

VILLAGE OF ATHENS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2005

Village of Athens Village Board

Marathon County Conservation, Planning & Zoning
Department

URS, Inc.
MSA

September 2005

Village of Athens Conditions and Issues

Village of Athens Conditions and Issues

Elements

1. Introduction and Summary	1
2. Demographics	2
3. Natural Resources	7
4. Land Use	12
5. Transportation	18
6. Utilities	24
7. Housing	28
8. Cultural Resources	34
9. Community Facilities	36
10. Parks	40
11. Economic Development	42
12. Intergovernmental Cooperation	46

List of Tables

Table 2-1: Demographic Change, 1970-2000	2
Table 2-2: Population by Age Group, 2000	3
Table 2-3: Population Projections – 2000-2030	3
Table 2-3b: Population Projections – 2000-2030	3
Table 2-4: Household Projections – 2000-2030	4
Table 2-4b: Household Projections – 2000-2030	4
Table 2-5: Educational Attainment (population age 25 and over)	5
Table 2-6: Household Income Levels, 2000	5
Table 2-7: Occupation by Sector, 2000	6
Table 2-8: Employment Projections – 2000-2030	6
Table 4-1: Land Use Cover Classification, 2000	12
Table 4-2: Land in Forest Preservation Programs (in acres), 1998 – 2002	14
Table 4-3: Per Acre Assessed Land Values (in dollars), 1998 – 2002	16
Table 5-1: Summary of Pavement Conditions	21
Table 7-1: Number of Housing Units by Type and Tenure	28
Table 7-2: Changes in Housing Stock	29
Table 7-3: Age of Community Housing Stock	29
Table 7-4: Physical Housing Stock	30
Table 7-5: Median Housing Value	30
Table 7-6: Range of Housing Values	31
Table 7-7: Housing Affordability	31
Table 9-1: Athens School District Enrollment	36
Table 9-2: Private Schools	36
Table 9-3: Child Care Referrals	39
Table 11-1: Marathon County Top 10 Industry Groups Based on Number of Employees (March 2001)	43

Table 11-2: Population and Employment by Sector, 200044
Table 11-3: Employment Projections in 5-Year Increments44
Table 11-4: Percent Change in Employment, 2000-203044
Table 11-5: Major Local Employers.....45

List of Figures

- Figure 3-1: Rivers and Floodplains**
- Figure 3-2: Wetland Types**
- Figure 3-3: Soil Associations**
- Figure 3-4: Prime Farm Soils**
- Figure 3-5: Slopes**
- Figure 4-1: Existing Land Use/ Land Cover**
- Figure 4-2: Farm Preservation Contracts and Existing Agricultural Zoning**
- Figure 5-1: Functional Classification**
- Figure 5-2: Trails and Regional Transportation**
- Figure 6-1: Depth to Bedrock**
- Figure 6-2: Suitable Soils for Septic Tank Absorption**
- Figure 6-3: Depth to Groundwater**
- Figure 6-4: Watersheds**
- Figure 6-5: Proposed Powerline Route**
- Figure 9-1: School and Library Facilities**
- Figure 9-2: Police Service Districts**
- Figure 9-3: Fire Service Districts**
- Figure 9-4: Hospitals and Clinics**
- Figure 10-1: Regional Recreation Facilities**
- Figure 11-1: Business and Industrial Parks**

List of Acronyms

303 (d) list—waters designated as “impaired” under section 303 (d) of the U.S. Clean Water Act.

AADT—Annual Average Daily Traffic

AHI—Architecture & History Inventory (a database of the Wisconsin Historical Society).

ATC—American Transmission Company

BMPs—Best Management Practices

CBD—Central Business District

CCR&R—Child Care Resource and Referral Network

CDBG—Community Development Block Grant

CES—Cropland Evaluation System (Marathon County)

Comm 83—Chapter 83 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code under the Department of Commerce, setting standards for regulation of private sewage systems.

CRP—Conservation Reserve Program

CTH—County Trunk Highway

CWA—Central Wisconsin Airport

DCPZ—Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning (Marathon County)

DWD—Department of Workforce Development

EMS—Emergency Medical Services

ERW—Exceptional Resource Waters, a designation by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

FCL—Forest Crop Law

FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency

FIRM—Flood Insurance Rate Maps

HOME—Home Investment Partnerships Program

HUD—U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

LHOG—Local Housing Organization Grant

LWRMP—Land and Water Resource Management Plan (Marathon County)

MFL—Managed Forest Law

MPO—Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

NCHC—North Central Health Care

NCWRPC—North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

NRHP—National Register of Historic Places

NTC—Northcentral Technical College

ORW—Outstanding Resource Waters, a designation under the U.S. Clean Water Act.

PASER—Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating

PMP—Pavement Management Plan

PSCW—Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

SCADA—System Control and Data Access monitoring system

STF Data—Summary Tape File, referring to data files of the 2000 U.S. Census.

STH—State Trunk Highway

TID—Tax Incremental District

TIP—Transportation Improvement Program (Marathon County)

USDA—United States Department of Agriculture

UW-MC—University of Wisconsin—Marathon County

WDA—Wisconsin Department of Agriculture

WDNR—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

WDOA—Wisconsin Department of Administration

WDOT—Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WHEDA—Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

WISLR—Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads

1. Introduction and Summary

The Village of Athens Conditions and Issues Report documents existing conditions in the Village and identifies primary issues or concerns the Village may need to address in the future. It includes information on the Village’s demographics, natural resources, land use, transportation, utilities, housing, cultural resources, community facilities, parks, economic development, and intergovernmental cooperation. This report provides a backdrop for the development of the final plan, which will outline policies and actions the Village can take to address identified issues and guide future growth in Athens. Some key findings include:

- The Village of Athens is located in the northwestern portion of Marathon County, Wisconsin. It is the economic and social center of the northwest portion of Marathon County. During the last decade, the total population for the Village has grown 15 percent to 1095.
- The landscape of the Village is rural with over 50 percent of the total land area covered by cropland or forest. At the same time, Athens contains major commercial, industrial and community facilities for the northwestern portion of Marathon County.
- The Village is located off STH 97, a major transportation corridor in the area. Road conditions overall are good, although there has been expressed a desire to formalize a sidewalk policy and explore multi-modal trail system options.
- The sewer service area for the Village of Athens encompasses the area within the Village limits. While most of the developed area within the Village is served by municipal sewer, the area north and east of Black Creek is not served. The Village distributes water to properties within its municipal boundary. The Village currently has six wells with adequate capacity to meet the needs of existing and anticipated development
- Recent housing growth from the 1990s makes up approximately 14 percent of the total housing stock. While most of the housing in the Village is single-family, the Village also contains most of the areas multi-family housing opportunities. There may be a need to increase the amount of multi-family housing within the community due to the capacity of the current supply.
- The Village of Athens has a medical clinic, chiropractic office, and dental clinic. It also has a child care facility, and seven Village-run parks within its boundaries.
- The Village has a number of local employers, and a 110-acre industrial park located off STH 97. There is a strong desire to improve the local central business district, and to provide good-paying jobs locally.
- The Village of Athens has good relationships with the surrounding Towns, providing many services including fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

2. Demographics

This analysis is intended to describe the existing demographics of the Village of Athens and identify the major demographic trends impacting Athens over the next few decades.

Major Demographic Characteristics

Historical Trends

The following table provides an overview of demographic change within the Village of Athens from 1970 – 2000. The Village’s population increased 28 percent from 1970 – 2000. The Village saw its population and number of households, drop during the 1980’s.

The increase in total households over the past 30 years was substantially higher than the increase in population. This is likely due to a decrease in household size of 18 percent, which reflects the national trend toward more households comprised of singles, couples without children, and widows or widowers.

Table 2-1: Demographic Change, 1970-2000

	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1970 to 2000	% Change 1990 to 2000
Total Population						
Athens	856	988	951	1095	+28%	+15%
County	97,457	111,270	115,400	125,834	+29%	+9%
State	4417821	4705767	4891769	5363675	+21%	+10%
Total Households						
Athens	293	397	384	443	+51%	+15%
County	29,771	37,865	41,534	47,402	+59%	+14%
State	1,328,804	1,652,261	1,822,118	2,084,544	+57%	+14%
Average Household Size						
Athens	2.93	2.48	2.48	2.47	-18%	-0.4%
County	3.27	2.9	2.75	2.6	-20%	-5%
State	3.22	2.35	2.68	2.50	-22%	-7%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000

The population of Marathon County grew from 115,400 in 1990 to 125,834 in 2000, an increase of 9 percent compared to an 10percent increase in the State and 8.7 percent in the U.S. The most recent estimates (Wisconsin Department of Administration [WDOA], Demographic Services, 2002) show an annual growth rate of 0.7 percent in all three jurisdictions. Population growth in Marathon County has been concentrated in the urbanized area surrounding Wausau.

The following table provides an overview of the Village of Athens age distribution. The Village has a slightly lower median age than the County, but just higher than the State as a whole. The distribution is relatively similar between all three units of government.

Table 2-2: Population by Age Group, 2000

Age Group	Percent of Population		
	Athens	County	State
Under 5 years	7.6	6.4	6.4
5 to 9 years	6.9	7.5	7.1
10 to 14 years	7.5	8.0	7.5
15 to 19 years	7.6	7.7	7.6
20 to 24 years	5.7	5.4	6.7
25 to 34 years	13.0	13.0	13.2
35 to 44 years	14.2	16.5	16.3
45 to 54 years	10.9	13.9	13.7
55 to 59 years	4.2	4.8	4.7
60 to 64 years	4.2	3.8	3.8
65 to 74 years	8.3	6.4	6.6
75 to 84 years	6.6	4.8	4.7
85 years and over	3.4	1.7	1.8
Median Age	36.1	36.3	36.0

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000

Population Forecasts

The following projections for population were determined by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in 2003. The projections are based upon the percentage change (growth) in total population between 1980-2000 for each planning sub-area (Highway 51, Eastern Municipalities, North-Western, South-Central, and South-Western). Table 2-3 below illustrates population projections for the Town and the County using a moderate growth rate.

Population projections are made on an assumed moderate growth rate of -1percent. The northwest area of Marathon County has seen population decline over time, and will most likely continue to see decline. The County’s population is projected to grow by 13 percent over the next 30 years.

While the NCWRPC projects that the Village of Athens will decline in population, the decade of the 1990’s demonstrates that this may not be the case. The Village grew at a robust 15 percent during the 1990’s.

Table 2-3: Population Projections – 2000-2030

	Total Population by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% change
Athens	1,095	1,093	1,091	1,090	1,088	1,086	1,084	-1%
County	125,834	128,632	131,430	134,217	137,022	139,820	142,618	+13%

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/03

Table 2-3b: Population Projections – 2000-2030

	Total Population by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% change
Athens	1,095	1,126	1,156	1,187	1,219	1,250	1,276	+17%
County	125,834	130,242	134,504	138,836	143,308	147,112	150,255	+19%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration
2030 numbers projected from 2025 DOA estimates based on countywide growth rate rates

Table 2-3b shows population projections completed by the WDOA, Demographic Services Center. The WDOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96. These projections are based on the same historical time period as those developed by NCWRPC, however more recent years carry a greater weight in the WDOA’s projected populations. Additionally, the WDOA projections are based on the historical population trends of individual communities, whereas the NCWRPC projections are based on trends in the planning sub-areas.

Village of Athens

The NCWRPC projections provide a baseline to determine trends in the sub-area. They are useful in identifying future population beyond the borders of individual communities. The WDOA projections are more useful at the local municipality level.

Household Forecasts

Like population, household projections were completed in 5-year increments between 2000 and 2030. The number of households was calculated by dividing the average persons per household into the total population for each 5-year increment. In the Northwest sub-area, the average persons-per-household was estimated to be 2.85, based on an average density of 0.53 dwelling units per acre. Persons-per-household for the County was calculated to be 2.59 based on the average persons-per-household for all five planning sub-areas.

Assuming a moderate rate of growth, the number of households is estimated to increase by 139, or 14 percent between 2000 and 2030. This is slightly higher than the County increase of 13 percent. As shown in Table 2-1, the average household size was estimated to be 2.47 persons in 2000.

Table 2-4: Household Projections – 2000-2030

	Total Households by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% change
Athens	443	442	441	441	440	439	438	-1
County	48,585	49,665	50,745	51,821	52,904	53,985	55,065	+13

Source: Derived from data in Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/10/03

Like the population projection, the WDOA household projections are recognized as Wisconsin's official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96. and are based on the historical population trends of individual communities. Table 2-4b includes household projections completed by the WDOA.

Table 2-4b: Household Projections – 2000-2030

	Total Households by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% change
Athens	443	463	487	509	531	550	566	+28%
County	47,702	50,109	52,902	55,589	58,181	60,283	62,035	+30%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

2030 numbers projected from 2025 DOA estimates based on countywide growth rate rates

Education and Income Levels

According to 2000 Census data, 77.0 percent of Village residents have a high school education or higher. This compares to 83.8 percent for the County, and 85.1 percent for the State. In the Village, 13.2 percent of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. This is slightly lower than the number of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher in the County and State with 18.3 percent and 22.4 percent respectively.

Table 2-5: Educational Attainment (population age 25 and over)

Educational Attainment	Athens		County	State
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Less than 9th Grade	108	14.9	8.2	5.4
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	59	8.1	8.0	9.6
High School Graduate	314	43.3	38.0	34.6
Some College, No Degree	90	12.4	18.3	20.6
Associates Degree	59	8.1	9.2	7.5
Bachelor's Degree	65	9.0	12.6	15.3
Graduate or Professional Degree	31	4.3	5.7	7.2
Percent high school graduate or higher		77.0	83.8	85.1
Percent bachelor's degree or higher		13.2	18.3	22.4

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000

Median household income, as shown in Table 2-6 for Village residents was \$39,286 in 2000. This is lower than Marathon County with a median of \$45,165, and lower than the State overall at \$43,791. Income distribution among all income levels is approximately proportionate to levels observed County- and statewide.

Table 2-6: Household Income Levels, 2000

Income Level	Athens		County	State
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Less than \$10,000	45	10.1	5.9	7.1
\$10,000 - \$14,999	41	9.2	5.4	5.8
\$15,000 - \$24,999	59	13.2	12.3	12.7
\$25,000 - \$34,999	57	12.8	13.1	13.2
\$35,000 - \$49,999	69	15.5	19.4	18.1
\$50,000 - \$74,999	124	27.8	25.2	22.7
\$75,000 - \$99,999	40	9.0	10.5	10.9
\$100,000 - \$149,000	10	2.2	5.4	6.4
\$150,000 - \$199,999	1	0.2	1.3	1.5
\$200,000 or More	-	-	1.6	1.5
Total Households	446		100.0	100.0
Median Household Income	39,286		45,165	43,791

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000

Employment Characteristics

Table 2-7 illustrates the breakdown of the employed population of the Village in 2000 by occupation. The “employed population” is defined as people living in the Village who are 16 years and older and had a job at the time of the Census. In 2000, the Village had an employed population of 539. Most residents were employed in production, transportation, and material moving (27.6). Sales and office occupations were second (25.8), and Management, professional, and related occupations were third (21.5%).

Table 2-7: Occupation by Sector, 2000

Sector	Number	Percent
Management, professional, and related occupations	116	21.5
Service occupations	50	9.3
Sales and office occupations	139	25.8
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	15	2.8
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	70	13.0
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	149	27.6
Total Employed*	539	100.0

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

* "Total Employed" represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

An employment forecast completed by the NCWRPC in 2003 indicates continued employment growth for the Village. By the year 2030, it is estimated that the Village will provide employment to 594 workers. This estimate is based upon a growth rate of about 33percent, which was based on the rate of change in employment between 1990-2000 for non-farm employment.

Table 2-8: Employment Projections – 2000-2030

	Total Employment by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% change
Athens	447	472	496	520	545	569	594	+32%
County	72,508	75,625	78,742	81,859	84,976	88,093	91,210	26%

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/03

Demographic Trends

- The Village has experienced moderate population growth over the past 30 years, with a higher rate (13%) between 1990 and 2000.
- The number of households in the Village has increased similarly to the average increases experienced by the County and State. All have experienced a decrease in average household size, which reflects the national trends toward more households consisting of singles, widows, and couples without children.

Issues

No significant issues have been identified.

3. Natural Resources

Because natural resource features do not follow geo-political boundaries, it is important to consider their patterns and inter-relationships on a broader scale. In addition, many of the programs for protecting or mitigating impacts to natural resources are administered at the County, State or Federal level. Thus, an overview of recent county-wide natural resource planning efforts is described below, followed by a description of local natural resource conditions. Of particular interest are geographic areas of the landscape encompassing valued natural resources features grouped below by resource type, including water, soil and biological resources.

Maps for the Natural Resources element include Figures: 3-1, Rivers and Floodplains; 3-2, Wetland Types; 3-3, Soil Associations; 3-4, Prime Farm Soils; 3-5, Slopes. All Figures are located at the end of this section.

Recent Planning Efforts Related to Natural Resources

In the last decade, several plans were prepared by the County specifically to address protection and management of natural resources. These plans may be used as resources to guide local policy and decision making regarding resource management and protection. In addition to the plans listed below, Marathon County and several local communities have adopted park and outdoor recreation plans that discuss natural resource based recreational facilities and protection strategies. These are described in more detail in the Parks section.

- **Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP)** - In 2001, Marathon County adopted a LWRMP in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Marathon County and outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources. Marathon County encompasses portions of 22 watersheds. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ranked these watersheds according to water pollution impacts and designated five as “priority” watersheds to receive special planning and funding through the voluntary, State-funded Priority Watershed Program. The County’s Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning (DCPZ) works with the WDNR to implement the program. Program funding is used to hire staff to assist in developing management plans for each watershed and to provide cost sharing to landowners for implementation of “best management practices” (BMPs) to achieve the program objectives.
- **Marathon County 2001 Groundwater Protection Guide** – This guide is an extension of the efforts established with adoption of the Marathon County Groundwater Plan in 1988. It is intended to guide local and County officials in setting policy. It also serves as a resource of information about groundwater and other natural resources and recommends strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection.

- **Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 1996-2005** – This plan includes recommendations to guide management of forest land in Marathon County in accordance with the County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department’s mission to manage and protect the County forest on a sustainable basis for ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future generations. It provides substantial information on existing forest resources and as well as information regarding the roles of the various agencies and regulatory framework related to forest management.

Water Resources

Marathon County contains abundant water resources. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state and others are in need of focused efforts to improve water quality. Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) designations are derived from an amendment to the U.S. Clean Water Act, which directed states to identify waters that were largely unaffected by pollution and should remain that way. States were required to develop “anti-degradation” policies to protect these waters from pollution. As a result, wastewater entering an ORW must be as clean as the water in the “outstanding” water body. The anti-degradation policies only apply to point sources of pollution, such as an industrial discharge pipe. However, Wisconsin has other programs in place to control non-point source pollution, such as animal waste and pesticides in farm runoff, urban runoff, and failing septic systems.

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board also wanted to extend higher levels of protection to top trout waters. As such, the WDNR established a second category of waterways to be protected under the anti-degradation policy; these are the ERW. Wastewater entering ERW must meet minimum clean water standards, although higher standards are encouraged where feasible.

There are no ORW in the Village of Athens

ERW in the Village of Athens include:

- Several tributaries to Black Creek

Water resources that have been significantly degraded are identified as “impaired waters”. Four of the 22 watersheds in Marathon County have been identified as “impaired waters” on the “303 (d) list” of the U.S. Clean Water Act. The list identifies waters that do not meet current water quality standards and merit water quality improvement and protection. Impaired waters in the Village of Athens include:

- Upper Big Eau Pleine in western Marathon County; and

Resource management plans for these watersheds, plus the Lower Big Rib River watershed are currently being done as part of the Priority Watershed Program, a State-funded, voluntary program administered by the County. The County’s resource management planning efforts are described in more detail in the *Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan* (2001).

Streams/Rivers – Potato and Black Creeks run through the Village.

Floodplains - Floodplains consist of land likely to be covered by floodwater during the regional (100-year) flood. Floodplain areas are based on information compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). The floodplain includes the floodway and the flood fringe.

In the northwest corner of the Village there is a large area of land adjacent to Black Creek within the 100-year floodplain. Floodplains also exist in a narrow band immediately adjacent to Black Creek and Potato Creek as they flow through the Village.

Wetlands – Wetlands in Wisconsin were defined by the State Legislature in 1978 as: *"an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions."*

Programs in three levels of government - local, State and Federal - regulate activities in wetlands. There are dozens of wetland types in Wisconsin, characterized by vegetation, soil type and degree of saturation or water cover. Some of the more prominent wetland types are:

- **Aquatic Bed** wetlands contain plants growing entirely on or in a water body no deeper than 6'. Plants may include pondweed, duckweed, lotus and water-lilies.

- **Marshes** are characterized by standing water and dominated by cattails, bulrushes, pickerel-weed, lake sedges and/or giant bur-reed
- **Sedge or "Wet" Meadows** wetlands may have saturated soils, rather than standing water, more often than not. Sedges, grasses and reeds are dominant, but look also for blue flag iris, marsh milkweed, sneeze-weed, mint and several species of goldenrod and aster.
- **Scrub/Shrub** wetlands include bogs and alder thickets and are characterized by woody shrubs and small trees such as tag alder, bog birch, willow and dogwood.
- **Forested** wetlands include bogs and forested floodplain complexes. They are characterized by trees 20 feet or more in height such as tamarack, white cedar, black spruce, elm, black ash, green ash and silver maple.

Wetlands are generally located adjacent to Black Creek and its tributaries. The largest wetland is located in the northwest corner of the Village and consists of a forested type wetland. While most of the wetlands are forested, there are also some scrub/shrub and emergent/wet meadow type wetlands in the Village.

Groundwater – Depth to groundwater is moderately deep to shallow in the Village. Water quantities are sufficient for current and domestic uses. However, water can be difficult to find, thus the Village has intentionally discouraged high-water users from locating there.

Soil Resources

Soil Types – Soils in the Village are classified in two major soil associations. Generally, Cathro-Seelyeville soils cover the southern portion of the Village. Magnor-Cable soils cover the northern portion of the Village. Susceptibility for soil erosion is similar to the average soil loss experienced by Marathon County as a whole and is not a major concern.

Prime Farm Soils – Figure 3-4 illustrates soils that have been identified as prime farm soils according to the Marathon County Cropland Evaluation System (CES). This system establishes a basis from which one parcel of land can be compared to another. It rates soils on their ability to produce food, feed, forage, and fiber crops. It is based upon the knowledge that soil properties affect yields. The system is non-biased, defendable, and can be consistently applied. Additional information on the Marathon County CES can be obtained from Marathon County DCPZ.

There are patches of Class 1 and 2 prime farmland soils throughout the Village. In fact, much of the developed portion of the Village is built on Class 2 prime farmland soils. These class designations refer to the quality of soils for growing crops and are based on United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifications. Class 1 soils are the best soils in Marathon County for growing all crops. Class 2 soils are also very good agricultural soils, however, they may be prone to wetness and are therefore less desirable than Class 1 soils. It should be noted that not all prime farm soils are used for farming; some have been developed with residential or other

uses. The “prime farm soils” designation simply indicates that these soils are good productive farmland.

There are no parcels under Farmland Preservation Contracts in the Village, but there is one block located adjacent the southwest corners of the Village, which provide certain tax incentives to encourage land to be kept in active farming. This is discussed in greater detail in the Land Use section.

Steep Slopes – Steep slopes are located east of Black Creek, on the east-central side of the Village. Steep slopes are defined as slopes with gradients over 12 percent. Map 3-5 illustrates where steep slopes exist and separates them into two categories. Category D includes areas with slopes between 12 and 20 percent. Category E includes areas where slopes are all greater than 15 percent.

Vegetation – Areas along Black Creek and its tributaries are mostly wooded. Areas of cropland are primarily located in the northeast and southeast corners of the Village. Vegetation in the developed areas of the Village consists of urban type landscaping of trees, shrubs and private gardens.

Wildlife Resources and Habitat – Wildlife resources include a variety of game and non-game species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians that typically live in Marathon County. Common types of wildlife include deer, wild turkeys, raccoon, squirrels, songbirds, waterfowl, bear, badger, wolf and raptors. Wildlife resources are abundant in the many undisturbed sanctuaries, refuges, reserves, and scattered habitats located throughout the County. Numerous other species of migrating birds use habitat in Marathon

County for food, shelter, and resting stops during seasonal migration.

There is a significant amount of wildlife habitat in Marathon County. In addition to County parks and forest units, major wildlife habitat areas include: the George W. Mead Wildlife Area, the McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Management Area, and Rib Mountain State Park.

Threatened and Endangered Species – There are no aquatic and terrestrial endangered, threatened, or special concern species present within the Village.

Issues

- **Creek System** – The creeks that run through the Village create barriers to the extension of utilities, which can increase the cost of extensions.
- **High Bedrock** – The presence of rocky areas in the industrial park make development in this area difficult and more costly. This affects ability of the Village to attract and retain business.

4. Land Use

The Village of Athens is located at the juncture of the towns of Bern, Halsey, Johnson and Rietbrock. With its mix of commercial businesses, schools and churches, it functions as a service center to these surrounding communities.

Maps for the Land Use element include Figures: 4-1, Existing Land use/Land cover; 4-2, Existing Zoning. All figures are located at the end of this section.

Current Pattern of Land Use

Existing Land Use – The developed portion of the Village of Athens is concentrated around STH 97 and CTH M. Most of the developed area consists of single-family residential, although there are also some areas of multi-family residential. Commercial and industrial areas are mainly located along STH 97. The central business district is located along STH 97, just south of the Black Creek bridge.

For purposes of this report, existing land cover was used to represent existing land use. Table 4-1 describes the various land use categories and Figure 4-1 illustrates the existing land use. Note, the acreage and percentage of land shown on Table 4-1 were determined from aerial photos and are not intended to be accurate to the parcel level.

Table 4-1: Land Use Cover Classification, 2000

Land Cover Category	Description	Acres	% of Total Land Area
Single Family Residential	One family structures, farm residences, mobile homes	156	10
Multi-Family Residential	Multiple family structures with three or more households, condos, duplexes, apartments	13	1
Commercial Services	Retail stores, taverns, restaurants, truck stops, gas stations, farm coops, farm implement dealerships, automobile dealerships, business offices, motels/hotels, offices, telephone/gas company	37	2
Industrial	Saw/paper/lumber mills, dairies, industrial parks, trucking operations, distribution centers	3	--
Quarries/Gravel Pits	Mining operations	0	0
Cropland	Tilled agriculture, prime farmland	410	26
Specialty Crops	Ginseng, orchards, vineyards, nurseries, groves, cranberries, etc.	0	0
Other Agriculture	Fallow, pasture and undetermined agriculture, power lines and water towers, municipal wells	185	12
Public/Quasi-Public	Schools, churches, cemeteries, town halls, fire departments, National Guard	60	4
Recreation	Ball fields, golf courses, playgrounds, parks, trails, camp grounds, shooting ranges	5	--
Woodlands	Forested land	387	25
Water and Wetlands	Open waters, such as lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, creeks, reservoirs	33	2
Transportation	Airports, highways, road right-of-ways, railroads, logging roads	88	6
Barren Land	Unused open land in wooded areas, along streams, along roadsides	51	3
Total Land Area		1,564	100%

Source: Marathon County Land Use Cover Database

Current Land Use Plans and Regulations

Land Use Plan(s) – The Village of Athens completed a comprehensive plan in 1995 / 1996. This plan needs to be updated to comply with current legislative requirements.

Zoning – The Village of Athens enforces its own zoning. Figure 4-2 illustrates the existing pattern of zoning in the Village of Athens.

Shoreland Zoning – Shoreland, shoreland wetlands, and floodplain regulations are applicable in all geographic areas of the County. Wisconsin law mandates Counties to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land use in shoreland/wetland and floodplain areas for the entire area of the County outside of villages and cities. This ordinance supersedes any Village ordinance, unless a Village ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland/wetland and floodplain area covered under this zoning is the area that lies within 1,000 feet of a lake and within 300 feet of a navigable stream or to the landward side of a floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

Farmland Preservation Program– The State of Wisconsin has a Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Program. The goals of the program are twofold: to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and to provide property tax relief to farmland owners. Landowners keeping land in agricultural use can claim a credit on their State income tax by obtaining a zoning certificate, if the land is exclusive agriculture zoned (8 towns in Marathon County), or sign contract with the State. The program requires that a landowner be a Wisconsin resident, own a minimum of

35 or more acres of contiguous land, and produce gross farm receipts of \$6,000 or more in the last year, or \$18,000 in the last three years. The income requirement can be satisfied with having 35 acres or more enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Landowners must also comply with County soil and water conservation standards. Contracts can range from 10 to 25 years, and remain in effect regardless of change in ownership.

Forest Crop Law (FCL) and Managed Forest Law (MFL)

In the State, over 2.6 million acres are enrolled under the FCL and the MFL. Because high taxes had encouraged the cutting of timber for revenue, the laws were developed to encourage better forest management and provide tax relief to the woodland owners. Land set aside under the FCL (which was combined into the MFL in 1986) required at least 40 acres in one quarter-quarter section, set aside under a 25- or 50-year contract, and public access for hunting and fishing activities. Current contracts will continue until their expiration dates. This land is typically shown in plat books to identify locations. Land set aside under the FCL in Marathon County is often owned by forest products companies, although many individuals also own large enough parcels to participate.

The MFL was enacted in 1985 and requires at least 10 acres of contiguous forest land. Because of the smaller acreage requirement, many individual landowners take advantage of the MFL. Landowners may close to the public up to 80 acres of their forest lands set aside under MFL. The remaining program acres must be open to public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing and cross-country skiing. Landowners must choose a 25- or 50-year contract. The landowner pays an

Acreage Share Amount as part of their tax bill in lieu of taxes. Current rates through 2007 are \$0.83 per acre for land open to the public and \$1.95 per acre for closed land.

Table 4-2 shows current estimates of land set aside under the FCL and MFL programs. It is noted that information on MFL land is not readily available since landowners select various acreage amounts and may have both closed or open land. These acreages do not correspond with the parcel boundaries, and thus are not mapped.

As shown in Table 4-2, there are zero acres of land estimated to be currently enrolled in the FCL program and about 40 acres enrolled in MFL programs in the Town.

Table 4-2: Land in Forest Preservation Programs (in acres), 1998 – 2002

Year	Forest Crop Law (FCL)	Managed Forest Law (MFL) open	Managed Forest Law (MFL) closed
1998	40	0	40
2002	0	0	40
Change	-40	0	0
% Change	-100	0	0

Source: Data compiled by local assessors with Municipal Board of Review

Development Trends

Land Supply – Estimates indicate the Village of Athens has 1,033 acres of land available and 531 acres of land unavailable. This was calculated using North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) data. Available land was considered to be cropland, special cropland, woodlands, and

barren / vacant lands. All other types were considered “unavailable” there are few residential lots available.

Land Demand – An estimate of land needed for future residential development was based on projected new dwelling units between 2000 and 2030 derived from WDOA household projections and the average density of dwelling units per acre in the community. The average density was calculated using the total acres of residential land on the 2000 land use/cover map divided by the number of households according to the 2000 Census. It was assumed that the density would remain constant between 2000 and 2030. Future acres needed for residential development were then estimated by multiplying the projected number of households in 2030 by the average density. In the Village of Athens, is estimated that 47 acres of land will be needed to accommodate new residential development through 2030.

