



**Town of Milton
Buffalo County, WI**

**Comprehensive
Plan**

2020

**Recommended by the Town of Milton Plan Commission
Pursuant to Resolution dated September 9, 2020**

**Adopted by Ordinance of the Town Board of the Town of Milton
Pursuant to Ordinance No.: 2020-20 dated November 11, 2020**

Town of Milton Comprehensive Plan Buffalo County, Wisconsin

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A. Land Use Planning Process

The land use planning process in Buffalo County was initiated by the Buffalo County Extension Agriculture Agent in December of 1997. After hearing the agent's presentation on the need for a land use plan, Town of Milton officials invited a diverse group of residents and non-residents to serve on a planning committee. Under the guidance of the Extension Agent, a Land Use Plan was created and approved by the Milton Town Board on April 21, 2004.

In 2013, another group was convened to update the Land Use Plan. The group met several times and revised the previous plan, completing its final draft in January of 2014. While the plan served as a useful guide, it was never formally approved as a comprehensive plan pursuant to Wis. Stat. Sec. 66.1001.

In 2020, the Town Chairperson established a Plan Commission and appointed seven residents to the Commission. The Commission was, among other things, charged with updating the Land Use Plan and following the process necessary to have it accepted as a Comprehensive Plan.

B. Purpose of Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is a local government's guide to community, physical, social, and economic development. Comprehensive plans are not meant to serve as land use regulations in themselves; instead, they provide a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year vision for future planning and community decisions. While a local government may choose to include additional elements, a comprehensive plan must include at least all of the nine elements below as defined by the Comprehensive Planning Law (s. 66.1001).

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Implementation

The Comprehensive Planning Law provides flexibility to local governments in addressing statutory requirements. Many communities choose to connect specific objectives, policies, and programs from throughout their comprehensive plan to responsible parties and timeframes in the implementation element, so that their hard work does not collect dust on a shelf. A central aspect of implementation is exercising land use regulation authorities. Land use planning is more than a set of rules for building, etc. It is a declaration of the priorities and values of the people within the Town. These priorities and values should determine if and how property is developed and used.

The remainder of this document describes the priorities and values of the people of the Town of Milton. It lists a set of action plans to achieve these priorities and values.

C. History of Milton Township

The Town of Milton was laid out July 20, 1857, and was originally much larger than it is currently. In 1858, the town name was changed to Eagle Mills, mainly as an advertisement campaign for the mill owned by the Fetter’s and Mehrmann’s. Later, with the organization of Fountain City, the northern part of the Town was given to Waumandee, and the southern part was given to Buffalo, leaving the Town at its present size and shape. Adam Weber and Michael Obermeier were the first settlers coming to Eagle Valley in 1853, followed by many others around 1856. Fred Fetter was the first chairman and Fred Binder was the first clerk. Settlers in the Town were basically all German.

D. Issues and Opportunities

1. Demographic Information:

a. Population and Population Projections:

Unlike many Towns in Buffalo County, the population in the Town of Milton has increased over time from 452 in 1990 to 534 in 2010. Projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration – Demographic Services Center, indicate that population is expected to continue this increase to 595 in 2030.

**Town of Milton Population Statistics and Projections
U.S. Census Data & WI Dept of Administration
Demographic Services Data**

Jurisdiction	Census 1960	Census 1970	Census 1980	Census 1990	Census 2000	Census 2010	Proj. 2020	Proj. 2025	Proj. 2030
Town of Milton	271	370	416	452	517	534	560	580	595
Buffalo County	14202	13743	14309	13584	13804	13,587	13,707	13,500	13,470

According to 2014 U.S. Census Bureau estimated data, Wisconsin’s population density is 106 people per square mile of land. The Town of Milton covers 29.5 square miles, 21.7 of which is land and 7.8 of which is water. The population density of the Town of Milton is 25.8 people per square mile of land.

The Town of Milton presents a blend of rural and residential areas. Therefore, the reduction in agricultural industries does not affect the township as much as it does other townships in the County. As a result, the town is expected to experience modest growth, particularly on the sand prairie located along State Highway 35. The majority of the existing housing developments in the township are located along State Highway 35 (Great River Road) and there is room for further development due to unused agriculture land on the prairie. The location is desirable due to its close proximity to the Cochrane-

Fountain City School District and highway, as well as the Mississippi River. A recent (2018-19) expansion of fiberoptic (broadband) internet service to the township has also increased the desirability of living in the township.

b. Population by Race:

The Town of Milton is predominantly white. This has been constant since records have been kept.

**Town of Milton Population by Race – 2013-2017
American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates**

Race	Population %
White	97.6
Hispanic	1.2
Black	.4
Asian	0.0
Native American	0.8
Other	0

c. Population by Education Level:

Ninety-five percent of residents age 25 or above who reside in the Town of Milton have a high school or higher level of education. Over 60% of the residents have attended college and 41% have a post-secondary degree. The high number of people with college or associates’ degrees may reflect the close proximity to Winona, Minnesota and the number of commuter jobs that require a college education. It may also be reflective of the college atmosphere of Winona which has two college campuses and one technical school.

**Town of Milton Population by Education
2018 American Community Survey**

Education Level	Population %	Percentage
Total (>25 years old)	398 (people)	
No High School Diploma	20	4.5%
High School Diploma Only	132	33.2%
Some College	83	20.9%
Associates Degree	76	19.1%
Bachelor’s Degree	56	14.1%
Graduate Degree	31	7.8%

d. Population by Age:

Residents in the Town of Milton tend to be older than in the rest of Buffalo County. The median age for the Town of Milton is 50, while the Buffalo County median age is 46. In the Town of Milton, 30.3% of the residents are age 62 or older, while only 26.6% of the Buffalo County residents are age 62 or older.

**Town of Milton Population by Age
2018 American Community Survey**

Age – years	Number	Percent
Under 5	10	1.8%
5-9	25	4.6%
10-14	40	7.4%
15-19	45	8.3%
20-24	23	4.3%
25-34	24	4.4%
35-44	57	10.5%
45-54	84	15.5%
55-59	54	10.0%
60-64	33	6.1%
65-74	97	17.9%
75 and older	49	9.1%

e. Per Capita Income:

Per capita income is higher than in Buffalo County, but lower than in the State of Wisconsin.

