

## 8.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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### Introduction

According to the Smart Growth Law, the purpose of the Economic Development Element is to promote the stabilization, retention and expansion of the economic base, and quality employment opportunities. To address this requirement, this chapter includes:

- Highlights of the **labor force information** from Chapter 3.0;
- An assessment of **strengths and weaknesses** with respect to attracting and retaining business and industry;
- An overview of programs that deal with **environmentally contaminated sites** for commercial or industrial uses; and
- A list of organizations (and contact information) providing **economic development programs** at the county, regional, state and federal levels.

The Town of Buffalo does not have an economic activity center or “downtown” area. Residents travel elsewhere (i.e. Montello, Pardeeville) to obtain needed goods and services. The Town of Buffalo does have a select number of local businesses within the town limits. Farming is the primary economic activity in the town.

### Economic Development Vision

*Economic development in the Town of Buffalo is in harmony with the Town's natural environment. Farming is the foundation of the local economy. Residents also enjoy access to a few new businesses (i.e. restaurant and gas station) that have developed along the STH 22 corridor. These businesses respect the town's "dry" alcohol policy.*

### Labor Force and Economic Base

Based on the information presented in **Chapter 3.0**:

- By a 2:1 margin, more people commute out of the county to places of employment than commute into the county for work.
- Most residents who are employed travel beyond the town limits to work.
- Marquette County residents who work make only approximately 70% of the state average wage.
- The unemployment rate in Marquette County has decreased since 1990.

- The average income for Marquette County residents has been consistently lower than the state average for decades.
- Nearly a quarter of town residents do not have a high school diploma.

These facts and statistics are consistent with the fact that the Town of Buffalo has a very limited economic base consisting of a few small businesses. Residents consider this limited amount of commercial development desirable.

## Current Business Inventory

There are few businesses located in the Town of Buffalo. Businesses are found in nearby cities that can offer additional amenities (i.e. sewer and water). Therefore, residents travel to nearby communities to purchase needed goods and services. Nevertheless, the town enjoys a **unique collection of more than 20 small businesses**, in addition to farm operations, that are scattered throughout the community. These businesses include:



- Custom Vinyl Windows, W2760 CTH CM, Pardeeville, WI
- M&M Pet Supply, W2782 CTH CM, Pardeeville, WI
- Fairview Cabinets, W2302 Barry Road, Pardeeville, WI
- Millers Green Haus, W2214 Barry Road, Pardeeville, WI
- Lilac Wood Shop, W1996 Barry Road, Dalton, WI
- Twin Peaks Boutique, W3333 Grouse Road, Pardeeville,
- Lolar Automotive and Auto Sales, N2289 STH 22, Montello, WI
- Buffalo Auto Sales, W2753 CTH B, Montello, WI
- Schoewe Nursery, W2101 Gillette Road, Dalton, WI
- Sleepy Hollow Bed & Breakfast, N1997 16<sup>th</sup> Road, Montello, WI
- Woods & Goods, N1629 STH 22, Montello, WI
- Wilderness Campground, N1499 STH 22, Montello, WI
- Barb Beahm Income Tax & Bookkeeping, N1621 STH 22, Montello, WI
- Metal Building Concepts, N1074 17<sup>th</sup> Road, Dalton, WI
- Julie Ann Salon, N1171 17<sup>th</sup> Road, Dalton, WI
- LeRoy Miller Saw Mill, N1020 Smith Road, Dalton, WI
- Bontrager Furniture, N1112 18<sup>th</sup> Road, Dalton, WI
- CWS Building Erectors, N1683 18<sup>th</sup> Road, Dalton, WI
- Hickory Ridge Pheasant Farm, N330 14<sup>th</sup> Road, Pardeeville, WI
- Skyhurst Photos, W2201 Golden Road, Dalton, WI
- Henry Cuff Trucking, N1407 CTH F, Montello, WI
- DMS Roofing, N874 CTH F, Montello, WI
- Joseph Lanier, Jr., N557 CTH F, Montello, WI
- Quality Dog Grooming, N365 CTH F, Montello, WI
- Ken's Taxidermy Studio, W2371 Grouse Road, Dalton, WI
- Dennis Bush Trukut Saw Mill, N255 13<sup>th</sup> Road, Pardeeville, WI

The list of local businesses is not all-inclusive. Some residents have **home occupations** (i.e. child care, hair stylist, taxidermy, contractors, small engine repair, etc.). As the scope of the Internet continues to grow, more and more people may be working at home in the future. The nature of these businesses presents no noticeable impact or nuisance to adjacent properties. The **town supports a resident's right to have a small business operation** on his/her property or work at home, provided that the business activity or establishment does not create a nuisance for neighboring property owners by generating excessive traffic, noise, lighting, signage, etc.

