

CHAPTER TWO: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan contains background data, goals, objectives, policies, and recommended programs for agricultural preservation, natural resource conservation, and cultural resource protection.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

A. Character of Farming

Agriculture in surrounding areas remains an important component of the City's economy and community character. According to the 2006 land use inventory, agricultural land accounts for approximately 28% percent of the City's total land area, and a much greater percentage of the land in surrounding towns is in agricultural use. A number of local industries such as Crystal Farms and Paw Natural depend directly on area agricultural products.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- Limit non-agricultural development outside of the City limits through exercise of the City's extraterritorial authority.
- Work to coordinate farm and farm land preservation efforts with Jefferson County.
- Support markets and businesses that rely on locally produced, value-added agricultural products

B. Assessment of Farmland Viability

The Natural Resources Conservation Service groups soils based on their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants without deteriorating over a long period of time. These capability classifications are based on numerous criteria that include, but are not limited to, the soil's salinity, capacity to hold moisture, potential for erosion, depth, and texture and structure, as well as local climatic limitations (e.g. temperature and rainfall). Under this system of classification, soils are separated into eight classes. Generally, Class I and Class II soils are the best suited for the cultivation of crops.

Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use. These soils can sustain a wide variety of plants and are well suited for cultivated crops, pasture plants, range lands, and woodlands. Class II soils have moderate limitations that restrict the types of plants that can be grown or that require simple conservation practices or soil management techniques to prevent deterioration over time. However, these practices are generally easy to apply, and, therefore, these soils are still able to sustain cultivated crops, pasture plants, range lands, and woodlands.

Soils in Class III have severe limitations that, under natural circumstances, restrict the types of plants that can be grown, and/or that alter the timing of planting, tillage, and harvesting. However, with the application and careful management of special conservation practices, these soils may still be used for cultivated crops, pasture plants, woodlands, and range lands.

Soils in capability classes IV through VIII present increasingly severe limitations to the cultivation of crops. Soils in Class VIII have limitations that entirely preclude their use for commercial plant production.

Map 3 depicts the locations of Class I, II, and III soils in the City. Generally, Class I soils are located in small isolated patches comprising approximately 1.3 percent of the total land area. Class II soils are primarily concentrated in the area south of the City between STH 89 and Marsh Lake, east of the City

along the Crawfish Creek, and northeast of the City in the Town of Milford. Class II soils account for approximately 55.7 percent of the total land within the City's planning area.

Currently, relatively little land within the City limits is in active agricultural use.

Farmland Preservation Efforts

Local farmers can participate in several federal and State programs and initiatives that are intended to preserve long-term farming activities. The 2002 Farm Bill reauthorized several federal programs, including:

- The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.
- The Wetland Reserve Program, which provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts.
- The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, which provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to landowners to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat on their property.
- The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, which focuses on providing technical assistance to help new grazers begin using rotational grazing methods. Trained grazing specialists work one-on-one with farmers, developing grazing plans, including seeding recommendations, fencing and watering plans.
- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue offers two important farmland preservation programs, the Farmland Preservation Credit Program and the Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program.

The Farmland Preservation Credit Program strives to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and provides property tax relief to farmland owners. To qualify for the credit, farmland must be 35 acres or more and zoned for exclusive agricultural use or be subject to a preservation agreement between the farmland owner and the State. In addition, in order to be eligible for this credit, all program participants must comply with soil and water conservation standards set by the State Land Conservation Board. The City of Lake Mills has A-1 Exclusive agriculture zoning, but this is primarily a holding district, and little City territory is currently mapped in this district. The City has also established Exclusive Agricultural Zoning within its Extraterritorial Zoning Jurisdiction at the north end of the City. In 2006 there were 9 claims totaling \$1,255 for this credit in the City, for an average credit of \$139. It should be noted that claims for both of the Farmland Preservation Credit and the Farmland Tax Relief Credit are documented for the municipality in which the claimant lives, which may not be where the farm is actually located.

The Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program provides direct benefits to all farmland owners with 35 or more acres. The credit is computed as a percentage of up to \$10,000 of property taxes, with the maximum credit of \$1,500. In 2006, there were 14 claims for this credit in the City of Lake Mills, constituting a total of \$1,937 for an average credit of \$138.

Participation in both of these programs was considerably higher in the surrounding Towns. For example, there were 59 claims totaling \$39,968 under the Farmland Preservation Credit Program and 64 under Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program claims totaling \$20,318 from Town of Lake Mills.

In 1999, Jefferson County prepared its Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan, which was intended to provide guidelines for development and agricultural and natural resource preservation through 2020. The County's Plan identifies most lands outside of the City's Urban Services Area in the Towns of Lake Mills, Milford, Aztalan and other Towns as agricultural preservation areas. The County enforces the policy through its zoning and subdivision review authority (e.g. A-1 Exclusive Agricultural zoning, etc). The City of Lake Mills has defers to the County's density standards and lot sizes within its 1.5 mile ETJ, but retains its own rules for lot configurations and other aspects of lot design.

C. Agricultural Resources Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal:

Conserve farms and productive farmlands within the City's Planning Area.

Objectives:

1. Preserve large tracts and productive agricultural land outside of the City's planned growth area.
2. Direct new home development to City lots served by Municipal Sanitary Sewer and at locations adjacent to existing development.
3. Limit new residential and other non-agricultural development outside of the City limits.
4. Work with surrounding communities and farmers to help preserve local farming as a viable occupation and way of life.
5. Support continuation and expansion of markets, businesses, and industries that purchase and add value to locally produced agricultural products, especially those agricultural products produced in environmentally sustainable manner.

Policies:

1. The City will foster an urban land use pattern and infill development where appropriate within the City to reduce the consumption of land for non-agricultural purposes.
2. The City will continue to exercise its extraterritorial planning, zoning, and land divisions powers within its 1.5 mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) in order to limit non-agricultural development outside of the City limits.
3. The City will consider amending its subdivision ordinance to limit land divisions lying outside of the City's future urban service area but within its 1.5 mile ETJ and designated by the City's Future Land Use Map as "Agriculture/Vacant" to the number of land divisions and maximum lot size allowed by Jefferson County under the County's A-1 and A-3 zoning districts under the 1999 Jefferson County Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan, regardless of the County's underlying zoning unless specifically excluded from such policy through intergovernmental agreement with the affected Town.
4. The City will consider amending its extraterritorial land division ordinance to apply Jefferson County's 1999 land division policies for prime agricultural soils under its A-1 Zoning District to all land within the City's Future Urban Service Area regardless of soil classification or underlying county zoning, unless excluded from such policy through intergovernmental agreement with the affected Town or the property is annexed and developed in accordance with the Future Land Use recommendations of this *Plan*.
5. The City will explore additional approaches to farm and farm land preservation in cooperation with Jefferson County and other Jefferson County communities, and the State of Wisconsin such as purchase of conservation easements or purchase of development rights programs.
6. The City will explore strategies for increasing the viability of area farms and farming through such means as the Lake Mills' farmers market, selling of locally produced farm products by City stores and

vendors, bulk purchases of local produce by area schools and other institutions, and the use of local crops and crop waste for local industrial uses.

7. The City will support County and State efforts to promote sustainable agricultural practices that do not negatively impact the area's long term groundwater supply or quality, surface water, soils, and air.
8. The City will continue to reserve land for industrial development potentially suitable for bio-based industries.

D. Agricultural Resource Programs and Recommendations

Minimize the Encroachment on Agricultural Land through Infill Development.

One strategy to minimize the consumption of undeveloped agricultural land is through infill development of territory already annexed and redevelopment of blighted, abandoned, or obsolescent properties already in the City. Often these properties are more costly and difficult to develop than undeveloped land at the City's periphery due to one or more of the following: Cost of removing obsolescent buildings; renovation costs exceeding that of new construction; remediation and other liability costs from previous contamination, more uncertainty in securing financing owing to the aforementioned conditions; and (somewhat paradoxically) higher land costs due to desirable locations near existing development. Tools available to local governments to provide incentives include the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Community Development Block Grants, and various other State and Federal environmental clean up grants. (See Chapter 7: Economic Development for greater discussion of these programs). Of these, only TIF is based primarily on the resources and consent of local taxing jurisdictions, and is by far the strongest of the three in most situations (though other programs and funding are often critical to project success).

Effective use of Tax Increment Financing as a tool for encouraging redevelopment of blighted sites and reducing encroachment of green space at the urban fringe depends not only on the willingness of local taxing jurisdictions to use this tool to redevelop blighted and/or vacant areas within the City, but also refraining from using it to encourage development at the urban fringe where extension of City infrastructure and private development is economically feasible and likely without public financing.

The City has created four Tax Increment Districts that includes obsolescent buildings, contaminated sites, and other comparative disadvantages to development, and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7. This Plan recommends judicious use of TID financing and other programs for projects that promote infill and redevelopment of areas already in the City.

The City has also established a detailed Northside Neighborhood Plan for undeveloped areas currently within the City that recommends an efficient land use pattern that will minimize the need for the City to accommodate growth elsewhere (See Chapter 6: Housing and Neighborhood Development).

Minimize the Encroachment on Agricultural Land through promotion of a more Traditional Urban Land Use Pattern.

Since 1950, the State of Wisconsin has lost approximately one-third of its productive agricultural lands to development and to fragmentation of land ownership into smaller parcels by non-farmers. Since 1990, the rate of farmland loss to development has accelerated, with (See "Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative" call-out block). The problem is most acute in the rapidly growing counties such as Dane County to the West and the Southeastern Wisconsin counties surrounding Milwaukee. As these communities run out of developable land or implement tighter land use controls, Jefferson County communities can expect increased development pressures through 2030. The American Farm Land Trust has identified the Rock River Basin as the third most threatened region in the country.

Though some loss of farmland to development is inevitable owing to population growth and economic expansion, the rate of farmland loss has grown much more quickly than population in most areas. The

loss of farmland is largely the result of increased residential home and lot sizes in both rural areas and in cities and villages that have adopted a purely auto-oriented, suburban land use pattern. Where a common lot size for single-family homes in cities and villages was one-fifth of an acre prior to 1950 (or 5 dwelling units per acre), lots in many cities and villages since 1950 have grown to one-third, one-half, and or even larger lot sizes.

