

Chapter I

The Town of Wheaton and Comprehensive Planning

Introduction

The Town of Wheaton is located in the southwestern corner of Chippewa County in western Wisconsin (see Map 1-1). The 2019 estimated population is 2,812 residents. Agriculture has shaped the Town's landscape but the proximity to larger urban areas and highly traveled transportation corridors has led to growing residential, commercial and industrial development.

The Town of Wheaton shares its border with the City of Chippewa Falls, Village of Lake Hallie, City of Eau Claire, Town of Tilden, Town of Howard, Town of Union and Town of Elk Mound. In general, the area's population is growing. Many Town residents commute to work in the urbanized areas.

State Truck Highway (S.T.H.) 29 provides a major transportation corridor running east and west through the Town and United States Highway (U.S.H.) 53 running north and south in the northeastern corner of the Town. U.S.H. 12 touches the northeastern corner of Wheaton.

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport, located in the City of Eau Claire, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, only 1 ½ hours away in the Bloomington, MN, provides easy access to air transportation services.

The proximity to growing urban areas and major transportation corridors provides the need planning to ensure the future growth of the Town of Wheaton happens in a thoughtful way that meets the needs of the community and protects the qualities of the Town that residents value.

Comprehensive Planning Law

The Town of Wheaton adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 2009. It complies with the requirements of Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001. The Statute states that beginning January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit enacts or amends an official mapping ordinance, subdivision ordinance, zoning ordinance, or shorelands zoning ordinance, the ordinance shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan.

The term "consistent with" means that it furthers or does not contradict the objectives, goals, and policies contained in the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan, by itself, is not considered a law.

The Town of Wheaton worked with Short Elliot Hendrickson to create and adopt the Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Plan in 2009. This update will incorporate portions of the original document that are still relevant and revised portions of each chapters that need to be revisited.

