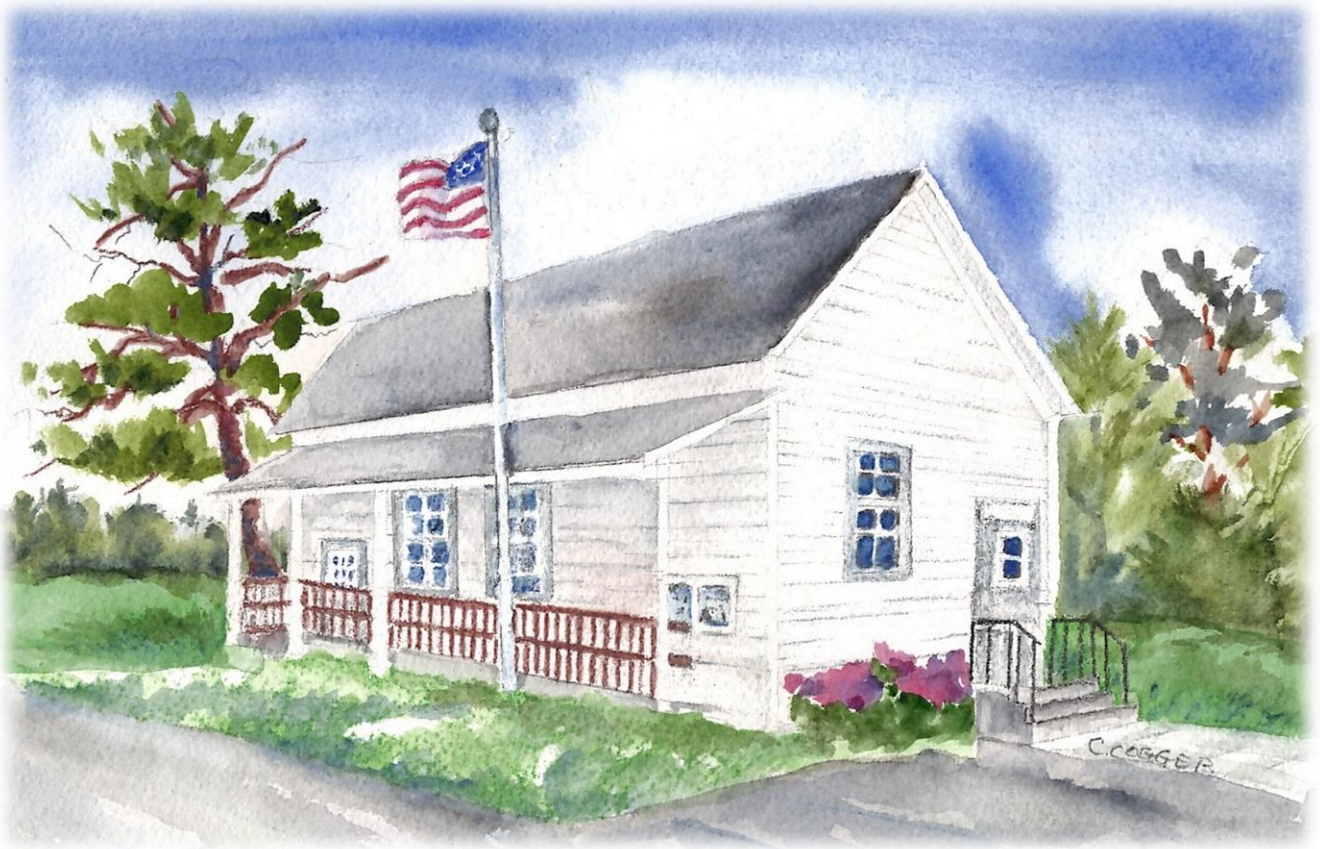


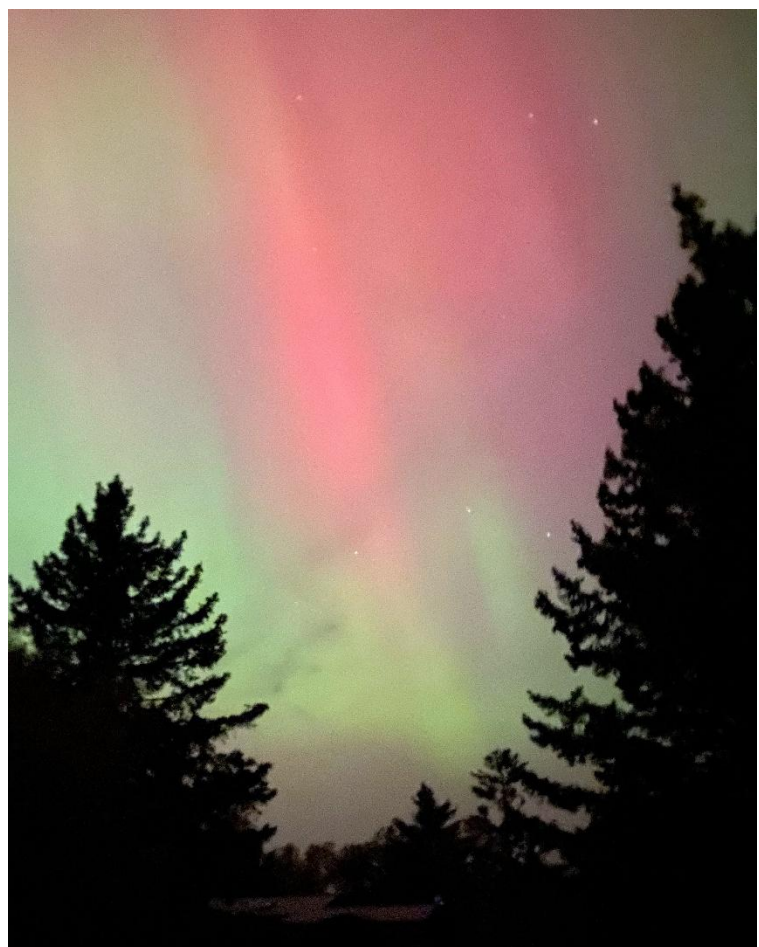
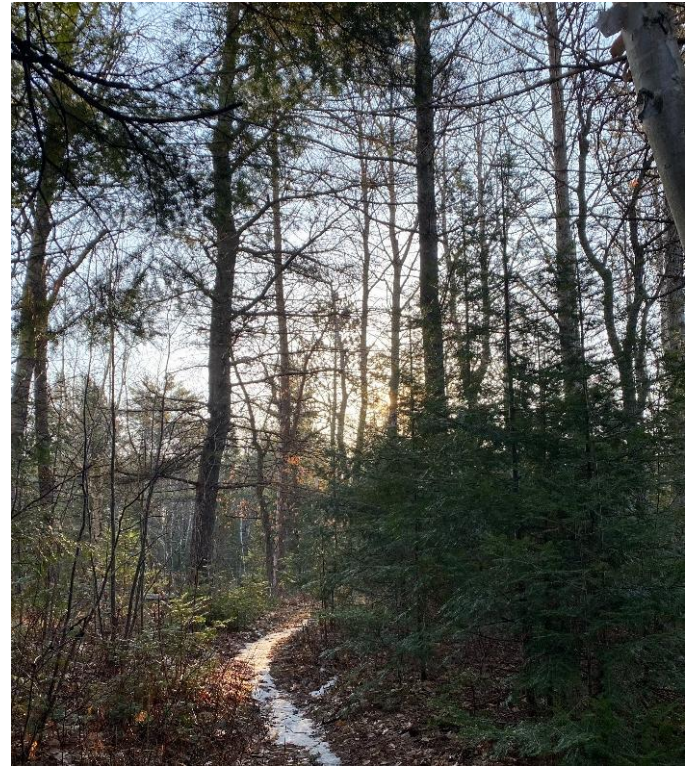
# **Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan**



**2025-2045**



# Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan



# Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan 2025–2045

Town of Washburn, Bayfield County, Wisconsin  
Adopted March 11, 2025

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Washburn's land use history is like other Bayfield County towns in the Chequamegon Bay area. The Town's rural character, shaped by its large, forested areas, farmlands, abundant natural and water resources, and rural residential qualities, plays a defining role in its identity. Concerns about future population growth and the associated increase in residential development prompted the Town to begin preparing a Comprehensive Plan. Recently, the Town has seen a gradual shift toward more residential development, and citizens have observed a much more rapid shift in some nearby communities. Despite this, the Town remains predominantly rural in character, and maintaining this rural identity continues to be a key goal for many of its residents.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan is an assessment of the current conditions that prevail within the Town, a description of the kind of community its citizens would like it to be in the future, and a plan for realizing that future. The Plan is a tool to safeguard and improve the quality of life for the Town's current citizens, and pass along the chance to continue to enjoy a high quality of life to future residents.

The Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan outlines a vision for the future of the Town. It serves as a guide to help preserve community values, improve areas in need of attention, and create the changes desired. More specifically, the Plan serves the following purposes:

1. Helps Town and County officials implement recommendations relating to their goals, objectives, and actions and assist in making future land use decisions.
2. Addresses both short-range and long-range development and management concerns, guiding growth, development, and preservation in the community.
3. Considers physical planning matters such as land use, transportation, housing, utilities, and natural resources while also addressing social and economic issues.
4. Integrates a variety of elements that affect a Town (e.g., land use, transportation, community facilities) into a cohesive plan, reflecting the relationship between these areas.
5. Conveys a long-term vision while providing specific policies and recommendations to address current issues.
6. Identifies key issues, sets goals and objectives, and outlines actions needed to achieve them. The Plan also provides the legal foundation for land use regulations and links to the Town's ordinances, ensuring consistency with Bayfield County ordinances.
7. Guides the Plan Commission, Town Board, landowners, and private developers in decisions related to environmental and cultural preservation, as well as future development.
8. Satisfies the requirements of the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning (Smart Growth) Law.

This Comprehensive Plan has been developed in accordance with the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law, as outlined in Wisconsin Statute 66.1001. The Plan is organized into nine chapters or elements, each addressing one element mandated by the law: issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; natural, agricultural, and



cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation; land use, and implementation.

As a general guide, the Comprehensive Plan integrates various aspects of the Town into a cohesive “big picture” strategy. It does not provide detailed plans for specific areas such as economic development, transportation, or community facilities. Instead, the Plan establishes a framework to guide the development of these more detailed plans in the future. Recognizing that the needs of the Town will evolve, this Plan is dynamic and should be periodically reviewed and updated as new issues and opportunities arise.

## **CONSISTENCY REQUIREMENT**

An important reason for the Town of Washburn to adopt a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning Law is the consistency requirement. Under this law, whenever a local government, such as Bayfield County, enacts or amends an official map, land division, or zoning ordinance that affects the Town, the ordinance must be consistent with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

Throughout the planning process, the public was provided with several opportunities to participate directly in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Notices of upcoming meetings were posted, and citizens attending these meetings were given the chance to speak and contribute. Once the draft Plan was completed, the Town Plan Commission and Planning Task Force recommended the Plan to the Town Board.

The final draft of the Plan was circulated to all adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions, as well as to others as required by law. Copies were readily available to the public. A public hearing was held to allow further public comment. Following the public hearing, and based on the Plan Commission’s recommendations, the Town Board reviewed and adopted the Comprehensive Plan.

## **TOWN’S PLANNING PROCESS**

The Town Board adopted its first comprehensive plan in 2007 and established a five-member Town Plan Commission. The Town Board also updated the Town’s driveway ordinance, which requires the Commission to review all developments involving new or expanded driveways, as well as all development projects that Bayfield County refers to the Town Board for review.

When the Town Board requested assistance from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC) in updating the comprehensive plan, the NWRPC recommended aligning the Town’s plan update with the Bayfield County Comprehensive Plan update. This approach allowed the Town to utilize much of the background data prepared for the County Plan. The chair of the Washburn Town Plan Commission actively participated in the County planning process from September 2022 through October 2023, sharing insights from the County meetings with the Town Commission. As part of this process, the Town updated its “Existing Land Use” map in May 2023. The Bayfield County Board adopted its updated Comprehensive Plan in November 2023.

In a newsletter sent to all residents in March 2024 and at the Town annual meeting in April 2024, the Town Plan Commission explained the purpose and process of the Comprehensive Plan update. The Commission also invited community members to support the effort by joining a

Planning Task Force. Beginning in June 2024, the Commission and Task Force held monthly meetings to review key updates needed for the plan.

In October 2024, the Town Board contracted with Northwest Regional Planning Commission to aid with updating the background information, maps, and format for the comprehensive plan. The Town Board formally adopted the Public Participation Plan in December 2024 recommended by the Plan Commission and Task Force (see Appendix A). In addition to the approved steps for engaging community involvement in the planning process, the Task Force initiated a Town of Washburn “Photo Challenge,” which was announced on the Town’s Facebook page, website, and the email distribution list. Community members were invited to submit photos of “what you are proud of” and “what we can’t lose”:



In February 2025, the Town made a draft of the updated Plan available for a 30-day review and public comment period. Clerks of Bayfield County and adjoining municipalities were notified of the availability of the draft updated plan, and public notice was posted on the Town website and in the *Ashland Daily Press*. Notice was also distributed to the Town's email distribution list. Interested parties were encouraged to submit comments and recommendations.

In March 2025, the Washburn Town Board and Plan Commission held a public hearing on the draft plan and solicited additional public comments. All public comments were in support of the draft plan. The Plan Commission recommended the revised and updated comprehensive plan for adoption by the Town Board. See Appendix B for plan adoption documentation.

## **HISTORY & BACKGROUND**

People are to varying degrees shaped by the land in which they live, and the character of the land in turn is shaped by the actions of the people. Knowledge of one's community, one's history, and one's land can help us become better citizens. In the words of Aldo Leopold, *"It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value."* By learning more about one's collective history and that of the land, it will help to nurture that love, respect, and admiration.

Following the ice age and migrations of the earliest people, the first inhabitants of the Town of Washburn and the surrounding region were Native Americans, including the Ojibwe, who continue to reside in and near Washburn to this day. Prior to European exploration, the Ojibwe lived in small groups along the edges of the forests and waterways, fishing, trapping, planting corn, and building birch bark wigwams and canoes.

European exploration begins in 1659, when French fur traders Groseillers and Radisson landed south of Washburn and north of Fish Creek establishing the first European encampment on Chequamegon Bay. Father Claude Jean Allouez arrived in 1666 to carry out missionary work, and he documented Native American villages at Fish Creek (Ottawa) and Bono Creek (Huron) where these tribes sought refuge from attacking Iroquois in the east. In 1669–71 Father Jacques Marquette constructed a small, bark chapel near Fish Creek. The British assumed control over this region in 1763. After the American Revolution, Wisconsin became a state in 1848, and the federal government acquired land from the Ojibwe through the Treaties of 1837, 1842 and 1854, which was then sold to the state, railroads, land companies, and homesteaders.

Two stagecoach trails and mail routes crossed the Town from 1850 to the mid-1880s. These were the Bayfield to Superior Stage and Mail Route and the Bayfield to St. Croix Stage Trail. They intersected at Moose Lake where travelers often stopped. A roadhouse and relay station stood at Pine Lake on the 80-mile-long Bayfield–Superior route, along which fish from the Bayfield fisheries was transported to market. Antoine Dennis walked this route once a week to deliver the mail, carrying a frying pan to cook fish that he would catch on the Brule River. The first permanent white settler in Washburn, probably in the 1870s, is believed to be Mr. Vanderverter, who homesteaded in the vicinity of Thompson's Creek, once named Vanderverter's Creek.

As fur trading declined in the mid-1800s, lumbermen began moving into the Midwest. In 1883, the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad reached Ashland, Washburn, and Bayfield. From 1885 to 1914, the vast white pine forests surrounding Washburn were heavily logged by A.A. Bigelow, C.C. Thompson, Hines, Stearns, and others. These towering trees, some reaching 200 feet in height, were 300 to 400 years old. In 1895, Bayfield County constructed its own railroad, the Washburn, Bayfield, and Iron River Railroad, nicknamed the



Battle-Ax, to support farming. The railroad ran two miles south from Washburn before heading west, parallel to Engoe Road, where a station stop was located. However, the railroad went bankrupt, was acquired by Northern Pacific in 1904, and was abandoned in 1916. Two logging railroads passed through Town: the Washburn and Northwestern Railway and the Ashland, Siskowiit, & Iron River Railroad. All three rails intersected at Grand Junction, just west of the end of Engoe Road.

The Town of Washburn, created in 1884, was probably named for Cadwaller C. Washburn, governor of Wisconsin from 1872–1874 and founder of Gold Medal Flour. The original Township included the present City of Washburn, but in 1904 the city was incorporated, and the Town formed its own government. O.L. Rowe was the first Chairman with Supervisors C. O. Dahl, J. Bartness, A.H. Hosmer, Clerk Allen Butterfield, and Assessor H.P. Swanby. Postal service began in 1883 under Postmaster F.E. Wyman.

When most of the timber had been cut and moved out of the area, there was a need for new opportunities. Land company agents promoted the agricultural potential of the area, and many small farms were established through the 1920s. Immigrants from Scandinavia and other European countries arrived during the late 1880s through the early 1900s in search of land, which was scarce in their homelands. Washburn reminded many of them of home. One of the earliest settlers to the current Town was Erick Westling who came to the U.S. from Sweden in 1893, and after stays in Bibon, City of Washburn, and Ashland, built a log cabin on Church Corner Road near Four Mile Creek around 1895. In 1897, he built a larger house and a dam to power a sawmill to make rough-cut timber planks and boards. Some of the pre-1905 families who thrived in this Town were the Swansons, Andersons, Streckers, Days, Hoves, Pajalas, Flonnes, Cooks, Stones, and Tranmals. Some of these families walked miles daily to go to work and high school in the nearby City of Washburn. In 1904, a fire raged through the countryside destroying bridges and trestles on the railway grade, necessitating the Town to build new roads, mostly straight up and down the hills. The Westlings helped build the first telephone line in the Town with the Four Mile Creek Telephone Co, in 1906, and in 1918 the Westling dam powered the family's electric lights.

The Four Mile Creek Church existed from 1904–1931 and the Enterprise Club was built across from the Town Hall early on for events. Another historic Town site was developed in 1909 when the Betania Evangelical Lutheran Church was built at the northeast corner of Church Corner Road and Wannebo Road by the families of the area: Prestgard, Hirsch, Bergquist, Overby, Moland, Berge, and Anderson. Reverend Christianson served the church. A stable and Grange Hall were also built next to the church. The Morning Star Choral Club met and entertained in this area during this time.

In 1922, the Town garage had its first motorized equipment. A new steel bridge was built over the Sioux River on County Highway C in 1924 to replace the wood one. Electricity first came to the Town by power line in 1929 by the Lake Superior District Power Company, but few people had power until the Bayfield Electric Cooperative established better lines in 1941. One of the earliest retail businesses was a store and dance hall on the east end of Long Lake by the Harvey family. In the 1930s, the Topside (later moved to Barksdale) and C-Side taverns were established.

Farming became the main occupation of the folks who lived in the Town up through the 1930s when lumber companies sold sand barren land to unwary immigrants. The land where the National Forest now lies was particularly poor and most farms that were located in this area failed after one generation. In 1929, the Federal Government purchased these lands under the Weeks Act of 1911 and later proclaimed them part of the Chequamegon National Forest. Aldo

Leopold studied sharp-tailed grouse in the Moquah Barrens here in 1930. Over the years new technology supported larger farms, and many small farms were abandoned. Also in 1930, the first snow plowing was done by the Town.

Meanwhile, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was established in 1933 to provide employment during the Great Depression and to restore forests on clearcut lands. The first CCC camp in Wisconsin was established on Ora Brinks's home site on the far western edge of Town in April 1933. The men worked managing the forest, building roads, marking survey lines, and fighting fires until 1941.

The Engoe School, built in 1894, now in Barksdale, was the first rural school attended by the Town's children. There were eight one-room schoolhouses in the Town: McKinley, Four Mile Creek, Three Switch, Long Lake, Arbutus (destroyed in the 1926 cyclone), Wilson (moved to Arnold Jacobsons on Engoe Rd), Progress (the old Long Lake Grange Hall moved to Nevers Rd), and Maple Hill (moved to Harold Petersons on County Highway C). In 1910, the Kanstrom cabin on County Highway C was used as a school for one year. The hand-hewn cabin was built by Gertrude Kanstrom in 1895. The Long Lake and Progress Schools were used as community centers where dances were held into the late 60s. The McKinley School, built on County Highway C in 1905, now serves as the Washburn Town Hall. The Maple Hill and Wilson buildings still stand. By the early 1940s all of the one-room schools closed, and the Town was divided between the Ondossagon and Washburn school districts. Ondossagon closed in 1989, and students now attend the Washburn schools.

The population of the Town has fluctuated through the years but has shown steady growth since the 1970s. Many changes have taken place as the area has become favored for homes in a rural setting. Many old barns still dot the landscape, but most are used for hobby farms now. Historic Potter's Farm, named for the accomplished writer and lecturer Greta Largo Potter, is used as a retreat center.

The Town of Washburn remains blessed with much natural beauty, a wealth of natural resources, and to a lesser extent, tangible cultural resources (Map 1: Recreational & Historical Resources). Recognizing and preserving both the natural and cultural aspects of the Town make it the desirable place it is to live.

# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

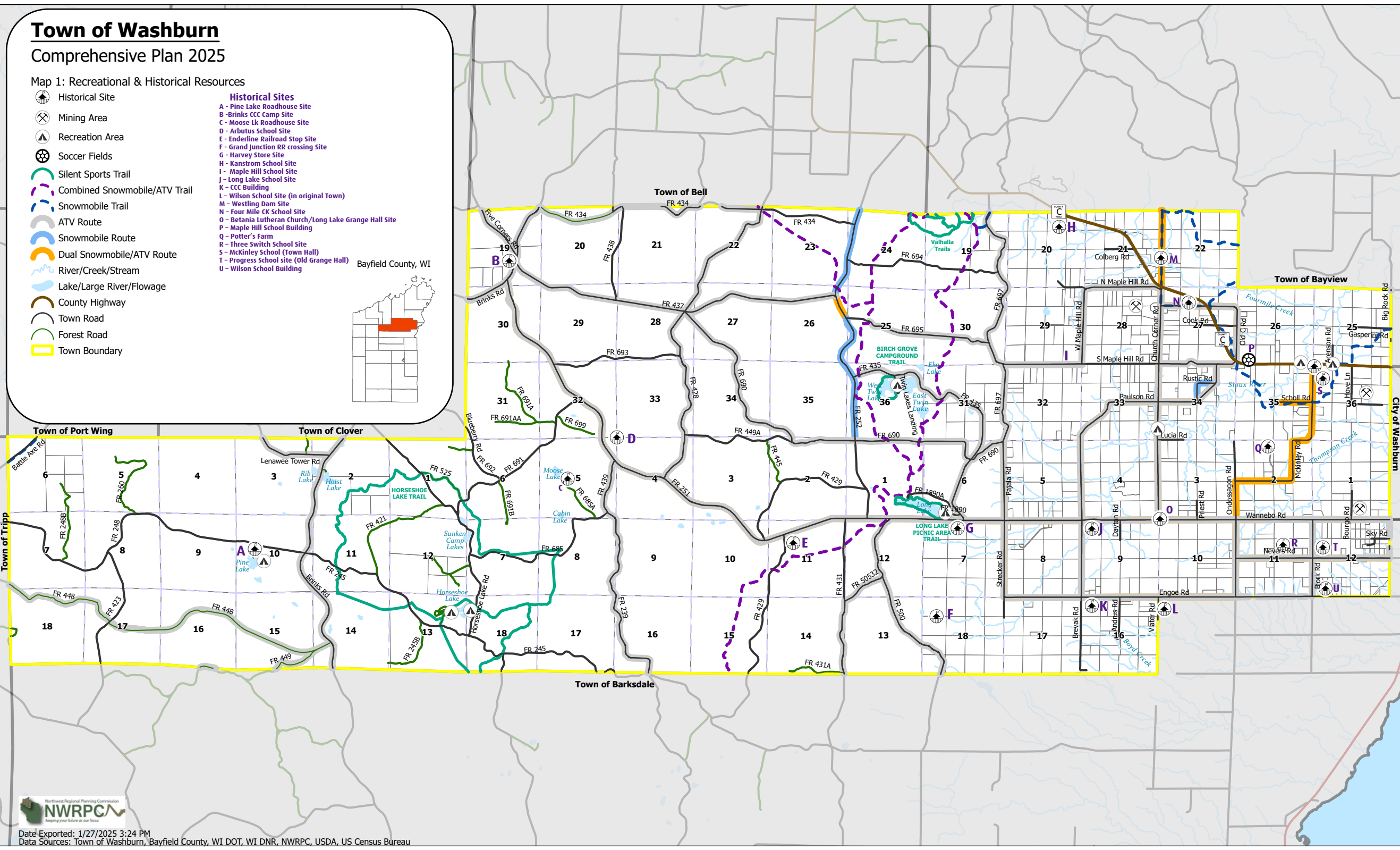
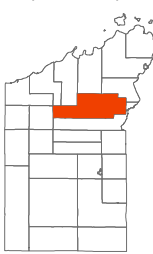
Map 1: Recreational & Historical Resources

- Historical Site
- Mining Area
- Recreation Area
- Soccer Fields
- Silent Sports Trail
- Combined Snowmobile/ATV Trail
- Snowmobile Trail
- ATV Route
- Snowmobile Route
- Dual Snowmobile/ATV Route
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Town Boundary

### Historical Sites

- A - Pine Lake Roadhouse Site
- B - Brinks CCC Camp Site
- C - Moose Lk Roadhouse Site
- D - Arbutus School Site
- E - Enderline Railroad Stop Site
- F - Grand Junction RR crossing Site
- G - Harvey Store Site
- H - Kanstrom School Site
- I - Maple Hill School Site
- J - Long Lake School Site
- K - CCC Building
- L - Wilson School Site (in original Town)
- M - Westling Dam Site
- N - Four Mile CK School Site
- O - Betania Lutheran Church/Long Lake Grange Hall Site
- P - Maple Hill School Building
- Q - Potter's Farm
- R - Three Switch School Site
- S - McKinley School (Town Hall)
- T - Progress School site (Old Grange Hall)
- U - Wilson School Building

Bayfield County, WI





## **2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter lays out the foundation for the other chapters in the Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan. It offers background information about the residents of the Town, describes overarching issues and opportunities facing the Town, and portrays a vision for the Town of Washburn's future.

### **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **POPULATION HISTORY AND CHANGE**

Historically, the City of Washburn has been the primary cultural and resource hub, commercial and industrial core, and the main employment and urban residential center for the surrounding populace of Bayfield County and the Bayfield Peninsula. The Town of Washburn, meanwhile, has served as an alternative to this more urbanized living and development and provides wonderful opportunities for open space and a rural or agricultural lifestyle.

The Bayfield Peninsula region has experienced significant population fluctuations since the early 1900s. During World War I, the area's population soared due to the operations of the DuPont plant in nearby Barksdale, which manufactured explosives for the U.S. military. During that period, more than 9,000 people lived in the City of Washburn. Following the war, employment at the DuPont plant leveled off, and logging, agricultural, and quarry operations in the area also declined sharply. World War II brought a slight upswing in employment and population to the regional area once again, but population levels remained well below those that existed during World War I.

The population of the Town likely fluctuated in the same pattern as that for the City. U.S. Census data from 1950 recorded a population of approximately 370 residents in the Town. Over the next two decades, the population declined, with drops of about 18% and 11%, respectively, and a population of 282 was recorded in 1970 (Figure 2-1).

Since then, the population of the Town has generally increased, reaching 541 residents by the year 2000. From 2000 to 2010, however, the population declined slightly by about 2.0%. The population has since rebounded, with an estimated 554 residents as of January 1, 2024, according to the Wisconsin Demographic Services Center Final Population Estimates. This represents nearly double the 1970 population. Table 2-1 below summarizes the 1990 to 2020 Census counts for the Town, as well as for the neighboring Towns of Barksdale and Bayview, the City of Washburn, Bayfield County, and the State of Wisconsin.

**Table 2-1: Population Change 1990-2020**

Location	1990 Pop.	Δ1980-90	2000 Pop.	Δ1990-00	2010 Pop.	Δ2000-10	2020 Pop.	Δ2010-20
<b>Town of Washburn</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>26.9%</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
Town of Barksdale	756	-0.8%	801	6.0%	723	-9.7%	745	3.0%
Town of Bayview	402	17.2%	491	22.1%	487	-0.8%	512	4.9%
City of Washburn	2,285	9.9%	2,280	-0.4%	2,117	-7.1%	2,051	-3.2%
Bayfield County	14,008	1.3%	15,013	7.2%	15,014	0.0%	16,220	7.4%
State of Wisconsin	4,891,769	4.0%	5,363,690	9.6%	5,686,986	6.0%	5,893,718	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections are effective planning tools when used correctly. However, their accuracy is subject to several factors, including assumptions for birth rates, death rates, migration, and economic conditions. Assumptions are based on past trends and the best information available at the time. However, assumptions do not always remain true, and unexpected changes can occur. For instance, existing employment facilities and industries may close or choose to expand. In a small town such as Washburn, these changes can have a significant impact on the population. Therefore, the Town of Washburn should use the population projections presented in this Comprehensive Plan as a general guide, not as an absolute certainty. Moreover, the Town should periodically review and update the population projections based on new conditions.

Washburn's population has grown by 13.1% since 1990. Its rural character and small-town charm have long attracted such retirees as the aging of the baby boomer generation. Geographically, there is a trend of people moving north from the major metropolitan areas of Minneapolis/St. Paul and Green Bay, seeking the peace and beauty of Bayfield County and towns like Washburn.

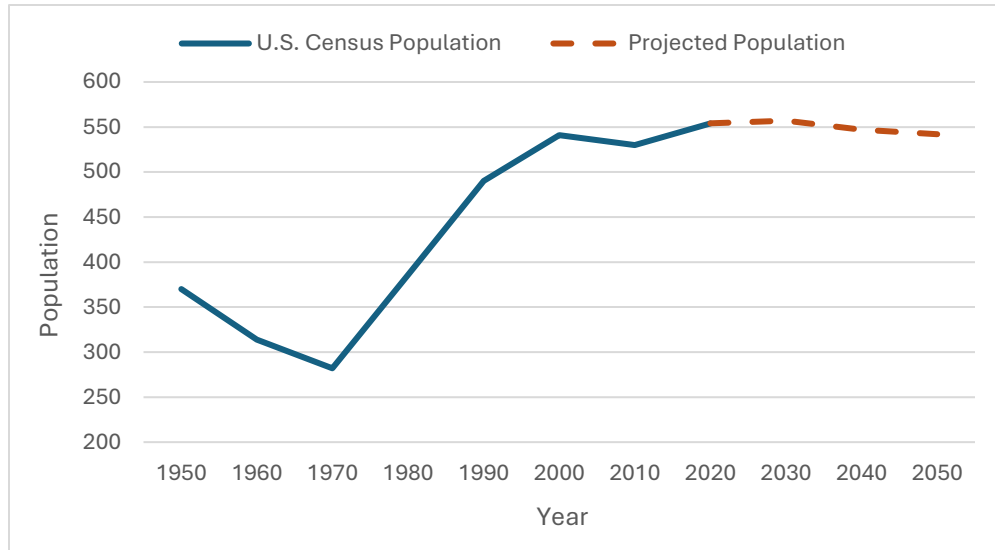
### Wisconsin Demographic Service Center Population Projections

The Wisconsin Demographic Service Center projects population decline through 2050 for the Town of Washburn, the surrounding Towns of Barksdale and Bayview, and the City of Washburn. Similar trends are expected for Bayfield County and the State of Wisconsin. The Town of Washburn is projected to decrease by 2.2%, Barksdale by 12.8%, Bayview by 6.3%, and the City of Washburn by 30.0%. Bayfield County and Wisconsin are projected to experience declines of 3.0% and 3.1%, respectively (Table 2-2 and Figure 2-1).

**Table 2-2: Population Projections 2020-2050**

Location	2020 Census	2030 Proj.	2040 Proj.	2050 Proj.	%Δ 2020-2050
<b>Town of Washburn</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>
Town of Barksdale	745	721	681	650	-12.8%
Town of Bayview	512	507	490	480	-6.3%
City of Washburn	2,051	1,860	1,633	1,436	-30.0%
Bayfield County	16,220	16,265	15,905	15,735	-3.0%
State of Wisconsin	5,893,718	5,890,915	5,841,620	5,710,120	-3.1%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographics Service Center

**Figure 2-1: Historic Population 1950-2020 & Population Projections 2030-2050**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1950-2020 & Wisconsin Department of Demographics Service Center 2030-2050

### Town of Washburn's Population Goal

The Town of Washburn can choose to respond to the population projections in several positive ways. It can accept that a future decline in the Town's population is inevitable and plan accordingly, or it can develop goals, objectives, policies, and plans to help stabilize or grow the population. This Comprehensive Plan will help the current residents and leaders of the Town set realistic goals to address the needs of its potentially changing population. The Town believes that the high quality of rural life, the availability of outdoor recreation activities, and the joy of being able to surround oneself in such a wonderful natural environment will help retain existing residents and attract new ones from elsewhere.

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

It is not only important to know how many people live in the Town, but also to understand key characteristics such as age, education, and employment status. The following section provides an overview of the age distribution of residents and outlines the projected changes in composition through 2050 (Table 2-3, Figure 2-2, and Figure 2-3).

#### Broad Age Groups

All residents fit into one of three very broad age groups:

- 1) *those age 19 and under;*
- 2) *those between the ages of 20 and 64; and*
- 3) *those age 65 and over.*

In 2020, 105 individuals, or 19.0% of the population of the Town of Washburn, were aged 19 or under; 283 individuals, or 51.1%, were between the ages of 20 and 64; and 166 persons, or 30.0%, were aged 65 or over. In comparison, in 2020, 24.6% of the population of the State of Wisconsin was aged 19 or under; 57.5% was between the ages of 20 and 64; and 18.0% were aged 65 and over. Notably, the Town, in comparison to the State of Wisconsin, has a smaller proportion of children and adolescents, fewer adults in the prime working age, and a much higher proportion of older residents aged 65 and over.



As the baby boomer generation continues to age and as families have fewer children, the percentage of people over 65 may continue to increase significantly in the Town and throughout Wisconsin. As is common among many rural cities and towns, unless the Town can attract younger families and retain or bring back young adults who have graduated from high school or college, the rate at which the Town ages will accelerate. An aging population can significantly affect future jobs, services, and education in Washburn. The following provides a more detailed description of the issues and opportunities associated with various age groups in Washburn.

### **People Aged 19 and Under**

The number of people aged 19 and under will vary by year, but the number of people in this age group will generally decrease over time, even if the overall population increases. There are several reasons for this. The number of people of childbearing age in the Town of Washburn is decreasing. Consequently, the number of new children born in the Town will continue to decrease. In addition, people today generally have fewer children than those of previous generations. Accordingly, unless the Town attracts a significant number of younger families from other areas and retains its current population, the number of children in this age bracket will most likely decrease over the next few years.

### **People Between the Ages of 20 and 24**

As indicated earlier, the Town possesses a decent contingent of young people. Most individuals between the ages of 20 and 24 choose to pursue higher education or enter the workforce. The Town is fortunate to have easy access to a quality school of higher education in nearby Ashland: Northwood Technical College. However, the Town, like most Wisconsin communities, should strive to retain its 20- to 24-year-old residents or find a way to bring them back into the community once they have received a college degree. Typically, the recruitment or retention of post-secondary educated individuals, or even those with technical and/or high school education, is heavily tied to the employment opportunities of the local area. Generally, people in this age group are not yet married, nor do they have children. Consequently, they may not feel significant ties to the Town and may be more willing to leave the Town (and the area itself) in search of other opportunities. So, in addition to jobs, Washburn will need to provide amenities to retain and attract 20- to 24-year-olds.

### **People Between the Ages of 25 and 54**

If the Town is to sustain its population, it will be especially important to retain and attract people between the ages of 25 and 54. This age group is particularly critical, as individuals in this range are in their prime working years and are more likely to have children, making them less prone to relocating. People between the ages of 25 and 54 often have a strong commitment to their community's future. To support this demographic, the Town will need to provide opportunities for additional, affordable housing. While the Town itself may not have the resources to provide the economic and employment opportunities necessary to retain this group, it can support neighboring urban areas that offer these services. Furthermore, the area will need to provide quality parks, outdoor recreational facilities, services, and cultural activities to ensure a high quality of life that will retain and attract people.

### **People Aged 65 and Over**

As life expectancy continues to rise and the youngest members of the Baby Boom generation reach retirement age, the number and percentage of people aged 65 and over will increase significantly. With this aging population, the Town is poised to become an even more attractive place to live. The Town is already beginning to feel the effects of an older, yet still active, workforce. According to the 2020 Census, 166 individuals, or about 30% of the Town's total population of 554, were aged 65 and over. These demographic trends carry important

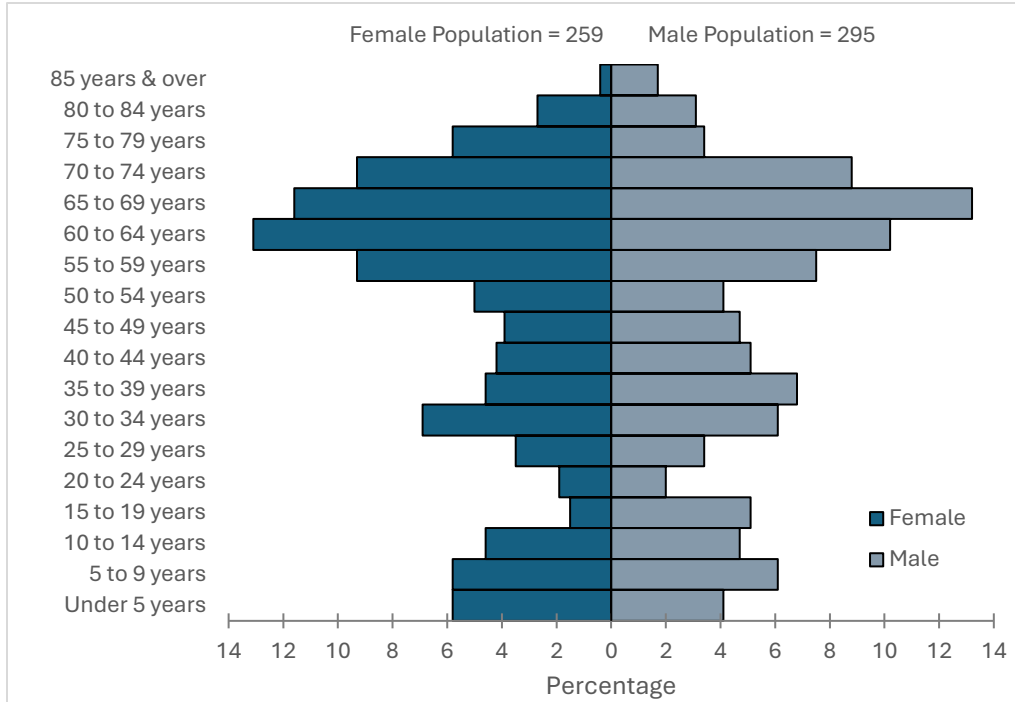
implications for Washburn's future. For instance, there will be a growing need for adequate housing for seniors. As the population ages, the demand for senior housing options, such as age-friendly homes or assisted living facilities, will likely increase. Many older residents may choose to stay in the area they have called home for years, rather than relocating to warmer climates or retirement communities in the South or Southwest U.S. This creates an opportunity for the Town to plan and develop housing solutions tailored to their needs. Additionally, there is a growing trend of younger family members returning to or staying in Washburn to care for their aging relatives. Whether it is children looking after elderly parents or grandchildren helping with family-run farms, multigenerational living is becoming more common.

**Table 2-3: Age Composition 2020**

Age	Town of Washburn		Bayfield County		State of Wisconsin	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 5 years	27	4.9%	638	3.9%	322,285	5.5%
5 to 9 years	33	6.0%	775	4.8%	352,714	6.0%
10 to 14 years	26	4.7%	847	5.2%	380,649	6.5%
15 to 19 years	19	3.4%	776	4.8%	386,233	6.6%
20 to 24 years	11	2.0%	563	3.5%	379,451	6.4%
25 to 29 years	19	3.4%	585	3.6%	364,175	6.2%
30 to 34 years	36	6.5%	692	4.3%	376,948	6.4%
35 to 39 years	32	5.8%	811	5.0%	376,978	6.4%
40 to 44 years	26	4.7%	778	4.8%	347,361	5.9%
45 to 49 years	24	4.3%	771	4.8%	338,173	5.7%
50 to 54 years	25	4.5%	1,058	6.5%	370,848	6.3%
55 to 59 years	46	8.3%	1,429	8.8%	424,014	7.2%
60 to 64 years	64	11.6%	1,671	10.3%	413,872	7.0%
65 to 69 years	69	12.5%	1,685	10.4%	354,789	6.0%
70 to 74 years	50	9.0%	1,366	8.4%	273,536	4.6%
75 to 79 years	25	4.5%	890	5.5%	182,885	3.1%
80 to 84 years	16	2.9%	504	3.1%	121,994	2.1%
85 years and over	6	1.1%	381	2.3%	126,813	2.2%
Median Age	54.8	-	54.2	-	40.1	-

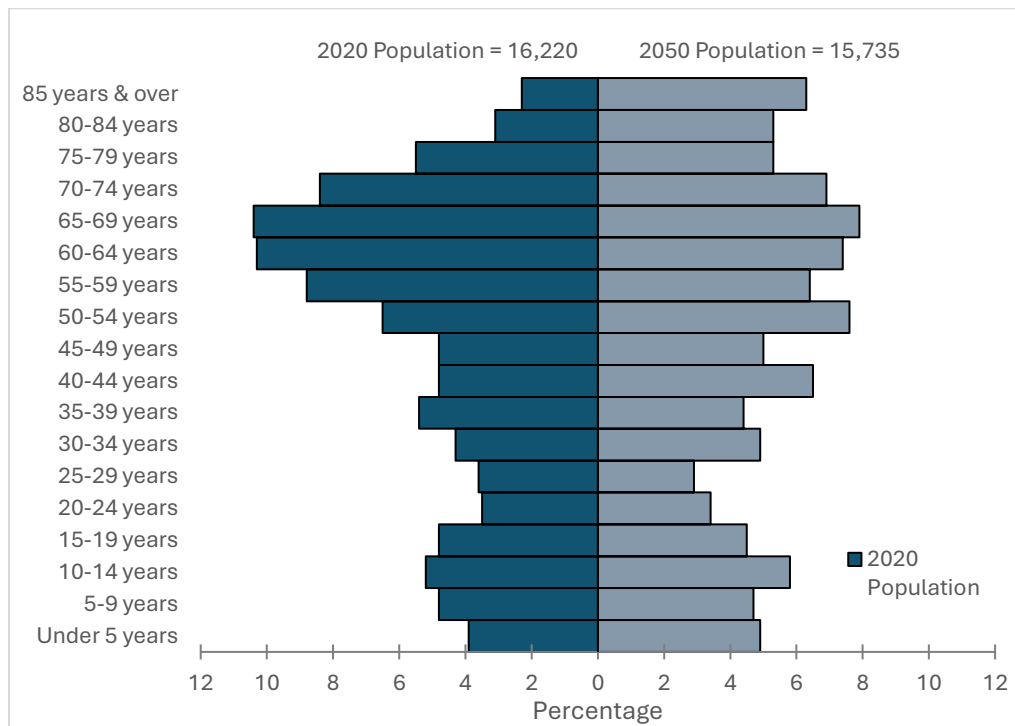
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020

**Figure 2-2: Town of Washburn Age Pyramid 2020**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020

**Figure 2-3: Bayfield County Age Pyramid Comparison 2020 & 2050**



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographic Services Center Population Projections 2020-2050

## RACE AND ORIGIN

According to the 2020 Census, 91.2% of Town of Washburn residents were White; 4.5% were American Indian/Alaska Native, and the remaining 3.6% were of other races (Table 2-4). We expect these statistics to remain relatively stable in the near future. As with all communities, if the Town is to grow and provide housing opportunities, it may need to attract people from outside the Town, from outside Wisconsin, and perhaps from outside the United States. Consequently, the Town should encourage members of our culturally diverse society to live in and enjoy the community, which in turn will create a more diverse and dynamic community in the future.

**Table 2-4: Race and Origin**

Race	Town of Washburn		Bayfield County		State of Wisconsin	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	505	91.2%	13,493	83.2%	4,737,545	80.4%
Black/African American	2	0.4%	59	0.4%	376,256	6.4%
Am. Indian/Alaska Native	25	4.5%	1,696	10.5%	60,428	1.0%
Asian	2	0.4%	36	0.2%	175,702	3.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	2,199	0.0%
Other	20	3.6%	934	5.8%	270,794	9.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The most recent American Community Survey reported that an estimated 99.5% of the Town's residents aged 25 and over are high school graduates or higher, and roughly 64.9% have a bachelor's degree or higher (Table 2-5). The percentage of people in the Town with a graduate or professional degree is higher than that in Bayfield County or the State of Wisconsin, which is notable and should be recognized. In recent years, there has been a rise in high school graduates pursuing a college degree. However, the general trend across Wisconsin is that young people with a college degree are leaving the area for employment opportunities elsewhere. A key goal of Wisconsin communities is to find opportunities for college graduates to stay in Wisconsin.

