

# **Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Town of Colfax**

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**2017 - 2027**

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# Chapter 1

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## Introduction; Town of Colfax History

### **Introduction:**

The State of Wisconsin, in 1999, enacted a new law requiring all local governments statewide to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan (a community-specific land use plan) by 2010. This law is codified as Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., and is referred to as the Wisconsin Smart Growth Statute. Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., established specific criteria, standards and procedural elements which each local comprehensive plan must satisfy before being submitted to the state for final approval.

The Wisconsin Smart Growth Statute includes an important mandate that after 2010 local land use reviews and determinations, such as with zoning and land divisions shall be consistent with the goals and objectives of that community's comprehensive plan, meaning that local land use plans are no longer advisory.

Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., requires that local comprehensive plans shall be reviewed and updated, at a minimum, once every ten (10) years. The Town of Colfax, Dunn County, Wisconsin adopted its original Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan ("Plan") in June, 2005. Following review and preparation by the Plan Commission, this document is respectfully submitted as the updated Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan 2017-2027.

### **A Short History of the Town of Colfax{:**

#### ***Prehistoric Times:***

Imagine the rich prehistoric natural, geologic and human landscapes of our thirty-six (36) square miles of Dunn County, Wisconsin, today called the Town of Colfax. Of the very earliest scenes some half-billion years ago – verified by geologists with their rock hammer work and fossil discoveries – is one of a shallow inland ocean. Underneath that warm sea, sand sediments gradually accumulated over millions of years, forming the basic bedrock outcroppings so prevalent in our Town. Found within modern rock quarries in the Town, fossil-hunters can find traces of ancient marine animals, including small trilobites, brachiopods, and cone-shaped hyoliths. These and other similar fossil species found in our bedrock mark this bedrock as part of the "Eau Claire, Wonewoc, and Lone Rock formations", dating back to the "Late Cambrian Geologic Period" of approximately 515 million years ago.

Travel through time millions of years and now imagine the Pleistocene epoch of approximately 2 million to 11,000 years ago. The area is no longer a warm shallow sea but is now a frozen mountain of ice, part of a glacier perhaps a mile thick covering not only our region but most of Wisconsin and neighboring states as well. Evidence of periodic glacial incursions and retreats include the gravel and sand deposits, plus scattered erratics (large boulders) picked up in Canada and elsewhere, and moved and deposited here hundreds of thousands of years ago.

One Wisconsin geologist described this unique period in the state's history as follows: "As the giant ice sheets from Canada pressed slowly into Wisconsin and beyond, each in turn overrode the highest hills in its path, knocked down forests, erased rivers, and scraped and ground the surface it passed over. After occupying the land for thousands of years, the ice would slowly melt, pouring out floods of meltwater, dumping its rock waste over the terrain, and leaving the barren land to restore itself, which it always did." [*Wisconsin's Foundations* by Gwen Schultz, page 23].

Thus, when the final glacial lobe melted some 11,000 years ago, the subsequent flooding helped create our Red Cedar River and other tributaries of our watershed, while at the same time, deposited much of the Town's sandy top and subsoils. The Red Cedar River watershed and these glacial meltwater depositions make up our unique "place" or "home."

Around the time of the final glacial retreat, imagine seeing the influx of Paleo-Indians, beginning with the very earliest group archaeologists have identified, simply called the "Clovis peoples." Living around the southern edge of the melting glaciers, Clovis bands have been identified by their associations with prehistoric large mammals: Woolly mammoths, great mastodons, giant bison, great sloths, saber-toothed cats, etc. A number of the unique Clovis stone spear points (identified by their specialized fluted or grooved bases) have been found by archaeologists both in the area of the Town of Colfax and elsewhere in Dunn County.

Other Native American bands also occupied our area, including the Archaic Indians (6500 – 550 B.C.) and later, the Woodland Indian bands (550 B.C. – 1000 A.D.) identified as the first Native Americans to make and use clay pots. Their lovely ceramics were crafted by a process of coiling ropes of clay tempered with crushed stone. These tribes were also known for their sacred mounds; some of the mound-sites can still be seen in Dunn County at Wakanda Park and also along the Red Cedar Trail near the hamlet of Dunnville. The purpose of these mounds remains a mystery, although some represented animate representations.

### ***The Settlement Era:***

Moving ahead in time, can you imagine geologist and Indian agent Henry Schoolcraft canoeing down the Red Cedar River in the year 1831? According to his diaries and official reports, Schoolcraft encountered numerous Ojibwe Native American bands on his way to reaching the Cedar Falls area; further south he met representatives of the Santee Dakota (or Sioux). It is believed that both of these modern tribes were related to the prehistoric Lake Woodland groups.

Envision now the summer of 1852 with the coming of the official survey authorized by the Wisconsin Commissioners of Public Lands. From the Surveyor's official 1832-1865 Field Notes, we find that the area comprising the Town of Colfax had a variety of distinct plant communities including oak savannas (white, burr, and black oak), short-grass prairies (their remnants can still be found in the Town), cattail marshes, and, on some sandy soils, white pine (west of the Red Cedar River), and jack pine barrens.

Sixteen years later in 1868, following the election of President Ulysses S. Grant, the Town was officially formed and named after Grant's running mate, Schuyler Colfax. [Note: What would later become the Village of Colfax was first surveyed by lumberman Andrew Tainter; it would later be incorporated as a village in 1904.]

Imagine, too, the completion in 1884 of the Wisconsin Central Railway (now the Canadian National Railway) that slices through the township from Section 1 on the Town's west side to

Section 24 on the east side. Six years after the completion of the railroad, the government's 1890 census recorded the Town's population as 672. In the year 2000, there were only 237 additional residents in the Town of Colfax; the 2010 census determined that the Town had grown, with 1,186 people residing in the Town.

Rural one-room schools were an important part of the history of the Town of Colfax. Although today's school system is consolidated into the Colfax School District system, many residents remember with fondness their time in one of the five one-room schools located in the Town: Knapp Settlement; Sinking Creek; Modern School; Bear Valley; and Running Valley School. For some, an education that began here in a one-room elementary school would be the first step towards moving on and discovering different occupations elsewhere beyond the rural environment of the Town of Colfax. A large number of residents, however, decided that their place was in the Town and, especially in the early years, made a living by farming.

Let us picture our local rural landscape from the perspective of a farmer. During the final three decades of the nineteenth century, we would have witnessed relatively prosperous farms dotting the township's flatlands, hills and valleys. One of the earliest documented agricultural endeavors was John D. Simons' famous rutabaga patch of 1869. In that year, Simons grew approximately 1,400 bushels of "beggas", temporarily making the hamlet of Colfax not "Colfax" but, according to the locals, "Begga (or "Bege") Town" instead. Later, Simons' grist mill would take in locally grown grains including wheat, corn and buckwheat for processing. Potatoes were also an important commodity around the turn of the century; "exports" at that time, according to the *Colfax Messenger*, were approximately one thousand train carloads annually. Tobacco made its appearance around the same time, having first been grown locally in 1898; farmers sold their tobacco crop to, among other places, Menomonie's growing cigar industry. Although tobacco demanded intensive labor, it was a profitable crop well into the 20th century. Hay, sold to Knapp Stout and Company for their horse teams, and hogs were also profitable during the pre-1900 period. Beginning in 1922, some area farmers made extra cash selling cucumbers to the Colfax Pickle Station, located on the Village's west side, just south of the railroad tracks.

Other local residents made their living working in the Town's stone quarries, an industry that began with the discovery of high-quality sandstone west of the Village of Colfax in 1900. Some of this cut stone was marketed in other states. Much of the stone was used locally – not only to build private homes, but also the Norwegian Lutheran Church (1902), the Colfax School (1910), and the Colfax Municipal Building (1915), as well as other commercial buildings and barns. But because of changing market and labor conditions, by 1940 the era of sandstone quarries and the local stone mill was essentially over.

Meanwhile, farmers were shifting more and more into dairy for their primary income. The prosperous farm years for our region, however, came to an abrupt and economically painful halt in the fall of 1920, when commodity prices collapsed post-World War I. From a farm price perspective, much of the decade of the 1920's was very difficult for local farmers, driving many off the land. This severe downturn in the agricultural economy occurred years before the general economic collapse of the Great Depression. Price deflation combined with severe drought conditions made the plight of farmers all the worse – especially in the early 1930's. Beginning in 1932, those precious rains that all farmers rely on simply failed. Picture for a moment the following: dry year after dry year, culminating in 1936's devastating dust storms that "turned the sky reddish brown" (as one local farmer described it) as topsoil blew away. Toward the end of the 1930's, the drought finally let up and the subsequent war years helped firm up commodity prices.

More recently, in the decades following World War II, the following description would be an accurate portrayal of rural Colfax:

"If one were to paint a landscape of the Town . . . in mid-summer, the rolling hills would have been covered with the spectacular view of changing colors from varying shades of green to gold created by alternating strips of corn, oats, and alfalfa. The summer air would be fragrant with the smell of fresh cut hay. Holsteins would have been grazing on lush green pastures interspersed with wooded hillsides and farmsteads that appeared on picture postcards designed to showcase rural America."

Today, however, agriculture has evolved, with many of these small, self-reliant family farms supplanted by mega-dairy, corn or soybean producers. Subdivisions and individual residences have become numerous in the countryside where once silos and barns held sway.

Viewing these changes, Town of Colfax citizens have strongly indicated their desire to maintain and preserve – as much as possible – the existing rural character of their Township, including the beauty, the environmental quality, and the scenic integrity. Indeed, it is the purpose of this Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan to outline and establish in detail the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies to preserve the high quality of life enjoyed today, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

## Chapter 2

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# Background and Authority; Comprehensive Plan Objectives

Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., defines a "comprehensive plan" as a guide to the physical, social, and economic development of a local governmental unit. This Statute establishes the content and procedural requirements for all local comprehensive plans. The contents of a comprehensive plan shall contain all nine (9) of the following planning elements: Issues and Opportunities; Housing; Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Intergovernmental Cooperation; Land Use; and Implementation. Element overviews, an analysis framework, and goals and objectives follow in this Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan addressing each of these planning elements.

Many types of change have occurred in the Town of Colfax throughout its history, but the potential for large Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) type intensive agricultural development and conversion of productive agricultural lands, open spaces and bluffscares to non-agricultural, industrial or intensive residential uses are of major concern to residents of the Town. Residents are concerned that the Town's irreplaceable farmlands, natural beauty and rural-focused quality of life may be lost without proper planning and ordinance enforcement.

The purposes of this Comprehensive Plan are to provide information and guidance about the Town of Colfax, its resources, citizens and existing character, and to provide planning direction to government officials when making determinations regarding zoning, land divisions, development, official maps and other land use-related ordinances and policy decisions, as required by the consistency requirement of Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats. The Town of Colfax also elects to follow the comprehensive plan consistency requirement with other local regulatory matters, including, but not limited to, licensing and other types of ordinances intended to protect public health and safety and the general welfare of the community. The Town Board, Plan Commission and all other governmental bodies and administrators shall utilize and adhere to the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan in making determinations about future growth and development, transportation, economic development, environmental protection, farmland preservation, general community welfare, and protection of public health and safety. The Comprehensive Plan also addresses community concerns about what the Town should become in the future and how the Town will address those issues.

# Chapter 3

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## The Nine Comprehensive Plan Elements

The following nine (9) planning elements are required in a Comprehensive Plan:

**ELEMENT 1-ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

***General Overview:***

The Issues and Opportunities element of the Comprehensive Plan provides, as required by Section 66.1001(2)(a), Wis. Stats., information on the Town of Colfax as a governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the Town to guide future development and redevelopment within the Town over a twenty (20) year planning period. This element of the Plan provides an overview of the pertinent demographic trends and background information necessary to develop a thorough survey of changes taking place in the Town of Colfax.

As required by Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., the Issues and Opportunities element includes information on population, households, employment, age distribution, educational levels, income levels, and employment characteristics. Data used in this element is from the U.S. Census of Population and Housing unless otherwise noted.

The Comprehensive Plan meets the statutory requirement of public input opportunities that were available through open public meetings and from a public survey (Appendix A) sent by the Plan Commission to the public. The results of the public input were utilized in the development of the original Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan, particularly in identifying primary goals, and with subsequent revisions to the Plan.

***Primary Goals:***

A "goal" is a planning statement regarding public policy toward which local programs, decisions, and/or activities are ultimately directed. Goals represent the most preferable outcome that can be achieved and reflect citizen values and input.

The following are the Town of Colfax's primary planning goals:

- (1) Pursue policies, objectives, and decision-making that encourage accessible, environmentally compatible, and affordable housing which provides for the needs of current and future Town residents, while maintaining the overall rural character of the Town.
- (2) Preserve productive agricultural lands and predominantly agricultural areas from significant conversion to a non-agricultural commercial, industrial or intensive residential use.
- (3) Recognize and protect areas of environmental, historical and aesthetic significance, including, but not limited to, wetlands and bluffs, wildlife habitat, streams and ponds, for the use and enjoyment of current residents and future generations.
- (4) Promote environmentally sound approaches to future development in the Town.

