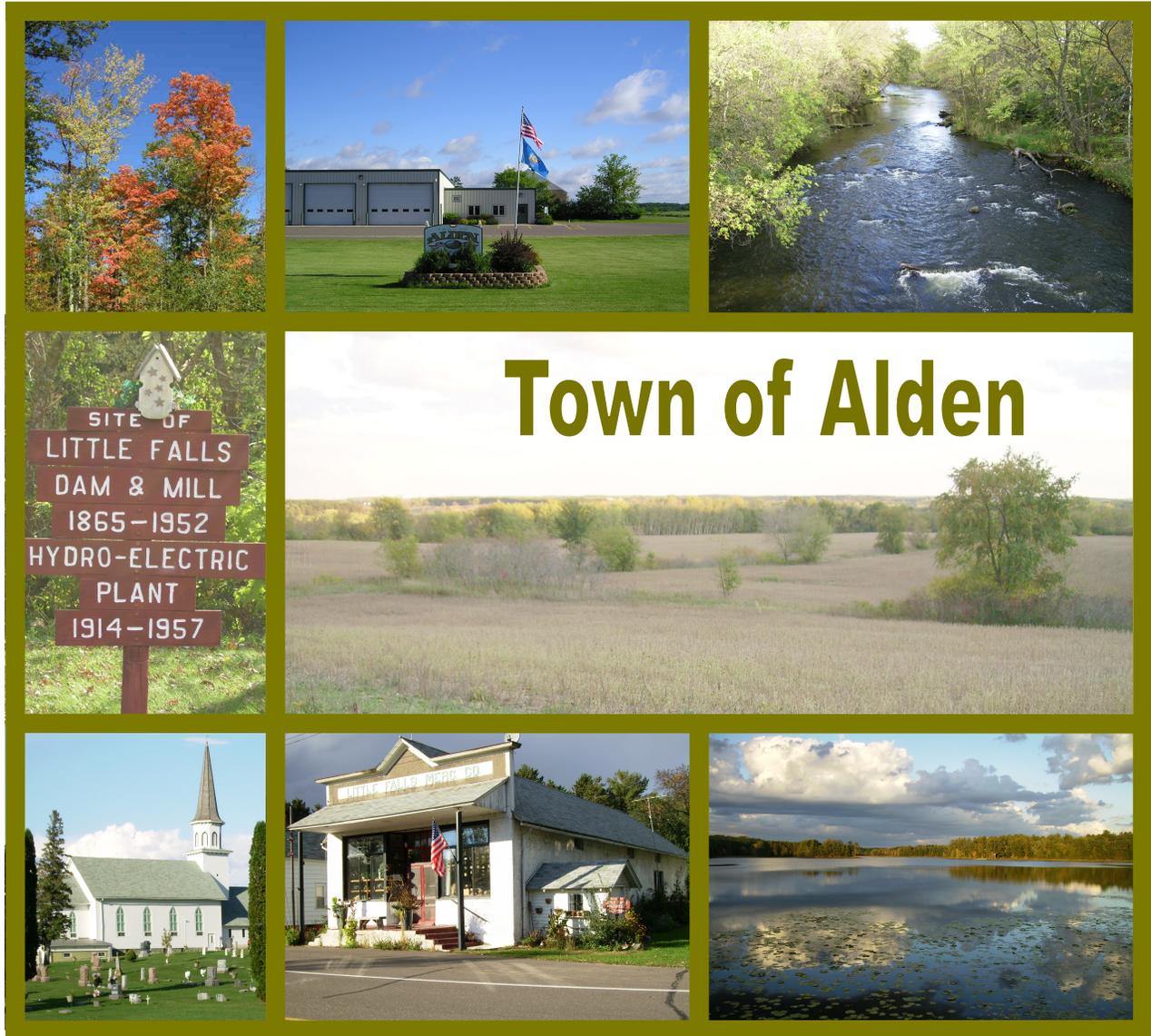


# TOWN OF ALDEN - POLK COUNTY, WISCONSIN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**JANUARY 24, 2008**

**PREPARED BY TOWN OF ALDEN PLAN COMMISSION  
WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**



Town of Alden - Polk County, Wisconsin  
Comprehensive Plan

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January 24, 2008



# TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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# TOWN OF ALDEN

Polk County, Wisconsin 54026

Office: 715-248-7859 Fax: 715-248-7966 Public Works: 715-248-3714

## RESOLUTION # 38-2008

### RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING TOWN BOARD ADOPTION OF THE "TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2008-2030"

WHEREAS, the Town of Alden has determined the need and propriety for a comprehensive plan with the general purpose of guiding, directing and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the Town, which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare, as well as, efficiency and economy in the process of development; and

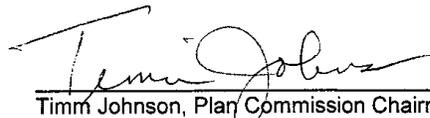
WHEREAS, the Town of Alden Plan Commission has prepared the *Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan 2008-2030* pursuant to § 66.1001 and § 62.23, Wisconsin Statutes, which contains plan documents, statistics, demographic data, maps and other materials in the nine comprehensive plan elements required by § 66.1001 (2), Wisconsin Statutes and is dated February 15, 2006; and

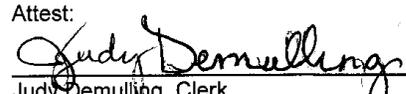
WHEREAS, the Town of Alden Plan Commission pursuant to § 66.1001 (4) (b), Wisconsin Statutes may recommend governing body adoption of the comprehensive plan by adoption of a resolution to that effect by a majority of the entire Plan Commission.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Town of Alden Plan Commission officially recommends adoption of the *Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan 2008-2030*, dated November 30, 2007, by the Town of Alden Town Board.

Adopted this 24th day of January 2008 by the Plan Commission of the Town of Alden, Polk County, Wisconsin.

ROLL CALL:	<u>6</u>	AYE
	<u>0</u>	NAY
ADOPTED ON January 24, 2008		

  
Timm Johnson, Plan Commission Chairman

Attest:  
  
Judy Demulling, Clerk

# TOWN OF ALDEN

POLK COUNTY, WISCONSIN

ORDINANCE NUMBER 21-2008

## AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Alden, Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to sections 62.23(2) and 62.23(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, the Town of Alden is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 2. The town board of the Town of Alden, Wisconsin has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every state of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by section 66.1001(4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 3. The plan commission of the Town of Alden by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of a comprehensive plan consisting of the documents entitled "TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2008-2030" dated November 30, 2007 together containing all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

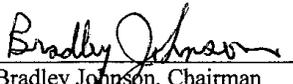
SECTION 4. The Town has held a public hearing on this ordinance, in compliance with the requirements of section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 5. The town board of the Town of Alden, Wisconsin, does, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the documents entitled "TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2008-2030", pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 6. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members-elect of the Town Board and posting as required by law.

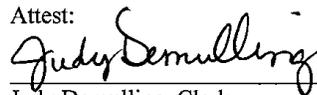
ADOPTED this 24<sup>th</sup> day of January 24, 2008.

Posted:

  
Bradley Johnson, Chairman

ROLL CALL	<u>4</u>	AYE
VOTE:	<u>0</u>	NAY

ADOPTED ON  
January 24, 2008

Attest:  
  
Judy Demulling, Clerk

# THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

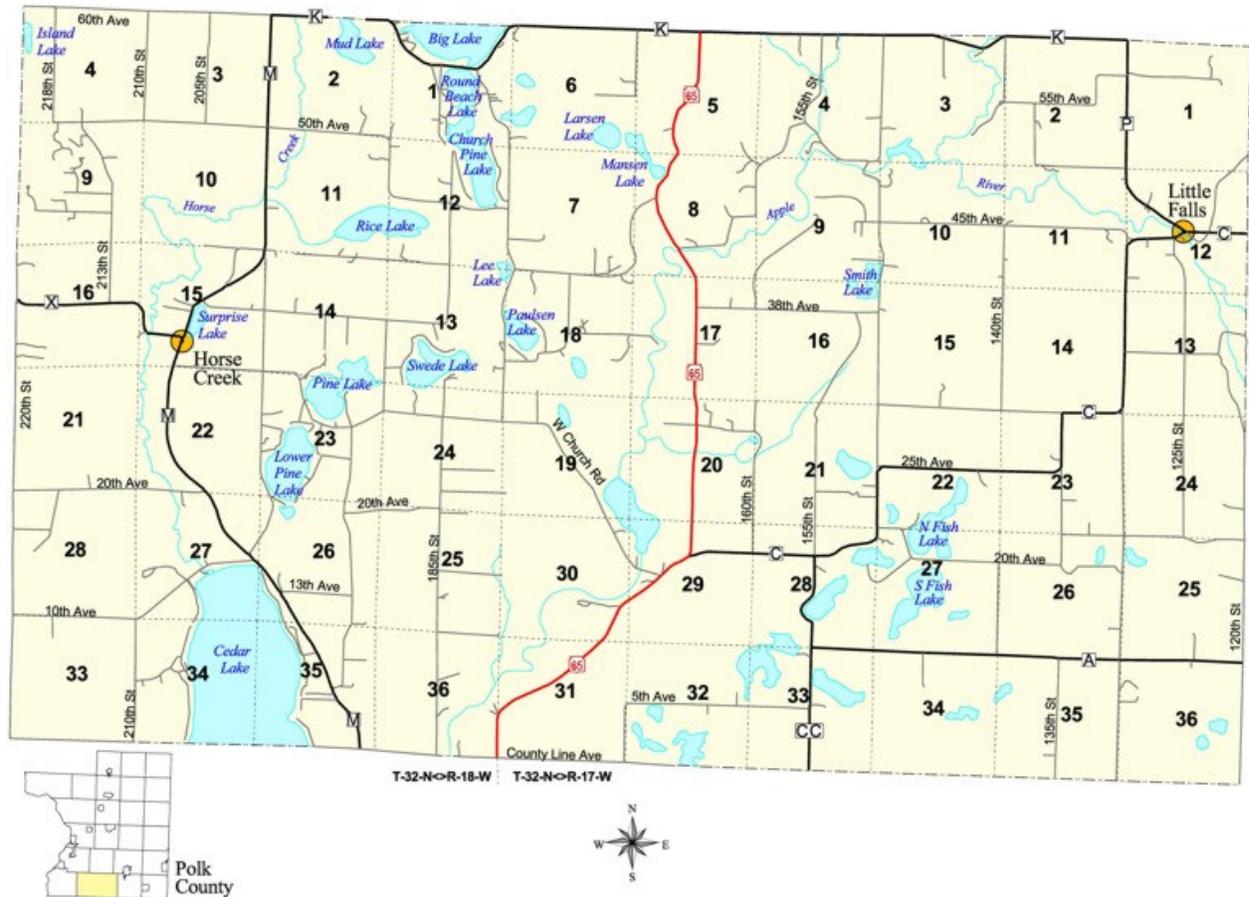
### RECOLLECTIONS OF 1876, ALDEN TOWNSHIP, BY SHERIFF V. M. BABCOCK, EXCERPTED

The geographical location of Alden Township is between the 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> degrees north of the equator and between 92 and 93 east-west meridians. It is located in the County of Polk, State of Wisconsin; and is Township 32 North, Range 17 West, and in addition, 24 sections from the east side of Township 32 North, Range 18 West.

Alden is noted for the clear and transparent lakes of clear water that are found within the township. Apple River is the principal stream. It runs through the town in a southwesterly direction on its course to the St. Croix River, and is noted for its numerous waterpowers. Apple River was called by the Indians "Potato River," on account of the existence of large quantities of ground nuts along its banks which were translated as "Apple." Cedar or Horse Creek runs in a southerly direction through the west part of the township and empties into Cedar Lake and thence into the Apple River.

From thirty to forty million feet of pine logs are cut and driven out of the Apple River each year. The soil is rich, dark colored clay, mixed with sand, and is noted for the good quality wheat, rye,

### The Town of Alden



*oats, corn and potatoes that it produces.*

*The first white settlers arrived in June 1856, and consisted of Delancy Kittle, Wm. Folsom, Charles Vassau, J. L. Bridgeman and their families. They located at a point on the Apple River called Wagon Landing and lived in their wagons until they could build log houses and shanties. Later in the same year the Rev. A. B. Peabody, Humphrey Sawyer, P.L. Gordon, Edmund Geve, Kelley Hankerson, J.C. Parslow, Philip Beal and V. M. Babcock arrived and settled in the township. In the fall of the same year J. M. Thornton and E. J. Tyler settled at Cedar Valley or Horse Creek.*

*The first town meeting was held in the house of William Folsom in the spring of 1858...*

*A temporary church organization was made during the year 1858. A permanent organization was perfected, however, on June 3 1863...The church was called St. John in the Wilderness.*

*The first school house was built at Wagon Landing in the year 1858... The first teacher was Mrs. E. K. Peabody.*

*The first frame house and barn were built by J. L. Bridgeman who also constructed the first fence.*

*The first church edifice built in the town was erected by the Norwegians. It is called First Lutheran.*

*I cannot close this brief sketch without speaking of the prehistoric mound builders and their works in the town. A little south of the house of J. L. Bridgeman are two mounds six or eight feet high and twenty feet in diameter. North of the mounds are traces of rows or beds thrown up in form of beds, with parallel lines running north and south. Also, on the flat near V. B. Kittel's house has been found many pieces or fragments of a red colored pottery ware, and without a doubt was the place where such wares were manufactured by the mound builders.*

*In 1858, when the town of Alden was organized, the population did not exceed sixty living souls. The census was taken by authority of law in 1875 by A. B. Peabody, town clerk. There were 190 heads of families (all white), and a total of 510 males and 447 females. This represented an increase of 897 since the organization of the town. With a total population last year of 957, Alden was, by 43, the most populous town in the county. The large majority of people residing in Alden at present are Norwegians or of Scandinavian descent. To the old original pioneers of Alden should be credited the present system of roads running north, south, east and west through the town; also they built the first two bridges across the Apple River.*

*The first sawmill in Alden was built by E. Gove on the Apple River at Little Falls. The first post office was established at and was called Wagon Landing, with V. M. Babcock, postmaster. Since then two others have been established in the town. One is located at Horse Creek and called Alden. The other is at Little Falls and is called by that name.*

*A large increase of population has occurred since 1868 and has been mostly Norwegian. There is not a single family of the old settlers remaining at Cedar Valley now, but newcomers are there and the settlement seems to be stimulated with courage and prosperity.*

*The first store in the town was built by V. M. Babcock at Wagon Landing. The name Wagon Landing was given by the lumbermen who first operated on Apple River. They brought their supplies on wagons to a point near J. L. Bridgeman's on Apple River, thence transferring them*

*into their boats and poling them up the river to their destination – hence the name Wagon Landing. The first settlers underwent many privations and hardships. A few of them used to take turns in going after the mail, either to Richmond or Huntingdon, once a week, until all had made “the rounds.” Then they would commence with the first name on the list again and repeat the service. We then had to go to Hudson to mill and also for our groceries. When we went out pleasure riding we took ox teams. For weeks we would live without seeing any human beings but our neighbors. Many times we would run short of the necessities of life. We often went without tea or coffee for weeks, and some of us drank wheat or rye coffee and a kind of wild tea for months. Beef and pork we scarcely ever had, but wild game was plentiful. That renowned hunter, Philip Beal, often supplied our tables with venison. We thought nothing of traveling 10, 20 or 30 miles and back again on foot during that time. We had no fences until we built them with the materials nature had supplied in a natural state. Roads were unknown and we used to travel on the trails. We had no bridges across the streams, but often waded waist deep in order to reach the opposite bank, or floated across on logs or rafts. Some of us used a coffee mill to grind corn for Johnnie cake and Indian pudding.*

*In 1862 we had a terrible Indian scare, and the entire settlement was ready to flee to a place of safety. A few cool-minded men foresaw the situation and resolved to stand their ground and protect their wives and children. The scare was a universal one and extended many miles either side of this settlement. The Rev. A. B. Peabody had an appointment for church at the house of Joseph Vassau on the Sunday after the outbreak in Minnesota, and his services turned into a war meeting. The next day we met at J. L. Bridgeman’s barn and enrolled a company of men called the Frontier Rangers; the group was about 40 strong, with V. M. Babcock as captain. We agreed on three places of rendezvous for our women and children. The company acted as minute men for the next succeeding five days, but when the alarm had subsided the company was disbanded.*

*From nine to ten-thousand acres of land are cultivated in this town, and during the past year nearly 1,200 acres of new land have been broken within the town limits.*

*If we were to travel back on the course of time to Philadelphia, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776, and view the representatives of the thirteen original States as they signed the Declaration of Independence, we should find that the white man did not live in what is now the states of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and all the other states and territories west of us to the Pacific coast. The Indian was then monarch of all he surveyed. The iron horse has taken the place of the Indian runner, and our lakes and rivers are alive with steam and sail. Our broad plains and prairies are spanned with iron rail and telegraph wire. We now export more wheat from Wisconsin and Minnesota than was raised in the thirteen colonial states. But what a change has taken place in Alden during the past 20 years! What was then a howling wilderness now blossoms as the rose, and our houses and barns are filled with our industry. We may safely conclude that twenty years hence this township will more fully develop its agricultural resources. Then numerous and unsurpassed water powers will be used for the manufacture of flour from wheat raised on our soil; then the saw mill will cut out a million feet of lumber each year. Alden will then rank more than equal with any township in Polk County.*

Excerpted from: *Alden Township*, by Sheriff V. M. Babcock, *Recollections of 1876*, Polk County’s *First Written History*, Edited by Timothy L. Ericson, The Polk County Historical Society, November 1980.

*As Polk County residents celebrated America's Centennial in 1876, the observance had special significance. America's first century had been a story of growth and progress, a story of taming the western frontier. Most of the people who lived in Polk County in 1876 had been born elsewhere – in Europe or in the Eastern United States. But along with thousands of others, they had joined the movement westward. By coming to the St. Croix Valley they had become direct participants in the American story. They knew what it meant to build a civilization in the wilderness. So it is not surprising that these pioneers used the American Centennial to record for posterity their own small contribution to the century of growth and expansion. – Timothy L. Ericson, Archivist, UW-River Falls, Introduction, Recollections of 1876, Polk County's First Written History, November, 1980.*

Little was known by Mr. Babcock at age 84 in 1876 that it would not be too long before wheat production gave way to dairying or that the timber industry would subside in the Town of Alden. However, even as he saw remarkable change in the first twenty years of the European-American settlement of the Town of Alden he would probably marvel at what has occurred since. Would he be surprised that by about 1900 all of the land that was to be in agricultural production in Alden township was, and by 1970 the amount of land in agriculture had begun to decline? That vehicular technology, the transportation system and employment opportunities would allow residents to travel 120 miles to and from work every workday when people in his time had to walk 30 miles to Hudson and back every month or two for provisions? What other changes in the Town would he marvel at? In our time, the change of the last twenty years has been staggering.

In the past, the residents of Alden didn't plan for such changes. Usually the negative impacts of change didn't really affect many people or they could be dealt with as they occurred. It really wasn't until fairly recently that the change in Alden made people think about what the impacts of change were, whether those impacts were dealt with very well, or how to address those impacts and put in place mechanisms to manage change in the town.

It was that recent consideration of the change the town faces that was the impetus for creating this comprehensive plan. The Town of Alden Plan Commission and Town Board realized that it was time to evaluate where the town has been, what it has become, and where it is likely to end up without doing anything or by attempting to shape the changes it faces. Hence, in this plan the town as a community is attempting to discover the current and potential changes that impact or could impact the town and in anticipation of that change come up with strategies or a guide to help the town deal with or manage it. In that light, it is necessary that the plan be heavily value laden. The values of town residents is well documented here in the results of Issues Generation workshop where 50 residents identified prominent values of and problems in the town. Those values were also seen in the 713 responses to the Town of Alden Community Opinion Survey.

Indeed, those community values embraced by those efforts, culminated in the Town of Alden Vision Statement, which present the dominant, overarching themes of this comprehensive plan. It is the Vision Statement that declares what the Town of Alden as a community hopes to achieve through the implementation of this comprehensive plan.

The rest of this chapter presents community socio-economic information, some relevant projections and the results of public input. Together which shall begin to tell the story of where the Town of Alden has been, what it is now, and what it hopes to be in the future.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

A review and analysis of selected demographic and economic characteristics help identify the factors that influence growth and development. These characteristics can also help determine the direction of future change and the development activities that can consequently occur.

Combined with information on land use patterns and land suitability characteristics, future development patterns can be influenced through various land use management strategies and practices that provide for development compatible with the environment and the desires of the community.

This background information includes demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist in the Town of Alden and population, household and employment forecasts that are used in the plan. The timely release of the Census 2000 information available for this plan places the City in a good position for future plan updates as a 10 year update schedule will allow the City to easily access future Census releases for use in those updates. In addition, the Census Bureau’s newly instituted *American Community Survey* will publish estimates for most of the Decennial Census parameters for the Town of Alden annually beginning in 2010.

### POPULATION

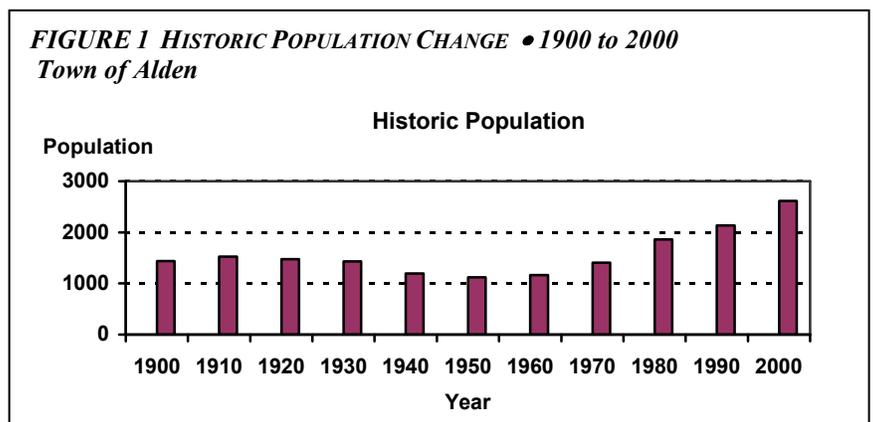
The Town of Alden experienced an overall decline in population during the first half of the Twentieth Century, gaining 82 people from 1900 to 1910 only to see a steady decline until just after World War II. The Census periods of greatest decline were the decades during the Great Depression and World War II. Since 1950 the Town has experienced steady population growth with an annual rate of change of 2.8 percent. During the 1970s the Town of Alden experienced its fastest population growth. Table 1, accompanied by Figure 1 below, shows the historic

1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2006*
1,440	1,522	1,474	1,434	1,193	1,120	1,164	1,406	1,862	2,133	2,615	2,883
--	5.7	-3.2	-2.7	-16.8	-6.1	3.9	20.8	32.4	14.6	22.6	10.3

Sources: U.S. Census, \* WiDOA estimate

population for the Town of Alden from 1900 to 2006. Based on the most recent population estimate, the Town of Alden appears to be having significant growth during the current decade with an annual rate of change of about 2 percent.

Table 2 and Figure 2 show a comparison of population growth between the Town of Alden, the



surrounding Towns, Polk and St. Croix Counties and the State of Wisconsin. It can be seen that, in general, there are similar rates of growth among many of the surrounding communities, with the Towns of Farmington and Garfield practically matching Alden's growth rate. The Towns of Black Brook, Osceola, Somerset, and Star Prairie are currently growing faster than the Town of Alden, while the Towns of Lincoln and Stanton are experiencing slower growth.

**TABLE 2**  
**COMPARATIVE POPULATION CHANGE • 1950 to 2005 Percent Change**  
**Town of Alden, Polk County, State of Wisconsin and Surrounding Communities**

	1950-1960	1960-1970	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2006*
<b>Town of Alden</b>	3.9	20.8	32.4	14.6	22.6	10.3
Town of Black Brook	-6.7	6.7	22.5	1.6	25.3	14.9
Town of Farmington	29.8	15.3	3.4	6.0	28.3	15.1
Town of Garfield	.7	4.2	31.5	9.6	30.4	14.3
Town of Lincoln	4.0	35.2	40.5	9.0	25.6	6.9
Town of Osceola	5.6	7.4	38.6	25.4	55.9	29.9
Town of Somerset	11.3	21.4	54.7	7.7	33.9	28.8
Town of Stanton	18.5	52.3	11.1	-3.8	-3.7	0.9
Town of Star Prairie	16.3	36.9	36.7	10.4	40.3	21.2
Polk County	.1	6.8	21.3	7.5	18.8	9.3
St. Croix County	11.6	14.8	39.1	16.2	25.7	23.6
State of Wisconsin	15.1	11.8	6.5	4.0	9.6	4.7

Sources: U.S. Census, \* WiDOA estimate

**FIGURE 2 COMPARATIVE DECENNIAL POPULATION CHANGE • 1950 to 2000**  
**Town of Alden, Surrounding Communities, Polk and St. Croix Counties and State of Wisconsin**

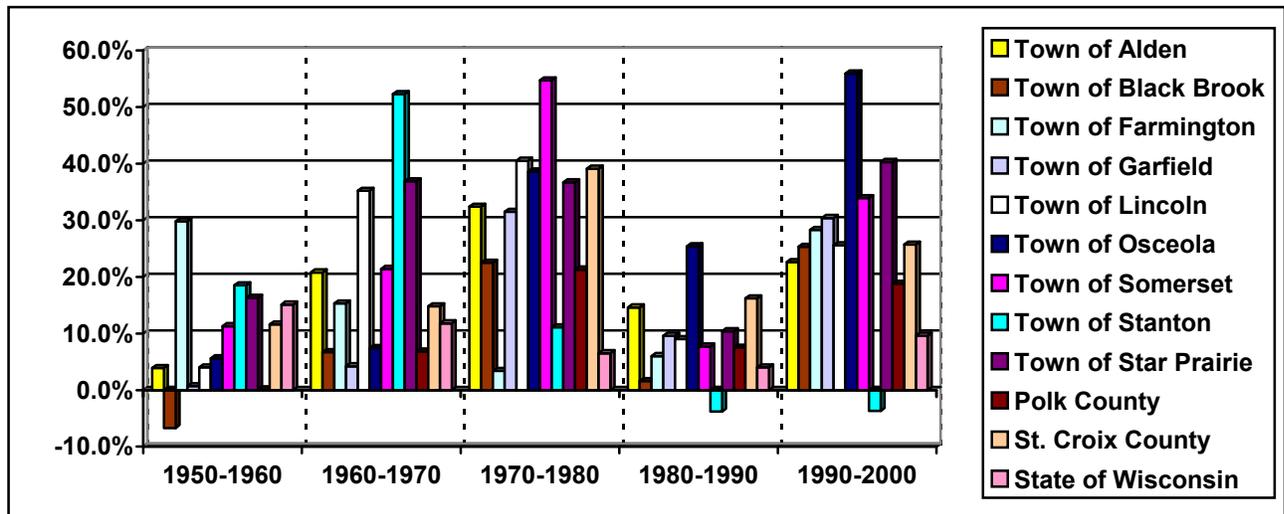


Table 3 shows the context of population for all the communities in Polk County. It is apparent that while some of the fastest growth is occurring many in the unincorporated areas of the County, there are incorporated communities that have experienced significant growth as well. Eight of the ten villages in Polk County have experienced significant growth, while the City of St. Croix Falls saw fast growth in the 1990s. The Town of Alden has seen steady moderate to fast growth since 1960. Recently many of the 24 towns in Polk County have seen significant population increases. In the 1990s, ten towns and the City of St. Croix Falls grew faster than the Town of Alden. However, Town of Alden did grow faster than 13 towns, 9 villages and one city

and Polk County as a whole. Hence, the Town of Alden has recently experienced slightly above average growth when compared to the county as a whole.

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>			
						<i>1960-70</i>	<i>1970-80</i>	<i>1980-90</i>	<i>1990-00</i>
<b>Towns:</b>									
<b>Alden</b>	<b>1,164</b>	<b>1,406</b>	<b>1,862</b>	<b>2,133</b>	<b>2,615</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>22.6</b>
Apple River	567	544	819	815	1,067	20.8	50.6	-0.5	30.9
Balsam Lake	565	631	960	1,067	1,384	11.7	52.1	11.1	29.7
Beaver	661	641	755	663	753	-3.0	17.8	-12.2	13.6
Black Brook	726	775	949	964	1,208	6.7	22.5	1.6	25.3
Bone Lake	466	416	466	503	710	-10.7	12.0	7.9	41.2
Clam Falls	549	522	614	596	547	-4.9	17.6	-2.9	-8.2
Clayton	710	713	789	780	912	0.4	10.7	-1.1	16.9
Clear Lake	774	793	777	744	800	2.5	-2.0	-4.2	7.5
Eureka	1,019	1,043	1,135	1,201	1,338	2.4	8.8	5.8	11.4
Farmington	1,003	1,156	1,195	1,267	1,625	15.3	3.4	6.0	28.3
Garfield	737	768	1,010	1,107	1,443	4.2	31.5	9.6	30.4
Georgetown	491	526	746	780	1,004	7.1	41.8	4.6	28.7
Johnstown	381	328	401	410	520	-13.9	22.3	2.2	26.8
Laketown	784	725	909	921	918	-7.5	25.4	1.3	-0.3
Lincoln	886	1,198	1,683	1,835	2,304	35.2	40.5	9.0	25.6
Lorain	347	275	280	299	328	-20.7	1.8	6.8	9.7
Luck	623	663	863	880	881	6.4	30.2	2.0	0.1
McKinley	353	297	337	327	328	-15.9	13.5	-3.0	0.3
Milltown	692	691	943	949	1,146	-0.1	36.5	0.6	21.1
Osceola	716	769	1,066	1,337	2,085	7.4	38.6	25.4	55.9
St. Croix Falls	677	783	873	1,034	1,119	15.7	11.5	18.4	8.2
Sterling	396	379	497	591	724	-4.3	31.1	18.9	22.5
West Sweden	765	691	718	682	731	-9.7	3.9	-5.0	7.2
<b>Villages:</b>									
Balsam Lake	541	648	749	792	950	19.8	15.6	5.7	19.9
Centuria	551	632	711	790	865	14.7	12.5	11.1	9.5
Clayton	324	306	425	450	507	-5.6	38.9	5.9	12.7
Clear Lake	724	721	899	932	1,051	-0.4	24.7	3.7	12.8
Dresser	498	533	670	614	732	7.0	25.7	-8.4	19.2
Frederic	857	908	1,039	1,124	1,262	6.0	14.4	8.2	12.3
Luck	853	848	997	1,022	1,210	-0.6	17.6	2.5	18.4
Milltown	608	634	732	786	888	4.3	15.5	7.4	13.0
Osceola	942	1,152	1,581	2,075	2,421	22.3	37.2	31.2	16.7
Turtle Lake	--	--	--	6	65	--	--	6000.0	983.3
<b>Cities:</b>									
Amery	1,769	2,126	2,404	2,657	2,845	20.2	13.1	10.5	7.1
St. Croix Falls	1,249	1,425	1,497	1,640	2,033	14.1	5.1	9.6	24.0
<b>POLK COUNTY</b>	<b>24,968</b>	<b>26,666</b>	<b>32,351</b>	<b>34,773</b>	<b>41,319</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>18.8</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## COMPONENTS OF THE POPULATION

There are many components of the population that can tell us about the characteristics of an area. The most basic characteristic of population change is the breakdown of that change into the natural increase and net migration. Natural increase is births minus deaths while net migration measures in-migration minus out-migration. These measures give a clearer picture of how population change is occurring.

The natural increase and net migration between 1990 and 2000 for Polk County are shown in Table 4. This information was not readily available for small area geography. It is apparent that there was heavy in-migration in the 1970s and 1990s. Also, in the 1990s the natural increase in population accounted for very little of the county's population change. In-migration is likely to be a significant component of the Town of Alden's population growth during these periods as well.

	<b>1950 to 1960</b>	<b>1960 to 1970</b>	<b>1970 to 1980</b>	<b>1980 to 1990</b>	<b>1990 to 2000</b>
Total Population, end of period	24,968	26,666	32,351	34,773	41,319
Births	5,382	4,603	4,481	5,150	4,565
Deaths	2,519	2,739	3,183	3,424	3,782
Total Natural Increase	2,863	1,864	1,298	1,726	783
Natural Increase Rate*	11.5%	7.0%	4.0%	5.0%	1.9%
Net Migration	-2,839	-166	4,387	696	5,763
Net Migration Rate*	-11.4%	-0.6%	13.6%	2.0%	13.9%
Total Population Change	24	1,698	5,685	2,422	6,546
Percent Population Change	0.1%	6.8%	21.3%	7.5%	18.8%

\*NOTE: Calculated as a percent of the County's total population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Age and sex distribution can give us insights into the implications of a changing population. Table 5 shows the age and sex characteristics for the Town of Alden between 1980 and 2000. The distribution of males and females has been quite stable at about 52% males and 48% females. There have not been any major spikes in any age-sex cohort. On the whole, the age-sex make up of the Town of Alden population has been relatively stable.

Table 6 reveals only the age component of the population. Working age people 25 to 54 years old increased significantly over the past 20 years, especially older working age people 45 to 54 years old. During the 1990s there was a significant increase in residents 55 to 64 years old. As the 45 to 64 years of age cohort progresses in age it could produce a significant amount of retirement age people in the future. The aging of the Town of Alden's population is reflected in the group 75 years of age and older, which increased by 94 percent from 1980 to 2000. Together with the dramatic increases in people 45 to 64 years old the median age has increased eleven years over the 20-year period, from 27.2 to 38.4 years of age. This most likely is attributed to the aging of the resident population and the in-migration of older working people and retirees.

Another component of the population that can give an indication of a changing population is race. Historically, the Town of Alden has been a racially homogeneous community. This is due to the European settlement of the area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries and in-migration of similar people from the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Indeed, as America becomes more diverse racially the Town of Alden continues to lack racial diversity. There has been a small change, but because of low absolute numbers to begin with these increases appear significant. The total number of minorities only increased by 13 individuals between 1980 and 2000. This is something that town leaders and residents need to be sensitive to so that all people in the Town feel welcome to participate in community life.

<b>TABLE 5</b>								
<b>POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX • 1980, 1990 and 2000</b>								
<b>Town of Alden</b>								
<b>1980</b>								
<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>%Male</b>	<b>%Female</b>
0-4	77	8.0	102	11.4	179	9.6	43.0	57.0
5-17	255	26.3	239	26.7	494	26.5	51.6	48.4
18-24	103	10.6	85	9.5	188	10.1	54.8	45.2
25-44	286	29.5	272	30.4	558	30.0	51.3	48.7
45-54	77	8.0	62	6.9	139	7.5	55.4	44.6
55-64	80	8.3	66	7.4	146	7.8	54.8	45.2
65-74	59	6.1	48	5.4	107	5.7	55.1	44.9
75-84	20	2.1	15	1.7	35	1.9	57.1	42.9
85+	11	1.1	5	0.6	16	0.9	68.8	31.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,862</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>48.0</b>
Median Age	28.1		26.3		27.2			
<b>1990</b>								
<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>%Male</b>	<b>%Female</b>
0-4	78	7.1	91	8.8	169	7.9	46.2	53.8
5-17	250	22.6	246	23.9	496	23.3	50.4	49.6
18-24	88	8.0	77	7.5	165	7.7	53.3	46.7
25-44	386	35.0	345	33.5	731	34.3	52.8	47.2
45-54	129	11.7	118	11.5	247	11.6	52.2	47.8
55-64	73	6.6	70	6.8	143	6.7	51.0	49.0
65-74	63	5.7	61	5.9	124	5.8	50.8	49.2
75-84	32	2.9	18	1.7	50	2.3	64.0	36.0
85+	5	0.5	3	0.3	8	0.4	62.5	37.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,133</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>48.2</b>
Median Age	n/a		n/a		32.2			
<b>2000</b>								
<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>%Male</b>	<b>%Female</b>
0-4	74	5.5	84	6.7	158	6.0	46.8	53.2
5-17	269	19.8	278	22.1	547	20.9	49.2	50.8
18-24	101	7.4	64	5.1	165	6.3	61.2	38.8
25-44	409	30.1	386	30.7	795	30.4	51.4	48.6
45-54	238	17.5	203	16.1	441	16.9	54.0	46.0
55-64	145	10.7	134	10.7	279	10.7	52.0	48.0
65-74	70	5.2	61	4.8	131	5.0	53.4	46.6
75-84	35	2.6	41	3.3	76	2.9	46.1	53.9
85+	16	1.2	7	0.6	23	0.9	69.6	30.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,258</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,615</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>48.1</b>
Median Age	38.7		38.1		38.4			

Source: U.S. Census

Table 7 shows population by race for the Town of Alden from 1980 to 2000, while Table 8 presents a breakdown of the City's population by Hispanic origin. Persons of Hispanic origin have increased between 1980 and 2000. However, because of low absolute numbers, it is the low numbers of Hispanics that is significant, not necessarily any increases in this population.

**TABLE 6**  
**POPULATION BY AGE • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

Age	1980	1990	2000	1980-90 Change		1990-00 Change	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-4	179	169	158	-10	-5.6	-11	-6.5
5-17	494	496	547	2	0.4	51	10.3
18-24	188	165	165	-23	-12.2	0	0.0
25-44	558	731	795	173	31.0	64	8.8
45-54	139	247	441	108	77.7	194	78.5
55-64	146	143	279	-3	-2.1	136	95.1
65-74	107	124	131	17	15.9	7	5.6
75-84	35	50	76	15	42.9	26	52.0
85+	16	8	23	-8	-50.0	15	187.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,862</b>	<b>2,133</b>	<b>2,615</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>22.6</b>
Median Age	27.2	32.2	38.4	5.0	18.4	6.2	19.3

Source: U.S. Census

**TABLE 7**  
**POPULATION BY RACE • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

Race	1980	1990	2000	1980-90 Change		1990-00 Change	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	1,840	2,132	2,580	292	15.7	448	21.0
Black	0	0	2	0	0.0	2	2000.0
American Indian	7	1	8	-6	-85.7	7	700.0
Chinese	1	0	1	-1	-100.0	1	1000.0
Filipino	6	0	0	-6	-100.0	0	0.0
Korean	4	0	3	-4	-100.0	3	3000.0
Asian Indian	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Japanese	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Vietnamese	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other Asian	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Samoan	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other race	4	0	9	-4	-100.0	9	9000.0
Two or more races	*	*	12	*	*	12	*

Source: U.S. Census, \* Two or more races not collected before 2000

**TABLE 8**  
**POPULATION BY HISPANIC ORIGIN • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

Race	1980	1990	2000	1980-90 Change		1990-00 Change	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mexican	2	3	7	1	50.0	4	133.3
Puerto Rico	0	0	2	0	0.0	2	2000.0
Other	0	0	8	0	0.0	8	8000.0

Source: U.S. Census

Increasing numbers of minorities and Hispanics will have the effect of slowly making the Town of Alden a more diverse community, providing opportunities for cultural exchanges not previously available. But it appears this change is going to be a slow one.

## EDUCATION

The Decennial Census provides information on the educational attainment levels of persons 25 years old and older, which are shown in Table 9. It should be no surprise with the large investments in education and the increasing requirement for technical or post-secondary degrees for job placement that people are obtaining higher levels of education than in the past. However, the residents of the Town of Alden have historically had significant numbers of people who have attained high school or higher educational levels. Since 1980, more Town of Alden residents have pursued an education past high school. Indeed, in 2000, almost 54 percent of Town of Alden residents 25 years or older had attended a post secondary institution, with about 30 percent achieving a degree. In 1980, two-thirds of residents had attained at least a high school education while in 2000 almost 88 percent had. This certainly demonstrates a well-educated population lives in the Town of Alden.

**TABLE 9**  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

<i>Educational Level</i>	<i>1980</i>		<i>1990</i>		<i>2000</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Persons 25 Years and Over						
• Less than high school diploma	323	32.3	222	17.0	216	12.4
• High school graduate	446	44.6	595	45.7	592	34.0
• Some college, no degree	142	14.2	203	15.6	416	23.9
• Associate degree	--	--	107	8.2	115	6.6
• Bachelor's degree or higher	90	9.0	176	13.5	400	23.0
High school graduate or higher	678	67.7	1,081	83.0	1,523	87.6

Source: U.S. Census

## EMPLOYMENT

The current growth of the area's economy is a major contributor to the employment opportunities available to residents of the Town of Alden. Certainly, a continuing influence is the employment opportunities available in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and the increasing mobility due to changes in the transportation system. The principal economic factors that influence an

**TABLE 10**  
**LABOR FORCE • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>
Persons 16 Years and Over	1,262	1,549	2,043
• In labor force	805	1,085	1,496
• Percent in labor force	63.8	70.0	73.2
• Employed	724	1,028	1,468
• Unemployed	81	57	26
• Percent unemployed	10.1	5.3	1.7

Source: U.S. Census

individual's quality of life and provide a choice of residential options are employment opportunities and income. A comparison of labor force and employment statistics for 1980 to 2000 provides some insight into the economic well being of the residents of the town.

As indicated by the data presented in Table 10, while the segment of Town of Alden residents eligible for the labor force grew by nearly 62 percent between 1980 and 2000, the actual number in the labor force increased by almost 86 percent. The number employed residents in the labor force more than doubled over the same period, while the number of unemployed residents decreased by 68 percent. Based on these statistics, it appears that a growing number of town residents have employment opportunities and unemployment of town residents is low, probably in large part due to the in-migration of persons employed in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The economic downturn early in the decade starting in 2000 makes it uncertain how the labor force and employment has been affected in the Town of Alden. By looking at Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area and Polk County labor force estimates and reported unemployment figures we may get a picture of how Town of Alden workers are currently fairing.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development reports a Polk County labor force estimate every month. In the first 5 months of 2005, 23,555 workers were reported compared to 23,677 annually for 2004, 23,734 annually for 2003, 23,510 annually for 2002, 23,328 annually for 2001 and 22,770 annually for 2000. In February and May of 2005 there were 23,795 and 23,255 workers, respectively, reported in Polk County. The labor force has definitely grown in Polk County between 2000 and 2003, yet appears to recently be fairly steady at around 23,500 workers.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development also reports an unemployment rate for Polk County every month. In the first 5 months of 2005, there were 6.4% unemployed compared to 5.4% annually for 2004, 7.7% annually for 2003, 6.7% annually for 2002, 5.8% annually for 2001 and 3.3% annually for 2000. In February and May of 2005 there were 7.6% and 4.5% unemployed, respectively, reported in Polk County. It appears that the Polk County economy is recovering from the economic downturn of 2001-2003, but still suffers from periodic spikes in the unemployment rate.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a labor force estimate and unemployment rate for the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area every month. In the first 5 months of 2005, 1,851,722 workers and a 4.1% unemployment rate were reported compared to 1,849,008 and 4.3%, respectively for 2004, 1,837,483 and 4.8%, respectively for 2003, 1,818,863 and 4.2%, respectively for 2002, 1,812,937 and 3.2%, respectively for 2001, and 1,762,474 and 2.6%, respectively for 2000. The labor force has definitely grown steadily in the Mpls./St. Paul MSA between 2000 and 2005, while the unemployment rate peaked in 2003 and has declined to pre-2002 levels since.

Table 11 and 12 show the kind of employment Town of Alden residents were engaged in in 1980, 1990 and 2000. Table 11 shows employment by industry and it can be seen that while agriculture, forestry and mining employment declined, the employment of town residents increased in almost every other industry. The largest increases came in manufacturing,

**TABLE 11**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Resident Workers 16 years of age and older**

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	129	17.8	123	12.0	53	3.6
Construction	57	7.9	57	5.5	101	6.9
Manufacturing	228	31.5	350	34.0	408	27.8
Wholesale trade	28	3.9	21	2.0	49	3.3
Retail Trade	75	10.4	128	12.5	151	10.3
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	40	5.5	45	4.4	57	3.9
Information	--	--	--	--	22	1.5
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	19	2.6	26	2.5	68	4.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	--	--	--	--	103	7.0
Business and repair services	17	2.3	75	7.3	--	--
Educational, health and social services	89	12.3	108	10.5	279	19.0
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	30	4.4	61	5.9	79	5.4
Other services, except public administration					63	4.3
Public administration	12	1.7	34	3.3	35	2.4

Source: U.S. Census Shaded area indicates combined categories

**TABLE 12**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Resident Workers 16 years of age and older**

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Executive, administrative and managerial	48	6.6	74	7.2	403	27.5
Professional	53	7.3	94	9.1		
Technician	30	4.1	45	4.4	356	24.3
Sales	41	5.7	70	6.8		
Administrative support, including clerical	76	10.5	121	11.8	172	11.7
Service	78	10.8	96	9.3		
Farming, forestry, fishing	121	16.7	120	11.7	10	0.7
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	--	--	--	--	141	9.6
Precision production, craft and repair	121	16.7	140	13.5	386	26.3
Machine operators, assemblers & inspectors	99	13.7	160	15.6		
Transportation and material moving	38	5.2	47	4.6		
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers and laborers	19	2.6	61	5.9		
<b>Total Employment (16 years and over)</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,468</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Shaded area indicates combined categories

construction, educational, health and social services, and other services. Table 12 provides employment by occupation and it is evident there has been a shift to more professional, executive, administrative, managerial, technical and service occupations from production occupations.

As *Place of Residence* data, Tables 11 and 12 provide information about what categories of employment town residents were employed in, but does not tell us where they worked. *Place of Work* data from the 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package provides survey information about the employment in the Town of Alden. Table 13 shows employment by industry in 2000 for those working in the Town of Alden. To complete the picture of the employment

characteristics of Town of Alden residents, indicators of commuting patterns are presented in Table 14 *Travel Time to Work* and Table 15 *Journey to Work*.

**TABLE 13**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY • 2000**  
**Workers in the Town of Alden 16 years of age and older**

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Employment</i>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	80
Construction	55
Manufacturing	10
Wholesale trade	15
Retail Trade	10
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	4
Information	10
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	10
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	40
Educational, health and social services	15
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	15
Other services, except public administration	15
Public administration	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>270</b>

Source: 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package

**TABLE 14**  
**TRAVEL TIME TO WORK • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Resident Workers 16 years of age and older**

	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Worked at home	122	17.4	127	13.0	104	7.1
Less than 5 minutes	15	2.1	32	3.3	31	2.1
5 to 9 minutes	41	5.8	30	3.1	42	2.9
10 to 19 minutes	166	23.7	251	25.7	312	21.4
20 to 29 minutes	109	15.5	156	16.0	323	22.1
30 to 44 minutes	81	11.6	148	15.2	198	13.6
45 to 59 minutes	54	7.7	119	12.2	199	13.6
60 minutes or longer	113	16.1	113	11.6	250	17.1
<b>Average Travel Time (Min.)</b>	<b>30.9</b>		<b>30.8</b>		<b>35.5</b>	

Source: U.S. Census

Table 14 definitely shows that Town of Alden resident's commute times are increasing. In 1980, half of all workers traveled 20 minutes or more to work while two-thirds did in 2000. In 1980, only 35 percent of workers traveled 30 minutes or more to work, compared to 44 percent in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of workers who traveled an hour or more to work more than doubled, increasing by 121 percent.

Table 15 actually shows us where Town of Alden residents traveled to work in 1980, 1990 and 2000. While the absolute number of workers who worked in Polk County has increased from 343 to 553 between 1980 and 2000, each decade shows that the percentage of all workers living in the Town of Alden and working in Polk County has declined from almost 49% to 38%. Indeed, the percentage of Town of Alden workers commuting to Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington Counties, Minnesota increased from 22.3% in 1980 to 31.4% in 2000.

**TABLE 15**  
**JOURNEY TO WORK • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Residents**

Place of Work	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Town of Alden, WI	343	48.5	426	42.7	158	10.8
Remainder of Polk County, WI					395	27.1
New Richmond, St. Croix County, WI					186	12.7
Somerset, St. Croix County, WI	123	17.4	237	23.8	58	4.0
Remainder of St. Croix County, WI					109	7.5
Minneapolis, MN	14	2.0	22	2.2	30	2.1
Remainder of Hennepin Co., MN	4	0.6	16	1.6	52	3.6
St. Paul, MN	84	11.9	37	3.7	108	7.4
Remainder of Ramsey Co., MN	4	0.6	47	4.7	57	3.9
Washington County, MN	51	7.2	141	14.1	210	14.4
Worked elsewhere	23	3.3	71	7.1	96	6.6
Not Reported	61	8.6	--	--	--	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census

Shaded area indicates combined totals.

While the number of workers working in Polk County increased by 61% from 1980 to 2000, the number commuting to St. Croix County and the aforementioned Minnesota counties increased by 187% and 191%, respectively, during the same period.

## INCOME

The combined effect of advanced education, increased employment opportunities, and evidence of well paying occupations is reflected in the earning capability and increasing incomes of town residents.

**TABLE 16**  
**HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON • 1999**  
**Town of Alden, Polk County and State of Wisconsin**

Income	Town of Alden		Polk County	Wisconsin
	Households	Percent	Percent	Percent
Less than \$10,000	31	3.2	7.9	7.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	24	2.4	6.2	5.8
\$15,000 to \$24,999	86	8.8	13.3	12.7
\$25,000 to \$34,999	114	11.6	14.1	13.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	159	16.2	19.2	18.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	269	27.4	22.7	22.7
\$75,000 to \$99,999	172	17.5	10.0	10.9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	103	10.5	4.9	6.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	11	1.1	0.8	1.5
\$200,000 or more	12	1.2	0.8	1.5

Source: U.S. Census

Table 16 shows household income distribution for the Town of Alden with comparisons to Polk County and the State. It appears that the Town of Alden has a smaller percentage of its households with incomes of less than \$50,000 and a larger percentage of households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$150,000 than both Polk County and the State as a whole.

Tables 17 and 18 show the changes in income of Alden, Polk and St. Croix Counties and State residents between the 1980 and 1990, and 1990 and 2000 Censuses. These tables present two different measures of income, median household income and per capita income.

**TABLE 17**  
**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON • 1979, 1989 and 1999**  
**Town of Alden, Polk and St. Croix Counties, and State of Wisconsin**

	<i>Median Household Income</i>			<i>Percent Change</i>	
	<i>1979</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1979-89</i>	<i>1989-99</i>
Town of Alden	\$16,818	\$35,732	\$57,337	112.5	60.5
Polk County	14,106	24,267	41,183	72.0	69.7
St. Croix County	19,568	36,716	54,930	87.6	49.6
State of Wisconsin	17,680	29,442	43,791	66.5	55.5

Source: U.S. Census

**TABLE 18**  
**PER CAPITA INCOME COMPARISON • 1979, 1989 and 1999**  
**Town of Alden, Polk and St. Croix Counties, and State of Wisconsin**

	<i>Per Capita Income</i>			<i>Percent Change</i>	
	<i>1979</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1979-89</i>	<i>1989-99</i>
Town of Alden	\$5,882	\$13,604	\$22,470	131.3	65.2
Polk County	5,795	11,291	19,129	94.8	69.4
St. Croix County	7,063	14,912	23,937	111.1	60.5
State of Wisconsin	7,243	13,276	21,271	83.3	60.2

Source: U.S. Census

Household income is the sum of money income received in the calendar year before the Decennial Census is collected by all household members 15 years old and over, including household members not related to the householder, people living alone, and other nonfamily household members. Included in the total are amounts reported separately for wage or salary income; net self-employment income; interest, dividends, or net rental or royalty income or income from estates and trusts; Social Security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); public assistance or welfare payments; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and all other income. The median is the mathematically derived middle value with 50% above and 50% below that number. Per capita income is the average income computed for every man, woman, and child in a geographic area received in the calendar year before the Decennial Census. It is derived by dividing the total income of all people 15 years old and over in a geographic area by the total population in that area. It must be noted that income information is not collected for people under 15 years old although those people are included in the denominator of per capita income.

It can be seen from the tables that the Town of Alden has a greater median household and per capita income than that for Polk County and the State of Wisconsin. However, the Town of Alden has a lesser incomes than the residents of St. Croix County.

Another indicator regarding income is the poverty level (Table 19). Changes in poverty levels can indicate whether economic conditions are improving for residents. In the 10 years between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses it appears that there was significant improvement in poverty levels for all groups except for persons 65 years of age and older. It is unclear why there has been in

increase in poverty amongst the elderly population in the Town of Alden, but it suggests that there may be a need for increased services for low and moderate income elderly persons.

<b>TABLE 19</b>		
<b>POVERTY LEVELS • 1999</b>		
<b>Town of Alden</b>		
	<b>Percent Below Poverty Level</b>	
	<b>1989</b>	<b>1999</b>
All persons	7.0	3.4
Related children under 18	7.9	2.4
Persons 18 years and older	6.0	3.4
Persons 65 years and older	6.0	11.5
All families	4.8	2.3
With related children under 18	5.1	2.0
With related children under 5	7.0	--
Female householder, no husband present	24.0	11.8
With related children under 18	25.0	--
With related children under 5	36.4	--

Source: U.S. Census

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORECASTS**

### **POPULATION PROJECTION**

Population projections have long been used in planning to assess development prospects created by population growth. Small area population forecasts can be used to evaluate potential residential development and economic conditions, and the level of demand for public facilities and services. Businesses, schools and government frequently use these forecasts to determine the future needs or design of public facilities or services. This estimate of future growth is also valuable information for establishing management techniques in order to provide for orderly growth and development.

Population projections are based on historical trends of population growth that are extended into the future. They are based on the assumption that the historical trends, and the factors behind them, will continue to some point in time. It is certain that not all of those factors will have the same influence on population change throughout the entire forecast period. It is also true that the closer the projection year is to the base year, the more likely the population for that projection will be close to the true population. Hence, the margin of error in population forecasts increases the farther out in time they are from the present.

Small area population projections also have limitations. Forecasts of large area populations are more reliable. For example, projections developed at the county level can be used to distribute the county population forecasts proportionally into the individual community projections. This "backing into" community projections from countywide forecasts is often done because the smaller the area for which a projection is produced, the greater the possibility for error. Population forecasts are, at best, guides and must be used with consideration of their limitations. However, intimate knowledge of local conditions can help build the assumptions into population projections to make them more valid.

Generally, population growth trends do not remain constant from decade to decade. The factors that influence population change are dynamic and are often subject to the effect of larger trends from outside an area's control. The forecasting of population change requires that certain assumptions be made regarding the conditions prevailing during the forecast period. Therefore, it is important to identify the assumptions inherent in the projection. The following factors and assumptions were incorporated into the population projections developed for the Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan.

In-migration will continue to be significant for population growth in Alden. Many factors are involved in the personal and business decisions that result in migration into Alden. This migration is due to numerous employment opportunities and other urban amenities in Alden that are in proximity to the serene, aesthetically appealing natural, rural and recreational areas surrounding the Town. It is also likely that there is significant in-migration of elderly from the surrounding rural areas looking for appropriate retirement living accommodations in the Town.

Numerous other interrelated factors can also affect in-migration and the rate of population change. These interrelated factors include the local, regional and national economies, lifestyle preferences, the physical and cultural setting of the county, infrastructure improvements, regulation and taxation.

The economy can have a dramatic affect on population growth. Locally, manufacturing employment has remained strong, and Alden has its own market threshold or trade capture area which has spurred more commercial services and retail trade employment.

The lifestyle preferences of people, and the perceptions of people and business, contribute to the decision-making that influence the movement of people and businesses. The physical setting of the Town provides an aesthetic, natural beauty that continues to attract people. Small cities across the country are experiencing resurgence due to the perceived amenities they offer. Town exhibits many of these "small town" amenities and it should continue its appeal as a place to locate a home or business. It is also evident that many small cities in rural areas become attractive to the elderly in the surrounding rural area as a place to live to take advantage of health care, residential, shopping and services opportunities.

Public services and infrastructure improvements can also influence growth and development activity. Planned transportation improvements make people, families and business more mobile and reduce personal and business travel, commuting and shipping times. The improvement of bridges and highways to meet current demand will also create more demand as development responds to the opportunities that are provided by improved access.

The expansion of public utilities capacity can provide opportunities for continued residential, commercial and industrial development. For example, as Town expands public facilities to meet anticipated demand, the capacity created can also attract development. Public utility expansion is probably ancillary to the other factors driving in-migration, and likely adds to the cumulative effect of all the factors in force.

The population forecast found in Table 20 for the Town of Alden was developed by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center (DOA/DSC). The population projections were derived from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 census population and Demographic Services' January 1, 2002 population estimate. The methodology used produces a trend line that emphasizes change that is more recent over more remote trends.

<b>TABLE 20</b>					
<b>PRELIMINARY POPULATION PROJECTION • 2005 to 2025</b>					
<b>Town of Alden</b>					
<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
2,615	2,821	3,023	3,202	3,365	3,514

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services 2004

This projection shows a suggested population growth for the Town of Alden between the years 2005 and 2025 of 693 people or 24.56% percent. This is significant growth for a rural area. Given the following discussion, the DOA/DSC population projection can be considered a conservative scenario.

In August of 2005, the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center released preliminary population estimates for January 1, 2005 for Wisconsin municipalities. This estimate for the Town of Alden of 2,873 persons exceeds the DOA/DSC population projection by 52 persons or 1.84%. Hence, for a moderate population projection, the DOA/DSC population projections have been modified to represent this small increase (Table 21).

<b>TABLE 21</b>					
<b>MODERATE POPULATION PROJECTION • 2005 to 2025</b>					
<b>Town of Alden</b>					
<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005 Estimate</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
2,615	2,873	3,079	3,261	3,427	3,579

Source: Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan, WCWRPC 2005

This projection shows a suggested population growth for the Town of Alden between the years 2005 and 2025 of 703 people or 24.57% percent. While this seems like an insignificant difference from the DOA/DSC population projection, the extra 65 persons by the year 2025 does reflect an additional 24 households, and because of the adjustment based on the 2005 population estimate represents somewhat more likely figures.

While the population projections in Table 21 portray an improved scenario over the DOA/DSC population projections found in Table 20, it makes sense to consider another scenario that reflects a potential optimistic or liberal scenario. The projections found in Table 22 go out to the year 2030, and use the 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census populations and the DOA/DSC 2005 population estimate to calculate an average annual numeric rate of change which, like the DOA/DSC population projections, gives more weight to more recent trends.

<b>TABLE 22</b>						
<b>OPTIMISTIC POPULATION PROJECTION • 2005 to 2030</b>						
<b>Town of Alden</b>						
<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005 Estimate</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
2,615	2,873	3,102	3,331	3,560	3,789	4,019

Source: Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan, WCWRPC 2005

## HOUSEHOLD PROJECTION

A household forecast is used to help develop housing and land use forecasts. The DOA/DSC has prepared household projections for year 2000 to 2025 in five-year increments and are found in Table 23. These household projections are largely based on the population projections found in Table 20.

<b>TABLE 23</b>						
<b>WIDOA HOUSEHOLD PROJECTION • 2005 to 2025</b>						
<b>Town of Alden</b>						
<b>Total households</b>		<b>Projected Households</b>				
<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	
973	1,067	1,179	1,279	1,371	1,452	

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services 2004

If the persons per household suggested by the DOA.DSC household and population projections are applied to the optimistic population projections in Table 22 the results are shown in Table 24.

<b>TABLE 24</b>						
<b>OPTIMISTIC HOUSEHOLD PROJECTION • 2005 to 2030</b>						
<b>Town of Alden</b>						
<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005 Estimate</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
973	1,086	1,210	1,330	1,450	1,566	1,675

Source: Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan, WCWRPC 2005

## EMPLOYMENT PROJECTION

In November 2003, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD) released a publication entitled *Wisconsin Projections, 2000-2010*. This publication makes economic projections regarding the state's labor force, industries and occupations.

Municipal units within Polk County have employment patterns that are similar to the state. It is expected that during the next several years, Wisconsin's population is projected to grow slower and older than the nation as a whole, therefore leading to lower participation rates in the workforce. Wisconsin is also having difficulty attracting international immigrants and domestic migrants, and retaining its own citizens. Wisconsin will continue to face the challenge of filling job openings. The industries that are projected to add the most jobs from 2000-2010 are health services, business services, educational services, eating and drinking establishments, social services and miscellaneous retail stores. The top five occupations in Wisconsin with the greatest expected job growth for 2000-2010 are retail salespersons (42,900); cashiers (40,000); combined food preparation/serving workers (39,800); waiters/waitresses (28,400), and registered nurses (20,100). For further economic base indicators refer to the Economic Development Element.

Table 25 presents employment and wage projections by the top 10 occupations for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development West Central Wisconsin Region. This represents the occupation opportunities available for Polk County residents. The greatest demand for workers is in the occupations on the 'Most Openings' list. This list includes many occupations considered as first-time, or temporary, jobs that workers often leave as other opportunities open up.

Turnover is high and wages are low. There are a few exceptions on the list: registered nurses and truck drivers. Both require a greater degree of education or training, which the wage scale reflects.

The ‘Fastest Growth’ occupations are often referred to as hot jobs, with more training requirements and better wages. There are often fewer openings in these jobs since the list is based on the greatest percent change in employment; for example, an occupation that increases from 5 to 10 jobs increased 100 percent, whereas an occupation that increases from 2,000 to 2,200 jobs increased only 10 percent.