**Table 2-5: Educational Attainment**

Educational Attainment	Town of Washburn	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Less than 9th grade	0.0%	1.0%	2.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	0.6%	3.2%	4.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	18.3%	27.2%	29.9%
Some college, no degree	14.3%	22.3%	20.0%
Associate's degree	9.4%	12.7%	11.1%
Bachelor's degree	40.4%	20.9%	21.1%
Graduate or professional degree	17.0%	12.6%	11.0%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022



## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS AND FORECASTS

In 2020, the U.S. Census reported 233 households in the Town of Washburn. Of these, 176 were family households and 57 were nonfamily households. Of the 176 family households, 155 consisted of married couples, and of these, 100 households had children under the age of 18. Of the 57 nonfamily households, 48 lived alone. In the future, it is likely that the percentage of married couples without children living with them will increase. The percentage of single-parent households will also increase. Female-headed households with no spouse present accounted for approximately 9.1% of the family households in the Town. The Wisconsin Department of Administration's projected households for the Town are shown in Table 2-6.

A household refers to all persons who live in a single housing unit, regardless of their relationship to each other. A family household consists of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. A nonfamily household consists of people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals.

**Table 2-6: Household Projections 2020-2040**

Location	2010 Census	2020 Proj.	2025 Proj.	2030 Proj.	2035 Proj.	2040 Proj.	%Δ 2010-2040
<b>Town of Washburn</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
Town of Barksdale	306	316	314	307	290	275	-10.1%
Town of Bayview	204	225	233	235	232	229	12.3%
City of Washburn	934	939	919	878	817	749	-19.8%
Bayfield County	6,686	7,207	7,367	7,384	7,232	7,016	11.4%
State of Wisconsin	2,279,768	2,491,982	2,600,538	2,697,884	2,764,498	2,790,322	22.4%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Approximately 49.8% of the Town of Washburn's labor force is employed, which is slightly lower than the City of Washburn (59.2%) and Bayfield County (53.7%). In terms of income, the Town has a median household income of \$81,000, which is significantly higher than both the City of Washburn (\$56,080) and Bayfield County (\$67,266). It also surpasses the state median household income of \$72,458 (Table 2-7).

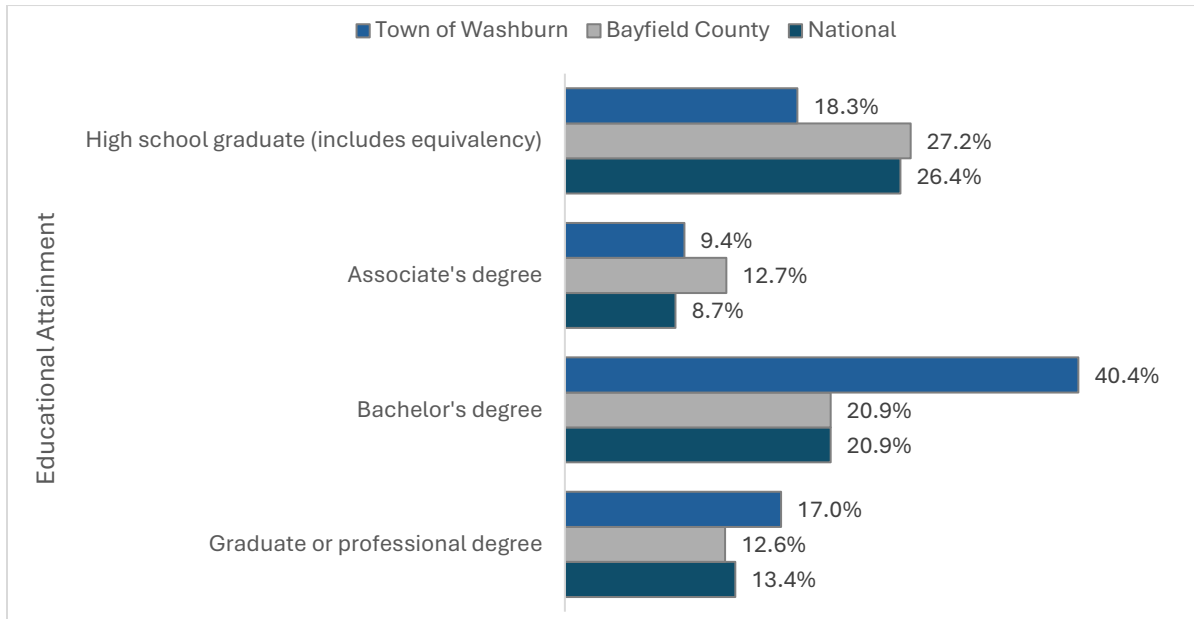
**Table 2-7: General Employment and Income Characteristics**

Characteristic	Town of Washburn	City of Washburn	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Employed in Labor Force	49.8%	59.2%	53.7%	63.4%
Unemployed in Labor Force	3.9%	1.2%	2.0%	2.2%
Not in Labor Force	46.3%	39.6%	44.2%	34.3%
Median Household Income	\$81,000	\$56,080	\$67,266	\$72,458
Per Capita Income	\$35,849	\$34,893	\$39,449	\$40,130
Median Earnings, Male, Full-Time, Year-Round	\$57,143	\$55,993	\$57,153	\$61,140
Median Earning, Female, Full-Time, Year-Round	\$57,500	\$47,908	\$48,246	\$49,248
Families Below Poverty Level	3.7%	17.6%	6.9%	6.6%
Individuals Below Poverty Level	10.3%	15.8%	10.4%	10.7%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

The education level of the Town of Washburn’s population aged 25 and older exceeds both the County and National averages for individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher. Approximately 57.4% of Town residents in this age group have earned a bachelor's degree or more. In comparison, about 33.6% of the Bayfield County population and 33.4% of the U.S. population have achieved the same level of education (Figure 2-4).

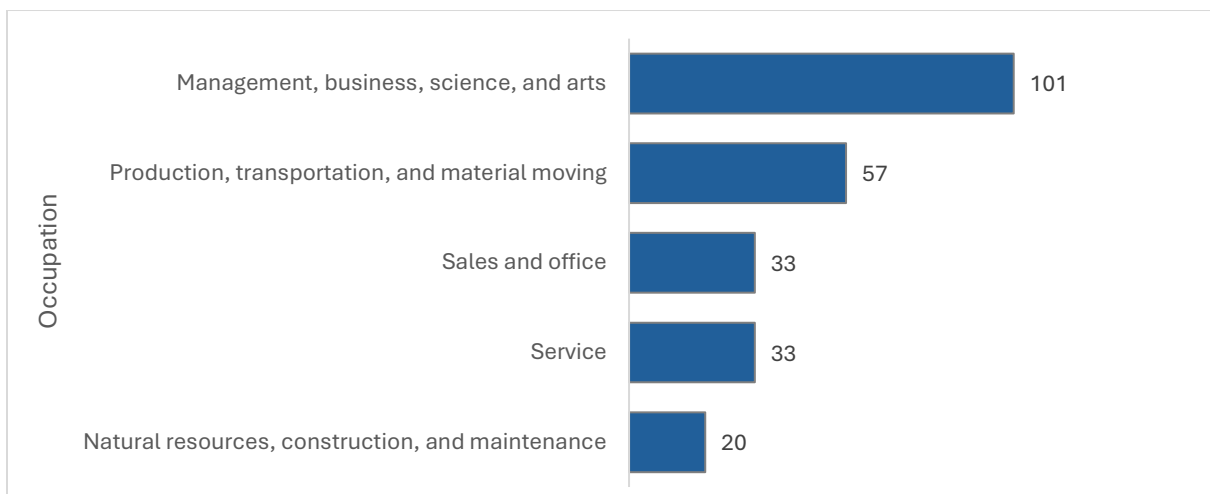
**Figure 2-4: Educational Attainment Population Age 25 Years and Over**



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

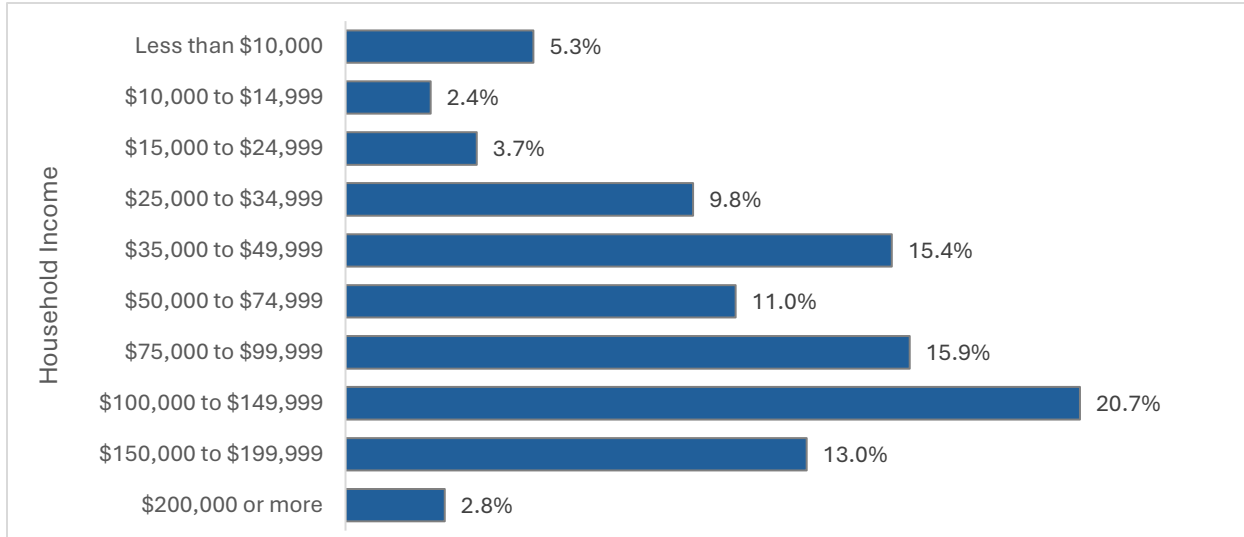
Of an estimated 244 Town of Washburn citizens over the age of 16, the prevailing occupation was in management, business, science, and arts, with 101 people (Figure 2-5). As Figure 2-6 demonstrates, the largest income bracket (in 2022 inflation-adjusted dollars) was \$100,000 to \$149,999. The average income was \$85,328.

**Figure 2-5: Occupations of Population Age 16 Years and Over**



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

**Figure 2-6: Income in the Past 12 Months**



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## KEY ISSUES FOR THE TOWN

The community submissions in response to the Photo Challenge identified physical qualities that community members identified in a 2006 survey as their highest priority: preserving rural character.

- Lakes and streams of high quality
- Farm fields
- Forestlands
- Town roads through natural and agricultural landscapes
- Beautiful night skies

These characteristics contrast with qualities found in the adjacent City of Washburn:

- A walkable downtown commercial district
- Attractive residential neighborhoods
- Government service buildings

### Increasingly Older Population and Smaller Household Size

While the population of the Town is expected to remain relatively stable over the next 20 years, the proportion of elderly residents is projected to increase. Because the number of people per household is expected to decrease, the demand for additional housing will rise. An increasing number of retirees are also choosing to move to the Town to be closer to nature and small-town life. Most elderly residents prefer to age at home, but the availability of in-home caregivers is already insufficient. To meet the demand for additional housing for smaller households, the Town needs to preserve its rural character without fragmenting the landscape.

### Working Families Need Affordable Housing and Childcare

While the population of the Town is expected to remain relatively stable over the next 20 years, the proportion of elderly residents is projected to increase. As the number of people per

household decreases, the demand for additional housing will rise. An increasing number of retirees are also choosing to move to the Town to be closer to nature and small-town life.

### **Residents and Visitors Seek More Opportunities to be Close to Nature**

People of all ages in both rural areas and small cities seek opportunities for outdoor recreation, including both silent sports and motorized activities. The demand for safe outdoor trails is growing.

### **Reducing Fragmentation of Forests and Farmlands to Preserve Rural Character**

A key goal of this plan is to support a vibrant rural economy and lifestyle while reducing the conversion of large parcels with few houses into sprawling, low-density residential development. Finding solutions to these expected demands will require collaboration between area cities and rural towns. The Cities of Washburn and Ashland have many vacant lots currently served by paved roads and municipal utilities. The rural character of the Town of Washburn complements the commercial, industrial, and residential character of the Cities, both of which have significant vacant areas for such development. As much as possible, future housing in the Town of Washburn should be clustered near existing residences and paved roads east of the Ondossagon Road north-south line.

A complementary goal is to retain the area of large-lot agricultural and forest lands. In particular, the quality of trout streams and groundwater depends on maintaining forest land adjacent to ravines, wetlands, and steep slopes in the watersheds of the Town's trout streams. To the extent practicable, new housing should share roads and driveways of existing houses rather than contributing to further fragmentation of existing agricultural and forest lands.

## **SMART GROWTH COMMUNITY**

The Town of Washburn is committed to being a smart growth community. This Comprehensive Plan incorporates the following goals that Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law requires the Town of Washburn to consider:

1. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests (see Chapter 8: Land Use).
2. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources (see Chapter 7: Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources).
3. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices (see Chapter 8: Land Use).
4. Encouragement of land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs (see Chapter 3: Land Use).
5. Preservation of cultural and historic sites (see Chapter 7: Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources).
6. Encouragement and coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government (see Chapter 9: Intergovernmental Cooperation).
7. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community (see Chapter 3: Housing).

8. Providing or allowing for infrastructure and public service improvements that will help serve developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential uses (see Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities).
9. Promoting and supporting the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels (see Chapter 6: Economic Development).
10. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals (see Chapter 8: Land Use).
11. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied or unique rural communities (see Chapter 8: Land Use).
12. Supporting and calling for an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience, and safety, and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit dependent and disabled citizens (see Chapter 5: Transportation).

Refer to the chapters that follow for corresponding objectives and policies.



## 3. HOUSING

### INTRODUCTION

Housing is an important component of all communities. High quality, available, and affordable housing enhances quality of life and supports economic development. This Chapter provides an analysis of the Town of Washburn's existing housing. It also describes goals, objectives, policies, maps, and programs that will help Washburn meet the housing needs of the residents and provide housing opportunities for future residents they hope to attract and retain.

### INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

#### HOUSING SUPPLY

##### Number and Types of Housing Units

The number of housing units in the Town of Washburn has steadily increased since 2000, with 279 housing units recorded as of the 2020 Census. The Town recorded the eighth largest percentage increase of housing units for all the municipalities in Bayfield County during this period. Table 3-1 provides a comparison of the total number of housing units from 2000 to 2020 for the Town, surrounding communities, and Bayfield County.

**Table 3-1: Total Housing Units 2000-2020**

Location	2000	2010	2020	# Δ 2000-2020	% Δ 2000-2020
<b>Town of Washburn</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>279</b>	52	22.9%
City of Washburn	1,004	1,070	1,059	55	5.5%
Town of Bayfield	491	644	667	176	35.8%
Town of Barksdale	353	371	376	23	6.5%
Town of Bayview	283	310	339	56	19.8%
Bayfield County	11,640	12,999	13,238	1,598	13.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2020

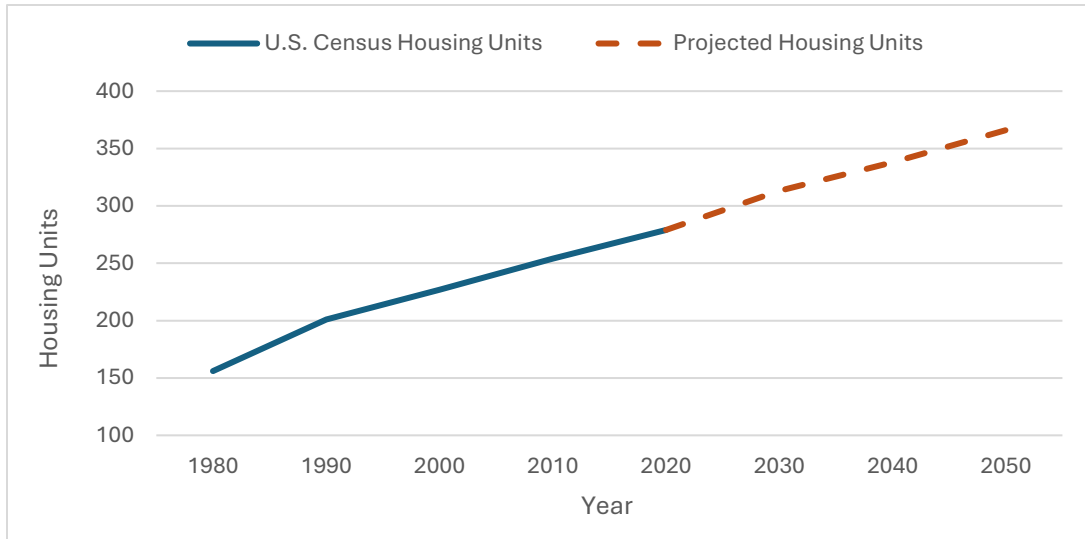
The Town is projected to have an increase of 2.9 housing units per year from 2020 to 2050 (Table 3-2). It is important to note that the housing supply should appropriately meet the needs of the residents. As environmental concerns are growing, some consideration should be given to having eco-friendly, sustainable housing. Environmentally conscious buildings may in many cases be more expensive.

**Table 3-2: Projected Total Housing Units 2020-2050**

Location	2020	2030	2040	2050	# Δ 2020-2050	Units/Year 2020-2050
<b>Town of Washburn</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>2.9</b>
City of Washburn	1,059	1,121	1,142	1,178	119	4.0
Town of Bayfield	667	774	895	975	308	10.3
Town of Barksdale	376	412	429	446	70	2.3
Town of Bayview	339	385	429	460	121	4.0
Bayfield County	13,238	14,469	15,263	16,137	2,899	96.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980-2020 and Northwest Regional Planning Commission 2030-2050

**Figure 3-1: Total Housing Units 1980-2020 & Projected Total Housing Units 2030-2050**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980-2020 and Northwest Regional Planning Commission 2030-2050

Table 3-3 lists the number of housing units in Washburn by housing type, such as single-family, multi-family, and others. According to the American Community Survey, about 91.3% of the Town’s housing units were single-family, detached homes. This is notably higher than the State of Wisconsin, where 66.5% of housing units were single-family, detached. The Town also has a small scattering of seasonal or occasional use homes, typically in the form of mobile homes or manufactured structures. Due to its rural character, the Town has very few two-family or multiple-family dwellings.

**Table 3-3: Housing Supply by Type**

Units in Structure	Town of Washburn	%	Bayfield County	%	State of Wisconsin	%
1 Unit, Detached	264	91.3%	11,512	86.9%	1,818,114	66.5%
1 Unit, Attached	3	1.0%	187	1.4%	116,442	4.3%
2 Units	0	0.0%	221	1.7%	168,357	6.2%
3 or 4 Units	0	0.0%	96	0.7%	96,643	3.5%
5 to 9 Units	0	0.0%	111	0.8%	133,649	4.9%
10 or More Units	0	0.0%	277	2.1%	314,745	11.5%
Mobile Home	22	7.6%	824	6.2%	85,538	3.1%
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0	0.0%	15	0.1%	1,023	0.0%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13,243</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,734,511</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

### Housing Occupancy and Vacancy

Table 3-4 compares the housing and vacancy status of Town of Washburn housing units between 2010 and 2020. In 2020, 83.5% of housing units were occupied, while 16.5% were vacant. This represents a slight decrease from 2010, when 87.4% of units were occupied, and 12.6% were vacant.

**Table 3-4: Housing Tenure**

Status	# 2010	% 2010	# 2020	% 2020	# Change	% Change
Total Occupied Housing Units	222	87.4%	233	83.5%	11	5.0%
Owner-Occupied	201	90.5%	211	90.6%	10	5.0%
Renter-Occupied	21	9.5%	22	9.4%	1	4.8%
Vacant Housing Units	32	12.6%	46	16.5%	14	43.8%
Seasonal Housing Units	27	84.4%	28	60.9%	1	3.7%
Average Household Size	2.39	-	2.38	-	(-0.01)	(-0.4%)
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9.8%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau 2010 and 2020

A healthy vacancy rate is important for ensuring that prospective buyers and renters have enough options, while also helping to maintain a balance in housing costs. As shown in Table 3-4, the Town of Washburn had an overall vacancy rate of 16.5% in 2020, which is higher than both the State of Wisconsin's rate of 11.0% and the City of Washburn's rate of 10.6%. However, when seasonal housing units are excluded, the vacancy rate drops to a more manageable 2.3%.

### Value of Housing

According to the American Community Survey, the median value of owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage in the Town of Washburn was \$209,700, with most homes valued between \$100,000 and \$299,999. The Town has relatively few high-value homes compared to lower and moderate-valued options, which is typical of many rural communities. The prevalence of low- to moderate-value homes presents a positive opportunity for entry-level or first-time homebuyers, as well as those seeking more affordable housing options that may be harder to find in higher-density urban or metropolitan areas. For more details and a comparison of housing values, refer to Table 3-5, which includes data for the Town of Washburn, the City of Washburn, Bayfield County, and the State of Wisconsin.

**Table 3-5: Housing Value**

Value	Town of Washburn	City of Washburn	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Less than \$50,000	4.9%	5.5%	2.5%	2.1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	18.7%	13.0%	9.2%	5.9%
\$100,000 to \$299,999	63.4%	78.1%	60.2%	57.5%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	11.4%	3.4%	20.7%	25.4%
\$500,000 to \$749,999	1.6%	0.0%	4.5%	6.4%
\$750,000 to \$999,999	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	1.6%
\$1,000,000 or more	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.1%
Median (dollars)	\$209,700	\$151,700	\$224,900	\$240,600

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

Housing decisions should consider not only the value of the property but also the cost in relation to household income. Generally, housing costs, such as taxes, insurance, principal, and interest, should not exceed 30% of a household's total income. According to the American Community Survey, about 30.1% of homeowners in the Town of Washburn had monthly housing

costs that were 30% or more of their household income (Table 3-6). In comparison, 22.3% of households across the State of Wisconsin faced similar housing cost burdens.

**Table 3-6: Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income**

Value	Town of Washburn	State of Wisconsin
Less than 10.0 percent	8.1%	8.9%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	20.6%	22.8%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	23.1%	19.5%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	15.9%	14.6%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	10.0%	4.1%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	5.8%	17.9%
35.0 to 39.9 percent	3.8%	0.0%
40.0 to 49.9 percent	4.4%	0.0%
50.0 percent or more	7.9%	10.6%
Not computed	0.3%	1.6%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

### Rental Characteristics

Rental housing units accounted for only 9.5% of the occupied housing units in the Town of Washburn in 2020. According to the American Community Survey, the median gross rent was \$1,550, with 52.2% of renters in the Town paying between \$1,000 and \$1,999 in monthly rent (Table 3-7).

**Table 3-7: Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income**

Gross Rent	Town of Washburn	State of Wisconsin
Less than \$500	26.1%	7.1%
\$500-\$999	-	41.8%
\$1,000-1,999	52.2%	43.1%
\$2,000 or More	-	4.0%
No Cash Rent	21.7%	4.1%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

According to the American Community Survey, 65.2% of renters in the Town of Washburn spent 30% or more of their household income on rent. In comparison, 46.5% of renters across the State of Wisconsin faced similar rent burdens (Table 3-8). This significant difference suggests a potential need for more affordable rental housing options in the Town.

**Table 3-8: Monthly Renter Costs as a Percentage of Household Income**

Value	Town of Washburn	State of Wisconsin
Less than 10.0 percent	4.5%	8.9%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	11.6%	22.8%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	14.2%	19.5%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	12.7%	14.6%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	10.7%	4.1%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	7.9%	17.9%
35.0 to 39.9 percent	5.5%	0.0%
40.0 to 49.9 percent	7.6%	0.0%
50.0 percent or more	19.6%	10.6%
Not computed	5.9%	1.6%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

### Age and Maintenance of Housing Stock

Nearly 40% of the housing units in the Town of Washburn were built in 1979 or earlier, and most existing housing is at least 25 years old (Table 3-9). As the housing stock continues to age, maintenance, energy efficiency, and safety concerns are becoming more prevalent in the Town.

**Table 3-9: Year Structure Built**

Value	Town of Washburn	State of Wisconsin
2020 or later	0.0%	0.4%
2010 to 2019	6.9%	6.2%
2000 to 2009	13.8%	12.2%
1980 to 1999	39.8%	22.9%
1960 to 1979	19.1%	24.1%
1940 to 1959	4.9%	16.0%
1939 or earlier	15.4%	18.3%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

### Plumbing, Kitchen & Telephones

The American Community Survey estimated that, of the 246 occupied housing units in the Town of Washburn, 12.6% lacked complete plumbing facilities, while 13.4% lacked complete kitchen facilities. All residential units appeared to have telephone service.

### Housing for Those with Disabilities

According to the American Community Survey, 12.3% of people between 18 and 64 years old had some form of disability, with 8.3% having ambulatory difficulty. An estimated 36.8% of people over 65 years of age were afflicted with some form of disability, with 11.7% having ambulatory difficulty. As the Town of Washburn's population continues to age, the housing need for those with disabilities and special needs will also increase. The Town should support and consider housing opportunities for those with disabilities and special needs and provide access to all public facilities that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



## **PROFILE OF HOUSEHOLDS**

The housing needs of a community are closely tied to the demographic profile of its households. Typically, households progress through several life-cycle stages, including entry-level households, first-time homeowners, move-up buyers, empty nesters/young seniors, and older seniors. The following sections describe each of these household types and the impact they have on housing demands in the Town.

### **Entry-Level Households**

People in the 18- to 24-year-old age group typically leave their childhood homes to establish their own households. Due to limited income and savings, many in this age range rent homes or apartments rather than buy. Additionally, their tendency to move frequently makes homeownership less appealing, and they are more likely to share housing with others of similar age.

The number of entry-level households in the Town will fluctuate annually. Many residents who graduate from high school leave the Town to pursue job opportunities or attend higher education institutions. Over the long term, unless current trends change, the 18- to 24-year-old population is unlikely to increase. However, there will always be a strong demand for affordable, entry-level housing options for people of all ages.

### **First Time Homeowners**

First-time homeowners are typically in their 20s and 30s and are often "move-up" renters transitioning from apartments to homes. They are usually married with young children, although an increasing number are now single. First-time homeowners tend to move within a few years of purchasing their first home for various reasons, such as salary increases enabling them to afford more expensive housing, the need for larger homes as their families grow, or job opportunities that require relocation.

Similar to the 18- to 24-year-old age group, the Town is unlikely to see a significant increase in typical first-time homeowners unless current conditions and trends change. However, the Comprehensive Plan anticipates growth in demand for housing, and the Town recognizes the need to attract and retain people in their 20s and 30s to support both its population and economy. As a result, it is essential for the Town to plan for future growth in the first-time homeowner market.

### **Move-Up Buyers**

Move-up buyers are typically in their 30s and 40s, transitioning from smaller, less expensive homes they purchased earlier. This group is vital for economic growth, as they often have children in school and stable jobs. They are also less likely to relocate and start over in a new community. Additionally, professionals moving to a community to advance their careers often seek more expensive homes than those they had in their previous location. To accommodate this group, the Town should ensure it offers a variety of move-up housing options that meet their needs, potentially through their late 50s and beyond.

### **Empty Nesters and Young Seniors**

Empty nesters and young seniors, typically in their 50s and 60s, often find themselves in larger homes after their children have moved out. Many in this group seek smaller, low-maintenance homes, such as townhouses. As the baby boomer generation ages, the number of empty nesters and young seniors is likely to rise. Currently, the Town has very few townhouses and no condominiums—housing options commonly sought by this group. These types of homes are more often found in urbanized areas like the City of Ashland or City of Washburn, where they

are conveniently located near essential services such as clinics, hospitals, pharmacies, grocery stores, and senior activity centers. To meet the needs of this growing population, the Town will need to plan for housing options tailored to empty nesters and young seniors. Without adequate choices, many young seniors may choose to relocate after retirement.

### **Older Seniors**

As the population continues to age, housing for seniors is becoming an increasingly important issue in both urban and rural communities. Often, adult children of senior residents may move back into their childhood homes to provide care or may choose to live together as an alternative to finding affordable housing. However, the special needs and requirements of senior residents often force them to move out of their communities to access the services and facilities they need.

The Town of Washburn does not have designated senior living or assisted living facilities, but these services are available in nearby cities, such as Ashland and Washburn, and Bayfield County offers programs to assist seniors. While a large-scale senior housing development may not be suitable for the Town, smaller, clustered developments could be a viable option. The Town should explore potential areas for such developments, though the lack of municipal sewer and water services may limit these possibilities.

Given that the nearest medical facilities in Ashland are nearly 15 miles away, the Town should consider the distance to healthcare services when planning for future senior housing. The County Highway C corridor could be an ideal location for senior-friendly houses. This main road through the Town provides easy access for transporting seniors to medical and other essential services in Washburn and Ashland.

As residents age, those in their 80s and beyond typically seek low-maintenance or assisted living housing. To meet the needs of this ageing population, the Town should consider ways to provide appropriate housing options for seniors who wish to age in place.

## **OTHER HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Housing in Relation to the Region**

While it is ideal for people to live and work in the same community, many individuals choose to live in one area and commute to another for various reasons. The Town functions for many as a "bedroom community," with residents commuting to the cities of Ashland, Washburn, or other employment centers. The City of Ashland serves as the regional hub, offering medical facilities, higher education centers, and numerous commercial venues, which require Town residents to travel to Ashland for these services and opportunities.

The Town's proximity to Ashland, as well as surrounding communities like Washburn and Bayfield, makes it an attractive place to live. It offers a rural, open space living environment that many individuals and families desire. As such, the Town's housing needs must be considered within a regional context. For example, the expansion of Ashland's Memorial Medical Center could increase demand for higher-priced housing. While Ashland may be able to meet this need, some medical center employees might prefer to live in a rural setting.

The Town experienced significant population growth from 1970 to 2000, followed by a period of stability. Housing units are projected to increase by 31.2% from 2020 to 2050, even as the Town's population is expected to remain relatively stable. These trends are likely driven by a growing population of residents over 70 years old, coupled with a decrease in the average

number of people per household. Many homeowners prefer to age in place after retirement. However, if their homes are not suited for this, there will be a need for housing that accommodates elderly lifestyles or modifications to existing homes. Planning for the expected demand for additional housing presents two main challenges: 1) how to support aging in place, and 2) how to accommodate new construction without compromising the rural character that most residents highly value.

The demand for a rural lifestyle with an easy commute to nearby municipalities creates pressure for the creation of 5-20 acre lots for nonfarm residences by fragmenting existing large lots of farmland and forestland. At the same time, it is the very proximity to farms and forests that draw people to build new houses in the Town. However, there is no immediate need in the next ten years to create a conservation subdivision in the Town, as nearby cities offer sufficient space for more concentrated development near existing roads and sewer and water systems. The Town can meet the demand for additional housing by establishing small clusters of homes with smaller minimum lot sizes, while retaining larger lots for farming and forest use. In many cases, elderly residents who wish to age in place have built smaller, elderly-suited homes near or attached to existing houses, creating multi-generational clusters that share driveways, wells, and septic systems. This approach also opens up the former residence for younger families.

Another potential solution for accommodating the demand for rural residences is the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Zoning Program. The Town contains several large parcels that may be eligible for the program. This allows 95% of the land to remain as farmland or forest, while a portion of the land is set aside to create smaller, non-farm residential lots. This preserves the primary agricultural and forestry use of the land while meeting the demand for rural housing.

### **Seasonal Housing**

The Town offers many amenities that attract people from distant locations. As a result, some individuals may have a primary residence in cities like Minneapolis or Duluth while owning a second home in the Town or the surrounding area. Conversely, some residents may live primarily in the Town but spend part of the year in the southern United States. Seasonal housing can have both positive and negative effects on a community. In nearby towns that are tourist destinations, non-residential homeowners are marketing their houses as short-term rentals and not making them available as long-term rentals for young families moving to the area. A proliferation of short-term rentals in rural communities is changing relations among neighbors as these homes become more like small motels but with more remote management. There currently are few short-term rentals in The Town, but the Town hopes to collaborate with the County in limiting negative impacts as the number increases. The Town will carefully monitor the impact of seasonal housing and address any concerns that arise as they come to light.

### **Home Occupations and Residences**

The Town of Washburn is home to a growing number of artists, craft-makers, writers, and other individuals who may wish to live and work from their homes. However, there are few commercial buildings or storefronts available to accommodate these small businesses or display their goods. As a result, some residents have begun manufacturing and selling their products directly from their homes. The Town permits such activities through Bayfield County zoning approval, with all signage requiring a permit. To ensure these home-based businesses are properly regulated, the Town will monitor and limit their expansion to prevent issues such as increased noise, dust, pollution, or traffic from deliveries or customers, which could affect neighbors or the broader community.

## HOUSING PROGRAMS

The Wisconsin Planning Law requires the Town to compile a list of programs to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand. Below are housing programs available to developers or the Town.

### USDA-Rural Development

Rural Development administers federal funds to help secure loan options to assist low-moderate income families with home purchase and rehabilitation. Rural Development generally funds individuals who cannot obtain conventional financing.

### CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Housing Rehabilitation

CDBG funds are available through HUD (Housing and Urban Development). These funds are available to public or private entities to help offset rehabilitation costs to homeowners, renters, and landlords. These funds are in the form of zero percent interest/deferred payment loans.

### WHEDA (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority)

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority serves Wisconsin residents and communities by working with others to provide creative financing resources and information to stimulate and preserve affordable housing, small business, and agribusiness.

### Northwest Affordable Housing

Northwest Affordable Housing is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization that is able to obtain funds that are not available to the general public for the purpose of promoting affordable and accessible housing for low and moderate-income persons.

### HCRI (Housing Cost Reduction Initiative)

The Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) was created in 1989, by the Governor and the Wisconsin Legislature. The State set aside funds to provide housing assistance to low- and moderate-income (LMI) households seeking to own or rent decent, safe, affordable housing.

### Federal Home Loan Bank (of Chicago)

The Community Investment Group of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago (FHLB Chicago) provides financing and direct funding tools that support affordable housing and local community lending initiatives. Three programs that can be used to assist homebuyers or renters include:

- a) The Affordable Housing Program (AHP) provides grants and subsidized loans to member financial institutions working with affordable housing providers to finance rental and ownership housing for low and moderate income households;
- b) The Community Investment Program (CIP) provides discounted advances and standby letters of credit to member financial institutions to finance affordable housing and to help develop and revitalize communities; and
- c) The Downpayment Plus Program (DPP) provides grants to very low, low, and moderate-income homebuyers to assist them with down-payment and closing costs.

Other local programs and agencies that may provide some level of assistance include **Bayfield County Housing Authority; City of Washburn Housing Authority; Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency; Ashland County Housing Authority.**

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Ch. 3 – Goal 1: The Town of Washburn supports residential development that will be compatible with the preservation of the Town’s rural character and environment, and the traditions of agriculture and forestry.**

**Objective 3.1:** Establish guidelines for visual buffers of residential development from Town roads.

**Objective 3.2:** Encourage small residential clusters with shared wells, septic systems, and shared driveways.

**Ch. 3 – Goal 2: The Town of Washburn will support and encourage newer, diverse, and aesthetically enhanced housing to meet the needs of residents.**

**Objective 3.3:** Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the existing housing stock to provide for the needs of current residents and to accommodate future residents.

In conclusion the Town of Washburn has a bright future and has great potential to be a very friendly and green town. Property owners encourage forest and farmland preservation. Cluster or group housing to preserve forests, open space, and scenic views, as well as preserving large tracts of private forest and restricting development near sensitive and fragile environmental areas were issues that citizens of the Town felt were important. Because of these results, environmentally friendly, sustainable, green-building practices should be promoted to the fullest possible potential.



## **4. UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Community facilities include parks, schools, government centers, museums, health and safety services, and so on. They are typically funded and staffed by local, county, state, or federal agencies. In many cases, these facilities can be the focal point of the community, such as a school, town hall, or community service center, or they provide necessary functions such as police, fire, ambulance, and medical services.

Utilities may include sanitary sewers, storm sewers, and water distribution systems, as well as electrical, natural gas, telecommunication, and solid waste disposal systems. Utilities and community facilities greatly contribute to the quality of life in the Town of Washburn, affecting its ability to maintain and attract residents, visitors, businesses, and industries. They also play a significant role in shaping the community's image and character, with their location and upkeep being important to community identity.

This chapter provides an inventory and analysis of the existing utilities and community facilities in the Town of Washburn. It also outlines goals, objectives, policies, maps, and programs for maintaining and enhancing these facilities and services.

The absence of adequate facilities can hinder future growth and development, limiting efforts to promote economic development. Understanding the location, use, and capacity of community facilities and utilities is crucial for effective planning.

### **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

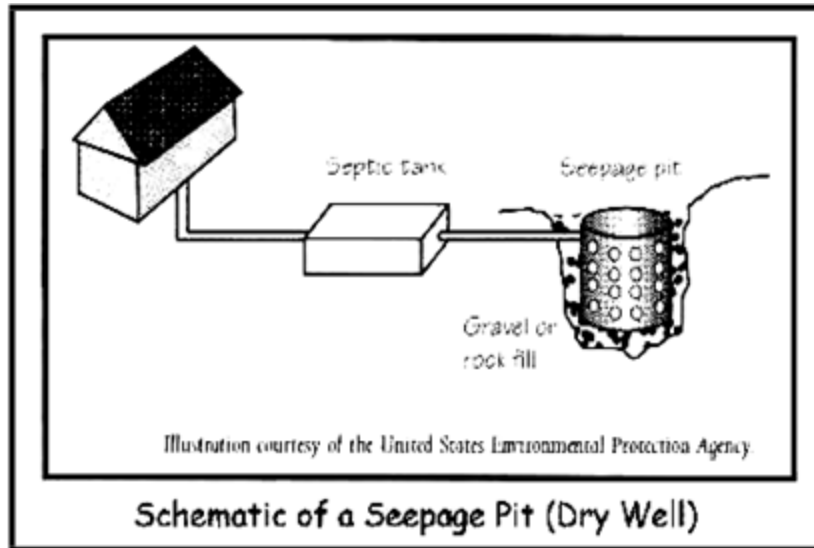
#### **EXISTING TOWN UTILITIES**

##### **Sanitary Sewer Systems**

The disposal of domestic and commercial wastewater is managed through private individual onsite wastewater disposal systems (commonly referred to as septic systems). Due to the varying soil conditions and terrain found throughout the Town, residents use a mix of open and closed septic systems.

The difference in the systems comes from the way the wastewater is drained from the septic tank, which both systems possess. A "closed system" does not classify the septic system as totally closed from the environment, yet there is still a holding tank, which can also be called the seepage pit for the wastewater. The seepage pits have gravel surrounding all sides, which allows for the slow release and leaching of the wastewater into the surrounding soils (Figure 4-1). Seepage pits once were permitted in Bayfield County but no longer may be installed for household sanitary systems.

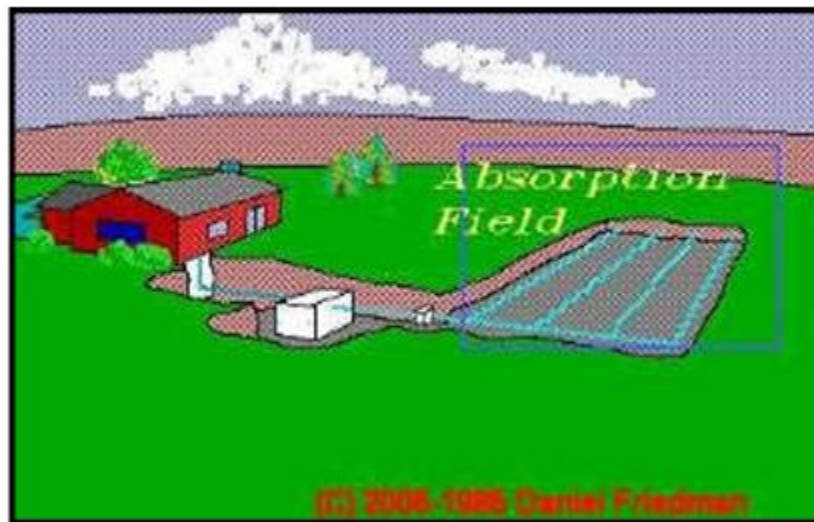
**Figure 4-1: Closed System or Seepage Pit Septic System**



Source: SepticApedia

The “open system” utilizes an attached drain field, where wastewater is transferred through perforated pipes laid in gravel-lined trenches. These trenches disperse the wastewater evenly and allow for slow release and leaching into the surrounding soil (Figure 4-2).

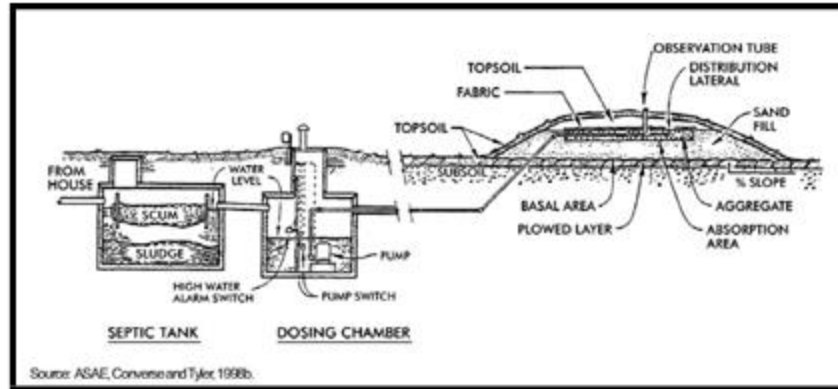
**Figure 4-2: Open Septic Systems Known as a Drain Field System**



Source: SepticApedia

A third option that may be more suitable to the heavy clay soils in the Town is a “sand mound” or “raised mound” type septic system. This system can work effectively in this area due to the presence of heavy clay soils throughout the Town (Figure 4-3).

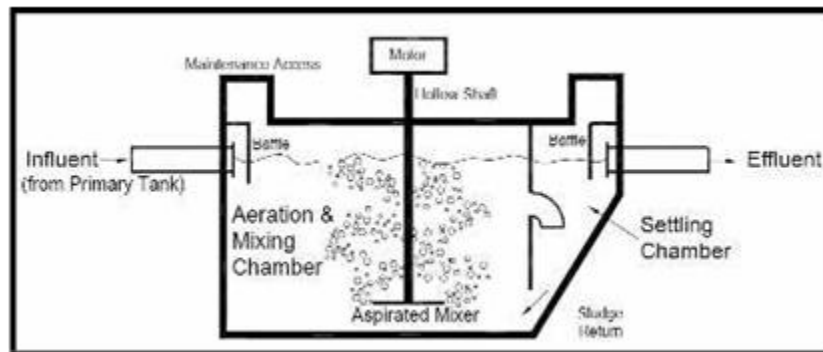
**Figure 4-3: Sand or Raised Mound Septic System**



Source: SepticApedia

The fourth option is the "aerobic treatment system" (ATU), suitable for sites where a conventional drain field is unfeasible, or soil conditions hinder proper seepage. ATUs are pre-packaged septic treatment systems that function as mini-wastewater treatment plants for home use. Waste enters a "trash tank" (like a septic tank) where it is mixed and aerated, allowing aerobic bacteria to break down the waste through oxidation. The treated effluent then moves to a settling chamber or clarifier before being released as highly treated wastewater (Figure 4-4).

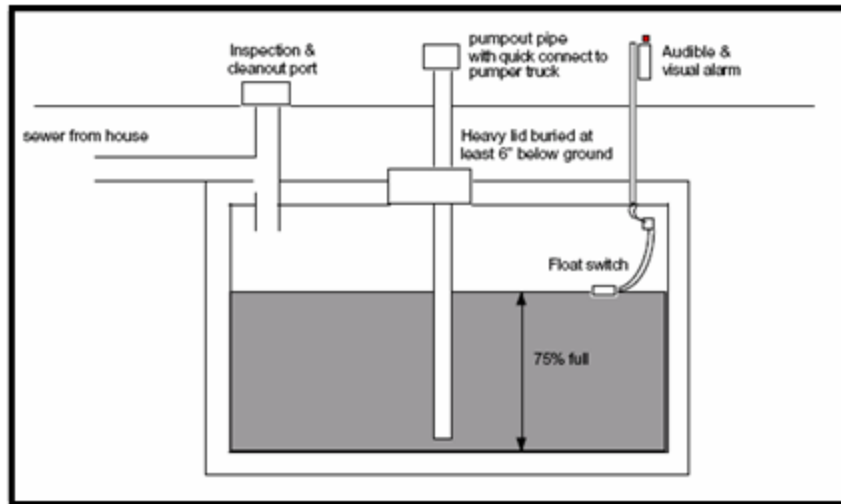
**Figure 4-4: Aerobic Treatment System**



Source: SepticApedia

The final option available to residents of the Town is the "holding tank system" (Figure 4-5). This system is typically used when a drain field is impractical or when soil and water table conditions do not meet the State sanitary code. A holding tank is a leak-proof drum that temporarily collects sewage effluent. When the tank reaches capacity, the contents are pumped out by a state-licensed waste hauler and transported to the nearest community with a public sewage treatment system for final treatment.

Holding tanks are regarded as "systems of last resort" and "failure prone." Pumping and trucking is quite expensive, depending on the size of the tank and rate it is filled by water use in the home or business. For example, a 2,000-gallon tank was about \$150 to pump and haul in 2024. The county requires tanks to be pumped at least every three months. The failure element relates to the ease with which owners may illicitly equip the tank with a sump pump, and eject the untreated effluent onto the ground surface, such as nearby road ditches, wetlands, or other open areas on private property. The State has held that the local governing County may not issue a permit for a holding tank unless the local ordinance allows for it, and the system has been classified as a "systems of last resort."

**Figure 4-5: Holding Tank System**

Source: Ohio State University Extension

Over the 20-year planning horizon, and due to its desire to remain primarily a rural community, it is not anticipated that the Town of Washburn will develop a municipal wastewater collection and treatment facility. Even the potential for connecting into the City of Washburn's municipal system appears remote, since the closest point is well over a mile and a half from the Town boundary. However, as development densities around critical natural resources grow, the potential for a small-scale or community type service system that can adequately serve these higher-density areas may occur.

