
To: Concord Plan Commission
From: Jason Valerius, AICP
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Update Overview
Date: August 26, 2022

This memo accompanies the first complete draft of the Town's updated Comprehensive Plan (AKA, the "Town Plan"). In our work over the past six months with the Town Plan Steering Committee, guided by community feedback at multiple public meetings, we have largely affirmed the Town's policy preferences as represented in the 2009 plan. There are many text changes, though most of those changes fall into the following categories:

- Informational updates, such as more recent census data, funding programs, etc.
- Descriptions of county planning and zoning policy in their updated plans
- Editing for clarity or brevity

There are some noteworthy policy changes in the draft which are described below, chapter by chapter.

Planning Schedule

March 8 – Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting
March 24 – Steering Committee Public Input Meeting
April 21 – Steering Committee Public Input Meeting
May 4 – Community Input Meeting led by MSA
June 8 – Steering Committee Working Meeting
June 28 – Steering Committee Working Meeting
Late August – Community Survey regarding rural business development
August 22 – Steering Committee Working Meeting
September 19 – Steering Committee Working Meeting, Final Plan Review
September 28 – Plan Commission discussion about draft plan and survey results, recommendation for edits and release of public hearing draft
October 14 – Deadline to publish and mail public hearing notices
October 26 – Plan Commission Final Review and Recommendation for Adoption
November 14 – Town Board Public Hearing and Adoption Vote

Plan Revision Summary

This highlights the substantive changes in your draft plan update.

Chapter 1 – Issues and Opportunities

- Description of new issues of concern, including the highly permissive A-2 zoning district, commercial solar energy projects, and increasing emergency services costs
- A revised vision statement addressing implementation emphasizes the need to document findings of fact showing consistency with this plan (or the lack thereof) in every zoning and subdivision review

Chapter 2 – Housing

- Added clarity that the Town will not support private, shared wastewater treatment systems to enable higher residential density – only individual systems

Chapter 3 – Transportation

- No policy changes

Chapter 4 – Utilities and Community Facilities

- Additional issue, vision, and strategy content regarding opposition to commercial solar and wind facilities

Town of Concord Comprehensive Plan Update

August 26, 2022

Chapter 5 – Agriculture

- New clarity in the vision statements about the meaning of “agriculture” and opposition to residential plats and utility-scale wind and solar energy facilities
- New, detailed strategy about opposition to utility-scale wind and solar energy facilities

Chapter 6 – Environmental and Natural Resources

- No policy changes

Chapter 7 – Cultural and Historic Resources

- No policy changes

Chapter 8 – Economic Development

- An expanded vision description of “rural character”
- Vision and strategy content about creating Town criteria for home-based businesses is eliminated, deferring now to the regulations in the County zoning ordinance
- A formerly vague strategy about discouraging businesses that could have a negative impact on the Town’s rural character is replaced with a strategy opposing any rezone to A-2, C, B or I districts outside the Town hamlet
- References to criteria for commercial development are simplified – that content is in the land use chapter now
- A strategy establish regulations on development that would interfere with agriculture or contaminate water resources is added
- A strategy to develop a land use plan for the hamlet is eliminated – land use policies for the hamlet are now included directly in the Land Use chapter
- A strategy opposing commercial solar or wind facilities is added

Chapter 9 – Intergovernmental Cooperation

- Vision statements and strategies addressing extraterritorial plat review and annexation by neighboring jurisdictions are modified. Periodic meetings with each community to discuss both issues are now the focus, rather than formal agreements. Extraterritorial plat review should not typically be a concern because those communities have only limited ability to block land divisions in the town, and more importantly the Town doesn’t want much land division or development anyhow. Annexation by Sullivan or Summit is a low risk, while annexation by Oconomowoc is a higher risk due to growth pressure and statutory clearance to annex in Concord without the Town’s permission. However seeking a formal agreement right now could have the effect of accelerating annexation interests.
- Vision and strategy related to the Glacial Heritage Area project are eliminated, as that 2009 plan does not include the Town of Concord

Chapter 10 – Land Use

- A vision statement is added about having a strong working relationship with the County on land use issues
- Vision and strategy opposing utility-scale solar and wind facilities are added
- Concerns about the A-2 district are described under Issues, and a strategy is added indicating that A-2 zoning will only be supported in the Town hamlet
- A new Future Land Use Policy section is added, with descriptions of land use intent and allowable zoning districts for each category shown on the Future Land Use Map. The Town Hamlet category includes recommended criteria for the review and approval of commercial uses in the hamlet.
- A description of the working relationship with County staff on land use regulation is added under Issues

Chapter 11 – Implementation

- An implementation action is added describing the Town’s need to support every land use or land division decision with documentation of exactly how the proposed change is or is not consistent with the Town Plan
- An action item to create a standalone plan for the Town hamlet is removed
- The Transportation action to create a short-term road maintenance plan is modified to call for the creation and maintenance of a 3-5-year Capital Improvement Plan
- An action to create a Town Hazard Mitigation Plan is removed – the Town will rely on the County’s plan
- Actions describing the creation of formal boundary agreements with neighboring communities are replaced by an action to seek periodic conversations with those communities (C. Oconomowoc, V. Summit, V. Sullivan)
- The plan amendment process is modified and clarified - please review this content

Town of Concord Comprehensive Plan Update

August 26, 2022

Maps

The maps in Appendix A are all new. Most significant is the new Future Land Use Maps (15, 16), provided with and without a “Development Limitations” overlay that highlights the possible presence of natural features that could limit or prevent development.

Note that the Town hamlet boundary as shown on most maps matches the boundary used in your 2009 plan. The image below shows three versions of that boundary – the version from your 2009 (dark red), the version in the current County comprehensive plan (bright red) and a new version I am proposing (green). I recommend including whole parcels most of the time, for simplicity of interpretation and enforcement, and have modified the boundary accordingly, especially along the south boundary. If you compare this image to the Future Land Use maps you will see that we have used the proposed green boundary for the limits of the Town Hamlet planning designation. My recommendation needs your review.

