing

for both owners and renters. Having 12% of all housing units available for renters meets the goal.

An analysis of the tenure of householders, or how long they have lived in their homes, provides a picture of how much residents like to live in the Town of Port Edwards and also shows how attractive the Town is for new residents. Table 9 provides a comparison of householder tenure for the Town of Port Edwards and Wood County. Of the owner-occupied housing units, 27% have lived in their home for five or fewer years and 44% for 10 or fewer years. These numbers would suggest that the Town of Port Edwards continues to become more of a commuter community, with residents working in Nekoosa, the Village of Port Edwards, Wisconsin Rapids, and other communities. These numbers compare to 40 percent and 57 percent for Wood County for the same time frames. County numbers are higher than the Town's because of the cities and villages and, to a degree, towns that are growing more rapidly than Port Edwards, where more movement of people occurs.

More than a third (34%) of the Town of Port Edwards residents lived in their homes for at least 20 years – they were there prior to 1980 – prior to the 2000 census. This compares to slightly over 25 percent for Wood County. County numbers show more movement than do Town numbers, but the numbers for Wood County include a very large number of rental units, group homes, nursing homes, etc., that are not present in the Town of Port Edwards.

YEARS	PERCENT OF TOTAL (Owner-Occupied Units)	
	TOWN OF PORT EDWARDS	WOOD COUNTY
1995-March 2000	27.3	40.3
1990-1994	17.0	16.5
1980-1989	21.7	17.6
1970-1979	20.6	11.9
1969 or earlier	13.4	13.8

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 2000. Table DP-4.

Housing Policies and Programs

The following policies and programs are established to promote development of housing for residence of the Town of Port Edwards.

- Develop zoning standards that promote development at a density that is considered much lower than many suburban communities, yet allow for the 2-acre lot size that makes the land affordable for homeowners.

The following policies and programs are established as means of maintaining or rehabilitating the existing housing stock:

- Encourage homeowners to participate in paint-up/fix-up events.
- Encourage volunteers or civic organizations to help those who are physically unable to maintain their property.
- Educate property owners about the Town zoning ordinance and other ordinances that may affect them, including activities that may require permits. The Town will work with Wood County to help make information available to town residents.



3. TRANSPORTATION

General

The purpose of this section is to describe the Town's transportation system, assess current and future changes and additions to that system, describe how the transportation system relates to other segments of the comprehensive plan, develop goals and objectives for the transportation system, and establish local programs that will seek to achieve those goals and objectives.

Overall Goal

It is the overall goal of the Town of Port Edwards to move people as efficiently as possible, to provide residents with safe, efficient, cost-effective access between their homes and places of work, school, parks, shopping and other destination points, and to provide a means for travelers to traverse the Town with minimal conflict with local land uses, while enjoying the natural beauty of the Town.

Objectives, Policies and Programs

Goal: To provide choices of transportation for the public.

Objective: Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wood County, the City of Nekoosa, the Village of Port Edwards, the Ho Chunk Nation, and neighboring towns to encourage and coordinate development of Town roads and bicycle and pedestrian trails and routes.

Objective: Maintain contact with County and State highway departments to encourage continued improvements to the highways as necessary in the interest of the safety of highway users and efficiency in coordinating local road improvements with those of County and State highways.

Goal: To provide interconnection of transportation systems between municipalities.

Objective: Develop and maintain an Official Road Map of the Town of Port Edwards, with input from the City of Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, Ho Chunk Nation, adjacent towns, Wood County, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to coordinate street alignments and rail development.

Objective: Provide for development of future through-streets and street extensions from Nekoosa, Port Edwards, and the Ho Chunk Nation where connections and extensions are logical for interconnections or may be possible to improve traffic movement.

Goal: To provide safe transportation throughout the Town.

Objective: Coordinate local street improvements with work on County and State/ Federal highways.

Objective: Through local zoning and plat review process, monitor the location of access points to assure clear visibility for motorists and bicyclists and to allow sufficient maneuvering space for speed changes and turning.

Transportation System

The Town of Port Edwards' internal transportation system consists primarily of town roads, county highways, and state Highways 54, 73, and 173. Local streets of adjoining communities link to Port Edwards' roads to form a network of transportation corridors.

The Canadian National Railroad bisects Town of Port Edwards from east to west, traveling through sections 3, 4, 5, and 6, T21N R5E, in the north eastern part of the Town. The most important at-grade crossing is at County G. This road is a main collector, moving traffic from nearby residential areas to and from Wisconsin Rapids, Nekoosa, and the Village of Port Edwards.

Another part of the Town's transportation system is public transportation. Providing for the needs of those who are not able to transport themselves has been provided through programs of the County, with the assistance of State and Federal grants. The Town's interest should be in maintaining communications with the appropriate agencies to ensure that whatever programs are available through those agencies be made available to Town of Port Edwards resident.

Highway Functional Classification

Different roads are meant to serve specific functions. Collector streets may be wider, straighter, have fewer access points and have a higher speed limit (i.e., 35 or 45 mph). The collector street functions to move larger volumes of traffic. The collector street may, then, connect with a county road. The collector street can be classified as a minor or major collector, depending on its location, traffic counts and other factors. The function of the county road may be to serve as an artery from the town to employment centers in the adjoining city. These arterials may be even larger than the collector because they carry traffic from several collector streets. Arterials should have fewer access points than collectors and may be multi-lane with higher speed limits (i.e., 55 mph). In large urban areas, arterials may channel traffic to larger, or principal, arterial highways, such as an interstate highway that has divided lanes and speeds of up to 65 mph or more.

The map in Figure 1 shows the road network in the Town of Port Edwards. State Highways 54, 73, and 173 are the major arterials, County Road G is a major collector, and County Roads AA and GG are minor collectors.

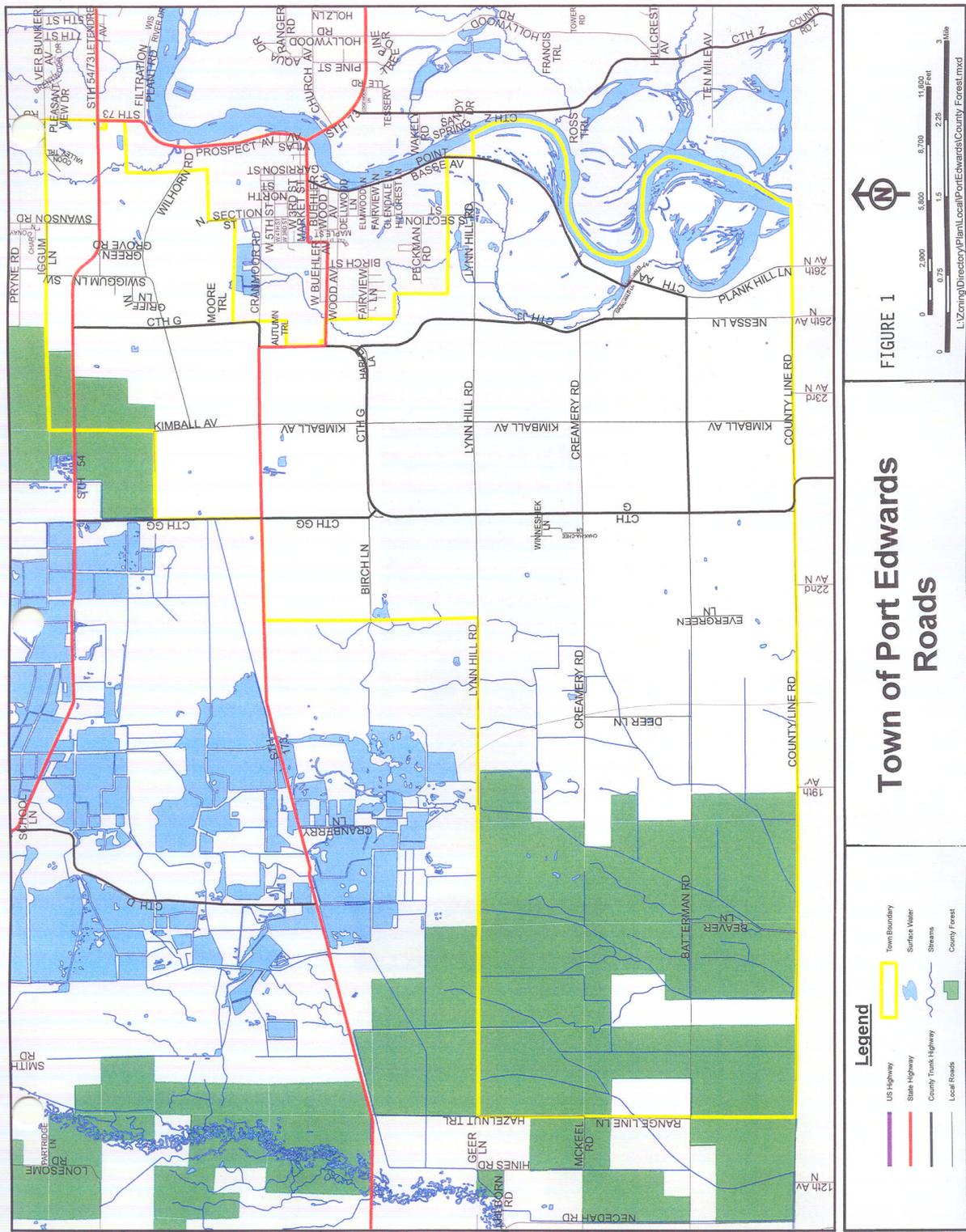


FIGURE 1

Town of Port Edwards Roads

Legend

- US Highway
- State Highway
- County Trunk Highway
- Local Roads
- Town Boundary
- Surface Water
- Streams
- County Forest



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Current & Future Changes to the Transportation System

There are not likely to be any major changes in town of Port Edwards' transportations during the planning period. Minor changes to the Town's transportation system would likely include improvements to the county roads. Typical maintenance of County and local roads is also anticipated when necessary.

County roads may be widened, where possible, to accommodate bicycles if off-road trails cannot be developed. Because of the wetlands and lack of right-of-way width on many roads, it will be difficult to expand road shoulders in many parts of the town.

Relationship of Transportation System to Other Comprehensive Plan Segments

Much of the residential development in the Town of Port Edwards belongs to residents who commute to work in nearby urban area communities. Lifestyle choices of those working in the city, but living in the town, affect the future of surrounding suburban areas. As the town grows, one of the first impacts is on streets. When a new development is proposed in a commuter town like Town of Port Edwards, provisions have to be made to move the intended population to and from that development to work, school, shopping, parks and other activities. Eventually, existing local streets may become so busy that the street will have to be widened to accommodate peak traffic, or speed limits may have to be lowered for safety reasons.

Land uses that exist or develop in or near the Town also impact streets. Commercial and industrial uses that generate a lot of truck traffic will impact the community's road maintenance dollars. Those uses may also have an impact on how surrounding land uses develop. The need for a buffer between incompatible land uses, the desire of Town of Port Edwards residents to maintain the Town's quiet, peaceful nature and the desire of many people to live on streets that do not have truck traffic will pressure certain areas to develop in residential uses and may pressure town officials to place more restrictions on the types of land uses that are allowed or the routes that trucks can use.

Transportation system changes also impact certain community facilities. As more streets are built, the demand increases for more road maintenance equipment.

New streets impact the natural resources and agricultural lands. Town of Port Edwards has areas of wetlands and floodplains that need to be protected from encroachment of construction of residences and other buildings.

Intergovernmental cooperation is essential to the development and maintenance of a transportation system. For example, Town of Port Edwards does not have a public airport, yet has a small portion of the Town that is impacted with height restrictions because of the location of Alexander Field. Areas affected are Section 3 and E ½ of the NE ¼ of Section 4, T21N, R5E and E ½ of Section 33, Section 34 and 35, T22N, R5E. The current height restriction is at 1160 feet MSL or approximately 150 feet above ground.

Street improvements should be coordinated between neighboring communities. If, for example, an increase in daily traffic on certain streets results in the need to widen the street, the Town should coordinate that project with adjacent communities to make the best use of taxpayer dollars. Finally, because bicycle and pedestrian facilities are getting so popular in the Wisconsin Rapids urban area and, because some respondents to the Town of Port Edwards community survey requested such facilities, the town should be sure to coordinate any planning with neighboring communities. Several planned routes or trails are incomplete as they come west into Town of Port Edwards. The County is updating the bicycle plan and has solicited Town of Port Edwards' input for that update.

