

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

1.2 The Chippewa County Planning Effort

1.3 The Chippewa County Planning Process and Public Involvement

Chippewa County is located in the Indianhead region of west central Wisconsin. Chippewa County is bordered by Barron and Rusk Counties to the north, Dunn County to the west, Eau Claire County to the south, and Clark and Taylor Counties to the east. The combined land and water area of Chippewa County is approximately 666,428 acres. This amounts to 1,041 square miles, which ranks 12th in land area among Wisconsin Counties.

The governmental center of Chippewa County is in the City of Chippewa Falls, which is in the southern portion of the County. Chippewa County was established in 1845, after the Governor allowed a split of Crawford County. Chippewa County originally extended from Lake Pepin, on the Mississippi River, nearly to Hurley, Wisconsin, which borders Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In 1848, after Wisconsin became a state, the western boundary of the County was shifted. Since then, the boundaries have been redefined many times.

The first courthouse was started in 1857, but never occupied. Then in 1860, a new courthouse was built and used by the County Sheriff and Officers. In 1875, a courthouse and jail were built at the current location of the courthouse. Since then, remodels and expansions have taken place, but the location seems to serve the need of the County well.

The land use within Chippewa County is predominately agricultural, with significant urbanized areas, and a recent increase in residential growth. Nearby major urban areas include the Chippewa-Eau Claire metropolitan area, which partially lies within the County, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area to the west.

Major regional transportation corridors run through the County. State Highway 29 runs east and west connecting Green Bay to Minneapolis-St. Paul. Interstate 94, which runs west and southeast, is a five to ten minute drive south of the County, and connects Minneapolis-St. Paul with Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago. State Highway 53 runs north and south and connects Duluth-Superior with Interstate 94. This infrastructure allows for the safe and efficient transportation of people, as well as goods and supplies for business needs. Chippewa County is also served by several rail transportation lines, which are discussed in more detail in the Transportation Element.

*Comprehensive Planning
Answers Three Questions:
1) Where has the community
 been?
2) Where do we want to be in
 20 years?
3) What will it take to get
 there?*

1.1 Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

The 1999 Wisconsin Legislative Act 9 created a framework in the State of Wisconsin for community planning. There are nine elements of a Comprehensive Plan that must be addressed under the current planning legislation. These nine elements include the following:

1. Introduction
2. Issues and Opportunities
3. Housing
4. Transportation
5. Utilities and Community Facilities
6. Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
7. Economic Development
8. Intergovernmental Cooperation
9. Land Use
10. Implementation

According to Wisconsin Statute, the Comprehensive Plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the community. In accordance with existing and future needs, the Comprehensive Plan will promote public health, safety, and general welfare of the entire community. The Planning Law requires zoning, official mapping, and subdivision regulations be consistent with a Comprehensive Plan by January 1, 2010.

1.2 The Chippewa County Planning Effort

The planning process began in the summer of 2008. Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH) was retained to assist Chippewa County in the planning process and the preparation of their Comprehensive Plan.

Chippewa County is completing their plan as part of a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning project. The lead in this project is the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC). Participants in this effort include three counties (including Chippewa), 13 towns, six villages, two cities, and WCWRPC's regional plan. A grant was awarded for this project in May of 2008 from the Wisconsin Department of Administration. The multi-jurisdictional planning process began with a kick-off meeting in June.

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared through the guidance of numerous committees. These committees represent a wide range of interests to ensure that the entire County's values and interests are expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The Committees met periodically during the drafting of this Plan to discuss land-use issues, review plan materials, and ultimately recommend the adoption of the Plan to the Chippewa County Board.

1.3 The Chippewa County Planning Process and Public Involvement

Chippewa County is committed to an open public involvement/outreach program that invites participation from all County residents at every level in the decision-making process. The County will continue to engage the residents in the development of planning related items and tasks that are discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Meeting notices for all meetings were advertised and open to the public.

Future public involvement opportunities will include County Board meetings, committee meetings, and multi-jurisdictional planning meetings. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a working document that will require periodic reviews and updates as trends and patterns develop across western Wisconsin, and Chippewa County.

At the onset, the County was committed to a highly participatory process. As such, the County has held many public meetings through each of the committees. These assisted in identifying key issues, and helping to shape the vision of the future for Chippewa County. The County also completed a random sample survey through the mail of Chippewa County residents. More details, along with the findings from the returned surveys, are presented in the Issues and Opportunities element.

With the elements drafted, the County committees began a series of meetings identifying Goals, Objectives, and Policies for each of the elements.

Page Intentionally Left Blank