TOWN OF EASTON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2007

Town of Easton Town Board

Marathon County Conservation, Planning & Zoning Department

URS, Inc.
MSA

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Town of Easton
Conditions and Issues

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Town of Easton
Conditions and Issues

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List of Acronyms

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

AADT—Annual Average Daily Traffic

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

BMPs—Best Management Practices

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

CCR&R—Child Care Resource and Referral Network

CDBG—Community Development Block Grant

CES—Cropland Evaluation System (Marathon County)

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

CRP—Conservation Reserve Program

CTH—County Trunk Highway

CWA—Central Wisconsin Airport

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

DWD—Department of Workforce Development

EMS—Emergency Medical Services

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

FCL—Forest Crop Law

FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency

FIRM—Flood Insurance Rate Maps

HOME—Home Investment Partnerships Program

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

LHOG—Local Housing Organization Grant

LOS—Level of Service (related to amount of traffic and congestion on a roadway, measure from Level A, no congestion and freely moving traffic, to Level F, traffic gridlock).

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

MFL—Managed Forest Law

MPO—Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

NCHC—North Central Health Care

NCWRPC—North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

NRHP—National Register of Historic Places

NTC—Northcentral Technical College

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

STH—State Trunk Highway

PASER—Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating

PMP—Pavement Management Plan

SHPO—State Historic Preservation Office

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

TIP—Transportation Improvement Program (Marathon County)

USDA—United States Department of Agriculture

UW-MC—University of Wisconsin—Marathon County

WDA—Wisconsin Department of Agriculture

WDNR—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

WDOA—Wisconsin Department of Administration

WDOT—Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WHEDA—Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

WISLR—Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads

WPS—Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

1. Introduction and Summary

The Town of Easton's *Conditions and Issues Report* documents the current conditions in the community and identifies primary issues or concerns that the Town may want to address in the future. This report includes information about Easton in the areas of demographics, natural resources, land use, transportation, utilities, housing, cultural resources, community facilities, parks, economic development, and intergovernmental cooperation. The report provides a foundation for development of the final plan, which will outline policies and actions that the Town can take to address identified issues and guide future growth in Easton. Some key findings in this report include:

- The Town of Easton is located in northeast Marathon County with CTH N on the south boundary and STH 52 on the north boundary. The Town has experienced steady population growth over the past three decades, with an increase of 150 persons, or 16 percent.

- Residents anticipate increased development pressure as new development, including the construction of a new hospital and new Wausau East High School, will cause increased demand for residential lots.

- Easton residents are concerned about preserving the natural environment, including woodlands, wetlands and open spaces. They also want to manage new development and preserve the rural character of the Town. They are examining whether there is a need to change minimum lot size to manage growth.

- Although farming activity is changing in Marathon County and Easton, the Town has over 3,800 acres of land under Farmland Preservation Contracts, one of the highest concentrations in eastern Marathon County.

- Easton's development capacity is somewhat limited because high bedrock levels hinder the ability to secure adequate water for development parcels.

- Residents within Easton use individual on-site waste disposal systems and have private wells. High bedrock levels often require the use of holding tanks for waste disposal systems.

- Easton residents are well served with County and State parks and have not identified any future park and recreation needs.

- Intergovernmental coordination activities are primarily focused on Easton's volunteer fire department and its participation in a tanker association with other towns.

2. Demographics

This analysis is intended to describe the existing demographics of the Town of Easton and identify the major demographic trends impacting Easton over the next few decades. Both Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin are also listed for comparison.

Population and Households

Historical Trends

As shown in Table 2-1, Easton has experienced steady population growth over the past three decades, growing by 150 persons, or 16 percent. Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin both grew by over 20 percent over the same time period. Household growth over the past decade was higher than for either the County or State. The average household size declined since 1990, but still remained higher than that of the County or State.

Table 2-1: Demographic Change, 1970-2000

	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1970 to 2000	% Change 1990 to 2000
Total Population						
Easton	912	1046	1039	1062	+16%	+2%
County	97,457	111,270	115,400	125,834	+29%	+9%
State	4,417,821	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,363,675	+21%	+10%
Total Households						
Easton	234	321	316	383	+64%	+21%
County	29,771	37,865	41,534	47,402	+59%	+14%
State	1,328,804	1,652,261	1,822,118	2,084,544	+57%	+14%
Average Household Size						
Easton	3.90	3.26	3.29	2.77	-29%	-16%
County	3.27	2.90	2.75	2.60	-20%	-5%
State	3.22	2.35	2.68	2.50	-22%	-7%

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Administration

Table 2-2 describes the percentage of population falling in various age groups. Easton varied from the County and State in several categories. Easton had fewer young people in all age categories until age 25, when Easton's percentage was similar to, or greater than those of the County and State. Easton's median age of 39.3 was higher than 36.3 and 36.0 for the County and State, respectively.

Table 2-2: Population by Age Group, 2000

Age Group	Percent of Population		
	Easton	County	State
Under 5 years	6.0	6.4	6.4
5 to 9 years	6.5	7.5	7.1
10 to 14 years	9.2	8.0	7.5
15 to 19 years	7.1	7.7	7.6
20 to 24 years	2.9	5.4	6.7
25 to 34 years	12.7	13.0	13.2
35 to 44 years	18.5	16.5	16.3
45 to 54 years	16.2	13.9	13.7
55 to 59 years	4.5	4.8	4.7
60 to 64 years	4.5	3.8	3.8
65 to 74 years	7.2	6.4	6.6
75 to 84 years	3.7	4.8	4.7
85 years and over	0.9	1.7	1.8
Median Age	37.9	36.3	36.0

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Administration, 2000

Population Forecasts

Table 2-3 indicates population projections for Easton and for Marathon County. These projections were completed by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) (2003). Projections were based on the population from the 2000 Census, and projected in five-year increments until 2030. The percentage change in population growth from 1980 to 2000 was used as the basis for future growth. Table 2-3 uses the moderate growth rate. Estimates were completed for low growth (-5%), and high growth (+5%) as well. The moderate growth percent change from 2000 to 2030 for Easton is 14 percent, slightly higher than the projected State change of 13.3 percent.

Table 2-3: Population Projections – 2000-2030

	Total Population by Year						
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Easton	1,062	1,087	1,112	1,136	1,161	1,186	1,211
County	125,834	128,632	131,430	134,217	137,022	139,820	142,618

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

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

The NCWRPC projections provide a baseline to determine trends in the sub-area. They are useful in identifying future population beyond the borders of individual communities. The WDOA projections are more useful at the local municipality level. The WDOA projections in Table 2-3b show a slower rate of growth for Easton than the NCWRPC projections, with a population of 1,075 by 2010.

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

	Total Population by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% change
Easton	1,062	1,069	1,076	1,084	1,092	1,101	1,124	+6%
County	125,834	130,242	134,504	138,836	143,308	147,112	150,255	+19%

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

Household Forecasts

Like the population projections, household projections were also calculated using both NCWRPC and WDOA population data. Table 2-4 indicates projected households for Easton and for Marathon County. These projections are based on the population projections shown in Table 2-3 divided by the average household size of 2.77 (Table 2-1) in Easton in 2000. Easton shows a 14 percent change, or 28 additional households, compared to 13 percent change for Marathon County.

Table 2-4: Household Projections – 2000-2030

	Total Households by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% change
Easton	383	392	401	410	419	428	437	+14%
County	48,585	49,665	50,745	51,821	52,904	53,985	55,065	+13%

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

Table 2-4b includes household projections based on population projections completed by the WDOA and assumes an average persons-per-household of 2.77 in Easton in 2000. Like the WDOA population projections, the WDOA household projections show a slower rate of growth for Easton by 2010.

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

	Total Households by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% chg
Easton	383	392	404	415	423	432	445	+16%
County	47,702	50,109	52,902	55,589	58,181	60,283	62,035	+30%

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

Education and Income Levels

According to 2000 Census data, 81.9 percent of Easton residents have a high school education or higher. This compares to 83.8 percent for the County, and 85.1 percent for the State. In the Town of Easton, 15.7 percent of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. This is slightly lower than the number of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher in the County and State with 18.3 percent and 22.4 percent respectively.

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

	Easton		County	State
Educational Attainment	**Number**	**Percent**	**Percent**	**Percent**
Less than 9th Grade	64	9.0	8.2	5.4
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	65	9.1	8.0	9.6
High School Graduate	311	43.6	38.0	34.6
Some College, No Degree	103	14.4	18.3	20.6
Associates Degree	58	8.1	9.2	7.5
Bachelor's Degree	80	11.2	12.6	15.3
Graduate or Professional Degree	32	4.5	5.7	7.2
Percent high school graduate or higher		81.9	83.8	85.1
Percent bachelor's degree or higher		15.7	18.3	22.4

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Administration, 2000

Median household income for Easton residents was $49,722 in 2000. This is higher than Marathon County with a median of $45,165, and the State overall median of $43,791. Income distribution among all income levels is approximately proportionate to levels observed County and Statewide.

Table 2-6: Household Income Levels, 2000

	Easton		County	State
Income Level	**Number**	**Percent**	**Percent**	**Percent**
Less than $10,000	10	2.7	5.9	7.1
$10,000 - $14,999	26	7.0	5.4	5.8
$15,000 - $24,999	31	8.3	12.3	12.7
$25,000 - $34,999	32	8.6	13.1	13.2
$35,000 - $49,999	89	23.9	19.4	18.1
$50,000 - $74,999	110	29.6	25.2	22.7
$75,000 - $99,999	46	12.4	10.5	10.9
$100,000 - $149,000	7	1.9	5.4	6.4
$150,000 - $199,999	2	0.5	1.3	1.5
$200,000 or More	19	5.1	1.6	1.5
Total Households	372	100.0	100.0	100.0
Median Household Income	$49,722	-	$45,165	$43,791

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Administration, 2000

Employment Characteristics

Table 2-7 illustrates the breakdown, by occupation, of the employed population of Easton in 2000. The "employed population" is defined as people living in Easton who are 16 years and older. In 2000, Easton had an employed population of 575. Most residents were employed in management, professional and related; sales and office; or production, transportation and material moving occupations. Employment projections are included in the Economic Development section.

Table 2-7: Occupation by Sector, 2000

Sector	Number	Percent
Management, professional, and related occupations	168	29.2
Service occupations	56	9.7
Sales and office occupations	132	23.0
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	12	2.1
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	86	15.0
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	121	21.0
Total Employed*	575	**100**

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration
* "Total Employed" represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

Demographic Trends

- Easton has experienced steady population growth over the past three decades, growing 16 percent while the County and State both grew by over 20 percent.
- Household growth over the past decade was higher than for either the County or State. The average household size is 2.77, higher than that of the County or State.
- Easton had fewer young people in all age categories until age 25, when it showed similar percentages to the County and State. Easton's median age is 37.9, as compared to 36.3 and 36.0 for the County and State.
- 81.9 percent of Easton residents have a high school education or higher, compared to 83.8 percent for the County, and 85.1 percent for the State.
- In Easton, 15.7 percent of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, slightly lower than the number of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher in the County (18.3 percent) and the State (22.4 percent).
- Median Household income for Easton was higher at $49,722 than either the County or State medians.
- Both population and households in Easton are expected to grow about 14 percent between 2000 and 2030. (NCWRPC projections).
- In 2000, most residents were employed in management and professional; sales and office; or production, transportation and material moving occupations.
- Easton's changing population — Residents noted that Easton is attracting new residents, many of whom appear to be empty-nesters.

3. Natural Resources

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

Recent Planning Efforts Related to Natural Resources

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

- **Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP)** - In 2001, Marathon County adopted a LWRMP in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Marathon County and outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources. Marathon County encompasses portions of 22 watersheds. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ranked these watersheds according to water pollution impacts and designated five as "priority" watersheds to receive special planning and funding through the voluntary, State-funded Priority Watershed Program. The County's Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning (DCPZ) works with the WDNR to implement the program. Program funding is used to hire staff to assist in developing management plans for each watershed and to provide cost sharing to landowners for implementation of "best management practices" (BMPs) to achieve the program objectives.

- **Marathon County 2001 Groundwater Protection Guide** – This guide is an extension of the efforts established with adoption of the Marathon County Groundwater Plan in 1988. It is intended to guide local and County officials in setting policy. It also serves as a resource of information about groundwater and other natural resources and recommends strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection.

- **Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 1996-2005** – This plan includes recommendations to guide management of forest land in Marathon County in accordance with the County Park, Recreation, and Forestry Department's mission to manage and protect the County forest on a sustainable basis for

ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future generations. It provides substantial information on existing forest resources as well as information regarding the roles of the various agencies and regulatory framework related to forest management.

Water Resources

Marathon County contains abundant water resources. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state and others need 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 located in Easton.

Water resources that have been significantly degraded are identified as "impaired waters." Four of the 22 watersheds in Marathon County have been identified as "impaired waters" on the "303 (d) list" of the U.S. Clean Water Act. The list identifies waters that do not meet current water quality standards and merit water quality improvement and protection. There are no impaired waters in Easton.

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

Resources in Easton

Streams/Rivers – The Eau Claire River crosses the southeast section of Easton. Big Sandy and Little Sandy Creeks are the other waterways in the Town. Easton is located within the Lower Eau Claire watershed. (Figure 3-1)

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

In the Town of Easton, the greatest land area within the 100-year floodplain is located along the Eau Claire River.

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

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

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

The largest wetland areas in Easton are categorized as forested, and emergent/wet meadows. They are primarily located along the Eau Claire River and along the various creeks. A large wetland area is located just north of CTH Z at the confluence of Big and Little Sandy Creek. (Figure 3-2).

Groundwater– Groundwater supply is limited, particularly across the northern portion of the Town, due to high bedrock levels. (Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4).

Soil Resources

Soils Types – The predominant soil type in Easton is Fenwood-Rietbrock-Rozellville. There is a section of Marathon-Mylrea-Moberg in the north central section. Along the Eau Claire and in the southwest corner is Mahtomedi-Fordum-Sturgeon soil. There are sections of Mosinee-Meadland-Dancy and Kennan-Hatley soils along the southern edge of Easton. (Figure 3-5)

Given that the average allowable soil loss rate for Marathon County is 4.4 tons per acre per year, the susceptibility for soil erosion in Easton is low, with maximum soil loss of 1.0 – 2.0 tons/acre/year.

Prime Farm Soils – Figure 3-6 illustrates soils that have been identified as prime farm soils according to the Marathon

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

Class 2 prime farm soils predominate in Easton and are present throughout most of the Town, except in the northeast quadrant. These class designations refer to the quality of soils for growing crops and are based on United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifications. Class 1 soils are the best soils in Marathon County for growing all crops. Class 2 soils are also very good agricultural soils, however, they may be prone to wetness and are therefore less desirable than Class 1 soils. It should be noted that not all prime farm soils are used for farming; some have been developed with residential or other uses. The "prime farm soils" designation simply indicates that these soils are good productive farmland.

Steep Slopes – Steep slopes are very limited in Easton, located in only a few areas along the Eau Claire River and in the extreme southeast corner of the Town. Category D slopes are defined as slopes with gradients over 12 percent; Category E slopes are greater than 15 percent (Figure 3-7).

Biological Resources

Vegetation – According to land cover maps, Easton is divided between woodland and cropland. Of the woodlands, approximately 600 acres have been set aside under the Forest Crop Law (FCL) and are available for public recreational access.

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, bear, badger, wolf, wild turkeys, raccoon, squirrels, songbirds, waterfowl and raptors. Wildlife resources are abundant in the many undisturbed sanctuaries, refuges, reserves, and scattered habitats located throughout the County. Numerous other species of migrating birds use habitat in Marathon County for food, shelter, and resting stops during seasonal migration.

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

Threatened and Endangered Species — Both aquatic and terrestrial endangered, threatened, or special concern species are present within Easton. These include:

Communities:

- **Northern Mesic Forest Community** – This forest complex covered the largest acreage of any Wisconsin vegetation type prior to European settlement. Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) is dominant or co-dominant in most stands, while hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) was the second most important species, sometimes occurring in nearly pure stands with white pine (*Pinus strobus*). Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) can be a co-dominant with sugar maple in the counties near Lake Michigan. Other important tree species were yellow birch (*Betula allegheniensis*), basswood (*Tilia americana*), and white ash (*Fraxinus americana*). The groundlayer varies from sparse and species poor (especially in hemlock stands) with woodferns (especially Dryopteris intermedia), bluebead lily (*Clintonia borealis*), clubmosses (*Lycopodium* spp.), and Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*) prevalent, to lush and species-rich with fine spring ephemeral displays. After old-growth stands were cut, trees such as quaking and bigtoothed aspens (*Populus tremuloides* and *P. grandidentata*), white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*) became and still are important in many second-growth Northern Mesic Forests. Several distinct associations within this complex warrant recognition as communities.

Issues

- **Limited Water Supply—**Due to high bedrock levels in the northern portion of Easton, water supplies are limited and of poor quality.
- **Preservation of Natural Resources—** In a recent survey, the majority of residents rated preservation of woodland, wetlands, and open spaces as very important.

4. Land Use

The Town of Easton is located in northeastern Marathon County. It lies east of the Town of Wausau, north of Ringle and south of the Town of Hewitt. Main routes to Easton include CTH N on the south, CTH Z, and CTH J on the western boundary.

Current Pattern of Land Use

Easton is located on the glacial moraine that divided southeast Marathon County topographically from the rest of the County. Easton retains high bedrock levels, but also high quality farmland. In overall land coverage, the Town appears to have more cropland than any other eastern Town in the County.

The major land uses in Easton are largely divided between woodlands and crop land. Approximately 600 acres are set aside under the Forest Crop Law (FCL) in the Town. According to plat maps, an additional 160 acres are owned by Marathon County, of which 80 acres are held by the County Parks Foundation and another 80 held by the Park, Recreation, and Forestry Department.

Crop land is scattered throughout the community, with a major concentration lying in a swath between Big Sandy Creek and the Eau Claire River. Maps of prime farm land reflect the amount of crop land in the Town, with a high concentration throughout the Town. Not surprisingly, Easton also has one of the highest acreages of land held in Farmland Preservation Contracts – an estimated 3,800 acres.

Residential development in the Town has been strongly influenced by transportation access and by the availability of water for wells. Like many other rural Towns, residential development in Easton has lined the primary roads, but is also scattered throughout the Town. In addition, development has followed along the Eau Claire River.

There are no villages in Easton, and commercial activities are limited to occasional crossroads businesses. Industry is limited to quarry operations along the Eau Claire River.

Existing Land Use - For purposes of this report, existing land cover was used as a proxy for existing land use. This was done to achieve consistency in describing existing land uses in the various municipalities participating in the Marathon County comprehensive planning effort. Table 4-1 describes the various land use cover categories and Figure 4-1 illustrates the existing land cover. The acreage and percent of land shown on Table 4-1 were determined from aerial photos and are not intended to be accurate to the parcel level or correspond directly to acreages calculated from plat maps.

Table 4-1: Land Use Cover Classification, 2000

Land Cover Category	Description	Acres	% of Total Land Area
Single Family Residential	One family structures, farm residences, mobile homes	829	3.02
Multi-Family Residential	Multiple family structures with three or more households, condos, duplexes, apartments	0	0
Commercial Services	Retail stores, taverns, restaurants, truck stops, gas stations, farm coops, farm implement dealerships, automobile dealerships, business offices, motels/hotels, offices, telephone/gas company	6	0.02
Industrial	Saw/paper/lumber mills, dairies, industrial parks, trucking operations, distribution centers	10	0.04
Quarries/ Gravel Pits	Mining operations	17	0.06
Cropland	Tilled agriculture, prime farmland	10,606	38.65
Specialty Crops	Ginseng, orchards, vineyards, nurseries, groves, cranberries, etc.	180	0.66
Other Agriculture	Fallow, pasture and undetermined agriculture, power lines and towers, water towers, municipal wells	2,827	10.30
Public/ Quasi-Public	Schools, churches, cemeteries, town halls, fire departments, National Guard	27	0.10
Recreation	Ball fields, golf courses, playgrounds, parks, trails, camp grounds, shooting ranges	0	0
Woodlands	Forested land	7,002	25.51
Water	Open water: lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, reservoirs, wetlands	4,950	18.04
Transportation	Airports, highways, road right-of-ways, railroads, logging roads	676	2.46
Barren Land	Unused open land in wooded areas, along streams, along roadsides	313	1.14
Total Land Area		27,444	100%

Source: Marathon County Land Use Cover Database

Current Land Use Plans and Regulations

Land Use Plan – Easton does not currently have a land use plan.

Zoning – Easton has its own zoning code, updated approximately five years ago. The code includes four residential districts, an agricultural district, two commercial districts and two industrial districts. A conservancy district is included for protection of natural resources, and a recreational district is available for a variety of recreation use types. Easton has adopted a 2-acre minimum lot size with a 200' frontage.

Figure 4-2 illustrates the existing pattern of zoning in the Town. Except for small areas, the entire Town of Easton is zoned A-2 (agriculture).

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

Farmland Preservation Program – The State of Wisconsin has a Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Program. The goals of the program are twofold: to preserve Wisconsin farmland by

means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and to provide property tax relief to farmland owners. Landowners keeping land in agricultural use can claim a credit on their State income tax by obtaining a zoning certificate, if the land is exclusive agriculture zoned (8 towns in Marathon County), or sign a contract with the State. The program requires that a landowner be a Wisconsin resident, own a minimum of 35 or more acres of contiguous land, and produce gross farm receipts of $6,000 or more in the last year, or $18,000 in the last three years. The income requirement can be satisfied by having 35 acres or more enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Landowners must also comply with County soil and water conservation standards. Contracts can range from 10 to 25 years, and remain in effect regardless of change in ownership.

Easton has one of the highest concentrations of land entered into Farmland Preservation Contracts with over 3,800 acres. The contracted land is throughout the Town (Figure 4-3).

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. Because the tax laws require 25- to 50-year contracts, they are a good indicator of the amount of land that is effectively kept from development 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. There are approximately 600 acres set aside in Easton. This amount is anticipated to grow, as owners take advantage of the tax relief offered through the program.

The MFL was enacted in 1985 and requires at least 10 acres of contiguous forest land. Because of the smaller acreage requirement, many individual landowners take advantage of the MFL. Landowners may close to the public up to 80 acres of their forest lands set aside under MFL. The remaining program acres must be open to public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing and cross-country skiing. Landowners must choose a 25- or 50-year contract. The landowner pays an Acreage Share Amount as part of their tax bill in lieu of taxes. Current rates through 2007 are $0.83 per acre for land open to the public and $1.95 per acre for closed land.

Table 4-2 indicates land in Easton currently enrolled in the FCL and/or MFL programs. Land enrolled under FCL has declined as those contracts expire, while land open to the public under the MFL programs has grown slightly.

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

Year	Forest Crop Law (FCL)	Managed Forest Law (MFL) open	Managed Forest Law (MFL) closed
1998	676.1	824	1,362.1
2002	595.9	842	954.1
Change	-80.2	+18	-408
% Change	-11.9%	+2.2%	-30%

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

Development Trends

Land Supply – Land potentially available for future development (residential and non-residential) between 2000 and 2030 was estimated by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) based on the land cover categories shown in Table 4-1. Land categorized as barren, crop land, forest land, other agriculture, and specialty crop was considered "available" for future development. Land categorized as already developed, such as residential or commercial, or areas that cannot easily be developed, such as wetlands or waterways, were considered "unavailable" for future development. In the Town of Easton 20,928 acres are identified as available for future development and 6,516 are considered unavailable. It is noted that some of the land classified as "available" may be in public ownership, and is not in actuality available for development. (Table 4-3)

Table 4-3: Public Owned Land (in acres), 1998-2002

Year	County Owned	State Owned	Federal Owned
1998	85	0	0
2002	85	0	0
Change	0	0	0
% Change	0	0	0

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

Easton's developable land is somewhat limited by the high bedrock levels that make it difficult to dig wells for residential use. Additional land could be available if farmland is sold for development.

Land Demand – An estimate of land needed for future residential development was based on projected new dwelling units between 2000 and 2030 derived from WDOA household projections and the average density of dwelling units per acre in the community. The average density was calculated using the total acres of residential land on the 2000 land use/cover map divided by the number of households according to the 2000 Census. It was assumed that the density would remain constant between 2000 and 2030. Future acres needed for residential development were then estimated by multiplying the projected number of households in 2030 by the average density. In the Town of Easton, is estimated that 133 acres of land will be needed to accommodate new residential development through 2030.

Between 1990 and 2002, 114 sanitary permits for residential development were approved in the Town of Easton. This represents an average of 9.5 new homes constructed each year. Demand for residential property has been strong in Easton. The construction of the new hospital at STH 29 and CTH X is

anticipated to cause residential development pressure in Easton. Although Easton is located in the D. C. Everest School District, the new Wausau School District East High School is still anticipated to encourage development in this area of the County.

The NCWRPC estimated land needed for non-residential development based on projected changes in local employment and an estimated current average density of 3.32 employees per acre in the Eastern Group planning sub-area. In the Town of Easton, it is estimated that only 6 acres will be needed to accommodate new non-residential development through 2030. This small acreage reflects the anticipated decline in employment, due primarily to loss of farm employment. Even though employment is estimated to decline, loss of acreage devoted to farming or other non-residential land uses should not occur. Rather, farm acres may remain constant, while the number of farm employees declines.

Land Values – Table 4-4 shows the change in per acre assessed land values in Easton between 1998 and 2002. It also indicates percent change in acreage and land value for the Town compared to Marathon County. A major change in Easton is the loss of over 1,200 acres (almost two sections of land) from assessed agricultural land. Some of this agricultural land may be accounted for by the large increase of 873 acres assessed as swamp and waste land, an increase of 117 acres assessed as forest, and an additional 112 acres assessed as residential. Per acre assessed values in Easton increased for residential, commercial, swamp and forest lands and declined for agricultural land. In Marathon County as a whole, land classified as swamp and waste land had the highest percent increase in acreage of all categories (74.8 percent) and the highest percent increase in value per acre (137 percent). This data appears to support anecdotal evidence from Easton residents, who indicated that land values are high because of the demand for recreational property.

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

Year	Residential		Commercial		Manufacturing		Agriculture		Swamp & Waste Land		Forest	
	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only	Acres	Land Only
1998	760	$2,169	20	$1,870	0	$0	15,956	$386	444	$110	7,070	$398
2002	872	$3,482	18	$2,689	0	$0	14,687	$206	1,317	$716	7,187	$1,144
Chg.	+112	$1,313	-2	$819	0	$0	-1,269	$-180	+873	$606	+117	$746
Percent Change Comparison												
	Acres	**Land ($)**	**Acres**	**Land ($)**	**Acres**	**Land ($)**	**Acres**	**Land ($)**	**Acres**	**Land ($)**	**Acres**	**Land ($)**
Town	+14.7	+60.5	-10.0	+43.8	0	0	-8.0	-46.6	+196.6	+550.9	+1.7	+187.4
County	+21.2	+5.6	+38.4	-4.0	-0.5	+34.4	-11.2	-47.6	+74.8	+137.0	+1.0	+91.8

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

Major Opportunities and Constraints

- **Water Availability –** The high bedrock level throughout the Town limits residential or industrial development because of the difficulty of drilling wells and having adequate water.