Relation of Highways to Other Transportation Plans

Except for County Roads AA, G, GG, JJ, and State Highways 54, 73 and 173, roads in the Town of Port Edwards are local streets. No improvements are included in the six-year plan. The County roads are well maintained and some have been improved in recent years. As the County roads are improved, the County Highway Department is to consider the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan, adding shoulders where indicated, if costs can be justified. Officials of Town of Port Edwards should maintain contact with the Wood County Highway Department and the District 4 office of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to encourage widening of shoulders for safer bicycle and pedestrian use. It was already mentioned earlier that The Wisconsin Bicycle Map does not include Town of Port Edwards, except for rating State Highways **13/73** as unsuitable for bicycle traffic. The "Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020" also does not include Town of Port Edwards on its "Priority Corridors and Key Linkages" map. This fact makes it more important that the Town determine its own future with regard to bicycle trails and routes.

A transportation plan for the Wisconsin Rapids urban area is near completion. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation-sponsored project is a comprehensive analysis of traffic movement into and out of the entire urban area, including the Town of Port Edwards. The final plan will recommend road improvements, which could impact the Town in terms of road needs and could affect development pressures if new routes (eg. bypasses) are established to move traffic around the urban areas. Upon completion of the urban area plan, the Town plan should be reviewed to determine if changes need to be incorporated.

4. UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Overall objectives, policies, goals and programs

As an unincorporated town, Township of Port Edwards does not have the same type utilities as does a higher-density village or city, nor is the Town able to provide all of the same type community facilities as its larger, incorporated counterparts. The town does, however, have the same type utility and community facility needs as residents who live in villages and cities. **It is the overall objective of the Township of Port Edwards to provide those utilities and community facilities that are needed, or desired, by town residents, either through individual town efforts or as a partner with other communities and agencies.** Following are policies, goals and programs relating to specific utilities and community facilities.



Sewage Disposal/Sanitary Sewer

The Town of Port Edwards does not have municipal sanitary sewer service. Any development that occurs in the Town must install a private on-site waste treatment system, or POWTS. All such systems must be approved by the State Department of Commerce under the provisions of applicable statutes and the Wisconsin Administrative Code for both installation and maintenance.

Township of Port Edwards' development will continue to rely on private on-site waste treatment systems. **A goal of the Town is to provide information about the advantages and disadvantages of building in various soils and groundwater conditions and refer potential developers to the appropriate County and State agencies who regulate POWTS and well locations.** These areas are mapped in the natural resources section of this plan.

Storm Water Management

The management of storm water is an engineering issue in cities where large expanses of land are going to be covered with roofs, parking lots and streets. In Port Edwards, such development is not going to occur in the foreseeable future. **It will be the policy of the Town of Port Edwards to review development proposals to consider and protect drainage patterns via appropriate setbacks, drainage easements, or similar means.**

Water Supply

There are no municipal wells located in Township of Port Edwards. All development in the Town is dependent on groundwater availability for private wells. The Town survey indicated that groundwater quantity and quality are important concerns to Town residents. It is important, if Port Edwards is to continue developing as a commuter community, that the groundwater supply and quality be protected from contamination. Contamination can be the result of improper development, improper disposal of private sewage, or improper land uses. Certain types of land uses, or changes in land use can impact groundwater quality and quantity. **It will be the policy of the Town of Port Edwards to consider residential, commercial and industrial development standards that will best meet the needs of the Town while protecting the quality and quantity of groundwater of existing and future residents of the Town of Port Edwards.** Such development standards may include building density, drainage easements in subdivision developments and protection of the Town's wetlands and groundwater recharge areas.

Solid Waste Disposal/Recycling

The Town provides garbage pickup at this time. The Town also participates in a recycling program as part of the weekly garbage pickup contract. This arrangement has worked well and will likely continue for the foreseeable future. Community recycling needs and methods will continue to be assessed and modified as needed near the end of each contract period.

Emergency Services

Police. Patrolling of the town and investigation of law enforcement problems are provided by the Wood County Sheriff's Department and Wisconsin State Patrol. Township of Port Edwards' population growth is not expected to create a need for a town-employed police officer during the planning period. **Because the population size of Port Edwards does not support a town police officer, the Town will continue to work with State and County law enforcement agencies to provide Town residents with a safe place to live.**

Fire. The Town of Port Edwards is protected by the Nekoosa and Port Edwards volunteer fire departments. Nekoosa and Port Edwards have a mutual aid agreement for fire protection. **It is the policy of the Town to provide the safest, most efficient fire protection possible by continuing to monitor fire department success, analyze needs for more or different equipment and encourage more town residents to join the fire department volunteer staff.**

Ambulance Service. Ambulance service is provided to the Town of Port Edwards by the City of Nekoosa via a contract with that city. **It is the policy of the Town to continue negotiating for the best ambulance service for town residents.**

Parks

There is only one park in Town of Port Edwards, but it is not a municipally-owned facility. The Wood County ATV Area, an ATV park with 10 miles of trails, is located on County Highway 54 in Section 32, T22NR5E in north-central Port Edwards. The western portion of the trail area is located in Section 31, T22NR5E, Town of Cranmoor. The park has a shelter for picnics and small gatherings. This park is shown on Figure 2. In addition, the Town has a community center building which is used exclusively for public gatherings, club meetings, receptions, and parties. Other than the community center, the Town does not offer an active recreational program for its residents. For outdoor recreation opportunities, town residents currently enjoy recreation facilities in the City of Nekoosa and Village of Port Edwards, as well as area county parks. Wisconsin River Power Company operates two recreational areas on the Wisconsin River off County Road AA. They are the Plank Hill Small Boat Access, a boat ramp and parking area, and the Plank Hill Bank Fishing and Carry-In Boat Access. The snowmobile clubs of Wood County maintain a trail that runs north-south from Kimball Avenue/Wilhorn Road area to the Juneau County line on Nessa Lane.



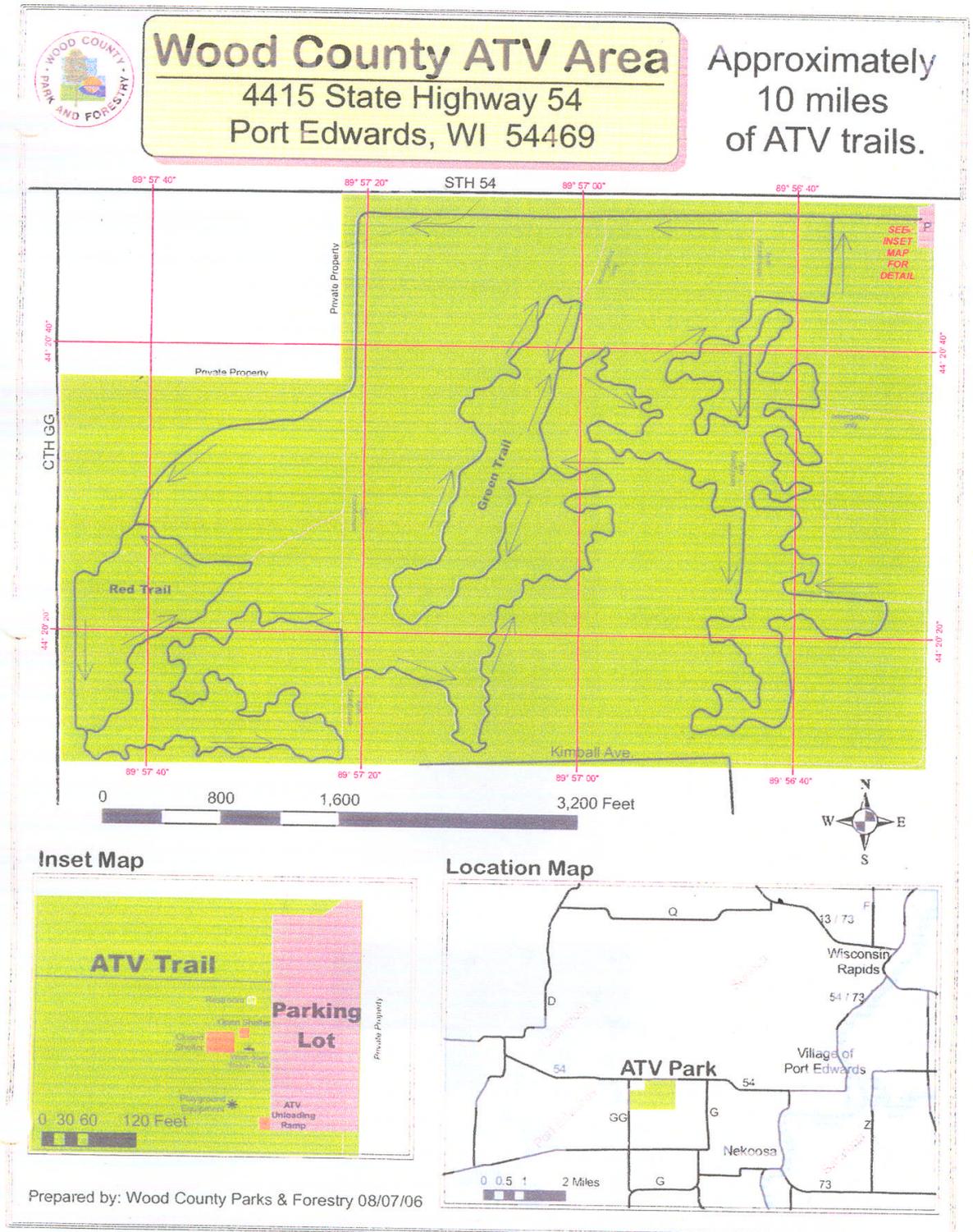
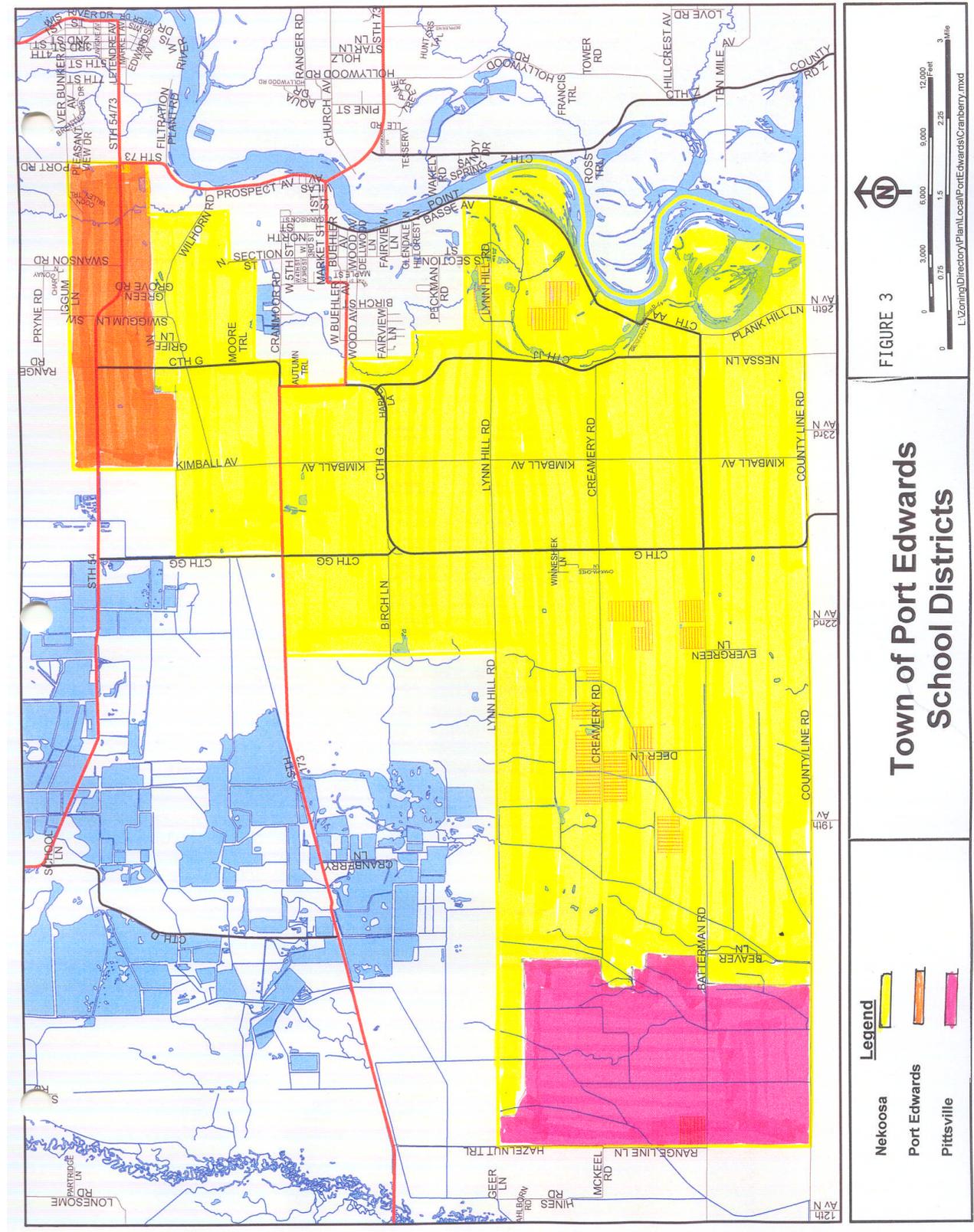


FIGURE 2



Library Service

Public library service is provided to Town of Port Edwards residents from the Nekoosa Public Library. This service is made available through financing from the County and the Town. **It is the policy of the Town to continue budgeting for library services for town residents.**

Schools

The Town of Port Edwards is included in three school districts -- Nekoosa, Port Edwards, and Pittsville. Only a small portion of the town's far west side is in the Pittsville School District, and a small portion of the near east side in the Port Edwards School District. The majority of the town is in the Nekoosa School District. Town officials must coordinate with each of the three school districts to keep them informed of new land splits, road extensions, and other land development activities that may affect either number of students or the routes that school busses can use. The map in Figure 3 shows how the Town is divided among school districts.