**TABLE 25**  
**WEST CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA OCCUPATION PROJECTIONS • 2010**

	Top 10 Occupations	Typically Required Education/Training*	Average Wage**
Fastest Growth	Computer Support Specialists	Associate degree	\$17.37
	Network/Computer Systems Admin	Bachelor’s degree	\$15.59
	Computer Software Engnrs Apps	Bachelor’s degree	\$30.52
	Medical Assistants	1-20. on-the-job training	\$11.45
	Social/Human Service Assistants	1-12 mo. on-the-job training	\$11.96
	Medical Records/Health Info Technicians	Associate degree	\$11.38
	Computer/Information Systems Managers	Work experience & degree	\$25.56
	Hotel/Motel/Resort Desk Clerks	1-month or less training	\$8.19
	Child Care Workers	1-month or less training	\$7.91
	Pharmacy Technicians	1-12 mo. on-the-job training	\$9.90
Most Openings	Retail Salespersons	1-month or less training	\$9.70
	Cashiers	1-month or less training	\$7.25
	Comb Food Prep/Serv Wrk/Incl Fast	1-month or less training	\$7.10
	Waiters/Waitresses	1-month or less training	\$7.27
	Registered Nurses	Bachelor’s degree	\$21.57
	Nursing Aides/Orderlies/Attendants	1-month or less training	\$9.71
	Stock Clerks/Order Fillers	1-month or less training	\$8.84
	Truck Drivers/Heavy/Tractor-Trailer	1-12 mo. On-the-job training	\$15.03
	Bartenders	1-month or less training	\$7.98
	Labrs/Frght/Stock/Matrl Movers/Handlers	1-month or less training	\$10.11

\*The most common way to enter the occupation, not the only way.

\*\*Wages from Occupation Employment Statistics survey responses for region, 2001

West Central WDA includes Barron, Chippewa Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk and St. Croix Counties.

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development, Bureau of Workforce Information, 2002

Table 26 shows that in the West Central Workforce Development Area there were 171,420 jobs with 11,020 local employers in 2002. There are more jobs in education and health care services than any other industry group, but there are more employers in the trade industry group. Over a ten-year period ending in in 2012, the number of jobs is projected to increase 13.9 percent to 195,270 jobs in the region. Most of the 23,850 new jobs (89%) will be with service-providing employers.

**TABLE 26**  
**INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS FOR WEST CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA • 2002-2012**

Industry Title	Employment		Ten-year change	
	2002 Estimate	2012 Projected	Numeric	Percent
Total Non-farm Employment	171,420	195,270	23,850	13.9%
Construction/Mining/Natural Resources	8,160	9,920	1,760	21.6%
Manufacturing	33,710	34,610	900	2.7%
Paper Manufacturing	1,490	1,460	-30	-2.0%
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	3,880	4,700	820	21.1%
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	3,500	3,060	-440	-12.6%
Trade	28,590	32,080	3,490	12.2%
Food and Beverage Stores	5,080	5,960	880	17.3%
Transportation and Utilities (Including US Postal Service)	8,090	9,740	1,650	20.4%
Financial Activities	6,480	7,300	820	12.7%
Education and Health Services (Inclgd state & local govt. ed. & hosp.)	36,110	44,930	8,820	24.4%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	5,270	7,420	2,150	40.8%
Hospitals (Including state & local govt.)	6,840	8,340	1,500	21.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	17,140	19,410	2,270	13.2%
Information/Prof Services/Other Services	20,050	23,720	3,670	18.3%
Government (Excluding USPS, state & local govt. ed. and hosp.)	13,080	13,560	480	3.7%

Source: WI DWD, Office of Economic Advisors, September 2004

By 2012, there will be 150,740 jobs with employers in the service-providing sectors of trade; transportation and utilities; financial activities; education (both private and public) and health services; leisure and hospitality services; a group that includes information, professional and business services, and other services; and government. Employers in the service providing industries have been increasing their dominance in the local economy for many years and that trend will continue during the projection period.

The largest industry group among the services-providing sector is education and health services. Education here includes both private and public institutions. Employment with public institutions is included in order to focus on the occupations of the jobs within the industry.

Education and health services employers will add nearly 9,000 jobs to the regional economy from 2002 to 2012. Roughly one-quarter of those new jobs will be with employers that provide ambulatory health services that include clinics, medical offices and emergency services. The number of jobs with ambulatory health providers is projected to increase 41 percent from 5,270 in 2002 to 7,420 in 2012. In addition to these jobs there are the projected new jobs with hospitals that will add 2,150 new jobs. While nearly half of the region's health care jobs in these two industries is in the Eau Claire metropolitan area this sector is likely to significantly affect employment in Polk County as well. The number of jobs in health care services is projected to increase in every region of the state as better technology that leads to improved healthcare generates an increasing need for services, especially among a population that is growing older. Educational services employment is also projected to increase 15 percent during the ten-year period.

Manufacturing employment, currently the second largest industry sector, is projected to increase by only 900 jobs over the ten-year period. There are 21 manufacturing industries in the sector in the West Central region and only ten are projected to add jobs from 2002 to 2012. Included among the ten with projected job growth are the three largest manufacturing industries in the

region: food products, fabricated metal products, and machinery manufacturing. Employment data in all three, however, is suppressed according to guidelines established by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Of these three manufacturing industries only plastics and rubber products, the fourth largest manufacturing industry in the region, is projected to add jobs. Computer and electronic products, the fifth largest manufacturing industry in 2002, has been losing jobs since 1999 and, even though it is projected to continue losing jobs, should still be the fifth largest in 2012.

Included with manufacturing in the goods-producing sector is the construction, mining and natural resources industry group. The second largest percent change in regional jobs, 21.6%, is projected for this group. The West Central region, like most regions in the state, will experience a large increase in new and remodeled building and road maintenance and construction. A much smaller share of jobs in this group includes mining, and forest and farm workers in natural resources. The food processing jobs located throughout the region are included in manufacturing.

The third largest industry group, trade, is projected to add 3,490 jobs during the ten-year period. Roughly 17 percent of the region's jobs are with trade employers with nearly half of them with employers in the Eau Claire metropolitan area. Trade employers should still have an impact in Polk County. The greatest share of trade jobs in the region are with general merchandise stores, but again, the employment data is suppressed. The second largest industry in the trade group is food and beverage stores with over 5,000 jobs in 2002 and is projected to add 880 jobs by 2012.

The third greatest increase in jobs in the region is projected by employers in the information, professional and business services and other services industry group with the addition of 3,670 jobs from 2002 to 2012. One reason the group is large is that it is an aggregate of five industry sectors. In addition to the three included in the group name there are the industry sectors of management of companies; and administrative support, waste management and remediation services. Another reason for the multitude of jobs is that the sector provides support to other industries through temporary help agencies, corporate offices, publishing firms and research, data processing, and engineering firms.

The overall job projection indicates an increase of 13.9 percent for the ten-year period in the West Central region. Polk County is likely to see employment increases somewhat below that of the region as a whole. This will be more than offset by increasing employment opportunities available to commuters in St. Croix County and the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area.

The occupation projections for West Central Wisconsin over a ten-year period that ends in 2012 (Table 27) include 23,850 new jobs created by expansion from existing employers or by new employers moving to the area. The projections also include a ten-year projection of 42,500 job openings generated when workers leave an occupation and create a need for a replacement worker. An example of this would be a nursing aide who retires from the occupation or, after completing training, becomes a registered nurse. Replacement needs do **not** include openings that occur when a nurse aid leaves one employer to work for another in the same occupation.

**TABLE 27**  
**OCCUPATIONAL GROUP SUMMARY FOR WEST CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA • 2002-2012**

Occupational Groups	Est./Projected Employment		2002 – 2012 Change		Annual average			Average hourly wage	Annual average wage
	2002	2012	Numeric	Percent	New Jobs	Replacements	Total Openings		
Total, All Occupations	171,420	195,270	23,850	13.9%	2,390	4,250	6,640	\$14.56	\$30,278
Management, Business & Financial Operations	11,270	13,260	1,990	17.7%	200	210	410	\$25.78	\$53,619
Computer, Math, Architecture & Engineering	4,870	5,600	730	15.0%	70	100	170	\$26.84	\$55,834
Life & Social Sciences, Legal, Art & Entertaining	6,710	7,930	1,220	18.2%	120	130	250	\$18.71	\$38,913
Education, Training, & Library	10,780	12,800	2,020	18.7%	200	230	430	\$18.46	\$38,406
Healthcare Practitioners, Technicians & Support	13,670	17,900	4,230	30.9%	430	240	670	\$17.43	\$36,258
Food Preparation & Serving	16,360	18,440	2,080	12.7%	210	650	860	\$8.03	\$16,702
Protective, Maintenance & Personal Care Service	12,740	15,060	2,320	18.2%	240	300	540	\$10.80	\$22,461
Sales and Related	17,560	20,020	2,460	14.0%	250	630	880	\$12.19	\$25,356
Office/Administrative Support	26,410	27,970	1,560	5.9%	160	620	780	\$12.24	\$25,451
Natural Resources, Mining & Construction	7,800	9,450	1,650	21.2%	160	160	320	\$16.73	\$34,801
Installation, Maintenance, Repair & Production	29,270	31,040	1,770	6.0%	180	700	880	\$13.90	\$28,910
Transportation/Material Moving	14,010	15,790	1,780	12.7%	180	300	480	\$12.70	\$26,419

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Office of Economic Advisors, September 2004

These projections do not include an estimate of self-employed therefore the total number of jobs in occupations, projected to increase from 171,420 in 2002 to 195,270 by 2012 matches the industry changes in Table 26.

The greatest increase, 18 percent of all new jobs, occurs in healthcare occupations with the addition of 4,230 jobs. The share of jobs in healthcare occupations increases from 8.0 percent to 9.6 percent of all jobs in the region. The share of total jobs in installation, maintenance, repair and production occupations, in spite of a decline from 17.1 percent in 2002 to 15.9 percent in 2012, will continue to be the greatest source of jobs in the region. The second greatest share of jobs, in office and administrative support occupations, follows a similar pattern declining from 15.4 to 14.3 percent of all jobs. In both occupational groups the number of replacement openings is roughly four times the number of new jobs.

New and replacement jobs, combined, produce the total (annual) jobs openings projected for an occupation over the projection period. In nearly all occupation groups, except health-related occupations, the number of replacement jobs exceeds the number of jobs created from growth.

Both sources of job openings are important. Too often the focus is only on job growth and little attention is given to the vacancies generated from replacement needs. But as baby boomers approach retirement age, the need to fill replacement jobs looms menacingly on the horizon. The average age of all workers in 2000 was 39-40 years, but was higher in occupations that require a degree. For example, the average age in the West Central region for those in education occupations was 48 years in 2000 and one-third of these workers were over 50 years old.

Healthcare occupations as a group that will have the most new jobs. There are 61 health related occupations in the region, but the need for registered nurses will generate one-fifth of the new jobs in healthcare and will produce the most new jobs of any occupation in the region.

## **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **KICKOFF MEETING**

There was a comprehensive planning kickoff meeting held at the Town of Alden Town Hall on March 5, 2005. This meeting was intended to introduce the public to comprehensive planning concepts and the Town's role in developing a comprehensive plan. General information about comprehensive planning was presented to inform the public about what comprehensive planning is and why it is important, the Town's planning process and timeline, including previous Town planning activities and how incremental activity during the process will build upon previous efforts, and what the Town hoped to get out of a comprehensive planning effort. Expectations were set for future meetings where the public was expected to provide important input to the plan decision-making process. These meetings were to start in about six months following the kickoff meeting, after the background information was compiled and analyzed.

### **ISSUES GENERATION WORKSHOP**

On October 1, 2005 the Town of Alden held an Issues Generation workshop at the Town of Alden Town Hall. Fifty people attended on a beautiful, sunny autumn afternoon to give their input on what issues are important to them. The room was set up with posters highlighting the community opinion survey results, socio-economic and housing information, and maps of the physical features and land use in the Town. After the crowd was able to digest as much of the displays as they wished, the consultant delivered a facilitated session to develop planning issues for the Town. Four groups of 11 or 12 participants broke out to separately go through the exercise. Participants were first asked to make an exhaustive list without discussion of community issues designating which were something they valued or were or were perceived to be a problem. They were to make this list with these questions in mind:

1. In your opinion, what are the development problems requiring attention over the next few years?
2. What do you value or appreciate about living in the community?
3. What would you like to see remain pretty much the same?
4. What suggestions do you have for the future of the community?
5. What should the community look like in 20 years?

In a round robin, the participant responses were recorded on a flip chart. Each group then discussed the list to clarify responses so everyone knew what was meant. Similar responses were grouped. The groups then were asked to rank the list from most important to least important. The issues were then compiled and are presented as follows:

***Town of Alden Issues and Opportunities as compiled from Town of Alden citizens on October 1, 2005***  
*Issues identified as a value are designated with a “V” and those as a problem with a “P”.*

**Group One** – 11 participants

1. Road limitations – too much speed and traffic P
2. Want small development – far apart V
3. Want to maintain rural atmosphere V
4. Too much farmland being developed P
5. Want to know impact of Supreme Court ruling on eminent domain P
6. Concern for conflicting land use, e.g. commercial next to a farm P
7. Continued growth of government – size and cost P
8. Concern for property owner rights V
9. Concern for parking congestion by Big Lake Store P
10. Concern for reduction in wildlife due to development P
11. Concern for growth taken place in the last 20 years – doubled P
12. We have an excellent Town Board V
13. We have excellent population growth and now have to contain economic growth V/P
14. Litter is a problem P
15. High taxes are a problem, especially along lakes and the river P
16. Wooded property for privacy is a value V
17. Out of Township developers are a concern P
18. Blind intersections, e.g. Church Road to Hwy 65, and other intersection visibility concerns
19. County police protection needed V/P
20. Winter snowplowing in a timely manner P
21. Well maintained roads V
22. Noise pollution from vehicles P
23. Mailbox vandalism P
24. Electric right-of-way concern P
25. Maintain look of rustic roads V
26. Buried electric lines V

**Group Two** – 12 participants

1. Which lot size is best? P
2. Limited low tech services – cell towers P
3. Fresh air V
4. Septic tank pumping disposal P
5. Adding services, police, fire and ambulance, with added development P
6. Monitoring groundwater pollution P
7. No retail shopping in Alden Township P
8. Need to plan for the future P
9. Density P
10. What are the rights of neighbors and landowners of proposed subdivisions P
11. Rural Atmosphere V
12. Property tax issues, farmland vs. development P
13. Affordable housing P

14. Lack of industrial noise V
15. Monitoring the type of industry coming into the area P
16. Planned growth influence on tax base P
17. Influence of big money on development P
18. Development rights and how to protect Ag land and wetlands P
19. Land Trust to protect property V
20. Guidelines to control junkyards, trashy residences, etc. P
21. Controlling meth problem, education P
22. Not too much government control, ordinances P
23. Having hunting and fishing close V
24. Available farmland V

**Group Three** – 12 participants

1. Keep residential V
2. Increase in population P
3. Incentive to keep land agricultural V
4. Keep more rural and agricultural V
5. Development will raise values and taxes P
6. Development increases the cost of government P
7. Development increases the value of life P
8. Need impact fees for developers P
9. Keep commercial where appropriate P
10. Save our natural resources V

**Group Four** – 11 participants

1. Rural Living and Setting V
2. Park and lake access V
3. Lot size V
4. Tax base – affordable V
5. Water and air quality – environment V
6. Development pace – slow V
7. Roads V
8. Homes – control cost P
9. Development Rights V
10. Law enforcement V/P
11. Open Land and Space V
12. Honest people V
13. Local control V
14. Everything remain the same V
15. Small development V
16. Planned, development more restricted V
17. Parks and recreation V
18. Preservation – farmland, woodland, wetlands, open land V
19. Control government spending V
20. Community voice V
21. Community pride V
22. Animal numbers restricted P
23. Slow growth V

***Town of Alden Issues and Opportunities priority ranked by Town of Alden citizens on October 1, 2005***

**Group One – 11 participants**

1. High taxes are a problem, especially along lakes and the river P
2. Want to maintain rural atmosphere V
3. Too much farmland being developed P
4. Concern for growth taken place in the last 20 years – doubled P
5. Concern for reduction in wildlife due to development P
6. Continued growth of government – size and cost P
7. Concern for conflicting land use, e.g. commercial next to a farm P
7. Concern for property owner rights V
9. Out of Township developers are a concern P
10. County police protection needed V/P
11. Blind intersections, e.g. Church Road to Hwy 65, and other intersection visibility concerns
12. Winter snowplowing in a timely manner P
13. Road limitations – too much speed and traffic P
14. Well maintained roads V
15. Noise pollution from vehicles P
16. What is impact of Supreme Court ruling on eminent domain P
17. We have an excellent Town Board V
17. Wooded property for privacy is a value V
19. Litter is a problem P
20. We have excellent population growth and now have to contain economic growth V/P
21. Buried electric lines V
22. Maintain look of rustic roads V
23. Want small development – far apart V
24. Mailbox vandalism P
24. Electric right-of-way concern P
26. Concern for parking congestion Big Lake Store P

**Group Two – 12 participants**

1. What are the rights of neighbors and landowners of proposed subdivisions P
2. Adding services, police, fire and ambulance, with added development P
3. Fresh air V
4. Density P
4. Property tax issues, farmland vs. development P
6. Rural Atmosphere V
7. Monitoring type of industry coming into the area P
8. Need to plan for the future P
8. Development rights and how to protect Ag land and wetlands P
10. Limited low tech services – cell towers P
11. Which lot size is best? P
11. Having hunting and fishing close V
13. Affordable housing P

14. Monitoring groundwater pollution P
14. Available farmland V
16. Land Trust to protect property V
16. Guidelines for junkyards, trashy residences, etc. P
16. Not too much government control, ordinances P
19. Planned growth influence on tax base P
20. No retail shopping in Alden Township P
21. Influence of big money on development P
22. Controlling meth problem, education P
23. Septic tank pumping disposal P
24. Lack of industrial noise V

**Group Three – 12 participants**

1. Keep residential V
2. Save our natural resources V
3. Incentive to keep land agricultural V
4. Increase in population P
5. Keep commercial where appropriate P
6. Development will raise values and taxes P
7. Keep more rural and agricultural V
8. Development increases the cost of government P
9. Development increases the value of life P
10. Need impact fees for developers P

**Group Four – 11 participants**

1. Rural Living and Setting V
2. Tax base – affordable V
3. Water and air quality – environment V
4. Development pace – slow growth V
5. Planned, development more restricted V
6. Community pride V
7. Parks and recreation V
8. Preservation – farmland, woodland, wetlands, open land V
9. Lot size V
10. Local control V
11. Roads V
12. Slow growth V
13. Open Land and Space V
13. Community voice V
15. Law enforcement V/P
16. Control government spending V
17. Home – control cost P
17. Development Rights V
19. Park and lake access V
20. Everything remain the same V
21. Animal numbers restricted P
22. Honest people V
23. Small development V

***Town of Alden Issues and Opportunities as priority ranked by Town of Alden citizens on October 1, 2005 Top ten priorities by each group***

**Group One – 11 participants**

1. High taxes are a problem, especially along lakes and the river
2. Want to maintain rural atmosphere
3. Too much farmland being developed
4. Concern for growth taken place in the last 20 years – doubled
5. Concern for reduction in wildlife due to development
6. Continued growth of government – size and cost
7. Concern for conflicting land use, e.g. commercial next to a farm
8. Concern for property owner rights
9. Out of Township developers are a concern
10. County police protection needed

**Group Three – 12 participants**

1. Keep residential
2. Save our natural resources
3. Incentive to keep land agricultural
4. Increase in population
5. Keep commercial where appropriate
6. Development will raise values and taxes
7. Keep more rural and agricultural
8. Development increases the cost of government
9. Development increases the value of life
10. Need impact fees for developers

**Group Two – 12 participants**

1. What are the rights of neighbors and landowners of proposed subdivisions
2. Adding services, police, fire and ambulance, with added development
3. Fresh air
4. Density
5. Property tax issues, farmland vs. development
6. Rural Atmosphere
7. Monitoring the type of industry coming into the area
8. Need to plan for the future
9. Development rights and how to protect Ag land and wetlands
10. Limited low tech services – cell towers

**Group Four – 11 participants**

1. Rural Living and Setting
2. Tax base – affordable
3. Water and air quality – environment
4. Development pace – slow growth
5. Planned, development more restricted
6. Community pride
7. Parks and recreation
8. Preservation – farmland, woodland, wetlands, open land
9. Lot size
10. Local control

All of the issues are important; prioritizing them allows the community to target resources to the most pressing issues if it is necessary. Because of this prioritization, it can be seen that natural amenity and quality of life issues were foremost on people's minds. There were also concerns about how small communities acquire revenue and keep the tax burden low. There are also numerous relationships between many of the priorities that will need to be considered and balanced during the planning process.

## **COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY**

In June 2000 the Town of Alden Land Use Committee sent out a community opinion survey. The purpose of the survey was to measure opinions and attitudes about a variety of land use issues. This survey was designed as a method to gain information that could be used in the development of a comprehensive plan for the Town of Alden.

The Town of Alden Land Use Committee sent out 1435 survey to Town landowners and renters. The surveys were mailed first class and a return postage paid envelope addressed to the Alden Town Hall was included. The surveys were to be returned by June 30, 2000.

On July 12, 2000, the Town's consultant, RMK Planning Group, received 684 surveys. Additional 29 surveys received later brought the total of surveys returned to 713. However, two surveys were returned with no responses, resulting in a final total of 711 responses out of 1435 surveys that were mailed. The response rate of 50% was an excellent response for a mailed survey where individuals self-select to participate and no follow-up was done. This indicated interest in the land use planning process undertaken by the Town of Alden.

The data from the completed surveys were tabulated using both the number of responses to each question and the frequency distribution of response (the percentage of respondents who selected each response for each question). The complete results of the community opinion survey are found in Appendix A and the summary of the findings from the Town's consultant follows here.

### **Demographic Data**

Seventy percent of the survey respondents were between 36-65 years old. With respect to gender, 68% of the surveys were completed by males, a percentage that is skewed from the norm. Seventy-one percent of the respondents had three or less people in the household. Most respondents (75%) have lived in Alden Township for ten or more years, and half of those have lived in Alden Township for more than twenty years. The type of employment responses showed a wide range of occupations represented by township residents, the highest response (22%) occurred in the "professional" category. Only five percent of the respondents selected 'farmer' as their primary employment, yet this group has a large stake in the percent of land ownership. A wide distribution of responses was shown in the employment location question, with the highest response rate (37%) for the Twin Cities metro area as the place of employment. More than 75% of respondents were full time residents, and nearly all respondents (98%) owned their residence in the township.

The following sections used a scale of responses that included the following choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, No Opinion. In the following discussion, responses were combined so that strongly agree and agree were grouped and considered as agreement, while disagree and strongly disagree were grouped and considered as disagreement.

### **General Development Objectives**

There was no clear consensus for the support of housing development within the township, with 49% agreement and 46% disagreement with that statement. There was strong support for small business development within the township, with 70% of respondents in agreement. However, the term small business is undefined and more information would be needed to determine the type of businesses that would be supported, such as home or farm based businesses. Fifty-four (54%) percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that the township should be more active in promoting commercial development and job growth. More than half of the respondents (54%) agreed that the township should rely on neighboring cities and villages to provide economic development. Respondents were about evenly divided on the statement that the Town of Alden should support housing on all levels, with 48% agreement, and 45% disagreement. The

last question of this section had the highest level of agreement (71%) with the statement that there should be more restrictions on land development within the township to maintain the quality of life. In summary, the respondents were not supportive of large-scale development, but were in favor of control on development.

### **Agricultural Conditions and Farmland Preservation**

There was a high level of agreement (78%) with the need to protect air, soil and water quality. Similar agreement (78%) was shown for concern about habitat loss. There was cautious approval (57%) of the statement that Alden Township should promote and cooperate with open space land purchase programs, however, this statement also had a high percentage (19%) of "No Opinion" responses, indicating possibly a lack of knowledge of or familiarity with these programs. There was 61 % agreement with the concept that landowners had done a good job of protecting the environment however responses in the previous section support future protection efforts by the township. This concern was echoed in the final question of this section, where 68% of respondents agreed with the statement that river and lake shorelines need greater protection from development and disturbance.

### **Planning and Zoning**

When asked whether zoning and subdivision regulations have been helpful in maintaining the quality, of life in the township, a high percentage (24%) of respondents marked the 'No Opinion' response, which indicated either a lack of knowledge of or experience with the regulations. Of those with an opinion on this issue, 372 respondents agreed versus 147 who disagreed. When asked about landowners' rights, 64% of respondents disagreed with the statement that landowners should be able to use land anyway they wanted. This indicated that two thirds of the respondents supported some type and level of regulation. A very high percentage (87%) of respondents agreed that zoning was a useful mechanism to preserve environmentally sensitive areas. Likewise, there was strong agreement (79%) with the concept of active township involvement in land use planning and regulation. More than one third of respondents (35%) had 'No Opinion' on the township's responsiveness to citizens' questions and concerns about land development. Of those with an opinion on this issue, 42% felt that the township was responsive. When queried about whether the township and county could do more to enforce zoning in lake shore areas, 59% agreed that these governmental bodies could do more enforcement. This question had a slightly higher rate of 'No Opinion' responses, as 17% selected that response.

### **Development Pattern and Appearance**

Cluster or grouping of housing was not the preference for 55% of the respondents. A slightly higher rate of "No Opinion" responses (15%) for this question possibly indicated that respondents were not familiar with the concept of cluster homes. When asked whether the township should encourage multi-family dwellings, 65% disagreed, meaning that multi-family dwellings were not a preferred housing alternative within the township. A high percentage (80%) of respondents agreed with the statement that policies should be enacted to maintain its rural appearance. When asked whether the level of lake shore development was acceptable, 58% agreed that the level was acceptable. This question had a slightly higher rate (18%) of "No Opinion" responses, possibly a large number of non-lake residents. More than half ( 55%) of the respondents who had an opinion felt that public sewers for lake shore areas were a priority, but 17% selected the 'No Opinion' response. Finally, when asked whether more intense lake shore

development was appropriate, 71% disagreed, which meant that increased development was not desirable. In summary, responses from this section included a high level of support and concern for the maintenance of rural character and some support for a sewer district in lake shore areas.

### **Community Services and Options**

This set of questions asked respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction by selecting 'Satisfied,' "Dissatisfied" or 'No Opinion." It should be noted that this set of issues had high rates of 'No Opinion" responses. Only three services, 1) town/county zoning and planning, 2) level of conservation and land preservation effort and 3) residential/housing choice received less than 50% satisfaction levels.

Employment opportunities (53%) and recycling(56%) were slightly higher in the satisfaction rating. The highest satisfaction levels were recorded for health care availability (71 %), quality of schools/education (71 %) and recreational opportunities (73%). In general, it appears that most services are acceptable to residents.

### **Lot Size**

When asked about lot size preference, a majority of respondents (82%) favored five or less acres for a minimum residential lot size. Breaking this number down, 30% favored one acre minimum lot size, 27% favored three acre minimum lot size and 25% favored five acre minimum lot size. Ten acre lots were supported by 12% of the respondents, while 35 acre lots were supported by 6% of respondents. When the lot size question is cross-referenced with Question 23 regarding clustering or grouping of housing, the preference seems to be for 1,3 and/or 5 acre lots scattered in non-agricultural areas of the township.

### **Additional Town Spending**

Respondents indicated support for additional town spending on road improvements (70%), open space preservation (57%), farmland preservation (59%) and police protection (64%). Two of the options, parks and recreation and lake district sewer system received less than 50% support.

### **Recreational Activities**

The recreational choices that received the most support from respondents were hiking/skiing trails (61 ballfields/active recreation areas (55%), bicycle routes (62%), and hunting/fishing access (55%). Campgrounds, boat landings, horse trails and snowmobile/ATV trails received less than 50% support. There was a resounding 'no' on golf courses as 82% of respondents indicated the Township should not provide or promote this activity.

### **Acceptable/Non Acceptable Land Uses**

In terms of acceptable land uses within the town, family farms received the highest acceptability rating with 99% of respondents supporting that land use. Hobby farms received a high acceptability rating with 95% support. There was support as well for home and farm based businesses (89%), and rural residential (79%). The level of acceptability drops down to 50% on large lot subdivisions (3-5 acres). High levels of non-acceptable responses were tallied for intensive agriculture (73%), multi-family development (70%), subdivisions (68%) and industrial uses (68%). Responses to this question indicated support for smaller lots that are scattered throughout the township, or larger lot subdivisions.

## **Cross Tabulations**

The following questions were cross-tabulated by occupation. Generally speaking, the farmers portrayed a different perspective from the community at large.

Question #6: When asked about more restrictions on land development, 50% of farmers agreed with the statement, while 71 % of the total population agreed.

Question #8: When asked whether the loss of wildlife habitat was a concern, 44% of the farmers agreed, while 78% of the total population agreed.

Question #9: When asked about township promotion and cooperation with open space land purchase programs, 30% of the farmers agreed, while 57% of the total population agreed.

Question #10: When asked whether landowners have been doing a good job of protecting the environment, 36% of craftsman agreed, while 61 % of the total population agreed.

Question #14: When asked whether preserving farmland was the choice and responsibility of individual landowners, 100% of the farmers agreed, while 65% of the total population agreed. This may be an indication that farmers as a group are supportive of individual choice, while the overall population favored choice and restrictions.

Question #16: When asked whether development was acceptable if prime agricultural land is not used, 80% of the farmers agreed, while 57% of the total population agreed.

Question #17: When asked whether zoning and subdivision regulations helped maintain the quality of life, 20% of the retired population agree, while 54% of the total population agreed. More information would be needed to determine if retirees feel that more restrictions are needed, or less.

Question #24: When asked if multiple-family dwellings should be encouraged, 44% of the farmers agreed, compared with 21% of the total population.

Question #26: When asked whether the level of lake shore development was acceptable, the self-employed and retired responders had an 80%, agreement level, while 58% of the overall population, agreed.

Question #27: When asked if public sewers for lake shore areas were a priority, 80% of the farmers agreed, while 55% of the total population agreed.

Question #29: When asked about level of satisfaction with community aspects, 70% of farmers found the employment opportunities acceptable but only 29% of the laborers found employment acceptable. The total population had a 53% level of acceptability for employment opportunities.

Question #33: When asked what land uses were acceptable or non-acceptable, 50% of the farmers felt hobby farms were acceptable, while 95% of the total population agreed; 43% of the farmers felt rural residential was acceptable compared with 79% of the total population; 60% of

the government employees felt feedlots were acceptable compared with 27% of the total population (this may be due to the small sample size of government employees).

Other than the questions noted above, no individual groups reflected a different profile than the overall population.

## VISIONING QUESTIONNAIRE AND VISION STATEMENT

Along with the Issues and Opportunities identified in Issues Generation and a Community Survey, a Vision Statement can set the broad agenda for a planning activity. A Visioning Questionnaire was distributed at the Issues Generation Workshop and to selected persons in the community. This questionnaire was designed to refine information about people's attitudes regarding planning issues and the future direction of the Town.

The Visioning Questionnaire solicits answers to questions intended to evoke the respondents wishes and desires for the future of their community. A content analysis was performed on the results to derive consistent themes from the responses and those themes were then crafted into a vision statement that hopefully captured the broad, overriding goals for the future of the community. The questionnaire results and vision statement follow.

### TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISIONING QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*Visioning – The process by which a community defines the future it wants.*

#### **1. What qualities or characteristics of the Town of Alden do you want protected, maintained, or achieved over the next twenty-five or so years?**

Lakes, Rivers, Streams and Wetlands

Apple River area to remain as "wild" as possible

Protect the best, high production, prime farmland, noted to be found in SW Alden

Green Space, Open Space

Woods; Woodlands; Forest

Country Quiet; Peace and Quiet

Clean water and air

Wildlife, Quality Habitat

Natural Beauty; Natural Environment

Charming rural area with great natural environment protected from encroaching development

Rural Character, Atmosphere, Setting or Landscape

Allow other (marginal) agricultural land to be farmed or have livestock

Limit development; don't want to see housing development everywhere I look

Protect natural resources

Good transportation, roads

Planned, controlled development maximizing land and put in proper places

Small developments 5-10 homes on 10-20 acres

Direct development to small lots in and around incorporated communities

Affordable taxes; long-time residents and those on fixed-income feeling the pinch

**2. What are the top two things that you think should be qualities or characteristics of the Town of Alden in 2030?**

Mix of Agriculture, Residential, limited Commercial  
Still a rural township, remain rural America, rural character or atmosphere  
Open Spaces; Continuous and contiguous green space in habitat, parks or natural environments  
Hobby Farms  
Peace and Quiet  
High quality water in lakes and rivers  
Maintain Wetlands  
Natural resources protected  
Good quality of life with adequate services for all income levels  
Apple River watershed protected, beauty and quality  
Impact fees  
Lack of commercial and industrial development  
Without excessive residential developments, overcrowding or large demand for public services

**3. What do you want your community to look like in the future?**

Very much like 10 years ago, slow change  
Maintain rural character; still have the appearance and feel of a rural area  
Rural area with small developments  
Conservation development  
Same as it does today, pretty much, as close as possible  
Like it does now, a mix of farms, woodlands, pleasant landscapes, quiet, untroubled ambiance  
Good quality housing  
Good employment opportunities  
Agricultural base; evident agriculture; preserve, protect and encourage agriculture  
Not end up just another suburb of Twin Cities  
Areas designated for development  
Public open spaces, especially access to the Apple River  
Every new home must plant a minimum of five new trees

**4. Identify any places, features, or characteristics that make your community special and unique.**

Apple River, Lakes, The Pike Hole on the Apple River (Recreational Area)  
Little Falls  
Alden Springs  
Mud Lake Springs  
Rice Lake Springs  
3 Pine Lakes  
Parker's Creek  
Deronda Farm  
Many clean lakes, streams and ponds, where you can still walk and enjoy their peace and beauty

**4. cont'd**

Woods, woodlands and their sights and sounds  
Clean air  
General, large open, non-developed areas  
Farms with their variety of crops; responsible agriculture  
Rural Character or Atmosphere  
Gently rolling landscapes, some farm, some forest, some grasslands  
Friendly people  
Abundant wildlife and nature  
Good Roads  
Good Town government; expect Town Board and Zoning to watch out for its people  
Close to cultural activities

**5. Identify any current qualities, characteristics, policies or trends in the area that you believe contradict your vision for the Town of Alden.**

Development allowed happening too rapidly  
Unplanned development; need town and regional planning  
Too much building in agricultural area  
Randomly place subdivisions  
Housing developments, want country atmosphere not suburbia  
Too many dead-end roads without a plan for future connections  
No real plan for where development is to occur, its scale or size, or its character/design  
Junk, debris stored on land  
Semi-trailers parked  
Ladd Auto Wrecking, better screening  
The trend towards housing developments  
Large subdivisions  
Multi-family housing  
Commercial/industrial enterprises (excavation, auto garages, etc.)  
High value of real estate drives many decisions  
Increasing traffic and noise  
More people coming to or through the Town  
Alden is poised for and experiencing a tremendous increase in population  
High land prices and taxes encourage farmers to sell  
Increase in population causes demands for more roads and gov't services leading to big gov't and higher taxes  
Influx of people that will expect services that they were used to elsewhere  
Poor police patrols  
No vision  
How to protect the Apple River?  
How to ensure contiguous and continuous greenspace for habitat?  
Each development is not examined in terms of its fit within a coherent Town plan  
Carving up the future, lot by lot

**6. What types of land uses should be encouraged, protected, preserved or regulated in the Town of Alden?** Check all that apply.

	<b>encouraged</b>	<b>protected</b>	<b>preserved</b>	<b>regulated</b>
Agricultural	11	12	11	3
Residential	1	1	1	12
Commercial	1	1		14
Industrial				14
Parks & Recreational	12	5	7	1
Forests	11	10	10	1
Wetlands & Shorelands	9	14	11	4
Open Spaces	10	12	11	4
Other: <u>taxes</u>				1
Other: <u>housing developments</u>				1

**7. What is your vision for residential housing growth in the community?**

- Clustering; maintain open space
- Single family houses, on large lots or smaller lots clustered surrounded by open space
- Maximize use of land with denser development, clustered with open space
- Develop 5 acres of a 40 every 5 years
- Allow 30 acre Hobby Farms in Agriculture
- Explore transfer of development rights
- Limit backlot development around lakes and rivers
- Dense development should no occur along the Apple River
- No multi-family, does not fit Alden
- Encourage cluster and open space
- New houses very sparse, 10-20 acres per house
- Occur on non-productive land or marginal farmland
- Surrounding towns starting to look like “displaced suburbs”
- Not adequately managed currently
- Single homes on 2 acres minimum; developments of 2-4 lots should be on 10 acres min.;
- developments over 4 lots developer should be responsible for common well and septic
- Planned development and services maintained to keep pace with growth
- Very slow
- Need development and no-development belts or zones
- Encourage in open areas (non-ag) with an ordinance on planting trees

**8. What is your vision for commercial or industrial development in the community?**

- None or very little here now
- Should be kept at a minimum; limited
- No commercial or industrial, don’t see it as part of the community
- It should occur only along or near County or State Highways, if at all
- Where it currently exists on County or State highways
- Not adequately managed presently, don’t know how it is currently managed

**8. cont'd**

Address high truck traffic

Increased population will require additional commercial development, occurring where need is greatest

Light industry could help the local economy, especially if labor is from the Town

Don't see as a benefit to the Town

Highly regulated

**9. What is your vision for natural areas and open space in the community?**

They should be protected, preserved so they can be enjoyed for generations to come, remain as intact as possible

Protect land and water resources

There should be responsibility for all who develop land to provide open space, either through set aside, fee in lieu of set aside, or clustering surrounded by open space

No more development on the Apple River

Parks

Walking paths

Bike Trails

Preserve hunting and fishing rights, developments sensitive to access issues

Maintain adequate public open spaces

Encourage natural areas and open spaces; if trails and parks are created keep the County involved so they are properly maintained and policed

## **TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION STATEMENT**

*Vision Statement – An idealized statement that articulates the future a community wants.*

We, the residents, envision that in 2030, the Town of Alden will continue to offer rural country living with a mixture of agriculture, woodlands, grasslands, residences and the natural resource and scenic qualities found in the community today.

The Town will be a peaceful and quiet place to live, with safe, clean neighborhoods, quality housing, well-maintained properties, and friendly neighbors. The community will benefit from well planned and maintained roads and services, making sure that the development that creates increased demand for them pays its fair share. The Town will be a progressive community, strengthened by local control and pride in, and loyalty to, the Town.

Historically viable farm operations associated with the best farmland in the Town will be protected while accommodating agricultural diversification on marginally productive lands. The Town will seek to limit and manage large livestock operations as they are deemed intensive industrial-like uses not in character with the Town.

Lakes, rivers, streams, shorelands, open space, woodlands, and other natural resources will provide wildlife habitat and will be available for the enjoyment and economic benefit of residents, including public access to lakes, rivers and other recreational opportunities such as parks and trails. Town treasures such as the Apple River, and the many springs and lakes are protected so development does not entirely destroy their natural beauty and function. Environmental protection of air, surface water and groundwater quality is essential. These attributes will continue to contribute to the quality of life and aesthetic beauty of the Town.

Well-planned and managed development will let the community grow while retaining a country feel, not compromising the things that make it unique. Quality construction of single-family homes in small clusters with significant open space and proper wastewater treatment will be encouraged to create a safe and attractive rural setting, reduce the visual impact of development, and minimize negative impacts on agriculture and natural resources. Transfer of Development Rights will create a win-win-win situation in the Town where landowners can be compensated for their investment in land, the community can keep valued agricultural and natural resource lands from development, and developers can still develop in appropriate locations. Mobile home parks, and large subdivisions with small lots and no retained open space will be restricted.

Controlled local-serving commercial in the rural areas, including the unincorporated villages of Horse Creek and Little Falls, limited retail/services in appropriate locations along County and State highways, agricultural operations, and in-home, cottage businesses will be the significant commercial activities in the Town, with many residents continuing to commute to other communities for employment. Other than limited light manufacturing fabricating value-added products, industrial uses will be discouraged.

This vision will be achieved with community involvement, well-considered local land use controls and community programs that are balanced with respect for individual property rights.

## ***THE HOUSING ELEMENT***

This section contains an inventory and analysis of housing characteristics in the Town of Alden. Included is information regarding the current housing stock, housing affordability, housing forecasts, and programs/policies that are available to promote a wide variety of housing options.

An analysis of housing conditions will help the Town of Alden to gain a better understanding of the changes that have occurred over the past 20-25 years. It will also provide insight into future changes that can be anticipated. Those anticipated changes are reflected in the household projections found in the Issues and Opportunities Element on page 17 and in discussion in this Element. This information will create a foundation from which decisions regarding future housing development can be based.

### **HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS**

Table 28 shows building permit data for the years 1994 through 2004. It can be seen that during that period the Town of Alden averaged about 31 new single family residences. However, over the past

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>
2004	37
2003	30
2002	40
2001	38
2000	32
1999	32
1998	37
1997	38
1996	13
1995	25
1994	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>342</b>

*Source: Polk County Zoning Office \* may or may not include mobile homes*

eight years the Town experienced almost 35 homes on average. If those homes were occupied by the 2.72 persons per household reported in 2000 that would mean almost 100 new residents during that time.

General housing characteristics for 1980, 1990 and 2000 are found in Table 29. It can be seen that the Town of Alden saw increases in housing units, percentage of owner-occupied units, percentage of single family units, while renter-occupied units, vacant or seasonal units, mobile homes and persons per household declined. In addition, as expected, both home values and rents increased. As shown, between 1980 and 2000, 588 housing units were added or an increase of almost 91 percent, with most of that growth occurring in the 1980s.

**TABLE 29**  
**HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Total Housing Units	647	1,056	1,235
• Total Occupied Units	577	716	973
• Owner Occupied Units	505	635	888
Percent of Total Occupied	87.5	88.7	91.3
• Renter Occupied Units	72	81	85
Percent of Total Occupied	12.5	11.3	8.7
• Vacant/Seasonal Units	291	340	262
• Single Family Units	559	953	1,161
• Multi-Family Units	38	6	9
• Mobile Homes	54	97	75
Median Home Value	\$49,800	\$69,500	\$139,700
Median Cash Rent	\$193	\$404	\$478
Household Size (persons)	3.23	2.98	2.72

Source: U.S. Census

Table 30 shows indicators of the age of the housing stock in the Town of Alden. It is quite evident that new housing in the town is more than replacing any units that might have been lost through attrition.

**TABLE 30**  
**YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT (housing units) • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
1979 to March 1980	39	1989 to March 1990	55	1999 to March 2000	70
1975 to 1978	95	1985 to 1988	100	1995 to 1998	131
1970 to 1974	96	1980 to 1984	113	1990 to 1994	113
1960 to 1969	77	1970 to 1979	287	1980 to 1989	199
1950 to 1959	42	1960 to 1969	137	1970 to 1979	220
1940 to 1949	23	1950 to 1959	42	1960 to 1969	111
1939 or earlier	279	1940 to 1949	53	1940 to 1959	170
		1939 or earlier	269	1939 or earlier	235

Source: U.S. Census

**TABLE 31**  
**UNITS IN STRUCTURE (housing units) • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
1-unit, detached	559	1-unit, detached	948	1-unit, detached	1,158
1-unit, attached	--	1-unit, attached	5	1-unit, attached	3
2 units	21	2 to 4 units	6	2 to 4 units	4
3 and 4 units	--	5 to 9 units	--	5 to 9 units	--
5 or more units	17	10 or more units	--	10 or more units	5

Source: U.S. Census

Table 31 shows the number of housing units by the number of units in the structure. The Town of Alden is certainly characterized by the prevalence of single-family housing.

**TABLE 32**  
**HOUSING VALUE owner-occupied units • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

1980		1990		2000	
Less than \$50,000	110	Less than \$50,000	63	Less than \$50,000	5
\$50,000 to \$99,000	99	\$50,000 to \$99,000	190	\$50,000 to \$99,000	93
\$100,000 to \$149,000	8	\$100,000 to \$149,000	37	\$100,000 to \$149,000	215
\$150,000 to \$ 199,000	1	\$150,000 to \$ 199,000	8	\$150,000 to \$ 199,000	79
\$200,000 or more	--	\$200,000 or more	5	\$200,000 to \$299,000	92
				\$300,000 to \$499,000	31
				\$500,000 or more	5

Source: U.S. Census

**TABLE 33**  
**CONTRACT RENT renter-occupied units •1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

1980		1990		2000	
Less than \$250	29	Less than \$250	18	Less than \$200	2
\$250 to \$499	1	\$250 to \$499	29	\$200 to \$499	28
\$500 or more	--	\$500 or more	--	\$500 to \$749	12
				\$750 to \$999	7
				\$1,000 to \$1,499	3
				\$1,500 or more	--

Source: U.S. Census

The changing value/cost of housing is indicated by Table 32 *Owner-occupied Housing Value* and Table 33 *Contract Rent*. In 1980, there was only one owner-occupied housing unit reported to be worth at least \$150,000 and none over \$200,000. By 1990, there were 13 owner-occupied houses worth at least \$150,000, 5 of those over \$200,000. In 2000, 207 owner-occupied houses were reported to be worth over \$150,000 in the town or about 40 percent of all owner-occupied housing. Indeed, Table 21 shows that the median value of owner-occupied housing was \$139,700 in 2000. Regarding rental housing in the town, Table 33 shows that the rents charged in the town experienced similar increases from 1980 to 2000.

**TABLE 34**  
**MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE owner-occupied units •1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden and area communities**

Community	1980	1990	2000
Polk County	\$41,000	\$53,600	\$100,200
<b>Town of Alden</b>	<b>49,800</b>	<b>69,500</b>	<b>139,700</b>
Town of Black Brook	41,300	51,100	101,600
Town of Farmington	53,100	62,300	129,400
Town of Garfield	53,800	69,800	122,500
Town of Lincoln	49,500	66,900	120,500
Town of Osceola	48,300	68,300	138,200
St. Croix County	54,800	74,400	139,500
Town of Somerset	63,600	83,700	156,000
Town of Stanton	59,000	72,800	123,800
Town of Star Prairie	53,800	74,500	139,700

Source: U.S. Census

Local trends in owner-occupied housing value can be seen in Table 34, which shows median housing value for the Town of Alden and area communities. It is apparent that the trends

affecting housing value in St. Croix County are influencing the Town of Alden as well. The Town of Alden is comparable with Star Prairie to the south and has owner-occupied housing values above the average for St. Croix County.

**TABLE 35**  
**SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME • 1999**  
**Town of Alden**

	Number	Percent of Total
Less than 15.0 percent	29	34.5
15.0 to 19.9 percent	12	14.3
20.0 to 24.9 percent	11	13.1
25.0 to 29.9 percent	9	10.7
30.0 to 34.9 percent	3	3.6
35.0 percent or more	17	20.2
Not computed	3	3.6

Source: U.S. Census

**TABLE 36**  
**GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME • 1999**  
**Town of Alden**

	Number	Percent of Total
Less than 15.0 percent	20	36.4
15.0 to 19.9 percent	16	29.1
20.0 to 24.9 percent	7	12.7
25.0 to 29.9 percent	--	--
30.0 to 34.9 percent	6	10.9
35.0 percent or more	3	5.5
Not computed	3	5.5

Source: U.S. Census

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability is concern of fairness in our society. Besides just considering low and moderate income people, young, working families, often just starting out, elderly or other people on fixed incomes require housing within their means in a rapidly changing housing market. If housing becomes too expensive in a community we can find people’s parents or grandparents or their children can have a hard time affording to live where they grew up or close to family.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), defines affordable housing as that housing which does not cost a household more than 30% of their monthly or annual income. This affordability standard is not an underwriting standard; it does not say that households are unable to pay more than that amount. Households may choose to pay more to get the housing they need or want. However, according to HUD standards, people should have the choice of having decent and safe housing for no more than 30 percent of their household income.

As shown in Table 35, a majority (73%) of owner occupied households in the Town of Alden pay less than 30% of their household income towards housing costs. A slightly higher percentage of renters find their housing costs “affordable” (Table 36). Of those owner-occupied

units, an indeterminate number of those people could be spending more than 30% of their gross income on housing cost as a lifestyle choice.

Table 37 presents the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Polk County income limits and fair market rents for its housing programs. HUD identifies qualifying households by family income by family size which relates to various housing programs it administers. The income limits are broken out by family size of 1 to 8 persons and a percentage of median family income which relates to funding for prescribed low income, very low income and 30% of median income families. The fair market rent relates to the rent limits for the

**TABLE 37**  
**HUD HOUSING PROGRAM INCOME LIMITS (DOLLARS) • 2000**  
**Polk County**

Median Family Income (All families)	\$53,000							
	<b>Family Size (persons)</b>							
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
30% of Median Income (Targeted population for HUD housing programs)	\$9,800	\$11,200	\$12,600	\$14,000	\$15,150	\$16,250	\$17,350	\$18,500
Very Low Income (50% of median)	16,350	18,700	21,000	23,350	25,200	27,100	28,950	30,800
Low Income (80% of median)	26,150	29,900	33,600	37,350	40,350	43,350	46,350	49,300
	<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>							
Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>			
2000 Fair Market Rent (dollars)	\$276	\$322	\$417	\$523	\$590			

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**TABLE 38**  
**HUD HOUSING PROGRAM INCOME LIMITS (DOLLARS) • 2005**  
**Polk County**

Median Family Income (All families)	\$55,900							
	<b>Family Size (persons)</b>							
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
30% of Median Income (Targeted population for HUD housing programs)	\$11,750	\$13,400	\$15,100	\$16,750	\$18,100	\$19,450	\$20,800	\$22,150
Very Low Income (50% of median)	19,550	22,350	25,150	27,950	30,200	32,400	34,650	36,900
Low Income (80% of median)	31,300	35,800	40,250	44,700	48,300	51,900	55,450	59,050
	<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>							
Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>			
2005 Fair Market Rent (dollars)	\$382	\$447	\$587	\$722	\$745			

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**TABLE 39**  
**NUMBER OF BEDROOMS renter-occupied units • 2000**  
**Town of Alden**

No bedroom	0
1 bedroom	5
2 bedrooms	24
3 bedrooms	32
4 bedrooms	13
5 or more bedrooms	3

Source: U.S. Census

Section 8 rental vouchers program. Using year 2000 information in comparing the fair market rent figures to the contract rent in Table 33, the median cash rent from Table 29, and the number

of bedrooms in renter-occupied units in Table 39, one can infer that a significant number of rental units in the Town of Alden might be available for rent subsidies. In 2000, median (50% higher and 50% lower) rents in the Town of Alden were \$478, seventy-nine percent of renter occupied housing units were three bedrooms or less, seventy-six percent of renter occupied units command less than \$500 in rent, and the maximum fair market rent for a subsidized 3 bedroom apartment was \$523.

## HOUSING PROJECTIONS

Household projections developed for the Issues and Opportunities Element are repeated in Table 40. However, the number of potential future housing units relates to not only dwellings occupied by households but also to those dwellings that are vacant or used seasonally.

<b>TABLE 40</b>						
<b>HOUSEHOLD PROJECTION • 2005 to 2030</b>						
<b>Town of Alden</b>						
<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005 Estimate</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
973	1,086	1,210	1,330	1,450	1,566	1,675

Source: Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan, WCWRPC 2005

The amount of anticipated vacant and seasonal housing units are presented in Table 41, derived from historical change and the knowledge that, while some seasonal dwelling units will continue to be built, many of these units are being converted to full-time residences by retirees and natural amenity lifestyle seekers.

<b>TABLE 41</b>						
<b>VACANT/SEASONAL UNIT PROJECTION • 2005 to 2030</b>						
<b>Town of Alden</b>						
<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005 Estimate</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
262	249	236	224	212	202	192

Source: Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan, WCWRPC 2005

Combining the household and vacant/seasonal unit projections yields the potential number of housing units in the Town in five-year increments to the year 2030 found below in Table 42.

<b>TABLE 42</b>						
<b>HOUSING UNIT PROJECTION • 2005 to 2030</b>						
<b>Town of Alden</b>						
<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005 Estimate</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
1,235	1,335	1,446	1,554	1,662	1,768	1,867

Source: Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan, WCWRPC 2005

Based on the population, household and vacant/seasonal unit projections, the housing unit projections reveal that the Town of Alden could see a 40% increase in housing units in the 25 year period between 2005 and 2030.

## **HOUSING PROGRAMS**

### **HOME PROGRAMS**

#### **Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)**

A CHDO is an official designation of selected private nonprofit housing development corporations that meet requirements set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). An organization, which is designated as a CHDO can potentially qualify for special project funds, operating funds and technical assistance support associated with the state's HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME). A CHDO must have in its charter, resolutions or bylaws, a statement that among its purposes is the development of decent housing that is affordable to low and moderate income persons. A CHDO must be community based and have significant representation of low income community residents on the CHDOs board. The regulations requires at least one-third of the governing board's membership be low income residents. A CHDO may be created by a public body provided the nonprofit is not controlled by the public body. For this reason, a CHDO must have a governing body two-thirds of, which are individuals who are acting in a private capacity. In addition, a CHDO must meet the requirement to maintain accountability to low income community residents. This may be done through involvement of local residents or neighborhood organizations in the development of the housing project; or a CHDO may solicit local resident input project by project; or in its general planning, project selection, and development activities. A CHDO must have a demonstrated capacity for carrying out housing development in the geographic area that the organization serves. A CHDO may be required to demonstrate a history of providing housing within its service area. CHDOs can own, develop and sponsor housing development projects for low income persons using HOME funds. A CHDO is considered a developer if the CHDO has contractual authority to acquire, finance, rehabilitate and/or manage the project for the term of affordability and may or may not be the legal owner. A CHDO is considered a sponsor if the CHDO assists another nonprofit to own and manage a project.

The CHDO operating within Polk County is:

**West Central WI CAA, Inc.**  
525 Second Street  
P.O. Box 308  
Glenwood City, WI 54013

Peter Kilde  
Executive Director

Phone – (715) 265-4271  
Fax – (715) 265-7031

#### **HOME-Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Program (HHR)**

The Wisconsin Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has identified homeownership and the conservation of quality owner-occupied and rental housing as top priorities for allocating federal and state housing resources. A program was established to provide essential home purchase assistance and necessary home rehabilitation, and other vital improvements for dwelling units occupied by low- and moderate-income households. The source of funds is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and the American dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI) program. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce, DHCD awards these funds to local units of government and local housing organizations through a biennial funding cycle.

Eligible applicants for funds under the HHR program include:

- The governing body of a village, city, town, or county;
- The governing body of a federally-recognized American Indian tribe or band in the State of Wisconsin;
- A public agency or nonprofit organization;
- Faith-based or religious organizations, as long as the funds are not used to support inherently religious activities.

The program is designed to provide funding for three HOME-eligible activities:

- **Homebuyer assistance:** Direct assistance may be provided to eligible homebuyers for acquisition (downpayment and closing costs), acquisition and rehabilitation, or new construction. Grantees may utilize the funds to construct housing for sale to low- and moderate-income (LMI) homebuyers (household income at or below 80% County Median Income).
- **Owner-occupied rehabilitation:** Funds are provided for making essential improvements to single-family homes serving as the principal residence of LMI owners. Eligible costs include energy-related improvements, accessibility improvements, lead-based paint hazard reduction, and repair of code violations.
- **Rental rehabilitation:** Funds are provided to landlords for making essential repairs to units rented to tenants at or below 60% of the county median income. Landlords are required to lease HOME-assisted units at or below the HUD published Fair Market Rent (FMR) for the county.

HOME Homebuyer and Rental Rehabilitation funds, including ADDI, total approximately \$12 million for the biennial funding cycle. Grants to eligible applicants will be awarded only in an amount commensurate with the scope of the proposed program and the applicant's capacity.

Information regarding the HHR Program may be obtained by contacting Betty Kalscheur at (608) 267-6904.

### **Home Single-Family Housing Program (HSF)**

The HOME Single-Family Housing (HSF) program is designed to provide funding to assist low- and moderate-income (LMI) homebuyers and homeowners to secure and maintain safe, decent, affordable housing. The program is part of the Bureau of Housing, Division of Community Development, Wisconsin Department of Commerce. Eligible costs covered by the program include:

- Homebuyer assistance to acquire a single-family home, including: down payment and closing costs, gap financing, new construction, essential rehab at the time of purchase.
- Homeowner assistance for essential improvements to the home, including: structural repair, energy-related components, accessibility improvements, lead-based paint hazard reduction/removal, and repair of code violations.

Organizations that are eligible to complete for HSF funding include local governments, federally recognized American Indian tribes/bands, housing authorities, non-profit and for-profit corporations, and faith-based organizations. Eligible homebuyers/owners must have household

incomes at or below 80% of County Median Income (CMI) and the property must be the primary residence of the owner.

Information regarding the current HOME Single-Family Housing Program may be obtained by calling Betty Kalscheur at 608-267-6904.

### **Rental Rehabilitation Program**

The HOME Rental Rehabilitation Program (RRP) assists existing residential rental property owners in obtaining low interest loans to help defray rehabilitation expenses. Loans may be for up to 75% of the cost of repairs. The loans are available through selected local non-profit and local government sponsors that compete annually for funds. Owners are required to lease HOME-assisted units at or below HUD determined Fair Market Rent (FMR) levels and keep them affordable for a specified time based on the amount of HOME assistance. At least 90% of the units assisted under this program must be occupied by households with incomes at or below 60% of the County's Median Household Income. The average cost of repairs for a HOME-assisted project must be between \$1,000 and \$24,999 per unit. This program is part of the Bureau of Housing, Division of Community Development, Wisconsin Department of Commerce. It is federally funded through HUD's HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME).

Information regarding the current Rental Rehabilitation Program may be obtained by contacting Sandi Capps at (608) 267-6908.

### **Rental Housing Development**

The Rental Housing Development (RHD) Program assists eligible housing organizations, particularly Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), with funds to develop affordable rental housing. For-profit corporations may partner with the above-mentioned groups or directly apply for these funds. The funds must serve households at or below 60% of the County Median Income (CMI). Projects receiving HOME funds are subject to rent limitations for a specified period. Funds may be used for acquisition, rehabilitation and new construction activities. Application and Program Guide are available below and accepted as long as the supply of funds lasts. Application submission dates are quarterly. This program is part of the Bureau of Local Development, Division of Housing and Community Development, Wisconsin Department of Commerce. It is federally funded through HUD's Home Investment Partnership's Program (HOME).

Information regarding the Rental Housing Development Program may be obtained by contacting Meryl Lesch at (608) 267-6912.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT**

### **CDBG-Small Cities Housing Program**

The Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), provides grants to general purpose units of local government for housing programs which principally benefit low and moderate income (LMI) households. CDBG dollars are flexible and responsive to local needs. In addition to addressing LMI housing needs, CDBG can

be used to leverage other programs or serve as a local match. The grant also can be used as an incentive to involve the private sector in local community development efforts or to respond to area needs. Often the CDBG program serves as a catalyst for other community development projects.

General purpose units of local government (i.e., towns, villages, and cities with populations of less than 50,000 and counties other than Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Dane) are eligible to apply. Applications may be submitted individually or jointly with another jurisdiction where mutual action is needed to solve a shared problem. Special purpose units of government such as redevelopment authorities, housing authorities, and sanitary districts cannot apply but may be chosen by grantees to operate the program. Indian tribes are not eligible because there is a special Indian Block Grant Program administered directly by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Eligible activities include:

- Rehabilitation of dwelling units.
- Removal of architectural barriers.
- Homeownership opportunities for renters.
- Payment of relocation costs and benefits.
- Small public facilities projects.
- Demolition or removal of buildings so site can be used for LMI housing.
- Conversion of buildings into LMI dwelling units.
- Acquisition of real property for the construction of LMI housing with other sources of funds.
- Site improvements for the construction of LMI housing with other sources of funds.

Housing proposals will be funded in order to upgrade the quality and expand the supply of decent, safe, and sanitary housing for LMI households. Successful programs have included residential rehabilitation (including accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities); conversion of commercial property to residential units; assistance to LMI renters to become homeowners; and small public facilities projects.

Under the Rehabilitation program available funding is approximately \$7million per year with the average 22-month grant being approximately \$450,000. Under the Development Project program a minimum of \$750,000 is available annually. While the grant ceiling establishes the maximum which may be requested, individual grants will be awarded only in amounts commensurate with the size of the community, the capacity to complete the work in a timely manner and the scope of the proposed program.

Information regarding the CDBG-Small Cities Housing Program can be obtained by contacting Joanna Schumann at (608) 261-6535.

### **CDBG-Emergency Assistance Program (CDBG-EAP)**

The Community Development Block Grant Emergency Assistance Program (CDBG-EAP) is a special program designed by the Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to assist local units of government that have recently experienced a natural or manmade disaster.

Funded from the Division's annual CDBG allocation, the program provides funds to address housing and community needs which occur as a direct result of natural or manmade disasters. Communities may apply to DHCD within 60 days of the date of the disaster.