- (5) Support sustainable and environmentally sound businesses, such as small-scale and in-home businesses, and balanced economic development which are compatible with the rural character of the Town, its quality of life, Town resources, and public health, safety and welfare.
- (6) Protect ground and surface water quality and quantity.
- (7) Maintain safe and adequate rural profile roads and other transportation infrastructure of a design normally associated with rural areas, farm use, rural housing, periodic deliveries, and low-impact commercial and business uses.
- (8) Ensure that residents and businesses of the Town are adequately served by desired public utilities, telecommunications, and community facilities in a cost-effective and environmentally sound way and in a manner which promotes a high quality of life.
- (9) Balance landowner and neighbor rights and interests.
- (10) Support collaboration, communication and agreement with neighboring towns and municipalities, and with the county and state.

**Population Data:**

*[ Please refer to the Town of Colfax data from the U.S. Census Bureau for statistical updates.]*

As of the 2000 census, there were 943 people and 330 households in the Town of Colfax. The population density was 26.5 people per square mile (10.3/km<sup>2</sup>). There were 343 housing units at an average density of 10 per square mile (3.7/km<sup>2</sup>).

In 2010, the population of the Town of Colfax had increased to 1,186. The number of households had increased to 422, and the number of housing units had increased to 448. The population density was 34.7 people per square mile.

The total population of Colfax Township had increased to 1,216 in 2015, making the population density 35.6 people per square mile. There were 438 households.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 34.6 square miles (89.5 km<sup>2</sup>). of which. 34.2 square miles (88.7 km<sup>2</sup>) of it is land and 0.3 square miles (0.8 km<sup>2</sup>) of it (0.93%) is water.

***Town of Colfax Data & Demographics (As of July 1, 2015):***

Total Population	1,216
Population Density Total (Population per square mile)	36
Total Households	438
Average Household Size	2.75
Family Households	343
Average Household Income	\$70,706

***Population Changes:***

From 2000 to 2010, the population increased from 943 to 1186 (25.8%), households increased from 330 to 422 (27.9%), and housing units increased from 343 to 448 (30.6%). From 2010 to 2015, the population increased from 1186 to 1216 (2.5%), households had increased from 422 to 438 (3.4%), and housing units increased from 448 to 460 (2.7%).

In 2010, the Town of Colfax was the fastest growing local governmental jurisdiction of Dunn County's ten largest towns and municipalities, according to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center. This reflects the trend that more people moving into Dunn County are choosing to live in a rural area, with the lifestyle that such a decision entails, while still living relatively close to city amenities and employment opportunities. The Town of Colfax also benefits from its location, equidistant to the City of Menomonie and the larger Cities of Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls to the east and their employment opportunities. To the west lies the large St. Paul/Minneapolis metropolitan area.

***Summary and Trends:***

There was a significant increase in both population and housing growth in the Town of Colfax in the decade of 2000-2010, but this growth slowed significantly in the five (5) year period of 2010-2015. Of the two sources of population growth, natural increase tends to be more stable. Birth and death patterns normally do not change quickly over time, while net migration can be a more variable factor. Previous Dunn County profiles tend to indicate that the majority of growth between 2000 and 2010 was due to net inward migration. That trend, however, has reversed, highlighting how quickly migration trends can change.

Population projections made in 2013 for 2015 by the Demographic Services Center of the Wisconsin Department of Administration projected a population of 1,290 for the Town of Colfax, but the U.S. Census found an actual population of 1,216. Projections for 2015-2020 show less than a 0.5% increase per year, but population estimates have a significant unreliability factor due to changing migration trends, often due to underlying economic factors.

## **ELEMENT 2-HOUSING:**

### ***General Overview:***

The intent of the Housing element of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide basic information on the housing stock in the Town of Colfax. This element analyzes trends, assesses needs, and identifies potential problems regarding accommodating the varied housing needs.

### ***Housing Availability and Affordability Analysis:***

For purposes of this Plan, housing refers to the "actual building" while household refers to the "family structure living" in a housing unit. Because the "households" classification analyzes the number of people in a structure, housing and households are not a one-to-one comparison.

### ***Housing as of July 1, 2015:***

Total Households	438
Total Housing Units	460 (100%)
Owner Occupied HU	379 (82.4%)
Renter Occupied HU	59 (12.8%)
Vacant Housing Units	22 (4.8%)
Median Home Value	\$185,119
Average Home Value	\$207,870

### ***Availability:***

Generally, overall housing vacancies should not exceed 3%. The Town's rate at 4.8%, as of July 1, 2015, indicates that adequate housing choices exist in the Town of Colfax for consumers. This was also reflected by the citizen survey results and analysis (Appendix A).

### ***Affordability:***

Affordable housing, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), is a housing unit in which essential housing costs do not exceed 30% of the household income. For example, owner-occupied households are considered to be affordable if the principal, interest, taxes, and insurance costs do not exceed 30% of the household income. Rental housing is considered affordable if the rental and utility costs do not exceed 30%.

While the average household income in the Town was \$70,706 in 2015, the median income was \$54,609. According to [http://www.city-data.com/county/Dunn\\_County-WI.html](http://www.city-data.com/county/Dunn_County-WI.html), the median monthly cost for homes and condominiums with a mortgage was \$1,249 (\$501 without a mortgage) in 2013, for an annual cost of \$14,988. This is below the 30% (\$16,383) level of the median household income in the Town.

***Housing Starts:***

In tracking housing starts between 2005 and 2014, a significant decrease is noted since 2007.

2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
6	4	6	4	7	9	4	13	13	20

***Summary and Trends:***

Although housing in the Town of Colfax is affordable, the vacancy rate of housing is increasing. The number of building permits for dwellings has decreased from the 2005-2007 period. Housing availability is not an issue of high priority at this time as reflected by both the U.S. Census and the citizen survey of 2015. [Refer to the Agriculture, Natural Resources and Cultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan for additional impacts and goals affecting housing.]

## **ELEMENT 3 - TRANSPORTATION:**

### ***General Overview:***

Residents of the Town of Colfax depend upon the transportation facilities in their community and the region to connect them to other areas of the region, state and nation.

The type, quality, and location of transportation facilities are important components in maintaining the quality of life of the residents and in developing and sustaining a good economy. This element provides basic information about existing transportation networks in and around the Town, and assesses existing transportation facilities, problems, and concerns.

### ***Analysis:***

The Town of Colfax's local road network is currently adequate for the needs of its citizens, visitors and businesses, reflecting the Town's predominantly agricultural, residential and small-scale makeup. The Town maintains approximately 38.2 miles of town roads. According to state requirements, the Town inspects all roads eligible for state transportation aid on a bi-annual basis and assigns a pavement condition rating. The system used is PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating). The PASER rating system is used to evaluate each road segment, based on a scale of 1-10.

Dunn County maintains six (6) county trunk highways (A, B, BB, M, N, and W) which traverse the Town of Colfax. In addition, segments of U.S./State Highways 40 and 170 pass through the Town. U.S. Highway 40 and State Highway 170 were reconstructed within the past decade. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has no major work planned for State Hwy. 170. Interstate I-94 is located just south of the Town boundary and is the most convenient route for travel east to Eau Claire and west to the St. Paul/Minneapolis metro area. The proximity of I-94 is a major factor in attracting new residents to the Town of Colfax. The Town is committed to working with WisDOT and the Dunn County Highway Department regarding future transportation infrastructure planning and projects impacting the Town, particularly intersection improvements where Town roads intersect with federal, state and county highways.

The Canadian National Railroad maintains an active rail line through the central part of the Town. The Town should work with WisDOT, Dunn County, and railroad representatives to improve the safety at all crossings, including, but not limited to, crossing signals, crossing arms, crossing design, and visibility. New at-grade crossings should be avoided whenever possible.

Bicycle routes should be encouraged to be mapped in the Town. Dunn County presently has a county-wide bike trail map or plan. There are no state bicycle trails in or near the Town.

In reviewing applications for new uses which could generate increases in vehicle and/or train traffic, including, but not limited to, construction of new railroad service spur lines, consideration should be given to impacts to public safety from such proposed development. The Town notes that present fire and ambulance public safety facilities are located in the Village of Colfax which serve residents of the Town; such facilities are physically separated by an active railroad line. Increases in the frequency or size, or need for auxiliary/spur

lines, of trains could potentially create emergency response problems and is a factor to be considered when reviewing related development, zoning and/or licensing applications.

The 2015 citizen survey conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan amendment process indicated that transportation issues (road maintenance, changing useage, snow removal, etc.) was the third most important issue for residents. Related to this issue are impacts on Town resources and property tax usage, which was found to be the second most important issue identified by citizens. It is noted that road maintenance is the largest component of Town expenditures.

With the increase in housing units and the decrease in farming families in the Town, more citizens are commuting elsewhere for employment and personal business. The increase in two-career families means that often both household adults are each driving separately, with some households also having teenage and other drivers. Between the increase in housing units and the number of vehicle trips per family, road use has increased more than linearly.

The changing face of modern agriculture has also produced additional stress on the Town road system. Many farms are using larger, heavier agricultural equipment and trucks. Farm consolidations mean farm implements often must travel greater distances from one field to the next. This change in use has implications for Town road use as well as for the safety of farmers and other drivers. The Implements of Husbandry state statute went into effect in January, 2015, as a means for local governments to allow increased weight limits.

State shared revenue funds for local road maintenance have steadily decreased, placing additional pressure on the Town budget (and Town taxpayers) for there to be an adequate road maintenance program.

***Summary and Trends:***

Due to increasing road maintenance/reconstruction costs and the fiscal restraints imposed by state-mandated levy limits, the Town of Colfax will discourage new land uses in the Town which would place extraordinary demands or loads on Town roads/shoulders, generate heavy truck traffic, and/or present public safety concerns. The emphasis will be on maintaining the Town's existing transportation infrastructure. Roads constructed as part of new development activity, such as with a new subdivision, shall be constructed and paid for by the developer pursuant to Town standards and ordinances.

## **ELEMENT 4-UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES:**

### ***General Overview:***

The Utilities and Community Facilities element of the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan provides information on facilities and services such as solid waste management, water and sanitary facilities, recreational areas and schools. This element also identifies public facilities and services that need to be expanded. This baseline information is to be used to provide direction for utilities, facilities and services growth as the Town's population increases in the future.

### ***Background:***

Town of Colfax residents currently utilize services and facilities appropriate to a rural, agriculturally-oriented township with farms, rural residences and small businesses. Citizen concerns about safety, health, mobility, education, and recreation are currently satisfied, for the most part, by existing local and area infrastructure and services.

### ***Water Facilities:***

There is no general public water system or town utility district within the Town of Colfax; the nearest public water system is located in the Village of Colfax. Residents get potable water from private wells. A small number of residences receive water from the Village of Colfax Water Utility. Safeguarding groundwater quality and quantity was identified as the single most important issue in the 2015 citizen survey.

### ***Wastewater Facilities:***

There is no public sanitary sewer system or town sanitary district within the Town of Colfax. The sanitary sewer needs of residents are met through the use of private septic systems; the nearest public sewer system is in the Village of Colfax.

According to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) records, there are at least seven (7) septage land spreading sites in the Town of Colfax which have sites that percolate greater than six (6) inches per hour and that do not meet the required standards of NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code.

### ***Stormwater Management Facilities:***

A stormwater sewer system is not available in the Town. Stormwater is dispersed using the natural contours of the land and natural recharge, with drainage flowing down local creeks and streams to the Red Cedar River and Lower Chippewa River. Based on past stormwater runoff experiences, both construction sites and agricultural activities need to employ best management practices to avoid excessive runoff of sediments, chemicals and nutrients into Town and regional surface waters.

### ***Solid Waste Disposal/Recycling:***

The Town of Colfax at one time had a landfill, closed since the 1990s. The Town of Colfax is part of the Dunn County Solid Waste Management and Recycling Program. Residents are able to take their garbage and recyclable materials to a local collection site in the area. Glass, metal cans, plastic, newsprint, and cardboard are sorted and recycled.

Garbage is compacted and shipped to an appropriate landfill.

***Recreation Facilities and Area Attractions:***

A wide range of recreation activities are available in the area. These include fishing, hunting, hiking, bowling, golf, cross country skiing, birdwatching, and snowmobiling. A major attraction is the Hoffman Hills cross country skiing and hiking area; Hoffman Hills also offers camping and picnic grounds for organized youth programs. Whitetail Golf Course offers an eighteen hole course, and its site is available in the winter for cross country skiing. A shooting range is located in the Town, a recreational resource serving the greater community.

While more citizen survey respondents ranked recreational opportunities as "not important" than those ranking it as "very important", planning for future recreational resources remains necessary as Town population and demographics change in the future.