Health Care

There are no clinics or hospitals in the Town of Port Edwards, but with the Nekoosa, Wisconsin Rapids, and Marshfield facilities within a reasonable distance, there is no need for local medical facilities.

Power-Generating Plants, Electric-, Natural Gas- and Oil Transmission Lines

The bulk of Town of Port Edwards' electrical power is supplied by Alliant Energy Company. A few square miles on the Town's southern boundary get electric power from the Oakdale Electric Cooperative in Juneau County. There are no power generating plants in Port Edwards.

The Enbridge Group has four pipelines that traverse the Town from north to south, through sections Sec. 33, T22N, R5E, T21N, R5E, Sect. 4, 16, 21, and 22. These lines are part of a system that transports crude oil through 24", 34", and 42" lines going south. A 20" line transports refinery products north. No leakage problems have occurred along this segment of the transmission pipelines, but an emergency response manual is in place should an event occur.

Natural gas has recently become available to Swiggum Lane, Wilhorn Road, Griffin Lane, and Green Grove Lane in the northeast parts of Port Edwards and about one mile running north-south starting ¼ mile north of Wood Avenue and going south to the northern portion of highway JJ, which could influence additional growth in that area.

The Town of Port Edwards recognizes the importance and need for an adequate supply of power from all sources. Because Port Edwards is located in an area where utilities have located, **it is the policy of the Town to work with utility companies and surrounding communities to provide for orderly expansion of needed utilities, while setting safety of town residents and protection of their property values as a high priority.**

Telecommunications Facilities

With the growing use of wireless technologies, the Town of Port Edwards has had development of two new telecommunications towers. There has not been an ordinance in place to guide the location or aesthetics of these structures. In order to protect property owners, property values and the Town and because airport zoning around the Wisconsin Rapids Airport sets height restrictions for all structures, the Town should consider implementing a set of standards for the development, maintenance, and abandonment of telecommunications towers and facilities.

5. AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section provides an analysis of lands that have some constraints to development. They are primarily environmental constraints, such as floodplains, wetlands, soils with high groundwater conditions, or soils with characteristics that severely limit development because of inability to accommodate private on-site waste treatment systems. Prime agricultural soils may also be restricted from development to retain the best agricultural areas. This section will look at each of these characteristics and through a series of analyses and maps, describe areas that cannot or should not be developed in the future. Conversely, the analyses and map overlays will also reveal the best areas in the Town of Port Edwards for future development.



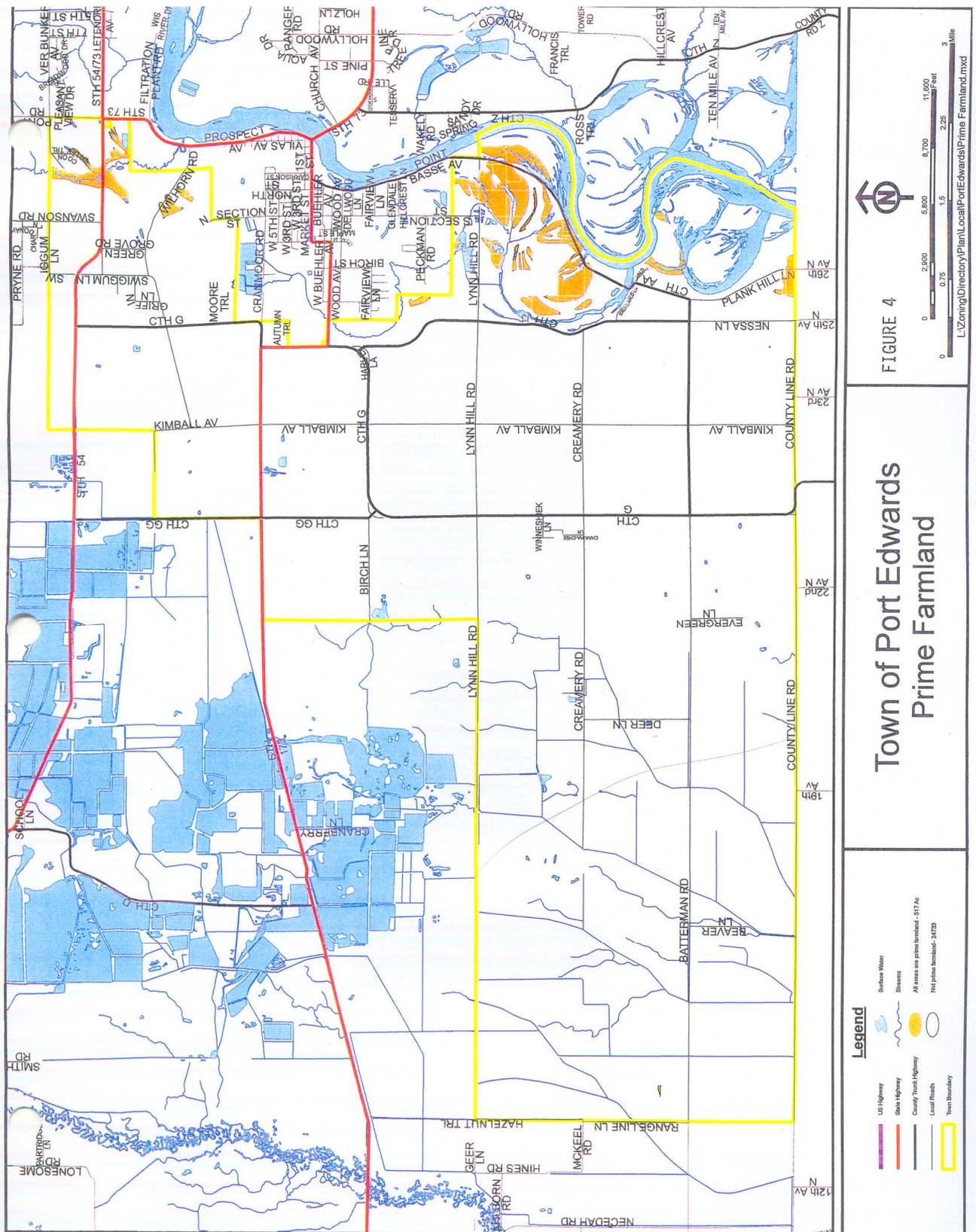
Productive Agricultural Areas

Figure 4 shows how the Natural Resource Conservation Service rates soils in Town of Port Edwards for traditional agricultural purposes. Most of the Town, 98.0%, is rated as “not prime farmland.” About 2% (517 acres) is rated as “prime farmland.” Most soils with a “prime” rating are located in the eastern part of the Town in the area of the floodplain of the Wisconsin River. A few of those “prime” acres are also found in the far northeast corner of the Town.

Although soils are not conducive to traditional agricultural uses, the Town of Port Edwards is still a strong agricultural community. Presently, irrigated vegetable crops and cranberries play a major role in the local community and continue to grow. Aerial application of agricultural chemicals is an acceptable practice within the Town if aerial application complies with Wisconsin Administrative Code, Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, Chapter 29, and other applicable state and federal regulations. Many other acres are dedicated to supporting residences and associated uses. Small and hobby farms are also present in some areas throughout the Town.

It is the desire of those responding to the community planning survey that the agricultural character of the Town of Port Edwards be preserved.





Water Resources

The State has significant responsibilities for protecting water resources under what is known as the “Public Trust Doctrine.” The Public Trust Doctrine embodies the notion that the waters in Wisconsin are held in trust by the State for the benefit of all. There can be no private interests in waterways that adversely affect this public interest. In fulfilling its responsibilities under the Public Trust Doctrine, the Wisconsin Legislature has enacted laws and charged the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to protect water resources. The local plan, at a minimum, must be consistent with the state laws. This section of the Town of Port Edwards comprehensive plan provides an inventory of the water resources in the Town and establishes local policies and programs regarding those resources.

Groundwater

Fifteen to thirty percent of the precipitation we get in Wisconsin each year seeps into the ground and recharges our aquifers.¹ It is estimated that there is enough water underground to cover Wisconsin to a depth of 30 feet.² The Town of Port Edwards is in an area of Wood County characterized by water table depths ranging from 0 inches to 137 inches and deeper. There are also some areas for which no data is available. This is shown in Figure 5, “Town of Port Edwards Depth to Water Table.” Most of the areas of high water table lie to the west of County Highway G, with some areas lying closer to the Wisconsin River, also having a higher water table, and are in the river floodplain. Because some agricultural soils may have a higher seasonal water table, it is important to protect both them and the water table.

¹ “Planning for Natural Resources,” Dept. of Urban & Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, January, 2002, pg. 35.

² Ibid.

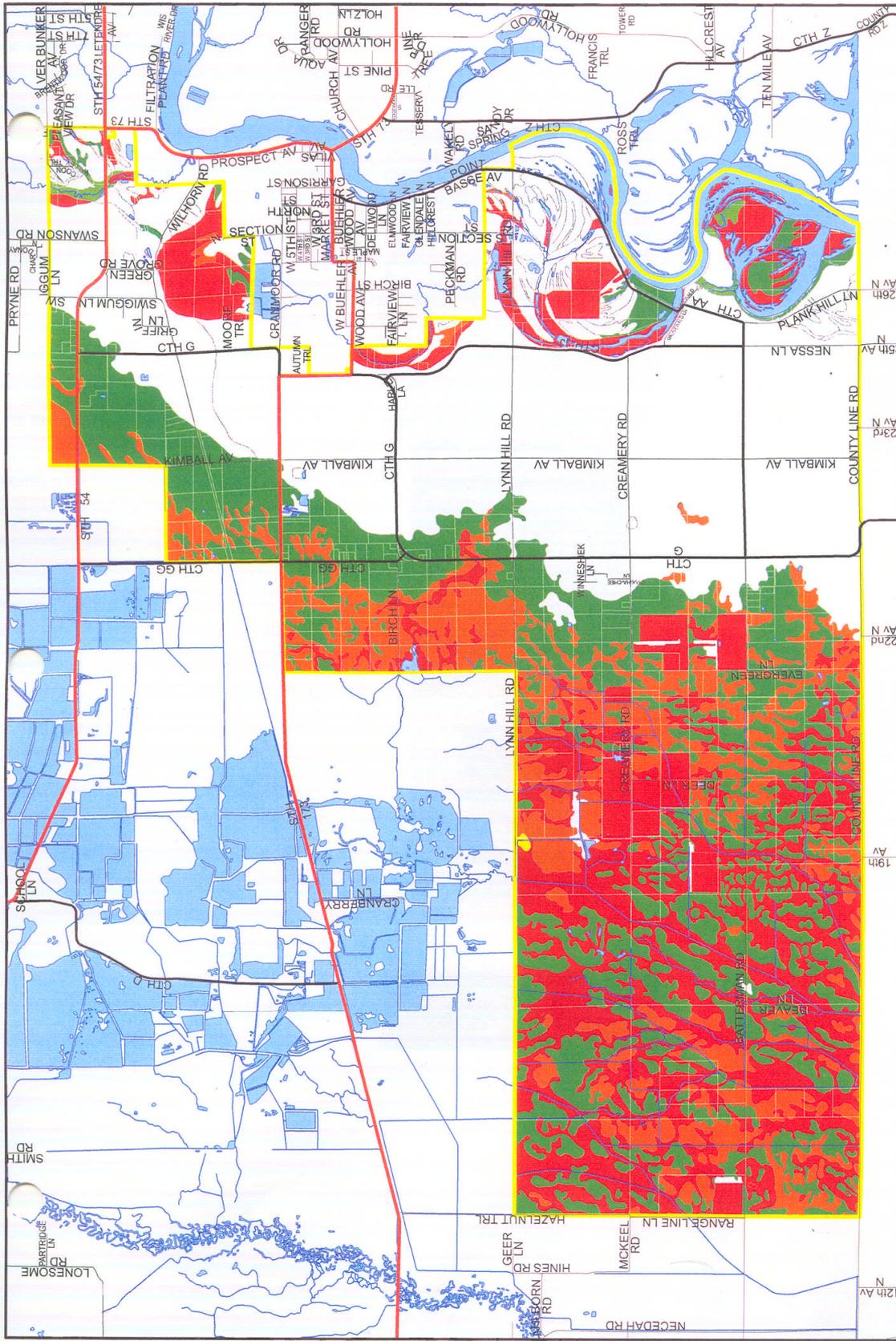


FIGURE 5

North arrow pointing up.