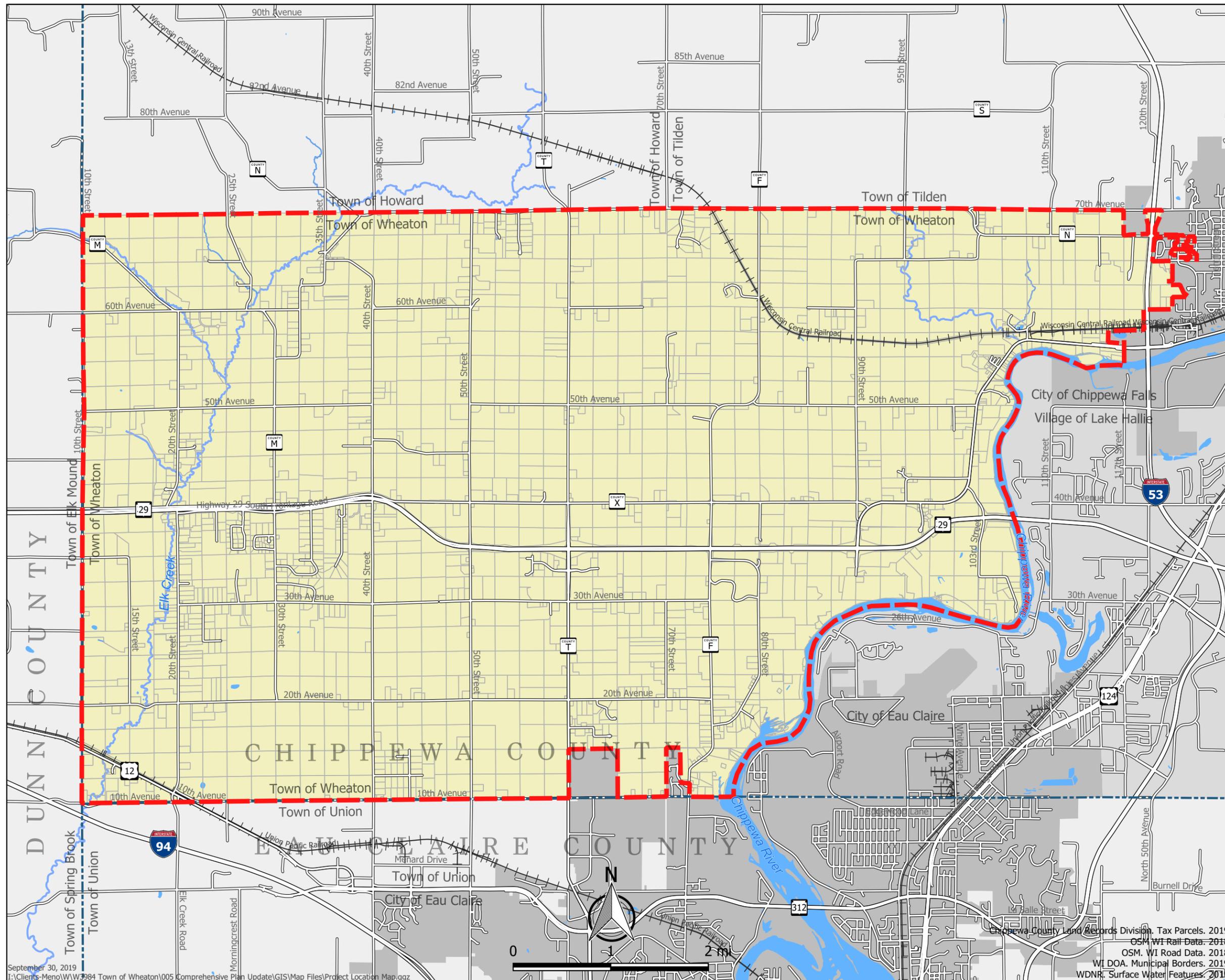


Town of Wheaton

Chippewa County, WI



Map 1-1



The Town's Comprehensive Plan is designed to act as a guide to the physical, social, and economic development of Wheaton. The Comprehensive Plan must address nine (9) elements, each focusing on a unique sector of the community. The elements required by the Wisconsin State Statutes are:

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Implementation

Each element is addressed in a manner that provides fluidity and consistency with the other elements, existing local and regional plans, and local and regional objectives.

Goals of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law or "Smart Growth" Law was designed to confront the social, environmental, and economic challenges resulting from urban sprawl. A Comprehensive Plan must be created with these goals in mind.

1. Promotion of redevelopment of land with existing infrastructure and public services, and maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitat, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
5. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and low costs.
6. Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.
7. Encouragement of cooperation and coordination among nearby units of government.
8. Building community identity by revitalizing main streets & enforcing design standards.
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels within the community.
10. Providing infrastructure, services & developable land adequate to meet market demand residential, commercial and industrial uses.
11. Promoting expansion or stabilization of the economic base and job creation.
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests & goals.



13. Planning & developing land uses that create or preserve unique urban & rural communities.

Benefits to Planning

A Comprehensive Plan can provide numerous benefits to any community. These include:

- Coordinating community activities to reduce costs
- Understanding the past and present to plan for the future
- Allowing a community to be proactive rather than reactive
- Preserving local control
- Promoting economic development
- Promoting intergovernmental cooperation
- Protecting cultural, agricultural, and natural resources

The most important benefit of a Comprehensive Plan is that it provides information so that Town officials can make consistent decisions. It also provides a vision that residents, committees, business owners, and developers can utilize when pursuing their own projects.

Public Participation

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires public participation at every stage of planning. At a minimum, the law calls for the adoption of a Public Participation Plan to provide for a diverse range of opportunities for the public to help shape their community, making copies of the proposed plan available for the public to review, and holding at least one public hearing prior to adopting the comprehensive plan.

The Town of Wheaton adopted a Public Participation Plan that included conducting a Community Survey in 2019 to get the opinions of residents and business owners on a wide range of development issues. The adopted Public Participation Plan is found in Appendix A.

Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations in a wide variety of chapters integrate this perspective and reinforce the historic pride and sense of place that the Town of Wheaton is determined to maintain, strengthen, and build upon.



Formulating Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations

Goals, objectives, and recommendations are found at the end of each chapter. These provide guidance and direction for the growth and development of the Town of Wheaton and can be used to evaluate the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. A definition of each is provided below.

Goals:

Goals are statements of desired outcomes or achievements. They are general in nature.

Objectives:

Objectives are more specific and are measurable.

Recommendations:

Recommendations are specific actions to be taken to achieve the objectives and meet the goals.

The goals, objectives, and recommendations identify the direction and priorities the Town has identified and will implement over time.

Note on Comprehensive Plan Limitations

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to act as a guide for the future growth and development of the Town of Wheaton. It should be noted that although the Comprehensive Plan looks out over a 20-year period, the Town should review and revise the Comprehensive Plan on a periodic basis to adjust for deviations from population and other growth forecasts and unforeseen variables. At a minimum, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed every ten years.

Maps and tables found within the Comprehensive Plan are a compilation and reproduction of various sources and data. The maps are intended to be used for general reference purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for an accurate site survey. When referring to the Comprehensive Plan during the decision making process, the intent of the Comprehensive Plan as a whole should be considered.