- **Private Waste Disposal Systems –** Private waste disposal systems are a concern. Many older systems are failing, and there are concerns about the proliferation of holding tank and mound systems that can be placed on smaller parcels. Private waste disposal systems are regulated by the County.

- **Ice Age Trail –** A segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail follows CTH Y (the Town's eastern boundary with Plover) and extends northward and east into Eau Claire Dells Park. There is a short unconnected segment in Easton. The presence of the Trail may offer the Town opportunities to provide services or amenities for Trail users.

Issues

- **Farm Land Transition –** Residents recognize that most remaining farms in the Town will likely be developed in the future, and do not see an economic solution that would stop this trend. Still, many would like to see farm land remain in production.

- **Preservation of Rural Character—**Residents like the rural, country atmosphere in Easton and would like to preserve that character. Most residents would like the population to stay about the same size for the next decade.

- **Commercial and Industrial Development—**Residents do not envision a need for industrial development in Easton. They do support some limited commercial activity, such as convenience stores or hardware or machinery firms that would provide needed services for residents.

- **Parcel Size and Development Patterns –** The Town is concerned about the two-acre minimum lot size and whether it should be larger so that there are fewer parcels for development. The difficulty of securing adequate water because of the high bedrock levels would indicate a need for fewer, larger parcels. Similarly, the Town does not believe that cluster development is suitable because of the difficulty of securing adequate water in a limited area.

- **Preservation of Natural Resources –** The Town of Easton has the Eau Claire River and Big and Little Sandy Creeks dividing it. In addition, the Town has rolling hills and valleys, some of which offer picturesque views. The Town may want to consider methods to preserve its natural environment while facing increased development pressure.

5. Transportation

Existing Transportation Planning Efforts

Recent Transportation Plans

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

County transportation planning efforts are presented in various plans and studies. Findings and recommendations in these plans should be integrated into local community planning efforts when relevant and appropriate. Recent transportation plans prepared by Marathon County include:

- ***Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*** – The TIP includes all programmed transportation projects receiving Federal and/or State funds. The TIP was adopted in October 2001 and is updated every two years.

- ***State Trunk Highway 29 Corridor Land Use Review (1997)*** – This plan was prepared by a multi-departmental team working with communities along the STH 29 corridor in the western part of Marathon County. The primary goal was to identify recommendations to allow local communities to protect STH 29 from impacts related to unplanned growth.

- ***Marathon County Functional / Jurisdictional Highway Classification Study (1998)*** –This plan identifies and groups classes of roadways that 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.

Road Network

Functional Classification of Roads / Jurisdiction

(WDOT Facilities Development Manual)

A functionally classified road system is one in which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. At the upper limit of the system (principal arterials, for example), are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas at the lower limits are those local roads and streets that emphasize access.

The functional classifications are generally defined as:

Principal Arterials serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. These routes generally serve all urban areas with a 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 intra-community continuity and service for trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.

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

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

Jurisdiction - Roads are commonly classified in one of two ways: by ownership or by purpose. Jurisdictional responsibility refers to ownership of a particular road, while functional classification, as described above, identifies the road by the Level of Service (LOS) it provides.

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

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

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

Major Road Facilities

Following is a brief description of the major road facilities located in Easton. Functional classification, jurisdiction, and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), are summarized for all major roads.

- **STH 52** is an east-west minor arterial that serves as the Town's northern border. Between Mill Road and

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

Woodland Road, STH 52 had an AADT volume of 1,800 in 1998 and 1,700 in 2001. East of CTH J, STH 52 had an AADT volume of 2,300 in 1998 and 2,100 in 2001.

- **CTH Z** is an east-west major collector through Easton. CTH Z, between Eau Claire River Road and Pleasant View Road, had an AADT volume of 1,100 in both 1998 and 2001.

- **CTH N** is an east-west major collector and the southern boundary of the Town. CTH N had an AADT volume between Thornapple Creek Road and Forestville Road of 1,400 in 1998 and 1,600 in 2001. Between Sandy River Road and Club House Road (in Ringle), CTH N had an AADT volume of 2,000 in both 1998 and 2001.

- **CTH J** is a north-south major collector and the western Town boundary. CTH J had an AADT volume south of the STH 52 west intersection of 980 in 1998 and 1,100 in 2001. North of CTH N, CTH J had an AADT volume of 990 in 1998 and 1,400 in 2001.

- **CTH Y**, a major collector, skirts the eastern border of Easton. South of STH 52 in Plover, CTH Y had an AADT of 240 in 1998 and 220 in 2001.

- **CTH Q** is designated as a local road for functional classification purposes and provides north and south access through Easton.

Road Maintenance

Easton has an informal capital budgeting process, and sets a road budget annually. Currently the Town has 30 miles of paved road and 40 miles of crushed granite (gravel). They are working on repaving and rebuilding roads. Easton has 27 bridges, the most of any town in the County, and has reconstructed all but five of them. Bridges have required widening in order to meet State specifications.

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

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

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

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

Figures 5-2 and 5-3 and Table 5-1 illustrate the WISLR road assessment done in 2004 by surface type and condition rating. As shown, the majority of roads in the Town are paved with asphalt. Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below "Fair" should be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. Roads that display a surface rating of "Good" or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to maintain safe travel conditions. Those roads without data should be examined to ensure safe travel conditions exist along these routes. A majority of the roads in the Town are rated in "Good" or better condition and will require only preventative maintenance. However, roughly 13 miles of roadways will require some sort of reconstruction.

Table 5-1: Summary of Pavement Conditions

Surface Type Code (miles)						
Unimproved Road	Graded Earth Road	Gravel Road	Wearing Surface	Cold Mix Asphalt on Concrete	Cold Mix Resurfacing with < 7" Base	Cold Mix Resurfacing with > 7" Base
	0.5	31.06	1.99			
Cold Mix Asphalt Base < 7"	Cold Mix Asphalt Base > 7"	Hot Mix Asphalt on Concrete	Hot Mix Resurfacing	Hot Mix Asphalt Pavement	Concrete Pavement	Brick or Block Pavement
0.05	11.02		7.14	26.65		

Surface Condition Rating - WISLR Data						
No Data	Failed	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
	0.28	3.00	10.14	23.57	33.85	7.57

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

Land Use and Transportation

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

Driveway Permits – 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.

Easton does not have a permit process for driveways. They do approve installation of culverts for driveways.

Traffic Generators – Although Easton does not have any major traffic generators, residents have noticed increasing congestion due to more residential development.

Other Transportation Modes

Pedestrian – There are no public sidewalks in Easton.

Bicycle – 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. Suggested routes in Easton include CTH Q, CTH Z, Eau Claire River Road, and Thornapple Creek Road. (Figure 5-4).

A segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail follows CTH Y (the Town's eastern boundary with Plover) and extends northward and east into Eau Claire Dells Park. There is a short unconnected trail segment in Easton.

Transit – There is no general transit service in Easton. Elderly, needy, and disabled transit service is provided throughout the County through North Central Health Care (NCHC). The services include semi-fixed routes that are scheduled, and demand services available with a 48-hour notice. Information and services are available by calling 848-4555.

Rail – There are no rail lines serving Easton.

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

Issues

- **Funding** — Future road maintenance and improvement costs and funding options may be limited, depending on State aid availability.

- **Driveway Permitting Process —** With increased development pressure, Easton should consider development of a driveway permitting process that examines various safety and road management issues.

6. Utilities

This section describes the existing conditions and issues relative to utilities available to the Town of Easton, 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

Most unincorporated areas of Marathon County use private on-site waste disposal systems for sewage disposal and obtain potable water from private wells. The Town of Easton does not provide public sewer or water service. All development uses private wells and on-site waste disposal systems. Easton has its own zoning and requires a minimum lot size of two acres for installation of individual waste disposal systems and wells.

On-Site Waste Disposal Systems

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

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

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

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

- **Conventional Systems** – These systems include an absorption field that is buried under the natural ground level. These systems cannot be built in areas where soils do not allow percolation due to high clay content or bedrock where groundwater is too near the surface, or where soils percolate too rapidly and thus pose problems for groundwater contamination.

- **Mound Systems** – These systems include an absorption field that is constructed above ground, creating a "mound." This type of system is generally used where clay soils, groundwater, rapid permeability or bedrock prevent construction of conventional systems.

- **Mechanical Treatment Components** – These components 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 Deparment of Conservation, Planning and Zoning (DCPZ) reviews and issues permits for private on-site waste disposal systems. Soil and site evaluations are required to determine if the proposed 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.

On-Site Waste Disposal Systems-- All development in Easton uses on-site waste disposal systems. Much of Easton has high bedrock and areas with soils suitable for septic systems are limited. As a result, holding tanks are often used. Many old systems do not meet current regulations. Systems must be upgraded if property is sold. (Figure 6-1 and Figure 6-2)

Water Wells – All development in Easton receives water from private wells. Because water availability is limited, particularly due to high bedrock in the northern part of the Town, farms and houses often have 3-4 wells each.

Surface Water Management

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

The County is particularly concerned about nonpoint sources of pollution, including failing septic systems, urban runoff, and issues often identified with rural areas such as soil erosion, animal waste and pesticides. Nonpoint pollution is best addressed by watershed. Marathon County encompasses portions of 22 watersheds as shown on Figure 6-3. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has ranked these watersheds according to water pollution impacts and designated five as “priority” watersheds to receive special planning and funding through the voluntary, State-funded Priority Watershed Program. Preparation of resource management plans for the following watersheds is currently underway:

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

There are currently no watersheds identified for special planning and funding in Easton.

Electrical and Gas Utilities

The Town of Easton receives electric power from Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS). There is an existing major power line through Easton, paralleling the east Town boundary. (Figure 6-4)

Most residents have private propane tanks for gas. There is a natural gas line in CTH J on Easton's west boundary.

Telecommunication Facilities and Services

- Television/Cable providers – No cable service
- Telephone— Verizon
- Cell towers – None in Easton; coverage problems in some locations.

Solid Waste Management

Residents of Easton are responsible for their own solid waste management. Municipal, commercial and industrial waste is accepted at the Marathon County Landfill in Ringle. User fees collected at the landfill defray the cost of landfill operations.

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.

Recycling

The Town of Easton contracts with a private contractor for monthly recycling pick-up at the Town Hall.

Issues

- **Limited water supply** – The Town is considering increasing the minimum lot size to 5-10 acres because high bedrock makes it difficult to find water and requires use of holding tanks for waste disposal. As a result, the carrying capacity of the land is decreased, making low-density, scattered development preferable to concentrated development.

7. Housing

Housing is a significant aspect of any comprehensive planning effort. This section is an inventory and analysis of housing conditions in the Town of Easton. Housing in Easton is predominantly single family, with over 90% owner-occupied. About 17% of housing units were constructed over the last decade, and housing values are higher than median values for Marathon County as a whole.

Data contained in this section reflect two methodologies of data collection employed by the U.S. Census. The source of data collected for the first table is from 2000 Census, Summary Tape File (STF)-1 Data, which was collected through a household-by-household census and represents responses from every household within the country. To get more detailed information, the U.S. Census also randomly distributes a long-form questionnaire to 1 in 6 households throughout the nation. Tables utilizing this sample data are identified in the footnote below each table and are labeled "STF-3 Data". It should be noted that STF-1 and STF-3 data may differ for similar statistics, due to survey limitations, non-response, or other attributes unique to each form of data collection.

Housing Inventory

Housing Type and Tenure

As shown in Table 7-1, the 2000 Census shows the Town of Easton has 383 occupied housing units. 359 (or 94%) of these units are owner-occupied. The Town has an average household size of 2.77 persons. 16% of all households are classified as being "1 person households." Approximately 21% of Town households have a householder 65 years or older.

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

Area	Easton	Marathon County	Wisconsin
Occupied Housing Units	383	47,702	2,084,544
Owner Occupied Units	359	36,091	1,426,361
Renter Occupied Units	24	11,611	658,183
Average Household Size	2.77	2.6	2.50
% Owner Occupied	93.7	75.7	68.4
% 1 Person Households	16.2	23.6	26.8
% With Householder 65 years or older	20.9	21.7	21.5

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 STF-1 Data

Changes in Housing Stock

Table 7-2 notes changes in the housing stock between 1990 and 2000 according to U.S. Census Data. Total housing units have increased by 57 while the number of occupied housing units grew by 56. Vacancy decreased from 6% to 5% between decades. The number of owner-occupied housing units increased by 59 or 20%. The census reports increases in the number of single-family units. Duplex housing units remained constant.

Table 7-2: Changes in Housing Stock

	1990	2000	# Change	% Change
Total Housing Units	335	392	57	17%
Occupied Housing Units (Households)	316	372	56	18%
Vacancy %	6%	5%	--	--
Owner Occupied Housing Units	288	347	59	20%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	28	25	-3	-11%
Owner Occupied Housing Units as percent of Total	91%	93%	--	--
Number of Homes for Seasonal/Rec Use	10	8	-2	-20%
Number of Single Family Homes	312	383	71	23%
Detached*	308	381	73	24%
Attached**	4	2	-2	-50%
Number of Duplexes	2	2	0	0%
Multi Family Units 3-9 units	0	0	0	--
Multi Family Units 10+	0	0	0	--

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, 2000 STF-3 Data

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

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

Housing Age

The age of a community's housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the dwelling 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 housing sizes have increased. For example, average houses constructed in the 1980s and 1990s are typically much larger than housing built in previous decades. This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Marathon County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 7-3: Age of Community Housing Stock

Total Units	Year Built								
	1999 to March 2000	1995 to 1998	1990 to 1994	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1950 to 1959	1940 to 1949	1939 or earlier
392	15	36	15	36	90	16	20	17	147
100%	4%	9%	4%	9%	23%	4%	5%	4%	38%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 STF-3 Data

Table 7-3 shows housing age for the community. In the Town of Easton, data show that significant portions of the local housing stock were built before 1939 and in the 1970s. Recent housing growth from the 1990s makes up approximately 17% of the total housing stock. That is slightly higher than overall figures for the County. The Census reports that houses built in the 1990s make up 13% of the County's overall housing stock.

Physical Housing Stock

Table 7-4 looks at several select measures of physical condition and compares them to figures for the County and State. The median house size in the Town of Easton is larger than that of the County and State, when measured by number of rooms. Over 97% of the community's housing stock is classified as single family housing, significantly higher than

figures for the County or State. Census data indicate that only a small percentage of Easton houses lack complete plumbing facilities.

Table 7-4: Physical Housing Stock

Community	Median Rooms	Characteristic (%)			
		1 unit, detached or attached	In buildings with 10 or more units	Lacking complete plumbing facilities	Lacking complete kitchen facilities
Easton	6.5	97.70%	0.00%	1.02%	0.00%
Marathon County	5.8	76.10%	4.50%	0.90%	0.90%
Wisconsin	5.4	69.30%	9.40%	1.40%	1.50%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 STF-3 Data

Housing Values

Median Value

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

Table 7-5: Median Housing Value

	Median Value (dollars)
Easton	$107,400
Marathon County	$95,800
Wisconsin	$112,200

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 STF-3 Data

Range of Values

Table 7-6 shows the range of housing values that exist in the community. Figures for the Town show that Easton has a higher percentage of housing valued at greater than $100,000 than the County.

Table 7-6: Range of Housing Values

Number of Houses per Housing Value Category	Easton	Marathon County
< $49,999	4	1,459
%	3%	5%
$50,000 to $99,999	51	13,405
%	39%	49%
$100,000 to $149,999	48	8,220
%	37%	30%
$150,000 to $199,999	17	2,368
%	13%	9%
$200,000 or more	10	1,714
%	8%	6%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 STF-3 Data

Housing Affordability

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

Statistically speaking, those spending in excess of 35% of their total household income on housing costs may be facing

affordability difficulties. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends that rental-housing costs not exceed 30% of the monthly income. HUD also indicates that mortgage lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is less than 29% of the monthly household income. The percentage of households in the Town of Easton that pay more than 35% of their household income on housing costs is similar to that of the County and State among owner occupied households. The percentage of renters that pay over 35% of their income is somewhat less in Easton as compared to the County and State figures.

Additionally, Table 7-7 shows that select Town median owner-occupied costs, both with and without a mortgage, are similar to median figures for Marathon County. The same holds true for select renter costs. Technical documentation from the Census states that contract rent is the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings, utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included. For vacant units, it is the monthly rent asked for the rental unit at the time of enumeration. Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid by or for the renter. *(U.S. Census STF 3 Technical Documentation Guide)*

Table 7-7: Housing Affordability

	Owner Occupied			Renter Occupied		
	Median selected monthly owner costs[1]			Median selected monthly renter costs[1]		
	With Mortgage	No Mortgage	%[2]	Median Contract Rent	Median Gross Rent	%[2]
Easton	$875	$300	11%	$463	$613	11%
Marathon County	$916	$295	10%	$423	$484	20%
Wisconsin	$1,024	$333	9%	$473	$540	25%

1In dollars
2Percent paying over 35% of household income on housing
Source: U.S. Census, 2000 STF-3 Data

Special Housing

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

Senior Housing

The Eastern area of Marathon County is served by the senior housing Home Sweet Home in the Village of Hatley, as well as four additional facilities in the Village of Birnamwood. This area is also served by facilities in the City of Antigo and the Wausau region. This region, along with the rest of Marathon County, will most likely need additional senior housing in the coming years, as the senior population continues to increase.

Assistance Programs

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

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-Small Cities Housing**

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

- **Homeless Programs (Wisconsin Department of Administration [WDOA])**
  --HUD Emergency Shelter Grants
  --State Shelter Subsidy Grants
  --Transitional Housing

- **Local Housing Organization Grant (LHOG)**
  State grants are available to enable community-based organizations, tribes and housing authorities to increase their capacity to provide affordable housing opportunities and services.

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

- **Housing-Related Consumer Protection Services (Wisconsin Department of Agriculture [WDA])**
  The Trade and Consumer Protection Division is responsible for the investigation of unfair and deceptive business practices and handles individual consumer complaints involving landlord/tenant complaints, and home improvement transactions.

Issues

- **Minimum Lot Size—** Because of water and sewer concerns, Easton may consider increasing the average lot size from the two- acre minimum to 5-10 acres. Limited water supplies limit the amount of development that can occur on any parcel.

- **Development Patterns—** As a result of wells and potential waste disposal issues, residents view scattered residential development as more appropriate than a more concentrated development pattern.

8. Cultural Resources

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

Brief History of the Town of Easton

Established in 1879, the Town of Easton was among the early townships in the eastern part of the County. In the previous decade, settlers had located near Big Sandy Creek in an area called Sunset. Although Easton had some logging activity at the turn of the century, it has been more identified with dairy and beef cattle farms. Cheese factories were once prominent and some may remain in the community. There are also brick farmhouses and other buildings constructed of the "Ringle red brick" produced in nearby Ringle, throughout Easton.

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

There are no properties in Easton 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.html. There are three historic properties in Easton that have been previously surveyed and included in the AHI.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has identified no archaeological sites and five historic cemeteries in Easton.

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 8-1: Known Cemeteries

Cemetery Name	Location	Section
German Evangelical/Zion	Star Road	5
Wendt Family	Junction Rd., east of Nutterville	7
Bethany Lutheran (Norwegian)	Church Rd.	11
St. John's Lutheran(German)	County Z, Sunset	19
Forestville	County N	33

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

Issues

- **Lack of Current Information –** Although a brief countywide historic properties survey was carried out in 1975-77, there has been no update. Many properties identified at that time may be gone, while other properties not previously surveyed may now be evaluated in a new context. It is necessary for the community to have current information about cultural resources in order to maximize planning and make the best use of historic properties. Easton residents have noted old barns that are historic and worthy of survey, as well as other properties.

- **No Recognition Process –** Outside the City of Wausau, there is no process to recognize historic buildings or begin to plan for their protection. Once historic properties are identified, towns and villages do not have an established mechanism for recognizing them or integrating them into ongoing planning processes.

- **Rural Character and Historic Resources –** In Marathon County, residents have expressed a strong desire to preserve the rural character of the County and raised concerns about increasing ex-urban development and the decline of working farms. An important part of rural character is the rural landscape and the buildings that convey that sense of place. While it is important to address the location and type of new development, there is also a need to preserve some visible reminders of rural character, including working farms. Without preserving some of the existing resources, including farmsteads and farmlands, the very characteristics that attracted residents will increasingly be lost.

- **Protection of Archaeological Sites and Cemeteries –** Cultural resources planning includes identification and protection of archaeological sites and historic cemeteries. The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains a list of reported sites and cemeteries, representing a fraction of sites that are actually present. This information is often overlooked and should be incorporated into the planning process for local communities.

9. Community Facilities

This element describes the community facilities and services provided to the Town of Easton. It describes schools, libraries, public protection services, hospitals and child care services available to residents.

Schools

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Easton is served by the D. C. Everest School District, which has six elementary schools, a middle school, junior high and senior high school. Most residents of the Town of Easton are in the Easton/Hatley Elementary attendance area. Easton School serves children from kindergarten, first and second grades and early childhood. Once students have left the second grade, they attend Hatley Elementary. Some students in the southwest corner of Easton attend Riverside Elementary located on River Road in the Town of Ringle. The district opened a new middle school at 9302 Schofield Avenue in Weston in the fall of 2002. The senior high campus is also is Weston off Alderson Street, and has the new Greenheck Field House. (Figure 9-1)

There are two private schools in Easton: Faith Christian Academy at the corner of CTH J and CTH N; and St. John's Lutheran School, near CTH J and CTH Z.

Table 9-1: D.C. Everest School District Enrollment

Year	Enrollment PreK-12
1996-1997	4,882
1997-1998	4,892
1998-1999	4,950
1999-2000	5,032
2000-2001	5,084
2001-2002	5,104

Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction

Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

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

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

Libraries

The Town of Easton is served by the Marathon County Public Library system. The Wausau Headquarters Library, located on First Street in downtown Wausau, completed an expansion to

82,000 square feet in 1995. This new main Wausau Library is open seven days a week and offers over 555,800 volumes, including books, magazines and other materials, as well as internet access. The Village of Hatley is working with the County to plan and construct a new branch library in the Village in the near future. The bookmobile stops at the Easton Town Hall weekly.

Public Protection

Police

Law enforcement is provided by the County sheriff. (Figure 9-2).

Fire and Emergency Response

The Town of Easton has its own 17-member volunteer fire department, and provides mutual aid to Ringle, Hewitt and to Wausau. Easton owns one tanker and two pumper trucks. They are members in a tanker association with the City of Wausau and Towns of Wausau, Hewitt, Texas, Maine, Stettin, and Rib Mountain.

There are also 7 First Responders in Easton. The Town contracts with the Village of Weston for ambulance service. (Figure 9-3)

E-911 Dispatch Service - 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 85 user agencies and also provides alert paging support for the Emergency Management Office, District Attorney, and Medical Examiners Office.

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

Hospitals

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

St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield and St. Michael's Hospital in Stevens Point are both operated by Ministry Health Care. St. Joseph's Hospital is located at 611 Saint Joseph Avenue in Marshfield and offers a full array of services, specialty services and a complete rehabilitation unit. St. Michael's is a fully accredited acute care facility with 181 beds and nearly 200

doctors on staff. It is located at 900 Illinois Avenue in Stevens Point.

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

Ministry Health Care announced plans in July 2002 to construct a 104-bed, $100 million hospital and medical office complex in Weston near the intersection of STH 29 and CTH X. The hospital is planned to open in 2005. (Figure 9-4)

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.

Child Care

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

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

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

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

Table 9-2: Child Care Referrals

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

Issues

- **Closure of Easton School**—There has been discussion of closing the K-2 Easton School and building a new school to consolidate students in one location.

10. Parks

Existing Parks, Trails and Open Space

Local Park and Recreation Facilities

Big Sandy Park — Big Sandy Park was formerly owned by the County and turned over to Easton in the 1990s. Located on CTH J near East Tower Road, the park has picnic and playground facilities. It is maintained by the local Lion's Club.

County or State Parks, Forest and Trails

Several County or State parks are within driving distance of Easton.(Figure 10-1) These include:

The Dells of the Eau Claire Park— Just east of the Town line is the nearest Marathon County Park: the Dells of the Eau Claire Park, located off CTH Y in the Town of Plover. Ancient volcanic rock palisades and potholes carved in the rock by the falling water create a unique place on the Eau Claire River. The park is 190 acres in size bisected by the river. A dam upstream from the falls creates an impoundment that has a swimming beach and changing rooms. A large Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-era shelter is located north of the falls area. Park facilities include picnic tables, grills, drinking fountains, and children's play equipment. There are extensive trails located along both sides of the river, including a portion of the Ice Age Trail.

Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit – North of Easton, Marathon County owns and maintains the Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit that includes 8,424 acres located on both sides of the Township line between Hewitt and Harrison. The forest is made up of mixed upland woods, marshes, and water impoundments. Recreational opportunities include hunting, snowmobiling, and hiking. One of the forest's special features is the Bitzke Bird Walk, completed in 1992. The Bitzke Bird Walk passes a number of wetlands and impoundments, with some sections including boardwalks through wetlands. The trail includes interpretive displays and many opportunities for viewing waterfowl.

Ice Age Trail – A segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail follows CTH Y (the Town's eastern boundary with Plover) and extends northward and east into Eau Claire Dells Park. There is a short unconnected segment in Easton. The presence of the Trail may offer the Town opportunities to provide services or amenities for Trail users.

Trappe River Dells County Park— Also nearby, within the Town of Texas, is the undeveloped Trappe River Dells County Park. The park is an 80-acre woods that is not accessible from other public lands or roads. The County has no current plans to develop the woods into a functioning park.

Rib Mountain State Park— 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.

Park System Needs

With a variety of park facilities nearby operated by the County, as well as Big Sandy Park in Easton, no park and recreation needs have been identified.

11. Economic Development

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

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

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

Key Economic Sectors

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

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

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

***data suppressed to maintain confidentiality**

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

Agricultural Economy

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

The Marathon County agricultural economy is in a depressed state due to a downturn in prices for agricultural goods such as milk and ginseng. At the same time that prices for farm commodities are low, cash rents for Wisconsin farmland have increased, and the percentage of farm equity associated with real estate values has increased significantly. The average cost for agricultural land being converted to non-farm uses has increased from $544 per acre in 1990 to nearly $1,200 per acre in 2000; this compares with the average cost for agricultural land continuing in agricultural use, which has increased from $612 per acre in 1990 to nearly $1,000 per acre in 2000. When farms are not profitable and the value of land rises, farmers have a harder time competing for the land base.

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

- Net farm profits are increasingly a function of Federal United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) support payments.
- The average age of the current agricultural owner/operator is nearly 55; a large number are nearing retirement.
- The low entry rate into agriculture reflects the high capital investment and low profit margins.
- The number of dairy herds decreased by 10 percent (1,565 to 951 farms) in the past 13 years, and the total number of cows decreased from 77,000 in 1990 to 64,000 in 2000, a decrease of 17 percent.
- Dairy production is now more concentrated; the average size of dairy herds increased from 42 cows in 1990 to 62 cows in 2001. Nearly 50 dairies have over 300 animal units (200 cows), and 12 dairies have more than 1,000 animal units (more than 700 cows).
- Local milk production is not sufficient to reliably meet the demand of local dairy processors.

