

Town of Phelps Comprehensive Plan



Town of Phelps, Vilas County Wisconsin

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Prepared with the assistance of:

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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Chapter One

Demographics

The Town of Phelps was established in 1905 (as the Town of Hackley until 1912), and is located in the eastern corner of Vilas County, Wisconsin. The Town is bounded by the State of Michigan to the north, Forest County to the east, The Towns of Conover and Land O' Lakes to the west, and the Town of Washington to the south. It is one of the fourteen towns in Vilas County. See the [Locational Reference Map](#).

This analysis describes existing demographics and historical trends in the Town of Phelps and identifies the major demographic projections impacting Phelps over the next two to three decades. Both Vilas County and the State of Wisconsin are listed for comparison. This chapter includes subjects such as population, households, age, education, and income.

The data in this chapter, as well as the chapter on housing, mainly utilizes data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS), as well as the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA). The U.S. Census and the American Community Survey are both produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census is a count of the American population released every ten years and the American Community Survey is an estimate of the population released on a yearly basis. Data is analyzed for various years from the U.S. Census Bureau for this comprehensive plan, while 2016 data is provided to give a sense of current trends.

The American Community Survey evolved from the long-form of the Census that a random subset of the population used to receive with the Census. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau started releasing American Community Survey data for all populations on a yearly basis, including the Town of Phelps. The Census is a perfect count of the population, regardless of size, but small populations, such as Phelps, are often difficult to survey. This can produce data that is not always completely accurate or consistent. As such, there are instances where the Census and the American Community Survey provide slightly different data for the year 2010. These examples are discussed for the readers throughout these sections.

Population & Households

Historical Trends

The 2018 population estimate in the Town of Phelps created by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) is 1,266. **Figure 1** displays the population trends in the Town of Phelps from 1970 to projected populations in 2040. Population within the Town is projected to decrease over time, as the Town is projected to decrease to 1,140 residents in 2040, down from its peak population of 1,350 residents in 2000.

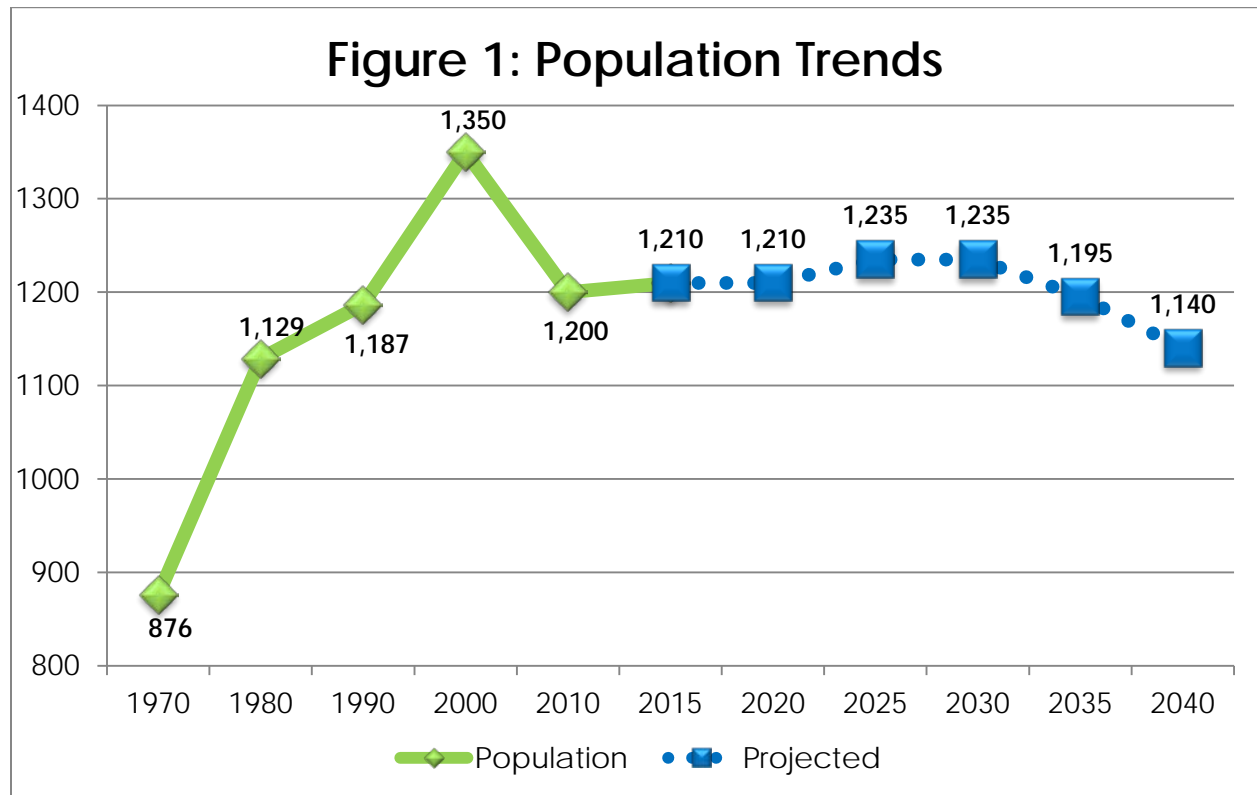


Table 1.1 compares demographic changes in the Town of Phelps, Vilas County, and Wisconsin for the years 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2017. Demographic changes include population numbers, number of households, and average household size. The Town of Phelps has experienced a nearly 10 percent decrease in population since 1990. This is due to a large decrease in population since 2000, as the Town's population actually increased between 1990 and 2000, but has decreased by nearly 21 percent since 2000. Unlike the Town of Phelps, Vilas County has increased in population since 1990 and since 2000.

By contrast, the number of total households within the Town of Phelps has increased since 1990. This is due to a decrease in household size, which reflects the national trend toward more households comprised of singles, couples without children, smaller

families, and widows or widowers. The number of households in the Town of Phelps has increased by nearly 16 percent since 1990. In comparison, Vilas County has increased at a faster pace than the Town, while the state as a whole has also increased at a faster pace. Similar to the Town’s population, most of this growth occurred between 1990 and 2000, as the number of households within the Town has been decreasing steadily since 2000.

Table 1.1: Demographic Change, 1990 – 2017						
	1990	2000	2010	2017	% Change 1990 – 2017	% Change 2000 – 2017
Total Population						
Phelps	1,187	1,350	1,200	1,072	-9.7%	-20.6%
County	17,707	21,033	21,430	21,465	21.2%	2.1%
State	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,763,217	17.8%	7.4%
Total Households						
Phelps	457	560	544	528	15.5%	-5.7%
County	7,294	9,066	9,658	10,758	47.5%	18.7%
State	1,822,118	2,084,544	2,279,768	2,328,754	27.8%	11.7%
Average Household Size						
Phelps	2.12	2.29	2.11	2.03	-4.2%	-11.4%
County	2.40	2.32	2.22	2.00	-16.7%	-13.8%
State	2.61	2.5	2.43	2.48	-5.0%	-0.8%

Source: U.S. Census Decennial Censuses 1990-2010 & ACS 5-Year Estimates 2013-2017

Seasonal Population

Seasonal residents have a major impact on the Town. Visitors and seasonal residents can easily outnumber the local residents during peak times during the summer. In 2017, there were 962 housing units. The US Census defines seasonal housing units as those intended for occupancy only during certain seasons of the year and are found primarily in resort areas. Approximately 56 percent of all the housing units in the Town are for seasonal/recreational use.

Seasonal homeowners also contribute expenditures for food and drink, recreation and equipment, auto and home supplies, construction and remodeling, professional and other services. According to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, there were an estimated \$219 million from seasonal residents and tourists in Vilas County in 2017.

Projections

State population projections were completed in 5-year increments between 2015 and 2040, as shown in [Table 1.2](#). According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA), the population in the Town of Phelps will decrease by 5 percent by 2040. In comparison, Vilas County is projected to increase by 11.5 percent during the same time period. The Town of Phelps reached its peak population in 2000 and Vilas County is projected to reach peak population in the year 2030. The WDOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes 16.96. The WDOA uses the Cohort Component Method for projections, which takes into consideration base population, net migration figures, age, sex, and birth/death rates.

Like population, household projections were completed in 5-year increments between 2015 and 2040. Like the population projection, the WDOA household projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official household projections and are based on the historical population trends of individual communities. [Table 1.3](#) includes household projections completed by the WDOA. During this time period, the number of households in Phelps is projected to increase by less than 1 percent, compared to the number of households in Vilas County increasing by 19 percent.

Table 1.2: Population Projections, 2010-2040

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change
Phelps	1,200	1,210	1,210	1,235	1,235	1,195	1,140	-5.0%
County	21,430	21,840	22,535	23,645	24,395	24,305	23,890	11.5%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Population Projections 2013

Table 1.3: Household Projections, 2010-2040

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change
Phelps	544	560	565	580	583	568	547	0.6%
County	9,658	10,059	10,469	11,069	11,512	11,575	11,517	19.2%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Household Projections 2013

Age

In 2017, 16 percent of the Town’s residents were under the age of 18, compared to 17 percent for Vilas County. 36 percent of the population was over the age of 65 years, compared to 29 percent for Vilas County. The remaining 48 percent of Phelps residents are between the ages of 18 and 65 – the prime working age.

The number of people aged 65 and older that lived in the community increased from 376 in 2000 to 385 in 2017, an increase of 2 percent. Meanwhile the number of persons 17 and under decreased by 31 percent during that same time period from 248 in 2000 to 170 in 2017. Both percentages indicate a steady or slowly aging population in Phelps.

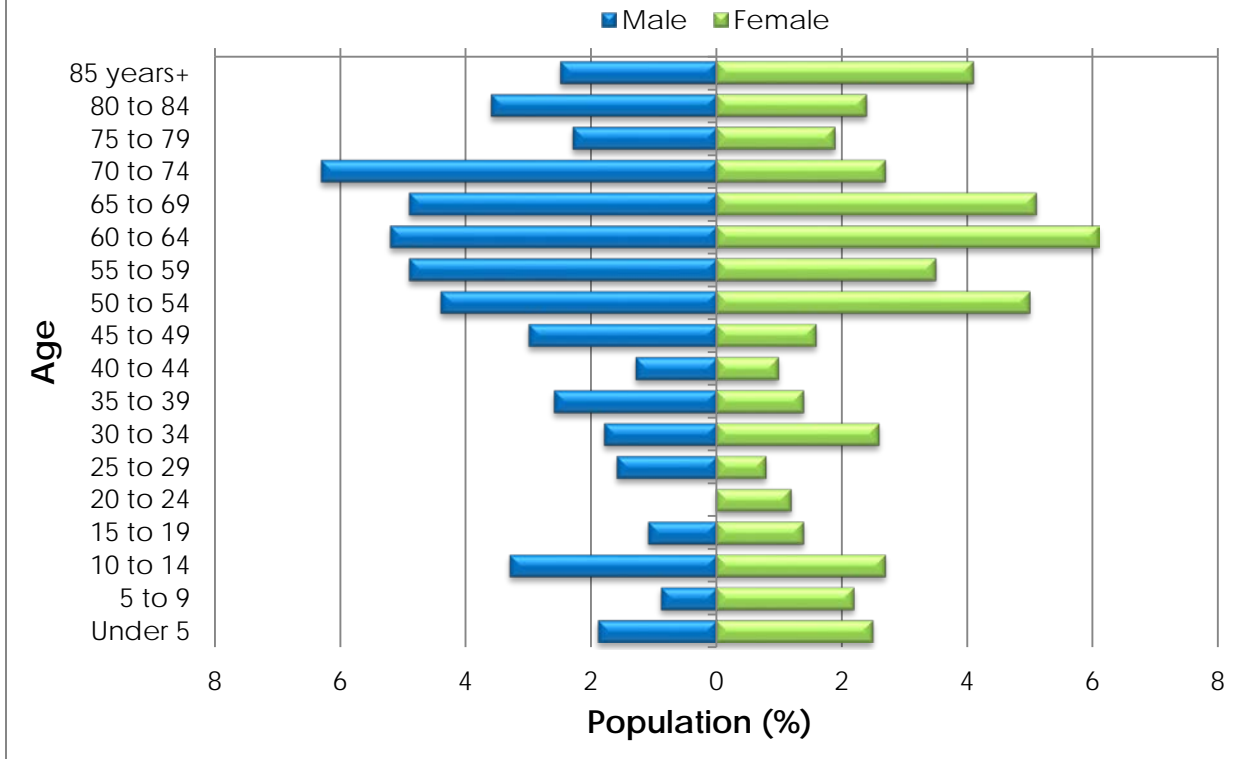
The estimated median age in Phelps in 2017 was 57.9, which is slightly older than the median age in Vilas County (53.4) and significantly higher than in Wisconsin (39.2), as shown in [Table 1.4](#). Since 2000, median age in Phelps has increased by over 17 percent, a faster rate than both Vilas County and Wisconsin. Between 2010 and 2017, Phelps's 4.5 percent increase in median age was slower than Vilas County and faster than Wisconsin.

Table 1.4: Median Age					
	2000	2010	2017	% Change 2000-2017	% Change 2010-2017
Phelps	49.3	55.4	57.9	17.4%	4.5%
Vilas County	45.8	50.7	53.4	16.6%	5.3%
Wisconsin	36.0	38.5	39.2	8.9%	1.8%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

[Figure 2](#) shows the population age distribution broken down into age categories or cohorts for the Town of Phelps in 2016. Figure 2 illustrates a more “top heavy” population for the Town of Phelps, with a large percentage of Town residents falling between the ages of 50 and 74.

Figure 2: Town of Phelps Population Pyramid



Race & Ethnicity

According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 93.1 percent of the population in Phelps is White, about the same proportion as it was in 2000 and 2010. About 4.5 percent identified as “Two or More Races”. About 1.9 percent identified as “American Indian”. About 2.6 percent identified as Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity in 2017, while about 0.6 percent identified as Asian.

Education & Income Levels

Educational attainment in the Town has increased since 2000. The percentage of population 25 and older with a high school education increased from 82.4 percent in 2000 to 93.1 percent in 2017. The percentage of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher has increased from 13.9 percent in 2000 to 22.4 percent in 2017. These increases were in line with those experienced in Vilas County. The proportion of people with less than a high school education in the Town is slightly lower than the county and the state. [Figure 3](#) and [Table 1.5](#) show more detail on educational attainment.

Figure 3: Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Older, 2017

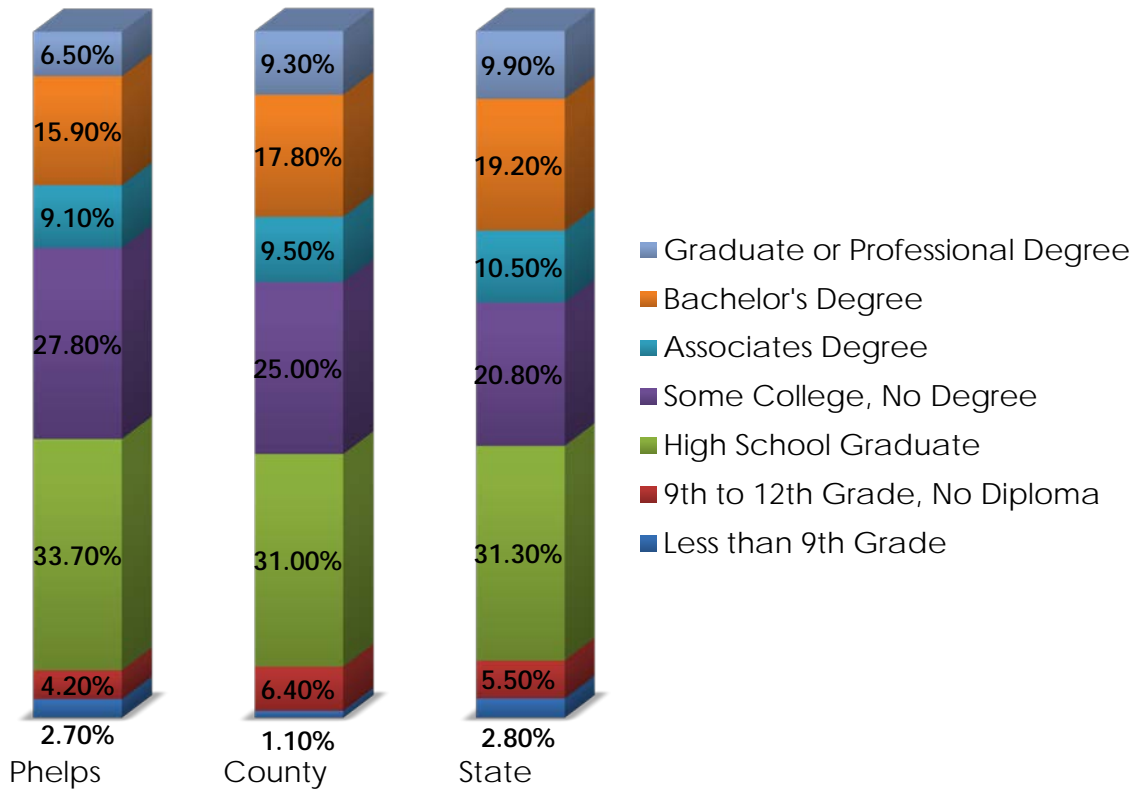


Table 1.5: Educational Attainment Change, 2000-2017									
Educational Attainment	Town of Phelps			Vilas County			Wisconsin		
	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017
% high school graduate or higher	82.4%	92.6%	93.1%	85.4%	91.7%	92.5%	85.1%	90.2%	91.3%
% Bachelor's degree or higher	13.9%	23.5%	22.4%	17.6%	25.0%	26.8%	22.4%	26.4%	28.3%

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses 2000 & 2010; ACS 2013-2017

Table 1.6 shows median household income for the Town of Phelps. The median household income for Town of Phelps households was \$41,528 in 2017, up from \$31,574 in 2000. However, after adjusting for inflation, real median household income actually decreased by \$3,416. Vilas County and Wisconsin also experienced a decline in median household income when adjusted for inflation. The median household income of \$41,528 is slightly lower than Vilas County with a median household income of \$42,720 and significantly lower than the state at \$56,759.

Table 1.7 shows per capita income for the Town of Phelps. Per capita income is the average obtained by dividing aggregate income by the total population of an area. Since 2000, the Town's per capita income increased by nearly 17 percent when adjusted for inflation, significantly faster than Vilas County and Wisconsin.

Table 1.6: Median Household Income					
Minor Civil Division	2000	2000*	2017	Adj. Net Change*	% Change*
Town of Phelps	\$31,574	\$44,944	\$41,528	-\$3,416	-7.6%
Vilas County	\$33,759	\$48,055	\$42,720	-\$5,335	-11.1%
Wisconsin	\$43,791	\$62,335	\$56,759	-\$5,576	-8.9%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000, ACS 2013-2017 & NCWRPC 2019

*Adjusted for inflation in 2017 dollars.

Table 1.7: Per Capita Income					
Minor Civil Division	2000	2000*	2017	Adj. Net Change*	% Change*
Town of Phelps	\$17,337	\$24,679	\$28,789	\$4,110	16.7%
Vilas County	\$18,361	\$26,136	\$29,058	\$2,922	11.2%
Wisconsin	\$21,271	\$30,278	\$30,557	\$279	0.9%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000, ACS 2013-2017 & NCWRPC 2019

*Adjusted for inflation in 2017 dollars.

Retirement Sector

The large number of retirees living within Phelps contribute personal income in the form of transfer payments such as retirement fund income, social security and others. In Vilas County, transfer payments account for more of the personal income of residents than proprietor income. Transfer payments as a percentage of total income are significantly higher in Vilas County than in Wisconsin and the nation, while net earnings from employment and proprietor income as percentages of totally income are significantly lower in Vilas County than in Wisconsin and the nation.

Poverty

In 2017, 15.6 percent of the Town’s population was under the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). This is higher than the county (15.3%), state (12.3%), and national (14.6%) averages. Poverty rates within the Town of Phelps have been increasing since 2000, as only 9.2 percent of Town residents were under the FPL in 2000. Comparisons of poverty rates can be found in [Table 1.8](#).

Table 1.8: Poverty Rate (%)			
Minor Civil Division	2000 Poverty Rate	2010 Poverty Rate	2017 Poverty Rate
Town of Phelps	9.2%	16.6%	15.6%
Vilas County	8.0%	11.9%	15.3%
Wisconsin	8.7%	11.6%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2013-2017

Employment Characteristics

According to the 2013-2017 ACS, the 437 members of the Phelps labor force had median earnings of \$22,740. This indicates that half of the Town’s labor force makes less than \$22,740 per year while the other half of the Town’s labor force makes more than \$22,740 per year. Median earnings are generally higher as education increases, ranging from \$7,143 for those without a high school degree to \$37,813 for those with a bachelor’s degree. Residents with either some college education or an associate’s degree had median earnings of \$22,500. Between 2000 and 2017, the number of employed residents within the Town of Phelps decreased from 548 employed residents in 2000 to 413 employed residents in 2017. [Table 1.9](#) compares the number of employees and trends of employment among residents in the Town of Phelps with those in Vilas County and Wisconsin.

[Table 1.10](#) shows the breakdown of occupations by sector of the employed population in the Town of Phelps in 2017. The Construction industry accounted for nearly 21 percent of jobs held by Town of Phelps residents, the most of any industry. This table show the industry that the person works in and may not be located in the Town of Phelps.

Table 1.9: Total Employed					
	2000	2010	2017	% Change 2000-2017	% Change 2010-2017
Phelps	548	587	413	-24.6%	-29.6%
Vilas County	9,268	9,764	9,038	-2.5%	-7.4%
Wisconsin	2,734,925	2,869,310	2,939,880	7.5%	2.5%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2013-2017

Table 1.10: Occupation by industry, Percent of Workforce, 2017

	Phelps	Vilas County	Wisconsin
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	3.1%	2.6%	2.4%
Construction	20.8%	10.9%	5.5%
Manufacturing	1.7%	4.7%	18.4%
Wholesale trade	0.7%	1.9%	2.7%
Retail trade	8.7%	13.7%	11.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	10.2%	4.8%	4.4%
Information	0.7%	2.1%	1.6%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	1.5%	4.6%	6.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	10.4%	8.8%	8.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	17.2%	17.0%	23.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	16.0%	18.7%	8.7%
Other services, except public administration	4.8%	5.7%	4.1%
Public administration	4.1%	4.5%	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2013-2017

Demographic Trends

- The Town of Phelps has experienced fluctuations in population over the last 50 years, greatly increasing between 1970 and 2000, then declining between 2000 and 2010. Population is projected to steadily increase between 2015 and 2030 before slightly declining between 2030 and 2040.
- Total households in the Town have steadily increased since 1970, while average household size continues to decrease leading to more households with fewer people. This can increase the cost of services on a per person basis.
- When adjusted for inflation, median household income has decreased at a slower pace in Phelps than in the county and the state.
- Educational attainment has grown at similar rates than the county and the state, but the percentage of Phelps residents with higher educational attainment is lower than both the county and the state.

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Chapter Two

Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources

This chapter describes local land and water conditions in detail as well as agricultural resources and cultural heritage. It is important to consider the patterns and interrelations of natural resources on a broader scale because they do not follow geopolitical boundaries. In addition, many of the programs for protecting or mitigating impacts to natural resources are administrated at the County, State, or Federal level. Thus an overview of recent county-wide natural resource planning efforts is described below, followed by a description of local natural resource conditions. Of particular interest are geographic areas of the landscape encompassing valued natural resource features grouped below by resource type, including soil and biological resources.

Previous Plans and Studies

In the last decade, several plans were prepared by Vilas County specifically to address protection and management of natural resources. These plans may be used as resources to guide local policy and decision making regarding resource management and protection.

