

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Orientation</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>2</b>
Location Map-Town of Beecher	3
<b>Purpose and Scope of this Document</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Public Involvement</b>	<b>5</b>
Kick-Off Meeting	5
Quarterly Meeting	6
Mid-Course Meeting	6
Intergovernmental Meetings	6
Public Hearing and Open House	7
<b>Town Values</b>	<b>7</b>

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **Orientation**

The Town of Beecher is located in northern Marinette County, Wisconsin, approximately 16 miles south of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, 2 miles south of Pembine, and 6 miles north of Amberg. The town is easily accessible via USH 141, which traverses 4 miles through the western portion of the town.

The Town of Beecher is a natural paradise for outdoor enthusiasts seeking the northern vacation and living experience. The town boasts approximately 8 miles of winding frontage along the Menominee River. Vast areas of woodlands, wetlands and other natural areas (including a stretch of the Pike River, Beecher Lake and Town Corner Lake) are found in the town. Many of these natural amenities are protected by Marinette County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The Town of Beecher does not have a traditional six-mile by six-mile civil township shape. Rather, the township extends four miles from its northern to its southern boundaries and approximately 12 miles across. In total, the Town of Beecher includes approximately 50 square miles of land area. The Town of Beecher shares borders with: the Town of Pembine to the north, Town of Dunbar to the west, Town of Amberg to the south, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to the east.

### **Background**

In 2001, the Town of Beecher Board decided to initiate the comprehensive planning process. This decision was made to ensure that the town will continue to have a say in land use decisions after 2010, as is stipulated in the Wisconsin Smart Growth law. During this start-up period, town leaders sought assistance from OMNNI Associates, a consulting firm based in Appleton, WI. OMNNI's staff of certified planners was selected to facilitate a community-based planning program including visioning, town strengths and weakness identification, and the development of GIS-based maps. This community-based planning approach, using a Planning Advisory Committee, helped the town to identify and address important land use, resource protection and development issues facing the Town of Beecher. Later in the process (in 2003), the Town established a Planning Commission. The Planning Commission recommended adoption of the Plan to the Town Board and is charged with plan implementation.

Developing this plan sends a clear message that the Town of Beecher wishes to act proactively - to set its own ground rules for the types of development that will benefit the town, maintain a rural atmosphere and still provide flexibility for landowners.

**LOCATION MAP – TONW OF BEECHER, MARINETTE COUNTY, WI**

## **Purpose and Scope of This Document**

This 20-year *Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Beecher*, includes four major components:

*A profile of the demographic, economic and housing characteristics of the town;*

*An inventory and assessment of the environment, community facilities, and natural resources;*

*Visions, goals, objectives and implementation strategies; and*

*A land use map that depicts the future land use patterns in the town.*

This plan was developed under the authority of 1999 Wisconsin Act 9, Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" Law. The law requires that a 20-year comprehensive plan be developed and adopted by all units of government that wish to have a say in land use decisions. The law authorizes municipalities to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans to serve as guides for the development of their communities. The law also authorizes multi-jurisdictional planning efforts.

The Smart Growth Law defines, for the first time, what is meant by a "comprehensive plan" in Wisconsin. It includes nine (9) required elements. These are:

1. Issues and Opportunities
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Utilities and Community Facilities
5. Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources
6. Economic Development
7. Intergovernmental Cooperation
8. Land Use
9. Implementation

In addition, the state requires that these elements be developed in concert with Wisconsin's 14 goals for planning, which are:

1. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protections of natural area, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.

5. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
6. Preservation of cultural, historic and archeological sites.
7. Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
8. Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community.
10. Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
11. Promoting the expansion of stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels.
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
13. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
14. Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience, and safety that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

## **Public Involvement**

The *Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan* was developed in an environment rich with public input. To gain citizen understanding and support throughout the planning process, the public was provided with a variety of meaningful opportunities to become involved in the process. Public input was facilitated through a series of Saturday morning workshops, evening meetings and special activities. Copies of meeting agendas and attendance sheets as well as the *Public Participation Plan and Adoption Procedures* are provided in the appendices of this document.

What follows is a description of some of the primary opportunities for public education and input in the planning program.

### **Kick-Off Meeting**

The Town of Beecher “kick-off” meeting was held on Saturday, March 23, 2002 at the Beecher Town Hall. At that meeting, OMNNI Associates presented an overview of the planning process and provided general information to the public about smart growth planning and its importance in the Town of Beecher. In addition, background demographic, housing and economic information was presented.

After this background information presentation was completed, attendees were asked to participate in a series of visioning exercises. First, participants were asked to identify

what they value about the community (presented at the end of this chapter). Next, participants had the opportunity to identify and evaluate town strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (see Chapter 2 for more information). Finally, participants discussed their vision for each of the nine required plan elements in an effort to develop a collective future town vision. Together, these activities established the framework for the planning effort and helped to motivate all involved.

Prior to adjourning the “kick-off” meeting, interested residents were advised on how they can keep informed about and become involved with the comprehensive planning process. OMNNI Associates kept a detailed record of all information discussed at this kick-off meeting in order to draft preliminary vision statements and the Issues and Opportunities Element of this plan.

### **Quarterly Meetings**

The Planning Advisory Committee, and alter the Planning Commission, met quarterly to review draft text, maps, establish goals and establish priorities for plan implementation. Each of these meeting was duly posted and open to the public.

### **Mid-Course Meeting – Consensus Mapping**

At the mid-point of the planning process, the Planning Advisory Committee hosted an informational meeting to share wit the public what had been happening in the planning program and what was yet to be done. At the meeting, OMNNI presented an overview of progress on the planning program, shared the final element vision statements approved by the Planning advisory Committee and invited the public to continue to participate in the process to provide additional input.

During this meeting, residents were also given the opportunity to participate in a consensus mapping exercise whereby everyone in attendance received a map of the town. On this map, they were asked to identify where they would like to see future commercial, industrial, and residential development. They were also asked to identify important natural resources that should be protected and areas of concern. Finally, participants were also asked to identify primary travel routes using these maps.

### **Intergovernmental Meeting**

As part of the planning program, the Planning Advisory Committee hosted an intergovernmental meeting with representatives from neighboring units of government, Pembine-Dunbar-Beecher School District, Marinette County, the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Wisconsin Department of Transportation in October of 2003 to discuss the existing plans of these neighboring jurisdictions and agencies and identify potential conflicts that may exist with the proposed *Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan*. Participants from the neighboring units of government, county, state agencies, regional planning and school district were given the opportunity for mutual exchange of ideas and recommendations to address any

conflicts. Based on the conversations and suggestions received at this meeting, the *Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan* includes recommendations to continue to resolve intergovernmental planning issues and conflicts over the 20 year planning period.

### **Public Hearing/Open House**

The purpose of the plan “open house” was to display the plan maps and text in an informal setting. At the “open house”, there were no formal presentations, minutes, or voting. Rather, the maps and plan text were on display for interested residents to review at their own pace. The atmosphere was as casual as possible with refreshments being served. Members of the newly formed Planning Commission and OMNNI staff were available to answer questions as needed. This meeting was a success in that it allowed the participants to share their ideas in a setting that was much less formal than the public hearing. The public hearing was held after the “open house” with a formal presentation of the plan and an opportunity for official comments.

### **Town Values**

During the Kick-Off Meeting, residents in attendance were asked to identify the values that influence people to vacation and live in the Town of Beecher. More importantly, participants were asked what makes residents remain, take pride in, and become actively involved in the community. The complete list of those values is provided below. These value statements provided a clear direction for the development and implementation of the *Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan*. Moreover, these values clearly indicate that residents of the Town of Beecher share a strong sense of community identity and pride closely associated with the rural character and natural areas that make the Town of Beecher a desirable place to live.

*We value that the Town of Beecher is a quiet community, without the “hustle and bustle” of a big city.*

*We value the town’s friendly atmosphere (everybody knows everybody).*

*We value the strong roots people have in the community.*

*We value our plentiful hunting and fishing opportunities.*

*We value the town’s “northwoods” character.*

*We value the pristine quality of the town’s natural environment.*

*We value our access to USH 141 – only 24 miles to Iron Mountain.*

*We value our golf courses, especially the fact that they are relatively inexpensive and not crowded.*

## **2.0 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	9
<b>Visioning Process</b>	9
SWOT Meeting	9
Cognitive Mapping	11
Vision Development	12
<b>Visions</b>	12
Issues and Opportunities (Overall Vision)	13

## 2. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Introduction

The Issues and Opportunities Element provides the background information on the town and the overall visions to guide future development and redevelopment over a 20-year planning period. Specifically, the Issues and Opportunities Element includes population, household and employment forecasts and demographic trends, age distributions, education levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local government unit. This chapter presents the overall vision for the Town of Beecher, including a complete assessment of local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The community characteristics and general background information that form the basis for the Issues & Opportunities Element, is included in Chapter 3 Community Profile.

### Visioning Process

To identify community issues and opportunities, a three-step process was utilized, which resulted in the development of individual vision statements for each of the nine required smart growth planning elements. This process included: community SWOT meeting, cognitive mapping and element vision development. What follows is a description of the activities and the major issues and opportunities identified through the issues and opportunities process.

### SWOT Meeting

What follows is a brief definition of a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat as used in a SWOT exercise.

**Strength** *Something that makes a community stand out when compared to other communities. Something that makes you proud to call the community home. Strength can be a physical asset, a program, an environmental condition or an impression or feeling (i.e. friendly community atmosphere).*

**Weakness** *Opposite of strength. Problem that needs to be addressed.*

**Opportunity** *Something that could be done to improve the community. A potential.*

**Threat** *A threat may be internal or external. A threat can be anything that could jeopardize the future success of a community.*

A SWOT meeting is a planning exercise used to get communities thinking about:

- Where they have been;
- Where they are;
- Where they want to be in the future; and
- How they want to get there.

On Saturday, March 23, 2002, the Town of Beecher Planning Advisory Committee participated in a SWOT exercise. The objective of the exercise was to find out how the Planning Advisory Committee members viewed various aspects of the town. This could include their feelings on physical things such as roads, utilities, etc., and “quality of life” issues. OMNNI Associates, the town’s comprehensive planning consultant, facilitated the exercise.

At the meeting, each member of the Town of Beecher Planning Advisory Committee was asked to share what he or she thought were the town’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Anyone present could list as many items as he/she wished under each category. All ideas were recorded by OMNNI Associates. The table on the next few pages lists the responses given, by category.

At the meeting, participants collectively agreed that the Town of Beecher’s primary *strengths* lie in its rural character and natural features. The most important *weakness* seemed to be the town’s lack of zoning control and resulting uncontrolled growth.

Participants agreed that the town’s greatest opportunities lie in its ability to protect its natural areas, rural character and farmland. Unplanned growth and uncontrolled development due to a lack of local zoning control was considered the greatest *threat* to the future of the Town of Beecher.

## **STRENGTHS**

- Abundance of County Land
- Beecher Lake
- Menominee River
- State Land (3 Different Areas/Types)
- Accessibility to Recreations
- Quiet Community Setting
- Rural Atmosphere
- Small School District
- Diversity of Religious Institutions – Variety of Choices

## **WEAKNESSES**

- Lack of Industry
- Not enough tax base – Commercial/Industrial development is needed in the Town of Beecher to keep taxes low
- High Equalization Value
- Road Conditions – Less Road Aids available to maintain the towns approximately 58 miles of roads, so the quality is not as desired
- Slow response time for local law enforcement (county issue), but improving

## **OPPORTUNITY**

- Opportunity from the perspective of the potential to expand the town’s tax base with new development. Currently has added passing lanes on USH 141.
- Recreation lands represent an opportunity to bring new businesses and tourists to the area.
- The opportunity exists to pursue shared community services with neighboring towns (i.e. Animal Control Officer to handle issues associated with barking dogs, etc.) Currently share fire/rescue/zoning with Towns of Pembine and Dunbar.

## **THREATS**

- No Town Zoning Ordinance in effect to regulate nuisances like: Outdoor Storage of Junk Cars and Animal Control Issues
- Recreational Vehicle Misuse especially on County Roads

## **COGNITIVE MAPPING**

A cognitive map, or mental map, is a map drawn by a person that geographically locates his or her memories, ideas and thoughts of a particular place. Since cognitive maps are based on individual’s preferences and opinions there are no “right” or “wrong” maps. Cognitive maps are used to delineate geographic areas of a community people like, dislike, frequently visit, feel are important, travel through regularly, feel safe, etc.

As part of the Mid-Course Meeting, the members of the Planning Commission and other residents in attendance were provided two maps of the Town of Beecher. On the first map, participants were asked to delineate important travel routes and aesthetically pleasing areas of the town. The most attractive places were colored in one shade, less attractive another, not attractive in yet another color.

On the second map, participants outlined those areas where they would like to see new commercial/industrial development, new residential development, new recreational area and open space in the Town of Beecher.

These maps were used extensively in the development of the Future Land Use Maps presented later in this plan. This approach helped to ensure that the Future Land Use Maps accurately reflect community concerns and priorities for the future.

## **VISION DEVELOPMENT**

At the Kick-Off Meeting in March 2002, the Planning Advisory committee participated in a visioning exercise. The exercise involved completing a series of statements related to what the Town of Beecher would look like in 20 years. The statements related to each of the nine (9) required plan elements. For example, participants were asked to complete the following statements, “In 20 years, looking down from an airplane at the Town of Beecher, one would see . . . “ OMNNI used the responses to develop draft vision statements, which the Planning advisory Committee reviewed in July 2002. Each of the final vision statements is provided at the end of this chapter.

## **VISIONS**

In addition to a series of goals, objectives and policy statements (see definitions below), the Planning Commission also participated in an extensive visioning process to establish a framework from which to make future planning decisions for the Town of Beecher. The result of this process was a vision statement for each of the nine required plan elements, including an overall vision statement. This process was critical to establish a unified vision for the Town of Beecher and provide a direction and focus for the planning effort.

### *Definitions:*

*Vision:* An overall statement related to each of the nine required elements expressing the Town’s expectations for the future. These statements provide a framework and context to consider when making future land use decision.

*Goal:* A statement that describes, unusually in general terms, desired future conditions. Goals will usually only address one specific aspect of the vision.

*Objective:* A statement that describes a specific action or condition that is to be attained within a stated period of time. Objectives include ordinances, changes, new programs, and other tasks. The objectives serve as a “to do” list to implement the plan. To be effective, objectives must be evaluated regularly and updated as necessary.

*Policy:* A course of action, or rule of conduct, used to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan. Policies are based on specific research. Therefore, they are developed after vision statements. In some cases, the policies relate closely to the vision, but provide more refined, specific actions.

Below is the overall community vision statement that represents the broad interest of town residents, elected/appointed officials, business leader and property owners. A vision for each of the plan elements is provided at the beginning of each corresponding chapter of this plan. The visions establish the planning framework and a direction for subsequent planning efforts and decisions in the town. Supporting goals, objectives and program initiatives are described in Chapter 12 of this plan.

## **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES (OVERALL VISION)**

**The Town of Beecher is a quiet, safe and friendly place to live. A relatively low density of residential development and abundant natural areas support a rich diversity of wildlife and provide recreational opportunities for residents and tourists alike.**

**Year round and seasonal residents, along with tourists enjoy the town's north woods charm, relaxed lifestyle, and easy access to neighboring communities via USH 141. Children benefit from the nurturing environment, offered by the rural school district. Seniors live independently, with assistance from family, friends, neighbors and the county.**

### **3.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Demographic Profile</b>	<b>15</b>
Population Trends	15
Population Characteristics	17
General Household Trends	17
<b>Economic Profile</b>	<b>18</b>
Labor Force	18
Major County Employers	19
Income and Wages	21
Education Levels	22
Poverty Status	22
Employment and Economic Forecasts	23

### 3 COMMUNITY PROFILE

#### Demographic Profile

The planning process for the Town of Beecher begins with a profiled of the people who live, work and own property in the community. Specifically, this section analyzes the size, composition and trends of the population. This information is critical to forecasting the need for community facilities and services, since it is people who will demand better schools, roads, parks, jobs and other public services.

#### Population Trends

After several decades of steady population gains, **the Town of Beecher has not seen its population increase over the past 20 years** as demonstrated in Table 1. The population projection developed by the Wisconsin Department of Administration showed that the estimated population for 2022 would remain the same at 786. Although the population has remained steady, it has outpaced Marinette County which has decreased in population by 7.1% over the past 20 years.

**TABLE 1  
HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS**

<b>Location</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>AnnualChg 2000-2020</b>	<b>% Change 2000-2020</b>
Town of Beecher	626	783	722	786	3	0.4%
Share of County Population	1.5%	1.8%	1.7%	1.9%	NA	NA
Marinette County	40,548	43,384	41,749	40,312	-3,072	-7.1%

Source: WI Dept. Administration, Demographic Service Center and 2020 U.S. Census

To put the population trend of the Town of Beecher into context, Table 2 compares the population changes for all towns in Marinette County. From this table, it is apparent that the steady population of the Town of Beecher is positive when compared to other townships in the northern half of the county. **Of the nine townships in the northern half of the county, Beecher is the only township with a slight projected growth in population.** Of the 18 towns in Marinette County, the Town of Beecher growth rate ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, compared to 13<sup>th</sup> 20 years ago.

**TABLE 2**  
**MARINETTE COUNTY TOWN POPULATION CHANGES 2000-2022**

Town Name	2000 Population	2020 Population	2022 Estimate	Population % Change
Beecher	783	786	786	0.4%
Amberg	854	693	701	-18%
Athelstane	601	554	556	-7%
Beaver	1,123	1,153	1,163	4%
Dunbar	1,303	605	606	-53%
Goodman	820	607	608	-26%
Grover	1,729	1,731	1,731	----
Lake	1,064	1,186	1,198	13%
Middle Inlet	831	851	861	4%
Niagara	924	852	859	-7%
Pembine	1,036	877	880	-15%
Peshtigo	3,702	4,006	4,001	8%
Porterfield	1,991	1,888	1,894	-.04%
Pound	1,367	1,412	1,412	3%
Silver Cliff	529	514	520	-2%
Stephenson	3,065	3,494	3,530	15%
Wagner	722	653	664	-8%
Wausaukee	1,196	1,097	1,105	-8%
All Towns in Marinette Co	23,640	22,959	23,075	-2%

Source: 2000 and 2020 U.S. Census and 2022 DOA Population Estimates

As can be seen from Table 1, the population of Marinette County (as a whole – including cities and villages) over the past 20 years has decreased by 7.1%. This lags behind the state and the nation, which both saw population increases over the past 20 years.

Table 2 demonstrates that many of the smaller communities in Marinette County experienced a decline in population. The Town of Stephenson experienced the largest numerical gain with the Town of Peshtigo close behind. The Town of Dunbar had the largest percent decrease, with Goodman, Amberg and Pembine also seeing significant decreases.

Growth during the early 2000s has been stagnant with **declining employment opportunities** especially in the paper mills and the closure of Northland International University. Fewer job opportunities has an impact on the number of people moving to the area, as well as the number of people that leave the area for other employment opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic did bring some new population growth to some townships as people realized they could work from home and so moved to rural area in order to escape city life.

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population figures and growth rates do not provide any insight about the characteristics of the population. To learn more about the people of the Town of Beecher, information about the race, sex, and age of the population must be examined.

In 2020, there were **382 males and 394 females** living in the town of Beecher. About 94.4% of the residents reported their race as white only in the 2020 census. Eight indicated they were American Indian or Alaska Native, one as Asian only, and five as some other race alone.

**The median age of a Town of Beecher resident in 2020 was 58.6, an increase of 14.3 years from 2000.** This average is nearly 10 years older than the median age of a Marinette County resident (48.9) and much higher than the median age of a Wisconsin resident (39.6).

Figure 1 examines the age distribution of town residents in 2020. What is significant to notice from the chart is that the age groupings are unevenly distributed, with those 50 and over predominate. In fact, according to the 2020 U.S. Census, 31.9% of the population of the Town of Beecher is 65 years of age and older. That compares to 23.7% for Marinette County. This is also a significant difference from the 2000 U.S. Census when the age brackets were more evenly distributed.

**Chart 1**

5 & Under	1%
6-19	13%
20-29	3%
30-39	6%
40-49	5%
50-59	23%
60-69	26%
70-79	19%
80+	4%

Source: 2020 U.S. Census

## GENERAL HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

A “household” can be basically described as a group of people living together in a single dwelling unit. This could include a family, a single person, or a group of unrelated individuals sharing a house or an apartment, but excluding those persons living in a group quarters.

National and state trends have all moved towards an increase in the number of households, along with a decrease in the average number of persons per household. The main reasons for this decrease in household size include: a decrease in birth rate, people

waiting longer to get married, an increased divorce rate, and an increase in the average life span thereby resulting in more elderly people living either alone or with another family member.

The Town of Beecher has not escaped this trend. Between 2000 and 2020, **the total number of households increased from 334 to 351**. During this same period, **the population per household decreased from 2.34 to 2.1**. This trend is expected to continue in the town.

The majority of the town's households (58%) are family households (families). That is down from 68% in 2000. Of these family households, the most common type was married-couple family households (49%). This means the number of non-family households is quite large for a town the size of Beecher. In 2000, nearly a third of all households were considered non-family households. This increased to over 41% in 2020. The vast majority of these non-family households were people living alone (80%). One-half of those living alone were 65 years of age or older.

## **ECONOMIC PROFILE**

Economic conditions have a direct impact on the supply, demand and costs for housing, infrastructure and services within a community. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the economic situation in the Town of Beecher to predict additional housing, infrastructure and service needs. This section profiles the local economic environment by examining factors, including per capita income, poverty rate, and unemployment rate.

To understand and appreciate the local economic picture in the Town of Beecher, it is necessary to look beyond the town and examine characteristics in Marinette County. Comparisons between the town and the county provide much more information about the local economic situation than would a simple look at conditions only in the Town of Beecher. Furthermore, these comparisons put economic characteristics into perspective.

## **LABOR FORCE**

The labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons who are 16 years of age and older. In 2000, the Marinette County unemployment rate was 4.9%. In 2020, it was 4.4%. There is no data for Town of Beecher's unemployment rate in 2000, but the 2020 rate was at 13.7%, significantly higher than Marinette County's rate.

The term used to describe the relationship between the labor force and population is **participation rate**. The participation rate is the share of the employment-eligible population that works or looks for work. **The Town of Beecher's participation rate is 34.8 percent, much lower than the counties, states or nations.** Marinette County has a lower participation rate than both the State of Wisconsin and the United States. The participation rate for Marinette County is 57.7 percent. The United States participation rate is 63.6 percent, while the state's rate is 66.5 percent. Participation rates are often a reflection of economic, cultural and demographic conditions.

The lower participation in both Marinette County and the Town of Beecher may be due to workers who have been laid off and have become discouraged in looking for work and subsequently left the labor market. Others may have reached retirement age and left the market (a probable reason seeing the Town of Beecher’s median age is much higher).

**The Town of Beecher’s rate certainly reflects the number of retirees who have moved into the area.**

### **MAJOR COUNTY EMPLOYERS**

Marinette County workers are very mobile. Data from the 2000 U.S. Census revealed that nearly all town residents commute to work. The average travel time for a Marinette County worker is 20.9 minutes, with the state average being 22 minutes. A Town of Beecher worker drives more than double the county average, averaging 44 minutes of commute time.

The majority of commuting for county residents occurs with the State of Michigan, primarily between the cities of Marinette, Wisconsin, and Menominee, Michigan. Given that job opportunities are also very limited in the Town of Beecher, town residents commute elsewhere in the county and into Iron Mountain, Michigan in search of employment opportunities.

Table 3 highlights the occupations of employees in Marinette County and the Town of Beecher in 2020. Table 4 highlights the top 10 employers in Marinette County in 2005, the last year this data could be found.

**TABLE 3  
EMPLOYEE OCCUPATIONS MARIENTTE COUNTY  
AND TOWN OF BEECHER 2020**

<b>Industry Group</b>	<b>Total Civilian Employees Marinette County</b>	<b>Total Civilian Employees Town of Beecher</b>
Manufacturing	5,410	45
Education, health care and social assistance	3,752	42
Retail Trade	1,779	23
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	1,499	14
Construction	1,117	6
Transportation, warehousing & utilities	913	16
Other services, except public administration	810	2
Professional, scientific, management, waste	755	0

management services		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, mining	745	11
Finance & insurance, real estate, rental & leasing	705	4
Public administration	519	8
Wholesale trade	342	19
Information	227	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18,573</b>	<b>195</b>

Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Marinette County has a variety of large employers from both the public and private sector. The top public sector employers include Marinette County and Marinette Public Schools. The private industries are from a number of different sectors. The size and diversity of these employers provide a solid economic foundation for the county and its many communities. There has been a decline in paper and allied products due to company mergers and consolidations that resulted in the closing or downsizing of paper making plants in the area in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This has especially impacted the northern part of the county where the Town of Beecher is located.

**TABLE 4  
TOP 10 EMPLOYERS IN MARINETTE COUNTY 2005**

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Product of Service</b>	<b>Size (Dec. 2004)</b>
Karl Schmidt Unisia, Inc.	Carburetor, piston, ring, valve, mfg	1000+ employees
Marinette Marine Corp.	Ship building and repairing	500-999
Bay Area Medical Center	General medical & surgical hospitals	500-999
Waupauca Foundry Inc.	Iron foundry	500-999
Ansul Fire Protection	Fire protection equipment	500-999
County of Marinette	Government	250-499
Stora Enso North American Corp.	Paper, except newsprint, mills	250-499
Marinette Public Schools	Elementary and secondary schools	250-499
Aerial Company	Equipment merchant wholesalers	250-499
Silvan Industries	Plate work manufacturing	250-499

Source: DWD. Bureau of Workforce Information, ES-202, July 2005

The largest employer of Town of Beecher residents in the area is Specialty Granules LLC located in Pembine. SGI's "Kremlin" plant was built in 1939 and employs over 100 people. According to its website, "the facility contains an open pit quarry that mines meta-andesite rock, which is crushed and screened to produce raw granule production feedstock. These raw granules are then converted into semi-ceramic coated colored roofing granules before being shipped to roofing customer's facilities primarily in the Midwest. Over the last several years, the Kremlin site has increased its focus on quarry development to expose long term rock reserves. It has also expanded the primary, secondary, and tertiary crushing and drying process to improve down stream crushing

and screening production. The Kremlin plant ships its products primarily on the Canadian National railroad.

**INCOME & WAGES**

**Manufacturing provides the largest portion of wages** to Marinette County workers. The number of workers in manufacturing is just under 30 percent of the total employment. This was also the highest percentage among Town of Beecher residents at 23 percent of the total employment. Education, health care and social assistance was a close second amongst Town of Beecher residents at 21.5 percent. Retail trade and wholesale trade combined also equaled 21.5 percent of the Town of Beecher workforce.

In the 2000 Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan it was noted that there was a gap between Marinette County’s wages and the statewide averages. That was attributed to the size of the county relative to the limited number of cities or business centers. Well paid service workers tend to gravitate toward areas with mature markets for their services. Similarly, insurance wages depend largely on the presence of a headquarters or processing center that generates technical, professional and managerial jobs. Likewise, retailer’s wages are likely to be higher if shoppers are numerous enough to justify full time shifts and wealth enough to buy upscale goods.

