

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Cross Plains in western Dane County is primarily a farming community with the rural settlement of Pine Bluff in the south-central part of the town. The northern part of the town is associated with the Village of Cross Plains and is traversed by the Black Earth Creek.

The Black Earth Creek, which is a well-known trout stream, has formed a beautiful valley with productive agricultural soils on the surface and high-quality gravel deposits below the surface. There is a major gravel extraction area east of the village. There are also a number of limestone quarries in the town.

While most of the land in the town is in farms, the hills and steep slopes of this driftless or unglaciated area has resulted in considerable tree cover. These woodlands add to the scenic beauty of the area but more importantly they assist in protecting the slopes from excessive erosion.

The terminal moraine, or farthest westward extent of the glacier runs through the northeastern corner of the town. In fact, the Cross Plains Unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve is located in this area because it contains a segment of the terminal moraine situated on the boundary between glaciated moraine on one side and the unglaciated “driftless area” on the other.

The major roadways of the town are U.S. Highway 14 in the north and County Highway “S” (Mineral Point Road) which provides access to shopping and employment in the Madison area. County Highway “P” runs north and south through the center of the town primarily linking the Villages of Cross Plains and Mt. Horeb.

This combination of factors has generated some urban development. While the town is not opposed to development, there is a concern for farmland preservation, protection of farm operations from non-farm uses, the control of sporadic development, and the maintenance of the rural character of the town. Another concern is that uncontrolled development can lead to the need for urban services for development areas. Such services as sewer, water and storm sewers are not necessary for a farming community.

The balance of the Town Land Use Plan will review the current situation in the town, objectives and policies for various land uses, an implementation program or how the plan will work and a series of maps which show the various resources graphically.

## BACKGROUND DATA

### Population

One part of the plan analysis is the population, or trends in the number of people living in the town. The trends have been somewhat erratic in that the population decreased from 1940 to 1960. However, there was an increase from 1960 to 1970. Recent estimates indicate a stable or decreasing population.

Table 1  
Town of Cross Plains Population

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Number Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
*1940	908		
*1950	901	- 7	- .8%
*1960	853	- 48	-5.3%
*1970	995	+142	+16.7%
**1975	1,008	+ 13	+ 1.3%
**1979	1,009	+ 1	+0.1%

Source: \*U.S. Census

\*\*Wisconsin Department of Administration Annual Estimates

### Growth and Development

Growth and development trends have been measured since the adoption of the County Land Use Plan by the Regional Planning Commission. Two key indicators for towns are the number of lots created and the number of residences constructed. Table 2 shows those figures for the past few years. While there has been some development, the balance between building and lots created is favorable. Some towns have experienced problems with excessive numbers of vacant lots.

Table 2  
Town of Cross Plains  
Housing Units Built and Land Divisions

<u>Year</u>	<u>Housing Units</u>	<u>Parcels Created</u>
1970	9	-
1971	6	-
1972	15	10
1973	13	5
1974	5	6
1975	4	0
1976	9	8
1977	8	12
1978	12	14
1979	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	87	62
Ave. Per Year	8.7	7.8

Source: Dane County RPC "Regional Trends"

## Agriculture

The number of farms has dropped slightly for the period shown in Table 3, however, the acreage in farming is fairly stable. Thus, the average acreage per farm has increased which is fairly typical with individual farmers able to handle larger areas with improved equipment.

Table 3  
Town of Cross Plains  
Farm Statistics

	<u>1967</u>	<u>1976</u>
Number of Farms	100	80
Acres of Farmland	19,559	19,735
Ave. Acres per Farm	196	247
Acres of Corn	4,027	5,522
Acres of Oats	1,673	1,302
Acres of Hay	4,325	5,474
Pasture and Other Farmland	9,043	6,905
Number of Milk Cows	2,780	2,606

Source: Wisconsin Assessor Farm Statistics

## **MAPPED INFORMATION**

In developing the land use plan, a number of maps were prepared showing the various natural resources, man-made features and ownership patterns. These maps were used in making the plan and will continue to be used to make future decisions based on the policies of the plan.

### 1. Soil Productivity Classification

This map identifies the soils on which agriculture is most productive, and therefore the lands that deserve special attention in developing land use policies. The soils of the town have been mapped according to their agricultural capability as defined by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, USDA.

Two categories are identified. Prime Farmland is land with the soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically when managed and worked according to modern farming methods. Farmland of Statewide Importance is land which is not identified as prime farmland on a nationwide basis, but which is important in Wisconsin for the production of various food, feed, fiber and forage crops.