[Vilas County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2015-2024](#)

This plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Vilas County from 2015 to 2024. The County Land and Water Conservation Department, in partnership with the NCWRPC, identified the following goals for Vilas County's natural resource protection efforts:

- *Goal 1: Increase the publics' level of natural resource knowledge and stewardship*
- *Goal 2: Protect aquatic and terrestrial environments from non-point source pollutants*
- *Goal 3: Protect aquatic, terrestrial, and wetland ecosystems from invasive species*
- *Goal 4: Organize sites of concern within watersheds, wetlands, lakes, and forests*
- *Goal 5: Attend to state and local conservation funding and policy issues*

Vilas County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2015

The Vilas County Farmland Preservation Plan is required under Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes. The Plan's Purpose is to guide and manage farmland preservation and agricultural production capacity from 2015 to 2030. The plan identifies portions of the county as designated farmland preservation areas and existing farmland preservation areas, as well as increasing the amount of tax credit opportunities.

- Existing agricultural areas are located in the southern portion of the town east of North Twin Lake as well as located throughout the central and southern portions of the Town.

Vilas County Forestry Plan, 2017

The Vilas County Forestry Plan, updated in 2017, is a management guide for the Vilas County Forest and is updated every decade. The mission of the plan is to manage and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for ecological, economic, educational, and research needs of present and future residents throughout Vilas County. There is a portion of County Forest located in the northwestern portion of the Town of Phelps.

USGS Protecting Wisconsin's Groundwater through Comprehensive Planning

In a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the University of Wisconsin System, and the United States Geological Survey, a website was made available with data and information on geology, general hydrology, and groundwater quantity and quality. The website was developed to aid government officials in their comprehensive plans, including this plan.

The most recent data available for Vilas County was public in 2007. The Vilas County report can be accessed here: <https://wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/index.html>.

Vilas County Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP), 2014-2019

The primary purpose of the CORP is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreation needs of Vilas County. This direction takes the form of an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities followed by establishing recommendations to meet identified needs.

Proposed recreational projects listed in the plan within the Town of Washington include future plans to establish biking and hiking trails to other communities. Between 2009 and 2013, the Town made a children's sledding hill available at the transfer station property on Rangeline Road, open to the public.

The CORP is currently being updated by NCWRPC, to cover years 2019-2023.

Natural Resources Inventory

Examining the natural environment is essential to the planning process. For instance, soils, topography and geology can pose limitations to certain types of developments, while an inventory of surface water resources, vegetation types, environmentally significant areas, and historical features identifies those resources and areas which should be protected from over-development. This section of the plan identifies both the water and land resources of the Town.

Water Resources

Similar to the rest of Vilas County, the Town of Phelps contains numerous natural surface water features including rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state and others are in need of focused efforts to improve water quality.

This section discusses the characteristics of the major surface water features located within the Town.

Watersheds

A watershed is an area of land in which water drains to a common point. In Wisconsin, watersheds vary in scale from major river systems to small creek drainage areas and typically range in size from 100 to 300 square miles. River basins encompass several watersheds. There are 32 river basins in Wisconsin, which range in size from 500 to over 5,000 square miles.

The Town of Phelps is part of several watersheds. The northwest third of the Town is located in the Tamarack Pioneer River watershed; the middle third of the Town lies in the Deerskin River watershed; and the northeast third of Town lies within the Brule River watershed. The sub continental surface-water divide determines where surface water will drain. All streams within the Brule River watershed flow into Lake Michigan. Water within the Tamarack Pioneer River watershed, and the Deerskin River watershed will flow into the Mississippi River, via the Wisconsin River.

Surface Water

According to the Soil Survey, Vilas County ranks second in the state in total acreage of surface water with 102,276 acres, of which approximately 98 percent is lakes and the remaining 2 percent is rivers and streams. Overall, the County ranks first in the state in total number of lakes with 1,327, or 15.6% of the land base. Wetlands comprise 19% of

the land base. The Town of Phelps contains 8901 acres of surface water based on Vilas County Mapping Departments GIS 2017 LiDAR hydro breaklines, comprising 8.7 percent of the County's total surface water acreage, and has 38 lakes. The Town of Phelps has 88.27 miles of lake shoreline within the town. Overall, the surface water features within the Town comprise nearly 12.8 percent of the Town's total acreage.

Lakes

The Town of Phelps contains 38 lakes. Within the area, the lakes are of glacial origin; some formed in broad, deep depressions in the drainage system while others are in depressions in the glacial drift. The following provides additional information about the larger lakes within the Town of Phelps.

- **Lac Vieux Desert**

Lac Vieux Desert is located in the northeast portion of the Town of Phelps and crosses into Michigan. This lake is the point of origination for the Wisconsin River. Lac Vieux Desert is managed by both the Wisconsin and Michigan DNR's as a warm water fishery. In addition, the WDNR has classified the lake as an outstanding resource water because of its water quality, aesthetic characteristics, outstanding fisheries, significant waterfowl staging area, and high quality, multi-use recreation. WVIC owns the dam on the lake outlet and manages the lake as a storage reservoir to augment Wisconsin River flows.

- **Long Lake**

The water levels of this lake are controlled by a WVIC-owned dam at the outlet. It is managed as a cold and warm water fishery, and identified as an exceptional resource water due to its water quality, largely natural watershed, cold water fisheries (cisco and trout), and high-quality, multi-use recreation.

- **Big Sand Lake**

Water levels here are influenced by WVIC-owned dam on the outlet of Long Lake. Big Sand Lake is managed as a warm water fishery and identified as an exceptional resource water.

- **Smoky Lake**

Smoky Lake is considered an exceptional resource water, located on the Wisconsin-Michigan border. It is managed as a warm and cold water fishery in cooperation with Michigan DNR.

- **North and South Twin Lakes**

These two lakes are connected and actually are the same water body. A WVIC-owned dam at the South Twin Lake outlet controls the water level of both lakes. Both are identified as warm water fisheries, and as outstanding resource waters due to water quality, aesthetic characteristics, cold water fishery (cisco), trophy fisheries (walleye and muskellunge) and high-quality, multi-use recreation.

Rivers

Three river systems flow through the Town of Phelps including the Wisconsin River, Deerskin River, and Little Deerskin River.

- **Wisconsin River**

The main stem of the Wisconsin River originates at Lac Vieux Desert in the northwest portion of the Town of Phelps and flows south to the Merrill Dam. This river is classified as an outstanding resource water. In addition, the portion of the river near Lac Vieux Desert is considered a warm water sport fish community which is capable of supporting a community of warm water sport fish or serving as a spawning area for these fish. The greater redhorse and pirate perch, which are on Wisconsin's watch species list are found in the Wisconsin River northern sub-basin.

- **Deerskin River**

The Deerskin River flows from Long Lake south to Scattering Rice Lake near Eagle River. This river is designated as an outstanding resource water, and is classified as a warm water sport, Class I and II brook and brown trout fishery. Beaver activity on the river has modified fish habitat, therefore beaver control activity has occurred. Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company (WVIC) operates and maintains a dam on the river on the south side of Long Lake in the Town. Dam operations historically permitted significant flow variation in a relatively short period of time which has had an adverse impact on the fishery and associated habitat improvement structures.

- **Little Deerskin River**

This River is classified as an exceptional resource water and Class I trout stream. It is located in the southwest portion of the Town and provides drainage from Deerskin Lake. The river supports a highly diverse fish population of 24 species, including trout, and a valuable feeder stream that discharges to the Deerskin River.

In addition to the above listed streams, Military Creek, Muskrat Creek and Blackjack Creek are all classified as exceptional resource waters.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

The WDNR classifies major surface water resources. These classifications allow water bodies of particular importance to be identified because of their unique resource values and water quality. Two classes which are represented by surface waters in the Town of Phelps include 1) Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) which have the highest quality water and fisheries in the state and are therefore deserving of special protection, and 2) Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) which have excellent water quality and valued fisheries but receive or may receive wastewater discharges.

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.

Several water bodies are listed as ORWs—Lac Vieux Desert, Wisconsin River, North Twin Lake, Deerskin River, and Elvoy Creek (T41N R12E Sec 13 area). There are some ERWs too—Military Creek (leading into N. Twin Lake), Muskrat Creek (T42N R11E Sec. 31-33), Beaver Creek and Little Deerskin River (T41N R11E Sec. 28, 23-33), and Blackjack Creek & Springs (T41N R11E Sec 34-35).

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.

One water body in Town is listed as not meeting the standards set under the U.S. Clean Water Act, Section 303(d). The impaired water in Phelps is: Kentuck Lake, because of mercury contamination from the air, and is rated a low priority for clean-up by the WDNR. The only action taken based upon that pollution is for the WDNR to issue fish consumption advisories.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Surface water resources in Vilas 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. Lac Vieux Desert has infestations of Eurasian water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), rusty crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*), banded mystery snail, freshwater jellyfish (*Craspedacusta sowerbii*), and Chinese mystery snail (*Cipangopaludina chinensis*). North Twin Lake and South Twin Lake have infestations of Eurasian water-milfoil and rusty crayfish, and Chinese mystery snail. Long Lake has infestations of Eurasian water-milfoil, Chinese mystery snail, and rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*). Big Sand Lake has infestations of eurasian water-milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*), and Chinese mystery snail. Kentuck Lake has an infestation of curly-leaf pondweed, rusty crayfish, banded mystery snail, and Chinese mystery snail. Smoky Lake has infestations of rusty crayfish, Eurasian water milfoil, and rainbow smelt. Contact the County Land and Water Conservation Department for public outreach education strategies.

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. The Town of Phelps contains 8,565 acres of wetlands. Wetlands make up 12.4% of the Town of Phelps land base.

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. Wetlands and other natural features are displayed in the [Natural Resources Map](#).

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 Town of Phelps does not have many floodplain areas being that they are located at the headwaters of the Wisconsin River. There are about 1,200 acres of floodplain located in the town.

Groundwater

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 source of all groundwater in Phelps is from local precipitation, and all drinking water in Phelps is from wells.

Most groundwater in Vilas County is obtained from sand and gravel aquifers. Wells are drilled 20 to 300 feet deep to yield 5 to 50 gallons per minute, but yields of 200 gallons per minute are possible. Shallow wells in these deposits are subject to pollution.

Groundwater quality in Vilas County and the Town of Phelps is generally good. Local differences in quality are the result of the composition, solubility, and surface of the soil and rock through which the water moves, and the length of time that the water is in contact with these materials. The main constituents in the water are calcium, magnesium, and bicarbonate ions. Mainly in the moraines, the water is hard. A high content of iron is a problem in many wells, but it is not a health hazard.

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 the Town of Phelps is "most susceptible," based upon reviewing 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.

The Phelps Sanitary District has a wellhead protection plan, but does not have a wellhead protection ordinance.

Wellhead protection plans are developed to achieve groundwater pollution prevention measures within public water supply wellhead areas. A wellhead protection plan uses public involvement to delineate the wellhead protection area, inventory potential groundwater contamination sources, and manage the wellhead protection area. All new municipal wells are required to have a wellhead protection plan. A wellhead protection ordinance is a zoning ordinance that implements the wellhead protection plan by controlling land uses in the wellhead protection area.

Land Resources

The Town is located in the northeast portion of Vilas County on the Wisconsin/Michigan border. It is bounded by the State of Michigan to the north, Forest County to the east, Forest County and the Town of Washington to the south, and the Towns of Conover and Land O'Lakes to the west. The nearest Wisconsin cities are: Eagle River approximately 18 miles southwest, and Rhinelander approximately 37 miles southwest. The Town of Phelps covers 69,736 acres.

Topography and Geology

The Town is located in the Northern Highland physiographic region of Wisconsin, which has some of the highest elevations in the state. Elevations range from approximately 1,660 feet above sea level in the southwestern portion of the Town to about 1,900 feet near the intersection of Boot Lake Road and Norwood Lake Road. Relief in the area is generally low, with most elevations being between 1,700 and 1,800 feet above sea level.

The Town of Phelps landscape includes drumlins and ground moraines, and is characterized by low, smoothly rounded, elongated, and oval ridges that are nearly level to moderately steep and are interspersed with long, narrow drainageways. Oriented in a NE to SW direction. The primary drainage system includes the Town's numerous rivers and creeks, including the Wisconsin and Deerskin Rivers, and Kentuck, Elvoy, Brule, Military, Blackjack, Haymeadow and Muskrat Creeks. The Wisconsin River and its tributaries drain approximately 40 percent of the Town, while the Kentuck, Elvoy, and Brule Creeks drain about 10 percent of the Town.

According to the Soil Survey of Vilas County, the secondary drainage system is rather poorly defined, and includes the Town's numerous lakes which drain into the river systems through shallow, crooked drainageways. Glacial meltwater was unable to establish a system of deeper channels in the glacial topography of the area. In addition, many of the lakes do not have any outlets.

The geology of the Town includes both stratified and unstratified glacial drift, which were developed primarily during the various stages of glaciation during the last ice age. Stratified drift consists of outwash and ice-contact deposits, which were laid down by meltwater during glacial stagnation. Stratified drift is located primarily in portions of the southern, northwestern, and central areas of the Town. Unstratified drift consisting of ground moraine is located generally in the central, western and eastern portions of

Town. Ground moraine is composed of unsorted sandy clay till which was laid down directly by ice. The thickness of glacial drift, or the depth to bedrock, generally ranges from 0-240 feet, and tends to be thinnest in areas of ground moraine.

The bedrock geology in the Town is characterized by igneous and metamorphic rocks which are part of the Canadian Shield. More specifically, these rocks include Gneiss from the Archean age located in the southwest, and rocks from the Early Proterozoic age including metasedimentary rocks which comprise the majority of the Town, iron formations scattered throughout, and metavolcanic rocks in the northern region. The bedrock generally slopes to the south.

Forests

Forests are an important resource in the Town. Forests also provide protection for environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, groundwater, and flood plains. In addition, expansive forests provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development. The National Forest lands are dominated by hardwood forest, with smaller areas of red and white pine, aspen, and jack pine. There are also small amounts of spruce, paper birch, balsam fir, hemlock, oak, forest openings and wetlands

The pre-settlement composition of forestland in the Town was dominated by a mix of conifer and deciduous tree species that included hemlock, sugar maple, yellow birch, white pine, and red pine. Part of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest within Phelps, just south of Manuel and Baker Lakes, was a fire-dominated pinebarrens. Prairie existed in a smaller pocket east of Manuel Lake.

Presently, both the species composition and relative proportion of presettlement forest types have been greatly altered by humans in the northern forest region.

The Town of Phelps contains parts of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, The Chequamegon - Nicolet National Forest comprises 54,504 acres within Vilas County. There are 36,614 acres based on Vilas County tax parcel information within the Town of Phelps. 53% of the land base located within the Town of Phelps is covered by Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest lands within Phelps are comprised of a variety of cover types.

Some private woodlands in the county are enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL). Based on the Vilas County tax parcel information 2,364 acres or 4% of the land base are in MFL within the Town of Phelps. 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. 38.75 acres is forest cop lands.

Conservation Easements Land Under the North Woods Land Trust

The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) owns or manages conservation properties throughout a number of north central counties. These lands come through outright donations, transfers from other organizations, and in limited cases, purchases. NWLT has also transferred or gifted lands to other organizations and municipalities to allow for more localized management and stewardship.

Soils & Productive Agricultural Areas

Soil is composed of varying proportions of sand, gravel, silt, clay and organic material. The soils in the Town primarily result from glacial till, glacial outwash, or glaciolacustrine deposits, and a few formed from organic material.

A detailed study of all the soils in Vilas County was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. As part of that study, soils were identified in terms of both generalized soil associations, or predominant soil patterns, and specific detailed soils.

The presence of agricultural land within the Town of Phelps is primarily limited to small farms with grazing areas for livestock and tree farms, which are found scattered throughout the Town. According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook*, the Town of Phelps between 1991-1993 was 3.5 percent agricultural, 80.8 percent forested, and 14.1 percent wetlands. The town's total land area is 94.4 square miles. Of the total land area, 0.2 percent of land was used for row crops, 0.9 percent of land was used for foraging, and 2.3 percent was grassland. In terms of farming trends, the town has lost 231 acres of farmland acreage on tax rolls, but the number of farms increased from 18 to 20 between 1990 and 1997.

Metallic & Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

There are no active metallic mines in the Town, nor are there any known deposits. There are however, a number of non-metallic quarries throughout the Town. [See Map Natural Resources.](#)

Environmentally Remediated Areas

Areas which might fall under the environmentally sensitive designation include 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. **Table 2.1** lists the 23 contaminated sites within the Town of Phelps that are registered on the WI DNR Internet database known as the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS).

Table 2.1: Environmentally Remediated Areas – Searched June 10, 2019	
Name	Type & Status
C M Christiansen #2	Closed ERP
C M Christiansen #2	Closed Spill
Big Sands Lake Club	Closed LUST
Big Sands Lake Club	Closed LUST
First National Bank of Eagle River - Phelps	Closed LUST
CLAAR, DRU Service	Closed LUST
C M Christiansen #1 (Town of Phelps)	Open ERP
C M Christiansen Co Inc	General Property
Smokey Lake Reserve	Closed LUST
Northwoods Medical Center	Closed LUST
DRU CLAARS Service	Closed LUST
Edgewater Beach Resort	Closed LUST
Phelps School	No Action Required
Phelps School	No Action Required
Phelps Town Garage	No Action Required
Minnow Bucket	No Action Required
Land O Lakes Frosty Club	Closed Spill
Twin Lake Substation	Closed ERP
Phelps Co-op	Closed LUST
WisDot North-Land Realty	Closed LUST
Phelps Convenience	No Action Required
Largay, Julie Ann Property	Open ERP
Julie Ann Largay	Closed Spill
5492 Sugar Maple Rd	Closed Spill
Phelps COOP (FMR)	Closed LUST
<i>Source: WI DNR; BRRTS</i>	

Of the 25 registered contaminated sites, 2 are still considered “Open”, meaning that cleanup of the site is still needed or is underway. Descriptions of the various activity types that caused contamination at the contaminated sites in Table 2.1 are listed below.

Abandoned Container (AC): sites previously had an abandoned container with potentially hazardous contents that has been inspected and recovered. No known discharge to the environment has occurred. If the container discharged a hazardous substance, a Spills activity will be created at the location in question.

Environmental Repair Program (ERP): ERP sites are sites other than LUSTs that have contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Examples include industrial spills (or dumping) that need long term investigation, buried containers of hazardous substances, and closed landfills that have caused contamination. The ERP module includes petroleum contamination from above-ground (but not from underground) storage tanks. ERP activities in BRRTS have an activity number prefix of ‘02’.

Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST): A LUST site has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer causing substances. However, given time, petroleum contamination naturally breaks down in the environment (biodegradation). Some LUST sites may emit potentially explosive vapors. LUST activities in BRRTS have an activity number prefix of ‘03’.

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

General Property: This activity type consists of records of various milestones related to liability exemptions, liability clarifications, and cleanup agreements that have been approved by the DNR to clarify the legal status of the property.

No Action Required: There was, or may have been, a discharge to the environment and, based on the known information, the DNR has determined that the responsible party does not need to undertake an investigation or cleanup in response to that discharge.

[Rare Species & Natural Communities](#)

Wisconsin’s National Heritage Inventory Program (NHI) is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the State. The program’s database, on the Wisconsin DNR website, identifies species and natural communities that are currently tracked by the NHI. As of August 2018, NHI tracked 23 species or communities in the Town of Phelps. One of these species, the American Marten, is classified as endangered in Wisconsin. One of these

species, the Spruce Grouse, is listed as threatened in Wisconsin. Of the 23 species tracked by NHI, 11 are communities, 5 are plants, and 7 are animals or insects.

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.

Natural Communities

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 identified regionally significant forest and wetland areas that should be protected. Two Land Legacy Areas identified in the Town of Phelps are summarized below:

[Deerskin River](#) is a DNR Legacy Place that was identified to meet future conservation and outdoor recreation needs for the next 50 years. The DNR Land Legacy report recommends protection of such places. This place rated a 3 of 5 stars. Five stars represents the highest level of conservation significance.

The Deerskin River is a cold water stream containing Class I and Class II trout waters in different reaches. Much of the upper part of the river goes through the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The river corridor includes impoundments at Long Lake and Scattering Rice Lake. A dam that held the former Deerskin Flowage has recently been removed, restoring wetlands and the natural streambed.

[Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest](#) is a DNR Legacy Place that was identified to meet future conservation and outdoor recreation needs for the next 50 years. The DNR Land Legacy report recommends protection of such places. This place rated a 5 of 5 stars. Five stars represents the highest level of conservation significance.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest represents the "Best of Wisconsin's Northwoods. Formed by the receding glaciers of the past ice age, more than 1 million acres of temperate forests and barrens are interspersed with stream, rivers and lakes to provide a truly diverse landscape that has something for all. The Forest is managed with multiple uses in mind. The objective of this management is to continue restoration of the northern forests landscapes lost or damaged during the turn of the 20th century logging, while providing a wide array of uses and experiences to the public.

For instance, hunting opportunities for big game, upland game birds, waterfowl and small game exist across the entire Forest. Fishing for trout or other game fish is available in any of our 600 fishable lakes or 1,200 miles of fishable stream. Opportunities to encounter many rare species of fish, wildlife or plants abound. Bird watching, viewing fantastic fall colors and nature study experiences await those seeking to experience nature.

Vegetation management is another multiple use facet that supports Wisconsin's North Woods. The Forest sustains a large vegetation management program to ensure the continued health and restoration of the Northwoods. From this, Wisconsin gains forest products that provide jobs that support local and state economies.

[State Natural Areas \(SNA\)](#) are designated to protect the state's natural diversity, provide sites for research and environmental education, and serve as benchmarks for assessing and guiding use of other lands in the state. State Natural Areas are defined as tracts of land or water, which have native biotic communities, unique natural features, or significant geological or archeological sites. These sites do not have much facility development, though there may be a designated trail on the site.

[Kentuck Lake State Natural Area](#) (No. 442) is within the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest (T41N R12E, Sections 27, 34. 291 acres). This site features a unique 0.7 mile long, 30-60 foot wide swale flanked by two narrow, curving sandy ridges that parallel the north shore of Kentuck Lake. Wind and wave action, in concert with the lake's size, shape, orientation and basin morphology, have over the centuries created the unique ridge and swale topography found here. The assemblage of plants found on the swale contains representatives of several natural communities seldom found in such close association. Species normally associated with xeric pine forests or barrens exist here intermingled with species characteristic of open bog, conifer swamp, sedge meadow, and calcareous fen. The inland beach consists of a wet, open sandy-peat swale with scattered small trees of tamarack, jack pine, white pine, paper birch, showy mountain ash, red maple, and winter holly.

In open areas are patches of bog species such as sphagnum moss, wire-leaved sedges, and ericaceous shrubs interspersed with patches of bog club moss, sundews, bladderworts, beak-rushes, and sedges. The low ridge adjacent to the lake is densely forested with scattered pines, white spruce, red maple, and balsam fir. To the northeast is a one to two meter high, 10-30 meter wide beach ridge forested with an older-growth forest of white and red pine, hemlock, white spruce, black spruce, balsam fir, yellow birch, and white cedar. Further inland is a larger northern wet forest dominated by black spruce and tamarack with small pockets of white cedar, black ash, and red maple. A dense shrub layer of tag alder, winterberry, and mountain holly is present in

the less boggy portions of this wetland. Where a deep carpet of sphagnum moss is present, the shrub layer is composed of ericaceous species including Labrador tea, bog rosemary, and cranberry. Common herbaceous species are cinnamon fern, water arum, and swamp false Solomon's seal. Breeding birds include Nashville warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, yellow-bellied flycatcher, and white-throated sparrow. Other species include bald eagle along with mink, leopard, and green frogs. Kentuck Lake SNA is owned by the US Forest Service and was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.

