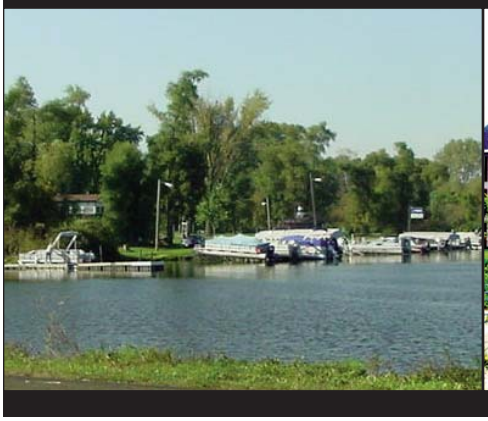
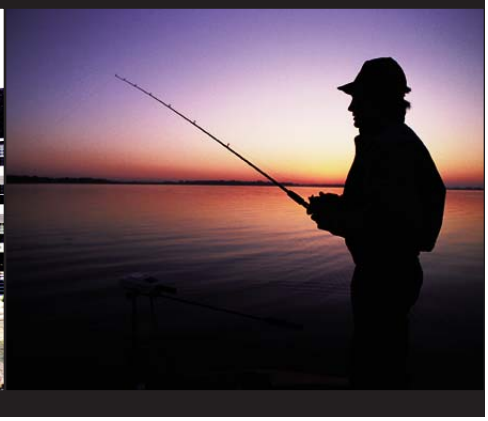
Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan





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Proposed Amendment: July 12, 2007

Planning Assistance by:

Vandewalle & Associates
Madison, Wisconsin

Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan

Plan Summary

THE REASON FOR PLANNING

Dekorra enjoys a rich agricultural and recreational heritage, punctuated by the scenic Wisconsin River and rolling hills that define the Town's unique character. The Town's landscape is attractive to an increasing number of residents and visitors. Increasing tourism and growth of nearby communities will place pressure on Dekorra's character in the near future. Dekorra must carefully and creatively plan.

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* will help the Town preserve its rural character and, at the same time, attract high quality commercial, industrial, and residential development to planned areas of the Town to help balance its tax base. Carefully planning the location, timing, and quality of this new development will both maximize tax base and assure that the features that brought residents to the Town in the first place are not destroyed in the process.

The *Comprehensive Plan* updates the Town's 1997 Land Use Plan, and meets all requirements of the State's comprehensive planning law. The *Comprehensive Plan* was prepared concurrently with plans in Lowville and Poynette. Dekorra is located on three sides of the Village, which makes coordination critical. To prepare this *Plan*, public input sessions and workshops were held at both local and "regional" levels. Residents wish to preserve the rural character of the Town, preserve the scale and character of development along the Wisconsin River, and attract new businesses to the Interstate 39/Highway CS interchange and planned areas along Highway 51.

The resulting *Comprehensive Plan* document includes ten chapters, covering land use, transportation, agricultural, natural and cultural resources, utilities and community facilities, housing, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, and implementation.

PROTECT RURAL COMMUNITY CHARACTER

"Community Character" is hard to define, but it is the reason why many people choose to live in Dekorra. The Town's rural character is defined by large areas of agricultural land, woodlands, and natural areas like the Wisconsin River and the Rocky Run, Hinkson and Rowan Creeks. To preserve this rural and natural character, the *Plan* will help the Town to:

- Preserve scenic and natural areas, like wooded hillsides and steep slopes, from development.
- Implement other growth control strategies such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).
- Sensitively site new housing on the rural landscape through siting guidelines.
- Provide "bonuses" for clustering homes in agricultural areas, as an option to 35+ acre lots.
- Protect the character of the Wisconsin River waterfront by controlling the scale of new uses.

GUIDE DEVELOPMENT

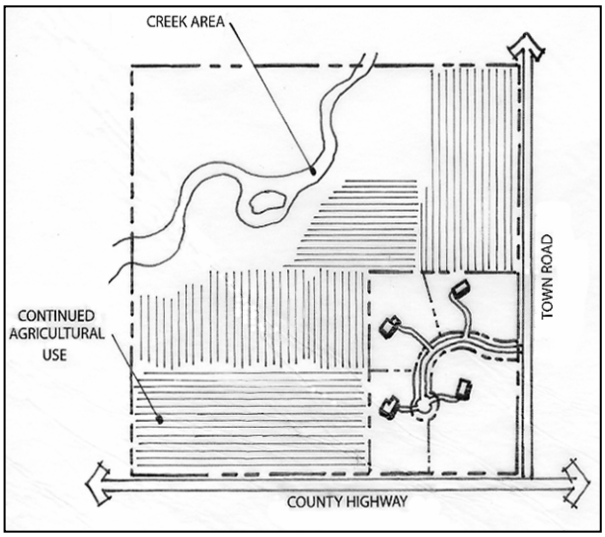
This *Comprehensive Plan* contains a Planned Land Use map to help the Town decide how to guide future land uses. Future development decisions will be based on that map and policies to:

- Guide a quality mix of business development and promoting business redevelopment in a carefully planned area near the I-39/CS Interchange, while providing sewer to that area.
- Designate a second Commercial/Industrial Mix area along Highway 51 near the Town's north edge.
- Allow for modest, phased expansion of residential development areas in pre-planned locations, provided that developers help contribute to the preservation of farms in Dekorra through TDR.
- Work with Poynette to arrive at a mutually agreed Village growth area and a cooperative economic development strategy.
- Keep intensive new development away from sensitive environmental areas, such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and productive agricultural land.

PROMOTE HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

As important as *where* new development goes is *how* it looks and relates to surrounding uses, roads, natural areas, and the desired rural character of the Town. The *Plan* recommends:

- Using siting guidelines for homesites and clusters to preserve existing farmland, vegetation, and site features (e.g., fence rows) and minimize the visual impact of rural development.
- Designing new commercial and industrial developments with high quality building materials, landscaping, lighting and signage.
- Making sure that new residential and commercial waterfront development fits with the historic scale of the area.
- Treating lands along the Interstate and the Interchange Area as a critical gateway to the Town.



IMPLEMENT THE PLAN IN COOPERATION WITH OTHERS

The Town of Dekorra will have to work on further efforts and with other governments to fully achieve its future objectives. Recommendations include:

- Working with Poynette and Lowville on an intergovernmental boundary/land use agreement.
- Coordinating with Columbia County on updating the County's plan and zoning ordinance.

Acknowledgements

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Town Board Adoption Ordinance

Plan Commission Recommendation Resolution

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A. Snapshot of Dekorra

Dekorra, located in southwestern Columbia County, contains a mostly rural landscape of drumlins, moraines, and stream bottoms. Over the past decade or so, the 46 square mile Town has experienced modest growth due to its landscape and location. Residents enjoy the rural atmosphere of the Town, Lake Wisconsin and accessibility to nearby centers such as Madison. Interstate 39/90/94 and U.S. Highway 51 run through the Town. Most of the land in Dekorra is undeveloped, but the landscape is punctuated by pockets of residential development, especially along the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin. Map 1 shows the regional influences that affect Dekorra.

B. Purpose of this Plan

The *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* is intended to update and replace the Town's Land Use Plan, adopted in 1997. The purposes of the *Comprehensive Plan* are to:

- Identify areas appropriate for development and preservation over the next 20 years;
- Recommend types of land use for specific areas in the Town;
- Preserve agricultural lands and retain farming as a viable occupation;
- Identify needed transportation and community facilities to serve future land uses;
- Direct private housing and other investment in the Town; and
- Provide detailed strategies to implement plan recommendations.

This *Comprehensive Plan* is being prepared under the State of Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" legislation, adopted in 1999 and contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This *Plan* meets all of the statutory elements and requirements of the "Smart Growth" law. The document is organized into several chapters corresponding with the required plan elements under this law.

C. General Regional Context

Map 2 shows the relationship of Dekorra to nearby places. Dekorra is in the southwest quadrant of Columbia County, roughly five miles south of Portage. Dekorra surrounds Poynette on three sides--portions are within Poynette's 1½ mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. Dekorra abuts the Town of Lowville to the east, Lake Wisconsin and the Town of Caledonia to the west, the Town of Pacific to the north, and the Towns of Arlington and Lodi to the south.

To complete this *Plan*, Dekorra participated in a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning effort with Lowville and Poynette. This effort was aided by a state grant. A Joint Steering Committee created regional goals and objectives, coordinated the public participation process, helped to resolve any potential conflicts among local draft plans, and served as liaisons to the village and town boards and commissions.

Map 1: Regional Influences

Map 2: Jurisdictional Boundaries

CHAPTER TWO: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter gives an overview of demographic trends and background information to understand the changes taking place in Dekorra. As required under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, this chapter includes existing conditions, trends, and forecasts for population, households, and employment. It also summarizes participation efforts and includes overall goals to guide the future preservation and development in the Town over the 20-year planning period, both from a regional and local perspective.

A. Population Trends and Forecasts

Dekorra experienced significant population growth during the 1990s. The Town grew from 1,829 permanent residents in 1990 to 2,350 permanent residents in 2000—an increase of 28.5% (see Table 1). This growth increase compares to 36.3% for the Village of Poynette and 5.2% for the Town of Lowville. Columbia County as a whole grew by 16.4% during the past decade and the State of Wisconsin by 9.6%.

This growth slowed somewhat in the early years of the new millennium. The Town's estimated 2006 population was 2,444, according to the Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographics Services Center. These population numbers do not account for the Town's significant seasonal population base.

Table 1: Population Trends

	1970	1980	1990	2000	Population Change*	Percent Change*
Town of Dekorra	1,763	1,914	1,829	2,350	+521	28.5%
Village of Poynette	1,118	1,447	1,662	2,266	+604	36.3%
Town of Lowville	819	976	938	987	+49	5.2%
Town of Arlington	701	752	748	848	+100	13.4%
Columbia County	40,150	43,222	45,088	52,468	+7,380	16.4%
Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,363,675	+471,906	9.6%

Sources: U.S Census of Population and Housing, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000.
** 1990 to 2000 population change*

Table 2 shows the Town's forecasted population in five-year increments over the next 20 years based on historic growth trends. The three forecast scenarios in Table 2 reflect different assumptions on the continuation of historic trends and population growth. On average, Dekorra has added about 38 new residents per year from 1990 to 2006.

The aging population and the Town's attractive setting suggest that Dekorra may become even more popular for both seasonal vacationers and retirees. Further, anticipated employment growth and higher housing costs in northern Dane County suggest that commuter housing growth pressure will also be significant. A forecast population of 3,152 (Long Term Compounded Growth, annual growth rate of 1+%) permanent residents in 2030 appears quite feasible and will be used as the basis for this *Plan*. Seasonal population, not included in that total, is forecasted to remain relatively steady. Actual future population will depend on market conditions, regional growth pressure, attitudes toward growth, changing demographics, development regulations, and availability of public utilities.

Table 2: Town of Dekorra Population Forecast Scenarios

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Linear Growth (based on number of new residents per year from 1980 to 2006)	2,525	2,627	2,729	2,831	2,933
Long Term Compounded Growth (based on annual percentage increase in population from 1980 to 2006)	2,550	2,688	2,835	2,989	3,152
Recent Compounded Growth (Based on Annual Percentage Increase from 1990 to 2006)	2,656	2,947	3,269	3,627	4,025

B. Age and Gender of Population

Table 3 compares the age and sex distribution of Dekorra's population in 2000 to surrounding communities, the County, and the State. Trends in age distribution factor into future demand for housing, schools, parks, and social services.

Table 3: Age and Gender Statistics, 2000

	Town of Dekorra	Village of Poynette	Town of Lowville	Town of Arlington	Columbia County	State of Wisconsin
Median Age	40.2	33.9	40.8	39.2	38.0	36.0
% under 18	23.6	28.4	23.5	27.5	25.2	25.5
% over 65	10.8	11.5	12.7	8.7	14.4	13.1
% Female	46.9	49.1	48.7	46.1	49.6	50.6

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000

In 2000, Dekorra's median age was comparable to surrounding Towns but older than that of Poynette and Columbia County as a whole. The percentage of the Town's population aged 18 and under was lower than that of Poynette, the County and the State, and comparable with the Town of Lowville. The percentage of Dekorra's population aged 65 and older was comparable with nearby towns, but lower than Columbia County and the State.

Nationwide trends show an aging population. Following this trend, the average age of Dekorra's population has increased in the past twenty years. The median age in Dekorra rose from 31.7 in 1980 to 40.2 in 2000. With prolonged life expectancy and declining birth rates, the median age will likely continue to rise over the 20-year planning period. The Town's popularity as a location for seasonal and retirement homes has also contributed to the rising median age.

C. Educational Levels

According to the 2000 Census, about 94% of the Town's population age 25 and older had attained a high school level education. Approximately 19% of this same population had attained a college level degree (bachelor's degree or higher).

D. Income Levels

According to 2000 Census data, Dekorra's 1999 median household income was $55,737. The percent of Dekorra residents below the poverty level was 2.1% in 1999. According to the Program on Agricultural Technology Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, of Town households, 10.5% reported agricultural income from the sale of farm products. The average net farm income per farm household was $8,471. The amount of total Town resident income derived from farming was 2.5%.

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue also provides income data for Dekorra. Based on income tax returns filed in 2001, the adjusted gross income per tax return for Dekorra residents was $46,549. For comparison, the adjusted gross income per tax return for all residents in Columbia County was $37,784; for residents in the Town of Lowville, $39,537; and residents in the Village of Poynette, $37,605. This data includes only income subject to tax and income of persons filing tax returns; it does not include non-taxable income and income of persons not filing returns. It does not directly reflect household incomes because tax returns do not always correspond with households.

E. Household Trends and Forecasts

Table 4 compares household characteristics in 2000 for Dekorra with surrounding communities, Columbia County, and the State. The Town's average household size was similar to that of Poynette, Columbia County, and the State, but lower than Lowville and Arlington.

The Town's average household size has declined over the past two decades. The number of persons per household dropped from 2.92 in 1980 to 2.65 in 1990, and to 2.48 in 2000. The average household size in all of Columbia County in 2000 was 2.49, down from 2.46 in 1990. The rate of decline in the Town's average household size since 1980 is not projected to continue over the next twenty years. Instead, average household size is forecasted to gradually decrease before leveling off at approximately 2.3 persons per household by 2025. Household forecasts are included in Chapter Seven.

Table 4 shows a smaller percentage of year-round homes in Dekorra than in the other jurisdictions and the State.

Table 4: Housing & Household Characteristics, 2000

	Town of Dekorra	Village of Poynette	Town of Lowville	Town of Arlington	Columbia County	Wisconsin
Total Housing Units (Seasonal and Year-Round)	1,237	957	394	308	22,685	2,321,144
Total Year-Round Households	949	919	368	302	20,439	2,084,544
Average Household Size	2.48	2.46	2.68	2.81	2.49	2.50
% single-person households	21.9	30.5	17.1	13.9	25.5	26.8
% with individuals 65 years or older	19.7	22.7	23.9	16.6	25.0	23.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000

F. Labor Force and Employment Trends and Forecasts

A community's labor force is the portion of the population employed or available for work. The labor force includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment. According to 2000 Census data, 1,371 of Dekorra residents aged 16 and older were employed out of a potential labor force of 1,906 Town residents. The 2000 unemployment rate for the Town was 2.5%.

Most employed residents work in manufacturing, education/health/social services, retail trade, or construction. The percentage of the Town's employed population by sector in 2000 is shown in Table 5. A large part of the Town's labor force is employed outside of Dekorra and Columbia County. Nearly two-thirds of employed Dekorra residents worked over 20 minutes from home.

According to Wisconsin Department of Workplace Development, total employment in all sectors increased in Columbia County by about 13% from 1994 to 1999. Jobs in the construction sector had the biggest percentage increase, from 762 jobs in 1994 to 1,021 jobs in 1999. The County also experienced significant growth in jobs in the service and manufacturing sectors. Transportation, communications & utilities, wholesale trade, and real estate all showed a decline in jobs during this period. This data does not reflect the economic slowdown that began in 2000.

Table 5: Occupation of Employed Residents, 2000

Industry	Percentage of Labor Force
Manufacturing	22.3%
Education/Health/Social Services	13.8%
Retail Trade	10.6%
Construction	10.5%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Accommodation/Food Service	7.4%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	6.1%
Public Administration	6.0%
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	4.4%
Professional/Scientific/Management/Administrative	4.2%
Agriculture/Forestry/Mining	4.1%
Wholesale Trade	3.9%
Information	3.3%
Other Services	3.3%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000

Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.—a regional economic analysis firm—projects total employment in Columbia County growing at an annual rate of 1.27% from 1996 to 2005. In the long term, Woods & Poole projects total employment in Columbia County to increase 19% from 2000 to 2020; from approximately 28,180 workers in 1999 to 33,570 workers in 2020. Employment in the service, retail trade, and state and local government sectors is projected to grow fastest during this time period. Farm jobs are the only sector projected to decrease.

It is also important to take into account the growth of Dane County employment, particularly in the Madison metropolitan area, as so many Columbia County residents are employed there. Total employment in the Madison area is projected to increase 26% over the next 20 years, from approximately 330,880 workers in 1999 to 417,370 workers in 2020. As jobs in Dane County continues to increase, and Dane County housing become less affordable, workers will increasingly seek housing in Columbia County. With increasing access, Dekorra will be a key recipient of that residential growth pressure.

Forecasting employment growth for establishments located within Dekorra is difficult. The Town's greatest concentration of jobs is near the Interstate 39/Highway CS Interchange, which is planned to grow as both a service and job center over the next 20 years (see Map 7). There will also be scattered employment opportunities along Highway 51 and the waterfront.

G. Issues Raised Through Public Input

The Town Comprehensive Planning Committee—comprised of the Town Board and Town Plan Commission—directed a number of efforts to ensure that this *Comprehensive Plan* is based on the goals of Dekorra residents. Some of these were pursued jointly with Poynette and Lowville, while others were completed at the Town level. These efforts raised key issues and opportunities that later sections of the *Plan* attempt to address.

1. Public Workshop To Discuss Key Community Issues

A public workshop was held on September 19, 2002 with members of Dekorra's Town Board and Plan Commission to identify key community issues relating to existing conditions and the future growth of the Town. Primary issues identified at the workshop were:

- **Community Character:** Lake Wisconsin defines the character of the Town and is the main tourist attraction. "Growth" along the lake often means older, smaller seasonal homes being replaced with year-round retirement homes. Land in rural (agricultural) areas is being split into 35-acre lots resulting in the fragmentation of the Town's farmland.
- **Land Use:** The future viability of the farming economy is in doubt unless new markets for agricultural products are explored. There is a concern with Poynette's future plans for residential growth along its borders. There is a desire to attract high quality commercial and industrial development to the Interstate 39/CS Interchange Area.

  The State plans to upgrade the Interstate rest areas in the Town, and would like to be provided with sanitary sewer service. The State and Town are negotiating an agreement on a sewage treatment plant which the Town would manage. The Town would like to see sewer lines linked to the Interchange Area, but most do not want new development to occur between the rest areas and the Interchange Area.

  There were concerns that recreational zoning district includes too broad a range of uses.

- **Housing/Economic Development:** The Town's housing stock is in good condition, but there are isolated maintenance problems.
- **Environment:** Rolling hills and Class A streams make Dekorra a special place. There are concerns about the closed landfill's impact on water quality. There is a concern about pollution associated with Co-op in the eastern part of the Town. There is a perception that the Wisconsin River is over-used on weekends.
- **Community Facilities:** There is a desire to provide park and recreation opportunities to all areas of the Town, not just the waterfront. There is interest in considering building a new community center/town hall/town park.

2. Community Survey

A survey was mailed to all property owners and residents in Dekorra, Lowville, and Poynette in October 2002. Of these surveys, 1,421 were mailed to Town of Dekorra residents, and 461 of those were returned (32.4%). The survey included questions to gather basic demographic data, obtain an assessment of current situations, and get opinions on the future. The full results of the survey may be obtained by contacting the Town Clerk. The following is a summary of the Town's survey results:

- **Community Character:** The Town's rural, small-town character was the #1 reason why survey respondents live in the area. Most supported exploring regulations that would help to preserve this character.
- **Land Use:** The majority of survey respondents supported locating future development near areas that are already developed; keeping natural areas undeveloped and connected to each other; retaining farmland; and exploring ways to cluster new development in both the towns and village, as opposed larger lots and more scattered development.
- **Economic Development:** Most survey respondents agreed that the three participating communities should cooperate on economic development efforts that will benefit the region as a whole; support local businesses; and attract new development at both a small and large scale.
- **Environment:** Most survey respondents ranked preservation of wildlife habitat, woodlands, wetlands, streams, and other natural areas as very important to the quality of life.

3. Vision Setting Workshop

The three participating communities held a vision workshop on December 5, 2002. The purpose of the workshop was to identify a shared future vision for the region, and somewhat more detailed strategies for achieving that vision at both the individual community and regional level. In total, 96 residents attended this workshop. The following is a summary of the results. Complete results of the workshop may be obtained by contacting the Town Clerk.