### Stormwater Management

The stormwater system established in the Town of Washburn consists of very few structures. At this time, the Town does not have a stormwater management plan or system in place and has no plans to add a storm sewer system in the Town. There are no primary collection basins or major arterials located in the Town. The soils located along the westerly end of Town have great infiltration qualities and disperse the storm water quite well. The area where there appears to be the most establishments is in the transition zones, where sandy soils overlay the clay layer. This transition area comprises a number of wetlands, which are natural features that help retain and capture stormwater run-off before it drains into the protected streams, rivers, and lakes. Stormwater management is an increasingly important issue as rainfall intensity during storms increases. The Town may need to design and implement ways to slow the flow of water to streams to reduce erosion. The Town should work cooperatively with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Bayfield County to mitigate any adverse impacts of stormwater runoff and ensure that the Town's environmental resources and infrastructure remain protected.

### Water Supply

All Town of Washburn residents receive their water by means of private wells. The primary water source for the Town is a groundwater aquifer, which provides very high quality and healthy water that can only be accessed by these private wells. When it comes to the future of the well system there needs to be a large assessment of the toxins present. As of December 2024, approximately 172 active wells are in the Town of Washburn (WDNR 2024). Over the 20-year planning period, the Town does not anticipate developing a municipal water delivery system. Town residents are encouraged to protect surface and ground waters from contamination and ensure the future water supply system remains a valuable resource for the long-term future generations of its residents.

## **OTHER UTILITIES AND SERVICES**

The following provides an overview of other utilities and services that the Town should consider in its planning efforts.

### **Electrical and Natural Gas Service**

The service providers for electricity are Bayfield Electric Cooperative and Xcel Energy. Xcel's Bay Front Station, which is located on the City of Ashland's waterfront, is one of four Xcel's "waste-to-energy" facilities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The station can use wood, shredded rubber, or natural gas to generate electricity. The plant was the first investor-owned utility in the United States to burn wood to generate electricity, starting in 1979.

Gas for residential heating and cooking is provided by private contractors that individually serve and replenish personal liquefied petroleum (LP) or propane tanks on every residential property. This is a very volatile gas and can be dangerous if not regulated correctly. Currently, propane gas is efficient, affordable, and reliable, although it can experience some price volatility. The reliance on this type of fossil fuel may become scarce in the future, and the Town may need to plan for or allow for a replacement system to adequately serve the Town.

Currently there are no underground pipes or infrastructure for the use of natural gas in the Town and there does not appear to be an overwhelming need. Although there is a major natural gas pipeline running north south across the westerly portion in the nearby City of Washburn, there is no plan or current need to link or branch off a line to the Town.

### **Solar Generated Electricity**

It is not expected that large solar arrays will be set up in the Town of Washburn as the area is not sufficiently close to an electrical substation and does not have the large open areas suitable for such an installation. However, smaller solar installations for single homes are expected to increase. The Town has obtained a grant to install a small microgrid power system at the Town Garage that uses solar panels to generate electricity, storing the energy in a battery bank. This micro-grid will provide a resilient source of electrical power even if the utility electric service is interrupted. An EV charging station is also planned with the microgrid installation which will be near the Town Hall.

### **Telecommunications**

The landline phone service for the Town is provided by Brightspeed and Norvado. Although many residents still have landline phone service, an increasing number are discontinuing it in favor of wireless cellular communications and VOIP (Voice over IP) internet phone service. It is expected in the future that dedicated landline phone service will gradually be replaced with other technologies.

Cellular phone service in the area is provided by three main networks: Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile. In most of the Town's eastern, more populated areas, cell phone reception is adequate. However, in the western regions, particularly within the national forest, coverage is limited or nonexistent. This lack of coverage can be problematic for recreational users or workers in the forest who rely on their phones for emergency communication but may struggle to get calls or text messages through. To address this, Bayfield County is implementing a new 911 system that will allow for text messaging, which can sometimes go through when voice calls cannot. The Town is also interested in exploring future technologies that could improve emergency communications in currently underserved areas.

Broadband (high-speed internet) has evolved from a luxury to an essential utility in the Town. Once a scarce resource, it is now expected and integral to daily life. Remote work and schooling increasingly rely on broadband, and it has become a key tool for communication between residents and government. Thanks to advancements in technology, residents now have multiple options for fast and reliable internet service (see the Bayfield County Telecommuter Forward initiative in Chapter 6: Economic Development).

Norvado has obtained grants for laying fiber optic cables that will be accessible to the majority of residences in the Town. Norvado provides internet, phone, and cable TV options.

Bayfield Wireless utilizes point-to-point wireless communication to provide broadband service. This method requires a clear line of sight with minimal interference from trees and other obstacles. Unlike traditional towers, many of the structures used by Bayfield Wireless are utility poles or smaller, less intrusive mounts for wireless equipment. Additionally, the company has installed equipment on one of the larger existing towers on Maple Hill.

Broadband via cell phone has also become faster but is limited to the areas which have adequate cell phone reception.

Satellite based internet systems like Starlink use a constellation satellite network for service. The Town encourages the continued development of broadband service to provide multiple options and more complete coverage of the area.

The Town also provides public internet access at the Town Hall. A public Wi-Fi network is available inside the building (when open for public use) and in the parking lot. This service is intended for occasional or emergency use, rather than for extended or frequent use.

Two large telecommunications towers are in the Town. One, located just off West Maple Hill Road, appears to serve wireless (cellular phone) communications. The other, a very tall structure near the northwest corner of Church Corner Road and South Maple Hill Road, is the public safety communications tower for Bayfield County. Both towers are positioned at some of the highest points in the Town. Due to their height and placement, these towers are highly visible to all Town residents and stand out even among the surrounding mature trees.

As demand for wireless and cellular services grows, additional towers may be considered in the Town. However, the Town aims to limit such structures and will set standards to discourage future tower construction. The Town will work closely with communication providers and Bayfield County officials to ensure residents have access to modern technology while prioritizing the community's best interests.

### **Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling**

Solid waste and recycling services are primarily handled by the Bay Area Solid Waste District (BASWD) at the local transfer station near Barksdale Town Hall on East Ondossagon Road. Residents can drop off garbage and recycling on collection days (Saturdays year-round, with additional Wednesday evening hours in summer). They must purchase bags or pay a small fee per drop-off. Recycling is single-stream, so sorting is not required. Waste is transported to landfills in Sarona, Wisconsin, and Ontonagon, Michigan. Residents can also contract at-home waste removal through Waste Management or Republic Services, with the Town's service contracted through Waste Management.



The Town once operated an active landfill off South Maple Hill Road near the Chequamegon National Forest, serving the City of Washburn and the Towns of Bayview and Washburn. The landfill was closed in the early 1990s and capped with clay. In 1991, the three municipalities agreed to share preventative maintenance costs, with the City covering 77%, the Town of Bayview 12%, and the Town of Washburn 11%. Three water monitoring wells track potential groundwater contamination, with annual reviews of the data. The clay cap is inspected twice a year for erosion and settling and once annually to prevent deep-rooted woody vegetation from causing excessive water infiltration through the cap. The Town of Washburn handles mowing and inspections, billing the City for actual costs, while inspection findings are shared with both the City and Town of Bayview. More information is available on the Town's website: <https://townofwashburn.wi.gov/forms-permits/all-information-relating-to-the-landfill/>.

A new composting service, Big Lake Organics, is available in the Chequamegon Bay area, offering residents and businesses a way to dispose of food waste and compostable items through a subscription service, helping reduce landfill waste. While there is a yard waste site near the Town's eastern border off Highway C in Washburn, it is only for City residents.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

### **Town Facilities**

The Town of Washburn has a Town Hall located on County Highway C, approximately 1 mile from the easterly Town boundary/City of Washburn corporate limits. The building once housed the former McKinley School and was updated with new lapboard siding, paint, and fitted with new replicate windows in 2006. The building serves as the main meeting place for the Town Board and Town committees and commissions. The building is handicapped accessible with ramps and designated parking spaces, is heated, and cooled throughout the seasons, and it serves the needs of the Town very well.

The Town also has a good-sized and very well-maintained pole-barn style garage located on the same property, which is used to store and manage equipment and vehicles that serve the Town. Existing facilities are adequate to meet current and future needs. The Town has no plans to develop additional Town facilities.

## **OUTSIDE TOWN SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

### **Fire**

The Town of Washburn does not have a full-time or volunteer fire department. The adjacent City of Washburn Fire Department, which is a volunteer-driven organization, provides fire suppression and related services not only to the City of Washburn, but also to the surrounding towns. The Fire Department stores its equipment in a building on the 700 block of North Washington Avenue and is well within the quick response time needed for any fire or medical emergencies within the Town of Washburn.

### **Ambulance/Medical Response**

The Washburn Area Ambulance Service is a City of Washburn owned and operated ambulance service that serves the City, the Town of Washburn, and several surrounding Towns. Volunteer licensed emergency medical technicians provide emergency medical services. Ambulance equipment is stored in a building on the 700 block of North Washington Avenue next to the Fire Department.

**Law Enforcement**

The Town is provided with law enforcement services through the Bayfield County Sheriff. They are the enforcing agency for any local regulations since the Town doesn't have its own police force. Bayfield and Ashland Counties share a merged dispatch service center, located in the City of Washburn.

**Public Safety Summary**

Since public safety is provided through services located in the City of Washburn, the Town provides annual funding for the ambulance and fire services. The Town Board reviews agreements with these safety services and will continue to work with public safety officials to review the Town's public safety needs. The fire and ambulance services are almost always looking for volunteers to become EMTs and serve on their crews. Rural areas routinely see shortages of emergency response personnel. Any residents interested in volunteering to serve their community as an EMT or firefighter are encouraged to reach out to the City of Washburn to connect with the Ambulance Director or Fire Chief.

**Public Library**

The nearest public library is located in the City of Washburn, and is housed in a fully accessible, historic brownstone building at 307 Washington Avenue. The Washburn Library serves the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the residents of Washburn and the surrounding area. Its collection consists of books, audio and visual materials, and serial subscriptions. In addition, the library participates in the Northern Waters Library Service, which provides inter-library loan services and other shared resources. The library also provides programs and events for children and adults and provides computers and Internet access. Area residents and organizations are encouraged to use the library meeting rooms for events and they can use the library's wireless Internet access.

**Religious Institutions and Cemeteries**

There are no churches and only one existing cemetery in the Town of Washburn. All area churches are located in the nearby cities and towns. The one cemetery is located at the northeast corner of Church Corner Road and Wannebo Road. This cemetery is a historic site and no longer provides burials at the site. The City of Washburn also provides two cemeteries: Woodland Cemetery is a municipal cemetery overlooking Lake Superior from West Woodland Drive and Calvary Cemetery is owned by the St. Louis Church and is located directly east of Woodland Cemetery on West Woodland Drive.

**Schools**

The Town no longer has any schools, although at one time it was home to eight one-room schoolhouses.

Today, public education is provided by the Washburn School District, which includes the Town of Washburn, City of Washburn, Town of Bayview, and Town of Barksdale. All school facilities are centrally located in the City of Washburn, where the district operates three schools: Washburn Elementary School (411 West 8th Street), Washburn Middle School; and Washburn High School (305 West 4th Street). In the 2024-25 school year, enrollment in the Washburn School District was approximately 603 students, but overall enrollment has been steadily declining. The district anticipates this trend will continue in the coming years.

A \$14.43 million referendum was approved by voters to renovate the middle and high schools to improve safety and accessibility in November 2024. A series of options and costs were mailed to all district residents in a survey prior to the referendum to gauge the community's financial

willingness to support various types of capital maintenance projects. Building an entirely new school wasn't financially feasible based on construction estimates and limits the state has on school district borrowing capacity.

Higher education is available at Northwood Technical College in Ashland and through online degree programs. Northwood Technical College offers two-year degree programs in a variety of fields where there is employment demand. Northland College in Ashland stopped accepting students in 2025, but some members of the community are exploring ways for the campus to continue providing higher education opportunities.

### **U.S. Forest Service**

The district headquarters of the Chequamegon National Forest are located at the intersection of Bayfield Street and 1st Avenue East in the City of Washburn. Thousands of acres of national forest are located in the Town of Washburn. The national forest provides a managed timber source for the forestry industry, and it provides numerous recreation opportunities for Town residents and visitors.

### **Health Care/Senior Care Facilities**

There are no health care or senior care facilities within the Town of Washburn. Health and senior care options are available in nearby areas, all within a short driving distance. The closest regional medical center is Tamarack Health, Ashland Medical Center in Ashland, which provides a comprehensive range of services, including general and orthopedic surgery, diagnostic and rehabilitation services, obstetrics, behavioral health care, and an emergency room, among others.

In Washburn, Kreuser Clinic and Birch Haven North Assisted Living Facility are located at 320 Superior Avenue, next to Northern Lights Services. Northern Lights Services is a nonprofit health care campus offering a skilled nursing home, assisted living, and rehabilitation services. The Bayfield County Health Department also provides Bayfield County residents with public health services, including immunizations and prenatal care coordination. Other counseling, dentist, chiropractic clinics, and a pharmacy, are also in the City of Washburn.

There are limited home health agencies available in northern Bayfield County. There are a few in home health services available in the area, including Avanti Home Health, Living Life Home Health Care PLS, Lori Knapp, and Ashland Health Services. Ashland and Bayfield counties do have volunteer services for local individuals, CORE Community Services and Faith in Action. Ashland Aging and Disability will also direct individuals to the services that are provided throughout the Bayfield and Ashland County areas.

### **Recreation Facilities, Resources, and Trails**

The Town of Washburn has approximately 50 miles of snowmobile and 20 miles of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and utility terrain vehicle (UTV) routes and trails. There are four marked trail systems running through the Town, including Valhalla, Iron River, Moquah Spur and Lenawee trails. Some of these trails are clearly marked or indicated as ATV/UTV, snowmobile, or dual-purpose.

There are hiking trails around Long Lake and Horseshoe Lake Recreation Areas, which are all located in the Chequamegon National Forest (but still within the Town of Washburn boundary). More detailed descriptions of these trails are located in the Transportation chapter of this plan.

## **Parks and Campgrounds**

Long Lake is the only park, picnic, and swimming area in the Town. There are picnic and campground facilities at Birch Grove and Horseshoe Lake. Many of the lakes provide nice panfish and largemouth bass for fishing, along with canoeing and non-motorized boats for water recreation. Fishing is also available for trout and salmon in the streams and rivers that run through the Town.

The Chequamegon National Forest is open to deer, bear, and small game hunting. There are approximately 45 species of mammals and numerous birds and plants for viewing. The southwest corner of the Town contains part of the Moquah Barrens Wildlife Management Area. Other opportunities throughout the national forest lands and the Town include berry picking, gathering of forest products, viewing scenery by auto and bicycles, skijoring, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and dog sledding.

## **Recreation and Athletic Facilities**

Outdoor soccer fields are situated near the back portion of a private farmstead, located at the northeast corner of County Highway C and Old C Road. A gravel driveway was installed off Highway C to the immediate east of the soccer fields, which leads to a public parking area for visitors to the site. The surrounding Towns of Barksdale, Bayview, and Washburn donated gravel for the driveway and parking area, along with the cities of Bayfield Washburn, and Bayfield County. Signs were installed by Bayfield County Highway Department, and maintenance of the gravel driveway and parking area is done by the Town of Washburn. This soccer facility is frequently used by the surrounding communities, Town of Washburn residents, and the Washburn and Bayfield Chequamegon Bay Soccer Club.

Map 1 also illustrates two separate recreational areas owned by the Wisconsin DNR, which are situated near the northwest corner of the Church Corner Road bridge crossing over the Sioux River (vicinity of Church Corner Road and Lucia Road), while the other is located at the northwest end of County Highway C bridge over the same Sioux River waterway. These areas are only gravel-surfaced areas, which serve only as off-road parking facilities for anglers' and/or recreational enthusiasts' vehicles.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Ch. 4 – Goal 1: Support the continued development of renewable energy in the region and develop renewable energy usage in the Town where appropriate.**

**Objective 4.1:** Implement micro grid at the Town Hall using a solar bank, battery storage, and power inverter system. Setup EV charging station.

**Objective 4.2:** Encourage individual adoption of renewable energy by providing information and education to citizens of the Town.

**Objective 4.3:** Encourage deployment of “rooftop” solar photovoltaics on Town residential and business properties through solar-friendly permitting, education assistance, utility collaboration, and potential incentive assistance as it might become available.

**Ch. 4 – Goal 2: Support the continued development of broadband internet in the Town so that at least one high speed option is available for every home desiring access.**

**Objective 4.4:** Support local utilities as they seek funding and implement broadband internet.

**Ch. 4 – Goal 3: Ensure that facilities, equipment, and staff associated with providing services to the Town are adequate to meet the needs of the community.**

**Objective 4.5:** Maintain Town Hall and Garage facilities, along with equipment and nearby properties.

**Objective 4.6:** Support Emergency Services and non-town-based services utilized by Town residents.

**Objective 4.7:** Support residents in completing projects on their property that protect community infrastructure and sanitation.

**Ch. 4 – Goal 4: Continue monitoring and prompting actions to protect public health surrounding the former Washburn Landfill location on Maple Hill in Section 29.**

**Objective 4.8:** Continue monitoring efforts at the former landfill location.

**Objective 4.9:** Initiate action to maintain the clay cap and repair issues noted during monitoring.

## 5. TRANSPORTATION

### INTRODUCTION

A well-designed and maintained transportation system provides safe, efficient, and reliable ways for people and products to get to their residences, businesses, schools, commercial and cultural centers, and places of employment. Furthermore, it provides recreation opportunities, such as trails or walkways, and it contributes to the overall image of the community. This chapter provides an inventory and analysis of the Town of Washburn's transportation system, and it describes goals, objectives, and programs to maintain and enhance the existing and future transportation system of the Town.

### INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

#### ROAD SYSTEMS

The road system is the most important component of the Town of Washburn's transportation system. It provides the primary links within the community and to surrounding areas. The Town currently has 127.74 miles of Town roads, and 5.21 miles of county highway roads, for a total of 132.95 total miles (Map 2: Transportation System). The following provides an overview of the key components of the Town's road system.

#### Functional Road Classification

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) classifies roads as principal and minor arterials, major and minor collectors, and local streets. The following provides a brief description of the classification system as it applies to the Town of Washburn.

**Principal Arterials:** Principal arterials connect cities or regions, moving large volumes of traffic along direct routes with limited access to private property, parking, and intersections for smooth flow. Washburn has no principal arterials, but WisDOT designates US Highway 2, about 4 miles south of the Town, as a principal arterial.

**Minor Arterials:** Minor arterials connect to principal arterials and carry large volumes of traffic but allow more access to private property and may permit on-street parking. WisDOT designates State Highway 13 (Bayfield Street in the City of Washburn), located just east and south of the Town, as a minor arterial road.

**Collectors:** Collectors provide major connections within a community, linking local streets to arterials and often serving as primary access to private property. WisDOT identifies Bayfield County Highway C as the only major collector in the Town. Brinks Road, along the Town's western edge through Chequamegon Forest, is a local collector, as is the 4-mile north-south segment of Church Corner Road (from the northerly Town boundary line down to Wannebo Road), then east 1-mile along Wannebo Road, then south one mile along Ondossagon Road, are collectively considered a local collector.

**Local Roads:** Local roads handle the least amount of traffic volume but provide direct access to private property. They are generally the narrowest roads in the road system and are the most prevalent throughout the Town and the National Forest areas.

**Forestry Roads:** These are roads that are found primarily inside the Chequamegon National Forest area. These roads are unimproved roadways with typical sand or class-5 aggregate

materials used for roadbed surfaces. These roads are lightly maintained and graded by the Town and U.S. Forest officials. These roads typically serve the logging and forestry service vehicles, and visitor traffic to access certain campgrounds and recreation areas.

### **Jurisdiction and Maintenance Responsibilities**

State Highway 13 (Bayfield Street) is under the jurisdiction of the State of Wisconsin. Bayfield County has jurisdiction of, and maintenance responsibilities for County Highway C through the Town. The Town of Washburn has jurisdiction of, and maintenance responsibilities for, all local roadways in the Town.

The Town and the U.S. Forest Service jointly administer the roads within the boundary of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. There are approximately 85 miles of forest roads to maintain. The Town makes decisions about these roads, such as restrictions for weight limits during the spring “break up” season and does the plowing and grading. Through the federal grant process, the Town applies for and receives funding from the Forest Service for purchasing gravel and completing various repair projects. The U.S. Forest Service has a Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) for the Eastern Region (Northeast and Midwest states) of which the Town Board Chair is currently a member. The Town received \$300,000 in RAC funds in 2024 and \$65,000 in 2023 to support road work on Town roads in the National Forest. These funds were temporary and unlikely to be available again for several years.

### **Traffic Counts and Congestion**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) defines the “annual average daily traffic” (AADT) as the number of vehicles that are expected to pass a given location on an average day of the year. Table 5-1 shows traffic counts from 2009 through 2022 for key locations on County Highway C and State Highway 13. The traffic counts reflect anticipated traffic on an “average” day of the year. The Town purchased a traffic counter so that it could assess the levels of traffic on town roads and use that information to set priorities for road improvements.

County Highway C serves as the major collector, and State Highway 13 serves as the minor arterial for the area and the Town. It is assumed that most traffic is from residents of the Town and surrounding communities commuting to their workplaces in the City of Washburn and City of Ashland, and/or residents traveling to the main commercial, educational, or medical facilities of Washburn and Ashland. However, the traffic on State Highway 13 increases during the tourist season (most notably on summer weekends). The Town will work in close cooperation with Bayfield County and WisDOT officials and help monitor and assess the overall future conditions of County Highway C, and bring forth or communicate to county and state officials about any concerns or issues related to this vital road system.

**Table 5-1: Annual Average Daily Traffic for Key Locations by Year**

Location	Year		
	2009	2012	2022
CTH C 2.5 miles northwest of STH 13 (Town of Washburn)	880	-	1,000
CTH C east of Big Rock Rd (Town of Washburn)	1,100	-	1,200
CTH C between Pine St & STH 13 (City of Washburn)	2,300	1,500	1,300
STH 13 between Washington Ave & 2nd Ave W (City of Washburn)	9,900	6,000	6,000

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation Traffic Count Map



## Commuting Patterns

The American Community Survey identified that of the 241 workers aged 16 years and over in the Town of Washburn, 66.4% drove alone to work, 24 or 8.7% carpooled, 12 or 4.4% walked, 18 or 6.5% worked at home, and nobody used public transportation. The Census also reported that the mean travel time to work was 19 minutes. This finding indicates a significant number of Town residents are commuting to work in other communities, most notably the City of Ashland and to some extent the City of Washburn. In fact, the Census found that 1,927 Bayfield County residents worked in Ashland County, whereas only 301 Ashland County residents worked in Bayfield County.

**Table 5-2: Commuting Characteristics**

	Town of Washburn	City of Washburn	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Total Population	602	1,975	16,214	5,882,128
Workers 16 years +	241	963	7,301	2,974,249
Car, Truck, or Van - Alone	66.4%	67.6%	72.3%	77.0%
Car, Truck, or Van - Carpooled	6.6%	9.9%	10.1%	7.4%
Public Transportation	0.8%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%
Walked	1.7%	5.2%	3.2%	2.8%
Bicycle	1.2%	2.1%	0.4%	0.5%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or Other Means	0.8%	2.0%	1.1%	1.0%
Worked from Home	22.4%	12.1%	11.8%	10.1%
Avg. Travel Time to Work (min.)	20.8	14.1	23.3	22.2

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

## Roadway Improvement Projects

The Town of Washburn keeps its local road system in good condition, with regular upkeep and improvements made on an as-needed basis. The Town has a formal road improvement plan for all its roadways, which is updated every two years by the Town's Road Superintendent using the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system. For paved roadways, the PASER scores range from 1 to 10, with ratings of 9 or 10 indicating the road doesn't need any maintenance and a score of 1 or 2 indicating the road needs to be reconstructed. Gravel roadways are also evaluated using this system, though with a different scale. They can have a score range of 1 to 5, with 5 meaning the road is in excellent condition and 1 indicating the road has failed. Every spring, the Town Board and the Road Superintendent conduct an annual road inspection, which includes an internal evaluation and assessment of road conditions. A five-year Road Plan is also available on the Town's website: <https://townofwashburn.wi.gov/>.

The PASER two-year road improvement plan is necessary to comply with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's guidelines for local communities and towns to receive Town Road Improvement (TRI) funds through the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP), which match up to 50% of project costs that meet the requirements. This funding may only be used for existing roads. The Town intends to continue requesting TRI funding to support road improvement and repair projects.

In 2022, the Town received TRI funding for one mile of pavement replacement and resurfacing on South Maple Hill Road. The total cost for that project was \$24,500, with \$12,250 covered by TRI funds. In 2025, the Town of Washburn, in cooperation with the Town of Barksdale, will be receiving TRI funds to resurface Engoe Road from Bjork Road to the Town's eastern border, a

distance of one mile. The total project cost is estimated to be \$110,000, with TRI funds covering \$55,000. The Town Board also pursues funding outside of the LRIP program when available. In 2024, the Town received funding from the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to help cover the costs of resurfacing two miles of Wannebo Road, from the intersection of Chequamegon Heights Road to Ondossagon Road, including replacing culverts. BIL funds covered \$624,746.

## **ROAD PLANS AND PROGRAMS**

### **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program indicates that State Highway 13 (located along the eastern edge of the Town and through the City of Washburn), from Washington Avenue to Superior Avenue, is scheduled for pavement replacement in 2025 and 2026. Additionally, County Highway C, from State Highway 13 to McKinley Road, is scheduled for pavement replacement in 2027.

### **Wisconsin Lake Superior Scenic Byway**

The Wisconsin Lake Superior Scenic Byway is a 70-mile stretch of State Highway 13 that was designated a National Scenic Byway in February 2021. The byway runs from U.S. Highway 2 to County Highway H in northwest Wisconsin, following the southern shore of Lake Superior.

### **Wisconsin Rustic Road Program**

The Rustic Roads Program was created in 1973 by the State Legislature to preserve what remains of Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled back roads for the enjoyment of motorists, hikers, and bicyclists. Currently, the Town doesn't have any designated Rustic Roads.

Local governments and communities benefit from Rustic Road designation by providing travelers an additional incentive to visit. Unique brown and yellow signs mark the routes of all officially designated Rustic Roads. Some of the requirements for this designation include the road being at least two miles in length, connecting to major highways to form a loop, and having a posted speed limit of 45 mph or less.

### **Connect 2050**

Connect 2050 is the statewide long-range multimodal transportation plan developed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The plan facilitates decision-making, improvements, and investments in all types of transportation throughout Wisconsin through the year 2050.

### **Wisconsin Active Transportation Plan 2050**

The Active Transportation Plan 2050 is a statewide long-range plan focused on human-powered modes of transportation, such as bicycling and walking. This plan evaluates active transportation opportunities and needs, resulting in policies and actions that align with and further Connect 2050, Wisconsin's statewide long-range transportation plan.

## **PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

The Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) system provides bus service to the surrounding community and area, but not to the Town of Washburn. The nearest BART bus stop is located at the intersection of 5th Avenue West and Bayfield Street in the City of Washburn. All BART buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts and bike racks. The Blue Goose, a subsidiary of BART with financial support from the City of Washburn and Bayfield County Human Services, offers rides

to anyone needing transportation within the City of Washburn. The Blue Goose can be used to reach BART bus stops, stores, and other areas in the community.

Bay Mobility LLC (a private transportation service), BayCo Door2Door (part of BART), Ashland Aging and Disability, Veterans Affairs Services, and Bayfield County Human Services may offer limited transportation services to Town of Washburn residents and the surrounding area. BayCo Door2Door is a van service that offers public transportation from any private residence in Bayfield County to any other location in the county, or to the cities of Ashland and Hayward. The cost is distance-based.

## **RAILROAD**

There are no operating railroads (for freight, passenger, or commuter service) in the Town of Washburn, nor any plans to expand or provide railway service lines in the future. From a historical perspective, the railroad greatly influenced the growth and development of the City of Washburn and the surrounding communities, including the Town of Washburn. In the late 1800s through the early 1900s, the railroad was one of the primary means of transporting raw materials and manufactured goods to and from Washburn. However, by the mid-1900s, rail service to Washburn was no longer feasible due to the decline of the industries that used the railroad and the growth of the road system and trucking industry. The last operating railroad abandoned service to the City of Washburn in 1983.

## **AIRPORT**

Although the Town of Washburn does not have an airport, the Town and its residents have easy access to John F. Kennedy Memorial Airport in Ashland. The City of Ashland and Ashland County jointly operate the airport, but because it is important to the region, not just Ashland, Bayfield County helps fund its operations. It is a non-commercial airport with two paved runways. The primary runway is 5,200 feet long and 100 feet wide, while the secondary runway is 3,400 feet long and 75 feet wide. Both runways are adequate for twin-engine aircraft. The airport features a log cabin-style terminal building, 21 hangars, and a full-time airport manager.

## **SHIPPING AND HARBORS**

There are no shipping centers, harbors, or ports within the Town of Washburn because the Town does not extend eastward to Lake Superior. However, in the nearby City of Washburn, the harbor and shipping industries flourished from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. The City's port facilities included a coal dock, a merchandise dock, and a grain elevator dock, along with several sawmills. During this period, large quantities of lumber were harvested from the Town and nearby communities and shipped out through the ports of Washburn. The harbor also facilitated the shipment of locally cut brownstone and grains from the area and allowed for the drop-off of merchandise from the eastern states. By the early 1900s, however, much of the region's forests had been depleted, the demand for brownstone had diminished, and the grain elevators moved to Duluth, Minnesota. Consequently, harbor shipments declined dramatically. The merchandise dock and the grain elevator dock no longer exist, but the coal dock (also known as the commercial dock) still stands and is occasionally used to transport and store bulk materials, including aggregate.

## **TRAILS**

Trails can provide a sense of place and a source of community pride. When integrated with features such as historic sites, residential and commercial areas, and parks and lakes, they can enhance the overall character of a region. At this time, there are no plans to construct additional trails in the Town. However, as the Town continues to grow, its population ages yet remains

active, and to help attract younger residents, the Town could consider or plan for more trails to serve the needs of residents and attract more visitors to the area.

The Town of Washburn and the surrounding region are fortunate to have a number of recreational trails to accommodate a variety of users. The Town currently has approximately 50 miles of snowmobile trails, 20 miles of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) routes and trails, and 23 miles of horseback riding trails. Many of these trails are either specifically marked for these recreational activities or are allowed on certain Town and U.S. Forestry road systems. The logging roads on 2,300 acres of industrial forest land also are open to the public for hiking, but these are not maintained as hiking trails.

There are four marked trail systems running through the Town, including Valhalla Trail, Iron River Trail, Horseshoe Lake Saddle Trail, and Lenawee Trail. Some of these trails are clearly marked or indicated as ATV/UTV, snowmobile, or dual-purpose snowmobile and ATV/UTV trails or routes.

### **Valhalla Trail**

Valhalla Trail through the Town is identified as an ATV/UTV trail only. This trail eventually connects to the Mt. Valhalla Recreation Area, located north of the Town of Washburn and in the adjacent Town of Bayview. The trail runs north-south through the national forest, bisecting the central part of the Town, and ends near the vicinity of Long Lake. Valhalla Trail also provides several spur or cross-route trail connections to other trails. It is clearly marked and well-groomed for these activities.

### **Iron River Trail**

The Iron River Trail runs parallel to Valhalla Trail but continues both north and south of the Town's corporate boundaries. This major recreation trail extends from beyond the southern boundary of Bayfield County to the City of Bayfield. The trail is labeled on the Recreation Map as a dual-purpose snowmobile and ATV/UTV trail. It is also located near the Valhalla Recreation Area in the Town of Bayview. The trail is clearly marked and well-groomed for these activities.

### **Horseshoe Lake Trails & Recreation Area**

Horseshoe Lake Recreation Area and its trails are located in the far west-central section of the Town, within the Chequamegon National Forest. The area features 23.2 miles of horseback riding trails, consisting of three separate loops: the "A Loop" (9.25 miles), the "B Loop" (3.7 miles), and the "Outside Loop" (10.25 miles). The terrain is gently rolling with a sandy loam surface, ideal for horseback riding. The trails wind through towering pine and hardwood forests as well as open barrens. These trails are also open to hikers. The area includes a rustic 10-site campground with non-potable water and highlines at each campsite. Horseback riding is also allowed on all national forest roadways.

### **Lenawee Trail**

The Lenawee Trail connects to the Iron River Trail near the north-central portion of the Town. This trail heads in a northwesterly direction from Iron River into the Town of Bayview. It is also labeled on the Recreation Map as a dual-purpose snowmobile and ATV trail. The trail is clearly marked and well-groomed for these activities.

### **Long Lake Recreation Area**

A 2.3-mile loop trail wraps around 32-acre Long Lake in the National Forest and shares a short section with a motorized trail on the western end. Previously, this trail was a 1-mile loop with a

boardwalk over a portion of Long Lake, which may be reopened at some point. The trail is open to hiking and snowshoeing. There are also two picnic sites on Long Lake, a swimming beach on the eastern end, and a carry-in boat launch on the northwest side. Ice fishing is popular in the winter.

### **Surrounding Area Trails**

There are many trails in the surrounding area. Valhalla Recreation Area in the National Forest offers cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, a sledding hill, and a warming hut in the winter. In the summer, the trails are open to hiking and mountain biking. The Washburn School Forest and Environmental Education Center, located at the north end of 8th Avenue West in the City of Washburn, offers hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country ski trails. The Tri-County Corridor Trail is a multi-use trail that runs from the City of Superior to the City of Ashland. The trail is roughly 6 miles south of Washburn and can be accessed via existing snowmobile trails from the Town of Washburn and the Chequamegon National Forest trails.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes**

Bicycling is also popular in the Town of Washburn and the surrounding area (Figure 5-1). The 2020 Wisconsin State Bicycle Map designated a bicycle route through the Town on County Highway C as a "Best Condition" bike route. Approximately 26 miles of paved roads intersect throughout the Town, providing suitable surfaces for cyclists. The other roadways are primarily narrow, unimproved (graveled) surfaces. The varying grades limit sight distances for both bicyclists and vehicle drivers. The lack of posted speed limits and limited shoulders make some of these local roadways treacherous for cycling and less desirable as bicycle routes. The Superior Vistas Bike Tour is an annual event that starts at Thompson's West End Park in the City of Washburn, travels through the surrounding region, and returns to Washburn. All other trails open to bicycles are predominantly unimproved and would require more rugged bikes, such as typical mountain bikes.

The Town of Washburn has limited pedestrian walkways or features. Pedestrians primarily use the roadways or shoulders of these road systems. Most rural communities, including the Town, do not have sidewalks or crosswalks typically found in urbanized areas. Pedestrian traffic is generally limited, with most walking done to visit other residences, for exercise, or for leisure. The distance from employment, commercial, educational, and other services typically found in urbanized areas (i.e., the City of Washburn and the City of Ashland) makes the concept of "walking to work" or to other destinations difficult, if not impossible. The projected increase and aging of the Town's population may lead to further reliance on personal vehicles unless the Town and surrounding communities collaborate on more effective alternatives to reduce this reliance and explore other economical and environmentally friendly transportation options.

# "Out & Back" & "Loop" Bicycling Road Routes

This bicycle map is designed to assist bicyclists in identifying enjoyable bicycling routes in Ashland & Bayfield Counties. These bicycle routes are intended for use by adult bicyclists who have had driver's training, and possess the skills and knowledge to handle shared bicycle/motor vehicle situations. Keep in mind that roadway conditions may vary considerably by the day of the week, time of day, weather conditions and construction. All bicyclists are encouraged to select routes with riding conditions that match their own skill level and preparation.

The user of this map bears full responsibility for his or her safety. Bicyclists should exercise good judgement and obey traffic laws on all roadways, regardless of the bicycle routes on this map. The state, Ashland and Bayfield Counties, cities, villages and towns, and the agencies who have contributed to the development of this bicycle map are not responsible for the personal safety of bicyclists who use this map, and do not warrant the safety of the roads on this map for use by bicyclists.



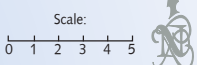
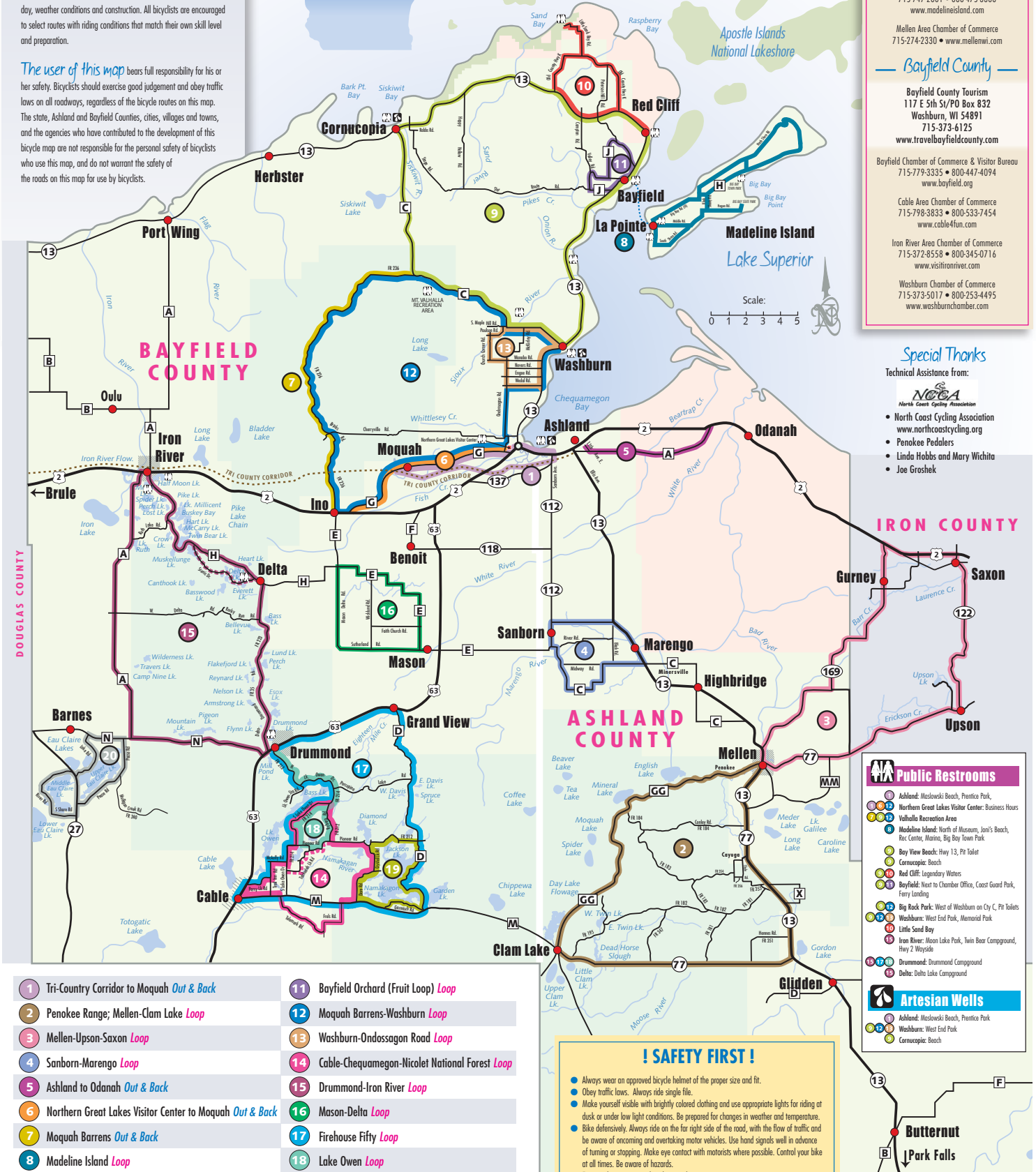
## APOSTLE ISLANDS AREA

# Bicycle Map

## FOR Ashland & Bayfield Counties

WISCONSIN

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore



**Ashland County**

Ashland County Tourism  
Ashland Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Bureau  
1716 Lake Shore Dr W • Ashland, WI 54806  
715-682-2500 • 800-284-9484  
www.travelashlandcounty.com  
www.visitashland.com

Madeline Island Chamber of Commerce  
715-747-2801 • 888-475-3386  
www.madelineisland.com

Mellen Area Chamber of Commerce  
715-274-2330 • www.mellenwi.com

**Bayfield County**

Bayfield County Tourism  
117 E 5th St/PO Box 832  
Washburn, WI 54891  
715-373-6125  
www.travelbayfieldcounty.com

Bayfield Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Bureau  
715-779-3335 • 800-447-4094  
www.bayfield.org

Cable Area Chamber of Commerce  
715-798-3833 • 800-533-7454  
www.cable4fun.com

Iron River Area Chamber of Commerce  
715-372-8558 • 800-345-0716  
www.visitironriver.com

Washburn Chamber of Commerce  
715-373-5017 • 800-253-4495  
www.washburnchamber.com

### Special Thanks

- Technical Assistance from:
- NCA North Coast Cycling Association
  - North Coast Cycling Association www.northcoastcycling.org
  - Penokee Pedalers
  - Linda Hobbs and Mary Wichita
  - Joe Groshek

### Public Restrooms

- Ashland: Maslowski Beach, Prentice Park
- North Coast Lakes Visitor Center: Business Hours
- Vallhalla Recreation Area
- Madeline Island: North of Museum, Jon's Beach, Rac Center, Marino, Big Bay Town Park
- Bay View Beach: Hwy 13, Pit Toilet
- Cornucopia: Beach
- Red Cliff: Legendary Waters
- Bayfield: Next to Chamber Office, Coast Guard Park, Ferry Landing
- Big Rock Park: West of Washburn on Cty C, Pit Toilets
- Washburn: West End Park, Memorial Park
- Little Sand Bay
- Iron River: Moon Lake Park, Twin Bear Campground, Hwy 2 Wayside
- Drummond: Drummond Campground
- Delta: Delta Lake Campground

### Artesian Wells

- Ashland: Maslowski Beach, Prentice Park
- Washburn: West End Park
- Cornucopia: Beach

- |                                                                       |                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Tri-Country Corridor to Moquah <i>Out &amp; Back</i>                | 11 Bayfield Orchard (Fruit Loop) <i>Loop</i>             |
| 2 Penokee Range; Mellen-Clam Lake <i>Loop</i>                         | 12 Moquah Barrens-Washburn <i>Loop</i>                   |
| 3 Mellen-Upson-Saxon <i>Loop</i>                                      | 13 Washburn-Ondessagon Road <i>Loop</i>                  |
| 4 Sanborn-Marengo <i>Loop</i>                                         | 14 Cable-Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest <i>Loop</i> |
| 5 Ashland to Odanah <i>Out &amp; Back</i>                             | 15 Drummond-Iron River <i>Loop</i>                       |
| 6 Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center to Moquah <i>Out &amp; Back</i> | 16 Mason-Delta <i>Loop</i>                               |
| 7 Moquah Barrens <i>Out &amp; Back</i>                                | 17 Firehouse Fifty <i>Loop</i>                           |
| 8 Madeline Island <i>Loop</i>                                         | 18 Lake Owen <i>Loop</i>                                 |
| 9 "Around the Horn" <i>Loop</i>                                       | 19 Lake Namakagon <i>Loop</i>                            |
| 10 Red Cliff-Little Sand Bay <i>Loop</i>                              | 20 Barnes; Upper & Middle Eau Claire Lakes <i>Loops</i>  |

### ! SAFETY FIRST !

- Always wear an approved bicycle helmet of the proper size and fit.
- Obey traffic laws. Always ride single file.
- Make yourself visible with brightly colored clothing and use appropriate lights for riding at dusk or under low light conditions. Be prepared for changes in weather and temperature.
- Bike defensively. Always ride on the far right side of the road, with the flow of traffic and be aware of oncoming and overtaking motor vehicles. Use hand signals well in advance of turning or stopping. Make eye contact with motorists where possible. Control your bike at all times. Be aware of hazards.
- Equip and maintain your bicycle properly.
- For off-road biking, leave no trace and practice low-impact cycling.
- Equip yourself with a map, compass and tools for a self-supported ride.
- Plan ahead. Know your ability, equipment and carry all necessary supplies to make your ride a safe, comfortable experience.

This map not to be used for navigation.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Ch. 5 – Goal 1: Provide a functional, safe, accessible, and economical transportation system that meets the needs of the Town’s residents and visitors.**

**Objective 5.1:** Pursue road improvements and maintenance activities that are economical, functional, and provide safe transportation options.

**Ch. 5 – Goal 2: Provide an attractive transportation system that offers recreation and economic benefits that complement the rural characteristics of the Town.**

**Objective 5.2:** Plan and implement roadway control options that support recreational activities as well as vehicle transit.

**Objective 5.3:** Pursue roadway improvement funding that supports multi-modal uses.

**Objective 5.4:** Support options in future development for recreational opportunities.

**Ch. 5 – Goal 3: Promote sustainable and healthy modes of transportation through resilient designs that allow for multiple uses of the roadway and incorporate emerging sustainable technologies into the Town’s road maintenance work to reduce environmental degradation.**

**Objective 5.5:** Incorporate resiliency in future projects to mitigate impacts from changing weather conditions.

**Objective 5.6:** Invest in electric, compressed natural gas, or other alternative fuel type vehicles as technology becomes available.