***Library Services:***

There are four (4) public libraries in Dunn County: Boyceville, Colfax, Menomonie, and Sand Creek. Dunn County is a member of Indianhead Federated Library System (IFLS), a multi-county system which provides library services to all residents within the system. This service includes full access to public libraries participating in the system as well as books by mail and a bookmobile. As members of the IFLS, the four (4) libraries have access to library consultants who provide information services such as reference assistance, interlibrary loan service, support for children's services and services for those with special needs. All four (4) libraries are governed by municipal boards which regularly meet and are appointed by their municipality. The closest library for Town of Colfax residents is located in the Village of Colfax, and for which patron data indicates is utilized by more Town residents than Village residents. Town fiscal support for libraries through statutory formulas helps support the broader library system.

***Law Enforcement Protection:***

The Dunn County Sheriff's Department provides public safety services to the Town of Colfax as part of its overall protection responsibility for the county. These services include 24-hour law enforcement, process service, court security, and jail facilities.

***Fire Protection:***

The Colfax Fire Department provides fire protection services for the Town of Colfax. The Department is staffed by volunteer firefighters, plus a Fire Chief, and is located south of the railroad track on County Hwy. M. The Department has mutual aid procedures which follow State of Wisconsin requirements.

***Hazardous Materials Responses:***

The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) is utilized in the event of a significant petroleum, chemical, or hazardous material spill or cleanup situation. MABAS is a mutual aid system which may be used to deploy fire, rescue and emergency medical services personnel and equipment in a multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency response.

For example, Class A hazardous materials spills are anything over twenty-five (25) gallons

and are typically cleaned up, via MABAS, by the Eau Claire or Chippewa Falls Fire Departments. The Material Safety Data Sheets/Card (MSDS) are used to determine if a Class A or B spill has occurred, and state regulations require that this report be provided to the carrier or buyer.

***Emergency Medical Services:***

Emergency medical services (EMS) are provided by the Colfax Rescue Squad and Dunn County Medical First Responders. The Colfax Rescue Squad consists of both full-time and volunteer members, and is available 24 hours a day. The Colfax Rescue Squad has a contractual arrangement with the Town of Colfax based on a per capita, annual basis. Dunn County First Responders is a volunteer organization that operates throughout the county under the auspices of the Dunn County Sheriff's Department providing basic life support services for medical emergencies. They are trained to state standards and fully equipped to provide care up to their certified level of training. Both the Colfax Rescue Squad and Dunn County First Responders are dispatched through Dunn County's 911 system. Advanced life support services are also provided as needed, on a mutual aid basis, by the Menomonie-Chippewa Fire District, the City of Chippewa Falls EMS, the Eau Claire Fire Department (paramedic), and Mayo One and Lifelink (air ambulance services). In addition, many First Responders, as well as Sheriff's Department deputies, are equipped with automatic external defibrillators for cardiac emergencies.

***Town Buildings and Equipment:***

The Town of Colfax has a Town Hall and shop building centrally located in the Town. The Town Hall houses the town office and is used for meetings, elections, open houses, and special events. The shop houses road maintenance equipment.

***Electrical Power and Natural Gas Transmission:***

Electrical power to the Town is provided by the Dunn County Electric Cooperative and Xcel Energy. Because natural gas service is limited to those areas in the incorporated Village of Colfax, propane gas and fuel oil are supplied by local dealers based in surrounding communities. Alternative energy sources are currently available on an individual property owner basis; however, the Dunn County Electric Cooperative is creating a solar power farm which will produce electricity that can be utilized by Town residents.

***Telecommunications and Broadband Services:***

Local landline telephone service is provided by CenturyLink Telephone Company. There are areas in the Town that CenturyLink reports are reaching the maximum telephone service capacity; additional residential development may not be appropriate in such areas unless telephone services are upgraded. Cellular telephone service is available from a number of providers; however, cellphone service maybe disrupted in some areas due to terrain blocking reception.

Expansion of broadband width and speed has been identified as an issue of importance by some citizen survey respondents, with such expansion being important to Town small businesses. The lack of robust broadband service in the Town of Colfax not only hampers economic development, but educational opportunities as well. The ability to telecommute to the workplace is severely hampered by inadequate broadband service. More workplaces are seeing the financial benefit of employees telecommuting to work. Residential

development in the Town of Colfax will depend on the ability of future homeowners to access high-speed broadband service regardless of the rural setting. The ability to use distance learning and other online learning technologies is basically nonexistent in many rural areas of Dunn County, including the Town of Colfax. While schools may have adequate broadband service, the lack of robust broadband service at the student's place of residence is a significant handicap. The Town of Colfax's population is now higher than that of the Village of Colfax, an indication of the growth of the Town of Colfax. CenturyLink is the predominant vendor for broadband service in the Town of Colfax. It may be beneficial for the Town of Colfax to support competition between broadband vendors in the Town to promote residential and economic growth, low environmental impact businesses, and enhanced availability of educational services within the township.

***Health Care Resources:***

Town of Colfax residents have access to health care from services located in Bloomer, Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire and Menomonie. A number of specialized health care providers are also available, providing dental, chiropractic, optometry, and alternative health care programs.

***Child Care Facilities:***

A number of licensed child care facilities are available in the area. These range from day care providers approved to offer care in their own homes to larger group care centers. Information on current state-licensed child care facilities is available from the Wisconsin Bureau of Early Care Regulation at [www.dcf.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov).

***Cemeteries:***

Running Valley Cemetery is the only cemetery maintained by the Town of Colfax. The cemetery is located 1.8 miles east of the Village of Colfax on State Hwy. 40. Plots are available at the Running Valley Cemetery.

***Schools:***

A number of educational facilities are available to the residents in the Town of Colfax. Town residents are primarily served by the Colfax School District, while a small area of the Town is served by the Elk Mound School District. Open enrollment opportunities are available statewide.

The Town of Colfax is part of the Chippewa Valley Technical College District. Chippewa Valley Technical College offers associate degree and technical diploma programs. Other programs are available at the main campus in Eau Claire or at one of the satellite campuses of the District. Higher education degree programs within commuting distance are available from the University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

## ELEMENT 5 - AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES:

### **General Overview:**

The Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element of the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan provides an inventory and review of the physiographic features of the Town of Colfax.

### **Analysis:**

Significant resources of the Town of Colfax have been identified herein and, where possible, mapped. Mapping the locations of these features allows the Town to identify resources for protection and preservation, and to direct development around these valuable resources and attributes.

### **Groundwater:**

Groundwater is the primary source of all potable water in the Town of Colfax and is used for residential, commercial and agricultural purposes. Clean, reliable water supplies are essential. Homes in the Town have individual wells that draw from one shared aquifer, which is recharged through rainfall and melt water. Water seeps through the porous soil under the force of gravity, settling at an impervious layer such as bedrock. (*Please refer to map of Recharge Zones in Appendix B.*)

The major aquifer that underlies all of Dunn County is the sandstone of Cambrian age. The sandstone aquifer receives recharge from snowmelt and rainfall in Dunn County. The snowmelt and rainfall sinks into the ground and moves down to the water table, which is the top of the water surface of the aquifer.

Discharge from the aquifer is to nearby creeks, rivers and lakes. The sandstone is as much as 800 feet thick in some places in Dunn County. The outwash deposits of sand and gravel are part of the sandstone aquifer where they are in contact with underlying sandstone. [Information from *Location of Recharge Areas to the Sandstone Aquifer in Dunn County, Wisconsin* – by Neil C. Koch, 2005].

Soils ranked as having "excellent" recharge potential also have the greatest risk of contaminants reaching the aquifer. Housing developments, where numerous wells and septic fields exist, pose a risk of septic waters entering the aquifer. The permeability of these soils could be 20 inches per hour or more. Even in the "very good" recharge soils, there could be septic contamination to wells where the alluvium is very sandy overlying outwash.

The direction of flow in the aquifer is important to determine so wells can be placed up gradient from septic fields. The recharge zone, location of wells and septic fields on neighboring properties and housing density are just as important as the direction of aquifer water flow in determining if and where there are appropriate well and septic locations. Also, agricultural pollutants can contaminate the aquifer quickly in "excellent" and "very good" recharge areas. [Information from *Location of Recharge Areas to the Sandstone Aquifer in Dunn County, Wisconsin* – by Neil C. Koch, 2005.]

Agricultural groundwater contaminants may be chemical or biological. Biological

contaminants of most concern are zoonotic pathogens such as E. coli, Salmonella, Leptosporidia, and Cryptosporidia. Chemical contaminants may include, but not be limited to, nitrates, potassium and soil mobile pesticides such as Atrazine. The longer it takes for water to move through the soil the more likely biological contaminants will be inactivated. Biologically active soils with continuous living cover can reduce nitrate losses through immobilization.

Protection of the aquifer should be an important consideration when planning future land use patterns in the Town of Colfax. Developing large tracts of privately owned land in the Town could threaten the aquifer recharge capability and groundwater quality and quantity, and increase the likelihood of contamination. Land use decisions should examine potential impacts on the aquifer, and development lot sizes and uses may need to be adjusted based on the recharge and contamination susceptibility of the land.

Based on data from the Dunn County Health Department, average private well nitrate levels in the Town of Colfax have increased from 2.71 mg/l in 1987 to 3.60 mg/l in the period of 1990-1999, to 4.36/l in the period from 2000-2010 to 6.52 mg/l in the period from 2011-2016. With the unacceptable nitrate health level set at 10 mg/l, the trend for the Town of Colfax is definitely moving toward the unacceptable level. This data, however, is based on limited well sampling in two (2) of the four (4) time periods reported. Based on the whole county data where sample sizes are far greater, it is clear that nitrate levels are increasing, especially in environmentally sensitive areas, as land use changes occur, such as converting pasture land to row crops, like corn. Similarly, according to the UW-Stevens Point Center for Watershed Science and Education, Dunn County, at 16%, is above the Wisconsin state average (10%) for wells that test at unacceptable levels of nitrates. Data for the Town of Colfax does show wells that are above unacceptable level of nitrates; however, the sampling data is too small to see the percentage of averaged *elevated* private wells as meaningful. Given the trends noted in Dunn County and the trends in average private well nitrate levels reported with limited sampling data in the Town of Colfax, it is important that the Town of Colfax pursue regular well testing and analysis of land use change impacts on water quality.

The Town of Colfax needs to be proactive in monitoring and protecting the aquifer from being contaminated or depleted. The land and water below the surface are very connected to the land and water above. Certain areas of the Town should be considered as significant "environmentally sensitive areas", areas which are major bodies of land and/or water that could be greatly damaged or eliminated by development activity. Because the aquifer is not located within just one local community's boundaries, protection of the aquifer is a topic for potential intergovernmental discussion and cooperation.

#### ***Aquitards:***

Aquitards are beds of low permeability along an aquifer. They determine groundwater flow and recharge patterns. Aquitards can restrict recharge from the land surface. One of the most important roles of aquitards in the groundwater system is the protection of aquifers from chemical or microbial contamination. [Ponzini, Crosta, and Giudici, 1989]. Impacts on aquitards should be considered when reviewing intensive development proposals.

#### ***Steep Slopes:***

Steep slopes are any area where the slope of the land is greater than 12%. Areas having

steep slopes can be categorized into three (3) categories: 0-12%, slight; 13%-19%, moderate; and 20% and greater, severe limitations. *(Please refer to map of Steep Slopes in Appendix B.)*

Development on slopes 0-12% should take into consideration the effect of direct runoff to receiving waters or wetlands and will need to comply with state-approved construction site erosion controls. Land with slopes 13-19% should also consider the effect of direct runoff to receiving waters or wetlands, shall follow state-approved construction site erosion controls, and best management practices shall be utilized to control site runoff and pollution. Land with slopes 20% or greater have a significant potential for erosion, which can result in major negative impacts to surface and ground waters as well as higher construction costs. Development on slopes 20% or greater should be highly discouraged and/or regulated.

**Wetlands:**

Conservation of wetlands is important to Town surface and ground waters, as wetlands:

- (1) Prevent and/or control water pollution;
- (2) Provide stormwater management and shoreline protection;
- (3) Reduce sediment and pollutant flow into surface waters;
- (4) Reduce flooding and flooding damage;
- (5) Protect stream flow, temperature, and shallow groundwater levels;
- (6) Constitute wildlife and specialized plant habitat; and
- (7) Preserve natural drainage features.

Wetland conservation is important to protecting surface and groundwaters, the protection of which were identified by survey respondents as very important. *(Please refer to map of Wetlands in Appendix B.)*

**Floodplains:**

Floodplains are lands which are generally adjacent to creeks, rivers, lakes, and wetlands and that are susceptible to flood flow (floodway) or areas of slack water (flood fringe). The Town of Colfax has a number of areas adjacent to rivers and streams where water fluctuations can cause flooding. To protect property and public investments, Section 87.30(1), Wis. Stats., requires counties, cities and villages to implement Floodplain Zoning. Dunn County is responsible for administering the Floodplain Management Program in the Town of Colfax. For purposes of this Plan, "floodplains" includes areas which are subject to occasional or frequent flooding, based on soils analysis. The floodway is typically the most dangerous part of a floodplain, and uses in this area shall be limited to conservation areas or open space. *(Please refer to Floodplain map in Appendix B.)*

**Woodlands and Forests:**

Although the Town of Colfax has large areas of agricultural lands, the Town features a significant amount of forested land, particularly along steep slopes. (See Appendix B). The forested areas, while attractive for residential development, are important for the prevention of soil erosion and as habitat for wildlife and forest-dependent plant life.