This pattern, commonly referred to as “urban” (or more appropriately “suburban” and “rural”) sprawl, consumes up to five times the amount of agricultural land than the traditional pattern, and cannot be sustained indefinitely without irreparably diminishing the agricultural capacity and quality of life of the Lake Mills area and other parts of the State for future generations.

To combat this unsustainable trend, some smaller communities are returning to a more traditional pattern of development. This includes greatly limiting non-agricultural development in rural areas (discussed in greater detail in subsequent Recommendation#3 below), and increasing the density of uses in a pattern resembling that created when more people traveled shorter distances to meet daily needs.

A policy supporting these traditional patterns is compatible with the desire to maintain single-family housing as the dominant form of housing in Lake Mills, and will likely be facilitated by demographic trends toward increasingly smaller households with fewer children and more single-adults and seniors. These policies would limit unsewered development in the productive farmland at City’s periphery and reduce the amount of land needed to accommodate future housing growth. More information on compact and traditional neighborhoods is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6: Housing and Neighborhood development, but consequences for farmland preservation efforts are clear.



Suburban Sprawl

THE WISCONSIN WORKING LANDS INITIATIVE

The State's agriculture, forestry, and tourism industries contribute a combined total of \$56.3 billion annually to Wisconsin's economy. In addition, Wisconsin's working lands and associated infrastructure put the state in a strong position to take advantage growing opportunities in burgeoning sectors such as the bio economy (the production of biomass for energy, chemicals and other products), eco-tourism (tourism based enjoyment and use of a given location's natural amenities in a sustainable manner), and agricultural diversification (organic farms, production of food for local markets).

However trends evident in the past several decades threaten this vital part of the State's economy, environment, and lifestyle. Wisconsin's highly productive agricultural lands are rapidly disappearing to development in many parts of the state. Divestment in and fragmentation of agricultural and forestry lands for smaller, private lots is making viable, large scale agricultural, timber, and hunting areas increasingly difficult in some areas. Population growth, changes in the forest and farm economy, and local land use policies that encourage or require increasingly large lots for housing and other uses have resulted in a decrease of productive farmland from 24 million acres in 1950 to 16 million acres by the 1990's.

Wisconsin, while once a national leader in farm land preservation and natural resource protection, has not adapted its working lands policies to comprehensively address changes occurring at the local, state, national, and international level. According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the average size of lot platted in the State's 24 fastest growing counties (excluding Milwaukee County) in 2005 was .73 acres (31,800 square feet), or just 1.5 housing units per acre. This is far short of the four housing units per acre that the National Association of Home Builders describes as "typical".

In an effort to address these issues in a comprehensive way, the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was launched in 2005 to find common ground on conserving the State's productive agricultural, forestry, and tourism lands to other forms of development. In June 2005 the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) appointed a 28 member Steering Committee made up of representatives from an array of citizens including developers, farmers, foresters, environmental groups, local government representatives, and other groups. The Steering Committee issued its final 64-page report in August 2006.

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative Steering Committee's Final Report identified a series of goals and recommendations that recognize the need for a comprehensive action based on collaboration between various economic sectors, public and private actors, and all of the various levels of government from local to federal level. The report includes recommendations for improving past programs and strategies and creating new ones to make them more effective and attractive to owners of the state's working lands. A Copy of the WWLI report can be found at the website below.

Source: www.datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/pdf/so-0155web.pdf

Continue to Support the 1999 Jefferson County Farmland Preservation Plan through exercise of the City's Extraterritorial Subdivision Review Authority.

The trend toward accelerated consumption of land for non-agricultural purposes in Wisconsin in recent decades has been even more evident in unincorporated areas than it has been in cities and villages (see Recommendation # 2 above). This phenomenon is being increasingly referred to as "Rural Sprawl" or "Exurban Sprawl". According to the Urban Land Institute, housing on lots of 10 acres or more accounts for 55% of productive land lost to development nationally since 1994.



Rural Sprawl

Owing to the much larger acreage per residence and a pattern of lot creation not constrained by extension of sanitary sewer and municipal water lines, the negative impacts of residential subdivisions and commercial development, on rural economic activities and environmental areas are proportionally much greater outside of cities and villages for the same number of residences.

Jefferson County's 1999 Farmland Preservation Plan is a comprehensive attempt to preserve productive agricultural land throughout Jefferson County. The plan, implemented through the County's zoning and subdivision authority, restricts the number of new residential lots on prime farm land to 1 new residential lot on 50 acres or less and 2 new residential lots on parcels 50 acres or more in size. Each new lot is limited to a maximum of 2 acres unless the land owner chooses to have fewer larger lots that do not exceed the total acreage allowed for the maximum number of two acre lots. For non-prime farm lands, the maximum number of new residential lots is 3 lots (again with 2 acres maximum area per lot) regardless of original parcel size. This plan is an attempt to balance the desires of property owners to create additional residences while retaining large, un-fragmented parcels of productive farmlands. The City will work to ensure that the County enforces its own 1999 policies within the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

The City of Lake Mills also seeks to limit land divisions, non-agricultural development, and fragmentation of farmland through exercise of its own Extraterritorial Land Division Authority. This would be done to both limit low-density, unsewered development in the productive farmland at City's periphery and reduce barriers to annexation and more land-efficient development within the City. In order to reduce the number of land divisions from what the City currently allows, reduce unsewered development in rural areas, and reduce confusion between City and County standards, the City will consider amending its current subdivision code to reduce the number of land divisions and size of new lots within its ETJ to those allowed by Jefferson County in its A-1 and A-3 agricultural zoning districts. However, unlike the County, the City will consider applying the 1999 Jefferson Farmland Preservation policies for land zoned A-1 or A-3 by the County to all lands within the City's 1.5 mile ETJ regardless of proposed land use or whether the County grants or has granted non-agricultural zoning. To be most effective, the City would apply this stricter standard to all property designated as Agriculture/Vacant on the Future Land Use Map (see Chapter 3) within its ETJ unless otherwise covered by intergovernmental agreement with the Town of Lake Mills (See Chapter 8.). In order to reduce the barriers to future annexation even further, the City will consider further restricting land divisions within its future urban service area to the same number and size lots allowed by the 1999 Jefferson County Farmland Preservation Plan for the County's A-1 District only unless the subject property is annexed to the City and developed in accordance with Map 6: Future Land Use.

Consider adopting more restrictive land division policies for Extraterritorial Land Divisions within the City's planned Urban Service Area.

Though Jefferson County's Agricultural Preservation Plan is relatively restrictive compared with those in many other Wisconsin counties, there are some aspects of the County Plan that may allow a greater amount of rural residential development than is desirable to protect open space and prevent undesirable unsewered-residential within the City's ETJ. For example, the policies restricting residential development described above apply only to the County's Agricultural and Agricultural Rural Districts. County residential districts allow higher densities, and many of these areas, though not classified as prime agricultural land, are still valued open spaces. There are several residentially zoned areas of this type that lie within the City's ETJ that also lie within the City's Future Urban Service area. The residential zoning would potentially allow for a significant number of residential lots in rural subdivisions that would not only consume more farm land than the same number of residential lots in the City, but also create barriers that prevent or impede efficient annexation and extension of municipal services on the City's periphery.

The City currently maintains a policy of not extending municipal water to any area outside of the City unless it is annexed to the City and also refuses to provide sanitary sewer service to any area outside of the City not covered under inter-municipal agreement with the Town of Lake Mills. This *Plan* recommends continuation of this policy. However, this policy does not prevent land divisions for residential development in areas already zoned for residential uses by Jefferson County. Therefore, to more effectively limit development in the City's ETJ or at minimum its planned Urban Service Area to protect farmland and realize other objectives of this *Plan*, the City will consider a more restrictive policies for all lands within its extraterritorial land review jurisdiction.

This *Plan* recommends consideration of the following policies for within the City's Future Urban Service Areas (as depicted on the Future Land Use Map):

- Amend and enforce the City's extraterritorial land division ordinance to limit maximum size of new lots in the ETJ to 2 acres, require public street access and lot configurations that will not impede efficient long term growth of the City, and to limit residential densities to 3 or fewer lots (dwelling units) per non-prime agricultural land parcel of record and two or fewer lots (dwelling units) per prime agriculture parcel-of-record regardless of County or Town zoning.
- Discourage premature development and utility extensions in these areas,
- Prior to any intensive development within the Future Urban Service Area, the City should engage in detailed planning processes that leads to a clearly articulated vision for land use, transportation, and utility plans.

Consider Participating in Potential County or Local Purchase or Transfer of Development Rights Programs.

In 2007 Jefferson County created a Task Force to explore various ways to preserve agricultural and natural resource lands through purchase of conservation easements and/or development rights to augment local regulatory tools for protecting these areas. The benefits and costs of such programs could be subject of further discussion between the City of Lake Mills and other Jefferson County following adoption of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

Preservation of farmland through municipal zoning and subdivision ordinances provides a cost-effective means of preserving agricultural and other open lands from development. However, there are two main criticisms for relying on regulatory tools alone. The first stems from real or perceived unfairness to a property owner for diminishing expectations for development potential - and therefore the potential value - of property for purposes other than primarily agricultural or related uses. The second weakness, somewhat related to the first, is the general impermanence of zoning and subdivision regulations that can

be easily changed or weakened over time in the face of mounting pressures to cease farming and sell for development.

To help address the both issues, regions facing loss of agricultural land to development in some parts of the country (notably the northeastern United States) have adopted or are considering adopting programs that provide direct financial compensation to property owners who permanently restrict use of land to farm and open space purposes via private deed restriction or covenant. The restrictions on development typically are permanent and “run with the land”. In other words, the restrictions would remain binding regardless of changes to ownership or changes in zoning or subdivision regulations. The property owner retains all of the other rights of ownership of the protected farm land, including rights to use, restrict access, lease, sell, and borrow against its value.

Incorporated municipalities like the City of Lake Mills that place a high value farmland and open spaces around their community may also opt to participate in such programs by providing funding or allowing development rights to be transferred from agricultural to urban areas. Bringing in more communities can make the program more effective by bringing additional resources to bear. However, if not carefully implemented, these programs have several drawbacks of their own and can lead to unintended negative consequences.

PDR'S AND TDR'S

Nationally, two increasingly common programs for preserving farm land and other open space through purchase of conservation easements are Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs.

A Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program is generally the easier of the two to administer and is more common than a TDR program. Under a PDR program, participating communities (a town, county, region, state or any combination of these) purchase the Development Rights from individual property owners based on a reasonable and predetermined calculation of the development value of the property. In exchange, the property owner agrees to record a deed restriction that prevents development on that property, though the owner still owns and may use the land for farming and similar purposes. In most programs, the decision of whether sell the rights is left to the individual property owners, but the administering jurisdiction establishes the criteria to determine which lands will be eligible and what the base development potential will be. Program funds typically come from local taxes. The Town of Dunn in Dane County Wisconsin was the first community in Wisconsin to implement such a program, and funds the program primarily with property taxes. The State of Wisconsin has recently considered adopting a state-wide PDR program. Though deleted from the 2008-2009 budget, this program would have provided matching funds to local governments implementing local PDR programs.

A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program is similar to a PDR program in that land owners are financially compensated and retain most property rights in exchange for permanent development restrictions on their land; limiting use to agricultural and conservation uses regardless of ownership or changes to zoning. The big difference between the two programs is the method of compensation. In contrast to a PDR program, development rights in a TDR program are purchased by a developer or other private entity, and no public revenues are needed. However, the program depends not only on a willing seller of rights, but also a willing buyer. Furthermore, the buyer of the rights (typically a developer) must have a location in which he or she can exercise the purchased right to develop. This location - referred to as a receiving area - must permit the developer the ability to develop at greater intensities than the community would allow without the purchased-and-transferred development rights. A City such as Lake Mills can more readily provide receiving areas with more intense development than an unincorporated town without urban services, though receiving areas can also be created in less productive or less environmentally critical rural lands. A rural TDR program has been established in Sauk County.

"Bio Industry": New Uses for Traditional Agricultural Products.

Advances in technology are opening up new markets for traditional agricultural products. The "new uses" economy is focused on finding new ways to use and process corn, soybeans and other carbohydrate-rich farm products into plastics, fuel, and even pharmaceuticals. Ethanol from corn and Bio-diesel from vegetable oils are two well known (if controversial) examples. Production costs of other carbohydrate-based materials are decreasing while environmental regulations and "green" economic incentives are increasing, thus making them competitive with non-renewable hydrocarbon- or petroleum-based products. Fuels and other products from crop waste, grasses, timber, and other biomass – all abundant in

Wisconsin – promise to be more viable and efficient sources of energy if the technologies can be developed to fully realize this potential.

To compete with east and west coast efforts to capture this emerging economy, many mid-nation states are assembling initiatives to produce and commercialize these bio-industrial products. “New uses” economic clusters are being built and Wisconsin, with its productive forest and farm lands and agricultural and forestry infrastructure, is well positioned to become a major player in the new “bio economy”. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Energy awarded one of three \$125 million research grants to the University of Wisconsin – Madison for research in cellulosic ethanol from sources other than corn, further bolstering Wisconsin’s competitive position.

Lake Mills and other Jefferson County communities are strategically located close to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, agricultural producers, and the manufacturing centers of southeastern Wisconsin, north central Illinois, and Chicago. Lake Mills and other Jefferson County communities are therefore are well-placed in relation to both raw materials produced by area farms and potential markets.

Encourage Direct Marketing of Locally Produced Agricultural Products

Direct marketing to local consumers is an increasingly common and effective strategy to add value to locally produced agricultural products. This can be a viable strategy for farmers in the Lake Mills area. The Lake Mills Farmer’s Market held Wednesdays between May and October in Commons Park is one good example. As the local and regional population increases and tourism increases, Lake Mills is increasingly well-positioned to take advantage of the local food movement as economic, farmland preservation, carbon reduction, and community health initiatives. These ideas are explored in greater detail in Chapter 7, Economic Development.



Supporting local, more traditional industries that rely on and add value to local agricultural products is also essential to the viability of area farms. The City of Lake Mills can work with these industries to provide adequate sites for expansion, appropriate levels of utilities and municipal services, and an efficient transportation system. Establishing balanced land use regulations and development review procedures is also important.

Map 3: Agricultural Soils

NATURAL RESOURCES

An understanding of Lake Mills' natural resources provides an essential framework for planning a community that is environmentally, economically, socially sustainable. The City's natural assets and attributes also provide the framework for guiding decisions on other elements of the comprehensive plan. As a growing community, such information can help identify the appropriate locations for certain types of development, and can pinpoint areas that should be preserved and managed for recreational purposes, stormwater management, and ground water protection. Maintenance of these natural features is also important for community character and appearance and for the maintenance of natural plant and animal communities. Map 3 in this Plan depicts the City's key environmentally sensitive areas, some of which are described in more detail below.

NATURAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- Protect Environmental Corridors in the City's Planning Area
- Protect Water and Shoreland Resources in the City's Planning area.
- Integrate Natural Resource Sustainability Goals with other Comprehensive Goals such as Cultural, Recreational, Community Facility, and Neighborhood Development Goals

A. Natural Resources Inventory

Landforms/Topography

An ecological landscape is defined as a region of Wisconsin characterized by a unique combination of physical and biological attributes, such as climate, geology, soils, water, or vegetation. Different ecological landscapes offer distinct management opportunities based upon their levels of biological productivity, habitat suitability for wildlife, and presence of rare species and natural communities. The City of Lake Mills falls entirely within the Southeast Glacial Plains Landscape. Understanding the distinct attributes of each of these landscapes will be important when identifying future land management and land use goals. Many of these attributes are identified in the following sections.

The topography in the City of Lake Mills was shaped over 10,000 years ago by Wisconsin's most recent period of glacial activity. The landscape is characterized by gently rolling drumlins that were formed by material deposited along the edges of the ice sheet during the glacier's retreat. The terrain in and around the City is fairly level with gentle changes of grade and few steep slopes.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Resources

There are no extraction activities in Lake Mills. Under State Statutes (295.20), landowners who want to register their property as a nonmetallic mining deposit are required to notify each county, city, village and/or town that has zoning authority over their property. Registrations must be recorded at the County Register of Deeds in the County where the mineral deposit is located. State law limits the ability of a municipality or a county to rezone or otherwise interfere with the future extraction of a mineral resource from a registered nonmetallic mineral deposit. It is important to note that zoning changes prohibiting mining on land registered as a marketable nonmetallic mining deposit cannot take effect during the registration period. Registration is effective for 10 years and renewable for an additional 10 years. In addition, registration on property with active mining operations can be renewed for as long as mining is ongoing. Zoning changes may take affect after the registration has expired.

Groundwater

Groundwater is comprised of the portion of rainfall that does not run off to streams or rivers and that does not evaporate or transpire from plants. This water percolates down through the soil until it reaches

the saturated zone of an aquifer. Groundwater supplies nearly all of the water for domestic, commercial and industrial uses in the City of Lake Mills.

The quality and availability of groundwater in the City is generally good. However, groundwater availability and quality will continue to be an important issue for Jefferson County. In the last few decades, the number of high-capacity wells in the region has increased to accommodate growth. Such deep wells not only threaten to deplete the aquifer, but also disturb areas of the aquifer in which natural contaminants are found in higher concentrations, such as radium, arsenic, lead, fluoride, and iron. Depletion of deep ground water aquifers is already a growing concern for a number of communities in the more developed areas of eastern Wisconsin such as Dane and Waukesha Counties.

In the rural areas located immediately around the City, a potential groundwater contaminant is nitrate-nitrogen, which can come from improperly functioning on-site wastewater systems, animal feedlots, livestock waste facilities, sludge and liquefied waste application, lawn and agricultural fertilizers, and decaying plant debris.

Watersheds and Surface Waters

The City and its planning area are located within the Upper Rock River Basin. The Rock River Basin covers approximately 3,777 square miles and drains all or part of 10 counties in southern Wisconsin. Water from the Rock River Basin enters the Mississippi River via the Rock River and eventually ends up in the Gulf of Mexico. The main trunk of the Rock River flows south through the Cities of Watertown, Jefferson, and Fort Atkinson in Jefferson County.

Located at the western edge of the City, Rock Lake is the most prominent natural feature in Lake Mills. Although only a narrow band of the City of Lake Mills drains stormwater directly into the 1,400-acre lake, that portion, along with the majority of the Lake's northern and northeastern shore outside the City, has been thoroughly developed, primarily with single-family residences. In spite of this, the water quality of the Lake remains relatively high, in part owing to the extension of sanitary sewer to the heavily developed shoreland area in the Town of Lake Mills, management of the Lake's water levels to prevent shore erosion, and recent measures to protect shoreland areas from future development. Another feature likely contributing to the high water quality is the relatively undisturbed marsh and wetland areas south of the lake. Rock Creek drains Rock Lake and flows eastward through the City and Hooper Mills Pond before flowing into the Crawfish River. The Crawfish River, in turn, is a tributary of the Rock River and flows southward past Aztalan State Park before joining the Rock River in the City of Jefferson.

Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplain areas. These are areas predicted to be inundated with flood waters in the 100-year storm event (e.g., a storm that has a 1 percent chance of happening in any given year). The State requires local regulation of development in floodplains. Development is strongly discouraged in floodplains to avoid both on-site and up- and downstream property damage. In the City of Lake Mills, floodplains are located along the Rock Creek. Other floodplains in the City's planning area are located south of Rock Lake and in isolated areas north of Rock Lake. Approximately 126 acres or 5.0 percent of the City's area is located in floodplains.

Wetlands

According to the Wisconsin DNR's Wetland Inventory Maps, wetland habitats comprise approximately 5.4 percent (136 acres) of the City's total land area, not including small tracts of wetland that are less than five acres in size. These ecosystems play significant roles in maintaining the quality of groundwater and surface water and provide valuable habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife. Wetland areas are scattered throughout the City, but are most concentrated in the vicinity of Rock Creek, particularly around the Mill Pond and the State-owned Fish Hatchery. Much of the land in the environmental corridors designated by Jefferson County are comprised of wetlands and associated flood plain. The City's Shoreland/Wetland

Ordinance regulates the use and development of wetlands within 300 feet of navigable streams and 1,000 feet of lake and ponds and controls for lands annexed into the City.

Woodlands and Natural Vegetation

Prior to European settlement, much of Jefferson County was covered with prairies, wetlands, oak savanna, and dense forests of basswood and sugar maple. Isolated, relatively pristine remnants of these native plant communities remain in several locations in the area, but the majority of the land has been converted to agricultural and urban land uses. Over time, new (sometimes invasive) species have been introduced to the area as it has been developed.

