

TOWN OF ARMSTRONG CREEK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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Prepared by
**North Central Wisconsin
Regional Planning Commission**

TOWN OF ARMSTRONG CREEK

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapters

1.	Issues and Opportunities	2
2.	Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources.....	13
3.	Housing	29
4.	Utilities and Community Facilities	35
5.	Transportation	41
6.	Economic Development.....	50
7.	Land Use	57
8.	Intergovernmental Cooperation	67
9.	Implementation	72

List of Tables & Figures

Table 1:	Population Trends.....	3
Table 2:	Population Estimate 2005 and Population Forecasts to 2025.....	3
Table 3:	Households.....	4
FIGURE 1	2000 Age Cohorts for Town of Armstrong Creek	5
Table 4:	Age Distribution 1990 to 2000.....	6
Table 5:	Education Levels	7
Table 6:	Income Levels.....	8
Table 7:	Occupation of Employed Workers	9

Table 8:	Industry Sectors.....	10
Table 9:	Year Structure Built, 2000.....	29
Table 10:	Residential Occupancy Status, 2000.....	30
Table 11:	Housing Units by Structural Type, 2000.....	31
Table 12:	Housing Values, 2000.....	31
Table 13:	Road Mileage by Jurisdiction, and Functional Class.....	43
Table 14:	Traffic Counts	44
Table 15:	Rural Highway Functional Classification System	46
Table 16:	Occupation of Employed Workers, 1990-2000	51
Table 17:	Industry Sectors, 1990-2000.....	51
Table 18:	Existing Land Use, 2009 Town of Armstrong Creek	57
Table 19:	Projected Land Use Demand to 2030.....	59
Table 20:	Town of Armstrong Creek Equalized Land Values	60

List of Maps

1.	Locational Reference.....	1
2.	Natural Resources.....	28
3.	Utilities and Community Facilities	40
4.	Existing Land Use Inventory.....	65
5.	Future Land Use Plan.....	66

Attachments

- A. Public Participation Plan
- B. Plan Adoption Documentation

Insert Map 1 - Location

CHAPTER 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter, the first of nine chapters of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan, explores potential issues that may have an effect on the development of the Town over the 20-year planning period of the plan. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001(2)(a) Wis. Stats.], this chapter contains trends and forecasts with jurisdictional comparisons for some basic demographics including: population, households, employment, age, education, and income. Although forecasts should typically cover the 20-year planning period, in some cases, the only acceptable sources had lesser time periods for their forecasts. Official sources are used for data and forecasting, including the WDOA Demographic Service Center, and the U.S. Census Bureau.

In addition to this review of basic town statistics, a variety of tools are utilized to identify issues, including a review of past plans, brainstorming by the planning committee, a public hearing, and observations of the NCWRPC professional planning staff.

This chapter closes with a vision statement; and some goals, objectives, and policies. The vision statement was crafted from the Town's discussion of their issues, and the direction they want the Town to travel over the next 20 years. Goals, objectives, and policies were developed as a blueprint for the Town to follow when guiding future development over the 20-year plan horizon.

Plans are required to be updated every 10 years, roughly corresponding to the decennial census and fresh community data. This is the minimum amount of time between extensive review and update of issues and related objectives, policies, and goals.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS

In 2000, 463 people lived in Armstrong Creek. Between the 1990 and the 2000 Censuses, the Town of Armstrong Creek's population increased by 0.7%, see TABLE 1. Both the County and the State grew more than Armstrong Creek, with growth rates of 14.2 and 9.6 percents respectively. Armstrong Creek added 7 people from 1990 to 2005. According to the 2007 population estimate of 483 people living in Armstrong Creek, another 20 people were added since the 2000 Census.

TABLE 1 displays the total population for the Town of Armstrong Creek, the neighboring towns, the County, and the State. Although Armstrong Creek has

grown much slower than the County and the State, towns surrounding Armstrong Creek have grown at very different rates, with many in decline. The Town of Goodman grew the fastest from 1990 to 2005 at an overall change of 12 percent. The largest amount of decline was recorded in the Town of Blackwell with -13.5%.

**Table 1:
Population Trends**

	1990	2000	Estimate 2005	% Change 1990-00	% Change 2000-05	% Change 1990-05
Town of Armstrong Creek	460	463	467	0.7%	0.9%	1.5%
Town of Fence, Florence Co.	222	231	231	4.1%	0.0%	4.1%
Town of Goodman, Marinette Co.	758	820	849	8.2%	3.5%	12.0%
Town of Blackwell	384	347	332	-9.6%	-4.3%	-13.5%
Town of Laona	1,387	1,367	1,371	-1.4%	0.3%	-1.2%
Town of Caswell	94	102	99	8.5%	-2.9%	5.3%
Forest County	8,776	10,024	10,213	14.2%	1.9%	16.4%
Wisconsin	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,580,757	9.6%	4.0%	14.1%

Source: US Census, and WDOA Demographic Services Center

**Table 2:
Population Estimate 2005 and Population Forecasts to 2025**

	Estimate 2005	Projection 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025
Town of Armstrong Creek	467	455	449	439	431
Town of Fence, Florence County	231	233	232	229	224
Town of Goodman, Marinette County	849	848	859	866	868
Town of Blackwell	332	319	305	289	273
Town of Laona	1,371	1,321	1,292	1,255	1,221
Town of Caswell	99	103	103	102	101
Forest County	10,213	10,350	10,448	10,465	10,482
Wisconsin	5,580,757	5,751,470	5,931,386	6,110,878	6,274,867

Source: WDOA Demographic Services Center

Population projections in TABLE 2 show the Town of Armstrong Creek declining by 7.7 percent over the next 20-year period between 2005-2025. Blackwell and Laona are both projected to have greater than 10 percent declines over the next 20 years. Fence is projected to have a 3 percent loss; and both Goodman and Caswell are projected to grow by about 2 percent from 2005-2025. Forest County is projected to have a 2.6 percent growth rate, and the State is projected to grow overall by 12.4% between 2005-2025.

Further analysis of population change can be found in other chapters of this Plan, particularly in the Housing chapter and the Land Use chapter.

2. HOUSEHOLD TRENDS AND FORECASTS

The 463 (year 2000) residents of the Town of Armstrong Creek formed 207 households. Total households are projected to increase to 220 by 2025, see TABLE 3. This reflects the population growth projected in TABLE 2. Average household size in Armstrong Creek was 2.24 people in 2000, which is lower than the 2.50 State average. TABLE 3 reflects an overall trend of fewer people per household, and projected population changes in Table 2.

Further analysis of housing unit change can be found in other chapters of this Plan, particularly in the Housing chapter and the Land Use chapter.

**Table 3:
Households**

	Total 2000	Projection 2005	Projection 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025
Town of Armstrong Creek	207	211	216	219	219	220
Town of Fence, Florence County	107	110	116	119	121	121
Town of Goodman, Marinette County	360	376	396	412	422	429
Town of Blackwell	45	34	31	32	29	18
Town of Laona	564	568	580	583	579	573
Town of Caswell	41	42	44	45	46	46
Forest County	4,043	4,206	4,434	4,613	4,729	4,811
Wisconsin	2,084,556	2,190,210	2,303,238	2,406,789	2,506,932	2,592,462

Source: US Census, and WDOA Demographic Services Center

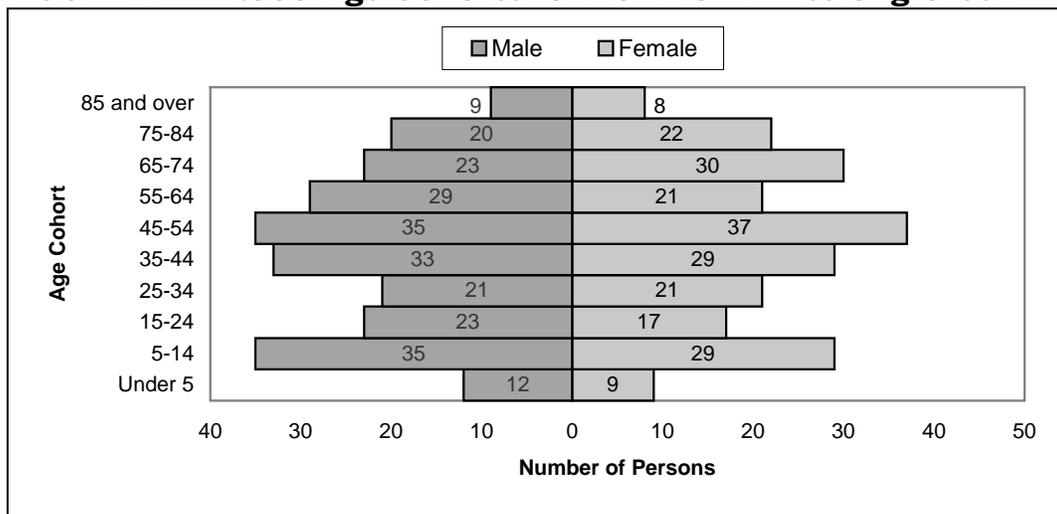
3. AGE DISTRIBUTION

Population distribution by age is important in the planning process. Two age groups are examined here: 1) people 5 to 17 years old, and 2) people 65 years and older. These two age groups are often referred to as dependent populations and have different needs. The younger group requires schools, and the older group is retiring from the workforce. TABLE 4 shows each of these groups in 1990 and 2000.

In 1990, the median age of Armstrong Creek's population was 42.7 years. At that time, residents of the County had a much lower median age (35.7 years). Both the Town and the County had populations older than the State (32.9 years) as a whole. The Town of Armstrong Creek had a lower proportion of population (17.0%) in school (5-17 age class) than the County (19.5%), and the State (19.0%). Armstrong Creek's older population (65+ age class) percentage of 25.7 is higher than both the County (18.9%), and the State (13.3%).

By 2000, the median age of Armstrong Creek's population had advanced by 3.8 years to 46.5; which is less than the County (4.2 years), but more than the State (3.1 years). The Town's median age is higher than the State's. Fence and Goodman both have high median ages similar to Armstrong Creek. Laona, Caswell, and Forest County each have median ages of about 40 years. The Town of Armstrong Creek's school age population (5-17 age class) increased to 18.8 percent in 2000. This is a slightly lower proportion of the population than the County (19.6%), and the State (19.1%); both of which remained about even from 1990 to 2000. Armstrong Creek's older population (65+ age class) percentage of 24.2 is also still higher than both the County, which rose slightly (19.3%), and the State, which stayed almost even (13.1%).

FIGURE 1 2000 Age Cohorts for Town of Armstrong Creek



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A shifting age structure affects a variety of services and needs within the community including transportation, housing, elderly care, and schools. It will become increasingly important to retain or attract younger age groups in order to provide for service demands and maintain the workforce.

FIGURE 1 is the population pyramid for Armstrong Creek that shows age groups at the time of the 2000 U.S. Census. Armstrong Creek has a large school age population (5-14 years), but the 15 to 34 age groups are smaller, indicating residents leaving the town to seek employment after receiving higher education. Men slightly outnumbered women until about age 45, then the trend becomes more even.

**Table 4:
Age Distribution 1990 to 2000**

		Percent of Population				Median Age
		<5	5-17	18-64	65+	
Town of Armstrong Creek	1990	6.1%	17.0%	51.3%	25.7%	42.7
	2000	4.5%	18.8%	52.5%	24.2%	45.6
Town of Fence, Florence County	1990	7.7%	20.7%	55.9%	15.8%	35.8
	2000	2.6%	18.6%	60.6%	18.2%	42.8
Town of Goodman, Marinette Co.	1990	6.6%	17.5%	54.1%	21.8%	39.1
	2000	3.8%	14.9%	58.2%	23.2%	45.4
Town of Blackwell	1990	2.9%	22.7%	56.0%	18.5%	20.6
	2000	2.0%	18.4%	59.4%	20.2%	20.9
Town of Laona	1990	7.3%	19.5%	53.3%	19.9%	36.9
	2000	6.5%	19.6%	55.1%	18.8%	39.7
Town of Caswell	1990	7.4%	18.1%	60.6%	13.8%	35.0
	2000	1.0%	28.4%	54.9%	15.7%	39.5
Forest County	1990	7.6%	19.5%	54.0%	18.9%	35.7
	2000	5.7%	19.6%	55.4%	19.3%	39.9
Wisconsin	1990	7.4%	19.0%	60.3%	13.3%	32.9
	2000	6.4%	19.1%	61.4%	13.1%	36.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

4. EDUCATION LEVELS

The educational attainment level of persons within a community is often an indicator of the overall income, job availability, and well being of a community.

In 1990, 55.7% of the Town of Armstrong Creek's population age 25 and over were high school graduates, compared to 64.1% in the County and 78.6% in the State. By 2000, the percentage of high school graduates had risen to 78.5% in the Town, and rose significantly in both the County at 78.5% and the State at 85.1%. See TABLE 5 for details.

The number of residents in Town who are 25 and older and have four or more years of college has increased in Town from 28 people in 1990 to 37 in 2000. Both the County and the State also rose from 1990 to 2000, but at a much slower rate than the Town, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:
Education Levels**

	Town of Armstrong Creek		Forest County		State of Wisconsin	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less than 9 th Grade	85	39	846	428	294,862	186,125
9-12 Grade / No Diploma	61	53	1,166	1,011	367,210	332,292
High School Diploma	119	146	2,177	2,859	1,147,697	1,201,813
College / No Degree	20	81	658	1,403	515,310	715,664
Associate Degree	16	7	332	322	220,177	260,711
Bachelor Degree	19	21	303	478	375,603	530,268
Graduate/Professional Degree	9	9	126	193	173,367	249,005
Total Persons 25 & Over	329	356	5,608	6,694	3,094,226	3,475,878
Percent high school graduate or higher	55.7	74.2	64.1%	78.5%	78.6%	85.1%
Percent with bachelors degree or higher	8.6	8.5	7.6%	10%	17.7%	22.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

5. INCOME LEVELS

In 1990, the median household income for the Town was 0.7% lower than the County, and about 75% lower than the state. On a per capita basis, the income of Armstrong Creek's residents was 11.9% higher than that of the County, and about 40% lower than the state in 1990.

Between 1990 and 2000, Town of Armstrong Creek's median household income expanded nearly 63.8%, which increased the gap with the County to 16.4% less than the County. On a per capita basis, Armstrong Creek's income grew 93.1%, but continues to trail the state by 16.5%, see TABLE 6.

