

Introduction:

The conservation and wise use of the agricultural, natural and cultural resource base is vital to the physical, social, and economic development of any area and to the continued ability of the area to provide a pleasant living environment. The anticipated growth for the Oconomowoc area and the related land use development may be expected, in absence of sound planning, to subject the natural resource base of the area to possible degradation and even destruction. Consequently, a sound comprehensive plan for the City of Oconomowoc should identify areas with concentrations of agricultural, natural and cultural resources that deserve protection from intensive urban development. In addition, areas having natural resource characteristics which may impose severe limitations on urban development should be identified as well as those which have characteristics suitable for urban development.

Vision Statement: *In the year 2030, the City's unique lakes, rivers, and streams continues to contribute significantly to the quality of life. The City highly values the recreational and conservation amenities that are found within the community and strive to protect sensitive ecological areas from development. In 2030, the City promotes Oconomowoc's cultural and historic resources.*

Groundwater

Groundwater resources are plentiful within the City at both shallow and deep levels. Due to the lack of the Maquoketa Shale confining layer in the area, both the shallow and deep aquifers are hydraulically connected. Both aquifers are linked to certain surface water features and receive recharge from rainfall. Water quality in both aquifers is acceptable with the shallower aquifer being more susceptible to contamination from the surface. Water directed recharge from surface runoff should not be located near shallow wells and potential shallow well sites unless properly treated, particularly for chlorides from salt.

The draft regional water supply study prepared by SEWRPC in 2009 recognizes that the area in and around the City is a prime recharge area for the deep sandstone aquifer in Southeastern Wisconsin. The plan projects a 9.3 percent increase in impervious surface for the region by 2035. This increase will be accompanied by a reduction in infiltration and groundwater recharge to both the shallow and deep aquifers and an increase in runoff to surface waters. The affects of development can be mitigated through the use of proper subdivision design, density control and stormwater infiltration requirements of Chapter 151 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

In general, the City has some risk for groundwater contamination. This risk is caused by the geological formations underneath the City. There is no confining impermeable layer of rock between the glacial drift and the sandstone aquifer. An increase in the areas impervious surface impacts the recharge of the sandstone aquifer by diverting larger amounts of precipitation into surface drain rather than allowing it to percolate into the ground. As development continues in the future, the City should continue to ensure safe water is available in the City.

Forests

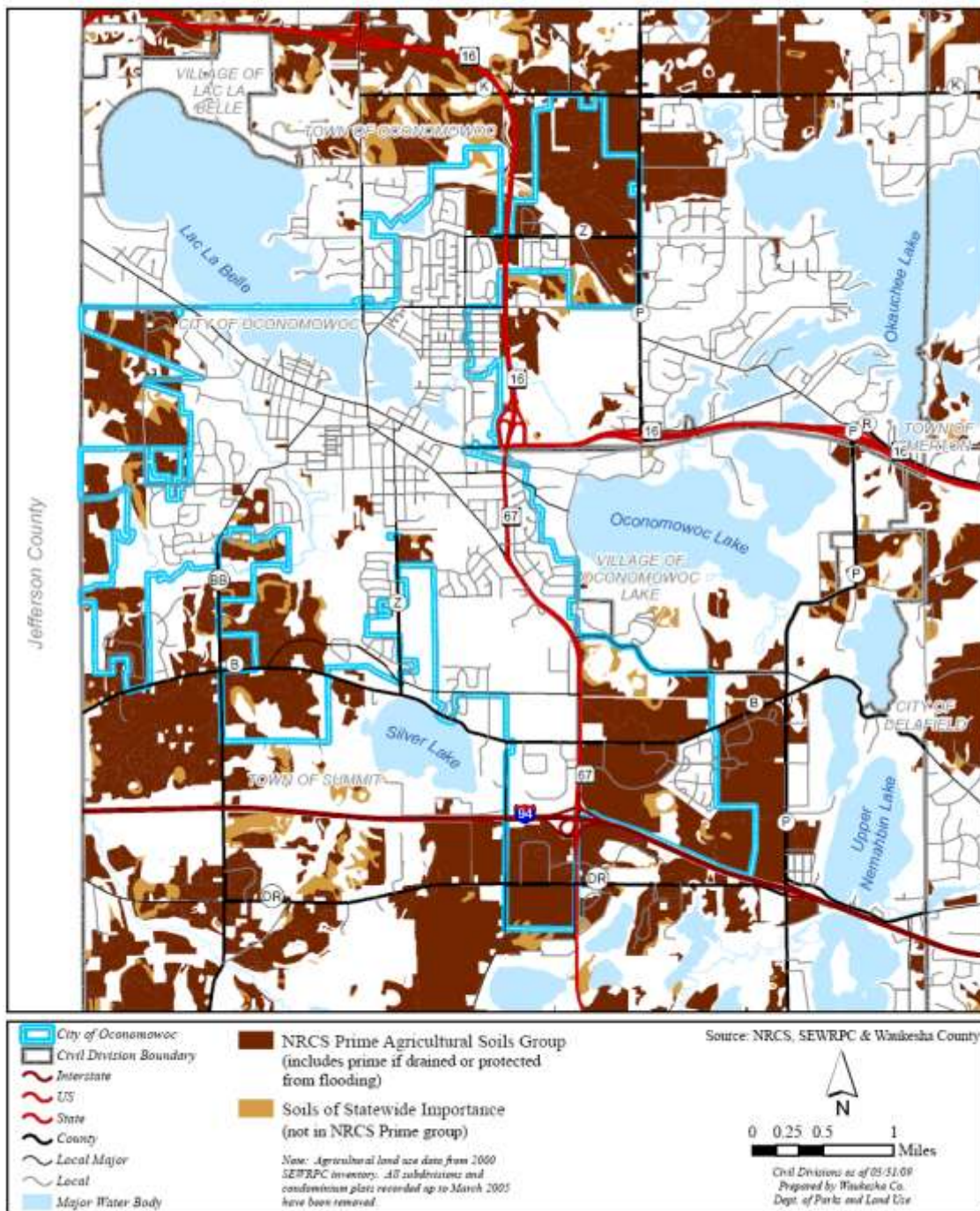
The City contains very few wooded areas, except in areas dominated by floodplains or wetlands. This sparsely wooded condition is due to a combination of productive soils, few steep slopes, and residential activity which tends to place a high value on wooded sites. As such, the remaining woodlands of the City are valuable contributors to the area’s character and beauty.