## 2. Soils Limited for Septic Tank Absorption Fields

This map identifies the land on which septic systems are difficult to install and operate, and therefore the lands where unsewered development probably should not occur. Two categories of limitation are identified: severe and very severe. Severe limitations for septic tank absorption field mean that soil characteristics (permeability, depth to bedrock, slope, etc.) are unfavorable and difficult to overcome. Very severe limitations mean that one or more soil properties are so unfavorable that overcoming the limitation is not commonly practical.

Since there are no areas presently served or planned to be served by public sewer service in the town, all development will have to use septic tank-soil absorption systems for sewage disposal. The Village of Cross Plains does have public sewer service and has plans for some limited expansion.

## 3. Water Resources

This map identifies water bodies, floodplain areas where there are limitations on development, wetlands, and drainage divides. The most prominent features are the Black Earth Creek in the north and the beginning of the Sugar River in the south.

## 4. Woodlands

This map shows the location of woodlands, an important resource of the town.

## 5. Land Use

This map shows the location of man-made features such as farms, homes, commercial uses, etc. It was used in the preparation of the plan and will be used for reference in making future planning and zoning decisions.

## 6. Zoning

This map shows the current zoning for all lands in the town. Once the plan is adopted all zoning changes proposed will be evaluated using the policies in the plan.

## 7. Ownership Analysis (Available at the Town Hall)

This map shows the land publicly owned (such as DNR), currently urbanized areas and parcels under 35 acres in size. This provides a picture of current and potential urbanization based on ownership and parcel sizes, since it is unlikely small parcels would be farmed.

## 8. Absentee Owners (Available at Town Hall)

This map shows land owned by people who do not live in the town. In some places, this is an indicator of proposed development.

## TOWN LAND USE OBJECTIVES AND DISTRICTS

### Objectives of the Town of Cross Plains are to:

Preserve the productive farmlands in the town for continued agricultural use.

Protect farm operations from conflict with incompatible uses.

Control sporadic development.

Protect the natural environment.

Maintain the rural character of the town.

Avoid any substantial expenditure of public funds for urban development.

### Town Plan Districts

As an initial effort to achieve the town's land use objectives, the town has been divided into the following districts. The Town Board and Town Planning Committee have the responsibility of assuring that the use of land within any plan district is consistent with purpose and policies of that district.

#### Agricultural Preservation District

**Purpose:** Protect farm operations from the encroachment of incompatible uses and help qualify farmers for the state agricultural tax credit program.

**Policies:** The uses of land permitted in the agricultural district will be primarily limited to agricultural production and dwelling units which serve as the places of residence for the owners and employees of the farm.

#### Non-Farm Development

Lands in the agricultural district should not be rezoned for non-farm residential development at an overall density of greater than one dwelling per 35 acres owned as of the date of adoption of this plan. Any land considered for rezoning shall meet all the following criteria. It should be:

Land where there has not been a history of economically viable farming activities.

Land which is too small to be economically used for agricultural purposes or which are inaccessible to the farm machinery needed to produce and harvest agricultural products.

Land located such that there would be no possible conflict with the surrounding agricultural uses.

Land which assessor has classified as non-workable land.

Land which will allow construction of a road or driveway suitable for emergency vehicle travel and safe access onto existing roadways. Compliance with the Town Driveway Ordinance will be required. Every effort will be made to avoid having roads or driveways cross agricultural land to reach proposed non-farm development.

Land which does not disturb or destroy any important natural features such as: significant woodland areas, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.

The minimum lot size for any approved non-farm development in agricultural areas shall be 20,000 sq. ft.

Only commercial uses clearly needed to support agricultural production may be permitted to rezone in designated agricultural preservation areas. Also small family owned and operated businesses that provide a service to the community may be permitted with any restriction deemed necessary by the Town Board. Only that portion of land necessary for the contemplated use will be rezoned if all other policies are met.

Mineral extraction operations may be permitted through rezoning provided that they meet all the policies and standards of the town with regard to road usage and are compatible with the surrounding use of land.

Farmers within the town will be encouraged to follow soil conservation plans or to utilize soil conservation practices.

The town will cooperate with other units of government to make local farmers eligible for the farmland tax credit and other programs that would encourage the continued use of land for farming.

Town ordinances that restrict noise, odors, keeping of animals or other activities that could inhibit normal farm operations should not apply in farming areas designated on the plan map.

Unsewered Development District (Platted Areas on Plan Map)

Purpose: Provide areas for low density residential and limited commercial development.

