

Introduction

This chapter builds upon the information and recommendations expressed in the previous chapters to present the *10-Year and 20-Year Town of Buffalo Future Land Use Maps*. These maps illustrate the goals, objectives, visions and policies expressed throughout this plan.

Land Use Vision

Actions taken by Town of Buffalo, through its Comprehensive Plan and supporting regulations, have ensured that the overall appearance of the landscape will not change significantly. While new residences have been built in the Town, they are well planned to protect the town's natural resources, farmland and aesthetic appeal.

Background

To develop the *Future Land Use Maps* a great deal of time and effort was required over the course of a 24-month planning program. The planning process was initiated with an extensive vision development effort and review of the historic and existing population characteristics. This information is described in Chapters 2 and 3. From there, the Planning Committee studied current conditions and future needs related to housing (Chapter 4), transportation (Chapter 5), utilities and community facilities (Chapter 6), and economic development (Chapter 8). The Planning Committee also examined the natural environment (Chapter 7). Finally, existing land use patterns and regulations were considered in the previous chapter.

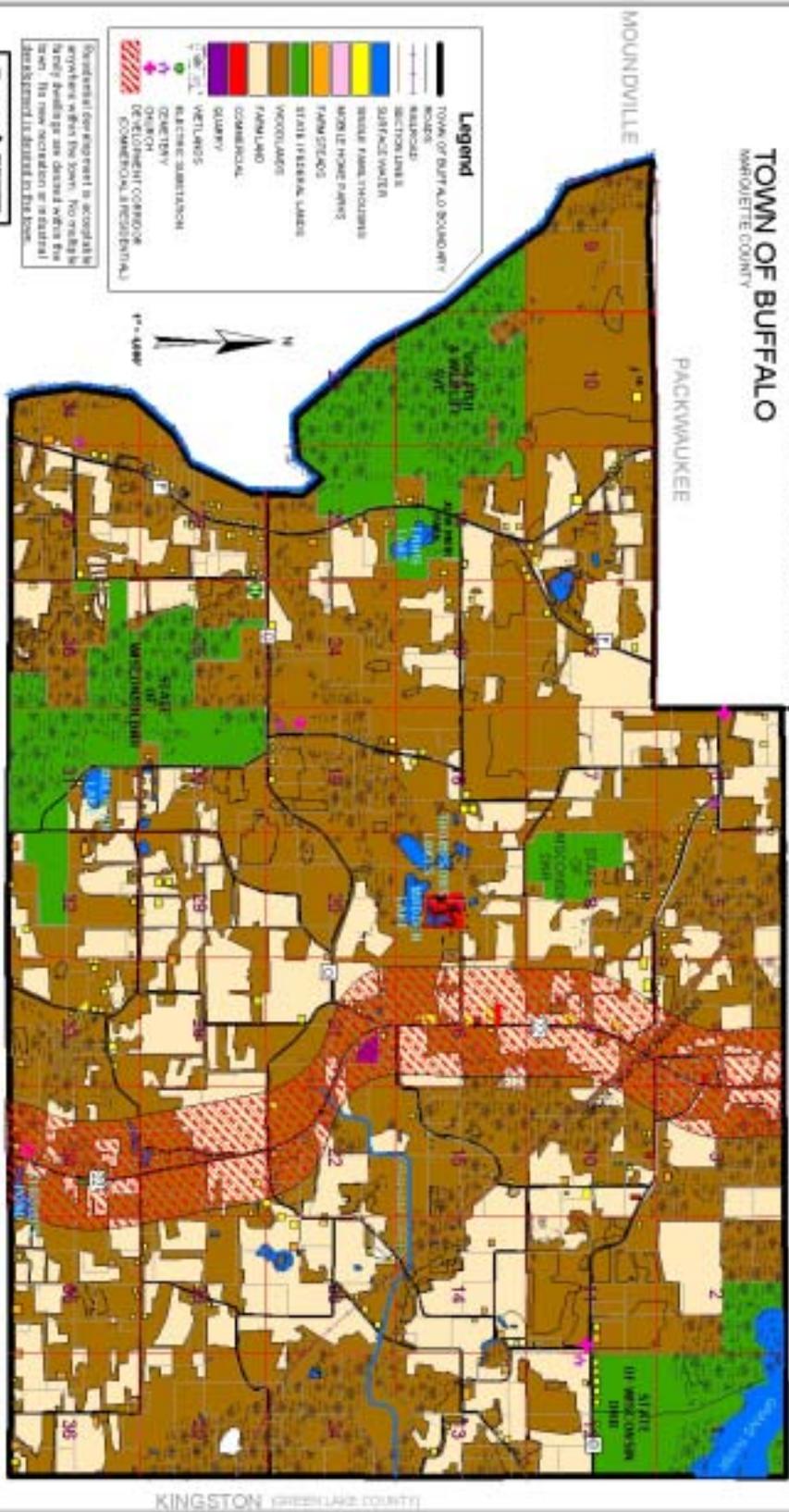
Desired Development

COMMUNITY VALUES

To understand development and preservation desires, the planning process began with an assessment of community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (see Chapter 2). Immediately thereafter, residents were asked to consider community values. By answering the question, "*What makes the Town of Buffalo special?*" it was easy to identify planning priorities. A complete list of values is provided at the end of Chapter 1.

COGNITIVE CONSENSUS MAP

TOWN OF BUFFALO
MARQUETTE COUNTY



COGNITIVE MAPPING

Another tool used to determine desired future development was cognitive mapping. Cognitive mapping is a process whereby individuals have the opportunity to develop their own *Future Land Use Map*, based on their ideas, perceptions, experiences and beliefs. Chapter 2 describes the cognitive mapping process in detail.

A copy of the “Consensus Map” is provided on the previous page of this plan. This map is a composite of all of the individual maps developed by participants. The map indicates that additional single-family residential development is anticipated. New recreation and industrial development is not desired. Residents believe existing recreation resources are adequate to meet future needs (as is demonstrated in the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter). Moreover, residents do not want to see industrial uses established that could pose a threat to the quality of the groundwater supply. Residents indicated that the STH 22 corridor is the primary development area in the town.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Throughout this plan, town results from the **Marquette County Community Planning Survey** have been highlighted to express resident desires for housing, transportation, economic development, etc.