Productive Agricultural Areas

Areas in and around the City have been identified as prime agricultural soils by the National Resources Conservation Service (see map). There is some agriculture land within the City, but much of that land will be developed in the future. The City strongly supports townships surrounding the City in the preservation of agriculture lands; provided the land is not identified on the City's future land use map as urban development. The City continues supports the preservation of farmland, especially prime farmland, in areas that are located outside of the City.

Agricultural Use and Classification of Soils



Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally sensitive areas include lands that have physical or environmental constraints that limit development. Lands included in this designation include wetlands, shorelands, floodways, floodplains, steep slopes, highly erodible soils, groundwater recharge areas, soil types, environmental corridors, etc.

The 2005 Environmental Corridors map provides an overview of areas within and around the City that are considered to be environmental significant. Environmental sensitive areas/corridors normally include:

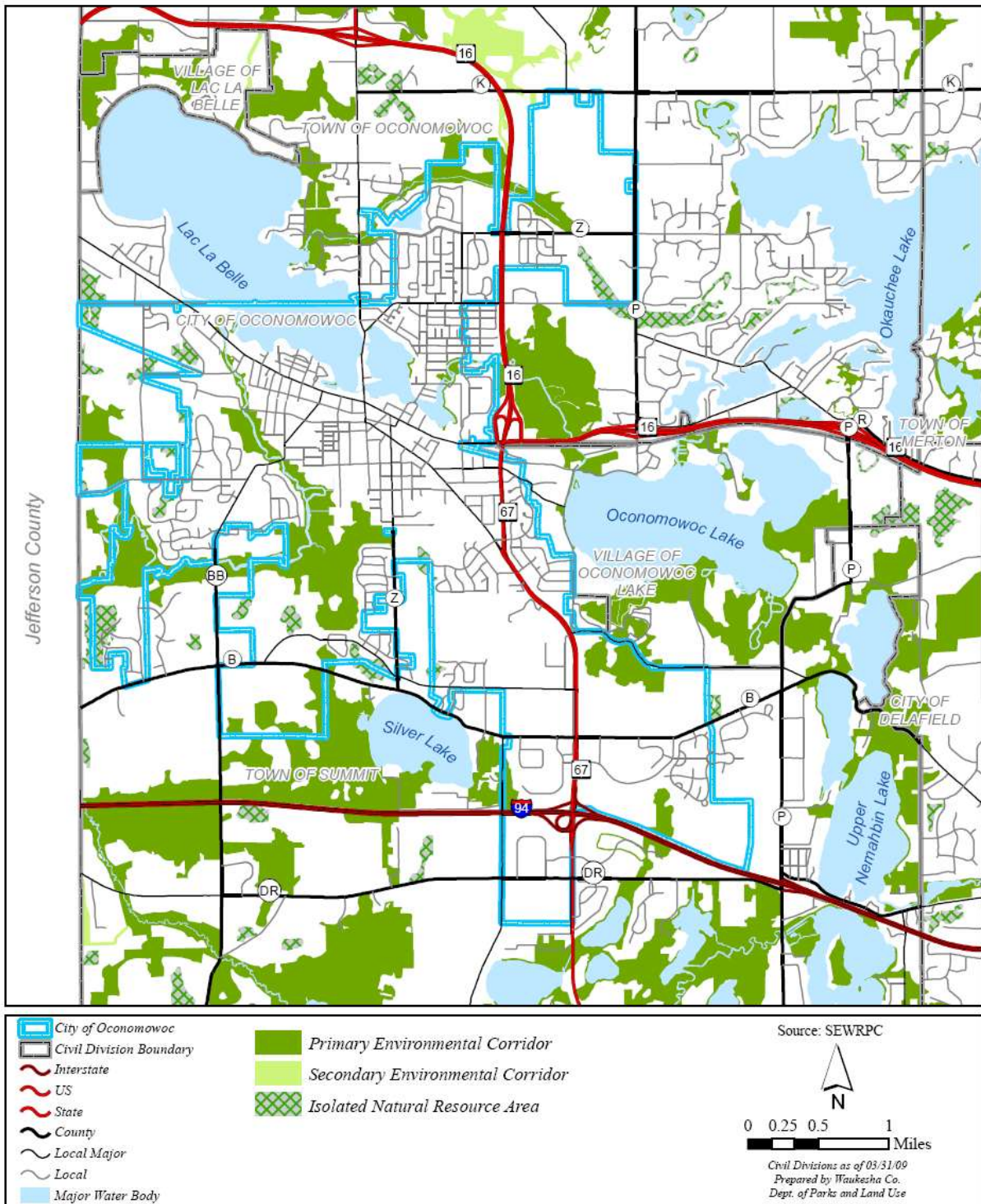
- Lakes, rivers, streams, shorelands, floodplains
- Wetlands
- Woodlands
- Wildlife habitat areas
- Areas of steep slopes
- Significant geological formations and physiographic features
- Wet, poorly drained, and organic soils

