

TOWN OF HOLLAND

Comprehensive Plan Narrative

The Town of Holland began as a small community that formed along the banks of the Black River in 1850, in a burg referred to as New Amsterdam. In the early years, New Amsterdam was a growing town that contained a ferry, general store, post office, saw mill, blacksmith shop, stage coach station, hotel, tavern, church and a school house. Today, the church is the only remaining building still in operation, leaving the growth of the township as mostly agricultural and subdivisions.

It was in the late 1970s that the Town of Holland saw significant population growth. In the past ten years alone, the Town's population has increased by 37%. With growth, the Town is struggling to balance between development and maintaining its rural character. Residents choose to reside in the Town of Holland because of its rural flavor, open space and accessible recreational sites.

Part of the rural flavor in the Town of Holland is the family farms rolling into beautiful bluff lands used for hunting and hiking. The historic McGilvary Bridges provide miles of hiking and wildlife watching. There are over 8,000 acres of Black River bottom lands held by the Department of Natural Resources and the Federal Department of the Interior for wildlife habitat. Open space is also being preserved through conservancy. Currently, there are over 400 acres held by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy with an additional 61 acres of river terrace prairie land being purchased cooperatively between the MVC, Town of Holland and the DNR. In addition to canoeing, fishing and hunting the Black River, other recreational areas include the recently completed Holland Bike Trail which was built last year in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Over the next twenty years, the Town will need to address and explore a variety of avenues to obtain balance between the rights of individual property owners with community interests and goals. For instance, the Town recently approved a plat in the northern part of the township that was planned with cluster housing and shared open space. In the past year alone, the Town has approved four new subdivisions which will allow for 158 new residential homes with another three subdivisions proposed for 2006. The Town recognizes that the future development patterns need to be maintained with proper planning and implementation techniques.

The Town shares its borders with the Village of Holmen to the east, Town of Onalaska to the south and the Town of Farmington to the northeast. At one point, the Town Hall was even located in the Village of Holmen. Throughout the years, there have been long standing cooperative relationships between the adjacent Towns and Village, such as equipment sharing, road service partnerships, fire services and schools. More recently, the Town has been working cooperatively with the Village of Holmen on Extra-Territorial Technical Advisory Committee and engineering services. The Town of Holland must continue to communicate and work cooperatively with adjacent municipalities in order maintain and develop a healthy community for future residents.

During the comprehensive planning process, the Town will use a range of tools to implement land use and related decisions. The Town of Holland will not only need to work with adjoining Towns and Village, but with the County and State on issues dealing with land use, housing, transportation, cultural resources, public works (such as storm water control), recreation and economic development.

The Comprehensive Smart Growth Plan will allow everyone to see the big picture of what the Town will look like in the future. This will become a very useful tool in making decisions every month on issues that will affect the town in the long term.

Marilyn Pedretti
Town Clerk
10/5/05