

INTRODUCTION

GOAL STATEMENT

The overall goal is to promote growth while maintaining the quality of life in the Town of Willard. To do this, the overall objective of the Town of Willard is to guide future development and redevelopment of the community in a manner consistent with the element goals, objectives, actions, and identified programs contained in this document. The overall result is to adopt, update and implement the Comprehensive Plan and continue to work with the County, adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions.

HISTORY

The early pioneers of the Town of Willard were tasked with transforming wilderness and cutover land into homesteads. They accomplished this by helping each other, cooperating with neighboring towns on projects, and sharing plans for best practice in land development. Those who followed the plans fared better than others.

Logging was the industry that opened up the area in 1884 with the help of the Chippewa River. When the Soo Line was completed in 1884, many homes and business places were constructed. Once there were enough residents in the area, they petitioned to become a new township. Creating a new town is a slow process that may take years.

March 19, 1907 the 48th Wisconsin Legislature created the Town of Willard. The civil Town of Willard is comprised of all 36 sections of Wisconsin's Congressional Township 33 North, Range 6 West in southern Rusk County. See [Map 1, Appendix D](#).

Over the next 75 years, plans for best practices in land development became more formal. Cities and counties created comprehensive plans (master plans) for housing, roads, farms, utilities, and economic development. In 1999, former Governor Tommy Thompson signed into law Act 9. The law required that every municipality in the state that wished to have a say in land use decisions approve and adopt a comprehensive plan prior to January 1, 2010.

On June 20, 2009 the Town of Willard adopted the following Comprehensive Plan to promote the orderly development of the Township. While planning for growth, a Comprehensive Plan cannot predict the future, and is a fluid document that needs revision over time. This Plan has been reviewed, and amendments were adopted 2018 and 2023.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Willard took it upon themselves to fund the development of a comprehensive plan. Work on the plan began in May 2008 with the hiring of NWRPC to devise a comprehensive plan in accordance with 66.1001 that was to be concluded in June 2009. A Plan Commission was created to complete assigned tasks and to oversee the development of the plan. In July of 2008, a Comprehensive Land Use Planning Community Survey was mailed to each property owner in the Town of Willard to get input on land use issues facing the Town. The results were compiled and presented at a Plan Commission meeting at the Town Hall on September 2, 2008.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

The Town of Willard recognizes the need to engage the public in the comprehensive planning process. Public involvement provides the citizens of the Town an opportunity to express their views, ideas and opinions on issues they would like addressed on future development of Willard. These procedures form the basic framework for achieving an interactive dialog between citizens and local decision-makers. The Town of Willard Public Participation Procedures was adopted by the Town Board in 2008. See Town of Willard Public Participation Procedures in [Appendix A](#).

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE SURVEY

In an effort to gain as much public participation as possible, the Town of Willard mailed a survey in July 2008 to 527 property owners. 182 surveys were returned, providing a 35% response rate. Results of the survey will be provided throughout this document. Complete results may be found in [Appendix B](#).