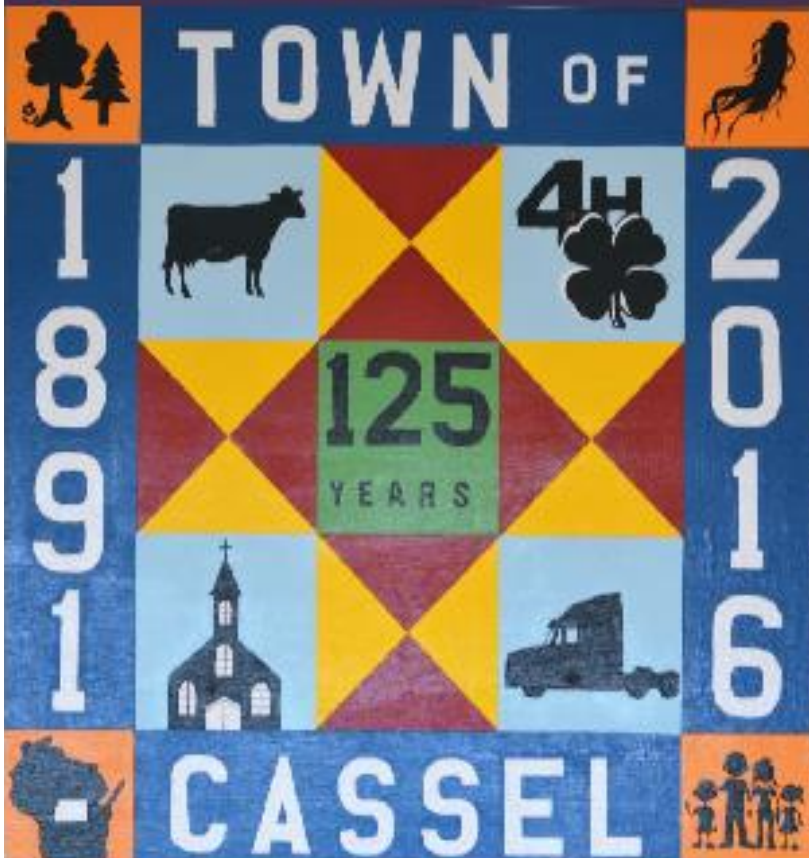




Town of Cassel Comprehensive Plan 2018



Town of Cassel, Marathon County

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Adopted April 9, 2018

Cover Images: Town of Cassel; Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry

Prepared with the assistance of:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Town of Cassel is rural township located in central Marathon County. The town is located about 20 minutes south of Wausau. The town lies immediately to the southwest of the Village of Marathon City, and to the southeast of the Village of Edgar, as referenced in Map 1: Location.

The Town of Cassel Comprehensive Plan documents existing conditions in the town, identifies primary issues or concerns the town may need to address in the future and includes goals and objectives to address those issues. It includes information on the town's demographics, natural resources, land use, transportation, utilities, housing, cultural resources, community facilities, parks, economic development, and intergovernmental cooperation.

Goals and objectives have been developed for 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 chapter at the end of this document compiles and prioritizes all the recommended action steps and identifies who is responsible for implementation.

20-Year Community Vision Statement

The Town of Cassel will protect the rural character of the town while recognizing the economic needs and ownership rights of property owners.

Goals, Objectives, Policies, Strategies & Actions

This document describes a variety of goals, objectives, policies, strategies and actions the town has identified to help it respond to issues and opportunities identified in the *Issues and Conditions* report. Definitions are provided below to clarify the purpose and intent of each category.

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:** *Strategies are approaches that 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 goal or objective.*

List of Acronyms

AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic

ACS – American Community Survey

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

ALICE – Asset-Limited, Income Constrained, Employed

CCC – Civilian Conservation Corps (a 1930s construction and conservation program)

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant

CEDS – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

CIP – Capital Improvement Plan

CPZ – Department of Conservation, Planning, and Zoning (Marathon County)

CTH – County Trunk Highway

CWA- Central Wisconsin Airport

DOH – Division of Housing, within the Wisconsin Department of Administration
DWD – Department of Workforce Development

EDA – U.S. Economic Development Administration

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

FHA – Federal Housing Administration

FIRM – Flood Insurance Rate Maps, the official source of flood data from FEMA

HOME – Home Investment Partnership Program

HOPWA – Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS

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

LEHD – Longitudinal Employment and Housing Dynamics

LIHTC – Low Income Housing Tax Credit

MCPL – Marathon County Public Library

NCHC – North Central Health Care

MFL – Managed Forest Law

NAICS – North American Industry Classification System

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

PUD – Planned Unit Development

RLP – Regional Livability Plan

SHPO – State Historic Preservation Office

STH – State Trunk Highway

TOPS Lab – University of Wisconsin – Madison Traffic and Operations Safety Laboratory

TSC – Traffic Safety Council

USDA-RD – United State Department of Agriculture, Rural Development

UW-MC – University of Wisconsin – Marathon County

Wausau MPO – Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

WDNR – Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

WDOA – Wisconsin Department of Administration

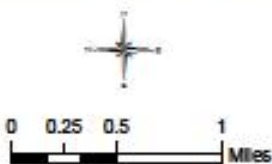
WHEDA – Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

WisDOT – Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WPS – Wisconsin Public Service Corporation



Map 1
Location
 Town of Cassel
 Marathon County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Chapter Two

Demographics

This analysis describes existing demographics and historical trends in the Town of Cassel and identifies the major demographic projections impacting Cassel over the next few decades. Both Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin are listed for comparison. This chapter includes subjects such as population, households, age, education, and income.

Population and Households

Historical Trends

The 2017 population estimate in the Town of Cassel created by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) is 919. The population in the Town of Cassel has fluctuated between 1970 and 2010, according to numbers from the Wisconsin Department of Administration and the U.S. Census. Between 1970 and 1990 the population in the town declined, before rising again between 1990 and 2010. The total increase in population between 1980 and 2010 was 1.33 percent, while growth in the last decade (2000-2010) was approximately 7.56 percent. By contrast, total households in the town have grown every decade between 1970 and 2010. Household growth between 1980 and 2010 was 40 percent, much higher than the population growth of 1.33 percent. There was 19 percent household

growth between 2000 and 2010. Average household size continues to decrease overall nationwide, but has decreased much faster in the town. [Table 2-1](#) shows these changes.

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 40%, which reflects the national trend toward more households comprised of singles, couples without children, and widows or widowers. Millennials and Baby Boomers, two of the largest demographic cohorts, are driving much of this household change and household growth at the national level.

Cassel has long had larger households than the county and state. Declines in household size in Cassel, but household and family size in Cassel is still larger than Marathon County. Almost 80 percent of households are family households. Far more households in Cassel have children that are under 18 compared to Marathon County. Almost 34 percent of households in Cassel are two person households. The vast majority of households are between one and five people, with just over 12 percent of households having five or more people.

Table 2-1: Demographic Change, 1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1980 to 2010	% Change 2000 to 2010
Total Population						
Cassel	899	816	847	911	1%	8%
County	111,270	115,400	125,834	134,063	21%	7%
State	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	21%	6%
Total Households						
Cassel	230	245	271	322	40%	19%
County	37,865	41,534	47,402	53,176	40%	12%
State	1,652,261	1,822,118	2,084,544	2,279,768	38%	9%
Average Household Size						
Cassel	3.9	3.33	3.1	2.83	-27%	-9%
County	2.85	2.75	2.6	2.49	-13%	-4%
State	2.77	2.61	2.5	2.43	-12%	-3%

Source: US Census, Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2010.

The population of Marathon County grew from 125,834 in 2000 to 134,063 in 2010, an increase of 6.5 percent, compared to a 6.0 percent increase in the state and 9.7% in the United States. Population growth in Marathon County has been concentrated in the urbanized area surrounding Wausau. Most towns experienced modest percentage growth over the last two decades. Most of the communities with very high percentage growth also have relatively small populations. Five towns, as well as one city and one village, had population decline between 1990 and 2010.

Projections

Figure 2-1 and Table 2-2 compare projected population in Cassel to Marathon County, based on projections made by the WDOA. The WDOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96. These projections are based on historical population and household growth in the community, with more recent years given a greater weight. The Town of Cassel is expected to continue population growth through the year 2040 at a slower rate than Marathon County, but higher than historic rates. As shown in Table 2-3, the town is expected to increase in total population until 2035 when population growth flattens. Growth between 2010 and 2040 is expected to be approximately 10 percent, while the increase in the county is greater, at 14 percent.

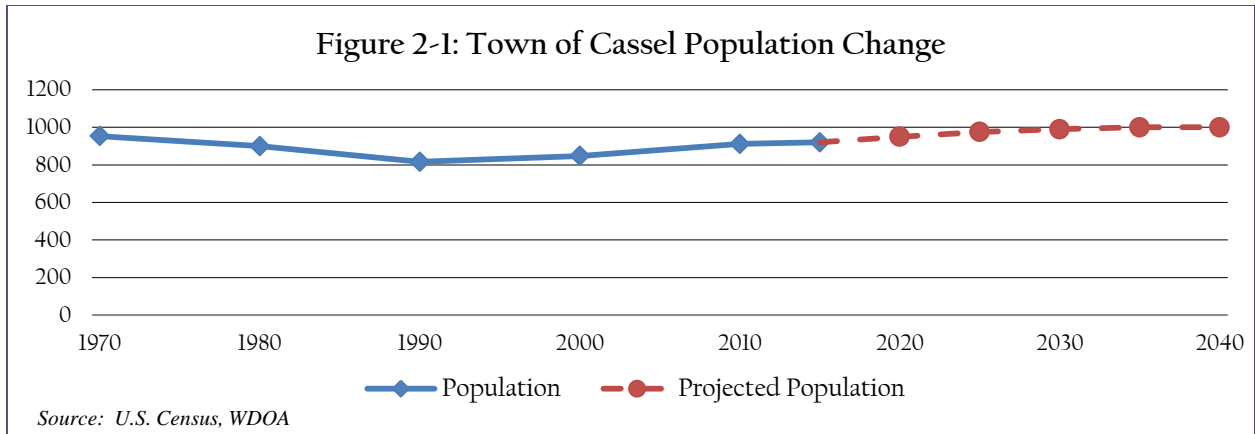


Figure 2-2 and Table 2-3 show household projections completed by the WDOA. These projections show that the number of households is expected to grow more quickly than the population, reflecting historic trends for decreasing household sizes. Household growth in the town is expected to be lower than the county. The

average household size was 2.83 in 2010 and was expected to decrease to 2.67 by 2040. In 2010 in Marathon County the average household size was 2.49. Household growth is expected to continue through the year 2040 for both the county and the town.

Table 2-2: Population Projections – 2010-2040

	Total People by Year							% change
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	
Cassel	911	920	950	975	990	1,000	1,000	10%
County	134,063	136,510	142,200	146,595	150,130	152,120	152,790	14%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Population Projections, 2013

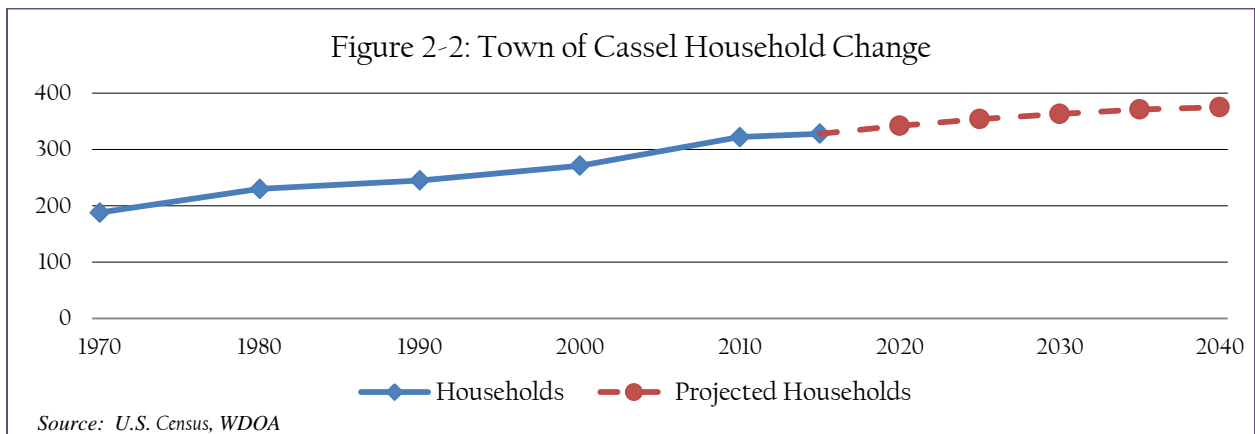


Table 2-3: Household Projections – 2010-2040

Total Households by Year								% change
2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040		
Cassel	322	328	342	354	363	371	375	16%
County	53,176	54,657	57,394	59,611	61,524	62,958	63,730	20%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Household Projections, 2013

Age

The town’s median age in 2000 was 34.7 years, lower than the county and state medians at 36.3 and 36.0, respectively. By 2010 the median age in Cassel was 39.7, higher than the state at 38.5 years and the county at 39.4 years. 38.5 percent of households have individuals under 18

years old, higher than the county, while 20.5 percent have individuals 65 years or older, lower than the county. Comparing [Figure 2-3](#) and [Figure 2-4](#) shows that the age distribution in Cassel is much more concentrated in the middle ages and teenage children than the county, with fewer young adults and adults older than 70.

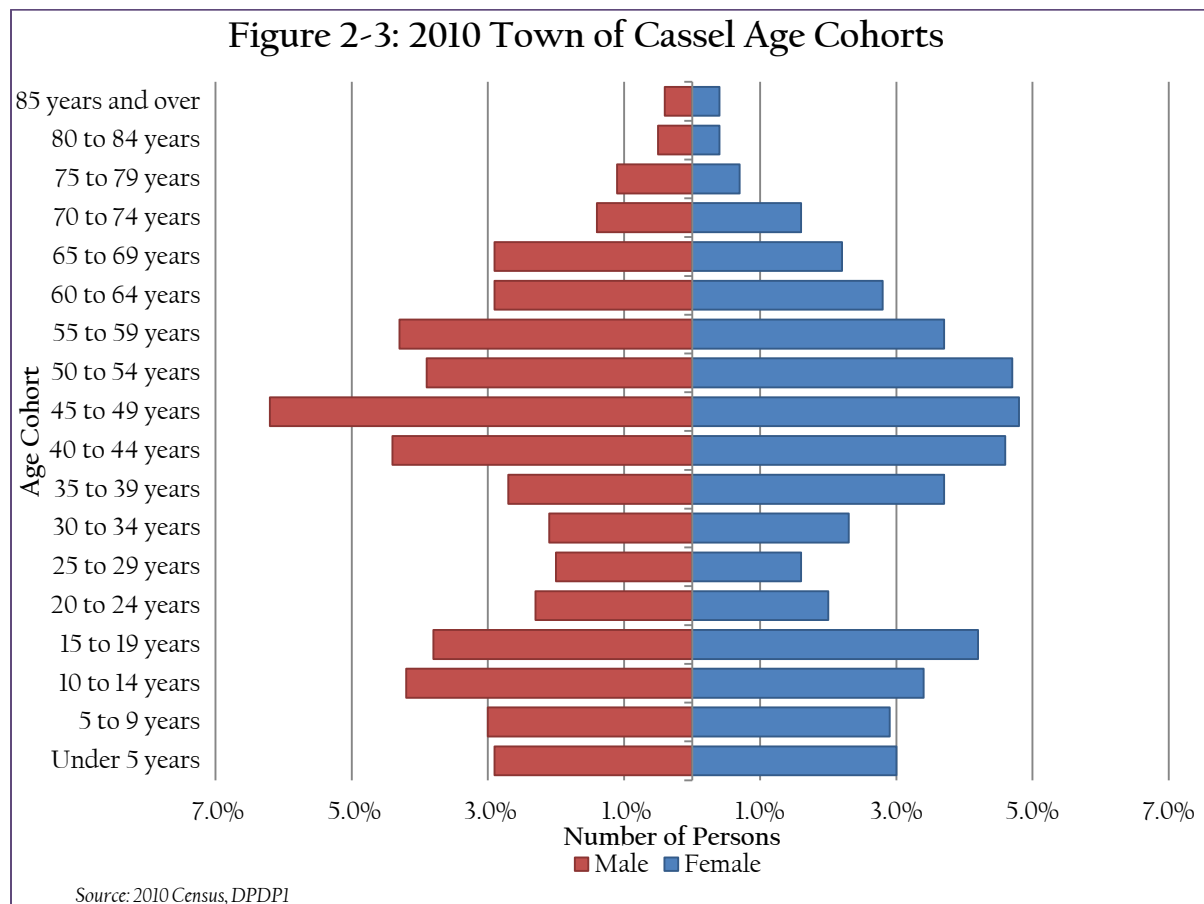
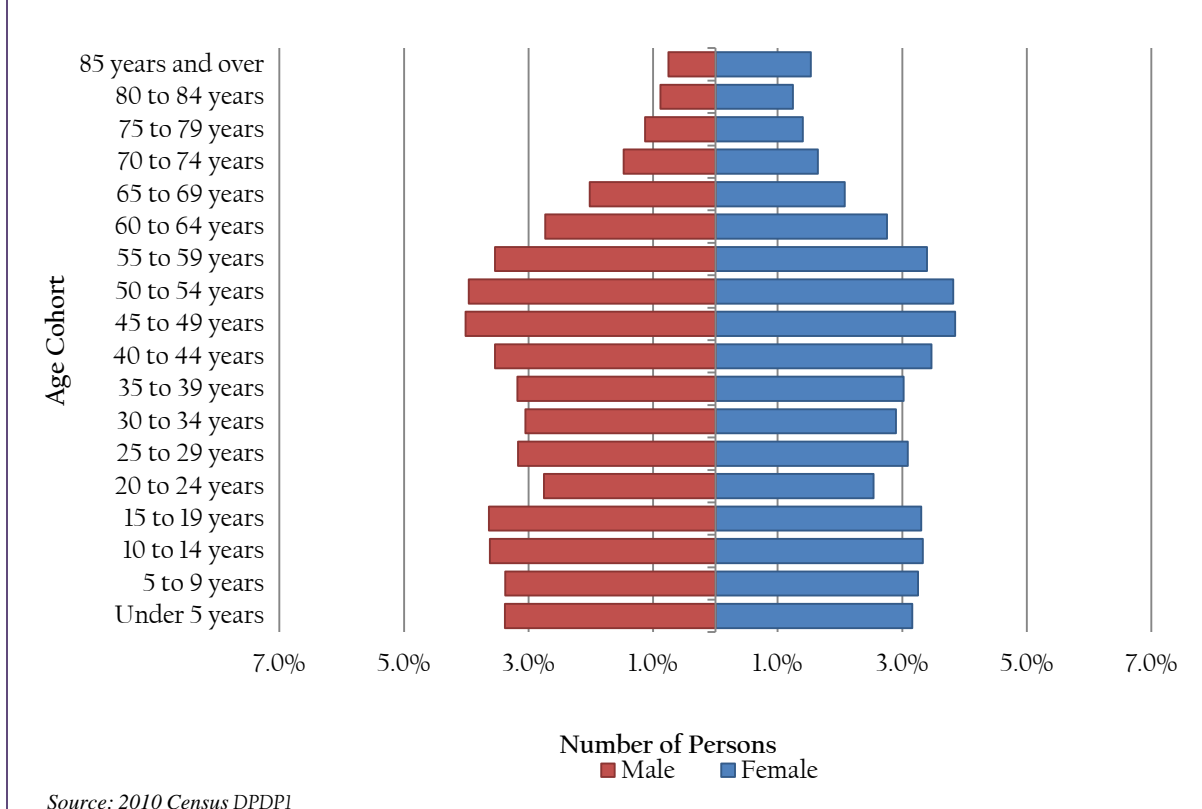


