

TOWN
OF
PELICAN



LAND USE PLAN

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

INTRODUCTION

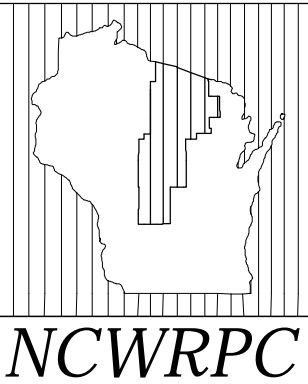
Cooperative community planning is the key to shaping a community's future. Change happens, and it is the efforts of community leaders to ensure that future residents receive the same, if not better, quality of life as that of current and prior generations.

A land use plan is a carefully thought out, thoroughly discussed, and mutually agreed upon vision of what a community would like to look like in the future. To develop a land use plan, a community starts by inventorying and discussing its existing land uses. Public opinion and direct input is sought to gain a better understanding for the desires of the entire community. Then we examine the population and socioeconomic forces that shape the various land uses and set goals towards striving to achieve the future community vision. Policies are developed to obtain the stated goals and objectives.

Unfortunately, the planning process is not as easy as the above recipe. The analysis of extensive inventories and setting of goals and policy standards must be meshed with consensus building among competing interests. However, having a rational process to follow, a community can be assured that it is on the right track.

The results of a community survey are used to create the future vision statement for the Town and arrive at goals and policies to meet that vision. The local community and the County must come together to implement the Pelican Plan by reviewing the County zoning districts throughout the Town.

Planning is an organized way of determining what a community's needs are and aiming for an effective and efficient process of change which will make the community a better place in which to live. The planning implementation process is ongoing and cyclical in nature. Even as portions of plans are implemented, evaluation should be occurring which influences remaining recommendations and the next cycle of planning. In this way, a plan becomes the cornerstone for building a better community.



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Prepared June 2001 By:
**North Central
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PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Town of Pelican is at a critical junction in its development. Over the last decade, Pelican has experienced slow but steady growth. However, concern over increasing development and interest in "Northwoods" property has spurred the Town to take a closer look at land use issues. Town officials have recognized the need to plan for future needs to avert problematic situations and to be prepared for controversial and disruptive potential development issues.

The process of developing this plan was carried out by a seven member Town of Pelican Land Use Management Committee with the technical assistance of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). This "focus group" identified primary development issues for the Town. All Town property owners were surveyed concerning their opinions relative to future development and an inventory of existing land-uses was conducted. A community vision statement and goals and objectives were established to guide development in ways that will not sacrifice the existing qualities and character of the community. Proposed future land uses for all areas of the Town were established and recorded. All meetings were posted and open to the public. Special informational meetings/hearings were held to keep all informed and provide everyone an opportunity for input.

Therefore, the purpose of land use planning is to encourage orderly future land use development for the Town of Pelican, based on an analysis of the existing uses and future use requirements. Simultaneously, the effort is intended to promote and stimulate public participation in the planning process by bringing local issues to the forefront. A land use plan does not directly regulate land use, it provides a statement of basic principles to guide both Town and County officials when making certain regulatory decisions including subdivision plat reviews, certified survey maps, rezoning requests, or other land use proposals. The plan will also be used as a guide when developing (and updating) the Town zoning map. The plan's general philosophy is to encourage growth in a fashion that protects and preserves the natural beauty and integrity of the Town's environment, which is the foundation of its quality of life.

VISION STATEMENT

Using the results of the community survey mailed to all property owners, the Town of Pelican Land Use Committee developed the following vision statement to describe the direction and desired future character of the community.

The Town of Pelican is a small, rural, recreational based community adjacent to the larger community of Rhinelander. This rural setting is dependant upon the natural environment, which provides ample opportunities for boating, fishing, hunting, swimming, and other lake and woods based experiences. The local economy is also heavily based upon the recreational industry.

The residents of Pelican envision a future where the current peaceful Town character and the natural environment will be preserved through land conservation methods, shoreline protection, and management of development so that "the lake and woods environment" will be retained and maintained for the enjoyment of future generations.