Scale bar in feet: 0, 2,500, 5,000, 8,700, 11,600.

Scale bar in miles: 0, 1.5, 2.25, 3.

File path: L:\Zoning\Directory\Plan\Local\PortEdwards\Depth to Water Table.mxd

Town of Port Edwards Depth to Water Table

Legend

- No Data (White box)
- 0 inches (Red box)
- 15 inches (Orange box)
- 61 inches (Yellow box)
- 76 inches (Light Green box)
- 137 inches (Dark Green box)

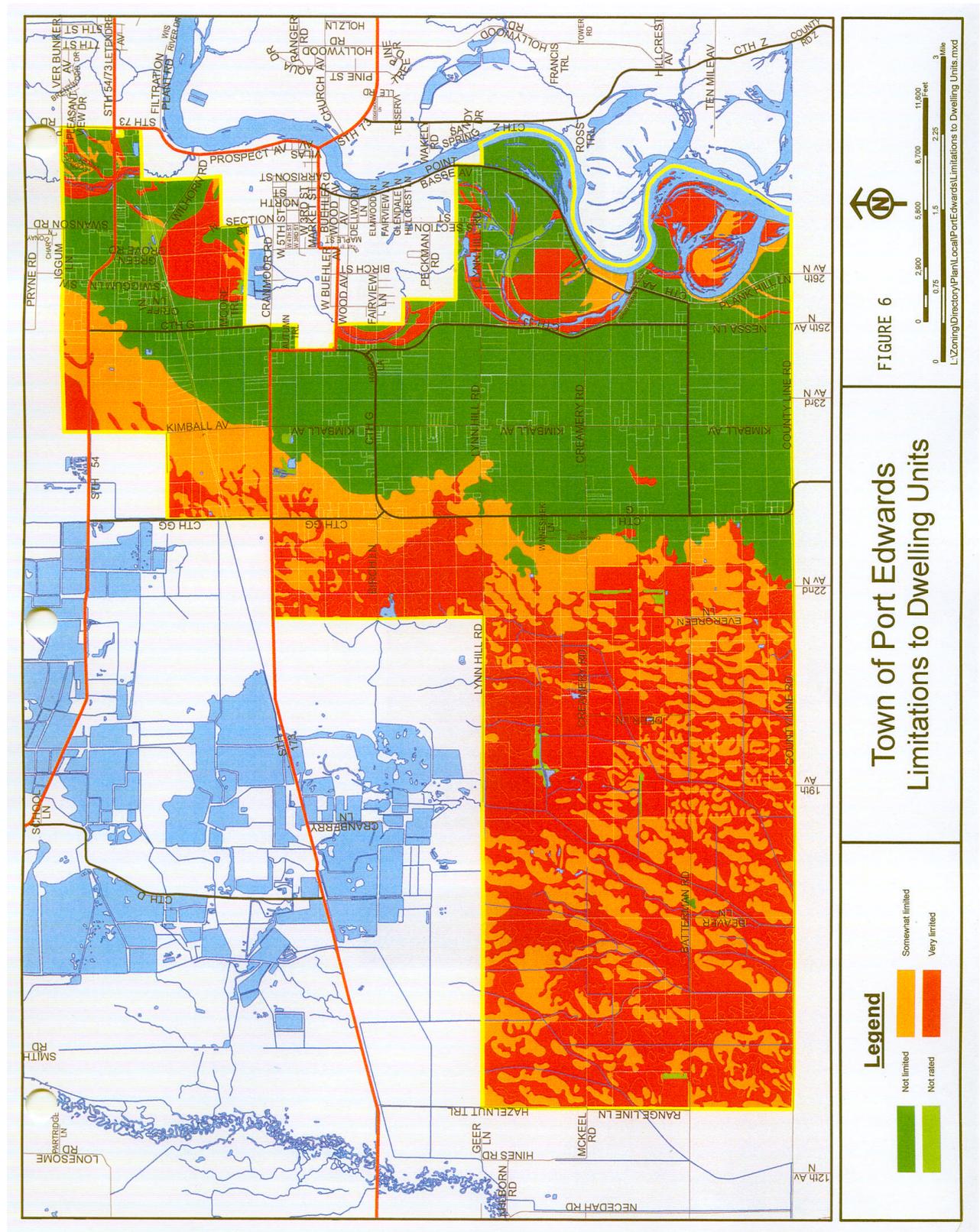
The parts of the Town of Port Edwards with the deepest water table, hence the most conducive to structural development, are (beginning at the southern part of the town) the areas to the East of County Highway G to the Wisconsin River with some exceptions. As you follow County Highway G to the north through the Town, structural development becomes more conducive to acres east and west, north and south of the Highway. These areas can be viewed in Figure 6, Town of Port Edwards Limitations to Dwelling Units.

There are growing concerns statewide about both the quantity and quality of groundwater. Groundwater quality may be impacted by a variety of activities, including leaking underground storage tanks, old dumps, septic systems, land spreading of septage and over-application of fertilizers and pesticides. The most common contaminants found in Wisconsin groundwater are nitrate-nitrogen, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and pesticides.³ Nitrate comes from a number of sources, including nitrogen-based fertilizers, septic systems, animal waste storage, feedlots, municipal and industrial wastewater and sludge disposal. Some examples of VOCs are gasoline, diesel fuel, paints, paint thinners, stain removers and drain cleaners. Pesticides reach the groundwater from land application, spills, misuse or improper storage and disposal. Many respondents to the town planning survey expressed concern about groundwater quality.

It is not only important to protect groundwater resources at the local level, it is the law. Private well supplies, agricultural uses, recreational use of surface waters, etc. depend on a clean water supply. Every drinking water supply in the Township of Port Edwards is a private well – untreated water from the groundwater supply. In 1974, the Wisconsin Supreme Court overturned existing law and created the current law – the doctrine of reasonable use. A property owner's use of groundwater is not absolute, but has to be reasonable, considering impacts on the water table and other uses. Groundwater is also protected as waters of the State.



³ Ibid.



Surface Water

Surface water in the Town of Port Edwards consists of Grass Lake, Moccasin Creek, Cranberry Creek, Lynn Creek, and other minor tributaries. Surface water also includes the many ponds, reservoirs, and drainage ditches. Most of these are manmade, and some are used for flooding of cranberry beds. It is important to protect the quality of Township of Port Edwards' surface waters for the protection of the abundant wildlife in the Town and because contamination can migrate to residential wells.



Floodplains and Shorelands

Floodplains serve many important functions related to flood control, erosion control, ground water recharge, fish and wildlife habitat, and water quality. The general public often does not fully understand floodplains or their function. A floodplain is a natural extension of a waterway, and flooding is a natural physical event. When structures are placed in the floodplain, the floodplain's water storage capacity is reduced, causing the next flood of equal intensity to crest even higher than the last, often flooding areas that were previously outside the floodplain.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines floodplains. Floodplains are comprised of the floodway, which is that area that actually carries the floodwaters, and the flood fringe, which is the area that accepts backed-up water for storage until the floodway can carry the water downstream. The flood fringe is sometimes referred to as the "backwater" areas. Floodplain boundaries have been established nationwide to delineate the 100-year and 500-year flood elevations. There is a one percent chance that the 100-year, or regional, flood will occur in any given year. The regional flood could occur two years in a row, or may not occur at all in a 100-year period. According to the Wisconsin Emergency Management Division,

Wisconsin communities experienced significant flooding each year from 1990 – 2001, except 1994. Total damages to public and private property, including agricultural damages, during that time period totaled more than one billion dollars.⁴

By State law, Wood County adopted a floodplain zoning ordinance in the late 1960s to regulate development in floodplains. FEMA floodplain maps identify areas where major floods occur. Regulations prohibit development in the floodway, the most dangerous flood area. Development is allowed in the flood fringe, provided it is built above flood levels and otherwise flood-protected. Although allowed, it is wise to restrict development from occurring in the flood fringe as well as the floodway.

The floodplains in the Town of Port Edwards are shown in Figure 7. The flood plain follows streams and drainage patterns, but in the western portions of the Town the floodplain spreads over a wide area. There are 7,423 acres of floodplain in the Town of Port Edwards.

Shorelands and floodplains are very closely associated. Like floodplains, shoreland areas are protected under Wisconsin law. Also, like floodplains, counties are required to zone all shorelands within their jurisdiction.⁵ The shoreland includes that land that is located within 300 feet of a navigable stream or 1,000 feet of a lake, pond or flowage.

By reviewing the floodplain map (Figure 7) and the map that shows high groundwater areas (Figure 5), there is somewhat of a correlation between the two. Floodplain areas have soils with higher water table, but there are also some acres in Town of Port Edwards that are not included in a floodplain, but have a seasonal higher water table.

Wetlands

The value of wetlands is often disregarded or not understood by the public, although they are becoming more familiar with the benefits of wetlands to both humans and wildlife. Wetlands serve as a water storage and distribution system, filtering nutrients and purifying the water before it is reintroduced into the groundwater or surface water system. As more impermeable surfaces (rooftops, driveways, patios, roads, etc.) dominate the landscape, the capacity of wetlands to handle excess water runoff becomes increasingly important.

Under Wisconsin Administrative Code, cities and villages (and towns with village powers) are required to protect, at a minimum, all unfilled wetlands that 1) are within their borders, 2) are five acres or larger, 3) are shown on Department of Natural Resources wetland inventory maps, and 4) are located within shorelands.

In the Town of Port Edwards, wetlands are widely scattered throughout the Town (Figure 8). Figure 9 shows the county wetland inventory for comparison of surrounding areas. There are approximately 4,866 acres of DNR defined wetlands in the Town. Wetlands are often associated with floodplains, but not always, as can be seen on the maps. In all but a very few instances, obviously, wetlands are associated with soils that have high groundwater characteristics. This can be verified by studying the pertinent maps.

⁴ Ibid, page 28.

⁵ Sec. 59.692, Wis. Stats., and Chapter NR 115, Wisconsin Administrative Code.

