

CHAPTER 2: INVENTORY, TRENDS, AND FORECASTS

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter inventories the unique natural features that make the town of Stiles distinct from its neighboring communities. It also highlights the demographic, economic, and land use trends and forecasts used to create the Town of Stiles 20-Year General Plan Design, **Map 3.1**.

COMMUNITY INVENTORY

History and Description of Planning Area

Town of Stiles History

The Settlement of Stiles was surveyed in 1839 and sections were located in 1840. At the time of its organization in 1852, Oconto County contained most of northeastern Wisconsin north of Green Bay, an area from which Marinette, Forest, and Florence counties were later partitioned. At that time, the town of Stiles included most of present Oconto County north of Suamico and Pensaukee and west of Oconto.

In 1850, Merrick Murphy and Jerusha, his wife, obtained a deed from Thomas Lindsay, who had arrived the year before. After securing a U.S. patent, Murphy started a logging operation and put a dam across the Oconto River. He became associated with Anson Eldred, a lumberman who had come into Wisconsin from Michigan in 1842 where he operated mills through partnerships with lumber yards in Milwaukee and Chicago. Merrick Murphy and his associates secured a charter to establish a dam in 1851, and with this mill and dam, began the lumber industry of Stiles. It grew in volume through the Civil War and through the 1870's and '80's, bringing fame to the valley of Oconto for the white pine timber shipped to England and Scotland.

Anson Eldred took over Murphy's interests in 1853 and built a settlement at Stiles named after his son, Howard Stiles Eldred. Operations increased in volume with an estimated 21 million feet of logs in the river or at the mill by 1855-56. In 1856, Anson Eldred, his brother Elisha and Uri Balcom of New York State formed a partnership. After a stormy relationship, Uri left for Oconto and formed another partnership of Holt and Balcom. The mills were largely staffed by Indians, and one, Chief Machickanee of the Menominees, is reputed to have pitched his tepee for hunting at the present flowage which bears his name, as does the Machickanee Forest.

The settlement at Stiles, its white houses built along the bank of the river, was a pleasant place to live. At night, it was illuminated by the flames of the huge open fireplace built on an island in the river, and the people sat by watching it. In the spring, the lumberjacks went roaring up and down the board walk when they celebrated returning from the woods. The men lived in the company houses or at one of the big boarding houses built for their use.

Lumbering stopped with the sawing of the last log in 1910, and by 1912, the yard was sold out and the planing mill shut down. Joseph Bergemeier left off the last of the steam in a long wailing blast of the whistle. Families soon moved away and the houses were torn down. A pulp mill carried on until 1924 when it, the last village industry, burned. After that, no one looked for a miracle and one by one the families moved away until there were only eight or nine families remaining. Someone set fire to the post office and general store in a failed robbery attempt in 1927. One of the lone remaining buildings was the famous hostelry erected before the Civil War for use by the mill workers. Since it was no longer needed to serve as housing for mill workers, the boarding house was converted to a "country tea room" and a summer hotel in 1928.

With cities like Milwaukee and Chicago growing noisy and congested, the resort at Stiles was not at a loss for customers as people came by car and train to enjoy the beauty and comfort of the Machickanee Forest area. The popular destination had a short-lived boon until the historic Stiles house was burned down in 1932. In spite of the frequency of fires and mass migrations from the town, two “institutions” have survived Stiles’ past-the St. Patrick’s Catholic Church and the general store, which was converted from a dance hall and tavern in 1928 and has since become a private residence.

The big business now in Stiles is real estate, as more and more “big city” people buy lots for homes and cottages. And many people, who were once seasonal residents, are now retiring permanently to their summer homes.

Town of Stiles Planning Area

The town of Stiles is located in the southeastern portion of Oconto County encompassing an area of approximately 35 square miles, or 22,514 acres. The closest cities from the center of the town are: Oconto Falls, five miles to the west; Oconto, eight miles to the east; and Green Bay, 23 miles south. The town of Stiles contains two unincorporated communities- Stiles and Stiles Junction. Stiles is located in the southern area of the town adjacent to USH 141 and northeast of the Machickanee Flowage. Stiles Junction can be found in the east central area of the town at the intersection of STH 22 and USH 141. **Map 2.1** provides a general location of the town of Stiles in Wisconsin, and **Map 2.2** highlights the planning area.

