

## 9 IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires this element to include a compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in the Plan. In addition, the element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.

By law and beginning on January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit engages in any of the following actions, those actions shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan:

- Official mapping.
- Local subdivision regulation.
- City zoning ordinances.
- Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands.

The City of Onalaska's Comprehensive Plan establishes a 20-year vision and goals for the City of Onalaska, and a Long Term Planning Area beyond this timeframe. It has been created with public input, including neighboring jurisdictions, and provides a realistic direction for the City's future. The Plan will be measured in terms of the degree to which we achieve our vision and goals.

The implementation of the Plan is of primary importance, and implementation depends on both private and public action. Public action includes making policy decisions, adopting specific plans, administering regulations, and budgeting and financing public and/or private improvements.

The Plan Commission (or the Long Range Planning Committee?) should be the primary body responsible for implementing, monitoring, and recommending updates to this plan. The Commission should be supported by the City Council, staff, and other appointed boards and commissions.

The greatest number of decisions impacting the City's future will be made by private citizens and businesses through private actions. Thus, it is essential that the public be aware of, understand and support the plan. The public has been involved in creating this plan and will continue to be involved in all City planning efforts.

## 9.1 The Role of Implementation in the Comprehensive Planning Process

It has been said that a plan is only as good as its implementation. The City of Onalaska has worked hard to develop this plan as a vision for its future. Whether or not that vision is realized depends upon the degree to which the elements of the plan are put into action.

This element looks at those tools already in place to help decision making bodies in their work. It should be stated at the outset that the plan can be implemented using existing tools and regulations. No new laws or regulations are required in order for the plan to be realized. What is required is the commitment of all of the decision making units of the ideals of the plan.

## 9.2 Development Control Ordinances

One of the most important tools of plan implementation is the authority to control development of private land. Most jurisdictions have a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, including the City of Onalaska, which provide specific land use restrictions and development standards. Since the early 1920's, when the concept of land development control was initiated in the United States, development control techniques have been expanded, refined and subjected to all levels of judicial scrutiny. As the purview of municipal authority has changed along with new land development techniques, so have the development control ordinances. However, as times and conditions change, so do regulatory systems, and one of the central recommendations of this Plan is for the City to create a new Unified Development Code/Ordinance to combine and update the existing zoning and subdivision ordinances.

### 9.2.1 Zoning Regulations

Careful application of modern zoning controls can go far in assisting the City in accomplishing the goals of this Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance establishes definitions, standards and procedures for administrative and legislative bodies to review and approve specific land developments. The existing Zoning Ordinance should be updated to reflect the plan's recommendations. As stated above, the City's zoning regulations are proposed to become part of a new Unified Development Code/Ordinance rather than just a separate, stand-alone ordinance.

### 9.2.2 Subdivision Regulations

Instituting development standards for land subdivision is another regulating measure of importance in community development. It is essential that the

opening of new residential and other areas, by the platting for sale of lots, be at a level that will not be a liability to the public at a future date. Subdivision regulations serve an important function by ensuring the orderly growth and development of unplatted and undeveloped land.

Good subdivision controls include minimum or maximum standards for improvements such as street widths, lot sizes, block sizes, street grades and utility easements. In addition, such conditions as dead-end streets, offset intersections and the relationship of streets to adjacent neighborhoods should be regulated in a reasonable manner and in the public interest. The City's subdivision ordinance should include clear statements of development policies. These policies should detail the developer's responsibilities for providing sanitary sewers, storm sewers, water, roads and other improvements.

It is important that the City's Plan Commission and City Council continue to give careful attention to the enforcement of these regulations and general standards. Each preliminary plat should be reviewed thoroughly to assess the compatibility of the proposed street pattern with adjoining land. It is important that the proposed development plan follow recommended land planning standards and it is essential that the engineering design of streets, storm drainage facilities, sanitary sewers and utility systems conform to adopted criteria and requirements. An engineering review is important as the Plan Commission reviews and makes decisions on development proposals.

The areas to be platted should also be compared with the Comprehensive Plan to determine what, if any, attention should be given to future school sites, park sites, thoroughfares, changes in land use, cluster/conservation subdivision design and other elements of the plan. Also as stated above, the City's zoning regulations are proposed to become part of a new Unified Development Code/Ordinance rather than just a separate, stand-alone ordinance.

### 9.2.3 Official Mapping

The official map is another tool for land use control that can be used to preserve the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan and to regulate future growth. Chapters 60 and 62 of the Wisconsin Statutes provide for the establishment of an official map to indicate all existing and planned streets, parks and other public uses. The official map enables the City to prevent private development from occurring in areas designated for other uses. The City adopted its first Official Map in XXXX and will be updated as part of this plan. It should continue to be updated. All proposed street extensions, park areas, drainageways, and wellhead protection areas should be identified on the map.

### 9.2.4 Codes

Building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and fire prevention codes provide sound standards for the safe construction, use and occupancy of buildings. These codes should be considered implementation devices of the plan for a variety of reasons. First, use of the codes ensures that the high quality of development sought as an objective of the plan is, in fact, carried out via the permit and inspection requirements of the codes. Secondly, through the same permit requirements, government is providing a check-off point to insure that the land uses proposed are in accordance with the proposed uses embodied in the plan and permitted by the appropriate zoning district. Finally, use of the codes provides a mechanism that insures that, following the construction of the building to the required standards, it is maintained in an acceptable fashion over time.