- Crop land and open space are being broken up into smaller fields by rural residences.
- Crop land production is being concentrated into fewer, larger operations.
- Soil erosion is increasing and soil organic matter content is decreasing.
- Environmental regulation of farms by the State and Federal government continues to increase. Agriculture is identified as a major non-point source of water pollution (sediment and nutrients) in the U.S.
- Larger farm equipment damages local roads and farm traffic is increasing.
- Conflicts between various land uses in rural areas are increasing.

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

Local Economic Environment

The population of Marathon County grew from 115,400 in 1990 to 125,834 in 2000, an increase of 10.3% compared to an 8.5% increase in the State and 8.7% in the U.S. The most recent estimates show an annual growth rate of 0.7% in all three jurisdictions. (Wisconsin Department of Administration [WDOA], Demographic Services, 2002) Population growth has been concentrated in the urbanized area surrounding Wausau.

Table 11-2 illustrates population and employment information for the Town of Easton.

In 2000, there were 328 employed people in the Town of Easton. Data show that most people in Easton were self-employed or in farming.

Because self-employment and farm employment are not covered under the State's unemployment compensation law, totals in that category were estimated by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), using the Agricultural Census and figures from Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD)

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

POPULATION	1,062
EMPLOYMENT:	
Commercial	--
Manufacturing	--
Service	2
Other	4
Self-Employed/Farm	322
TOTAL	**328**

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

Employment Projections

Information on employment in Marathon County is gathered separately for non-farm and farm employment. The Wisconsin DWD collects data on non-farm employment. The DWD estimated non-farm employment in Marathon County to be 49,407 in 1990 and 65,630 in 2000. This represents about a 33 percent increase over ten years. Data on farm employment is collected by the Census of Agriculture and consists of hired

farm labor and operators. In 1987, farm employment in Marathon County was estimated to be 11,643 and in 1997 it was estimated to be 8,298. This represents a decrease of almost 29 percent.

The NCWRPC computed employment projections, using a low, moderate and high growth scenario, based on the assumption that the historical growth rates described above would continue through 2030. The moderate projections are shown in Table 11-3.

Table 11-3: Employment Projections – 2000-2030

	Total Employment by Year						
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Easton	328	318	308	298	288	278	268
County	72,508	75,625	78,742	81,859	84,976	88,093	91,210

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

The projections indicate declining employment for the Town of Easton. By the year 2030, it is estimated that the Town of Easton will provide employment for 268 workers. This estimate reflects an 18 percent employment decline, and reflects the historical countywide decline in agricultural employment of almost 29 percent between 1987 and 1997.

Table 11-4 shows the percent change in projected employment for Easton using a low, moderate and high growth scenario. With current employment (2000) at 328 workers, the scenarios show the number of projected workers in 2030 under each projection. The projected low and moderate growth percentages are similar for Easton because of the relatively low numbers involved in the decline.

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

	Percent Change in Employment by Growth Rate		
	Low Growth	Moderate Growth	High Growth
Easton	-19% (265)	-18% (268)	6.4% (349)
Marathon County	21%	26%	34%

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

Major Local Employers

Most residents are self-employed or farmers. There are a few businesses in Easton, including an auto repair shop, implement repair shop and a steel/aluminum bending business. Most other residents work in Wausau.

Issues

- **Water Supply Limitations—**The lack of available water limits the ability of Easton to attract any large industry.

12. Intergovernmental Cooperation

This analysis presents an inventory of existing mechanisms that the Town of Easton 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 Easton 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.

Shared Public Services and Local Facilities

Law Enforcement – Law enforcement is provided by the County sheriff.

Fire and Emergency Response- The Town of Easton has its own volunteer fire department, and provides mutual aid to Ringle, Hewitt and to Wausau. The Town contracts with the Village of Weston for ambulance service. Easton is part of an association that owns a 3,000-gallon tanker, along with the City of Wausau and Towns of Rib Mountain, Stettin, Maine, Texas, Hewitt and Town of Wausau. It is housed in the City of Wausau.

Utilities- The Town does not provide sewer or water services; residents have private on-site sewage disposal systems and individual wells.

Relationships with Other Governmental Entities

Surrounding Municipalities- The Town of Easton is bordered by the Town of Hewitt to the north, Town of Plover to the east, Town of Ringle to the south, and Town of Wausau to the west. These surrounding municipalities are concurrently preparing comprehensive plans, which will increase opportunities for coordination and cooperation on matters of common interest.

School District- Easton is located in the D. C. Everest School District. There are no shared use agreements with the school district.

Marathon County- The County provides several services to the Town including: law enforcement through the Sheriff's Department, 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 North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) provides planning and mapping assistance.

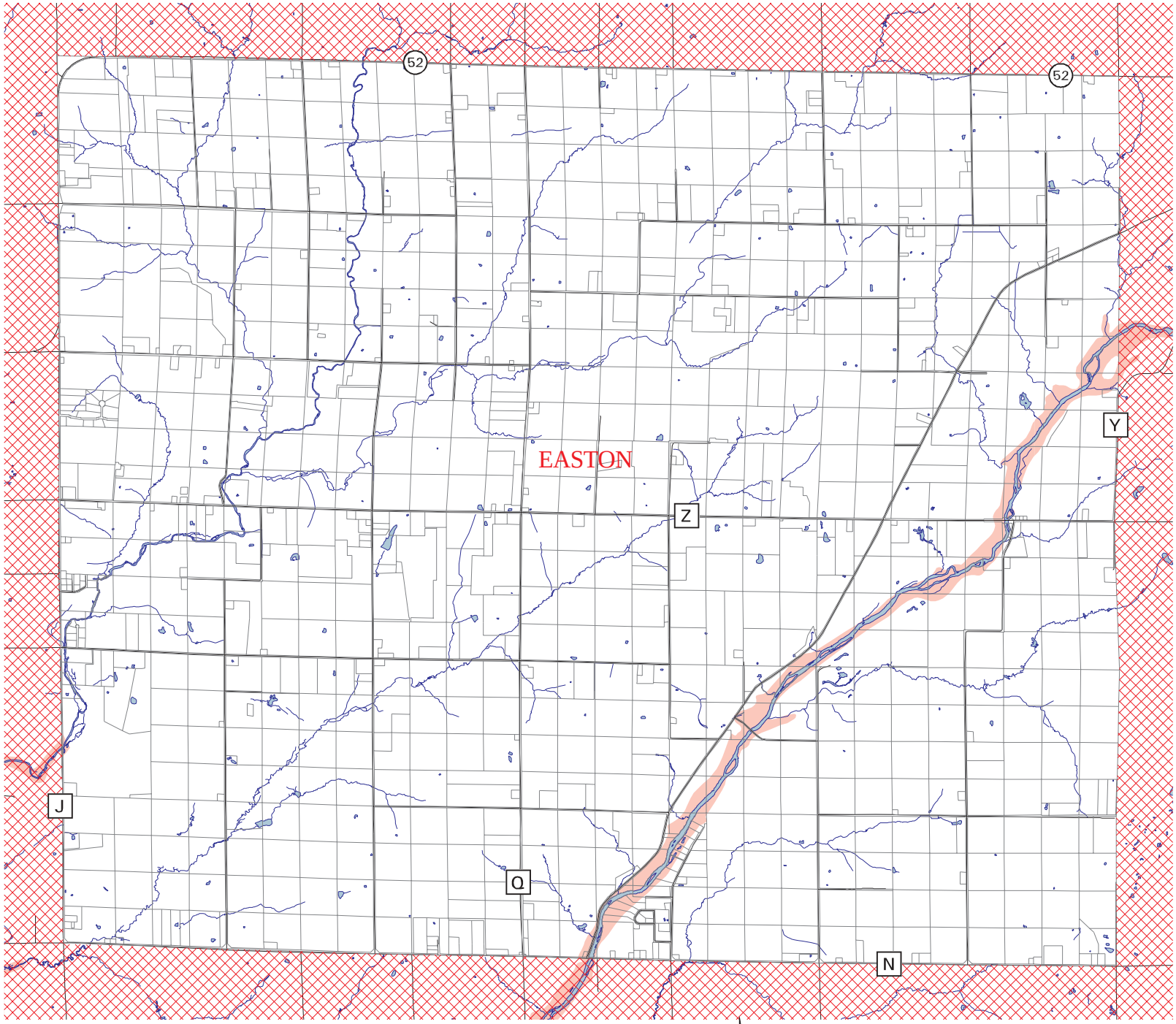
State and Federal Agencies- The Town has little direct contact with State or Federal agencies. However State agencies regulate certain activities such as access onto State roads, shoreland, floodplain and wetland zoning oversight, navigable waters protection, compliance with water quality standards,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

Cooperative Plans or Agreements

Mutual Aid – The Town of Easton has its own volunteer fire department, and provides mutual aid to Ringle, Hewitt and to Wausau.

Existing or Potential Conflicts

No existing or potential conflicts have been identified in the Town of Easton.



FEMA Floodplain

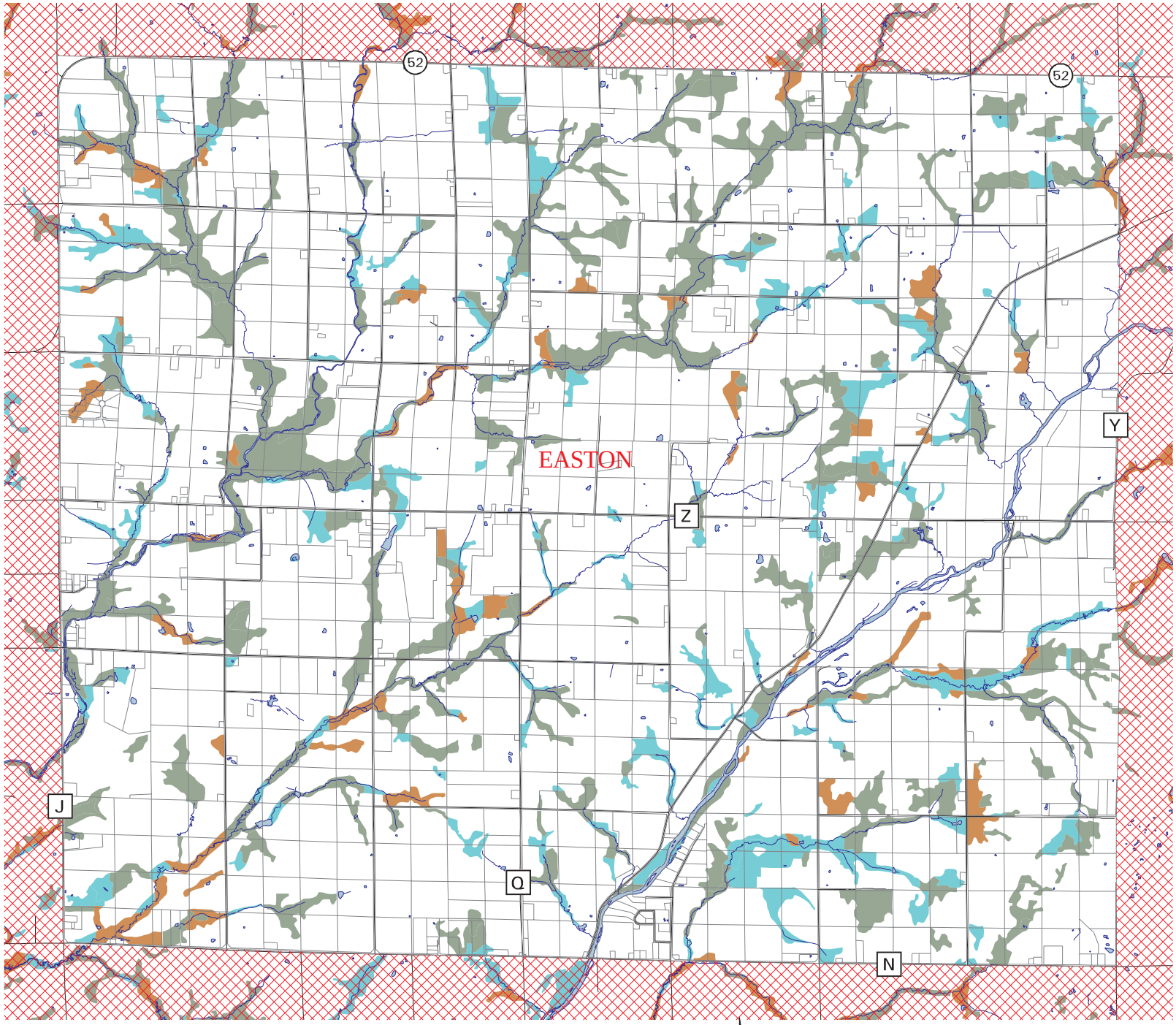
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-1

100 Year Floodplain

EASTON



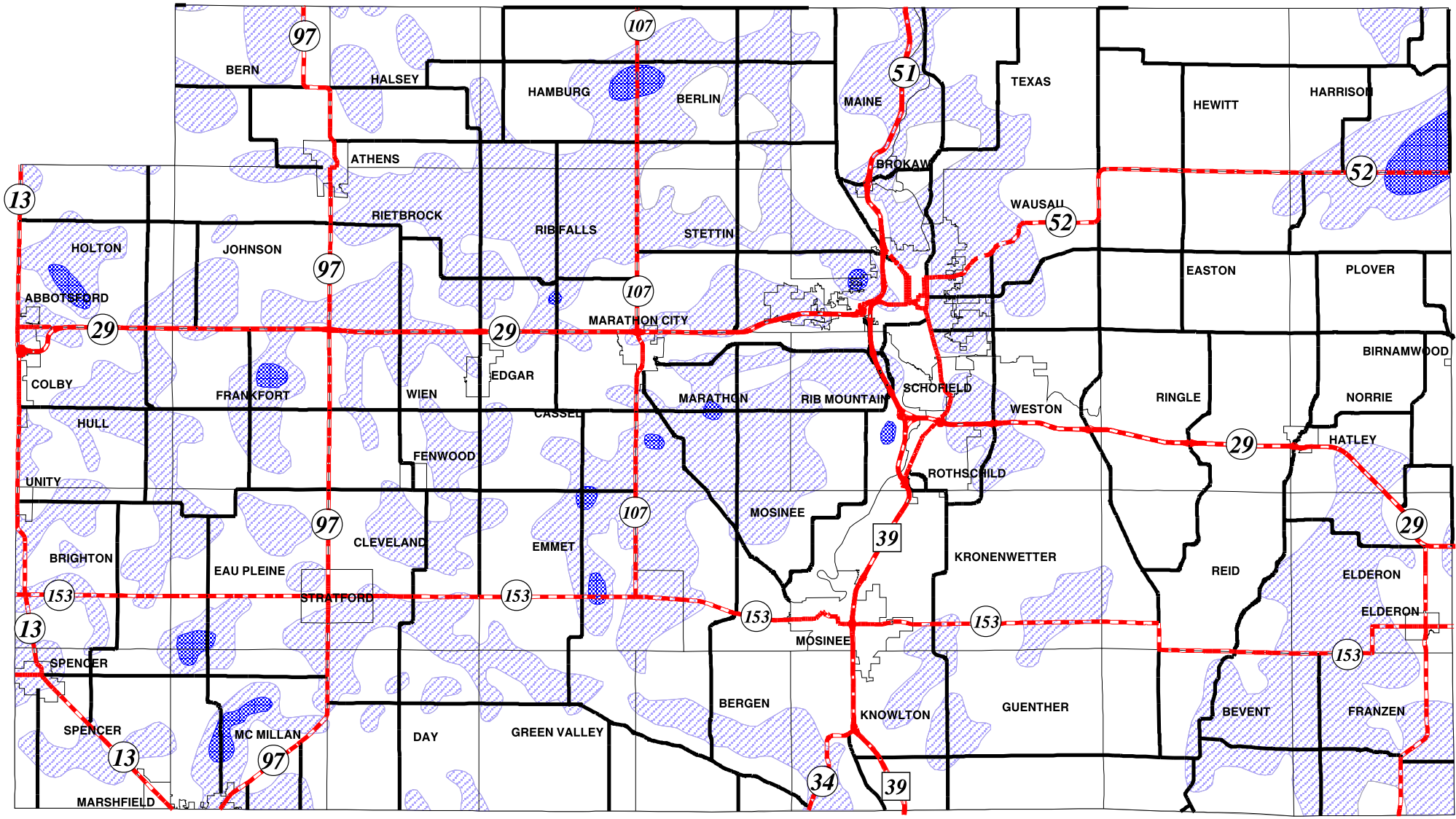
Aquatic beds
Emergent/wet meadow
Filled/drained wetland
Flats/unvegetated wet soil
Forested
Scrub/shrub

N

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

Figure 3-2
Wetland Types
EASTON

MARATHON COUNTY
DEPTH TO GROUND WATER



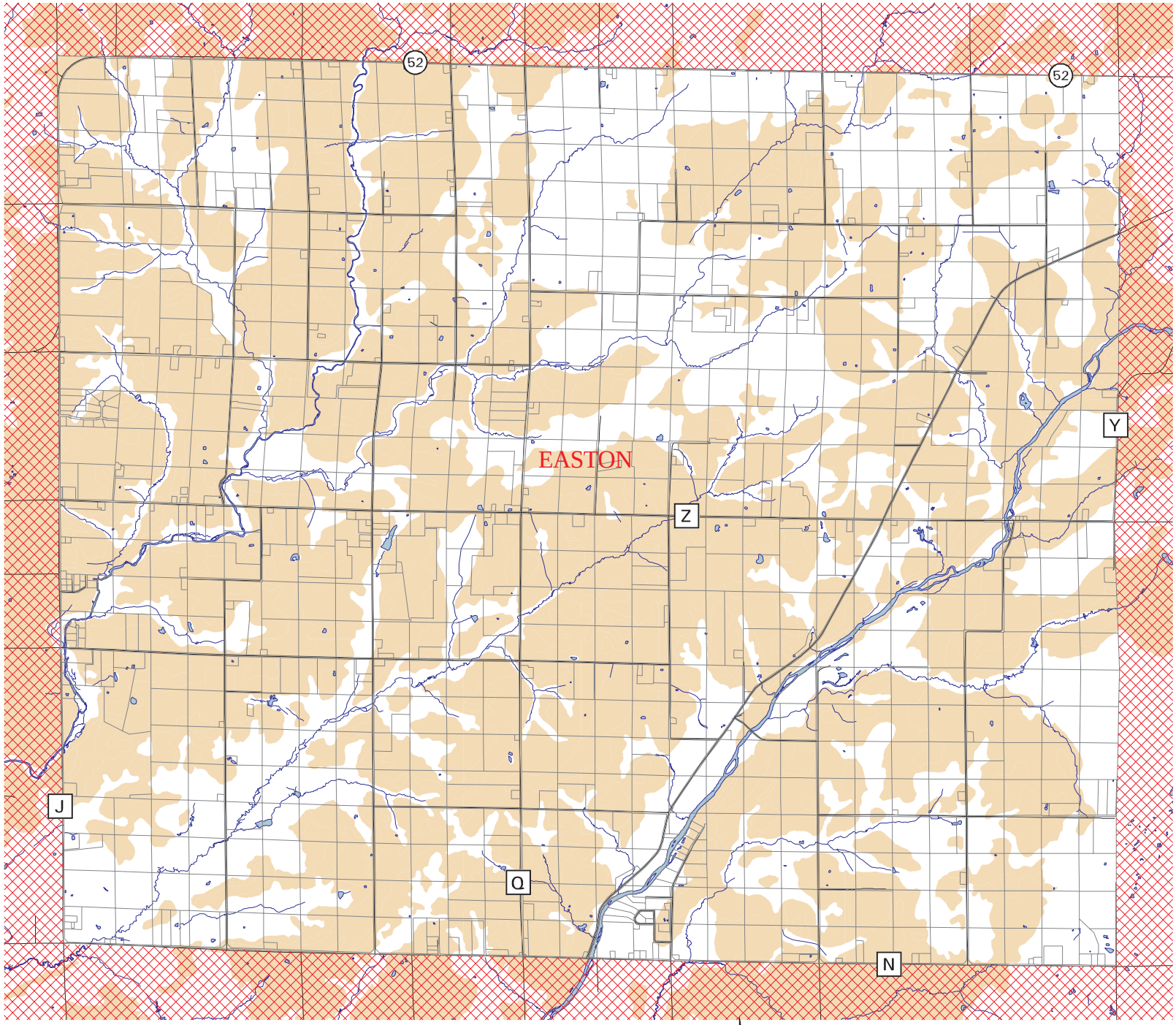
State & Us Highways
County Roads
Municipal Boundary
Ground Water Depth
0-20 feet
20-50 feet
>50 feet

N

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Source: "Irrigable Lands Inventory --- phase 1 Groundwater and Related Information", I.D. Lippelt and R.G. Hennings, MP -81-1, WGNHS 1981.

Figure 3-3



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

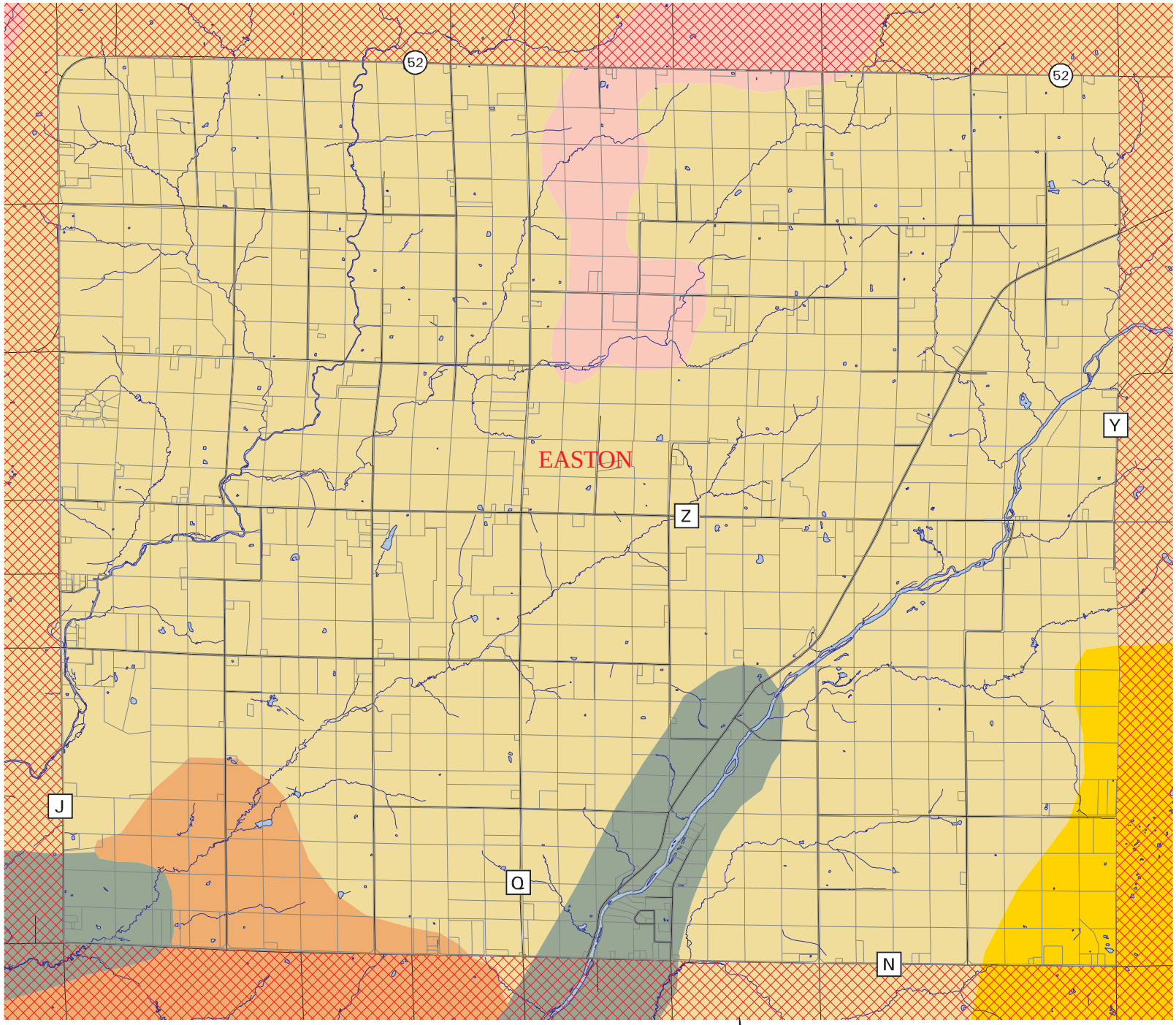
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-4

Depth To Bedrock

EASTON



Magnor-Cable
Loyal-Withee-Marshfield
Kennan-Hatley
Marathon-Mylrea-Moberg
Fenwood-Rietbrock-Rozellville
Mosinee-Meadland-Dancy
Mahtomedi-Fordum-Sturgeon
Chetek-Rosholt-Oesterle
Mahtomedi-Graycalm-Meehan
Cathro-Seelyeville

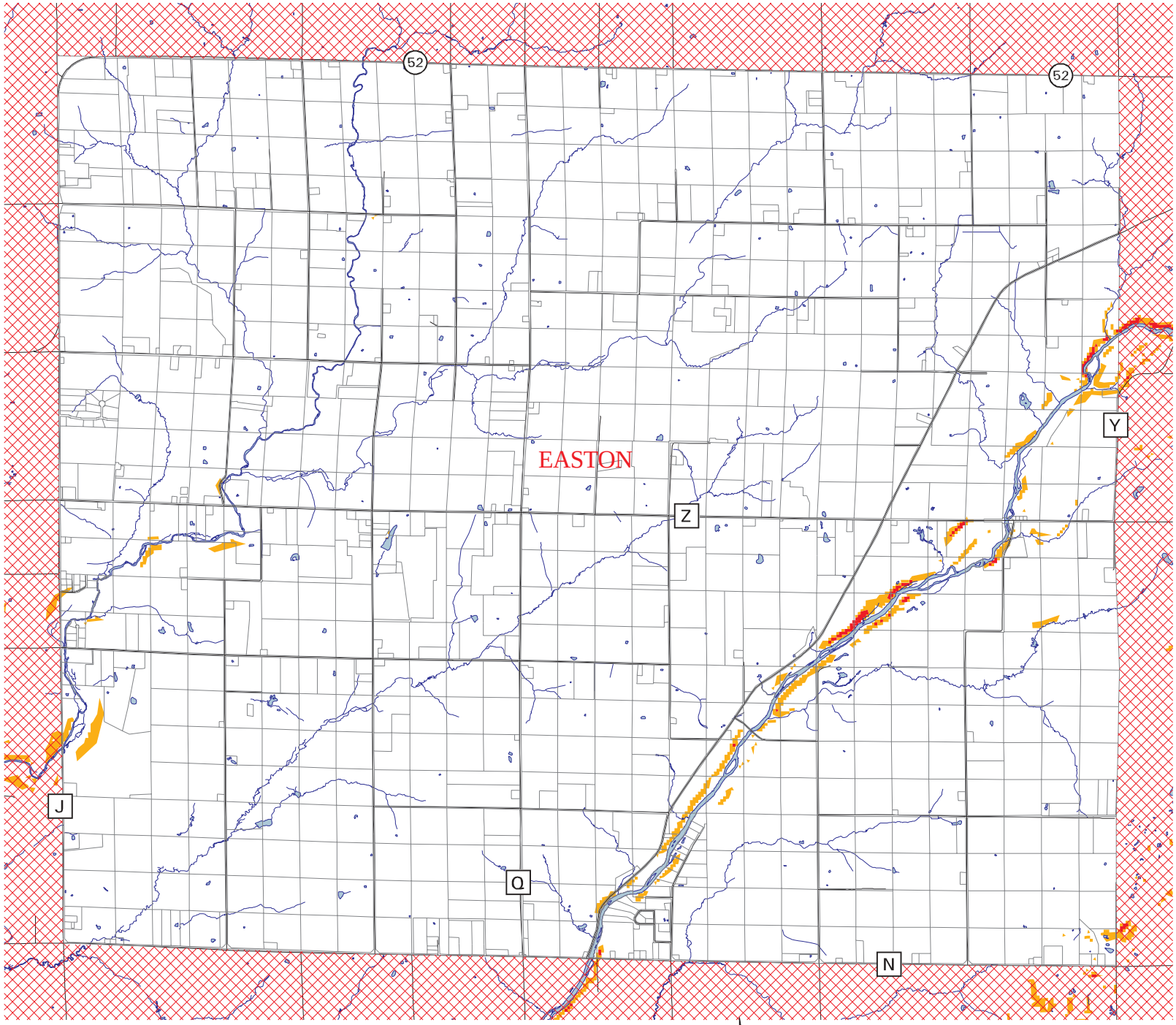
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-5

Soil Associations

EASTON



D - generally 12-20% slopes

E - generally greater than 15% slopes.

