

INTRODUCTION

On March 18, 1909, the Town of Howard was introduced as the newest member to an already well-established Chippewa County. It did not do so without a battle though. Prior to this time the area now known as the Town of Howard was a part of the Town of Wheaton. In order to form the new township, an area needed to be carved out of the northern section of the exiting one. Many in the Town of Wheaton strongly opposed such a movement. A petition was circulated and signed by a “large number of freeholders.” A counter petition was also circulated and both were submitted to the Wheaton Board of Supervisors. The supervisors, being unable to come to an agreement, took the matter to the State Legislature. Finally, the Legislature ruled in favor of the split and the new independent Town of Howard was formed.

On April of 1909 at the Norwegian schoolhouse,” the first officers of the township were elected. Officials included: Chairman, Anton Solberg; supervisors, Joseph Hartman and H.P. Olson; clerk, Charles Emmerton; assessor, C.W. Bitney; treasurer, Thomas G. Thompson. The new township was described as having “considerable good land” and being “watered by Hanson, Elm and Little Hay creeks and streamlets”. In addition, the high bluffs (which divided the township in two) and the Wisconsin Central Railroad (which cut through the southern portion of the Town) were significant and defining features of the area. Interestingly, the Township was supposedly named after an official of the Soo Line Railway. Also, it was also written that the churches and schools of Howard were both “sufficient in number and well supported” by its residents.

This was the existing condition of the township when our “rebellious” founders took the helm. How much of this has changed and how much as remained the same? How much does the Town of Howard want to change and how much does the Town want to remain the same? These are the questions the residents of the Town of Howard must mull over in the coming months and years. How these questions are answered will inevitably shape the future of our township and add to the legacy the Town leaves behind.

Now, in this 100th anniversary year of the founding of the Town of Howard, the current citizens of Howard have expressed their views in a comprehensive plan survey on a variety of issues facing the Town. In this comprehensive plan the Plan Commission and the Town Board identify the issues that can be reasonably expected to challenge the Town in the next 20 years

and set forth ways of addressing those issues consistent with the views expressed by the majority of citizens in the comprehensive plan survey.

The modernization of the Town of Howard government began at the Annual Town meeting on April 13, 1999, when the electors authorized village powers. The process has continued through the decade to follow. This development of a comprehensive plan inaugurates the next phrase of in the modernization for the Town.

The following dates mark the most significant moments in the process leading up to the adoption of the comprehensive plan by the Town Board.

- May 2, 2000 -- The first ordinances are adopted by the Town Board.
- May 22, 2003 -- The need for a plan commission is recognized and met by the adoption of a Plan Commission Ordinance.
- July 8, 2003 -- The Town Board appoints five members to the Plan Commission.
- Nov 11, 2008 -- The Town Board amends the Plan Commission Ordinance to expand its membership to seven members.
- Nov.13, 2008 -- The newly constituted Plan Commission passes a resolution to develop a comprehensive plan and recommends that the Town Board adopt a plan for public participation in the development process.
- Dec. 22, 2008 -- At a special meeting, Town Board amend the Plan Commission ordinance and reconstitutes and reappoints its membership bringing the plan commission and its procedures in accord with the updated ordinance.
- Jan. 6, 2009 -- The Town Board adopts a public participation plan.
- Jan.15, 2009 -- Plan Commission meets to discuss vision of the Town for next 20 years.
- Feb. 5, 2009 -- Plan Commission develops draft of comprehensive plan town survey.
- Feb. 26, 2009 -- Plan Commission approves final copy of comprehensive plan survey.
- Early March -- 201 copies of survey are mailed to owners of properties with improvements on the assessment roll. The deadline for returning the survey is set for March 25th. When it is learned that some homeowners did not receive the survey, additional copies are sent out as requested. The clerk also made 30 more copies available on election day, April 7th. All of them were used and a list was started of electors who still needed a survey. They were sent out two days later and a new deadline for return is set for April 14th. Copies of also made available at the annual meeting on April 14th.

- April 23, 2009 -- Plan Commission tabulates and analyzes results of the comprehensive plan survey. The process of drafting the plan takes place in two meetings in both May and June.
- July 23, 2009 -- An information meeting is held and the Plan Commission receives input from citizens on the housing element, the agricultural, natural resource and cultural resource elements, and the land use element. Drafts of the transportation element, the utilities and community services element and the issues and opportunities element are reviewed.
- Sept. 3, 2009 -- Plan Commission reviews drafts of the economic development element, the intergovernmental cooperation element, and the implementation element.
- Sept 17, 2009 -- An information meeting is held and the Plan Commission receives input from citizens on the final six elements of the draft. Following the information session, amendments are made to the plan, and the plan as amended is recommended for adoption by the Town Board.
- Oct. 6, 2009 -- Following a hearing, and consideration of possible amendments to the Plan, the Town Board adopts the Comprehensive Plan Ordinance.

Acknowledgements

The Town of Howard comprehensive plan was developed by the Town of Howard Plan Commission members: Ron Koshoshek (chair), Mike Burns, Chuck Flodquist, Dave Haake, Ron Halvorson, Joanne Keller, Ann Mitchell, and Sue Haake (town clerk). The Plan Commission is grateful for the significant input given by the citizens attending the Plan Commission meetings devoted to developing the comprehensive plan, and in meetings between the Plan Commission chair and small groups of interested citizens that occurred outside of the formally arranged committee meetings.

The Plan Commission is indebted to the Chippewa County Land Conservation Department, the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Department, and the West Central Regional Plan Commission for providing helpful data, maps, and counsel.

The Plan Commission is also grateful for the contribution made by Mr. Evan Byers, a senior with GIS skills majoring in Geography at University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. Mr. Byers worked with the Plan Commission in the development of three elements during the spring 2008 semester, earning academic credit under an internship program offered by the Department of Geography.

Officers of the Town Board that held the public hearing and adopted the ordinance were Vernon Schindler (Chair), Dennis Dvoracek (Supervisor), and Tom Zwiefelhofer (Supervisor).

Sources

Sources for the brief history of the Town of Howard (written by Ann Mitchell) contained in this Introduction are:

Chippewa County. *Chippewa County Wisconsin, Past and Present: A Record of Settlement, Organization, Progress, and Achievement*. Vol I. Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913.

Chippewa County. *The Chippewa County Chronicle*. Friendship, WI: New Past Press, Inc., 1995.

The tables used in this comprehensive plan are taken from the *Chippewa County Conditions and Trends* published in CD media format in August 2008 by the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Department. For a copy of this CD or more information regarding tables and interpretations contact the Chippewa

The maps referenced in the Town of Howard comprehensive plan are taken from *The Chippewa County Resource and Land Use Atlas*, published in January, 2009 in a DVD media format by the West Central Regional Plan Commission.

Element 1: Issues and Opportunities

1.0 Introduction

The State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law (§66.1001) requires that comprehensive plans include background information about the current conditions and trends in the Town, an identification of issues that Town can be reasonably expected to face in the next 20 years, and a “compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development” in the Town over the next 20 years. Each of the subsequent elements in this plan aims at taking each of the above tasks.

The Vision Statement

This year, 2009, is the hundred anniversary of the founding of the Town of Howard. The introduction to this plan gives a snapshot of the Town’s founding in 1909. The elements in this plan that deal with a substantive body of issues and policy options further amplify the snapshot of its founding with facts describing past and current conditions. The elements also provide details of the vision the Town has of itself in the coming years. Only a brief summary of that vision will be provided in this element.

The history of Howard is primarily and almost exclusively agricultural. The modest commercial activity that developed in New Albertville in the past has shrunk to a single establishment and because of local terrain and the proximity of large urban centers and small towns nearby is not likely to significantly expand. Recreational activity in the Town is limited because of the absence of any recreationally significant natural resource around which development has occurred in other towns within the County. Infrastructure is insufficient for any significant industrial activity. In short, the Town’s future prospects rest on maintaining its agricultural land base and supporting and promoting its agricultural economy together with any “cottage industry” that may be compatible with it.

In the Town's comprehensive plan survey, 95% of the citizen respondents indicated that farmland preservation should be the Town's top priority in the coming years. The issues and opportunities facing the Town will be associated with pressures that contribute to the loss of the agricultural land base, namely, the transfer of farmland to non-farm use. The most significant pressure will be the pressure of residential development consequent upon the expansion of the City of Eau Claire on its northwest side. This expansion includes the creation of a major transportation corridor along County Road T to Wis Hwy 29 in Chippewa County, where significant industrial and commercial development is already underway just four miles from the southeastern border of the Town of Howard. Howard is in the bull's eye of urban sprawl and its citizens are urging it to take the strongest possible measures to protect its agricultural land base and the economy on which it rests.

Secondly, citizens are concerned with protecting the value of their properties. Citizens who do not make their living by farming their land want to preserve the quality of life offered in a rural community and especially to preserve enjoyable use and the economic value of the lands and homes in which they have invested. The Town has already established ordinances limiting lot size and establishing building codes to ensure that residential development do not compromise the values of established residential properties. But property values can also be significantly eroded by conflicting adjacent land use. For example, the proposed location of an industrial sand mine in the Town with no less than ten homes located within 50-80 feet of the perimeter of the mine site and additional homes with 100 feet of a transportation route on which a 25 ton semi truck will pass every 2-3 minutes will certainly diminish value of those properties. Exposure to the nuisances associated with mining, blasting of bedrock and hauling operations will also diminish the adjacent property owners' enjoyment of their properties during the entire lifetime of their ownership. The investment and use of the lands for agricultural purposes is protected to some extent by the State of Wisconsin's Right to Farm Act. But no such protection exists for investment in and use of lands for residential purposes. Residential development in the Town of Howard has increased significantly in the past few years and the number of residential land owners now far exceeds the number of citizens whose lives and livelihoods are tied to working farm land. Nevertheless, both the farming and non-farming communities within the Town live in relative harmony with each other. Both constituencies responded in roughly the same proportions to questions regarding land use and land use conflicts on the Town survey.

Roughly 80% of respondents identifying themselves as members of each constituency favored the preservation of farmland and favored the adoption of a Town zoning ordinance to achieve the goals of farmland preservation and the reduction or elimination of land use conflicts that reduce the economic and enjoyment values of current land uses. The centerpiece opportunity for addressing the issues that the Town envisions arising in the next 20-year period will be, on the one hand, a carefully crafted Town zoning ordinance designed to maximize the preservation of farmland and the support such an ordinance would provide for the agricultural economy and, on the other hand, designed to preserve the quality of life and the value of residential property for non-farm landowners within the Town.

1.1 Population

The County and nearly all townships within it have a larger population in 2007 than they had in 1960 based on U.S Census taking. Table 1-1 shows that over that 47 year period only the towns of Howard, Estella, and Ruby have suffered a net loss in total population.

There are many reasons that might be offered in explanation of this startling fact, and the reasons will not be entirely the same for all three of the towns that have lost population in the past 50 years. The single common denominator is the fact that all three townships suffered very large losses during the 1980's, a decade in which the first phase of a long and significant downturn in the dairy farm economy occurred and the beginning of a dramatic and sharp decline in the number of family dairy operations. While other Towns also suffered a similar decline in dairy farming during this period, other Towns had natural resource assets and were served by major highway projects that attracted considerable new residential development. So while the young moved out for educations and jobs elsewhere in towns with population increase, they were replaced by retirees, many from out of state who sought cheaper real estate to retire or recreate on and local commuting urbanites seeking the landscape of country living. The elderly folk retired and sold their farmland off for residential developments.

The Town of Howard lacks the recreational resources that attract development in other towns. Howard has lacked a major transportation corridor providing quick and easy access to the urban workplace for commuters. Howard's non-agricultural lands have steep sloped landscape and soils less hospitable to residential development than other towns. The recent pressure of population growth felt in Howard is due largely to an increase in residential development.

Table 1-1

	Year						Percent Change				
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	'60-'70	'70-'80	'80-'90	'90-'00	'00-'07
Towns											
Anson	1,349	1,446	1,590	1,634	1,881	2,108	7.2	10.0	2.8	15.1	12.1
Arthur	784	774	856	756	710	755	-1.3	10.6	-11.7	-6.1	6.3
Auburn	418	408	456	474	580	695	-2.4	11.8	3.9	22.4	19.8
Birch Creek	321	365	540	500	520	533	13.7	47.9	-7.4	4.0	2.5
Bloomer	870	800	930	880	926	1,013	-8.0	16.3	-5.4	5.2	9.4
Cleveland	645	607	732	758	900	1,008	-5.9	20.6	3.6	18.7	12.0
Colburn	832	678	760	731	727	788	-18.5	12.1	-3.8	-0.5	8.4
Cooks Valley	565	610	603	594	632	684	8.0	-1.1	-1.5	6.4	8.2
Delmar	1,123	1,079	1,062	994	941	970	-3.9	-1.6	-6.4	-5.3	3.1
Eagle Point	2,017	2,224	2,750	2,542	3,049	3,186	10.3	23.7	-7.6	19.9	4.5
Edson	1,167	1,082	1,061	913	966	1,077	-7.3	-1.9	-13.9	5.8	11.5
Estella	542	484	483	449	469	503	-10.7	-0.2	-7.0	4.5	7.2
Goetz	556	613	607	640	695	744	10.3	-1.0	5.4	8.6	7.1
Hallie	2,530	3,568	4,275	4,531	4,703	156	41.0	19.8	6.0	3.8	-96.7
Howard	702	643	660	625	648	695	-8.4	2.6	-5.3	3.7	7.3
Lafayette	4,188	4,189	4,181	4,448	5,199	5,911	0.0	-0.2	6.4	16.9	13.7
Lake Holcombe	564	648	791	920	1,010	1,110	14.9	22.1	16.3	9.8	9.9
Ruby	504	469	514	464	446	470	-6.9	9.6	-9.7	-3.9	5.4
Sampson	681	724	805	817	816	914	6.3	11.2	1.5	-0.1	12.0
Sigel	703	654	782	736	825	855	-7.0	19.6	-5.9	12.1	3.6
Tilden	916	963	1,088	1,079	1,185	1,336	5.1	13.0	-0.8	9.8	12.7
Wheaton	1,441	1,782	2,328	2,257	2,366	2,670	23.7	30.6	-3.0	4.8	12.8
Woodmohr	827	872	967	991	883	857	5.4	10.9	2.5	-10.9	-2.9
Subtotal:	24,245	25,682	28,821	28,733	31,077	29,038	5.9	12.2	-0.3	8.2	-6.6
Villages											
Boyd	622	574	660	683	680	635	-7.7	15.0	3.5	-0.4	-6.6
Cadott	881	977	1,247	1,328	1,345	1,393	10.9	27.6	6.5	1.3	3.6
Lake Hallie	-	-	-	-	-	6,132	-	-	-	-	-
New Auburn*	383	368	452	459	547	548	-3.9	22.8	1.5	19.2	0.2
Subtotal:	1886	1919	2359	2470	2572	8708	1.7	22.9	4.7	4.1	238.6
Cities											
Bloomer	2,834	3,143	3,342	3,180	3,347	3488	10.9	6.3	-4.8	5.3	4.2
Chippewa Falls	11,708	12,351	12,270	12,749	12,925	13,515	5.5	-0.7	3.9	1.4	4.6
Cornell	1,685	1,616	1,583	1,541	1,466	1,454	-4.1	-2.0	-2.7	-4.9	-0.8
Eau Claire**	724	957	1,657	1,676	1,910	2,012	32.2	73.1	1.1	14.0	5.3
Stanley***	2,014	2,049	2,095	2,011	1,898	3,389	1.7	2.2	-4.0	-5.6	78.6
Subtotal:	18,965	20,116	20,947	21,157	21,546	23,858	6.1	4.1	1.0	1.8	10.7
Chippewa County*	45,096	47,717	52,127	52,360	55,195	61,604	5.8	9.2	0.4	5.4	11.6

Between 1960 and 1990, the population of the Town of Howard decreased by 11%. In the last 17 years, however, Howard's population has increased 11%. In the

Housing element the Town gives reasons for expecting that Howard's population will surge in the next 20 year cycle.

1.2 Components of the Population by age and sex

Table 1-2a

2000 Census	1990 Census
Total	625
Median Age	31.0
Male	325
Female	300
	Female
Under 5 years	19
5 to 9 years	29
10 to 14 years	28
15 to 17 years	12
18 and 19 years	9
20 years	7
21 years	4
22 to 24 years	15
25 to 29 years	28
30 to 34 years	33
35 to 39 years	26
40 to 44 years	22
45 to 49 years	22
50 to 54 years	21
55 to 59 years	10
60 and 61 years	10
62 to 64 years	6
65 and 66 years	11
67 to 69 years	9
70 to 74 years	2
75 to 79 years	2
80 to 84 years	0
85 years and over	19
	Male
Under 5 years	31
5 to 9 years	22
10 to 14 years	32
15 to 17 years	22
18 and 19 years	8
20 years	5
21 years	0
22 to 24 years	10
25 to 29 years	19
30 to 34 years	27
35 to 39 years	26
40 to 44 years	17
45 to 49 years	20
50 to 54 years	19
55 to 59 years	9
60 and 61 years	7
62 to 64 years	6
65 and 66 years	11
67 to 69 years	2
70 to 74 years	6
75 to 79 years	0
80 to 84 years	1
85 years and over	31

Table 1-2b

**Percent change in age
1990-2000**

Under 5 years	-20.00
5 to 9 years	-1.96
10 to 14 years	-16.67
15 to 17 years	5.88
18 and 19 years	41.18
20 years	-16.67
21 years	200.00
22 to 24 years	-52.00
25 to 29 years	-31.91
30 to 34 years	-23.33
35 to 39 years	26.92
40 to 44 years	48.72
45 to 49 years	38.10
50 to 54 years	0.00
55 to 59 years	57.89
60 and 61 years	-64.71
62 to 64 years	8.33
65 and 66 years	-81.82
67 to 69 years	18.18
70 to 74 years	162.50
75 to 79 years	600.00
80 to 84 years	900.00
85 years and over	-94.00

A brief look at Table 1-2a is quite revealing. Births were roughly equal in the two Censuses, so the increase in population was through migration from outside the Town.

Between 1990 and 2000, females between ages 22-34 years of age left the Town in droves to live elsewhere. The rate of migration out of the town for males is significantly less during the decade.

However, there is a significant increase in females aged 35-50 living in the Town in 2000. Male population

matches female population in this age group, suggesting that migrants are involved in establishing households in the Town.

If the dramatic loss of males aged 22-35 continues into the future, the recruitment pool for the volunteer fire protection service may be seriously drawn down.

Needless to say, numbers without explanations are meaningless and explanations not easy to offer by just looking at the numbers. Real world observations about current conditions

and events occurring within and around the Town will have a greater impact on shaping our comprehensive plan than the statistics alone.

1.3 Population projections

The same can be said for population projections for the Town of Howard set forth in Table 1-3.

Table 1-3

Municipality	Census 2000	Proj. 2005	Proj. 2010	Proj. 2015	Proj. 2020	Proj. 2025	% Change 2000-2025
Towns							
Anson	1,881	1,958	2,079	2,191	2,294	2,363	25.6
Arthur	710	695	697	695	691	677	-4.6
Auburn	580	619	671	721	767	802	38.3
Birch Creek	520	522	536	547	556	558	7.3
Bloomer	926	951	998	1,041	1,079	1,102	19.0
Cleveland	900	944	1,009	1,070	1,127	1,166	29.6
Colburn	727	720	731	738	742	736	1.2
Cooks Valley	632	654	691	724	755	775	22.6
Delmar	941	924	929	929	926	911	-3.2
Eagle Point	3,049	3,236	3,499	3,746	3,978	4,150	36.1
Edson	966	975	1,008	1,035	1,058	1,066	10.4
Estella	469	474	491	505	517	522	11.3
Goetz	695	720	762	800	835	858	23.5
Hallie	4,703	323	351	374	395	403	-91.4
Howard	648	662	691	717	741	754	16.4
Lafayette	5,199	5,538	6,006	6,444	6,858	7,167	37.9
Lake Holcombe	1,010	1,052	1,118	1,178	1,235	1,272	25.9
Ruby	446	436	436	433	430	420	-5.8
Sampson	816	844	891	933	973	998	22.3
Sigel	825	848	891	929	964	984	19.3
Tilden	1,185	1,217	1,276	1,330	1,378	1,407	18.7
Wheaton	2,366	2,435	2,559	2,672	2,774	2,836	19.9
Woodmohr	883	868	874	875	874	860	-2.6
Subtotal:	31,077	27,615	29,194	30,627	31,947	32,787	5.5
Villages							
Boyd	680	663	663	659	653	637	-6.3
Cadott	1,345	1,333	1,354	1,367	1,375	1,365	1.5
Lake Hallie	0	4,558	4,942	5,276	5,568	5,685	--
New Auburn*	547	559	585	607	628	639	16.8
Subtotal:	2,572	7,113	7,544	7,909	8,224	8,326	223.7
Other Municipalities							
Bloomer	3,347	3,326	3,383	3,424	3,452	3,432	2.5
Chippewa Falls	12,925	12,935	13,244	13,490	13,690	13,691	5.9
Cornell	1,466	1,423	1,414	1,397	1,376	1,336	-8.9
Eau Claire**	1,910	1,979	2,094	2,199	2,295	2,358	23.5
Stanley***	1,898	3,349	3,344	3,329	3,308	3,262	71.9
Subtotal:	21,546	23,012	23,479	23,839	24,121	24,079	11.8
Chippewa County	55,195	57,740	60,217	62,375	64,292	65,192	18.1

While an increase in population is being projected in a given numerical amount, the Plan Commission considers that projection to assume that conditions will remain the same as they have been in the recent past. Discussions in subsequent elements will describe real world conditions that suggest the rate of population growth will likely exceed the numerical projections in Table 1-3.