**Town of Milton Per Capita Income – 2000 Census
2018 American Community Survey**

	1990 Per Capita Income	2000 Per Capita income	2018 Per Capita Income
Town of Milton	\$10,742	\$22,431	\$30,768
Buffalo County	\$10,947	\$18,123	\$29,613
State of Wisconsin	\$13,276	\$21,271	\$32,018

2. SWOT Analysis:

Following are the results of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis conducted by the Plan Commission.

a. Strengths

- People
 - Good mix of friendly and compassionate people
 - Many multigenerational families reside in township
 - Skilled and educated workforce
- Natural Resources:
 - Peaceful and beautiful
 - Variety of land, river, bluffs
 - Plentiful wildlife including whitetail deer, turkey hunting, fishing
 - Merrick State Park is located within township
 - Bordered by Mississippi River

- Many recreational opportunities – camping, hiking, biking, fishing
 - State snowmobile trails
 - Intensive forestry practices for preservation of environment
- Roads
 - Roads in good conditions; town roads blacktopped
 - Intersected by state highway
 - Great River Road and Scenic Byway
- Utilities
 - Good utility service
 - Broadband internet availability throughout township
 - Good water quality
 - Member of BBC&M Garbage & Recycling Center
- Land Use
 - Good mix of rural area and residential
 - Township falls under County zoning
 - Industries that do not pollute
 - Township will support new business development
- Strong agricultural heritage
 - Good farmland
 - Conservation practices on farm land
 - Successful farmers
- Access/proximity to services/other business
 - Close proximity to Winona/Arcadia
 - K-12 school located within township
 - Prairie Moon Museum
 - Served by 1st Responders and Winona Area Ambulance
 - Close to churches
- Financial stability
 - Low township taxes
 - Per capita income and education levels of residents is higher than average for the County
 - New Town Hall
 - Low crime rate

b. Weaknesses

- Utilities
 - No township sewer or water
- Roads
 - Limited driveway access on state highways
 - Some steep and curvy roads create expensive upkeep and potential for accidents if people don't drive at appropriate speed.
 - Inexperienced drivers find town roads difficult to navigate
 - Aging roads
- Industry
 - Lack of industry and businesses within township
 - Limited retail stores

- Limited job opportunities and employers
- Railroad– Noise from trains by housing and rough crossings
- Large flood zone and high risks of flooding in the spring
- Limited interest in local government
- No designated biking or other non-motorized trails for recreation
- Limited resources (budgets, employees, programs)

c. Opportunities

- Ample room for housing developments
- Expanding tourism
- CAPX 2020 Annual Stipend
- Growing population trend
- Proximity to major area employers (Winona, Arcadia)
- Potential to recruit new businesses due to high speed internet
- ATV Trails
- Flyway Trail development
- Business development opportunities due to traffic flow created by C-FC Schools (a major employer)

d. Threats & Issues

- Increased population could lead to more crime
- Non-residential owners
 - Non-residential ownership may mean less interest/investment in the community
 - Non-residential owners putting forest land in MFL
 - Absentee owners not respecting property lines when hunting
- Large scale animal agriculture
- Environmental
 - Mining or other industries that produce pollution
 - Erosion
 - Pollution
 - Siltation of Indian Creek
 - Chronic Waste Disease
- Economic
 - Lack of major employers
 - Younger generation leaving area due to lack of job opportunities
 - Buffalo County trends of decreasing population, aging population, and economic decline
- Funding
 - Reduced funding from state for road projects
 - Rising costs for road maintenance and projects
 - Cost of compliance with state mandates
 - Lack of state funding
- Farmland future – what will farmland be used for when sold?

E. HOUSING ELEMENT:

1. Overview

Housing Units in the Town of Milton and Buffalo County – Census Data

Municipality	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019
Town of Milton	142	173	181	227	253	257
Buffalo County	4,597	5,478	5,586	6,098	6,664	6,874

The most recent U.S. Census statistics on township-level housing units is from 2010. However, in 2018, in conjunction with a Uniform Addressing Sign Project led by Buffalo County, the township conducted its own census of housing units. According to that census, there were 198 owner-occupied homes, 24 rental homes and 35 vacation homes or cabins. The county assessment records from 2020 disclose a total of 283 houses; however, 25 of those have an assessed value of lower than \$25,000, suggesting that they are either cabins or vacant, abandoned or uninhabitable residences. According to 2020 Buffalo County Lottery Credit records, there are 200 residences in the Town of Milton eligible for state lottery credit, meaning that those residences are used as a permanent home by the property owner(s). Using the township’s census of habitable housing units (257), the density of housing units per square mile of land (21.7 miles) is 11.84.

The average assessed home value, per the 2020 assessment records is \$115,000. When excluding the 25 residences valued at \$25,000 or less, the average assessed home value rises to \$125,190. Assessment records indicate that 64 new housing units were constructed between 2000 and 2019 in the township. Many of these homes were constructed in Henry Lane subdivision on the sand prairie.

There has been a moderate growth of seasonal homes, cabins and second homes in Milton over the last twenty years, in part due to the hunting opportunities that exist in the township. Existing housing is not readily available for purchase for those choosing to purchase a home. Land for building homes is readily available in the Town including many sites that are not designated as prime farmland.

2. Housing Goals & Actions

- New housing starts have continued to increase in the Town of Milton. The town will encourage housing developments to build consistent with the current zoning district map and compatible land use. Also, access to improvements (houses, cabins, sheds, etc) should be reasonable to allow for emergency response vehicles to reach property without risk to volunteers and equipment.
- All trailers and mobile homes must be kept in good repair and meet all requirements of the Buffalo County Zoning Department. Sanitation permits must be obtained and be kept to standards and all mobile homes that are relocated in or to the Town of Milton must be 10 years old or less.

F. TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT:

1. Overview:

The Town of Milton has a total of 37.66 miles of road: 7.47 miles of state road, 3.84 miles of county roads and 26.35 miles of town miles. Functional road classification for rural roads include principal arterials, major and minor collectors, and local roads. *Principal arterials* serve interstate and interregional trips. These roads serve urban areas with populations greater than 5,000 and are classified as interstate highways. Milton has 5.5 miles of principal arterials. *Collector miles* collect traffic from local roads and link them to nearby population centers. Major collectors are classified as state roads and minor collectors are classified as county roads. Milton has 6.84 miles of collector miles. This includes County Road G, State Road 88, and Prairie Moon Road. *Local roads* provide access for travel over relatively short distances. These roads are classified Local Miles and includes all town roads. Milton has 25.32 miles of Local Miles. Vehicular traffic is the major form of transportation in the township due to limited other forms of transportation. Recreational transportation includes snowmobiles, bicycles and all-terrain vehicles.