## Local Business Environments

Presently, the town's businesses are **spread across the town**. This situation does not support businesses that are dependent on passing traffic. Likewise, many of these businesses are situated on large properties, which helps to ensure that they do not create a nuisance (visual or otherwise) to adjacent landowners.

The **Amish community supports a business environment** in the Town of Buffalo and surrounding communities. By owning large areas of contiguous land, the Amish have established a farm-based community in the region. Many of the Amish operate businesses on their property to sell the goods they produce. As a result, a network of rural Amish businesses are scattered around the town and in adjacent communities. Nearly all of these businesses are accessible from STH 22.

The Town of Buffalo believes if any future non-Amish businesses are established, they will most likely be situated along **STH 22**. Today, development along the corridor consists mainly of single-family homes and farmland. Long-term, additional businesses are desired, including perhaps a restaurant. New business development is encouraged to locate near existing businesses to minimize the impact on farmland, distant views, and open space. Businesses should cater to both passing motorists and area residents.

Given there are some existing homes scattered along the corridor, efforts should be made to protect existing homeowners from the lighting and signage of new development through the use of landscape buffers and signage controls.

## Attracting and Retaining Business and Industry

The Town of Buffalo has several *positive attributes* to offer potential businesses. Specifically, the town has:

- ? A **favorable tax rate**;
- ? Properties with **STH 22 frontage**;
- ? Residents have a **good work ethic**;
- ? **Land available** for development; and
- ? **A large Amish community** that brings tourists to the area and maintains farming economy.

While the town certainly enjoys its share of advantages, there are several *challenges* that the town must contend with when seeking to attract new businesses and industry. In particular:

- ? The Town of Buffalo has **limited services** to offer potential businesses (i.e. no municipal water or sewer service).
- ? The population in the town is not large enough to provide the customer base necessary to support a large commercial endeavor.
- ? Residents of the Town of Buffalo are very **mobile** and can easily drive to nearby communities to purchase services and products.
- ? There is a **limited supply of available workers**. Those workers that are available will likely require training.
- ? Currently there are comparatively **few established businesses** in the town. Businesses generally seek to locate in areas that have a demonstrated ability to support business development.
- ? Commercial establishments that depend on high traffic volumes have limited opportunity to locate in the town because **traffic volumes are relatively low**.

## Economic Development Opportunities

### STH 22

Any future commercial and industrial development in the Town of Buffalo is encouraged along the **highway corridor**. This is pattern of development is desired to protect natural areas, farmland and residential development in other areas town. Furthermore, since the highway is the primary travel route, it provides the most visibility for a business.

It must be understood that the town does not envision STH 22 infilling completely with development over the next 20 years. Preferably, development along the corridor would **expand from existing developed areas near the intersection of CTH B**.

While the town would like to welcome additional commercial, office and light industrial development to support the local tax base, it is important that any new development exist **in harmony with the local environment**. Therefore, new development should be “clean” and not produce a significant amount of waste, which could pose a hazard to natural areas, groundwater and wetlands of the Town of Buffalo. Likewise, new development should blend into the rural landscape and not represent a nuisance to residents. Therefore, new developments must include natural **landscaping and attractive signage**.

## COMM 83

The use of innovative treatment systems, permissible under the provisions of Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter **COMM 83**, may be one approach for the town to consider to attract development that might otherwise seek locations in communities with municipal sanitary sewer service.

For Additional Information about  
COMM 83, refer to Chapter 6.0 .

## AMISH BUSINESSES

Many of the Amish residents have opened shops and roadside businesses. The handmade, homegrown items sold draw tourists to the community. To support this network of businesses, and improve safety, the Town can work with the Amish and County to provide directional signage and reduced speed limit areas. The town will also encourage, and a few supporting businesses on STH 22 (i.e. gas station/convenience store and restaurant).