Participants were first asked to express their opinions about the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Small groups then established community planning goals, or vision statements, meant to guide the comprehensive planning process. The group developed the following consensus vision statements and advice for achieving the visions:

- **"Grow near existing populated areas."** Recommended strategies to achieve this vision include promoting cluster developments, promoting greater lot density in developments adjacent to the Village of Poynette and existing subdivisions, and adopting land use planning and zoning tools to define the type and placement of development.
- **"Promote economic development consistent with community character, and maintain a balanced and fair ratio between residential and commercial development."** Recommended strategies to achieve this goal include zoning that encourages high quality commercial and industrial development around the Interstate/CS Interchange, in infill areas within the Village, and along Highway 51 in areas connected to the Village. Zoning policies for new residential development should encourage development within the Village, or in close proximity to the Village.
- **"Balance urban growth with farmland preservation, and protect productive farmland."** Recommended strategies to achieve this vision include policies that direct new residential development away from areas with the best soils, and cluster residential developments at a slightly higher density that allows more farmland and open space preservation. New commercial and industrial development along highways should be clustered into groups, rather than strung out along highways.
- **"Preserve scenic beauty and rural character."** The group recommend that natural features such as the Rocky Run, Hinkson and Rowan Creeks be used to form natural boundaries between

"village and country". New development along the creeks and along Lake Wisconsin should be discouraged.

- **"Improve intergovernmental communication and cooperation between communities and with County government."** The desired strategy to achieve this goal includes developing intergovernmental agreements on development issues, with citizen input.
- **"Develop strong planning and zoning program."** Recommended strategies to achieve this goal include policies such as an incentive program for the use of cluster, conservation development, and transfer of development rights receiving area options within rural areas, and amend zoning ordinances to allow single family homes on smaller lots. The group also approved of zoning areas for the appropriate types of commercial and industrial development in locations around the Interchange and in areas along Highway 51 adjacent to or accessible to the Village.
- **"Maintain and promote quality schools and education."** Recommended strategies include cooperation between the Committee and the School District in future planning for needed additions/expansions to existing school facilities and planning for new schools.
- **"Preserve natural resources; protect surface and groundwater quality and quantity."** Recommended strategies to achieve this goal include using the Rocky Run, Hinkson and Rowan Creeks as natural boundaries between developed areas and natural areas, promoting the use of conservation and cluster developments to preserve more farmland and open space and sensitive environmental areas, and developing policies that ensure that new residential developments are not located within close proximity to feedlots and other agricultural operations.
- **"Control property taxes."** Recommended strategies to achieve this vision include achieving a balance between new residential and commercial/industrial development to maintain the local tax base; working with neighboring jurisdictions to develop cost sharing agreements for public services such as fire, police, hospitals and emergency medical services; and working cooperatively with the County and State to ensure that local communities receives their fair share of state and federal funding.

4. Town Comprehensive Planning Committee Listening Sessions

Dekorra's Comprehensive Planning Committee held regular meetings throughout the planning process. Two special listening sessions were also by the Committee to get input on issues that were considered a top priority in the community.

5. Farming and Natural Resources Forum

On March 6, 2003, a meeting was held to get input regarding farming and natural resources. Seventeen members of the public attended. Input was sought on three issues:

- **Viability of Farming.** Those present at the meeting felt that farming is an important part of the community's lifestyle and economy and that there was interest on the part of future generations to keep farming in Dekorra. Those present also felt that farmers and farming related businesses in the community needed more support for farming to remain a viable activity for the next generation.
- **Preservation of Farmland.** Those present felt that policies should be developed to protect the best farmland from being developed. Support was expressed for options such as cluster development and directing new housing away from areas of the community with the best agricultural soils.
- **Location of New Housing.** Those present felt that some areas of Dekorra have better soils for farming than others, and that new housing developments should be directed away from areas with the best soils for farming. New housing was seen as a potential threat to preserving farmland as new homes on large lots break up existing farm parcels, but new housing was also seen as an opportunity to generate non-farm income.

6. Economic Development Forum

On July 10, 2003, a meeting was held for public input into future directions for economic development in the Town. Ten members of the public attended. Input was sought on four main issues:

- **Local Business Climate.** Those present at the meeting felt that the current regulatory climate in the area was not conducive to a healthy economy. Suggested problems included uneven enforcement of standards and certain aspects of the then-current town land use plan.
- **Future Economic Potential.** Attendees felt that the Interchange Area had potential for such uses as hotels, restaurants, industry, and transportation related uses. Hotel and restaurant development could create more jobs and help keep business guests and visitors in the area, create a place for locals to spend their money rather than in the Madison area, and create more jobs. The need for well-planned and quality development in this area is crucial, because it functions as a gateway. The Highway 51 corridor might be a second good location for industry, perhaps in conjunction with the Village. Waterfront development seems to be shifting more toward housing rather than resort-type uses, for better or worse.
- **Partnerships.** The consensus was that Dekorra and Poynette need to work together on economic development. Dekorra may not be accessing County economic opportunities as much as other Columbia County communities.
- **Housing.** Attendees recognized that some future housing development will be necessary to achieve the Town's economic development objectives. There are some places where farming is no longer viable, and housing is a way for farmers to provide for their retirement. Cluster or conservation housing development had support, but the participants felt that there would need to be an incentive for the landowner to choose this option.

7. Draft Plan Open Houses

On March 23, 2004, an open house was conducted to present and obtain community input on a draft version of this *Comprehensive Plan*. Based on feedback, at and after the open house, the Town Plan Commission made appropriate changes to this document. On August 1, 2007, the Town Board and Plan Commission held a joint public open house on significant amendments to this *Comprehensive Plan*.

8. Formal Public Hearing

Per the requirements of the "Smart Growth" law, the Town Board held a formal public hearing on the *Comprehensive Plan* and the adopting ordinance on January 6, 2005. At least 30 days before that hearing, the Town provided a legal notice and copies of the *Plan* to surrounding governments and others for their review. The public hearing was held after the Plan Commission made its recommendation to adopt this *Plan*. The Town Board subsequently held several meetings to discuss changes in response to comments received at the public hearing. On October __, 2007, the Town Board held a formal public hearing on the significant amendments to this *Comprehensive Plan*, preceded by proper notice.

H. Regional Opportunities Analysis

1. Alternative Futures Open House

An open house was held on June 24, 2003 to gather input on two alternative future scenarios for the Dekorra-Lowville-Poynette area. The scenarios depicted various ways that development in the next 50 or 60 years might be arranged. The two scenarios presented were:

a. "Trend" Scenario:

This scenario represented the region if current land use trends continue and land use controls remain similar to what they are today. Features included:

- 35-acre rural lots
- Build-out of waterfront properties
- Undefined development edges
- Disconnected natural areas
- Development spread along Interstate
- Uncoordinated economic development
- Large-lot development at the edges of the Village
- Identity of region as "suburb" of Madison

b. "Vision" Scenario:

This scenario represented the region with changes made to plans and regulations to take advantage of lessons learned and the results of public input. Features included:

- Clustered rural housing
- Reflection of small-town, rural character in new development
- Joint economic development planning
- Growth focused in already developed areas
- Clear edges between developed and open lands
- Unified natural areas

- Higher density development in Village; with priority placed on infill development and redevelopment
- Coordinated effort to get people to live, work, and recreate locally

When asked to pick which scenario they preferred, 23 participants preferred the "Vision Scenario", compared to 5 who preferred the "Trend Scenario". Complete results of the Alternative Futures Open House can be obtained by contacting the Town Clerk. This *Comprehensive Plan* for Dekorra was based largely on the "Vision Scenario".

I. Vision and Goals

Nearly every remaining chapter in this *Plan* includes goals, objectives, policies, and programs. Combined, these provide both the vision for this *Plan* and the specific guidance that the Town will use in making decisions to implement the *Plan* over the 20-year planning period. Specifically:

- A Vision Statement is an expression of the general direction the community wishes to take over the next 20 years. All goals, objectives, policies, programs, and actions to implement the *Plan* should be consistent with this vision.
- Goals are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach development issues during the next 20+ years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.
- Objectives are more specific than goals. Objectives are usually attainable through policies and specific implementation activities. Accomplishment of an objective contributes to fulfillment of a goal.
- Policies are rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Success in achieving policies is usually measurable.
- Programs are specific projects or services advised to achieve plan goals, objectives, and policies. Programs are sometimes included in the same list as "policies" and are sometimes included in the same section as "recommendations," depending on the chapter.

The Dekorra, Lowville, and Poynette Joint Steering Committee developed a vision statement and regional goals based on agreed-upon opportunities. Dekorra supports the regional vision and goals, and has prepared this *Plan* in accordance with the framework provided through them.

Regional Vision

The area's identity is defined by its high quality of life and unspoiled natural beauty. Communities must protect natural and community resources, including quality education, by carefully managing change as new residents are welcomed. Controlling property taxes is also an important component of maintaining a high quality of life.

Goals:

1. **Preserve and enhance the area's quality of life.** The area's identity is defined by its high quality of life and unspoiled natural beauty. Communities must protect natural and community resources, including quality education, by carefully managing change as new residents are welcomed. Controlling property taxes is also an important component of maintaining a high quality of life.
2. **Incorporate sensible, sustainable land use practices.** Support land use practices that will preserve the area's character while accommodating planned growth. Such practices include focusing new development near already developed areas and exploring new models of neighborhood design. These practices will help to preserve natural resources, reduce infrastructure and service costs, and maintain small-town and rural character.
3. **Provide economic opportunities for existing and future businesses.** Support the growth of existing businesses and the expansion of new business, tax base, and job opportunities where compatible with the character of the area and consistent with natural resource preservation. This may include exploration of low-impact recreation and tourism opportunities.
4. **Capitalize on emerging trends and markets for agriculture.** Farming is a key feature of the area's economy and cultural landscape. Identifying new uses for farmland and new markets for agricultural products will help preserve the area's rich farmland and agricultural heritage. Different approaches to rural development that preserve farmland while providing non-farm income opportunities should be explored.

In addition to the regional goals, this *Plan* is guided by the following Town vision and goals. More specific policies linked to these goals and objectives are included in Chapters Three through Nine. An overall program to implement these goals, objectives, and policies is included in Chapter Ten.

Dekorra's Vision

Preserve and enhance Dekorra's high quality of life in a manner that recognizes the importance of rural community character. Components include preserving farmland and farming as a viable occupation, protecting sensitive and beautiful natural environments, and providing for modest residential and business development in thoughtfully planned locations, generally in and near existing developed areas.

Overall Town Goals:

1. **Agriculture:** Preserve farming as a viable business activity and productive farmlands for continued agricultural use and rural character preservation.
2. **Natural Resources:** Respect the natural environment as an irreplaceable resource and protect and enhance natural and recreational resources for the enjoyment of present residents and future generations.
3. **Land Use:** Promote an efficient and high-quality land use pattern consistent with the Town's rural character and desire to direct intensive land uses to already developed areas.
4. **Transportation:** Provide a safe and efficient road system that serves the land use pattern and recognizes that different types of roads can and should serve different purposes.
5. **Housing and Neighborhood Design:** Manage residential growth by providing opportunities for limited housing development, while retaining rural character, productive farmland, natural resources, and historic and cultural features.
6. **Economic Development:** Designate adequate land in appropriate locations for high-quality commercial land use to provide convenient sources of shopping and services.
7. **Community Facilities, Utilities, and Services:** Provide access to basic public services such as police and fire protection, road maintenance and snow removal, recycling, schools, recreational facilities and activities, and public utilities in intensive development areas.
8. **Intergovernmental Cooperation:** Build on relations with surrounding and overlapping governments to achieve mutual goals and deliver services efficiently.

CHAPTER THREE: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter of the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* satisfies the agricultural, natural and cultural resources elements described in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This chapter does not directly address the use of natural resources for recreational purposes (instead see Chapter Six).

A. Agricultural Resource Inventory

Farming is still a way of life for many Town residents and an essential part of our region and nation. The agricultural landscape, also defines much of Dekorra's rural character. The land is punctuated by seasonal changes in crop cover, colors and textures of fields, and architecturally significant farm buildings.

1. Character of Farming

Farmers in Dekorra produce a variety of agricultural commodities including dairy, alfalfa, corn and soybeans, as well as vegetables and fruits for the local market. The average farm size in Dekorra was approximately 201 acres in 1997, up from 187 acres in 1990. The average farm size for the entire County was 208 acres in 1997 and 182 acres in 1990.

Most of the farms in the Town remain family-owned. The total number of active farms in Dekorra increased during most of the 1990s. According to the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service (WASS), the estimated number of full time farm operations in the Town grew from 110 in 1990 to 122 in 1997. (WASS defines an active farm as a place that sells at least $1,000 worth of agricultural products in a given year). These numbers suggest that farming remains viable in the Town. Still, according to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, the number of dairy farms in the Town decreased, from 69 active farms in 1989 to 59 farms in 1997. This decline is at least partially attributed to the drop in milk prices during the 1990s and the consolidation of dairy herds.

The State Farmland Preservation Program provides income tax credits to property owners who agree to keep their land in agricultural use. As of the mid-1990s, 89% of the Town's farmland was enrolled in this program.

2. Location of Farmland

According to WISCLAND data developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR), approximately 51% of the land in Dekorra was used for agricultural purposes in the early 1990's. The "Farmland" land use category included row crops, hayfields, pastures, grasslands, idle farmland, and Conservation Reserve Program land. As shown in Map 5, agricultural land still covers the majority of Dekorra. Nearly all of this land was designated in the "Agriculture/Woodlands Plan District" in the 1997 Town Land Use Plan and is zoned Agricultural.

3. Assessment of Farmland Viability

The suitability of land for crop production is one important predictor of its future viability for continued farming and its level of appropriateness for non-farm development.

The USDA-NRCS Land Evaluation System groups soil suitability for agriculture based on three factors: prime farmland soils, soil productivity for corn, and land capability class. Soils are grouped by suitability from Group I to Group VIII. Group I soils have few limitations that restrict their use for agriculture. Group II soils have moderate limitations that may reduce the choice of crops, require special conservation practices, or both.

Soil suitability for agriculture is presented on Map 3. Much of Dekorra's land is not as well-suited for crop production as land in neighboring towns, and may be better suited to animal farming and other open space uses. Approximately 15% of all soils in Dekorra are in Group II and are concentrated in the northeastern part of the Town along Highway 51. There is only a very small amount of Group I soils in the Town.

Of course, the viability of land for continued farming is affected by other factors aside from soil suitability. These include size and shape of cropland, farm product market prices, individual commitments to farming (financial and emotional), opportunities for animal farming, conflicts with nearby non-farm uses, proximity to urban areas (sewer and water), and proximity to highways. Each of these factors was considered in making land use recommendations included in Chapter Four of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

B. Agricultural Goals, Objectives, Polices, and Programs

1. Goal

Preserve productive farmland and farming as an occupation for future generations.

2. Objectives

a. Preserve productive farmland for continued agricultural use.

b. In planned agricultural areas, limit the amount of non-farm uses, and guide the location of allowable homes on individual sites.

c. Direct new homes to smaller lots, to locations where housing is already located, and in clusters where appropriate.

d. Support appropriate opportunities for farmers to obtain non-farm income.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Designate **most of the Town as a planned Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area**, with most of those lands appropriate for agricultural zoning.

b. **Limit the number of homes in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area** by following a maximum residential density policy, described in more detail in Chapter Four.

c. **Guide the placement of homes**, driveways, and other uses in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area to **less productive soils** and the edges of agricultural fields, as described in more detail in Chapter Four.

d. Promote the **clustering or grouping of four or fewer homesites** in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area consistent with the residential density policy, and promote the use of design guidelines to direct homes away from the best soils and protect rural character.

e. Promote the **clustering of smaller lots** in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area as mapped on Map 6 (e.g., average lot size of 3 acres), rather than larger homesites (e.g., 35+ acres), in order to preserve open land and agricultural uses. Refer to the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Chapter Four for detailed clustering standards in these planned land use areas.

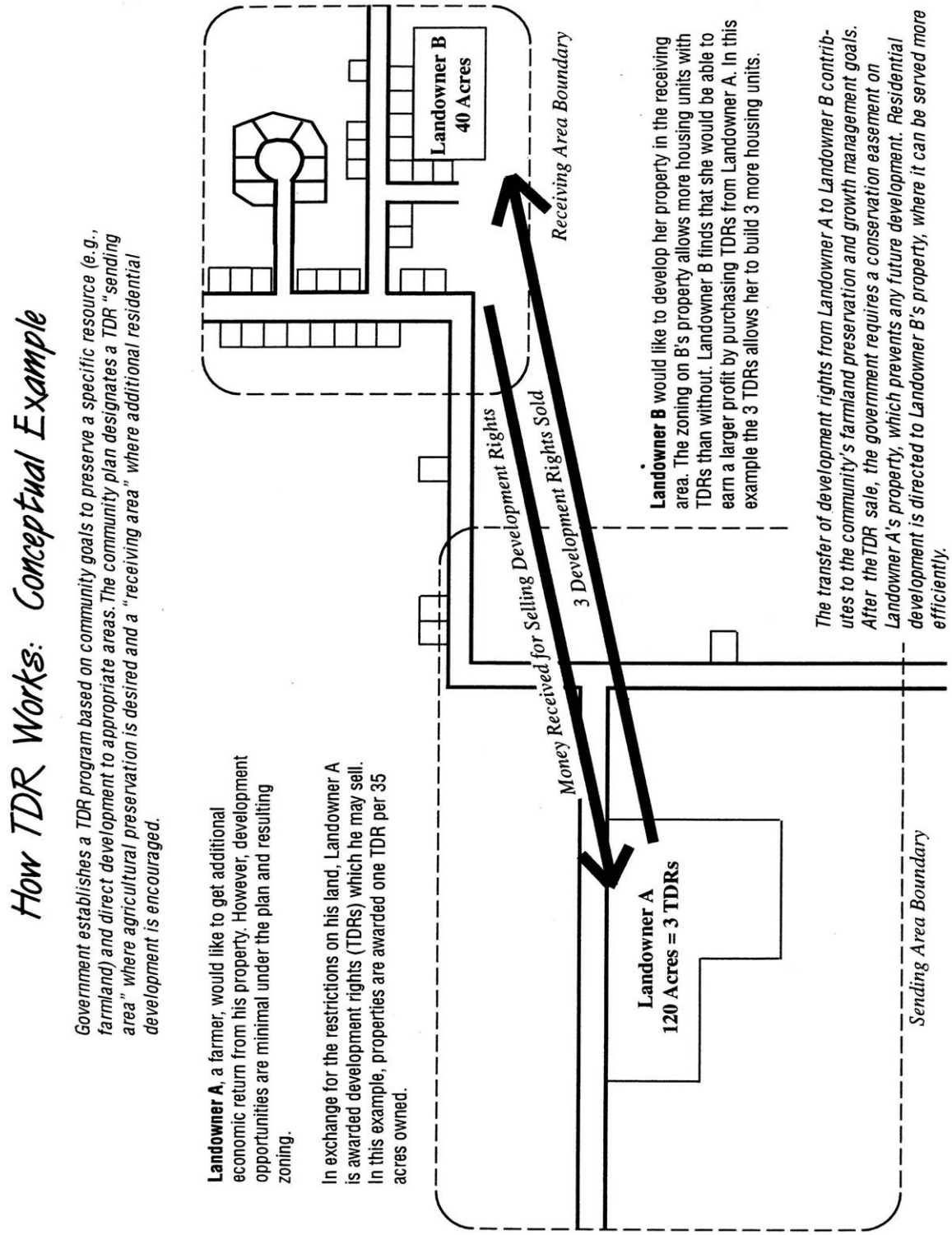
f. Allow **home occupations and farm family businesses** on farm parcels to supplement farming income.

g. Support farmland tax credits, use value assessments, reform in federal farm laws, and other programs that **encourage the continued use of land for farming**.

h. Participate in innovative techniques to permanently protect large tracts of agricultural and open lands in the Town while compensating the farmer/landowner for these protections, such as **transfer of development rights**. The concept of how transfer of development rights may work

is included as Figure 1; the specific program in Dekorra is described in Chapter Four and the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code.

Figure 1: Transfer of Development Rights Conceptual Model



Map 3: Soil Suitability for Agriculture

C. Inventory of Other Natural Resources

Understanding Dekorra's natural features suggests possible locational advantages for particular land uses. It is also essential to understand the location of environmentally sensitive areas where development is not appropriate. This will prevent severe developmental or environmental problems that may be difficult or costly to correct in the future. Maintenance of these natural features is also important for community appearance and the functions they perform for natural communities. Map 4 depicts the Town's environmentally sensitive areas, some of which are described in more detail below.

1. Landforms/Topography/Non-metallic Mineral Resources

Dekorra is situated near the eastern edge of Wisconsin's driftless area. The Town's landforms are characterized primarily by gently rolling ground moraines. Elevations range between 835 feet above sea level at the Wisconsin River and 1,080 feet in bluff areas.