Figure 2-4: 2010 Marathon County Age Cohorts



Race and Ethnicity

According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 96 percent of the population in Cassel is White, about the same proportion as it was in 2000 and 2010. About 2.5 percent identified as “Two or More Races.” About 2.4 percent identified as Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity in 2010, while 1.3% identified as “Some Other Race.” In 2000, 2.0% identified as Asian, while 0.5% identified as Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity.

Education and Income Levels

Educational attainment in the town has increased over the 2000 to 2010 period. The percentage of population 25 and older with a high school education increased nearly ten percentage points from 84.6 percent to 94.1 percent. The proportion of those with a bachelor’s degree has almost doubled since 2000. These increases were of a much higher magnitude than increases in the county and the state. The proportion of people with an associate’s degree has increased slightly over those ten years, by approximately one percentage point. The proportion of people with less than a high school education in the town is lower than the county and the state. Figure 2-5 and Table 2-4 show more detail on educational attainment.

Figure 2-5: Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Older, 2016

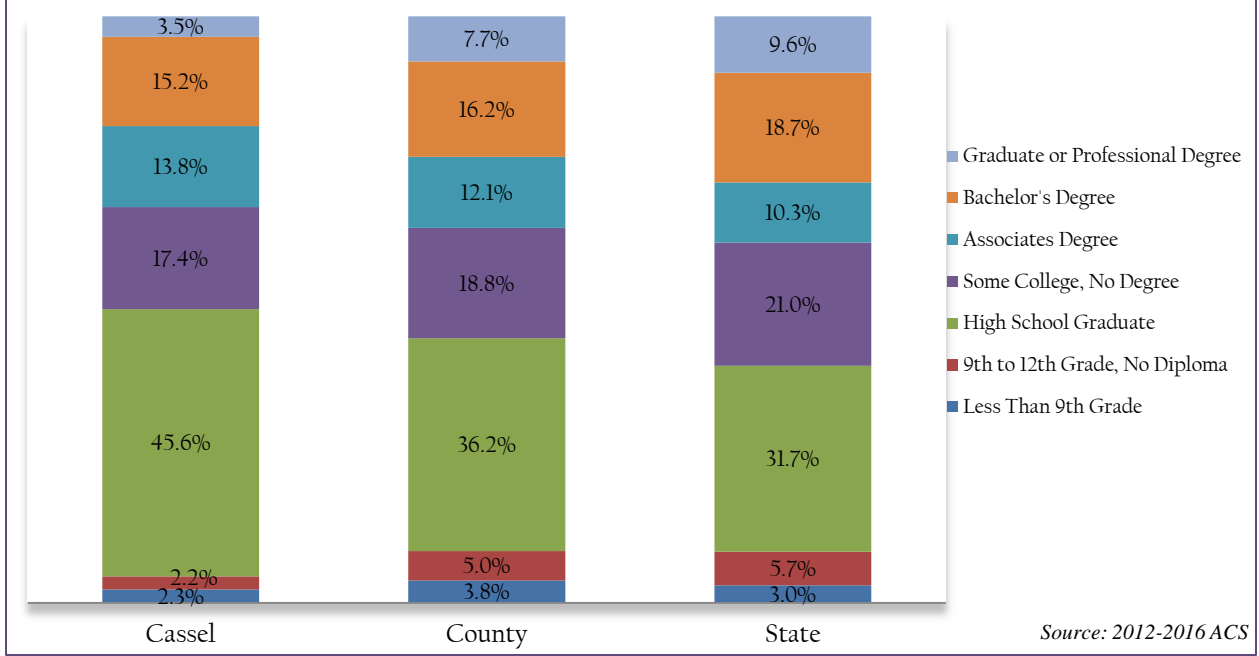


Table 2-4: Educational Attainment Change 2000-2016

Educational Attainment	Town of Cassel			Marathon County			Wisconsin		
	2000	2010	2016	2000	2010	2016	2000	2010	2016
Percent high school graduate or higher	84.6%	94.1%	95.5%	83.8%	89.2%	91.2%	85.1%	90.2%	91.3%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	8.5%	15.1%	18.7%	18.3%	21.9%	23.9%	22.4%	26.4%	28.3%

Source: US Census 2000, ACS 2012-2016

Table 2-5 shows median household income for the Town of Cassel. The median household income for Town of Cassel residents was \$75,781 in 2016, up from \$52,614 in 2000. However, after adjusting for inflation, real median household income only increased by about \$1,628. Marathon County and Wisconsin, meanwhile, experienced a decline in median household income when adjusted

for inflation. The median household income of \$75,781 is higher than Marathon County with a median of \$54,227, and higher than the state at \$54,610. Income distribution among Cassel residents has shifted upwards since 2000, with more people earning between \$75,000 and \$199,999, and the same number of people earning 200,000 or more.

Table 2-5: Median Household Income 2000-2016

Minor Civil Division	2000	2016	Adj. Net Change*	% Change*
Town of Cassel	\$52,614	\$75,781	\$1,628	2.2%
Marathon County	\$45,165	\$54,227	-\$9,428	-14.8%
Wisconsin	\$43,791	\$54,610	-\$7,108	-11.5%

Source: US Census 2000, ACS 2012-2016 & NCWRPC 2017
 *Adjusted for inflation in 2016 dollars

Employment Characteristics

According to the 2012-2016 ACS, the 585 employed residents of Cassel had median earnings of \$38,182, while the mean earnings of full-time, year-round workers are \$46,335. Median earnings are higher as education increases, ranging from \$34,886 for high school graduates to \$58,750 for those with a bachelor’s degree.

Table 2-6 shows the breakdown of the employed population of the town in 2000 and 2010 by occupation. The “employed population” is defined as people living in

the town who are 16 years and older and had a job at the time of the Census.

In 2000 there were 475 employed people living in the Town of Cassel, and by 2010 this had increased to 549. Most residents were employed in management, business, science and arts occupations, and this employment has increased over the decade. Production, transportation and material moving occupations were second, and sales and office occupations were third. Production, transportation and material moving occupations and sales and office occupations have declined slightly, while service occupations have increased.

Table 2-6: Resident Occupation 2000 – 2010, Town of Cassel

Occupation Sector	2000	2010
Management, business, science, and arts occupations**	28.4%	34.4%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	22.5%	18.8%
Sales and office occupations	25.1%	18.2%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations**	16.5%	16.9%
Service occupations	7.6%	11.7%
Total Employed*	475	549

Source: WDOA

*“Total Employed” represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

** Some changes may be due to changes in name and categorization of occupations between the 2000 and 2010 Census.

Demographic Trends

- ◆ The Town of Cassel has experienced fluctuations in population over the last 50 years, declining between 1970 and 1990, then increasing between 1990 and 2010.
- ◆ Total households in the town have steadily increased since 1970, while average household size continues to decrease leading to more households with fewer people. This can increase the cost of services on a per person basis.
- ◆ Median household income has grown more in Cassel than the county and the state.
- ◆ Educational attainment has grown faster than the state, but higher educational attainment lags behind the county and the state.

Chapter Three

Natural, Agricultural & Cultural 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.

Previous Plans and Studies Related to Natural and Agricultural 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

The Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Marathon County from 2010 to 2020. The Land Conservation and Zoning Committee identified the following long-term program outcomes for the natural resource protection efforts in Marathon County:

- ◆ Land Use activities are well planned to enhance community development, minimize conflicts, maximize infrastructure investments, and protect rural character.
- ◆ Improve and protect the surface and ground water assets to enhance public health and safety, recreational opportunities, and economic development.
- ◆ Maintain the soil and water resources as productive assets through topsoil and organic matter conservation.
- ◆ Marathon County agriculture and woodlot producers are economically strong.

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan

The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan is required under Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The purpose of this plan is to guide and manage the preservation of farmland and agricultural production capacity. Most of the town was designated as farmland preservation areas in 2013.

The Farmland Preservation Plan places nearly the entire township within the farmland preservation area, with only a few parcels classified under the 15 year growth area throughout the town, mostly outside of the Village of Marathon City and along STH 29. Additional parcels at the intersection of CTH S and Alpine Road, CTH N and Cardinal Lane, and along STH 107 between Soda Creek Road and CTH N are also designated within the 15-year growth area.

Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Use Plan

The Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Use Plan is a management guide for the Marathon County Forest and is updated every ten years. The mission of the plan is to manage and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for the ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future residents throughout the county. The report includes a number of recommendations for timber management, wildlife habitat and game management, land acquisition and forest boundary management, biodiversity management, watershed management, and tourism.

Marathon County Groundwater Protection Guide

The Groundwater Protection Guide was an extension of a 1988 groundwater plan. In April 2001, the guide was created to assist county and local officials in setting policy related to groundwater. It also serves as a resource for information about groundwater and strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection. The county is considering a new groundwater planning effort.

USGS Protecting Wisconsin's Groundwater through Comprehensive Planning

In a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin System, and the U.S. Geological Survey, a website has been made available with data and information on geology, general hydrology, and groundwater quantity and quality. The website was developed to aid government officials and planners in addressing groundwater in their comprehensive plans. The most recent data available for Marathon County was published in 2007. The full Marathon County report can be found at their website: wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/find/marathon/.

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 or ERW in the Town of Cassel.

Streams/Rivers

The two main creeks located in the town are Soda and Scotch Creeks. There are several smaller tributary creeks throughout the town. The south ¼ of the township is part of the Lower Big Eau Pleine River Watershed and most of the rest of the town is in the Lower Rib River Watershed. Both have been identified as priority watersheds by the WDNR.

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. Areas within the 100-year floodplain are associated with Soda and Scotch creeks.

Wetlands

Most wetlands are located adjacent to the creeks and their tributaries. There are a variety of wetland types, including forested, emergent/wet meadow, and scrub/shrub wetlands. A fairly large forested wetland exists in the NW quadrant of the town just west of CTH S.

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 pond-weed, 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.

Groundwater

Depth to groundwater within the town varies from shallow to moderately deep. Groundwater availability is sufficient for current development and land uses near Scotch Creek. In other areas of the town, groundwater supply can be limited.

Agricultural and Soil Resources

Farmland Fragmentation and Development

Development can affect the viability of farming in an area. As development occurs amongst farm operations, farm owners and operators are faced with the decision to continue making investments in farming, or to eventually sell their land for development. Those that anticipate selling reduce investments in equipment and improvements and production falls. It's been found that this can cause ripple effects on other farms within a three mile radius. The degree to which this occurs is largely dependent on the area's proximity to shopping and job centers, proximity to public water, sewer and major roads,

whether more farmland is owned or rented, and the financial condition of landowners.¹

The Town of Cassel has some conditions favorable for farmland conversion and fragmentation by development, including the proximity to Edgar, Marathon City, and Wausau, and State Highway 29. The lack of availability of public sewer and water limits the development potential of the town, but likely means that development will occur near Edgar and Marathon City, where sewer and water service is available.

Soil Types

The predominant soils in the town consist of the Fenwood-Rietbrock-Rozellville association. Soils of the Chetek-Rosholt-Oesterle association are located along Scotch Creek in the NE quadrant of the town. Some small areas of Mahtomedi-Fordum-Sturgeon and Loyal-Withee-Marshfield also exist. Potential for soil erosion is 2.0 – 3.0 tons/acre/year. 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

Most (80%+) of the town is covered in Class 1 or 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, may need to be

¹ Daniels, Tom and Deborah Bowers. 1997. *Holding Our Ground: Protecting America's Farms and Farmland*. Island Press. Washington D.C./Covelo, CA

drained, 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.

Steep Slopes

A few areas of steep slopes are associated with the creek in the northeast. Steep slopes are defined as slopes with gradients over 12 percent. Steep slopes pose limitations to development and increase the potential for soil erosion.

Contamination

All identified contaminated soil and water cases in the Town of Cassel have been closed or resolved. There are no known brownfields within the town at this time.

Farmland Preservation

There are many methods of preserving farmland to maintain farm productivity and minimize the impacts of development. One that has been attempted in the Town of Cassel before, but was observed to be unsuccessful, is a minimum lot size of 35 acres for residential uses. It is possible a different minimum lot size (size vary widely, some communities use 80 acres, some use 160, and some use minimums as large as 320) would be more effective in reducing development and fragmentation. Minimum lot sizes in agricultural districts should reflect lot sizes needed for a minimum viable farm size, and the historic pattern of lots in Wisconsin suggests somewhere around 40 acres is most practical. Current zoning in Cassel requires a minimum of 2 acres and a maximum of 10 acres in residential zoning districts.

Other methods include exclusive agricultural zoning and other methods of non-exclusive zoning. Exclusive agricultural zoning does not allow any other uses, and is generally avoided for fear of legal challenges over a regulatory “taking” of private property. In addition to minimum lot sizes, non-exclusive zoning can include an area-based allocation, allowing a farm to develop a small amount of non-farm dwellings on small lots, usually under two acres, e.g. one lot for every 25 acres of farmland. Another method is designating an agricultural buffer zone with smaller minimum lot sizes of 5 to 10 acres, usually where it is expected that sewer and water will be available in the future, with the assumption that the land will be further subdivided at that time.

Adopting farmland preservation zoning in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes can help preserve farmland in the designated areas. The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan identifies nearly all of the land in the Town of Cassel as farmland preservation areas, except a few parcels scattered throughout the town, near Marathon City, and along STH 29. This means that the town could adopt a Department of Agriculture and Consumer Protection (DATCP) certified farmland preservation zoning district to protect farmland deemed important within these areas. This zoning district would also make landowners eligible for farmland preservation tax credits.

Biological Resources

Vegetation

Much of the town consists of cropland or specialty crops. Areas adjacent to creeks and tributaries are generally wooded.

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 habitats 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. Private forests, open lands, and areas adjacent to bodies of water and wetlands also serve as valuable habitat and wildlife corridors. Maintaining connections between habitats is very important to allow species to move around, promoting biodiversity.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Aquatic and terrestrial endangered, threatened, or special concern species are all present within the town. Document species in the WDNR natural heritage

inventory include Blanding's Turtle and the Wood Turtle. Sensitive species such as cave bats have been removed from this list.



Blanding's Turtle, a Special Concern species present in Cassel.
Image Source: Wisconsin DNR

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 the Town of Cassel

The Town of Cassel, along with the Town of Marathon to the east, was settled by a group of Pittsburgh mill workers. Known as the Pittsburgh German Homestead Society, the group banded together in 1856

to purchase land in Wisconsin. Armed with deposits of \$100 per worker, representatives arrived in Stevens Point and purchased 3,000 acres in what later became the Towns of Marathon and Cassel. The settlers followed in 1857 and took steamboats from Stevens Point to Mosinee, then continued their journey with American Indian guides to their new location.

Marathon City, in the northeast corner of Cassel, was platted as a village in 1858. In 1870, the arrival of Henry Fricke and his construction of a grist and saw mill led to growth of the community. When lumbering declined as the primary economic activity, Marathon City became a service center for surrounding farmers, who had turned to dairying. By the 1900s, there were over 70 cheese factories in the Cassel area, many cooperatively owned by the farmers.