**Per capita income** is total income divided by the total number of residents. Income includes wages, self employment, assets and transfer payments (social security, insurance, welfare, alimony). Table 5 charts the per capita income and the median household income for the State of Wisconsin, Marinette County and the Town of Beecher. This table reveals that Town of Beecher residents earn about 80 percent of what Marinette County workers earns, and about 2/3 of what Wisconsin workers earn. It also shows that although Town of Beecher residents experienced a better than average increase in per capita income, the median household income percent change did worse than Marinette County, and about the same as the State of Wisconsin.

**TABLE 5  
PER CAPITA AND MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON  
2000 TO 2020**

	Per Capita 2000	Per Capita 2020	Percent Change	Median Household 2000	Median Household 2020	Percent Change
Wisconsin	\$28,100	\$34,450	22.6%	\$45,088	\$63,293	40.3%
Marinette County	\$21,923	\$29,395	34.0%	\$35,260	\$52,385	48.6%
Town of Beecher	\$17,674	\$24,340	37.7%	\$29,107	\$40,602	39.5%

Source: U.S. Census 2020

## EDUCATION LEVELS

A good indicator of the quality of life in a community is the educational attainment of its residents. Generally, a high level of educational attainment reflects a skilled population with a higher earnings potential. Chart 2 illustrates the level of educational attainment for persons age 25 and over in Marinette County and the Town of Beecher in 2020. From the information for the town and county, it is apparent that the population is very well educated. In both the town and county, a significant portion of the population has some college education.

**Chart 2A**  
**Town of Beecher 2020**  
**Education Attainment**

9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10.4%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9%
HS Graduate	42.7%
Some College	20.5%
Associate Degree	12%
Bachelor’s Degree	8.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	6.1%

**Chart 2B**  
**Marinette County 2020**  
**Education Attainment**

9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 Grade	6.5%
HS Graduate	40.4%
Some College	22.5%
Associate Degree	11.6%
Bachelor’s Degree	10.9%
Graduate Degree	5.5%

## POVERTY STATUS

According to the 2020 U.S. Census:

- 14.8 percent of residents in the Town of Beecher are living below the poverty level. This is 1.3 times the Marinette County rate of 11.2 percent, and 1.4 times the Wisconsin rate of 11 percent. The Town of Beecher poverty rate in 2000 was 11.9%.
- 15.3 percent of all children fewer than 18 years of age in the town are living below the poverty level. This is down from 2000 when 16.4% lived below the poverty level, but the drop in percentage could be due to the fact that there are less children living in the Town of Beecher in 2020 than in 2000.

These figures reveal that **poverty is a major issue in the town.** This plan identifies some programs, policies and economic development opportunities to begin to improve this situation. Coordination with Marinette County and its resources will continue to be important in this effort.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC FORECASTS <sup>1</sup>**

Historically, Marinette County has had a slow to moderate economy with employment rates that were lower than the comparable state and national figures. Demographic factors are a key driving force in any long term projection. The growth rate of the population and changes in its composition have considerable impacts on the labor force, the unemployment rate, housing demand, and other spending categories. The population projections used in the U.S. economic forecast is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's "middle" projection for the U.S. population. This projection is based on specific assumptions about immigration, fertility, and mortality rates. The national fertility rate (the average number of births per woman upon completion of childbearing) is expected to rise from 2.0 in 2000 to about 2.2 in 2025. Life expectancy for men and women will rise steadily from 74.1 to 79.8 years in 1999 to 77.6 and 83.6 years in 2025. Net immigration (including undocumented immigration) was estimated to fall from 1999 to 2025 but probably has increased in recent years.

The age distribution of the population is also an important part of the long term outlook. As baby boomers begin to retire, the share of the U.S. population aged 65 and over will jump from 13% in 2010 to nearly 19% by 2025, pushing outlays for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid higher. In addition, the growth rate of the working age population will slow by more than that of the overall population. After increasing 1.1% annually from 1975 to 1999, the population aged 16-64 will grow 0.8% per year during 1999-2014 and just 0.2% per year thereafter.

Wisconsin total population growth is expected to average 0.4% annually from 2001 to 2025, a rate slightly below the 0.6% average from 1975-2000. Compared to the U.S. projected growth of 0.8% over the same period, Wisconsin is expected to continue the long term trend of slower population growth than the nation as a whole. The adult population (those over the age of 17) in Wisconsin grew at an average annual rate of 1% from 1975 to 2000, but is expected to grow by 0.5% per year from 2001 to 2025. Also similar to U.S. demographic trends, the aging population in Wisconsin (those 65 and over) is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 2% from 2001 to 2025, including 3% per year after 2010. The aging population in Wisconsin grew at an annual rate of 1.3% per year from 1975 to 2000.

A key feature of the population projection that is very problematic for growth of the Wisconsin economy and the local economy in Marinette County is the prospect for a decline in the working age population after 2011. Statewide, the population aged 16 to 64 was expected to grow at an annual rate of 0.6% from 2000 to 2011, but then decline at an annual rate of 0.4% from 2012 to 2025. The working age population grew at an annual rate of 0.9% from 1974 to 1999. The growth of the working age population has a profound effect on the growth of the labor force and employment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Much of the information used to develop this section was from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue Long Term Economic Forecast 2001.

Because of demographic shifts that will play out as baby boomers age and reach retirement, labor force growth was expected to slow sharply from 2000-2020. First, increases in female participation will taper off, if only because the participation rates for many female age groups are approaching those of males. Second, growth of the adult population will be slower. Third, over time, a growing share of the population will reach retirement age, when the participation rate falls to about 12%. As a result, the Wisconsin labor force was expected to expand by 1.3% per year between 2000 and 2005, 0.8% per year from 2005 to 2014, and by only 0.4% per year from 2015 to 2025. Overall labor force participation is expected to fall as the population progressively moves into age groups with lower participation rates.

The overall dependency ratio (the ratio of those not in the labor force to those who are) will continue to decline, falling from 1.00 in 1989 to 0.91 by 2010, before rising to 1.01 by 2025. This ratio peaked at 1.65 in 1962, just after the crest of the baby boom. Clearly, the working population will *not* have to support proportionately more non workers in the next 25 years than it has in the past.

There will be a change in the mix of non workers, however, especially towards 2025. While the share of the population aged 65 and over has risen dramatically over the last two decades, the ratio of the number of elderly to the number of workers has so far remained stable. There were 24.4 persons aged 65 and over for every 100 persons in the labor force in 1971, versus 24.8 in 2000. This ratio was expected to decline to 24.3 in 2006 and then jump to 27.89 in 2014 and to 37.6 by 2025, by which time most baby boomers will be of retirement age.

In summary, the United States, Wisconsin and Marinette County are expected to post markedly slower economic growth through 2025 than during the quarter century from 1975 to 1999. The prime causal factors for this slowdown are already in place: labor force growth constrained by demographic forces that cannot be quickly reversed and relatively moderate growth of the capital stock.

For the Town of Beecher, these indicators are important because they may impact the quality of life for residents living in the town. Furthermore, these key economic indicators provide a gauge for the town's ability to support additional commercial and industrial development over the next 20 years. It was anticipated that over the 20 year planning period from 2000 to 2020, that some additional businesses would be established in the town, particularly along the USH 141 corridor. That has not happened. Small manufacturing and retail establishments that provide quality jobs to residents are most desired, but have not developed, as of 2022.

## **4.0 HOUSING ELEMENT**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Housing Vision</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Existing Housing Supply</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Senior Housing</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Age and Quality of Housing Stock</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Occupancy</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Cost of Housing</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Housing Affordability Analysis</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Opportunities for Housing Choice</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Future Housing Need</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Housing Issues and Concerns</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Housing Programs</b>	<b>31</b>
Federal Programs and Revenue Sources	31
State Programs and Revenue Sources	32
Local Programs and Revenue Sources	32
<b>Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements</b>	<b>32</b>
Land Use Element	33
Utilities and Community Facilities	33
Transportation	33
Economic Development	33
Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources	33
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>34</b>

## 4 HOUSING ELEMENT

### Introduction

Traditionally, most towns have a high percentage of single family homes, often with few other housing types available. This is also true for communities with a large seasonal population. As new residents move in and population ages, other types of housing must be looked at to provide the variety necessary to meet the needs of all residents. This is particularly true in towns where a large proportion of the population has been long time residents. In such communities, there is a desire for these residents to remain in the town during their retirement years. In developing the 20 year plan for the Town of Beecher, the existing housing stock has been reviewed and recommendations made to meet the housing needs to the year 2025. This chapter includes specific goals and objectives to ensure that local housing choices exist for all stages and conditions of life and the vision described below can be achieved.

### Housing Vision

Quality housing choices are abundant in the Town of Beecher as a result of effective local zoning. These choices include a balance of rural residences, conservation subdivisions, and seasonal cottages. Residences are located and designed to blend with natural features to maintain the rural character. All residential development in Beecher is attractive, well maintained and aptly suited for raising a family. Neighbors support neighbors, especially seniors.

### Existing Housing Supply

Based on the 2020 U.S. Census, there were 1120 housing units in the Town of Beecher. Of this 895 or 79.9% were houses and 258 or 20.1% were mobile homes. Of these, 68.6% were built after 1970 so meet code requirements.

68.6% of these homes are seasonal and used only as hunting or summer cottages. Only 16.2% of the homes in Beecher are rental properties. Alternative housing (apartments or condos) are not feasible due to lack of sewer and water capable of handling more dense housing options. These types of housing options are available in larger cities accessible via USH 141.

**Private wells and individual waste treatment systems** serve all of the housing units in the Town of Beecher due to no local sanitary district in the town.

In urbanized areas (i.e. cities and villages), one quarter to one third of a community's housing supply is recommended, from a planning perspective, to be available as alternative housing to ensure diversity and affordability in a community. These percentages are not realistic in rural towns like Beecher, with lack the necessary infrastructure to support alternative housing. The town understands that if some areas for alternative housing are not part of the future plan, long time residents and people with

special needs may be forced to move away from the Town of Beecher, to nearby cities, which offer an abundant supply of additional housing options. Therefore, the town is encouraged to develop at least five percent of its total housing supply as alternative housing and senior housing.

## **Senior Housing**

Determining the need for senior housing in a community is not a simple task. Unfortunately, there is no clear formula or mathematical model available to determine need. This is largely due to the complexity of the marketplace. The majority of all seniors in Wisconsin, in all age groups, live in their own homes or in mixed family congregate housing (e.g. apartments that have residents of all age ranges). This is true for seniors living in the Town of Beecher as well. The ability to remain in their own homes is enhanced by organizations and services that are becoming more common. Examples include: “meals on wheels”, parish nursing programs, home health care, etc. However, for a variety of reasons some elderly cannot or will not live in a private home or apartment, and will instead need to live in some type of senior housing arrangement.

Fortunately, there are a wide variety of living options available in Marinette County for seniors including: independent living condominiums, subsidized and non subsidized independent living apartments, assisted living facilities and nursing facilities. The facilities are differentiated by the level of care they offer to their residents. The most intensive care environment is the nursing facility.

There **are no senior assisted living facilities** in the Town of Beecher. Residents in need of nursing or retirement living environments must seek housing opportunities elsewhere. Given that the town lacks municipal water and sewer service, the likelihood of another large senior care facility located in the town is very limited. However, **the potential exists for a smaller facility, possible a single family home converted to accommodate 4-5 residents.** Given current conditions, the vast majority of seniors living in the town must either be able to live independently, or with limited support from area programs (Meals on Wheels, Home Health through ADRC), family and friends. Seniors also reside with other family members living in the town. There are federal and state grants available to help develop alternative housing options such as HUD, USDA-Rural Development, DHIR and WHEDA.

## **Age and Quality of Housing Stock**

Understanding the relative age of the housing stock in a community is a good indicator of the quality of the available housing. Table 6 lists the number of units and the corresponding percent of the town’s total housing stock by year built. Almost a third of the towns housing supply was constructed in the 1970s. Homes built since the 1970s have consistently met modern building, plumbing and electrical code requirements.

**TABLE 6  
AGE OF HOUSING STOCK**

<b>Year Structure Built</b>	<b># of Units in Town</b>	<b>% of Total Housing Stock</b>
1990 to 2000	157	16.4%
1980 to 1989	165	17.2%
1970 to 1979	261	27.2%
1960 to 1969	136	14.2%
1940 to 1959	183	19.1%
1939 and Earlier	56	5.8%
Total	958	100%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Age alone is not the best measure of housing condition in a community. To be more accurate, a visual assessment of the housing stock is helpful. Such an assessment is commonly referred to as a “windshield survey” because it entails driving or walking through the community and evaluating each housing unit based on visual appearance. The theory is that exterior condition general correlates with interior conditions.

A windshield survey of the Town of Beecher was conducted in the summer of 2002. Based on this assessment:

- Most of the town’s quality year round homes are located along County Z.
- Many quaint, well maintained seasonal cottages and mobile homes were found near the Menominee River and around Beecher (and other lakes) in the town.
- Rural residences varied tremendously in appearance. In some instances structural improvements appeared to be needed (i.e. new roofing, cracked foundation, etc.)
- Not surprisingly, most of the seasonal units were less well maintained than the year round dwellings. Most of these units will require structural improvements to be used as year round dwellings (i.e. insulation improvements, updated windows, new roofing materials, etc.)

### **Occupancy**

For a housing market to operate efficiently, it must possess an adequate supply of available housing units (units for sale or rent). *A housing market’s supply of available units must be sufficient to allow for the formation of new households by the existing population, to allow for in migration and to provide opportunities for households to change their housing because of a change in household size or status.*

According to **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**, an overall available vacancy rate of 6.5% (1.5% for the owned portion of a housing stock and 5.0% for the rented portion) is required to allow for an adequate housing choice among consumers. The overall available vacancy rate for Wisconsin is 4.75% for rentals and 1.4% for owner occupants (WI Dept. of Commerce, 2000 Consolidated Plan). Vacancy rates vary from one community to the next. High vacancy rates offer a degree of competition in terms of price. The available vacancy rate of a housing market is a good

indication of the adequacy of the housing supply, which in turn helps dictate the cost of housing.

In 2000, the vacancy rate for owner occupied housing units in the Town of Beecher was 65.6% (637 units). This figure seems alarmingly high, but considered that 599 of these vacant units are classified as seasonal, recreational or occasional use dwellings, the town's "true" homeowner vacancy rate is only 7.2%. The Town of Beecher rental vacancy rate was 5.5% in 2000. Given these vacancy rates, there is a fairly adequate choice for housing in the town.

Marinette County, like the Town of Beecher, also has a very high vacancy rate (33.1%) due to a number of seasonal, recreational and occasional use dwellings. Comparatively, the town has twice as many seasonal, recreational and occasional use dwellings than the related county figure.

### **Cost of Housing**

The available supply, age and condition of the housing stock are the basis for determining the demand for and cost of housing.

### **Housing Affordability Analysis**

Does the cost of housing match the ability of residents to pay for it? This is the fundamental question to answer when determining housing affordability. There are many ways to answer this question. One common technique comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This method involves comparing income to housing costs. HUD recommends 30% of income be used for housing to be "affordable".

In 2020, median income in the Town of Beecher was \$40,608 which is 33% less than the Wisconsin median income. Median home value is at \$63,300 in the Town of Beecher. 14.8% of the Town of Beecher residents are below the poverty rate. Housing costs per percent of income in the Town of Beecher show that 48.9% of residents are paying 35% of their income for housing. Workers living in the Town of Beecher have a 44 minute mean commute time which increases the cost of living and decreases the money available for other expenses. This could discourage workers from settling in the area.

One strategy to promote affordable housing is to encourage quality manufactured housing in the Town of Beecher. It is important to point out that manufactured homes are not mobile homes. Lot sizes in the Town of Beecher are set at a two acre minimum. Likewise, it must be clearly stated that the Town of Beecher does not encourage mobile home park development or additional mobile homes on individual lots. As was previously mentioned in the chapter, about 20% of the town's housing supply already consists of mobile homes.

Manufactured housing is considered a viable affordable housing choice only if units are compatible in size, appearance and quality of area stick built housing. Any manufactured

housing unit must be constructed in accordance with local building and zoning restrictions. The manufactured home, once located on a property, should be virtually indistinguishable from 60 percent of site built housing located within a quarter mile of the home. Therefore, manufactured housing should have a similar roof pitch, garage facilities, and be located on a foundation, basement, or crawl space as a site built home would be required. Manufactured homes may even be two stories.

Manufactured housing is far more affordable than stick built housing because homes are built in a factory, which eliminates delays and costs associated with weather and the factory approach improves efficiencies. Manufactured housing costs are typically around \$50-\$70 per square foot, compared to \$118 per square foot for site-built homes (<https://www.modulartoday.com/modularpriceswi.html>)

### **Opportunities for Housing Choice Barriers to Affordable Housing**

**Opportunities for elderly, disabled and low income housing are limited** in the Town of Beecher. The existing housing supply consists primarily of single family dwellings. Therefore, seniors and disabled person who reside in the Town of Beecher must be able to live independently, have assistance available to them, or seek residency elsewhere in other larger nearby communities that can provide needed services.

The fundamental reason for limited housing choices in the Town of Beecher is the fact that the **community is rural in nature**. The town's development consists of low density, single family residential units.

The **low density of development is not anticipated to change** significantly during the life of this plan given the fact that the town has no sanitary district to accommodate denser development and resident opinion regarding desirable development. Consequently, the supply of jobs, public transportation and other service and opportunities that are necessary to accommodate low income, elderly and disabled populations will continue to be either unavailable or extremely limited in supply. This is not to say that residents don't desire senior and affordable housing opportunities in the community. However, these types of development **are available nearby in communities**, which are easily accessible to the town.

### **Future Housing Needs**

The 2025 projected population for the Town of Beecher at the time of writing the original planning document was 986. According to the 2020 census, the population decreased by 8% to 907. Currently, 47% of the population is over the age of 60 years old. The median age is 58.6 years, which is 20% higher than the median age of Marinette County. (The remainder of the paragraph remains the same as before)

## **Housing Issues and Concerns**

The major housing issue facing the Town of Beecher is that as people move into the town from urban areas, they expect to receive city services. Internet is available to most residents using multiple services. Cellular service unfortunately is spotty at best. Grocery shopping is a 20-30 minute drive away. There is a lack of barber/salon service; medical care is 30 minutes away and many trades' people (plumbers and electricians) are 30 minute away. Education is the best tool to address this issue. It would also be desirable to develop a leaflet for area realtors to provide to prospective buyers.

Another growing housing concern is safety. Unfortunately, break ins have become more common in recent years. Minimal law enforcement is available for break ins, enforcing boating, ATV/UTV and snowmobile regulations. This is due to the fact that the town relies on the County Sheriff's department to do policing and the fact that many rural residences are isolated, the township is large, and many of the homes are only used seasonally. To improve community safety, residents really need to be aware of the issues. In addition, residents are encouraged to get to know their neighbors to establish informal and formal (i.e. neighborhood watch) groups to keep an eye on all areas of the town and report concerns to the sheriff.

## **Housing Programs**

A number of federal and state housing programs are available to help the Town of Beecher promote the development of housing for individuals with lower incomes, senior housing, and housing for people with special and/or housing maintenance needs.

## **Federal Programs and Revenue Sources**

HUD is the federal agency primarily responsible for housing programs and community development. Though many of its programs are directed to larger cities and urban areas, the Town of Beecher does qualify for some available funds. Specifically, HUD provides money to non-entitlement (i.e. communities with populations less than 50,000) communities through grants. In the State of Wisconsin, the Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Relations (DHIR) within the Department of Administration is responsible for the distribution of these federal funds. It awards these funds through a competitive proposal process.

The United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) provides a variety of housing and community development programs for rural areas. Its programs are generally available to communities with populations of 10,000 or less. It provides support for rental housing development, direct and guaranteed mortgage loans for homebuyers, and support for self help and cooperative housing development.

## **State Programs and Revenue Sources**

Beyond the funds distributed through HUD, the DHIR administers several state funded programs that can potentially be used to finance housing improvements. Money available through the DHIR, because it is funded by general purpose revenue, cannot be used to invest directly in housing development. However, funds can achieve the desired result by helping organizations develop the capacity to develop houses or by providing various types of financial assistance to homebuyers or renters through grants to local governments or non profit agencies.

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) is a quasi-governmental agency that finances housing development through the sale of bonds. Unlike the DHIR, it receives no direct state tax support. Therefore, WHEDA can provide mortgage financing for first time homebuyers and financing for multifamily housing as well. Specific programs evolve and change with the needs of the housing market.

## **Local Programs and Revenue Sources**

The Town of Beecher has the ability to affect the type and cost of housing available in the area through local regulations and policies. While most government regulations are implemented in order to protect health, safety and welfare needs, they may also have unintended adverse impacts on affordability.

At this time, there are no zoning or subdivision regulations in the Town of Beecher. The town does have the ability to establish these ordinances. Moreover, residents have expressed support for these tools, if developed in an environment rich with public input and education. As growth continues in the Town of Beecher, other regulatory tools may need to be adopted to preserve the rural character of the area. Specifically, the Town of Beecher may also want to consider developing growth management tools (such as “purchase of development rights”, conservation subdivisions, and overlay development areas) to gain better control over local land development. The town may also want to consider partnering with local land trusts to identify and protect important areas of the town, beyond the county and state lands.

## **Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements**

Housing is the primary *developed land use* in the Town of Beecher. As such, it directly affects most other elements of this comprehensive plan. Land Use, Utilities and Community Facilities, Transportation, Economic Development and Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources are all elements directly affected by housing. The goals and policies set forth in this Housing element will affect these elements and vice versa. Therefore, it is important that the elements are consistent and support one another.

## **Land Use Element**

Land use dictates the amount of land available for housing, as well as its location, type and density. The Land Use Plan Map devotes XX number of acres to residential use over the next 20 years in accordance with current density restrictions. Furthermore, the goals and objectives of the land Use Element recommend reviewing building permit and residential planning activity to gauge development trends.

## **Utilities and Community Facilities**

Improvements such as roads, sewer, water, parks, recreational facilities and schools all need to be coordinated with the housing decisions and vice versa. The best method to coordinate improvements is to follow the land use pattern presented on the Land Use Plan Map as closely as possible and plan for future improvements in a Capital Improvements Plan and Budget as recommended in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element. This approach will greatly enhance the efficiency of capital improvements and services.

## **Transportation**

The location of housing affects commuting patterns and transportation costs. The inverse is also true – the location and density of housing affects transportation needs. The location of housing influences on which roads people drive or whether they need to drive at all. These factors were carefully considered in the Transportation Element to ensure compatibility with projected residential development. Of particular concern was traffic on County Z and USH 141.

## **Economic Development**

Housing needs must be linked to a community's economic situation. Specifically it is important to ensure that the local housing supply is affordable to town residents working in the Town of Beecher or elsewhere within Marinette County. For this reason, an affordability analysis is presented in this chapter. Moreover, given that housing is the primary developed land use in the Town of Beecher, quality local housing directly impacts the town's ability to finance needed improvements to support the local economy through receipt of property taxes.

## **Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources**

The desire to preserve agricultural and natural areas competes with the desire of others to build additional housing in the Town of Beecher. These competing interests are balanced through the land suitability analysis information presented in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element. This information helps to ensure that housing is located in areas that will have the least impact possible on existing farming areas and important natural resources, while still supporting additional residential development needs.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Goals and objectives are included in Chapter 12 based on the information gained during the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and input from town residents and the Planning Committee. These goals and objectives were developed to ensure that the Town of Beecher:

- Remains a good place to raise a family and remain after retirement.
- Remains a good place to enjoy Marinette County's recreational activities.

## **5.0 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Vision</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Inventory of Existing Transportation Facilities</b>	<b>36</b>
Pedestrian Facilities	36
Cycling Opportunities	37
Bicycling Conditions Map – Marinette County	38
Transportation Network Map	39
Winter Recreation Trails	40
Streets and Highways	40
Railroad Corridors	41
Mass Transit	41
Truck Transportation	41
Water Transportation	42
Airports	42
<b>Summary of Existing Transportation Plans</b>	<b>42</b>
WISDOT State Highway Plan 2020	42
Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan for 2020	42
Marinette County	43
Midwest Regional Rail Initiative	43
Bay Lakes Regional Planning Commission	43
PASER Rating System Report	44
<b>Transportation Issues and Concerns</b>	<b>46</b>
Access Limitations on USH 141	46
Road Map – Driveway Access Limitations	47
Expanse of Roadways	48
Desire for Safe Pedestrian and Cycling Opportunities	48
Transportation Budgeting	48
<b>Coordination with Other Required Plan Elements</b>	<b>49</b>
Issues and Opportunities	49
Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources	49
Utilities and Community Facilities	49
Economic Development	50
Land Use	50
Implementation	50
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>50</b>

## **5 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

### **Introduction**

The Town of Beecher's transportation system consists primarily of local roads supplemented by one principal arterial and one major collector. Most areas of the town can also accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic. However, private vehicles are the primary means of transportation in, through and around the Town of Beecher.

### **Vision**

The Town of Beecher is served by a network of well maintained local roads and county trunks. Residents enjoy easy and direct access to nearby communities via USH 141, which remains a 2 lane highway through the town. There are passing lanes on USH 141 throughout Marinette County. Multiple use trails (snowmobile, cross country skiing, hiking, bicycling, ATV) are an integral part of the transportation network, providing connections to natural areas and adjacent communities. Residents depend on their own vehicles to meet their transportation needs. Residents without vehicles rely on the kindness of friends, families and neighbors to provide needed transportation assistance.

### **Inventory of Existing Transportation Facilities**

Transportation facilities in the Town of Beecher range from rural town roads to state highways. Residents enjoy easy access to town roads, country trunk highways and USH 141. Opportunities for safe pedestrian travel are somewhat limited given a lack of sidewalks and posted speed limits of 45 mph or higher. Residents of the Town of Beecher rely on their personal vehicles to meet most of their transportation needs. Other modes of transit, including light rail and air transportation are not available in the town, nor are they likely to be developed in the near future, given that the population and local businesses do not demand, nor can they support, these types of transportation services. All town roads are currently ATV/UTV access.

### **Pedestrian Facilities**

Most local roads in the Town of Beecher have limited shoulder areas with posted speed limits typically more than 45 miles per hour. These conditions hamper safe pedestrian travel opportunities. Moreover, given the relative low density development pattern and the fact that nearly all providers of goods and services are located several miles away in nearby cities and villages, walking to places of work, shopping or entertainment are not realistic for most residents. It is simply much easier to drive. This situation is not anticipated to change over the planning period. As a result, people without access to vehicles face severe transportation challenges in obtaining services and employment, especially given that there is no public transportation service available in the town. Seniors and the disabled are particularly challenged to find adequate transportation. Limited opportunities for walking and hiking exist on county and state lands as well.