Eligibility:

- Cities, towns, counties and villages with populations less than 50,000 and all counties except Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Dane.
- Residents of the municipality awarded CDBG-EAP funds may receive assistance if their dwelling was damaged by the disaster.
- Municipality will be required to give preference to those households with incomes at or below 80% of the county median.
- Infrastructure affected by natural disaster

Eligible Activities:

CDBG-EAP funds may be used to address damage caused by the disaster, including:

- Repair of disaster related damage to the dwelling unit, including repair or replacement of plumbing, heating, and electrical systems. CDBG-EAP funds may be used to reimburse owners for repairs that have been made in direct response to the disaster for up to 50% of the pre-market equalized assessed value.
- Acquisition and demolition of dwellings unable to be repaired.
- Downpayment and closing cost assistance for the purchase of replacement dwellings. Assistance is limited to 50% of the pre-market equalized assessed value.
- Streets
- Sidewalks
- Community Centers
- Publicly owned utility system repairs

CDBG-EAP funds *may not* be used for:

- Repairs or other costs covered by insurance or other federal or state assistance.
- Cleaning.
- Replacement of furniture, food, clothing or other personal items.
- Any repairs not directly related to the disaster.

Funding:

- A maximum of \$500,000 may be awarded to a local unit of government to address emergency housing conditions, or damaged public facilities.
- Residents of the community awarded CDBG-EAP funds may receive assistance if their dwelling was damaged by the disaster and if their household income doesn't exceed the income limit established for their county (100% of the County Median Income).

Information regarding EAP may be obtained by contacting Jack Sanderson at (608) 267-0317.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS - HOMELESS**

### **Critical Assistance Program (CA)**

The Critical Assistance Program (CA) was created in 2004. Comprised of Bureau of Supportive Housing funds formerly known as Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) and Housing Opportunities Direct Assistance Program (HODAP) funds are designed to provide direct financial assistance to reduce the housing costs of low- and moderate-income households. Grant awards include administrative funds to support the housing activities, and may be used to provide housing counseling as well as staff salaries and other administrative necessities. Prevention of homelessness is an important part of the HUD Continuum of Care philosophy however it is not an allowable activity for funding through the HUD Continuum of Care Supportive Housing Program. Therefore, the Bureau of Supportive Housing (BSH) plans to use \$500,300 to fund prevention activities including services that are concerned with housing counseling and eviction or foreclosure prevention in those parts of the state that are not served using HUD Emergency Shelter Grant or State funded Homeless Prevention funds. The BSH encourages the coordination of CA prevention activities with existing local programs and expects the applicant agency to collaborate with agencies in local communities for the delivery of homelessness prevention services.

Eligible CA activities include:

- Rent and Security Deposits  
Grantees may provide rental assistance to households in the form of security deposits, short-term rental subsidy, and/or utility costs.
- Foreclosure Prevention  
Homeowners may receive assistance with payment of principal and interest on a mortgage loan that is in arrearage, property taxes, and utility arrearages. The homeowner must show the ability to make future payments.

The grantee agency may use up to 15% of the award for administrative funds to support the housing activities.

Information regarding the Critical Assistance Program may be obtained by contacting Judy Wilcox at (608) 266-9388.

### **Emergency Shelter Grant/Transitional Housing Grant/Homelessness Prevention Program (ESG/THP/HPP)**

Authorized by HUD under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) are to be used to improve the quality of emergency shelters for the homeless, make additional emergency shelters available, meet the costs of operating emergency shelters, and provide prevention programs and essential social services to homeless individuals and families. The shelter programs serve a broad range of homeless interests, including shelters for victims of domestic violence, runaway adolescents, and persons with disabilities, etc.

Any city, county, tribe, or private nonprofit agency (if its project receives an approval certification by the local government) may apply for and receive funding for its emergency shelter program. There are specific requirements for participation by religious organizations. DCD currently administers the application and contract process (including the required

Environmental Impact Assessment), monitors the work of the sub grantees, and files appropriate reports with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Grant award recipients must comply with all federal requirements as detailed in the grant agreement. These include nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements. Grant amounts, moreover, may not be used to renovate, rehabilitate, or convert buildings owned by pervasively religious organizations unless specific safeguards are established to protect the public investment.

The following are major program requirements:

- Each city, county, or private nonprofit agency must match its emergency shelter grant with an equal amount of funds from other sources. In the case of the balance of state agencies, an adjusted amount reflects the \$100,000 exemption by the federal government of the required match for those agencies, which find it a hardship to provide the dollar for dollar match.
- Any grantee receiving ESG funds for shelter operations and essential services must maintain the shelter building for as long as federal assistance is received. Any grantee receiving ESG funds for rehabilitation must maintain the shelter building for at least three years. Any grantee receiving ESG funds for major rehabilitation or conversion must use the building as a shelter for at least ten years.
- Private nonprofit ESG recipients must provide assistance to homeless individuals to help them in obtaining appropriate support services and public and/or private assistance available to them.
- Participation in the statewide Homeless Management Information System (Wisconsin ServicePoint) is a requirement.

Applicants are strongly urged to collaborate within their areas of service to ensure the availability of a comprehensive continuum of services for individuals and families affected by homelessness.

Emergency shelter funds may be used for one or more of four categories of eligible activities:

- 1) Renovation, major rehabilitation or conversion of buildings for use as emergency shelters for the homeless.
- 2) Prevention programs, up to 30% of the funds may be used for prevention programs.
- 3) Provision of essential services concerned with employment, physical health, mental health, substance abuse, education, or food (up to 30 percent of the funding may be taken from the aggregate amount of the grant that is given to the state or local government and used for essential services).
- 4) Payments for maintenance, operation costs (exclusive of staff), rent, insurance, utilities, and furnishings.

The amount of federal funding for ESG varies, but for the past few years it has been approximately \$1.8 million. All of the HUD funds received are distributed to Milwaukee Metro Counties, Other Metro Counties, and the Balance of State according to a specific formula. Since 1996, funds from the Interest Bearing Real Estate Trust Account (IBRETA) program have been added to the HUD ESG allocation to expand the available dollars. \$375,000 for the Transitional Housing Grant and \$1.4 million for HPP will be added to the pool of funds.

Funds will be made available in a combined application, the state THG/HPP program and the HUD ESG will be combined as a single application process for both grants. Information regarding the availability of the application will be posted on the DHCD website.

Information regarding ESG/THP/HPP may be obtained by contacting Judy Wilcox (608) 266-9388.

### **Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS**

The Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program is authorized by AIDS Housing Opportunity Act (AOHA) and amended by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 (Pub. L. 102-550 approved October 28, 1992). It is designed to provide eligible applicants with program and administrative resources for meeting the housing needs of persons with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or related diseases and their families. HOPWA funds may be used to assist all forms of housing designed to prevent homelessness including emergency housing, shared housing arrangements, apartments, single room occupancy (SRO) dwellings, and community residences. Appropriate services must be provided as a part of any HOPWA assisted housing, but HOPWA funds may also be used to provide services independent of any housing activity.

Any non-profit organization or governmental housing agency is an eligible applicant. There are specific requirements for participation by religious organizations. The Division of Housing and Community Development administers the application and contract process (including the required Environmental Impact Assessment), monitors the work of grant recipients and files required reports with the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The following activities may be carried out with HOPWA funds:

- Housing information services including counseling and referral to assist eligible persons to locate, acquire, finance and maintain housing.
- Resource identification to establish, coordinate and develop housing assistance resources for eligible persons.
- Acquisition, rehabilitation, conversion, lease and repair of facilities to provide housing and services and SRO or community residence new construction.
- Project or tenant based rental assistance, including assistance for shared housing arrangements. Short term rent, mortgage and utility payments to prevent the homelessness of tenants or mortgagors of dwellings.
- Supportive services including, but not limited to, health, mental health, assessment, permanent housing placement, drug and alcohol abuse treatment and counseling, day care, nutritional services, intensive care when required and assistance in gaining access to local State and Federal government benefits and services.
- Technical assistance in establishing and operating a community residence.

Grant award recipients must comply with federal requirements in 24 CFR part 574 -- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS. These include standards for supportive services and housing quality as well as non-discrimination and equal opportunity requirements.

Approximately \$400,000 is available for HOPWA programs annually. In the balance of state area funds are distributed in response to an application process. Contracts are scheduled to start October 1 of each year and they may be multi-year agreements.

Information regarding the HOPWA Program may be obtained by contacting Judy Wilcox at (608) 266-9388.

### **WISP - an HMIS for Wisconsin**

An HMIS is a Homeless Management Information System, a computerized data collection tool specifically designed to capture client level systemwide information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. The WI site is called WI ServicePoint or WISP for short. All questions about WI ServicePoint should be sent to: SPhelp@commerce.state.wi.us

## **STATE PROGRAMS**

### **Interest Bearing Real Estate Trust Accounts Program (IBRETA)**

Since 1993, Wisconsin Statutes require real estate brokers to establish interest-bearing real estate trust accounts for the deposit of all down payments, earnest money and other trust funds received by the broker and related to the conveyance of real estate. Banks and other depository institutions remit the interest from the IBRETA accounts, approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000 annually, to the State. The Dept. of Commerce, Division of Housing and Community Development uses these funds to augment existing emergency and transitional homeless programs. IBRETA dollars, partially fund grants to organizations that provide shelter or services to homeless individuals or families.

### **State Shelter Subsidy Grant Program**

The State Shelter Subsidy Grant Program (SSSG) This program provides up to 50% of an emergency shelter or voucher program's annual operating budget. These funds are available to programs with additional funding needs due to renovation/expansion of an existing shelter facility, the development of an existing building into a shelter facility, the expansion (or development) of shelter services or the inability of a shelter program to obtain adequate funding to continue an existing level of service. Estimates of the homeless population in Wisconsin range from 29,000 to 34,000. The emergency shelter programs funded by the State Shelter Subsidy Grant Program provided approximately 398,000 nights of shelter to 24,000 persons annually.

An eligible applicant may be a county or municipal governing body or agency, a community action agency, or other private non-profit organization. Only generic emergency facility or voucher programs are eligible. Individuals and families who are homeless are eligible for shelter and related services Domestic Abuse and Runaway shelters are not eligible.

The \$1,131,000 annual state appropriation is shared among Milwaukee County, Dane County, and balance of state areas and is available for three pre-determined allocations based on shelter use within each area. Grant amounts, which range from \$1,100 to \$60,000, are enhanced through the use of funds from the Interest Bearing Real Estate Trust Account (IBRETA) funds. In many areas, a local shelter or service provider is the designated lead agency which works with other shelters to develop a plan for distributing funds earmarked for that community. This plan is

submitted in their application to Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and must be endorsed by all shelters in that community. The grant to the lead agency may not exceed 50% of the participating shelters combined operating budgets. The balance of state shelter programs apply directly to DHCD for a grant. Funds are distributed by formula to all eligible applicants. The formula is based on the estimated number of shelter nights each applicant provides compared to the total number of shelter nights the balance of state agencies estimate they will provide. No applicant may receive a grant greater than 50% of its operating budget. The grant cycle for this program begins in late summer, when notices of available State Shelter Subsidy funding are sent to potential grantees. Applications are available on the DHCD website, by e-mail, diskette and hard copy. Applications are due to DHCD in fall and grant contracts begin in January.

Information regarding the SSSG Program may be obtained by contacting Patti Glassburn at (608) 266-8273.

### **Wisconsin Fresh Start**

The Wisconsin Fresh Start Program (WFS) awards funds to agencies to establish and sustain programs based on the Operation Fresh Start, Inc., service model. The program is designed to provide on-site housing construction and rehabilitation work experience, off-site academic classes and supportive services for at-risk young people. The program provides young people with education, employment skills and career direction leading to economic self-sufficiency. The purpose of the replication effort is to establish comparable projects throughout the state using the Operation Fresh Start program in Madison as the model. The program aims to increase the self-esteem and self-sufficiency of youths and young adults (ages 16 to 24) who evidence alcohol and other drug abuse problems; poor health and nutrition; low educational achievement; poor employment history; physical, sexual and emotional abuse or criminal histories. The program offers an educational component where participants complete classes leading to a high school equivalency diploma and a vocational component where participants learn basic home construction, rehabilitation and remodeling skills. An additional focus of the work component of the program is to rehabilitate substandard housing into well-built, mechanically sound and affordable dwellings for low- and moderate-income residents. This program is part of the Bureau of Housing, Division of Community Development, Wisconsin Department of Commerce. It is funded through a variety of federal, state and local funding sources.

Information regarding the Fresh Start Program may be obtained by calling Padraic Durkin (608) 267-2737.

## HOUSING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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### *Housing Goals*

To provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and future housing demand in the Town of Alden.

Manage residential development in a manner that allows for affordable, quality housing choices consistent with the rural nature of the community.

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### *Objectives:*

- 1) Ensure land is zoned for low-density residential development.
- 2) Encourage conservation design residential development which helps preserve open space.
- 3) Preserve rural character by utilizing existing transportation routes and encouraging the protection of natural features.
- 4) Provide for a range of housing opportunities for persons of all age groups, income levels, and special needs. Encourage safe, accessible, quality housing development and housing stock, while maintaining affordability for young families, the disabled and seniors.
- 5) Carefully design residential subdivision developments to be cost-efficient and meet the daily living and recreational needs of residents.

## HOUSING POLICIES

- 1) Encourage residential development in areas closest to existing roadways to minimize the construction of new roads.
- 2) Maintain viable, properly planned and zoned areas available for needed affordable, owner-occupied residential development as determined by housing and land-use forecasts.
- 3) Through careful site plan review, encourage landowners to consider alternatives to new home development on good farmland, hilltops and slopes greater than 20%, and productive forests and interior woodland habitat in order to preserve the rural nature of the community.
- 4) New residential subdivision development must be carefully planned and analyzed, based on the cost-efficiency of community services, compatibility with adjacent uses, environmental impacts, and consistency with the vision, goals, and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.
- 5) Continue to enforce applicable State and local building regulations to encourage safe, quality housing development.
- 6) Develop regulations for mobile homes and mobile home parks based on Policies 7 and 8.

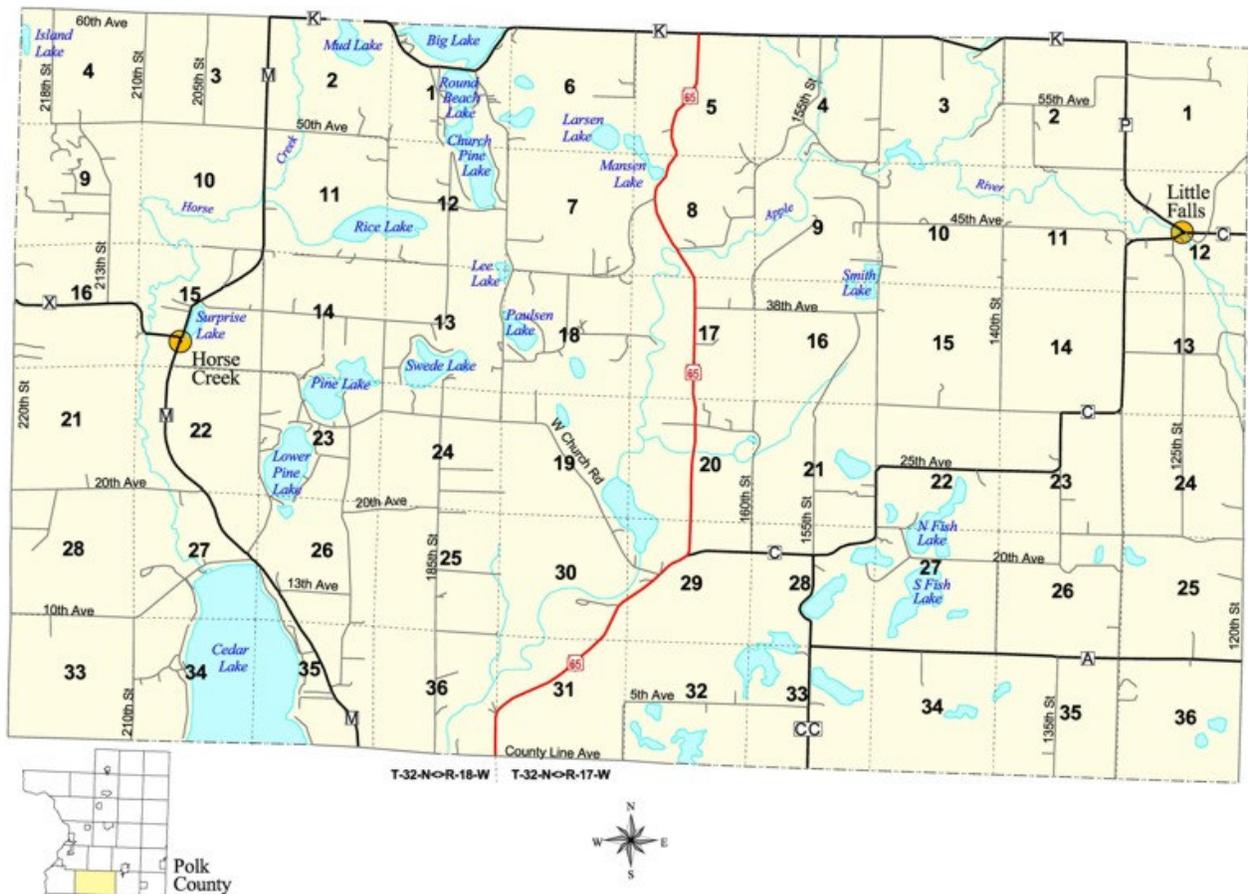
- 7) Manufactured homes shall be allowed as a single family dwelling unit anywhere in the Town where single family residences are allowed. Such manufactured homes must be HUD certified and labeled under the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 (U.S.C. Title 42, Chapter 70), be at least 24 feet in width and length, be set on and anchored to an approved foundation, have a pitched roof of 3:12 pitch or steeper, and have roof eaves that are enclosed with fascia and vented soffit and extend at least eight inches beyond the exterior walls. This provision does not apply to manufactured homes in mobile home parks.
- 8) Manufactured homes that are HUD certified and labeled under the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 (U.S.C. Title 42, Chapter 70) shall be allowed in, and mobile homes or manufactured homes that are not so certified and labeled shall be limited to, licensed mobile home parks.
- 9) Current and future land-use policy and decisions in the Town should promote affordable housing opportunities and alternatives.
- 10) Support assisted-living and group facilities that are appropriately accommodated in the surrounding incorporated communities.
- 11) Promote Federal and State home ownership and rehabilitation programs to help increase housing affordability and quality. Work with Federal, State and County agencies, local financial institutions, and other service providers to increase resident knowledge of available housing financial assistance and homebuyer counseling programs.
- 12) Implement those policies related to new housing development as noted under the Land Use Element and the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element of this Plan.

# THE TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

## TOWN OF ALDEN TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT

Changes in land use patterns driven by the economy, politics and lifestyle preferences have and will continue to affect the Town of Alden. These changes in turn require modifications and improvements in surface transportation systems. Streets, highways, expressways, freeways and railroads are the components of surface transportation systems. Automobiles, buses, trucks, motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrian and trains comprise the modes of surface transportation. The surface transportation system facilitates the movement of people and commerce throughout the town and county, and provides connections to other urban areas and states. Figure 3 shows the Town of Alden. It can be seen that there is a considerable network of roads including State Highway 65 running north and south through the middle of the Town, seven County Highways distributed quite evenly throughout the Town, and many Town roads.

**FIGURE 3**  
*Town of Alden*



## St. Croix River Crossing

The emergence of downtown Stillwater, Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin as tourist destinations, commercial development along Minnesota Highway 36 attracting employees and residents throughout the region, development in Wisconsin, and the economic strength of the Twin Cities metropolitan area as an employment center have contributed to increasing traffic

**FIGURE 4**  
*St. Croix River Crossing*



Source: MnDOT

volumes on Minnesota Highway 36, Minnesota Highway 95, in downtown Stillwater, Wisconsin State Highway 64, and across the Stillwater Lift Bridge.

Identifying possible solutions to this transportation problem required consideration of the context in which this bridge and its adjoining highways sit. The U.S. Congress has designated the St. Croix River, over which the existing Lift Bridge and proposed bridge crosses, as a National Wild and Scenic River, designated for its scenic, recreational, and geologic values.

In addition, historic buildings, several of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, are located throughout the Stillwater area, which is known as the "birthplace of Minnesota." The Stillwater Lift Bridge itself is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a testament to innovative engineering techniques in the early twentieth century.

The St. Croix River Valley is valued by residents and visitors alike for its combination of natural, historic, and scenic resources. Proposed solutions to the transportation problem are intended to minimize potential negative impacts on these resources and maintain the balance that creates a respected environment in which to live, work, and play.

The resulting efforts to address a new crossing for the St. Croix River by the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation (MnDOT and WisDOT) have spanned over twenty years and culminated with final documents intended to establish the much needed bridge. A stakeholder group was convened in 2003 to address St. Croix River Crossing issues and offer an acceptable resolution so the project can move forward. The federal government, through executive order, has indicated its willingness to support the St. Croix River Crossing project by designating it as one of seven projects of national significance that is eligible for environmental streamlining.

The Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) included all of the alternatives studied in the previous Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) and their potential environmental impacts. The SFEIS, which describes the preferred alternative package, was distributed in early June 2006 and currently a public comment period is underway which will continue until July 19. After the public's comments are compiled and reviewed, a final decision regarding the preferred alternative package will be made by the Minnesota and Wisconsin DOT's and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

If the Minnesota Department of Transportation is able to stay with the current schedule, and full funding is available, construction could be completed as early as 2012. However, many people do not expect the bridge to be completed before 2020 because of anticipated further delays. As of the end of 2006 planning estimates for construction costs for the St. Croix River Crossing range from \$334 to \$373 million.

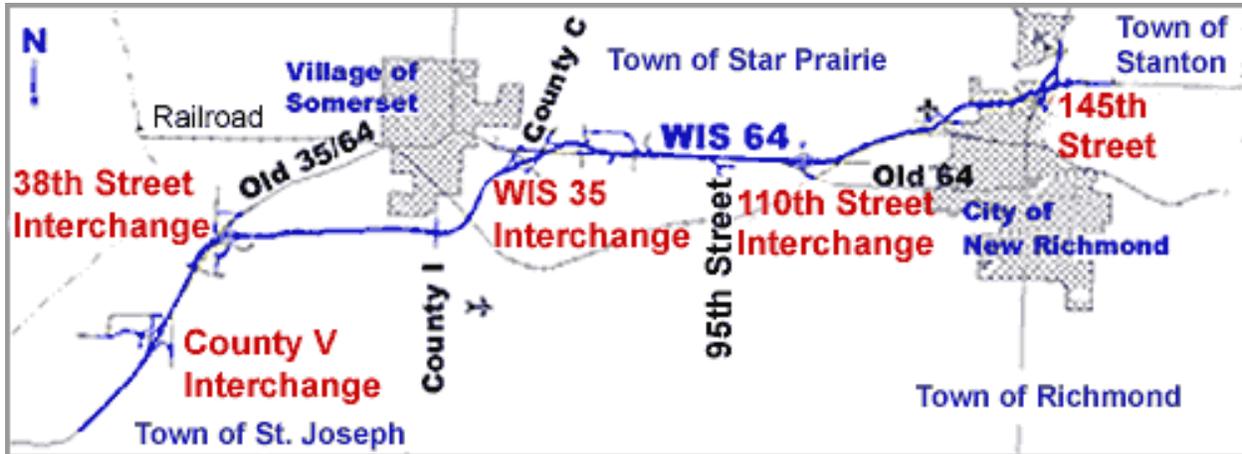
Figure 4 shows the current preferred alignment for the crossing. The bridge facility will connect with the recently completed State Highways 35 and 64 four lane facility.

### **State Highway 64**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation identified State Trunk Highway 64 as part of the State's "backbone highway system" in the Corridors 2020 long-range highway improvement

program. The Corridors 2020 program directed providing multi-lane improvements to a select portion of the State's existing highway network to improve mobility and enhance future economic development. The proposed Corridors 2020 "backbone system" consisted of multi-lane divided highways connecting all major population and economic centers to each other and to the national transportation system. State Trunk Highway 64 provides an east-west link across the one of the fastest growing parts of Wisconsin.

**FIGURE 5**  
**State Highway 64 Improvements**



Source: WisDOT

State Highway 64 is a major east-west travel corridor in St. Croix County. It joins State Highway 35 near Somerset to serve interstate, interregional and local traffic between Houlton, Somerset and New Richmond. The Town of Alden is only five miles to the north from the State Highway 64 interchange with State Highway 65 (labeled 145<sup>th</sup> Street in Figure 5), which runs north and south through the middle of the Town. Indeed, the farthest reaches of the Town are probably no more than fifteen or twenty minutes from this new four lane facility.

Conversion of State Highways 35 and 64 to a four-lane, divided highway began in August 2002. (See Figure 5) The new highway runs from 150th Avenue, east of Houlton, to 145th Street, east of New Richmond. It runs south of Somerset and north of New Richmond. Interchanges provide direct access to the highway at County Highway V, 38th Street, State Highway 35, 110th Street and State Highway 65. Overpass structures are located at 150th Avenue, County Highway I and County Highway K. An overpass was also built for the Wisconsin Central Limited Railroad. The project was completed and opened to traffic October 3, 2006.

The 14-mile project represents an estimated \$85 million investment in western Wisconsin's transportation system. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation worked with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to preserve, enhance and restore wetlands affected by project construction. Native prairie grass seeds will also be used to restore certain areas along the corridor. Between the anticipated construction of the St. Croix River Crossing and the completion of the State Highways 35 and 64 project, the Town of Alden is going to be exposed to potential development pressure that such improved mobility presents.

## **Other Area Highway Improvements**

Improvements to U.S. Highway 8 and U.S. Highway 63 are also likely to have an impact on the Town of Alden.

U.S Highway 8 runs east and west seven mile north of the Town of Alden. The U.S. Highway 8 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) examines 40 miles of US 8 from State Highway 35 North in Polk County to U.S. Highway 53 in Barron County. The corridor passes through the communities of Range, Turtle Lake, Almena, Poskin and Barron. This segment of U.S. Highway 8 is classified as a Corridors 2020 connector route in Wisconsin's State Highway Plan, making traffic movement and safety high priorities.

The majority of U.S. Highway 8 is a two-lane rural road. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation recently added passing lanes at various locations to increase safety. U.S. Highway 8 is a four-lane undivided road through the urban areas of Turtle Lake and Barron. WisDOT is working with the Highway 8 Coalition to address the needs and potential solutions for the corridor. The coalition includes the Barron, Polk, Price and Rusk County highway commissioners, highway committee chairpersons and community members from each county. Their mission is to work cooperatively in promoting, developing and prioritizing improvements to U.S. Highway 8 from the Minnesota/Wisconsin border to State Highway 13 in Price County. These efforts are likely to result in a four-lane divided highway facility in Polk and Barron counties with bypasses around several communities.

U.S. Highway 63 is classified as a principle arterial and serves regional north-south travel in northern Wisconsin. It connects the Minneapolis/ St. Paul metropolitan area with northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. U.S. Highway 63 also provides a link to the national transportation system for northwest Wisconsin. This highway runs from Baldwin to Turtle Lake east of the Town of Alden. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is looking at creating several passing lanes and some stretches of four-lane highway from I-94 at Baldwin to State Highway 64. While improvements aren't likely to be made until the year 2020, when they are completed they should have an impact on the Town. It can be seen there are significant highway improvement activities that will increase mobility in the area.

## **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION**

### **Connections to Highway Facilities**

Historically, the Town of Alden has been somewhat isolated due to major highway systems that surround it. Access to those major systems is improving even as those facilities are themselves improved to accommodate anticipated demand. State Highway 65 and County Highway M provide good access to State Highway 64 to the south, and U.S. Highway 8 to the north. State Highway 65 continues south of State Highway 64 to Interstate 94. East and southbound travelers can also access U.S. Highway 63 from State Highway 64 and nearby (one to two miles east of the Town border) State Highway 46. U.S. Highway 63 also continues south to Interstate 94. Connections to major highway facilities outside of the Town provide access to major metropolitan areas, employment centers, and markets for Polk County goods and services. In addition, County Highways K, X and C facilitate east-west movements in the Town. There is no

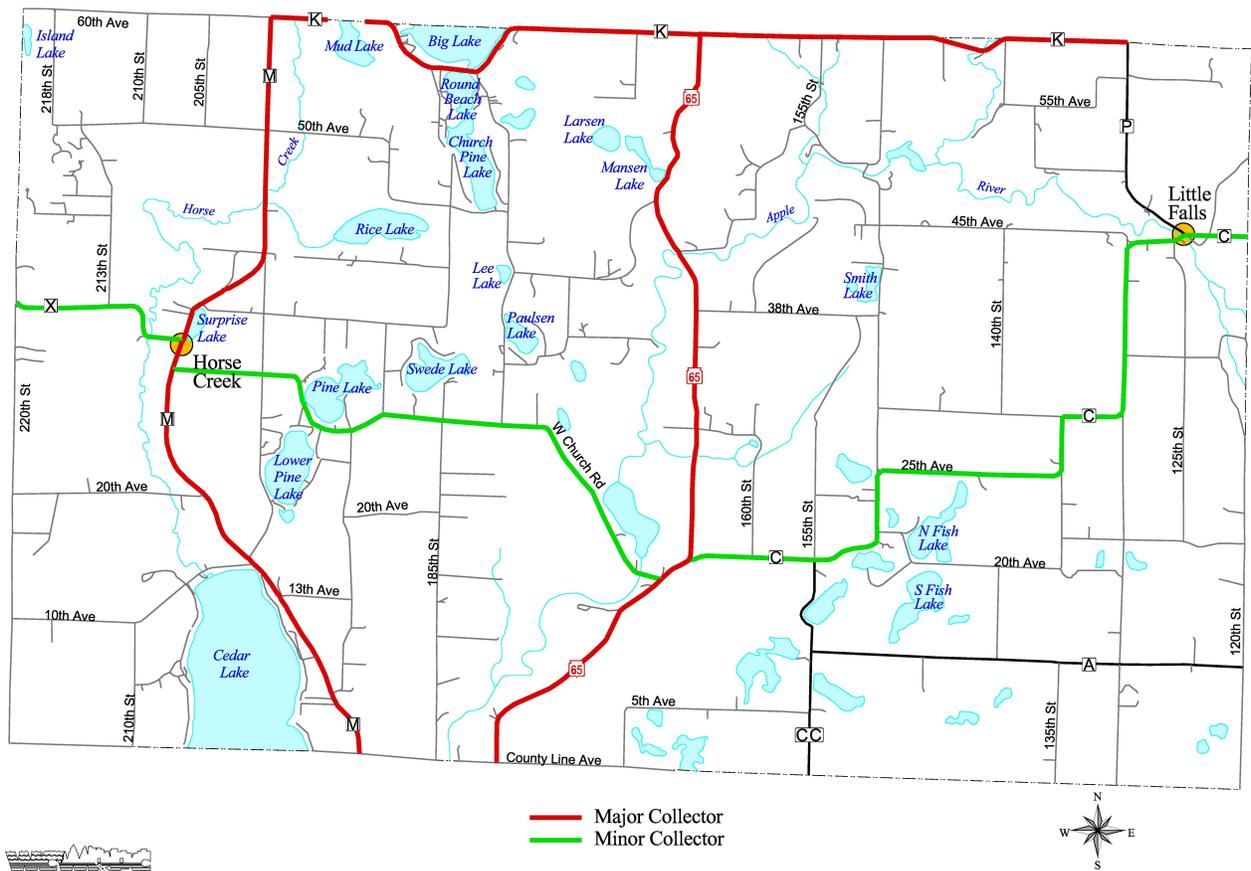
doubt that the major and minor collectors in the Town and the surrounding major highways provide vital connections between Alden and other crucial markets and destinations, and will be significant factors in the future development of the Town.

The Town of Alden also has numerous Town and County roads that feed traffic into the collector system. (See Figure 6) With the before mentioned federal, state and county highways, these local roads complete the highway system that impacts the Town of Alden.

### Plans for Future Improvements

The highway improvements of the St. Croix River Crossing, State Highway 64, U.S. Highway 8 and U.S. Highway 63 have been previously described. Another significant highway that may receive attention in the future is State Highway 65 that bisects the Town. This is a two-lane facility that can meander in rather sharp curves in some areas. Safety concerns will likely dictate improvements in the future. County Highway M actually receives more traffic than State Highway 65 and may need improvements based on traffic volume and safety concerns. It is likely that if State Highway 65 were improved it would take some traffic off County Highway M.

**FIGURE 6**  
*Functional Classification of Roadways – 2005*

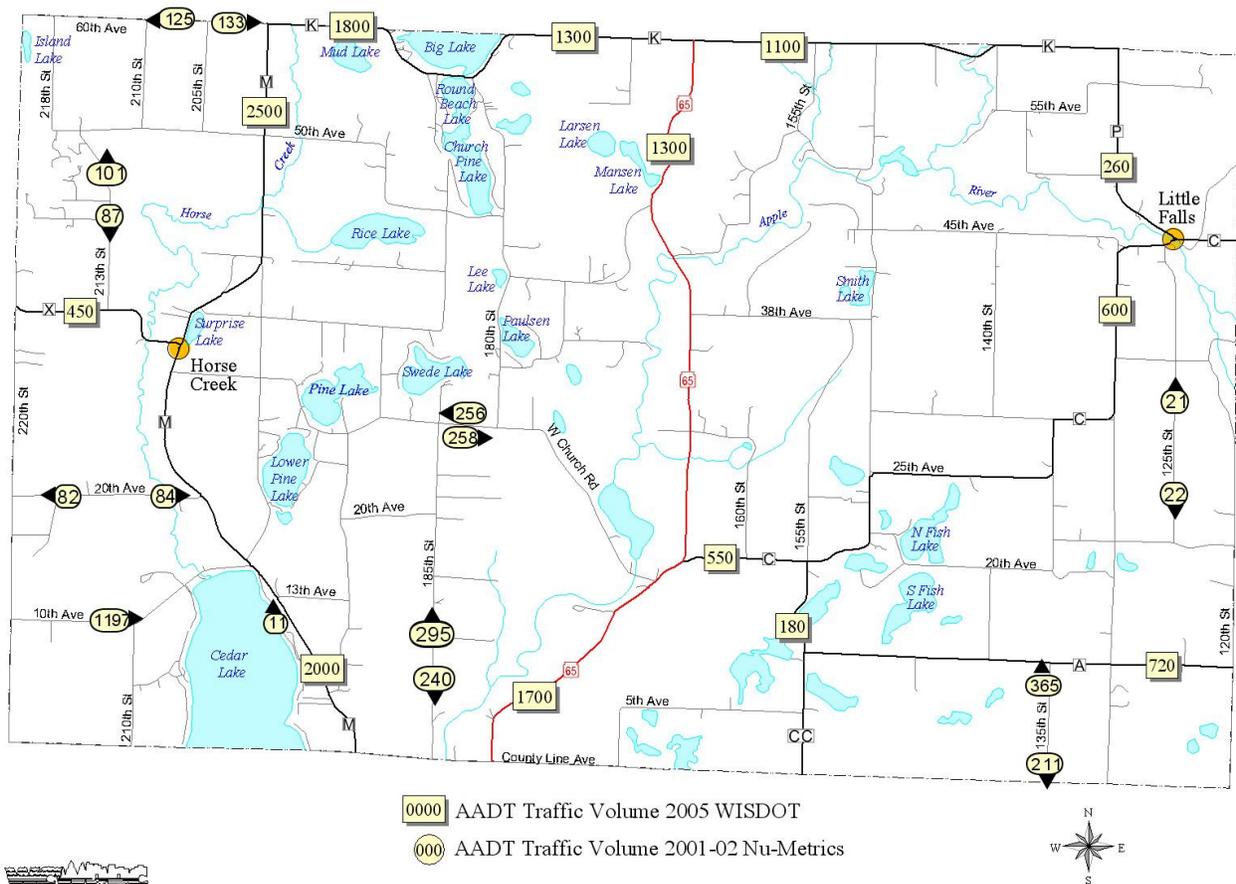


West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
Source: WISDOT

## Traffic Circulation in The Town of Alden

Historically, the major flow of traffic in Alden was from north and south following State Highway 65 or County Highway M. However, traffic also disburse through the Town along its several other County Highways. The functional classification of the road system in the Town of Alden can be found in Figure 6. In simplistic terms, "functional classification" reflects a highway's balance between providing land access versus mobility. Functional classification is the process by which public streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Generally, highways fall into one of four broad categories-- *principal arterial*, *minor arterials*, *collector roads*, and *local roads*. **Arterials** provide longer through travel between major trip generators (larger cities, recreational areas, etc.); **collector** roads collect traffic from the local roads and also connect smaller cities and towns with each other and to the arterials; and, **local** roads provide access to private property or low volume public facilities. The Federal Highway Administration provides a hierarchy of functional systems for urbanized area, small urban areas and rural areas. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation used the **Criteria for rural highway functional classification, Trans 76.05**, Wisconsin Administrative Code to develop the functional classification system for

**FIGURE 7**  
**Traffic Volumes**



Source: WISDOT, Nu-Metrics/Town of Alden

the Town of Alden, reflected in Figure 6. State Trunk Highway 65, County Highway M and K are major collectors. County Highways C and X are minor collectors. All other roads are considered local roads. Nearby, State Highway 64 to the south and U.S. Highways 8 and 63 to the north and east, respectively, are principal arterials.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation traffic counts in Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for 2005 and locally produced counts from 2001-2002 are shown in Figure 7. The figure shows counts indicate that County Highway M sees the most traffic on a daily basis. State Highway 65 and County Highway K also see significant traffic. Local roads seeing the most traffic are County A, County P, 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 135<sup>th</sup> Street, 185<sup>th</sup> Street and W. Church Road.

### Improving Traffic Flow Within the Town

Currently, there are no glaring deficiencies in the Town’s road system. Traffic volumes are not such that levels of service are diminished to the point where motorists will perceive significant delays. Other than some safety and access issues on some of busier roads in the Town, the main concerns regarding traffic will come with the impacts of new development. This new development is expected to be dispersed and could become a problem if developments are created in such a way that connectivity between them is not accounted for.

### Commuting

The commuting patterns of Alden residents are an important consideration for impacts on the surface transportation system. Table 43 shows the travel time to work of Alden workers in 1980,

**TABLE 43**  
**TRAVEL TIME TO WORK • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Resident Workers 16 years of age and older**

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Worked at home	122	17.4	127	13.0	104	7.1
Less than 5 minutes	15	2.1	32	3.3	31	2.1
5 to 9 minutes	41	5.8	30	3.1	42	2.9
10 to 19 minutes	166	23.7	251	25.7	312	21.4
20 to 29 minutes	109	15.5	156	16.0	323	22.1
30 to 44 minutes	81	11.6	148	15.2	198	13.6
45 to 59 minutes	54	7.7	119	12.2	199	13.6
60 minutes or longer	113	16.1	113	11.6	250	17.1
<b>Average Travel Time (Min.)</b>	<b>30.9</b>		<b>30.8</b>		<b>35.5</b>	

Source: U.S. Census

1990 and 2000. It can be seen that the average travel time to work for Alden workers was already fairly high in 1980 and didn’t change much by 1990. However, average travel time to work did increase by almost 5 minutes between 1990 and 2000. There were substantial increases in the number of workers who traveled more than 20 minutes to work.

Table 44 shows where Alden workers went to work in 1980, 1990 and 2000. While a considerable number of Alden workers still work in Polk County it can be seen that there were significant increases in the number of workers working in St. Croix County, and Washington and

Ramsey Counties in Minnesota. This is to be expected as Alden is positioned to become a bedroom community with the not too distant employment centers that can be increasingly accessed by a major highway. This trend can only be accelerated once the St. Croix River Crossing is completed.

**TABLE 44**  
**JOURNEY TO WORK • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Residents**

<i>Place of Work</i>	<i>1980</i>		<i>1990</i>		<i>2000</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Town of Alden, WI					158	10.8
Remainder of Polk County, WI	343	48.5	426	42.7	395	27.1
New Richmond, St. Croix County, WI					186	12.7
Somerset, St. Croix County, WI	123	17.4	237	23.8	58	4.0
Remainder of St. Croix County, WI					109	7.5
Minneapolis, MN	14	2.0	22	2.2	30	2.1
Remainder of Hennepin Co., MN	4	0.6	16	1.6	52	3.6
St. Paul, MN	84	11.9	37	3.7	108	7.4
Remainder of Ramsey Co., MN	4	0.6	47	4.7	57	3.9
Washington County, MN	51	7.2	141	14.1	210	14.4
Worked elsewhere	23	3.3	71	7.1	96	6.6
Not Reported	61	8.6	--	--	--	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census

Shaded area indicates combined totals.

### Encouraging Alternative Modes

The use of mass transit, bicycles and walking instead of the automobile should be encouraged. However, facilitating these modes of transportation presents challenges in rural areas. The plans for pedestrians and bicycles in Alden will likely involve adding paved shoulders on select roads during reconstruction projects and promoting trails systems within and between residential developments. The Town of Alden’s roads are mostly laid out in an organic pattern following major survey lines and corresponding with landscape features. However, the size and location of the Town of Alden makes any form of public transportation difficult. There is currently transport available to special populations but mass transit for the Town is impractical. There also is currently no commercial bus service. There may be opportunities for van pooling and shared rides. The Town should encourage this in the future, possibly pursuing a park and ride lot with the WisDOT.

### Access Management - The Land Use Connection

Access management is a current buzzword among highway planners and engineers and involves the concept of controlling access points to major highways much like access to the freeway system is confined to on ramps and interchanges. This is certainly true for State Trunk Highways where WisDOT exercises access controls through Administrative Rule Trans 233. This may affect development along State Highway 65 in the Town as improvements are made access may be more restricted and some areas may require frontage roads. County and Town rules already enforce minimum separation distances between roads and driveways.

In Alden, probably a more important issue is the connectivity of roads amongst new developments. If too many subdivisions are allowed only single access to the road network and provisions are not made to take advantage of opportunities to connect with adjacent future development or establish new collectors, eventually much of the traffic in the Town will be unduly concentrated on a few corridors.

## **AIR TRANSPORTATION**

Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport is the largest and busiest airport in the five-state upper Midwestern region of Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Wisconsin and North Dakota. As of 2005, Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport was the tenth largest in the United States, and nineteenth largest airport in the world, in terms of passengers. It straddles the southern border of the cities of Saint Paul, Minnesota and Minneapolis, Minnesota, but is mostly located in Fort Snelling, Minnesota. With two terminals, it is a major hub for Northwest Airlines, Champion Air, Sun Country Airlines, and Northwest's Airlink partners Mesaba Airlines and Pinnacle Airlines, all of which except Pinnacle are headquartered nearby. Northwest accounts for more than 80% of the airport's passenger traffic. It is operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission, which also handles operation of six smaller airports in the region. This airport is about 45 miles from the Town of Alden.

Amery Municipal Airport is a small general aviation airport two miles south of the City of Amery.

New Richmond Regional Airport is a small commuter and general aviation airport with a 5,507 foot asphalt and 2360 foot turf runways and a variety of services for fuel, maintenance and travel.

L. O. Simenstad Municipal Airport in Osceola has a 5000 foot asphalt runway and a 2270 foot turf runway and a variety of services for fuel, maintenance and travel.

There are some small private airfields in the area that provide an insignificant amount of air travel opportunities.

## **RAILROADS**

The Canadian National Railroad has freight service running south of the Town through New Richmond and west of Alden in the Town of Osceola. The tracks in the Town of Osceola used to run through the northern part of the Town of Alden but were abandoned between Dresser and Amery.

The Scenic Osceola and St. Croix Valley Railway runs a renovated passenger train for pleasure excursions to Dresser and Marine St. Croix.

## **TRAILS**

The Gandy Dancer State Trail is a 98-mile recreational trail follows the old Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie railroad grade from St. Croix Falls north to Superior. This grade was commercially used for approximately 100 years starting in the late 1880s. Upon abandonment, part of the corridor was purchased by Burnett County and the State of Wisconsin for use as a recreational trail.

Railroad history is remembered in the name "Gandy Dancer." Hand crews, who built and maintained the tracks, used railroad tools manufactured by the Chicago-based Gandy Tool Company. Often the crews used vocal and mechanical cadences to synchronize the swinging of their hand tools or the movement of their feet. Hence the name "Gandy Dancer" reminds us of the past crews who built the railroads.

The trail begins at St. Croix Falls and passes through Centuria, Milltown, Luck, Frederic and Lewis in Polk County. The 98-mile recreation trail follows the railroad grade from St. Croix Falls north to Superior. Recreational use on the Trail is divided by geographic location: south half and north half. The south trail segment extends 47 miles from St. Croix Falls to Danbury, paralleling State Highway 35 for most of the distance. This segment was surfaced with crushed limestone in 1995 and offers a smooth, hard surfaced trail with use limited to biking and hiking from April through November.

There are no other trails planned at this time. Transportation and recreational bicycling and pedestrian movements are accommodated well by the existing road network in the Town. Snowmobile trails in the area are well developed and maintained by a cooperative effort of Polk County and local snowmobile clubs.

## **CONTEXT SUMMARY**

Alden has adequate connections to the state trunk highway system and the federal interstate system. State Highway 65 and County Highway M are the most important surface links for the Town. These and other collectors in the Town, and area arterials, provide access to regionally important facilities such as State Highway 64, U.S. Highways 8 and 63, Interstate 94 and the future St. Croix River Crossing.

When it comes to improving traffic circulation in Alden the Town might see help from the State of Wisconsin and Polk County in the form of state or county funded improvement projects. These projects are likely to address safety concerns on primarily State Highway 65 and County Highway M.

The use of long range capital improvements and commitment to a coordinated traffic improvement system that utilizes access management techniques and physical improvements to achieve improved traffic circulation in the Town appears to be the best strategy the Town can pursue. In particular, the Town should concentrate on connectivity between new development and future development and explore potential new collector roadways.

## **Current Transportation Issues**

The exploration of the transportation information and issues suggests several important issues for consideration and discussion throughout the planning process:

- 1. Improvements to the State Trunk Highway 65 corridor.  
The Town believes that this eventuality will be determined by safety issues rather than demand. However, once the facility receives improvements it is likely to see more traffic.*
- 2. Improvements to County Trunk Highway M and other collectors.  
Again, safety will be a driving force in the improvements seen as necessary for these roads. It is, however, certain that once such improvements are made they will be taken advantage of with increased traffic volume.*
- 3. Connectivity between new and future development.  
There is currently a provision in the Town's land division ordinance to consider such connectivity. The Town will have to monitor development activity to determine if this provision is having the desired effect of more evenly distributing future traffic in the Town.*
- 4. Scheduled improvements to deteriorating roads.  
Existing roads must be maintained to support the vitality of the Town. The WISLR addition to the Town's pavement management process will help the Town to effectively address a road improvement schedule within its budget constraints.*
- 5. Potential corridors for future collectors.  
Once potential corridors are determined the Town should consider Official Mapping them.*
- 6. A network of trails for bicycle and pedestrian movement.  
There may be opportunities to create networks of trails amongst and between new developments. Selected roads could receive paved shoulders when they are reconstructed.*

## **TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES**

### **Transportation and Traffic Circulation**

The safe and efficient movement of people and goods to, from and through the Town are goals and objectives of the plan. In the past years, the Town has seen the improvement of a nearby major highway corridor to a four-lane facility and plans to improve other major highway facilities in the area. These activities are forever changing the character of the Town and its countryside.

The comprehensive plan links the land use pattern to the transportation and traffic circulation system by identifying desired improvements and system needs. Alden is amidst federal, state and county highways serving Polk County and the Northwestern Wisconsin. County and state highways link the Town to federal highways and the interstate system. The Polk County Highway Department and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) cooperate on joint projects and long range improvement plans for the area's federal, state and county roadways. The current WISDOT policy regarding transportation and roadway improvements in the state and the region is that the needs outweigh the resources available and the traveling public will experience more delays before roadway and traffic conditions improve.

With limited financial commitment from the state for projects within the Town, it is fortunate that needed improvements in facilities surrounding the Town are being undertaken. Those improvements, however, may have the effect of increasing the mobility of prospective residents and businesses in the Town. Subsequently, there could be an increased need for new and/or improved highway facilities within the Town. The Town should be fully prepared to stay apprised of the six transportation issues described in the previous section and act when necessary.

### **Anticipated Street Improvements**

The Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) is an Internet-accessible system that helps local governments and WisDOT manage local road data to improve decision-making, and to meet state statute requirements. With Geographic Information System technology, WISLR combines local road data with interactive mapping functionality. The result is an innovative system that allows the Town to display their data in a tabular format, on a map, or both.

With WISLR, the Town can produce maps that show the location of road-related data and see trends that might otherwise go unnoticed. For this reason alone, WISLR aids with organized and logical assessments about local road data and helps the Town plan and prioritize road investments.

The Town is required to report the pavement condition of roads under their jurisdiction to WisDOT. Since WISLR is a receptacle for local road information, such as width, surface type, surface year, shoulder, curb, road category, functional classification, and pavement condition ratings—plus more, WISLR generates the data the Town needs to get the job done.

The anticipated street improvements for the near future are determined by the Town of Alden road management program with the use of WISLR.

## OTHER RELEVANT TRANSPORTATION PLANS

### Statewide Transportation Plans

#### *Translink 21*

This statewide multi-modal transportation plan designated to guide the State transportation policy, programs and investments through the year 2000, was mandated by the federal government in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and subsequent TEA21.

On June 9, 1998, the President signed into law PL 105-178, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) authorizing highway, highway safety, transit and other surface transportation programs for the next 6 years. Subsequent technical corrections in the TEA 21 Restoration Act have been incorporated; thus, the material presented here reflects the combined effects of both Acts and the two are jointly referred to as TEA-21.

TEA-21 builds on the initiatives established in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), which was the last major authorizing legislation for surface transportation. This new Act combines the continuation and improvement of current programs with new initiatives to meet the challenges of improving safety as traffic continues to increase at record levels, protecting and enhancing communities and the natural environment as we provide transportation, and advancing America's economic growth and competitiveness domestically and internationally through efficient and flexible transportation.

Significant features of TEA-21 include:

- Assurance of a guaranteed level of Federal funds for surface transportation through FY 2003. The annual floor for highway funding is keyed to receipts of the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). Transit funding is guaranteed at a selected fixed amount. All highway user taxes are extended at the same rates when the legislation was enacted.
- Extension of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) program, providing a flexible national 10 percent goal for the participation of disadvantaged business enterprises, including small firms owned and controlled by women and minorities, in highway and transit contracting undertaken with Federal funding.
- Strengthening of safety programs across the Department of Transportation (DOT). New incentive programs, with great potential for savings to life and property, are aimed at increasing the use of safety belts and promoting the enactment and enforcement of 0.08 percent blood alcohol concentration standards for drunk driving. These new incentive funds also offer added flexibility to States since the grants can be used for any Title 23 U.S.C. activity.
- Continuation of the proven and effective program structure established for highways and transit under the landmark ISTEA legislation. Flexibility in the use of funds, emphasis on measures to improve the environment, focus on a strong planning process as the foundation of good transportation decisions—all ISTEA hallmarks—are continued and enhanced by TEA-21. New programs such as Border Infrastructure, Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation, and Access to Jobs target special areas of national interest and concern.

- Investing in research and its application to maximize the performance of the transportation system. Special emphasis is placed on deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems to help improve operations and management of transportation systems and vehicle safety.

Adopted in 1994 by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation it outlines the States programs for highways, passenger rail, air service, intercity buses, public transit and local road aids.

Translinks 21 - the planning process and 21st century transportation plan - will be in place by the Summer of 1994. Its development will rely upon these fundamental "building blocks":

- Basic transportation goals and values
- New federal requirements
- Wisconsin's existing transportation system
- Responding to a changing Wisconsin
- Transportation financing
- Public involvement

While Translinks 21 will not make decisions on specific transportation projects, it will set the critical framework and priorities to determine which projects are designed and built in the future.

#### *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan - 2020*

This is the State's major plan for developing and integrating bicycles into the transportation system. It was adopted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in 1998 and looked at creating a system of bikeways using suitable routes along County and State Highways.

#### *Midwest Regional Rail System*

Nine Midwestern States, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration are working on proposals for intercity high-speed passenger rail. The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative is intended to develop and improve the 3000-mile Midwest Regional Rail System. This plan was published in February, 2000.

#### *Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020*

Also known as Corridors 2020, this plan prioritizes highway construction and improvement needs and investments. It was adopted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in February, 2000. Wisconsin's State Trunk Highway system, consisting of approximately 11,800 miles of roads, is aging and deteriorating at the same time traffic congestion is increasing. In response to this critical issue, WISDOT, in partnership with its stakeholders, has developed the State Highway Plan 2020, a 21-year strategic plan which considers the highway system's current condition, analyzes future uses, assesses financial constraints and outlines strategies to address Wisconsin's preservation, traffic movement, and safety needs. The plan is updated every six years to reflect changing transportation technologies, travel demand and economic conditions in Wisconsin.

#### *Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2030*

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is currently developing a statewide long-range transportation plan through the year 2030, called Connections 2030. The plan will address all forms of transportation: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit –

and ways to make the individual modes work better as an integrated transportation system. The overall goal of the planning process is to identify a series of policies to aid transportation decision-makers when evaluating programs and projects.

Connections 2030 will differ from DOT's previous planning efforts. Beginning with the release of Translinks 21 in the mid 1990s, the department has prepared a series of needs-based plans for various transportation modes. Connections 2030 will be a policy-based plan. The policies will be tied to "tiers" of potential financing levels. One set of policy recommendations will focus on priorities that can be accomplished under current funding levels. Another will identify policy priorities that can be achieved if funding levels increase. Finally, DOT may also identify critical priorities that we must maintain if funding were to decrease over the planning horizon of the plan. While the final plan will include statewide policy recommendations, some of these recommendations may differ by specific corridors in the state.

In addition to policies related to each transportation mode, Connections 2030 will also include recommendations on cross-cutting issues such as economic development, land use, transportation finance and the environment. The department's goal is to provide a plan that can aid policy-makers in future transportation decisions. Connection 2030 will be the statewide blueprint for transportation in the future.

Connections 2030 will identify a series of multimodal corridors for each part of the state. Each corridor will identify routes and/or services of several modes such as highways, local roads, rail, air, transit, etc.

The multimodal corridors build on the idea of the Corridors 2020 network, first established in 1988. Corridors 2020 identified a system of two-lane and multi-lane highways. The network is made up of two subsystems:

- Backbone system: 1,550-mile network of multi-lane highways connecting all major population and economic regions of the state
- Connector system: 2,100-mile network of high quality two-lane highways directly linking significant economic and tourism centers to the Backbone system.

It is anticipated that Connections 2030 will be completed in 2007.

#### *Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020*

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation identifies the maintenance and improvement programs for public-use airports in the State Airport System. Airports are not itemized for activities and funding so it cannot be determined which airports are in need of improvements.

#### *State Recreational Trails Network Plan*

Adopted in 2001 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as an amendment to the Wisconsin State Trail Strategic Plan to identify a network of trail corridors throughout the state consisting of more than 4000 miles of trails known as the *Trail Interstate System*.

### *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan*

This plan was completed in 2001 by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and lays out State policies for the provision of pedestrian facilities which address coordination with existing transportation facilities and pedestrian-friendly development.

### *Wisconsin State Rail Plan and Wisconsin State Transit Plan*

These plans are nearing completion by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and will address state policy, programs and financing of coordinated freight and passenger rail systems and the provision of transit facilities.

### **Other Transportation Plans**

#### *St. Croix River Crossing Supplemental Final EIS*

This document was completed in June of 2006 and lays out the current state of project planning for the St. Croix River Crossing.

#### *U.S. Highway 8 EIS*

The draft environmental impact statement for U.S. Highway 8 between State Highway 35 and U.S. Highway 53 was completed in May of 2006. Work continues to determine preferred alignments and funding and time schedules for project work.

#### *U.S. Highway 63 I-94 to STH 64 EIS*

Completed in March of 2004, this document evaluates improvements to U.S. Highway 63 between Interstate 94 and State Highway 64.

#### *WIS 65 - I-94 to Paperjack Street Environmental Assessment*

Completed in August of 2006, this plan outlines proposals for improvements to State Highway 65 between New Richmond and Interstate 94.

### **Comparison with State and Regional Transportation Plans**

There are no apparent inconsistencies between the goals and policies of the Town of Alden Transportation Element and those in the reviewed State and Regional Transportation Plans.

## TRANSPORTATION GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

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### *Transportation Goal*

Provide a safe, efficient transportation system that meets the needs of the community while encouraging development near the primary transportation arterials and collectors.

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### **Objectives:**

- 1) Coordinate road improvements based on current and future land uses and land use plans.
- 2) Town roads serve the needs of its residents and agricultural community in a manner consistent with the rural character of the community.
- 3) Manage the Town's road system in a cost-effective manner, utilizing the existing road network to accommodate future development whenever possible.
- 4) Encourage a variety of safe transportation options.

### **Transportation Policies**

- 1) Continue to use the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system and the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) to inventory, evaluate, and plan for roadway improvements in the Town.
- 2) Require new roads serving more than two residences to be built to Town road specifications.
- 3) Promote shared driveway entrances for clustered development and subdivision development. Look for ways to ensure road connectivity between new and future developments.
- 4) Require developers to pay the costs associated with new roads or streets.
- 5) Promote trails and the Town's Rustic Roads.
- 6) Integrate future roadway improvements and road maintenance equipment into a capital improvements plan.
- 7) Maintain an ongoing plan for future roadway improvements and road maintenance equipment purchases.
- 8) Cooperate with Polk County on enforcement of the County Driveway Ordinance on County roads. Enforce the Town's Driveway Ordinance.
- 9) Promote transportation services for the elderly and those with special needs that are provided in Polk County.
- 10) Stay involved with WiDOT plans for State Highway 65 and the County regarding County Roads in the Town.
- 11) Evaluate Official Mapping as a tool to designate future road rights of way to ensure connectivity amongst development and roadways in the Town.

# ***THE UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT***

## **EXISTING UTILITY & COMMUNITY FACILITIES CONDITIONS**



**Town of Alden Town Hall and Shop**

### **Town Facilities**

The Town of Alden Town Hall and Shop/Garage is located at 183 155<sup>th</sup> Street, on the northwest corner of 155<sup>th</sup> Street and County Highway C. The Town will maintain the Town Hall and Shop in good repair and up to codes.

### **Sanitary Sewer System**

The Town of Alden is serviced entirely by private onsite wastewater treatment systems. For the most part they are thought to be in good condition with no known issues at this time. However, there are a few older systems in the Town which fail to meet state standards every year that are typically eligible for replacement through the Wisconsin Fund due to their position in soils or geology with limitations. The Wisconsin Administrative Rule Commerce 83 now provides for private onsite wastewater treatment systems that address such limitations with alternative

technology. The conservation design development standards the Town of Alden employs in its land division ordinance allows alternative private onsite wastewater treatment systems technologies, including systems that will service more than one dwelling unit.

### **Storm Water Management**

Stormwater management involves reducing impervious surfaces that increase runoff and providing controlled release rates of runoff to receiving systems, typically through detention and/or retention facilities. A stormwater management system can be very simple – a series of natural drainage ways – or a complex system of culverts, pipes, drains and detention or retention ponds. Either way, the purpose of the system is to reduce impervious surfaces where possible or store and channel water to specific areas, diminishing the impact of non-point source pollution.

Since March 10, 2003, federal law has required that landowners of construction sites with one acre or more of land disturbance obtain construction site storm water permit coverage to address erosion control and storm water management. Except within areas controlled by Native Americans, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been delegated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to implement the federal storm water program in Wisconsin. On August 1, 2004, the DNR received authority under revised ch. NR 216, Wis. Adm. Code, to require landowners of construction sites with one acre or more of land disturbance to obtain permit coverage.

In the Town of Alden, stormwater is managed mainly by the use of drainage ditches, although stormwater from subdivisions is managed with a variety of best management practices required by Polk County. Stormwater management plans will be required for planned developments.

### **Water Supply**

Similar to sanitary sewer, water needs in the Town are met mostly by private wells. Water quantity is currently sufficient to meet local needs, and there are no known issues with regard to water quality at this time. The conservation design provisions of the Town's land division ordinance allows for common or community wells to serve more than one dwelling.

### **Solid Waste Disposal & Recycling Facilities**

The Town provides a solid waste and recycling facility for use by its residents. Private haulers pick up waste at the curb based on individual residential contracts within the Town. Some residents have expressed concern that haulers' trucks are causing road damage and have suggested that pick-up routes could be more efficient to reduce the overall number of trips. Residents and businesses can use a drop-off site at the Town Hall for recycling. The disposal of hazardous waste can be done by contacting Polk County or a private facility in the area.

## **Parks and Recreation Plan**

### *Introduction*

The people of the Town of Alden appreciate the opportunities for recreation throughout our area of the state of Wisconsin, both indoor and outdoor. We have never assessed the opportunities that we have as a local government and where we would like to go with them in the future. This is an attempt to look at what we have today and to put together a plan for the future.

The plan for the future will explore not just what we have in mind for our own area of local government but to view our area of Wisconsin and see what we might accomplish working jointly with other local units of government. The local units of government trying to have a common future vision for recreation are the Village of Osceola, Village of Dresser, Town of Osceola, Town of Farmington as well as our Town of Alden.