## Desired Business and Industry

During the planning process it was revealed residents take great pride in the undeveloped, rural character of the community and do not want to see it negatively impacted by business and industrial development. It is only anticipated that a couple of new businesses will establish in the town in the future.

Any new business and industry in the town must understand that municipal water and sewer service is not available. In addition, the town wants to be sure that new development does not jeopardize the rural quality of life. Therefore, businesses and industries that locate in Buffalo should:

- ? Be environmentally friendly;
- ? Have limited outdoor storage (if any) to control unsightliness;
- ? Generate minimal noise and traffic that can be easily accommodated by the existing transportation network;
- ? Require only minimal lighting (on-site lighting only, no beams, or other protruding light sources);
- ? Require only on-site signage (no billboards);
- ? Have generous landscaping to improve the façade from the roadway and buffer the development from adjacent land uses; and
- ? Respect the town's "dry" policies.

Given these constraints, the town would like to target the following types of development:

- ? **Farm operations** as the primary economic activity in the town. Farming is the foundation of the local economy. The town residents want farming to remain the

focal point of the community. As a result, the plan seeks to limit development in farmland areas by directing other uses to other areas of the town.

- ? **Service business** (i.e. restaurant, coffee shop, convenience store) along the STH 22 corridor. These types of businesses would rely on highway motorists and Amish tourists to survive.
- ? **Home occupations** of a professional nature to take advantage of the Internet and other technologies that permit people to work from the privacy of their homes. Home occupations are particularly attractive to the town given the town's low density of development that limits the likelihood that a home occupation will become a nuisance to neighboring property owners.

In the Marquette County Community Planning Survey, residents of the Town of Buffalo were asked about business and employment preferences. The results revealed the following results:

<u>Type of Development</u>	<u>% Agree/Strongly Agree</u>
<i>Small Scale Industrial Development</i>	58.1%
<i>Small Scale Retail Development</i>	56.1%
<i>Small Scale Agricultural Development</i>	55.8%
<i>Moderate Scale Industrial Development</i>	51.6%
<i>Tourism Development</i>	44.2%
<i>Large Scale Retail Development</i>	28.4%
<i>Large Scale Industrial Development</i>	23.2%
<i>Service Development</i>	21.7%
<i>Moderate/Large Scale Agricultural Development</i>	21.3%

## Tools to Promote Economic Development

### RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (RED) EARLY PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

This program is designed to assist rural businesses with 25 employees or less. Grants may only be used for professional services such as preparation of a feasibility study, market study or business plan.

### INTERNET MARKETING

Many towns in Wisconsin are creating Internet Web Pages. The Town of Buffalo should consider marketing itself on the Internet by providing detailed information about available land for commercial/industrial development, community services, programs, and organizations, and includes demographic, economic and housing statistics. Much of this information could be taken from this plan. This type of information is a valuable resource to marketing professionals seeking redevelopment locations.



A Town of Buffalo web site could also be used to advertise community events, post community meeting minutes and agendas, and provide a new forum for residents to provide feedback and get questions answered. Ideally, the Town Clerk would maintain this web site.

### **MILK VOLUME PRODUCTION PROGRAM (MVP)**

The MVP program is designed to assist dairy producers that are seeking to acquire additional cows. The program is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. The goal of the MVP program is to provide qualifying dairy producers with needed financing and to partner with local communities to increase dairy production in Wisconsin. Assistance is limited to no more than \$500 per cow added to an operation or a maximum award of \$1 million. Additional information about this program, including application requirements, is available at [www.commerce.state.wi.us](http://www.commerce.state.wi.us).

### **CREATING COMMUNITY IDENTITY TO SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES**

When talking about future development, this section would be remiss without discussing the desire the Town of Buffalo has to ensure that development in the town is easily identifiable as being in the Town of Buffalo. This will require the town to establish design requirements, through zoning, to define the desired appearance of local businesses. From that point, it will be incumbent upon business owners to follow landscaping, lighting, signage and façade guidelines that create a consistent theme for the community.

Beyond design requirements, the town can also emphasize community identify through:

- ? Unique road signs for all town roads
- ? Gateway or entrance signs along STH 22
- ? Directional signage to Amish and rural businesses

## **Residential Development as Economic Development**

There is potential for residential development in the Town of Buffalo. As such, it will continue to provide an increasing share of the tax base. Therefore, residential development does provide some economic development gains for the town.