### 9.2.5 Capital Improvement Plan

A method by which the public related components of the Comprehensive Plan can be implemented is through capital improvements programming (CIP). A CIP provides an orderly sequence of funding, prioritization and project status. It furnishes a means of assuring that projects will be carried out in accordance with the community's ability to pay without creating an excessive tax burden.

A capital improvement may be defined as a major expenditure of public funds, beyond maintenance and operating costs, for the acquisition or construction of a needed physical facility. Salaries, supplies and other overhead expenditures are considered maintenance and operating costs and should be provided for elsewhere in the annual budgetary process. Improvements or acquisitions of a permanent nature representing a long-term investment of public funds are considered a capital improvement.

A capital improvement program is simply a method of planning for major capital expenditures and scheduling them over a period of years in order to maximize the use of public funds. It is a means of attempting to coordinate a physical development plan with the jurisdiction's current and anticipated financial resources.

The capital improvements program is a five-year plan. The overall purpose of assigning years to proposed projects is to provide a short-range outline for action, and a long-range schedule of project completion for an accurate picture of needed capital improvement projects and resources.

The first year phase of the program presents the most comprehensive and detailed picture of those projects scheduled for immediate action. This phase of the program, known as the capital improvement budget, is presented with

a detailed list of anticipated expenditures and sources of funding. The second phase of the capital improvements program includes those projects specified as being necessary but not of an urgent or immediate nature to warrant inclusion into the first year of the program. This phase does not require a detailed cost breakdown, however, estimates of capital costs should be provided. The capital improvements program provides continuity by addressing long-range projects and therefore minimizing duplication or conflicts with other improvements.

It is important to note that the capital improvements program should be reviewed and updated each year. Those projects that were scheduled but were not undertaken should be re-evaluated and rescheduled in the capital improvements program as determined by the needs, desires and financial characteristics of the community. This is a tool that should be utilized and updated by the City.

### **9.2.6 Citizen Involvement**

Public support is a principal tool in the planning process, and the City is a regional and statewide leader in this regard. First, citizen participation is essential during plan preparation to ensure that issues addressed and proposals offered reflect local desires and attitudes. The City's Long Range Planning Committee actively participated in plan development and helped create the plan based on public input.

Second, public involvement is critical to implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Many of the plan's recommendations will require years of effort and financial commitment. Only with community support can such efforts be maintained. Accordingly, the City's civic and business organizations and citizens should be informed of and understand the plan.

## **9.3 Consistency Among Plan Elements**

Section 66.1001(2)(i) of the Wisconsin Statutes requires that this element include a discussion of how the elements will be made consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Because the elements of this plan were prepared simultaneously and by the same City staff, Long Range Planning Committee, and consultant, this ensures that there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different elements of this plan. Additionally, the implementation program relies heavily on City commissions and committees to complete the work. The work of these bodies will be interactive and complementary, thereby integrating elements of the plan and ensuring their consistency.

## 9.4 Plan Adoption, Monitoring, Amendments and Update

The Plan Commission will be responsible for monitoring progress in achieving the goals, objectives, policies, recommendations and actions of the Comprehensive Plan.

### 9.4.1 Plan Adoption

The first official action toward plan implementation is the adoption of the plan document as the general statement of public policy on land development within the City. After the Plan Commission recommends for approval to the City Council by resolution, the City Council must adopt the plan by ordinance. This action formalizes the plan document as the current basic frame of reference on general development patterns over the next 20 years. The plan, thereby, becomes a tool for communicating Onalaska's land use policy and for coordinating various individual decisions into a consistent set of actions to harmoniously shape the City's continued growth in the desired manner.

### 9.4.2 Plan Amendments

The Comprehensive Plan is considered to be a flexible guide to decision making rather than an inflexible blueprint for development. Decisions regarding the location of different land uses were based on existing knowledge of the characteristics and expressed priorities of Onalaska leaders and its residents, and anticipated growth and development patterns. As this knowledge or comprehension of these and other factors expands and makes existing proposals undesirable, the plan should be amended.

Amendments should be made only after a realistic evaluation of existing conditions and the potential impact of such a change is made. Amendments should not be made merely to accommodate the daily pressures of development and/or government. It is important to recognize that planning is a process that should occur on a continuing basis if the City is to take advantage of new opportunities as conditions change.

### 9.4.3 Plan Update

Although not truly an implementation device, the importance of plan monitoring and review to the implementation of the plan should be noted. The plan is based on variables that are dynamic and whose future direction cannot always be accurately predicted. Accordingly, such variables as population and urban development characteristics should be periodically compared against the plan's assumptions and recommendations (at least every 10 years). The process for updating the plan should include public input through a public hearing procedure.

An effective planning program should be continually reviewed and updated to reflect the processes of actual development and the changing attitudes and priorities of the community. Resource information should be gathered and studied to determine trends and reevaluate projections, forecasts and plans. In five years, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed in depth to make any necessary policy and recommendation changes in relation to the direction and character of community development at that time.