2. Other Transportation:

- **Bus Service:** There is no bus service in the Town of Milton. The nearest commercial bus service is the Jefferson Bus Lines stopping in Winona, MN.
- **Freight Rail Service:** The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) runs along the entire western edge of Buffalo County and the Town of Milton. The closest currently used spur is located in the Village of Cochrane, WI.
- **Passenger Rail Service:** There is no passenger rail service to the Town of Milton. Daily passenger service (AMTRAK) is available in Winona, MN, with one train heading south in the am and one train heading north in the pm.
- **Airports:** There are no public or private airports in the Town of Milton. Winona, MN has a private airport but no passenger air service. La Crosse, WI has the closet passenger air service which is about 40 minutes from the Town. Most residents traveling by air would fly out of Minneapolis/St. Paul which is about 120 minutes travel time. An airport shuttle service to the MSP Airport from Winona, MN is also available.
- **Water Transportation:** The Mississippi River runs on the entire west side of Buffalo County, with the Port of Winona being the closest terminal. Much of the grain produced in the township is transported by truck to Winona and sold to one of three grain buyers to be loaded onto barges. Fertilizer, chemical, liquid propane and other commodities are shipped to Winona and distributed throughout the region by truck.

- **Trucking:** Most commercial shipping in the township is by truck, with State Highway 35 being a major transportation route. Road bans may be implemented each spring on County and Town roads.
- **Pedestrian and Bike Trails:** There are no designated biking trails in the Town of Milton. Many residents and non-residents use town, county, and state highways for biking activities. Bicycle usage in rural areas is on the increase. The amount of motorized traffic, farm traffic, and bicycle traffic all sharing the town and county roads does create safety concerns. Many visitors to the Town may not be aware of the amount and size of modern farm machinery or industry that relies on heavy highway use. Future development opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle trails include the Flyway Trail Project. The Plan Commission supports this project and a potential phase 3 development in the Town of Milton.
- **Snowmobile Trails:** There is a very strong network of snowmobile trails in the Town of Milton and across Buffalo County. The sport of snowmobiling brings a lot of tourism to Buffalo County. The trails, when adequate snowfall occurs, are second to none. Snowmobile trails, located through private land, are maintained by local snowmobile clubs. These trails are located on private property. Maintenance and property agreements are completed by local clubs.
- **Other:** Some elderly transportation is available through Buffalo County Health and Human Services, Meals on Wheels program. Transportation is also available for veterans through Veteran’s Services.

3. State and Regional Transportation Plans:

At www.dot.state.wi.us the Wisconsin Department of Transportation home page under “Projects and Studies”, the Town reviewed and considered the following State and Regional Transportation Plans that have potential affects or integration with the Town plan.

- **Connect 2050** - focuses on addressing the state’s multimodal transportation needs through the year 2050.
- **Connections 2030** - the current multimodal plan being developed for all forms of Transportation through the year 2030
- **Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020** – the current strategic plan for all facets of the 12,000 miles of the State’s highways
- **Wisconsin Six-Year Highway Improvement Program** – the more specific construction programs for the Wisconsin DOT from 2020 through 2025
- **Wisconsin Airport System Plan 2030** – the plan for determining airport facility needs
- **Wisconsin Bicycle Plan 2020** – comprehensive bicycle plan

- **Wisconsin Statewide Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020** – the plan outlines State and local measures to promote safe pedestrian travel
- **Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030** – the rail plan being developed for integrated rail development through 2030
- **Buffalo County Highway Plans** – Currently, there are no plans for major county road work, beyond general maintenance for any county roads within the borders of the Town of Milton. A bridge on County Road G near Eagle Creek has been identified for replacement during 2022.

4. Town of Milton Transportation Plan:

Each year the Town Board prioritizes current year road and bridge work based upon the condition of the road/bridge, safety, traffic count, slope, funds available and other factors. The intent of the Town of Milton Transportation Plan is to maintain high quality roads throughout the township. The Town of Milton cooperates with other local units of government when necessary to complete road improvements.

Town of Milton Road Improvement Plan

Year	Road Name	Miles of Road	Improvement
2020	Schlawin Rd	1.3 Miles	Full Depth Mill, Shape and Pack Double-Chip from Jensen to Dunn Single Chip from Hwy 88 to Jensen
2020	Henry Ln & Fern Cir	.47 Miles	Crack Fill
2020	Kamrowski Rd Bridge	n/a	Add riprap along abutments and wings.
2020	Lower Eagle Valley Rd	n/a	Replace two bridges with culverts
2021	Bechly Rd	.49 Miles	Chip Seal and Crack Fill
2022	Canada Ridge Rd	1.5 Miles	Double-Chip or Resurface

5. Goals and Actions:

- The Town transportation system will be designed to protect the rural character of the Town and minimize impacts on the natural environment as much as possible.
- The Town’s transportation system will be designed and maintained to protect the safety and general welfare of the citizens of the Town.
- The Town of Milton will only take over a private road if it meets guidelines developed by the state and is blacktopped.
- Snow removal and township road repair is contracted out to a private contractor. This contract will be reevaluated both for quality of service and cost competitiveness as the board deems necessary.

- Development of new transportation terminals and facilities including rail spurs, airports, water terminals, passenger rail service, trucking terminals, etc. should be approved in areas that are consistent with surrounding land uses and be zoned accordingly.
- The Town of Milton supports the Flyway Trail building a bike/pedestrian trail that links the Town of Milton to Fountain City, Merrick State Park, C-FC School, Winona, Cochrane, Buffalo City, and the Marshland Access to allow safer transportation for youth and adults. This plan will give leverage to the Town of Milton and other municipalities in getting grants to study and build a trail if it is feasible.

G. UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT:

This element looks at existing utility service and community facilities benefiting the citizens of the Town of Milton. Items include solid waste disposal, recycling services, parks, telecommunication services, emergency response services, schools, government facilities and others.

1. Utilities/Services:

- **Sanitary Waste and Water Supply:** The Town of Milton has a concentration of residents along the Mississippi River North of Fountain City and South of Cochrane. All citizens in Milton have private sewer and water service. There are currently no plans to develop public services at this time, but it could be studied for the long term development of the prairie. Buffalo County Zoning issues all sanitary permits in the Town.
- **Solid Waste/Recycling:** Garbage disposal and recycling is available in cooperation with Buffalo County. Town citizens can bring their recyclables and garbage bags to the Recycling Center located at Buffalo City, Belvidere, Cochrane and Milton Garbage and Recycling facility (BBC&M) located at 300 N Main St in Cochrane. Residents in some town locations have the option of using curbside pickup and contracting with private waste haulers.
- **Electricity:** Riverland Energy Cooperative supplies electrical services in the Town of Milton. The township supports alternative energy sources such as wind, solar and methane.
- **Natural Gas:** There are no natural gas services in the township; most people rely upon liquid propane.
- **Telephone:** Cell phone service is good in most areas of the township. Landline telephone services are provided by Cochrane Cooperative Telephone (CCT) and Centurylink.

