

CHAPTER 1 – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Russell is located in the northwestern corner of Sheboygan County, Wisconsin (see Figure 1.1). The Town is small and family-oriented, with a mix of agriculture, open/green space, and residences. The Town is growing slowly and has a rural country atmosphere. The Town feels the natural environment is a great asset to the community and surrounding areas. This Comprehensive Plan is the first for the Town of Russell and was prepared to meet the requirements of Wisconsin’s “Smart Growth” law and adopted under the authority granted by Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

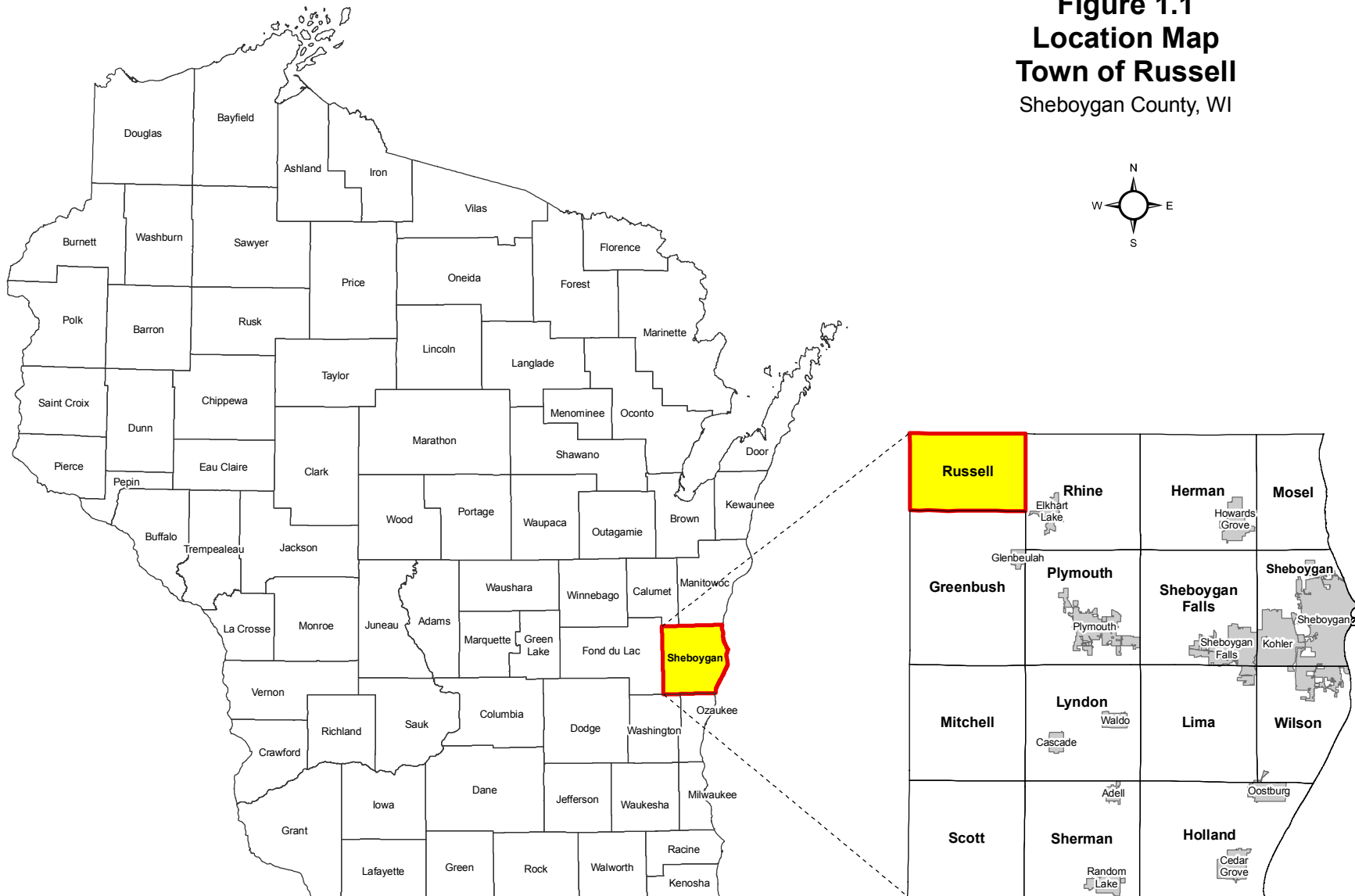


PURPOSE AND INTENT

A comprehensive plan is an official public document, which is adopted by ordinance by the local government that sets forth its major policies concerning the future physical development of the community. The primary purposes of this plan are to generate goals for attaining a desirable development pattern, devise strategies and recommendations the Town of Russell can follow to achieve its desired development pattern, and meet the requirements of the State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning (Smart Growth) Law. It is intended that the recommendations reflect the 14 local comprehensive planning goals, prescribed in state statute and listed below:

1. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructures and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas.
2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources.
4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
5. Encouragement of land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs.
6. Preservation of cultural, historical, and archaeological sites.
7. Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
8. Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income level throughout each community.
10. Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
11. Promoting 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. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
13. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.