The survey also asked a series of questions related to planning and zoning. The results revealed that most residents believe land use should be governed by zoning. Only about 22% disagreed with this statement, while 63% agreed (about 15% were neutral). There was even more support for planning in the community. Almost 90% agreed that it is important for residents to plan for the future of their community. Only 4% disagreed with this statement. Sixty-seven percent of respondents reported that a building inspector should be in place to enforce building codes.

The survey also asked respondents a general question about their vision of the town in the year 2020. The question asked what type of town they would like to see in the future: (1) preserve rural landscape with limited new development; (2) preserve rural landscape with moderate amounts of new development; and (3) unrestricted development in rural areas. The majority of respondents (62.9%) preferred the first option, while 34.1% selected the second option. Few (3%) of the respondents picked the third option.

Special Considerations

UNCONTROLLED DEVELOPMENT/SPRAWL

In the Marquette County Community Planning Survey, a primary problem/concern expressed by town residents was uncontrolled development/sprawl.

Homes in the town are on parcels with individual sewer systems and private wells. Many of these residences have been built along roadsides as farmers and other landowners have sold lots for revenue. The result is a string of homes along county and town roads. This pattern is beginning to appear in the town and can be seen on the *Existing Land Use Map*. The name for this scattered pattern of roadside development is “*sprawl*” (see box).

Sprawl is of concern because overtime the rural character of the area (i.e. farm fields, barns, silos, open views, woodlands, wildlife, etc.) is replaced by housing development. Moreover, sprawl requires additional access to groundwater supplies because development patterns are not compact enough to support shared or municipal wells. Conflicts with remaining farmers (i.e. odor, dust, noise) are more likely to occur as residential development is allowed to spread into farming areas. Sprawl is perpetuated by large lot zoning requirements, affordable land, highway access, affordable tax rates, and lifestyle choices-- people want to get away from “big city” for country living.

WHAT IS RURAL SPRAWL?

“Sprawl” usually refers to development with negative effects such as loss of agricultural land, open space, and wildlife habitat. Sprawl is often equated directly with growth. That is, as population increases in an area or as city limits expand to accommodate growth, an area is considered to be sprawling (*National Geographic*, November 1999 Issue).

One of the strongest indicators of sprawl is increased traffic. As a result, auto-dependent development is considered to be sprawl.

Sprawling development is usually located on the urban fringe, at the edge of an urban area. Sprawl is often considered to be “low-density” development, though how low is generally not defined. Because “low” is a relative term, it is not standardized and ranges significantly (e.g. 3 units per acre to 1 unit per 40 acres).