A contiguous forest is very important to the overall environment, forest-based economics,

variety of wildlife and air/water quality. The fragmentation of woodlands and forests results in the disruption/loss of animal and bird habitat, migration of wildlife, and conflicts between animals and humans. Tracts of forested land of less than 20 acres are not considered to generally be economically viable as commercial forestland. Analysis of the citizen survey identified significant importance attached to forest and woodland preservation.

***Wildlife:***

All lands and waters, whether cropland, woodland, farmland, wetland, river, stream, floodplain and even residential yards, support wildlife. The following types of wildlife are common in the Town of Colfax: big game such as deer and black bear; small game such as rabbits and squirrels; upland birds such as turkeys, pheasants and grouse; a large variety of songbirds and water fowl; birds of prey such as owls, red-tailed hawks and eagles; and fur-bearing animals such as raccoons, opossums, beaver, mink, red and gray fox, fishers, bobcats, and coyotes.

The majority of respondents to the citizen survey indicated that wildlife habitat protection is "very important."

As woodlots, fence rows, and shrubs have been removed to increase agricultural cultivation and housing development and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) protected lands have been removed from the CRP program, habitat has been altered or lost, negatively impacting numbers of some species of wildlife. Some species, such as grassland birds, have significantly decreased in numbers due to loss of habitat.

***Nonmetallic Mining Deposits:***

Like many areas in Wisconsin, the Town of Colfax has sand and gravel deposits, which can be found on outwash plains. Silica sand deposits exist in the Town of Colfax. Potential and actual impacts from industrial-grade sand mining and processing facilities include, but are not limited to, the excavation and loss of hills and sandstone ridges; exposure to respirable silica dust; increased truck and rail traffic; noise and light pollution from operational equipment and mining sites; loss of agricultural land; diminished property values of neighboring lands; increased governmental expenditures; destruction of aquitards; increased groundwater use; and contamination of surface and groundwaters.

It is the policy of the Town of Colfax to allow small scale construction-grade aggregate extraction operations, whose product is primarily used for road construction and concrete mixing purposes. While the Town of Colfax contains deposits of sand and other aggregate materials, the intensive, industrial-type mining and/or processing of industrial-grade aggregate and sand is inconsistent and generally incompatible with the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. All such activities shall comply with applicable licensing and regulatory ordinances of the Town of Colfax.

***Endangered Resources:***

Wisconsin's Endangered Resources Program works to conserve Wisconsin's biodiversity for present and future generations. The State's goals are to identify, protect, and manage native plants, animals, and natural communities from the very common species to the critically endangered. The Program works with others to promote knowledge, appreciation, and stewardship of Wisconsin's native species and ecosystems.

### ***Wisconsin's Threatened and Endangered Species:***

Wisconsin's threatened and endangered species are any species whose continued existence as a viable component of Wisconsin's wild plant, bird or animal inventory is determined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to be in jeopardy on the basis of scientific evidence. The Wisconsin DNR's local representative should be used as a resource for additional information.

### ***Productive Agricultural Areas:***

Farming has a long history in the Town of Colfax and modern production agriculture continues to be a dominant land use, with agribusiness being perhaps the most important single local economic contributor. Large tracts of land are suitable for agriculture, and the Town of Colfax has a relatively high percentage of productive cropland which provides a stable economic foundation for the Town. The citizens of the Town of Colfax are greatly concerned about: farmland and open space preservation; maintaining the viability of production agriculture and the livelihoods of farming neighbors; and the desire of farm and non-farm residents to maintain the rural character of the Town.

Agricultural land in the Town of Colfax is characterized by many soil types which are suitable for production agriculture. According to the *USDA-NRCS-Wisconsin Technical Guide, Section 2, Dunn County Soil Descriptions Non-Technical*, pages 1-26, dated 11/22/95, there are eight (8) land capability classes, practical groupings based on soil types and their limitations. The limitations are based on characteristics such as erosion hazard, droughtiness, wetness, stoniness, and response to management. Each class reflects the land's relative suitability for crops, grazing, forestry, and wildlife. Class 1 soils are best suited for agriculture and Class 8 soils are least suited. For planning purposes, soil classes have been combined for mapping purposes. [See Soil Productivity Map, Appendix B]. Class 1 and 2 soils are combined with soils of high agricultural importance, Class 3 soils are considered to be of medium importance, and Class 4-8 soils are considered to be poorly suited for crop production.

Land identified as prime farmland or possessing valuable soils (where 80% of the soil is classified as #1, #2 or #3 soils) should be preserved for the purposes of their agricultural-economic benefits and for safeguarding the rural character of the Town of Colfax. While the existence of prime farmland does not automatically pose an obstacle to development, it should carry significant weight when determining if the area is or is not suitable for non-agricultural development. If the Town of Colfax intends to maintain the viability of agriculture, efforts are necessary to limit non-agricultural development in these areas.

Nutrient management planning has become as important as conservation planning to modern resource management. The primary reason for this relatively new emphasis is the broader understanding of how excess nutrients in the soil lead to surface and groundwater contamination. Excessive applications of nitrogen fertilizer on cropland can lead to nitrates in ground water. Phosphorus attaches to soil particles that pollute water when the soil erodes and enters a body of water. When excess amounts of phosphorus enter a river or lake, the results can be significant; locally, this produces algae blooms in Lakes Menomin and Tainter.

A nutrient management plan is based on up-to-date soil tests and requires a conservation plan resulting in at or below the allowable soil loss. A nutrient management plan requires the proper crediting of on-farm nutrients, such as manure and legume crops, and then

allows the use of commercial fertilizer to address the remaining crop nutrient needs. In 2015, 11% of Dunn County's cropland had a nutrient management plan. Nutrient management planning is encouraged by the Dunn County Land Conservation Department and the Natural Resources Conservation Department. Having nutrient management plans for farms in the Town of Colfax is important for protecting water quality.

Some issues which are to be addressed in nutrient management plans are: distance from any wells, groundwater and bedrock; type of manure storage liner needed, if any; and, the location upon which manure will be spread when the manure storage structure is emptied. Any person who wants to construct a new manure storage facility, or alter an existing such structure, shall apply for and obtain a permit from the Dunn County Land Conservation Division.

Nutrient management plans must address unconfined manure stacking, which is when manure is stored on field edges or other areas not suitable for cropping. Such locations may not be within a "Water Quality Management Area," which is defined as:

- (1) The area within 1,000 feet from the ordinary high-water mark of navigable waters that consist of a lake, pond, and flowage, except for a navigable water that is a glacial pothole lake. Water quality management areas include those areas within 1,000 feet from the high-water mark of such body of surface water.
- (2) The area within 300 feet from the ordinary high-water mark of navigable waters that consist of a river or stream.
- (3) A site that is susceptible to groundwater contamination or that has the potential to be a direct conduit for contamination to reach groundwater.

***State Natural and Wildlife Areas:***

State of Wisconsin natural areas protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape and natural communities, significant geological formations, and archaeological sites. The State's 673 designated natural areas are valuable for research and educational purposes, the preservation of genetic and biological diversity, and for providing benchmarks for determining the impact of use on managed lands. These areas also provide some of the last refuges for rare plants, birds and animals.

A portion of the Hoffman Hills State Recreation Area lies in the Town of Colfax. Hoffman Hills offers 707 acres of preserved and restored wooded hills, wetlands, and prairie traversed with hiking and cross-country skiing trails. A 60 foot high observation tower crowns one of the highest points in Dunn County, offering spectacular views of the surrounding countryside, which is especially beautiful in autumn. Hoffman Hills also serves as an excellent area for bird watching.

***Hydrologic Features:***

Streams, rivers, aquitards, and ponds are the primary hydrologic features located in the Town of Colfax. The Red Cedar River originates in southwestern Sawyer County and flows south through the Town of Colfax, eventually entering into the Chippewa River. Water quality problems have been identified and documented; further evaluation and the implementation of plans for phosphorus and other nutrient management controls need to continue.

A number of creeks and streams flow through the Town of Colfax, including 18 Mile Creek

and Running Valley Creek, as well as the headwaters of Elk Creek, all of which are classified as Class I and II trout streams. Running Valley and 18 Mile Creeks experienced a frac sand mine spill in 2014 which resulted in damaging sediment deposits in the streams.

Citizen survey respondents expressed considerable concern over the potential for possible future contamination of these streams by frac sand mine operations and/or CAFO farms runoff.

***Watersheds:***

Portions of the Town of Colfax are located within the Red Cedar River and Lower Chippewa River Watershed. A "watershed" is defined as a land area which drains into nearby rivers, lakes and/or streams. Land uses and polluted runoff within a watershed can dramatically affect the water quality of that watershed. A majority of the citizen survey respondents consider surface water quality and quantity to be "very important."

***Shorelands:***

A native shoreline and native vegetation along the shore, act as buffer zones between development and surface water resources. Buffer zones are important in sustaining fish and wildlife and protecting navigable waters by intercepting nutrients and reducing runoff, erosion, and sedimentation. A minimum of 5 to 20 feet are required for buffers with the distance depending upon bank stability.

Shoreland Zoning is mandated by the State of Wisconsin and applies to all lands within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable lakes, ponds, or flowages, or within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable rivers or streams, or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater. These regulations limit the type and amount of permitted development within the jurisdictional boundary and regulate general land uses within this boundary.

***Summary and Trends:***

Groundwater quality and quantity was the issue on the citizen survey that a vast majority of the respondents (over 80%) named as "very important." Its importance was also the topic in over 20% of the comments.

Any reviews, including those under an ordinance or with proposed new development, business, and industry proposals, should first take into consideration impacts on groundwater quality and quantity. In addition, steep slopes, woodlands, soil capabilities, and the effects on the Town's other resources and area residents should be examined and considered when making any land use or zoning determinations.

## ELEMENT 6 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

### **General Overview:**

The Economic Development element of the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan provides basic economic information about the Town by analyzing the economic base of the community and trends affecting the area. This element identifies desirable businesses, assesses the community's strengths and weaknesses relative to attracting and retaining economic development.

### **Background:**

Refer to the Census Data for the Town of Colfax from the U.S. Census Bureau for the statistical analysis of the Town's residents.

### **Labor Force:**

According to 2015 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Town of Colfax was found to have an estimated 95.1% of its civilian labor force age 16 and older employed; 4.9% were unemployed. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development reported that the 2013 unemployment rate in Wisconsin was 6.8% and the rate for Dunn County was 6.4%.

Subject	2000		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age 15 & older	674	100	838	100
Civilian Labor Force	530	78.6	603	72
Employed	504	74.8	573	95.1
Unemployed	26	3.9	30	4.9

### **Community Economic Development Strengths:**

The following factors are considered to be community strengths of the Town of Colfax regarding economic development:

- (1) Proximity to the Village of Colfax and the Cities of Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Menomonie, and Bloomer for additional employment, education and community services.
- (2) Proximity to the higher educational resources of the University of Wisconsin System (three campuses) and the Chippewa Valley Technical College.
- (3) Beautiful and healthful natural environment offering quality of life.
- (4) Strong agricultural base attractive to agribusiness.
- (5) Above average area transportation resources.

### **Community Economic Development Weaknesses:**

The following factors are considered to be community weaknesses of the Town of Colfax regarding economic development:

- (1) Lack of public sewer and water system.
- (2) Lack of robust telecommunications and broadband service.
- (3) Limited ability as a town to utilize tax incremental financing (TIF).

**Income:**

Median Household Income	\$ 54,609
Average Household Income	\$ 70,706
Per Capita Income	\$ 25,633

**Employment by Industry Type:**

Employment by Industry	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Industry</b>				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, & mining	49	9.7	28*	5*
Construction	49	9.7	51	9.1
Manufacturing	102	20.2	119	21.3
Wholesale trade	14	2.8	9	1.6
Retail trade	64	12.7	74	13.2
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	24	4.8	28	5
Information	4	0.8	7	1.3
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental & leasing	5	1	21**	3.7**
Professional, scientific, waste mgt.	22	4.4	19	3.4
Educational, health & social services	94	18.7	130***	23.2***
Arts, entertainment, recreation, food	38	7.5	10	1.8
Other (except Public Administration)	35	6.9	15	2.7
Public Administration	4	0.8	28	5

\*2010 statistics separated the mining industry from Agriculture and Natural Resources industries. The figures in the table include 5 people (.9%) employed by Mining.

\*\*2010 statistics separated Real estate, rental & leasing from Finance and Insurance. The figures in the table include 3 people (.5%) in Real estate, rental, and leasing.