Figure 1.1
Location Map
Town of Russell
 Sheboygan County, WI



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

The Town of Russell's Comprehensive Plan should be used by Town officials when revising and administering its zoning ordinance and other town ordinances. The plan should be the basis for siting future developments and extending public services. The plan is designed to be a guiding vision so that there is a consistent policy to follow and clear goals for the future for the residents of the Town of Russell.

DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING AREA

The Town of Russell encompasses approximately 15,424 acres (approximately 24.1 square miles) and is located in the northwest portion of Sheboygan County (see Figure 1.2). The Town of Russell is bordered by the Towns of Greenbush and Rhine, and the counties of Fond du Lac and Calumet. The Villages of Elkhart Lake, Glenbeulah, and St. Cloud are in the vicinity of the Town of Russell. Figure 1.3 is an orthophotograph of the planning area.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

As the administrator of the Comprehensive Planning Grant, the Sheboygan County Planning Department was contracted to provide professional planning assistance to the Town of Russell. Staff from the Sheboygan Planning Department prepared the background information and the recommendations of this plan based upon the consensus of the Lake Country Planning Committee, the town-wide surveys, and the Comprehensive Planning Law.

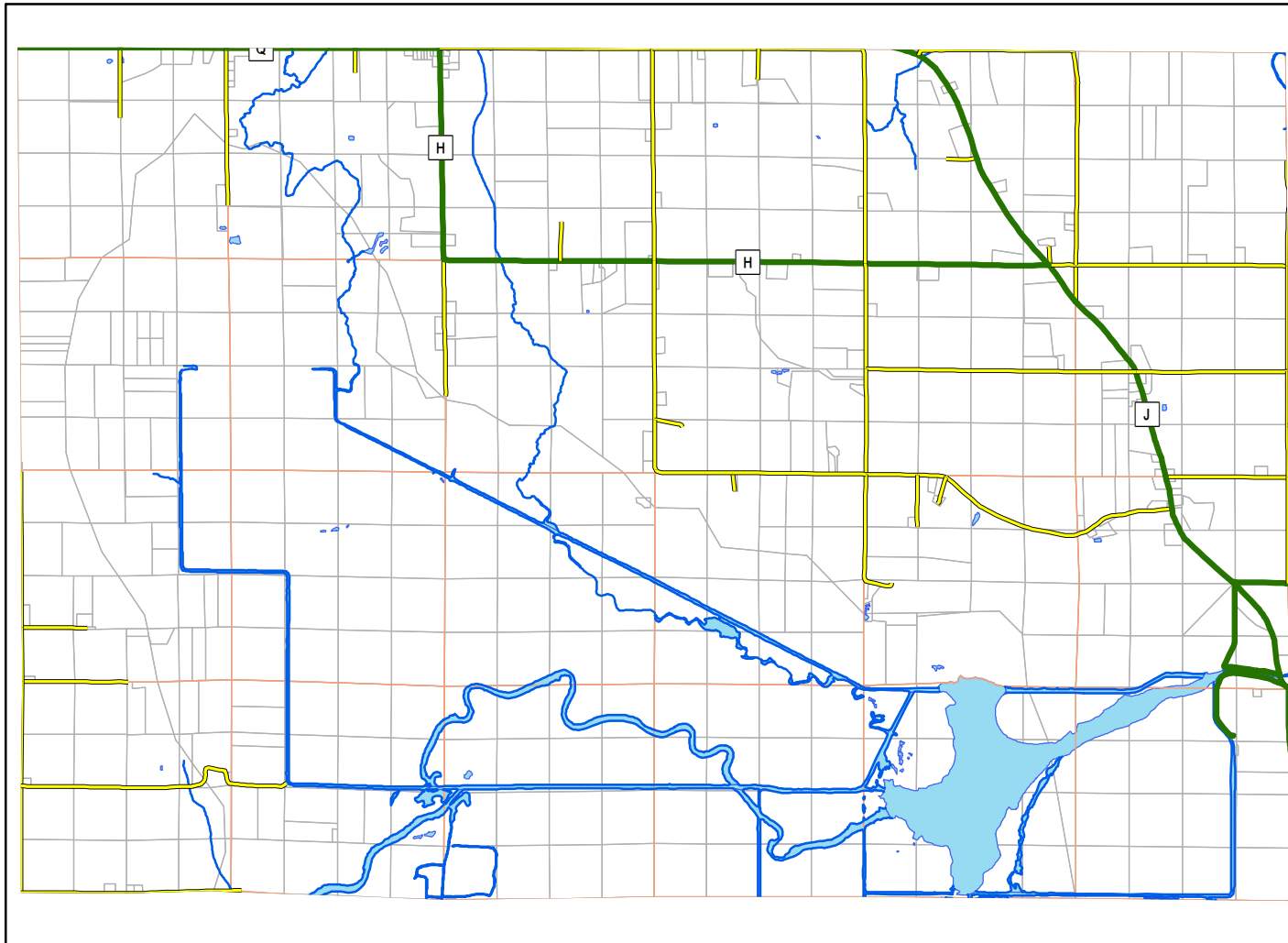
The planning process was completed in five stages. Initially in the Fall of 2004 the Lake Country Planning Committee, with the help from the Sheboygan County UW-Extension, mailed a community-wide survey to residents in order to identify issues and concerns relative to land use and development within the Town and the Lake Country planning region.

