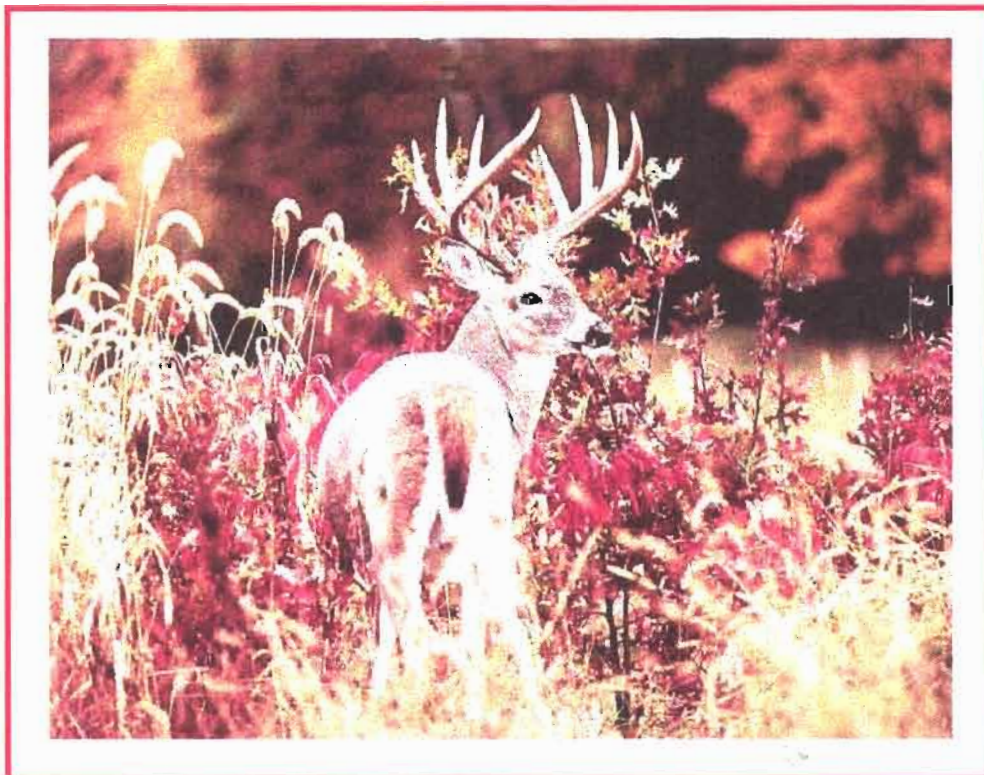


# TOWN OF LINCOLN

## LAND USE PLAN



North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

# INTRODUCTION

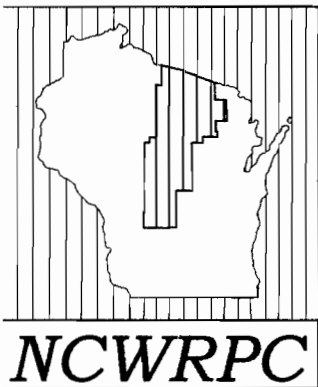
## THE LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS

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

Unfortunately, the planning process is not as easy as the above recipe. The analysis of extensive inventories and setting of goals and policy standards must be meshed with consensus building among competing interests. However, having a rational process to follow, a community can be assured that it is on the right track. The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has developed a model planning process that has received statewide recognition. The plan concept is a poster format that is user friendly and easy to read and understand rather than the typical bulky volume plan that sits on a shelf.

This planning process was formalized while developing the Town of Woodboro (Oneida County) Land Use Plan, which took first place in Land Use Planning Applications category at the Wisconsin Land Information Association's (WLIA) 1998 State Conference and was also recognized as one of Wisconsin's Top 50 Rural Development Initiatives of 1998. The results of a community survey are also used to create the future vision statement for the Town and arrive at goals and policies to meet that vision.