\*\*\*2010 statistics separated Health care and social assistance from Educational Services. The figures in the table include 76 people (13.6%) employed by the Health care and social assistance industry.

**Largest Regional Employers:**

According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, only 18 people (3.2%) in the Town of Colfax worked at home. The vast majority of the Town's labor force commuted to their place of employment and had an average commute time of 25.6 minutes. Since the Village of Colfax and the Cities of Menomonie, Bloomer, Chippewa Falls, and Eau Claire are within easy commuting distance, the Town of Colfax's residents have a large number of employers within the region. The largest of these (generally, 1,000 employees or larger) include: 3M Company, ConAgra Foods, Inc., Intel Corporation, Marshfield Clinic, Mayo Clinic Health System-Eau Claire and Red Cedar, Menards, Inc., Menards, Inc. Distribution, Nestle USA, Phillips-Medisize, WalMart Distribution Center, United Healthcare Community Plan, University of Wisconsin System, TTM Advanced Circuits, Inc., St. Joseph's Hospital, and LE Phillips Libertas Center.

**Regional Industrial/Commercial Parks:**

The Town of Colfax presently does not have an existing public or private business park, primarily due to the lack of public utilities, limited ability to have tax incremental financing, and the desire to preserve the Town's rural character. Future intensive commercial or industrial development is unlikely, and, in some instances, undesirable, due

to incompatibility with Town planning objectives: the Town's commitment to farmland, open space, rural environment, and woodland preservation and potential demands on Town resources and infrastructure. The Town shall review any such proposal for compatibility and consistency with the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.

***Desirable Businesses and Industries:***

The Town of Colfax will consider proposed businesses and industries in the context of consistency with Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives and the anticipated impacts on the rural character of the Town; local quality of life, farmland preservation; potential impacts on the public health, safety and welfare; effect on Town resources and infrastructure; and impacts on natural, bluffscape, water and open space resources. Any such business or industry would need to be carefully sited, modest in size and neighborhood impacts, non-polluting (including, but not limited to, surface and groundwater, air, light, noise), environmentally safe, and be of a small business or light industry-type use. The Town encourages the establishment of more home-based occupations and businesses. The availability of broadband service would enhance business development in the Town.

***Summary and Trends:***

People choose to live in, and move to, the Town of Colfax because of its quality rural character, pristine natural resources, and the relatively easy commuting distances to a variety of employment opportunities. As indicated in the citizen survey, a majority of Town citizens rank the importance of groundwater quality and quantity, road maintenance, and natural resource preservation (of all types) ahead of the need for local economic development, particularly of the large-scale, industrial-type varieties of frac sand mining and CAFOs.

Future economic development in the Town of Colfax is to be compatible and consistent with the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan: protection of the Town's rural character, production agriculture, natural resources, unique landscape characteristics, and the public health and safety. Growth and change should be managed for the benefit of the entire community and not be detrimental to property values and the environment.

Future economic development will be of five (5) classifications:

- (1) Production agriculture and agriculture-support-related businesses with appropriate environmental monitoring.
- (2) Agri-tourism and tourism, with limited impacts on Town infrastructure.
- (3) Small-scale and in-home businesses and occupations with minimal impacts on the landscape, environment, and neighbors.
- (4) Limited commercial development along major highways which are properly located and are compatible with the rural character of the Town of Colfax, such as production agriculture commodities processing, warehousing, repair and service shops, implement dealerships, etc. Intensive industrial or commercial activities are not considered appropriate for the Town of Colfax.
- (5) Limited or clustered rural housing.

## **ELEMENT 7 - INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION:**

### ***General Overview:***

The Intergovernmental Cooperation element of the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan assesses the Town's role and collaboration in joint planning and decisions with other governmental jurisdictions. This element analyzes the relationship with local, regional and state jurisdictions; compiles existing cooperative agreements; identifies potential conflicts; and develops strategies to resolve conflicts within the boundaries of the Town and between itself and other communities.

### ***Background:***

The Town of Colfax is primarily a rural township composed of farms, rural residences, and a number of small businesses, mainly operating out of residences. Neighboring entities include the Village of Colfax (an incorporated municipality wholly within the Town's boundaries) and the Towns of Howard, Grant, Tainter, and Elk Mound. Overarching these entities are Dunn and Chippewa Counties and the State of Wisconsin. Because the future will bring new issues and challenges, ongoing collaboration and communications with area local governments are essential, particularly when changes and decisions in one jurisdiction have significant impacts on other communities. The Town is not an "island" but is part of a region. Therefore, there is a need for intergovernmental planning and cooperation where practical.

Currently neighboring towns and municipalities independently address issues within their jurisdictions, even though the impacts of such decisions may overlap from one community to another. For example, frac sand mining and CAFO impacts cross governmental boundaries. The Colfax School District is engaged in establishing distance learning opportunities with regional universities and would benefit from improved broadband width in rural areas.

Extraterritorial plat review, annexation and extraterritorial zoning are concerns that should be addressed through intergovernmental cooperation with the Village of Colfax. Because Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., contains a "consistency requirement" that land use decisions be consistent with comprehensive plans, it is important that municipal, town and county comprehensive plans be regularly updated to ensure that the policies therein are compatible and consistent with future rezonings and land division reviews in the extraterritorial area.

### ***Summary and Trends:***

Intergovernmental cooperation is important between the Town of Colfax and other governmental jurisdictions. Enhanced collaboration, communications and intergovernmental cooperation can produce efficiencies, reduce conflicts and potentially minimize unnecessary duplication of personnel and equipment. Additional incentives are state-mandated levy limits and the strong support for intergovernmental collaboration found in Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., and other statutes.

The increasing complexity of government administration, fiscal limitations and issues which cross governmental boundaries are compelling reasons for intergovernmental cooperation. To accomplish this, a compilation of objectives, policies, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision-making should be implemented. Entities involved can be, but are

not limited to, towns, municipalities, counties, school districts, fire/EMS districts, sanitary/utility districts, Law enforcement authorities and regional planning commissions. Regular meetings and communications between these entities are recommended. Intergovernmental collaboration can produce benefits to the citizenry such as reduced conflicts, early identification of issues, consistency and predictability of governmental behavior, and the development of trust and sound relationships between jurisdictions and their local officials. Potential tools to utilize include boundary agreements and intergovernmental agreements.

## **ELEMENT 8 – LAND USE:**

### ***General Overview:***

The Land Use element of the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan identifies the importance and relationships of land uses by noting existing uses, identifying areas of conflict, developing future projections, and preparing a future land use guide intended to effectuate the consistency requirement of Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats.

### ***Existing Land Uses:***

The Town of Colfax currently has approximately 170 acres zoned to conservancy districts, 160 acres zoned to commercial/business activity, and 75 acres of zoned residential areas. The remainder of the Town is zoned for agriculture and intensive agriculture use.

The Town of Colfax has no acreage devoted to industrial development or use.

### ***Redevelopment Opportunities:***

As a town, there cannot be any incorporated areas of the Town of Colfax. The Town has no public sewer and/or water districts, blighted neighborhoods, or abandoned or "brownfield" commercial or industrial sites – there are no traditional redevelopment opportunities. "Redevelopment" in the Town takes the form of changes in use, such as, for example, when farmland and woodland are converted to other uses.

### ***Land Use Conflicts:***

There are many potential land use conflicts which need to be taken into consideration when the Town of Colfax and other review authorities are making land use decisions. Forested areas are attractive for residential development or conversion to productive farmland, but woodlands are also important for soil erosion prevention, wildlife habitat, and forest-dependent plant life. A contiguous forest is very important to the environment. The fragmentation of land results in the disruption of animal habitat and migration and leads to conflicts between wildlife and humans. Fragmented forests are not conducive to commercially viable forestry. Low flatlands may be farmed or developed for non- agricultural uses, but also serve as important groundwater recharge areas, a function which may be significantly diminished with a change of use.

Converting steep slopes to productive farmland or residential housing may lead to soil erosion and loss, runoff pollution of surface waters, and loss of forested land, all issues which conflict with goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. The Town's prime farmland is limited, yet that land may also be desired for housing development and/or annexation, both of which have taken place in the past. This may be an issue area for joint planning between the Town and the Village.

With development, two potential problems can occur affecting the sensitive sandstone aquifer:

- (1) Reduced recharge to the aquifer may occur as more land is covered with impervious surfaces, such as roads, buildings and driveways, causing both disrupted recharge and precipitation moving more quickly to streams and ponds, resulting in less water being available to recharge the aquifer.
- (2) The risk of contaminating and polluting the aquifer increases.

A water table aquifer is at risk of becoming contaminated by surface spills, so it is necessary to manage what types of development occur, especially in areas where there is "good" to "excellent" recharge to the aquifer. Of particular concern are possible uses which rely on on-site containment facilities with breach potential, particularly during heavy rainfall. To aid in planning for future development in the Town of Colfax, identifying the location of key recharge areas for the sandstone aquifer and taking adequate steps to safeguard such areas to protect the aquifer from becoming contaminated from surface pollutants.

As demand for groundwater withdrawal increases with each high capacity well, expanding population and industrial growth, recharge to the aquifer should not become less than the withdrawal from the aquifer. The conversion of farm fields, woodlands and bluffs into non-agricultural development results in more impervious surfaces associated with buildings, driveways, parking lots, roads and streets, reducing the recharge from precipitation to the aquifer. By carefully managing development in the "good" to "excellent" recharge areas, development may have less of an impact on reducing recharge to the aquifer.

Soil characteristics, development, and land use practices can all contribute to groundwater contamination or reduced recharge to the aquifer. Throughout the Town, there are areas, due to soil conditions, which are unsuited for development relying on private septic systems due to the predominance of soils that are excessively drained, on steep topography, or with shallow depth to groundwater or bedrock. In areas with shallow soils which are excessively drained, concentration of septic systems could threaten groundwater quality. Current state septic system regulations only require a minimal soil depth, sufficient water infiltration into soil, and minimal separation between wells and drain fields; these standards may not fully address the impacts of unsewered development in the Town.

Land use conflicts may also arise when incompatible land uses are located nearby each other, with one property owner's rights in conflict with neighbors' property rights. For example, large livestock confinement feeding operations with manure pits or frac sand mining site/facilities can emit dust, odors, light pollution and noise which could affect neighbors' health, quality of life and property values. An individual's activities may conflict with county and town safety, health and nuisance standards.

### ***Future Land Uses:***

Planning the future land use of areas of the Town of Colfax can assist in minimizing land use conflicts. Determining what are the appropriate areas for future land uses must take into consideration land characteristics, prior development patterns, transportation options, existing area land uses, zoning, nearby environmentally sensitive areas, impacts on Town resources, etc. While the Future Land Use Map is included with this Comprehensive Plan as Appendix B, land use determinations must be made on a case-by-case basis and be consistent with the objectives and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

The permitted and conditional land uses in the Town, building setbacks, minimum lot sizes, housing density and building heights are regulated by applicable zoning codes and local land division and official map ordinances.

Existing development patterns in the Town indicate that population growth has slowed, and that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing and vacant lots available. Road use and maintenance, Town fiscal resources and other infrastructure concerns are all very important considerations. Economic development, utilities and community facilities were identified as less important issues in the citizen survey, while protection of the Town's rural character and natural resources (especially groundwater) were ranked of high importance. All of these, and additional possible factors should be taken into consideration when reviewing bodies make individual land use decisions.

Because groundwater quality and quantity are of vital importance to the Town, any requests for land divisions, variances, conditional or special use permits, or rezoning in areas of "good" to "excellent" recharge must ensure that recharge to the aquifer will not be threatened and there will be no contaminant or pollution increase. With development or land division applications, the direction of groundwater flow shall be noted and any wells and septic systems must be located safe distances from neighboring wells and septic systems.

The following new land uses should be strongly discouraged in recharge areas classified as "good", "very good", or "excellent", unless the applicant can demonstrate (as part of the application review) that the proposed use will not decrease recharge to the aquifer, and there is no threat that contaminant levels will rise above current levels or to any level deemed unsafe (whichever is the highest standard):

- (1) Land disposal of hazardous wastes or sludge from municipal wastewater treatment.
- (2) Land disposal of human waste from pumped septic systems.
- (3) Asphalt mixing plants.
- (4) Concrete mixing plants.
- (5) Landfills and incinerators.
- (6) Public or private recycling centers.
- (7) Junk yards, vehicle wrecking yards, public or private dumping grounds, or contractor's storage yards.
- (8) Disposal grounds for snow and ice commercially removed from other sites.
- (9) Storage sites for large quantities of chemicals or other hazardous materials which would pose major contamination problems if improperly or accidentally released.

The following zoning districts/uses are strongly discouraged in "good", "very good" or "excellent" recharge areas:

- (1) Light Industrial or Heavy Industrial.
- (2) Mineral Extraction and Nonmetallic Mining, except for nonmetallic mining operations for construction-grade aggregate for public highway construction and concrete mixing for a limited duration.