The NCWRPC estimated land demand for future non-residential development based on projected changes in local employment and estimated current average density of employees per acre. In the Village of Athens, it is estimated that 34 acres will be needed to accommodate new non-residential development through 2030.

Land Values – Table 4-3 indicates the change in assessed land values between 1998 and 2002 for various types of land use in the Village of Athens. It also indicates percent change in acreage and land value for the Village compared to Marathon County. Between 1998 and 2002 the number of acres in residential land use decreased by 44. At the same time, the amount of land in Agriculture decreased by over 91

acres. The amount of land classified as Swamp & Waste Land did not change. Similarly, the acreage of land classified as Forest did not change either. In Marathon County, land classified as Swamp & Waste Land had the highest percent increase in acreage of all categories (74.8%) and land classified as Forest had the highest percent increase in value per acre (almost 92%).

Table 4-3: Per Acre Assessed Land Values (in dollars), 1998 – 2002

Year	Residential		Commercial		Manufacturing		Agriculture		Swamp & Waste Land		Forest	
	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only
1998	170	\$23,179	96	\$10,779	2	\$4,400	479	\$479	0	\$0	0	\$0
2002	126	\$31,352	130	\$9,296	7	\$4,757	388	\$504	0	\$0	0	\$0
Chg.	-44	\$8,173	+34	\$-1,483	+5	\$357	-91	\$25	0	\$0	0	\$0
Percent Change Comparison												
	Acres	Land (\$)	Acres	Land (\$)	Acres	Land (\$)	Acres	Land (\$)	Acres	Land (\$)	Acres	Land (\$)
Athens	-25.9	+35.3	+45.4	+35.4	-13.8	-6.8	+250.0	+8.1	+47.4	-19.0	+5.2	0
County	+21.2	+5.6	+6.4	+38.4	-4.0	-7.8	-0.5	+34.4	+31.4	-11.2	-47.6	+74.8

Source: Data compiled by local assessors with Municipal Board of Review

Major Opportunities and Constraints

- Future growth will most likely take place to the south of the Village.
- The Village would like to continue revitalizing the Central Business District (CBD). This is a key to economic development, as well as providing a full range of services to the Village and the region.

Issues

- **Coordination of Fringe Development** - There is a desire in the Village to work with the surrounding Towns on coordination of future growth and development. Currently, adjacent Towns are invited to pertinent meetings, however more cooperative efforts may be beneficial.
- **Highway Oriented Development** - The Village would like to keep industry contained within its industrial park and not develop along STH 97.

5. Transportation

Background

The Village of Athens is split by STH 97, north to south. CTH M enters the Village from the west, and CTH A enters the Village on the northeast side.

Maps for the Transportation element include Figures: 5-1, Functional Classification; 5-2, Trails and Regional Transportation. All figures are located at the end of this section.

Existing Transportation Planning Efforts

Recent Transportation Plans

Transportation planning in Marathon County is coordinated between Marathon County Planning Department staff and the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); the body designated by the Federal Department of Transportation to be responsible for transportation planning in the metropolitan area. The Marathon County Planning Department provides staff for the Wausau Area MPO. The County's planning department also does transportation planning for areas outside the Wausau metropolitan area.

County transportation planning efforts are presented in various plans and studies. Findings and recommendations presented in these plans should be integrated into local community planning

efforts when relevant and appropriate. Recent transportation plans prepared by Marathon County include:

- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** – The TIP includes all programmed transportation projects receiving Federal and/or State funds. The TIP was adopted in October 2001 and is updated every two years.
- **State Trunk Highway 29 Corridor Land Use Review (1997)** – This plan was prepared by a multi-departmental team working with communities along the STH 29 corridor in the western part of Marathon County. The primary goal was to identify recommendations to allow local communities to protect STH 29 from impacts related to unplanned growth.
- **Marathon County Functional / Jurisdictional Highway Classification Study (1998)** – This plan identifies and groups classes of roadways that provided similar levels of service. The plan recommended that the unit of government having the greatest basic interest in the roadway's function would carry out the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the classified roadways.

Road Network

Functional Classification of Roads/Jurisdiction

(Source: *WDOT Facilities Development Manual*)

A functionally classified road system is one in which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they provide, ranging from a high degree

of travel mobility to land access functions. At the upper limit of the system (principal arterials, for example), are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas at the lower limits are those local roads and streets that emphasize access.

The functional classifications are generally defined as:

Principal Arterials serve corridor movements having trips length and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. These routes generally serve all urban areas greater than 5,000 population or connect major centers of activity, the highest traffic volumes and the longest trip desires.

Minor Arterials, in conjunction with principal arterials, serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intracommunity continuity and service to trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.

Collectors provide both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. The collector system distributes trips from the arterials through the area to the local streets. The collectors also collect traffic from the local streets and channel it onto the arterial system.

Local Streets comprise all facilities not on one of the higher systems. They serve primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to the higher order of systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility, and serve the through-traffic movement on this system is usually discouraged.

Jurisdiction - Roads are commonly classified in one of two ways: by ownership or by purpose. Jurisdictional responsibility refers to ownership of a particular road, while functional classification, as describe above, identifies the road by the level of service it provides.

Jurisdiction refers to governmental ownership, not necessarily responsibility. For example, some State owned roads are maintained by local jurisdictions. Additionally, the designation of a public road as a “Federal-aid highway” does not alter its ownership or jurisdiction as a State or local road, only that its service value and importance have made that road eligible for Federal-aid construction and rehabilitation funds.¹

Ownership is divided among the Federal, State, and local governments. States own over 20 percent of the national road network. The Federal Government has responsibility for about 5 percent, primarily in national parks, forests, and Indian reservations. Over 75 percent of the road system is locally controlled.

In some cases, local municipalities are responsible for conducting routine maintenance and minor repairs on State and Federal highways within their jurisdictional boundaries. In return, the State generally provides financing to those jurisdictions. However, major repairs and reconstruction are generally still the responsibility of the State Department of Transportation. Roadway jurisdictions (i.e. U.S., State, and County highways) are indicated in Figure 5-1.

¹ U.S Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration Conditions and Performance Report.

Major Road Facilities – Functional classification, jurisdiction, and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), when available, are summarized below for all major roads.

- **STH 97** is a minor arterial. The 1998 and 2001 AADT volumes are listed below:

STH 97 Count Locations	1998	2001
South of Mueller ST	2,500	2,600
East of Pine St	3,900	3,200
North of Mueller ST	2,400	2,700
North of Athens	1,500	1,500
South of Athens	1,900	N/A

N/A = AADT not available

It is noted that STH 97 is planned for reconstruction in 2005.

- **CTH M** is a minor collector. CTH M converges with STH 97 through Athens. Near the western boundary of Athens, the AADT was 1,900 in 1998 and 950 in 2001. The 2001 AADT west of Washington Street was 1,200.
- **CTH A**, which converges with STH 97 at the northern boundary of Athens where it had an AADT volume of 1,400 and 1,300 in 1998 and 2001, respectively.
- **West Limit Road**, a local street had a 1998 and 2001 AADT south of Mueller Street of 1,000 and 670, respectively.
- **Allen Street**, a local street had a 1998 and 2001 AADT south of Pond Street of 790 and 610, respectively.

Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) – The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) requires all incorporated communities to prepare a Pavement Management Plan (PMP) using a pavement rating system for their local roads. These plans were to be submitted for review by December 2001. The data from these plans is intended to provide the foundation for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), which is a computer resource that will enable communities and the State to begin to assess Wisconsin’s local roadway system.

The PASER system, which was designed by the Transportation Information Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is the rating system used most by Wisconsin communities. PASER rates road surfaces on a scale of 1 to 10. This scale is broken down as follows:

- “1” and “2” = very poor condition
- “3” = poor condition
- “4” and “5” = fair condition
- “6” and “7” = good condition
- “8” = very good condition
- “9” and “10” = excellent condition

In addition to its use in the new WISLR, the rating system gives communities a detailed assessment of the appropriate maintenance method for each road segment under their jurisdiction. This assessment is then incorporated into the community’s PMP.

Table 5-1: Summary of Pavement Conditions

Surface Type Code (miles)						
Unimproved Road	Graded Earth Road	Gravel Road	Wearing Surface	Cold Mix Asphalt on Concrete	Cold Mix Resurfacing with < 7" Base	Cold Mix Resurfacing with > 7" Base
		0.59				
Cold Mix Asphalt Base < 7"	Cold Mix Asphalt Base > 7"	Hot Mix Asphalt on Concrete	Hot Mix Resurfacing	Hot Mix Asphalt Pavement	Concrete Pavement	Brick or Block Pavement
0.68	6.62			0.80	0.07	

Surface Condition Rating (miles)						
Failed	Poor	Very Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
	0.22	1.00	2.24	2.01	2.06	1.19

Source: WDOT (WISLR), 8/10/04

Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “Fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. The roads that display a surface rating of “Good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. The majority of the roads within the Village of Athens will require preventative maintenance, however, about 3.44 miles of roadway will require some sort of reconditioning.

Land Use and Transportation

Access Management – Wisconsin was one of the first states to recognize the relationship between highway operations and the use of abutting lands. Under Chapter 233, the WDOT was given the authority to establish rules to review subdivision plats abutting or adjoining State trunk highways or connecting highways. Regulations enacted by WDOT establish the principles of subdivision review. They require new subdivisions to: (1) have internal street systems; (2) limit direct vehicular access to the highways from individual lots; (3) establish building setbacks; and (4) establish access patterns for remaining unplatted land.

Marathon County issues driveway permits and implements access restrictions on all properties fronting a lettered County road. The *County Trunk Highway Access-Driveway Policy* addresses the requirements regarding culverts, access width, slope, visibility and spacing. The policy is available through the Marathon County Highway Department.

Traffic Generators – there is a feed mill on STH 97 that is highly utilized by larger farms

Other Transportation Modes

Pedestrian – There is no current sidewalk policy for either improvements or new construction in the Village.

Bicycle -- STH 97 from Athens north is identified as suggested bike routes in the *Marathon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*.

The *Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan for the Non-Urbanized Area of Marathon County, Wisconsin, 1996* identified **recommended** bicycle routes in Marathon County. These recommended routes were based on traffic counts and condition of pavement. Formal action has not occurred to adopt these as **designated** bicycle routes.

Transit -- Elderly, needy, and disabled transit service is provided throughout the County through North Central Health Care (NCHC). The services include semi-fixed routes that are scheduled, and demand services available with a 48-hour notice. Information and services are available by calling 848-4555.

Rail -- An abandoned railroad line connects Athens to Abbotsford to the southwest. Abandoned rail corridors have provided opportunities for developing multi-use trails in many communities. Currently, this corridor is utilized as a snowmobile and ATV trail.

Airports – The Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) is a joint venture of Marathon and Portage Counties. It is the only airport within Marathon County or neighboring counties that provides scheduled air passenger services. The CWA is located east of Mosinee and accessible via I-39. The terminal has been modernized and highway access reconstructed to be more convenient. Since 1982 more than \$24,000,000 has been spent to keep the airport ready to serve the needs of the region. Service is provided through Mesaba/Northwest, United/United Feeder Service and Skyway/Midwest Express, offering 24 flights per day that connect through Minneapolis, Chicago,

Detroit and Milwaukee. There are also nine air freight and express flights daily.

Issues

- **Road Maintenance** - There is a need to determine, prioritize and fund road maintenance and road improvements.
- **Sidewalk Policy** – There is a need for a sidewalk policy especially in developing areas and along major pedestrian routes (around the high school, etc.). This will improve the transportation options for all residents of the Village.
- **Trail System** – The community identified the need for intra-community trail system linking existing parks, the Central Business District (CBD) and community facilities. Opportunities may exist for a multi-use trail development via the rails to trails programs.

6. Utilities

Maps for the Utilities element include Figures: 6-1, Depth to Bedrock; 6-2; Suitable Soils for Septic Tank Absorption; 6-3, Depth to Groundwater; 6-4, Watersheds; 6-5, Proposed Weston-Arrowhead Powerline. All figures are located at the end of this section.

Sanitary Sewer Service

Sewer Service Area: The sewer service area for the Village of Athens encompasses the area within the Village limits. While most of the developed area within the Village is served by municipal sewer, the area north and east of Black Creek is not served and uses private on-site waste disposal systems.

Sewer Treatment and Collection Facilities - The Athens wastewater treatment facility was upgraded in 1984 and is in good shape. It has capacity to serve anticipated future development within the service area. The treatment plant (and recycling center) is located off of Goodrich Street near Black Creek. The wastewater collection system (pipe network and lift stations) is generally in good condition, although some pipes are very old. The sewer pipe network consists of 6, 8, 10, and 12-inch pipes. Sewer pipes and mains are replaced and upgraded in conjunction with road reconstruction or in response to known problems. It is noted that in Summer 2003 the Village expects to replace 2000-feet of pipe in conjunction with road reconstruction and in 2005 the State plans to

reconstruct STH 97, at which time all water and sewer in that road will be upgraded.

On-Site Waste Disposal Systems

Chapter 15 of the *General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County* requires private sewage systems on all premises intended for human habitation or occupancy that are not served by public sewer. The County Code incorporates by reference rules, regulations, and laws in the Wisconsin Statutes and Wisconsin Administrative Code governing private sewage systems, including:

- **Comm 83** – This refers to Chapter 83 in the Wisconsin Administrative Code under the Department of Commerce. It sets standards for regulation of private sewage systems. This code was updated in 2000 now allows the use of new concepts and technologies through a system of individual component approval. Standards for effluent are based on a drinking water standard, although nitrates are generally exempted.

Types of Systems – Under the revised Comm 83 standards, property owners have a wider array of system options than previously available. Septic tanks can be steel, concrete, fiberglass or plastic, but they all must now be equipped with a filter to prevent the movement of solids out into the soil absorption component. In addition, rock in drainfields may now be substituted with specifically engineered foam peanuts bound in mesh or plastic chambers.

On-site waste disposal systems generally fall into four categories:

- **Conventional Systems** – these systems include an absorption field that is buried under the natural ground level. These systems cannot be built in areas where soils do not allow percolation due to high clay content or bedrock where groundwater is too near the surface, or where soils percolate too rapidly and thus pose problems for groundwater contamination.
- **Mound Systems** – these systems include an absorption field that is constructed above ground, creating a “mound”. This type of system is generally used where clay soils, groundwater, rapid permeability or bedrock prevent construction of conventional systems.
- **Mechanical Treatment Components** – these generally replace or augment the septic tank component and may include aerobic treatment tanks and/or self-contained artificial media or sand filters to clean the effluent prior to its discharge into the soil absorption component.
- **Holding Tanks** - Holding tanks are considered the system of last resort and are only allowed if other types of septic systems cannot be used. Temporary holding tanks (e.g., less than 2 years) are sometimes allowed in areas where public sewer is approved for installation in the near future.

Permit Requirements – The Marathon County Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning (DCPZ) reviews and issues permits for private sewage systems. Soil and site

evaluations are required to determine if the proposed septic system is suitable for the specific property and location before a permit will be issued. If deemed necessary, floodplain and/or wetland delineation may also be required prior to permit issuance. In addition, a maintenance agreement must be submitted prior to permit issuance. All septic tanks installed on or after July 1, 1980, are required to be pumped at least once every three years.

Public Water Service

Service Areas and Supply: The Village distributes water to properties within its municipal boundary. The Village currently has six wells with adequate capacity to meet the needs of existing and anticipated development. It is noted that two wells are located in areas with high bedrock and thus have lower flow rates. Because water can be difficult to find in the area given high bedrock, the high water use industries are discouraged from locating in the Village.

Currently there are no concerns about well contamination. The Village does treat its water by adding chlorine and fluoride as well as caustic soda to raise the pH. An air stripper is also used to remove radon.

Storage Facilities: The Village current has a 240,000-gallon ground storage reservoir. A new 150,000-gallon water tower will be constructed in summer 2003 and a System Control and Data Access (SCADA) monitoring system will be added. The old tower will then be removed.

Distribution Systems: The Village’s water distribution system is generally in good working condition. An area of the Village east of Black Creek is served with 4-inch water mains, which are inadequate for proper flow and pressure, however this area is located in the floodplain and acquisition of properties within this area is being pursued. Old pipes are replaced in conjunction with road reconstruction or in response to a known problem. Reportedly, the water utility experiences 15-25 percent water loss (unaccounted), also some looping of distribution system is needed. Water distribution pipes and mains will also be upgraded in 2003 and 2005 as noted above for sanitary sewers.

Surface Water Management

In 2001, Marathon County adopted a Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP) in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Marathon County and outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources.

The County is particularly concerned about nonpoint sources of pollution, including failing septic systems, urban runoff, and issues often identified with rural areas such as soil erosion, animal waste and pesticides. Nonpoint pollution is best addressed by watershed. Marathon County encompasses portions of 22 watersheds. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ranked these watersheds according to water pollution impacts and designated five as “priority” watersheds to receive special planning and funding through the voluntary, State-funded Priority Watershed

Program. Preparation of resource management plans for the following watersheds is currently underway:

Springbrook in the Town of Harrison;

- Upper Yellow River in the Town of Spencer;
- Upper Big Eau Pleine in western Marathon County; and
- Lower Big Eau Pleine in the south-central part of the County.
- Lower Big Rib River

Electrical and Gas Utilities

Electrical power is provided to the Village of Athens by Xcel Energy, which is based in Minneapolis. Western Marathon County is the tail end of Xcel’s distribution system.

Figure 6-5 shows the potential route of the proposed Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line. This line, proposed by American Transmission Company (ATC), would run 220-miles from Duluth, MN to Weston, WI. This is a controversial project. Supporters claim the line is necessary to prevent energy shortages that could have significant negative impacts on the area economy. Those opposed have concerns about electro-magnetic impacts on animals and humans, loss of rural and visual character, and the imposition of major structures on private land. The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) must approve this line. To date, Marathon County has opposed granting easements through county-wide land for the transmission line. However, if approved by the PSCW, the ATC can use eminent domain to place the line on private property.

Telecommunication Facilities and Services

- Television/Cable providers: Charter Communications
- Telephone/Fiber Optics: Verizon
- Cell tower: CellCom tower located in industrial park in 2002

Solid Waste Management and Recycling

The Village of Athens provides solid waste and recycling pickup.

The Marathon County Solid Waste Management Department is in charge of waste management for non-hazardous solid waste. It consists of the 575-acre landfill, recycling programs, composting, and waste-to-energy. The Department opened a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in May 1997, where County residents can drop off hazardous waste free of charge.

Issues

- **Water System Looping** - There is a current need to continue looping of the water system for improved fire protection and for overall water delivery to some areas of the Village.

7. Housing

Housing is a significant aspect of any comprehensive planning effort. This section is an inventory and analysis of housing conditions in the Village of Athens. Housing in Athens is predominantly single family, with over 73percent owner-occupied. Almost 13percent of housing units were constructed over the last decade, and housing values are higher than median values for Marathon County as a whole.

Data contained in this section reflect two methodologies of data collection employed by the U.S. Census. Data in the first table, labeled as “2000 Census: STF [Summary Tape File]-1 Data” are collected through a household-by-household census and represents responses from every household within the country. To get more detailed information, the U.S. Census also randomly distributes a long-form questionnaire to 1 in 6 households throughout the nation. Tables utilizing this sample data are identified in the footnote below each table and are labeled “STF-3 Data”. Tables are labeled as either STF-1 or STF-3 data because numbers may differ for similar statistics between each method, due to survey limitations, non-response, or other attributes unique to each form of data collection.

Housing Inventory

Housing Type and Tenure

The 2000 U.S. Census reports that the Village of Athens has 443 total occupied housing units. 326, or 74percent of these

units are owner occupied. The average household size in the Village is 2.47 persons. Approximately 29percent of Village households are classified as being “1 person households.” Just over 32percent of all Village households have a householder 65 years or older.

Table 7-1: Number of Housing Units by Type and Tenure

Area	Athens	Marathon County	Wisconsin
Total Occupied Housing Units	443	47,702	2,084,544
Owner Occupied Units	326	36,091	1,426,361
Renter Occupied Units	117	11,611	658,183
Average Household Size	2.47	2.6	2.50
% Owner Occupied	73.6	75.7	68.4
% 1 Person Households	29.1	23.6	26.8
% With Householder 65 years or older	32.3	21.7	21.5

2000 Census: STF-1 Data

Changes in Housing Stock

Table 7-2 notes changes in the housing stock between 1990 and 2000 according to U.S. Census Data. Total housing units have increased by 58 while the number of occupied housing units grew by 60. Vacancy decreased from 7 to 6percent between decades. The number of owner-occupied housing units grew by 50 or 18percent. The census reports increases in the number of single-family, duplex, and multi-family housing units.

Table 7-2: Changes in Housing Stock

	1990	2000	# Change	% Change
Total Housing Units	412	470	58	14%
Occupied Housing Units (Households)	384	444	60	16%
Vacancy %	7%	6%	--	--
Owner Occupied Housing Units	279	329	50	18%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	105	115	10	10%
Owner Occupied Housing Units as percent of Total	73%	74%	--	--
Number of Homes for Seasonal/Rec Use	3	0	-3	-100%
Number of Single Family Homes	305	320	15	5%
*Detached	299	320	21	7%
**Attached	6	0	-6	-100%
Number of Duplexes	31	57	26	84%
Multi Family Units 3-9 units	45	59	14	31%
Multi Family Units 10+	0	0	0	--

1990, 2000 Census: STF-3 Data

* This is a 1-unit structure detached from any other house

**In row houses (sometimes called townhouses), double houses, or houses attached to nonresidential structures, each house is a separate, attached structure if the dividing or common wall goes from ground to roof.

Housing Age

The age of a community’s housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1940s, for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have increased. For example, average homes constructed in the 1980s and 1990s are

typically much larger than housing built in previous decades. This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Marathon County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 7-3: Age of Community Housing Stock

Total Units	Year Built								
	1999 to March 2000	1995 to 1998	1990 to 1994	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1950 to 1959	1940 to 1949	1939 or earlier
470	8	22	28	23	74	46	44	35	190
100%	2%	5%	6%	5%	16%	10%	9%	7%	40%

2000 Census: STF-3 Data

The above table shows housing age for the community. In the Village of Athens, data shows that housing growth has been fairly consistent since the 1940s. A small growth spike can be seen in the 1970s. Recent housing growth from the 1990s makes up approximately 13 percent of the total housing stock. That very similar to overall figures for the County.

Physical Housing Stock

The following table looks at several select measures of physical condition and compares them to figures for Marathon County and Wisconsin. The median home size in the Village of Athens is larger in size compared to the overall figures for the State, as measured by number of rooms. Just over 68percent of the community’s housing stock is classified as being a “single family” home. That is lower than overall

figures for the County or State. At the time of the 2000 census, no homes within the Village were within structures with more than 10 units.

Table 7-4: Physical Housing Stock

Community	Median Rooms	Characteristic (%)			
		1 unit, detached or attached	In buildings with 10 or more Units	Lacking complete plumbing facilities	Lacking complete kitchen facilities
Athens	5.7	68.10%	0.00%	0.70%	1.60%
Marathon County	5.8	76.10%	4.50%	0.90%	0.90%
Wisconsin	5.4	69.30%	9.40%	1.40%	1.50%

2000 Census: STF-3 Data

Housing Values

Median Value

Table 7-5 shows median home value statistics for the community, County and State. Specifically, the column to the right shows the median (or middle value) of select owner-occupied homes for each specified area. This value includes only single-family houses that are located on less than 10 acres. Additionally, this statistic only considers homes without a business or medical office on the property. Census data indicates that the Village of Athens has a median home value lower than overall values for Marathon County and Wisconsin.

Table 7-5: Median Housing Value

	Median Value (dollars)
Athens	\$78,900
Marathon County	\$95,800
Wisconsin	\$112,200

2000 Census: STF-3 Data

Range of Values

The following table shows the range of housing values that exist in the community. A majority of the Village’s homes were valued between \$50,000 and \$150,000 as of the 2000 Census.

Table 7-6: Range of Housing Values

Number of Houses per Housing Value Category	Athens	Marathon County
< \$49,999	27	1,459
%	10%	5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	185	13,405
%	69%	49%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	42	8,220
%	16%	30%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	13	2,368
%	5%	9%
\$200,000 or more	0	1,714
%	0%	6%

2000 Census: STF-3 Data

Housing Affordability

Several factors impact the varied levels of housing affordability in Marathon County. These factors include rent and mortgage payments, maintenance expenses, lot size, and required or desired amenities for the home. Household size and income are also key factors contributing to what housing options are available and accessible to residents.

Statistically speaking, those spending in excess of 35 percent of their total household income on housing costs may be facing affordability difficulties. The U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development (HUD) recommends that rental-housing costs not exceed 30 percent of the monthly income. HUD also indicates that mortgage lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is less than 29 percent of the monthly household income. The percentage of households in the Village of Athens that pay more than 35 percent of their household income on housing costs is similar to that of the County and State.

Table 7-7: Housing Affordability

	Owner Occupied			Renter Occupied		
	With Mortgage	No Mortgage	% ²	Median Contract rent	Median Gross rent	% ²
	Median selected monthly owner costs ¹			Median Selected monthly renter costs ¹		
Athens	\$833	\$319	9%	\$310	\$371	23%
Marathon County	\$916	\$295	10%	\$423	\$484	20%
Wisconsin	\$1,024	\$333	9%	\$473	\$540	25%

¹In dollars

²Percent paying over 35% of household income on housing
2000 Census: STF-3 Data

Additionally, the above table shows that select Village median owner-occupied costs, both with and without a mortgage, are lower than median figures for Marathon County. The same holds true for select renter costs. Technical documentation from the Census states that contract rent is the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings,

utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included. For vacant units, it is the monthly rent asked for the rental unit at the time of enumeration. Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid by or for the renter. (*U.S. Census STF 3 Technical Documentation Guide*)

Special Housing

Senior Housing

In Marathon County, housing for seniors and populations with special needs is primarily provided in the urbanized areas in and around Wausau. The Marathon County Aging and Disability Resource Center, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and the Marathon County United Way all maintain a list of these housing options throughout the County. As the number of elderly persons increases in the coming years, there will most likely be an increased need for these types of housing options. This trend will be seen throughout Marathon County, the State of Wisconsin, and the Nation.

Northwest Marathon County is served by senior housing options in several communities. The Village of Athens is home to the Plisch Apartments and the Rietbrock Apartments. Both of these facilities currently have waiting lists, possibly indicating that there is a need to add additional facilities to serve this region. There are 16 units in 2 buildings.

Other communities with facilities that serve this area are: the Abbottsford / Colby area, the Village of Edgar, and the Wausau region.

Assisted Housing - The Village does not have any assisted living facilities, however, special assisted living housing is available in Colby and Stratford.

Assistance Programs

There are a variety of State and Federal housing programs geared at addressing a variety of housing issues. Grants and low interest loans are available for counties, communities, or individual homeowners. The following housing resources are available to participants as specified by program.

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-Small Cities Housing**
- **Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)**
 - Rental Rehabilitation Program
 - Home Owner and Accessibility Rehabilitation Program
 - Home Ownership Program
 - Wisconsin Fresh Start Initiative provides at-risk young people with education, skills, and career direction leading to economic self-sufficiency.

- **Homeless Programs (Wisconsin Department of Administration [WDOA])**

- HUD Emergency Shelter Grants
- State Shelter Subsidy Grants
- Transitional Housing

- **Local Housing Organization Grant (LHOG)**

State grants are available to enable community-based organizations, tribes and housing authorities to increase their capacity to provide affordable housing opportunities and services.

- **HOME Loans and Home Improvement Loans (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority [WHEDA])**

The Village of Athens has a housing rehabilitation program (revolving loan fund) that has helped to stabilize the housing stock in the community. There is a \$9,000 limit on the loans, currently the Village reports having \$750,000 in active rehab loans.

- **Housing-Related Consumer Protection Services (Wisconsin Department of Agriculture [WDA])**

The Trade and Consumer Protection Division is responsible for the investigation of unfair and deceptive business practices and handles individual consumer complaints involving landlord/tenant complaints, and home improvement transactions.

Trends

- The 2000 U.S. Census reports that the Village of Athens has 443 total occupied housing units. About 74 percent (326) of these units are owner occupied.
- Between 1990-2000, total housing units have increased by 58 while the number of occupied housing units grew by 60. Vacancy decreased from 7 to 6 percent between decades.
- Census data indicates that the Village of Athens has a median home value lower than overall values for Marathon County and Wisconsin.
- The Village has special housing for seniors consisting of two buildings with 16 units in each.
- Younger people are moving to Athens and building new housing.

Issues

- **Senior Housing** - There is a need for development of more senior housing and/or an assisted living facility in the Village.
- **Multi-Family Housing Need** - The multi-family residences in the community are currently filled to capacity, possibly indicating the need to construct additional multi-family dwellings.

8. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources is a broad term that can encompass many aspects of our heritage. Cultural resources may include archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to American Indians or other cultural groups. Cultural resources are those elements around us that signify our heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinctive. Cultural resources include buildings, sites and landscapes that help communities retain their sense of identity in an increasingly homogenized society.

Brief History of Athens

The Village of Athens and development of the surrounding area was led by Milwaukee attorney Frederick Rietbrock. While handling a lawsuit in Wausau in the 1870s, Rietbrock took a side trip to the northwest section of the County and began purchasing land. He ultimately owned much of the three townships of Halsey, Johnson and Rietbrock and controlled some 50,000 acres of timberland, which he ruled from his Milwaukee home.

Rietbrock planned his center of operations at Black Creek Falls (later Athens), where he built a sawmill, and a “Company House,” for use as a way station for the new agricultural settlers he also wanted to attract. To haul lumber, Rietbrock built a road west to Dorchester to connect with the Wisconsin Central Railroad. He soon decided that Black Creek Falls needed its own rail connection and incorporated the Abbotsford

and Northeastern Railway, and it was built to connect Rietbrock’s sawmill with Dorchester on an alignment through the towns of Holton and Johnson by 1891.

While Rietbrock & Halsey was the main lumber operation, employing about one-third the residents of Black Creek Falls, there were several other companies as well that prevented the community from becoming a one-company town. Black Creek Falls was incorporated in 1901 as the Village of Athens. In the following decade the sawmills transitioned from lumber production to furniture and box companies as the wood products industry evolved.

The Village grew after the turn of the century with new industry controlled by Rietbrock, and his son-in-law, William Erbach, after Rietbrock’s death in 1906. Among the economic engines in the Village were the Athens Brick and Tile Factory, the Athens Electric Light and Power Company, the Athens Telephone Company, the Bank of Athens and the Athens Printing Company. The town grew to over 900 by 1910, becoming the largest village in the County.

As the lumber industry declined, Athens became a center of the expanding dairy business. Some cheese factories had opened in the area northeast of Athens as early as 1891, operating seasonally. By 1898, a cheese factory in Athens ran year round. Over 2.4 million pounds of cheese was produced annually by 16 cheese factories in the vicinity of Athens by 1924. A creamery had also been founded in Athens. By the 1920s, the town had local branches of the County Holstein Association and the County Guernsey Association, both devoted to improving livestock.

Properties Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in Athens

There are no properties in Athens listed on the NRHP. The Village does not have a local historic preservation commission. Archaeological sites are identified only at the town level.

The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains the Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory (AHI) that identifies any properties that may have been surveyed in the past; the Inventory does not convey special status and may not be current. The inventory may be reviewed at www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/index.html. There are no historic properties in Athens that have been previously surveyed and included in the AHI.