- **Internet:** Internet service is excellent in the Town due to a recent fiber to the home high-speed Internet project that was completed by Cochrane Co-op Telephone (CCT) in 2018 and 2019. The town partnered with CCT in 2018 to apply for state and county rural broadband grants to help fund the fiber to the home high-speed Internet project. In total, 225 residents took service and over 295 connections were made. There were 56.34 miles of fiber run as part of the project.
- **Fire Protection, Police Protection and Emergency Management:** Fire protection is provided by the Fountain City Fire Association, which is an association financially supported by four municipalities: the Towns of Cross, Buffalo and Milton and the City of Fountain City. Ambulance service to the Town of Milton is provided by the Winona Ambulance Service. The township does not pay an additional fee for this service.

2. Community Facilities:

- **Town Hall:** The Town of Milton currently holds regular meetings and elections in the new Town Hall, which was built in 2019 and is located at S2794 State Rd 88, Fountain City.
- **Cemeteries:** There are no public cemeteries in the township.
- **Libraries:** There are no public libraries in the township.
- **Schools:** Students residing in the town attend Cochrane-Fountain City Public Schools, which is located within the boundaries of the township but is its own municipality. The Town recognizes the significant role the school has in providing quality educational services for the citizens of Milton and to the stakeholders in surrounding communities that send students to Cochrane Fountain City School. The Town also recognizes that Cochrane Fountain City School offers many extracurricular activities that benefit many stakeholders from the Town of Milton and surrounding communities. The school has become a vibrant community center in the Town of Milton and offers many opportunities for township residents and stakeholders from surrounding communities to enjoy. The Town of Milton desires to promote activities and land use in the surrounding area by the school that is consistent with and supports a safe, nurturing, positive and respectful learning environment that will enable all students to succeed and reach their full potential. Taxpayers in the township also provide financial support to Western Technical College in La Crosse.
- **Health Care and Long-Term Care Services:** There are no health care providers in the Town of Milton. Excellent medical services are provided by health care providers in La Crosse, Eau Claire, Winona and Wabasha. Long-term care services are provided in Fountain City (assisted living), Pepin, Wabasha and Winona.

3. Goals and Actions:

- Maintain the high-quality fire and rescue services that are currently available. This requires regular contact and discussions with the other municipalities involved. Support the MABAS (mutual aid) system.
- Maintain recycling and solid waste services that the township currently uses.
- Promote activities, land use, economic development, industry, and commerce in the surrounding area by Cochrane Fountain City Schools that will continue to support the existing safe and nurturing environment enjoyed by students and stakeholders of the school.
- Carefully consider new alternative energy resources as they become available.
- Support future development of projects that improve high-speed internet or enhanced cell phone coverage as these technologies are considered vital infrastructure for the town.

H. AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT:

1. Agriculture:

The Town of Milton was settled by farmers and is in the driftless area of Wisconsin along the Mississippi River. Driving through the Town of Milton, one can see the importance that agriculture once had to the visual, economic and social landscape. Even though active farming in the township has declined, farming still remains the township's major economic activity. Much of the land is very steep, prone to erosion and, in some places, difficult to farm. The tillable land is very productive and numerous cropping rotations are possible. Agricultural use has changed throughout the town's history, going from wheat to livestock to dairy and now back to row cropping and some large poultry production farms. Currently, there are no active dairy farms in the township and fewer farmers are raising hay on their tillable acres. Farms will most likely continue to grow in size, but small part-time farmers will also increase in number. Some of these may consider value-added products as part of their activities. Marginal land may be lost to agriculture due to low prices, modest returns and federal and state land management programs. This has been common and under current government programs will continue to increase.

2. Natural Resources:

- **Wildlife:** Milton has a wide variety of wildlife species and excellent wildlife habitat. It is best known (as is all of Buffalo County) for high quality whitetail deer. This area has been identified for its tremendous potential for wildlife, threatened species and general natural habitat.

- **Recreational Activities:** Natural resources create excellent opportunities for recreation in the Town of Milton. Most recreational uses involve some sort of hunting or fishing activity, but bicycling, golfing, snowmobiling, boating, motorcycles, paddle boarding, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, bird-watching and sightseeing have all increased visitors to the township.
- **Groundwater:** All drinking water in the Town of Milton is from groundwater sources (private wells). Buffalo County completed a groundwater study in 1998 indicating very little contamination of wells within the Town of Milton. Contamination that was found was in the form of elevated nitrates, and these problems were solved by drilling deeper cased wells rather than shallow sand point wells. A more recent study, but with a smaller number of samples, from the Buffalo County Health and Human Services continues to indicate good groundwater quality.
- **Surface Water:** There are numerous small streams in the Town of Milton, with Waumandee Creek being the major tributary. Many of the streams are classified as intermittent. Bensel Pond is a 45 acre lake located in Buffalo County. It had a maximum depth of 5 feet. This is a natural drained lake that likely flows into Waumandee Creek during high water periods. Also, it is possible that water enters the pond from Waumandee Creek during high water periods. Its depth indicates winterkill conditions; however, fish species found include northern pike, bluegill, pumpkinseed, and carp. There is no public access. Beaver are present and muskrat are significant. Migrant puddle and diving ducks and coot use the pond. Mallard and teal broods may be observed.
- **Forests:** Forest land makes up 34.1% of the land in the Town of Milton. Much of the high quality timber has been harvested, and most timber land is managed for both forest and wildlife. The forests are located on very steep slopes which are too steep to convert to farmland, or on land that is normally too wet to farm.
- **Wetlands:** Wetlands make up a significant portion of the land basin the Town of Milton. The wetlands are found along the Mississippi River bottoms and along some of the streams. Most of the wetlands are owned by the US, Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin DNR, or are in the Mississippi Conservancy Land trust. Wetlands should be protected from development as they serve as filters and buffers for the environment. Current zoning regulations will not allow building in designated wetlands.
- **Floodplains:** Development of floodplains is generally not allowed by existing law/ordinances. These are fragile areas necessary to avoid flooding of roads and other developed property.
- **Non-Metallic Mining:** Non-metallic mining mainly consists of the excavation of sand, gravel and stone. This has been traditionally rock quarries in the Town of Milton for road building and field limestone. There are several approved non-metallic mines in Buffalo County with two active mines in the Town of Milton.

