

# Town of Salem Comprehensive Plan



**2009 – 2029**

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**Salem Plan Commission Members:**

Dave Gilles

Craig Flynn

Paul Shingledecker

John Cuddy

Mike Graham

# INTRODUCTION

## Preface

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide a framework that describes existing conditions, plans for future development and land use, identifies potential impacts, provides a basis from which to make decisions regarding proposed projects and projects a vision for the next 20 years. Concern over issues such as the potential growth of and initiation of new corporate dairy farms, maintaining rural character and recognizing the need for greater flexibility in zoning were key considerations in the development of this plan.

In writing this plan, the Town of Salem has attempted to be:

1. *Comprehensive.* The plan must address all areas of the community as well as all activities associated with regulating development.
2. *Flexible.* The plan must be structured to summarize policies and proposals and allow for flexibility to facilitate the ever changing needs of the area.
3. *Relevant.* The plan should apply to current issues and concerns as well as address future issues.

With these general guidelines as a basis, specific issues must be addressed by analyzing the growth patterns and physical features of the community. While a variety of factors influence where and when development takes place, several basic categories can be analyzed to assess the impact of past and future growth. The categories this plan addresses are:

*Housing; Economic Development; Land Use; Public Facilities; Transportation; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; Intergovernmental Cooperation, and Implementation.*

Because growth pressures have been experienced in the recent past in Pierce County, much of the focus of this plan is in terms of impact rather than statistical forecast. The reason for this approach stems from the way in which forecasts or projections are made. Generally, projections are based on past trends or knowledge of certain specific factors, which will influence growth.

For Salem, past trends may not accurately predict increases in population and development associated with growth pressures. In addition, there is no clear factor that shows how much growth will occur in the near future. The influence and degree of impact associated with growth in Pierce County will be the result of several factors, some of which may be generated outside the immediate boundaries of the County and/or of Salem. When costs associated with travel time to the Twin Cities metropolitan area are offset by the potential cost of housing, Salem may be looked on as a base from

which to commute. As the Salem area is perceived as a quiet, rural and scenic place, it will be viewed by those attracted to such amenities as an area desirable for residential housing. Annual housing starts have remained very modest over recent years but are largely dictated by economic factors such as interest rates and the state of the general economy. Because of this, it is challenging to predict when and where growth will happen. However, the more important issue is to have a plan in place that anticipates growth and to have foresight that prepares the Town for issues associated with growth. It is also important to have appropriate policies and planning processes in place to address growth when it occurs. This Comprehensive Plan confronts these issues and provides a basis for the policies that will shape the community in the future.

### **Community Vision Statement**

*In the year 2030, the Town of Salem is envisioned as a dominantly rural community with residential areas strategically placed amid farmlands, woodlands, and hills. Agricultural uses continue to be largely family farms (individual or corporate) as opposed to non-family corporate farms. Home-based business uses are compatible with the agricultural community. Town government, local citizens and landowners have proactively collaborated to provide leadership and commitment to create a plan that preserves its productive farmland, woodlands, the Rush River valley and other natural amenities. The vision is that Salem continues to maintain a rural atmosphere with low-density residential uses, planned and harmonious industrial uses and home-based small businesses.*

*For future reality to approximate this vision, Town officials will need to work with citizens, local farmers, developers, public sector partners, and others to share this vision, create visual tools that express it, and promote the projects that are consistent with it.*

### **THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A community completes a comprehensive plan in order to develop a long-range policy guide for the physical development of the community that is broad in scope. When combined with implementation tools, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, or open space preservation programs, the comprehensive plan can more effectively meet community needs for planning and action.

The Salem Plan Commission plans to re-visit this Comprehensive Plan one year after its implementation to determine if revisions are in order, assess its relevance, and examine its usefulness/functionality in real-world situations. To help meet the needs of the community more efficiently, a 5-year up-date will also be done when applicable.

Salem's comprehensive planning process included community planning meetings, opinion surveys, analyses of population, Town resources, and land use, and recommendations for plan implementation. The community's 2030 vision, drawn from the aforementioned sources, will project an image of productive farmlands,

woodlands, natural areas, and recreational areas.

Generally, based on population projections and various limits of development, this plan recommends that future commercial and retail development, modest as it may be, would be focused in locations which take advantage of the proximity of existing infrastructure which can capably serve these needs and which provides visibility advantages. To enhance the quality of growth that occurs, Salem needs to develop more effective regulatory tools and guidelines that preserve open space, minimize adverse natural resource impacts, and cause the least amount of potential damage to the Town's infrastructure.

### **Goals, Objectives and Policies**

Goals are generally defined as the ultimate aim towards which an effort is directed. The goals outlined below are broad to provide a general framework of Salem's priorities. Objectives, on the other hand, are defined as an action directed to achieve the stated goal. Policies are recommendations or steps that could contribute to achieving or maintaining an objective or goal.

## **OVERALL GOAL—Salem Township**

There are several goals of the Comprehensive Plan that serves as the primary basis for adopting the plan. Decisions made with regard to development should be based on achieving these goals.

The following long-term goals for land use and development were established by the Salem Plan Commission. In order to implement Salem's vision for the future, officials and citizens of Salem will work to:

- Maintain and improve the community's quality of life.
- Promote the comfort, safety, health, prosperity, aesthetics and general welfare.
- Provide for orderly development.
- Protect the Town's infrastructure (i.e., roads).
- Maintain a rural character typified by family farms.
- Protect Salem's natural resource base.

# Element 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Salem Township

As input was received from elected/appointed officials and citizens of Salem, various issues came to the forefront. Through the Plan Commission participation process, these points were distilled to three issues:

- *Residential, Commercial and Ag-Business Growth*—Community quality of life can be enhanced and threatened by additional houses, businesses and large family farms (individual or corporate), including non-family corporate farms in Salem.
- *Threats to Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Drainage Patterns, and Corridors*—Development in Salem increases the need for vigilance and guidance in these areas.
- *Rationale for Land Use Decisions*—The Town Board and Plan Commission needs a planned regulation to provide a meaningful framework for the land use decisions that will be necessary in the future.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITES AND THREATS

### Salem Town

#### Strengths

- Engaged Town government
- Natural beauty of the area
- Agricultural related home businesses
- Rural Setting
- Neighborly Environment
- Proximity to Twin Cities, Eau Claire, Ellsworth, River Falls
- Natural beauty of the Rush River corridor and activities such as hunting and fishing
- Cultural Amenities- Historical Structures and Places
- Tourist Attractions: Rush River, Blueberry Farm, Winery, Artesian Wells
- Sound agricultural economy
- Low crime rates
- Well maintained road system
- Weiser Concrete- major pre-cast manufacturing business
- Town is represented by two (2) county board members
- Limited commercial development

## Weaknesses

- Limited high speed internet services
- Lack of affordable housing
- No commercial district
- Limited cellular telephone access
- Unfunded government mandates (e.g., less match funding for highway upkeep)
- No limit of animals per acre on producer farms
- Lack of community involvement in Town government

## Threats

- Large Dairy Operations
- High-Density Housing
- Weakening or poor economy
- High traffic on township roads due to dairy operations
- Neighboring Town's business expansion can cause complaints from neighbors and Town residents as well as potential safety concerns (traffic, speeding)
- Less government cost sharing programs
- Political Intervention

## Opportunities

- Plan for commercial growth while maintaining rural character
- Utilize natural resources in controlled manner
- Un-named campground
- Close Community (neighbors know each other)

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

A wealth of demographic information is available regarding population trends/projections, household characteristics, educational levels, age/gender/race/ethnicity, and income/employment data in the document: *Pierce County "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*.