1.4 Household projections to the year 2025

Table 1-4

Municipality	2000	Proj. 2005	Proj. 2010	Proj. 2015	Proj. 2020	Proj. 2025	% change 2000-2025
Towns							
Anson	709	748	811	869	924	967	36.4
Arthur	258	256	262	266	269	267	3.5
Auburn	202	218	242	264	286	303	50.0
Birch Creek	212	215	226	235	243	247	16.5
Bloomer	321	335	358	380	400	414	29.0
Cleveland	313	333	363	392	419	440	40.6
Colburn	262	263	273	280	286	288	9.9
Cooks Valley	214	224	242	258	273	285	33.2
Delmar	314	313	320	327	330	330	5.1
Eagle Point	978	1,053	1,159	1,261	1,358	1,433	46.5
Edson	309	317	333	349	361	370	19.7
Estella	167	171	181	189	196	202	21.0
Goetz	231	242	262	280	297	309	33.8
Hallie	1,690	118	130	142	152	157	-90.7
Howard	235	243	259	273	287	296	26.0
Lafayette	1,980	2,139	2,365	2,584	2,792	2,962	49.6
Lake Holcombe	413	436	473	508	540	564	36.6
Ruby	152	150	154	156	157	155	2.0
Sampson	330	346	372	397	421	438	32.7
Sigel	294	307	328	349	367	381	29.6
Tilden	399	416	445	471	496	514	28.8
Wheaton	852	889	953	1,013	1,068	1,109	30.2
Woodmohr	319	318	326	333	337	338	6.0
Subtotal	11,154	10,050	10,837	11,576	12,259	12,769	14.5
Boyd							
Boyd	274	270	276	279	281	278	1.5
Cadott	562	565	585	602	614	619	10.1
Lake Hallie	0	1,661	1,838	1,996	2,139	2,217	--
New Auburn*	210	217	232	245	258	266	26.7
Subtotal	1,046	2,713	2,931	3,122	3,292	3,380	223.1
Bloomer							
Bloomer	1,424	1,434	1,488	1,534	1,569	1,583	11.2
Chippewa Falls	5,638	5,722	5,974	6,194	6,373	6,469	14.7
Cornell	607	597	605	608	608	599	-1.3
Eau Claire**	670	704	760	812	861	897	33.9
Stanley***	817	782	788	786	779	748	-8.4
Subtotal	9,156	9,239	9,615	9,934	10,190	10,296	12.5
Chippewa County	21,356	22,002	23,383	24,632	25,741	26,445	23.8

1.5 Employment Projections

**Table 1-5
Employment by Occupation**

Occupation	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Executive, administrative and managerial	17	5.2	-	-
Professional	19	5.8	93	25.4
Technician	7	2.2	-	-
Sales	26	8	62	16.9
Administrative support, including clerical	25	7.7	-	-
Service	35	10.8	51	13.9
Farming, forestry, fishing	91	28	13	3.6
Construction, extraction and maintenance	-	-	48	13.1
Precision production, craft and repair	37	11.4	-	-
Machine operators, assemblers and inspectors	29	8.9	99	27
Transportation and material moving	25	7.7	-	-
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers & laborers	14	4.3	-	-
Total Employment (16 years and over)	325	100	366	100

Table 1-5 shows that the occupation of farming and forestry has dropped immensely. In the agricultural element the Town will challenge the accuracy of some of these numbers. Nevertheless, in addition to a decline in farming in the Town, there has been a decline in forestry occupations during the period of 1980 to 2000 as large scale logging operations in the Town and surrounding areas declined and as sawyers were rapidly replaced by mechanical means of harvesting the trees. There continues to be work trucking logs to mills in Colfax and the south eastern parts of Eau Claire County. But aside from harvesting small plots in the area immediately surrounding the town, virtually all large scale operations occur in the Chippewa

County Forest to the north and Eau Claire County forest to the east. There is no commercial fishing activity in this part of the state and no commercial fish farms located in the Town. The increase in the proportion of service, sales, professional and machinist occupations compensates for the decrease in the number of residents participating in the agricultural economy. However, non-agricultural occupations are employed outside the Town itself.

1.6 Employment By Industry – 1990 and 2000

	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Town of Howard				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting & mining	94	28.9	41	11.2
Construction	19	5.8	41	11.2
Manufacturing	72	22.2	99	27.0
Wholesale trade	12	3.7	12	3.3
Retail trade	58	17.8	48	13.1
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	15	4.6	20	5.5
Information	0	0.0	3	0.8
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental & leasing	6	1.8	7	1.9
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	6	1.8	4	1.1
Educational, health and social services	28	8.6	70	19.1
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7	2.2	17	4.6
Other services, except public administration			4	1.1
Public administration	8	2.5	0	0.0
Total Employment (16 years and over)	325		366	

1.7 Labor Force

Table 1-7

	Persons over 16	#in Labor Force	% in Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	% unemployed
1990	415	337	81.2	325	12	3.6
2000	486	375	77.2	366	9	2.4

1.8 Education Attainment Levels

Table 1-8 shows a significant increase in the level of the education of town residents between 1990 and 2000. This increase also echoes the shifts in the occupations of residents that have taken place during this decade. If this change in educational level carries with it the same significance it has shown elsewhere, it probably indicates a shift in the expectations placed on town government. That is, town government will be expected to address a wider range of issues than it traditionally addressed and, because of the nature of those issues, the infra-structure of town government (the decision-making bodies, and their procedures, and the ordinances it administers) will need to develop as well. As of 2009, this has already started to take place with the development of Town of Howard Plan Commission and ordinances to regulate landfills, non-metallic mining, roadway accesses, and several ordinances related to housing and residential development. The Town's Comprehensive Plan Survey shows extremely strong support for existing Town policies with an expectation that additional regulations may be in order. However, as the effectiveness of the ordinances are tested, revisions may be in order. Also, the procedures and role of the Plan Commission will need to be updated as it gains experience in administering the ordinances that fall under its charge.

**Table 1-8
Education Attainment Levels**

Education Level	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Persons 25 years or older	504	100	581	100
Less than High School Diploma	185	36.7	136	23.4
High School Graduate	246	48.8	281	48.4
Some college, no degree	31	6.2	90	15.5
Associates degree	17	3.4	42	7.2
Bachelor's degree or higher	25	5.0	32	5.5
High school graduate or higher	319	63.3	445	76.6

1.9 Median Household income

If median household income is one measure of “wealth” the Town of Howard was the fifth wealthiest town in Chippewa County in 1989. In 1999, Howard's ranking slipped to seventh.

Also worthy of note is the fact that the percent of increase in the median household income in dollars was only 37.4 % with only its neighboring Town (Cooks Valley) at 37.4% and the Town of Ruby 25.9% having a lower rate of income growth. Numerous factors can be cited to explain its relatively high rank in median income coupled with a low rate of income growth. On the one hand, the drop in rank reflects the decline in the number of family operated farms coupled with the lack of significant industrial, commercial, or service income earning opportunities within the Town itself. On the other hand, the comparatively high median income is maintained by an influx of residents with well-compensated employment outside the Town and by an increase in the number of two income-earner households.

**Table 1-9
Median Household Income in Dollars**

	Dollars		Change	
	1989	1999	Dollars	Percent
Towns				
Anson	29,464	46,500	17,036	57.8
Arthur	23,173	40,000	16,827	72.6
Auburn	22,708	36,000	13,292	58.5
Birch Creek	22,417	39,479	17,062	76.1
Bloomer	26,875	40,057	13,182	49.0
Cleveland	21,750	33,929	12,179	56.0
Colburn	23,289	35,625	12,336	53.0
Cooks Valley	31,607	43,523	11,916	37.7
Delmar	23,274	40,278	17,004	73.1
Eagle Point	29,489	54,250	24,761	84.0
Edson	23,967	34,722	10,755	44.9
Estella	25,132	38,250	13,118	52.2
Goetz	26,250	39,028	12,778	48.7
Hallie	31,764	46,547	14,783	46.5
Howard	30,658	42,109	11,451	37.4
Lafayette	34,183	52,850	18,667	54.6
Lake Holcombe	19,583	33,083	13,500	68.9
Ruby	24,000	30,208	6,208	25.9
Sampson	22,237	33,021	10,784	48.5
Sigel	25,500	37,639	12,139	47.6
Tilden	32,188	46,477	14,289	44.4
Wheaton	31,981	52,692	20,711	64.8
Woodmohr	31,563	47,500	15,937	50.5

Villages				
Boyd	19,306	37,250	17,944	92.9
Cadott	20,598	33,295	12,697	61.6
Lake Hallie	17,083	30,000	12,917	75.6
New Auburn*	19,306	37,250	17,944	92.9
Cities				
Bloomer	21,575	38,715	17,140	79.4
Chippewa Falls	23,056	32,744	9,688	42.0
Cornell	20,404	30,690	10,286	50.4
Eau Claire**	29,259	39,643	10,384	35.5
Stanley***	17,193	27,644	10,451	60.8
Chippewa County	25,858	39,596	13,738	53.1
State of Wisconsin	29,442	43,791	14,349	47.1

1.10 Ethnic diversity

Table 1-10 shows Howard is 99.1% Caucasian and the other .9% is made up of Asian and persons who listed themselves as belonging to other or more than one race. In the year 2000, of the 648 people making up Howard’s population, 642 were Caucasian. There were four Asians and one that is classified as two or more races. Howard is not an ethnically diverse town and neither is the rest of Chippewa County. However, the City of Eau Claire has a significant Asian (Hmong) population that is growing both in number and economic vitality. In addition, Hispanic migration into the surrounding area, particularly as laborers in the nearby urban centers of Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls and as employees on dairy farms that are not exclusively family operated has been on the increase since the 2000 Census. Despite these changes in the surrounding area, the lack of industry in the Town of Howard coupled with the reduction in the number of dairy operations and the transfer of lands to crop farming by operators with ownership or leaseholds on several hundreds of acres of crop land, strongly suggests that the demographic trend during the next 20 years will not be toward greater ethnic diversity in the Town’s population.

Table 1-10

Total pop	White	% White	Black/African Amer.	Asian	Hispanic	Other	Two or more	% other
648	642	99.1%	0	4	0	1	1	.9%

ELEMENT 2: HOUSING

2.0 Housing: Prospect for future developments

Located at the western edge in the southern part of Chippewa county, the Town of Howard is equidistant (approximately eight miles) from the outskirts of Chippewa Falls on the east and Eau Claire on the South and about five miles from the Village of Colfax on the west, making it well situated for development in the next 20 years. There are several sources of new development:

- 1) The expansion of the industrial park on the northwest of Eau Claire will promote residential development in nearby outlying areas, especially for employees of companies located in the park, who have prospects of long term employment.
- 2) The increasing commercial and light industrial development in the area of Highway 29 and County Road T, just four miles south of the southern board of the Town, will push residential development further north, especially into the southern and eastern parts of the Town of Howard. The likely prospect of reconstructing County Road T from a two lane to a four lane road between the city limits of Eau Claire to Hwy 29 in order to accommodate already heavy auto and truck traffic will increase the pressure for development and stress the housing density limits already established by the Town.
- 3) The increasing saturation of lands along the Highway T corridor between Eau Claire and Highway 29 with subdivision development, small hobby farms and ranchettes, and the fact that the area northwest of Eau Claire is the only area not already overburdened with urban sprawl.

Counting the new housing starts between 1990 and 2000, the US Census shows that the Town of Howard ranks among the fastest growing towns in Chippewa County, growing at the rate of 17.3% during this period. New housing starts in the Town of Howard have declined in the past three years, largely due to the deep recession in the housing market at both the sale and construction ends of the spectrum and, to a lesser extent, to the spike to \$4.00 a gallon of gas

in 2007-2008, coupled with a new and used car market low in both supply and demand for cars with high fuel efficiency ratings. This decline will be reversed as the housing market revives and highly fuel efficient modes of transportation become widely available. The dream of country living is still very much a part of Midwestern culture. The Town of Howard will be a prime target for new housing development during the next 20 years. Managing that development consistent with the preservation of working agricultural lands, maintaining and the preservation of the landscape which is so essential to the identity of the Town and the reason why most people chose to reside in the Town, is the central challenge facing the Town in the coming years.

2.1 Housing Goals and Objectives

1. Preservation of the Town's rural landscape.

This goal underlies housing objectives and policies as well as many of the objectives and policies adopted in the other elements of this comprehensive plan. Its rural landscape gives the Town of Howard its identity both for longtime residents as well as more recent and future residents.

2. Reduction of land use conflicts.

Residential land uses can conflict with other uses, including agricultural uses.

3. Preservation of the market value of residential property.

4. Ensure that new housing development can be efficiently and effectively served by emergency fire and EMS service providers, as well as septic and utility service providers.

2.2 Housing Strategies and Policies

1. Encourage housing development on soils suitable for residential dwellings

Map no. 15 shows areas where soils present problems for private septic systems and traditional house construction with basements.

2. Encourage the location of housing on marginal agricultural and non-forested lands in order to preserve the remaining working agricultural and forested lands in the Town and the Town's landscape.

3. Because of the prevalence of soils unsuitable for large scale housing units, limit development to one or two family dwellings.
4. Enforce applicable State and local building codes.
5. Adopt policies to ensure that subdivision developments and condominium lands are located on marginal agricultural lands and minimize residential/agricultural land use conflict insofar as practicable.
6. Preserve property values by controlling dwelling size, structural types, and building site locations.
7. Consider the adoption of a Town zoning ordinance to include farmland preservation zones to prevent the loss of farmland and to encourage residential development on agriculturally marginal lands
8. Require a minimum a lot size for a single or two family dwellings in an area composed of stand-alone lots. The Town currently has established by ordinance a minimum lot size of five acres per single or two family dwelling.
9. Through careful review of site plans, encourage landowners to consider alternatives to clearing large areas of forested hill tops in order to preserve the rural nature of the Town and the scenic beauty of the Town's landscape.
10. Consider site specific plans for subdivisions based on five acre minimum lot sizes that allow for cluster housing development with less than five acre lot sizes under certain conditions and with the remaining acreage placed in an out lot to be commonly owned by residents of the subdivision or condominium lands and managed by the owners for green space.
11. Ensure that roads serving subdivisions be built to town road standards as a necessary condition of town ownership and maintenance of those roads.
12. Ensure that a driveway serving a new dwelling located in excess of 500 feet off a public roadway have sufficient width, clearance, and turn around for the passage of fire trucks and utility service vehicles.
13. Consider the need for employee housing on farmland with an allowance for less than the minimum five acre lot size requirement. If the proposed dwelling is located in an exclusive ag zone where only one dwelling per 40 acres is the maximum density required, and if more than one dwelling is proposed on 60 acres or more, consider

clustering the dwellings, including siting the dwellings on lot sizes less than five acres in order to maximize the amount of acreage as working agricultural land.

2.3 Existing Conditions: Housing Units

Between 1990 and 2000 the number of housing units increased from 201 to 237, an increase of 17.3 %. With the average household size of 2.76 persons, the population of Howard increased by approximately 10 new residents per year during this period. Other comparable towns (percent change) are Anson (16.6%), Lafayette (17.8%), and Tilden (17.3%).

**Table 2-3a
Housing Units by Number**

<u>Municipal Name</u>	<u>2000 Households</u>	<u>Number of Housing Units</u>		<u>Change in Units 1990-2000</u>		<u>Percent Seasonal</u>
		<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Net Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
Howard	235	202	237	35	17.3%	0%

All housing units in the Town are registered as year-round residences. The lack of any registered seasonal residences is probably due to the lack of natural lakes and rivers of sufficient size to provide recreational opportunities during the summer and very limited specialized recreational opportunities during the winter months in the town or general area.

Table 2-3a shows the statistical projections for housing units in Howard.

Table 2-3b

Housing Units Projections by Number

Town	2000	Proj. 2005	Proj. 2010	Proj. 2015	Proj. 2020	Proj. 2025	Proj. 2030
Howard	237	254	270	286	301	316	332

These projections indicate that there will be 95 new housing units built from 2000 to 2030. This is a large increase for a small town like Howard. Household projections are very similar to table 3-2, indicating that the town of Howard will grow in housing units and households within the next 20 years. These straight-line statistical projections are probably very misleading given the development pressures identified in the 3.0. In the absence of housing policy that guides and development in the interest of preserving the landscape and agricultural

lands, housing unit projections will likely fall far short of the number that can be reasonably expected to occur in the next 20 years.

2.4 Existing conditions: Housing characteristics

By the year 2000, all housing units were occupied and, of the 233 total occupied units, only 17 were rental units. Of the occupied units, only 11% (25) were mobile homes. Of this number only one mobile home unit had been located during the 1990-2000 - the period of most rapid growth in the past 20 years (see Table 2-4). No multi-family units have been in place in 1990 and are currently prohibited by Town Ordinance. A significant number of mobile homes were put in place between 1980 and 1990, several being placed in a floodplain. Since 1990, restrictions have been placed on the location of mobile homes.

**Table 2-4
Housing Characteristics 1980-2000**

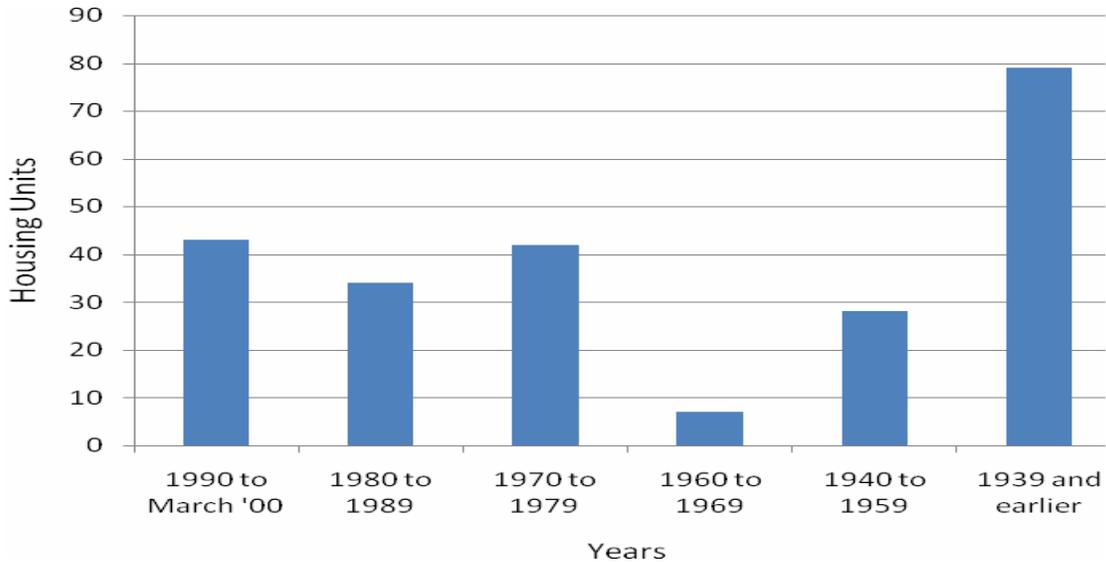
Town	1980	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	193	202	237
Total Seasonal	0	2	0
	1980	1990	2000
Total Vacant	6	9	0
Total Occupied Units	187	193	233
Owner Occupied	165	168	216
Renter Occupied	22	25	17
Single Family Units	182	173	208
Multi-Family Units	4	0	0
Mobile Homes	7	24	25

2.5 Existing Conditions: Housing Age Characteristics

Age characteristics of the housing units are an important factor within the community of Howard. The older houses will eventually need to be rehabilitated, replaced or abandoned. If the older housing units are not rehabilitated or replaced, the number of newer housing units will increase. Also with the population growing, the number of housing units will increase. As demand for new housing units grows, issues such as land availability, potential for land use conflicts, and increases in the need for and costs of community services become more pressing.

Of the 233 existing occupied housing units, 79 units were built prior to 1939. In short, 33.9% of the all housing units in Howard are 69 years or older. Not counting the number of housing units built in the 2001-2009 years, 51% (119 units) are 38 years or less in age.

**Graph 2-5
Housing Unit Construction to Year 2000**



**Table 2-6
Age of Housing Units by Number 2000**

1990 to 2000	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1940 to 1959	1939 or earlier
43	34	42	7	28	79

**Table 2-7
Housing Units by Percent 2000**

1990 to March 2000	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1940 to 1959	1939 or earlier
18.4%	14.5%	18.0%	3.0%	12.0%	33.9%

**Table 2-8
House Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Units in Dollars – 2000**

Town	<50,000	50,000-99,999	100,000-149,000	150,000-199,999	200,000-299,999	300,000-499,999	500,000 or more	Median Value
Howard	8	41	36	8	0	0	0	96,900

Table 2-7 shows that the housing stock of homes aged 40 years or less is 50 of all units and undoubtedly reflects residential development for migrants into the Town and the offspring of landowners already housed in the Town. Very little housing was constructed in the 30 year period between 1940 and 1970 reflecting the fact that the agricultural economy hummed along at a steady rate. The sizable number of farm homes aged 70 years and older (34%) are maintained in good condition and the properties they occupy are well-kept.

Table 2-8 shows that the majority of the houses in Howard are worth \$50,000 to \$149,000. The median value is a good representation of the house value in Howard.

2.6 Demographic profile of the Town of Howard

1. Housing Occupant Characteristics

**Table 2-9
Employment by Occupation**

Occupation	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Executive, administrative and managerial	17	5.2	-	-
Professional	19	5.8	93	25.4
Technician	7	2.2	-	-
Sales	26	8	62	16.9
Administrative support, including clerical	25	7.7		
Service	35	10.8	51	13.9
Farming, forestry, fishing	91	28	13	3.6
Construction, extraction and maintenance	-	-	48	13.1
Precision production, craft and repair	37	11.4	-	-
Machine operators, assemblers and inspectors	29	8.9	99	27
Transportation and material moving	25	7.7	-	-
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers & laborers	14	4.3	-	-
Total Employment (16 years and over)	325	100	366	100

Table 2-9 shows that the occupation of farming has dropped immensely. During the 1980 to 2000 period, large scale logging operations in the Town and surrounding areas had significantly declined and sawyer occupations were being rapidly replaced by mechanical means of harvesting the trees. There continues to be work trucking logs to mills in Colfax and the south eastern parts of Eau Claire County. But aside from harvesting small plots in the area immediately surrounding the town, virtually all large scale operations occur in the Chippewa County Forest to the north and Eau Claire County forest to the east. There is no commercial fishing activity in this part of the state and no commercial fish farms currently located in the Town.

The increase in the proportion of service, sales, professional and machinist occupations reflects the decrease in the number of residents participating in the agricultural economy. This is good representative of the lost of agriculture lands and changes in the pattern of agricultural ownership/operations in Howard. It also reflects the increasing migration of people from urban areas into the Town for purely residential purposes.

2. Median Household income

Table 2-10
Median Household Income in Dollars

<u>Town</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>Dollars Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Howard	30,658	42,109	11,451	37.4

Table 2-10 shows the difference between median household income between 1989 and 1999. The table shows significant difference in the years. The median household income has increased 37.4%. The data is insufficient to show how much of the increase in the medium income is due to inflation and how much do to shifts in the occupations of Town residents.