There are a few small sand and gravel quarries located in Dekorra, mostly near the Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin. County zoning allows nonmetallic mining, or quarrying, operations as a conditional use within the following zoning districts: Agricultural District; Agricultural District No. 2; and Industrial District.

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. Columbia County does not yet have a register of marketable mineral deposits. 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.

2. General Soils Information

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. Problems that limit development on certain soils include slumping, poor drainage, erosion, steep slopes and high water tables. Dekorra's soils are of four major associations:

- *The Lapeer-Wyocena Association* if found in a wide east-west strip across the center of Dekorra. These soils are found mostly on glaciated uplands, and are characterized by moraines, drumlins, and glaciated ridges. The drumlins are generally east-west oriented. Both Lapeer and Wyocena soils are well drained and consist of a sand/loam mix. These soils have medium fertility and low available water capacity, which may inhibit cultivation in spots. The heavily sloped and ridge areas are wooded. These soils are well suited for development.
- *The Plainfield-Okee Association* is found in the south one-third of Dekorra. The predominating landscape of these soil is sand-capped drumlins separated by low areas of sandy outwash. These soils are generally well-drained. The sandier Plainfield soils occur in outwash plains, while loamy Okee soils are found on the drumlins. The soils are generally low in fertility and available water capacity, and are easily susceptible to drought conditions and wind erosion. Much of this soil association is wooded and provides for wildlife habitat. Increasing numbers of residential units are being constructed on this association due to its low value for farming, and its proximity to Poynette.
- *The Houghton-Adrian-Palms Association* is found in three areas of Town, all located along streams (Rocky Run, Rowan Creek, and Hinkson Creek). These soils are usually found in floodplains,

and tend to be very poorly drained. Marshes are common throughout this association. These soils have low fertility and high available water capacity, and are often subject to flooding. The soils are limited in their capacity for housing or road construction. Most of the wildlife areas and hunting and fishing grounds throughout the County are associated with the *Houghton-Adrian Palms* association.

- *The Granby-Alluvial Association* is found in the extreme northwest corner of Dekorra, adjacent to the Wisconsin River. These soils are characterized by nearly level or gently sloping poorly drained soils. Available water capacity and fertility are low in this association. Flooding is occasional to frequent, and runoff is very slow. These sand soils can be seasonally dry, and subject to wind and water erosion. *Granby-Alluvial* is poorly suited to crops, although some forage, vegetable, and cash grain crops could be grown in well-drained areas. Housing, industrial, and commercial development is ill suited to this soil association, yet there has been a significant amount of housing built in these areas- mostly using holding tanks for waste disposal.

The suitability of the various soils in the Town for on-site waste treatment systems is described in Chapter Six—Utilities and Community Facilities.

3. Drainage Basins

Dekorra is located in the Lower Wisconsin River basin. The Lower Wisconsin River basin drains approximately 4,940 square miles of south-central and southwestern Wisconsin. Water quality in the basin is generally good. The primary water quality problems are caused by nonpoint sources of pollution, particularly from agricultural operations. Basins are further divided into watersheds, shown on Map 4. Most of the Town is in the Lake Wisconsin Watershed. The northeastern portion of the Town is in the Duck Creek and Rocky Run Watershed.

4. Groundwater

Groundwater resources are plentiful in the Town at both shallow and deep levels. The general geology of the region is comprised of gravel and sand over sandstone or dolomite formations. Water supplies are drawn mostly from the alluvial aquifer made up of the coarse-grained sand and gravel, and is generally of good quality. A large amount of the groundwater withdrawn and used in Dekorra is recharged locally from infiltration of precipitation.

Although groundwater in Dekorra is of good quality, problems with contamination can occur. In areas of granular soils, the upper aquifers supplying water are susceptible to contamination from both surface and subsurface sources. The most common and widespread groundwater contaminant is nitrate-nitrogen. Nitrate-nitrogen is highly soluble in water and is not significantly absorbed in the soil; thus it can seep readily through the soil and into the groundwater. Potential sources of nitrate pollution include on-site wastewater systems, animal feedlots, livestock waste facilities, sludge and septic application, lawn and agricultural fertilizers, silage juice and decaying plant debris.

Another contaminate found in Dekorra groundwater is atrazine, which has been the most commonly used corn herbicide in Wisconsin for the past 30 years. The herbicide and its breakdown products are often found in groundwater in agricultural areas of Wisconsin. In the southeast corner of Dekorra, sections 25, 36, and the east halves of sections 26 and 35 are included in Wisconsin's Atrazine Prohibition Areas.

Map 4: Dekorra Natural Areas

5. Surface Waters

Dekorra is bordered on the west by the Wisconsin River and the 9,000 acre Lake Wisconsin, formed by a downstream dam in the river near Prairie du Sac. The lake has a maximum depth of 39 feet. Popular with year-round residents, seasonal residents, and tourists, these waters provide recreational opportunities.

The man-made Lake Columbia is partially located in the Town. The lake was constructed as a cooling pond for the Columbia Power Plant south of Portage. Lake Columbia remains free of ice year-round due to the power plant. The lake has exceptionally high levels of fish and aquatic vegetation.

The Town has several high quality streams:

- Rowan Creek runs through the southern portion of the Town. Four miles of Rowan Creek are categorized as a Class I trout stream, and eight miles categorized as Class II. Rowan Creek has been listed as an exceptional water resource (ERW), but is also on the WisDNR's list of Section 303D impaired waters, due to both nonpoint and point source pollution.
- Hinkson Creek is a small, low gradient, coldwater, Class II tributary to Rowan Creek. Rocky Run Creek flows through Dekorra in the northern quarter of the Town. East of Highway 51 the stream is trout water, with six miles of Class II and 2 miles of Class III trout stream. The stream is buffered by wetlands.
- Rocky Run receives point source discharges from the Lake Columbia power plant (Alliant/Wisconsin Power & Light), and a tributary to the stream receives discharge from the Rio wastewater treatment plan. The creek has been ranked as a high priority for nonpoint source pollution protection, and would benefit from a pollution reduction project.

These surface waters are important to the health of the Wisconsin River. The river has been impacted both from industries (including paper making) and by non-point and point source pollution in its tributaries. Overall, the Lower Wisconsin River is classified as a diverse warm water sport fishery (WWSF). The river no longer supports commercial fishing, due to pollution. The river is home to a number of threatened and endangered species.

6. Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplain areas. These are areas predicted to be inundated with floodwaters in the 100-year storm event (e.g., a storm that has a 1% chance of happening in any given year). The State requires County regulation of development in floodplains. Development is strongly discouraged in floodplains to avoid property damage.

Floodplain areas in the Town are located along Rocky Run Creek, Rowan and Hinkson Creeks, and the Wisconsin River. While floodplain areas are included on Map 4, the National Flood Insurance Program maps produced by FEMA should be referenced for official delineation and elevations of floodplain boundaries.

7. Wetlands

Wetlands are important for aquifer recharge, groundwater and surface water quality, and wildlife habitat. Wetlands cover approximately 16% of Dekorra. Wetlands in Dekorra are generally found in close vicinity to the streams. Sizeable wetland areas are located along Rocky Run Creek, Rowan and

Hinkson Creeks, and along the Wisconsin River north of the Interstate 39/90/94 bridge. The single largest wetland is just east/northeast of Whalen's Bay near the mouth of Rowan Creek.

Wetlands of at least two acres are shown on Map 4. County zoning regulates wetlands located within 1,000 feet of a lake, pond, or flowage, and within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of streams or rivers, or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever is greater. Wetlands are also subject to WisDNR or Army Corps of Engineers fill regulations.

8. Woodlands

Remaining woodlands are valuable contributors to the area's character, beauty and wildlife habitat. Due to nature of Dekorra's topography, about 1/3 of the Town contains significant areas of woodland cover. These areas generally coincide with heavily sloped, floodplain, or marginal agricultural areas. The most common species found in the woodlands are oak, hickory, maple, and basswood.

The State's Managed Forest Land (MFL) program is designed to encourage long-term investment in private forestland and promote sound forest management practices. This program is available to landowners with 10 or more contiguous acres of forestland. Participating landowners must agree to a forest management plan that includes selective harvesting. In exchange, their land is taxed at a lower rate. As of March 2002, there were 794 acres of forestland in the Town enrolled in the MFL program.

9. Steep Slopes

As shown on Map 4, slopes exceeding a 12% grade occur throughout Dekorra, but are more frequent in the central and western portions of the Town. A total of 639 acres (2% of total acreage) in the Town contain slopes of 12% or greater, and 93 acres (>1% of total acreage) contain slopes of 20% or greater. Slopes of between 12% and 20% present challenges for building site development. Steep slopes that exceed a 20% grade are not recommended as development sites due to erosion concerns.

10. Hilltops and Ridgetops

Hilltops and ridgetops are important natural features that serve to define the horizon. While commanding impressive views, large structures (houses) constructed on top of them tend to be visually prominent to surrounding lands.

Home placement on hilltops and ridgetops can lead to a perception of greater development in the Town than if homes were placed more discretely at the base or side of hills with screened vegetation. Hilltops and ridgetops in Dekorra are generally associated with steep slope areas on Map 4.

11. Rare Species Occurrences/Natural Areas

WisDNR's Natural Heritage Inventory program maintains data on the general location and status of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species. Map 4 shows sections in Dekorra identified in the 1999 Natural Heritage Inventory as containing rare plant or animal species, is especially areas along streams, the Wisconsin River, and Lake Wisconsin. More specific information on location and type of species is available from the state's Bureau of Endangered Resources on a request basis.

12. MacKenzie Environmental Education Center/Poynette State Game Farm

The MacKenzie Environmental Education Center and Poynette State Game Farm are Department of Natural Resources' facilities located in the eastern part of Dekorra. They are unique among state facilities in their mission of environmental education.

Since its incorporation in 1934, education programs and public contacts have been emphasized. In 1961, a cluster of buildings, built as part of an economic recovery program, and 250 acres were formally set aside "to promote knowledge and wise use of Wisconsin's outdoor resources." In 1975, a resident center, authorized and funded through the Legislature, opened to accommodate overnight groups taking part in education programs.

People come from many areas of the state to attend programs at the center, ranging in age from preschool to adult. In 2001, 5,669 students attended overnight programs, and 7,459 students came to MacKenzie on day trips. The facility is also open to the general public. Exhibits and displays show some of the natural communities found in Wisconsin. Hiking trails and picnic areas provide an opportunity for outdoor experiences, and wildlife displays provide a means of learning about Wisconsin's indigenous flora and fauna. A logging museum and conservation museum are also among the attractions.

The primary role of the State Game Farm today is to provide pheasants and chicks for both public and private hunting grounds throughout Wisconsin. Wild pheasant populations in Wisconsin have declined steadily since the 1950's, due to conversion of wetland and grassland habitat to cropland and urban development. The Farm produces about 100,000 per year. Adult pheasants are raised for release on public lands, while pheasant chicks are produced and given to 75 cooperating conservation clubs in 35 counties, who raise the birds and release them on private lands open to public hunting.

D. Natural Resource Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Protect the Town's important natural resources.

2. Objectives

a. Preserve streams, drainageways, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, steep slopes, the continuity of larger woodland areas, and other natural features.

b. Protect surface water and groundwater quality.

c. Prevent future problems associated with developing land too close to natural areas and on erosion prone slopes.

d. Cooperate with other units of government on resources under shared authority.

e. Maintain the piece and tranquility of the rural setting.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Preserve environmental and open space corridors by **prohibiting new buildings in wetlands, stream banks, floodplains, shoreland setback areas, and on slopes greater than 20%**. Development should also be discouraged on slopes between 12% and 20% where other more appropriate sites are available. The Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Code have specific regulations regarding development on slopes of 12% or greater. Steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains are shown on Map 4. The Town should support more detailed mapping of these natural resources where it is apparent that a development proposal may impact these features, existing maps are in error, or changes have occurred in the features.

b. **Preserve special landscape features** including the Rowan, Hinkson and Rocky Run Creek Corridors, remaining undeveloped Wisconsin River frontage, bluffs and hilltops, and larger woodland habitats.

c. Before approving any changes in land use, **consider the impact on wildlife habitat**, potential locations of rare or threatened plant and animal species, **and archeological sites** such as mound groups and ensure that the land use changes meet all applicable criteria in the Town's land division and subdivision regulations.

d. Protect and improve the **quality of surface water** within the Town, particularly the Hinkson, Rowan, and Rocky Run Creeks. Participate in any County or State water quality improvement efforts.

e. Help form a broad-based coalition focused on the **long-term management of the creeks** and the watersheds.

f. Promote the construction of an **interconnected, low-impact trail** in the Rocky Run Creek corridor.

g. Enforce the Town's **Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Ordinance**. Emphasize the use of natural drainage patterns, construction site erosion control, and permanent, **ongoing stormwater management and erosion control measures** that control the quality, quantity, and temperature of water leaving any site.

h. To protect groundwater quality, avoid the over-concentration of on-site waste treatment systems.

i. Require the submittal and implementation of **nutrient/or manure management plans for high density agricultural operations** expected to have large numbers of animals in any part of the Town.

j. Avoid extensive development within designated **groundwater recharge areas** and steep slope areas to protect groundwater quality.

k. Implement ordinances pertinent to enabling **continuation of the rural quality of life** (e.g., lighting).

l. Follow the policies in Chapter Four: Land Use regarding **non-metallic mineral resource** sites.

E. Cultural Resource Inventory and Analysis

Preservation of historic, archeological, and other cultural resources fosters a sense of pride, improves quality of life, and provides an important feeling of social and cultural continuity between the past, present and future. The following sections and Map 4 depict and describe the significant historic, archeological, cultural resources in the Town.

1. Historic Resources

The first settler of the Town and of what is now Columbia County was Wallace Rowan who entered his claim for a homestead on June 6, 1836, where he built a combination home and hotel. An area adjoining the Wisconsin River was platted and recorded in January 1843. This was Kentucky City which had only one building, that being Lafayette Hill's Tavern. Later this site became known as Dekorra Village. In 1836, Dekorra bid and was considered to become the state capital of Wisconsin. Near here a grist mill was built in 1844 and served a wide area for many years since there was no mill in Madison, Baraboo, Portage, Wyocena or Columbus. The site was also an ideal place for a ferry to the opposite shore of the Wisconsin River (Caledonia). It was also a distributing place for lumber floated down the river.

By 1852 there were eight common and two joint school districts in Dekorra. There was the United Presbyterian Church, organized in 1863 and served by Rev. H.A. Preus, a pioneer Lutheran minister. Inch Methodist Church was completed in 1875, the total cost being $1,600. Sunday School had been held in the Inch School before the church was built. The Dekorra Lutheran Church was organized in 1869 under the leadership of Pastor H.A. Preus. The Chicago-Milwaukee Railroad between Portage and Madison was completed in 1870. This line, still in existence, cut thru Dekorra with stations at Poynette and Hartman.

The Town has a fine collection of historic or architecturally significant buildings and sites from the Amish Era. The State Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) contains data on a wide range of historic properties. The AHI includes 33 documented properties in Dekorra. These properties mainly include houses and farm buildings.

The State Historical Society also maintains a list of properties certified as significant by the National Park Service, and determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, there are no properties in Dekorra listed in the State or National Registers, or listed as eligible for the Registers. However, properties may be named to the Register in the future. Several historical societies operate within the area, including the Poynette Area Historical Society, the Columbia County Historical Society, the Portage Historical Society, and the Lodi Valley Historical Society.

2. Archeological Resources

According to the State Historical Society there are 46 known archaeological sites and cemeteries in Dekorra as of August 2003 (see Map 4). This does not include all of the sites that might be present in the Town. Sites include cemeteries (church or municipal cemeteries, burial mounds, and unmarked graves), cabins and homesteads, and Native American community and burial sites. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from encroachment by any type of development. Few of the sites reported to the Society have been evaluated for their importance or eligibility for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

3. Visual Character Resources

The comprehensive planning process included an analysis of visual resources that greatly enhance the unique community character or "personality" of Dekorra. Visual resources include both natural and human-altered landscapes.

Dekorra is mostly rural in character, but it has been greatly influenced by the development of Poynette, vacation and resort development along the Wisconsin River, and the Interstate. There is a great deal of residential development along the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin. Driving along the roads through the development areas along the river is reminiscent of vacation areas of northern Wisconsin. Views of Lake Wisconsin are breathtaking from the Highway V causeway.

Most of the rest of the Town remains quite sparsely settled. There, the land is rolling and mostly devoted to agriculture, open space, and woods. Cultivated flat-to-rolling fields and scattered farmsteads dominate the landscape. Fields are often farmed to road edges and there are few woodlots. Town roads have relatively little traffic, making them ideal for recreational cycling. Long views of the horizon dominate the visual experience.

F. Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Preserve Dekorra's rural, scenic, and historic character.

2. Objectives

a. Recognize Dekorra's character is defined by large areas of rolling agricultural woodlands, natural areas, and the historic "Dekorra Village" area near the River.

b. Identify and protect unique historic and archeological areas within the Town.

c. Protect scenic views, particularly of rolling countryside and along Lake Wisconsin.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Emphasize the value of the remaining **natural resource areas as focal points** of natural beauty and recreation (see Map 4).

b. Promote the **nomination of historic sites** and perhaps the Dekorra Village to the National or State Register of Historic Places. Make sure that new development in these areas respects the historic integrity and small scale of these districts.

c. Encourage **new development forms that celebrate the Town's agricultural heritage**. Examples include grouping new homes at the end of a driveway or road to look like a historic farm-

stead, incorporating existing farm outbuildings in new development, and promoting new building styles and materials consistent with historic styles.

d. In largely undeveloped areas, promote the **use of existing topography and vegetation to screen** new development from public roads.

e. Support local festivals, fairs, farm tours, farm breakfasts, and markets that **celebrate the Town's farming heritage** and rural way of life.

f. For the Interstate 90-94-39 corridor, work with the County to **limit additional billboards, communication towers, and unplanned development**. Work to upgrade development quality and provide an attractive gateway at the Interchange Area.

CHAPTER FOUR: LAND USE

This chapter of the *Plan* contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide the future preservation and development of lands in Dekorra, as required under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

A. Existing Land Use

1. Existing Land Use Pattern

A majority of Dekorra remains in open space. Much of the land is shown as *Agriculture/Open Lands* on Map 5, with scattered areas of *Woodlands* and *Wetlands* along Rowan, Hinkson, and Rocky Run Creeks. These areas have very low development densities.

Residential development has occurred predominately along Lake Wisconsin and the Wisconsin River. Other residences are dispersed throughout the community—generally along Town and County roads. Residential development has generally occurred at lower densities (e.g., 2+ acre lots) consistent with the land needs of septic systems. Density is higher in older lakefront development areas, where many homes are on holding tanks. *General Business and Industrial* uses are generally limited to the Highway 51 corridor and the Interstate and Highway CS interchange. *Institutional* uses are scattered. These are at low densities. Table 6 estimate the acreage within each existing land use category.

Table 6: Town of Dekorra Existing Land Use, 2002

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture/Open Lands	16,439	55%
Wetlands	4,442	15%
Woodlands> 40 acres	3,598	12%
Rural Single Family Residential (Town)	797	3%
Road	360	1%
Public Open Space	411	1%
Recreation	638	2%
Surface Water	2,787	9%
Institutional	48	<1%
Mixed Residential	26	<1%
Landfill/Extraction	8	<1%
Central Business District	2	<1%
General Business	89	<1%
Industrial	30	<1%
TOTAL	29,675	100%

Source: GIS Inventory, Vandewalle & Associates, 2007

2. Land Development Trends

From 1990 to 2002, there were a total of 48 new parcels created in Dekorra. Nearly all of these four lots per year were intended for single-family residences. This total does not include homesites that did not require review under the Town or County subdivision ordinances (e.g., 35+ acre lots). During the 1990s, an average of 20 building permits was issued per year for new houses. Many of these were on the 35+ acre parcels and pre-existing waterfront lots, with some of those involving the tear-down of cottages, replacing them with newer, larger homes.

According to data from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's Fielded Sales System, 1,963 acres of agricultural land were sold in Dekorra from 1990 to 1997. On average, an acre of agricultural land in the Town sold for $937 over that period. Of the 1,963 acres of land that were sold, 1,141 acres (58%) continued in agricultural use. The remaining 822 acres were converted out of agricultural use. The average price of land that remained in agricultural use was $749 per acre. The average price of land that was converted to a different use was $1,187 per acre. These land prices have significantly increased since 1997. Based on more recent land sales, average prices for land converted to non-agricultural use are now between $3,000 and $4,000 per acre, depending on the quality of the site.

B. Planned Land Use

1. Planned Land Use Pattern

Map 6 presents recommended future land uses over the 20-year planning period for all parts of the Town. Changes from the existing land use pattern to realize this planned land use pattern may occur if and when property owners make requests for rezoning, subdivisions or land divisions, conditional use permits, or other development approvals. Map 6, along with policies later in this chapter, will guide Town decision making on future land use changes.

