

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Location

The Town of Erin Prairie is located in central St. Croix County, Wisconsin, one of the fastest growing counties in the state (see *Map 1-1*). The Town shares a border with the City of New Richmond and adjoining Townships. Erin Prairie is a historically agricultural area that is also home to residents who commute to non-agricultural jobs outside the town. Such bedroom residency may increase in the future.

Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Town of Erin Prairie Comprehensive Plan is to identify and analyze area trends in order to guide the Town's future. It provides a document that will promote consistent decision making by local officials, industries, businesses, developers, and residents, by providing a clear vision of the future. It is meant to be reviewed and revised as the community vision evolves over time.

Comprehensive Planning Law

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law or "Smart Growth Law" was passed in October 1999 as part of the State's biennial budget. This law requires that every town and city be guided by a comprehensive plan by January 1, 2010. Smart Growth was enacted to encourage long-range planning for communities and provide consistency in land-use decision making.

Smart Growth planning calls for public participation throughout the entire planning process. Before 1999, public participation and a public hearing were not required for adoption of a local plan.

State statutes require the plans to consist of nine elements, each focusing on an important sector of the community. These elements are:

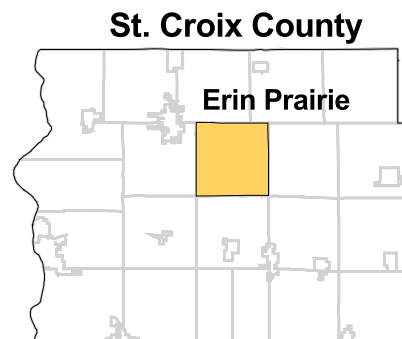
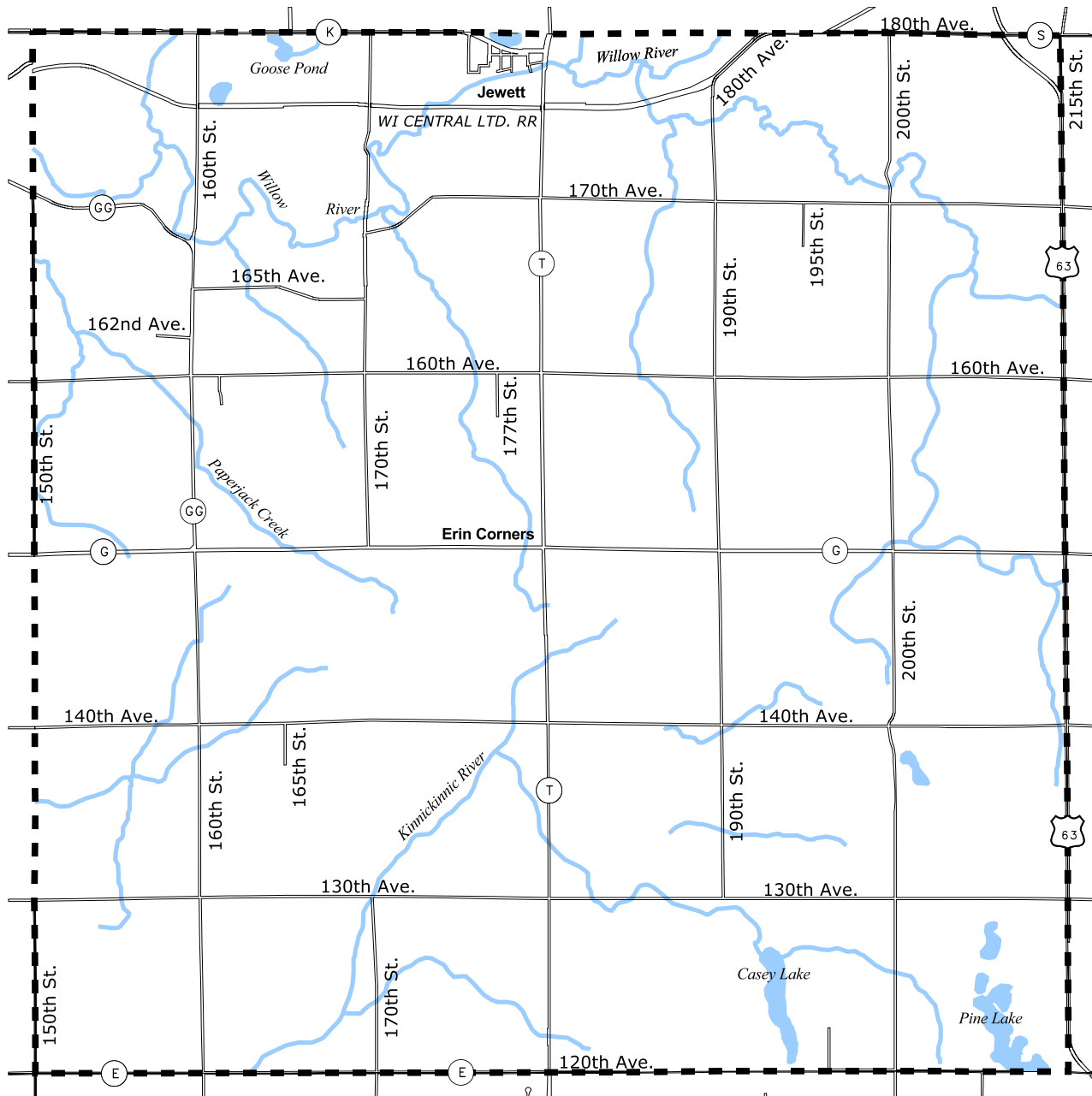
- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Plan Implementation

The goal of Smart Growth is to ensure that communities look at how all of these elements affect each other, creating awareness and a cohesive overall vision for the Town of Erin Prairie.

PROJECT LOCATION

Map 1-1

Town of Erin Prairie
St. Croix County, Wisconsin



Public Participation

Wisconsin State Statutes Section 66.1001(4)(a) requires that procedures be adopted to foster public participation at every stage of the plan's preparation. The Town adopted a public participation resolution, which is included as a preface to this document.

Plan Development Process

The Town of Erin Prairie Plan Commission was assigned the task of creating the comprehensive plan. The Town's comprehensive plan was developed after discussing demographic trends, existing conditions, visions of how the Town should be in the next 20 years, and means of achieving those visions.

Regional Planning Jurisdictions and Government Agencies

While the Town of Erin Prairie plans for its own future, it also is within and adjacent to other governmental agency districts that do their own planning. Available plans will be reviewed to negotiate inconsistencies in areas of joint concern. Some of the planning and government agencies that the Town interacts with are:

- West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- St. Croix County
- St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation
- City of New Richmond
- Adjoining Townships

Goals, Objectives, Programs, Policies, and Actions

Goals, objectives, policies, programs, and actions will be created for each of the planning elements listed above,. Together, these will present and identify means of realizing the plan. Definitions of these terms are listed below.

Goal: A general statement that describes a desired future result.

Objective: Objectives are statements that describe what the Town hopes to achieve in pursuit of a goal.

Programs, Policies, and Actions: Programs, policies, and actions describe specific implementation strategies to be carried out in order to meet a goal and achieve the objectives. A policy can be an ordinance, a program can be a series of policies and actions, and an action can be something carried out by a group without the need of an official policy.

The intent of the plan as a whole should be considered in decision-making. No single sentence, table, or map, on its own, represents the whole intent of the Town's comprehensive plan.