3. Monthly Housing Costs as a percentage of household income

Table 2-11
Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income - 1999

Town	<15%	15.0%- 19.9%	20.0%- 24.9%	25.0%- 29.9%	30.0%- 34.9%	35.0% or more	Total Units
Howard Owner	42	25	9	8	2	5	93
Howard Renter	1	0	4	0	0	0	9

Table 2-11 shows there are only five contracted renters in the year of 2000. Three of the five renters pay in the range of \$200-\$299 per month and the remaining two renters pay \$300-\$399 per month. Fifteen homeowners exceed the recommended 25% of income that can be safely devoted to the cost of housing. In these 15 cases, continued home ownership is being stretched to the point of collapse and the Town may be facing foreclosures on some units in these difficult times.

2.7 Population and Housing Density 2007

Howard, WI	
Density per Square Mile	
Population	Housing Units
18.1	6.6

In itself, housing density has no direct significance. However, density is an important measure of the effectiveness of the density limit that may be part of housing ordinance revisions and a zoning ordinance, especially given the goal of preserving the rural character of the landscape and the preservation of working agricultural lands.

2.8 Town of Howard Survey Results

1. Lot size policy:
 - (a) 72% favored keeping a minimum five acre lot size throughout the Town with 24% disagreeing with this policy.
 - (b) 29 % favored allowing dwellings to be built in some areas of the Town on lots of less than 5 acres provided this would increase the availability of affordable housing in the Town, while 60% disagreed with this policy. 10% had no opinion.

(c) Citizens were about evenly divided on the issue of cluster development in subdivisions. Given a 20 acre subdivision as an example, with four 2-acre lot sizes and the remaining 12 acres owned and managed as green space by members of the subdivision, opinion was almost evenly divided. 35% favored the idea, 45% opposed the idea and 15% had no opinion.

2. Structure types:

(a) 71% favored allowing only single family residences in subdivisions, with 17% disagreeing with this view and 12% having no opinion.

(b) 22% favored a policy that allowed duplexes, while 69% opposed the allowance of duplexes and 11% had no opinion

(c) 78% disapproved a policy that would permit the construction of four-plexes or apartment dwellings; with only 14% approving this policy and 7% had no opinion.

3. Zoning

(a) 79% believe that the Town has a duty to minimize land use conflicts and protect the property values of all its citizens, while 17% believed it had no such duty and 4% had no opinion.

(b) 79% favored creating a Town of Howard zoning ordinance as a means to regulating land use conflicts, 19% were opposed and 2% had no opinion.

(c) In addition, when asked whether zoning should be achieved by the adoption of County zoning rather than developing the Town's own zoning ordinance, 79% opposed the adoption of County zoning, 13% favored it and 8% expressed no opinion.

4. Imposing an impact fee on new residential development.

65% favored imposing an impact fee on new residential development, while 22% opposed the policy and 11% had no opinion.

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

3.0 Transportation

The transportation system within the Town of Howard consists of roadways, bridges, and a railroad. The town does not contain an airport, state, county, or Local Park, or designated ATV, cross-country ski or bicycle trails. No roads have been designated as rustic roads. A snowmobile trail weaves its way through the Town on private lands with landowner permission. Where landowner permission is denied, the trail utilizes ditches along County and Town roads. The boundary and directional signs that mark the trail and the stop signs at road crossings are put up in late fall and removed in the spring. The Town lacks major natural resources attractions or developed recreational opportunities, so traffic is not subject to tourism or seasonal variations. There is no public transportation system in place within the town. However, school buses from four school districts pick up children at their residences and drop them off at the end of the school day.

3.1 Existing Conditions: Roadways, Railroads, Bridges

(1) Roads

The Town has a total of 61.75 miles of roads. Of this total, 16.25 miles are listed by the County as under their jurisdiction, 42.0 miles are listed under Town jurisdiction, and 3.5 miles are under the jurisdiction of the State of Wisconsin (Hwy 40).

Roads are classified into three categories – arterials (such as Wis. Hwy 40), collectors and local roads. Typically, arterials provide the least amount of driveway and field access and highest level of mobility (faster speed limits, year-round use for all types of vehicles), while local roads provide the most access and lowest level of mobility. Collector roads (such as County Roads B, N, and T) provide somewhat greater access and less mobility because of use restrictions such as lower weight limits and a use prohibition during the spring thaw. Local roads and the sections of County Roads DD and S provide greater access, often slower speed limits, and seasonal restrictions.

The category of road also determines different sources of funding. Federal cost sharing funds are available for reconstruction of arterial and some collector roads that serve to connect state and federal highways. County road B lies in the latter category. County Roads N running east-west through the southern and western parts of the Town and County Road T running north from the southern edge of the Town at its junction with N to its juncture with B is also a collector road. County Road DD and S are 2.76 miles but are classed as local roads.

The Town is not financially responsible for funding State or County roads. The State provides \$1,900 for each of the Town's 42 miles of local roads. Considering that in 2008, the cost of grinding the existing asphalt, graveling and paving one mile of road amounts to at least \$175,000, the \$79,800, and the amount of State Transportation aid doesn't go very far, particularly since this money needs also to be use for snowplowing and sanding in the winter and mowing ditches in the summer.

Roadways are routinely inspected each spring for deteriorating conditions using a software program call PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating). Using PASER, roads are rated on a scale of 1 to 10 and gravel roads on a scale of 1 to 5, based upon visual inspection. The PASER software is capable of generating several different reports that assist the town board to prioritize road reconstruction and repair projects. The reports also allow the board to see how maintenance money can best be spent to extend the life of existing roads. For example, crack filling or seal coating a road that is in pretty good shape can extend the life of that road by keeping out snow and water that causes more rapid destruction of the road. The life of a well constructed road is 20-30 years. Currently, the town asphalt roadways are rated "above average" between 6 and 9 on a scale of 1-10. Gravel roads rate 3-4 on a scale of 1-5.

The Town repairs potholes or severe cracking in order to extend the life of the road. As funds allow the town contracts for crack filling and seal coating. Reconstruction projects are put out for competitive bidding. Chippewa County and private contractors usually submit bids. Reconstruction is planned in a six year cycle for the LRIP (Local Road Improvement Plan). LRIP is money that becomes available to the Town from the state about once every four years. The LRIP money is provided in addition to State Transportation Aids. LRIP funds are usually only able to cover a very small portion of a reconstruction project.

(2) Railways

One railway system, owned and operated by Canadian National, runs in an east-west direction through the town. Canadian National maintains the only railroad bridge within the town. The bridge is constructed of wood and is older that any current resident. Planks are replaced by the railroad when necessary. Whether it will the railroad will ever replace the bridge with a more serviceable structure is an open question. There is no rail stop or loading facility within the town at this time. Yet the railroad represents a great asset to the town. As fuel costs

keep rising, less expensive rail transportation cannot be overlooked. At one time, a pickle factory was located along the railway tracks in an area known as New Albertville. The factory used the rail to transport pickles to and from the pickle factory to outlying markets. The historic “Howard Depot” located near the pickle factory in New Albertville no longer exists. A railcar siding is still in place and currently being used for temporary railcar storage at a location on the far eastern edge of the Town.

Addendum B contains a map that provides an excellent picture of how the Canadian National railway running through Howard connects with other railway systems in this part of Wisconsin. The rail bed is in good condition and the train operates on a daily basis throughout the year.

(3) Bridges

Town bridges are inspected every two years by certified Chippewa County personnel. Bridges are rated and classified in terms of their functional and structural situation. Older bridges are frequently classified as *functionally obsolete* if they no longer meet modern geometric standards. For example, a bridge would be rated as functionally obsolete if its lanes or shoulders would be narrower than required of more modern bridges. If a bridge is classified as functionally obsolete, it does not mean that bridge is unsafe for public travel. A bridge can also be rated as *structurally deficient* if it has one or more things that need repair. For example, a bridge would be rated as structurally deficient if it has potholes on its deck or rust on its metal trusses. This rating does not mean the bridge is unsafe for travel. These factors just need to be fixed, but have little to no impact on a bridge’s overall safe function of getting the user across the bridge without it collapsing. Depending on the extent of the structural deficiency, the bridge may be load-posted until improvements are completed. The last inspection was in 2008. The bridge on 40th Street over the CMSTPP railroad constructed in 1929 is the only bridge in the Town rated as functionally obsolete. It is owned and maintained by the Canadian National Railroad Company. No Town owned bridges were rated as structurally deficient.

Of the nine bridges within the town, five are one lane measuring sixteen feet wide which makes passage by some farm equipment impossible. The remaining four bridges are weighted for 40 ton loads and in good condition.

Bridge repair and reconstruction is funded with 80% Federal money, 10% State money, and 10% Town money. If the five narrow, functionally obsolete bridges were replaced, funding would involve 50% of the cost paid by County money and 50% paid by the Town. Federal funds are not available for functionally obsolete bridges.

3.2 Transportation Safety

The following table shows the annual number of accidents in the Town in each year from 2003-2007.

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
12	8	6	8	12

This is among the lowest accident totals among towns in the County. This is likely due to the fact that no major arterials go through the Town so the traffic flow is fairly light, even on the sections of the three major collector roads that course through the Town. Records of the nature and cause of the accidents are kept by the County Highway Department.

Visibility from the roadway is an important safety consideration. The danger represented by wildlife on the roadway is great. To increase the visibility, the ditches are mowed periodically during the summer months. Due to limited visibility on roads with many curves and trees close to the road, roadway signage is not only informational but necessary. Upgrading the existing signage to newly defined retro-reflectability requirements represents a cost that is well worth the additional visibility that is provided.

Railroad crossings are unguarded but are adequately marked for motorist safety. Although the 35th Street crossing in New Albertville has had no car or train accidents, icy conditions and visibility create a coupled with poor warning signs, makes this site an accident waiting to happen for the unwary and non-resident motorist traveling south through this crossing.

3.3 Transportation Maintenance Equipment

The Town of Howard owns several pieces of equipment used for road maintenance. A used Ford L8000 1.5 ton plow/dump truck was purchased in 1988 for \$26,000. A John Deere

772 BH, 6 wheel drive grader was purchased new in 1988 for \$118,000. A John Deere tractor with bucket and mower was purchased around 1975. Each of these pieces of equipment has been fully depreciated. As conditions warrant, replacement will be needed based on available funding.

3.4 Transportation funding issues

As noted above, revenue for funding maintenance, repair, and reconstruction of Town roads comes from property taxes, State or Federal transportation aids, and state shared revenue. As with most small towns, the bulk of annual revenue is spent on transportation costs. Wis. Statutes mandate towns spend 70% of annual revenue on transportation costs.

One challenge in the payment for transportation costs arises from the untimely receipt of funds by the town. The date on which funds including tax revenues are received does not always coordinate with the date on which payment for completed projects is due. Sometimes, payment cannot even be made in the same fiscal year as the funds are received. In addition, the County is now charging interest for late payment, further increasing the cost of transportation in the town. There are also limitations on the ability of the town to increase revenues by raising the tax levy. Property taxes can only be raised 2% per year. With roadway construction and repair costs increasing at a rate greater than 2% per year, it is possible to have roads continue to deteriorate due to funding constraints and payment costs. In the past the Town has not adopted a policy of establishing a cash reserve contingency fund. However, establishing a cash reserve contingency fund would enable the Town to more efficiently weather the emergency payment or purchase situations without the cost of borrowing funds to meet their temporary needs and would also be consistent with long term planning for replacement of the Town's aging transportation equipment.

In addition to the maintenance and replacement costs for roadway equipment, the cost of materials for sanding and road patching is increasing. In the winter of 2008-2009 for example, the salt/sand mixture spread on hills and corners for better traction on ice and snow cost the Town \$20,000 and this does not cover the labor costs involved. Approximately 65 % of the town's budget is designated for public works. These costs can be expected to increase and with limited means to increase funding, equipment replacement costs could cripple the budget of the town.

Most of the roadways within the town are designed for 40 ton payloads. If loads being transported are suspected of exceeding the weight limit via visual inspection, the town constable has the authority to issue a citation. However, the town does not maintain a weigh station. The closest certified weigh station is several miles from the town. The Town of Howard posts temporary weight restrictions on roadways in the spring due to thawing conditions at the same time as Chippewa County posts the county roads. The restrictions attempt to reduce road damage when the roads are undergoing spring thaw.

As roadway costs for construction and maintenance continue to climb, the Town will have to do “more with less”. The primary way to control taxes will be to limit spending. This will become increasingly difficult with more demands on fewer dollars. As state and county face limits to funding and increasing costs, the town may have to spend more funds for town administration, planning, and development, meaning less money for roadway construction and maintenance. As an example, because of the budget crises in 2009, the state and county have limited ditch mowing to a single shoulder cut for the year. The town may also have to make budgetary cuts to parallel the cuts made by the state and county as a result of funding cuts.

The town contains parts of four school districts – Elk Mound Area School District, Chippewa Falls Area School District, Bloomer School District, and Colfax School District. Due to the agricultural nature of the town, busing the students from their home to school is a major cost consideration. As fuel costs and school bus replacement costs continue to rise, alternative solutions may need to be developed. It is possible that the cost of home-door to school busing policy will be reduced by the development of a school bus depot in the Town. The concept is similar to the commuter parking lot. While this concept is already in place in urban areas, application to a rural, farming area is new.

3.5 Other transportation related issues.

As development pressures increase in the Town, the hills of Howard will likely be more exposed to development than in the past. In some cases, driveways to residences on hillsides or hilltops that were put in prior to current ordinances severely restrict the use of those driveways by emergency vehicles, especially fire trucks and tankers. Building site selection and planning for a given development should place driveway location, design and construction on a par with perc tests and septic system choices.

When subdivisions and condominium lands are developed, careful attention should be given upfront to the location of any private road, the standards to which it will be designed and constructed, and the eventuality of a request of the Town for road services (snowplowing and sanding, grading etc.), road repair, or assumption of road ownership. Lack of sufficient attention to this detail has caused problems in the recent past.

Some roads that in the past have been through roads connecting one road to another, or connecting several residences to one road today serve only one residence and terminate at that residence. They function as a private driveway does; yet the Town still maintains ownership, and the associated obligations of providing road services and repair. Past attempts to abandon these roads have failed. The Town should persist in its effort to abandon these roads, allowing them to convert to the private ownership of the sole regular user.

3.6 Transportation goals, objectives and policies

1. Preserve and maintain the quality of Town roads up to PASER ratings current in 2009 to the extent that is economically feasible.
2. Consider developing a cash reserve contingency fund to minimize funding costs.
3. Review current ordinances regulating accesses and driveways to ensure that new driveways serving residences located a great distance from a public road have adequate width, turn-around opportunity and clearance so that the residences can be served by emergency and utility vehicles.
4. Review subdivision/condominium ordinances to ensure that private roads in a development are built to Town road standards if there is any likelihood that eventually the Town will be requested to either take over ownership of the road or to service (snowplow and sand) the road or repair it.
5. Continue efforts to abandon roads that no longer serve any public purpose.
6. Review policies regarding the provision of services such as grading and snowplowing for private driveways and the fees charged for these services.
7. Consider developing a policy for the mechanical control of noxious weeds and exotic plants along roads and right of ways in the Town so that they do not spread into pastures and crop fields.

3.7 Town of Howard Survey Results

1. 24% of residents drive between one and ten miles to work and 45% travel a distance greater than ten miles to work.
2. The residents agree that town roads are kept in good repair and are satisfied with the snow plowing and sanding.
3. Mowing of the ditches to improve visibility and motorist safety is important to more than 60% of the survey respondents.

Element 4: Utilities and Community Facilities

4.1 Town Services

The State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law (§66.1001) requires that comprehensive plans include a “compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit.”

The Town of Howard is a rural community consisting of farms and single family residences. Residential development is located on single lots with the exception of two subdivisions. No public water or sewer services are available. The only community facility is a Town Hall built in 1989 with an attached Fire District garage, Town garage and an adjoining outdoor recycling center. The Town provides its citizens with four services: (1) Disposal of garbage and disposal of recyclable materials such as glass, plastic, cardboard, metals, and paper. Recently, disposal of appliances, tires and electronics can be made for a modest fee. (2) Emergency paramedic services. (3) Fire Protection service. (4) Use of the Town Hall for public meetings and private events.

4.2 Recycling and solid waste disposal

The Town maintains a recycling center at the Town Hall located at the Corner of Hwy 40 and County Rd B in the Northwest section of the Town. The Town began providing its citizens with the opportunity to recycle glass and metals in 1989. When the Wisconsin Solid Waste Reduction, Recovery, and Recycling Law went into effect in 1990, all other recyclable materials were included. Recycled newsprint is given to local farmers who use it for animal bedding. The recycled paper ends up as a soil conditioner on farm fields. Waste Management Inc., a commercial hauler, picks up the recyclables and the solid waste (garbage) at the center once a month. There is some garbage/recyclable “curbside” pickup being made by private commercial haulers, but the extent of it is negligible and contracts with new customers are being refused.

The cost to citizens of garbage disposal is currently \$3.00 per 30 gallon bag of garbage with no cost for disposing of recycled plastics and paper. Joining with the neighboring Town of Cooks Valley in the recycling effort has resulted in cost savings for hauling and an increase in funding aids from the State.

Only non-hazardous materials can be deposited as garbage or recyclables at the Town Hall Recycling Center. Hazardous waste must be disposed of at special sites selected by the County. As State grant assistance allows, Chippewa County conducts a combined

household/agricultural “Clean Sweep” twice a year to provide residents a safe means of disposing of hazardous chemicals, paints, solvents, etc. Contact the Recycling Program within the Land Conservation Department (715-726-7999) or visit their website for current dates, times and drop-off locations.

The Town also accepts appliances, electronics and tires for a modest fee. The County also collects appliances and electronics for a small fee three times a year at four different locations (Chippewa Falls, Cornell, Stanley, and New Auburn). The County also accepts waste tires for recycling on thirteen different dates at two locations (Cornell and Lafayette). Special recycling programs for fluorescent bulbs, pharmaceuticals, and sharps/needles are also available through the County. For more information on recycling both hazardous and non-hazardous waste material by Chippewa County, contact the Recycling Program within the Land Conservation Department (715-726-7999) or visit their website.

All fees are variable depending on the cost of disposal services.

4.3 EMS and Fire Protection services

The Town provides emergency medical services and fire protection services in association with other local government units that make up the Chippewa Fire District. The district includes the Village of Lake Hallie, population 6,132, and the Towns of Hallie, population 136, Howard, population 695, Lafayette, population 5,911, and Wheaton, population 2,670. Stations are located in each jurisdiction as equidistant from each other as possible. In 2007 the district served 15,564 people, approximately 25% of the 61,604 population of Chippewa County.

It is important to recognize that the emergency medical and fire protection services are not essentially “owned” by the local government unit in which the station is located and the service provided out of the Howard station is not devoted exclusively to the Town of Howard. The district is divided into stations designated as first and second responders depending on their proximity to the emergency and the type of equipment that needs to be deployed in order to adequately handle it. A grass fire is going to need a truck that can both spray water on the fire and move along the line of the fire at the same time. A large tanker that can only operate from a stationary position would be useless for this type of emergency but the larger stationary tanker truck is necessary for building fires. The policy is to have all the equipment and personnel

necessary for handling any emergency placed so that they get to the scene as fast as possible. For a very large fire event, for example, several stations would be activated to rush to the scene with whatever equipment is necessary to do the job.

(1) EMS service

Paramedic level service is available 24/7 throughout the district. The Howard station has two volunteers trained to the emergency medical technician level and a fully equipped medical Rescue Truck. The district employs six full-time paramedics. Two stations supply ambulance service only with very limited medical equipment, supplies and training. A physician is paid \$1,000 per month to be available on call when needed for severe trauma cases.

(a) Funding for the EMS service

Funding for EMS services in the district is on a per capita basis. The annual amount of each local governmental unit's dues is adjusted according to the type of service able to be provided by a station's equipment and trained volunteers. Since Howard's station equipment and personnel can provide paramedic services, the cost per capita is \$24.50 for the 693 persons living in the Town, amounting to a dues payment of \$16,977 by the Town to the Fire District budget in the 2009 budget year. For a minimal ambulance service for residents living in close proximity to a medical facility, the cost is \$10 per capita. The higher the level of service (training, equipment and supplies), the higher the per capita dues will be. The maximum level of service and the maximum dues fee is currently \$24.50.

Uses of the EMS are covered by private insurance and Medicare and Medicaid. However, each run costs the district about \$900. Medicare pays \$400 and Medicaid pays \$212 to the district per trip. The taxpayers pick up the remainder of the cost. In addition, the District provides services to uninsured residents of the district at no charge greater than the per capita dues fee the Town pays. The district also provides transfer services from one hospital facility to another major hospital facility.

(b) Equipment for EMS service located at the Howard Town Hall station

A 1986 Ford Road Rescue Ambulance equipped for paramedic service is currently located at the station but is scheduled to be replaced in 2009 by a 1999 Ford Road Rescue Ambulance complete with the latest equipment and supplies.

(c) Frequency of Service

Over the past decade, EMS runs from the Howard station ranged from 12-15 runs a year. The frequency of use is increasing in recent years in large part due to the lower mobility of an aging resident population as well as a population increase in Howard and Wheaton.

(2) Fire Protection service

(a) Funding for and rating of fire protection service.

The primary funding source is from local property taxes. When an estimate is reached regarding the total capital and operational costs of providing EMS and fire protection services to the population in the entire district, then that estimate determines how much revenue will need to be generated in order to pay the costs of service. Property values are classed as industrial, commercial, agricultural and residential with different costs associated with each class based on experience in the provision of service. The total assessed property values for each protected class of property is determined and a mill rate levied on that class sufficient to cover the estimated costs of protection for property in that class. Each local governmental unit contains within it some percentage of the total equalized value of property across the entire district. In 2008 the Equalized value of all property in the district was \$1,262,050,900. Total property values in Howard were \$58,449,600. A mill rate of 0.000416 was levied against those equalized values. Since Howard's percentage is 4.635% of the total value of properties in the district its payment for the 2009 year was \$24,300. Needless to say, many citizens do not understand the concept of equalized value and become upset when, for example, the Town of Lafayette which holds 40.9052% of the total property value ends up making a total payment of \$214,507. However, equalized value means that every citizen's dollar is worth as much and no more than another other citizen's dollar. If one citizen therefore has a house worth \$200,000, the cost of fire protection for that home is incorporated into the amount of taxes assessed on that home. $\$200,000 \times .000416 = \83.20 . The \$83.20 buys that citizen fire protection for his home. The tax levy on a home does not buy coverage for the damages caused by the fire. Coverage for the

repair of damages caused by the fire or replacement for the burned down house is what a home owner buys from a private insurance company.