They are particularly interested in the preservation of the rural character of the community and in attempting to manage the density of future physical development. There will be locations provided for commercial and industrial development to provide jobs, commerce and economic prosperity as well as, affordable housing for a cross-section of income levels to enjoy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

TOPOGRAPHY

Part of the Northern Highland geomorphic region of Wisconsin, the Town of Pelican is characterized as a pitted out-wash plain. The out-wash plain varies from nearly level to steep with drumlins and water-worked moraines. The topographic features of the Town are a result of the last glacial age about 15,000 years ago.

SURFACE WATER

The principle waterbodies in the Town are Lake George, Lake Thompson and Fourth and Fifth Lakes. Lake George is a 435-acre lake with heavy residential development and high recreational use located in the center of the Township. It is a soft-water drainage lake and the DNR has identified both Lakes George and Thompson as being of exceptional-quality. Fourth Lake is 458 acres and Fifth Lake is 240 acres and both are impoundments of the Pelican River. Resources include a trophy fishery for Muskie, significant waterfowl production, blue heron rookery, multi-use recreation and exceptional water quality. Management problems include past development on substandard lots.

GROUNDWATER

The groundwater in the Town is generally of good quality. Total mineral content is less than 150 milligrams per liter. The main inorganic components in the water are calcium, magnesium, and bicarbonate ions. A large concentration of iron is in the groundwater throughout the Town but is not considered a health hazard.

The Soil Survey for Oneida County indicates that the bulk of the soils within the Town are rated "severe limitation" for septic absorption fields. These soils may not adequately absorb effluent from standard conventional on-site septic systems. Systems installed under these conditions have the potential to pollute groundwater and affect public health, especially when a number of systems are installed relatively close together. It should be noted that the potential impact of the newly revised private sewage systems code, Comm. 83, could increase the amount of buildable land area in the Town.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

WETLANDS

Wetlands serve several important environmental functions including flood control, water quality improvement, and groundwater recharge as well as providing habitat for fish and wildlife. Wetlands shown herein reflect those wetlands mapped by the DNR on its digital Wisconsin Wetland Inventory Maps and may not reveal all areas considered wetlands by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A complex set of local, state, and federal regulations place limitations on the development and use of wetlands. The Shoreland/Wetland Zoning Ordinance adopted by Oneida County regulates shoreland use and development within 300 feet of navigable streams and 1,000 feet of lakes. The Department of Natural Resources regulates the placement of structures and other alterations below the ordinary high water mark of navigable streams and lakes. The Corps of Engineers has authority over the placement of fill materials in virtually all wetlands. The USDA incorporates wetland preservation criteria into its crop price support programs. Prior to placing fill or altering wetland resources, the appropriate agencies should be contacted to receive authorization.

There are significant wetland areas throughout the Township. These wetlands include a wide diversity of wetland types from emergent/wet meadow to scrub/shrub to deciduous and coniferous forest.

WOODLANDS

Woodland and forest cover is significant within the Town of Pelican. Over 81 percent of the Town is forested (approx. 29,105 acres). A small portion of this land is County Forest Land or school district property. However, the majority of forest land is in private ownership. The State of Wisconsin also holds a few parcels in the Town.

POPULATION

The estimated population in 1999 for the Town of Pelican was 3,267, which is an increase of 2.2 percent since 1990. This rate is significantly lower than the statewide average growth rate of 7.83 percent, and is among the lowest rates of growth within Oneida County where the overall growth rate is about 10 percent. This moderate growth rate is partially attributed to the City of Rhinelander.

HOUSING

According to the 1990 Census there were 1,679 housing units in the Town of Pelican in that year. Of these, 74 percent were occupied year-round, while the remaining were seasonal, recreational, or occasional use housing units. Approximately 5 percent of the housing stock were vacant, for sale, rental, or some other status. Mobile homes comprised about 19 percent of the Town's housing.

Since 1990, new dwelling unit additions have averaged 31 per year based on zoning permit data. Utilizing the above estimated population, approximately 23 of these units are occupied year-round, indicating that an average of 8 new seasonal units have been added to the Town, annually. At the projected rate of growth, an additional 620 dwelling units will be added to the Town by 2020.