Planning and zoning can be used to limit the impact of sprawl. **This plan provides information to address sprawl by:**

- **Protecting rural character;**
- **Providing a sense of place by directing development in accordance with the *Future Land Use Maps*; and**
- **Preserving farmland through the use of conservation subdivisions and other techniques outlined in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter.**
- **Encouraging the town to develop zoning and subdivision requirements.**

NON-METALLIC MINING (I.E. QUARRY/ SAND PITS/ GRAVEL PITS) BUFFERS

There is one (1) active non-metallic mining operation in the town. Residential development is not encouraged around this operation in order to limit the incidence of nuisances (i.e. noise, odors, truck traffic, groundwater concerns, etc.). At a minimum, residential development should be directed at least 1,200 feet away from local quarry operations. Exceptions should only be made when conditional use permits are granted to landowners and a note is attached to the title for all future users indicating a quarry is located within 1,200 feet of the property.

CONSERVATION/CLUSTER SUBDIVISION DESIGNS

The Town of Buffalo will **encourage conservation/cluster subdivision designs** to support residential development opportunities. The Town of Buffalo firmly believes that conservation/cluster subdivisions are a tool to balance the growth desires of landowners and retiring farmers with the rural character preservation desires of other residents.

What are Conservation Subdivisions?

A definition of conservation/cluster subdivisions, as well as procedures for establishing these types of subdivisions is provided in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.

Conservation Subdivisions Have Cost Savings

The town believes the cost benefits associated with conservation/cluster subdivisions will entice landowners to pursue their development. These incentives include:

- **Reduced construction costs** compared to traditional subdivisions because a reduced area needs to be graded, fewer roads need to be constructed, and less supporting infrastructure (gas, electric, etc.) needs to be installed.
- **Residents of conservation-based developments are willing to pay more** for their lots than landowners in traditional subdivisions given the open, space amenities.

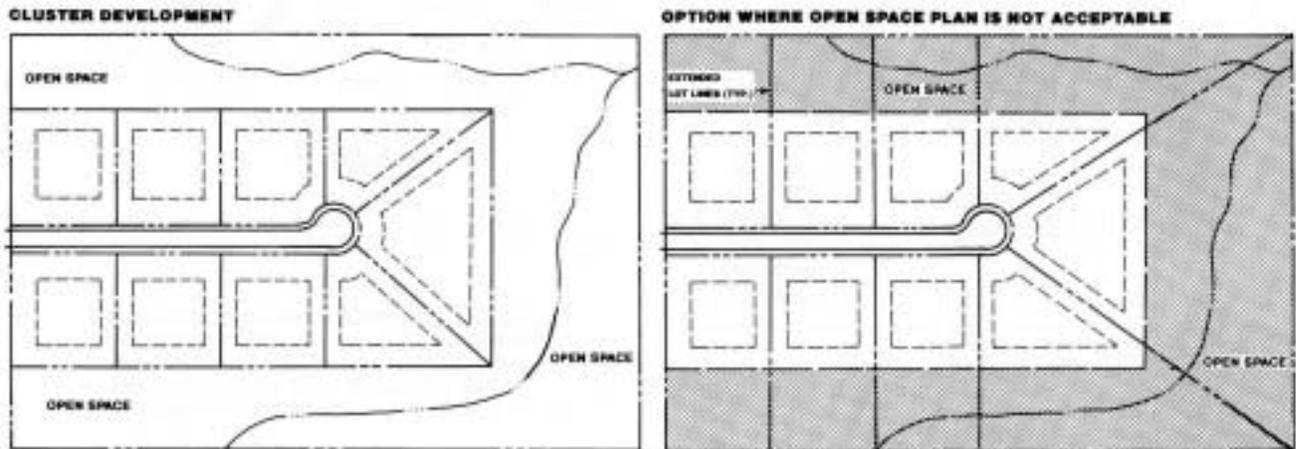
Two Approaches to Conservation-Based Subdivisions

There are two ways to develop conservation-based subdivisions. Figure 3 illustrates the differences between the two approaches.

If the landowner agrees to **common open space**, a *conservation easement* is established. A *conservation easement* is a restriction against further development on a portion of a property. Conservation easements can be used to protect floodplains, areas of steep slope, woodlands, and scenic views beyond the home sites in the development. In this approach, individual lot sizes are reduced and surrounding land is held in common ownership and usually maintained by a homeowners association. The overall density of development remains the same (i.e. no more homes are permitted than in a traditional subdivision development).