During the second stage the surveys were collected, interpreted, and analyzed by the UW-Extension. This data helped to show what the residents of the Town want for their community now and in the future. Using these results, vision, goals, and objectives were developed. The results of these surveys can be found in Appendix A.

The third stage included holding key stakeholder forums in order to help develop and refine the vision, goals, and objectives. The third stage of the planning process also consisted of sending out surveys with the vision statements, goals, and objectives. The residents of the Town were asked their opinion on the accuracy of these goals and objectives. These survey results for the vision, goals, and objectives are located in Appendix B. Appendix C contains the notes from the key stakeholder forums that were held.

The fourth stage was the development of the Land Use Plan. The first three stages were combined to create a recommended land use plan to guide future conservation, growth and development within the Town over the next twenty years. This design was reviewed by the Lake Country Planning Committee in order to review the plan and receive comment. The comments from the other members of the Lake Country Planning Committee were considered and possibly included in the potential Land Use map.

Figure 1.2
Project Area Map
Town of Russell
 Sheboygan County, WI



Legend

Parcels

Roads

State Hwy

County Road

Local Road

Private Road

Planimetric

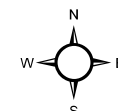
Bridges

Dams

Railroads

Rivers, Streams

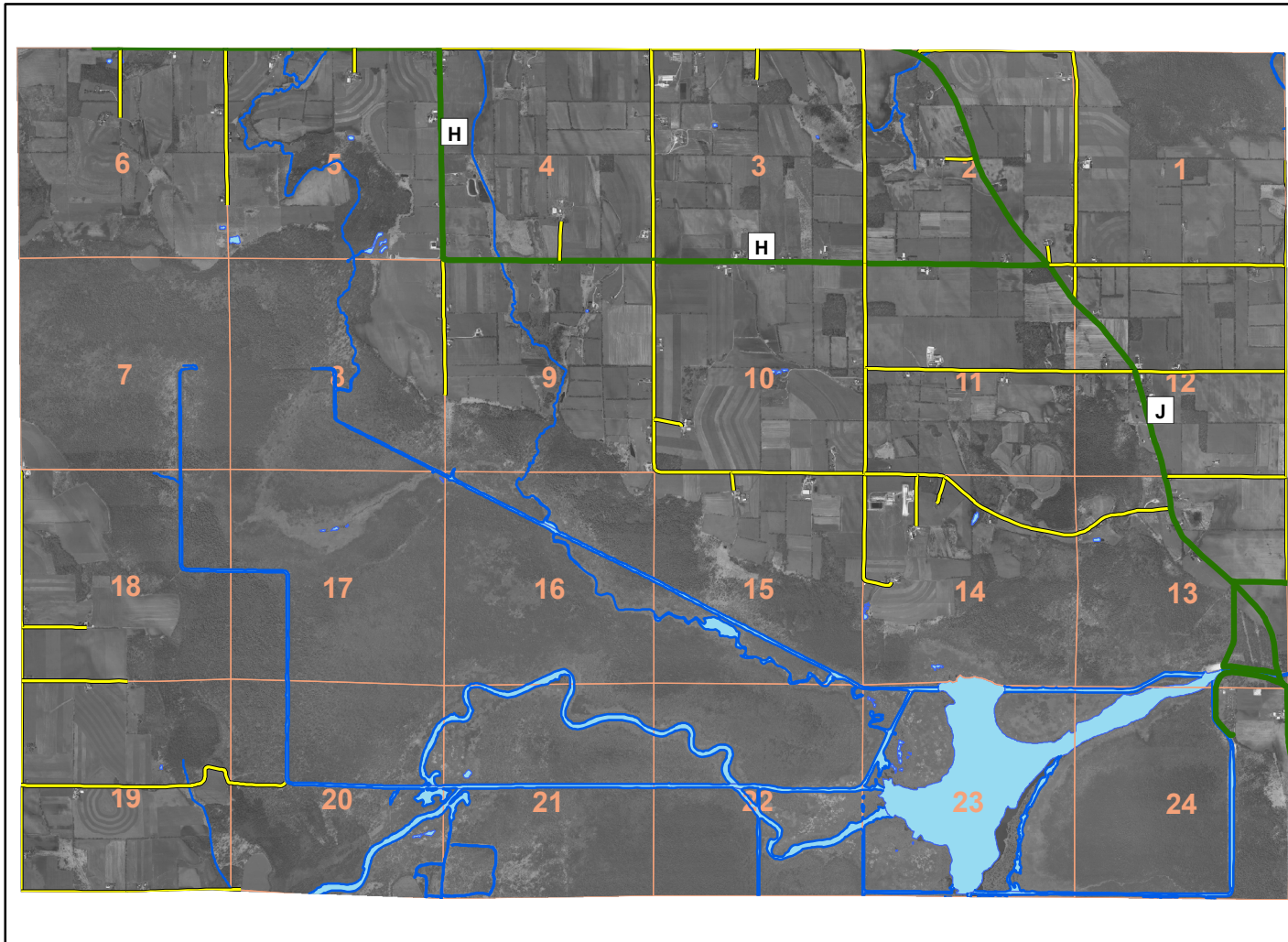
Road / Bridge



1" equals 4,400'



Figure 1.3
2003 Orthophotograph
Town of Russell
 Sheboygan County, WI



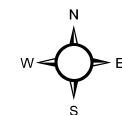
Legend

Roads

- State Hwy
- County Road
- Local Road
- Private Road

Planimetric

- Bridges
- Dams
- + + Railroads
- Rivers, Streams
- Road / Bridge



1 " equals 4,400 '



The final stage establishes the tools necessary for implementation of the plan. Recommendations for regulatory techniques including zoning, and an action plan were established to ensure that the intent of the plan would be achieved. Appendix D includes a Land Rezoning Checklist as a possible way of analyzing potential zoning changes.

This document is not the end of the planning process. For the Town of Russell to succeed in achieving its vision for the future, planning must be a continual, ongoing exercise.

PLAN CONTENTS

This comprehensive plan contains nine chapters that correspond to the nine elements required by Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes: Chapter 1: Issues and Opportunities; Chapter 2: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; Chapter 3: Housing and Population; Chapter 4: Economic Development; Chapter 5: Transportation; Chapter 6: Utilities and Community Facilities; Chapter 7: Intergovernmental Cooperation; Chapter 8: Land Use; Chapter 9: Implementation. All of these elements will be discussed in their appropriate chapters. The Town of Russell developed goals for each of the elements listed above. This plan will take each element and discuss it in relation to the Town and its surrounding communities. This plan then will set forth a plan on how the Town can meet its objectives in the next 20 years.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Introduction