EXISTING LAND USE

The table below shows a breakdown by acres of the different land use types in the Town of Pelican based on the land use inventory in 2000.

Use Type	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	377	1.10
Commercial	106	0.30
Grassland/Pasture	472	1.30
Industrial	889	2.50
Institutional/Government	93	0.26
Long-Term Specialty Corps	72	0.20
Mobile Home Parks	66	0.18
Mobile Homes (not in parks)	19	0.05
Multi-Family	14	0.04
Other Residential Structures	6	0.02
Outdoor Recreation	182	0.51
Pasture	37	0.10
Resorts/Campgrounds	111	0.31
Single Family	1,699	4.80
Single Family Farms	17	0.05
Water	2,334	6.50
Woodlands	29,105	81.80
Total	35,599	100.00

Forest and woodlands comprise 81 percent of the land in the Town of Pelican. Surface water (lakes and streams) is the next largest category with 6.5 percent. Approximately 5 percent of the land area is currently being used for residential purposes, while 2.8 percent of the land is in commercial/industrial use.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The community survey responses were utilized to identify the key issues impacting the Town "vision statement." These issues formed the basis around which the following list of goals and related policies were drafted. The combined goals and policies are a statement of the Town's basic land use philosophy and a planning guide for local officials, residents, and other interests to use and understand. In general the Town's growth rate is considered to be acceptable, yet support for future residential development is desirable.

GOAL 1:

Provide orderly, planned growth that will promote health, safety, environmental welfare, and make efficient use of the land, public services and tax dollars. Require a minimum lot size of one (1) acre for new residential development, to protect groundwater resources from impacts of higher density development. Utilize large lot development concepts to help preserve the rural character in designated areas (5-10 acre lots).

POLICIES:

A. Evaluate all new development proposals on the recommendations of this plan.

B. Restrict new development in areas known to be unsafe, unsuitable or incompatible.

C. The Town should actively participate in planning and zoning decisions made on County levels that effect the Town and land use.

D. The Town shall regulate housing density to minimize groundwater degradation areas from private sewage disposal systems.

E. Restrict the size and number of mobile home parks allowed within the Town.

F. Utilize forestry zoning on county owned and commercial forest lands.

G. Any Town level regulations (zoning) enacted should allow "non-conforming" type structures to remain with normal and reasonable maintenance to the extent authorized under state statute.

H. Maintain and follow the Town Road Improvement Program to address road maintenance and reconstruction priorities for the Town's road system.

GOAL 2:

Encourage light commercial and industrial interests.

POLICIES:

A. Address all commercial/industrial development proposals on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the variable nature of their uses and needs.

B. Discourage strip development along town roads in order to insure traffic safety, mobility and avoid urban sprawl.

C. Architecture and character of commercial/industrial development should be consistent with traditional Northwoods landscaping and exterior materials.

D. Encourage the size and appearance of commercial signage be reflective of the Northwoods character in similar fashion with such architecture.

GOAL 3:

Preserve, protect, and enhance shorelands, wetlands and publicly owned lands used for recreation and wildlife management purposes.

POLICIES:

A. The Town shall encourage low-density single family residential development especially for its lake and river front properties.

B. New waterfront development set back is 75' from shoreline for equity development standards as well as aesthetic and water quality.

C. In accordance with Oneida County, new development lot size should require a minimum shoreline width of 100' and a minimum depth to accommodate single family residential development standards (50,000 square feet).

D. Shoreland access for condominiums, apartments, mobile home parks, businesses, or keyhole access should be discouraged or prohibited in areas not provided with sewer service.

E. The Town should preserve shoreland where critical natural habitats, floodways, historic sites, scenic spaces, steep slopes, and wetlands are present.