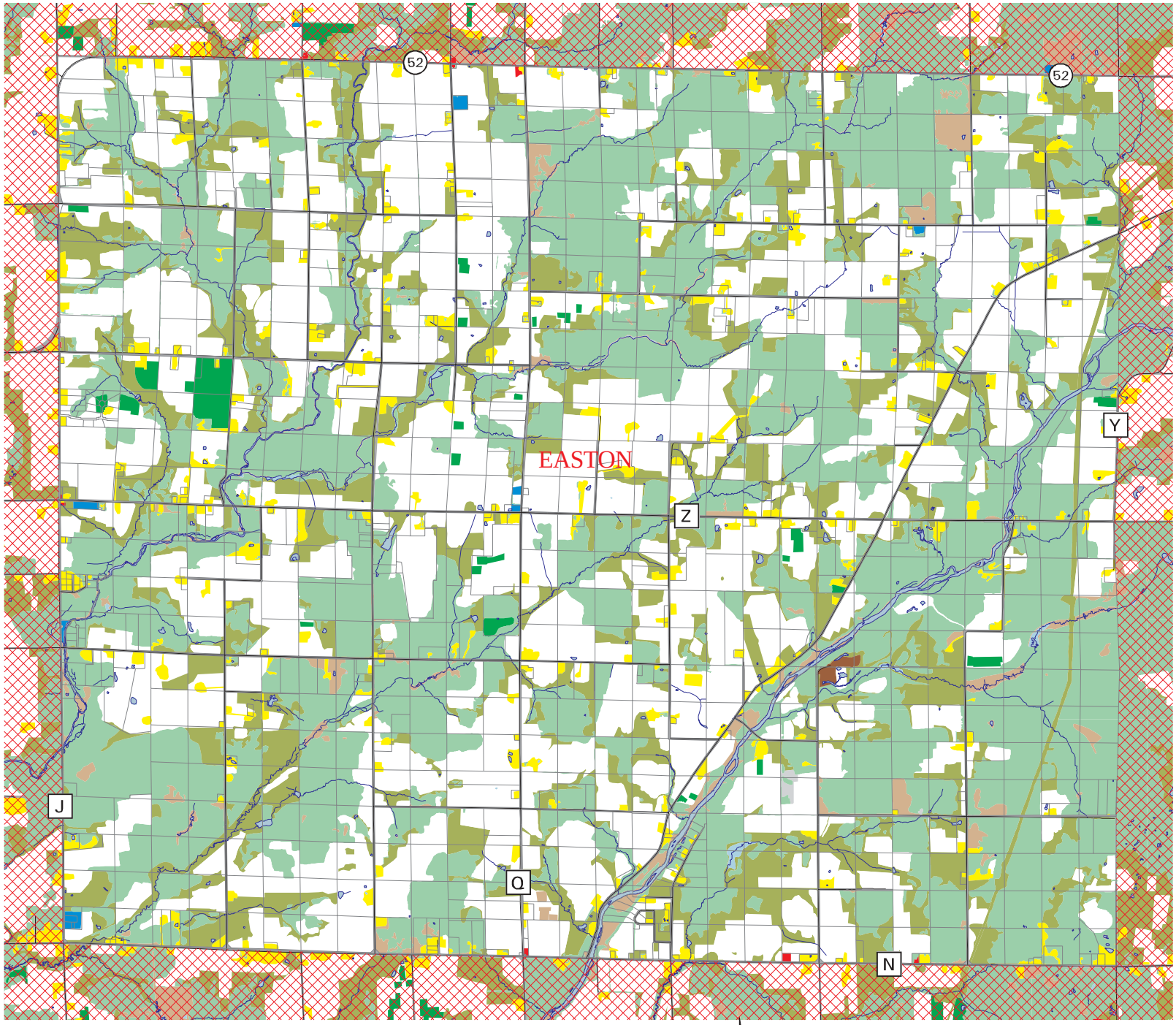
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-7

Slopes

EASTON



Single Family Residential
Multi-Family Residential
Commercial Services
Industrial
Quarries/Gravel Pits
Crop Land
Specialty Crops
Other Agriculture
Public/Quasi-Public
Recreation
Woodlands
Water
Transportation
Vacant/Barren Land

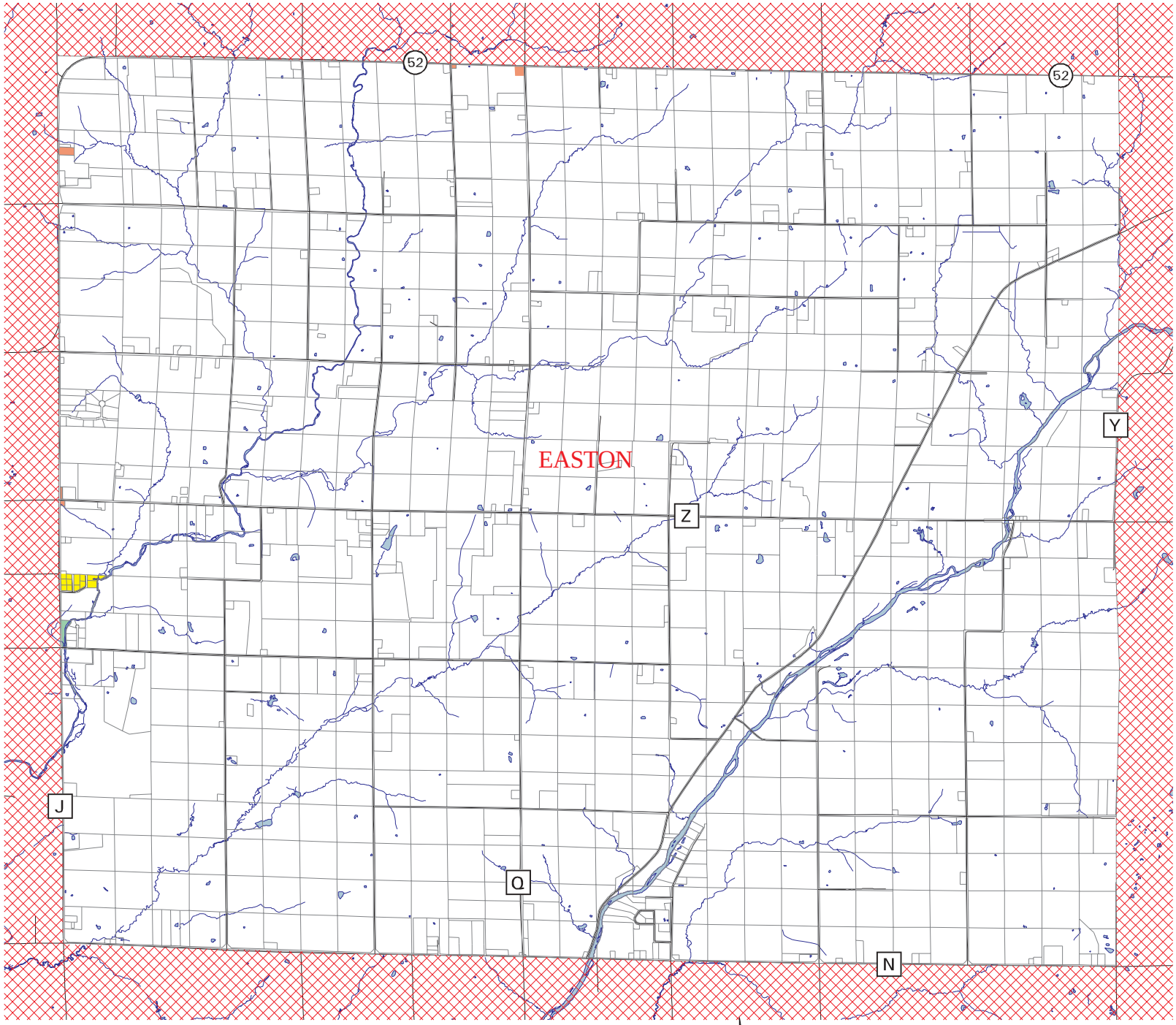
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 4-1

2000 Landuse/Landcover

EASTON

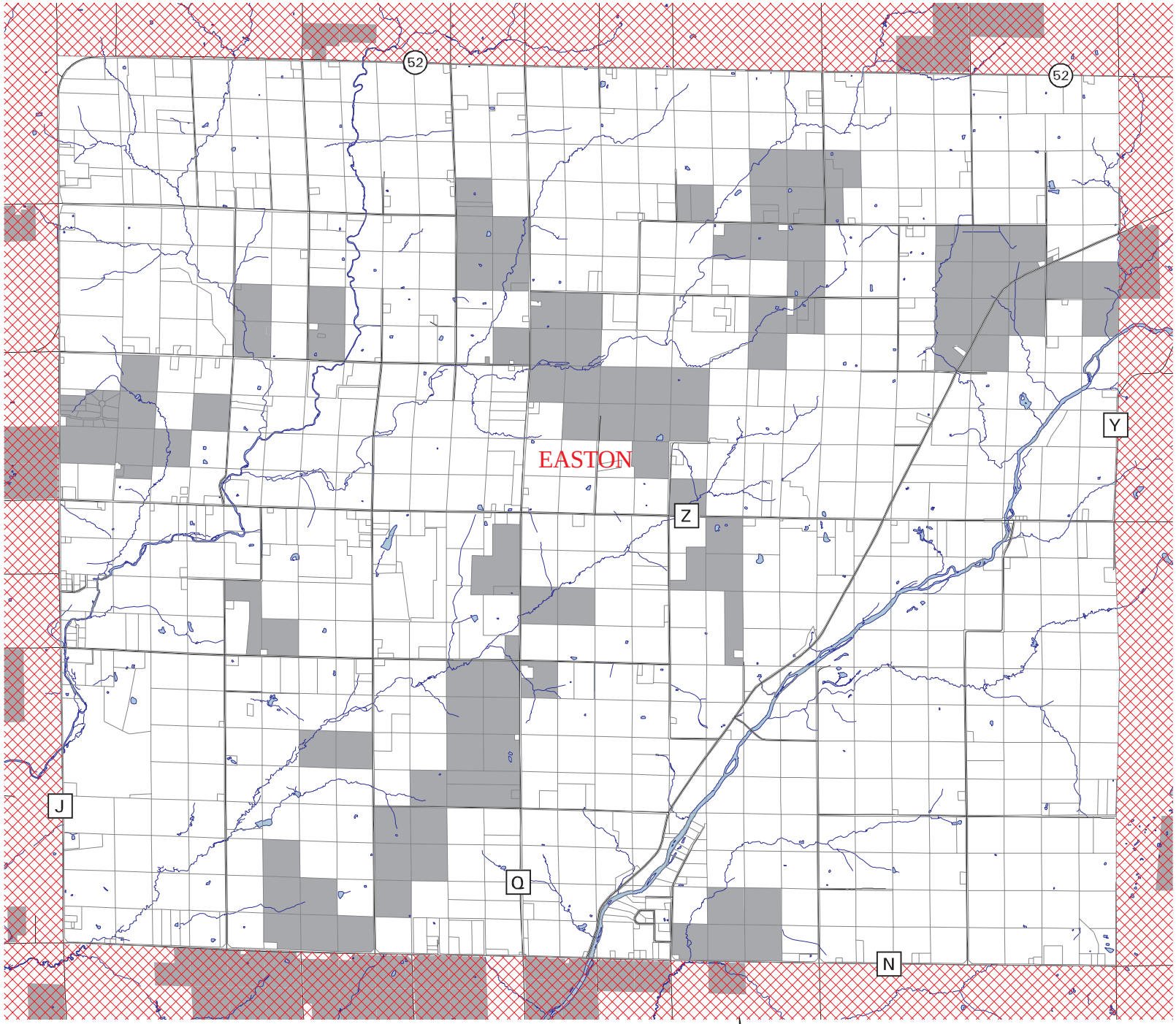


RS-1/20 RM RC HI M-2
RS-1/40 RP A-1 C-1
RS-2 CV A-2 M-1

Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 4-2
Local Zoning
EASTON



Exclusive ag zoning

Farmland pres contracts

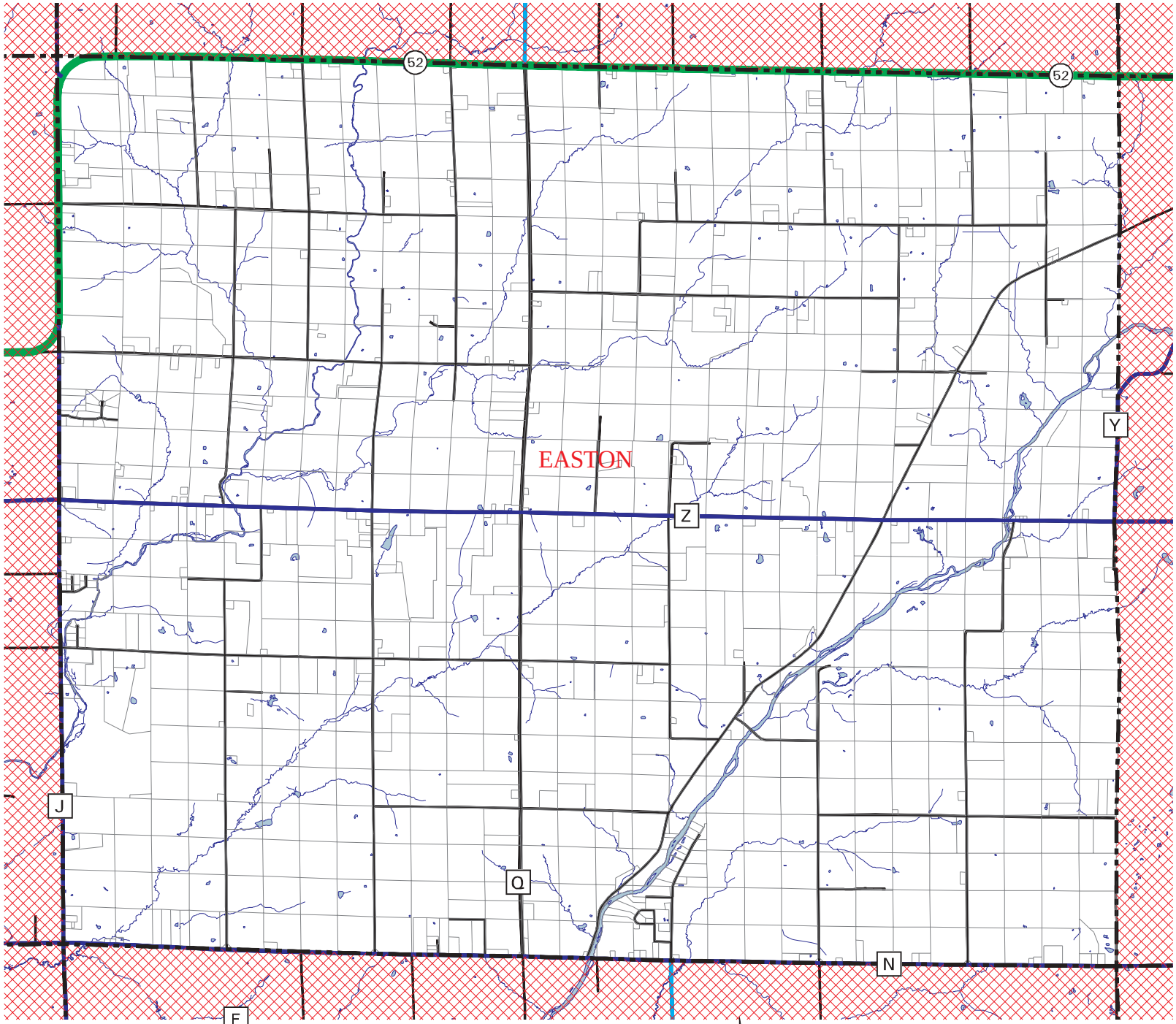
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 4-3

Exclusive Ag & Farmland Preservation

EASTON



Principal Arterial
Minor Arterial
Major Collector
Minor Collector

F County Highways
52 State Highways
51 US Highways
39 Interstate

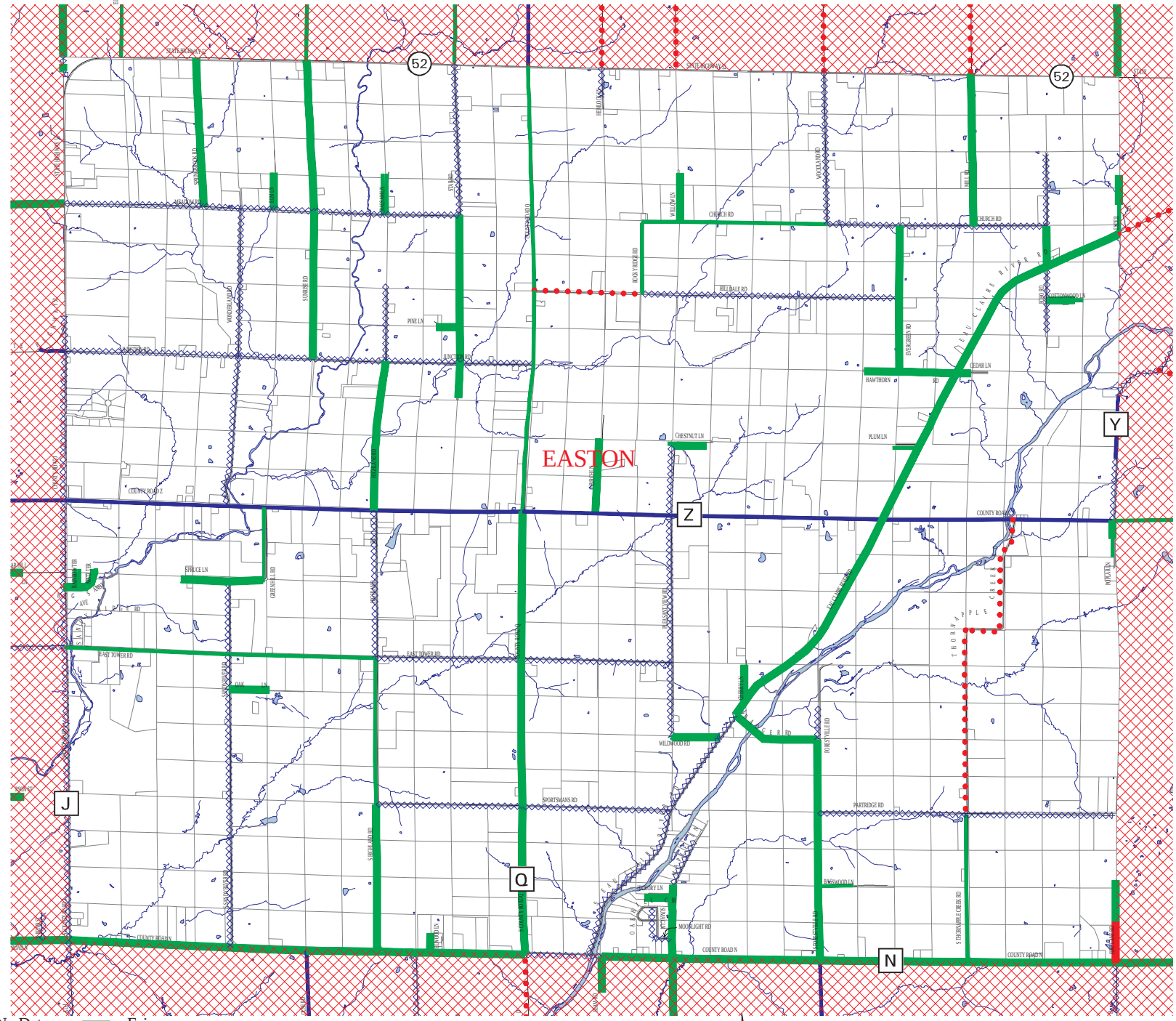
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 5-1

Functional Classification of Roads

EASTON



No Data
Failed
Very Poor
Poor
Fair
Good
Very Good
Excellent

Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 5-2
Road Surface Rating
EASTON

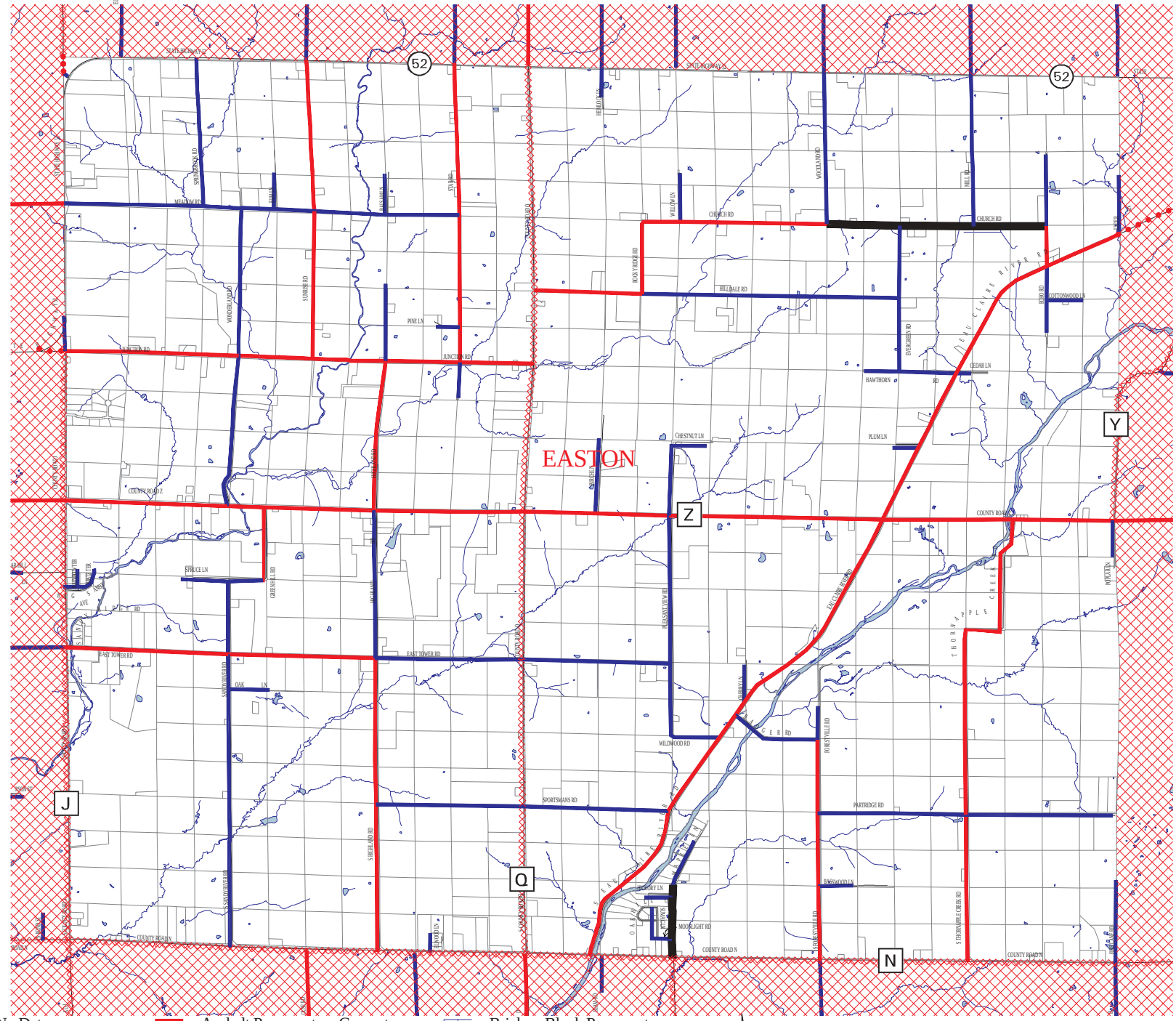
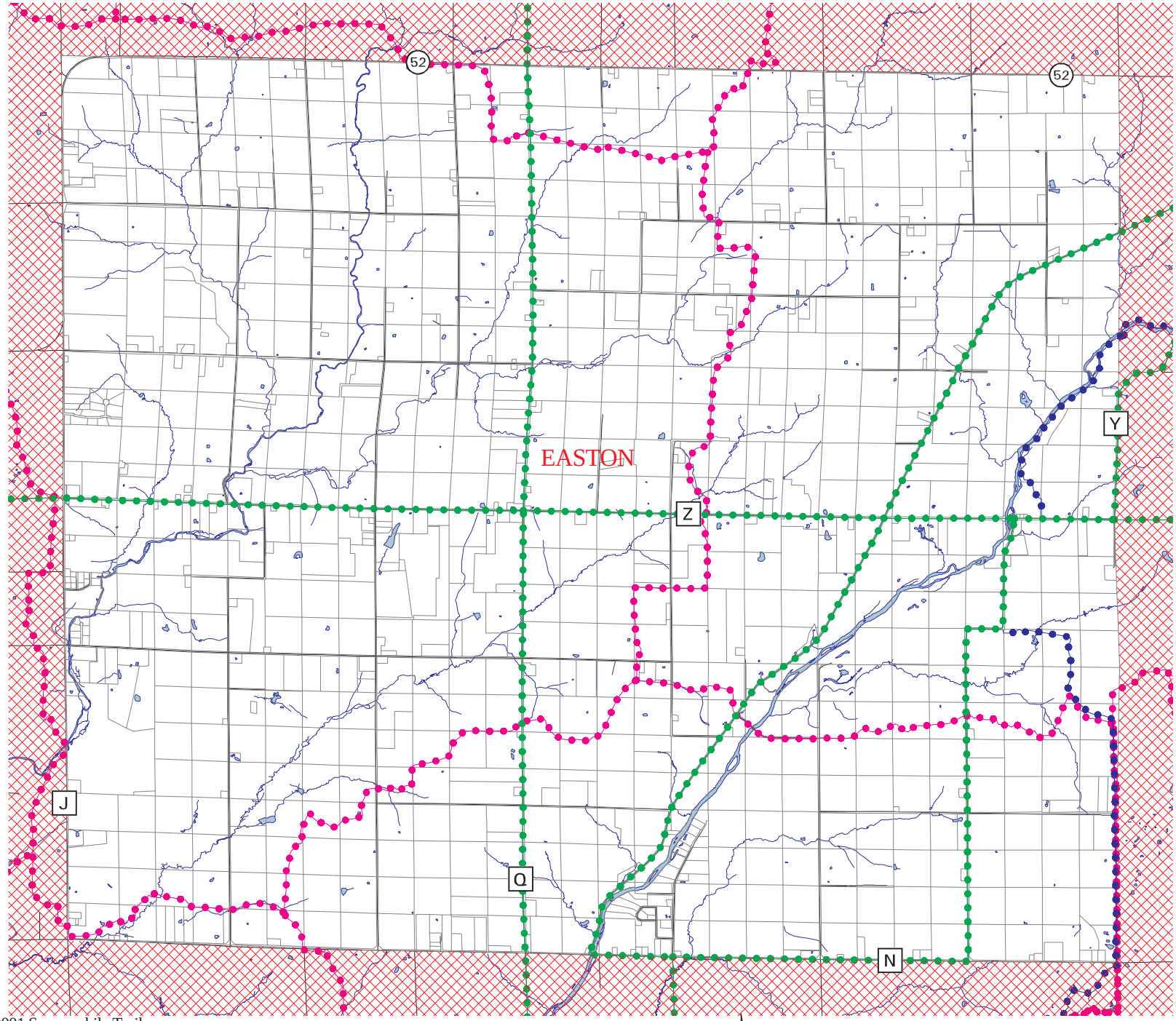