# Element 2: HOUSING

## INTRODUCTION

Because of less dependence on farming and industry for their livelihoods, Americans today have much more freedom to choose where they live and work than they did in the first seven or eight decades of the 1900's. These choices were reflected by the 2000 Census.

Primary considerations regarding residential growth rates and planning include where growth is occurring, if growth is occurring, the speed at which growth or decline are occurring and why growth or decline are occurring.

The impact of many "local" development activities are felt beyond the local borders, sooner or later. For example, traffic generated by a business enterprise in one jurisdiction may have a significant impact on adjacent jurisdictions.

Impacts can have a cumulative effect. One house or one shop or one convenience store might have slight impacts, but each undeniably demands services, generates travel, creates economic activity, and adds to the tax base. Such enterprises can also gradually or abruptly change the character of a community.

One of the primary areas of concern in community development that demands attention in the near future is the ramification of housing.

Two primary considerations will affect housing:

- Zoning. Salem has Exclusive Agriculture, Primary Agriculture and General Rural zoning districts that allow residential uses. These districts have allowable densities of 1 house per 35 acres, 2 houses per 40 acres and 4 houses per 40 acres, respectively. However, with the potential ability to cluster homes in a more concentrated area through the use of density points, there is the potential to design residential projects that could range from a rural to a suburban look. New residential development should be encouraged in areas which can be served conveniently and economically by Town maintenance operations and utilities.

- Ability to provide services (police, fire, school, road maintenance, etc.) without burdening current systems.

Future residents of Salem will require a mixture of housing types to meet individual requirements of preference, age, family size, and income. This will be necessary in order that each family and individual may find suitable housing at a location convenient to jobs, recreation, and commercial facilities.

It is important for a community to provide adequate and safe housing for all its residents. As stages of life, health, family, marital status, and financial circumstances change, so do housing needs. Ideally, a person should be able to live and work in the same community and not be forced to look outside the community for housing.

Local government has the power to levy taxes on properties. In return for these revenues, local government provides services for the users of the land. Local governments are constantly faced with determining what services are in demand, and given local budget constraints, what services are most necessary. Both the provision of services and the regulation of land come under the general heading of public welfare and safety.

Different land uses generate demands for different services. The issue here is housing. While population and density may determine the aggregate level of demand, the configuration and location of dwelling units may determine how, where, and at what cost services may be delivered. Housing is a major land use category in most communities and typically, in most towns. It is a major source of revenues. This is why housing is an important element in comprehensive plans.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

A wealth of demographic information is available regarding housing type/condition and housing cost data in the document: *Pierce County "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Housing Goals

- Limit future residential development to those areas best suited for development, where infrastructure is presently located, or can be economically provided.
- Provide for/encourage a multitude of housing options for various income levels and life stages

### Housing Objectives

- Encourage future single family residential development to locate in appropriate areas and at low densities.
- Direct higher density residential development to areas where conflict with agricultural uses are less likely and where infrastructure can support it.

## **POLICIES**

### Housing Policies

- Pursue the modification of current zoning rules for Exclusive Agricultural to allow lot sizes smaller than the current 35 acre minimum. The smaller lot sizes will minimize the impacts to larger, farmable tracts and will thus preserve farmland.
- Create a subdivision ordinance that reflects the Town's vision of the future (i.e., rural character, low density housing).

## Element 3: Economic Development

### **Economic Profile**

The Town of Salem's roots lie within its rich agricultural heritage. Salem is surrounded by agriculture which makes up the majority of the land use. Most of the citizens who work within the Town of Salem work in agriculture or operate agriculture-related home businesses and most of the residents who work outside of the agriculture sector commute to other areas for work. The main source of employment within the town is Weiser Concrete, which makes for limited local employment opportunities for those who do not work in agriculture.

Since so many residents commute to their jobs, which on average are 33 minutes away or more, they have the opportunity to purchase goods and services close to where they work. Lower prices in those areas can make it difficult for local businesses within the town to be competitive at this time. However, if petroleum prices increase to an uncomfortable level, market forces may shift, creating more opportunity for local business to establish. Therefore it is important to plan for development that makes sense for the town and residents both economically and physically.

At this time, tourism holds the most potential for revenue generation as Salem has many beautiful natural features. The natural feature of the Rush River valley, as well as local home based businesses draw tourists into the town from all over the Twin Cities and surrounding areas. However, the town does not have any defined commercial areas to truly capitalize on additional potential revenue. Market forces play a large part in this, and there may not be enough tourism at the present time to support a permanent commercial district. However, this is a potential resource that could be tapped into at some point in the future. Such enterprises could include town-sponsored events and activities as well as private businesses.

## **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and, Threats**

### Strengths

- The Town of Salem is home to the scenic Rush River, and surrounding bluffs known for their aesthetic beauty and excellent trout fishing. It is quiet, peaceful, and a place that local citizens and visitors enjoy.
- Salem is located between Ellsworth, WI, and Plum City, WI. It is only 12 miles from Ellsworth, and 15 miles from Red Wing, MN which was rated as the 26<sup>th</sup> most beautiful historic city in the world according to National Geographic Traveler Magazine in 2008.
- Salem is located within an hour of the Twin Cities metro area.
- There is a beautiful rural charm that anyone who travels through Salem can appreciate. The topography, the agricultural heritage, and the Rush River valley are notable.
- The town has several destinations including “pick your own” farms, a vineyard, a semi-public artesian well that provides ice sculptures and other home based businesses that lend character to the town.

### Weaknesses

- Due to the town’s low population, and distance from other destinations, few commercial enterprises or businesses have been feasible in the area.
- Due to the distance from other cities, it is difficult for residents to purchase goods and services as well as receive emergency services as quickly as other areas.
- There is limited high-tech infrastructure located within the town, such as high speed internet, cell phone towers, etc.
- There is a lack of affordable housing for both the elderly and low income residents.
- There is no clearly defined node of commercial development within the Town of Salem.
- Potential tourism revenues go un-captured, and actually are a cost to the town (i.e. use of roads to access river or neighboring businesses).

### Opportunities

- Working with the Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and other surrounding businesses, could help bring in more tourists to Salem. “Vino in the Valley,” a thriving business located in the Town of El Paso, draws a large volume of tourists from as far away as Madison. However, there is likely to be as much opposition

as support for such an enterprise in Salem since residents treasure the peaceful rural charm of the town.

- Pierce County and the Town of Salem are home to beautiful geologic formations. Promoting them by development of roadside signs and promoting sales of the CD “Geologic Tour of Pierce County” could bring more tourists through Salem. However, with very few businesses to capitalize on such tourism, promotion of this sort may not pay off.
- There are currently no local farmer’s markets for the area. Creating a local farmer’s market could capture some of the tourism revenue, as well as create a place where local residents could buy and sell local produce.
- In recent surveys, residents identified bicycle and walking trails as something that they would like to see more of. County Road A may provide an opportunity for a bike/walk path or lane to be constructed if it is improved in the future. Such an amenity could have a positive impact on the local economy.

### Threats

- Urban sprawl could begin to impact the town in the near future. Having a plan as well as proper zoning can guide it in a way that is beneficial for the town. The extent and timing of such development is very difficult to predict and is influenced by a number of variables.
- CAFOs and other large agri-businesses have the potential to degrade groundwater, and surface water quality as well as increase local infrastructure costs if plans are not put in place to anticipate their potential impacts.
- Development along the Rush River has the potential to degrade water quality, scenic beauty, and increase intensity of flooding.
- Salem does not have a well diversified economy. Residents are forced to shop elsewhere due to the lack of commercial outlets in Salem. This is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future regarding most commercial products.