Village residents feel the downtown is of historic significance, as is the town square. A new survey may reveal this area to be of historic regional significance.

Issues

- **Lack of Current Information** -- Although a brief countywide historic properties survey was carried out in 1975-77, there has been no update. Many properties identified at that time may be gone, while other properties not previously surveyed may now be evaluated in a new context. It is necessary for the County to have current information about cultural resources in order to maximize planning and make the best use of historic properties.
- **No Recognition Process** -- Outside the City of Wausau, there is no process to recognize historic buildings or begin to plan for their protection. Once historic properties are identified, towns and villages do not have an established mechanism for recognizing them or integrating them into ongoing planning processes.
- **Rural Character and Historic Resources** -- In Marathon County, residents have expressed a strong desire to preserve the rural character of the County and raised concerns about increasing ex-urban development and the decline of working farms. An important part of rural character is the rural landscape and the buildings that convey that sense of place. While it is important to address the location and type of new development, there is also a need to preserve some visible reminders of rural character, including working farms. Without preserving some of the existing resources, including farmsteads and farmlands, the very characteristics that attracted residents will increasingly be lost.
- **Protection of Archaeological Sites and Cemeteries** -- Cultural resources planning includes identification and protection of archaeological sites and historic cemeteries. The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains a list of reported sites and cemeteries, representing a fraction of sites that are actually present. This information is often overlooked and should be incorporated into the planning process for local communities.

9. Community Facilities

This section describes the schools, libraries, and other community facilities for the Village of Athens

Maps for the Community Facilities element include Figures: 9-1, School Facilities; 9-2 Police; 9-3 Fire; 9-4, Hospitals and Clinics. All figures are located at the end of this section.

Schools

The Village of Athens is served by the Athens School District. The Athens district has an elementary, middle, and high school all located in the Village of Athens. There are three parochial schools serving the Village. Two are located in the Village and the third is located in the Town of Bern on Iron Bridge Road. There is also a Mennonite school located within the community and two Amish schools.

Table 9-1: Athens School District Enrollment

Year	Enrollment PreK-12
1996-1997	574
1997-1998	581
1998-1999	576
1999-2000	586
2000-2001	564
2001-2002	557

Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction

Table 9-2: Private Schools

Name	Location	Level
Trinity Lutheran School – MO	Athens	Other
Athens Menonite School	Athens	Other
St. Anthony’s School	Athens	Other

Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

University of Wisconsin – Marathon County (UW-MC) - UW-MC, located in Wausau, offers lower level (freshman/sophomore) college classes, leading to a baccalaureate degree. Associate Degrees are offered in Arts & Sciences, and Bachelor’s Degrees (through collaborative degree programs with UW Oshkosh and UW Stevens Point) offered in Business Administration, General Studies, and Nursing. Enrollment in 2002-2003 was approximately 1,300 students.

Northcentral Technical College (NTC) - NTC, located in Wausau, offers 40 one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields. Approximately 2,300 full- and part-time students attend classes, although more than 16,000 people take at least one class annually.

Libraries

The Village of Athens is served by the Marathon County Public Library system. The new Athens Branch Library, located on Caroline Street, has 2,750 square feet of space and approximately 18,800 volumes, including books, magazines, and other materials. The Wausau Headquarters Library, located on First Street in downtown Wausau, completed an

expansion to 82,000 square feet in 1995. The new main Wausau Library is open seven days a week and offers over 555,800 volumes, as well as facilities including internet access.

Police

The Village of Athens is served by the full time Athens Police Department. The Department includes 1 Police Chief, and seven part-time officers.

Fire

The Athens Area Fire Commission provides fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) protection to the Village of Athens, the Town of Halsey, Town of Johnson, Town of Rietbrock, Town of Bern, and Town of Frankfort. There are 30 fireman and 14 EMTs, all volunteer. Equipment includes 1 snowmobile, 1 brush truck, 1 John Deere Gator, 1 covered sled, 1 ambulance, 2 tankers, and 2 pumpers.

Emergency Response

The Athens Area Fire Commission provides fire and EMS protection to the Village of Athens, the Town of Halsey, Town of Johnson, Town of Rietbrock, Town of Bern, and Town of Frankfort. The Town of Hamburg contracts for ambulance service.

E-911 Dispatch Service

The Marathon County Sheriff’s Department Communications Division provides E-911 Dispatch for all Police, Fire, and EMS agencies in Marathon County. The Communications Division services 85 user agencies and also provides alert paging support for the Emergency Management Office, District Attorney, and Medical Examiners Office.

The users are served by a microwave linked voted repeater radio system, consisting of a control center at the Sheriff’s Department, and nine remote radio tower sites spread throughout the County. The system is also utilized by the Marathon County Highway Department and the Wausau Fire Department to support their radio communications. The 37 base radio transmitters and 479 mobile radios that make up the integrated system are maintained and serviced by the Sheriff Department’s radio technician.

Hospitals

The major hospital in Marathon County is Wausau Hospital at 425 Pine Ridge Boulevard in Wausau. Wausau Hospital was created in the 1970s from a merger of St. Mary’s Hospital and Memorial Hospital. A new building was completed in 1979 and expansions followed in 1982 and 1992. The 321-bed facility is a multi-specialty regional health center serving a 12-county region in north central Wisconsin. Annual admissions in 2001 totaled 13,631.

Wausau Hospital and its parent corporation, Community Health Care, and other nearby hospitals are part of the

Wisconsin Valley Health Network. Hospitals nearby that are part of the network and may serve Athens residents include:

- Good Samaritan Health Center Merrill, WI
- Memorial Health Center Medford, WI

St. Joseph’s Hospital is located at 611 Saint Joseph Avenue in Marshfield and offers a full array of services, specialty services and a complete rehabilitation unit. Most residents report attending Marshfield facilities.

Ministry Health Care announced plans in July 2002 to construct a 104-bed, \$100 million hospital and medical office complex in Weston near the intersection of STH 29 and CTH X. The hospital is planned to open in 2004.

St. Joseph’s Hospital in Marshfield is operated by Ministry Health Care. St. Joseph’s Hospital is located at 611 Saint Joseph Avenue in Marshfield and offers a full array of services, specialty services and a complete rehabilitation unit.

Working in conjunction with St. Joseph’s Hospital is the Marshfield Clinic. Marshfield Clinic began in 1916 when six physicians decided to join their efforts. The Marshfield Clinic has grown to over 700 physicians with 41 Regional Centers in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Marshfield Clinic first established satellite locations in 1976. Offices in Marathon County are located in Athens, Colby/Abbotsford, Marathon, Mosinee, Schofield (Everest Center), Stratford, and Wausau (4 locations).

The Marshfield Clinic – Athens Center is fully integrated into the Clinic System with digital dictation, electronic medical records, modern x-ray and laboratory facilities, and procedure rooms. A chiropractic office, and dental office are also located in the Village.

Ministry Health Care announced plans in July 2002 to construct a 104-bed, \$100 million hospital and medical office complex in Weston near the intersection of STH 29 and CTH X. The hospital is planned to open in 2004.

Child Care

The Village of Athens has one local child care facility— Learning Tree Child Care.

The Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Network is a membership organization made up of 17 community-based CCR&R agencies serving the State of Wisconsin.

CCR&R agencies assist parents in selecting quality childcare, help to increase the supply of childcare in areas that may be lacking sufficient care, offer information and technical support to potential child care providers, and give technical assistance and support to existing childcare programs.

Each agency manages a database of existing childcare providers and programs, collects data about childcare rates, provider and teacher salaries, the number of parents and children using their services, the type of care requested and the children's ages.

Village of Athens

The community-based CCR&R agencies that provide services to Marathon and adjacent counties are:

Table 9-3: Child Care Referrals

Counties	Agency	Contact Information
Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Taylor	Child Care Connection	http://www.childcareconnectionrr.org/ (800) 848-5229

Issues

No issues have been identified.

10. Parks

Existing Parks, Trails and Open Space

Maps for the Parks element include Figure: 10-1, Recreation Facilities. All figures are located at the end of this section.

Local Parks, Trails and Open Space

The Village of Athens owns and maintains seven parks.

Athens Park - Athens Park was originally a Marathon County park, but was deeded to the Village in the 1990s during a period of restructuring that divested the County of municipal parks that served primarily recreational needs and had less than 40 acres. Athens Park's 25 acres, located on the south side of the Village, are developed with the following facilities: a shelter, restrooms, ten picnic tables, climbing bars, swings, slides, a merry-go-round, and a parking lot.

Erbach Park - At 330 acres, Erbach Park is a very large park, the majority of which is wooded. The developed part of the park contains 16.2 acres and has a shelter, volleyball court, and play equipment. A rifle range and archery area are also available. The wooded section has developed cross-country ski trails.

Village Ball Park - This 3-acre park on Maple Street is located near Athens Elementary School. Facilities include a softball diamond, dugouts, bleachers, scoreboard, lights, a

basketball court, volleyball court, picnic tables, concession stand, and a shelter.

Memorial Park (formerly Mueller Park) - Memorial Park is a third of an acre centrally located in the Village. The park hosts the Village fair, and has fair barns, a large shelter, restrooms, grills, and play equipment.

Degner Park - Degner Park is an undeveloped park that was the site of an old cheese factory next to Potato Creek. The park has an informal sledding hill and turf field for informal play.

Village Square - This Square is a focal point for downtown, with a bandstand that hosts concerts in the summer, picnic tables, and veteran's memorial.

Jensen Street Park - This 0.3-acre park is built next to a water reservoir at Jensen and Alferd Streets. It has a sandbox and play equipment.

County or State Parks, Forest and Trails

There are no County or State park facilities within the Village, however there are several within the vicinity, including:

Amco Park - Marathon County owns and maintains Amco Park in the Town of Halsey. Amco Park is located off CTH F, between Meridian Road and Dietsch Road. Amco Park is a 40-acre park on the Big Rib River. Park facilities include picnic tables, grills, restrooms, a park shelter, a drinking fountain, and children's play equipment. Amco Park also has a hiking trail along the banks of the Big Rib River.

Rib Falls County Park is located off CTH S at the intersection with CTH U in the Town of Rib Falls. Rib Falls Park is 315 acres with park facilities including an open shelter, toilet, well, and children's play equipment. The majority of the park is currently undeveloped and is the temporary site of a County gravel pit and asphalt plant. The park's main feature is the Big Rib River, which flows through the park and over a dam and rapids, with an impoundment that allows for swimming. The gravel pit is currently being developed as an artificial lake for recreational use.

Rib Mountain State Park is located within the Town of Rib Mountain. The park's main feature is Rib Mountain, which at 1924 feet above sea level is one of the highest elevations in the State of Wisconsin. The park surrounds the mountain and has the following facilities: a picnic area with 65 tables, a camping area with 31 developed sites, 3 hiking trails, a nature trail, and a downhill skiing area.

Park System Needs

The current park system is adequate to serve Village needs.

Issues

- **Trail System** - The community has expressed a need/desire for intra-community trail system linking existing park system, Central Business District (CBD), community facilities (and perhaps industrial park).

- **Equipment Needs** - Replacement of recreational equipment at some parks is needed. Funding these replacements will be a key issue.
- **Utilities** – There is a desire by some of the community to extend water utilities to Erbach Park

11. Economic Development

The condition of the local economy directly influences local growth and development, and therefore must be considered when planning for a community's future. Employment patterns and economic trends generally occur on a regional scale. Oftentimes residents of one community work in another. Similarly changes in a major industry can impact jobs and growth far beyond the community where the business is physically located.

It is therefore important to understand a local community's economy in light of its regional context. The following section provides a brief overview of the economy in Marathon County, in terms of key economic sectors and the regional labor force. A more specific description of employment trends, major local employers or industries, and where most residents of the Village of Athens work is included. Potential economic development opportunities and/or issues regarding the local economy are also identified.

Maps for the Economic Development element include Figure: 11-1, Business and Industrial Parks. All Figures are located at the end of this section.

County Economic Environment

Originally, the Marathon County economy was based on forest resources and diversified agriculture. Increased population and infrastructure – railroads, roads and dams for power enabled

the area to evolve beyond simple agricultural and logging operations. Resources that once left the area unprocessed were now transformed into finished products in the County, providing employment opportunities and adding value in forest products and agricultural processing. A number of related manufacturing operations grew up in the area, some based on forest products and agricultural products, others supplying the existing industries with fabricated metal products. As these industries progressed, so did industries such as transportation, communications, public utilities, government, trade, finance, insurance and real estate. The County now enjoys a well-diversified economy.

Agricultural Economy

Located in the agricultural area of western Marathon County, the economic health and vitality of Athens is affected by the economic health of the agricultural economy. However, the agricultural economy is subject to national and international pressures, creating challenges for rural areas seeking to adapt to the changing economic environment and preserve their rural agricultural heritage.

The Marathon County agricultural economy is in a depressed state due to a downturn in prices for agricultural goods such as milk and ginseng. At the same time that prices for farm commodities are low, cash rents for Wisconsin farmland has increased, and the percentage of farm equity associated with real estate values have increased significantly. The average cost for agricultural land being divert to non-farm uses has increased from \$544 per acre in 1990 to nearly \$1,200 per acre in 2000; this compares with the average cost for agricultural

land continuing in agricultural use, which has increased from \$612 per acre in 1990 to nearly \$1,000 per acre in 2000. When farms are not profitable, and the value of land rises farmers have a harder time competing for the land base.

Other forces that create an environment of change in the rural area:

- The average age of the current agricultural owner/operator is nearly 55; a large number are nearing retirement.
- The low entry rate into agriculture reflects the high capital investment and low profit margins.
- The number of dairy herds decreased by 10percent
- Local milk production is not sufficient to reliably meet the demand of local dairy processors.

** Source: Marathon County Task Force on the Rural Economy, Agricultural Issues in Marathon County ,January 10, 2003 and Report of the Marathon County Task Force on the Rural Economy, April 2003.*

Key Economic Sectors

Key sectors of a regional economy can be identified by size; by growth or decline in employment; by a concentration of the industry in the local area exceeding the national concentration. An industry that shows a higher concentration of employment than the national average is considered a “basic industry” and is identified by a technique called “Location Quotient” analysis. Basic industries are those sectors that export a product or service from the local community into the national or international economy. They are a critical part of the “economic engine” for a region, affecting the growth and

health of many dependent sectors such as retail, transportation, construction, and local services.

Table 11-1: Marathon County Top 10 Industry Groups Based on Number of Employees (March 2001)

Industry Group	Employers	Employees	Numeric change	
			1-year	5-year
Health Services	139	4,646	251	-276
Lumber & Wood Products	41	4,438	-30	253
Educational Services	22	3,792	108	243
Eating and Drinking Places	192	3,554	219	335
Fabricated Metal Products	32	3,458	-184	168
Insurance Carriers	24	3,339	-171	*
Miscellaneous Retail	120	3,142	206	1,206
Paper and Allied Products	11	2,649	4	*
Industrial Machinery & Eqmt	37	2,642	41	697
Wholesale Trade – Durable	164	2,521	-89	63

**data suppressed to maintain confidentiality*

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, ES-202, December 2001

Local Economic Environment

In 2000, there were 447 people employed in the Village of Athens. A breakdown of employment by industry is shown below. Data show that most people were employed in the “Other” sector, with 141 employees. Service is the second largest employment industry with 133 workers. The following table illustrates population and employment information for the Village of Athens.

Table 11-2: Population and Employment by Sector, 2000

POPULATION	1,095
EMPLOYMENT:	
Commercial	87
Manufacturing	35
Service	133
Other	141
Self-Employed/Farm	51
TOTAL	447

Source: North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission 6/10/03

Employment Projections

Information on employment in Marathon County is gathered separately for non-farm and farm employment. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) collects data on non-farm employment. The DWD estimated non-farm employment in Marathon County to be 49,407 in 1990 and 65,630 in 2000. This represents about a 33 percent increase over ten years. Data on farm employment is collected by the Census of Agriculture and consists of hired farm labor and operators. In 1987, farm employment in Marathon County was estimated to be 11,643 and in 1997 it was estimated to be 8,298. This represents a decrease of almost 29 percent.

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) computed employment projections, based on the assumption that the historical growth rates described above would continue through 2030. These projections are shown in Table 11-3.

Table 11-3: Employment Projections in 5-Year Increments

	Total Employment by Year						
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Athens	447	472	496	520	545	569	594
County	72,508	75,625	78,742	81,859	84,976	88,093	91,210

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/03

The employment forecast in Table 11-3 indicates increased employment for the Village of Athens. By the year 2030, it is estimated that the Village will provide employment to 594 workers. This represents an employment increase of more than 32percent and assumes a moderate growth rate based on the rate of change in employment between 1990-2000 for non-farm employment. The estimates suggest an overall increase in employment by 2030 between 27percent if a lower than expected growth rate occurs and +37percent if a higher growth rate occurs.

Table 11-4: Percent Change in Employment, 2000-2030

	Percent Change in Employment by Growth Rate		
	Low Growth	Moderate Growth	High Growth
Athens	+27%	+32%	+37%
Marathon County	+21	+26	+34

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/03

Major Local Employers

The largest employers in the Village are listed on Table 11-5.

Table 11-5: Major Local Employers

Business Name	# Employees
Heartland Co-Operative	55
E J Peter Trucking Inc	55
Athens Elementary School	32
S.D. Ellenbecker	30
Athens Middle School High School	28
Peter Grain Inc	26

Economic Development Opportunities

Opportunities for economic development and enhancement of local economy include:

- The Village has an enhancement grant for the revitalization of its Central Business District (CBD).
- The Village has a revolving loan fund that provides money for start up, construction, purchase, and storefront work in the community.
- The Village of Athens purchased 110 acres of land for the purpose of developing an Industrial Park. A Tax Incremental District (TID) was established and a Community Development Authority was formed to oversee the development, promotion, and sales to prospective business. Presently there are three local businesses established in the park, a Cellcom tower, Spec Building,

and a new water tower will be added in 2003. The Athens Industrial Park provides easy access to STHs 97, 64 and STH 29.

Issues

- **Strip Commercial Development** - The Village would like to limit the development of strip commercial businesses, as they are not aesthetically pleasing to the community, and could compete with businesses in the existing CBD.
- **Industrial Area Identity** - The industrial area needs to be clearly distinguished in the community. The Village is trying to attract industry to its industrial park

12. Intergovernmental Cooperation

This analysis presents an inventory of existing mechanisms that the Village of Athens uses to coordinate with other units of government, including: Marathon County, adjacent towns, the school district, the State of Wisconsin and the Federal government. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the existing cooperative mechanisms and summarize the major challenges and issues regarding intergovernmental cooperation and regional planning, including

- Opportunities to reduce or eliminate duplication of services;
- Incompatible goals, policies and development;
- Mechanisms for conflict resolution;
- Opportunities for joint planning and decision making.

Mechanisms for cooperation and coordination primarily take the form of intergovernmental agreements, leases and contracts, and regulatory authority. These can occur between the Village of Athens and other local, regional, State or Federal entities. Following is a brief description of the various functional areas and services that require intergovernmental coordination at various levels.

Local and Regional Level Cooperation

Shared Services

Fire and Emergency Response- The Village of Athens is part of the joint Athens Area Fire Commission providing protection to the Village of Athens, Town of Johnson, Town of Reitbrock, Town of Bern, and Town of Frankfort with the Town of Halsey.

Cooperative Practices

Surrounding Towns - The Village of Athens has good relationships with the Towns of Rietbrock and Johnson.

- **Town of Rietbrock** – The Village has a good relationship with the Town of Rietbrock.
- **Town of Johnson** – The Village has road maintenance agreements with the Town of Johnson.
- **Town of Halsey** – The Village has little contact with the Town of Halsey
- **Town of Bern** – Road maintenance agreements

Athens School District- The Village works well with the Athens School District. The Village provides a gymnasium, park facilities and various programs for the schools.

Marathon County- The County provides several services to the Village including: 911 dispatch service, access permits, maintenance and improvement of County Highways and planning and permitting oversight regarding shoreland, wetland

and floodplain regulations. The County also provides oversight on compliance with County soil and water conservation policy for the Farmland Preservation Program. The Village has good relations with Marathon County

Regional Agencies – The Village has little contact with regional agencies.

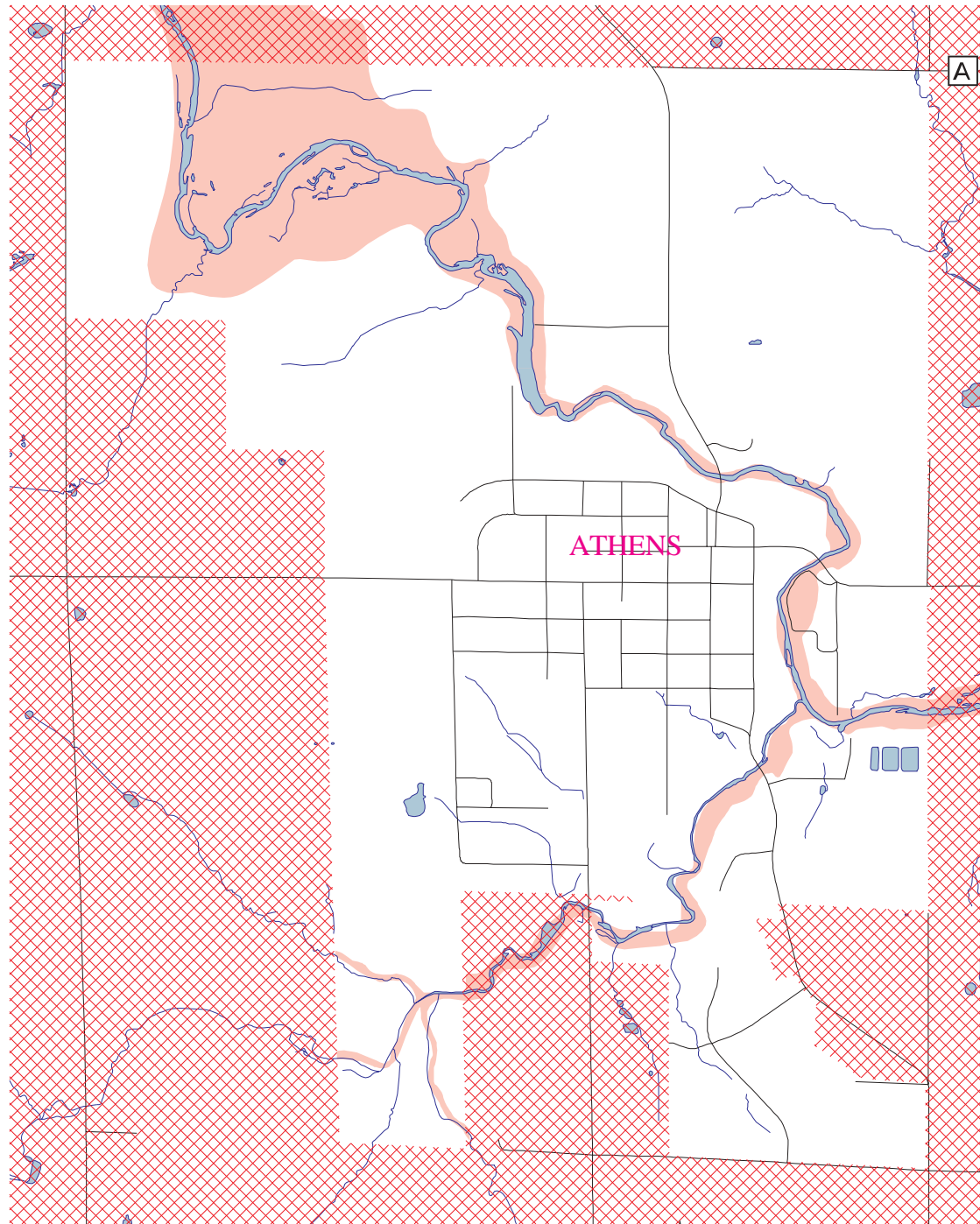
State and Federal Level Cooperation

State Agencies: The Village has little contact with State agencies.

Federal Agencies: The Village has little contact with Federal agencies.

Issues

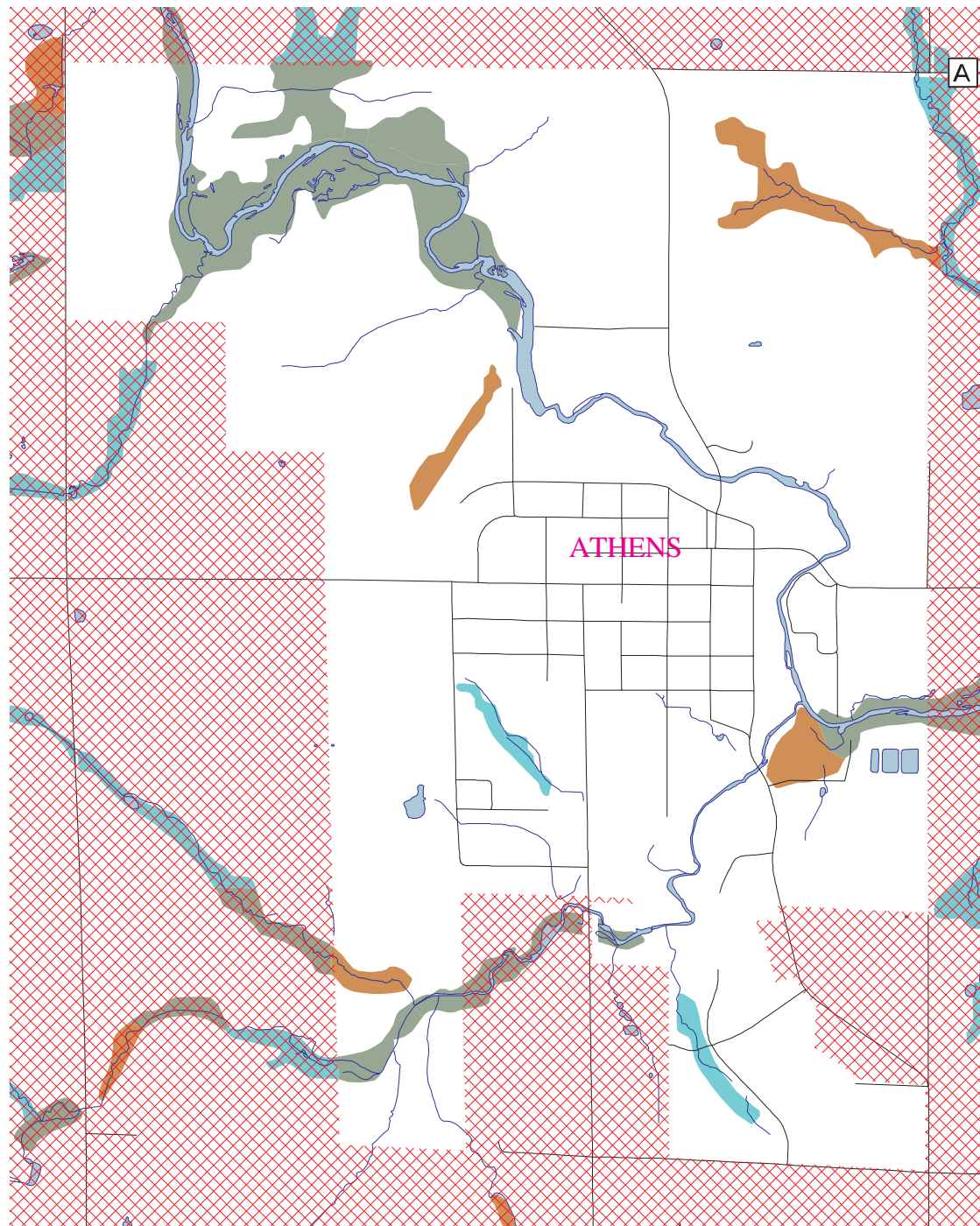
No significant issues have been identified.