Public participation is the process through which people who will be affected by or are interested in a decision by a unit of government have an opportunity to influence the content of a final decision or outcome.

Public participation goes beyond public information. The purpose of public participation is to inform the public as well as to provide opportunities for input on public needs, values, and comment on proposed plans.

The current Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law requires public participation in State Statutes section 66.1001 (4) (a)...*“The governing body of a local governmental 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 for wide distribution of proposed, alternative or amended elements of a comprehensive plan and 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.”*

The Lake Country Planning Committee is made up of representatives from the Towns of Russell, Rhine, and Greenbush and the Villages of Elkhart Lake and Glenbeulah. The Committee is charged with identifying issues related to their portion of Sheboygan County. The regional perspective provided by working together will provide opportunities for each of the communities to identify common issues and possibly common solutions leading to more shared services and increased efficiency in government for their respective constituents.

Public Participation Opportunities

The Town of Russell will build on the previous public participation efforts in the development of a comprehensive plan. Future efforts outlined below will continue to develop public participation from the citizens of the community. The list below highlights the major efforts for participation; other additional opportunities for participation may be developed as needed throughout the planning process.

• Public Input at Lake Country Planning Committee Meetings

There will be an opportunity for public input after each agenda item of the Lake Country Planning Committee meetings. During these times local citizens can speak about local planning-related issues. The planning committee will continue to meet on the fourth Thursday of each month throughout the development of the Town's plan. Notice of the public meetings will be posted by each of the communities in the group.

• Reporting on Planning Committee Meetings/Progress at Town Board Meetings

Members of the Lake Country Planning Committee will be intermediaries between the planning committees and their community. Members will report on planning activities from the committee to their community and report feedback from their community to the planning committee.

• Articles in Community Newsletter

The Town of Russell community newsletter will be used for public awareness and education about planning and planning activities.

• Newspaper Articles

The Town of Russell will post notices in *Tri-County News* on planning meetings. The newspaper will also be used for public awareness and education on local planning and planning activities.