**Objective 5.7:** Promote alternative transportation opportunities for residents.



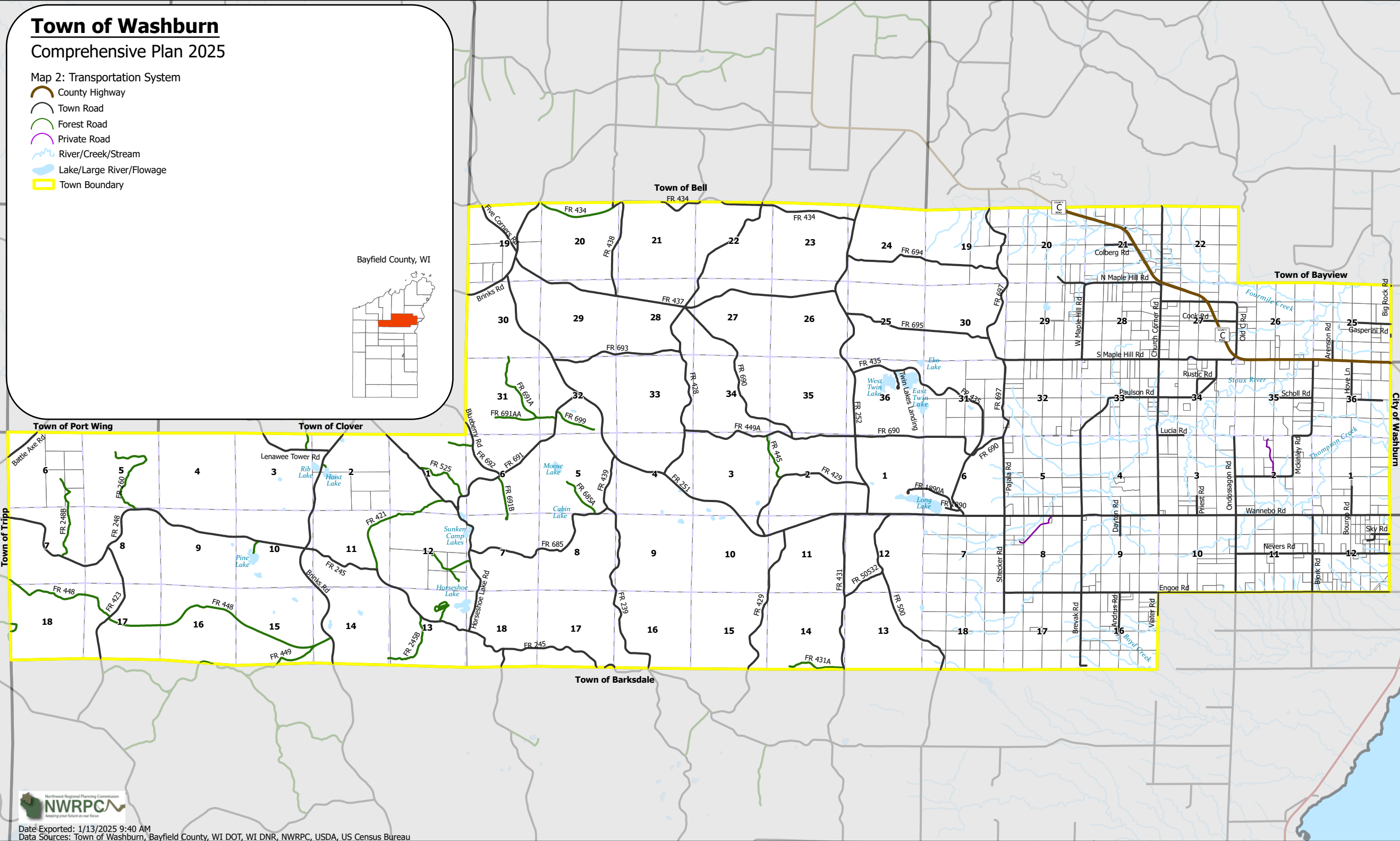
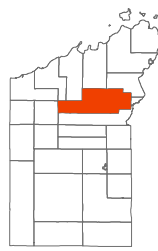
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 2: Transportation System

-  County Highway
-  Town Road
-  Forest Road
-  Private Road
-  River/Creek/Stream
-  Lake/Large River/Flowage
-  Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI





## **6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The first European visitors to the area that now includes the Town of Washburn encountered the Ojibwe people, who had an economy primarily based on hunting and gathering. These early explorers, who did not settle in the region, lived lifestyles like those of the Ojibwe. However, they were also part of an extensive fur trading network, exchanging goods with the Ojibwe for furs that were highly sought after in Europe.

The next wave of economic activity centered around the extraction of timber, which fueled the growth of cities like Chicago after the Civil War. As more settlers arrived, subsistence farming became common when they were not working in the timber industry. By the late 1800s, the area had developed into a thriving community. Additional economic activities included milling, sandstone quarrying, and shipping, with the port at what is now the City of Washburn becoming one of the busiest on the Great Lakes. During this period, the waterfront was lined with large sawmills and lumber yards.

By the early 20th century, the region's timber resources were mostly depleted, bringing an end to the great "cutover". At the same time, the demand for sandstone and brownstone declined with the introduction of concrete, prompting a shift toward agriculture. The State, along with companies that owned much of the now-deforested land, sought to promote agricultural development. Some of those farms were located in areas with soils not well-suited for farming, and many were later abandoned.

The economic development section provides an overview of the community's economic health, addressing factors such as the workforce, economic base, and opportunities. In smaller towns like Washburn, many economic forces are shaped by external factors. Since data at the town level may not always be available, this section will also include information on Bayfield County and the State of Wisconsin. The chapter will explore how the Town of Washburn's economy can evolve in alignment with the community's long-term goals. A summary of the Town's economic strengths and weaknesses will also be provided. This chapter offers an analysis of the current economy and outlines goals, objectives, policies, and programs—including state, county, and regional initiatives—that will help the Town move towards a future envisioned by its residents.

### **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

#### **LABOR FORCE**

##### **General Characteristics**

The labor force is defined as individuals aged 16 and older who are employed, unemployed but able to work, or actively seeking employment. As shown in Table 6-1, the labor force in the Town of Washburn compares favorably to that of the surrounding area and the State in several key measures. Notably, the Town has the highest median household income at \$81,000, surpassing the State of Wisconsin (\$72,458), Bayfield County (\$67,266), and the City of Washburn (\$56,080). The Town also stands out in terms of educational attainment, with 99.4% of residents having earned a high school diploma or higher, and 57.4% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. However, it is important to note that the Town's unemployment rate (3.9%) is slightly higher than that of the City of Washburn (1.2%), Bayfield County (2.0%), and the State of Wisconsin (2.2%).

**Table 6-1: Labor Force Characteristics**

	Town of Washburn	City of Washburn	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Population	602	1,975	16,214	5,882,128
In Labor Force	53.7%	66.4%	55.8%	65.7%
Civilian Labor Force Employed	49.8%	59.2%	53.7%	65.6%
Civilian Labor Force Unemployed	3.9%	1.2%	2.0%	2.2%
Not in Labor Force	46.3%	39.6%	44.2%	34.3%
Median Household Income	\$81,000	\$56,080	\$67,266	\$72,458
Per Capita Income	\$35,849	\$34,893	\$39,449	\$40,130
Median Earnings for Male, Full-Time, Year-Round	\$57,143	\$55,993	\$51,573	\$61,140
Median Earnings for Female, Full-Time, Year-Round	\$57,500	\$47,908	\$48,246	\$49,248
Below Poverty Level	10.3%	15.8%	10.4%	10.7%
High School Education or Higher (25 or Older)	99.4%	95.1%	95.8%	93.1%
Bachelor's Degree of Higher (25 or Older)	57.4%	33.2%	33.6%	32.0%
Walked to Work	1.7%	5.2%	3.2%	2.8%
Worked from Home	22.4%	12.1%	11.8%	10.1%
Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)	20.8	14.1	21.6	22.2

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

### Commute to Work

The average commute time for workers in the Town of Washburn is 20.8 minutes, slightly lower than the state average of 22.2 minutes, indicating that many workers commute to Ashland and beyond. About 66.4% of workers commute alone, which is below the state average of 78.5%. Only 1.7% walk to work, while 22.4% work from home. Increasing mass transit options, pedestrian walkways, and bicycle facilities could reduce solo commutes and encourage more walking and bicycling.

Table 6-2 shows that most Washburn residents work within Bayfield County or Wisconsin. Specifically, 98.3% were employed in Wisconsin, with 61.4% working in the County. Of those, 32.4% work in Washburn itself, while 67.6% commute to jobs elsewhere in the County.

**Table 6-2: Place of Work**

Industry	% of Population
Worked in State of Wisconsin	98.3%
Worked in Bayfield County	61.4%
Worked in Town of Washburn	32.4%
Worked outside Town of Washburn	67.6%
Worked outside Bayfield County	36.9%
Worked outside State of Wisconsin	1.7%

### Impending Decline of the Labor Force

Like much of the country, the Town of Washburn faces a growing population of aging residents who are at or nearing retirement, while birth rates and family sizes continue to decline. Additionally, many young people are leaving the area in search of employment opportunities elsewhere. Unless the Town can develop strategies to retain its youth and attract new residents

to the workforce, it may face a future labor shortage, which could negatively impact the local economy and the surrounding area.

## ECONOMIC BASE AND EMPLOYERS

The Town of Washburn is located immediately west of the City of Washburn, covering the north-central and northeastern areas of Bayfield County. State Highway 13 runs along the southeastern corner of the Town, while Bayfield County Highway C cuts diagonally through the eastern quarter of the community. Both roads provide excellent access to major employment centers in the cities of Washburn and Ashland, as well as other Bayfield County communities. The Town does not host any large employers or significant commercial or service industries. Most residents commute to work outside the Town, with local employment primarily focused on agriculture, forestry, and small home-based businesses or offices.

### Employment by Industry

Table 6-3 presents the percentage of employed residents in the Town by industry sector, based on data from the American Community Survey, along with median earnings for each sector (where available). Meanwhile, Table 6-4 provides a comparative analysis of industry sector percentages across the Town, City of Washburn, Bayfield County, and the State of Wisconsin.

**Table 6-3: Employment by Industry and Median Earnings**

Industry	Town of Washburn	Median Earnings
Agriculture, forestry, fishing hunting, mining	11.1%	\$14,485
Construction	5.3%	\$56,563
Manufacturing	17.6%	\$24,226
Wholesale trade	0.8%	-
Retail trade	9.0%	\$23,750
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	7.0%	\$20,625
Information	0.0%	-
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	2.5%	\$58,750
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management	0.4%	-
Educational services, health care, social assistance	23.0%	\$61,250
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food	8.6%	\$28,125
Other services, except public administration	0.8%	-
Public administration	13.9%	\$59,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$40,500</b>

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

**Table 6-4: Comparison of Employment by Industry**

Industry	Town of Washburn	City of Washburn	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Agriculture, forestry, fishing hunting, mining	11.1%	2.2%	3.7%	2.1%
Construction	5.3%	6.8%	9.3%	6.1%
Manufacturing	17.6%	13.9%	10.2%	18.1%
Wholesale trade	0.8%	2.7%	1.6%	2.6%
Retail trade	9.0%	11.2%	8.3%	11.0%
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	7.0%	4.0%	6.2%	4.9%
Information	0.0%	3.4%	1.4%	1.5%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	2.5%	1.8%	4.2%	6.1%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management	0.4%	6.6%	6.4%	8.9%
Educational services, health care, social assistance	23.0%	22.1%	22.6%	23.2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food	8.6%	9.7%	14.9%	7.8%
Other services, except public administration	0.8%	8.3%	4.8%	4.2%
Public administration	13.9%	7.4%	6.4%	3.5%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

Table 6-5 provides a comparative analysis of occupation percentages across the Town, City of Washburn, Bayfield County, and the State of Wisconsin.

**Table 6-5: Comparison of Employment by Occupations**

Occupation	Town of Washburn	City of Washburn	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Management, business, science, arts	41.4%	32.2%	35.6%	38.4%
Service	13.5%	21.2%	21.1%	15.6%
Sales and office	13.5%	21.6%	17.4%	19.3%
Natural resources, construction, maintenance	8.2%	6.7%	12.1%	8.7%
Production, transportation, material moving	23.4%	18.4%	13.8%	17.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022

Industries that form a community's economic base can be broadly categorized as basic or non-basic. Basic industries, such as manufacturers that export products, bring dollars into the community. Due to its rural character, the Town lacks major manufacturers or industrial bases, with the nearest manufacturers located in the nearby cities of Washburn and Ashland. Non-basic industries provide services to both basic industries and residents, circulating dollars within the community. Examples of non-basic industries include education, healthcare, social services, as well as retail and entertainment businesses.

The tables above and on the previous page illustrate that most of the Town of Washburn's economy is service based. The largest sector is educational services, healthcare, and social assistance, which employs 23.0% of residents and has a median income of \$61,250.

Most communities aim for a diverse economic base with a balance of basic and non-basic industries. This indicates that the Town of Washburn may want to explore opportunities to attract new dollars into the community.

### **Home-Based Businesses**

Given the rural nature of the Town and a growing desire among some residents to reduce reliance on personal automobiles, coupled with the advent of wireless/satellite telecommunications and high-speed internet access, there may be opportunities to expand home-based businesses in Washburn. These businesses, often focused on arts and crafts, as well as home offices for sales and other types of work, typically generate low traffic volumes, do not require municipal water or sewer services, and do not need off-street parking facilities.

### **Agriculture-Based Businesses and Enterprises**

There are a few rural farmsteads and residences that provide limited agriculture-based or small, entrepreneurial business in the Town. These include Tetzner's Farm, located off Nevers Road, which operates a large dairy farm producing milk, cheese, and ice cream products for public sale. Tetzner's also maintains small greenhouses on a separate parcel for the sale of vegetable seedlings, annuals, and perennial plants. Maple Hill Farms provides woolens, honey, natural soaps, and eggs to the public. Cook's Tractor Place, located at 28800 Cook Road, specializes in tractor parts and sales, employing approximately two people.

These farm-based and home-based businesses reflect the preferences of Town residents, who value such enterprises over large-scale factories or industrial centers typically found in urbanized areas. All home-based businesses are required to obtain a special use permit, which must be approved by both the Town Board and Bayfield County. This regulation ensures that these businesses can be effectively managed and controlled in a way that aligns with the needs and desires of the community.

### **Forestry-Based Enterprises or Businesses**

Forestry-based businesses in the Town include a variety of small-scale operations run by local property owners. The Town has significant areas designated for private forestry, as shown on the local land use maps. While not all properties are used for large-scale forestry, many provide a secondary or alternative income for those owning small tracts of woodland. These businesses often involve various stages of tree processing, from planting to supplying raw materials for the region's pulp and paper mills.

Timber harvesting is the most common forestry-related business in Bayfield County. This process involves converting standing trees into logs or pulpwood, which are then delivered to processing facilities. The market for these products varies, with some being sold to local buyers and others shipped to distant customers. Due to Wisconsin's large papermaking industry, much of the wood from the Town is transported to mills outside the county. Since pulp and paper mills are capital-intensive and typically large-scale operations, none are located within Bayfield County, meaning most of the Town's wood products are shipped elsewhere. In addition to timber harvesting, other local businesses include small-scale sawmills that provide raw materials for residents, such as firewood or woodworking supplies. Some individuals also collect and process balsam boughs and sheet moss for decorative purposes. Additionally, businesses offering outfitting and guiding services cater to those looking to explore or hunt in the Chequamegon National Forest.

### **Tourist Impacts on the Town**

Tourism data at the town level is unavailable, so Bayfield County data from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism is used as a proxy for the Town of Washburn. In 2023, tourism generated a total economic impact of \$25 billion in Wisconsin, with Bayfield County contributing \$93 million to this total. While much of this spending is likely concentrated around the Lake Superior and Apostle Islands regions, known for their restaurants, lodges, hotels, campgrounds,

golf courses, and other recreational facilities, some of this \$93 million can likely be attributed to the Town of Washburn's own recreational offerings.

The Town's seasonal residents, combined with its ATV/UTV and snowmobile trails, campgrounds, and fishing and hunting sites, offer ample opportunities for tourists. These recreational and natural resources significantly contribute to the Town's appeal. The tourism industry's impact reaches beyond the county, with the revenues it generates supporting local schools and governments. To capitalize on this, the Town should continue to promote its trails and recreational areas, which attract a substantial number of visitors. Town leaders should prioritize the maintenance and enhancement of these facilities to ensure they remain enjoyable for both tourists and residents.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS**

Many local, regional, and state organizations support economic development and offer assistance to businesses in the Town of Washburn. Below is an overview of key organizations that provide valuable resources for economic growth:

### **Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation**

The Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC) provides incentives and support for qualifying new business ventures and existing businesses. A key example of BCEDC leveraging Bayfield County's broadband expansion is the BCEDC initiating and partnering with the Wisconsin State Broadband Office, and the Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association, drafting legislation to create Telecommuter Forward!, a statewide program to certify communities with broadband infrastructure in place to offer support for this activity. Marketing of telecommuting opportunities by BCEDC since 2018 has reaped benefits of new residents moving into the county because of the ability to telecommute to their place of work, or to develop businesses in the county, utilizing the availability of high-speed broadband (see pp.27-31, Wisconsin Program Evaluation and Evolution): <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2020/02/how-states-are-expanding-broadband-access>)

Also, BCEDC participates with five other Northwest Wisconsin counties in the Superior Life Technology Zone making funds available as tax credits for businesses that use new technology to expand jobs.

### **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation**

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is a public-private agency that administers programs to support business development and innovation, including tax credits, grants, loans, and technical assistance. It is the primary state entity responsible for economic development in Wisconsin.

### **University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Office - Bayfield County**

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Office brings educational resources to people and businesses across the state. Its Community Development Program offers seminars, expert advice, and assistance with land use and natural resource planning, supporting economic development.

### **Northwest Regional Planning Commission**

Founded in 1959, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC) provides community and regional services in Northwest Wisconsin, focusing on economic and business

development. Recognized by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, NWRPC maintains a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to guide regional growth. NWRPC also oversees three affiliated organizations: the Northwest Wisconsin Business Development Corporation (managing revolving loan funds), Northwest Affordable Housing Inc. (offering housing rehab and down payment assistance), and the Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation (supporting tech startups and business expansion).

### Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program

The Northwest Concentrated Employment Program (NWCEP) is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to meeting the workforce development needs of businesses, job seekers, incumbent workers, and students. The NWCEP has been in existence since 1968. It administers programs that help Northwest Wisconsin youth and adults gain marketable skills and obtain better jobs. It also provides a variety of services for businesses and business development. NWCEP covers a ten-county region in northwest Wisconsin.

### Northwood Technical College

Northwood Technical College (NTC) has four campuses in northern Wisconsin, including one in Ashland. NTC provides a wide variety of classes and training as well as associate and technical degree programs. NTC works with area employers providing customized training consisting of specific courses that are developed and taught by NTC instructors at an employer's worksite. NTC provides instruction for apprentices in cooperation with employees, employers, and the State of Wisconsin.

### Financing Opportunities

Several local, state, and federal programs exist that can help attract new investments, retain existing businesses, and enhance the opportunities of business expansion in Washburn. Table 6-6 below provides a partial list of financing and technical assistance programs available to area businesses and investors.

**Table 6-6: Partial List of Washburn Area Financing Opportunities**

Entity	Program Name	Finance Type
Northwest Wisconsin Business Development Corporation (NWWBDC)	Northwest Wisconsin Business Development Fund Intermediary Relending Program and Northwest Wisconsin Regional Economic Development Fund	Loan Program
Xcel Energy – Wisconsin	Economic Development Loan Program	Loan Program
Wisconsin Department of Administration	CDBG Program, CDBG-ED Program	Loan Programs
Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)	Small Business Guarantee; Linked Deposit Loan Subsidy	Loan Guarantee Program; Loan subsidy at reduced interest rate
Small Business Administration (SBA)	Business Loan Program – 7(A) Loan Guarantee Program, Certified Develop. Co (504)	Loan Guarantee
Impact Seven	Micro-Loan Program Intermediary Relending Program	Amortizing loans (monthly payment of principal, interest)
USDA Rural Development	Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program	Maximum size: Loan \$450,000 Minimum size: Loan \$10,000
City of Washburn	Revolving Loan Fund Program	Loan Program

## BROWNFIELDS AND CONTAMINATED SITES

Brownfields are abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial properties where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination, limiting the potential for development, redevelopment, or expansion of otherwise viable businesses on the site. Brownfields can limit economic activity, affect the viability of surrounding sites or businesses, and may pose a threat to human health or natural resources. Brownfields include sites with known contamination, but also include old gas stations, dumps, industrial facilities, and other potentially contaminated sites, which may or may not have documented contamination. The only site in the Town that may be considered a brownfield is the old landfill on South Maple Hill Road. However, this site currently undergoes constant monitoring, and so far, all testing and monitoring indicates this site to be contained and not creating any negative impact upon the community.

There are many local, state, and federal technical and financial resources available for brownfield cleanup and redevelopment, including the following programs.

1. **Wisconsin Assessment Monies.** This WDNR program provides funding to address specific brownfield sites where potential or known contamination is acting as an impediment to economic development.
2. **Ready for Reuse Loan and Grant Program.** This WDNR program provides loans and grants for environmental cleanup of hazardous substances or petroleum at brownfields.
3. **Brownfields Grant Program.** This Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) program provides grants to assist with the assessment and remediation of environmental contamination of abandoned, idle, or underused industrial or commercial facilities or sites. This program helps convert contaminated sites into productive properties that are attractive and ready for redevelopment.
4. **Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.** This WDNR program provides grants for recreational development and conservation land purchase. The program may be used at brownfields, but not those that have been condemned.
5. **Environmental Remediation Tax Incremental Financing (ER TIF) & Tax Incremental Financing (TIF).** These Department of Revenue financing tools are available to local governments to reimburse eligible environmental remediation expenses.

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as the Superfund Law, is a national program enacted by Congress in 1980. Superfund was created to help clean up the country's worst waste disposal and hazardous substances spill sites that endanger human health and/or the environment. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources compiles a list of Wisconsin Superfund sites based on the federal National Priority List. There are no Superfund sites in the Town of Washburn.



## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Ch. 6 – Goal 1: The Town of Washburn will help foster and provide a healthy environment in the creation of well-paid and full-time employment opportunities for its residents, and will assist in the retention, expansion, and recruitment opportunities for the local area employment providers.**

**Objective 6.1:** Retain and support the expansion of local business and industry.

**Objective 6.2:** Recruit new working residents in cooperation with local businesses and employers and those that help diversify the Town of Washburn's economic base.

**Objective 6.3:** Encourage the formation of new businesses that will be conducive to the existing rural environment, and businesses that will not cause any disturbances, noise, pollution, increased traffic, or harm to the natural environment.

## **7. AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Washburn's past, present, and future are strongly tied to its agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. This chapter provides an inventory and analysis of these resources, and it describes goals, objectives, policies, maps, and programs that will help conserve and effectively manage these resources.

### **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

#### **AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

Agricultural activities are deeply valued in the Town of Washburn, and many residents are keen on preserving this aspect of the community's character. However, there is also a recognition of the need for growth and development, particularly the introduction of more single-family homes and other compatible land uses. The goal is to strike a balance that allows for agricultural preservation while also supporting the Town's continued growth, enhancing the quality of life for all residents. This balanced approach can help sustain both the rural charm of the area and the evolving needs of the community.

Historically, the Washburn area was densely covered by old-growth pine and hardwood forests, which were harvested and shipped primarily to the eastern United States during the lumber boom of the 19th and early 20th centuries. After the land was cleared, settlers and immigrants moved in and began farming the "cutover" lands. These farms were generally family-run, with livestock such as cows, chickens, and hogs, along with large vegetable gardens. However, most of these farms did not grow into larger commercial operations due to the proximity of well-paying jobs at the DuPont Plant in the nearby Town of Barksdale and to a lesser degree in the City of Washburn. Dairy farming has become a significant part of the local economy. Some of the largest dairy farms in the Town during this time included the Anders Hokanson and Philip Sorenson farms along the Sioux River near Church Corner Road Bridge. Harold Peterson also ran a dairy farm on County Highway C, where the soccer fields are located today.

Tetzner Dairy remains the largest and only operational dairy farm in the Town today. The farm continues to thrive, supporting three families through retail and wholesale sales of their products, including bagged milk. Tetzner Dairy is an important part of the agricultural landscape of Washburn and is a key example of a successful multi-generational farm in the region.

The Town of Washburn has experienced a decline in agricultural operations since the early 1980s, though there has been a modest increase in the number of farms in recent years. The types of farms have diversified, with beef production now being the dominant agricultural activity. In addition to cattle, several small farms in the Town produce a variety of goods, including horses, hogs, sheep, eggs, hay, vegetables, flowers, native plants, mushrooms, CBD products, and honey. By 2024, approximately 15 farms were operational in the Town, with many residents also keeping horses for recreational purposes. Much of the agricultural land in the Town of Washburn is used for pasture and hay production, with corn and small grains also being grown. As time has passed, some areas once used for farming or personal acreage have started to revert to a more natural or managed forested condition. This shift represents the

changing landscape of the region, with a blend of agricultural use and natural reclamation as the area evolves.

Agricultural production faces challenges such as the fragmentation of farmland. As properties are subdivided or developed for housing, it becomes more difficult for farmers to use larger equipment to harvest smaller, divided fields. Additionally, the remaining hay fields are increasingly used to meet the forage needs of the current livestock population, and some small hay fields are no longer being utilized. Maple Hill, a notable area in the Town, has soils and topographical features well-suited for high-value specialty crops such as blueberries and raspberries. This area is second only to the Bayfield fruit production region in its potential for growing these crops. However, no commercial specialty crops are currently being produced there. Most of Maple Hill is wooded, and it is increasingly being developed for residential housing, further limiting the potential for agricultural activities in the area.

Farmland classification by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is based on the quality of the land and its suitability for agricultural production. The categories include (Map 3: Prime Farmland):

**Prime Farmland:** Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. It may include land currently used to produce livestock and/or timber.

**Unique Farmland:** Land other than prime farmland that is used for production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, as determined by the Secretary. Examples of such crops include citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, fruits, and vegetables. Within the Town of Washburn, unique farmland is suited for the production of small fruit and vegetable crops. A combination of soil characteristics and microclimate (elevation and proximity to Lake Superior) make the land well-suited for specialty crop production with the use of appropriate management practices.

**Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance:** Farmland that is of statewide or local importance other than prime or unique farmland is used to produce food, feed, fiber, forage, or oilseed crops, as determined by the appropriate State or unit of local government agency or agencies, with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture. Within the Town of Washburn, farmland of local importance is well-suited for the production of grain and hay crops. Appropriate soil and water conservation practices are necessary to protect against excessive sheet and rill erosion.

A significant amount of existing agricultural land, located in these farmland classifications and soil areas, needs to be preserved to ensure the existence of viable farms in the Town (Map 3). This map provides a resource for encouraging, preserving, and protecting certain areas of the Town for existing and future agricultural uses. All these land uses continue to be an important element and activity for the Town and the surrounding communities. While this Plan does not dictate or require the continued agricultural use of the land, it suggests that these lands provide an opportunity to maintain rural farming and agricultural activities and offer personal or employment opportunities for the residents.

Residents identified preserving the visual character of the Town as a major objective. The mix of agricultural fields and wooded areas defines the landscape that should be preserved. Much of the available agricultural land is being utilized to support livestock in the Town. However, in recent years, an increasing amount of hay produced in the Town is being sold and shipped out

of the area. Numerous studies show that agricultural lands have a more favorable impact on a town's budget than housing development and its attendant infrastructure requirements.

Altering farm fields to residential uses will jeopardize the remaining agricultural activity in the Town. Volatile fuel prices could potentially make imported food increasingly expensive for residents. In addition, climate change will have increasingly negative impacts on food production across the country. Small farmers in the Town and the Chequamegon Bay area have demonstrated the ability to grow an abundance of food throughout the year. Therefore, it is essential to preserve agricultural areas in the Town for local food production. This principle is one of the most significant actions a municipality can take to work towards a more sustainable community. Supporting local farms will also have a positive economic impact by circulating money locally, rather than exporting wealth. Financially supporting local farms will help ensure agricultural land remains available for farming, thereby maintaining the desired visual character of the Town.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Throughout its history, the natural resources in and around the Town of Washburn have drawn people seeking a quieter, rural lifestyle often absent in urbanized areas. The nearby Chequamegon Bay, along with the area's forests, iron ore, and brownstone, played a significant role in shaping both the economy and physical development of the Town and its neighboring communities. Today, natural resources cannot be viewed simply as a commodity. While some resources no longer hold the economic importance they once did, they continue to offer immense value to the community. They enhance the Town's quality of life by supporting recreation and tourism opportunities, strengthening the local economy and making the area appealing to new residents. Natural resources are a key factor in creating a healthy, vibrant, and desirable community. For these reasons, the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources are essential to Washburn's future. This section provides an overview of the key natural resources that contribute to the Town's character and well-being.

### Geographical Province and Topography

The Town of Washburn spans nearly 54,400 acres, or 85 square miles. Almost 37,000 acres (68%) are within the boundaries of the Chequamegon National Forest to the west, while about 17,400 acres (32%) lie outside of the forested area to the east. The land generally slopes from the highest terrain in the west toward the lower elevations in the east. The highest point in the Town is approximately 1,470 feet above sea level, located about 2 miles west of Rib Lake. The lowest point is about 620 feet above sea level, where Thompson Creek flows out of the Town into the City of Washburn and eventually down to Lake Superior, which has a mean lake elevation of approximately 602 feet above sea level (Map 4: Topography & Slope). This change in elevation allows for wonderful views of Lake Superior/Chequamegon Bay from various vantage points throughout the Town.



The character of the land differs markedly between the eastern and western sections of the Town, shaped largely by the region's geological history, particularly over the last 10,000 years. As the last of the Pleistocene glaciers receded northeast, they left behind thick deposits of

sediment over the ancient sandstone bedrock. The highlands in the western part of the Town, situated between two glacial lobes, received vast amounts of meltwater and sediment as the glaciers melted. These glacial outwash deposits, primarily composed of sand and gravel, can reach several hundred feet thick in the western Town. Once the ice margin retreated far to the northeast, the western Lake Superior Basin was filled by a large glacial lake. Although the lake level fluctuated due to the instability of the ice margin to the north, it stabilized at about 1,100 feet, long enough to form a distinct bench in the landscape. Today, this old shoreline is still visible as a flat step at 1,100 feet, encircling the hills above that elevation. The shoreline is marked by well-sorted sand deposits with little gravel or clay, and it also serves as a boundary: to the east, the land is underlain by silt and clay deposited by the glacial lake, while to the west, the land is primarily composed of outwash sand and gravel above the old lake level.

The glacial-age sediments play a significant role in controlling both surface water and groundwater flow in the Town. In the western section, where the land is composed of sand and gravel, these highly permeable sediments allow precipitation to easily infiltrate and drain primarily through groundwater. In some areas, the permeability is so high that groundwater flows relatively quickly, and the water table lies at considerable depths, often tens of feet below the surface. In contrast, the eastern section, underlain by finer silt- and clay-rich sediments, has much lower permeability, preventing water from infiltrating as easily. Instead, precipitation runs off as streams. In many areas, the fine sediments form a low-permeability layer that confines an artesian aquifer beneath the sand and gravel. Where this confining layer is absent or disrupted, groundwater may flow to the surface, emerging as springs or flowing artesian wells.

Since the end of glaciation and the establishment of the shoreline of Lake Superior at or near its current level, the landscape has continued to evolve through erosion and deposition by modern streams. The relatively soft sediments, especially the finer-grained silt and clay, have been eroded by major rivers like the Sioux River and Thompson Creek, resulting in deep ravines. Overall, the topography of the Town of Washburn is considered an amenity. However, there are areas where the existing landscape could pose challenges for development, particularly steep slopes near the lake and along creeks and ravines.

### **Soils in the Town of Washburn**

The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service conducted a soil survey for Bayfield County, offering valuable insights into potential development constraints, vegetation suitability, and more (Map 5: Generalized Soils). However, this soil data is somewhat generalized and may not always accurately reflect the specific conditions at a given site. For a more precise understanding of the soils, detailed soil borings can be conducted on individual sites, if necessary.

**Till Soils Within Sandy Areas:** Found in the higher elevations of the Town of Washburn within the Bayfield sandplain, these soils are slightly loamier, improving their nutrient and water-holding capacities. This allows the area to support richer forest habitats. Common soil series include Keenan, Stanberry, Pence, and Karlin. While predominantly well-drained, small areas of organic soils are also present.

**Clay Soils:** These soils, found in the lower elevations of the Town on the clay plain, are primarily clay with some sand and loamy layers below 40 inches. Due to slight elevation variations, drainage conditions range from well-drained to poorly drained over short distances. The clay's slow permeability leads to high runoff, ponding, and challenges for septic systems. Additionally, building dwellings with basements can be difficult due to the clay's shrink-and-swell

behavior and moisture issues. Common soil series include Cornucopia, Portwing, Herbster, Happyhollow, and Odanah.

**Sand Over Clay:** This transitional area separates the sandy uplands of the Bayfield sandplain from the clay plain in lower elevations. Soils here range from moderately well-drained to somewhat poorly drained, with a sand cap over clay creating lateral subsurface flow. This can lead to wetness and seeping, affecting basements and road stability unless addressed. The flow also creates unique conditions for agriculture and forestry, benefiting certain plants. Common soil series include Kellogg, Ashwabay, Allendale, Cublake, Crosswell, and Manistee.

**Sandy Soils:** These soils, found in the Town's higher elevations, are primarily sandy, ranging from well to excessively drained, with some organic and poorly drained areas. Their low water and nutrient-holding capacity, along with high permeability, make them nutrient-poor and drought-prone, limiting tree and crop growth. While they are important for groundwater recharge, their permeability offers limited filtration for contaminants. Common soil series include Rubicon, Sultz, and Vilas.

**Wetland Soils:** These soils are wet for most of the year and typically support wetland vegetation. They are mostly poorly or very poorly drained mineral soils, with some organic soils. As a result, they are severely limited for most land uses. Due to lateral subsurface water flow, many areas do not freeze in winter, making winter logging challenging. Common soil series include Kinross, Lupton, Cathro, Wakely, and Tawas.

**Steep Ravines and Floodplains:** These excessively drained soils are found in ravines, some recently undercut by streams and exhibiting slumping. The soils are stratified, with loamy, sandy, and clayey materials, and water seeps emerging from certain layers. Ravine bottoms often include streams or rivers with alluvial deposits. Due to steep slopes and soil stratification, land use is severely limited.

For more detailed information about the soils of the Town of Washburn, refer to the Bayfield County Soil Survey: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>.

### Surface Water and Groundwater Resources

The Town of Washburn has abundant and outstanding water resources that contribute to the economy, health, and identity of the Town. The Town's water resources also provide tremendous recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. The following provides a brief description of water resources in the Town. Table 7-1 shows that major drainages in the Town are concentrated in the eastern third, due to variations in geology and soil types. The 2.7 miles of streams within the National Forest area are all headwaters. Key surface waters include the Sioux River, Four Mile, Thompson, Bono, Boyd, and North Whittlesey Creeks.

**Table 7-1: Summary of Stream Mileage and Lake Acreage**

Measurement	Outside Forest	Inside Forest Boundary
Miles of Streams	71.7	2.7
Acres of Lakes	7.1	137.3

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The Sioux River originates in the Town of Washburn and flows 17 miles northeast, emptying into Lake Superior through the Sioux River Sloughs, an extensive wetland estuary complex located

north of the City of Washburn (and outside the Town). The Lake Superior Binational Program has identified the Sioux River Sloughs as important to the integrity of the Lake Superior ecosystem, due to its rich coastal wetlands, rare communities, and vital functions for fish and wildlife spawning and nursery grounds. Protecting the entire Sioux River watershed should be a priority.

The entire Sioux River is designated as Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and several high-quality trout streams are tributaries to it. The river is classified as a Class II trout fishery for about half of its length and as a Class I fishery from County Highway C westward. The Town also contains Class II and III tributaries. Rainbow and brown trout are the most abundant species, along with some coho salmon and a notable number of resident brook and brown trout.

The red clay soils within the drainage have low absorption capacity, leading to high runoff, significant fluctuations, silt loads, and bank erosion. The watershed supports both agricultural and forestry activities. Past water quality assessments indicated clear, cool waters upstream, while downstream areas carried a light load of suspended clay particles. The Sioux River has been identified by the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory and the Lake Superior Coastal Wetland Evaluation as an aquatic priority site. The river's macroinvertebrate fauna is diverse, with 35 taxa present, including four rare species. Dominant species include caddisflies, mayflies, and beetles. Management concerns include turbidity, low flow, filamentous algae, and silt.

Two unnamed tributaries to the Sioux River are also classified as trout streams, with one designated as a WDNR outstanding resource water. This tributary supports a Class II trout fishery and flows approximately 3 miles south from its headwaters in Section 32 (T49N-R5W) within the Town, entering the Sioux River in the northeast corner of Section 4. It supports a resident population of brook and rainbow trout, along with migratory runs from Lake Superior. The second tributary is classified as a Class III trout stream, supporting brook and rainbow trout, as well as some migratory species from Lake Superior. The WDNR has observed that the river supports stunted (small) fish, possibly due to a lack of in-stream food sources. This tributary originates from wetlands at the southeast end of Long Lake, in Section 7 (T48N-R5W). A six-foot rock water control structure in Section 7 creates a small impoundment, and the stream enters the Sioux River at the northeast corner of the southwest quarter of Section 4.

Four Mile Creek is classified by the WDNR as an outstanding resource water and is a major tributary of the Sioux River, lying almost entirely within the Town of Washburn. The first 0.8 miles of the creek are located within the National Forest. Four Mile Creek is a Class I trout stream, supporting primarily brown and rainbow trout, along with some brook trout, and providing spawning areas for several migratory trout and salmon species from Lake Superior. The creek features good in-stream cover, with undercut banks and pools. Recently, the Forest Service improved the portion of Forest Road 697 that crosses the stream to reduce siltation from runoff. This headwaters area is unique enough within the National Forest to have received special protection under the Chequamegon and Nicolet National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). It is one of the few areas in the Washburn Ranger District with clay plain soils and is home to a small population of Canada Yew, a plant that has become scarce due to deer browsing.

Thompson Creek is also listed as a WDNR ORW. This spring-fed Class I trout stream originates in the southeast corner of the Town and flows for about 3.5 miles before entering Lake Superior in the City of Washburn. It primarily supports brook trout, with some brown and rainbow trout,

and provides spawning areas for several migratory trout and salmon species from Lake Superior. During a survey as part of the Natural Heritage Inventory's coastal wetlands evaluation, no rare macroinvertebrate species were found, and overall taxa richness was low (0-4 species). Stream bank erosion, siltation, and low flows were significant contributors to impaired habitat quality, and livestock, barnyards, and cropland were identified as potential sources of pollutants affecting the stream. Both Four Mile and Thompson Creeks are impacted by red clay soils, which result in high runoff after rainfall, leading to stream bank erosion and high silt loads. To protect these streams, reducing soil erosion and maintaining a vegetative buffer along the stream banks is crucial.

Bono Creek (a Class II trout stream), Boyd Creek, and the north fork of Whittlesey Creek (a Class I and II trout stream) all originate in the southeast corner of the Town, though they quickly flow out of the area. Protecting the headwaters of these streams is crucial for maintaining water quality and healthy fisheries. The headwaters of the North Fork of Whittlesey Creek drain a region that was recently clear-cut, passing through agricultural areas and pastureland before reaching Whittlesey Creek. This stream is part of the WDNR Whittlesey Creek Small-Scale Priority Watershed Project.

As shown in Table 7-1, the distribution of lakes and ponds is the reverse of that for streams, with approximately 137 acres located within the National Forest compared to just 7 acres outside of it. This difference is largely due to the distinct geologies and soil types in the two areas. Outside the National Forest, all the lakes are small, unnamed ponds, with the largest being less than 3 acres in size. The largest lake within the National Forest is the 32-acre Long Lake, where the Forest Service operates a popular swimming beach. Other named lakes include Twin Lakes (which is home to a Forest Service campground), as well as Sunken Camp, Rib, Pine, Moose, Horseshoe, Hoist, and Cabin Lakes.

The forested landscape along stream corridors provides significant benefits to wildlife. Riparian areas are recognized as vital corridors for animal movement and plant dispersal, with nearly 70% of vertebrate species in an area utilizing these corridors at some point in their life cycle. The forested habitats along stream corridors in the Town of Washburn offer breeding, foraging, and migration opportunities for a variety of wildlife species. These habitats are particularly important for abundant game species, federally threatened bald eagles, gray wolves, and state species of concern, such as the northern goshawk. Additionally, numerous bird species, especially during migration, and aquatic furbearers like otters, mink, and beavers rely on these riparian corridors.

The Town of Washburn has a unique opportunity to protect its resource waters. Many of these areas remain relatively undeveloped and are still in natural or nearly natural condition. Protecting these resources now, rather than investing in costly restoration projects later, benefits both people and wildlife. By maintaining appropriately sized buffers of forest around headwaters and stream corridors, these riparian areas can continue to provide essential services, including flood control, erosion control, and water quality protection, at minimal cost. Riparian areas also serve as recreational spaces for locals and tourists, offering opportunities for hiking, picnicking, and sport fishing. Furthermore, they function as vital links between aquatic, floodplain, and upland habitats for both animals and plants.

Sound planning considers not only the preservation of the function of natural systems but also maintaining or enhancing their viability and long-term sustainability. It is important to recognize that natural systems are made up of many individual components, all of which are interconnected through natural cycles, food chains, and ecological relationships. As the Town of

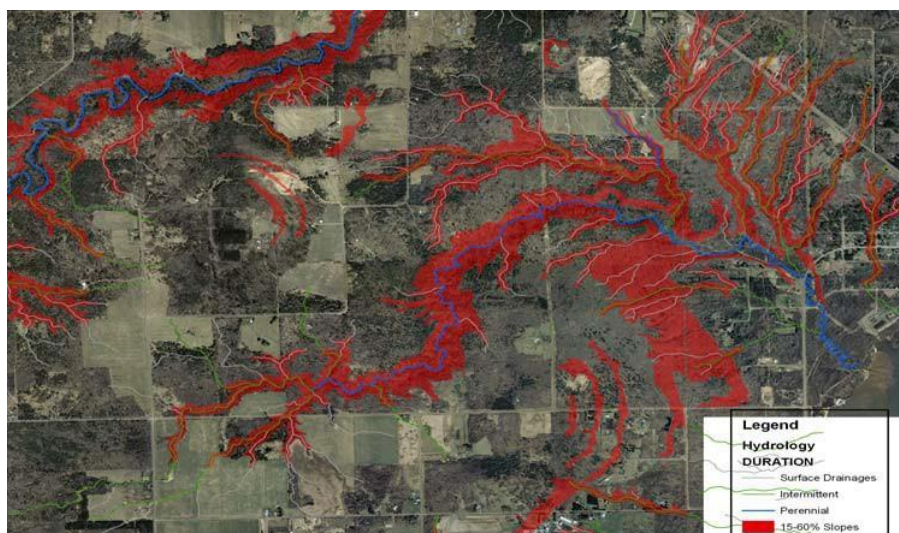


Washburn continues to grow, careful attention must be given to the natural community to preserve the existing balance between development and the environment. When evaluating land-altering activities, the community must consider natural conditions, such as wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes, which can severely constrain or prohibit certain forms of development.

The primary objective for drainage areas in the Town of Washburn should be to protect the headwaters of streams and maintain a forested landscape along riparian corridors. Riparian corridors include the stream channel and adjacent land, which may be influenced by high water tables, flooding, or the water-holding capacity of soils. The steep topography of many of the Town's stream corridors, combined with impervious soil types, should be considered when determining setback recommendations. Additionally, it is important to protect the integrity of non-navigable streams (i.e., streams that do not appear on 1:24,000 topographic maps) to ensure their continued function when they contain water. Landowners at headwaters and along drainage areas should be encouraged to maintain forested landscapes through zoning, education, and conservation incentives.

**Watersheds:** The Town of Washburn is located within the Bayfield Peninsula Southeast Watershed, one of Wisconsin's 16 watersheds that drain into the Lake Superior Basin (Map 7: Watersheds (HUC10) & Sub-Watersheds (HUC12)). This watershed includes the eastern half of the Bayfield Peninsula and most of the Apostle Islands. Since watersheds do not adhere to political boundaries, cooperation among neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions is crucial for effective management. The Bayfield Peninsula Southeast Watershed is particularly sensitive due to its highly erodible red clay soils, which are carried into Chequamegon Bay, degrading water quality and harming plant and animal habitats. Poor land and water management anywhere within the watershed can negatively affect downstream areas and, ultimately, Chequamegon Bay. Given that the Town is home to numerous streams and rivers that contribute to this watershed's drainage, it is essential for the Town to minimize harmful runoff and pollution to protect the water quality flowing out of the Town, safeguarding the health of this vital watershed and Lake Superior.

**Figure 7-1: Intermittent, Surface Water and Perennial Drainage Ways**



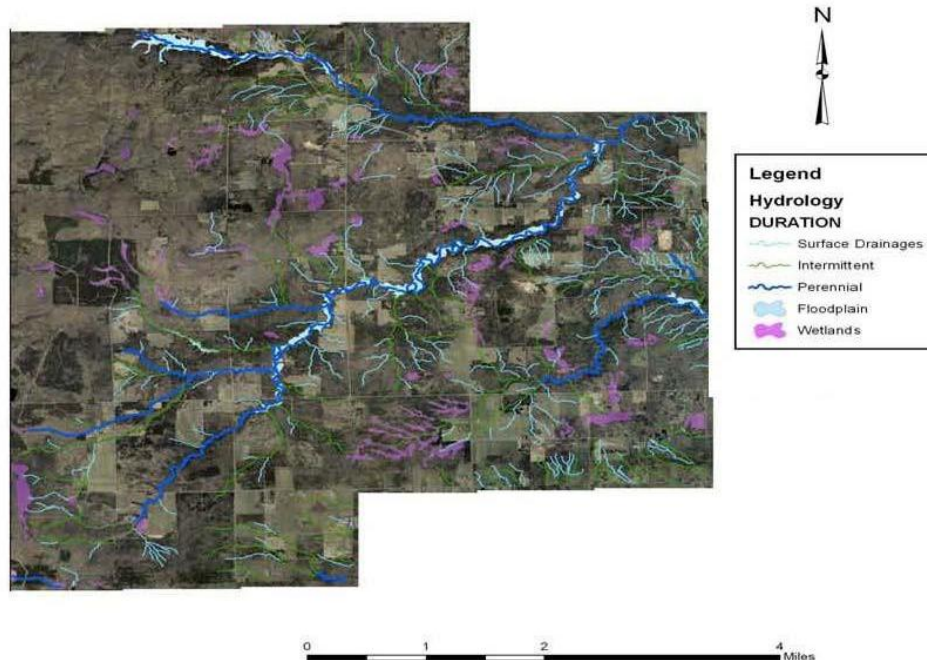
Source: USGA and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (Oliver Adams)

**Wetlands:** The Wisconsin Wetland Inventory, generated by the WDNR, identifies 80,252 acres, or about 8.5% of Bayfield County, as wetlands based on 1991 aerial photography (Map 8: Surface Waters & Wetlands). While the Wisconsin Wetland Inventory is useful for general planning purposes, it does not provide the exact boundaries of all wetlands within the Town. Therefore, it is essential to delineate and evaluate wetlands on a property before considering development.