First, we will inventory what we have in the Town of Alden. Second we will attempt to assess the needs in our local town. Finally, we will put together a vision of how our town will attempt to partner with other local units of government to see what we might accomplish by working together.

### *Definitions*

Local Park. A park within the Town of Alden that is not connected with any other unit of government.

Lake Access. A location onto the lakes of the Town of Alden, either accessible by being able to launch a boat or to be able to have access to a lake by walking in only.

Other Public Access. Land owned by the State of Wisconsin, DNR or other government agency that is open to the public.

### *Recreation Inventory*

1. Cedar Lake Park. Lake access on north end of Cedar Lake on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, picnic area and summer bathroom availability. The local community club manages the former Cedar Lake School which is open for public use. The community club manages the building and hosts card parties, rents it out for family or local events. Total area approximately two acres.
2. Little Falls Park. Located at the intersection of Polk County (P) and Polk County (C). Historically maintained by a local 4-H Club. It is next to the Apple River and has had a single picnic table at the sight, and has no available toilet facilities. Total approximate area one acre.
3. Lower Pine Lake Access. Fifty foot wide access off of Lower Pine Lake Road. Good quality access for boats, no toilet facility at any time, no picnic area. The area of weakness is a lack of parking space. Total area approximately six thousand square feet.

4. Middle Pine Lake Access. This is located on the west side of Middle Pine Lake on West Church Road. This was never established as a public access except by its availability and historical use. Total area is approx. 400 square feet assuming twenty-five feet wide and from the road surface to the waters edge. The location is not very desirable and there is no real available parking, no toilet facility.
5. Church Pine Lake Access. Located on 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the south end of Church Pine Lake. A historical use boat landing directly off of road right of way. Heavily used by boaters and swimmers. Very limited parking and the boat access area is shared by swimmers which presents a dangerous situation. No toilet facility. Total approximate area 600 square feet.
6. Big Lake Boat Access. Located on the south shore of Big Lake at the intersection of Polk County (K) and 180<sup>th</sup> Street. Possibly a historical use boat landing with access off from a very heavily traveled county road. A small parking lot off from 180<sup>th</sup> Street is available with a fee charged by the private property owner. Portable toilet made available year round. This is a very congested area at times. Total area of boat landing and available parking area approximately 2400 sq ft.
7. Swede Lake Boat Access. Located on Swede Lake Drive with a fifty foot access. Total area 750 sq ft.
8. Although it is not designated in any way as a public park, the area along the east side of Cedar Lake, formerly part of old county "M" and now called East Cedar Lake Drive, is used very much like a part of a park setting. Due to its proximity to the lake and low traffic volume, it is used by local residents for a beautiful view of the lake while driving and you will frequently encounter walkers, runners bicyclists and, in the winter, more access to local people to ice fish.
9. Undeveloped access to Lower Pine Lake. Located on north east side of lake, fifty feet wide off of private road, never used and has an isolated location.
10. Undeveloped access to Middle Pine Lake. Located on North side of lake, fifty feet wide on an extremely steep slope with little prospect of being made useful for public purposes.
11. Undeveloped access to Church Pine Lake. Located at the very end of 184<sup>th</sup> Street fifty feet wide which has a very large and steep ravine to get down to get to lake. This is not a viable place to have the general public use it.
12. Access to Magic Lake. Fifty feet wide off from 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue improved with a driveway and small parking area with walk in access to the lake and no other public amenities.
13. 40 acres SW SW Section 32, R 18 W belonging to U S Fish and Wildlife Service.
14. 10 Acres in SW SW Section 33, R 18 W belonging to USA.
15. 75 Acres in NE NE of Section 33, R 18 W belonging to USA.
16. 60 Acres in SE SE of Section 28, R 18 W belonging to USA.
17. 40 acres in SW NW of Section 34, R 18 W belonging to USA.
18. 50 acres in SW NW of Section 35, R 18 W belonging to USA.
19. 62 acres in NW NE of Section 25, R 18 W belonging to USA.
20. Various parcels in Section 24 totaling 183 acres belonging to Wisconsin DNR.
21. Various parcels in Section 13 totaling 169 acres belonging to Wisconsin DNR.
22. A parcel of approximately 20 acres north of Polk County (C) next to the Apple River and just west of Little Falls in Section 12 belonging to WI DNR.
23. 26 acres in NW NW Section 21, R 18 W belonging to WI DNR.
24. 40 acres in SE NE of Section 20, R 18 W belonging to WI DNR.

*Park and Recreation Standards*

Studies by the National Recreation and Park Association found that “homogeneous standards accepted over the years, suggesting that each community should have a number of acres of open space per capita. . .are no longer relevant.” The study concludes that it is “not the amount of open space alone that determines the recreational health of the community; the critical factors are the location of the space, the programs conducted on it, the responsiveness of the personnel who run it, the physical condition of the space and the relative accessibility for the people who will use the facility.”

We are not aware of a specific standard for a town such as Alden, whether it be acres/1000 residents or the item of accessibility of community parks and specialized recreation areas. Our standard could most appropriately be measured in an intergovernmental assessment of what would be advantageous for the area as a whole.

*Town Park and Recreation Needs*

The population of the Town of Alden has been increasing at a regular rate but it is expected to increase more rapidly with increasing growth in our surrounding area, especially pressure from the south, in St Croix County. The following projection was provided by the State of Wisconsin.

<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
2,615	2,821	3,023	3,202	3,365	3,514

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services 2004*

There isn't a magic number of acres that is needed per thousand residents. The issue is more appropriately to be a part of a greater plan for our part of the State of Wisconsin.

*Park and Recreation Action Program*

The following is a series of recommendations to help the Town of Alden plan for the issue of recreation possibilities in our area. The basis for the plan recommendations is from input from the community, discussions with representatives of other local units of government and from the members of the Alden Town Board. It must be noted that funding sources under consideration would be local taxation in the budgeting process, placing a unit charge on each lot created, county park and recreation grants and any other grant possibilities that may exist.

General Recommendations

- 1 Continue discussions and planning for an intergovernmental agreement with other local units of government for recreation planning.
- 2 Pursue funding options for a joint recreation plan such as exploring getting our per lot funding back from Polk County and secondly to assess a per lot charge for the town for recreation purposes.

- 3 Park Board. Citizen involvement will certainly be encouraged, however, until the Town of Alden has the interest to maintain such an organization the board will serve this function.
- 4 Community Parks. The town would like to continue to improve on what already exists. The need for an improved boat ramp is a high priority at the Cedar Lake Park.
- 5 Lake Accesses. Priority should be given to improving lake accesses and especially look to the parking issue. The Church Pine access is highly used with limited parking, and with its proximity to the town road, is generally not safe.
- 6 Park Development. There is the possibility of requiring developers to dedicate a portion of subdivided land for permanent park and open space use. Local land owners should be encouraged to dedicate land to their communities for recreational use or to cooperate with land trusts to protect and preserve recreational opportunities.
- 7 Cross-Country Skiing. This is an activity that can be engaged in without benefit of developed trails. Our town supports this activity and encourages the opening of private lands or to permit land under our control to be used by Nordic or cross-country skiers.
- 8 Historic Preservation. We would like to encourage the need to identify, study, record and preserve sites and events of regional or local historical interest.
- 9 Bicycling. The increasing popularity of bicycling among adults, combined with its continued popularity among youth, indicates a need to consider its incorporation into a town plan and area wide. Some kind of route system, as well as proper signs to alert motorists of this activity in the area is needed.
- 10 Citizen Involvement. Regardless of the issue related to what is planned, our goal is to try to get citizen participation. By having our citizens being a part of the planning and implementation and maintaining our plan, their will be a more diverse knowledge and skill level. An additional benefit would certainly be a greater base of support to continue this type of program.
- 11 Service Group Involvement. Wherever possible, we would network with service groups in our area. There is the possibility of financial support as well as knowledge and help to implement and support a number of activities.
- 12 Recycled Materials. Recreation development costs could possibly be reduced by using recycled or surplus materials (i.e. used railroad ties or electrical poles could be used as parking lot boundaries.)
- 13 Aid Programs. Take advantage of state and federal financial and technical aid programs designed to assist in implementing the plan in our town and area in meeting recreational needs and maintain community eligibility for such programs.
- 14 Program Development. Whatever the plan is, it is important to remember to consider the cost of annual maintenance so that it does not exceed what our town board or its residents can afford or are willing to pay.
- 15 Priority System. As with all local units of government, it will be necessary to establish priorities in a recreation plan and be responsive to the needs and demands of our residents.

### Acquisition and Development Recommendations

1. Maintain the quality and attempt to improve on our local parks at Little Falls and Cedar Lake. **The highest priority at Cedar Lake is to upgrade the boat ramp, with a**

**possible cost of \$10,000.00 excluding grants or contributions from the lake association. The boat ramp will be completed when funding can be obtained from Cedar Lake Rehab. District, the Town of Alden and DNR grants.**

2. Improve local lake access points, as well as improve parking safety at these areas. The priority areas are Lower Pine, Middle Pine, Church Pine and Big Lake. **Discussions with the Big Lake, Round and Church Pine Lake District are on going to possibly purchase a safe access to the joint lakes to get away from using County 'K' and Alden 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue as historical use area accesses to the three lakes. There is no anticipated completion date due to the complexity of the issue.**
3. The Apple River runs through the Town of Alden and is extremely beautiful. The goal will be to explore improving access to the river in safe areas instead of just drop off points with no safe parking areas. **There is no target date for completion, however, we have begun networking with the Apple River Association to see how we can work together to accomplish this.**
4. Work with other local units of government to have a cooperative plan established to have an area wide plan and scope. **We have been meeting with representatives of our part of the county for nearly a year and are completing a joint plan addressing recreation collaborative efforts to benefit our area.**
5. Establish safe bicycle areas in the town and when improving our area roads, try to obtain grant money to have them wide enough to accommodate this type of activity. **Our town is used by individuals and clubs and our goal is to network with them to identify and sign areas that we believe are safest for such activities.**

The Polk County Outdoor Recreation Plan is incorporated by reference.

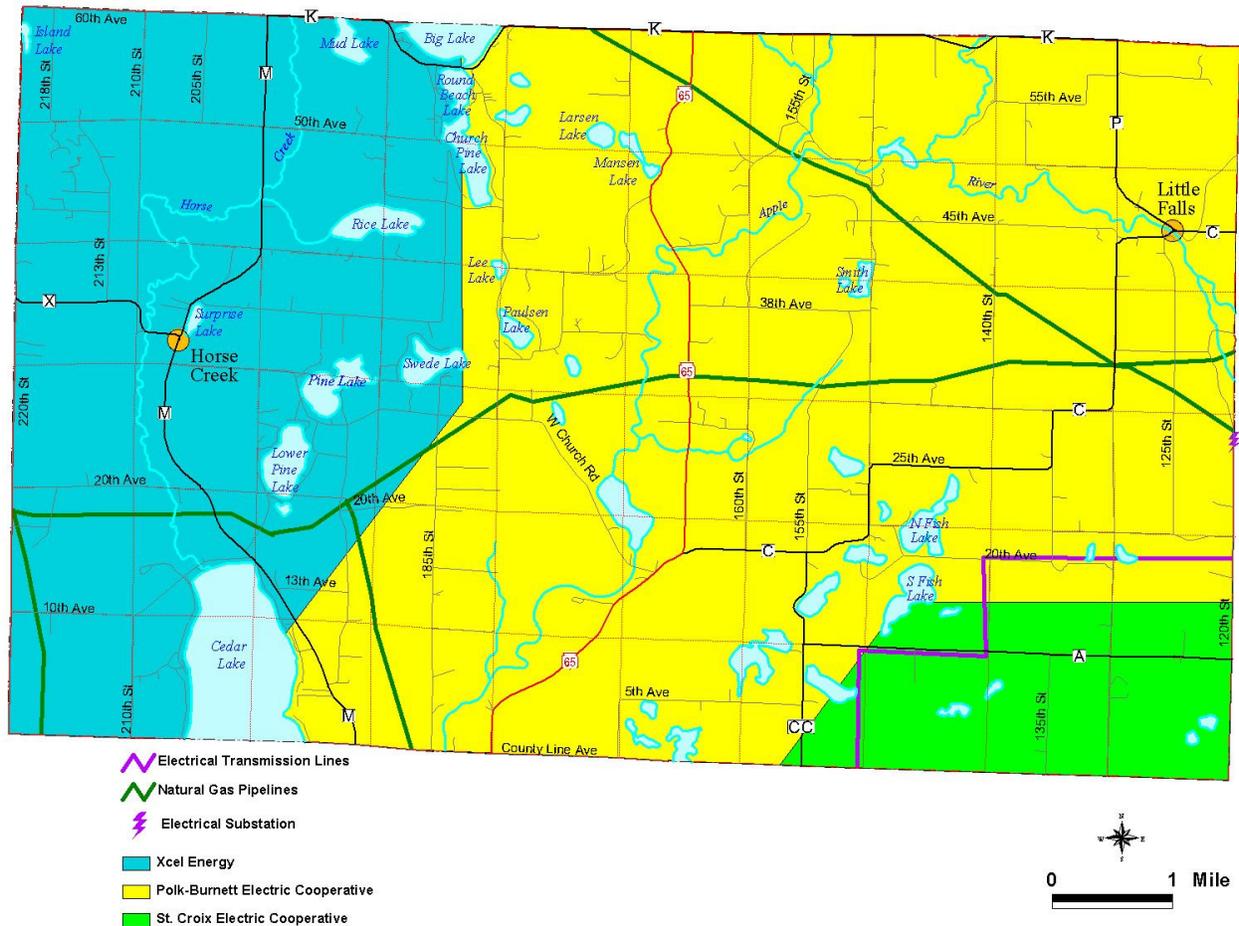


Cedar Lake

## Telecommunication Facilities

Town of Alden residents do have access to cable television/internet in some areas of the Town. Digital Subscriber Line is also available from some of the telecom providers. The Town does not currently have access to fiber optics.

**Figure 8 TOWN OF ALDEN UTILITIES**



Source: Public Service Commission

## Electrical Service, Power Plants & Transmission Lines

The Town of Alden receives electrical service from Xcel Energy, the Polk-Burnett Electrical Cooperative and the St. Croix Electrical Cooperative. There is one 69 kilovolt electric transmission line operated by Xcel Energy traversing the southeast corner of the Town. There is an electrical power substation located on 120<sup>th</sup> Street on the eastern border of the Town. Figure 8 shows generalized service areas and power and gas lines in the Town. Service area boundaries are not accurate, but show general areas served.

## **Gas Service and Gas Pipelines**

There is no natural gas service in the Town of Alden. There is service supplied by the Wisconsin Gas Company to at least part of all of the communities surrounding the Town of Alden. There are gas pipelines traversing the Town. One is owned and operated by Viking Gas Transmission Company and the other by Xcel Energy.

## **Cemeteries**

East Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery is located at the East Immanuel Lutheran Church located at 270 120<sup>th</sup> Street. Little Falls Lutheran Church Cemetery is located at Little Falls at 1272 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Wagon Landing aka Mason Landing is located about a quarter mile east of the Town of Alden Town Hall on County Highway C. West Emmanuel Church Cemetery is found south of Church Pine Lake on 180<sup>th</sup> Street.



**East Immanuel Lutheran Church and Cemetery**

## **Health Care Facilities**

The Town of Alden has no hospitals, general medical clinics, or nursing homes, although residents have access to an array of health care options in the Cities of Amery and New Richmond, and the Village of Osceola.

## **Child Care Facilities**

There are currently no licensed childcare facilities within the Town.

## **Police, Fire & Emergency Services**

The Polk County Sheriff's Department provides for law enforcement needs in the Town.

The Town of Alden has contracts with five fire departments and are not represented on the board of any of these fire departments:

1. New Richmond Fire Department, which supplies fire protection to Parts or all of the Town of Alden, Polk County, as well as the Towns of Erin Prairie, Richmond, Stanton, Star Prairie, and the Village of Star Prairie, all of which are in St. Croix county.
2. Osceola Fire Department, providing coverage for all or parts of the Towns of Alden, Farmington, Osceola and the villages of Osceola and Dresser, all of which are in Polk County.
3. Amery Fire Department, which provides coverage for parts or all of the Towns of Alden, Black Brook and Lincoln, and the City of Amery, all of which are in Polk County.
4. Deer Park Area Fire Department, which is located in the Village of Deer Park. This provides protection for parts or all of the Towns of Alden and Black Brook in Polk County and the Towns of Cylon and Stanton and the Village of Deer Park, all of which are in St. Croix County.
5. Dresser-Osceola-Garfield Fire Department, which is a joint fire department formed by the Village of Dresser, the Towns of Osceola and Garfield. This fire department has two stations, one in the Village of Dresser and the other in the unincorporated Wanderos in the Town of Garfield. This fire department provides coverage for the Village of Dresser, parts or all of the Towns of Alden, Garfield, and Osceola.

Coverage for the Town of Alden is also provided by the following area First Responders:

1. Deer Park First Responders, providing coverage for the Towns of Alden and Black Brook in Polk County and the Towns of Cylon and Stanton and the Village of Deer Park in St. Croix County.
2. Star Prairie First Responders providing coverage for the Village of Star Prairie, the Towns of Somerset and Star Prairie in St. Croix County and the Towns of Alden and Farmington in Polk County.
3. County Line First Responders cover much of the Towns of Alden and Farmington.

The Town of Alden has representation on the board of three area ambulance services. They are:

1. The Osceola Area Ambulance, which is an intergovernmental cooperative comprised of the Villages of Osceola and Dresser and the Towns of Alden, Farmington and Osceola. This cooperative provides coverage for all or parts of the listed local governments as well as being supported by and providing coverage for a small area of the Town of Garfield through a contractual arrangement.
2. The Amery Area EMS, an intergovernmental cooperative which serves the City of Amery and parts or all of the Towns of Alden, Apple River, Black Brook, Beaver, Clayton, Garfield and Lincoln.
3. New Richmond Area Ambulance and Rescue Service, an intergovernmental cooperative comprising the City of New Richmond, Village of Star Prairie, the Towns of Cylon, Erin Prairie, Richmond, Star Prairie, Stanton all in St. Croix County and the Town of Alden, Polk County.

## **Libraries**

The libraries in the area are the Amery Public Library, the Carleton A. Friday Memorial Library in New Richmond, the Deer Park Public Library, the Dresser Village Library and the Osceola Public Library.

Although no public libraries exist within the Town, all residents can currently access nearby libraries due to a contract agreement. In 1971, the Wisconsin State Legislature passed a law creating seventeen Library Systems in Wisconsin. The purpose of the library systems is to provide free and equitable access to public libraries for all residents in Wisconsin even if their community has no library. The library systems also serve to take on projects too costly or complex for individual community libraries. The funding for the Public Library Systems comes from a set percentage of the budgets of all the public libraries in Wisconsin. The Indianhead Library System is headquartered in Eau Claire and serves libraries in Eau Claire, Chippewa, Pepin, Dunn, Pierce, St. Croix, Polk, Barron, Rusk, and Price counties. For more information, visit the Indianhead website <http://www.ifls.lib.wi.us/index.asp>.

## **Schools**

The Town of Alden is within the Osceola and Amery School Districts. The Town has the most contact with the Osceola Schools. The Town maintains the old Cedar Lake School and the property around it that is adjacent to its Cedar Lake Park and lake access. The school is owned by the Osceola School District. It serves as a place for card parties, Lake District meetings and has been used for large family gatherings. The agreement with the district is that as long as the town maintains the property, it can be used by the citizens in the area.



**Cedar Lake School**

The Osceola School District has played a very important role in encouraging long range planning. The school district hosted meetings for local governments to meet and discuss the need to do the comprehensive plan process before there was any interest in doing so by our county government.

The Indianhead Technical College (CVTC) provides educational programs resulting in Associate Degrees and Certificates. There is a campus in New Richmond and the administrative offices are in Shell Lake.

The University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UWRF) provides undergraduate, limited graduate and continuing education courses which support the fine arts, liberal studies, technology, business and industry. The university houses the Rural Development Center which has done projects with the Town. The Town has a good working relationship with the University of Wisconsin – Extension Polk County Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development Agent.

## FORECASTED UTILITY & COMMUNITY FACILITIES NEEDS

Table 46 indicates any utility or community facility projects that were known at the time this comprehensive plan was completed.

**Table 46 FORECASTED UTILITY & COMMUNITY FACILITY NEEDS**

Utility or Facility	Name/ Location	Estimated Quantity (sq. ft, linear ft, gallons, etc.)	Condition (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor)	Estimated Percent of Capacity	Pending Repairs or Improvements	New or Replacement Facilities Planned
Sanitary Sewer Service	All private	Approx 1,100	Good; no known issues	NA	NA	NA
Stormwater Management	Mainly drainage ditches, subdivisions under stormwater management	NA	NA	NA	NA	Will be required for planned development.
Water Supply	All private	Approx 1,100	Good; no known issues	NA	NA	
Solid Waste Disposal	Residents contract individually with private haulers	NA	Good	NA	Some interest in creating pick-up routes	None by Town
Recycling Facilities	Collection site in Town	NA	Good	No issues	None	None
Parks	Various Parks and Recreational Sites	24	Good	No issues	See park plan	See park plan
Tele-communication Facilities	None	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Power Plants and Transmission Lines	Xcel and Viking Gas	69 kV	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cemeteries	Private	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Health Care Facilities	None	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nursing Care	None	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Licensed Child Care Facilities	None	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Police	Polk County Sheriff Dept.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Utility or Facility	Name/ Location	Estimated Quantity (sq. ft, linear ft, gallons, etc.)	Condition (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor)	Estimated Percent of Capacity	Pending Repairs or Improvements	New or Replacement Facilities Planned
Fire/Rescue	Various Community Fire Department	Various	Good	no issues	None	None
First Responders	Deer Park and Star Prairie	No facility; volunteers use own vehicles	Excellent	NA	May have to increase some equipment if ambulance response times decrease & extended patient care required	None
Ambulance	Osceola, Amery and New Richmond		Excellent	No issues	None	None
Libraries	None; Indianhead	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Schools		Osceola School District Amery School District		The Town of Alden has a good working relationship with the Osceola School District		
Town Hall	183 155 <sup>th</sup> Street	NA	Very Good	NA	Private office space	None
Town Shop	183 155 <sup>th</sup> Street	NA	Very Good	NA	Additional garage bay	None

Source: WCWRPC, Town Chair; review of other documentation (e.g. County ORP)

## UTILITY & COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### *Utilities and Community Facilities Goal*

Maintain and provide community facilities and services the Town determines are needed in a safe and cost-effective manner which is consistent with the Town's vision.

### *Objectives:*

- 1) Infrastructure improvements should be done in a manner that is compatible with the Town's rural character.
- 2) New development should be responsible for corresponding increases in community services and infrastructure through Town designated required improvements.
- 3) Maintain current levels of public works and community services, while protecting the health of Town residents and the natural environment.

***Policies:***

- 1) For all new residential development, require developers to pay related Town costs, including dedication of land, or payment-in-lieu of such dedication, for parks or open space land.
- 2) Integrate, when feasible, future community facilities improvements into a capital improvements plan.
- 3) Adopt a cell tower ordinance that requires separation from residences, co-location and the use of alternative support structures to minimize visual impact where feasible OR, support enforcement of the Polk County Cell Tower Ordinance in the Town.
- 4) Continue to work with Polk County to ensure the proper installation of new private onsite wastewater treatment systems, the continued maintenance of existing systems, and the identification of failing private septic systems.
- 5) The Town will periodically evaluate the adequacy of the Town Hall and Shop facility and update this element if changes or expansion are necessary.
- 6) If issues regarding solid waste, recycling, hazardous waste disposal or stormwater management become more prevalent, the Town will address them as necessary.
- 7) The Town will develop parks and recreational land and facilities in accordance with its Park and Recreation Plan contained herein.

Future needs for utilities and facilities of regional significance (e.g., health care, emergency services, recycling facilities, telecommunications, electric utilities, child care, libraries, parks, and schools) and for privately owned facilities (e.g., cemeteries, solid waste disposal) are evaluated and planned for by the providers and are not considered a normal responsibility of the Town. The Town of Alden has very little or no control or responsibility regarding the planning and operation of these facilities. This is also true for private wells, and private sanitary sewer systems which are regulated by Polk County and the State of Wisconsin, and not the Town of Alden.

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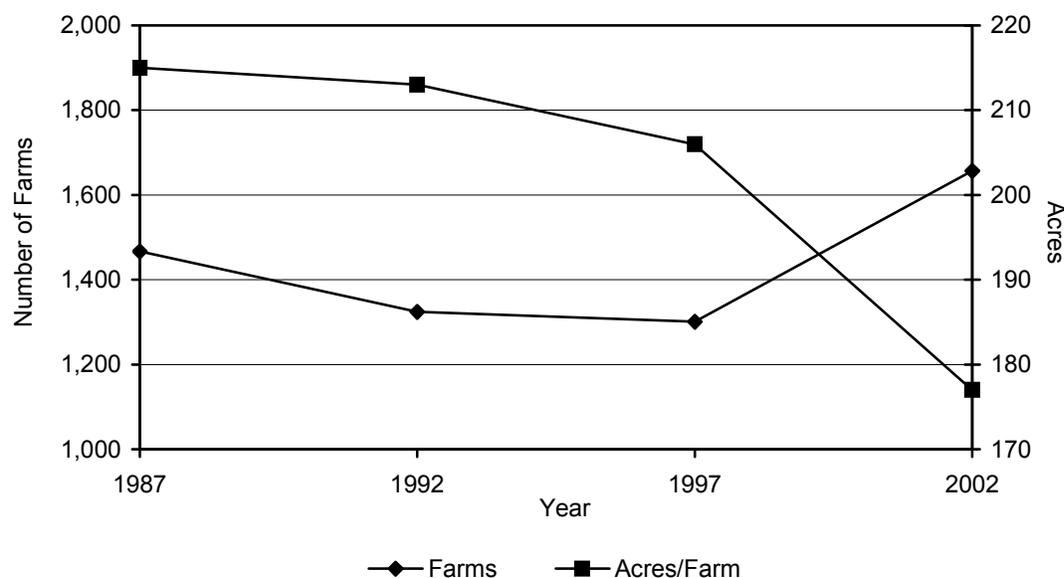
# THE AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

### Agriculture Characteristics

Although not as dominant as an industry as some surrounding counties, agriculture is still an important element of the social and economic characteristics of Polk County. Historically, the Town of Alden has had evident agricultural activity. However, the physical characteristics of the Town, such as its surface waters, glacial geology and soils, limit this activity. Changes in agriculture due to socio-economic conditions and the development pressures to convert agricultural land to other uses can have profound impacts in Polk County and surrounding communities. Several indicators point to these changes.

**FIGURE 9**  
**NUMBER AND AVERAGE SIZE OF FARMS • 1987 TO 2002**  
**POLK COUNTY**



Source: 1987, 1992, 1997 and 2002 Census of Agriculture

In 1997, there were 166 fewer farms in Polk County than in 1987. This is an 11.3% decrease. The average farm size decreased over the same period by 9 acres, or 4.4%. However, largely due to Land Use Value Assessment implemented in the late 1990s the number of farms had increased by 2002 while the average size of farms continued to decline.

**TABLE 47**  
**ACRES IN FARMLAND • 1987 TO 2002**  
**POLK COUNTY**

	1987	1992	1997	2002
Acres	315,416	282,405	267,639	292,860
Percent of County Land Area	53.7	48.1	45.6	49.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Countywide, farmland declined by 47,777 acres between 1987 and 1997 -- a 15.1% decrease. However, again due to Land Use Value Assessment the amount of farmland increased between 1997 and 2002 by 25,221 acres – a 9.4% increase.

Farm acres accounted for 53.7% of the total land area in the county in 1987, only 45.6% in 1997, yet rebounded somewhat to 49.9% in 2002 (Table 47).

**TABLE 48**  
**NUMBER OF FARMS BY FARM OWNERSHIP • 1987 TO 2002**  
**POLK COUNTY**

<b>Ownership</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2002</b>
Individual/Family Farms	1,343	1,210	1,466	1,542
Partnership	102	86	114	17
Corporation - Family	19	22	52	367
Corporation - Other	1	3	2	2
Other (Coop, Trust, etc...)	2	3	8	7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In 2002, nearly 80% of the farms in Polk County were individual or family farms, while another 19% were corporations held by families (Table 48). In 1987, 91.5% of farms in Polk County were individual or family farms, while another 7% were in partnerships.

**TABLE 49**  
**NUMBER OF FARMS BY FARM TYPE • 1982, 1992 AND 2002**  
**POLK COUNTY**

<b>Farm Type</b>	<b>1982</b>		<b>1992</b>		<b>2002</b>		<b>Change</b>	<b>Change</b>
	<b>Farms</b>	<b>Pct of Total</b>	<b>Farms</b>	<b>Pct of Total</b>	<b>Farms</b>	<b>Pct of Total</b>	<b>1982-92</b>	<b>1992-02</b>
Cash Grains	191	11.1	121	9.1	236	14.2	-36.6	95.0
Field Crops (exc. Cash Grains)	95	5.5	195	14.7	568	34.2	105.3	191.2
Livestock	448	26.0	349	26.4	371	22.3	-22.1	6.3
Dairy	836	48.6	501	37.8	228	13.7	-40.1	-54.5
Other	151	8.8	158	11.9	256	15.4	-4.6	62.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,324</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,659</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-23.1</b>	<b>25.3</b>

Source: 1982, 1992 and 2002 Census of Agriculture

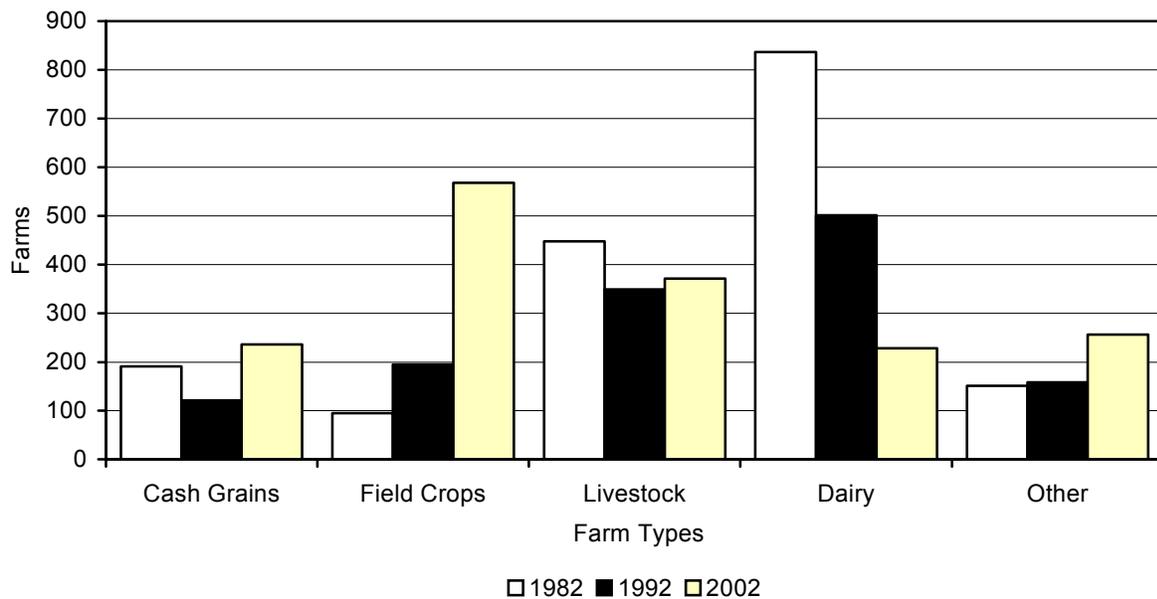
In 1982 and 1992, dairy farms were the predominant type of farm in Polk County, comprising nearly 49% and 38% of the total farms, respectively (Table 49). However, between 1982 and 1992, dairy farms experienced the greatest decline in the number of farms, 335, or a 40% decrease. By 2002, dairy farms were no longer the majority after nearly a 55% decline between 1992 and 2002 and only account for less than 14 percent of all farms.

Cash grain and field crop farms increased between 1982 and 2002, with the greatest increases likely coming with the implementation of Land Use Value Assessment. Livestock farms (excludes dairy) rebounded somewhat between 1992 and 2002 after significant losses between 1982 and 1992. The “Other” farm category showed strong growth between 1992 and 2002 as more specialty farms become apparent (Figure 10).

The number of farms have increased while, farmland acreage and farm population declined from 1987 to 2002. However, Land Use Value Assessment appears to have at least temporarily halted losses of farm acreage.

Nonetheless, about 50% of the land in the county is still in farm acreage. Consequently, land use and development policies will have to seriously take into account the impacts on agricultural lands.

**FIGURE 10**  
**NUMBER OF FARMS BY FARM TYPE • 1982, 1992 AND 2002**  
**POLK COUNTY**



Source: 1982, 1992 and 2002 Census of Agriculture

There are also agricultural data specific to the Town of Alden. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue keeps track of land that is assessed as agricultural. How this has been determined has changed over the years with the enactment and implementation of Use Value Assessment. The law governing assessment of agricultural land in Wisconsin was changed in 1995 under 1995 Act 27 from a standard based on the full market value of the land to a use value standard. Under use value, valuations are based on the income that can be generated from the land's rental for agricultural use. Act 27 also created the Farmland Advisory Council that would make recommendations to the Department of Revenue regarding use valuation.

The implementation of use valuation was done in phases, beginning with a freeze in the assessed value of agricultural land in 1996 and 1997 at 1995 levels. Use valuation was phased-in beginning in 1998 whereby the 1995 frozen assessed value of agricultural land was reduced by 10% of the difference between the frozen value and its use value. The phase-in continued in 1999 when the frozen values were reduced by 20% of the difference between the frozen value and its use value. Under Act 27, the phase-in would have continued until 2007 when full use value would have been implemented. However, in October 1999, the Farmland Advisory

Council recommended discontinuation of the phase-in in favor of immediate implementation of full use valuation. In November of 1999, the Department of Revenue promulgated an emergency rule providing for the full implementation of use value assessment beginning in 2000. A subsequent change was made by the Legislature in 2003 that affected forested lands associated with agricultural parcels. According to sec.70.32 (4), Wisconsin Statutes, beginning with the assessments as of January 1, 2004, agricultural forest land shall be assessed at 50% of its full value. The forest acres qualify as agricultural forest if the parcel contains land that was classified as agricultural land in the 2004 assessment roll and in the current assessment year.

**TABLE 50**  
**STATEMENT OF ASSESSMENTS • SELECTED YEARS 1985 TO 2006**  
**TOWN OF ALDEN**

<b>1985</b>				<b>1998</b>			
<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>			<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>		
	<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>		<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Residential	1,184	857	1,552	Residential	1,446	1,089	3,025
Commercial	9	7	18	Commercial	15	14	22
Manufacturing	0	0	0	Manufacturing	0	0	0
Agriculture	834	158	21,175	Agriculture	816	0	19,094
Swamp/Waste	395	0	3,903	Swamp/Waste	546	0	3,911
Forest	620	5	8,393	Forest	598	0	8,621
Other	0	0	0	Other	115	122	229

<b>1990</b>				<b>2000</b>			
<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>			<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>		
	<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>		<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Residential	1,240	925	1,747	Residential	1,509	1,157	3,277
Commercial	10	96	19	Commercial	15	14	22
Manufacturing	0	0	0	Manufacturing	0	0	0
Agriculture	844	0	20,933	Agriculture	807	0	18,739
Swamp/Waste	388	0	3,797	Swamp/Waste	548	0	4,048
Forest	617	0	8,497	Forest	604	0	8,473
Other	0	0	0	Other	110	115	216

<b>1995</b>				<b>2002</b>			
<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>			<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>		
	<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>		<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Residential	1,359	1,019	2,687	Residential	1,554	1,203	3,448
Commercial	14	13	20	Commercial	17	16	33
Manufacturing	0	0	0	Manufacturing	0	0	0
Agriculture	816	0	19,832	Agriculture	786	0	17,648
Swamp/Waste	386	0	3,642	Swamp/Waste	568	0	4,868
Forest	601	0	8,698	Forest	594	0	8,175
Other	0	0	0	Other	110	113	215

**TABLE 50 CONT'D**

<b>2003</b>			
<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>		
	<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Residential	1,595	1,233	3,594
Commercial	16	15	31
Manufacturing	0	0	0
Agriculture	786	0	17,519
Undeveloped	572	0	4,898
Ag Forest	0	0	0
Forest	586	0	8,021
Other	110	113	222

<b>2004</b>			
<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>		
	<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Residential	1,640	1,256	3,881
Commercial	16	15	31
Manufacturing	0	0	0
Agriculture	784	0	17,288
Undeveloped	546	0	4,656
Ag Forest	1	0	16
Forest	584	0	7,940
Other	105	109	212

<b>2005</b>			
<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>		
	<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Residential	1,729	1,288	4,485
Commercial	16	15	31
Manufacturing	0	0	0
Agriculture	721	0	16,294
Undeveloped	569	0	5,347
Ag Forest	297	0	3,647
Forest	267	0	4,041
Other	100	103	203

<b>2006</b>			
<b>Use</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>		
	<b>Land</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Residential	1,756	1,308	4,675
Commercial	16	15	31
Manufacturing	0	0	0
Agriculture	728	0	16,337
Undeveloped	562	0	5,131
Ag Forest	295	0	3,645
Forest	263	0	3,942
Other	98	101	200

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

From looking at Table 50 it is evident that generally the amount of land assessed as agricultural has been declining over the past several decades. The advent of use value assessment seems to have initially slowed and eventually stemmed this decline. In the twenty years from 1985 to 2005, land assessed as agricultural declined by 4881 acres or 30 percent. At the same time land assessed as residential increased by 3123 acres or over 200 percent. From 2005 to 2006 the amount of land assessed as agricultural increased slightly, perhaps temporarily halting a 40 year decline.

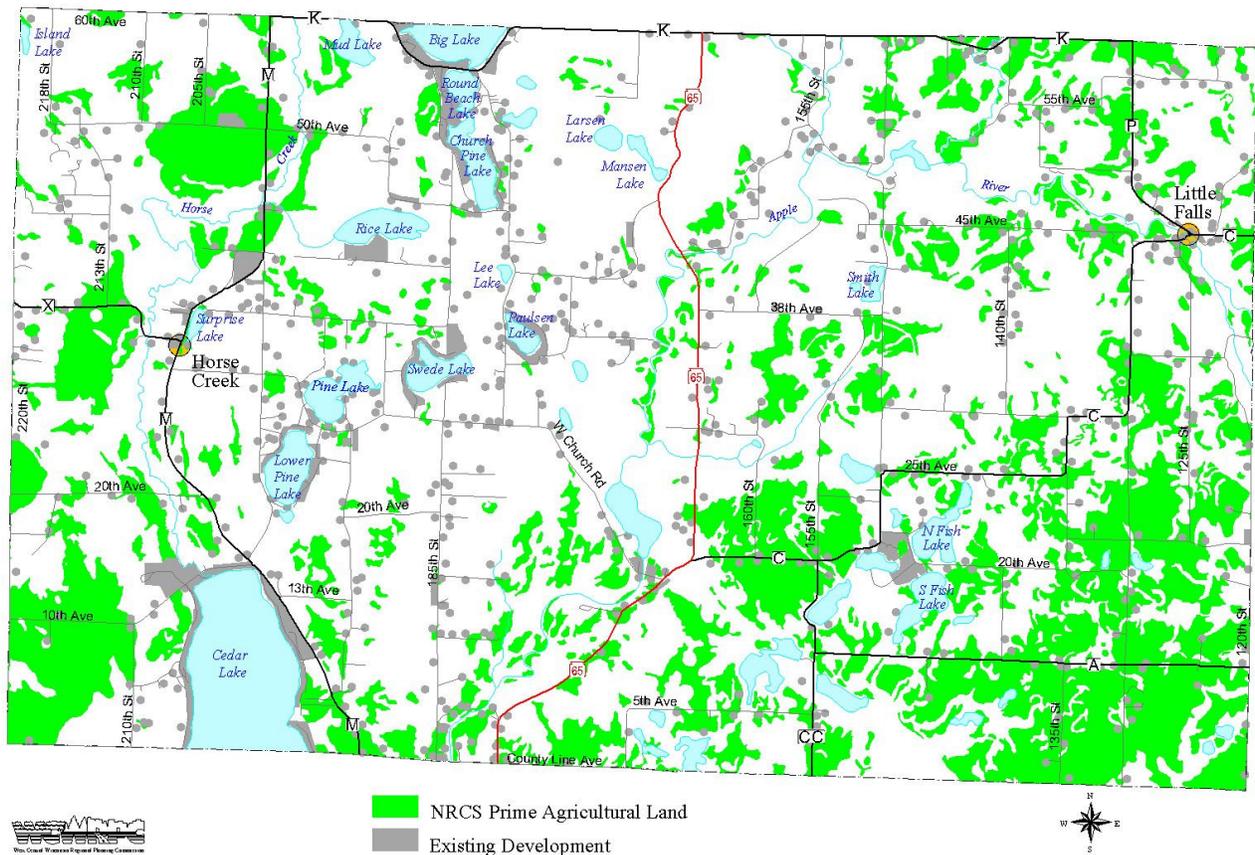
### **Agricultural Land as a Resource**

Prime farmland is the land that is best suited to food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It may be cultivated land, pasture, woodland or other land, but it is not existing urban and built-up land, or water areas. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for a well managed soil to produce a sustained high-yield of crops in an economic manner. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Figure 11 shows the land under the Natural Resources Conservation Service's prime farmland designation. These are areas where the soils and other land characteristics are likely to be highly suited for agricultural activity. Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, range-land, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water). It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable

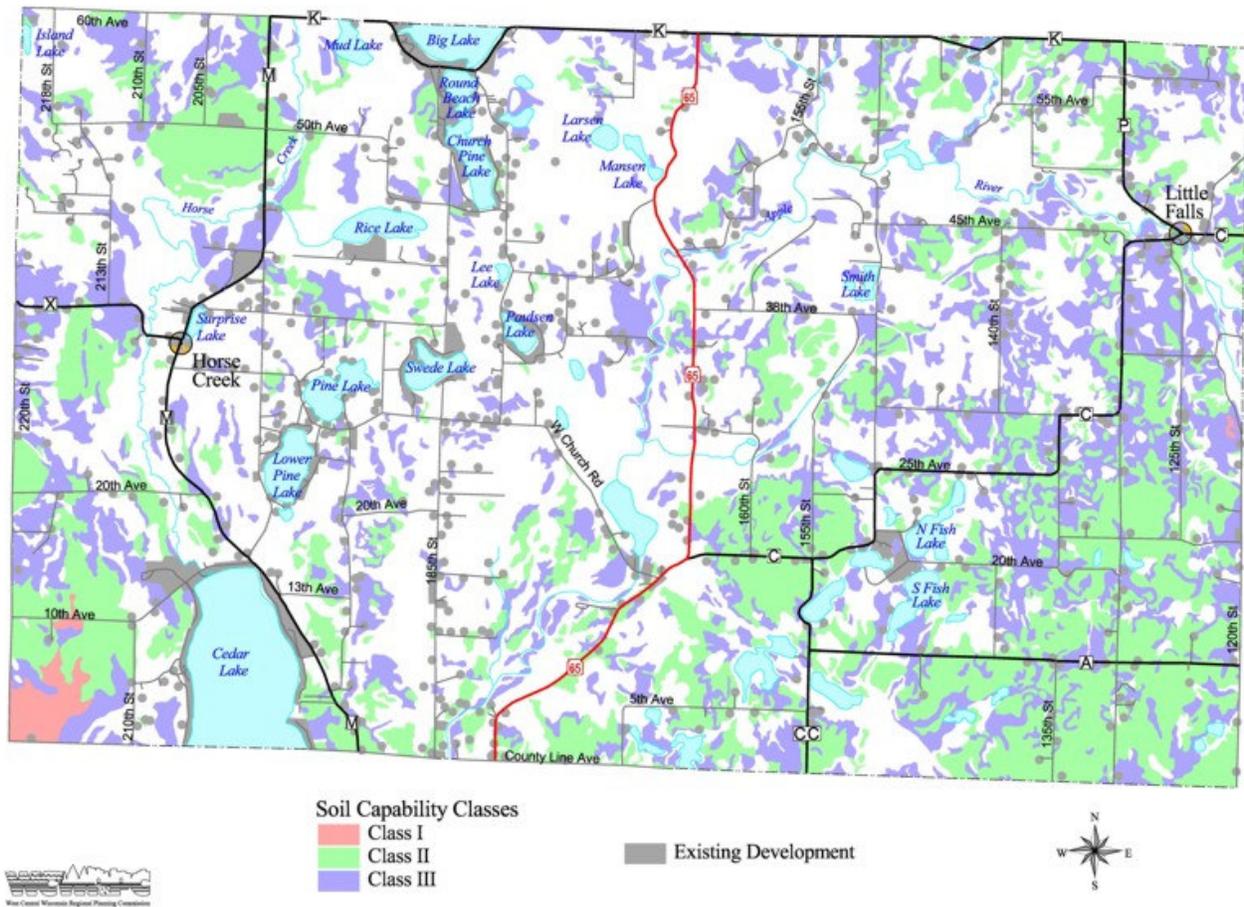
temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.

Soils that fall into classes I, II, and III of the Natural Resources Conservation Service's capability unit classification system are also considered prime agricultural lands. The value of these lands are associated with not only their soil class, but also with their size, present use and any regulatory framework for their protection. Capability classes and subclasses show, in a general way, the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops. The soils are classed according to their limitations when they are used for field crops, the risk of damage when they are used, and the way they respond to treatment. The grouping does not take into account major and generally expensive land-forming that would change slope, depth, or other characteristics of the soils; does not take into consideration possible but unlikely major reclamation projects; and does not apply to rice, cranberries, horticultural crops, or other crops that require special management. Capability classification is not a substitute for interpretations designed to show suitability and limitations-of groups of soils for rangeland, for forest trees, or for engineering purposes. Figure 12 shows NRCS Soil Capability Class I, II and III and Table 51 their distribution.

**Figure 11**



**Figure 12**



**TABLE 51**  
**LAND CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION / PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND**  
**TOWN OF ALDEN**

Soil Class	Acres	Percent Total Land Area
Class I	208.2	0.59%
Class II	7,922.7	22.31%
Class III	7,561.9	21.29%
Class IV	10,168.4	28.63%
Class V	259.8	0.73%
Class VI	5,630.6	15.85%
Class VII	3,446.6	9.70%
Class VIII	315.5	0.89%
<b>Total Land Area</b>	<b>35,513.7</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: NRCS

The interpretation depicted in Figure 12 differs from Figure 11 as it uses different criteria to designate soils that are suitable for agriculture. Soil capability classes are related to yields of specific crops with classes I through III being considered soils highly suited to agricultural activity. However, a brief review of both interpretations reveals that the NRCS Prime

Agriculture designation consists mostly of Soil Capability Class I and II soils. Figure 13 shows NRCS Prime Agriculture lands which are not exclusively, yet encompass all, Soil Capability Class I and II soils, and Soil Capability Class III soils not within the NRCS Prime Agriculture designation. It can be seen from both of the previous interpretations that there are significant areas in the town with soils suitable for agricultural activity. The soils, however, are only the base resource and there are many factors such as historic agricultural activity, landcover, ownership patterns and parcel fragmentation that contribute to or limit agricultural activity.

The agriculture within Alden was identified in 1997 with the WISCLAND project. Satellite imagery was used to determine the location of agricultural fields as depicted in Figure 14. Figure 15 shows more recent information derived from Farm Service Agency 2005 farm field delineations. It is revealed just how prevalent agricultural activity is within Alden. Figure 16 shows further analysis where the agricultural limitations of non-farm development, forested land, shallow depth to bedrock, shallow depth to groundwater, floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes 12% or greater are overlain the 2005 FSA farm field information. It can be seen that agricultural lands are significantly fragmented in the Town and the large tracts of agricultural production associated with successful agricultural areas do not exist in Alden. In addition, when comparing the agricultural fields in the 1997 WISCLAND map and the 2005 FSA map it appears that use

**Figure 13**

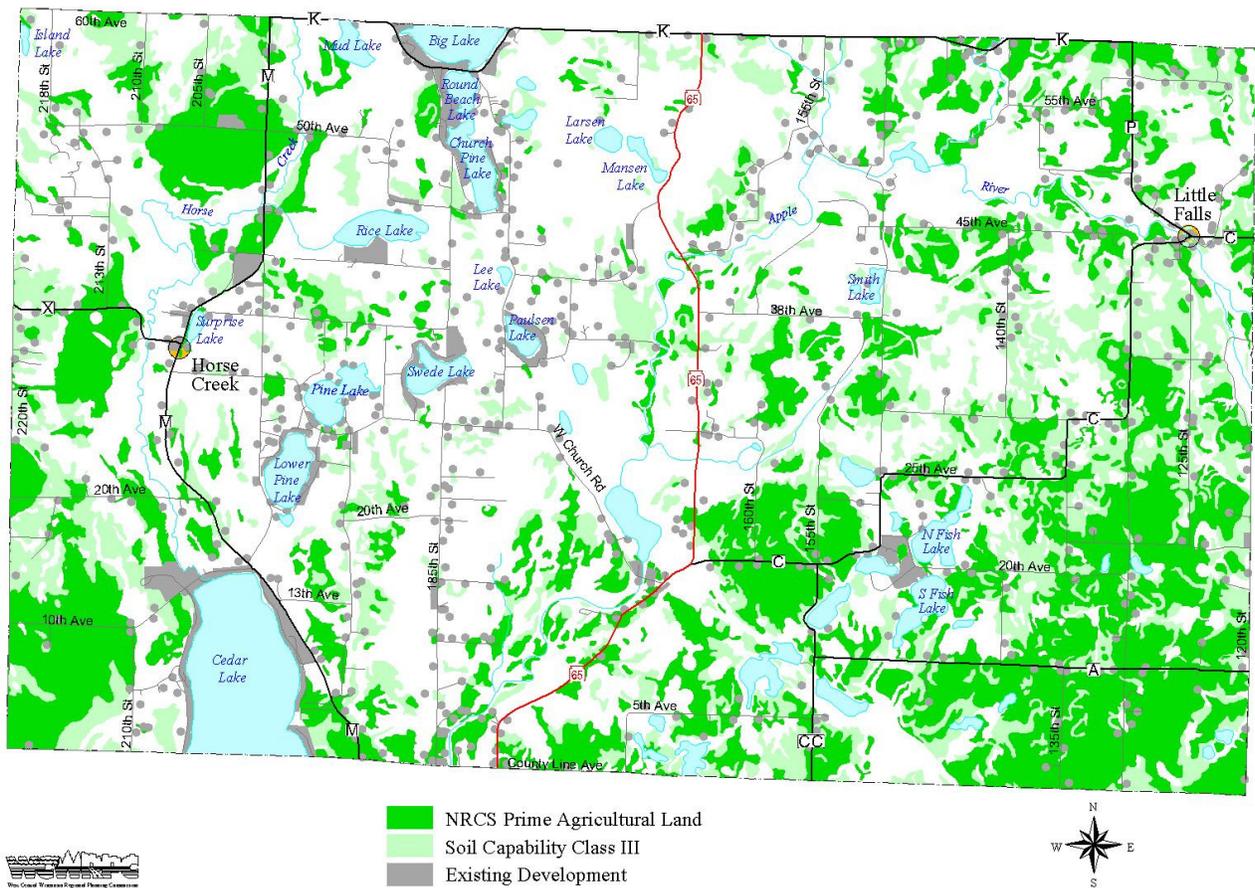
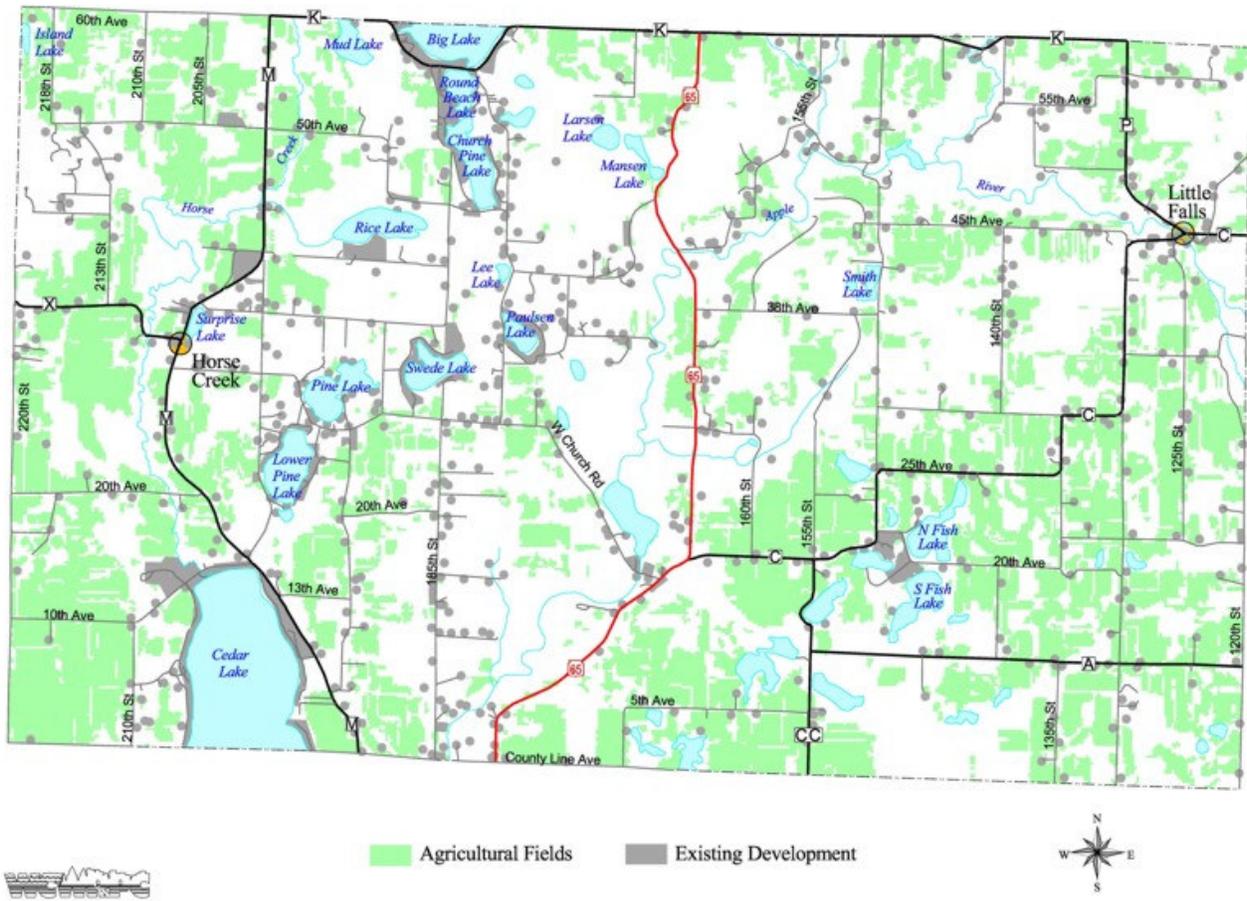


Figure 14



value assessment has had a small impact on bringing some land back into production. However, land brought back into production due to use value assessment is likely to be marginal farmland.

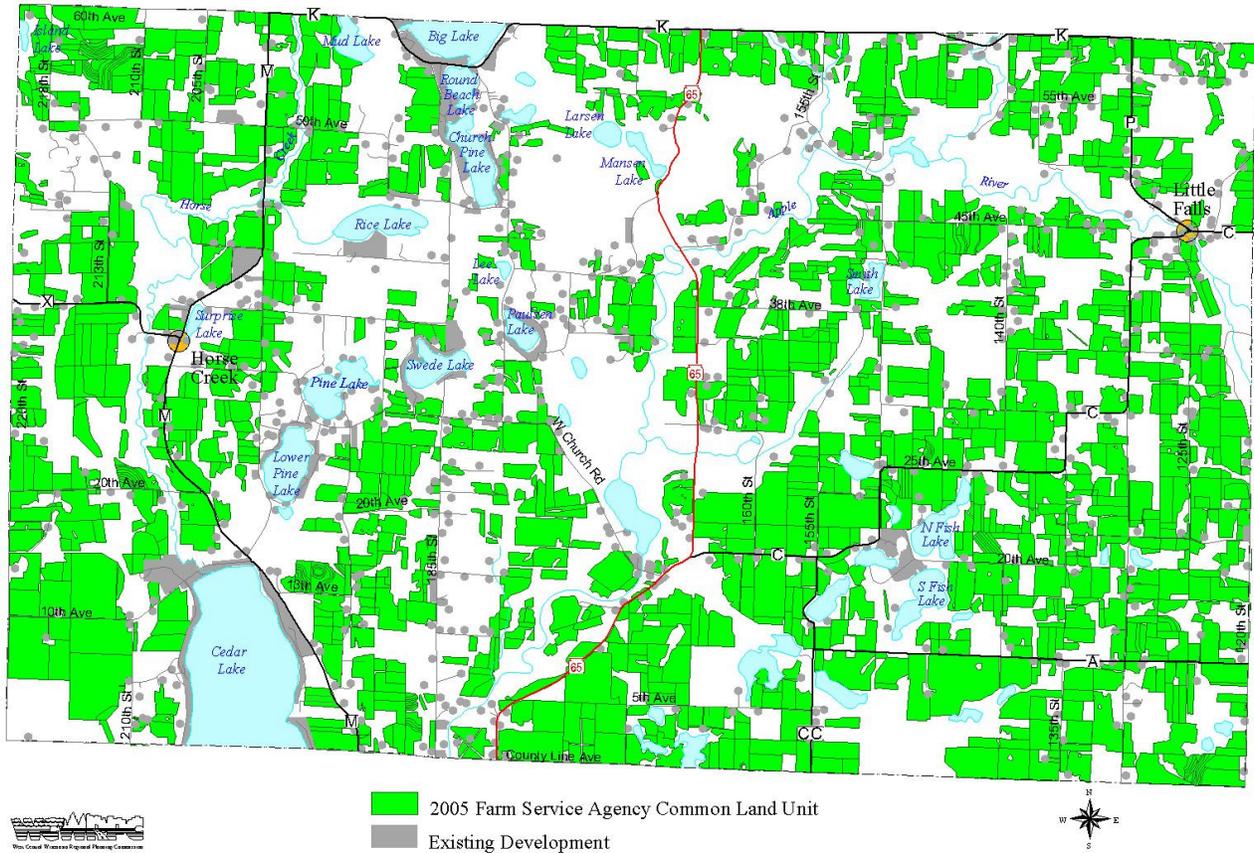
### Farmland Protection Background

Agricultural preservation has largely been the domain of Polk County with its implementation of Chapter 91, Wisconsin Statutes, in its zoning ordinance, and the State of Wisconsin in administering farmland preservation contracts. In 2003, the Town of Alden updated the farmland preservation areas that determine the location of Exclusive Agricultural Zoning.

The Town of Alden Town Board passed a resolution to Polk County supporting the creation of Agricultural Zoning in March 1986. The Town and Polk County held Farmland Preservation informational meetings in the Town on November 13 and December 3, 1986. On April 7, 1987, the Town submitted an advisory referendum to the voters which read, “Should the Town of Alden adopt Sec. VI (a) Polk Co. Comprehensive Land Use Ordinance which creates an Exclusive Agricultural District to protect areas where agricultural production is the dominant land use and conflict exists with non-farm uses, in accordance with Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Statutes?”

On May 5, 1987, following the April 7<sup>th</sup> advisory referendum vote of 202 in favor and 129 opposed, the Town of Alden Town Board adopted Exclusive Agricultural Zoning.

**Figure 15**



Even though most of the land in the Town of Alden was not prime farmland, agricultural activity occurred on the marginal lands within the Town and many of the people working those lands expressed interest in the tax advantages the Chapter 91 Farmland Preservation program offered. However, it became apparent that the original farmland preservation area delineated as a basis for the Exclusive Agricultural District was indeed too broad and did not reflect the true capacity of the land for agricultural production.

From 1988 to 2002 there were 51 rezonings from Exclusive Agricultural A2 to other districts totaling about 1,710 acres (3 for 188.8 acres to Residential, 1 for 1.07 acres to Commercial, and 47 for 1520+ acres to Agricultural A1), for averages of 3.4 rezonings and 114 acres per year. For the six years from 1997 to 2002, there were 33 rezonings or 65% of all that had occurred over the fifteen year period. Further, for the five years from 1998 to 2002, there were 29 rezonings or 57% of all that had occurred over the fifteen year period. The amount of rezonings approved suggested that many of the lands zoned in Exclusive Agricultural in 1987 were actually not best suited to agricultural production.