There is an important relationship between the quality of protection available to residents and the cost of private home owner's insurance. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the worst, the quality of service in the Town of Howard has a 6 rating compared to a rating of 3 in the Village of Hallie. A 3 rating is only possible in a village or city where each block has a fire hydrant and the municipality has a public water supply with a prescribed gallon per minute flow rate at the hydrants. A 6 rating for a rural community with the need to haul water with tankers and pump trucks is an excellent rating. If a fire protection service had a rating of 10, the worst, and the service cost the home \$100 per unit of home value, then a rating of 9 would cost \$93; a rating of 8 would cost \$72; a rating of 7 would cost \$68; and a rating of 6 would cost \$65. A rating of 3 would cost \$42. Keep in mind that the urban homeowner with a rating of 3 pays less per unit of home value, but has to pay on tax on improvements assessed for the installation of the hydrant and water supply and well as pay for the associated cost of drinking water into his home. None of the later items are annual costs paid by the rural home owner. So while the cost of private insurance is much lower in the urbanized areas of the Fire District, the annual cost of providing infrastructure that is the reason for the higher rating is much higher over the long haul than in a rural district. Everything seems to be fair under the equalized value system of funding the fire district.

Chippewa Fire District fire fighters are an entirely volunteer force with the exception of administrative staff. The volunteers usually hold two fund-raisers a year. Howard holds a Dinner and Dance event and a breakfast event featuring their acclaimed breakfast. The funds acquired in these events go toward the purchase of small pieces of equipment and supplies used in providing EMS and Fire Protection service.

The final source of funding comes in the form of State aid. A Fire Department Dues Fund is supported by fire insurance premiums paid in Wisconsin. The Insurance Commissioner's Office annually collects 2% of premiums paid by citizens to private insurance companies and places them in this fund. The fund is then distributed to municipalities according to a formula that is too complex to set forth here. The annual fire dues payment to the Town in 2009 was \$1,400. Money in this fund must be used either to purchase fire protection equipment, fund fire prevention inspections and public fire education programs, fund fire fighter training and

the fees charged by fire inspectors, or funding for the fire fighter's pension or other special funds for the benefit of disabled or superannuated fire fighters.

(b) Volunteers

Volunteers must spend a lot of time on the job even when not involved in fighting a fire or medical rescues. Eighty hours of training is required to bring a volunteer up to the minimal level of certification. They also attend two meetings per month. They are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of equipment. A volunteer force in sufficient numbers and with schedules varied enough so that a supply of volunteers is readily available on call is highly important. Equipment is garaged at the station located at the Town Hall and kept in a ready to roll status at all times.

The task of fire protection poses variable challenges and risks to the fire fighters. It requires the volunteer to keep in top physical condition. The most physically demanding task involves interior work within a burning building, where strength, agility and endurance are at a premium. These physical attributes are the mark of youth to mid-age but decline with age despite best efforts to maintain them. Historically, the preponderance of farming in the Town provided a deep pool from which to draw physically fit men who remained physically fit well beyond mid-age. But over-time the demands of dairy farming on knees and hips reduce the agility necessary for interior work. Also, the migration of young men with farming backgrounds from the Town for good jobs elsewhere and their replacement by mid-aged men who commute to less demanding desk jobs or factory work several miles from the fire station, coupled with their unfavorable week-day work schedules, has significantly reduced the size of the recruitment pool. The Town is in a situation where 12 of its current volunteer force of 22 members are between 50 and 71 years of age and another five are between 43-49 years of age. Five volunteers are aged 27-34. Many citizens are willing, but of the willing, few are able. In addition, as population growth in Howard involves new residents with largely urban backgrounds where fire protection is provided by a paid professional force, the recruitment pool may be even further restricted. The future of the fire protection service, as the community has known it, may be endangered by an increasingly diminished opportunity to recruit suitable replacements to cover the rate of attrition of current members that is on the horizon.

(c) Equipment for Fire Protection Service

The Town of Howard first station is located at and attached to the Town Hall. It was built in 1989. It contains the following pieces of equipment:

- 1978 Chev/Smeal 750/1000/900 fire truck
- 1986 Pierce/Ranger Rescue Squad and Air Cascade
- 2000 Freightliner Tanker 300/4000
- 1986 GMC 4X4 250-100
- 1986 Chev 4X4 250/350
- Portable Sykes 3000 gpm Trailer Pump

The 32 year old 1978 Chev/Smeal 750/1000/900 Fire Truck was replaced in 2009 by a fire truck with greater water tank capacity (1500 gallon) and pumping rate, a top mount station for water hose operation, and other features common in more modern fire truck designs. The 1978 Chev/Smeal will be retained for use, because it is capable of spraying water while moving and therefore suitable for use against grass fires. The newer replacement truck will be a stationary pumper.

(d) Frequency of Service

The fire protection unit had about 6-10 runs as a first responder per year over the past decade. Additional runs as second responder also occurred.

(3) Town Hall Services

The Town Hall contains facilities for meetings and events such as family reunions, weddings, birthday parties and graduation and anniversary celebrations. The rental fee is \$150, except that 4H club meetings are free.

4.4 Private sewage

A private septic system serves each house. Map no. 15 shows that nearly the entire Town has soils with moderate to severe limitations when it comes to the use of conventional septic absorption fields.

In areas where soils have only slight limitations, septic disposal systems have a gravity flow design in which waste flows from the house to the septic tank where solids settle out and are stored for later removal and the remaining waste water flows from the septic tank into a soil absorption field. As gravity pulls the waste water through the soil in the absorption field, the waste water is cleansed before it reaches the groundwater table. In all conventional wastewater treatment systems, solids must be regularly pumped from the storage tank by a private hauler to be treated at a sewage treatment plant located elsewhere or spread on farm fields under a DNR permit. Only the wastewater is treated on-site.

A soil depth of at least three feet is needed to adequately purify the wastewater before it discharges into the groundwater. If the depth of the soil between the surface of the ground and the groundwater table, or between the surficial soil and bedrock is insufficient (usually less than six feet), then the absorption field cannot be placed in ground, but soil must be mounded above ground in order to provide adequate soil depth for gravity to do its job so the soils can purify the waste water before it reaches the groundwater. Typically, at grade or mound systems use some pressured system involving a lift pump to pump waste water from the septic tank into the absorption field.

Most of the soil in Howard has some characteristic that severely limits the use of conventional absorption systems. When this is the case a holding tank must be used to dispose of the wastewater. A holding tank is an underground storage unit with no outlet into the soil. The contents of the tank must be pumped regularly and properly disposed of.

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce (COMM 83) regulates the siting, design, installation and inspection of most private on-site sewage systems in the State. In 2000, the State adopted a revised private system policy (Wisconsin Statute COMM 83). The revised policy allows for conventional sewage systems and advanced pre-treatment sewage systems. There are several types of on-site disposal system designs authorized for use today: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at grade holding tank, and sand filter systems. Sanitary permits are required under state law. To obtain a permit, one must contact a Wisconsin-

licensed master plumber who will complete the necessary forms and obtain the sanitary permit. The plumber is also responsible for installing the private sewage system.

Under COMM 83, Wisconsin counties can further regulate private on-site waste disposal systems through a sanitary code. Chippewa County has adopted a sanitary ordinance as part of its Code of Ordinances (Chapter 62, Article IV, Division 2) which is enforced through the County Planning and Zoning Office. The Planning and Zoning Office will review and approve soil tests and plans, issue sanitary permits, and inspect systems during installation. Landowners who have a failing wastewater treatment system may be eligible to receive funding assistance from The Wisconsin Fund, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, for the replacement or rehabilitation of the failing system.

4.5 Water Supply

All incorporated communities in Chippewa County have publicly supplied drinking water. Several mobile home parks and courts also provide a common water supply. In all other areas of the County, private wells provide the water supply. Private well water is the blood of life of the Town. A general survey of groundwater quality has never been done in the County, although individual well tests show occasional spikes in nitrate levels above ten pounds per minute in wells adjacent to farmlands. Preserving the quality of the aquifer as well as its quantity has to be one of the highest priorities of land use management in the Town in future years.

4.6 Storm water runoff

The management of storm water runoff is important for the protection of surface waters. Storm water runoff is of special concern because of the Town's gently to steeply sloping landscape. By controlling the rate of storm water runoff, beneficial rains will be retained in place to optimize its opportunity to infiltrate the soils and replenish groundwater supplies. Encouraging the use of best management agricultural practices on moderate to severe slopes can serve to prevent the loss of fertile soils through erosion and the subsequent sedimentation of streams that run through and drain from the Town.

Storm water management is a concern at all levels government. State law requires landowners to develop an erosion control plan and obtain necessary Wisconsin DNR erosion

control and storm water discharge permits for all construction sites where one or more acres of land will be disturbed.

The Chippewa County subdivision regulations cover all unincorporated areas of the County and include a section pertaining to storm water management (Section 38-73). Drainage easements or rights may be required of developers to accommodate anticipated storm water discharge from the development.

Town and County ordinances related to the placement of culverts at driveway access points on Town and County roads as well as limitations on the gradient and the need for prompt seeding of driveway accesses aim to limit erosion caused by runoff. A concern for the control of erosion by the use and maintenance of best management practices during construction is reflected in the Town's subdivision ordinance.

4.7 Telecommunications

Telecommunications facilities and networks are increasingly critical for public safety and the quality of life for future citizens in the Town. Although not currently essential for the economy of the Town or economic development in the Town, it will become increasingly important as the future economy of the Town will likely expand more in the direction of cottage industry and work out of the home, than in the direction of significant industrial or commercial development. In addition, education at all levels increasingly depends on the use of wireless communication and the internet.

The increase in use of and need for wireless communication for public safety, education, business and personal use, constructing telecommunication towers has become a controversial issue in many Towns across the State. Chippewa County has not adopted an ordinance regulating the citing and placement of cell towers and the extent of a Town's legal authority to regulate the construction of telecommunication towers is dubious. Nine telecommunication providers currently are able to provide service to Town citizens.

As competition increases for the communications dollar, many traditional "wired" companies are upgrading their ability to provide high quality and swift communication services. West Wisconsin Telephone and Communications, for example, has laid fiber optic cable in those sections of the Town it is licensed to serve. The decision to base the statewide 911 system on fiber optic cable will soon render all overhead telephone lines obsolete.

The Town of Howard has established a website on which all meetings and their agendas are noticed and important documents are made available for the public to read and keep informed about Town government affairs. The Town website also facilitates the work of Town government by reducing the cost of paperwork and travel needed to conduct Town business. It is conceivable that in twenty years, Town citizens will be able to have live access to all Town meetings on their home computer monitors.

4.8 Goals and Policies

Goals 1: Provide a high quality and cost efficient fire protection and emergency medical services.

Currently, this goal is best achieved by participation in the all volunteer Chippewa Fire District and that is not expected to change in the near future. However, the intergovernmental cooperation necessary for the continued vitality of the District has threatened to break down in the recent past and may do so again in the future. Budget crises, visions of a greener pasture, and infighting among strong personalities sometimes get in the way of careful planning and problem solving. Of greater significance, however, are the demographic and occupational changes within the Town Howard (and Wheaton) that are starting to severely restrict the pool from which potential volunteers are drawn.

A number of methods for enhancing recruitment and retention may be considered. The Town may consider offering a monetary incentive package, short of offering hour wages, for levels of training achieved and years of service. Stipends may be considered for meetings attended and/or runs made. In order to honor the risks volunteers take without compensation and sacrifices made by families that enable them to serve the public in this way, the names of the volunteers may be posted on the Town's website in conjunction with the names of Town officials. Overtures may be made to the western half of Cook's Valley, to join the Chippewa Fire District for some of the benefits it would provide them.

Goal 2: Maintain the recycling and solid waste disposal service.

Consider periodic review of hours and days of operation so as to maximize convenience and opportunity for access to the facility. Annually review fees for services to keep them in line with the costs of disposal service.

Goal 3: Continue to use and expand the town website to enable Town government bodies to communicate with Town residents.

In addition to the posting of dates and times of scheduled meetings of the Town Board and Plan Commission, include the Town's code of ordinances and this comprehensive plan as well as other relevant documents and information as may be useful to them. List the names of volunteers on the fire protection/EMS force.

Goal 4: Consider ground and surface water protection as an important goal when reviewing subdivision and condominium plans and making siting decisions with regard to development.

Work with County and the State programs and regulations to ensure the protection of the groundwater and surface waters in the Town. Review current Town ordinances to make sure that the means to achieving this goal is clearly incorporated in the provisions of these ordinances.

ELEMENT 5: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

5.0 Agricultural resources

The most notable fact about agricultural resources is the startling decrease in productive farm land, nationally, statewide, and in the local area. Nationally, agricultural lands whose productivity depends on irrigation water drawn from ancient aquifers are in danger of being lost as those aquifers are being consumed at a rate faster than they can ever be replenished. Between 2003 and 2009 in West Central Wisconsin alone, 239 square miles of productive farmland were transferred to non-farm uses, an area slightly larger than Pepin County [*Source: Eau Claire Leader Telegram*]. Despite a similar dramatic decline in the total acreage of farm land in Chippewa County, the decline in total acreage of farmland in the Town of Howard was not as severe. As population locally and nationally grows, the demand for food supplies will increase. In addition, as the demand for bio-energy grows, productive farmland and forest land will be looked to as a resource for bio-energy. The Town can reasonably expect that the dual demands for food and energy are on a collision course and cannot be met unless the most serious and effective means for farmland preservation are adopted as soon as possible. The preservation of existing agricultural land and the productivity of its soils in the Town of Howard for future food production and as a bio-energy resource were recognized as a high priority by 95% of respondents who expressed an opinion on this issue in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Survey.

Although the size of an individual landowner's agricultural holding is not statistically represented in the County's data, it is well known within the community of Chippewa County that there is a significant change in the pattern of ownership of farmland. Historically, Chippewa County agricultural was almost entirely composed of dairy farms ranging from 80-200 acres. Dairy farming began its precipitous decline in the 1970's. Some of the dairy farm land was sold off for residential development. Lands kept in agricultural use were either leased or sold to local crop farmers who already owned or leased several thousand acres of cropland. The increasing consolidation of agricultural resources in the hands of fewer and fewer owners is a trend that is being driven both by the capital (equipment) intensive and industrial nature of corn and soybean

production and by the loss of family operated farms. Large-scale industrial crop farmers prefer large parcels or many contiguous small parcels of relatively flat land and certain soil types. This means that the market values of farmland are likely to be increasingly dependant on their suitability for large scale crop production. In 2009, farmland in high demand for crop farming sold for \$4,500 or more per acre in area auctions.

The landscape of the Town of Howard is marked by agricultural lands occupying the valleys between forested sandstone hills. Much of Howard's farmland is gently sloped to moderately sloped and suitable for large scale crop production. Some of Howard's steeply sloped farmland is more suitable for grasslands than cultivated crops and, therefore, very suitable for dairy farming based on rotational grazing operations.

Fewer dairy farms exist in the Town of Howard today than 20 years ago. Land devoted to raising haylage and grains for dairy herds is increasingly being turned into croplands raising corn and soybeans for outlying markets. Of the 15 operating dairy farms in June, 2009, two are rotational grazing operations. Confined agricultural facility operations (CAFO) larger than 1,000 animal units have not yet appeared in the Town. Unless carefully sited and outfitted with bio-digesters for manure management or with enough acreage suitable for animal waste disposal, a CAFO may have difficulty finding land with slopes suitable for spreading manure that will not pose significant risks of polluted runoff into the headwaters of streams that drain from the Town.

Land identified as productive forest land for tax assessment purposes declined 21% from 1997 to 2007. Since actual observation does not show that the Town has physically lost 21% of its forest cover, the decline woodland taxed as forest land is almost entirely due to a transfer from parcels of undeveloped woodland primarily managed for forest production to parcels of woodland occupied by residential development. Much of the remaining forested lands in the Town of Howard are located on slopes too steep for agricultural development. The forested hills of Howard can be seen from a distance in all directions from the Town and distinctively mark its landscape and its identity.

The Town of Howard has considerable acreage enrolled in the Federal CRP program. This program is slated for significant downsizing if not outright elimination in the near future, since the growing shortage of agriculturally productive land necessitates finding productive uses

for CRP lands that were at one time enrolled in the program because of some feature or features that marginalized it for productive purposes.

5.1 Existing Conditions: Agricultural resources

Between 1990 and 2007, agriculture has undergone a 2.5% decline in the Town of Howard in the amount of total acreage assessed on the tax rolls as agricultural land.

Table 5-1a

Assessed Agricultural Parcels and Acreage - 1990 and 2007

Town	Total Parcels			Total Acres			% Change
	1990	2007	No. Change	1990	2007	No. Change	
Howard	561	559	-2	14,333	13,970	-363	-2.5

This decline is dramatically less in Howard than the decline in the County generally, as Table 5-1(b) shows. Over the 17 year period from 1990 to 2007, the 363 total acreage of farm land lost in Howard is stunningly low compared to losses in other towns in Chippewa County.

Table 5-1b

	Total Parcels			Total Acres			
	1990	2007	No. Change	1990	2007	No. Change	% Change
TOWNS							
Anson	532	451	-81	14,835	11,362	-3,473	-23.4
Arthur	584	508	-76	19,719	12,223	-7,496	-38.0
Auburn	533	527	-6	14,148	12,531	-1,617	-11.4
Birch Creek	259	194	-65	6,316	4,249	-2,067	-32.7
Bloomer	708	775	67	22,240	19,119	-3,121	-14.0
Cleveland	405	657	252	10,467	6,135	-4,332	-41.4
Colburn	717	670	-47	20,626	16,106	-4,520	-21.9
Cooks Valley	571	588	17	16,405	15,032	-1,373	-8.4
Delmar	732	679	-53	22,480	19,296	-3,184	-14.2

Eagle Point	873	677	-196	25,855	17,683	-8,172	-31.6
Edson	732	798	66	23,169	23,530	361	1.6
Estella	327	291	-36	8,259	5,245	-3,014	-36.5
Goetz	450	418	-32	14,072	11,520	-2,552	-18.1
Hallie	266	110	-156	7,005	2,630	-4,375	-62.5
Howard	561	559	-2	14,333	13,970	-363	-2.5
Lafayette	590	412	-178	14,877	10,226	-4,651	-31.3
Lake Holcombe	199	129	-70	5,855	2,609	-3,246	-55.4
Ruby	446	375	-71	10,936	9,601	-1,335	-12.2
Sampson	399	358	-41	10,516	8,748	-1,768	-16.8
Sigel	481	487	6	11,694	10,343	-1,351	-11.6
Tilden	632	629	-3	18,610	16,111	-2,499	-13.4
Wheaton	875	851	-24	24,612	21,114	-3,498	-14.2
Woodmohr	637	651	14	19,539	17,621	-1,918	-9.8
TOTALS	12,509	11,794	-715	356,568	287,004	-69,564	-19.5

Agricultural use of land is also dramatically shifting from uses devoted solely or largely to raising forage for dairy operations, to raising corn, soybeans and grains for the global food fuel and fiber markets. This trend may be expected to continue in the near future. Table 5-1(c) purports to show trends in the number of dairy farm operations between 1989 and 2002.

Table 5-1c
Trends in Howard Dairy Farm Numbers by Town, 1989-2002

Area	Dairy Farm Numbers			Farms per Sq. Mile			Number Change		%Change	
	1989	1997	2002	1989	1997	2002	1989-1997	1997-2002	1989-1997	1997-2002
35.8	45	33	3	1.26	0.92	0.08	-12	-30	-27%	-91%

Unfortunately, the numbers given for the year 2002 are extremely inaccurate based direct local observation. In 2002, the actual count reveals a total of 22 operating dairy farms in Howard and on June 1, 2009 there were a total of 15 operating dairy farms. This would

represent a 33% change between 1997 and 2002 and a 32% change between 2002 and 2009. Therefore, during the 20 year period from 1989-2009, of the rate of change occurring in the Howard reflects the rate of change in the County and State.

Table 5-1(c) shows the number of people in Howard living on farms and those employed adults working on farms

Table 5-1d

Dependence on Agriculture

Town	Population	Population Living on Farms		Employed Adults Working on Farms	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Howard	648	87	13.4%	41	11.2%

5.2 Natural Resources

The following topics are described in the text in this section as well as in a series of maps describing these physical features in the Town of Howard. Master copies of these maps sized 12” x 18” can be viewed by request of the town clerk. Smaller copies of these maps are incorporated into this element in copies of the comprehensive plan.

(1) Soils

(a) General Soil Types

The soils of the Town consist of general geological types all of which are associated with the Eau Claire Sandstone Geology.

Billett-Rosholt-Oesterle: Depth to bedrock: Deep. Slopes: Moderately well-drained and somewhat poorly drained. Loamy soils on outwash plains and stream terraces. Located in the Hay Creek watershed in the northern part of the Town east of Hwy 40 and along the Elk Creek stream corridor north of County Rd N on the south and southeastern edge of the Town.

ElkMound-Plainbo-Eleva: Depth to bedrock: Shallow to moderately deep. Slopes: Gently sloping to very steep. Well drained to excessively drained. Loamy and sandy soils on upland plains, outwashes and stream terraces. Located roughly from along County Rd S and T on the eastern edge of the Town through the center of Town and occupying the entire west side of the Town from north to south.

Seaton-Gale: Depth of Bedrock: Deep to moderately deep. Slopes: Nearly level to steep. Moderately well drained and well drained. Silty soils on uplands.

Located on either side along Cty Rd B on the east and northeast and on the northwest of Hwy 40 and on either side of Cty Rd DD.

See the General Soils Map ___ for the Town of Howard, (Map no. ___) for a good visual of the distribution of these general soil types within the Town.