However, if conservation or cluster subdivisions are developed in the town, these developments could include multiple use (walking, hiking, and skiing) trails.

### **Cycling Opportunities**

As part of the *State Highway Plan 2020*, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) completed a bicycling conditions assessment in conjunction with planned state highway priority corridors, to identify key linkages in Marinette County, this is in the process of being updated and should be approved in 2025.

The WisDOT map provided on the next page only suggests possible bicycle routes along state, county and local roads. The map ranked several roads throughout Marinette County based on their appropriateness for bicycle traffic. The ratings are primarily based on the road width (i.e. ability to accommodate a shoulder path) and traffic volume. Secondary considerations include the percent of truck traffic and site distance restrictions.

In the Town of Beecher, WisDOT only suggests CTH Z as a potential bicycle trail route. This route was selected because bicyclists have a natural tendency to want to travel to and along waterways. In addition, local bicycle traffic is found in locations where there is a concentration of residents. All town roads in Beecher are considered acceptable for bicycle traffic.

The WisDOT suggestions for bicycle accommodations along county and town roads are simply suggestions. Marinette County is under no obligation to adopt these suggested routes as official trail routes.

Currently, Marinette County has several mapped rural bicycle loops through the county. Three of these trail loops (not signed or marked trails) are located in the Town of Beecher; Pike River, Four Seasons and the Pembine/Amberg Loop Trail. The **Pike River and Four Seasons Loop Trails** run together for eight miles from Amberg along the scenic Pike River. These trails split at this point with the Four Seasons Loop continuing through Beecher and on to Pembine before returning to Amberg. Highlights of this trail include the Four Seasons Resort and Town Corner Lake road. The **Pembine/Amberg Loop Trail** spans between Dave's Falls Park in the Town of Amberg and Twelve Foot Falls Park in the Town of Dunbar.

**Bicycling Conditions Assessment with Planned State Highway Priority Corridors  
and Key Linkages  
Marinette County**

**Transportation Network  
Town of Beecher, Marinette County, WI**

## **Winter Recreation Trails**

The Town of Beecher has **two groomed snowmobile trails**. One of the trails runs parallel to USH 141 through the town. The other trail runs through the county forestland located in the southern portion of the town between USH 141 and CTH Z. These trails are part of a larger trail network that extends north into Pembine and continues into the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. To the south, the trails continue into Amberg.

At this time, there are no plans to develop additional trails in the town. The existing trails provide important connection routes to Michigan and other areas of Marinette County. The town also contains some cross country skiing trails and snowshoe opportunities through county forestland and the Miscauno Wildlife Area.

## **Streets and Highways**

Streets and highways are classified according to their primary function, either to move vehicles or to serve adjacent land. Arterials accommodate the movement of vehicles, while local roads are designed to provide direct access to individual parcels of land. Collectors serve both local and through traffic by providing a connection between arterials and local roads. Facilities classified under the Federal Aids Secondary System (county trunks and state highways) qualify for federal aid for capital projects involving construction, reconstruction or repair. State highway aids are available to communities for construction and maintenance. Aids cannot exceed 85% of expenditures based on a 3 year average. All the roads described in this section are illustrated on the

### **Transportation Network Map.**

Principal Arterials serve interstate and interregional trips. USH 141 is the only principal arterial in the Town of Beecher.

Minor Arterials accommodate interregional and inter-area traffic movements, often in conjunction with principal arterials. There are no minor arterials in the Town of Beecher.

Major Collectors provide service to moderate sized communities and other intra area traffic generators. Most county trunk highways fall into this classification. Until 2003, CTH Z was the only major collector road in the Town of Beecher. CTH Z runs east and west between USH 141 and the State of Michigan border.

Minor Collectors, these roads collect traffic from local roads and provide links to all remaining portions of smaller communities and other higher function roads. There are no minor collectors in the Town of Beecher.

Local Roads provide direct access to residential, commercial and industrial development. The remaining roads in the town are local. They provide access to residential, commercial and industrial uses within the Town of Beecher.

The town owns several pieces of equipment to handle basic maintenance needs and snow plowing of town roads. Specifically, the town owns a grader, two dump trucks with snow plows, a tractor for mowing roadside grass with a boom for brushing trees and a front end loader used for loading gravel and sand. All town road construction, reconstruction and improvement projects are completed either by the town, Marinette County through contract agreements with the Town of Beecher, or private companies. The town plans to utilize a combination of its own and contract services indefinitely in the future because these arrangements provide quality, timely, cost effective services for the town.

### **Railroad Corridors**

There is **one railroad corridor** in the Town of Beecher. It extends through the town, parallel to USH 141. There are no railroad stops in the town. Given the modest economic activity, there are no plans to expand rail service in the town.

### **Mass Transit**

**Mass transit is not available** in the Town of Beecher given its low density of development. Simply put, the density of development in the town cannot provide the rider ship needed to support a bus route.

There are no high speed trains or other means of public transit to serve residents of the Town of Beecher. This is no local demand for these services and no plan exists to establish these facilities and services in the future. The Marinette County Community Options Program (administered by the Department of Health and Human Services) does offer transportation assistance to seniors, disabled and chronically ill county residents. This program is discussed further in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element.

The Town of Beecher has no plans to establish its own transit service. Transit dependent residents of the town must rely on the assistance of friends or family, hire private transportation providers or if eligible, utilize Marinette County programs for seniors and disabled residents.

### **Truck Transportation**

There are **no freight or trucking companies** located in the Town of Beecher, nor are there plans to locate such a facility in the town. These types of facilities are more likely to be established in larger communities with access to additional services and businesses not found in the Town of Beecher. Most truck traffic in Beecher is associated with trucks passing through town on the USH 141 corridor. Given the limited number and size of businesses in the town, trucks make deliveries very infrequently to establishment located along USH 141 and CTH Z.

## **Water Transportation**

The Town of Beecher enjoys **significant areas of waterfront** along the Menominee River, Pike River, Beecher Lake, Town Corner Lake and several ponds. Many residents and visitors to the Town of Beecher utilize these waterways for recreational travel. Therefore, continued access to these waterways for recreation and recreation based travel is an important local priority for the future. The town believes that the available lake and river access is adequate to meet local demand.

## **Airports**

There are **two private airstrips** located in the Town of Beecher. One is located west of USH 141, south of Weckerle Road and is approximately 2,200 feet in length. The other one is located north of CTH Z near Shangrila Drive and is 2,500 feet in length and is a lighted grass airstrip. There are no plans to establish other airstrips or airport facilities in Beecher. The nearest regional airport facilities to the Town of Beecher are located in Crivitz, WI (**Crivitz Municipal Airport**) and Iron Mountain, MI (**Ford Airport**). Green Bay's **Austin Straubel International Airport** is the nearest major airport to the Town of Beecher. All of these airport facilities are accessible from the Town of Beecher via USH 141.

## **Summary of Existing Transportation Plans**

### **WisDOT State Highway Plan “Connect 2050”**

Wisconsin's State Trunk Highway system, consisting of approximately 11,800 miles of roads, is aging and deteriorating at the same time traffic is increasing. In response to this critical issue, WisDOT, in partnership with its stakeholders, has developed the *WisDOT State Highway Plan “Connect 2050”* which considers the highway system's current condition, analyzes future uses, assesses financial constraints and outlines strategies to address Wisconsin's preservation, traffic movement, and safety needs. The plan can be viewed at [www.wisdotplans.gov](http://www.wisdotplans.gov) and is anticipated to be adopted in 2025 which will include bicycle and pedestrian plans.

The only road in the Town of Beecher addressed by the *WisDOT State Highway Plan* is USH 141. This connecting corridor is expected to experience moderate congestion through 2050. The corridor has the potential to be expanded to a four lane roadway over the next 20 years. However, no formal plans have been administratively approved for this project. A significant expansion would require both environmental analysis and legislative approval. Beyond basic maintenance, the town believes the corridor will remain roughly the same as it exists today over the next 20 years.

## **Marinette County**

At the time of the original comprehensive plan was created, Marinette County had not yet developed a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan however, they did adopt a plan in February 2010. Likewise, the county had not developed a transportation plan. The county does schedule traffic improvement projects up to five years in the future. The Town of Beecher will coordinate with Marinette County when any activities commence to ensure that town interests are represented.

## **Midwest Regional Rail Initiative**

Since 1996, the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) advanced from a series of service concepts, including increased operating speeds, train frequencies, system connectivity and high service reliability, into a well defined vision to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century regional passenger rail system. This vision has been transformed into a transportation plan known as the Midwest Regional Rail Systems (MWRRS). The primary purpose of the MWRRS is to meet future regional travel needs through significant improvements to the level and quality of regional passenger rail service. The major MWRRS elements are designed to improve Midwest travel. The major plan elements include:

- Use of 3,000 miles of existing rail rights of way to connect rural, small urban and major metropolitan areas throughout Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin.
- Operation of a “hub and spoke” passenger rail system through Chicago to locations throughout the Midwest.
- Introduction of modern train equipment operating at speeds up to 110 mph.
- Provision of multi modal connections to improve system access.
- Improvements in reliability and on time performance.

The cost to provide the improvements needed to facilitate a Chicago-Milwaukee-Minneapolis/Green Bay Route would be \$978 million, including rolling stock (i.e. passenger cars) and infrastructure improvements (i.e. track improvements). The current schedule provided in the MWRRS plan calls for the entire project to be completely online by 2012. The first phase of MWRRS plan in Wisconsin calls for 110 mph rail service between Madison and Milwaukee and continuing to Chicago.

## **Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission**

The Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission had not yet developed a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan at the time the Town of Beecher’s plan was put in place. Nevertheless, the Town of Beecher consulted regularly with the Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission through its planning process to ensure that their concerns and expectations were addressed. Moreover, the town utilized GIS based mapping data from Bay Lake to develop the maps in this plan. In addition, the Town of Beecher will provide a copy of the completed Town of Beecher Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan to Bay

Lake as a reference for understanding town objectives when Bay Lake develops their regional plan.

### **PASER Rating System Report**

The Town of Beecher completed its Pavement Surface Evaluation and Ratings (PASER) program for all town roads in accordance with WisDOT requirements. This is updated on an annual basis. PASER is a visual inspection system to develop a condition rating for community roads. PASER is an important planning tool for smaller units of government because it provides a picture of road conditions on all roads and can identify candidates for maintenance and rehabilitation. Surface defects, cracking, potholes and other road conditions are examined during a typical PASER evaluation. Paved roads are rated 1-10 based on their condition. Gravel roads are rated 1-5.

<b><u>Paved Roads Rating</u></b>	<b><u>Need(s)</u></b>
Rating 9 & 10	no maintenance required
Rating 7 & 8	routine maintenance, crack sealing and minor patching
Rating 5 & 6	preservative treatments (seal coating)
Rating 3 & 4	structural improvement and leveling (overlay or recycling)
Rating 1 & 2	reconstruction

<b><u>Gravel Roads Rating</u></b>	<b><u>Need(s)</u></b>
Rating 5	no maintenance required
Rating 4	good; routine maintenance
Rating 3	fair; ditch improve & culvert maintenance; gravel in some areas
Rating 2	poor; new aggregate; ditch reconstruction & culvert maintenance
Rating 1	failed; rebuilding

Table 7 provides the total number of miles of roadway in the town by each PASER rating. In total there are 57.66 miles of roads in the Town of Beecher that were evaluated. 32 miles of road in the town are gravel and 28 miles are paved. The majority of town roads rated in the original PASER results.

**TABLE 7  
MILES OF ROADWAY BY PASER RANKINGS**

<b>Paser Rating</b>	<b>Total Miles of Paved Road</b>	<b>Total Miles of Unpaved Rd</b>
1	0.33	5.66
2	1.91	9.03
3	11.59	18.58
4	0	5.24
5	1.33	3.0
6	0	0
7	0	0
8	3.93	0
9	0.17	0
10	0	0

Source: 2023 PASER Rating System Report, Town of Beecher

It important to understand that the town roads were rated in segments. As a result, a portion of a particular road may be a 9, whereas a different segment may only rate a 6. These fluctuations can greatly impact the overall need for construction improvements.

According to the PASER manual, it is recommended that communities strive to attain a rating of 7 for all paved roads and a rating of 3 for all gravel roads. Given the extent of roadway in the town and the limited money available to maintain these roads, meeting this goal would be a major challenge for the Town of Beecher.

If, in the future, the town decides that additional tools are necessary to further evaluate its roads to determine the best course of action with respect to annual road improvements and to maximize its available funds, it is recommended that the town further analyze its PASER results using PASERWARE. This software program is designed to help communities consider different scenarios for extending the money with respect to road maintenance and improvements. Using PASERWARE, a community can determine what sequence of improvements is recommended to meet a certain goal (i.e. get all roads to a 7 rating). PASERWARE will also provide cost estimates for maintenance and construction projects. If desired, the town can provide PASERWARE with the total funds available for roads in a given year and the program will recommend ways to best spend the money to obtain the greatest return.

Based on the PASER results, the town should also consider developing a capital improvements plan and budget to effectively plan for road improvements in relation to other town spending needs. A capital improvements plan and budget may use the recommendations of PASERWARE, or the recommendations determined by the Town Board and Marinette County Highway Department representative, as part of the annual road assessment to plan for road improvements in a 5-6 year cycle. For additional

information about capital improvement plans and budgets, refer to the Utilities and Community Facilities Element.

## **Transportation Issues and Concerns**

### **Access Limitations on USH 141**

WisDOT is enforcing 84/24 access controls along USH 141 in the Town of Beecher. These requirements essentially freeze access so that the number of access points available to USH 141 today will not be increased in the future. This requirement is intended to protect the integrity of the USH 141 corridor so that it continues to function as a primary arterial with minimal points of conflict. Future development along the corridor in the town will be required to use existing points of access. This situation may require the development of frontage roads, shared driveways and other provisions to accommodate development requests. Ideally, WisDOT would like to see as much development as possible using access points from intersecting town and county roadways. A map illustrating the location of existing access points is provided on the next page.

## **Road Map – Driveway Access Limitations**

## **Expanse of Roadways**

The town of Beecher faces a great challenge with respect to road maintenance. This rural community has approximately 57 miles of town roads to maintain. Complicating matters, these 57 miles of roadway have more than 70 different road names. As road aids continue to diminish, the town is challenged to maintain quality roadways for residents.

## **Desire for Safe Pedestrian and Cycling Opportunities**

At the Kick Off Meeting for the Comprehensive Planning Program some residents indicated that safe pedestrian and cycling opportunities are a priority for the future of Beecher. However, other residents were concerned that trail facilities to accommodate bicycles and walkers would interfere with private property rights. Moreover, given the rural nature and number of town roads, it would be a great expense to develop road shoulders wide enough to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Given this situation, the town must seek to ensure that development along rural roadways remains limited so that traffic does not increase significantly and increase the potential for vehicle conflicts.

## **Transportation Budgeting**

A long standing transportation issue in the Town of Beecher and many other rural towns is the ever present concern of road maintenance and improvement costs. The town receives General Transportation Aids (GTA) payments from WisDOT to help offset the cost of municipal road construction, maintenance, and traffic operations. Roadway maintenance including culvert maintenance and replacement can be a large part of a town's budget. In many cases infrastructure replacements (culverts, bridges, etc.) are done on an emergency basis mainly due to budget constraints. Emergency replacements can be very costly, and the actual replacement could be a sub-optimal resulting in on-going maintenance issues or even structure failing during flood events. As part of planning, it is not only important to consider structure condition as a factor for replacement, but also flood resilience and connectivity. A study titled *Conservation Leverage: Ecological Design Culverts also Return Fiscal Benefits* was conducted in Green Bay Watershed in Wisconsin and Michigan that examined the long-term costs of culverts replaced with hydraulic capability only considerations compared to culverts with stream connectivity or ecological design considerations. The study found that culverts designed with stream connectivity considerations can be more cost effective over the life of the culvert.

The road-stream crossings in the Town of Beecher have already been inventoried. This inventory includes structure condition, flood resiliency, and connectivity and can be found at : [Great Lakes Stream Crossing Inventory \(arcgis.com\)](http://arcgis.com). Using this inventory can help the town prioritize road-stream crossing replacements to avoid costly and ill-planned emergency replacements. It can also help identify which road-stream crossings may yield partnerships in strategic replacement of road-stream crossings. The DNR is

available to review road-stream crossings and help interpret the inventory data to aid the township in prioritizing road-stream crossing replacement.

A capital improvements program in the Town of Beecher would serve as the town's present and near future financial plan to match future capital improvement costs, such as roads, to anticipated revenues. The Town of Beecher Planning Commission should be given the authority to develop and review the CIP/B, thereby linking planning to the annual budgetary process. CIP/B are usually prepared for five or six years into the future and updated annually. The CIP/B process would first identify and then prioritize capital expenditures. An estimated cost and means of financing each capital expenditure would be included as part of the process. The desired expenditures would be compared to the budget to determine annual spending priorities. The process helps to ensure that improvements are made in a logical order and do not "surprise" town officials or taxpayers.

## **Coordination with Other Required Plan Elements**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

The Issues and Opportunities Element establishes the framework for planning – the overall future vision – the ideal from which this plan has been developed. That vision will impact the way the town considers and approves changes to the transportation network. It will also guide their participation in activities sponsored by WisDOT. To realize the vision and support the transportation vision presented in this chapter, the town will seek to maintain its network of roads and only consider road expansions and approvals of subdivisions and driveways that fit into the natural landscape.

### **Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources**

This critical question with respect to the Transportation Element and this element is: How will changes to the transportation system impact the preservation/protection of natural areas? Given that the town only has jurisdiction over town roads; the answer to this question in many areas of the Town of Beecher will likely be dictated by actions of Marinette County and WisDOT. As a result, it will be incumbent upon town residents and leaders to continue to participate in public hearing and other opportunities for input, to ensure that local interests are realized in new road projects in farmland, undeveloped and natural areas of the Town of Beecher.

The key is to ensure that the road network is adequate to meet the needs of local landowners, but not overbuilt to draw a substantial amount of additional residential development in the natural areas. Otherwise, the result may be a loss of natural habitats to subdivision development. If not controlled, this pattern may eventually lead to additional road improvements to support new residents moving into the area.

### **Utilities and Community Facilities**

How will the Town of Beecher ensure that the decisions made for the transportation system preserve the existing facilities and potentially reduce the need for expansion or realignment? The answer to this question is realized in the land Use element whereby the location of future development and associated transportation improvements is correlated to the location of adequate utilities and community facilities.

### **Economic Development**

Providing a quality transportation system is important to the success of any business. Just as businesses need good access, employees also want to be able to efficiently access places of employment and shopping areas. Lack of access to employment opportunities may affect individual decisions to seek employment or live in a community. In the Town of Beecher these issues were carefully considered. The local solutions to these issues are reflected on the Future Land Use Map.

### **Land Use**

While transportation improvements generally respond to changes in land use, they also have the potential to directly and indirectly affect land development either by inducing new development or altering the pattern of existing development. However, land use changes are dependent on other factors as well. These include local plans, zoning, taxation and the provision of public services.

What steps will be taken to ensure that transportation decisions and land use decisions are compatible? Although transportation is not the only influence on land use, it is important to be aware that decisions regarding the transportation system may impact land use both directly and indirectly. Therefore, efforts were made to plan accordingly for land uses along USH 141 and CTH Z and other developing areas of the town. These considerations and others are reflected on the Future Land Use Map.

### **Implementation**

Through the development of a capital improvements plan and budget, the associated costs of the transportation element can be addressed. The town's capital improvements plan and budget will seek to not only plan for town expenditures but also to locate grant and low interest loan opportunities that may exist to fund needed improvements.

### **Goals and Objectives**

It is the goal of the Town of Beecher that residents will enjoy safe roads with minimal traffic congestion. Because the Town of Beecher has a minimal amount of control over county roads and state highways, the transportation goals and objectives included in Chapter 12 are related to actions that the town can control. The Town of Beecher will work in accordance with the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element of the Wisconsin "Smart Growth" Law, with Marinette County and WisDOT to ensure that adequate community transportation facilities are available to serve the area.

## **6.0 UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Vision</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Inventory – Location, Use, Capacity</b>	<b>52</b>
Wastewater Collection and Treatment	52
Stormwater Management	52
Water Supply	53
Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling	53
Electricity and Natural Gas	54
Parks	54
Communication Facilities	55
Childcare Facilities	57
Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine School District	57
Libraries	58
Senior and Disabled Care Facilities	58
Cemeteries	59
Health Care Facilities	59
Police Protection	60
Fire and Rescue	60
Ambulance and First Responders	61
Town Facilities	61
Utilities and Community Facilities Map	61
<b>Utilities and Community Facilities Funding Options</b>	<b>62</b>
Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant Program	62
Utilities and Community Facilities Map	63
State Trust Fund Loan Programs	64
Rural Development Community Facility Grants	64
Fire Administration Grants	64
<b>Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements</b>	<b>64</b>
Housing	64
Economic Development	65
Land Use Element	65
Intergovernmental Cooperation	65
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>65</b>

## 6 UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Vision

The town works with neighboring communities, such that residents enjoy improved access to more efficient, cost-effective regional services that reduce the tax burden. Basic local services, like a medical clinic and small senior center, are available in the community, but residents in need of additional services and choices travel to larger nearby cities via USH 141 and Hwy 180. Water and sewer services are provided by residents to meet their individual needs while gas, electricity and communications services are available from regional providers.

### Inventory – Location, Use, Capacity

Understanding the location, use and capacity of utilities and community facilities is an important consideration when planning for the future. This information, coupled with the demographic trends and projections, provides a realistic picture of service supply and demand. The community facilities and utilities discussed in this chapter were carefully considered in the development of the future land use maps.

What follows is a description of existing utilities and community facilities within the Town of Beecher. Neighboring communities and Marinette County provide many of the Services available to town residents. These arrangements help to control town costs. Therefore, included in this chapter is information about some of the utilities and Community facilities located in and provided by nearby communities and Marinette County.

### Wastewater Collection and Treatment

There are no sanitary districts in the Town of Beecher. Likewise, there are no plans to establish sanitary districts. Therefore, **residents and business utilize on-site private individual wastewater systems.** The town supports the continued use of these types of private one-site facilities to handle wastewater needs. Furthermore, the town supports the use of innovative treatment systems, as approved by the town, to accommodate rural development in conservation or cluster subdivisions. The Town of Beecher does not believe that future residential, commercial or industrial development must connect to municipal sanitary service, since safe and efficient on-site service can be achieved in most areas of the town.

POWTS permits are issued for approved systems by Marinette County.

### Storm water Management

The Town of Beecher has **no curb and guttered areas.** Stormwater management requirements are limited to construction sites and agricultural limitations imposed by Marinette County, WDNR through NR152, and EPA Phase I and Phase II Stormwater

Requirements. There is **no stormwater management plan** in place for the Town of Beecher. Open, grassed ditches serve to slow the flow of stormwater, reduce erosion, filter pollutants, and allow infiltration of the groundwater. There are no county drainage districts in the Town of Beecher and no plans to establish any in the future.

The WDNR, through NR216, requires certain industries to obtain stormwater discharge permits from the WDNR. However, there are no facilities in the town that require these types of permits. Furthermore, NR151 has an extensive series of nonpoint administrative rules addressing agricultural performance and requiring protective areas for wetlands from 10 to 75 feet.

Given the limited density of proposed future development and the potential use of conservation, cluster and other innovative design techniques that will have a positive impact on stormwater management, town officials believe that existing practices will be adequate to meet local needs for the next 20 years. Additional information about stormwater management considerations is provided in the Future Land Use Chapter.

### **Water Supply**

Residents and businesses in the Town of Beecher receive their water from individual **private wells**. There is no municipal water service in the town and no plans to establish such service. The Town of Beecher has a **high quality supply of potable groundwater and surface water** for nearly all anticipated uses. The source of groundwater in the town is from locally recharged aquifers. In recent years, shallow wells in the town have occasionally dried up or experienced pressure problems that have forced residents to dig deeper wells. Additional information about groundwater resources is provided in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element of this plan.

### **Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling**

In 1989, the State of Wisconsin adopted a recycling law. Beginning in 1995, the disposal of paper products such as newspaper, office paper, magazines and corrugated cardboard and containers made from aluminum and steel were prohibited from being disposed of in landfills. Certain glass and plastic containers were also banned. In addition, the recycling law also prohibited landfill disposal of tires, automotive batteries, oil, appliances and yard wastes.

The Town of Beecher has a contract with a private company to provide roadside waste and recycling pick up in the town. Materials are collected biweekly at each property in the town. The town, through its general budget, finances the cost of roadside waste pick up.

Once each year, the town also organizes a “**Clean Up Week**”. This annual event occurs in the spring. Residents can get a voucher from the clerk to take large items to a waste collection facility. Currently the town has no composting or brush collection drop off site.

## Electricity and Natural Gas

Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) supplies the electricity needs for the town's residences, businesses and farms. WPS was formed in 1883 as the Oshkosh Gas Light Company and incorporated as Wisconsin Public Service Corporation in 1922. Today, WPS provides electricity to more than 400,000 customers within an 11,000 square mile, 20 counties service territory, which consists of a large portion of Northeast and Central Wisconsin and a small part of Upper Michigan. WPS operates fossil, nuclear and hydroelectric generating plants to produce electricity along with wind and solar.

Residents maintain individual LP tanks on their property for gas. Many other residents also use wood heating sources. There are no natural gas pipelines in the Town of Beecher.

## Parks

The town maintains several recreation facilities.

- **Beecher Park** is a small park facility with picnic tables located on the same property as the Town Hall.
- The town owns a **boat landing and a small park** on the Menominee River.
- On the shores of Beecher Lake, the town has a **beach, a boat landing** and a 2.5 acre parcel (located across the street from the beach).
- **Public access** to the Menominee River is also at the end of Hilltop Road for fishing, kayak or canoe access.
- Along Peterson Road, near the railroad tracks, there are **two little league baseball fields** situated on approximately 5 acres of town land. At this time neither field is lighted, but the area Little League Organization and School District are considering improvements to the facility
- The town also owns two small irregularly shaped parcels in the **Pike River Flat Plat**, along Park Road near the Pike River.
- Lastly, the town has a 37 acre parcel known as the **Beecher School Forest**, on the east side of USH 141.

Together these facilities include approximately **50 acres of recreation lands**. The town has no plans to sell or otherwise develop these facilities in the immediate future.

**Marinette County** also owns sever hundred acres of forest land in the town. These areas are used for hunting, fishing, hiking and other outdoor recreation pursuits. In addition, the **Miscauno Wildlife Area**, a property maintained and managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, is located in the Town of Beecher.

The Miscauno Wildlife Area includes 635 acres of state owned land. The property includes coniferous swamp and upland forest. Many deer and ruffed grouse are found within the wildlife area. State wildlife areas, like Miscauno, were acquired to preserve an important American heritage of wild lands and wild things for hunters, trappers, hikers, wildlife watchers and all people interested in the out of doors. They help protect and

manage important habitat for wildlife and to help prevent draining, filling and destruction of wetlands. They are also purchased to prevent private blocking of important waterways, game lands and lakes. Wildlife areas, like Miscauno, only have minor facility development like a very small, gravel parking lot. These state and county lands are of critical importance to the tourism industry in Marinette County.

The Beecher-Dunbar-Pembin School District also maintains a 40 acre forest area known locally as the “Pembin School Forest”. This property is located off Beecher lake Road, near Smeester School Road.

The **National Recreation and Park Association** recommends a community standard of 10 acres of local recreation land per 1,200 residents. The current population of the Town of Beecher is 740+ persons. The town’s 50 acres, far exceed this recommendation. In addition, water based recreation opportunities (winter and summer) are abundant in the town, given Beecher Lake and access to the Menominee, Pike and Miscauno Rivers.

Residents of the Town of Beecher have access to two public golf courses.

- The **Four Seasons Resort** is located off Shoreline Drive, 7 miles east of USH 141. This 9 hole course plays to a par 34.
- **Green Acres Golf Course** is located on County Road Z in the Town of Beecher. This 9 hole course offers more than 2,500 yards of play to a par 34.

### **Communications Facilities**

Access to communication facilities is very important in the modern economy. Brightspeed provides telephone service to the town. Radio, television and newspaper service is available in the town from other locations in the state. Satellite TV is also available in the town. Expansion of services will depend on resident demand. All communication services currently serving the town are expected to continue in the future and be expanded as technology and demand dictates. The quality of communication services depends on the capacity of the lines and towers serving the town. Fiber optic is available in limited areas.

One particular area of concern with respect to communication facilities is the availability and demand for **cellular service**. The advent of new communication technologies, such as cell phones, has greatly increased the need for towers to provide receiving and sending capabilities. The federal government formally recognized this need by the passage of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996.

The **Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996** has increased the need for many local governments to examine their zoning ordinances to make sure that they do not discriminate against cellular communications in land use and zoning decisions. Under Section 704 of the act, townships do have the power to regulate the placement, construction and modification of personal wireless facilities, as long as the rules do not unreasonably discriminate between providers or prohibit service.

Currently, there is one cellular tower located in the Town of Beecher. This tower is on Pembine Beecher Town Road, approximately 2 miles west of USH 141, in the northwestern portion of the town. This tower serves residents and passing motorists on the USH 141 corridor. There are no applications pending for additional towers. Town residents do have cellular service coverage from towers located in neighboring communities.

**Tower Location and Coverage** How large is the service area for a single cellular tower? This is a very complicated question to answer. Coverage areas depend on topography and tower height. In order to provide a complete network, towers must be able to “see” one another.

When cellular technology first came about, analog service required towers of a height of 3090 feet or more. These towers could provide coverage within a five mile radius of the tower. Today, new digital technologies, PCS, and the wireless Internet operate at a higher frequency than the older analog towers. This increased frequency reduces the coverage from a five mile radius to a 2-3 mile radius. As a result, there is a need for more towers to serve the same area. If new towers and antennas are needed in the town, the coverage zones will vary with frequency, height, and service type. A radio frequency engineer can determine the exact coverage areas for any new tower or antenna.

There are two “schools” of thought on tower height and location. One “school” prefers the use of several shorter towers in a community; whereas, the other group prefers the use of fewer taller towers. Each of these approaches can provide adequate coverage within a community, but do not necessarily eliminate the need for additional towers.

While the Town of Beecher has only one cellular tower at this time, there are several close by. As technology changes and as demand for service increases, particularly in rural areas away from USH 141, tower demand will soon follow. The Town of Beecher has several options to reduce the coverall numbers of towers needed in the future and to minimize their visual impact. For example, co-location of several antennas on a single tower reduces the need for additional towers. Carriers also are more and more willing to camouflage their towers by locating antenna on church steeples, tall buildings, silos, tall power transmission lines and water towers. Each of these techniques can help to minimize the impact of wireless industry in the Town of Beecher.

**Future Tower Needs in the Town of Beecher** Unfortunately, it is not possible to develop a map of specific locations to site towers in the Town of Beecher. This is because networks provided by different carriers have different location requirements for towers. Moreover, as technologies change and new licenses are granted for additional carriers to move into the area, locations identified on a map would quickly become outdated.

One problem with 1996 Telecommunications act, from a local perspective, is that simply providing coverage is not enough. Communities must provide for networks from competing carriers licenses in an area. The number of licenses granted, and in turn, the number of towers needed is controlled by the FCC.

It is anticipated that in the next few years the primary coverage area for wireless service in the Town of Beecher will continue to be along the USH 141 and CTH Z corridors. Beyond this time frame, coverage will likely extend next to the county trunk lines and waterways and finally to other remote areas of the town. The rate of tower construction will depend on local demand, the number of licenses granted by the FCC and the capacity of new towers to accommodate additional carriers.

### **Childcare Facilities**

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, of the town's 741 residents, 14 percent are under the age of 18. This portion of the local population that has particular service demands (i.e. schools, parks, child care facilities). While school and park facilities are profiled elsewhere in this chapter, this section discusses childcare facilities available to the residents of the Town of Beecher.

There are no commercial childcare facilities located in the Town of Beecher nor are there any plans to build such a facility. However, residents may have informal networks of child care (i.e. family or friends) and some residents may provide childcare from their home for their neighbors.

The nearest commercial childcare centers to the Town of Beecher are found in Pembine, Niagara, Norway, Wausaukee and Iron Mountain, MI. As the towns population grows, it is possible over the 20 year life of this plan a local center may be built to accommodate demand. However, at this time, space is available in the families currently serving the area, though the quantity of available space varies by location and time of year.

### **Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine School District**

The Town of Beecher is served by the Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine School District. This District has a single building for students from K-12. In 1997, a 3.8 million dollar addition was dedicated. The district has **no additional plans to construct other school buildings or to add onto the existing facility**. The school building includes:

- An elementary gymnasium
- A double court high school gymnasium (with a stage)
- 30 classrooms
- Cafeteria
- Library
- Media Center
- Art Room

- Music Room and 2 practice rooms
- Extensive technology department with area for welding, electronics, small engine repair, drafting and computer aided design

The district's curriculum is enhanced by Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS) online courses, and Start College Now classes through Wisconsin Technical Colleges and the Early College Credit Program through Wisconsin Universities as well as offering courses through Bay College.

## **Libraries**

The Town of Beecher is located within the **Marinette County Consolidated Public Library System**. The system consists of headquarters, Stephenson Public Library, and six branch libraries located in Coleman, Crivitz, Goodman, Niagara, Peshtigo and Wausaukee. The branch libraries have limited staff and hours each week. All town residents have access to the shared catalogue of items owned by the system and services provided by any member library.

All of the libraries in Marinette County Consolidated Public Library System facilities are part of a web catalogue that can be accessed 24 hours a day from the Internet. **WISCAT** is the statewide bibliographic database and catalogue for Wisconsin. It contains 6.7 million bibliographic records with local holdings statement for 1,270 libraries of all types throughout Wisconsin. The libraries listed in WISCAT are willing to loan many of the materials through established statewide interlibrary loan channels. WISCAT has been online since the summer of 2000. Users simply connect to the Internet web page, search for the materials they are interested in and place a hold on those materials so that they can be picked up during regular library hours.

Given the improved access to resources via the web catalogue and the interlibrary loan program, in addition to the resources the Internet made available to town residents, it is anticipated that library services will be adequate to meet future demands.

Recently a free library of donated materials has also been made available to residents at the Beecher town hall.

## **Senior and Disabled Care Facilities**

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, 49% of the residents living in the Town of Beecher are age 60 or over. Like youth populations, seniors also demand particular services and housing options to meet their specific needs.

The Town of Beecher does not have any senior housing, assisted living or retirement communities located within its boundaries. Seniors living in the Town of Beecher must be able to live independently or find assistance from family members, friends and neighbors. There are some programs serving Marinette County that provide services and opportunities for older persons living in the Town of Beecher.

If a senior living in the Town of Beecher is unable to live independently or desires a living arrangement with other seniors, he or she can find quality assisted living, nursing homes and retirement homes in other nearby communities. Available space and waiting lists depend on the location and cost of the facility and can fluctuate regularly. Like childcare establishments, providers of senior housing regularly assess the local market conditions to determine if additional facilities or expansion are needed based on local population demands.

Since the town's population base is not large enough to support a local senior care facility, retirement home or nursing home, it is critical that the informal networks of friends, family and support services continue to provide needed assistance to seniors living in the Town of Beecher. To facilitate these efforts, it may be desirable for the town to consider using the town hall on a limited basis as a local senior center. The Town of Beecher must continue to pay particular attention to the special needs of seniors when providing utilities and community facilities.

Programs and services for disabled residents are also provided through Marinette County. Most notably, the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) assists individuals with chronic illness or disability to obtain services needed to remain in their own home or to return to their home. ADRC serves children and adults with long term disability. Services include: home healthcare, transportation, respite care, dental care, equipment, home weatherization and remodeling, vans and lifts, therapy, medical bills and counseling.

County programs and services provide vital services that make independent living possible. Contact ADRC in Marinette.

### **Cemeteries**

Often overlooked, cemeteries are an important facility every community must provide. There are **no cemeteries** located in Beecher. The town pays a fee to the Beecher-Pembine Cemetery Association that permits residents from the Town of Beecher to use the Pembine facility. There is ample space in the Pembine Cemetery to meet future needs. The Town of Beecher has no plans to establish its own cemetery.

### **Health Care Facilities**

There are no health care facilities located in the Town of Beecher. However, given the Town of Beecher's easy access to USH 141, residents of the town can reach several primary and advanced specialty health care facilities located elsewhere in the county. The population in the Town of Beecher is not large enough to support its own hospital, primary care or clinic facility. **The nearest major medical centers and hospitals are approximately 25-50 miles away** in Crivitz and Marinette, WI or Iron Mountain, MI.

Nearby facilities provide a range of primary and specialized medical services including; trauma care, neonatal care, rehabilitation, laser vision correction, orthopedic care, cardiac care and cancer treatment. Moreover, these facilities pride themselves on their efforts to maintain a quality care environment through continued efforts to improve facilities and services.

### **Police Protection**

The Town of Beecher does not have a police station or its own police department. The Marinette County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) provides police protection services to the town. MCSO is located on University Avenue in the City of Marinette. MCSO provides 24-hour primary emergency response service to county residents.

MCSO maintains enhanced 911 emergency response services throughout Marinette County. The enhanced system provides an address and directions to all calls received. The department hopes to implement a map based system in the future. The 911 Communications Center is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The telecommunicators are responsible for answering 911 calls for the entire county of Marinette.

MCSO also maintains a jail facility in the City of Marinette. The County developed a new facility, the Marinette County Law Enforcement Center, which has a capacity of 169 inmates.

When requested by the Marinette County Sheriff's Department, the Town of Beecher may also receive back-up assistance from nearby city and village police departments.

### **Fire and Rescue**

The Town of Beecher participates in the Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine Fire District, a multi-jurisdictional fire protection service covering the Town of Pembine, Town of Dunbar and Town of Beecher. This department provides on call volunteer based fire service to residents in need. The cost for fire equipment and maintenance is evenly split between the three towns, with each town paying 1/3 of all costs.

The fire station is located in Pembine on USH 141. The department has 18 trained volunteer firefighters. Given the central location of the station, the volunteers are from all three communities.

The fire department provides 911 based emergency service dispatched by Marinette County. The response time within the Town of Beecher varies depending on the location of the call and the time of day. Typical response times average between 7-8 minutes.

The department has a variety of specialized equipment to meet fire service needs. Specifically, the department has:

- 1983 Ford Tanker

- 1998 GMC Van
- 2001 International Pumper
- 2003 Ford Brush Truck
- 2012 International Pumper/Tanker

The fire department annually considers needs for additional equipment and vehicle replacement and upgrades. Generally, the department is on a 20 year rotation for major vehicle replacements. Each year, the fire department meets with the 3 towns to request funds. Upcoming major planned purchases include a replacement tanker within 10 years.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources also provides Forest fire protection throughout Marinette County, which is located within an Intensive Forest Protection Area. The WDNR provides for fire detection through aircraft and fire lookout towers and Pembine Fire District, providing grant opportunities, training and equipment.

### **Ambulance and First Responders**

The Beecher-Pembine-Dunbar area is served by a Joint First Responders Unit and Joint Ambulance Service, including 6 trained EMT's, 4 First Responders and 4 Ambulance Drivers (who have no medical training). The joint unit has 2 ambulances (2012 and 2021 Chevy Lifeline) located in a building adjacent to the Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine Fire Station on USH 141. The First Responders and Ambulance Service are financed equally by each community and from user fees.

### **Town Facilities**

Town facilities generally include such things as fire stations, meeting halls and other town properties. The Town of Beecher has a town facility located near the intersection of CTH Z and USH 141. The facility was constructed in 2004 which includes a meeting hall with a kitchen area (no stove), bathrooms, janitor and storage rooms, garage facility with 4 bays. There is also an unheated 2 bay steel building for additional storage and a sand storage facility.

Besides the town hall and other buildings off CTH Z, the Town of Beecher also owns a few scattered properties, including a beach, 2 boat landings, a school forest, baseball field and town parks. These properties are profiled in the Parks section of this document. The town has no plans to acquire additional property. The town plans to continue to use properties it owns in the same manner it has in the past.

### **Utilities and Community Facilities Map**

The Utilities and Communities Facilities Map provided on the next page illustrates the location of utilities and community facilities in the Town of Beecher. The map identifies the location of the Town Hall, parks, Miscauno Wildlife Area and other community facilities serving the town.

## **Utilities and Community Facilities Funding Options**

Many of the utilities and community facilities serving the Town of Beecher are provided by other governments and agencies (i.e. county and school districts). As such, they are funded through their general budgets and funding through tax revenues and referendums.

The Town of Beecher is constantly seeking opportunities to finance needed utilities and community facilities. There are numerous grant and loan programs that the town may seek to help finance needed improvements. These programs are available through the State of Wisconsin and the U.S. Federal Government. What follows is a description of some of the major opportunities available to the town. A major obstacle facing the town when seeking these funds is the town's relatively high median household income. This situation hinders its ability to receiving some forms of funding that are based on need.

## **Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant Program**

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce administers the **Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant Program** to provide cities, villages and towns with a population of less than 50,000 and all counties except Milwaukee, Dane and Waukesha to obtain matching grants for a number of public works projects. Eligible activities include: the installation, upgrade or expansion of municipal drinking water and wastewater systems, installation or repair of publicly owned telecommunications systems, street repair, storm sewer systems, fire stations, community centers and handicap access

## **Utilities and Community Facilities Map**

improvements. Successful applications are based on a distress score, documentation of need, ability to repay, matching fund availability and project readiness.

### **State Trust Fund Loan Program**

The **Board of Commissioners of Public Lands** provides this loan program with terms of up to 20 years and deeply discounted interest rates. Loans may be used for a variety of purposes including: road improvements, community centers/halls, trail development and property acquisition. The funds available fluctuate annually.

### **Rural Development Community Facility Grants**

The **USDA Rural Development** also offers grants to communities seeking to build or improve their community buildings (i.e. halls, libraries, community center and fire stations). These grants awarded to communities with a population up to 10,000 based on a competitive application process.

### **Fire Administration Grants**

The **Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)** offers over \$00,000,000 in annual grant awards to fire departments in six specific areas: training, fitness programs, vehicles, firefighting equipment and Fire Prevention Programs. Applicants from communities, which serve a population of less than 50,000 must provide a 10% match.

### **Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements**

Utilities and community facilities can dictate future planning for a community if capacity, location and services are not adequate to support development. Therefore, it is important to inventory existing utilities and community facilities and understand how these facilities will be provided over the planning period. Furthermore, utilities and community facilities have a direct impact on the other elements of the comprehensive plan. In particular, the Housing, Economic Development, Land Use and Intergovernmental Coordination Elements are most directly impacted by utilities and community facilities.

### **Housing**

Improvements such as roads, recreational facilities and schools all need to be coordinated with the housing decisions and vice versa. The best method to coordinate improvements is to follow the land use pattern presented on the Land Use Plan Map as closely as possible and plan for future improvements. This approach will greatly enhance the efficiency of capital improvements expenditures. To provide further assistance in these efforts, the town should consider the use of a capital improvement plan as a tool to help organize and plan for future capital expenditures.

## **Economic Development**

The availability of utilities like electricity and communications services is critical to economic development. This infrastructure is needed to support growth in the Town of Beecher. Therefore, the goals and objectives of this chapter seek to maintain and where feasible, improve local utilities and community facilities to provide some additional economic development opportunities in the Town of Beecher.

## **Land Use Element**

Land use dictates the need for utilities and community facilities. Inversely, the availability of utilities and community facilities can dictate where development can and should occur. The Land Use Plan Map was developed after careful consideration of where utilities and community facilities are now available or will be available within the planning period. In addition, the Land Use Plan Map carefully considers the economic feasibility of utilities and community facility extensions to serve areas planned for future development. Areas where the extension of communication services, power supplies or the like are cost prohibitive and not encouraged for future residential, commercial or industrial development.

## **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

As is obvious from this chapter, utilities and community facilities used by town residents are not provided solely by the Town of Beecher. Utilities and community facilities that serve the area are also provided by Marinette County, private companies and neighboring communities. It is important that these utilities and community facilities continue to effectively serve the Town of Beecher. Therefore, continued coordination is essential to ensure that development in the Town of Beecher is compatible with local utility and community facility capacities. Goals and objectives included in this chapter, as well as the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element, support continued coordination to efficiently provide needed utilities and community facilities to the Town of Beecher.

## **Goals and Objectives**

It is the goal of the town that all future utilities and community facilities needs will be met. Though many of these facilities will be located outside of the town limits, they will be easily accessible in nearby towns, cities and villages. The services provided will also meet the special needs of the elderly and youth populations in the town.

Because the Town of Beecher has a minimal amount of control over resource allocations in neighboring communities and the school district, the goals and objectives provided in Chapter 12 are related to actions that the town can control. The Town of Beecher will work in accordance with the Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the Wisconsin “Smart Growth” Law with neighboring communities and school districts to ensure that adequate community and utilities facilities are available to serve the area.

## **7.0 AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>66-67</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Vision</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Agricultural Resources</b>	<b>69</b>
Right to Farm	69
Productive Agricultural Areas	69
Soils Association Map	70
The Farming Dynamic	72
CAFOs	72
The Future of Farming	73
Natural Features Map	74
<b>Natural Resources and Environmental Concerns</b>	<b>75</b>
Upper Green Bay Basin Integrated Management Plan	75
Pike Wild River Project Master Plan	76
Menominee River Natural Resource Area Master Plan	77
Northeast Sands Ecological Landscape Master Plan	77
<b>Inventory of Natural Resources</b>	<b>77</b>
Climate	
Geology & Topography	78
Surface Water and Fisheries	78
Surface Water	79
Shorelines	80
Wetlands	81
Floodplains	81
Groundwater & Aquifers	81
Forests	82
Ground Covers Map	85
Wildlife Habitats	86
Threatened Species	87
Exotic and Invasive Species	87
Mining Resources	88
Soils & Development	88
Air Quality	89
<b>Historical and Cultural Resources</b>	<b>89</b>
Four Seasons Resort	90
Truss Bridges	90
<b>Issues and Concerns</b>	<b>90</b>
Aging Septic Systems	90
Protection of Natural Resources	91

<b>Current Policies &amp; Programs</b>	<b>92</b>
Zoning	93
WPDES	93
Land & Water Resource Plan	94
CRP	94
EQIP	94
Beecher and Upper Lakes Public Inland Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District	95
<b>Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements</b>	<b>95</b>
Land Use	95
Housing	96
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>96</b>

## 7. AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Introduction

The Town of Beecher is literally defined by its natural resources. The rivers, wetlands, forests and protected county and state lands establish the character of the community, provide a sense of peace, determine the potential for future development and support the local economy. This is reflected in the values expressed in Chapter 1. As such, this chapter is the focal point of the plan. The information presented in this chapter was the foundation for preparing the *Future Land Use Maps*.

This chapter provides an inventory of existing agricultural, natural and cultural resources. In addition, issues associated with these resources are discussed. A vision, with supporting goals and objectives is also presented.

### Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Vision

Residents of the Town of Beecher enjoy a high quality of life enhanced by the town's rural character and north woods charm. Public and privately owned forested areas, the Pike River, Menominee River and Beecher Lake are an integral part of the landscape – blending harmoniously with residential development. Recreational opportunities, including fishing, hunting, hiking, cross country skiing and snowmobiling are abundant.

### Agricultural Resources <sup>1</sup>

As a north woods community, farming is less important to the local economy than in other rural towns in the central and southern portions of Wisconsin. Still, approximately 1.3% of the Town of Beecher is classified as row crops and another 8.6% is considered grassland. In 1990, there were 2,016 acres of farmland on the tax rolls. By 1997, this amount had decreased 11% to 1,794 acres. Table 8 provides a comparison of land cover for the Town of Beecher to surrounding towns. The Town of Beecher has more farmland than surrounding towns, but still a small percentage of all land area. The *Ground Cover Map* and *Natural Features Map* provided in this chapter illustrate the location of farmland in the town.

Rural Sociology and Agricultural and Applied Economics at UW Madison and UW Cooperative Extension. Additional information is available online at [www.wisc.edu/pats](http://www.wisc.edu/pats)

---

<sup>1</sup> This section is based on several studies and documents produced by the Program on Agricultural Technology Studies. The program is a joint program of the Departments of

**Table 8: LAND COVER**

<b>Town Name</b>	<b>Land Area (sq miles)</b>	<b>Farmland</b>	<b>Urban (subdiv/Comm)</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>
Beecher	48.5	9.9%	0.2%	65.4%	23.4%
Pembine	66.3	6.7%	0.1%	71.7%	20.0%
Dunbar	104.4	5.8%	.01%	71.9%	22.1%
Amberg	71.8	8.3%	0.1%	65.9%	25.2%
Athelstane	106.2	8.7%	0.0%	69.8%	21.1%

Source: 1993 Land Cover Data, Wisconsin Town Land Use Data Project: Program on Agricultural Technology Studies UW Madison

### **The Right to Farm**

Wisconsin has a right to farm law protecting farmers from nuisance lawsuits related to typical farm noise and odors. The Town of Beecher supports this law. Fortunately, since the town has a limited number of farm areas, all of which are well buffered by forested areas, conflicts between farming and residential uses are virtually nonexistent.

### **Productive Agricultural Areas**

**Prime farmlands** (productive agricultural areas) **are determined by soil types** that are capable of producing high yields of crops under a high level of management. *Productive soils are considered to be those soils that are capable of producing an average of 4 tons per acre per year of grass-legume hay or 100 bushels per acre of corn.* The United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service considers a “high level of management” to include provisions for adequate drainage, appropriate tillage, planting and seeding with high yielding varieties, control of weeds, diseases, insects, optimum fertilizer application and timely, efficient harvesting techniques.

The *Soil Associations Map* illustrates the four associations found in the Town of Beecher. Table 9 provides additional information about the characteristics of these soils. None of the soils found in the Town of Beecher are considered productive soils based on the standards stipulated above.

## **Soils Association Map**

**Table 9: SOIL CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Soil Type and Location</b>	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Qualities and Concerns</b>
<p><b>Menahga Association</b></p> <p>Found along USH 141 and areas to the west toward Smeester School Road</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessively drained</li> <li>• Deep, sandy soil</li> <li>• Nearly level and gently sloping in some areas</li> <li>• Rapid permeability</li> <li>• Surface runoff is slow</li> </ul>	<p><b>Well suited for corn, small grain, grasses, legumes for hay, and pasture.</b></p> <p><u>Management Concerns:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crop yields are limited by low available water capacity</li> </ul> <p>Water erosion and soil blowing are hazards</p>
<p><b>Padus-Pence-Greenwood Association</b></p> <p>Far western portion of the town</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly level and gently sloping</li> <li>• Well drained soil</li> <li>• Most areas used for woodlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation tillage, winter cover crops, contour strip cropping, field windbreaks and grassed waterways help prevent soil loss</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ishpeming-Michigamme-Menahga Association</b></p> <p>Found in north of CTH Z and in the southern portion of the town</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well drained</li> <li>• Sandy and loamy soils</li> <li>• The loamy soil is nearly level</li> <li>• Gently sloping</li> <li>• Some undrained areas are used for pasture or as wildlife habitat</li> </ul>	<p><b>Well suited for trees</b></p> <p><u>Management Concerns:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seedling mortality resulting from droughtiness</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emmet-Menahga-Mancelona Association</b></p> <p>Located in the central portions of the town and along the Menominee River</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly level to steep slope</li> <li>• Well drained to excessively well drained</li> <li>• Most areas are used as woodland</li> <li>• Mancelona and Menahga soils are poorly suited for septic tank absorption fields</li> <li>• Emmet soils are moderately suitable for dwellings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Suited for dwellings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Septic tank absorption field drain satisfactorily but can pollute groundwater because of rapid permeability</li> </ul>

## **The Changing Farming Dynamic <sup>2</sup>**

The loss of farms and farmland is a problem that affects all Wisconsin communities. However the pace and severity of agricultural decline varies considerably across the state. Fortunately, the Town of Beecher has lost little farmland when compared to other rural towns in Wisconsin.

The Town of Beecher understands the challenges associated with modern farming operations. To support the local farm economy, the Town of Beecher will:

- Support local farmers “Right to Farm”;
- Seek to direct new residential development to the edges of rural farmland areas or to properties that are difficult to farm given their irregular shape or topography;
- Provide farmers with information about private (i.e. land trusts), state and federal assistance programs.

### **Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)**

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (farms with over 1,000 animal units. An “animal unit” is equivalent to 1,000 pounds), or “mega farms”, are increasing in number in Wisconsin. In 1985 there was one such operation in the state. By 1990, 24 operations and by 2000 there were 77 mega farms in Wisconsin. Generally, CAFOs locate in rural areas where conflicts with neighboring property owners can be minimized.

**CAFOs often bring advantages and disadvantages** to a community.

- From an economic standpoint, CAFOs generate jobs and taxes in a municipality.
- Proponents also argue that animals in CAFOs are generally cleaner and better cared for than animals on smaller farms.
- Opponent’s site concerns related to manure management, odor, traffic, neighboring land value and lighting issues as concerns which must be addressed to successfully locate a CAFO in a community.

**Given Beecher’s limited cropland capacities for growing feed for animals and the high potential for groundwater contamination, it is not anticipated that a CAFO would locate in the town.** Moreover, the town has a limited water capacity that would

---

<sup>2</sup> This section is based on several studies and documents produced by the Program on Agricultural Technology Studies. The program is a joint program of the Departments of Rural Sociology and Agricultural and Applied Economics at UW Madison and UW Cooperative Extension. Additional information is available online at [www.wisc.edu/pats](http://www.wisc.edu/pats)

likely be inadequate to meet the needs of a CAFO. For these reasons, the town will encourage CAFOs to locate elsewhere in the county and region.

### **The Future of Farming in Beecher**

The primary issue with the long term sustainability of farmland in the Town of Beecher is that aging individual farmers own much of the remaining farmland. Faced with development pressures, retirement needs, crop productivity and management constraints, and a worsening farm economy, farmers see the sale of their land for development as an attractive financial opportunity. As people “discover” Beecher as a quiet, attractive, north woods community for vacation and retirement homes, farmers will likely find people interested in purchasing their land for development.

Today, farmland areas in the Town of Beecher are very limited. Over the 20 year planning period, it is anticipated that most of the remaining family farms will either be sold for residential development or sold as open hunting land.

## **Natural Features Map**

## Natural Resources & Environmental Concerns <sup>3</sup>

Natural resources help to determine the potential for development. Geology, topography, drainage patterns, floodplains, wetlands and soil characteristics are among the natural features that determine if an area is physically suitable for specific types of development. Likewise, natural resources provide important recreational benefits for hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and other outdoor activities.

Because natural resources are so integral to the character and future of the Town of Beecher, this chapter attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of local natural resources. The overview is based heavily on data available from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the Marinette County Land and Water Conservation Department. These two agencies work cooperatively to protect many of the natural areas in the Town of Beecher. The town supports their efforts.

### ***Natural Resource Protection is a Local Priority***

*Throughout the planning process, residents have consistently expressed the importance of local natural resources. They contribute to the local quality of living by providing scenic surrounds and abundant recreation opportunities*

To begin this portion of the chapter, summaries are provided below of three WDNR plans that impact the Town of Beecher.

### **Upper Green Bay Basin Integrated Management Plan**

In 2001, the WDNR released The **Upper Green Bay Basin Integrated Management Plan**. The purpose of this report was to satisfy the requirements of the Clean Water Act, Section 208, Area Wide Water Quality Planning Program. The management plan identified 10 priorities for partners (i.e. private organizations, state agencies, communities and citizens) in the basin to address:

1. Shoreline Development Planning
2. Non Point Source Pollution and Resource Education
3. User Conflicts with Natural Resources
4. The Role of Special Interests, Money and Politics
5. Habitat Loss and Fragmentation of Habitat
6. Retaining the Rural Character of the North woods
7. Impacts of Human Population Growth on Natural Resources
8. Industrial and Municipal Discharges to Surface Waters
9. Inadequate Zoning and Zoning Enforcement
10. Lack of Comprehensive Land Use Planning and Mechanisms to Guide Implementation

<sup>3</sup> Information used to develop this section was obtained from: *Soil Survey of Marinette County*, United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, 1991. The *Upper Green Bay Basin Integrated Management Plan*, WDNR, February 2001.

**What is a Basin?**

A basin is all the land drained by a river and its branches. The Upper Green Bay Basin includes all the land drained by the Menominee, Peshtigo and Oconto Rivers.

The Peshtigo, Oconto and Menominee Rivers are the three main rivers in the Upper Green Bay Basin. The basin also includes nearly 1,000 miles of trout streams, some of which flow through the Town of Beecher. The management plan includes a series of Objectives to provide direction for the WDNR and partners over the next few years. The objectives support the priorities described above.

Through the WDNR efforts to protect the Upper Green Bay Basin, the Town of Beecher will gain the following long term benefits:

- Preservation of important wildlife habitats;
- Maintenance of hunting and fishing opportunities; and
- Preservation of open, undeveloped areas that contribute to the town's rural character.

**Pike Wild River Project Master Plan <sup>4</sup>**

This plan addressed the north, south and main branches of the Pike River as it meanders 61.3 miles through primarily undeveloped areas. The North Branch begins at the outlet of North Pond in the Town of Goodman. The South Branch begins at the outlet of Coleman Lake in the Town of Goodman. The North and South Branches combine approximately one half mile west of Amberg to form the Main Branch of the Pike. The Main Branch flows easterly and eventually empties into the Menominee River in the Town of Wausaukee.

The Pike River is characterized by rock outcroppings and forested rolling terrain. Numerous rapids and waterfalls are found throughout the length of the river. Rock bluffs provide scenic views of the river in many places.

The primary goals of *the Pike Wild River Project Master Plan* are to:

- Preserve and protect the Pike River in a free flowing, natural state by preventing development adjacent to the river and by restoring sections of the river to an undeveloped condition.
- Protect and manage the natural resources associated with the Pike River; and
- Provide compatible outdoor recreation opportunities.

---

<sup>4</sup> Information taken from Pike Wild River Project Master Plan as approved by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on May 10, 1989.

## **Menominee River Natural Resource Area Master Plan <sup>5</sup>**

The Menominee River Natural Resource Area (MRNRA) includes the Wisconsin portion of 4,450 acres of land purchased by the Richard King Mellon Foundation and the Conservation Fund in 1997 from Wisconsin Public Service Corporation. The Menominee River, which forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Michigan, passes through the center of the property – resulting in about 5 miles of publicly owned river frontage in each state.

In the Town of Beecher, areas north of CTH Z, adjacent to the Menominee River, are addressed specifically by this master plan. Pemene Falls is identified as a unique feature in the property.

The management vision for the area is for natural resource management and public recreation. Currently the property is especially popular for deer and small game hunting, fishing, hiking, birding and canoeing. These activities have led to some problems such as the cutting of trees to clear shooting lanes, erection of permanent deer blinds and the use of all terrain vehicles (ATV). There also has been disposal of unwanted household appliances, tires and rubbish on the property. Camping, which has always been prohibited has been documented on the site.

In the future, the MRNA will continue to be open for public use. Vehicle access will be allowed in designated areas and former logging roads will be open to foot travel only. Hunting and fishing will remain important recreational pursuits on the property, and a limited amount of primitive camping will be provided. Hiking trails to some of the more scenic areas, such as Pemene Falls will be provided with several small parking areas for visitors to the property.

## **Northeast Sands Ecological Landscape Master Plan**

Information can be found at [dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fl/PropertyPlanning/NortheastSands](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fl/PropertyPlanning/NortheastSands).

## **Inventory of Natural Resources**

### **Climate**

Winters in Marinette County are very cold and the short summers are warm. The short freeze free period during the summer limits cropping mainly to corn, small grain, forage and some vegetables. Precipitation is fairly well distributed throughout the year, reaching a slight peak in the summer. Snow blankets the ground much of time from late fall through early spring. This is good news for the tourist economy that depends on snowfall to bring snowmobilers, cross country skiers and snowshoe enthusiasts to the area.

---

<sup>5</sup> Information taken from the Executive Summary of the Menominee River Natural Resource Area Master Plan as adopted by the Department of Natural Resources in March of 2000.

## **Geology & Topography**

Under Marinette County is igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rock. The bedrock is overlain by glacial deposits, which range in thickness from 0 to 350 feet. The topography of the Town of Beecher was largely created by deposition of glacial drift from continental ice sheets. The last glacial stage occurred some 11,000 years ago.

The town's topography is characterized by rolling hills, plain meadows, lush and forested wetland and river systems.

## **Surface Water and Fisheries**

Beecher Town has a number of lakes and streams within its Boundary. In addition, the Menominee River forms the entire eastern boundary of approximately seven miles.

The Town has nine named lakes. Most are small and six of them do not have public access. These six, with the exception of Miscauno Pond, range from only one to six acres and have a depth of three to 24 feet. These lakes contain warm water species including largemouth bass, northern pike and pan fish. Miscauno Pond is 23 acres, located on the Miscauno Creek and contains trout.

The three lakes with public access are Town Corner, Beecher and Upper Lakes. Town Corner, although the largest lake in the Town at 171 acres is very shallow, nine foot maximum depth, and does experience occasional winterkill. The warm water fishery is limited but the lake may produce some northern pike, largemouth bass and pan fish. Bullheads have dominated the fishery in the past. The lake is very scenic and does provide wildlife habitat.

Beecher and Upper Lake are connected and have an excellent largemouth bass, northern pike and pan fish populations.

Table 10 summarizes the major named streams in Beecher Town. Primary trout water includes approximately five miles of the North Branch Pike River. The Pike is one of only three Wild Rivers in the State of Wisconsin. It is a Class I trout stream and contains an excellent population of both brook and brown trout. Other Class I trout water include the Miscauno Creek and both the North Branch Miscauno and South Branch Miscauno which form it. These streams primarily contain brook trout but also some brown trout. The other Class I trout water is 3-mile long Mullaney Creek, which contains brook trout.

Two no trout water streams in Beecher Town include McAllister and Slough Creeks.

By far the primary warm water river in Beecher Town is the Menominee River which forms the eastern boundary of the Town. At the northeastern corner of the Town is Pemene Falls, a beautiful cascade of water and a possible spawning site for walleyes. The river flows southward through the Town for about seven miles around Miscauno

Island and enters the head of Chalk Hill Flowage. This section of river contains and excellent fishery including walleyes, smallmouth bass, northern pike and pan fish. The Department of Natural Resources is currently trying to restore lake sturgeon through a stocking program into this section of river. Good public access is available to this section of river.

**Surface Water (Navigable Waters)**

The Town of Beecher has many beautiful water features that contribute significantly to the character of the community (see Tables 10 and 11). The **Menominee River** forms the eastern boundary of the Town of Beecher. These rivers, not only define the physical limits of the town, but also contribute significantly to the character of the community.

The Menominee River and its tributaries, including the Pike River, along with several feeder streams, are important wildlife habitats and corridors. They also provide many recreation opportunities for residents and tourists.

The Marinette County Land and Water Conservation Department and the WDNR work cooperatively to protect the quality of these rivers.

**Table 10: Rivers & Streams**

Name	Attributes	Concerns
Menominee River	Capable of supporting a community of warm water sport fish and serves as a spawning area for warm water sport fish.	Faces issues of point source pollution for upstream communities and paper mills; Active mine exploration in MI along river is threat for negative impacts on river
Pike River	Cold Water Community <b>Class 1 Trout Stream</b> – population sustained by natural reproduction	Non-point source is the primary potential for pollution and use problems
Beecher Creek	5 Mile Cold Water Community <b>Outstanding Water Resource</b> – has the highest value as a resource, excellent water quality and high quality fisheries. Does not receive wastewater discharges or point source discharges. <b>Class 1 Trout Stream</b> – population sustained by natural reproduction	Non-point source is the primary potential for pollution and use problems
McAllister Creek	4 Mile Warm Water Forage (fish for food) Community <b>Outstanding Water Resource Class 1 Trout Stream</b>	Non-point source is the primary potential for pollution and use problems

N Branch Miscauno Brook	3 Mile Cold Water Community	Beaver dams (threat to trout) and non-point source pollution that may result in sedimentation and fish migration interference.
S Branch Miscauno Brook	5 Mile Cold Water Community	Beaver dams and non-point source pollution that may lead to sedimentation and fish migration interference
Mullany Creek	3 Mile Cold Water Community Class 1 Trout Stream	Beaver dams (threat to trout) and non-point source pollution that may result in sedimentation and fish migration interference.
Slough Creek	4 Mile Cold Water Forage (fish for food) Community	Non-point source pollution is greatest threat to long term use

Source: Upper Green Bay Basin Integrated Management Plan, 2001

**Table 11: Lakes and Ponds**

Name	Public Access	Section	Surface Area	Max Depth	N Pike	Trout	Bass	Panfish
Beecher Lake	Y	28	34ac	47 ft	X		X	X
Upper Lake	Y	28	21 ac	18 ft			X	X
Town Corner Lake	Y	31	174 ac	8 ft	X		X	X
Mullaney Lake	N	27	4 ac	24 ft				
Clarey Lake	N	27	4 ac	3 ft				
Miscauno Pond	N	16	24 ac	9 ft		X		
McAllister Pond	N	19	4 ac	6 ft	X			
Barr Lake	N	32	7 ac	16 ft	X			X

Source: Marinette County Plat Book 2021-2022

### Shorelines

Given the abundance of lakes, creeks and rivers in Beecher, there is much shore land in the town. The Shore land/Wetland Ordinance adopted by Marinette County regulates shore land uses and development by requiring a permit for any filling or grading activity

within 300' of any navigable stream as a minimum to protect the stream from harmful impacts. The Town of Beecher supports the county's efforts to protect shore lands.

## **Wetlands**

Due to their many benefits, County and State regulations place limitations on the development and use of wetlands and shore lands. **Nearly a quarter of all land in the Town of Beecher is classified as wetland.** These areas are protected under the Marinette County **Shore Land/Wetland Ordinance**. Wetland areas are found near the town's rivers and streams. The Ground Cover Map also illustrates the locations of other wetland areas (i.e. lowland shrub, emergent/wet meadow areas).

### **Benefits of Wetlands**

- Wetlands act as a natural filtering system for sediment and nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrates
- Wetlands serve as a natural buffer, protecting shorelines and stream banks from erosion
- Wetlands are also essential in providing fish & wildlife habitat, flood control and groundwater recharge

## **Floodplains**

Floodplains serve important functions related to flood and erosion control, water quality, groundwater recharge and fish and wildlife habitats. Areas susceptible to flooding are considered unsuitable for development because of risks to lives and property. Floodplain maps, based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps indicate that floodplain areas in the Town of Beecher are situated adjacent to area creeks and rivers. **Floodplain areas are illustrated on the *Natural Features Map*.**

Marinette County has adopted a floodplain zoning ordinance requiring certain land use controls in designated flood hazard areas. The existence of this ordinance makes residents of the town eligible to participate in the Federal Flood Insurance Administration's Insurance Program. The flood insurance program requires all structures construction or purchased in a designated flood hazard area, with loans from federally insured banks, to be covered by a flood insurance policy. **Generally, areas susceptible to flooding are considered unsuitable for development due to potential health risks and property damage.**

## **Groundwater & Aquifers**

**Groundwater is the source of the water supply in the Town of Beecher.** Water is supplied from the glacial drift, which overlies crystalline bedrock of Precambrian age.

Three types of glacial drift are found within the town, each producing different levels of groundwater, depending on sand and gravel content. Outwash has high levels of sand and gravel, producing high volumes of groundwater, and is found in certain areas in the

town. Two north-south trending end moraines are located in the town, and depending on sand and gravel content, can be good sources of groundwater. The majority of the town is covered with ground moraine, which contains varying amounts of clay, sand and gravel.

Recharge to the glacial drift aquifer is from local precipitation and then moves toward lakes, streams and wetlands, and ultimately to the Menominee River and Green Bay.

**The overall quality of groundwater in the Town of Beecher is generally considered to be of good quality.** Groundwater is hard and often has high iron concentrations.

Since wells are generally shallow and recharge is fairly quick through the glacial drift, contamination risks from land use practices are the major threat to groundwater resources. **Potential contaminant sources include:**

- Landfills (open and closed)
- Nitrates from failed septic systems
- Salvage operations
- Farm Fields (nitrate concentrations and pesticides)
- Leaking Underground and above ground storage tanks
- Road salt
- Surface spills or dumping of contaminants like motor oil
- Industrial discharge

All of these sources are presently regulated or are being addressed through ordinances or technical assistance services by various county and state agencies.

As long as residential densities remain low and high capacity pumping is not required within the town, over pumping of the aquifer should not become an issue.

The Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey prepared a statewide map of groundwater susceptibility for contamination. This map is intended to illustrate the ease with which a contaminant can enter the groundwater based on depth to bedrock, bedrock type, depth to water table, soil characteristics and surface deposits. Although the map is not intended for site specific use, it indicates that area groundwater is very susceptible to contamination. This does not mean that groundwater is polluted, only that the likelihood of it being polluted from within the town is highly likely. As a result, it is important that residents and business owners understand this risk. It is also possible groundwater could be contaminated by a pollutant entering the groundwater in an area of recharge beyond the town limits.

## **Forests**

Prior to settlement, the vegetation of Marinette County was mostly forested with mixed conifer-northern hardwood forest. As people moved to the area, some forests were cleared for agricultural crops and development. Fortunately, many of the forested areas of the county remain. In the Town of Beecher, 65.4% of the town is considered forested. The county owns approximately 40% of all forested areas in the Town of Beecher.

### **Marinette County Forest Land**

Marinette County owns more than 8,000 acres in the Town of Beecher. These forests are used extensively for hunting (waterfowl, deer, grouse and other small game) and non-hunting activities including birding, hiking and fishing. These lands are of critical importance to the tourism industry in Marinette County.

The Town of Beecher Natural Features Map delineates the location of woodland areas, including wooded wetlands. The *Ground Cover Map* provides a detail of the types of forests (and other land covers) found in Beecher. Most of the forested areas are classified as aspen, coniferous, mixed deciduous/coniferous and mixed/other broad leaved deciduous.

Privately owned forestlands are eligible for protection through the **WDNR Managed Forest Law**. This program is available to landowners who own more than 10 acres of contiguous forestland. Through the program, landowners agree to manage their forestland for hunting, fishing, wildlife and recreation purposes and not permit development in exchange for significant tax credits. Additional information is available on the internet at [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry). Many town landowners currently participate in this program and these acres are shown on the Future Land Use Maps. In addition to the Managed Forest Law program which helps protect existing woodlands, other programs such as the **Conservation Reserve Program** and the **Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program** can help with the re-establishment of forests.

Fragmentation is the primary threat to forested areas across Wisconsin (see wildlife habitat section of this chapter). To preserve the town's rural character and the forested areas that remain, it is important for the residents to be good land stewards with the remaining acreage while encouraging residents to replant other areas. Areas of marginally productive farmland or sensitive areas near streams and wetlands could be reforested. Also areas that are part of the open space in a conservation subdivision could be reforested.

Additional threats to forest resources include forest health issues, exotic invasive species, destructive cutting, conflicting recreational demands, and wild land-urban interface (fire) issues.

Oak Wilt, Two-Lined Chestnut Borer, Gypsy Moth and Forest Tent Caterpillar, and many other forest pests can affect the health of the forest resource, and can have significant social and economic impacts as well. Maintaining healthy forests can serve to reduce pest outbreaks and limit any damage that may result.

Wild land fires continue to be a common occurrence across the landscape in Wisconsin, and in Marinette County. During 2003 approximately 90 such fires occurred in Marinette

County burning an average of 1.5 acres each. Although the far majority of wild land fires are small in size, the threat to human lives, property and forests are all real. Open burning is the single largest cause of wild land fires in Marinette County and in Wisconsin.

Moreover, increasing land values and property taxes have forced many landowners across Wisconsin to divide and sell off large blocks of their land in smaller parcels. Increased timber harvesting is often another result of the need to quickly come up with cash in order to pay increased taxes. Often such harvesting occurs without addressing the long-term sustainable forestry and other environmental issues.

The current trends toward moderate population growth and difficult economic times will place continued and conflicting demands upon the forest resource. These trends will increase the importance of wise land use planning and need to ensure long-term sustainable use of the forest resource.

Given the importance of the town's forests, the practice of sustainable forestry is encouraged.

## Ground Covers Map

## Wildlife Habitats

Unfortunately there is not a source of comprehensive habitat information specific to the Town of Beecher. Information is available for Marinette County and the Upper Green Bay Basin, but these sources of data cover a broad area to protect habitats from encroachment.

### **Wildlife Habitat Fragmentation**

A primary threat to wildlife is fragmentation – the breaking up of larger habitat areas into smaller sections. Fragmentation decreases wildlife population sizes, isolates habitat areas and creates more edges – where two dissimilar habitats meet (i.e. wetlands and residential subdivisions).

Resident observation is the best available resource about local wildlife habitat areas. Primary wildlife habitat areas correspond to the forested areas shown on the Natural Features Map. These areas provide food and cover for deer, raccoons, skink and other small creatures common in the area. The local farm fields also serve as a food source for deer, sand hill cranes, turkeys and waterfowl in the area. Farmland and grasslands are also a very important local wildlife habitat that provides travel corridors between waterways and woodlands.

The Menominee and Pike Rivers are also major waterfowl, aquatic, reptile and amphibian habitat areas. Likewise the many feeder streams, lakes and ponds of the town are important fish spawning habitats. (See Tables 12 and 13)

Within the Miscauno Wildlife area is 555 acres of state natural area known as the **Miscauno Cedar Swamp**. State natural areas exist to protect natural diversity and provide sites for research and environmental education. Natural areas like the Miscauno Cedar Swamp, contain areas that have largely escaped disturbances since settlement.

The Miscauno Cedar Swamp features a northern wet-mesic forest in a steep-sided basin along the South Branch of Miscauno Creek. The timber varies from nearly pure stands of pole sized white cedar to mixtures of white cedar, balsam fir and black spruce with black ash and elm along the stream. Tamarack snags indicate a former forest of this species and which was undoubtedly logged in the past. The surrounding uplands are mainly an aspen-oak and pine cutover forest. The ground layer is rich in smaller orchid species along with one-flowered pyrola, bunchberry, American starflower, yellow bluebead-lily, gaywings, Canada mayflower and several ferns. In the numerous headwater springs is a rich flora of mosses and lichens. Breeding bird surveys have shown that uncommon birds such as ravens, hermit thrush, black and white warbler, pine warbler, scarlet tanager and black-billed cuckoo are found during the nesting season. Although the lowlands have been logged, they still retain natural conditions. The swamp was also the site of a 20 year research study looking at the effects of cedar thinning.

### **Miscauno Wildlife Area**

State wildlife areas were acquired to preserve important wild lands and wild things for hunters, trappers, hikers, wildlife watchers and people interested in the outdoors. They were sought to help protect and manage important wildlife habitat and to help prevent draining and filling of wetlands.

Different from State Parks, State Wildlife Areas tend to have only minor facility development, like a very small gravel parking lot. Most do not have formal designated trails, public restrooms, concessions, picnic areas or camp sites.

The Miscauno Wildlife Area includes 635 acres of coniferous swamp and forested upland areas. Principal wildlife includes deer, grouse and snowshoe hares. The property is accessible from CTH Z, east of USH 141.

The remaining areas of the town (i.e. residential areas, road corridors and other developed areas) are not classified as primary wildlife habitat areas, though certainly animals do wander into these areas.

Additional information about wildlife habitats is available from the WDNR. Statewide, the WDNR is concerned about loss of wetlands, aquatic habitat and open land to development as well as pollution to surface and ground water. Moreover, simplification of diverse habitat and loss of special places that support rare species are also major concerns. The town supports WDNR programs to protect wildlife habitats.

### **Threatened & Endangered Species**

Based on information contained in Wisconsin's Natural Heritage Inventory, there are **50 aquatic animals, 21 aquatic plants, 19 terrestrial animals and 21 threatened plant species that are threatened, endangered or a species of special concern in Marinette County**. Unfortunately, there is **not a specific species list or map available for the Town of Beecher**. Available county maps are general and do not specially identify habitat areas within the Town of Beecher. The reason for this is because the WDNR does not want people to visit or otherwise intrude on the habitats of endangered and threatened species. The WDNR is attempting to identify and catalog endangered plant and animal species across the state. For a complete, up to date list, refer to [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us). The state and federal government have programs and laws in effect to protect threatened and endangered plant and animal species in the Town of Beecher and beyond.

### **Exotic & Invasive Species**

Non-native, or exotic, plant and animal species have been recognized in recent years as a major threat to the integrity of native habitats and species, as well as a potential economic threat (damage to crops, tourist economy, etc.). The WDNR requires that any person seeking to bring a non-native fish or wild animal for introduction in Wisconsin obtain a

permit. The Town of Beecher can help combat exotic species by educating residents about non-native species and encouraging residents to use native plants in landscaping.

### **Metallic & Non-Metallic Mining Resources**

There is not a substantial volume of accessible mining resources in the Town of Beecher. Access to any existing materials is also limited by the amount of county and state land in the town.

At this time, there are several **non-metallic mining operations** (i.e. sand and gravel pits) in Beecher. No additional requests for quarries have been submitted to the town. The location of existing quarries is shown on the *Existing Land Use Map*. There are no metallic mining operations in the town.

As part of **NR 135**, Wisconsin Administrative Code, adopted in December 2000, any community in Wisconsin could adopt an ordinance to establish requirements for reclamation of non-metallic mines, such as gravel pits and rock quarries. If a town decided not to develop its own ordinance, a county could develop one that would also regulate operations in the town. Likewise, regional planning agencies could develop ordinances for counties within their region. The ordinances must establish reclamation requirements to prevent owners and operators of quarries and gravel pits from abandoning their operations without proper reclamation of the mines.

The process of siting a mine continues to be a local matter governed under existing zoning procedures by local authorities. The new reclamation requirements through NR 135 add to the status quo but do not replace or remove any other current means of regulation. The requirements neither regulate active mining process nor have any effect upon local zoning decisions like those related to the approval of new mine sites.

Under the law, any landowner of a demonstrated “marketable non-metallic deposit” may register the site for mining. Local zoning authority can object to the application if the zoning does not permit it. Registration expires after a 10 year period and may be extended for a single 10 year period if it is demonstrated that commercially feasible quantities continue to exist at the property. Otherwise, remediation action is required.

Towns (on their own and through the use of county zoning) rezoning property in a manner consistent with a Comprehensive Plan are not required to permit non-metallic mining operations that are inconsistent with the plan.

### **Soils & Development**

Soils are the physical base for development and agriculture. The *Soil Association Map* illustrates the soil characteristics in Beecher. Knowledge of soil limitations and potential difficulties is important in evaluating crop production capabilities and other land use alternatives, such as residential development. Soil problems that limit development potential include: slumping, compaction, erosion and high water tables. Severe soil

limitations do not always mean a site cannot be developed, but rather that more extensive construction measures may have to be taken to prevent damage to the land or structures.

For additional information about specific soil characteristics and limitations, refer to the *Marinette County Soil Survey*

There are dozens of specific soil types in the Town of Beecher. **All soil types (beyond wetlands) in Beecher have a moderate building suitability.** This means that buildings can be supported, if certain precautions or mitigation technique are used. According to the *Marinette County Soil Survey*, **nearly all soil types have severe limitations for sanitary suitability**, which means they are not recommended for development given slopping, steepness, wetness or other limitations. Sanitary suitability is what has caused the town’s development to be scattered in a low density fashion. Simply stated, housing has been built in areas where sanitary systems could be accommodated. This will continue to be the case in the future.

The Town of Beecher has mostly sand soils. There have been no problems with sanitary systems reported by residents. This reality seems to conflict with the information available in the *Marinette County Soil Survey*.

**In order to obtain a building permit in the Town of Beecher, a sanitary permit is required which is obtained through Marinette County.**

### **Air Quality**

The following information is from the WDNR:

“A few common air pollutants are found all over the United States. These pollutants can injure health, harm the environment and cause property damage. EPA calls these pollutants **criteria air pollutants** because the agency has regulated them by first developing health based criteria (science based guidelines) as the basis for setting permissible levels. One set of limits (**primary standard**) protects health; another set of limits (**secondary standard**) is intended to prevent environmental and property damage. A geographic area that meets or does better than the primary standard is called an **attainment area**; areas that don’t meet the primary standard are called **nonattainment areas**.”

Marinette County is an attainment area. Unfortunately, the nearest Wisconsin air quality monitoring station from the Town of Beecher are located a great distance away in Green Bay and Rhinelander. More information on air quality is available at:

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/air/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/air/).

### **Historical & Cultural Resources**

Visit the AHI on the internet at [www.shsw.wisc.edu/ahi/](http://www.shsw.wisc.edu/ahi/) .