**Table 6:
Income Levels**

	1990			2000		
	Town of Armstrong Creek	Forest County	State of Wisconsin	Town of Armstrong Creek	Forest County	State of Wisconsin
Median Household Income	\$16,786	\$16,907	\$29,442	\$27,500	\$32,023	\$43,791
Per Capita Income	\$9,461	\$8,339	\$13,276	\$18,266	\$16,451	\$21,271

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

6. EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS, TRENDS AND FORECASTS

According to the Census, the civilian labor force (population 16 and over) living in the Town of Armstrong Creek was approximately 237 workers in 2000. Of these, 10 were unemployed for an unemployment rate of 4.2%. The unemployment rate for the County was 7.7% in 2000.

The primary occupations of Armstrong Creek residents in the labor force include: *Production, transportation & material moving*; and *Management, professional & related*, see TABLE 7. The leading industry sector employing Town residents is *Manufacturing*, employing about 75 people, see TABLE 8.

Historically, *manufacturing* has been the strongest industry sector county-wide, with 881 workers in 1990, but declined by 24.1% to employ only 669 people in 2000. *Education, Health and Social Services* has jumped ahead 51.3% as the dominant industry sector in 2000 by employing 755 people county-wide, with about 25 people from Armstrong Creek employed in this sector in 2000.

These figures are all based on the number of workers residing in the Town and what they do for employment not where they are actually employed.

Information regarding the number of jobs available in the Town of Armstrong Creek itself is not readily available.

**Table 7:
Occupation of Employed Workers**

	Town of Armstrong Creek		Forest County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Management, professional & related	30	43	603	831
Service	25	33	492	855
Sales & office	28	30	600	799
Farming Fishing & Forestry	16	11	274	179
Construction, extraction & maintenance	12	31	252	472
Production, transportation & material moving	77	79	973	908

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Employment forecasts are difficult to come by and not available at the town level. However, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD) prepares workforce projections by industry for its multi-county service regions. The current projections, released August 2006, cover 2004-2014. The projections for the North Central Workforce Development Area cover Forest County and include eight other counties. These projections show increases in all occupations. *Production*; and *Farming, fishing, & forestry* occupations both are projected to gain less than 30 positions each for the whole region. The following occupations are all projected to need over 600 replacement workers each: *Production*; *Office & administration*; *Sales*; and *Food preparation & serving*. Town residents commute to jobs, of which 59% travel out of Forest County for employment, so the Town of Armstrong Creek can expect to take advantage of some of this projected employment.

Another way to look at future employment is to examine the labor force and unemployment rates. In 1990, the labor force in the Town was 209 people with an unemployment rate of 8.6%. By 2000 the labor force had increased 13.4% to 237 with 4.2% unemployment. The degree to which this available workforce is actually employed is dependant on external economic factors reflected in the unemployment rate.

**Table 8:
Industry Sectors**

	Town of Armstrong Creek		Forest County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	11	15	199	303
Construction	6	12	174	303
Manufacturing	89	74	881	669
Wholesale Trade	0	2	53	57
Retail Trade	28	18	553	402
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	11	26	239	256
Information	N/A	5	N/A	49
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	0	2	80	119
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Mgmt Services	10	7	163	136
Education, Health and Social Services	23	25	499	755
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	2	23	34	527
Public Administration	4	2	205	300
Other Services	7	16	147	168

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

B. ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

1. REVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Demographic change is a principle factor in predicting future community growth. Population characteristics relate directly to the community’s housing, education, utility, recreation, and facility needs, as well as future economic development. Over time, fluctuations in local and regional economies can influence population change.

From Part A—Background Information—a number of issues and opportunities facing the Town of Armstrong Creek can be identified:

- ✓ The Town of Armstrong Creek is currently in a period of declining population growth.
- ✓ Household formation is driven by the decline in average household size or persons per household, and a growing retirement population.

- ✓ Armstrong Creek has a much older population compared to surrounding communities and the county, but a strong youth base also exists.
- ✓ Median household income of Town residents rose from 1990 to 2000, but still trails the county median. Per capita income also rose, and is higher than the county.
- ✓ The unemployment rate among Town residents decreased by 4 points from 1990 to 2000.

2. PLANNING ISSUES

A variety of issues have been identified by the citizens, land owners, Plan Commission, and Town Board during the planning process. The issues identifies are:

1. Nicolet National Forest is declining in overall health
2. Opportunities exist for economic development including:
 - a. Chapel in the woods
 - b. Farmers and Craft market
 - c. Heavy rail industry access

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, & PROGRAMS

Each of the following chapters of this comprehensive plan includes a set of goals, objectives and policies, which the Town Board will use to guide the future development of the Town over the next 20 years.

For purposes of this plan, goals, objectives, and policies are defined as follows:

- ✓ **Goals:** Broad statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach development issues during the next 20 years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.
- ✓ **Objectives:** More specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. Accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.
- ✓ **Policies:** Rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Decision-makers use policies on a day-to-day basis.

Each chapter also includes a listing of possible programs that the Town might implement in order to advance the goals and objectives of this plan. The listing does not imply that the Town will utilize every programs shown, but only that these programs are available to the Town and may be one of many possible ways of achieving the Town's goals.

CHAPTER 2: NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter, the second of nine chapters of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan, is based on the statutory requirement [§66.1001(2)(e) Wis. Stats.] for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under §295.20(2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.

A. PAST PLANS

All planning efforts need to examine relevant previous plans about the community and the surrounding county. Those plans are discussed below:

Forest County Land and Water Resource Management Plan 2006-2011

This Plan provides a framework for local/state/federal conservation program implementation efforts. Implementation of this plan will help protect and improve the valuable water and soil natural resources in Forest County. Some of the plan's recommendations include replacing failing septic systems, reducing pollutants entering the waterways, and protecting and managing the area forests. A copy is available in the Forest County Land Conservation Department.

Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2007-2011

The primary purpose of this recreation plan is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreation needs of the County. This direction takes the form of an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities followed by establishing recommendations to meet identified needs. Adoption of this plan and its subsequent acceptance by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) allows for continued eligibility for financial assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON), the Stewardship Fund, and many other federal and state funding programs. Some of the recommendations of this plan include: continued expansion of non-motorized and multiple purpose trails, refurbishing the Otter Springs springhouse, and relocation consideration of the county fairgrounds. A copy is available in the Forest County Forestry Department.

Forest County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2006-2020

The mission of the County Forest is to manage, conserve and protect the natural resources within the county forest on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. The Plan contains information about forest resource planning, outdoor recreation planning, silvicultural practices, aesthetic management zones, trails and access control, biological communities, and wildlife species that exist within the county forest. A copy is available in the Forest County Forestry Department.

B. WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY

1. SURFACE WATER

Surface water resources support the area's economy by drawing tourists, and providing a good quality of life for residents.

Armstrong Creek is mainly within the Upper Peshtigo River watershed, with the Popple River watershed covering a narrow northern area of the town. Both of these watersheds drain into Lake Michigan.

Forest County Shoreland Zoning is in effect. Actual shoreland jurisdiction measurements are coordinated through the County Zoning Department. Refer to Natural Resources Map for water bodies in the Town.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERWs) share many of the same environmental and ecological characteristics. The primary difference between the two is that ORWs typically do not have any direct point sources discharging pollutants directly to the water. In addition, any pollutant load discharged to an ORW must meet background water quality at all times. Exceptions are made for certain types of discharge situations to ERWs to allow pollutant loads that are greater than background water quality when human health would otherwise be compromised.

One area water body is listed as an ERW—Armstrong Creek (from Lost Lake down through Blackwell).

Impaired Waters

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop a list of impaired waters, commonly referred to as the "303(d) list." A water body is considered impaired if a) the current water quality does not meet the numeric or narrative criteria in a water quality standard or b) the designated use that is described in Wisconsin Administrative Code is not being achieved. A documented methodology is used to articulate the approach used to list waters

in Wisconsin. Every two years, states are required to submit a list of impaired waters to EPA for approval.

No water bodies in Town are listed as not meeting the standards set under the U.S. Clean Water Act, Section 303(d).

Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Forest County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. These species out compete native species and degrade habitats possibly by decreasing biodiversity from having less plant and animal species. Hilbert Lake (T37N R16E Sec 1) has a boat launch in town, and the lake has rusty crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*). Contact the County Land Conservation Department for public outreach education strategies.

2. WETLANDS

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of the hydrologic cycle and local ecological systems. In terms of hazard mitigation, they act as water storage devices in times of high water. Like sponges, wetlands are able to absorb excess water and release it back into the watershed slowly, preventing flooding and minimizing flood damage. As more impermeable surfaces are developed, this excess capacity for water runoff storage becomes increasingly important.

Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants ranging from pesticides to animal wastes. Calm wetland waters, with their flat surface and flow characteristics, allow particles of toxins and nutrients to settle out of the water column. Plants take up certain nutrients from the water. Other substances can be stored or transformed to a less toxic state within wetlands. As a result, the lakes, rivers and streams are cleaner.

Wetlands that filter or store sediments or nutrients for extended periods may undergo fundamental changes. Sediments will eventually fill in wetlands and nutrients will eventually modify the vegetation. Such changes may result in the loss of this function over time. Eradication of wetlands can occur through the use of fill material. This can destroy the hydrological function of the site and open the area to improper development. The WDNR has promulgated minimum standards for managing wetlands.

The wetlands shown for the Town of Armstrong Creek were created from the WisDNR Wetlands Inventory. See the Natural Resources Map.

3. FLOODPLAINS

A floodplain is generally defined as land where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any year. The primary value of floodplains is their role in natural flood control. Flood plains represent areas where excess water can be accommodated whether through drainage by streams or through storage by wetlands and other natural detention/retention areas. Specific areas that will be inundated will depend upon the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, the areas shown on a map as floodplains should be able to handle the severest (regional) flood, i.e. those that have a probability of occurring once every one hundred years.

The 100-year floodplain was developed from most current FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. See the Natural Resources Map.

4. GROUNDWATER & GEOLOGY

Groundwater is water that occupies void spaces between soil particles or cracks in the rock below the land surface. It originates as precipitation that infiltrated into the ground. The type of soil and bedrock that a well is drilled into often determines water's pH, saturation index, and the amount of hardness or alkalinity in water. The type of soil and bedrock in a region also determines how quickly contaminants can reach groundwater.

The majority of the Town lies within a glacial drift aquifer, which is the major source of ground water in most of the county. Large yields of ground water are available where the thickness of the saturated drift is at least 50 feet. Precambrian crystalline rock underlying the county is not considered a significant source of water. The availability of water from the bedrock is difficult to predict and is probably less than 5 gallons per minute. The glacial drift aquifer above the bedrock is the best source of ground water.

Susceptibility of groundwater to pollutants is defined here as the ease with which a contaminant can be transported from the land surface to the top of the groundwater called the water table. Many materials that overlie the groundwater offer good protection from contaminants that might be transported by infiltrating waters. The amount of protection offered by the overlying material varies, however, depending on the materials. Thus, in some areas, the overlying soil and bedrock materials allow contaminants to reach the groundwater more easily than in other areas of the state. Groundwater contamination susceptibility in Forest County is "most susceptible" based upon soil characteristics, surficial deposits, depth to water table, depth to bedrock, and type of bedrock.

Many land use activities have the potential to impact the quality of groundwater. A landfill may leach contaminants into the ground that end up contaminating groundwater. Gasoline may leak from an underground storage tank into groundwater. Fertilizers and pesticides can seep into the ground from application on farm fields, golf courses, or lawns. Leaking fluids from cars in junkyards, intentional dumping or accidental spills of paint, used motor oil, or other chemicals on the ground can result in contaminated groundwater.

Well yields within Forest County vary greatly from a few gallons to 1,000 gallons per minute.

Groundwater quality in Forest County and the Town of Armstrong Creek is generally good. The aquifer water is principally a calcium magnesium bicarbonate type that is moderately hard or hard. A high content of iron is a problem in many wells, but it is not a health hazard.

C. WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY

1. FORESTS

Forests play a key role in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas like steep slopes, headwater springs, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. Expansive forests provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development.

The pre-settlement composition of forestland in the Town of Armstrong Creek was a mix of conifer and hardwood tree species that included white pine, red pine, yellow birch, sugar maple, hemlock, and beech.

In the mid-1800s, northern Wisconsin was heavily dominated by maple-beech-birch forests, with several large pineries. White pine was the major species involved in the development of timber harvest in the northern Lake States. In fact, this species was so extensive that before its supply began to dwindle around the turn of the century, the term lumbering was used exclusively to refer to the white pine industry. (History of the CNNF)

After the majority of the timber had been harvested and the large slash fires exhausted the available fuels, numerous land companies purchased the abandoned lands. Many families were lured to northern Wisconsin and bought much of the land. When these settlers arrived, they saw cut-over lands. What was left of the great “Northwoods” were brush fields, eroded fallow pastures, and burned-over stump patches. No trees or animals existed throughout the land, and early family photos show no trees in the background.

In the 1920s, the Nicolet National Forest was established in 10 counties on over 1,500,000 acres of land. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was established, and enrolled men performed forest fire control, tree planting, road construction, recreation area construction and maintenance, installation of telephone lines, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, timber stand improvement and surveying.

After several decades of growth, the cutover land is green again. Much of it supports good stands of timber. The “weed” trees that had come in during the era of uncontrolled fires grew into merchantable size. Aspen became the dominant species in the cutover and burned-over timberlands. Paper birch and jack pine flourished. Overwhelming abundance of these “weed” species and the development of new logging technology created new markets and was a driver for pulp mills in the great lakes region. (History of the CNNF)

All forests are dynamic, always changing from one stage to another, influenced by natural forces and humans. Changes can be subtle and occur over long periods, or can happen in seconds from a timber harvest, windstorm, or fire.

Forests have living trees that need to be managed in order to keep the forest healthy. Without management, trees become too dense [for young trees to grow, and stress existing trees, which makes them more susceptible to spreading diseases.] Managing forests according to silvicultural guidelines also provides better habitat for wildlife, employment for local people, funding to local governments, and [necessary] products [for a thriving national economy.]

The Town of Armstrong Creek contains a portion of the Nicolet National Forest, which covers about half of Forest County.