In some situations, it is not feasible to reduce the lot size to develop a conservation/cluster subdivision. In these situations, lot lines can be extended so that there is no common open space, but rather **private open space**. Areas beyond the house site can then be deed-restricted against further development, keeping the property open without creating a “common” open space that will need to be maintained by a homeowners association or others.

Figure 3



Source: Fred Heyer, *Preserving Rural Character*, American Planning Association PAS Report No. 429

COMM 83

Areas proposed for residential development, will be required to demonstrate their ability to provide adequate sewer service (i.e. perk test). The town supports the use of innovative waste treatment systems permissible under the COMM 83 legislation (refer to the Chapter 6 for additional information). Specifically, the town supports the installation of individual systems, mounds, and other sewage treatment methods to meet rural residential sanitary needs in the future. The town (and other officials) will review any proposed treatment system to determine effectiveness in the proposed environment.

Additional information about the nine types of innovative treatment systems permitted through COMM 83 is available on-line at: www.wra.org/pdf/government/landuse/Onsite_System_Descriptions.pdf

ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDORS

Natural features (i.e woodlands, wetlands, rivers, lakes and wildlife habitat) are a very important part of the community. Resident support for protecting natural areas is very strong. To that end, the *Future Land Use Maps* delineate environmental corridor areas that should remain largely undeveloped, in accordance with state and county restrictions (i.e. County Shoreland/Wetland Ordinance, etc.) and resident desires. Environmental corridors in the Town of Buffalo include the following areas:

- Floodplains
- Wetlands
- Areas within 1000' of lakes
- Areas within 300' of navigable streams

DENSITY RESTRICTIONS

Town leaders firmly believe that minimum parcel size requirements must be strictly enforced to:

- Retain the rural character of the town;
- Limit overall growth so as to prevent overcrowding and the need for associated urbanizing services like community water and sewer service; and
- Protect the quality of groundwater resources.

For these reasons, the town should develop a zoning ordinance to establish minimum (and maximum) lot size restrictions. It is recommended the ordinance provide a smaller minimum lot size (i.e. 1-2 acres) in areas identified as Primary Residential Development Areas on the *Future Land Use Maps*.

Larger lots (10-acre minimum) are encouraged in other areas to provide serve as a buffer to adjacent woodland and other wildlife habitat areas. Ideally, only a portion of the 10-acre site would be disturbed for development. Remaining portions of the property would be left in their natural state to retain wildlife habitats, woodlands, and privacy for landowners.

Community Design Considerations

Ensuring that developed and natural areas are attractive and well maintained is an important priority. To that end, the town supports the development and enforcement of zoning regulations, including sign ordinances. Likewise, Buffalo supports the use of a detailed site plan review process, including lighting, sidewalk, building material and sign proposals, to ensure that new commercial development is compatible with surrounding land uses and the visions, goals, objectives and policies expressed in this plan.

PRESERVING RURAL CHARACTER

What is “*rural character*”? For every town the answer is somewhat different. In the Town of Buffalo, rural character means a blend of:

- Low density residential development
- Family farms
- Conservation-based subdivisions
- Limited areas of non-residential development situated along STH 22
- Abundant wooded areas
- Rivers and lakes
- Rustic town roads that are largely free of development
- Open, scenic, distant views
- Abundant natural resources and wildlife

The goals and objectives include specific actions to protect rural character by restricting the location of future development.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING

For additional information about the Society for Dark Sky Preservation, visit their web site at: www.amesastronomers.org/links/darksky.htm

In recent years a movement has spread across the country related to outdoor lighting. At the forefront of these efforts is the Society for Dark Sky Preservation. This organization's mission is to ensure that the night sky is visible by eliminating intrusive lighting. Buffalo believes that its rural character includes the dark skies overhead that make it possible to enjoy the stars. To that end, Buffalo will seek to promote environmentally friendly lighting choices that:

- Keeping glare to a minimum;
- Discourage the use of direct uplighting in any application;
- Put outdoor lighting only where it is needed and when it is needed;
- Use alternatives to constant "dusk-to-dawn" lighting whenever possible; and
- Eliminate light trespassing on neighboring properties and roadways.