The **Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)** is the State of Wisconsin official historic catalogue. The AHI is comprised of written text and some photographs of each property, which document the property's architecture and history. Most of the properties became part of the AHI as a result of systematic architectural and historical surveys. Inclusion in the AHI conveys no special status or advantage; it is merely a record of the property. The AHI inventory is housed at the **State Historical Society** of Wisconsin in Madison and is maintained by the Society's Division of Historic Preservation. At this time, there are no historic properties identified in the Town of Beecher in the AHI.

Cultural resources, like natural resources, are valuable assets, which should be preserved. At this time, the three bridges and the Four Seasons Resort located on Miscauno Island are all listed in the AHI. There are no other town properties listed in the AHI and no applications are pending.

### **Four Seasons Resort**

Constructed in 1925, this neoclassical facility originally served railroad officials and their families.

### **Truss Bridges**

Originally constructed in 1905, there are three W&M Overhead Truss Bridges to connect Miscauno Island to the Town of Beecher and the State of Michigan. The longest bridge spans 92 feet. The bridges were originally constructed as railroad bridges for the Wisconsin-Michigan Railroad. The railroad abandoned the bridges in 1930.

The Town of Beecher supports the activities of the Marinette County Historical Society and the State Historical Society and others to identify and protect historic resources. Beecher will not seek to develop its own historical preservation district or ordinance. If, in the future, residents desire additional historic preservation measures, the town may establish a committee to develop a local program for historic preservation.

In the future, the Town Board, in exercising its zoning authority to protect public health, safety and welfare, may establish a landmarks commission to designate historically significant sites in the town. If desired by the community, this commission could also develop a driving tour brochure discussing local historical resources and areas of the community.

### **Issues & Concerns**

#### **Aging Septic Systems**

There are several relatively old private septic systems in use in the Town of Beecher. While none of these systems have reported problems, the potential certainly exists. Given the high susceptibility of groundwater contamination from failed septic systems

and the river and lake resources in the town, it is very important residents test and maintains their systems. Currently there is a program at the county level where postcards are sent out every few years to have the systems inspected and/or pumped by a licensed pumper.

Of particular concern are the systems being used by properties surrounding Beecher Lake. The homes in this area are in close proximity. A failure in one property could have a severe impact on neighboring properties and the lake habitat. The District seeks to educate residents about the importance of septic system maintenance in order to protect the quality of the lake.

### **Protection of Natural Resources**

The abundant natural resources and north woods character attract residents to the area. However, if too much development were to occur, the natural environment will suffer. A significant amount of additional residential development in the Town of Beecher will increase the potential for fragmentation of wildlife habitat. Furthermore, additional residential development will also restrict hunting areas. As new homes are constructed, hunting opportunities are diminished. Simply put, the natural areas and amenities that attract people to the area will be severely impacted by significant amounts of residential development.

Fortunately, approximately 12.5 square miles of land in Beecher is owned by Marinette County and managed as forestland. The state owns 358 acres through the Menominee River Natural Resource Area and more than 500 acres through the Pike Wild River. Another nearly 640 acres is protected within the Miscauno Wildlife Area. As a result, nearly a full third of the town is protected from development. In addition, significant areas of wetland and shore land areas are protected under the Marinette County Shore land/Wetland Zoning Ordinance.

For private landowners interested in additional protection, there are **many methods to protect land**. One option available to landowners seeking to protect natural areas and farmland is through the activities of **land trusts**. Land trusts provide landowners with advice on protection strategies that best meet the landowner's conservation and financial needs. Land trusts accept lands donated by landowners for conservation purposes. Land trusts can also work with landowners to establish conservation easements.

Yet another method to protect natural areas, while still permitting residential development, is **conservation or cluster subdivisions**<sup>6</sup>. *Conservation subdivision designs encourage the preservation and protection of open space, natural areas and farmland resources*. In a conservation subdivision, homes are "clustered" together on smaller lots so that a greater proportion of the land is protected from development.

- Typically, a conservation subdivision will require at least 50% of a site be protected from further development.

- Protection and maintenance of the conserved area can be accomplished through a conservation easement with an appropriate conservation organization, land trust, homeowners association or government body, or through deed covenants.
- The areas to be conserved must be protected indefinitely.
- The land designated for protection should either be left as natural habitat, open space or farmland.

#### **How is a Conservation/Cluster Subdivision Created?**

1. **Develop a Yield Plan.** This plan essentially shows how many homes could be developed if a traditional subdivision layout were used.
2. **Identify Primary and Secondary Conservation Areas.** Primary conservation areas include: poor soils, steep slope, wetlands, waterways and floodplains that are not conducive to development. Secondary conservation areas include other areas of local importance targeted for protection (i.e. farmland, woodlands, scenic views, etc.).
3. **Locate the Home Sites.**
4. **Include Roads, Sidewalks and Trails.**
5. **Draw the Lot Lines.** This is usually the first step in a traditional approach.

In conservation subdivisions, the development of walking, hiking and bicycle trails is encouraged, particularly to provide limited access to protected natural areas.

The town also has options available to protect natural areas by limiting development. The town can develop a zoning ordinance to provide protections to natural areas, including buffers and areas of non-development. The town could also adopt a growth management policy to annually restrict the number of building permits issued in order to strictly control development pressures. Unless development pressures increase significantly, it is probably not necessary for the town to adopt such a policy.

### **Current Policies & Programs**

#### **Shore Land/Wetland Zoning**

Shore lands and wetlands are often viewed as valuable recreational and environmental resources. These areas provide for storm water retention and habitat for various types of fish and wildlife. Development in these areas may have an adverse effect on water quality, wildlife habitat and storm water drainage. In addition, it may also result in increased development and maintenance costs to protect from the occurrence of flooding and high water, increased flood insurance premiums, extensive site preparation and maintenance and repairs of roads and sewers.

---

<sup>6</sup>Any subdivision development in the town, conservation or traditional, should include a fire-wise concept plan to mitigate natural fuel (i.e. forests) hazards.

The State of Wisconsin requires that every county adopt a Shore Land/Wetland Ordinance to address the problem associated with development in these areas. *Development in shore land areas is generally permitted, but specific design techniques must be considered. Development in floodplain areas is strictly regulated and in some instances not permitted.* The authority to enact and enforce these types of zoning provisions is set forth in Ch. 59.97 Wis. Stats. and Wisconsin Administrative Codes NR 115.116 and 117, and is established in the Marinette County Zoning Ordinance.

Marinette County is currently administering its Shore land/Wetland Ordinance in unincorporated areas of the county.

## **Zoning**

Beyond shore land and wetland restrictions, Marinette County does not regulate zoning. Currently, the Town of Beecher is unzoned.

The Town of Beecher does have village powers under Wis Stats. Ch. 60, Sec. 60.62. This allows the town to adopt its own zoning regulations. The town is interested in developing local zoning control. When developing a zoning ordinance, it will be important to develop regulations that are basic, easily enforced and supported by the community. The zoning requirement must be based on the long term visions and goals presented in this plan. For more information about zoning options, refer to the land Use Chapters of this plan.

## **Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits (WPDES)**

Any CAFO with over 1,000 animal units, or more than 300 animal units that meet discharge criteria, is required to obtain a WPDES Permit. This same permit is also issued to all businesses and industries in the State of Wisconsin that discharge water or wastewater to surface water, groundwater and/or wetlands. The permit requires applicants to provide a plan for runoff management for outdoor lots and feed storage areas, a manure storage facility plan/diagram, a comprehensive manure management plan to be updated annually, willingness to submit to monitoring and reporting requirements and a daily record keeping log system. The permit essentially regulates land application, manure storage and runoff management – all of which have the potential to be a discharge to waters of the state.

The WPDES Permit process provides the opportunity for public comment, which may result in changes to the environmental assessment completed by WDNR. The WPDES does not address noise, land value, traffic or other types of similar issues because there is no statutory authority for the permits to address these types of impacts. These types of concerns must be regulated by county and local ordinances.

## **Marinette County Land & Water Resource Plan**

The Marinette County Land and Water Resource Plan was developed in accordance with Chapter 92.10 Wis. Stats. The plan:

- Serves as a guide for resource management planning and decision making
- Assesses land and water resource conditions
- Identifies problems and priorities

Copies of the plan are available from the Marinette County Land and Water Conservation Department.

## **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CRP)**

CRP is a USDA program which enhances the successful CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) that has run in the U.S. since 1985. In Wisconsin 600,000 acres have been taken out of agriculture production to decrease erosion, enhance water quality and establish wildlife habitat in the 35 years since its inception. Under the program, a farmer volunteers to take land out of production for a period of 10 or 15 years and is paid annual rental payments and cost share assistance to establish long term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) makes annual rental payments based on the agriculture rental value of the land and it provides cost share assistance for up to 50 percent of the participant's costs in establishing approved conservation practices. Participants enroll in CRP contracts for 10 to 15 years.

The CCC through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the program, and program support is provided by Natural Resources Conservation Service, Cooperative State Research and Education Extension Service, state forestry agencies and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. At the end of the contract period the farmer can sell the land or put it back into production.

For More Information: [www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm)

## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

EQIP was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of ten years. These contracts provide incentive payments and cost shares to implement conservation practices. Persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the

EQIP program. EQIP activities are carried out according to an environmental quality incentives program plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer that identifies the appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concerns. The practices are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions. The local conservation district approves the plan.

EQIP may cost share up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices. Incentive payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use without the incentive.

For Additional Information: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/)

### **Beecher and Upper Lakes Public Inland Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District**

The Beecher and Upper Lakes Public Inland Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District were established in 1997. Unlike an association, with volunteers, the district has a board and all residents along Beecher Lake, Upper Land and the channels in between are part of the district. The district has the authority to impose taxes, which it does to cover the costs of mowing, weed removal and gypsy moth spraying. The primary mission of the district is to maintain the quality of the lake and educate area residents about shore land protection efforts, including the maintenance of natural vegetation.

### **Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements**

The development of the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element required coordination with all of the required plan elements. For example, when considering economic development strategies, the future role of agricultural operations in the town, as well as the importance of natural resources, was considered. Below is a description of the critical issues addressed with respect to the land Use and Housing Elements. These elements are profiled because their coordination with the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element is critical to the success of the plan.

#### **Land Use**

Residents of the town have clearly indicated at public meetings that protection of natural resources is a priority. As a result, when the *Future Land Use Maps* were developed, special consideration was given to this priority. Also, when developing the *Future Land Use Maps*, special consideration was given to soil characteristics as they relate to building site limitations and limitations for septic tank absorption fields. Likewise, the Implementation Element will help to ensure that through the enforcement of desired planning and zoning requirements, natural resources are protected.

## **Housing**

Housing, if not carefully located and planned for, can have a severe impact on natural resources. Housing development can fragment wildlife habitat areas. If not carefully planned, additional traffic, people and services associated with housing development can quickly destroy rural character. The town will seek to direct development to areas where soils will support residential development. Directing development to certain areas will help to protect natural resources, while still accommodating residential development. The strategy for housing development is reflected in the *Future Land Use Maps*.

## **Goals and Objectives**

It is the vision of the Town of Beecher that the community will retain its rural character by continuing to enjoy a mix of scenic, open, natural, undeveloped areas. Natural resources will be protected and serve as an environmental, recreational and economic asset to the town. Residential and commercial development will be very limited in scale and in harmony with the town's natural environment. The town will also work in accordance with the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element of the Wisconsin "Smart Growth" Law, with neighboring communities, school districts, Marinette County, the Bay Lake Regional Plan Commission and the State of Wisconsin to ensure that natural resources are adequately protected for future generations. Specific goals and objectives are provided in Chapter 12.

## **8.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Vision</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Labor Force and Economic Base</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Current Business Inventory</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Attracting and Retaining Business and Industry</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Economic Development Opportunities</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Desired Business and Industry</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Program Assistance</b>	<b>102</b>
Marinette County Chamber of Commerce	102
<b>Environmentally Contaminated Sites</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>104</b>

## 8. Economic Development

### Introduction

Economic activity in the Town of Beecher is closely tied to the land. Tourism and recreation activities are the foundation of the local economy. Given that the natural environment is essential to the continued success of the local economy, it is of critical importance that the plan protects natural areas. As a result, the economic development opportunities discussed in this chapter are encouraged near the USH 141 and CTH Z corridors only. Other areas of the town are not encouraged for commercial or industrial development in order to maintain the north woods character of the community.

According to the Smart Growth law, the purpose of the Economic Development Element is to promote the stabilization, retention, or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities. To address this requirement, this chapter includes:

- A summary of the **labor force information** provided in Chapter 3;
- An **inventory** of existing businesses;
- An assessment of town **strengths and weaknesses** with respect to attracting and retaining business and industry;
- An overview of programs to deal with **environmentally contaminated sites** for commercial or industrial uses; and
- County, regional and state **economic development programs**.

### Vision

**The town benefits from expanded commercial and light industrial development along the USH 141 corridor. The businesses provide residents with quality, well-paying job opportunities. Economic development is in harmony with the Town natural environment and residential areas. The Town capitalizes on its abundant public recreation areas to support some niche development for tourists in the area (i.e. souvenir stores, craft shops, etc.).**

### Labor Force and Economic Base

The Community Profile Chapter of this plan provides a detailed analysis of the local and county economy as well as the labor force. Highlights from that chapter include:

- Only **34.8% of the labor force** population (over age 16) is **working**. This reflects limited job opportunities and a significant retired population in the town.
- **Most town residents who work travel beyond the town limits**. Residents work in Green Bay, Marinette, Niagara, Oconto and Iron Mountain, MI. It is not uncommon for workers to travel 40-50 miles each way to work.

- The 2020 U.S. Census data also reveals that town residents are employed in the following industries: manufacturing (23%), education, health and social service (21.5%), retail (11.8%), wholesale trade (9.7%), transportation (8.2%), service industry (7.2%) and forestry (5.6%).
- Manufacturing is the highest paying industry in Marinette County.
- Average annual wages in Marinette County are significantly less than the State average for every class of worker and declining.
- According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the Town of Beecher **per capita income was \$24,340**, lower than the Marinette County per capita income figure (\$29,395), but significantly less than the State of Wisconsin per capita income (\$34,450).
- 81% of the labor force in the Town of Beecher has earned a high school diploma and 14.4% have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. These figures are below the Marinette County figures of 93.5% and 16.4%.

These facts and statistics indicate that the Town of Beecher has a limited economic base, but opportunities do exist for expansion. The town supports new business development (as is illustrated on the *Future Land Use Maps*). The town desires commercial and light industrial businesses that will employ local residents. Moreover, the town supports recreation-based business ventures.

### **Current Business Inventory**

The Town of Beecher is a rural community with relatively easy access to nearby communities via USH 141. There are very few businesses located in Beecher. Residents generally travel to nearby communities like Pembine, Wausaukee, Niagara and Iron Mountain (MI) to purchase needed goods and services.

Specifically, the Town of Beecher is home to seven business establishments (not including any home occupations).

- **Patti's Platter.** A family restaurant located at N17480 USH 141, south of CTH Z. This restaurant caters to local residents and passing motorists.
- **Coldwell Real Estate Group.** Selling real estate in the area.
- **Four Season's Island Resort.** Located at N16800 Shoreline Drive, this 9-hole public golf course was established in 1908. W.D. Mann designed the course. The facility offers reasonable green fees, cart rentals, and an on-site clubhouse with 2 restaurants, 2 bars and an ice cream shop. The golf course is open for play from April-November.
- **Green Acres Golf Course.** Located at W5601 CTH Z, this 9-hole public course was established in 1969. The course offers reasonable green fees, cart rentals and plays to a par 34. Open from April-November.
- **Lange Brothers Woodwork Company Inc.** In business since 1932, Lange Brothers Woodwork Company has an architectural millwork facility in Beecher. The company is a member of the Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI) and has completed sever premier projects in the state, including work in all four wings of the renovated Wisconsin Capital Building and the American Club in Kohler.

The firm works mostly on commercial projects, but does occasionally do residential work.

- **Tom's Service Center.** This business is located on CTH Z and repairs small engines such as lawn mowers, ATVs, snow blowers, etc.
- **Northern Sport and Recreation Community Center (NSRCC).** This business was established in the old Faith Baptist facility on USH 141 in 2023. They are currently fundraising to purchase the property and reach out the community and sponsor craft fairs, paint parties, bingo, kid's fun days, etc. They hope to eventually have a soccer field along with the gym that they currently use for their activities. They also have opened a resale shop and food bank.

It is also believed that some home occupation uses (i.e. child care, hair stylist, taxidermy, contractors, etc.) also exist in the town without any special permits or other zoning approvals. However, the nature of these businesses presents no noticeable impact or nuisance to adjacent properties, so their location is difficult to detect. Moreover, some residents may work at home utilizing internet and other technologies. The town supports a resident's right to have a small business operation on his/her property or work at home, provided that the business activity or establishment does not create a nuisance for neighboring property owners by generating excessive traffic, noise, lighting, signage, etc.

### **Attracting and Retaining Business and Industry**

The Town of Beecher has several positive attributes to offer potential businesses. Specifically, the town has:

- A relatively **low tax rate**;
- Properties with **USH 141 frontage**;
- **Land available** for development;
- Environmental features which attract **tourists and outdoor enthusiasts** to the area.

While the town certainly enjoys its share of advantages, there are several weaknesses that the town must contend with when seeking to attract new businesses and industry. In particular:

- The Town of Beecher has **limited services** to offer potential businesses (i.e. no municipal water or sewer service).
- The population in the Town of Beecher is not large enough to provide the customer base necessary to support a large commercial endeavor.
- Commercial establishments that depend on high traffic volumes have limited opportunity to locate in the town, given that except for USH 141, **traffic volumes are relatively low**.
- **Residents of the Town of Beecher are very mobile** and can easily drive to nearby communities to purchase services and products.

## **Economic Development Opportunities**

Future commercial and industrial development in the Town of Beecher is most likely to occur along the **USH 141 and CTH Z corridors**. In fact, the Plan Committee has indicated a preference for commercial and industrial development to occur along these corridors so as to protect the north woods character of other portions of the town. However, it should be understood that the Plan Committee does not envision the USH 141 or CTH Z corridor infilling significantly with commercial and industrial development over the 20 years. Preferably, development along the USH 141 corridor would **expand from the existing unincorporated Beecher** area, so significant areas of the USH 141 corridor will remain undeveloped.

While the town would like to welcome additional commercial, office and light industrial development to support the local tax base, it is important that any new development exist **in harmony with the local environment**. Therefore, new industrial and commercial development should be “clean” and not produce a significant amount of waste, which could pose a hazard to the rivers, streams and wetlands of the Town of Beecher. Likewise, new development should blend into the rural landscape and not represent a nuisance to residents. Therefore, new developments must include natural **landscaping and attractive signage**.

Most importantly, new development should generate quality, **well paying jobs** capable of allowing workers to support their families.

New development along USH 141 must not interfere with the traffic flow along the highway. Therefore, the development of a service/frontage road to provide adequate and safe access may be necessary if an extensive amount of development were to occur.

The use of innovative treatment systems, permissible under the provisions of Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter COMM 83, may be one approach for the town to consider in order to attract development to the town that might otherwise seek locations in communities with municipal sanitary sewer service.

## **Desired Business and Industry**

New business and industry in the town must not require municipal water or sewer service. In addition, the town wants to be sure that new development does not jeopardize the rural quality of life. Therefore, businesses and industries which locate in the town should be environmentally friendly, have limited outdoor storage (if any) to control unsightliness, generate minimal traffic and noise, and require only minimal lighting and signage.

Given these constraints, the town would like to target the following types of development:

- **Light industrial, commercial and office establishments** along USH 141 catering to both passing motorists and the local population. These businesses should generate higher income and skilled jobs for residents of the town.
- **Niche development** along USH 141 corridor to attract tourists – souvenir shops, craft shops, outfitters, sport equipment sales/rentals.
- **Service business** (i.e. gas station with convenience store and fast food restaurant).
- **Home occupations** of a professional nature to take advantage of the Internet and other technologies (fiber optic) that permit people to work from the privacy of their homes. Home occupations are particularly attractive to the town given the town’s low density of development that limits the likelihood that a home occupation will become a nuisance to neighboring property owners.

### **Program Assistance**

Marinette County wishes to encourage economic development opportunities within the county. What follows is a description of the activities and mission of the Marinette County Chamber of Commerce.

### **Marinette/Menominee County Chamber of Commerce**

The Marinette/Menominee County Chamber of Commerce is a business advocacy organization. Service offered by the chamber to local businesses includes assistance with:

- Attaining financing
- Obtaining building permits
- Site location
- Setting up counseling sessions with business consultants
- Encouraging school-to-work arrangements
- Monitoring the needs of local businesses through studies and surveys, and investigating ways to help meet those needs

<p>For More Information Contact:          Jacqueline Boudreay, Executive Director          Marinette Area Chamber of Commerce          601 Marinette Avenue          Marinette, WI 54143          (715) 735-6681</p>
--

## **Environmentally Contaminated Sites**

Development efforts can sometimes encounter the challenge of potentially contaminated properties, which are commonly referred to as brown field sites (see box). Brownfield sites vary in size, location, age and past use. A brown field site can be a former corner gas station or an empty manufacturing plant. There are an estimated 10,000 brown field sites across Wisconsin. These sites pose a number of problems for communities, including:

- Neighborhood deterioration and community blight
- Potential harm to human health and the environment
- Reduced tax revenue and economic growth
- Attraction for vandalism, open dumping and other illegal activity

The term “brown field” was first used to distinguish developed land from unused suburban and rural land, referred to as “green field” sites. The EPA, states and municipalities believe that choosing brown field redevelopment over green field development yields several benefits for communities and for commerce. Brownfield redevelopment encourages the cleanup of contaminated sites. This is the major goal of most modern environmental regulations. The fewer the number of contaminated sites, the less the cumulative impact to the environment. Another benefit of brown field redevelopment is that it revitalizes urban areas. (Many brown fields are centrally located in urban areas.) This leads to another perceived benefit – the minimization of green space development. When brown fields are redeveloped or revitalized in urban areas, less farmland on the urban fringe is developed, maintaining green space and reducing the need for expanding infrastructure and utilities. Finally, when brown fields are redeveloped and new businesses begin operating, these properties return tax base and provide jobs. This is a major financial incentive for municipalities to develop and encourage programs for brown field redevelopment.

The Town of Beecher is not challenged with brown field redevelopment. However, to minimize future environmental impacts, the town will encourage environmentally friendly business development that is properly permitted and regulated to protect the town’s natural environment.

Using one of several databases, interested residents can search for properties in the town that have been impacted by environmental contamination, and have been reported. The WDNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Internet website tracking list is one such database available at: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/brrts/indes.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/brrts/indes.htm). This database tracks identified sites from the first reporting through closure or no further action. Records are kept in perpetuity regardless of whether or not contamination was actually found, the size of the incidence, and whether or not the site has been cleaned.

Governments at all levels have recognized that brown field redevelopment is an important issue. Numerous programs have been created to encourage brown field redevelopment including grants, loans and tax incentives. In the future, the town will

encourage residents and landowners to pursue the clean-up and redevelopment of any contaminated or brown field site.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The Town of Beecher would like to have some expanded local economic activities to support the local tax base without jeopardizing the rural character and north woods charm of the Town. The goals and objectives needed to expand the economic base are provided in Chapter 12. The location for new business development is illustrated on the *Future Land Use Maps* provided in the Future Land Use Chapter of this Plan.

## **9.0 EXISTING LAND USE**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Existing Land Use Inventory</b>	<b>106</b>
Roads	106
Water Features	106
Single Family Residential	106
Mobile Home	106
Commercial	106
Non-Metallic Mining (Gravel Pits)	107
Woodyard	107
Utilities	107
Institutional Facilities	107
Golf Course/Parks/Campgrounds	107
Agriculture	107
Other Open Land	107
Woodlands	107
Town Properties	107
Existing Land Use Map	108
<b>Zoning Regulations</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Subdivision Regulations</b>	<b>109</b>
Town of Beecher Shoreland/Wetland Zoning Map	111
<b>Trend in Supply, Demand and Price of Land</b>	<b>112</b>
Residential Development	112
Farming	112
Natural Areas	112
Commercial and Industrial Development	112
<b>Opportunities for Redevelopment</b>	<b>113</b>

## **9.0 EXISTING LAND USE**

### **Introduction**

The landscape of Beecher tells the story of its north woods heritage and pride. The beautiful rivers, lakes, and forested areas give the community its identity. These physical attributes are echoed in the value statements presented in Chapter 1 and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats listed in Chapter 2.

### **Existing Land Use Inventory**

The *Beecher Existing Land Use Map* was created from information provided by Marinette County and the Bay-Lakes Regional Planning Commission. The Town of Beecher Planning Committee provided additional updated in 2002 and 2003.

Woodlands are the primary land use in the town covering more than 85% of the landscape. This is not expected to change significantly in the future. Housing development is concentrated mainly around Beecher Lake and along CTH Z. The few businesses located in the town are concentrated along the USH 141 corridor. What follows is a description of the land use categories illustrated on the *Existing Land Use Map*.

### **Roads**

All town, county, and state roadways in the Town of Beecher are shown in black on the *Existing Land Use Map*. To learn more about transportation facilities serving the town, refer to Chapter 5.

### **Water Features**

Water features are presented in two categories river/streams and open water. Open water includes lakes and areas of the Menominee and other rivers.

### **Single Family Residential**

Single and two-family (i.e. duplex) residential development is scattered throughout the town. Information about the characteristics and quality of the town's housing supply is available in Chapter 4.

### **Mobile Home**

There are no mobile home parks in the Town of Beecher. However, there are many individual mobile homes scattered around the town. Some of these mobile homes are used as hunting cabins and second homes. Others are primary residence of their occupants.

### **Commercial**

Commercial land uses are concentrated primarily along USH 141 and in the unincorporated area of Beecher. Commercial uses include a restaurant, wood products

manufacturer, small engine repair and a realtor. Chapter 8 profiles other economic development opportunities in the Town of Beecher.

### **Non-Metallic Mining (Gravel Pits)**

Several non-metallic mining sites are located in the Town of Beecher. These areas are shown in pink. To learn more about these operations refer to the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element provided in Chapter 7.

### **Woodyard**

A sizeable one is located in the unincorporated Beecher area, near the northern town boundary. This wood yard is shown in black.

### **Utilities**

Cemeteries, cellular tower sites and electric substations are included in this category. A detailed profile of utilities serving the Town of Beecher is provided in Chapter 6.

### **Institutional Facilities**

Churches and schools are considered institutional land uses. For more information on these types of use refer to the Cultural Resources portion of Chapter 7 and also Chapter 6.

### **Golf Course/Parks/Campgrounds**

The Green Acres and Four Season's Golf Courses, as well as a private campground are included in this category. For detailed information about park and recreation facilities, refer to Chapter 6.

### **Agriculture**

There is some agricultural land in the Town of Beecher. Rented cropland and family farms are illustrated on the Existing Land Use Map. For additional information about farming, refer to Chapter 7.