[Beaver Creek State Natural Area](#) (No. 478) is within the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest (T41N R11E, Sections 28 & 33. 697 acres). This site features high quality natural communities associated with the Vilas-Oneida Outwash Plains land type including northern dry-mesic forest, northern wet forest, and open bog. The mature, fire-related dry-mesic forest is dominated by large red pine, mostly 15-20 inches in diameter although some individuals are larger. The stand's year of origin is 1890. Associates include white pine, red maple, and white spruce. Although not common, there are pockets of white pine regeneration, especially on upland islands within the black spruce swamp forest. The dense shrub and sapling layer is primarily beaked hazelnut, red maple, and mountain maple with blueberry and sweet fern.

Ground flora is variable and includes barren strawberry, trailing arbutus, early low blueberry, wintergreen, yellow bluebead lily, and spinulose wood fern. The lowland northern wet forest is dominated by older black spruce with several small inclusions of white cedar and a fringe of tamarack along the Little Deerskin River. Bryophytes (sphagnum, feather mosses, liverworts, and lichens) are a dominant group in the understory and on branches and trunks of black spruce. Several small spring runs start within the site. Situated within a kettle depression is a small but pristine poor fen surrounding a bog pond. The fen is dominated by white beak-rush and arrow-grass with wool-grass, few-seeded sedge, two-seeded bog sedge, mud sedge, cotton-grass, and numerous ericaceous shrubs. Several boreal birds are known to occur here including boreal chickadee and gray jay. Beaver Creek SNA is owned by the US Forest Service and was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.

[Haymeadow Creek State Natural Area](#) (No. 479) is within the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest (T42N R11E, Sections 16, 18, 19, & 20. 957 acres). This site features a large, wet meadow interspersed with elevated islands forested with jack pine, red pine, and white pine. Wet areas contain a thin sphagnum carpet with a ground layer of few-seeded sedge and northern blue-flag iris. The northeastern portion of the site contains a dry mossy opening that supports the rare Canada mountain rice-grass (*Oryzopsis canadensis*). Surrounding the meadow is northern wet forest with a mix of black spruce, tamarack, and northern white cedar. The understory includes species such as bracken fern, Labrador-tea, bunchberry, trailing arbutus, Canada mayflower, wintergreen, and



blueberry. The entire complex is important habitat for a number of bird species including gray jay, boreal chickadee, Connecticut warbler, Lincoln's sparrow, and yellow-bellied flycatcher. Other species include yellow-rumped warbler, Nashville warbler, olive-sided flycatcher, Northern parula, white-throated sparrow, and winter wren. Osprey and bald eagle are also known to use the

area. Haymeadow Creek SNA is owned by the US Forest Service and was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.

[Blackjack Springs State Natural Area \(No. 308\)](#) The Blackjack Springs SNA occurs in the Blackjack Wilderness and is located on pitted sandy outwash south of the Deerskin River and drumlinized ground moraine to the southeast that supports extensive stands of mature, mostly dry-mesic forest on rolling topography. The diverse canopy is composed of red oak, sugar maple, red maple, big-tooth aspen, trembling aspen, paper birch, yellow birch, white pine, hemlock, and balsam fir. Uncommon components of the canopy include red pine and white spruce. Among the trees, sugar maple exhibits the best reproduction and is well represented in both the seedling and sapling class. White pine is reproducing well in some areas. Relatively dense stands of pole-sized timber, especially on the hogback ridge near the north end, are interspersed with well-structured, uneven-age stands of mature timber. Some of the larger pines exceed 30 inches in diameter adding a super canopy stratum to the forest. The understory varies from open park-like expanses in which ground-hugging herbs predominate to dense thickets of shrubs and saplings. Common understory species include ironwood, beaked hazelnut, American fly honeysuckle, red-berried elder, and raspberries. Pennsylvania sedge, big-leaved aster, and wild sarsaparilla dominate the herbaceous layer under deciduous trees and in areas where pine is a significant canopy component characteristic species are barren strawberry, wintergreen, and blueberries. Canada mayflower, wood sorrel, bunchberry, three-leaved gold-thread, and American starflower are more common in rich mesic areas. Blackjack Creek is part of the Deerskin River drainage and flows northeast from its source for 5 miles where it then empties into the Deerskin River. The water is clear, slightly alkaline, and of high fertility. Small inclusions of boreal-like white spruce-balsam fir are present in lowland transitional habitats along Blackjack Creek. The complex also contains several boggy kettle wetlands, groundwater influenced conifer swamps, headwater streams, and several softwater spring ponds. Bird life is diverse and includes ruby-throated hummingbird, yellow-bellied

sapsucker, hermit thrush, golden-crowned kinglet, northern parula, blackburnian warbler, pine warbler, ovenbird, scarlet tanager, and purple finch. Unique and uncommon birds include osprey, gray jay, black-backed woodpecker, veery, black-throated blue warbler, and Nashville warbler. Blackjack Springs was originally designated the Pine-Oak Grove State Natural Area in 1996 and later expanded in 2007.

[Blackjack Springs Wilderness Area](#) The Blackjack Springs Wilderness was established by Congress in 1978 and is located in Northeast Wisconsin on the Eagle River Ranger District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Much of the area was changed by logging and fire in the early 1900's with subsequent reforestation, road building, and timber harvest under National Forest management. Portions of former logging roads and railroad grades are still visible. In the midst of the Wilderness, four large crystal-clear springs, for which the Wilderness Area is named, form the headwaters of Blackjack Creek, and have been designated a State Natural Area. Here, glaciation from the last ice age has produced a rolling and uneven terrain. In the northeastern section of the Wilderness Area, you will find the delightfully named Whispering Lake, surrounded by forest that provides habitat for black bears, deer, fishers, ruffed grouse, wolves, and a variety of sweet-throated songbirds. Three streams drain the area, and produce occasional ponds and wetlands. Much of the use of the Wilderness Area revolves around camping, hiking, fishing, bird watching, and hunting. Several trails enter the area, providing four miles of maintained trail, though many additional opportunities for hiking also are provided on the former road grades still evident in the area.

Terrestrial Invasive Species

The Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department has identified a number of terrestrial invasive species in the Town of Phelps. Spotted knapweed, Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, common tansy, garden valerian, Canada thistle, Asiatic honeysuckle shrubs, European marsh thistle, bull thistle, mullogo bedstraw, lupine, forest forget-me-not. Some species are NR40 listed species that do not allow for sale, transport, or being planted. Some listed species require removal by landowners. Many of the roadsides in Phelps are infested with invasive species and current vegetation management of roadsides causes some species to spread. Other species were planted as garden ornamentals and have spread out of control.

Historical & Cultural Resources

Although the Town of Phelps is not as large as other communities within Wisconsin, it still boasts as much or more history, tradition, and impact on Wisconsin as any community in the State. To acknowledge and commemorate the Town's unique history, Pauleyn

Nystrom, P.C. Christiansen and other local residents worked to establish the Phelps Historical Museum. Below is a description of the history of the Town provided by the Phelps Historical Museum:

In the formation of what was to become Phelps started before the turn of the century. Two men, B.R. Thompson and J.A. Bonnell, saw the vast natural forests in the area and, on February 9, 1896, they incorporated the Thompson and Bonnell Lumber Company.

Following that start, the Wisconsin Lumber and Bark Company was incorporated December 28, 1901. The incorporators were John Bonnell, William A. Phelps, Charles A. Phelps, Charles H. Hackley, Otis A. Ferger, Dustin Oakes, and George C. Covell. As the lumbering operation began, it was aided by the fact that, by the turn of the century, the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad laid tracks into the area that was to become known as The Great North Woods. In 1905, a final railroad spur from Conover to Phelps was completed, thus helping with the shipment of lumber.

The Town was originally named Hackley, but because of the confusion created by another Wisconsin town named Hatley, the Hackley name was changed to Phelps in 1912.

In 1928, the Hackley-Phelps-Bonnell Company was dissolved and its assets were purchased by C.M. Christiansen and his wife, Leta. Under Christiansen, the lumber mill prospered and eventually was the main root of providing nearly 400 jobs for families, including mill workers, staff, loggers, truckers and numerous craftsmen, ranking the operation as one of the largest in the entire nation.

"Were it not for C.M. Christiansen, there would be no Town of Phelps and, without the help of C.M.'s son, Phil, we could not have created the Phelps Historical Museum," says Pauleyn Nystrom.

Cultural Resources

The identification of existing historical structures and cultural areas are an important consideration in all Town planning efforts, as these features help to define a community's physical look and character. The State Historical Society has recorded ten "registered" historic properties within the Town. These properties are listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, and include:

- Wallila Farm Archaeological Site
- Fort Eagle
- Big Sand Lake Club

- Sandy Beach Resort
- L. Badow Resort
- Jeff's Camp
- Hillside Resort
- Hazen's Long Lake Lodge
- Lac Vieux Desert Dam
- Long Lake Deerskin Dam
- CCC Camps
- WarVet Lake Site
- Fire Tower

In addition, a number of buildings in the Town appear on the Wisconsin Architectural History Inventory, including:

- Sandy Beach Resort, destroyed
- Big Sand Lake Club
- L. Badow Resort #14
- Jeff's Camp
- Hillside Resort
- Hazen's Long Lake Lodge
- Fort Eagle
- Lac Vieux Desert Dam
- Long-on-Deerskin Dam
- JC Higgins Home, Highway K, Mutter Home #3889
- Christiansen Home #2294
- Chevy Garage #2299
- Theater #2293
- Old Post office #2295
- Fire Tower #5 and #1055

Natural Resources Programs

There are a variety of programs available to the Town related to natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Some of these 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.

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.

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.

Other Programs

Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)

The purpose of the Stewardship Incentive Program is to assist landowners in more actively managing, protecting, and enhancing their forest lands and related resources through cost-sharing. The program aims to keep forest lands productive and healthy for both present and future owners, and to increase the economic and environmental

benefits of these lands. Private landowners may enroll 10 to 1,000 acres of woodland in the program, and must maintain a 10-year contractual commitment.

Nine general categories of management practices are eligible for cost-sharing under SIP, including forestry management plan development, tree planting, forest improvement, windbreaks and hedgerows, soil and water protection, riparian and wetland protection, fisheries habitat enhancement, wildlife habitat enhancement, and forest recreation enhancement. Sixty-five percent of the actual cost of each practice is covered, with maximum limits as established by the WDNR. The practices available in individual counties may vary. Public access is not required. This program is administered by the WDNR, USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), and County Land Conservation Departments.

Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Cost Share Program

The Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department (VCL&W) has Cost Share funding and technical resources available to assist landowners address soil erosion and water quality protection activities on their property. VCL&W also assists with invasive species management, shoreland restoration, and resources for lake organizations.

Forestry Incentive Program (FIP)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Forestry Incentive Program, in association with the WDNR, which was initiated to provide cost-sharing to private landowners for implementing forestry management practices. Landowners with 10 or more acres are eligible to enroll in the program, and agree to maintain the practices for an estimated life span. The development of a management plan is required which establishes the practices to be performed including tree planting, site preparation for natural regeneration, timber stand improvement, etc. Public access on the property is not required.

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program which was established to restore wetlands on lands which were previously altered for agricultural use. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in consultation with the Farm Service Agency and other federal agencies.

Land is eligible for enrollment in the WRP if the landowner has owned that land for at least one year, and the land is restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. Landowners may choose to restore wetlands with a permanent or 30-year easement, or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with the USDA. If a permanent easement is established, the landowner will receive payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100% of the wetland restoration costs. The 30-year easement payment is just 75% of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site, and 75% of the

restoration costs. Voluntary cost-share restoration agreements are generally for a minimum of 10 years, and 75% of the cost of restoring the land to wetlands is provided. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for private landowners who wish to establish or improve wildlife habitat on their land, with a primary emphasis on re-establishing declining species and habitats. Both technical assistance and cost sharing are provided to help develop, maintain, and/or improve fish and wildlife habitat through management practices. Lands which are eligible for program participation include woodlots, agricultural and non-agricultural land, pastures, and streambanks which are generally at least 5 acres. Landowners are required to prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan which includes cost-share eligible practices to be conducted including fencing, seeding, limited tree planting, instream structures, burning, etc. Up to 75% of costs are reimbursed, generally not to exceed \$10,000; other organizations may provide the remaining 25% of the cost-share or provide expertise to help complete a project. The normal contract duration is 10 years at a minimum to maintain wildlife habitat. Public access is not required under this program. The program is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Goals, Objectives, & Policies

Goals:

1. Preserve and protect the unique natural resources of the Town that are key elements of the "Northwoods" character, which include lakes, rivers, wetlands, groundwater, forests, dark skies, and quiet.
2. Protect economically productive areas, including farmland, forests and recreational areas.
3. Preserve, protect, and enhance shorelands in the Town.
4. Preserve scenic, cultural, historic, archaeological and recreational sites.

Objectives:

1. Prohibit development within environmentally sensitive areas.
2. Minimize impacts to the Town's natural resources from metallic or non-metallic mining.
3. Inform landowners of opportunities to protect their lands for future generations by placing them into a conservation easement program, or similar program.
4. Support the enforcement of wetland protection and erosion control in shoreland areas.
5. Protect wetlands and surface waters from land development with natural vegetative buffers .
6. Encourage and provide assistance in the development and the maintenance of lake and waterway associations and districts to protect lakes, rivers and streams.
7. Preserve wetlands and floodplains to minimize flooding, filter runoff, and provide wildlife habitat.
8. Review development proposals so they do not deteriorate the historical and cultural resources of the Town.

9. Identify historical structures within the town, such as fire towers, churches, and resorts.
10. Make residents, developers, and potential landowners aware of active forest management activities and other aspects of living in a forest. Implement a “Firewise” program to protect housing in the Wildlands/Urban Interface (WUI) from wildfire.

Chapter Three

Housing

Housing characteristics and trends are important components of comprehensive planning. The physical location of housing can determine the need of many public facilities and services. Furthermore, understanding dynamics in the market likely to affect housing development in the future provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate transportation facilities with a sustainable pattern of residential development. Understanding the factors affecting people's ability to meet their own housing needs provides a basis for reinforcing community ties, fostering economic development and environmental sustainability and improving the quality of life.

Previous Plans and Studies

Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan

*The Consolidated Housing Plan is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development *(HUD) in the application process required of the states in accessing formula program funds of Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter Grants and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)*

"The Consolidated Plan provides the Framework for a planning process used by states and localities to identify housing, homeless, community, and economic development needs and resources and to tailor a strategic plan for meeting those needs."

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development and land use. The RLP identifies a number of issues affecting community livability related to housing:

- *Aging Population*
- *Smaller household sizes*
- *Lack of Housing Options*
- *Increase in Housing Costs related to incomes*

Vilas County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The Vilas County Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the County's Land Use Planning Committee and Zoning & Planning Committee, with assistance from the NCWRPC. The plan closely examines the state of housing throughout Vilas County, examining housing issues and qualities such as age of housing units, housing value, housing types, seasonal housing, and general housing characteristics. The identified goal in the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan as pertains to housing is as follows:

- Provide opportunities for a broad range of housing choices that will meet the needs of all residents while maintaining the predominantly rural forested and lakeshore residential character of Vilas County.

Housing Assessment

Structural Characteristics

The majority of housing units in the Town of Phelps and the surrounding towns are single-family homes (1-detached), see [Table 3.1](#). Single-family homes (1 unit attached and detached) account for 89.2 percent of all housing units within the Town. Single family homes that are attached share a wall with another home. This typically happens with condos or row houses. Multiple-unit housing accounts for 3.8 percent of the Town's housing stock while mobile homes account for 7.0 percent. The "5 or more" housing unit buildings in Town may be group residences, or could be apartment buildings. Phelps has 42 housing units in buildings that have at least 5 of these units together in the same building.

Municipality	1-Detached	1-Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
Town of Phelps	1,525	8	21	2	42	121	0	1,719
Town of Conover	1,494	19	0	0	0	40	0	1,553
Town of Land O' Lakes	1,299	5	26	0	28	91	0	1,449
Town of Washington	1,730	6	31	20	47	75	0	1,909
Town of Alvin, Forest County	375	6	0	0	0	90	0	471
Town of Hiles, Forest County	658	8	3	0	2	66	0	737
Vilas County	22,543	198	807	187	731	1,116	33	25,615

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

Several of the housing units in the Town, were originally built in the early 1900's as living quarters for employees of the mill and chemical plant that operated in the town. In addition, there are some multi-family units located in Phelps, including an elderly assisted living facility operated by In Care.

Age Characteristics

The age of a community's housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1940's for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have increased. For example, average homes constructed in the later part of the previous century and the first decade of the millennium are typically much larger than housing built in previous decades. This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Vilas County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 3.2 indicates the age of the housing stock in the Town of Phelps area that is based on the year the structures were built as reported in the 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Housing in the Town of Phelps saw the greatest increase from 1990-1999, with an additional 290 housing units being added to the Town's housing stock during this time. About 34 percent of buildings in the Town of Phelps were built after 1990, slightly higher than the percentage of homes built after 1990 in Vilas County. Data shows that about 57 percent of buildings in the town were built between 1970 and 2014. Data also shows that in Phelps, about 22 percent of homes were built before 1940, which is a higher percentage than in Vilas County.

Table 3.2: Year Structure Built, 2017									
	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 or later
Town of Phelps	371	129	86	148	289	116	290	252	38
Town of Conover	148	80	169	133	223	226	225	328	21
Town of Land O' Lakes	225	155	152	126	158	171	202	234	26
Town of Washington	265	181	168	177	296	230	305	225	62
Town of Alvin, Forest County	44	22	34	35	71	67	125	73	0
Town of Hiles, Forest County	70	68	117	53	99	87	120	105	18
Vilas County	2,709	1,693	2,146	2,217	4,989	3,367	3,963	4,048	483

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

Occupancy Characteristics

Table 3.3 breaks down the occupancy status of housing units in the Town of Phelps. About 56 percent of homes in Phelps are seasonal units, which is no surprise since this area is known as “Up North” to visitors statewide. Only 31 percent of the housing units were occupied year round. Of those occupied houses, 429 or 81 percent were owner-occupied, while 99 or 19 percent were renter-occupied.

Table 3.3: Residential Occupancy Status, 2017					
	Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant Units	Seasonal
Town of Phelps	1,719	429	99	1,191	962
Town of Conover	1,553	568	48	937	860
Town of Land O' Lakes	1,449	352	82	1,015	922
Town of Washington	1,909	731	45	1,133	1,037
Town of Alvin, Forest County	471	64	2	405	365
Town of Hiles, Forest County	737	169	12	556	512
Vilas County	25,615	8,225	2,533	14,857	12,924

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

Seasonal Housing

Of the 1,719 housing units in the Town in 2017, 528 units were occupied, while the remaining 1,191 units were vacant. Over 80 percent of vacant units within the Town are classified as seasonal housing units. Seasonal housing units account for over half (56%) of all housing units within the Town, as shown in [Table 3.4](#). This compares to 50 percent of housing units in Vilas County being classified as seasonal, and 7 percent for the state. The percentage of seasonal homes in Phelps is nearly identical to the percentage of seasonal homes in the Towns of Conover and Washington, and is lower than the Towns of Land O' Lakes, Alvin and Hiles.

Table 3.4: Percentage of Seasonal Housing, 2017			
	Total Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units	% Seasonal Housing Units
Town of Phelps	1,719	962	56%
Town of Conover	1,553	860	55%
Town of Land O' Lakes	1,449	922	64%
Town of Washington	1,909	1,037	54%
Town of Alvin, Forest County	471	365	77%
Town of Hiles, Forest County	737	512	69%
Vilas County	25,615	12,924	50%

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

Value Characteristics

In 2017, median value of housing stock in the Town of Phelps is below the median housing stock value in Vilas County. [Table 3.5](#) displays median home values for the Town of Phelps as well as the surrounding towns. About 23 percent of homes in the Town of Phelps have house values below \$100,000. Nearly 23 percent of all homes in the Town of Phelps have house values over \$300,000, a lower percentage than in Vilas County (29%).

Table 3.5: Housing Values, 2017							
	< \$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 Phelps	3.3%	19.8%	12.8%	18.6%	22.4%	23.1%	\$181,900
Town of Conover	0.9%	10.6%	10.7%	18.1%	24.3%	35.4%	\$231,300
Town of Land O' Lakes	8.5%	8.5%	9.9%	19.3%	22.7%	31.1%	\$218,600
Town of Washington	2.7%	8.5%	19.7%	17.9%	19.3%	31.9%	\$205,100
Town of Alvin, Forest County	20.3%	37.5%	20.3%	14.1%	7.8%	0.0%	\$87,000
Town of Hiles, Forest County	3.0%	16.0%	16.6%	16.6%	14.8%	33.0%	\$190,300
Vilas County	5.3%	11.1%	16.9%	15.1%	22.2%	29.4%	\$206,500

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

Housing Affordability

Rent and mortgage payments, maintenance expenses, lot sizes, and required or desired amenities are a few of the factors which influence housing affordability. Available housing options are further refined by household size and income. Affordability is particularly an issue for the elderly, disabled, and low-income residents of a community.

Median monthly costs for homeowners, with and without a mortgage, and for renters are shown in [Table 3.6](#). For homeowners with a mortgage, costs are slightly lower in Phelps than in Vilas County. For homeowners without a mortgage, costs are slightly higher in Phelps than in Vilas County. Phelps had a slightly lower median gross rent cost in 2017 than Vilas County.

The percent of a community paying more than 30 percent of their household income on housing is a common measure of housing affordability. The more money spent on housing, the less disposable income is available to spend on education, food, retail, and recreation. In Phelps, 37.7 percent of homeowners and 54.2 percent of renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, as shown in [Table 3.6](#). The percentage of homeowners who pay more than 30 percent of household income in Phelps is higher than that of Vilas County. The percentage of renters in Phelps who pay more than 30 percent of their household income for rent is also higher than that of Vilas County.

Table 3.6: Housing Affordability, 2017

Municipality	Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs			Median Selected Monthly Renter Costs	
	With Mortgage	Without Mortgage	30%+*	Median Gross Rent	30%+*
Town of Phelps	\$1,149	\$444	37.7%	\$667	54.2%
Town of Conover	\$1,303	\$446	30.0%	\$884	41.5%
Town of Land O' Lakes	\$1,269	\$467	41.2%	\$396	36.4%
Town of Washington	\$1,172	\$461	24.6%	\$725	47.4%
Town of Alvin, Forest County	\$795	\$375	29.7%	N/A	N/A
Town of Hiles, Forest County	\$1,263	\$536	30.4%	\$1,075	62.5%
Vilas County	\$1,195	\$441	27.4%	\$673	50.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

*Percent paying over 30% of household income on housing

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:

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are administered by the Department of Administration, Division of Housing & Intergovernmental Relations (DHIR). 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.

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.

North East Wisconsin Community Action Program (NEWCAP) is a non-profit organization serving twelve counties providing assistance in the area of housing, emergency

services, and employment & training among others. In Vilas County the agency provides housing assistance for the Section 8 - housing voucher program and homebuyer and rehabilitation program.

Goals, Objectives, and 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. A review of housing stock assessment information has led to the establishment of the following housing policy statement:

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. Maintain and rehabilitate existing housing as appropriate.

Objectives:

1. Discourage residential development in agricultural or silvicultural areas except for related uses.

Policies:

1. Promote housing programs that assist residents with maintaining or rehabilitating existing housing units.
2. Encourage residential developers to provide a variety of housing types for all income and age groups.

Chapter Four

Utilities and Community Facilities

Background

Providing public infrastructure, such as roads, parks, sewer and water service, and services, such as police, fire, and ambulance protection are 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. They also represent a large 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.