Any proposed land development with lots which have any portion in "very good" or "excellent" recharge areas shall be consistent with the Town Land Division Ordinance and have at least 30% of the acreage maintained as non-impervious open space (green space). Such green space shall be located on those areas of the parcel classified as having "very good" or "excellent" recharge capabilities.

Lands with steep slopes greater than 20% shall be preserved in its natural vegetative, undeveloped state and not be cultivated or developed in order to prevent severe erosion and the loss of natural beauty of bluffscape areas. Forests, wildlife preserves, open space and certain recreational activities are appropriate uses of land with sloped greater than 20%.

Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of characteristics for producing food, fiber, feed and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fertilizer, fuel, chemical and labor. Areas with soils classified as #1, #2 or #3 should be retained and protected whenever possible for long-term production agriculture purposes.

Areas which are suitable for development will be those without such limitations as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes and environmentally sensitive areas. Appropriate housing density must be maintained to preserve rural character and maintain groundwater quality and integrity. Adequate buffers for streams, wetlands, and rivers shall be maintained, in conformance with floodplain and shoreland-wetland zoning. In addition, land use reviews shall review whether there are no or minimal adjacent land use conflicts.

Residential development and farming adjacent to rivers and streams require careful planning to avoid contamination. Phosphorus, manure, and sand mine runoff have had damaging impacts on area rivers and streams. Careful review of land uses on tributary streams and the Red Cedar River support the health of the Town of Colfax and neighboring communities' surface waters.

### ***Summary and Trends:***

While the citizen survey identified some differences regarding the ranking in importance of some issues, the survey found that the one issue a clear majority of citizens agreed upon was the importance of ground water quality and quantity.

Ordinances must be proactive in intent to protect groundwater from becoming contaminated from surface pollutants, and using the map prepared by the Dunn County Land Conservation Division entitled *Location of Recharge Areas to the Sandstone Aquifer in Dunn County, Wisconsin, 2005* by Neil C. Koch (Appendix B) when making land use decisions will help protect the groundwater quality and quantity.

To protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public and preserve and maintain groundwater and key groundwater recharge areas, development and land use practices in

environmentally sensitive areas should be carefully identified and regulated as part of the planning process. To assist in planning for future development in the Town, the location of the recharge area to the sandstone aquifer is necessary to maintain good recharge to the aquifer and to protect it from becoming contaminated from surface pollutants.

## **ELEMENT 9 - IMPLEMENTATION:**

### ***General Overview:***

The Implementation element of the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for future decision-making on land use matters, and is particularly important for meeting the consistency requirement of Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats. This element describes the specific goals and objectives the Town shall use to implement the integration of the above planning elements.

"Goals" are long-term, forward-focused aims that the Town desires to accomplish, planning statements regarding public policy toward which local programs, decisions, and/or activities are ultimately directed. Goals represent the most preferable outcome that can be achieved and strongly reflect citizen values and input. "Objectives" are specific steps to attaining goals.

For organizational purposes, the goals and objectives of the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan are established in the subsequent chapter of this Plan.

# Chapter 4

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## Goals and Objectives

Establishing goals and objectives to effectuate implementation of the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan, provide guidance on land use decision-making, and to satisfy the consistency requirement of Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., are the primary purposes of this Chapter. Goals and objectives shall be listed by comprehensive plan element.

(a) **Housing Goals and Objectives:**

- (1) **Goal:** Pursue policies, objectives and land use-related decision-making which encourage environmentally compatible and affordable housing meeting the needs of present and future Town residents, while maintaining the overall rural character of the Town.
- (2) **Objectives:** The following are the Housing element objectives:
  - a. Objective 1: Consider developing and enacting Town land division, site plan review, licensing, official map, and other land use-related ordinances, with particular emphasis on cluster or conservation-type subdivision requirements.
  - b. Objective 2: Administer Town land division, site plan review, licensing, and official map ordinances (if adopted), and make determinations, including Town reviews under the county zoning code, consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan, as required by Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats.
  - c. Objective 3: Create Town development guides providing compliance checklists for use with Town land use and licensing ordinances and Comprehensive Plan criteria.
  - d. Objective 4: Discourage the conversion of farmland, open spaces and bluffsapes to non-agricultural uses incompatible with the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.
  - e. Objective 5: Allow the limited creation of rural lots by certified survey map or plat in compliance with Town ordinances and the County Zoning Code.
  - f. Objective 6: Ensure that county, extraterritorial and other reviewing authorities in their administration and enforcement of land use ordinances within the Town adhere to the goals and objectives of the Town Comprehensive Plan.

(b) **Transportation Goals and Objectives:**

- (1) **Goal:** Maintain safe and adequate rural-profile roads and other transportation infrastructure of a design normally associated with rural areas, farm use, rural housing, periodic deliveries, and low-impact business and commercial uses.
- (2) **Objectives:** The following are the Transportation Element objectives:
  - a. Objective I : Strive to maintain or improve upon the current level of maintenance and condition of Town roads, as well as Town equipment and facilities serving the public.
  - b. Objective 2: Discourage new land uses in the Town which would impose

unusual or extraordinary demands on Town budgets, roads and services, produce heavy truck traffic or truck noise, or present public safety and/or health concerns.

- c. Objective 3: Where circumstances exist where heavy trucking will occur associated with a commercial or industrial-type enterprise which will use Town roads, the Town will require appropriate maintenance agreements assigning costs to the user and defining repair and reconstruction responsibility.
- d. Objective 4: Work with state, county and private industry representatives to improve and upgrade railroad crossings of Town roads, and discourage new uses which would significantly increase train size and frequency through the Town or create a need for additional crossing points; potential impacts on law enforcement, fire and First Responder response times shall be considered.
- e. Objective 5: Monitor Town road use and maintenance needs and explore methods of funding to maintain roads in good condition.

(c) **Utilities and Community Facilities Goals and Objectives:**

- (1) **Goal:** Ensure that residents and businesses of the Town are adequately served by desired public utilities and community facilities in a cost-effective, environmentally sound way and in a manner which promotes a high quality of life.
- (2) **Objectives:** The following are the Utilities and Community Facilities element objectives:
  - a. Objective 1 : Engage in discussions with area local governments and the school districts of possible ways to collaborate on future community facilities needs.
  - b. Objective 2: Monitor to assure human waste septage is properly managed.
  - c. Objective 3: Identify additional ways to communicate with Town residents.
  - d. Objective 4: Explore expansion of broadband services within the Town.
  - e. Objective 5: Examine local regulations and standards, strengthening them where necessary, to protect quality of life and sensitive environmental areas with regard to construction of cellphone and other transmission towers or wind turbine energy towers, in compliance with the parameters of the Wisconsin Statutes.
  - f. Objective 6: Revise procedures and ordinances, where necessary, to assure that environmentally sensitive areas are considered prior to deciding the location of new utilities or community facilities.

(d) **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goals and Objectives:**

- (1) **Goal:** Proactively preserve areas of agricultural, environmental, historical and aesthetic significance for the use and enjoyment of current residents and future generations.
- (2) **Objectives:** The following are the Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources element objectives:
  - a. Objective 1: Maintain and protect groundwater quality and quantity within the Town, working with other governmental agencies and organizations

to identify and protect groundwater of the Town. Under this objective, proposals for the use of high-capacity wells will be thoroughly reviewed for impacts on groundwater and surface water. [Note: High capacity wells are subject to review and approval by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.]

- b. Objective 2: Establish groundwater monitoring at the existing well at the Town Hall.
- c. Objective 3: Regard wetlands, bluffs, woodlands, clean air, surface and groundwaters, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, and environmental corridors as irreplaceable resources and ensure that they are preserved for future generations as important features in maintaining a quality rural character of life in the Town.
- d. Objective 4: Protect for the future productive farmland and the integrity of primarily agricultural areas by discouraging land conversions to non-agricultural uses incompatible or detrimental to farming, while encouraging diverse farming and agricultural operations.
- e. Objective 5: Map environmentally significant areas and resources, and document and map any contaminated sites, such as old landfills.
- f. Objective 6: Allow small-scale construction-grade aggregate extraction operations whose products are primarily used for road construction and concretemixing purposes. While areas of the Town contain deposits of sand and other aggregate materials, intensive mining, processing and transloading of such industrial-grade materials, typically associated with frac sand mining activities, are generally incompatible and inconsistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan. Proposed post-mining land uses of any current or future nonmetallic mining site, of any type, shall be consistent with this Plan.
- g. Objective 7: Any parcel of land over ten (10) acres which is subject to post-mining reclamation and is located in an area under a farmland preservation zoning ordinance enacted pursuant to subch. III of Chapter 91, Wis. Stats., shall be restored to an agricultural use of the type and quality as existed prior to the mining activity. The proposed post-mining land use shall be consistent with the Town Comprehensive Plan, ordinances, and applicable zoning requirements at the time the post-mining plan is submitted for review and determination.
- h. Objective 8: Work with local historical and community organizations to obtain written and oral histories and photographs from long-time residents, and identify, photograph, and catalog unique or historically significant farm structures, residences and sites in the Town, such as, but not limited to, the Running Valley School (Hones School), sandstone quarries, and cemeteries. Encourage public displays of materials educating the public on the history of the Town.
- i. Objective 9: The Town recognizes that this Plan subsection complies with the requirement of Section 66.1001(2)(e), Wis. Stats., that a comprehensive plan must contain an Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element: "A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation and promotion of the effective management of resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with the zoning limitations under Section 295.20(2), Wis. Stats., parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, and other natural resources." The Town shall consider such factors when reviewing all

developments, land use changes, pertinent licensing proposals or development requests.

- j. Objective 10: Discourage non-agricultural uses or development of areas, or near such areas, that possess valuable natural landscape characteristics, such as, but not limited to, wetlands, floodplains, bluffs, viewsheds, springs, and wildlife habitat. These features are valuable to maintaining the Town's rural quality of life. The Town shall regard wetlands, bluffs, woodlands, surface waters and groundwaters, agricultural lands, and environmental corridors as irreplaceable resources and ensure that they are preserved for future generations.
- k. Objective 11: Uphold best management practices for nutrient management since nutrient management planning on agricultural lands has an impact on surface and groundwaters.
- l. Objective 12: Encourage effective buffers along streams and the Red Cedar River to avoid polluted surface waters both within the Town and downstream in neighboring towns.
- m. Objective 13: Consider having the Town designated an Agricultural Enterprise Zone (AEA) by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.
- n. Objective 14: Consider encouraging property owners to participate in voluntary conservation easement programs.
- o. Objective 15: "Right to Farm" notices, pursuant to statutory standards, should be required on any new subdivision plat or certified survey map approved by the Town. Such notice should be recorded on the property deed and alert potential purchasers that they are buying property in an agricultural area with predominantly pre-existing agricultural operations.
- p. Objective 16: If environmentally sensitive areas exist due to regulatory standards within a plat or certified survey map area which cannot be developed, such limitations shall be noted on the face of the plat or certified survey at the time of approval and subsequent recording.

(e) **Economic Development Goals and Objectives:**

- (1) **Goal:** Support sustainable and environmentally sound businesses compatible with the rural character of the Town.
- (2) **Objectives:** The following are the Economic Development element objectives:
  - a. Objective 1: Encourage small-scale, home-based, production agriculture, agri-tourism related, and other similar economic development opportunities with minimal impacts to the environment, landscape, natural features, air and water quality, Town infrastructure, rural character, local quality of life, farmland preservation, and limited rural residential uses. Economic development proposals will be reviewed in the context of the above planning objectives.
  - b. Objective 2: Support and encourage diversification within the agricultural economy.
  - c. Objective 3: As part of the review and decision-making process by Town officials, consider Town resources when reviewing proposals, including, but not limited to, impact on Town finances; anticipated tax revenue which may be gained versus increased Town costs; impacts on Town infrastructure; changes in regulatory compliance expenses; impacts on existing residences,

farms, businesses and property values; changes in transportation/road needs; quality of life impacts, etc.

(f) **Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals and Objectives:**

- (1) **Goal:** Seek ways of improving communications, collaboration and agreement between the Town and neighboring townships, municipalities, state, and counties.
- (2) **Objectives:** The following are the Intergovernmental Cooperation element objectives:
  - a. Objective 1: Communicate Town concerns with neighboring towns and municipalities regarding groundwater quality and quantity, emphasizing that all share the same aquifer and that Town residents have strongly indicated their concern over groundwater issues.
  - b. Objective 2: Explore concerns which overlap with neighboring units of government, and develop intergovernmental agreements, such as boundary agreements, where appropriate.
  - c. Objective 3: Seek ways to share road, transportation and other infrastructure concerns with neighboring local governments, the county and the state. Cooperative possibilities include intergovernmental agreements on boundary area road maintenance and shared equipment.
  - d. Objective 4: Work with neighboring municipalities' sewage treatment plants to explore treatment of human waste as an alternative to land spreading in an environmentally unsound manner.
  - e. Objective 5: Discuss land use planning objectives with other units of government to minimize future conflicts.