However, to a much greater degree than commercial and agricultural development, housing requires extensive services to accommodate resident needs. These services include: schools, parks, sanitary sewer, public safety, roads and associated maintenance (including snowplowing), and other amenities. As an example, in 1994, the Town of Dunn<sup>1</sup> in Dane County, WI conducted a study to understand the tax implications of

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<sup>1</sup> Additional Information about the Town of Dunn Community Services Study is available on-line at [www.town.dunn.wi.us](http://www.town.dunn.wi.us).

development. The study showed for every dollar of tax revenue collected from residential development, \$1.06 was required in services for residential users. (Any service costs greater than \$1.00 result in a net loss for the town.) Conversely, for every dollar collected from a commercial development, \$0.29 was required for services. Therefore, commercial uses bring additional tax dollars into the community. For every dollar collected from farmers, as little as \$0.18 was required in services.

It is important to ensure that local residential tax dollars cover the costs to provide needed services. While the Town of Buffalo supports additional residential development opportunities, the town does not want to see poorly planned new residential development significantly increase town operating and service costs for all existing homeowners and taxpayers. Therefore, the town supports new residential development paying a fair and proportionate share of service costs.

One strategy encouraged by the town to help ensure that future residential development is attractive is the use of conservation or cluster subdivisions. The town believes this type of development will:

- ? Limit overall land consumption to maintain as much valuable farmland as possible;
- ? Minimize infrastructure and maintenance costs for development; and
- ? Utilize COMM 83 systems.

## **Program Assistance**

### **UW-EXTENSION**

Through the Marquette County Office of the University of Wisconsin-Extension Service, the Marquette County Resource Development Agent offers:

- Small business management assistance workshops or one-on-one counseling;
- Information on county revolving loan funds and other sources of financing;
- Research into available government loans; and
- Local demographic information.

### **EAST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION –** *www.eastcentralrpc.org*

ECWRPC maintains an Economic Development Program that provides communities with information for economic development, reviews of program changes and initiatives, and review assistance for local economic development proposals, plans. ECWRPC also reviews regional economic development program recommendations for more effective application at the local level.

A significant portion of the Economic Development Program is updating the CEDS - an annual report that includes a review of the previous year's accomplishments, current



demographic and economic statistics and any significant changes in the local economy. As part of the process, the Commission’s Economic Development Committee helps to identify economic problems and opportunities and economic development projects to address their needs.

ECWRPC also collects and distributes socio-economic data about the region that is useful for market analysis by prospective developers. Furthermore, ECWRPC maintains an inventory of industrial sites and buildings within the region.

### STATE AGENCIES/PROGRAMS

- ? Wisconsin Department of Commerce – *www.commerce.state.wi.us*: the state’s primary agency for delivery of integrated services to businesses.
- ? Wisconsin Department of Transportation – *www.dot.state.wi.us*: the office of disadvantaged Business Enterprise Programs administers a range of services to increase participation of firms owned by disadvantaged individuals in all federal aid and state transportation facility contracts.
- ? Forward Wisconsin – *www.forwardwi.com*: to market outside Wisconsin to attract new businesses, jobs and increased economic activity to the state.
- ? Department of Workforce Development – *www.dwd.state.wi.us*: to build and strengthen Wisconsin’s workforce by providing job services, training and employment assistance, and help employers find necessary workers.
- ? Wisconsin Small Business Development Centers – *www.uwex.edu/sbdc*: to help ensure the state’s economic health and stability through formative business education by counseling, technology and information transfer and instruction. The nearest Small Business Development Center is located at UW-Oshkosh.

### FEDERAL AGENCIES/PROGRAMS

- ? Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration – *www.rurdev.usda.gov*
- ? U. S. Small Business Administration – *www.sba.gov*: provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run and grow their businesses.
- ? US Department of Commerce – *www.doc.gov*
- ? US Department of Transportation – *www.dot.gov*

## Environmentally Contaminated Sites

Throughout Wisconsin, many properties have become polluted in such a way that inhibits their continued use. Aside from the environmental consequences, these properties are often underutilized and/or abandoned. This creates negative impacts on local economies. To address this growing program, the State has developed the authority and resources to help clean up these sites so that they can again be used to contribute to the local economy.