On December 12, 2002 the Town of Alden Town Board passed the following resolution:

*Be it resolved, the Town of Alden has worked under the guidance of the Polk County Zoning Office. The Town of Alden is one of two towns within Polk County to have had the category of Exclusive Agriculture Zoning as one of the zoning categories.*

*The Exclusive Agriculture designation has not been adjusted since its creation and has caused considerable time to be involved both at the town level and at the county level to change to another zoning category.*

*Various departments at the county level have encouraged Alden to address this issue.*

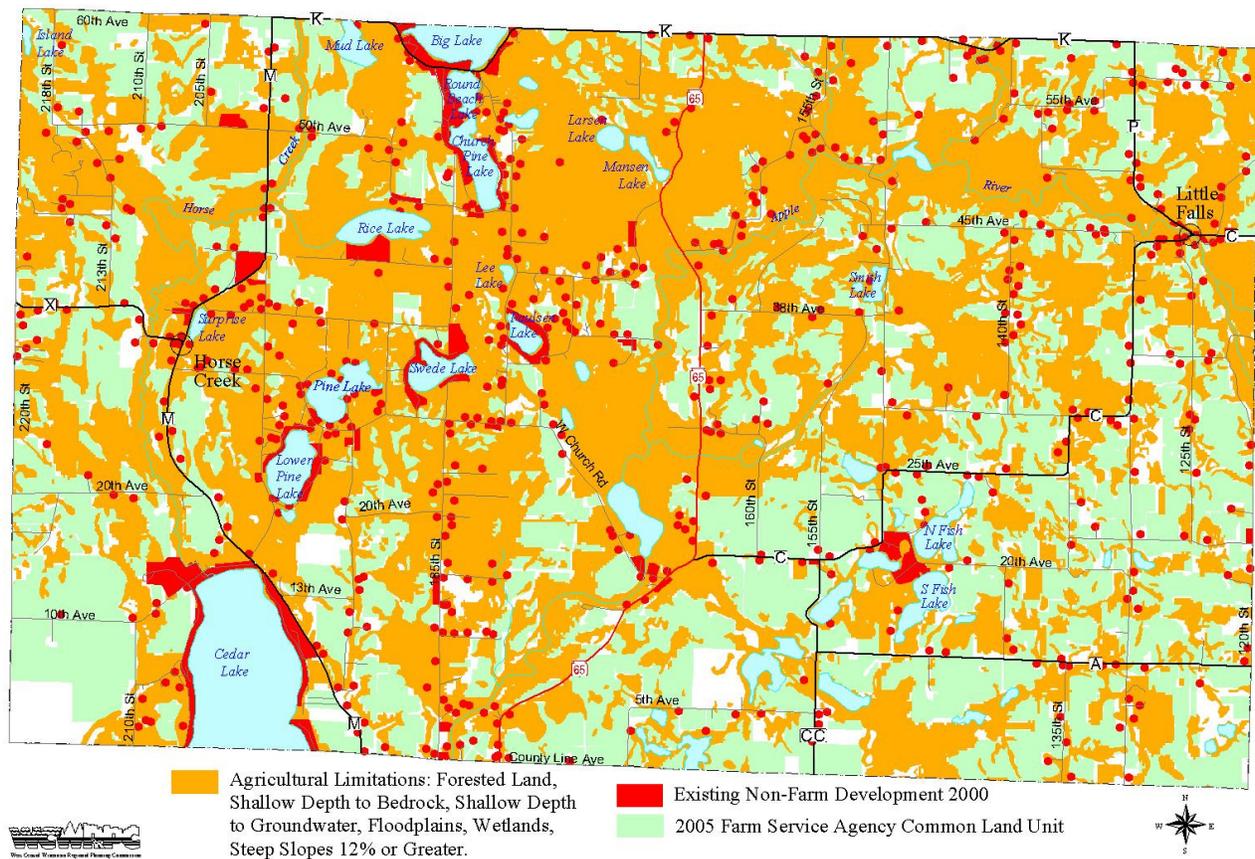
*The Town of Alden has recently established a Statutory Planning Commission and they have just begun their responsibilities for the town.*

*The Town of Alden Planning Commission has made a request of the town board to have a period where no changes from Exclusive Agriculture by allowed to let them address the appropriateness of Exclusive Agriculture on the total area of the Town of Alden.*

*The Town of Alden board agrees to this request and will forward this to the Polk County Zoning Office and the Polk County Land Information Office as well as the office of the Polk County Board Chairman.*

*The allowed period to accomplish this task will begin on December 12, 2002 and will expire on May 1, 2003.*

**Figure 16**



The Town of Alden Plan Commission studied the agricultural characteristics and agricultural zoning in the town and then established the following criteria for Exclusive Agricultural Zoning:

*Exclusive Agriculture Zoning Criteria*

*Sizable amounts of contiguous cropland currently used for agricultural production that lends itself to future agricultural use and is compatible with the uses around it.*

- *A sizable amount of cropland means parcels of 80 acres or more.*
- *Contiguous cropland means AG parcels connected together free of pockets of alternate land uses (spot zoning).*
- *Currently used for agriculture production means dairying, livestock, grazing, poultry raising, raising of grain, grass, mint and seed crops. Beekeeping, commercial feedlots, floriculture, fish and fur farming, forest and game management, orchards, plant greenhouses and nurseries, raising of fruit, nuts and berries, sod farming and parcels of at least 35 acres enrolled in CRP.*
- *Cropland that lends itself to future agricultural use means long term desire of AG and suitable soil and topography. The majority of the land shall be non-highly erodible and relatively flat (slopes less than 12 degrees). Sufficient roads and AG infrastructure currently in place and available for the foreseeable future.*
- *Compatible uses around it means neighboring areas are not zoned residential, commercial or industrial or conduct operations incompatible with agricultural land use.*

Subsequently, the Planning Commission traveled the entire Town and made an assessment of each farm and the parcels of farmland throughout the Town. After consulting with landowners, applying their criteria and long discussions about the real suitability of agriculture in the Town the Planning Commission developed a recommendation to change most of the land currently in Exclusive Agricultural Zoning (A2) to the Agricultural District (A1). About 2,080 acres in the southwest corner of the Town was recommended to remain in Exclusive Agricultural Zoning category.

On May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the Town of Alden Town Board approved the Plan Commission's recommendation of exclusive agricultural zoning criteria and map. The Town Board also agreed to the Plan Commission recommendation to extend the moratorium on exclusive agricultural rezonings until September 1, 2003 so the Plan Commission could review the Town of Alden Subdivision Ordinance for possible revision. This was conveyed to the Polk County Zoning Administration on June 26, 2003.

The Town of Alden Town Board then passed the following resolution regarding the Town's petition to Polk County to amend exclusive agricultural zoning in the Town on July 10, 2003:

*RESOLUTION 22-2003*

*PETITION TO POLK COUNTY TO AMEND EXCLUSIVE AGRICULTURAL ZONING*

*WHEREAS, the Town of Alden has Exclusive Agricultural Zoning as one of its zoning categories since 1987,*

*WHEREAS, the Town of Alden Exclusive Agricultural Zoning map has not been modified since It was created,*

*WHEREAS, the Polk County Zoning and Planning Office of Polk County and the Land and Water Conservation Office must spend considerable time to allow a change from Exclusive Agricultural to Agricultural 1, these offices have asked the Town of Alden Board to review Exclusive Agricultural Zoning in Alden,*

*THEREFORE, now that the Town of Alden has an appointed Statutory Planning Commission, The Town Board has assigned them the task of examining Exclusive Agricultural Zoning,*

*THEREFORE, the Town of Alden Planning Commission has established criteria that they feel properly addresses what they would like to see as an Exclusive Agricultural Zone. The established criteria list is attached,*

*THEREFORE, the Alden Town Board has reviewed their recommendations and approves their findings and submits them to the Polk County Zoning and Land Use Planning Committee for their review and then onto the Polk County Board,*

*NOW, THERE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town of Alden does not want to do away with Exclusive Agricultural Zoning, but wishes to amend our map to more adequately reflect the criteria as established by the Town of Alden's Planning Commission. Attached is a description of the relevant areas along with a highlighted map.*

Subsequently on August 6, 2003, after a public hearing the Polk County Revolving Loan Fund, Planning, Zoning and Land Records Committee made a recommendation to the Polk County Board to change the Exclusive Agricultural Zoning in the Town of Alden to reflect the Town of Alden recommendations and the Polk County Board approved the change with Resolution 84-03 on September 9, 2003.

### **Support for the Town of Alden Farmland Protection Plan**

As documented above, the Town of Alden practiced due diligence in addressing the farmland preservation issue when it arose in 2002. Here follows more points of detail and description for the rationale for making such a significant change to the land classified in the Exclusive Agricultural zoning district.

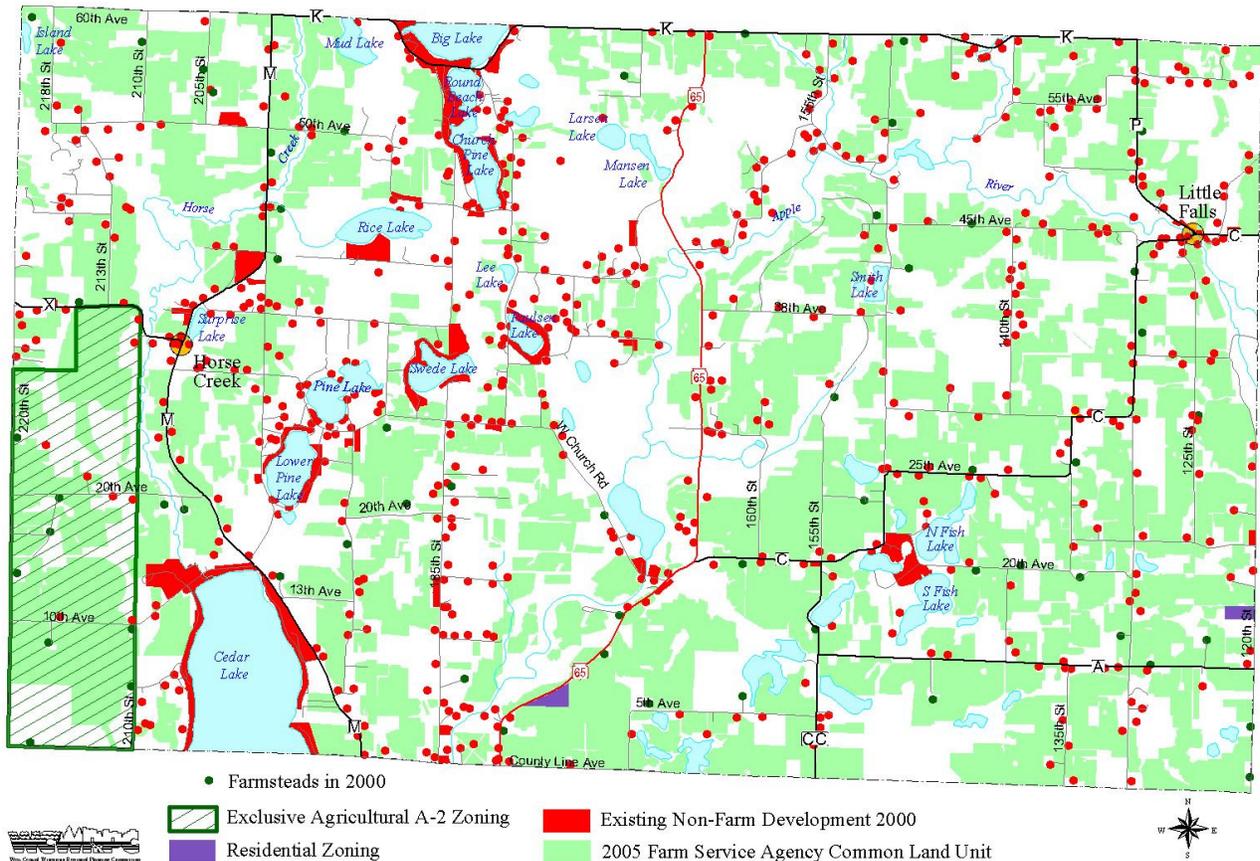
While 26% and 44% of the Town of Alden land in the soil survey is classified as Prime Agricultural Land and Class I, II and III soils (Table 51), respectively, some of this land is not available for agriculture and most of it is not in large tracts of relatively flat land (Figure 16). It is clear that the 1987 designation of agricultural preservation areas and the resulting Exclusive Agricultural district in the Town of Alden was overly broad and did not represent actual prime areas for agricultural production.

To avoid constant time-consuming and costly rezoning from Exclusive Agricultural and the resulting voluntary spot zoning, the Town of Alden Planning Commission reevaluated areas best suited for agricultural production in 2002 based on a consensus of evaluation criteria and the resultant recommendations. The area selected for the Town's agricultural production area is shown in Figure 17 as the Exclusive Agricultural district. Consideration was given to this area also as the best place for potential large livestock operations, to reduce the potential impacts of such uses on surrounding incompatible uses.

The Town of Alden development management framework as represented by Polk County Zoning and the Town of Alden Land Division Ordinance is consistent with the Polk County Land Use Plan goals and objectives and the policies for rural transition, rural open space and agricultural

preservation areas. Agriculture continues to be a permitted use in the Agriculture A-1 District and is practiced on marginal lands largely due to tax incentives presented by Use Value Assessment. The Town of Alden enforces residential density in the Agriculture A-1 District of 7 dwelling units per 40 acres, or 9 per 40 acres with conservation design requiring 50% open

**Figure 17**



space. This is designed to protect the rural character of the Town and the rights of individual property owners.

The Town considers the action in 2003 to be a rezoning from the Exclusive Agricultural classification to the Agricultural district. Their action was not an effort to amend the agricultural preservation areas of the Polk County Farmland Preservation Plan. Removal of land from exclusive agricultural zoning has a lesser standard than for the removal of lands from agricultural preservation or transition areas in a farmland preservation plan.

Removal of land from agricultural preservation or transition areas in a farmland preservation plan must be based on findings that meet one of more of the following:

- a. Existing or planned activities adjacent to the identified agricultural area are incompatible with agricultural use.
- b. The area is not economically viable for agricultural use.
- c. Substantial urban growth in the area or planned urban expansion has created a public need to convert agricultural land use to other uses.

- d. Maintenance of the area in agricultural use is not consistent with the goals and objectives of the county agricultural preservation plan.

A petition for rezoning areas zoned Exclusive Agricultural can only be approved after findings are made based upon consideration of the following:

- a. Adequate public facilities to accommodate development either exist or will be provided within a reasonable time.
- b. Provision of public services to accommodate development will not place an unreasonable burden on the ability of the affected local units of government to provide them.
- c. The land proposed for rezoning is suitable for development and development will not result in undue water or air pollution, cause unreasonable soil erosion or have an unreasonably adverse effect on rare or irreplaceable natural areas.

The Polk County Board of Supervisors agreed with the Town of Alden after both gave due consideration to the three points above. Both the County and Town have in place adequate natural resource protections.

However, representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection have stated that the area of Exclusive Agricultural District cannot be less than 80% of the area of the agricultural preservation area in the County's Farmland Preservation Plan. In other words, there must be consistency between the two designations. Hence, in effect, the more stringent standards for removing lands from the agricultural preservation area will prevail in this case.

Polk County encouraged the Town of Alden to address the discrepancies in the Exclusive Agricultural District. The Town faced the dilemma of leaving the Exclusive Agricultural district alone and see it steadily whittled away through time-consuming and costly rezonings, causing spot zoning, or take steps to more accurately reflect the agricultural production potential of sites within the Town by preserving truly the best farming area of the Town. Hence, the Town petitioned Polk County to rezone all but about 2,080 acres of the Exclusive Agricultural district in the Town to Agricultural district. The Town did not ask the County to remove lands from the agricultural preservation or transition area designation in the Polk County Farmland Preservation Plan. It was Polk County's responsibility to determine and consider the effect such a rezoning would have on its Farmland Preservation Plan.

However, now that it is clear the effect of having an Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District that is inconsistent with the Polk County Farmland Preservation Plan's agricultural preservation area requires a change to that plan, the Town of Alden recommends that the agricultural preservation area in the plan be amended to reflect the current Exclusive Agricultural District, and those properties which are under farmland preservation agreements, as the agricultural preservation area in the Town of Alden.

Although the Town of Alden is glad to provide documentation to help Polk County develop the rationale for the Farmland Preservation Plan amendment, it is County's responsibility to develop and submit materials to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection justifying the change to the Polk County Farmland Preservation Plan.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

The quality of the local environment in terms of air, surface and ground water, and diversity of wildlife are three measures of the condition of the local environment. This quality can be assessed by examination of the condition of local air and water quality and the health and diversity of Eco-systems and wildlife. The resource maps referred to here are presented in a map series at the end of the element. A location and place name reference map is the first map of the series (Figure 18).

Alden is primarily located in the Apple River valley, which slopes gently northeast to southwest in the eastern two-thirds of the Town. The western one-third of the Town is characterized by several lakes and Horse Creek which runs north to south terminating in Cedar Lake. The Town is a landscape of rolling hills, farm fields, grasslands and woodlands.

The Town is largely drained by the Apple River, which flows from the northeast corner of the Town to the southcentral part of the Town. Horse Creek drains the western areas of the Town, and flows into Cedar Lake. The southeastern portion of the Town has significant internal drainage with numerous closed depressions. The Apple River, Horse Creek, Balsam Branch, Big Lake, Cedar Lake, and the Pine and Fish Lakes are the major surface water features.

### Topography

The Town of Alden is in an area of gently rolling hills. There is over 200 feet of local relief in the Town. Figure 19 shows the topography of the Alden area. The greatest relief in the area are hills just west of State Highway 65 between Church Pine, Larsen, Manson and Lee Lake, and just east of State Highway 65 and north of the Apple River.

### Geology and Soils

#### *Geology*

Glacial drift overlies bedrock throughout most of the area. The bedrock, from oldest to youngest in age, includes Precambrian igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks, Cambrian sandstone, and Ordovician dolomite and sandstone. Figure 20 displays the bedrock geology for the Alden area. The Jordan and St. Lawrence Formations are sandstones (Jordan) and shales and limestones (St. Lawrence). The Ancell Group are thin sandstones. The Prairie du Chien Group consists of thick, often scarp-forming dolostones. In the western part of Wisconsin it often occurs as river bluffs and resistant caps on hilltops.

#### *Glacial Geology*

The surface geology of Alden has been influenced by several periods of glaciation. Landforms produced by glacial deposition include end moraine, ground moraine and outwash plains. These deposits largely determine the kinds of non-metallic minerals such as sand and gravel that are present. Sand and gravel are the only known minerals of value in the Alden area. Pitted outwash

plain is characterized by numerous depressions such as kettles, shallow pits, and potholes. Figure 21 shows the glacial geology for the Alden Area.

### *Sand and Gravel*

The Alden area has significant supplies of sand and gravel. The soils amongst glacial outwash are the most likely source for sand and gravel as the melting waters of the glacier were most active in sorting and depositing high-quality sand and gravel in this area. Where the bedrock is at or near the surface of the ground are areas which are probably most suited for quarrying stone. It is helpful to know where these deposits are so that extraction can be considered before development occurs. Development almost always precludes extraction, while these lands can often be reclaimed for development after extraction is done. Figures 22 and 23 show probable sand and gravel deposits, respectively, in the Alden area.

### *Soils*

The Town is underlain by limestone and sandstone formations and the area was repeatedly overrun by glaciers from four glacial periods. The soils of the Town were formed principally from glacial and alluvial deposits under northern hardwood and conifer forest cover. Prairie and savanna vegetation in portions of the Town affected the soil formation in those areas. Soil particles carried and deposited by winds contributed to the other soil characteristics of the area. Irregular topography and many depressions account for much of the local variability in soils.

The soils group for the Alden area contains three primary soil types that are characteristically:

1. **Amery-Santiago-Magnor:** Nearly level to very hilly, well and somewhat poorly drained loamy and silty soils on till plains;
2. **Antigo-Rosholt:** Nearly level to sloping well-drained silty and loamy soils on outwash plains; and,
3. **Rosholt-Cromwell-Menahga:** Nearly level to very hilly, well and somewhat excessively drained loamy and sandy soils on pitted outwash plains.

The generalized soils for the Town of Alden are displayed in Map 24.

### **Forest Cover**

Prior to 1856, the Alden area forest cover was primarily white pine with mixed hardwoods. Several Native American tribes built encampments or moved through the area harvesting game, fish and wild rice. The fur traders came in the early 1800s and established posts on the St. Croix River. The lumbermen followed the fur traders and began the process of harvesting white pine forests in the St. Croix River valley in 1838. The logging practices of the lumber barons were not conducive to the re-forestation process. Soil erosion and stream sedimentation resulted from the clear cutting that gave no consideration for vegetation stabilizing slopes or maintaining natural wind breaks. By 1903 most of the areas white pines were gone and so were the lumbermen.

Agriculture followed the lumber harvest as the first settlers in Alden came in 1856; farmers who sought to utilize the cleared lands for livestock and crops. Development of the agriculture industry continued the process of de-forestation but at a slower pace.

Today the Alden area and Polk County forests are making the natural transition to northern hardwood forests. Polk County and the State of Wisconsin are assisting land owners in re-planting cleared lands with white pine and hardwood trees such as oak and maple. Recently, some land owners are planting trees for the USDA Conservation Reserve Program or as they prepare for retirement and sale of their land, knowing forested land is worth more than cleared land for country home sites.

The climate and soils in Alden are the primary reason for a natural progression of the forest from oak to sugar maple. The forest or woods cover is displayed in Figure 25.

## **Grasslands**

Much of southern Polk County was originally covered by prairie, most of which does not remain today. Prairie is the term used to describe the grassland type which predominated Wisconsin prior to Euro-American settlement. Prairies are dominated by grasses and sedges, lack trees and tall shrubs, and are home to a rich variety of plants and animals. Within the prairie designation there are variations due to soils and climate.

Prairies continue to be a threatened plant community in Wisconsin. The reduction of prairie in the state means that an estimated 20% of the original grassland plants are considered rare in the state. Consequently, many species of plants and animals associated with Wisconsin prairies are endangered, threatened or of special concern.

There are few high quality prairie remnants remaining. However, it will take more than the preservation of these remnants to recover or retain the biodiversity this ecosystem can offer. Degraded areas that were once prairie can often be restored with moderate effort to yield a habitat suitable for most of the associated plant and animal species. Even certain managed agricultural and livestock practices can accommodate the maintenance of the open habitats needed by many grassland species. Grasslands can be restored and maintained through preserving a certain amount of open space for this type of cover as development occurs. Hence, development can occur in such a way that it can maintain sufficient grasslands for its habitat value while preserving the rural character of the landscape.

The WISDNR has recognized the Western Prairie as an ecological landscape of Wisconsin's Legacy Places. The Western Prairie ecological landscape covers most of St. Croix County (see Figure 26), more than a third of Pierce County, a significant portion of Polk County and parts of Dunn and Barron Counties. The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area was established in 1999 to protect and restore up to 20,000 acres of grassland and wetland habitat in western St. Croix and southwestern Polk Counties. The project's goal is to protect and restore scattered blocks of prairie, savanna and wetland within a larger area of farm fields and low density development. Such a "checkerboard" pattern, combining working farms and native prairie/savanna vegetation, would meet the habitat needs of many grassland species. It may also help buffer both farms and natural areas from conflicts with residential development. Although

work on the project is just beginning, interest is high and there is good local support. Most public lands within the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area will be open to the public for hunting, hiking, wildlife watching and educational activities. Many of the open grasslands in southern Polk County are included USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas and the Star Prairie Pothole Grasslands. The grasslands in the Town are displayed in Figure 27.

## **Land Cover**

Forested land and grasslands are components of the overall landscape. Figure 28 uses the WISCLAND statewide satellite imagery interpretation and analysis to show what the land cover characteristics of the areas are. Each land cover type reflects light differently to the satellite which can then be assigned a "signature". Field checking verifies the signatures are associated with the specific land cover type. The image is made up of 1/16th of a mile or 330 foot square cells or "pixels". At this resolution the cells and even errors become apparent. However, the state map of WISCLAND is quite interesting, showing the patterns of the landscape that are affected by geology, climate and human activity. A 42"x50" state map of WISCLAND is available from the State Cartographer's Office.Map.

## **Water Resources**

### *Watersheds*

Watersheds delineate the major surface drainage of the area. The Town of Alden is primarily within the Lower Apple River subwatershed of the Apple River watershed which contributes to the St. Croix River Basin. Other subwatersheds in the Town include, Balsam Branch, Trout Brook and Upper Willow River. Figure 29 from the map series shows the watersheds in the Town of Alden.

### *Surface Waters*

The surface water resources include lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, intermittent streams, and natural drainage. The major surface water features in Alden are the Apple River, Cedar Lake, Big Lake, Horse Creek, Balsam Branch and concentrations of smaller lakes between Big lake and Cedar Lake, and from the area around 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to North Fish Lake. A description of some of these waters follows and a map of the surface waters in the Town of Alden are found in Figure 30.

### **Apple River**

The Apple River is a tributary of the St. Croix River, about 70 miles long, in northwestern Wisconsin in the United States. Via the St. Croix, it is part of the greater watershed of the Mississippi River.

It issues from Staples Lake in Barron County and flows generally southwestwardly through Polk and St. Croix Counties, through several lakes and past the City of Amery and the Villages of Star Prairie and Somerset. It joins the St. Croix River 7 miles northeast of Stillwater, Minnesota in the St. Croix County Town of Somerset.



**Apple River**

In the Ojibwa language, the Apple River is called *Waabizipinikaan-ziibi*, meaning "River Abundant with Swan Potatoes". This name was translated into French, but only *pomme* (apple) of the French word for "potato", *pomme de terre* - apple from the earth, was translated into English.

The Apple River was once an important route of trade for the logging industry; timber was floated downstream from logging camps in the north to a sawmill in Amery where it was cut, loaded onto trains and transported throughout the region. Today, the river generates tourism revenue through recreation. Its relatively gentle rapids make it very popular for canoeing and tubing, and is a popular fishing spot through all seasons.

The Apple River Association is a proactive group of concerned citizens focused on the future of the Apple River and its watersheds, including but not limited to issues concerning development, preservation, safety and water quality.

### **Cedar Lake**

Alden has a surface area of 1,100 acres, 6.3 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 32 feet. It is found in two counties, about the northern two-thirds is in the Town of Alden in Polk County with the southern one-third in St. Croix County. Horse Creek originating in Horse Lake in the

Town of Osceola flows into the lake from the north. Cedar Creek flows out of the lake on the south end to join the Apple River a couple of miles downstream.



Cedar Lake

Most of the shoreline has traditional lake cabin development which for generations was seasonal in nature. However, many of the properties are converting to large homes for permanent habitation. Shoreline development can be detrimental to overall water quality without adequate buffers. There are significant areas with inadequate shoreland buffers. Cedar Lake is listed on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (WDNR) 1998 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. The Lake is nutrient (phosphorus (P)) impaired as a result of agriculture, internal loading and local land use, and is listed as a medium priority water with external load sources that are nonpoint source (NPS) dominating. The designated use for Cedar Lake is defined as a full recreation, warm water sport fishery water.

Water quality in Cedar Lake is generally poor to very poor, falling into the eutrophic to hypereutrophic category. Summer (1986-2001) surface water column total phosphorus levels average 83 ug/l. Summer algal blooms result in foul odors and an unsightly build-up of algae biomass on the shoreline. In addition, trophic conditions in the lake limit rooting depth for emergent vegetation used by the resident fish populations. Changes have been observed in the aquatic plant community in the lake. There has been decreased maximum rooting depth, increased colonization of free-floating and floating-leaf vegetation, increased frequency and density of turbidity tolerant/ nutrient-favored species, decreased quality of the Cedar Lake plant community, decreased cover of aquatic vegetation, decreased colonization of submergent vegetation, decreased Species Richness and a decline in the 6 native pondweeds in Cedar Lake. As a result, these impairments impact the recreational/aesthetic value of the lake and stress sport fish populations.

There are also WisDNR designated Lake Sensitive Areas for Cedar Lake. Designation of sensitive areas within lakes provide a holistic approach to the protection of critical habitat within a lake that are most important for preserving the very character and qualities of the lake that initially attracted development on the lake. These sites are those sensitive and fragile areas that support the wildlife, fish and aquatic habitat, provide the mechanisms that protect the water quality in the lake, harbor quality plant communities and preserve the places of serenity and aesthetic beauty for the enjoyment of lake residents and visitors. The sensitive area designation provides a framework for management decisions that impact the ecosystem of the lake. There are a series of recommendations that are considered vital to improving the condition of the lake.

A Cedar Lake District Association continues work, cooperating with the Counties and WisDNR, to improve water quality. To improve plant and fish health in the lake, the Lake District and the WisDNR are currently implementing numerous recommendations from various studies. In addition, the Horse Creek Priority Watershed Plan recommendations are guiding more efforts to improve the lake's water quality.

### **Big Lake**

Big Lake is 258.8 acres with a maximum depth of 24 feet. It is connected with Round Lake to the south by a small channel which in turn is connected to Church Pine Lake. A small creek flows out of the lake to join Horse Creek after about a mile. As with many of the lakes in the Town of Alden all of these lakes have significant shoreline development. Only the southern one-half of Big Lake is in the Town of Alden; the northern half is in the Town of Garfield. Panfish are abundant, northern pike and largemouth bass are common, with walleyes being rare.

### **Horse Creek**

The Horse Creek Watershed covers about 30,373 acres, of which 33.6% is agricultural land. The Horse Creek Priority Watershed Project, Nonpoint Source Control Plan prepared by the WisDNR outlines the following goals for the watershed:

1. Reduce sediments delivered to Horse Creek in the Horse Creek subwatershed.
2. Protect, improve, or maintain lakes in regard to phosphorus levels.
3. Restore wetlands.
4. Identify and properly abandon unused wells in the watershed to protect groundwater.
5. Develop nutrient and pesticide management plans for farms in the watershed.
6. Reduce construction site erosion.

### **Balsam Branch**

The Balsam Branch Watershed covers about 66,560 acres, of which 25.6% is agricultural land. However, only a small portion of the creek in the Town of Alden before in terminates into the Apple River. Development north of the Town of Alden in this watershed has a significant impact on this waterbody. Ongoing planning continues with planned updates to the Balsam Branch Priority Watershed Project, Nonpoint Source Control Plan. The goal of the plan is to protect, maintain, and enhance the aquatic ecosystem of the watershed through:

1. Nutrient reduction.
2. Sedimentation and erosion reduction.
3. Runoff rate reduction.
4. Restoration and protection of aquatic habitat including wetlands.

5. In-lake nutrient management.
6. Groundwater protection.

The Balsam Branch Partnership works to provide and sustain environmental areas in the Balsam Branch watershed where educational and recreational opportunities are promoted for all seasons.

### *Floodplains*

Floodplains represent a natural component of surface waters that delineate areas where excess water exists during peak volume and flow events. Floodplain zoning is required to be implemented by counties, cities and villages by Wisconsin Statute 87.30(1). The purpose of Wisconsin Administrative Code NR116, Floodplain Management Program, is the protection of property and public investments from the effects of flooding. Federal Emergency Management Agency 100 year floodplain maps are usually used to delineate flood hazard areas. Floodplains are mapped in Figure 31.

### *Shorelands*

Lands within 1000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a lake or pond and 300 feet past the ordinary high water mark or landward edge of the floodplain, whichever is greater, of a river or stream are designated shorelands. Shorelands are usually considered prime residential building areas because of their scenic beauty. However, shorelands provide valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation. Shorelands also act as buffers and thus serve to protect water quality. Wisconsin requires cities to protect and prevent the loss and erosion of these valuable resources by adopting and enforcing a shoreland ordinance. The authority to enact and enforce this provision comes from Section 59.692 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Polk County exercises shoreland zoning over these areas. Figure 32 shows the shorelands within the Town of Alden.

### *Wetlands*

Wetlands in the Town of Alden are depicted in Figure 33. Wetlands are defined by State Statute as "an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions." Wetlands may be seasonal or permanent and are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants ranging from pesticides to animal wastes. Wetlands can make lakes, rivers and streams cleaner, drinking water safer and also provide valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation. In addition, some wetlands can also provide the replenishment of groundwater supplies. Groundwater discharge is common from wetlands and can be important in maintaining stream flows, especially during dry months. Groundwater discharged through wetlands can contribute to high quality water in lakes and streams. Wetlands can be associated with kettles and closed depressions.

The federal government and the WisDNR restrict development in wetlands through Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and NR103, respectively. Local governments often fail to notify landowners and developers of these restrictions. Wetlands can be damaged, resulting in costly fines and/or restoration.

Even though the WisDNR has an inventory of wetlands of two acres and larger, all wetlands, no matter how small, which meet the state definition are subject to WisDNR regulations. Even if state regulations do not apply, federal regulations may, making it necessary to review all wetlands against these regulations before their disturbance. Particular attention must be given wetlands within shorelands to ensure protection from development. Site investigation is required to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.

### *Groundwater*

The principal sources of potable water supplies are the sand and gravel aquifer and the sandstone aquifer. The sand and gravel aquifer consists of unconsolidated sand and gravel in glacial drift and alluvium. These deposits occur either at the land surface or buried under less permeable drift. The sand and gravel aquifer can yield sufficient water yield for private residential water supplies. The sandstone aquifer includes all sedimentary bedrock younger than the Precambrian age. Precambrian rocks generally have low permeability and mark the lower limit of groundwater movement. Hence, Cambrian sandstones are usually tapped for municipal water supplies.

The major source of groundwater recharge in and near Alden is precipitation. Between one and ten inches of precipitation per year infiltrates and recharges the groundwater aquifers. The amount infiltrated depends mainly on the type of rock material at the land surface. Most groundwater moves through the unconsolidated material and bedrock units and then discharges to surface waters.

### *Groundwater Pollution Susceptibility*

Groundwater supplies the majority of potable water to the residents in and around the Town of Alden. Some land areas, because of inherent physical resource characteristics, do not attenuate (lessen the impact of) pollutants very well which may be introduced into the environment. These areas should be protected from certain high risk land uses and have best management practices and monitoring established, especially when in proximity to any wells which supply drinking water.

A relative susceptibility index is based on the type of aquifer, depth to groundwater, type of bedrock, depth to bedrock, subsurface permeability, and soil attenuation. The Wisconsin Geologic and Natural History Survey and WisDNR have prepared a map which shows relative groundwater susceptibility for the State of Wisconsin. According to this map there is an area of high susceptibility in the Horse Creek watershed.

### **Improving Water Quality in the Town**

There are a number of actions and policies the Town could undertake to improve water quality in local lakes and streams. Recognition of the connection between land use and water quality is the most important element of a coordinated improvement program. Polk County has adopted a lake classification system and uses it in its shoreland zoning, which the Town supports.

Water quality experts increasingly call for expanded buffer areas between development and shorelands. Many experts believe the shoreland setbacks and restrictions on removal of vegetative cover are woefully inadequate, especially when communities rely on the buffer area to

filter contaminants and preserve critical ecosystems. Buffer areas that reach 75 feet on either side of stream or 75 feet from a lake are often supported. Obviously, in an area such as Alden where much of the shoreline has been previously developed prior to knowledge and acceptance of the value of conservancy buffers, education of land owners on how to protect water quality through management of their shoreland is key.

The WDNR integrated staff team of biologists, water regulators and zoning officials, recommended the following guidelines for Protecting, Maintaining and Understanding Lake Sensitive Areas in their report to legislators and the public:

1. Protection and restoration of shoreline buffers. Provides protection for water quality, aquatic plant communities and coarse rock rubble walleye spawning habitat.
2. Protection of existing aquatic plant communities
3. Aggressive erosion control measures for all base soil areas with an emphasis on all construction and ground breaking . This provides protection for water quality, aquatic plant communities and coarse rubble walleye habitat.
4. Limit the use of fertilizers on lakeshore lawns.
5. Support aggressive application of existing zoning regulations and support the development of future ones to prevent unnecessary impacts to the ecosystem which could be avoided if future development is accomplished in a wise and careful manner considerate of the resource.
6. Encourage the retention of large woody debris in or near shore areas. Fallen trees provide critical habit.
7. Utilize land acquisition or easement in certain critical or unique areas, to ensure they are protected.
8. Implement an active public education program to help lakeshore owners better manage their land for the betterment of the lake.
9. Control purple loosestrife to ensure it does not become established.

The WDNR has published a companion document *Guidelines for Protecting and Maintaining and Understanding Lake Sensitive Areas*, wherein they describe in detail the types of actions necessary to protect water resources from development impacts such as erosion from construction sites, protection of riparian zone vegetation, use of fertilizers in shoreland zones, preservation of aquatic plants and zoning regulation enforcement.

### **Air Quality**

The extent of Alden's compliance with federal air quality standards is assumed compliance. The closest federal air quality monitoring station is in Luck, Wisconsin. This station has not recorded any violations of federal air quality standards and therefore Alden has no violations and is assumed to be in compliance with federal air quality standards.

Practically, the Town is located in a river valley that is more broad and shallow than narrow and deep. Valley areas typically have air quality problems due to a lack of air movement and at times inversions of air temperature that traps emissions in the valley. The Town also has extensive upland areas which are broad and allow transference of the prevailing winds.

The Town is subject to windblown dust from exposed soils and vehicle emissions and to a much lesser degree emissions from stationary sources such as household heating, nearby large power plants and nearby industrial sources.

For the most part there is adequate dispersion of these emissions throughout the year. The rare poor air quality periods in Alden while perhaps noticeable to some residents are not monitored by any federal or state agency. Noticeable changes to air quality would most likely occur on a day with zero wind and a layer of colder air over the area, confining air emissions close to the ground surface. These are generally short lived events and are not a threat to the long term health of residents.

Alden has no nearby industrial emissions that are not permitted or in non-compliance with permit conditions. State air quality permits are required for large natural gas sources and in some cases for particulate control.

Another threat to air quality is open burning of garbage or other wastes. There is an ordinance that restricts burning wastes, but the WDNR receives a number of complaints each month regarding burning violations. Nevertheless, the problem is not widespread and is somewhat sporadic.

### **Limitations to Development**

Certain soil survey interpretations provide information on individual landscape characteristics posing limitations to development. Such limitations may not be absolute but often require additional cost be incurred to address the potential negative impacts caused by developing in such areas.

#### *Steep Slopes*

Steep slopes are any area of where the gradient of the land is 12 percent or greater (each percent of slope is measured as one unit in elevation for every 100 horizontal units). One category of steep slope is 12% to less than 20% slope and consisting of any soil type. It has been demonstrated that 12% slope is a threshold at which impacts from development become apparent. To allow development on these slopes one should consider direct runoff into streams or rivers and follow state approved construction site erosion control standards, and the institution of best management practices, monitoring and maintenance to control on-site runoff and pollution. Steep slopes of 20% or greater are subject to erosion impacts even from slight land cover disturbance. Development on these slopes results in high construction costs and severe erosion with resultant negative impacts to surface waters. Therefore, development on slopes 20% or greater should be prohibited. Steep slopes in the Town of Alden are shown in Figure 34.

#### *Depth to Bedrock*

The extreme of this condition results in rock outcroppings; however, shallow depth to bedrock usually creates problems for excavation during certain development activities. Shallow depth to bedrock for the Town of Alden is depicted in Figure 35.

### *Depth to Groundwater*

When groundwater is close to the surface of the ground, development activity can be curtailed or severely limited. These areas are often associated with wetlands, wet, poorly-drained soils or thin soils over saturated bedrock. Figure 36 shows the shallow depth to groundwater in the Town of Alden.

### *Limitations for On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems*

Septic tank absorption fields are subsurface systems of perforated pipe which distribute effluent from septic tanks to the soil. Soil between 18 inches and 6 feet is evaluated for properties that affect absorption of effluent and construction and operation of the system. Properties that affect absorption are permeability, depth to bedrock and water table, and susceptibility to flooding. The layout and construction of a system is affected by soil conditions related to slope, erosion potential, lateral seepage, and downslope flow of effluent. Soils with characteristic large rocks and boulders present additional problems, and increase the costs of septic system construction.

The state requirements for septic system siting are specified in Chapter COMM 83 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. This code relies heavily on the ability of the soil to efficiently absorb the effluent discharged from the septic system drainfield. However, the NRCS soil interpretations for septic tank absorption fields consider most excessively drained soils occurring over fractured bedrock or high water tables a limitation to septic system development because effluent in these situations can be readily transported to the groundwater. Hence, even though the siting of septic systems in some areas may be allowed by state code, doing so has the potential for threatening groundwater quality. It is the new on-site wastewater treatment and disposal technologies that COMM 83 now allows for that can provide adequate protections in areas with limitations for conventional septic systems. The limitations for conventional septic systems are shown in Figure 37.

### *Limitations for Dwellings with Basements*

Dwellings for this interpretation are no taller than three stories and are supported by foundation footings in undisturbed soil. The capacity to support load and resist settling under load, and the ease of excavation affect the soil rating for dwellings. Wetness, susceptibility to flooding, density, plasticity, texture, and shrink-swell potential are soil properties that affect the capacity to support load. Soil properties which affect excavation are wetness, slope, depth to bedrock, and the content of stones and rocks. Soils with severe limitations preclude basements in most instances. Soils with moderate limitations may preclude basement development in some instances. However, it is more likely that these soils will result in an increased cost for basement construction as engineering can often overcome these limitations. Figure 38 shows the limitations for residential basements interpretation for the Town of Alden.

### *Limitations for Small Commercial Buildings*

Single story, small commercial building development is limited by soil factors related to steep slope, wetness, susceptibility to flooding, density, plasticity, texture, and shrink-swell potential. These are the same factors which affect the construction of dwellings without basements and this

interpretation can be used to evaluate these dwellings as well. Limitations for small commercial buildings and residences on concrete slabs are depicted in Figure 39.

### **Stormwater Management**

The Clean Water Act continues to impact local governments as new regulations are promulgated. As the Phase II requirements are implemented, urban areas, and suburban and some rural areas surrounding them, will soon be faced with having to have a more stringent stormwater management program in effect. To help with putting stormwater management practices into effect the State offers Urban Nonpoint Source and Storm Water Grants and the Targeted Runoff Management Grant Program. The Town of Alden will be spared the requirement to implement effective stormwater management for now. However, Polk County and the Town of Alden should be prepared to explore instituting these measures some time in the near future.

### **Environmental Corridors and the Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Lands**

Many communities have developed management strategies based on the identification of an environmental corridor scheme. Such schemes evaluate the value of individual resources and combine the important resources into a designated management unit which garners special considerations. These considerations are designed to mitigate the impacts of development on these environmental features. Some of the resources usually considered for inclusion in an environmental corridor are wetlands, floodplains, shorelands, steep slopes, wellhead protection areas and designated natural areas.

The Town of Alden already has some protection measures in place for most of these resources, yet an environmental corridor resource identification scheme could enhance these efforts. The mapping of environmental corridors will assist the Town of Alden Plan Commission in evaluating sites where environmental assessments should be made during land division review.

The selected features for the Town of Alden Environmental Corridors are Wetlands, Floodplains, Shorelands (1000 feet from lakes and ponds and 300 feet from rivers and streams), Steep Slopes (12% or greater), Forested Land (potential interior woodland habitat or closely associated with a waterbody), Shallow Depth to Bedrock, and Shallow Depth to Groundwater. The environmental corridors are mapped in Figure 40.

### **Rare or Endangered Species and Communities**

The WisDNR, Bureau of Endangered Resources conducts data searches for endangered plants and animals. The Bureau urges special notice be taken to protect any and all endangered resources from development. To protect them from disturbance, the exact locations of the endangered resources can only be used for analysis and review purposes. Therefore, these locations will be will not be specifically revealed but should be reviewed before development occurs so that appropriate protection measures can be taken.

## **The Impacts of Development on Environmental Resources**

### *Surface Water*

Several of the previously described resources are involved in the impacts of development on surface water quality and quantity. Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, Streams, and Intermittent Waterways and Natural Drainageways; Wetlands; Shorelands; Floodplains; Steep Slopes; and, Wildlife and Fisheries Areas are directly affected by surface water impacts.

Urbanization, development and other human activities disrupt the natural course of water as it moves across a watershed. Removing vegetation and constructing impervious surfaces such as roads, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks and rooftops greatly increases the amount and rate of stormwater runoff. As this increased stormwater runoff crosses the urbanized or developed landscape it also picks up contaminants and sediments which affect water quality.

In rivers and streams the changes brought by development are: increased water level fluctuations manifested by lower base flow and increased stormwater flow which can lead to flooding; decreased oxygen levels; increased water temperatures; greater channel erosion; muddying of waters from increased sediment; and, pollution from fertilizers, pesticides, debris, salt, oil, grease and toxic substances. In effect, urbanization and development can turn a clear, cool, brisk-running trout stream which does not breach its banks every spring into a muddy, warm, slow-moving stream which swells over its embankment with every heavy rain.

Lakes, ponds and reservoirs can also be impacted by development. All lakes decline in water quality over time if left in their natural state. However, development can accelerate the decline in lake water quality so what once took thousands of years can occur in decades. As with rivers and streams, the detrimental impacts from development to lakes are caused by stormwater runoff, erosion and pollution.

Shorelands and the vegetation they contain are the natural buffer which helps protect surface waters from overland runoff and contaminants. If they are disturbed their ability to slow runoff and filter contaminants is reduced. Shoreland is also critical habitat for a variety of plants and animals and preserves the aesthetic quality of water bodies if left undisturbed.

Development within areas which are prone to flooding can cause adverse impacts on not only the waterway but also on the development itself. Altering the floodplain landscape by filling or building levees or structures can exacerbate flooding conditions. The filling of wetlands in floodprone areas has been proven to increase the likelihood of flooding. These alterations divert water from where it once moved through or was stored in during spring runoff or storm events, which usually increases the area of the floodplain. The accumulation of development in floodplains can cause more severe flooding in other areas within the floodplain or newly created floodplain. In addition, development within floodplains is always subject to damage from flooding.

Development on steep slopes causes erosion by introducing impervious surfaces to areas where water does not infiltrate readily. Increased erosion impacts surface waters by increasing runoff quantity and the sediment it carries. Development on these slopes results in high construction costs as special construction techniques must be employed for structures, hillsides are cut and filled, and attempts are made to stabilize hillsides through building terracing. Terraces may

appear to stabilize these slopes, but if they are not rigorously maintained the forces of gravity and water eventually deteriorate them.

### *Wetlands*

Development in wetlands by either draining or filling removes their natural functions of storing and filtering pollutants, cleaning lakes, rivers and streams, making drinking water safer, providing valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation, replenishing groundwater supplies, and the groundwater discharge from wetlands which maintains stream flows, especially during dry months.

### *Groundwater*

Groundwater can be adversely affected when contaminants are released into or spilled upon the ground. Some factors influencing an aquifer's susceptibility to pollution are depth to groundwater and bedrock, type of bedrock, sub-surface permeability, and the soil's ability to attenuate (lessen the impact of) pollutants. High-risk activities, such as industries using hazardous materials, pose serious threats to groundwater and should be kept out of the immediate recharge areas of public water supply wells, and where practical, private wells also. High concentrations of conventional septic systems also can pollute groundwater with nitrates.

## **CULTURAL OR HISTORIC RESOURCES**

### *Historic Sites and Structures*

Historic resources are responsible for defining much of a community's identity. Many communities have active programs overseen by some sort of landmarks commission or committee. In addition, there are ways communities can help to reinforce State law to protect these resources and make sure their essence is recorded if they must be disturbed, destroyed or removed.

Historic sites are of great importance to our society, as they are reminders of the past and also of the progress which has taken place since. A record search by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin reveals the presence of architectural, historical, and archeological properties in Alden. They are also certain there are many undiscovered prehistoric and early historic sites present in most counties. A listing or depiction of these sites and their location are not provided so as to protect them from disturbance. However, any development should be reviewed, pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 44.40 (1989), against the historical resource list to determine whether historic properties within the area will be affected. The Historical Society should be contacted for a determination of possible impacts on these resources from the development.

The Historical Society strongly recommends that all proposed developments be surveyed by a qualified archeologist to identify any sites. Also, if the removal or alteration of any building or structure over 50 years old is proposed, the Historical Society should be contacted so they may assist in evaluating any historical significance. Cooperation of all developers, public and private, will ensure preservation and/or recording of these valuable resources of our community.

There are no sites or buildings on the State Historical Society of Wisconsin list of the Wisconsin and National Register of Historic Places.

The Wisconsin Historical Society has identified one historically significant site or property in their Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory. It is suggested by the Wisconsin Historical Society that communities and interest groups under take an inventory to update the status of these places. The Wisconsin Historical Society has suggestions for preserving the historic resources of the Town of Alden which will be advisory to the comprehensive plan.

The site on the Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory is the West Immanuel Lutheran Church located on 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This building was constructed in 1880 and is an example of the Gothic Revival architectural style. The original name of the site was Immanuel Norsk Luthersk Kirke.

With the dearth of listings of historical places in the Town of Alden it is interesting that the Polk County Historical Society has documented some places of interest and placed some signs in these locations with information about them. The Society also printed a small book called *Recollections of 1876, Polk County's First Written History* in 1980 which details the early settlement of the Town of Alden.

## **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goal and Objectives**

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### ***Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goal***

Agricultural activity is evident in the Town and the community's natural resources and cultural assets are protected.

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#### ***Objectives:***

- 1) Encourage farmland preservation, viable farm operations, and the maintenance of the Town's rural character.
- 2) Work cooperatively to protect natural resources.
- 3) Support efforts to preserve buildings and sites of historical or cultural significance.

## **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Policies**

- 1) Implement those applicable policies in the Land Use Element of this Plan that will help preserve and protect the Town's working farmlands, productive forestlands and natural resources.
- 2) To show support for local farmers, while helping reduce nuisance complaints, require newly created residential lots within a mile of land zoned Exclusive Agriculture or other lands with an Agriculture assessment, to have recorded with the deed a covenant or deed restriction stating that the new lot created for residential purposes is in a pre-existing agricultural area where agricultural uses predominate and are favored by the Town and owners of said lot are forewarned they are moving into a pre-existing agricultural area with its associated accepted normal agricultural practices, including but not limited to, animal and plant husbandry, broad hours of operation, farm equipment traffic and farming debris on roads, farm equipment lights, odors, dust, smoke, noise, and manure, chemical, pesticide

and herbicide application; OR, Adopt a Town “Right-to-Farm” resolution with similar language as above and provide a copy of the resolution with every building permit application and in general distribution to Town residents and landowners.

- 3) Support State tax programs which encourage the preservation of farmland and forest lands, such as farmland tax credits, use value assessment, forest crop law and other such farmland and forest land preservation programs.
- 4) Maintain communication with Polk County Land and Water Conservation Department and Polk County UW-Extension on efforts to protect surface water and groundwater quality, preserve farmlands, prevent soil erosion, and prevent the spread of invasive species.
- 5) Maintain communication with Polk County regarding the enforcement of the County Zoning Ordinance, Land Division Ordinance, Sanitation Ordinance, Floodplain Ordinance, and Shoreland-Wetland Ordinance.
- 6) Maintain communication with Polk County, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, watershed communities and interested private conservation organizations regarding the protection and water quality management of and future planning for the Apple River valley, Parker and Horse Creeks and the Town’s lakes.
- 7) Support efforts by the Polk County Historical Society, other local groups and property owners to preserve buildings and sites of historical or cultural significance. Encourage the maintenance of local historical landmark signs provided by the Polk County Historical Society.
- 8) Provide community and resident input in decisions regarding the siting of large livestock feedlot operations. Urge Polk County to upgrade its ordinance in accordance with ATCP 51, Wisconsin Administrative Code, to establish nuisance standards and minimum distance requirements for the siting of large livestock operations such as factory farms or large feedlots operations that can be considered intensive industrial uses that are a potential threat to the surface waters and groundwater of the community.
- 9) Mining of high value non-metallic sites should be considered before other development occurs. Those sites should only be considered for pre-development extraction if it is determined that they can be properly reclaimed so that subsequent development can occur.
- 10) Metallic mining (dredge, shaft, pit or strip mining for the recovery of metallic elements or minerals containing metallic elements) should not be allowed in the Town. The Town will evaluate its legal authority to control the location and operation of metallic mines within the Town and consider adoption of an ordinance exercising such authority.
- 11) Encourage conservation design subdivisions to help preserve natural resources and retain rural character.
- 12) Explore a Transfer of Development Rights program as outlined in the Land Use Element.
- 13) The Town of Alden should explore the issue of backlot development and determine if regulations to control it are necessary.
- 14) The Town of Alden should explore potential acquisition of Apple River frontage to set aside park land and natural areas for the public.