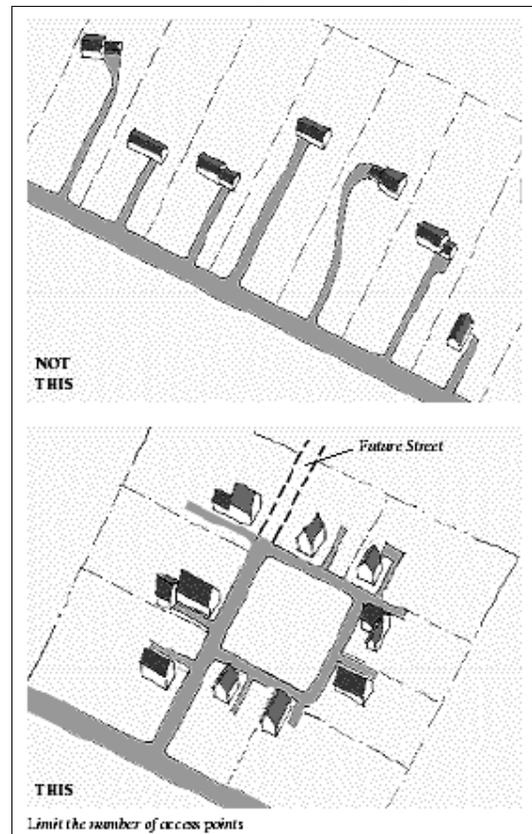
These restrictions can be enforced through zoning and site plan review.

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING (BILLBOARDS)

State highways and highly traveled county roads (i.e. STH 22, CTH F) offer opportunities for billboard advertising. To preserve and enhance the scenic character of Buffalo, billboard signs are prohibited. Billboards distract from the rural scenic quality of this local highway route. The town believes that preservation of natural beauty, including open views of woodlands from roadways, is important to protect the quality of life and community identity.

MANAGED ROADWAY ACCESS

Another tool available to maintain rural roadside character is control over roadway access. "Roadway access" refers to the number of points of ingress and egress from a roadway. Managing roadway access points help to promote safe and efficient travel and minimize disruptive and potentially hazardous traffic conflicts. Managed roadway access involves minimizing the number of driveways along a roadway and establishing standards for driveway spacing. Rather than promoting driveway after driveway along rural roadways and highways, shared driveways are encouraged (see diagram). This approach has the added benefit of limiting impervious surface and its associated impacts on groundwater quality. The Marquette County Planning Department and



WisDOT regulate current standards for roadway access. Coordination with these agencies is important to ensure that rural character is preserved.

Rural Development

Given the importance of rural and wooded areas in the Town of Buffalo it is necessary to address the question of rural development again here.

If a landowner would like to develop their property after this plan has been adopted, the landowner, must:

- 1) Meet with the Buffalo Plan Commission to discuss the development proposal. The Plan Commission will provide the landowner with feedback about the development of the property, including the recommendations of this plan, associated maps, and concepts outlined in this chapter (i.e. managed roadway access, etc.).
- 2) Consider ways to use conservation/cluster-based approaches to minimize the impact of the proposed development on natural areas and wildlife habitat. Accordingly, the landowner must give special consideration to aquatic buffers and landscape screening along town and county roads adjacent to the development to protect the rural views after development is complete.

To more clearly define specific standards for rural development, an objective has been added to this section for the Town of Buffalo to develop a zoning ordinance to establish specific conditions, in accordance with the ideas described above, to protect the town's rural character.

How Were the Future Land Use Maps Developed?

The *Future Land Use Maps* were developed using a very specific process:

1. Natural resource areas were identified to understand development limitations.
2. Future population and household projections were examined to understand the extent of future residential development needed in the town.
3. Utility and community facility capacities were reviewed to ensure new development would be adequately serviced.
4. Existing development plans were incorporated into the plan maps.
5. The results of the cognitive mapping exercise and Marquette County Community Planning Survey results for the Town of Buffalo were reviewed to emphasize resident desires and expectations.

The result of this process is the detailed set of *Future Land Use Maps* presented at the end of this chapter.

How Are the Future Land Use Maps Used?

The *Future Land Use Maps* are a planning tool for the Town of Buffalo. In accordance with the **Smart Growth Law**, they should be used to guide the following actions:

- ✓ Municipal Incorporation
- ✓ Annexation
- ✓ Cooperative Boundary Agreements
- ✓ Official Mapping
- ✓ Local Subdivision Regulation
- ✓ Zoning
- ✓ Transportation Improvements
- ✓ Agricultural Preservation Plans
- ✓ Impact Fee Ordinances
- ✓ Land acquisition for recreational lands and parks
- ✓ Any other ordinance, plan or regulation that relates to land use.