Wetlands are not wasted lands that constrain development. On the contrary, wetlands provide many benefits, including water quality protection, groundwater recharge and discharge, flood protection, and wildlife habitat. To that end, the Town should continue to ensure their protection.

**Floodplains:** Two significant floodplains within the Town are located along the upper portion of Four Mile Creek and the middle to lower Sioux River water channel (Figure 7-2). A small segment is also present along the far-east edge of the Town, where Thompson Creek leaves the Town and enters the City of Washburn. Areas susceptible to flooding are unsuitable for development due to risks to lives and property. Any proposed development or redevelopment near the floodplain should be surveyed to determine the precise boundaries of the floodplain. Erosion within these separate watersheds will increase sediment loads in the respective waterways, thereby heightening the risk of floodplain soils and contaminants entering the wetland areas. This could lead to loss of biodiversity, a reduction in water quality flowing into Lake Superior, and increased soil saturation within and around the wetlands.

**Figure 7-2: Floodplains and Wetlands**



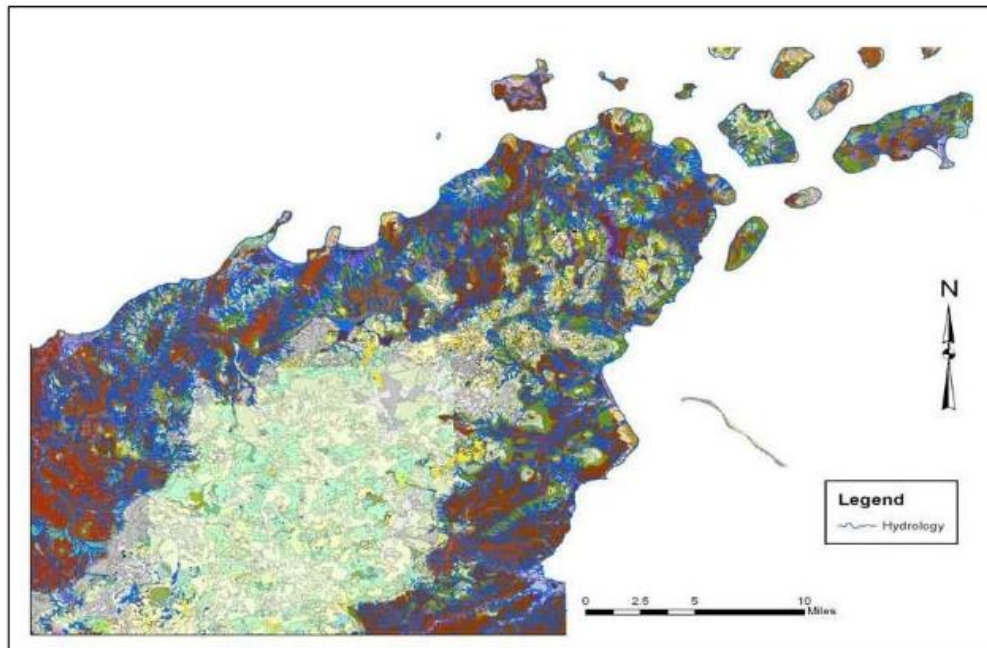
Source: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Groundwater:** The interior of the Bayfield Peninsula consists of very sandy soils that serve as groundwater recharge areas for the entire peninsula (Figure 7-3). These sandy soils, shown in lighter colors between the blue rivers and reddish clay areas, can reach depths of several hundred feet, particularly within the National Forest. While the permeability of sandy soils is advantageous for groundwater recharge, it also presents several challenges.



First, the high permeability of these soils allows pollutants to easily travel through, potentially contaminating the groundwater (Figure 7-4). Since local groundwater can remain in the soil for anywhere from several years to several hundred years, it is essential to take preventative measures now to protect water quality for the future. Second, sandy soils, primarily located within National Forest lands, are well-suited for road construction due to their ease of use and low maintenance requirements. However, this characteristic should not encourage the unnecessary construction of new roads, as it could increase the risk of groundwater contamination. Instead, efforts to expand infrastructure should prioritize utilizing existing roads, such as logging roads, to minimize potential environmental impacts.

**Figure 7-3: General Soils of Bayfield County**

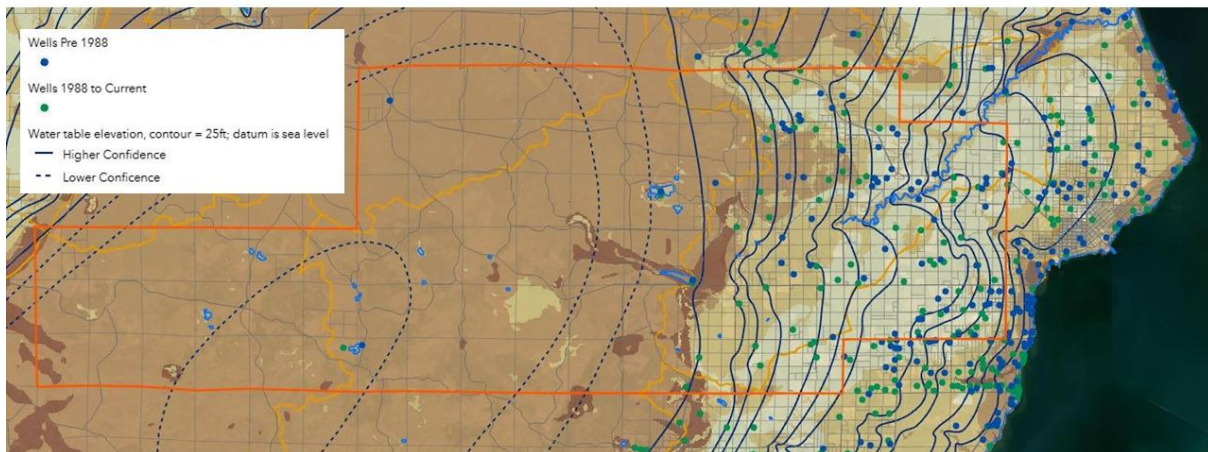


Source: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Figure 7-4: Groundwater Table Elevation (25-Foot Contours)**

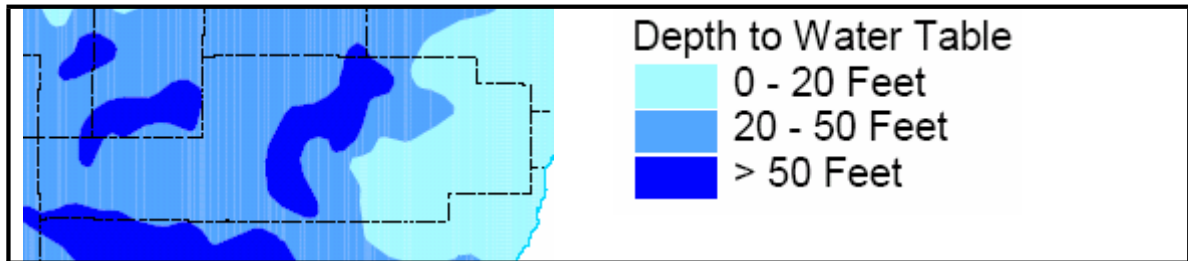
(The darker the map color, the more susceptible groundwater is to contamination)

The western part of the Town of Washburn is the source of groundwater that supplies public and private drinking water to the east and that provides cool, clean, flowing springs that feed several high-quality trout streams and coastal estuaries.



All the Town of Washburn's drinking water comes from groundwater, accessed through personal wells. The Town rates its groundwater quality as generally good to outstanding. However, it is essential for the Town to remain vigilant in protecting this vital resource to ensure its safety for future generations. Figure 7-5 illustrates the water table depths throughout the Town. The shallowest water tables, ranging from 0 to 20 feet, are primarily found in the eastern third of the Town, where most residential areas are located. Deeper water tables, ranging from 20 to 50 feet and beyond 50 feet, are predominantly found in the National Forest areas.

**Figure 7-5: Groundwater Depths**



Source: Bayfield County

**Impaired Waters:** There are no impaired waters in the Town of Washburn as defined by Section 303 of the Clean Water Act. However, it is important for the Town, along with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions, to work together to maintain and improve surface water quality in the region.

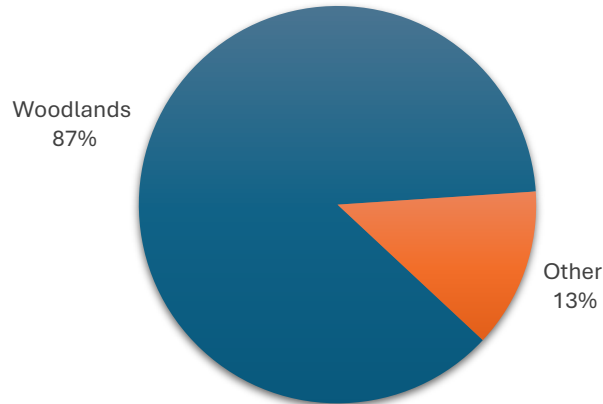
**Vegetation of the Town of Washburn:** When the first European visitors arrived at the shores of Chequamegon Bay, the area now encompassed by the Town of Washburn was predominantly forested. However, these forests were quite different from those that exist today. Historical records and surveys indicate that the Town was primarily dominated by northern hardwood stands, including sugar maples, yellow birch, and hemlocks. In the eastern part of the Town, where moist clay soils prevailed, red and white pines predominated, with small pockets of northern hardwoods and oaks. The drier, sandy areas were characterized by scrub oak and savannah-like conditions.

After extensive logging operations and the cutover of the land, there was a brief period of farming, but many of these farms were abandoned due to the dry, sandy soil conditions. What remained was a largely deforested landscape. Today, the western two-thirds of the Town's 54,000+ acres are part of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The National Forest was established on the driest portions of the area, where farming had proven difficult. During the Great Depression, the creation of the Forest was part of a national effort to help the country recover from the economic crisis. At the time, these lands were often referred to as "the lands nobody wanted." Since then, the forests have naturally regenerated, with additional reforestation efforts, including tree planting and the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), another initiative designed to combat the Great Depression.

When discussing the vegetative cover of the Town, it is important to distinguish between lands within the National Forest boundaries and those outside for two main reasons. First, this Plan applies only to lands outside the National Forest boundary. Second, National Forest lands are managed differently from private and other non-federal lands, so including them in the same summary would obscure the patterns found on the predominantly private lands outside the Forest. Figure 7-6 illustrates the vegetative composition of the portion of the Town located within the National Forest. This area includes a small amount of private land, but it is minimal. The

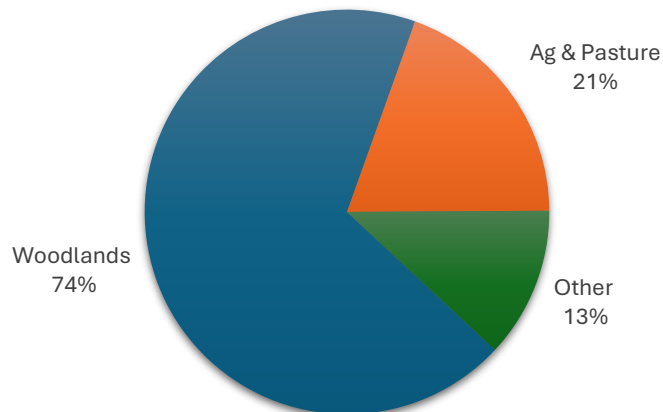
data used to create this chart, as well as the data for the remainder of the Town, are based on satellite imagery analyzed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Known as WISCLAND data, this information is reliable when averaged over a large area like the Town, though it is not considered accurate at the scale of individual parcels.

**Figure 7-6: Vegetation Inside of National Forest**



As expected, nearly 90% of the area within the National Forest is covered by woodlands. This figure would likely be higher if not for efforts to restore savannah-type conditions, which were more prevalent prior to European settlement. More details about these areas can be found in the Wildlife section. These restored areas are likely reflected in the 'grasslands and shrublands' category, which comprises most of the 'other' acres. Figure 7-7 below illustrates the land cover composition for the portion of the Town outside of the National Forest boundary.

**Figure 7-7: Vegetation Outside of National Forest**



Almost three-quarters of this area is covered by woodlands, with the remainder primarily in pasture and cultivated lands. The 'other' category consists mostly of shrublands, along with wetlands and areas lacking vegetation. Most of the agricultural and pasture lands are found in the easternmost part of the Town, where the soil is more conducive to farming. Many of these pastures and hayfields were once cultivated but are now mainly used for beef cattle forage. As discussed in the Agriculture section, only one dairy operation remains in the Town, located in this area of more fertile soils. Between the pastures and fields, and in the transition zone between the clay soils of the east and the dry sands of the National Forest, much of the land

has naturally regenerated into forest. Aside from a few pine plantations, most of this regeneration has occurred through natural processes. These woodlands are a key part of the Town's rural character, which is highly valued by its residents, and provide opportunities for hunting, hiking, and other outdoor activities.

Of the nearly 13,000 acres of forest land in the non-National Forest portion of the Town, over 3,884 acres are enrolled in the Forest Crop or Managed Forest program, both of which are administered by the WDNR (Map 6: Public Lands and Open Managed Forest Lands Enrollment). These programs provide tax incentives in exchange for a commitment to sustainable forest management, demonstrating that many landowners are dedicated to maintaining their lands in forest cover.

### **Forested Lands**

Forest areas cover 92% (50,531 acres) of the land area in the Town of Washburn. The federal forest land, officially known as the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, accounts for 36,739 acres (73%) of this total, while private woodlands make up the remaining 13,792 acres (27%). Forests offer both economic and recreational benefits to people and provide crucial habitat for numerous plant and animal species. The forested land in the Town spans two ecological landscapes: the Superior Coastal Plain and the Northwest Sands. The Superior Coastal Plain is Wisconsin's northernmost Ecological Landscape. Historically, it was almost entirely forested, with a distinctive mixture of white pine, white spruce, balsam fir, paper birch, balsam poplar, trembling aspen, and white cedar dominating the lacustrine clays. White pine was particularly dominant in some areas, according to mid-nineteenth century surveys by the US General Land Office. Mesic to dry-mesic forests of northern hardwoods or hemlock hardwoods were more prevalent on the glacial tills of the Bayfield Peninsula. Today, the forest is relatively young due to past harvest practices over the last 100 years. It is now predominantly composed of early successional tree species such as aspen and birch, alongside mixtures of hardwoods (red and sugar maple, red oak) and conifers (white, red, and jack pine, white and black spruce, balsam fir, white cedar, and hemlock).

The WDNR recommends the following management strategies for the Superior Coastal Plain:

- Protect unique Great Lakes shoreline environments including the biologically rich estuaries at Fish Creek, Sioux River Slough, Sand River, Raspberry Bay, Bark Bay, Lost Creek, Port Wing, Allouez Bay, and the lower St. Louis River.
- Protect, manage, and restore clay plain boreal forest (dominated by conifer species), a rare and diminished forest community found nowhere else in the state, which is crucial for maintaining the water quality of the streams feeding into Lake Superior.
- Increase conifer cover, forest patch size and connectivity, and late successional forests to mitigate the impacts of fragmentation and re-establish diminished habitats.
- Protect, manage, and restore of stream corridors.
- Maintain extensive forest habitat on the Bayfield Peninsula.

The Northwest Sands Ecological Landscape spans across Bayfield, Douglas, Burnett, Washburn, and Polk counties, forming a large glacial outwash system. The soils in this area are deep sands, low in organic material and nutrients. Historically, during the General Land Office survey, the dominant vegetation consisted of jack pine and scrub oak forests, along with barrens. White and red pine forests also made up a significant portion of the landscape. Numerous barrens were found in the southwestern half of the Ecological Landscape, with a few

large ones located in the northeastern half. Jack pine was the predominant tree species in these barrens.

The northern section of the Moquah or Bayfield Barrens is located within the Town of Washburn and is managed under special oversight by the U.S. Forest Service. Due to past forest management practices and fire suppression, barrens—a savannah-like ecosystem—have become a rare habitat, both locally (with less than 3% remaining in Wisconsin) and globally. According to Wisconsin's Natural Heritage Inventory for the Northwest Sands Ecoregion, occurrences of endangered, threatened, and species of special concern are widespread and abundant in this area.

The barrens in the Northwest Sands region support a variety of bird species due to the diverse ecological communities found there. A breeding bird survey of these habitats, which range from open areas to pine-dominated forests, identified 110 upland bird species. The open barrens habitat is particularly important for grassland and brushland species, which are rare in other parts of the state. These include the sharp-tailed grouse, upland sandpiper, clay-colored sparrow, and vesper sparrow. Additionally, the federally endangered Kirtland's warbler, which depends on early stages of jack pine regeneration, may potentially colonize this area. The Northwest Sands area also provides habitat for a range of mammals, including the badger, which prefers areas with diggable soils and abundant ground squirrels. The open barrens in this region are crucial for the badger's survival in Wisconsin.

The WDNR recommends the following management strategies for the Northwest Sands:

- Increase the extent of dry jack pine-northern pin oak forest and white and red pine restoration.
- Implement large-scale restoration of oak-pine barrens and wetlands (sedge meadows, marshes, and bogs). This would benefit many rare birds, herptiles, plants, butterflies and moths, and many other invertebrates found in the Ecological Landscape.
- Direct special management efforts toward species such as wolves and grassland/shrubland birds.

Since the Bayfield Barrens are entirely within the Chequamegon National Forest, the Town Board and citizens do not have direct management authority. However, they should be encouraged to participate by providing input on forest plans and harvest proposals from the U.S. Forest Service.

Forest management should account for landscape-level factors such as watershed protection, forest stand size, species composition, soil type, wildlife corridors, snag retention, and road density, especially in sensitive water recharge areas. With more than half of the Town situated within the Chequamegon National Forest, there is a unique opportunity for collaboration with the Forest Service to reconnect fragmented forests, creating continuous corridors from the Town's eastern boundary to the Bayfield Barrens. Additionally, the Town includes significant industrial forest land, particularly in headwater areas, which must remain under active management to protect downstream watersheds. Fragmenting these lands into smaller private parcels could hinder effective, long-term management.

### **Forest Conservation Management Programs and Technical Assistance**

Federal, state, and county assistance is available to landowners interested in maintaining important corridors and sustainably harvesting forest resources.

#### **Federal Programs and Assistance:** <https://www.usda.gov/forestry-0>

- *Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)*  
A program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service that provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and forest landowners to address natural resource concerns such as:
  - Improved water and air quality
  - Conserved ground and surface water
  - Increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation
  - Improved or created wildlife and pollinator habitat
  - Mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility
- *Information on Conservation Planning Assistance:*  
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/NRCS%20WI%20Conservation%20Choices.pdf>
- *Information on Conservation Practices*  
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wi/publications>

#### **State Programs and Assistance:** [dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/ForestLandowners](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/ForestLandowners).

- *Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program (WFLGP)*  
A cost-share program offered by the WDNR. It is designed to assist landowners in protecting and enhancing their woodlands. The program reimburses woodland owners up to 50% of the cost of eligible practices:
  - Stewardship plan development
  - Tree planting/regeneration
  - Forest health and improvement
  - Soil and water protection and improvement
  - Wetland and riparian protection
  - Wildlife habitat enhancement
  - Endangered or threatened resources, rare natural communities, historic, cultural, and archaeological protection, restoration, enhancement, and maintenance
- *Managed Forest Law (MFL)*  
A landowner incentive program administered by the WDNR that encourages sustainable forestry on private woodland. In exchange for following sound forest management, the landowner pays reduced property taxes. Together with landowner objectives, the law incorporates:
  - Timber harvesting
  - Wildlife management
  - Water quality management
  - Recreation management
- *Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Field Manual*  
Provides BMPs in the following categories:
  - Forest roads
  - Stream crossings
  - Timber harvestings
  - Riparian management zones
  - Wetlands



- Fuels, lubricants, waste, and spills
- Chemicals
- Mechanical site preparation and tree planting
- Prescribed burning and wildfire
- **Oak Wilt Management**  
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/foresthealth/oakwilt>
- **Emerald Ash Borer Management**  
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/foresthealth/emeraldashborer>
- **Management Recommendations for Forestry Practices on Wisconsin’s Lake Superior Lake Superior Red Clay Plain**  
[https://townofwashburn.wi.gov/wp-content/uploads/Comprehensive\\_Plan\\_Update/LkSupClayPlainForestExrpt.pdf](https://townofwashburn.wi.gov/wp-content/uploads/Comprehensive_Plan_Update/LkSupClayPlainForestExrpt.pdf)

Additional information regarding forestry best management practices can be obtained from the Bayfield County Forestry Department.

**Endangered and Threatened Species**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a list of endangered and threatened species and habitats across the United States. Additionally, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) tracks rare and endangered species, natural communities, and significant features through the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory. This inventory includes both state and federal protection status. Table 7-2 provides a list of species and communities found within the Town of Washburn, though specific locations are kept confidential for their protection. The Town should collaborate with the DNR to ensure that future development activities do not negatively impact these vulnerable species and habitats.

**Table 7-2: Natural Heritage Inventory**

Name	Status	Name	Status
Animals		Plants	
American Marten	END	Dwarf Milkweed	THR
Black Tern	END	Tea-Leaved Willow	THR
Upland Sandpiper	THR	Michaux's Sedge	THR
Blanding's Turtle	SC/P	Algae-Leaved Pondweed	THR
Eastern Elliptio	SC/P	Hooker's Orchid	SC
Northern Flying Squirrel	SC/P	Fir Clubmoss	SC
Western Meadowlark	SC/M	Large-Flowered Ground Cherry	SC
Swainson's Thrush	SC/M	Canada Mountain Ricegrass	SC
American Bittern	SC/M	Rugulose Grape Fern	SC
Black-Backed Woodpecker	SC/M	Russet Cotton-Grass	SC
Four-Toed Salamander	SC/H	Torrey's Bulrush	SC
Sharp-Tailed Grouse	SC/H	Community	
A Flat-Headed Mayfly	SC/N	Northern Dry Forest	NA
A Perlodid Stonefly	SC/N	Northern Dry-Mesic Forest	NA
Chryxus Arctic	SC/N	Emergent Marsh	NA
Cobweb Skipper	SC/N	Open Bog	NA

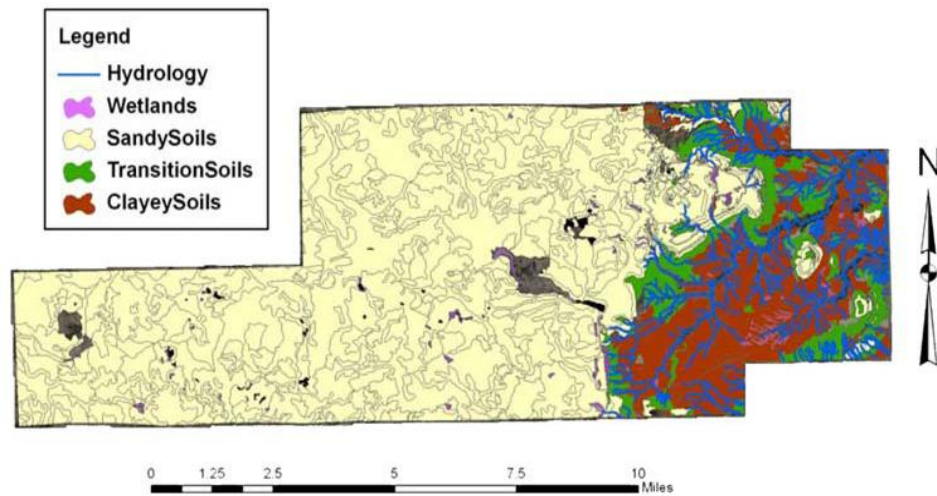
Name	Status	Name	Status
Animals		Plants	
Confusing Bumble Bee	SC/N	Poor Fen	NA
Yellow-Banded Bumble Bee	SC/N	High Potential Zone	
Northern Barrens Tiger Beetle	SC/N	Rusty Patched Bumble Bee	NA
Bald Eagle	-	Migratory Bird Concentration Site	
END = Endangered species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range (legally protected under state and federal laws) THR = Threatened species that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range (legally protected under state and federal laws) SC = Species of Concern (those species about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proved. The WDNR and federal regulations regarding SC range from full protection to no protection. The current categories and their respective levels of protection are as follows: SC/P = Fully protected under state law SC/M = Fully protected by federal and state laws under the Migratory Bird Act SC/H = Take regulated by the establishment of open-closed seasons SC/N = No laws regulating use, possession, or harvesting NA = Not applicable (this is assigned to all natural community records)			

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Inventory December 2024

**Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

There are no WDNR-designated State Natural Areas within the Town of Washburn. However, the Town should take special care to protect and enhance the trout streams and rivers, creeks, ravines, wetlands, and woodlands. The sandy soils in the area are sensitive, but the soils around the transition zone—from sandy soils to sand over clay, and eventually to clay soils—are particularly crucial. This transition zone plays a key role in the Town's surface hydrology (Figure 7-8). As the depth of sandy soils and groundwater approaches the clay layer, wetlands begin to form. The groundwater, which sits above the clay layer, feeds into the Town's streams and creeks. Additionally, groundwater beneath the clay layer is pressurized, emerging as the Town's source of artesian water.

There is approximately 30-60 inches of sand over the clay in the transition zone. This zone is highly sensitive and requires special attention from both private landowners and those managing public lands. The thin layer of sand over clay makes the clay prone to acting as a lubricant, allowing the sand to erode if the surface is disturbed. These areas serve as the headwaters for several key streams, including the Sioux, Four Mile, and Thompson Creek. Any alteration of the wetlands or surrounding land could increase sedimentation in the rivers, which would reduce water quality and harm fish and wildlife habitats. Therefore, the Town must recognize the importance of preserving these sensitive areas by restricting development and carefully managing land use activities in and around them.

**Figure 7-8: General Soils of the Town of Washburn**

Source: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 Detailed soils information is available at:  
<https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>

### Air Quality

Air quality in the Town of Washburn is relatively good. According to the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Bayfield County had an annual average of 5.4 micrograms per cubic meter of fine particulate matter in the air in 2019. The Environmental Protection Agency has a primary annual average standard of 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter.

### Mineral Resources

Mineral resources have been a key part of Washburn's history and that of the surrounding area. Brownstone was mined in the region from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. Today, sand and gravel mining continue on a smaller scale, supplying essential materials for road and building construction. It is vital that these mines are properly managed and reclaimed to ensure their sustainability and minimize environmental impact.

### Invasive Plants

The Town of Washburn is home to several invasive plant species, with the most notable being leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*). The highest concentration of this plant in Bayfield County, and all of Northwestern Wisconsin, is found at the top of Maple Hill. In response, the Town has taken a proactive stance in managing and ultimately controlling the spread of this persistent and highly invasive plant. Since 2004, the Town has partnered with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) to reduce plant populations through a combination of herbicide treatments and biological control. Previously, the Town also employed strategic mowing by the Town Work Crew as part of the control efforts, but this practice is no longer in effect.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Landmarks Commission for the Town of Washburn was formed in 1983 to designate and help preserve historic sites in the Town. The Westling Dam, Church Corner Cemetery, and the Town Hall are currently listed as Historical Landmark Sites. Following the Commission's work, Ed Pajala led the Town Historical Committee in collecting early town history from residents.

## **HISTORIC SITES**

### **Westling Power Dam**

Erick Westling, an early settler who immigrated from Sweden in 1893, built a log cabin on Church Corner Road near Four Mile Creek around 1895. In 1897, Westling constructed a larger house and a dam to power a sawmill for making boards. He later built a bigger dam closer to the house and began producing cedar shingles. After a lengthy battle to exempt it from WDNR regulations, the dam was removed in 1985.

### **McKinley School (Washburn Town Hall)**

The McKinley (Sioux River) School was built in 1904 at the corner of McKinley Road and County Highway C and began operating in the 1905-06 school year. It operated through the 1936-37 school year. The property was deeded to the Town, and at the April 3, 1973, annual meeting, it was officially designated as the Washburn Town Hall. It is used for Town meetings and voting. In the summer of 1993, a well was drilled, holding tanks were installed, and an equipment garage with restrooms was built. The original outhouses have been preserved and are used for storage. In 2006, the Town Hall was resided and fitted with new replica windows.

### **Church Corner Cemetery**

Betania Evangelical Lutheran Church was built at the northeast corner of Church Corner Road and Wannebo Road in 1909 by the families of the area: Prestgard, Hirsch, Bergquist, Overby, Moland, Berge, and Anderson. A stable and Grange Hall were also built there. After the church was torn down in 1932, the Grange Hall was moved, cut down, and became the Progress School on the corner of Nevers and Bjork Roads. There are four known graves, one of which is marked, that remain in the small cemetery there, which is owned and maintained by Messiah Lutheran Church in Washburn in memory of Lucia Hokanson.

## **OTHER HISTORICAL FEATURES**

### **Potter's Farm**

Historic Potter's Farm on McKinley Rd. was named after Alden Potter, an osteopath and farmer, and his wife, the accomplished writer and lecturer Greta Largo Potter. It is now a non-profit educational and spiritual retreat and event center. Buildings constructed between 1912 and 1920 include a farmhouse, cabin, stone icehouse, and stone barn. The area is renowned for its vibrant community of artists, including painters, fiber crafters, musicians, soap makers, woodworkers, and many others.

### **Moose Lake**

From 1850 to 1879, Moose Lake served as a key stopping point at the intersection of the St. Croix Stage Trail and the Bayfield-to-Superior Stage and Mail Route. It was a regular rest stop for travelers. Around 1900, a logging camp was established on the lake, and a railroad trestle was extended into the water, allowing logs to be dropped in for storage.

### **Pine Lake Station**

From 1870 to the mid-1880s, a relay station and roadhouse operated along the Bayfield-to-Superior Stage and Mail Route. The station was abandoned after the Northern Pacific Railroad extended from Superior to Ashland. Due to the deep sand along the route, the stagecoach could only cross during the winter until 1876, when improvements were made to allow wheeled travel along the entire 80-mile route. Around 1900, the Edward Hines Lumber Company constructed logging camp buildings on the former roadhouse site.

### **“Battle Ax” Railroad Grade**

The Washburn, Bayfield, and Iron River Railroad, commonly known as the Battle-Ax, was built in 1898 at taxpayer expense, funded by \$215,000 in Bayfield County bonds. County leaders made this investment with the expectation that the Northern Pacific Railroad would establish the Port of Washburn as its Lake Superior terminus. The railroad earned its nickname from the brand of chewing tobacco given to workmen when pay was delayed. Most of the rails were removed and salvaged in 1922, when the bonds were retired, and the last 10 miles of track to Iron River were salvaged in 1927. Today, much of the old railroad grade can still be traced near Forest Road 251 in the National Forest, passing by Moose Lake. As it nears Lake Superior, the grade extends northeast across Chequamegon Heights, Nevers, and Wannebo Roads, ultimately reaching the City of Washburn. Two other railroad grades cross the Battle-Ax at Grand Junction.

### **Brinks CCC Camp**

The first U.S. Forest Service CCC camp in Wisconsin was built on the site of the Ora Brinks home near the intersection of FR236 and FR251. Lizzie Brink was a trick sharpshooter for the Ringling Bros. and a cowgirl in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Hundreds of young men from the camp planted rows of jack pines to restore forests that had been logged at the turn of the century. Although no buildings remain on the original site, a maintenance building was relocated to the old A. Zifko farm on Engoe Road and the foreman's house was moved to an unknown location off State Highway 13. The U.S. Forest Service has an interpretive marker at the site.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Ch. 7 – Goal 1: The Town of Washburn protects and enhances its natural, forest and agricultural areas.**

**Objective 7.1:** Protect and enhance the existing agricultural land in the Town, and ensure proper safeguards are in place for future generations, thereby preserving and encouraging the “rural” character and spirit of the Town.

**Objective 7.2:** Encourage sustainable forest management practices on private and public lands throughout the Town.

**Objective 7.3:** Protect and maintain much of the natural resources of the Town to preserve the rural character, protect wildlife habitat, and protect sensitive and fragile environmental areas.

**Objective 7.4:** Protect and enhance natural habitats and water quality including creeks, wetlands, and forests to provide habitat for plant and animal species and to allow for sensitive use and enjoyment by humans.

### **Ch. 7 – Goal 2: The Town of Washburn protects and promotes its historic and cultural resources.**

**Objective 7.5:** Identify and preserve sites, features, structures, access points or routes having unique local historical, archaeological, aesthetic, scenic or natural value for present and future enjoyment. Encourage protection, preservation, or use of them in such a manner that will ensure their continued existence.

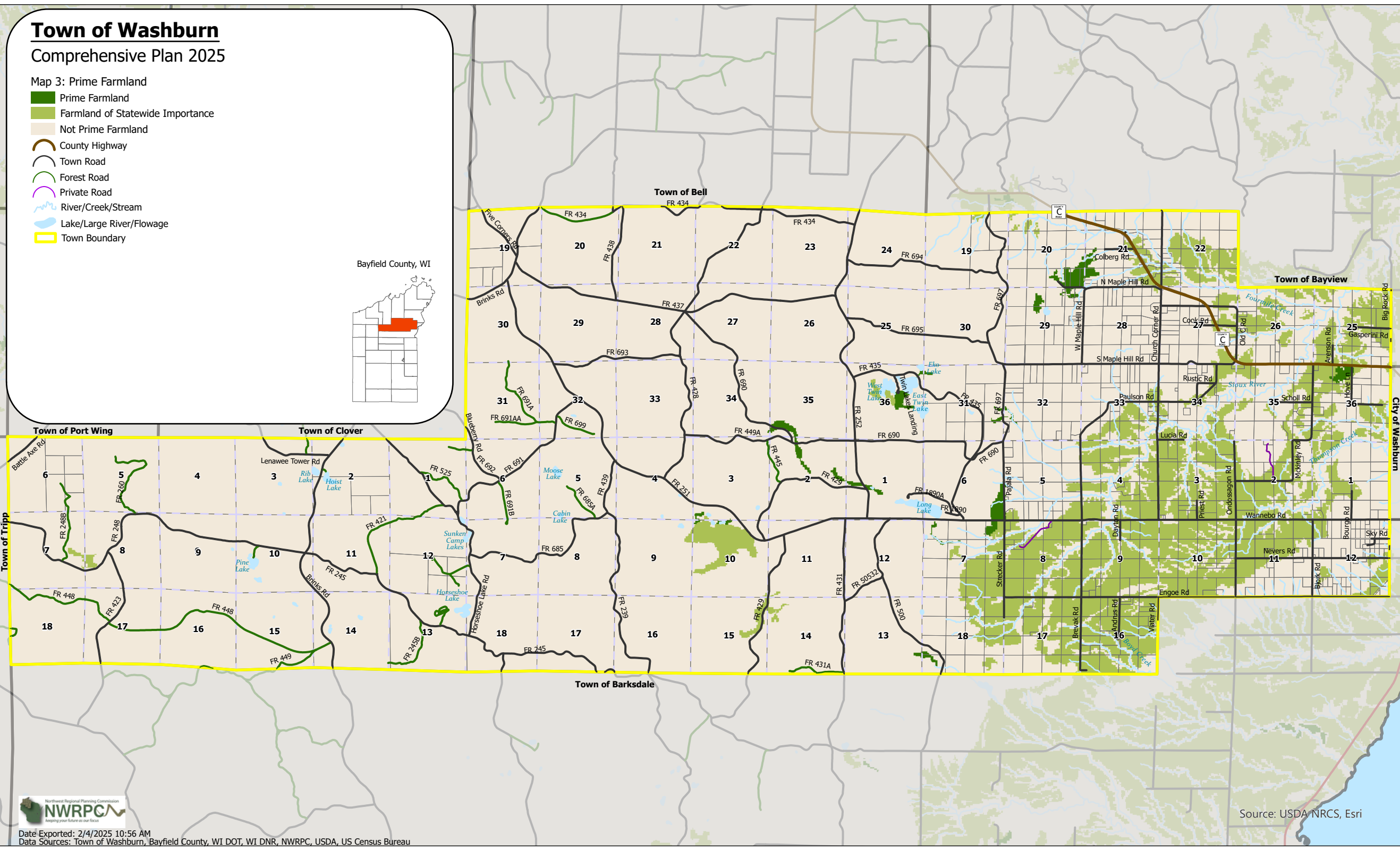
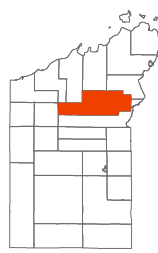
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 3: Prime Farmland

- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Not Prime Farmland
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Private Road
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI





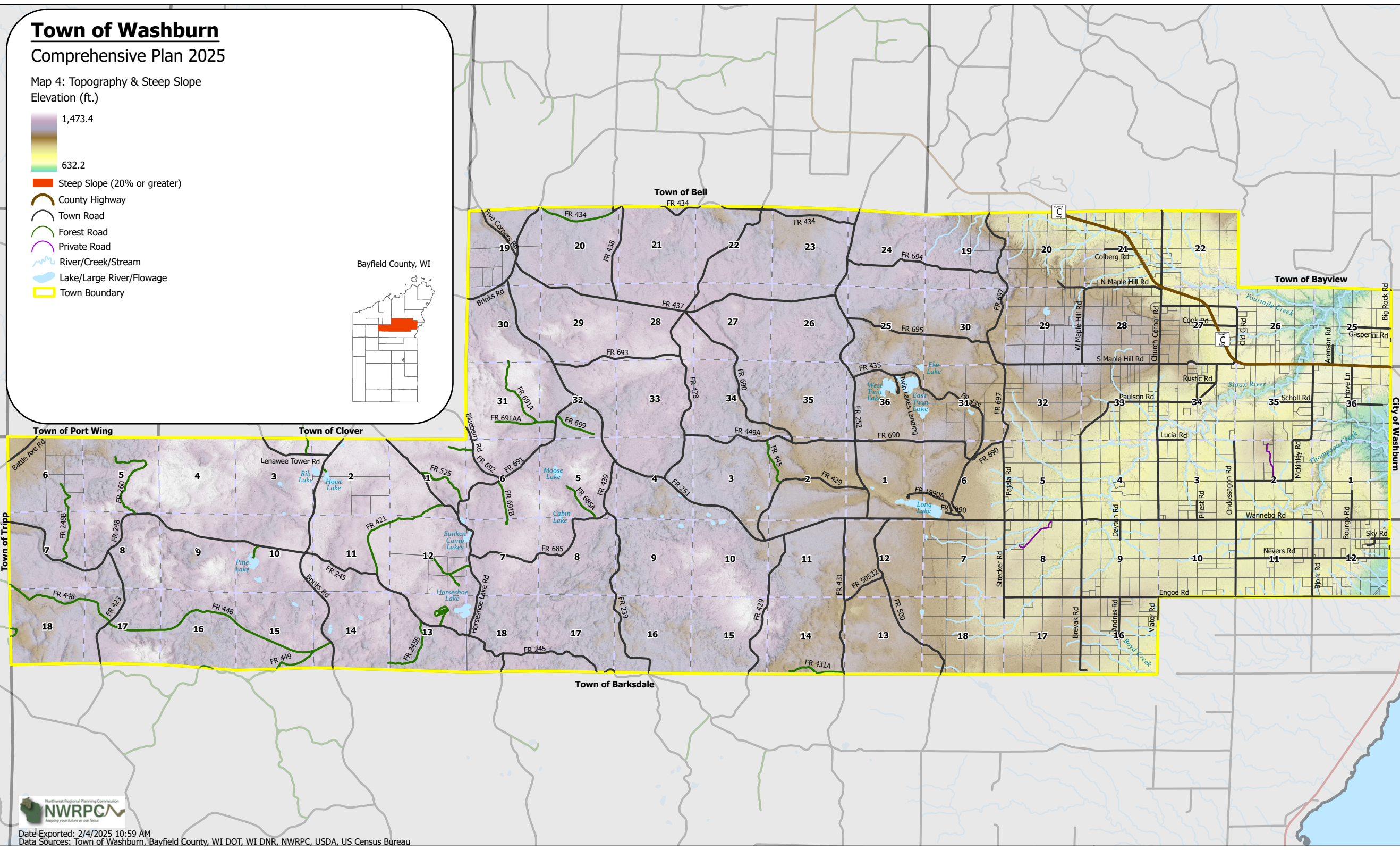
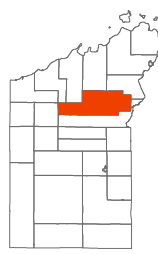
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 4: Topography & Steep Slope  
Elevation (ft.)

- 1,473.4
- 632.2
- Steep Slope (20% or greater)
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Private Road
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI



















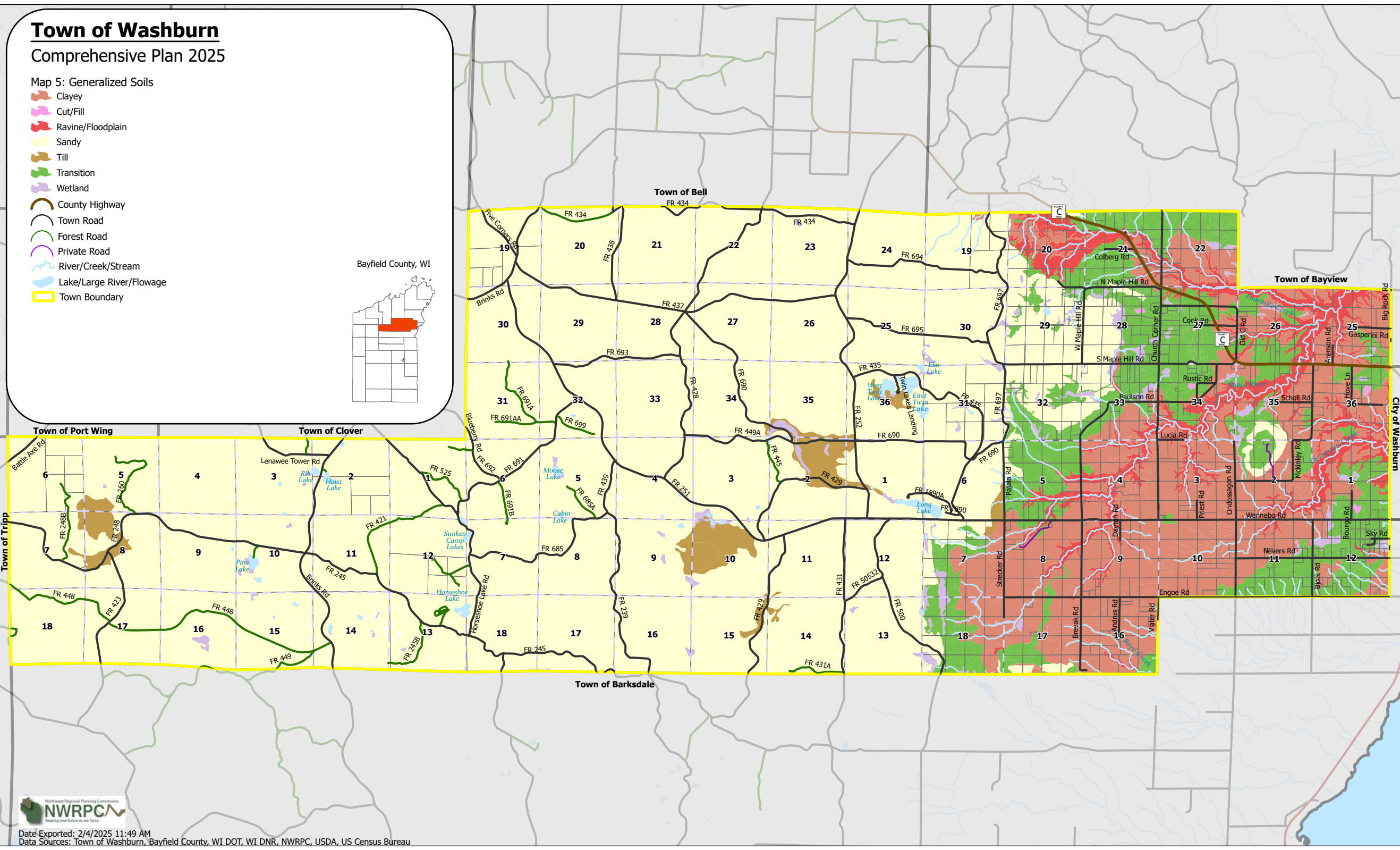
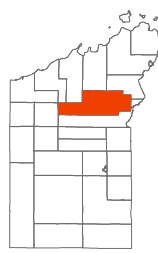
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 5: Generalized Soils

-  Clayey
-  Cut/Fill
-  Ravine/Floodplain
-  Sandy
-  Till
-  Transition
-  Wetland
-  County Highway
-  Town Road
-  Forest Road
-  Private Road
-  River/Creek/Stream
-  Lake/Large River/Flowage
-  Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI





# Town of Washburn

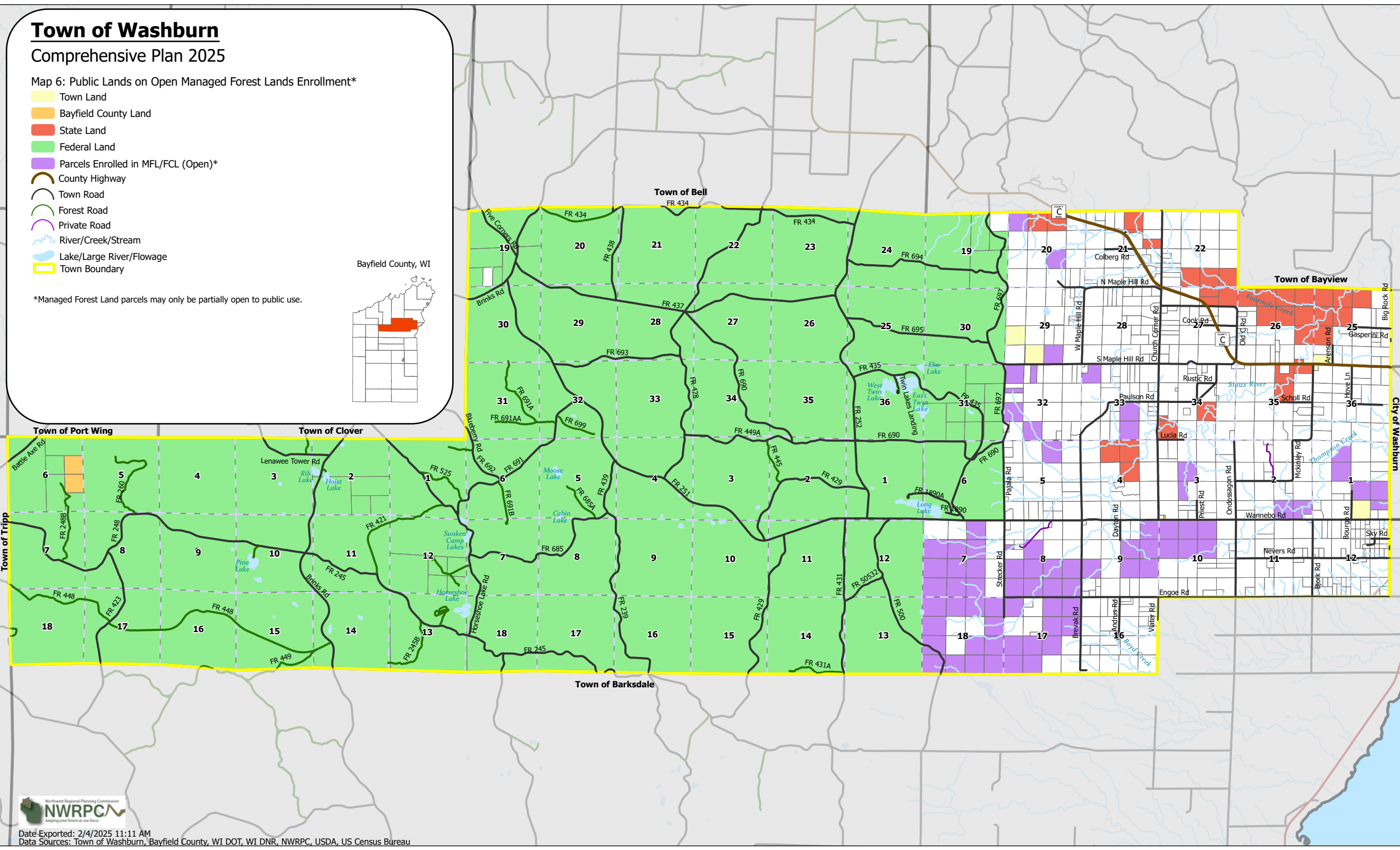
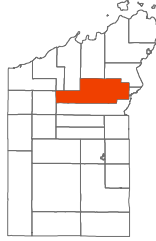
## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 6: Public Lands on Open Managed Forest Lands Enrollment\*

- Town Land
- Bayfield County Land
- State Land
- Federal Land
- Parcels Enrolled in MFL/FCL (Open)\*
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Private Road
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- Town Boundary

\*Managed Forest Land parcels may only be partially open to public use.

