

LAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Town of Lessor sits amid a diverse landscape of farms, woodlands and scattered site residential development as well as wetland and floodplain areas. The Town of Lessor also contains two distinct unincorporated communities, Landstad and Briarton. The town is concerned about the impact the widening of STH 29 may have. The Town of Lessor is attempting to plan for the future growth of the town by preparing a land management plan. The planning process has been guided by the results of the town survey.

The land management strategy is designed to help town officials in making land use and zoning decisions. The purpose of the land management strategy is to preserve and enhance the overall quality of life within the town. This strategy utilizes physical characteristics of the land to guide where development should occur but also recognizes the significance of highways and other infrastructure.

VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Lessor is a place where neighbors still trust and count upon each other, even as they respect individual rights. It is a place where families can have "space" for living, but without having too many homes spread over the landscape. Lessor has a quieter, slower pace of life -- a tranquil lifestyle that lends itself to relaxation. Townspeople have fast and easy access to larger communities for services and employment, but sleep easy knowing they are in a safe and watchful community.

As citizens of Lessor, we value our quality natural environment and wish to protect its clean air and water. Land, water, and wildlife bring joy to our lives. We value learning for its own sake, and take pride in our schools. A respect for God is evident in our religious values and in commitment to our churches.

We cherish our rural lifestyle and small community atmosphere. We are the Town of Lessor.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The final phase in the planning process involves defining a vision for the town, including setting goals and objectives. The following goals and objectives are proposed:

Community Growth and Development

Provide a growth pattern which meets the needs of the Town of Lessor residents through a balanced mix of land uses. Development should be directed to minimize land use conflicts, protect the town's agricultural base, preserve rural character, and provide for a variety of land use types.

- To provide areas for new development while maintaining the integrity of the existing natural resource base.
- To protect future growth areas from incompatible development.
- To develop land use policies which accommodate new development in a logical, cost-effective manner while preserving the town's farming activities.
- To maintain the character of existing rural portions of the town.

Housing and Residential Development

Provide a variety of quality housing opportunities for all segments of Lessor's population in a way that minimizes adverse environmental impacts and provides adequate public services.

- To provide an adequate supply of single family housing that is affordable to the population of the Town of Lessor while minimizing land use conflicts.
- To regulate the amount and location of new residential development.
- To protect residential areas from non-compatible land uses.
- To provide standards for future subdivisions in order to protect environmental resources and maintain rural character of the town.

Commercial and Industrial Development

Encourage harmonious and well-planned commercial and/or industrial development which will serve the needs of the town and area residents.

- To provide standards for all new commercial and/or industrial areas so as to minimize conflict with adjacent land uses and adverse environmental impacts.
- To retain existing commercial businesses and industries.

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Natural Resources

Preserve unique and significant open space and natural resource areas of the town.

- To protect designated environmental resources (i.e. streams, woodland areas, etc.) from development.
- In accordance with state and federal law, development in identified floodplain areas (as shown on inventory maps) is discouraged.
- To monitor development occurring in proximity to wetland areas identified on inventory maps.
- To prevent concentrated manure management systems from large agricultural operations from contaminating surface and groundwater.
- To prevent all concentrated pollutants from contaminating surface and groundwater, thereby ensuring the quality of surface and groundwater.

Recreation

Provide and maintain a system of outdoor recreation areas that offer diverse recreational activities to all town residents.

- To evaluate the need for additional recreational facilities and related services.
- To consider recreational trails in the Navarino Wildlife Area and in other areas of the Town of Lessor.

Public and Community Facilities

Improve the quality of essential community services by directing orderly development of the town through planned development of public and community facilities.

- To keep the town hall and other public offices in easily accessible areas of the town.
- To provide safe and convenient access to all public buildings.
- To provide adequate solid waste disposal and recycling service.

- To provide adequate fire protection to the residents of the Town of Lessor.
- To monitor the need for any additional services and facilities as the Town of Lessor grows and changes.