3. Cultural Resources:

The Town of Milton is rich in history and cultural activities that reflect the heritage of the Town. Some examples of cultural resources in the Town include:

- **Merrick State Park:** Merrick State Park is located in the Town of Milton on the beautiful backwaters of the Mississippi River. Many of the campground sites have river access for mooring watercraft or fishing directly from the sites. There are over two of manicured trails which are easily traveled with very few hills. Two boat landings provide easy launching for all sizes of boats. Shore fishing is very accessible for visitors without watercraft.
- **Prairie Moon Museum:** Prairie Moon Sculpture Garden & Museum is owned by the Town of Milton, having been donated to the township by the Kohler Foundation in 1994 to be maintained as a public art site. A joyful opening celebration in 1995 brought the community together with preservationists, artists, and art historians from throughout the country. The museum, which highlights the stone and glass sculptures of Herman Rusch, remains one of Buffalo County's premier folk art sites and is an important part of Wisconsin's cultural heritage.

4. Goals and Actions – Agriculture

- Landowners need to be respectful of their neighbors and when possible, should build livestock facilities according to current guidelines. Farm odor and residence separation should be used for all new livestock facilities.
- All farms should meet a reasonable nutrient/waste management plan for their farm and keep it updated as farm size increases. These plans should be in place for both livestock and non-livestock farm businesses.
- Protect existing farm operations from restrictions on noise, odor, and accepted animal husbandry practices associated with farm operations. This policy recognizes that often non-farm residents who are unfamiliar with farm operations may have unrealistic expectations of farming operations.
- Landowners within the township will be encouraged to follow soil conservation plans that meet tolerable soil loss levels.

5. Goals and Actions – Natural Resources

It is the objective of the residents of the Town of Milton to maintain natural resources located within the township. The following statements have been put in place to meet this objective:

- To consider the natural beauty of the township whenever development is considered.

- To protect and maintain habitat for the wildlife found in the township. Land use should protect as much of the native ecosystems as possible and protect the scenic vistas and views within the township.
- To encourage residents to use programs such as Mississippi Valley Conservancy and others to maintain the natural beauty of the Township.
- To encourage development which maximizes environmental protection.

6. Goals and Actions – Cultural Resources

- All current federal and state wildlife areas should be maintained.
- Recognize the historical and cultural importance of Merrick State Park and Prairie Moon Museum in the Town of Milton and promote activities that protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the stakeholders of those facilities.

I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT:

1. Employment

The majority of township residents who are employed are employed in manufacturing, agriculture, education/health/social, arts/recreation and retail occupations. The township is within commuting distance to jobs in Winona, La Crosse, Arcadia, and other cities. The Town of Milton and all of Buffalo County tends to have very low unemployment rates, due to the variety of jobs in the region and the growth of industry in Arcadia (Ashley Furniture and Golden Plump Chicken).

**Town of Milton Employment Statistics
2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates**

Employment Status	Number	Percent
Population 16 years and older	462	100
In Labor Force	289	62.6
Civilian Labor Force	289	62.6
Employed	283	61.3
Unemployed	6	1.3
Armed Forces	0	0
Not in Labor Force	173	37.4
Unemployment Rate	X	2.1
Occupation	283 total	100
Education, health care	79	27.9
Manufacturing	43	15.2
Retail Trade	27	9.5

Construction	24	8.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation	24	8.5
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	21	7.4
Transportation/warehousing	19	6.7
All others	5	1.8
Other services, not public admin	15	5.3
Professional, management, etc.	13	4.6
Finance/insurance, real estate	13	4.6
Class of Worker	283 total	100
Private wage and salary	206	72.8
Government workers	44	15.5
Self-employed	33	11.7
Unpaid family	0	0

2. Commuting to Work:

Many employed residents of the Town of Milton, who do not work on their own farms, or are self-employed, commute out of the Town to work. Winona and La Crosse are within 40 minutes for all residents.

Town of Milton, Commuting Habits 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Means of Travel	Number	Percent
Car, truck, van – drove alone	228	81.1
Car, truck, van – carpooled	32	11.4
Public transportation	0	0
Walked	2	.7
Other means	7	2.5
Worked at home	12	4.3
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	22.6	X

According to the 2019 Buffalo County Workforce Profile by the Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development, nearly 45% of Buffalo County residents work within the county, which is below the median of 65% for Wisconsin counties. Approximately 18% of the working residents travel to Winona County to work. With respect to the workers who work in Buffalo County, nearly 71% of those workers are Buffalo County residents.

3. Buffalo County Industries:

Buffalo County has a very small manufacturing base, with the major manufacturing (in terms of numbers of employees) being La Crosse Milling in Cochrane. Most all of the manufacturing employment opportunities in the near future will be outside of the Town or Buffalo County. Other major employers in Buffalo County include the school districts, Riverland Energy, Marten Transport and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

4. County, Regional and State Economic Development Programs:

Buffalo County does not have an Economic Development Department, but does have an Economic Development Committee. Following are programs that provide funding or other assistance for economic development activities:

- Small Business Administration Guaranteed Loan
- WHEDA Small Business Guaranteed Loan
- WHEDA Agriculture Guaranteed Loan
- Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission's Business Capital Fund
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Multi-Family Housing Loan Guarantee
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Business and Industry Loan Guarantees
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Value Added Producer Grant Program
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Business Growth Funding
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Entrepreneur Funding
- WWBIC Loan Fund
- 7 Rivers Alliance
- Wisconsin Fast Forward Grants
- Blueprint for Prosperity
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits
- Manufacturing and Agricultural Tax Credits

5. Local Planning Efforts:

The Town of Milton is a Wisconsin Public Service Commission Telecommuter Forward Certified jurisdiction, which means that it supports and commits to promote the availability of telecommuting opportunities.

Current Businesses located in the township include:

- Auto repair shop and towing
- Campground
- Concrete – ready mix
- Cottage rental
- Day care
- Excavator businesses
- Farms – Crop, Beef, Poultry, etc.
- Grain mill
- Home construction businesses
- Race track
- Recycling business
- Saw Mill
- Taverns
- Winery
- Wood product manufacturer

Desirable businesses in the Town of Milton include the following:

- Accounting, tax preparation, and legal Firms
- Agriculture, farming, organic Farming
- Architectural, interior design
- Business Consulting Services (HR, finance, sales, marketing, engineering)
- Childcare centers
- Educational services
- Financial, insurance, real estate broker
- Fitness facilities
- Graphic design, engineering Services
- Grocery store, hardware store, convenience store
- Home builders, plumbing, HVAC, electrical, and other building contractors
- Ice cream store, meat market, gift shop
- Information technology, computer programming, web-based businesses, e-commerce
- Landscape and lawn Maintenance
- Local business that sells local goods (i.e. organic produce, local t-shirts, etc)
- Medical, assisted living, health care, dentists, chiropractors
- Museums, nature parks, theatre, performing Arts
- Photography
- Restaurant, caterers
- Small business service companies
- Tourism and Recreational

6. Goals and Actions:

- Utilize existing national, state and local economic development resources to encourage economic growth, while ensuring that environmental impacts are always considered.
- Promote economic development that fits the Town of Milton's rural and small-town character and preserves and maintains existing homes, farms, and lifestyles.
- Support telecommuter businesses with our Broadband Forward and Telecommuter Certifications.

J. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ELEMENT:

1. Types of Intergovernmental Cooperation:

Cooperation between governmental units is a normal activity of governments. The Town of Milton currently cooperates with federal, state and local entities in the following ways:

- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency):** When natural disasters affect the town, the township works with FEMA in cooperation with Buffalo County Emergency Management.

- **Wisconsin Department of Transportation:** The Town of Milton participates in the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads. Road ratings are performed by the Buffalo County Highway Department.
- **Buffalo County:** The township maintains positive relationships with several Buffalo County agencies.
 - The township consults with the **Buffalo County Highway Department** on road and bridge issues, meeting with the Highway Commissioner each year (usually in April) to assess town roads and bridges.
 - The township cooperates with **Buffalo County Emergency Management** and in 2019 updated its Emergency Management Plan.
 - The Town of Milton has adopted the **Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance** and Buffalo County Zoning administers the zoning ordinance within the town, allowing the town to have input on certain zoning issues.
 - The **Buffalo County Clerk** administers elections for the county and serves as the WisVote provider for the Town of Milton.
 - The Town of Milton has been part of the **Buffalo County Recycling Program** since the program began.
- **Other:**
 - The Town of Milton cooperates with the Towns of Cross and Buffalo and the City of Fountain City to fund and operate the **Fountain City Fire Association** which provides fire prevention and services to those municipalities. The association recently funded and built a new fire station in Fountain City which was completed in July of 2020.
 - The Town of Milton cooperates with the Town of Belvidere, Village of Cochrane and City of Buffalo City in the **BBC&M (Buffalo City, Belvidere, Cochrane and Milton)** Waste and Recycling Center in Cochrane.
 - The Town of Milton is a member of the Wisconsin Towns Association and members of the town board attend the **Buffalo County Towns Association Unit Meetings**, which are held quarterly and which allow town officers to meet and exchange ideas about town issues.
 - The town is served by **Cochrane-Fountain City Public Schools**. The residents of the Town of Milton are very supportive of the school.
 - The **Buffalo County Sheriff's department** provide law enforcement services for the Town of Milton.

2. Intergovernmental Agreements:

The following agreements are currently in place:

- Buffalo County Recycling Department;
- BBC&M Waste and Recycling Center;
- Fountain City Fire Association;
- Buffalo County Towns Association;

- MABIS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System)

3. Goals and Actions:

- Encourage coordination and cooperation among units of government. Remain active with the Towns Association and discuss issues that can better be addressed as a group of towns.
- Encourage coordination with Buffalo County Highway Department and local municipalities in areas of possible cooperation on road maintenance and repair.
- Maintain the strong relationship with the Fire and EMS Services.

K. LAND USE ELEMENT

1. Existing Land Use:

- **Overview:** The Town of Milton is a rural town. It has almost equal proportions of agricultural land, forest land, and wetlands. Most of the farmland is steep soils with very productive land in the valleys and along the bluff tops. There is a relatively large area that is residential housing along State Highway 35 on the sand prairie.
- **Topography:** The Town of Milton can be described as bluffs, valleys, and wetlands. Land that is not currently in productive farmland is mainly too steep or too wet to farm.
- **Commercial/Industrial:** There are few properties zoned commercial or industrial; most properties in the town are zoned agricultural.
- **Forest Land:** Forest land in the Town is generally land that is too steep for other uses. The committee sees very few, if any opportunities for land to be taken out of forest and put into row crop production. The exception is some areas that have been planted to trees through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Managed Forest Law (MFL) enrollment is a concern throughout Buffalo County. Currently, Milton has 5,902 acres of forest land with 3,188 acres enrolled in the MFL program; this accounts for 54% of the woodland acres in the Town. MFL continues to be a major concern because of falling property tax base for the Town and County.
- **Population and Housing Densities:** The population density of the Town of Milton is 25.8 people per square mile of land. Using the township's census of habitable housing units (257), the density of housing units per square mile of land (21.7 miles) is 11.84.
- **Land Demand and Prices:** Land sales values in Buffalo County have increased in the past 10 years. Until the last few years, this was driven by recreational land sales mostly to whitetail deer hunters. Sales of vacant land in 2018 and 2019 disclose an average price per acre of \$4,650.

- **Opportunities for Redevelopment:** The Town of Milton has had very limited development over history due to the Town’s rural nature. No redevelopment opportunities were identified.
- **Land Use Projections:** The two major land uses in the Town of Milton are agriculture and recreation (hunting); both of these uses provide very little development pressure. There is a small amount of land along State Highway 35 that may be suitable for small industrial development. There are houses close by, so existing landowners need to be considered.
- **Housing Starts:** See the Housing topic above.

The following table displays the breakdown of property within the town.

**Town of Milton Property Assessment
Buffalo County Treasurer (2020)**

Property Classification	# of Parcels	Total Value	Total Acres
Residential	324	36,936,200	242
Commercial	21	2,402,500	53
Manufacturing*	2	453,900	13
Agricultural	369	717,100	4,243
Undeveloped	184	1,110,400	2,482
Productive Forest Lands	76	2,502,800	563
Agricultural Forest Land	198	4,827,500	2,151
Woodland Tax Lands	159	10,299,100	3,188
Exempt Lands	212	0	4,135
TOTALS	1545	59,249,500	17,070

*2019 Figures

2. Zoning:

The Town of Milton participates in county comprehensive zoning as described in Wisconsin Statute 59.97. Zoning decisions are made by the Buffalo County Zoning Department pursuant to the Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance which was adopted in 2018.

3. Goals and Actions:

- Cluster development should be encouraged whenever housing is considered to preserve farmland and natural areas. Preserving prime farmland should be a priority when rural development is considered.
- Existing landowner rights should be considered when considering any business development. Right to Farm protection should be given to farms located in the Town.

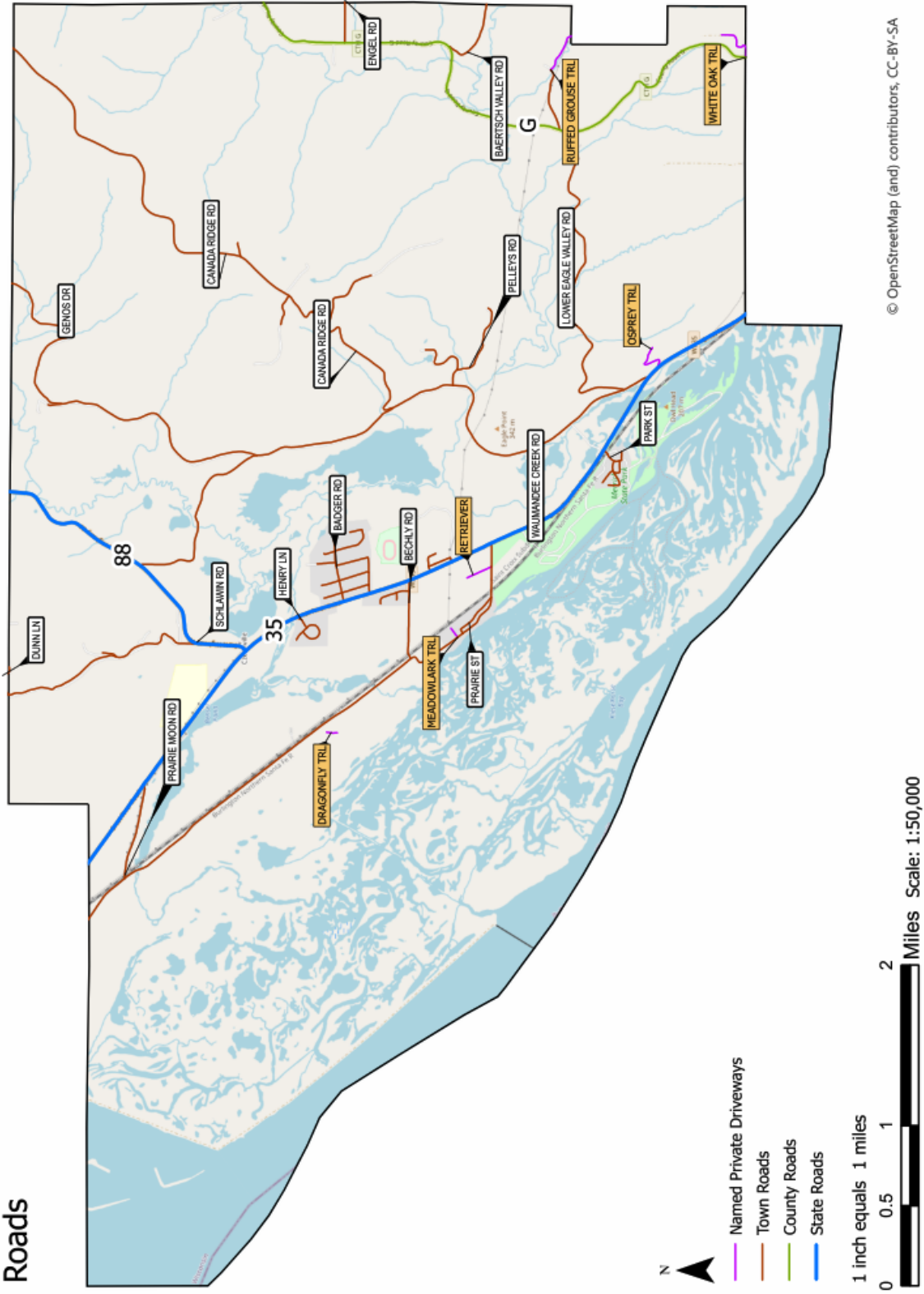
- Conservation plans should be encouraged and plans in place be enforced by Buffalo County to preserve both farmland and natural areas. Landowners are encouraged to voluntarily participate in programs to preserve farmland, and natural areas, such as land conservancy organizations. Bluff protection that preserves the natural scenic beauty and natural resources which are unique to the bluffs in the township and Buffalo County is encouraged.
- Access to private property should be regulated to prevent driveways that are too steep for emergency vehicles to safely travel. Private access from town, county and state roads should require permits to prevent unsafe access.
- Property owners should keep their property in an orderly condition. Mobile homes more than 10 years in age should not be allowed to move in the Town of Milton. The Town Board may put in place ordinances to regulate conditions or businesses that may affect the health and safety of the people of the Town.
- The Town supports the enforcement of the Buffalo County zoning ordinance.

L. IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT:

Goals and Actions in Implementing Plan:

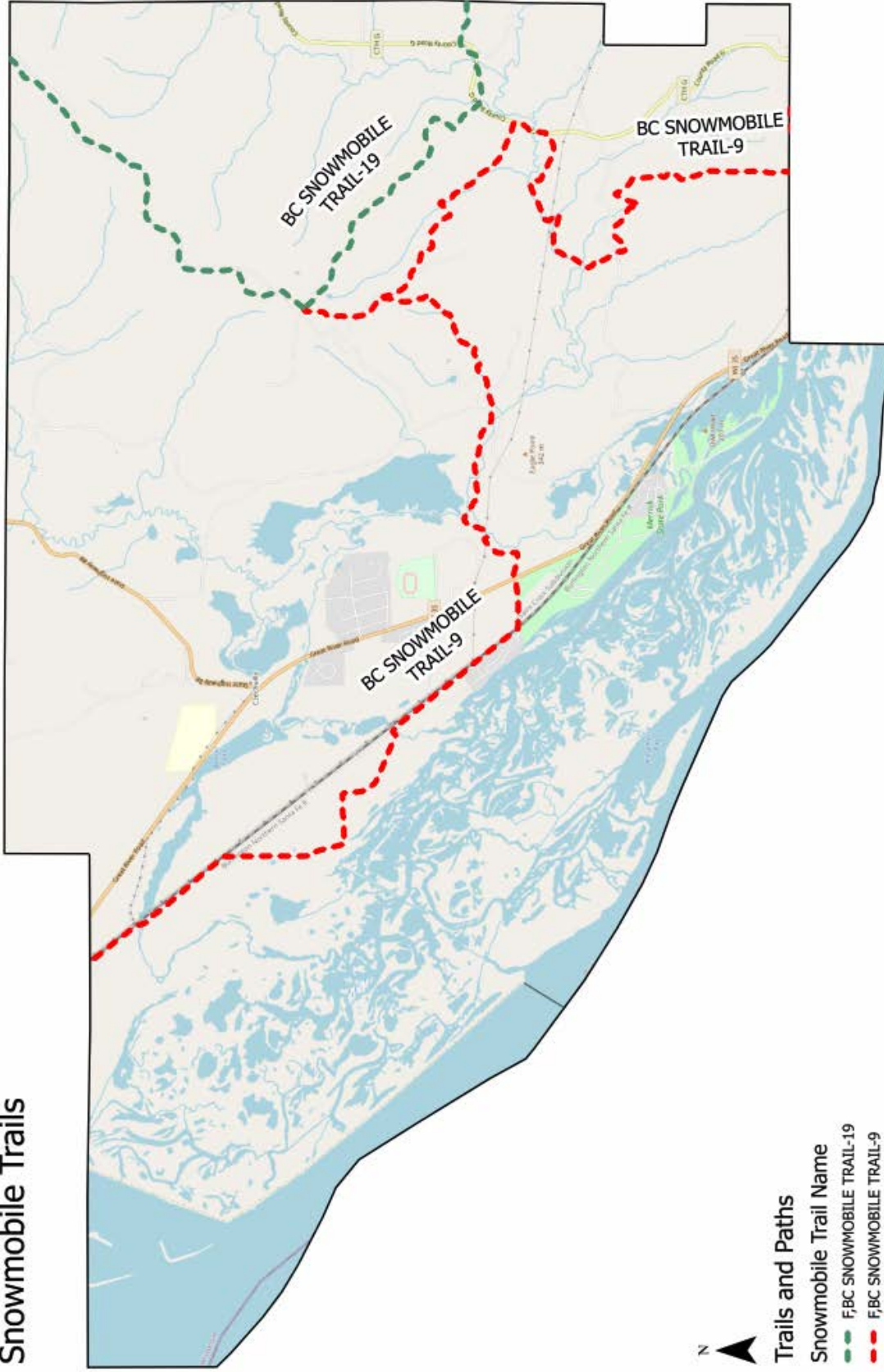
- The plan will be updated at least every ten years and reviewed and revised as needed.
- The implementation of the plan will be the ultimate responsibility of the Town Board of the Town of Milton.
- The Town Board of the Town of Milton will work together with other municipalities and entities to implement other portions of the plan.