Bayfield County, WI



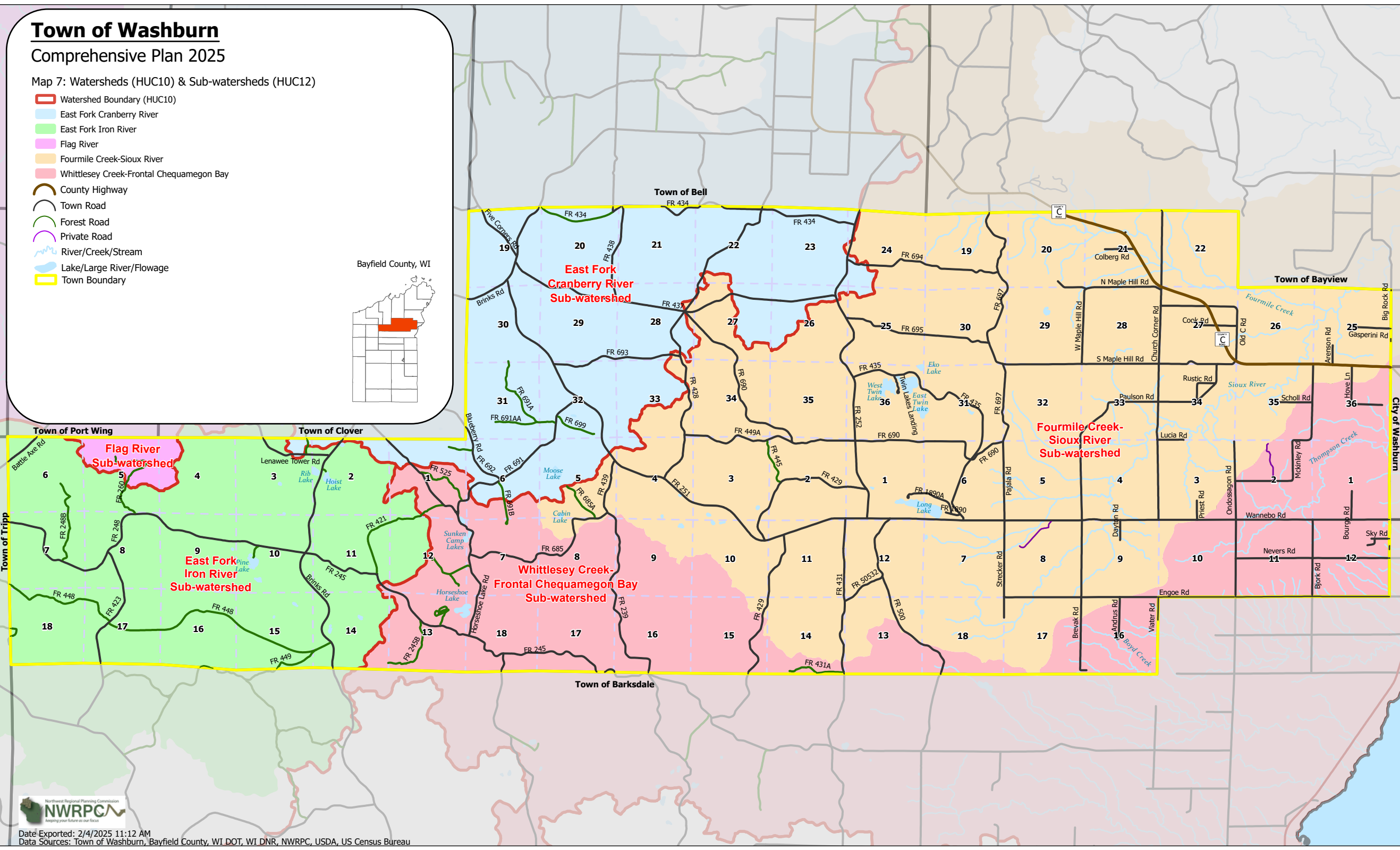
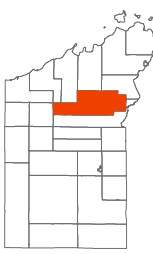
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 7: Watersheds (HUC10) & Sub-watersheds (HUC12)

- Watershed Boundary (HUC10)
- East Fork Cranberry River
- East Fork Iron River
- Flag River
- Fourmile Creek-Sioux River
- Whittlesey Creek-Frontal Chequamegon Bay
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Private Road
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- Town Boundary

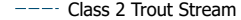
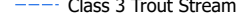
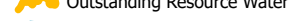
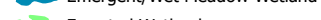
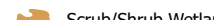





Bayfield County, WI



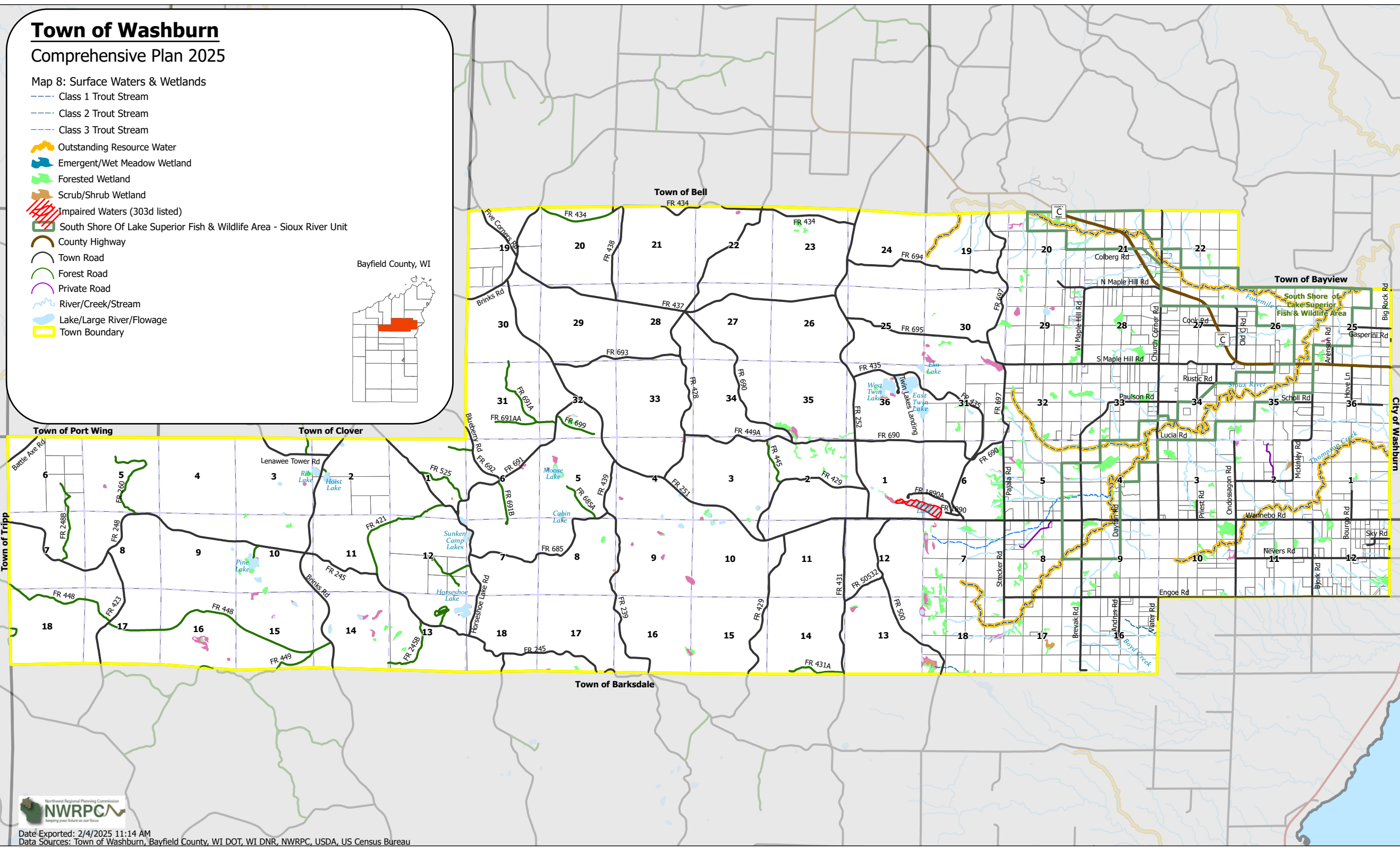
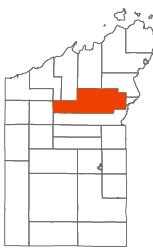
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 8: Surface Waters & Wetlands

-  Class 1 Trout Stream
-  Class 2 Trout Stream
-  Class 3 Trout Stream
-  Outstanding Resource Water
-  Emergent/Wet Meadow Wetland
-  Forested Wetland
-  Scrub/Shrub Wetland
-  Impaired Waters (303d listed)
-  South Shore Of Lake Superior Fish & Wildlife Area - Sioux River Unit
-  County Highway
-  Town Road
-  Forest Road
-  Private Road
-  River/Creek/Stream
-  Lake/Large River/Flowage
-  Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI



## 8. LAND USE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes existing land use patterns in the Town of Washburn and sets forth a plan for future land use that is consistent with the Town's vision. The Town's land use plan guides Town Board members and leaders, the Town Plan Commission, property owners, developers, and other interested parties in decisions relating to the type, location, and density of future development and growth in the community. It also serves as the foundation for updating Bayfield County's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and other implementation tools that apply directly to the Town of Washburn.

### WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT OUR TOWN

When the Town's Planning Task Force asked residents to submit photos of what they love about our Town and of what we can't lose, they sent photos of:

- Natural resources such as the Sioux River, Long Lake, forest trails, wildlife, and wildflowers
- Outdoor activities such as dog-sledding, winter sports, and kayaking
- Vistas of back roads, Chequamegon Bay, the northern lights, farms, and hayfields

These photos reaffirm the feedback expressed about the Town's 2007 comprehensive plan. People live in the Town because of its "rural character." Life in the Town is different from life in the nearby small cities. There is no commercial downtown, no sidewalks, and no public sewer and water lines. Nobody submitted a photo of a mowed lawn with a house prominently visible from the road. Rural character is different from the quality of residential neighborhoods in the City of Washburn.

### LAND USES ARE CHANGING

The way many rural towns have attempted to retain rural character is by controlling density with two- to five-acre minimum lot sizes. In the Town of Washburn, the minimum lot size is 4.5 acres, with a minimum average lot width of 300 feet. The problem with this type of density standard is that what was once a 40-acre farm field or forest becomes eight lots, each with its own driveway extending out to a Town road. Over time, the area begins to look like an oversized version of the city's residential neighborhoods, except there is no sewer and water, and there are no sidewalks near the road. Providing such services as school bus routes becomes inefficient.

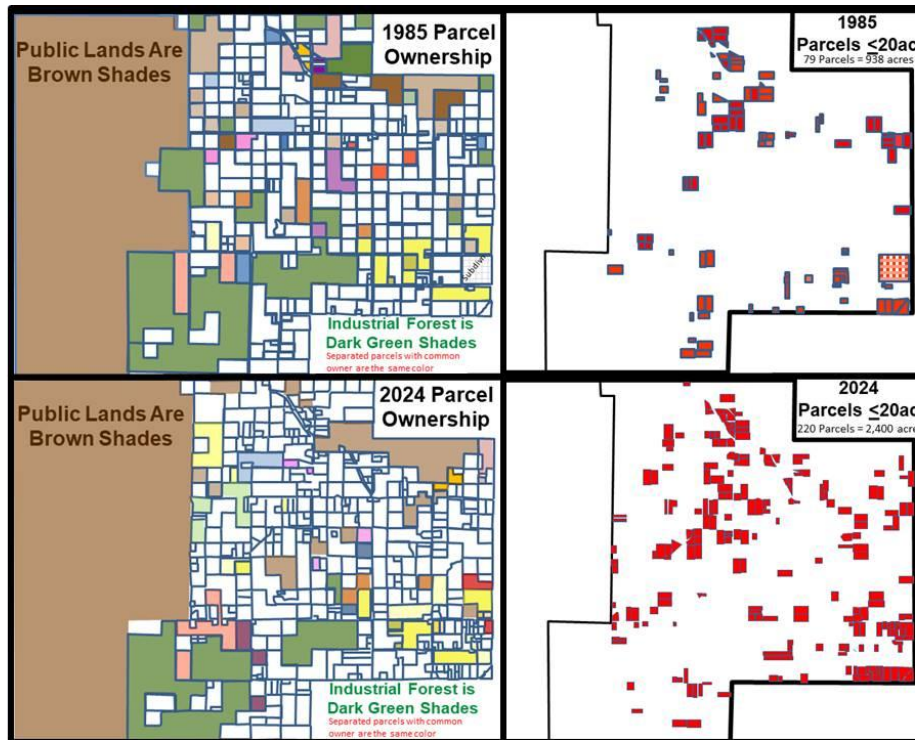
The other problem is that dividing larger lots into 5-acre and 10-acre parcels fragments the landscape. The area available for farming and private forestry decreases over time, and wildlife corridors are blocked. The planning task force reviewed how landownership patterns in the Town have changed over the past forty years (Figure 8-1). For the 27-square-mile area of the Town east of the Chequamegon National Forest, the area of privately owned parcels of 20 acres or less increased from 5% in 79 parcels to 12% in 220 parcels (Figure 8-2). The distribution of fragmented parcels appears random—like a measles outbreak.

Many of the lands that were once small farms are reverting to forest land. The change is apparent when one compares the area of the Town that, in the 1970s, was identified as agricultural on the County Zoning District Map (Map 12) with the area that is now agricultural on the Existing Land Use Map (Map 9). The steady growth in the number of houses in the Town



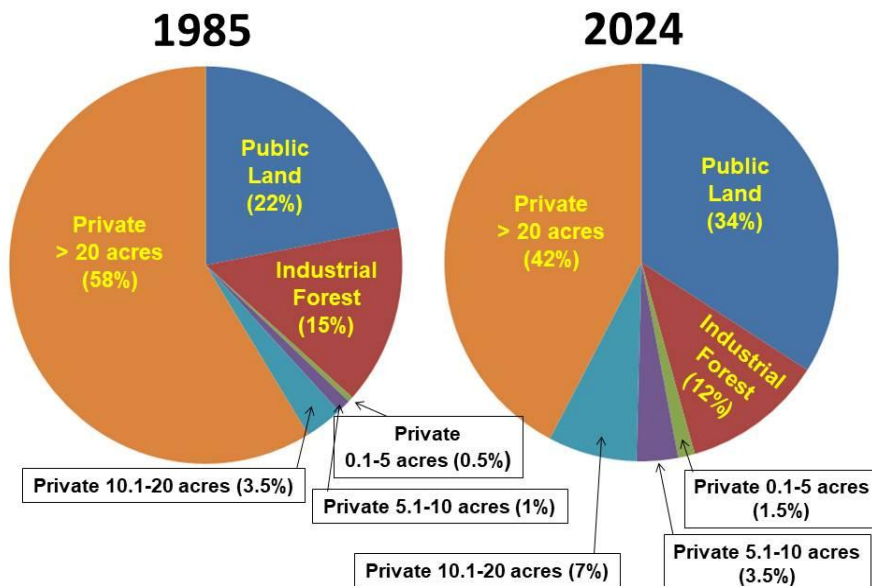
appears to match the growth in the number of fragmented parcels. Since the demand for additional houses in the Town is projected to continue over the next 25 years (Figure 3.1), a challenge for the Town will be to provide ways to encourage new home construction while also retaining the farm and forest landscapes that draw families to live here and that compel elderly residents to age in place in their rural homes.

**Figure 8-1: Differences of 2024 and 1985 Parcel Size in Eastern Part of Town**



**Figure 8-2: Changes in Land Ownership Area**

**Land Ownership Change: Eastern Town of Washburn**



## INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The Town of Washburn's existing land use inventory was prepared by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission based on interpretation of the Town's most recent aerial photographs, parcel data from the Bayfield County Land Records Department, and input from the Town Plan Commission. The existing land use inventory reflects general development patterns and should be used for general planning purposes only. Overall, land use conflicts are minimal, as the community is primarily residential. With limited farming activity, there are virtually no conflicts between agricultural and residential uses. Any potential high-density, commercial, or industrial development would be better suited to the neighboring City of Washburn.

Table 8-1 and Map 9: Existing Land Use provide an overview of the existing land use in the Town of Washburn as of January 2025. The Town features a substantial amount of undeveloped, rural land, much of which is covered in forests and woodlands. Forested areas make up 95% of the Town's total land area, with 24.9% privately owned and 67.7% part of the Federal Forest. State-owned lands, also primarily woodlands, account for 2.2%, while county-owned lands make up 0.1%. Agricultural land is the next largest category, covering 4.2%, followed by residential land, which comprises 0.4% of the Town's area.

**Table 8-1: Existing Land Use 2025**

Land Use Classification	Acres	% of Town
Rural Residential	214.8	0.4%
Agricultural	2,225.6	4.2%
Institutional	182.4	0.3%
Extraction	36.3	0.07%
Utility	19.6	0.04%
Private Forest/Open Space	13,312.2	24.5%
Conservation	37,527.9	70.1%

Source: Northwest Regional Planning Commission

## CONSERVATION

Approximately 70.1% of the Town is dedicated to conservation and public recreation uses, including lands managed by Bayfield County, the State of Wisconsin, and the U.S. Forest Service. The U.S. Forest Service oversees most of the forest area in the western two-thirds of the Town, which is part of the expansive Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, covering much of Bayfield County. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources owns select parcels, with notable sites including access points to the Sioux River and Four Mile Creek. The State also holds over 560 acres near the northeast corner of the Town, designated as a protected forest reserve. The Town also includes 80 acres of Bayfield County Forest.

## PRIVATE FOREST/OPEN SPACE

Comprising approximately 24.9% of the Town, this includes private forest lands, many of which are either reserved for or currently undergoing managed tree harvesting or logging operations, as well as other areas not intensively developed for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. It is expected that many, if not most, new residences in the Town will be built in these areas. Additionally, residents of the Town and surrounding communities have access to a privately owned soccer field at the Kirsten farmstead, located at 29060 County Highway C.

## **RURAL RESIDENTIAL**

Comprising approximately 0.4% of the Town's land use, low density is the primary characteristic of residential development in the Town of Washburn. Due to the abundant open space and undeveloped land, particularly in the eastern third of the Town, both year-round and seasonal homes are scattered throughout. One of the more noticeable, denser developments is located near the southeast corner, known locally as Chequamegon Heights. This development situated off Sky Road and Chequamegon Heights Road (north half of Section 12, Township 49 North, Range 5 West) stands out as a more concentrated residential area.

## **AGRICULTURAL**

Approximately 4.2% of the Town is dedicated to agricultural purposes. While the Town is considered "rural," agricultural activities are somewhat limited. One of the largest farming operations in the area is Tetzner's Farm, located at 30455 Nevers Road, which operates a dairy farm with over 100 milking cows. The Tetzners also run a creamery and retail outlet, where they sell bagged milk and ice cream to the public. Several smaller farms in the Town primarily focus on hay production, with some also growing vegetables, berries, mushrooms, and row crops. Other agricultural activities include beekeeping, livestock farming (horses, beef cattle, hogs, and sheep), and the production of flowers, bedding plants, eggs, and cannabidiol (CBD).

## **INSTITUTIONAL**

Approximately 0.3% of the Town is designated for institutional use. A key institutional site is the 3-acre Town Hall, located off County Highway C. The Town Hall serves as the primary venue for local government meetings, including those of the Town Board and Plan Commission. It also functions as the main polling/voting station and can be used as a meeting space for residents upon request. Directly east of the Town Hall is the large, well-maintained Town garage, which houses the public works offices, vehicles, and equipment. The Town owns and maintains a parcel across the road, which is used for outdoor salt and sand storage as well as unused equipment storage. The Town also owns and controls another site, an abandoned landfill, located near 26000 South Maple Hill Road.

## **EXTRACTION**

The Town owns and controls a 35.3-acre site (approximately 0.07% of Town land use) at the northeast corner of Wannebo Road and Bourgo Road, which is used or designated as a sand and gravel pit. In addition, there are three private sand and gravel pits in the Town.

## **UTILITY**

Utility uses include land designated for telecommunication infrastructure, encompassing approximately 0.04% of the Town's land use.

## **WATER FEATURES & RESOURCES**

The Town is blessed to have a number of significant water features spread throughout or running through it. There are eight named lakes, totaling approximately 100 surface acres, all located in the Chequamegon National Forest. These lakes include Long Lake, Moose Lake, Horseshoe Lake, Hoist Lake, Rib Lake, Pine Lake, and Twin Lakes. Most of these lakes offer or support many outdoor recreational activities, such as boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, swimming, hiking, picnicking, and camping. The Town of Washburn's streams, creeks, and drainages are in the eastern third of the Town. Important flowing surface waters in the Town include the Sioux River, Four Mile Creek, Thompson Creek, Bono Creek, Boyd Creek, and North Whittlesey Creek. The Sioux River, Four Mile Creek, Thompson Creek, and Bono Creek

are classified as Class I or II trout waters. (Note: More information on these important water resources is highlighted in Chapter 7: Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources).

## **LAND USE STANDARDS & DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning legislation requires that, after January 1, 2010, any official mapping, subdivision regulations, and zoning ordinance actions by a local governmental unit must be consistent with that unit's comprehensive plan. Due to the relatively low amount of new development expected over the next 20 years, and the fact that most of this development will likely involve typical single-family residential units, a town like Washburn can maintain development requirements and standards through zoning provisions and other reasonable land use regulations. The following information outlines the current standards and requirements that impact the existing and future land uses in the Town.

### **Bayfield County Standards and Requirements**

Zoning laws were created to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of a community. General zoning regulates land use, lot sizes, and the height and bulk of structures. It may also establish standards for various types of development and construction activities. Zoning is an effective and widely accepted tool for regulating land use and ensuring orderly development.

Bayfield County enacted its initial countywide zoning in 1934 and revised the ordinance in the 1970s to include shoreland provisions. The Town of Washburn adopted the Bayfield County Zoning Ordinance on June 7, 1990. By adopting this ordinance, land use regulations in the Town of Washburn are now administered by the Bayfield County Planning and Zoning Department. In 2024 and 2025, the department initiated a process to rewrite the county zoning and subdivision ordinances comprehensively.

The Town of Washburn has the authority to veto county zoning changes, as outlined in Wis. Stat. § 59.69(5)(e)3. Known as the "10-day rule," this authority allows the Town to disapprove and reject proposed amendments to county zoning ordinances under certain circumstances. However, these rights must be exercised according to statutory procedures and do not apply to shoreland zoning or the zoning of county-owned lands. All other zoning permit activities, standards, and requirements are administered at the discretion of the county. These activities include the issuance of conditional use permits (special exceptions), special use permits, variances, and building and sanitary permits.

Wisconsin counties have the authority to regulate subdivisions under Chapter 236 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The Bayfield County Subdivision Control Code outlines the standards by which the county reviews proposed subdivisions in unincorporated areas. The Town of Washburn must approve any proposed subdivision. The Bayfield County Zoning Ordinance includes a map and associated text. The ordinance contains 14 districts, each with a set of standards and requirements outlined in the ordinance text. The following four zoning districts currently govern the Town of Washburn, and Table 8-2 (on the next page) provides specific land use standards within these districts (Map 13).

### **Bayfield County Zoning Districts**

**F-1 Forestry-1:** This district is to provide continuation for forestry programs and to permit compatible recreational development. Single-family dwellings and other permanent residential dwellings require a special use permit and Town Board approval.

**F-2 Forestry-2:** This district is to provide for large contiguous tracts that may be used primarily for forestry programs. No residential structures are allowed under this zone.



**A-1 Agricultural-1:** This district is designed to provide areas for general agriculture and to prevent the encroachment of scattered commercial and industrial enterprises and small lot residential development. Farm related residences in this district are permitted uses. Non- farm related residences require a special use permit and Town Board approval.

**W-Conservancy:** This district is intended to be used to prevent destruction or alteration of natural or manmade resources which are considered to have valuable ecological or aesthetic assets. All efforts should be made in these areas to preserve the qualities for which they have been set aside.

**Table 8-2: Bayfield County Zoning District Requirements**

For the Zoning Department to issue a Land Use Permit, the following dimensions are required.			Minimum Side and Rear Yards Setbacks	
Zoning District	Minimum Area	Minimum Average Width	Principal Building	Accessory Building
R-RB, R-1	30,000 sq. ft.	150-ft.	10'	10'
F-1, R-2, A-1	4.5 acres	300-ft.	75'	30'
R-3	2 acres	200-ft.	20'	20'
F-2, A-2	35 acres	1,200-ft.	75'	30'
I, C	20,000 sq. ft.	100-ft.	5'	5'
R-4 (sewer & water)	10,000 sq. ft.	75-ft.	10'	10'
R-4 (sewer only)	15,000 sq. ft.	75-ft.	10'	10'
R-4 (water only)	20,000 sq. ft.	100-ft.	10'	10'

**Note: All Lots/Parcels must have legal access from public roads and comply with Article C, Section 14140 Survey and Recording Requirements.**

At this time, residential dwellings within the Town of Washburn are only permitted or allowed in the A-1 Agricultural and F-1 Forestry Districts. The Town Plan Commission has indicated their desire to keep these zoning districts intact for now; therefore, the minimum (lot) areas will remain at 4.5 acres/unit.

**Town of Washburn Standards and Requirements**

The Town of Washburn has a private driveway/road ordinance in place. This ordinance requires property owners to submit an application outlining the request, location, width, and length of any driveways or private roads to the Town Board for consideration and approval. The Town encourages property owners to consider shared driveways where appropriate, especially in areas where terrain or topographical conditions may necessitate shared facilities.

**Shoreland-Wetland Zoning**

The Shoreland/Wetland Overlay District is created to accomplish the objectives contained in Ch. NR 115, Wis. Adm. Code, and Title 13, Chapter 3 of Bayfield County Code of Ordinances. The Bayfield County shoreland/wetland zoning ordinance establishes development standards for lands within the shoreland areas. Shorelands are defined as lands within the following distances from the ordinary high-water mark of navigable waters: one thousand (1,000) feet from a lake, pond, or flowage and three hundred (300) feet from a river or stream or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

These standards are based on the Bayfield County Lakes Classification System, which assigns each waterbody in the county into one of three classes (I, II, III). The lakes

classification rating is based on the individual characteristics of each lake, with class I lakes requiring minimum protection and class III needing the most. Mapped wetlands larger than five acres are also regulated under this ordinance.

All of the lakes within the Town are located inside the Chequamegon National Forest area, and as indicated previously in this section, no residential structures are allowed under the F-2 Zoning. However, several protected rivers and streams do meander throughout the eastern third of the Town where housing is currently situated or planned for, and setback and buffer protections are critical for ensuring the continued protection from the harmful effects of developments near these environmentally sensitive waterways. The Town is fully committed to ensuring that existing and future development in and around these protected rivers and streams are made to meet these important standards. The county setback distance of 75 feet from navigable waters often is too little to prevent development on steep, erodible slopes of the ravines that surround streams and tributaries.

### **Wetland Setbacks**

A setback of 25 feet is required on all mapped wetlands 2 acres or greater.

### **Floodplain Zoning**

The Bayfield County Floodplain Zoning Ordinance regulates zoning in floodplains along county waterways. Floodplain districts are based on Flood Hazard Boundary Maps produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and approved by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The Bayfield County Floodplain Zoning districts include: the Floodway District (FW), Flood Fringe District (FF), and General Floodplain District (GF). Areas that are susceptible or prone to flooding must be clearly identified and regulated to prevent future or expanded developments in these flood zones or districts.

### **Sanitary and Private Sewage Code**

The Sanitary and Private Sewage Code regulates the location, construction, installation, alteration, design, and use of all private onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS) in the County.

### **Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is the agency responsible for regulating nonmetallic mining in the state. Chapter NR 135, Wis. Adm. Code, defines the standards for reclamation and restoration of state nonmetallic mining operations. The county ordinance implements these required standards for Bayfield County.

### **Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law**

The Managed Forest Law (MFL) and Forest Crop Law (FCL) programs are designed to incentivize sustainable forestry practices on private land. Administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, these programs offer reduced property taxes for landowners who commit to responsible forest management. While the FCL program, enacted in 1927, closed for new enrollments on January 1, 1986, the MFL program remains open for enrollment. Landowners in the MFL program can choose whether to make their land open or closed to public access.

As of February 7, 2024, the Town of Washburn has 3,844 acres of forestland enrolled in these programs. Of that, 2,933 acres are open to the public, while 951 acres are closed to public access. The Public Lands Map (Map 6) highlights the MFL and FCL lands in the WDNR program.

## LIMITATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Washburn's future development will likely focus on residential growth, but several key factors will shape and limit the extent and nature of this development. Natural features, such as wetlands, floodplains, creeks, ravines, steep slopes, and important agricultural soils, should serve as key considerations when deciding where new residential development can take place. It's crucial that development does not harm these significant natural resources, and further details can be found in Chapter 7: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources.

In addition to natural constraints, other practical limitations may impact the Town's ability to accommodate new development. Areas that lack access to affordable or efficient community services and utilities will be less suitable for expansion. Furthermore, regions with poor soil conditions, which may hinder the proper installation of septic systems and wells, will present challenges for residential growth. As these factors are taken into account, the Town will aim to foster responsible development while preserving the integrity of its natural landscape.

### Contaminated Sites and Landfills

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources maintains a registry that tracks known hazardous waste or contaminated sites across the state. This registry includes sites where solid or hazardous waste has been, or may have been, deposited. It's important to note that being included on the registry does not necessarily mean there are current or future environmental concerns at these locations.

Within the Town of Washburn, there are a total of five sites that are either closed or still under environmental review. These sites have been classified as either former hazardous waste locations or are still in the process of investigation. They include:

- **Town of Washburn Abandoned Landfill** (located off South Maple Hill Road) – A closed landfill.
- **Irene Teschner Property ERP (Environmental Repair Program)** – An open site under review for environmental concerns.
- **Dupont Cabin Lake – Cladding Site (FR 685)** – An open ERP site with ongoing environmental review.

Additionally, there are two other sites that involve **Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST)**, which are also being monitored or investigated for potential contamination.

These sites are being managed through appropriate programs, such as the ERP and LUST programs, and are subject to continued oversight to ensure any environmental risks are addressed.

### Redevelopment and “Smart Growth Areas”

Under Wisconsin Chapter 66.1001 comprehensive planning legislation, local communities are encouraged to explore and plan for redevelopment opportunities, including infill housing, brownfield sites, and obsolete buildings. Brownfield sites are typically locations that may have contamination concerns, which could potentially inhibit development due to unknown costs or liabilities associated with remediation. Additionally, state law requires communities to identify potential "smart growth areas" where development and redevelopment can occur. These areas typically have existing infrastructure and services in place, making them more efficient and cost-effective for development. Smart growth areas are often adjacent to existing development, where development can occur at densities that minimize public service costs.

In the case of the Town of Washburn, there are no identified "brownfield" sites, and due to the rural residential character of the community with large lots, there are no specific areas or parcels designated for redevelopment in this comprehensive plan. The Town's focus will likely remain on maintaining its rural character while encouraging appropriate, low-density development in areas where services and infrastructure are already available or can be reasonably provided.

## LAND SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The Town of Washburn is characterized by a significant amount of vacant, rural, and undeveloped land, particularly in the eastern one-third of the area. This land includes private agricultural and forested properties, offering a range of potential for future development. As discussed earlier, some of this available land is not well suited for certain types of future development, particularly residential developments. In addition, some land is in higher demand, and consequently more valuable, than other land. For example, properties with mineral resources, forestry products, or some with good views of Lake Superior or river valleys, may command higher land values. Nevertheless, the supply of available land in the Town of Washburn far exceeds the anticipated demand for future general residential development.

The Town of Washburn has many attractive qualities, making it a desirable place to live, work, and recreate. Its proximity to natural amenities such as Chequamegon National Forest and Lake Superior, along with the numerous trails, parks, trout streams, and rivers, and the overall low population density represents the kinds of amenities people seek. These factors will help drive the demand for residential land within the community, maintain affordable and reasonable property values, and help attract more residents to the community.

A general picture of land prices in the Town can be obtained by reviewing the Bayfield County records online to determine assessed land values. However, it should be noted that the assessed value is generally considerably lower than the market value of land.

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The future land use plan is one of the most important tools and resources for providing the Town of Washburn's guide to future land use decision-making. More importantly, the land use plan provides a guide for ensuring that existing and future uses will be compatible with each other, co-exist in relative harmony, and provide a balanced synergy between all land uses. The plan also provides a guide to steer future growth away from areas of the community where natural constraints such as wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains and protected streams and rivers exist.

## PROJECTED LAND USE TRENDS

As the Town of Washburn plans for its future, several emerging trends will likely shape its land use patterns. These trends reflect broader regional and statewide shifts seen in rural towns with slight population growth or expansion. Below are some key trends identified by the Town:

- **Continued Demand for Rural Housing:** The demand for rural housing will persist, especially as more people seek out parcels of land in less densely populated areas. The desire for privacy, proximity to nature, and a slower pace of life will drive this demand.
- **Loss of Agricultural Lands:** Agricultural lands in Washburn will continue to transition into residential or recreational uses. While this trend is ongoing, the Town aims to minimize the loss of agricultural land to maintain its rural character and preserve local farming activities.

- **Stable Population but Increased Housing Demand:** Even though the Town's population is projected to remain relatively stable, the demand for housing will continue to grow. This increase in housing demand may be fueled by seasonal residents, new residents seeking rural living, or retirees wishing to age in place.
- **Proximity to Job Centers:** Washburn's proximity to job centers and access to well-maintained transportation routes will make the area increasingly attractive for residential development. People will continue to move to the Town for the balance of quiet rural living with easy access to urban opportunities.
- **Aging Population and Housing Needs for Elderly Residents:** As the proportion of residents in their 70s and 80s rises, there will likely be an increased demand for housing suitable for elderly residents. This could include modifications to existing homes or new construction designed to accommodate aging in place, such as homes with wider doors, fewer stairs, and accessibility features.
- **Increase in Seasonal Residents and Tourism:** Seasonal residents and tourists are expected to grow in number, drawn to the natural beauty and recreational opportunities in the area. This will likely increase seasonal housing development and may lead to conversions of these properties into year-round residences.
- **Traffic Increases:** With more residents and visitors, traffic on local roads will likely rise. This will necessitate improvements to the roadway infrastructure to ensure accessibility for all.
- **Outdoor Recreation Appeal:** The Town's lakes, rivers, campgrounds, and trails will continue to attract visitors, and some may even consider relocating to the area for a lifestyle centered around outdoor recreation.
- **Rising Land Prices and Property Taxes:** Land prices and property taxes are expected to rise, reflecting the increasing demand for land in Washburn. This trend is consistent with broader real estate patterns in rural areas that are becoming more desirable as places to live and retire.
- **More Seasonal Housing and Conversions to Year-Round Residences:** The Town may see an increase in seasonal housing units, which could eventually be converted into year-round homes as people seek permanent residence in rural areas.
- **Home-Based Businesses and Telecommuting:** With advances in technology and better access to internet services, more residents may choose to work from home. This trend will allow people to live in the Town of Washburn while working for companies located elsewhere, supporting the growth of home-based businesses.

These trends highlight the evolution of land use in the Town of Washburn and suggests that the Town will need to balance residential development with the preservation of its rural and agricultural character. Planning for future development will need to take into account these factors while maintaining the aspects of Washburn that make it an attractive place to live and visit.

## PROJECTED LAND DEMAND

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law requires this plan to include future projections for residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial land uses in 5-year increments for the next 20 years, based on the plan's background information (Table 8-4). Historic trends derived from assessment statistics were used to estimate future residential and agricultural land demand. No commercial or industrial land use is predicted through the year 2045.

**Table 8-3: Future Land Use Projections 2025-2045**

Projected Land Demand	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	Acre Change 2025-2045
Residential	214.8	215.3	220.3	222.4	228.5	13.7
Agricultural	2,225.6	2,222.0	2,218.8	2,215.5	2,210.3	(-15.3)
Commercial	0	0	0	0	0	-
Industrial	0	0	0	0	0	-

Source: Northwest Regional Planning Commission

## POTENTIAL LAND USE CONFLICTS

Within the Town of Washburn, agricultural, rural residential, and forestry uses have coexisted for many years with relatively little conflict. Anyone traveling through the Town would soon witness several small rural residential acreages, mixed in with a scattering of larger farmsteads and fields, or the occasional private forest or stand of trees awaiting harvest, or the ever-present National Forest area. Traditionally, communities experience land use conflicts when a more intense use (for example, a commercial or industrial use) produces excessive noise, traffic, odors, or other problems that adversely affect a less intense use (for example, a residential use). These sorts of conflicts do not appear to be a major problem in the Town. One of the goals of the comprehensive plan is to reduce the potential for land use conflicts.

In rural environments, such as the Town of Washburn, land use conflicts typically fall into two categories:

- 1) conflicts with the individual landowner or between neighboring landowners, or
- 2) uses and activities that may be considered undesirable to the community.

Potential land use conflicts may arise when residential development encroaches on agricultural areas. These conflicts typically reflect differences or inconsistencies between individual landowners, as both agricultural and residential uses are generally considered 'desirable' by the Town.

The second type of land use conflict arises when a proposed use goes against the preferences of the larger community. For instance, a proposed communication tower, sand and gravel operation, or outdoor commercial recreation facility may face widespread opposition. These conflicts can be difficult to avoid entirely, especially given the complexities of existing regulations and the involvement of multiple jurisdictions. A key tool for minimizing conflict is to establish clear growth and development policies and ensure a thorough review process for development proposals. The land use map serves as an illustrative, user-friendly guide to identifying preferred land uses and activities throughout the Town. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan should outline goals, objectives, and policies that provide a framework for evaluating future proposals and establishing criteria or performance standards.

### Examples of Potential Land Use Conflicts

- Communication towers or facilities
- Utility lines or new corridors
- Landfills
- Excessive or obtrusive home-based businesses

- Dilapidated/vacant/ and/or seasonal dwellings next to new or well-maintained or single-family dwellings
- Commercial/recreation lodges or facilities
- ATV/UTV/snowmobile trails in pristine, tranquil environments
- Sand and gravel/mining operations
- Transportation and related facilities
- Large-scale animal farms/stables/ranches
- Manufacturing or industrial operations

The Town of Washburn has been very attentive and diligent in its approach to providing a future land use plan, map and strategy that identifies and minimizes the potential for land use conflicts. To continue to reduce the potential for conflict, the Town should remain cognizant of changes in planning and development requirements of adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions. Furthermore, the Town should continue to communicate with neighbors and with the county on land use issues and policy.

### **FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

The Town of Washburn's "Future Land Use Plan" map, shown in Map 10: Future Land Use, outlines a general vision for land use and preferred development patterns for the Town's future. This map serves as a guide for residents, Town officials, and Bayfield County. Along with the land use category descriptions and development guidelines found in Chapter 10: Implementation, it will be used to evaluate future development proposals.

It is important to note that the Future Land Use Map is not a Zoning Map and does not change the existing zoning on individual properties. Therefore, landowners can continue to use their properties in accordance with the Bayfield County Zoning Ordinance provisions.

The Future Land Use Map is intended to be used by the Town of Washburn's Plan Commission and Town Board to review and evaluate future land use proposals. The map, along with the supporting narrative, should guide the Town in reviewing rezoning requests, land divisions, and other development applications, helping to make informed recommendations to the Town Board. Additionally, Bayfield County officials should consider both the map and narrative when making land use decisions and base any future zoning amendments on the provisions outlined in this document.

### **How the Map was Developed**

The Town Plan Commission and Task Force followed these guidelines to prepare the Future Land Use Map:

- **Retain Existing Agricultural Land:** Farming and agricultural products are vital to both the Town and the broader Chequamegon Bay area. The Town encourages the community to support local producers and purchase locally grown food.
- **Concentrate New Rural Residential Lots:** New rural residential lots should be situated near existing development on paved roads, particularly on the east side of the Town. This area is more accessible for school buses and emergency response vehicles. Whenever possible, new residential lots should make use of shared driveways with safe access points to Town roads.

- **Preserve Headwaters of Trout Streams:** The Town aims to retain the unfragmented block of forestland at the headwaters of its trout streams. These headwater areas are essential for maintaining stable water flow and minimizing sedimentation in these high-quality streams.
- **Preserve Large Parcels of Forestland:** The Town will work to retain large, intact parcels of forestland, preventing further fragmentation into small five- and ten-acre parcels. To accommodate housing demand, the Town encourages creating clusters of smaller residential lots in areas suitable for development while preserving the surrounding forest and agricultural uses.

### **Sensitive and Transitional Areas**

The Comprehensive Planning Committee chose to highlight certain areas on the Future Land Use Map as **Sensitive Areas** and **Transitional Areas** within the developable portion of the Town (the eastern one-third) (Map 11: Future Land Use (With Sensitive & Transitional Overlays)).