### **Other Open Land**

Areas classified as other open land consist of former farm fields that have long since been allowed to grow over, meadows, wetlands, and other open areas not actively farmed, covered by woodlands, or developed for residential uses.

### **Woodlands**

Forested areas dominate the landscape. For information about woodlands and other natural areas, refer to Chapter 7.

### **Town Properties**

Town properties include a beach at Beecher Lake, boat launches at Beecher Lake and Menominee River, a baseball diamond and the town hall. For detailed information about town properties, refer to Chapter 6.

## Land Use Map

## **Zoning Regulations**

Marinette County enforces shoreland and wetland zoning in the Town of Beecher. The County also has a zoning ordinance regulating forestry and recreation areas. All other lands are classified as “unrestricted” in the Marinette County Zoning Ordinance with no specific requirements in place for use of these areas.

The Town of Beecher does have village powers under Wis Stats. Ch. 60, Sec 60.62. A town, with village powers, located in a county without county zoning, may develop its own zoning ordinance under 60.62. However, the town must first petition the county to develop such an ordinance (under the requirements of 60.61 (3)). If the county fails to do so, then the town may develop its own zoning ordinance. Marinette County has historically expressed no interest in developing county-wide zoning requirements for all and uses due to political, economic (related to enforcement staff needs) and administrative concerns.

### **The Town of Beecher is interested in developing a zoning ordinance as needed.**

When developing a zoning ordinance, it will be important to adopt regulations that are basic, easily enforced, and supported by the community. The zoning requirements must be based on the long-term visions and goals presented in this plan.

Important topics to address in the Town of Beecher Zoning Ordinance include:

- Sign regulations to restrict billboards along USH 141 and County Highways;
- Commercial development lighting standards;
- Standards for cellular towers, including requirements for co-locations to limit the number of towers developed
- Definition of businesses, residential, agricultural, and conservation (i.e. woodlands) districts, including permitted uses, minimum lot sizes, setbacks and conditions; and
- Provision for enforcement (including permits), appeals, and penalties.

## **Subdivision Regulations**

The Town of Beecher does have its own subdivision ordinance. Marinette County has adopted a Land Division Ordinance. This ordinance requires all subdivisions (state or county) or land divisions (less than 9 acres) be created by Plan or Certified Survey Map (CSM) and submitted to the County for review and approval. The intent of the **County Land Division Ordinance** is to create well-planned, safer developments in the county.

### **The ordinance requires:**

- All lots or parcels have access to a public/private street;
- Roads have at least 66 feet of right-of-way;
- Street names, public or private, be approved by the county to prevent duplications or similarities that may delay response by emergency services;
- All roads, public and private, have a sign for identification purposes;
- All roads have a turnout suitable for emergency vehicles; and

- All lots created after the ordinance is adopted have a minimum width at the proposed building site (i.e. where the home will be built) of 100 feet a minimum square footage of 30,000 square feet.

The town supports the proposed county ordinance. To establish and enforce additional requirements, the town will need to develop and adopt its own subdivision ordinance in the future.

County Land Division Ordinance: Additional information about this ordinance is available on the Marinette County Website. Go to [www.marinettecounty.com](http://www.marinettecounty.com) and select the Zoning Department to review current ordinance requirements.

## Zoning Map

## **Trends in Supply, Demand and Price of Land**

### **Residential Development**

Residential development accounts for a small portion of the land area in the town, but it is a substantial portion of the town's tax base and expenses.

There is not a supply of vacant housing units in the town available for purchase. Vacant units are seasonal homes used on a limited basis by people who live elsewhere. People moving to the town must build/buy new homes.

The town is relatively undeveloped, so there is a significant amount of land available for additional residential development. The price of land is also relatively inexpensive compared to other communities in Marinette County.

Given the abundance of state and county land in the central portion of the town, most of the housing is located on individual lots, not in subdivisions, adjacent to town and county roads. The greatest clusters of housing are found around Beecher Lake and along CTH Z.

To protect the rural character and northwoods feel, the Town of Beecher has adopted a 2 acre minimum lot size.

### **Farming**

As has been discussed in many areas, farming is not a dominate land use in the town. It accounts for less than 4% of all land area. The town has not experienced an increase in demand for farmland development. To the contrary, local farmers have clearly expressed the challenges of modern farming and a long-term desire to potentially sell their lands for development to support their retirement.

### **Natural Areas**

27% of the Town of Beecher is owned by Marinette County and the State of Wisconsin. These land-holdings are for conservation and preservation of forest resources and waterways. As a result of these significant land-holdings, the northwoods character of the community will be protected in the future. Moreover, these lands bring visitors to the community that may need to spend money in the town for lodging, food, gas and other pursuits.

These state and county land-holdings also present some challenges to the town. Specifically, these lands reduce the town's tax base using Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Managed Forest Lands (MFL) payments. These lands also bring visitors to the town that sometimes pursue residency options to live near the natural areas. In this sense, the state and county land-holdings is a draw for people to move to the area.

### **Commercial and Industrial Development**

Only a handful of businesses exist in the town. Most of these uses are concentrated along the USH 141 corridor where they are most visible to residents and visitors. Given there

is no water and sewer service available, a significant amount of future commercial development is not anticipated. Furthermore, given the importance of natural resources in the community, any business development must be environmentally friendly. Some additional development, particularly in the unincorporated Beecher area is desired. These businesses would be able to capitalize on the town's affordable land prices (compared to other communities in the county), highway visibility, and tourist potential associated with the natural resources. For additional information about business development opportunities, refer to Chapter 8.

### **Opportunities for Redevelopment**

Opportunities for redevelopment are extremely limited given that most areas are undeveloped at this time. There is some long-term potential for redevelopment of local farm fields and other open lands along CTH Z and Town Corner Lake Road into residential developments. In order to retain the rural character of the town, if these properties develop, conservation subdivision approaches are desired in order to retain open space, scenic views, and wildlife habitat corridors.

Probably the greatest potential for redevelopment is associated with the local quarry/gravel pit. As quarry/gravel pits sites are reclaimed, they may be redeveloped. Additional information about quarry/gravel pit redevelopment is provided in Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Chapter. When redevelopment opportunities arise, the Town of Beecher will rely on zoning requirements, site plan review, and other tools.

## **10.FUTURE LAND USE**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Vision</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Desired Development</b>	<b>116</b>
Community Values	116
Cognitive Mapping	116
<b>Special Considerations</b>	<b>117</b>
Private Well Setback Areas	117
Conservation/Cluster Subdivision Designs	117
Collective Attitude Map	118
USH 141 Access Limitations	119
Environmental Corridors	119
Lake Associations/District	120
Storm water Management	120
Density Restrictions	121
<b>Community Design Considerations</b>	<b>121</b>
Preserving Northwood’s Character	122
Outdoor Lighting	122
Managed Roadway Access	122
<b>Rural Development</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>How were the Future Land Use Maps Developed?</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>How are Future Land Use Maps to Be Used?</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Future Land Use Maps</b>	<b>125</b>
Future Residential	125
Environmental Corridor	125
Public Utility/Conservation	125
Mixed Use	125
Private Well Setback	126
<b>How Much Land is Provided for Development?</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>127</b>

<b>10-Year Future Land Use Map</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>20-Year Future Land Use Map</b>	<b>129</b>

## 10.0 Future Land Use

### Introduction

This chapter builds upon the information and recommendations expressed in the previous chapters to present the *10-Year and 20-Year Town of Beecher Future Land Use Maps*. These maps illustrate the goals, objectives, vision and policies expressed throughout this plan.

### Vision

Action taken by Town of Beecher residents has ensured that the overall appearance of the landscape has not changed significantly. While new residences and businesses have been built in the town, they are well planned to protect the town's natural resources and aesthetic appeal.

### Background

To develop the *Future Land Use Maps* a great deal of time and effort was required over the course of a 24-month planning program. The planning process was initiated with an extensive vision development effort and review of the historic and existing population characteristics. This information is described in Chapters 2 and 3. From there, the Planning Committee studied current conditions and future needs related to housing (Chapter 4), transportation (Chapter 5), utilities and community facilities (Chapter 6), and economic development (Chapter 8). The Planning Committee also examined the natural environment in Chapter 7. Finally, existing land use patterns and regulations were considered in the previous chapter.

### Desired Development

### Community Values

To understand development and preservation desires, the planning process began with an assessment of community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (see Chapter 2). Immediately thereafter, residents were asked to consider community values. By answering the question, "*What makes the Town of Beecher special?*" it was easy to identify planning priorities. A complete list of values is provided at the end of Chapter 1.

### Cognitive Mapping

Another tool used to determine desired future development was cognitive mapping. Cognitive mapping is a process whereby individuals have the opportunity to develop their own *Future Land Map*, based on their ideas, perceptions, experiences and beliefs. Chapter 2 describes the cognitive mapping process in detail. **A copy of the "Collective Attitude Map" is provided on the next page of this plan.** This map is a composite of all of the individual maps developed by cognitive mapping participants. The map clearly indicates that additional residential development is anticipated and desirable.

## Special Considerations

### Private Well Setback Areas

Quarries and landfills are intensive land uses. As such, they may create disturbances to neighboring properties including: vibration, odors, noise, and groundwater issues. The WDNR requires a 1,200-foot setback around landfills for private wells. To develop within this area, property owners are required to obtain a variance from the WDNR to drill a well. This process is intended to protect residents from potential environmental hazards, including groundwater issues. On both the Future Land Use Maps, this 1,200 setback is shown around quarries and landfills. For quarries, while the DNR Permit is not required, the Town will consider requiring a special local permit for wells in this area in order to make landowners aware of potential concerns.

### Conservation/Cluster Subdivision Designs

The Town of Beecher will **encourage conservation/cluster subdivision designs** to support residential development opportunities. The Town of Beecher firmly believes that conservation/cluster subdivisions are a tool to balance the growth desires of landowners and retiring farmers with the rural character preservation desires of other residents.

#### **What are Conservation Subdivisions?**

A definition of conservation/cluster subdivisions, as well as procedures for establishing these types of subdivisions is provided in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.

### **Conservation Subdivisions Have Cost Savings**

The town believes the cost benefits associated with conservation/cluster subdivisions will entice landowners to pursue their development. These incentives include:

- **Reduced construction costs** compared to traditional subdivisions because a reduced area needs to be graded, fewer roads need to be constructed, and less supporting infrastructure (gas, electric, etc.) needs to be installed.
- **Residents of conservation-based developments are will to pay more** for their lots than landowners in traditional subdivisions given the open, space amenities.

## Collective Attitude Map

## **Two Approaches to Conservation-Based Subdivisions**

There are two ways to develop conservation-based subdivisions. Figure 1 illustrates the differences between the two approaches.

If the landowner agrees to **common open space**, a *conservation easement* is established. A *conservation easement* is a restriction against further development on a portion of a property. Conservation easements can be used to protect floodplains, areas of steep slope, woodlands, and scenic views beyond the home sites in the development. In this approach, individual lot sizes are reduced and surrounding land is held in common ownership and usually maintained by a homeowners association. The overall density of development remains the same (i.e. no more homes are permitted than in a traditional subdivision development).

In some situations, it is not feasible to reduce the lot size to develop conservation/ cluster subdivision. In these situations, lot lines can be extended so that there is no common open space, but rather **private open space**. Areas beyond the house site can then be deed-restricted against further development, keeping the property open without creating a “common” open space that will need to be maintained by a homeowners association or others.

## **USH 141 Access Limitations**

As is discussed in the Transportation Element, WisDOT is enforcing access limitations along USH 141 in the Town of Beecher. These limitations freeze access to the current level and number of points provided. As a result, development along the corridor will need to coordinate access, or utilize access from connecting town and country roads.

## **Environmental Corridors**

Natural features (i.e. woodlands, wetlands, rivers, lakes and wildlife habitat) are a very important part of the community. Resident support for protecting natural areas is a very strong. To that end, the *Future Land Use Maps* delineate an environmental corridor area that should remain largely undeveloped, in accordance with state and county restrictions (i.e. County Shore land/Wetland Ordinance, WDNR Pike Wild River Project Master Plan, etc.). Environmental corridors in the Town of Beecher include the following areas:

- 100-Year Floodplains
- Wetlands Greater than 2 Acres in Size
- 25' Wetland Buffer
- Areas within 1000 ft of lakes
- Areas within 300 ft of navigable streams
- Areas of Steep Slope

## Lake Associations/District

In the Town of Beecher is the **Beecher & Upper Lake Rehabilitation Protection District**. Given that the land around Beecher Lake is almost completely built-out, additional development is not a primary concern. Rather, the condition of aging private individual sanitary systems was of some concern. The association was contacted several times about this potential concern. The Town of Beecher will continue to coordinate with the Beecher Lake District with respect to growth and water quality issues around the lake.

## Stormwater Management

There are increasing concerns about the impacts of storm water runoff on the quality of receiving water resources like the Menominee and Pike Rivers. Of significant concern is the impact of additional impervious surface area in the watershed. As development occurs, additional streets, parking areas and buildings are constructed which increase impervious surface. Within a watershed, as impervious surface area increases, area streams are adversely impacted. In fact, relatively low levels of impervious coverage can have a significant impact on the quality of area streams and lakes. To mitigate these impacts, the town will pursue:

- **Watershed Planning**. All watershed-planning activities in the Town of Beecher will be coordinated with the Marinette County Land and Water Conservation Department to identify critical habitats, aquatic corridors and water pollution areas. The DNR has purchased considerable land along the Pike River.
- **Land Conservation Techniques**. Land conservation techniques include: cluster and conservation subdivisions, setbacks, buffers, land acquisition, and following the development patterns outlined on the *Future Land Use Maps*.
- **Aquatic Buffers**. Aquatic buffers are natural areas on either side of area streams to buffer against runoff. The Marinette County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance requires a permit for any filling or grading activity within 300 ft of any navigable stream as a minimum to protect the stream from harmful impacts.
- **Site Design Techniques**. Effective site design techniques will encourage the use of natural landscaping, limit impervious surface, enforce setbacks and buffers, and protect natural resources.
- **Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP)**. Storm water best management practices seek to reduce stormwater pollutant loads, maintain ground water recharge and quality, protect stream channels, and safely maintain the 100-year floodplain. Successful BMP's include ponds, wetlands, infiltration, filtering systems and open drainage channels.

- **Erosion and Sediment Control.** Typically, erosion and sediment control requirements affect construction sites and farming operations. To be effective, erosion and sediment control measures need to extend beyond these two situations. Probably one of the most effective techniques is to reduce the time that soil is exposed. As with the other mitigation techniques outlined in this subsection, education will be critical to success.

### **Density Restrictions**

Town leaders believe that minimum parcel size requirements must be enforced to:

- Retain the rural, north woods character of the town;
- Limit overall growth so as to prevent overcrowding and urban service needs (i.e. water and sewer); and
- Protect the quality of groundwater resources.

During the planning process the Plan Commission considered three density patterns:

- A more compact residential development density of 2 to 5 acres around USH 141.
- Larger lots (5-acre to 10 acre range) along some well-traveled county roads and adjacent to state and county woodlands.
- Even larger lots (10 acre minimum) in outlying areas.

After much discussion and the distribution of the community survey, the Town of Beecher Plan Commission ultimately decided to show a 2-acre minimum residential lot size in the Town of Beecher on all lands that are not part of a managed forest area, within an environmental corridor, owned by the County or State, or part of a planned public utility/conservation area. This decision was made to make it easier to develop land in the town (e.g. more affordable). This decision may need to be periodically reviewed to ensure that impacts on groundwater are avoided.

The Plan Commission does not anticipate that these areas will infill completely with housing. Rather, this area is designed to show where housing development is permitted, subject to successful soil surveys (perk tests) and development interest.

### **Community Design Considerations**

Ensuring that developed and natural areas of the Town of Beecher are attractive and well maintained is an important priority. To that end, the town supports the development and enforcement of zoning regulations, including sign ordinances. Likewise, the Town of Beecher supports the use of a detailed site plan review process, including lighting, sidewalk, building material and sign proposals, to ensure that new commercial development is compatible with surrounding land uses, and the visions, goals, objectives and policies expressed in this plan.

## **Preserving Rural North woods Character**

What is “*rural character*”? For every town the answer may be somewhat different. In the Town of Beecher, rural character means a blend of:

- Low density (2-5 acre) residential development
- Conservation-based subdivisions
- Abundant Wooded areas
- Rivers and Lakes
- Rustic town roads
- Distant view
- Abundant natural resources and wildlife

The goals and objectives include specific actions to protect rural character by the location of future development.

It should be noted here that several property owners in the town have taken part in the Wisconsin Forest Management Law to protect the woods throughout the town. The *Future Land Use Maps* do not show development of these lands.

## **Outdoor Lighting**

In recent years a movement has spread across the country related to outdoor lighting. At the forefront of these efforts is the International Dark Sky Association. This organization’s mission is to ensure that the night sky is visible by eliminating intrusive lighting. The Town of Beecher believes that its rural character includes the dark skies overhead that make it possible to enjoy the stars. To that end, the Town of Beecher will seek to promote environmentally friendly lighting choices that:

Keeping glare to a minimum;

- Discourage the use of direct up lighting in any application;
- Put outdoor lighting only where it is needed and when it is needed;
- Use alternatives to constant “dusk-to-dawn” lighting whenever possible; and
- Eliminate light trespassing on neighboring properties and roadways.

These restrictions can be enforced through zoning and site plan view.

## **Managed Roadway Access**

Another tool available to maintain rural roadside character is control over roadway access. “*Roadway access*” refers to the number of points of ingress and egress from a roadway. Managing roadway access points help to promote safe and efficient travel and minimize disruptive and potentially hazardous traffic conflicts. Managed roadway access involves minimizing the number of driveways along a roadway and establishing standards for driveway spacing. This approach has the added benefit of limiting impervious surface and its associated impacts on groundwater quality. The Marinette

County Planning Department and WisDOT regulate current standards for roadway access. Coordination with these agencies is important to ensure that rural character is preserved.

## **Rural Development**

Given the importance of rural and wooded areas in the Town of Beecher it is necessary to address the question of rural development again here.

If a landowner, would like to develop their property after this plan has been adopted, the landowner, must:

- 1) Meet with the Beecher Plan Commission to discuss the development proposal. The Plan Commission will provide the landowner with feedback about the development of the property, including the recommendations of this plan, associated maps, and concepts outlined in this chapter (i.e. managed roadway access etc.).
- 2) Consider ways to use conservation/cluster-based approaches to minimize the impact of the proposed development on natural areas and wildlife habitat.

To more clearly define specific standards for rural development, an objective has been added to this section for the Town of Beecher to develop a zoning ordinance to establish specific conditions, in accordance with the ideas described above, to protect the town's character.

## **How Were the Future Land Use Maps Developed?**

The *Future Land Use Maps* were developed using a very specific process:

1. Natural resource areas were identified to understand development limitations.
2. Future population and household projections were examined to understand the extent of future residential development needed in the town.
3. Utility and community facility capacities were reviewed to ensure new development would be adequately serviced.
4. Existing development plans were incorporated into the plan maps.
5. The results of the cognitive mapping exercise were reviewed to emphasize resident desires and expectations.
6. A community survey was distributed to determine resident desires for future land development with respect to minimum lot sizes.

The result of this process is the detailed set of *Future Land Use Maps* presented at the end of this chapter.

## **How Are the Future Land Use Maps To Be Used?**

The *Future Land Use Maps* are a planning tool for the Town of Beecher. In accordance with the **Smart Growth Law**, they should be used to guide official mapping, subdivision regulation and zoning.

**Town appointed and elected officials** should use the plan maps as a guide for making future land use decisions.

**Developers and residents** should under the plan maps are intended to direct development to certain areas where facilities and services are available.

It is important to remember that a **plan is not a static document**. It must evolve to reflect current conditions. If not regularly **reviewed and amended**, it will become ineffective.

Applications for rezoning and development that are inconsistent with the plan must still be considered. In some situations, it may be desirable to amend the plan (and maps) to accommodate a compatible, but previously unplanned use. Likewise, a change in county or regional policy, technological changes, or environmental changes may impact the plan.

Any change to the plan (including the plan maps) must be considered in the context of all nine required plan elements, including the visions and goals. If an amendment is to be approved, the process must include a formal public hearing and distribution per the requirements of the Wisconsin Smart Growth Law. Any amendment must be recommended by the Plan Commission and approved by the Town Board **before** development is permitted.

## **Future Land Use Maps**

Provided at the conclusion of this chapter is a ***10-Year and 20-Year Future Land Use Maps*** for the Town of Beecher. These maps illustrate the location and intensity of new development. What follows is a description of the development areas.

Residential development is welcome in the Town of Beecher, provided it is not located in an environmental corridor, on state or county lands, or on managed forest properties. It must be understood that without water and sewer to direct development to certain areas, development in the Town of Beecher is based solely on individual landowner desires to sell. Accordingly, **it is not possible to accurately predict the exact location of future residential development.**

The *Future Land Use Maps* present a **pattern of densities for future development**. These densities will be used when developing the Town's Zoning Ordinance. **The town does not expect all areas shown for development to infill completely. Rather actual development acreage is expected to more closely parallel the acreage totals presented in Table 12.**

## **2-Acre Minimum Residential**

The *10-Year Future Land Use Map* provides for 2-Acre Minimum Residential parcels throughout the community. The *20-Year Future Land Use Map* only indicates a 2-Acre Minimum Residential area near USH 141. The areas shown as a 2-Acre Minimum Residential are not intended to infill completely. Rather the density is intended to act as a guide for future zoning ordinance development and CSM approvals.

The reason that less land is planned for 2-Acre Minimum Residential parcels on the *20-Year Future Land Use Map*, as compared to the *10-Year Future Land Use Map*, is because the Town wants to continue to allow 2-acre development over the next 10-Years to accommodate growth. However, over the long-term, the town does not want to become over developed and lose its rural, rustic, northwoods character. Accordingly, a 3-acre minimum residential parcel size is shown on the *20-Year Future Land Use Map*. Therefore, the minimum lot size is planned to increase from 2 to 3 acres. Given this approach, the Town feels it will be better able to monitor the rate and density of development. It is important to remember that these acreages are minimums; landowners may choose to create larger parcels (e.g. 5-acre, 10-acre, or more).

Zoning regulations (if developed) may further define:

- How many 2-acre parcels can be created from a single tract of land?
- How many 2-acre parcels can be created along a certain length of roadway, and
- If any minimum portion of a 2-acre parcel should be protected in its natural state to retain forest coverage, wildlife habitat, and a buffer to surrounding parcels.

## **Environmental Corridor**

As described earlier in this chapter, environmental corridors include wetlands, floodplains and areas delineated for shoreland/wetland zoning protection.

## **Public Utility/Conservation**

The public utility/conservation areas correspond to existing and expanded natural resource areas associated with the Menominee River Natural Resource Area Master Plan (refer to the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element for additional information). These properties will eventually provide hiking trail access to Pemene Falls and a small parking lot to accommodate visitors.

## **Mixed Use**

To capitalize on the town's USH 141 frontage, the Future Land Use Maps indicate future development is encouraged along USH 141. This development may include light industrial, commercial, and residential uses.

To adhere to access limitations enforced by WisDOT, development along this corridor should utilize access from existing intersection streets, as opposed to direct access to USH 141. This approach is necessary in order to maintain traffic flows on the highway corridor. Development in the area should also be setback from USH 141 to accommodate any long-term road widening plans with the most minimal of impact to development in the vicinity.

To promote community identity, the most developed area of the corridor (e.g. greatest number of uses located nearest to one another) should be concentrated in the unincorporated Beecher Area along USH 141 near CTH Z. Specific types of business encouraged and discouraged are discussed in Chapter 8.

It is imperative that future commercial and industrial ventures be environmentally friendly to protect the quality of groundwater and streams. If the town develops its own zoning ordinance, consideration should be given to the following to protect the appearance of the community:

- Prohibit outdoor storage associated with new commercial/industrial
- Require all waste receptacles be screened from view along USH 141
- Require landscaping, proper signage, limited lighting, and parking
- Seek to minimize nuisances (e.g. noise, odors, lighting) from industrial/commercial uses located near residential development

Part of any zoning effort should consider development of a USH 141 corridor development plan to more specifically outline different uses planned along this corridor.

### **Private Well Setback**

A 1,200-foot setback is illustrated around any existing quarry/landfill site. The purpose of this area is to illustrate locations that may experience nuisances for residential development due to noise, vibration, traffic, lighting, or groundwater concerns. Private wells within 1,200-foot of landfills require a DNR variance for approval. Private wells within 1,200-foot of quarries do not require special permits at this time, but the town wanted residents to be aware of potential concerns in these areas.

### **How Much Land is Provided for Development?**

Table 12 provides a detailed breakdown of projected future development, in five-year increments, in the Town of Beecher. These acreages are based on existing land use patterns, projected populations increases and the community survey results.

**To implement this plan, the Town of Beecher Plan Commission will seek to direct development to areas identified on the *Future Land Use Maps*.**

As with any long-term planning document, as proposals are presented, amendments may be necessary to reflect market forces that shift land use patterns.

**Table 12**  
**20-Year Projections for Future Land Use Acreage**

Land Use Type	2020 (acres)	2025 (acres)
Residential (single/two family)*	362	405
Commercial/Light Industrial	120	160
Wood Yard/Landfill	75	75
Agricultural Land	1027	1000
Woodlands	27082	27082
Town Properties	7	7
Private Parks & Recreation	130	130
Roads	799	799
Institutional Facilities	3	3
Mining/Quarry Sites	13	13
Water Features	620	620
Other Open Land	1510	1494
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31602</b>	<b>31602</b>

\*Based on an average density of 2 acres per housing unit with the number of units based on historic building permit trends. An average of 87 units is developed every 10 years (8 to 9 new homes per year).

### **Goals and Objectives**

The Town of Beecher anticipates that it will grow over the next 20 years. To ensure that this development will not have a negative impact on the natural environment or create undue congestion on town, county and state roads, the Town of Beecher will pursue the goals and objectives outlined in Chapter 12.

## **10 Year Future Land Use Map**

## **20 Year Future Land Use Map**

## **11.0 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Vision</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Governmental Units and Relationships</b>	<b>131</b>
Adjacent Governmental Units	131
School District	132
County & Regional Governmental Units	132
State Agencies	
<b>Intergovernmental Comprehensive Planning Process</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Intergovernmental Cooperation Programs</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Existing and Proposed Plans</b>	<b>134</b>
Adjacent Governmental Units	134
School District	134
County and Regional Governmental Units	134
State Agencies	135
<b>Intergovernmental Policy</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Intergovernmental Goals</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Intergovernmental Objectives</b>	<b>135</b>

## **11.0 Intergovernmental Cooperation**

### **Introduction**

The Town of Beecher's relationship with neighboring municipalities, school districts, state agencies and Marinette County can significantly impact planning, the provision of services, and the siting of public facilities. An examination of these relationships and the identification of potential conflicts will help the town address these situations in a productive manner.

#### **Intergovernmental Vision**

The Town of Beecher works cooperatively, through shared service agreements, with neighboring towns, Marinette County and State agencies to provide Town residents with a wide variety of cost-efficient, non-duplicative services.