Lands identified as primary environmental corridors are linear landscape features that contain at least three (3) of the above criteria. These features occupy an area of at least 400 acres, have a minimum length of 2 miles and a minimum width of 200 feet. Secondary environmental corridors occupy at least 100 acres, have a minimum length of 1 mile and have one (1) or two (2) of the elements identified above. Isolated natural resources are at least five (5) acres in, more than 200 feet wide and have at least two (2) of the elements above.

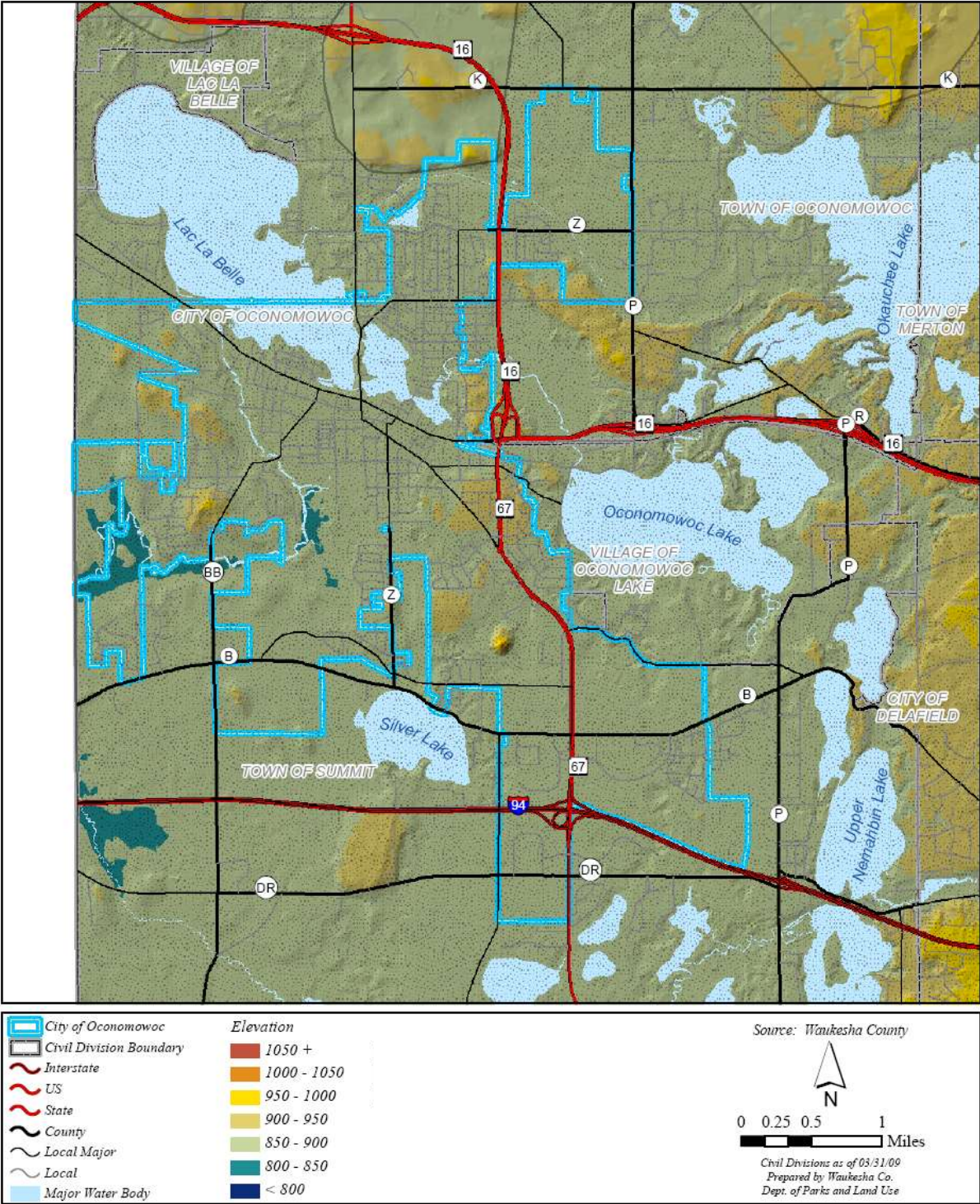


The City has limited primary environmental corridor remaining. As a result, this plan recommends a policy limiting development within these environmental sensitive areas.

Environmental Corridors - 2005



Topographic & Physiographic Features



Threatened or Endangered Species

Wisconsin law prohibits the “taking” of any plant or animal listed as endangered or threatened, regardless of where it occurs. Taking is defined as the act of killing, harming, collecting, capturing, or harassing a member of a protected species. For plants, taking is prohibited only on public property. However, even on public lands, taking of listed plants is not prohibited if it occurs in the course of forestry, agriculture, or utility practices.