On the northwest corner of Cassel is the Village of Edgar, incorporated in 1898. Edgar was the site of a logging camp on Scotch Creek until the 1891 arrival of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western made it a railroad stop. Although the town had two sawmills, it soon evolved into a service center for the surrounding farmers.

Although a small settlement of Polish immigrants came to Cassel in the 1870s, the town was in the heart of the German settlement of Marathon County. Cassel was settled by Germans who had previously lived in Pittsburg, but other Germans in the north central section of the county hailed from Pomerania, West Prussia, and Brandenburg. In addition to the Town of Cassel, the German settlement was concentrated in Marathon, Maine, Berlin, Wien, Wausau, Stettin, Rib Falls, and Hamburg. Approximately 75% of the population in the county was of

German parentage in the late nineteenth century. As late as 1905, 36 of 41 townships in the county were still predominantly populated by persons of German descent.

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

There are no properties in Cassel listed on the NRHP. The town does not have a local historic preservation commission.

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.htm

1. There is 1 historic property in Cassel that has been previously surveyed and included in the AHI.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has identified six archaeological sites and historic cemeteries in Cassel.

Cemeteries, Burial Mounds, Other Burials

Wisconsin Statute 157.70 provides for the protection of all human burial sites, including all marked and unmarked burials and cemeteries. There are currently 133 cemeteries and burial areas identified in Marathon County, and it is likely that other cemeteries and burials may be present. Suspected burial mounds or unmarked burials must be reported to the State Burial Sites Preservation Office. If human remains are uncovered during excavation, all work must cease pending

review of the Burial Sites Preservation Office. All cemeteries and burials in Marathon County should be catalogued under Wis. Stat. 157.70 to provide maximum protection of these sites.

Table 3-1: Known Cemeteries

Cemetery Name	Location	Section
Cassel	STF 29, moved to Edgar Cemetery	4
St. John Catholic/Edgar Protestant	Co. H., south of Edgar	18
Sacred Heart Catholic	Co. S.	23

Source: www.rootsweb.com/~wimarath/CenLocations.htm

Issues

- ◆ **Wetlands** - Preservation of wetlands is important to residents. Identification of preservation tools should be explored.
- ◆ **Forests** - Preservation of woodlands is important to residents. Identification of preservation tools should be explored. Voluntary forest preservation, such as MFL and conservation easements should be encouraged.
- ◆ **Farm Land** - Preservation of prime agricultural lands is important to maintain the rural heritage and economy of the town. In the past, minimum lot sizes of 35 acres have appeared to result in the removal of large parcels of land from production, rather than smaller parcels. However, it is difficult to know whether smaller minimum lot sizes during the same time period would have resulted in more parcels being removed from production due to cheaper land prices, resulting in more farmland fragmentation.
- ◆ **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.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Protect wetland areas from the encroachment of development.

- ◆ Objective: Enforce existing wetland regulations set by county/state.
- ◆ Objective: Discourage additional development in wetland areas.

Policies

- ◆ Encourage developers to consult with WDNR officials before submitting development proposals.

Strategies and Actions

- Communicate the desire for wetland protection to the WDNR.
- Report instances of possible regulation infraction to the WDNR.
- Obtain a main contact person from each agency that the town communicates with at the county and WDNR.

Goal 2: Preserve forestland.

- ◆ Objective: Explore public ownership of forestland.
- ◆ Objective: Encourage private participation in programs, such as

the Managed Forest Law, to preserve forests.

Policies

- ◆ Inform property owners of state and local programs that preserve forestlands.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Send owners of private forestland information on preservation programs.
- ◆ Perform feasibility analysis to determine the maximum amount of forestland the town could publicly own (if any).
- ◆ Encourage developers to maintain as much forestland as possible in new developments. Promoting conservation subdivisions or other preservation techniques.

Goal 3: Preserve historically significant buildings and sites.

- ◆ Objective: Work with local historical societies, like the County Historical Society, to identify historic resources so they may be considered in future planning.
- ◆ Objective: Ensure that any known cemeteries, human burials or archaeological sites are protected from encroachment by roads or any development activities.

Policies

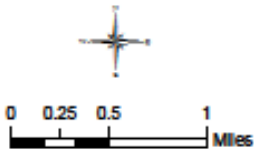
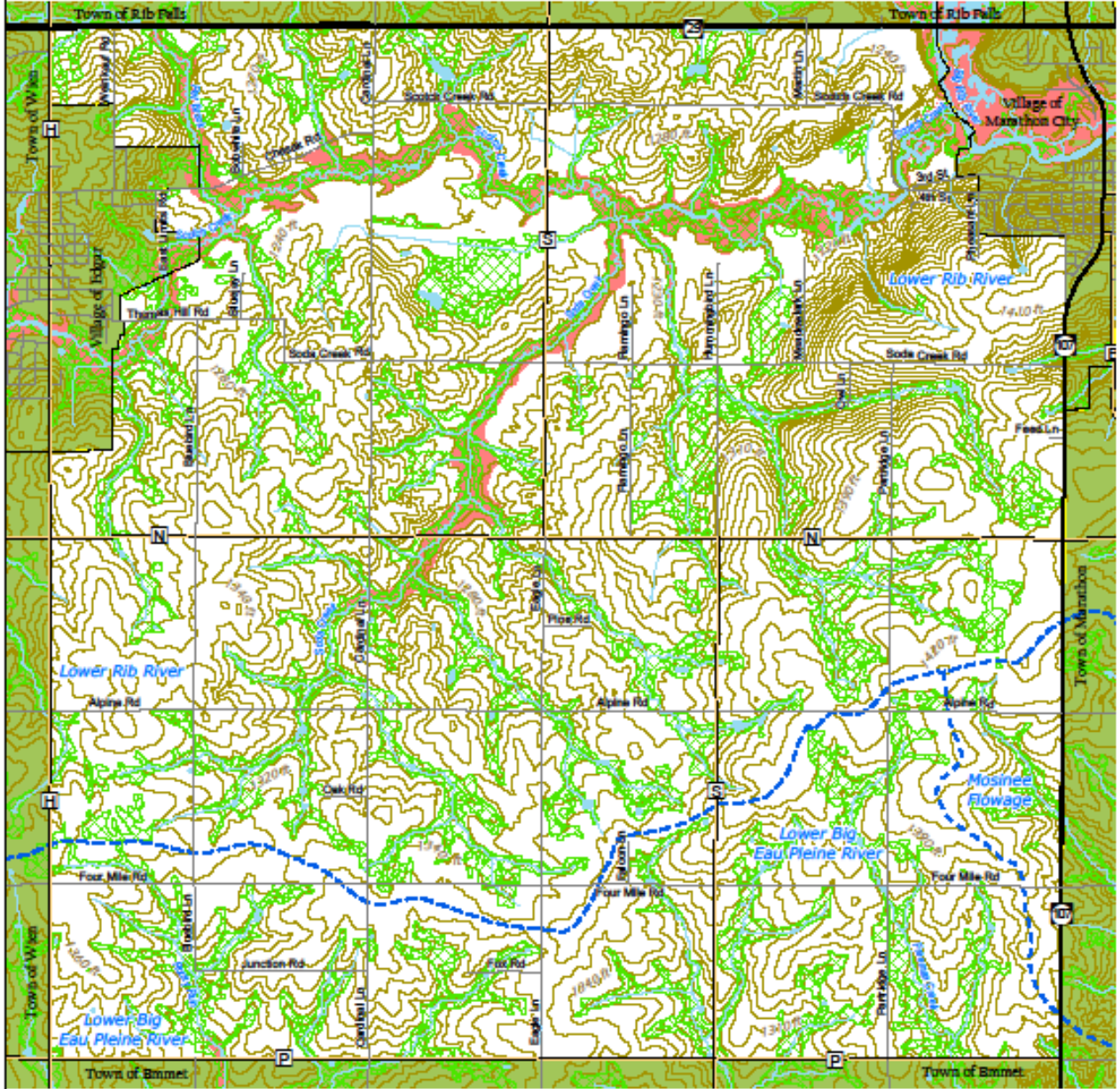
- ◆ Preserve historically significant structures and locales within the jurisdiction.

Strategies and Actions


- ◆ Contact the Marathon County Historical Society for tips on how to inventory significant structures.
- ◆ Consider teaming with other local communities to form a committee that records historic sites.
- ◆ Help interested properties owners obtain information on their property if they feel it is historically significant.
- ◆ Celebrate historic local sites with a pamphlet or other materials for dissemination.

Map 2
Natural Resources
 Town of Cassel
 Marathon County, Wisconsin

- Legend**
- Minor Civil Divisions
 - US Highway
 - State Highways
 - County Highways
 - Local Roads
 - Water
 - Watershed Boundaries
 - Wetlands
 - Contours 10ft
 - Floodplains



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co, FEMA
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purpose only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Chapter Four

Housing

Housing characteristics and trends are important components of a comprehensive plan. The physical location of housing determines the need for many public services and facilities. Furthermore, understanding dynamics in the market likely to affect housing development in the future provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate transportation facilities with a sustainable pattern of residential development. Understanding the factors affecting people's ability to meet their own housing needs provides a basis for reinforcing community ties, fostering economic development and environmental sustainability, and improving the quality of life.

Previous Plans and Studies Related to Housing

While quality housing is an essential aspect of livability, there are few housing studies or plans at the local level. Two plans, at the state and regional levels relate to housing in the area.

Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan

The Consolidated Housing Plan is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the application process required of the state in accessing formula program fund of Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter Grants, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS.

“The Consolidated Plan provides the framework for a planning process used by states and localities to identify housing, homeless, community, and economic development needs and resources, and to tailor a strategic plan for meeting those needs.”

Regional Livability Plan

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies a number of issues affecting community livability related to housing:

- ◆ An aging population,
- ◆ Smaller household sizes,
- ◆ A lack of housing options, and
- ◆ An increase in housing costs related to incomes.

Housing Data

The majority of the housing data in this section is taken from the WDOA, the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census and the 2016 American Community Survey. While the census is a count, the American Community Survey is an estimate. Surveys are more accurate when used for larger populations, and as the Town of Cassel is a smaller community, it is likely that there are minor errors present in the data.

Housing Characteristics

Housing Type and Tenure

The 2010 Census shows the Town of Cassel has 322 occupied housing units. 296 (or 92%) of these units are owner-occupied. The town has an average household size of 2.83 persons. 16.8% of

all households are classified as being “1 person households,” an increase since 2000. Approximately 21% of town households have a householder 65 years or older. Average household size is smaller among renter occupied units (2.46) than owner occupied units (3.16).

Table 4-1: Number of Housing Units by Type and Tenure

Area	Cassel	Marathon County	WI
Total Housing Units	341	57,734	2,624,358
Total Occupied Housing Units	322	53,176	2,279,768
Owner Occupied Units	296	39,090	1,551,558
Renter Occupied Units	26	14,086	728,210
Average Household Size	2.83	2.49	2.43
% Owner Occupied	91.9%	73.5%	68.1%
% 1 Person Households	16.8%	25.8%	28.2%
% With Someone 65 years or older	20.5%	24.4%	24.0%

Source: 2010 Census DPDP1

Changes in Housing Stock

Table 4-2 notes changes in the housing stock between 2000 and 2016 according to U.S. Census Data. Total housing units have increased by 75 while the number of occupied housing units grew by 77.

Vacancy decreased from 5 to 4 percent between decades. The number of owner-occupied housing units increased by 77 while the owner occupancy rate decreased slightly. This decrease has been seen nationwide after the housing bubble in 2008.

Table 4-2: Changes in Cassel’s Housing Stock

	2000	2016	# Change	% Change
Total Housing Units	289	364	75	26%
Occupied Housing Units (Households)	274	351	77	28%
Vacancy %	5%	4%	-	1%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	257	323	66	26%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	17	28	11	65%
Owner Occupied Housing Units as percent of Total	94%	92%	-	-2%
Number of Homes for Seasonal/Rec Use	4	7	3	75%
Number of Single Family Homes	272	356	84	31%
*Detached	271	350	79	29%
**Attached	1	6	5	500%
Number of Duplexes	0	4	4	100%
Multi-Family Units 3-9 units	0	0	0	0%
Multi-Family Units 10+	3	0	0	-100%
2000 Census SF-3, 2012-2016 American Community Survey DP04				
*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 continuously increased. In some cases this can be due to higher minimum lot and home sizes in zoning codes.

Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 4-3 shows housing age for the community. In the Town of Cassel, data shows that a significant portion of the local housing stock, 28.3 percent, was built before 1939. Recent housing growth from the 1990s and 2000s also makes up a large group of housing at approximately 34.6 percent of the total housing stock. That is slightly higher than overall figures for the county. The Census reports that homes built in the 1990s make up 14% of the county’s overall housing stock.

Table 4-3: Age of Housing Stock in Cassel

Total Units	Year Built								
	2010 or later	2000 to 2009	1990 to 1999	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1950 to 1959	1940 to 1949	1939 or earlier
364	3	91	32	38	35	23	23	16	103
	0.8%	25.0%	8.8%	10.4%	9.6%	6.3%	6.3%	4.4%	28.3%

2012-2016 American Community Survey DP04

Physical Housing Stock

Table 4-4 looks at several select measures of physical condition and compares them to figures for the county and state. The median home size in the Town of Cassel, measured by the number of rooms, is larger than that of the county and state.

Most of the community’s housing stock is classified as being single family home, significantly higher than figures for the county or state. Census data indicates that just over 1 percent of homes lack complete kitchen facilities, slightly higher than the county and state.

Table 4-4: Physical Housing Characteristics

Community	Median Rooms	1 unit, detached or attached	Characteristic (% of Total Units)		
			In buildings with 10 or more units	Lacking complete plumbing facilities	Lacking complete kitchen facilities
Cassel	6.8	97.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Marathon County	5.9	78.9%	7.4%	0.4%	0.9%
Wisconsin	5.5	71.1%	10.7%	0.4%	0.9%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey DP04

Housing Values

Median Value

Table 4-5 shows 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 Town of Cassel's median home value was 16 percent higher than the State of Wisconsin and 33 percent higher than the county.

Community	Median Value (dollars)
Cassel	\$194,000
Marathon County	\$145,900
Wisconsin	\$167,000

2012-2016 American Community Survey DP04

Range of Values

Table 4-6 shows the range of housing values that exist in the community. Figures for the town are generally higher in the town when compared to the county.

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. In Marathon County, median and per capita income levels are generally lower than the state. For many people this poses a difficulty in paying for decent, safe, and sanitary housing.

Statistically speaking, those spending in excess of 30% of their total household income on housing costs may be facing affordability difficulties, also known as being cost-burdened. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends that rental-housing costs not exceed 30% of the monthly income. Mortgage lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is less than 29% of the monthly household income. Cost burdened households are also more likely to become homeless.

The percentage of households in the Town of Cassel that are cost burdened is similar to that of the county and state among owner-occupants, while fewer renters in the town are cost burdened. The Census indicates that there are approximately 24 renter-occupied housing units in the town.

Table 4-6: Range of Housing Values, 2016

	Cassel		Marathon County	
	#	%	#	%
< \$49,999	4	1%	1,717	4%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	19	6%	7,694	20%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	75	23%	11,118	28%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	72	22%	7,983	20%
\$200,000+	153	47%	10,727	27%

2012-2016 American Community Survey DP04

Table 4-7: Monthly Housing Costs and Cost Burdens

	Owner Occupied Median selected monthly owner costs ¹			Renter Occupied Median Selected monthly renter costs ¹		
	With Mortgage	No Mortgage	% Cost Burdened	Median Contract rent	Median Gross rent	% Cost Burdened
Cassel	\$1,524	\$569	19.2%	\$657	\$1,154	29.2%
Marathon County	\$1,241	\$476	20.4%	\$596	\$704	42.6%
Wisconsin	\$1,391	\$532	22.7%	\$664	\$789	46.6%

2012-2016 American Community Survey DP04

Additionally, [Table 4-7](#) shows that select town median owner-occupied costs, both with and without a mortgage, are higher than the median figures for Marathon County and Wisconsin. The same holds true for select renter costs. Gross rent in Cassel is much higher than the state or county. 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.

One of the most widely used and easily available forms of affordable housing is the manufactured home. Modern manufactured housing is virtually indistinguishable from site-built housing, but can be constructed for roughly 75 percent of the cost. Manufactured housing offers a realistic alternative for providing affordable homes that can fit

well with existing neighborhoods or be developed as new communities.

Senior Housing Needs

Wisconsin is aging. This rise of seniors creates a special set of housing issues. As people age they have more need for specialized services. The most obvious of these is for health care, but there is a more subtle relationship between an aging population and their housing needs. An integrated view of senior housing needs to be developed that includes a continuum of housing options ranging from assistance to age in place all the way to assisted care facilities.

According to research by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the overwhelming majority of seniors prefer to “age in place” or remain in their home throughout retirement. This can be difficult in rural areas for many residents that are no longer able to access the necessary goods and services or keep up with the property maintenance of larger parcels.

Strategies that promote and allow aging in place can reduce the need for senior housing by allowing seniors to stay in

their homes longer. These strategies include strengthening transportation access to services and goods such as health care, assistance with household care and maintenance, and designing housing to serve the needs of the resident throughout their life, such as visitable design and universal design. For new housing these standards may be incorporated into the zoning code, or negotiated in a developer agreement. For retrofitting existing housing, the town can provide assistance to residents that need to upgrade their homes to continue living in them.