Policies: 20,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size exclusive of roadway will be the requirement for each building site.

All developments shall follow natural contour of the land or be related to the natural contour of the land.

All developers shall be required to institute permanent erosion control measures.

### Roads

No cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets will be permitted.

The Town of Cross Plains will not accept financial responsibility of any road as a result of a new development until 80% of the development is completed and the road meets the town standards.

Each development must provide a performance bond to cover the cost of road construction and erosion control measures.

### Parks

Park dedication requirements shall be in the form of a financial contribution to the Town of Cross Plains which shall be used for future development of public parks to be located in an area that is designated by the Town Board for use by all residents of the township.

No existing parks or land designated for a park or public use shall be reverted to private ownership without a public hearing.

### Commercial Development

Must be adjacent to existing commercial development.

Must have direct access to a town road, county or state highway.

Will be limited to services for local residents and only the minimal area necessary for use will be rezoned.

Which requires sanitary sewer service will be directed to an urban service area which such service is available.

### Expansion of an unsewered development district must meet the following:

Land proposed for inclusion must adjoin on existing development area.

Land which is not classified as prime farmland or those of statewide importance (as shown on the soil map).

Proposed development on the land to be included must be compatible with existing agricultural uses on adjacent parcels.

All relevant objectives and policies of this plan as well as the general welfare of the whole town will be taken into account in making such a decision. This would be a plan amendment and would follow that procedure.

## Resource Protection District (100 Year Floodplain)

**Purpose:** Provide an overlay district that offers the opportunity to identify and manage important local resources such as: floodplains, wetlands, woodlands and historic sites.

**Policies:** There shall be no filling or development in any floodplain or wetland area indicated on the plan map.

Woodlands are an important resource to the town, and protection of quality woodlands, as well as those which provide some erosion protection, will receive priority consideration for preservation from development.

Agricultural activities within delineated wetlands area on the Water Resources Map will be limited to existing operations and may be expanded only if filling or draining is not required.

## Public Lands

The town has several areas which are owned by public agencies such as:

- Wisconsin DNR lands along Black Earth Creek
- Cross Plains Unit Age National Scientific Reserve, DRN owned and operated
- University of Wisconsin Observatory on Observatory Road
- Waterfowl Production Area in Section 24

The town intends to take the following steps:

1. To maintain contact with DNS and the University to insure input and participation from town officials and citizens concerning future acquisition of land.
2. To insure that such land acquisitions are subsequent use conform to the objectives of the town plan.

## Urban Service Area

**Purpose:** To recognize the urban service area of the Village of Cross Plains and cooperate in planning to insure that higher density land uses requiring urban services take place in the village. Thus, more farmland will be preserved and efficient use of exiting public facilities can be made.

**Policies:** To continue to participate in the “Good Neighbor” planning group with the Village and Town of Berry in a cooperative planning effort.

To recognize the adopted urban service area of the village as delineated on the plan map.

To evaluate any proposed change to the urban service area with respect to applicable objectives and policies of the town plan.

To require that the village and other interested governmental units consider the Town Land Use Plan and recommendations of the town officials in making future decisions about the service area.

### **PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING THE LAND USE PLAN**

The town planning committee will continue to study issues and problems relating to the use of land in the town and on an annual basis evaluate this plan's effectiveness and recommend needed changes to the Town Board.

The Town Board, upon application from landowners, may change the district boundaries on the land use plan map when it is found that the change is consistent with plan district policies.

In both cases the following procedure will be used for changing the plan:

1. The Town Planning Committee will notify all concerned individuals and conduct a public hearing to gather and present information.
2. Following the public hearing the plan committee shall make a recommendation to the Town Board.
3. The Town Board, at a regular meeting, shall act on the plan committee's recommendation and approve, deny or amend any proposed change to this plan. If the action is to amend the proposed change, a further hearing will be held on that amendment, prior to adoption.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

To give the plan meaning and clearly state the town's intent for using the plan in making decision, the following actions are anticipated:

1. The Town of Cross Plains will consider adoption of the A-1 Agricultural District (Exclusive) of the Dane County Zoning Ordinance, which would apply to all lands designated as agricultural preservation on the Land Use Plan maps. It is the intent of the town to apply the Town Policies and Objectives in the evaluation and decision of each proposed zoning change.
2. Environmental protection is an objective of the plan, which is partially implemented through the Floodplain Zoning District; however, there is provision in the ordinance for some filling and development. There are, in addition, areas beyond the floodplain which need protection and Conservancy Zoning will be considered for those areas. The Town will continue to monitor and take positions on legislation proposed to protect such lands and provide some benefit to landowners of such lands.