Past Planning Efforts

The town has prepared and adopted several local ordinances that either support or expand upon county zoning ordinances. An inventory of local ordinances is contained in Chapter 4: Implementation. These ordinances will be used to implement the comprehensive plan.

The town of Stiles has participated in a number of planning efforts over the past few decades. The information contained in the *Town of Stiles 2015 Comprehensive Plan* adopted in September 1999 served as the basis for preparing the *Town of Stiles 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*, which was adopted in 2008 and then updated in 2021. This plan does acknowledge the following reports and integrates, as appropriate, the findings from those studies. The goal of the comprehensive planning process is to identify the key findings from these past plans in order to ensure their consistency in utilization and implementation within the context of the comprehensive plan. Any of the plans still being used should be revisited from time to time to check their relevance to current conditions and whether there is any progress being made towards implementation.

Sewer and Water Plan: The *Oconto County Sewer and Water Plan* was prepared by Max Anderson Associates to identify areas having a problem with or need for centralized utility systems, based on population, housing, density, and the age and types of individual utility systems. The plan was adopted in 1971 and reports future sewer and water needs for communities within the county.

Oconto County Farmland Preservation Plan: In 1985, Oconto County adopted the Oconto County Farmland Preservation Plan prepared by Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission. This plan served as a guide for preserving farmland, woodlands and significant environmental areas within the county and to help maintain and expand the agricultural economy. In 2014, Oconto County amended the Oconto County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan to include all statutorily

required components of the Farmland Preservation Plan. The Oconto County Comprehensive Plan includes all requirements of Chapter 91.

Non-point Source Control Plan - Little River Watershed: This plan was prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and adopted in 1986. The purpose of the *Non-point Source Control Plan* is to assess the non-point pollutants in the Little River Watershed and guide the implementation of control measures. Non-point source control measures are needed to meet very specific water resource objectives designed to protect and enhance the surface and ground water in the watershed.

Oconto County - Green Bay West Shore Sewer Service Area Plan: This document was adopted in 1996 as part of a water pollution control planning process required by the *Federal Clean Water Act* and administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) under Chapter NR 121, Wisconsin Administrative Code. The plan prepared by the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission establishes the geographic extent of the sewer service area for the year 2015, delineates environmental corridors, defines procedures for reviewing boundary and plan amendments, and serves as a guideline for government interaction and community development.

Town of Stiles 20-Year Comprehensive Plan: In September of 1999, the town of Stiles adopted its first comprehensive plan entitled the Town of Stiles 2015 Comprehensive Plan. With planning assistance from the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, the town of Stiles developed a plan to guide future development through the creation of a 20-year General Plan Design. Development strategies were prepared to more efficiently and effectively implement the plan over the course of the planning period. In July of 2008, the town of Stiles adopted its first major update to the comprehensive plan. This updated plan was titled the Town of Stiles 20-Year Comprehensive Plan. This plan was developed with planning assistance from Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission and Oconto County Planning staff as part of a county wide planning project. In 2017, the town of Stiles began working with Oconto County Planning staff to complete the first major update to the comprehensive plan. This plan update was completed and adopted in 2021.

Community Resources

Natural Resources

Natural resources are large elements and defining features for local communities. They contribute to providing a clean and abundant supply of groundwater; a source for economic development opportunities; plus comprise an environment essential to maintaining healthy and diverse biological communities.

The resources that lie above and beneath the ground are very important when considering future development. A summary of those resources located within the town of Stiles are highlighted below. Expanded definitions and countywide maps of these natural resources can be found in Chapter 5 of *Volume II: County Resources*.

- Three soil types can be found in the town of Stiles. Lake silt and clay covers the southeastern one-third of the town; clayey till is covering nearly the northeastern two-thirds of Stiles; and a small section in southwestern corner of the town has soils related to outwash sand and gravel. The contour of the town encompasses a number of depressions and basins and is scattered with lake and outwash plains. This combined topography and soil type limits the

amount of water driven erosion that is likely to occur in the town.