• Public Hearing for Plan Adoption

The Town of Russell Plan Commission will hold a public hearing on the final draft of their comprehensive plan. The final draft is targeted for completion in spring of 2008. The Town Plan Commission will meet to review public comments on the final draft of the plan and make a recommendation to the Town Board for adoption. The Town Board will meet to review the Plan Commission recommendation and take action to adopt, adopt with amendments, or remand the plan back to the Plan Commission for further work. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan shall be enacted by ordinance and comply with Section 66.1001 of Wisconsin State Statutes. The public hearing will be preceded by a class 1 meeting notice under ch. 985 that is published at least 30 days before the meeting is held.

• Website

The Town of Russell will use a website to post the Comprehensive Plan and planning process information to be available to the public. This information may include the project schedule, meeting agendas and minutes, draft plan elements and reports, maps, photographs, and survey results. The website will serve as a link to citizens on the planning activities of the group.

Citizens will be able to provide input on the plan and planning process to planning committee members via an email link on the website.

- **Community Surveys**

The Town of Russell and the other member communities of the planning committee will use a random sample community survey to gauge the attitudes and concerns of the citizens. The survey will be written to provide regional and local input from the community. Regional questions will pertain to the planning group and local questions will be directed toward the Town of Russell.

- **Utilize Public Input Gathered with other Planning Efforts**

- Natural Areas and Critical Resources Plan
- Agricultural Planning Group (Farmland Preservation Plan)
- Sheboygan County Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan

- **Community Visioning**

The Town of Russell sent a survey to some of its citizens and other citizens of the Lake Country Planning Committee area to get the citizens' opinions on the vision statement for the Town of Russell and the Lake Country region.

COMMUNITY VISION PROCESS

Vision Statement

According to Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law, the Town is required to develop a vision statement that describes what the Town will be like in the next twenty years as well as a description of the policies and procedures that will lead them there. The vision statement for the Town of Russell is as follows:

"We envision the Town of Russell as a community with a blend of agriculture, open/green space, and single-family residences in harmony with a quality natural resource base. We value a quiet, rural country atmosphere. Town of Russell residents consider the natural environment comprised of glacial terrain and lakes to be a great asset and encourage careful planning to ensure it is used wisely. Intergovernmental cooperation will be important in this planning."

The Lake Country Planning Group also developed an overall vision statement for the five communities involved in this planning process. This vision statement is as follows:

"We envision the Lake Country region of Sheboygan County, which includes the Villages of Elkhart Lake and Glenbeulah, and the Towns of Rhine, Russell, and Greenbush, as a region that embraces the rural characteristics of the area including the historic charm and agricultural and natural resources. Residents consider the natural environment, comprised of glacial terrain and lakes, to be a great asset and encourage careful planning to ensure it is used wisely. The region will resemble a balanced mix of farmland, open space, tourism opportunities, and will remain a safe, quiet, and unique place to live."

Goals and Objectives

The goal for the Town of Russell will be to develop a 20-year comprehensive plan to serve as a guide for assisting local officials in making land use decisions that reflect Russell's vision of the preservation of its rural atmosphere. **Goals** are broad statements that reflect the vision of a community (where do we want to be 10-20 years from now?). They represent an end to be sought, although they may never be fully attained. **Objectives** define goals with practical, concrete and specific terms (what will it look like when we get there?). They are measurable ends towards reaching the goals. **Policies** focus the intent of the governing body on moving forward (we're committing to getting there). These are used to ensure plan implementation. The goals, objectives, and policies for the Town of Russell will be listed in the corresponding chapter, and goals for the whole Lake Country Planning region are listed in Chapter 9: Implementation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION/DEMOGRAPHICS

The next few pages include data and a brief analysis of the basic demographic data for the Town of Russell and surrounding communities. This type of data is helpful in understanding the makeup of the local population, which is important in the planning process. The following summary includes information regarding population and employment forecasts, as well as demographic trends, age distribution, education levels, income levels, employment characteristics, and housing stock that exist within the Town.

Existing conditions

Population & Gender

Over time the Town of Russell has stayed primarily an agricultural town. The Town's population has been decreasing since the 1970's, but in the last decade it has increased slightly. The largest time period of growth was between 1960 and 1970. The population trends for the last 65 years can be seen in Figure 1.4. Shown in Figure 1.5 is the breakdown of the population by gender from 1990-2000.