Figure 5-3
Road Surface Types
EASTON



2001 Snowmobile Trails

Mountain Bay Trail

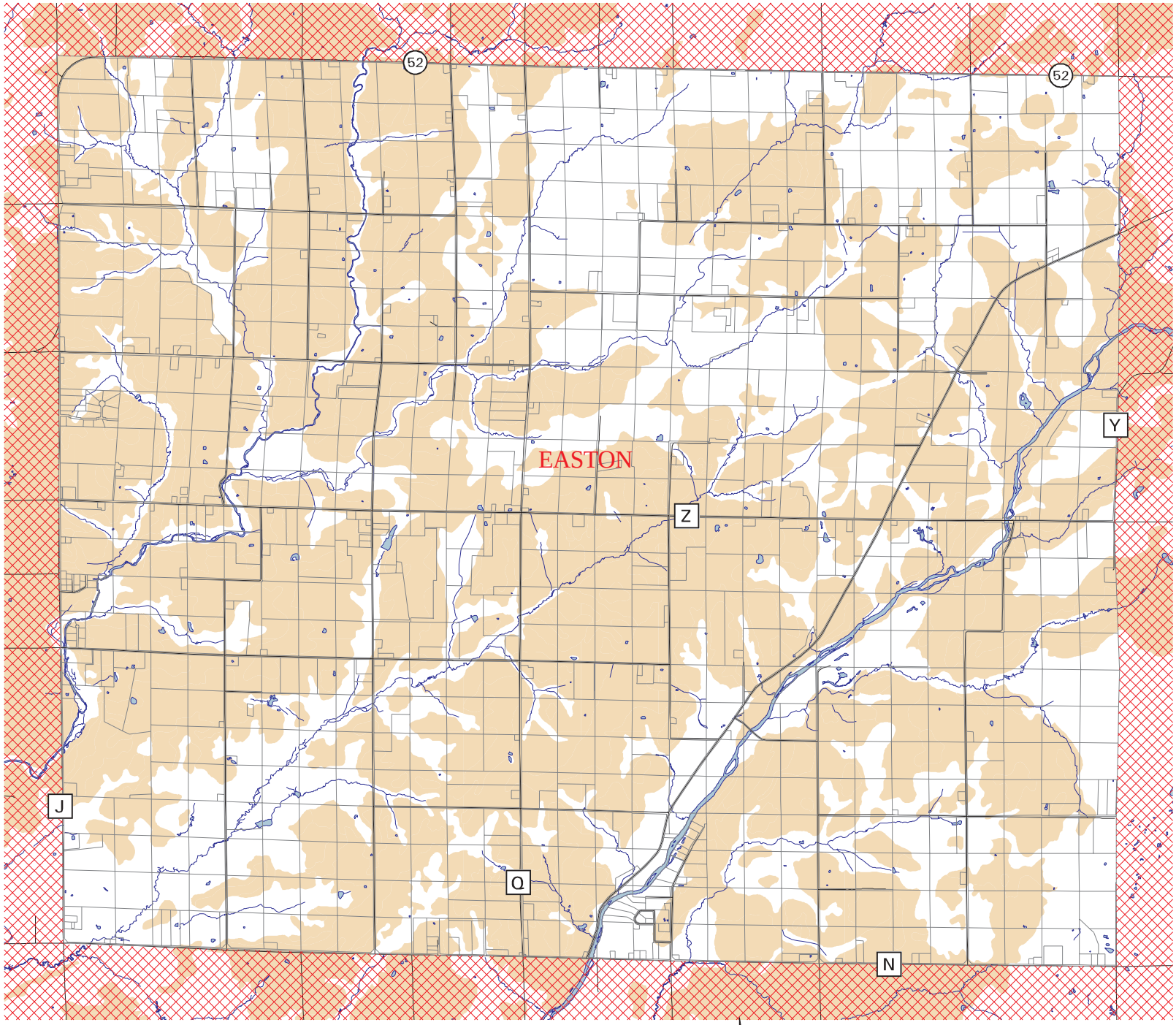
Ice Age Trail

Suggested Bike Routes

Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 5-4
Trails
EASTON



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

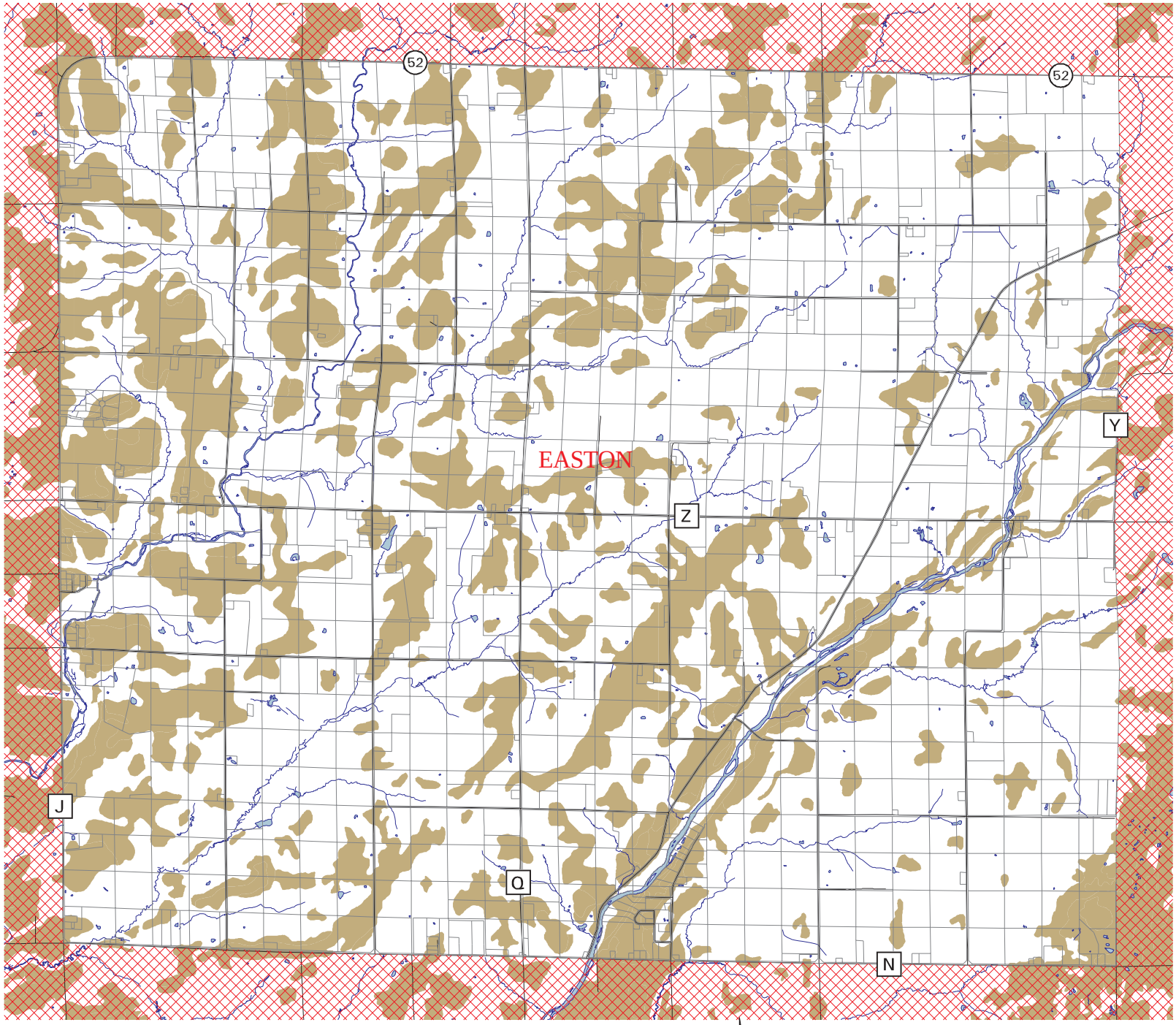
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 6-1

Depth To Bedrock

EASTON



Soils suitable for septic systems w/soil absorption component

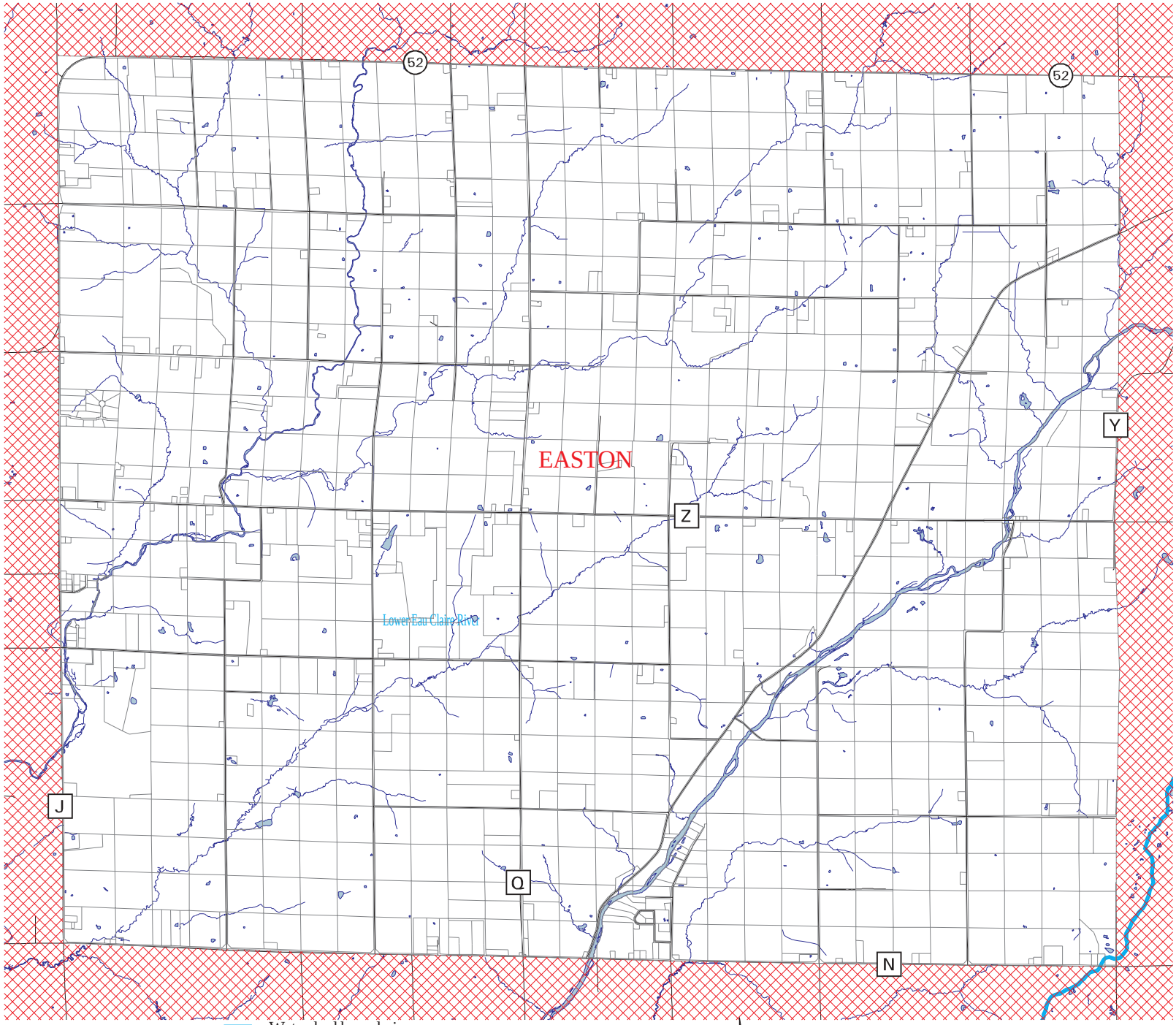
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 6-2

Suitable Soils-Septic Tank Absorption

EASTON



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

Watershed boundaries

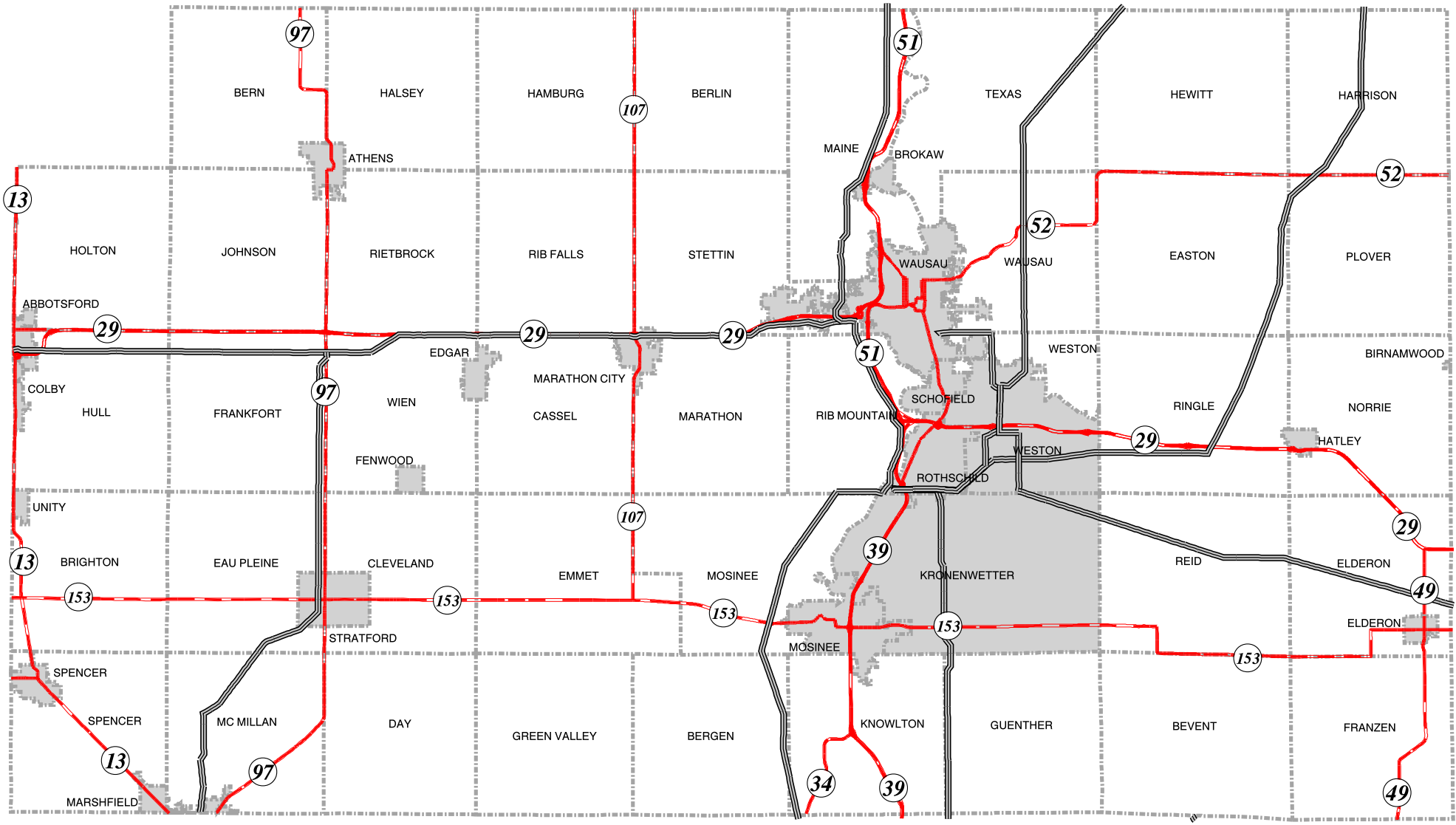
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 6-3

Major Watersheds
EASTON

MARATHON COUNTY
EXISTING POWERLINES



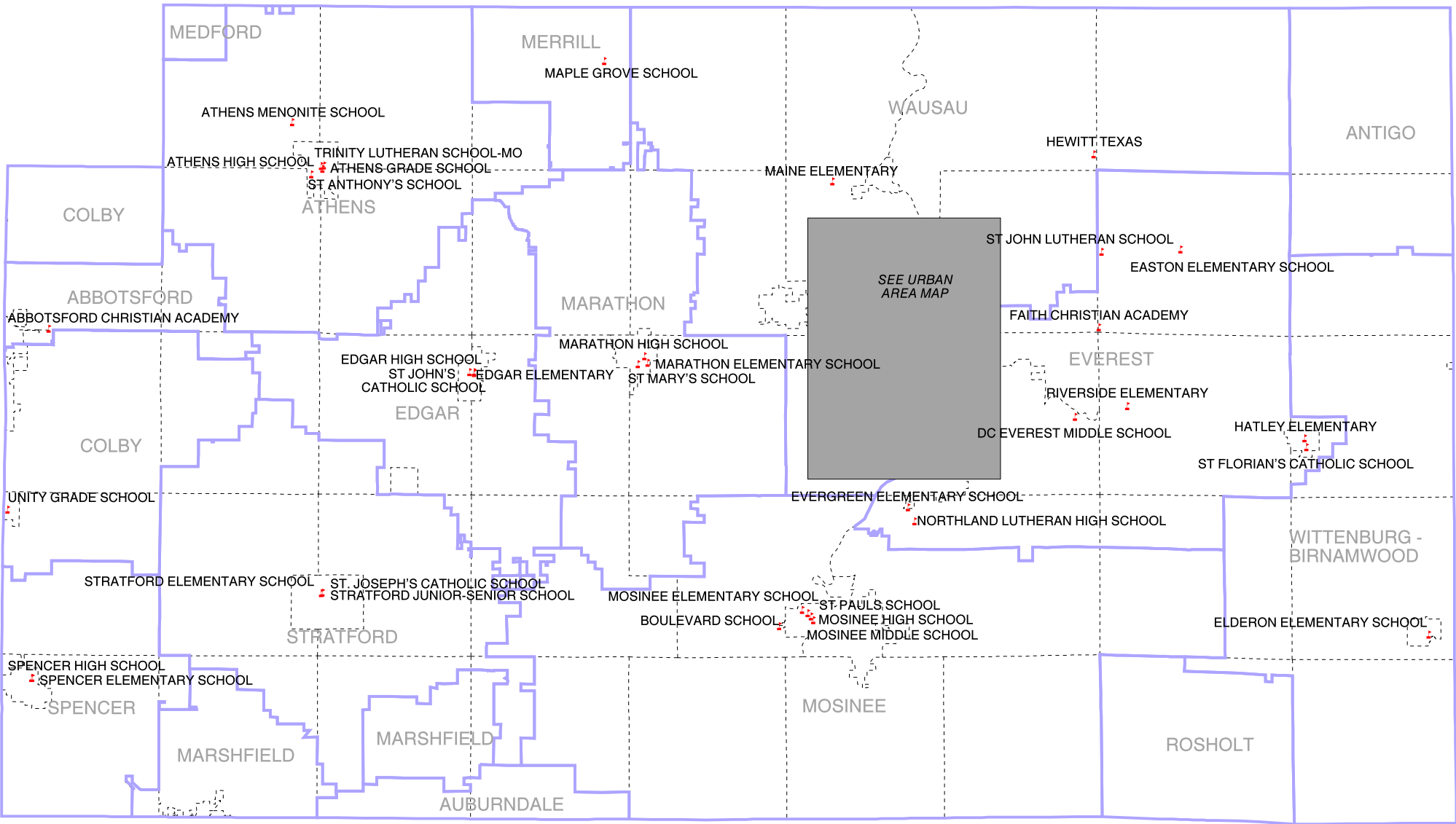
N

Existing Power Lines
State & Us Highways
Municipal Boundary
Incorporated Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 6-4