**NATURAL RESOURCES MAP SERIES**

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Figure 18

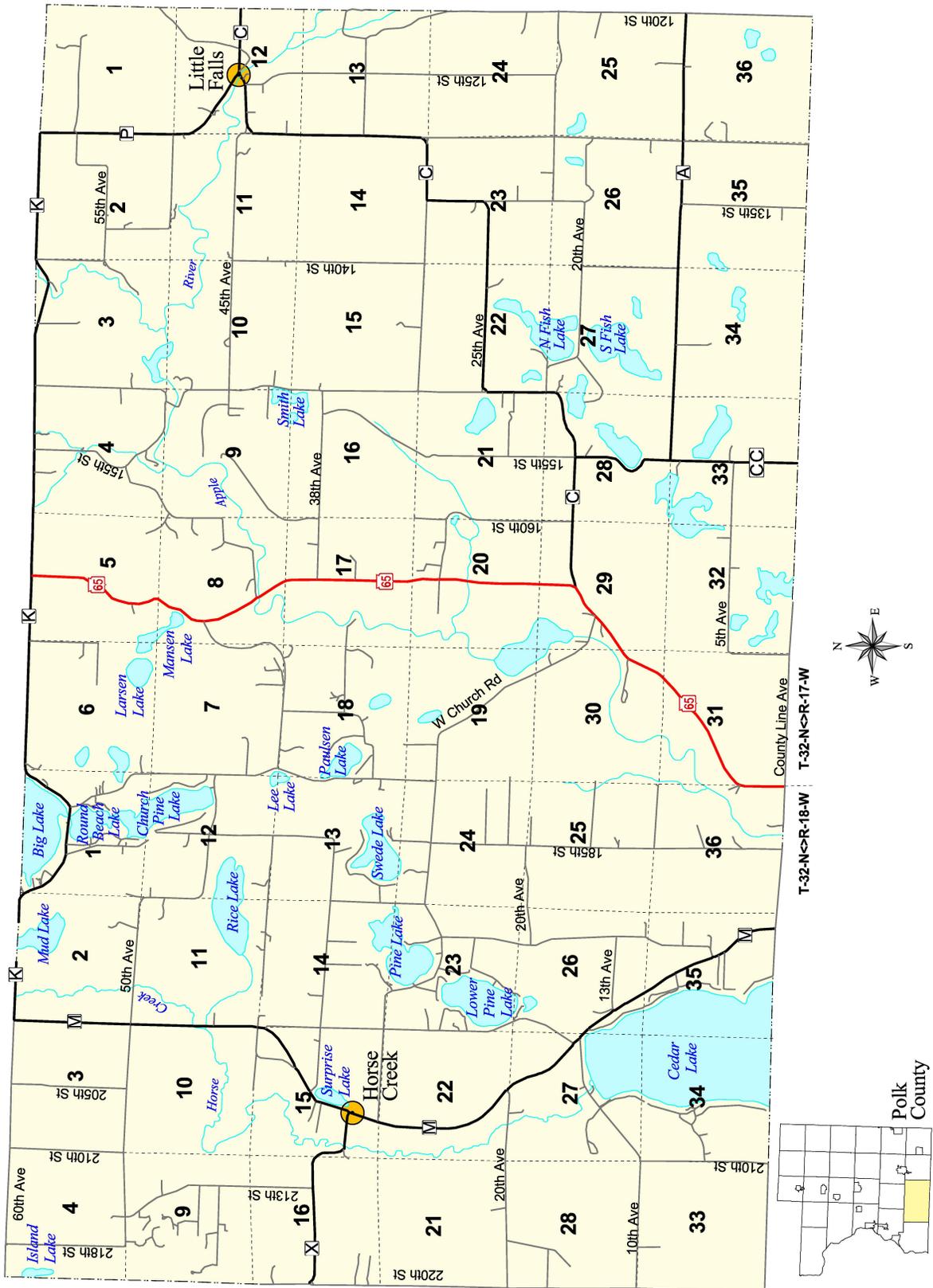




Figure 20

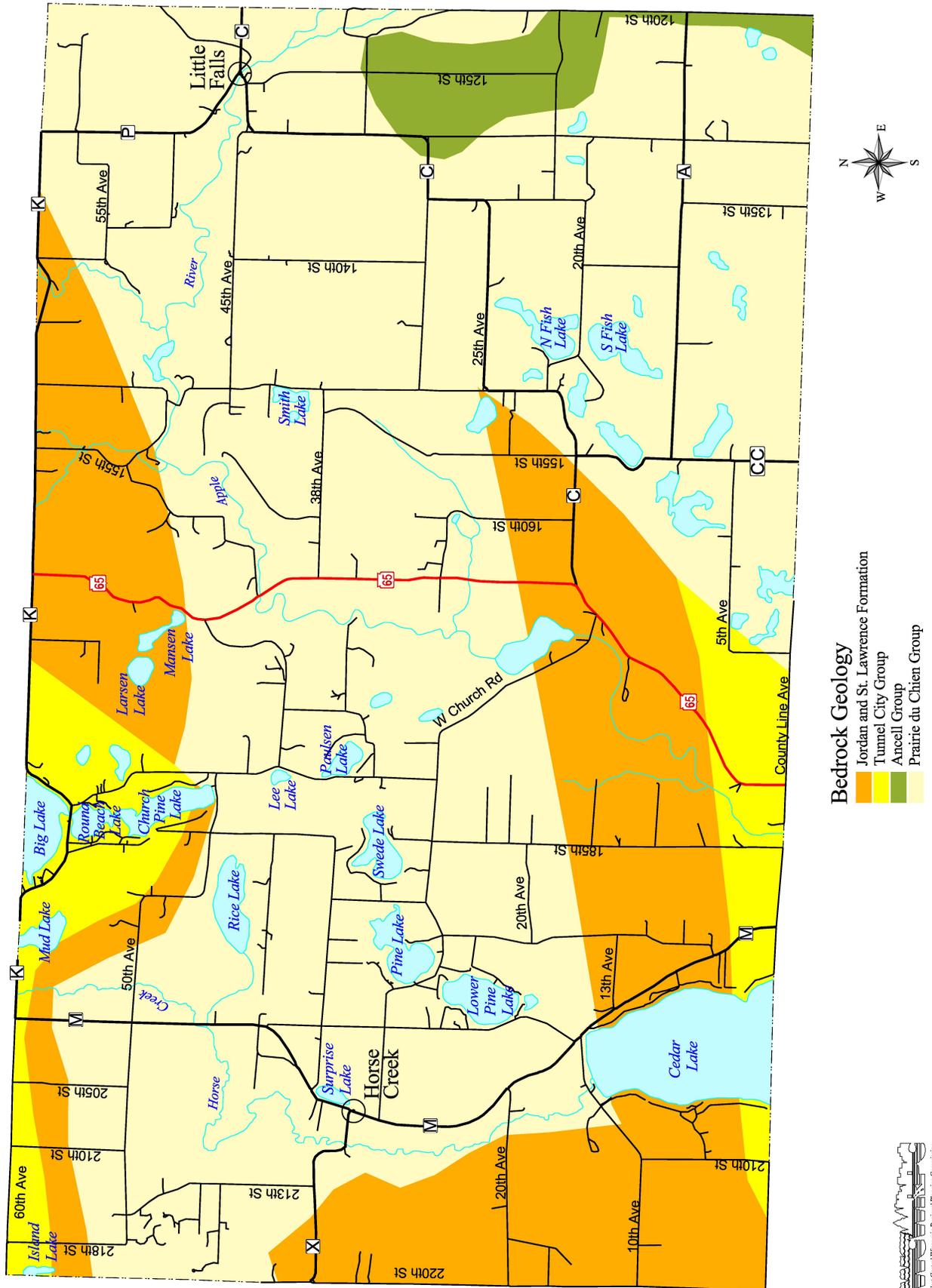


Figure 21

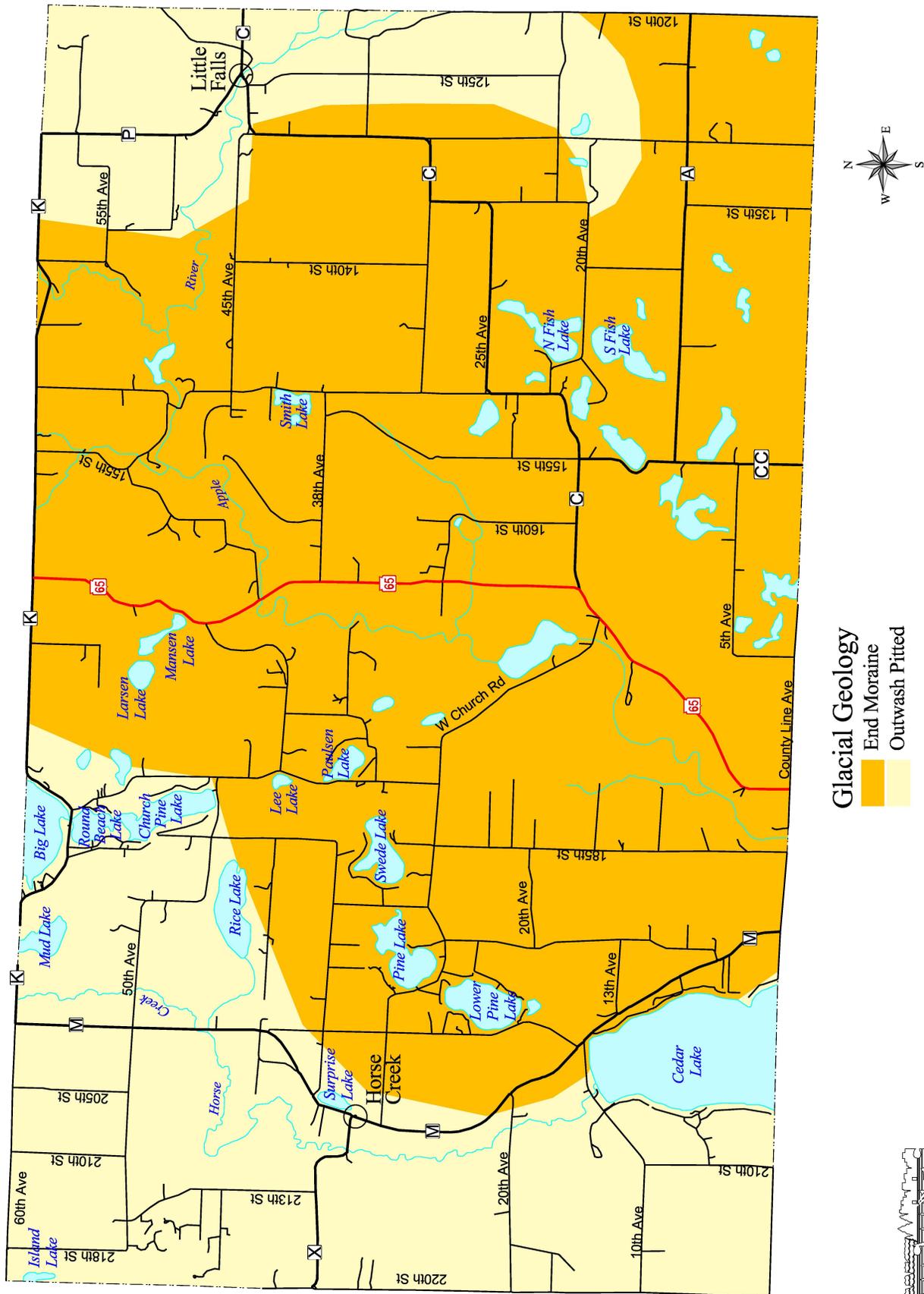


Figure 22

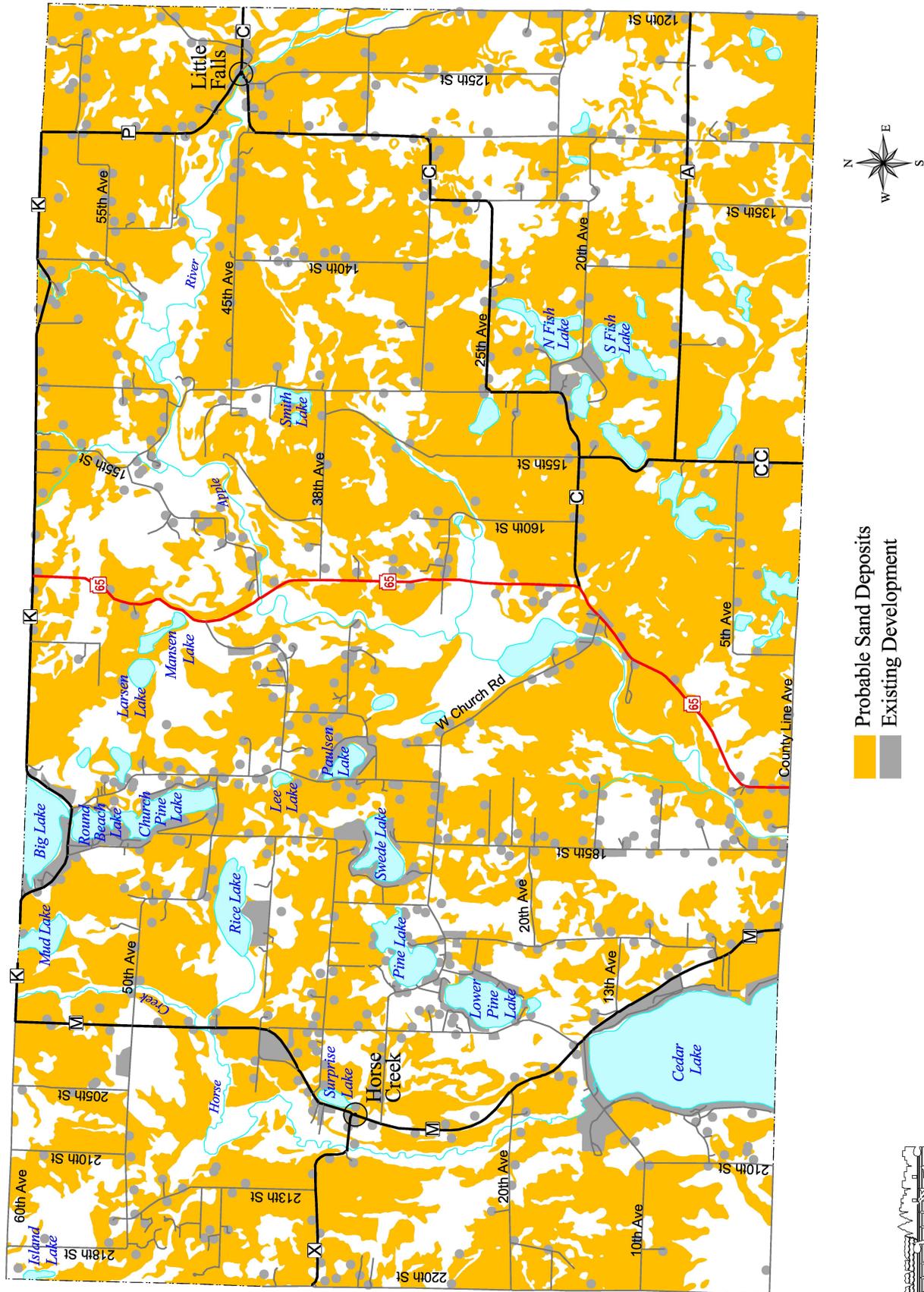


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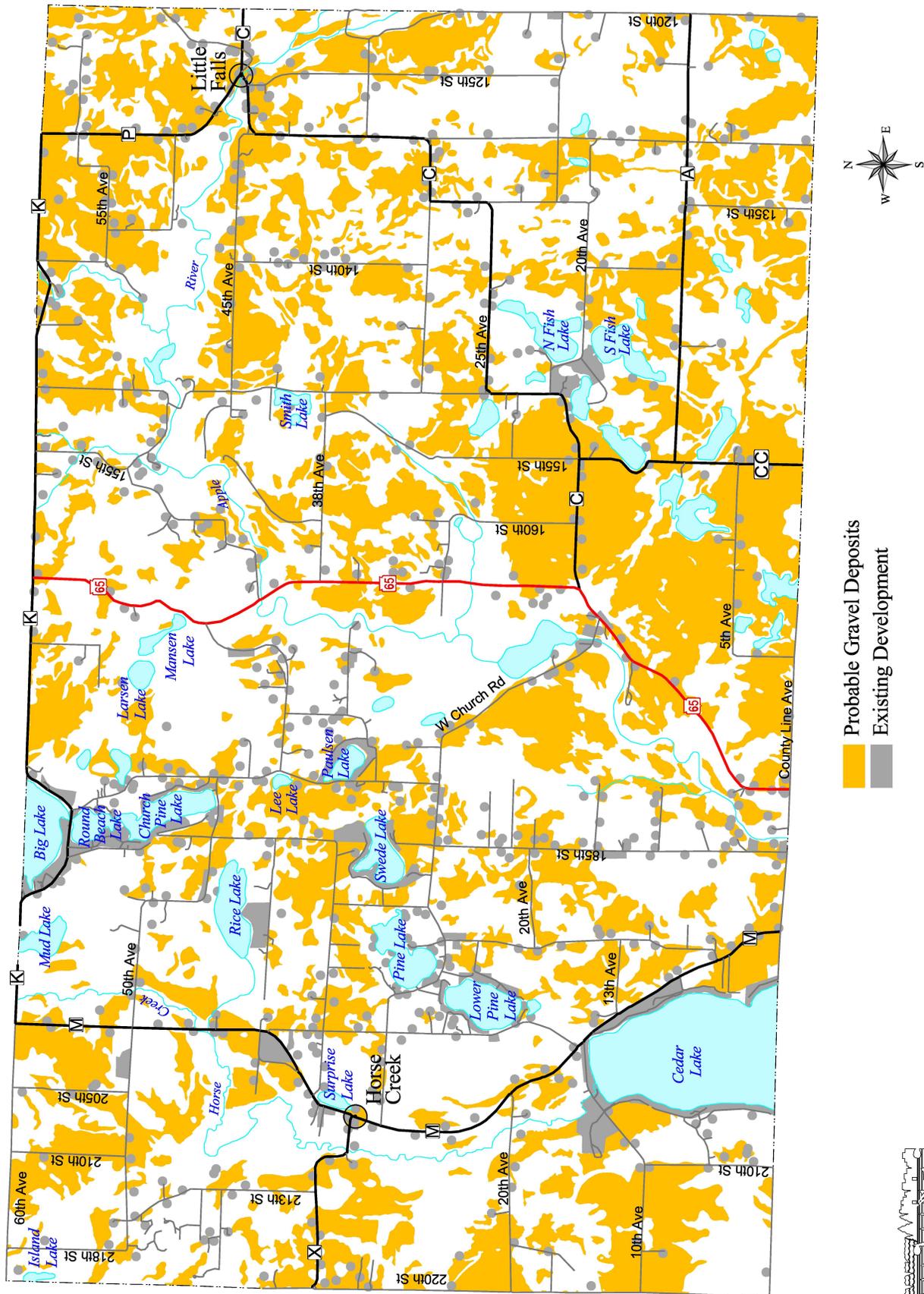


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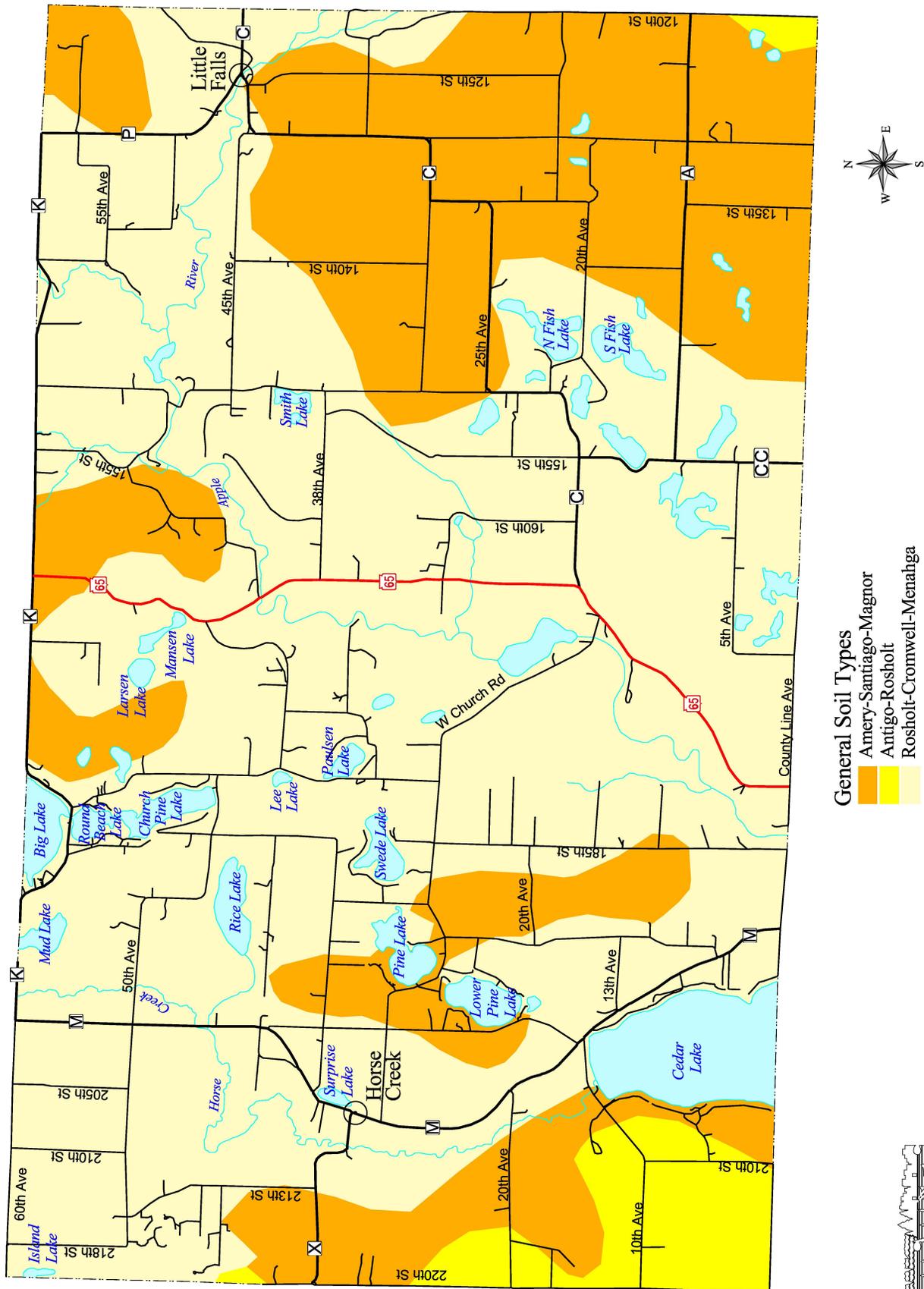


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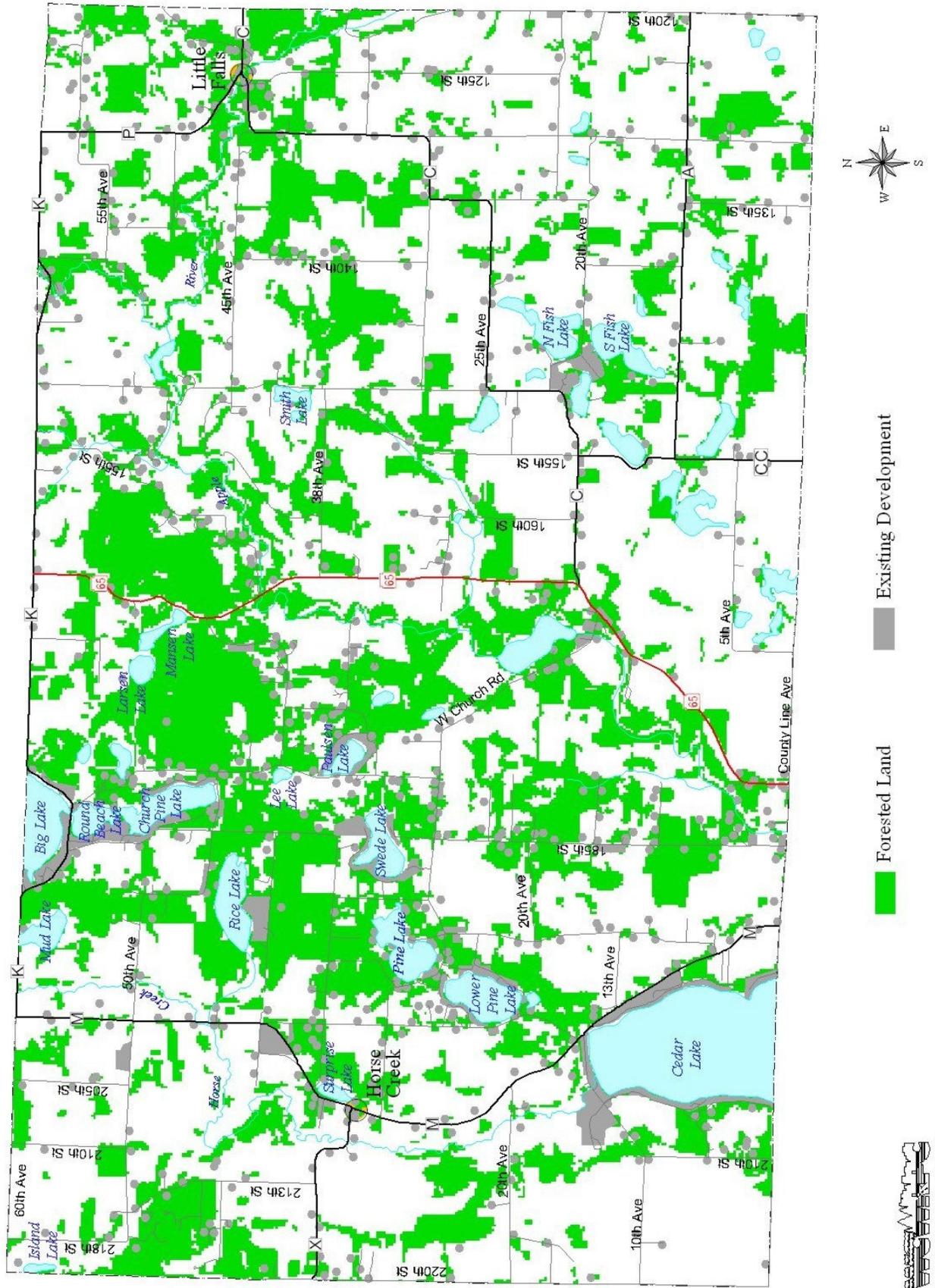


Figure 26

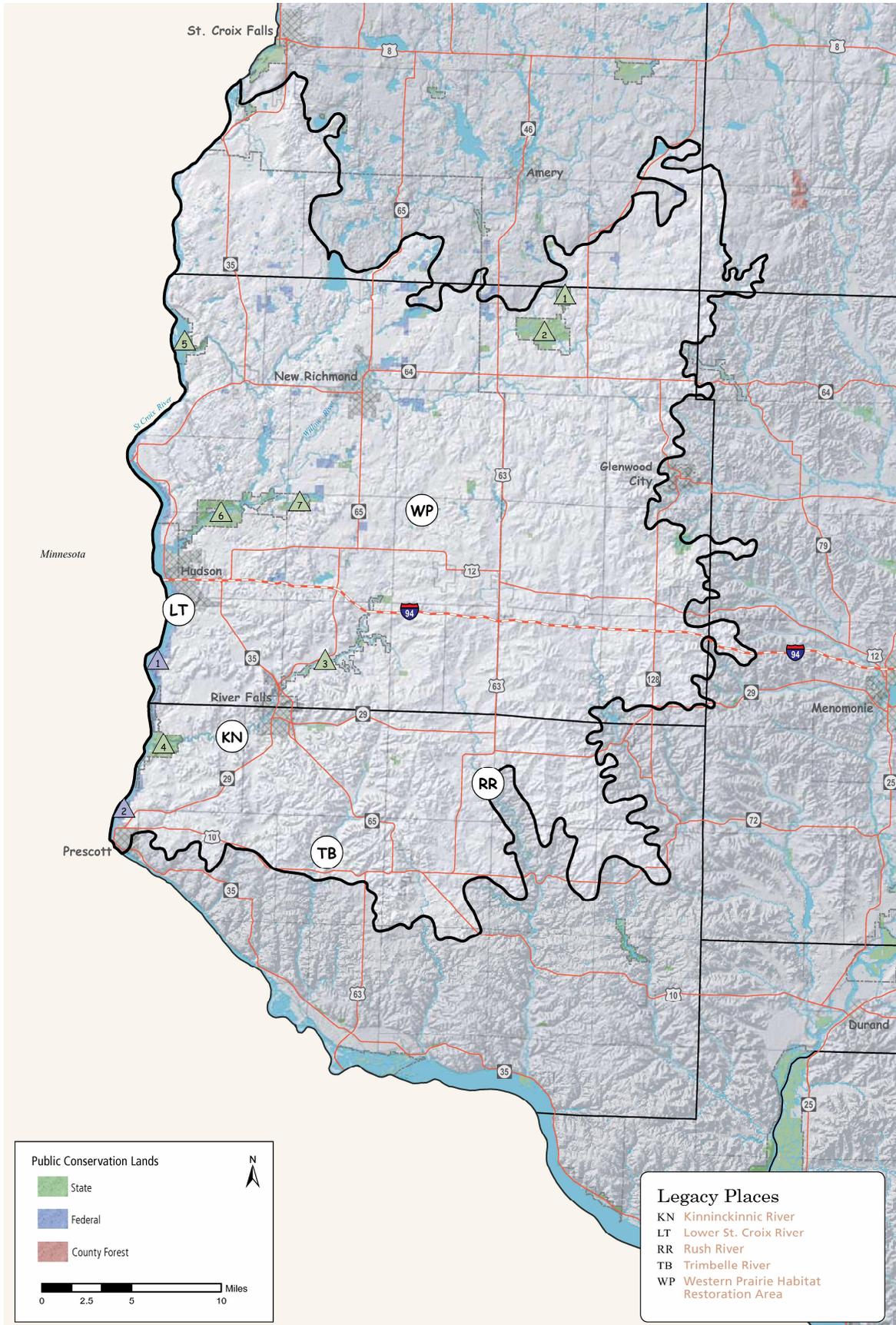




Figure 28

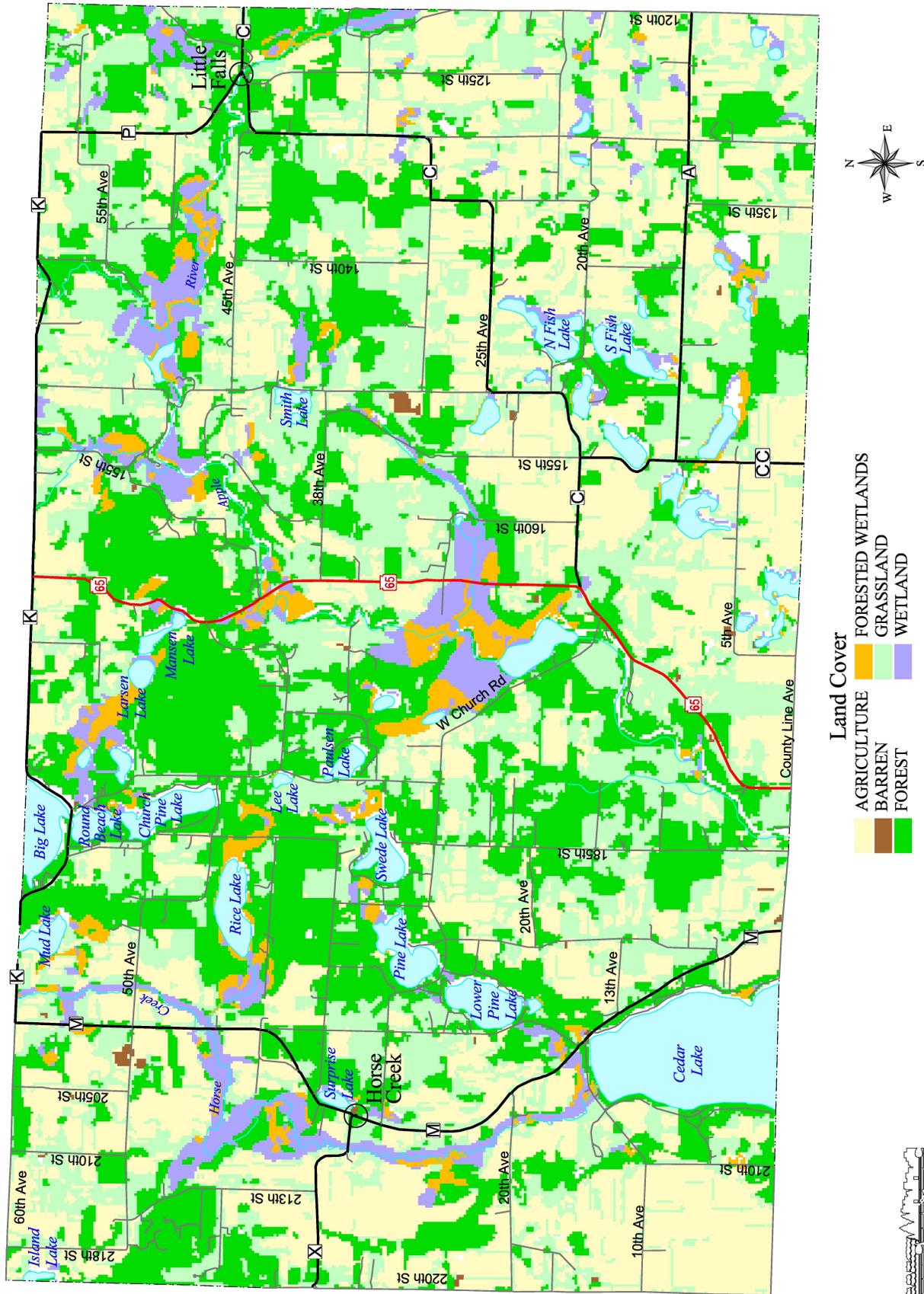


Figure 29

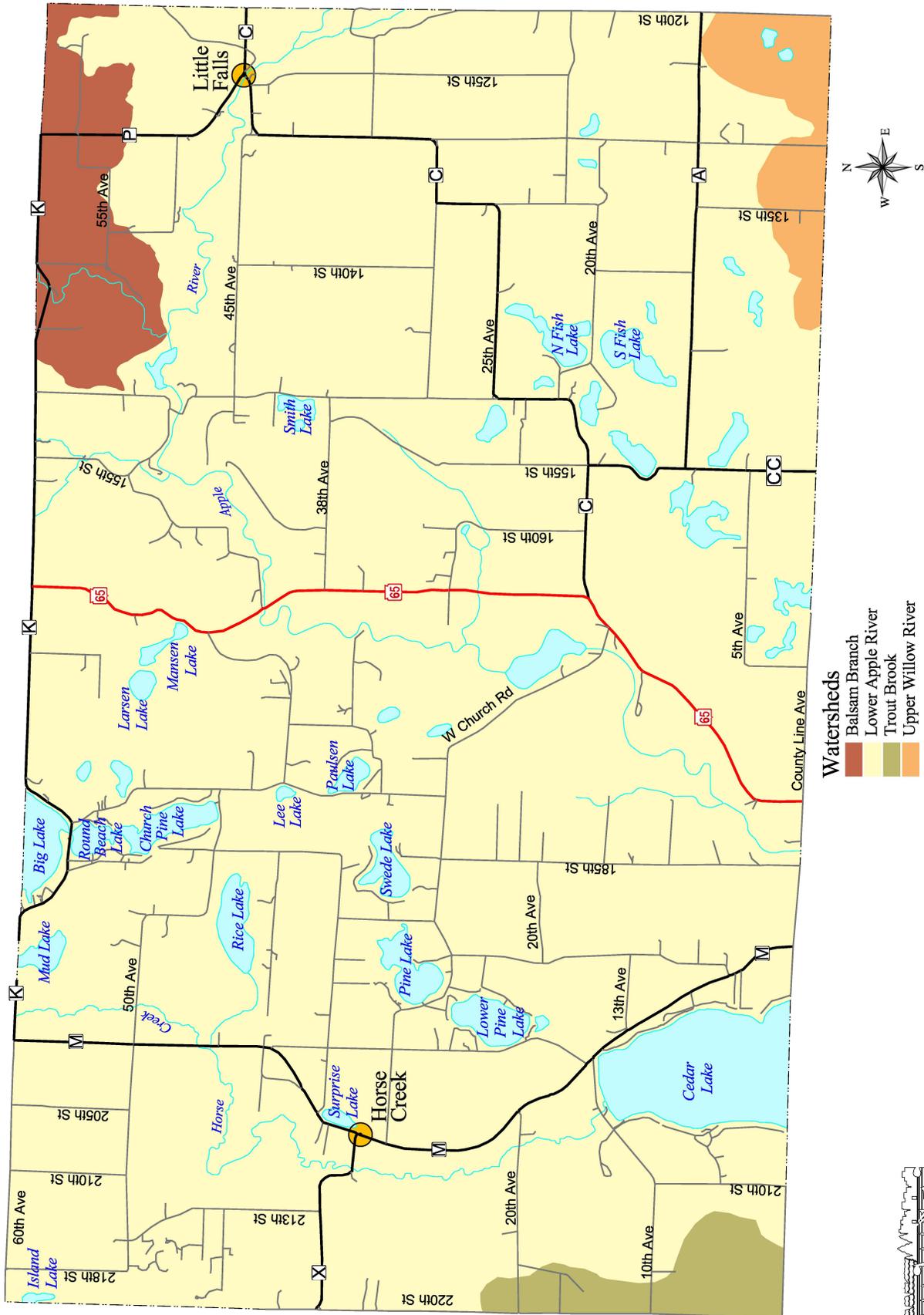


Figure 30

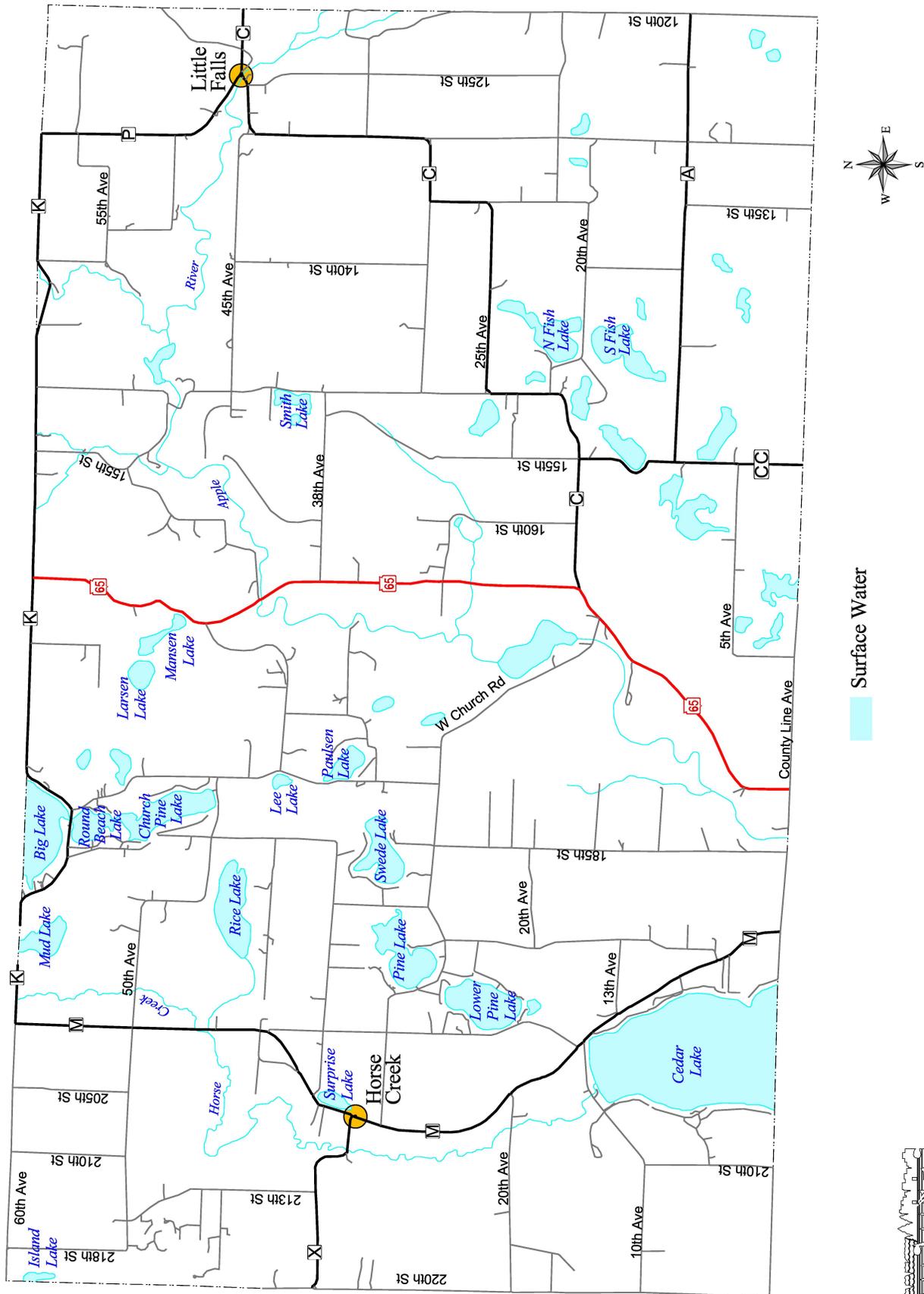


Figure 31

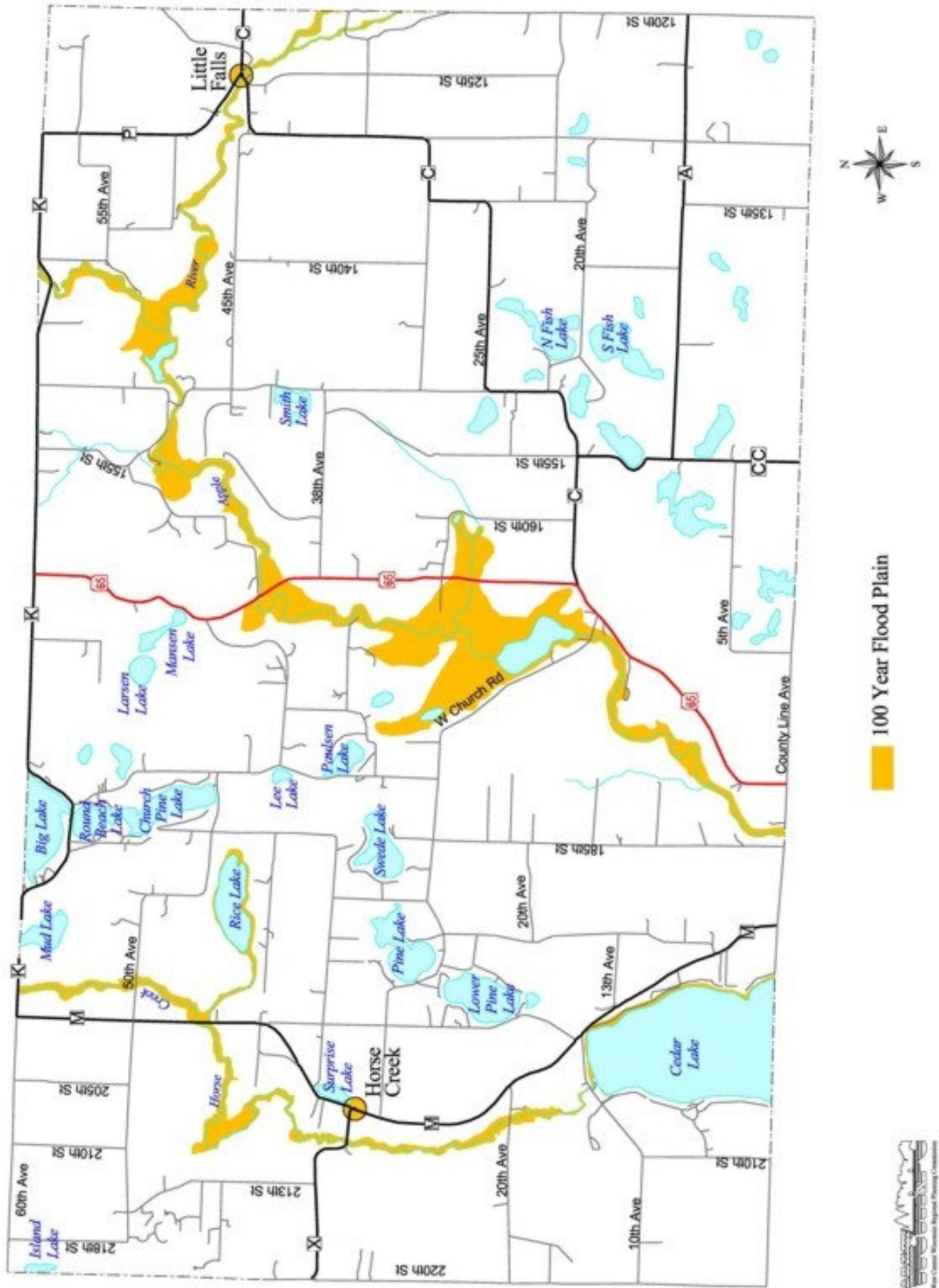




Figure 33

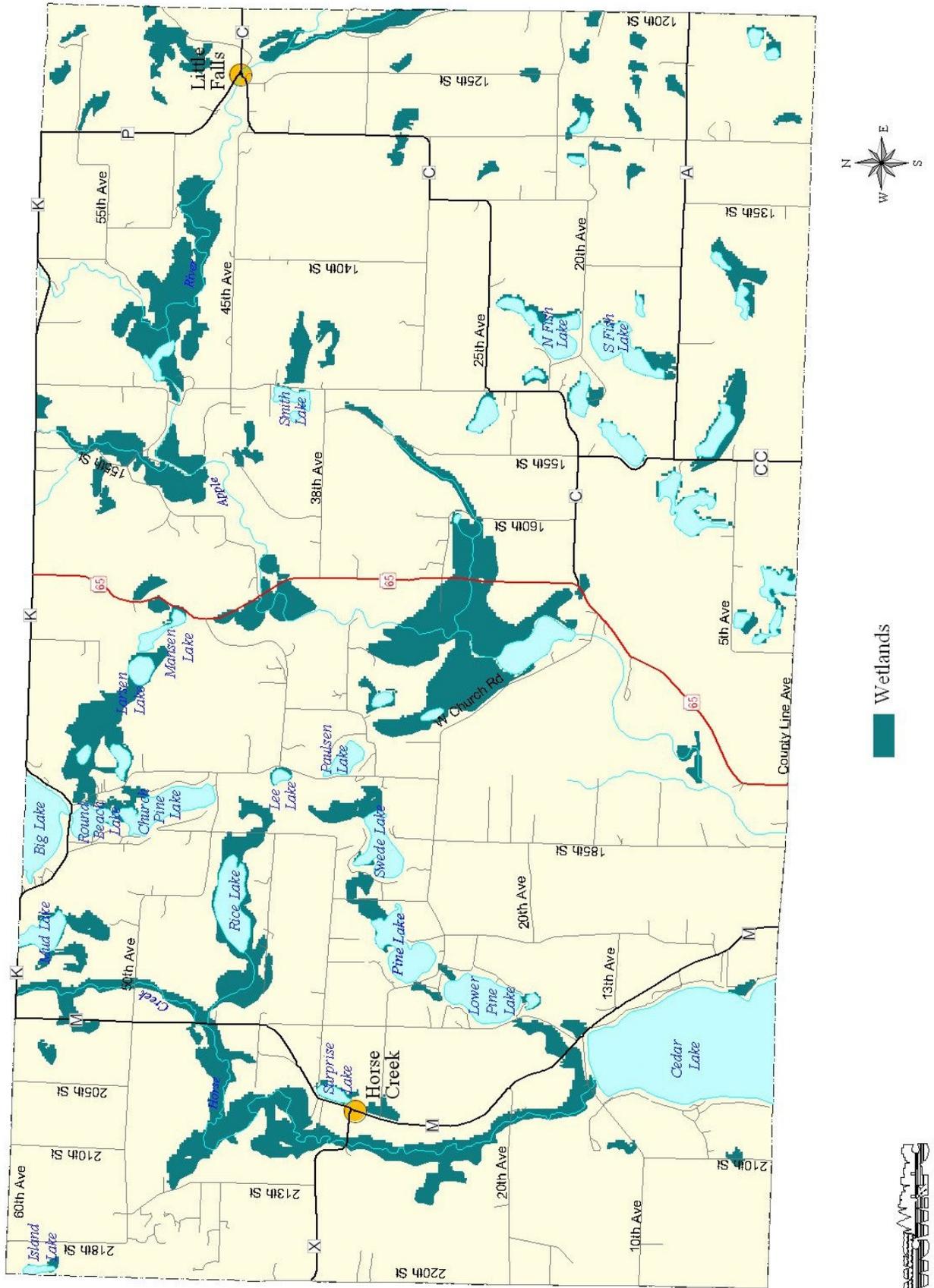


Figure 34

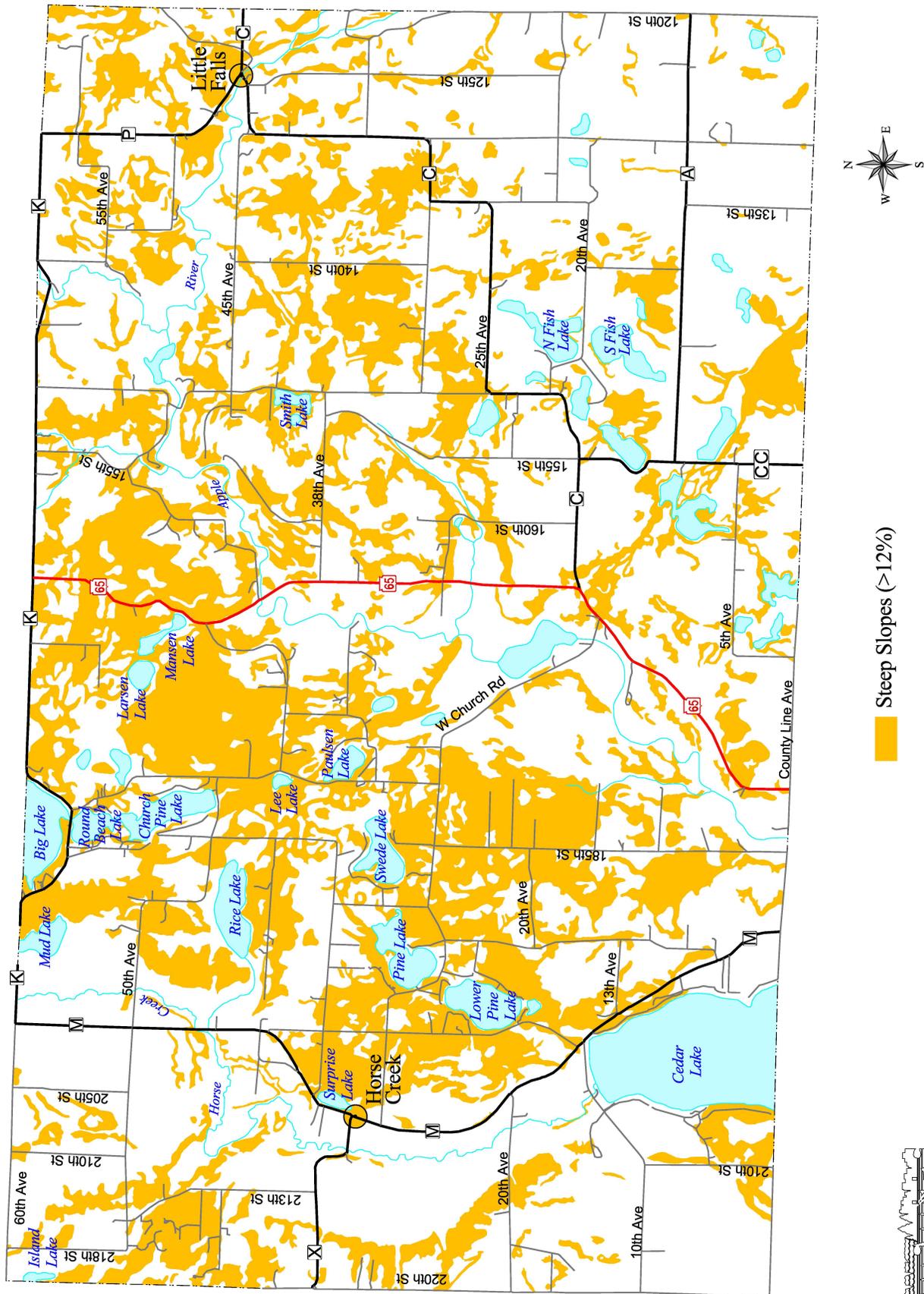


Figure 35

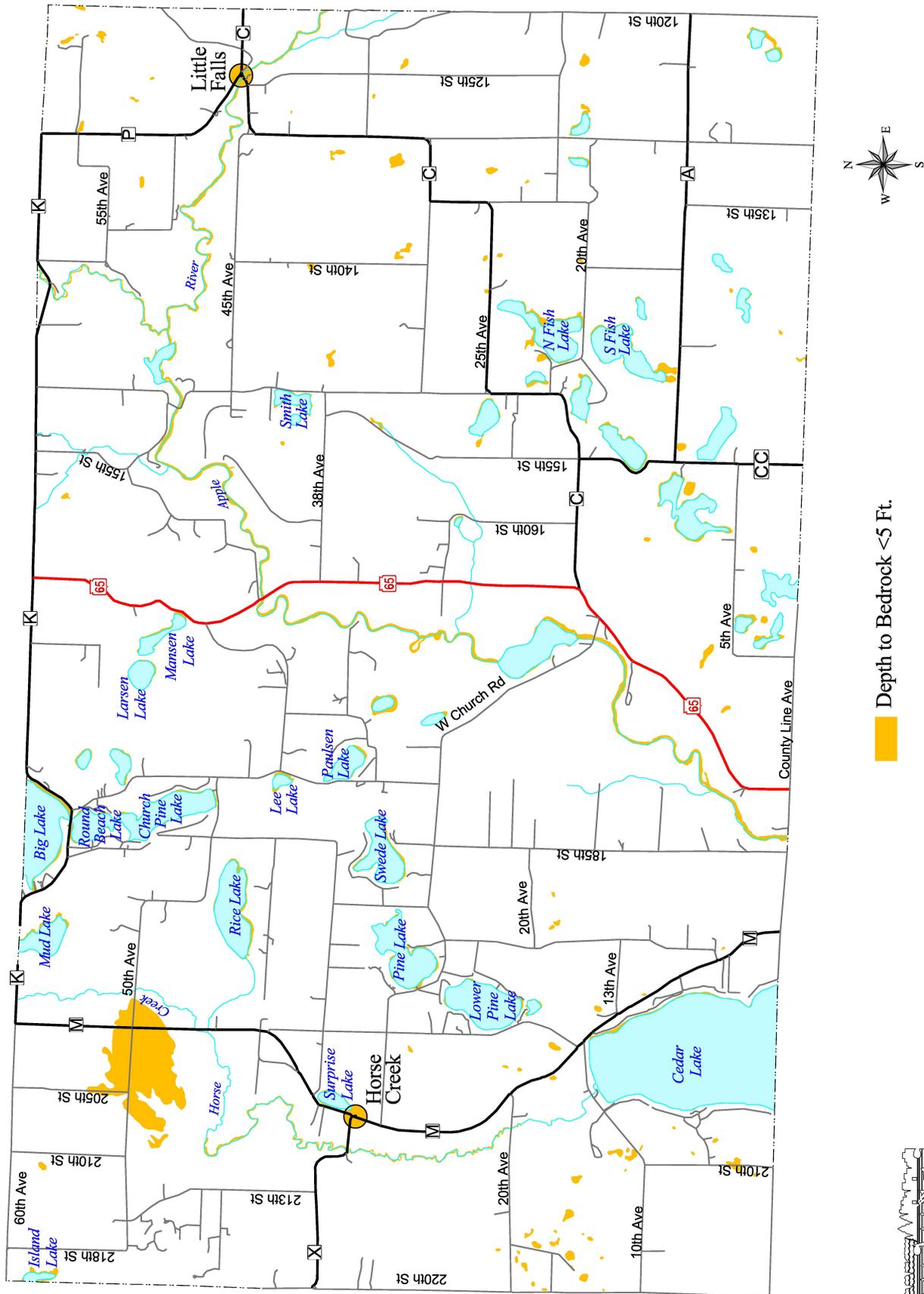


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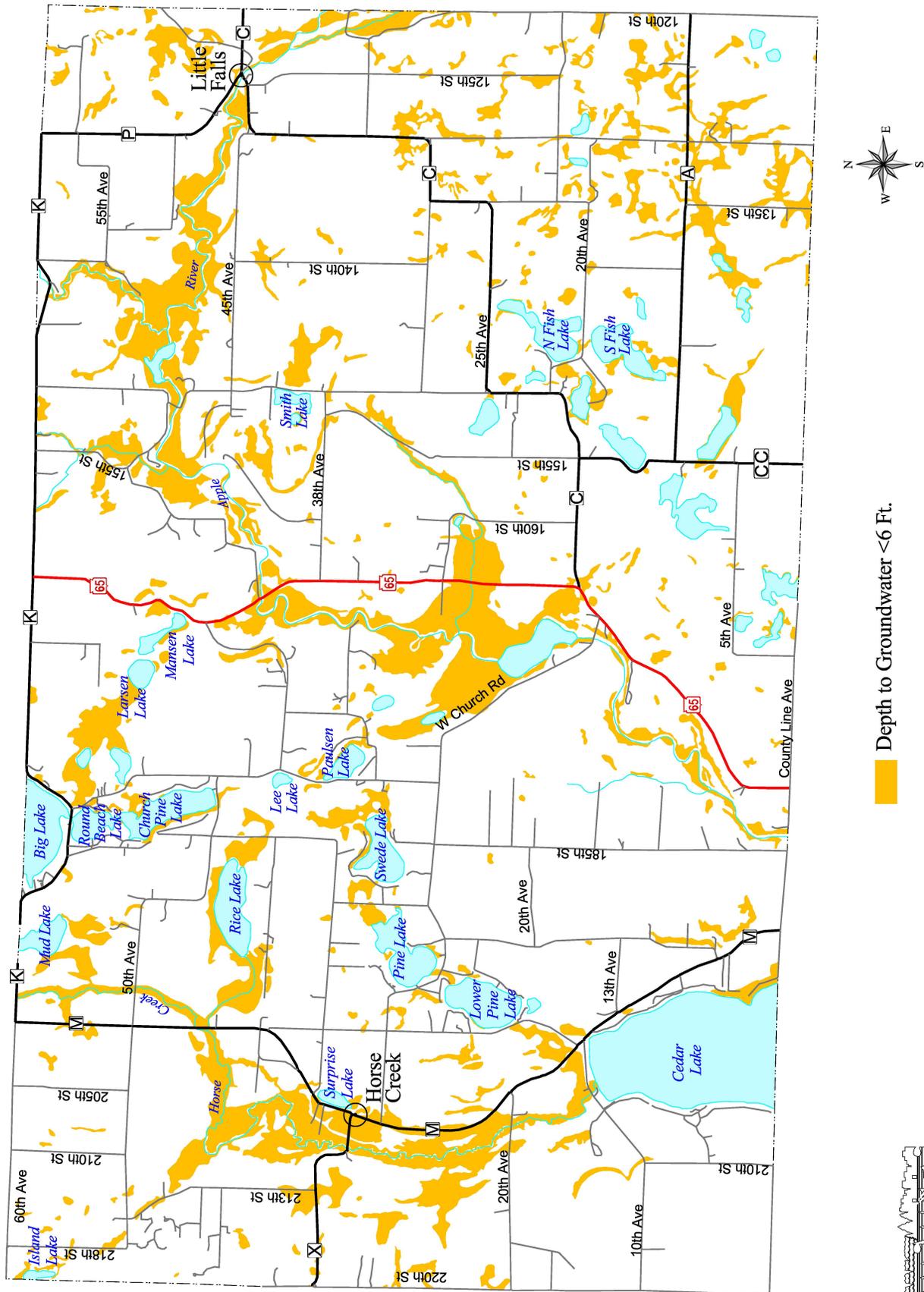


Figure 37

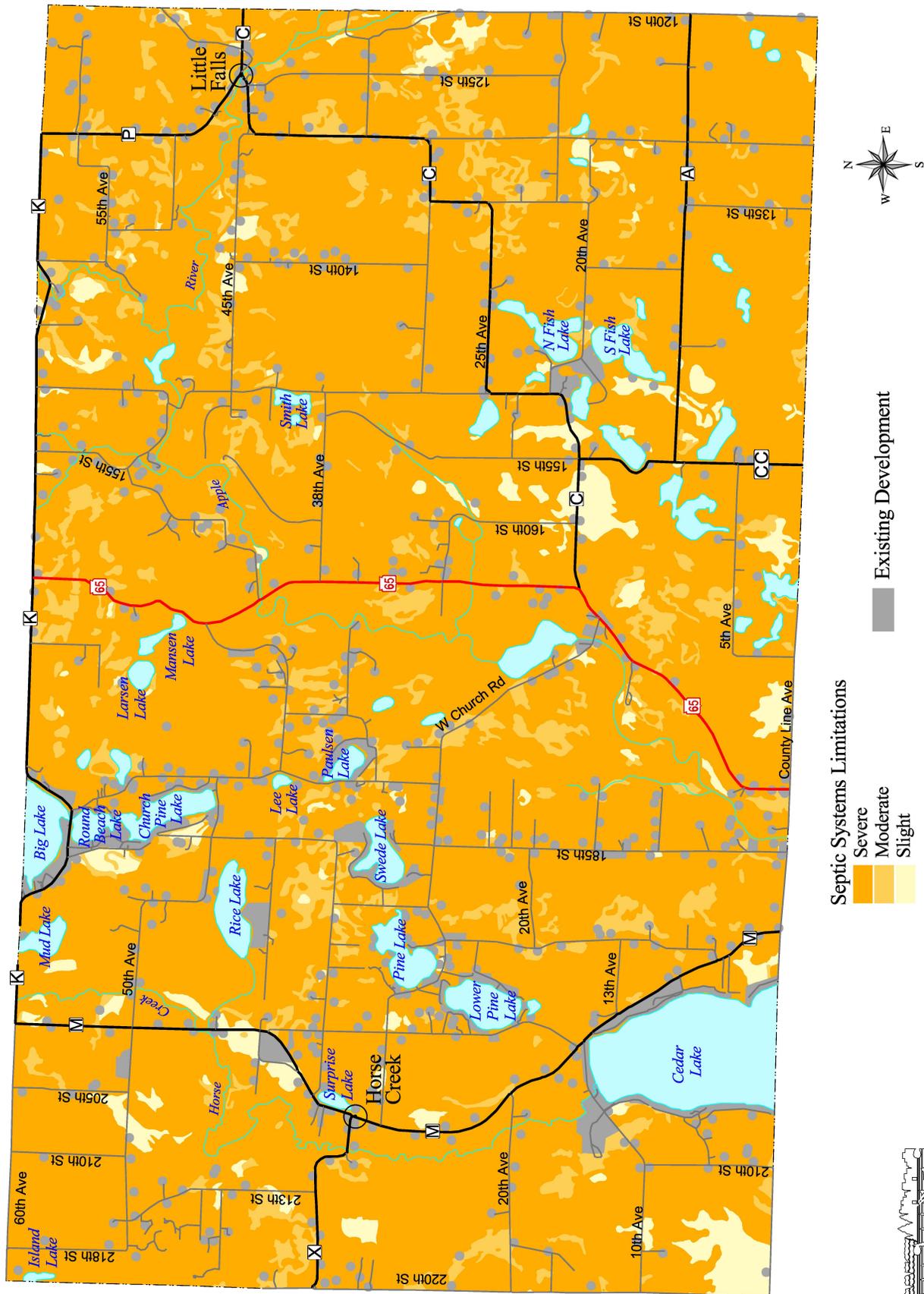


Figure 38

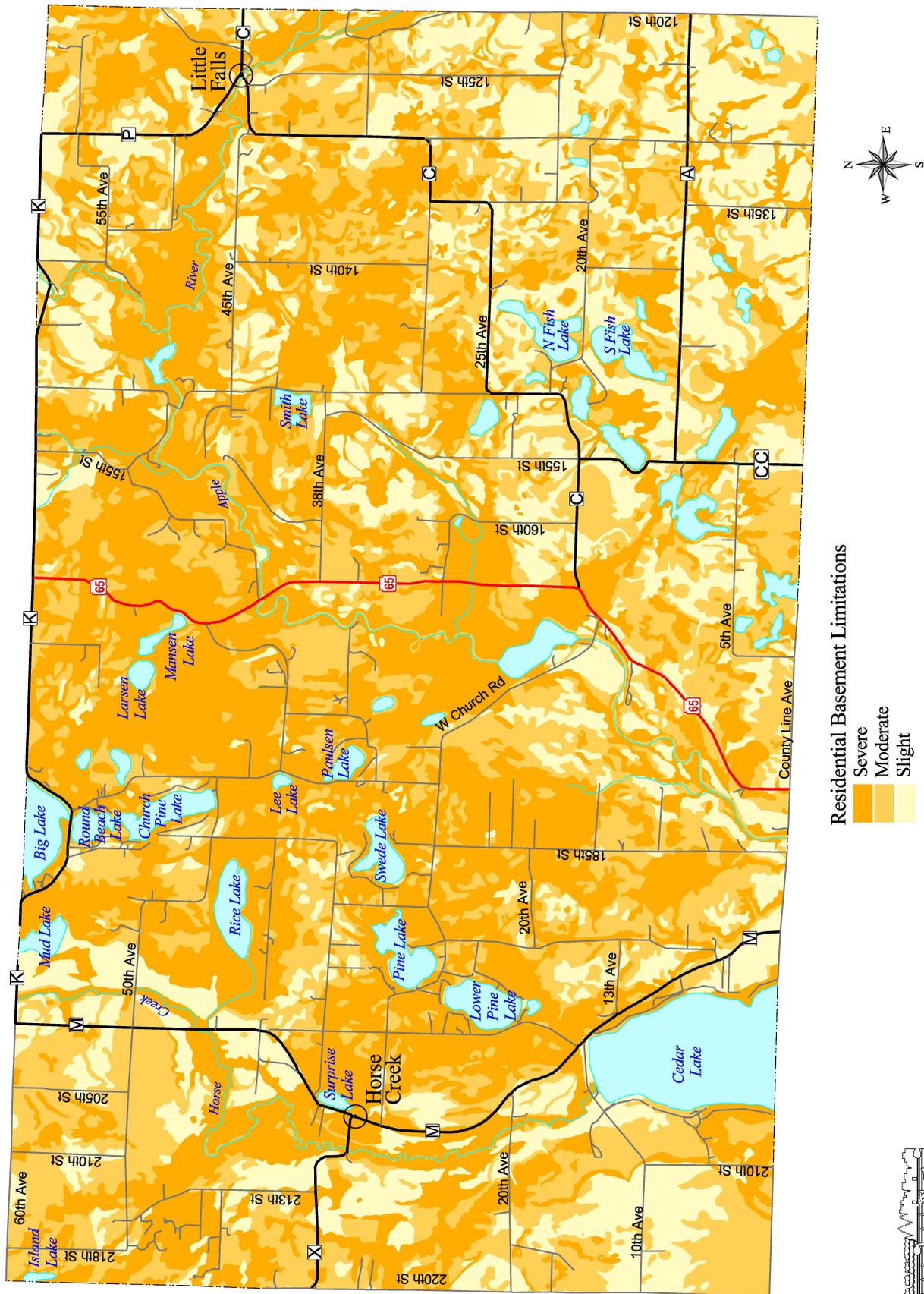


Figure 39

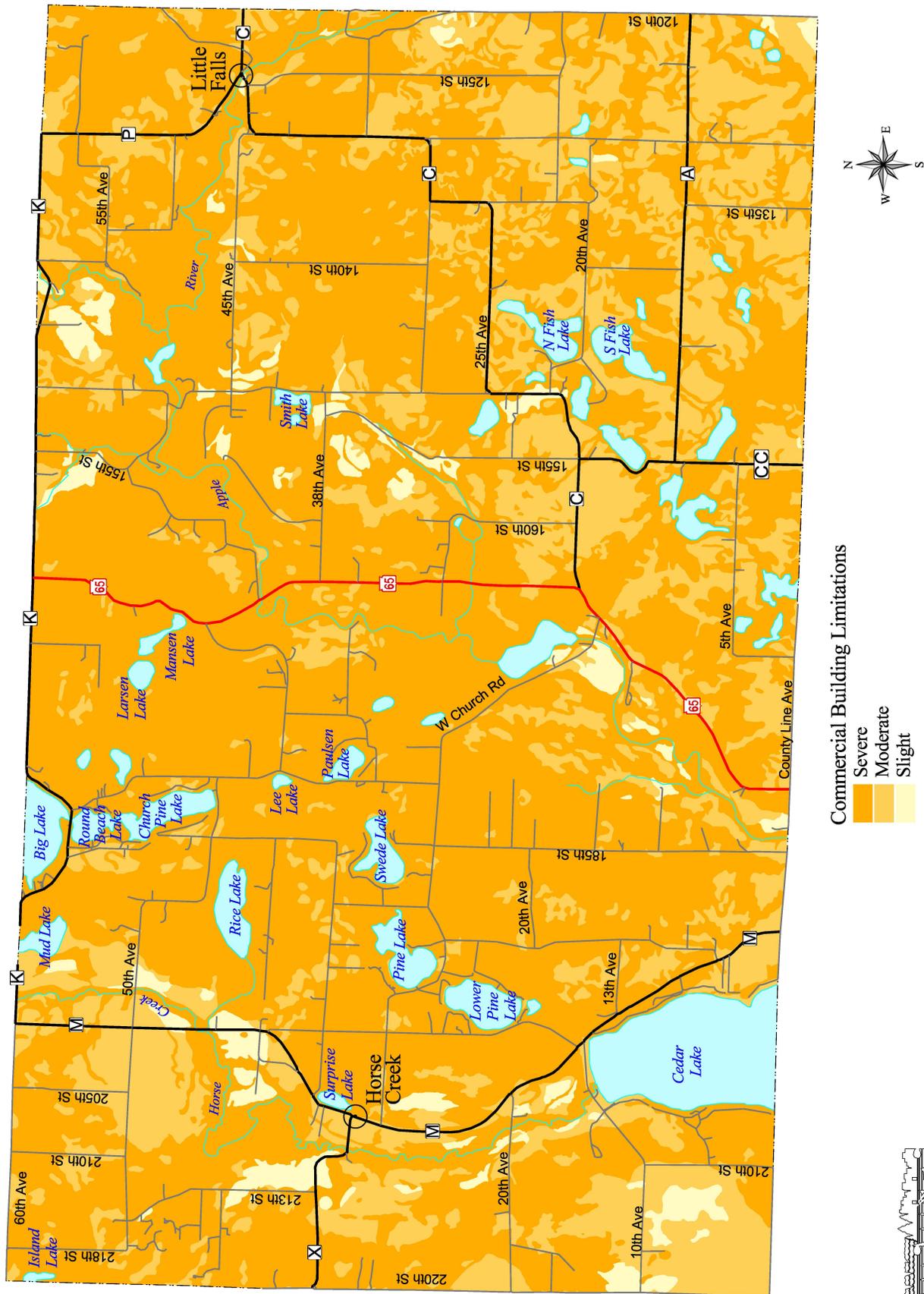
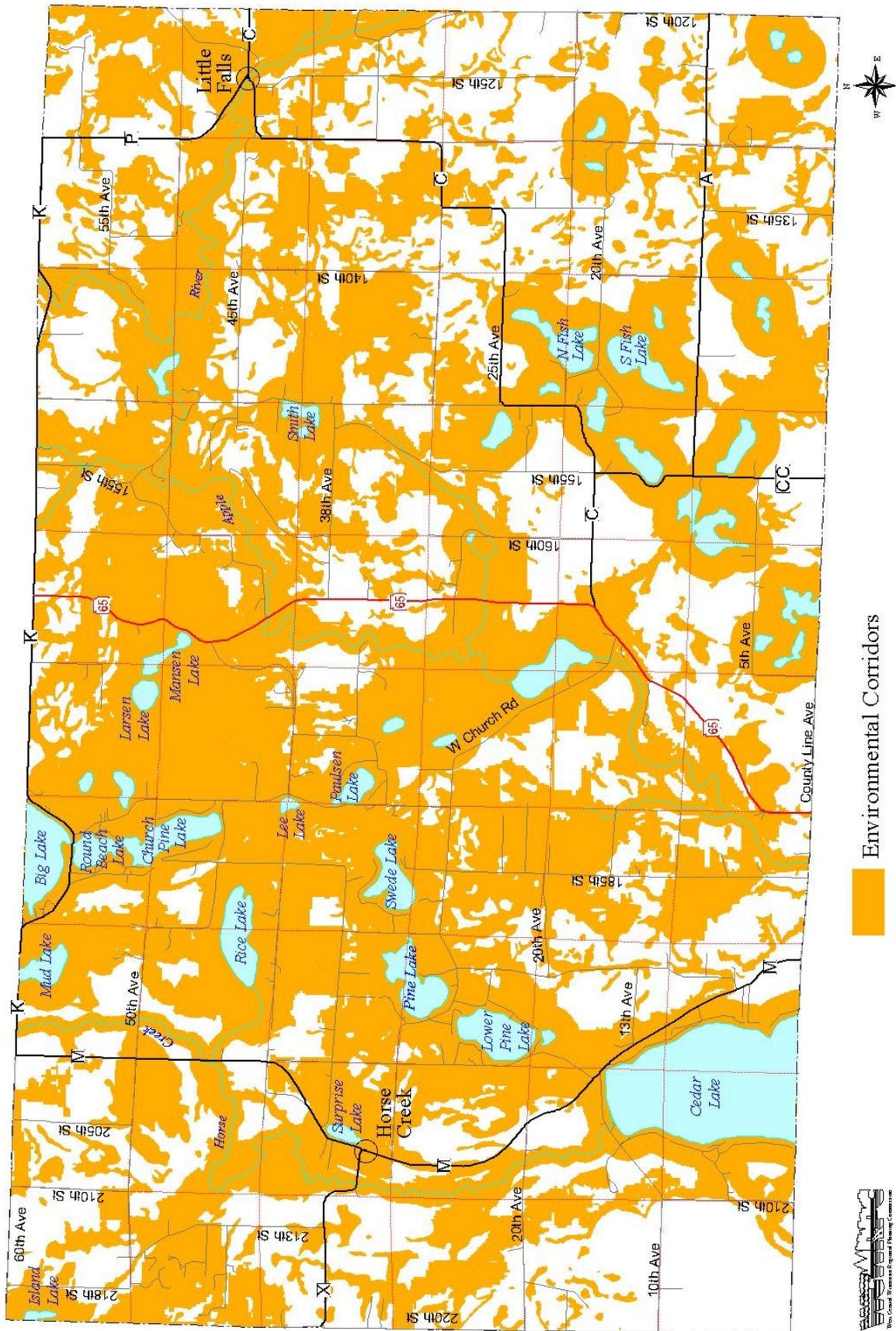


Figure 40



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## ***THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT***

The Economic Development Element is an opportunity for the Town of Alden, its citizens, and the local economic development and business community to clarify the categories or types of new businesses and industries that would be favorable to Alden's business climate, evaluate the Town's strengths and weaknesses for attracting and retaining business and industry, and determine if there are an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The Town of Alden is a rural community and as such any economic activity must be compatible with its rural character.