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides information on endangered or threatened species. In addition, the WDNR maintains Wisconsin’s Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI). Established in 1985 by the Wisconsin Legislature, the NHI program is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare species, natural communities, and natural features in Wisconsin.

River and Streams

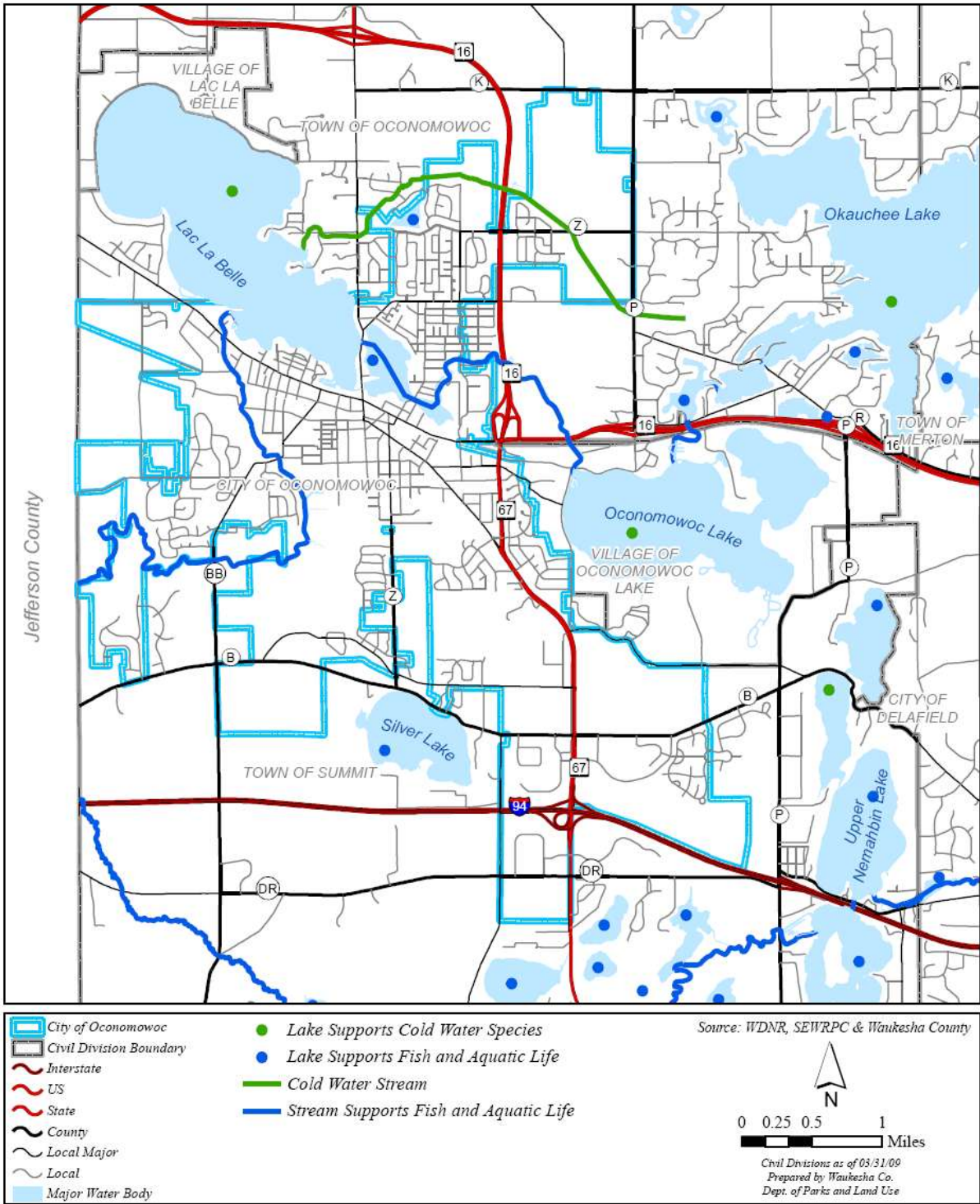
The Oconomowoc River is an important natural and visual feature of the City. Linking Okauchee Lake, Upper Oconomowoc Lake, Oconomowoc Lake, Fowler Lake, and Lac La Belle, with the lakes of its upper basin, the river is among the most heavily recreated in Wisconsin. Extensive development (mostly unsewered outside of the City of Oconomowoc) has occurred around these lakes. Dams are located at the outlet of Okauchee Lake, Fowler Lake and Lac La Belle. The lower portion of the Oconomowoc River, from Concord Road to its confluence with the Rock River, is relatively undisturbed by urban or suburban development.