COMMUNITY PLANNING SURVEY

By conducting a community survey, consensus on the issues facing the Town of Pelican and a shared vision for its future can be developed. Of the 1550 surveys that were mailed to property owners, 623 were returned for a response rate of 40%. Sixty-nine percent of those surveyed described themselves as being a permanent resident of Pelican, while 18% indicated that they were seasonal residents. About 24% of respondents owned undeveloped land in the Town, and 5% owned commercial or industrial land. Twenty-six percent describe their land as an individual lot with 41% holding 1 to 5 acres and 21% over 5 acres. Thirty percent described their property as a lake lot, and 2% checked "on a farm".

Over 25% of all respondents were over the age of 65, 22% were 55-64, 43% were 45-54, 18% were 35-44, 5% were 25-34 and 1% was under 24. Additionally, over 50% lived with frontage on a Town Road and nearly 20% lived within 200 yards of County Highways 'C', 'G', or Business '8'.

A review of the key issues from the survey are summarized below:

- Survey respondents had mixed opinions on what the minimum residential lot size should be. Forty eight percent felt that it should be one acre, followed by 15% each on less than one and two acres. There was a mixed response between three, five and ten acres or more (6, 4 and 2% respectively). About 8% were not sure.

- Housing development that respondents felt should be encouraged in the Town included single family homes at 84%, seasonal/recreational housing at 29%, and elderly housing and manufactured homes at 17% respectively. Other choices were not as popular including subdivisions, cluster development, apartments, duplexes, condominiums, and "not sure" received a 6% response. Other forms of housing were less attractive with only 5% choosing mobile home parks.

- A majority (77%) were in favor of the Town adopting design standards for mobile and manufactured homes.

- The largest majority (46%) would support additional residential development, while 22% oppose additional residential development, and 31% "had no opinion".

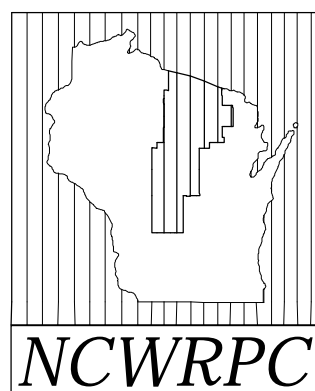
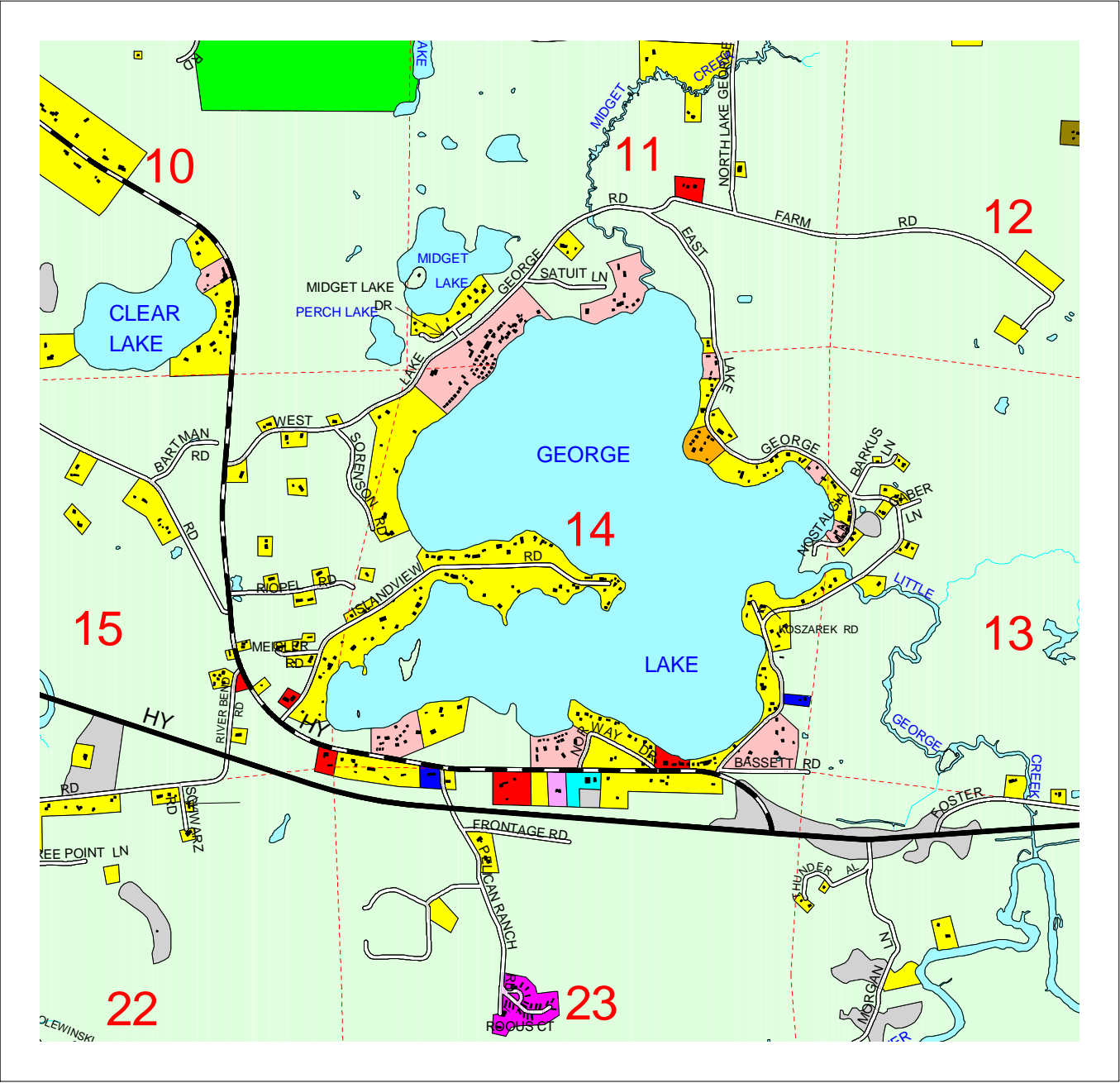
- Most (44%) agreed that both light and heavy industry should not be allowed to locate within the Town. However, a substantial number (35.5%) would like to see only light industry which represents a sizable split in preference.

