

## **CHAPTER 3: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

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## INTRODUCTION

This portion of the *Town of Spruce 20-Year Comprehensive Plan* highlights the town's future land use plan, known as the General Plan Design. The General Plan Design builds upon the town's existing land use issues to establish a planning strategy and map which will guide the location and density of future development, while preserving various natural resources, over the next 20 years in the Town of Spruce.

## 20-YEAR GENERAL PLAN DESIGN

The General Plan Design was developed based on the information contained in:

1. *Volume II: County Resources*;
2. the survey results and other public input found in Chapter 1 (Introduction) and the appendices of *Volume I: Town Plan*; and
3. the community inventory and development goals found in Chapter 2 (Inventory, Trends, and Forecasts) of *Volume I: Town Plan*.

The data and input in these sections of the plan were major components in both the development of the 20-Year General Plan Design Map (**Map 3.1**) and the following Recommended Development Strategy for the town's 20-year planning period.

### **Land Use Recommendations**

The following land use classifications associated with the Town of Spruce Future Land Use Plan best represent the community's character and are in the best interest of the town's future growth

*Note:* All categories are not represented on the General Plan Design Map (**Map 3.1**), however future development strategies for each are discussed in this chapter. The town's future land use classifications include:

- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Industrial/Light Industrial
- Parks and Recreation
- Governmental / Institutional / Utilities
- Agriculture / Woodlands
- Transportation
- Mineral Resources Overlay
- Environmental Corridors

Utilizing the land use classifications, this section details the suggested type, location and density of development for the Town of Spruce 20-year planning period.

### **Residential**

It is the intent of this classification to promote orderly and efficient residential growth patterns that are consistent with adjacent land uses and discourages further fragmentation of woodlands, productive agricultural areas, and open spaces. As a result, residential development in the Town of Spruce is categorized into *concentrated residential* and *rural residential*.

### ***Concentrated Residential***

The Concentrated Residential category is illustrated as *Residential* on the town's 20-Year General Plan Design Map (**Map 3.1**). This residential classification is designated for portions of the town that contain large concentrations of existing development along with adequate infrastructure and will allow for future growth with similar residential types and densities.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Developments will continue to be concentrated adjacent to Kelly Lake.** Future compact development is planned due to the accessibility of the Kelly Lake Sanitary District along with other convenient services. Consider the following issues as these areas become more developed.
  - Sanitary District capacity/expansion
  - Continue to monitor surface water quality
  - Provision of Emergency services
  - Stormwater management
  - Connectivity of Transportation system
  - Traffic control
  - Signage
  - Nuisances
  - Recruitment of commercial services
- **One and Two family residencies will be the primary development** with the possibility of infill developments and rehabilitation, or redevelopment of existing structures.
- **Multi-family developments may be considered within the Kelly Lake sanitary district.**
- **New residential development types are encouraged to conform to surrounding uses.** Conflicting size or type of development may detract from existing properties.
- **Future residential development shall be sensitive to natural features.** Environmentally sensitive areas (i.e. woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, etc.) in new areas of residential development should be preserved.
- **The single family residential zoning district will be the primary zoning district of choice for any proposed residential development** in areas shown as concentrated residential. The town may also consider the use of the rural residential zoning district on a limited basis when the use of that district better aligns with existing residential development.

### ***Rural Residential***

Future residential development is highly encouraged toward areas in the Residential classifications on the 20-Year General Plan Design Map (**Map 3.1**). However, the town's agricultural lands, woodlands, and open spaces will likely encounter residential development pressure during the 20-year planning period. This residential category is intended to allow low density development while maintaining the town's visual and environmental integrity in areas illustrated as "Woodlands and Agriculture" on the town's 20-Year General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**). The following recommendations provide methods to best protect the town's rural landscape from increased fragmentation.