Steep Slopes

Generally, slopes that have between a 12 and 20 percent grade present challenges for building site development, and slopes that exceed a 20 percent grade are not recommended for any disturbance or development. Within the Planning Area, steep slopes are located to the west of Rock Lake and other isolated locations.

Environmental Corridors

The Jefferson County Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan identifies the location of environmental corridors in the City. These corridors are shown on Map 4. Environmental Corridors are continuous systems of open space that include floodplains, wetlands, public lands, and contiguous woodlands. Environmental corridors are located throughout the City and generally correspond with other natural features. It is Jefferson County's policy to discourage development within areas that have been identified as environmental corridor. However, as documented in the County's Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan, if and when development is permitted within an environmental corridor, it is recommended that it not exceed one dwelling unit per ten acres.

Rare Species Occurrences

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, there are occurrences of aquatic endangered species in the sections surrounding Rock Lake. There are aquatic and terrestrial occurrences southwest of the City in the Lake Mills State Wildlife Area and northwest of the City in the Town of Milford. Detailed information regarding the types of endangered animals, plants, and natural communities can be found at the Department of Natural Resources' website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/workinglists/mapsbycounty.htm>.

State Natural/Wildlife Areas

The 1,199-acre Lake Mills Wildlife Area is owned by the State of Wisconsin and provides permanent protection from development. The area includes shoreland, marsh, wetland, savannah, and isolated wood stand habitats, and is open to the public for hiking, fishing, and bird watching. Large areas of environmental corridor adjacent to this wildlife area are still under private ownership. The 172-acre Aztalan State Park lies within the City's 1.5 mile ETJ. The majority of the park is prairie with approximately 38 acres of oak woods and some wetlands associated with Crawfish River.

Other nearby State Natural or Wildlife Areas that are outside of the City's planning area include the 1,400-acre Zeloski Marsh Wetlands area in the western part of the Town of Lake Mills, the Goose Lake Wildlife Area northwest of the City, the Faville Grove Sanctuary to the northwest in the Town of Milford, the 6,179-acre Waterloo Wildlife Area one mile east of the City of Waterloo, and the Red Cedar Lake Nature area southwest of the City east of Cambridge. Although these areas lie outside of the City's planning area, various efforts at the State, County, and local levels are underway to link local natural and wildlife areas to these and other regional environmental remnants through a network of greenways and trails.

State wildlife areas are intended to preserve wild lands for hunters, trappers, hikers, wildlife watchers, and all people interested in the out-of-doors. Furthermore, these areas help protect and manage important habitat for wildlife and help prevent draining, filling, and destruction of wetlands and the private blocking of important waterways, game lands, and lakes.

State natural areas are intended to protect the state's natural diversity, provide sites for research and environmental education, and serve as benchmarks for assessing and guiding use of other lands in the state. Natural areas consist of tracts of land or water that have native biotic communities, unique natural features, or significant geological or archeological sites.

Glacial Heritage Area Project

The Glacial Heritage Area Project is an effort led by the WisDNR to establish a network of conservation areas, recreational facilities, and recreation trails in the Glacial Heritage Area in Southeastern Wisconsin. This area is centered on western Jefferson County, but includes portions of Dane County, Dodge County, Rock County, and Walworth County. The primary goal of the project is to help meet the demand for outdoor, nature-based, land and water recreational activities in the state by setting aside lands for hiking, biking, wildlife watching, camping, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, boating, and other activities. The portion of Southeastern Wisconsin that is known as the Glacial Heritage Area already boasts one state park, eleven large State Wildlife Areas, twelve State Natural Areas, the Glacial Drumlin and Glacial River trails, numerous county parks, and lands owned by private conservation groups. The City of Lake Mills is located in the heart of the project's primary study area. (See Figure 15 in Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation.)

Another goal of the Glacial Heritage project to directly connect these outdoor recreational resources with the numerous communities located within the Glacial Heritage Area. The resulting network of these natural resource areas and connecting trails is referred to as "strings and pearls," with conservation areas and parks representing the "pearls," and trails representing the "strings." The WisDNR is taking the lead in identifying new "strings" and "pearls" but is also relying on the efforts of local communities and private conservation and outdoor recreation groups to identifying and prioritizing areas for acquisition. Therefore, the future growth plans of the City will be important in helping WisDNR identify and preserve future lands for acquisition and future opportunities for connecting these lands to people.

B. Natural Resource Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

Preserve the Natural Resources and Sensitive habitats within the City's Planning Area for future generations.

Objectives:

1. Protect environmental corridors and natural areas within the City by directing new development around these features, whenever possible.
2. Strive to preserve the high quality and quantity of surface waters, particularly the Rock Lake, Rock Creek, and Crawfish River watersheds.
3. Preserve shorelands and wetlands that recharge and filter the City's surface and ground water resources and provide critical plant and wildlife habitat.
4. Protect the City's groundwater supply through greater efficiency, sustainable rates of withdrawal, and protecting groundwater recharge areas.
5. Preserve large, isolated stands of mature native woodlands and steep slopes.
6. Promote awareness and appreciation of the community's natural resources through education and low impact recreation access in natural areas.

7. Balance recreation and tourism needs with protection of the resources on which these activities depend.
8. Promote more environmentally sustainable standards for buildings, neighborhoods, and services within City.

Policies:

1. The City will utilize and update as necessary the City's subdivision and zoning powers to protect environmental corridors as mapped by Jefferson County and this Plan and other significant environmental features within the City and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).
2. The City will work cooperatively with other units of government and private conservation organizations to preserve environmentally sensitive areas in the City's planning area such as the Lake Mills Wildlife Area, Aztalan State Park, and the State-owned wildlife habitat north of Interstate-94.
3. The City will work with Jefferson County, the Joint Rock Lake Committee and other entities in an effort to find common ground on the objectives of the 2006 "Management Plan for Rock Lake"
4. Where disturbance within or near environmental corridors and other environmentally sensitive areas is necessary, the City will establish, modify, and enforce regulations as needed in accordance with DNR or similar "Best Practices" for wetland and habitat preservation.
5. The City will continue to adhere to latest established Best Management Practices regarding erosion control and stormwater run-off for all new development in the City.
6. The City will consider findings and recommendations resulting from the USGS Ground Water Flow Model study to manage and protect the quality and quantity of groundwater. The City will also consider participation in any future study that promises to provide a basis for sustainable ground water use and protection.
7. The City will protect groundwater quality by limiting the type and intensity of development near municipal wells through Wellhead Protection Overlay zoning and other measures.
8. The City will encourage the clean up or safe containment of contaminated sites, and prevent the creation of new contaminated sites through sound site planning.
9. Consider adopting recommendations of "Toward a Sustainable Community; a Toolkit for Local Government" (See Also Chapter 5: Utilities and Community Services)
10. The City will continue to consider ways to combine natural resource preservation and sustainability goals with all other plan elements.
11. The City will conduct a census of Street Trees by 2012 to ensure health of the City's "urban forest". And work to raise awareness by property owners of good management practices and threats to healthy trees.

C. Natural Resource Programs and Recommendations

1. **Protect Environmental Corridors**

Environmental corridors are important elements of the natural resource base. They have environmental, ecological, passive recreational, stormwater management, groundwater protection and recharge, erosion control, wildlife, timber, and scenic value. Environmental corridors have severe limitations for development; therefore, minimizing development in these areas also diminishes risks to private property. For the City of Lake Mills, environmental corridors are a composite of the following areas:

- Publicly-owned parks, recreation, and conservancy lands.
- Wisconsin DNR-identified water bodies and wetlands as mapped in the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory and areas identified through more detailed field surveys, which are subject to regulations at several levels of government.

- Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) designated floodplains. The County and City are required to limit development within the 100-year floodplain as shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps.
- Woodlands over 10 acres in size.
- 75-foot setbacks from navigable waters and well-defined natural drainageways.
- Undeveloped lands with steep slopes of 12 percent or greater.

Generally, the City should prohibit new development and disturbances of natural vegetative cover within mapped environmental corridors. Existing local, State, and Federal restrictions such as Flood Plain, Shoreland, and Shoreland/Wetland Zoning districts already restrict development in much of the area mapped as environmental corridor, such as special setbacks and rules on clearing of vegetation. This Plan recommends review possible amendments to the City's municipal ordinances to establish a higher level of protection where needed to meet the goals and objectives of this plan.

Furthermore, there may be other environmentally significant areas within or adjacent to environmental corridors such as woodlands or other open space areas that provide a logical natural connection between the sub-categories of constituent features of environmental corridors and are not protected by existing regulations. For example, non-wetland or shoreland woodlands, prairies and steep topography are vital to preserving uninterrupted and un-fragmented species habitats by providing linkages between better protected areas and can also provide uninterrupted views and recreational connections. Protection of these non-wetland and non-shoreland sub-areas is usually completely at the discretion of the local government through exercise of its zoning and subdivision regulations. This Plan therefore recommends reviewing and updating the City's zoning and subdivision regulations to prevent or limit additional encroachment on all mapped environmental corridors and other significant features.

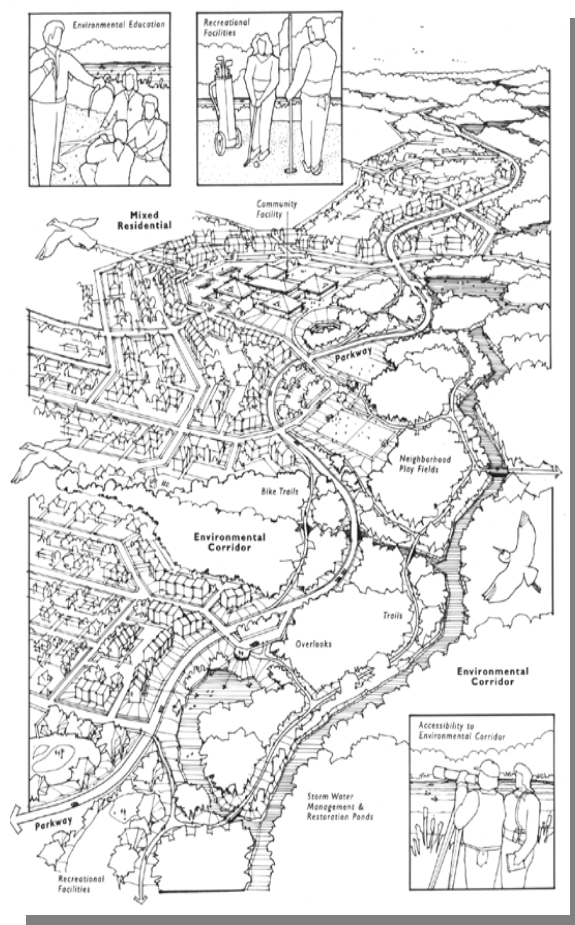


Figure 1: Environmental Corridor

2. Promote Compact Development

A compact development pattern can benefit regional water quality (see call-out box), while also promoting other Plan goals of reducing development of agricultural land, facilitating alternative forms of transportation (e.g. walking, biking), providing greater connectivity to multiple locations, and providing more efficient public utilities and services.