Previous Plans and Studies

[Vilas County All Hazards Mitigation Plan, 2013](#)

This plan examines general conditions, including an inventory of utilities, community facilities, and emergency services throughout Vilas County. Risk assessment is at the heart of the all-hazards mitigation program. In order to mitigate the risks, it is necessary to assess their relative importance. The report looks at a series of mostly weather-related disasters; how they have affected the County in the past and how future instances are likely to affect the County and how local government should respond to such occurrences.

The report concludes with suggested mitigation measures that might be taken by local governments to reduce the risk from identified hazards. Counties and incorporated municipalities are required to adopt such plans with updates every five years.

Vilas County Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP), 2014-2019

The primary purpose of the CORP is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreation needs of Vilas County. This direction takes the form of an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities followed by establishing recommendations to meet identified needs.

The CORP is currently being updated by NCWRPC, to cover years 2019-2023.

Inventory

Utilities and community facilities provided by the Town of Phelps or by other public or private entities are inventoried and evaluated in this section. Some discussion of their present condition and adequacy to meet the current and future needs of the Town is also included. See the [Utilities and Community Facilities Map](#).

Water and Wastewater Facilities

Most of the water is provided via private water wells throughout the town. Groundwater is the source of all of these water systems. Most wastewater is also handled by private on-site septic systems that discharge to underground drainage fields and may include: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, or sand filter systems. The Wisconsin Departments of Commerce and Natural Resources regulate these on-site wastewater treatment technologies.

There is a sanitary district that provides service throughout much of the “village” (the developed area along Highway 17 on North Twin Lake) of Phelps. A sanitary board controls water and sewer service within the sanitary district. The board oversees continual system updates are performed.

The Phelps Sanitary District No. 1 supplies the developed portion of the Town with both a water supply and waste water system. In 1969, the Town decided to construct its public sewer and water systems at the same time. The Town's original well (Well No. 1) is located along STH 17, as is the water stand pipe; both of these components were constructed in 1972. The water system and sewer systems were both upgraded in 2009. A new well was constructed at the request of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to serve as a back-up to Well No. 1. This well is located on Deerskin Road. The Town's water stand pipe provides an overhead storage capacity of 60,000 gallons. The system's capacity is 100,000 gallons per day (gpd), while average consumption is 50,000 gpd.

A wastewater treatment pond, lab and air-blower room were constructed in 1972, and are located along STH 17. In 2000, the wastewater treatment facility was upgraded from its original design which consisted of one pond which was split into two cells by a baffle, into a new pond containing new aeration-mixing units. The upgrade resulted in the following:

- ◆ Increase in loading from 3.84 million gallons to 6 million gallons.
- ◆ Storage days in the summer went from 33.4 days to 52.2 days, and winter storage days went from 47.4 days to 74 days.
- ◆ Surface area increased from 1.57 acres to 2.5 acres.
- ◆ Aeration requirements went from 100 cubic feet per minute to 520 cubic feet per minute.

The 2000 upgrade also included the construction of a new lab and office, while the old lab and blower rooms were converted to house the large aeration blowers for the new treatment system. Overall, the plant's maximum design capacity is 115,000 gpd with an average load is 68,000 gpd.

[Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities](#)

Refuse collection service is provided to Town residents by a private service. The landfill site, which services Phelps, is the Highway G Landfill and Waste Processing Facility, which is located in Eagle River. The landfill was opened in 1990. There is also a drop off and transfer site provided by the Town, located on DNR Vista Lane in Phelps.

[Power and Telecommunications Facilities](#)

Electrical service and natural gas services are provided by WE Energies. Verizon North provides basic telephone service. Other local vendors, such as Sonic Net, Charter, and Frontier supply Internet service and Verizon Wireless and AT&T Mobility provides wireless phone service.

[Parks and Recreational Facilities](#)

A variety of park and recreational facilities are located within the Town of Phelps. The Town of Phelps's parks and recreation system contains four parks, a shooting range, multiple boat launches, a trails system, and portions of Federal and County Forests located within Phelps. Below is a description of each of the types of parks and recreational facilities that are located in Phelps. Parks and other recreational facilities are displayed in the [Outdoor Recreation Map](#).

Parks

Wavering Park is a 42-acre town-owned park facility which is located on the south side of STH 17 approximately ¼ mile east of the downtown. This park is the focal point of community-based outdoor recreation activities, and of the efforts of the Phelps Park Commission. Major facilities at the park include a baseball diamond, softball diamond, two tennis courts, two basketball courts, a regulation-size soccer field, and sand volleyball court, among a variety of other recreational facilities for all ages in the community.

North Twin Beach is a park that includes a small beach area (approximately ¼-acre), which is located on North Twin Lake. Both area residents and visitors use the park. The primary focus of the beach is for swimming and passive recreation, and the site includes picnic tables and grills.

Lakefront Pines Park is located along the lakeshore in the town on North Twin Lake. Both visitors and residents use the park. Facilities in the 3.5 acre park includes public piers, restrooms, a canoe/kayak launch, a bandstand and festival area, picnic tables, and the trailhead for the Conover – Phelps Bike/Hike Trail

Smoky Lake Boat Landing and Park is located on the far-east side of the Town. The facility has a beach, boat landing, picnic tables, grills, small shelter, and primitive toilets. The park is about 1 acre in size.

Shooting Range

The Town's Park Commission also operates the Phelps Shooting Range. The range is located along Shooting Range Road. This facility has a primitive toilet, shelter area, picnic tables, 6 shooting benches, target ranges from 25 yards to 200 yards, and a trap shooting area. The range is on a 40-acre town owned parcel.

Boat Launches

The Town of Phelps Park Commission is also responsible for developing and maintaining the following boat launches: North Twin Boat Landing, Long Lake Boat Landing, Smoky Lake Boat Landing and Kentuck Lake Boat Landing. Other boat launches within the Town are maintained by the Wisconsin DNR, or the US Forest Service.

Trails

The Town of Phelps also has their own trail system that consists of biking, hiking, nature and snowshoeing trails. The Town also contains 32 miles of snowmobile trails. Descriptions of trails within Phelps were provided by the Phelps Chamber of Commerce website: <https://www.phelpswi.us/>

The Vista Lake Biking Trails provide an abundance of outdoor activities for any season and include three trail loops that originate at a parking area east of Vista Lake. The trail loops range from 2.9 miles to 13.1 miles in length. Trail conditions along the Vista Lake Trails vary from paved to gravel to hard-packed sandy loam forest lanes and offers great conditions for exploring nature via a bicycle. There are also some areas of the trails with slopes that range from gently rolling to hilly.

There are numerous hiking trails within Phelps that allow residents and visitors to explore nature by foot. These hiking trails include:

- **Phelps Trail:** a 1-mile trail that provides an easy nature hike with relaxing scenery and sounds of nature for people of all ages
- **Beaver Creek Trail:** a 1.5-mile Hunter Walk-in trail that runs through National Forest lands off of Indian Road near the Vista Lake Trails
- **Spectacle Lake-Kentuck Lake Trail:** a 2.5 mile trail with lakes on both ends that runs through the Kentuck Lake State Natural Area.
- **Blackjack Springs Trail:** a 4-mile hiking trail in the Blackjack Wilderness area that offers some of the best wildlife observation and bird watching in Vilas County.
- **Conover – Phelps Trail:** a 8.3 mile stretch of trail that runs along the railroad grade between Phelps and Conover, and 2 miles of roadside trail from Song Hill Land to the Lakefront Pines Park. This trail offers great endurance hiking, biking, and bird watching opportunities

Areas within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest are also open to cross country skiing and offer skiers the opportunity to get off of the beaten path and enjoy breathtaking views of snowy pines and wildlife. The recently developed Deerskin Snowshoe Trails, within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, offer nearly 12 miles of snowshoeing trails within Phelps. The Deerskin Snowshoe Trails contain four different trail loops that all originate at a parking area along Indian Road and have trail lengths that range from 1.6 miles to 3.7 miles.

There are 32 miles of snowmobile trails within the Town of Phelps. These trails connect with other Vilas County trails as well as trails in Upper Michigan. The Phelps snowmobile trails also cross many lakes including; Big Sand Lake, North & South Twin Lakes, Kentuck

Lake, and Lac Vieux Desert. The dedicated volunteers of the Phelps Snowmobile Club groom and maintain the trails within Phelps.

Over 130 miles of ATV/UTV routes and trails are accessible from Phelps. ATV Routes within Phelps connect to the communities of Eagle River, Conover, Land O' Lakes, Lincoln and Washington, as well as Forest County, Oneida County, and Upper Michigan.

Vilas County Tourism provides free trail apps that cover both motorized and non-motorized trails within the County.

[Child Care](#)

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services there is one facility (Phelps Day Care) located in Phelps. There are several others in the Eagle River area.

[School](#)

Phelps School District provides educational facilities for the Town of Phelps. All grades (4 year old kindergarten – 12) are all located in one facility, which is located on Old School Road in the Town of Phelps.

The existing school was originally constructed in 1938, with additions completed in 1978 and again in 1996. Upon completion, the additions increased the school to about 82,888 sq. ft., which can accommodate approximately 300 students.

In addition to providing the town's educational facilities, the school building also serves various functions for the general public. The commons area is utilized by the town for various meetings and programs, the weight room is open for use, open gym is provided for the public, and people may also walk in the gym in the morning before the school day begins.

[Emergency Services](#)

[Law Enforcement](#)

The Vilas County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement protection in the Town of Phelps. They patrol all county roads and respond to 911 calls. In addition, the Wisconsin State Patrol has statewide jurisdiction on all public roads. The Vilas County Sheriff's Department is stationed in the City of Eagle River. In addition to the county's

services, the Town of Phelps has a part-time Town Constable with limited enforcement power.

Fire

The Town's fire services are provided by the Phelps Volunteer Fire Department. Phelps also has a joint fire service agreement with the Town of Stambaugh, Michigan, and is involved in mutual aid agreements with Vilas County, Oneida County and Forest County, Town of Alvin. The mutual aid agreements are written contracts which state that the departments will assist one another, if needed, at no cost.

Ambulance/First Responders

The Phelps Area EMS provides ambulance and first responder service throughout the town. Mutual aid agreements exist with all the surrounding communities, and into Michigan as well. The Intermediate Tech level staff and ambulances are housed with the Town Fire Department.

Medical Services

The nearest hospitals are Eagle River Memorial Hospital in Eagle River, Aspirus Iron River Hospital in Iron River, Michigan and Saint Mary's Hospital in Rhineland. The Eagle River Memorial Hospital is a temporary holding area, Aspirus Iron River Hospital is a critical access hospital, and Saint Mary's Hospital in Rhineland is used for long-term care.

Cemeteries

There are two established cemeteries in the town. One is the "Phelps Cemetery" which is about 5 acres in size, and the other is the "Volkman Cemetery" which is about 1 acre in size. There is a possible Native American site located on South Shore Road, but it is overgrown and undefined.

Library

The Eleanor Ellis Phelps Public Library is housed with the town hall and offices, and occupies about 2,100 square feet.

The Public Library is supported financially by the Town for all to use, and is part of the Northern Waters Library Service.

Government Facilities

The Town of Phelps' administrative facilities/town offices are housed in the Phelps town hall which is located on Town Hall Road. This building includes 760 sq. ft. for meetings, 108 sq. ft. for administrative functions, and the Phelps Public Library. The building was constructed in 1968 and updated in 2008.

The town board meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the town hall. The board consists of five members that serve staggered two-year terms.

Most of the Town's public buildings are located adjacent to one another on Town Hall Road. These buildings include the town hall and office, town shop and the fire department. The town shop is used to house/store road equipment and other town of Phelps equipment, and also to perform maintenance on the equipment. The shop was constructed in 1956 and the fire hall was constructed in 1982. There is also a salt shed located on Strong Road.

Other Community Facilities

There are four churches located in the Town. These include Twin Lakes Bible Church located on STH 17, St. Mary's Catholic Church located on Town Hall Road, St. John's Lutheran Church located on STH 17, and the Phelps Congregational Church which is also located on STH 17.

The Phelps Post Office provides postal service throughout the area and is located on Highway E.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Maintain and improve the high quality of existing town services and amenities.
2. Balance the need for town growth with the cost of providing public services.
3. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, recreational, and industrial uses.

Objectives:

1. Share equipment and services across Town boundaries, whenever possible.
2. Consider the potential impacts of development proposals on groundwater quality and quantity, and other ecosystem services.

Policies:

1. Continue to provide ambulance, volunteer fire, and first responder services to residents.
2. Make information available to residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems.
3. Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Plan for major equipment purchases.
4. Provide and maintain a safe and reliable town roadway network, including curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.
5. Evaluate the need to expand its fire hall to afford adequate space for the storage of its fire service and related equipment.
6. Monitor and review current service agreements as needed.
7. Continue to invest in new public works equipment and maintain existing equipment in order to adequately, and economically, perform required duties.

8. Continue to maintain and upgrade its wastewater treatment plant facility as continued residential and commercial development increases the public utility demands within the town. Adequate space is available for future wastewater treatment plant expansion.
9. The town's sewer and water administration, procedures, and policies needs to be reviewed relative to permitted development within the sanitary district. The district should provide *both* sewer and water to new development within the district.
10. Continue to allocate funds for the construction of a community center that will serve various town needs.
11. Continue its joint fire service agreement with the Town of Stambaugh, Michigan, as well as its involvement in mutual aid agreements with Vilas, Oneida and Forest counties.
12. Evaluate the need to expand/rebuild its town shop to meet the needs of providing adequate housing for the town's maintenance equipment.
13. Continue to maintain and upgrade its public water supply system facilities. The town should continue its Wellhead Protection Plan and make amendments as needed.
14. Periodically update its five-year outdoor recreation plan to ensure the recreational needs of the community are being met.

Chapter Five

Transportation

The transportation system includes all state, county, and local roads. The transportation network exists to provide mobility and access to people, goods and services locally, regionally, and nationally, and is essential for commerce and recreation. The local transportation network is an important factor in the safe movement of people and goods, as well as in the physical development of the Town. There is no transit, passenger rail, air, or water transportation service within the Town's jurisdiction.

Previous Plans and Studies

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), prepared by NCWRPC, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies three major transportation issues

- **Modes of Transportation to Work:** The Region's workforce is extremely dependent on the automobile. In 2012, over 80 percent of the Region's workforce drove alone to work on a daily basis. Another ten percent carpooled, leaving less than ten percent for the non-automobile methods such as walking, biking, and using transit. The average commute time in Vilas County was 19.6 minutes.
- **Age of Drivers in the Region** – The Region is seeing a change in the number of licensed drivers by age groups. Between 2004 and 2013, the Region saw a 20 percent decrease in the number of drivers 17 and age 19. During the same years, the Region had a 20 percent increase in drivers over age 65. These changes mean communities increasingly need multimodal options for those who are either unable or choose not to drive.
- **Transportation Costs** – It is expensive to maintain the transportation infrastructure in the Region. The current reliance on fuel tax and registration fees is inadequate, unstable, and may soon be outmoded. The inability to fund improvements, and maintenance on transportation infrastructure will impact the ability to transport goods and provide safe, reliable, and efficient roads.

Additionally, transportation accounts for a large portion of the average household's budget, and is greatly affected by housing location. Many low income and fixed income families are unable to afford the cost of owning and maintaining vehicles, thereby limiting employment opportunities.

Connections 2030

This is WisDOT's latest long-range, statewide, multimodal transportation plan. It identifies a series of system-level priority corridors that are critical to Wisconsin's travel patterns and the State economy.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2018

This 2018 plan is a regional effort to improve bicycling and walking across communities in north central Wisconsin. The plan, written by NCWRPC, assess existing conditions related to bicycling and walking, identifying other potential trail and route user groups, identifying routes and describing policies and programs to assist local governments in improving bicycling and walking to promote connectivity between communities and destinations throughout the Region.

The Regional Plan recommends an off-road bicycle route running along STH 70 to enhance the bicycle corridor between Eagle River and Nelma in Forest County.

Vilas County Countywide Bike/Ped Route & Trail Plan, 2011

The Vilas Area Silent Sports Association (VASSA), in conjunction with the local area trail groups around Vilas County and assistance from NCWRPC, prepared this plan to establish a fresh blueprint for its efforts and the efforts of other agencies and organizations with intersecting trails and routes within Vilas County. The Trails and routes recommended within this plan would connect people to destinations.

The Plan recommends an off-road bicycle route running along STH 70 (as echoed in the Regional Plan prepared by NCWRPC). The Plan also recommends improvements to CTH A to better host bicycle transportation.

Vilas County Shared Use Trail Study, 2018

The Vilas County Shared Use Trail Study was conducted after shared interest among different trail-user groups in potential routes within Vilas County. The goal of the Vilas County Shared Use Trail Study is to: "Assist government entities, route & trail interest groups and individual trail users within Vilas County in working together to plan, develop and maintain a comprehensive and sustainable route and trail network for diverse outdoor recreation". Existing and proposed routes for five different trail-uses are identified as part of this study.

Road Network

The road network provides for the movement of people and products within the town with connections to county, state/federal highways. Highway 17 and County Highways

A, E, and K are the primary roads in addition to the numerous town roads. In all, the road network is over 130 miles.

Jurisdictional and Functional Classification

Public roadways are generally classified by two different systems, the jurisdictional and functional. 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. All road mileage totals listed under the jurisdiction of Town are submitted to WisDOT for local road funding.

A functional classification system groups streets and highways into classes according to the character of service they provide. This ranges from providing a high degree of travel mobility to providing access to local parcels. See below:

- **Principal Arterials** – The principal function is to provide the most efficient movement for relatively large volumes of traffic at increased speeds. Movement to and from other road facilities is limited to controlled interchanges. Regional movement of traffic contributes an increasing portion of the traffic counts.
- **Minor Arterials** – The principal function is to provide efficient traffic movement for larger volumes of traffic. Little or no direct access is strived for with non-local destinations comprising a major portion of the traffic.
- **Major Collectors** – The principal function is to provide an intermediary link between efficient movement of arterials and accessibility of local roadways. They serve to funnel or collect traffic from local roadways to arterials. More efficiency of movement is strived for in favor of accessibility.
- **Minor Collectors** – The principal function is to provide traffic with access to and from property. It is the grass roots classification where accessibility for vehicles and pedestrians is emphasized and efficiency of movement is secondary.
- **Local Roads** – provide direct access to residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

Using the roadway classifications, the Town of Phelps has the service of 8 major collectors, including STH 17, CTH A, CTH E, CTH K, Kentuck Lake Road, Deerskin Road, Military Road, and a portion of Indian Road. STH 17 dissects the town into a northern half and a southern half, and follows the shoreline of the south side of North Twin Lake and South Twin Lake, ultimately connecting with USH 45. This highway provides for larger volumes of traffic entering the central portion of the town and entering or leaving Wisconsin/Michigan. CTH A is located in the southern portion of the town south of Big Sand Lake and Long Lake, and provides access to STH 17 in the central portion of the town. CTH E, located in the northern portion of the town, provides a link between STH

17 in the central portion of Phelps and USH 45/STH 32 in the town of Land O' Lakes. CTH K provides direct access to and from the west to CTH E, which then allows access to STH 17. CTH K runs north of North Twin Lake, and stretches across the mid-section of Vilas County. There are also some local roads that are classified as major collectors, all of which are located in the southern portion of the town. Kentuck Lake Road provides access to and from CTH A, and runs in a north - south direction. West of Kentuck Lake Road, the link of Deerskin Road, to Indian Road, to Military Road is considered to be a major collector route. This route connects provides access to STH 17 near North Twin Lake by means of Deerskin Road.

In addition to the major collectors, there are three local roadways, which are considered minor collectors, including W. Shore Road, S. Shore Road, and Sugar Maple Road, all of which are located in the northern portion of the Town, and linked together. West Shore Road is located along the west shore of Lac Vieux Desert and connects with CTH E, which then provides access to S. Shore Road which travels along the southern shore of the lake. Sugar Maple Road connects with S. Shore Road and provides access to CTH E in the central portion of town.

Table 5.1 displays mileage for both the jurisdictional and functional classification of roads within the town.

Table 5.1: Road Mileage by Jurisdiction and Functional Class				
Jurisdiction	Functional Classification			Totals
	Arterial	Collector	Local	
Federal/State	14.32			14.32
County		17.41		17.41
Town		20.67	81.72	102.39
TOTALS	14.32	38.08	81.72	134.12

Source: WisDOT & NCWRPC.

In addition to these main classifications, a road or segment of road may hold a number of other designations, such as forest road, rustic road, emergency or evacuation route, truck route, bike route, etc.

Pavement Conditions

WisDOT requires all local units of government to submit road condition rating data every two years as part of the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) program and WISLR are tools that local governments can use to manage pavements for improved decision making in budgeting and maintenance. Towns can use this information to develop better road budgets and keep track of roads that are in need of repair. A summary of pavement conditions for roads under jurisdiction of the Town of Phelps can be found in **Table 5.2**.

Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “Fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary.

Roads that display a surface rating of “Good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. Road conditions within the Town have declined over the last 5 years, as about 31.1% of the Town’s roads rated as “Poor” or “Very Poor” in 2013 compared to about 52.4% in 2019. In 2019, about 47.6% of roads rate as “Fair” or better. It is worth noting that 0.25 miles of road or 0.2% of local roads within the Town were not rated in 2013.

Table 5.2: Summary of Pavement Conditions		
	2013	2019
Surface Type	Miles	Miles
Unimproved	10.32	5.90
Sealcoat or Gravel Road	54.60	38.27
Asphalt or Concrete	37.27	58.21
Surface Condition Rating	Miles	Miles
Very Poor	10.20	17.95
Poor	21.55	35.69
Fair	47.30	24.75
Good	14.96	9.56
Very Good	2.98	7.79
Excellent	4.96	6.65
No Rating	0.25	0.00

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation 2013, 2019

Traffic and Safety

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts are measured and calculated on selected high traffic roads and highways every three-, six-, or ten-years (depending upon functional classification) by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). Monitoring these counts provides a way to gauge how traffic volume is changing in Phelps.

There are several count sites located throughout the town, many along Highway 17. The [Transportation Map](#) identifies the site locations with the most current count information for all sites.

The interrelationships between land use and the road system make it necessary for the development of each to be balanced with the other. Types and intensities of land-uses

have a direct relationship to the traffic on roadways that serve those land uses. Intensely developed lands often generate high volumes of traffic. If this traffic is not planned for, safety can be seriously impaired for both local and through traffic flows.

Traffic generated and attracted by any new land-use can increase the volume throughout the highway system and increase congestion on the roadway system keeping property from reaching its full potential value. Even without the creation of new access points, changes in land-uses can alter the capacity of the roadway because more, and possibly different, kinds of vehicles than before, enter, leave, and add to the traffic flow. Uncontrolled division of land tends to affect highways by intensifying the use of abutting lands, which impairs safety and impedes traffic movements.

As development continues and land use changes, the cost of maintaining the road system must be increased. More traffic requires more maintenance and expansion of the local road system. The entire road system in the Town of Phelps is also open by state law to pedestrian and bicycle travel, although some traffic volumes may make such travel unsafe.

Other Modes of Transportation

Air Transportation

Air passenger services available to Phelps residents include the facilities in Land O'Lakes, Eagle River, and Rhinelander.

The Eagle River Union Airport is located approximately 11 miles southwest of Phelps. This facility provides charter services, and facilities for private and corporate air transportation. Commercial flights are available during the summer. There is also a heliport located at the airport that is used for emergency related flights.

The (King's) Land O'Lakes Municipal Airport is located approximately eight miles northwest of Phelps. This airport provides general aviation charter services and has no scheduled flights. Charter services are available to destinations throughout the Midwest. The airport is designed to accommodate virtually all small general aviation aircraft. Typically, these aircraft are used for business and charter flying, or for personal use. Total aviation operations (take-offs and landings) at King's Land O' Lakes Airport are projected to remain stable around 8,400 per year through 2020.