*Recommendations:*

- **If residential development is permitted, low density development should be considered** as long as steps are taken to preserve agricultural and wooded areas, viewsheds, open spaces and areas deemed important for the town to keep preserved.
- **New residential development should conform to surrounding uses** in order not to detract from or conflict with existing properties.
- **Discourage developments in rural areas that may cause a hindrance to protective services.** Developments with long driveways and improper signage can be disruptive for fire, police or rescue services.
- **Encourage new development techniques which maintain a balance between agricultural/woodland areas and new development.** Utilize various development techniques such as conservation/cluster subdivisions (Figure 3.1) in an effort to protect the surrounding environmental features; allow for more open space; and preserve farmland, woodlands and wildlife habitats within the town.

Figure 3.1: Subdivision Design



Traditional Subdivision Design

Source: Arendt, R. G. 1996. Conservation design for subdivisions

Conservation Subdivision Design

- **Any non-agricultural development proposed for areas in the Agricultural designation on the 20-Year General Plan Design should be evaluated on a list of criteria set by the town.** The following are examples of general criteria that should to be analyzed by the Town Plan Commission and Town Board prior to making a decision.
  - Inventory of surrounding land uses,
  - Physical measurements and topography,
  - Geology, hydrology and vegetation,
  - Structure, utility and roadway locations and dimensions,
  - Effects on neighboring properties,
  - Economic impacts,
  - Natural resource impacts,
  - Necessary permits from other agencies, etc.

- **The establishment of natural or man-made buffers between residential development and farming operations** will help reduce land use conflicts.
- **Access controls are encouraged to limit the number of driveways** along the primary corridors in order to improve safety and reduce road maintenance costs.
- **The rural residential zoning district will be the primary zoning district of choice for any proposed residential development** while the town may also consider the single family residential zoning district on a limited basis when a smaller lot size would further the towns intent of preserving woodlands and agricultural lands.

## Commercial

The town does not view itself as a community that would attract large commercial businesses during the 20 year planning period. As a result, only two locations have been identified for commercial development on **Map 3.1**. Large businesses are expected to locate within nearby communities that have adequate infrastructure.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Businesses in the town should be compatible with the character of the town.** Any new commercial must be consistent with the scale of the town and be environmentally friendly.
- **The town supports home-based businesses** that are properly permitted, compatible with the character of the town, and do not negatively impact other area land uses.
- **Consider businesses that meet the demands of the growing population around Kelly Lake** along with tourist businesses and specialty shops that would fit with the rural nature of the town.
- **Control the appearance of commercial businesses** by reviewing designs, signage, and landscaping of future commercial establishments through building scale and appearance. Any new business development should be directed away from environmental sensitive areas (shown as “Environmental Corridors” on Map 3.1).
- **Development of new commercial spaces should be carefully planned in order to minimize the impacts on existing infrastructure.** Proposals for new development should consider the adequacy of existing infrastructure to accommodate the needs of that area. New development should minimize the costs of utility and road extensions. Additionally, the presence of truck traffic, noise, and other impacts of industrial activity should be minimized when located near residential areas. When necessary, buffers should be created to minimize impacts between residential and business land uses.
- **Proposed businesses not located within areas planned for commercial development will be considered on a case-by-case basis.** The town should first determine if the business will negatively impact the surrounding land uses and if it is a use that is consistent with the vision of the town. If a change in zoning is considered to permit the proposed business, the town may consider utilizing the restricted commercial or neighborhood commercial zoning districts.
- **The location of home-based businesses should be carefully scrutinized to ensure their operations do not interfere or compromise surrounding land uses or the rural integrity of the town.** For any home based businesses that grow to a level that requires a change in

zoning, the town should first determine if the business will negatively impact the surrounding land uses. If a change in zoning is required to permit the business, the town may consider utilizing the restricted commercial or neighborhood commercial zoning districts.

## **Industrial / Light Industrial**

The Industrial/Light Industrial land use classification specifically accommodates manufacturing businesses which creates or changes raw or unfinished materials into another form or higher valued product. Since industrial manufacturing can occur at various intensities, the inclusion of light industrial accommodates less intense operations. The town does not view itself as a community that would attract large industrial operations during the 20 year planning period and have not identified any areas for industrial development on **Map 3.1**. Industrial uses are expected to locate within nearby communities that have adequate infrastructure, while light industrial uses may be considered in areas designated for commercial development on **Map 3.1** or in other areas where commercial businesses may be considered.