Town of Milton Roads



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Town Of Milton Snowmobile Trails



Trails and Paths

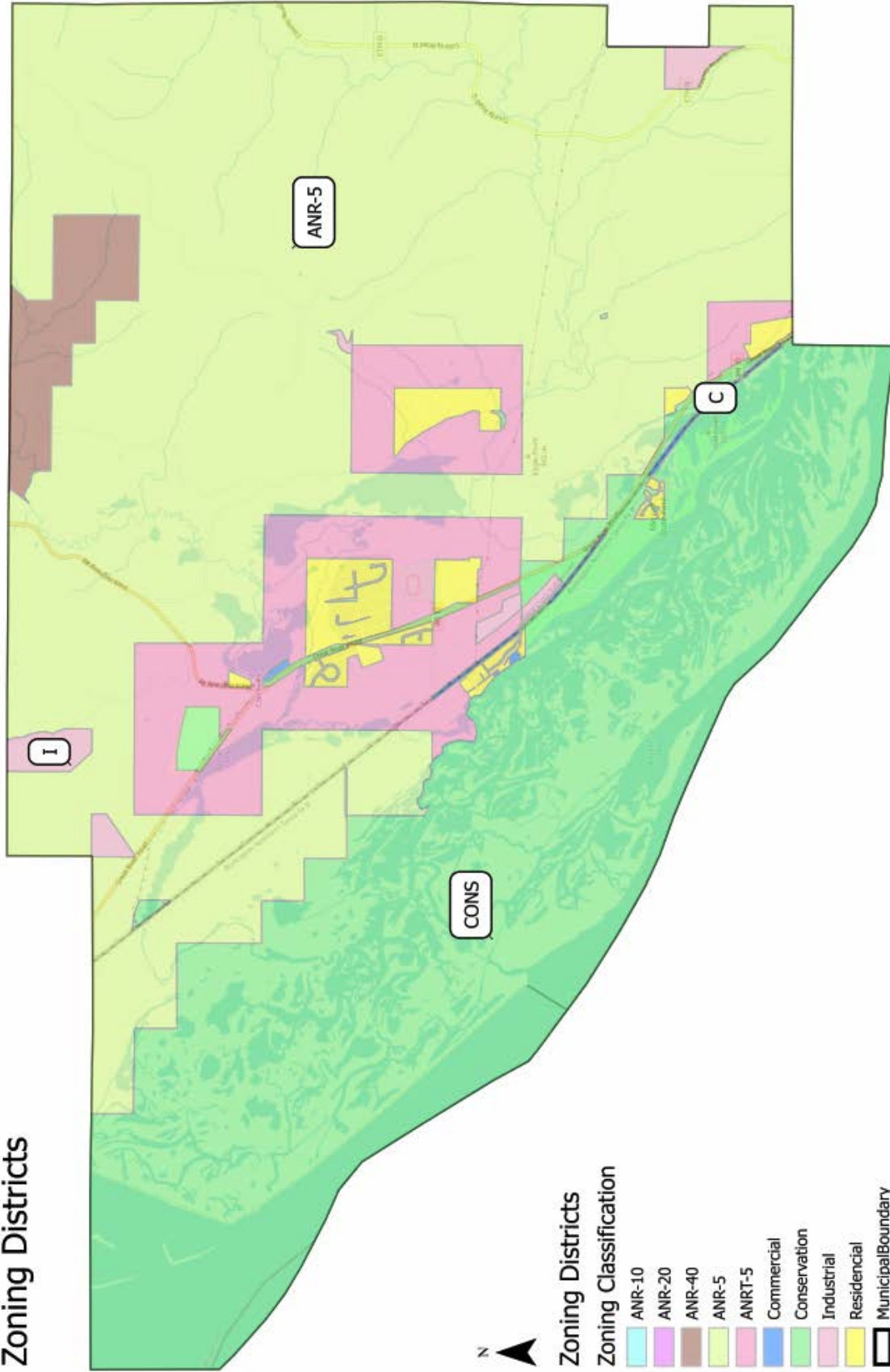
- Snowmobile Trail Name**
- F/BC SNOWMOBILE TRAIL-19
 - F/BC SNOWMOBILE TRAIL-9

1 inch equals 1 miles



Scale: 1:50,000

Town Of Milton Zoning Districts



Zoning Districts
Zoning Classification

- ANR-10
- ANR-20
- ANR-40
- ANR-5
- ANRT-5
- Commercial
- Conservation
- Industrial
- Residential

Municipal Boundary

1 inch equals 1 miles



Miles Scale: 1:50,000

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