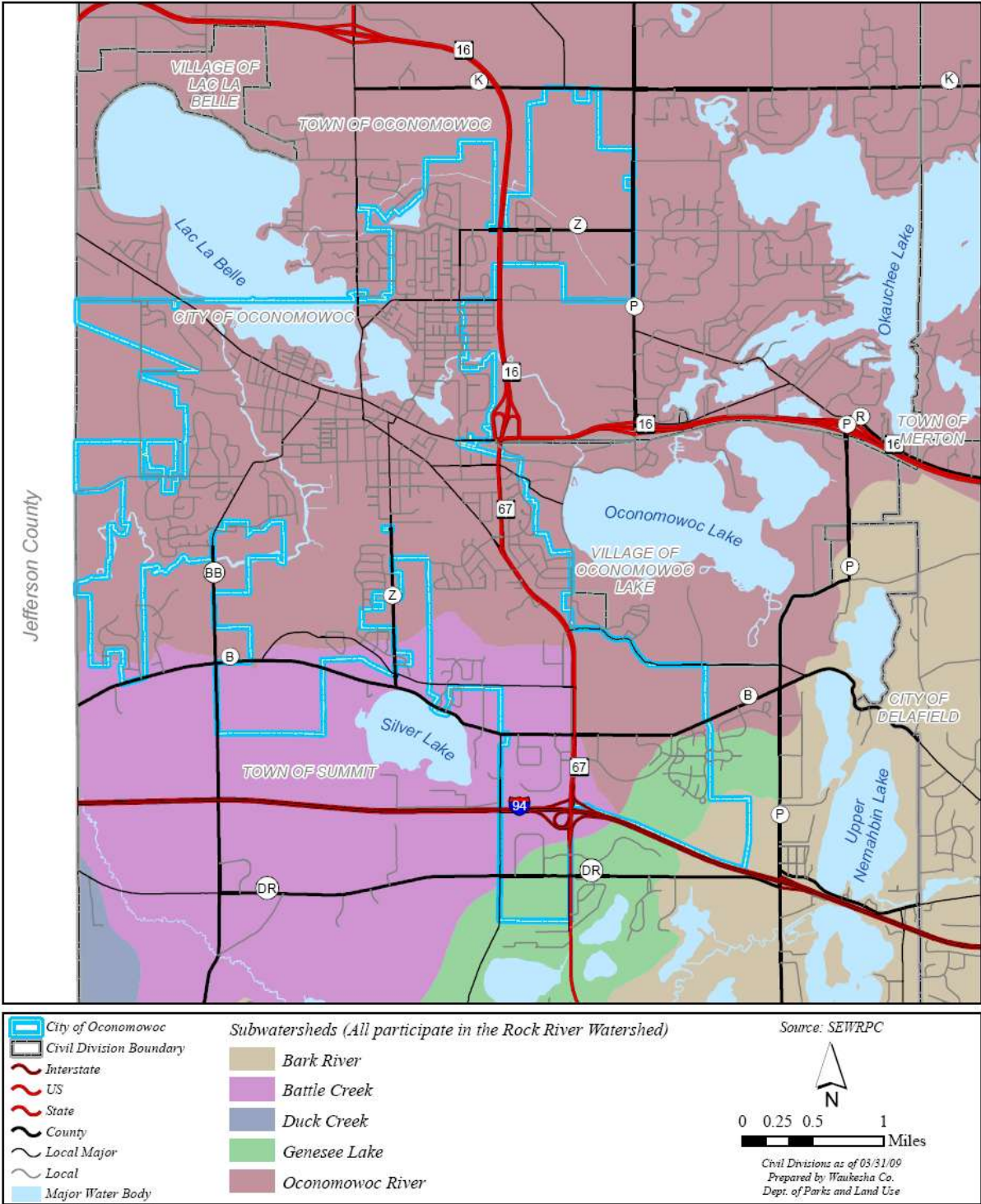
Rosenow Creek, located in the northeast portion of the City, has been subject to long-term farming impacts for almost 150 years. Urbanization, in the form of both sewered and septic-based development has been occurring since the 1960’s. Additional development in its basin is likely, as virtually its entire watershed is located within the Oconomowoc Sanitary Sewer Service Area, and is shown for continued development in plans adopted by SEWRPC.