MARATHON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS
RURAL AREA MAP



School Locations

School District Boundary

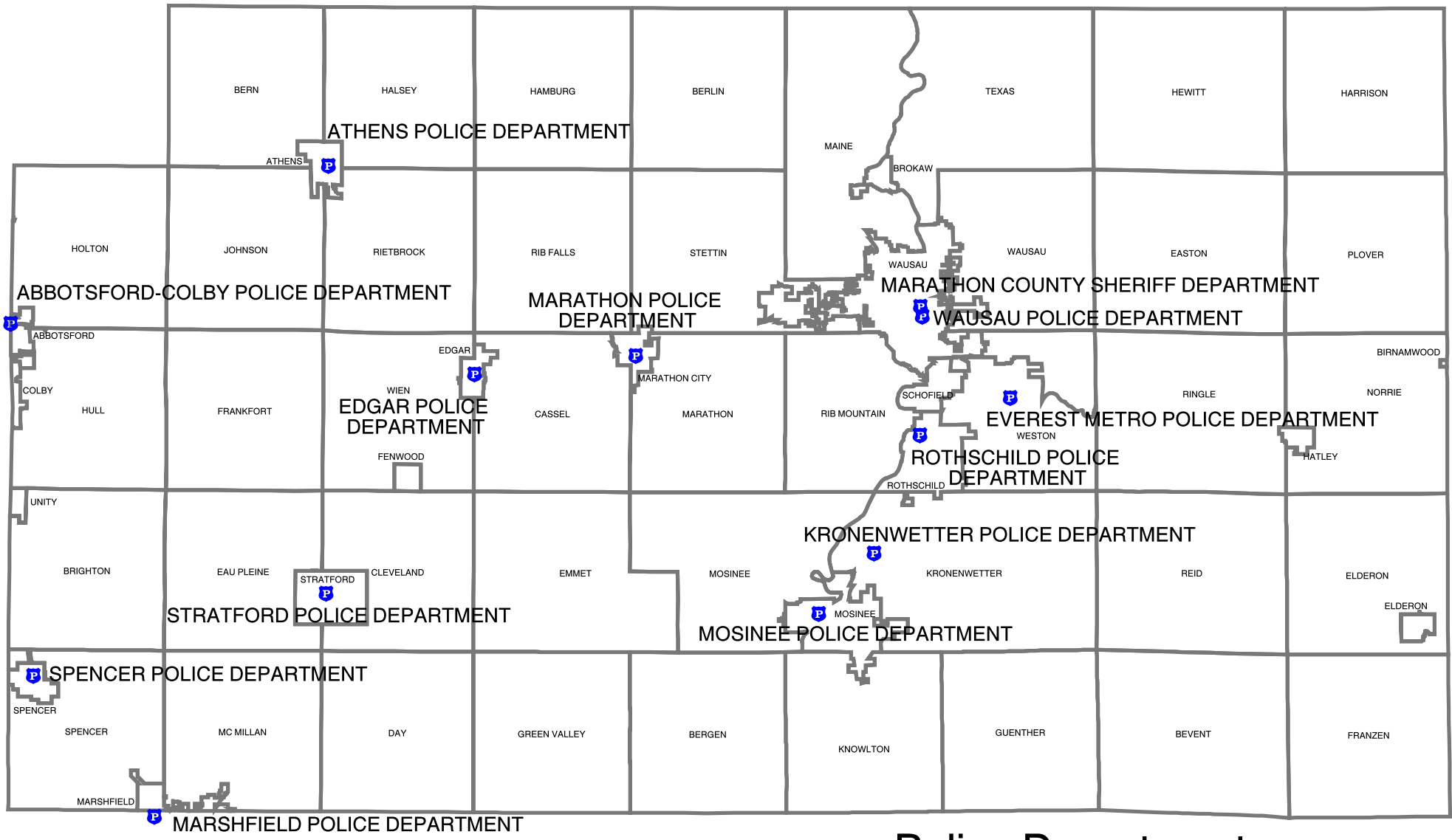
Municipal Boundary

N

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 9-1

MARATHON COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT



Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 9-2

FIRE DEPARTMENTS & SERVICE AREAS

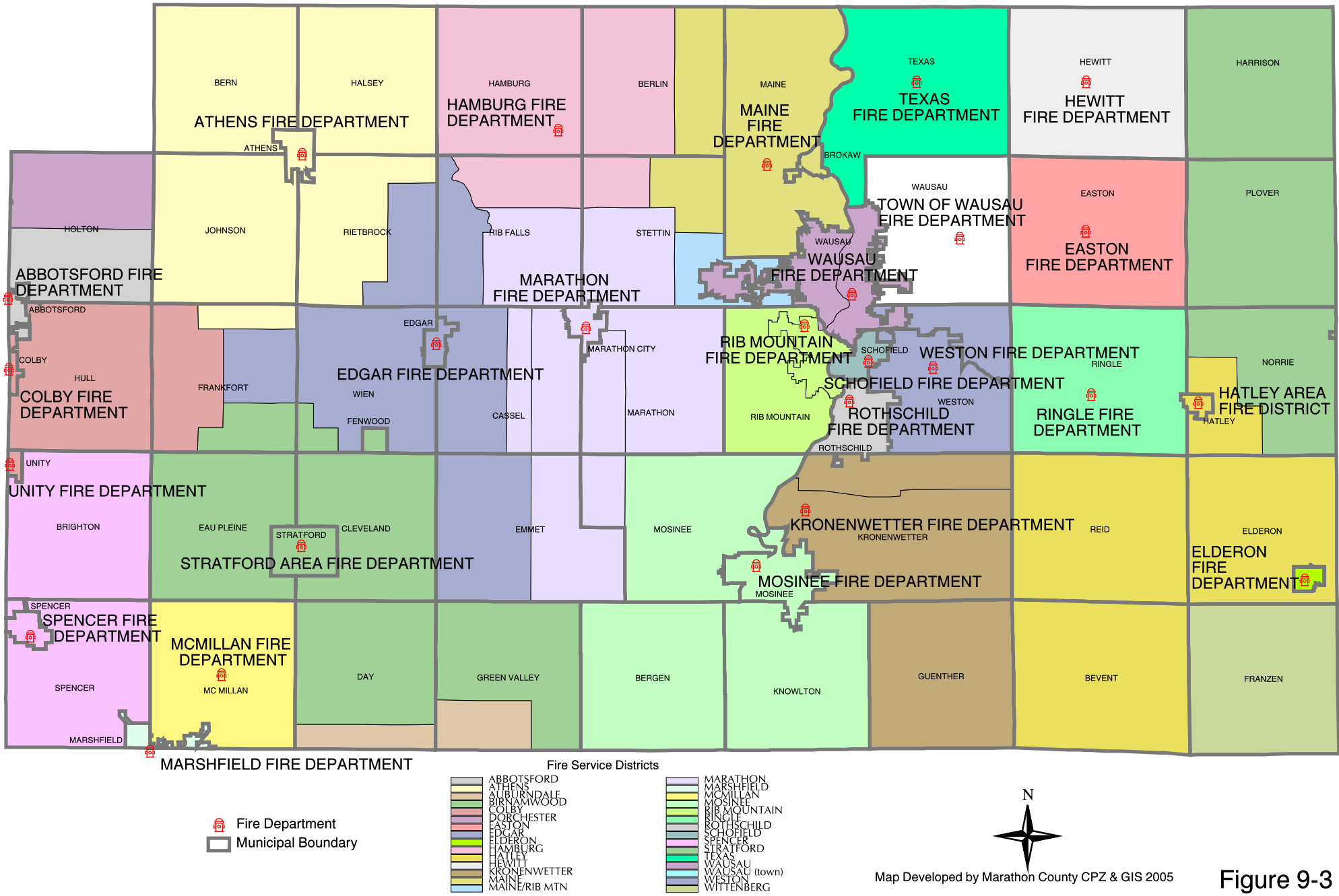
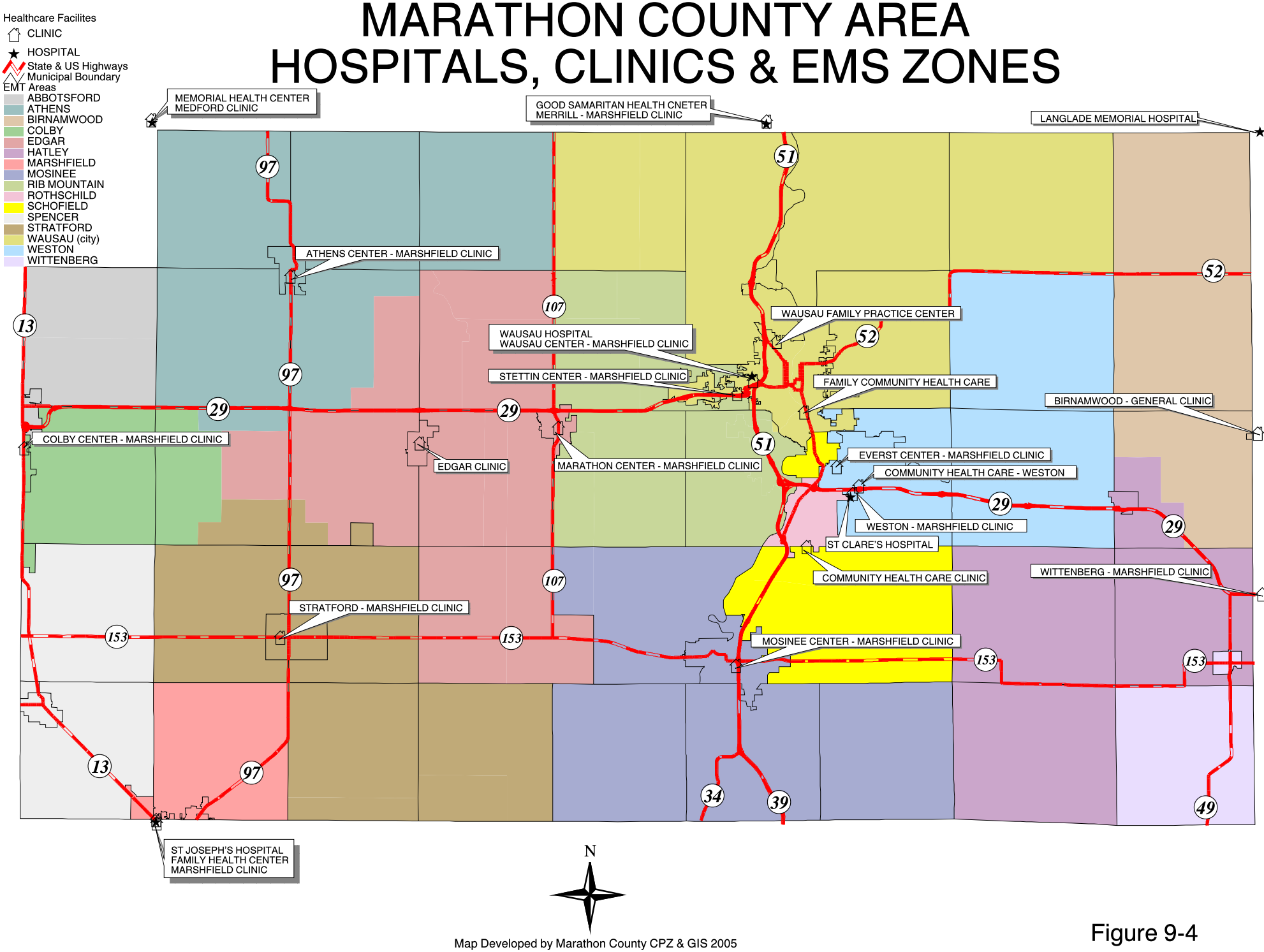


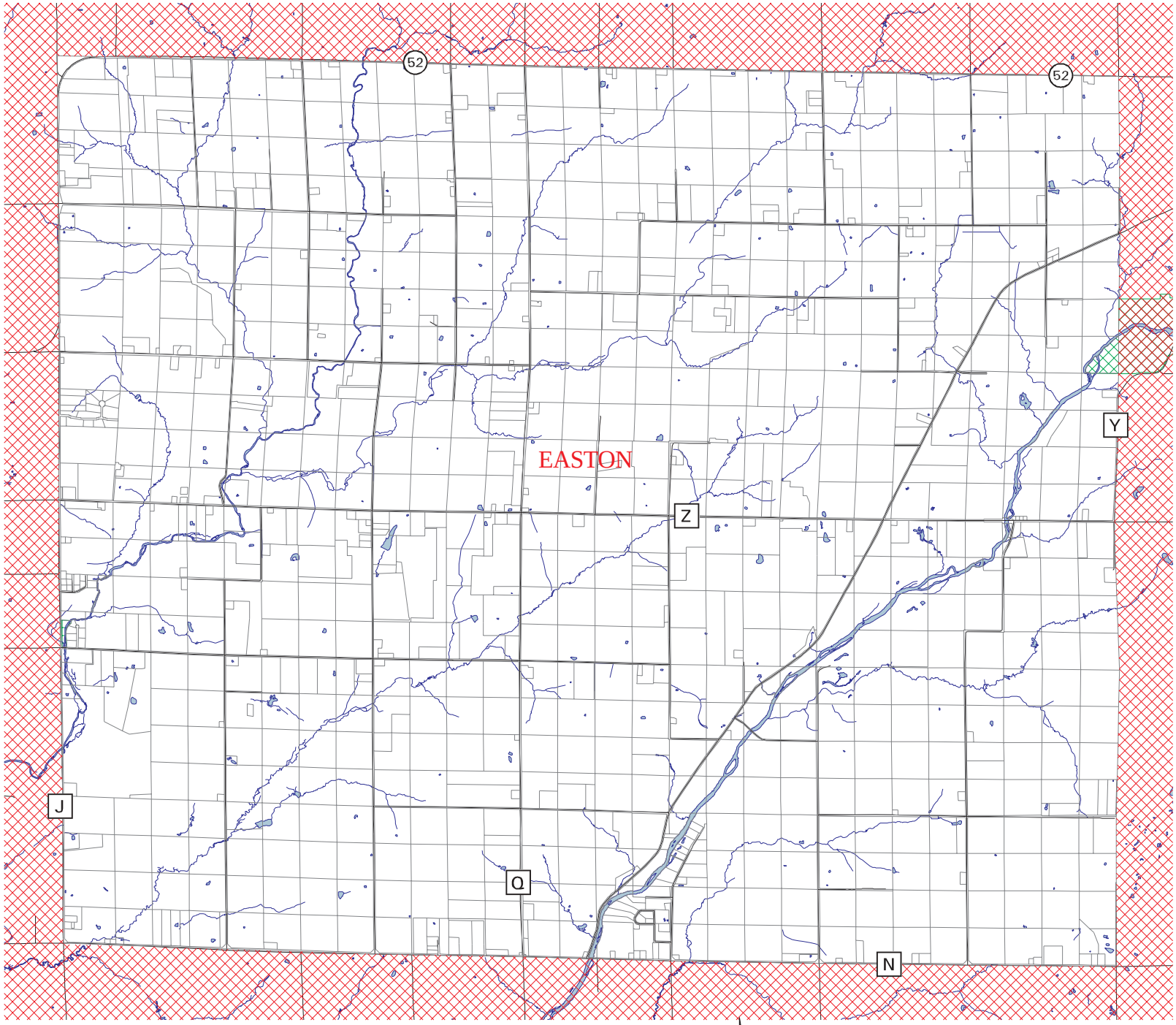
Figure 9-3

MARATHON COUNTY AREA HOSPITALS, CLINICS & EMS ZONES



Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 9-4



Municipal Parks
County Forest Units
County Parks
State Parks

Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 10-1
Recreation Facilities
EASTON

Town of Easton

Comprehensive Plan

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Implementation

September 2005

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7. Cultural Resources Element 17
8. Community Facilities Element..... 18
9. Parks Element 20
10. Economic Development Element..... 21
11. Intergovernmental Cooperation Element..... 22
12. Implementation Element 24

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B. Marathon County Guiding Principles
C. Ordinances and Resolutions for Adoption
D. Public Participation Plan
E. Bibliography of Related Studies and Plans
F. Road Paving Criteria

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Figure 3-3: Development Constraints
Figure 4-1: Functional Classification
Figure 4-2: WISLR Ratings
Figure 4-3: WISLR Road Surface Type

List of Acronyms

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

AADT—Annual Average Daily Traffic

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

BMPs—Best Management Practices

CCR&R—Child Care Resource and Referral Network

CDBG—Community Development Block Grant

CES—Cropland Evaluation System (Marathon County)

CIP—Capital Improvement Program

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

CRP—Conservation Reserve Program

CTH—County Trunk Highway

CWA—Central Wisconsin Airport

DWD—Department of Workforce Development

EMS—Emergency Medical Services

EMT—Emergency Medical Technician

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

FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency

FIRM—Flood Insurance Rate Maps

HOME—Home Investment Partnerships Program

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

LHOG—Local Housing Organization Grant

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

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

MPO—Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

NCHC—North Central Health Care

NCWRPC—North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

NRHP—National Register of Historic Places

NTC—Northcentral Technical College

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

PASER—Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating

PMP—Pavement Management Plan

SHPO—State Historic Preservation Office

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

STH—State Trunk Highway

TDP—Transit Development Plan (Wausau Area Transit System)

TIP—Transportation Improvement Program (Marathon County)

USDA—United States Department of Agriculture

USH—U.S. Highway

UW-MC—University of Wisconsin—Marathon County

WATS—Wausau Area Transit System

WDA—Wisconsin Department of Agriculture

WDNR—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

WDOA—Wisconsin Department of Administration

WDOT—Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WHEDA—Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

WISLR—Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads

WPD—Wetland Protection District

WPS**—Wisconsin Public Service Corporation**

1. Introduction

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

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

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

Sub-Area Concerns

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

General Concerns:

Local Development Control

- Maintain local control of development regulation
- Private property rights

Degree of Regulation

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

Land Use and Development:

Preserve Rural Character

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

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

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

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

Preservation and Protection of Resources:

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

Fiscal/Economic:

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

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

Infrastructure:

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

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

Sewer and Septic System Availability

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

Cost Efficient Community Services

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

Goals, Objectives, Policies, Strategies & Actions

This section is intended to address issues and opportunities as identified by the Town of Easton in its *Conditions and Issues Report*. These issues and opportunities are captured in the policies, strategies and actions set forth with the intent of achieving the goals identified by the community. These goals work in concert with the goals set forth by the State of Wisconsin (Appendix A) and Marathon County (Appendix B).

Definitions:

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

2. Natural Resources Element

Town of Easton residents are concerned about preservation of natural resources, especially woodlands, wetlands and open spaced. Residents are also concerned about limited water supply due to high bedrock levels in the northern portion of the Town. The Town has developed the following goals and actions to demonstrate its support.

Goal 1: Protect and enhance the wetlands in Easton.

- **Objective: To minimize intensive development in areas that could affect the water quality and habitat of wetlands.**
- **Objective: To continue working with the WDNR and Marathon County to ensure appropriate preservation of wetlands.**
- **Objective: To the extent possible, limit uncontrolled runoff, overuse of fertilizers, and other contaminants to surface water.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton discourages development in areas that will negatively affect wetlands.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Establish guidelines for developments located near wetlands, including type and use.
- Identify buffer zones around wetlands and prohibit development within those buffers.
- Work with Marathon County and UW-Extension to address uncontrolled runoff and overuse of agricultural chemicals.

Goal 2: Maintain the balance between woodland and cropland in Easton.

- **Objective: To encourage property owners to learn/maintain good forest management practices.**
- **Objective: To encourage land owners to manage pasture land so that it can be maintained as a significant agricultural resource.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages the preservation of woodland and cropland.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Research conservation subdivisions

Goal 3: Protect the Town's water resources, including potable water.

- **Objective: To work with the WDNR and Marathon County to protect critical groundwater recharge areas.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton strongly supports the protection of water resources.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Work with Marathon County and the WDNR to identify areas where development or agriculture could impact the water table and overall water quality.
- Work with Marathon County and UW-Extension to address uncontrolled runoff and overuse of agricultural chemicals.

Goal 4: Encourage the protection and preservation of prime farmland for agricultural production.

- **Objective: To continue use of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce soil erosion, decrease sedimentation into surface waters, and increase proper nutrient crediting to protect surface resources.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton recognizes the importance of prime farmland as an important agricultural resource, now and in the future.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and the NRCS to implement and monitor farmland conservation practices, including BMPs.

3. Land Use Element

Major land uses in Easton are largely divided between woodlands and cropland. Approximately 600 acres are set aside under Forest Crop Law (FCL), and an estimated 3,800 acres are in Farmland Preservation Contracts. Residential development in Easton has been strongly influenced by transportation access and by the availability of water for wells. Like many other rural towns, residential development in Easton has lined the primary roads, but is also scattered throughout the Town. Additionally, development has followed along the Eau Claire River. Easton's goals and actions reflect its desire to maintain balance between development and a rural lifestyle.

Goal 1: Proactively plan for increased demand for rural residential land development.

- **Objective: To identify areas where different types of residential development, such as large lots or subdivisions, may occur.**

- **Objective: To direct residential uses to locations that complement adjacent areas and to respond to availability of water and other infrastructure.**

- **Objective: To direct rural residential uses away from sensitive lands such as wetlands, creeks and rivers**.

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton discourages developments from occurring around natural resource areas.
- The Town of Easton encourages development in areas that can be served by available infrastructure.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Evaluate future development requests to ensure that the revenue generated from the taxes on these developments will exceed the expenditures required to provide services to them.
- Work with the County to identify and map areas where different residential development types should occur, such as the most appropriate place for large lots.
- Set guidelines for required buffers around identified sensitive areas – no development can occur within buffer, or development must be xx feet away from stream, etc.

Goal 2: Provide tools for managing growth.

- **Objective: To base land use decisions on Easton's adopted plan for future development.**

- **Objective: To develop subdivision regulations that guide development review and specify subdivision requirements. (NOTE: Easton has identified preliminary requirements for plan)**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages the use and adoption of tools to manage new growth.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Use the adopted plan for future development as a tool when reviewing development applications.
- Adopt subdivision regulations.

Goal 3: Preserve the rural character of Easton.

- **Objective: To determine an appropriate lot size that will support Easton's concept of rural character.**

- **Objective: To determine lot sizes that recognize the shortage of water in some areas of Easton.**

- **Objective: To establish development regulations that will enhance rural character.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton recognizes its rural character as an important and attractive asset.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Research conservation subdivisions.
- Identify and map water shortage areas, and adopt an appropriate lot size for these areas.
- Set guidelines for minimum lot size.
- Guide higher density development to areas that would not greatly compromise rural character.

Goal 4: Support existing farms and prime farmland as long as lands are maintained in agricultural production.

- **Objective: To encourage development away from identified farming areas so that large blocks of farmland can continue in production. (NOTE: Easton has identified preliminary requirements for plan)**

- **Objective: To encourage residential development away from identified farming areas in order to minimize conflicts between non-farm residents and farms and their operating characteristics.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton recognizes the importance of farmland as an important agricultural resource, now and in the future.
- The Town of Easton supports the minimization of farm/non-farm conflicts.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Encourage property owners, Marathon County, and UW-Extension to develop a program to direct new agricultural operators to existing operators of prime farmland who wish to sell.
- Actively support in the ongoing program that Marathon County and UW-Extension is developing to direct new/young farmers into the County.

Goal 5: Proactively plan for non-residential, non-farm uses.

- **Objective: To limit industrial and heavy commercial uses to locations near state and county roads.**

- **Objective: To develop regulations that will restrict the placement of non-farm commercial and industrial uses in identified prime farming areas.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages the placement of industrial and heavy commercial uses in areas most appropriate for that level of use.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Create commercial/industrial zones adjacent to state and county roads.

Goal 6: Ensure that development in the area of the Ice Age Trail complements proposed recreational activity.

- **Objective: To review development plans near the Trail for land use compatibility with the Trail.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages compatible use along the Ice Age Trail.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Develop a list of land uses that would be complementary/compatible with the trail and use this list when reviewing development plans near the trail.
- Develop a list of land uses that would definitely NOT be compatible with or desired near the trail.

Accommodating Future Growth

The population of Easton has grown at a rate of 16 percent between 1970 and 2000. This growth rate was slightly less than that of Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin. Easton's population is projected to increase another six percent by the year 2030 (WDOA).

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

Table 3-1: Future Land Use, 2005

Land Cover Category	Description	Acres	% of Total Land Area
Single Family Residential	One family structures, farm residences, mobile homes	876	3%
Multi-Family Residential	Multiple family structures with three or more households, condos, duplexes, apartments	0	0.00%
Commercial Services	Retail stores, taverns, restaurants, truck stops, gas stations, farm coops, farm implement dealerships, automobile dealerships, business offices, motels/hotels, offices, telephone/gas company	6	<1%
Industrial	Saw/paper/lumber mills, dairies, industrial parks, trucking operations, distribution centers	1	<1%
Quarries/ Gravel Pits	Mining operations	17	<1%
Cropland	Tilled agriculture, prime farmland	10981	39%
Other Agriculture	Fallow, pasture and undetermined agriculture, power lines and towers, water towers, municipal wells	3894	14%
Public/ Quasi-Public	Schools, churches, cemeteries, libraries, government buildings, National Guard, utility facilities.	131	<1%
Park and Recreation	Public and private parks, trails, ball fields, golf courses, playgrounds, camp grounds, shooting ranges, etc.	0	0
Woodlands	Privately-owned forested land, including nurseries, paper mill forests, etc.	10841	39%
Water and Wetlands	Open waters, such as lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, creeks, reservoirs, etc.	197	<1%
Transportation	Airports, highways, road right-of-ways, railroads, logging roads	679	2%
Barren Land	Unused open land in wooded areas, along streams, along roadsides	613	2%
Total Land Area		28,236	100%

Source: Future Land Use map (May 2005)

A majority of the future land use in the Town of Easton is anticipated to be in woodland and cropland/other agriculture (combined 92%). Only three percent of land is designated for residential use. These will be mostly single-family homes on larger lots scattered throughout the Town along County and other major roads.

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

It is estimated over the next 20 years, 133 acres will be needed to accommodate future residential development and 6 acres are needed for future non-residential development. Sufficient acreage to meet estimated demand for new development has not been provided in the appropriate land use categories on the future land use map**.** The Town is 86 acres short on residential and six acres short on non-residential. However, the Town has identified the southeast part of the Town as being most suitable for subdivisions, although this is not shown on Figure 3-1 and therefore is not included in the total future residential acres. This is a large area, and it is likely that the 86 acres could be made up in this area. The Town of Easton does not see a need for increased commercial or industrial development, and therefore has not identified additional non-residential uses on its map. It recognizes that this type of development may occur, but is not comfortable siting it at this time.

Land developed for new residential and commercial use will most likely be converted from agricultural use and limited woodland use, instead of subdividing existing residential lots. This trend is illustrated in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2: Acreage Projections, 2000-2030

	Estimated Acreage Needed by Year						
	2000	**2005**	**2010**	**2015**	**2020**	**2025**	**2030**
Agricultural	20928	20904.8	20881.7	20805.5	20835.3	20812.2	20789.0
Residential	829	851.2	873.3	895.5	917.7	939.9	962.0
Non-Residential	33	34	35	36	37	38	39

Source: Acreage based on estimates from Regional Planning Commission dated 10/29/03 and Marathon County

The agricultural category includes cropland, other agriculture, woodlands and barren land use categories. The residential category includes single-family and multi-family uses. The non-residential category includes commercial, industrial and quarry uses. This table does not include land use categories that are generally not developable, such as public/quasi-public, recreation, water/wetlands, and transportation.

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

Achieving consistency between land use and zoning is required by State Statutes. This generally occurs when a community is considering a proposed zoning change. The decision to approve a zoning change must be based on the adopted comprehensive plan, and specifically, the future land use map. Generally, if a 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 consist with the land use designation, the community should consider denying the rezoning request.

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

4. Transportation Element

The Town of Easton has 30 miles of paved road and 40 miles of gravel road in the Town. It is working on paving and rebuilding roads, and reconstructing bridges as needed. The following goals, objectives and actions reflect Easton's desire to maintain current operations and safety, as well as plan for future development demands on the transportation system.

Goal 1: Improve traffic safety within the Town.

- **Objective: To work with Marathon County to establish better parking controls along County roads and State roads, both for efficient traffic flow and to ensure traffic safety.**

- **Objective: To encourage Ice Age Trail officials to purchase additional land for parking to serve trail users.**

- **Objective: To develop/formalize criteria for review of driveway access along Town roads.**

- **Objective: To look for opportunities to minimize rural/urban road usage conflicts.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton will work with many parties to make sure that traffic safety is improved within the Town.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Coordinate with Marathon County to establish a plan for parking controls along State and County roads. Establish priority projects.
- Encourage Ice Age Trail officials to purchase additional land for parking to serve trail users.
- Consider development of a driveway permitting process that examines various safety and road management issues.
- Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and the County Sheriff's Department to educate the public about slow-moving vehicles.

Goal 2: Maintain town roads.

- **Objective: To adequately maintain currently blacktopped roads.**

- **Objective: To continue the annual road budgeting process so that maintenance and improvements can be programmed and adequately funded.**

- **Objective: To obtain financial support from road users whose heavy vehicles result in increased maintenance costs.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton supports programs to help maintain the condition of currently blacktopped roads.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Meet with the County Sheriff's Department to discuss the enforcement of weight limits on Town roads.
- Consider implementation of Conditional Use Permits

Goal 3: Ensure that new development will not have negative impacts on the local road network or create traffic issues within the Town.

- **Objective: To incorporate road planning into development review processes.**

- **Objective: To develop guidelines for roads and access to Town roads in new development.**

- **Objective: To require new subdivision road design that can accommodate future expansion.**

- **Objective: To incorporate non-motorized transportation (bicycles, pedestrians) into new subdivision designs.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages more planning for the relationship between roads and new development.
- The Town of Easton supports the inclusion of non-motorized transportation into new subdivision designs.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Make roadway considerations a part of the standard development review.
- Adopt and implement new development guidelines for roads and access to Town roads.
- Adopt and implement new subdivision road design criteria that will ensure that new roads can handle additional traffic volumes in the future, in areas that are projected for growth.
- Require added lane or shoulder width and/or sidewalks along certain roads in new subdivisions.
- Acclimate developers to new regulations/guidelines by holding meetings or creating a brochure that accompanies the development application.

Goal 4: Provide the most cost-efficient, effective services to residents in areas such as road maintenance, snowplowing, or other services.

- **Objective: To explore opportunities to work with adjacent communities where there are potential cost savings in service delivery.**

- **Objective: To coordinate timing of road maintenance with adjacent communities, to determine if services can be shared for potential cost savings.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton supports working with adjacent communities to provide cost savings in road maintenance and services.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Initiate meetings with surrounding Towns and the County to discuss road maintenance schedules
- Initiate meetings with surrounding communities to discuss snow-plowing and other service activities.
- Develop a plan for any shared road maintenance, including detailed responsibilities and cost-sharing.

Road Improvements

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

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

This scale is broken down as follows:

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

In addition to its use in the new WISLR, the rating system gives communities a detailed assessment of the appropriate maintenance method for each road segment under their jurisdiction. This assessment is then incorporated into the community's Pavement Management Plan. WISLR ratings and surface types in the Town of Easton are shown on Figures 4-1 and 4-2, and summarized in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Summary of Pavement Conditions

Surface Type Code (miles)						
Unimproved Road	Graded Earth Road	Gravel Road	Wearing Surface	Cold Mix Asphalt on Concrete	Cold Mix Resurfacing with < 7" Base	Cold Mix Resurfacing with > 7" Base
	0.5	31.06	1.99			
Cold Mix Asphalt Base < 7"	Cold Mix Asphalt Base > 7"	Hot Mix Asphalt on Concrete	Hot Mix Resurfacing	Hot Mix Asphalt Pavement	Concrete Pavement	Brick or Block Pavement
0.05	11.02		7.14	26.65		

Surface Condition Rating - WISLR Data						
No Data	Failed	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
	0.28	3.00	10.14	23.57	33.85	7.57

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

The roads that display a surface rating of "Good" or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. Further information is necessary for those roads that display no surface rating data. This data collection effort will help ensure safe travel conditions along those routes.

Paving Gravel Roads – Approximately 31 miles of roads within the Town remain unpaved. When paving gravel roads, there are many factors that should be taken into consideration. Appendix F outlines some general guidelines to help the Town decide if or when to pave gravel roads.

5. Utilities Element

The Town of Easton does not provide public sewer or water service. All development relies on private wells and waste disposal systems. Easton residents are concerned with planning for efficient private waste disposal systems, as well as protecting the Town's water supply.