(b) Soil Capability classifications

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly called the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), has developed a soil classification system that can be used to uniformly evaluate the capability of soils for agriculture production. The Capability Classification of Soils is published as part of the *Soil Survey of Chippewa County, Wisconsin*. Map no. 1 provides an excellent view of the location and distribution of all three classes of soil capabilities in the Town. A soil's capability classification indicates how suitable a soil of that class is for various types of agricultural use.

- Class I -- soils that have few limitations that restrict their use.
- Class II -- soils that have some limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.
- Class III -- soils that have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require special conservation practices, or both.
- Class IV -- soils that have severe limitations and that if cultivated require careful management.
- Class V -- soils that are suited mainly for pasture due to permanent limitations such as wetness or stoniness.
- Class VI -- soils that have limitation that make them generally unsuited for cultivation and limit use to pasture, woodland or wildlife.

Class I, II, and III soils are considered prime farmland under the NRCS classification system.

The capability of a soil for agricultural use is its ability to support various crops and other types of agricultural activities. It is based on the limitations of the soil, on the risk of soil loss through water and wind erosion to which they are exposed by various agricultural uses and how the soil would respond to treatments that could improve its suitability for the agricultural use or

to treatments that help the soil recover from damages caused by agricultural uses. The limitations of a particular class of soil are regarded as permanent limitations of the soil in its natural place, without consideration for how changing the limitations in some way, such as change of slope or depth to bedrock or other natural characteristics, would improve the soil's capabilities for various types of agricultural use.

Overlaying the Soils Capability Class Map (Map no. 2) with other maps shows that virtually all land that is currently used as farmland within the Township is very suitable farm land, except where the slopes are too steep. The severely steep areas are occupied by forested land. Depth to bedrock is a limitation in some areas because certain uses may pose dangers to groundwater quality in the area. Consideration of soil capability limitations can be a useful guide when making planning decisions with respect to types of development occurring on lands within the town. However, the general maps are a guide only and cannot replace site specific information. The maps should be used to prompt decision makers to ask questions about site-specific issues regarding the suitability of soil and the terrain for a particular type of development proposed for the site.

(2) Soils: suitability of soils for development.

The Wisconsin DNR has developed a Groundwater Contamination Susceptibility Model (GCSM) that can be used to estimate the susceptibility of the groundwater to contamination based on particular natural resource characteristics.

(a) Topography

The varied elevations in the topography of the Town of Howard are depicted in Map no. 10. The Town's landscape is composed most of gently to moderately sloping valleys between steep sloped hills. Elevations range from 1,324 ft at its highest point to 326 above sea level at its lowest point. The Town topography gives the Town its distinct identity and no doubt accounts for the complete lack of any village development within the Town's history. The highest ridgeline begins in the west/southwestern edge of the Town and extends to the Northeastern corner of the Town. Some areas are have extremely limited access and are for the most part without roads. Map no. 11 provides an excellent composite of the varied land cover in the Town.

(b) Bedrock Geology

Chippewa County is almost equally divided between two Wisconsin geomorphic provinces – the Northern Highland and the Central Plain. The Northern Highland is an ancient peneplain of complexly folded and faulted igneous and metamorphic rocks of Precambrian age. The Central Plain of which the Town of Howard is a part is a dissected landscape of Upper Cambrian age. It overlaps the Precambrian rocks. The bedrock is mostly sandstone, but includes some siltstone and shale.

Map no. 7 shows the layout of bedrock throughout the Town and the depth of soils to bedrock.

(3) Mineral Resources

Metallic sulfides, particularly copper and iron are disseminated in the Precambrian rock that underlies the Upper Cambrian geology of the Town. Unlike the moraine Northland Highland province in northern Chippewa County where metallic mining prospecting is known to have occurred in the 1970's there has been no metallic mining prospecting nor are there any known or likely deposits of accessible metallic minerals in sufficient quantities or concentrations for economically viable metallic mining operations in the Town of Howard.

Map no. 4 describes the location of non-metallic mineral resources within the Town. Sand and gravel deposits are present but limited to a few locations within in the Town. Unlike sand and gravel deposits in the glacial outwash areas in other parts of Chippewa County, sand and gravel sites within the Town are not highly coveted for road construction because the sand and gravel deposits in the Town of Howard do not provide sufficient quantities of all the types and grades of materials necessary to meet all state standards for use in road construction, without importing some materials to sites within the Town. Nevertheless, sand and gravel mining for a product for use in some local roadfill applications and in driveway construction and sandstone quarrying to produce crushed stone for a variety of drainage uses and large stone for bank revetments are viable mining industries within the Town. Some areas identified on the map as sand and sand and gravel deposits would not be extractable because they include and lay along surface waters.

The sandstone hills of Howard contain mostly Wonewoc deposits of a type of sandstone that, when crushed and processed, is in demand now and in the foreseeable future for use in the extraction of crude oil from the tar sands in western Alberta, Canada, for use in drilling for oil in Western and Southern states and the Gulf of Mexico, as well as for use in drilling to extract natural gas in the mountainous western and eastern United States. Industrial sand mining within the Town of Howard poses significant issues with respect to road maintenance, property values, nuisance, ground and surface water quality and quantity issues, and air quality. Currently, a 101 acre sand mine site has been leased at the corner of County Rd B and 55th Street. Stormwater, wetland, and air quality permits from DNR are required for this proposed mine and a reclamation permit is required from the Land Conservation Dept. of Chippewa County. The Town of Howard has developed its own mining ordinance designed to protect public health and safety within the statutory limits of the Town's authority to do so. A mining permit (license) is currently required to operate any mine within the Town. If permitted by the Town, the industrial sand mining operation is projected to continue in full operation for 56 years and, according to the reclamation permit, will be reforested during each phase of the reclamation process.

The prospect of widespread industrial sand mining in Howard and adjoining townships is viewed as a benefit by a few landowners whose ownership of a sandstone deposit is the new cash cow. On the other hand, that prospect is viewed by the many other Town residents as a threat to the very qualities of life that are the reason they chose to live in the Town. There are legitimate concerns with the potential negative impacts on ground and surface water quantity and quality. There are also concerns about how respirable crystalline silica dust will affect air quality downwind of a sand mine site and about how the nuisance impacts will affect public health and the adjoining property values. Industrial sand mining and the need to preserve agricultural land are the two most significant issues occupying the Town's policy development currently and in the foreseeable future.

(4) Watersheds and Surface Waters

Maps no. 5 and no. 6 show the watersheds and surface waters within the Town. Surface waters are limited to three streams and their tributaries. Only one stream has any significant recreational value in the section of stream thread that flows within the Town,

although all three serve as headwaters of streams that provide recreational opportunities for area residents. It is not unusual to find cars with Minnesota license plates parked at the public access points along the fishable reaches of Elk Creek and Hay Creek.

Elk Creek is a first class trout stream and rated as an outstanding water. It is the only section of stream thread rated as an outstanding water crossing Highway 29 from here to Lake Michigan. Its watershed covers the southern and eastern parts of the Town. In the past 59 years, thousands of dollars has been spent on stream stabilization, bank revetment, and habitat improvements by Federal and State governments and private groups such as Trout Unlimited and Chippewa Rod and Gun. DNR has purchased several miles of a buffer zone along the stream and its tributaries from the bridge over Elk Creek on Highway N north to provide fishing access, protect banks from encroachment by pastured cattle and to protect sediment from entering the stream during storm water runoff. DNR also purchased the Elk Creek Wildlife Area comprised of a buffer zone and an additional 60 acre tract north of County Rd N to which the public has access for hunting and fishing. The creek also serves as a source of water for the Town's fire trucks.

Eighteen Mile Creek is a trout stream with limited natural reproduction largely because its base flow has been dramatically reduced during the past 20 years. Beaver dams in the upper reaches on the western edge of the Howard Town line have destroyed the channel of what was once very fishable water.

Hay Creek is a trout stream with significant natural brook trout reproduction and a watershed occupying the northern and north eastern part of the Town. Howard's hills provide many seeps and springs that feed the lower reaches of both Hay Creek and Little Hay Creek.

(5) Groundwater

Groundwater is the source of life for all humans and domesticated animals in the Town of Howard. Homes and farms in Howard are served by private wells. Water from a private well is not treated as drinking water would be in a municipal water supply. Aside from sand filters and water softeners, contaminants the groundwater pass directly from the spigot into our bodies.

There is an important relationship between land use and both the quality of the groundwater the Town drinks and the surface waters of our streams.

As precipitation falls to the ground, some runs off into the streams that course through the Town, carrying with it whatever contaminants that are contained in or upon the soils over which the rain courses on its way to the streams. Surface waters in agricultural areas fertilized by animal waste and some chemical farm and lawn fertilizers that contain phosphorus are highly susceptible to phosphate contamination since phosphates bond with soils and are carried with the soils. As the soils are carried in run-off, they can be deposited as sediment on the beds of our streams. Precipitation that does not run-off the soil's surface infiltrates the soil and becomes groundwater. Some of the water in the soil near the surface evaporates; some of it is utilized by plants and trees. The rest of the water passes down through the soil and subsoil until it reaches a saturated zone. The top of that saturated zone is called the water table and the water contained in the saturated zone is called an aquifer. It is from the aquifer that the Town draws groundwater to sustain our lives of its residents and those of our domesticated animals. Nearly anything that is dumped, spilled, or spread on the ground can seep into the groundwater. This groundwater is then used by residents for drinking, farming, and other activities.

Groundwater protection is also critical to protection of our surface waters. Groundwater also discharges to lakes, river, and streams. In fact, the streams in the Town of Howard are called cold water resources because, when not filled with the surface run off of rainwater, the streams are entirely dependent for their daily flow on groundwater discharges in the form of seeps and springs that lie along the banks and beds of the streams and their tributaries.

Protecting groundwater quality and quantity must be one of the Town's highest priorities when considering land use policy. Protecting groundwater and surface water means regulating or even prohibiting certain activities in areas where contaminants can easily enter the groundwater. The closer the land surface is to the groundwater table and the more well-drained (sandy or gravelly) the surficial soil is, the more susceptible the groundwater is to contamination. Map No. 8 shows the depth to groundwater within the Town.

Chippewa County Zoning regulates the construction and selection of the type of septic systems based on the ability of the soil to protect groundwater. Current septic system regulations only require a minimal soil depth, sufficient water infiltration into soil and minimal separation between wells and drain fields. These regulations do not fully address the potential impacts that

private septage can have. In a controversy that dates back to the late 1970's and 80's, the regulation of private sewage that is administered by the Counties is oriented to allowing development to occur virtually anywhere, provided only that the development uses one of the three available types of septic systems. The County Land Conservation Department administers state regulation of manure waste containment and disposal both from the standpoint of groundwater contamination as well as surface runoff. Both of these regulations are helpful but do not always provide effective protection. While the Town should cooperate with and support the regulatory efforts of the County in these regards, the Town may wish to provide additional protections to groundwater that cannot be achieved within the limits of County regulation.

The Town may consider enhancing its current housing ordinances and, if it adopts its own zoning ordinance, may consider incorporating groundwater protection into its planning and permitting decisions. This would build upon the County's approaches to groundwater protection.

Detailed soil maps and separate more specific soil data is available describing the relevant resource characteristics of soils for all land within the Town. Currently, the Town regulates the density of dwellings with the Town by imposing a minimum lot size of five acres through the Town. While this serves the goal of preserving the rural character of the Town, it unnecessarily eats up lots of farmland. It also does not encourage optimal aesthetic management of the many small plots of green space it creates, and it ignores the impact of residential land use on natural resources. In order to achieve other goals of Town planning, more flexibility is needed. The Town may consider that density limits should also be based on an estimate of the susceptibility of the groundwater to contamination based on particular natural resource characteristics of an area of land or of a specific site for which some activity or development is being proposed. The natural resource characteristics to be considered include depth of soil to bedrock, bedrock type, soil characteristics, surficial deposits and depth to the water table.

The Wisconsin DNR has developed a Groundwater Contamination Susceptibility Model (GCSM) that can be used to make this estimate by assigning a value to each of these natural resource characteristics. The model also includes a scheme by which the weight of each resource characteristic can be given in order to establish an estimate of susceptibility to ground water contamination. Using these estimates as a basis of lot-size (density) decisions and siting decisions, the Town may find that some area of the Town or a particular acreage or site is so excessively susceptible to groundwater contamination that residential development on that site

should be prohibited or density severely limited. In some cases, it may be best to cluster development to avoid areas of greatest risk to the groundwater. In addition, some activities or operations on lands highly susceptible to groundwater contamination, may need to be regulated in an effort to prevent contamination or may even need to be prohibited if there is no way of conducting the activity in a safe manner. Mining within three to five feet of bedrock and the water table would very likely create upon reclamation, based on the Model of Soil susceptibility to Groundwater contamination, an area of land unsuitable for agricultural activity involving the use of organic (animal waste) or chemical fertilizers. Grazing land or reforestation may be the only suitable agricultural use of the reclaimed land after termination of the mining operation. Similarly, a large scale feedlot operation may be acceptable in some places but should be prohibited in others based on the natural resource characteristics of the site proposed for the development of a new facility or the expansion of an existing facility. The regulation of some activities by a licensing ordinance may also seek to protect groundwater by using these estimates in regulatory decisions.

In addition, when adopting a zoning ordinance, the Town may consider using soil maps and the protection of groundwater as a consideration when establishing its zones and the types of permissible and prohibited land uses in a zone.

(6) Sensitive Lands

(a) Shore lands and floodplains

Shore lands, as defined by law, are lands within 1,000 feet of a lake, pond, or flowage and lands within 300 feet of a river or stream. By state law, surface waters include water that is standing still or flowing, navigable or intermittent, which collects and channels overland runoff. As noted above, three streams, their tributaries and associated intermittent flows make up all the surface waters in the Township. Shore lands are a special resource because they can provide habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation. Properly managed and protected, shore lands act as buffers to protect the water quality of the streams they border. However, lands adjacent to shore lands are also prime areas for development, especially residential development. Without careful oversight, shore lands can be exposed to contamination from residential development and recreational use. The State of Wisconsin requires counties to prevent the loss and erosion of these resources by adopting and enforcing a shore land ordinance. Shore lands

are able to buffer sedimentation of stream beds only to the extent to which runoff is able to pass over the shore lands in the form of sheet on its way to the stream. When runoff water is channeled toward the buffer by adjacent land uses or landscapes, it tends to create erosive rills or ditches in the shore land eliminating, thereby, the buffering effect of shore land vegetation. Map no. 6 shows the surface waters in the town along which shore lands are located. Map no. 13 shows the location of floodplains within the Town.

(b) Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by the State law 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 are usually defined by the presence of types of vegetation that commonly grow in them than by the persistence of water during the course of the year. A wetland is commonly thought of as marked by a persistence of shallow water or soil wetness through the year because of its proximity to the water table or to surface water. Many of the wetlands in Howard are of this lowland type. Other important wetlands are perched because they sit well above the water table and are simply surficial depressions that retain runoff water and serve as a purifying filter as it percolates down into the aquifer from which residents and domesticated animals draw their water. Some of these perched wetlands sit on top of a bedrock capstone that is relatively impervious to infiltration or sit on poorly drained silty soils (clay) so that water remains in them until it slowly infiltrated to the subsoil or evaporates. In times of drought the water in a perched wetland can dry up for extended periods of time. Lowland wetlands can also dry up as the water table is lowered but are not as often receive protections because of their proximity to surface water. During period of drought, perched wetlands are highly susceptible to being transferred to other uses such as cropland or hay. They are also susceptible to destruction by filling development purposes. Maintenance of wet lands during period of drought should be a high priority but is often ignored as the need to expand the productivity of taxed land is always an incentive for private owners to convert public resources to private profit. Map No.9 shows the locations of wetlands within the Town.

(c) Forests and Woodlands

Table 5-5 shows the assessed forest parcels and acreage for the town of Howard. The numbers show that amount of forested land is decreasing steadily from the year 1990.

**Table 5-5
Assessed Forest Parcels and Acreage 1990 – 2007**

Total Parcels						Total Acres					
1990	1997	2000	1990-1997 % Change	1997-2000 % Change	1990-2007 % Change	1990	1997	2007	1990-1997 % Change	1997-2000 % Change	1990-2007 % Change
429	427	381	-.5	-10.8	-11.2	7493	6864	5883	-8.4	-14.3	-21.5

Map no. 12 shows the forested lands within the Town. There are a total of 240 acres of forested lands enrolled in under the Managed Forest Cropland law. Under the law this land is open to the public for specific types of recreational purposes only.

(d) The Hills of Howard

Hills are highly valued natural resources, especially in the Town of Howard where they contributed significantly to the Town’s scenic beauty and its identity. The highest hills and can be easily identified as one drives or bikes toward the Town, especially from the north, east, and south directions. Most of the land in Howard is gently to steeply sloped land. Because rainwater run off is accelerated as it flows down the side of steep slopes, hills create drainage ways to the streams and tributaries that carry surface water out of the Town toward the south to the Chippewa River and west to the Red Cedar River. These drainage ways may be gullies, rills, rivlets or grass ways. Loss of valuable soil, flooding, wet basements and cement floor slabs are caused by disruption of drainage ways.

Slopes with a 6% to 12% have limitations for agricultural uses that can be managed with contour farming or no-till farming and should be managed to prevent soil erosion from construction sites. In additions, compliance with nutrient management laws can serve to minimize pollution by runoff to area streams.

Slopes are regarded as “steep” where the gradient of the land is 13% or more. Development of any kind on slopes with 13-20% gradient should consider runoff into streams and their tributaries and intermittent flows. State approved erosion control standards should be followed on all construction sites and best management practices should be instituted to control

on-site runoff. Development of any kind on slopes greater than 20% should be strongly discouraged if not outright prohibited in the most extreme slopes. The construction costs on these gradients are extremely high and negative impacts on surface and ground waters nearly impossible to avoid. Map no. 14 shows the location and distribution of steep slopes in the Town.

5.3 Cultural Resources. There are no known cultural, historical or archeological resources within the Town of Howard.

5.4 Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Preservation of Agricultural Lands. Preservation includes maximizing the total acreage of farmland as well as maintaining or improving the soil productivity of those lands.

Objectives and Policies that may be considered as a means to achieving this goal:

- a. Consider adopting a Town Zoning Ordinance with farmland preservation zones. A farmland preservation zone controls non-agricultural uses either by limiting them or prohibiting them in that zone.
 - Limit the density of residential development to one dwelling on a maximum five acre lot per 40 acres. On larger tracts cluster development on lots less than five acres is possible and desirable to maximize preservation of farmland acreage. Give the greatest possible weight to landowner preferences when making a siting decision or granting a request for a variance consistent with the goals of maximizing the acreage preserved for farming, maintaining soil productivity and natural resource protection.
 - Building solely for agricultural use would not be restricted or require permits within a farmland preservation zone, as long as the building would not be used for residential purposes. Buildings used for a commercial purposes related to the agricultural use may be granted a variance.
 - Regulate allowed uses by requiring a conditional use permit under Town zoning authority or a licensing permit under Town Police powers.

- b. Encourage individual landowners to enjoy the financial benefits of farmland conservation easements in exchange for preserving their lands for agricultural use in perpetuity. This should also include forested lands on slopes greater than 21% where residential or other development may be restricted or prohibited.
- c. Promote the sustainability of agricultural resources within the Town by encouraging landowners to take advantage of assistance provided by various Federal, State, and County programs.

Goal 2: Protect and conserve natural resources of the Town.

- a. Support County regulatory programs designed to protect and conserve the natural resources of the Town. These include but are not limited to:
 - The shore land zoning law
 - The nutrient management law
 - The mine reclamation law
 - Wetland protection laws
- b. Encourage local landowners to apply for grants for land conservation that may be available under County programs such as but not limited to:
 - The County Stewardship Fund
 - The Farmland Conservation Easement Program
 - The CREP program (federal, but administered by the County)
 - All programs associated with DATCP's "Working Lands Initiative and programs administered by the County
- c. Protect Ground and Surface water quality and quantity by:
 - Incorporating the susceptibility of soils to groundwater contamination as a factor when making planning and siting decisions, including the granting of variances.
 - Requiring that standards for erosion control and best management practices for erosion control be used in construction.
 - Consider restricting development on slopes in excess of 20 percent
 - On lands less than 21 percent gradient, require that erosion control measure be taken before, during, and after construction.

Require that the owner of lands on which erosion control measures have been taken maintain the effectiveness of those measures.

In all planning, development, and siting decisions, consider how the rate or amount of groundwater consumption necessary for a particular activity to occur will affect the water supply of other users in the area and impact base-line flows in streams and tributaries in the area.

- d. Protect the scenic beauty of the forested Hills of Howard by:
 - seeking ways of screening development that occurs near the rim or along the high ridge of the hill.
 - preventing the leveling of our best and highest hills as a result of a strip mining operation.
- e. Protect our natural resources by advocating for their protection before County and State agencies considering making a decision on policy, a permit, or a request for a variance that could weaken existing protections, or would fail to create needed protections.

5.5 Comprehensive Plan Survey Results.

- (1) 86% favored, 9% had no opinion, and less than .5% were opposed to encouraging the preservation of farmland in the Town.
- (2) 80% favored the adoption of a Town zoning ordinance with 60% of those in favor strongly in favor. 19% of respondents disfavored the adoption of a Town zoning ordinance, with 56% of those strongly disfavoring Town zoning. Only 2 respondents expressed no opinion about this. The percentage of strong views on this topic were the higher (59%) than any other question on the survey. The number of respondents with no opinion was also lower than on any other issue.
- (3) 79% were opposed to adopting County zoning rather than Town zoning with 13% in favor. 10% had no opinion.

(4) 75% wanted either Town or County zoning, while 18% wanted no zoning at all and 6 respondents expressed no opinion on the issue at all.

(5) Of those expressing an opinion on including exclusive ag zones in a zoning ordinance, 81% were in favor, while 16% were opposed. 10 of 80 respondents on this issue had no opinion.