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



Prepared December 2000 By:

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# PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

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

The process of developing this plan was carried out by a five member Town of Lincoln Land Use Planning Committee with the technical assistance of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). This group identified primary development issues for the Town. All Town property owners were surveyed concerning their opinions relative to future development and an inventory of existing land-uses was conducted. A 44.6% response rate was received from the survey effort. Also, a community vision statement and goals and objectives were established to guide development in ways that will not sacrifice the existing qualities and character of the community. Proposed future land uses for all areas of the Town were established and recorded. All meetings were posted and open to the public. Special informational meetings/hearings were held to keep all informed and provide everyone an opportunity for input.

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

# VISION STATEMENT FOR THE TOWN OF LINCOLN

A community completes a land use plan in order to develop a long-range policy guide for the physical development of the community. This plan will provide a model for growth and development in the Town of Lincoln. Utilizing the results of the community-wide survey and a focus group session, the Land-use Planning Committee developed the following vision statement for the Town of Lincoln.

*The majority of residents who responded would like our area to retain its distinctive "Northwoods-Image" in the future. Protecting and enhancing our abundant supply of natural resources like lakes, wetlands, forests and farmlands is accomplished through planned growth and limited development in some areas. Maintaining the quality of our groundwater in the future is also critical as the majority of Town residents rely on private wells for their water supplies.*

*The community is particularly interested in the preservation of the rural character of the Town and with this document is attempting to maintain/manage the density of future physical development. There will be locations provided for commercial and industrial development to provide jobs, commerce and economic prosperity.*

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## TOPOGRAPHY

The Town of Lincoln's topographic features is a result of the last glacial age about 15,000 years ago. The Town is part of the Northern Highland geomorphic region of Wisconsin, and is characterized as a pitted out-wash plain to the east and end moraine to the west. The out-wash plain varies from nearly level to steep with drumlins with water-worked moraines, while the end moraine is part of a ridge of small, gently rolling, rounded hills with tracts of forest rising above adjacent marshy areas.

## SURFACE WATER

The principle waterbodies in the Town are Bradley Lake (49 Acres), Bug Lake (11 acs.) Clear Lake (75 acs.), Devils Lake (31 acs.), Donut Lake (29 acs.), Ground Hemlock Lake (88 acs.), Lost Lake (75 acs.), Luceme Lake (1,026acs.), Metonga Lake (2,157 acs.), Peshtigo Lake (156 acs.), Tee Lake (12acs.) and Wyman Lake (19 acs.). All are soft-water drainage lakes and contain Northern, Walleyes, Large and Small Mouth Bass. These water resources are significant due to their water quality, waterfowl production, and multi-use recreation/residential uses. Management problems include past development on substandard lots.

## GROUNDWATER

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

However, soil studies indicate that the bulk of the soils within the Town are rated "severe limitation" for septic absorption fields. These soils may not adequately absorb effluent from standard conventional on-site septic systems. Systems installed under these conditions have the potential to pollute groundwater and affect public health, especially when a number of systems are installed relatively close together (see Soils with Limitations maps).

## WETLANDS

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

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

Significant wetland areas cover the Town. These wetlands include a wide diversity of wetland types from emergent/wet meadow to scrub/shrub to deciduous and coniferous forest (please see Water Features Map).

## WOODLANDS

Woodland and forest cover is significant within the Town of Lincoln. Over 20 percent of the T

Woodland and forest cover is significant within the Town of Lincoln. Over 83 percent of the Town is forested (approx. 36,786 acres). The majority of this land is County Forest Land and not in private ownership. The State of Wisconsin also holds a number of parcels in the Town.

## POPULATION

The estimated population in 2000 for the Town of Lincoln is 790 an increase of 78 persons since 1990 or 9 percent. This rate is higher than the statewide average growth rate of 6.14 percent.