- The depth to bedrock is 60 inches or greater providing natural filtration of contaminants from septic systems, farming operations, and stormwater runoff before it gets to the groundwater.
- The town is located in two watersheds—the northern area contains the Little River and the southern part of Stiles contains the Lower Oconto. These watersheds are part of the larger Lake Michigan Basin that drains directly into Green Bay of Lake Michigan.
- Two of the county’s main water features can be found in the town of Stiles—the Machikanee Flowage located along the southern boundary with the Town of Abrams and the Oconto River meandering west to east through the southern part of the town.
- Town residents get their drinking water through individual wells tapping the groundwater below. Groundwater, lakes, and rivers are all connected as water commonly flows between them. Groundwater is also connected to the surface of the land by rain and melting snow which carry substances from the surface down to the groundwater below.
- Glaciation has caused a majority of the town to be poorly drained and pocketed with marshes and wetlands. The topography within the town of Stiles reflects this glaciation with landscapes fluctuating from level to rolling.
- Elevations vary by approximately 160 feet. The highest elevations, 750 feet above mean sea level, are in the northwest area of the town. The lowest elevations, approximately 590 feet above mean sea level, are on the banks of the Oconto River in the southeast area of the town. A majority of the town maintains elevations of approximately 700 feet above sea level.
- The upland woodlands (those woodlands that are not in a wetland) are located throughout the town. These woodlands are primarily found in areas that are unsuitable for agricultural use; mixed in with ridges and steep slopes; adjacent to primary water features such as the Machikanee Flowage and the Oconto River; and bordering wetlands which are prone to flooding.
- Surface waters are abundant throughout Oconto County. **Map 2.3** illustrates the surface water features in the town.
- The Plan Determinants consist of wetlands, floodplains, steep slope (12 percent or more), and the 75-foot setback from surface water features. Each of these four Plan Determinant features for the town is shown on **Map 2.4**. The individual plan determinants merged together forms a single feature known as “environmental corridors”, which is displayed on the town’s General Plan Design (**Map 3.1**).
 - Several areas of steep slopes are present within the town. Primary locations are along the Oconto River, the Machikanee Flowage, and smaller tracts in the central area of the town. Areas of steep slope based on soils characteristics within the town of Stiles can be seen as a constraint to development due to increased runoff and soil erosion.
 - The floodplains are located adjacent to the Oconto River, Machikanee Flowage and Splinter Creek in the southern portion of the town, and the Little River and its tributaries in the eastern half of the town.
 - The town has a large, contiguous wetland complex located in the northwest quarter of the town providing vital wildlife habitat. This area is known locally as the Lena Swamp.

Agricultural Resources

The town's prime agricultural soils are shown in **Map 2.5**. These soils have been determined to contain the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for growing crops for human and animal consumption. There are approximately 6,269 acres of croplands and pastures in several non-contiguous tracts primarily located in the northern and western parts of the town. Areas that have been designated as farmland preservation areas within the town are shown on **Map 3.30** found in Chapter 3 of *Volume I: County Plan*.

The town of Stiles is part of Oconto's First Drainage District covering portions of the Town of Lena and the Village of Lena.

More information regarding agricultural resources and farmland preservation in the town and the county can be viewed in Chapter 3 of Volume I: County Plan and Chapter 5 of *Volume II: County Resources*.

Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources are typically sites, features, and/or objects of some importance to a culture or a community for scientific, aesthetic, traditional, educational, religious, archaeological, architectural, and historic reasons.

- The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains a list of 37 historically significant structures located in the town of Stiles. A majority of these listings are homes, businesses, and agriculture related structures. Some of the more prominent entries on the historical society's site are the former Stiles Town Hall, Stiles General Store, Stiles School, and St. Patrick's Church and Fellowship Hall.