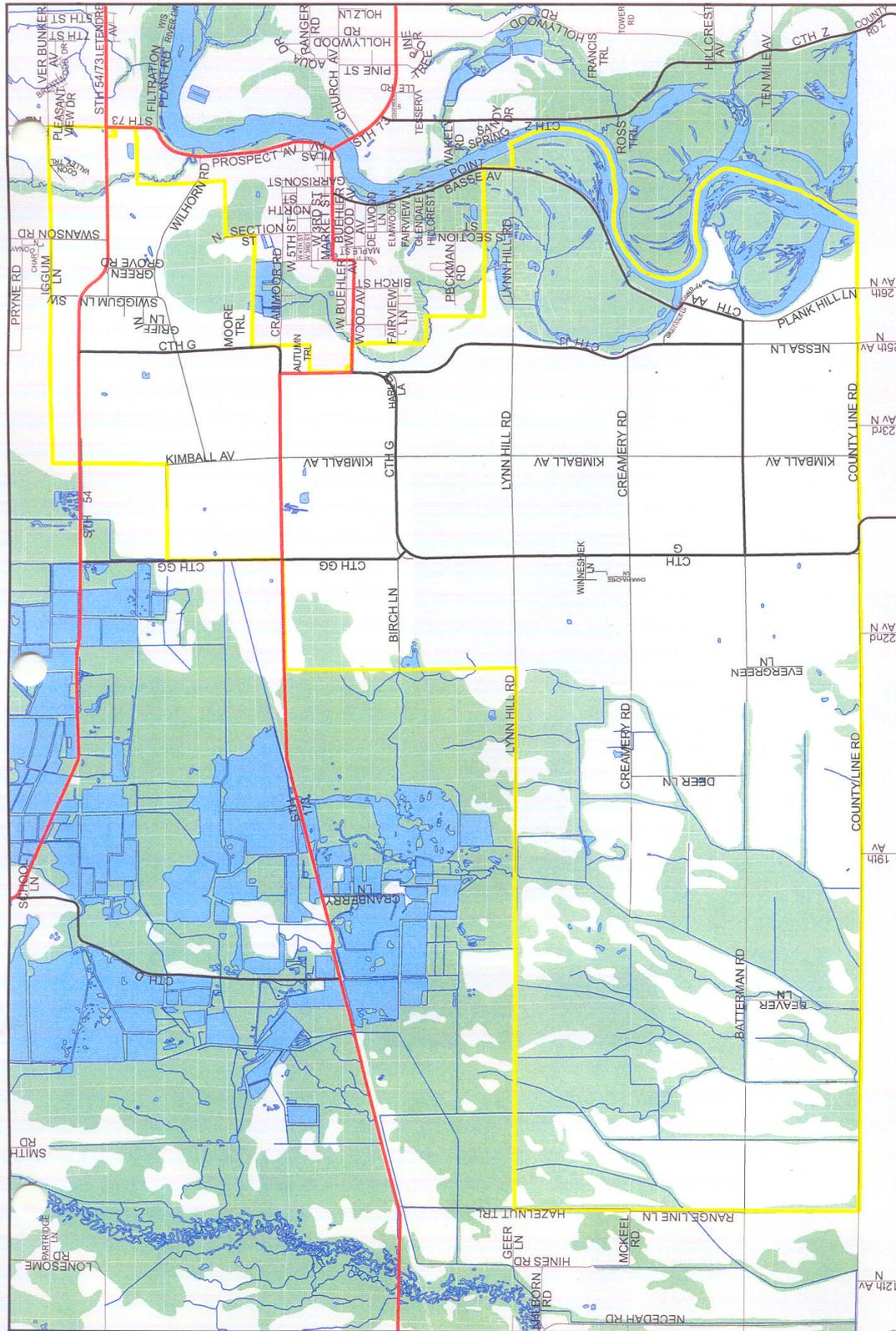


FIGURE 7

0 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000 10,000 Feet
 0 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles

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Town of Port Edwards Floodplain 7,424 Acres of Floodplain

Legend

- US Highway
- State Highway
- County Trunk Highway
- Local Roads
- Town Boundary
- Surface Water
- Streams
- Floodplain

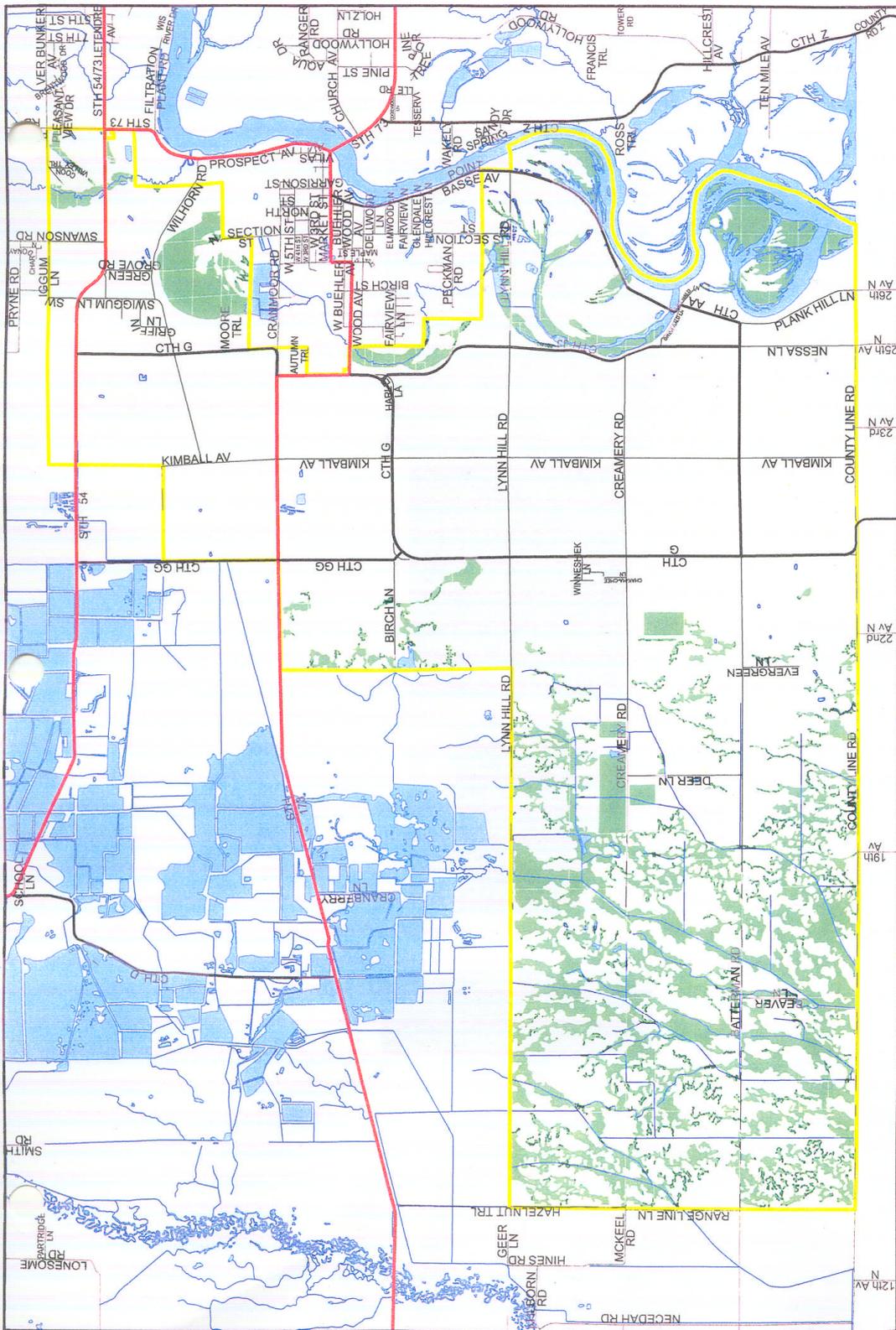


FIGURE 8

Town of Port Edwards WIDNR Wetland Inventory

Legend

- WIDNR Wetland Inventory

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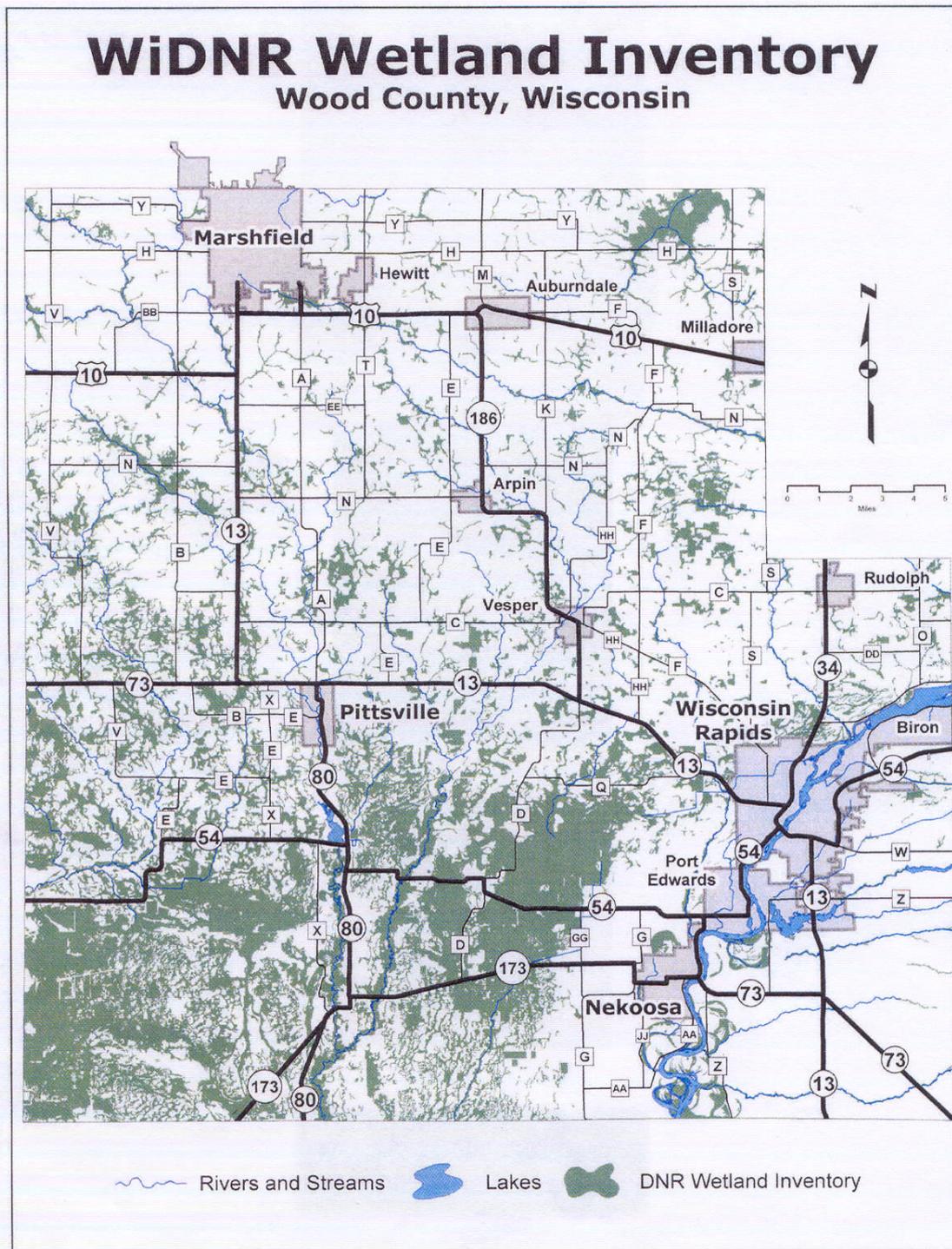
Development should be directed away from all mapped wetlands, both for the protection of the wetland and for the protection of the structures and persons using them. One town in Wood County requires a 100-foot setback from any mapped wetland for any new structure. Such a requirement will preserve the important functions of the wetlands for many years into the future. Wetlands are protected from development by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources when those wetlands lie within 300 feet of a navigable stream. There are wetland areas that lie further than 300 feet of the streams. These wetlands are not protected and have, in many communities, been destroyed. It should be a town policy to protect the unregulated wetlands from encroachment and destruction so they can serve the function of water runoff storage, wildlife habitat, etc.

Soils: Limitations for Dwellings

Figure 6 is a map of Town of Port Edwards showing the soils limitations for development of dwellings in the Town. Based on the information provided in Figure 6, a good portion of the Town has some type of dwelling restriction ranging from somewhat limited to very limited.

Looking at Figures 6, 7, and 8, it makes sense that the areas with the very limited designation are directly associated with the soils that have high groundwater conditions. The majority of land that is best suited for dwellings is located to the east of County Highway G. As G proceeds north, there are areas on both sides of the highway that have no limitations to dwellings. Most areas, with exception, to the west of County Highway G are limited in some degree to dwelling units.

Soil limitations are indicated by the ratings "slight," "moderate," and "severe." A slight limitation means that the soil properties are generally favorable for the rated use; that is, limitations are minor and easily overcome. A moderate limitation means that some soil properties are unfavorable, but can be overcome or modified by special planning and design. A severe limitation means that soil properties are so unfavorable and so difficult to correct or overcome as to require major soil reclamation, special designs or intensive maintenance. In Figure 9, transitional ratings of slight-moderate and moderate-severe are also used. In the slight-moderate category, limitations are slight for dwellings without basements and moderate for dwellings with basements. The same holds true for the moderate-severe classification. Those soils have moderate limitations for dwellings without basements and severe limitations for dwellings with basements. Because virtually all structures with bathrooms are served by Private On-Site Waste Treatment Systems (POWTS), it is important for town officials to keep the soil maps contained in Section 5 in mind when recommending areas for new development. It is imperative that all POWTS be properly maintained to protect the groundwater that is so close to the surface.