## HOUSING

According to the 1990 Census of Population and Housing there were 812 housing units in the Town of Lincoln in that year. Of these, 35 percent were occupied (year-round), while the remaining were seasonal, recreational, or occasional use housing units. Approximately 6 percent of the housing stock was vacant, for sale, rental, or some other status. Mobile homes comprised about 11 percent of the housing stock.

Since 1990, new dwelling unit additions have averaged 15 per year based on septic permit data. From the above estimated population, approximately 4.38 of these units are occupied year-round, indicating that an average of 8.62 new seasonal units have been added to the Town, annually. At the projected rate of growth, an additional 192 dwelling units will be added to the Town by 2020. There were eight new houses constructed in the year 2000.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The table below shows a breakdown, by acres, of the different land use types in the Town of Lincoln based on the land use inventory. Town of Lincoln Land Uses 2000:

<u>Use Type</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Residential	1,906	4.31
Commercial	168	0.38
Agricultural	972	2.20
Mobile Home Parks	17	0.04
Institutional/Government	114	0.26
Industrial	46	0.10
Single Family Farms	105	0.24
Outdoor Recreation	37	0.08
Waters	3,702	8.37
Woodlands	36,786	83.13
Grassland / Prairie	398	0.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,251</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Forest and woodlands comprise 83 percent of the land in the Town of Lincoln. Surface water (lakes and streams) is the next largest category with 8 percent. Only 4 percent of the land area is currently being used for residential purposes, while under 1 percent of the land is in commercial/industrial use. Another 398 acres is classified as Grassland Prairie and potentially could be developed for other purposes.



# GOALS & POLICIES FOR THE TOWN OF LINCOLN

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

**GOAL 1:** Provide orderly, planned growth that will promote health, safety, environmental welfare, and make efficient use of the land, public services and tax dollars.

## **POLICIES:**

- A. Evaluate all new development proposals on the recommendations of this plan.
- B. Restrict new development in areas known to be unsafe, unsuitable, undesirable, or incompatible, etc.
- C. The Town should actively participate in planning and zoning decisions made on the County level which effect the Town and all land use.
- D. The Town should regulate housing density to minimize groundwater degradation areas from private sewage disposal systems.
- E. Restrict the size and number of mobile home parks allowed within the Town.
- F. The Town shall require a minimum lot size of (2) two acres for new residential development, to protect groundwater resources from impacts of higher density development.
- G. Consider duplex type development on a case by case basis, within areas designated rural residential on the land use plan map, as part of the rezoning process.
- H. Consider multiple family development only where sewer service is available or planned and where a need for such development can be shown.
- I. Utilize appropriate zoning tools to protect important or fragile environmental areas including critical natural habitats, floodways, historic sites, old growth forests, scenic open spaces, shorelands, steep slopes, and wetlands. These areas should be recognized for their valuable wildlife habitat, flood control, cultural heritage, recreational opportunities, and protection of water quality.
- J. Work with UW-Extension on educational programming for the Town.
- K. Address solid waste, composting and recycling issues.
- L. Maintain and follow the Town Road Improvement Program to address road maintenance and reconstruction priorities for the Town's road system.

**GOAL 2:** Encourage light industrial and commercial interests.

## **POLICIES:**

**POLICIES:**

- A. Address all commercial/industrial development proposals on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the variable nature of their uses and needs.**
- B. Discourage strip development along high volume roads in order to insure traffic safety and mobility.**
- C. Architecture and character of commercial/industrial development should be consistent with traditional Northwoods landscaping and exterior materials.**
- D. Ensure the size and appearance of commercial signage be in accordance with Chapter 9 of the Town of Lincoln zoning Ordinance.**

**GOAL 3: Preserve, protect, and enhance shorelands, wetlands and publicly owned lands used for recreation and wildlife management purposes**