### **Existing Conditions**

A wealth of demographic information is available regarding population trends/projections, age distribution, income/education levels, and employment data in the document: *Pierce County “Smart Growth” Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*.

## **Community Desires Based on Pierce County Community Attitudes Survey**

In the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan Phase II Community Attitudes Survey, a percentage of the town was able to voice their opinions on a number of issues that the town is facing. The town was represented by 81 returned surveys out of 216 mailed. The following is an analysis of what they said.

Approximately seventy-nine percent said that development was moving too fast or about right for the Town of Salem indicating that the residents are apprehensive about growth, or want to protect the town's rural character. Fifty-six percent said that there is not enough planning, or just enough planning and regulation. This may suggest that they would like to see more guided growth if that happens. Thirty-two percent said there was too much planning indicating that private property rights may be more important to them. About forty percent indicated that they would like to see market forces guide development while forty eight percent would like to see a limit on development.

Twenty percent would like to see more senior housing. This number was high as less than fifteen percent of the town is over the age of 60. Perhaps the survey data could be skewed due to the number of surveys completed and the age groups most likely to have returned them.

There was a large spread between people's opinions on the optimum size parcels for new residential development. It was split nearly even four ways in each category of 1-5 acre lots, 5+ acre lots, 35+ acre lots and small cluster type lots. This may indicate that people want to protect the natural features of the area. Additional public input would be helpful to understanding their wishes.

Sixty-six percent of the residents would like to see more family restaurants in the area. Fifty-five percent would like to see general retail, and fifty-two percent would like to see more general services. Sixty-three percent would like more industrial development, and fifty-three percent would like to see it placed in existing industrial areas. This may indicate that some commercial development would be beneficial to the residents.

Over twenty-nine percent of people think that quality public schools would be the best way to encourage growth indicating education is important to many of the citizens. Seventy-five percent of the citizens felt that agri-development, and agriculture expansion should be encouraged. This may indicate that people enjoy this area because of the rural feel.

Over ninety-four percent of people felt that tourism should remain the same or increase indicating that people have positive feelings towards tourism.

## Element 4: TRANSPORTATION

## **INTRODUCTION**

A transportation system represents a key element in order for any community to be functional. Of particular importance, especially for smaller communities, is the local road system since it often is the largest issue that must be dealt with by local government in terms of time spent and impact on budget.

A wisely conceived road system can result in many benefits and long term cost savings for a community. Being an integral aspect of the community, it plays a major role in the efficiency, safety, and overall desirability of the community as a place to live and work. Roads can also be burdensome to local government as costs to repair and replace roads, culverts and town rights-of-way continue to increase as local budgets are reduced and equipment, material and fuel costs rise.

### **GOAL:**

1. Develop a safe and efficient transportation system that serves all town residents.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1 Establish policies and standards for new roads within developments that will be paid for by developers.
- 2 Establish policies and standards for existing roads serving uses that generate high volumes of traffic and/or uses that negatively impact roads at an accelerated rate to ensure that a disproportionate amount of town resources aren't required for maintenance.
- 3 Maintain a transportation system that enhances a sense of community and safety.
- 4 Develop a system for regular maintenance of all Town roads, signage, and management of right-of-way vegetation according to current and future design standards.

### **POLICIES:**

- 1 Ensure that Pierce County includes Town projects in its Capital Improvements Program.
- 2 Maintain Town roads and rights-of-way to limit visual obstacles and encourage the County to maintain roads under its jurisdiction in the same manner.

- 3 On an annual basis, continue to review and upgrade the roads under Salem’s jurisdiction based on safety, budget, level of service and pavement condition criteria.
- 4 When new roads are required, minimize the use of dead end roads and cul-de-sacs whenever possible. New driveways shall continue to be regulated to ensure sufficient emergency vehicle access and to maintain safe driveway spacing standards and proper drainage.
- 5 Evaluate future requests for atv routes on a case by case basis emphasizing public health and safety considerations.
- 6 Uses that have the potential to generate high volumes of traffic and/or negatively impact roads at an accelerated rate will not be issued a driveway permit if the use can reasonably be accessed from a state or county road.
- 7 Conditionally permitted uses that have the potential to generate high volumes of traffic and/or negatively impact roads at an accelerated rate should only be permitted at locations served by adequate infrastructure (e.g. county or state roads).

## **Existing Transportation Facilities**

The road system in Salem is composed of three levels of governmental jurisdiction. It includes the Town system composed of local roads, the County system of trunk highways and the State and Federal highway systems. By far, the greatest amount of road mileage in the Town is composed of Town roads.

A variety of transportation facilities serve the area. These include the local road network, trails, rails, access to air and water transport, and other facilities.

### ***Local Roadway Network***

The local road network shapes access and circulation through the Town and the County. There are no “public streets” within Salem. Roads in the area are classified by their primary function, as described below:

- Principal Arterials – Serve longer intra-urban trips and traffic traveling through urban areas. They carry high traffic volumes and provide links to major activity centers.
- Minor Arterials – Provide intra-community continuity and service to trips of

moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials. The minor arterial system interconnects with the urban arterial system and provides system connections to the rural collectors.

- Collectors – Provide both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. These facilities collect traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it onto the arterial system. In the central business district, and in other areas of like development and traffic density, the collector system may include the street grid that forms the basic unit of traffic circulation.

- Local Streets – Local streets primarily provide direct access to adjacent 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. There are no local streets in Salem.

### ***Highways***

One main roadway, USH 10, supports the Town of Salem. In researching the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) Web site for the next five years, there do not appear to be any roadway projects contemplated for DOT roads in Salem. There are no published plans posted on the DOT Web site for USH 10.

### ***County Roads***

County roads in Salem include County CTH CC and CTH A.

### ***Town Roads***

Salem has 54 miles of town roads. There are 62.5 gross road miles within the Town.

## **Water**

The Town of Salem has no water-related transportation facilities.

## **Rail**

There are no active railroads in Salem. The nearest passenger service is provided by Amtrak in Minneapolis/St. Paul and Red Wing, Minnesota.

## **Biking**

There are no bike trails in the Town. The 2003–2023 Pierce County Bicycle Plan proposes that a paved shoulder be constructed on CTH A for bicyclists.

## **Air Transportation**

The nearest airport supporting the Town of Salem is the Red Wing Airport. The new expansion developed a 5,000 ft. runway that is capable of handling corporate jets. There are no plans to expand or change the runways or services to accommodate commercial aircraft. Other airports in the area include St. Paul Downtown, Chippewa Valley Regional, Minneapolis/St. Paul International, and the Menomonie Airport.

## **ATV Routes**

ATV routes are beginning to emerge within Pierce County as some towns in the northern tier of the county have approved existing town roads for use by all-terrain vehicles. Particularly, the towns of Martell, Ellsworth, Spring Lake and Trimbelle have designated and approved the vast majority of their town roads (excluding dead-ends) for such use. Gilman has approved a route in the southern portion of the town to connect designated routes in Martell and Spring Lake. According to the Pierce County ATV Association, the remainder of the towns within Pierce County, including Salem, have not designated any ATV routes to-date. The only town which abuts Salem that has approved ATV routes currently is Ellsworth. None of the approved Ellsworth routes actually connect to any Salem town roads. Therefore, town roads in Salem are not currently preventing travel between any approved ATV routes.