As noted in the callout box, achieving all of the benefits of compact development often requires a creative or cooperative approach to water quality management. Maintaining contiguous greenway buffers between developed areas wetlands and waterways while encouraging compact development further away from these water features is an effective way of balancing water quality and land conservation goals.

Rather than each individual lot or parcel relying solely on individual stormwater facilities, which can increase lot widths, distances between destinations, and paved surfaces required, joint or common stormwater detention and retention areas at the rear of lots or in other less intrusive locations allow narrower lots that reduce the amount of pavement and other infrastructure needed to serve each lot. In some instances, stormwater facilities can be located in or near commonly-held natural or man-made open spaces such as parks. Shared stormwater facilities are already a common design element of contemporary subdivisions, owing to State regulations requiring that each new development produce no greater rates of run-off than the site did prior to development.

The creation of the proposed City of Lake Mills Stormwater Utility with a fee structure based on the total impervious surface of a property would also provide a financial incentive to reduce total impervious surfaces area and promote more compact development. A public stormwater utility would also provide more flexibility for of creating shared stormwater facilities that are often the most appropriate for compact developments. It should be noted that some of the advanced strategies for managing stormwater on individual sites mentioned above can be employed on relatively small lots with significant levels of impervious surface as a compliment to any joint or community stormwater management approach.

3. Require a Conservation Approach to Site and Subdivision Design

Neighborhood and site design processes that require the thoughtful inventory and analysis of natural resources before lots are platted or buildings are placed are essential in reducing the level of impact development has on natural resources. This Plan recommends requiring the following procedures as a required part of the review process for all site plans, and conditional use permits reviewed by the City. The “conservation” approach to subdivision design can be applied in both urban and rural settings, though the acceptable levels of development in the two settings will obviously differ.

In a City context, the level of resource protection and mitigation at a given location would need to be balanced with the other comprehensive planning goals and an understanding that prohibiting development altogether on an otherwise suitable site will likely just redirect development to a site with equal or greater environmental considerations elsewhere. Nevertheless, even in an urban context, it is appropriate to preserve high priority natural areas serving multiple functions such as environmental corridors, shoreland areas, and/or critical habitats.

Key steps include:

- **Site Assessment:** Completion of “site assessment checklists” as part of development approvals is recommended. The checklist should include inventorying all natural resources features when a development proposal, site plan, conditional use permit, or other petition is within a critical area. Also, natural resource features should be depicted on site plans, preliminary plats, and certified survey maps including all features designated as environmental corridor (wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, drainageways, mature wooded areas, etc.) and any additional features such as individual or small stands of mature native trees, critical habitat, and intermittent streams.
- **Resource Protection and Mitigation:** Once critical site features are identified, protection is the next step. Buildings, parking areas, infrastructure, and other areas should be designed and located to minimize disturbance or removal of these features, and indicate ways to provide on-site mitigation where loss or disturbance is unavoidable. The City can also formally adopt standards for the level of resource disturbance or loss allowed without mitigation. For example, the community may adopt woodland/mature tree identification, protection, and mitigation (e.g., replanting) standards for trees outside of environmental corridors in its zoning and subdivision ordinances. In many instances, the City’s existing landscaping and stormwater requirements are a de facto form of mitigation, but in larger developments, subdivisions, and project sites, it may be possible to do more to minimize disturbance of existing natural systems.

4. Adopt Environmentally Sustainable Standards and Practices For Community Facilities and Services

A growing number of Wisconsin Communities are recognizing the benefits of adopting sustainable standards and practices. The University of Wisconsin – Extension has authored a publication entitled “Toward a Sustainable Community: A Toolkit for Local Government” that defines “Sustainability” in economic and social as well as environmental terms and outlines a series of interrelated goals and strategies that municipalities can employ to balance these objectives when planning for community facilities and services.

Topics covered include Guidance on Energy, Buildings, Transportation, Procurement, Investments, Human Resources. The Publication also provides case studies on how to formalize and fully integrate the individual strategies throughout City government.

Benefits of adopting the various strategies include lower lifecycle costs for buildings, lower energy and fuel consumption, reduced infrastructure costs, decreased reliance on resources from outside of the community, decreased consumption and degradation of local water and land, and improved quality of life and environment for residents.

Both large and small communities throughout Wisconsin have or are considered adopting formal resolutions and plans to implement the recommendations from the guide and other sustainable practices.

5. Promote “Green and Healthy” Schools

The City’s school system is and will continue to be a significant part of what makes Lake Mills a desirable place to live and raise a family. Lake Mills’ schools also play an important role in promoting environmentally responsible practices and helping to foster a socially and environmentally healthy community. This Plan recommends two major ways in which the City’s schools can promote and embody Natural Resource preservation and sustainability.

School Facilities Planning. The Lake Mills Area School District has purchased land at the south end of the City on the eastern side of State Highway 89 immediately south of the Glacial Drumlin Trail. The School District may plan to construct a new school on the site. Although the City does not have direct jurisdiction over the public schools, the City should work cooperatively with the School District, the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and the Wisconsin Department of Administration to encourage a school design that incorporates the latest proven construction and design features for efficiency and sustainability and meets LEED standards. Efficiency and Sustainability Criteria should also be considered and encouraged in any renovations to existing public schools.

The Wisconsin “Green and Healthy Schools” Program. This program is sponsored by a partnership between WisDNR and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The mission of this program is to

“...increase the students’ knowledge and awareness of Wisconsin’s natural resources and the environmental, health, and safety concerns and challenges that face our schools, our communities, and our Earth. The Green and Healthy Schools program will help students develop the necessary skills and expertise to address these challenges, and to foster life-long attitudes, behaviors, and commitments in order to make informed decisions and to encourage students to become active participants in their communities...”

This program is designed so that students and staff work together to discover how to utilize existing resources to improve the school environment, modify and enhance the school curriculum, and contribute more actively to the surrounding community. In order to achieve Green and Healthy School certification, each school must complete three steps.

So far, eleven Wisconsin schools have completed all three steps and have been recognized as official Green and Healthy Schools, and roughly 40 other schools around the State have initiated the process of becoming a Green and Healthy School.

Schools that have engaged in this program have seen a variety of benefits, including a healthier and safer learning environment as measured by marked decreases in absentee rates and student visits to the school nurse; an increased sense of ownership by staff, faculty, and students; economic savings associated with reduced consumption and operating costs; increased protection of local natural resources, increased connections between the community and the school; use of the school site and facilities as a teaching tool; and increases in academic achievement as measured by math, science, language, and social studies test scores.

Although the Green and Healthy School program would be implemented by the School District and not by the City, City staff and Council members can contribute to this effort by supporting and promoting the program wherever possible, and continuing to facilitate open communication between City staff, council members, School District staff, and school board members.

6. Promote Sustainable Site and Building Design

The City should encourage the construction of buildings that use energy and water more efficiently and are constructed of materials that are recyclable, made from renewable sources (bamboo, wood, etc), and/or are less harmful to the environment during fabrication, the life of the building, and demolition. Efforts could range from greater promotion of energy and water efficient home design, renovations, and appliances by the City Utilities to providing financial incentives for private developers who construct LEED-certified buildings or neighborhoods for the private sector, such as density bonuses, tax or other financial incentives, and/or expedited permit review. Incentives for property owners who retrofit existing buildings and sites with “green” technologies and should also be explored.

LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (LEED)

LEED is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED promotes a “whole building” approach to sustainability by recognizing five key areas of human and environmental health:

- Sustainable Site Development
- Water Savings
- Energy Efficiency
- Materials Selection
- Indoor Environmental Quality

LEED Green Building Rating Systems have been developed for existing and new homes, schools, healthcare facilities, commercial buildings, and institutional facilities and are being developed for neighborhood-scale development. Each rating system is developed by volunteer committees comprised of a diverse group of experts and practitioners representing a cross section of the building and construction industry.

Architects, real estate professionals, facilities managers, engineers, interior designers, landscape architects, construction managers, and officials at all levels of government across the country use LEED to help transform the built environment to sustainability.

Source: U.S. Green Building Council website

At minimum, the City should review zoning and other local regulations to ensure that do not prevent homeowners from voluntarily constructing or retrofitting homes with design elements that improve energy and water efficiency and environmental health such as solar panels and rain gardens. While not every technology or particular equipment or technique may be made compatible with other *Plan* objectives, many have no significant negative impacts on other plan objectives, surrounding properties, or neighborhoods.

7. Work with the State, County, and Area Conservation Groups to Preserve and Improve Existing Lands within the Glacial Heritage Area

The City of Lake Mills and its extraterritorial jurisdiction are located within the Glacial Heritage Area Project's primary study area (See Figure 15, Chapter 8 for map). The City has a significant stake in remaining involved in the Project's ongoing feasibility study process, which is intended to identify lands appropriate for future acquisition and preservation, as well as routes and methods of providing recreational connections between areas. Lake Mills should also continue to work with WisDNR to coordinate possible connections between public recreation areas and City neighborhoods, and exercise of its extraterritorial review authority will be important tools in helping the WisDNR identify and preserve areas that are most appropriate for further study and analysis.

8. Link Natural Area Preservation with Environmental Education, Recreational and Cultural Preservation Goals

One of the hoped for outcomes of the Comprehensive Plan is recognize and implement complimentary and mutually reinforcing policies to achieve multiple objectives. The following are three potential examples that can enhance the City's natural resource protection goals and objectives.