Commercial air service available to Town of Phelps residents is provided by Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport located approximately 37 miles southwest of the

Town of Phelps. The Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport is a short haul air carrier airport. This airport serves scheduled, nonstop, airline markets and routes of less than 500 miles.

[ATV/UTV](#)

In 2014 Vilas County approved the use of County Roads for ATV/UTVs. Phelps then designated selected town roads as ATV /UTV routes by Ordinance.

[Bicycling and Walking](#)

All roads are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel. The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin along with WisDOT have determined what the bicycling conditions are on all county and state highways. Bike trails have become very popular in the area. The former rail corridor of Chicago & North Western Railroad between Conover and Phelps is being developed into the Conover-Phelps Trail.

There are also numerous bicycle and hiking trails within the Town of Phelps including the Vista Lake Bike Trails, Phelps Trail, Beaver Creek Hunter Walk-in Trail, Spectacle Lake-Kentuck Lake Trail, Blackjack Springs Trail, the Deerskin Snowshoe Trails, and Conover-Phelps Tail. Descriptions of these trails can be found in the [Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter](#).

[Bus Transit and Transportation Facilities for the Disabled](#)

Northwoods Transit Connections (NTC) provides transportation opportunities to residents of Oneida and Vilas Counties. There are three different routes that serve the two counties, with the Town of Phelps being a stop along the Eagle Eye Route. Additionally, the other two routes make stops in Eagle River.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Vilas County provides a Volunteer Transportation Program for any citizen of Vilas County. Any older adult (60 and older) and/or handicapped people (any age) are eligible. Letters are sent out at the end of each month requesting a donation for the number of miles the passenger was transported. Donations are not required for further service. Reservations are needed one day in advance for this door-to-door service that is provided on weekdays and weekends upon request.

Rail

There is no rail service in close proximity to Phelps. Shipments via rail would have to be trucked from nearby cities with rail access.

Snowmobile

Snowmobiling has been organized in Vilas County for over 50 years. As a result, the system is well established and completely interconnected. There is very little new route planning, and the system is in more of a "maintenance mode"; annually dealing with reroutes around landowner changes or issues that crop up. Additionally, Eagle River is known as the "*Snowmobile Capital of the World*" and hosts the World Championship Snowmobile Derby every January. There are over 623 miles of snowmobile trails throughout Vilas County. There are 32 miles of snowmobile trails in Phelps.

Trucking

The WisDOT truck operator map identifies Wisconsin highways for operation of vehicles and combinations of vehicles where the overall lengths of which cannot be limited. County trunk highways limit semi-truck travel when they are posted with weight limits in spring. When county trunk highways do not have posted weight limits, then basic semi-trucks are allowed.

Local truck routes often branch out from these highways to link local industry with the official designated state highways as well as for the distribution of commodities with the local area.

Water Transportation

There are no harbors or ports within the Town, although there are 42 navigable lakes and rivers within town available for pleasure boating. There are 13 public boat landings located in the town.

Goals, 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. Land uses that generate heavy traffic will be avoided on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
2. Future road locations, extensions or connections will be considered when reviewing development plans and proposals.
3. Maintain and reconstruct Town roads to preserve scenic, and aesthetic "Northwoods" setting while maintaining safety and mobility.
4. Support specialized transit by a variety of agencies that serve the Town's elderly and handicapped residents.
5. Promote the development of non-competitive, multi-use trails, trail linkages, and wide shoulders on roads as part of new developments or road projects.

Policies:

1. Roadway access will be spaced along the existing Town, County, and State road networks to increase safety and preserve capacity.
2. Prepare and update a 5-year Town Road Improvement Plan.
3. Cooperate with the county and the state on any project that affects the Town.
4. Update street signage to improve visibility for all residents and visitors.
5. Support recreational trails.

6. Design all Town roads to accommodate access requirements for emergency vehicles as well as school busses and snowplows.
7. Require traffic impact studies for large-scale developments, which have the potential to create on-site and off-site traffic problems.
8. Provide a pedestrian shopping environment, pedestrian linkages, i.e. sidewalks and trails, must be given equal precedence to roadways in development proposals.
9. Limit the number of driveway access points on local streets to improve traffic flow and maintain safety. When constructed, driveways should be adequately spaced to minimize vehicle conflict.
10. Consider developing an official map to govern the locations of future streets within the town.
11. Consider expanding off-street parking in the downtown business district and Lakefront Pines Park area to accommodate parking needs, especially for the demands experienced during the peak season.
12. The town should also consider providing or coordinating off-street parking located to the rear of commercial buildings to accommodate for new development needs, as well as overflow from existing businesses.

Chapter Six

Economic Development

The condition of the local economy directly influences local growth and development, and therefore must be considered when planning for a community's future. Employment patterns and economic trends generally occur on a regional scale. Residents of one community often work in another. Similarly, changes in a major industry can impact jobs and growth far beyond the community where the business is physically located.

Previous Plans & Studies

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2017

Vilas County is one of ten counties included in the North Central Wisconsin Economic Development District as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The NCWRPC is the agency responsible for maintaining that designation. As part of the designation, the NCWRPC annually prepares a CEDS. This report summarizes and assesses economic development activities over the past year and presents new and modified strategies to promote growth.

Regional Livability Plan (RLP), 2015

Economic Development is one of four elements included in the RLP, adopted by the NCWRPC in 2015. The Economic Development Assessment Report within the RLP observes in detail the economic health of the ten-county region and identifies trends and issues facing the local economy. The RLP address three issues: the disparity between the available labor force and employment, the need for a living wage, and broadband access. The four economic development goals of this plan are as follows:

- *Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce.*
- *Support and develop a diverse economic base ensuring economic growth and resiliency.*
- *Support infrastructure needed for economy development.*
- *Develop tourism and knowledge-based economy into leading economic sectors.*

ALICE Study of Financial Hardship: Wisconsin

This report, developed in part by Northwoods United Way based in Rhinelander, described the households in Vilas County that are above the federal poverty level but still struggle to afford basic household necessities. These households are considered to be “ALICE” (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) households. “ALICE” households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the “household survival budget,” which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many “ALICE” households work in fields that provide vital services, such as retail, health care, child care, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income from these jobs.

- *The “ALICE” report shows that 40 percent of Town of Phelps households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered to be “ALICE” Households, compared to 39 percent of Vilas County households that are either below the federal poverty level or considered to be “ALICE” households. This indicates that the average household in Phelps is relatively slightly less financially prosperous than the average Vilas County household at-large.*

Vilas County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The Vilas County Comprehensive Plan guides county decision-makers on a wide array of issues through 2030. Chapter Six of this plan discusses economic development in Vilas County. The Plan establishes the following goals relating to bolstering economic development in the County.

- *Encourage a variety of economic development opportunities appropriate to the resources and character of Vilas County.*
- *Enhance career opportunities and living wage jobs in an economy that is compatible with our natural resources and reflects the needs of the entire community.*
- *Enhance and diversify the economy consistent with other Vilas County goals and objectives.*

Town of Phelps Economic Analysis

Economic development is an organized process to expand the number and types of business, increase employment levels and opportunities, and increase the tax base. A part of the process to prepare for economic development is to identify local strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to promote strengths and address weaknesses.

Residential Strengths and Weaknesses

The Town's strengths for attracting and retaining residential development are its lakes and forests. In addition, the town provides the basic services needed to support residential growth, such as emergency services and roadways. There are a variety of other amenities in the town as well.

The primary weaknesses for attracting or retaining residents are the lack of employment opportunities, a lack of starter houses for young families, and the general distance to more urban areas and their amenities.

Business Strengths and Weaknesses

The Town has several tourism, service and retail businesses-and a small industrial base.

The vast forests and lakes in the Town and the surrounding area are a strength for the timber industry, as well as recreational and construction businesses. Some weaknesses in attracting or retaining businesses include: lack of a business park, distance to other industries and markets, limited high-speed Internet, and fundamental services such as grocery stores and hardware store throughout the town.

Economic Base

Table 6.1 displays employment by industry sector for both the Town and Vilas County in 2000, 2010, and 2017. The top three industry sectors in 2017 for the Town are: Construction; Education, health, & social services; and Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services. At the county level, the three largest sectors were Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services; Education, health & social services; and Retail Trade.

In the Town of Phelps, those three sectors account for 54 percent of total employment in the Town and the top three sectors in Vilas County represent about 49 percent of total employment in the county.

Table 6.1: Employment by Industry Sector

Industry Sector	Town of Phelps			Vilas County		
	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	33	13	13	231	222	232
Construction	103	78	86	1,107	1,113	983
Manufacturing	24	13	7	643	512	425
Wholesale Trade	14	7	3	264	164	175
Retail Trade	73	51	36	1,457	1,517	1,236
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	16	45	42	324	357	435
Information	7	17	3	145	243	193
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	13	8	6	425	633	417
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Management Services	19	28	43	489	600	794
Education, Health and Social Services	126	153	71	1,666	1,684	1,533
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	72	121	66	1,536	1,791	1,690
Public Administration	28	16	17	521	468	411
Other Services	20	37	20	460	460	514
Totals:	548	587	413	9,268	9,764	9,038

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Commuter data from 2017 indicates that 79 percent of town residents remained in Vilas County for work, and 34 percent of town residents remained in the Town of Phelps for work. This information means that while many of the town's employed residents leave the Town's boundaries for work, many of these residents remain in Vilas County. About 13 percent of the Town's residents travel to another county in Wisconsin for work, and over 8 percent of the Town's residents travel to Michigan for work.

Labor Force

Labor force is a critical component of economic development. Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. In 2017, the total labor force in the Town was 437. The Town had a participation rate of about 47 percent, meaning that about 47 percent of Town residents over the age of sixteen are currently employed or are seeking employment. Of the 437 members of the Town's labor force, 413 are employed, which represents about 95 percent of the Town's labor force.

County wide, the workforce in 2017 was 9,811. Vilas County had a participation rate of about 54 percent. Of the 9,811 members of the Vilas County labor force, 9,038 are employed, which represents about 92 percent of the County's labor force.

Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2015, only about 33 – or 7 percent – of the 285 jobs throughout Phelps were filled by Township residents. About 252 traveled to Phelps during the average workday in 2015. In contrast, 411 Phelps residents commuted to locations outside the Town for work during the same period, indicating that Phelps's laborshed extends beyond its municipal boundaries. **Figure 6.1** shows the inflow-outflow patterns of the Town's laborshed.

In-migration

The majority of in-commuters live in close proximity to the Town of Phelps. The largest percentage of workers commuting into the Town of Phelps come from the City of Rhinelander with 24 workers (8%) commuting to Phelps from Rhinelander.

Out-migration

Town of Phelps residents commuting outside of the Town's boundaries travel across Wisconsin and across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. About 444 Town residents are employed outside of the Town's boundaries. Like in-commuters, the majority of employed residents work in nearby communities. The largest percentage (21%) of workers leaving the Town travel to the City of Eagle River, followed by the City of Rhinelander where 4.5% of residents travel for work.

Figure 6.1: Town of Phelps Laborshed

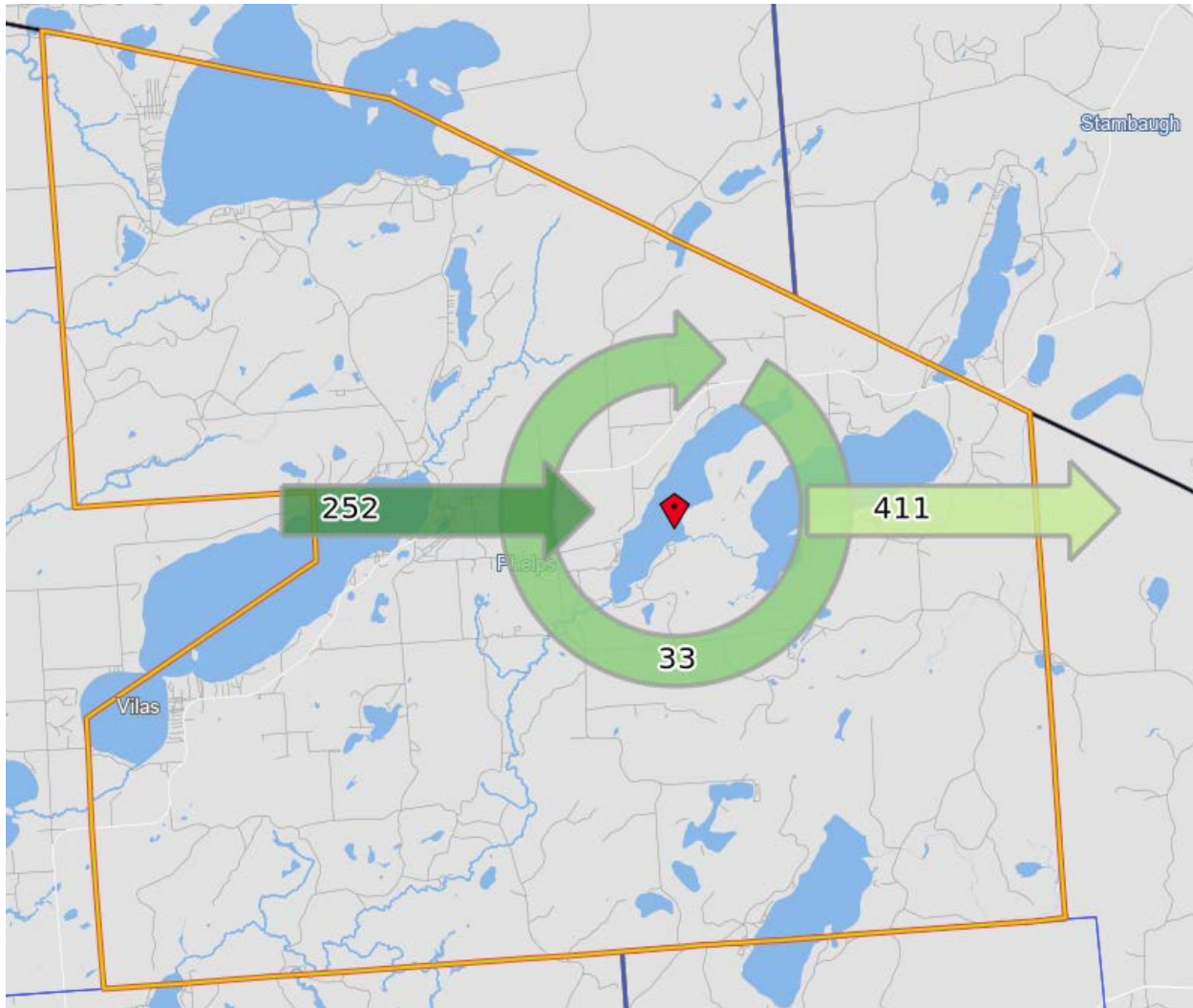


Image source: U.S. Census OnTheMap.

Vilas County Economic Analysis

Due to the amount of economic activity which takes place exclusively within the Town and the truth that the local workforce is primarily employed outside the Town, this section will look at the economic activity within Vilas County.

Economic Sectors

Overall, in 2017, there were 7,819 persons employed in the basic economic “supersectors” in Vilas County. That is a decrease of over 3 percent since 2000. [Table 6.2](#) displays employment by economic sector for Vilas County for the years 2000, 2010, and 2017.

Between 2000 and 2017, the three fastest growing sectors were Professional & Business Services; Education & Health Services; and Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities. In terms of total employment, Leisure & Hospitality is the largest segment of the economy, followed by Trade, Transportation, & Utilities.

It should be noted that the number of employees in certain sectors, particularly those workers engaged in agriculture, forestry & fishing, may be understated because this information utilizes Department of Workforce Development data; those who are self-employed or work in family businesses are not reflected in this data.

Sector	2000	2010	2017	2000-17 Net Change	2000-17 % Change
Natural Resources & Mining	59	57	53	-6	-10.2%
Construction	812	497	532	-280	-34.5%
Manufacturing	567	359	410	-157	-27.7%
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	1,464	1,416	1,606	142	9.7%
Information	99	*	88	-11	-11.1%
Financial Activities	261	275	272	11	4.2%
Professional & Business Services	257	272	398	141	54.9%
Education & Health Services	1,084	1,002	1,218	134	12.4%
Leisure & Hospitality	1,953	2,110	2,128	175	9.0%
Public Administration	1,262	917	881	-381	-30.2%
Other Services	292	380	233	-59	-20.2%
Totals	8,110	7,285	7,819	-291	-3.6%

Source: WI Dept. of Workforce Development; OCEW ES202 Results; 2000, 2010 and 2017 & NCWRPC

*Data suppressed - some federal employees not reflected in totals

Labor Force Analysis

Overall, the labor force has decreased from 10,933 in 2000 to 10,188 in 2017, which represents a decrease of about 7 percent, which is less than the state's growth rate of 6 percent. [Table 6.3](#) displays labor force trends in Vilas County between 2000 and 2017. The labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, that are employed or searching for employment. Persons over sixteen who are students, homemakers, retired, institutionalized, or unable/unwilling to seek employment are not considered part of the labor force. In 2000, 10,370 Vilas County residents were employed, with the number of employed residents in Vilas County dropping to 9,744 in 2017, which represents a decrease of about 6 percent.

As discussed in the [Demographics Chapter](#), Vilas County, along with the Town of Phelps, has experienced a significant amount of aging (median age increased by 16.6% in Vilas County between 2000 and 2017). In 2000, about 21 percent of the Vilas County population were ages 17 and under, while about 23 percent were ages 65 and older. By 2017, only about 17 percent of residents were ages 17 and under, while the percent of residents ages 65 and older grew to 29 percent. These population trends create issues for the expansion of the local labor force, and also help explain the decreases in Vilas County's labor force and employment totals.

Indicator	2000	2010	2017	2000-17 County Change	2000-17 State Change
Labor Force	10,933	10,345	10,188	-6.8%	6.0%
Employed	10,370	9,176	9,744	-6.0%	6.3%
Unemployed	563	1,169	444	-21.1%	-1.1%
Unemployment Rate	5.1%	11.30%	4.40%	-13.7%	-5.7%
Participation Rate	57.3%	58.10%	53.60%	-6.5%	-3.2%

Source: DWD Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Annual Averages; 2000, 2010 & 2017; U.S. Census

Forecasts

Employment forecasts are difficult to come by and not available at the town level. However, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WisDWD) prepares workforce projections by industry for its multi-county services regions. The current projections for the North Central Workforce Development cover Vilas County and include eight other counties. These projections show increases in all employment sectors except Other Services (1% decline).

The other sectors increase within a range from 0.3% (Manufacturing and Public Administration) to 21% (Information). Residents of both the Town of Phelps and Vilas County travel throughout the North Central Workforce Development Region.

Tourism

Tourism is a major component in Vilas County's economy, as thousands of visitors travel to the area to take advantage of the over 1,300 lakes, large public forest lands, and diversity of recreational resources. In 2017, Vilas County ranked 17th among the 72 counties in Wisconsin for total traveler expenditures. According to annual estimates prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, travelers to Vilas County spent \$219 million in 2017, up 3.1% from 2016. This level of expenditures is estimated to directly and indirectly support 1,961 full-time equivalent jobs and provide over \$42 million of resident income.

Accommodations such as motels, resorts, campgrounds and other lodging facilities generate an influx of visitors and business to Phelps. According to licensing information from the Wisconsin Department of Health & Social Services, a total of 227 rooms are available in the Town of Phelps.

When these lodging facilities are full during the peak summer visitor season, an estimated 400 day and overnight visitors are utilizing services in Phelps.

Economic Development Programs

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

Local

Chamber of Commerce:

There are two Chamber of Commerce groups located in close proximity to the Town of Phelps. The **Phelps Chamber of Commerce** is based in Phelps, and was created to promote recreation/tourism and businesses in the area. The Chamber holds an annual Independence Day celebration, the Twin Tri triathlon event, an annual Musky Classic tournament, Blizzard Blast, and the annual Phelps Maple Syrup Fest. The **Vilas County Chamber of Commerce**, helps promote the area by conducting many events throughout the year, in addition to advertising and promoting the growing tourism industry in the area.

Community Development Authority (CDA):

The Community Development Authority was created by the Town Board for the purposes of carrying out blight elimination, slum clearance, urban renewal, and community development programs and projects, as well as housing projects. The CDA is deemed to be a public body, and a body corporate and politic, exercising necessary public powers, and having all the powers, duties and functions conferred on community development authorities by applicable law.

Phelps Planning and Development Commission:

The Phelps Planning and Development Commission was established by ordinance in 2016 to further the health, safety, welfare, and wise use of resources for the benefit of current and future residents of the town and neighboring jurisdictions.

County

Vilas County Economic Development Corporation:

The Vilas County Economic Development Corporation (VCEDC) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, quasi-governmental organization that was established in 2008. The VCEDC helps public, business and nongovernmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation within Vilas County. The overall goal is to *“Connect resources to the various sector partners of Vilas County to improve economic future of the county and the quality of life for all of its residents.”* The VCEDC’s mission is to *“Promote innovative leadership and regional infrastructure to: improve the economic well-being of businesses, communities and residents; promote creation and retention of viable businesses and quality jobs; and provide increased opportunities for education strengthening workforce development.”*

Regional

Loan Fund Programs:

There are two programs that are available to Phelps residents, businesses, and the Town. They are the Vilas County Revolving Loan Fund and the Central Wisconsin Economic Development (CWED) Revolving Loan Fund.

Grow North:

Grow North began in 2004 as a private/public 501(c) (6) organization. Grow North serves an eight-county region in northern and northeastern Wisconsin, and includes Vilas County. Grow North is dedicated to economic development throughout the region, and focuses on forestry and wood products, workforce development, and broadband expansion.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission:

The Town is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, as are all local governments in Vilas County based on county membership. Membership brings with it a variety of planning benefits and services. Among them are participation in the Economic Development District, including eligibility for a variety of grants administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

In addition, by way of membership in the NCWRPC, the county is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation which manages a revolving loan fund designed to address gaps in private capital markets with long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, and low interest financing.

State

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC): WEDC is the state's primary department for the delivery of integrated services to businesses. Their purpose is to 1) foster retention and creation of new jobs and investment opportunities in Wisconsin; 2) foster and promote economic business, export, and community development.

Wisconsin Small Cities Program: The Wisconsin Department of Administration 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 designated economic development districts and local governments 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.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

- 1: Promote the expansion and retention of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities.
- 2: Support residential development.
3. Develop and beautify the downtown and lakefront to become a centerpiece of the town, including an area for community functions.

Objectives:

1. Encourage new residential, commercial, and industrial development to locate in designated areas on the Future Land Use map.
2. Encourage businesses to locate in Town of Phelps.

Policies:

1. Encourage home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or would otherwise negatively impact the surrounding areas.
2. Continue to support the Chamber of Commerce and Town and County economic development efforts.
3. Focus economic development marketing on tourism orientated business, service, retail, and light industrial businesses such as restaurants and an event center.
4. Promote community activities and events that benefit local and downtown business and merchants.
5. Preserve and utilize old buildings and historic sites to anchor the downtown and areas small town theme.
6. Retain and acquire public common areas or park sites to accommodate special events and community activities in the downtown area.

7. Pursue opportunities for financial and other incentives to attract and locate business.
8. Develop a plan for the downtown waterfront in conjunction with local businesses, residents, and various community groups, to include landscaping and design.

Chapter Seven

Land Use

Background

The Town of Phelps covers an area of about 69,289 acres in Vilas County. To the north is the state of Michigan, to the east is the Town of Alvin (Forest County), to the south are the Towns of Washington and Town of Hiles (Forest County), and to the west are the Towns of Conover and Land O' Lakes.

Previous Plans and Studies

Regional Livability Plan, 2015

Land use is one of the four element included in the RLP, adopted by NCWRPC in 2015. The Land Use Assessment Report, a component of the plan, looks in detail at the land uses through the ten-count region and identifies issues and trends related to land use: housing density and farmland preservation. The two land use goals of the plan are as follows:

- *Preserve and protect the Region's landscape, environmental resources and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.*
- *Manage and reduce vacant land and structures.*

Vilas County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2013

The purposes of this plan is to guide and manage growth and development of land use in a manger that will preserve the rural character, protect the agricultural base and natural resources, and contribute to the safety, health and prosperity of Vilas County's communities. The Farmland Preservation Plan identifies farmland preservation areas for towns throughout the County.

Vilas County Comprehensive Plan, 2009

The Vilas County Comprehensive Plan is a policy plan. The Plan describes existing and future land uses, and regulatory tools for land use. The overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide consistency between official mapping, zoning and subdivision ordinances, local plans, and other implementation tools.

Neighboring Comprehensive Plans

The Townships of Alvin, Conover, Hiles, and Washington's Comprehensive Plans are also policy plans that serve comparable purposes to this plan. These plans describe existing and future land uses throughout the next 20 years after the plan's adoption. Most Vilas County townships, including Phelps, follow county zoning. The statuses of these municipalities' comprehensive plans are as follows:

- **Town of Alvin:** Adopted in 2010, prepared by NCWRPC
- **Town of Conover:** Adopted in 2010, prepared by the Town of Conover Plan Commission with assistance from NCWRPC.
- **Town of Hiles:** Adopted in 2010; Subsequently amended in 2017 and prepared by NCWRPC.
- **Town of Washington:** Currently being updated with assistance from NCWRPC

Existing Land Use, 2015

Knowledge of the existing land use patterns within a town is necessary to develop a desired "future" land use pattern. The Existing Land Use Map was developed using air photos from a countywide flight in 2015, with updates by the locals. Ten basic categories were used to classify the various land uses. These are: Agriculture, Commercial, Governmental/Institutional, Industrial, Open Lands, Outdoor Recreation, Residential, Transportation, Woodlands, and Water.

Agriculture land uses are areas primarily used for agricultural purposes. Includes ground tillage or crop rows, orchards and other specialty crops.

Commercial land uses are areas primarily used for light commercial businesses. Examples would be childcare facility, offices, and / or restaurants, general retail sales and service related businesses.

Governmental / Institutional land used primarily for religious, governmental, and educational purposes.

Industrial lands containing manufacturing, construction companies, utilities and wholesale trade. Gravel pits and quarries are also included in this use.

Open Lands are passive open space lands. These areas are usually free of trees, undeveloped and can contain wetland areas. Non active agriculture areas can also be included in these lands.

Outdoor Recreation are lands used for park and recreational sport activities. Uses may include public parks, private parks, campgrounds, playgrounds, rest areas. Large wooded areas with trails and or hunting lands are not included in these lands.

Residential lands containing single-family homes, seasonal / vacation, manufactured housing, and farmsteads can be included in these areas.

Transportation lands used for transportation network. Roads, railroad and airports.

Woodlands areas of forested trees. These lands may include areas of improvements like forest roads and trails, but the primary use is forestry.

Water body of water or flowing waterways. This typically does not included wetlands or periodically flooded areas.

[Existing Land Use Map](#)

The intent of an existing land use map is to provide a general snap shot as to the existing uses of land within the Town for planning purposes. This map gets updated every 5 years as new aerial imagery becomes available. The map shows only the dominant or primary use. Obviously, many parcels would have a house (residential), but also could have a business use (commercial) or farming (agricultural) uses. See the [Existing Land Use Map](#).

Table 7.1 presents the current breakdown of land-use types within the Town. The majority of the Town is woodlands with over 55,000 acres or about 80% and water covers about 13% of the Town. The next most significant land use type is residential with about 2,600 acres.



Table 7.1: 2015 Existing Land Use		
Land Use Classification	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	565	0.8%
Commercial	137	0.2%
Industrial	62	0.1%
Open Land	1,259	1.8%
Outdoor Recreation	181	0.3%
Residential	2,589	3.7%
Governmental/Public	17	0.0%
Transportation	471	0.7%
Woodlands	55,123	79.6%
Water	8,884	12.8%
Total	69,289	100.0%

Source: 2015 Aerial Photos, Town, & NCWRPC GIS.

Large blocks of federal forest cover much of the Town with residential development concentrated mainly along some of the lakeshores and primary roadways. Commercial development is concentrated along state and county roads in the Town of Phelps.

The residential development in the town consists primarily of single-family residences. Single-family residential development has taken place primarily adjacent to the shoreline along the many town lakes such as Lac Vieux Desert, Big Sand, and North Twin Lake. Inland residential uses are scattered throughout the town, and are typically located on relatively large wooded lots. About 60 percent of the residential housing units are seasonal. There are multi-family residential developments in the Town, including the Northwoods senior housing complex directly adjacent to the Medical Center.

Commercial development includes resorts, highway, and community commercial. Highway commercial activities are located along STH 17. Some of the commercial developments are renovated single-family structures. The downtown business district serves both seasonal and year-round residents.

There are a few community commercial uses in the town, most of which are interspersed along STH 17. Businesses experience strong seasonality.

Public Lands

Federal Lands

Approximately 53 percent of the total area of the Town of Phelps is included in the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest, comprising 36,477 acres. The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest covers approximately 661,377 acres in Vilas, Florence, Forest, Langlade, Oconto, and Oneida Counties in Wisconsin. Farming was not viable at that time and most farms were abandoned. Therefore, the Forest was established in 1933 by presidential proclamation to purchase abandoned land and reestablish the area's original tree-covered vegetation. Today, public access is allowed within the National Forest for enjoyment of its abundant natural resources and beauty.

The U.S.D.A. Forest Service requires that Land & Resource Management Plans be prepared for all National Forest. These "forest plans" represent an integrated, ecological approach to managing the forests' natural resources and guide all natural resource management decisions. The plans provide direction for multiple-use management and the sustained yield of goods and services in an environmentally sensitive manner, termed "Ecosystem Management". These documents are dynamic, therefore they can and often are amended. Major topics that will be addressed in the revised plan include 1) access and recreational opportunities, 2) biological diversity, 3) special land allocation, and 4) timber production

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) owns 70 acres of land in the Town of Phelps. This acreage includes property for the purpose of public access for fisheries along Lac Vieux Desert and Big Sand Lake.

Other Ownership

Town-Owned Lands

Town-owned land comprises approximately 160 acres within the town.

County-Owned Lands

The Vilas County Forest is divided into 40 management compartments ranging in size from 308 acres to 1,725 acres. There are about 390 acres of County Forest located in the western portion of the Town of Phelps. The County Forest system provides various

recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike, and also is used for timber management.

Vilas County also owns and maintains Lac Vieux Desert Park. Lac Vieux Desert Park features a historic marker marking the Headwaters of the Wisconsin River. The park borders the 4,260-acre Lac Vieux Desert, and offers diverse wildlife viewing opportunities and a wonderful view of the lake. Parking is located on West Shore Road and the park is accessed via a footbridge over the Wisconsin River that links up to a pathway lined with massive white pine trees. The park also contains a comfort station and picnic area with tables and grills



*Lac Vieux Desert Park can be accessed via the footbridge shown above.
Source: Vilas County*

Lac Vieux Desert Band of Chippewa Indians

The Lac Vieux Desert Band of Chippewa Indians owns approximately 114 acres along the eastern border of Lac Vieux Desert.

Private Conservation Clubs

The Big Sand Lake Club owns approximately 594 acres of land along the eastern shore of Big Sand Lake. Club property contains excellent fishing opportunities, winding trails, and a pristine and private environment.

The Wilderness LLC Preserve owns approximately 262 acres of land within Phelps along the northeastern town border north of Big Sand Lake. The majority of this club's land is located in the state of Michigan to support natural resources there.

Land Use Trends

Land Supply & Demand

As shown by the existing land use inventory, the majority of the Town is "undeveloped" woodlands, so the supply of land "available" for development appears to be adequate. Nevertheless, even under a rapid growth scenario, the supply of land in the Town of Phelps is more than sufficient to accommodate projected demand over the next 20 years for all use categories.

Land Values

Table 7.2 displays the assessed land values in the Town of Phelps. It is important to note that lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law programs and other exempt lands (such as the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest) are not included in values for Table 7.2. In 2018, the assessed value of land (not including improvements) was \$222,130,900. Overall, land value per acre in the Town is valued at about \$14,884 per acre. Properties classified as “Residential” have the highest value per acre, followed by “Commercial” and “Other” properties.

Table 7.2: Assessed Land Value (per acre), 2018		
Land Classification	Total Value of Land	Total Value per Acre
Residential	\$194,017,000	\$68,244
Commercial	\$4,491,200	\$29,354
Manufacturing	\$100,600	\$7,186
Agriculture	\$153,000	\$197
Undeveloped	\$992,500	\$483
Forest	\$21,819,800	\$2,493
Agricultural Forest	\$411,800	\$1,279
Other	\$145,000	\$16,111
Total	\$222,130,900	\$14,884

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

Opportunities for Redevelopment

There are 23 properties within the Town that had environmental contamination on them. All but two of these sites have been remediated to DNR standards and are available for use. See the *Environmentally Remediated Areas* section in the **Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources Chapter** for more information.

Higher density type development should locate within the sewered area of the town. See map 5 for sanitary district location.

The most efficient development utilizes existing public services and infrastructure. The use of existing infrastructure and services is more cost-effective; therefore, new commercial, industrial and higher density residential development should be located in these areas. Areas where sewer & water and other infrastructure and services are not available should have minimal industrial and commercial development.

Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Any plan should seek to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned use-buffers and public information and education components. In order to attain that goal, it is important to identify the existing or potential conflicts between land uses in the town.

There may be some degree of undesirability between many land use combinations, such as a residential development in close proximity to a particular industrial or commercial development that might conflict with sight, sound, odor or other undesirable characteristics. Another example could be an auto salvage yard in proximity to a recreational or natural area, or a home business/occupational, commercial-type use in a single family area that has outgrown its roots.

In the other direction, an example of compatible land use could be residential development in association with wooded recreational lands or vacant open space areas. Obviously, with the constraints of existing development and limiting factors on future growth, the most desirable situations are not always possible. What should be strived for is an awareness of incompatible land uses and an effort to alleviate or avoid them where possible.

In terms of the Town of Phelps, land use in the Town is generally desirable. Working with the business owners to modify the structures when and if remodeling or building takes place will be a benefit to the business as well as the entire community.

Home-based businesses are becoming more popular as the workforce is disseminated from the office environment and more people with entrepreneurial spirit are testing the waters of self-employment from their homes. Professional disciplines can be networked to the home office with internet services and overnight mail. This technology is changing the way people work and do business. A growing home-based business could potentially outgrow its roots and be disruptive to surrounding communities.

Future Land Use

A [Future Land Use Map](#) represents the long-term land use recommendations for all lands in the Town. The Town Planning & Development Commission recommends using the Existing Zoning Map to represent future land use needs of the town. Below are general descriptions of the current zoning districts within the town. For more details and permitted uses see Vilas County Zoning Ordinance.

1. Agricultural

The Agriculture District is created to preserve land & water resources for food and fiber production & preserve farms by preventing land use conflicts between incompatible uses. This District applies to lands in productive farm operations, good crop yields, lands capable of such yields, dairying, livestock raising, and grazing. Land for specialty crops e.g.: cranberry production, sod farms, Christmas trees & other types of food and fiber products. Wood lots and forested land part of commercial farm operations maybe included.

2. All-Purpose

The All Purpose District is created to provide areas for variety of mixed uses. Lands in this District are subject to the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and all other Local, State and Federal Regulations.

3. Community Business

The Community Business District is established to create, preserve and protect unincorporated villages which have historically been places where retail stores and services have located. Lot areas and dimension requirements in the Community Business district are lower than in other districts in order to promote compact business district environments.

4. Forestry

The Forestry District is created to set aside areas for forestry and other land uses. The purpose is to reduce the public service demands, in remote areas and to promote the preservation of forest lands for sustained yielded forestry, wildlife habitats, aesthetics and recreation.

5. General Business

The General Business District is established to create areas for a wide variety of commercial purposes on relatively large lots.

6. Recreation

The Recreation District is created to provide areas primarily for businesses oriented toward outdoor recreation.

7. Single-Family Residential

The purpose of the Single-Family Residential District is to create areas for exclusive low density residential use and prohibit the intrusion of uses incompatible with the quiet and comfort of such areas.

Since the 2009 Town of Phelps Comprehensive Plan, the town has acquired approximately 36 acres for park and recreational purposes. Most notable are 1) approximately 3 acres to enlarge the Lakefront Pines Park; 2) approximately 22.8 acres near Military Creek to develop a snowmobile/ATV/UTV trailhead and 3) approximately 10.7 acres near the Military Hill Forest Fire Lookout Tower for future campsites and a nature boardwalk.

Over time, sales and division of some property parcels has resulted in zoning districts that do not match parcel boundaries. The Future Land Use Map represents our goal to correct this.

Land Use Programs and Tools

The principle land use program in Wisconsin is the comprehensive planning program. The primary land use tools are zoning, subdivision ordinance, and official mapping.

Zoning

The Town of Phelps is currently under Vilas County 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 in to be allowed.

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 Map are the same and could be changed in the future based on public input.

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. Therefore, following the planning process it is critical that the zoning ordinance be updated to incorporate the findings of the plan.

The adoption of the comprehensive plan will inform the county on the Town’s goals, objectives, and policies. It will also explain the rationale behind these plan recommendations. These efforts should put the town in a strong position to work with the county on implementing zoning controls that are consistent with the town plan.

Shoreland Zoning

All counties are mandated by Wisconsin law to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land-use in shoreland/wetland and floodplain areas for the entire area of the county outside of villages and cities. This ordinance supersedes any town ordinance, unless the town ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland/wetland and floodplain area covered under this zoning is the area that lies within 1,000 feet of a lake and within 300 feet of a navigable stream or to the landward side of a floodplain, whichever distance is greater. Shoreland Zoning in the Town of Phelps is administered by Vilas County.

Land Division

Subdivision regulation relates to the way in which land is divided and made ready for development. 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 set. 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.

A town land division code can provide the town the means to review and regulate new divisions of land to ensure consistency with the vision, goals, objectives, land protection criteria, and other recommendations of an adopted plan. The ordinance would require administration and enforcement by the town. Therefore, local control of divisions of land would require town funding. It also adds a layer of government involved in regulating proposals for land divisions.

The alternative to a town land division code is to approach the county to amend the county land division code to ensure that new divisions of land are consistent with the town plan. Other town's may be in support of similar modifications and could provide political support for the changes. However, changes would affect the entire county and may not be politically supported by the county. In addition, any amendments may not be totally satisfactory to the town, since the county must balance its' own abilities to administer the code and also the needs of other local governments.

Official Mapping

State statutes (Ch. 62.23(6), 61.35, 60.10(2)c) permit cities, villages and towns to prepare official mapping. This mapping is intended to serve as a formal public record to indicate where the government unit is likely to require right-of-way, easements, or land for future roads, drainageways, utilities, recreation facilities, etc. This enables landowners to plan future construction to avoid costly removal of structures later when a public facility identified on the official map is built through or near their properties.

Official mapping is also an excellent way to implement recommendations made in a land use or comprehensive plan. Further, it ensures new developments will be linked to existing and future street extensions and connections in a planned manner

Other Programs

Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)

The purpose of the Stewardship Incentive Program is to assist landowners in more actively managing, protecting, and enhancing their forest lands and related resources through cost-sharing. The program aims to keep forest lands productive and healthy for

both present and future owners, and to increase the economic and environmental benefits of these lands. Private landowners may enroll 10 to 1,000 acres of woodland in the program, and must maintain a 10 year contractual commitment.

Nine general categories of management practices are eligible for cost-sharing under SIP, including 1) forestry management plan development, 2) tree planting, 3) forest improvement, 4) windbreaks and hedgerows, 5) soil and water protection, 6) riparian and wetland protection, 7) fisheries habitat enhancement, 8) wildlife habitat enhancement, and 9) forest recreation enhancement. Sixty-five percent of the actual cost of each practice is covered, with maximum limits as established by the WDNR. The practices available in individual counties may vary. Public access is not required. This program is administered by the WDNR, USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), and County Land Conservation Departments.

Forestry Incentive Program (FIP)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Forestry Incentive Program, in association with the WDNR, which was initiated to provide cost-sharing to private landowners for implementing forestry management practices. Landowners with 10 or more acres are eligible to enroll in the program, and agree to maintain the practices for an estimated life span. The development of a management plan is required which establishes the practices to be performed including tree planting, site preparation for natural regeneration, timber stand improvement, etc. Public access on the property is not required.

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program which was established to restore wetlands on lands which were previously altered for agricultural use. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in consultation with the Farm Service Agency and other federal agencies.

Land is eligible for enrollment in the WRP if the landowner has owned that land for at least one year, and the land is restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. Landowners may choose to restore wetlands with a permanent or 30-year easement, or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with the USDA. If a permanent easement is established, the landowner will receive payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100% of the wetland restoration costs. The 30-year easement payment is 75% of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site, and 75% of the restoration costs. Voluntary cost-share restoration agreements are generally for a

minimum of 10 years, and 75% of the cost of restoring the land to wetlands is provided. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for private landowners who wish to establish or improve wildlife habitat on their land, with a primary emphasis on re-establishing declining species and habitats. Both technical assistance and cost sharing are provided to help develop, maintain, and/or improve fish and wildlife habitat through management practices. Lands which are eligible for program participation include woodlots, agricultural and non-agricultural land, pastures, and streambanks which are generally at least 5 acres. Landowners are required to prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan which includes cost-share eligible practices to be conducted including fencing, seeding, limited tree planting, instream structures, burning, etc. Up to 75% of costs are reimbursed, generally not to exceed \$10,000; other organizations may provide the remaining 25% of the cost-share or provide expertise to help complete a project. The normal contract duration is 10 years at a minimum to maintain wildlife habitat. Public access is not required under this program. The program is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Lake Organizations

Several lake organizations exist for different lakes within the town of Phelps. These organizations aim to improve, protect and preserve their representative precious water resources by promoting proper lakefront management practices, conducting weed harvesting, and obtaining funds to complete lake studies/lake management plans, among partaking in other related activities.

- Long Lake of Phelps Lake District
- Big Sand Lake Property Owners Association
- Deerskin Lake Association
- Imogen Lake Association
- Kentuck Lake PR District
- Lac Vieux Desert Association
- Smoky Lake Property Owners Association
- Spectacle Lake PR District
- North South Twin Lakes N & S Riparian Owners Association
- North & South Twin Lake District
- Phelps Town Lakes Committee
- Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

As in the previous chapters of this plan, a series of goals, objectives, and policies are identified.

Goals:

1. Maintain orderly planned growth that promotes the health, safety and general welfare of Town residents and makes efficient use of land and efficient use of public services, facilities and tax dollars.
2. Preserve the productive forest and farmland in the Town for long-term use and maintain forestry and agriculture as important economic activity.
3. Development should not adversely affect or reduce town-owned park properties that have been, or are being developed to make best use of the community's natural setting, for use by all residents and tourists.
4. Control the type and location of residential, commercial, and industrial development.
5. Create, promote, and maintain a pro-active planning process in the town.
6. Enhance and develop year round recreational opportunities in the Town while minimizing user conflicts.
7. Enhance and Develop parks and recreational areas that make use of the natural setting and location of Phelps.

Objectives:

1. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve the rural character and unique natural setting of the community.
2. Land uses should be planned 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. Maintain the rural focus of the Town.

5. Designate suitable land for future residential, commercial, light industrial, and recreational uses in accordance to the Phelps Comprehensive Master Plan recommendations.
6. Encourage development in areas currently served by public utilities, roads, parks, schools, and other key services.
7. Guide future development within or adjacent to existing compatible development.
8. Cluster commercial and light industrial development along State Highway 17 (east and west) and County Highway E.
9. Review, and if appropriate, pursue change of the Vilas County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance which will promote Phelps's future land use vision.
10. Coordinate town planning efforts with the Vilas County Land Use Plan.
11. Establish common sense regulations to coordinate the proper use, access, and opportunity of motorized watercraft on lakes and rivers, based on a waterway classification system.
12. Enhance the town's existing parks and provide for recreation facilities that provide multi-use, non-competitive, recreational opportunities.
13. Maintain existing and improve public access to waterways.
14. Maintain existing and provide additional snowmobile, hiking, skiing, and biking trails.
15. Explore opportunities to develop a town multi-use, non-competitive, trail system.
16. Connect Phelps trails to other Vilas County communities.
17. Pursue state and federal funding programs which can aid in the development and acquisition of parks, trails, scenic and environmentally significant areas.
18. Recognize need to accommodate all age groups in recreational pursuits.
19. Implement the Town of Phelps Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

20. Periodically review the adopted Phelps Comprehensive Master Plan and associated ordinances relative to effectiveness in achieving town goals.
21. Develop and provide educational materials and conduct local workshops on topics pertinent to planning goals.
22. Pursue development of a town newsletter (or other means of public communication) to ensure year around and seasonal residents and property owners are informed regarding town issues, business, and development projects.
23. Establish relationships and communication between local governments and agencies to encourage discussion and action on land use, transportation and service issues.
24. Consider the development of an official map to reserve adequate right-of-way for future road linkage.
25. Continue the planning committee functions after plan approval to monitor plan effectiveness, review development proposals and required updates.
26. Work with land owners to resolve split land use designation of parcels.

Policies:

1. The Town will maintain a long-range Comprehensive Plan, which will serve as a guide for future land use decisions. New development will be permitted based on consideration of this Plan, as well as other Town, County, and state plans and regulations.
2. New development should not adversely affect the property value or livability of neighboring properties.
3. Future commercial development should be encouraged in planned development districts rather than extended in a strip along the major highway corridors
4. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.

5. Encourage land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
6. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
7. Use-buffer areas may be used as shields to lessen the impacts of potentially conflicting land use types located in relatively close proximity.
8. The location of 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, loss of farmland, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
9. Lands, not suited to forestry should be the focus of development activity in the Town. Land best suited to timber production (or agriculture) should remain in that use, to the extent possible, and new development should be steered toward land less well adapted to productive use.

Chapter Eight

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Background

The issue of intergovernmental cooperation is increasingly important; since many issues cross over political boundaries, such as watersheds, labor force, commuter patterns, and housing. Communities are not independent of each other, but rather dependent on each other. The effects from growth and change on one spill over to all surrounding communities and impact the region as a whole.

Overview

Wisconsin Statute §66.30, entitled “Intergovernmental Cooperation”, does enable local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Unfortunately, there is little public policy in Wisconsin law that encourages, let alone requires, horizontal governmental relationships such as town to town and municipality to county or town. The result is that towns, municipalities, and counties act more as adversaries than as partners.

State-wide, Wisconsin has more than 2,500 units of government and special purpose districts. Having so many governmental units allows for local representation, but also adds more players to the decision making process. In general terms, intergovernmental cooperation is any arrangement by which officials of two or more jurisdictions coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. It can be as simple as communication and information sharing, or it can involve entering into formal intergovernmental agreements and sharing resources such as equipment, buildings, staff, and revenue.

As jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become more aware of one another’s needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to avoid them. Intergovernmental cooperation makes sense for many reasons including trust, cost savings, consistency, and ability to address regional issues. Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust between jurisdictions. It can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. It can lead to consistency of goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions of neighboring communities. Finally, by communicating and coordinating their actions and working with regional and state jurisdictions, local communities are able to address and resolve issues that are regional in nature.

The major beneficiary of intergovernmental cooperation is the local resident. They may not understand, or even care about, the details of a particular intergovernmental issue, but residents can appreciate their benefits, such as cost savings, provision of needed services, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

A variety of factors, some long-standing and others more recent, have brought the issue of intergovernmental cooperation to the forefront. Some of these factors include:

- Local government's financial situation;
- Opportunity to reduce costs by working together;
- Elimination of duplication of services;
- Population settlement patterns and population mobility; and
- Economic and environmental interdependence.

In addition, as more jurisdictions create and implement comprehensive plans and share them with surrounding communities, new opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation will be identified.

Intergovernmental Relationships

Surrounding Townships

Currently, there are mutual aid agreements with all of Vilas County, the Town of Alvin in Forest County, Watersmeet, Michigan, Stambaugh, Michigan, and the WI DNR related to Fire Protection. There is also a separate agreement with the US Forest Service related to Fire Protection.

The Phelps Library is part of the Northern Waters Library Service. In addition, the Town is a participating member of the joint Vilas County Chamber of Commerce.

Vilas County

Vilas County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to the Town and the Town enjoys a good working relationship with many of the responsible departments. These departments include Finance, Highways, Sheriff, Forestry, and Land Records.

The County Highway Department maintains and plows County, state and federal highways within the Town. The County Sheriff provides protective services

through periodic patrols and on-call 911 responses. The Sheriff also manages the 911-dispatch center, not only for police protection, but also for ambulance/EMS response and dispatching the Town Fire Department. The Forestry and Outdoor Recreation Department maintains a county-wide park system and county forest system for the use and enjoyment of all residents. The County Zoning Department administers zoning in the Town and land conservation services including joint monitoring of surrounding lakes.

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 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources administered park and recreation development funding of each local unit that adopts it, and All Hazard Mitigation Plans which are required by Federal Emergency Management Agency in order for individual local units of government to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funding.

Gogebic and Iron Counties, Michigan, is across the state line from the Town. There are some existing relationships and more that could be developed in the future.

School Districts

The Phelps School District includes the entire town and is located at 4451 Old School Road. The 4K-12 school complex also serves as the community center. The Town is included in the Nicolet Technical College District and the main campus is located in Rhineland.

Sanitary District

The Phelps Sanitary District supplies water and sewer service to the core “village” area of the Town. Residents of the Sanitary District elect the members of the Sanitary Board.

Business District

Community Development Authority (CDA):

The Community Development Authority was created by the Town Board for the purposes of carrying out blight elimination, slum clearance, urban renewal, and community development programs and projects, as well as housing projects. The CDA is deemed to be a public body, and a body corporate and politic, exercising necessary public powers, and having all the powers, duties and functions conferred on community development authorities by applicable law.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was formed under §60.0309 Wis. Statutes as a voluntary association of governments serving a ten county area. Vilas County is a member of the NCWRPC, which includes all of its local units of government. 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.

The NCWRPC is also assisting the county and several town comprehensive plans. Other countywide projects by the NCWRPC that cover the Town, included: a county economic development strategy, county regional bike route plan, human services public transit coordination plan, and the Conover – Phelps Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

State and Federal Government

The Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation 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 WNR Resources takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland, and other wildlife habitat areas, while Wisconsin Department of Transportation 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. 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.

In Wisconsin, most federal programs are administered by the state, so the Town would be dealing with the responsible state agency with regard to federal programs and regulations.

Existing / Potential Intergovernmental Conflicts

Overall the Town has a good working relationship with the surrounding Towns, County, and Federal Agencies, and with the Lac Vieux Desert Tribe. However, there were some concerns identified that may need to be addressed in the future. A primary concern is the policy of closing roads and access to the National Forest lands. Closing of the roads results in limiting recreational activity

and decreases tourism. Less access also results in less timber production, which in turn decreases a valuable raw material to the local wood industry. In addition, the payment in lieu of taxes or "PILT" formula, which is the payment for public lands in the town, lags behind the cost of services. No other potential intergovernmental conflicts were identified in this process.

The process for resolving some of these conflicts will in part be achieved by meeting with the surrounding towns when significant issues of mutual concern arise, including across the state border to Michigan.

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, and 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 ten 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.

Goal, Objective, and Policies

As in the previous chapters of this plan, a series of goals, objectives, and policies are identified.

Goal:

1. Seek mutually beneficial cooperation with all levels of government.

Objective:

1. Maintain current agreements and explore additional opportunities with adjacent communities and County, State, Tribal, and Federal governments to address issues of mutual interest, including solid waste and recycling, protective services, invasive species, wildland firefighting, and technology.

Policies:

1. Meet with surrounding communities, County, State, Tribal, and Federal entities to discuss issues of mutual concern, including those in Michigan, and obtain written agreements.
2. Investigate cost sharing or contracting with neighboring Towns, County, State, Tribal, and Federal Government to provide more efficient services or public utilities.
3. Maintain a working relationship with the School District related to facility planning, and the Sanitary District related to service area.

Chapter Nine

IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

This is the final chapter of the Town of Phelps Comprehensive Plan. This chapter outlines plan adoption, plan review, plan amendment, plan update, and implementation. This chapter also includes the recommended steps to implement this plan.

The Town Planning & Development Commission, the Town Board, and its various committees, boards, and commissions should use the Comprehensive Plan to guide the physical development of the Town. In addition, developers and landowners will use the document.

Plan Adoption

The adoption process requires that The Town Planning & Development Commission develop and review the Comprehensive Plan, and pass a “resolution” to recommend the adoption of the plan to the Town Board. That recommendation is forwarded to the Town Board who must hold a public hearing to solicit public comment prior to adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by “ordinance”. That public hearing must be advertised with at least 30 days notice. Review Statute 66.1001 for a detailed overview of the adoption procedure.

Adoption formalizes the plan document as the framework to guide local growth and development decisions over the next 10 years or more. The adopted plan should also be recognized as a tool for communicating the community’s vision related to natural resources, housing, utilities & community facilities, transportation, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, and land use.

Plan Review

Members of the Town Board, Town Planning & Development Commission, and other local decision-making bodies should periodically review the plan and identify areas that might need to be amended or addressed during a future plan update.

As part of the comprehensive planning process, a number of goals, objectives, and policies were developed. These statements are intended to provide direction to local leaders and staff, as well as residents of the Town. To measure progress towards meeting these goals, objectives, and policies, a regular plan review needs to take place. Therefore, the task to review/measure plan progress is as simple as determining if any action was taken or not on the various goals, objectives, and policies. It should be noted that many of the policies identified in the plan are continuous or on-going and should also be monitored to measure the plan's overall success. In addition, many of the objectives and their related actions can be accomplished in the short term, say 1 to 5 years. However, some will take longer to accomplish, say 6 to 10 years or more.

It is recommended that a periodic "Plan Status" report be prepared to summarize the progress toward implementation. This report might be jointly developed by various Town departments, as related to their involvement in the implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies developed within this plan. Ultimately, the success of the planning process will be measured by the future quality of life experienced by both residents and visitors to Phelps.

Plan Amendments

The plan may be amended at any time, if needed, upon the recommendation of the Town Planning & Development Commission and approval from the Town Board following the same statutory process described for initial plan adoption. The procedures are the same regardless of how minor the proposed amendment.

Amendments may be appropriate throughout the lifecycle of the plan, particularly if new issues emerge or trends change, or an error is discovered. However, frequent changes to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided. Some reasons an amendment include:

- ✓ Plan amendment corrects an error made in the original plan
- ✓ A certain goal, objective, or policy is no longer relevant
- ✓ Future land use map is no longer reflective of community desires

The Town Planning & Development Commission prior to the public hearing and adoption by the Town Board must review proposed amendments. The public should be notified of proposed plan changes and allowed an opportunity for review and comment. For major amendments, it may be desirable to solicit public opinion through surveys and/or community meetings prior to the public hearing.

Plan Updates

According to the State's comprehensive planning law, comprehensive plans must be updated at least once every 10 years. As opposed to the more routine amendments described above, plan updates will probably involve re-writing entire chapters of the plan document. A plan update should include a thorough examination of the community's goals and objectives, based upon an analysis of current growth trends and major changes that have occurred since the plan was initially adopted or last amended. Plan updates must be formally adopted following the same procedure described above for initial plan adoption.

It is important that the public be involved in the update process. To ensure that the public is engaged in plan amendments, the same procedure used for initial plan adoption must be followed. (See State Statute 66.1001).

Upon Town Planning & Development Commission review and resolution to make recommended changes to the plan, the Town Board shall call a public hearing to allow property owners and citizens' time to review and comment on recommended plan changes. The public hearing shall be advertised using a Class I notice.

Implementation Tools

The primary implementation tools for this Plan are County Zoning and Land Division ordinances. These ordinances provide the underlying regulatory framework that supports many of the Plan's policies. Currently the Town Planning & Development Commission reviews zoning and subdivision applications and makes formal recommendations to the Town Board. The Comprehensive Plan should be an important consideration in this process. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that a local government's land use related decisions and actions be consistent with that unit's Comprehensive Plan.

Having the appropriate tools to implement the recommendations in this comprehensive plan is critical. These regulatory tools are used to protect existing development and guide future growth and development. There is also a non-regulatory approach to implementing the comprehensive plan; this generally involves decisions related to how the community will spend its limited financial resources on staffing and various capital improvements.

State law requires that by January 1, 2010, certain programs and/or actions that affect land use must be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan. To meet this deadline, the Town should update related ordinances as needed.

The previous chapters of this Plan contain a compilation of programs the Town Planning & Development Commission may consider in working to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

Consistency Among Plan Chapters

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the Implementation section describe how each of the required chapters will be integrated and made consistent with the other chapters of the plan. Since the Town completed all planning elements simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist. It is noted that some overlap occurs between the nine plan chapters. Where deemed appropriate, certain goals, objectives, and policies have been repeated or restated within multiple chapters of the plan.

This Comprehensive Plan also references previous and current related planning efforts to ensure they are considered in the community's planning and development decisions. Some recommendations from other plans have been summarized and incorporated in this plan, as deemed appropriate, to foster coordination and consistency between plans.

In the future, as plan amendments occur, it is important that Town staff and the Town Planning & Development Commission conduct consistency reviews. These reviews will ensure that the plan is up-to-date. It is also critical that the plan and/or maps are changed that these changes are made they do not conflict with other sections of the plan or other maps, or local implementation tools.

Recommended Action Steps

This section outlines the steps to implement the goals, objectives, and policies contained in the comprehensive plan. These steps are:

1. The Town Planning & Development Commission should pass a resolution recommending adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The Town Board should hold a public hearing and adopt the plan by ordinance and use it as a guide for decision-making.
3. The Town should incorporate changes to its local implementation tools to establish consistency.
4. The Town Planning & Development Commission should become knowledgeable of the plan and use it to justify recommendations to the Town Board on development issues.
5. The Town's staff should incorporate the goals, objectives and policies of the plan into annual work plans and budgets.
6. The Town should encourage citizen awareness of the plan. It is also important that developers are aware of the plan. An initial step would be to have the document hosted on the Town website.
7. The Town should provide copies of the plan to the surrounding communities and Vilas County.
8. The Town Planning & Development Commission should review the Future Land Use Map at least annually and make necessary amendment recommendations to the Town Board.
9. The Town should review the plan at least every five years, and update the plan at least every ten years.

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Maps

Map 1

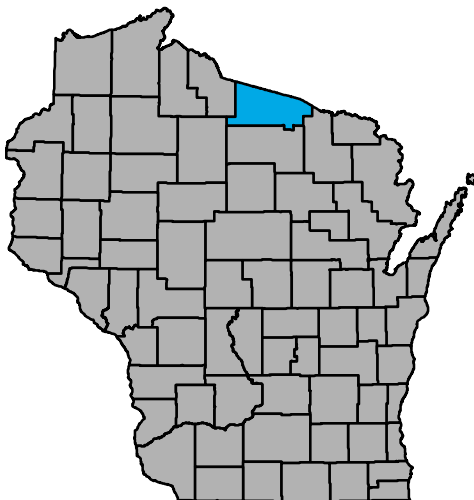
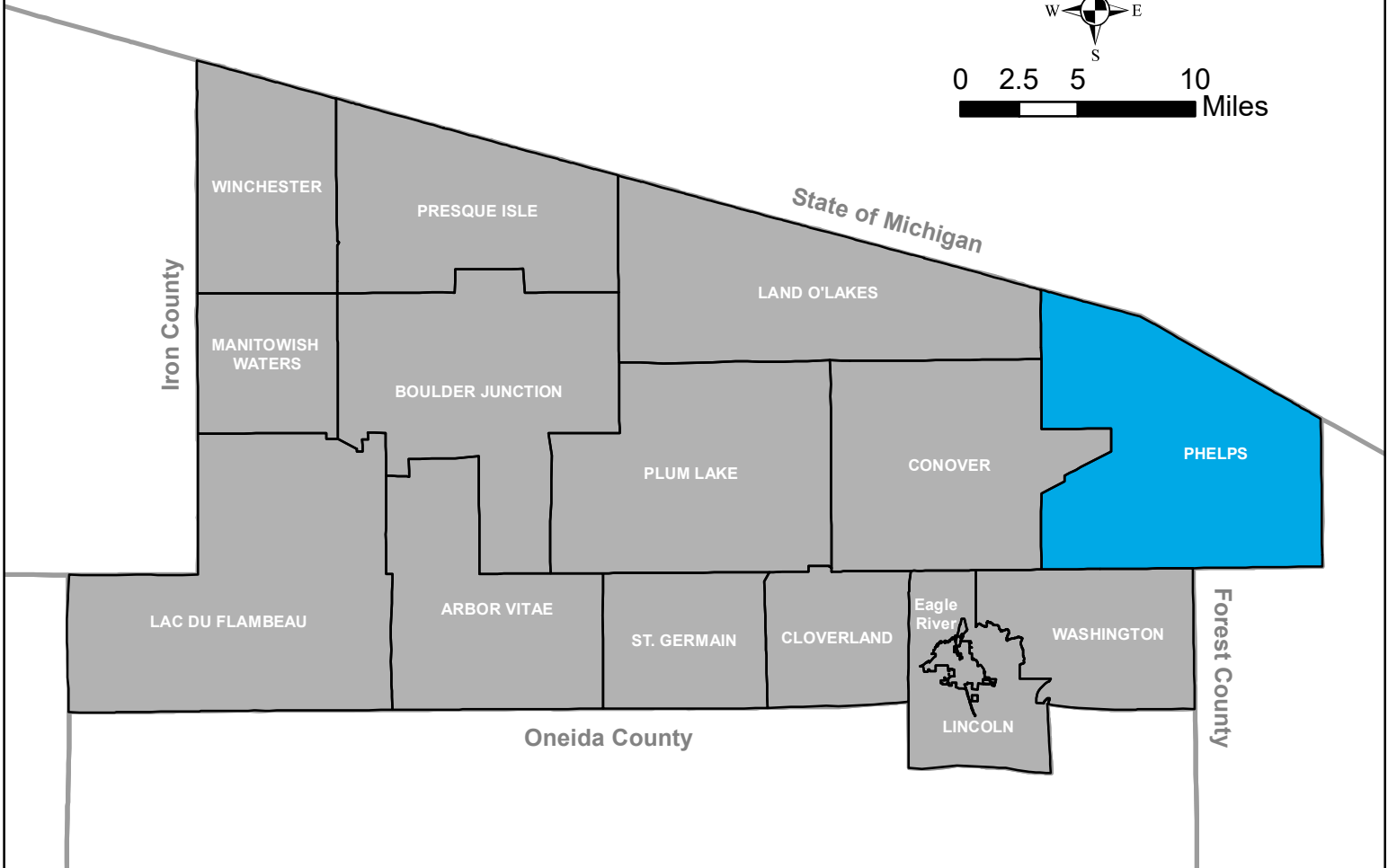
Town of Phelps

Locational Reference

Vilas County, Wisconsin



0 2.5 5 10
Miles



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



**North Central
Wisconsin Regional
Planning Commission**

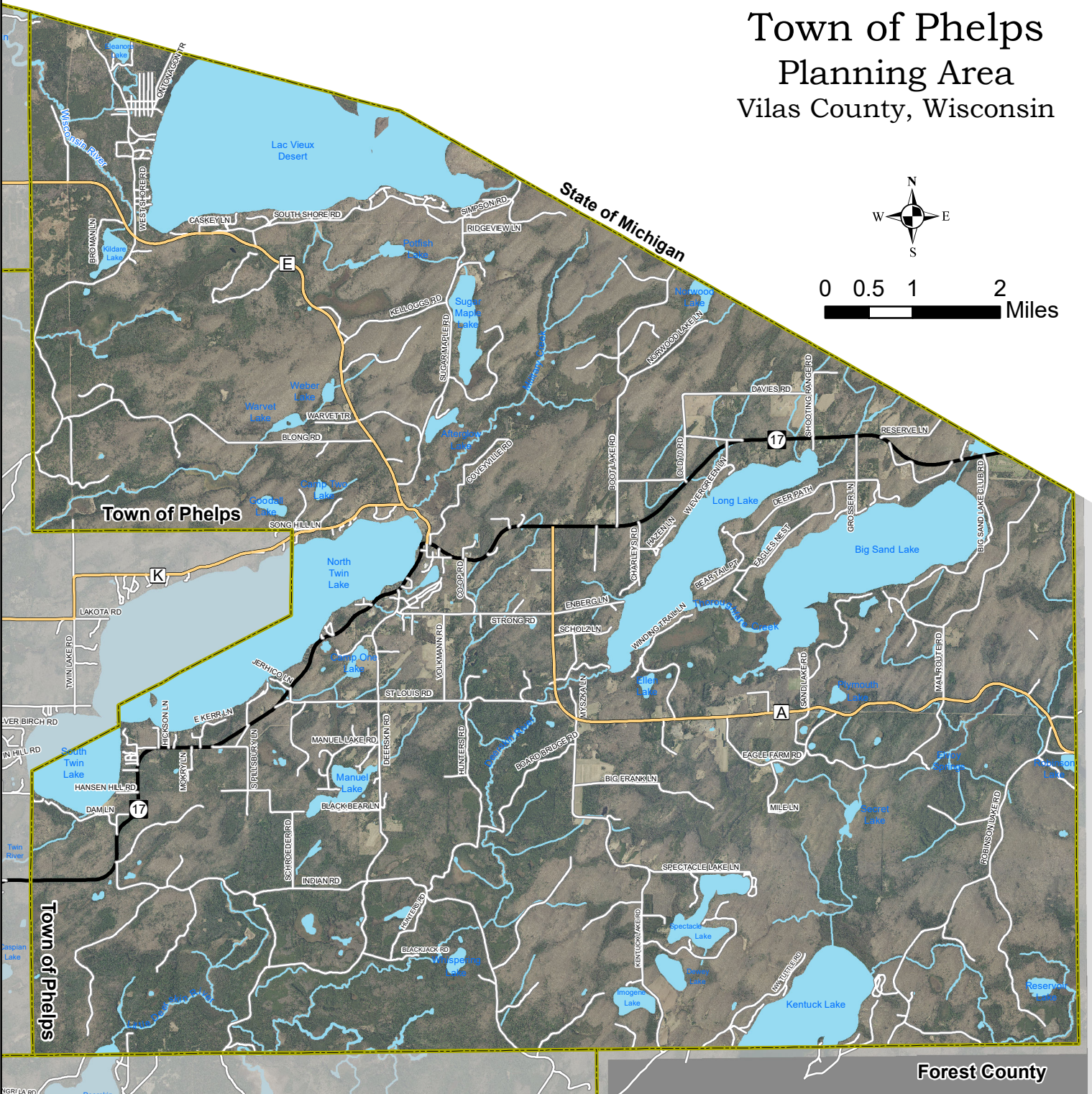
210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org







Map 2

Town of Phelps

Planning Area

Vilas County, Wisconsin



-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  U.S. Highways
-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Roads
-  Water

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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Map 3

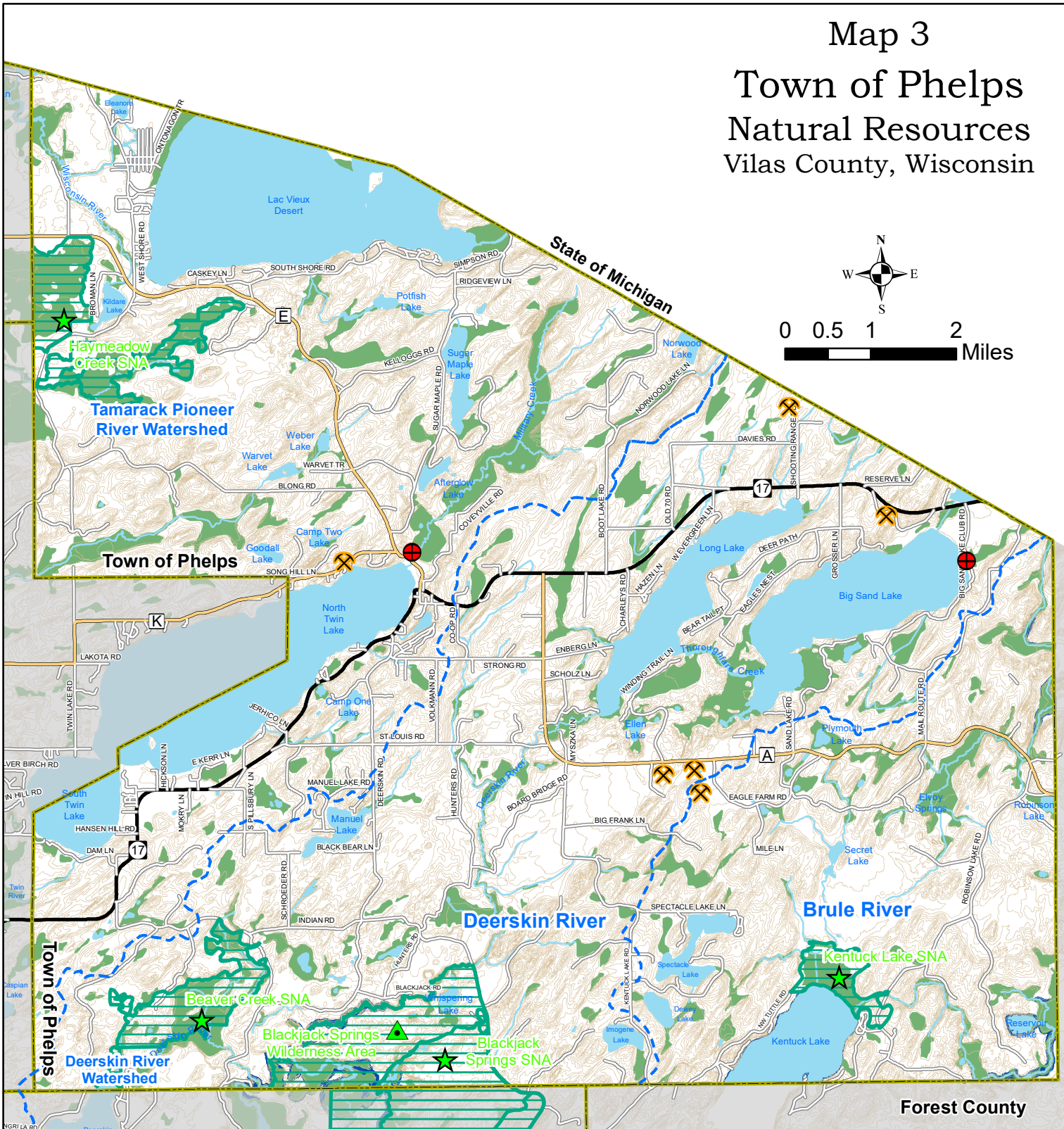
Town of Phelps

Natural Resources

Vilas County, Wisconsin



0 0.5 1 2 Miles



- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Minor Civil Divisions | Watersheds | State Natural Areas (SNA) |
| U.S. Highways | Contours 10ft | Wilderness Areas |
| State Highways | Wetlands | SNA and Wilderness Areas Boundaries |
| County Highways | Floodplain | Non-Metallic Mines |
| Roads | Water | Open Contaminated Sites |