3. Residential Development policies will be implemented through zoning. In those areas shown for “Rural Development” on the Plan Map, the intent is to keep them in agricultural use until development is imminent and insure eligibility of landowners for Farmland Preservation Act benefits until the time of zoning change. For lands to develop a plan amendment and re-zoning to an appropriate residential district will be required such as R-1.
4. Commercial and Industrial Development Policies will be implemented primarily through zoning changes.
5. The primary policy for Agricultural Lands is preservation, with limited development allowed on less productive lands. This limited non-farm development has a 20,000 square foot minimum lot size, which will be implemented through use of the Residential Zoning District. The “density of one lot per 35 acres within a farm unit” means that someone who owns 140 acres could create up to 4 lots if all other policies were met. The lots may be together in a cluster or at scattered points depending “farm unit” will include the land holdings as of the date of adoption of this plan. It is also recognized that additional farm residences are allowed in the A-1 Agricultural (Exclusive) District “...occupied by a person who, or a family at least one member of which, earns a substantial part of his or her livelihood from farm operations on the farm parcel.” There is also provision for one residence per farm under the conditional use provisions for parents or children of the farm operator. In reviewing applications for these conditional uses, the town will apply the Town Land Use Plan policies insofar as reasonable.
6. The town recognizes the importance of woodlands and steeper slopes as being valuable to the natural habitat and scenic value of the area. Provisions to safeguard these areas from harmful development are provided for in the Land Use Plan.
7. It is recognized that the Town Land Use Plan will require periodic review and revision in light of changing conditions and experience gained in plan implementation. The intent of the Town Board is to have the Town Land Use Plan reviewed by the Town Planning Committee annually for needed changes. It is further the intent to conduct a major re-evaluation of the plan every 5 years hereafter.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Agricultural Land: areas identified on the Town Plan as being most appropriate for preservation as long-term agricultural use based on soil type, historical use, owner commitment, degree of investment, natural features, parcel size, and adjacent land uses.

Density: Medium – residential development at a density of two housing units per acre in the “rural development” areas of the plan.

Low – residential development at a density of one housing unit per 35 acres owned as provided in plan policies with on-site sewage disposal within farmland preservation area.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction: the unincorporated area with 1 ½ miles of the corporate limits of a city of the fourth class or a village.

Floodplain: the land adjacent to a body of water which has been or may be hereafter covered by flood water.

Public Services: for the purposes of this plan, include transportation facilities, police, fire protection, and others determined to be appropriate.

Rural Non-Farm Areas: those areas identified on the Town Plan as the location of new or additional residential areas at rural densities.

Shoreland Area: all lands in the unincorporated area of the town which are 1,000 feet from the normal high water mark of any lake, pond or flowage listed in Surface Water Resources of Dane County published by Conservation Commission, 1961; and or to the landward side of a floodplain of the navigable reaches of rivers and streams.

Strip Development: the development of a series of commercial or residential land uses generally one lot deep along a road or highway, with each use usually requiring an access to the road.

Subdivision: a division of a parcel of land where the act of division creates:

- a) Five or more lots, parcels or building sites of 15 acres each or less in area; or
- b) Five or more lots, parcels or building sites of 15 acres each or less in area by successive divisions within a period of five years.

Urban Service Areas (Municipally Associated): those areas identified on the Town Plan adjacent to the Village of Cross Plains determined to be most suitable for new or additional development at urban densities and providing the full range of public services.

Urban Services: include those services that should be provided in urban areas with particular emphasis on facilities on or in the land as a part of the development process such as sanitary and storm sewer, and water supply and distribution.

Wetland: land areas characterized by high water table, the presence of surface water at any time during the year, predominantly organic soils and aquatic vegetation.

RESOLUTION

TO ADOPT TOWN OF CROSS PLAINS  
LAND USE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Town of Cross Plains Planning Committee has developed a Town Land Use Plan;

WHEREAS, the Planning Committee has conducted a hearing on this plan including: background information, information maps, goals, policies, implementation program and plan map;

WHEREAS, the Planning Committee has recommended Town Board adoption;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Land Use Plan, including all maps and materials be forwarded to the County Zoning Committee for review and approval.

May 19, 1981  
Date Adopted

Susan Swiggum  
Clerk

Walter Haack  
Town Chairman

Maurice Coyle  
Supervisor

Donald Bowar  
Supervisor