Town appointed and elected officials should use the plan maps as a *guide* for making future land use decisions.

Developers and residents should understand the plan maps are intended to direct development to certain areas where facilities and services are available.

It is important to remember that a **plan is not a static document**. It must evolve to reflect current conditions. If not regularly **reviewed and amended**, it will become ineffective.

Applications for rezoning and development that are inconsistent with the plan must still be considered. In some situations, it may be desirable to amend the plan (and maps) to accommodate a compatible, but previously unplanned use. Likewise, a change in county or regional policy, technological changes, or environmental changes may also impact the plan.

Any change to the plan (including the plan maps) must be considered in the context of all nine required plan elements, including the visions, goals and. If an amendment is to be approved, the process must include a formal public hearing and distribution per the requirements of the Wisconsin Smart Growth Law. Any amendment must be recommended by the Plan Commission and approved by the Town Board **before** development is permitted.

Future Land Use Maps

Provided at the conclusion of this chapter is a **10-Year and 20-Year Future Land Use Maps** for the Town of Buffalo. These maps illustrate the location and intensity of new development. The *Town of Buffalo Future Land Use Maps* were created from the

Existing Land Use Map. Therefore, existing land use patterns and conditions are the foundation of the plan -- the beginning point from which to build the future. Areas that are not proposed for future development are represented by their existing land use in order to promote stability in the Town of Buffalo. What follows is a description of the development areas.

PRIMARY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Areas in this category include some properties along STH 22 adjacent to proposed commercial/industrial development and along CTH O, near the Town Hall. Residential development is also identified near CTH F – expanding from existing development in the vicinity.

The town will seek to encourage subdivision development in these areas to protect wooded areas, water features, and wildlife habitat in other areas of the town. Development should adhere to the objectives outlined in this chapter to protect the rural character of the community. Conservation subdivisions are encouraged to provide a buffer between this proposed development and surrounding areas. The purpose of identifying these primary development areas is to limit sprawl throughout the town.

Based on population projections, approximately 124 new households will be established in the town over the next 20 years. Based on historic building permit trends, this number increases to over 200 households. Due to the fact that there is no zoning in the Town of Buffalo at this time, there is not a minimum lot size for accommodating new development. The town plans to address this situation by developing its own zoning and subdivision ordinances. The areas identified as primary single family residential should accommodate lot sizes of 2 acres (or less) to concentrate development in these areas, while maintaining the rural undeveloped character elsewhere in the town. The 20-Year Future Land Use Map designates enough acres in this category to accommodate approximately 500 households (if the 2-acre density patterns were followed). If larger lots are used, fewer homes will be developed in these areas.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL MIX

To capitalize on the town's STH 22 frontage, the *Future Land Use Maps* indicate an area of future development is encouraged near CTH B. Specific types of businesses encouraged and discouraged are discussed in Chapter 8.

It is imperative that future commercial and industrial ventures be environmentally friendly to protect the quality of groundwater and streams. Furthermore, outdoor storage associated with new commercial/industrial development is prohibited. All waste receptacles must be screened from view along STH 22. Moreover, all development must include landscaping, proper signage, limited lighting, and other amenities to be described in a future zoning ordinance and adhere to the town's dry policies.

POTENTIAL RECREATION EXPANSION AREAS

Foreseeable expansions of state land holdings are illustrated on the *Future Land Use Maps*.

PRIVATE WELL SETBACK AREAS

Quarries and landfills are intensive land uses. As such, they may create disturbances to neighboring properties including: vibration, odors, noise, and groundwater issues. The WDNR requires a 1,200-foot setback around landfills for private wells. To develop within this area, property owners are required to obtain a variance from the WDNR to drill a well. This process is intended to protect residents from potential environmental hazards, including groundwater issues. On both *Future Land Use Maps*, a 1,200 setback is shown around the local quarry (Section 21) and a documented waste site (a fish kill disposal site in Section 12). While the DNR does not require variances for quarries, the Town wanted to show this buffer on the map to make residents seeking to develop in that area aware of potential risks. No special permits are required to develop within this area.