- Likewise, most agree (54%) that the Town should be involved in attracting commercial and retail businesses and 46% do not agree, compared with 59%, in the following question that the amount of commercial development is about right.

- Eighty-eight percent feel "very strongly" that there should be aesthetic requirements for commercial and industrial developments. Also, 89% believed that specific standards should be set for business advertising signs.

- With regard to lakes in the Town of Pelican, 90% indicated that they felt residential development coupled with resort /recreational development should prevail. Forty-three percent indicated that the lakes were developed at an acceptable level, however, 39% believed that they were over developed.

- Sixty-nine percent believed that the Town should have a "say" in where new growth should go."



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PROPOSED LAND USE TYPES

The proposed land use activity areas depicted on the plan map are generalized. The land use plan recommends conceptual land use categories. Note, these categories are not "zones" and do not have the authority of zoning. The following is a brief description of the various use categories shown on the map, which must be used in the context of the other provisions of this plan report:

FOREST

This category includes all lands designated as forestry in the Town of Pelican. Future development of these lands out of the basic permitted forestry uses will require review by the Town of Pelican for consistency with the intent of the this land use plan and/or its future updates.

RESIDENTIAL AND FARMING

A broad use category intended to allow continued operation of existing farming and non-metallic mining/quarrying activities while maintaining a largely rural atmosphere with single-family housing or other low-density development. Future development should be planned/permitted in such a manner as to minimize conflict between agriculture and mining activities through the use of various types of "buffer zones" or other appropriate measures.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

A rural residential use category intended to allow operation of forestry related activities, forest recreation based activities and home-occupations while maintaining a largely rural residential atmosphere with single-family housing or other low-density development. Future development should be planned/permitted in such a manner as to minimize conflict between residential and forestry or other rural activities through the use of various types of "buffer zones" or other appropriate measures.

RECREATIONAL

Areas set aside for private and public use and enjoyment centered around lake use activities and the general outdoor sporting industry. Such areas should be maintained and possibly expanded for future development.