**Little Falls Mercantile Co.**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROLES**

### **Town of Alden**

The Town of Alden has historically had a limited role in economic development. Most industrial economic development activity has traditionally been concentrated in the county's incorporated municipalities. Indeed, several such communities have economic development agencies of their own. The Town is responsible for land use planning and implementing its economic development policies through its comprehensive plan.

**Town of Alden, cont'd**

Town of Alden  
Alden Town Hall  
183 155th Street  
Star Prairie, WI 54026  
Website: [www.twp.alden.wi.us](http://www.twp.alden.wi.us)  
Email: [Alden@presenter.com](mailto:Alden@presenter.com)

**Polk County Information Center**

The Polk County Information Center is an important resource for non-industrial economic activity in Polk County. It promotes the county as a tourism destination and retail center.  
Polk County Information Center  
State Highway 35  
St. Croix Falls, WI 54024  
Phone: 715-483-1410  
or 1-800-222-POLK  
Website: [www.polkcountytourism.com/](http://www.polkcountytourism.com/)  
Email: [polkinfo@charterinternet.net](mailto:polkinfo@charterinternet.net)

**Polk County Economic Development Corporation**

The Polk County Economic Development Corporation provides industrial economic development services to the communities of Polk County. It plays a coordinating role for economic development issues that affect Polk County and its communities, helps with retention and recruitment, financing, and assists in marketing the county to business and industry.  
Polk County Economic Development Corporation  
PO Box 181  
Balsam Lake, WI 54810  
(715) 405-7655  
Website: [www.PositivelyPolkCounty.com](http://www.PositivelyPolkCounty.com)  
Email: [info@PositivelyPolkCounty.com](mailto:info@PositivelyPolkCounty.com)

**West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

On a multi-county level, including Polk County, the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission conducts economic development and transportation planning and project development. The Commission is designated as an economic development district by the Economic Development Administration. It is required to undertake economic development planning and project identification for all seven counties of the region. The commission does industrial site analyses, helps local governments develop local economic development strategies, packages economic development financing, creates county economic and population profiles, creates community and industrial park profiles and administers the Regional Business Fund, Inc.  
West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
800 Wisconsin Street, Mail Box 9  
Eau Claire, WI 54703-3606  
715-836-2918  
Website: <http://www.wcwrpc.org>  
Email: [wcwrpc@wcwrpc.org](mailto:wcwrpc@wcwrpc.org)

### **Impact Seven**

Impact Seven, Inc. is a private nonprofit community development corporation with the stated mission to increase the economic opportunity of Wisconsin people and prosperity of Wisconsin communities. While it operated in seven northwestern Wisconsin counties exclusively for many years, Impact Seven now serves the entire state and beyond. A Federally certified Community Development Financial Institution, Impact Seven provides business financing and technical assistance, develops and finances affordable housing, and assists communities with organizing, planning and fostering economic development.

Impact Seven, Inc.

147 Lake Almena Drive

Almena, WI 54805

Phone: (715) 357-3334

Fax: (715) 357-6233

Website: [www.impactseven.org](http://www.impactseven.org)

E-mail: [impact@impactseven.org](mailto:impact@impactseven.org)

### **Xcel Energy**

Xcel Energy provides electric service to the parts of Polk County and the Town of Alden. The utility has a variety of economic development business and community assistance programs. They have programs to make available financial assistance for new development in loan guarantees and matching grant funding.

Xcel Energy

414 Nicollet Mall

Minneapolis, MN 55401-1993

Business Solutions Center Phone: 1-800-481-4700

### **Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College**

The Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) provides educational programs in support of business and industry in the region. It not only provides customized training and technical assistance programs, it also runs an affiliate center of the Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center which helps manufacturers access and use modern tools and strategies.

WITC New Richmond Campus

1019 South Knowles Ave.

New Richmond, WI 54017

Phone: (715) 246-6561

Fax (715) 246-2777

### **Polk County University of Wisconsin - Extension**

Polk County University of Wisconsin - Extension provides educational services that support economic development in Polk County. Cooperative Extension develops practical educational programs tailored to local needs and based on university knowledge and research. County-based Extension educators are University of Wisconsin faculty and staff who are experts in agriculture and agribusiness, community and economic development, natural resources, family living and youth development. Extension county-based faculty and staff live and work with the people they serve. Extension specialists work on UW System campuses where they access current research and knowledge. Collaboration between county and campus faculty is the hallmark of Cooperative Extension in Wisconsin.

### **Polk County University of Wisconsin – Extension, cont'd**

Polk County - UW Extension  
Agricultural Center  
100 Polk County Plaza  
Suite 210  
Balsam Lake, WI 54810-0160  
Phone: 715-485-8600  
Fax: 715-485-8601

### **Realtors Association of Northern Wisconsin**

The Realtors Association of Northern Wisconsin is the local association of real estate brokers. This organization plays an important supportive role to economic development by providing access to the real estate market and relocation services for business and people.

Realtors Association of Northern Wisconsin  
1903 Keith Street  
Eau Claire, WI 54701  
Phone: 715 - 835-0923  
Fax: 715 - 835-4621

## **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Commercial development in Alden has is very limited and has not changed much in the past 30 years. Land use inventories from 1973 and 2000 both show the Town with 12 acres of land in commercial land use and a 50% decline of industrial land uses during the same period.

Alden is near several communities that have a number of manufacturing industries and bulk commodity producers in a region dominated by agriculture. The jobs provided by the existing industrial sector in Polk and St. Croix Counties are a contributing part of the economy of Alden. Preservation of the community and its values requires placing a high priority on County and State efforts at retention of existing industry and working to facilitate their ability to compete in a global economy.

## **LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS**

### **Labor Force**

Table 52 shows labor force statistics for the Town of Alden. Tables 53 and 54 show employment by occupation and industry. These tables represent labor force and employment statistics for the residents of Alden (Place of Residence) and do not indicate where those residents work. However, Table 55 reveals Journey to Work information for Alden workers (where Alden residents work) but cannot be cross-tabulated with the employment sector information. Fortunately, the U.S. Census Bureau releases the Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) which can give us Place of Work employment as found in Table 57.

**TABLE 52 LABOR FORCE • 1980, 1990 AND 2000**  
**TOWN OF ALDEN RESIDENTS**

	1980	1990	2000
Persons 16 Years and Over	1,262	1,549	2,043
In labor force	805	1,085	1,496
Percent in labor force	63.8	70.0	73.2
Employed	724	1,028	1,468
Unemployed	81	57	26
Percent unemployed	10.1	5.3	1.7

Source: U.S. Census

**TABLE 53 EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Resident Workers 16 years of age and older**

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Executive, administrative and managerial	48	6.6	74	7.2	403	27.5
Professional	53	7.3	94	9.1		
Technician	30	4.1	45	4.4		
Sales	41	5.7	70	6.8	356	24.3
Administrative support, including clerical	76	10.5	121	11.8		
Service	78	10.8	96	9.3	172	11.7
Farming, forestry, fishing	121	16.7	120	11.7	10	0.7
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	--	--	--	--	141	9.6
Precision production, craft and repair	121	16.7	140	13.5	386	26.3
Machine operators, assemblers & inspectors	99	13.7	160	15.6		
Transportation and material moving	38	5.2	47	4.6		
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers and laborers	19	2.6	61	5.9		
<b>Total Employment (16 years and over)</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,468</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census

Shaded area indicates combined categories

As indicated by the data presented in Table 52, while the segment of the population eligible for the labor force grew by nearly 62 percent between 1980 and 2000, the actual number in the labor force increased by 86 percent. The employed residents in the labor force increased by 103 percent over the same period, while the percentage of unemployed residents decreased by almost 8.5 percentage points. Based on these statistics, it appears that a growing number of Town residents have been finding employment opportunities. The economic downturn early in the decade starting in 2000 makes it uncertain how the labor force and employment was been affected in Alden with decennial Census data. However, in the State of Wisconsin data found in Table 5 we can see indicators in employment for Polk County that may reveal the present economic rebound. Personal income is derived primarily from employment wages. An individual's occupation determines the range of that wage scale and influences their personal standard of living. A comparison of the occupations of those employed in the labor force helps to determine the economic affect of the employment opportunities available to area residents and the ability to increase their standard of living.

The Census Bureau collects place of residence employment data. This means these data can tell us what occupations or industries the residents of Alden work in, but not where they work. Table 53 presents a comparison of the occupation of Alden residents between 1980 and 2000. The Town of Alden experienced very dramatic change in the occupations residents were employed, including Farming, Forestry and Fishing, which decreased by almost 92 percent between 1980 and 2000 and Service occupations, which increased by 120 percent, while white

collar occupations increased by over 200 percent!. Table 54 shows what industries or businesses Alden residents were employed in as opposed to the occupations depicted in Table 53. Between 1980 and 2000, Alden residents were increasingly employed in Construction, Manufacturing, and Educational, Health and Social Services industries. Perhaps surprising is the steady decrease in resident's employment in the Retail Trade industry. As seen in Table 56 Retail Trade employment in Polk County remained fairly constant throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It is likely that a significant portion of those jobs are elsewhere than the county. Hence, it is probable that increases in Retail Trade employment of Alden residents are increasingly being satisfied by opportunities outside the Town and County.

**TABLE 54 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Resident Workers 16 years of age and older**

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	129	17.8	123	12.0	53	3.6
Construction	57	7.9	57	5.5	101	6.9
Manufacturing	228	31.5	350	34.0	408	27.8
Wholesale trade	28	3.9	21	2.0	49	3.3
Retail Trade	75	10.4	128	12.5	151	10.3
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	40	5.5	45	4.4	57	3.9
Information	--	--	--	--	22	1.5
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	19	2.6	26	2.5	68	4.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	--	--	--	--	103	7.0
Business and repair services	17	2.3	75	7.3	--	--
Educational, health and social services	89	12.3	108	10.5	279	19.0
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	30	4.4	61	5.9	79	5.4
Other services, except public administration					63	4.3
Public administration	12	1.7	34	3.3	35	2.4

Source: U.S. Census

Shaded area indicates combined categories

**TABLE 55 JOURNEY TO WORK • 1980, 1990 and 2000**  
**Town of Alden Residents**

Place of Work	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Town of Alden, WI					158	10.8
Remainder of Polk County, WI	343	48.5	426	42.7	395	27.1
New Richmond, St. Croix County, WI					186	12.7
Somerset, St. Croix County, WI	123	17.4	237	23.8	58	4.0
Remainder of St. Croix County, WI					109	7.5
Minneapolis, MN	14	2.0	22	2.2	30	2.1
Remainder of Hennepin Co., MN	4	0.6	16	1.6	52	3.6
St. Paul, MN	84	11.9	37	3.7	108	7.4
Remainder of Ramsey Co., MN	4	0.6	47	4.7	57	3.9
Washington County, MN	51	7.2	141	14.1	210	14.4
Worked elsewhere	23	3.3	71	7.1	96	6.6
Not Reported	61	8.6	--	--	--	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census

Shaded area indicates combined totals.

Table 56 shows Polk County non-farm employment. As previously mentioned, these data could give an indication of the economic downturn in the early part of the decade and the rebound of a subsequent economic recovery.

### Economic Base

To analyze the economic base of the community usually basic industry (primarily manufacturing) employment in the community is compared to non-basic employment. This is often difficult to do with secondary source information as such labor statistics are often

<b>TABLE 56 NON-FARM WAGE AND SALARY EMPLOYMENT • 2002-2006 *</b>					
<b>Polk County</b>					
<b>Industry Category</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Total Nonfarm	14,800	14,799	15,137	15,825	15,958
Total Private	12,090	12,168	12,545	13,278	13,497
Goods Producing	4,498	4,440	4,500	4,758	4,797
Service Producing	10,310	10,358	10,636	11,066	11,161
Construction, Mining and Natural Resources	672	712	746	751	750
Manufacturing	3,826	3,728	3,754	4,007	4,046
Retail Trade	2,105	2,129	2,106	2,079	2,025
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	298	305	309	307	336
Financial Activities	493	507	518	491	462
Education and Health Services	1,893	1,925	2,018	2,246	2,322
Leisure & Hospitality	1,328	1,323	1,350	1,588	1,647
Information, Professional and Business Services, Other Services	1,478	1,536	1,741	1,806	1,906
Total Government	2,711	2,630	2,591	2,547	2,460
Federal	137	140	144	135	135
State	32	38	38	40	44
Local	2,543	2,451	2,409	2,370	2,281

\* average of all months

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

suppressed to protect the identity and number of employees of individual businesses that may suffer a competitive disadvantage with such disclosure. There is employment sector information available for Polk County shown in Table 56. In addition, the Place of Work data from the CTPP in Table 57 shows the number of workers working in Alden by industry for 2000. Hence, the economic base analysis for the plan is inferential in nature due to the limitations of the existing information. It can be seen, however, Alden is a modest employment center for its own residents and provides some employment opportunities for residents of the surrounding area. Manufacturing employment in Polk County accounts for thirty percent of all non-farm employment; this indicates a relatively strong basic industry sector. Table 57 shows that agriculture accounts for significant employment in the Town of Alden, followed by construction and professional services. Services of all kinds account for 61 percent of the employment in the Town of Alden.

**TABLE 57**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY • 2000**  
**Workers 16 years of age and older working in the Town of Alden**

<i>INDUSTRY</i>	<i>Employment</i>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	80
Construction	55
Manufacturing	10
Wholesale trade	15
Retail Trade	10
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	4
Information	10
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	10
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	40
Educational, health and social services	15
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	15
Other services, except public administration	15
Public administration	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>270</b>

Source: 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package

## FEDERAL AND STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

### The Community Development Block Grant - Public Facilities for Economic Development (CDBG-PFED) Program

The Public Facilities for Economic Development (PFED) program is a federally funded program designed to assist communities with expanding or upgrading their infrastructure to accommodate businesses that have made a firm commitment to create jobs and invest in the community. It is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce (WisCOMM). Eligible activities include those improvements to public facilities such as water systems, sewerage systems, and roads that are owned by a general or special purpose unit of government; that will principally benefit one or more businesses; and that as a result will induce the business(es) to create additional jobs and to invest in the community. The total amount of all CDBG-PFED assistance received by an eligible government may not exceed \$1,000,000 per calendar year. The total amount of CDBG-PFED assistance that can be provided to benefit a single business or related businesses may not exceed \$750,000.

### The Community Development Block Grant - Economic Development (CDBG-ED) Program

The CDBG-ED program was designed to assist businesses that will invest private funds and create jobs as they expand or relocate to Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce awards the funds to a general-purpose unit of government (community) which then loans the funds to a business. When the business repays the loan, the community may retain the funds to capitalize a local revolving loan fund. This fund can then be utilized to finance additional economic development projects within the community. Eligible activities include construction and expansion, working capital, and acquisition of existing businesses, land, buildings, and equipment, but not refinancing. The Department of Commerce's typical level of participation in a CDBG-ED project is \$3,000 to \$10,000 per full time job created, although the actual amount of participation is dependent upon factors such as the viability of the project, the number and nature

of the jobs created, the project's economic impact upon the community and the collateral position available.

### **Community Development Block Grant - Blight Elimination and Brownfield Development (CDBG-BEBD) Program**

The Blight Elimination and Brownfield Redevelopment Program (CDBG-BEBR) program is designed to assist communities with assessing or remediating the environmental contamination of an abandoned, idle or underused industrial or commercial facility or site in a blighted area. Critical to obtaining a grant is a redevelopment plan that describes how the property will be reused for commercial or industrial development that results in jobs and private investment in the community. An eligible applicant is a general purpose unit of government with a population less than 50,000 that is not enrolled in the Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Program. This includes any county, other than Dane, Milwaukee, or Waukesha Counties. Eligible projects are environmental site assessments (ESA), commonly known as Phase I, II or III site assessments, or the environmental remediation of sites which are blighted, subject to the following conditions:

- The applicant has a redevelopment plan for the property.
- The project will result in the redevelopment of the brownfield site for a taxable reuse.
- The applicant will repay to the Department any funds that are loaned to a nonprofit or a business.
- The applicant commits to pursue recovery of environmental remediation costs from responsible parties and to reimburse the department a proportional share of the CDBG funds.
- The applicant demonstrates financial need and demonstrates that the project is the best alternative for the project site.
- The community provides at least 25 percent of the public facility project funding.

### **Enterprise Development Zone (EDZ) Program**

The Enterprise Development Zone Program provides tax incentives to new or expanding businesses whose projects will affect distressed areas. Based on the economic impact of a proposed business project, the Department of Commerce will be able to designate an enterprise development zone. A zone is "site specific" and applies to only one business. The maximum amount of credits per zone is \$3.0 million. Zones can exist for up to seven years. The Department can vary zone benefits to encourage projects in areas of high distress. The Department can designate up to 79 zones. In order to participate in the program, a business should work with one of Commerce's Area Development Managers and complete a prospect data sheet to submit to the Department. Projects must affect distressed areas suffering from high unemployment, low incomes, declining population, declining property values, and plant closings and that have high numbers of people on public assistance. The Department will determine if a project is eligible for an enterprise development zone based on information about the economic impact of the project, the prospective site, and the distress of the area. Businesses earn credits only by creating new full time jobs or by conducting environmental remediation on a "Brownfield" site.

### **Community Development Zones**

The Wisconsin Community Development Zone Program can help to expand businesses, start a new one, or relocate a current business to Wisconsin. The Community Development Zone Program is a tax benefit initiative designed to encourage private investment and to improve both the quality and quantity of employment opportunities. The program has more than \$38 million in tax benefits available to assist businesses that meet certain requirements and are located or willing to locate in one of Wisconsin's 22 community development zones. The development zone tax credits include: (All tax credits have a carry forward provision for up to 15 years) A non-refundable jobs credit of up to \$8,000 for new full-time jobs being created and filled by members of target group. Eligible target groups include W2 participants, dislocated workers, federal Enterprise Community residents, vocational rehabilitation program referrals and Vietnam-era veterans, ex-felons and youth from low-income families. A non-refundable jobs credit of up to \$6,000 for new full-time jobs being created and filled by Wisconsin residents who are not members of target groups. The actual amount of job credits is dependent upon wages and benefits. Wages must be at least 150% of federal minimum wage. Full-time job means regular, nonseasonal, and scheduled to work 2,080 hours per year. One-third of the allocated job credits must be claimed for jobs that are filled by target group members.

### **Wisconsin Development Fund - Technology Development Fund (WDF)**

The Technology Development Fund (TDF) program was established in 1984 to help Wisconsin businesses research and develop technological innovations that have the potential to provide significant economic benefit to the state. Any Wisconsin business or consortium can apply for TDF funds. A consortium is an association between a Wisconsin business and a Wisconsin higher educational institution. Eligible activities include research and development that will lead to new or significantly improved products or processes, has a high probability of commercial success within a relatively short time period (2-3 years) and will provide significant economic benefit to Wisconsin. Only costs directly associated with the proposed research project are eligible. This includes salaries of applicant personnel, professional services provided by independent third parties, equipment critical to the research project and supplies and materials. Although up to 75% of the eligible project cost can be financed, the actual level of TDF participation in any given project is based upon an analysis of the project's scientific and technical merit, commercial potential, economic impact, business viability and fund availability.

### **Wisconsin Development Fund - Major Economic Development (MED) Program**

The MED program is designed to assist businesses that will invest private funds and create jobs as they expand in or relocate to Wisconsin. To be eligible for consideration under the MED program, the project must Involve significant capital investment relative to the state of Wisconsin as a whole, OR, Involve the retention or creation of a significant number of jobs in the political subdivision where the project is located. Eligible activities include construction and expansion, working capital, acquisition of existing businesses, land, buildings, and equipment, but not refinancing. WisCOM's level of participation in MED projects ranges between \$3,000 and \$10,000 per full time job created. The actual amount of participation is dependent upon factors such as the viability of the project, the number and nature of the jobs created, the project's economic impact upon the community, the collateral position available and the amount of private funds leveraged. Applicants are typically required to provide at least 50% of the total eligible project costs from sources other than the State of Wisconsin.

### **Transportation Facilities Economic Assistance and Development (TEA-Grant) Program**

The Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) program provides 50% state grants to governing bodies, private businesses, and consortiums for road, rail, harbor and airport projects that help attract employers to Wisconsin, or encourage business and industry to remain and expand in the state. The goal of the TEA program is to attract and retain business firms in Wisconsin and thus create or retain jobs. The businesses cannot be speculative and local communities must assure that the number of jobs anticipated from the proposed project will materialize within three years from the date of the project agreement and remain after another four years. Grants of up to \$1 million are available for transportation improvements that are essential for an economic development project. It must begin within three years, have the local government's endorsement, and benefit the public. The program is designed to implement an improvement more quickly than normal state programming processes allow. The 50% local match can come from any combination of local, federal, or private funds or in-kind services.

## **LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND PROGRAMS**

The Town of Alden currently has no local economic development plans and programs, but residents, businesses and the community do have access to the myriad of County, regional, and State economic development programs identified in this element.

## **NEW INDUSTRIES OR BUSINESSES DESIRED**

The types of new businesses or industry desired are largely determined by location. Principally, it is envisioned that the rural area of the Town will continue to be primarily rural in nature, including agricultural and recreational lands, with many residents from low-density rural residences continuing to commute to employment centers outside the area. Commercial activities that do occur within the rural area are envisioned to be small enterprises or in-home cottage businesses that compliment agricultural and recreational uses or serve local residents. However, along County Highway M, County Highway C, and State Highway 65 there are limited areas with potential for well-planned commercial development that is compatible with the Town's rural character. Traditional, family-owned and corporate farms are desired instead of higher-impact feedlot operations and factory farms that are viewed more as industrial uses and could threaten the community's water resources. However, more intensive agricultural operations can be accommodated in the Town's exclusive agriculture area. In addition, there may be recreation of tourism-based business appropriate within the Town's two rural hamlets of Little Falls and Horse Creek.

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

The Town of Alden has State Highway 64 and 35 and U.S. Highways 63 and 8, regional transportation arterials, nearby. The proximity to these transportation facilities could be seen as both strengths and weaknesses. While increasingly people and goods will find easier ways into

the Town, the Town wants to make sure that whatever commercial development that does occur does not harm the Town or its residents.

The scenic and recreational value of the Apple River, Cedar Lake and other water features, wooded lands and cultivated or grassy clearings, offer opportunities for tourism-based business. However, it is more likely that such natural amenities will continue to spur demand for rural residential development and recreational properties. Some areas in the Town may also hold substantial sand and gravel deposits. Entrepreneurs also have access to a diversity of County, regional, and State economic development assistance programs.

However, the Town has no municipal water or wastewater utilities for more intensive commercial and industrial uses. Due to a prevalence of excessively drained soils and the proximity to the Apple River, such intensive uses are deemed inappropriate to the community, if on private onsite wastewater treatment systems, as well as being inconsistent with the rural character expressed in the community vision. Most Town roads are not built to specifications to allow for year-round heavy traffic often associated with industrial and some commercial uses.

There is no rail service in the Town. It is clear that commercial development will be intentionally limited and industrial uses more intense than small, value-added fabricating will be discouraged.



**Horse Creek Store**

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR BROWNFIELD DEVELOPMENT**

As a rural, unincorporated community, no opportunities for brownfield redevelopment were identified during the planning process. However, the Town expects full reclamation of non-metallic mining sites to a more natural setting and, where appropriate, to be made available for development once mining activities cease.

## **DESIGNATION OF SITES**

As indicated previously dispersed low-impact commercial activity is appropriate for the rural portions of the Town. However, the Town might accept commercial and light industrial activity that is compatible with the Town's rural character along major road corridors. In any event, the Town wants to keep the influence of such business activity from negatively impacting nearby residential development and the Town's natural resources. Horse Creek and Little Falls might have areas that could see recreation or tourism-based businesses, but would be subjected to intense scrutiny to ensure the Town's vision is secured.

Proposed business development and sites should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Foremost, is the proposed project consistent with the community's vision and Comprehensive Plan? Is it compatible with the rural nature of the community or designated commercial areas and does it pose a threat to the surface water and groundwater of the community? And what will be impacts of the proposed project on local roads and services? These are examples of the types of inquiries the Town will make when reviewing a proposed commercial development.

## **Economic Development Goal, Objectives and Policies**

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### *Economic Development Goal*

Agriculture, home occupations, and other businesses and industry compatible with the rural character of the Town or designated commercial and industrial areas of the Town will continue to be the primary economic activities within the Town.

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### ***Objectives:***

- 1) Promote the continued success of farming, forestry, farm-related, tourism and recreational businesses.
- 2) Support the maintenance and development of in-home, cottage industries and local serving and tourism-based commercial establishments that complement the rural community and comply with applicable regulations.
- 3) Allow commercial activity that serves the local residents of the Town along major highways and within the unincorporated villages of Horse Creek and Little Falls.
- 4) Discourage larger, "higher impact" commercial and industrial development without access to municipal wastewater services.

## **Economic Development Policies**

- 1) Implement the agricultural-related policies in the Agricultural Element that promote agricultural and forestry-related practices and industries.
- 2) Allow home occupations, cottage industries and recreational or tourism establishments that are compatible with the rural character of the community.
- 3) Require larger commercial and heavy industrial development to be located on a municipal wastewater system while minimizing impacts on adjacent uses through natural screening, appropriate lighting, and careful site planning. Define “larger” and “heavy” based on standards such as: number of employees, water use, plant processes, types of end products, average trips per day, heavy equipment or truck traffic, dust generated, hours and days of operation, noise, use of chemicals, waste generated, facility size, impervious surface area, etc.
- 4) Require bonding for potential environmental impacts, impacts to Town roads, and site reclamation for mineral extraction operations, as well as periodic permit renewals.
- 5) Consider proposed commercial and industrial uses on a case-by-case basis by evaluating potential impacts and the compatibility with the community’s rural character or designated commercial or industrial area.
- 6) Commercial and industrial uses should be financially responsible for potential environmental impacts and impacts to Town roads.
- 7) Support the efforts of the Polk County Economic Development Corporation.

## ***THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ELEMENT***

Advances in technology and improved mobility have resulted in the faster and easier movement of people, money, goods, and other resources across jurisdictions. Many issues cross intergovernmental boundaries, affecting more than one community or governmental unit (e.g., school district). And the decisions, plans, and policies of one community can impact neighboring jurisdictions. The environmental, economic, and social health of a community and the region are interconnected.

Intergovernmental cooperation exists in varying forms among many different levels of government. This cooperation is a daily activity as governments perform their functions. However, the actions of a particular governmental unit can impact another governmental unit resulting in undesirable consequences and conflict between them. Through intergovernmental cooperation, communities can anticipate potential conflicts in plans and policies in order to identify potential solutions or agreements to mitigate such conflicts. The most common approach to these conflicts has been communication between governmental units as each tries to relate their position and arrive at a mutual understanding at the least and a mutually beneficial resolution at best. Governmental units may also identify opportunities for cost-sharing, competitive bidding, and other strategies to leverage available resources to everyone's benefit. There is also enabling legislation which gives local governmental units some tools to cooperate in the provision of services and others to resolve certain conflicts. This element will review the Town of Alden's position in relation to other units of government, identify potential intergovernmental conflict, and propose ways that those conflicts can be reduced or eliminated.

## **GROWTH TRENDS AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN ADJACENT COMMUNITIES**

Growth trends for surrounding communities are described in more detail in the *Land Use Element*. Like the Town of Alden, adjacent unincorporated towns have also been experiencing population and housing growth and loss of farmlands to residential or recreational use, though agriculture remains an important, evident land use in the area. Residential development pressure has been greatest along shorelines of water bodies and near areas offering natural amenities. The Town of Osceola to the northwest experienced the greatest percentage of residential growth during the 1990s and into the next decade among surrounding communities. The Towns of Black Brook, Farmington, Star Prairie and Somerset also appear to be experiencing high residential growth rates in this decade. Changes in the amount of agricultural land varied by community, with many Towns experiencing more than a 1% per year of agricultural land loss and the others saw more moderate decline. Changes in the amount of forest lands were characterized by increases in some Polk County Towns and moderate to significant loss amongst some surrounding communities.

Even with its relative remoteness the Twin Cities Metropolitan area represents the most significant growth and development impact on the Town. Once the St. Croix River Crossing is completed this influence will increase. The Town of Alden is preparing itself for its current level of development and additional development that may come from such an eventuality. Polk County and the surrounding Towns in Polk County are currently developing comprehensive plans under a Multijurisdictional Comprehensive Planning Grant. The Town of Somerset in St.

Croix has prepared its comprehensive plan while several other Towns and the Village of Star Prairie have yet to do comprehensive plans.

## **REVIEW OF OTHER GOVERNMENTAL UNITS**

### **County Government**

The Town of Alden is the second largest community by population out of 35 communities in Polk County and its largest Town. The Town and its citizens access many services and programs of County government in the Balsam Lake which is located 13 miles to the north. The Town participates in Polk County Zoning and has a good working relationship with the County regarding development review in the Town. Law enforcement is provided in the Town by the Polk County Sheriff's Department.

### **Cities and Villages**

The eastern edge of the Town of Alden is only a couple of miles west of Polk County's largest city, the City of Amery with a population of 2,845. The western edge of the Town of Alden is less than four miles east of Polk County's largest village, the Village of Osceola with a population of 2,421. The Village of Star Prairie (population 628) in St. Croix County borders the Town to the south, the Village of Somerset (population 2,250) is about eight miles southeast of the Town, and the City of New Richmond (population 7,858) is about five miles south of the Town. The distance from these cities and villages usually precludes Town government interaction with them, yet there is Town contact with the City of Amery and the Village of Osceola. In addition, most of these incorporated communities have an influence on Town residents during their daily activities.

### **Town Government**

The Town of Alden is bordered by several Towns; the Towns of Star Prairie, and Stanton in St. Croix County, and the Towns of Black Brook, Farmington, Garfield, Lincoln and Osceola in Polk County. There are areas of cooperation between some of these communities in the provision of some services and sharing equipment. The Town of Alden is a member of the Polk County Unit of the Wisconsin Towns Association.

### **Regional Planning Commission**

The Town of Alden is within the jurisdiction of the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (RPC). The Commission provides services and programs to the seven county region of Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk and St. Croix Counties. The Regional Planning Commission serves its member communities with economic development, transportation, community development, housing, land use, environmental protection, hazard mitigation, and recreation planning. The Commission also operates the Regional Business Fund. The RPC has provided a variety of services to the Town.

### **School Districts**

The Town of Alden is within the Osceola and Amery School Districts. The Town has the most contact with the Osceola Schools. The Town maintains the old Cedar Lake School and the

property around it that is adjacent to its Cedar Lake Park and lake access. The school is owned by the Osceola School District. It serves as a place for card parties, Lake District meetings and has been used for large family gatherings. The agreement with the district is that as long as the town maintains the property, it can be used by the citizens in the area.

The Osceola School District has played a very important role in encouraging long range planning. The school district hosted meetings for local governments to meet and discuss the need to do the comprehensive plan process before there was any interest in doing so by our county government.

### **Indianhead Technical College**

The Indianhead Technical College (CVTC) provides educational programs resulting in Associate Degrees and Certificates. There is a campus in New Richmond and the administrative offices are in Shell Lake.

### **University of Wisconsin – River Falls and University of Wisconsin – Extension**

The University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UWRF) provides undergraduate, limited graduate and continuing education courses which support the fine arts, liberal studies, technology, business and industry. The university houses the Rural Development Center which has done projects with the Town. The Town has a good working relationship with the University of Wisconsin – Extension Polk County Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development Agent.

### **Wisconsin Department of Transportation**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) is organized into eight district offices located throughout the state. Polk County and the Town of Alden are located in District 8 which has offices in Superior, Wisconsin. Projects are now organized by WDOT region. Both Polk County and the Town are in the WDOT Northwest Region. The Town has frequent contact with WDOT District 8 staff regarding transportation projects and issues that affect the Town of Alden.

### **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is organized into five regions. Polk County and the Town of Alden are situated in the Department's 18-county Northern Region. There is a region service center in Cumberland, Wisconsin. The regional offices are in Spooner, Wisconsin.

### **Wisconsin Departments of Administration, Revenue and Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**

The Town of Alden has working relationships with these agencies in the normal course of governmental operations and activities. The Town recently worked with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection on exclusive agricultural zoning issues.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLANS, AGREEMENTS, & RELATIONSHIPS**

Several local governments have been meeting in the Osceola School District board room. The official name is the Greater Osceola Intergovernmental Cooperative. The parties involved

are the towns of; Alden, Farmington, Osceola and the Villages of Osceola, Dresser as well as the Osceola School District. The purpose is to explore areas of common interest and to try to share resources that would benefit all of these local governments. There have sessions held for well over a year. One area of emphasis is to cooperatively plan for area wide recreational possibilities such as hiking and bike trails. The group is exploring areas of sharing services, equipment and joint bidding of road maintenance. There is some interest by the Town in joining the Western Wisconsin Intergovernmental Collaborative. This is a group of governments from the Wisconsin side of the St. Croix River Valley which is open to the chief elected officials and senior administrators of the 99 town, village, city and county governments in Pierce, St. Croix and Polk Counties. Its purpose is to explore critical public policy issues of common interest and provide opportunities for collaboration.

The Town of Alden has joint road maintenance agreements with the Towns of Farmington, Osceola, Black Brook, Star Prairie, Stanton and the Village of Star Prairie.

The Town of Alden has a joint agreement in the Amery Ambulance Service with the City of Amery, the towns of Lincoln, Black Brook, and Garfield.

For the New Richmond Ambulance, the Town works with the Towns of Cylon, Deer Park, Star Prairie, Stanton, the Village of Star Prairie and the City of New Richmond. All of these are in St Croix County.

The Osceola Ambulance service has agreements with the towns of Farmington, Osceola, and the Village of Osceola.

The Town has contracts with the New Richmond, Deer Park, Amery, Osceola and the Dresser, Osceola, and Garfield Fire Departments.

The Town of Alden works with the Cedar Lake Rehabilitation District which includes the Towns of Alden and Star Prairie, which is in St Croix County. The Town of Alden is part of the Church Pine, Round and Big Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District which includes Alden and the Town of Garfield.

The Town of Alden has no cooperative boundary agreements as defined under State Statute 66.0307, and there is no regional master plan as defined under State Statute 66.0309. The Town is part of the Osceola and Amery School Districts as mapped in the community facilities section of the *Utilities and Community Facilities Element*, but has minimal involvement in school district planning and operations.

The Town has a good working relationship with the Polk County Highway Department. The Town acquires salt, sand and hot-mix from the County and the County bids on providing blacktop and aggregate. The County sometimes shares equipment and provides limited engineering consulting and other limited services to the Town. The County establishes house numbers for the Town and provides the signs. The Town also works with the County Land and Water Conservation Department and the Polk County Extension Agricultural agent.

The Town is encompassed within a number of Polk County plans and ordinances, though Town approval of these documents was not required and ongoing participation is minimal. These plans

include, but are not limited to the: *Subdivision Control Ordinance, Sanitary Ordinance, Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, Emergency Operating Plan, Manure Storage Ordinance, Recycling Ordinance, and Land & Water Resource Management Plan*. General guidance for other specific issues may be acquired from numerous other local, regional and State plans regarding natural resource management, farmland preservation, economic development, emergency services, and social programs. Please refer to the appropriate plan elements for more details on many of these plans.

## **EXISTING OR POTENTIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICT**

Since the Town is involved with five other Towns in the provision of fire protection there can be some conflict regarding how things are run. As a matter of fact there can be disagreements regarding any number of working relationships the Town has. However, these issues are not especially serious and as long as communication is good things should get worked out.

It appears that the Polk County Highway Department does not have adequate funds to maintain certain highways. State Highway 65 is not properly maintained and is deteriorating. This causes some friction as the Town attempts to be diligent in the maintenance of its roads.

Otherwise, the Town is involved in a number of intergovernmental cooperation efforts previously describe which keeps the Town busy and should move it towards identifying problems as they arise and provide a mechanism to address issues with other governmental entities.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND PLANNING**

The Town of Alden already has a history of working closely with state, county and local governments. Perhaps the best thing that the Town of Alden can do to continue to foster intergovernmental cooperation is to keep communications open amongst the various units of government. Ongoing dialogue will at least keep the parties informed as to each other's position and at most provide opportunities to resolve the pertinent issues facing these communities. It is hoped that the mutually beneficial outcomes sought result in real progress on identified issues through a concerted effort of exploration, dialogue, cooperation and consensus.

## **Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal and Objectives**

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### ***Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal***

Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relations with neighboring units of government, the Amery and Osceola School Districts and Polk County.

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#### ***Objectives:***

- 1) Maintain communication with adjacent governmental units to identify and discuss existing or potential conflicts.
- 2) Utilize intergovernmental agreements to realize a financial benefit or cost-savings to the Town.
- 3) Stay informed and participate in intergovernmental discussions to ensure continued opportunities for the Town and its residents.

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation Policies**

- 1) Provide a copy of the adopted Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan to surrounding local governments.
- 2) Maintain membership of the Town Board in the Wisconsin Town's Association.
- 3) Work cooperatively with adjacent municipalities, the Amery and Osceola School Districts and Polk County when mutually beneficial opportunities for cost-sharing for needed facilities or services arise.
- 4) Work with Polk County to improve notification and coordinate timing of County and Town land use decision-making.
- 5) Participate in discussions with the City of Amery, the Villages of Osceola and Star Prairie and area towns on the potential expansion of wastewater services to unincorporated areas or the establishment of sanitary districts.
- 6) Participate in discussions with area communities to assess surface water and groundwater quality concerns and identify appropriate remedies if needed.
- 7) Work cooperatively with other area communities to identify routes appropriate for the potential development of linked recreational trails.
- 8) Maintain communication with the area municipalities and Polk County on land use and growth issues.
- 9) Maintain communication with other area unincorporated jurisdictions on the development of land use regulations and on shared land use concerns. Maintain a relationship with the Greater Osceola Intergovernmental Cooperative and consider participation in the Western Wisconsin Intergovernmental Collaborative.
- 10) Work cooperatively with adjacent municipalities, Polk County and the State of Wisconsin on hazards mitigation and emergency planning.
- 11) Continue to cooperate in fire protection and ambulance service.

# THE LAND USE ELEMENT

## TOWN OF ALDEN LAND USE CONTEXT

### Population

A significant influence on land use in any community is population growth. The Town of Alden experienced a decline in its population during and shortly after World War II. After 1950, this reversed with a small increase in population between 1950 and 1960. After 1960, the Town experienced steady population growth. According to Census reports, during the 1960s the Town increased in population by 242 persons, or by 20.8%. The Town saw even faster growth in the 1970s adding 456 persons, an increase of 32.4%. Since 1980, population growth has moderated somewhat with an average annual percentage change in population of 1.8%. (Table 58)

**TABLE 58**  
**HISTORIC POPULATION AND PERCENT CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS PERIOD • 1940 to 2006**

TOWN OF ALDEN

1940 Census	1950 Census	1960 Census	1970 Census	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2006 Estimate
1,193	1,120	1,164	1,406	1,862	2,133	2,615	2,883
-16.8	-6.1	3.9	20.8	32.4	14.6	22.6	10.3

Source: U.S. Census and WiDOA

More recently, a look at WiDOA official population estimates for 2001 through 2006 (Table 59) reveals that Alden is currently experiencing steady moderate growth compared to the dramatic growth that had occurred in the 1970s. The preliminary January 1, 2007 population estimate from WiDOA for the Town of Alden of 2,912 persons reveals that moderate growth continues.

**TABLE 59**  
**RECENT POPULATION TRENDS**

TOWN OF ALDEN

1990 Census	2000 Census	2001 Estimate	2002 Estimate	2003 Estimate	2004 Estimate	2005 Estimate	2006 Estimate
2,133	2,615	2,656	2,719	2,738	2,806	2,873	2,883

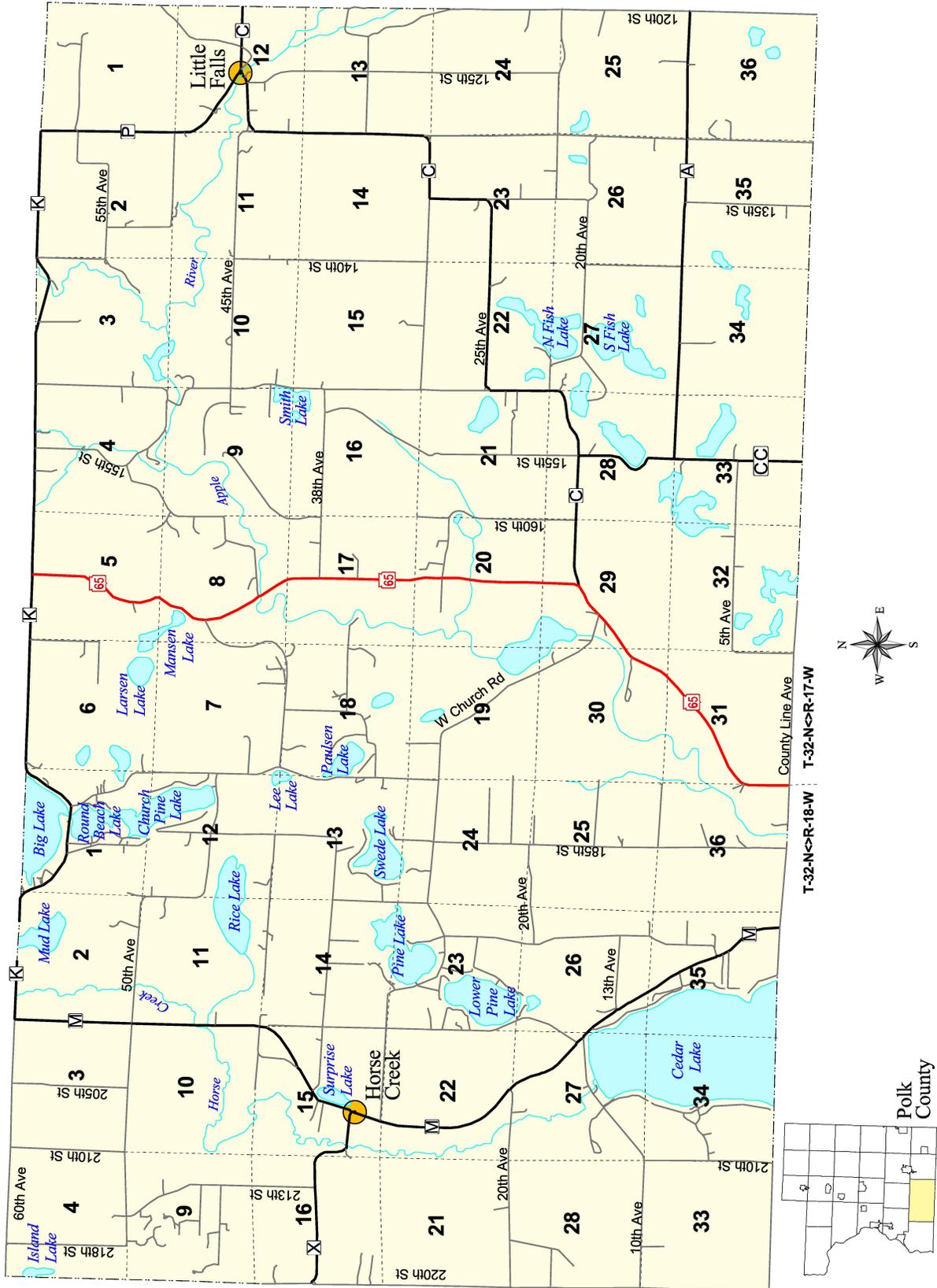
Source: U.S. Census and WiDOA

The study of the local population is vital to the planning process, because people are intended to be the principal beneficiaries of the planning. Knowledge of the number of people in the planning area, the various characteristics of this population, and the manner in which this population is changing, must all enter into the various planning decisions regarding the future of the Town of Alden. Complete population statistics are provided in the Issues and Opportunities Element.

### Community Setting

The Town of Alden is located in southern Polk County in the west central region of Wisconsin. The Towns of Star Prairie and Stanton in St. Croix border the Town to the south. The Town is bounded by Towns of Osceola, Garfield and Lincoln to the north, the Town of Farmington to the west and the Town of Black Brook to the east. Alden has one major highway running north and south through the center of the Town. It is well served by seven County Highways, K along its northern boundary, X and M in the western part, P in the northwest, A and

FIGURE 41 BASE MAP AND LOCATION TOWN OF ALDEN



CC in the southeast and C which is east-centrally located. The Town sits in an area of gently rolling farmlands or woodlands with significant influence of lakes, streams and associated wetlands. At one time, the town and surrounding areas were heavily forested, just like most of northern Wisconsin. The Apple River flows from the northeast to the south-central part of the Town. The northern half of Cedar Lake is found in the southwestern part with Horse Creek running into it from the north. There are numerous smaller lakes and streams throughout the Town. These water features are a valuable scenic and recreational amenity for residents of the town to enjoy.

### **Land Use Characteristics**

The Town of Alden consists of large expanses of open spaces, agricultural fields, woods and scattered residential development commonly associated with a rural environment.

There are about 37,676 acres of land and water in the Town of Alden, or approximately 58.8 square miles. Water makes up about 2,037 acres of the Town, or about 5.4% of the Town's surface area.

According to plan land use inventories, in 2000, about 84.4%, or about 20,358 acres, of the land is currently associated with agricultural uses. This includes acreage that is dedicated to the cultivation of crops, pasture, farm residences and other farm buildings. By comparison, 90.7% of the Town, or about 24,614 acres in the Town in 1973, were associated with agricultural use. Land assessed by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue as Agricultural amounted to 16,337 acres in 2006, down from 18,739 acres in 2000. According to land use inventories, between 1973 and 2000 over 17 percent of the agricultural land in the Town has been lost to conversion to other uses. According to assessment data, between 1980 and 2006, 6,786 acres or almost 30 percent of the agricultural land in the Town has been lost to conversion to other uses. The difference between the two sources lays in what is counted. The land use inventory includes land dedicated to the cultivation of crops, pasture, farm residences and other farm buildings, as well as fallow lands. Assessment data generally includes only land in active agricultural use.

A significant change has occurred in the acreage devoted to residential use. In 1973, it was estimated that 1,399 acres were associated with residential uses, or about 5.2% of the land in Alden. By 2000, the number had increased significantly to 2,631 acres, or 10.9% of the land in the Town. So, between 1973 and 2000 this represents an 88.1% increase in land associated with residential development in the Town. These residential land uses include residential parcels in subdivisions and other developments, lots in agricultural areas that are used only for residential purposes, and existing residential parcels that have been subdivided from surrounding lands that are 40 acres or less. Prior to 1980, most residential development in the Town involved scattered single lot development. Recently, more residential development is occurring in multi-lot subdivisions.

The acreage that is being used for commercial purposes has essentially remained the same over the same 27 year period. The land use inventories indicate that 12 acres of land was devoted to commercial use in 1973 as well as 2000. This represents a very small amount of commercial activity in the Town.

The 1973 land use inventory indicated that 49 acres of land were devoted to industrial use. By 2000, industrial land had declined to 25 acres. According to assessment data has been no manufacturing land in the Town between 1980 and 2006. Land that is tallied as industrial according to the those inventorying land use includes sand, gravel and rock quarries, and other land that may be assessed as commercial instead of industrial. Government and institutional land use comprised 13 acres of land in Alden in 1973 and 23 acres in 2000, or about a 76.9% increase.

About 1,075 acres of land, or about 4.5% of the Town, is included in road and railroad rights-of-way, electrical substations and communications facilities. This figure has remained fairly steady since 1973 for various reasons.

The Parks and Recreational land use category includes parks, campgrounds, and other properties dedicated to active outdoor recreational activities. No land has been identified in the inventories as recreational lands. However, it is likely that DNR and Fish and Wildlife Service holdings for conservation and areas around the Town’s lakes and streams are used for recreational purposes. It is just that these lands are not readily recognizable as being used for these purposes.

Land use characteristics in the Town of Alden have changed considerably in the 27 years between 1973 and 2007. Although the Town retains much of the character of a rural community, this character is changing with more subdivision development. These figures clearly indicate that the Town, while still largely opens spaces of woods and fields, is becoming more of a rural residential community with a substantial portion of the residential development scattered throughout the area on individual and multiple large lots.

**TABLE 60**  
**LAND USE INVENTORIES, 1973 AND 2000**  
*TOWN OF ALDEN*

Land Use	1973		2000		1973-2000	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	Acreage Change	% Change
Agricultural	24,614	90.7	20,358	84.4	-4,256	-17.3
Residential	1,399	5.2	2,631	10.9	1,232	88.1
Commercial	12	< 0.1	12	< 0.1	0	0.0
Industrial	49	1.8	25	0.1	-24	-49.0
Government and Institutional	13	< 0.1	23	0.1	10	76.9
Parks and Recreation	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	1,051	3.9	1,075	4.5	24	2.3

Source: West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Land cover information for the Town of Alden found in Figure 42 was derived from the 1997 WISCLAND satellite imagery project. The land cover information can be used as a backdrop for the current inventory of existing land use. The land cover map does not show where residential subdivisions are or individual residences. It only shows significant built up or developed areas. The land cover categories are agricultural, barren, forest, grassland, open water, shrubland, urban/developed, and wetlands.

Land use inventories for the Town of Alden were conducted in 1973 and 2000. There was an attempt to be consistent as possible with past methodologies in collecting the more current information. However, there are differences in data collection and interpretation in each of these

FIGURE 42 LAND COVER 1997 WISCLAND TOWN OF ALDEN

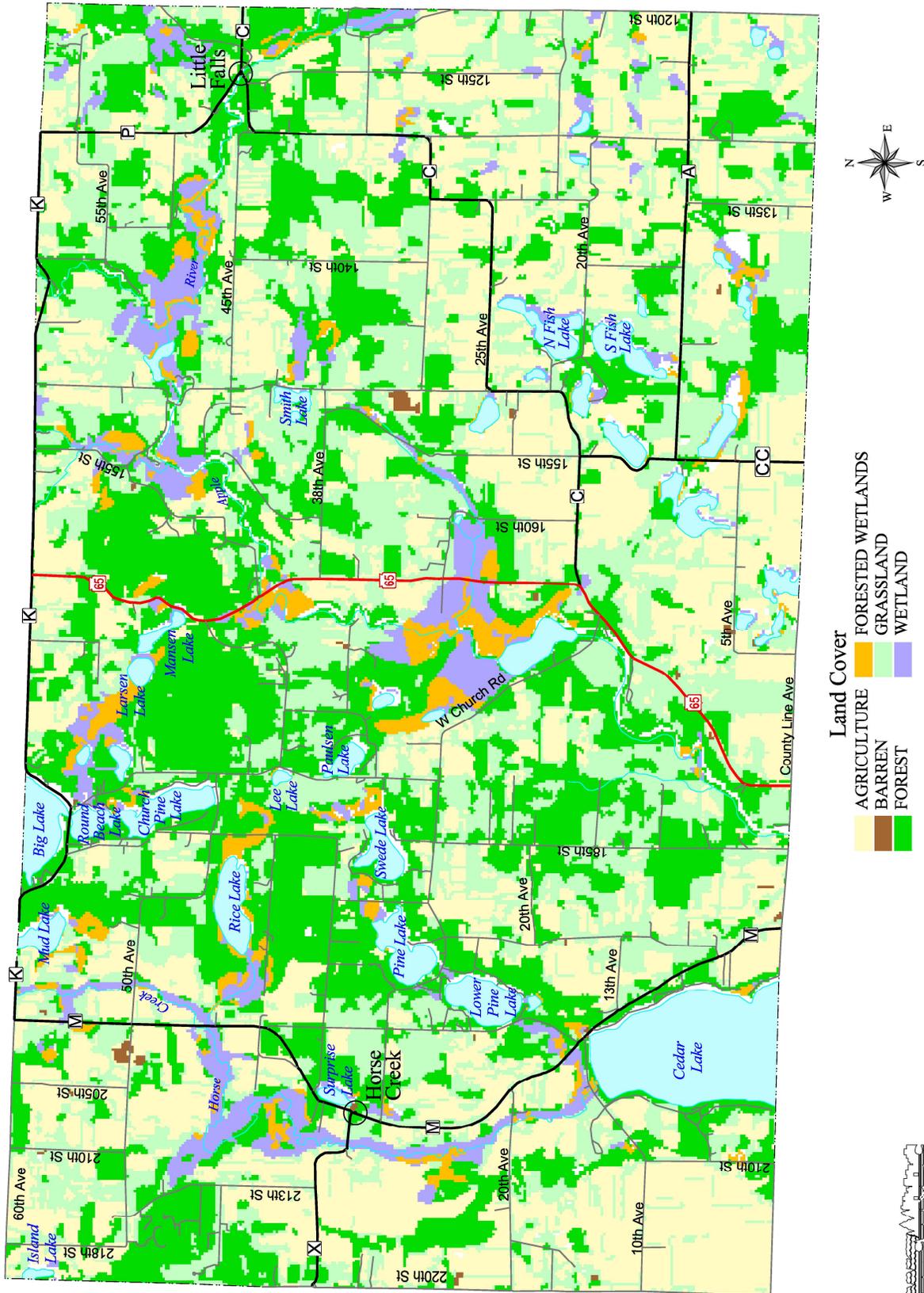
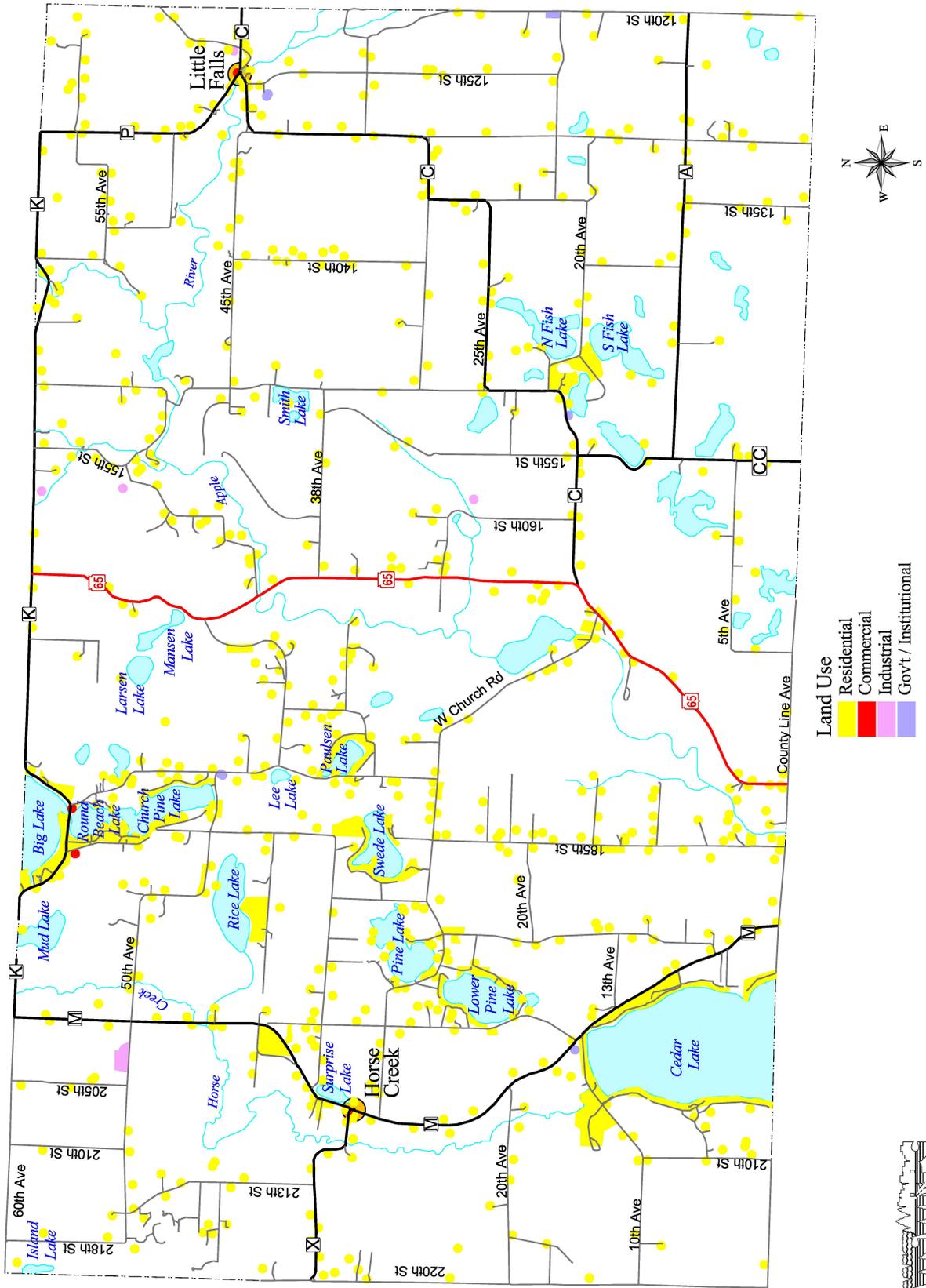


FIGURE 43 EXISTING LAND USE 2000 TOWN OF ALDEN



inventories. These discrepancies should not prevent one from interpreting the significant changes in land use that occurred. The existing land use map found in Figure 43 was developed with the 1998 Polk County Land Use Plan and shows areas of non-farm development. Evaluating the land cover map in conjunction with the existing land use map can reveal more about the use of the land in the Town.