OTHER AREAS

All other areas of the town are illustrated by their existing land use. To the greatest extent possible, land uses should remain unchanged. If development is desired, only single-family residential development, agricultural operations, and parks/undeveloped areas would be considered compatible with existing development patterns. Proposals for development must adhere to the objectives expressed in this chapter and any future zoning ordinances developed for the town.

How Much Land is Provided for Development?

Table 18 provides a detailed breakdown of projected future development, in five-year increments, in the Town of Buffalo.

To implement this plan, the Town of Buffalo Plan Commission will seek to direct development to areas identified on the *Future Land Use Maps*.

As with any long-term planning document, as proposals are presented, amendments may be necessary to reflect market forces that shift land use patterns.

TABLE 18 20-YEAR PROJECTIONS FOR FUTURE LAND USE ACREAGE				
Land Use Type	2005 (acres)	2010 (acres)	2015 (acres)	2020 (acres)
Residential (single family, Duplex and farmsteads)	200	312	850	1,311
Mobile Home Park	20	20	20	20
Commercial / Light Industrial	10	10	300	560
Campground	40	40	40	40
Forests	18,398	18,269	17,641	17,142
Farmland	8,460	8,307	7,921	7,535
Mining/Quarry Sites	36	36	36	36
Surface Water/Transportation Features	2,711	2,718	2,722	2,726
DNR / County and US Fish & Wildlife Properties	3,588	3,706	3,888	4,048
Additional Wetland Areas (Regional Wetland Bank)	40	85	85	85

Goals and Objectives

The Town of Buffalo anticipates that it will grow over the next 20 years. To ensure that this development will not have a negative impact on the natural environment or create undue congestion on town, county and state roads, the Town of Buffalo will pursue the following goals and objectives.

OVERALL LAND USE GOAL

Protect the town's abundant and high quality natural resource areas to maintain the town's rural atmosphere and community character.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

1. Adopt a **Town Subdivision Ordinance**, including conservation/cluster provisions, minimum lot size requirements and road standards that are more restrictive than area currently included in the Marquette County Land Division Ordinance. Use the principals outlined in this plan as a guide in this effort.
 - a. Coordinate with local resources to assist in this effort, including Marquette County Planning Staff and the UW-Extension.
 - b. Review the Model Conservation Ordinance developed by the UW-Extension as a resource when initiating this effort.
2. Seek to adopt a **Zoning Ordinance**, in accordance with the ideas presented in Chapter 9. Provide requirements to establish a minimum percentage of areas to be preserved in every development, landscape buffers/screens along roads, managed roadway access and desired areas for protection (i.e. steep slopes, wooded areas, wetlands, floodplains, meadows, etc.).
3. Work with the UW-Extension, Marquette County Zoning Department, and other experts to develop and enforce a **Town Site Plan Review Ordinance**. The

purpose of this ordinance is to present a positive image of the community and provide guidelines for developers related to the appearance of commercial and industrial development in the town. The ordinance should require developers and landowners to discuss ideas with Plan Commission before go to expense of developing engineered plans.

4. Coordinate with electric, natural gas and other utility providers to ensure that adequate utilities will be made available for cost effective future growth and development in the town.
5. Minimize the visual impact of development to maintain the town's rural character. These objectives can be enforced through the local zoning regulations, once established.
 - a. When individual lots (not subdivisions) are proposed, new homes should not be placed in the middle of open farm fields.
 - b. Individual residences (not part of subdivisions) should be located adjacent to tree lines and wooded field edges, if available. If not, homes should be clustered on the edges of farm fields and undeveloped areas to retain as farmland and open views.
 - c. Where clustering of homes will yield open space that can remain actively farmed or protect vital wildlife habitat/corridors, its use should be explored and possibly required.
 - d. Stone rows and tree lines should be preserved.
 - e. Homes should not be located on hilltops in order to maintain rural, undeveloped views. Homes should be placed on the sides of hills, such that, rooftops do not protrude to or over the top of the hill.
6. Minimize the disturbance to the natural environment when new development occurs.
 - a. Roads should be constructed to follow contours.
 - b. Disturbance for the construction of roads, basins and other improvements should be kept at a minimum by clustering homes together to prevent disturbance to an entire property.
 - c. Disturbance on individual lots should be limited by restricting development to occupy only a portion of a lot.

POLICY STATEMENTS

The Town of Buffalo will encourage landowners and developers to use conservation-based approaches.

10-YEAR FUTURE LAND USE

TOWN OF BUFFALO

MARQUETTE COUNTY