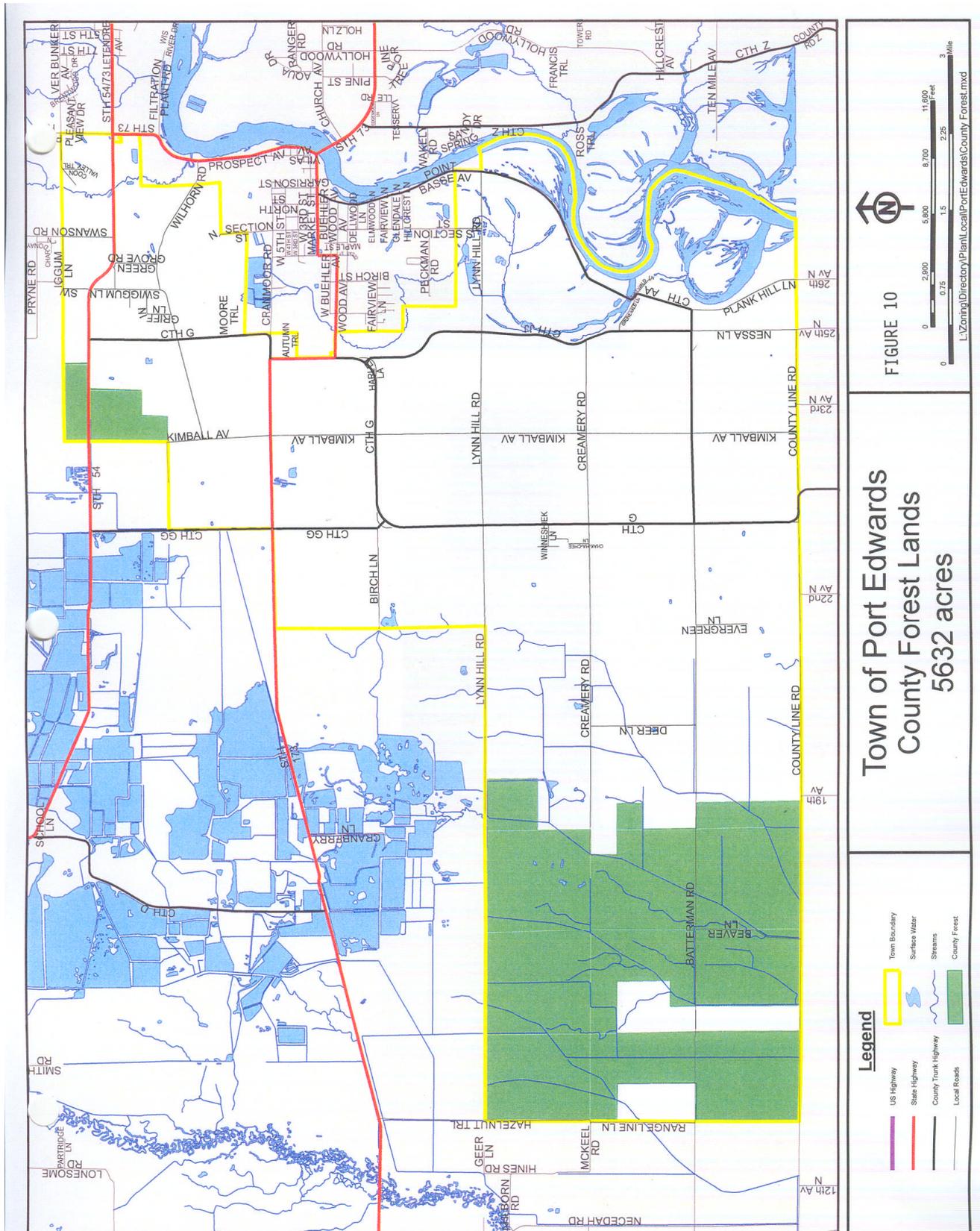


Forests

Forests are a prominent land cover type in the Town of Port Edwards. In addition to county owned forest, there are many other wood lots and tree farms.

Wood County owns 5,602 acres of forests in the Town, shown on Figure 10. The county forests are available for public hunting and hiking. The "Port Edwards Block" of the Wood County forests extends beyond the Town limits. The extent of the Port Edwards Block and the primary and secondary roads are shown on Figure 11.

Figure 12 shows the Wood County 2006-2020 harvest plan areas in the Port Edwards Block. The Town should be aware of these plans, as it relates to roads and other town facilities.



Port Edwards Block Primary & Secondary Roads

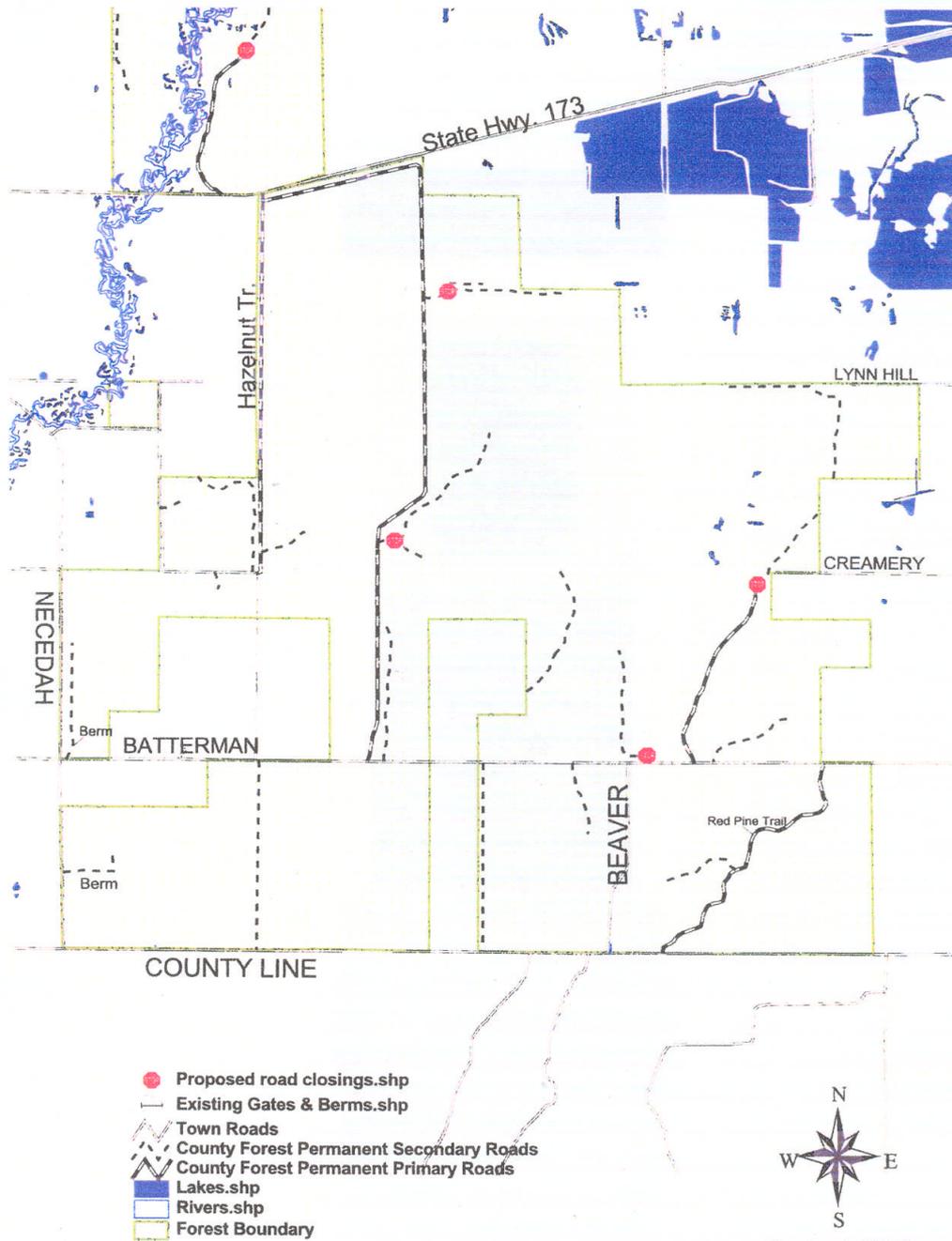


FIGURE 11

Port Edwards Block Harvest Areas 2006-2020

900.11

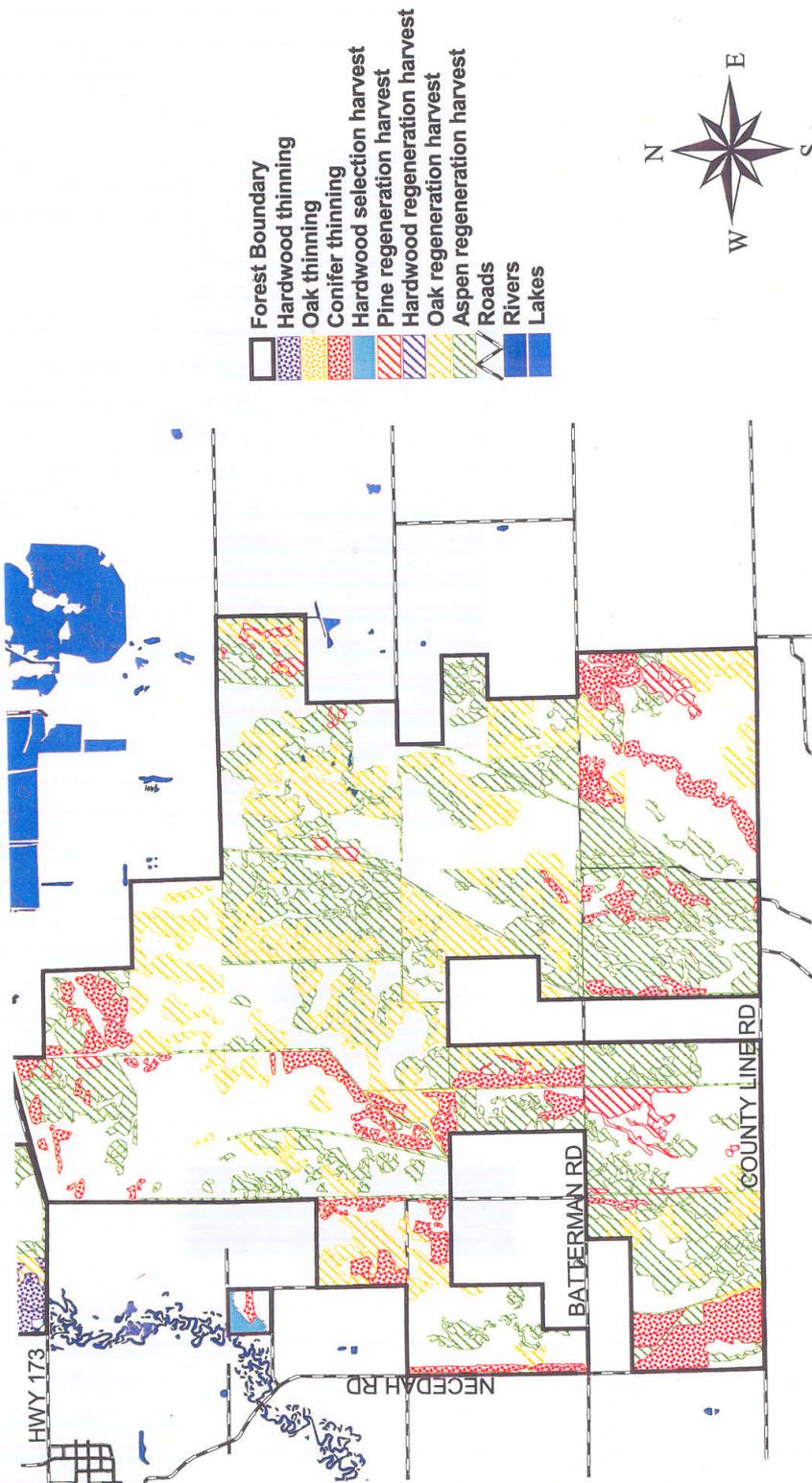


FIGURE 12

Cultural Resources

The Ho-Chunk Nation has not provided any information on Native American archaeological sites, but other surveys have shown they exist in Sections 21 and 28.

Wildlife Habitat and Endangered Species

The Town of Port Edwards has an abundance of wildlife including deer, rabbits, ducks, geese, turkeys, Sandhill cranes, and many more. Sightings of bald eagles, coyotes, and other animals which were previously rare in the area are becoming more common.