In the neighboring Village of Marathon City, two organizations provide senior housing and assisted living options. Copperleaf Assisted Living and Parkview Apartments are facilities which provide trained staff, personal services, and social activities for residents. Additionally, Copperleaf provides dementia care, hospice, and rehabilitation services.

Beyond the Village of Marathon City, other senior housing options can be found throughout Marathon County. 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.

Homelessness

Data on homelessness is difficult to collect. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, during the 2015/2016 school year the Marathon City School District reported four homeless students and the Edgar School District reported none. It is likely that there are more homeless children and adults that go unnoticed or uncounted. Homelessness is often thought of as

people living on the streets, but it is often a more hidden problem, consisting of people that have unstable housing, living in shelters, staying with friends or family temporarily, or living in a vehicle. Across the state, 14 percent of homeless students stayed in a shelter, 77 percent were doubled up with friends or family members, one percent were unsheltered, and seven percent stayed in hotels.

The efforts of most organizations working on preventing homelessness in Marathon County are directed towards preventing people from becoming homeless. Preventing homelessness is the preferred means of intervention, as it is less costly to all involved, and it helps maintain household stability. It is also widely recognized that homelessness is often the result of other problems such as housing costs, unemployment, poor credit, mental illness, domestic abuse, housing discrimination and drug addictions. Vice versa, homelessness and housing insecurity can also cause many of the aforementioned issues, such as unemployment, drug abuse, and mental illness.

Tight rental markets increase the likelihood of a family becoming homeless for minor transgressions, or even for reporting unsafe housing conditions to officials. As such, providing an integrated network of support is essential to address this complex issue. In some cases, better quality basic services such as housing assistance, schools, employment services, and transportation can prevent homelessness. To address these issues the Marathon County Housing and Homelessness Coalition was created in 2012. Their mission is to raise awareness, find solutions, and eradicate homelessness.

Assistance Programs

Below is a listing of some of the major programs utilized, including some more details on major programs at the state and federal levels. Each year new programs are available.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

- ◆ Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)
- ◆ Rental Assistance (Section 8) Programs
- ◆ Multifamily Loan Fund
- ◆ National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling
- ◆ WHEDA Advantage
- ◆ FHA Advantage
- ◆ First-Time Home Buyer Advantage
- ◆ WHEDA Tax Advantage
- ◆ WHEDA Foundation Grant Program

Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Housing

- ◆ Housing Grants and Loans
- ◆ Shelter for Homeless and Transitional Housing Grants
- ◆ Wisconsin Fresh Start
- ◆ Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness
- ◆ Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Program
- ◆ Rental Housing Development Program
- ◆ Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program
- ◆ Emergency Solutions Grant Program
- ◆ Continuum of Care Supportive Housing Program
- ◆ Housing Rehabilitation Program – Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- ◆ CDBG Emergency Assistance Program
- ◆ Neighborhood Stabilization Program

- ◆ Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA)

Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Energy Services

- ◆ Home Energy Assistance Program
- ◆ Low Income Weatherization Program

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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.

State Programs

Wisconsin Department of Administration

The Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Housing (DOH), provides grants to general purpose units of local government for housing programs which principally benefit low and moderate income (LMI) households. These funds are primarily used for rehabilitation of housing units, homebuyer assistance, and small neighborhood public facility projects. CDBG dollars are flexible and responsive to local needs.

In addition to addressing LMI housing needs, CDBG can be used to leverage other programs or serve as a local match. The grant also can be used as an incentive to involve the private sector in local community development efforts or to

respond to area needs. The CDBG program often serves as a catalyst for other community development projects.

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) aims to encourage the production and rehabilitation of affordable housing. It provides an incentive for private entities to develop affordable housing. The credit reduces the federal taxes owed by an individual or corporation for an investment made in low-income rental housing. LIHTC provides funding for the construction of new buildings or the rehabilitation or conversion of existing structures. To qualify, a property must set aside a certain share of its units for low-income households.

Federal Programs

USDA-RD

A variety of loan programs are available to provide assistance in financing homes for low-income households including the Homeownership Direct Loan Program of the Rural Health Service, the Mutual Self-Help Housing Loan program, the Very-Low-Income Housing Repair Program, the Rural Rental Assistance Program, and Rural Housing Preservation Grants. These funds are provided through approved lender organizations. Local approved leaders who can provide resources from these program to qualified individuals include CoVantage Credit Union and River Valley Bank.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program finances land acquisition and site development associated with self-help housing for low-income families. Loans

are made to the nonprofit sponsors (including the Housing Assistance Council and Habitat for Humanity International) of development projects and are interest-free. Portions of the loans are forgiven if promised units of housing are completed within a given period. These forgiven “grant conversion” funds may be used to subsidize future development projects.

HOME Investment Partnership Program aims to encourage the production and rehabilitation of affordable housing. HOME funds may be used for rental assistance, assistance to homebuyers, new construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition of rental housing.

Issues

Rural Residential - The continued growth of rural residential in the Town of Cassel is a great concern to residents. This is especially true in relation to the sporadic location of new housing. Unplanned rural residential is likely to cause the fragmentation of farmland and forestland, increasing the costs of farming and making agricultural land owners less likely to invest in their properties.

Migrant Housing - Migrant housing is a concern as available units for workers employed by local farmers is in short supply.

Housing Affordability - A large proportion of renter households are cost burdened in the town. A smaller but still significant proportion of owner occupied households are also cost burdened.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Locate new residential development in appropriate areas.

- ◆ Objective: Discourage development in natural, sensitive areas.
- ◆ Objective: Guide new housing to locations where the extension of service provision will be easiest to deliver.

Policies

- ◆ Direct new housing developments to the most appropriate areas for residential development.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Observe the land use plan in siting new residential development.
- ◆ Determine limits of service provision on a per-unit basis.

Goal 2: Provide appropriate housing options for migrant workers.

- ◆ Objective: Identify areas where seasonal housing is most appropriate.
- ◆ Objective: Work with farmers who utilize migrant workers, Marathon County, and other appropriate agencies to develop an appropriate supply of housing.

Policies

- ◆ The town desires all employers utilizing immigrant labor to provide

safe, clean, and decent housing for these workers.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Identify a list of local employers who utilize migrant workers.
- ◆ Contact employers of migrant workers and express desire for them to also provide housing to these populations.
- ◆ Work with Marathon County and other agencies to develop a seasonal housing plan for temporary residents.

Goal 3: Explore development of specific accessory use requirements.

- ◆ Objective: Develop regulations for accessory uses to include formal public site approval procedures.

Policies

- ◆ The town requires all accessory uses to abide by the essence of its land use designation.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Acquire accessory use regulations from other communities.
- ◆ Determine appropriate accessory use restrictions for the Town of Cassel.
- ◆ Present draft regulations to the community for public comment.
- ◆ Adopt regulations as part of the zoning code.

Chapter Five

Utilities & Community Facilities

This section describes the existing conditions and issues relative to utilities available to the Town of Cassel, including sewage disposal, water supply, power supply, and telecommunication facilities and services. It also describes existing conditions with regard to surface water management.

Private Utilities

The Town of Cassel does not provide public sewer or water service. All development is on private wells and septic systems. The town, which has its own zoning, requires a minimum lot size of 3 acres for installation of individual septic systems and wells.

On-Site Waste Disposal Systems

All development in Cassel uses on-site septic 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.

Types of Systems –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 (CPZ) 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.

Water Wells: All development in Cassel receives water from private wells. Wells generally run deep due to high bedrock.

Solid Waste Disposal: Residents of the town contract privately for garbage and recycle collection services.

Electrical Utilities and Natural Gas

The Town of Cassel receives electric power from Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS). Gas service is not available to residents at this time, and many residents use liquefied propane (LP) tanks for heating fuel. Cassel is within the gas service territory of Wisconsin Public Service. According to the 2012 to 2016 ACS, 45 percent of Cassel residents use liquefied propane for heating fuel, 28 percent use wood, and 15 percent use fuel oil or kerosene.

Telecommunication Facilities and Services

Private companies, such as T-Mobile, AT&T, Cellcom, TDS, and Charter provide telecommunication services in Marathon County. The rural areas generally rely on satellite dishes for television and internet services. Large portions of the Town of Cassel have no wireline broadband available, and fixed wireless broadband ranges from less than 3 Megabits per second (Mbps) to 24.99 Mbps. This limits the potential for internet based businesses, people who work from home, or internet based technological improvements and commerce for agricultural businesses. In the Town of Cassel, there are seven internet providers, including Frontier Communications, Cellcom, and HughesNet. However, download speeds vary greatly across the township.

Affordable, accessible, high speed internet service is vital to residents and businesses in Marathon County, including rural areas like the Town of Cassel. Residents utilize high speed internet for communication, education, telemedicine, entertainment, and home businesses, among other uses. Businesses require high speed internet to be competitive in a global economy.

Solid Waste and Recycling

Residents in the Town of Cassel contract for solid waste disposal service privately. Contracting at the town level may reduce the costs of waste management to residents.

Solid waste management is best dealt with in a hierarchical structure under the following hierarchy: reduce, reuse, recycle, waste to energy, incinerate, and landfill. Studies have shown that it is possible to

significantly reduce the volumes of both solid and hazardous waste generated by the United States.

Likewise, recycling reduces the amount of waste that might otherwise have to be disposed of in a landfill. Waste to energy, incineration, and gasification have proven to be effective as part of a larger waste disposal strategy. Land disposal is the least desirable means of managing solid and hazardous waste because the amount of space they require and the dangers associated with them create adverse effects to human and ecosystem health. Composting can help reduce food waste and provide beneficial mulch or soil as a byproduct.

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.

Community Facilities and Public Safety

Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Cassel is served by two public school districts: The western half of the town is served by the Edgar School District, while the eastern half is served by the Marathon School District. The Edgar School District has an elementary and middle school at 203 Maple Street and a high school at 203 Birch Street all located in the Village of Edgar. The high school is also located in Edgar. Enrollment in the Edgar School District has been slowly

declining over the last five years. The Marathon School District operates a K-8 elementary school and a high school. There is also a 1-8 parochial school in Marathon City. Enrollment in the Marathon City School District has fluctuated in the last five years, increasing slightly overall during that time period.

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 are offered in Business Administration, General Studies, and Nursing, through collaborative degree programs with UW Oshkosh and UW Stevens Point. Enrollment in 2014-2015 was approximately 1,100 students, down slightly from the enrollment in 2002-2003 of 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 17,000 full- and part-time students attended classes in the 2013-2014 school year.

In addition to the public schools, the Wausau area has a private college. Rasmussen College, located in Wausau, offers bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees, certificates and diplomas in fields like business, design, education, justice sciences, and nursing.

Libraries

The Town of Cassel is served by the Marathon County Public Library system.

The Edgar Branch Library, located on Third Street in Edgar, has 2,046 square feet of space. The Marathon City Branch Library is located in a new 3,000 sq. ft. facility built in 2010. The MCPL is a member of the Wisconsin Valley Library Service, providing access to materials throughout the Wisconsin Valley Library system

Police

Police protection is provided by the Marathon County Sheriff's Department.

Fire

Fire protection is provided by a joint fire district with the Village of Edgar and the Village of Marathon City. The town has owning interest in one tanker.

Emergency Response

Ambulance services are provided from the Village of Edgar. There is also a First Responder program through the Village of Marathon City Fire Department.

The Marathon County Sheriff's Department Communications Division provides E-911 Dispatch for all Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies in Marathon County. The Communications Division services 84 user agencies and also provides alert paging support for the Emergency Management Office, District Attorney, and Medical Examiner's Office. The users are served by a microwave linked repeater radio system, consisting of a control center at the Sheriff's Department and multiple radio tower sites spread throughout the county.

Hospitals

Two major hospitals serve the town. Aspirus Hospital is located in the City of Wausau at 425 Pine Ridge Boulevard. Aspirus Hospital, formerly Wausau Hospital, is a 321-bed facility that is a multi-specialty regional health center serving a 12-county region in north central Wisconsin. Ministry Health Care St. Clare's Hospital is a 104-bed hospital and medical office complex located in the Village of Weston.

In 2016, a telemedicine service, Astia Health, was established in Marathon County. Astia is able to come to any home or business in Marathon County in their Mobile Medical Unit vehicle, MMU that is equipped to handle many different urgent care services and connect patients with a doctor via video chat. They're primarily used for urgent care, but patients can schedule doctor's appointments too.

Additionally, Ministry (Ascension) Saint Joseph's Hospital and Marshfield Clinic, located in the City of Marshfield, provide regional medical services to north central Wisconsin. Though further than Wausau and Weston, these facilities also serve the town.

North Central Health Care (NCHC) – In addition to the hospitals and clinics described above, Marathon County is served by NCHC, a public agency that also serves Langlade and Lincoln counties. The NCHC main campus is located at 2400 Marshall Street in Wausau. Additional offices are located in Antigo (Langlade Health Care Center) and Merrill and Tomahawk (Lincoln Health Care Center). According to their web site, NCHC offers outpatient, day hospital, community support and inpatient services

for mental/emotional problems; vocational, life skill training, early intervention, housing and care management services for the developmentally disabled; and assessment, individual and outpatient group counseling, intensive programming, day hospital, referral for residential and inpatient treatment, and education for alcohol and other drug problems. Services for detoxification and for persons suffering from problems with gambling addiction are also offered.

NCHC operates a nursing home (Mount View Care Center) that offers skilled nursing services at the main campus in Wausau. This facility has a licensed capacity of 320 and serves persons requiring either short term or long term skilled nursing care because of complex physical needs, psychiatric and neurological diseases, dementia or behavior problems

Many town residents rely upon local clinics including facilities in Marathon, Edgar, and Mosinee.

Child Care

There was no regulated child care providers in the town, but several others in the Village of Marathon City and the Village of Edgar are listed with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. The YoungStar program is Wisconsin's child care quality rating and improvement system. It also provides an online site tool to help families find child care services.

Parks

Local Park and Recreation Facilities

The Town of Cassel does not own or operate any public parks.

County or State Parks, Forest and Trails

There are no Marathon County parks or forest units located in the Town of Cassel. Marathon County park facilities in the vicinity include:

Rib Falls County Park is located off CTH S at the intersection with CTH U. 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 1,924 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 with 12 runs.

Big Eau Pleine Park - Marathon County owns and maintains Big Eau Pleine Park, half of which is located in Green Valley and the other half in Bergen. Big Eau Pleine is the county's largest park, at 1,450

acres located on a peninsula on the north shore of the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir. Active recreation areas are concentrated in two main sites on the shores of the reservoir. Park facilities include: campgrounds, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-era shelters, drinking fountains, boat launches, swimming beaches, play equipment. The extensive trail system allows for cross-country skiing, hiking, and nature walks. Fishing is a popular activity.

Park System Needs

The Town of Cassel has not identified any park system needs. Recreational facilities in surrounding communities are adequate for resident needs. Accessible parks are important for quality of life, social and recreational purposes for residents, but may also increase residential development pressure.

Issues

There were no issues identified.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain current provision of services.

- ◆ Objective: Perform annual budget allocations to fund public services.
- ◆ Objective: Continue to find methods of cost sharing, such as equipment sharing, with surrounding municipalities to increase the efficiency by which services are provided.

Policies

- ◆ Continue to provide sufficient services as desired by residents.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Perform annual review of service provision costs.
- ◆ Communicate with surrounding communities the willingness to share services/costs.
- ◆ Determine feasibility of sharing services and the degree to which Cassel will retain control.
- ◆ Explore creating a services committee to identify areas for consolidation, sharing, or privatization.
- ◆ Consider contracting at the town level for garbage and recycling pick up services.

Goal 2: Provide effective public safety services.

- ◆ Objective: Work with the Marathon County Sheriff Department and the Villages of Edgar and Marathon City to continue to provide effective police and EMS services.

Policies

- ◆ Contract with appropriate entities to provide sufficient emergency service delivery.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Participate in long-term facilities and equipment planning with service-providing entities.

- ◆ Annually review contracts with service providers and evaluate delivery of services.
- ◆ Participate in recruitment efforts, especially concerning fire and emergency response, with providing agencies.

Goal 3: Support state and county park system.

- ◆ Objective: Encourage proper funding for maintenance of local Marathon County parks.

- ◆ Objective: Encourage proper funding for state parks.

Policies

- ◆ Encourage appropriate development of public spaces throughout the region.