The City is located in the Oconomowoc River and Battle Creek Watersheds and is part of the Rock River Basin. The Rock River Basin covers 3,777 square miles and is located in ten (10) counties. The Wisconsin portion of this basin has about 790,000 people. The area is considered to be growing rapidly and urbanization is overtaking the once largely rural river basin.

Surface Water Resources



Watersheds



Surface Waters

Lac La Belle, Fowler Lake, and Silver Lake are lakes that are located within the City.

Lac La Belle has a surface area of 1,117 acres and a maximum depth of 45 feet.

Fowler Lake, which is located entirely within the City, has a surface area of 99 acres and a maximum depth of 50 feet.

Silver Lake, which is located in the city and the Town of Summit, has a deepest point of 44 feet and covers 222 acres. All of these lakes are

considered mesotrophic lakes and are associated with clear water, beds of submerged aquatic plants, and medium levels of nutrients.



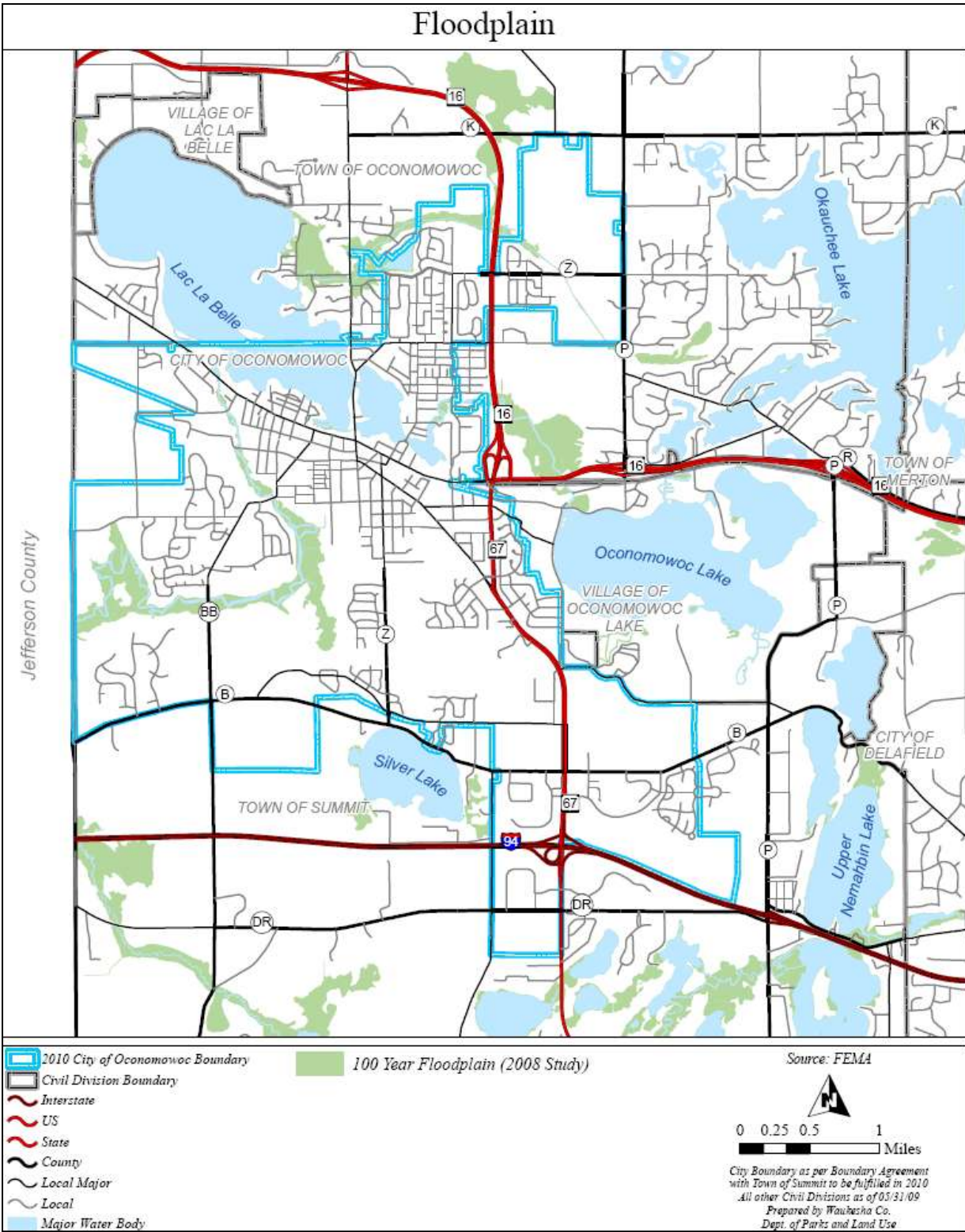
Floodplains

Extensive flood hazard areas are located along the Oconomowoc River. These have been identified and mapped by the Federal Insurance Administration for risk management purposes. The 100 year flood area, where the flooding probability is greater than 1% in any given year, is restricted to development.