The inventories of existing land use, as depicted in Table 60 and Figure 43, provides the Planning Commission with information on the change of development patterns in the community and assists with decisions regarding future land use. The Town can also refer to the Polk County 2003 Land Use Plan and the Town of Alden Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element for additional valuable land use information. A land use plan is necessary to direct future land uses that are compatible with a neighborhood's character and which are considered desirable to the community. An example of an undesirable disruption of existing character would be the location of a large livestock operation near an area already developed for a residential use. Nor would it be recommended to plan for industrial development that does not have the proper access to transportation routes or public facilities. These and other potential conflicts can hopefully be eliminated or minimized by a careful study of existing and proposed uses preceding planning decisions.

## **ALDEN LAND USE ISSUES**

### **Agricultural Preservation**

The Town has a history of farmland preservation dating back to the implementation of the Polk County Farmland Preservation Plan adopted in 1983. This plan made property tax credits (80% of determined credit) available to landowners practicing agriculture through contracts with the State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Exclusive Agricultural Zoning has been implemented in the Town since it adopted it in 1987. Properties in this district receive 100% of the determined property tax credit. The Town of Alden comprehensive plan addresses farmland preservation by setting aside an exclusive agriculture district and proposing methods and incentives that address landowner investment-backed expectations while reducing the amount of land lost to large lot development. Further discussion of farmland preservation in the Town is found in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.

### **Residential Development**

The Town of Alden believes it is appropriate to accept reasonable, managed residential development in the future to maintain its tax base. The comprehensive plan provides for reasonable residential development, addressing landowner investment-backed expectations, farmland protection, rural character and protection of natural resources.

### **Commercial/Industrial Development**

The Town, in the Economic Development Element, has identified the kinds of commercial and industrial development that is consistent with its rural character and the criteria to be considered when siting such uses. The Town is planning for very little commercial and virtually no industrial activity and that which occurs will be largely restricted to major roads or within rural hamlets.

## **Land Use Carrying Capacity**

The term "carrying capacity" can be used to indicate the level and type of development that a piece of land can handle. For example, certain parts of the Town are low and marshy and would be difficult and expensive to develop. Many of these lands are perhaps best left as open space because of these development restrictions. Also, the ability of the town to service new areas with necessary services has been considered in the land use planning process and it is closely associated with the concept of carrying capacity. This relates to the density of residential development and the intensity of commercial or industrial development that is deemed appropriate for a given piece of land. It is possible to develop land in the Town of Alden as all one acre minimum lot subdivisions yielding about 36 dwelling units for every 40 acres of land. However, this development pattern is not sustainable and would ruin the rural character the Town wishes to preserve. Hence, the Town is limiting the amount of development in order to ensure the land can accommodate it and that the Town's essential rural atmosphere remains.

## **LIMITATIONS TO DEVELOPMENT**

The soils and other natural resources of the Alden area have been mapped and analyzed as to their suitability for various forms of urbanization. The term "urbanization" includes the complete realm of residential, commercial, and industrial developments. Limitations to development include such things as prime agricultural land, wetlands, depth to bedrock, slope of the land, depth to water table, shrink-swell potential, corrosivity, likelihood of flood inundation, and utility as a foundation base.

Soils that have slight limitations for a given factor can be developed for almost any urban use with few, if any, difficulties. However, problems may occur as development takes place in areas classified as having moderate or severe limitations. Many of these limitations can be overcome or their undesirable effects minimized if proper measures are taken, but especially in the case of severe limitations, questions regarding the economic and environmental feasibility of such developments should be posed. The purpose of analyzing soils and other physical features, and mapping out areas according to their development limitations is not to restrict development in certain areas of the town, but rather to warn the residents and the Planning Commission of potential problems that may increase the cost of development.

Productive farmland is the land that is best suited to food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It may be cultivated land, pasture, woodland or other land, but it is not existing urban and built-up land, or water areas. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for a well managed soil to produce a sustained high-yield of crops in an economic manner. Productive farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment.

In Polk County, agricultural preservation has largely been the domain of individual landowners and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer for farmland preservation agreements and Polk County and the Town of Alden in the administration of Exclusive Agricultural Zoning. A full discussion on Agriculture as a limitation to development is found in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.

## **Limitations to Development**

Certain soil survey interpretations and physical feature inventory items provide information on individual landscape characteristics posing limitations to development. Such limitations may not be absolute but often require additional cost be incurred to address the potential negative impacts caused by developing in such areas. A complete discussion of limitations to development, including limitations to development maps in the Natural Resources Map Series, are found in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.

### *Sand and Gravel*

The Alden area has significant supplies of sand and gravel. The soils amongst glacial outwash are the most likely source for sand and gravel as the melting waters of the glacier were most active in sorting and depositing high-quality sand and gravel in this area. Where the bedrock is at or near the surface of the ground are areas which are probably most suited for quarrying stone. It is helpful to know where these deposits are so that extraction can be considered before development occurs. Development almost always precludes extraction, while these lands can often be reclaimed for development after extraction is done.

### *Surface Waters*

The surface water resources include lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, intermittent streams, and natural drainage. The major surface water features in Alden are the Apple River, Cedar Lake, Big Lake, Horse Creek, Balsam Branch and concentrations of smaller lakes between Big lake and Cedar Lake, and from the area around 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to North Fish Lake. There are many minor streams in the area including numerous unnamed creeks or drainages, and various ponds from gravel pits.

### *Shorelands*

Lands within 1000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a lake or pond and 300 feet past the ordinary high water mark or landward edge of the floodplain, which ever is greater, of a river or stream are designated shorelands. Shorelands are usually considered prime residential building areas because of their scenic beauty. However, shorelands provide valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation. Shorelands also act as buffers and thus serve to protect water quality. Wisconsin requires cities to protect and prevent the loss and erosion of these valuable resources by adopting and enforcing a shoreland ordinance. The authority to enact and enforce this provision comes from Section 59.692 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Polk County exercises shoreland zoning over these areas.

### *Floodplains*

Floodplains represent a natural component of surface waters that delineate areas where excess water exists during peak volume and flow events. Floodplain zoning is required to be implemented by counties, cities and villages by Wisconsin Statute 87.30(1). The purpose of Wisconsin Administrative Code NR116, Floodplain Management Program, is the protection of property and public investments from the effects of flooding. Federal Emergency Management Agency 100 year floodplain maps are usually used to delineate flood hazard areas.

### *Wetlands*

Wetlands are defined by State Statute as "an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions." Wetlands may be seasonal or permanent and are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants ranging from pesticides to animal wastes. Wetlands can make lakes, rivers and streams cleaner, drinking water safer and also provide valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation. In addition, some wetlands can also provide the replenishment of groundwater supplies. Groundwater discharge is common from wetlands and can be important in maintaining stream flows, especially during dry months. Groundwater discharged through wetlands can contribute to high quality water in lakes and streams.

The federal government and the WisDNR restrict development in wetlands through Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and NR103, respectively. Local governments often fail to notify landowners and developers of these restrictions. Wetlands can be damaged, resulting in costly fines and/or restoration. The Town of Alden and Polk County make concerted efforts to be sensitive to wetland issues due to their prevalence and location within the Town.

Even though the DNR has an inventory of wetlands of two acres and larger, all wetlands, no matter how small, which meet the state definition, are subject to DNR regulations. Even if state regulations do not apply, federal regulations may, making it necessary to review all wetlands against these regulations before their disturbance. Particular attention must be given wetlands within shorelands to ensure protection from development. Site investigation is required to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.

### *Steep Slopes*

Steep slopes are any area of where the gradient of the land is 12 percent or greater (each percent of slope is measured as one unit in elevation for every 100 horizontal units). One category of steep slope is 12% to less than 20% slope and consisting of any soil type. It has been demonstrated that 12% slope is a threshold at which impacts from development become apparent. To allow development on these slopes one should consider direct runoff into streams or rivers and follow state approved construction site erosion control standards, and the institution of best management practices, monitoring and maintenance to control on-site runoff and pollution. Steep slopes of 20% or greater are subject to erosion impacts even from slight land cover disturbance. Development on these slopes results in high construction costs and severe erosion with resultant negative impacts to surface waters. Therefore, development on slopes 20% or greater should be prohibited.

### *Depth to Bedrock*

The extreme of this condition results in rock outcroppings; however, shallow depth to bedrock usually creates problems for excavation during certain development activities.

### *Depth to Groundwater*

When groundwater is close to the surface of the ground, development activity can be curtailed or severely limited. These areas are often associated with perched water tables, wetlands, wet,

poorly-drained soils or thin soils over saturated bedrock. Well driller's logs can provide information on the level of these groundwater constituents.

#### *Limitations for On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems*

Septic tank absorption fields are subsurface systems of perforated pipe which distribute effluent from septic tanks to the soil. Soil between 18 inches and 6 feet is evaluated for properties that affect absorption of effluent and construction and operation of the system. Properties that affect absorption are permeability, depth to bedrock and water table, and susceptibility to flooding.

The layout and construction of a system is affected by soil conditions related to slope, erosion potential, lateral seepage, and downslope flow of effluent. Soils with characteristic large rocks and boulders present additional problems, and increase the costs of septic system construction. The state requirements for septic system siting are specified in Chapter COMM 83 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. This code relies heavily on the ability of the soil to efficiently absorb the effluent discharged from the septic system drainfield. However, the NRCS soil interpretations for septic tank absorption fields consider most excessively drained soils occurring over fractured bedrock or high water tables a limitation to septic system development because effluent in these situations can be readily transported to the groundwater. Hence, even though the siting of septic systems in some areas may be allowed by state code, doing so has the potential for threatening groundwater quality. It is the new on-site wastewater treatment and disposal technologies that COMM 83 now allows for adequate protections in areas with limitations for conventional septic systems.

#### *Limitations for Dwellings with Basements*

Dwellings for this interpretation are no taller than three stories and are supported by foundation footings in undisturbed soil. The capacity to support load and resist settling under load, and the ease of excavation affect the soil rating for dwellings. Wetness, susceptibility to flooding, density, plasticity, texture, and shrink-swell potential are soil properties that affect the capacity to support load. Soil properties which affect excavation are wetness, slope, depth to bedrock, and the content of stones and rocks. Soils with severe limitations preclude basements in most instances. Soils with moderate limitations may preclude basement development in some instances. However, it is more likely that these soils will result in an increased cost for basement construction.

#### *Limitations for Small Commercial Buildings*

Single story, small commercial building development is limited by soil factors related to steep slope, wetness, susceptibility to flooding, density, plasticity, texture, and shrink-swell potential. These are the same factors which affect the construction of dwellings without basements and this interpretation can be used to evaluate these dwellings as well. Again, severe limitations do not necessarily preclude small commercial building development, but will add to its cost.

## **The Impacts of Development on Environmental Resources with Limiting Factors**

### *Surface Waters*

Several of the previously described resources are involved in the impacts of development on surface water quality and quantity. Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, Streams, and Intermittent Waterways and Natural Drainageways; Wetlands; Shorelands; Floodplains; Steep Slopes; and, Wildlife and Fisheries Areas are directly affected by surface water impacts.

Urbanization, development and other human activities disrupt the natural course of water as it moves across a watershed. Removing vegetation and constructing impervious surfaces such as roads, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks and rooftops greatly increases the amount and rate of stormwater runoff. As this increased stormwater runoff crosses the urbanized or developed landscape it also picks up contaminants and sediments which affect water quality.

In rivers and streams the changes brought by development are: increased water level fluctuations manifested by lower base flow and increased stormwater flow which can lead to flooding; decreased oxygen levels; increased water temperatures; greater channel erosion; muddying of waters from increased sediment; and, pollution from fertilizers, pesticides, debris, salt, oil, grease and toxic substances. In effect, urbanization and development can turn a clear, cool, brisk-running trout stream which does not breach its banks every spring into a muddy, warm, slow-moving stream which swells over its embankment with every heavy rain.

Lakes, ponds and reservoirs can also be impacted by development. All lakes decline in water quality over time if left in their natural state. However, development can accelerate the decline in lake water quality so what once took thousands of years can occur in decades. As with rivers and streams, the detrimental impacts from development to lakes are caused by stormwater runoff, erosion and pollution.

Shorelands and the vegetation they contain are the natural buffer which helps protect surface waters from overland runoff and contaminants. If they are disturbed their ability to slow runoff and filter contaminants is reduced. Shoreland is also critical habitat for a variety of plants and animals and preserves the aesthetic quality of water bodies if left undisturbed.

Development within areas which are prone to flooding can cause adverse impacts on not only the waterway but also on the development itself. Altering the floodplain landscape by filling or building levees or structures can exacerbate flooding conditions. The filling of wetlands in floodprone areas has been proven to increase the likelihood of flooding. These alterations divert water from where it once moved through or was stored in during spring runoff or storm events, which usually increases the area of the floodplain. The accumulation of development in floodplains can cause more severe flooding in other areas within the floodplain or newly created floodplain. In addition, development within floodplains is always subject to damage from flooding.

Development on steep slopes causes erosion by introducing impervious surfaces to areas where water does not infiltrate readily. Increased erosion impacts surface waters by increasing runoff quantity and the sediment it carries. Development on these slopes results in high construction costs as special construction techniques must be employed for structures, hillsides are cut and filled, and attempts are made to stabilize hillsides through building terracing. Terraces may

appear to stabilize these slopes, but if they are not rigorously maintained the forces of gravity and water eventually deteriorate them.

*Groundwater*

Groundwater can be adversely affected when contaminants are released into or spilled upon the ground. Some factors influencing an aquifer's susceptibility to pollution are depth to groundwater and bedrock, type of bedrock, sub-surface permeability, and the soil's ability to attenuate (lessen the impact of) pollutants. High-risk activities, such as industries using hazardous materials, pose serious threats to groundwater and should be kept out of the immediate recharge areas of public water supply wells, and where practical, private wells also. High concentrations of septic systems also can pollute groundwater with nitrates.

*Wetlands*

Development in wetlands by either draining or filling removes their natural functions of storing and filtering pollutants, cleaning lakes, rivers and streams, making drinking water safer, providing valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation, replenishing groundwater supplies and reducing flooding, and groundwater discharge from wetlands maintains stream flows, especially during dry months.

**POPULATION AND LAND USE PROJECTIONS**

**Population Projections**

Since the main objective of planning is to serve people, the Alden Planning Commission needed to have some ideas concerning the number of residents that the community will be planning for up to twenty years in the future. Population forecasts will provide guidance to the town in the determination of the quantity and quality of public facilities and services, housing units, and developable land area that will be required during the planning period. The population projections for the plan were presented in the Issues and Opportunities Element and are repeated here in Table 61.

**TABLE 61**  
**POPULATION PROJECTION**  
*TOWN OF ALDEN*

1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2005 Estimate	2010 Projection	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection
1,862	2,133	2,615	2,873	3,102	3,331	3,560	3,789	4,019

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The Wisconsin Department of Administration has developed population projections for all Wisconsin communities. The methodology used has derived small-area projections from county projections that are in turn derived from a State of Wisconsin projection. However, these projections are considered too moderate based on local factors and do not run past the year 2025. Hence, the table shows a projection for the year 2030 based on a more optimistic assessment of the previous trends.

## Use of Population Projections

Population projections can be applied to a wide variety of planning related issues to get an estimate of future conditions and needs. It is important to emphasize that the population projections prepared for this plan, like any other projections, must be considered predictions only, as unforeseen events might change the picture at any given time and make adjustments and revisions in the projections necessary. There are certain reasonable scenarios that can be considered which would alter our view of these projections. If the population projections are used with this in mind, they can be useful to the Town Board, the school board, the local business community, the public library, and many others.

One example of how the projections can be used is to project the number of new housing units that will be needed to meet future demands through the planning period. An assumption is made that, by 2030, there will be 2.4 persons per housing unit. This figure is based on past trends and existing conditions. There were 1,235 dwellings units in the Town in 2000, of which 973 were occupied for an occupancy rate of 78.8 percent. However, according to independent household projections, occupancy rates are likely to increase to 89.7 percent due to the conversion of seasonal homes to permanent residences. Hence by 2030, there likely will be 1,867 dwelling units ( $4,019 / 2.4 = 1,675$  and  $1,675 / .897 = 1,867$ ). This means that there will be an expected net increase of 632 dwelling units between 2000 and 2030, an average of almost 22 dwelling units a year.

Taking this example one step further, forecasts of future residential land requirements can also be computed. By assuming a gross density of .304 dwelling units per acre, or approximately one dwelling unit per 3.29 acres, (projected overall residential density or development standard) and the projection series, an estimate of 6,141 acres of residential land will be required to meet anticipated future needs ( $1,867 / 0.304 = 6,141$ ) by 2030. This is about 2,945 acres more than is presently being used for residential use (almost double the land currently in residential use) and should probably be viewed as a "maximum" requirement, depending on the density of and market for new residential development.

Similar forecasts of future needs can be made for other major land use categories such as commercial, industrial, or recreational, based on past trends and accepted standards. The projections can be used to determine anticipated pressures to be placed on the community's services and facilities, and to help the Town schedule capital improvements to these and other facilities. All indications are that there will be ample land in each major category to accommodate anticipated growth in population. The projections have been used in developing the planned land use map.

One thing that the projections do not reveal is the composition, particularly the age structure, of the local population in the future. This is primarily due to a lack of updated and reliable statistics. In recent decades, the mature sector of the population has been dominant in the community, and in the future, the elderly are expected to continue to represent a large percentage of the total population. However, it is difficult to project exact numbers of people by age group.

Although the primary reason for developing a land use element is to prepare for anticipated growth and development, there are other more specific purposes for going through the planning process. These include the protection of public health and welfare, preparing for and facilitating economic development, protection of property values, to obtain and encourage citizen

participation in the local government, and to maintain the quality of life presently being enjoyed in the community. The land use element serves as the base upon which the County’s zoning ordinance for the Town and the Town’s subdivision regulations are developed and updated.

### Land Use Projections

As seen above the population projections combined with forecasted household size, housing occupancy rates and a derived development standard can produce a projection of residential land use. Table 62 presents land use projections for residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural land use classes. These forecasts can give the planning commission an idea of the amount of land that is likely to be needed for each land use class in the future or provides a basis for prescriptive land use allocation by the Town.

The American Public Health Association recommends that ten acres of recreational open space and three acres of playground space be set aside for each 1,000 people in a community. Considering the rural and open character of Alden, these figures should be viewed only as minimums. Alden does not meet this recommended standard, but new parklands, open space and recreational facilities have been allowed for in the plan as opportunities and funding allow.

**TABLE 62**  
**LAND USE PROJECTIONS, TOTAL ACRES, FIVE-YEAR INCREMENTS 2005 TO 2030**  
*TOWN OF ALDEN*

	2000	2005 Estimate	2010 Projection	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection
Residential	2,631	3,196	3,816	4,416	5,016	5,596	6,141
Commercial	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
Industrial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agricultural*	18,739	16,294	15,404	14,524	13,694	12,912	12,174

Source: Town of Alden Land Use Element \*based on assessment data trends

### PLANNED LAND USE MAP

Figure 45 is a map that shows the recommended planned land use for the community for the next twenty to twenty-five years. The planning areas show the predominate land use intended and should not be confused with zoning categories. However, there may be instances where there are other uses not of the predominate type. Those uses are appropriate to persist within the permitted use and non-conforming use mechanisms provided in the zoning ordinance. In addition, some areas also have a general description of the intent for the types of uses in an area. The future designated use of those lands will be evaluated by the Plan Commission and rendered based on the most appropriate use of the land and compatibility with surrounding uses. Ultimate use of lands are to be determined by site level considerations, such as environmental factors, current use, current regulations, permitted uses, use of neighboring properties, economic trends, and consistency with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

### ALDEN LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

The Land Use Element sets forth proposed guidelines for the future development of the town, formulated by the Planning Commission. The Land Use Element is intended to cover a period extending from the present to the year 2030. It is felt that this period is long enough to provide

the necessary perspective for the future, while remaining short enough to be relevant to the residents of the town and to the town officials who will be called upon to implement the plan.

The Land Use Element itself is comprised of two distinct but interrelated components. The primary means of expressing the Land Use Element is the Planned Land Use Map, which is included in this chapter. However, the map cannot and should not stand alone as a planning tool. Figure 45, the Planned Land Use Map, is supplemented and explained by the Goals and Policies that also follow.

The Planned Land Use Map is intended to be a graphic description of the desired pattern of land use showing the general location, character and intensity of land uses for the foreseeable future. The map itself is not intended to be a rigid end-product document, but a necessary and useful planning tool in helping the community clarify and better evaluate issues and alternatives and thereby formulate policies which will best achieve local objectives in an effective but flexible manner. The map will also help to illustrate the implications of related policies.

Complementary to the map is a set of Goals and Policies. Technically, the Goals and Policies are written descriptions of what is depicted on the map. These written statements are necessary to provide more detail about the map's intents and to provide some constant guidelines that the town can follow to achieve the desired land use results. The Goals and Policies, like the map, are intended to be flexible and reasonable. It would be wrong to expect more out of the Land Use Element (both the map and the written statements) than is anticipated because of this intended flexibility. The plan is really only as effective and meaningful as the town's officials and the local residents ability to digest and interpret it.

It is strongly recommended that this element be reviewed from time to time for any changes that may be required to improve it. Change, in the form of new conditions, assumptions, desires, goals and needs of the community, will make revisions of both map and policies necessary. It is recommended that a formal re-evaluation of the land use plan be made at least once every five years.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to listing the Goals and Policies of the element. Goals and Policies have been developed by the Planning Commission for three major policy areas: rural character, open space and natural resources, and land management.

### **Development Scenario Policies**

The development scenarios for the comprehensive plan involve the general planning areas found on the Planned Land Use Map. The Planning Areas include Exclusive Agricultural, Agricultural Residential, Rural Residential, Rural Hamlet and Business. These planning areas are not zoning districts, although they may physically closely match the current zoning. The prescriptions for desired development in these planning areas are found in the following descriptions and rationale and in the land use element policies. While the Planning Areas designate general areas with specific characteristics, there may be areas within other Planning Areas with those same characteristics. The Plan Commission and Town Board will use the mapped Planning Areas as a guide to apply development prescriptions. However, they will play close attention to the performance standards/characteristics (see the descriptions and rationale below) when determining the appropriate development scenario for any particular property considered for development. Hence, while a property may be in the Agricultural Residential Planning Area, the

land it holds may be prime farmland and not highly erodible; in which case the Town may consider the property to be Exclusive Agricultural, particularly if it has a history of viable farm operations. In contrast, if a property in the Agricultural Residential Planning Area contains mostly highly erodible land, has not had a history of farming, is being impacted by existing non-farm development, is adjacent to or within a rural hamlet or other area of relatively high density, and development on it will not significantly impact surrounding agriculture or environmental features, the Town may consider the property to have the characteristics of the Rural Hamlet Planning Area and apply an appropriate development prescription. So, a Planning Area can be applied to a property by a location on the Planned Land Use Map or by performance standards and characteristics defined for a Planning Area that fit the property. Following are the descriptions of, and the rationale for, the Planning Areas:

TABLE 63 <i>LOT SIZE AND DENSITY EXAMPLES</i>	Agricultural Residential			Rural Residential		
	Minimum lot size, per dwelling unit	Average size of all lots, per dwelling unit	Approximate density, i.e. number of dwelling units per 40 acres *	Minimum lot size, per dwelling unit	Average size of all lots, per dwelling unit	Approximate density, i.e. number of dwelling units per 40 acres *
Land division type and number of dwelling units per lot						
Subdivision, one dwelling unit per lot	2 acres	5 acres	7	2 acres	5 acres	7
Subdivision, more than one dwelling unit per lot	2 acres	5 acres	7	1.5 acres	3.75 acres	9
Minor subdivision, one dwelling unit per lot	2 acres	--	--	2 acres	--	--
Minor subdivision, more than one dwelling unit per lot	2 acres	--	--	1.5 acres	--	--
Conservation design, one dwelling unit per lot	1 acre	2 acres	9	1 acre	2 acres	9
Conservation design, more than one dwelling unit per lot	1 acre	2 acres	9	0.75 acres	1.5 acres	12
Land division type and condominium unit (condo-unit) types **	Minimum acreage per condo-unit	Average acreage per condo-unit	Approximate density, i.e. number of condo-units per 40 acres *	Minimum acreage per condo-unit	Average acreage per condo-unit	Approximate density, i.e. number of condo-units per 40 acres *
Condominium plat, detached condominium units	2 acres	5 acres	7	2 acres	5 acres	7
Condominium plat, condominium units combined into buildings with more than one unit	2 acres	5 acres	7	1.5 acres	3.75 acres	9
Conservation design condominium plat, detached condominium units	1 acre +	2 acres +	9	1 acre +	2 acres +	9
Conservation design condominium plat, condominium units combined into buildings with more than one unit	1 acre +	2 acres +	9	0.75 acres +	1.5 acres +	12

\* depending on the area of road right-of-way and development limitations

\*\* one condominium unit = one dwelling unit for density calculation purposes

+ area not included in required common open space

Conservation design subdivisions must contain 50% minimum open space

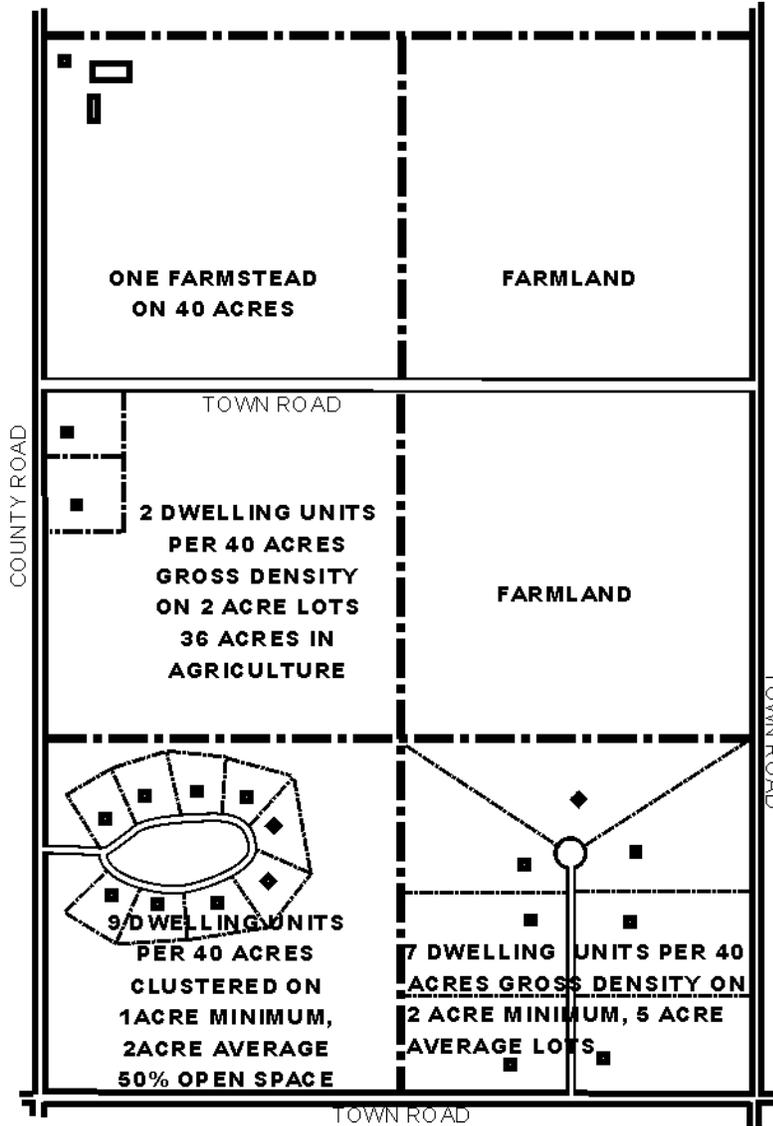
### *Exclusive Agricultural*

The Exclusive Agricultural Planning Area encompasses the areas of the Town whereby extensive analysis the Town has determined to be the agricultural production area of the Town. There is a detailed discussion of farmland protection, including the criteria for exclusive agriculture, in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.

### *Agricultural Residential*

The Agricultural Residential Planning Area is essentially those agricultural and rural lands that

can accommodate limited non-farm development due to location, soils characteristics and relatively low intensity of agricultural operations. It is characterized by highly erodible soils, small farms, horses, pastures, alternative agriculture and residential development that does not detract from the area's rural and agricultural character. Table 63 presents the residential density characteristics of this planning area. Figure 44 shows a graphic representation of development.



**Figure 44 Development in the Agricultural Residential Planning Area**

*Rural Residential*

The Rural Residential Planning Area is essentially those rural lands that can accommodate more non-farm development. These are areas next to existing subdivisions or in areas of low impact on agriculture, natural resources and the transportation network. Any new lands considered for rural residential development must be rezoned to, and conform with, the Residence District of the Polk County Zoning Ordinance. Table 63 presents the residential density characteristics of this planning area.

*Rural Hamlet*

The Rural Hamlet Planning Area comprises the unincorporated villages of Little Falls and Horse Creek. These areas may be appropriate for denser residential development with a mix of other uses complementary with and characteristic of the small New England village.

*Business*

The Town of Alden recognizes the importance of commercial development for enhancing its tax base, creating employment and providing needed goods and services to Town residents. However, the types of commercial and industrial development are strictly prescribed in the Economic Development Element and the Land Use Policies. There is a need for local serving

businesses and those in the tourism trade that can be deemed innocuous and consistent with the Town's rural character.

## **Land Use Goals and Policies**

### **MAINTAIN THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE TOWN**

#### **Agricultural Goals**

- 1. The protection and maintenance of agricultural activities as the dominant, highest and best use where viable farm operations on the best agricultural soils in the Town have historically occurred.*
- 2. The continuation of the family farm and accommodation of diversity in future agricultural operations.*

#### **Agricultural Policies**

1. Agriculture will be recognized by the Town as the preferred land use in areas of the Town that have historically supported viable farm operations on the best agricultural soils in the Town.
2. Limit the location and density of non-farm development in the exclusive agricultural planning area to one new residence per 40 acres and off of productive agricultural lands.
3. In agricultural areas that can accommodate limited non-farm development due to location, soil characteristics and relatively low intensity of agricultural operations, limit the location and density of non-farm development in accordance with the density standards prescribed in the Town of Alden Land Division Ordinance.
4. To protect agricultural interests from public complaints associated with routine agricultural operations, covenants, deed restrictions or other legal instruments will be applied to all new residential developments in or near the agricultural areas stating that the new lot created for residential purposes is in or near a pre-existing agricultural area where agricultural uses predominate and are favored by the Town of Alden, and owners of said lot are forewarned they are moving into a pre-existing agricultural area with its associated, accepted normal agricultural practices, including but not limited to, animal and plant husbandry, broad hours of operation, farm equipment traffic and farming debris on roads, farm equipment lights, odors, dust, smoke, noise, and manure, sludge, chemical, pesticide and herbicide application.

#### **Agricultural Residential Goal**

- 3. To maintain the Town of Alden as a high quality rural community, residential development will be orderly, well planned, and will complement and not detract from the rural, agricultural and natural resource characteristics of the Town.*

#### **Agricultural Residential Policies**

5. Residential development in the town shall be limited to 2 acre minimum/5 acre average lots for a gross density of seven dwelling units except for developments using conservation design

which can have a gross density of 9 dwelling units per 40 acres with 1 acre minimum/2 acre average lots and contain at least 50% of the site is in common open space. Higher densities may be considered in the Town's rural hamlets and lakeshores if it is deemed not to detract from the Town's rural character or harm environmentally sensitive features.

6. The Town of Alden will actively participate in a subdivision review process in order to manage the creation of new lots and the site-specific impacts associated with residential development. The Town will systematically receive, review and act on certified survey maps and plats submitted through the Town of Alden Land Division Ordinance.

7. The Town of Alden will actively participate in the review of, and act on, proposed rezoning of land in the Town in order to manage the land use change and impacts associated with the proposal. The Town Plan Commission will systematically receive and review rezoning proposals and make recommendation to the Town Board. The Town Board will determine whether it needs to exercise its statutory authority to pass resolutions opposing rezoning proposals.

8. Small clusters of homes will be encouraged that set aside substantial open space and reduce development's visual impact and impacts on agricultural and natural resources.

9. Manufactured homes shall be allowed as a single family dwelling unit anywhere in the Town where single family residences are allowed. Such manufactured homes must be HUD certified and labeled under the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 (U.S.C. Title 42, Chapter 70), be at least 24 feet in width and length, be set on and anchored to an approved foundation, have a pitched roof of 3:12 pitch or steeper, and have roof eaves that are enclosed with fascia and vented soffit that extend at least eight inches beyond the exterior walls.

10. Mobile homes or manufactured homes that are not HUD certified and labeled under the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 (U.S.C. Title 42, Chapter 70), do not have at least 24 feet in width and length, are not set on and anchored to an approved foundation, do not have have a pitched roof of 3:12 pitch or steeper, and do not have roof eaves that are enclosed with fascia and vented soffit that extend at least eight inches beyond the exterior walls, are considered sub-standard and shall not be used for human habitation or business activities.

11. The Town will restrict mobile home parks and large lot subdivisions as these uses are deemed to detract from its rural character.

### **Rural Commercial/Industrial Goals**

***4. The development of limited, local-serving commercial that enhances the daily living of town residents and the rural character of the Town, except for retail and services along specific major road corridors and appropriate commercial establishments in unincorporated villages.***

### **Rural Commercial Policies**

12. Commercial development will be encouraged to occur in designated areas planned for that

use, as identified by stated commercial land use intentions in this plan and the Town of Alden Planned Land Use Map.

13. New commercial development and businesses will be consistent with community values and primarily serve the needs of local residents.

14. Determine commercial establishments appropriate for development in unincorporated villages through a study with community participation.

15. Retail, services and low-impact light industrial activities are appropriate along certain areas of Highways 65 and County Roads where they will not adversely impact other surrounding uses.

## **PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND UNIQUE NATURAL FEATURES**

### **Open Space and Natural Features Goal**

*5. Maintain the quality of the natural resources within the Town of Alden and protect those areas that might be negatively impacted or where environmental factors pose severe limitations.*

### **Open Space and Natural Features Policies**

16. The Town will consider the location of, and impact on, open space and scenic views when reviewing development proposals and encourage development that is sensitive to those characteristics of the Town.

17. The Town will consider the location of and impact on environmentally sensitive lands (wetlands, steep slopes 20 percent or greater, shorelands and floodplains) when reviewing development proposals.

18. To protect lakes, rivers and streams, runoff from development should be managed on site so that there is no more runoff leaving the site during and after development than was leaving before the development of the site.

19. The Town will consider doing outdoor recreation planning to pursue funding opportunities to create parks, expand public access to lakes and rivers, and explore possibilities for trails.

## **MANAGE LAND USE IN THE INTEREST OF THE TOWN**

### **Land Management Goals**

*6. To represent the community's long-term interest, the Town of Alden will be actively engaged in ongoing issues related to planning and land use development.*

*7. To help maintain a high quality rural environment, the Town will encourage development that is orderly, well planned, and consistent with community values.*

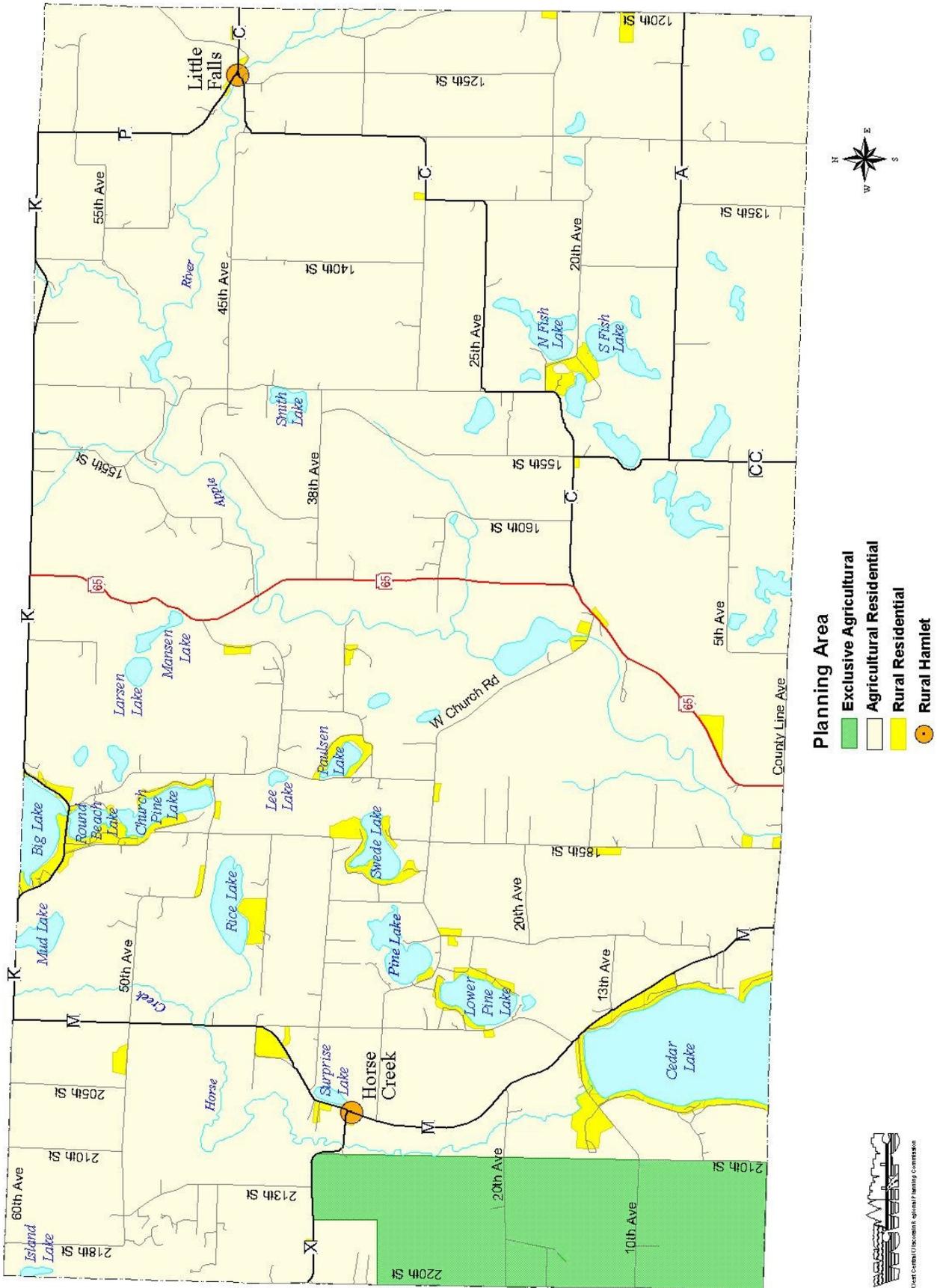
*8. In order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and address the adverse impacts of nuisances and certain land uses on surrounding properties, the Town will evaluate and adopt land use controls and programs that meet the community's needs.*

***9. Encourage Town residents to share a common pride in the appearance of their property and in the appearance of the Town as a whole.***

**Land Management Policies**

20. The Town will use its comprehensive plan as a guide in addressing ongoing public decisions related to future development.
21. The Plan Commission will systematically review all land divisions submitted to the town and make recommendations to the Town Board based on the comprehensive plan, the land division ordinance and the facts of the proposal.
22. The Plan Commission will review all development proposals involving re-zoning of land and make recommendations to the Town Board based on the comprehensive plan and the facts of the proposal.
23. The Town will support State standards for the location, operation and monitoring of large-scale livestock agricultural operations. The Town will encourage Polk County to amend the zoning ordinance for compliance with State rules on large-scale livestock agricultural operations while at the same time providing for appropriate local control of the siting of such facilities.
24. The Town will discourage littering, the dumping of refuse and garbage, and the stockpiling and disposal of recyclables. All items that are recyclable, as defined in State law, must be recycled through the Polk County Recycling Program.
25. The Town will implement a permit process for all private dumps, junkyards, demolition sites or accumulations of unused materials under continuous operation, used to dispose of or store refuse, garbage, automobiles or machinery, demolition waste or accumulated unused materials generated from a Town residence, Town business, or outside parties. This permit process will be used to reduce negative impacts and educate residents about the liabilities of these practices and to monitor their location.
26. Metallic mining (dredge, shaft, pit or strip mining for the recovery of metallic elements or minerals containing metallic elements) should not be allowed in the Town. The Town will evaluate its legal authority to control the location and operation of metallic mines within the Town and consider adoption of an ordinance exercising such authority.
27. The Town will support Polk County standards for the location, operation and land reclamation of non-metallic (sand, gravel, and quarry) mining.
28. In the interest of limiting Town taxes, through fees the landowner and developer will bear the full costs of land use management and permit administration, including plan review and site inspection.
29. In the interest of limiting Town taxes, the landowner and developer will bear the full public cost of project development including capital expenses associated with road or infrastructure development, and measurable capital costs necessary to support accelerated Town services.

FIGURE 45 PLANNED LAND USE TOWN OF ALDEN



## SUMMARY

Future land use in the town has been divided into four major types for the purposes of the Planned Land Use Map. There are seven planned land use categories: exclusive agricultural; residential agricultural; rural residential; rural hamlet; business; conservancy; and public/institutional. Goal and Policy statements have been developed for the three policy areas and supplement planned land uses listed above. Together the Planned Land Use Map and the Goals and Policies comprise the impact of the Land Use Element.

Many things have been taken into consideration in the process of developing this Land Use Element. First, the existing patterns of land use and current land use trends were noted. To a large extent, land use patterns are expected to remain much the same as they are now, as the Town has a well established development management process and standards. There is really little need for preparing a plan such as this if the local leadership does not accept the assumption that the town can actually do something about its future development -- rather than letting things happen as they may or be controlled by outside forces. The Alden Planning Commission and Town Board have obviously taken a positive approach in this aspect.

Next, the anticipated future growth of the Town's population and economy was considered. The population projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration forecast moderate growth for the local population through the planning period and the assumption for this plan is that somewhat faster growth is expected. It is also expected that planning efforts of the Town will control commercial and industrial land uses to maintain the Town's rural character. This means, of course, that land of various use types will be needed to accommodate this growth. How much land of each type will be needed has been determined based on trends and anticipated future conditions.

Also taken into consideration were conflicts between neighboring land use types and the carrying capacity of the land. For instance, it is not wise to plan for new residential development that would be downwind of a large livestock operation. Nor would it be recommended to plan for industrial development that does not have the proper access to transportation routes. These and other potential conflicts can hopefully be eliminated or minimized through the land use planning process. The term "carrying capacity" can be used to indicate the level and type of development that a piece of land can handle. For example, certain parts of the Town are low and marshy and would be difficult and expensive to develop. Many of these lands are perhaps best left as open space because of these development restrictions. Also, the ability of the town to service new areas with necessary services has been considered in the land use planning process and it is closely associated with the concept of carrying capacity.

The relationship of the Town of Alden to the Towns of Farmington, Garfield, Lincoln, Black Brook, Osceola, Stanton and Star Prairie, and Polk County is very important. In addition, the Town is not necessarily isolated from nearby incorporated communities such as Star Prairie, Osceola, Amery and New Richmond. Implementation of the plan should involve close cooperation of the town government with these jurisdictions. The coordination of the plan with neighboring areas and in dealing with regional issues and conflicts are addressed in an Intergovernmental Cooperation Element of the Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan.

## ***THE IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT***

The comprehensive plan provides a design for attainment of the goals and objectives set forth by the community. In a practical sense, however, the plan is not complete until the steps to implement that plan are identified. After formal adoption of the comprehensive plan, realization of the plan will require long-term dedication to the underlying objectives by the Town officials concerned with its implementation. Therefore, the adoption of the plan is only the beginning of a series of required actions necessary to achieve the objectives expressed in this plan. The plan, and in particular the land use element, should be used as a guide for making decisions concerning land development in the Town.

To achieve the community's vision, the Comprehensive Plan must be put into action. This section identifies a timeline of specific actions to be completed in order to achieve the Plan's vision, goals, and objectives and policies. This includes a description of how each of the Plan's elements is integrated and consistent with each other.

The Comprehensive Plan must also be a flexible, dynamic document that considers or allows for change in the community. Plan monitoring and evaluation lets the Town gauge progress towards achieving the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and monitors progress as the Town faces the challenge of inevitable change. Plan amendments and updates may be required or suggested by the information gathered by monitoring and evaluation.

## **REGULATORY MECHANISMS**

### **Zoning**

Zoning is probably the single most commonly used legal device available for implementing the land use plan of a community. Zoning is essentially a means of insuring that land uses in a community are compatible with one another with regard to the type, location, and spacing of development. Zoning regulates the development density in each area so that property can be adequately serviced by such governmental facilities as streets, schools, recreation, and utility systems. Zoning can direct new growth into appropriate areas and protect existing property by requiring development to meet acceptable development standards.

The Town of Alden has adopted Polk County Comprehensive Land Use Ordinance, more commonly known as the Zoning Ordinance. The existing zoning ordinance and map have been periodically updated since their adoption, however, there has not been a comprehensive revision of the zoning ordinance undertaken since it was adopted by Polk County in 1971. Because of changes that have occurred during that time, which not only include changing land uses in the County, but also changing conditions related to the economy, public facilities, housing needs, and the development of multiple local government comprehensive plans, a revision of the zoning ordinance and map should be done. Changes to the zoning ordinance should be a collaborative process between the County and Towns to coincide with the policies and maps of the land use elements presented in the completed comprehensive plans of the Towns. The review and update of the zoning ordinance is the next logical step to follow the comprehensive planning process,

and the Planning Commission has the primary responsibility for making recommendations regarding desired changes in zoning for the Town.

### **Subdivision Regulations**

Subdivision regulation enables a community to control the subdivision of land by a developer to ensure that development patterns are consistent with community standards. They can also ensure the adequacy of existing and planned public utilities and facilities such as roads, onsite wastewater treatment systems and schools to accommodate new growth. In addition, environmental protection considerations can be made during the development process. The Town of Alden adopted a subdivision ordinance in 1994 and updated it in 2005 to include environmental review and conservation design provisions. The subdivision ordinance also affects residential density in the Town and is more restrictive than what is allowed under County Zoning.

### **Nuisance Ordinances**

The Town has enacted Village Powers which gives it authority to act to protect the public health, safety and welfare of Town residents. There are many activities that have negative impacts that eventually become apparent by adversely affecting residents in the community. If the Town recognizes that something must be done about a particular activity, it can develop ordinances to address the negative impacts that are associated with the activity. The Town can develop a rationale for addressing the issue, possibly licensing the activity and controlling it with actions necessary to mitigate its negative impacts.

### **Building and Housing Codes**

Building codes are sets of regulations that establish standards for the construction of buildings to ensure that new and altered buildings will be safe. New and renovated structures must conform to the state building, plumbing and electrical codes. The Town has a building inspector who ensures that these codes are followed. Housing codes define standards for how a dwelling unit is to be used and maintained after it is built. A housing or occupancy code helps to keep housing from becoming dilapidated and neighborhoods from becoming blighted. The Town should periodically review the need for a local housing or occupancy codes in light of changing conditions and be prepared to act if the community determines such regulations are necessary.

### **Aesthetic Controls**

Aesthetic controls influence the appearance of a community and contribute to its overall character. Ordinances that address the placement of signs in a community, or help to preserve historic places and maintain a particular design appearance are considered aesthetic controls. A *sign ordinance* restricts the type, size and location of signs within a community. It also often restricts the types of materials that can be used to construct signs. *Historic preservation ordinances* are intended to protect historic buildings and districts. The Town of Alden has no listed historic landmarks requiring such protection at this time. However, there are cultural features of the Town that may need consideration after implementation of the limited cultural resources activities declared in the plan. *Design review* involves the review and regulation of the design of buildings and their sites. Design review is often included as part of zoning and subdivision ordinances. Its application is to protect communities from development which

would detract from the appearance of the community and reduce property values. In the future, the Town may need to consider the use of the appropriate aesthetic controls, in combination with zoning and subdivision ordinances, to enhance the community's appearance and property values.

## **LOCAL ACTION ROLES**

### **The Town Board**

Alden's growth and development has been and will continue to be substantially influenced by governmental decisions. An important step in plan implementation is the formal adoption of the comprehensive plan by the Town Board. The Town Board is assigned the legislative power to adopt the comprehensive plan and implement development regulations and programs. Upon such adoption, the comprehensive plan becomes the official guide for decision-making by Town officials. As chief policy makers, the Board is also responsible for establishing and actively sponsoring a continuing planning and development management program.

### **The Planning Commission**

The Alden Planning Commission's role in carrying out the plan is advisory to the Town Board. It is their responsibility to review all pertinent information that is available on a particular planning issue and to develop an objective recommendation which is then given to the Board. To acquire assistance in making land use and other planning decisions, the Alden Town Board should use the Planning Commission to the fullest extent possible. The recommendations of the Alden Planning Commission that are contained in this document can guide the future direction of growth and development in Alden, and the present environment of a small, rural community can be maintained while providing for a safe, healthy and comfortable living environment for local citizens and businesses. A principal purpose for the existence of the Planning Commission is to help assure that benefits to local taxpayers are maximized and that governmental expenditures are minimized.

The Planning Commission will review all matters regarding development in the Town, including subdivision or development proposals and site plans to assure that they conform to the pertinent ordinances and policies. In addition, the Commission must review and make recommendations to the Town Board on zoning amendments which affect the Town and should make recommendations on any requests for home occupancies, special exceptions and conditional uses. The Commission will examine all matters before it and determine their consistency with the comprehensive plan.

Due to the community's size, the Alden Planning Commission must function without a full-time professional staff. Nevertheless, planning issues do arise from time to time which require concentrated attention from professional planners. The Town of Alden, as an active member in the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, can rely upon assistance provided by the planning staff of the Regional Planning Commission as part of its technical assistance program. The role of the planner does not stop with the completion of the comprehensive plan, but will continue in an advisory capacity when the community is working with the tools of implementation. These tools of implementation include things such as a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, other ordinances and other more specialized tools.

## **The Citizen**

The Alden Planning Commission seeks to prepare plans that are acceptable to the local citizens and that they will support. Public participation is encouraged throughout the planning process and is extremely important to the acceptance and successful implementation of local plans. Each citizen has an opportunity to take an active part in the development of plans for the future of the community. The Town of Alden Community Opinion Survey was one such opportunity. By attending meetings of the Planning Commission, citizens may review plans or projects in-progress and provide input to affect their outcome.

Other methods of citizen participation include press releases to the local newspaper on the Planning Commission meetings and its progress on various plan elements or implementation programs. Citizens are encouraged to attend and voice opinions at public hearings which are held before the plan is adopted by the Town Board. The Planning Commission may also wish to use advisory committees comprised of local residents in future planning efforts. The democratic privilege of citizen participation should be used to contribute to and support the Alden Comprehensive Plan, as it is the community's plan. The Town's residents should also stay involved in the planning and development process and help the Planning Commission and Town Board implement the plan to achieve the community goals it represents.

## **ACTION PLAN**

The action plan identifies short-term and long-term activities for implementation of the plan. Identified timeframes are approximate and implementation of the individual action items is subject to available resources and conditions at the time of implementation. The Town Board has the responsibility for implementation of the action plan, though some actions may be delegated to the Town Clerk, Planning Commission, and other Town employees at the Board's discretion. For instance, the Town Board will often delegate to the Planning Commission the responsibility of drafting new ordinances or code changes for review and approval by the Board.

The Planning Commission will review the action plan and all comprehensive plan goals, objectives and policies annually to evaluate progress on plan implementation and monitor the consistency of ongoing operations and proposed new policies with the vision, goals, and objectives of the plan.

Prior to implementation, the Town will consider and reassess each action item to further determine if each is in the best interests of the community. Changing conditions in the community may necessitate an addition or modification to the implementation actions identified below.

The action plan is organized into the following categories of implementation actions:

- Public Information and Participation
- Planning Activities
- Codes and Ordinances
- Cooperative Efforts

**Table 64 Implementation Action Plan**

<b>Information and Participation</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	Continue to monitor governmental procedures to ensure opportunities for community participation during all phases of plan, program, and regulation development and implementation.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>1.2</b>	Provide a copy of the Town “Right-to-Farm” resolution with building permits and post a copy at the Town Hall, OR require a deed restriction on lots in the exclusive agricultural and rural residential area putting new homeowners on notice they are moving into a farming area.	<b>2008-2009</b>
<b>1.3</b>	Utilize University of Wisconsin-Extension and other available resources to increase resident and Planning Commission understanding of planning regulations, techniques, and conservation subdivision design.	<b>2008, periodically thereafter</b>
<b>1.4</b>	Working with Wisconsin DNR and Polk County, to help educate Town residents on regulations and methods for the protection of water quality through the distribution of materials at the Town Hall.	<b>2008 and ongoing</b>
<b>1.5</b>	Work with Polk County Sheriff’s Department and other area law enforcement to increase resident knowledge of pertinent issues, such as potential neighborhood watch programs and methamphetamines.	<b>every 2-5 years; or more often as needed</b>
<b>Planning Activities</b>		
<b>2.1</b>	Annually reassess and update 5-year plans for future public facilities, road improvements, and heavy equipment purchases. Ensure basic training in road management tools by employees and/or Board members.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>2.2</b>	Implement the Town’s Park Plan. Work cooperatively with other area communities in the planning of linked recreational trail systems, strive to include proposed trails into future updates of the Polk County Outdoor Recreational Plan, and integrate resident participation into this planning process.	<b>2008 and ongoing as needed</b>
<b>2.3</b>	Ensure that Comprehensive Plan policies are incorporated into the Town’s development management program. This should involve reflecting on relevant plan policies when making decisions.	<b>2008-2012</b>
<b>2.4</b>	The Town will inventory shorelands and other lands with potential for public acquisition and maintenance, evaluate their resource and recreational value, and develop a program to set aside, fund and manage selected properties for future public access and recreational use.	<b>2009-2010</b>
<b>2.5</b>	The Town will review fire districts to provide the best protection possible for its residents.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>2.6</b>	The Town will continue to evaluate first responders and ambulance services to determine if changes are needed to the arrangements for these services.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>2.7</b>	The Town will continue its road maintenance program using WISLR.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>2.8</b>	The Town, through its Planning Commission, will continually monitor land use changes in the community and assess the compatibility of these changes with the Plan’s vision, goals, and objectives. If such changes conflict with the Plan and a change is needed, the Town will use a public planning process to update the Plan.	<b>annually, and more frequently as needed</b>

<b>Codes and Ordinances</b>		
<b>3.1</b>	The Town Board, Planning Commission, and employees of the Town of Alden will continue to enforce applicable codes and ordinances. The Town will evaluate all development proposals based on the comprehensive plan, including the vision statement, goals, objectives and policies, and its overall intent.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>3.2</b>	Modify Town ordinances to require developers to pay Town costs related to a development (e.g., special studies, roads, parks) and be financially responsible for potential environmental impacts.	<b>2009-2010</b>
<b>3.3</b>	Work with other Towns and Polk County to amend the County Zoning Ordinance to address local comprehensive plan land use objectives.	<b>2010-2012</b>
<b>3.4</b>	Evaluate whether the subdivision process and standards continue to meet Town needs. If necessary, the Town may develop new land division ordinance provisions to address Town needs.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>3.5</b>	Develop manufactured home, mobile home and mobile home park regulations.	<b>2010-2012</b>
<b>3.6</b>	The Town will work with Polk County to review development application and review processes and timelines to coordinate decision-making.	<b>2009</b>
<b>3.7</b>	When Town land management ordinances are amended, the Planning Commission shall notify the Polk County Zoning Office of the changes to Town land use policy.	<b>as needed</b>
<b>3.8</b>	The Town will review the vision statement and comprehensive plan goals, objectives and policies to determine how land management regulations will need to be amended to effectively implement the plan.	<b>2008-2010</b>

<b>Cooperative Efforts</b>		
<b>4.1</b>	Establish and maintain communication with the Polk County Recycling Program and Emergency Management to increase resident awareness of the County's recycling program and CleanSweep efforts.	<b>2008 and ongoing</b>
<b>4.2</b>	Establish and maintain contacts with adjacent unit of governments, Polk County, Wisconsin Town's Association, and the State of Wisconsin to protect the natural resources and interests of the Town, including ongoing membership and active participation in related organizations and regarding the enforcement of applicable regulations.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>4.3</b>	Maintain ongoing communication with Polk County in the enforcement of the County Zoning Ordinance, Land Division Ordinance, Shoreland-Wetland Ordinance, Floodplain Ordinance, Sanitary Ordinance, and access controls on County Highways.	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>4.4</b>	Maintain contact with adjacent municipalities and Polk County to coordinate and pursue opportunities for the cost-sharing and planning of road projects and the enforcement of access controls.	<b>ongoing, as opportunities arise</b>
<b>4.5</b>	Continue to participate in the Greater Osceola Intergovernmental Cooperative and consider participation in the Western Wisconsin Intergovernmental Collaborative.	<b>2008, ongoing</b>
<b>4.7</b>	Provide opportunities for adjacent municipalities and School Districts to comment on proposed plans and ordinances that may have intergovernmental impacts. Maintain communication with Planning Commissions from adjacent communities, and with School Districts, to encourage cooperation in the development and sharing of said plans and ordinances.	<b>ongoing, as opportunities arise</b>

## **PLAN INTEGRATION AND CONSISTENCY**

The Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan has an important role as a guide and determinant for future action and policy decisions in the community. All development proposals and capital expenditures should be reviewed against the conclusions, vision, goals, objectives and policies of the plan for consistency. When the Town is requested or desires to comment on proposed policy changes at a municipal, county, regional, State or Federal level, the plan can provide important guidance to Town officials.

The elements of the Comprehensive Plan are also internally consistent. Indeed, there is much overlap in issues and policy between many of the elements. A review of all plan data, analysis and conclusions, and of plan goals and policies has been performed to ensure consistency. As the plan developed, major consistent themes emerged which moved the plan toward consistent conclusions and compatible approaches to solving identified problems among the elements. Any future plan amendments should be evaluated for consistency with the overall Comprehensive Plan.

## **PLAN MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Any plan is subject to the passage of time possibly making its policies and recommendations obsolete. The Town of Alden Planning Commission is responsible for monitoring changing conditions and plan implementation to evaluate whether a plan amendment or update is needed.

The Planning Commission will conduct an annual review and evaluation on: (a) progress of plan implementation, (b) growth trends in past year, (c) issues and conflicts with the plan, (d) any needed plan amendments, and (e) any ordinance or program development or changes necessary to implement the plan. The Planning Commission will report its findings of each annual review to the Town Board.

## **PLAN AMENDMENTS AND UPDATES**

Plan monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing process and will, at some time, lead to the realization that the plan requires an amendment or updating.

Plan amendments are minor changes or additions to plan maps or text as deemed necessary and appropriate. The Town Planning Commission must be given sufficient opportunity to make a recommendation to the Town Board on proposed amendments prior to the Town Board decision.

The plan will be updated at least every 10 years as required by State law, unless a more frequent update is deemed necessary by the Town Board. The Town Planning Commission is responsible for facilitating the plan update, working within any general guidelines provided by the Town Board.

The adoption process for plan amendments and plan updates is similar. Consistent with State law, a public hearing at a joint-meeting of the Planning Commission and Town Board will be held. The Planning Commission must then adopt a resolution recommending the proposed plan

changes or update to the Town Board. The Town Board will then adopt by ordinance the plan changes or update.

The Town of Alden will encourage public participation during plan amendment and update processes. Frequent plan amendments and updates should be avoided in an attempt to provide continuity in planning and land management decisions.