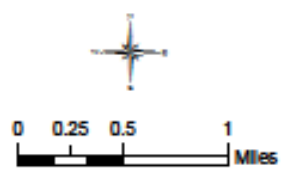
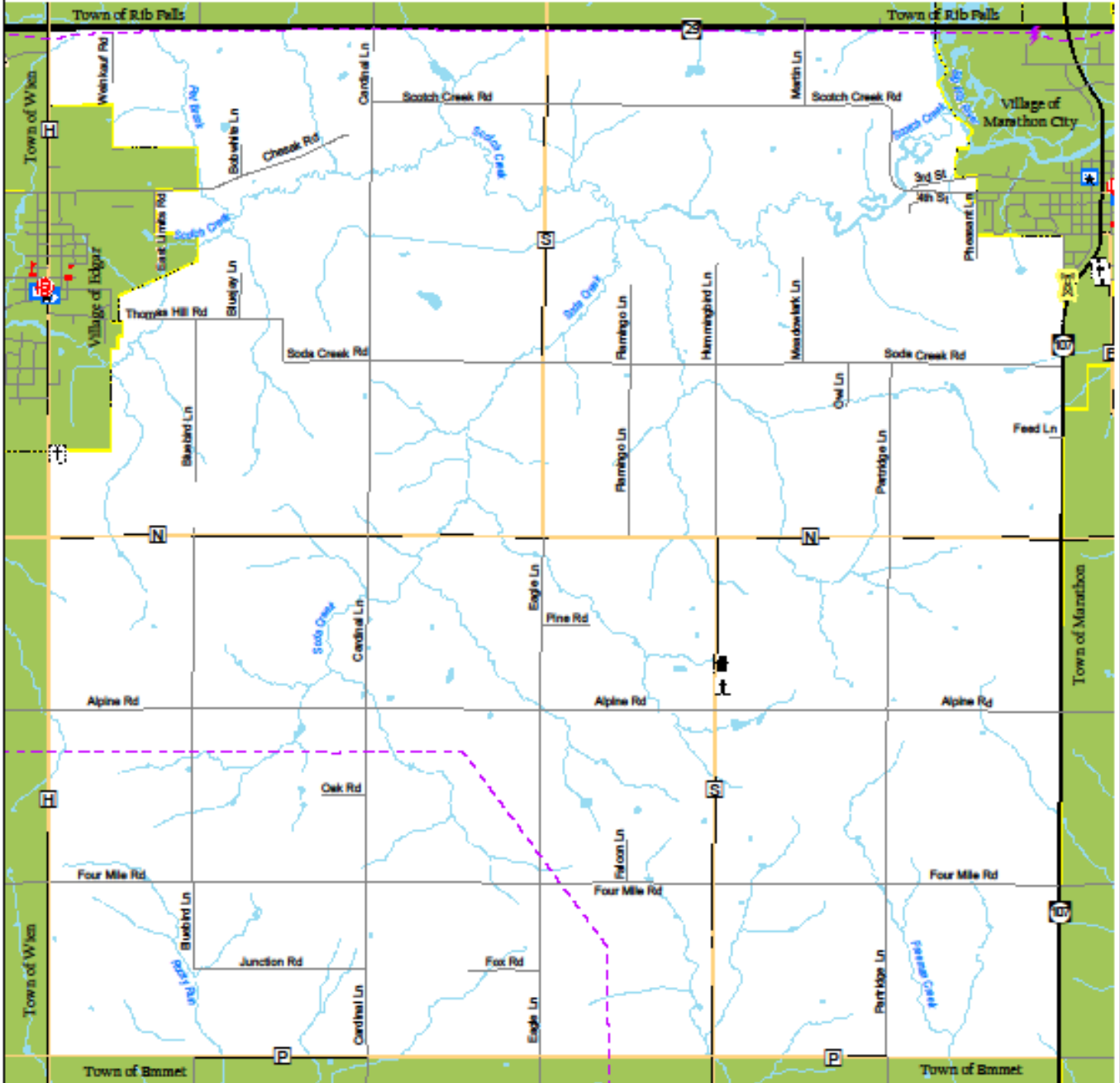
Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Encourage proper maintenance and upkeep of the existing county and state park system.
- ◆ Communicate desires for recreational facilities and uses to the appropriate entities.


Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- == US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Water
- Cemeteries
- Fire Station & Ambulance Service
- Library
- Non-Metallic Mines
- Police Department
- Post Office
- Schools
- Town Halls
- Substations
- Celltower
- High Voltage Powerline

Map 3
**Utilities & Community
 Facilities**
 Town of Cassel
 Marathon County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co, Wis DOT
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.


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Chapter Six

Transportation

Background

Transportation is necessary for the effective movement of people and goods within and with connections outside of the town. Transportation is also critical to development and land use. This chapter provides an inventory of the existing transportation facilities and services within the town.

Transportation is a crucial component of livability and provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate transportation facilities with a sustainable pattern of development. The existing network, from roads to rails, needs to be coordinated to maximize efficiency for the overall system. The connection between home and work is an important part of any transportation system.

The town is served by several state and county trunk highways, which serve as the main thoroughfares of the transportation system in Marathon County. The town is located adjacent to two Wisconsin's state highways. STH 29 located along the northern edge of the town, serves as the major east/west transportation corridor through the region. STH 107 runs through the west side of the town serves as a north/south corridor through the area. Both provide direct access into the town and STH 29 serves as an entry gateway. CTH P, CTH N, CTH H, and CTH S also provide access throughout the town.

Previous Plans and Studies Related to Transportation

Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

This 2014 plan analyzes service gaps and needs in public transit and human services transportation then propose strategies to address the gaps and needs. A five-year work plan was written to cover 2014 through 2018.

Regional Livability Plan

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies three major transportation issues.

- ◆ **Modes of Transportation to Work** – The region's workforce is extremely dependent on the automobile. In 2012, over 80 percent of the region's workforce drove alone to work on a daily basis. Another 10 percent carpooled, leaving less than 10 percent for the non-automobile methods such as walking, biking, and using transit. The average commute time in the central sub-region, which includes Marathon County, was 18.7 minutes.
- ◆ **Age of Drivers in the Region** – The region is seeing a change in the number of licensed drivers by age

groups. Between 2004 and 2013, the region saw a 20 percent decrease in the number of drivers age 17 and age 19. During the same years, the region also had a 20 percent increase in drivers over age 65. These changes mean communities will have a need for multimodal options for the younger ages and options to increase safety as drivers age.

- ◆ **Transportation Maintenance Cost** – It is expensive to maintain the transportation infrastructure in the region. The current reliance on fuel tax and registration fees is inadequate, unstable, and may soon be outmoded. The inability to fund improvements and maintenance on transportation infrastructure will impact the ability to transport goods and provide safe, reliable, and efficient roads.

Connections 2030

This is Wisconsin's latest long-range, statewide, multimodal transportation plan. It identifies a series of system-level priority corridors that are critical to Wisconsin's travel patterns and the state economy.

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 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.

Wisconsin 29 Corridor Preservation Plan, Abbotsford to Wausau

WIS 29 carries approximately 18,700 vehicles per day between Abbotsford and Wausau. One of the primary objectives of the WIS 29 corridor preservation plan is to ensure that this important highway continues to operate safely and efficiently, and to protect the state's investment in this important east/west route. By officially mapping and preserving the right of way, the department can protect the state's long-term investment in the highway while providing local communities with information needed to plan for future development. This study will provide for future freeway conversion. No construction or design is scheduled. Freeway conversion will take place as mobility or safety concerns warrant changes, and when funding is available.

A preferred alternative under this plan proposes a possible interchange or overpass at County Highway S, along with some additional local roads to preserve access to local roads for properties that currently directly access State Highway 29.



Site of Possible Interchange or overpass at CTH S and STH 29 (southward view from Town of Rib Falls along STH S).
Source: Google Street View, 2017

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.

Road Network

Functional Classification

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 with population greater than 5,000 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

- ◆ **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.

All 17 miles of county road in the Town of Cassel are collector routes, while all 48 miles of town roads in Cassel are local streets. WisDOT classifies the 11 miles of STH 29 as a major arterial, and classifies the 4 miles of STH 107 as a collector route.

Jurisdictional Classification

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 described 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.

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.

The Town of Cassel has about 15 miles of state roads, 17 miles of county roads, and 48 miles of town roads.

Major Road Facilities

All major roads are summarized by functional classification, jurisdiction, and Average Daily Traffic count (ADT). Traffic volumes on most roads in the town have stayed relatively steady, increasing slightly between 2001 and 2010.

- ◆ STH 29 serves as the town's northern boundary with the Town of Rib Falls. Major roads providing access STH 29 include CTH S, STH 107 and CTH H. Four local roads have access to STH 29. STH 29 is a four-lane divided principal arterial. Between CTH H and CTH S, STH 29 had an ADT

volume of 14,000 in 2001 and 16,200 in 2013.

- ◆ STH 107 serves as the eastern boundary of the Town of Cassel. It is a major collector connecting Marathon City and STH 29 to the north and STH 153 to the south. STH 107 AADT volume north of CTH N was 3,300 in 1998 and 2,200 in 2001. The average daily traffic count was 2,900 in 2010.
- ◆ CTH N is an east-west major collector bisecting the town between north and south. CTH N connects to STH 107 to the east and STH 97 to the west. CTH N had an ADT count of 2,000 to 2,200 in 2010.
- ◆ CTH S is a north-south minor collector that connects to STH 29 to the north and STH 153 to the south. CTH S north and south of CTH N is offset with CTH S merging with CTH N for a short distance. South of the intersection with STH 29, CTH S had AADT volume of 700 in 2001 and 736 in 2010.
- ◆ CTH H is a north-south major collector serving as the town's western boundary. The AADT north of CTH N was 2,000 in 2001 and 3,500 in 2010. The AADT volume south of CTH N was 1,200 in 2001 and 1,400 in 2010.
- ◆ CTH P is an east-west major collector serving and the southern boundary of Cassel. The average daily traffic count in 2010 was between 430 and 490 in the township.

Road Maintenance

Most town roads are gravel and the perception appears to be that they are in good to fair condition. The town uses a

five-year improvement plan. The town does provide snowplowing service.

Large dairy farms have been expressed as a concern because of damage to the roads from the number of large trucks transporting dairy products.

Crashes

Crash data in this section is taken from the Traffic Safety Council (TSC) Crash Mapping program through the University of Wisconsin Traffic Safety and Operations (TOPS) Lab. A high number of crashes occurred on county and state highways within the Town of Cassel. Most crashes mapped in Cassel between 2001 and 2017 occurred along STH 29, with four fatalities resulting. Dozens of these crashes resulted in property damage or injuries. There were also several serious crashes along CTH H, CTH N, CTH P and CTH S, including five fatalities.

Road Conditions

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:

- ◆ “0” = failing
- ◆ “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

Table 6-1 shows pavement condition in Cassel. There were slightly fewer gravel roads in the town than there were in 2011, although they still make up a healthy majority of roads in Cassel.

Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. Those roads that are classified as graded earth roads should be examined for structural integrity to ensure safe travel. The roads that display a surface rating of “good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. The median road segment is rated as “fair” in the Town of Cassel as of 2017.

Table 6-1: Summary of Pavement Conditions

Surface Type	Miles
Unimproved or Graded Earth Road	0.00
Sealcoat or Gravel Road	43.58
Asphalt and Concrete	18.96
Surface Condition Rating	Miles
Failed	0.08
Very Poor	2.96
Poor	24.73
Fair	20.01
Good	7.61
Very Good	6.39
Excellent	1.00

Source: WisDOT, 2017

Other Transportation Modes

Pedestrian

Everyone is a pedestrian at some point in their trip, even when walking from a parking spot to the final destination. There are no separate facilities for pedestrians in the town. Pedestrians may share the road with motor vehicles, although many perceive that this is unsafe and undesirable. Paved shoulders and sidewalks may serve to improve both the real and perceived safety for pedestrians.

According to crash data mapped by the TOPS Lab at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, there have been no recorded pedestrian crashes in Cassel between 2001 and 2015.

Bicycle

Bicycling is a very economical and efficient mode of transportation. All roads within the town are open to bicycles. However, perceptions of safety keep many people that would like to bicycle from doing so. Providing safe facilities for bicycling usually attracts people to bicycle that wouldn't do so without those facilities. Since Cassel is bordered by two villages, Edgar and Marathon City, there is the potential for more bicycle traffic traveling between these two areas than in many other rural areas.

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. The *Marathon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*

identified CTH N as a recommended route within the Town of Cassel.

WisDOT rates the suitability of state and county highways for bicycle travel, most recently in 2015. STH 29 and CTH N were rated as “High Volume, Undesirable,” CTH H was rated as moderate conditions, and CTH P, CTH S, and STH 107 were rated as “Best Conditions.” There are several parallel town roads that are gravel surfaced. Creating a bicycle routes system along the town roads as alternatives to undesirable roads may improve bicycling in the town.

Transit

There is no transit service currently available in the Town of Cassel. 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.

Rail

No rail access exists in the Town of Cassel.

Airports

There are two primary airports in the area:

- ◆ **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.

- ◆ **The Wausau Downtown Airport** provides aviation service for the area and is fully equipped to receive large corporate jets, charters, and privately owned aircraft. Air charter, flight instruction, aircraft rental, as well as aviation line services such as refueling are available.

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 WisDOT was given the authority to establish rules to review subdivision plats abutting or adjoining state trunk highways or connecting highways. Regulations enacted by WisDOT 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.

Access to STH 29 is restricted to CTH H, CTH S, and STH 107. The WIS 29 Corridor Preservation Plan intends to preserve right of way for future conversion to a freeway. The preferred alternative includes a possible interchange or overpass at CTH S, along with some changes to adjacent local roads. There is no construction scheduled to implement this plan. The town should plan for the eventual conversion of STH to a freeway. If an interchange is constructed at CTH S, this may be a good location for some highway oriented commercial development.

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.

Issues

Maintenance - Determining, prioritizing, and funding the maintenance of roads is a difficult process. A formal policy would help decision-making.

Farm Equipment - Large farm equipment often damages roads, which is of concern to the town. To address problem, identifying methods to defray or share costs of road repair due to large farm equipment should be discussed.

Vulnerable Users - The road network should accommodate vulnerable road users, such as horses and horse drawn carriages, bicycles and pedestrians.

STH 29 Conversion - WisDOT has long term plans to convert STH 29 to a limited access freeway. This conversion will alter access in the town. The town should plan for the eventual conversion by ensuring the land near the potential interchange is not built on.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain local roadways.

- ◆ **Objective: Continue using an annual process of roadway analysis, such as PASER, to prioritize maintenance scheduling.**

- ◆ Objective: Work with surrounding towns and municipalities to share road repair costs.

Policies

- ◆ The town will continue to maintain and update current transportation facilities.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Perform biennial roadway evaluation.
- ◆ Explore using free online software through WisDOT to streamline funding allocations for repair.
- ◆ Hold public hearings to discuss roadway condition and determine in-need areas.
- ◆ Plan for the long term conversion of STH 29 to a limited access freeway.

Goal 2: Limit taxes incurred by residents due to roadway damage from large farm equipment and trucks.

- ◆ Objective: Explore developing a retainer system for road or other capital repairs that occur as a direct result of operating large farm equipment and heavy trucks on local roadways.

Policies

- ◆ Cassel will work for equitable distribution of costs for roadway repair.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Increase enforcement of weight limits on local roadways.
- ◆ Determine local authority to levy fees against individual property owners for excessive roadway damage.

Goal 3: Explore development of local regulations for rural driveways.

- ◆ Objective: Update zoning/subdivision code to include regulations that address access to roadways and stormwater drainage from private property.
- ◆ Objective: Explore development of a driveway ordinance to include location, grade, and distance from other driveways.

Policies

- ◆ The town will promote safe access from public roadways to private property.

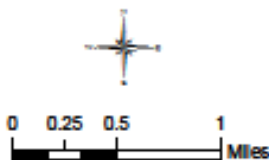
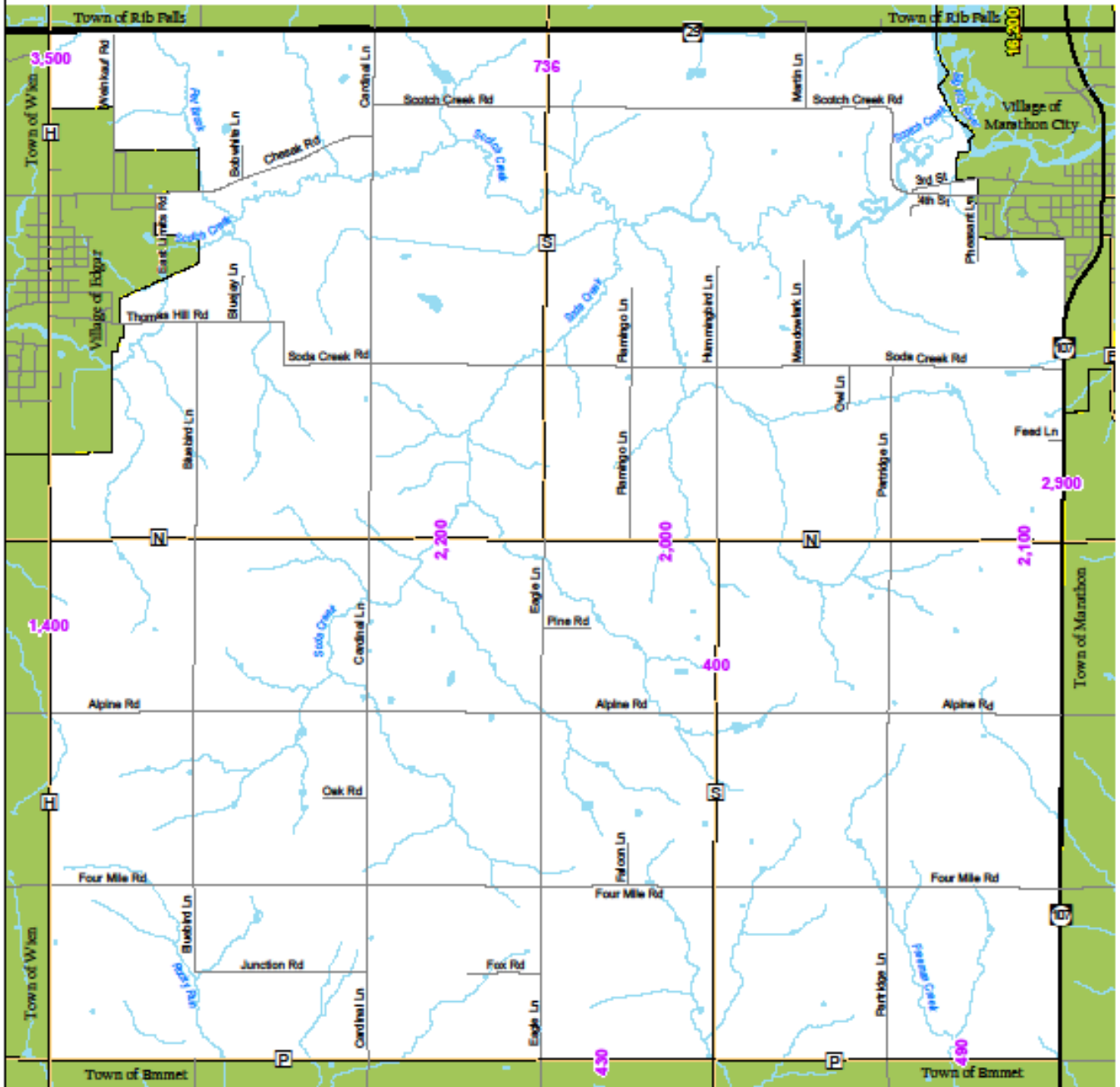
Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Collect examples of driveway ordinances from other communities.
- ◆ Determine local standards for setbacks, distances from other driveways, and other key features of the ordinance.
- ◆ Solicit public input concerning proposed regulations.
- ◆ Adopt regulations as part of the zoning code.
- ◆ To develop a formal application process for a driveway permit.