Map 6 shows most of the Town as being preserved for agriculture, open space, and natural areas. Aside from very low density housing in the *Agriculture* and *Woodland Preservation Area*, new single family residential development will be directed to areas in and around existing residential development. New high quality commercial and light industrial land uses will be directed to the *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area surrounding the Highway CS interchange with Interstate 90-94-39, while other commercial and industrial uses will be directed to a second *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area along Highway 51 near Columbia Lake. This area is appropriate for small-scale, mixed uses because it already has some small-scale industrial uses, is located near the intersection of Highways 51 and J, has rail access, has soils that are not ideal for agriculture, and is relatively remote from the influence of Poynette.

This *Plan* advises minimizing scattered development along Highway 51 between Highway J and Hinkson Creek. The reasons for this recommendation include the higher quality of farmland in this area, access and aesthetic concerns associated with strip development, preferred truck traffic routes through the Town or the Village, and community edge and separation interests. For many similar reasons, this *Plan* also advises minimizing development along Highway CS between the *Commercial/Industrial Mix Area* near the Interchange and the Village limits.

Table 7 shows the acreage included within each planned land use designation on Map 6. Each designation is described in detail in the Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies section below.

Table 7: Town of Dekorra Planned Land Use

Planned Land Use Designation	Acres	Percent
Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area	16,677	56%
Environmental Corridor	4,350	15%
Public Open Space	2,457	8%
Surface Water	2,787	9%
Urban Transition Area (within Town only)	681	2%
Multiple Family Residential/Mobile Home Park	33	<1%
Single Family Residential	853	3%
TDR Receiving Areas	722	2%
Neighborhood Business	7	<1%
General Business	30	<1%
Institutional	73	<1%
Commercial/Industrial Mix	635	2%
Roads (Existing)	370	1%
TOTAL	29,675	100%

Source: GIS Inventory, Vandewalle & Associates, 2007

2. Projected Land Use Demand

This *Plan* projects demand over the 20-year planning period (in five-year increments) for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses. Projected demand is then compared to the potential supply of land to meet that demand, presented in Map 6 and Table 7.

Demand projections for residential land uses within lands currently in Dekorra boundaries are based on housing unit demand forecasts for Dekorra and, in part, the Village of Poynette. This is because the *Plan* anticipates some amount of growth of the Village of Poynette into lands that are now part of Dekorra. Projected rural (i.e., remaining in Dekorra) residential land use demand is presented in Table 8. The ranges presented in this table are based on the three population forecast scenarios presented in Table 2. Table 8 assumes that the average residential homesite will be 5 acres, which considers ~~1 to~~ 3 acre lots in subdivisions and cluster developments as well as 50+ acre homesites in agricultural areas. Housing unit forecasts that aided in preparation of this table are also shared and described more fully in Chapter Seven.

Table 8: Projected Rural Residential Housing and Land Use Demand

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Cumulative potential demand for additional housing units in Town (above year 2000 totals)	70 units	145 to 213 units	215 to 384 units	294 to 583 units	362 to 791 units	431 to 1,025 units
Cumulative potential demand for additional acres of rural residential development (above year 2000 totals)	348 acres	725 to 1,065 acres	1,077 to 1,918 acres	1,469 to 2,913 acres	1,809 to 3,956 acres	2,154 to 5,125 acres
Projected annual demand for new housing units in previous five-year period	14 units/yr	15 to 29 units/yr	14 to 34 units/yr	16 to 40 units/yr	14 to 42 unit/yr	14 to 47 units/yr

Source: Vandewalle & Associates

Map 5: Existing Land Use (2002)

Map 6: Planned Land Use

Future development planned under Map 6 and the policies of this *Plan* provide enough capacity to accommodate the expected residential land use demand through the year 2030, provided that actual housing unit growth is at or below roughly the midpoint figures in Table 8. This is because the *Existing Residentially and Recreationally Zoned Lands, TDR Receiving Areas,* and *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation* planned districts can each accommodate new homes at different densities. It is the Town's desire to seek conversion for land for residential purposes towards the low end of the ranges in Table 8. If that desire changes, the Town may choose to amend Map 6 and/or the policies behind that map to provide for additional growth capacity within the next 20 years.

Having an available supply of appropriate land for non-residential development over the 20-year planning period is also important. Based on an analysis of historic growth rates, the Town projects a demand for 25 to 60 acres of land for commercial purposes every five years during the 20-year planning period. The Town also projects a demand for 20 to 45 acres of land for industrial purposes every five years during this same period. This anticipated demand for commercial and industrial land can be accommodated within the 600+ acres shown in the *Commercial/Industrial Mix* areas ~~shown~~ on Map 6, supplemented by waterfront business areas. Again, the Town can consider future expansions to these areas through comprehensive plan amendments if actual demand outstrips available supply.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's Fielded Sales System, which tracks sales of agricultural, forest, swamp and waste parcels for all towns in the state, approximately 822 acres of agricultural land in Dekorra were converted out of agricultural use from 1990 to 1997, a loss of approximately 117 acres per year. If this trend continues, the amount of agricultural land in active use in the Town will decrease by about 587 acres every five years over the 20-year planning period. This figure is also basically consistent with projections of residential, commercial, and industrial land demand presented above. The Town seeks to minimize the amount of agricultural and open land conversion.

3. Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Residential development in the Town has created some conflicts between newer residents and surrounding farming operations. Activities that make up the day-to-day operation of a farm—slow farm machinery, farm odors associated with manure, livestock noise—are sometimes considered nuisances by new, non-farming neighbors.

This *Plan* seeks to minimize these types of conflicts in the future through thoughtful land use planning that discourages intensive residential development in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*. Conflicts will inevitably occur in areas where residential and other non-farm development abuts or occurs in planned agricultural areas.

4. Opportunities for Redevelopment

This *Plan* promotes opportunities for community-sensitive redevelopment in appropriate locations and situations. The Town should work with property owners to assure that any soil or groundwater contamination on redevelopment sites is cleaned before development approvals are provided. The primary redevelopment area within the Town is the Interchange Area, where the Town advocates high-quality redevelopment of older properties. There will also be redevelopment areas along the waterfront, as seasonal cottages make way for larger, and often year-round, homes.

C. "Smart Growth" Planning Areas

"Smart Growth Areas", as defined by §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, are "areas that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state, and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs." The Town is required to designate these areas in this *Plan*.

This *Plan* designates the *Existing Residentially Zoned Lands*, *TDR Receiving Areas*, *Commercial/Industrial Mix*, and *Urban Transition* areas shown on Map 6 as "Smart Growth Areas".

In order to subdivide lands within *TDR Receiving Areas*, it will be necessary to purchase development rights from property in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* under the Town's transfer of development rights program, described below. This will result in the permanent protection of agricultural and open space lands, leave large areas open for farming, and concentrate development in areas near areas with existing residential development. This Town-scale clustering of development will help to improve efficiency in the provision of public services. Lands that are currently zoned residential or recreational are not affected by this program.

The primary *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area is designated at the Interchange Area. Here, the Town intends to work with WisDOT to provide public sanitary sewer service. This service will enable the Town to facilitate redevelopment of aging development parcels and promote more compact growth than would otherwise be possible. Development in this area also takes advantage of existing transportation infrastructure and will provide the Town with an enhanced non-farm, non-residential tax base. New development and redevelopment projects will need to occur in accordance with design standards later in this section.

The *Urban Transition Area* is designated near the Village of Poynette. This area is identified for potential development on municipal services over the 20-year planning period, is generally appropriate for a mix of residential uses, and is described in greater detail in the sections that follow.

D. Land Use Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Promote a future land use pattern consistent with the Town's rural, "small-town" character.

2. Objectives

a. Promote a desirable and compatible mix of rural land uses.
b. Plan for a sufficient supply of land to meet Town objectives.
c. Maintain low densities of non-farm development in agricultural areas.
d. Direct new development in and around areas of existing development.
e. Promote high quality design and scale compatibility in new development projects.
f. Minimize the visual impact of new development on the landscape.
g. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.

3. Policies and Programs

a. When making detailed land use decisions, **follow the land use recommendations** mapped and described in this *Comprehensive Plan* (see Maps 6 and 7).
b. Assure that **incompatible land uses are not located close to one another** or require appropriate separation and screening.
c. Promote **grouping and clustering of allowable development sites** to preserve farmland, protect other natural resources, and reduce development visibility.
d. Direct **intensive new development to the mapped *Commercial/Industrial Mix* areas, Poynette,** and other specific areas targeted for development as a way to relieve pressure to develop in the planned *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*.
e. Require use of **standards for building, site, landscape, signage, and lighting design** in new development projects.
f. When **changes in zoning** are proposed that would permit development on a parcel of land, the **Town will require the submittal of a specific development proposal** (comprised of a certi-

fied survey map or plat that depicts the location on the property where the dwelling will be placed, or a detailed site plan in the case of development not requiring a new lot) before recommending County approval of the rezoning. Action of the proposal will be based on the degree to which the proposal fulfills the goals, objectives, and policies of this *Plan*. Once the rezone has been approved, the Town will consider changes to the location of development at the property owner's request, if the changes meet all the original criteria for approval.

The following sections of this chapter provide detailed objectives and policies for the primary planned land use designations on Maps 6 and 7. The policies under each section apply only to the planned land use designation described in that section.

E. Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area (shown on Map 6)

1. Objective

The Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area is shown on Map 6. This planned or future land use designation identifies land intended over the 20 year planning period to be preserved primarily for farming, farmsteads, forestry, open space, and agricultural or forestry support activities, with limited recreational uses, farm family businesses, limited clustered and very large lot (50+ acre) residential development, and small parcel district residential development as described in the "Policies and Programs" section below. Farmers in this area may also be able to sell their development rights through the Town's transfer of development rights (TDR) program. Most lands in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area planned land use designation should be zoned under the appropriate agricultural zoning district, though rezonings may be necessary to accommodate future land uses allowed under this planned land use category.

2. Policies and Programs (For new development within the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area)

a. ***Data Sources and Definitions:*** The records of the Columbia County Register of Deeds should be used as a guide to the land ownership, configuration, and parcel size as of the date of adoption of this *Comprehensive Plan* (May 10, 2005), unless the Town or applicant is able to develop more detailed or more recent legal information on ownership as of that date. The Town has a copy of land ownership records as of the date of adoption of this *Plan*, for the purpose of tracking allowable dwelling units. The following definitions are applicable within this section (Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area) of this *Plan* only. Similar terms may have different definitions in other documents, such as the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code. However, for the purposes of understanding the policies of this *Plan* section, the following definitions shall apply:

- A "lot" is a single piece of land generally occupied or intended to be occupied by not more than one principal building and its accessory buildings and uses, except where not allowed under this section. A new lot may be created through a subdivision plat or certified survey map. No land included in any public street right-of-way, railroad right-of-way, or land under navigable bodies of water shall be included when computing lot area. When creating a new lot, a public street, road, highway, or railroad right-of-way shall be considered to divide one lot from another.

- "Contiguous single ownership" and "parcel" are both defined as all lands under single ownership as of May 10, 2005 that share a common boundary (including lands in mapped Environmental Corridors shown on Map 6). A parcel may contain more than one tax parcel and/or one or more "lot" as defined above. When measuring parcel size, lands to the centerline of undedicated streets are included. A public road, navigable waterway, or connection at only one point should not be considered to break up contiguity.
- "Single ownership" is defined as any combination of contiguous lands singly owned by one individual, jointly owned by a married couple including that individual, or owned by a partnership or corporation in which the individual owns at least a 50% stake as of May 10, 2005. A public road, navigable waterway, or connection at only one point should not be considered to break up contiguity.

b. ***Treatment of Lots of Less Than 35 Acres:*** The Town contains many lots that are less than 35 acres, many within the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area. In order to best preserve the Town's agriculture and rural character, the Town encourages owners of lots of less than 35 acres in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area to transfer any remaining ability to build new dwelling units to owners of land in TDR Receiving Areas, as described later in this chapter. For land owners who elect not to take these options, policies for additional development vary depending on several factors. **The remainder of this subsection describes development policies for such sub-35 acre lots under different circumstances:**

- **No further land division** of such lots shall be permitted, unless the land is redesignated out of the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area through an amendment to this *Comprehensive Plan*.
- Where the lot **already contains one or more dwelling units**, the Town will not allow rezoning or division that would result in the right to build any more dwelling units. Further, such lots may not be used in any calculation of contiguous single ownership for development on contiguous lots or parcels.
- **Where the lot is located within a "Small Parcel District" on Map 6, and is undeveloped** (e.g., no housing unit constructed), and was legally created before May 10, 2005, the Town will support the rezoning of such lot to allow the construction of a **total of one dwelling unit**, subject to execution of the design and placement principles in the "Minimum New Lot Size without Clustering" section below.
- **Where the lot is NOT located within a "Small Parcel District" on Map 6, and is undeveloped** (e.g., no housing unit constructed), and was legally created before May 10, 2005, the Town will support rezoning of lands which result in the development potential on some or all of the lots as laid out in Table 9 below.
- Siting of new homes on lots less than 35 acres in area will be made subject to siting standards described in Section c below, through appropriate changes to Town Ordinances following adoption of this *Plan*.
- When new homes are allowed on lots less than 35 acres per the policies in this subsection, the balance of the contiguous single ownership will be restricted to prevent further housing development.

Table 9: Development Potential on Sub-35 Acre Lots in Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area (Outside of "Small Parcel District" on Map 6)

Total Acreage of Sub-35 Acre Lots in Contiguous Single Ownership	Total Number of Dwelling Units Allowed on All Contiguously Owned Lands	Design standards to be followed*	Conservation easement requirement?
One or more lots less than 35 acres in area	1	Execution of design and placement principles in the "Minimum New Lot Size without Clustering" section below	Yes, no further dwelling units permitted
One or more lots between 35 and 70 acres in area	2	Execution of design and placement principles in the "Minimum New Lot Size without Clustering" section below	Yes, no further dwelling units permitted
One or more lots with a total size of 70 acres in area or greater	Per "Clustering" provisions later in this section	Execution of cluster development siting standards below	Yes, no further development units permitted, or lesser restriction if cluster standards allow additional future homesites

*NOTE: * Also refer to applicable Columbia County design and siting standards.*

c. ***Minimum New Lot Size without Clustering:*** Where the cluster development standards in subsections (b.) through (d.) below and in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code are NOT met, the **minimum size of a newly divided lot in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area created on or after May 10, 2005 shall be 50 acres**. The Town has adopted amendments to its Land Division and Subdivision Code to implement this standard. For example, a 240-acre parcel may be divided into four, 50+ acre parcels, which would result in the ability to construct a total of four new dwelling units (240/50=4.8, truncate to 4). Where 35 to 50 acre lots were legally created before May 10, 2005, new development within the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area will be limited to one dwelling unit on each such lot.

d. ***Standards for Individual Home Siting:*** The Town believes that appropriate placement of new development is important to advance the objective of the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area and the vision and overall goals of this *Comprehensive Plan*. As such, the Town intends to adopt amendments to appropriate Town ordinances to guide the placement of new individual residences and driveways, based on the following principles:

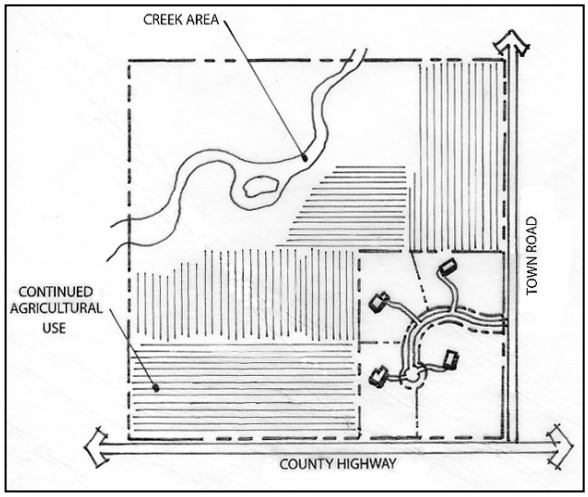
- Direct them towards lower quality soils, as depicted on Map 3.
- Do not place them in Environmental Corridors, and direct them away from Soils with Building Limitations wherever possible. Areas with each of these designations are depicted on Map 6.
- Place them in such a manner to maximize future farming potential and open space preservation on remaining lands; for example, at the edges of farm fields.
- Where practical, screen them from public view via existing vegetation, existing topography, and/or new vegetation.
- For lots of 35 acres or greater, allow no greater than a five acre area within which the property owner may select up to a 20,000 square foot building envelope within which the home may be placed.

- For lots less than 35 acres in area, allow no greater than a 2.5 acre area within which the property owner may select up to a 10,000 square foot building envelope within which the home may be placed.

Please see section f below for standards applicable only to "Cluster" Developments.

It is the applicant's responsibility to learn about and follow additional siting and design standards that may be promulgated by Columbia County.

e. ***Development Opportunities Available Through Clustering:*** Where there are at least 70 acres in contiguous single ownership before division in the mapped Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area, the Town desires to provide an incentive for smaller lots and clustering as a means to preserve farmland, open space, and rural character. The accompanying graphic illustrates this idea. Where the cluster development lot size and siting standards in subsection f below are followed, the maximum number of dwelling units allowed on the lands under contiguous single ownership as of the date of adoption of this *Plan* will be determined through the following calculations and policies:



- Divide the number of gross acres in contiguous single ownership as of the date of adoption of this *Plan* by 50. Multiply that number by 2, and then round up any fractional amount over 0.5. This is the total number of dwelling units that will be allowed, where there are at least 70 acres in contiguous single ownership before division and the cluster development lot size and siting standards subsections (b.) through (d.) below are followed.
- "Clusters" initially may have fewer than the total number of lots calculated above (as few as one lot).
- Because contiguous single ownership lots of 35 acres or less that do not already contain a dwelling unit may be used in the calculation of total contiguous single ownership for the purposes of clustering, such lots shall lose their ability to be treated separately under Subsection b above. In other words, they will be treated similarly to all other lots from which the cluster development has been created under the provisions of this chapter.
- Within cluster developments in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area, the Town will require relatively small lot sizes, in accordance with the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and the zoning classification of lots.

f. ***Cluster Development Design Standards:*** In addition to Land Division and Subdivision Code standards, for cluster developments in the mapped Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area as described under Section e above, regardless of zoning following development, use the following cluster development siting standards:

1. Buildings should be sited to minimize visibility from public roads through proper placement with respect to existing vegetation and topographic changes, retention of existing vegetation and topography, and/or planting of new vegetation or berming. New buildings and driveways should be located adjacent to tree lines where available and at the edge of open fields rather than the middle.

2. Again, for cluster developments within the mapped Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area, buildings or driveways should not be developed on soils classified as Group I or II on Map 3 of this *Plan*, or within a mapped Environmental Corridor on Map 6, unless all soils on the ownership parcel are so classified or unless those maps are demonstrated to contain inaccuracies. In the case of such total restrictions, the Town will work with the property owner to determine the area of the property that if developed would have the least impact on farmland and/or natural areas.
3. Flag lots should be allowed only where advisable to achieve rural character objectives of this *Plan* (e.g., hiding of development). A flag lot is a lot with its widest point set back from the road, and having a thin, long strip ("flagpole") of land connected to the road to provide legal access and frontage.
4. Existing vegetation, stone rows, fence lines, and tree lines should be preserved.
5. New streets or driveways shall be placed along existing contours, property lines, fencerows, lines of existing vegetation, or other natural features wherever possible.

Above: A cul-de-sac can provide access to several homes set back from the roadway. The homes are kept off of the hilltops, and a series of driveways leading off the main road is avoided.

Below: Vegetation and topography can "hide" development.

