

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 LAND USE PLAN PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Bayfield County Land Use Plan is to serve as an advisory guide to help local government officials and others make more informed decisions affecting future growth and development in the county and its towns. The local town land use plans are an integral part of the county plan. While the county plan provides an overall countywide framework, the local town plans provide specific detail and guidance on future growth and development in their respective communities.

The county plan is not a static document but is periodically revised as local towns develop, adopt, and revise their plans or when other circumstances and conditions warrant. These local plans are then incorporated into the county plan. It should be emphasized that the county plan is advisory and serves only as a guide. Implementation of the plan necessitates that public officials and others use it as a tool when making decisions affecting future growth and development. A variety of regulatory (e.g., zoning ordinance) and non-regulatory (e.g. public education) tools can be utilized to help implement the plan.

1.2 WISCONSIN PLANNING ENABLING LEGISLATION

The State of Wisconsin grants power to local governments to conduct land use planning and the regulating of activities that affect land use. Referred to as “enabling legislation”, the state allows local governments to act but does not require it. For example, the state gives counties the authority to adopt county development plans but does not require them to do so.

1.3 WISCONSIN’S COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING LEGISLATION

Changes to Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning statutes in 1999-2001 reflect a movement toward a uniform set of planning guidelines and requirements for community planning in Wisconsin. Referred to as “Smart Growth” legislation, the new changes define the content and outline the process for the development of comprehensive plans. The State of Wisconsin requires a comprehensive plan to contain nine elements, each of which examines a different aspect of community composition. After January 1, 2010, local governmental actions that affect land use must be consistent with the contents of the local governments plan. If a community fails to base its land use decisions on the contents of the plan, these decisions may not be considered legally defensible, greatly limiting the municipality’s authority to regulate land use.

While not a comprehensive plan, the Bayfield County Land Use Plan addresses eight of the nine “Smart Growth” issues including the natural environment, transportation, demographics, public and community facilities, land use, implementation and housing. This background provides the basis for the development of a plan that meets the requirements of a comprehensive plan under Chapter 66, Wisconsin State Statutes (“Smart Growth” legislation).

1.4 LAND USE AUTHORITY

In Wisconsin, counties have the greatest authority to regulate land uses outside of incorporated areas such as villages and cities. Towns may exercise village zoning powers and may adopt their own zoning ordinance, if specifically authorized at the town annual meeting or by special meeting. However, in counties with a county zoning ordinance, the county board must approve the towns zoning ordinance. Bayfield County also has within its borders one Indian Nation, the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe who has an entirely different set of land use structures and authority in place. The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, a federally recognized Tribe of Indians holds title and jurisdictional control over reservation lands that are located in Bayfield County.

1.5 BAYFIELD COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING

Initial countywide zoning in Bayfield County was enacted in 1934 and revised in the 1970's. All towns in Bayfield County, except the Town of Pilsen, adopted the county zoning ordinance by 1990. Several towns in Bayfield County began developing local land use plans in the 1990's, which were completed and adopted by the end of 2001. Contents of the local plans were integrated into the countywide plan.

1.6 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

History

Bayfield County was created in 1854 and is named after British Naval Lieutenant Henry Bayfield, who first surveyed this area of the Great Lakes Region. Historically, Bayfield County's economy has been based on lumbering, fishing, and quarrying but has since become renowned as one the Midwest's premiere tourism destinations.

Geography

Bayfield County, located in northwestern Wisconsin (*Approximate Geographic Center 46.30 degrees Lat, 90.17 degrees Long*), is bounded on the west by Douglas County, south by Sawyer County and on the east by Ashland County. Bayfield County is the second largest county in the state, encompassing 1,476.4 square miles. The county's spatial extent ranges from 30 miles east/west to nearly 60 miles north/south. Bayfield County has 86.2 miles of mainland shoreline on Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world. Four of the Apostle Islands (Eagle, Sand, York, Raspberry) are also part of the county. The county has a very diverse and extensive network of lakes, rivers, and streams and an abundant natural resource base.

Bayfield County is comprised of 25 unincorporated towns, 2 cities, 1 village, and 1 Indian reservation. Several small communities serve as the population centers for many towns, especially those along the Lake Superior shore.