(g) **Land Use Goals and Objectives:**

- (1) **Goal:** Promote an environmentally responsible approach to future development in the Town.
- (2) **Objectives:** The following are the Land Use element goals and objectives:
  - a. Objective 1: Identify issues and factors regarding development proposals which may have significant impacts on the environment, such as, but not limited to, groundwater quality, potential spillage and stormwater management, air quality, noise and light levels, loss of landscape features, demands on Town finances and infrastructure, etc.
  - b. Objective 2: Adhere to the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan, as prescribed by the consistency requirement of Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., when making determinations regarding land use, zoning and land use-related licensing. Use of lands zoned Exclusive Agricultural, Agricultural, Agricultural-Residential, Commercial, Residential 1, Residential 2, or Rural Housing under the County Zoning Code, or similar successor districts, for metallic or industrial-grade nonmetallic mining (and associated processing and transloading uses) are considered incompatible and inconsistent with the Town's primary commitment to preserving rural character, environmental quality and farmland preservation. This objective includes review and decision-making involving rezoning applications, zoning classification, special exception and conditional use permits, and/or proposals for conversion of a construction-grade aggregate pit or quarry to an industrial-grade

aggregate/sand mining, processing or transloading operation. Because of the inherent intensive scale, methods of operation, negative environmental and farmland preservation impacts, and permanent land-converting nature of industrial-grade sand mining, transloading and processing, such operations would significantly impair or limit the viability of production agriculture and/or rural housing in the neighborhood of such a site.

- c. Objective 3: Implement groundwater and air quality monitoring where deemed necessary.
- d. Objective 4: Ensure a future land use pattern in the Town which consistently and effectively maintains and protects the rural and natural character of the Town and the Town's long-term commitment to production agriculture, farmland preservation, limited rural development, and protection of groundwater, water resources, air quality, and landscape resources.
- e. Objective 5: Discourage conversion of lands to industrial, large commercial or intensive residential use.
- f. Objective 6: Support responsible use, and recognize limitations, of the Town's financial, infrastructure and other resources, and consider the impact of land use- related decisions on Town taxpayers.
- g. Objective 7: Discourage the conversion of lands in the Town to uses deemed incompatible and in conflict with the goals and objectives of the Town Comprehensive Plan.
- h. Objective 8: Balance economic growth and CAFO expansion with quality of life, public health protection, and Town resources.
- i. Objective 9: Make land use decisions with groundwater protection as the first consideration when reviewing any development proposal.
- j. Objective 10: Make land use determinations that balance landowner rights and neighbor rights.
- k. Objective 11: To ensure consistency with this Comprehensive Plan, as required by Section 66.1001, Wis. Stats., adhere to the goals, objectives and requirements of the Comprehensive Plan, applicable Town ordinances, Subdivision Checklist, and other Town requirements when making decisions relative to land use, land divisions, zoning and licensing. Town ordinances will be amended, if necessary, to reflect this policy.
- l. Objective 12: Make land use determinations in a manner which best safeguards property values in the area of proposed projects, based on the present uses and values at the time of a development proposal.
- m. Objective 13: Educate and inform the public and government officials on the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, its importance, the need for balance and consistency in reviews and determinations at all levels of government, specifically the Plan's consistency requirement.

**(h) Comprehensive Plan Monitoring, Evaluation and Updating:**

- (1) The Town of Colfax Town Board and Plan Commission shall monitor the progress of Comprehensive Plan implementation and compliance, and evaluate the Plan against changing conditions on a minimum of an annual basis or as significant changes warrant.
- (2) With the passage of time and the evolving nature of the Town, Plan monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing process, which may lead to a need to make changes or

additions to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. At a minimum, State law requires that all comprehensive plans shall be evaluated and formally updated every ten years, following the statutory requirements for review and adoption; the Town may engage in the evaluation and revision process more frequently if warranted.

# Appendix A

## Public Survey

## **Appendix A: Public Survey**

### ***Survey Process:***

As part of the process updating and amending the Town of Colfax Comprehensive Plan, the Plan Commission, in September of 2015, sent out over 450 surveys to property owners in the Town to gather information and input to guide the revision of the Plan.

### ***Summary of Citizen Opinion Survey:***

A vast majority (over 80%, plus an additional 20% making comments) of the survey respondents thought that groundwater quality and quantity were very important issues. Next in importance was Town tax dollar usage, with over 60% indicating that this issue was very important. Between 50% and 60% of the respondents ranked the following issues as very important: Surface water quality; farmland preservation and maintaining a rural environment; transportation; air quality; landowner/neighbor rights; police/fire/emergency medical services; property value protection; forest/woodlands preservation; and wildlife preservation.

Cultural development, housing availability, and residential lot size were identified as not as important in terms of issues facing the Town by the survey respondents.

Although not specifically addressed in the survey, one one-third of the respondents expressed very negative comments regarding frac sand mining and/or CAFOs developing in the Town of Colfax.

The following pages include a copy of the survey sent out by the Plan Commission, a compilation of survey results and comments, and charts analyzing the survey results.

## Citizen Survey

The Town Planning Commission is updating Colfax's Comprehensive Plan this year and would like citizen input. Please indicate how important the following issues are to you. Explain your concerns and ideas on the other side of this page.

Issues	Not important	Important	Very Important
Air Quality (example: chemicals, dust, silica)			
Citizen safety and health issues			
Community Services (example: services for elderly)			
Cultural Development (example: arts)			
Economic Development (Small/home business, tourism, farming, commerce)			
Economic Development (Industrial or factory farm)			
Farmland Preservation and Rural Environment			
Forests/Woodlands Preservation			
Ground Water Quality and Quantity (ex.: well water)			
Historical Site Preservation			
Housing Availability			
Land Owner Rights / Neighbor Rights			
Natural Resource Preservation or Development (gravel, industrial sand, heavy metal)			
Nuisance issues (ex. Pets running loose, noise, obnoxious odors)			
Parks/Scenic Areas Preservation / Development			
Police/Fire/Emergency Medical			
Property Value Protection			
Recreational Opportunities (ex. Biking/walking /ATV routes)			
Residential Lot Size			
Transportation (ex. Road Maintenance/Snow Plowing)			
Solid Waste/Recycling			
Surface Water Quality/Quantity (ex.pond, streams)			
Town Tax Dollar Usage			
Utilities (including broadband)			
Wetland protection			
Wildlife habitat protection			
Inter-community cooperation (ex. village and surrounding townships)			
Other			



**Table 1: Survey Totals**

Issue	Not important	Important	Very important	No Answer	Total
Air Quality (ex. chemicals, dust, silica)	12	52	87	8	159
Citizen safety and health issues	7	80	63	9	159
Community Services (ex. services for elderly)	18	91	37	13	159
Cultural Development (ex. arts)	84	54	6	15	159
Economic Development (ex. small/home business, tourism)	19	85	45	10	159
Economic Development (ex. industrial, factory farm)	46	74	28	11	159
Farmland Preservation and Rural Environment	15	58	74	12	159
Forests/Woodlands Preservation	6	60	79	14	159
Ground Water Quality and Quantity (ex.well water)	4	20	129	6	159
Historical Site Preservation	40	85	20	14	159
Housing Availability	66	63	17	13	159
Land Owner Rights/Neighbors rights	3	57	85	14	159
Natural Resource Preservation/Development	20	58	67	14	159
Nuisance issues (ex. Pets running loose, noise, obnoxious odors)	37	69	42	11	159
Parks/Scenic Areas Preservation/Development	33	77	31	18	159
Police/Fire/Emergency Medical	4	55	87	13	159
Property Value Protection	4	62	82	11	159
Recreational Opportunities(ex.Biking/walking/ATV routes)	45	75	27	12	159
Residential Lot Size	59	61	26	13	159
Transportation(Road Maintenance/Snow Plowing)	3	62	87	7	159
Solid Waste/Recycling	17	82	46	14	159
Surface Water Quality/Quantity(ex.pond,streams)	4	65	84	6	159
Town Tax Dollar Usage	3	49	99	8	159
Utilities (including broadband)	20	70	57	12	159
Wetland protection	19	68	62	10	159
Wildlife habitat protection	15	58	76	10	159
Inter-community cooperation	17	86	45	11	159

**Table 2: Survey Results in Very Important descending Percentage Order**

Issue	% Not important	% Important	% Very important	% No answer
Ground Water Quality and Quantity (ex.well water)	2.52%	12.58%	81.13%	3.77%
Town Tax Dollar Usage	1.89%	30.82%	62.26%	5.03%
Air Quality (ex. chemicals, dust, silica)	7.55%	32.70%	54.72%	5.03%
Police/Fire/Emergency Medical	2.52%	34.59%	54.72%	8.18%
Transportation(Road Maintenance/Snow Plowing)	1.89%	38.99%	54.72%	4.40%
Land Owner Rights/Neighbors rights	1.89%	35.85%	53.46%	8.81%
Surface Water Quality/Quantity(ex.pond,streams)	2.52%	40.88%	52.83%	3.77%
Property Value Protection	2.52%	38.99%	51.57%	6.92%
Forests/Woodlands Preservation	3.77%	37.74%	49.69%	8.81%
Wildlife habitat protection	9.43%	36.48%	47.80%	6.29%
Farmland Preservation and Rural Environment	9.43%	36.48%	46.54%	7.55%
Natural Resource Preservation/Development	12.58%	36.48%	42.14%	8.81%
Citizen safety and health issues	4.40%	50.31%	39.62%	5.66%
Wetland protection	11.95%	42.77%	38.99%	6.29%
Utilities (including broadband)	12.58%	44.03%	35.85%	7.55%
Solid Waste/Recycling	10.69%	51.57%	28.93%	8.81%
Economic Development (ex. small/home business, tourism)	11.95%	53.46%	28.30%	6.29%
Inter-community cooperation	10.69%	54.09%	28.30%	6.92%
Nuisance issues (ex. Pets running loose, noise, obnoxious odors)	23.27%	43.40%	26.42%	6.92%
Community Services (ex. services for elderly)	11.32%	57.23%	23.27%	8.18%
Parks/Scenic Areas Preservation/Development	20.75%	48.43%	19.50%	11.32%
Economic Development (ex. industrial, factory farm)	28.93%	46.54%	17.61%	6.92%
Recreational Opportunities(ex:Biking/walking/ATV routes)	28.30%	47.17%	16.98%	7.55%
Residential Lot Size	37.11%	38.36%	16.35%	8.18%
Historical Site Preservation	25.16%	53.46%	12.58%	8.81%
Housing Availability	41.51%	39.62%	10.69%	8.18%
Cultural Development (ex. arts)	52.83%	33.96%	3.77%	9.43%

## **COLFAX COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY COMMENTS (front side)**

The following are comments from the front side of the Citizen Survey Questionnaire. They have been grouped under the issue where they were made.

### **1: Air Quality (ex. Chemicals, dust, silica)**

- Had a “check-plus” in the “Very important” column
- Wrote “Cow Manure” in the “Very important” box.
- double check-marks in “Very important.”

### **2: Citizen safety and health issues**

- Had “health issues” circled and “Very important” marked.
- Had a “check-plus” in the “Very important” column

### **3: Community Services (ex. Services for elderly)**

### **4: Cultural Development (ex. Arts)**

### **5: Economic Development (ex. Small/home business, tourism)**

- Economic Development (Small/home business, tourism, farming, commerce) – had “tourism” circled and “Very important” marked.
- Circled farming and “Very important” marked, but Factory farm circled on next line and “Not Important” marked.

### **6: Economic Development (ex. Industrial, factory farm)**

- wrote in “important not to develop”.
- had “Industrial or factory farm” circled and “Not important” marked.
- wrote “but potentially negative” next to their “Very important” mark.

### **7: Farmland Preservation and Rural Environment**

- Farmland Preservation and Rural Environment – had “Rural Environment” circled and “Very important” marked.

### **8: Forests/Woodlands Preservation**

### **9: Ground Water Quality and Quantity (ex. Well water)**

- wrote in “of course” next to their mark in the important column.
- had a “check-plus” in the “Very important” column
- Wrote “Farmer using chemicals & shit run-off” next to their “Very Important” mark.

### **10: Historical Site Preservation**

### **11: Housing Availability**

### **12: Land Owners Rights/Neighbors rights**

- circled Neighbor Rights with their “Important” mark.
- Land Owner Rights/Neighbor rights – had “Neighbors rights” circled and “Very important” marked.
- Land Owner Rights/Neighbor rights – had “Neighbors rights” circled and “Very important” marked.
- had “Neighbors rights” circled and “Important” marked.