■ FEMA Floodplain

▨ Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-1
 100 Year Floodplain
 ATHENS



- Aquatic beds
- Emergent/wet meadow
- Filled/draind wetland
- Forested
- Scrub/shrub
- Flats/unvegetated wet soil

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-2
Wetland Types
ATHENS

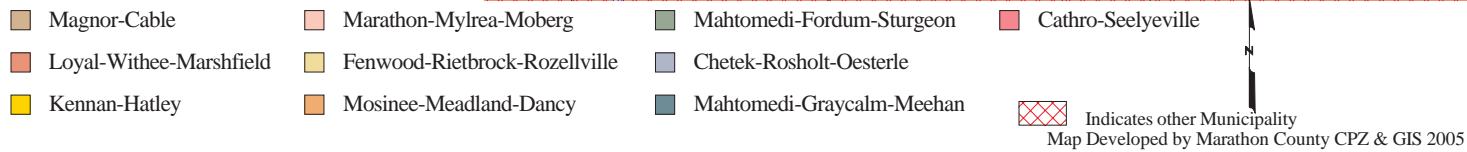
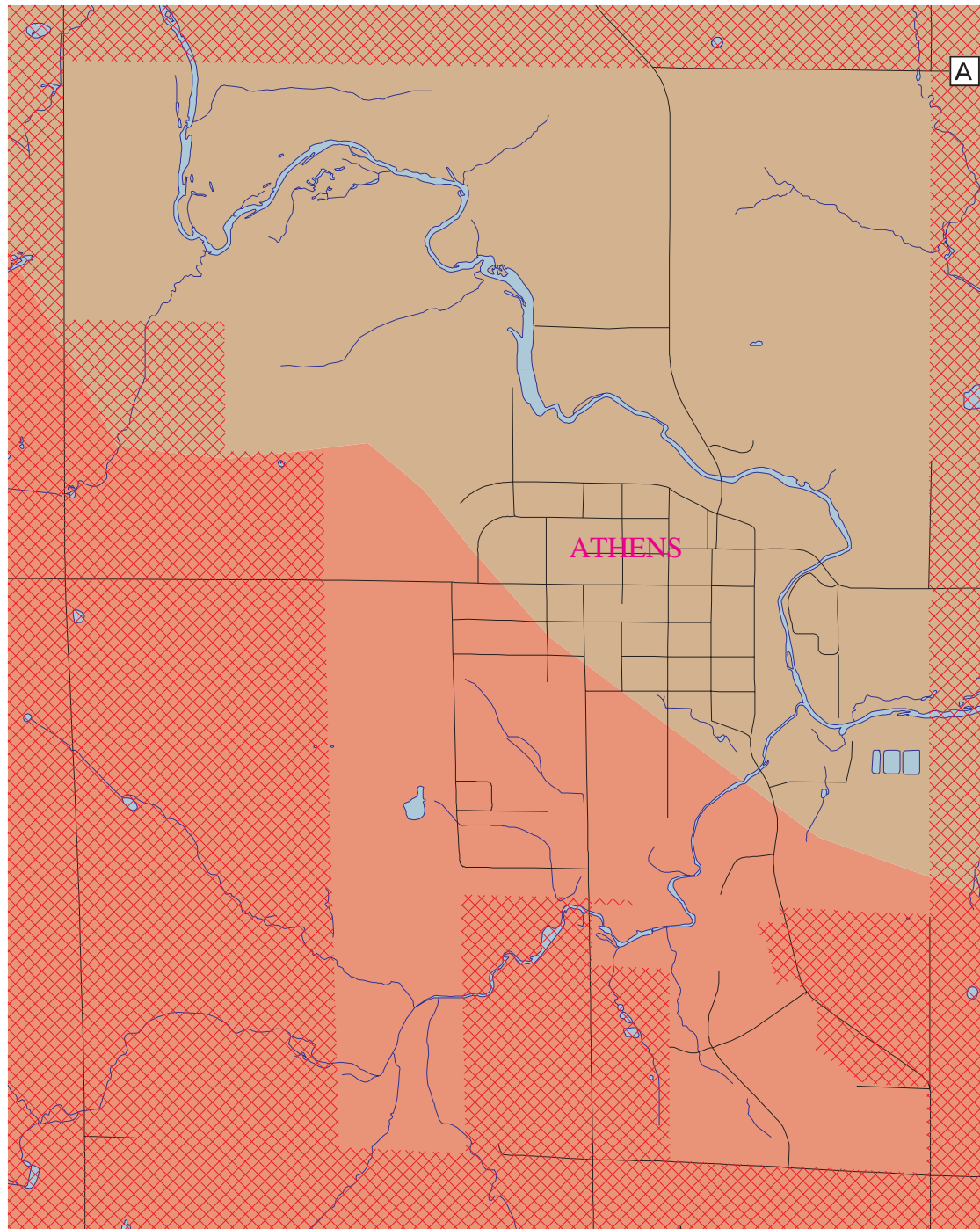
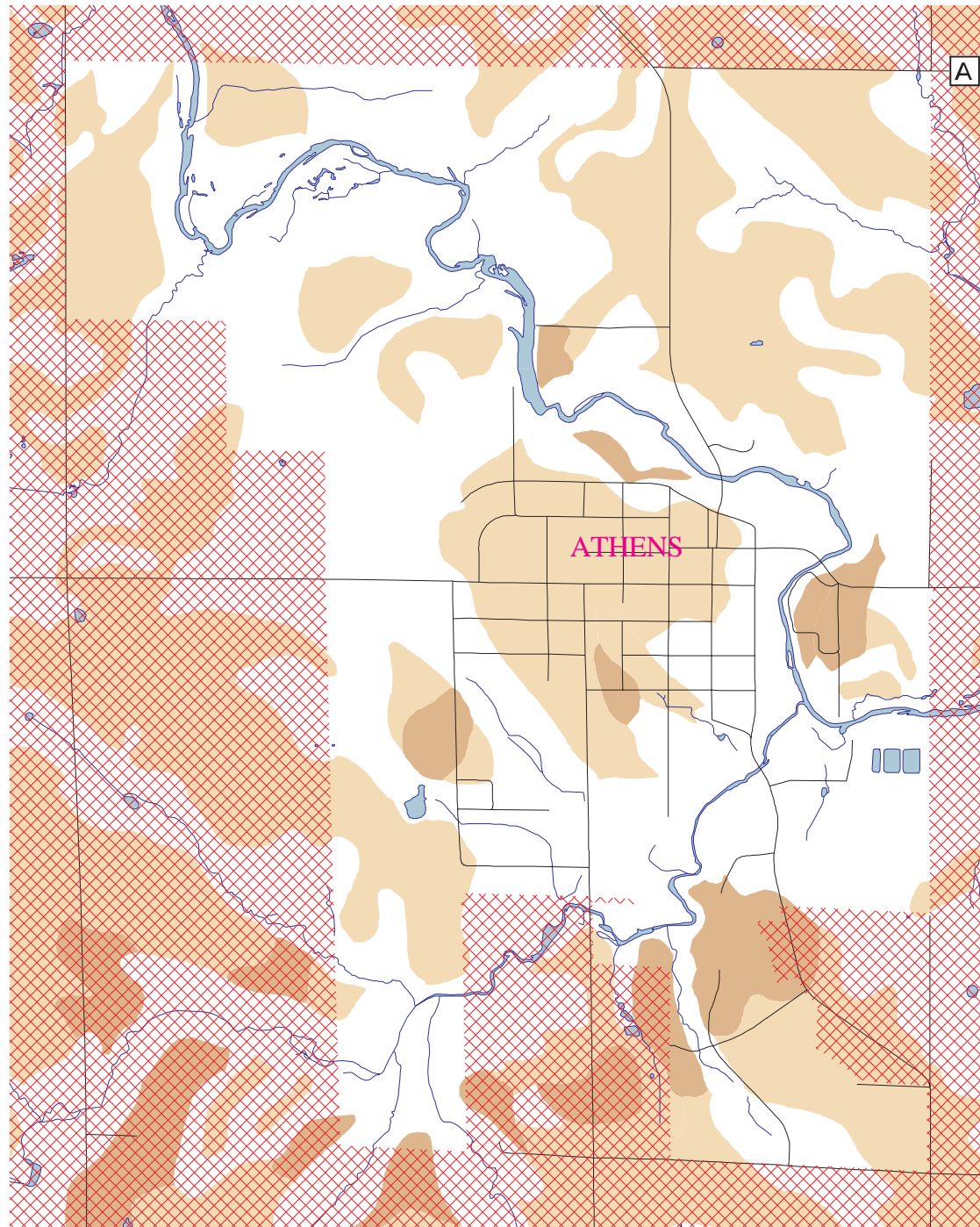


Figure 3-3
 Soil Associations
 ATHENS

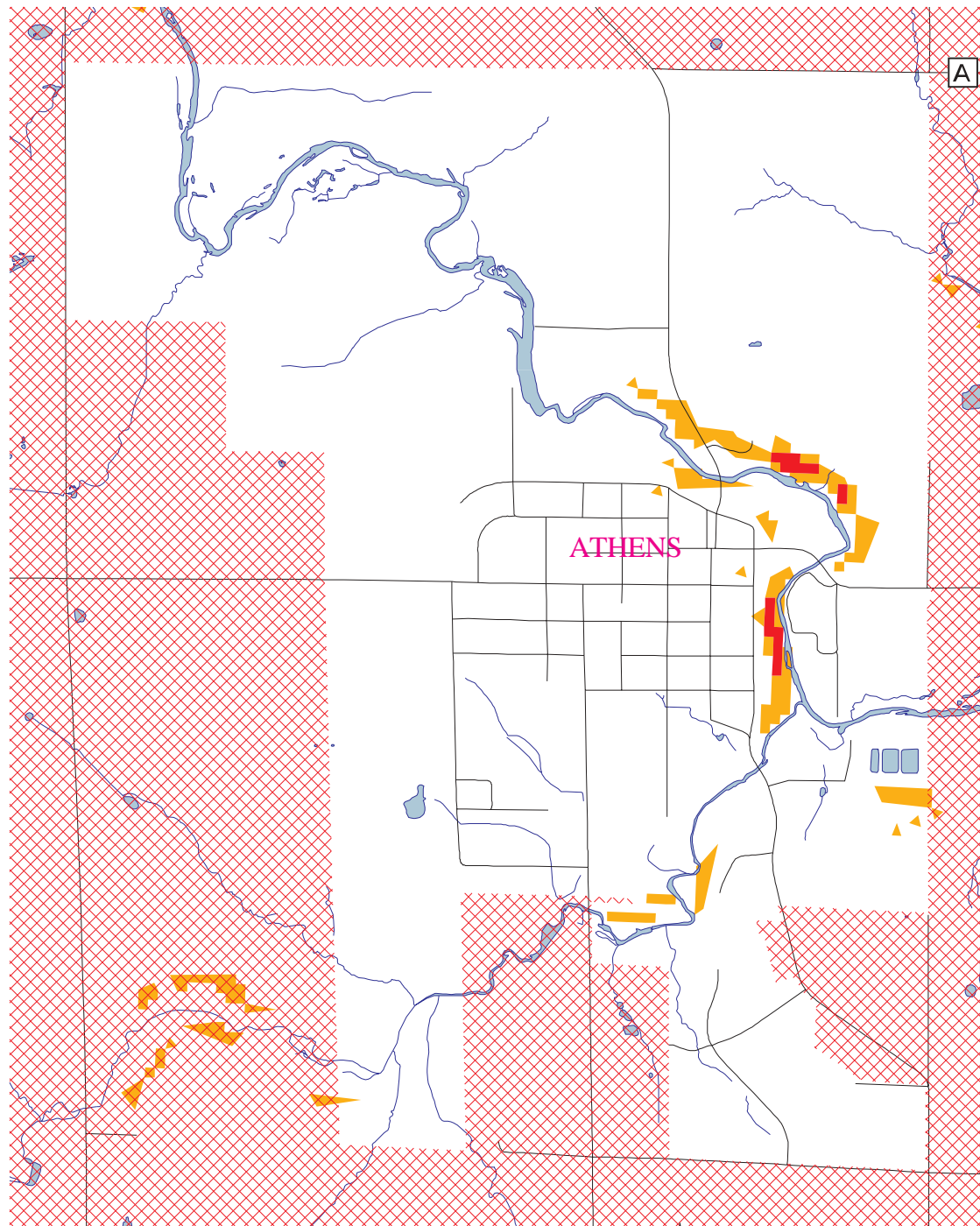


Group 1: The soils in this group are the very best in Marathon County. The USDA classification for these soils are prime farmland Class 2 due to climate and growing season length. They are well suited for growing all crops.

Group 2: The soils in this group are very good agricultural soils. They also are designated as prime farmland Class 2. These soils differ by having restricted drainage. In wet years they are more difficult to work and crops needing well drained condition (alfalfa, ginseng) do very poorly.

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-4
Prime Farm Land
ATHENS



■ D - generally 12-20% slopes

■ E - generally greater than 15% slopes.

⊠ Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-5
 Slopes
 ATHENS

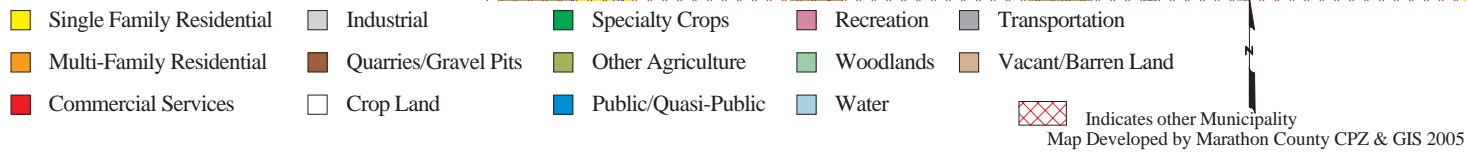
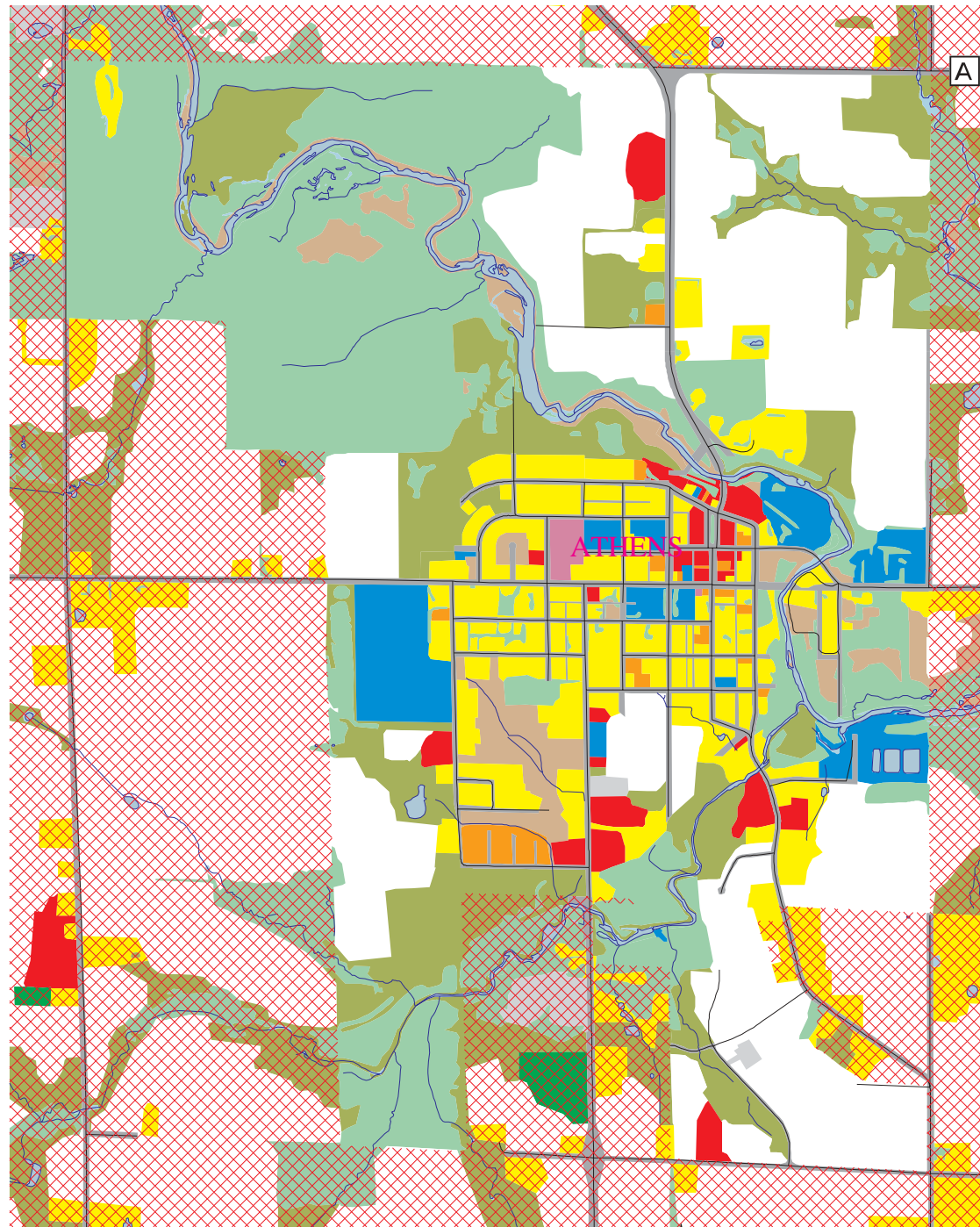
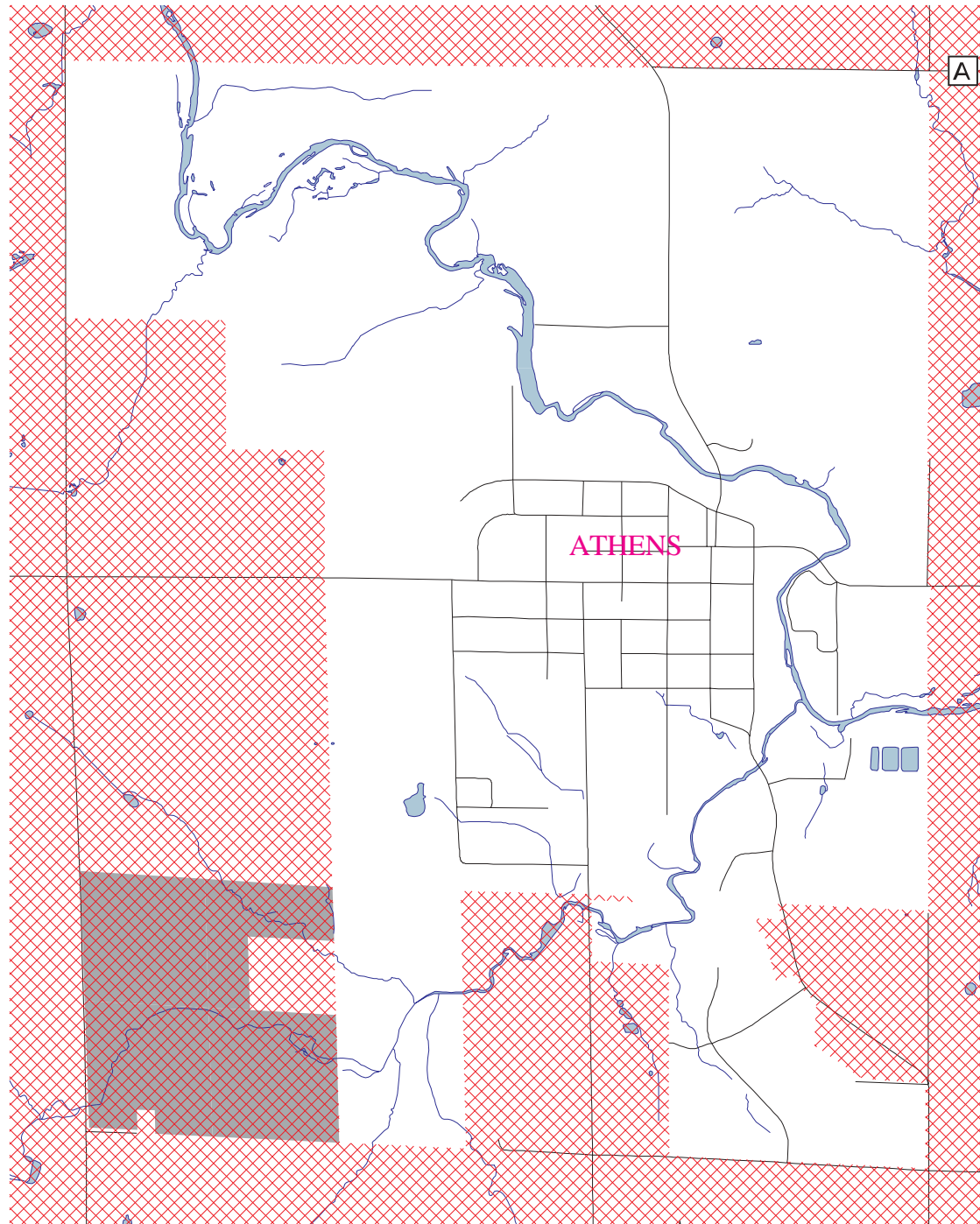


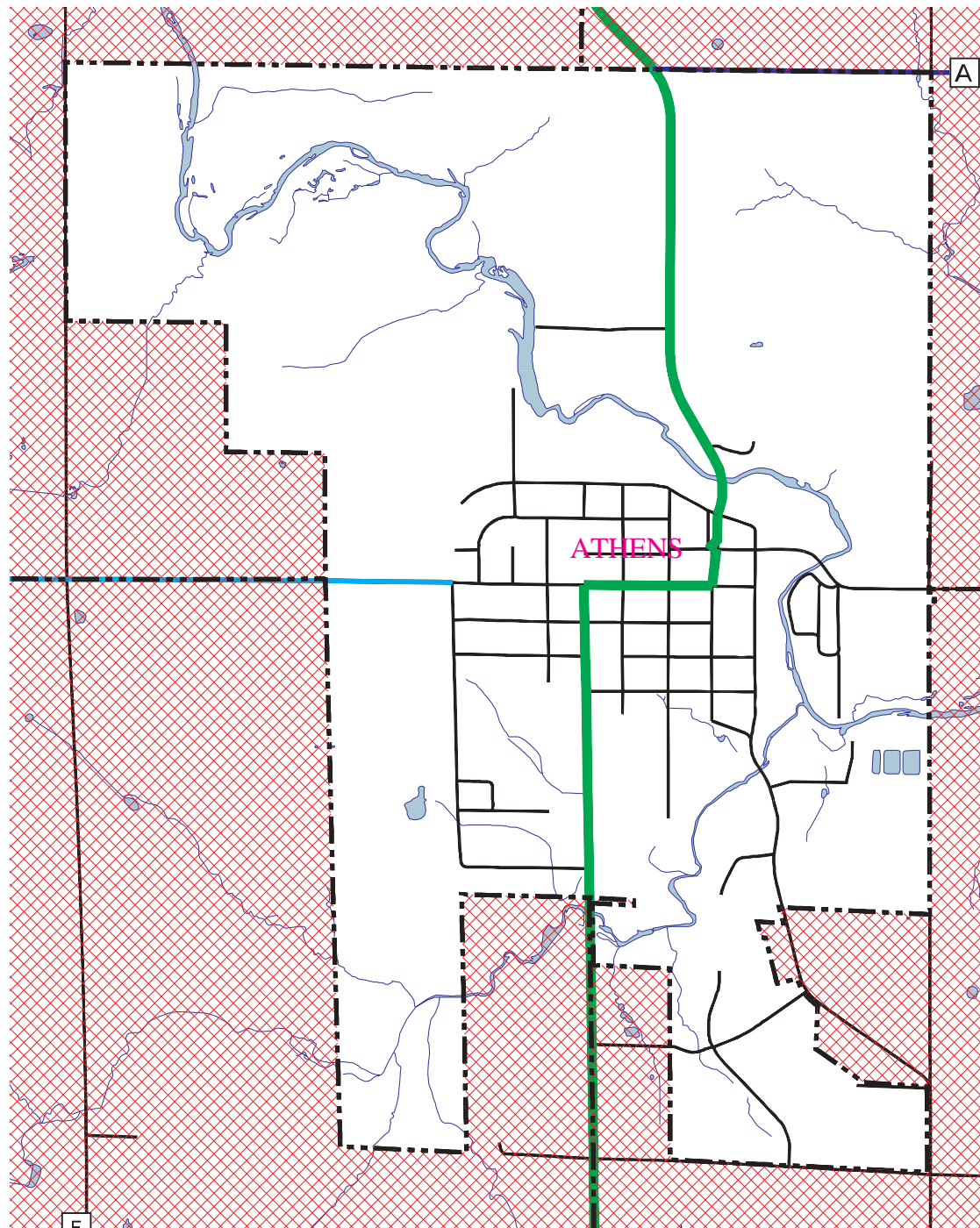
Figure 4-1
 2000 Landuse/Landcover
 ATHENS



- Exclusive ag zoning
- Farmland pres contracts

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 4-2
Exclusive Ag & Farmland Preservation
ATHENS

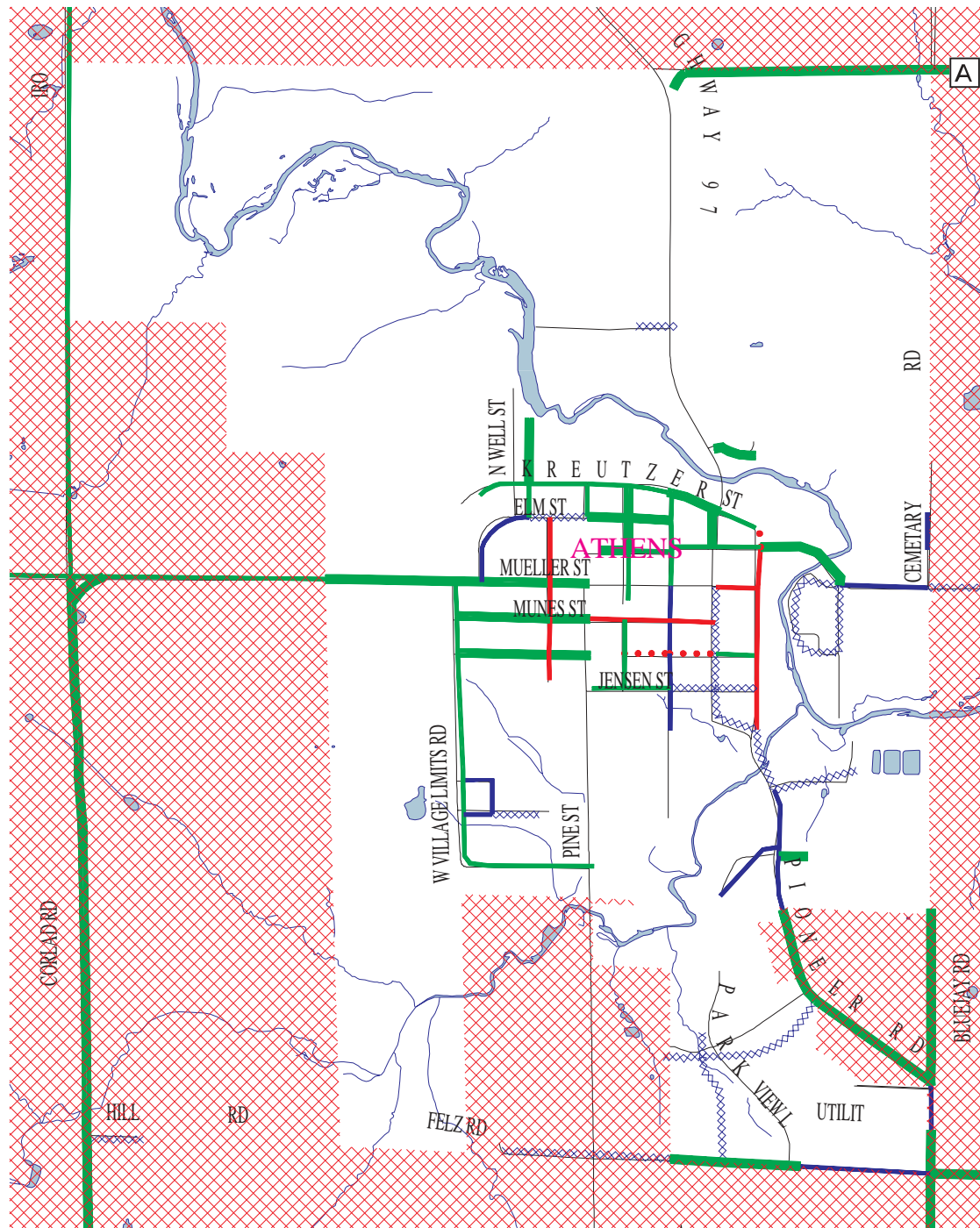


- █ Principal Arterial
- █ Minor Arterial
- █ Major Collector
- █ Minor Collector

- F County Highways
- 52 State Highways
- 51 US Highways
- 39 Interstate

 Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

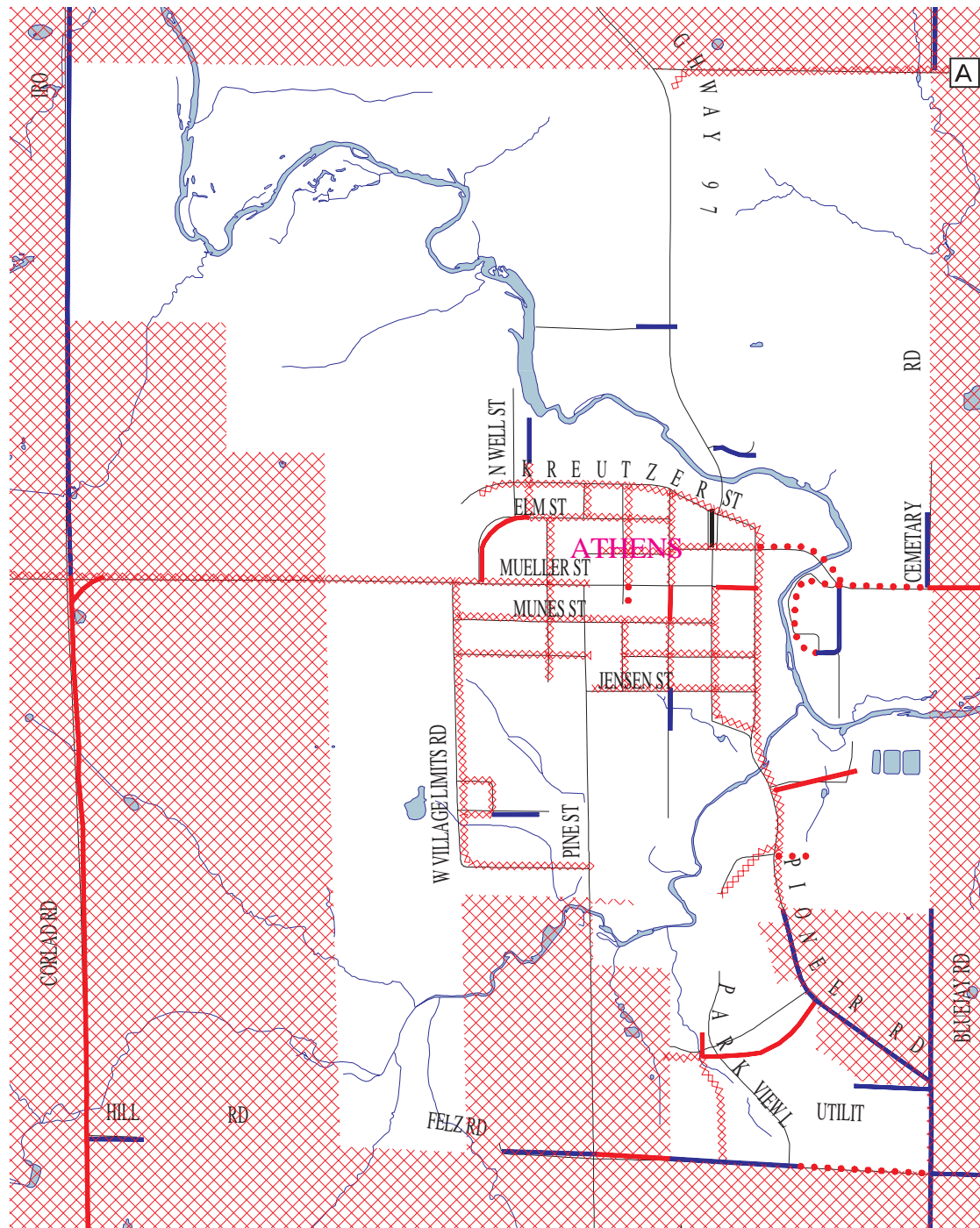
Figure 5-1
Functional Classification of Roads
ATHENS



- No Data
- Fair
- Failed
- Good
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Very Good
- Excellent