Goal 1: Ensure a sufficient supply of potable water.

- **Objective: To discourage concentrated development in areas with limited water availability.**

- **Objective: To work with the WDNR and Marathon County to protect critical groundwater recharge areas.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton supports the maintenance and protection of its water supply.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Identify and map areas within the Town that have limited water supply.
- Work with the DNR and the County to identify and map critical groundwater recharge areas.
- Zone or place development regulations on areas that have limited water supply or are within a critical groundwater recharge area.

Goal 2: Plan for efficient on-site sanitary waste disposal systems in Easton.

- **Objective: To ensure that lot sizes are adequate for private waste disposal systems.**

- **Objective: To ensure that waste disposal systems will not have negative effects on wetlands, rivers, or streams in Easton.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages appropriate and efficient use of on-site sanitary waste disposal systems.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Develop and adopt a minimum lot size relative to a certain size of waste disposal systems.
- Develop guidelines for installing waste disposal systems within a certain distance from wetlands, rivers, or streams.
- Identify or hire staff to monitor waste disposal systems on a regular basis.

6. Housing Element

Looking into the future, Easton is most concerned with guiding development to areas that will best utilize areas already served by public utilities.

Goal 1: Plan for rural residential development to address concerns about waste disposal systems, adequacy of water supply and to preserve rural character in the Town.

- **Objective: To encourage housing development in areas that can best be served with infrastructure including water capacity and road access.**

- **Objective: To locate new residential units in areas that will have minimal impact on farmland and will have appropriate services.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton supports adequate and thorough planning for rural residential development.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Identify and map areas within the Town that have limited water supply.
- Zone or place development regulations on areas that have limited water supply or are within other critical water areas.
- Identify and map service area boundaries.
- Distinguish areas that are preferable to the Town for new rural residential development.

7. Cultural Resources Element

Although there are no properties in Easton listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has identified five cemeteries in the Town. The Town wishes to cooperate with any future studies done by Marathon County.

Goal 1: Preserve historically significant buildings and sites.

- **Objective: To work with the County Historical Society or others to identify historic resources so they may be considered in future planning.**

- **Objective: To ensure that any known cemeteries, human burials or archaeological sites are protected from encroachment by roads or any development activities.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton supports the preservation of historically significant buildings and sites.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Work with the County Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Office to determine if structures are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Map historic buildings, cemeteries/burials, and archaeological sites, and make maps readily available for project planning and development review.

8. Community Facilities Element

The Town of Easton is served by the D.C. Everest School District. The Town has its own fire department, and provides mutual aid to surrounding communities. Easton contracts to the Town of Weston for ambulance service, but also has its own First Responders team. Law enforcement is provided by Marathon County. Easton's goals reflect the desire to support existing facilities and services, and to look for ways to ensure that the most cost-effective service is being provided.

Goal 1: Support and maintain existing community facilities.

- **Objective: To maintain the Town Hall as a seat of local government and community meeting hall.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton recognizes the importance of the Town Hall as a gathering place for the community and as a government center of the Town.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Identify necessary repairs and allocate funds to maintain and/or improve the Town Hall on a regular basis.

Goal 2: Ensure sufficient fire service protection.

- **Objective: To continue to support the volunteer fire department and maintain and improve fire equipment.**

- **Objective: To maintain an adequate number of trained volunteer fire department staff.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton recognizes the importance of a well-trained, well-equipped, and well-staffed volunteer fire department.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Develop a list of improvements or new equipment that is needed by the fire department.
- Initiate conversations with surrounding communities about the sharing of fire-fighting equipment.
- Develop criteria for the minimum number of firepeople on staff adequately to serve the area.

Goal 3: Ensure adequate emergency response.

- **Objective: To maintain current contracts for ambulance service and review if community needs or response times change.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton requires the maintenance of adequate emergency response.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Regularly record, review, and audit emergency response times.
- Meet annually to determine if existing service is adequate.
- Initiate conversations with surrounding communities about service-sharing, if applicable.

9. Parks Element

The Town of Easton operates one public park, located on CTH J near East Tower Road. There are no Marathon County parks in the Town, though several are within short driving distance. While the Town sees no need for additional park land at this time, it wishes to support existing facilities, and to coordinate future amenities with the Ice Age Trail.

Goal 1: Support the Marathon County park system and local facilities available for Easton residents.

- **Objective: To continue to work with the Lions Club to maintain Sandy Park as a recreational facility in Easton.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton recognizes the County and local park systems as an important asset to the community.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Initiate conversations with the County to learn of plans for improvements or maintenance to Dells of the Eau Claire Park.
- Meet with the Lions Club annually to discuss ideas for improvements to Sandy Park.

Goal 2: Ensure that development in the area of the Ice Age Trail complements proposed recreational activity.

- **Objective: To consider whether the Town should make any improvements or enhance infrastructure to serve Ice Age Trail users.**

- **Objective: To encourage Ice Age Trail officials to purchase additional land for parking to serve trail users.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages compatible land use along the Ice Age Trail.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Meet with Ice Age Trail officials and users to identify areas where local infrastructure may serve to enhance the trail experience (connecting trails/sidewalks, water fountains, etc.)
- Prioritize identified trail projects and determine if funding is available, or determine cost-sharing.
- Identify land parcels that might be suitable and preferable for trail parking. Initiate conversations with Ice Age Trail officials about purchasing this land.

10. Economic Development Element

Employment opportunities within the Town of Easton are limited to mostly agricultural employment, as there is limited commercial and industrial use within the Town. As overall agricultural employment is anticipated to decrease in Marathon County overall, the Town of Easton is expected to see a decrease in overall employment through the year 2030. The Town recognizes the importance of agriculture to its economy, and has set forth goals and actions to maintain a viable agricultural base.

Goal 1: Strengthen the viability of the local agricultural economy to ensure that existing farms are able to remain in agriculture as long as they choose.

- **Objective: To encourage residential development to locate away from identified farming areas so that large blocks of farmland can continue in production.**

- **Objective: To support the creation of niche markets or other opportunities that will help farmers to stay in business.**

- **Objective: To encourage the use of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to increase productivity of farmland.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton supports agriculture as a prime economic force in the Town.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Review Town ordinances to ensure that they encourage appropriate types of secondary agricultural businesses to locate in the Town.
- Adopt guidelines or ordinances to guide residential development to certain areas, away from active farmland.
- Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and the NRCS to implement farmland conservation practices, including BMPs.

11. Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

The Town of Easton recognizes the importance of good communication, and its goals and actions indicate its desire to work effectively with other communities.

Goal 1: Ensure that the fire department provides adequate fire protection services for residents.

- **Objective: To continue to work with adjacent communities to purchase and maintain adequate equipment needed to provide good service.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton supports the purchase and maintenance of fire equipment.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Develop a list of improvements or new equipment that is needed by the fire department.
- Initiate conversations with surrounding communities about sharing or jointly purchasing fire-fighting equipment.

Goal 2: Provide the most cost-efficient, effective services to residents in areas such as road maintenance, snowplowing, or other services.

- **Objective: To explore opportunities to work with adjacent communities where there are potential cost savings in service delivery.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton supports working with adjacent communities to provide cost savings in road maintenance and services.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Initiate meetings with surrounding Towns and the County to discuss road maintenance schedules.
- Initiate meetings with surrounding communities to discuss snow-plowing and other service activities.
- Develop a plan for any shared road maintenance, including detailed responsibilities and cost-sharing.

Goal 3: Coordinate development with surrounding communities.

- **Objective: To communicate with surrounding communities when proposed development is on a boundary or the development could have impacts on the adjacent community.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages communication with adjacent communities when new development potentially affects those communities, or occurs on the border with those communities.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Maintain a list of the appropriate person(s) to call when development is occurring on the Town boundary or may have and impact on another community.
- Meet with potentially affected communities to disclose potential impacts and discuss possible mitigation or cooperation.

Goal 4: Encourage participation by Town officials and residents in all levels of government.

- **Objective: To encourage local officials to participate in county and state government activities and organizations.**

- **Objective: To encourage regular participation and feedback from residents through surveys, informational public meetings, newsletters or other activities.**

POLICIES

- The Town of Easton encourages local officials and residents to participate in local planning activities and organizations.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Invite representatives from county and state activities and organizations to speak at Town meetings.
- Designate a main contact person who will be responsible for organizing and/or distributing public information materials.

12. Implementation Element

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

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

Implementation Tools

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

The State planning law requires that by January 1, 2010 certain programs and/or actions that affect land use must be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan. To meet this deadline, the Town of Easton should update related ordinances on or before the year 2010. 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 establishment of zoning districts and the zoning map indicates where specific types of development can and should be located. Zoning districts shown on the zoning map should be coordinated with the land use plan and map. While the zoning map and land use map do not need to directly match at the time the land use map is adopted, the intent is that the land use map will serve as a guide indicating how the property should eventually be zoned. Therefore, indiscriminate zoning changes may result in weakening of the comprehensive plan. In fact, changes to zoning district boundaries should only be made if they are consistent with the adopted land use map.

  However, there may be situations where changing the zoning district boundary makes sense and is in the best interest of the

community. If changing the zoning would result in a conflict with the future land use map, the land use map should also be changed. However, the future land use map should only be changed if it does not accurately reflect the community's desired land use pattern. Achieving consistency between zoning and land use designation is also discussed in the Land Use Element.

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

The Town Board makes the final decisions regarding changes to the content of the zoning ordinance and the district map **[only in munis with own zoning].** These decisions are preceded by public hearings and recommendations of the plan commission.

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

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

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

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

The preparation of a CIP is normally a joint responsibility between the 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 in light of the priorities outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Plan Adoption, Monitoring, and Amendments

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

Plan Adoption: The first step in implementing this plan involves adoption of the plan by local officials. The formal review and adoption process involves plan review by the Plan Commission (or other planning committee) who must adopt the plan by resolution of majority vote. The Plan Commission recommendation is forwarded to the 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 the Town of Easton 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 the Town of Easton. 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, Plan Commission, and any other local decision-making bodies should periodically review the plan and identify areas that might need to be updated. The evaluation should involve first reviewing the goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires. Then the strategies and actions should be reviewed and refined to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate. The evaluation should also include an updated timetable of actions to clarify priorities.

Plan Amendments: The Town of Easton 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 12-1.

As noted above, proposed amendments must be reviewed by the Plan Commission 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.

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

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

Consistency Among Plan Elements

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

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

Action Plan

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

Table 12-2 is intended for use by local officials in setting priorities for capital budgeting. 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 Easton, staff, 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 12-2 : Implementation Plan Actions

Action	Priority
Natural Resources	
Establish guidelines for developments located near wetlands, including type and use.	Short-term
Identify buffer zones around wetlands and prohibit development within those buffers.	Short-term
Work with Marathon County and UW-Extension to address uncontrolled runoff and overuse of agricultural chemicals.	Ongoing
Research conservation subdivisions	Short-term
Work with Marathon County and the WDNR to identify areas where development or agriculture could impact the water table and overall water quality.	Short-term
Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and the NRCS to implement and monitor farmland conservation practices, including BMPs.	Ongoing
Land Use	
Evaluate future development requests to ensure that the revenue generated from the taxes on these developments will exceed the expenditures required to provide services to them.	Ongoing
Work with the County to identify and map areas where different residential development types should occur, such as the most appropriate place for large lots.	Immediate
Set guidelines for required buffers around identified sensitive areas – no development can occur within buffer, or development must be xx feet away from stream, etc.	Short-term
Use the adopted plan for future development as a tool when reviewing development applications.	Immediate
Adopt subdivision regulations.	Short-term
Research conservation subdivisions.	Short-term
Identify and map water shortage areas, and adopt an appropriate lot size for these areas.	Short-term
Set guidelines for minimum lot size.	Short-term
Guide higher density development to areas that would not greatly compromise rural character.	Immediate
Encourage property owners, Marathon County, and UW-Extension to develop a program to direct new agricultural operators to existing operators of prime farmland who wish to sell.	Mid-term
Actively support in the ongoing program that Marathon County and UW-Extension is developing to direct new/young farmers into the County.	Ongoing
Create commercial/industrial zones adjacent to state and county roads	Short-term
Develop a list of land uses that would be complementary/compatible with the trail and use this list when reviewing development plans near the trail.	Short-term
Develop a list of land uses that would definitely NOT be compatible with or desired near the trail.	Short-term
Transportation	
Coordinate with Marathon County to establish a plan for parking controls along State and County roads. Establish priority projects.	Mid-term
Encourage Ice Age Trail officials to purchase additional land for parking to serve trail users.	Mid-term
Consider development of a driveway permitting process that examines various safety and road management issues.	Short-term
Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and the County Sheriff's Department to educate the public about slow-moving vehicles.	Short-term
Meet with the County Sheriff's Department to discuss the enforcement of weight limits on Town roads.	Short-term
Consider implementation of Conditional Use Permits	Short-term
Make roadway considerations a part of the standard development review.	Short-term
Require added lane or shoulder width and/or sidewalks along certain roads in new subdivisions.	Short-term
Acclimate developers to new regulations/guidelines by holding meetings or creating a brochure that accompanies the development application.	Short-term

Action	Priority
Adopt and implement new development guidelines for roads and access to Town roads.	Short-term
Adopt and implement new subdivision road design criteria that will ensure that new roads can handle additional traffic volumes in the future, in areas that are projected for growth.	Short-term
Initiate meetings with surrounding Towns and the County to discuss road maintenance schedules	Short-term
Initiate meetings with surrounding communities to discuss snow-plowing and other service activities.	Short-term
Develop a plan for any shared road maintenance, including detailed responsibilities and cost-sharing.	Short-term
Utilities	
Identify and map areas within the Town that have limited water supply.	Short-term
Work with the DNR and the County to identify and map critical groundwater recharge areas.	Short-term
Zone or place development regulations on areas that have limited water supply or are within a critical groundwater recharge area.	Short-term
Develop and adopt a minimum lot size relative to a certain size of waste disposal systems.	Short-term
Develop guidelines for installing waste disposal systems within a certain distance from wetlands, rivers, or streams.	Short-term
Identify or hire staff to monitor waste disposal systems on a regular basis.	Mid-term
Housing	
Identify and map areas within the Town that have limited water supply.	Short-term
Zone or place development regulations on areas that have limited water supply or are within other critical water areas.	Short-term
Identify and map service area boundaries.	Short-term
Distinguish areas that are preferable to the Town for new rural residential development.	Immediate

Action	Priority
Cultural Resources	
Work with the County Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Office to determine if structures are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.	Mid-term
Map historic buildings, cemeteries/burials, and archaeological sites, and make maps readily available for project planning and development review.	Short-term
Community Facilities	
Identify necessary repairs and allocate funds to maintain and/or improve the Town Hall on a regular basis.	Ongoing
Develop a list of improvements or new equipment that is needed by the fire department.	Ongoing
Initiate conversations with surrounding communities about the sharing of fire-fighting equipment.	Ongoing
Develop criteria for the minimum number of firepeople on staff adequately to serve the area.	Short-term
Regularly record, review, and audit emergency response times.	Ongoing
Meet annually to determine if existing service is adequate.	Ongoing
Initiate conversations with surrounding communities about service-sharing, if applicable.	Short-term
Parks and Recreation	
Initiate conversations with the County to learn of plans for improvements or maintenance to Dells of the Eau Claire Park.	Mid-term
Meet with the Lions Club annually to discuss ideas for improvements to Sandy Park.	Ongoing
Meet with Ice Age Trail officials and users to identify areas where local infrastructure may serve to enhance the trail experience (connecting trails/sidewalks, water fountains, etc.)	Short-term
Prioritize identified trail projects and determine if funding is available, or determine cost-sharing.	Short-term
Identify land parcels that might be suitable and preferable for trail parking. Initiate conversations with Ice Age Trail officials about purchasing this land.	Mid-term

Action	Priority
Economic Development	
Review Town ordinances to ensure that they encourage appropriate types of secondary agricultural businesses to locate in the Town.	Short-term
Adopt guidelines or ordinances to guide residential development to certain areas, away from active farmland.	Short-term
Work with UW-Extension, Marathon County, and the NRCS to implement farmland conservation practices, including BMPs.	Ongoing
Intergovernmental Cooperation	
Develop a list of improvements or new equipment that is needed by the fire department.	Short-term
Initiate conversations with surrounding communities about sharing or jointly purchasing fire-fighting equipment.	Short-term
Initiate meetings with surrounding Towns and the County to discuss road maintenance schedules.	Short-term
Initiate meetings with surrounding communities to discuss snow-plowing and other service activities.	Short-term
Develop a plan for any shared road maintenance, including detailed responsibilities and cost-sharing.	Short-term
Maintain a list of the appropriate person(s) to call when development is occurring on the Town boundary or may have and impact on another community.	Immediate
Meet with potentially affected communities to disclose potential impacts and discuss possible mitigation or cooperation.	Short-term
Invite representatives from county and state activities and organizations to speak at Town meetings.	Short-term
Designate a main contact person who will be responsible for organizing and/or distributing public information materials.	Immediate

Appendix A

State Comprehensive Planning Goals

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

1. Promote the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.

2. Encourage neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.

3. Protect natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes and woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources.

4. Protect economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.

5. Encourage land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state government, and utility costs.

6. Preserve cultural, historic, and archaeological sites.

7. Encourage coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.

8. Build community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.

9. Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels throughout each community.

10. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services and a supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

11. Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels.

12. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.

13. Plan and develop land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.

14. Provide an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that provides mobility, convenience, and safety, which meets the needs of all citizens including transit-dependent and disabled.

Appendix B

Marathon County Guiding Principles

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

1. **Respect Local Governance -** Planning in Marathon County should build on local town, village and city government as a system that is unique, has served residents well, and is a strong component of local identity.

2. **Preserve Working Agriculture -** Agriculture has been central to the culture and economy of Marathon County for over 100 years. Farming has been a way of life for generations of county residents and is fundamental to both community and individual identity. Efforts such as protecting prime farmland from development, exploring niche markets, and supporting cooperative practices can be implemented at the local level to help maintain and preserve working agriculture.

3. **Maintain a Sense of Place -** As Marathon County's population grows and changes, communities will need to ensure that important physical features, buildings, and landscapes that exemplify their local identity are retained. These features provide a sense of heritage and continuity that contribute to a community's identity and sense of place.

4. **Preserve Rural Character -** Shifts in the farm economy and urban expansion are altering the County's rural landscape characterized by working farms, woodlands, rolling hills, marsh areas, and plentiful water bodies. As open spaces, farms, and woodlands are being lost or fragmented by development, Marathon County communities will need to make some important choices in order to preserve the qualities and character of the rural landscape.

5. **Safeguard Natural Resources -** Marathon County is graced with abundant natural resources including numerous rivers, wetlands, forests, and wildlife. Careful stewardship of natural resources is essential to protect against fragmentation and degradation and ensure these resources continue to contribute to the ecology, character, quality of life, and economy of Marathon County into the future.

6. **Foster Managed Growth and Coordinated Development -** Managing growth is important to ensure that no area is overwhelmed by development, land use conflicts are minimized, and development occurs in a quality manner that minimizes impacts on natural resources. Managing growth requires coordination of land uses and infrastructure, within and between communities, and recognizes that high quality growth in any one community will benefit surrounding communities as well.

7. **Cost-Effective and Efficient Provision of Public Services -** Marathon County residents are clear in their desire to keep local taxes reasonable. One of the most effective

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

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

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

10. **Preserve and Enhance Local Tax Base -** A strong tax base allows a community to deliver needed services to residents while helping to keep taxes low. Erosion of local tax base is a concern for many communities, often as a result of annexation, increases in public land ownership, and shifting economic markets. Efforts to attract additional revenue generators and coordinate with adjacent municipalities can help communities protect and preserve their local tax base.

RESOLUTION

RE: ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS PREPARED BY THE TOWN OF EASTON PLANNING COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, numerous persons involved in local planning provided information at regular and special meetings called by the Town of Easton Planning Commission; and

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

WHEREAS, the Town of Easton Planning Commission has reviewed the recommended Comprehensive Plan at a regular monthly meeting; and

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

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

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

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

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

APPROVED:

Chairperson
Planning Commission

ATTEST:

July 9, 2007

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN for the

TOWN OF EASTON, WISCONSIN

AUGUST 13, 2007

Please be advised that the Town Board of the Town of Easton will hold a public hearing on August 13, 2007, at 7:30 p. m. at the Easton Town Hall located at E15212 County Road Z, (corner of County Roads Q & Z) Easton, Wisconsin, to hear comments and concerns related to the proposed Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Easton. This plan includes extensive data concerning existing conditions and issues, and provides goals, objectives, and actions for such elements as land use, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, and utilities as required by 66.1001 of the Wisconsin State Statutes.

For more information regarding this public hearing, contact Arnold Schlei, Town Chairman at 842-4718.

All interested parties will be heard.

Town of Easton,
Ronald D. Sieglaff, Town Clerk

Published: July 13, 2007

Ordinance No. R-02-08-07

An Ordinance to Adopt the Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Easton, Marathon County, Wisconsin.

The Town Board of the Town of Easton, Marathon County Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to section [59.69(2) and (3)(for counties)/62.23(2) and (3)(for cities, and towns exercising City powers under 60.22(3))] of the Wisconsin Statutes, the Town of Easton is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in section 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

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

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

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

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

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

Adopted this 13th ~~Day~~ of August, 2007

Town Board President Arnold Schlei

(Published/Posted): 15 August 2007

(Approved, Vetoed): Approved 3-0

Attest: Ronald D. Sieglaff
Ronald D. Sieglaff
Town Clerk

Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan
Public Participation Plan

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Posting/Notification of all planning commission meetings.

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

- Easton Town Hall
- Tower Rd east of County Road J
- Junction Rd west of County Road Q

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

The Planning Commission will hold two public hearings as required by Chapter 66.1001(4)(d). These meetings will be held upon the completion of the Easton Comprehensive Plan and prior to Town Board voting to accept or deny the Comprehensive Plan. A notice of the hearing must be published at least 30 days before the hearing in a newspaper likely to give notice in the area. The notice will meet the requirements for proper notification regarding date, time, location, etc.

Sub-Area / Consultant Meetings

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

Town Newsletters

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

Newspaper Notices

The Town of Easton Planning Commission will prepare notices of meetings to be published in the Wausau Daily Herald.

Public Comments

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

Other

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

Resolution #R-112-04

A RESOLUTION BY THE TOWN OF EASTON
THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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

WHEREAS, the TOWN OF EASTON is participating in the Marathon County Comprehensive Planning Process.

WHEREAS, the TOWN OF EASTON recognizes the importance of public participation throughout the Comprehensive Planning Process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the TOWN OF EASTON approves the Comprehensive Planning Public Participation Plan.

DATED: January 12, 2004.

FIELD(2)

Arnold Schlei, Chairman

Daniel Southworth, Supervisor

Dean Beck, Supervisor

Attest

Ronald D. Sieglaff, Clerk

RECEIVED

FEB 18 2004

MARATHON CO. CONSERVATION, PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.

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

Natural Resources

- **Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (LWRMP)** - In 2005, Marathon County adopted the LWRMP in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Marathon County, to outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources and to ensure compliance of state agricultural performance standards and local ordinances.

- **Marathon County 2001 Groundwater Protection Guide** – This guide is an extension of the efforts established with adoption of the *Marathon County Groundwater Plan* in 1988. It is intended to guide local and County officials in setting policy to safeguard groundwater resources. It also serves as a resource of information about groundwater and other natural resources and recommends strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection.

- **Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2006 - 2015** This plan includes recommendations to manage and protect the county forest on a sustainable basis for ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future generations. It provides substantial information on existing forest resources and information regarding the roles of the various agencies and regulatory framework related to forest management. The Marathon County Board of Supervisors will consider approval of the plan in September 2005 and the DNR will do so in December 2005.

- ***Soil Survey for Marathon County***, published in 1990 by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service and updated in 2003.

- ***Marathon County Cropland Evaluation System (CES)* -** This system rates soils on their ability to produce food, feed, forage, and fiber crops. The system is non-biased, defendable, and can be consistently applied.

- ***Farm Preservation Program*** is an income tax credit program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture (WDA), Trade & Consumer Protection. The goals of the program are twofold: to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and to provide property tax relief to farmland owners. Landowners keeping land in agricultural use can claim a credit on their state income tax by obtaining a zoning certificate (if the land is zoned "exclusive agriculture") or by signing a contract with the State.

- ***Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan,*** adopted in 1982, eight towns have adopted Exclusive Agriculture Zoning. These include: Stettin, Marathon, Mosinee, Hull, Brighton, Eau Pleine, McMillan, and Day. The intent of this zoning classification is to minimize fragmentation of farmland by imposing a minimum lot size of 35 acres. In order to adopt Exclusive Agriculture zoning, a municipality must be enrolled in the Farmland Preservation Program.

- ***Marathon County Non-metallic Mining Ordinance,*** adopted in 1989 requires reclamation of these sites to a purposeful and acceptable landscape appearance and use. The program is administered by the County DCPZ and includes incentives to reclaim abandoned excavations.

- ***Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) maps*** provided by the State of Wisconsin include general information on endangered resources are appropriate for general planning and assessment purposes only. The locations of endangered resources that are not considered vulnerable to collection are identified at the town level in Marathon County. Locations of more vulnerable species are generalized to minimize the potential for collection or disruption.

Land Use

- ***General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County*** includes several sections that specifically address land use and various development activities. Some of these include:

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

- ***Marathon County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2005)*** – This plan, prepared in accordance with Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) directives of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, outlines strategies for pre-disaster planning and hazard mitigation. The intent is to minimize the effects of potential disasters and help streamline the administration of disaster relief.

- ***Forest Crop Law (FCL) and Managed Forest Law (MFL) -*** the FCL and the MFL programs were developed to encourage better forest management and provide tax relief to woodland owners. Land set aside under the FCL (which was combined into the MFL in 1986) required at least 40 acres in one quarter-quarter section, set aside under a 25- or 50-year contract, and public access for hunting and fishing activities. The MFL was enacted in 1985 and requires at least 10 acres of contiguous forest land. Landowners may close to the public up to 80 acres of their forest lands set aside under MFL. The remaining program acres must be open to public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing and cross-country skiing. Landowners must choose a 25- or 50-year contract. The landowner pays an Acreage Share Amount as part of their tax bill in lieu of taxes.

Transportation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Federal Highway Administration:

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

Utilities

- **Sewer Service Area "208" Plans** - Section 208 of the Clean Water Act passed in 1972 required the preparation of area-wide water quality management plans. This was translated at the State level through NR 121 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, which requires that water quality management plans also address sanitary sewer service needs for 20 years into the future. These requirements form the basis of Sewer Service Area "208" Plans. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has review and approval authority over Sewer Service Area plans; however, the technical work to prepare the plan is typically done by local government staff.

  - Wausau Urban Area Sewer Service Plan for the Year 2000 (1981) – initial "208" Plan
  - Major Amendment to the Wausau Sewer Service Area Boundary completed in 1992 (City of Wausau) and 1998 (Towns of Kronenwetter and Rib Mountain, Villages of Weston and Rothschild).
  - Current amendment in progress; with all communities in the sewer service area participating. It is anticipated that the plan will be approved by the DNR in December, 2005.