ELEMENT 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Existing Conditions

- (1) The Town has a total of 20 acres devoted to commercial activity, three acres less than a decade ago. It is located in two areas of the Town.
 - (a) “New Albertville” is a small area that developed when the railroad track running near “Old Albertville” in the Town of Wheaton was rerouted through the Town of Howard about a mile directly to the north of the Wheaton/Howard southern town line. A pickle factory, a railroad depot, a grocery store, a blacksmith garage offering mechanical repairs, an embroidery business and a tavern/restaurant made up the business community of New Albertville over the years. In 2009 only the tavern/restaurant business currently remains. The pickle factory and depot, store and garage are long gone. The embroidery business has recently closed and its building put up for sale. The topography and location is not favorable for significant commercial development in this area.
 - (b) Another area is located in the northwestern part of the Town along Wis Hwy 40 within 1.5 miles of the junction of Hwy 40 and 20th Street. Currently, a tavern, a seed and feed store with some farm machinery for sale, and retail sources for crushed stone/gravel and ag lime operate along the highway. Because this area has excellent access for commercial traffic, limited access for residential development, and the lands directly adjacent to the highway are either currently fallow or not prime farmland land, the area is very suitable for commercial/light industrial development.
- (2) The Town has no acreage devoted to industrial development. However, approximately 101 acres of a 180 acre parcel have been leased for an industrial sand mine. See paragraph (6) in this section.

- (3) The Town has 13,970 acres assessed as farmland as of 2007, down 2.5% since 1990. This represents a significant loss of the Town's economic base.
- (4) In 2007, the Town had 5,883 total acres assessed as forest land. This represents a loss of 21% of lands assessed as forest land since 1990. The physical cover remains, but the lost parcels are now occupied by residential development. Much of the forested land in the Town is suitable for harvest although very little of it has been harvested in recent years and, except for a 4H forest, none has been placed in managed forest crop land program. Map no. 12 shows the forested lands within the Town. In recent years, forestry has not represented a significant component of Howard's economy and is not likely to be in the foreseeable future.
- (5) There is a small sand and gravel business currently operating in the Town, but there are limited areas of sand and gravel resources and the quality of the sand and gravel is not highly sought after by the major road building companies in the area. Nevertheless, sand and gravel mining is a viable industry within the Town. Map no. 4 describes the location of non-metallic mineral resources within the Town. The sand and gravel deposits can be mined for various local uses. The mining operation is regulated under the Town's non-metallic mining ordinance.
- (6) There is also a considerable amount of Wonewoc sandstone in the bedrock geology underlying the Town. This sandstone can be mined and manufactured for use in the gas and oil drilling industry. A 101 acre site located on the northwest corner of County Road B and 55th Street has been leased for an industrial sand mining operation with the manufacturing plant proposed for location in the industrial park in Chippewa Falls some 15 miles away. This type of operation is also subject to regulation under the Town's non-metallic mining ordinance.

There is no evidence that this type of industrial development will provide any significant net benefit to the citizens of the Town of Howard either by way of providing jobs for its citizens or providing significant revenues for tax relief. Unlike the value offered by the locally used

products of a sand and gravel operation, the manufactured product of an industrial sand mine is shipped out of the State and to Canada, leaving only the industrial waste product behind. In addition, the expected operational life of the proposed industrial sand mine of 56 years will significantly lower the property value of the ten residences located within sixty feet of the perimeter of the mine site as well as all the properties along the trucking route through the Town for the entire remaining lifetime of the current owners. Finally, mining takes farmland out of production during the lifetime of the mining operation. Although the industry claims that after reclamation the land can be returned its former use, only two of the hundred plus pits in the County have been returned to productive crop land and these two pits have cover crops only. From a purely economic standpoint, this type of economic development seems to result in a net loss to the Town's residents and property owners (except for the lease-holder) and a further erosion of land base of its agricultural economy.

6.2 Prospects for economic development within the Town

Planning for economic development within the Town must be shaped by four important facts and considerations.

The Town lacks the infra-structure necessary for significant manufacturing and commercial activity and such infrastructure is not ever likely to be developed.

(1) The cities of Bloomer, Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire and Colfax have infrastructure available and under-utilized either because of a downturn in the economy or because of expanded space devoted to industrial/commercial activity. The urban centers have regional and national transportation facilities already in place. They also have sufficient water and energy services readily available. In addition, the cities have the housing necessary for supplying the workforce with easy access to the manufacturing service and commercial workplaces already in place. The Town simply cannot compete with what the larger municipalities has to offer.

(2) The Town of Howard's single and most outstanding economic asset is its wealth of prime farm land.

(3) Many studies of the fiscal impact of various types of development on the cost of services provided by towns, villages and cities have been done in the past 25 years. These

studies have shown that, in every case, residential development does not pay its way from a tax revenue standpoint. No such study has been done for the Town of Howard, although it is reasonable to assume that the results would be the same as those found by studies of townships similar to Howard. Of course, how much the cost of services for residential development will exceed the tax revenues generated by residential development will depend on and vary with changes in tax assessment policies. Nevertheless, the incentive for economic development from a property tax and cost of services standpoint is that industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities generate significantly more property tax revenues than it costs the municipality to provide services to these properties. So these types of development keep property taxes down.

(4) The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Survey has shown that a vast majority of citizens place a high value on the preservation of the rural character of the landscape of the Town and the preservation of farmland because it is the Town's economic base. Industrial and commercial development in areas not already devoted to those land uses would involve the transfer of agricultural land to non-agricultural use and a loss of the Town's rural character. Widespread support for maintaining a 5-acre minimum lot size for residential development also suggests that citizens want to limit the transfer of agricultural land to residential uses.

These four facts seem to lead to an unavoidable and obvious conclusion: the future of economic development in the Town of Howard lies almost entirely in the future of its agricultural economy. That future depends on preserving the agricultural land base and the capacity of its working soils to produce agricultural goods by limiting the transfer of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. The following goals and policies follow from that conclusion.

6.3 Economic Development Goals

Recognizing that the ability of Town government to direct and encourage economic development as well as to ensure the viability of any type of economic activity is limited, the basic goals of the Town's economic development policy should be the following:

1. The preservation of the Town's agricultural land base.

2. The encouragement of additional commercial development in the two areas already occupied by commercial activity, to the extent that expansion in these areas is feasible and does not conflict with existing agricultural or residential uses in those areas.
3. The allowance of forms of economic activity compatible with the preservation the agricultural land base especially when this takes the form of cottage industry that does not involve the loss of agricultural land and forms of economic activity located out of the home.
4. The discouragement of economic activity that is incompatible with the preservation of the agricultural land base.
5. The support and encouragement of diversification within the agricultural economy.

6.4 Economic development policy.

(1) Create a Zoning ordinance with farmland preservation zones

The most effective means for preservation of its agricultural land base is to minimize the transfer of working farm lands to non-farm uses is by the adoption of a Town Zoning ordinance that incorporates zones designated as farmland preservation zones. The adoption of a zoning ordinance strategy raises three issues that need consideration.

- (a) Unlike ownership of commercial and industrial units, the wealth of an agricultural producer resides in his land rather than his business or bank account as such. Agricultural businesses are not mobile in the way other types of economic activity usually are. To live off that wealth at retirement, the farmer must sell or lease his land. The demographic data set forth in other elements in this plan and data showing farm ownership trends during the past 20 years indicates that leaving a farm to a family member to operate as working agricultural land and to provide some measure of income and care to the retiring elder is, in most cases, not possible. When the market value of farmland is significantly lower than its value when offered for sale for residential, commercial, or industrial uses of the land, some believe that farmland preservation zoning imposes a sacrifice on the farmer/landowner without fair compensation. Needless to say, zoning of any kind is designed to restrict the use of

land by one person when it diminishes or destroys the values of adjacent land uses without compensation to neighbors or if it imposes a significant danger or loss to the community in general. Zoning does impose some restriction on the use of land, but when properly done has been found to be constitutionally sound. However, if the current market conditions hold up as farmland, for a many reasons, continues to become increasingly scarce, the value of an acre of farmland will be nearly equal to or exceed its value for other uses. Currently, market values for farm land in Howard are roughly equal to land for residential development. If this continues to be the case, the use of farmland preservation zones will not impose an involuntary and excessive sacrifice on the individual land owner. However, if the value of farmland were to fall well below its value for other land uses, then the Town should consider designing a system for the purchase development rights in order to reduce the difference, thereby preserving the wealth the farmer has invested in his land, while at the same time preserving its use as working agricultural land.

- (b) Secondly, there is going to be continued pressure for residential development. Some of this will come from within the Town itself as farmers retire or as demands for housing for farm labor may increase. Farmland preservation zoning allows for a maximum of one residential development per 40 acres. In a farmland preservation zone, a 200 acre farm would be allowed a maximum of 5 residential dwellings. A house siting policy will need to be created to encourage siting the allowable residential units in order to maximize available working lands.
- (c) Thirdly, there currently are areas with significant residential development and where some types of agricultural activity may conflict with neighboring non-agricultural uses. The investments of non-farming residents of the Town must be protected as well. In such cases, transitional agricultural zones may be created within which the most noxious agricultural activities may be tightly regulated or even prohibited if necessary. For example, in a transitional agricultural zone, a large scale confined animal facility could be prohibited, or field spreading of animal or human waste restricted in amounts or frequency in order to protect the water quality of residential wells, or the number of high capacity wells limited in order to protect ground water quantity.

(2) Adopt Policies assisting the agricultural economy

The Town should adopt policies which support and implement, whenever possible, programs and initiatives that assist the agricultural economy and are developed or administered by other agencies.

A vibrant agricultural economy have never been purely market driven anywhere in the developed world. A private/public partnership has been necessary to enable the production of food and fiber essential to the future of human life on this planet to ride through crises caused by variations in weather, changes in market conditions, variable financial needs, and lags in technological development. The Town expects that this private/public partnership will continue and anticipates it will be part of that whenever necessary and useful.

Over the past four years, the Wisconsin Department of Agricultural Trade and Consumer Protection has been revising the existing but ineffective State farmland preservation laws and policies under a program called “The Working Lands Initiative.” As of the 2009 State budget, monies have been allocated to Counties to revise their farmland protection programs and moneys have been made available in limited amounts to the County’s Farmland Stewardship Fund. This fund is designed to fund a limited number of farmland conservation easements and for the creation of farmland enterprise zones in areas where farmland preservation zoning is not in place.

Other anticipated future programs involve support for energy conservation measures in agriculture and sustainable agriculture initiatives aimed at diversifying the agricultural economy and preserving small family operated farms by connecting local producers with the local and regional market. Most of the efforts in market development in recent years have focused on exporting to the global market and lately on the energy market. Research shows that buying local food keeps money circulating in our communities significantly longer and is the key in supporting small family farms and agricultural diversification. Thus far there is no known local producer in the Town whose income is derived primarily from retailing farm products to the local or regional market. A website, wifarmfresh.org has been established by the West Central Regional Plan Commission. It provides an extensive and growing list of family operated farms that supply various types of

produce to local markets in the West Central region of the State. It is the beginning of a more intensive effort to establish an area wide distribution network for local farm produce.

The Town of Howard has established a Town website which it manages on its own and uses it for publication/posting of meeting notices and agendas and well as ordinances and the names of Town officials and how to contact them. The Town's website use can be expanded to include information on current and developing programs supporting the Town's agricultural economy.

Element 7: Intergovernmental Cooperation

7.1 An overview of intergovernmental cooperation.

(1) Cooperation in the Delivery of Services

Some of the services delivered by the Town of Howard, such as road maintenance and garbage collection, are highly visible, while others, such as building inspection and library services, are less visible to most citizens. In this element, the services provided by the Town are identified and examines the ways in which those services are delivered.

The delivery of services can be made in a number of ways. In some cases, the private sector can be contracted to provide all or part of the service. In other cases, the Town may deliver the entire service or it may deliver the service in cooperation with another agency of government. In fact, in some cases, the delivery of a service may involve all three parties in some way.

As the cost of providing services increases and federal and state aid decreases, it is necessary to scrutinize the delivery of services to find the best and most efficient delivery possible. Because of the potential for cost savings, efficiencies, and other improvements that are possible when cooperatively providing service, the idea of intergovernmental cooperation is now receiving prime consideration.

(2) Cooperation in Administration and Enforcement of Regulations

Another area of possible intergovernmental cooperation has to do with the manner in which the regulations (ordinances) of one governmental agency may affect another agency's administration or enforcement of its regulation. While this can involve a relationship of two towns, it can also involve governments with overlapping jurisdictions, as is the case between town and County government in some areas. Sometimes prior consultation, particularly a conversation associated with ongoing planning by these agencies can avoid conflicts that might develop between these agencies. This can avoid the undesirable costs of adversarial battling over the issues to all the agencies involved, as well as to the citizens they should be devoted to

serving. In some cases, the issues may not be able to be resolved without court costs, but at least prior efforts can be made to see if some degree of cooperation is possible.

A good example of a failure of intergovernmental cooperation occurred in 2008 involving the Town of Howard. A dispute regarding the legal authority of the Town to regulate non-metallic mining under its police powers has arisen because the County Administrator, seeking to further the County's own development goals and without any prior consultation with the Town of Howard, decided to declare his opinion that the Town's mining ordinance was not valid. The opinion provided encouragement to a few citizens in a neighboring Township with a similar ordinance to sue in court for a declaratory judgment on the validity of that Town's ordinance. A fledgling industrial sand mining company, for whom County officials had strongly advocated before the Town of Howard Plan Commission in the summer of 2008, received a recommendation from the Town of Howard Plan Commission for approval of the permit. However, as soon as the County Administrator's written opinion was announced, the company's lawyers declined to continue the permit review process before the Town Board and withdrew their application for a permit to establish an industrial sand mine in the Town. Then the sand mining company sought a declaratory judgment in court. This lack of consultation between Town and County government is costing the Town, its citizens and the company lots of money. That cost may have been avoided with prior consultation. Without a significant effort to change the very negative attitude Town citizens currently have to County Government, and especially to its leadership, this attitude may continue to impose unnecessary costs on all for several years to come.

(3) Cooperation regarding Boundaries

A third area intergovernmental interaction and potential cooperation involves shared boundaries. The most notable type of a boundary dispute occurs when one government decides to annex land lying within the jurisdiction of a neighboring town. However, less notable boundary disputes can arise when some activity regulated by one town is permitted on lands bordering another town and the citizens occupying the neighboring lands are exposed to a risk of loss against which they have no legal or political voice. Land use planning by both governments may be able to foresee the potential for cases such as these and design their policies so that

citizens living on the boundaries and across boundaries will not be totally at the mercy of whatever the neighboring jurisdiction fancies at the moment. A third type of boundary issue can arise when an officer of an Economic Development Corporation hired by the County and paid by taxpayers secretly fosters and plans for an industrial development that will benefit the County and another municipality but that involves land and will have significant impacts within the jurisdiction of a town. When the interests of the town are ignored early on in a consideration of the project, when an already completed and negotiated proposal is dumped in the town's lap while at the same time declaring that, despite the town's belief that it would be requiring a permit under the town's ordinance, declaring the town lacked the authority to do anything about it, the boundary dispute creates not only unnecessary costs on all involved but long lasting and deep resentments. These types of boundary disputes are born of the very ignorance and arrogance that the Comprehensive Planning Law is attempting to undercut by insisting on a careful consideration of opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation.

(4) Cooperation by Sharing Revenues

Most of the services provided by the Town of Howard involve sharing revenues with other agencies. The revenue sharing involved in road and bridge construction and repair is the most historic and well known example. Pooling resources, financial and otherwise, can result in savings without a loss in quality of service.

7.2 Intergovernmental cooperation – existing cooperation

(1) Garbage and Recycling

The Town of Howard collects the garbage and recycling materials, but contracts with the private sector to dispose of the collected materials. The Towns of Howard and Cooks Valley have entered into a joint contract for solid waste and recycling services with Waste Management. By signing the joint contract, the towns are able to save money on the hauling services and are able to receive extra recycling fund grants from the county for participating in intergovernmental cooperation. Each town maintains its own solid waste and recycling facility. Recycling of items

not covered by the town recycling program can be done through Chippewa County. For a fuller discussion of this service and the manner in which it is funded see the Utility and Community Services Element.

(2) Animal Control

Animal control is covered under town ordinance. The town constable is the town official responsible for animal control. The town has an agreement with the Chippewa County Humane Association for housing and care of stray animals picked up by the town constable. All fees for housing the animal are the responsibility of the animal's owner and no fees are paid directly to the Chippewa County Humane association by the town.

(3) Library Services

The Town of Howard does not provide library services. Chippewa County has agreements with the Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire Libraries and all payments are made at the county level. Each of the libraries keeps track of usage by town residents and statistics are sent to the county broken down by town. Some residents use the Colfax Library. The town does not have an agreement with the Village of Colfax for library use but it is a part of the Indianhead Library System which includes Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire as well as most libraries in northwestern Wisconsin.

(4) Building Inspector

The county offers building inspection services to towns within the county through the Planning and Zoning Department. County Planning and Zoning collects the building permit applications. Chippewa County contracts with independent building inspectors to provide inspection services. When the Town adopted its Uniform Dwelling Code in 2000, the Town used the inspectors contracted by the County. However, in early 2005 the Town contracted directly with a building inspector selected by the Town. This did not result in any changes in fees to the town as all building inspection fees whether contracted by the county or the town, are paid

directly to the inspector by the individual/contractor applying for the permit. The direct hiring of a building inspector by the Town has resulted in better compliance with state Department of Commerce regulations concerning the UDC. Prior to employing our own building inspector the town was not receiving any inspection reports as is required by law. On a few occasions when the town needed copies of inspection reports it was discovered that the county, as the administrator of permits, did not have copies of the required inspection reports. Lack of inspection reports resulted in potential liabilities for the town.

The initial contact for a building permit is made with the town clerk who sends out a building inspection packet provided by the building inspector. All completed forms are sent directly to the building inspector who issues the building permit after the county issues a sanitary permit.

The town does not have jurisdiction over sanitary permits. All inspection reports are maintained both by the town and the building inspector for a period of seven years.

(5) Election Administration

As of 2006, a result of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA), town voter registration records must be a part of the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS). Prior to 2006 voter registration was not required in municipalities with a population of less than 5,000. Election administration is currently shared at the County and Town levels. The county provides coding services for voting machine memory cards and printing of ballots. Costs for this service come directly from county and state funds unless there is a town election on the ballot (every 2 years in odd numbered years). When there is a town election a fee based on the number of names on the ballot and number of ballots printed is charged to the town. All of the municipalities within the county use the same models of voting machines and ballots resulting in a cost saving for everyone. HAVA set forth requirements for handicapped accessible (touch screen) voting machines and some federal grant money became available for purchase of machines that met the requirements. After a meeting of the county and municipal clerks it was determined that if grant money for the entire county was pooled and all of the purchases made through the county that the Town of Howard could get the most value from the grant money available. A memorandum of understanding was signed by each of the municipalities and the county. In addition to

purchasing the voting machine the Town was able to receive several years worth of voting machine supplies, preventive maintenance and the ability for the county to program memory cards in house. All repair costs are the responsibility of the individual municipality. The optical scan voting machines in each municipality are currently scheduled for replacement in 2011. The purchase of machines will be done as a whole county once again with the plan to make them data compatible with the handicapped accessible machines allowing for more efficient county wide reporting of election results.

The county currently provides services for the SVRS data entry, report printing and poll list printing at a cost to each municipality. The City of Chippewa Falls and Village of Lake Hallie are required to be self providers due to their size. The Town of Howard is also a self provider by choice at this time. The town had DSL service and the necessary computer capabilities to provide its own services resulting in a cost savings to the town. Confidential voter registration records are able to stay in the town providing better security. All voter registration forms for relier municipalities must be photocopied and sent to the county for processing. Processing all forms within the town also allows for closer to Election Day generation of poll lists allowing for more efficient processing of electors at the polls.

The training and continuing education of poll workers required by HAVA is coordinated through the county in most cases and is currently provided free of charge. When the county wide training does not fit into the schedule of poll workers, training is provided at the local level. All training outlines must be submitted to the state Government Accountability Board (GAB) for approval. Some baseline training is provided by the state GAB usually at no charge to the town. Some federal grant money, administered by the state, has been provided to the town in the past year because of its self provider status. The money can be spent for training or upgrading of the election process within the town.

(6) Tax Collection

All of the municipalities within the county are currently required to use the same tax collection software. The software also processes dog licenses. This allows for the most efficient transfer of data when collecting taxes. The county is considering offering an online tax collection system for a fee to municipalities that would like to collect the January taxes with an online

option. Currently the county allows the second half tax collection to be done online. There is a fee for taxpayers who wish to pay taxes this way.

(7) Transportation

The element on transportation detailed the role of shared revenues and other cooperative arrangements involved in the replacement, reconstruction and repair of bridges and roads in the Town of Howard. In addition to the details set forth in that element, the Town cooperates with bordering towns by agreeing to snowplow, sand and salt, and grade, sections of roads that lie within their town but cannot be accessed from a road within that town. Such cooperative agreements exist with two towns covering about two total miles of roads.

(8) Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Service

The establishment of a fire department in the town of Howard originated in the summer of 1988. Very little rain from spring to August that year led to severe drought conditions over the entire region. This drought made the area vulnerable to fires. In mid August the inevitable happened. Lightning strikes burned two non-working barns to the ground. The Colfax fire department was called on one fire while Chippewa was called on the other. At the time, the town was not paying any subsidy to either entity and the town did a lot of negotiating over the cost of the fires.

In October of the that same year, representatives from the surrounding fire departments of Colfax, Chippewa and Bloomer met with the Howard town board to discuss fire protection within the town. There was a proposal to divide the town up between the Colfax Fire Department and the Chippewa Fire District. (Bloomer was deemed too far away and spread too thin to provide good service.) The cost to Howard for joining either department was comparable but neither wanted Howard to get by too cheaply. Joining the District had many benefits such as lower insurance rates, providing training for our firemen, etc. but also came with a stipulation. A fire station needed to be built in the town of Howard. A final decision was made in November 1988 to join the Chippewa Fire District and a building committee was selected. In the end, a fire station and town hall were constructed for approximately \$120,000 and fire equipment (fire

truck, tanker and brush buggy) equaling \$50,000 was purchased. An estimated 35 men took the fire training (about 17 of them remain today) and on December 8, 1989 the first meeting took place in the new town hall.

A detailed discussion of the fire protection and emergency medical service is contained in the Utilities and Community Services Element.

(9) Services provide to private parties

Like many rural townships in Wisconsin, the Town of Howard offers snowplowing and grading of driveways and farmyard (non-cattle) areas for an hourly fee. Liability for damages to the property being serviced lies with the landowner. The Town annually reviews the hourly fee to ensure that it covers the cost of the service.