Subdivision and significant commercial or industrial development plans within the town are shared with the school district, to ensure that the location, size and nature of development will not result in undue pressure for additional school facilities.

Town leaders keep residents informed on all matters pertinent to Town operations and land development issues. The Town continues to pursue opportunities to provide coordinated, cost-effective services with neighboring communities and the county.

### **Governmental Units and Relationships to the Town of Beecher**

The Town of Beecher shares borders with three municipalities. In addition, the town must coordinate with the local school district, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the Bay Lake Regional Plan Commission, Marinette County and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency.

#### **Adjacent Governmental Units**

- Town of Amberg
- Town of Dunbar
- Town of Pembine

The Town of Beecher's relationship with the three adjacent towns can be characterized as one of mutual respect and compatibility from a land use and political standpoint. Towns cannot annex land from one another. Therefore, the borders between the Town of Beecher and the adjacent towns are fixed and boundary disputes are non-existent. Public services (i.e. road maintenance and construction, etc.) are conducted individually by each town, but opportunities for shared services to reduce costs by improving efficiencies will be considered.

## **School District**

The Town of Beecher is served by **Pembine-Beecher-Dunbar School District**, but there is no actual school buildings located in the town.

The town's relationship with the school district can be characterized as limited, but cooperative. The town has little direct interaction with the school district. Given that there are no school buildings in the town and no plans to establish any in the future, this situation is unlikely to change.

## **County and Regional Government Units**

- Marinette County
- Bay Lakes Regional Planning Commission (Bay Lake)

The Town of Beecher is located in Marinette County. Marinette County has some jurisdiction within the town. In particular, Marinette County has jurisdiction over land divisions, on-site sanitary systems, and shoreland-wetland zoning of the town. Marinette County also maintains county roads in the Town of Beecher. Furthermore, Marinette County owns a significant amount of property in the Town that is managed as forest land.

The relationship between the Town of Beecher and Marinette County can be characterized as one of general agreement and respect. In those areas where the county has jurisdiction in the town, the county attempts to get input from the town before making decision affecting the town. Likewise, Beecher has attempted to maintain open communication with Marinette County. Continued cooperation will be especially important as it relates to zoning as a tool to implement this plan.

Marinette County and the Town of Beecher are part of the Bay Lake Regional Plan Commission. Historically, the Town of Beecher has little direct interaction with Bay Lake. However, during this planning program, the Town did obtain mapping data from Bay Lake and asked Bay Lake to review draft chapters and provide general feedback in the development of this plan.

## **State Agencies**

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

WDNR and WisDOT are the primary state agencies the Town of Beecher must coordinate with to achieve the goals and objectives of this plan.

The WDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and the protection and sustained management of woodlands, wetlands and other natural wildlife habitat areas. Additionally, as a significant local landowner, the town and DNR interact regularly with respect to property management issues.

The activities of the WDNR are discussed further in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element (Chapter 7) of this plan. Additional information is also available on-line at: [www.drn.state.wi.us](http://www.drn.state.wi.us).

WisDOT is also a key player in the planning and development of the town. WisDOT is responsible for the maintenance and access to the USH 141 corridor. It will be important for the Town of Beecher to continue to coordinate with WisDOT with respect to this roadway.

Open communication and participation in land use and transportation decisions, which may impact the town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

For additional information about WisDOT activities in the Town of Beecher, refer to the Transportation Element (Chapter 5) of this plan. Additional information is also available on-line at: [www.dot.state.wi.us](http://www.dot.state.wi.us).

### **Intergovernmental Comprehensive Planning Process**

To facilitate intergovernmental coordination, the Town of Beecher sent all adjacent municipalities, the school district, Marinette County and Bay Lake a letter at the on-set of the planning effort. This letter was intended to notify these agencies and communities of the Town of Beecher planning process. Likewise, this letter extended an open invitation for participation in the development of this plan.

On an element-by-element basis, the Town of Beecher contacted adjacent local government units, the school district, and state agencies again to complete inventories of available services, facilities, and programs. For example, during the development of the Transportation Element, WisDOT was contacted to obtain information available related to transportation facilities and programs in the Town of Beecher. Likewise, WisDOT was provided a preliminary copy of the Transportation Element to review and comment upon. This same courtesy was extended to the WNDNR during development of the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.

Throughout the plan development process, The Town of Beecher worked closely with Marinette County to coordinate plan-mapping resources.

On October 16, 2003, as the draft comprehensive plan was nearing completion, the Town of Beecher hosted an intergovernmental meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the plans of other local agencies and governments and attempt to coordinate the *Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan* with the goals and objectives of these other local plans. Participants were also given the opportunity to view and comment on the *Draft Future Land Use Maps*. This collective “meeting of the minds” provided a unique

opportunity to discuss area growth, development, transportation, education, and other concerns. Prior to this meeting, a copy of the Draft Intergovernmental Element was available on the Internet for review and comment.

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation Programs**

At this time, the only intergovernmental programs the Town of Beecher participates in are for fire protection, zoning administration, municipal court and humane officer. Many other opportunities exist to establish other intergovernmental programs, with neighboring communities to improve efficiencies and save money. Specifically, the town could pursue joint contracts with neighboring towns and private companies for road maintenance, garbage collection, and other services needed by neighboring communities. The idea would be by entering into a larger contract a cost savings could be gained.

### **Existing and Proposed Plans**

#### **Adjacent Governmental Units**

No adjacent government has adopted a Smart Growth Plan. The Towns of Amberg, Athelstane and Silver Cliff are working together to develop a Multi-Jurisdictional Smart Growth Plan. This process will likely be completed in late 2004.

To ensure compatibility with planning goals and objectives of the *Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan*, the town would like to participate in the planning efforts of all neighboring communities to ensure the goals, objectives and visions of this plan are communicated. Likewise, impacts from surrounding plans on the Town of Beecher need to be addressed.

#### **School District**

The school district serving the town extends into neighboring communities. As such, development in neighboring communities may have an impact on the districts needs to expand. The Town of Beecher wishes to remain involved in the siting of future schools to ensure that the goals and objectives of this plan can be met. This will become more important as Beecher and neighboring communities continue to grow, bringing additional residents (and students) to the area. At this time, the school district has no plan to construct any new facilities in the town.

#### **County and Regional Governments**

**Marinette County** has not adopted a comprehensive plan in accordance with 1999 Wisconsin Act 9. However, the county has been working toward the start of such a plan for some time. The Town of Beecher will participate in county planning efforts to provide information about the town plan, including local goals, objectives, and visions for the future.

**Bay Lake** has not yet adopted a comprehensive plan. It will be important for the town to participate in regional planning efforts when Bay Lake develops its plan.

### **State Agencies**

The Town of Beecher's relationship with the State of Wisconsin mainly involves state aids for local roads and the administering of various state mandates to towns. Coordination with WisDOT will continue to be important with respect to the future of USH 141.

Moreover, there is a significant amount of forested land in the town that is either owned by the state, or privately owned, but managed through the WDNR Managed Forest Program.

### **Intergovernmental Policy**

The Town of Beecher will seek to cooperate with all neighboring municipalities, the county, state agencies, and the school district for mutual benefit.

### **Intergovernmental Goals & Objectives**

Goals and objectives to support the policy described above are included in Chapter 12.

## **12.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>136</b>
Introduction	137
Relationship between Elements	137
Measuring Progress	137
Responsibilities	138
Updating the Comprehensive Plan	138
Housing Agenda	138
Transportation Agenda	140
Utilities & Community Facilities Agenda	142
Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Agenda	143
Economic Development Agenda	145
Intergovernmental Cooperation Agenda	146
Land Use Agenda	147
Implementation Agenda	149

## CHAPTER 12.0: IMPLEMENTATION

### Introduction

The Implementation Element is the “how to” portion of the plan. It prescribes those actions necessary to realize the visions, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, site plan regulations, design review ordinances and subdivision ordinances.

This chapter includes all of the goals, objectives and policies highlighted in previous chapters of the plan. In this way, this chapter serves as the master “to do” list for implementing the plan.

### Relationship between Elements

Throughout the plan, coordination between the nine (9) required elements has been highlighted as a special section of each element chapter. Also, in several instances, a single objective applies to more than one element of the plan and was reprinted in several chapters. Moreover, in the tables printed at the end of this chapter, the specific elements that relate to each goal and objective are identified.

### Measuring Progress

Special attention has been given to the **milestone dates** (see definition in box) to ensure that individual objectives act in harmony with other stated goals and objectives. To ensure that the plan elements are understood in their totality over the life of the plan, the **Town of Beecher Plan Commission will annually review the goals and objectives.** Part of this effort, will also include addressing conflicts which may arise between the nine elements. During this annual review, the Plan Commission may also discuss Development requests received in the previous year, lessons learned, and experiences gained. These discussions may lead to additional considerations about changes to the plan and its maps.

Milestone Date – A specific date, after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, when the Town will review the plan implementation action to see if the objective has been met and consider additional implementation strategies to achieve the stated goal.

To track progress and help to ensure that the plan is implemented, milestone dates are provided for each objective. The Town has reviewed the milestone dates to ensure that they are feasible expectations for the Town.

**Responsibilities**

This plan was developed by an ad hoc committee, including representatives of the Town Board. Implementation of the Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan will be the primary responsibility of the **Town of Beecher Plan Commission**. The Plan Commission will make recommendations pertaining to development issues, in accordance with the Plan, for the Town Board and Marinette County to consider when making final decisions.

Updating the Comprehensive Plan

As is stipulated in 1999 Wisconsin Act 9, a comprehensive plan must be updated at least once every 10 years. However, in order to ensure that the Town’s plan is an effective management tool, the Town of Beecher Plan Committee will **review the plan goals and objectives annually** to track those activities that have been completed and add additional objectives as needed to accomplish the stated goals.

The Town of Beecher Plan Committee will initiate the next **major update of this plan by 2033**. At that time, information from the 2030 census will be available to update several tables. This update will also involve a comprehensive review of the inventory information presented in each chapter. Furthermore, the Town will coordinate with all partners identified in the Intergovernmental Element Chapter to understand any external changes that may impact the plan. Finally, the Plan Commission will complete a comprehensive review of all visions/policies, goals, objectives and programs outlined in this plan to evaluate progress and consider additional opportunities.

**HOUSING AGENDA**

<b>ELEMENT (S)</b>	<b>OVERALL GOALS</b>
Housing Ag., Nat. & Cult.	Maintain the environmental assets and rural character of the community so that it continues to be an attractive place to live.
Housing	Preserve or improve the quality of existing single-family housing values over time.
Housing Issues & Opportunities	Provide housing choices for residents in all stages of life (i.e. starter homes, family homes, senior housing, etc.)

<b>ELEMENT (S)</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>MILESTONE DATE</b>
Housing Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Using the information provided in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element, identify and map areas for primary and secondary conservation in the Town of Beecher.	
Housing Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Develop a zoning ordinance and a conservation subdivision ordinance to encourage the preservation of natural areas, minimize the impact of urban sprawl, and support well-planned residential development in the Town. Use the	

	model ordinance developed by University of Wisconsin Extension as a resource in this effort.	
Housing Ag., Nat., & Cult. Resources Land Use	Encourage “low impact” development within the Town that can help reduce stormwater runoff and flooding.	Continuous
Housing Intergovernmental	Support existing efforts and consider new programs that will provide additional elderly and disabled resident housing opportunities and services in the Town of Beecher. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Coordinate with Marinette County to direct large alternative and multiple family developments to communities where appropriate services are available.</li> <li>b. Survey seniors to understand the services that are needed locally.</li> </ul>	a. Continu ous b.
Housing	Educate residents about the importance of property maintenance and safety. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Hold special Town meeting to discuss the issue with residents.</li> <li>b. Develop articles for the Town website that highlight property maintenance techniques and benefits.</li> <li>c. Establish an annual maintenance recognition program to award one property owner each year for his/her efforts to maintain their property and improve the appearance of the Town.</li> <li>d. Coordinate with the area school district, local churches and community service organizations to provide volunteer services on “Make a Difference Day” as well as a regular program to assist seniors and disabled residents in need of home maintenance services.</li> <li>e. Encourage residents to establish formal and informal neighborhood watch programs.</li> </ul>	
Housing	Educate new residents moving into the area about what it means to live in the country. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop “welcome” packet for prospective and new homebuyers in the area.</li> <li>b. Provide information about available Town services and amenities on the Town’s web page.</li> <li>c. Have local realtors and area builders distribute this packet.</li> </ul>	

Housing	Encourage quality affordable housing opportunities in the Town of Beecher by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support the efforts of private, non-profit organizations like community housing development organizations (CHDOs) to develop affordable housing units in the Town of Beecher.</li> <li>b. Enforcing Town and county residential codes and ordinances to ensure that properties are in good condition.</li> </ul>	Continuous
---------	--	------------

**TRANSPORTATION AGENDA**

<b>ELEMENT (S)</b>	<b>OVERALL GOALS</b>
Transportation	To maintain and improve Town roads in a timely and well planned manner.
Transportation, Land Use	Seek to expand opportunities for trail development in the Town of Beecher.

<b>ELEMENT (S)</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>MILESTONE DATE</b>
Transportation	Review the Town Road Ordinance to define standards with respect to width, construction, cul-de-sac length and radius, turnarounds, dead ends, culverts, ditching and the like in order to maintain the integrity of the roads and protect public health, safety and welfare. These same standards should also apply to private roads. Town road standards can directly impact the forest industry by allowing the continued utilization and transportation of forest products through the Town. Road access control and residential road design standards directly impact public safety.	
Transportation	Obtain and file a copy of the deeds to all roads in the Town.	
Transportation Utilities & Comm. Facilities	Develop a Capital Improvements Plan and Budget (CIP/B) to coordinate and plan for annual roadway improvements and maintenance as well as and other capital improvements.	

Transportation Land Use Intergovernmental	Coordinate with Marinette County to ensure that proposed trail routes, road improvements and other transportation facilities eventually outlined in the Marinette County Transportation Element of the County Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan are completed in the Town of Beecher in a coordinated fashion with the visions, goals and objectives expressed in this plan.	Continuous
Transportation	Develop a local policy to support access control standards to limit ingress and egress from county roads in order to protect the function of these corridors.	
Transportation	Annually review available accident reports for the Town to identify priorities for Town transportation improvements to protect public safety.	Annually
Transportation	As part of any Town effort to develop a subdivision ordinance, seek to ensure that the residential road design standards are adequate for legal speeds, sizes and weights of vehicles, but also consider ways to minimize runoff and limit the impact on natural areas.	
Transportation	Using the future land use plan as a guide, seek to prevent the location of roadways through environmentally sensitive lands in the Town of Beecher	Continuous
Transportation Ag., Nat., & Cult. Resources	Seek to protect scenic areas when constructing new or improving existing transportation facilities. To support this effort develop an inventory or catalogue, including photos, of scenic areas to be protected in the Town of Beecher.	
Transportation Land Use	Encourage the development of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, in accordance with WisDOT recommendations and the Transportation Plan Element of the Marinette County Comprehensive Plan.	Continuous
Transportation Land Use	Develop a Road Access Control Ordinance to set standards for separation of roadways and private drives, and develop a continuous collector type road system from section to section.	

## UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES AGENDA

ELEMENT (S)	OVERALL GOALS
Utilities & Comm. Facilities Intergovernmental	Provide efficient, cost-effective Town services to residents of the Town of Beecher.
Utilities & Comm. Facilities	Support the continued operation of community facilities provided by Marinette County, the local school district, private companies and neighboring communities, which serve residents of the Town of Beecher.
Utilities & Comm. Facilities	Seek to ensure that all development is served by adequate utilities.

ELEMENTS	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONE DATE
Utilities & Comm. Facilities	As desirable, issue permits for innovative waste treatment systems (pursuant to the requirements of COMM 83) that will provide safe and effective results for commercial development opportunities near USH 141 and CTH Z.	Continuous
Utilities & Comm. Facilities Intergovernmental Ag., Nat., & Cult. Resources Land Use	Work with Marinette County, and if necessary adopt a Town policy, to encourage developers to consider alternative waste treatment systems in support of innovative subdivision designs (i.e. cluster and conservation subdivisions).	
Utilities & Comm. Facilities	Seek to educate residents of the Town of Beecher about available community facilities in the area through a community newsletter and/or web site, particularly to ensure that populations in need can obtain services.	
Utilities & Comm. Facilities	Coordinate with Marinette County to ensure that the county cellular tower ordinance provides adequate protection and provisions for the Town of Beecher. Encourage co-location, stealth technologies, and other techniques to minimize the visual impact of cellular towers. Furthermore, the ordinance should address policies with respect to the location of towers on Town property.	
Utilities & Comm. Facilities Land Use	Maintain and enhance Town park facilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Pursue grant funding opportunities to develop park signage and install minor improvements as deemed necessary by the Town.</li> <li>b. Evaluate the need to establish additional campsites at the Town parks. If desired,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continu ous</li> <li>b.</li> <li>c. Continu ous</li> </ul>

	<p>work with county and state representatives to identify funding sources available to help pay for the campsites.</p> <p>c. Coordinate with the WDNR and Marinette County officials to ensure that state and county recreation areas are well-maintained and meet the needs of Town residents and visitors.</p>	
Utilities & Comm. Facilities	Annually evaluate contracts for cemetery and waste management services to ensure costs are reasonable and services are high quality.	Annually

### **AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES AGENDA**

*It is the policy of the Town of Beecher to maintain its northwoods character by discouraging development that will interfere with important natural resources, including the Menominee and Pike Rivers and the Miscauno Wildlife Area.*

*Encourage residents to seek professional forestry advice and practice sustainable forestry on all forest properties.*

<b>ELEMENT (S)</b>	<b>OVERALL GOALS</b>
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Land Use	Preserve opportunities for outdoor recreation.
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Protect surface and groundwater quality.
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Maintain and expand wildlife habitat.
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Preserve and manage natural resources to ensure their value for future generations.
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Protect the Menominee and Pike Rivers, local lakes and other streams from harmful uses.
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Protect lakes, rivers, and wetlands from detrimental impacts.

<b>ELEMENT (S)</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>MILESTONE DATE</b>
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Land Use	Seek to severely limit land divisions or subdivisions in forested areas, unless conservation based and at least 50 percent of wooded areas are preserved.	Continuous
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Land Use	In farmland areas, seek to direct individual lot development (not part of subdivisions) to the edges of farm fields.	Continuous
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Partner with local land trusts and the WDNR to protect wildlife habitat areas, including:	Continuous

Land Use	woodlands, wetlands, hilltops and farmland areas and encourage local landowners to pursue opportunities to protect their land by working with land trusts.	
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Land Use	Support the efforts of Marinette County to enforce stream and lake setback requirements and protect wetland and floodplain areas by enforcing county zoning requirements and policies established in the Marinette County Land and Water Resource Management Plan.	Continuous
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Intergovernmental	Create, maintain and enhance natural buffers along stream banks. Work with Marinette County, the WDNR and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to promote and help fund buffer strips along rivers and streams.	Continuous
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Intergovernmental	Coordinate with WDNR to identify and protect wildlife habitats. Through local zoning, discourage habitat fragmentation by encouraging development adjacent to existing development.	
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Intergovernmental	Participate in the planning efforts of Marinette County to ensure that the county comprehensive plan represents the interest, visions, and expectations of the Town of Beecher	
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Intergovernmental	Coordinate with Marinette County and the WDNR to protect the quality of lakes, rivers and wetlands. This effort must include education for residents about the importance of these natural resources and actions they can take to prevent harmful impacts. Education information may be distributed through a Town newsletter or web site.	Continuous
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Land Use	Encourage active forest management recommendations as outlined in the Wisconsin Forest management Guidelines and Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality to enhance the Town's northwoods character, protect wildlife habitats and protect water quality of lakes, streams and wetlands.	Continuous
Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources Land Use	Seek to educate residents, through a Town web site and other means about fire risks related to open burning and the potential for wildfires.	Continuous

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

ELEMENT (S)	OVERALL GOALS
Economic Development	Expand commercial and light industrial development along USH 141 to “grow” and diversify the local economy.
Economic Development	Expand tourism opportunities (i.e. motel, gift shop, convenience store/gas station, outfitters, etc.) in the Town without jeopardizing the quality of life for year-round residents. These types of establishments should be located along USH 141 and CTH Z.
Economic Development	Encourage local entrepreneurs who seek to expand and diversify the Town’s economy by opening home occupations.
Economic Development Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Seek to prevent future contamination to groundwater, surface water, and other natural resources.

ELEMENT (S)	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONE DATE
Economic Development	<p>Through appropriate zoning and communication with local realtors, seek to concentrate new commercial and industrial development around the unincorporated Beecher area in accordance with the land use plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Distribute a copy of this plan to local realtors.</li> <li>b. Work with county officials, and possibly a consultant, to develop a zoning code which addressed commercial and industrial uses.</li> </ul>	
Economic Development Intergovernmental	<p>Coordinate with Marinette County to create tourism and businesses opportunities within the Town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Encourage the County to include more information about the Town on the County Web Page, particularly information that highlights on water related activities (Pike and Menominee Rivers), Marinette County Forest Land and the Miscauno Wildlife Area.</li> <li>b. Provide the Marinette County Chamber of Commerce with a packet of information about the Town of Beecher (including this chapter and the Future Land Use Plan Map) to provide prospective developers.</li> </ul>	

Economic Development	Support the establishment of home occupations, provided such uses do not constitute a nuisance to neighboring properties or deter from the rural character of the area (i.e. signage, lighting, etc.) a. Adopt a policy for providing recommendations to Marinette County about proposed special use permits to allow for home occupations in the Town of Beecher. b. Develop a guide for local property owners who wish to establish a home occupation. Include criteria for site development and zoning approvals.	
Economic Development Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Develop an education program to inform landowners about environmental contamination sources.. a. Coordinate with the WDNR and County to develop articles for a Town newsletter/web site addressing contamination risks and ways to prevent/address risks. b. Provide residents with information sources and contacts to address local contamination concerns.	

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AGENDA**

*It is the policy of the Town of Beecher will seek to cooperate with all neighboring municipalities, the county, state agencies, and school districts for mutual benefit.*

<b>ELEMENT (S)</b>	<b>OVERALL GOALS</b>
Intergovernmental	Improve lines of intergovernmental communication.
Intergovernmental Land Use	Continue to seek new ways to coordinate and share community facilities and services with neighboring communities and Marinette County whenever efficient.

<b>ELEMENT (S)</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>MILESTONE DATES</b>
Intergovernmental	Host a bi-annual summit to discuss concerns, plans, exchange ideas and report implementation achievements.	Even Number Years
Intergovernmental	Participate in the “Smart Growth” planning activities of neighboring communities, Marinette County, and Bay Lake.	
Intergovernmental Utilities & Comm.	Expand and continue to explore the potential for mutual services with neighboring towns	Continuous

Facilities	(including road development and maintenance, garbage collection, etc.)	
Intergovernmental Utilities & Comm. Facilities	Notify the school district about proposed residential developments so the district may plan for additional school children.	Continuous
Intergovernmental Transportation Land Use	Notify WisDOT of proposed development projects near USH 141 so WisDOT may plan accordingly for access and required improvements (i.e. acceleration lanes, turn lanes, shared driveways, etc.).	Continuous
Intergovernmental Land Use Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Coordinate with WisDOT and WDNR to ensure transportation facilities are safe and natural features are protected.	Continuous

### LAND USE AGENDA

*The Town of Beecher will encourage landowners and developers to use conservation-based approaches. The Town will seek to require at least a 2-acre minimum parcel size for lot divisions.*

ELEMENT (S)	OVERALL GOALS
Land Use	Protect the Town's abundant and high quality natural resource areas to maintain the Town's northwoods atmosphere and community character.

ELEMENT (S)	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONE DATE
Land Use Intergovernmental Ag., Nat. & Cult. Resources	Adopt a <b>Town Subdivision Ordinance</b> , including conservation/cluster provisions, minimum lot size requirements and road standards that are more restrictive than area currently included in the Marinette County Land Division Ordinance. Use the principals outlined in this plan as a guide in this effort. Coordinate with local resources to assist in this effort, including Marinette County Planning Staff.	
Land Use Economic Dev.	Adopt a <b>Town Zoning Ordinance</b> , in accordance with the ideas presented in Chapter 9. Provide requirements to establish a minimum percentage of areas to be preserved in every development, landscape buffers/screens along roads, managed roadway access and desired areas for protection (i.e. steep slopes, wooded areas, wetlands, floodplains, meadows, etc.)	

<p>Land Use Intergovernmental Economic Dev</p>	<p>Work with Marinette County Zoning Department and other experts to develop and enforce a <b>Town Site Plan Review Ordinance</b>. The purpose of this ordinance is to present a positive image of the community and provide guidelines for developers related to the appearance of commercial and industrial development in the Town. The ordinance should require developers and landowners to discuss ideas with Plan Commission before going to the expense of developing engineered plans.</p>	
<p>Land Use Utilities &amp; Comm. Facilities</p>	<p>Coordinate with electric, natural gas and other utility providers to ensure that adequate utilities will be made available for cost effective future growth and development in the Town.</p>	<p>Continuous</p>
<p>Land Use</p>	<p>Minimize the visual impact of development to maintain the Town’s northwoods character.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. When individual lots (not subdivisions) are proposed, new homes should not be placed in the middle of open fields.</li> <li>b. Individual residences (not part of subdivisions) should be located adjacent to tree line edges, if available. If not, homes should be clustered on the edges of fields and undeveloped areas to protect woodlands, wildlife habitat and open views.</li> <li>c. Residents are encouraged to maintain as many trees as possible on wooded sites.</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous</p>
<p>Land Use</p>	<p>Minimize the disturbance to the natural environment when new development occurs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Roads should be constructed to follow contours.</li> <li>b. Disturbance for the construction of roads, basins and other improvements should be kept at a minimum by clustering homes together to prevent disturbance to an entire property.</li> <li>c. Disturbance on individual lots should be limited by restricting development to occupy only a portion of the lot.</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous</p>

## IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA<sup>2</sup>

ELEMENT (S)	OVERALL GOALS
Implementation	To ensure that the Town of Beecher Comprehensive Plan is an effective tool for making local land use decisions.

ELEMENT (S)	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONE DATE
Implementation	Annually review the goals and objectives presented throughout this chapter to assess implementation success and consider additional objectives.	Annually
Implementation	As available, provided updated information to supplement the plan information (i.e. updated map, updated population projections, U.S. Agricultural Census Data, future local survey results, etc.)	Annually
Implementation	If legislation is changed to permit Town's to develop official maps or TIF districts, evaluate these opportunities.	

---

<sup>2</sup> As part of this element, the Town determined no changes were needed to existing building, mechanical, housing, and sanitary codes to implement this plan. Existing code requirements are consistent with the recommendations of this plan. A new state law requires all communities to enforce the uniform dwelling code, including erosion control. Communities have the option of local enforcement, delegating responsibility to the County (if the County will agree) or take no action and the State Dept. of Commerce, with its Safety Building Division, will be required to provide inspection and enforcement services.