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Survey responses indicate the desire to maintain the lake shoreline areas with high quality single family residences. Any development/improvements of these properties should be done in such a manner as to minimize their impacts on the natural shoreline aesthetics, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and other public natural resource values of the lakes. Property owners should be encouraged to go "beyond" the minimum restrictions by increasing the setback distance of new structures, minimizing the amount of impermeable surfaces (roof, pavement) to limit runoff, and limit shoreline vegetation clearing. Other use categories/types for these properties should be limited as protection for the high property values of these lake residences.

RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL

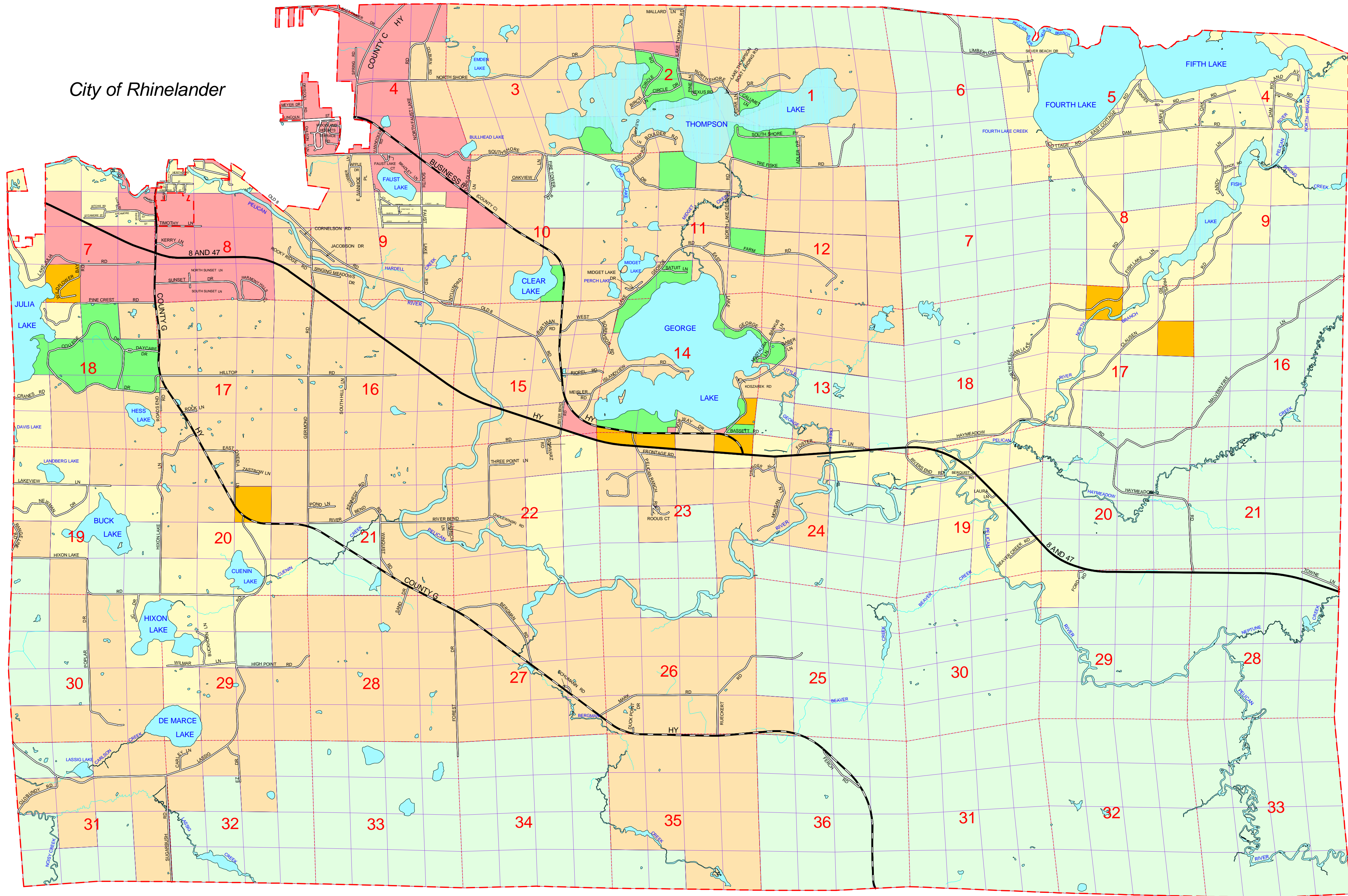
The intent regarding this use area is to blend the mixed uses of both housing and retail/commercial. Compatibility is determined by scale/size, distance/setbacks, and total area density. Future recommendations are to keep different land uses separated by "natural buffer strips" or other developments (streets and roads).