The Department of Natural Resources now exempts the list of endangered species from public record; however, a map of rare species is shown in Figure 13.

Suburban development sometimes encroaches on wildlife habitat, often destroying former homes or breeding areas for wildlife. Port Edwards officials and residents recognize the value of wildlife in residence, and through this planning process will establish development densities that will assure protection of wildlife habitat.

Summary

The maps presented in this section show areas of Port Edwards that should not be developed, along with those that are best suited for new development. The map in Figure 6 shows the “Limitations of Dwelling Units,” which essentially is the constraint on any development other than for agriculture or farming.

Each of the environmental factors discussed and illustrated in this section – floodplains, wetlands, etc., present hindrances to development that must be considered with each proposed development.

6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Port Edwards is basically a commuter, or “bedroom” community, whose residents work in the adjacent urban municipalities. In the year 2000, a third of the town’s workforce (34.3%) were employed in the manufacturing sector. Another 12.3 percent were employed in the retail trade. These two categories account for nearly half (46.6%) of Port Edwards’ labor force. Other strong job classifications for Township of Port Edwards residents include arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (11.5%), education, health, and social services (10.4%), and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (6.9%). Table 10 provides a breakdown of all job classifications for those Port Edwards residents that are in the labor force.

In a recent community survey, Town residents indicated that, while they do not want to see large industrial or commercial developments come into the Town, they do not discourage small commercial ventures and, in fact, many residents want to see convenience stores, motels and restaurants locate in their community. Large industrial and commercial developments are encouraged to locate in the incorporated communities of Wisconsin Rapids, Port Edwards, Nekoosa, and Pittsville, where public water and sanitary sewer services are available. One of the Town’s strengths in the economic development area is their ability to work with neighboring municipalities to encourage larger developments that will create jobs for all area workers.

INDUSTRY	PCT OF LABOR FORCE
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and mining	6.9
Construction	5.6
Manufacturing	34.3
Wholesale Trade	2
Retail Trade	12.3
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.5
Information	0.9
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	4.0
Professional, scientific, management, administration, and waste management services	2.7
Educational, health and social services	10.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	11.5
Other services (except public administration)	2.5
Public administration	2.3
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000, Table DP-3.	

Because most of Port Edwards' residents work in the incorporated municipalities to the east and southeast, the Town's future land use plan needs to take careful consideration of the transportation network to move workers (and school children) to and from the cities and villages. Land use plans that allow for future road improvements, including extension of city and village roads into the Town, should be considered.

The major weakness of attracting anything other than small industrial and commercial uses is the lack of public sewer and water systems. Many larger businesses use a lot of water and, as a result, need to dispose of a lot of wastewater. Because all of Port Edwards is on private, on-site waste treatment systems, disposal of large quantities of water can be hard on systems and pose a potential of contaminating private drinking water supplies.

The Town has several strengths to offer businesses and industries that are considering locating or expanding in the neighboring incorporated communities. A quality labor force and good work ethic is chief among the strengths. Port Edwards residents have skills in a good cross-section of jobs, primarily manufacturing jobs as shown in the table above. Another strength is the quality school systems in Nekoosa, Port Edwards, and Pittsville. Recreation opportunities abound in the South Wood County area, including high quality county parks, a broad selection of youth sports in state-of-the-art facilities, and hundreds of acres of public land for hunting and hiking. Finally, the simple beauty of the Town, with its forests and streams and abundant wildlife, is an attraction to persons who are looking for the peaceful quietness of rural living. Yet, the Town of Port Edwards is only minutes for work, schools and shopping.

Given the information and past practices discussed herein, it shall be the Town of Port Edwards' overall objective to encourage and support development of large commercial and industrial concerns in the incorporated communities of Wisconsin Rapids, Port Edwards, Nekoosa and Pittsville, while continuing to allow for small businesses and industries that do not require large amounts of water or public sewer services in the Town.

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The Town of Port Edwards has cooperated with neighboring communities, Wood County and the school districts in Pittsville, Nekoosa, and Port Edwards in various service areas for many years. Cooperative efforts may have evolved out of State mandates, but, more often, intergovernmental cooperation has been the result of economy of scale. With growing shortages of funding and increasing demand for services, it makes sense for communities to discuss increasing shared services and to coordinate new or expanded municipal programs. Like many towns in Wood County, the Town of Port Edwards' overall objective for this planning element is to cooperate with neighboring municipalities and school districts when such cooperation and shared services are cost-effective and economically feasible. A listing of current intergovernmental cooperative services in Port Edwards includes the following:

- Mutual aid with the Village of Port Edwards and City of Nekoosa for fire department services.
- Contract for ambulance service is with the City of Nekoosa.
- Boundary roads are maintained under agreements with adjacent municipalities.
- The Wood County Highway Department does all paving of town roads.
- Participating cooperatively with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission and Wood County on an area-wide transportation study.

With recent proposals to curtail general revenue sharing in Wisconsin and with demands for use of funding growing, Town officials should consider basic planning options, many of which reflect input from Port Edwards' community survey. Future objectives of the Town, then, include the following:

- Encourage new development to locate in areas that can be efficiently and economically served by existing and planned streets and public utilities.
- Coordinate comprehensive planning with neighboring communities, the County and the Pittsville, Nekoosa, and Port Edwards Public School Districts.
- Support industrial and business development in the cities of Wisconsin Rapids, Pittsville, and Nekoosa and the village of Port Edwards.
- Coordinate boundary developments with the Nekoosa, Village of Port Edwards, and Ho Chunk Nation Plan Commissions.
- Review contracts and agreements with neighboring communities to determine what changes or additions can be made to make provision of services more cost effective and efficient for Town residents and land owners.

- Provide the school districts an opportunity to comment on future proposals.
- Coordinate the location of public utilities and facilities with projected growth and development patterns.

8. LAND USE

Current Land Use

The land-based classification standards (LBCS) method of classifying land uses is utilized by communities in plans they develop. Land-based classification standards provide a consistent method for classifying land uses based on their characteristics. LCBS extends the notion of classifying land uses by refining traditional categories into multiple dimensions, such as activities, functions, building types, site development character, and ownership constraints. Each dimension has its own set of categories and subcategories for classifying land uses. Classifications are based on field surveys, aerial photographs, topographic maps, local knowledge, and other data.

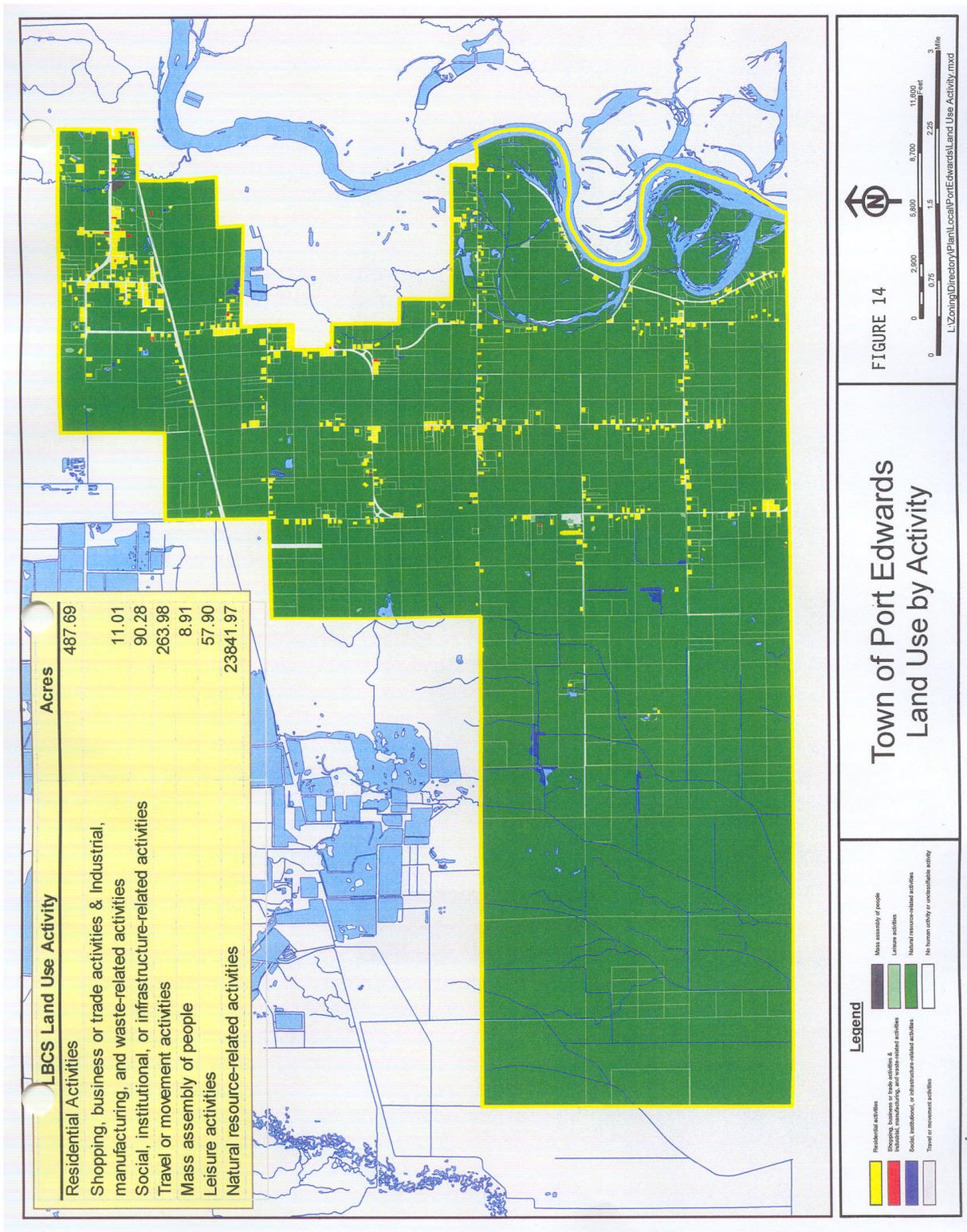
For purposes of this plan, current land use analysis will focus on the activity dimension of LBCS. Activity refers to the actual use of land based on its observable characteristics, or what is actually taking place on the land, such as farming, shopping, manufacturing, etc. This is the most commonly referred to method of defining land uses and is the most easily understood by the average individual. The accompanying map (Fig. 14) shows the observable activity on each parcel in Township of Port Edwards, and the chart summarizes what is shown on the map. A description of each activity follows.

Residential

These activities fall into the 1000 LBCS code. There are 487.7 acres classified as residential in Town of Port Edwards. This accounts for about 2 percent of the total land. The land use map shows that residential activities are concentrated along Highway 54, County G, County GG, County AA, Lynn Hill Road, Kimball Avenue, and other roads in the eastern half of the township. Nearly all of the residential activity is within three miles of the Nekoosa city limits. This should be considered when planning future road and community improvements.

Commercial/Industrial

The 2000 category of the land-based classification system includes shopping, business, or trade activities. Because Town of Port Edwards is primarily a commuter town of relatively small size, there are not a lot of commercial support activities in the Town. Only 11.01 acres fall into this land classification, which is less than 1/10th of 1 percent. Existing commercial developments are not concentrated, but are scattered throughout the eastern part of the county. Since the township is located near Nekoosa and Wisconsin Rapids, it is unlikely there will be a rapid expansion of commercial activity in the near future.



Social, Institutional, or Infrastructure Related

Ninety acres, or 0.36 percent, of the land in Town of Port Edwards is classified in this category. The category includes public safety-related activities, activities associated with utilities (water, sewer, power, etc.), inactive mass storage (including open storage of water), and health care activities. The utilities area includes irrigation water storage, an activity common in Town of Port Edwards' cranberry-growing areas.

Travel Activities

There are 264 acres listed in the 5000 code. Travel and movement activities include roads, parking lots, bicycle/pedestrian trails, and other such activities. In the Town of Port Edwards, nearly the entire acreage in this classification is roads, including town and county roads and state highways. As the town develops, additional streets may be added, but this category will likely not have a major impact on the Town's land uses in the future.

Mass Assembly of People

These sites account for only about nine acres and would include places like the community center, town hall, etc.

Leisure Activities

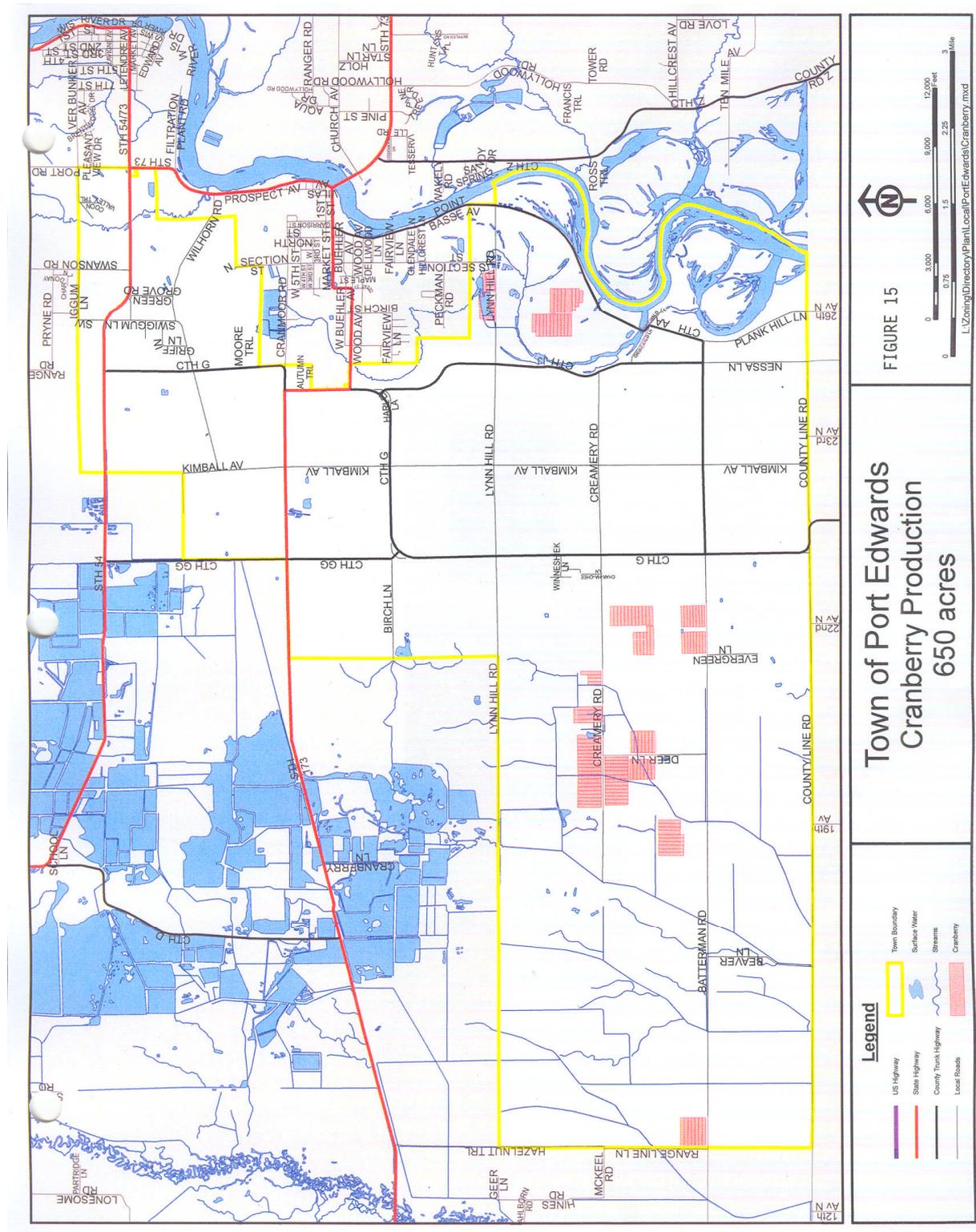
Activities listed as leisure activities in Town of Port Edwards include the ATV park, boat landings, etc. Together, leisure activities comprise 57.9 acres in the Town. Port Edwards has the land for new and expanded leisure activities and in the future would be a good location for new parks, trails, and other outdoor activities. The character of Town of Port Edwards is defined by the wooded areas, quietness of the community, wildlife, streams, low activity, forest, and simplicity, among other similar characteristics. Some residents would like safer bike routes.

Natural Resources Related

Over 96 percent of the land in Port Edwards is classified as natural resources-related land. The category includes numerous land uses, such as forests, wood lots, farm fields, cranberry marshes, and the like. Total acres are 23,841.97 acres. Although this total will decrease as residual activities grow, the proportion of natural resources-related lands will continue to dominate the Town for many decades. Cranberry production accounts for 65 percent of the acres as shown in Figure 15.

Ownership

There are five categories of classifying land uses. The previous section described the activity classification of the land-based classification standards. Ownership is another of the five categories and one that is worth mentioning in the Port Edwards plan. Not surprisingly, most land in Port Edwards (74.2 percent) is privately owned. According to the land use survey, 24.6 percent is under public ownership, primarily in the form of county-owned forestlands. What is unique about land ownership in Port Edwards is the mix of land that is privately owned with that which is owned by the County. Figure 16 shows the land use ownership in the Town.



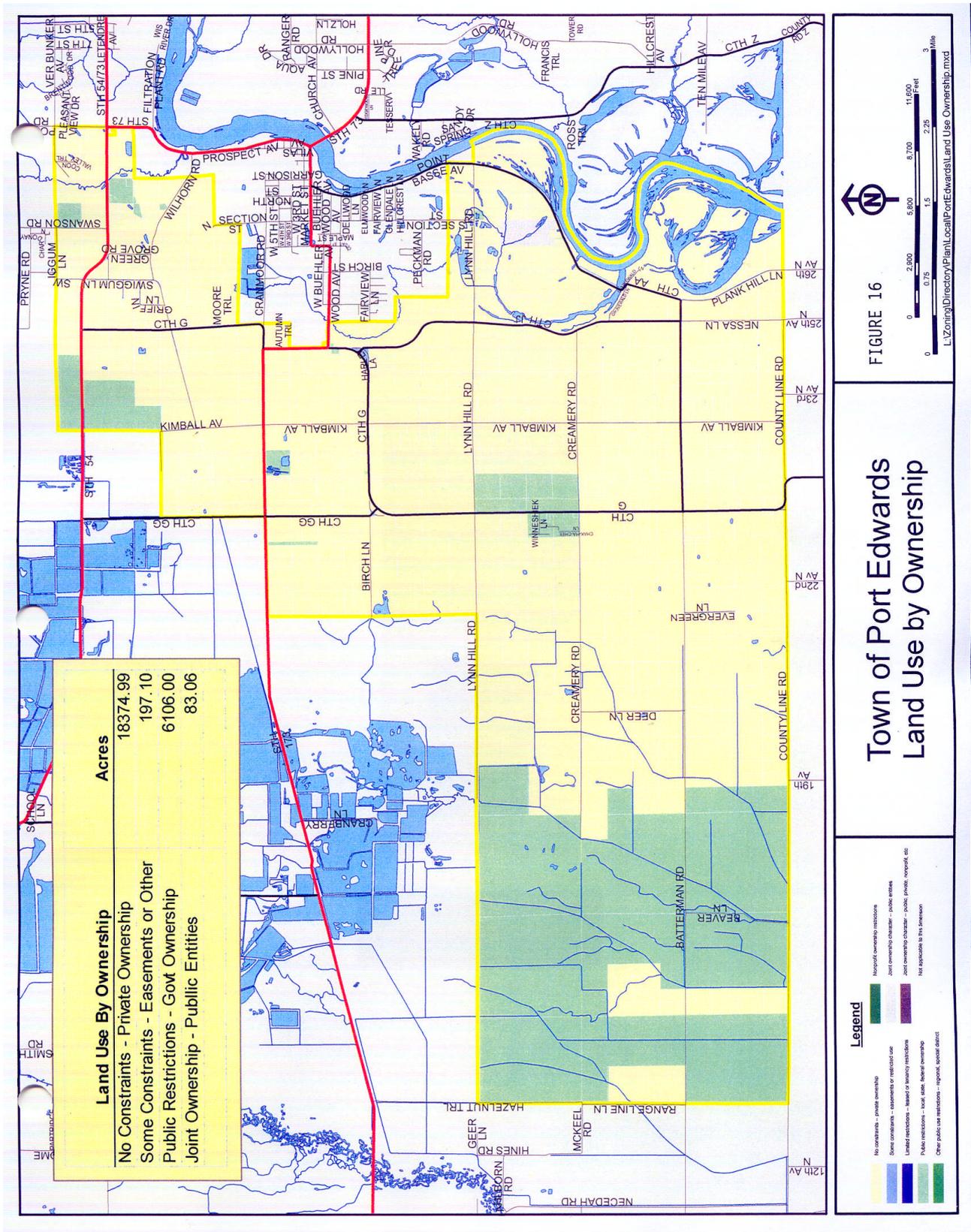


FIGURE 16

Town of Port Edwards Land Use by Ownership



Legend

- No constraints - private ownership
- Some constraints - easements or restricted use
- Limited restrictions - local state, federal ownership
- Other public use restrictions - regional, special district
- Nonprofit ownership restrictions
- Joint ownership character - public, private, nonprofit, etc. Not applicable to this plan.

Land Use Trends & Projections

The previous section shows land uses in Port Edwards as classified today. A comprehensive land use analysis was completed by Wood County in 1972 and updated in 1979. Land use coding techniques have changed since those studies, and technology now allows greater accuracy in determining land uses. A comparison of current information with that of the earlier years, coupled with data on the preceding maps and charts, can help document any trends in land use changes. Housing data, presented earlier, can also be used to determine any trends in development and land use trends in Town of Port Edwards.

Future Land Use Plan

The limitations to dwelling units (figure 6), floodplain (figure 7), Wisconsin DNR wetland inventory (figure 8), and prime farmland (figure 4), maps can be used to plan future town development.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

Plan Adoption

The first step toward implementation of the comprehensive plan is adoption of the plan by the Town Board. Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 provides specific procedures that are necessary to adopt the plan. As allowed by statute, the Port Edwards Town Board has delegated the responsibility of preparing and maintaining the comprehensive plan to the Township of Port Edwards Comprehensive Planning Committee. Once the plan has been completed, the Plan Committee must adopt a resolution by a majority vote of the entire committee before sending the plan to the Town Board for adoption.⁶ The comprehensive plan does not take effect until Town Board enacts an ordinance that adopts the plan and that ordinance cannot be adopted unless the plan contains all of the elements specified by the comprehensive planning statute.⁷ At a minimum, a class 1 public notice is required to be published at least 30 days before the hearing is held.⁸ Once adopted and no later than January 1, 2010, any program or action of the Town Board that affects land use shall be consistent with the comprehensive plan.⁹ This statutory requirement will primarily impact the Town's zoning ordinance and any other land use-related ordinance or program that they may adopt.

The following paragraphs provide information about the options that are allowed under Wisconsin law to implement a comprehensive plan at the town level.

Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance is the most common land use regulatory instrument that is used in rural Wisconsin communities. The Town of Port Edwards has adopted village powers under Wisconsin Statute 60.22 and, therefore, adopts its comprehensive plan under s. 62.23, Wis. Stats. Under that statute, zoning "regulations shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan..."¹⁰ The contents of a comprehensive plan are defined in the new planning legislation, Wisconsin Statute 66.1001. The relationship between the plan and the zoning ordinance is easy to understand if one considers that the plan identifies a pattern of desired land use development and the zoning ordinance specifies the range of conditions of use that can occur on parcels of land pursuant to the plan. In this relationship, the zoning ordinance is clearly a tool to implement the land use recommendations of the general plan, and in Wisconsin, it is a statutory requirement.

An effective and manageable planning tool, zoning offers many possibilities for confronting the issues presented in this comprehensive plan. Natural conditions such as geology or geography are very difficult, if not impossible, for man to alter to the advantage of both. Zoning is an acceptable solution because of the nature of the land. Fitting compatible uses with suitable natural conditions saves expense for the landowner or homeowner as well as protects natural conditions.

⁶ Chapter 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, 1999-2000, pg. 1706.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Chapter 62.23 (7) (c), Wisconsin Statutes, 1999-2000, pg. 1581.

Zoning typically creates different zones, or districts, for various categories. Each district has some clearly permitted uses and other uses requiring approval of a zoning board for specific site proposals. Other uses are prohibited. Flexibility can be built into the zoning ordinance to allow for some variance in land use rules. This is important because the unique characteristics of some lands preclude them from being categorized to be used the same as other lands in a specific zoning district. For example, odd-shaped lots may preclude a parcel from meeting lot line setbacks, while the lot may, in fact, contain adequate area for development.

Land Division

As a comprehensive plan implementation tool, land division regulations attempt to minimize the creation of lots that fail to satisfy zoning or sanitary ordinances.