7.3 Goals, objectives and policies

1. Annually review current intergovernmental cooperative agreements to find ways of improving the delivery of the service and making its delivery more efficient.
2. Actively seek cooperative agreements with neighboring towns and the County that would help both other governmental agencies and the Town of Howard avoid costly boundary disputes, achieve more cost effective way of delivering services and sharing revenues, and reduce administrative and enforcement costs.

ELEMENT 8: LAND USE

8.0 A Background and history of land use and description of current conditions.

Historically, the Town of Howard, like Chippewa County generally, was entirely covered by forest, except for marshland areas located in the moraine areas of northern Chippewa County and along tributary streams of the Chippewa River. Chippewa Falls, the first permanent settlement in the area, was established in 1822 when a saw mill was built along the Chippewa River. The saw mill was expanded in 1837 to accommodate the extensive lumbering going on in the area, becoming the largest sawmill in the world.

The succession of ethnic European groups that migrated to and settled in the Chippewa Valley had mostly agricultural backgrounds. This early historical shift in land use from forest land to agricultural land accelerated in the first half of the 19th century because of the ready local supply of the logs and lumber needed to build habitat for people and livestock in the variable seasons of this water rich area. In addition, Federal land-grant programs made land available without cost to applicants willing to occupy a 40 acre plot and transfer it to agricultural use. These two factors provided many immigrants with a strong incentive to settle the area.

Land use in the County during the 20th century was dominated by dairy farming. Villages were established around a milk and cheese factory and feed mill. Churches and schoolhouses dotted the countryside to serve the local population. The villages grew to provide easy access to retail outlets and various services necessary to sustain the lives of the people and agricultural operations in their immediate vicinities.

The waning years of the 20th and early 21st century in Chippewa County brought a significant transfer of farmland acreage devoted to the raising of forage for livestock to farmland used for growing corn and soybeans for outlying food and energy markets. Some dairy operations began expanding to large confined dairy facilities using very little land and the attendant equipment necessary for raising livestock forage crops. Other dairy operations began changing to operations with small to midsize herds in rotational grazing systems. The most dramatic change in land use during this period was the transfer of agricultural land use to residential land use as retiring dairy farmers sold off their lands for residential use at much higher market value than they would have received if sold as farmland.

The Town of Howard was originally entirely forested. Its geology consists in sandstone hills whose steeper slopes to a great extent remain forested today with valleys cleared for agriculture. A rural village never developed within the Town of Howard’s boundaries, perhaps because of its close proximity to the villages of Colfax on the west, Bloomer to the northeast, and Tilden to the east, and the cities of Chippewa Falls to the southeast and the Eau Claire to the south and Elk Mound to the southwest. So pressure for the transfer of farm land to residential land use comes almost entirely from the urban sprawl spreading from the rapidly growing population centers nearby. In the year 2009, Howard’s landscape remains largely forested and agricultural, with very little acreage devoted to commercial or manufacturing activities.

However, as the following tables show, between 1987 and 1997 there was a significant and rapid increase in the development of residential land use in the Town of Howard.

Table 8-1

Land Use Acreage 1987

Residential	Commercial	Manufacturing	Agriculture	Undeveloped	Forest	Other	Total
132	7	0	14,540	155	7,554	0	22,388

Table 8-1 shows the acreage of land use in 1987. The majority of the land is used for agriculture and forest purposes. This indicates that the town of Howard is primarily an agriculture based township. Small amounts of land are used for residential purposes. The use of undeveloped land is unknown. Commercial and manufacturing are negligible types of land use.

Table 8-2

Land Use Acreage 1997

Howard, WI

Residential	Commercial	Manufacturing	Agriculture	Undeveloped	Forest	Other	Total
583	20	0	14,261	21	6,864	242	21,991

Table 8-2 shows the acreage of land use in 1997. In comparison with Table 8-1, the acreage is relatively similar with a few exceptions. Residential acreage has grown to 451 acres from 1987-1997, indicating that housing and population have seen a steady increase in the 1987-1997 time periods. Undeveloped land has dropped a significant amount.

Table 8-3
Land Use Acreage 2007
Howard, WI

Residential	Commercial	Manufacturing	Agriculture	Undeveloped	Forest	Other	Total
767	23	0	13,970	754	5,883	284	21,681

Table 8-3 shows the acreage of land use in 2007. In comparison with Table 8-2, the acreages are relatively similar with a few exceptions. The rise of residential acreage in Table 8-2 is still continuing in 2007. It is not clear what use can be assigned to” undeveloped” and “other” lands

8.1 Recent Land Use history

As of 2007, the dominant land use is agricultural with a total of 13,979 acres. Forestry is a distant second with 5,883 acres, while 767 total acres are devoted to residential use, according to lands and parcels assessed for tax purposes. Total acreage of agricultural lands decreased in Howard at a rate of 3.9% from 1987 to 2007 and forested lands decreased at a rate of 36.4%. Residential land use, on the other hand, increased by 511.6%, most of it occurring in the 1987-97 period. Residential development during the past ten years has been slowed by the Town’s decision to regulate residential development by the use of a subdivision ordinance covering land divisions into three or more lots and by an ordinance requiring a minimum lot size of five acres. The collapse of the housing market and the banking/mortgage crisis of 2008 and 2009 have brought residential development in Howard to a virtual halt.

Table 8-4
Assessed Agricultural Parcels and Acreage
Howard, WI

Total Parcels			Total Acres			1987-1997	1997-2007
1987	1997	2007	1987	1997	2007	Acres % Change	Acres % Change
562	541	559	14,540	14,261	13,970	-1.9%	-2.0%

Table 8-4 shows the total agricultural parcels and acreage from 1987-2007. From 1987-2007 the acres have been declining. The steady decline has been small amounts in the 20 year time period. From 1987-2007 agricultural acreage has only declined 3.9%, this is a small amount compared to the surrounding towns similar to Howard.

Table 8-5
Assessed Forest parcels and Acreage
Howard, WI

Total Parcels					Total Acres					
1987	1997	2007	1987-1997 % Change	1997-2007 % Change	1987	1997	2007	1987-1997 % Change	1997-2007 % Change	1987-2007 % Change
433	427	381	-1.4%	-10.8%	7,554	6,864	5,883	-9.1%	-14.3%	-22.1%

Table 8-5 shows the assessed forest parcels and acreage from 1987-2007. The total number of parcels declined only 1.4% from 1987-1997 but the decline sharply increased by 10.8% for the years 1997-2007. There was a 22.1% decline in the total acreage of forested land use from 1987-2007. It is important to understand that the 22% decline in the total acreage of forested land over the 20 year period is a decline in tax accessed acreage, not a necessarily a decline in the acreage of forested land considered as physical cover. For example, if a 15-acre parcel forested land is purchased and a residence built on that parcel the entire parcel is assessed as residential land rather than forest land. Map no.12 shows the forested lands in the Town.

8.3 Special uses that can generate land use conflicts.

a. Confined Animal Facility Operations (CAFO's)

Using land to operate a large scale confined animal facility operation (CAFO) is a land use that generates significant land use conflicts in towns around the State. A CAFO is an operation that confines more than 1,000 animal units in one facility. An animal unit consists in 1,000 lbs of animal weight. The largest scale dairy (CAFO) in the State contains 6,000 cows. It is estimated that if this CAFO were considered a city the total amount of organic waste annually produced by this facility would rank it third in the state, behind only Milwaukee and Madison. CAFO's containing hogs, dairy, beef cattle and turkeys are common in the state with several such operations in neighboring townships. The Town of Howard has not yet had a CAFO locate in the town. CAFO's are highly controversial because the large amount of animal waste generated by these facilities may cause odor and pest nuisances as well as severe risk of ground and surface water pollution if not properly managed.

The state enacted a Livestock Facility Siting Law in 2006. Towns are required to follow state standards and procedures if they decide to exercise local control over the siting of these facilities. If the Town of Howard adopts a town zoning ordinance, it can use its local planning and zoning authority to make these siting decisions. It may prohibit livestock operations in non-agricultural zoning districts, i.e. in residential, commercial or other zones. The Town can also create multiple types of agricultural districts prohibiting CAFO's in some districts, while allowing permitted or conditional uses in others. These districts and uses must be consistent with our comprehensive plan, including farmland preservation plans. In order to prohibit or regulate the siting of a CAFO, the Town's prohibition or regulatory siting decision must be based on reasonable and scientific findings of fact that clearly show the decision is necessary to protect public health and safety. This would certainly be the case in areas of the Town where sloping agricultural lands and depth to bedrock have the potential for significant ground and surface water contamination. A zoning ordinance provides the most control of the siting of CAFO's. The Town can also choose to require a individual conditional use permit under its zoning authority, or a operational permit (license) using its police powers in order to protect public health and safety under a separate CAFO ordinance.

b. Mining

In 2008, Canadian Sand and Proppant, Inc. proposed to mine site of 130 acres (of a total of 240 acres leased land to extract 600-800,000 tons of sandstone per year for a period of 56 years. The extracted material would be trucked to a processing plant sited in the Chippewa Falls Industrial Park on Highway S just east of Hwy 124, where it will be processed to produce the type of sand for use in oil and natural gas drilling operations in Canada. Several other sites in neighboring townships are being discussed as additional sources of sandstone for the processing plant.

A permit (license) to mine in the Town of Howard is required by the Town's January 6, 2009 non-metallic mining ordinance. The sandstone hills of Howard contain deposits of Wonewoc sandstone in varying amounts and degrees of accessibility. In the proposed mine, top soil will removed down to bedrock and the sandstone mined to within 3-5ft of the water table that fluctuates during the course of rainy and droughty spells.

The goal of farmland preservation is the overriding priority in all land use planning and policy in the Town. However, while the Town seeks to slow the transfer of farmland acreage to non-agricultural uses by the use of farmland preservation zones or other means, the Town does not seek only to preserve farmland acreage. The Town's goal, like most state and federal agricultural programs, also seeks to preserve soil productivity through the use of various best management practices. Although sand and gravel mining is said to be a compatible land use in agricultural zones, only two of the approximately 100 sand and gravel pits in Chippewa County have been reclaimed for agricultural use, let alone reclaimed with soils that have the same capacity for productivity and suitability for agricultural use as they had before mining occurred. In Howard, most crop land is located on sloping land adjacent to hills that contain the sandstone deposits suitable for mining. Special attention will need to be given to the whether reclamation of the mine site can restore both the acreage of farmland being withdrawn for mining use but also restore the soil productivity lost during the process of extraction.

If mining in the Town results in either the loss of farmland or in the ultimate degradation of farmland soil productivity, the Town may consider whether sandstone mining should be an allowable use in its farmland preservation zones.

c. Landfills

The Town currently has no solid waste landfills. When finally closed and capped, sites used to landfill solid waste are used for green space and wildlife. However, landfills sited on farm land destroy acreage useable for agriculture. For that reason, they are inconsistent with the preservation of farmland and would be not considered as allowable in farmland preservation zones. They are also incompatible with residential zones. It would seem that on the basis of maps showing the geological features of the Town, particularly distance to bedrock, an depth to groundwater, there would be few places, if any, where a landfill could be placed, even when fully engineered, without the creation of unacceptable risk of ground water contamination. See Map no. 7 (depth to bedrock) and Map no. 8 (depth to groundwater)

d. Wind Turbines

Generally, the Town should encourage landowners to participate in energy conservation and energy generation programs and opportunities. It has been widely reported that this area of Wisconsin is unsuitable for large scale generation of energy by wind turbines because the frequency and velocity of winds in this area are insufficient for economically feasible and physically efficient systems. Many residents dispute this report. In addition, some say that the topography of the land is unsuitable for the installation of such systems. For these reason the Town may not have to face issues associated with this type of land use in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, issues such as setbacks, height, noise levels, and rumored interference with various types of telecommunications are issues that need to be considered whenever one or more wind turbines are built. The State of Wisconsin will likely set some uniform standards on this matter but will leave it up to the Towns to enforce these standards in their ordinances.

8.4 Residential land use

**Table 8-6
Assessed Residential Acres 1987, 1997 and 2007
Howard, WI**

Total Acres			1987-2007	1997-2007
1987	1997	2007	Percent Change	Percent Change
132	583	767	481.1%	31.6%

Table 8-6 shows the assessed residential acreage from 1987-2007. The time period of 1987-1997 experienced a large increase in residential acres. There were 451 new residential acres in that time period. The increase has continued into the 1997-2007 time period which was an increase of 184 acres.

The total acreage does not reflect the number of residences, especially since 2003 when the Town adopted a minimum lot size of five acres for single or two family dwellings. During this same period, a subdivision ordinance was in effect, with two subdivisions approved north of County Road S on either side of County Road T. A small motor home court, unregistered as a mobile home park is located along 20th Street in the northwest corner of Howard. Land use in the area of 82nd Avenue and 25th Street and along County Road N near 50th Street is also predominantly residential. For more detailed locations, see the Land Use Map attach as an Addendum D.

8.5 Commercial Land Use

Table 8-7
Assessed Commercial Acres 1987, 1997 and 2007
Howard, WI

Total Acres			1987-1997	1997-2007
1987	1997	2007	Percent Change	Percent Change
7	20	23	228.6%	15.0%

Table 8-7 shows the assessed commercial acreage from 1987-2007. Although the percent of change is 243% over the 20 year period, the total amount of acreage devoted to commercial land use is insignificant. The Town may have a few areas suitable for commercial development. The town may consider identifying and promoting those areas to diversify the Town's economy. In addition, cottage industries may be considered in areas where it is compatible with the surrounding land use.

8.6 Industrial Land Use

The Town has no acreage devoted to industrial use in the Town. In addition, the soils, groundwater supply and the necessary infrastructure are either unavailable, unsuitable, or insufficient for industrial use. Light industrial land use on lands adjacent to Highway 40 on the West side of the Town may be feasible, if the aforementioned limitations do not apply.

8.7 Land Use Goals, objectives, suggested policies

Goal 1: Preservation of Farm lands and their productivity.

Aggressively explore the most effective means of preserving farmland. Preservation of farmland is not to be simply considered preservation of acreage, but shall also include preservation of the soil productivity of farmland. For example, the degradation of soil capability from class 3 soils capable of crop farming (provided that limiting soil conditions are carefully managed) to class 6 land suitable only for forestry or pasture is as much to be avoided as transferring class 3 lands from agricultural to non-agricultural use.

- a. Adopt a Town Zoning Ordinance:

The ordinance should include farmland preservation zones which will have the following effects:

Residential development within an exclusive ag zone is limited to one dwelling on no more than a five acre lot per 40 acres. On a parcel of 200 acres for example, five dwellings would be allowed and they should be clustered in order to maximize the remaining acreage as productive farm land. If possible, clustering would involve lot sizes of less than five acres each. (Note: Farmers are only eligible to receive the tax benefits for farmland preservation programs in farmland preservation zones or in specialized farmland free-enterprise zones.)

Encourage groups of farmers to join together to form a Farmland Enterprise zones provided their lands meet the requirements for grants under this program. Such zones would not need to be exclusive ag zones and must total a minimum of 1,000 contiguous acres.

- b. Encourage individual farmers and forestland owners to apply for conservation easements for their lands through the County from the County Stewardship Fund, other County sources, or through private sources such as Western Wisconsin Land Trust.
- c. Cooperate with the farmland conservation programs administered by the County and Land Conservation Department.
- d. Work with landowners who are taking their lands out of the CRP program to return these lands to productive agricultural uses compatible with the physical characteristics the lands may have.
- e. If there is a great disparity between the market value of agricultural land, consider the adoption of an ordinance creating the opportunity for the purchase of development rights or of applying such a purchase from the County programs.
- f. Promote the reputation of Howard as a farming community and encourage the production of produce for local markets on small plots unsuitable for large scale crop production or used by dairy and livestock operations.
- g. Seek to develop a share by local residents in the distribution of energy produced locally by bio-digesters, wind turbines and solar sources of energy should these develop on a scale that exceeds the personal use of the owner of such production.

Goal 2: Guide Residential land use

- a. Restrict residential development on prime farmland by the adoption of farmland preservation zones that impose a limit of one dwelling on a maximum five acre lot size per 40 acres.
- b. Consider utilizing the NRCS's LESA program or the more commonly used soil capability classification of farm lands and seek to place residential development on farmlands whose soil capabilities for agricultural production are marginal.
- c. Consider the suitability of soils for development when making decisions regarding applications for building sites, subdivision plats, and condominium lands.
- d. Consider using the Groundwater Contamination Susceptibility Model (GCSM) used by DNR to estimate the susceptibility of groundwater contamination based on particular natural resource characteristics that are associated with the types of land uses and developments contemplated or proposed for an area or site.
- e. Encourage the maintenance of property values by the enforcement of minimum lot sizes and building codes.
- f. Consider creating multiple agricultural districts within exclusive ag zones of which one would be an agricultural transition zone.

Goal 3: Develop policies that prevent or minimize land use conflicts:

- a. Through the use of zoning seek to prevent the siting of CAFO's and the lands used for spreading a CAFO's animal waste in close proximity to residential development.
- b. Adopt ordinances to regulate a permitted use under a conditional use permit under the Town's zoning authority or ordinances that regulate operations causing damage or nuisance to neighbors or that diminish the value and enjoyment of neighboring properties through the use of operational permits (licenses).
- c. At the earliest contact with the buyer of a parcel of land and prior, if possible, to an application for any permit to make a land division, or to construct a building or dwelling, ascertain the purpose for the purchase or the development and advise the buyer or the applicant of potential land use conflict with adjacent land uses.

- d. Consider the feasibility of multiple agriculture districts within exclusive ag zones within which, depending on soil capabilities, different land uses may be prohibited or conditionally permitted and different grounds for variances set forth depending on the sensitivity of adjacent land uses to negative impacts. For example, in an exclusive ag zone adjacent to a subdivision, a “transitional agricultural district” could be created involving certain restrictions on types of chemical use or animal waste disposal etc. in an effort to limit contamination of the ground water.

Goal 4: Protection of the Town’s natural resources, including groundwater and surface water quantity and quality and sensitive lands, the Town may consider the following

- a. Consider restricting development on slopes in excess of 20%.
- b. Support and insist upon County enforcement of nutrient management practices under NR 151 Wisconsin Statutes.
- c. Support and insist upon County enforcement of the shore land zoning law.
- d. Consider suitability of soils for development with regard to the impact the development could have on natural resources.

Goal 5: Preservation of the Rural character and Aesthetic beauty of the Town’s landscape.

- a. Encourage screening of dwellings built on hill tops or hill sides by limiting the clearing of forestry along the rims of bluffs and hilltops, planting natural visual barriers and requiring setbacks or other means as appropriate and feasible.
- b. Continue a five acre minimum lots size as a way of managing density. Also consider using cluster development on large tracts in exclusive agriculture districts, subdivision and condominium lands, in order to maximize green space, preserve farmland, and protect natural resources.

8.8 Comprehensive Plan Survey Results

The function of a democratic form of government is the protection and furtherance of the public interest. A survey of Town residents was sent to 201 households by US Postal Service. It was also made available for those who had not filled out a mailed survey at the Town Hall on

Election Day and at the Annual meeting. A total of 87 respondents completed the survey. Many of the survey questions dealt directly or indirectly with the tension that always exists between the goals which the majority wants public policy to aim for and the desires of individual landowners who don't share a belief in a particular goal. This tension is perhaps no more evident than when considering land use regulation.

An equally overwhelming majority in excess of 75% of respondents were favorably disposed to protecting their own use and the value of property from injurious uses of adjacent land users by the use of zoning and/or ordinance regulating specific operations on lands.

A full 95% of all respondents favored the preservation of farmland and the rural character of the Town's landscape. When survey questions were analyzed in terms of how various groups such as farmers or non-farmers, old-timers or newbies, and retired seniors or non-seniors, and there was no significant difference in how they answered the questions.

Nearly 80% of respondents favored a Town zoning approach to land use regulation and opposed the adopting of County zoning.

Zoning places some restrictions on an individual's use of land if it will likely cause a negative impact on public goods or on the economic value, enjoyment of use of neighboring lands by their owners or lessees. When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement "A property owner should be able to do whatever he wants to do with his property, even if it diminishes the use, enjoyment, or market value of a neighbor's property, 86% of the respondents who had an opinion on the issue indicated disagreement with the statement.

ELEMENT 9: IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Survey together with discussions during the drafting of each previous element have established the goals, objective and policy considerations for the immediate future

The first task will be to develop a town zoning ordinance dedicated to farmland protection and support of the agricultural economy through the use of farmland preservation zones.

The second and associated task will be the review of each of the existing Town ordinances to ensure that they are in compliance with the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan. This will include a review of all fees with a view to covering the cost of services for which those fees are assigned.

A third and subsequent task will involve exploring the feasibility of various suggestions made within the plan for addressing, in an anticipatory fashion, some of the issues the Town is likely to face in the more distant future.

A fourth task is the exploration of intergovernmental cooperation as contemplated by the comprehensive plan law. The narrow time frame within which the development and adoption of this comprehensive plan necessarily took place imposed two important limitations on the substantive plan as it evolved and was finally adopted.

- 1) The planning process did not allow sufficient time to try to explore the intergovernmental cooperation that is clearly the intent of the comprehensive plan law to achieve. In fact, while informal conversations with neighboring towns normally occur, substantive cooperative efforts on specific plans or policy issues, in addition to those that already exist, cannot often be effectively explored until the towns have completed their own planning process. While the law idealistically contemplates that towns share and discuss their plans as they develop them, neither time nor the real

world seem to accord very well with mutual exploration and initial plan development. In addition, there is uncertainty as to the extent to which the County is interested in intergovernmental cooperation with towns that do not fall under County zoning authority.

Solution: Following the adoption of the Town of Howard comprehensive plan and in compliance with the Comprehensive Planning Law, the Town will share its plan with neighboring towns and submit it to the County. The Town is committed to exploring any area where plan proposals overlap or interact. The Town will make a good faith effort to avoid or minimize potential conflicts and to seek ways of cooperating with the goal of better serving the citizens in our respective jurisdictions. The Town considers this to be an on-going effort that is essential to the planning process and that will continue in the years to come.

- 2) Significant uncertainty surrounds the ability of the Town to use its police powers to address some issues that are now or will face the Town in coming years.

Regarding some of the issues addressed within this comprehensive plan there is some uncertainty about the ability of the Town to deal with them. For example, the validity of the Town's mining ordinance is currently being challenged in circuit court by an applicant for a permit to operate an industrial sand mine within the Town. A declaratory judgment on that issue will not likely be made until well after this plan has been adopted.