Map 4 Transportation Town of Cassel Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Water
- 500 Average Daily Traffic Count, 2013
- 500 Average Daily Traffic Count, 2010



Source: WI DNR, NCRWPC, Marathon Co., WI DOT

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCRWPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**

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Chapter Seven

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 Town of Cassel work is also provided. Potential economic development opportunities and/or issues regarding the local economy are also identified.

Previous Studies Related to Economic Development

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Marathon County is one of ten counties included in the North Central Wisconsin Economic Development District as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The NCWRPC is

the agency that is responsible for maintaining that federal designation. As part of maintaining that designation, the NCWRPC annually prepares a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report. The report summarizes and assesses economic development activities of the past year and present new and modified program strategies for the upcoming year.

Key components from this regional level plan include an inventory of the physical geography of the Region and its resident population. Labor, income, and employment data are reviewed as well as an in-depth analysis of the economic status of the region.

Regional Livability Plan (RLP)

Economic Development is one of four elements included in the Regional Livability Report, adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in 2015. The Economic Development Assessment Report, a component of the plan, looks in detail at the economic health of the 10-county region and identifies trends and issues facing the local economy. The Regional Livability Plan addresses three issues: the disparity between the available labor force and employment, the need for a living wage, and broadband internet access. The four economic development goals of the plan are as follows:

- ◆ **Goal 2:** Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce.

- ◆ **Goal 3:** Support and develop a diverse economic base ensuring economic growth and resiliency.
- ◆ **Goal 4:** Support infrastructure needed for economic development.
- ◆ **Goal 5:** Develop tourism and the knowledge-based economy into leading economic sectors.

United Way LIFE Report

The LIFE Report is a joint effort of Marathon County and the United Way. Its purpose is to provide a reference for the community to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and identify priority issues. The report, which is published every two years, serves as a tracking vehicle to show how the community has changed over time. Two of the sections of the report focus on education and on the economic environment.

The education report tracks childcare, kindergarten readiness, enrollment by racial and economic differences, school district expenditures, reading comprehension, mathematics proficiency, high school graduation rates, and higher education. Challenges facing education according to the 2013 report include limited access to child care in rural areas, school district revenue cuts, an increase in economically disadvantaged students, and fewer residents attaining post-secondary education relative to state averages.

The economic environment report tracks many economic indicators including employment, job satisfaction, income, unemployment, poverty, economic impacts of transportation, and tourism. Challenges facing the economic environment according to the 2013 report

include high unemployment despite employer needs in select industries, resident concerns about jobs providing living wages and career advancement, and a strain on county services to unemployed residents.

Marathon County: A Next Generation Talent Magnet

This report, developed by Next Generation Consulting, addresses the question, “What will it take for Marathon County to be a destination for top talent?” As part of the research process, a “handprint” for Marathon county was developed to contrast the county’s assets with other communities. According to the study, Marathon County meets or exceeds the standards of its peer regions in five of the seven measured indexes – vitality, earning, cost of lifestyle, after hours, and around town. The county falls short in two categories – social capital and learning. The report also identifies nine priority areas of focus to address moving forward. The top four priority areas were:

- ◆ Engage emerging leaders
- ◆ Create green economy, e.g. industries
- ◆ Create “next generation” businesses
- ◆ Develop a long-term funded plan.

ALICE Report: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed

This report, developed by the United Way of Marathon County, describes the 31 percent of households in Marathon County that are above the federal poverty level (10 percent of households are below the poverty level) but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or ALICE households. These households are

largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the “household survival budget,” which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, child care, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income from these jobs.

It also breaks down the data by the municipal level, and shows that 19 percent of the households in the Town of Cassel are either below the federal poverty level or are ALICE households, much lower than the Town of Rib Falls and the Villages of Edgar and Marathon City.

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.

Key Economic Sectors

In 2016, there were 76,624 jobs in Marathon County and the county had a Gross Regional Production of \$6.5 billion in 2016. **Table 7-1** shows a select number of industries by employment in Marathon County in 2011 and 2016. In 2016, the *Manufacturing Industry* (NAICS 31) was the largest employment sector with 16,369 workers. *Health Care and Social Assistance* (NAICS 62) and *Retail Trade* (NAICS 44) were second and third with 9,395 and 8,300 workers respectively.

In terms of job growth, *Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction* (NAICS 21) was the fastest growing industry from 2011 with a growth rate 315 percent, adding 82 jobs. *The Management of Companies and Enterprises industry* (NAICS 55) was second, employing an additional 1,973 workers, a 274 percent increase. The third fastest industry was *Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation* (NAICS 71) increasing 51 percent, or 378 workers. The *Management of Companies and Enterprises* (1,973 jobs), *Manufacturing* (1,458 jobs), and *Health Care and Social Assistance* (853 jobs) Industries added the most jobs overall. *Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services* came in fourth, adding 489 jobs.

It should be noted that the number of employees in certain sectors, particularly those workers engaged in Crop and Animal production, which includes forestry, may be understated because this information utilizes the Wisconsin DWD data; those who are self-employed or work in family businesses are not reflected in this data.

Table 7-1: Jobs by Industry-Marathon County, 2011-2016

NAICS	Description	2011 Jobs	2016 Jobs	2011-2016 Change	2011-2016 % Change
31	Manufacturing	14,911	16,369	+1,458	+10%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	8,542	9,395	+853	+10%
44	Retail Trade	8,539	8,300	-239	-3%
90	Government	7,895	7,983	+88	+1%
52	Finance & Insurance	4,920	4,807	-113	-2%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	4,680	4,799	+119	+3%
42	Wholesale Trade	4,206	4,321	+115	+3%
23	Construction	2,882	3,106	+224	+8%
81	Other Services (Except Public Admin.)	3,204	2,888	-316	-10%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	719	2,692	+1,973	+274%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	2,407	2,330	-77	-3%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,734	2,223	+489	+28%
Total		71,424	76,624	+5,300	+7%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International, 2017.3

Five industries lost jobs from 2011 to 2016. *Other Services except Public Administration* (NAICS 81) lost 316 jobs, decreasing 10 percent. *Retail Trade* (NAICS 44) decreased its employment by 3 percent, or 239 jobs; while *Finance and Insurance* (NAICS 52) lost 113 jobs. *Transportation and Warehousing* (NAICS 48) and *Information* (NAICS 51) lost 77 and 69 jobs respectively.

Key sectors of a regional economy can be identified by size, by growth or decline in employment, or by the concentration of the industry in the local area compared to 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. *Basic industries in Marathon County include a) Manufacturing, b) Management of Companies and Enterprises, c) Crop*

and Animal Production, d) Finance and Insurance, e) Wholesale Trade, Utilities, and f) Retail Trade. These industries 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.

In 2016, Marathon County generated 10.5 billion dollars in export revenue. Export revenue is money received in the region through foreign and external domestic sources. *Manufacturing* was the highest export industry accounting for 4.8 billion dollars, or 46 percent of total export revenue. *Finance and Insurance* was the second highest export industry accounting for over 1.4 billion dollars, or 14 percent of total export revenue. *Health Care and Social Assistance* was the third highest export industry accounting for over \$664 million.

The ability to export goods and services is essential to the county’s economy as it introduces new money to the economy,

rather than simply circulating money that is already in the region. This influx of new revenue is redistributed throughout the economy at local restaurants, suppliers, and retailers.

Job Growth

Between 2011 and 2016, Marathon County added 5,300 jobs, an increase of 7 percent. The State of Wisconsin experienced a job growth of 6 percent and the nation which increased 9 percent. Based on National Growth Effect (6,282), an Industry Mix Effect (-543), and the Competitive Effect (-539) the county would expect to add 5,739 jobs in this industry over the next ten year time period based on a shift share analysis.

While a location quotient analysis provides a snapshot of the economy at a given time, shift-share analysis introduces trend analysis (change over a period of time). This is an analysis technique that examines economic change and incorporates a “what-if” component. The theory behind shift-share is that local economic trends can be determined to be “up “or “down” relative to national trends, called the National Growth Component. It also identifies if the growth is in fast or slow growing industries or sectors, call Industrial Mix; and finally, it identifies how competitive an area is for attracting different economic sectors, called the Competitive Share. Both models use the same employment data.

The industrial mix effect represents the share of regional industry growth explained by the growth of the specific industry at the national level. The national growth effect explains how much the regional industry’s growth is explained by the overall growth in the national economy. The regional competitiveness

effect explains how much of the change in a given industry is due to some unique competitive advantage that the region possesses, because the growth cannot be explained by national trends in that industry or the economy as a whole. As a result of the regions unique competitiveness, the county should continue to grow.

Agricultural Economy

The Marathon County agricultural economy contributed 821 million dollars to the county’s income, or 12.1 percent of the county’s income in 2012. The Crop and Animal Production (NAICS 11) provided employment for 2,167 persons in 2016. The county’s top commodities in 2012 were **milk (\$249.8 million), grain (\$78.8 million), and Cattle (\$40.1 million).** Twenty-two plants process milk in the county providing jobs.

There are 485 farms in the county. Forty-eight percent of the county’s land, or 479,045 acres, is devoted to agricultural production. This is an 18.31 percent reduction in farmland since 1987. In 1987, an acre of farmland was valued at 751 dollars, while in 2012 an acre was valued at 2,916 dollars.

The average age of farm operators has been increasing, and a large number are near or over the typical retirement age. Many operators that wish to retire have difficulty finding replacements due to the high capital investment required. High capital investment costs and the need for more training and education reduces the accessibility of farming to young people and new farm operators. The number of dairy farms has decreased in the county, while the average herd size has increased, reflecting the consolidation and growth of large farm operations. Larger farm

equipment has also placed more stress on the local transportation network.

Local Economic Environment

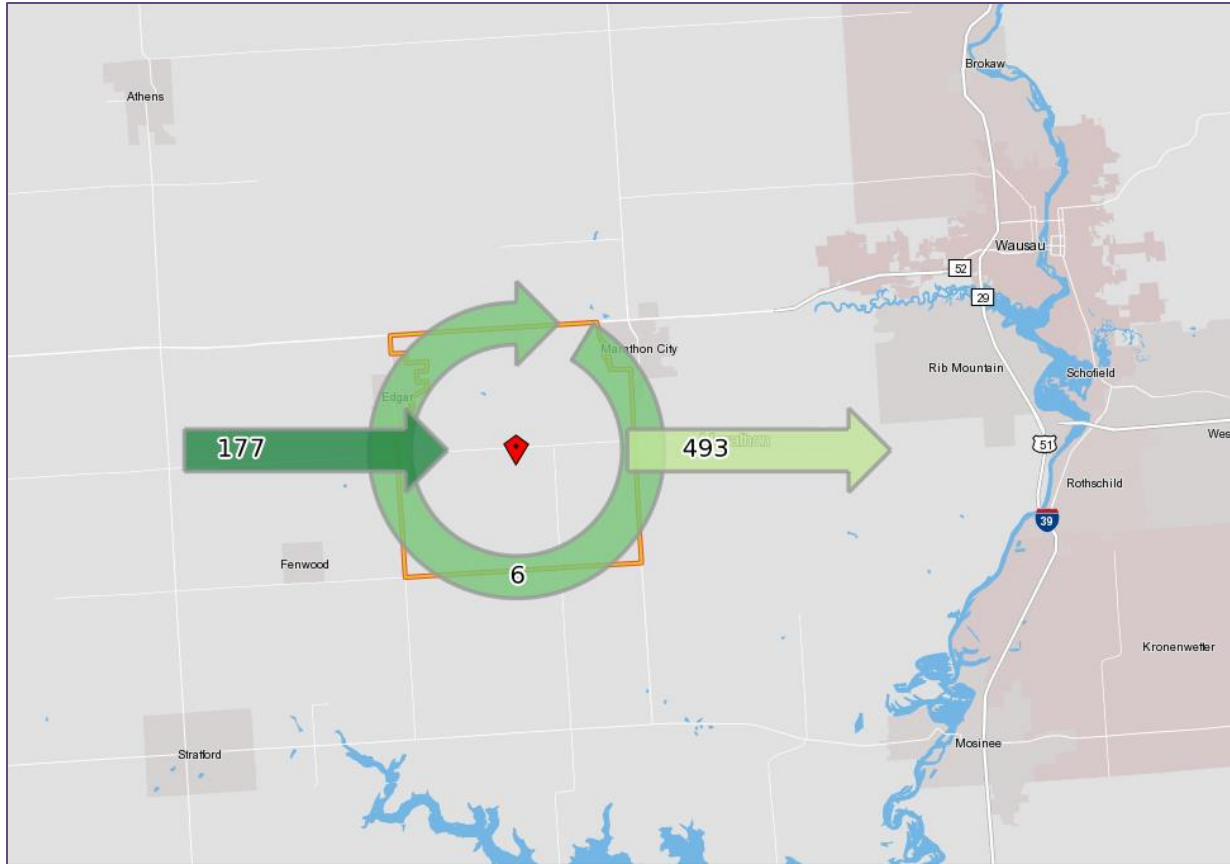
Many local jobs in Cassel are on local farms. Those who are employed in non-farm jobs work mostly in Marathon, Wausau and Marshfield. Table 7-2 illustrates resident employment information for the Town of Cassel. As of 2015, 287 residents travel to the urban Wausau Region (the Cities of Wausau

and Schofield, the Villages of Kronenwetter, Weston, Marathon City, Rothschild, and Mosinee, and the Town of Rib Mountain) for work, 20 residents travel to Marshfield, and 16 residents travel to the Town of Marathon. Of the 287 residents travelling to the Urban Wausau region for work, 74 of those workers travel to neighboring Marathon City. In total, 177 people who worked in Cassel in 2015 lived outside the township. 493 Cassel residents traveled outside the township to commute to work in 2015.

Table 7-2: Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector, Town of Cassel

NAICS Industry	2015	
	Count	Share
Transportation and Warehousing	72	39.3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	45	24.6%
Wholesale Trade	36	19.7%
Manufacturing	10	5.5%
Public Administration	9	4.9%
Retail Trade	5	2.7%
Construction	3	1.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2	1.1%
Other Services (excl. Public Administration)	1	0.5%
Total	183	100.0%

Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program (LEHD), 2015



Worker Inflow & Outflow in the Town of Cassel. 177 workers in Cassel commuted from outside the township to work, while 493 Cassel residents leave the township for work.

Source: LEHD, 2015

In 2015, there were 183 people employed in the Town of Cassel. The largest industry employer was the Transportation and Warehousing which had between 50 and 100 jobs. B&K Trucking is one of the largest businesses in the town, which specializes in transporting flatbed and stepdeck freight.

The second largest industry employer was the agriculture industry which employed about 45 people, although this figure does not include farm operators. A number of farms are scattered throughout the township. Wholesale trade was the third largest employer.

Issues

There were no significant issues identified.

Goals, Objectives, Policies, Strategies and Actions

Goal 1: Strengthen the viability of the local agricultural economy.

- ◆ Objective: Explore the development of niche markets for agricultural products (e.g. organic/hydroponic).
- ◆ Objective: Encourage secondary business development, such as outdoor markets or canneries, around the agricultural economy.

- ◆ Objective: Work with Marathon County and other agencies such as the UW-Extension, to explore regional approaches to aiding the agricultural economy.

Policies

- ◆ Encourage efforts to increase research and learning in the area of strengthening the long-term viability of agriculture within the region.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Take an active role in regionally based agricultural forums and programs.
- ◆ Encourage agricultural operators in the town to participate in regional programs aimed at improving the agricultural economy.
- ◆ Review town ordinances to ensure that they allow secondary agricultural businesses within the town.

Goal 2: Maintain access to local goods and services.

- ◆ Objective: Support local commercial corridors in Villages of Edgar and Marathon City.
- ◆ Objective: Work with the Villages of Edgar and Marathon City to develop a long term, area strategy to promote local goods and services.