**A Brownfield** refers to an abandoned, idled, or underused industrial or commercial facility or property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

For a **complete history and up-to-date list of brownfield sites in the Town of Buffalo**, including spill locations and mitigation actions taken, check the WDNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Internet web site tracking list available at: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/brrts/find\\_sites.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/brrts/find_sites.htm). According to available information, there is only 1 spill site in the town. That site has been addressed to WDNR specifications. However, this simply means that the investigations conducted by the WDNR are completed. Contamination may still exist on these properties.

The town can pursue organizational and financial assistance from Marquette County, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency if a land contamination issues arise. There are many grant programs available through these agencies to help communities address brownfield (currently vacant commercial and industrial facilities), leaking underground storage tank, and other environmental concerns should they arise in the future.

To prevent an environmental situation, the town will encourage only environmentally friendly business development that is properly permitted and regulated to protect the town's natural environment. In the future, the town will also seek to educate residents (through a newsletter and website) about contamination risks and potentials. Moreover, the town will encourage landowners, with potential contamination problems, to pursue investigation and mitigation opportunities to understand the extent of pollution and address it before severe impacts occur.

## **Relationship to Other Required Plan Elements**

Economic development in the Town of Buffalo has the potential to impact many of the other required plan elements. What follows is a summary of the relationship between the Economic Development Element and the Land Use, Transportation and Intergovernmental Elements.

### **LAND USE**

The location, type, and amount of business development in the Town of Buffalo was an important consideration in the development of the *Future Land Use Maps*. Likewise, as business environments were identified in the planning effort, the importance of landscaping, signage controls and lighting controls to protect the rural character of the town was discussed. The development and enforcement of zoning will be important to this effort.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Existing businesses are located throughout the community on town, county and state roads. This situation presents some challenges, particularly on narrow town roads, with limited shoulder areas and more limited sight-distances. Compounding structural issues,

Amish traveling in horse-drawn buggies also present a hazard. To mitigate these issues, additional signage is encouraged to help visitors locate businesses, and increase awareness of reduced sight-distances, and slow-moving vehicles.

## Goals and Objectives

In 20 years, the Town of Buffalo expects economic activity consist mainly of farm operations. A few new businesses will locate in the town. The location for new business development is illustrated on the *Future Land Use Maps*.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Support local farmers and farm operations as the primary economic activity in the town.
2. Support additional business development along the highway corridors.
3. Encourage local entrepreneurs who seek to expand and diversify the town's economy by opening home occupations.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. Through appropriate zoning and communication with local realtors, seek to concentrate new commercial and industrial development around existing development in areas identified on the *Future Land Use Maps*.
  - a. A copy of this plan will be available upon request and available at the nearest public library for local businesses.
  - b. Establish and enforce zoning code requirements to adequately permit commercial and industrial uses with appropriate signage, lighting, and landscaping.
2. Develop a guide for local property owners who wish to establish home occupations. Include criteria for site development and zoning approvals.
3. Coordinate with county and regional organizations to market the Town of Buffalo for economic growth opportunities.
  - a. Develop a web site to provide demographic, market, site locations, cost, and other information about the community for prospective entrepreneurs.
  - b. Maintain the list of current businesses on the web site.

4. Improve communication with local businesses owners to remain aware of local economic conditions and challenges.
  - a. Through the establishment of a web page, provide business owners with the opportunity to interact more directly with the town to express questions, concerns, and comments.
  - b. Host a meeting with local business owners once every 5 years to discuss local business concerns in the context of this chapter. This meeting should coincide with the town's annual review of implementation strategies.
5. Seek to ensure that the town's development is distinguishable from development in adjacent communities.
  - a. Create a town logo for use on letterhead, etc.
  - b. Seek to integrate the town logo on road signs.
  - c. Locate directional signage at prominent locations along STH 22.

## **POLICIES**

1. *It is the policy of the Town of Buffalo to support local farmers and protect farming operations from development pressures.*
2. *It is the policy of the Town of Buffalo to support the establishment of home occupations, provided such uses do not constitute a nuisance to neighboring properties (i.e. excessive noise, traffic, odors, vibration, etc.) or deter from the rural character of the area (i.e. signage, lighting, etc.).*
3. *It is the policy of the Town of Buffalo to support the use of COMM 83 to promote business and residential development opportunities.*