- ***Chapter 15 - General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County*** incorporates by reference rules, regulations, and laws in the Wisconsin Statutes and Wisconsin Administrative Code governing private sewage systems.

- ***Wellhead Protection Plans*** - The State of Wisconsin mandates that **wellhead protection plans** be developed for any municipal well proposed after May 1, 1992. These plans must be approved by the WDNR before a community can use the new well. Section NR 811.16(5) of the Wisconsin Administrative Code defines specific requirements for required wellhead protection plans.

Parks and Recreation

- ***Marathon County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for 1999-2004***, completed in May 1999, this plan identifies several needs related to parks and recreation and outlines several actions to address those needs.
    - The plan has received a one-year extension from the State of Wisconsin, and is in the process of being updated with a completion date in spring of 2006.

- ***The Rivers Edge Master Plan,*** adopted in June 1995, outlines a long-range (20-30 year) framework for improving access to the riverfront and enhancing the riverfront environment and provides a master plan to establish a bicycle/pedestrian trail along the banks of the Wisconsin River through the City of Wausau.

Economic Development

- ***Marathon County Workforce Profile,*** Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), annually in October.

- ***Final Report***, Marathon County Task Force on the Rural Economy, April 2003.

- ***Agricultural Impacts in Marathon County***, University of Wisconsin – Extension (UWEX), Ken Barnett and Steve Deller, February 2003.

- ***Status of Wisconsin Agriculture***, 2003, UWEX, Mike Wildeck and Ed Jesse, April 2003.

- ***Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2002-2003***, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), June 2002.

Appendix F: Guidelines for Paving Gravel Roads[1]

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

Traffic Demand

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

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

Maintenance Considerations

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

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

Base and Drainage Needs

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

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

Safety and Design Considerations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Costs

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

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

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

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

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

Public Opinion

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

Staged Construction

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

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

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

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

Summary

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

Appendix G: Economic Development Programs

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

Federal Programs

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wisconsin State Programs

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

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** There are several CDBG programs focusing on different aspects of economic development.

    - **Economic Development Program** – grants to establish loans for business start-up, retention, and expansion.
    - **Public Facilities for Economic Development Program:** Helps underwrite the costs of necessary public infrastructure to retain or create employment opportunities.
    - **Public Facilities Program:** Helps finance infrastructure and facilities to serve low and moderate income persons.
    - **Emergency Grant Program:** Helps restore or replace critical infrastructure damaged or destroyed as a result of natural or manmade catastrophes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

County, Regional, and Local Programs

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

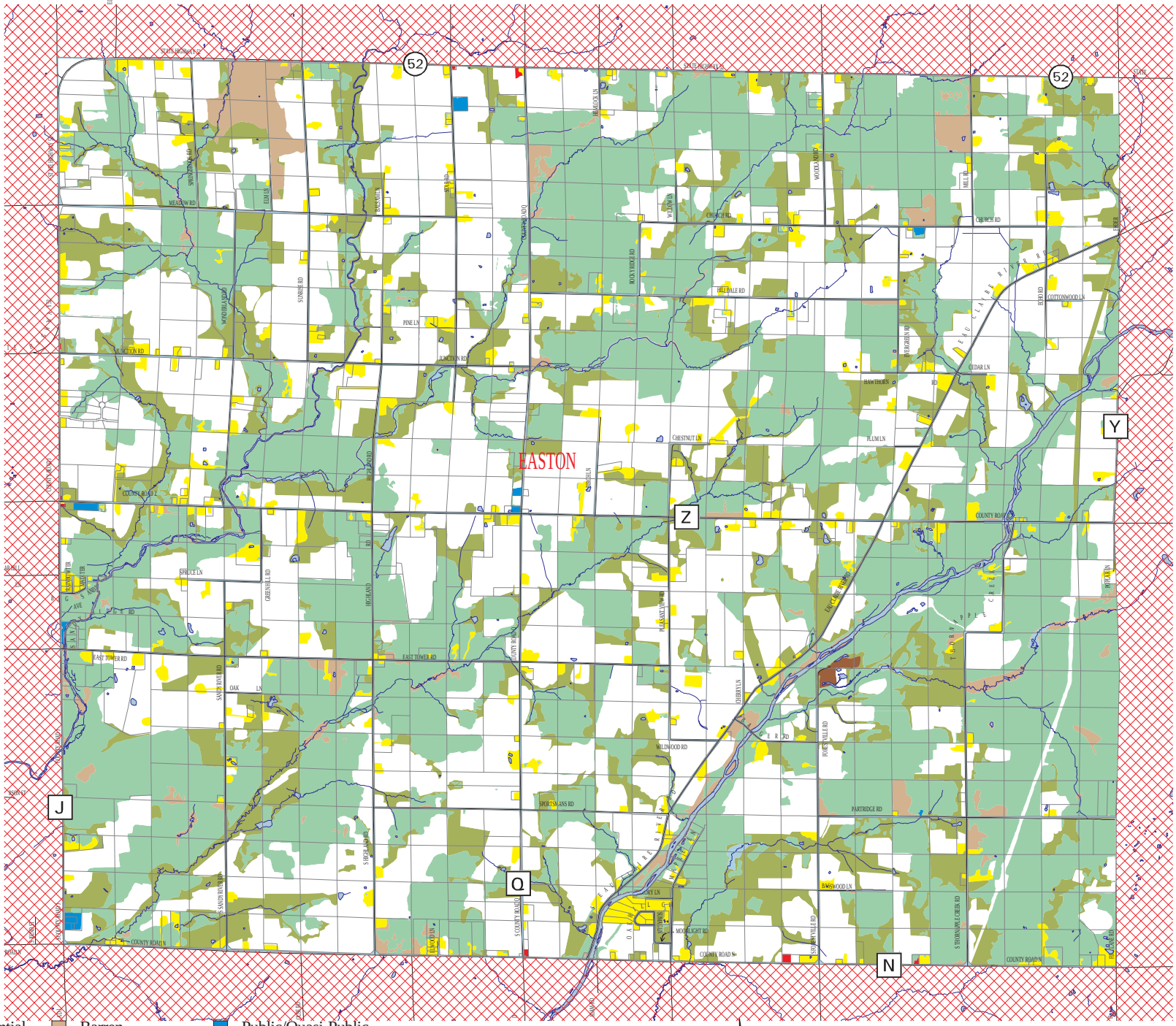
- **North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC):** The NCWRPC is a designated Economic Development District and provides services such as economic research, marketing, financial packaging, evaluation and analysis of public infrastructure needs that support private economic development activity. The NCWRPC also works with local units of government to maintain eligibility for certain grants.

- **North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC):** A regional organization created for the purpose of managing a regional revolving loan fund. The NCWDC is staffed by the NCWRPC.

- **Wausau Region/Marathon County Chamber of Commerce:** The Chamber provides leadership and support for economic development efforts in the region, including a variety of networking programs, mentoring services, workshops and business counseling services.

- **Marathon County Development Corporation (MCDEVCO):** This is the economic development arm of the Wausau Area Chamber of Commerce. MDCEVCO serves all businesses and communities in Marathon County. MCDEVCO works with individual business, municipalities, and the banking community to facilitate investment in the region. Specific programs administered by MCDEVCO include a revolving loan fund, a small business incubator, and job training funds.

- **Wausau/Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB):** The CVB promotes the area to the business and leisure traveler and provides information on the area to visitors and residents.



- Single Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Quarry
- Barren
- Crop Land
- Other Agriculture
- Forest Land
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Transportation
- Water

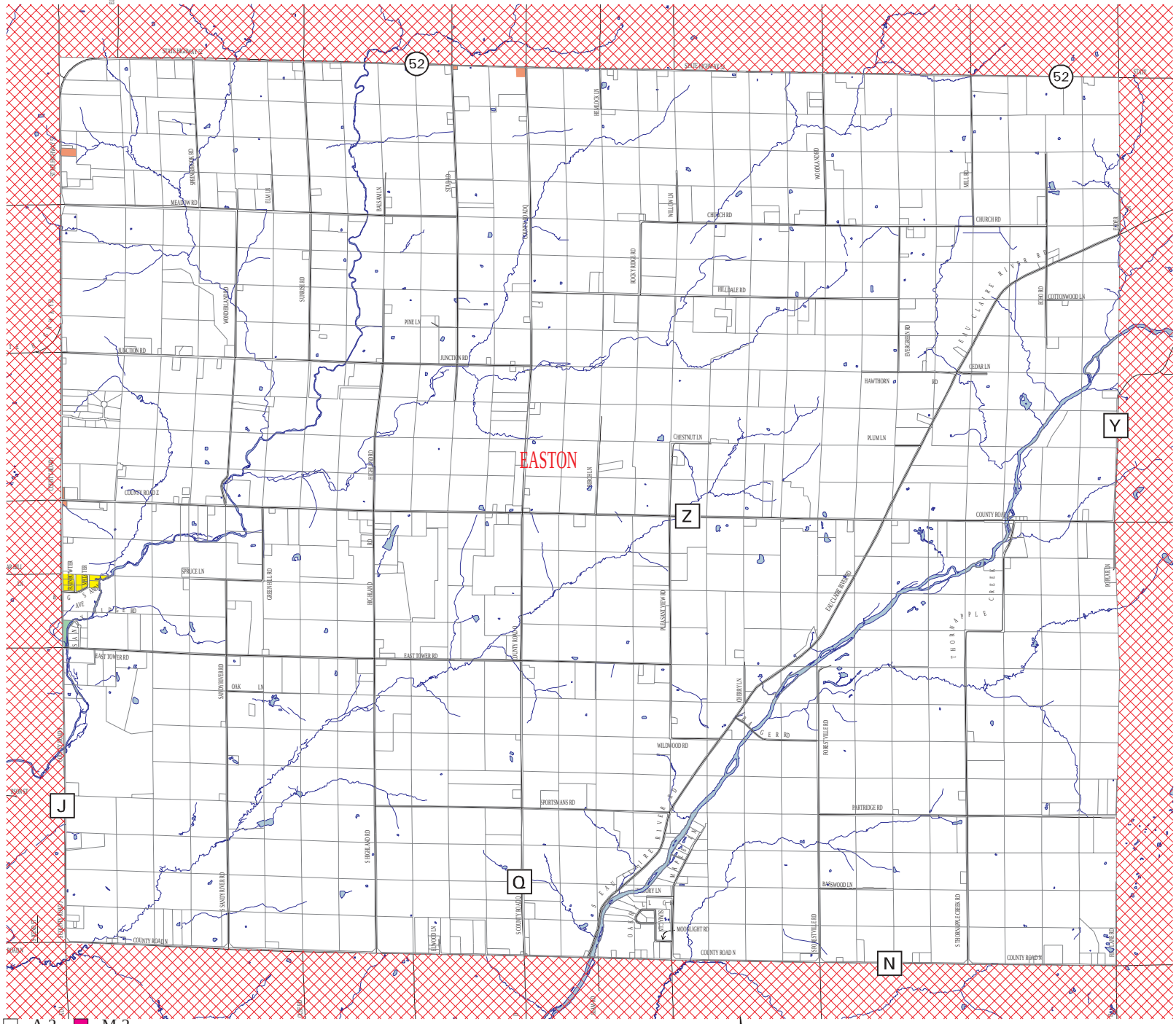
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-1

Future Land Use

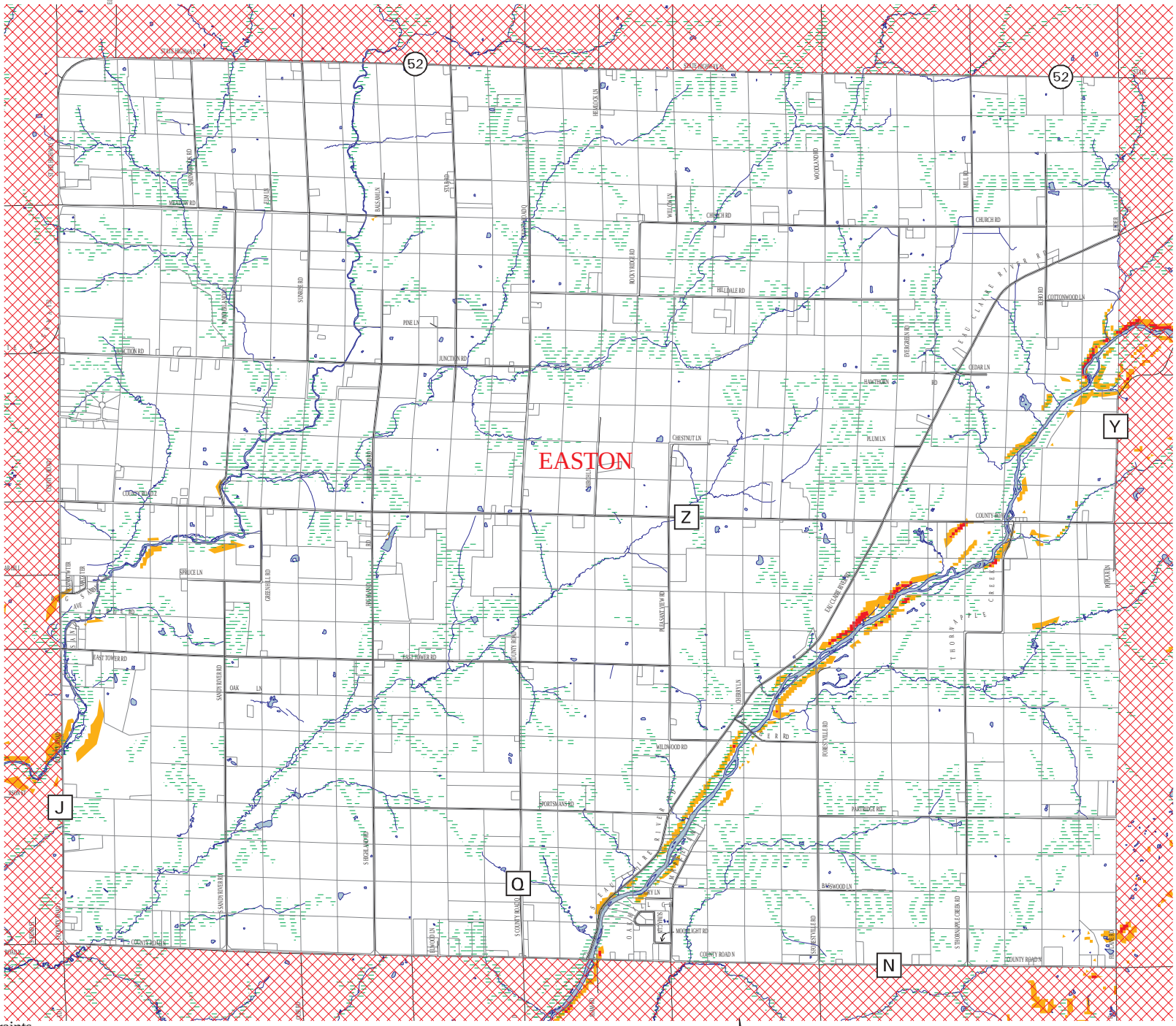
EASTON



RS-1/20 RP A-2 M-2
RS-1/40 CV HI
RS-2 RC C-1
RM A-1 M-1

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

Figure 3-2
Local Zoning
EASTON



Environmental Constraints

Slopes Generally 12-20%

Slopes generally greater than 20%

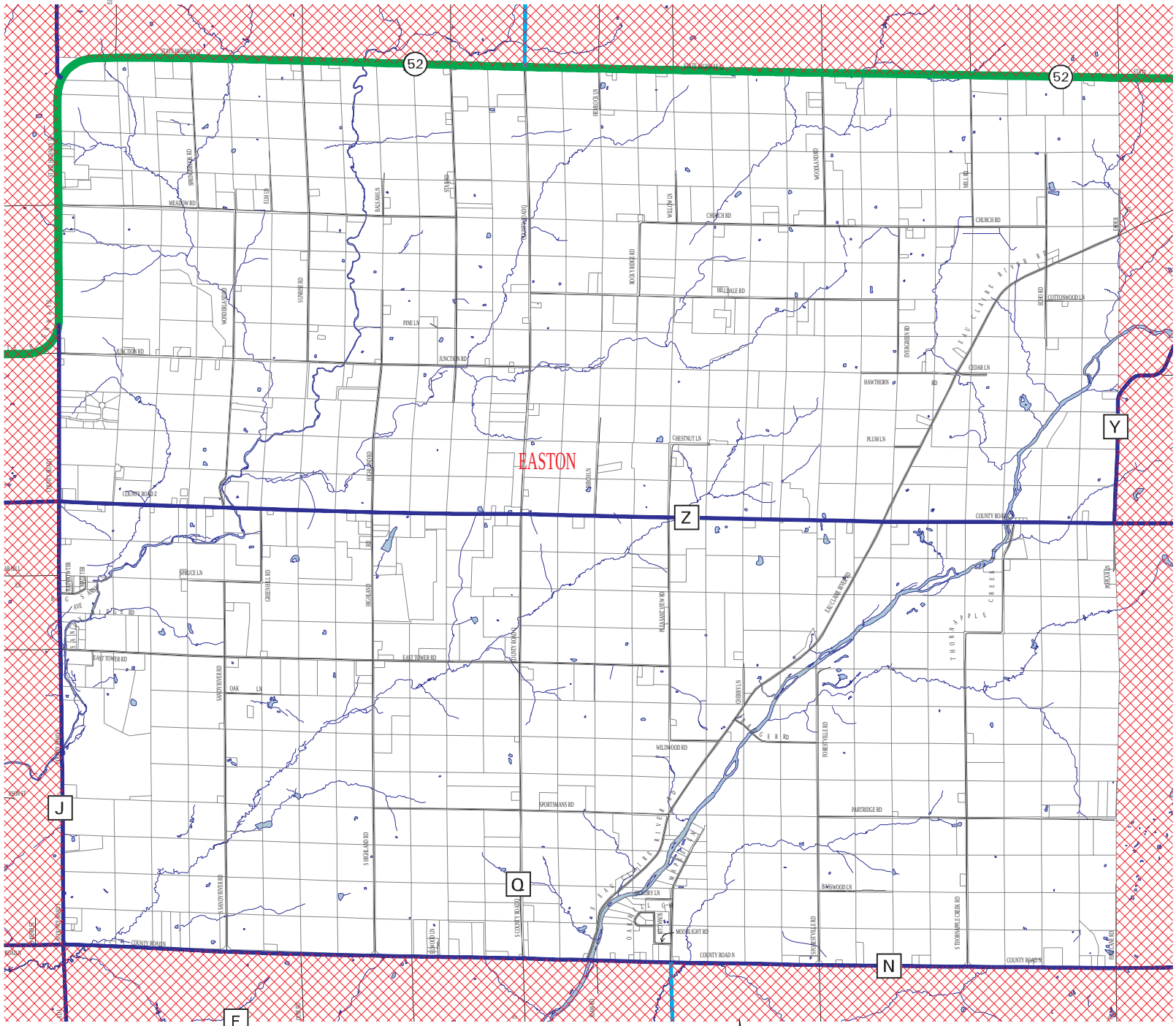
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 3-3

Development Constraints

EASTON



Principal Arterial
Minor Arterial
Major Collector
Minor Collector

F County Highways
52 State Highways
51 US Highways
39 Interstate

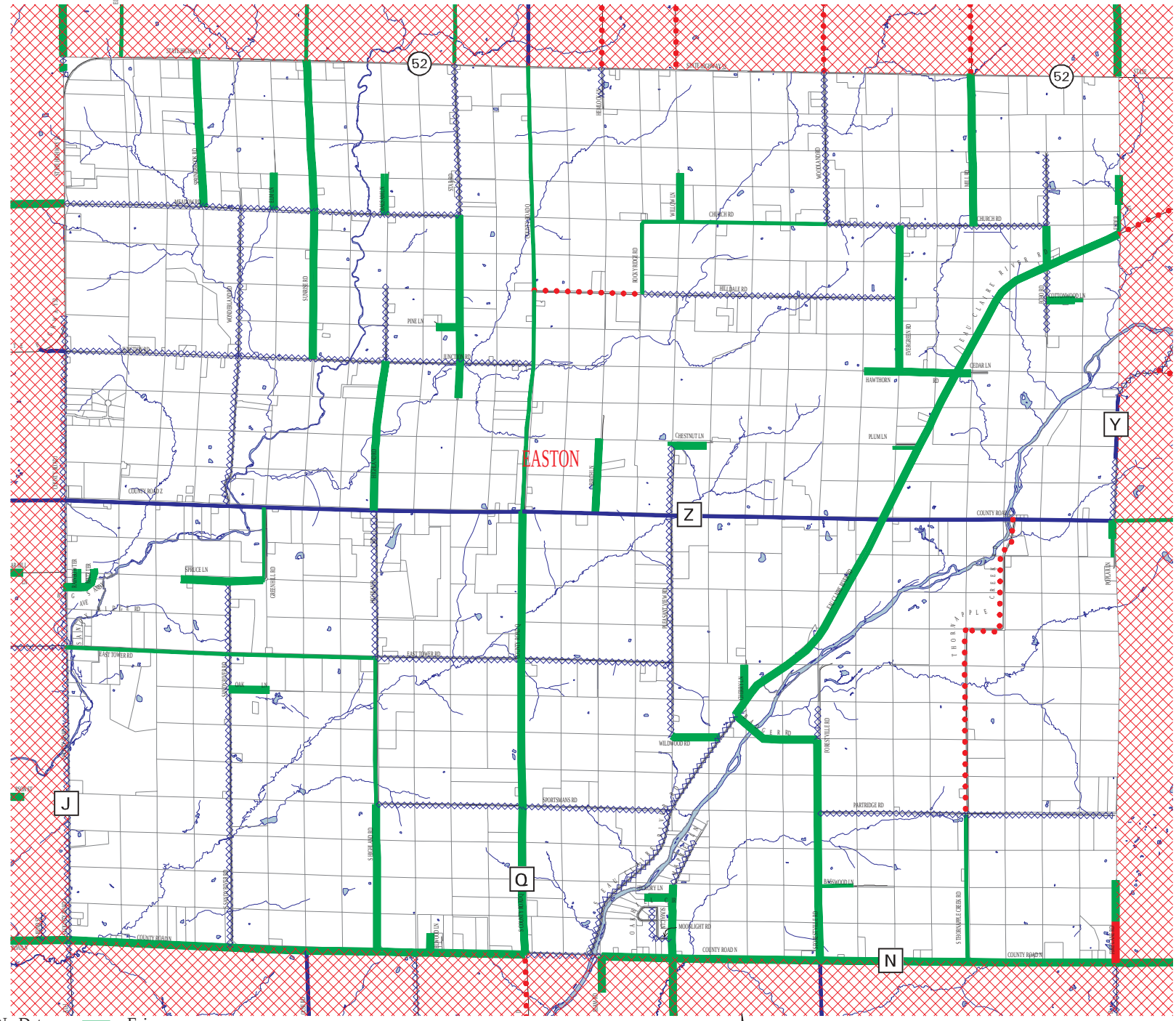
Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 4-1

Functional Classification of Roads

EASTON



No Data
Failed
Very Poor
Poor
Fair
Good
Very Good
Excellent

N

Indicates other Municipality

Map Developed by Marathon County CPZ & GIS 2005

Figure 4-2

Road Surface Rating

EASTON

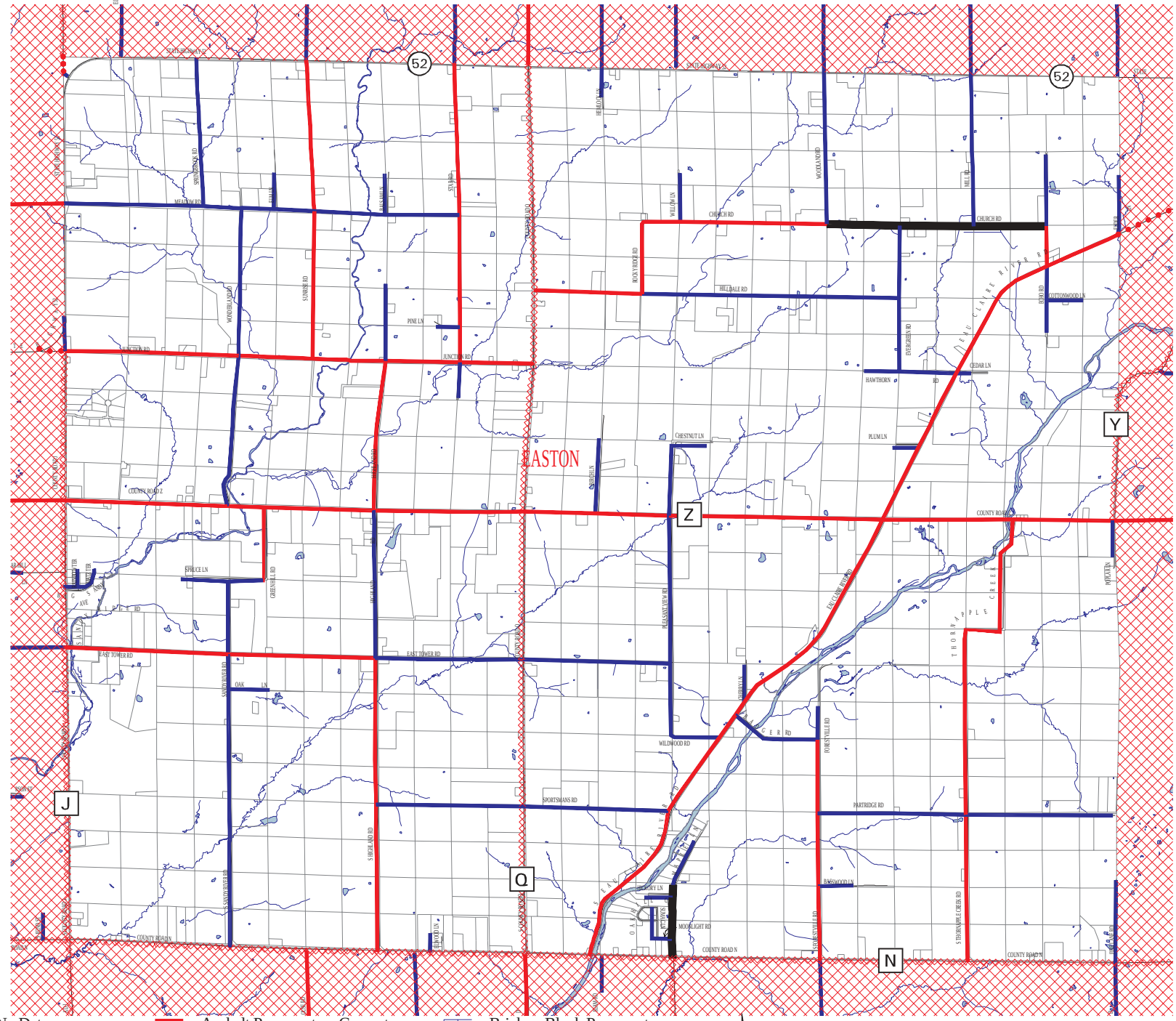


Figure 4-3

Road Surface Types

EASTON