Policies

- ◆ Work with the Villages of Edgar and Marathon City in strengthening commercial and service development within the area.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Work with surrounding communities to develop a mutually beneficial “regional” business plan that allows each community to attract the commercial development they desire.
- ◆ Encourage residents to patronize local establishments for goods and services.
- ◆ Coordinate with communities interested in establishing a local festival.

Chapter Eight

Land Use

The Town of Cassel is located between the Villages of Edgar and Marathon City, south of STH 29. Agricultural land uses dominate the landscape. The second largest land use in the town is woodlands.

Previous Studies Related to Land Use

Regional Livability Plan (RLP)

Land Use is one of four elements included in the Regional Livability Report, adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2015. The Land Use Assessment Report, a component of the Plan, looks in detail at the land uses through the 10-county region and identifies trends and issues facing land use. The Regional Livability Plan addresses two issues: housing density and farmland preservation. The two land use goals of the Plan are as follows:

- ◆ **Goal 9:** Preserve and protect the region's landscape, environmental resources, and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.
- ◆ **Goal 10:** Manage and reduce vacant land and structures.

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2013

The purpose of the Farmland Preservation Plan is to guide and manage growth and development of land use in a manner that will preserve the rural character, protect the agricultural base and natural

resources, and contribute to the safety, health, and prosperity of Marathon County's communities. The Farmland Preservation Plan identifies 15 year growth areas and farmland preservation areas for each town within the county. Farmland preservation areas are generally around prime farmland and existing productive agricultural areas. This plan forms the basis for Farmland Preservation Tax Credits.

Marathon County Comprehensive Plan, 2016

The Marathon County Comprehensive Plan is a policy plan. The overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to add a county-level perspective and planning direction that complements and strengthens local planning efforts, as well as provide guidance to the communities within Marathon County. The plan describes existing and future land uses, and regulatory tools for land use.

Current Pattern of Land Use

Marathon City is located on the eastern border of Cassel, and the Village of Edgar is located on the western border. The majority of single-family residential development is concentrated in these areas. Other single-family residential homes are scattered throughout the town, mainly on major roads. There are no known multi-family developments in the town.

Agriculture uses occupy the majority of land in Cassel. There are limited commercial or industrial land uses in the town. Those are located on or near major highway STH 29 and CTHs S and N.

Existing Land Use

Table 8-1 illustrates the existing land and describes land use categories. Note, the acreage and percentage of land shown on Table 8-1 were determined from aerial photos and are not intended to be accurate to the parcel level.

Table 8-1: Existing Land Use in the Town of Cassel, 2015

Land Use	Description	Acres	% of Total Land Area
Agriculture	Tilled agriculture, prime farmland, pasture, agricultural related structures, farm residences, limited scattered rural residential.	12,398	59%
Woodlands	Forested land, tree nurseries, paper forests, forested wetlands, limited scattered rural residential.	4,172	20%
Open Lands	Open land in wooded areas, along streams, prairies and savannas, wetlands.	3,000	14%
Residential	One family structures, multiple family structures with three or more households, condos, duplexes, townhouses, subdivisions.	701	3%
Transportation	Airports, highways, road right-of-ways, railroads, logging roads.	655	3%
Water	Open waters, such as lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, and reservoirs.	133	1%
Commercial	Retail stores, coffee shops, taverns, restaurants, truck stops, gas stations, farm coops, farm implement dealerships, clinics, automobile dealerships, business offices, motels/hotels, offices, telephone/gas company, business incubators, etc.	81	0%
Governmental / Institutional	Schools, churches, cemeteries, town halls, fire departments, community centers, etc.	12	0%
Total Acres		21,152	100%

Source: Marathon County Land Use Cover Database 2015, Aerial Photo Interpretation by NCWRPC

Current Land Use Plans and Regulations

Land Use Plan

The Town of Cassel completed a Comprehensive Plan in 2005 and this document is an update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning

The Town of Cassel regulates zoning within its borders. There are 22

classifications of land use, however, A-1 agricultural dominates with small sections of C-1 commercial and M-1 Manufacturing. There is also a section near the Village of Marathon City that is RS residential.

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 are of the county outside of villages and cities. 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.

Related Programs

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 taxes. See the Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan for more information.

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

With a large amount of forest land in the county, forest tax laws have a major effect on land uses. The tax laws require 25- to 50-year contracts, so they are a good indicator of the amount of land that is intended to remain undeveloped for the near future.

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. Due to the smaller acreage requirement, many individual landowners take advantage of the MFL. Landowners may close to public access up to 320 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. If the land is withdrawn from MFL prior to the contract period it is subject to a withdrawal tax.

Brownfield Redevelopment

Pursuing funding from state agencies for redevelopment of contaminated sites can reduce the uncertainty that otherwise prevents contaminated properties from being redeveloped. Action by the town to evaluate contaminants or begin remediating the property is often necessary before the private sector will be willing to invest in redevelopment. While this may require some upfront investment from the community, property values around the redeveloped properties often increase and it reduces the conversion of land from agriculture and woodland uses.

Table 8-2 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 8-2**, there are no acres of land estimated to be currently enrolled in the FCL program and about 161 acres enrolled in Management Forest Laws programs in the town.

Table 8-2: Land in Forest Preservation Programs (in acres), 2002-2016

Year	Forest Crop Law (FCL)	Managed Forest Law (MFL) open	Managed Forest Law (MFL) closed
2002	40	60	80
2016	0	0	161
Change	-40	-60	+81
% Change	-100%	-100%	100%

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

Development Trends

Land Supply

Agriculture, forested, and open lands may be considered available for development. Nearly 19,600 acres of land in the town are considered agriculture, forested, or open lands. This does not indicate that current land owners are willing to sell or develop their land. Much of this land may also be undevelopable, due to environmental constraints or other physical, geological,

or sociopolitical reasons. It is noted that 2.7 acres of this “available” land is in public ownership, thus making it essentially “unavailable” for development.

Development is somewhat limited by the enrollment of properties into tax incentive programs to maintain existing use/cover under the managed forest law, the forest crop law, and farmland preservation.

Land Values

Table 8-3 indicates the change in assessed land values between 2008 and 2016 for various types of land use in the Town of Cassel. It also indicates percent change in acreage and land value for the town. Between 2008 and 2016 the number of acres assessed as residential land increased by 31. At the same time, the amount of land in Agriculture decreased by over 24 acres and the amount of undeveloped land decreased 40 acres. This likely reflects the conversion of some farmland to rural residential uses and changes made in the classification of land from agriculture.

Major Opportunities and Constraints

Lack of Effective Development Regulation Tools

The community likes the local zoning control, but is not sure if has been effective in slowing the growth of rural residential.

Table 8-3: Change in Assessed Land Value (per acre) 2008 – 2016

Land Classification	Characteristics in Cassel	2008	2016	Change 2008 - 2016	% Change 2008 - 2016
Residential	# of Acres	621	652	31	5.0%
	Parcel Count	252	260	8	3.2%
	Per Acre Land Value	\$4,970	\$4,946	\$-23.74	-0.5%
Commercial	# of Acres	36	36	0	0.0%
	Parcel Count	13	12	-1	-7.7%
	Per Acre Land Value	\$4,353	\$4,483	\$ 131	3.0%
Agriculture	# of Acres	12,181	12,157	-24	-0.2%
	Parcel Count	514	533	19	3.7%
	Per Acre Land Value	\$174	\$186	\$12.07	6.9%
Forest	# of Acres	923	853	-70	-7.6%
	Parcel Count	65	66	1	1.5%
	Per Acre Land Value	\$1,785.48	\$1,797	\$11.47	0.6%
Agricultural Forest	# of Acres	2,970	3,036	66	2.2%
	Parcel Count	256	260	4	1.6%
	Per Acre Land Value	\$898	\$898	\$-0.12	0.0%
Undeveloped	# of Acres	3,406	3,366	-40	-1.2%
	Parcel Count	390	404	14	3.6%
	Per Acre Land Value	\$382	\$388	\$6.26	1.6%
Other	# of Acres	401	400	-1	-0.2%
	Parcel Count	137	136	-1	-0.7%
	Per Acre Land Value	\$3,862	\$3,880	\$17.65	0.5%
Total	# of Acres	20,538	20,500	-38	-0.2%
	Parcel Count	1,627	1,671	44	2.7%
	Per Acre Land Value	\$610	\$623	\$12.77	2.1%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Statement of Assessment

Future Land Use

The Town of Cassel Future Land Use Map illustrates the anticipated future pattern of land uses. The map includes twelve 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 8-1**.

Land Needs

Projections of future household growth in Cassel are provided in the Demographics chapter. Existing land use estimates were

taken from assessment data and existing land use for these calculations. Household projections were used to estimate future residential land demand, with an assumption of an average density of three acres per unit. Past trends were used to estimate the amount of land needed to accommodate future non-residential development over the next 20 years. **Table 8-4** shows estimates for land use between 2020 and 2040.

It is estimated that over the next 20 years about 99 acres will be needed to accommodate future residential development. Potential locations for future residential are identified on the **Future Land Use Map**.

Table 8-4: Land Use Projections, 2020-2040

	<i>Estimated Total Land Used by Year (Acres)</i>				
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Agricultural	12,382	12,364	12,350	12,338	12,332
Residential	734	770	797	821	833
Nonresidential	81	81	81	81	81

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 will be consistent with more than one land use designation. Additionally, although the Land Use Map shows parcel lines, the future land use categories are not expected to precisely follow parcel lines, but instead show general areas where certain land uses are

appropriate. For example, the development of a single family residence or a multi-family building would both be consistent in an area designated as residential. Zoning categories, on the other hand, are specific to each parcel.

Consistency between land use and zoning is required by state statutes. This requirement 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 chapter.

Issues

- ◆ **Improve Development Regulations** - There is a need to “beef up” the zoning code for the town especially as it relates to rural residential development. Environmental protection is also a key issue.
- ◆ **Commercial District designation** will help identify where business should locate. A concentration on agri-business is preferred.
- ◆ **Mega-Farms** - The town would like to discourage further large farm operations from starting up, as there are concerns with odor, pollution, and damage to roads from farm equipment. Establishing a retainer system for road repair might be an option.

Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Goal 1: Update current zoning regulations to reflect the desires of the community to remain agricultural.

- ◆ **Objective:** To implement zoning measures, such as conservation subdivision regulations, that would preserve natural and agricultural areas.
- ◆ **Objective:** Identify areas where rural residential development is most appropriate and direct growth to that area by zoning it accordingly.
- ◆ **Objective:** To consider a larger minimum residential lot size (eg. 5 acres).

Policies

- ◆ Cassel will review zoning regulations on a periodic basis for update.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Work with community residents to update the land use plan on a periodic basis to ensure private property rights.
- ◆ Review residential development zoning standards to determine if changes in minimum lot size or other standards would help preserve active agricultural land.
- ◆ Explore developing a planned unit development (PUD) ordinance to enable and locate large developments that meet review approval, to develop in appropriate areas.

Goal 2: Identify where a commercial district should be located.

- ◆ Objective: To direct commercial development to areas that contain appropriate infrastructure.
- ◆ Objective: To zone contiguous land as commercial.
- ◆ Objective: To develop a site plan review process for commercial development.

Policies

- ◆ The town will direct all proposed commercial development to those areas identified as appropriate for commercial use.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Assemble a commercial development committee to interact with developers and recommend proposals to the board.
- ◆ Determine access capabilities of local roadways and highways for commercial development and determine best locations for development given current traffic flow patterns.
- ◆ Conduct a poll or public listening session to solicit community opinion for creating and locating a commercial district.
- ◆ Determine types and appearances of commercial development desired and tailor commercial regulations to reflect these desires.

Goal 3: Discourage the development of mega-farms.

- ◆ Objective: To work with Marathon County to identify regulatory measures to influence the size of farm operations.

Policies

- ◆ The town will oppose the development of large mega-farm operations within its jurisdiction.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Express concerns about large mega-farm operations to members of the county board, local legislators, and other individuals in a formal letter or public meeting.
- ◆ Contact UW-Extension, Marathon County and other agencies to collect information on the impacts of mega-farms for local distribution.

Goal 4: Preserve prime agricultural land.

- ◆ Objective: To discourage conversion of active farmland to rural residential lots.
- ◆ Objective: Explore programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, that seek to maintain prime soils and cropland.

Policies

- ◆ The town will support the preservation of active agricultural lands.

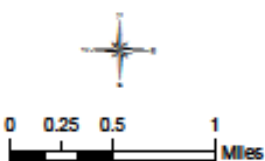
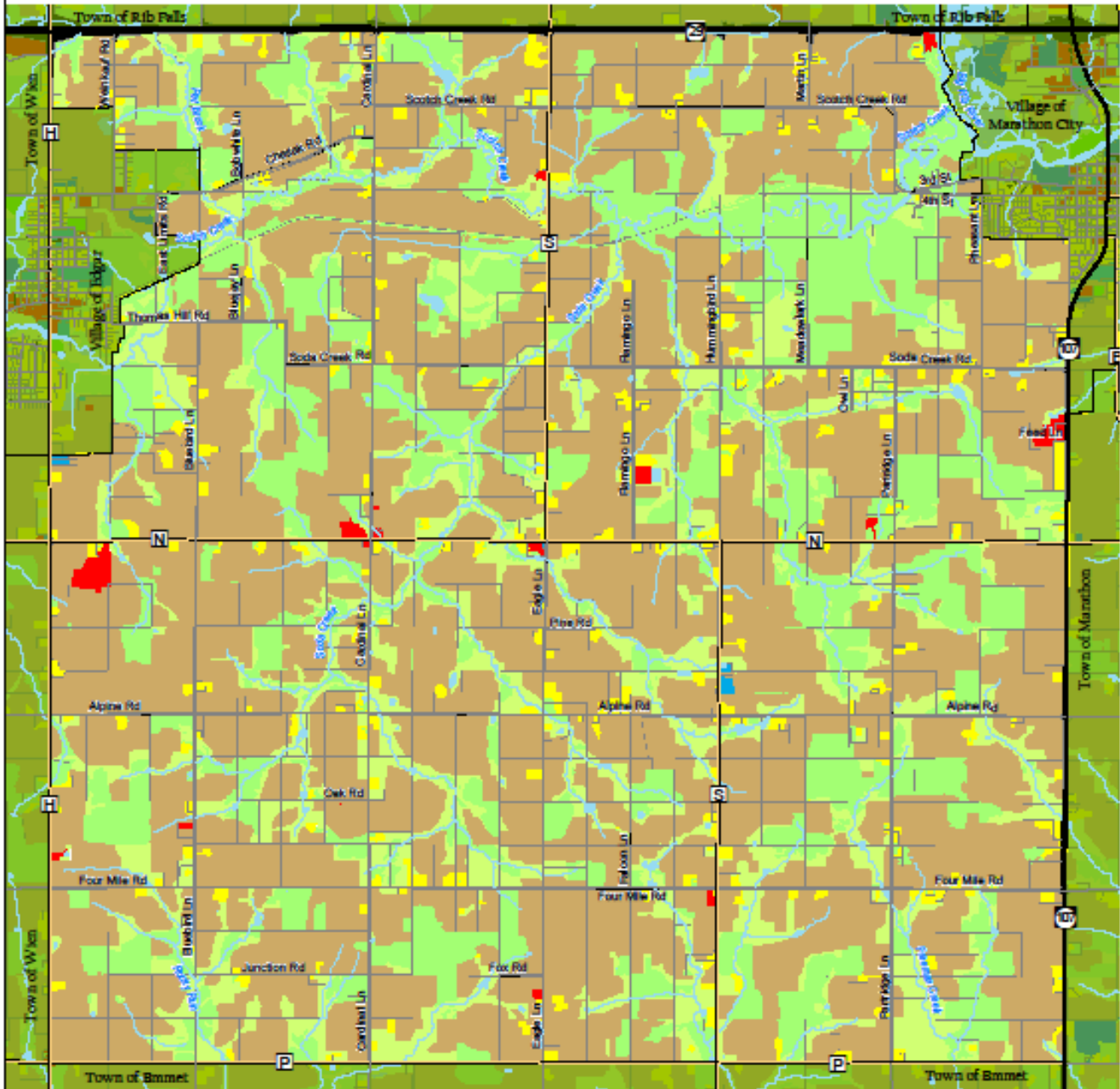
Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Contact local agencies, including UW-Extension, to acquire pamphlets and other informational materials on agricultural preservation tools.
- ◆ Explore working with Marathon County, or local communities to host a workshop on agricultural preservation.