Transportation

Establish a safe and efficient transportation system that is compatible with the adopted Town of Lessor Land Management Plan.

- To develop a transportation system which is harmonious with surrounding land uses.
- To provide for convenient and efficient vehicular movement near all commercial, industrial, recreational and public facility locations.
- To provide and maintain aesthetically pleasing transportation corridors.
- To determine the need for biking/walking lanes on town roads.
- To encourage future development to locate on existing roadways.
- To update construction standards for town roads.

STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following strategies and recommendations are proposed as a means of accomplishing plan goals and objectives.

Community Growth and Development

The Town of Lessor should preserve and protect its best and most productive farmland.

In 1997 the Town of Lessor in cooperation with Shawano County and East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) conducted a land use survey. Within the survey, town residents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the town should preserve farmland. More than half (58%) strongly agreed with preserving farmland and 28 percent agreed with this land use activity.

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Consequently to achieve this objective, it is recommended that development not related to crop production should be directed away from areas with prime agricultural soils. According to the Shawano County Farmland Preservation Plan, prime agricultural soils are defined as Class I, II and III soils. Within the areas occupied by prime agricultural soils, development unrelated to agricultural uses should be discouraged.

There are various methods available to towns for preserving these areas, which include agricultural zoning, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights and conservation easements. The Town of Lessor should evaluate these different alternatives to determine the best method to use. Several of these methods are presented in Appendix C.

The Town of Lessor should restrict development of unsuitable areas.

Wetlands and floodplains are examples of areas where development is limited by local governments as well as state and federal agencies. However, other areas which are not presently regulated may be poor development sites. These areas may be unsuitable for on-site waste disposal systems or have characteristics which are unfavorable for building construction.

The Town of Lessor should establish cooperative agreements with all adjacent communities.

The majority of the survey respondents rated cooperation with other towns when making land use decisions as highly and moderately important. Development which occurs on the fringe of a community has an impact (positive or negative) on the adjacent community. Consequently, the Town of Lessor should be communicating with adjacent communities to minimize land use conflicts along common boundaries. The necessary first step is for the Town of Lessor to establish cooperative agreements with the adjacent communities.

Housing and Residential Development

Residential development should be encouraged in areas easily served by existing infrastructure.

Government at all levels, utilities, and other interests have made investments in the existing infrastructure which includes highways, local streets, electric and natural gas distribution, and other facilities needed to serve the population base. Development should be directed to areas where these services are presently available or are easily extended.

In the short-term, residential growth should be encouraged to in-fill existing developable lots.

It is in the town's best interest for development to occur on its vacant lots within existing subdivisions. Development should occur in areas where streets and utilities are already in place. Vacant lots within existing subdivisions are examples of areas to be developed.

New single family residential development should be encouraged in areas where services can be extended in a cost-effective manner and where residential uses are compatible with adjoining land uses.

New residential development proposals, when presented to the town board, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. New residential should be located in areas that are easily served by existing infrastructure, compatible with adjoining land uses, and where soils are suitable for on-site waste disposal system, and for building sites. Additionally, residential development should be discouraged in areas identified as prime agricultural soils.

New single family residential development should be encouraged to occur in subdivisions.

Subdivision development is more compact and orderly than scattered single lot development. Services can be provided more efficiently and cost-effectively to development clusters. Additionally, single lot development has much broader peripheral land use impacts, particularly if the lots are located adjacent to actively farmed areas where noise, odors, and other aspects of farm operations can conflict with residential uses.

New residential subdivisions should be encouraged to incorporate the conservation subdivision design concept.

Many survey responses noted the importance of the rural, "small town" atmosphere within Lessor. In order to accommodate residential development and also maintain the rural atmosphere, it is recommended that the town encourage all new residential subdivisions to incorporate a concept known as "conservation subdivision design." This concept involves the designation of half or more of the buildable land area in the proposed subdivision as undivided, permanent open space and the allowance for smaller residential lots than is normally required under existing zoning. A more in-depth explanation of this concept is included in Appendix D.