**Sensitive Areas** are defined as: *Areas that are prone to erosion problems and generally unsuitable for development. These areas are at risk of mass soil erosion and severe gully erosion unless proper safeguards are implemented. Changes in upstream watersheds (such as housing, roads, and other impervious surfaces) can degrade stable channels in these areas. The best practice for these areas is to maintain permanent forest cover.*

**Transitional Areas** are defined as: *Soils in these areas have limitations for certain types of development. They are typically characterized by sandy soils over clay, often seasonally wet. Excavations in these soils are prone to cave-ins. These areas are generally not suitable for septic field development and may require alternative sanitary systems, such as mound systems. Roads in these areas are often prone to break-up and may contain unstable wet zones. Some groundwater recharge to the aquifer occurs in these areas.*

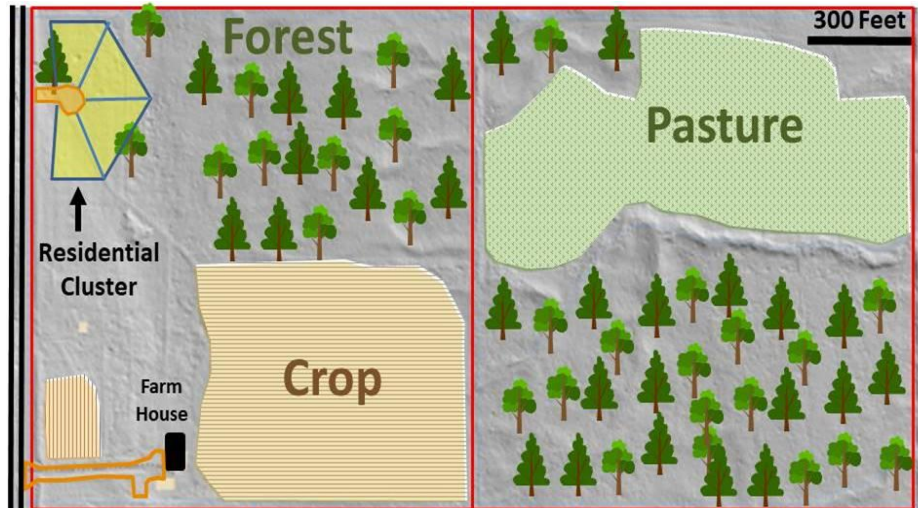
Sensitive areas are areas of very fragile soils that are highly prone to erosion. Development of these areas is not recommended. The best use of these areas is to remain in natural forest cover. Transitional areas are not intended to preclude development or activities on those properties or parcels that may be affected by these overlay areas. However, they represent environmentally sensitive areas throughout the Town that may need added protection and/or careful analysis prior to undertaking any form of development. Any development or activity in these areas should require the Town Plan Commission or Town Board oversight and approval, to be evaluated on an individual basis during the review process.

### **LIMITING FUTURE FRAGMENTATION OF LARGER PARCELS**

As part of Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation/Working Lands Initiative, the State created a model zoning ordinance that allows retention of functioning farmlands and forestlands while accommodating additional housing development in small clusters in an appropriate portion of a larger lot. Many counties have adopted this system as part of their farmland preservation plans. The ordinance allows the creation of up to four non-farm residences occupying no more than five percent of the base lot area. In the example in Figure 8-3, a farmer manages an 80-acre parcel with 28 acres in production as pasture and crop lands. Most of the remaining land is forested. In this example, the owner could potentially create a cluster of four 1-acre residential lots in a corner of the property on relatively level land near a Town road. Rather than viewing lots in a rural subdivision, the homes in this cluster can have guaranteed views of farms and forest because no further subdivision of the 80-acre base parcel may occur.



Figure 8-3: Farmland Preservation Zoning Example



## PRESERVING THE BEAUTY OF THE NIGHT SKY

You know your town has rural character when your neighbor says, “Please call me at any time of night when the northern lights are active.” Families and neighbors step outside and stand in awe of the starlit sky. A comet may be blazing just above the horizon, or a meteor shower may provide an evening’s entertainment rather than streaming a late-night program indoors.

All this joy can be destroyed when a neighbor installs bright outdoor lights that shine outward or upward and that glare toward neighbors or produce “sky glow” that washes out a view of the stars. There are several steps communities can take to provide visibility and security without “trespassing” on neighbors’ night sky experience. Well-designed light fixtures direct lighting downward and do not require as much energy or as lengthy a time of operation.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**Ch. 8 – Goal 1: Land use patterns and development preserves rural character and environmental quality.**

**Objective 8.1:** Land parcels of 35 and more acres remain largely intact.

**Objective 8.2:** New construction occurs on lands best suited for development and near roads best suited for increased traffic.

**Objective 8.3:** New construction, driveways, land clearing, and pastures are set back from steep slopes and drainages feeding area streams.

**Objective 8.4:** Property owners develop and manage their land in a fashion consistent with the Town’s rural character.

**Ch. 8 – Goal 2: Promote and encourage sustainable forest management practices on private and public lands in the Town of Washburn.**

**Objective 8.5:** Explore or develop land use standards that provide for the creation and maintenance of aesthetic buffers or vegetative/wooded natural screening for residences from local roadways.

**Objective 8.6:** Educate and make available information on proper forest management practices from county, state and federal agencies and private development and/or logging organizations and develop and encourage a sustainable forest management practice for the Town.

**Objective 8.10:** Encourage the retention of large blocks of forested lands that are not fragmented by residential or other developments.

**Objective 8.11:** Promote cooperation of loggers and U.S. Forest Service in maintaining Town roads.

**Ch. 8 – Goal 4: Promote and encourage local businesses that are compatible with the rural character of the Town of Washburn.**

**Objective 8.12:** Promote and approve home-based businesses that are not obtrusive or may cause disturbances to the surrounding properties or harm the natural environment.

**Objective 8.13:** Encourage the location of commercial and light industrial developments within the nearby City of Washburn.

**Objective 8.14:** Limit or restrict the placement of any signs and billboards throughout the Town.

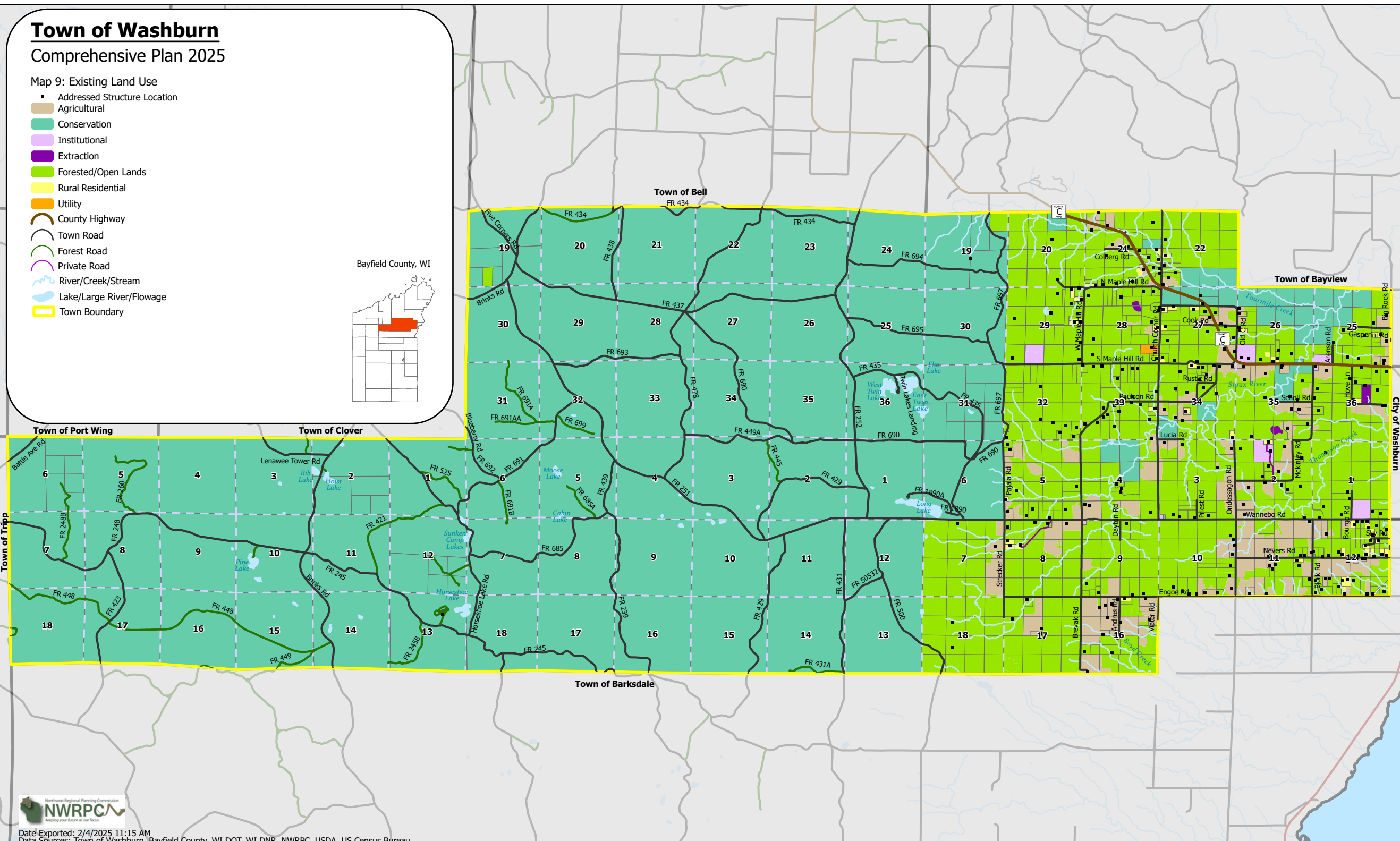
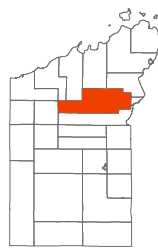
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 9: Existing Land Use

- Addressed Structure Location
- Agricultural
- Conservation
- Institutional
- Extraction
- Forested/Open Lands
- Rural Residential
- Utility
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Private Road
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI



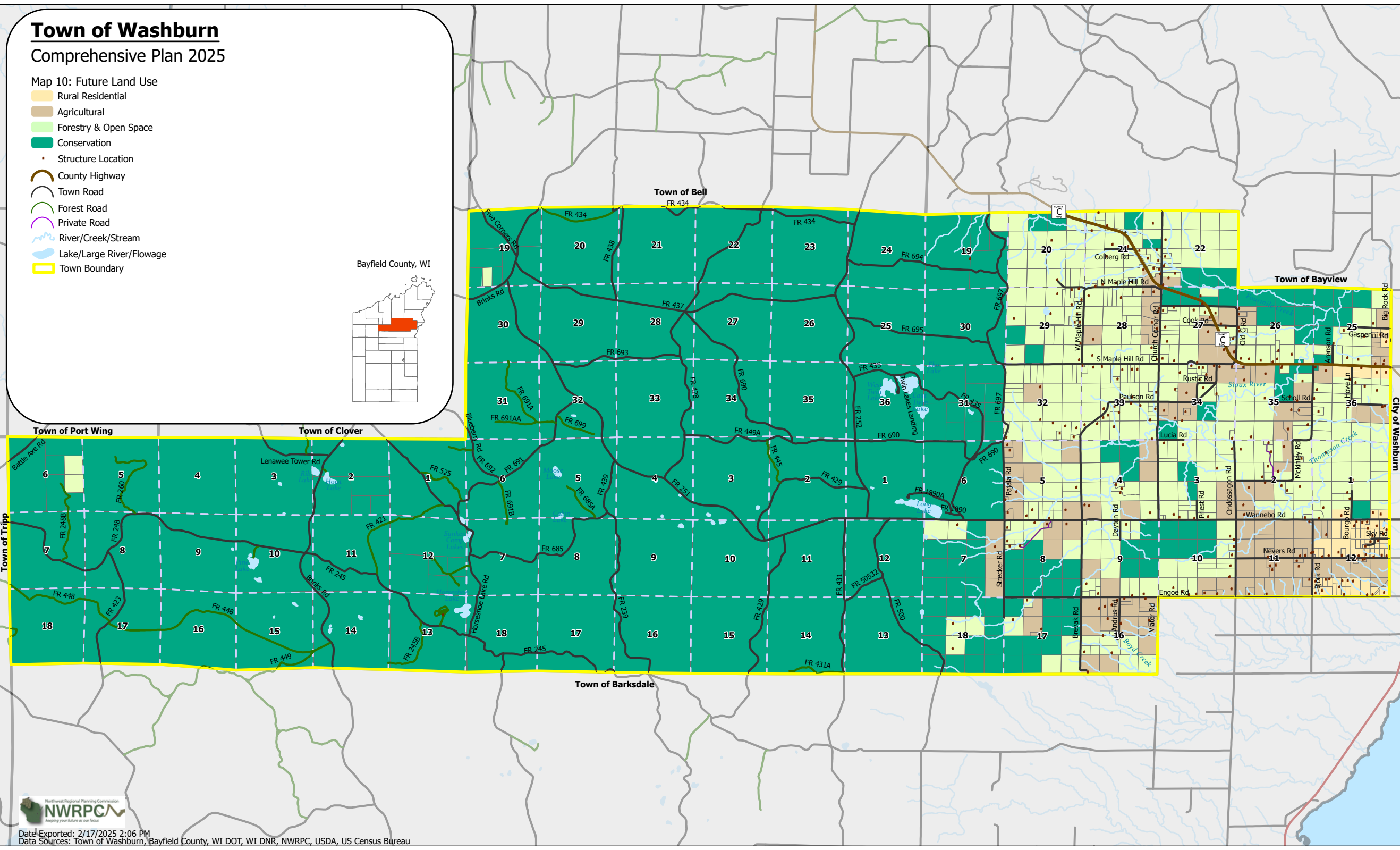
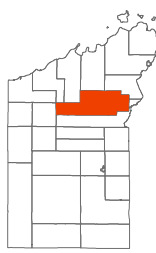
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 10: Future Land Use

- Rural Residential
- Agricultural
- Forestry & Open Space
- Conservation
- Structure Location
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Private Road
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI





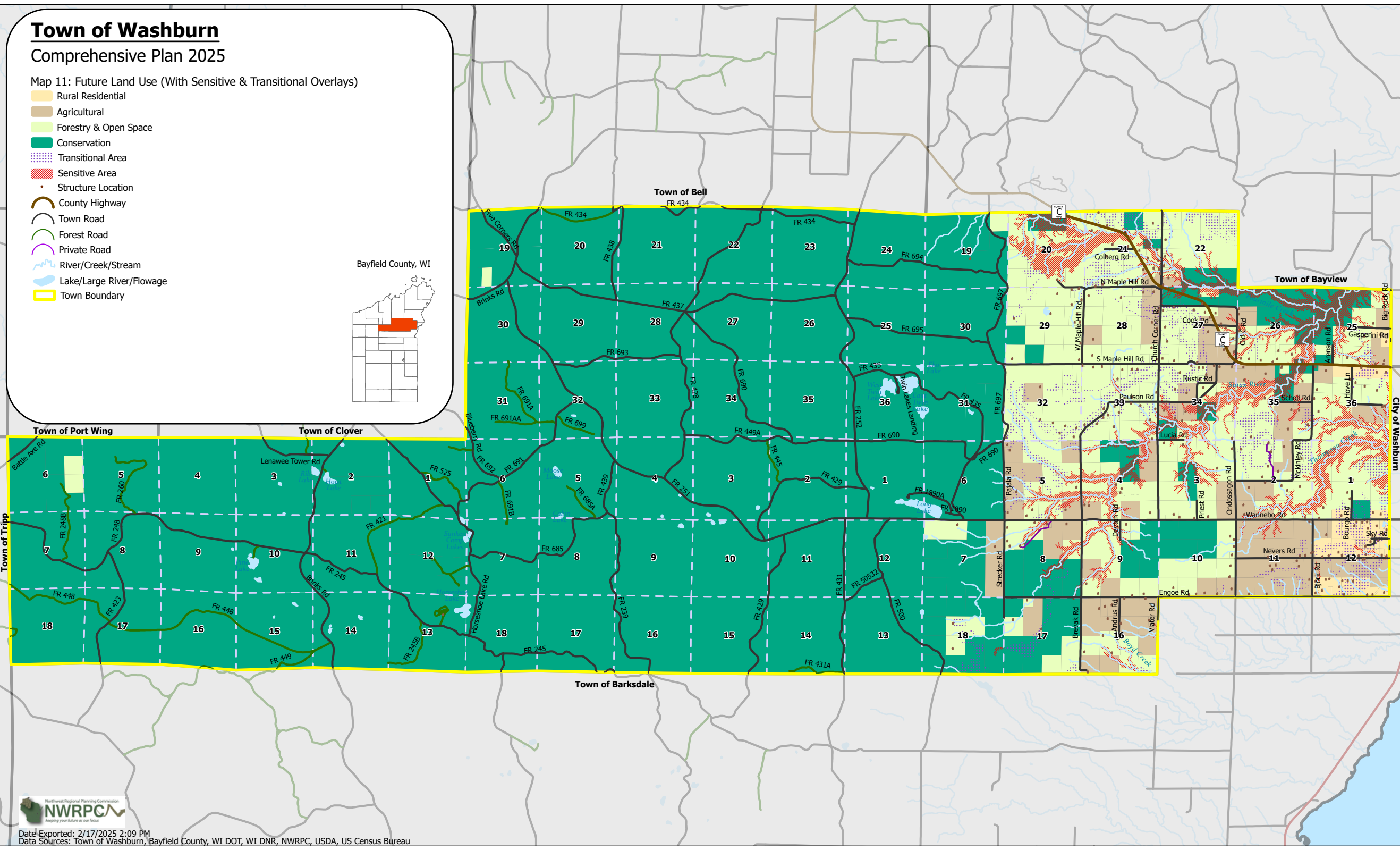
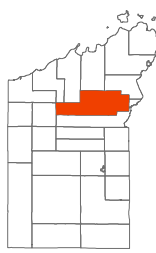
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 11: Future Land Use (With Sensitive & Transitional Overlays)

- Rural Residential
- Agricultural
- Forestry & Open Space
- Conservation
- Transitional Area
- Sensitive Area
- Structure Location
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Private Road
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI



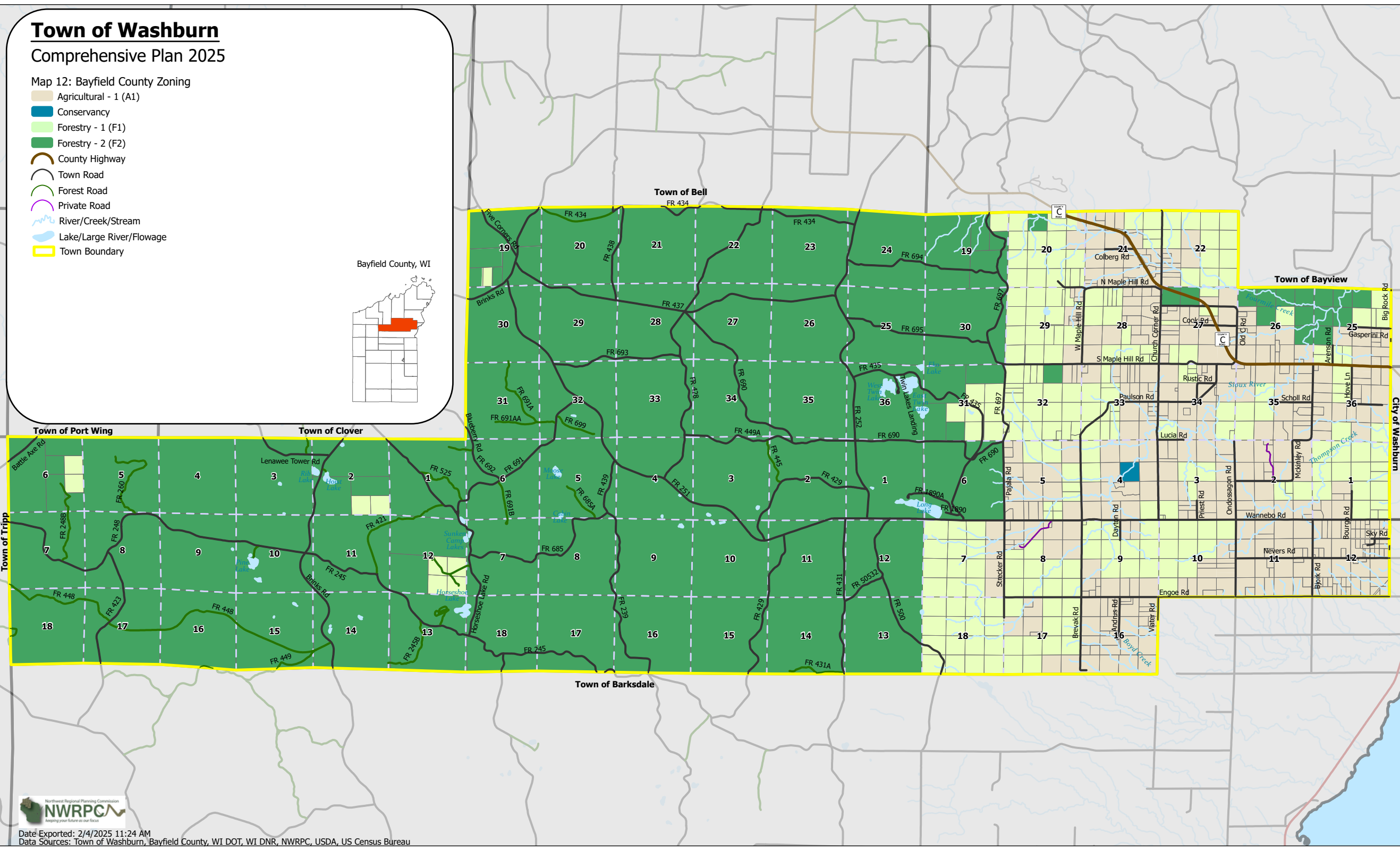
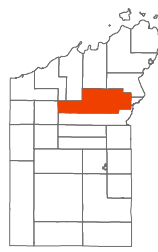
# Town of Washburn

## Comprehensive Plan 2025

Map 12: Bayfield County Zoning

- Agricultural - 1 (A1)
- Conservancy
- Forestry - 1 (F1)
- Forestry - 2 (F2)
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Forest Road
- Private Road
- River/Creek/Stream
- Lake/Large River/Flowage
- Town Boundary

Bayfield County, WI



## **9. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The adage, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” captures the essence of intergovernmental cooperation. While the Town of Washburn may not be the region's economic, educational, social, or cultural hub, it plays a crucial role in the area’s long-term success. Many of the issues affecting the Town also impact neighboring communities. By collaborating, all levels of government stand to benefit. Intergovernmental cooperation is a true “win-win” for everyone involved.

This chapter outlines a plan for strengthening the Town of Washburn’s relationships with other governmental entities. It includes an analysis of current areas of cooperation, potential conflicts, and strategies for resolving these conflicts. The chapter also includes goals, objectives, and actions designed to foster joint planning and decision-making that benefit both the Town and the broader region.

### **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

#### **OVERVIEW**

The Town of Washburn is bordered by several neighboring governments, including the City of Washburn and the Towns of Bayview, Barksdale, Bell, Clover, Port Wing, Tripp, and Orienta. Although the Cities of Bayfield and Ashland do not directly border Washburn, they remain important urban neighbors. In addition to these municipalities, the Red Cliff Reservation and the Bad River Reservation offer opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation.

Overlapping government entities in the region include the Bayfield and Washburn School Districts, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Forest Service, which manages the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

The Town of Washburn can also benefit by cooperating with various organizations, including the City of Washburn Chamber of Commerce, Northwood Technical College, the Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation, the Bayfield County Extension Office, and others.

The continued cooperation with the city and the surrounding towns is crucial for enhancing educational, economic, social, and environmental opportunities for the Town of Washburn’s students and residents. Cooperative planning with these local governments on future public infrastructure and service projects can significantly improve these services for the entire region. Pooling resources, especially in times of limited funding, is vital for communities facing challenges. Establishing and maintaining a clear framework for cooperation will help ensure that services are effectively provided to residents and visitors while preserving the rural character of the region and maintaining the unique identity of each local community.

#### **Existing Cooperation**

The Town of Washburn has taken proactive steps to collaborate with neighboring and overlapping governments on numerous issues. The Town contracts with the City of Washburn to provide fire and emergency (ambulance) services, and Bayfield County provides police protection and roadway patrols. The Town also cooperates and works with the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive corridors, such as trout streams and rivers, and to provide public parking areas near these resources. Many other examples exist as well.

### **Existing Intergovernmental Agreements**

Washburn has several agreements in place with neighboring governments and agencies. For example, the Town has an agreement with the City of Washburn to provide fire protection and emergency medical services. The Town also relies on Bayfield County's professional staff to provide zoning ordinance regulations and oversight, code enforcement, and assistance with land use permits and applications. The Town also has agreements with the County and State for road maintenance and repair, and the U.S. Forest Service to provide snowplowing and general road maintenance for the numerous miles of forestry roads within the Chequamegon National Forest. The Town collaborates with four other towns to operate a solid waste and recycling center in the Town of Barksdale. In addition, the Town of Washburn and the Washburn School District cooperate on numerous issues.

### **Other Potential Intergovernmental Agreements**

Intergovernmental agreements are the most common formal arrangements among local governments in Wisconsin. These agreements facilitate the sharing of public services, such as police, fire, and emergency services, road maintenance, and various professional services. Additionally, they can be expanded to include revenue sharing, boundary establishment, and the resolution of land use issues or conflicts within defined areas. The following are types of agreements that the Town may consider exploring in the future, should certain conditions or opportunities arise:

- 1. Trading services:** The Town of Washburn and surrounding communities could agree to exchange services or equipment. For example, towns could jointly plow town line roads, with each town handling one side, or share the responsibility for maintaining roadways or facilities that are easier for another town to manage.
- 2. Renting equipment:** The Town of Washburn could rent equipment to or from neighboring communities and other governmental units. Renting makes sense for both parties—the renting party gains access to necessary equipment without the upfront cost, while the renting entity generates income from equipment that might otherwise sit idle.
- 3. Sharing staff:** The Town of Washburn could explore sharing staff with neighboring communities and other jurisdictions, including both municipal employees and independently contracted professionals. For instance, the Town could collaborate with the City or County to share services such as a building inspector, assessor, planner, engineer, surveyor, accountant, drivers, mechanics, and more, as needed.
- 4. Consolidating services:** The Town of Washburn could work with communities or governmental units to consolidate certain services. This can make services more feasible when they might otherwise be too costly or inefficient to provide individually.
- 5. Joint use of facilities:** The Town of Washburn could share public facilities with neighboring communities and other jurisdictions. This could involve joint ownership or renting space from another entity. Examples of facilities that could be shared include municipal buildings, garages, parks, campgrounds, education or job centers, swimming pools, golf courses, and community centers.
- 6. Joint purchase and ownership of equipment:** The Town of Washburn could collaborate with other jurisdictions to jointly purchase and own equipment such as pothole patching machines, mowers, rollers, shoulder-shaping machines, snowplows,



street sweepers, and crack-sealers. Sharing equipment can be especially important for towns because road maintenance represents such a large percentage of their expenditures. Joint ownership helps spread the cost and ensures access to necessary tools without the financial burden of individual ownership.

- 7. **Cooperative purchasing:** The Town of Washburn could explore cooperative purchasing, where multiple jurisdictions come together to buy supplies and equipment in bulk, securing better pricing. This approach not only saves money but also reduces staff time spent researching products, comparing prices, writing bid specifications, and managing contracts. Cooperative purchasing can also extend to buying used or surplus equipment from other jurisdictions, further reducing costs.

Other state statutory methods for formalizing intergovernmental agreements include:

- **General Agreements (authorized under §66.0301, Wis. Stats.).** The most common type of intergovernmental agreement, allowing municipalities to cooperate broadly on services or joint powers. The only limitation is that municipalities cannot exceed their own powers.
- **Cooperative Boundary Agreements (authorized under §66.0307, Wis. Stats.).** Used when service sharing is part of a broader boundary agreement. A plan must be developed outlining how services will be provided to the agreement area.
- **Stipulations and Orders (authorized under § 66.0225, Wis. Stats.).** Provides a way for municipalities in a boundary dispute to resolve it through a written agreement, subject to court approval and possibly a referendum.
- **Municipal Revenue Sharing Agreements (authorized under §66.0305, Wis. Stats.).** Allows adjacent communities to share taxes and fees for specific services, such as a city providing sewer and water to a nearby town in exchange for a share of property tax revenue.

The distinctions between these types of agreements are illustrated in Table 9-1.

**Table 9-1: Intergovernmental Agreement Types**

	General Agreements	Cooperative Boundary Agreements	Stipulations & Orders	Revenue Sharing Agreements
Used for?	Services	Boundaries, services, revenue sharing	Boundaries	Revenue sharing
Binding with boundaries?	No	Yes, period fixed by participants (10 years or longer with MBR approval).	Yes, so long as any party is willing to seek enforcement of the agreement	Yes, period fixed by participants (10 year minimum)
Notice required?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public hearing required?	No	Yes	No	Yes
Referendum?	No	Advisory referendum possible	Binding referendum possible	Advisory referendum possible

	General Agreements	Cooperative Boundary Agreements	Stipulations & Orders	Revenue Sharing Agreements
Who decides?	Participating municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating municipalities</li> <li>• MBR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities involved in the lawsuit</li> <li>• Judge</li> <li>• Area residents (if they request a referendum)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating municipalities</li> </ul>
Who Reviews or Comments?	Participating municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating municipalities</li> <li>• MBR</li> <li>• Area jurisdictions</li> <li>• State agencies</li> <li>• RPC</li> <li>• County</li> <li>• Residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities involved in the lawsuit</li> <li>• Judge</li> <li>• Area residents (if they request a referendum)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating municipalities</li> <li>• Residents</li> </ul>

**ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS**

The Town Comprehensive Planning Committee investigated and attempted to identify any potential intergovernmental conflicts between the Town of Washburn and the neighboring and overlapping governments. Due to the overwhelming desire of its residents to retain the rural lifestyle and remain a low-density residential Town, and the fact that most of the high density or intensive land use changes (such as commercial or manufacturing uses), would more than likely take place in the nearby City of Washburn, the potential for conflicts should be minimal. No major points of conflict have been identified between the Town of Washburn and the adjacent communities. The following information summarizes key intergovernmental cooperation issues and opportunities that may arise between the Town of Washburn and its neighboring and overlapping governments:

**Land Use**

- Explore opportunities to work together on land use planning issues near and along the shared corporate boundaries between the Town of Washburn and City of Washburn, especially along the County Highway C corridor.
- Ensure the City of Washburn controls or addresses land use practices that allow sprawling, poorly planned development in the adjacent rural areas.
- Explore the possibility of working together to develop a regional or joint industrial park that would benefit the area, not just one community.
- Work together to preserve productive farmland in the area.
- Work together to address the long-term maintenance of closed landfills in the area.
- Work together to preclude the development of any future telecommunication towers, or extension of any existing towers. Encourage co-location requirements and standards for additional or new equipment to be installed on existing towers
- The Town and City of Washburn will work together to ensure that the Town is notified and included in discussions well in advance of any potential land annexation plans by the City. (Note: due to the remaining available and developable land within the city limits, there are no immediate or future plans to annex any portion of the Town or neighboring lands within the next 20 years.

### **Rivers, Streams, Lakes, and Waterfront/Coastal Resources**

- All entities need to work together to preserve and protect the various trout streams and rivers throughout the Town, the recreation lakes found in the Chequamegon National Forest, and the wetlands and drainage ways that eventually feed into the rivers and streams that eventually drain into the Chequamegon Bay/Lake Superior basins.
- Recognize that Lake Superior is a regional resource that people throughout the area enjoy and depend on. Explore ways to ensure that all residents in the region have adequate access to Lake Superior.
- Work together to protect the Chequamegon National Forest's and Chequamegon Bay's plants, animals, and water resources.

### **Transportation**

- Work together to enhance the Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) system. Explore ways to encourage use of the public transportation system. Work to make the public transportation system more energy efficient and cost effective.
- Explore the creation of a bus and/or rail transportation hub that could serve residents in the region as well as visitors from other areas of the country including Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Minneapolis-St. Paul.
- Explore opportunities to provide public parking and park and ride facilities that benefit the area. Promote carpooling opportunities.
- Encourage additional bicycle and pedestrian trails that connect communities and key destinations throughout the region.
- Encourage the use of existing regional snowmobile and ATV trails and the connections between communities and key destinations including the Chequamegon National Forest. Address concerns relating to use of the trails.
- Work together to explore designating pertinent roads as rustic roads.

It is imperative that governments cooperate on transportation issues. Potential conflicts could arise if one community does not see the value of working together on regional trails, or if some communities do not contribute their fair share to addressing and supporting public transportation efforts.

### **Utilities and Community Facilities**

The Town of Washburn is willing to cooperate and assist with neighboring and overlapping governments on many issues relating to utilities and community facilities. The residents have indicated their desire to provide financial support to the nearby City of Washburn's library system and recreation programs and support the City's fire and rescue services and facilities. Yet with all the cooperation that exists, governments can do more.

- Explore opportunities to work together on parks and recreation facilities that benefit the region.
- Continue to share and operate police, fire, and emergency medical services in a manner that provides quality, cost effective service.
- Work together to address the concerns of area school districts regarding declining enrollment and the need to upgrade facilities. Coordinate with the Washburn School District to explore the possibility of replacing the Washburn Middle/High School with a

new school that may serve a broader area than it currently serves. Consider integrating regional recreation facilities with the creation of a new school.

- Promote recycling, reduction, and reuse of materials.
- Promote energy conservation programs and explore opportunities to develop sustainable energy production in the region, including wind and solar energy.
- Identify opportunities to share or trade equipment and services.
- Explore options to develop joint facilities for stockpiling road salt and sand, fuel stations, and other public works facilities.

Potential conflicts could arise if communities do not contribute their fair share to supporting the area's community facilities. However, by working together, these types of issues can be successfully addressed.

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

The Town of Washburn can do its part to address issues relating to agricultural, natural, and cultural resources, yet the region as a whole must cooperate to ensure the protection and enhancement of these resources.

- Recognize that the enhancement and protection of natural resources is strongly tied to the region's economy and its quality of life.
- Work to connect fragmented ecosystems.
- Explore opportunities to strengthen food production in the region, including aquaculture.
- Promote the region's historic and cultural resources.
- Work together to enhance and promote the creative professions in the region. Potential conflicts between governments could arise if a jurisdiction allows insensitive land use practices that adversely affect the region's resources or another community. For example, a neighboring city or town that allows a major residential subdivision or large commercial/industrial use on prime agricultural land would conflict with the Town's vision to reduce sprawl, and more importantly preserve the existing natural and agricultural resources within the area.

### **Housing**

- Recognize that economic development is tied to the region's ability to provide diverse housing options that meet the needs of the region.
- Promote quality, affordable rental options and provide transitional housing as needed.
- Address concerns over the proliferation of seasonal (second) homes in the region.
- Work to enhance property maintenance throughout the region.
- Work together as a region to discuss an appropriate balance of new housing between rural and urban areas.

Potential disagreements between governments could arise if, for example, a government promotes a high-density housing development in a rural area that cannot be adequately served by community facilities and services.

## Economic

The Town of Washburn's economy and the regional economy are connected. Consequently, the Town of Washburn and its neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions must cooperate to ensure that the regional economy is healthy.

- Continue to promote tourism as a means to grow the economy but also explore other options that produce higher paying jobs.
- Explore technological innovations that can grow the regional economy in a healthy and sustainable manner. For example, explore creating a microgrid combining photovoltaic energy generation with back battery storage.
- Explore opportunities to promote additional business development at the Bayfield County Business Park use the Agricultural Research Station in a manner that continues to benefit the region.
- Capitalize on the tremendous number of public sector jobs and services in the region by exploring potential spin-off opportunities that would provide synergistic relationships between the public and private sectors.
- Promote and provide greater opportunities for the rural Town residents to work from home or establish home-based businesses, which will reduce the travel, needs and costs between homes and employment bases.
- Work together to promote value-added industries that incorporate regional resources.
- Continue to coordinate regional events and festivals that draw people from across the country.

Potential conflicts could arise between governments if a government chooses to allow economic development that adversely affects the region's natural and social resources.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**Ch. 9 – Goal 1: The Town of Washburn and all neighboring and overlapping governmental jurisdictions work proactively and cooperatively to ensure that the Chequamegon Nicolet Forest and Chequamegon Bay region has a strong, sustainable economy; respects natural resources; and meets human needs fairly and efficiently.**

**Objective 9.1:** Provide open communication and good working relationships between the Town of Washburn and neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

**Objective 9.2:** Partner with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to provide efficient, cost effective, high-quality services, where practical or mutually beneficial.

**Objective 9.3:** Work proactively and cooperatively on planning issues that affect neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION PLAN**

Key concepts of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Plan include the following:

- Periodically meet with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to identify issues and opportunities for cooperation.
- Openly share information that may be of interest to neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions; for example, distribute planning reports to neighboring communities and invite others to attend Town meetings and seminars when appropriate.
- Help organize joint planning committees to address regional issues.
- Share purchases of bulk items and special equipment.
- Continue to share services, such as fire protection and emergency medical services.
- Trade services where practical and beneficial.
- Continue to share facilities, equipment, and services where practical and mutually beneficial.
- Communicate and coordinate all components of the Town of Washburn's Comprehensive Plan with other jurisdictions.
- Explore opportunities for alternative energy programs.
- Work together to address the concerns of area school districts.
- Cooperate on developing and maintaining parks and recreation facilities that benefit the region.
- The Town of Washburn will cooperate with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to ensure that the Chequamegon National Forest and area region has a strong, sustainable economy; respects natural resources; and meets human needs fairly and efficiently.

# **10. IMPLEMENTATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The future character of the Town of Washburn and the quality of life for its residents will be strongly influenced by future land use decisions. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a guide for the individuals and community officials responsible for making these important land use choices. To move toward the goals and objectives laid out in this Plan, it is essential that the entire Plan be used and understood by its residents, the Town Board, the Town Plan Commission, and the Bayfield County Board and Zoning Committee. The Comprehensive Plan must be treated as a living, dynamic document, one that can (and should) be modified as needed to address changing conditions in the Town and surrounding communities.

The Comprehensive Plan presents a bold yet reasonable vision for the Town of Washburn. To realize this vision, the Town, the neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions, the private sector, and its residents must take specific actions. This chapter provides an overview of the primary actions necessary to implement the Plan. Refer to the other chapters of the Plan for additional information regarding implementation.

## **INTEGRATION OF ELEMENTS**

The Town of Washburn is committed to considering reasonable and appropriate land uses alongside economic, environmental, and social principles in all of its planning decisions. As a result, each element of this Comprehensive Plan is integrated and consistent with the others. Town Board members and Plan Commission members will consider all elements of the Comprehensive Plan as a whole when applying, interpreting, and implementing the Plan.

## **OVERVIEW OF REGULATIONS**

The Town of Washburn can utilize various tools to achieve the vision, goals, objectives, and actions of the Plan; however, the most common tools are regulatory. This section describes the existing regulations in the Town and provides an overview of the key changes the Town will make to ensure the Plan's implementation.

## **ZONING ORDINANCE AND RELATED ORDINANCES**

The Town may consider recommendations for revising the Bayfield County Zoning Ordinance to reflect the goals, objectives, and actions of the Comprehensive Plan. Updating the Zoning Ordinance is an important task that will require considerable cooperation with Bayfield County Zoning officials and much public participation.

## **ZONING MAP**

The Town of Washburn may consider revising its Zoning Map to align with the Comprehensive Plan. Updating the Zoning Map, like updating the Zoning Ordinance, is an important task that will require significant cooperation with the Bayfield County Zoning Department and active public participation. The Town may also recommend creating new zoning districts for the 'Residential' areas shown on the Future Land Use Map.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

A Capital Improvements Program organizes City expenditures for capital improvements, some of which are proposed in the Comprehensive Plan, including street and road improvements, community building construction and upgrades, parks and trails, and equipment. This program links the development policies established in the Comprehensive Plan to the future receipt and expenditure of funds, as well as the construction of capital improvements. The Town may eventually and systematically review all capital projects to ensure consistency with the adopted goals, objectives, and policies in the Plan. Although a Capital Improvements Program was not part of this comprehensive planning process, it remains a vital tool for community officials to identify and plan for future expenditures.

## **IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMELINES**

This section lists the goals, objectives and policies described earlier in the Plan and it identifies implementation responsibilities and timelines. The Town will use this information as a general guide to implement the Plan. Areas of responsibility and responsible entities or persons may overlap, and all entities should be prepared to help implement this Plan as needed. Some of the key responsible entities include the following:

1. Town Board
2. Town Plan Commission
3. Bayfield County Zoning Administrator
4. Bayfield County Board
5. Bayfield County Code Enforcement Officer
6. Bayfield County – University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension
7. Bayfield County Sheriff
8. City of Washburn (which may but not exclusively include: the Mayor; Common Council; City Staff; and City Advisory Committees)
9. City of Washburn Public Schools
10. City of Ashland (which may but not exclusively include: the Mayor; Common Council; City Staff; and City Advisory Committees)
11. BART Authority
12. U.S. Forest Service
13. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission
14. Town of Barksdale, Town of Bayview, Town of Bell, Town of Clover, Town of Port Wing, Town of Orienta, Town of Tripp
15. Wisconsin Department of Transportation

## **MEASUREMENT OF PROGRESS**

The Town can use the implementation objectives and actions presented below as tools for measuring progress. Responsible entities can simply highlight or place checks next to actions as they are addressed. The Town may also want to develop a set of indicators to help measure the progress of the Plan. Examples of indicators include the unemployment rate, median household income, community survey results, and other indicators that can help measure progress towards the goals of the Plan. The Town Board and Town Plan Commission will periodically review the progress of the Plan and make changes accordingly.



## HOUSING

### Vision Statement

The Town of Washburn will encourage the retention of housing that serves the needs of current residents who wish to age in place and encourage the addition of new housing consistent with the Town’s rural character.

### Ch. 3 – Goal 1: The Town of Washburn supports residential development that will be compatible with the preservation of the Town’s rural character and environment, and the traditions of agriculture and forestry.

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 3.1: Establish guidelines for visual buffers of residential development from Town roads.</i>		
Action 3.1.a: Provide information and options on Town website for how landowners can design home sites and driveways that protect rural character and natural vegetative screening.	2025	Town Plan Commission
Action 3.1.b: Prepare a handout (PDF) for property owners and prospective buyers on landscape designs that preserve rural character.	2026	Town Plan Commission
<i>Objective 3.2: Encourage small residential clusters with shared wells, septic systems, and shared driveways.</i>		
Action 3.2.a: Advocate for zoning to allow limited, small-lot residential clusters for new housing.	2025	Town Board Town Plan Commission County Planning & Zoning
Action 3.2.b: Limit zoning in Town for parcels $\leq 5$ acres to areas designated for rural residential development.	2026	Town Board Town Plan Commission County Planning & Zoning
Action 3.2.c: Identify and map larger farm and forest lots where small residential clusters could be suitable.	2027	Town Board Town Plan Commission Farm & forest landowners County Planning & Zoning

**Ch. 3 – Goal 2: The Town of Washburn will support and encourage newer, diverse, and aesthetically enhanced housing to meet the needs of residents.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 3.3: Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the existing housing stock to provide for the needs of current residents and to accommodate future residents.</i>		
Action 3.3.a: Work with local builders to describe ways that property owners have accommodated new housing while retaining larger lots.	2027	Local builders Town Plan Commission
Action 3.3.b: Prepare a handout (PDF) available on the Town website explaining how creating small residential clusters can provide new housing without compromising rural character.	2029	Local builders Town Plan Commission University Architecture Interns

**UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**Vision Statement**

The Town of Washburn will be served by renewable, safe, and resilient utilities including broadband, energy infrastructure, and community facilities that contribute to the overall health, safety and general welfare of residents while maintaining the rural, natural character of the Town.