Wetlands

Wetland areas are located along streams, drainageways and in isolated low spots.

These have been identified and mapped by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. These areas are important for aquifer recharge, groundwater and surface water quality improvement, and wildlife habitat. Very significant wetlands are located throughout the City. Generally, these areas are restricted to development.



Wetlands



Wildlife Habitat

Inventories of wildlife habitat in the Southeastern Wisconsin region were conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. A variety of wildlife lives within the City in natural areas, parks, and open space.

Metallic/Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

The City's geology is glaciated dolomite bedrock, covered with glacial till and loess deposits. Surface soils are extremely fertile throughout the area, except on steep slope areas and in low lying wetlands and floodplains. There are several areas within and around the City where glacial deposits of sand, gravel, and bedrock (dolomite, limestone, and sandstone) are present in sufficient amounts to be economically mined. This includes the area immediately south of Silver Lake. There are no active metallic or nonmetallic mining sites in the City.

Parks/Open Space/Recreational Resources

Parks and open space provide a number of key functions including meeting human needs for recreation and aesthetics, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, and shaping the extent and patterns of development in a community. The park and open space system of every community should be planned and designed to meet the diverse needs of persons living in the community. Proper recreation-based planning requires a focus on both the types of facilities needed to meet the needs of the



community as well as the geographic distribution of those facilities in relation to the persons who will use them. Currently, the City of Oconomowoc is experiencing a substantial amount of new development activity, which will have a direct impact on the community for years to come. Therefore, it is extremely important for the City to continue to proactively plan for the future recreational needs of the community.

The Park and Open Space Plan is an important element of Oconomowoc's overall community master planning program. This plan is updated every five (5) years and is integrated into the City's planning and budgeting framework. Precise details and implementation actions of the Park and Open Space within in the City is provided within that plan. Additional details relating to recreation activities in the City are included in the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter.

Historical/Cultural Resources

The City of Oconomowoc has a long history that has provided numerous older structures within the City that have historic value. Buildings in the City that have been listed with the State Historical Society, the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places in Wisconsin include the following:

- National Guard Armory – 102 W. Jefferson St. (1921)
- City Hall – 174 E. Wisconsin Ave. (1886)
- Oconomowoc Depot – 115 Collins St. (1896)
- Clarence Peck Residence – 430 & 434 N. Lake Rd. (1845)
- Walter L. Peck House – 38926 Islandale Dr. (1882)
- Henry & Mary Schuttler House – 351 E. Lisbon Rd. (1879)

Due to the numerous historic structures and places within the City, special consideration should be given to development within areas of cultural or historical significance. Future development will attempt to balance the historic past of the City and the future needs.

Along with being a historic community in Waukesha County, the City boasts numerous cultural attractions and resources. Some of those cultural resources include:

- The Theatre On Main (TOM) is a nonprofit venue for performing arts. TOM provides performances, classes, camps and community events relating to theatrical experiences.
- The Oconomowoc Historical Society and Museum educates and serves the public in preserving the history of the City and Lake Country.
- The Oconomowoc High School Auditorium, completed in 2008, provides seating capacity for 750 people and is used by both the school and the community for performances. The facility includes a full rehearsal room, full fly feature, orchestra pit, scene shop, dressing rooms, and a lobby reception area.

In addition to the numerous historic and cultural resources as already stated, the City has many churches and places of worship. These places of worship help provide residents and visitors additional cultural experiences in the City.

Community Design

A wide variety of elements contribute to the creation of community character or design.

These include:

1. **Geographic Context** – A key element of the character of Oconomowoc is its setting as the main urban center of the “Lakes Region”. Planning and development within the community must ensure that the relation of development to surface water areas, including rivers,



creeks, and wetlands, emphasizes the visibility and accessibility of the water. Lacking dominant hills, extensive forests, or other prominent natural features, the character of the Oconomowoc area is also strongly influenced by more subtle environmental corridor components such as drainageways, steep slopes and woodlands. These too should be protected, and yet made as visible and accessible as possible.