A density package with open space provisions should be incorporated into a Town Land Division Ordinance to accommodate higher density development.

Although minimum lot sizes would need to be maintained, higher densities than those prescribed in a town land division ordinance would be permitted through the provision of clustered development and common open space. A local ordinance would put the majority of the review at the town level. The town could assure the physical layout of the lots into clusters, setting structures back from sensitive areas, protecting the rural character of the town, and achieving the preservation of open space in perpetuity. Development along existing roads would be difficult to cluster, but should follow the recommendations for two acre parcels discussed below.

The use of holding tanks for new residential construction should be prohibited in the Town of Lessor by future ordinance (this would not include existing lots of record or replacement systems).

Holding tanks enable the development of building sites which are marginally developable. Development of such sites often leads to long term costs to correct structural problems, environmental contamination or site deficiencies such as poor drainage. Unlike conventional septic or mound systems which do treat the wastewater before allowing it to seep into the ground, holding tanks are not considered a "wastewater treatment system." Holding tanks do not treat household wastewater. They only serve as storage. The wastewater must be regularly pumped out and sent to treatment facilities.

High operating costs for collecting, transporting and treating holding tank effluent induce some holding tank owners to improperly dispose of wastes, threatening surface and groundwater used by themselves and their neighbors. A substantial maintenance program must be followed by users to ensure no leaks exist in the tank and the holding capacities are stable. No real "policing" of the owners' maintenance exists, making protection of environmentally sensitive areas difficult.

New residential development should be encouraged to locate on existing town roads.

The Town of Lessor has a limited budget and already has a significant investment in the existing infrastructure, specifically, town roads. It is in the town's best interest to encourage new residential development to locate on the existing town roads.

Outside of the unincorporated communities, new single family lot residential development will be required to locate on two acre parcels or larger.

Currently, the Shawano County Zoning Ordinance allows single lot residential development to occur in the general agriculture zoned areas on one acre parcels. In order to protect prime farmland and environmental resources, stricter controls should be established for the cropland and undeveloped areas outside the unincorporated community of Landstad and Briarton.

Consequently, single lot residential development will be required to locate on parcels with a minimum lot size of 2.0 acres. Additionally, new residential development will be required to locate on existing public roads. The required minimum ~~lot width~~ frontage will be 290 feet, and the principal residence should be required to locate within the first 290 feet of the right-of way of existing roads. For lots greater than 35 acres, the minimum ~~lot width~~ frontage should remain at 290 feet, but those lots would not be subject to a maximum setback from the road right-of-way. If only four lots are proposed for residential development along a road within a forty acre parcel, then the town may consider a variance with a smaller minimum frontage.

These standards will help control piecemeal and scattered single lot development which strains services. The areas within which this type of development should be allowed are the cropland/undeveloped areas recommended on the land use plan map.

Commercial and Industrial Development

The town should direct commercial development to areas with easy access to the state highway network.

Areas should be designated for future commercial land uses to provide suitable business sites for prospective businesses. Future commercial development should be located where there is easy access to STH 29, STH 47, and STH 156. However,

individual commercial sites should not be allowed to randomly locate along state highways. Appropriate areas for commercial development are identified on the Land Use Plan Map.

The Town of Lessor should set standards for potential commercial sites.

The Town of Lessor is primarily a rural community. However, smaller-scale commercial enterprises may want to locate within the town's boundaries. To ensure that this commercial development blends in with the rural landscape and to provide higher quality commercial development, the following standards have been proposed:

Landscaping requirements

In front of the primary building, landscaping (grass, shrubs, trees or other suitable materials) should be provided which blends in with the existing adjacent land uses. All plant materials shall be maintained in a living and growing condition so as to present a healthy, neat and orderly appearance. The area shall be kept free of refuse and debris. All parking areas shall be paved.