6. Rooflines of new buildings within the cluster development should not be higher than prominent hill crests or ridgelines. For the purposes of this section, a "prominent hill crest or ridgeline" shall be defined as one that is (a) visible from one or more pre-existing public roads and (b) seen from one or more such public roads as a distinct edge against a backdrop of land or sky.
7. In wooded hillside areas, only enough area for the house, a cleared yard area of no greater than 10,000 square feet, and a driveway should be cut.
8. Where existing vegetation and changes in topography would not adequately screen the development from public roads, and new plantings would be insufficient, consider arranging development sites in a pattern resembling historic farm building placements (e.g., a group of houses set back from the road, tree lined single drive or street, fence rows.)
9. Clusters should be sited in such a manner to minimize the potential for incompatibilities with pre-existing uses on both (a) the remainder of the parcel from which the cluster is divided and (b) adjoining parcels. These include uses such as agriculture, commercial forestry, and other business operations. The Town may require that clusters be set back a minimum distance from such uses, or from particular components of such uses, such as animal confinement or loading areas.
10. Meet additional siting and design standards that may be promulgated by Columbia County.

g. ***Duplexes, Two-flats, and "Granny Flats":*** Duplexes and two-flats will count as two dwelling units for the purpose of the Town's density policy in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area. Accessory apartments or "Granny flats," together with the primary dwelling unit, will count as only one total dwelling unit, provided that the following conditions are met: the "granny flat" is used by a relative of the family occupying the primary dwelling unit, there is a single front entrance to both units, the "granny flat" occupies no more than 1000 square feet and contains no more than one bedroom, and there is an inside connecting door between the two units.

h. ***Farm Residences:*** Any new residence for a landowner or family member earning substantial income from the farm operation shall be considered one dwelling unit for the purposes of this density policy. Farm residences built after December 21, 1977 and on the parcel on the date of adoption of this *Plan* shall also be considered one dwelling unit for the purposes of the Town's density policy.

i. ***Commercial and Industrial Uses*:** New commercial and industrial uses in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area are not permitted, except for mineral extraction sites, wireless telecommunication facilities, and agricultural-related uses that may be allowed under applicable zoning rules and standards later in this section.

j. ***Effect of Land Sales:*** Changes and reconfigurations in ownership do not trigger new allotments of potential future dwelling units per the density policy. When land is sold or consolidated after the adoption date of this *Plan*, the Town will use the following approaches in the order listed to determine how many (if any) potential future dwelling units were transferred along with the land:

   - The Town encourages property owners to make clear in sales contracts how many potential future dwelling units (if any) are being transferred along with the land. The Town will use such a sales contract or similar document when considering the application.
   - In the absence of a clearly understood sales contract or similar document, the Town will attempt to learn from all affected property owners the intent (in writing). That written intent statement or affidavit should then be recorded against the deeds to all affected properties.
   - In the absence of a clearly understood sales contract or statement of intent, the Town Board will attempt to make a determination based on the best available evidence.

k. ***Number of Dwelling Units Remaining:*** Any time a rezoning or division of land is approved which will result in the ability to construct new dwelling units, the Town intends, as part of the approval, to require that a restriction be added to the deed of the original contiguous single ownership parcel indicating the number of dwelling units permitted on the parcel under then-current adopted Town policies. All such deed restrictions shall be subject to removal or alteration only if approved by the Town Board, and potentially the County, in light of a relevant change to this *Comprehensive Plan*. The Town has included provisions in the Land Division and Subdivision Code that specifically authorize the Town to limit future overall density through deed restrictions.

l. ***New Subdivisions:*** Allow the establishment of new subdivisions (five or more lots within a five-year period) within the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area only when appropriate to carry out the Town's cluster development standards in subsections d and e, and only after this *Comprehensive Plan* is amended per the procedures in the Implementation Chapter.

m. Consider conditional use permit applications through the County for **non-metallic mineral extraction sites** provided that:

   1. The extraction site and any associated buildings are not located on Group I or II soils, as shown on Map 3, AND
   2. The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be substantially detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare, AND

3. The uses, values and enjoyment of other property in the neighborhood for purposes already permitted shall be in no foreseeable manner substantially impaired or diminished by establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use, AND
4. The establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the area, AND
5. The land will be restored according to a nonmetallic mining reclamation plan complying with the Columbia County zoning ordinance.

n. Consider applications for **wireless telecommunication facilities** (e.g. cell towers) using the following standards:
   1. The wireless telecommunication facility and any associated buildings are not located on soils within Group I or II soils, as shown on Map 3.
   2. The petitioner shall submit directly to the Town copies of all project descriptions, site plans, and engineering reports required by the County Planning and Development Department. A pre-application meeting with the Town is recommended before petitioner contacts the County.
   3. The petitioner shall submit all necessary authorizations or proofs of "no hazard" from the FAA and/or the State Bureau of Aeronautics.
   4. The Town does not intend to take action on the rezoning or conditional use permit until it receives and reviews the results of a requested technical analysis.
   5. The Town supports co-location of multiple antennas on a single tower and the use of alternative support structures such as silos, light poles, billboards, electrical poles, and other tall structures in locations that are favorable to preserving the Town's rural character.
   6. Facility locations that maximize the screening of the tower structure through topography or vegetation are preferred. All support equipment and the base of the tower shall be fully screened from adjacent properties and public roads, including the interstate with fencing or evergreen vegetation.

F. Single Family Residential (as shown on Map 6)

1. Objective

The Single Family Residential planned land use designation is established and mapped on Map 6 to identify certain lands for single-family detached residential development, generally on lots served by on-site waste treatment systems, with minimum lot size depending on zoning classification. Subdivisions are allowed in areas shown in this designation. The Town intends to allow predominately residential development on those properties, in accordance with their current zoning, and without requiring the transfer of development rights. Lands shown on Map 6 within this planned land use designation were zoned either "Single Family Residential" or "Recreational" under the County zoning ordinance and zoning map in place at time of *Plan* adoption or amendment.

2. Policies and Programs

a. **Require a minimum lot size** for all new lots proposed as building sites in accordance with the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and the zoning classification of lots. Lots for residential building sites of **over five acres each are discouraged.**

b. Consider the following **types of uses as generally appropriate** on Single Family Residential designated lands (implemented through County action):
   1. Single family residences;
   2. Institutional uses, such as churches and the Town Hall;
   3. Recreational uses, such as parks, walking trails and campgrounds;

4. Waterfront businesses, such as small retail shops and restaurants, scaled and massed in a manner that is consistent with existing homes and businesses. Heavier commercial uses that are not related to serving waterfront activities should be directed to areas of the Town that are better suited for those uses, except that the Dekorra Village area in Sections 5 and 6 of Town 11N, Range 9E may accommodate a broader mix of uses.

c. **Do not allow development within the Environmental Corridor** shown on Map 6, unless more detailed investigations suggest that the land does not actually contain the conditions which lead to its mapping as Environmental Corridor. Development is also discouraged in areas with soils with severe limitations for on-site solid waste disposal, as shown on Map 8; soils with building limitations, as shown on Map 6; and areas with slopes between 12 and 20 percent and over 20 percent as shown in Map 4 shall be restricted per the regulations in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Code.

d. Standards for submittal of plats, supporting documents, and environmental assessment are included in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Code.

e. All land divisions within this planned land use designation must meet applicable design standards in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and should be **designed in accordance with the following general principles:**

1. Design and layout should not impede the orderly future development of the surronding area or future utility extensions.
2. Buildings should be sited to minimize visibility from pre-existing public roads through techniques like proper placement with respect to existing vegetation and topographic changes, retention of existing vegetation and topography, distance from such pre-existing public roads, and/or planting of new vegetation or berming.
3. Buildings, roads, or driveways should not be developed within sensitive environmental areas, as described elsewhere in this *Comprehensive Plan* and in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code.
4. Existing contours, vegetation, stone rows, fence lines, and tree lines should be preserved wherever possible.
5. New streets or driveways should be placed along existing contours, property lines, fencerows, lines of existing vegetation, or other natural features wherever possible.
6. Natural areas—such as clusters of mature trees and wetlands—should be preserved and integrated into the subdivision design as aesthetic, conservation, and recreational land use elements. For example, in wooded hillside areas, only enough area for the house, a cleared yard area of no greater than 10,000 square feet, and a driveway should be cut.
7. Preservation of common open space, and access to and through such open spaces, should be emphasized.
8. Building lots should be sited in such a manner to minimize the potential for incompatibilities with pre-existing land uses on adjoining parcels. These include uses such as agriculture, commercial forestry, and other business operations.

G. TDR Receiving Areas (as shown on Map 6)

1. Objective

TDR Receiving Areas are established and mapped on Map 6 to identify certain lands for single-family detached residential development, in order to carry out a market-driven approach to direct development potential to areas most appropriate for development and away from large expanses of open space and agricultural land. The Town has identified these areas as appropriate "receiving areas" for the Town's transfer of development rights (TDR) program, described in greater detail below. Note

that parts of some of these designated TDR Receiving Areas may not be appropriate for development, given slope and other environmental limitations.

2. Policies and Programs

a. **Require a minimum lot size** for all new lots proposed as building sites in the TDR Receiving Area in accordance with the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and the zoning classifications of the lots. Lots for residential building sites of **over five acres each are discouraged**.

b. Consider the following **types of uses as generally appropriate** within the TDR Receiving Area (implemented through County action):

1. Single family residences,
2. Institutional uses, such as churches and the Town Hall,
3. Recreational uses, such as parks, walking trails and campgrounds.
4. Waterfront businesses, such as small retail shops and restaurants, scaled and massed in a manner that is consistent with existing homes and businesses. Transfer of development rights are not required for such uses. Heavier commercial uses that are not related to serving waterfront activities should be directed to areas of the Town that are better suited for those uses, except that the Dekorra Village area in Sections 5 and 6 of Town 11N, Range 9E may accommodate a broader mix of uses.

c. If a property owner in a mapped TDR Receiving Area elects not to participate in the Town's TDR program as described in this section of the *Plan*, but still wishes to develop his or her land, all policies normally applicable within the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area (Section E of this chapter) shall apply, except that the clustering development option shall not be available. In the event that the current or subsequent owner of such a parcel(s) later decides to participate in the TDR program, the number of lots normally possible under such program shall be reduced by the number of homes created from the time the parcel was first designated as a TDR Receiving Area.

d. Through this section and the Town Land Division and Subdivision Code, the Town hereby establishes a **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program.** The TDR program requires developers of land in designated TDR Receiving Areas to financially contribute to the conservation of land in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area (i.e. TDR Sending Areas) as part of the Town's overall farmland preservation, rural character protection, and growth management strategy.

When reviewing subdivision plats or certified survey maps (CSMs) that would create new lots within the TDR Receiving Areas, where the number of lots being proposed is above what a 1 dwelling unit per 50 acre standard would otherwise allow, the Town will require the developer to contribute to the permanent conservation of land within the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area by the **developer acquiring a conservation easement(s) directly from a willing land owner(s) in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area**. A conservation easement is a legal agreement to permanently limit the use of the land to farming and open space uses only (i.e., no non-farm development), and the process to apply a conservation easement is established in the Town Land Division and Subdivision Code. More specifically:

1. **The developer of lands within the TDR Receiving Area will be required to acquire and transfer development rights from 50 acres of land (i.e., reduce the amount of potential building in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area by at least one dwelling unit) in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area for every 7 new lots** intended for new home construction within the mapped TDR Receiving Area. The exact number of new lots that may be constructed shall be calculated by dividing the total gross land area within Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area on Map 6 to be preserved (not including lands mapped as Environmental Corridor) by 50, then multiply by 7,

then round up where the fractional amount is 0.5 or greater to achieve the number of residential lots for the TDR Receiving Area. For example, if 23 lots are proposed to be created through a subdivision plat on lands mapped in a TDR Receiving Area on Map 6, the developer will need to acquire a conservation easement over at least 164 acres of land from a land owner in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area.

2. **The parcel(s) in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area from which development rights are transferred (i.e., TDR Sending Area) must meet the following criteria:**
   i. The parcel(s) must have at least the required number of unused development rights to transfer under the Town's density and other policies in this *Plan*, as determined by the Town. The Town intends to update Map 6, without requiring an amendment to this *Comprehensive Plan*, to identify those TDR Sending Area parcels where all available development rights have been transferred.
   ii. Development rights from more than one parcel in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area may be transferred to a single TDR **Receiving** Area. The combined parcel area of the TDR **Sending** Area must be at least 50 acres, with at least one of the parcels that make up this total being at least 40 acres.
3. **Prior to Town signing of the certified survey map or plat to record the land division or subdivision, the Town will require that the developer record a conservation easement on the appropriate amount land in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area (i.e., TDR Sending Area).** The Town shall approve the format and language of the conservation easement prior to recording, and the amount of future land conserved and/or development rights removed. The Town shall be designated as a holder of the conservation easement. The Town may specify that the conservation easement cover the entire parcel in contiguous single ownership within the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area as of the date of adoption of this *Plan*, indicating the total amount of non-farm development that will be allowed after the transfer, per the Town's density policy. The terms "parcel" and "contiguous single ownership" are as defined in section E above.

e. TDR sending and receiving areas may not be located on contiguous lands under the same ownership.

f. **Do not allow development within the Environmental Corridor** shown on Map 6, unless more detailed investigations suggest that the land does not actually contain the conditions which lead to its mapping as Environmental Corridor. Development is also discouraged in areas with soils with severe limitations for on-site solid waste disposal, as shown on Map 8; soils with building limitations, as shown on Map 6; and areas with slopes between 12 and 20 percent and over 20 percent as shown in Map 4 shall be restricted per the regulations in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Codes.

g. Standards for submittal of plats, supporting documents, and environmental assessment are included in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Code.

h. All land divisions within this planned land use designation must meet applicable design standards in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code, and should be **designed in accordance with the following general principles:**
   1. Design and layout should not impede the orderly future development of the surronding area or future utility extensions.
   2. Buildings should be sited to minimize visibility from pre-existing public roads through techniques like proper placement with respect to existing vegetation and topographic changes, retention of existing vegetation and topography, distance from such pre-existing public roads, and/or planting of new vegetation or berming.

3. Buildings, roads, or driveways should not be developed within sensitive environmental areas, as described elsewhere in this *Comprehensive Plan* and in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code.
4. Existing contours, vegetation, stone rows, fence lines, and tree lines should be preserved wherever possible.
5. New streets or driveways should be placed along existing contours, property lines, fencerows, lines of existing vegetation, or other natural features wherever possible.
6. Natural areas—such as clusters of mature trees and wetlands—should be preserved and integrated into the subdivision design as aesthetic, conservation, and recreational land use elements. For example, in wooded hillside areas, only enough area for the house, a cleared yard area of no greater than 10,000 square feet, and a driveway should be cut.
7. Preservation of common open space, and access to and through such open spaces, should be emphasized.
8. Building lots should be sited in such a manner to minimize the potential for incompatibilities with pre-existing land uses on adjoining parcels. These include uses such as agriculture, commercial forestry, and other business operations.

i. Through future amendments to this *Comprehensive Plan*, the **Town may designate additional TDR Receiving Areas**. The Town will utilize the following criteria in deciding when, where and how to designate such areas:

1. The effectiveness of previous TDR developments in achieving the vision and overall goals of this *Plan* (see Chapter Two).
2. The anticipated effect of designating the additional TDR Receiving Area on the Town's achievement of its desired future population and housing unit growth projections (see Chapters Two and Seven).
3. The environmental conditions of the property which affect its suitability for development, including the presence or absence of steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, and soil suitability for on-site waste treatment systems.
4. The suitability of land for continued agricultural use as a viable economic alternative to designating such land as a TDR Receiving Area (see Chapter Three).
5. The location of the property in its surrounding context, with an emphasis placed on designating new TDR Receiving Areas within or adjacent to lands with substantial pre-existing subdivision development.
6. The capacity of nearby existing roadways to safely handle increased traffic volumes associated with the future development of the potential TDR Sending Area.
7. The likelihood that sanitary sewer service may become available to the potential TDR Receiving Area in a timeframe that relates to the expected development timing.
8. The interest of the affected and neighboring property owners in the TDR Receiving Area designation, as vocalized through the public review process associated with the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* amendment.

H. Commercial/Industrial Mix Area: Interchange Area

1. Interchange Area Objective

The land surrounding the Interchange of the Interstate 90-94-39 and County Highway CS is identified as one area for future "mixed use" development—almost entirely commercial and industrial development. The realization of this *Plan* hinges in large part on the decision to bring public sanitary sewer service to this area. The *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area largely coincides with the Utility District but also suggests potential future expansion areas for the Utility District. In general, the Town is

seeking high-quality new development and redevelopment in this area that will provide tax base, jobs, and serve as a growth opportunity and enhance the Town's image.

The 400+ acre *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area shown on Map 6 roughly encompasses a radius of 1-mile from the interchange. The area is bounded on the north, east, and west by environmental corridors and steep slopes and to the south by a prominent ridge line. These boundaries are also logical sewer service boundaries. Map 7 is a conceptual development plan that advises, in greater detail, future land uses and transportation improvements in this Commercial/Industrial Mix area. Future development proposals should be consistent with this *Plan* and the desired image and standards that follow.

The Town Board has adopted a site plan review ordinance affecting new commercial and industrial development throughout the Town, and detailed design guidelines for future development of the Interchange Area which go beyond the recommendations on the following pages. These are the "Interchange Area Design Guidelines," adopted by the Town Board on May 10, 2005.

2. Interchange Area: Gateway Identification/Development Character

The Interchange Area is a "gateway" to Dekorra, the Poynette area, and Lake Wisconsin. Both communities should work together to develop joint entryway and directional signage that advertise the Dekorra-Poynette-Lake Wisconsin area to visitors. Possible locations for signs might be at the Interstate entrance/exit ramps to direct visitors to the "Old Dekorra" village and other waterfront areas. These locations are shown on Map 7.

Much of the Interstate 90-94-39 corridor is currently lined with continuous stands of trees. These trees help define the character for both residents and visitors. In addition to aesthetic importance, these trees help moderate the effects of wind and snow drifting, screen against noise, act to stabilize soil, reduce erosion and run-off, and provide for habitat for birds and animals. The Town should consider steps to ensure that these trees are preserved along the corridor as new development occurs. The Town should also work with the County to limit the placement of billboards and other large signs along this corridor.

In addition, new landscaping should be required in all new development projects in the Interchange Area. Landscaping should be encouraged around building foundations, in and around paved areas, around areas where screening is appropriate, and in a buffer between the building and the highway. Landscaping materials should be of adequate size to ensure both a high degree of survivability and immediate visual effectiveness. The Town's site plan review ordinance and Interchange Area Design Guidelines cover desired landscaping in greater detail.

Map 7: Interchange Area Conceptual Development Plan

3. Interchange Area: Transportation Access

Numerous private access points can result in more congestion and more traffic-related conflicts along the corridor. Limiting the number of and ensuring adequate spacing between access points can help to control the type and pace of new development. Shared access drives and local access roads are promoted.

Map 7 shows two main proposed development pockets that would be served by an interconnected road network with a minimal number of access points from the County highways. The conceptual new road network is designed to provide access to individual businesses, whereas Highway CS is used primarily to provide access to and from the Interstate, Poynette, and waterfront areas. This arrangement will serve both the goals of avoiding congestion and safety hazards on Highway CS, and maximizing the number of businesses to the Interchange Area by using the full depth of properties.

4. Interchange Area: Planned Business

The Planned Business areas shown on Map 7 are designed to promote high-quality indoor retail, commercial service, office, and institutional land uses with landscaping, lighting, and signage, complying with the design standards described below and in the Town's detailed Interchange Area Design Guidelines. Generally, Planned Business area uses should be directed to those areas in closest proximity to the interchange. Rezoning of certain areas from their present zoning is advised, such as those lands presently zoned Recreational.

The Town will require that all proposed commercial projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, landscape plan, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan and signage plan prior to development approval. The following design review standards should be used for all commercial development projects, which are provided in additional detail in the separate Interchange Area Design Guidelines document:

a. High-quality signage based on the area of building frontage, road frontage, or façade area should be required. The use of monument signs should be encouraged instead of pole signs. The Town should also work with the County on a billboard control ordinance.

b. Existing vegetation should be retained, especially west of the Interchange in heavily wooded areas. Landscaping treatment of buffer yards, street frontages, paved areas and building foundations should be provided. Landscaping materials should be of adequate size to ensure both a high degree of survivability and immediate visual effectiveness.

Monument type signage is encouraged

c. Intensive activity areas such as service and loading areas, parking lots, and trash receptacle storage areas should be screened and oriented away from less intensive land uses.

d. Loading docks, dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and outdoor storage areas should be located behind buildings and complete screening of these facilities should be promoted through the use of landscaping, walls, and architectural features.

e. Parking lots should be landscaped with perimeter landscaping and/or landscaped islands, along with screening (hedges, berms, trees, and decorative walls) to buffer views from public roads, improve appearance, and help with stormwater management.

f. Parking should be to the sides and rear of buildings wherever possible, rather than having all parking in the front.

g. Interconnected walkways, parking lots and driveways between sites should be provided to facilitate on-site and cross-site circulation.

h. Illumination from lighting should be kept on-site through the use of cut-off, shoebox fixtures.

i. High-quality building materials, colors, and designs that reflect the Town's desired image should be required. For example, building materials, colors, and designs could reflect agricultural heritage of the community (e.g., stone, gabled roofs, earth tones).

Parking lots should be landscaped and provide safe pedestrian access to building entrances.

j. Canopies, awnings, trellises, bays, windows and/ or other architectural details should be incorporated to add visual interest to facades.

k. Variations in building height and roof lines are desirable, particularly on larger buildings.

5. Interchange Area: Planned Industrial

The Planned Industrial areas shown on Map 7 are designed to promote high-quality indoor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office uses with generous landscaping, screened storage areas, modest lighting, and limited signage, complying with detailed design standards described below. Generally, Planned Industrial area uses should be directed to those areas beyond the Planned Business areas and within 1-mile of the interchange. Rezoning of certain areas from their present zoning is advised, such as from Recreational to Highway Interchange.