It is possible that neighboring towns will approve ATV routes which abut Salem town roads in the future. Salem's elected and appointed leadership have thus far taken a "wait and see" attitude toward approving ATV routes. This issue will continue to be discussed and any decisions to designate ATV routes in the future should be carefully considered with the best interests of the Town in mind and with a consensus of Town leaders and residents.

## **State and Regional Transportation Plans**

Wisconsin Statutes §66.1001(2)(c) requires communities to compare the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. It also requires communities to incorporate applicable state, regional and other transportation plans into their Comprehensive Plan. This section satisfies this statutory requirement. The Town of Salem's Transportation Element goals, objective, policies, and programs are consistent with and implement all relevant sections of the following plans and programs:

### **Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) completed the Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 in 1998. This Plan establishes WisDOT goals, objectives, and policies for both intercity and urban and suburban bicycling, and recommends strategies and actions for WisDOT, local governments, and others to take to implement the plan. The two primary goals of the plan are to double the number of trips made by bicycles and to reduce bicyclist-motorist crashes by at least 10 percent by the year 2010. More specifically, it seeks to improve bicycle access to major destinations along arterial and collector streets.

### **2002–2008 Transit Improvement Program**

The TIP must be consistent with the region's long-range transportation plan, include all transportation projects in the metropolitan area that are proposed for federal funding, and include at least three years of programming.

### **The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020**

The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020, created by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), was established to make pedestrian travel a viable, convenient and safe transportation choice throughout Wisconsin. While the Policy Plan primarily aims to minimize the barrier to pedestrian traffic flow from State Trunk Highway expansions and improvements, it provides guidance to local communities on how to encourage pedestrian travel through the creation of pedestrian plans, increasing enforcement of pedestrian laws, adopting and implementing sidewalk ordinances.

## **Connections 2030: Wisconsin's Long-Range Transportation Plan**

WisDOT is currently developing a long-range transportation plan for the state called "Connections 2030." This plan will address all forms of transportation over a 25-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air.

The **Local Roads Improvement Program** (LRIP) assists local governments in improving seriously deteriorating county highways, town roads, and city and village streets. The competitive reimbursement program pays up to 50% of total eligible costs with local governments providing the balance. The program has three basic components: County Highway Improvement (CHIP); Town Road Improvement (TRIP); and Municipal Street Improvement (MSIP).

## **Pavement Surface Evaluation & Rating**

Software tools help jurisdictions to prioritize their transportation projects. Information collected as part of the **PASER** (Pavement Surface Evaluation & Rating) system helps establish budget parameters, select possible projects, and evaluate the implications of maintenance decisions. This information is submitted to WisDOT every two years and is integrated into the state's **WISLR** (Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads) database.

## **Planning For Capital Improvements**

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) can assist in planning for major project costs by creating a multi-year scheduling plan for physical public improvements including transportation. The schedule is based on the projection of fiscal resources and prioritization of improvements five to six years into the future. Capital improvements include new or expanded physical facilities that are relatively large in size, expensive, and permanent.

## **Pierce County Bicycle Plan 2003–2023**

This plan is the result of a cooperative planning effort between Pierce County and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. The plan's purposes are to document existing bicycling conditions in Pierce County and develop a plan of action for improving bicycling opportunities and safety.

WisDOT administers a variety of state and federal programs, including:

- Airport Improvement Program (AIP)
- Connecting Highway Aids
- County Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance
- Federal Discretionary Capital Assistance
- Freight Rail Infrastructure Improvement Program (FRIIP)
- Freight Rail Preservation Program (FRPP)
- General Transportation Aids (GTA)
- Highways and Bridges Assistance
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance
- Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP)
- Local Transportation Enhancements (TE)
- Railroad Crossing Improvements
- Rural and Small Urban Public Transportation Assistance
- Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP)
- Rustic Roads Program
- Surface Transportation Discretionary Program (STP-D)
- Surface Transportation Program – Rural (STP-R) & Urban (STP-U)
- Traffic Signing and Marking Enhancement Grants Program
- Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

### **Promote a diversified economy**

- Guide development by promoting the development and use of existing industrial areas for future expansion.
- Investigate potential for an incentives program to attract businesses to the area.
- Support business and industry.
- Support the development of locally produced energy (i.e. wind, solar, biomass).

### **Encourage economic development while protecting the town's rural character.**

### **Promote Tourism**

- Work with county and local communities to promote tourism.

### **Encourage the use of existing infrastructure by future development**

- Support the rezoning of appropriate areas along Highway 10 and County Road CC for commercial and light industrial development.

## **POLICIES:**

- Investigate development of a market for local food.
- Do not impede the development of locally produced energy (i.e. wind, solar, biomass) to the extent it does not take away from the rural character.
- Support the establishment of home businesses (i.e. home occupation, home business, farm and home business) that do not adversely impact adjacent property owners.

# Element 5: Land Use

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to analyze the current land use in the Town of Salem and what barriers or issues must be addressed when considering development of the land. This section will also discuss the future land use needs in the Town.

## **GOAL:**

1. Promote an overall pattern of development that reflects the vision of the community by maintaining its natural character and farm base as well as providing a visually appealing, safe, and enjoyable atmosphere.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1 Promote an organized development pattern that will minimize conflicting land uses and provide for a controlled rate of development.
- 2 Direct land uses in an orderly and sustainable pattern to allow for efficient and economical public services. This will assure that the full range of services usually associated with a village will not be required of the Town.
- 3 The Town Board shall maintain a standing Plan Commission to review any rezoning petitions or other land use regulation. The purpose of this review is to ensure consistency with the stated objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and report the findings to the Town Board.
- 4 Provide limited public services only as necessary.
- 5 Minimize potential conflict between agriculture and residential areas by separating their placement to the extent possible and making new residents aware of the agricultural base of the Town.
- 6 All new development will be consistent with this adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- 7 Explore and implement measures at the Town level to ensure the pace and location of new residential development does not erode the rural character of the Town or place undue or premature development burdens upon Town services.
- 8 Protect groundwater quality and quantity by making sound land use decisions.
- 9 Control Town service costs and taxes by discouraging high intensity residential, commercial, agricultural or industrial uses that cannot be served in a cost effective manner by Salem. Uses requiring urban levels of water, police, fire, public works, or other services are generally discouraged. Uses requiring disproportionate levels of available Town funds are also discouraged such as operations which accelerate the deterioration of Town roads.
- 10 Consider incorporating measures to protect and preserve prime farmland and open space.
- 11 Preserve productive agricultural lands from over development or from nearby uses that threaten the economic viability of these areas.

## **POLICIES:**

1. Annually review this plan to evaluate the progress of implementation and consider appropriate amendments based on changes in the Town's conditions.
  2. Make site-specific land use decisions based on the plan. If a proposed land use does not comply with the Comprehensive Plan, either deny the request or require an application to the Town to amend the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the proposed change.
  3. Educate property owners about land protection methods (e.g. conservation easements, cluster development, best management practices).
  4. Encourage new developments to maintain natural features such as creeks, wetlands, woodlands, and shorelands as visual amenities. Many of these protections are already codified in federal, state and local law.
  5. Only the following types of land divisions are allowed in the Town:
    - a. Land divisions that create one or two parcels of 15 acres or less in size within a 30-month period by one or successive divisions by the same or subsequent owners are considered minor certified survey map land divisions.
    - b. Land divisions that create three or four parcels of 15 acres or less in size within a 30-month period by one or successive divisions by the same or subsequent owners are considered major certified survey map land divisions.
- Plats, as defined in the Pierce County Subdivision Ordinance, Article III are not allowed in the Town.
6. Building envelopes shall not include areas with slopes in excess of 15 percent.
  7. Roadways (access to more than two houses) shall follow existing contours to minimize the extent of cuts and fills. Roadways shall follow design specifications per County zoning and in the Town's roadway ordinance, once developed.
  8. The appropriate use of common driveways is encouraged. Where lots will access an off-site public road, common driveways should be used where appropriate to minimize the number of driveway openings required.
  9. The maximum number of units served by a common driveway shall be two.
  10. Industrial/Light Industrial uses should be limited to those areas adjacent to parcels currently zoned for such use and where such use does not present negative impacts.
  11. Develop a subdivision ordinance for the Town that reflects the vision as stated in

this Comprehensive Plan.