Link Environmental Education with Natural Resource Goals

Parents and Educators have long recognized the benefits of interactive and experiential learning in the teaching of earth and natural sciences. Physical interaction with the environment engages the senses and brain centers govern physical, emotional, and intellectual activity. This in turn fosters greater appreciation for the subject and motivation to learn and empathize with the subject. A 1998 study titled "Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning," a survey was given to 40 K-12 schools in 13 states across the nation confirmed that use of offsite open spaces provided measurable benefits to socially disadvantaged children.

However, recent societal trends away from agricultural and nature based job occupations, increased urbanization and suburbanization, and alternative sources of entertainment have undermined children's (and adults') connections with the natural environment. Books such as "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder" document the decline in time children spend experiencing nature and the environment first-hand, which is a fundamental first step in ensuring that a strong environmental ethic will be passed on to the next generation.

Lake Mills' proximity to public natural areas such Rock Creek, Lake Mills Wildlife Area, and Aztalan State Park offers significant opportunities for outdoor learning experiences. The City's schools and local community organizations and environmental groups have opportunities to enhance awareness of regional ecosystems through development of educational programs that integrate hands-on learning experiences within these natural areas. The natural resource conservation and education community is strong in Wisconsin, and Lake Mills is particularly fortunate in its proximity to such organizations as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson County UW-Extension, the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin, the Madison Audubon Society and others.

The City could be more directly involved in such an effort by supporting and sponsoring events that engage adults and children in the management and preservation of natural areas, such as the ongoing restoration and maintenance of areas parks and environmental areas.

Link Recreation and Natural Resource Goals

The City of Lake Mills has long been a weekend and seasonal summer destination for people attracted to the areas natural beauty and amenities. Providing



appropriate recreational opportunities in Natural Resource Preservation areas can achieve a number of benefits, including: building a constituency for natural resource preservation by providing citizens with greater personal connection with the natural resources and areas in question; a source of direct revenues (in the form of park fees, trail fees, boat landing fees, and venues for fund raising events) that can improve long term preservation and restoration efforts; and improved health of residents. These benefits are in addition to the potential economic benefits (described in greater detail in Chapter 7). Lake Mills already boasts many opportunities for recreation in natural areas including opportunities for swimming, fishing, and boating from City and County Parks, opportunities for hunting, bird watching, camping, and hiking in the Lake Mills Wildlife Area and the Sandhill Station State Campground, and bicycling through some of the area's largest remaining undeveloped areas on the Glacial Drumlin State Trail.

The City can provide additional opportunities to link natural resource preservation and recreation planning by:

- Identifying areas that can accommodate both active recreation (e.g. ballfields, playgrounds, courts, jogging trails) and passive recreation (e.g. picnicking, nature walks, bird watching) when considering new parks or improving existing ones.
- When considering extensions to its bicycle trail network, the City should continue to consider extensions and connections that serve as primarily nature-based recreational opportunities in addition to the transportation function.
- Working with other communities, agencies, conservation groups and user groups to reserve areas within the City's planning area to work collaboratively on such projects as a regional multi-use trail system. In 2005, Jefferson County prepared a report entitled "Connecting Jefferson County's Parks and Communities: Proposed Trail Linkages" that included recommendations for the Lake Mills area, including a trail west of Rock Lake linking the Glacial Drumlin Trail to Waterloo and a trail paralleling the Crawfish River between the Glacial Drumlin Trail and the Town of Milford. Other possible extensions include a trail following the Crawfish River from the Glacial Drumlin Trail to Jefferson. Eventually both of these segments could be part of a larger, interconnected network linking communities and natural areas throughout the County. Another regional opportunity exists in creation of "water trails" following the Crawfish River and Rock River, which would consist of appropriately spaced, low impact, and publicly accessible canoe and kayak landings along these and other navigable waters. The Glacial Heritage Area Project is also considering ways of realizing these linkages (See description of the Glacial Heritage Area Project earlier in this chapter and the map of the project area in Figure 15 in Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation).

Link Cultural and Natural Resource Goals

Aztalan State Park is a relatively small State Park that serves the three fold purpose of preserving one of the most significant Native American archaeological sites in the United States, natural resource protection, and recreation. The Park currently includes preserved mounds, reconstructions of the old settlement walls, and interpretive signage as well as recreation and preservation areas. In 2003, the WisDNR developed a Master Plan for Aztalan State Park that includes not just the 178-acre park but a 738-acre area that includes the surrounding area in addition to the Park. The vision for the Park is create an visitor/interpretive center at the Park that will provide visitors with a much greater opportunity to understand this nationally recognized Archaeological site and the Native American culture that created it. The plan also seeks to retain some of the recreational and natural resource preservation functions. To accomplish these goals, the 2003 Aztalan State Park Master Plan makes recommendations for the greater planning area which reaches Harvey Road and abuts the City's municipal boundary. Because WisDNR does not own the land, City policies will play a major role in determining whether or not key goals of this plan can be realized. For more detailed description of the plans for Aztalan State Park, see the Cultural Resource recommendations later in this chapter.

9. Balance Nature Based Recreation with the Need to Protect the Resources

When considering any plan for recreational and cultural uses in natural areas, balance the desire for recreation with the need to protect the local resource by ensuring low impact and sustainable facilities and activities.

In areas of extremely critical or sensitive habitat, it may be necessary to prohibit even minimal human disturbances caused by parks and trails.

In high use areas, it may be necessary to institute measures that limit the intensity of use as well as the type of improvements. In Lake Mills, use of Rock Lake serves as an example, though others may arise in land and wetland areas. The popularity of recreational boating and fishing in Rock Lake has led to concerns over safety, shoreland protection near boat launches, water quality of the lake, and the overall level of enjoyment. Such concerns are typically most acute at specific times of the year such as major summer holidays. This Plan recommends exploring ways to balance the competing rights to access and enjoy the lake with environmental issues.

10. Protect Ground and Surface Water

Few natural resources are as essential to sustaining the City's health, environmental, economic, and social goals as water. The City of Lake Mills is fortunate in both the quantity and quality of its ground and surface water. Despite significant levels of residential development along the shores of Rock Lake and the high level of use, the lake's water quality remains high. Many of the areas other shoreland and wetland areas are protected from development through public ownership or through such regulatory tools as shoreland and shoreland/wetland regulations. Finally, the City has taken active steps to enforce these regulations as well as Best Management Practices erosion control during construction for each new subdivision and site plan that comes before the City.

Similarly, the City's ground water supply remains at a high quality and there are currently no indication that local groundwater resources are in danger of being depleted in the planning period. To protect this invaluable resource, the City has established a Well-head Protection overlay zoning district, encourages the remediation and redevelopment of contaminated sites through establishment of TIF districts and a cooperative approach with developers, and is participating in the Jefferson Ground Water Flow study that will hopefully supply insights into the sustainable rates of water usage and how best to cooperatively manage water resources in the future. Finally, the practices and policies designed to protect surface water resources and wetlands offers at least the promise of some natural recharge of the area's subsurface water supply.

Nevertheless, managing the quantity and quality of the community's water in a sustainable manner will pose an ongoing challenge. To better accomplish these goals, this *Plan* recommends the following:

Advance Stormwater Best Management Practices

The City should continue to require development to incorporate appropriate stormwater management facilities to mitigate the

URBAN DENSITY AND WATER QUALITY

It has been well-documented that urban development has negative impacts on water quality by decreasing natural ground cover and increasing the amount of stormwater runoff that enters streams and lakes. Studies have indicated that water bodies become impaired when just 10 percent of the immediate adjacent land is impervious. As a result, some communities have concluded that lower-density development patterns will have less of an impact on water quality by spreading out development and allowing for more pervious surface around and between buildings, roads, driveways, and parking lots. However, when the quantity of stormwater runoff in a given area is measured per building (or dwelling unit), versus per acre, research indicates that higher density developments generate less stormwater runoff than lower density developments and consequently have less of a negative impact on the overall watershed (see USEPA report "Protecting Water Resources with Higher Density Development). Therefore, compact development is not inherently contrary to the goal of protecting water quality, provided the localized increases in impervious surfaces associated with higher density development are accompanied by appropriate stormwater and water quality management techniques for individual lots and neighborhoods.

negative impacts stormwater can have on waterways and downstream properties.

Outmoded stormwater management practices attempt to carry water away from a developed site as quickly as possible via storm sewers that often drained directly into a river or other water body. Current practice often directs water to constructed retention or detention ponds that slow water run-off and improve water quality but do not necessarily provide natural filtration and direct water to the local groundwater supply. Improved Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) aim to control run-off volume by managing precipitation as “close to where it hits the ground” as possible by facilitating infiltration of precipitation into groundwater and evaporation of water back into the atmosphere. This approach decreases peak stormwater quantities and improves the overall quality of the stormwater that does enter streams and lakes.

A uniform stormwater management ordinance that focuses on Best Management Practices for stormwater quality and is, therefore, ideal, and may also include any or all of the following strategies:

Reduce Impermeable Surfaces within Multi-Lot Developments.

Reductions in the total impermeable surface area for a multi lot development site can be achieved by:

- Reducing lot widths to eliminate the length of streets necessary to access individual lots within the development. (Which also reduces distance between destinations and encourages walking and bicycling);
- Keeping the width of paved streets to a minimum necessary for efficient traffic flow (and also reduce traffic speeds in neighborhoods)
- Ensuring parking standards are not excessive and include reasonable maximums as well as minimums. Also utilizing joint parking where practical;
- Creating common stormwater management areas for two or more development sites to reduce distance and the need for impermeable surfaces between each individual structure.
- Reduce Impermeable Surfaces on Individual Development Sites. These techniques focus on reducing the impervious footprint of development sites. They include:
 - Encouraging compact development in the form of multi-story structures (a two-story house of a given floor area creates half the impermeable surface of a single-story house of the same size),
 - Where subsurface water tables are deep enough, encourage underground or understructure parking
 - Ensuring that Zoning and Building Code requirements do not prohibit modest size single and multi-family housing (which also encourages greater housing choice),
 - Encouraging the use of permeable paving blocks or materials in pedestrian areas (where no accumulation of leaked vehicle fluids is likely).
- Because impervious surfaces cannot be avoided entirely, stormwater run-off should be directed to appropriate on-site or locally shared stormwater management facilities. The City should continue to require substantial landscaping areas within and around parking lots required (which also reduces local temperatures in summer and improves air quality). Other advanced methods are discussed in the Section 11 below.

11. Improve On-Site and Shared Stormwater Management

The following are additional, progressive techniques for on site stormwater management:

Preserve Natural Systems:

Since the impacts of stormwater runoff are far more effectively managed by natural systems, such as wetlands and forest ecosystems, than by pervious ground cover that has been altered by construction or other human impacts (e.g. lawns), the preservation of environmental corridors or portions of environmental corridors within individual sites and multi-lot developments can go a long way in mitigating stormwater impacts.

Incorporate Infiltration and Retention Areas:

Where stormwater basins are necessary to effectively manage runoff, such basins and associated conveyance routes should be carefully integrated into the surrounding development pattern and should incorporate native/natural edge vegetation whenever possible to ensure the aesthetic and functional integrity of the site.

Create Rain Gardens:

A rain garden is a landscaping feature that is designed, located, and installed for the purposes of capturing stormwater runoff and allowing it to infiltrate back into the ground. The City should consider codifying rain garden design standards for new development and allowing the construction of rain gardens to apply toward meeting a portion of City landscaping requirements in commercial, industrial, and multi-family developments. At minimum, the City could raise awareness of the benefits of rain gardens and promote voluntary establishment of rain gardens by allowing explicitly allowing a portion of individual residential lots to be landscaped in this manner.



Stormwater Facility for Multi-family Residential

Install Rain Barrels:

A rain barrel collects and stores the water that drains from rooftops to prevent it from running off-site. Collected rain can be used to water the lawn or garden, or to wash a car. Barrels can also be set to slowly empty themselves, allowing the water to filter back into the ground. The City should take measures to actively promote rain barrel use by providing homeowners with information about how and where they can purchase their own rain barrels. Commercial and industrial buildings often collect rain water in “gray water tanks” for similar purposes.

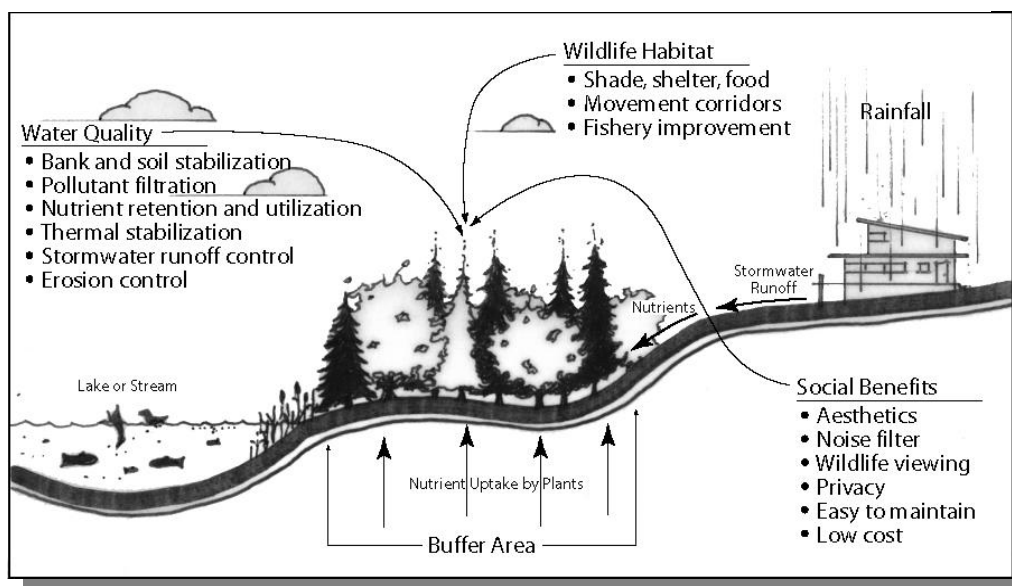
Green (vegetated) roofs:

Green roofs filter air and rain water pollutants, reduce the rate and amount of stormwater from a building site, protect the building’s underlying roof from UV radiation, provide insulation from extreme temperatures, reduce energy costs, reduce outdoor noise entering the building, provide habitats for birds and other small animals, and can provide a more attractive alternative to traditional rooftops. (adapted from the USEPA. For more information visit: [<http://www.epa.gov/heatisland/strategies/greenroofs.html>]). Cities such as Chicago and Toronto serve as excellent examples of communities that have successfully implemented green roof incentive programs.]

Vegetated Buffer Strips (Figure 2):

Locating areas of vegetation at a property's periphery helps restrict the off-site flow of water. Also, the addition of organic material to soil aids in the decomposition and filtration of pollutants. This technique is particularly useful for areas abutting shoreland areas and wetlands, and provided the additional benefit of preserving habitat for the many water and terrestrial species dependent shoreland habitat. (See Natural Resource Recommendation # 1 above). The City currently requires a vegetative buffer within 35 feet of shorelines except for vision access corridors. The City may want consider increasing this requirement in currently undeveloped shoreland/wetland areas particularly those associated with high value environmental corridors. This design element may also be a useful additional design element in the construction of larger man-made stormwater facilities and non-navigable streams

Figure 2: Vegetative Buffer



Continue Requiring Progressive Construction Site Erosion Control Practices:

Construction sites generate a significant amount of sediment run-off if not managed properly. Under current state laws, erosion control plans are required for all construction sites that are larger than one acre. The City should continue to enhance and enforce erosion control of its Erosion Control ordinances and techniques for the protection and continued improvement of water quality. In particular, progressive erosion control systems should be components of new development sites. These techniques include providing silt fencing surrounding the construction project, minimizing the amount of land area that is disturbed throughout the construction process, and quickly reestablishing displaced vegetation.

The City will continue to require approved stormwater drainage and erosion control plans in accordance with State Administrative Rules. The City will also explore the option of obtaining funds from programs that are designed to assist in efforts to protect and enhance surface water quality in key areas. Programs may include the DNR Target Runoff Management Program and the DNR River Protection Grant Program.

12. Visual Impact Analysis and View Shed Protection

The visual impact of new development is an often-overlooked component of protecting views and preserving community character. The visual impact of new development as viewed from high points/scenic views in the City and its planning area should be taken into consideration. In a City, the goal of protecting natural or

pastoral views must be balanced realistically with other objectives and the realities of the urban context. For example, new housing should ideally be sited below ridge lines, and partially screened with trees, but would not necessarily be completely screened from all vantage points.

Nevertheless, there may be specific geographical areas of regional of significance to the greater community where the City may wish to create stricter standards for view shed protection. A prime example of a priority view shed in the Lake Mills planning area has been identified in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Master Plan for Aztalan State Park. The Plan places a high priority on preserving the view from Signal Hill just east of Harvey Road overlooking Aztalan State Park to the east. Of related significance is the view *from* the State Park looking west. Preserving the views in this area would provide visitors to the State Park and nearby Lake Mills-Aztalan Historic Museum with a more immersive experience of the past and provide City residents with a permanent recognizable break from the development occurring elsewhere in the area.

Map 4: Natural Features

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The area now occupied by the City of Lake Mills had been settled by Native Americans for centuries before the arrival and permanent settlement by people of European decent in the 1830's. This first Euro-American settlement was originally known as Keyesville after a founder who established on a saw mill near Rock Lake in 1837. Evidence from different eras of the City's development still survives in the form of historic buildings and neighborhoods. Other artifacts and records have been carefully preserved through the efforts of individual citizens and organizations. Still other groups add to the City's cultural legacy through their efforts to cultivate the arts and organize various civic activities. Identifying valued aspects of the community past and present is a key component of planning for the City's future.

CULTURAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- Identify and preserve historically significant structures and archaeological sites.
- Combine historic preservation and economic development polices for the historic downtown area and other historic buildings to preserve the character and structures.
- Promote the arts through such activities as continued support of the annual arts festival and the City Band.

A. Historic Sites

The Wisconsin Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) contains data on a wide range of historic properties throughout the state. The AHI identifies 46 documented structures in the City of Lake Mills. This list includes the Rock Lake Hotel, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Scholl House, and numerous other houses and buildings. Two of these properties, the L.D. Fargo Public Library and the Enoch J. Fargo House, are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Additional information about these and other properties at the Wisconsin Historical Society website at: www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/welcome.asp. The comprehensive planning process provides an opportunity for identifying other structures and areas that are worth preserving or rehabilitating and recommending strategies for doing so.

The Lake Mills Aztalan Historical Society is a non-profit organization that runs the Lake Mills/Aztalan Museum. This museum is housed in an old Mambre Moravian Church 2 miles east of the City's downtown on CTH Q in the Town of Aztalan. The museum site includes several historical structures from the area that were moved to the site in addition to interpretive exhibits, artifacts and records from areas earliest settlement to the present. The Museum site, between the rural hamlet of Aztalan and Aztalan State Park, contributes to its historic charm and character.

B. Archeological Sites

The Wisconsin State Historical Society lists 20 sites for the City of Lake Mills in its Archeological Sites Inventory. These sites include cemeteries/burial sites, effigy mounds, and campsites/villages. All human burial sites, including cemeteries and Indian mounds, are protected under State law. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not adversely affect archeological sites on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Archeological sites can be protected during the course of state agency activities if the sites have been recorded with the Office of the State Archeologist.

The most famous of the area's archaeological sites is Aztalan State Park, located one mile east of the City of Lake Mills. The Park contains archeological remains of a Native American settlement that flourished from around 900-1200 AD. Evidence from the site indicates that a village of 500 residents once included

fortified walls and pyramidal burial mounds. At its peak, the settlement was one of the largest Native American settlements in what would become the continental United States.

Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from encroachment by any type of development. Many of these sites are located on private land, and may not be viewed by the general public.

C. Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal:

Preserve the City's architectural and archaeological heritage and cultivate local civic and cultural life.

Objectives:

1. Identify and protect landmark buildings and archaeological sites within the City's planning area.
2. Preserve architectural character of the downtown and the traditional pattern of pre-World War II neighborhoods.
3. Continue to promote the downtown as the City's primary civic, cultural, tourist, and entertainment destination by facilitating festivals and other special events.
4. Cooperate with other jurisdictions to preserve, improve, and promote the Lake Mills Aztalan Museum and Aztalan State Park.