The Town will require that all proposed industrial projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, landscape plan, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan and signage plan prior to development approval. The following design review standards should be used for all industrial development projects in the Planned Industrial areas, which are provided in additional detailed in the Interchange Area Design Guidelines document:

a. In situations where planned industrial use areas are close to residential uses, screening should be provided. Hedges, evergreen trees, berms, decorative fences, retaining existing landscaping and vegetation or a combination of these screening elements should be used to satisfy this requirement.

b. Long, monotonous industrial building facades should be avoided by varying building setbacks and placing vegetation in strategic locations along foundations.

c. Parking lots for industrial uses should be screened from the view of public right of ways and non-industrial uses. Large parking lots (e.g., employee parking areas or truck parking areas) should not be located between the building and the public right of way. Smaller parking lots (e.g., visitor parking lots) may be located in front of the building. However, such parking lots should be screened from public rights-of-way and non-industrial uses.

d. Industrial projects should be designed so that vehicles serving the site are able to move from one area of the site to another without re-entering a public street.

e. Public streets should not be used for parking trucks associated with the operation of industrial facilities. Truck loading and staging activities should not be allowed within public streets.

f. Loading areas for industrial uses should be located at the rear of buildings and should be screened from the view of public rights-of-way and adjacent non-industrial uses.

g. All outdoor storage areas should be screened from public view using berms, hedges, decorative walls, or decorative fences. The height of such screens will be determined by the height of the material being screened. Outdoor storage of materials or products will only be allowed as a conditional use.

h. All mechanical equipment (e.g., air conditioners, ventilation equipment, etc.) should be screened from public view. This includes rooftop equipment and equipment on the ground.

i. The following design elements should not be allowed in new industrial buildings:
   1. Large, blank, unarticulated wall surfaces.
   2. Un-landscaped chain-linked fences and barbed wire.
   3. Non-architectural façade materials such as untreated exterior cement block walls and metal siding with exposed fasteners.
   4. Pole-barn type buildings.

I. Commercial/Industrial Mix: Highways 51/J/V Area (on Map 6)

1. Objective

The second Commercial/Industrial Mix area is established and mapped on Map 6 to identify a limited area near the north edge of the Town for indoor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, office, and commercial uses, with outdoor storage areas and moderate attention to building design, landscaping, and signage. This mapped Commercial/Industrial Mix area is focused around a few existing similar uses near the intersections of Highways 51, J, and the railroad tracks. Its size would be limited by Environmental Corridors in the vicinity. Special attention will be needed to protect the integrity of the natural resources in the area.

2. Policies and Programs

a. Require a minimum lot size for all new lots proposed as building sites in accordance with the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and the zoning classification of the lots.

b. Do not allow development within the Environmental Corridor. Development is also discouraged in areas with soils with severe limitations for on-site solid waste disposal, as shown on Map 8; soils with building limitations, as shown on Map 6; and in areas with slopes between 12-20 percent and over 20 percent as shown in Map 4. Developers shall submit detailed maps showing these features when applicable to a certain development area.

c. Before the rezoning of lands for development, require the property owner or developer to submit a plan showing environmentally sensitive areas that should not be developed, including:
   1. Wetlands based on a field survey conducted by a qualified professional
   2. Stream banks
   3. Shoreline setback areas
   4. Floodplains
   5. Hydric soils (formed under wet conditions—many formerly wetlands)
   6. Soils with severe limitations for on-site waste treatment systems (see Map 8)
   7. Soils with low or very low potential for dwellings with basements
   8. Steep slopes (show 12-20% and 20%+)

d. **Attempt to follow the site and building planning and design standards** for the Commercial/Industrial Mix: Interchange Area in Section H above.

e. Consider preparation of a **detailed development plan** for the Commercial/Industrial Mix: Highways 51/J/V Area.

J. Environmental Corridors & Soils with Building Limitations (on Map 6)

1. Objective

Environmental Corridors are established to identify and protect generally continuous environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, floodplains, and undeveloped shoreland setback areas. They are intended for long-term open space, wildlife habitat, stormwater management, natural areas, and or trails uses. The "Soils with Building Limitations" area is mapped as an overlay designation on Map 6. This category includes slopes greater than 20 percent and hydric soils not in mapped wetlands, per the Columbia County soil survey. The Town also wishes to preserve slopes of 12 percent to 20 percent to the extent practical.

2. Policies and Programs

a. Where development is proposed, determine the **exact boundaries of the Environmental Corridor or Soils with Building Limitations based on the features that define those areas**. These lands may be considered for more intensive uses if (1) more detailed information or studies reveal that the characteristic(s) that resulted in their designation as Environmental Corridors or Soils with Building Limitations is not actually present, (2) approvals from appropriate agencies are granted to alter a property so that the characteristic that resulted in its designation will no longer exist, or (3) a mapping error has been identified and confirmed by the Town.

b. Where land included in the Environmental Corridors and Soils with Building Limitations area are adjacent to land in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area, such land **shall count toward calculating the number of dwelling units** allowed on the overall parcel, per the Town's density policy in section E above, even though building development should not occur in the Environmental Corridor.

c. **Prohibit building development** in Environmental Corridors, and strongly discourage building development on Soils with Building Limitations. Under the Town's TDR program, development rights may not be transferred away from Environmental Corridors, but they may be transferred away from lands under the Soils with Building Limitations overlay if that land is also within the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area.

d. **Permit cropping and grazing** with Soils with Building Limitations and Environmental Corridors where compatible with natural resource protection and farmland preservation.

K. Urban Transition Area (as shown on Map 6)

1. Objective

The Urban Transition Area is established and mapped on Map 7 over lands within the Village of Poynette, where the Village has land use decision making authority. The Urban Transition Area is also mapped over certain lands in close proximity to the Village limits within the Town, based on 20-year growth projections. These lands should either (a) be preserved in the near term as mainly agriculture and open space uses, with development densities no greater than one lot per 35 acres (consistent with the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*), or (b) be developed more intensively within the next 20 years, if desired by the respective property owners, if provided with public sewer and water services, and if consistent with the recommended intergovernmental agreement between the Village and the Town (see Chapter Nine). The boundaries of the Urban Transition Area may be altered as a result of this recommended agreement.

2. Policies and Programs

a. **Limit new development in accordance with all policies applicable to the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area (see section E above),** until such time when the Town and Village agree that particular mapped area is appropriate for more intensive development with public

sewer and water service. The Urban Transition Area may be an appropriate additional "receiving area" for the Town's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, if the Village agrees.

b. Require all permitted non-farm development projects be designed **not to impede the orderly future development** of the surrounding area with more intensive development with public sewer and water service in the future.

c. Negotiate with Poynette on an **intergovernmental agreement** to further determine the type, timing, jurisdiction, services, and other aspects of future development within portions of the Urban Transition District presently in the Town. Chapter Nine contains more detailed guidance on the recommended agreement.

CHAPTER FIVE: TRANSPORTATION

This chapter includes a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and programs to guide future transportation in Dekorra. The chapter also compares the Town's transportation policies and programs to state and regional transportation plans.

A. Existing Transportation Network

Access is a key determinant of growth. Dekorra is very well connected to the region through the existing roadway network. Other transportation facilities, such as freight rail, are located in or easily available to the Town.

1. Roadways

Interstate 39/90/94 runs north-south through Dekorra. It enters the town two miles west of Poynette, and exits when crossing the Wisconsin River. There is one interstate interchange in Dekorra, located where Interstate 39/90/94 intersects County Trunk Highway (CTH) CS. CTH CS runs east into Poynette and west to the developed residential areas on Lake Wisconsin. U.S. Highway (USH) 51 runs somewhat parallel to the Interstate, three to four miles east. State and county highways in Dekorra make up the community's arterial and collector road network.

Traffic within the Town has grown steadily. The greatest growth of traffic has been on the Interstate. Between 1996 and 2000 traffic volumes on 39/90/94 increased by 40%. Measured at a point just south of the CTH CS interchange, traffic rose from 41,500 vehicles per day to 68,400 vehicles per day. Traffic on USH 51 grew 31% between 1994 and 2000. Traffic on County highways in the Town also grew steadily, with an average growth of 15% between 1994 and 2000. Traffic on local roads has also grown. Tipperary Road west of CTH V handled 27% more traffic in 2000 than in 1994.

There are currently no plans to expand or rework any of the County roads within the Town beyond routine maintenance. Poynette has expressed interest in rerouting CTH CS on a new road through the southern edge of the Village.

Town roads generally serve as local roads in the system. The Town maintains a five-year road maintenance program. Between 2003 and 2007, resurfacing work is planned for Voss Road, Phillips Road, Wildwood Way, Drake Road, Stebbins Road, East Street (shared expense with Poynette), St. Lawrence Bluff, Dunning Road, Bohling Road, South Stebbins Road, Ernie Road, Thompson Road, and Tipperary Road. Normal maintenance, such as crack filling and sealcoating, is anticipated as needed. Details regarding work on specific roads can be obtained by contacting the Town Clerk.

2. Airports

There are no airports located in Dekorra. There are two landing strips in the Town, one located just south of Bilkie Road, and one just east of Stebbins Road. Larger air carrier and passenger facilities are located approximately 30 miles to the south in Madison at the Dane County Regional Airport. Small passenger and freight service is available north of Dekorra at Portage Municipal Airport.

3. Rail

A line of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad operates north-south through Dekorra, running through Poynette to the south and Portage to the north. It runs west of and roughly parallel to USH 51. This placement provides opportunities for industries that may require boat, rail and highway access.

4. Bicycles and Walking

WisDOT has recommended several cycling routes through Dekorra. The routes are located mostly along County and Town roads. The routes include CTH V along Lake Wisconsin and the Wisconsin River and CTH J from Lake Columbia south to CTH CS. The recommended bike routes have good access to the Ice Age Trail, a designated National Scenic Trail. Portions of the Ice Age Trail can be found in Lodi, to the south, and Portage, to the north. Many lightly traveled Town roads are in good

condition for bicycling. In general, the rolling, winding roads through Dekorra provide amazing cycling options.

There are few sidewalks in Dekorra. Lesser-traveled roads, such as those in residential subdivisions, provide the main opportunities for safe walking. Sidewalks or paths should be considered in future planned development areas, particularly within utility and sanitary districts where development density and traffic is high (such as the Interchange Area shown on Map 7). This *Plan* also advises developing a hiking and/or bicycle path in the Rowan Creek corridor.

5. Snowmobile Trails

Segments of the Columbia County snowmobile trail system are located in Dekorra. One trail runs east of Poynette and just west of the MacKenzie Center. It connects the Village of Arlington in the south and splits north of the MacKenzie Center to connect to both Portage and Rio. Another segment is located in the northeast corner of the Town, skirting a portion of the Rocky Run Creek Fishery on its way to Portage.

6. Transit and Specialized Transportation Services

There is no public transit system in Dekorra. Columbia County Department of Health and Human Services provides transportation for elderly residents through a volunteer driver service and a County ride service. This service can take residents to medical appointments, grocery shopping, nutrition sites, or other personal business. The County can also help put residents in touch with private service providers who will help with transportation.

7. Trucking

The federal, state, and county highway and interstate network through the Town accommodates truck traffic. There are rest areas along the Interstate within the Town. WisDOT is planning upgrades to the rest areas within the next five years, including working with the Town on providing public sewer services. Water transportation is limited to recreational boating on the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin.

B. Review of State and Regional Transportation Plans

This section reviews state and regional transportation plans relevant to Dekorra. This *Comprehensive Plan* is consistent with these transportation plans, so they are incorporated by reference. Dekorra is not within the jurisdiction of a regional planning commission or metropolitan planning organization.

1. Columbia County Land Use and Transportation Plans

Columbia County's *Land Use Plan* was created in 1970. The County does not currently have a transportation plan. At the time of writing, the County was preparing to update these plans as part of a comprehensive plan. The County maintains a transportation improvement program that lists potential projects, prioritized annually. At the time of writing, there were no major improvements or resurfacing projects planned for County highways within the Town.

2. Wisconsin State Highway Plan

The *Wisconsin State Highway Plan* focuses on the 11,800 miles of State Trunk Highways in Wisconsin. The *Plan* does not identify specific construction projects, but rather broad strategies and policies to improve the highway system over the next 20 years. Given its focus, the *Plan* does not identify improvement needs in Dekorra.

3. Translinks 21: A Multimodal Transportation Plan for Wisconsin's 21st Century

Translinks 21: A Multimodal Transportation Plan for Wisconsin's 21st Century provides a broad planning "umbrella," including overall goals for transportation for the next 25 years. This 1995 *Plan* advises

construction of the Corridors 2020 "backbone" network by 2005 (includes the Interstate in Dekorra), the creation of a new state grant program to help local governments prepare corridor management plans to deal effectively with growth, the provision of funding to assist small communities in providing transportation services to elderly and disabled persons, and the development of a detailed assessment of local road investment needs.

4. Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

The *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* presents a blueprint for improving conditions for bicycling, clarifies the WisDOT's role in bicycle transportation, and establishes policies for further integrating bicycling into the current transportation system. The plan map shows existing state trails and future "priority corridors and key linkages" for bicycling along the highway system. In 2001, the State also adopted a pedestrian policy plan.

5. Wisconsin Department of Transportation District 1 Plans

The WisDOT District 1 office maintains a program for state highways within the District. There are currently no plans for major improvements or resurfacing of state highways within the Town. The District desires to maintain contact with communities within which state or federal highways run, and encourages the Town to work with them when any changes in land use occur that could affect the functioning of the highways. This will be particularly important for any new development proposed along USH 51. Aside from the *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area near CTH J, the Town plans little development near Highway 51 (see Map 6).

C. Transportation Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

1. Goal

Provide a safe, efficient, multi-modal transportation system that meets the needs of multiple users and minimizes impacts on landowners and farming.

2. Objectives

a. Maintain and require an interconnected road and highway network.

b. Coordinate transportation with land use, especially near the interchange and USH 51.

c. Support biking, walking, transportation facilities and services for the transit-dependent and disabled, freight rail transport, trucking, water transport, transit, nearby air service, and other alternative modes of transportation.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Work with WisDOT to plan for a **future park and ride lot** at the interchange of the Interstate and Highway CS (see Map 7).

b. Work with WisDOT and the Columbia County Highway Department on an **access control plan** for the Commercial/Industrial Mix area near the interchange.

c. Explore how access to the functioning **rail line might be used to promote industrial development** in limited planned areas near Highway 51, as shown on Map 6.

d. **Cooperate with the Village of Poynette, WisDOT, and the Columbia County Highway Department** to explore the extension of Highway CS to link up with Highway 51 near the southern border of the Village. Currently, truck traffic and other motorists trying to reach the Interstate must move through the Village or use Town roads north of the Village to get from Highway 51 to Interstate 39.

e. Continue to **update and implement a Town Road Improvement Program** to provide for upgrading of Town roads and seek funding.

f. **Upgrade existing Town roads** to current standards to the extent practical when repaving those roads, **but do not over-design those roads** beyond rural standards.

g. **Discourage use of Town roads for through traffic** by considering techniques such as signage, speed zones and weight limits.

h. Support access control and rural character objectives by **discouraging "side of the road" development** on main roadways.

i. Require **new roads to meet the design and layout standards** in Town ordinances.

j. Promote **joint driveways** to achieve public safety and rural character goals.

k. **Accommodate bicycle traffic** on less traveled town roads, and pedestrian traffic in the Commercial/Industrial Mix areas on Map 6 and other intensively developed areas.

l. Support **additional transportation options** for those without access to an automobile, including the elderly, disabled and children.

CHAPTER SIX: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This chapter of the *Plan* contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide future utilities and community facilities in Dekorra.

A. Existing Utilities and Community Facilities

1. Water Supply

Dekorra is not presently served by municipal water service; residents receive their water via private wells. Poynette provides municipal water services to residents within the corporate limits of the Village. The Town does not anticipate providing municipal water service over the 20-year planning period, except perhaps in the new Utility District. Areas shown as being within the Urban Transition Area shown on Map 6 may be provided with municipal water service when development is imminent.

2. Sanitary Sewer Facilities

There are two sanitary districts in Dekorra, both along Lake Wisconsin. District One serves the area north and west of CTH V, and District Two serves the area on either side of CTH CS (see Map 8). However, there is no sanitary sewer service provided or contemplated in these districts at the present time.

The Town's new Utility District near the Interchange is designed to facilitate sanitary sewer service to existing and planned land uses in this area. The Town has worked with WisDOT and WisDNR on the construction of a sewage treatment plant west of the rest areas and force sewer mains from the rest areas to the Utility District/Interchange Area.

Construction of the new sanitary sewer facilities was completed in 2006. The system has adequate capacity to serve the 20-year needs of the rest areas, plus future growth in the Utility District/Interchange Area. Modules could be added in the future to accommodate additional development as needed.

3. On-Site Water Treatment Systems

All development in the Town currently utilizes individual on-site wastewater treatment systems, often referred to as septic systems, which generally discharge the wastewater to underground drainage fields. Many of the Town's existing systems were installed prior to 1970, when standards for on-site systems began to be upgraded.

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce (COMM) regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site treatment systems. In 2000, the State adopted a revised private sewage system code called COMM 83. This revised code allows conventional on-site systems, mound systems, and alternative systems, such as those that employ biological or chemical treatment. There are six types of on-site disposal system designs authorized for use today: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, and sand filter systems. In some cases, alternative waste disposal systems can be used in areas where conventional systems are not feasible due to unsuitable soil conditions. In Columbia County, the Department of Planning and Zoning administers the private sewage system ordinance under the same code.

Map 8 shows soil suitability for conventional on-site wastewater treatment systems in Dekorra. The suitability classifications (from severe to slight limitations) are derived from the Columbia County soil survey. Classifications are based on average slope, depth to soil saturation, average depth to bedrock, and flooding potential. In general, there is a high probability that a conventional system could be used in areas identified on Map 8 as having "slight limitations". As areas move toward "severe limitations", the probability increases that mound or alternative treatment technologies would have to be used.

Map 8: Soil Suitability for On-site Waste Treatment Systems

4. Solid Waste Disposal Sites

There are no active solid waste disposal sites in the Town, and none planned. The Columbia County Recycling and Waste Processing Facility is located in Pardeeville.

Solid waste disposal sites, or landfills, are potential sources of groundwater pollution. With the passage of stringent federal regulations in the late 1980s, many smaller landfills closed. Many of these older landfills were located in worked-out sand and gravel pits, or in low-lying wetland areas. These landfills sites pose a much greater risk to local groundwater quality than modern landfills because of poor location and absence of liners or advanced leachate collections systems. To protect drinking water quality, WisDNR requires a separation of 1,200 feet (a little less than ¼ mile) between open or closed landfills and new private water supply wells.

5. Stormwater Management

Dekorra does not have or intend to have an urban storm sewer system. Dekorra has an Erosion Control and Stormwater Runoff ordinance that applies to all land-disturbing activities (as defined in Section 11.01 of the Building and Construction Codes). In addition, Columbia County requires the submittal of a stormwater management plan with all new subdivision requests. The Wisconsin DNR requires an erosion control plan and permit for all projects that disturb one or more acres of land. The landowner is required to ensure that a site-specific erosion control plan and stormwater management plan are then implemented.

6. Town Hall

The Town Clerk's office is located in the Village of Poynette municipal building at 106 S. Main Street. The Town conducts meetings at the Dekorra Elementary School, typically in the gym area. The facilities are not considered adequate for the 20-year planning period. A committee was formed to study the possibility of a new Town Hall/community center, possibly with other gathering spaces at the time conceptual planning is undertaken. This is still an issue that needs to be addressed.

7. Law Enforcement

The Columbia County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency for Town residents. The patrol officer serving Dekorra is stationed at a dispatch office in the Portage, on STH 33. The Town considers these law enforcement services adequate. The Town has a constable, who is primarily involved with enforcing the Town's ordinances.

8. Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Service

The Town participates in a joint fire district with the Village of Poynette, with the firehouse located in the Village. This service provides both fire and EMS service to the entire Town. At this time, there are no planned changes to these services, which are considered adequate at this time.

9. Trash Collection and Recycling Services

Residents of the Town contract privately with either Green Valley or Waste Management Inc. to receive on-site trash and recycling pickup on a weekly basis. The Town runs a trash drop-off/recycling site at McMillan and Hall Roads, paid through property tax bills as a special charge. No changes in these services are anticipated.

10. Libraries

Residents in Dekorra patronize the Poynette library. The Town has historically contributed funds to subsidize this service. Library patrons can use their Columbia County Library card at any of the libraries in the seven-county South Central Wisconsin Library System. The library and the United States Postal Service also provide free delivery for persons who are physically unable to visit the library. The Town considers the current library arrangement to meet foreseeable resident needs.

11. Schools

Most students in Dekorra attend schools in the Poynette School District. The Poynette school system includes two elementary schools, one elementary/middle school, and one high school. One elementary school, Dekorra Elementary, is in the Town located on Bilkie Road. Current enrollment in the system totals 1,078 students. The district is projecting enrollment decreases over the next five years.

A small portion of the southwestern part of the Town is in the Lodi School District. The Lodi School District has one primary school for pre-school to Grade 2, one elementary school for grades 3-5, a middle school for grades 6-8, a high school, and a charter high school for children with differing educational needs. All schools are located within the Village of Lodi. The 2002 Lodi district enrollment was 1,640 students.

There are a few households in the far north east corner of the Town in the Portage School District.