Some private woodlands in the county are enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL). This program provides a low annual tax rate per acre and requires a management plan for the property that must include some harvesting along with allowing some public uses based on acreage thresholds. When timber is harvested from MFL properties, a harvest tax is also assessed. This provides an incentive to keep woodlots in active production and allows some community access to the site in exchange for greatly reduced taxes. See the programs section at the end of this chapter for more detail on this program.

2. METALLIC & NON-METALLIC MINERAL RESOURCES

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources estimates that there could be no more than five metallic mineral mines developed in Wisconsin over the next twenty years (1997-2017). This includes the Flambeau Mine now in operation, the Crandon Project now owned by two tribes, the Lynne Project being considered as of 2009, the Bend Project known but not yet under consideration, and one additional ore body not now known. This estimate is

based on the current state of knowledge about the geology of northern Wisconsin and the steps necessary to discover an ore body and the time it takes to complete the regulatory requirements.

There are a number of quarries throughout the Town of Armstrong Creek, as well as a few closed or inactive sites, and various mineral deposits.

3. SOILS & PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS

Agricultural enterprise in Armstrong Creek consists of timber harvesting for industry and for firewood; row and forage crops; and various animal husbandry operations for beef cattle, horses, and bison.

According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook*, the Town of Armstrong Creek between 1991-1993 was 14.2 percent agricultural, 53.3 percent forested, and 32.1 percent wetlands. The town's total land area is 48 square miles. Of the total land area, no land was used for row crops, 3.9 percent was used for foraging, and 10.4 percent was grassland.

In terms of farming trends, the town has lost 7.8 percent of farmland acreage on tax rolls between 1990 and 1997. According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook* there were 32 farms, 3 of which were dairy farms in 1997. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs and results in the least damage to the environment, see Natural Resources Map.

4. ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Environmentally sensitive areas are typically defined by the local jurisdiction and often include many of the areas referred to in this section such as special groundwater protection areas, threatened or endangered species habitat, floodplains, wetlands and other unique or special resources where encroachment or development could have negative consequences. The Town of Armstrong Creek has not established a specific guideline for defining environmentally sensitive areas, however, some potentially sensitive areas are discussed below.

One type of area which might fall under the environmentally sensitive designation is contaminated or potentially contaminated sites in part because they may need special care or monitoring to prevent further environmental degradation or hazard to human life. The WDNR Internet database known as the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) lists 7 sites. The following sites were listed as "closed":

- LUST site: Armstrong Creek Town Garage, 7880 Old Hwy 101
- LUST site: Union 76 Service Station, 8017 Hwy 101

- Spill site: Klemm Tank Lines, Hwy 8
- Spill site: D&C Trucking, RR tracks & OLD HWY 101

LUST sites have contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer causing substances.

Spill sites are a discharge of a hazardous substance that may adversely impact, or threaten to impact public health, welfare or the environment.

The two leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites were at the Town Garage, and at the Union 76 gas station. The two spill sites occurred on roadways because of truck accidents. All sites were remediated to DNR standards.

5. RARE SPECIES & NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The Town of Armstrong Creek has 14 sections with occurrences of endangered resources (rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants & animals, and high-quality natural communities) as identified in the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory.

Wisconsin's biodiversity goals are to identify, protect and manage native plants, animals, and natural communities from the very common to critically endangered for present and future generations. Knowledge, appreciation, and stewardship of Wisconsin's native species and ecosystems are critical to their survival and greater benefit to society.

The Wisconsin Land Legacy Report 2006-2056, compiled by the WDNR, is a comprehensive inventory of the special places that will be critical to meet future conservation and outdoor recreation needs for the next fifty years. The report focused on identifying what areas of our state or regionally significant green infrastructure remains to be protected. The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest is a Land Legacy Area summarized below with 5 stars representing the highest level for that category:

CN <u>Chequamegon-Nicolet</u>			
<u>National Forest</u>		Protection Remaining	Limited
Size	Large	Conservation Significance	☆☆☆☆☆
Protection Initiated	Substantial	Recreation Potential	☆☆☆☆☆

6. HISTORICAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

One structure in the Town appears on the Wisconsin Architectural History Inventory:

- Red Bridge, Old Hwy 101, south of USH 8.

Red Bridge was built in the 1800s. Made of steel, the bridge was part of the Military Railroad that traveled through Forest County, linking Fort Howard in Green Bay to Fort Wilken's in Upper Michigan's Keweenaw Point.

In 2009, the U.S. Forest Service received an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant to refurbish the Red Bridge.

There are no Wisconsin or National Registers of Historic Places listings within the Town, but after the U.S. Forest Service restores the bridge, it may become listed on the register.

7. NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS

Natural, agricultural, and cultural programs available to the town with regard to resources are identified below. The following list is not all-inclusive. For specific program information, the agency or group that offers the program should be contacted.

Aquatic Habitat Protection Program: The WDNR provides basic aquatic habitat protection services. Staff members include Water Management (Regulation) Specialists, Zoning Specialists, Rivers (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission-FERC) Specialists, Lakes Specialists, Water Management Engineers, and their assistants (LTEs). The program assists with water regulation permits, zoning assistance, coordination of rivers, lake management, and engineering.

County Conservation Aids: Funds are available to carry out programs for fish or wildlife management projects as per §23.09 (12), Wis. Stats. and NR 50, Wis. Adm. Code. Projects related to providing improved fish or wildlife habitat or projects related to hunter/angler facilities are eligible. Projects that enhance fish and wildlife habitat or fishing and hunting facilities have priority. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Drinking Water and Groundwater Program: This WDNR program is responsible for assuring safe, high quality drinking water and for protecting groundwater. This is achieved by enforcing minimum well construction and pump installation requirements, conducting surveys and inspections of water systems, the investigation and sampling of drinking water quality problems, and requiring drinking water quality monitoring and reporting. A team of specialists, engineers, hydrogeologists, and a program expert and program assistants staff the program. WDNR staff provide assistance to public and private well owners to help solve water quality complaints and water system problems. They also provide interested citizens with informational or educational materials about drinking water supplies and groundwater.

Wisconsin Fund is a program by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Safety and Buildings Division. Grants are provided to homeowners and small commercial businesses to help offset a portion of the cost for the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing failing Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS). Eligibility is based upon several criteria, including household income and age of the structure. 66 counties out of Wisconsin's 72 counties, the City of Franklin, and the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin participate in the program. County government officials assist interested individuals in determining eligibility and in preparation of grant applications. A portion of the money appropriated by the state government for the program is set aside to fund experimental POWTS with the goal of identifying other acceptable technologies for replacement systems.

Endangered Resources Program: The WDNR's Endangered Resources staff provides expertise and advice on endangered resources. They manage the Natural Heritage Inventory Program (NHI), which is used to determine the existence and location of native plant and animal communities and Endangered or Threatened Species of Special Concern. The NHI helps identify and prioritize areas suitable for State Natural Area (SNA) designation, provides information needed for feasibility studies and master plans, and maintains the list of endangered and threatened species. All management activities conducted by Wildlife Management and Forestry staff must be reviewed to determine the impact on NHI-designated species. A permit for the incidental take of an Endangered or Threatened species is required under the State Endangered Species Law. The Endangered Resources Program oversees the permit process, reviews applications and makes permit decisions. Funding for the Endangered Species Program comes from a number of sources, including tax checkoff revenue, license plates, general program revenues (GPR), gaming revenue, Natural Heritage Inventory chargebacks, wild rice permits, general gifts and Pittman Robertson grants.

Fisheries Management Program: The WDNR funds this program primarily through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. The program assists with fishery surveys, fish habitat improvement/protection, and fish community manipulation. This program may also be used to fund public relations events and a variety of permitting and administrative activities involving fisheries.

Forest Management Program:

Funding for the forestry program is supported primarily by a fixed rate mill tax on all property in the State of Wisconsin. Other support is received from the federal government, from recreation fees, from sale of forest products, from sale of state produced nursery stock, forest tax law payments, and other miscellaneous sources. All activities of the Forestry Program help support efforts to promote and ensure the protection and sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests.

Private Forestry: The WDNR's goal is to motivate private forest landowners to practice sustainable forestry by providing technical forestry assistance, state and federal cost-sharing on management practices, sale of state produced nursery stock for reforestation, enrollment in Wisconsin's Forest Tax Law Programs, advice for the protection of endangered and threatened species, and assistance with forest disease and insect problems. Each county has at least one Department forester assigned to respond to requests for private forestland assistance. These foresters also provide educational programs for landowners, schools, and the general public. Both private and industrial forest landowners have enrolled their lands under the Managed Forest Law.

Managed Forest Law (MFL): The purpose of the MFL is to promote good forest management through property tax incentives. Management practices are required by way of an approved forest management plan. Landowners with a minimum of 10 contiguous acres (80% must be capable of producing merchantable timber) are eligible and may contract for 25 or 50 years. Open lands must allow hunting, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and sight-seeing, however, up to 80 acres may be closed to public access by the landowner. There is a 5% yield tax applied to any wood products harvested. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Program: This WDNR program is currently undergoing restructuring and being gradually replaced by short-term grants that will address specific projects rather than focusing on entire watersheds. The goal of this voluntary program is to improve and protect the water quality of surface waters and groundwater within the watershed. Landowners are encouraged to control nonpoint pollution on their properties through cost sharing of Best Management Practices. This program will be replaced by Targeted Runoff Management projects (TRM). These are projects that are more specific in nature and may last up to three years. They are scored on a competitive basis, based on the amount of pollutant control they will achieve and the degree of impairment of the location. One nonpoint source coordinator is located in the Rhinelander WDNR Service Center. This coordinator administers and oversees the priority watershed program and will also assist with the TRM grants. The coordinator also provides nonpoint source pollution advice to counties that are implementing their land and water plans.

Parks and Recreation Program: The WDNR gets its authority for administering the Parks and Recreation Program from Chapter 27 Wisconsin Statutes. This program provides assistance in the development of public parks and recreation facilities. Funding sources include: the general fund, the Stewardship Program, Land and Water Conservation fund (LAWCON), and the recycling fund, and program revenue funds.

Stewardship Grants for Nonprofit Conservation Organizations:

Nonprofit conservation organizations are eligible to obtain funding for the acquisition of land or easements for conservation purposes and restoration of wildlife habitat. Priorities include acquisition of wildlife habitat, acquisition of lands with special scientific or ecological value, protection of rare and endangered habitats and species, acquisition of stream corridors, acquisition of land for state trails including the Ice Age Trail and North Country Trail, and restoration of wetlands and grasslands. Eligible types of projects include fee simple and easement acquisitions and habitat restoration projects. All projects must be in a WDNR approved outdoor recreation plan. Contact the WDNR or NCWRPC for further information.

Wastewater Program: The Department of Natural Resources provides this program to address point and non-point source pollution control. Operating funds for this program come from the federal government's Clean Water Act funding as well as state general program revenues. The core work of this program involves the issuance of wastewater discharge permits that discharge directly to surface or groundwater and enforcing the requirements of these permits. The program closely monitors the impacts of industry, septic tanks, sludge, and stormwater on the environment. Pretreatment plants for wastewater are offered economic assistance and provided with plan review services before the facility is established.

Watershed Program: The WDNR seeks to protect wild and domestic animals, recreational activities, natural flora and fauna, agriculture, business, and other land uses through watershed management. Funds to run this program are provided by the federal government through Clean Water Act and through state general program revenues. The program assists with watershed planning, water quality monitoring and modeling, and development of water quality standards and policy.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP): The purpose of the WRP is to restore wetlands previously altered for agricultural use. The goal of the WRP is to restore wetland and wildlife habitats. Lands that have been owned for at least one year and can be restored to wetland conditions are eligible. Landowners may restore wetlands with permanent or 30-year easements or 10-year contracts. Permanent easements pay 100% of the agricultural value of the land and 100% cost-sharing; 30-year easements pay 75% of the agricultural value and 75% cost sharing; 10-year contract pays 75% cost share only. Permanent or 30-year easements are recorded with a property deed, however 10-year contracts are not. Public access is not required. Contact the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for further information.

Wildlife Management Program: The WDNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management oversees a complex web of programs that incorporate state, federal and local initiatives primarily directed toward wildlife habitat management and enhancement. Programs include land acquisition, development and maintenance of State Wildlife Areas, and other wild land programs such as State Natural Areas. Wildlife Staff work closely with staff of state and county forests to maintain, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat. Wildlife Management staff conduct wildlife population and habitat surveys, prepare property needs analysis's, develop basin wildlife management plans and collaborate with other WDNR planning efforts such as Park, Forestry or Fishery Area Property Master Plans to assure sound habitat management. Funding comes from the federal government in the form of Endangered Species grants and Pittman-Robertson grants and from state government in the form of hunting and trapping license revenues, voluntary income tax contributions, general program revenue and Stewardship funds.

Wisconsin Historical Society, Office of Preservation Planning (OPP): The OPP can provide information on how to protect and preserve your own historic property, to implement grassroots strategies for preserving and protecting historic properties, and on state or federal laws and regulations that may be applicable to a given case.

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Goals:

1. Preserve, enhance, and promote the sustainable use of forest resources.
2. Protect natural areas (including wetlands, water bodies, federal forest lands) and groundwater resources.
3. Preserve scenic, cultural, historic, archaeological, and recreational sites.
4. Promote flexibility in regulation, and base decisions on science.
5. Promote the wise use of our natural resources including but not limited to proper management of forest lands and promoting the exploration and development of mineral resources.

Objectives:

1. Promote sustainable forestry, through Best Management Practices and the most recent scientific guidelines, on both private and public lands to maximize residual stand quality and promote abundant regeneration of a range of tree species.

2. Promote healthy and protected forest ecosystems to serve a multitude of ecological roles that include habitat for animal and plant species, and water quality protection.
3. Work in partnership with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest to ensure the ecological, economic, and social benefits of forests for the citizens of Wisconsin now and into the future.
4. Prevent new development and non-metallic mining from becoming a nuisance.
5. Promote waterbody maintenance to retain residential property values and clean water.
6. Encourage exploration and development of all metallic and non-metallic mineral resources.
7. Consider mineral extraction as an economic activity, taking precautions to be sensitive to the environment.