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County
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**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

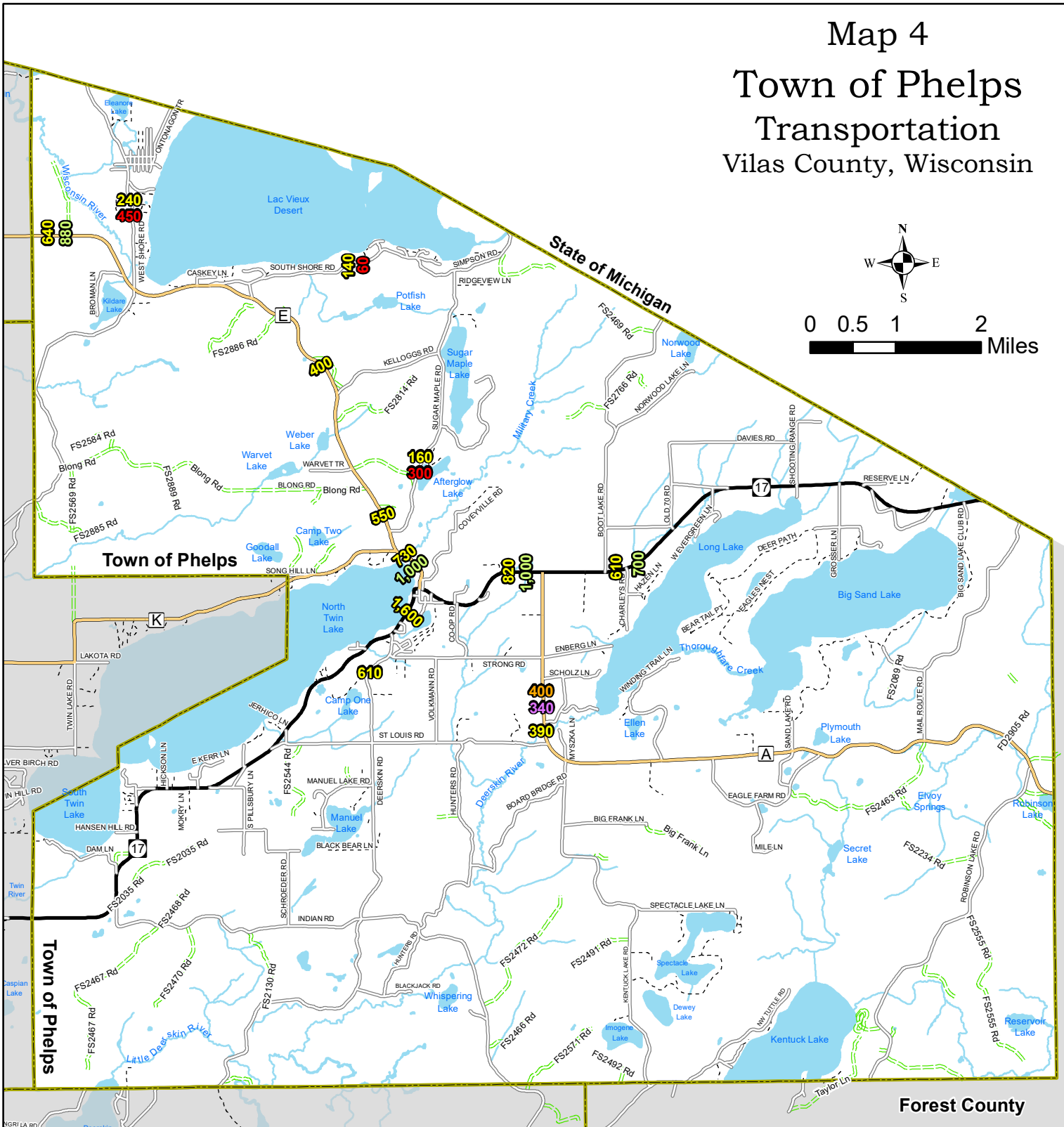
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 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Map 4

Town of Phelps

Transportation

Vilas County, Wisconsin



- Minor Civil Divisions
 - U.S. Highways
 - State Highways
 - County Highways
 - Local Roads
 - Forest Roads
 - Private Roads
 - Water
- Average Daily Traffic Counts, 2004
 - Average Daily Traffic Counts, 2007
 - Average Daily Traffic Counts, 2010
 - Average Daily Traffic Counts, 2013
 - Average Daily Traffic Counts, 2016

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, WisDOT, Vilas County Mapping

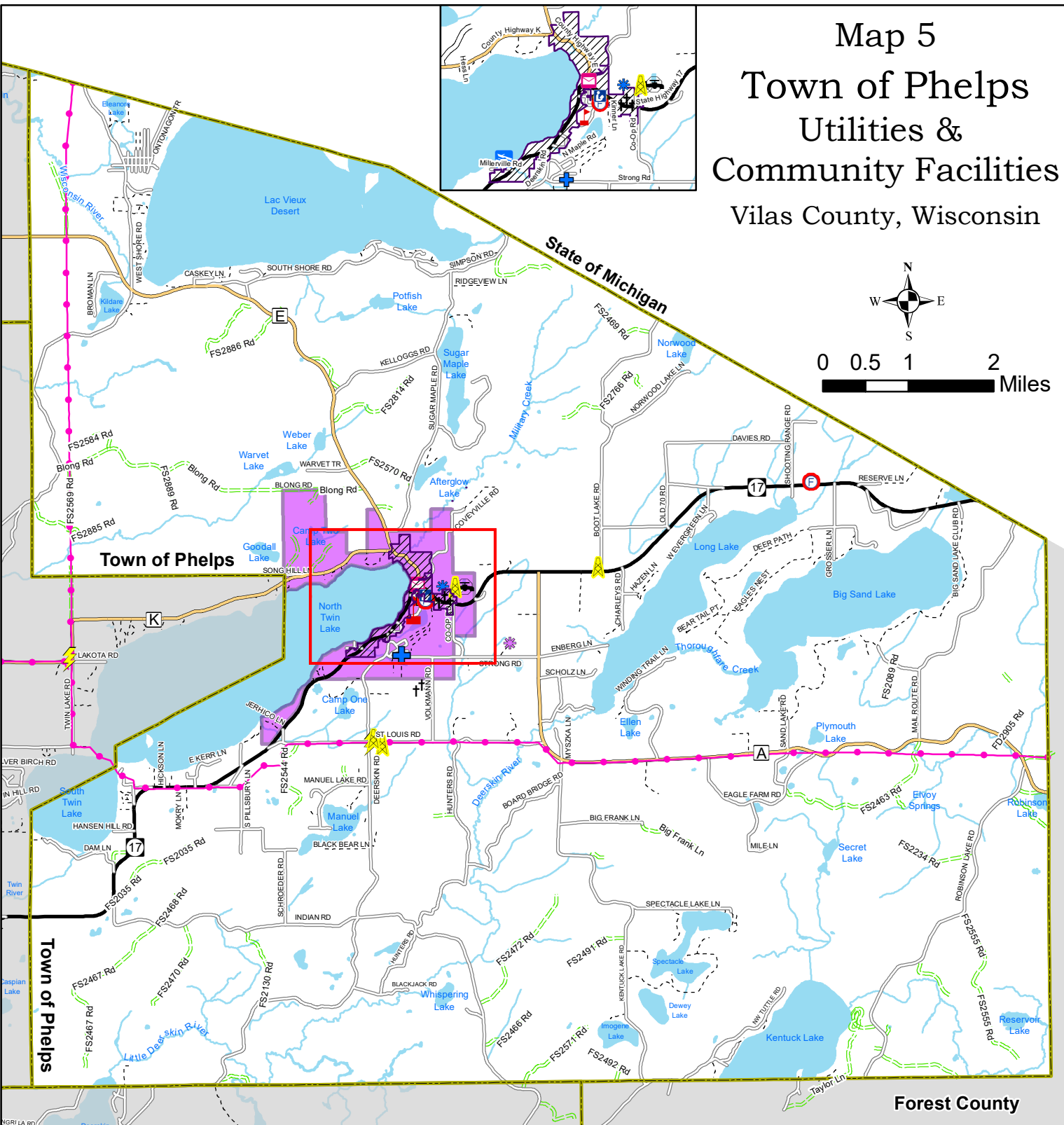
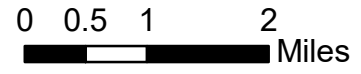
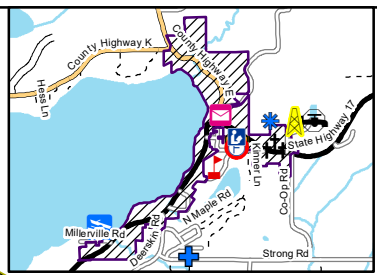
This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Map 5 Town of Phelps Utilities & Community Facilities Vilas County, Wisconsin



- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| State Highways | Cemetery | Public Water Supply |
| County Highways | Fire Station | Water Towers |
| Local Roads | Library | Waste Water Treatment Plant |
| Forest Roads | Assisted Living | Water |
| Private Roads | Post Office | Sanitary District |
| Minor Civil Divisions | Transfer Station | CDA Boundary |
| Communication Tower | School | |
| Substations | Town Hall | |
| High Voltage Powerline | | |

Source: NCRWPC, WI DNR, & Vilas County
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCRWPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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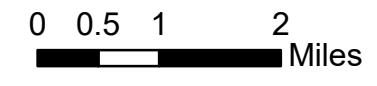
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Map 6

Town of Phelps

Outdoor Recreation

Vilas County, Wisconsin



- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| U.S. Highways | Shooting Range | Biking |
| State Highways | Campgrounds | Proposed Bike Routes |
| County Highways | Boat Launch | Existing Bike Routes |
| Local Roads | Parks | Proposed Bike Trails |
| Forest Roads | National Forest | Existing Bike Trails |
| Private Roads | State Forest | ATV |
| Minor Civil Divisions | Managed Forest Lands | Route |
| Water | Town Lands | Trail |
| | | Snowmobile Trails |
| | | Other Recreation Trails |

Source: NCRWPC, WI DNR, & Vilas County Mapping
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCRWPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



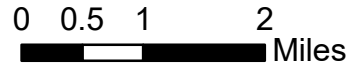
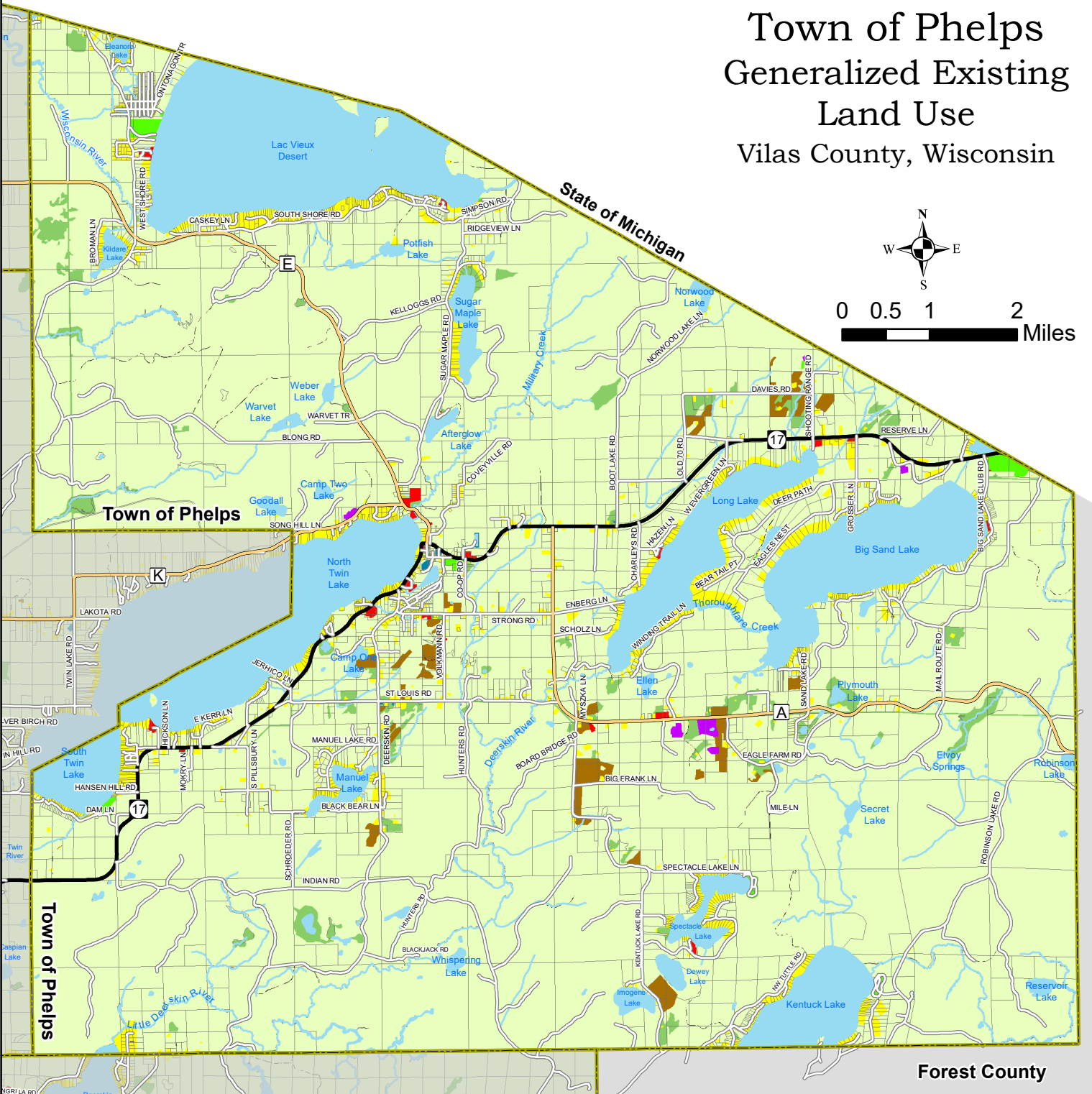
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Map 7

Town of Phelps

Generalized Existing Land Use

Vilas County, Wisconsin



- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Minor Civil Divisions | Agriculture |
| U.S. Highways | Commercial |
| State Highways | Governmental / Institutional |
| County Highways | Industrial |
| Roads | Open Lands |
| Parcels | Outdoor Recreation |
| | Residential |
| | Transportation |
| | Woodlands |
| | Water |

Existing Land Use based off aerial photo interpretation

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas County Mapping
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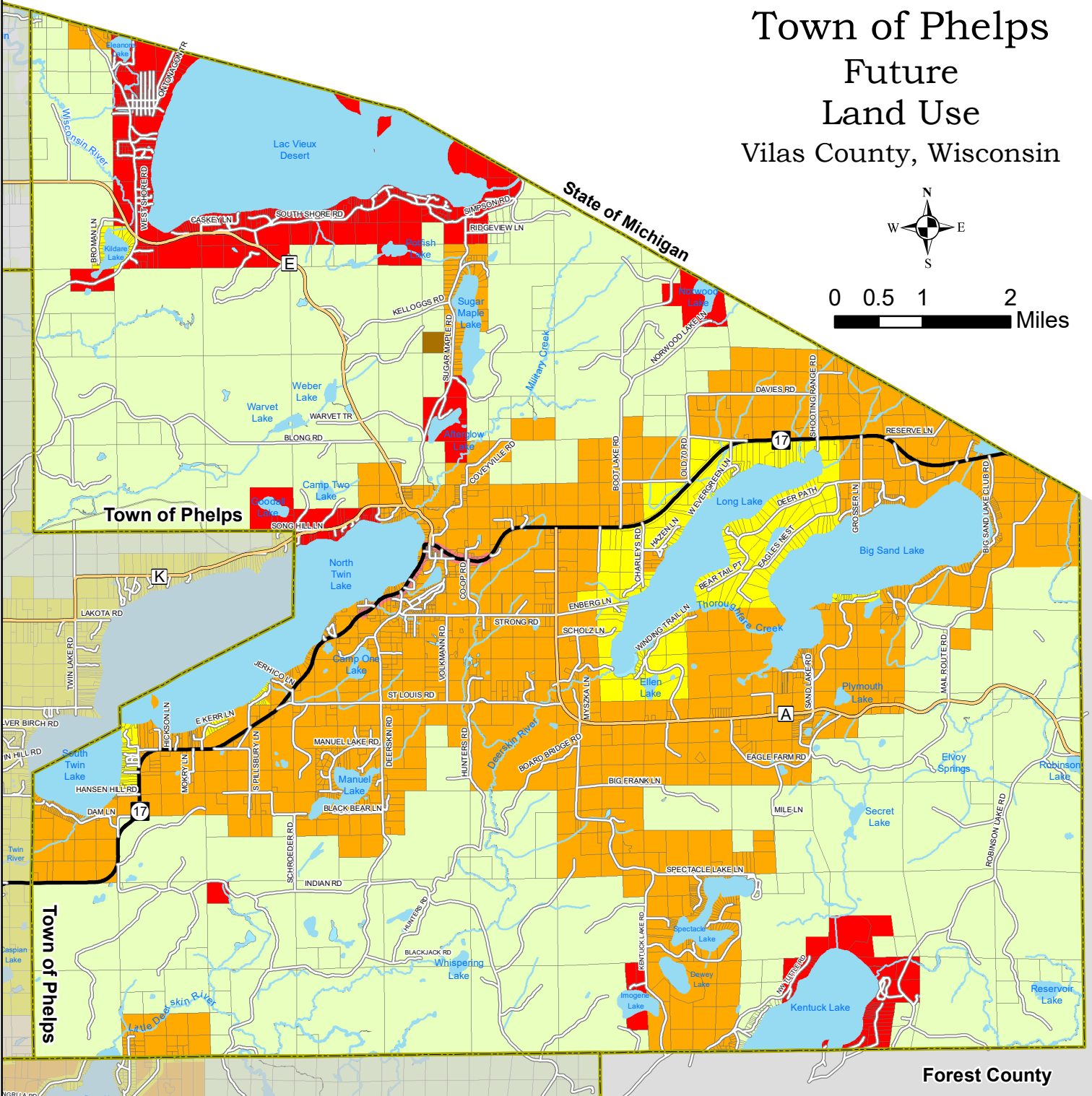
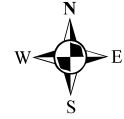
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Map 8

Town of Phelps

Future Land Use

Vilas County, Wisconsin



- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Minor Civil Divisions | Agricultural |
| U.S. Highways | All-Purpose |
| State Highways | Community Business |
| County Highways | Forestry |
| Roads | General Business |
| Parcels | Recreation |
| Water | Single-Family Residential |

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, 2015 NAIP
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Future Land Use based off County Zoning

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Appendix A

Public Participation Plan

**Resolution 2019-01
Resolution for the Adoption of a
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)**

THE TOWN BOARD DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the Town of Phelps is updating its Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

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

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Town Board to approve a process to involve Public in the planning effort; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Phelps Town Board does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as attached to this resolution.

Adopted this 13th day of March, 2019.

Phelps Town Board



Steve Doyen, Town Chair



Eugene McCaslin, Town Supervisor



Ronald H. Buell, Jr., Town Supervisor



Steve Waier, Town Supervisor



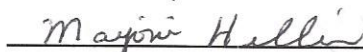
Debbie Vold, Town Supervisor

Certificate

State of Wisconsin

Town of Phelps

I, Marjorie Hiller, Town Clerk/Treasurer, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a Phelps Town Board meeting, held at the Phelps Fire Station on March 13th, 2019.



Marjorie Hiller, Clerk/Treasurer

Town of Phelps Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The Town of Phelps recognizes the importance of public participation in the planning process. As such, a goal during the comprehensive planning process will be to inform and involve the public in updating the planning process.

1. Background

The Town of Phelps recognizes the need to engage the public in the comprehensive planning process. This document sets forth the techniques the Town will use 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, elected officials, and other interested parties.

The creation of the Public Participation Plan is a task required in meeting the requirements of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Legislation (State Statute 66.1001). As the planning process develops, additional steps may be taken to involve the public.

2. Plan Development

Throughout the plan process, the Planning & Development Commission will provide oversight for the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning & Development Commission will also recommend adoption of the Public Participation Plan to the Town Board.

The public participation plan will incorporate the following:

1. All meetings for the planning process will be posted and open to the public.
2. Plan related materials will be available at the Town Hall for review by the public.
3. The draft plan and maps will be available on the town website for review by the public before the public hearing.
4. A public hearing on the draft plan will be held to solicit comment from the public prior to adoption by the Town Board.
5. The Comprehensive Plan will be distributed as outlined in state statute.

The Planning & Development Commission will review and recommend adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to the Town Board.

III. Implementation, Evaluation & Update:

The Comprehensive Plan will be used as a general guideline for development in the Town. The plan will support the existing zoning and other regulations that the Town has in place.

As with all plans, its is critical for the Comprehensive Plan to be maintained and updated on a regular basis to keep it current as things change.

Appendix B

Adoption Resolution

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION RESOLUTION #2019-01

Town of Phelps, Vilas County, Wisconsin

The Planning & Development Commission of the Town of Phelps, Vilas 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 Phelps as follows:

Adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Phelps Planning & Development Commission, by this resolution, further resolves and orders as follows:

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

The vote of the Planning & Development Commission in regard to this resolution shall be recorded by the clerk of the Planning & Development Commission in the official minutes of the Town of Phelps Planning & Development Commission.

The Town Clerk shall properly post or publish this resolution as required under s. 60.80, Wis. Stats.

Adopted this 1st day of Oct 2019.

Town of Phelps Planning & Development Commission:

Mariquita Sheehan
Mariquita Sheehan, Chair

Bob Egan

Lorin Johnson

Jack Carlson

ATTEST:

Marjorie Hiller
Marjorie Hiller, Clerk

Eugene McCaslin
Eugene McCaslin

Rollie Alger
Rollie Alger

Debbie Vold
Debbie Vold

Appendix C

Adoption Ordinance

Ordinance #2019-03
ADOPTION OF COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

Town of Phelps, Vilas County, Wisconsin

Section I- Title/Purpose

The title of this ordinance is the Town of Phelps Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Phelps 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 Phelps 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 Phelps must be in compliance with s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. Stats., in order for the Town Board to adopt this ordinance.

Section III- Adoption of Ordinance

The Town Board of the Town of Phelps, 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 Phelps 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 Phelps 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 Recommendations

The Planning & Development Commission of the Town of Phelps, 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 Phelps Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. Stats.

Section VI- Public Hearing

The Town of Phelps, 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 Phelps, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Phelps Comprehensive Plan Ordinance pursuant to s. 66.1001 (4)(c), Wis. Stats.

Section VIII- Severability

If any provision of this ordinance or 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.

Dated this day of 19th Day of November 2019.

Steve Doyen

Steve Doyen, Chairman

Debbie Vold

Debbie Vold, Supervisor

Ronald H. Buell, Jr.

Ronald H. Buell, Jr. Supervisor

Steve Waier

Steve Waier, Supervisor

Eugene McCaslin

Eugene McCaslin, Supervisor

ATTEST: *Marjorie Hiller*

Marjorie Hiller, Clerk/Treasurer

Posted/Published: 11/27/19
Effective Date: 11/28/19

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was duly approved by the Phelps Town Board by roll call vote at a legal meeting on the 19th day of November, 2019.

Marjorie Hiller
Marjorie Hiller, Clerk/Treasurer

Town of Phelps
Comprehensive Plan
2019