Figure 1.4: Population Trends for the Town of Russell

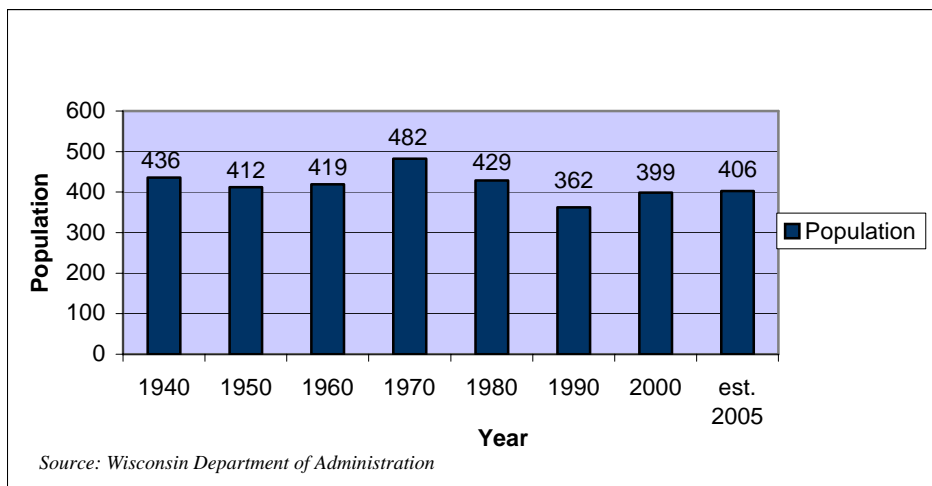


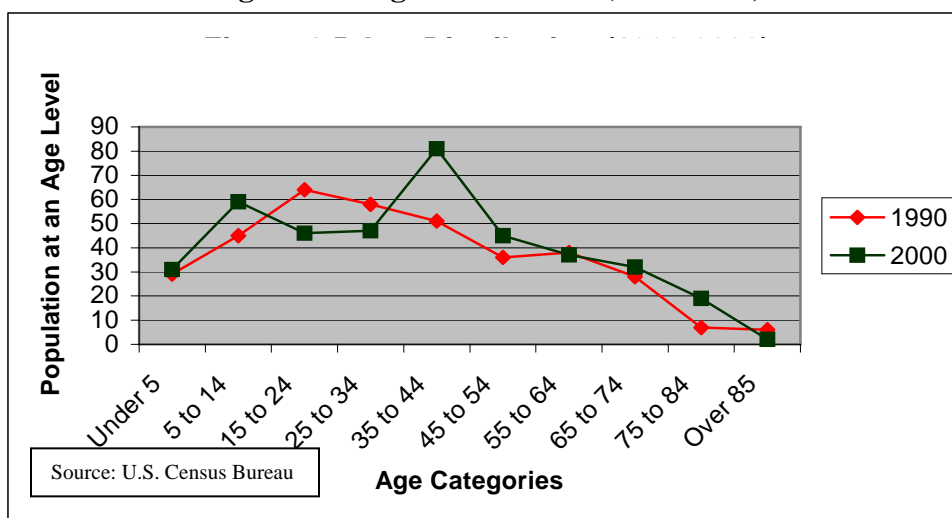
Figure 1.5: Town of Russell-Population and Gender Trends (1990-2000)		
	1990	2000
Male (number, percentage)	194, 53.6%	220, 55.1%
Female (number, percentage)	168, 46.4%	179, 44.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Age Distribution

The age distribution graph in Figure 1.6 shows similar population distributions at under 5, ages 55 to 74, and over 85 when comparing 1990 to 2000. There were greater populations in 1990 for ages 15 to 24 and also 25 to 34. The population in 2000 is larger for the ages of 35 to 44, 45 to 54 and 75 to 84. This means the Town of Russell has an aging population and a growing population of adolescents. These changes in the age distribution present a set of variables for the Town to consider when drafting new policies or amending older policies. The needs and desires of residents change as they age and as income increases or decreases. A larger distribution of elderly in 2000 means that the population is aging and that their incomes can be limited. This can change the demands placed on public services because of the changes in needs and desires. Since the age of school age children has increased, this will also change the demand for the educational system.

Figure 1.6: Age Distribution (1990-2000)



Education Levels

In the Town of Russell, there has been a decrease in the number of residents who have completed less than 9th grade (from 16.7% in 1990 to 8.4% in 2000)(See Figure 1.7). The percentage of residents who are high school graduates or higher has increased from 70.0% in 1990 to 82.1% in 2000, while the percentage that hold a bachelor's degree or higher has increased moderately from 4.0% in 1990 to 9.6% in 2000. Comparing the Town to Sheboygan County, the Town has more residents that have less than 9th grade education levels, but Russell has a larger percent of residents that are high school graduates than Sheboygan County. The Town also has a lower percentage of residents that hold a graduate or professional degree than the County, but this may be due to location and job availability.