BUSINESS

Designed for existing business areas, this category should only be expanded for retail and light industrial uses compatible with the "Northwoods" Character where concentrations of businesses already exist. Areas which should not be developed for business uses include shoreline areas and other areas with significant residential development in close proximity.



LAND USE PLAN MAP - TOWN OF PELICAN, ONEIDA COUNTY, WI

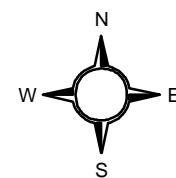


LEGEND

- US HIGHWAYS
- COUNTY HIGHWAYS
- LOCAL ROADS
- - - TOWN BOUNDARY
- - - SECTION LINES
- - - FORTY LINES
- WATER

LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES

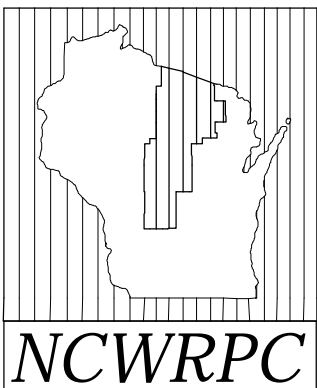
- BUSINESS (B)
- FOREST (F)
- RECREATIONAL (REC)
- RESIDENTIAL AND FARMING (RF)
- RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL (RRET)
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (SFR)
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL (RRES)



3000 0 3000 6000 Feet

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF PLAN BY:
ANDREW FAUST, GIS SPECIALIST



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IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this plan depends on the willingness of local officials (both Town and County) to use it as a guide when making decisions that affect growth and development in the Town of Pelican. It is also important that local citizens and developers become aware of the plan.

The tools and techniques recommended to implement the land use plan are as follows:

TOWN DECISION MAKING

The Town Board should adopt the plan and use it as a guide in decisions that affects all development within the Town.

ZONING

The Town should consider its options for developing and implementing zoning in the Town. Zoning is one of the primary tools for implementing and achieving community plans.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

The Town should consider the development of design standards for mobile and manufactured housing including specifications for permanent foundations, skirting, permanent water systems and minimum floor area. An ordinance dealing with solid waste and landfill siting issues should also be considered. A sign ordinance setting specific standards for advertising signage to include location, size and maintenance requirements is also recommended, as is a lake use ordinance in conjunction with local lake associations.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION/EDUCATION

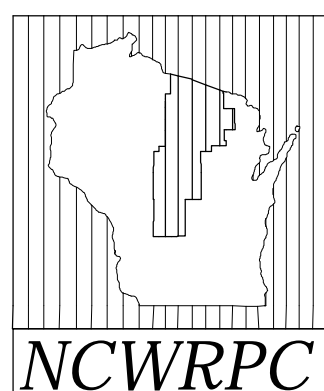
The Town should encourage citizen awareness of the Town's land use plan by making copies available and conducting public informational meetings with the assistance of Oneida County UW-Extension.

CONSIDER OTHER TOOLS

Additional tools and approaches can be utilized by the Town to achieve the goals of the plan. These include but are certainly not limited to the following: fee simple land acquisition, easements (purchased or volunteered), deed restrictions, land dedication, and ordinances or programs regulating activities such as impact fees, land division, building permits, erosion control, septic pumping, mobile homes and/or keyhole access, etc.

REVIEW AND UPDATE

An essential characteristic of any planning program is that it be ongoing and flexible. Periodic updating of the plan is necessary for continued refinement and course correction in the planning program to insure that it reflects the desires of the Town's citizenry. Property owners may petition the Town Board at any time to make changes to the plan.



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