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

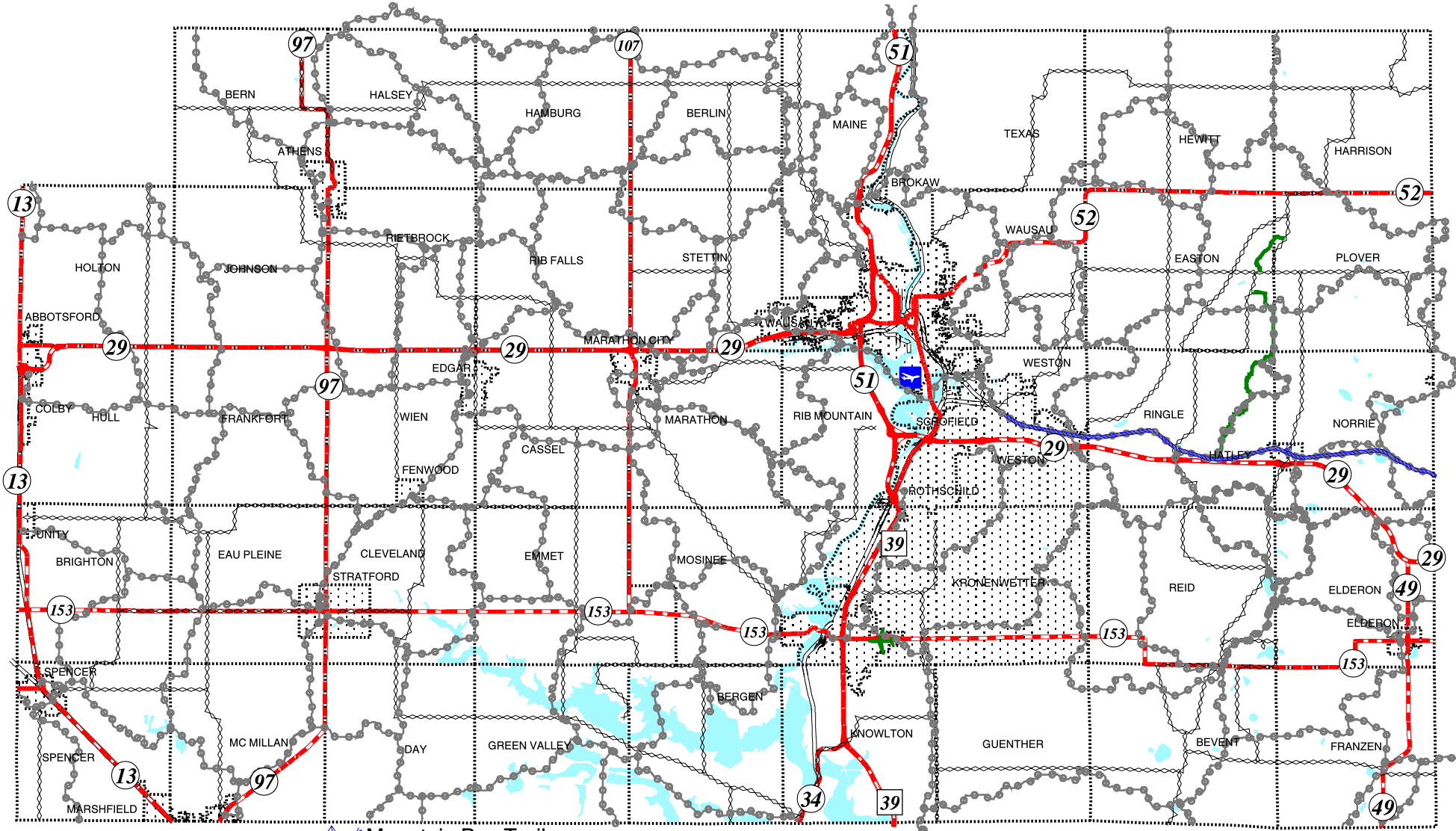
Figure 5-2
 Road Surface Rating
 ATHENS



- No Data
 - Concrete Pavement
 - <1" Wearing Surface
 - Asphalt Pavement
 - Asphalt Pavement on Concrete
 - Asphalt Pavement with Base >7"
 - Asphalt Pavement With Base <7"
 - Unimproved Road
 - Brick or Block Pavement
 - Indicates other Municipality
- Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

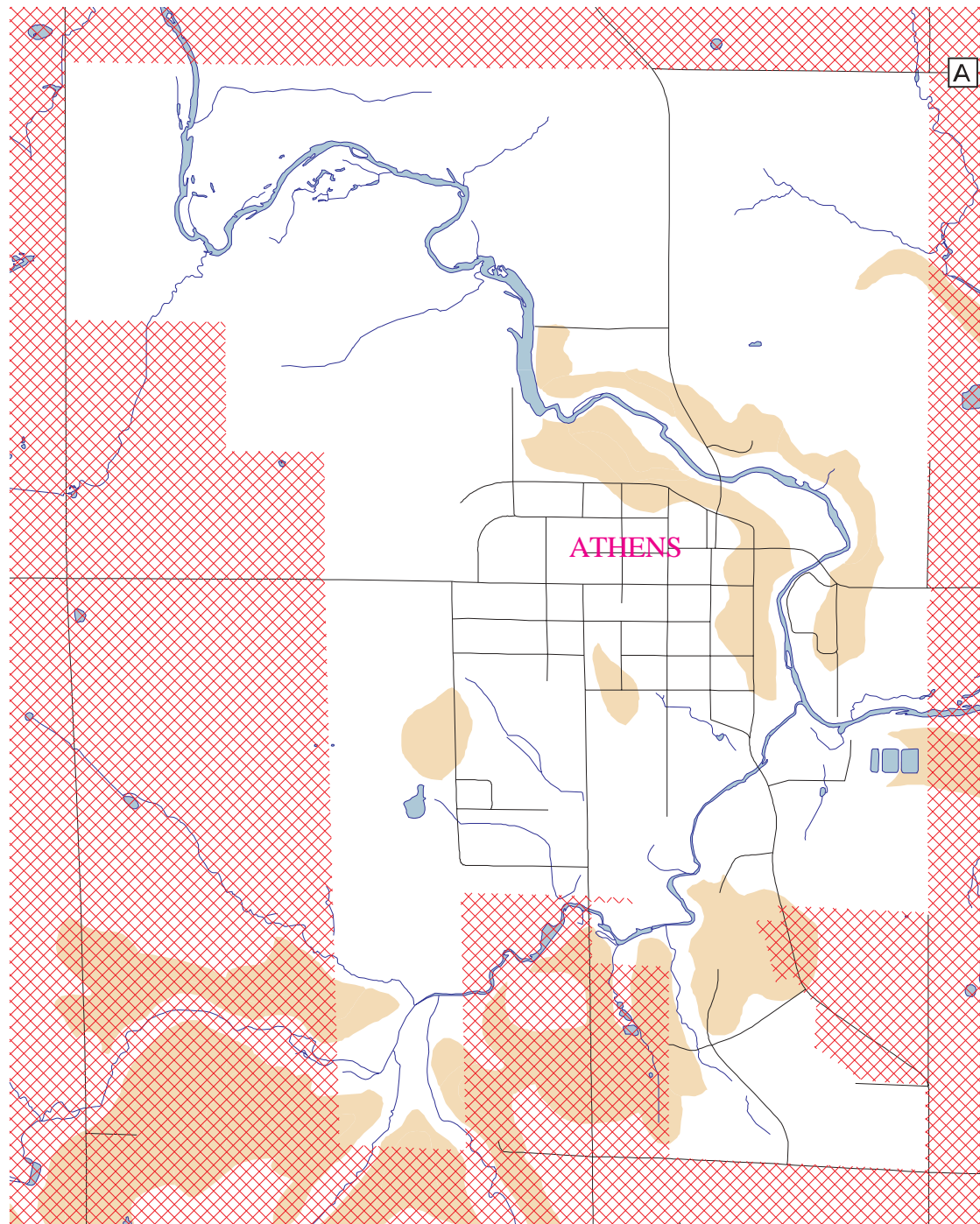
Figure 5-3
Road Surface Types
ATHENS

MARATHON COUNTY REGIONAL TRAILS & TRANSPORTATION



- Mountain Bay Trail
- 2001 Snowmobile Trails
- Ice Age Trail
- Suggested Bike Routes
- Wausau City Airport
- Central Wisconsin Airport (Mosinee)
- State & Us Highways
- Railroads (Active)
- Municipal Boundary
- Water Features
- Incorporated Municipality

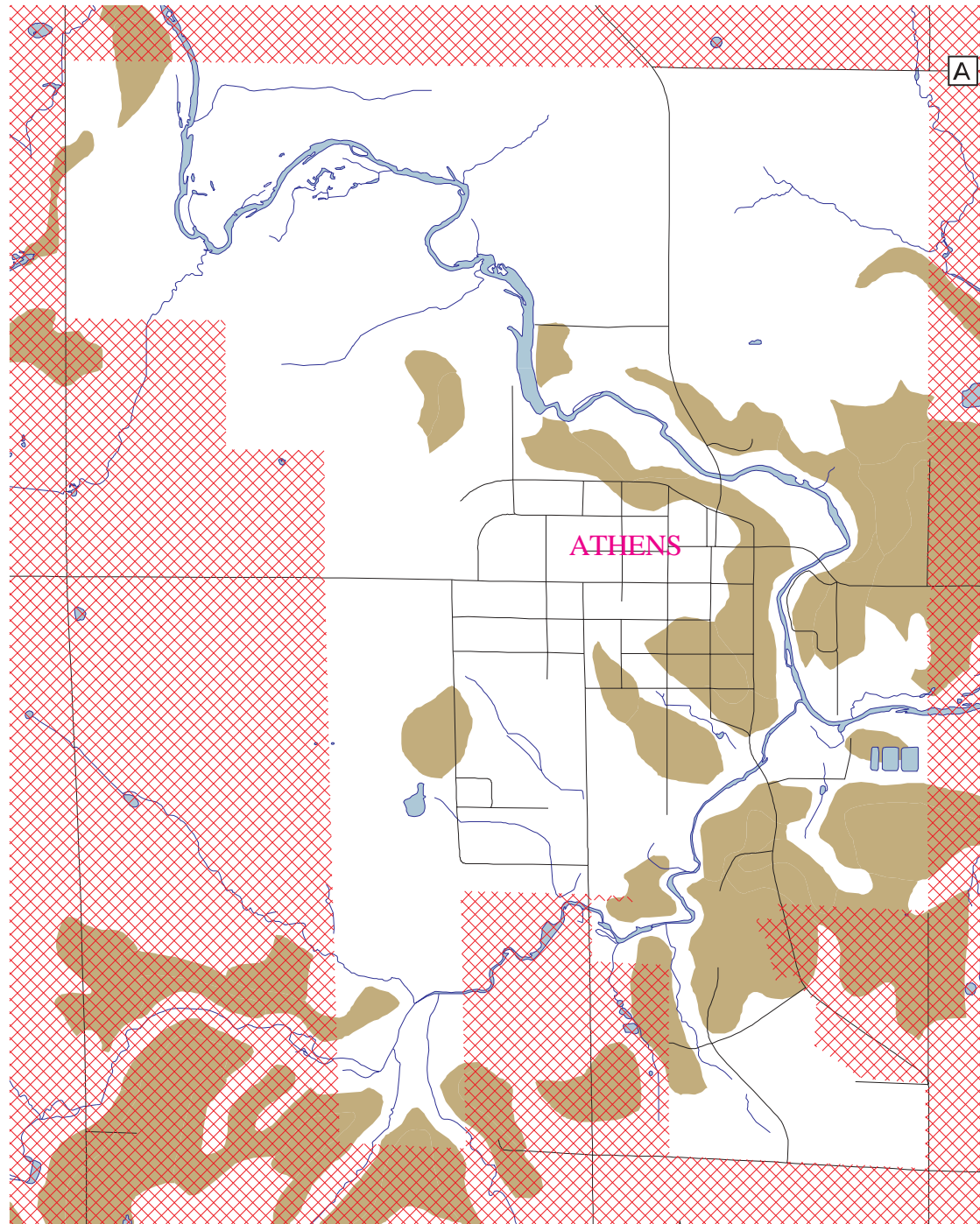
Figure 5-4



- 0 - 20" (Quarries) □ >60"
- 20 - 40 "
- 40-60"

⊠ Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 6-1
 Depth To Bedrock
 ATHENS

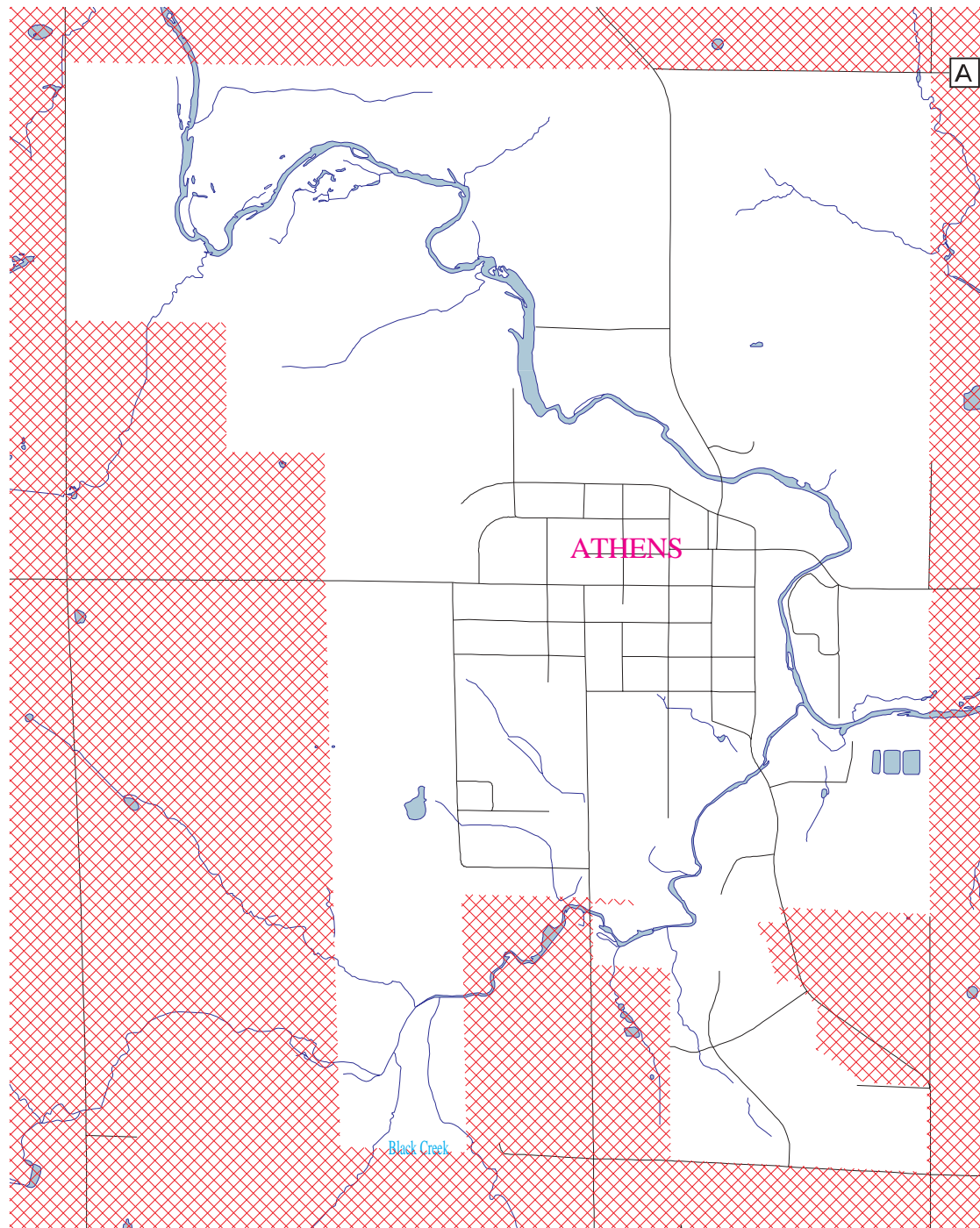


Soils suitable for septic systems w/soil absorption component

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Suitable Soils-Septic Tank Absorption
 ATHENS

Figure 6-2



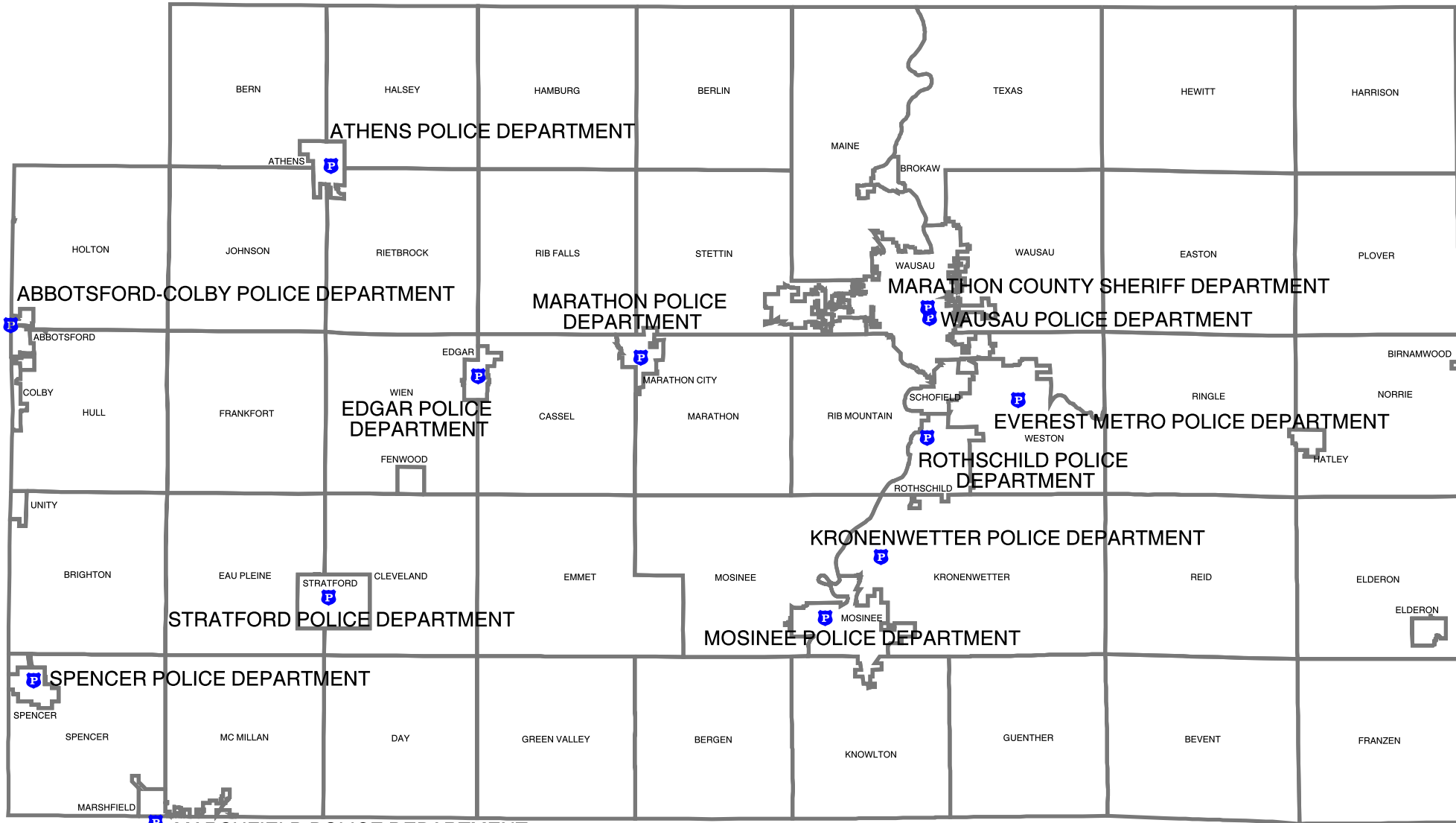
Priority Watersheds
 as identified in the Marathon County
 Land & Water Resource Management Plan

Watershed boundaries

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

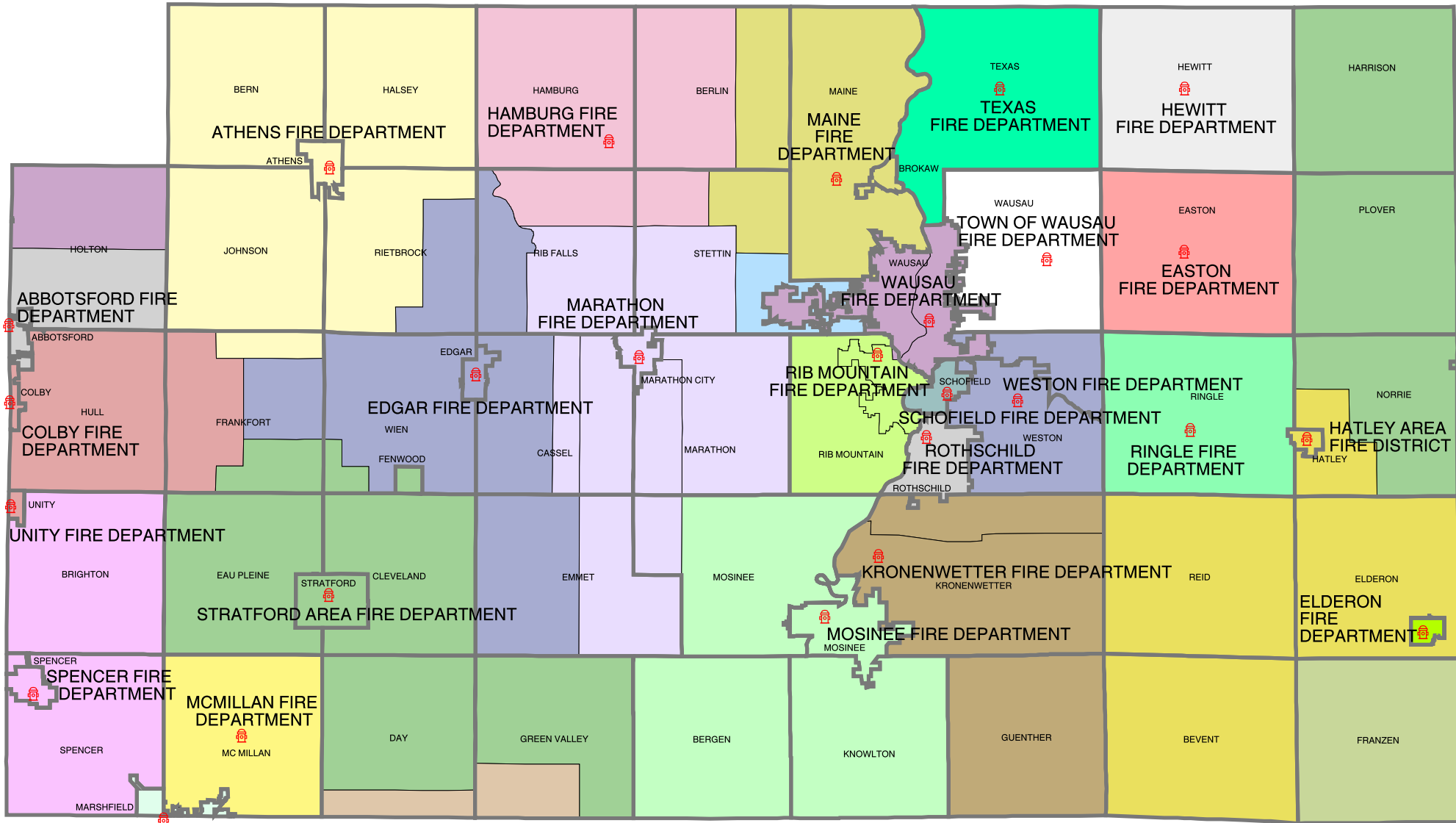
Figure 6-4
Major Watersheds
ATHENS

MARATHON COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT



 Police Department
 Municipal Boundary

FIRE DEPARTMENTS & SERVICE AREAS



Fire Department
 Municipal Boundary

Fire Service Districts

	ABBOTSFORD		MARATHON
	ATHENS		MARSHFIELD
	AUBURNDALE		MOSINEE
	BIRNAMWOOD		MOSINEE
	COLBY		RIB MOUNTAIN
	DORCHESTER		RINGLE
	EASTON		ROTHSCHILD
	ELDERON		SCHOFIELD
	FAMILY		SPENCER
	HAMBURG		STRATFORD
	HEWITT		WASAU
	KRONENWETTER		WASAU (town)
	MAINE		WESTON
	MAINE/RIB MTN		WITTENBERG

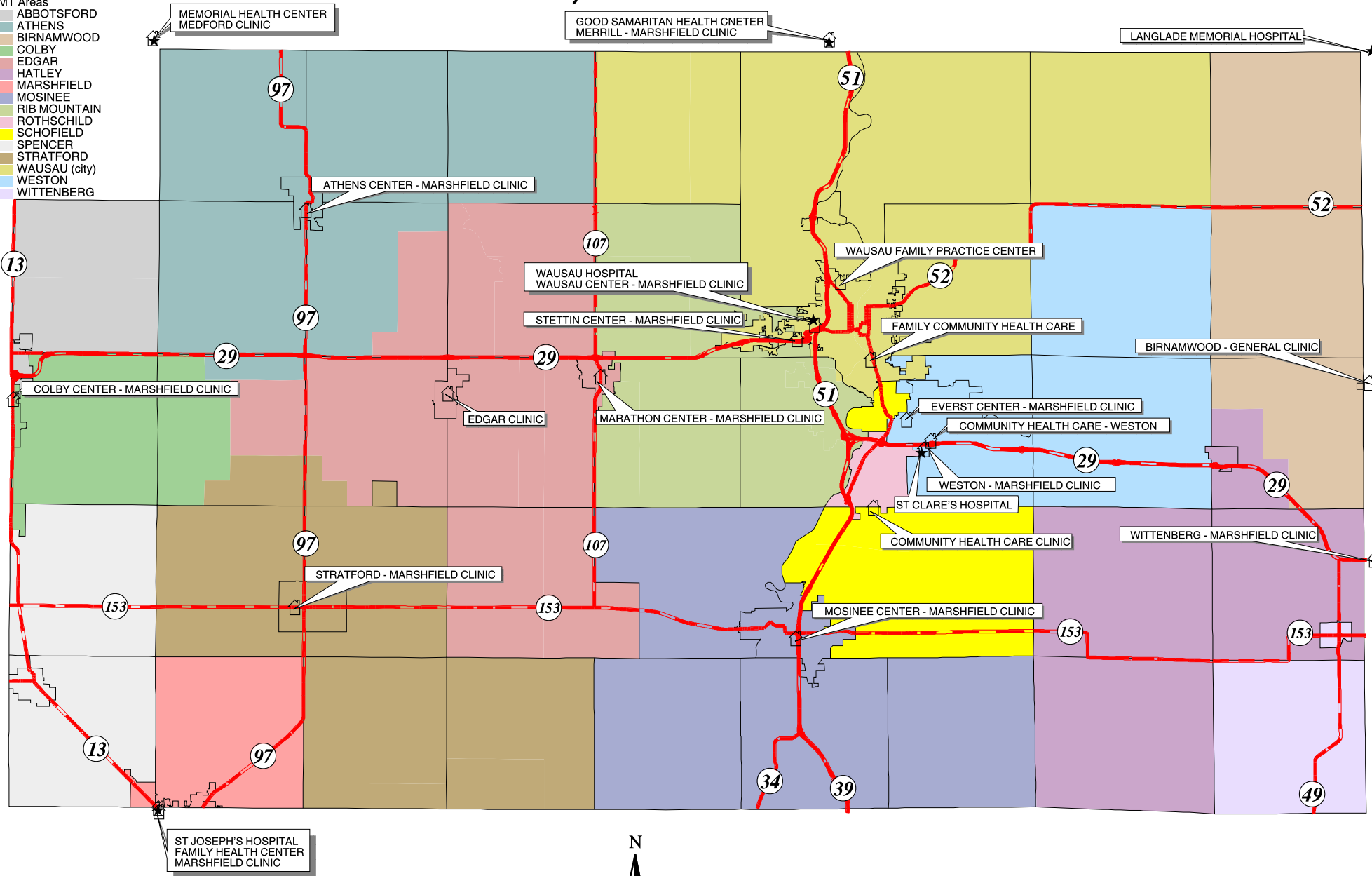


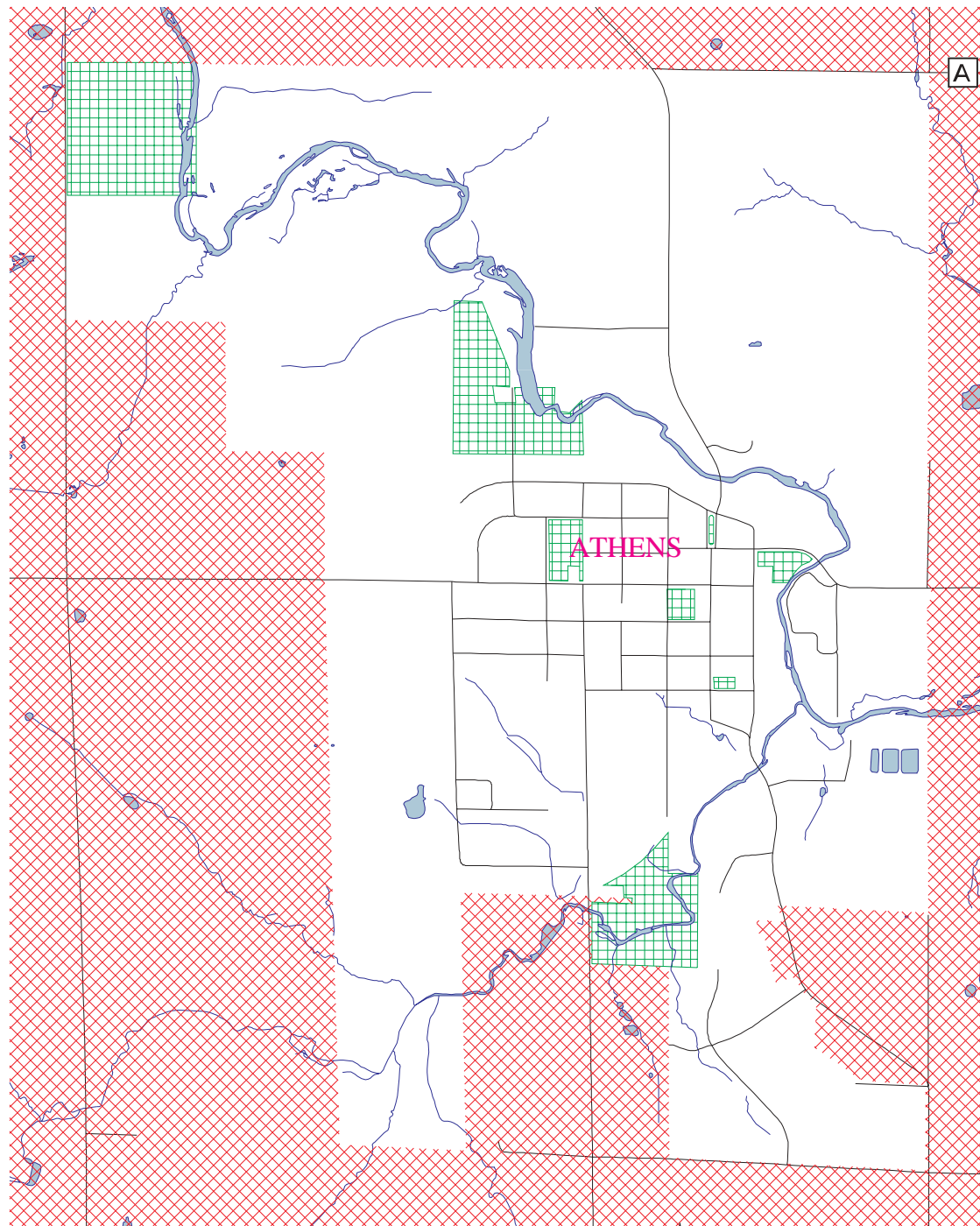
Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 9-3

MARATHON COUNTY AREA HOSPITALS, CLINICS & EMS ZONES

- Healthcare Facilities
- CLINIC
 - HOSPITAL
 - State & US Highways
 - Municipal Boundary
- EMT Areas
- ABBOTSFORD
 - ATHENS
 - BIRNAMWOOD
 - COLBY
 - EDGAR
 - HATLEY
 - MARSHFIELD
 - MOSINEE
 - RIB MOUNTAIN
 - ROTHSCHILD
 - SCHOFIELD
 - SPENCER
 - STRATFORD
 - WAUSAU (city)
 - WESTON
 - WITTENBERG

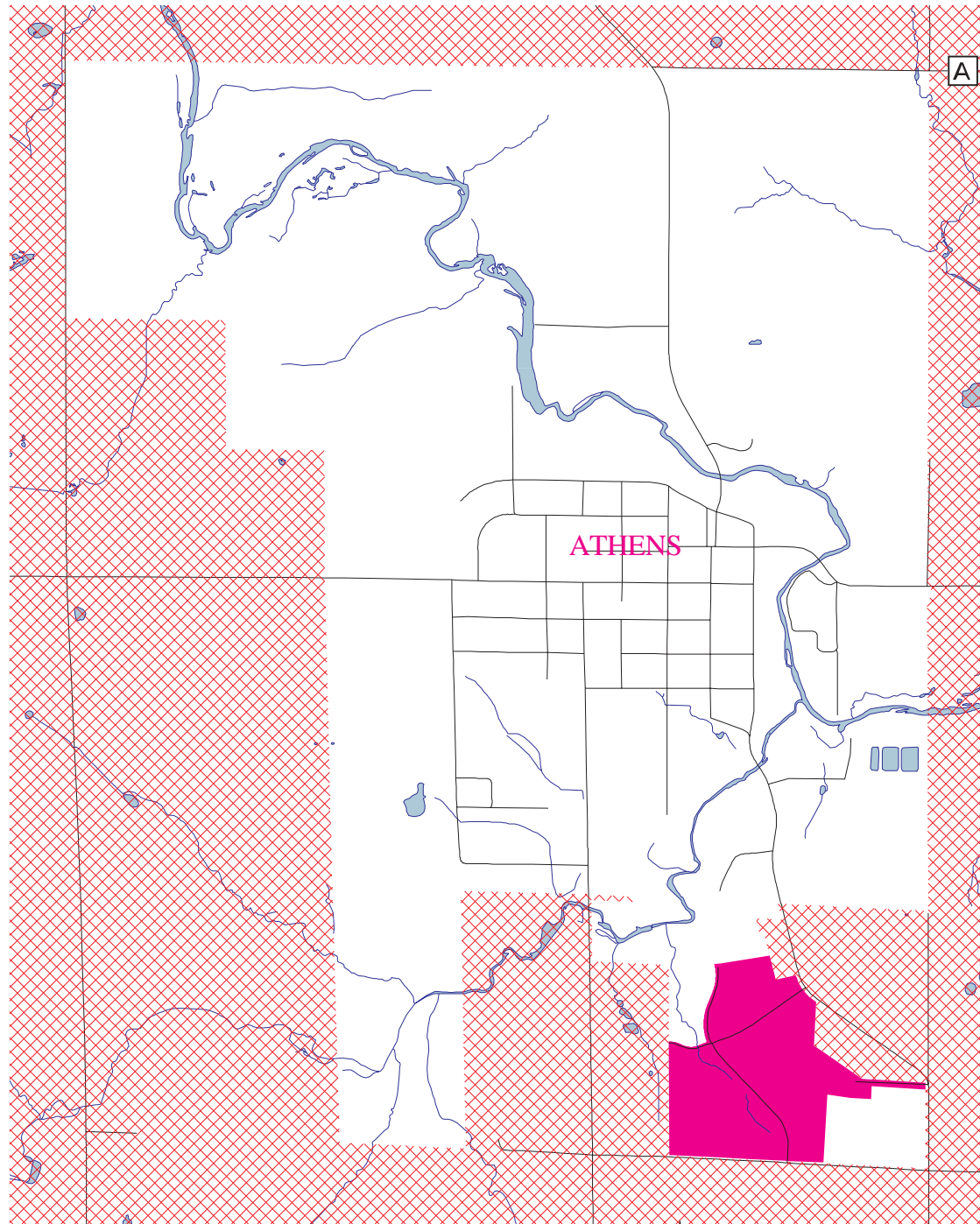




- Municipal Parks
- County Forest Units
- County Parks
- State Parks

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 10-1
Recreation Facilities
ATHENS



Industrial/Business Parks

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 11-1
Business/Industrial Parks
ATHENS

Village of Athens

Comprehensive Plan

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Implementation

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Natural Resources Element	4
3. Land Use Element.....	6
4. Transportation Element.....	9
5. Utilities Element	11
6. Housing Element	12
7. Cultural Resources Element	13
8. Community Facilities Element	15
9. Parks Element	16
10. Economic Development Element.....	18
11. Intergovernmental Cooperation Element.....	20
12. Implementation Element	21

Appendices

- A. State Comprehensive Planning Goals
- B. Marathon County Guiding Principles
- C. Ordinance of Adoption and Resolution of Recommendation
- D. Public Participation Plan
- E. Bibliography of Related Studies and Plans
- F. Road Paving Criteria

List of Tables

Table 3-1: Future Land Use, 2005	7
Table 3-2: Acreage Projections, 2000-2030.....	8
Table 4-1: Summary of Pavement Conditions.....	10
Table 12-1: Criteria to Consider When Reviewing Plan Changes	24
Table 12-2: Implementation Plan Actions.....	26

List of Figures

- Figure 3-1: Future Land Use
- Figure 3-2: Existing Zoning
- Figure 3-3: Development Constraints
- Figure 4-1: Functional Classification
- Figure 4-2: WISLR Ratings
- Figure 4-3: WISLR Road Surface Type

List of Acronyms

303 (d) list—waters designated as “impaired” under section 303 (d) of the U.S. Clean Water Act.