**POLICIES:**

- A. The Town shall encourage low-density single family residential development especially for its lake and river front properties.**
- B. New waterfront development set back is 75' from shoreline for equity development standards as well as aesthetic and water quality.**
- C. New development lot size should require a minimum shoreline width of 100' and a minimum depth to accommodate single family residential development standards (20,000 square foot minimum).**
- D. The Town should support regulations to prevent shoreland clearing (tree cutting) or provide such regulation for future development (refer to Chapter 5.03.14 of the Town of Lincoln Zoning Ordinance).**
- E. Uses which result in greater lake impact such as condominiums, apartments, mobile home parks, businesses, or keyhole access will be discouraged or prohibited in areas not provided with sewer service.**
- F. The Town should preserve shoreland where critical natural habitats, floodways, historic sites, scenic spaces, steep slopes, and wetlands are present.**
- G. Encourage woodland preservation and allow voluntary conservation easements.**



**SNOWMOBILING IN NORTHERN WISCONSIN**

# COMMUNITY PLANNING SURVEY

By conducting a community survey, consensus on the issues facing the Town of Lincoln and a shared vision for its future can be developed. Of the 1035 surveys that were mailed to property owners, 462 were returned for a response rate of 44.6%. Survey respondents had an even three-way distribution between those who have lived in Lincoln for less than 10 years, between 10 and 25 and more than 25 years (30.5%, 36.9% and 32.5% respectively). About 22.5% of respondents owned undeveloped land in the Town, and 2.2% owned commercial or industrial land. Thirty-one percent describe their property as a permanent year-round residence while 52% indicated seasonal/recreational home.

Twenty-eight percent were over the age of 65, 29% were 55-64, 23% were 45-54, 16 were 35-44, 4% were 25-34 and 1% was under 24. Additionally, over 46% lived with frontage on a Town Road and nearly 23% lived within 200 yards of County Highway 'W' & '8'.

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

- Survey respondents had mixed opinions on minimum residential lot size requirements. Thirty-eight percent felt it should be one acre, and 16% felt it should be two acres. There was a mixed response between three, five and ten acres or more (6, 8 and 8% respectively). About 12% were not sure.
- Housing development that respondents felt should be encouraged in the Town included single family homes at 80%, seasonal/recreational housing at 39%, and elderly housing and manufactured homes at 17 and 11 % respectively. Other choices not as popular, included subdivisions, cluster development, apartments, duplexes, condominiums, and "not sure," combined these received an 8% response.
- A majority (82%) were in favor of the Town adopting design standards for mobile and manufactured homes.
- The largest majority (43%) would support additional residential development, 28% oppose more development, and 29% "had no opinion".
- Most (70%) agreed that in general the current pace of development is about right. A substantial number (37%) would like to see only light industry with 39% responding to no industry.
- Sixty-two percent felt that the Town should be involved in attracting commercial and retail businesses and 38% do not agree.
- Ninety percent feel "very strongly" that there should be esthetic requirements for commercial and industrial developments. Also, 92% believed that specific standards should be set for business advertising signs.
- With regard to lakes in the Town of Lincoln, 90% indicated that they felt residential development coupled with resort /recreational development should prevail. Fifty-four percent indicated that the lakes were developed at an acceptable level, however, (35%) believed that they were over developed.
- Seventy-five percent believed that the Town should have a "say in where new growth should go."
- Given a choice between maintaining Town zoning or going with County zoning the majority (71%) desired retaining Town zoning.

A complete copy of the actual survey including percentage breakdowns for each response item can be found in Appendix C of the Plan Resource Document.



# SUMMARY

A variety of recommendations were made in this plan in relation to the concerns identified through the survey and from issues common to lakes in the area. These issues, ranging from aquatic plant growth to conflicting lake uses, were addressed in a way to alleviate the concern and still preserve the sensitive environment of the area.

These recommended actions would help minimize existing problems and prevent future problems in the Town of Lincoln. However, no plan can address everything. Additional study will be required at some time, but this plan provides a solid foundation for those studies. Again, the plan itself should be updated, in some manner, every five years at a minimum to keep it as current as possible.