A comprehensive list for the town can be found on the Wisconsin Historical Society's website at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/>

Community Design Features for the town of Stiles are distinguishing features and are often reference points, roads and trails, boundaries, areas of commonality, and destinations individuals will acknowledge and express to describe the town or a definable area within the town. For the town of Stiles, these include:

A. Landmarks: (reference points)

- Oconto River
- Machickanee Flowage
- Stiles Junction
- Pioneer County Park
- Town of Stiles Cemetery
- Lena Swamp

B. Pathways: (roads and trails)

- U.S. Highway 141
- State Highway 22
- County Highway I
- Stiles Road

- Bike Trail beginning near USH 141 (end of Military Road) to City of Oconto

C. Edges: (boundaries)

- Machickanee Flowage

D. Districts: (encompass areas of commonality)

- Lena School District
- Oconto Falls School District
- NWTC
- West Shore Sewer Service Area
- City of Oconto Falls' Planning Area
- Drainage District

E. Nodes: (destinations within the center of a community)

- Town Hall
- Former Town Hall
- St. Patrick's Church
- Stiles School

Economic Resources

Being a rural community, the town's local economy is connected to its vast amount of natural resources such as water features, forestlands, and open space that promote recreational opportunities and attract seasonal residents and tourism. The town's location, along with the good transportation system that includes State Highway 22, U.S. Highway 141, and operating rail line, make it an ideal location for future economic opportunities.

Other employment types found in the town of Stiles include food and tavern service, gas and convenience stations, auto salvage, auto restoration, building contractors, and a pallet company. According to the 2017 land use inventory, there are nearly 79 acres of land dedicated to commercial uses and approximately 43 acres used for industrial operations. The town's industrial land use consists of three non-metallic mines-sand and gravel extraction.

Utilities and Community Facilities

An inventory and assessment of existing facilities is made to determine whether or not there may be condition and capacity issues in meeting future development needs. Information on the town of Stiles community and public facilities are outlined below. The town's parks and community facilities are shown on **Map 2.6**. A countywide inventory of all public facilities with maps depicting their location can be found in Chapter 9 of *Volume II: County Resources*.

The town of Stiles municipal building contains office space. The town hall, garage, and recycling facility are located at 5718 Watercrest Road. The Town Hall serves as space for town meetings, town's polling place, and eventual location of town administration. Residents have two options for disposing of their solid waste and recyclables. Residents may also dispose of their refuse at the Stiles Waste and Recycling Center at



5718 Watercrest Road. The town has a recycling program where residents can bring their recyclables. Town residents maintain their own wells for drinking water. A portion of the town is within the West Shore Sewer Service Area that includes the towns of Little Suamico, Abrams, Pensaukee, and Little River and the City of Oconto.

The Oconto County Sheriff's Department provides primary police protection for the town. Fire protection is provided through aid agreements with the City of Oconto Falls and the Village of Lena. **Map 9.4** in Chapter 9 of *Volume II: County Resources* illustrates the fire districts in Oconto County. The Oconto Falls Area Ambulance Service located in the City of Oconto Falls provides emergency services to town residents. The EMS/Ambulance districts are shown on **Map 9.5** in Chapter 9 of *Volume II: County Resources*.

The northeastern two-thirds of the town is served by the Lena School District while the southwestern third is within the Oconto Falls School. See **Map 9.4** in Chapter 9 of *Volume II: County Resources* for public school districts located in Oconto County. In addition, there are two private schools serving town residents - St. Anthony's Congregation School at 253 N. Franklin in Oconto Falls and Marantha Seventh Day Adventist School located on 5100 McCarthy Road in the town of Stiles.

There is no public library located in the town of Stiles. Residents of the town can utilize the Oconto Public Library, Oconto Falls Community Library, or the Lena Public Library. Town residents are served by the United States Post Offices located in the cities of Oconto and Oconto Falls and the Village of Lena. Residents of the town can access both local and satellite TV services. Oconto Electric Cooperative provides electric service to the town. Natural gas service is available in limited areas within the town of Stiles. There are two telecommunications towers located in the town. One tower is on Landing Lane next to the hydro-plant owned by the Oconto Electric Cooperative. The second is at 6842 State Highway 22.

The HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital located at 835 S. Main Street, Oconto Falls and the Bond Community Center located at 820 Arbutus Avenue, Oconto are the primary medical facilities utilized by the town's residents. The town of Stiles has two cemeteries-St. Patrick's/St. Louis and Stiles Town Cemetery. There is ample space still available within each cemetery.