Policies:

1. Direct new development of all kinds to areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Participate on Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CENN) Resource Advisory Committees (RAC).
3. Provide information for Town land owners who want to enroll land in the Managed Forest Law (MFL).
4. Cooperate with land owners, the DNR, and the Forest Service to remediate waterbodies with algae blooms, beaver dams, and other natural or man-made occurrences.
5. Make residents, developers, and potential landowners aware of Wisconsin's Right to Farm law and other aspects of living in a rural agricultural area.
6. Work with Forest County Zoning to enforce existing regulations of septic systems to protect groundwater quality.

7. Work with Forest County Zoning to continually update the Nuisance Ordinance as new types of development, like personal wind turbines, become available.
8. Manage Town land for wildlife conservation.
9. Promote wildlife habitat development that also provides a scenic vista along U.S. Highway 101.
10. Allow mining companies to rent parking area west of town garage for exploration equipment.
11. Mining extraction operation shall use all precautions to protect the environment and have a restoration plan approved by the town, county, and state prior to starting the operation.

Insert Map 2 – Natural Resources

**CHAPTER 3:
HOUSING**

This housing chapter is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001 (2)(b) Wis. Stats.], this chapter provides a basic housing stock assessment and identifies policies and programs that promote the development of housing for all residents of the Town including a range of choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups and special needs; that promotes the availability of land for low-income housing; and that maintains the existing housing stock.

A. HOUSING STOCK ASSESSMENT

1.) AGE CHARACTERISTICS

Table 9 indicates the age of the housing stock in the Town of Armstrong Creek area as reported in the 2000 Census. Armstrong Creek has about 30% of housing built between 1940-1959, and another 23% built in the 1990s. There was no building boom for the whole area, so Table 9 shows that each town grew based upon local needs.

	1939 or earlier	1940-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-2000
Town of Armstrong Creek	73	129	42	53	41	101
Town of Blackwell	21	38	8	8	22	25
Town of Laona	186	190	78	160	85	134
Town of Caswell	30	46	26	8	7	38
Town of Fence, Florence Co.	59	60	32	76	40	101
Town of Goodman, Marinette Co.	169	111	48	155	116	98
Forest County	1,524	1,608	820	1,425	994	1,951
Wisconsin	543,164	470,862	276,188	391,349	249,789	389,792

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2.) OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS

Table 10 examines the occupancy status of housing units. Of the 422 housing units in Armstrong Creek, nearly 184 (44%) are considered seasonal. Only 207 units were occupied year-round in the town. Of all the units in Town, 187 (44%) were owner-occupied, and 20 (5%) were renter occupied units. Surrounding towns have similar percentages of residential occupancy. In 2008, there were 535 housing units.

	Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant Units	
					Seasonal (Part of Vacant Units)
Town of Armstrong Creek	422	187	20	215	184
Town of Blackwell	116	36	9	71	64
Town of Laona	850	437	127	286	225
Town of Caswell	156	36	5	115	105
Town of Fence, Florence Co.	373	97	10	266	263
Town of Goodman, Marinette Co.	680	298	62	320	285
Forest County	8,322	3,188	855	4,279	3,856
Wisconsin	2,321,144	1,426,361	658,183	236,600	142,313

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.) STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The vast majority of housing units in the Town of Armstrong Creek and surrounding towns are single-family homes, see TABLE 11. Mobile homes comprise 14.8% of the housing stock in Armstrong Creek, and are the second most popular type of housing in other surrounding towns as shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11 Housing Units by Structural Type, 2000

	Single-family	%	Multi-family	%	Mobile Home	%	Other	%	Total
Town of Armstrong Creek	374	85.2	--	--	65	14.8	--	--	439
Town of Blackwell	90	73.8	2	1.6	28	23.0	2	1.6	122
Town of Laona	695	83.5	59	7.1	67	8.0	12	1.4	833
Town of Caswell	126	81.2	--	--	29	18.7	--	--	155
Town of Fence, Florence Co.	305	82.9	--	--	61	16.6	2	0.5	368
Town of Goodman, Marinette Co.	583	83.7	31	4.4	83	11.9	--	--	697
Forest County	6,807	81.8	392	4.7	1,055	12.7	68	0.8	8,322

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

4.) VALUE CHARACTERISTICS

In 2000, the median value of a housing unit was \$61,500 in Armstrong Creek, which lagged behind the county, and state median values. Table 12 displays the town, surrounding towns, county, and state information. Most of the houses are worth under \$150,000 in Armstrong Creek and the surrounding area.

TABLE 12 Housing Values, 2000

	<\$50,000	\$50,000 to 99,999	\$100,000 to 149,999	\$150,000 to 199,999	\$200,000 to 299,999	\$300,000 and up	Median Value
Town of Armstrong Creek	34.1%	45.5%	17.0%	--	3.4%	--	\$61,500
Town of Blackwell	57.1%	28.6%	14.3%	--	--	--	\$45,000
Town of Laona	29.4%	49.9%	10.7%	6.5%	3.0%	0.6%	\$67,200
Town of Caswell	--	78.9%	10.5%	--	10.5%	--	\$86,300
Town of Fence, Florence Co.	35.1%	64.9%	--	--	--	--	\$56,900
Town of Goodman, Marinette Co.	55.1%	31.0%	10.2%	1.9%	1.9%	--	\$46,200
Forest County	22.9%	48.3%	16.3%	6.3%	5.4%	0.7%	\$77,400
Wisconsin	6.5%	35.4%	30.6%	15.5%	8.5%	3.5%	\$112,200

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

B. Housing Programs

Various organizations offer a variety of programs to assist with the purchase, rehabilitation, or construction of housing. Many of these programs are listed below:

North East Wisconsin Community Action Program (NEWCAP) is a non-profit organization headquartered in Oconto, but with a branch in Crandon. NEWCAP administers the Section 8 (housing voucher) program for the County, as well as WHEAP (energy assistance), and a weatherization program that performs roughly thirty energy-efficiency improvement projects for qualified homeowners every year in Forest County. NEWCAP also administers a homeownership and rehabilitation revolving loan program. Zero percent down-payment loans are available. The loans are repaid when the property is sold and the money can be loaned out again. Loans are also made for rehabilitation projects. NEWCAP has recently been accredited by HUD to provide foreclosure counseling, as well.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) can be used to provide affordable housing. Rural communities and non-urban counties can receive grants through the Department of Administration, Division of Housing & Intergovernmental Relations (DHIR) if their requests conform to the State Consolidated Housing Plan. States set their own standards for awarding CDBG funding, but are required to award at least 70 percent of these funds for activities that will benefit low-and-moderate-income persons. Communities are allowed great latitude in how CDBG funds can be used, including land acquisition, housing rehabilitation, and in certain circumstances new construction, direct assistance to homeowners such as down-payment assistance or revolving loan funds for first-time buyers, concentrated building code enforcement, and planning and administrative expenses. There is a range of programs that can be utilized in the form of CDBG grants to foster affordable housing.

Multi-Family Housing Rentals: The USDA Rural Development Department subsidizes over 15,000 section 515 rural multi-family apartment complexes throughout the 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. Properties are classified as Elderly or Family and provide unit sizes from studio to 4 bedroom. The properties are serviced by approved Management Agencies who provide required annual tenant certification processing for their residents. There are 9 rental properties developed under this program in Crandon, Laona, and Wabeno.

Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Grant: This program is administered by the Rural Housing Service of the USDA Rural Development Department. Seniors aged 62 and older may obtain a grant for rehabilitating their home provided

they are below 50% of the area median income and are unable to procure affordable credit elsewhere.

Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Loan: Also administered by USDA, this program is a loan for rehabilitation provided applicants meet the same standards as the grant above.

Rural Housing Guaranteed Loan: USDA also offers this loan that is used to help low-income individuals or households purchase homes in rural areas. Funds can be used to build, repair, renovate or relocate a home, or to purchase and prepare sites, including providing water and sewage facilities.

Rural Housing Direct Loan: USDA-Rural Development also offers this loan to provide financing at reasonable rates and terms with no down payment. The loan is intended for low-income individuals or households to purchase homes in rural areas. Funds can be used to build, repair, renovate or relocate a home, or to purchase and prepare sites, including providing water and sewage facilities.

Rural Housing Direct Loan: USDA-Rural Development uses this program to help very low- and low-income households construct their own homes. The program is targeted to families who are unable to buy clean, safe housing through conventional methods.

HUD's FHA Loan: This program is administered by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department and offers a low down payment of 3% mortgage loan for home purchase or construction for selected applicants under certain income limits.

HUD Insured Loans for Condominiums, Energy Efficiency, Special Credit Risks, and Rehabilitation: These programs are administered by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department. HUD will insure selected applicants under certain income limits when procuring loans for rehabilitation or for rehabilitation at the time of purchase.

FHA HUD 203(k) Home Rehabilitation Loan Program: Whereas HUD desires to see current housing stock rehabilitated, this program provides owner occupants of existing homes, or intended owner occupants who are looking to purchase a home, readily available mortgage money to refinance/rehabilitate or purchase/rehabilitate their homes, respectively.

VA Home Loans: These loans, administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, are often made without any down payment at all, and frequently offer lower interest rates than ordinarily available with other kinds of loans. These loans may be used for purchase or construction up to \$240,000.

HOME Loans: The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) offers federal HOME Investment Partnership Program loans with a low, fixed interest rate to help low- and moderate-income individuals and families buy a home.

C. Goals, Objectives & Policies

Although the town has not historically played a role in housing, it supports equal opportunity housing, and understands the importance of sound housing stock for its residents and the community as a whole.

Goals:

1. Promote housing development that provides a variety of housing choices for residents of all income levels, age groups, and people with special needs.
2. Promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low- and moderate-income housing.
3. Promote maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing as appropriate.

Objectives:

- Direct residential development to areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.

Policies:

1. Provide adequate areas for residential development on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Promote housing programs that assist residents with maintaining or rehabilitating existing housing units.
3. Encourage residential developers to provide a variety of housing types for all income and age groups.

CHAPTER 4: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This is the fourth of nine chapters of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan. It is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide future development of utilities and community facilities. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001 (2)(d) Wis. Stats.], this element inventories existing public utilities and community facilities and assesses future needs for such services including those beyond the control of the Town located outside the community and/or under another jurisdiction.

A. INVENTORY & ANALYSIS OF EXISTING FACILITIES

1.) WATER AND WASTEWATER FACILITIES

Water supply is accessed via individual private wells. The drilling, use and abandonment of private water supply wells is regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The disposal of wastewater is handled by private on-site septic systems that discharge wastewater to underground drainage fields and which may include: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, and sand filter systems. These on-site wastewater treatment technologies are regulated by both the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and Forest County Planning and Zoning.

2.) SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING FACILITIES

Armstrong Creek maintains a waste & recycling transfer site that is located by the town garage and town hall.

3.) POWER, FUEL, AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES

Electrical service is provided by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS). Three-phase 114 volt service exists along USH 8, Millan Rd, and part of STH 101, as shown on the Community Facilities Map.

Liquid petroleum (LP gas) is available for home and business delivery from several vendors. A natural gas transmission line runs through Armstrong Creek to Laona, but local natural gas service does not exist.

Telephone service is provided by CenturyLink. A fiber optic network exists along U.S. Highway (USH) 8. Landline based DSL broadband telecommunication service is available on a 3-mile radius from Millan Rd &

USH 8. Cable TV service does not exist. One cellular tower exists in town along USH 8 between Cavour and Armstrong Creek, and a second tower from a different provider is proposed on land that is next to the Town Garage.

4.) PARKS, RECREATION AND OTHER YOUTH FACILITIES

Armstrong Creek Park is located next to the Town Hall, and includes a playground, covered pavilion, restrooms, and basketball court.

Hilbert, and Laura Lakes both have boat landings within Town, and a carry-in access exists on Logger Lake.

The whole Nicolet National Forest is available for outdoor recreation. Laura Lake has a 41-spot campground with boat landing, grills, day picnic area, and 5-mile bicycle trail.

The Town of Armstrong Creek is within the Goodman School District, with an elementary school located in Goodman. The Nicolet Technical College, located in Rhinelander, and Green Bay Technical College both serve the Town.

There is one childcare provider in Armstrong Creek. Childcare providers that care for less than 5 children are part of a school or other governmental facility do not need a license. The closest licensed childcare providers for Armstrong Creek residents are near Iron Mountain, and in Laona.

5.) EMERGENCY AND MEDICAL SERVICES

Police protection in the Town of Armstrong Creek is provided by the Forest County Sheriff's Department.

The Wisconsin State Patrol, located in Wausau, has statewide jurisdiction on all public roads but operates mainly on State and U.S. highways as a matter of general practice to enforce traffic and criminal laws, and help motorists in need. They also help local law enforcement by reconstructing traffic accidents; inspecting trucks, school buses, and ambulances; and helping local agencies with natural disasters and civil disturbances.

The Goodman & Armstrong Creek Volunteer Fire Department covers the Town for fire and rescue squad service. A fire truck is located in the Armstrong Creek town garage. Armstrong Creek currently holds an ISO rating of 7 for fire response. An ISO rating of 1 represents the best protection and 10 represents an essentially unprotected community.

The nearest medical facility is Dickinson Memorial Hospital in Iron Mountain, Michigan, which provides 24-hour emergency service and critical care.

Town residents use clinics in Laona, Florence, and Iron Mountain

6.) OTHER GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

The local road system is the most significant public facility maintained by the Town and is covered in the Transportation Element.

The town hall and town garage are located at the intersection of USH 8 and STH 101. There is a meeting room in the town hall that is available for Town residents use and includes a kitchen and restrooms.

Pine Hill Cemetery is located on Cemetery Rd, southeast of the town hall.

There is a public library in Goodman-Armstrong Creek High School for Town residents and school children to use, and residents also use the Iron Mountain Library in Michigan.

A U.S. Post Office exists near the intersection of State Highway 101 and U.S. Highway 8.

See Utilities and Community Facilities Map for the location of all of these facilities.

B. UTILITIES AND PUBLIC FACILITIES PROGRAMS

Providing public infrastructure—roads, sewer and water service, schools, police and fire protection—is one of the major functions of local government. In addition to these public services, both public and private entities provide electricity and telephone service as well as such specialized services as child-care, health-care and solid-waste disposal. Taken together these constitute the utilities and community facilities that represent much of the backbone of modern life. Beyond what these facilities do for us, they also represent a huge investment of public and private resources.