Figure 1.7: Russell-Educational Attainment (residents 25 years and over)		
Grade Level	1990	2000
Less than 9 th grade	16.7%	8.4%
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	13.2%	9.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	50.2%	42.2%
Some college, no degree	10.1%	22.7%
Associate degree	5.7%	7.6%
Bachelor's degree	4.0%	6.8%
Graduate or professional degree	0.0%	2.8%

Sheboygan County-Educational Attainment (residents 25 years and over)		
Grade Level	1990	2000
Less than 9 th grade	10.8%	5.8%
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	11.8%	9.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	41.6%	39.9%
Some college, no degree	15%	19.7%
Associate degree	7.1%	6.9%
Bachelor's degree	9.9%	12.8%
Graduate or professional degree	3.8%	5.1%

Educational attainment is generally tied to income earnings potential; therefore, trends which show an increase in educational attainment, such as that in Russell, often indicate an increase in earnings income potential for Town residents.

Income Levels

Annual income levels for Russell's households were somewhat lower than those of other towns within the County. In 1999, 70.4% of Russell households have an annual income that is over \$35,000 compared to 77.5% of households in all towns and 64.6% in all of Sheboygan County. The middle-income brackets totaled 67.4% in Russell, compared to 64.7% of all towns, and the high-income brackets in Russell totaled 3%, compared to 12.8% in all towns. Russell does not have as many residents in the high-income brackets the way the county and other towns do. For the middle-income levels, Russell has a higher income level than other towns and the county. Russell has seen a steady increase in its median income over the last 20 years, which also means there has been a steady drop of the total people below the poverty line. Figure 1.8 shows the household income levels for Russell, town averages of all towns in Sheboygan County, and Sheboygan County for 1999.

Figure 1.8: Household Income Levels, 1999			
Annual Income	Russell	Town Averages (Sheb. County Towns)	Sheboygan County
Less than \$10,000	0.0%	2.0%	4.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.0%	3.3%	5.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.8%	7.9%	12.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	16.7%	9.4%	13.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	18.2%	18.1%	19.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	30.3%	30.5%	26.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	18.9%	16.1%	11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3.0%	8.6%	5.2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0.0%	2.2%	1.2%
\$200,000 or more	0.0%	2.0%	1.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Employment Characteristics

For the period between 1990 to 2004, the civilian labor force in Sheboygan County increased 17.8%, from 55,935 to 65,906; the number of unemployed increased 18%, from 2,298 to 2,711; and the number of employed increased by 17.8% from, 53,687 to 63,195. The unemployment rate experienced a high of 5.5% in 1991 and a low of 2.0% in 1999. In May of 2006, the unemployment rate in Sheboygan County was 4.1% which was the 65th lowest of all the counties; this means that Sheboygan County has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state, with seven counties having lower unemployment rates.

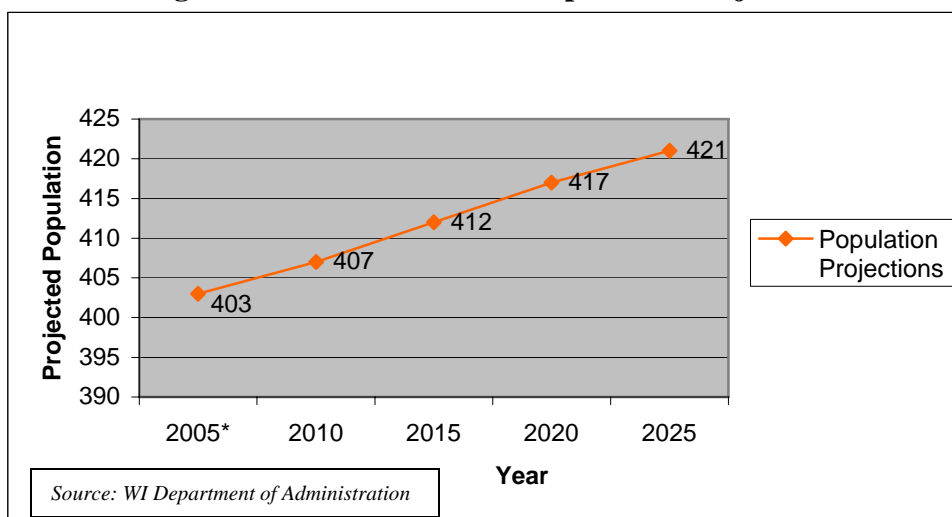
In 2000, the majority of people in the workforce in Russell were employed in the manufacturing industry, 37.6%. This was down slightly from 1990 (38.5%). The Agricultural, Forestry, Fisheries, and Mining sector is the second largest employment industry in the Town of Russell with 16.4%. Education, Health and Social Services are tied for the employment sector with Arts, Entertainment, and Recreational Services, both having a share of 8.0%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Workforce Development.

Forecasts

Population

Using a linear projection method, which uses historical population trends to indicate population changes in future time periods, future population levels have been projected for the Town of Russell and Sheboygan County. As shown in Figure 1.9, the projection for Russell indicates a slight increase from 407 in 2010 to 421 in 2025.