*Recommendations:*

- **Light Industrial uses in the town should be compatible with the character of the town.** Any new light industrial uses must be consistent with the scale of the town and be environmentally friendly.
- **Control the appearance of light industrial businesses** by reviewing designs, signage, and landscaping of future establishments through building scale and appearance. Any new light industrial business development should be directed away from environmental sensitive areas (shown as “Environmental Corridors” on Map 3.1).
- **Development of new light industrial spaces should be carefully planned in order to minimize the impacts on existing infrastructure.** Proposals for new development should consider the adequacy of existing infrastructure to accommodate the needs of that area. New development should minimize the costs of utility and road extensions. Additionally, the presence of truck traffic, noise, and other impacts of industrial activity should be minimized when located near residential areas. When necessary, buffers should be created to minimize impacts between residential and light industrial land uses.
- **The location of home-based businesses should be carefully scrutinized to ensure their operations do not interfere or compromise surrounding land uses or the rural integrity of the town.** For any home based businesses that grow to a level that requires a change in zoning to light industrial, the town should first determine if the business will negatively impact the surrounding land uses.

## **Mixed Use**

The Mixed Use land use classification includes areas with a mix of existing residential and commercial land uses. It is the intent of this classification to promote continued development of commercial uses within these areas, as they are located along County Highway G near Kelly Lake and the intersection of County Highway A and County Highway B. It is not the intent of the town to promote significant residential development within these areas.

*Recommendations:*

- **Mixed use development is planned along County Highway G near Kelly Lake and the intersection of County Highway A and County Highway B.** These locations are envisioned to contain primarily commercial, retail, and service related businesses that will be widely used by the town's residents and visitors along with some existing residential uses and some limited new residential uses.
- **New businesses should be compatible with the character of the town.** The town encourages new businesses to feature attractive, well-maintained buildings that include appropriate signage and lighting so not to detract from the rural character of the community and the mixture of uses within the planned mixed use area.
- **New development should be directed away from environmentally sensitive areas (shown as “Environmental Corridors” on Map 3.1).**
- **Development of new commercial spaces should be carefully planned in order to minimize the impacts on existing infrastructure.** Proposals for new development should consider the adequacy of existing infrastructure to accommodate the needs of that area. New development should minimize the costs of utility and road extensions. Additionally, the presence of truck traffic, noise, and other impacts of commercial activity should be minimized when located near residential areas. When necessary, buffers should be created to minimize impacts between residential and business land uses.
- **Residential uses within these mixed use areas are anticipated to continue, however it is not the intent of the town to promote significant residential development within these planned mixed use areas.** The town will utilize the single family residential zoning district for the limited new residential uses as needed.
- **The general commercial zoning district will be the primary zoning district of choice for any proposed commercial proposals.** When a commercial proposal within one of the designated mixed use areas is situated amongst existing residential uses the town may wish to utilize the restricted commercial or neighborhood commercial zoning district.

## **Governmental/Institutional/Utilities**

The Governmental/Institutional/Utilities land use classification addresses the capacity and efficiency of government buildings, emergency facilities, utility sites, religious facilities, and public services provided to the town residents.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Monitor the capacity of the Kelly Lake Sanitary District as development pressures increase.** Discuss possible expansions as necessary.
- **Future municipal development should be located and signed in a manner to ensure safe access into and out of all public buildings and facilities.**
- **Continue to provide safe and convenient access to the town's public buildings.**
- **The Town Board will continue to monitor services provided to the town residents.** Because many of the services, including fire, police and emergency services, road maintenance, disposal of solid waste, etc. are being provided by other agencies and municipalities, the Town Board should work with adjoining communities and Oconto County

to help provide future services to a growing population as effectively and efficiently as reasonably possible. Consider the following:

- Work with fire departments and county sheriffs department if population rapidly increases.
- Recommend that developments be built a reasonable distance from a public road for adequate provision of utilities and emergency services.
- **Be aware of the changing issues on telecommunication towers and antennas.** Work with adjacent communities to discuss issues such as alternate structures, joint use of new and existing towers, and visual and other potential adverse impacts of telecommunication towers. Remain informed as to when and where possible telecommunication towers may be constructed in the area.
- **Explore renewable energy options where feasible.** More homeowners are utilizing individual renewable energy systems for the power. Discuss any possible impacts to the town's landscape prior to allowing individual systems.

## Park and Recreation

The Park and Recreation land use classification discusses existing and future recreational facilities, trails, parks, and open spaces within Town of Spruce. The intent is to promote the existing recreational facilities, trails, parks and open spaces within and around the town while ensuring that the public is served with adequate park facilities, ranging from passive to active recreation.

*Recommendations:*

- **The town should continue to maintain Holt Park and the existing boat landings located within the town.**
- **The town should consider charging a fee to launch watercraft on Kelly Lake.**
- **The town should be involved in updates to the Oconto County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.**
- **Future town recreational facilities should be located in areas that can be easily accessed by either motorized or non-motorized means.**
- **Future town recreational facilities should be built to accommodate all age groups, levels of disabilities, and skills.**
- **The town should cooperate with the surrounding towns, Oconto County, etc. to promote connectivity of recreational uses such as trails.**
- **Proposed private campgrounds should be compatible with the character of the town and located in areas that do not conflict with area land uses.** Any campground proposals should be directed away from environmentally sensitive areas (shown as “Environmental Corridors” on Map 3.1) and away from areas that do not have suitable soils to support the sanitary system needs of the proposed use.

## Agricultural

The Agricultural land use classification encompasses lands being utilized for agricultural

purposes within the areas illustrated as “*Agriculture / Woodlands*” on the town’s 20-Year General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**). The agricultural classification is designed to preserve existing lands devoted to the growing of crops and the raising of livestock.

*Recommendations:*

- **The town should encourage the preservation of agricultural lands** and the farmer’s right to farm. Areas that have been designated as farmland preservation areas within the town are shown on **Map 3.29** found in Chapter 3 of *Volume I: County Plan*. The town should verify the location of development proposals in relation to areas designated for farmland preservation when reviewing development proposals in the area illustrated as agriculture/woodlands on the town’s 20-Year General Plan Design.
- **Future residential developments are encouraged to be directed toward areas in the Residential classification.** In an effort to create orderly and efficient development patterns, in addition to providing efficient services, the town should encourage residential developments to the areas indicated on the General Plan Design Map (**Map 3.1**).
- **If residential development is permitted in these areas, low density development should be considered.** Future development in these areas should be done in a fashion which is least impactful to the natural environment and ensures fragmentation of quality open space does not occur.
- **Where appropriate, encourage new development techniques and programs which will preserve as much farmland as possible.** Utilize various development techniques such as conservation/cluster subdivisions to help protect the farmlands within the town.
- **As development pressure increases, the town will need to weigh the cost of converting farmland into other intensive uses.** A preferred approach is to encourage property owners thinking about developing subdivisions to plan for development on lands that are least productive based upon the Natural Resources Conservation Services map data (**Map 2.4**).
- **Encourage natural buffers for development.** Adequate buffers are encouraged between farming and future non-farming operations in these areas in order to lessen conflict between land uses.
- **Advocate that agricultural lands are under adequate farming practices.** It is important for these lands to continue to be under the best management practices for agricultural activities.
- **Work with Oconto County to address the issue of large-scale farming operations.** Large-scale farming operations are recommended to be located in areas of the town that avoid environmental corridors and surface water features.

## Woodlands/Open Space

The Woodlands/Open Space land use classification encompasses lands being utilized for woodland and natural open space and is illustrated as “*Agriculture / Woodlands*” on the town’s 20-Year General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**). The woodland classification is designed to promote the maintenance of private woodlands and open space areas within the town.

*Recommendations:*

- **If residential development is permitted in these areas, low density development should be considered.** Future development in these areas should be done in a fashion which is least impactful to the natural environment and ensures fragmentation of quality open space does not occur.
- **Utilize existing natural areas to enhance the character of the town.** Preserve large natural areas and/or features to enhance/retain buffers between incompatible uses while maintaining scenic views of the town.
- **Maintain the town's private woodland areas.** Woodlands should not be developed with great densities. Utilizing unique development options such as conservation subdivision designs or clustering can help maintain the continuity of woodlands.
- **Encourage the replacement of woodlands (reforestation).** Efforts to replenish the woodlands that are removed would be beneficial to the natural makeup of the area and the community as a whole. Benefits include maintaining/improving wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities, restoration of clean water resources, erosion prevention, etc.

## Transportation

The Transportation land use classification covers both motorized and non-motorized travel. This includes the existing road network; future recreation paths and trails; and recommendations for safety and improved traffic movement in the town.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Preserve town views along transportation routes.** Limiting driveways and recommending landscaping/buffers along major transportation corridors assists in preserving the rural atmosphere that the town currently maintains.
- **Ensure a cost effective road system management plan.** Utilize the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) program to assist in maintaining the roads in the future.
- **Roads should be constructed to handle a variety of traffic flow, recreational vehicles farm equipment, and bicycle traffic.**
- **Consider adopting an Official Map to delineate future road extensions.** Areas of increasing development, especially around Kelly Lake, an official map will assist with orderly growth patterns.
- **Recreational paths, routes, and trails such as snowmobile trails should have proper signage and intersection controls** to ensure safe crossing and interaction with vehicles.

## Mineral Resources Overlay

The Mineral Resources Overlay is depicted on the General Plan Design to ensure active and future quarries are identified within the town. This overlay includes both metallic mining, although extremely rare, and non-metallic mining activities. In most cases, the type of mining to occur in Oconto County will involve extraction of gravel, marl, clay, and similar materials to be conducted for a specified approved period of time. When mining is complete and the site is reclaimed, the overlay shall be removed and the previous land uses allowed to continue.

- **The town should work with Oconto County Officials to monitor existing mining operations.** Any issues involving the mining operation should be brought to the attention of

the county officials in a timely manner.

- **The town should adequately review proposed mining operations.** The town should recommend conditional use requirements to the county that ensure the mining operation does not significantly compromise surrounding land uses. The application of setbacks will help alleviate issues with neighboring properties.
- **Mining operations should be sited in areas that will have little negative impact** on the neighboring properties, adverse effects on groundwater, or significant wear on local roads.
- **The town should work with Oconto County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources** to ensure mining operations are properly closed and reclaimed.
- **The town should pursue avenues in which to reclaim mining operations not sufficiently reclaimed.**
- **The reclaimed mining sites will be available for other land uses.** The town will need to determine the land use that best suits the area and needs of the town. (i.e. agriculture, recreational, residential)

## Environmental Corridors

Environmental corridors contain four components; 100-year floodplain as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), WDNR wetlands, and steep slopes of 12 percent or greater, and setback from all navigable waterways as defined by the Oconto County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Together, these elements represent the areas of the town that are most sensitive to development and are intended to be preserved.

*Recommendations:*

- **This plan should serve as a guide for the preservation of environmental corridors.** Using the environmental corridors as a guide when reviewing proposed developments will give the town background information to determine what areas are important to maintaining the rural character and quality of the town's natural resource base. The corridors are an overlay to the recommended plan (**Map 3.1**) and should be utilized as a reference.
- **Future developments should be steered away from environmental corridors as much as possible,** or they are designed in such a manner to minimize the negative effects on water resources, wildlife habitats and the overall character of the town.
- **Any future development near environmental features should be carefully reviewed in order to maintain ample wildlife corridors.**

## IDENTIFIED SMART GROWTH AREAS

According to s. 16.965, Wis. Stats., a “smart growth area” is “an area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands within 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 utility and municipal and state governmental costs.”

During the planning process the Town of Spruce identified lands located in and adjacent to the Kelly Lake sanitary district as a “smart growth area”.

- Locating areas of new growth adjacent to lands of existing development and existing infrastructure allows for more orderly and efficient development patterns.
- Assists the Town of Spruce in maintaining its rural character by preserving the many valuable agricultural lands, open spaces, and woodlands that make up much of the town's landscape.



Map 3.1: 20-Year General Plan Design