The efficient utilization of these resources is one of the basic principles of comprehensive planning. Already in-place infrastructure is a public asset that must be safeguarded for the future, both to conserve and protect environmental values and to maximize the benefits of economic growth. Development that bypasses or ignores existing infrastructure resources is wasteful of the public investment that they represent. Development patterns that require the extension of utilities and the expansion of public facilities while existing facilities go unused at other locations is probably not the best use of scarce public resources.

Both the state and federal governments offer programs that assist communities with the development of critical infrastructure and facilities. These programs are listed in more detail in the Economic Development Element of this plan.

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Goals:

1. Provide adequate public services (roads, fire, and rescue) to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
2. Consider cost effectiveness of future development proposals in covering required services, utilities and community facilities.

Objectives:

1. Consider the potential impacts of development proposals on groundwater quality and quantity.
2. Explore opportunities to develop integrated, multi-use trail systems and recreational facilities.
3. Educate residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems and the benefits of recycling.
4. Share equipment and services across Town boundaries, where possible.
5. Cooperate with public utility providers to keep their utility corridors free of obstacles.

Policies:

1. Require underground utilities in new residential subdivisions.
2. Provide approvals to public electric, gas, and telecommunication providers so they may remove brush and other obstacles from their utility right-of-ways.
3. Work with adjoining towns, the county, the state, and individual landowners to address known water quality issues.
4. The feasibility of wastewater collection and treatment systems on water quality should be considered by future major developments.

5. Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Plan for major equipment purchases.
6. Make information available to residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems and on recycling.

Insert Map 3 – Community Facilities

CHAPTER 5: TRANSPORTATION

This chapter, the fifth of nine chapters of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan, is based on the statutory requirement [§66.1001(2)(c) Wis. Stats.] for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. This element compares the Town's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element also identifies highways within the Town by function and incorporates state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the Town of Armstrong Creek.

A. REVIEW OF STATE & REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS & PROGRAMS

This section contains a review of state and regional transportation plans and how they affect the Town of Armstrong Creek.

Corridors 2020

Corridors 2020 was designed to enhance economic development and meet Wisconsin's mobility needs well into the future. The 3,200-mile state highway network is comprised of two main elements: a multilane backbone system and a two-lane connector system. All communities over 5,000 in population are to be connected with backbone & connector systems.

This focus on highways was altered in 1991 with the passage of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which mandated that states take a multi-modal approach to transportation planning. Now, bicycle, transit, rail, air, and other modes of travel would make up the multi-modal plan. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) response to ISTEA was the two-year planning process in 1994 that created TransLinks 21.

TransLinks 21

WisDOT incorporated Corridors 2020 into TransLinks 21, and discussed the impacts of transportation policy decisions on land use. TransLinks 21 is a 25-year statewide multi-modal transportation plan that WisDOT completed in 1994. Within this needs-based plan are the following modal plans:

- State Highways Plan 2020
- Airport System Plan 2020
- Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020
- Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020
- Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report
- No plans exists for transit or local roads.

Connections 2030

Connections 2030 will be a 25-year statewide multi-modal transportation plan that is policy-based. The policies will be tied to “tiers” of potential financing levels. One set of policy recommendations will focus on priorities that can be accomplished under current funding levels. Another will identify policy priorities that can be achieved if funding levels increase. Finally, WisDOT may also identify critical priorities that we must maintain if funding were to decrease over the planning horizon of the plan. This plan will not conflict with the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan, because the policies are based upon the transportation needs outlined in TransLinks 21. Recommendations will be presented in "multimodal corridors." The Town of Armstrong Creek is in part of the North Country (USH 8) corridor.

State Trails Network Plan

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) created this plan in 2001, to identify a statewide network of trails and to provide guidance to the DNR for land acquisition and development. Many existing trails are developed and operated in partnership with counties. By agreement the DNR acquires the corridor and the county government(s) develop, operate, and maintain the trail. There is one potential trail that would run through Armstrong Creek.

One potential trail crosses Armstrong Creek:

Segment 13—Dresser to Michigan is a possibly abandoned rail corridor that would connect Rhinelander due east through Forest County. The use of roadways in Oneida and Forest counties are an alternative to the rail line.

Regional Comprehensive Plan

The Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) titled “A Framework for the Future”, adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in December of 2003, is an update of a plan adopted by NCWRPC in 1981. The RCP looks at transportation in all ten counties that make up the North Central Region, including Oneida. It looks at general trends within the Region and recommends how county and local government can address transportation issues.

The RCP recommends a variety of strategies to address a variety of transportation issues such as growing traffic volumes, congestion and the increase of drivers aged 65 and over. Two such strategies include corridor planning and rural intelligent transportation systems. Corridor planning is one way to relieve some of the need for additional direct capacity expansion by comprehensively managing critical traffic corridors. Rural ITS applications have the potential to make major improvements in safety, mobility, and tourist information services

B. TRANSPORTATION MODE INVENTORY

1.) HIGHWAYS AND TRUCKING

a. Functional and Jurisdictional Identification

Public highways are generally classified by two different systems, the functional and the jurisdictional. The jurisdictional class refers to which entity owns the facility and holds responsibility for its operations and maintenance. The functional class refers to the role the particular segment plays in moving traffic within the overall system. Each is described in more detail below.

In addition to these main classifications, a road or segment of road may hold a variety of other designations including federal forest road, rustic road, emergency route, truck route, etc. There are no rustic roads within the Town of Armstrong Creek. Truck routes are discussed at the end of this section, under Trucking.

The highway system within the Town of Armstrong Creek is a network of federal, state and county highways together with various local roads and streets; see the Community Facilities map. The jurisdictional breakdown is shown in TABLE 13. U.S. Highway 8 is a Principal Arterial. State Highway 101 is a Major Collector. Old 101 Road is a Minor Collector. The remainder of roads within the Town are classified as "Local."

JURISDICTION	FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION			TOTALS
	ARTERIAL	COLLECTOR	LOCAL	
State*	7.6	4.8		12.4
County		0.3		0.3
Federal Forest			0.7	0.7
Town		6.2	47.9	54.1
TOTALS	7.6	11.3	48.6	67.5

Source: WisDOT & NCWRPC.

* WisDOT has jurisdiction over interstate and federal highways.

The Town of Armstrong Creek is served by U.S. Highway (USH) 8, and State Highway (STH) 101.

USH 8 is designated a Corridors 2020 Connector Route by WisDOT. See TABLE 14 for specific traffic counts.

STH 101 is neither a Corridors 2020 Connector nor a Backbone Route, but it is a significant north-south corridor that connects Forest County to Florence County. See TABLE 14 for specific traffic counts.

Corridors 2020 was designed to enhance economic development and meet Wisconsin's mobility needs well into the future. The 3,200-mile highway network was comprised of two elements: a multilane backbone system and a two-lane connector system.

The backbone system is a 1,650-mile network of multilane divided highways interconnecting the major population and economic centers in the state and tying them to the national transportation network. The connector system is 1,550 miles of high-quality highways that link other significant economic and tourism centers to the backbone network. All communities over 5,000 in population are to be connected to the backbone system via the connector network. Within Forest County, USH 8 is the only highway in the County designated as part of the Corridors 2020 system.

TABLE 14 shows that the overall traffic trend appears to have increased overall, with fewer people driving toward Goodman in 2003 than in 1994. It appears that traffic used USH 8 to travel straight through Town, since Sites 20 & 21 were equal in 1994. But in 2003 traffic used USH 8 west of Town to connect with STH 101 north of Town for through trips.

TABLE 14		Traffic Counts	
Count Site*	1994	2003	# and % Change 1994-2003
Site 20	1900	2100	200 / 10.5%
Site 21	1900	1700	-200 / -10.5%
Site 22	690	1000	310 / 44.9%

Source: Wisconsin Highway Traffic Volume, Department of Transportation & NCWRPC

* Each traffic count site is described on the next page.

Site 20: USH 8, about 1-mile west of STH 101

Site 21: USH 8, about 1-mile east of STH 101

Site 22: STH 101, just west of STH 32.

County Highway F in conjunction with STH 101 serves the Town of Armstrong Creek by providing access to Iron Mountain, Michigan. County highways generally serve rural land uses and distribute local traffic to the regional arterial system. They provide an important role in linking the area's forestry resources to the major highways and urban centers.

Federal Forest roads are constructed and maintained by the Forest Service on National Forest lands to maintain a safe and environmentally sound road network that is responsive to public needs, and affordable to manage.

The following federal forest roads are maintained (graded, brushed, and plowed in winter) by Armstrong Creek:

Common Road Name – Forest Road #

- Newald Tower Rd – 2159
- South Tower Rd – 3727
- Wall Rd – 2208
- Camp G Rd – _____

Town roads are an important component of the county-wide transportation system, because they serve local development, as well as the forested areas. A particular issue of concern with Town roads is that of seasonal weight limits. In Armstrong Creek, a 5-ton limit applies to all Town roads from March 15 to May 1. Forestry activities within the Town make logging trucks a significant concern.

Old 101 Rd, Millan Rd, and County Line Rd do not have weight limits (Class A).

Armstrong Creek receives local road aid from WisDOT for all town roads that are identified on WisDOT map, and only receive gravel from the National Forest for the federal forest roads listed above.

Informal "park and ride" lots for up to 5 vehicles exist on at least 3 private property sites along USH 8.

A **functional classification** system groups streets and highways into classes according to the character of service they provide. This character of service ranges from providing a high degree of travel mobility to providing land access functions.

The current classification system used in Wisconsin consists of five classifications divided into urban and rural categories. Functional classifications are used to determine eligibility for federal aid. For purposes of functional classification, federal regulations define urban as places of 5,000 or more population, so the rural classifications apply throughout the Town. TABLE 15 summarizes the rural functional classification system.

TABLE 15 Rural Highway Functional Classification System

Principal Arterials	Serve interstate and interregional trips. These routes generally serve to connect all urban areas greater than 5,000 population. The rural principal arterials are further subdivided into 1) Interstate highways and 2) other principal arterials.
Minor Arterials	In conjunction with the principal arterials, they connect cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intra-regional and inter-area traffic movements.
Major Collectors	Provide service to moderate sized communities and other inter-area traffic generators and link those generators to nearby larger population centers or higher function routes.
Minor Collectors	Collect traffic from local roads and provide links to all remaining smaller communities, locally important traffic generators, and higher function roads. All developed areas should be within a reasonable distance of a collector road.
Local Roads	Provide access to adjacent land and provide for travel over relatively short distances. All roads not classified as arterials or collectors are local function roads.

Source: WisDOT

b.) Trucking

U.S. Highway 8 is the principal truck route, and STH 101 is a secondary truck route within the Town as designated by WisDOT.

Local truck routes often branch out from these major corridors to link local industry with the main truck routes as well as for the distribution of commodities with the local area. Mapping these local routes is beyond the scope of this study, and local issues such as safety, weight restrictions, and noise impacts play significant roles in the designation of local truck routes.

A number of private independent logging truck operators and over-the-road trucking exists within the region.

2.) TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES FOR THE DISABLED

The Forest County Commission on Aging coordinates driver-escort service to residents of Forest County, which includes Armstrong Creek. Escort drivers provide transportation to elderly and disabled residents of Forest County that qualify as a priority trip purpose. Travel includes both in and out of county travel, and generous volunteers have driven any day or time necessary.

There is no intercity bus service within Forest County or any surrounding counties.

3.) BICYCLING AND WALKING

All roads are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel in Armstrong Creek. Low traffic volumes provide safe walking and bicycling on all Town roads, so no sidewalks are needed.

Long distance bicycle touring enthusiasts have been seen using U.S. Highway 8 through Town.

The Town of Armstrong Creek contains portions of a potential trail as described in section A of this chapter under State Trails Network Plan on page 2. Any trails from the State Trails Network Plan are not automatically going to become bicycle and walking trails. The WDNR is more likely to create multi-use trails to provide the most access for a variety of uses.

4.) RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

One main snowmobile trail exists in Town. ATVs and snowmobiles are allowed on all Town roads. These trails support tourists' and residents' desires to enjoy the Northwoods. Active ATV and snowmobile clubs exist within the Armstrong Creek area for trail maintenance and outdoor enjoyment.

5.) RAILROADS

There is a rail spur at the railroad intersection on Old Highway 101. Other shipments needing rail service would have to be trucked to nearby cities with rail access such as Iron Mountain, Crandon, Rhinelander, Tomahawk, or Wausau.

6.) AIR TRANSPORTATION

Armstrong Creek has two airports to choose for passenger flights: Ford Airport (IMT) in Iron Mountain and the Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport (RHI) in Rhinelander.

RHI is an air carrier / air cargo airport, which is designed to accommodate virtually all aircraft. Airports in this category are usually referenced by the type of air carrier service provided—RHI is a short haul air carrier airport. This airport serves scheduled, nonstop, airline markets and routes of less than 500

miles. Short haul air carriers typically use aircraft weighing less than 60,000 pounds, and use primary runways with a length between 6,500 to 7,800 feet.

There were about 42,340 total aviation operations (take-offs and landings) in 2000. WisDOT projections show total aviation operations increasing at RHI to 44,040 by 2010, and 45,740 by 2020; an 8 percent increase from 2000.

The Crandon Municipal Airport (Y55) in Nashville is a basic utility (BU-A) airport that is designed to accommodate aircraft of less than 6,000 pounds gross weight, with approach speeds below 91 knots and wingspans of less than 49 feet. Such aircraft are typically single-engine piston.

7.) WATER TRANSPORTATION

There are two boat landings within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, and one other boat landing in Armstrong Creek for recreational enjoyment. Armstrong Creek is a navigable stream south of U.S. Highway 8 where canoeists may create their own water trails throughout the Town. Harbors or ports do not exist within Forest County. All boat landings are shown on the Community Facilities Map.

C. TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

Below is a listing of programs that may be of assistance to the Town with regard to the development of the local transportation system. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is the primary provider of programs to assist local transportation systems. A wide variety of programs are available to serve the gamut of jurisdictions from county down to the smallest town. The programs most likely to be utilized by rural towns such as Armstrong Creek include:

- General Transportation Aids
- Flood Damage Aids
- Town Road Improvement Program
- Town Road Improvement Program – Discretionary
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance
- Local Transportation Enhancements
- Traffic Signing & Marking Enhancement Grant
- Rustic Roads

More information on these programs can be obtained by contacting the WisDOT region office in Rhinelander or on the Internet at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/>.

D. GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goals:

1. Provide an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety to meet the needs of all citizens, including disabled citizens.
2. Support and maintain a safe and efficient Town road system.

Objectives:

1. Avoid allowing land uses that generate heavy traffic on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
2. Town roads must accommodate access requirements for emergency services (fire, EMS, ambulance, etc.) as well as school bus and snowplows, while still maintaining road aesthetics.

Policies:

1. Update street signage to improve visibility for all Town residents.
2. Space roadway access along the existing Town road network to increase safety and better preserve capacity.
3. Consider connecting adjacent properties with road connections when reviewing development plans and proposals, then add those connections to the official Town map if those connections are Town roads.
4. Support snowmobile and ATV trails within the Town.
5. Promote use of specialized transit to Town residents.
6. Support countywide transit that also includes specialized transit.
7. Cooperate with other municipalities and the County to organize intercity transit that also provides specialized (elderly & disabled) transportation.

CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This is the sixth chapter of the nine chapter Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan. It is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the Town. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law [§66.1001 (2)(f) Wis. Stats.], this chapter analyzes the labor force and economic base, ensures designation of adequate sites for business and industry, evaluates potentially contaminated sites for reuse, and identifies applicable county, regional and state economic development programs.

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF LOCAL CONDITIONS

1.) LABOR FORCE

According to the Census, the civilian labor force (population 16 and over) living in the Town of Armstrong Creek was approximately 237 workers in 2000. Of these, 10 were unemployed for an unemployment rate of 4.2%. The unemployment rate for the County was 7.7% in 2000. Armstrong Creek's 1990 unemployment rate was 8.6%. The current County unemployment rate is about 6.8% (2007).

2.) ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

Geographically, the land within the Town is overwhelmingly dedicated to the forestry sector. Over 53% of the land in the Town of Armstrong Creek is woodland. See the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources and Land Use chapters of this plan for more on the forest cover of the community.

There was a minor occupation shift of Armstrong Creek residents from 1990 to 2000 as shown in TABLE 16. The number of residents in the *Farming, fishing, & forestry* occupation declined 31%, and the *Construction, extraction, & maintenance* occupation gained 158%. Forest County figures have the same trends as Town figures in TABLE 16.

The leading industry sector in the Town is: *Manufacturing*, employing 74 people in 2000. TABLE 17 also shows that *Manufacturing; Retail; Professional; and Public Administration* all lost workers from 1990 to 2000; which is the same countywide. *Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services; and Transportation, warehousing, & utilities* both gained at least 15 workers

each in the same decade. These same industries gained workers throughout Forest County as shown in TABLE 17.

	Town of Armstrong Creek		Forest County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Management, professional & related	30	43	603	831
Service	25	33	492	855
Sales & office	28	30	600	799
Farming Fishing & Forestry	16	11	274	179
Construction, extraction & maintenance	12	31	252	472
Production, transportation & material moving	77	79	973	908

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

	Town of Armstrong Creek		Forest County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	11	15	199	303
Construction	6	12	174	303
Manufacturing	89	74	881	669
Wholesale Trade	0	2	53	57
Retail Trade	28	18	553	402
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	11	26	239	256
Information	N/A	5	N/A	49
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	0	2	80	119
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Mgmt Services	10	7	163	136
Education, Health and Social Services	23	25	499	755
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	2	23	34	527
Public Administration	4	2	205	168
Other Services	7	16	147	300

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

These figures in TABLES 16 & 17 are all based on the number of workers residing in the Town and what they do for employment not where they are actually employed. Information regarding the number of jobs available in the Town of Armstrong Creek itself is not readily available.

Commuting patterns provide one way to estimate the number of jobs within a community. The 2000 commuting data shows a total of 103 workers traveling to the Town of Armstrong Creek for work. About half of these actually represent residents of the town working at jobs within the Town. The others travel to jobs within Armstrong Creek from other communities in Forest County (18.4%), 27% from Goodman, and 4% from the Town of Fence.

There is a sense of community in Armstrong Creek that has created a "barter" economy that benefits all residents. Many residents are self employed because they are mechanically inclined and self sufficient. For example if somebody has a rototiller, then others pay the owner to have their own yards tilled.

3.) ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL CONDITIONS

Based on the silvicultural nature of the community, the Town supports the development of forestry and forest-related business. The forested nature of the Town also lends itself to tourism and recreation based industries, which the Town is in favor of as well.

The Town's main strength that may be helpful in attracting or retaining business and industry is the forested lands available for timber harvest and outdoor recreation. Tourism flows through Armstrong Creek as visitors travel through Town to access the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Several small businesses depend on this recreation traffic for a large part of their business, and a few more businesses like a chapel in the woods, and a farmers/craft market may also thrive.

Other strengths that relate to industry include three Class A town roads, state and federal highways that are main truck routes, 3-phase power, and a 4-acre yard with rail spur exists.

Some weaknesses in attracting or retaining business and industry only relate to industries that manufacture or assemble items. No utilities provide sewer, water, or natural gas within Town, although a natural gas pipeline runs through the town. Broadband internet access is just becoming available.

There are 4 sites that were environmentally contaminated and are now cleaned up to DNR standards. Review all the sites, located in the Natural Resources Chapter of this plan, to identify if any sites (brownfields) are available for redevelopment, or if they are at existing businesses.

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Various organizations at the County, Regional and State level offer a variety of programs to assist with economic development. Many of these are listed below:

Local:

Tax Increment Financing: In 2004, the WI State Legislature enacted changes to the state's Tax Increment Financing statutes. One significant change involved allowing townships to establish tax increment districts for specified economic development projects. Tax Increment Financing has been employed by numerous communities throughout the state to promote redevelopment in blighted areas and finance new industrial development.

County:

Forest County Economic Development Committee: The Forest County Economic Development Committee was formed to attract economic growth within Forest County. The committee will help current employers within Forest County thrive and will attract businesses to the region.

Regional:

North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation: The North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) manages two revolving loan funds designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing. The fund is targeted to businesses in the ten county region.

North Central Advantage Technology Zone Tax Credits: The County has been designated a Technology Zone by the Department of Commerce. The Technology Zone program brings \$5 million in income tax incentives for high-tech development to the area. The North Central Advantage Technology Zone offers the potential for high-tech growth in knowledge-based and advanced manufacturing clusters, among others. The zone designation is designed to attract and retain skilled, high-paid workers to the area, foster regional partnerships between business and education to promote high-tech development, and to complement the area's recent regional branding project.

State:

Rural Economic Development Program: This program administered by Wisconsin Department of Commerce provides grants and low interest loans for small business (less than 25 employees) start-ups or expansions in rural areas. Funds may be used for "soft costs" only, such as planning, engineering, ad marketing assistance.

Wisconsin Small Cities Program: The Wisconsin Department of Commerce provides federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to eligible municipalities for approved housing and/or public facility improvements and for economic development projects. Economic Development grants provide loans to businesses for such things as: acquisition of real estate, buildings, or equipment; construction, expansion or remodeling; and working capital for inventory and direct labor.

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC): The UW SBDC is partially funded by the Small Business Administration and provides a variety of programs and training seminars to assist in the creation of small business in Wisconsin.

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA): This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, provides immediate assistance for the cost of transportation improvements necessary for major economic development projects.

Other State Programs: Technology Development grants and loans; Customized Labor Training grants and loans; and Major Economic Development Project grants and loans.

Federal:

U.S. Dept. of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA): EDA offers a public works grant program. These are administered through local units of government for the benefit of the local economy and, indirectly, private enterprise.

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development (USDA – RD): The USDA Rural Development program is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life. Financial programs include support for water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities, and electric and telephone service. USDA-RD promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. The program also offers technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their member services.

Small Business Administration (SBA): SBA provides business and industrial loan programs that will make or guarantee up to 90% of the principal and interest on loans to companies, individuals, or government entities for financing in rural areas. Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation acts as the agent for the SBA programs that provide financing for fixed asset loans and for working capital.

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Although the Town of Armstrong Creek has not, historically, played a role in economic development, it supports efforts to stabilize and expand the economic base and employment opportunity for its residents and the community as a whole.

Goals:

1. Increase forest health through proper forest management, and receive coordination status with National Forest Management.
2. Encourage a variety of economic opportunities related to forests, forestry, and forest-based products.
3. Encourage mineral exploration and mining.

Objectives:

1. Promote sustainable forestry practices on both private and public lands to maximize residual stand quality and promote abundant regeneration of a range of tree species.
2. Promote healthy forest ecosystems to serve a multitude of ecological roles that include habitat for animal and plant species, and water quality protection.
3. Work in partnership with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest to ensure the ecological, economic, and social benefits of forests for the citizens of Northern Wisconsin now and into the future.
4. Encourage new retail, commercial, and industrial development to locate adjacent to county, state, or federal highways.
5. Discourage industrial development from negatively impacting environmental resources or adjoining property values.
6. Encourage businesses that are compatible with a rural setting.
7. Review costs and benefits of a proposed development project prior to approval.

Policies:

1. Support efforts to promote economic development within the Town.
2. Designate enough land for commercial and industrial development on the Future Land Use Map.
3. Intensive industrial uses should be steered to areas that have the service capability to support that development.
4. Participate on Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) Resource Advisory Committees (RAC), and receive coordination status.
5. Promote "home grown" service industries to develop such as hotels, restaurants, and RV camping areas.
6. Promote locating wood products industries within the Town.
7. Establish natural vegetative buffers along Town roads that are used for through traffic to screen industrial uses from the roads.
8. Accommodate home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or would otherwise negatively impact the surrounding areas.

**CHAPTER 7:
LAND USE**

This is the seventh of nine chapters of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan. This chapter is based on the statutory requirement [§66.1001(2)(h) Wis. Stats.] for a "compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property". This chapter reviews existing land uses, trends, programs, and future land use.

A. EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY

Current land use activity (see Existing Land Use Map) in the Town is characterized mainly by large blocks of forestland, and agricultural land.

Table 18 presents the acreages for the generalized land uses within Armstrong Creek that were identified from the 2009 property assessment records. Water, transportation, and governmental land uses are not represented with this data.

Table 18 EXISTING LAND USE, 2009 Town of Armstrong Creek		
Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	4,317.5	13.10
Agricultural Forest	2,035.5	6.18
Commercial	22.7	0.07
Forest	25,106.3	2.15
Manufacturing	26.8	0.08
Residential	743.1	2.25
Other	707.3	2.15
Total	32,959.2	100

Source: Forest County Assessment

B. LAND USE TRENDS

1.) LAND SUPPLY

As shown by the existing land use inventory in Table 18, the majority of the Town is forestland and agricultural fields. Many sections of Armstrong Creek are part of the Nicolet National Forest, which can only be taken out of forestry for higher or better use public purposes.

Even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of Armstrong Creek is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years for all use categories, which are described below in Land Demand.

2.) LAND DEMAND

Residential:

The overall Town resident demand for housing land in the Town of Armstrong Creek results from a projected increase of 4 households (2010–2025). This does not account for seasonal home development. TABLE 19 shows projected

residential land demand based on household projections for the Town and a two-acre average lot size. Although some of the development will occur on larger or smaller parcels, this is more difficult to predict, and our projection becomes a conservative scenario. Thus, an average of 2 acres of residential land is expected to be added in the Town every 5 years to accommodate anticipated population growth by the year 2030.

About 3 of the 4 new housing units will probably be built as single-family houses, since 85% of all housing stock in Town is single-family dwellings, as shown in the Housing chapter. One (15%) of the 4 new housing units may exist as a manufactured or modular home.

Seasonal use of the housing in Armstrong Creek comprises of about 43.6% of all the housing units. Although existing seasonal homes are being converted to full-time permanent residences, it is assumed for planning purposes that new seasonal units will retain the same percentage of housing in Armstrong Creek (43.6%) over the lifespan of this plan. Therefore, an additional 2 seasonal homes are projected to be built from 2000 through 2025.

Commercial and Industrial:

Commercial and industrial development is subject to market forces and difficult to predict. There has been a small increase in commercial and industrial development in the Town over the last two decades. The current level of commercial and industrial land is projected to increase some through 2030, because of additional 3-phase power installations, increased high-speed internet availability, and better cellular phone coverage.

Existing non-metallic mines (gravel pits) in Armstrong Creek have a number of years remaining. Therefore, no projected increase in the land area for mines exists, but is not ruled out. Table 19 shows the projected commercial, and industrial land uses in 5-year increments.

Agricultural:

Agricultural land in Armstrong Creek that is actively farmed has declined since 1990. The *Wisconsin Land Use Databook, 1999*, lists 6,778 acres of agriculture in 1990, with a slight decrease to 6,249 acres in 1997. An NCWRPC GIS analysis in Table 18 shows that there were 2,141 acres of agricultural land in 2009, with an additional 431.4 acres listed as open lands. These 431.4 acres may once have been agricultural lands, which are now fallow.

Since there was a 68.4% decline in agricultural land from 1990 to 2009, there is no projected increase in agricultural land through 2030. The amount of agricultural land within the Town is anticipated to remain stable over the planning period. Table 19 shows the projected agricultural land uses in 5-year increments.

See the Natural Resources chapter in this Plan for more agricultural statistics.

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030*
Residential Acreage	453	457	461	465	469
Commercial Acreage	12	13	14	15	16
Industrial Acreage	23	24	25	26	27
Agricultural Acreage	2,141	2,141	2,141	2,141	2,141

Source: NCWRPC

*Extension of 2000-2025 trend.

3.) LAND PRICES

Overall equalized land values in the Town have increased about 130 percent over the last eight years; however, not all categories of land increased. These are prices for land only in each category. *Agricultural* land dropped in value, because *Agricultural Forest* land was removed from this category in 2004. *Residential* property values increased by about 154 percent, while land classifies as *Other* decreased by about 89 percent. The value of *undeveloped* land, which was formerly called "swamp and waste," has declined in value. See Table 20, Equalized Land Values, below.

The Equalized Value is an estimate of the market value of all residential, commercial, manufacturing, productive forest, other (farm sites and farm buildings), and personal property. The Equalized Value also estimates the use-value of agricultural land; 50% of the market value of undeveloped land; and 50% of the market value of agricultural forest land. It is computed independently from the estimate of the local assessor. While both the local assessor and DOR make estimates, the local assessor estimates the value of **each parcel**; DOR estimates the value of the **entire** town.