## **ZONING**

Salem is one of two Towns in Pierce County that is defined as an Exclusive Agriculture town (River Falls). The Exclusive Agriculture Zoning District is an agricultural-based zoning district which allows for limited residential and commercial development that is compatible with agricultural uses.

The General Rural and Primary Agriculture Zoning Districts are established for areas in which agricultural and certain compatible low density residential uses are allowed as the principal uses of land.

The purpose of these districts are to preserve agricultural land for food and fiber production; protect productive farmers by preventing conflicts between incompatible uses; maintain a viable agricultural base to support agricultural processing and service industries; reduce costs of providing services to scattered non-farm uses; allow planned development; promote orderly growth; and implement the provisions of the county comprehensive plan when adopted and periodically revised.

These districts are generally intended to apply to lands that include all classes of soils in the town that are in productive agricultural use including, but not limited to: land demonstrated to be productive for forestry, dairy, livestock raising and grazing; lands historically farmed that are integral parts of farm operations; lands for the production of specialty crops; and lands that are potentially productive if improved (i.e., through drainage).

Farmland is also the major component of what is defined as “rural character.” The agriculture areas also have rural development demands. Besides farmland, rural land also includes wetlands, river corridors, wildlife habitat, limited development, and areas for recreation. Intrusions are a two way street in rural lands (farmers’ right to farm and residential landowners noise, dust, and smell impacts), which may lead to conflict.

Site design is a consideration to maintain rural function. When abutting parcels are developed, proper siting is important to ensure the open space of each parcel can combine to preserve the critical blocks of land necessary to keep rural land functioning as rural land. The location of where development occurs on a site is important. When rural development is approved, the site review process should be considered of high value in the decision making process.

A developer or landowner wishing to develop property should provide adequate

evidence to Town officials that the proposal meets the following criteria:

- 1 The development proposal is consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan map and related policies.
- 2 Land is too small to be economically used for agricultural purposes or is inaccessible to the farm machinery needed to produce and harvest agricultural products.
- 3 The land is located such that there would be minimum conflicts with surrounding agricultural uses.
- 4 The proposed use is consistent with existing rules and regulations regarding wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, or other natural features.
- 5 The lay of the land will allow for construction of a road or driveway that is suitable for emergency vehicle travel. Safe access from the road or driveway onto existing roadways shall be required.
- 6 The development proposal is consistent with existing zoning standards.

The Town of Salem is currently zoned Exclusive Agriculture (73%), Primary Agriculture (1%), General Rural (24%) and Industrial (2%). The Town is currently undergoing a comprehensive re-zoning which would change the percentages of each zoning district as follows: Exclusive Agriculture (56%), Primary Agriculture (6%), General Rural (36%), Industrial (2%). The EA zoning district allows one dwelling per 35 acres, PA allows one dwelling per 20 acres, GR allows one dwelling per 10 acres. Pierce County has an overall density of 30 people per square mile. The Town of Salem has the lowest population density per square mile (14) in Pierce County (see *Pierce County "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*).

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

A wealth of demographic information is available regarding land use types, supply, population density, land use permit applications, real estate values, and land use forecast data in the document: *Pierce County "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*.

## **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

## **Zoning and Sign Regulations**

Careful application of modern zoning controls can go far in assisting the community in accomplishing the goals of this comprehensive plan. The county zoning ordinance establishes definitions, standards and procedures for administrative and legislative bodies to review and approve specific land developments.

## **Land Division/Subdivision Regulations**

Instituting development standards for land subdivision is another regulating measure of importance in community development. One of the Town's stated policies is to develop a Subdivision Ordinance.

## **Official Mapping**

The official map is another tool for land use control that can be used to preserve the integrity of the comprehensive plan and to regulate future growth. Chapters 60 and 62 of the Wisconsin Statutes provide for the establishment of an official map to indicate all existing and planned streets, parks and other public uses. The official map enables the Town to prevent private development from occurring in areas designated for other uses.

## Element 6:

# AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

## PART 1: AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

### INTRODUCTION

Agriculture resources in the Town of Salem are a vital feature for the survival of the town to the extent that they provide local citizens with work opportunities, provide an option for “passing on” the farm to the next generation, and generate property tax revenue. Dairies and family farms are among the most important and largest industries in the town. It is the desire of the residents of the town to preserve this asset. The Agricultural Resources element of a comprehensive plan is designed to simultaneously help maintain, promote and control the agricultural resources of the community.

The main crops in the town are corn, soybeans, alfalfa, and oats. These crops are farmed in a unique topography. The Rush River divides the town into an eastern and western half. To the east and west of the Rush River, there are rolling hills. There are also large areas of agricultural land on the flattest upland areas.

Several towns and cities serve as the marketplaces for agricultural products from the Town of Salem including Ellsworth, Maiden Rock, Plum City, Prescott, River Falls and Zumbrota, Minnesota. Here farmers are able to sell their agricultural products, helping local farmers to stay in business.

The strengths of the Town are focused around:

- Agriculture related industry
- Sound agriculture economy
- Prime soils
- High yielding crops
- Pastureland
- A rural setting
- Unique topography
- Conservation farming practices

The weaknesses seen in the Town of Salem are:

- No limit to animal density on farms
- Increasing farming costs
- Increasing feed costs
- Fewer farms being carried on by family members of retiring farmers

The opportunities in the Town consist of:

- Potential for organic dairy farms
- Potential for diversified farming operations
- Potential for farmer's markets
- Proximity to population centers as potential markets

The threats of the Town include:

- Large dairy operations
- Deterioration to town roads due to these large dairy operations
- Potential degradation of water quality from large dairies
- Urban sprawl
- Potential loss of prime agricultural lands
- Aging of roads and the need for maintenance and future upgrading of roads

It is important to prevent conflicts between agricultural and residential uses, to make a future possible for both agriculture and planned development in the Township.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

### **Preserve prime agriculture lands**

- Identify prime agriculture clusters
- Revise the existing Farmland Preservation Plan
- Revise zoning ordinance to small lots in EA to preserve prime agricultural lands
- Support a logical zoning strategy throughout the Town, including a hierarchy of agriculture based districts
- Discourage incompatible adjacent land uses to ensure that agriculture land is not threatened

### **Promote family-owned farming operations**

- Encourage farm owners to investigate governmental grants for small farming operations
- Encourage the use of county, state and federal programs to promote farming operations
- Encourage small farming operations to develop business plans

### **Encourage conservation practices**

- Direct farmers to governmental experts that can provide educational opportunities for local residents with regard to soil conservation practices
- Promote nutrient management planning to conserve soil, groundwater, and surface water
- Encourage farmers to implement Best Management Practices with regard to agricultural activities

### **Minimize environmental impacts of CAFOs**

- Promote nutrient management planning for animal operations to avoid contamination of surface waters, groundwater, and atmosphere