Figure 1.9: Town of Russell Population Projection

*The 2005 WI DOA projected population is lower than the estimated population for 2005 that the WI DOA has calculated. The projected numbers were calculated in 2000, so there are many variables that may have caused the population to grow slower or faster than what was projected.

Population forecasts, as stated above, are based on historical trends and are subject to revision. Many factors, such as changes in municipal boundaries, policies, housing availability, and economic development can have a substantial affect on population trends. Currently, the population forecast would not appear to be in harmony with the current growth rate. There may have been more development than was projected causing the 2005 projected population to be lower than the 2005 estimated population. Currently, Wisconsin's Department of Administration has estimated the Town's population to be 406 in 2005. This means that the Town of Russell's population is currently close to the 407 people that were predicted for the year 2010. This could mean that Russell may be currently growing at a faster rate than what the original projection had set forth.

Housing

A community's housing stock changes with fluctuations in community characteristics, such as population, economic development, and income level. The type of housing needed is indicated by the ages, incomes, and family sizes of current residents and those wishing to move to the community. The quality of housing stock also changes over time, creating needs for rehabilitation, refurbishing, and/or demolition of older homes. As indicated by Figure 1.10, the Town of Russell has less than 28% of housing stock built since 1970. Of the 150 housing units in the Town of Russell in 2000, approximately 73% are older than 1970 and will need more maintenance than newer homes. Programs which offer assistance in rehabilitation and or refurbishing older homes, help maintain a quality housing stock, and help meet demand for affordable housing among lower and limited income households will become important.

New housing in Russell coupled with well-maintained older homes should help provide adequate housing stock necessary to meet the needs and desires of existing residents. Demands for new housing must meet the needs of a cross-section of residents and new comers from high to low income, to elderly and very young residents whose income can be limited. Communities must

make decisions about the types of residents they wish to retain, and allow for flexibility in the available housing supply.

Figure 1.10: Russell-Year Housing Structure Built	
Year	# of Units
1990-March 2000	12
1980-1989	18
1970-1979	11
1960-1969	8
1940-1959	10
1939 or earlier	92

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Employment

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development created the Bay Area Workforce Development Area Profile, 2002-2012, a projection for industries, occupations, and the labor force. These projections are for the total number of nonfarm jobs in the ten-county Bay area, which includes Sheboygan County (See Figure 1.11). According to the profile, overall employment is projected to grow almost 12% between 2002 and 2012. The education and health services sector is projected to have the largest numeric employment growth adding 12,620 jobs, over one-third of the total growth. Manufacturing is currently the largest employing industry in the region and will remain the largest sector in 2012; however, other industry sectors will continue to close the gap over the period. Occupations remaining in manufacturing are expected to continue to move away from general labor positions to more semi-skilled and skilled operator and technician jobs. This is due primarily to production processes that are more efficient and availability of new technologies. With the change in industry, one may expect education or training may be needed in other growing fields. In 2000, residents' mean travel time to work was 21.0 minutes; this may increase if more of the manufacturing industry disappears. The ability for residents to remain employed with a reasonable travel time to work will be a key concept in planning for the Town of Russell's future.

Figure 1.11: Industry Projections for Bay Area Workforce Development Area, 2002-2012

Industry Title	2002 Estimated Employment	2012 Projected Employment	2002-2012 Employment Change	2002-2012 Percentage Change
Total Non-Farm Employment	302,080	338,060	35,980	11.9%
Construction/Mining/Natural Resources	15,820	19,170	3,350	21.2%
Manufacturing	77,690	78,180	490	0.6%
Paper Mfg	9,900	8,520	- 1,380	-13.9%
Plastics and Rubber Products Mfg	5,450	6,640	1,190	21.8%
Transportation Equipment Mfg	5,470	5,860	390	7.1%
Trade	42,270	46,840	4,570	10.8%
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	3,000	3,550	550	18.3%
Transportation and Utilities (Including US Postal)	15,760	17,900	2,140	13.6%
Financial Activities	15,120	16,990	1,870	12.4%
Education and Health Services (Including State and Local Gov Educ and Hosp)	50,170	62,790	12,620	25.2%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	9,890	13,860	3,970	40.1%
Hospitals (Including State and Local Government)	11,150	13,590	2,440	21.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	27,360	30,950	3,590	13.1%
Information/Prof Services/Other Services	38,510	45,150	6,640	17.2%
Government (Excluding US Postal, State and Local Educ and Hosp)	19,390	20,100	710	3.7%

Source: WI DWD, Office of Economic Advisors, September 2004

Income, education, employment, housing, and transportation are all related. To adequately plan for the future each of these areas, plus other areas, need to be addressed thoroughly. This Comprehensive Plan will help the Town plan for the future, so it is able to remain a great asset for many generations. The planning is a continual process, which is started with this Comprehensive Plan.