12. Parks and Recreation Facilities

The MacKenzie Environmental Education Center and Poynette State Game Farm is located at the eastern edge of the Town. The Center provides educational and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. The Game Farm raises pheasants for release on both public and private hunting grounds. These facilities are more fully described in Chapter Three.

There are a number of small Town parks and recreational facilities within the Town, mainly located along the Wisconsin River. The Town recently obtained new parkland near its northeast corner. There are no County parks within Dekorra.

The Town and Village of Poynette have recently explored establishment of a joint sports authority to operate a combined park system. The Town has also appointed its own committee to explore future uses for Town-owned lands and prepare a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to enable the Town to obtain state and federal grants.

13. Child Care Facilities

There are several small child care facilities, pre-schools, and family day care homes in the Poynette-Dekorra area. There is a perpetual shortage in child care services in the area and state. The Town will not get involved in providing child care services.

14. Churches and Cemeteries

There are two churches in Dekorra; Inch Methodist, on CTH B and USH 51, and Dekorra Lutheran, on CTH CS and Smith Road. These churches serve as both community gathering places and prominent buildings on the rural landscape.

There five cemeteries located within the Town. Each of the two churches has an associated cemetery. Others include the Schofield Cemetery (inactive, Town-owned) at USH 51 & Thompson Road, the Hastie Cemetery at CTH J & Black Road, and Dekorra Cemetery in the Old Dekorra Village Area. Other smaller burial areas are located throughout the Town.

15. Medical and Health Care Facilities

Health care needs in Dekorra will increase as the "baby boom" population approaches retirement age. The Dean/St. Mary's Regional Clinic, affiliated with Dean Health Systems, is located at 237 West Seward St in the Village of Poynette. The clinic has one full-time and one half-time physician and a full-time dentist, and provides general family medical and dentistry services. Specialty services are referred to other Dean Health facilities, primarily in Madison.

The Town's proximity to the Madison metropolitan area provides a wide array of health care providers, including the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics, St. Mary's Hospital, Meriter Hospital, and several HMO provider facilities.

16. Wireless Telecommunications Facilities

Due to the proliferation of wireless communications, the construction of telecommunication towers is an issue that towns are addressing more and more often. There are three telecommunications towers located in the northwestern portion of Dekorra. The Town should utilize the guidelines in this *Plan* when considering requests to site new telecommunications facilities (see Chapter Four).

17. Power Plants and Transmission Lines

The Columbia Power Plant is located just north of the Town of Dekorra along the Wisconsin River. It is a 1054 megawatt facility built in the late 1970s. The American Transmission company operates a transmission line through Dekorra. There are no planned upgrades to these facilities at the present time.

B. Utilities & Community Facilities Goals, Objectives, Policies, Programs

1. Goal

Supply utilities, facilities, and services in line with resident expectations and the rural atmosphere.

2. Objectives

a. Coordinate utility and community facility systems planning with land use, transportation and natural resource planning.

b. Protect the Town's health and natural environment through proper siting of on-site wastewater treatment systems and stormwater management facilities.

c. Promote the use of existing public facilities, and logical expansions to those facilities to serve future development wherever possible.

d. Support the provision of a full range of utilities and community facilities in the Dekorra area, recognizing that many of these utilities may not be appropriate in a rural setting such as the Town. A "full range" includes utilities and facilities like sanitary sewer service, stormwater management, public water supply, solid waste disposal, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power plants/transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities, police, fire, rescue, libraries, schools, and other governmental facilities.

3. Policies and Programs

a. **Work with the School District** to keep Dekorra Elementary School operating.

b. Consider a **new community center**/Town Hall/Town Park following a detailed study of options.

c. Continue to **provide basic services** for Town residents, including recycling.

d. Work with WisDOT on providing public **sewer service** to the rest areas and Interchange Area/Utility District, and consider water service within the Utility District in the longer term.

e. Continue to work with the Village and other neighboring governments to share costs for **joint fire and emergency medical services** and with Columbia County to maintain law enforcement services.

f. Complete a **comprehensive outdoor recreation plan** to enable the Town to obtain state and federal grants for park and open space acquisition and development.

g. Continue to work with the Village of Poynette on joint park and recreational system management, including the possibility of a **joint sports authority**.

h. Direct **rural development away from areas with limited suitability** for on-site waste treatment systems, as depicted on Map 8, as a way to protect groundwater supply for private wells.

i. Work with the County Planning & Zoning Department to ensure the **proper approval process and placement of new on-site wastewater systems**, and appropriate maintenance and replacement of older systems as a means to protect groundwater quality.

j. Allow the use of holding tanks and new biological and chemical wastewater treatment technologies **only where other systems are not feasible**, placement is consistent with the land use objectives of this Plan, and the property owner pays a special assessment on the property for monitoring and maintenance.

k. **Carefully evaluate proposed large on-site waste treatment systems**, or groups of more than 10 individual on-site systems on smaller lots (1.5 to 2 acres) in the same general area, to ensure that groundwater quality standards are not impaired.

l. Make amendments to, and continue to enforce, the Town's **Erosion Control and Stormwater Runoff ordinance** for multiple and individual lot developments. The amendments should ensure that developments not requiring the division of land are covered by the standards.

m. Do not plan for direct Town government involvement in **health care and child care** over the 20-year planning period, as these services will be provided by private and non-profit entities and in nearby communities.

n. Do not plan for direct Town involvement in providing additional or expanded libraries, cemeteries, or solid waste disposal facilities. The Town expects that **cemeteries and libraries** in the area will be sufficient to serve Town residents over the planning period, or other entities will provide these facilities.

o. Remain informed on any plans related to **power/transmission lines** in the Town. Because new transmission lines are costly to build and difficult to site, energy providers are increasingly looking to increase capacity along existing routes. Placing transmission lines in existing easements and rights-of-way reduces impacts by locating linear land uses together and minimizes the amount of new land potentially affected by new easements.

C. Utilities and Community Facilities Timetable

Table 10 is an estimated timetable for possible utility and facility changes in the Town over the 20-year planning period. Budgetary constraints and other unforeseen circumstances may affect this timeframe.

Table 10: Utilities and Community Facilities Timetable

Utility or Facility	Timeframe for Town Improvements	Comments
Water Supply	N/A	All water supplied by private wells. Town may consider providing water service to utility district in future. No other plans.
Sanitary Waste Disposal	2010-2015	Study extension of sewer lines to Sanitary District One as demand dictates.
On-Site Wastewater Treatment Technology	N/A	New alternative on-site wastewater treatment systems may be an alternative to existing holding tanks near the waterfront.
Solid Waste Disposal	N/A	All landfills in the Town are closed. None planned.
Stormwater Management	Ongoing	Enforce the Erosion Control and Stormwater Runoff ordinance (Section 11.01, Chapter 11 Building and Construction Codes). Do not provide urban stormwater system.
Town Hall	2010-2015 study	Complete a study on whether to construct a new Town Hall/Community Center/Park.
Recycling and Trash Services	Beyond 2025	The Town's recycling and trash service should meet forecasted needs over the planning period.
Law Enforcement Services	N/A	County Sheriff and Town Constable are expected to continue in their present form, with additional need as population grows.
Fire Protection & Emergency Medical Services	N/A	Joint fire and EMS services are sufficient to meet current needs and forecasted needs.
Medical & Health Care Facilities	N/A	Medical facilities in nearby communities appear to meet needs.
Library	N/A	Poynette and other libraries meet the current and forecasted needs of Town residents. Continue joint service arrangements.
Schools and Child Care	Ongoing	Work with the School District to keep Dekorra Elementary open if possible. Encourage small child care facilities.
Park & Recreation Facilities	2008-2010	Consider a main Town Park in conjunction with the study for a new Town Hall, potentially using park fees collected from new development to help fund the park. Complete a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Work with Poynette on possible joint park system management. Work with state and local agencies on a continuous trail in the Rowan Creek Corridor.
Telecommunication Facilities	N/A	No assessments have been made to determine whether current service levels are adequate.
Power Plants & Transmission Lines	N/A	No known upgrades to the area's power plant and transmission lines are planned.
Cemeteries	N/A	There are 5 cemeteries located within the Town and they are serving current needs. Private sector will serve needs.

CHAPTER SEVEN: HOUSING

This chapter of the *Plan* contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs aimed at providing an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in Dekorra, as required under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

A. Existing Housing Framework

1. Housing Stock Characteristics

In 2000, there were 1,273 housing units in Dekorra, a 19 percent increase over 1990's 1,074 housing units. This 19% increase in housing units is lower than the 29% population growth over the same period. This percentage difference may be attributed to a number of seasonal homes being converted to year-round use over that period. Nearly all new housing units built in the Town have been single-family residences.

Table 11: Housing Units by Structure Size, 1990 - 2000

Units per Structure	1990 Units	1990 Percent	2000 Units	2000 Percent
Single Family	962	90.9%	1171	93.9%
Two Family (Duplex)	15	1.4%	8	0.6%
Multi-Family	5	0.5%	0	0%
Mobile Home	76	7.2%	67	5.4%

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census of Population & Housing

Table 12 compares other housing stock characteristics for Dekorra with the Towns of Lowville and Arlington, Poynette, and Columbia County. In 2000, 288 units or 23.3% of Dekorra's housing units were classified as "vacant", but of those units, 87% or 251 units were classified as having seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of all housing units, nearly 90 percent were owner-occupied. The Town's median housing value in 1999 ($138,000) was higher than the values of the surrounding communities, as well as Columbia County.

At the county level, the median sale price for a home in Columbia County has increased 15 percent, from $102,500 in 1997 to $120,500 in 2001, according to the South Central Wisconsin Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Corporation.

Table 12: Housing Stock Characteristics

	Town of Dekorra	Village of Poynette	Town of Lowville	Town of Arlington	Columbia County
Total Housing Units	1,237	957	394	308	22,685
Total Year-round Households	949	919	368	302	20,439
% Vacant	3.0%	4.0%	6.6%	1.9%	9.9%
% Owner Occupied	89.9%	64.6%	93.4%	80.1%	90.1%
Median Housing Value	$138,000	$116,600	$125,700	$144,000	$115,000
Median Contract Rent	$521	$472	$442	$509	$507

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000

2. Housing Condition and Age

Age of a community's housing stock is sometimes used as a measure of the general condition of the community's housing supply. Almost 25 percent of Dekorra's housing stock was constructed from 1990 to 2000. Over 20 percent of the Town's housing stock was constructed prior to 1940. Over the planning period, some of these older homes may be in need of rehabilitation.

3. Forecasted Housing Needs

The Town had 1,273 housing units in 2000. Future housing units in Dekorra may be forecasted based on the three population forecast scenarios in Chapter Two, projected decreases in average household size, and an assumed future housing vacancy rate. For purposes of forecasting, the vacancy rate is assumed to be constant at 23.3 percent. This, in turn, is based on the assumption that seasonal housing will continue to make up about one-fifth of the Town's total housing stock.

Based on this methodology, Dekorra is forecast to accommodate between 1,310 and 1,378 total units by 2010, between 1,381 and 1,549 total units by 2015, between 1,459 and 1,748 total units by 2020, between 1,527 and 1,903 total units by 2025, and between 1,596 and 2,191 total units by 2030. Actual housing units built in the Town will depend on a number of factors, including market conditions, demographic shifts, regulations, and attitudes towards growth. The Town desires housing unit growth at the low end of the reported ranges.

These housing forecasts were used to forecast residential land use demand in Chapter Four.

4. Housing Affordability

Under the "Smart Growth" legislation, a community must provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups, and special needs. Affordable housing choices in the Town will be most feasible where public sanitary sewer services are available and Town plans allow for housing. Sewer service allows smaller (and therefore more affordable) lots and the potential for attached housing options, like condominiums and small apartments. The Village of Poynette provides the most appropriate location for affordable housing in the area, reflected through the Urban Transition Area on Map 6.

This *Plan* also advocates smaller lot sizes for rural residential development outside of publicly sewered areas, which can reduce the overall costs for housing. The Town's three mobile home parks and older houses also will provide affordable housing. According to the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Agency (WHEDA), there are no subsidized housing units in Dekorra.

In Columbia County, housing assistance is provided through both a non-profit and a private company. The County contracts with Workforce Connections Inc. to administer its W-2 program. Some housing assistance is available to those who qualify for the W-2 program.

The County refers others with housing assistance needs to the non-profit Community Action Council. The Council receives federal and state funding to provide housing assistance to low- to moderate-income residents. These programs include:

- Weatherization assistance to replace materials and rehabilitate homes
- Section 8 housing
- Rental assistance program
- Emergency funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Grants for temporary housing for the homeless
- Home buyers rehabilitation funding
- Downpayment and closing cost assistance

Other housing programs available to Dekorra residents include home mortgage and improvement loans from WHEDA and home repair grants for the elderly from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds down-payment assistance for homebuyers, rental rehabilitation, weatherization-related repairs, accessibility improvements, and rental housing development. The Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) funds activities such as emergency rental aid, homeless prevention efforts, and related housing initiatives. Further information on these programs can be obtained by contacting WHEDA.

The USDA Rural Development department provides low-interest loans to very low-income owner occupants, to improve or repair homes, to remove health and safety hazards, or to make homes accessible to disabled household members.

Other programs available to Columbia County residents can provide disabled, low-income, or elderly residents with energy assistance and in-home services, such as cleaning and health visits. Further information on these programs can be obtained by contacting the Columbia County Department of Health and Human Services.

B. Housing Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Encourage safe, affordable housing and neighborhoods for all Dekorra residents.

2. Objectives

a. Support the provision of housing in the Town to meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups and special needs.

b. Encourage high quality construction and maintenance standards for housing.

c. Encourage home siting that will not result in property or environmental damage, or impair rural character or agricultural operations.

d. Encourage neighborhood designs and locations that protect residential areas from infringement by incompatible land uses, promote connectivity of road and environmental systems, support a range of transportation choices, and preserve rural character.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Plan for a **sufficient supply of developable land for housing for a variety of income levels**, including low and moderate income residents, in areas consistent with the goals of the Town as set forth in this *Plan*, at a pace consistent with recent development trends, and of densities and types consistent with the rural setting. Map 6 shows areas planned for housing in the Town.

b. Direct eligible persons to County, State, Federal, and non-profit **housing programs** to promote and preserve decent, affordable housing options in the Town, maintain the Town's existing housing stock, and provide housing options with people of all ages and with special needs.

c. **Support the private market in developing affordable housing** for low and moderate income residents, the elderly, and people with special needs. Several state and federal programs and funding sources are available to assist private developers, Columbia County, local governments, and residents meet housing objectives. These are summarized on the preceding pages.

d. Encourage the **maintenance of housing and residential neighborhoods** through efforts such as enforcement of existing local and county housing and zoning regulations and the identification of funding sources and programs to rehabilitate housing that has deteriorated. For example, using CDBG funds, communities may establish rehabilitation loans or grants to assist owner-occupants with repairs.

e. **Work with Poynette** and other urban communities in the area to also meet the policies and programs listed above. In many cases, affordable housing goals are more appropriate to achieve in urban areas because the higher levels of urban services and utilities allow for greater densities and closer proximity to required services.

f. In areas planned for subdivision development, promote **interconnected streets and trail systems** to provide a range of transportation and recreational options.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This chapter contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to promote the retention and stabilization of the economic base in Dekorra. This chapter includes an assessment of new businesses and industries that are desired in the Town and the Town's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses. It also inventories contaminated sites. A labor force analysis was included in Chapter Two.

A. Economic Development Framework

1. Economic Development Focus

This portion of the *Comprehensive Plan* assesses categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that the Town desires. These include high quality commercial and industrial uses in the Commercial/Industrial Mix: Interchange Area (Utility District) and the Commercial/Industrial Mix: Highways 51/J/V district, both as shown on Map 6. Map 6 designates a sufficient number of sites and opportunities for the Town to achieve its desired economic development focus over the 20-year planning period. Other economic development opportunities will be accommodated in the Village.

2. Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development

The Town's strengths in fostering its desired economic focus in the future are as follows:

- Location along Interstate--the only place in the State where three interstates converge.
- Access to the Interstate interchange provides new development opportunities.
- Opportunity to provide sanitary sewer services to the interchange area.
- Located 30 minutes from both the second largest population center (Madison area) and the leading tourist destination in the State (Dells area).
- Location along the route carrying visitors to Wisconsin Dells and the "Northwoods."
- Lake Wisconsin generates tourist traffic as well as permanent local population growth.
- Major state highway and rail access on eastern edge of the Town.
- Abundant natural resources.

The Town's weaknesses in advancing its desired economic base include the following:

- Town government structure limits the ability to provide economic incentives for development, like Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Competition with other local governments for economic development.
- Inconsistent existing interchange area development quality.
- Limited array and locations of public utilities, even with proposed sewer expansion.
- Perception that Town might not be "business-friendly."

3. Economic Development Programs

Dekorra has no local economic development programs. The Columbia County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) has a revolving loan program, established in 2002, meant to aid start-ups or expansions of Columbia County businesses. The fund provides 50/50 matching funds of $20,000 per new job created. This program is for businesses with 50 or fewer employees and annual revenue below one million dollars.

Columbia County, through its participation in the Wisconsin Development Fund (WDF) Program also has funds for the establishment of a Business Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). This fund is designated to make direct business loans on a companion basis with other financing sources (public sector loans, governmental loans/grants, equity, etc.)

The Customized Labor Training Fund provides training grants to businesses that are implementing new technology or production processes. The program can provide up to 50 percent of the cost of customized training that is not available from the Wisconsin Technical College System.

The Dairy 2020 Initiative awards grants and loans for business and feasibility planning to dairy producers and processors considering a modernization or expansion project.

The Employee Ownership Assistance Loan Program can help a group of employees purchase a business by providing individual awards up to $25,000 for feasibility studies or professional assistance. The business under consideration must have expressed its intent to downsize or close.

The COMMERCE/Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Job Creation Program is designed to increase employment opportunities for DVR clients by providing equipment grants, technical assistance grants, and customized assistance to companies that will hire persons with disabilities as part of a business expansion.

The Rural Economic Development Program makes individual awards up to $30,000 for feasibility studies and other professional assistance to rural businesses with fewer than 25 employees. Businesses that have completed their feasibility evaluations are eligible for individual micro loans up to $25,000 for working capital and the purchase of equipment.

The Major Economic Development Program offers low-interest loans for business development projects that create a significant economic impact.

The state's Community Based Economic Development Program (CBED) provides funding assistance to local governments and community-based organizations that undertake planning, development and technical assistance projects that support business development. Using CBED program funds, local governments can finance economic development plans, small business and technology-based incubator grants, revolving loan programs, and entrepreneur training programs for at-risk youth. Any Wisconsin city, village, town, county, tribe or community-based organization is eligible to apply for grant funding. Funds are available on an annual basis through a competitive application process. Some grants must be matched by local funds. Application materials are available from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Certified Development Company (504) Loan Program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. 504 loans can be used to fund land purchases and improvements, grading, street improvements, utilities, parking lots and landscaping, construction of new facilities, or modernizing, renovating or converting existing facilities. A Certified Development Company is a nonprofit corporation set up to contribute to the economic development of its community.

4. Reuse of Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The Wisconsin DNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintains a list of contaminated sites, or "brownfields," in the State. The DNR defines brownfields as "abandoned or under-utilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination." Examples of brownfields might include a large abandoned industrial site or a small corner gas station. Properties listed in the DNR database are self-reported, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing of possible brownfields in a community.

There are three contaminated sites in Dekorra listed on this DNR database. More specific locations, property ownership information, and status of remediation efforts for these sites are available from the DNR. These properties will need special attention for successful redevelopment to occur. The location of these environmentally contaminated sites was considered when making land use recommendations in the *Plan*. The Town supports clean-up and appropriate reuse of these and other contaminated sites, but should not approve (re)development projects until remediation is completed or commitments are secured for remediation.

B. Economic Development Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Allow for high-quality economic growth that supports farming, provides quality job opportunities, and serves Town residents.

2. Objectives

a. Work jointly with Poynette and Columbia County on mutually beneficial economic development initiatives that promote the stabilization, retention, and attraction of local economic opportunity.

b. Make the interchange of Interstate 39 and Highway CS a priority for future economic development.

c. Plan for compact growth and small-scale businesses along the waterfront/marina area.

d. Promote economic development efforts for farming and farm-related businesses.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Support the economic **health of production agriculture** in Dekorra.

b. Support opportunities for **farm family businesses**, home occupations and agriculturally related businesses to assist farm families.

c. Implement standards to attract **high quality commercial development in the Interchange Area** such as hotels, restaurants and specialty retail (see Chapter Five).

d. Direct **highway oriented commercial uses**, particularly redevelopment, to lands closest to the interchange.

e. Direct **light industrial uses** further away from the immediate interchange area (but within 1-mile) and to a second proposed mixed use area located along Highway 51 near its intersection with County Highway J/V.

f. **Discourage strip commercial** or industrial development between the interchange area and the rest areas, along Highway CS, and along Highway 51.

g. Accommodate a range of **high quality employment opportunities** in areas planned as *Commercial/Industrial Mix* on Map 6.

h. Help small businesses access County and State **economic funding sources**.

i. **Partner with the Village of Poynette** in order to attract businesses that are appropriate for each community and work together on joint marketing of the area. Encourage the revitalization of downtown Poynette.