Architectural control

Complete architectural design must be given to all facades of all buildings with all side and rear elevations being given architectural treatment compatible with the front elevation for the building. Any portions of the building facing a road or residentially zoned area shall be finished in an attractive manner in keeping with the accepted standards used for the type of building. All buildings shall be of masonry or brick construction, stone, wood frame, enameled steel or equivalent.

Any outdoor trash storage areas shall be maintained within the rear and side yard required setbacks. The area shall be screened from view from the road and adjoining properties with a solid fencing to provide a suitable vision screen. The minimum height of the fence shall be six (6) feet.

Access

The Town of Lessor should adopt a driveway spacing standard for commercial development of 600 feet on all town roads and encourage the use of shared driveways. Regulating the minimum spacing of driveways reduces frequency of conflict by separating adjacent conflict areas and limiting the number of conflict

points on any length of road. This helps maintain the flow of traffic on a roadway. It also helps reduce the severity of accidents by providing more deceleration distance and perception time for motorists.

Natural Resources

All streams, creeks and drainageways should be buffered from any development or land use change 75 feet or more on either side of the water body.

Easements or restrictive deeds should be placed on the areas along all water bodies, including lakes, streams, creeks and drainageways. These are areas which often contain unique plant and wildlife and should be protected from development.

Buffering these areas will also help stormwater management efforts by slowing the rate of run-off entering the streams which aids in flood prevention, reduces sedimentation of water bodies, and filters nutrients entering the water.

New single family residential development should be discouraged in woodland areas.

In the town's land use survey, almost all of the respondents agreed with forest conservation. More than half (52%) strongly agreed with the promotion of this land use activity, and 39 percent agreed with it. As a result, development should be discouraged in these areas. However, if a property owner can demonstrate that the integrity of the woodland will remain intact, he/she will be allowed to build on a woodlot.

Recreation

An open space and recreation plan should be prepared to identify needed park and open space improvements.

The survey asked Lessor residents about promoting the enhancement of existing and future parks and open space. Forty percent of the respondents gave this land use strategy a high rating followed by another 40 percent who ranked it of medium importance. In order to properly plan for and develop additional facilities or improve existing facilities, an outdoor recreation plan should be prepared. This plan would help the town identify its recreational needs. It would also be used as a guide when making decisions concerning park improvements. Additionally, an outdoor recreation plan would also identify the existing recreational resources, make plan recommendations and propose an action program which would identify possible park development.

An outdoor recreation plan needs to be updated every five years to remain a useful tool as well as to maintain eligibility to participate in WDNR administered funding programs. East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission prepares these plans at no cost under its local assistance program.

Transportation

The Town of Lessor should continue to maintain an inventory of the condition of town roads so that timely improvements can be undertaken.

The PASERWARE pavement management system (PMS) has been developed and improved over the years by the Transportation Information Center (TIC) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in cooperation with WisDOT and others. East Central recommends that all local governments adopt a pavement management system of one form or another. Such an inventory provides the basis for developing a planned maintenance and reconstruction program. Setting up this type of program will help the town to track the timely improvements needed. Prompt maintenance can significantly reduce long-term costs for road repair and improvement. Additionally, budgeting for road improvements over an extended period can dampen annual fluctuations in town tax rates.

East Central offers technical assistance in the initiation of the state sponsored PASER/PASERWARE system as part of its transportation program. The Commission will provide software, including computerized local road segment files, on-site technical support and limited software training at no charge. The collection and integration of data sets will provide a more detailed needs assessment for current and future transportation funding.

Public and Community Facilities

The town should adopt a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in order to better manage town finances and plan ahead for improvements needed in the town.

A CIP will help town officials to look toward the community's future needs, remain focused on the improvement goals of the town, and stay organized regarding finances involved in the improvements. Annual updates of the CIP are also needed in order to better assess the necessary changes in the program.