In addition, there has been a gradual erosion of local government's exercise of its police power to protect public health and safety by regulating by ordinance the activities it judges to pose a risk to public health and safety. Successful lobbying of the State legislature by the corporate interests whose activities towns have attempted to regulate by ordinance has led to the passing of laws that preempt local government authority. Whatever one thinks of the desirability of this historical trend that places limits on home rule, preemption has happened in the case of the regulation of the aerial spraying of pesticides, and the siting of landfills and large scale confined animal facilities (CAFOs). Recently several towns have attempted to regulate the

development of wind turbine farms by adopting ordinances that establish setbacks, height and noise levels. As the Town adopts this comprehensive plan, a State law is being proposed and will likely pass that will certainly limit the ability of towns to regulate wind turbine development. How severe that limitation will be is currently uncertain.

Solution: The Town will continue to exercise its village powers within the limits of authority granted by State Law. It will defend its home rule against challenges to its ordinances by a specific party and against general challenges through its support of the Wisconsin Town's Association lobbying efforts in the State Capitol. Since most of the issues facing Town government are in some way connected with land use, the Town will seek to protect its home rule by developing and adopting a Town zoning ordinance.

Addenda A

Tables and Maps

The tables used in this comprehensive plan are taken from the Chippewa *County Conditions and Trends* published in CD media format in August 2008 by the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Department. For a copy of this CD or more information regarding tables and interpretations contact the Chippewa

The maps referenced in the Town of Howard comprehensive plan are taken from *The Chippewa County Resource and Land Use Atlas*, published in January 2009 in a DVD media format by the West Central Regional Plan Commission. This Atlas is a compilation of resource, land use, and development limitations maps for Chippewa County and each of its municipalities to assist in county and local planning efforts. However, these maps should only be considered a starting point. The source data is based on the best information available at WCWRPC, though site/parcel-specific variations in resource data can be expected and municipal boundaries may have changed, and some land use information is outdated. For more information on the maps contained in this Atlas and the WCWRPC geographic information system, please contact WCWRPC at 715-836-2918.

The maps are numerically referenced in the body of the comprehensive plan to the brief explanations offered below for each map. These explanations are taken from *The Chippewa County Resource and Land Use Atlas* but modified to apply specifically to the Town of Howard.

Map no. 1 Prime Farmland

Data source is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Prime farmlands or agricultural lands shown on the map 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.

Map no. 2 Soil Capability Class

Data source is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Soil capability classification is an alternative method of identifying prime farmland, though the two methods used for Map no. 1 and Map no. 2 often yield very similar maps. The value of these lands is 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.

Map no. 3 General Soils

Data source is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database. The general soils maps identify the soil associations in areas of the town, providing a basic understanding of areas with some common characteristics.

Map no. 4 Sand and Gravel

Data source is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Sand and gravel are natural aggregates suitable for commercial use with a minimum of processing and can be used in many kinds of construction. The sand and gravel maps show those soils with a good or fair likelihood of being a potential sand or gravel source of suitable quantity for extraction. The properties used to evaluate the soil as a source of sand or gravel are gradation of grain sizes, the thickness of suitable material, and the content of rock fragments. The maps do not indicate the suitability of the material for specific uses or whether there are factors prohibit or otherwise limit excavation of the material. Deposits that lie along and include the beds of intermittent or navigable streams, as is the case with sand and gravel deposits located along portions of Elk and Hay Creek, would not be able to be mined. Also, the areas identified on the map as containing potential sand and gravel resources do not include areas that may contain sandstone material that involves more than a minimum of processing in order to make the material suitable for industrial or other uses.

Map no. 5 Water Resources

Data sources are the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. This map is a compilation of the surface water resources of the Town.

Map no. 6 Watersheds and Surface Waters

Data source is the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. A watershed is the area which drains runoff water to a stream and its tributaries. The three streams in Howard each comprise a small separate watershed each of which are part of a larger watershed that drains into another body of water. Elk Creek drains directly to the Chippewa River; Eighteen mile to the Red Cedar River, and the headwaters of both Big and Little Hay Creek drain to Duncan Creek and then to the Chippewa River. A watershed is smaller than river basins. For instance, west central Wisconsin falls within the Mississippi River major river basin and has three primary water management unit river basins (St. Croix, Lower Chippewa, and Black River), but the region has many more watersheds. Watersheds are used to manage and plan for water resources at the local level, including the Non-Point Source (NPS) Priority Watershed Program.

Map no. 7 Depth to Bedrock

Data source is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database. NRCS soils data identifies those areas with a depth to bedrock of five feet or less based on soil borings and observations during soil mapping. Excavations can be made in soft or fractured bedrock with trenching machines, backhoes, etc. Hard bedrock may require blasting or specialized equipment.

Map no. 8 Depth to Groundwater

Data source is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database. Depth to groundwater shows the highest level of a saturated zone in the soil in most years; this is also called a seasonal high water table. The depth to a seasonal high water table applies to undrained soils. The estimates are based mainly on the evidence of a saturated zone.

The NRCS soil data typically offers a range for the depth to groundwater for each soil unit. The WCWRPC depth to groundwater maps group the soil units into two ranges—six feet or less and a range of six feet or more. Six feet was a natural break for many of the NRCS soil units, and is also just less than the seven feet used by NRCS for its analysis of limitations for single-family residential with basements.

Map no. 9 Wetlands

Data source is Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Wisconsin Wetland Inventory. For west central Wisconsin, wetland data was last updated for the Town of Howard was in 1996. Generally, the wetlands shown are two acres or larger. The actual Wisconsin Wetland Inventory shows smaller wetlands using point symbols, as well as classifying the wetlands by vegetative type, hydrology, etc.

Map no. 10 Elevations

Data source is the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Geographic Data Download website: www.usgs.gov. The USGS created a digital elevation model based on known elevation points which extrapolated and assigns an elevation to small blocks (raster).

Map no. 11 Land Cover

Data source is the Wisconsin Initiative for Statewide Cooperation on Landscape Analysis and Data (or WISCLAND). Information in the WISCLAND land cover is derived primarily from 1992 satellite imagery and made available in 2000. WISCLAND data identifies predominant land cover for a minimum five-acre raster area. For information on the WISCLAND program can be found at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/maps/gis/datalandcover.html>.

Map no. 12 Forested areas

Data source is the Wisconsin Initiative for Statewide Cooperation on Landscape Analysis and Data (or WISCLAND). Information in the WISCLAND land cover is derived primarily from 1992 satellite imagery and made available in 2000. WISCLAND data identifies predominant land cover for a minimum five-acre raster area. For information on the WISCLAND program can be found at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/maps/gis/datalandcover.html>. The forest maps identify those five-acre areas which are predominantly forested, without distinguishing the forest type. Forest is defined as an upland area of land covered with woody perennial plants and trees reaching a mature height of at least six feet tall with a definite crown.

Map no. 13 Floodplains

Data source for the floodplain information is the FEMA FIRM maps as digitized by WCWRPC. Data source for the frequently flooded soils information is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

The floodplains shown on the maps are the 100-year floodplains as identified on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). The FIRMs are used to identify properties for which flood insurance is required as a loan condition under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). However, the FIRMs have limited reference points, so site-specific analysis is often required to determine proximity to the floodplain. The accuracy of the FIRMs has often been questioned by local officials. And given that the floodplains identified in the map atlas were digitized by

WCWRPC, our maps should only be used for general planning purposes. Currently, the FIRM maps are being updated statewide and will be made available in digital form, which should result in more accurate and increase usability.

The NRCS defined frequently flooded soils as soils in which flooding, ponding, or saturation is likely to occur often under usual weather conditions. “Often” is further defined as more than a 50 percent chance in any given year or more than 50 times in 100 years.

Map no. 14 Steep Slopes

Data source is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database. NRCS data assigns a slope range to each soil unit (or phase). Steep slopes are considered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to be any area of 12 percent or greater slope and consisting of any soil type. Bare ground on slopes 12 percent or greater are considered vulnerable to soil erosion, depending on the characteristics of the soil type and site. Soil erosion on slopes 12 percent to 20 percent is often manageable with good practices. The WisDNR discourages development of slopes greater than 20 percent without more intensive or engineered best management practices and erosion control planning (e.g., retaining walls, stormwater management systems, terracing).

Map no. 15 Septic Systems

Data source is the Chippewa County Soil Survey by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; digital G.I.S. data is from the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database. This map shows soils which have limitations for septic tank absorption fields. Septic tank absorption fields are areas in which effluent from a septic tank is distributed into the soil through subsurface tiles or perforated pipe. Only that part of the soil between 24 and 60 inches is evaluated. The rating is based on the soil properties that affect absorption of the effluent, construction and maintenance of the system, and public health. Factors considered include permeability, depth to wet soils, ponding, stones/boulders, depth to bedrock, excessive slope, and flooding. Soils underlain by loose sand and gravel or fractured bedrock at a depth of less than four feet below the distribution lines may not allow adequate filtration of effluent and poses groundwater contamination concerns. Mound systems, holding systems, pretreatment, and municipal wastewater treatment are a few ways to mitigate or overcome some limitations.

The limitations are considered slight if soil properties and site features are generally favorable for septic tank absorption fields and limitations are minor and easily overcome. Moderate limitations exist if soil properties or site conditions are not favorable for septic systems and special planning, design, or maintenance is needed to overcome or minimize the limitations. Severe limitations indicate that there are soil properties or site features so unfavorable or so difficult to overcome that special design, significant increases in construction costs, and possibly increased maintenance costs are required.

Addenda B

Railway Map

This map shows the railway and its connections with others in the neighboring Counties.



Railroads	
	BNSF Burlington Northern-Santa Fe
	CN Canadian National ¹
	CPR Canadian Pacific Railway (Soo Line Railroad ¹)
	PGR Progressive Rail, Inc.
	UP Union Pacific Railroad
	WGN Wisconsin Great Northern

Symbols	
	Amtrak Station
	Intermodal Facilities
	Rail lines out of service
	Local Rail Bank
	Rails-to-Trails
	In Rails-to-Trails Negotiation & Out-of-Service
	White Dashes



Wisconsin Railroads
2006

NOTE:
Map displays rail lines and corridors owned by operating freight railroads and government agencies. Other privately owned facilities (examples: industrial lead, utility company spurs, museum tracks) not shown. Line Color represents principal operator, may not be owner.

ADDENDUM C Public Participation Plan

1. How many years have you lived in the town? 2. What is your occupation?
 1-4 5-10 11-15 16-25 26+ farm non-farm retired
3. How many miles do you travel to work? ____ 4. The age of your house is about ____ years
5. I am a homeowner renter 6. What is your age? 18 -24 25-44
7. My Residential lot size is. ____ acres 45-59 60+
8. I own ____ acres of farm land ____ acres of forested land ____ acres of CRP land
9. If you own farmland check what best describes your primary use of the land.
 Dairy farm Cash Crop Lease land CRP land Raise Livestock Wildlife

The most significant trend in the past 20 years has been the increase in residential development and the corresponding loss of farmland. If this development continues during the next 20 years, the transfer of farmland to residential use is likely to increase at an even a faster rate. If this occurs, taxes and land use conflicts will increase. Controlling costs of government services and minimizing land use conflicts are two important functions of Town Government.

TAXES

Generally, taxes paid by commercial and light industrial property exceed costs of service to that property by a \$3 to \$1 ratio. Taxes paid by a farm exceed the cost of service to that farm by as much as a \$5 to \$1 ratio. However, service to a residential property costs more than the tax paid by that property. A recent study done for the Town of Cleveland, for example, concluded that for every \$1 in tax revenue paid by a residential property, it cost \$1.25 to service that property. Cities and villages deal with this problem by investing in commercial and industrial development. Towns like Howard lack the financial means to make a sizable investment in the necessary infrastructure for commercial or industrial growth. However, by encouraging new commercial and light industrial development and by preserving farmland, the Town can try to buffer the costs of residential development. In addition, some towns impose an “impact fee” to reduce the taxpayer’s subsidy of new residential development. Please express your views on each of the following policies:

10. Encourage and allow commercial and light industrial growth to occur anywhere in the Town
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree
11. Encourage commercial and light industrial development, but limited to areas where it does not encroach on residential and agricultural land uses.
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree
12. Encourage the preservation of farmlands in the Town
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree
13. Reduce taxpayer’s subsidy of new residential development by using a one-time impact fee.
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

LAND USE

As population increases, patterns of land use and opportunities for new land uses arise. Land use conflicts also increase and can no longer be ignored. The Town can deal with these conflicts in by the use of three types of rules.

Conditional use ordinances. This type of rule grants licenses or permits. It sets forth certain conditions that must be met in order to minimize adverse affects on the use or enjoyment of a neighbor's property. These types of rules cannot determine where something such as a landfill, a mine operation, a large animal facility, wind turbines, a cell tower, a tavern, a subdivision, or a racetrack etc. is located. They can be placed anywhere. They only manage the activities associated with these things to the extent practical.

Land Division ordinances. This type of rule regulates how land can be divided in preparation for a development and tries to prevent harm to neighboring properties that results from storm water runoff and soil erosion. It makes sure that a parcel is buildable and has road access to assure fire, police and ambulance protection and makes sure that the parcel has solid waste, septic and utility services that are required by law. It does nothing to minimize harmful or nuisance affects caused by the development.

A zoning ordinance. This rule determines where development can occur. A "zone" is a well defined area based on current or best uses. "Exclusive zones" allow for a specific type of land use and prohibit or limit other incompatible uses. "Mixed zones" identify some preferred uses but allow for almost any use. In an exclusive residential zone, for example, a large scale hog farm, landfill, mine, or racetrack would be prohibited as incompatible. Other compatible uses would require a special permit. In an exclusive agricultural zone, for example, residential development is usually limited to one home per 40 acres, while racetracks and mines would be prohibited. A zoning ordinance can contain both exclusive and mixed zones. County zoning has exclusive residential but no exclusive agricultural zones. The Township of Bloomer has an exclusive ag zone. Conditional use ordinances are still necessary for uses that are not prohibited in the zone.

Zoning has a number of advantages: (Exclusive zone = EZ; Mixed zone= MZ)

- It protects a land owner's investment in property from developments that diminish its value.
- It is a better protection against nuisances and potential harms caused by adjacent land uses.
- It preserves the quality of life in a Town by prohibiting uses that would destroy prized qualities.
- It is the most effective means of preserving farmland
- It is often an incentive for commercial or light industrial development which would be protected against nuisance laws suits and have some assurance of needed Town services.
- In a mixed zone, citizens have a voice on what gets developed next door to them, since non-preferred uses would require a variance against which neighbors can effectively object.

Zoning has a disadvantage.

- If a land owner in an exclusive zone wants to sell the land for an incompatible use, the owner would not be able to do so. Residential landowners usually have neither the acreage nor a desire to develop their property for non-residential use. Consider the following statements:

14. A property owner should be able to do whatever he wants to do with his property even if it diminishes the use, enjoyment, or market value of a neighbor's property.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

15. The Town has a duty to minimize land use conflicts and protect property values of all citizens.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

Currently, the Town is not zoned. With no zoning, residents have no right to complain if a large scale hog facility is developed next door. With no zoning, farmers have no right to complain if a subdivision is placed next door, or if a year- round industrial mine lowers their water table and recurrent blasting and daily noise lowers milk production. Currently, anything can go anywhere. The Town can only control its own destiny by developing its own zoning ordinance. It can turn over control to County zoning or not zone at all. Indicate your views regarding statements 16-18.

16. The Town should consider developing its own zoning ordinance.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

17. The Town should consider turning over control to County zoning.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

18. The Town should not consider adopting any zoning ordinance.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

The sandstone contained in Howard's hills is used by the natural gas and oil drilling industry in other parts of the US and Canada. Unlike locally-owned sand and gravel operations that serve local road and building needs, sand mining is done by international corporations or their subsidiaries. The industrial sand mine currently proposed in Howard will operate 365 days a year for 56 years. Semi-trucks able to hold 25 tons of sand will travel along County Rd B to and from a processing plant in Chippewa Falls at an estimated average rate of 250 trips per day, almost a truck every 2-3 minutes year round. The Town has revised its mining ordinance to better protect ground and surface water and nuisance effects, but an ordinance cannot protect against the loss of property values to the neighbors of the mine and those living on Highway B. The location of a mine is able to be prohibited only in exclusive residential and exclusive agricultural zones. Indicate your attitude toward the following statements, consistent with your answers to 16-18 above

19. The Town should limit where mining can occur in the Town by adopting a zoning ordinance with some exclusive agricultural and residential zones.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

20. The Town should regulate mining by ordinance only, allowing it to occur anywhere.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

HOUSING

21. The Town should continue requiring a minimum 5-acre lot size throughout the town.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

22. The minimum 5-acre lot size limits the amount of residential development within the Town but it also limits the availability of affordable housing. Should the Town designate some areas where residential development can occur on lots of less than 5 acres?

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

23. Currently, if the Town approves a plat for a 20 acre subdivision, the plat will be composed of 4 lots, five acres each with a strip of land set aside for a road. As an alternative, should the Town consider approving a plat for a 20 acre subdivision composed of four 2-acre lots clustered near each other with a 12 acre green space commonly owned and managed by the subdivision association?

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

24. Which of the following types of multi-unit housing should the Town permit?

(a) Duplexes

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

(b) Four-plex condos or apartment buildings

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

25. The Town should limit subdivisions to single family residences.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

TOWN SERVICES

26. Currently, the Town provides garbage disposal and recycling of all non-hazardous materials at the Town Hall from 9 a.m. till noon on the 2nd and last Saturdays of each month.

(a) How frequently do you use this service? once a month more than once a month rarely

(b) Do you receive garbage pick up service from a private company? Yes No

27. The current days and hours provided by the Town are adequate for your current needs

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

28. Currently, Waste Management Inc. denies new requests for garbage service and has indicated plans for discontinuing garbage pickup in Howard at private residences. Whether they will discontinue all garbage service to the Town is unknown. If this were to occur in the future, what schedule for disposal at the Town Hall would be sufficient to serve your needs?

same as now every Sat. morning 9am-3pm on 2nd and last Saturday Other _____

Citizens are not only proud of and grateful for the Town's volunteer fire and emergency medical service, but its proximity holds down our home insurance cost. We also assist and are assisted by other volunteer departments in our district.

29. How often have you needed our fire or EMS service never once more than once.

30. Was the service provided in a timely and effective manner?

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

As our population ages and residents commute to work elsewhere, recruiting volunteers is becoming more difficult. A lack of recruits poses a real threat to providing this important service.

31. Would you be willing or do you know someone willing to volunteer? Yes No

AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

In the past 5 years alone in West Central Wisconsin, 239 square miles of productive farmland was lost to non-farm development, an area slightly larger than Pepin County. Nationally, 225,000 square miles of farmland from lower South Dakota to northwest Texas is in danger of being lost for crop production because crop farming in this semi-arid area depends on irrigation from the ancient Ogallala aquifer that underlies the land. The aquifer is 75% depleted now and at current rates of withdrawal will be dry in 25 years in most places. With precipitation averages of less than 15 inches a year, crop production in the “bread basket of America” is nearing an end. Farmland will change over to livestock grazing and grassland biofuel production. Our nation is going to desperately need farmland for food production in states like Wisconsin that average 30 inches or more of precipitation a year. The problem is being addressed at both the Federal and State level. Federal subsidy programs that have paid to keep land out of production are being phased out. In 2006, Wisconsin’s Department of Agriculture (DATCP) began discussing ways to preserve farmland in Wisconsin.

32. Creating exclusive agricultural zones is the most effective way to preserve farmland. An “exclusive ag” zone can be used only for prime farm land and prohibits developments that destroy its agricultural use. Mines, landfills and subdivisions are prohibited in an exclusive ag zone. The farmer is permitted to build a home for himself and family members or an employee.

Should the Town consider adopting exclusive Ag zoning?

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

33. There are also three potential voluntary programs for which farmers may apply, although the extent to which local government will be involved in enabling these programs is currently not clear.

- The Farmland Preservation Act gave farmers tax credits for agreeing to keep their land in production for a specific period of time. Credits vary according to the length of the period. The program is no longer working, but is being revised.

- Farmland Conservation Easements are voluntary agreements that farmers enter into by which they permanently preserve Farmland for future generations. In return, they receive a payment equal to the difference between the value of the farmland and residential development or may donate the difference and receive a state and federal charitable tax deduction. Several farms in the County already utilize this program.

- A Farmland Enterprise Zone is a new idea that requires a sizable block of farms to voluntarily apply for this type of zone. Member farms agree to keep the land in production and, when they are ready to sell their land, they receive a payment equal to the difference between the market value of the farmland and residential land. Farmers are permitted to build houses for family and one employee though not more than 1 house per 40 acres.

Should the Town encourage and assist farmers to apply for these voluntary programs if and when they become funded and available? The proposed 2009 State budget transfers 12 million of unused CREP funds to farmland preservation and targets \$420,000 for Counties to upgrade their farmland preservation programs.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

Efficient agricultural production may require the use of fertilizer and pesticides, both of which may contaminate groundwater. Nitrate concentration levels that violate safety standards for children and pregnant women may occur in wells adjacent to cropland. Studies of chronic low level exposure to contamination by some pesticides suggest alarm but are not yet definitive. Residential development immediately adjacent to croplands is not just a matter of nuisance; it is also a public health issue. The Town has a duty to protect public health and safety.

34. Should the Town, before granting a permit for creating a lot or a building permit, inform the applicant of the potential health hazards of well water contamination adjacent to crop land?

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

35. Should the Town create a buffer zone that would discourage residential development on lands immediately adjacent to and downstream from cropland?

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

TRANSPORTATION

The following questions ask for your view on transportation in the town. Please note a problem on the line provided.

36. Speed limits and signage on roads are adequate. Problem _____

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

37. Roads are kept in good repair Problem _____

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

38 Snow plowing and sanding is satisfactory Problem _____

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

39 How important is mowing of ditches during summer months to you?

very important somewhat important not very important.

40 How extensive should the mowing be?

entire ditch once only ditches with high weed growth all ditches 3 feet from road

Which of the following will be issues of concern to town residents in the next 20 years?

41 Wind Turbines Yes No Maybe No opinion

42 Cell Towers Yes No Maybe No opinion

43 Outside furnaces Yes No Maybe No opinion

44 Other _____ Continue on the back of the cover letter