### **Maintain/enhance rural community character**

- Encourage conservation design where practical
- Consider implementing “Rustic Road” designations along minor arterials
- Maintain character of the Rush River
- Consider establishment of parkland within the Town
- Encourage maintenance of historic barns and structures

### **Enhance economic viability of agriculture**

- Encourage Community Supported Agriculture
- Promote agricultural related farm and home-based businesses
- Network with local institutional food buyers
- Consider the establishment of a farmer’s cooperative and/or market in the Town
- Consider the promotion of agricultural tourism

### **POLICIES:**

- Consider utilizing LESA (Land Evaluation Site Assessment) analysis to determine prime agriculture clusters
- Encourage use of Best Management Practices for all development projects, including the control of erosion
- Encourage use of Best Management Practices in agricultural land use activities

- Encourage the preservation of open space along the Rush River
- Encourage roadside produce stands, farmers markets, and pick-your-own farms
- Work with Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association to promote agri-tourism destinations in the Town
- Encourage participation in the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant Program to secure funding for agri-tourism ventures

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

A wealth of information is available regarding farm census/statistical data in the document: *Pierce County "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*.

## **PART 2: NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A comprehensive analysis of the natural resources in the Town of Salem will allow for the best possible future growth. The existing soils, surface and ground waters, land cover and topographic conditions will provide a more complete understanding of the Town's natural resources to tailor the best strategy to manage development pressures throughout the next 20 years.

The primary features that define the Town of Salem are the Rush River, the aesthetic topography, and the prime agriculture soils on which the current economy is based. The majority of the Town is currently under private ownership of large parcels that are utilized for agriculture where the soils and topography are suitable with the remainder left as pasture or woodland. The areas along and around the Rush River and its major tributaries are primarily steep slopes and natural woodlands. These areas are unsuitable for development and are therefore effective natural buffers.

By comprehensively planning for development with respect to the natural resources of the area, the future residents of Salem will be aware and protective of the natural resources including the quality and use of the Rush River, the natural beauty of the topography and vegetation, and the rural character of the community.

The strengths of the Township are focused around:

- Little development pressure gives the town government time to carefully plan for its future
- Natural beauty of the area consists of the aesthetic topography and the Rush River
- Rush River is a Class 2 trout stream indicating the current health of the river ecosystem and its potential to draw tourists
- Economy is primarily agriculture based with some home businesses creating a minimal demand for infrastructure
- Morgan Coulee Prairie State Natural Area

The weaknesses seen in the Town of Salem are:

- Limited resources of a town government allows for a limited number of projects which can be accomplished
- High road construction and maintenance expenses leave little money for other projects
- Current zoning map has overused the Exclusive Agriculture zone limiting the strengths of zoning as a planning tool

The opportunities in the Town consist of:

- Limited development pressure caused by downturn in the housing market and the distance from urban sprawl pressure gives the town time to plan for the future with respect to its natural resources
- Creating a trail system could allow access to natural areas and create a tourist draw
- Comprehensive rezone process being pursued by the Town would correct the problem of having too many unsuitable parcels in the Exclusive Agriculture zone

The threats to the Township include:

- Development, runoff, erosion, and pollution have the potential to cause loss of organisms and vegetation, loss of habitat and deterioration of soil productivity
- Current code has no limit on animal density on farms creating the potential for major ground and surface water pollution if left unchecked
- Large dairy operations have already been established in the Town that could possibly attract similar operations or expansion of existing ones
- Urban sprawl has the potential to negatively affect the rural atmosphere of the town

## **RESOURCES**

### **Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

More than half of the town area is dominated by trees on the steep slopes of the Rush River Valley. Much of the town is located within the floodplain of the Rush River. These sloped forests require protection from deforestation and overdevelopment to reduce soil loss and to maintain the integrity of the slope. Development in floodplains should be avoided when possible to minimize impacts to floodplain ecosystems and to limit property loss.

### **Ground and Surface Waters**

The Rush River is the most obvious natural resource of the area. The Rush River and the major tributaries are the main features in the area, essentially dividing the town in two parts with a large vegetative buffer with steep slopes that prevents development from occurring within a distance of major surface waters. Slightly less than half of the town is occupied by the Rush River, tributaries and the forests along the river valley.

### **Forest and Vegetation**

The Rush River and its drainages are primarily deciduous forest along the steep slopes of the river and drainage valleys. The majority of the county and town roads cut through deciduous forest and agricultural lands creating a very aesthetically pleasing drive. Slightly less than half of the town is covered with deciduous forests that occupy the drainages and tributaries of the Rush River in addition to other isolated stands.

## **Soil Analysis**

The Rush River valley divides the town in half creating two distinct soil zones. The Intermediate zone between the river valley and the flat areas on the plateaus are often considered to be “of Statewide Importance” due to their potential erosion risks in addition to their high productivity class. The flat areas atop the plateaus are most frequently classified as “Prime Agricultural Soils.” These important soils require protection from erosion. This can be accomplished by promoting soil conservation techniques and educational meetings.

## **Topography**

The topography of the area is diverse with some land suitable for agriculture and low density development. However, even the flat areas of the town are best managed for agriculture with contour farming methods due to the hilly topography. The topography along the river and the major tributaries is very steep and unsuitable for development. The Town of Salem has a variety of bluffs scattered throughout. The topography of the area is very aesthetically pleasing due to the bluffs, steep river valley, and contour farms.

## **Agriculture**

The vast majority of the developable lands in the area are currently used as farmland with the exception of a small industrial zone along State Highway 10 near the Rush River. Several homes and farmsteads exist sporadically throughout the town.

About half of the town is used as agricultural fields. The remaining half of the town is covered with trees that are primarily located throughout the steep slopes of the Rush River valley and its tributaries.

## **Wetlands**

Several wetlands exist along the edges of the Rush River and as isolated basins in various areas of the town. Wetlands can serve as a habitat for aquatic and terrestrial creatures in addition to aiding in the recharge and stability of the surface and ground waters. Some wetlands help prevent flooding by absorbing excess amounts of water and purifying the water supply by capturing sediment.

## **Wildlife and Habitats**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has identified a number of species that are of concern that may reside in the Town of Salem as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Habitats/Species of Concern in the Town of Salem**

<b><i>Natural Communities</i></b>	<i>Dry Prairie</i>	<i>Dry Prairie</i>
	<i>Pine relict</i>	<i>Pine relict</i>
	<i>Southern dry forest</i>	<i>Southern dry forest</i>
	<i>Southern mesic forest</i>	<i>Southern mesic forest</i>
<b><i>Fish</i></b>	<i>Clinostomus elongates</i>	<i>Redside dace</i>
<b><i>Plant</i></b>	<i>Agalinis gattingeri</i>	<i>Roundstem foxglove*</i>
	<i>Artemisia dracuncululus</i>	<i>Dragon wormwood</i>
	<i>Calyclophus serrulatus</i>	<i>Yellow evening primrose</i>
	<i>Trillium nivale</i>	<i>Snow trillium*</i>
	<i>Napaea dioica</i>	<i>Glade mallow</i>

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources*

*\*These species are State Threatened and have legal protection (Endangered and Threatened species are protected under Wisconsin Endangered Species law, state statute (29.415 and Administrative Rule NR 27). All other species and community types on this list are of concern but have no legal status.*

**Morgan Coulee Prairie State Natural Area**

Located adjacent the north side of 200<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the N ½ NW ¼ Section 34, this SNA is the second largest dry prairie in the west central region, Morgan Coulee Prairie extends for over a half-mile along a steep, south-facing bluff in Morgan Coulee in the River valley. The large expanse of relatively undisturbed dry prairie is broken up with scattered islands of bur oak savanna dominated by open grown, gnarly oaks and shallow wooded draws. Limestone outcrops are scattered about the area and support a

community of lichens and ferns. Dominant grasses include big and little blue-stem, side-oats and hairy grama, Indian grass, needle grass, prairie drop-seed, and several muhly grasses. The forbs are equally diverse, highlighted by showy species such as asters, milkweeds, white and purple prairie-clover, blazing-star, Great Plains lady's-tresses, and prairie larkspur. Wild bergamot, bastard-toadflax, and western sunflower are found under the oaks. The prairie also harbors two rare plant species: yellow evening primrose (*Calylophus serrulatus*) and prairie thistle (*Cirsium hillii*). Much of the prairie is remarkably free of shrubs; those present include hazelnut, bittersweet, smooth sumac, and dogwoods. At the bluff is a southern dry oak forest. Animal species of concern include eastern bluebird (*Siala sialis*), field sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), and Reakert's blue butterfly (*Hemiargus isola*). Morgan Coulee Prairie is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1986.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

1. Preserve the Rush River and its major tributaries
  - Consider working with the county to implement fertilizer and pesticide application regulations as part of an integrated pest management plan
  - Consider providing low impact public access to the river for recreational purposes
2. Maintain the quality of surface and ground waters
  - Consider the identification and protection of ground water recharge zones through soil analysis
  - Work with the county to cap and monitor all abandoned wells for contamination
  - Work cooperatively with the county to develop wellhead protection plan for any existing or future high capacity wells
3. Encourage soil conservation practices
  - Create a soil map indicating prime agricultural soils and consider soil classification/slopes in all rezone requests from exclusive agriculture
  - Promote soil conservation programs
    1. NRCS Conservation Reserve Programs

### **POLICIES:**

1. Require the consultation of the Town's steep slope map in all rezone requests from exclusive agriculture

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Additional information is available regarding natural areas and recreational opportunities in the Pierce County area in the document: *Pierce County “Smart Growth” Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*.

## **PART 3: CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Cultural Resources help give a community a unique character that sets it apart from surrounding areas. The Town of Salem has many opportunities to provide these amenities and gives community members a sense of place. The absence of cultural features provides a great opportunity to expand this element of the lives of residents.

The first step to achieve these goals is to identify and inventory the current status of the cultural features. Next, public and private funding programs will be explored to provide financial support. Goals and objectives will then be derived from the wants and needs of the community. Finally, recommendations and policies will be made to achieve these goals.

With over 40% of the town's population living on farms, the Town of Salem is an agriculturally based rural community. These residents have placed an emphasis on retaining the characteristics of such a community, while also acknowledging the potential influence from metropolitan development. This plan is intended to protect and promote the quality of life and community character.

#### **Strengths**

- Established agriculture background
- Strong sense of community
- Rural character
- Outdoor recreation opportunities

#### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of cultural diversity
- Resistance to change by older residents
- No defined neighborhoods or districts

#### **Opportunities**

- Organic living- farming and berry picking
- Rural living- farming culture
- Rush River could attract outdoor recreation culture- fishing, camping
- Exurbanization - with new people comes a new set of ideas and culture

#### **Threats**

- Exurbanization- could become anywhere, USA
- Economic downturn- funds to preserve historical sites could become scarce

## **Cultural Opportunities**

Due to the lack of outlets for cultural expression within the town of Salem, neighboring communities of Maiden Rock and Stockholm provide most of the opportunities for residents and tourists consisting of art galleries and specialized eateries. Despite the low abundance of these amenities, Salem has the potential to take advantage of its proximity to the Twin Cities metropolitan area like these neighboring communities have.

## **Churches and Cemeteries**

Churches historically have had a significant impact on the culture of a community. They sometimes are also the only places where rural residents can gather to discuss important issues in their community. There are two churches in the town – Ono United Methodist at the corner of U.S. Hwy. 10 and County CC and Bible Center Church, located just south of Highway 10 near the Rush River.

There are two cemeteries in the town – Ono United Methodist and Salem Lutheran.

### **Existing Historical Sites**

When trying to preserve and enhance cultural identity, it is crucial to inventory architecture with historical significance. Appreciation of these assets is vital to the long-term success of a community. Respecting and utilizing these available resources increases the overall quality of life and may provide opportunities for tourism.

**Below is a list of the historic buildings, structures, sites, and objects, within the town of Salem.**

<b>Resource Type</b>	<b>Style/Form</b>	<b>Location</b>
House (clapboard)	Side Gabled	Halverson Rd., S side, 1.1 mi. W of STH 183
Ono Methodist Church	Queen Anne	N3297 CTH C
House (brick)	Gabled ell	USH 10, S side, 1.5 mi. W of STH 183
House (clapboard)	Front gabled	Crosby Rd., E end, .5 mi. E of Herbert Rd.
House (clapboard)	Bungalow	N2645 CTH CC
Salem Lutheran Church	Gothic revival	Chestnut St., S side, .5 mi. W of Herbert Rd.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives pertaining to the cultural element of the comprehensive plan for the town of Salem:

**GOAL:**

1. Preserve cultural, historic, and archeological resources within the town.

**OBJECTIVE:**

1. Encourage preservation of natural and historic areas. Encourage the Pierce County Historical Society to identify and record historically significant properties.

**POLICIES:**

1. Land use decisions should consider impacts to agricultural operations and ensure its continued viability.
2. Continue to promote awareness of the Town's history through the development of recreational and educational amenities.
3. Land uses that are detrimental to agricultural, natural, and cultural resources and features should be steered to appropriate locations.
4. Pursue opportunities to develop appropriate sites to highlight cultural and historic resources.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Additional information regarding cultural resources can be found in the document: *Pierce County "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection.*

## Element 7: Utilities and Community Facilities

## **INTRODUCTION**

This element provides an assessment of the existing facilities of the town in terms of their condition and how such facilities will be able to meet future needs.

To maintain a high level of public services, the community must continuously upgrade and, if needed, expand their existing facilities. The recommendations contained in this section are based on general long-range planning considerations and should not be substituted for detailed architectural or engineering studies required before expending substantial community resources and undertaking specific public works projects.

## **GOAL:**

1. Assess, maintain and upgrade community facilities and utilities to match the changing needs of the Town population (e.g., town-owned facilities).

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1 Expand Town services only as development warrants such expansions and as Town residents and taxpayers request higher levels of service.
- 2 Develop guidelines that require utilities that service new developments to use subsurface installation (including phone, electricity, etc.).
- 3 Coordinate efficient and cost-effective delivery and access of quality public services with orderly development options to ensure a well-designed community.
- 4 Encourage broadband development services (or its equivalent) in the Town.

## **POLICIES:**

- 1 Consistent with the desires of Town residents, the Town of Salem should continue to provide a limited number of basic facilities and services to its residents and businesses. The planning process did not identify the need nor the desire to significantly increase the level of services or facilities provided to Town residents and businesses.
- 2 The Town should carefully monitor its growth rate to ensure that new development in the Town does not overburden the ability of the Town and other service providers to provide a basic level of services to Town residents and businesses.
- 3 The Town should consider the land use planning implications of the new COMM 83 rules. Specifically, the Town should understand that the new COMM 83 regulations will probably allow development to occur in areas where private, on-site waste disposal systems were previously not feasible due to poor soil conditions.