Parks and Recreation

The town of Stiles has various recreation facilities and parks. The Oconto River Bowmen archery range is located on CTH I and is open to the public. Pioneer County Park can be found on Pioneer Park Road. Two boat landings are accessible on Landing Lane, west of USH 141. The landing providing access to the Machickanee Flowage also includes a handicapped accessible fishing dock. These recreation areas are noted on **Map 2.6**. Please see **Map 9.7** in Chapter 9 of *Volume II: County Resources* for a detailed inventory of county operated park and recreational areas within Oconto County.



Transportation

Transportation specific information for the town of Stiles is highlighted below. For more details on the transportation systems in Oconto County, please see Chapter 8 of *Volume II: County Resources*.

- U.S. Highway (USH) 141 is a principal arterial route. The function of an arterial highway is to move traffic over medium to long distances, often between regions as well as between

major economic centers, quickly, safely and efficiently. USH 141, from Green Bay to six miles south of the Village of Crivitz, has been upgraded to a four-lane divided freeway.

- State Highway (STH) 22 is also an arterial highway. It originates in the south central part of the state near the Wisconsin and Illinois border. From there, STH 22 travels north through the City of Shawano. From Central Shawano County, the highway travels in a northeasterly direction to the City of Oconto Falls, through the town of Stiles intersecting with USH 141. STH 22 ends on the eastern side of Oconto County in the City of Oconto at the intersection with USH 41.
- County Highway (CTH) I is classified as a collector road. The primary function of county roads classified as “collectors” is to provide general “area to area” routes for local traffic. CTH I originates at USH141 is the southern part of the town and extends west to the City of Oconto Falls and ends at CTH A.

The rail tracks and facilities located within the town are owned and operated by the Escanaba and Lake Superior Rail Company. The track runs north to south through the town just west of and approximately parallel to USH 141. Although the Escanaba and Lake Superior Railroad does not currently provide service to any industry or business located within the town of Stiles, it may become an important element of the town’s transportation system in the future.



Table 8.2 found in Chapter 8 of *Volume II: County Resources* lists the mileage of roads under the jurisdiction of the town of Stiles by function.

Map 8.1 found in Chapter 8 of *Volume II: County Resources* provides the location of the roads by function within the town.

Land Use Inventory

A detailed field inventory of land uses in the town of Stiles was completed by the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission in 2007. In 2017, as part of the plan update a detailed existing land use inventory was completed by Oconto County Planning. A consistent standard land use classification methodology and process was used to determine existing land uses. Please refer to Chapter 11 of *Volume II: County Resources* for a description of these categories. A breakdown of the town’s land uses and acreages is shown on Table 2.1. **Map 2.7** displays the town of Stiles existing land use.



Table 2.1: Existing Land Use

Land Use Type	Total Acres	Percentage Total Land	Percentage Developed Land
DEVELOPED			
<i>Single Family</i>	1,096.8	4.9	61.7
<i>Mobile Homes</i>	41.7	0.2	2.3
<i>Multi-Family</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Vacant Residential</i>	2.8	0.0	0.2
Total Residential	1,141.3	5.1	64.2
Commercial	78.9	0.3	4.4
Industrial	42.6	0.2	2.4
Transportation	270.1	1.2	15.2
Communications/Utilities	19.8	0.1	1.1
Institutional/Governmental	19.9	0.1	1.1
Recreational	90.7	0.4	5.1
Agricultural Structures	114.9	0.5	6.5
Total Developed Acres	1,778.2	7.9	100.0
UNDEVELOPED			
Percentage Undeveloped Land			
Croplands/Pasture	6,269.9	27.8	30.2
Woodlands	12,244.4	54.3	59.0
Other Natural Areas	1,615.3	7.2	7.8
Water Features	629.3	2.8	3.0
Total Undeveloped Acres	20,758.9	92.1	100.0
Total Land Area	22,537.1	100.0	

Source: Oconto County Planning, 2021.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND FORECASTS

Population

Historic Population Trends

Analyzing changes in the trends and characteristics of a community's population and housing is important in understanding the needs of its current and future populations.

The town of Stiles experienced a fluctuation in population from 1910 to 1970 due to the loss of the lumbering industry in the 1920's and the lack of comparable businesses to attract new residents to the area. The town's population increased dramatically during the past 40 years with the addition of 644 new residents from 1970 to 2010. According to WDOA's population estimated, Stiles should continue to see some population growth with the town projected to see an increase of population of 101 new residents between 2010 and 2020. The expansion of U.S. Highway 141 and the desirable Machickanee Flowage and Forest area is a draw for individuals seeking a comfortable location to live not too far from larger city amenities.

For more information on population trends in Oconto County refer to Chapter 6 of *Volume II: County Resources*. For town specific population data refer to Tables 6.14 – 6.18 found in Chapter 6 of *Volume II: County Resources*.

Population Projections

By analyzing past population trends, it is possible to project future growth. The use of forecasting calculates, or predicts, a future number by using existing figures. Projecting future population growth over this 20 year planning period will enable to the town of Stiles to better understand future needs for housing, utilities, transportation, recreation, and a number of other population influenced services. For this comprehensive plan, the town has utilized Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) projections.

Based on WDOA population projections, the town of Stiles can anticipate continued new resident growth. More information on county population projections and how the town of Stiles compares to Oconto County and local municipalities can be found in Chapter 6 of *Volume II: County Resources* with town specific projections shown in Table 6.17.

Housing

Housing Trends and Characteristics

As reported by the U.S. Census, the town of Stiles' total number of housing units more than doubled by 379 units between 1970 and 2010. The town experienced its largest increase in housing units, almost 69 percent, between 1970 and 1980.

Housing Projections

Utilizing the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) occupied housing unit projections, the town can expect to see a continued increase in occupied housing units.

For more housing information for Oconto County and the town of Stiles refer to Tables 6.19 – 6.22 found in Chapter 6 of *Volume II: County Resources*.

Economic Development

The town of Stiles' economy is heavily influenced by its natural resources, primarily the Machickanee Forest and Flowage and the Oconto River. Agriculture and farming operations also continue to be key elements of the local economy. The county forest, flowage, and rivers promote tourism and attract a number of seasonal residents which further enhances opportunities for local retailers and service providers.

A majority of the town's residents are employed in management, professional and related occupations. For a breakdown of employed persons by occupation for the town of Stiles refer to Table 7.11. This table along with other county and town economic information can be found in Chapter 7 of *Volume II: County Resources*.

LAND USE TRENDS AND FORECASTS

Land Use Issues and Conflicts

As the town continues to prepare for future development, it is necessary to recognize and acknowledge any existing land use issues or conflicts. These areas of concern, as highlighted below, may cause problems for future planning activities and will need to be addressed within the General Plan Design context and the implementation strategies outlined later in this

comprehensive plan.

- The lay-out of concentrated residential developments, primarily along the Machickanee Flowage, have single entrance and exit roads that do not allow for trail or recreation connectivity.
- The continued residential development will lead to ongoing fragmentation of natural areas (woodlands, open space) and agriculture land limiting the ability to implement and sustain management plans.
- There are multiple driveways along main transportation routes such as State Highway 22 and County Highway I only serving single residences and businesses.
- The town has limited recreational trails. The abandoned rail line from Stiles to the City of Oconto is underutilized due to the lack of signage.
- There will be continued development pressures on environmental corridors and natural areas.
- It is anticipated there will be continued loss of agriculture land and open space mainly north of State Highway 22.
- As commercial activity grows along the highway corridor, access points and the appearance of the area is important, including the U.S. Highway 141 and State Highway 22 interchange.
- The second tier development along Machickanee Flowage will necessitate the need for additional transportation, recreation, stormwater management, and sanitary sewer planning.
- Much of the town's residential growth is expected to occur within the City of Oconto Falls' one and one-half mile extraterritorial boundary. It is important to develop a boundary agreement between the town and the city to ensure the area is being developed efficiently and municipal services can be provided more cost effectively at a later date.



Anticipated Land Use Trends

The continued increase in fuel prices will be a major consideration as to where people chose to live and work. The town of Stiles has been and continues to be an ideal location for those who want to reside in the country yet within a short driving distance of shopping, schools, and amenities. The Machickanee Flowage offers recreational and development opportunities unique to the area.



- It is anticipated there will be continued steady residential growth throughout the central and southern areas of the town.
- There will be less dense residential development occurring north of State Highway 22.
- Denser residential development will occur within the southwestern corner of the town concentrated within the City of Oconto Falls' extraterritorial boundary and the Machickanee Flowage area because of the desire to reside adjacent to Oconto County Forest Land, Oconto

River, and Machickanee Flowage.

- Commercial, retail, and light manufacturing businesses are expected to continue locating along the highway corridors and the State Highway 22 and U.S. Highway 141 interchange.
- With land available, there will be continued in-fill development of existing residential and commercial areas.
- With a limited number of existing agriculture operations, there is an expected trend toward continued consolidation of farming operations into larger animal units and the creation of smaller agricultural operations focusing on organic crops and animals.
- The concentration of residential and commercial development may necessitate the need for additional municipal services such as a stormwater management program.
- With the towns' abundance of natural resources and growing population, town officials will need to review the ongoing need for additional recreational facilities, such as trails, public access roads, parks, and campgrounds.
- Development causes the continued fragmentation and parcelling of land into smaller lots.
- The strong demand for crops may influence farmers to begin tilling marginal crop land and land set aside for traditional open spaces.

Development Considerations

Land Supply

The town has room for properly planned residential, commercial, and industrial development without greatly compromising natural features. There is sufficient land designated for commercial and light industrial development along highway corridor and at the USH 141 and State Highway 22 Interchange. Stiles' location will continue to make the town increasingly desirable, especially as communities to the south become increasingly developed. The quality of the Oconto Falls School District will make it a draw to young families. However, there are limited development opportunities for some types of land uses due to the lack of utilities, primarily water and sewer. Demand will remain high for residential development on and adjacent to the Machickanee Flowage and Oconto River for both year-round and seasonal housing.

Land Price

Land prices within the town of Stiles are expected to follow the regional trend of increasing land prices for development. Rural areas within the 30 mile radius of the Green Bay Metro area are very desirable. The remaining agriculture land will increase in price as demand for alternative fuels climb, which are becoming a strong incentive to continue farming and to crop more marginal land. Land within desirable business locations such as along the highway corridor will maintain at a very high value due to the access to traffic. There are limited development opportunities for some types of land uses due to the lack of utilities, primarily water and sewer. The value for limited natural resources land (wooded and open space) will continue to be desired for hunting/recreational purposes. First and second tier development Machickanee Flowage and Oconto River will continue to increase values for these limited locations.

LAND USE PROJECTIONS

Five Year Incremental Land Use Projections

Comprehensive Planning legislation s. 66.1001, Wis. Stats. requires plans to include projections in five-year increments for future residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses over the 20-year planning period. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) projections were used to determine anticipated future growth within the town.

It is **not** the intent of this comprehensive plan to see an entire area within a land use classification noted on the General Plan Design to be developed. The specified uses should be allowed if consistent with the type, location, and density of existing development. Some of the land within the land use classification is not developable due to natural features, easements, setbacks, existing preferred land uses, or availability of supporting infrastructure. Within developing areas, these additional considerations and land uses generally account for approximately 25 percent of the gross land area. Given these considerations, the gross land use needs for residential, commercial, and industrial development for the town of Stiles by 2040 is **1,321 acres**. The net acreage total for each of the illustrated land uses in Table 2.2 is **991 acres**.

Table 2.2: Five-Year Incremental Land Use Projections, 2020-2040

Year	Residential		Commercial		Industrial	
	Acres	Total	Acres	Total	Acres	Total
2020	297.5		20.6		11.1	
2025	246.8	544.3	17.1	37.6	9.2	20.3
2030	232.8	777.0	16.1	53.7	8.7	29.0
2035	119.0	896.0	8.2	61.9	4.4	33.4
2040	-	896.0	-	61.9	-	33.4

Source: Oconto County Planning, 2021.

Residential Projections

The town's future residential land use acreage was projected utilizing the following methodology:

- Using the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) projections;
- A per residential lot average of three and one-half acre; and
- A multiplication factor ranging from 1.25 to 2.25 to allow for market flexibility and to further account for the continued decline in persons per household of 2.37 in 2020 to 2.24 by 2040.