2. **Urban Form** – The Downtown Oconomowoc area clearly retains its small city charms. This character is most emphasized by a combination of architectural styles ranging between 1880 and 1930, a clear pedestrian (versus auto) orientation, and a well-defined urban hierarchy. Specifically, virtually all important local roads in the community lead directly to the Downtown area. Outlying commercial centers should create characters which are well-integrated and defined to complement the Downtown area.
3. **Density and Intensity** – The most visually successful transitions of land use occur where residential densities (as defined by the number of dwelling units per acre) and nonresidential intensities (as defined by floor area ratios and the percentage of land left in green areas) remain relatively consistent, even though dwelling unit types or land use may vary significantly. The use of zoning districts which encourage a variety of uses with a similar density or intensity make for more gradual and visually comforting transitions.
4. **Building Scale** – The consistency of building scale is comparable to density and intensity issues. With the exception of carefully designed and carefully sited institutional uses, differences in building scale at magnitude levels is disruptive to an urban fabric. Proposed attached single-family (townhouse), multi-family, commercial and industrial structures which are inconsistent with the dominant scale of surrounding buildings (of all uses) should find other locations, or in certain instances, should incorporate design elements which create an appearance of several smaller structures. In general, the largest structures in a community should be located along its most important roadways.
5. **Building Location** – Consistent building setbacks (with exceptions possible for unique institutional structures complemented by pedestrian-orientated facilities) are also important in both residential and non-residential areas.
6. **Architecture** – When possible to identify a dominant architectural style, infill development should be complementary. Where a wider variety of styles exist, common architectural themes or elements (such as materials, colors, roof pitches, or stylistic appurtenances) should be reflected. In peripheral locations, styles should be of



long-term merit rather than reflective of short-term trends, quality of materials should be stressed, and the relative availability and affordability of the dominant architectural elements should be ensured.

7. **Signage** – The size of wall signs should be related to the area of the wall on which they are located. No wall sign should contain more than one (1) sign, except in a center-type development. In such centers, sign materials and the location of signs on the façade must be consistent, and the use of consistent colors and lettering styles should be rewarded with an area bonus. In centers, sign area should be also related to façade area. Center occupants with very small façade areas or with no façade frontage (as in a mall) should not be allowed exterior signage, except for nameplate signs designed as part of a well executed tenant listing sign.

Freestanding signs should never exceed a height of 20 feet, and only heights below eight (8) feet are consistently considered as noticeably low. Such low monument signs can be effectively landscaped, tall pylon signs confound such attempts. No building, whether a single use or a center, should be allowed more than one freestanding sign per street frontage.

A variety of signs are very difficult to make and/or keep attractive, and should therefore be prohibited. These include, at a minimum: off-site advertising signs (including billboards), roof signs and portable signs. Other signs are a visual distraction and a potential nuisance or safety hazard. These signs, which should be prohibited, include: flashing signs, inflatable signs, rippling or sparking, pennants, banners, streamers, and related attention-getters which have no structural or utility function. Trademark-type buildings or color schemes may also be considered as a form of signage, which should be prohibited if considered visually disruptive.

Certain types of signage, such as changeable letter reader boards, electronic message signs, and signs which are permanently embedded into the structure, should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis and limited to certain areas.

8. **Public Furnishings** – The use of public furnishings, particularly in public spaces relating to waterfronts, plazas, busy pedestrian streets, and institutional uses, should be encouraged. In all instances, these furnishings should be of high aesthetic quality and proven durability.



9. **Landscaping** – Significant amounts of landscaping should be required in all forms of development, except single-family residential uses (which virtually always provide adequate amounts of landscaping without need for public regulation), and family farm structures. For all other uses, landscaping should be

required around building foundations, in and around paved areas, and along streets with required supplement plantings in “yard” areas. Landscaping materials should be of adequate size to ensure both a high degree of survivability and immediate visual effectiveness. Either required landscaping should be installed before building occupancy, or alternatively, performance guarantees should be required in absence of installation.

10. **Transitions** – Very careful attention must be paid to providing an urban form which creates a clear-cut pattern of land uses that transition in a gentle, rather than abrupt fashion, and invite, rather than repel the pedestrian or view gaze across land use boundaries.

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resource Programs

A variety of programs are available from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other State and Federal groups. The programs with these agencies may be able to assist the City with the implementation of the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources chapter of the comprehensive plan.

Community Gardens

Community gardens are single or multiple parcels of land that are used by people to produce fresh produce and plants. In many cases, a nonprofit or private organization owns the garden. Community gardens allow people to interact with other citizens, produce locally grown food products, and sell or donate what they grow. Most gardens have plots or areas that are divided to allow each person or group their individual gardening space. A community garden or gardens would provide residents with the opportunity to grow their own food in an urban setting. According to the UW-Extension, in 2009 Wisconsin had 95 community gardens with more than 5,200 gardeners.

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Policies

Encourage development within the City corporate limits to promote efficient, compact urban development patterns that maximize available services and include adequate open space.

Plan for and support the extension of public services in an orderly manner to discourage scattered rural development.

Encourage the proper handling of wastes and chemicals so that they produce a minimum effect upon ground and surface water.

Regulate the type of development near the City’s municipal wells to minimize the chances of groundwater contamination.