**Ch. 4 – Goal 1: Support the continued development of renewable energy in the region and develop renewable energy usage in the Town where appropriate.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 4.1: Implement micro grid at the Town Hall using a solar bank, battery storage, and power inverter system. Setup EV charging station.</i>		
Action 4.1.a: Construction of system.	Summer 2025-2026	Cheq Bay Renewables muGrid Analytics Bayfield County Town of Washburn
Action 4.1.b: Monitor and document sustained operation of the microgrid system.	2028-2029	Cheq Bay Renewables muGrid Analytics Bayfield County Town of Washburn
<i>Objective 4.2: Encourage individual adoption of renewable energy by providing information and education to citizens of the Town.</i>		
Action 4.2.c: Put together a resource page on the Town website outlining renewable energy options and contact information.	2026	Town of Washburn

Action 4.2.d: Conduct an open house showcasing the micro-grid in operation at Town facilities.	2026	Town of Washburn
Action 4.2.e: Conduct a Town energy audit/survey to determine renewable energy usage in the Town and possible areas for development in the future.	2029	Town of Washburn
<i>Objective 4.3: Encourage deployment of “rooftop” solar photovoltaics on Town residential and business properties through solar-friendly permitting, education assistance, utility collaboration, and potential incentive assistance as it might become available.</i>		
Action 4.3.a: Work with Bayfield County Zoning to create solar-friendly zoning codes. Utilize information from the 2029 Town energy audit/survey.	2030	County, Municipal, and Tribal Zoning Cheq Bay Renewables Town of Washburn

**Ch. 4 – Goal 2: Support the continued development of broadband internet in the Town so that at least one high speed option is available for every home desiring access.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 4.4: Support local utilities as they seek funding and implement broadband internet.</i>		
Action 4.4.a: Follow up annually with the local utilities to determine project statuses and timelines.	2026-2030	Town of Washburn contacting: Bayfield Wireless Lumen Technologies (formerly CenturyLink), Norvado
Action 4.4.b: Publicize broadband internet options available to Town residents. Encourage residents to contact providers to encourage service adoption.	2026-2030	Town of Washburn
Action 4.4.c: Work with Bayfield County objective in identifying remaining broadband and cellular “deserts.”	2025	Bayfield County Administrator Town of Washburn

**Ch. 4 – Goal 3: Ensure that facilities, equipment, and staff associated with providing services to the Town are adequate to meet the needs of the community.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 4.5: Maintain Town Hall and Garage facilities, along with equipment and nearby properties.</i>		
Action 4.5.a: Plan and budget for equipment replacement and facility repair (i.e., furnace, roofing, tractor, etc.)	Annually	Town Board Road Crew

	<b>Target Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Action 4.5.b: Consider energy efficiency and environmentally friendly options for all replacement and repair needs.	As needed	Town Board Road Crew
Action 4.5.c: Repair Town pond to provide a water source for fire protection.	2025	Town Plan Commission Town Board Road Crew
Action 4: Review the feasibility and desirability of the town pond area being an outdoor event venue in addition to providing a source of water for fire protection.	2027	Town Plan Commission Town Board Treasurer Clerk
<i>Objective 4.6: Support Emergency Services and non-town-based services utilized by Town residents.</i>		
Action 4.6.a: Continue to financially support emergency services provided by the City of Washburn.	Annual	Town Board
Action 4.6.b: Ensure all residences are properly marked with visible address plates from roadways by reminding residents annually in snowplowing mailing and monitoring by Town staff.	Annual	Treasurer Road Crew Town Board
Action 4.6.c: Collaborate with Bayfield County Emergency services to ensure roads meet the requirements for 911 communications, such as naming and signing roads with more than three residences.	2027	Town Plan Commission Town Board Bayfield County
Action 4.6.d: Remind residents annually either at the Town Meeting or through the annual newsletter how they can volunteer with Washburn EMS to serve their community.	2025 Annual	Treasurer Washburn EMS
Action 4.7.e: Review providing financial support to the Washburn public library during any future fundraising campaigns for it to remain a vibrant, vital community resource	As needed	Town Board
<i>Objective 4.7: Support residents in completing projects on their property that protect community infrastructure and sanitation.</i>		
Action 4.7.a: Provide educational materials to residents about ways to retain stormwater (slow the flow) on their properties to reduce heavy	2026	Town Plan Commission UW-Madison Extension WDNR

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
erosion and washouts of roads or other facilities using the Town website and Facebook.		
Action 4.7.b: Encourage residents to have periodic and routine inspections of their septic systems via information on the Town’s website, annual newsletter, and Facebook.	2027	Town Plan Commission Bayfield County
Action 4.7.c: Collaborate with Bayfield County to provide resources for funding options and qualified septic inspectors to Town residents.	2026	Bayfield County Town Plan Commission UW-Madison Extension

**Ch. 4 – Goal 4: Continue monitoring and prompting actions to protect public health surrounding the former Washburn Landfill location on Maple Hill in Section 29.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 4.8: Continue monitoring efforts at the former landfill location</i>		
Action 4.8.a: Inspect clay cap for damage in May and October for frost heaving and/or settling.	2025 Annually	Town Plan Commission
Action 4.8.b: Review the three monitoring wells with a report presented at the Town’s annual meeting.	2025 Annually	Town Plan Commission
Action 4.8.c: Forward inspection findings of the cap and well monitoring to the City of Washburn and Town of Bayview.	2025 Annually	Town Board City of Washburn Town of Bayview
<i>Objective 4.9: Initiate action to maintain the clay cap and repair issues noted during monitoring.</i>		
Action 4.9.a: Mow cap-area at least twice during the growing season to prevent the establishment of trees.	2025 Annually	Town Board City of Washburn Town of Bayview
Action 4.9.b: Hire sawyer to remove any trees growing in the cap that are too large to mow.	2025 Annually-as needed	Town Board City of Washburn Town of Bayview
Action 4.9.c: Work with the City of Washburn to bring in additional clay for the cap to fill in areas where it has settled to prevent water intrusion.	As needed based on bi-annual inspections	Town Board Town Plan Commission City of Washburn Town of Bayview

## TRANSPORTATION

### Vision Statement

The Town of Washburn will provide an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that provides healthy, safe, efficient, environmentally sensitive, and economical movement of people and goods. The roadway network will support the land use vision and all other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Town will strive to incorporate new technologies into the Town’s fleet and roadway designs and provide an appropriate level of service to sustain community residents and businesses. The Town will strongly encourage the development of bicycle and pedestrian options throughout the Town as a means of enhancing healthy communities, providing transportation alternatives, and addressing recreational needs.

### Ch. 5 – Goal 1: Provide a functional, safe, accessible, and economical transportation system that meets the needs of the Town’s residents and visitors.

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 5.1: Pursue road improvements and maintenance activities that are economical, functional, and provide safe transportation options.</i>		
Action 5.1.a: Limit additional new paved roads to help maintain the bucolic setting of the Town and focus resources for paved road maintenance on existing paved roads to prevent excessive disrepair from occurring.	Ongoing	Town Board Road Superintendent
Action 5.1.b: Establish a written report process for the annual review of Town roads that includes the update and a review of the Town’s PASER data in the DOT system.	2025	Town Board Road Superintendent Town Plan Commission
Action 5.1.c: Annually complete a written road report, update, and review the Town’s PASER data.	2026 Annual	Town Board Road Superintendent
Action 5.1.d: Explore, research and test equipment and supplies to help maintain gravel roads with residences to reduce dust and improve surface conditions.	2025	Road Crew Town Board
Action 5.1.e: Obtain any additional equipment or develop equipment sharing agreements with neighboring towns to keep and maintain equipment for supporting gravel road upkeep.	2026	Road Crew Town Board

### Ch. 5 – Goal 2: Provide an attractive transportation system that offers recreation and economic benefits that complement the rural characteristics of the Town.

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 5.2: Plan and implement roadway control options that support recreational activities as well as vehicle transit.</i>		

Action 5.2.a: Post Ondossagon Road from Engoe to Wannebo with a 45 m.p.h. speed limit to match Ondossagon Road south of Engoe in the Town of Barksdale and slow traffic on the hill north of Engoe Road to reduce vehicle conflicts with other roadway users (pedestrians, bikes, farm implements, etc.).	2025	Town Board Road Crew
Action 5.2.b: Request the Sheriff’s department provide dedicated enforcement of limits shortly after posting.	2025	Town Board
Action 5.2.c: Review posting 45 mph speed limits on Wannebo, Engoe, Nevers, McKinley, and Church Corner Roads to reduce vehicle conflicts with other roadway users.	2027	Town Board Town Plan Commission
Action 5.2.d: Pursue additional signage alerting drivers to share the roadway with bikes and pedestrians for Ondossagon, Church Corner, Engoe, Never, and McKinley.	2026	Town Board Town Plan Commission Road Crew
<i>Objective 5.3: Pursue roadway improvement funding that supports multi-modal uses.</i>		
Action 5.3.a: Pursue federal and state funding opportunities to make road improvements that provide multi-modal transportation options, such as widening of shoulders to accommodate bikes, pedestrians, and farming implements.	Ongoing	Town Board Town Plan Commission
<i>Objective 5.4: Support options in future development for recreational opportunities.</i>		
Action 5.4.a: Work with Bayfield County zoning to develop a way to encourage new cluster or sub-division type developments in the Town to provide trails or communal space for recreational opportunities.	2025	Town Plan Commission
Action 5.4.b: Work with Bayfield County zoning to develop ways to encourage new residential developments approved under building permits to allow trail easements where future or existing trails are planned.	2026	Town Plan Commission Bayfield County Zoning
Action 5.4.c: Work with USFS to find ways to support their existing non-motorized trails at Long Lake and any potential additional trails. (i.e., Town volunteer “adoption” of basic trail support activities such as brushing, small repairs, litter clean up, etc.)	2026	Town Plan Commission



**Ch. 5 – Goal 3: Promote sustainable and healthy modes of transportation through resilient designs that allow for multiple uses of the roadway and incorporate emerging sustainable technologies into the Town’s road maintenance work to reduce environmental degradation.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 5.5: Incorporate resiliency in future projects to mitigate impacts from changing weather conditions.</i>		
Action 5.5.a: Research and write a short report (i.e., white paper) for the Town Board on best design practices for creating resilient roadways to use in funding proposals for roads.	2026 2030 update	Town Plan Commission
Action 5.5.b: Include climate-resilient features in roadway repair and improvement projects including larger culverts, and drainage systems or designs to help slow the flow of water.	Ongoing	Town Board Road Crew Town Plan Commission
<i>Objective 5.6: Invest in electric, compressed natural gas, or other alternative fuel type vehicles as technology becomes available.</i>		
Action 5.6.a: Research and review the feasibility of replacing conventional fossil fuel burning Town equipment with cleaner, healthier for efficient options each time a replacement need is identified.	As needed	Town Board Road Crew
<i>Objective 5.7: Promote alternative transportation opportunities for residents.</i>		
Action 5.7.a: Review designating a location near the Town Hall as a park & ride lot to encourage car-pooling options.	2026	Town Plan Commission Town Board
Action 5.7.b: Research options for residents to communicate to facilitate ridesharing, such as utilizing a social media platform or other method.	2027	Town Plan Commission Town Board
Action 5.7.c: Remind residents about the options BART provides for transportation at least annually via the Town’s Facebook page (or other digital media sources).	2025 Annual	Town Plan Commission Town Board

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Ch. 6 – Goal 1: The Town of Washburn will help foster and provide a healthy environment in the creation of well-paid and full-time employment opportunities for its residents, and will assist in the retention, expansion, and recruitment opportunities for the local area employment providers.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 6.1: Retain and support the expansion of local business and industry.</i>		
Action 6.1.a: Develop and implement a program where the Town Chairman and/or Board Members (or the Town’s special representative) meet periodically with the surrounding local government leaders, Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce’s, businesses and employers, to listen to concerns and discuss opportunities for growth that benefit the Town (i.e. encouraging new commercial or manufacturing businesses to locate at the Bayfield County Business Park).	2026 update annually	Town Board, City of Ashland City of Washburn Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation
Action 6.1.b: Work with government agencies, organizations, and others to promote training opportunities to help businesses and industries prosper. List training opportunities on Town website and Facebook page.	2026 updating as available	Town Board
Action 6.1.c: Work to implement programs that conserve energy and are more environmentally sensitive and promote the development of “green buildings” as alternatives to protecting the natural environment and resources (i.e. the Town’s micro-grid with updates on the website and Facebook page)	When microgrid project starts	Town Board
<i>Objective 6.2: Recruit new working residents in cooperation with local businesses and employers and those that help diversify the Town of Washburn’s economic base.</i>		
Action 6.2.a: Recognize and promote the arts, recreation, and natural resources as major contributors to the Town of Washburn’s high quality of life and as major economic forces in the community.	Spring 2027	Town Board Town Plan Commission

<p>Offer to list Town resident artists. List recreation opportunities, and natural resources on Town website.</p> <p>Town membership in Ashland, Bayfield, and Washburn Chambers of commerce.</p>		
<p>Action 6.2.b: Enhance the Town of Washburn’s existing rural living economy by marketing the Town to artists, writers, crafts persons, small home-based businesses, or entrepreneurs who are developing new products and new markets to locate in the Town of Washburn.</p> <p>Post advantages of locating in the Town of Washburn on website and chambers of commerce newsletters.</p>	<p>2027</p>	<p>Town Board Town Plan Commission</p>
<p>Action 6.2.c: Encourage new working residents and small businesses that can help serve the area’s growing population of elderly residents.</p> <p>Post information on this need and opportunity on the Town’s Facebook page.</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Town Board or Town Board Designee</p>
<p>Action 6.2.d: Support ecotourism and other tourism opportunities that are self- supportive revenue generators.</p> <p>Share tourism opportunities on the Town’s website, Facebook page, and Chamber of Commerce profile.</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>Town Board or Town Board Designee</p>
<p>Action 6.2.e: Partner with or work in close cooperation with the City of Washburn’s or other local municipalities Chambers of Commerce, to help promote tourism and the quality-of-life factor in the Town.</p> <p>Become member of the Chamber of Commerce.</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Town Board</p>
<p><i>Objective 6.3: Encourage the formation of new businesses that will be conducive to the existing rural environment, and businesses that will not cause any disturbances, noise, pollution, increased traffic, or harm to the natural environment</i></p>		

<p>Action 6.3.a: Support and promote business management education and training programs.</p> <p>Facebook page</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Town Board or Town Board Designee</p>
<p>Action 6.3.b: Promote the establishment of an organized business support network for new startup businesses.</p> <p>Provide information on the Townwebsite about the Bayfield County Development Corporation and any other business support networks as they become available or known.</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>Town Board Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation</p>
<p>Action 6.3.c: Identify and provide information on available business financing programs.</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Town Board Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation</p>
<p>Action 6.3.d: Support the establishment of entrepreneurship education programs in the schools.</p> <p>Communicate to area schools and education institutions the willingness of the Town of Washburn to be supportive in entrepreneurship education.</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>Town Board Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation</p>

## **AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **Ch. 7 – Goal 1: The Town of Washburn protects and enhances its natural and agricultural areas.**

	<b>Target Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
<p><i>Objective 7.1: Protect and enhance the existing agricultural land in the Town, and ensure proper safeguards are in place for future generations, thereby preserving and encouraging the “rural” character and spirit of the Town.</i></p>		
<p>Action 7.1.a: The Town should encourage sound soil and water conservation practices and provide information about land protection strategies.</p> <p>Provide contact information on the Town website, Facebook page and Town Facebook page and newsletter</p>	<p>2027</p>	<p>Town Board Town Plan Commission</p>

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
for conservation organizations, county, state, and federal agencies.		
<p>Action 7.1.b: The Town should encourage the support of local agricultural business.</p> <p>Contact known farms in the Town to determine interest in being listed on the Town website and Facebook page.</p> <p>Identify farms in the Town that raise and sell products. Feature a farm with off farm sales in the Town newsletter on a rotating basis. List farms and products sold on the Town website.</p>	2025	Town Board
<p>Action 7.1.c: The Town should discourage the conversion of prime farmland to non- agricultural use and encourage utilization of idle farmland for agricultural purposes (e.g. rental of land).</p> <p>Provide contact information in Town newsletters for conservation programs available to landowners that can enhance land.</p>	2027	Town Plan Commission
<p>Action 7.1.d: The Town needs to identify and clearly designate the Town’s prime farmland areas and be cognizant of any future development or expansion into these areas, and provide reasonable planning tools, measures or standards that help preserve these areas.</p> <p>The Town Plan Commission establishes a standard procedure to determine if prime farmland is present in new housing applications. Work with the landowner to protect prime farmland.</p>	2025	Town Plan Commission
<p>Action 7.1.e: Promote the preservation of productive agricultural land holdings.</p> <p>Discourage fragmentation of farmland into smaller un-usable parcel sizes due to equipment size limitations. This can be accomplished by the Town Plan Commission working with</p>	2025 and annually	Town Plan Commission

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
prospective landowners to concentrate buildings, thereby minimizing fragmentation of the farmland. Residents can gain understanding of this issue from information in the Town plan and information posted on the Town website or included in the Town newsletter.		
Action 7.1.f: Provide contact information on Town Website and Newsletter for Bayfield Land and Water Conservation Office.	2027	Town Board
<i>Objective 7.2: Encourage sustainable forest management practices on private and public lands throughout the Town.</i>		
Action 7.2.a: Educate and make available information on best forest management practices from government and private organizations. Provide forest management tips in the Town newsletter and on the Town website.	2025	Town Board
Action 7.2.b: Identify highly productive forest land areas. Discourage fragmentation of forest land into smaller parcel sizes. Smaller parcels become unusable for potential timber sales due to equipment size limitations and mobilization costs. Parcel size maintenance can be accomplished by the Town working with prospective landowners by concentrating any building to minimize the ability to manage the forest land. Property owners with adjoining forest properties can be encouraged to manage properties jointly. This would increase the potential parcel size, making it more attractive for timber sales and forest management.  Large areas of forest land held by forest products companies are located in important headwater areas in stream watersheds. These areas should be kept in forest to protect against flooding and streambank	2027 2025 and annually	Town Board Town Plan Commission

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<p>erosion. It is essential these areas remain in managed forest to protect the downstream watershed.</p> <p>The Town should contact and coordinate with the County Forestry Department if these lands are offered for sale and encourage potential purchase of the forest land by the County.</p>		
<p>Action 7.2.c: Maintain and protect an aesthetic buffer along roadways and stream corridors.</p> <p>Landowners are encouraged to work with a forester and logger to designate vegetative buffers along roadways and streams. The Town can provide information on the importance of buffers in the newsletter and on the website.</p>	2028	Town Plan Commission WDNR Forestry Bayfield County Forestry
<p>Action 7.2.d: There are a number of small sawmills in the Town allowing for local processing of harvested logs. List sawmill operations on Town website and feature in newsletter.</p>	2028	Town Board
<p><i>Objective 7.3: Protect and maintain much of the natural resources of the Town to preserve the rural character, protect wildlife habitat, and protect sensitive and fragile environmental areas.</i></p>		
<p>Action 7.3.a: Excessive light pollution disrupts many aspects of wildlife behavior. Migratory birds' and bats' navigation is disrupted by lights in the evening sky. The Town should work to designate the Town as a 'Dark Sky Town.' The Town Supervisors and the Town Plan Commission can work with landowners to reduce light pollution by using appropriate shielded lights. Information on the effects of light pollution and mitigation strategies can be posted on the website and newsletter.</p> <p><a href="https://darksky.org/">https://darksky.org/</a></p>	2026	Town Board



	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
Action 7.3.b: Town board works with the county to designate Bayfield County as a “Dark Sky County.”	2027	Town Board
Action 7.3.c: Feature information in Town newsletter and website on invasive plants identification and control.	2028	Town Board WDNR UW-Madison Extension Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area
Action 7.3.d: Feature information in the Town newsletter and website on sensitive soil areas. Information could be provided about the importance of large forest tracts for wildlife habitat and rural character.	2029	Town Board
Action 7.3.e: Contact local agencies annually for updates on invasive plants of potential concern in the Town. If necessary, coordinate control measures with area government agencies.	2029	Town Plan Commission
<i>Objective 7.4: Protect and enhance natural habitats and water quality including creeks, wetlands, and forests to provide habitat for plant and animal species and to allow for sensitive use and enjoyment by humans.</i>		
Action 7.4.a: Discourage development (public or private) along protected river and stream corridors that would cause erosion, endanger water quality, or otherwise adversely affect watershed or groundwater resources. The Town Plan commission will work with new home builders to ensure adequate setback distances from erodible banks and stream channels. Emphasize the role of trees and vegetation for soil and slope stability.	2025 and annually	Town Plan Commission
Action 7.4.b: Promote the preservation of productive agricultural land holdings. Establish a policy to discourage fragmentation of farmland into smaller unusable parcel sizes due to equipment size limitations. This can be accomplished by the Town Plan	2025	Town Plan Commission

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
Commission working with prospective landowners by concentrating on any building to minimize fragmentation of the farmland.		
Action 7.4.c: Use Town website and newsletter to provide and/or promote educational opportunities regarding sustainable development and preservation of natural resources in public and private developments.	2026	Town Board
Action 7.4.d: Establish a Town Earth Day event.	2027	Town Board

**Goal 2: The Town of Washburn Protects and promotes its historic and cultural resources.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 7.5: Identify and preserve sites, features, structures, access points or routes having unique local historical, archaeological, aesthetic, scenic or natural value for present and future enjoyment. Encourage protection, preservation, or use of them in such a manner that will ensure their continued existence.</i>		
Action 7.5.a: Develop a new historical/cultural committee to identify, document and help preserve and protect resources and structures that contribute to the Town’s architectural, historic, and cultural heritage, especially original homesteads, schools, and barns. Investigate programs that help preserve these structures and sites.	2025	Town Plan Commission Town Board
Action 7.5.b: Encourage residents to preserve and restore heritage sites by providing educational information such as the Wisconsin Barn Preservation Program on the Town website, at meetings and events.	2026	Historical/Cultural Committee
Action 7.5.c: Mark significant sites, e.g., schools, and structures e.g., century homesteads, with historical markers, possibly through the WI Historical Society.	2027-2028	Historical/Cultural Committee
Action 7.5.d: Solicit heritage family histories, stories and pictures from residents and other sources to be stored in the Town Hall and website. Request this information in regular	2026 and annually	Historical/Cultural Committee Town Clerk

Town mailings and website, providing a family history form.		
Action 7.5.e: Recruit a person or group to develop a comprehensive Town history from a variety of resources and publish booklets.	2028	Historical/Cultural Committee Planning Committee Town Board
Action 7.5.f: Continue good historic preservation practices and reuse of the McKinley School as the Town Hall. Display historic pictures and interpretation of the building in it.	2025 and ongoing	Town Board Planning Committee Historic/Cultural Committee
Action 7.5.g: Pursue preservation of the Long Lake School site and maintain contact with owners of the Maple Hill and Wilson School buildings to encourage preservation of them.	2028	Town Board Historic/Cultural Committee
Action 7.5.h: Develop and support community events and programs such as an annual picnic, food and/or educational displays at the annual meeting, recreational outings, Earth Day event, or an artistic/craft related activity which celebrate the history and culture of the Town.	2026	Historic/Cultural Committee Town Board

## LAND USE

### Vision Statement

Land in the Town of Washburn is used in a manner that preserves its rural character and high quality natural resources while providing for efficient public services and a robust, rural economy.

### Ch. 8 – Goal 1: Land use and development preserves the rural character and environmental quality of the Town of Washburn.

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 8.1: Larger parcels of 35 and more acres remain largely intact.</i>		
Action 8.1.a: Recruit a “Working Lands <i>ad hoc</i> . Committee.	2026	Town Plan Commission
Action 8.1.b: Develop an inventory of larger private parcels and owners.	2026	Working Lands Committee
Action 8.1.c: Explore owner openness to options for retaining larger, contiguous acreages.	2027	Working Lands Committee

Action 8.1.d: Develop Town and County support for a certified Farmland Preservation zoning ordinance as part of an updated county zoning ordinance.	2026	Town Board County Board Representatives
Action 8.1.e: Develop community support for retaining farms and forests in larger ownership blocks.	2027	Working Lands Committee
<i>Objective 8.2: New construction occurs on lands best suited for development and near roads best suited for increased traffic.</i>		
Action 8.2.a: Identify methods to communicate with property owners BEFORE they design development projects.	2027	Town Plan Commission Building Contractors
Action 8.2.b: Prepare a brief set of guidelines on “Designing with nature. long-term stability and safety in mind” the Town of Washburn.	2028	Town Plan Commission
Action 8.2.c: Prepare a marketing plan to encourage landowners to evaluate the pros and cons of possible future housing development.	2029	Town Plan Commission County Planning & Zoning Area Realtors
<i>Objective 8.3: New construction, driveways, land clearing, and pastures are set back from steep slopes and drainages feeding area streams.</i>		
Action 8.3.a: Arrange training for Plan Commission and county zoning staff on how to estimate hazards and setbacks from potentially unstable ravine and bluff slopes.	2028	Town Plan Commission County Planning & Zoning
Action 8.3.b: Contract for development of informational brochure on general steps for estimating development setbacks from potentially unstable and erodible slopes.	2029	Town Plan Commission County Planning & Zoning
Action 8.3.c: Encourage landowners of potentially unstable slopes in the Town to understand how development exacerbates erosion and reduces slope stability.	2030	Town Plan Commission County Planning & Zoning
Action 8.3.d: Support long term measures to protect the most hazardous bluffs and ravines from potential future development.	2031	County Forestry & Parks Landmark Conservancy
Action 8.3.e: Encourage Bayfield County to establish an understandable “Steep Slopes”	2027	Town Plan Commission

provision in the county zoning ordinance that functions in a fashion similar to Great Lakes bluff setback provisions in other county zoning ordinances.		County Planning & Zoning County Board Representative
<i>Objective 8.4: Natural vegetative screening or clusters of farm buildings reflect rural, rather than suburban, character.</i>		
Action 8.4.a: Encourage property owners to limit the use of outdoor lighting and to aim lights downward so that lights do not distract or obstruct views of the night sky. Protect the dark skies in the Town from light pollution. Designate the Town as a Dark Sky Town.	2026	Town Board
Action 8.4.b: Recruit an <i>ad hoc</i> committee to work toward certifying and listing Town as a “Dark Sky” community.	2027	Town Board

**Ch. 8 – Goal 2: Working farms and forests support local farmworkers and woodland workers, outdoor recreation, and home-based workers.**

<i>Objective 8.5: New home construction minimizes disruption of farm, forest, and outdoor recreational enterprises.</i>		
Action 8.5.a: Identify characteristics of land ownership that make properties most likely to contribute to the support of rural enterprise.	2025	Working Lands Committee
Action 8.5.b: Identify strategies to reduce the loss of working lands.	2025	Working Lands Committee
Action 8.5.c: Encourage owners of working lands to participate in various programs that support sustainable land and water management.	2025	Working Lands Committee County Land & Water Conservation

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

**Ch. 9 – Goal 1: The Town of Washburn and all neighboring and overlapping governmental jurisdictions work proactively and cooperatively to ensure that the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and Chequamegon Bay region has a strong, sustainable economy; respects natural resources; and meets human needs fairly and efficiently.**

	Target Timeline	Responsible Party
<i>Objective 9.1: Provide open communication and good working relationships between the Town of Washburn and neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.</i>		
Action 9.1.a: Facilitate the organization of intergovernmental workshops by reaching out to neighboring jurisdictions, identifying common goals, and coordinating resources to foster collaboration on shared regional issues.	2026	Town Board Town Plan Commission
<i>Objective 9.2: Partner with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to provide efficient, cost-effective, high-quality services, where practical or mutually beneficial.</i>		
Action 9.2.a: Work with the Washburn School District and neighboring communities to coordinate efforts to provide quality recreation programs and facilities for area residents.	2026	Town Board Town Plan Commission
<i>Objective 9.3: Work proactively and cooperatively on planning issues that affect neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.</i>		
Action 9.3.a: Work with the Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) system and neighboring and overlapping governments to promote the use of the public transportation system and encourage the inclusion of the Town as a future bus route or stop if demand calls for one.	2026	Town Board Town Plan Commission
Action 9.3.b: Partner with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to establish alternative energy programs that will provide sustainable, efficient, cost-effective energy that is practical and mutually beneficial.	2026	Town Board Town Plan Commission

## **PROCESS FOR AMENDING THE PLAN**

Future development must occur in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. If a proposed development is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Town must evaluate whether or not it should amend the Comprehensive Plan to allow the development to occur. Applications to amend the Comprehensive Plan should generally include the following information:

1. Description of request.
2. Location and map of the proposed development and surrounding properties.
3. Map of any other properties impacted.
4. Explanation of the request including:
  - Reasons for the request.
  - Overall impact on the community.
  - Impact on the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Impact on adjacent lands.
  - Impact on water bodies and other natural features.
5. The Town must publicly notice the proposed amendment. Notices must be sent to all adjacent property owners and to neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.
6. The Town Plan Commission must hold a public hearing to review the request, and the Town Board must take action on the request.
7. If the amendment request is approved, the Town must make the approved changes to the Plan and concurrently may recommend amending the Bayfield County Zoning Ordinance and/or Zoning Map.

## **PROCESS FOR UPDATING THE PLAN**

The Town of Washburn will periodically review this Comprehensive Plan. If there are significant physical, economic, or demographic changes; significant changes in attitudes, priorities, community standards or trends; or significant regulatory changes by overlapping jurisdictions, then the Town will update the Plan accordingly. At a minimum, the Town will update this Plan every ten years. The process for updating the Plan will be similar to the process used to develop this Plan. For example, the process will include a strong public participation component.

## **CONCLUSION**

This Comprehensive Plan presents a reasonable yet relatively unchanging vision of the Town of Washburn. Regardless of the specific actions that the Town will take to implement the Plan, the Town must always keep in mind the vision of the Plan and make decisions accordingly. A strong commitment to implementing the Plan will ensure that the Town of Washburn's future will be consistent with the expressed vision of the community.

# **APPENDICES**



# **APPENDIX A: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**Town of Washburn**  
**Bayfield County, Wisconsin**  
**Resolution 2024-1**

**Approval of a Public Participation Plan for Updating  
and Revising the Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan**

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board of the Town of Washburn approved having the Town Plan Commission lead the updating and revising of the Town's Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wis. Stats. s.66.101; and,

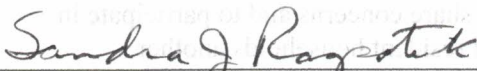
**WHEREAS**, Wis. Stats, s.66.101(4)(a) requires that the Town Board adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Washburn approves the attached Public Participation Plan for updating the Town Comprehensive Plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town of Washburn Plan Commission is tasked with implementation of the attached Public Participation Plan.

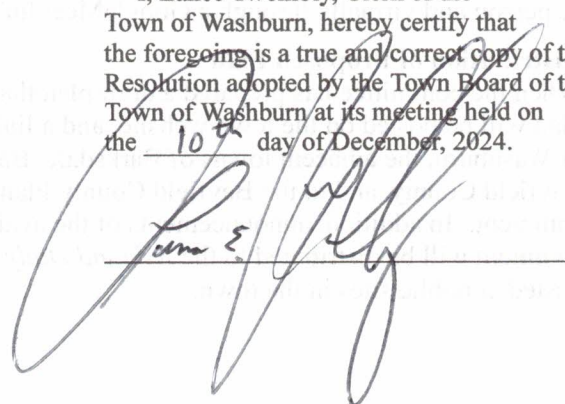
Approved this 10th day of December, 2024.

By the action of the Town Board of the Town of Washburn, Bayfield County, Wisconsin.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra J. Raspotnik, Chair

**STATE OF WISCONSIN )**  
**) SS.**  
**COUNTY OF BAYFIELD )**

I, Lance Twombly, Clerk of the Town of Washburn, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Resolution adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Washburn at its meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lance E. Twombly

# **Public Participation Plan for Updating the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Washburn**

Bayfield County, Wisconsin.

## **Purpose.**

This public participation plan encourages residents of the Town of Washburn to participate in updating the town's comprehensive plan. It encourages citizens to assist in identifying issues and opportunities and to recommend action steps for plan implementation. The town will conduct these activities to 1) solicit a range of community perspectives on planning issues and proposals; 2) maximize community awareness, involvement and understanding of future challenges facing our town's people and resources and 3) enhance the likelihood of developing a plan that residents and landowners will adopt and implement.

To accomplish these purposes, the town is using the following methods:

### **1. Town of Washburn Plan Commission and Comprehensive Plan Task Force.**

In 2007 the Town Board appointed a Plan Commission of residents representing various perspectives within the town. The commission includes an elected member of the Town Board. Assisting the Plan Commission is a group of resident volunteers who are members of the Comprehensive Plan Task Force. The commission and task force will identify planning issues and possible solutions. They will work with consultants and other specialists to inform and educate the community about issues and potential courses of action and provide forums for open discussion. The commission and task force will solicit community concerns about planning issues. The commission and task force meet monthly and post advance notice of its meetings on the town's website, at the Washburn Town Hall and at the Tetzner Dairy. Public participation is welcomed at the meetings.

### **2. Website**

The Plan Commission has a webpage dedicated to the plan update process on the town's website (<https://townofwashburn.wi.gov>). The town website posts agendas of upcoming meetings. The Plan Commission's webpage lists the names of commission and task force members and minutes of all meetings. It also includes copies of all background information and community data the commission and task force reviews in updating the plan.

### **3. Plan Commission Minutes.**

The commission posts minutes of its meetings at the town hall and on the town website.

### **4. Direct Mail Announcements.**

The Town Board's annual newsletter mailed to all resident households in April 2024 featured an article about updating the plan and encouraged community members to share concerns and to participate in updating the plan. In September 2024 the Town Board mailed all resident households another announcement "Your Voice, Our Future," which explained several ways that citizens can become involved in updating the plan.

### **5. Presentations at Town Annual Meeting and Town Board Meetings**

The chair of the commission gave a presentation at the April 2024 about the process for updating the comprehensive plan. The chair and Town Board representative regularly present information about elements of the comprehensive plan at Town Board meetings, which are open to the public both in-person and virtually through a GoogleMeet link posted in advance.

### **6. Distribution of Proposed Plan.**

When the committee has prepared a draft plan that is ready to be considered for adoption, the draft plan will be posted on the town website, and a link to the plan will be emailed to the clerks of the City of Washburn, the adjacent towns of Barksdale, Bayview, Bell, Clover, Port Wing, and Orienta and Bayfield County, and to the Bayfield County Planning and Zoning Department Director for review and comment. In addition, announcements of the availability of the proposed plan for review and

comment will be distributed to the *Ashland Daily Press*, the town e-mail distribution list, and will be posted at public sites in the town.

7. **Comment Period and Written Response Summary.**

When the draft updated comprehensive plan is ready to be considered for adoption, interested members of the public will have a public comment period of at least thirty days to submit written comments on the plan. After the comment period the commission will prepare a summary of all comments submitted and a response to the comments. The commission will then prepare a final draft of the comprehensive plan to present to the Town Board for adoption.

8. **Public Hearing.**

The Town of Washburn Plan Commission will hold a public hearing on the draft comprehensive plan at the end of the public comment period. The commission and task force will precede the hearing with a presentation summarizing the elements of the draft plan. Those attending the hearing will have an opportunity to make formal statements and to submit written comments. Announcements of the public hearing will be made with the public announcements of the availability of the plan.

**Documentation and Evaluation.**

The Plan Commission will keep a record of activities conducted to implement this public participation plan and will evaluate its effectiveness. The committee may recommend that the Town Board adopt changes to this plan in order to improve achievement of the plan's purposes.

**APPENDIX B:  
ADOPTION  
DOCUMENTATION**





# North Wisconsin CLASSIFIEDS

Please call 715.682.2313 Monday to Friday or 24/7 email [classifieds@ashlanddailypress.net](mailto:classifieds@ashlanddailypress.net)

### Legal Notices

### Legal Notices

**NOTICE**  
 The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has developed Request for Information (RFI) documents to gather information regarding available office space to rent or purchase in and around Ashland, WI and within Ashland or Bayfield Counties. If your business has at least 7,350 gross square feet of "move-in ready" office space in this defined location, please contact Shannon Holt for the RFI document(s). She can be reached at (608) 279-8735 or [shannon.holt@wisconsin.gov](mailto:shannon.holt@wisconsin.gov). Please be aware the deadline to submit a completed RFI is February 5th, 2025.

ADP Jan. 9, Jan. 16, Jan. 23, Jan. 30, 2025 WNAJLP

**NOTICE OF UNCLAIMED FUNDS**  
 PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Bayfield County Treasurer, Jenna Galligan, pursuant to Section 59.86(2) Wis. Stats. is required to publish in Bayfield County a Class 1 notice, under ch. 985, a listing of name and last known addresses of all persons for whom the Clerk of Bayfield County Circuit Court is holding money or security which was published in this newspaper on January 16, 2025 and follow that ad with this Class 2 notice, under ch. 985 stating that the full listing may be viewed at:  
[www.bayfieldcounty.wi.gov/151/Treasurer](http://www.bayfieldcounty.wi.gov/151/Treasurer)  
 or  
[www.wisconsinpublicoffices.org](http://www.wisconsinpublicoffices.org)  
 or at the  
 Bayfield County Treasurer's Office  
 117 E. 5th St., Washburn, WI  
 ADP January 23, January 30, 2025 WNAJLP

**NOTICE**  
 The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has developed Request for Information (RFI) documents to gather information regarding available storage space to rent or purchase in and around Ashland, WI and within Ashland or Bayfield Counties. If your business has at least 5,500 gross square feet of unheated storage space AND 2,800 gross square feet of heated storage space in this defined location, please contact Shannon Holt for the RFI document(s). She can be reached at (608) 279-8735 or [shannon.holt@wisconsin.gov](mailto:shannon.holt@wisconsin.gov). Please be aware the deadline to submit a completed RFI is February 5th, 2025. ADP Jan. 9, Jan. 16, Jan. 23, Jan. 30, 2025 WNAJLP

**Notice of Public Hearing**  
**Town of Washburn**  
**Comprehensive Plan Update**

A public hearing to discuss the proposed revised and updated Town of Washburn (Bayfield County, WI) Comprehensive Plan shall be held March 6, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. at the Washburn Town Hall 30015 County Hwy C, Washburn, WI 54891. Written comments may be submitted to the email address listed below or mailed to: Plan Commission, Town of Washburn, PO Box 216, Washburn, WI 54891. Written comments will be accepted until 4:00 P.M., March 6, 2025.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan revision in summary contains the following elements and information: issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; natural, agricultural and cultural resources; economic development, inter-governmental cooperation; land use; and implementation. The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for public officials and private citizens to use in making informed decisions affecting the community.

Kenneth Bro, chair of the Washburn Town Plan Commission, may be contacted by email to provide additional information on the proposed plan revision at [plan@townofwashburn.wi.gov](mailto:plan@townofwashburn.wi.gov).

A copy of the draft, revised comprehensive plan may be inspected prior to the hearing at the Washburn Public Library, 307 Washington Ave., Washburn, WI 54891 during normal hours, or online at [www.townofwashburn.wi.gov](http://www.townofwashburn.wi.gov).

WNAJLP

**RFP FOR TREE REMOVAL**  
**TOWN OF LA POINTE**

The Town of La Pointe is seeking quotes for dropping and removing 10 trees (large pine trees), located outside the Winter Transportation Building, 318 Big Bay Road, La Pointe.

Requirements:  
 Must provide proof of valid comprehensive and liability insurance.  
 Must remove all trees and debris from the site.

Please mail or deliver bids in an envelope marked "2025 Tree Removal" to: Alex Smith, Town Clerk, 240 Big Bay Road, La Pointe, WI 54850. Quotes must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, February 10th, 2025, and will be opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday February 11th, 2025, at the La Pointe Town Hall.

For more information, please call Public Works Director at 715-747-6855.

The Town of La Pointe reserves the right to refuse any or all bids.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Ashland City Planning Commission will be conducted on Tuesday, February 18th, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Ashland City Hall Council Chamber (601 Main St. W) and virtually via Go To Meeting. The meeting can be joined in person or by using a computer, smartphone or tablet at <https://meet.gotomeeting.com/775025133>. The meeting can also be joined by phone at 1-866-899-4679 using Access Code: 775-025133.

**ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS**

Sealed bids for the construction of:

Northwood Technical College  
**RICE LAKE REROOF**  
 1900 College Dr, Rice Lake, WI 54868  
 RICE LAKE, WISCONSIN 54868  
 OPN PROJECT NO. 24706003

will be received by:

NORTHWOOD TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
**NEW RICHMOND CAMPUS**  
 1019 S. KNOWLES AVENUE  
 NEW RICHMOND, WI 54017  
**If hand delivering bids, enter at Entrance A. ATTENTION Shawna Benish - Procurement Manager**

until 2:00 P.M. local time on February 12, 2025. Provide bid in a hard copy form. Bids presented electronically will not be accepted. Bids will be opened and read aloud at approximately 2:00 p.m. local time at the New Richmond Campus via tele-conference, +1 929-229-5751, 304048097#

The bids are for a single Prime Construction Contract for the entire Work, a 99,000 SF reroof. Bids shall be on a lump sum basis; segregated sub-bids will not be accepted. Notice to Proceed is anticipated to commence on or about February 24, 2024. The work may begin immediately following execution of the agreement and is scheduled to be completed by August 13, 2025, in one phase as shown on the Contract Documents.

A pre-bid conference is scheduled for January 28, 2025 at 1:00 p.m., local time, at Rice Lake Campus, to review project condi-

# Town Public Hearing Record & Plan Commission Minutes

## Town of Washburn

Town Hall, Thursday, March 6, 2025

**Commission members present:** Kim Bro (chair), Jim Park (town board representative), Tim Schwenzfeier (vice chair), Caroline Twombly.

**Commission members absent:** Cyndi Belanger (secretary) due to a family death.

**Planning Task Force members present:** Terri Bahe, Tom Cogger, Dennis Weibel.

**Planning Task Force members absent:** Phil Kraus, Charmaine Swan.

**Other Town Board Members present:** Sandy Raspotnik (chair), Scottie Sandstrom (supervisor).

**Other Town Officers present:** Lance Twombly (clerk).

**County Board Representative present:** Jan Lee.

**Other Residents present:** Steve Bade, Della Bro, Becky Brown, Connie Cogger, Greg Filipczak, Lynne Krueger, Kathleen Russell, Seth Vasser.

### Public Hearing

1. A public hearing on the draft updated *Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045* began at 7:00 P.M. with a brief presentation of highlights of the updated comprehensive plan.
2. Connie Cogger offered her painting of the Town Hall for the cover of the updated plan.
3. Steve Bade and Kathleen Russell spoke in support of the draft plan and of the need for effective enforcement.
4. Della Bro recommended getting information from the Audubon Society website to communicate the importance of dark skies for bird migration.
5. Jan Lee provided an update on county efforts to address the challenges towns face in obtaining Fire and Ambulance personnel and services in rural communities and to address the challenges of ATV/UTV use of roads.
6. The hearing closed at 8:10 P.M.

### Plan Commission Meeting

1. Kim Bro called the meeting to order at 8:20 P.M. and verified its legal notification (posted on town website and at town hall and Tetzner Dairy on March 1).
  2. The minutes of the February 4, 2025 meeting were approved (Tim moves, Caroline seconds).
  3. The commission adopted a resolution recommending Town Board adoption of the *Town of Washburn Updated Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045* (Tim moves, Caroline seconds; 4 for, 0 against).
  4. Kim mentioned that a County Zoning Committee member encouraged him to apply for membership on a Stakeholder Group to advise the county on its comprehensive rewrite of the county zoning and subdivision ordinances.
  5. The next meeting of the commission will be Monday, April 14, 2025 if there is business to conduct.
  6. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M. (Caroline moves, Tim seconds).
- Draft submitted by: Kenneth Bro, Chair, Town of Washburn Plan Commission (March 11, 2025).

## Plan Commission Report

The Plan Commission recommends that the Town Board pass an ordinance adopting the updated comprehensive plan.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING OF THE UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FOR THE TOWN OF WASHBURN, BAYFIELD COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Washburn, pursuant to Sections 62.23, 61.35, and 60.22(3) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, has adopted Village powers and created a Town Plan Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board adopted a Comprehensive Plan on September 11, 2007 following extensive public participation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Plan Commission prepared an updated comprehensive plan that contains all of the required elements specified in Section 66.1001(2) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town has duly noticed and held a public hearing on the proposed updated plan, following the procedures in Section 66.1001(4)(d) of the *Wisconsin Statutes* and the public participation procedures for comprehensive plan amendments adopted by the Town Board; and

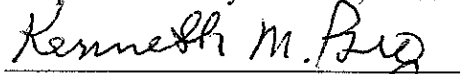
**WHEREAS**, the Town Plan Commission has prepared the Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045, containing all maps, approved comments and changes, and other descriptive materials, to be the comprehensive plan for the Town of Washburn under Section.66.1001, of the *Wisconsin Statutes*;

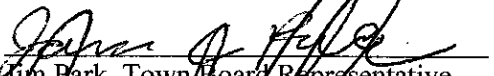
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that pursuant to Section 66.1001(4)(b) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, the Town of Washburn Plan Commission, Bayfield County, Wisconsin, by this resolution, adopted by a majority of the Town Plan Commission on a roll call vote with a quorum present and voting and proper notice having been given, hereby approves the updated Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Plan Commission does hereby recommend that the Town Board enact an Ordinance adopting the updated Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045.

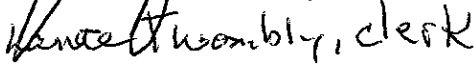
The Town Clerk shall properly post or publish this resolution as required under Section 60.80, *Wisconsin Statutes*.

Adopted this 6<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2025.

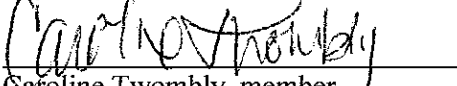
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth M. Bro, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Park, Town Board Representative

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST: Cyndi Belanger, Secretary

  
Hannah Twombly, clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Schwenzfeier, Vice Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Caroline Twombly, member

**ABSENT**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cyndi Belanger, Secretary



ORDINANCE NO. 2025-1

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE  
UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF WASHBURN 2025-2045

The Town Board of the Town of Washburn, Bayfield County, Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

**SECTION I – TITLE AND PURPOSE.** The title of this ordinance is the *Town of Washburn Updated Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045 Ordinance*. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Washburn, Bayfield County, Wisconsin, to lawfully adopt an updated comprehensive plan as required under §66.1001 (4) (c), *Wisconsin Statutes*.

**SECTION II – AUTHORITY.** The Town Board of the Town of Washburn, Bayfield County, Wisconsin, has authority under its village powers under §60.22, *Wisconsin Statutes*, to appoint a town plan commission under §60.62 (4) and §62.23 (1), *Wisconsin Statutes*, and under §66.1001 (4), *Wisconsin Statutes*, to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Washburn must be in compliance with §66.1001 (4) (c), *Wisconsin Statutes*, in order for the town board to adopt this ordinance.

**SECTION III – ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE.** This ordinance, adopted by a majority of the town board on a roll call vote with a quorum present and voting and proper notice having been given, provides for the adoption by the town of a comprehensive plan under §66.1001 (4), *Wisconsin Statutes*.

**SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.** The town board has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by §66.1001 (4) (a), *Wisconsin Statutes*.

**SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION.** The Plan Commission of the Town of Washburn, by a majority vote of the entire commission, recorded in its official minutes for March 6, 2025, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of the updated Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045, which contains all of the elements specified in §66.1001 (2), *Wisconsin Statutes*.

**SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING.** The Town of Washburn held a public hearing on this ordinance on March 6, 2025, with notice in compliance with the requirements of §66.1001 (4) (d), *Wisconsin Statutes*.

**SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.** The town board, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Washburn Comprehensive Plan Ordinance under §66.1001 (4) (c), *Wisconsin Statutes*.

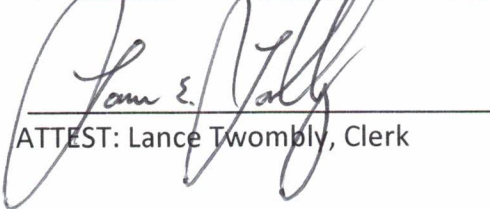
**SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY.** If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are severable.

**SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE.** This ordinance is effective on publication or posting. The town clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under §60.80, *Wisconsin Statutes*, and a copy of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan, shall be filed with at least all of the entities specified under §66.1001 (4) (b), *Wisconsin Statutes*.

Adopted this 11<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2025.

Ayes 3 Noes 0 Absent 0

  
Sandra Raspotnik, Chair

  
ATTEST: Lance Twombly, Clerk