CHAPTER NINE: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

This chapter of the *Plan* contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs for intergovernmental planning and decision making; incorporates by reference all plans and agreements to which Dekorra is a party under §66.0301, §66.0307, §66.0309 of Wisconsin Statutes; and identifies existing and potential conflicts between this *Comprehensive Plan* and the plans of adjacent villages and towns, Columbia County, the State, and school districts. This chapter includes several cooperative approaches with both Poynette and Lowville.

A. Existing "Regional" Planning Framework

The following is a description of the plans of other jurisdictions operating within or adjacent to Dekorra. These jurisdictions are depicted in Map 2. A summary of any potential conflicts with the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* follows the description of each jurisdiction's plans. Where conflicts are apparent, a process to resolve them is also proposed.

1. Columbia County

At the time of writing, Columbia County was completing a comprehensive plan to meet the state's comprehensive planning legislation. Dekorra has monitored and participated in this planning process to ensure consistency between jurisdictions. The precise relationship between the Town's plan and the County comprehensive plan was uncertain at the time of writing. The County has been seeking some uniformity in plan policies, given that most towns (including Dekorra) fall under County zoning. Minimally, the County will be incorporating and interpreting individual town planned land use maps into a County planned land use map.

The *Columbia County Agricultural Preservation Plan* was originally adopted in 1977, and updated in 1988. This *Plan* supports the basic goal of preserving farmland, and lays the foundation for the County's agricultural zoning, which was also adopted in 1977.

The *Columbia County Land and Water Resource Management Plan* was adopted in 1999. This *Plan* contains an assessment of County resources, and strategies to manage these resources.

There are no known conflicts between the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* and the adopted Columbia County plans. However, the Town intends to work to assure that Town policy desires for the Town are incorporated into the County comprehensive plan.

2. Town of Lowville

The Town of Lowville Land Use Plan was adopted in 2004. Lowville's updated plan is consistent with and complimentary to Dekorra's *Plan*. Dekorra will need to address residential development pressure along Highway CS adjacent to that type of existing and planned development in Lowville.

3. Village of Poynette

The Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Poynette was adopted in 2005. Poynette's updated plan was generally consistent with and complimentary to Dekorra's *Plan*. There are other recent and emerging development, service, and intergovernmental issues between the two communities, particularly at the Village's northeast corner. There are also very minor differences between recommended future growth areas. A recommended intergovernmental agreement approach is included later in this chapter. The Village has recently adopted extraterritorial subdivision regulations, which has prompted discussions and a possible intergovernmental agreement between the Village and Town.

4. Town of Pacific

Despite requests, no information was available from Pacific at the time of this publication.

5. Town of Caledonia

The Town of Caledonia Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies document was adopted in 1996. It is a set of policies that recommends preserving the rural look and feel of the Town by limiting residential and commercial development. The goals, objectives and policies of the Town of Caledonia are consistent with the goals and recommendations of the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan*. Caledonia is updating

its land use planning controls by preparing a comprehensive plan, participating with Columbia County in its planning process.

6. Town of Arlington

At the time of writing, the Town of Arlington did not have a land use plan in place. The Town policy is to discourage the conversion of agriculture to residential or commercial use. The Town is participating with the County in its comprehensive planning process.

7. Town of Lodi

The Town of Lodi Land Use Plan was adopted in 1992. The Plan's objectives include preserving farm operations and agricultural land, discouraging subdivision, protecting rural character, and protecting water and wetland quality. Housing density in most of the Town is limited to one parcel per 35 acres of land zoned agricultural. The *Town of Lodi Land Use Plan* is consistent with the goals and recommendations of the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan*.

8. Important State Agency Jurisdictions

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) District 1 office (Madison) serves Dekorra and all of Columbia County. The Town should continue to maintain good relations with District 1 as planning, congestion, and safety issues arise along U.S. and State highways, particularly Highway 51 and the interchange area. WisDOT plans are summarized in Chapter Five.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) provides service to the Town out of its service center located in Poynette. Project boundaries for potential DNR land acquisitions from willing sellers are shown on Map 6.

There are no known conflicts between the plans and policies of these State agencies and the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan.*

9. Regional Planning Commission

Dekorra is not within the service area of any Regional Planning Commission or Metropolitan Planning Organization.

10. School Districts

Information on local school districts is presented in Chapter Six. There are no known conflicts between the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* and the plans of the affected school districts. Dekorra's *Plan* advocates a controlled growth strategy in and around the Town and the continued operation of Dekorra School.

B. Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives, Policies, Programs

1. Goal

Develop and build on mutually beneficial relationships with nearby governments and school districts.

2. Objectives and Policies

a. Work with Poynette and Lowville to ensure that future municipal boundary changes, utility service areas, land use policies, and extraterritorial decisions benefit all three communities.

b. Explore the possibility of pursuing cooperative economic development initiatives and/ or a marketing approach that would have benefits for all three communities and minimize competition for new development.

c. Work with Columbia County and neighboring jurisdictions on their ongoing comprehensive planning efforts.

d. Cooperate with neighboring governments, school districts, Columbia County and State agencies on providing joint or shared services and planning for future public facilities needs, such as recreational programming and emergency services.

e. Stay informed on activities of the School Districts to ensure the Town has the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect Town residents, such as building improvements, tax issues, and transportation.

3. Recommended Program: Intergovernmental Agreement

Dekorra, Poynette, and possibly Lowville would benefit from entering into a formal intergovernmental agreement covering community development issues of mutual concern. These issues may include municipal boundaries, extraterritorial rights, economic development, rural development, growth management, sanitary sewer and water service provision, parks and recreation, development design standards, or even shared revenues from new development. An agreement such as this would help the communities minimize competition for development, share both the costs and benefits of economic development, make sure that future development is of high quality, provide all parties with a greater sense of certainty on the future actions of others, and promote municipal efficiency in an era of diminishing government resources.

There are two main formats for intergovernmental agreements under Wisconsin Statutes. The first is available under Section 66.0301, which allows any two or more communities to agree to cooperate for the purpose of furnishing services or the joint exercise of any power or duty authorized under State law. While this is the most commonly used approach, a "66.0301" agreement is limited by the restriction that the municipalities must be able to exercise co-equal powers. Another format for an intergovernmental agreement is a "cooperative plan" under Section 66.0307 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This approach is more labor intensive and ultimately requires State approval of the agreement, but does not have some of the limitations of the "66.0301" agreement format.

The following is a draft outline of issues that an intergovernmental agreement could cover. Municipal attorneys would need to place any agreement in a proper legal format prior to adoption, obviously following a significant amount of additional negotiation among the communities. Often, intergovernmental agreements are executed after a year or more of meetings, research, consideration of options, writing, and legal review.

a. **Municipal Boundary Changes.** Intergovernmental agreements between villages and towns frequently suggest limits to long-range municipal annexation, generally in exchange for some compromises from the town. Such compromises may include the town's agreement not to legally contest any annexation petition that is within the agreed annexation area and/or to limit town development in the possible future annexation area. Where there are annexations, responsibilities for road maintenance and upgrades can be confusing or controversial. Provisions for future maintenance, upgrades, or extensions of roads are often covered in intergovernmental agreements.

   Within the context of an intergovernmental agreement focused particularly on Dekorra and Poynette, future (e.g., through 2025) annexation area boundaries could be based on a negotiated Urban Transition Area boundary between the Town and Village. The Town's initial suggestion for that Urban Transition Area is shown on Map 6. Within that mutually agreed area, the Town would agree not to oppose annexation. Outside of that area, the Village would agree not to annex land. Both communities could agree to a procedure for addressing road maintenance issues when new land is annexed. The discussions on municipal boundary changes should address the future of the existing agreement between the Village and Town associated with the Pauquette Pines development.

b. **Utility Service Area Boundaries.** Some intergovernmental agreements include provisions that define where public sewer and/or water services may be extended and where they may not over the term of the agreement. These areas largely define where fairly intensive urban (public sewer) growth may occur. Some agreements include provisions that do not allow intensive development with on-site waste treatment systems in such designated utility service areas. These areas may ex-

tend beyond current municipal limits or utility district boundaries, as such agreements generally extend for 20 years or more.

Within the context of an intergovernmental agreement focused particularly on Dekorra and Poynette, future (e.g., through 2025) utility service area boundaries could be established within a negotiated Urban Transition Area boundary between the Town and Village and within a mutually agreed area near the Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin interchange. Each community could agree not to extend public sewer services beyond those limits. This, combined with the municipal boundary provisions described above, would provide greater certainty to both communities, property owners, developers, and the general public as to where intensive development could occur and where it could not. The discussions on utility services could also cover provisions for dealing with developed areas with failing septic systems or holding tanks to address public health concerns. The discussions and resulting agreement could also assure that both communities are carrying out appropriate stormwater management planning in planned development areas in accordance with specified standards.

c. **Future Land Use Recommendations.** Frequently, intergovernmental agreements include maps or descriptions that specify future land uses or development densities considered acceptable or unacceptable in areas that concern both communities. For example, the agreement may specify certain areas that both communities agree should remain in open space or at least maintain an open space character as limited development occurs. Some agreements also include provisions that the communities will then amend their comprehensive plans to be consistent with the future land use recommendations negotiated in the agreement, or to not amend their comprehensive plans in a manner that would be inconsistent with the agreement.

   Within the context of an intergovernmental agreement focused particularly on Dekorra and Poynette, the negotiations and resulting agreement could focus on provisions to:

   - Amend this *Comprehensive Plan* and Poynette's plan as necessary to achieve full compliance with the agreement. It should be noted that this *Comprehensive Plan* and the draft plan for Poynette were largely in alignment with respect to land use recommendations in areas of mutual concern.
   - Make development (e.g., rezoning) decisions that are consistent with the amended comprehensive plans and the agreement. This type of provision could include amending the comprehensive plans or intergovernmental agreement if both communities agreed in the future.
   - Implement innovative approaches to achieving shared growth management and land use objectives. These may include an inter-community transfer of development rights (TDR) program to direct more residential development to the village from the town. Another approach may be cooperative extraterritorial zoning, whereby the Village and Town could jointly (and without the County) make zoning decisions within 1½ miles of the Village limits.

d. **Joint Economic Development Efforts.** An intergovernmental agreement provides a potential tool to establish joint economic development or marketing efforts to the mutual benefit of each community. Some of the more innovative agreements include provisions on sharing property tax revenue from new development or mitigating tax losses resulting from annexation. These types of arrangements are allowed under Section 66.0305 of Wisconsin Statutes. For example, an agreement may include a provision specifying that participating communities would share property tax revenue from certain types of new developments (e.g., commercial or industrial). This tends to minimize competition for development, increases development quality, and somewhat equalizes municipal "winners and losers" resulting from new development.

   Within the context of an intergovernmental agreement focused particularly on Dekorra and Poynette, the negotiations and resulting agreement could focus on provisions to:

- Jointly pursue state, federal, and county economic development grants and incentives to promote business and light industrial development consistent with the "small-town" character of the area.
- Cooperatively plan for economic development in mutually agreed areas in and near Poynette and the Interstate 39/CS interchange, and not promote or allow economic development in other areas.
- Consider a revenue sharing agreement for new municipal taxes generated from development in some of these areas.
- Decide on the rerouting of Highway CS to extend near the Village's southern boundary east to Highway 51 as a means to facilitate economic development and redirect heavy and through traffic.

e. **Consistent Design Standards.** Intergovernmental agreements sometimes include minimum standards that all or certain types of new development projects would need to follow, regardless of in which community the development occurred. These might include standards for signs, landscaping, lighting, setbacks, building design, or other features of development. This type of provision tends to reduce the practice of communities compromising their development standards in attempts to lure projects away from their neighbors.

Within the context of an intergovernmental agreement between Dekorra and Poynette, the communities could agree to:

- Follow development design guidelines included in comprehensive plans when reviewing development proposals.
- Amend zoning ordinances as necessary to require site plan review and to require new non-residential and any multiple family residential development projects to meet minimum agreed standards for site design, building design, landscaping, signage, and/or lighting.
- Institute or maintain site plan review requirements for all commercial, industrial, and multiple family residential development projects.

f. **Shared Programs or Services.** The most common types of intergovernmental agreements focus on shared services or programs between communities. Poynette and Dekorra already have such an agreement with respect to fire and EMS services, and share municipal offices. The management of recreational lands and programs is another service that is occasionally shared across municipal boundaries.

Within the context of an intergovernmental agreement between Dekorra and Poynette, the communities could discuss greater opportunities for cooperation or consolidation of local parks and recreational programming. This should ideally be done in consultation with the Poynette School District. Another issue that could be advanced through the intergovernmental agreement is a joint commitment to work with WisDNR and potentially non-profit groups to create a trail through the Rowan Creek corridor.

The Poynette School District may be involved in this component to the extent appropriate.

g. **Agreement Term and Amendments.** An intergovernmental agreement should specify the length of time that it is applicable. Twenty years is a typical timeframe (e.g., through 2025), as this corresponds with local comprehensive planning time horizons. Occasionally, agreements have provisions for automatic extensions if neither party decides to withdraw. Most agreements also include provisions for periodic review and possible amendments if both parties agree. This keeps the agreement fresh in people's minds and allows adaptability as conditions change.

CHAPTER TEN: IMPLEMENTATION

This final chapter of the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* provides a roadmap for specific actions necessary to fully implement the *Plan*'s recommendations. This chapter generally does not cover day-to-day decisions. Instead, it identifies certain programs and larger actions that the Town may undertake over the next several years in a stated sequence.

A. Plan Adoption

The *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* was adopted following procedures specified by Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" legislation. The Town included all necessary elements for this *Plan* to meet all content requirements of the law, including grant program requirements. In addition, the Town met and exceeded all procedural requirements of the law. This included extensive public input throughout the process, a Town Plan Commission recommendation, distribution of the recommended *Plan* to affected local governments, a formal public hearing, and Town Board adoption of the *Plan* by ordinance. After Town adoption, this *Plan* was also forwarded to the County.

B. Implementation Recommendations

Table 13 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the Town should complete to implement the *Comprehensive Plan*. Often, such actions will require substantial cooperation with others, including County government and local property owners. Other Town government priorities, time constraints, and budget constraints may affect the completion of the recommended actions in the timeframes presented.

The table has three different columns of information, described as follows:

- *Category:* The list of recommended actions is divided into six different categories generally based on the different chapters of this *Plan*.
- *Recommendation or Program:* The second column lists the actual actions recommended to implement key aspects of the *Comprehensive Plan*. The recommendations are for Town actions that might be included, for example, in an annual work program or as part of the annual budgeting process.
- *Implementation Timeframe:* The third column responds to the State comprehensive planning statute, which requires implementation actions to be listed in a "stated sequence." The suggested timeframe for the completion of each recommendation reflects the priority attached to the recommendation. Suggested implementation timeframes are all within the next 10 years (and not the full 20-year planning period), because the Plan will have to be updated by 2015.

Table 13: Recommended Implementation Actions

Category	Implementation Timeframe	Recommendation or Program
Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources	2007 and ongoing	Encourage the preservation of historically and architecturally significant structures/districts and archeological resources in the Town.
Land Use	2007 and ongoing	Require the submittal of a conceptual/sketch plan or site plan for a specific development proposal before approving the rezoning of land to the appropriate development-based zoning district, in coordination with the Town's Site Plan Review ordinance.
	2007-2009	Work with the County and other towns to amend the County zoning ordinance to better implement Town objectives, including: ▪ Revisions to agricultural districts to promote clustering. ▪ Requirements for site reviews on large parcel homesites. ▪ Limits on billboard placement. ▪ Restrictions in the range of uses in the recreation zoning district.
	2013-2015	Prepare a complete update of this *Comprehensive Plan.*
Transportation	2008-2010	Work with Poynette, WisDOT, and the County Highway Department to extend Highway CS to Highway 51 along the southern border of the Village.
	2007 and ongoing	Continue to update and implement a Town Road Improvement Program.
Utilities and Community Facilities	Ongoing	Implement the recommendations in Table 10 in timeframes identified in that table.
Housing and Economic Development	2007 and ongoing	Follow *Plan* standards and design review ordinance for commercial and industrial development projects.
	2008-2009	Negotiate a formal intergovernmental agreement between Dekorra and Poynette.
	2007	Provide a copy of this *Comprehensive Plan* to all surrounding local governments, per Smart Growth requirements.
	2007	Encourage County Board adoption of the *Town Plan*. Because of shared land use authority, it is very important that the Town and County share the same plan for the same area.
Intergovernmental Cooperation & Administration	2007 and ongoing	Work to resolve conflicts between the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* and plans of surrounding communities.
	2010-2015	Work with surrounding communities on approaches for growth management, such as intergovernmental Transfer of Development Rights.

C. Plan Monitoring, Amendments, and Update

The Town should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the recommendations of the *Comprehensive Plan*, and amend and update the *Plan* as appropriate. This section suggests recommended criteria and procedures for using, monitoring, amending, and updating the *Plan*.

1. Plan Monitoring and Use

The Town Plan Commission should, on an annual basis, review its decisions on private development proposals over the previous year against the recommendations of this *Plan*. This will help keep the *Plan* a "living document."

The Town should constantly evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions against the recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

Before submitting a formal application to the Town and/or County for approval of any development proposal, the Town urges petitioners to discuss the request conceptually and informally with the Town Plan Commission. Conceptual review almost always results in an improved development product and can save the petitioner time and money.

2. Plan Amendments

Amendments to this *Comprehensive Plan* may be appropriate in the years following initial *Plan* adoption and in instances where the *Plan* becomes irrelevant or contradictory to emerging policy or trends. "Amendments" are generally defined as minor changes to the *Plan* maps or text. The *Plan* should be evaluated for potential amendments during the Town's annual review described above. Frequent amendments to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided.

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the Town use the same basic process to amend, add to, or update the *Comprehensive Plan* as it used to initially adopt the *Plan*. This does not mean that new vision forums need to be held, old committees need to be reformed, or recent relationships with adjacent communities need to be reestablished. It does mean that the procedures defined under Section 66.1001(4) and Chapter 91, Wisconsin Statutes, need to be followed. Specifically, the Town should use the following procedure to amend, add to, or update the *Comprehensive Plan*:

a. Either the Town Board or Plan Commission initiates the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* amendment. This may occur as a result of a regular Plan Commission review of the *Plan*, or may by initiated at the request of a property owner or developer.

b. The Town Board adopts a resolution outlining the procedures that will be undertaken to ensure public participation during the plan amendment process (see Section 66.1001(4)a of Statutes and model resolution included in this *Comprehensive Plan*).

c. The Town Plan Commission prepares or directs the preparation of the specific text or map amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan*.

d. The Town Plan Commission holds one or more public meetings on the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* amendment. Following the public meeting(s), the Plan Commission shall make a recommendation by resolution to the Town Board by majority vote of the entire Commission (see Section 66.1001(4)b of Statutes and model resolution in this *Plan*).

e. The Town Clerk sends a copy of the recommended *Plan* amendment to all adjacent and surrounding government jurisdictions and the County as required under Section 66.1001(4)b, Wisconsin Statutes. These governments should have at least 30 days to review and comment on the recommended *plan* amendment. Metallic mine operators, any person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit with the Town or county, and any other property owner who has requested notification in writing must be informed through this notice procedure, per a new State law adopted in 2004.

f. The Town Clerk directs the publishing of a Class 1 notice, with such notice published at least 30 days before a Town Board public hearing and containing information required under Section 66.1001(4)d, Wisconsin Statutes.

g. The Town Board holds the formal public hearing on an ordinance that would incorporate the proposed *plan* amendment into the *Comprehensive Plan*.

h. Following the public hearing, the Town Board approves (or denies) the ordinance adopting the proposed *plan* amendment. Adoption must be by a majority vote of all members. The Town Board may require changes from the Plan Commission recommended version of the proposed *plan* amendment.

i. The Town Clerk sends a copy of the adopted ordinance and *Plan* amendment to all adjacent and surrounding government jurisdictions as required under Sections 66.1001(4)b and c, Wisconsin Statutes, along with metallic mine operators, any person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit with the Town or county, and any other property owner who has requested the amendment in writing.

j. The Town Clerk sends copies of the adopted *Plan* amendment to the Columbia County Planning and Development Department for their reference for Town goals and policies.

3. Plan Update

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the *Comprehensive Plan* be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to an amendment, an update is often a substantial re-write of the *plan* document and maps. Further, on January 1, 2010, most programs or actions that affect land use, like zoning and subdivision decisions, will have to be consistent with locally-adopted comprehensive plans. Based on these two deadlines, the Town should complete a full update its *Comprehensive Plan* before the year 2015 (i.e., ten years after 2005) at the latest. The Town should continue to monitor any changes to the language or interpretations of the State law over the next several years.

D. Consistency Among Plan Elements

The State comprehensive planning statute requires that the implementation element "describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan shall be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan." Preparing the various elements of the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* simultaneously has ensured that there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different elements of this *Plan*.