Using this projection model illustrated in Table 2.3, the town of Stiles can anticipate the construction of 170 new homes by 2040. The land needed for these new homes equates to 896 net acres and 1,195 gross acres. A majority of this new housing development is anticipated to occur in the Machickanee Flowage area and within the extraterritorial planning area for the City of Oconto Falls.

Table 2.3: Five-Year Incremental Housing Land Use Projections, 2020-2040

Year	New Housing Units	Acres/DU	Market Value	Acres Needed
2020	68	3 1/2	1.25	297.5
2025	47	3 1/2	1.5	246.8
2030	38	3 1/2	1.75	232.8
2035	17	3 1/2	2	119.0
2040	0	3 1/2	2.25	0.0
Total	170			896.00

Source: Oconto County Planning, 2021.

Note: The projections are for single family homes and do not account for multiple family and apartment complexes which have greater residential densities. The new housing units shown for 2020 would be the increase from the number of housing units determined in the 2010 census and the projected number of housing units in 2020. From 2010 thru 2020 it is projected the town will see 68 new housing units. From 2020 thru 2025 it is projected the town will see 47 new housing units.

Commercial Projections

To calculate commercial land use projections, the ratio between residential acreage and commercial land use acreage is determined based on the 2017 land use inventory. That ratio was one acre of commercial land to nearly 14.47 acres of residential land for a 14.47:1 ratio. Based on this ratio, the town can anticipate allocating some 61.9 net acres for new commercial development equating to 82.56 gross acres during this planning period. This calculation is shown in Table 2.4 below. Commercial areas have been designated along the USH 141 corridor that will be suitable for both local and transient traffic. The corridor will also allow light industrial operations, if they fit the size and scale of the surrounding land uses and complement the existing business community.

Table 2.4: Five-Year Incremental Commercial Land Use Projections, 2020-2040

Year	Res. Acreage	Ratio	Acres Needed
2020	297.5	14.47	20.6
2025	246.8	14.47	17.1
2030	232.8	14.47	16.1
2035	119.0	14.47	8.2
2040	0.0	14.47	0.0
Total			61.9

Source: Oconto County Planning, 2021.

Industrial Projections

The ratio between residential acreage and industrial land use acreage is also determined based on the 2017 land use inventory. That ratio was one acre of industrial land to approximately 26.8 acres of residential land for a 26.8:1 ratio. The industrial land noted on the land use inventory is comprised primarily of existing non-metallic mining operations. At this time, town officials are not aware of any future mining operations planning to open. As reflected in Table 2.5, the town of Stiles has allocated 33.4 net acres for future light industrial development equating to 44.58

gross acres.

Table 2.5: Five-Year Incremental Industrial Land Use Projections, 2020-2040

Year	Res. Acreage	Ratio	Acres Needed
2020	297.5	26.8	11.1
2025	246.8	26.8	9.2
2030	232.8	26.8	8.7
2035	119.0	26.8	4.4
2040	0.0	26.8	0.0
Total			33.4

Source: Oconto County Planning, 2021.

Agricultural Projections

With a projected 1,321 gross acres of land needed for residential, commercial, and industrial development during the 20 year planning period, a percentage of that land will be taken out of existing agricultural operations. With approximately 6,270 acres of agricultural and pasture lands identified during the town's 2017 land use inventory, it is the intention of the town to preserve as much of these remaining open spaces as possible. The town of Stiles has instituted a five acre minimum residential lot size requirement north of State Highway 22, a three acre minimum lot size south of the highway, and three acre minimum lot size within the City of Oconto Falls' mile and one-half planning area. These larger residential lot sizes are designed to protect the rural nature of the town without compromising the existing agriculture land. There has been and will continue to be denser residential development taking place in within the City of Oconto Falls' planning area north and south of the Machikanee Flowage. Commercial with some limited light industrial is being directed along the U.S. Highway 141 corridor and State Highway 22 interchange.

Map 2.1: Location Map

Map 2.2: Planning Area

Map 2.3: Surface Waters

Map 2.4: Plan Determinants

Map 2.5: Prime Agricultural Soils

Map 2.6: Public and Community Facilities

Map 2.7: Existing Land Use