## **Water Supply**

The Town of Salem currently has no public water service for its residents. Private wells provide water to Town residents.

## **Sanitary Sewer Service**

The disposal of wastewater in the Town of Salem is handled through the use of septic systems.

**Waste disposal/Recycling**

Recycling is provided by the Town through the county recycling program. The Town provides a collection facility for recyclables (glass, paper, plastic) at the Town Hall. Town residents contract with independent suppliers for their garbage collection needs.

### **Telephone and Internet Service**

CenturyTel and Hager Telecom provide local telephone service; long distance service is available through several providers. Cellular service is also available in the town through a variety of providers. Internet service is available through CenturyTel, Hager Telecom and several satellite companies.

### **Power Plants, Electricity, and Transmission Lines**

Pierce-Pepin and Xcel Energy provide electrical services.

### **Libraries**

The Pierce County Books-by-Mail program provides library service for those rural residents unable to get to libraries in Plum City, Ellsworth, Elmwood, River Falls, Prescott or Spring Valley.

## **Educational Facilities**

There are no public or private school facilities located in the Town of Salem. The town is served by the Ellsworth and Plum City public school districts. In addition to public schools, there are a number of private elementary and elementary/secondary schools in Plum City (Ave Maria), Ellsworth (St. Francis), Prescott (St. Joseph), and River Falls (Good Shepherd, Heartland, Saint Bridget).

## **Advanced Education Facilities**

### *Chippewa Valley Technical College – River Falls*

A new Chippewa Valley Technical College facility opened in the spring of 1999 in River Falls and offers an extensive list of associate degrees. CVTC also has campuses in Eau Claire and Menomonie.

### *University of Wisconsin-River Falls*

UW-River Falls is a coeducational, public university with strong programs in the arts and sciences, education, business and economics, as well as agriculture, food and environmental sciences.

### *University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*

UW-Eau Claire is located approximately 50 miles from the Town of Salem and offers 55 undergraduate degrees as well as 15 graduate program degrees.

### *University of Minnesota-Twin Cities*

Approximately one hour from the Town of Salem is the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with campuses in St. Paul and Minneapolis. The U of M offers 161 bachelor's degrees, 218 master's degrees, 114 doctoral degrees and 5 professional degrees.

## **Churches and Cemeteries**

There is one church, Ono United Methodist, located within the Town of Salem. It is located in the southwestern quadrant of the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 10 and County Road CC. There is also a cemetery within the Ono property. The other cemetery in Salem is the Salem Lutheran Cemetery.

## **Public Buildings**

The Town owns one building – the Town shop at N3599 County Road A. The building is used to store Town equipment, as a polling place, and to hold Town meetings.

## **Police, Fire, and Rescue**

# Element 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation

## INTRODUCTION

It is not uncommon for towns to initiate agreements in order to provide better services for lower costs. Cooperative arrangements to share road maintenance equipment and labor are probably among the most common. There are a number of possibilities for such arrangements, written or unwritten, such as ditch mowing, snow removal, and road repairs.

Such arrangements allow the Town to provide efficient services while responding to changing conditions such as population growth and budget issues. These arrangements can help several governmental agencies to reduce costs by sharing equipment that is used for only brief periods during the year such as ditch mowing equipment. Cooperative agreements can also be invaluable in situations where equipment is not available or broken yet there is an immediate need such as snow removal equipment during the winter months.

For the Town to successfully implement its comprehensive plan, cooperation and coordination with other units of government that have influence both within the Town and outside its boundaries is crucial. Other governmental units that must be considered include the county, other Towns and schools.

## **GOALS:**

- 1 Intergovernmental cooperation agreements, policies and programs of the Town of Salem should be designed to provide efficient governmental services to the citizens of the Town.
- 2 Promote and encourage an environment of coordination and cooperation with neighboring towns, Pierce County, the school districts, and the state to provide consistency in land use and planning decisions.
- 3 Continue to keep communication open with neighboring towns to coordinate programs and land use decisions for the benefit of all. Actively work with all stakeholders in the development of land use controls that provide consistency and reflect the vision of the Town and neighboring areas.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1 Maintain open lines of communication with neighbors and other governmental agencies.
- 2 Continue to encourage strong relationships with inter-community fire and law enforcement providers.
- 3 Focus on the Town's vision of rural character and keep it compatible with neighboring communities to the extent possible.

## **POLICIES:**

- 1 Attempt to coordinate the comprehensive plan with the county's comprehensive plan to ensure an organized approach to the development of lands in the planning area.
- 2 Continue to consider the sharing of equipment and services with other governmental entities where such cooperation will result in improved services and/or economic benefits.
- 3 Develop and maintain open relationships with neighboring jurisdictions to build trust among staff and elected and appointed officials so that information is shared and there is cooperation on issues of mutual interest or concern.
- 4 Cooperate and maintain strong relationships with neighbors so that greater consistency with regard to policies, programs and actions is realized and also so that there is improved cost effectiveness of programs.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Additional information regarding intergovernmental cooperation can be found in the document: *Pierce County "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*.

# Element 9: IMPLEMENTATION

## INTRODUCTION

The development and adoption of a Comprehensive Plan becomes meaningful only if the Plan is implemented. The plan is best implemented when it is used as a guide for future decisions and is kept current with new information as it becomes available. Beyond the maintenance of the plan itself, the plan should be used to guide decisions regarding zoning, subdivision regulations, and intergovernmental relations.

The plan implementation chapter considers the goals, objectives, policies, programs, and actions listed at the end of each chapter. As the Town's budget, time limits, or priorities change, so should the goals, objectives, and policies recommended for implementation be reviewed and modified.

### Action Plan

<u>Element</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Lead Group</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
Housing	Decrease lot size in EA to <35 ac.	Plan Commission	2012
	Create Subdivision Ordinance	Plan Commission	2012
Economic Dev.	Investigate need for farmer's market	Town Board	Ongoing
Transportation	Evaluate future need for ATV routes	Town Board	Ongoing
Intergov. Coop.	Explore additional opportunities for Consolidation and sharing of equipment and services	Town Board	Ongoing

To increase awareness of this Comprehensive Plan by those who will be most affected by it, namely land owners, prospective landowners and sellers of land, the following notice will be provided to the Register of Deeds at the Pierce County Courthouse for inclusion on property deeds:

### **NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS/PROSPECTIVE PROPERTY OWNERS AND SELLERS OF PROPERTY IN THE TOWN OF SALEM:**

The Town of Salem has completed a Comprehensive Plan which includes policies that could affect your property or property you are considering purchasing/selling. Salem also has Exclusive Agricultural zoning which may affect your plans. It is your responsibility, as owner or potential owner, to inquire with the Town Board or Plan Commission regarding your plans to buy or sell property to determine how/if these issues may affect your plans.

Pierce County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to the Town of Salem. Fire protection is provided by the Ellsworth and Plum City Fire Departments. Ambulance services are provided by the Ellsworth Area Ambulance Service and the Maiden Rock/Plum City/Stockholm EMS. Health facilities are located throughout the county with no facilities located in the Town. Care facilities are located in Plum City, Pepin, and Red Wing. The closest hospitals are in River Falls, Red Wing, Hastings, Eau Claire, and the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

### **Childcare Facilities**

According to the Pierce County Health and Human Services, there are currently no registered daycare providers in the Town of Salem.

### **Parks and Recreation Facilities**

Salem has no designated parks within the town. However, numerous recreational opportunities exist within a short driving distance throughout Pierce County.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Additional information regarding utilities and community facilities can be found in the document: *Pierce County "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan Phase One: Data Collection*.