Type of Property	2000	2008	% Change
Residential	2,032,500	4,942,700	143.2
Commercial	97,000	196,500	102.6
Manufacturing	15,300	27,700	81.0
Agricultural	780,700	431,600	-44.7
Undeveloped	455,000	848,200	86.4
Ag. Forest	0	1,838,700	---
Forest	6,879,500	8,416,800	22.3
Other	224,400	510,400	127.5
Total Value	10,484,400	17,212,600	64.2

Source: WI DOR, 2000 & 2008

4.) OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDEVELOPMENT

There are a few properties in Town that had environmental contamination on them, but each site is still in use. For example there was a leaking underground storage tank at the Town Garage, but the Town Garage is still there, so no site is available to redevelop. Two spills also occurred, and those have been cleaned up and the properties are still in use. See the Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources and Economic Development chapters, for more details.

Many businesses in Armstrong Creek are in buildings that may need upgrading to improve customer comfort, and energy efficiency to improve the owner's bottom lines. There may be opportunities to make energy efficiency upgrades to heating & air conditioning systems, building insulation, and exterior & interior lighting.

Quarries have approved reclamation plans on file with the county as part of the permitting process. The existing quarries within the Town have a number of years of life left. Abandoned non-metallic mines were closed before reclamation regulations existed; and the Town has allowed the areas revert to nature.

5.) EXISTING AND POTENTIAL LAND USE CONFLICTS

No conflicts exist.

This Plan seeks to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned use-buffers, and public information components.

C. LAND USE PROGRAMS

A number of different programs directly and indirectly affect land use within the Town. The principle land use programs are the Nuisance ordinance, and Forest County Shoreland Zoning. The Town of Armstrong Creek also has a number of other ordinances contained within its municipal code. Official mapping authority is available but not widely used. See the Implementation Chapter of this Plan for more on these ordinances.

D. FUTURE LAND USE 2010-2030

The Future Land Use map represents the long-term land use recommendations for all lands in the Town. Although the map is advisory and does not have the authority of zoning, it is intended to reflect community desires and serve as a guide for local officials to coordinate future development of the Town.

Town of Armstrong Creek Plan Commission members participated in a mapping exercise with NCWRPC staff to identify the desired future land uses by using the Land Use Map Classifications as described below. Town Plan Commission members used their broad knowledge of the Town to draw shapes on an existing land use map that was created from a 2005 airphoto. The goal was to produce a Future Land Use Map for residents to review that will guide the Town's growth through 2030. See the Future Land Use map.

Existing & Future Land Use Map Classifications:

Land use classifications group land uses that are compatible and provide for the separation of conflicting uses. Not all classifications are used on both maps. The classifications are not zoning districts and do not have the authority of zoning, but are intended for use as a guide. Subdivision, zoning, and official map decisions must be consistent (§66.1001(3) WI Stats.) with the Future Land Use Map.

The Existing Land Use Map shows what existed in 2009. The Future Land Use Map is intended for use as a guide when making land use and zoning decisions from the time this Plan is adopted through 2030.

1. Agriculture

Land that is used for the purpose of general crop farming, the raising of livestock, orchards, hobby farms, Christmas tree farms, or any land enrolled in a federal agriculture program. Single family houses and hunting shacks may exist in this area.

2. Commercial

Identifies areas that sell goods or services to the general public; such as gas stations, stores, restaurants, professional services, hotels, campgrounds, and car dealerships. Higher density residential development is also allowed here, along with some storage facilities.

3. Governmental/Institutional

Identifies areas where the main purpose of use is for public good facilities, for example: utilities, community non-profit facilities, schools, churches, and governmental buildings.

4. Industrial

Identifies areas that produce goods or services for distribution to commercial outlets, for example: manufacturers and wholesale distributors. Any uses that directly relate to trucking or mining operations are also located in industrial areas.

5. Open Lands

Contains sensitive environmental areas (such as 100-year floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and DNR wetlands) and other open land. This area could include endangered species habitat or other significant features or areas identified by the Town, including cultural areas.

6. Outdoor Recreation

Land that is or could become parks or trails. Ball fields, outdoor amphitheatres, and waysides are all included in this designation.

7. Residential

Identifies areas of residential development typically consisting of smaller lot sizes (generally 2-acres or less) that may be served by municipal water and sewer systems, even if a municipal system is not planned.

8. Transportation

Identifies the existing road network along with the recommendations for improved and safe traffic movement in the town, including airports and rail facilities. This classification also includes trails with a permanent right-of-way, like rails-to-trails facilities.

9. Woodlands

Areas of land that are covered with trees and hardly any grass. Single family houses, and hunting shacks may exist in this area on large lots. DNR wetlands that contain many trees, and campgrounds may also exist in this area.

E. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

To address competing development concerns, a natural resource based land management set of goals, objectives, and policies was created.

GOAL 1: Maintain orderly planned growth for the health, safety, and general welfare of Town residents, and makes efficient use of existing tax dollars.

Objectives:

1. The Town will maintain a long-range Comprehensive Plan as a guide for future land use and zoning decisions.
2. Place land uses on the Future Land Use Map so that development occurs in an orderly manner and land use conflicts are avoided.
3. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.
4. New development should not adversely affect the property value or livability of neighboring properties.
5. Encourage dense development to exist on land that is served by municipal sewer and water or communal sewer.

Policies:

1. Permit new development based upon consideration of this Plan, as well as other Town, County, and State plans and regulations.
2. Commercial development in Armstrong Creek will continue around USH 8 and STH 101.
3. Provide adequate infrastructure (i.e. roads) and public services (ie. fire and rescue) and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses compatible in Armstrong Creek.

GOAL 2: Promote and regulate development to preserve the rural and natural character of the Town, and minimizes groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems, and other sources.

Objectives:

1. New development should not negatively impact the natural environment or existing property values.
2. New development will be restricted from areas in the Town shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, highway access problems, or incompatibility with neighboring uses

Policies:

1. All rural residential development should be set back from the roads and buffered by either natural vegetation or evergreen plantings.
2. Use-buffer areas may be used as shields to lessen the impacts of potentially conflicting land use types located in relatively close proximity; i.e. rural residential type development should be planned as a buffer between single-family and forestry or agricultural. Landscape buffers should also be used, especially where use-buffers are unfeasible.
3. Require that timber harvests appear like natural disturbances, with a jagged harvest pattern and vegetative screen between the harvest area and the road.
4. Continue to allow current and new residential development along lakefronts.
6. Encourage development proposal site designs to preserve or enhance the rustic and rural nature of the community.

Insert Map 4 – Existing Land Use

Insert Map 5 – Future Land Use

CHAPTER 8: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

This chapter is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. This chapter first analyzes the relationship of the Town of Armstrong Creek to school districts, adjacent local governmental units, the Region, the state, and other governmental units; then it incorporates plans and agreements under sections 66.0301, 66.0307, and 66.0309 of Wisconsin Statutes; and finally it concludes with an identification of existing or potential conflicts between the governmental units and a process to resolve such conflicts.

A. ASSESSMENT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS, PLANS AND AGREEMENTS

1.) SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Town of Armstrong Creek is within the Goodman-Armstrong Creek School District.

The Nicolet Technical College, located in Rhinelander, serves the town.

The main form of interaction with both school and college districts are through payment of property taxes, which help to fund both districts' operations. The Town has little participation in issues pertaining to administration or siting of new facilities. All school and college board meetings are open to the public.

2.) SURROUNDING TOWNS

The Town of Armstrong Creek is bordered (refer to Map 1) by the towns of Caswell, Laona, and Blackwell in Forest County; Goodman in Marinette County, and Fence in Florence County.

The Goodman & Armstrong Creek Fire Department covers Armstrong Creek for fire and rescue service. Mutual aid exists with surrounding towns.

3.) FOREST COUNTY

Forest County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to Armstrong Creek residents.

The County Highway Department maintains and plows the county, state, and federal highways within the Town. The County Sheriff provides protective services through periodic patrols. The Sheriff also manages the 911-dispatch

center, not only for police protection, but also for ambulance/EMS response. The Forestry Department maintains a county park and forest system for the use and enjoyment of all residents including the Town of Armstrong Creek. The County also provides land records and land & water conservation services.

In many cases where state and federal agencies require area-wide planning for various programs or regulations, the County sponsors a county-wide planning effort to complete these plans, and include each individual local unit in the process and resulting final plan. Examples of this include the County Outdoor Recreation plan which maintains the eligibility for WisDNR administered park and recreation development funding of each local unit that adopts it, and All Hazard Mitigation Plans which are required by FEMA in order for individual local units of government to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funding.

4.) NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was formed under §60.0309 Wis. Stats. as a voluntary association of governments within a ten county area. Forest County is a member of the NCWRPC, which qualifies the Town of Armstrong Creek for local planning assistance. Typical functions of the NCWRPC include (but are not limited to) land use, transportation, economic development, intergovernmental, and geographic information systems (GIS) planning and services.

5.) WISCONSIN TOWNS ASSOCIATION

The Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA) is a statewide, voluntary, non-profit and non-partisan association of member town and village governments in the State of Wisconsin controlled by its Board of Directors. WTA's twin purposes are to (1) support local control of government and to (2) protect the interest of towns. In furtherance of those goals WTA provides three types of services for its members: legislative lobbying efforts, educational programs, and legal information.

6.) STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Wisconsin departments of Natural Resources (WisDNR) and Transportation (WisDOT) are the primary agencies the Town might deal with regarding development activities. Many of the goals and objectives of this plan will require continued cooperation and coordination with these agencies.

The Forest Service is responsible for managing the national forest to generate jobs, provide outdoor recreation, maintain and improve wildlife and plant habitat, and improve forest health, while continuing to let the forest mature.

The WisDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland, and other wildlife habitat areas, while WisDOT is responsible for the planning and development of state highways, railways, airports, and other transportation systems. State agencies make a number of grant and aid programs available to local units of government like the Town of Armstrong Creek. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also a number of mandates passed down from the state that the Town must comply with, such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads.

Most federal programs are administered by the states, so the Town would be dealing with the appropriate state agency that relates to specific federal programs and regulations.

B. EXISTING OR POTENTIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICTS

The following intergovernmental conflict was identified in Armstrong Creek planning area:

- ✓ Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest contains extensive protected biodiversity, so why should private lands with similar biodiversity become unavailable for development.
- ✓ Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest does not harvest enough timber to maintain a healthy ecosystem, which hurts the local, social, and economic conditions.
- ✓ Laura Lake campground is not developed up to the standard as other national forest campgrounds (i.e. lack of potable water, showers, electricity, and access road to campground is in poor condition).
- ✓ The Goodman-Armstrong Creek School District is having trouble maintaining its school district because of declining enrollment and these communities should work together to come up with solutions to keeping the school system here.

No additional intergovernmental conflicts are projected in the Armstrong Creek.

The process for resolving these conflicts will in part be a continuation of past practices as new mechanisms evolve. The Town will continue to meet with surrounding towns when significant issues of mutual concern arise.

C. PROGRAMS

66.0301 – Intergovernmental Cooperation: Wisconsin Statute §66.0301 permits local agreements between the state, cities, villages, towns, counties, regional planning commissions, and certain special districts, including school districts, public library systems, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, sanitary districts, farm drainage districts, metropolitan sewerage districts, sewer utility districts, Indian tribes or bands, and others.

Intergovernmental agreements prepared in accordance with §66.0301, formerly §66.30, are the most common forms of agreement and have been used by communities for years, often in the context of sharing public services such as police, fire, or rescue. This type of agreement can also be used to provide for revenue sharing, determine future land use within a subject area, and to set temporary municipal boundaries. However, the statute does not require planning as a component of any agreement, and boundary changes have to be accomplished through the normal annexation process.

Municipal Revenue Sharing: Wisconsin Statute, 66.0305, Municipal Revenue Sharing, gives authority to cities, villages and towns to enter into agreements to share revenue from taxes and special charges with each other. The agreements may also address other matters, including agreements regarding services to be provided or the location of municipal boundaries.

Boundaries of the shared revenue area must be specified in the agreement and the term of the agreement must be for at least 10 years. The formula or other means for sharing revenue, the date of payment of revenues, and the means by which the agreement may be invalidated after the minimum 10 year period.

Incorporation: Wisconsin Statutes, 66.0201 – Incorporation of villages and cities; purpose and definitions, and 66.0211 – Incorporation referendum procedure, regulate the process of creating new villages and cities from Town territory. Wisconsin Statute, 66.0207 – Standards to be applied by the department, identifies the criteria that have to be met prior to approval of incorporation.

The incorporation process requires filing an incorporation petition with circuit court. Then, the incorporation must meet certain statutory criteria reviewed by the Municipal boundary Review Section of the Wisconsin Department of Administration. These criteria include:

- ✓ Minimum standards of homogeneity and compactness, and the presence of a "well developed community center."
- ✓ Minimum density and assessed valuation standards for territory beyond the core.

- ✓ A review of the budget and tax base in order to determine whether or not the area proposed for incorporation could support itself financially.
- ✓ An analysis of the adequacy of government services compared to those available from neighboring jurisdictions.
- ✓ An analysis of the impact incorporation of a portion of the Town would have on the remainder, financially or otherwise.
- ✓ An analysis of the impact the incorporation would have on the area.

Many of the other types of intergovernmental programs not discussed here relate to the urban fringe of cities, and therefore do not apply to a town like Armstrong Creek including boundary agreements, extraterritorial actions, and annexation.

D. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal

- Seek mutually beneficial cooperation with all levels of government.

Objectives

1. Consider ways to share services with neighboring towns and the County to provide more efficient service or public utilities.
2. Obtain coordination status with the National Forest.

Policies

1. Investigate cost sharing or contracting with neighboring towns and the County to provide more efficient service or public utilities.
2. Work with Forest County on the development of countywide planning efforts, and economic development in the Armstrong Creek area.
3. Identify alternative solutions to existing or potential land use, administration or policy conflicts that may hinder intergovernmental cooperation.

CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION

This last chapter (#9 of 9) of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan is based on the statutory requirement [§66.1001(2)(i) Wis. Stats.] for a compilation of programs and specific actions to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in the previous chapters. This chapter includes a process for updating the plan, which is required every 10 years at a minimum.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This Plan is intended to be used as a guide by local officials, both town and county, when making decisions that affect growth and development in Armstrong Creek. It is also important that local citizens and developers become aware of the Plan.

Steps taken to implement this Plan include adoption of public participation guidelines, Plan Commission formation, Plan Commission resolution recommending Plan adoption by the Town Board, a formal public hearing, Town Board approval of the Plan by ordinance, distribution of the Plan to affected government units, and ongoing Plan Commission reviews and updates.

RECOMMENDATION 1: PLAN COMMISSION

Once the Plan is approved, then it is important for the Town Board to use it as a guide for decisions that affect development in the Town.

The Town of Armstrong Creek Plan Commission is to measure the Town's progress toward achieving the Plan on an annual basis and make a full review and update of the Plan every 10 years (see: "C – Plan Review & Update" below).

The primary implementation tools for this Plan are the County Shoreland Zoning, and County Land Division ordinances. These ordinances provide the underlying regulatory framework that supports many of this Plan's policies.

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that a local government's land use related decisions and actions be consistent with that local government's comprehensive plan.

RECOMMENDATION 2: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Primary plan implementation tools include the Forest County Zoning and Land Division ordinances. These ordinances provide the underlying regulatory framework that supports many of the Plan's policies.

a. Land Division Ordinance

Land or subdivision regulations relate to the way in which land is divided from a section of land (640 acres) for additional people to own and develop. A community can control the subdivision of land by requiring a developer to meet certain conditions in exchange for the privilege of recording a plat. While imposing conditions restricts the use of private property, the cumulative effect of land subdivision on the health, safety, and welfare of a community is so great as to justify public control of the process.

Of all the land use control devices available, subdivision regulation has probably the greatest potential. When compared with zoning, a well-administered subdivision control is more useful in achieving planning goals and its influence is far more lasting. Once land is divided into lots and streets are laid out, development patterns are established. Subdivision regulations can ensure that those development patterns are consistent with community standards. Subdivision regulations can also ensure the adequacy of existing and planned public facilities such as schools, wastewater treatment systems, water supply, to handle new growth. Finally, subdivision regulation can help ensure the creation and preservation of adequate land records.

There is some overlap between zoning and subdivision codes in terms of standards. Both ordinances, for example, can set lot sizes. Both can deal with the suitability of land for development. Implementing important plan techniques such as rural cluster development often requires use of the zoning ordinance and the subdivision ordinance.

Forest County has a land division ordinance (Subdivision Ordinance, Forest County, Wisconsin). It applies to all unincorporated land within Forest County uniformly with limited exceptions.

b. Zoning

Zoning is the major tool used to regulate land uses and implement a comprehensive plan. The zoning ordinance regulates the use of property to advance the public health, safety, and welfare. It has been used throughout the United States and in Wisconsin since the 1920's.

A zoning ordinance creates different use zones or districts within a community. Each district has a list of permitted uses, which are uses that are desirable in a

district. Each district may also contain a list of special uses, sometimes called special exceptions or conditional uses, which are allowed under certain circumstances, and require review by a local body to be allowed. All other uses are prohibited.

Zoning regulations are adopted by local ordinance and consist of two basic things, a map and related text. The zoning map displays where the zoning district boundaries are, and the text describes what can be done in each type of district. The Future Land Use map and zoning are similar but they are not the same. Land use categories on the Future Land Use map are more general, while zoning is much more detailed. Zoning is the legal tool to regulate specific land uses. Since the land use categories on the Future Land Use map are generalized it is possible that more than one zoning district would correspond to each of the categories on the Future Land Use map.

Zoning should be derived from, and be consistent with, the policy recommendations adopted in the comprehensive plan. The desired land uses should “drive” the development of specific zoning ordinance provisions including district descriptions, permitted uses, conditional uses and the zoning map. This consistency has been important in upholding legal challenges in the Courts. After the planning process is complete, then updating the zoning ordinance is critical, so that it incorporates the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan.

County Shoreland Zoning

All counties administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land uses in shoreland and floodplain areas of unincorporated land, which is required under Wisconsin law. This ordinance supersedes any town ordinance, unless the town ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland zone is land located within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a lake, pond, or flowage; or within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a river or stream; or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

County Zoning

Forest County has had a general zoning ordinance in place since 1987. Four towns are covered under this ordinance.

Armstrong Creek could have general zoning through the County, if the County would allow additional towns to join County Zoning. If Armstrong Creek wanted County Zoning, then the Armstrong Creek Town Board would follow additional procedures. The next steps include:

- Having the Town Board pass a town general zoning ordinance, which includes a map, and related text to describe each mapped zoning district;

- Voters pass a referendum at an annual meeting about allowing town zoning; and
- County Board approval of the Town zoning ordinance.

Town Zoning

The Town could draft and administer its own zoning ordinance. This would require continuation of village powers, and County Board approval. Also, the County Board would continue to have “veto” power over future amendments to the Town’s ordinance [§60.62(2), Wis. Stats.]. The advantages of this option include providing the greatest amount of local control over zoning decisions. The zoning districts and other ordinance provisions could be tailored to best achieve the desired future conditions in each land use area. Administration of this option could be achieved in a variety of ways. The Town could fund its own administration. The County and Town could jointly administer this ordinance by having a Town zoning administrator that is also a County deputy zoning administrator. Another alternative could involve §66.30, Wis. Stats., intergovernmental agreements to contract with the County or an adjacent town for zoning administration and enforcement.

The obvious disadvantage would be cost. Creating town enforced zoning would be a more expensive option, as it would require funding zoning administration and enforcement (including legal expenses) at the local level instead of at the county level. The Town would likely need to hire at least a part time zoning administrator, and would need to establish a Board of Appeals. Any revision to the zoning ordinance would require County Board approval. There still would be some areas of overlap between the County and Town ordinances for shoreland and floodplain areas.

RECOMMENDATION 3: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The Town of Armstrong Creek cooperates with neighboring communities and other units of government to minimize intergovernmental conflict. Continued cooperation will ensure that the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan are fully realized. Key recommendations include the following:

- ✓ Work with Forest County to incorporate the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan into a Forest County Comprehensive Plan and to complete a plan for the entire county.
- ✓ Continue to build on the initial framework established in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Chapter of this Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 4: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Copies of this Plan should be made available to the public and all materials, maps, programs and information mentioned in the Plan should be assembled and displayed at the Town Hall so it is available for anyone to review when the facility is open or upon reasonable request. In addition, the same information should be made available on the Internet.

B. PLAN CONSISTENCY BETWEEN CHAPTERS

The state comprehensive planning law requires that the implementation chapter describe how each chapter of the plan will be integrated and consistent with the other chapters. Preparing all the chapters of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan simultaneously has ensured that there are no known inconsistencies between the different chapters of the Plan.

Whenever a goal, objective, or policy is changed, then a review of all other goals, objectives, and policies shall be reviewed to determine if others need revision also.

C. PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE

An annual review is to be completed by the Plan Commission, comparing how each land use decision made during the year measured up to this goals, objectives, and policies of the Plan. If a pattern of land use decisions inconsistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan is found, the following options are to be considered:

- ✓ Appropriate adjustments should be made to bring decision-making back in line with Plan goals, objectives, and policies;
- ✓ The goals, objectives, and policies themselves should be reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and worthwhile;
- ✓ Possible changes to existing implementation tools such as the zoning or land division ordinance should be considered to ensure the ordinances properly support land use decision-making and plan implementation;
- ✓ New implementation tools could be considered to gain more control over land use decisions.

A comprehensive plan update is required by statute every 10 years. An essential characteristic of any planning program is that it reflects the desires of the Town's citizens.

D. PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

Amendments to this Plan may include minor changes to plan text or maps or major changes resulting from periodic review. Frequent changes to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided. The Comprehensive Planning Law (§66.1001 Wis. Stats.) requires that the same process used to adopt the Plan will also be used to amend it, specifically:

An amendment or change may be initiated by either the Town Plan Commission or the Town Board and may result from a regular review or a request from a resident.

The Town Plan Commission prepares the specific text or map amendment being considered, holds a public meeting, and votes to recommend approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment, by resolution to the Town Board.

If an amendment is approved by resolution to the Town Board, then the Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town Board public hearing on the proposed changes. At the same time, the Town Clerk also mails this notice to all owners and operators of mines within the Town.

The Town Board conducts the public hearing and votes to either approve the Plan amendment by ordinance, disapprove, or approve with changes by ordinance.

Any approved changes are sent to:

- The school district, and technical college district that serve the Town;
- All adjacent town clerks;
- All adjacent county clerks;
- The local library;
- North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; and
- WDOA, Division of Intergovernmental Relations, Comprehensive Planning Program.

ATTACHMENT A
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Town of Armstrong Creek Public Participation Plan 2008

I. Background

The Town of Armstrong Creek recognizes the need to engage the public in the planning process. This plan sets forth the techniques to meet the goal of public participation. Therefore, this Public Participation Plan forms the basic framework for achieving an interactive dialogue between citizens, local decision makers, staff, and the NCWRPC.

The creation of the Public Participation Plan is a task required in meeting the requirements of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Legislation (1999 Wisconsin Act 9 and its technical revisions). As the planning process develops, it should be expected that deviations from the plan may occur.

II. Objectives

The following is a list of objectives for the public participation plan:

- That the residents become fully aware of the importance of participating in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.
- That the public participation process be designed to engage all aspects of the Town.
- That the public have opportunities to provide their input to the Plan Commission and Town Board.
- That the public have access to all technical information and any analyses performed throughout the planning process.
- That there is input from the broadest range of perspectives and interests in the community possible.
- That input is elicited through a variety of means (electronic, printed, and oral) in such a way that it may be carefully considered and responded to.
- That this process of public involvement strengthens the sense of community.

The goal will be to inform, consult and involve the public and the communities served during each phase of the planning process. Hopefully, this will help balance the issues related to private property rights.

III. Techniques

The public participation plan for the comprehensive planning process will incorporate the following:

1. All meetings for the planning process will be posted and open to the public.
2. NCWRPC newsletter will be used to inform persons of the planning process and solicit input.
3. Meeting summaries and/or handouts will be placed on file for review. The public library will be provided all materials as well.
4. The draft plan will be available via the NCWRPC website.
5. The local school will be provided information about the plan.
6. Other efforts as identified along the way.



RESOLUTION #1-2008

For Adoption of a Public Participation Plan

WHEREAS, the Town of Armstrong Creek is required to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan as outlined in the Wisconsin Statutes; and

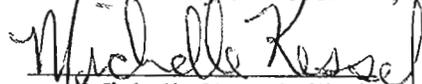
WHEREAS, public participation is critical for the development of a sound plan; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Town of Armstrong Creek to approve a process to involve the public in the planning process; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Armstrong Creek does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as presented.

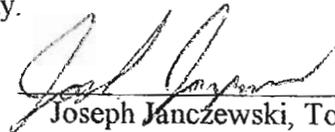
ADOPTED on this 17th day of December, 2008

ATTEST:


Michelle Kessel, Clerk

The governing body of the Town of Armstrong Creek has authorized this Resolution, dated today.

ATTEST:


Joseph Janczewski, Town Chairperson

ATTACHMENT B
PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

66.1001 (4) (b) * Resolution by plan commission to recommend adoption of comprehensive plan.

RECEIVED

MAR 22 2010

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Town of Armstrong Creek
Forest County

NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The Plan Commission of the Town of Armstrong Creek, Forest County, Wisconsin, by this resolution, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and by a roll call vote of a majority of the town plan commission present and voting resolves and recommends to the town board of the Town of Armstrong Creek as follows:

Adoption of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Armstrong Creek Plan Commission, by this resolution, further resolves and orders as follows:

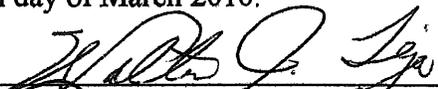
All maps and other materials noted and attached as exhibits to the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan are incorporated into and made a part of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan.

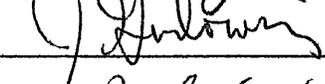
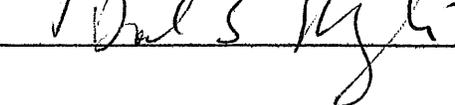
The vote of the town plan commission in regard to this resolution shall be recorded by the chairman of the town plan commission in the official minutes of the Town of Armstrong Creek Plan Commission.

The town chairman shall properly post or publish this resolution as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

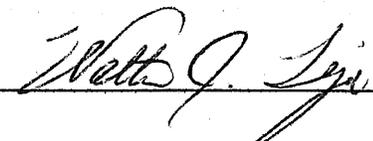
Adopted this 9th day of March 2010.

Signatures:



Attest:



RECEIVED

MAY 13 2010

NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

66.1001 (4) * Ordinance to adopt comprehensive plan.

(ONLY for use by towns authorized to exercise VILLAGE POWERS under s. 60.22).

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Town of Armstrong Creek, Forest County

SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE

The title of this ordinance is the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Armstrong Creek to lawfully adopt a comprehensive plan as required under s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION II – AUTHORITY

The town board of the Town of Armstrong Creek has authority under its village powers under s. 60.22, Wis. stats., its power to appoint a town plan commission under ss. 60.62 (4) and 62.23 (1), Wis. stats., and under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Armstrong Creek must be in compliance with s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats., in order for the town board to adopt this ordinance.

SECTION III – ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE

The town board of the Town of Armstrong Creek, by this ordinance, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and roll call vote by a majority of the town board present and voting, provides the authority for the Town of Armstrong Creek to adopt its comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., and provides the authority for the town board to order its publication.

SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The town board of the Town of Armstrong Creek has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by s. 66.1001 (4) (a), Wis. stats.

SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Plan Commission of the Town of Armstrong Creek, by a majority vote of the entire commission, recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of the Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Armstrong Creek, has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, with notice in compliance with the requirements of s. 66.1001 (4) (d), Wis. stats.

SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Armstrong Creek, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Armstrong Creek Comprehensive Plan Ordinance under pursuant to s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance of its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision of application, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are severable.

SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.

The town clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

Adopted this 21st day of April 2010.

Board Signatures:

Mark J. Igo
Randy W. B...
Steve Manuzayak
Thomas & Kessel

Attest: