

PREFACE

The Town of Madge is influenced by its rural and recreational character, emphasized by its forest and water resources. While still maintaining large tracts of land in agricultural or forest use, concerns regarding continued residential development and the projected increase in population prompted the town to embark on the development of a local planning process. This planning process reviews past changes in the landscape and to project future changes.

The town has experienced mainly residential development, and this development is projected to continue into the future, dividing the rural landscape and potentially creating negative impacts to the natural resources and recreational character. Few commercial businesses are located in the town, largely due to the town’s close proximity to the communities of Rice Lake, Spooner, Shell Lake, Hayward, and Stone Lake.

The town’s population has been on the increase since 1970. The decade from 1990-2000 saw the population rise from 357 persons to 454 persons, an increase of 27.1 percent. Projections over the next 20 years continue to identify a population increase. The increase in population results in the addition of housing units and increased land use activity.

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The *Town of Madge Comprehensive Plan* is intended to assist local officials and residents make future land use decisions. The plan will also assist with development and management issues by addressing short-range and long-range concerns regarding growth, development, and preservation of the community. Developing a comprehensive plan can assist in:

- identifying areas appropriate for development and preservation;
- recommending types of land use for specific areas;
- identifying needed transportation and community facilities that will serve existing and future residents;
- directing housing and other investments to areas that can best serve the community; and
- providing detailed objectives and actions to implement the overall plan goals.

This *Comprehensive Plan* has been prepared under the Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning legislation contained in Wisconsin Statute 66.1001. The plan is organized into nine chapters or elements (issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; natural, agricultural, and cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation; land use, and implementation) each addressing one element specified under the law.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In 2000, the Town of Madge participated in a multi-jurisdictional application to the State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Grant Program seeking funds to assist in the development of a local comprehensive plan. Upon being awarded state funding, the town and 16 other governmental jurisdictions embarked on a coordinated planning process with adjoining towns. Regional and individual town meetings assisted in plan development and ensured a coordinated process.

To gather community input, a community planning survey that was mailed to all property owners in January 2002. The survey included questions to gather basic demographic data, to ascertain residents' assessment of the current situation in the town, and to obtain opinions regarding the town's future. Nearly 40 percent of the planning surveys were returned and used by the planning committee in the overall development of the comprehensive plan. Results of the survey are included in the appendix.

The planning committee developed a list of issues and opportunities confronting the community and identified the town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). These processes were helpful in establishing a baseline for developing the comprehensive plan.

Wisconsin's State Statute 66.1001 requires municipalities to adopt written procedures that are designed to foster a wide range of public participation throughout the planning process. The main goal of the public participation plan is to make all citizens of the community aware of the plans progress and to offer the public opportunities to make suggestions or comments during the planning process. The Town of Madge adopted a public participation plan for use in the overall development of the Town of Madge Comprehensive Plan on November 13, 2002.

Throughout the planning process, the public was afforded several opportunities to participate directly in the development of the comprehensive plan. Meetings of the community planning committee were posted and public members attending all planning related meetings were afforded an opportunity to speak and participate jointly with the committee in plan review and development. Upon completion of the draft comprehensive plan, the planning committee recommended the plan to the town board. The town board is expected to submit the draft plan to a planning commission for review and recommendation to the town board.

The recommended draft comprehensive plan was circulated to all adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions and others required to receive the plan and made available to the public via hard copy and Internet. A public hearing will be held on the comprehensive plan, again affording an opportunity for public comment.