Bayfield County Municipalities (Population)

Town of Barksdale (801)	Town of Keystone (369)
Town of Barnes (610)	Town of Lincoln (293)
Town of Bayfield (625)	Town of Mason (326)
Town of Bayview (491)	Town of Namakagon (285)
Town of Bell (230)	Town of Orienta (101)
Town of Cable (836)	Town of Oulu (540)
Town of Clover (211)	Town of Pilsen (203)
Town of Delta (235)	Town of Port Wing (420)
Town of Drummond (541)	Town of Russell (1,216)
Town of Eileen (640)	Town of Tripp (209)
Town of Grand View (483)	Town of Washburn (541)
Town of Hughes (408)	Village of Mason (72)
Town of Iron River (1,059)	City of Bayfield (611)
Town of Kelly (377)	City of Washburn (2,280)

Unincorporated Communities

Barnes	Herbster
Benoit	Ino
Cable	Iron River
Cornucopia	Moquah
Drummond	Port Wing
Grand View	

Indian Reservation

Red Cliff

Geographic Province

Bayfield County is located in the glaciated region of Wisconsin and falls in two geographic provinces, the Northern Highland Province (north and south) and the Lake Superior Lowland Province. These provinces differ in diversity of flora and fauna, underlying geologic conditions, topography, soil conditions, and to some extent climate.

1.7 BAYFIELD COUNTY PLANNING PROCESS

In 1999, the Bayfield County Board of Supervisors authorized the formation of the Bayfield County Land Use Plan Steering Committee to oversee the completion of a county land use plan. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission was contracted to assist the committee in the planning process, develop mapping, draft plan narrative, and to facilitate public meetings.

Why Plan?

The planning process in Bayfield County was initiated in order to address a wide range of growth management and land use issues within Bayfield County. Land use planning is a tool to guide growth and development into the most appropriate areas of the community. The changing landscape of northern Wisconsin and the effect of growth on the natural, cultural, social, and economic environment were the impetus for initiation of the land use planning process.

Planning vs. Zoning

Differences between planning and zoning are not always clear to citizens or to all local units of government. Both planning and zoning are important elements in land use management efforts of local governments because an effective zoning decision should be based on a sound land use plan. A land use plan will serve as a guide for future growth and development and establishes community goals and objectives regarding how land will be used in the future. Planning is visionary in that it identifies where and how citizens would like to see the physical development of the community take place. Planning is a process that helps a community prepare for change, rather than react to it.

Zoning, on the other hand, is an important tool that can help communities achieve their respective goals and objectives through land use regulation. Zoning ordinances are regulations that are enacted to help protect public health, safety and welfare. They do this by separating conflicting land uses and ensuring that development is directed in certain areas that can accommodate a particular land use. Under zoning, communities are divided into different districts (or zones), which impose different land use controls or specific restrictions on each district. A local government land use plan will likely be more successful if the plan and zoning ordinance (if one is in place) are well integrated and if they accommodate the interests and needs of neighboring communities.

Public Input Survey

On April 28, 2000, a public input survey was distributed to 14,125 property owners and residents in Bayfield County. The purpose of the survey was to gather public opinion and comments regarding land use issues and planning in Bayfield County. Refer to Appendix A.4 for an executive summary of the survey results.

Goal and Objectives

After review and assessment of the public opinion survey and input gathered at three public meetings held in July 2001, a set of plan goals and objectives was developed.

Public Involvement

Throughout the planning process, members of the community were given the opportunity to provide input and ask questions. The public input survey was one of the first elements of public involvement in the planning process. Public comment was requested and given at four public information meetings held around the county in July 2000. News articles about the Bayfield County land use planning effort were published in local newspapers. Also, a Bayfield County land use planning web page was developed. Furthermore, three public information meetings were held in July 2001 which provided an opportunity for the public to comment on the plans draft goals and objectives. Additionally, all county Land Use Plan Steering Committee meetings were open to the public and public input was taken.

1.8 PLAN CONTENTS

The Bayfield County Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a generalized future growth and development plan. This plan incorporates many functional plans by reference that should also be consulted when making specific growth management decisions. The plan will provide county

officials, residents, and landowners with a guide for reviewing subdivision plats, certified survey maps, rezoning requests, and other land use proposals. The plan will also provide a level of expectation and assurance of county plans to the private sector. This land use plan addresses several planning elements through narrative and a series of maps including:

- Population & Demographics
- Housing
- Outdoor Recreation
- Natural Environment
- Transportation
- Economic Conditions
- Coastal Resources
- Public and Community Facilities/Services
- Land Use
- Recommendations
- Implementation