Map 5
**Existing Generalized
 Land Use**
 Town of Cassel
 Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| — Minor Civil Divisions | ■ Agriculture | ■ Outdoor Recreation |
| — US Highway | ■ Commercial | ■ Residential |
| — State Highways | ■ Governmental / Institutional | ■ Transportation |
| — County Highways | ■ Industrial | ■ Water |
| — Local Roads | ■ Open Lands | ■ Woodlands |
| □ Parcels | | |



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co.,
 Wis DOT

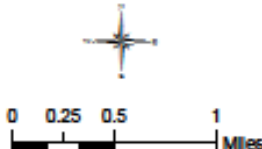
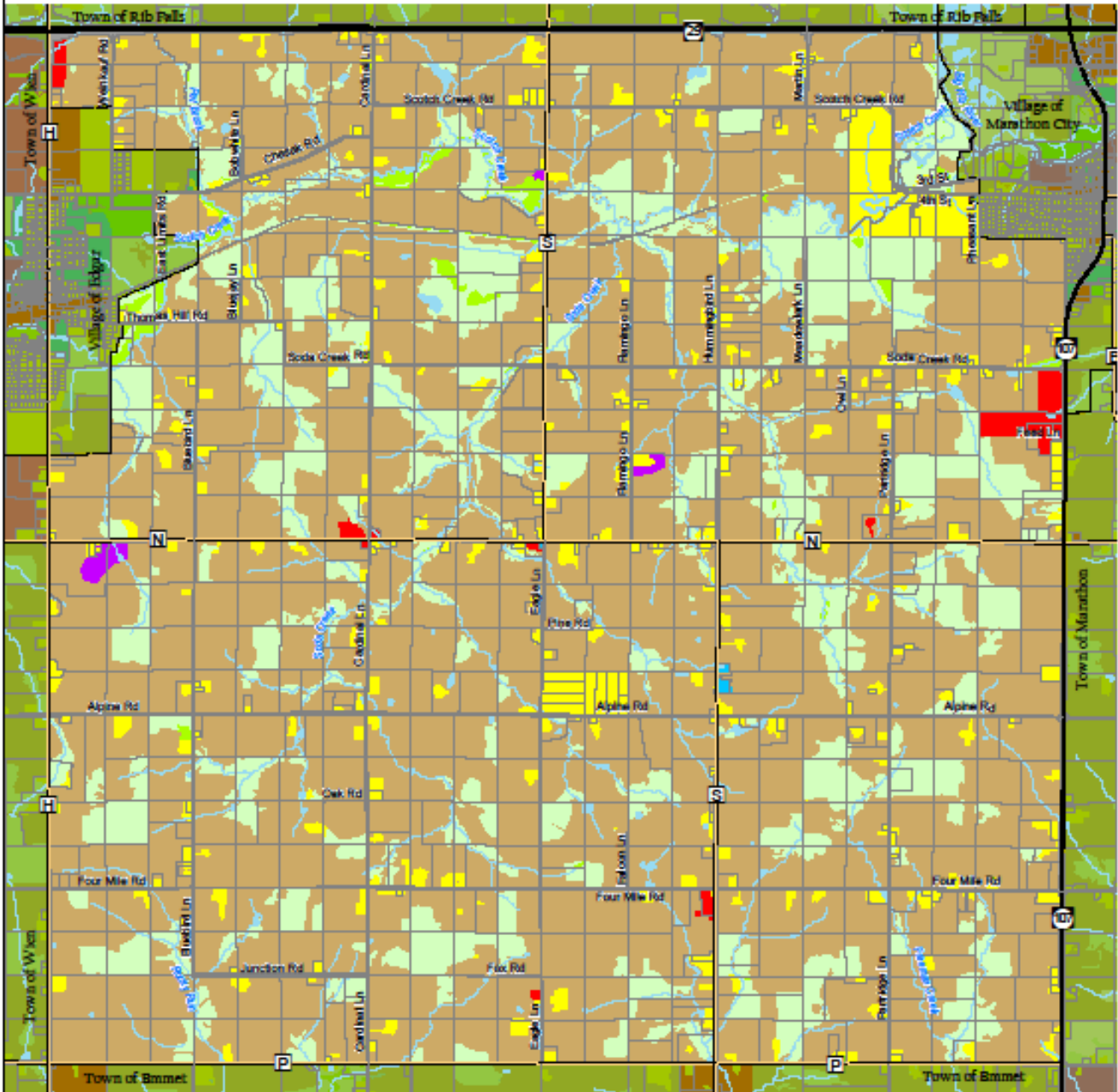
This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey
 and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is
 a compilation of records, information and data used for
 reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for
 any inaccuracies herein contained.

**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**
 210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Map 6
Future Land Use
 Town of Cassel
 Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| — Minor Civil Divisions | ■ Agriculture | ■ Open Lands |
| — US Highway | ■ Commercial | ■ Woodlands |
| — State Highways | ■ Industrial | ■ Public/Quasi-Public |
| — County Highways | ■ Mixed Development | ■ Outdoor Recreation |
| — Local Roads | ■ Multi-Family Residential | ■ Transportation |
| □ Parcels | ■ Single Family Residential | ■ Water |



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Marathon Co

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Chapter Nine

Intergovernmental Cooperation

This analysis presents an inventory of existing mechanisms that the Town of Cassel 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 Town of Cassel 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

Fire protection is provided by a joint fire district with the Village of Edgar and the Town of Marathon. Ambulance services are provided through the Village of Edgar.

Utilities- There are no shared utilities contracts

Cooperative Practices

Village of Marathon City /Village of Edgar – The Town of Cassel and the Village of Edgar cooperate with the Village of Marathon City to provide fire protection and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). There are also agreements in place for road maintenance.

Surrounding Towns

- ◆ Town of Marathon – minor road maintenance
- ◆ Town of Emmet – minor road maintenance
- ◆ Town of Wien – minor road maintenance
- ◆ Town of Rib Falls – minor road maintenance

School District

No special agreements currently exist with the Marathon School District or the Edgar School District

Marathon County

The county provides several services to the town including: law enforcement through the Sheriff's Office, 911 dispatch service, access permits, maintenance and improvement of county highways, planning and permitting oversight regarding shoreland, wetland and floodplain regulation, private sewage system regulation, and animal waste and manure management. The county also provides oversight on compliance with county soil and water conservation policy for the Farmland Preservation Program.

Regional Agencies

The NCWRPC provides planning and mapping assistance.

State and Federal Level Cooperation

State and Federal Agencies

The town has little direct contact with state or federal agencies. However state agencies regulate certain activities such as access onto state roads, shoreland, floodplain and wetland zoning oversight, navigable waters protection, compliance with water quality standards, farmland preservation tax credits and managed forest tax credit programs.

Existing or Potential Conflicts

Annexation

In Wisconsin, neither incorporated municipalities nor towns can initiate annexation. The process is driven by individual property owners (or developers) who petition for annexation into a city to receive sewer and water service. While towns often view annexation as a means to take their territory, cities and villages view annexations as a means to provide a more logical pattern of development and efficient provision of services. Cassel is adjacent to both the Village of Marathon City and Village of Edgar and residents feel annexations will need to occur as these villages grow. At the same time, the town is wary of losing land as it makes it difficult to provide current services without the tax revenue that is lost due to annexation.

Goals, Objectives, Policies, Strategies and Actions

Goal 1: Maintain appropriate tax base to provide minimum service levels.

- ◆ **Objective: Work with the Villages of Marathon City and Edgar to prevent large annexations that would negatively affect the tax base of the township.**
- ◆ **Objective: Develop boundary agreements with the Villages of Marathon City and Edgar to determine the extent of future growth into the township.**
- ◆ **Objective: Analyze future developments for their impact on the community's tax base in relation**

to the services that they would require.

Policies

- ◆ Cassel will seek to maintain sufficient tax base to continue to provide necessary services to its residents.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Stress with the Villages of Marathon City and Edgar the importance of communicating annexation plans and requests with the town.
- ◆ Determine community support for boundary agreements with the surrounding villages to help maintain current town size.
- ◆ Perform a feasibility analysis to determine residential property thresholds to maintain sufficient tax generation for provision of services.
- ◆ Analyze new housing developments for their impact of service provision and infrastructure development.

Goal 2: Maintain good relations with local, regional, and state agencies.

- ◆ Objective: Work with the WisDOT on road, highway and bridge reconstruction projects.
- ◆ Objective: Continue good working relationship with Marathon County Sheriff's Department.
- ◆ Objective: Continue good working relationship with the Villages of Edgar and Marathon City for emergency services.

Policies

- ◆ The Town of Cassel will continue to work with intergovernmental agencies concerning important local interests.

Strategies and Actions

- ◆ Establish regular meeting dates with service providers including Marathon County Sheriff's Office and the fire districts of Marathon City and Edgar.
- ◆ Maintain direct communication with a staff member of the WisDOT for updates and to answer questions concerning STH 29.
- ◆ Provide all service providers with regular updates, or meeting minutes, from official town meetings.

Chapter Ten

Implementation

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 town 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. The Town 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 Town of Cassel administers its zoning ordinance.

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 section.

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.

- ◆ **Subdivision (Land Division) Ordinance:** Subdivision regulations serve as an important function by ensuring the orderly development of

unplatted and/or undeveloped land (in the Town of Cassel, these regulations are currently administered by Marathon County). 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.

- ◆ **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 Town 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 by the town in light of the priorities outlined in this comprehensive plan on a regular basis.

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 Planning and Zoning Committee who must adopt the plan by resolution of majority vote. The Committee recommendation is forwarded to the Town 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 Cassel 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 Cassel. 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 Town Board, Planning and Zoning Committee, 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 Cassel Comprehensive Plan may be amended at any time by the Town 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 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 10-1.

As noted above, proposed amendments must be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Committee prior to final action and adoption by the Town Board. The public should be notified of proposed Plan changes and allowed an opportunity for review and comment. For major amendments, the town 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.

The following criteria should be considered when reviewing plan amendments and updates:

- ◆ The change is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Cassel Comprehensive Plan.
- ◆ The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
- ◆ 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.

- ◆ The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ There is a change in town actions or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
- ◆ The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
- ◆ There is a community or regional need identified in the comprehensive plan for the proposed land use or service.
- ◆ 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 Chapters

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 Cassel 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 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

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 10-1 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 Cassel, 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

Table 10-1: Implementation Plan Actions

Natural Resources	Who is responsible?	Priority
Communicate the desire for wetland protection and monitoring to the WDNR.	Town Board	Ongoing
Obtain a main contact person from each agency the town communicates with at the county and WDNR.	Town Board	Ongoing
Send owners of private forestland information on preservation programs.	Town Board	Short-Term
Perform feasibility analysis to determine the maximum amount of forestland the town could publicly own (if any).	Town Board	Short-Term
Encourage developers to maintain as much forestland as possible in new developments. Promoting conservation subdivisions or other preservation techniques.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term

Land Use	Who is responsible?	Priority
Work with community residents to update the land use plan on a periodic basis.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Mid-Term
Review residential development zoning standards	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term
Explore developing a planned unit development (PUD) ordinance	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term
Assemble a commercial development committee to interact with developers and recommend proposals to the Board.	Town Board	Immediate
Determine the best locations for development along transportation corridors	Planning and Zoning Committee	Immediate
Conduct a poll or public listening session to solicit community opinion for creating and locating a commercial district.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term
Determine types and appearances of commercial development desired and tailor commercial regulations to reflect these desires.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term
Express concerns about large mega-farm operations	Town Board	Short-Term
Collect information on the impacts of mega-farms for local distribution.	Town Board	Immediate

Acquire pamphlets and other informational materials on agricultural preservation tools.	Town Board	Short-Term
Explore working with Marathon County, or local communities to host a workshop on agricultural preservation.	Town Board	Mid-Term

Transportation	Who is responsible?	Priority
Perform biennial roadway evaluation.	Town Board	Ongoing
Explore using free online software through WisDOT to streamline funding allocations for repair.	Town Board	Immediate
Hold public hearings to discuss roadway condition and determine in-need areas.	Town Board	Short-Term
Increase enforcement of weight limits on local roadways.	Town Board	Short-Term
Determine local authority to levy fees against individual property owners for excessive roadway damage.	Town Board	Mid-Term
Adopt a local driveway ordinance for a 300-foot minimum distance between driveways (for town roads).	Planning and Zoning Committee	Immediate

Utilities	Who is responsible?	Priority
Perform annual review of service provision costs.	Town Board	Ongoing
Communicate with surrounding communities the willingness to share services/costs.	Town Board	Immediate
Explore creating a services committee to identify areas for consolidation, sharing, or privatization.	Town Board	Short-Term

Housing	Who is responsible?	Priority
Observe the land use plan in siting new residential development.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Immediate
Explore adopting a planned unit development (PUD) ordinance to allow for concentrated multi-use development.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term
Determine limits of service provision on a per-unit basis.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term
Determine the extent of growth desired by the community and explore exacting development fees, or incentives, to achieve desired outcomes.	Town Board	Short-Term
Determine parameters for new housing within the town including minimum height, bulk, and requirements for foundations.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Mid-Term
Explore adoption of residential design guidelines to promote development of desired structures.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Mid-Term
Work with Marathon County and other agencies to develop a seasonal housing plan for temporary residents.	Town Board	Short-Term
Determine appropriate accessory use restrictions for the Town of Cassel.	Town Board	Short-Term

Cultural Resources	Who is responsible?	Priority
Contact the Marathon County Historical Society and consider teaming with other local communities to form a committee that records historic sites.	Town Board	Long-Term
Celebrate historic local sites	Town Board	Long-Term

Community Facilities	Who is responsible?	Priority
Participate in long-term planning with service-providing entities.	Town Board	Short-Term
Annually evaluate delivery of services.	Town Board	Short-Term
Participate in recruitment efforts, especially concerning fire and emergency response, with providing agencies.	Town Board	Immediate

Parks and Recreation	Who is responsible?	Priority
Encourage proper maintenance and upkeep of the existing county and state park systems.	Town Board	Ongoing
Communicate desires for recreational facilities and uses to the appropriate entities.	Town Board	Ongoing

Economic Development	Who is responsible?	Priority
Encourage agricultural operators in the town to participate in regional programs aimed at improving the agricultural economy.	Town Board	Short-Term
Review town ordinances to ensure that they allow secondary agricultural businesses within the town.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Immediate
Work with surrounding communities to develop a mutually beneficial “regional” business plan.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term
Encourage residents to patronize local establishments for goods and services.	Town Board	Immediate
Coordinate with communities interested in establishing a local festival.	Town Board	Mid-Term

Intergovernmental Cooperation	Who is responsible?	Priority
Stress with the Villages of Marathon City and Edgar the importance of communicating annexation plans and requests with the town.	Town Board	Immediate
Determine community support for boundary agreements with the surrounding villages	Town Board	Immediate
Perform a feasibility analysis to determine residential property thresholds to maintain sufficient tax generation for provision of services.	Town Board	Short-Term
Analyze new housing developments for their impact of service provision and infrastructure development.	Planning and Zoning Committee	Short-Term
Establish regular meeting dates with service providers	Town Board	Immediate
Maintain direct communication with a staff member of WisDOT	Town Board	Ongoing
Provide all service providers with regular updates, or meeting minutes, from official town meetings.	Town Board	Immediate

Appendix A

Public Participation Plan



Resolution for the Adoption of a PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)

THE TOWN OF CASSEL DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the Town is updating its Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

WHEREAS, public participation is critical for the development of a plan; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Town Board to approve a process to involve the public in the planning effort; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as attached to this resolution.

I, NAME, Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a Town Board meeting, held at the Town Hall on the Xth day of MONTH, YEAR, at X:00 p.m. 11 Dec. 2017 7:00pm.

Mary Kay Hagenbucher
Clerk

Appendix B

Plan Resolution

PLAN COMMISSION RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #01-2018

Town of Cassel, Marathon County, Wisconsin

The Plan Commission of the Town of Cassel, Marathon County, Wisconsin, by this resolution, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and by a roll call vote of a majority of the town plan commission present and voting resolves and recommends to the town board of the Town of Cassel as follows:

Adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Cassel Plan Commission, by this resolution, further resolves and orders as follows:

All maps and other materials noted and attached as exhibits to the Town of Cassel Comprehensive Plan are incorporated into and made a part of the Town of Cassel Comprehensive Plan.

The vote of the town plan commission in regard to this resolution shall be recorded by the clerk of the town plan commission in the official minutes of the Town of Cassel Plan Commission.

The town clerk shall properly post or publish this resolution as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

Adopted this 24th day of January 2018.

[Signatures of plan commission members]

Robert A. Schumacher
[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]

Attest:

[Signature of plan commission clerk]

[Signature]

Appendix C

Plan Ordinance

ORDINANCE FOR PLAN ADOPTION

ORDINANCE #2018-01

Town of Cassel, Marathon County, Wisconsin

SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE

The title of this ordinance is the Town of Cassel Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Cassel to lawfully adopt a comprehensive plan as required under s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION II – AUTHORITY

The town board of the Town of Cassel has authority under its village powers under s. 60.22, Wis. stats., its power to appoint a town plan commission under ss. 60.62 (4) and 62.23 (1), Wis. stats., and under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Cassel must be in compliance with s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats., in order for the town board to adopt this ordinance.

SECTION III – ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE

The town board of the Town of Cassel, by this ordinance, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and roll call vote by a majority of the town board present and voting, provides the authority for the Town of Cassel to adopt its comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., and provides the authority for the town board to order its publication.

SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The town board of the Town of Cassel has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by s. 66.1001 (4) (a), Wis. stats.

SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Plan Commission of the Town of Cassel, by a majority vote of the entire commission, recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of the Town of Cassel Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Cassel, has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, with notice in compliance with the requirements of s. 66.1001 (4) (d), Wis. stats.

Appendix C (continued)

Plan Ordinance

SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Cassel, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Cassel Comprehensive Plan Ordinance under pursuant to s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision of application, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are severable.

SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

The town clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

Adopted this 9th day of APRIL 2018.

[Signatures of town board]

Curt Hageman chairman
Roger Hageman supervisor
Steve Hageman supervisor

Attest:

Mary Kay Stagenbuck

[Signature of town clerk]

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Town of Cassel
Comprehensive Plan
2018