Policies:

1. Ensure zoning and other regulations protect valued landmark historic structures.
2. Allow for internal modernization and rehabilitation of buildings of historic interest to improve their economic viability, while protecting the integrity of their historic exteriors and, where practical, interior spaces.
3. Work with local developers, the Main Street Program and historic preservation organizations to encourage reinvestment in historic buildings.
4. Require that new development in the downtown to be compatible with the historic architectural character of existing buildings.
5. Facilitate efforts by the Lake Mills/Aztalan Historical Society and other interested entities with efforts to preserve historic buildings within the City's planning area in place or by relocating them to the Aztalan museum.
6. Continue to facilitate the use of the downtown and other public spaces for local festivals, city band concerts, farmers markets, and special events.
7. Work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Town of Aztalan, and the Friends of Aztalan State Park to reach a common vision for area immediately surrounding the park.

D. Cultural Resource Programs and Recommendations

1. Historic Preservation

The City boasts a number of historic buildings of local, state, and national significance. Preserving individually significant buildings can range from literal preservation of all or most original architectural elements (and thus provide valuable tangible evidence of past building practices and lifestyles) to historically sensitive renovations that balance the desire to preserve with the economic necessity to keep buildings viable.

Typically, historic preservation is a task that requires active participation of owners, civic groups, and private organizations, often with assistance of state and federal programs. However, local government can provide assistance to historic preservation efforts in a number of ways, including:

- Working with the Lake Mills/Aztalan Historical Society and State Historical Society, mark existing buildings and sites that are on the State or National Register of Historic Places, and raise awareness of Historic Homes Owner's Tax Credits and Historic Preservation Tax Credits for Income Producing Historic Buildings; possibly nominating other buildings as appropriate in the future. Establishing local historic districts and listing property in a municipal register can help properties qualify for federal and state historic preservation tax credits, and also help establish buildings as "qualified historic buildings" for which the Wisconsin Historic Building Code supersedes the standard building code requirements.
- Consider establishing historic overlay zoning districts for buildings and neighborhoods constructed prior to existing setback and other requirements. Regulations within such a district create standards appropriate for the established building patterns.
- Working with contractors and experts in historical renovation, work to create Zoning Standards and Building Code Standards that allow renovations and retrofitting of historically significant buildings that are not to be preserved in their near original state by preserving aspects of a structure essential to the historic character while allowing modernization of key infrastructure. Every effort should be made to preserve exterior and interior design and materials, while allowing for low-visibility upgrades that improve the amenity, safety, and economic viability of buildings.

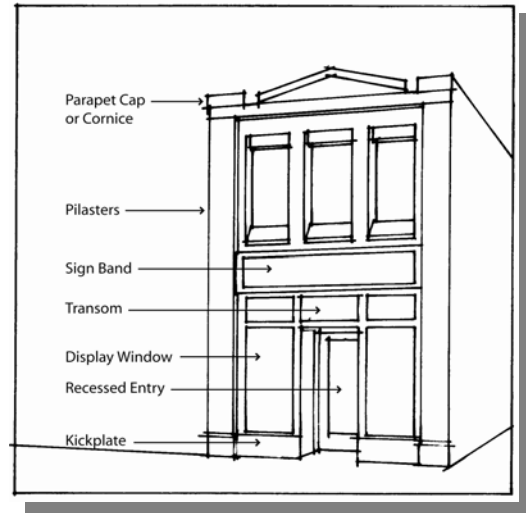


Figure 3

2. Update Architectural and Site Standards in the Downtown

The City of Lake Mills has established special requirements and review procedures for structures and signage in the downtown area through creation of a Downtown Overlay District B-1C Central Business Core district. The design and review provisions contain guidelines and graphics to ensure that new, expanded, or refurbished structures in the downtown meet various requirements for building materials, building mass, setbacks, signage, and key design elements such as window placement and orientation are consistent historic commercial and multi-use structures in the downtown. The City should continue to review and enforce these standards to ensure that the outcomes contribute to the downtown area's unique sense of place.

Business and developer resistance to locating in a historic district sometimes stems not from an unwillingness to locate in a two or three story structure, but from obsolescent buildings that are deficient in ceiling height, utilities, insulation, space for HVAC equipment and other aspects. In some cases, the costs of renovations, even when physically possible and tax credits are available, are substantially more expensive than new construction would be. In cases where it is not possible or desirable to save or rehabilitate existing buildings, the City should continue to stand firm on its requirements for new buildings with characteristics necessary to preserve the historical pattern and character the City of Lake Mills' downtown.

Requiring new structures and renovations that are consistent with valued historic structures is important not only to retaining the historic appearance and unique community character of a district but preserving its long term viability and vitality as a center for commerce and civic activity. Features to consider when reviewing proposed buildings in the historic overlay district and Central Business District are illustrated in the Diagram above. To ensure that the integrity of the entire downtown is preserved, the City will work to adopt standards to ensure the architectural compatibility of new buildings and renovations throughout the downtown. For buildings on blocks and street frontages with an established historic pattern, new buildings will be required to respect the established context in a manner illustrated in Figures 3 and 4. In other areas of the downtown that lack a similar context, a similar, unified pattern should be promoted, though some latitude on specific details such as building height could be considered. Any transitions in style between buildings and blocks should be gradual rather jarring and haphazard.

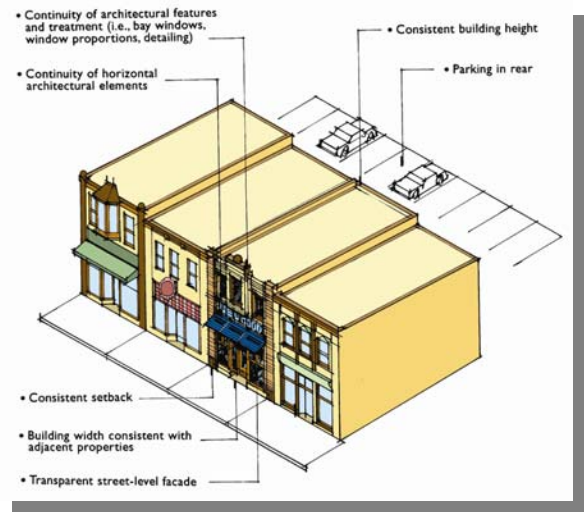


Figure 4

3. Continue Facilitating and Supporting Community Cultural Events

The City of Lake Mills has an active cultural life as expressed in the many civic and community oriented organizations and activities. The City, Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Program websites provide a wealth of information on community organizations and events ranging from City and Civic group sponsored athletic events to Arts Festivals to concerts by the City of Lake Mills Band. City Parks, the Historic Downtown area, and the City Community Center are favorite venues for many of these activities and events. The City will continue to work cooperatively with civic groups to find ways to provide safe and inviting places for residents and visitors to gather and contribute to the City's culture.

4. **Work to with WISDNR , the Town of Aztalan, and other organizations to Implement Key Recommendations of the 2003 Master Plan for Aztalan State Park**

Aztalan State Park in the Town of Aztalan lies within the City of Lake Mills extraterritorial jurisdiction and protects one of the most significant Native American archaeological sites in the country. Aztalan State Park and the neighboring Lake Mills-Aztalan represent a truly unique resource that allows residents and visitors to learn and appreciate the areas of historical and cultural development from the height of Native American settlement c.1100 A.D. to the earliest European immigrant settlement of the area to the present. Both Aztalan State Park and the Lake Mills/Aztalan Museum are testament not only to the achievements of early settlers and pioneers but also those of current area residents whose efforts to preserve and educate reflect a deep pride in the area's heritage and community. The Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society is a non-profit group that owns and operates the Lake Mills Aztalan Museum. Friends of Aztalan is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Aztalan State Park. The Friends of Aztalan are currently trying to raise \$1 million dollars to build the interpretive center and make other improvements to implement the State of Wisconsin's 2003 Master Plan for the Park (See call out box on the following page). The Organization also hosts social and fund raising events at the Park, publishes a newsletter, and develops other promotional and educational material about the Park.



The efforts of these groups to enhance these cultural, recreational assets can be greatly enhanced (or undermined) through the policy decisions by the City of Lake Mills. The Lake Mills Comprehensive Plan recommends adopting key recommendations of the 2003 *Master Plan for Aztalan State Park* as a means of complimenting its cultural preservation natural resource, as well as natural resource preservation, recreation, growth management, economic development, and intergovernmental goals. Specifically, this *Plan* recommends:

- Preventing land divisions within the Aztalan State Park Visual Buffer Unit that are contrary to the view shed, visual buffer, and public easement goals of the 2003 *Master Plan for Aztalan State Park* through exercise of the City's extraterritorial land division review authority.
- Working with WISDNR, Friends of Aztalan State Park, the Town of Aztalan and other groups to delineate how and what (if any) areas east of Harvey Road the City would allow to develop if annexed to the City, and which would be protected for purposes of open space and view shed protection.
- If the City decides to annex and allow development within the *Master Plan's* 738-acre Visual Buffer Area, a detailed plan for preserving views between the State Park from Signal Hill and using terrain, landscaping and natural vegetative buffers to hide development from public view as viewed from the Park should be developed and implemented.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS 2003 WISDNR MASTER PLAN FOR AZTALAN STATE PARK

In 2003, the WisDNR developed a Master Plan for Aztalan State Park that includes not just the existing 178-acre park but a 738-acre area surrounding the Park. Most of the surrounding area is included in the Plan to protect view sheds and provide a visual buffer from encroaching development, while some of the additional land would be required for additional visitor accommodations and resource protection. The vision for the Park is create an visitor/interpretive center at the Park that will provide visitors with a much greater opportunity to understand this nationally recognized Archaeological site and the Native American culture that created it. The plan also seeks to retain and enhance the recreational and natural resource preservation functions.

To protect views provide a much more meaningful, enjoyable, and immersive experience and enhance appreciation of the area's natural and cultural history; accommodate increased park use; and preserve relatively undisturbed natural and open spaces in and near the Crawfish River, the Master Plan recommends the following (among others):

- Construction of a museum/visitor/interpretive center within the Park.
- Acquisition of some additional park area east of the Crawfish River.
- Additional trails within and from the Park, including possible trail connection to the Glacial Drumlin Trail.
- Preservation of open spaces, natural resources, and view sheds throughout 738 acre Project Area surrounding the park.
- Acquisition of land or public easements from the park to the top of Signal Hill west of the Park to prevent all development and provide a public scenic overlook of the park.
- Minimization of development within the remainder of the "Visual Buffer" area around the park through easements and local land use regulations to protect views of the Park and from the Park, including the view westward toward the City of Lake Mills.

More information on the Master Plan for Aztalan State Park can be found at:

http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/completed_archive/parks_trails