AADT—Annual Average Daily Traffic

AHI—Architecture & History Inventory (a database of the Wisconsin Historical Society).

BMPs—Best Management Practices

CCR&R—Child Care Resource and Referral Network

CDBG—Community Development Block Grant

CES—Cropland Evaluation System (Marathon County)

CIP—Capital Improvement Program

Comm 83—Chapter 83 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code under the Department of Commerce, setting standards for regulation of private sewage systems.

CRP—Conservation Reserve Program

CTH—County Trunk Highway

CWA—Central Wisconsin Airport

DWD—Department of Workforce Development

EMS—Emergency Medical Services

EMT—Emergency Medical Technician

ERW—Exceptional Resource Waters, a designation by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency

FIRM—Flood Insurance Rate Maps

HOME—Home Investment Partnerships Program

HUD—U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

LHOG—Local Housing Organization Grant

LRTP—Long Range Transportation Plan (Prepared by the Wausau Metro Planning Organization for the Metro area).

LWRMP—Land and Water Resource Management Plan (Marathon County)

MPO—Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

NCHC—North Central Health Care

NCWRPC—North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

NRHP—National Register of Historic Places

NTC—Northcentral Technical College

ORW—Outstanding Resource Waters, a designation under the U.S. Clean Water Act.

Village of Athens

PASER—Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating

PMP—Pavement Management Plan

SHPO—State Historic Preservation Office

STF Data—Summary Tape File, referring to data files of the 2000 U.S. Census.

STH—State Trunk Highway

TDP—Transit Development Plan (Wausau Area Transit System)

TIP—Transportation Improvement Program (Marathon County)

USDA—United States Department of Agriculture

USH—U.S. Highway

UW-MC—University of Wisconsin—Marathon County

WATS—Wausau Area Transit System

WDA—Wisconsin Department of Agriculture

WDNR—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

WDOA—Wisconsin Department of Administration

WDOT—Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WHEDA—Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

WISLR—Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads

WPD—Wetland Protection District

WPS—Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

1. Introduction

This document represents the core of the Athens Comprehensive Plan. It outlines the community's goals and objectives to address the issues and opportunities identified in the *Conditions and Issues Report* and guide future growth. Goals and objectives have been developed relative to each of the required plan elements. For each of the goals and objectives, specific policies, strategies and/or actions are recommended to enable the community to achieve them. The Implementation Element at the end of this document compiles and prioritizes all the recommended action steps and identifies who is responsible for implementation.

Coordinating planning efforts with other jurisdictions was integral to the local comprehensive planning process. By working in sub-area groups, participating in county-wide planning workshops, and directly communicating with neighboring communities, all participating local municipalities have taken steps to foster intergovernmental cooperation and land use coordination. To achieve a level of broad consistency, all participating municipalities worked together to identify common likes, dislikes and concerns impacting their respective sub-areas. These were distilled into ten countywide guiding principles that describe a broad, shared vision of the future of Marathon County.

Local plans must also address the State's fourteen planning goals outlined in Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001, to the extent applicable. The sub-area concerns are summarized below and the State planning goals and countywide guiding principles are summarized in Appendix A and B, respectively.

Sub-Area Concerns

Following is a list of concerns shared by the four rural planning sub-areas outside of the Wausau metropolitan area. These were developed through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) exercise to identify aspects of the sub-areas that participants liked, disliked, or had concerns about. Because many of the concerns were shared by all the rural sub-areas, they were consolidated into one list as follows:

General Concerns:

Local Development Control

- Maintain local control of development regulation
- Private property rights

Degree of Regulation

- Prefer minimal development regulation, but open to some regulation to protect prime farmland, rural character, natural resources and water quality
- Managed development preferred

Land Use and Development:

Preserve Rural Character

- Rural settings (small farms dotting landscape)
- Low population density (1, 2 and 5 acre lots)
- Ample open space, woodlands, natural areas, etc.
- Small town living – familiar, friendly, safe
- Concentrate commercial and industrial development in cities or villages

Farm/Non-farm Conflicts

- Increased demand (from new residents) for higher level of service, paved roads, etc.
- Traffic conflicts between passenger vehicles and farm equipment
- Road paving and dust control – Costs? Benefits?
- Road damage from heavy farm equipment
- Increased complaints about farm smells, dust, noise

Urban Fringe Development

- Annexation - lack of control over where, when and what might develop
- Some support for cooperative boundary agreements to manage growth at urban edge
- Planned development preferred - but wary of over regulation

Identity and Appearance

- Lack of design/aesthetics control for commercial and industrial development (buildings, landscaping, signs)
- Cluttered appearance of major road corridors (signs, power lines, no landscaping)
- Improve housing maintenance in some neighborhoods
- Land use conflicts – i.e. old industrial adjacent to residential

Preservation and Protection of Resources:

Preserve/Protect Natural Resources

- Preserve woodlands (highest ratings in survey responses), wetlands, rivers
- Protect/maintain natural character and scenic quality
- Maintain access to natural areas

Fiscal/Economic:

Strong and Diverse Tax Base

- Loss of land, jobs and population due to annexation
- Loss of taxable land due to public purchase (e.g. County Forests)
- Redevelop under-utilized land, particularly along Wisconsin River
- Maintain/foster diverse mix of land uses
- Competition for industrial development – particularly between urban and fringe areas

Farmland Preservation (primarily economic issue)

- Loss of small/family farms to development or larger farms
- Mega farms [also concerns about environmental impacts]
- Decreasing number of active farms
- Conversion of farms to non-farm development
- Land value inflation (high taxes)

Infrastructure:

Traffic and Transportation System

- Too many driveway openings on busy road corridors
- Lack of future street planning
- Limited river crossings
- New interchange locations and loss of highway access
- Highway frontage roads – access limitations

Protect Water Supply

- Depletion or degradation due to high volume users (mega farms, new high school, industry)
- Limited access to water for wells in some areas (bedrock, etc.)

Sewer and Septic System Availability

- Poor soil drainage limits suitability for on-site waste treatment systems in some areas
- “Comm83” opens more areas for on-site treatment systems
- Interest in looking at alternatives to centralized wastewater treatment

Cost Efficient Community Services

- Shared services generally good – fragmentation an issue in some areas
- Maintain and improve services w/o increasing taxes
- How/who will pay for increased services
- Lack of transit access in rural and fringe areas

20-Year Community Vision Statement

It is the Vision of the Village of Athens to build and maintain a highly livable community by working in harmony with all members and organizations in the community. We value planned growth that will retain our small town atmosphere, a clean and attractive Village with parks and recreational opportunities. We support providing the highest level of service possible in the most efficient and responsible manner. We strive to provide programs and services to ensure the highest levels of public safety. Our Vision is to have Athens remain a great place to live, raise a family, and retire.

Goals, Objectives, Policies, Strategies & Actions

The Village of Athens has set forth goals and objectives related to the nine (9) elements of a Smart Growth comprehensive plan. These Goals and Objectives appear in the pages immediately

following. For the purposes of this document, Goal and Objective are defined below. The Goals and Objectives were developed with the Village over a series of meetings. These Goals and Objectives lay out the long-term desires that residents have for their community.

Under each goal and series of attached objectives, follow a list of Policies, Strategies, and Actions. For the purposes of this document, Policies, Strategies, and Actions are defined below. These Policies, Actions, and Strategies are designed to allow the Village to achieve the Goals and Objectives that they follow.

Definitions:

- **Goal:** A goal is a statement that describes a desired future condition. The statement is broad in scope and describes general concepts or things the community hopes to accomplish.
- **Objective:** An objective is a statement that describes a specific course of action to achieve a goal or address an issue.
- **Policy:** A policy is a general course of action or rule of conduct to be followed to achieve community goals and objectives.
- **Strategies:** As the name implies, strategies are strategic approaches that may involve a series of individual actions to achieve a specific goal or objective.
- **Actions:** An action describes a specific effort that will be undertaken to achieve a specific goal or objective.

2. Natural Resources Element

Goal 1: Maintain water quality in existing river and stream corridors.

- **Objective: To limit uncontrolled runoff, over use of fertilizers, and other waterway contaminants to surface water.**
- **Objective: To monitor water quality reports from the State.**
- **Objective: To discourage development in areas that will affect surface water resources through increased runoff, loss of vegetation, or improper landscaping especially along Black Creek.**
- **Objective: To develop plans for the extension of sewer and water utilities which do not damage existing water resources while still encouraging commercial and industrial development.**
- **Objective: To protect and enhance Outstanding Resource Waters and Exceptional Resource waters from intensive development.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens prohibits developments in areas that will have a detrimental impact on surface water resources.

- The Village of Athens will balance commercial and industrial development with the protection of natural resources.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Review and update, as appropriate, Village ordinances related to the use and overuse fertilizers in the Village.
- Develop plans for the extension of utilities, while ensuring that they do not damage existing water resources.
- Direct development away from sensitive natural locations, such as groundwater recharge areas.
- Continue to monitor State water quality reports.

Goal 2: Protect wetland areas from the encroachment of development.

- **Objective: Establish guidelines for development located near wetland areas including type, use.**
- **Objective: To identify perimeters around wetland areas where development is discouraged.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens prohibits development in wetland areas.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Identify an appropriate perimeter around wetland areas to protect these vital groundwater areas from damage.
- Develop design guidelines for development around wetland areas. These could include requiring rain gardens, limiting impervious surfaces, and developing retention basins to limit surface water runoff.

3. Land Use Element

Goal 1: Identify future areas for industrial development.

- **Objective: Target future industrial growth to areas contiguous with existing industrial development in the Athens Industrial Park.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens will direct future industrial growth to areas contiguous to the existing industrial park.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Develop a long-range plan for serving future industrial lands with utilities.
- Coordinate the development of future industrial land with MCDEVCO and the surrounding Towns.

Goal 2: Preserve and enhance the small town character of the Village of Athens.

- **Objective: Identify and preserve those aspects of the Village of Athens that contribute to the character of the community.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the preservation of its small town character.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Identify those aspects of the Village that best represent small town character, and strive to preserve them.

Goal 3: To preserve remaining farmland wherever possible.

- **Objective: To discourage rural residential development on prime farmland whenever possible and to encourage local participation in farmland preservation programs.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens discourages the conversion of prime farmland that is not contiguous to existing development, to other uses.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Work with surrounding Towns to direct residential growth to the Village of Athens, and away from prime farm soils.

Village of Athens

- Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and surrounding Towns to encourage participation in farmland preservation programs.

Future Land Use – The Village of Athens Future Land Use map, shown in Figure 3-1 illustrates the anticipated future pattern of land uses. The map includes land use categories to guide where new residential and non-residential development should be encouraged to locate or where development should be discouraged. Descriptions of each land use category and the number of acres within each category are provided in Table 3-1. Figure 3-3 shows areas with development constraints due to environmental conditions such as wetlands and floodplains, or policy constraints such as restrictive zoning or other programs (i.e., Exclusive Agriculture, Forest Crop Law). Areas where existing development precludes additional development are also shown.

Table 3-1: Future Land Use, 2005

Land Cover Category	Description	Acres	% of Total Land Area
Single Family Residential	One family structures, farm residences, mobile homes	388	25
Multi-Family Residential	Residential structures containing more than one unit	32	2
Mobile Homes	Any park or lot containing 10 or more mobile homes	8	<1
Commercial Services	Retail stores, taverns, restaurants, truck stops, gas stations, farm coops, farm implement dealerships, automobile dealerships, business offices, motels/hotels, offices, telephone/gas company (and Medical)	44	3

Industrial	Saw/paper/lumber mills, dairies, industrial parks, trucking operations, distribution centers, mining	126	8
Rural Development	General farming and related uses	501	32
Public/Quasi-Public	Schools, churches, cemeteries, libraries, government buildings, National Guard, utility facilities.	47	3
Park and Recreation	Public and private parks, trails, ball fields, golf courses, playgrounds, camp grounds, shooting ranges, etc.	47	3
Conservancy	Significant natural resource areas	268	17
Transportation	Airports, highways, road right-of-ways, railroads, logging roads	104	7
Total Land Area		1565	100

Source: Future Land Use map

As indicated in the table, a majority of land is projected to be used for rural development (32%) or maintained as conservancy (17%). Single-family residential currently occupies only 25 percent of the total acreage within the Village (388 acres).

Land Needs – Projections of future population and employment growth in Athens are provided in the *Issues and Conditions* report. These were used to estimate the amount of land needed to accommodate future residential and non-residential development over the next 20 years. Acreage projections were based on assumptions about density of houses per acre and employees per acre.

It is estimated over the next 20 years, 47 acres will be needed to accommodate future residential development and 34 acres are needed for future non-residential development. Potential locations for these land uses are identified on the Future Land Use Map.

Village of Athens

Table 3-2: Acreage Projections, 2000-2030

	Estimated Total Acreage Needed by Year						
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Agricultural	1033	1019	1005	991	977	964	952
Residential	169	177	185	193	201	209	216
Industrial	30	34	39	43	47	51	55
Commercial	10	12	13	15	17	18	19

Source: determined from NCWRPC and Marathon County projections

Consistency between Land Use and Zoning – Land use and zoning designations are related, but not necessarily identical. Land use categories tend to be fairly general whereas zoning districts regulate specific land uses and development requirements. Because the land use categories are general it is common for more than one zoning district to correspond to each land use category. It is also possible that some zoning districts might be consistent with more than one land use designation.

Achieving consistency between land use and zoning is required by State Statutes. This generally occurs when a community is considering a proposed zoning change. The decision to approve a zoning change must be based on the adopted comprehensive plan, and specifically, the future land use map. Generally, if the requested zoning is consistent with the land use designation on the property it should be approved, unless unique circumstances indicated the rezoning would negatively impact surrounding properties or the community. If a rezoning request is not consistent with the land use designation, the community should consider denying the rezoning request.

In situations where a rezoning request is not consistent with the land use designation - but the community believes the requested zoning is appropriate in the specific location and would benefit the community - the zoning change can be approved, however, the land use map should be amended accordingly to establish land use and zoning consistency. The process for amending the land use map is discussed in greater detail in the Implementation Element.

4. Transportation Element

Goal 1: Maintain the Village transportation system.

- **Objective: Utilize the PASER analysis, and prioritize maintenance scheduling through a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).**
- **Objective: Maintain and improve the ongoing cooperation with surrounding Towns regarding road maintenance.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the continued use of a CIP and PASER analysis for budgeting purposes.
- Meet with the surrounding Towns to continue the existing road maintenance agreements and identify areas for further cooperation.

Goal 2: Develop long-term policies regarding sidewalks.

- **Objective: Develop a sidewalk policy.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens will encourage all future developments to install sidewalks, to increase connectivity in the Village.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Develop a sidewalk policy to cover existing, developed areas of the Village.

Goal 3: Provide for efficient movement of traffic throughout the community.

- **Objective: Work with Marathon County to ensure that county roads can accommodate increased traffic resulting from commuters.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens encourages the development of transportation facilities that are adequate to address the needs of the community and commuters.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Meet with Marathon County to develop a long-term action plan for any required upgrades or maintenance to the Village's transportation system.

Road Improvements

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) requires all incorporated communities to prepare a Pavement Management Plan (PMP) using a pavement rating system for their local roads. These plans were to be submitted for review by December 2001. The data from these plans is intended to provide the foundation for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), which is a computer resource that will enable communities and the State to begin to assess Wisconsin’s local roadway system.

The PASER system, which was designed by the Transportation Information Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is the rating system used most by Wisconsin communities. PASER rates road surfaces on a scale of 1 to 10. This scale is broken down as follows:

- “1” and “2” = very poor condition
- “3” = poor condition
- “4” and “5” = fair condition
- “6” and “7” = good condition
- “8” = very good condition
- “9” and “10” = excellent condition

In addition to its use in the new WISLR, the rating system gives communities a detailed assessment of the appropriate maintenance method for each road segment under their jurisdiction. The Village has completed a PASER evaluation.

Table 4-1: Summary of Pavement Conditions

Surface Type Code (miles)						
Unimproved Road	Graded Earth Road	Gravel Road	Wearing Surface	Cold Mix Asphalt on Concrete	Cold Mix Resurfacing with < 7" Base	Cold Mix Resurfacing with > 7" Base
		0.59				
Cold Mix Asphalt Base < 7"	Cold Mix Asphalt Base > 7"	Hot Mix Asphalt on Concrete	Hot Mix Resurfacing	Hot Mix Asphalt Pavement	Concrete Pavement	Brick or Block Pavement
0.68	6.62			0.80	0.07	

Surface Condition Rating (miles)						
Failed	Poor	Very Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
	0.22	1.00	2.24	2.01	2.06	1.19

Source: WDOT (WISLR), 8/10/04

Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “Fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. The roads that display a surface rating of “Good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. The majority of the roads within the Village of Athens will require preventative maintenance, however, about 3.44 miles of roadway will require some sort of reconditioning.

Paving Gravel Roads – Only 0.59 miles of roads within the Village remain unpaved. When paving gravel roads, there are many factors that should be taken into consideration. Appendix F outlines some general guidelines to help the Village decide if or when to pave gravel roads.

5. Utilities Element

Goal 1: Provide efficient water and sewer service to all areas of the Village of Athens.

- **Objective: Consider the development of a long-term plan to connect un-served areas of the Village to sewer / water services.**
- **Objective: Continue looping existing water mains.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens will endeavor to connect all un-served areas of the Village to sewer and water services.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Identify those properties that are in the Village but are not currently served with utilities.
- Consider the development of a long-term plan, in conjunction with property owners, to extend utilities to currently un-served parcels.
- Continue water-looping projects.

Goal 2: Ensure a sufficient supply of potable water.

- **Objective: To work with Marathon County and WDNR to monitor existing aquifers for depletion and contamination issues.**
- **Objective: To work with Marathon County and WDNR to limit uncontrolled runoff and other contamination issues that may affect groundwater.**
- **Objective: To discourage concentrated development in areas with limited water availability.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens requires developments to maintain the current level of runoff both during, and after development has taken place on site.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Monitor existing aquifers, with the assistance of the WDNR and Marathon County, for depletion or contamination.
- Review and update existing ordinances to ensure that they prohibit uncontrolled runoff from new developments both during and after construction.
- Identify areas with limited water availability, in conjunction with the WDNR and Marathon County and the surrounding Towns, and direct growth away from these locales.

6. Housing Element

Goal 1: Provide a range of housing choices throughout the Village of Athens.

- **Objective: Identify sites in the Village that are best suited for multi-family housing.**
- **Objective: Zone sites for future multi-family housing.**
- **Objective: Identify sites for future senior housing facilities.**
- **Objective: Work with potential developers, Marathon County, WHEDA, and other appropriate agencies to assist with funding and construction of senior housing units.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the development of a range of housing options in the Village.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Review and update Village ordinances to ensure that they allow a range of housing options to be built.

- Ensure Village ordinances allow condominium developments, zero lot line / duplex development, and traditional neighborhood designs to be built.
- Develop a policy to aid in determining the level of Village participation, funding, or support for newly developing senior housing or housing for special needs populations.
- Identify sites for future residential development.

Goal 2: Develop a local housing program to assist in redevelopment and first time home purchase.

- **Objective: Identify potential funding sources for the development of a housing program.**
- **Objective: Work with Marathon County and area housing agencies to pursue and administer funds, such as State CDBG Housing Grants.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the creation of a local housing program to aid in rehabilitation and first time home purchase.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Submit an application to the State of Wisconsin housing program.

- Develop and maintain a housing revolving loan fund to aid first time home buyers and home owners who wish to rehabilitate their property.

Goal 3: Ensure safety of mobile home residential units.

- **Objective: Improve code enforcement to ensure mobile homes meet all building requirements.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports improving the safety of mobile home residences in the Village.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Review and update, as appropriate, the existing Village ordinances related to mobile home placement and development.

7. Cultural Resources Element

Goal 1: Recognize and protect historic resources in the community.

- **Objective: To work with the County Historical Society to identify historic resources so they may be considered in future planning.**
- **Objective: To ensure that any known cemeteries, human burials or archaeological sites are protected from encroachment by roads or any development activities.**
- **Objective: To participate in a countywide survey to identify historic properties.**

- Actively participate in a countywide survey of historic resources and sites.

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens recognizes and supports the preservation of historic resources in the Village.
- The Village of Athens discourages developments that would damage existing historic sites or structures.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Work with Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin to identify and preserve existing historic resources.

8. Community Facilities Element

Goal 1: Provide effective public safety services.

- **Objective: Work with the Marathon County Sheriffs Department and the surrounding Towns to continue to provide effective police, fire, and EMS services to the area.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the continued utilization of the Athens Police Department, and will investigate ways to expand its effectiveness.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Meet with the Marathon County Sheriff's Department and surrounding Towns to identify any areas where joint service agreements could be established to enhance services, as well as lower costs.

Goal 2: Establish a central meeting place to accommodate a variety of community functions.

- **Objective: To identify a location for adult education activities.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the development of a central meeting facility / community center.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Meet with surrounding Towns and local stakeholders to discover the level of interest in developing a centralized community center type of facility.

9. Parks Element

Goal 1: Actively pursue the development of multi-use trails.

- **Objective: Work with appropriate agencies, such as the WDNR, WDOT, Marathon County, downtown businesses owners, the school district, and others, to identify possible trail routes in Athens.**
- **Objective: Coordinate with other agencies to identify and acquire funds to complete and maintain multi-use trails.**
- **Objective: To link areas of importance, such as the school grounds and the CBD, together via a network of multi-use trails and sidewalks.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the development of multi-use trails in and around the community.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Meet with surrounding Towns, the WDNR, the WDOT, Marathon County, and other local stakeholders to develop a trail plan to connect points of interest both within and without the community.

- Develop a long-term funding strategy, in concert with other stakeholders, to fund the development and maintenance of a trail system.
- Work with the Parks and Public Welfare Committee, Village Forester, citizens, and stakeholders to update the Park and Recreation Plan to apply for WDNR grant funds.

Goal 2: Maintain and enhance existing park facilities.

- **Objective: Develop a long-term plan for the funding of renewed park equipment throughout the Village park system.**
- **Objective: Consider extending water utilities to Erbach Park.**
- **Objective: To explore options for funding park land acquisition and maintenance.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens will extend water service to Erbach Park, if it is determined to be feasible and cost effective.
- The Village of Athens will consider the acquisition and development of new park lands, as needed.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Work with community stakeholders to develop a plan to renew park equipment throughout the community and fund park acquisition and maintenance with a combination of public and private funds.
- Identify and budget funds for the extension of water utilities to Erbach Park.

10. Economic Development Element

Goal 1: Redevelop and revitalize the central business district (CBD) of the Village of Athens.

- **Objective: Investigate the potential of creating a downtown Business Improvement District (BID).**
- **Objective: Target Village investments into the downtown area to revitalize the infrastructure within the CBD.**
- **Objective: Consider a downtown revitalization / redevelopment plan.**
- **Objective: To consider a façade improvement program for downtown businesses.**
- **Objective: Consider a market study to determine what types of businesses are most suitable for the CBD.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the redevelopment efforts in the Downtown area.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Meet with downtown business owners to develop a vision for the future of the downtown.
- Develop an overall redevelopment plan to revitalize infrastructure in the CBD.
- Consider the creation of a Redevelopment Authority (RDA) or Community Development Authority (CDA) to lead redevelopment and community development efforts.
- Work with UW-Extension to conduct a market study to determine what types of businesses would be best suited to the downtown area.
- Work with interested stakeholders to investigate the feasibility, interest level, and long-term goals of a potential BID.

Goal 2: Direct commercial and industrial growth to appropriate locations.

- **Objective: Direct commercial growth toward the CBD.**
- **Objective: Direct industrial growth toward the Village industrial park.**
- **Objective: Distinguish the Village Industrial Park from surrounding uses by the use of signage, landscaping, and other appropriate methods.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens will direct future commercial growth to the CBD.
- The Village of Athens will direct future industrial growth to the Village industrial park.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Develop signage, landscaping, and other requirements to distinguish the industrial park from surrounding uses.

Goal 3: Enhance rural centers.

- **Objective: To foster opportunities for new development and redevelopment in rural villages and to encourage a wider variety of local and commercial service businesses in rural villages.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens encourages development to provide basic services to residents.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Develop a business retention and expansion strategy to encourage redevelopment and development in the Village.

Marathon County Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development

Strengths

- Many acres of land zone Exclusive Agriculture, which strengthens the retention of the agricultural industry.
- Ample open space, woodlands, and natural areas, which adds to the small town living environment sought after by existing/future businesses and their employees.
- A strong base economy made up of a variety of businesses including leaders in papermaking, lumber, insurance, and dairy products.
- Strong support for economic development from the community and economic development organizations

Weaknesses

- The agricultural economy is declining, and exclusive agricultural zoning prevents other industry development in the community.
- Access limitations along highways and frontage roads.
- Lack of design/aesthetics control for commercial and industrial development.
- Competition for industrial development – particularly between urban and fringe areas.

11. Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

Goal 1: Maintain and enhance ongoing relationships with surrounding governments.

- **Objective: Hold meetings on an as needed basis with surrounding Towns to discuss issues of mutual interest.**
- **Objective: Work with the surrounding Towns to identify long term growth plans for both the Village and the Town.**
- **Objective: Discuss the development of boundary agreements with the surrounding Towns.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports the development of joint plans with the surrounding Towns, in prelude to discussions related to cooperative boundary agreements.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Meet with surrounding Towns to discuss issues of regional interest.
- Work with surrounding Towns to develop joint land use plans.

Goal 2: Coordinate development along STH 29.

- **Objective: Work with surrounding communities, the County and State to carry out a corridor study along STH 29 to improve access management along STH 29.**

POLICIES

- The Village of Athens supports continued access to STH 29 from STH 97.

STRATEGIES / ACTIONS

- Continue to meet with WDOT, Marathon County, and surrounding Towns to develop a plan to govern land use in and around STH 29.

12. Implementation Element

The primary reason a community prepares a comprehensive plan is to establish a framework to influence decisions regarding management of growth and regulation of development to maintain the desired community character, and to set priorities for public expenditures. To be effective, this plan should be actively used as a tool to guide decisions concerning:

- The implementation and enforcement of regulatory ordinances based on the goals and objectives identified in this plan.
- The development of programs and support systems that further the goals and objectives set forth in this plan.
- The implementation of specific community improvements as identified in the comprehensive plan.
- The establishment and support of a continued planning process providing for periodic review and updates to this plan and other land use control measures.

Implementation Tools

Having the appropriate tools to implement the recommendations in this comprehensive plan is critical. The most common implementation tools are the Village official controls or regulatory codes. In particular, the zoning ordinance and subdivision (or land division) regulations comprise the principal regulatory devices used to protect existing development and guide future growth and development as identified in this comprehensive plan. There are also non-regulatory approaches to implementing the comprehensive plan; these generally involve decisions about how the community will spend its limited funding resources on capital improvements and staffing.

The State planning law requires that by January 1, 2010 certain programs and/or actions that affect land use must be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan. To meet this deadline, Athens should update related ordinances on or before the year 2010. The Village Board officially adopts these regulatory and land use control measures as ordinances (or as revisions to the existing ordinances).

- **Zoning Ordinance and Map:** Zoning is used to manage and control how land is used and developed. Zoning ordinances typically establish detailed regulations concerning how land may be developed, including setbacks, the density or intensity of development, and the height and bulk of building and other structures. The general purpose of zoning is to minimize undesirable side effects resulting from development by segregating and/or buffering incompatible uses and by maintaining standards that ensure development will not negatively impact the community's character or environment.

The establishment of zoning districts and the zoning map indicates where specific types of development can and should be located. Zoning districts shown on the zoning map should be coordinated with the land use plan and map. While the zoning map and land use map do not need to directly match at the time the land use map is adopted, the intent is that the land use map will serve as a guide indicating how the property should eventually be zoned. Therefore, indiscriminate zoning changes may result in weakening of the comprehensive plan. In fact, changes to zoning district boundaries should only be made if they are consistent with the adopted land use map.

However, there may be situations where changing the zoning district boundary makes sense and is in the best interest of the community. If changing the zoning would result in a conflict with the future land use map, the land use map should also be changed. However, the future land use map should only be changed if it does not accurately reflect the community's desired land use pattern. Achieving consistency between zoning and land use designation is also discussed in the Land Use Element.

As discussed below, the comprehensive plan (and future land use map) should be periodically reviewed and updated to adjust for unforeseen changes or events that were not considered at the time the initial plan and land use map were developed.

The Village Board makes the final decisions regarding changes to the content of the zoning ordinance and the district map. These decisions are preceded by public hearings and recommendations of the plan commission.

- **Subdivision (Land Division) Ordinance:** Subdivision regulations serve as an important function by ensuring the orderly development of unplatted and/or undeveloped land. These regulations may set forth reasonable regulations for lot sizes, road access, street design, public utilities, storm water drainage, parks and open space, and other improvements necessary to ensure that new development will be an asset. The Board makes the final decisions on the content of the subdivision ordinance. These decisions are preceded by public hearings and recommendations of the plan commission.

- **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP):** This is an ongoing financial planning program that allows local communities to plan ahead for capital expenditures and minimize unplanned expenses. A capital improvement plan consists of a list of proposed projects according to a schedule of priorities over a four-to-six year period. It identifies needed public improvements, estimates their costs, and identifies financing methods and sources. Public improvements or expenditures typically considered in a CIP include:

- Public buildings (i.e., fire and police stations)
- Park and trail acquisition and development
- Roads and highways (maintenance and new construction/paving)
- Utility system construction/expansion, treatment plants, water towers, wells, etc.
- Joint school and other community development projects
- Fire and police protection equipment

A CIP is simply a method of planning for and scheduling expenditures for public improvements over a period of several years in order to maximize the use of limited public funds. Each year the CIP should be reviewed and extended one year to compensate for the previous year that was completed. This keeps the improvement program current and allows for modifications to meet the community's changing needs.

The preparation of a CIP is normally a joint responsibility between the Village board, plan commission, staff, and citizen commissions. The preparation of a capital improvement program may vary from community to community depending on local preferences, the local form of government and available staff. The proposed capital improvement plan

should be reviewed in light of the priorities outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Plan Adoption, Monitoring, and Amendments

While this comprehensive plan is intended to provide a long-term framework to guide development and public spending decisions, it must also respond to the continuous stream of changes that occur in the community and/or region that may not have been foreseen when the plan was initially adopted. It is appropriate that some elements of the plan are rarely amended while others are subject to updating on a more regular basis. Plan maps should also be updated periodically. In general, key maps, such as the future land use map, should be reviewed annually to make sure they are still current.

Plan Adoption: The first step in implementing this plan involves adoption of the plan by local officials. The formal review and adoption process involves plan review by the Plan Commission (or other planning committee) who must adopt the plan by resolution of majority vote. The Plan Commission recommendation is forwarded to the Village Board who must adopt the plan by ordinance (of majority vote). A public hearing is required to allow public comment on the ordinance prior to Board final action to adopt the plan. Adoption formalizes the plan document as the framework to guide local development decisions over the next 20 years. The adopted plan should also be recognized as a tool for communicating the community’s land use policy and goals and objectives regarding coordination of growth and development.

Plan Use, Monitoring and Evaluation: The adopted plan should be used as a tool by Athens when making land use and development decisions. Decisions concerning private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions should be consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations outlined in this plan.

Although this plan describes policies and actions for future implementation, it is impossible to predict the exact future condition of Athens. As such, the goals, objectives, and actions in this plan should be monitored on a regular basis to maintain concurrence with changing conditions and respond to unanticipated events.

This plan should be evaluated at least every 5 years, and updated at least every 10 years. Members of the Village Board, Plan Commission, and any other local decision-making bodies should periodically review the plan and identify areas that might need to be updated. The evaluation should involve first reviewing the goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires. Then the strategies and actions should be reviewed and refined to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate. The evaluation should also include an updated timetable of actions to clarify priorities.

Plan Amendments: The Athens Comprehensive Plan may be amended at any time by the Village Board following the same process described above for initial Plan adoption, regardless of how minor the proposed amendment or change. Amendments may be appropriate throughout the lifecycle of the plan, particularly if new issues emerge or trends change. These amendments will typically consist of minor changes to the plan text or maps. Large-scale changes or frequent amendments to meet individual

Village of Athens

development proposals should be avoided or the plan loses integrity. A list of criteria to determine the merits of proposed amendments is included in Table 12-1.

As noted above, proposed amendments must be reviewed by the Plan Commission prior to final action and adoption by the Village Board. The public should be notified of proposed Plan changes and allowed an opportunity for review and comment. For major amendments, the Village might consider soliciting public opinion through surveys and/or community meetings prior to the official public hearing.

Plan Updates: According to the State comprehensive planning law, comprehensive plans must be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to the more routine amendments described above, plan updates often involve re-writing of whole sections of the plan document and significant changes to supporting maps. A plan update should include a thorough examination of the community's goals and objectives based on an analysis of current growth trends and major changes that have occurred since the plan was initially adopted or last amended. Plan updates must be formally adopted following the same procedure described above for initial plan adoption.

Table 12-1: Criteria to Consider When Reviewing Plan Changes

1. The change is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Athens Comprehensive Plan.
2. The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
3. Development resulting from the change does not create an undue impact on surrounding properties. Such development should be consistent with the physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade and improve its viability.
4. The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
5. The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment including trees, slopes and groundwater, or the impact could be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.
6. There is a change in Village actions or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
7. The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
8. There is a community or regional need identified in the comprehensive plan for the proposed land use or service.
9. The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration or dedication.

Consistency Among Plan Elements

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the Implementation Element describe how each of the required elements will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. Since Athens completed all planning elements simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist. It is noted that some overlap naturally exists between the nine plan elements. Where deemed appropriate, goals, objectives, and actions have been repeated under all applicable elements to ensure they do not get “lost”.

This Comprehensive Plan also references previous and concurrent related planning efforts (e.g. LRTP, Groundwater Study) to ensure they are considered in planning decisions in conjunction with the recommendations of this Plan. Summary descriptions of recent and concurrent planning efforts are provided in the *Conditions and Issues Report*. Recommendations from other plans have been summarized and incorporated in this plan as deemed appropriate, to foster coordination and consistency between plans. Some related plans, such as the *Marathon County Hazard Mitigation Plan*, are incorporated by reference in this plan and are essentially considered appendices of this plan even though they are separate documents. Appendix E provides a bibliography of other plans and studies relevant to comprehensive planning.

Action Plan

The table below provides a detailed list of major actions to complete in order to implement this comprehensive plan. It compiles the major short, mid, and long-term priorities described in each of the nine plan elements. It also identifies the parties that will play key roles in implementing the actions.

Table 12-2 is intended to be used by local officials in setting priorities for capital budgeting and project assignment. It is expected that this table will be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to respond to changing priorities, financial limitations, and other unforeseen events. It should be noted that many of the actions require considerable cooperation with others, including the citizens of Athens, committees, and other local/county/state agencies.

Priority ranking is defined as follows:

- Immediate = ASAP
- Short-term = 1-4 years
- Mid-term = 5-9 years
- Long-term = 10+ years
- On-going = Current activities that should continue indefinitely

Village of Athens

Table 12-2: Implementation Plan Actions

Action	Who is responsible?	Priority
Natural Resources		
Review and update, as appropriate, Village ordinances related to the use and overuse fertilizers in the Village	Village Board	Short-Term
Develop plans for the extension of utilities, while ensuring that they do not damage existing water resources	Village Board	Short-Term
Direct development away from sensitive natural locations, such as groundwater recharge areas	Plan Commission	Immediate
Continue to monitor State water quality reports	Village Board	Ongoing
Identify an appropriate perimeter around wetland areas to protect these vital groundwater areas from damage	Plan Commission	Immediate
Develop design guidelines for development around wetland areas. These could include requiring rain gardens, limiting impervious surfaces, and developing retention basins to limit surface water runoff	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Land Use		
Develop a long-range plan for serving future industrial lands with utilities	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Coordinate the development of future industrial land with MCDEVCO and the surrounding Towns	Village Board	Short-Term
Identify those aspects of the Village that best represent small town character, and strive to preserve them	Village Board	Ongoing
Work with surrounding Towns to direct residential growth to the Village of Athens, and away from prime farm soils	Plan Commission	Short-Term

Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and surrounding Towns to encourage participation in farmland preservation programs	Village Board	Short-Term
Transportation		
Meet with the surrounding Towns to continue the existing road maintenance agreements and identify areas for further cooperation	Village Board	Ongoing
Develop a sidewalk policy to cover existing, developed areas of the Village	Village Board	Immediate
Meet with Marathon County to develop a long-term action plan for any required upgrades or maintenance to the Village’s transportation system	Village Board	Short-Term
Utilities		
Identify those properties that are in the Village but are not currently served with utilities	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Consider the development of a long-term plan, in conjunction with property owners, to extend utilities to currently un-served parcels	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Continue water-looping projects	Village Board	Ongoing
Monitor existing aquifers, with the assistance of the WDNR and Marathon County, for depletion or contamination	Village Board	Ongoing
Review and update existing ordinances to ensure that they prohibit uncontrolled runoff from new developments both during and after construction	Plan Commission	Short-Term

Village of Athens

Identify areas with limited water availability, in conjunction with the WDNR and Marathon County and the surrounding Towns, and direct growth away from these locales	Plan Commission	Immediate
Housing	Who is responsible?	Priority
Review and update Village ordinances to ensure that they allow a range of housing options to be built	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Ensure Village ordinances allow condominium developments, zero lot line / duplex development, and traditional neighborhood designs to be built	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Develop a policy to aid in determining the level of Village participation, funding, or support for newly developing senior housing or housing for special needs populations	Village Board	Mid-Term
Identify sites for future residential development	Plan Commission	Immediate
Submit an application to the State of Wisconsin housing program	Village Board	Short-Term
Develop and maintain a housing revolving loan fund to aid first time home buyers and home owners who wish to rehabilitate their property	Village Board	Short-Term
Review and update, as appropriate, the existing Village ordinances related to mobile home placement and development	Plan Commission	Short-Term
Cultural Resources	Who is responsible?	Priority
Work with Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin to identify and preserve existing historic resources	Village Board	Mid-Term

Actively participate in a countywide survey of historic resources and sites	Village Board	Mid-Term
Community Facilities	Who is responsible?	Priority
Meet with the Marathon County Sheriff's Department and surrounding Towns to identify any areas where joint service agreements could be established to enhance services, as well as lower costs	Village Board	Short-Term
Meet with surrounding Towns and local stakeholders to discover the level of interest in developing a centralized community center type of facility	Village Board	Short-Term
Parks and Recreation	Who is responsible?	Priority
Meet with surrounding Towns, the WDNR, the WDOT, Marathon County, and other local stakeholders to develop a trail plan to connect points of interest both within and outside the community	Parks Committee	Short-Term
Develop a long-term funding strategy, in concert with other stakeholders, to fund the development and maintenance of a trail system	Village Board	Short-Term
Work with the Parks and Public Welfare Committee, Village Forester, citizens, and stakeholders to update the Park and Recreation Plan to apply for WDNR grant funds	Parks Committee	Immediate
Work with community stakeholders to develop a plan to renew park equipment throughout the community and fund park acquisition and maintenance with a combination of public and private funds	Parks Committee	Immediate

Village of Athens

Identify and budget funds for the extension of water utilities to Erbach Park	Village Board	Immediate
Economic Development	Who is responsible?	Priority
Meet with downtown business owners to develop a vision for the future of the downtown	Village Board	Short-Term
Develop an overall redevelopment plan to revitalize infrastructure in the CBD	Village Board	Short-Term
Consider the creation of a Redevelopment Authority (RDA) or Community Development Authority (CDA) to lead redevelopment and community development efforts	Village Board	Short-Term
Work with UW-Extension to conduct a market study to determine what types of businesses would be best suited to the downtown area	Village Board	Short-Term
Work with interested stakeholders to investigate the feasibility, interest level, and long-term goals of a potential BID	Village Board	Immediate
Develop signage, landscaping, and other requirements to distinguish the industrial park from surrounding uses	Village Board	Mid-Term
Develop a business retention and expansion strategy to encourage redevelopment and development in the Village	Village Board	Immediate
Intergovernmental Cooperation	Who is responsible?	Priority
Meet with surrounding Towns to discuss issues of regional interest	Village Board	Immediate
Work with surrounding Towns to develop joint land use plans	Plan Commission	Immediate

Continue to meet with WDOT, Marathon County, and surrounding Towns to develop a plan to govern land use in and around STH 29	Plan Commission	Short-Term
--	-----------------	------------

Appendix A

State Comprehensive Planning Goals

Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001 requires that the goals, objectives, policies, and programs of local governmental units be consistent with the fourteen planning goals in the State planning legislation, which include:

1. Promote the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.
2. Encourage neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protect natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes and woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources.
4. Protect economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
5. Encourage land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state government, and utility costs.
6. Preserve cultural, historic, and archaeological sites.
7. Encourage coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
8. Build community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
9. Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels throughout each community.
10. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services and a supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
11. Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels.
12. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.
13. Plan and develop land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
14. Provide an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that provides mobility, convenience, and safety, which meets the needs of all citizens including transit-dependent and disabled.

Appendix B

Marathon County Guiding Principles

Participants in the Marathon County comprehensive planning process worked cooperatively, through several meetings with sub-area groups, to develop a set of guiding principles that describe broad characteristics of a desired future for their communities and Marathon County. The guiding principles consist of a series of statements that reflect shared values and priorities regarding future growth and development. These principles were used to provide a general frame of reference for developing local goals and objectives. The ten guiding principles include:

- 1. Respect Local Governance** - Planning in Marathon County should build on local town, village and city government as a system that is unique, has served residents well, and is a strong component of local identity.
- 2. Preserve Working Agriculture** - Agriculture has been central to the culture and economy of Marathon County for over 100 years. Farming has been a way of life for generations of county residents and is fundamental to both community and individual identity. Efforts such as protecting prime farmland from development, exploring niche markets, and supporting cooperative practices can be implemented at the local level to help maintain and preserve working agriculture.
- 3. Maintain a Sense of Place** - As Marathon County's population grows and changes, communities will need to ensure that important physical features, buildings, and landscapes that exemplify their local identity are retained.
- 4. Preserve Rural Character** - Shifts in the farm economy and urban expansion are altering the County's rural landscape characterized by working farms, woodlands, rolling hills, marsh areas, and plentiful water bodies. As open spaces, farms, and woodlands are being lost or fragmented by development, Marathon County communities will need to make some important choices in order to preserve the qualities and character of the rural landscape.
- 5. Safeguard Natural Resources** - Marathon County is graced with abundant natural resources including numerous rivers, wetlands, forests, and wildlife. Careful stewardship of natural resources is essential to protect against fragmentation and degradation and ensure these resources continue to contribute to the ecology, character, quality of life, and economy of Marathon County into the future.
- 6. Foster Managed Growth and Coordinated Development** - Managing growth is important to ensure that no area is overwhelmed by development, land use conflicts are minimized, and development occurs in a quality manner that minimizes impacts on natural resources. Managing growth requires coordination of land uses and infrastructure, within and between communities, and recognizes that high quality growth in any one community will benefit surrounding communities as well.
- 7. Cost-Effective and Efficient Provision of Public Services** - Marathon County residents are clear in their desire to keep local taxes reasonable. One of the most effective

These features provide a sense of heritage and continuity that contribute to a community's identity and sense of place.

Village of Athens

means to keep taxes under control is to ensure that public services are efficiently organized to provide the best service possible for the taxpayer dollar. Communities have a responsibility to provide the highest level of services possible given limited resources. To ensure cost-effective public services, local communities may want to consider options such as greater coordination, cost-sharing and consolidation if such efforts improve access to services and service delivery.

concern for many communities, often as a result of annexation, increases in public land ownership, and shifting economic markets. Efforts to attract additional revenue generators and coordinate with adjacent municipalities can help communities protect and preserve their local tax base.

8. Build Social and Civic Capacity - Marathon County residents take pride in their long tradition of local government. Ideally, participation in community affairs embraces and builds upon the diversity of cultures and values present in the community. Providing opportunities to share ideas and participate in community decision-making is essential to building and maintaining a strong sense of local community.

9. Support Rural Service Centers - Rural centers are part of a web of services that support residents, give local identity and are part of the rural way of life that residents want to preserve. Most villages in the County grew as centers to provide goods and services for nearby farmers, but have evolved as rural activity centers including the local school, churches, and some goods and services. Just as city neighborhoods are stronger with nearby commercial services, rural areas are stronger with nearby villages that provide a central meeting place to connect with other rural residents. As more people move to rural areas, it makes sense to concentrate new development in areas that can efficiently provide utilities and other services.

10. Preserve and Enhance Local Tax Base - A strong tax base allows a community to deliver needed services to residents while helping to keep taxes low. Erosion of local tax base is a

RESOLUTION

RE: ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS PREPARED BY THE VILLAGE OF ATHENS PLANNING COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the Village Board of the Village of Athens established a Plan Commission for the purposes of preparing a recommended Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Athens; and

WHEREAS, numerous persons involved in local planning provided information at meetings called by the Athens Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, members of the public were invited to make comments at said meetings, wherein the Comprehensive Plan herein adopted was reviewed and commented upon by members of the public; and

WHEREAS, The Village of Athens Planning Commission has reviewed the recommended Comprehensive Plan at a regular meeting; and

WHEREAS, members of the public, adjacent and nearby local governmental units, and Marathon County will be given a 30-day review and comment period prior to the public hearing, which will be conducted by the Village Board for the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, after said public hearing, the Village Board will decide whether to adopt by ordinance the Comprehensive Plan; and


WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan may be used as the basis for, among other things, updating the zoning ordinance, accomplishing extra-territorial zoning, and as a guide for approving or disapproving actions affecting growth and development within the jurisdiction of the Village of Athens; and

WHEREAS, this Comprehensive Plan may from time to time be amended, extended, or added to in greater detail.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Village of Athens Planning Commission that the recommended Comprehensive Plan is hereby adopted as a part of the Village of Athens Comprehensive Plan pursuant to s.62.23 and s.66.0295, Wis. Stats. and that the Planning Commission recommends said Comprehensive Plan to the Village of Athens for adoption by ordinance, after a 30-day public review and comment period and public hearing.

Passed this 5th day of October, 2005.

APPROVED:


Chairperson; Planning Commission

ATTEST:


Lisa Czech, Village Clerk

RECEIVED

DEC 01 2005

MARATHON CO. CONSERVATION,
PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.

SEC 13-1-9

An Ordinance to Adopt the Comprehensive Plan of the Village of Athens, Wisconsin.

The Village Board of the Village of Athens, Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to section 62.23(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, the Village of Athens, is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in section 66.1001(1) (a) and 66.1001(1) (a) and 66.1001 (2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 2. The Village Board of the Village of Athens, Wisconsin, has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by section 66.1001(4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.


Section 3. The plan commission of the Village of Athens, by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the Village Board the adoption of the document entitled "Comprehensive Plan of the Village of Athens," containing all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 4. The Village has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, in compliance with the requirements of section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 5. The Village Board of the Village of Athens, Wisconsin, does, by enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the document entitled, "Comprehensive Plan of the Village of Athens," pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members-elect of the Village Board and publication as required by law.

Adopted this 28th day of November, 2005.



Village Board President

Published: 11/30/05

Approved: 11/28/05

Attest:



Village Clerk

RECEIVED

DEC 01 2005

**MARATHON CO. CONSERVATION
PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.**

RECEIVED

Village of Athens Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Plan

DEC 2003
MARATHON COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

Introduction

Public participation is the process which people who will be affected by or interested in a decision by a governmental body have an opportunity to influence its content before the decision is made.

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning statute recognizes the necessity of effective public participation and requires the adoption of a written public participation plan as stated in Chapter 66.1001(4)(a).

"The governing body of a local government unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments".

In preparation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Athens, the Village Board and Planning Commission are committed to providing on-going opportunities for public participation throughout the planning process. The Village of Athens is therefore committed to completing the following tasks in order to provide opportunities for public participation.

Posting/Notification of all planning commission meetings.

Public notification for Plan Commission meetings will be posted at the following locations:

- Athens Village Hall

Village Board and Plan Commission members will regularly check these sites to see that posted notifications are replaced if removed. These notifications will be posted during the entire Comprehensive Planning process until the adoption of a comprehensive plan by the Village of Athens.

Village Meetings

The Village of Athens Planning Commission will hold periodic public informational hearings/input sessions during the course of the planning process.

In addition, the Planning Commission will hold two public hearings as required by Chapter 66.1001(4)(d). These meetings will be held upon the completion of the Athens Comprehensive Plan and prior to Board voting to accept or deny the Comprehensive Plan. A notice of the hearing must be published at least 30 days before the hearing in a newspaper likely to give notice in the area. The notice

will meet the requirements for proper notification regarding date, time, location, etc.

Sub-Area / Consultant Meetings

All meetings conducted Marathon County or the Consultant will be open to the public and posted similar to planning commission meetings.

Village Newsletters

The Village Board along with the Planning Commission will prepare a newsletter for property owners and residents in the Village of Athens. This newsletter will be sent with property tax bills. The newsletter will include important news and updates about the comprehensive planning process.

Newspaper Notices

The Village of Athens Planning Commission will prepare notices of meetings in the local paper. Notices will be published in the Record Review.

Public Comments

The Village Board and the Planning Commission will always welcome written comments regarding issues presented. Direct written responses will be made where a response is appropriate. Comments will always be addressed and discussed at meetings.

Other

Planning is a continuous process that does not end with the adoption of the plan. Unforeseen issues at the time this document was prepared, or as future issues arise, the planning commission may organize additional public participation activities or as it considers specific planning issues and amendments to the comprehensive plan. The topics of the meetings or open houses will depend on these issues and will be designed to feature opportunities for public education, input, and interaction.

A RESOLUTION BY VILLAGE OF ATHENS
THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

WHEREAS, a requirement of Wisconsin Statutes §66.1001 (Comprehensive Planning Law) is the adoption of a public participation plan.

WHEREAS, the Village of Athens is participating in the Marathon County Comprehensive Planning Process.

WHEREAS, the Village of Athens recognizes the importance of public participation throughout the Comprehensive Planning Process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Village of Athens approves the Comprehensive Planning Public Participation Plan.

DATED: September 22, 2003.

VILLAGE OF ATHENS

Charles Kornack

Village President

Glenn Godzinski

Village Clerk/Coordinator

Appendix E – Bibliography of Planning Related Studies, Regulations and Resources

Natural Resources

- **Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP)** - In 2005, Marathon County adopted the LWRMP in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Marathon County, to outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources and to ensure compliance of state agricultural performance standards and local ordinances.
- **Marathon County 2001 Groundwater Protection Guide** – This guide is an extension of the efforts established with adoption of the *Marathon County Groundwater Plan* in 1988. It is intended to guide local and County officials in setting policy to safeguard groundwater resources. It also serves as a resource of information about groundwater and other natural resources and recommends strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection.
- **Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2006 - 2015**
This plan includes recommendations to manage and protect the county forest on a sustainable basis for ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future generations. It provides substantial information on existing forest resources and information regarding the roles of the various agencies and regulatory framework related to forest management. The Marathon County Board of Supervisors will consider approval of the plan in September 2005 and the DNR will do so in December 2005.
- **Soil Survey for Marathon County**, published in 1990 by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service and updated in 2003.
- **Marathon County Cropland Evaluation System (CES)** - This system rates soils on their ability to produce food, feed, forage, and fiber crops. The system is non-biased, defensible, and can be consistently applied.
- **Farm Preservation Program** is an income tax credit program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture (WDA), Trade & Consumer Protection. The goals of the program are twofold: to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and to provide property tax relief to farmland owners. Landowners keeping land in agricultural use can claim a credit on their state income tax by obtaining a zoning certificate (if the land is zoned “exclusive agriculture”) or by signing a contract with the State.
- **Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan**, adopted in 1982, eight towns have adopted Exclusive Agriculture Zoning. These include: Stettin, Marathon, Mosinee, Hull, Brighton, Eau Pleine, McMillan, and Day. The intent of this zoning classification is to minimize fragmentation of farmland by imposing a minimum lot size of 35 acres. In order to adopt Exclusive Agriculture zoning, a municipality must be enrolled in the Farmland Preservation Program.

- ***Marathon County Non-metallic Mining Ordinance***, adopted in 1989 requires reclamation of these sites to a purposeful and acceptable landscape appearance and use. The program is administered by the County DCPZ and includes incentives to reclaim abandoned excavations.
- ***Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) maps*** provided by the State of Wisconsin include general information on endangered resources are appropriate for general planning and assessment purposes only. The locations of endangered resources that are not considered vulnerable to collection are identified at the town level in Marathon County. Locations of more vulnerable species are generalized to minimize the potential for collection or disruption.

Land Use

- ***General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County*** includes several sections that specifically address land use and various development activities. Some of these include:
 - **Chapter 11 (Animal Waste and Manure Management)** includes regulations to prevent animal waste material from entering water bodies through issuance of construction permits for new and modified manure storage facilities. The ordinance also regulates the closure of abandoned manure storage facilities, mismanaged manure storage facilities and the application of manure onto cropland.
 - **Chapter 17 (Zoning Code)** includes development restrictions in shoreland and wetland areas and a wellhead protection overlay district that encompasses recharge areas for municipal water supply wells. Local communities in Marathon County may adopt their own zoning code, adopt the County zoning code, or choose to have no zoning.
 - **Chapter 16 (County Forests)** prescribes rules and regulations for the administration of County forests in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources. Provides for the establishment, protection, development and management of County forests to provide sustained yield of forest products for commercial use and the associated benefits of soil and water conservation, scenic and recreational values, fish and game resources, multiple-use purposes and related uses.
 - **Chapter 18 (Land Division)** The County's land division regulations apply in all unincorporated areas of the County. However, where a town has land division regulations that are more restrictive than the County's, the local regulations apply. Chapter 18 includes regulations for minimum lot sizes, street design and access requirements, land dedication, surface drainage and erosion control.
 - **Chapter 19 (Parks and Recreation)** includes regulations regarding use and management of all lands and water previously and subsequently acquired by the County for park or recreational purposes or placed under the jurisdiction of the Park Commission and including without limitation, parks, beaches, swimming pools and privately owned lands, the use of which has been granted or leased to the County for park, recreational or like public purposes.
 - **Chapter 21 (Non-metallic Mining)** includes requirements for reclamation that minimize impacts on groundwater quantity and quality.

- ***Marathon County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2005)*** – This plan, prepared in accordance with Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) directives of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, outlines strategies for pre-disaster planning and hazard mitigation. The intent is to minimize the effects of potential disasters and help streamline the administration of disaster relief.
- ***Forest Crop Law (FCL) and Managed Forest Law (MFL)*** - the FCL and the MFL programs were developed to encourage better forest management and provide tax relief to woodland owners. Land set aside under the FCL (which was combined into the MFL in 1986) required at least 40 acres in one quarter-quarter section, set aside under a 25- or 50-year contract, and public access for hunting and fishing activities. The MFL was enacted in 1985 and requires at least 10 acres of contiguous forest land. Landowners may close to the public up to 80 acres of their forest lands set aside under MFL. The remaining program acres must be open to public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing and cross-country skiing. Landowners must choose a 25- or 50-year contract. The landowner pays an Acreage Share Amount as part of their tax bill in lieu of taxes.

Transportation

Studies related to transportation are listed below under the jurisdiction who prepared the plan.

1. Marathon County (Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department (CPZ) and/or Highway Department) is responsible for completing/updating/assisting with several plans/policies/studies relating to transportation including:

- ***State Trunk Highway 29 Corridor Land Use Review (1997)***
 - Recommends actions or measures local communities can make to protect areas within the STH 29 corridor from the negative impacts related to unplanned growth.
- ***Marathon County Functional / Jurisdictional Highway Classification Study (1988)***
 - Identifies and groups classes of roadways that provide similar levels of service. The plan recommended that the unit of government having the greatest basic interest in the roadway's function would carry out the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the classified roadways.
- ***Marathon County Program Evaluation Team (P.E.T.) Transportation Services Recommendations (2002)***
 - These recommendations, under direction of the Marathon County Human Services Committee, are intended to address issues related to specialized transportation services provided by various Marathon County Departments, including issues related to overlapping services.
- ***Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan for the Non-Urbanized Area of Marathon County, Wisconsin (1996)***
 - Identifies suggested bicycle routes in Marathon County outside the Wausau area. Routes were based on traffic counts and condition of pavement. Formal action has not occurred to adopt these as officially designated bicycle routes.
- ***Marathon County Paratransit Study (2001)***
 - Studied paratransit services within the Wausau area provided primarily by Wausau Area Transit System Plus (WATS+). Identified issues with regard to

providing demand responsive services for persons in the Greater Wausau Area and Marathon County. Provides a plan for enhancing paratransit services over a five-year period primarily geared toward controlling costs and increasing efficiency and trip sharing on the WATS+ system.

- **County Trunk Highway Access-Driveway Policy**
 - Available through the Marathon County Highway Department, addresses the requirements regarding culverts, access width, slope, visibility and spacing. Marathon County issues driveway permits and implements access restrictions on all properties fronting a lettered county road.

2. Wausau Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MPO) - The MPO is responsible for completing/updating/assisting with several plans relating to transportation in the metropolitan area including:

- **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Wausau Metropolitan Area (1996)**
 - The LRTP addresses needed improvements to the transportation system serving the Wausau urbanized area. LRTP recommendations are based on the relationship between land use policy and transportation facilities and services, including roadways, transit, bikeways, pedestrian ways, air, inter-city bus, and the movement of goods by air, rail, and truck. The 1996 plan was reaffirmed in 2001 and will be updated by 2005.
- **Local Arterial Circulation Plan (2000)**
 - The purpose of this plan was to guide public and private sector decisions concerning the infrastructure, right-of-way, Level of Service (LOS), land use compatibility, and safety needs of the local arterial transportation system over the next 20 to 30 years.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
 - The TIP includes all programmed transportation projects receiving federal and/or state funds. The TIP for 2005 – 2007 was adopted in 2005 and is updated every two years.
- **Wausau Area Transit System (WATS) Transit Development Plan (TDP) (1999)**
 - The TDP is updated every five years and provides a five-year capital improvement program and service recommendation plan. This plan is being updated in 2005.

3. Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) – WDOT has completed several statewide plans relating to most modes of transportation, including:

- **Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020**
 - Considers the highway system's current condition, analyzes future uses, assesses financial constraints and outlines strategies to address Wisconsin's preservation, traffic movement, and safety needs. The plan is updated every six years to reflect changing transportation technologies, travel demand and economic conditions in Wisconsin.
- **Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020**
 - Outlines statewide and local measures to increase walking and promote pedestrian safety. The plan also clarifies the WDOT role in addressing

pedestrian issues and meeting pedestrian needs by establishing policies for better integrating pedestrian travel into the transportation system.

- **Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020**
 - Presents a blueprint for improving bicycling conditions and encouraging bicycling in the state and calls for the implementation of metropolitan area bicycle plans that have been prepared by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).
- **Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020**
 - Developed by WDOT, identifies information related to the state's aviation system. The plan is used by WDOT's Bureau of Aeronautics to pre-qualify airport improvement projects submitted by airport sponsors for funding consideration.
- **Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report (2004)**
 - Developed by WDOT, summarizes critical rail transportation issues, suggests opportunities for public sector involvement, and points out areas where additional research is needed. This report reflects input and guidance from a variety of sources including a State Rail Advisory Committee and a Rail Industry and Shippers' Advisory Group. The information in this report was originally intended for a State Rail Plan 2020. WDOT decided to incorporate the rail planning efforts into *Connections 2030*, WDOT's long-range all-mode transportation plan, and release the Issues and Opportunities Report in the interim. *Connections 2030* is currently being developed by WDOT, and is scheduled to be completed by Spring 2006.

4. Federal Highway Administration:

- **Federal Highway Administration's Highway Functional Classification: Concepts, Criteria and Procedures**
 - Outlines Federal regulations that States must follow to classify roadways.

Utilities

- **Sewer Service Area "208" Plans** - Section 208 of the Clean Water Act passed in 1972 required the preparation of area-wide water quality management plans. This was translated at the State level through NR 121 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, which requires that water quality management plans also address sanitary sewer service needs for 20 years into the future. These requirements form the basis of Sewer Service Area "208" Plans. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has review and approval authority over Sewer Service Area plans; however, the technical work to prepare the plan is typically done by local government staff.
 - Wausau Urban Area Sewer Service Plan for the Year 2000 (1981) – initial "208" Plan
 - Major Amendment to the Wausau Sewer Service Area Boundary completed in 1992 (City of Wausau) and 1998 (Towns of Kronenwetter and Rib Mountain, Villages of Weston and Rothschild).
 - Current amendment in progress; with all communities in the sewer service area participating. It is anticipated that the plan will be approved by the DNR in December, 2005.

- **Chapter 15 - General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County** incorporates by reference rules, regulations, and laws in the Wisconsin Statutes and Wisconsin Administrative Code governing private sewage systems.
- **Wellhead Protection Plans** - The State of Wisconsin mandates that **wellhead protection plans** be developed for any municipal well proposed after May 1, 1992. These plans must be approved by the WDNR before a community can use the new well. Section NR 811.16(5) of the Wisconsin Administrative Code defines specific requirements for required wellhead protection plans.

Parks and Recreation

- **Marathon County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for 1999-2004**, completed in May 1999, this plan identifies several needs related to parks and recreation and outlines several actions to address those needs.
 - The plan has received a one-year extension from the State of Wisconsin, and is in the process of being updated with a completion date in spring of 2006.
- **The Rivers Edge Master Plan**, adopted in June 1995, outlines a long-range (20-30 year) framework for improving access to the riverfront and enhancing the riverfront environment and provides a master plan to establish a bicycle/pedestrian trail along the banks of the Wisconsin River through the City of Wausau.

Economic Development

- **Marathon County Workforce Profile**, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), annually in October.
- **Final Report**, Marathon County Task Force on the Rural Economy, April 2003.
- **Agricultural Impacts in Marathon County**, University of Wisconsin – Extension (UWEX), Ken Barnett and Steve Deller, February 2003.
- **Status of Wisconsin Agriculture**, 2003, UWEX, Mike Wildeck and Ed Jesse, April 2003.
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2002-2003**, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), June 2002.

Appendix F: Guidelines for Paving Gravel Roads¹

When a local government considers paving a road, it is usually with a view toward reducing road maintenance costs and providing a smooth riding surface. But paving may not be the right answer. After all, paving is expensive. Municipalities should consider the following factors to help them make the most cost-effective decision. Taken together, these factors provide a framework for careful decision-making.

Traffic Demand

The number and weight of vehicles affects a road's lifespan. Generally speaking, the more vehicles using a road, the faster it will deteriorate. The average daily traffic volumes (ADT) used to justify paving generally range from a low of 50 vehicles per day (vpd) to 400 or 500 vpd. When traffic volumes reach this range, serious consideration should be given to some kind of paving. However, traffic volumes alone are merely guides.

Types of traffic should also be considered. Different types of traffic (and drivers) make different demands on roads. Will the road be used primarily by standard passenger cars or will it be a connecting road with considerable truck traffic or heavy farm equipment? Overloaded trucks are most damaging to paved roads. The functional importance of the road should also be considered. Generally speaking, a major road should probably be paved before residential or side roads are paved. On the other hand, a residential street may be economically sealed or paved while a road with heavy truck or farm equipment usage may best be surfaced with gravel and left unpaved until sufficient funds are available to place a thick load-bearing pavement on the road.

Maintenance Considerations

The following questions should be considered when assessing costs associated with maintaining existing gravel roads:

- How often must new gravel be applied to the gravel road? (Some roads require more than others do.)
- How many times per year must the gravel road be graded?
- How often and in what locations should calcium chloride or other road stabilizers be applied?
- What is the plan for ditching and shouldering?

Base and Drainage Needs

"Build up the road base and improve drainage before paving." This cardinal rule cannot be stressed enough. If the foundation fails, the pavement fails. If water is not drained away from the road, the pavement fails. Paving a road with a poor base or inadequate drainage is a waste of money. It is far more important to ask, "Does this road need strengthening and drainage work?" than it is to ask, "Should we pave this gravel road?"

¹ "When to Pave a Gravel Road" Gravel Roads Maintenance and Design Manual (2001); Kentucky Transportation Center, University of Kentucky at Lexington, KY, adapted from an article from the Vermont Local Roads Program, Saint Michael's College; posted by Local Technical Assistance Program and the National Local Technical Assistance Program Association and sponsored by the US Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

Safety and Design Considerations

Paving a road tempts drivers to drive faster. As speed increases, the road must be straighter, wider, and as free as possible from obstructions for it to be safe. Paving low volume roads before correcting safety and design inadequacies encourages speeds that are unsafe, especially when the inadequacies "surprise" the driver. In areas with a large number of miles of low volume roads, it is difficult to reduce speeds by enforcement.

Poorly designed and hazardous roads – Roads must be designed to provide safe travel for the expected traffic volume at the design speed. To do this a number of physical features must be considered:

- Sight Distance
- Design Speed
- Alignment and Curves
- Surface Friction
- Lane Width
- Superelevation

Some engineers insist that no road should be paved that is less than 22 feet wide. If this standard is accepted, gravel roads may need to be widened prior to paving. Likewise, bridges along these roads may need widening. It may also be necessary to remove trees or other obstructions such as boulders from the road edge. Considering these and other safety and design factors in the early stages of decision-making can help to achieve the most cost-effective road design that meets desired transportation needs.

Geometric Guidelines for Very Low-Volume Local Roads (< 400 ADT): The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) publishes road design guidelines, including Geometric Guidelines for Very Low-Volume Local Roads (those with <400 ADT). Less stringent design criteria are generally acceptable on these low volume roads because:

- Lower traffic volumes present substantially reduced opportunities for multiple vehicle collisions, and
- Most drivers are familiar with the roadway design characteristics.

The guidelines offer more flexibility for road designers to maintain existing geometric features, which have not been shown to be a safety problem. Allowing less stringent design standards for very low volume roads provides an opportunity to reduce improvement costs, which may be better utilized elsewhere.

Costs

The decision to pave a gravel road involves determining when it becomes economical to pave; and ultimately when the benefits of paving exceed the costs.

Road Preparation Costs – Road preparation costs related to road bed construction activities that occur before paving actually takes place. Costs will vary greatly from project to project depending on topography, types of soils, and availability of good crushed stone or gravel, traffic demands and other factors. Road design should comply with standards in the municipality's road policy; which is one reason to carefully consider, and routinely update, what is contained in the road policy. For larger projects it may be desirable to hire an engineering consulting firm (another cost) to design the road and make cost estimations. For smaller projects construction costs can be fairly closely calculated by adding the estimated costs of materials, equipment and labor required to complete the job.

Maintenance Costs – Another financial consideration is to compare maintenance costs of a paved road to maintenance costs of a gravel road. To make a realistic comparison, estimate the years of pavement life (how long the pavement will be of service before it requires treatment or overlay) and the actual cost of paving. Then compare those costs with those associated with gravel roads as noted above.

User Costs – Not all road costs are directly reflected in a road budget. There is a significant difference in the cost to the user between driving on a gravel surface and on a paved surface. It costs more to operate vehicles on gravel surfaces than on paved surfaces, often 2 or 3 times greater than for bituminous or concrete roads in the same locations. There is greater rolling resistance and less traction, which increase fuel consumption. The roughness of the surface contributes to additional tire wear and influences maintenance and repair expenses. Dust causes extra engine wear, oil consumption and maintenance costs.

By including vehicle-operating costs with construction and maintenance costs, a more comprehensive total cost can be derived.

Public Opinion

Public opinion as to whether to pave a road can be revealing, but it should not be relied upon to the exclusion of any one of the factors already discussed. If a decision to pave is not based on facts, it can be very costly. Public opinion should not be ignored, of course, but there is an obligation by government leaders to inform the public about other important factors before making the decision to pave.

Staged Construction

Local government may consider using "stage construction design" as an approach to improving roads. This is how it works: A design is prepared for the completed road, from base and drainage to completed paving. Rather than accomplishing all the work in one season, the construction is spread out over three to five years. Paving occurs only after the base and drainage have been proven sufficient over approximately one year. Crushed gravel treated with calcium chloride serves as the wearing course for the interim period. Once all weak spots have been repaired, the road can be shaped for paving.

Following are some advantages to keeping a road open to traffic for one or more seasons before paving:

1. Weak spots that show up in the sub-grade or base can be corrected before the hard surface is applied, eliminating later expensive repair;
2. Risky late season paving is eliminated;
3. More mileage is improved sooner;
4. The cost of construction is spread over several years.

Note: Advantages may disappear if timely maintenance is not performed. In addition, the surface may deteriorate more rapidly because it is thinner than a designed pavement.

Summary

Some existing local roads are not engineered to accommodate the traffic they receive. Larger volumes of heavy trucks and other vehicles are weakening these roads at a fast rate. Paving roads as a sole means of improving them without considering other factors can be a costly mistake. Careful consideration of the factors described above will help to assure local government officials that they are making the right decision before paving a gravel road.

Appendix G: Economic Development Programs

The following list provides a summary of the major programs and resources available to assist with economic development efforts. This is not an exhaustive list and local officials are encouraged to contact Marathon County and MCDEVCO for more complete and current information.

Federal Programs

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural, Development: Provides a wide range of programs aimed at farming and rural areas, including:

- **Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program:** Provides financial backing for rural businesses to create and maintain employment. Assistance includes loans for working capital, machinery and equipment, buildings and real estate, and certain types of debt refinancing.
- **Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) Program:** Provides grants to public entities, private nonprofit corporations, and Federally-recognized Indian Tribal groups to finance and facilitate small and emerging private businesses located outside a city or urbanizing area.
- **Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) Program:** Provides grants to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs.

Economic Development Administration (EDA): Provides a variety of assistance programs focusing on long-term economic growth targeted to areas with demonstrated need or economic distress, including:

- **Public Works Program:** Investments aimed at revitalization, expansion, and upgrades to physical infrastructure specifically to attract new businesses and generate private sector jobs. Examples: water and sewer facilities, rail spurs, port improvements, access improvements.
- **Economic Adjustment Program:** Assistance to mitigate local economic changes resulting from corporate restructuring, natural disasters, depletion of natural resources, or new federal laws or requirements.
- **Technical Assistance Program (Local):** Assistance to help fill knowledge and information gaps to help local leaders in distressed areas make informed decisions regarding economic development.

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA): The SBA provides financial, technical, and management assistance generally aimed at business startup and growth. Some programs include:

- **Certified Development Company (504 non-profit corporation) Loan Program:** Long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and building improvements.

Wisconsin State Programs

Most State programs are provided through the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, although other departments also offer limited programs. Primary State programs include:

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** There are several CDBG programs focusing on different aspects of economic development.
 - **Economic Development Program** – grants to establish loans for business start-up, retention, and expansion.
 - **Public Facilities for Economic Development Program:** Helps underwrite the costs of necessary public infrastructure to retain or create employment opportunities.
 - **Public Facilities Program:** Helps finance infrastructure and facilities to serve low and moderate income persons.
 - **Emergency Grant Program:** Helps restore or replace critical infrastructure damaged or destroyed as a result of natural or manmade catastrophes.

- **Community Based Economic Development Program (CBED):** Provides funding assistance to local governments and community-based organizations that undertake planning, development, and technical assistance projects supporting business development.

- **Main Street Program:** Supports efforts to help communities organize to revitalize their downtowns.

- **Wisconsin Technology Zone Program:** Offers tax-credits to high-tech firms that meet certain criteria.

- **Wisconsin Development Zone Program:** Tax benefit initiative to encourage private investment and improve both the quality and quantity of employment opportunities.

- **Enterprise Zone Program:** Provides tax incentives to new or expanding businesses whose projects will enhance distressed areas.

- **Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program:** Allocation of Federal tax-exempt status on bonds that will be issued by a business to finance an expansion project. Program is limited to small and mid-size manufacturers with strong financial statements.

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD): This department offers several programs aimed at investing in the workforce, including programs in apprenticeship, vocational rehabilitation, employee training, child care, etc.

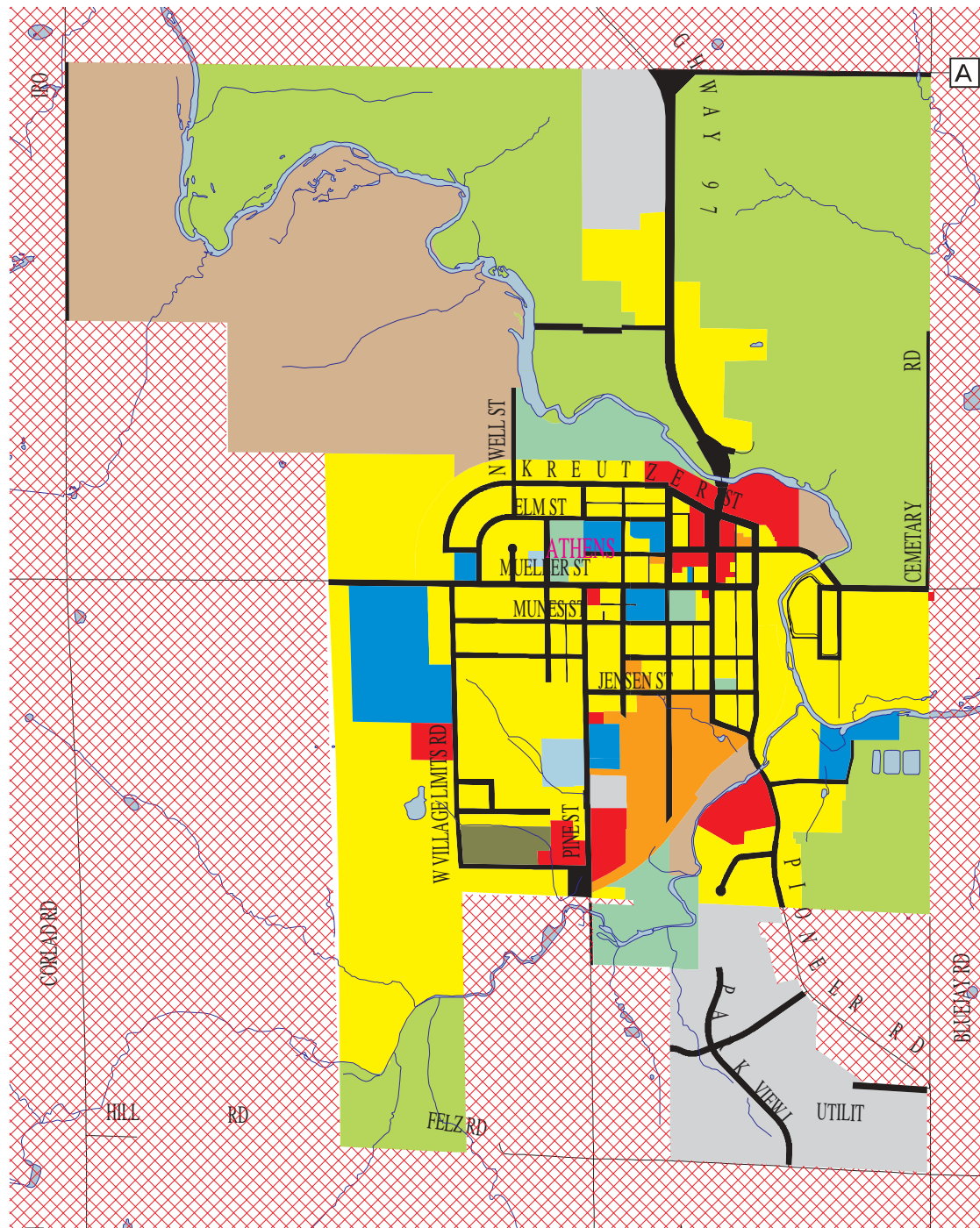
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR): The Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment consolidates state and federal clean up programs and provides assistance to help businesses clean up and re-use existing brownfield sites.

Forward Wisconsin, Inc.: This is a State public-private marketing and business recruitment organization that focuses on marketing outside Wisconsin to attract new economic development to the State.

County, Regional, and Local Programs

The primary financial assistance available at the County and local level are revolving loan funds. The primary entities in Marathon County that participate in economic development related efforts include:

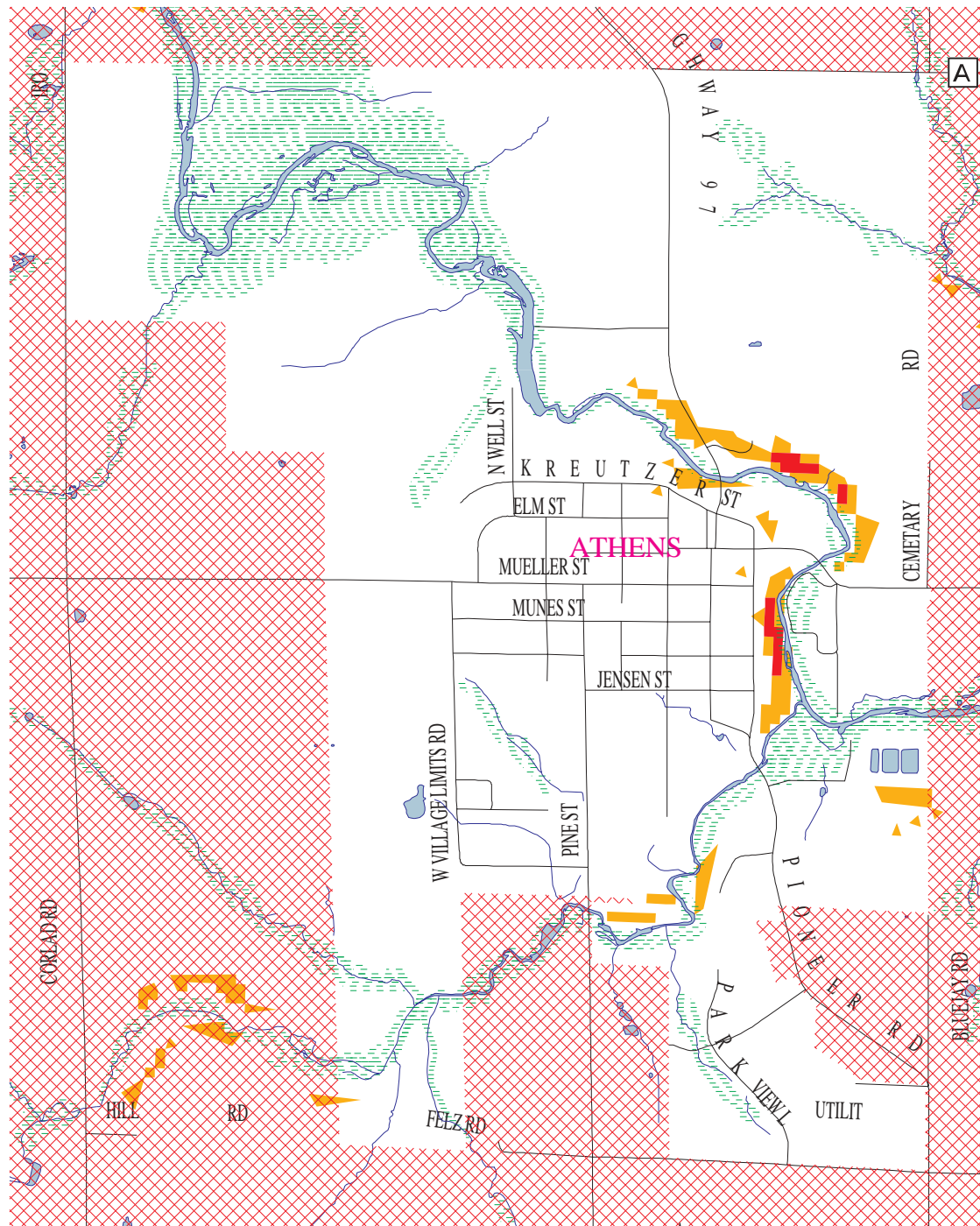
- **North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC):** The NCWRPC is a designated Economic Development District and provides services such as economic research, marketing, financial packaging, evaluation and analysis of public infrastructure needs that support private economic development activity. The NCWRPC also works with local units of government to maintain eligibility for certain grants.
- **North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC):** A regional organization created for the purpose of managing a regional revolving loan fund. The NCWDC is staffed by the NCWRPC.
- **Wausau Region/Marathon County Chamber of Commerce:** The Chamber provides leadership and support for economic development efforts in the region, including a variety of networking programs, mentoring services, workshops and business counseling services.
- **Marathon County Development Corporation (MCDEVCO):** This is the economic development arm of the Wausau Area Chamber of Commerce. MCDEVCO serves all businesses and communities in Marathon County. MCDEVCO works with individual business, municipalities, and the banking community to facilitate investment in the region. Specific programs administered by MCDEVCO include a revolving loan fund, a small business incubator, and job training funds.
- **Wausau/Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB):** The CVB promotes the area to the business and leisure traveler and provides information on the area to visitors and residents.






- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Single Family Residential | Conservancy | Public/Quasi-Public |
| Multi-Family Residential | Recreational | Medical |
| Commercial | Mobile Homes | Transportation |
| Rural Development | Industrial | |

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-1
 Future Land Use
 ATHENS



-  Environmental Constraints
-  Slopes Generally 12-20%
-  Slopes generally greater than 20%

 Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-2
Development Constraints
ATHENS

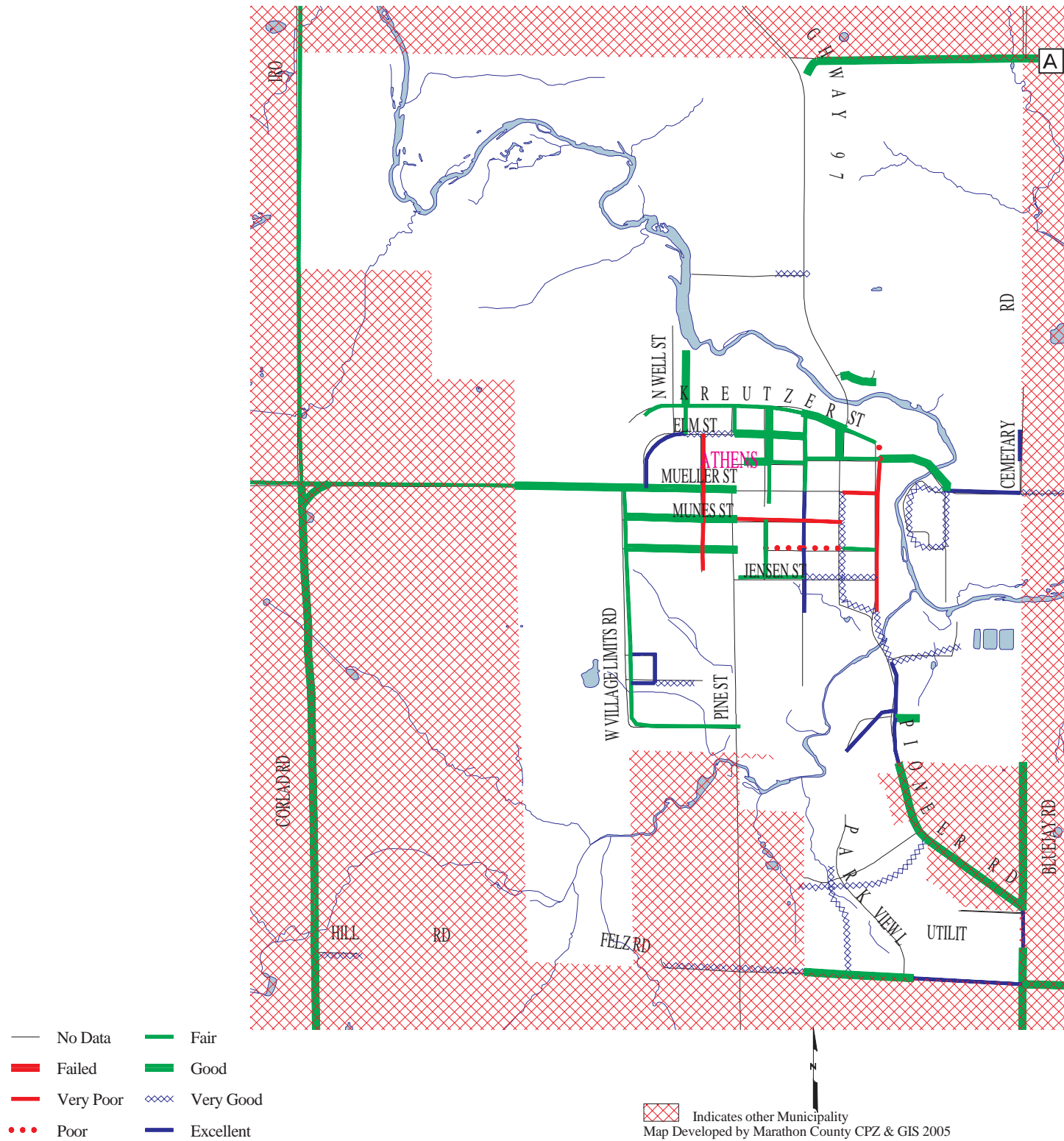
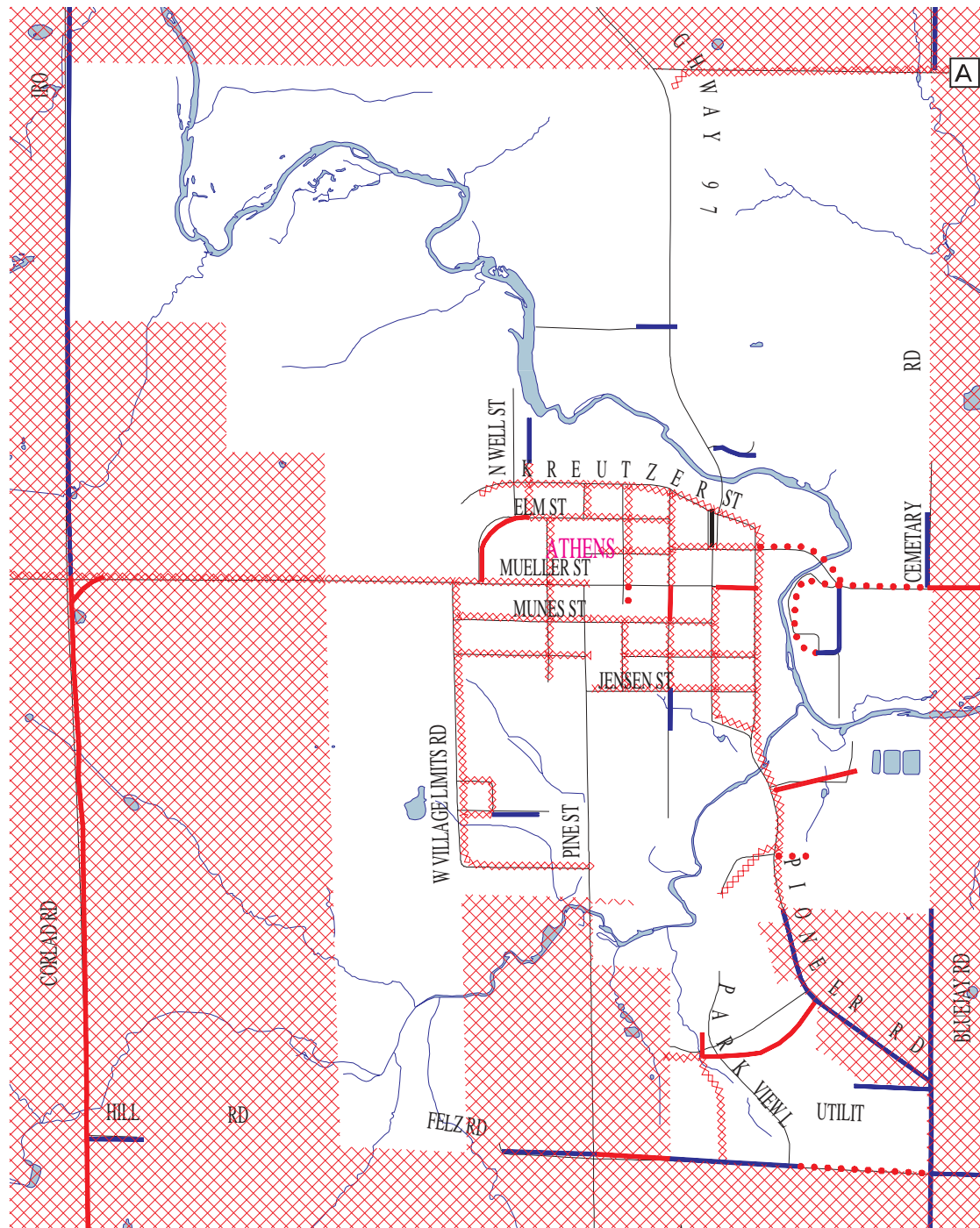


Figure 4-2
 Road Surface Rating
 ATHENS



- No Data
- Concrete Pavement
- <1" Wearing Surface
- Asphalt Pavement
- Asphalt Pavement on Concrete
- Asphalt Pavement with Base >7"
- Asphalt Pavement With Base <7"
- Unimproved Road
- Brick or Block Pavement

Indicates other Municipality
 Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 4-3
Road Surface Types
ATHENS