### **13: Natural Resource Preservation/Development**

- Natural Resource Preservation or Development – did not check any box, but wrote “NO SAND MINING” in the columns in capital letters.
- Natural Resource Preservation or Development – had “Development (gravel, industrial sand, heavy metal)” crossed off, and marked “very important”, indicating they thought Natural Resource Preservation was very important – not Development.
- Natural Resource Preservation or Development – had “Natural Resource Preservation” circled and “Very important” marked.
- had “Natural Resource Preservation” circled, “Development” crossed off, and “Important” marked.
- had “Preservation” circled and “Very important” marked.
- had “Natural Resource Preservation” circled, “Development” crossed off, and “Important” marked.
- had “Preservation” circled and “Very important” marked.
- had “Preservation” circled, wrote “No Gravel, Sand, Heavy Metal”, and marked “Very important”.
- No check-marks, but wrote in “Don’t want Sand Mines”.
- had “Preservation” circled and arrow to “Very important” mark. Had “industrial sand, heavy metal” underlined and wrote “No industrial sand or heavy metal.”

### **14: Nuisance Issues (ex. Pets running loose, noise, obnoxious odors)**

- “Pets running loose” circled, and “Very important” marked.
- Wrote “Pets loose” and marked “Not important” and wrote “No Sand Mines traffic noise” and marked “Very important”.
- Both important and very important checked with Pets running loose, and noise circled, and “BARKING” written in capital letters.
- “Noise and obnoxious odors” were circled and “Important” marked.

### **15: Parks/Scenic Areas Preservation/Development**

- Parks/Scenic Areas Preservation/Development – “Scenic Areas Preservation” circled and “Very important” marked.

### **16: Police/Fire/Emergency Medical**

--

### **17: Property Value Protection**

- 3 marks in the very important column.

### **18: Recreational Opportunities (ex. Biking/walking/ATV routes)**

- “Biking/walking” circled and marked “Very important”.

**19: Residential Lot Size**

- Wrote “Should be larger” and “Very important” marked.

**20: Transportation (Road Maintenance/Snow Plowing)**

- Doing an adequate job on everything, but could use some guard rails over culvert on our road (1/2 mile west of E9673 890<sup>th</sup> Ave).
- “Road Maintenance/Repair County Rd. N” written in and “Very important” marked.
- Wrote “Dead End Roads Also, Dead End Roads Need Fixing” next to their “Very important” mark.
- Wrote “Fixing Roads” and “Very important” marked.
- Wrote “Good job snow plowing now! Smiley face” and marked “Important”.
- “Glen does Great” and “Not important” marked.

**21: Solid Waste/Recycling**

**22: Surface Water Quality/Quantity (ex. Pond, streams)**

- Had a “check-plus” in the “Very important” column

**23: Town Tax Dollar Usage**

Wrote “Extremely” next to their “Very important” mark.

**24: Utilities (including broadband)**

- Had “broadband” circled and “Very important” marked.
- “Good Internet and phone usage” written next to their “Very important” mark.

**25: Wetland Protection**

**26: Wildlife Habitat Protection**

**27: Inter-community cooperation**

- Had a “check-plus” in the “Very important” column

**28: Other**

- “Better protection of all streams and wetlands from farm run off & potential industrial pollution” written in and “Very important” checked.
- “Sand Mine Regulation!” written in and double check-marks in “Very important”.
- “All these things are Important. High priority or Not.”
- Wrote “Dog Parks/public lands where dogs are allowed”, and “Important” marked.
- Wrote “Usage of water by farms is a very big concern. There should be a large tax put on large amounts of water like they’re using. The free ride should end,” and marked “Very important.”
- Wrote “Responsibility to future generations to protect our farms and scenic beauty.

## **Citizen survey Comments**

**The following are verbatim comments from the reverse side of the Citizen Survey Questionnaire. Where multiple concerns were not easily separated into specific categories they have been grouped under one of the most prevalent listings.**

### **1: Air Quality (ex. Chemicals, dust, silica)**

--Stop the sand mines. Very concerned about our air and water quality and contamination / depleting our ground water. Irrigation systems.

### **2: Citizen safety and health issues**

--Anything that reduces the health, welfare and public safety of others should not be allowed, just as it should not detrimentally affect the environment.

### **3: Community Services (ex. Services for elderly)**

--The parks and play equipment in town could be improved.

### **4: Cultural Development (ex. Arts)**

### **5: Economic Development (ex. Small/home business, tourism)**

### **6: Economic Development (ex. Industrial, factory farm)**

--Not in favor of large dairy operations. Not in favor of industrial development.

--Economic development is important in that it should not affect others livelihood in a detrimental way.

--Economic development of larger industries or factory farms should not be allowed if it pollutes air, water, affects tourism in a negative manner, creates obnoxious odors, light, noise, and reduces neighboring property values.

--I'm concerned about large-scale industrial operations (like sand mines or CAFOs) encroaching on our rural/residential area, since this has already happened elsewhere. I would like to preserve our scenic beauty and clean air and water.

--I'm concerned about factory farms and manure disposal.

--I think it is important for everyone to be good neighbors, even large farms. The dust we have to put up with is not healthy for anyone who has to deal with it. It is really frustrating when all they would have to do is black top the driveway. It is not fair that neighbors have to live with this mess. Windows cannot be opened nor is it safe to be outside breathing the dust.

--Don't allow mining operation in our beautiful area. It's not only unsightly but dangerous to our ground water and air quality.

- Moving in the right direction with the mining developers agreements.
- Concern: Development of proposed sand mine in neighboring township even though there are already too many, some of which seem to be idle and non-operational already. Get more people concerned & help them understand the negative impact of one being developed so close to our homes while benefiting only the few willing to sell or lease their land without thought for our beautiful, scenic area and our clear air.
- No sand mines please. The hills are what make this area beautiful. I know the DNR may say they will work to preserve our wildlife and nature, but they don't always follow through.
- No sand mines—trucks, traffic, dust, noise, scenic view is gone—take away the wilderness which is home to all the animals—not a fan of sand mines!
- No more dairy industries. The heavy traffic and obnoxious odors year round are more than anyone should have to put up with. No sand mines. Very heavy traffic and water pollution—18 Mile creek. The dairy industries will ruin the water table also—only a matter of time—there is no cure for polluted water.
- Industrial strip mining is not ok. Factory farms should be limited to less than 500 animal units.
- continued township involvement / awareness of sand mining issues in the area.
- Sand mines ruining—air, ground water, forest land.
- Sand mine intervention.
- Sand mines are not being regulated by the DNR or any state agency. They are harming the environment. However they can be a great benefit to the local economy if they are properly regulated.
- I am concerned about the spread of sand mines. Factors are air quality, water quality and train traffic in Colfax.
- Don't want sand mines or all the issues associated with it (like poor air quality, a lot of noise, polluted H2O, health issues).
- Hopefully no sand mining in Dunn County. Preserve the land and hills. I see what it's doing to New Auburn, Chetek and other places. It doesn't look good.

## **7: Farmland Preservation and Rural Environment**

- Any large scale industrial land use needs to consider impact to surrounding properties. Need to maintain rural character of Town of Colfax.
- NO SAND MINING—I believe it is too destructive, both here and at the wells. Not worth destroying our hills, which is one reason I live here. I live in the country for its beauty and quiet. Do what you can to preserve our environment. Once it's gone we're never getting it back.
- We are all health care providers / staff and find current conditions in Colfax exceptional for maintenance of physical and mental health. We moved to Colfax because of the air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat, low noise levels and beautiful wooded hills and valleys as

well as abundant clear streams and small wetlands. We like the fact that it is not yet over built and lot sizes are large, when new homes are built! The qualities that make the township attractive so far also include the fact that we are not bombarded with noise (from) ATV trails and no frack sand mines or neighbor vs. landowner rights conflicts so far. We would like to see more careful consideration of wildlife habitat preservation with regard to road construction and farm expansion.

--This area is zoned for agriculture and recreation. We do not want industrial sand mining to destroy the natural beauty and change the peaceful rural life. We believe agriculture is important economically as a security for Wisconsin; if there were an extreme drought or other agricultural failure elsewhere our excellent farmers would provide us with high quality food. We need our lands to stay in the hands of farmers, and to keep us true to our roots. My husband has a business and people visit from Minneapolis and Chicago to experience the true rural life. They love it. Let's preserve it!

--Concerned about land usage = is Farm land being lost to urban development. Clear cutting woods to plant pine plantations which ruins habitat for many native plants and animals.

--Some regulations on the size of these factory farms.

--Thirty three years ago I moved to the Town of Colfax because of the forests, rolling hills, the trout stream that starts on our land, and the freedom this land affords the critters big and small that were here before Europeans settled here. I could have moved somewhere else to earn more money. That was not my priority. Since that time, I've learned to appreciate the rarity of this clean air, clean water and uninterrupted woods and the depth of the people who are grounded to the land in the Town of Colfax. We've purchased as much land as we could afford in order to steward the rarity we've found here. Recognizing the rarity this land offers, what doesn't seem rare in the Town of Colfax are the communal values for family, friendly and helpful neighbors, responsible family farms, and a healthy place to rear our next generations. I ask our Town government and pledge to do what I can to protect the rarity that our land offers and to support our welcoming and nurturing community for all—elders to newborns. In my mind that means:

No sand mines

No factory farm

Any development be based on the rural, scenic nature of our Township

Protection of our wetlands, streams and river

Vigilance about what can compromise our clean air and ground/surface waters

Sensible forest management

Safe roads for cars, pedestrians, bikes and farm implements

Promotion of ordinances and customs that assure individual property rights do not infringe on neighbors' equally important rights to a good life and the rarity our land offers (for example, prohibition of liquid manure spray irrigation.

--We are very concerned about the proposed Town of Howard sand mine. Don't want one so

close to us or in the Town of Colfax either. We are concerned about air quality, groundwater quality, noise, increased truck / train traffic, and declining property values. We chose to live in a rural area for the peace and quiet and to be surrounded by nature, not industry.

--Need to preserve farmland, etc. for future generations (woodland and water).

--No issues to date. The Town of Colfax has been reasonable to work with. They are also very engaged with the sand mining in the Town of Howard. I would rather keep the Town of Colfax in its current quiet setting, that's why I moved here. I believe overall we as a society are robbing resources to fill a temporary fuel crunch that is not sustainable.

### **8: Forests/Woodlands Preservation**

--Forests / woodlands preservation helps air quality and animal wildlife also parks scenery.

Tax \$ = best for all types of people not just a selected few.

--Forestry and woodland management should be strongly encouraged due to their renewable, literally perpetual economic impacts.

### **9: Ground Water Quality and Quantity (ex. Well water)**

--Concerned about the proliferation of high capacity wells. More is needed on how to address this issue.

--Concern: depletion of ground water. Farmers who run irrigation too much and allow water spraying on roadway. Regulate and enforce regulations.

--Animal waste in water pollution management & restrictions mining reclamation enforcement. Land usage and lot size.

--Chemicals used on crops getting into ground water. Don't need all the sand mines. Irrigation is using too much water.

--I would like to see our Town develop a test well where the Town can measure water quality and quantity. Ideally local citizens will be testing their water but the Town needs to be a leader in water stewardship. By publishing what the Town is doing, we are representing to our citizens the importance of water testing.

--It needs to be understood that once groundwater aquifers are impaired almost everyone is harmed health-wise and economically.

--High capacity well monitoring / regulation.

### **10: Historical Site Preservation**

### **11: Housing Availability**

--I would like to see no trailer houses out in the country.

### **12: Land Owners Rights/Neighbors rights**

--Landowner and neighbor rights are very important in that they should not detrimentally

affect the others.

--Although all items (on the reverse side) are important or very important two issues seem to stand out; (1) Protecting property rights, within the law, whatever the issue is (2) Economic development and coordinating efforts with the village. Together the town and village could assess future needs of residents, taking into account demographics, and determine long range goals. We should Plan for the future instead of letting it happen.

--I'm concerned about individual property rights vs. the community as a whole.

--Land owner rights / neighbor rights within reason.

--I support property owner rights! As long as what a person does and it does not have a direct affect on their neighbors then it is nobody's business but his or her own.

--There needs to be a clear understanding about what is an appropriate acceptable balance between these 'right-holders' (and neighbors' rights).

### **13: Natural Resource Preservation/Development**

--It's my opinion that family farms are a thing of the past. Within 1 generation, 2 at most, all 'family farms' will be gone. I think we need to focus more on urban sprawl which is eating up our woods and fields, which impacts hunting. I feel that the large commercial farms are capable of creating just as much environmental damage as any sand mine, if not more. That does not mean that I am against Commercial Dairy, I just feel that both if properly managed and held accountable can exist here and should both have the opportunity. I feel that any property owner who pays their taxes has the right to use their property as they see fit so long as it does not destroy or damage the environment and they have the proper permits, and are held accountable.

--Water and air quality are my biggest concerns. The Red Cedar River is being polluted from fertilizer and the sand mine industry. Can something be done about the nuisance engine braking into town from the south on Hwy 40?

--Most of my primary concerns are regarding environmental protection. Economic development is important as well, but it should not come at the cost of the environment. We have a great resource in the Red Cedar River and must work to reduce sediment and runoff of chemicals and manure. Policy mandating buffer strips along streams and rivers is very important. We have kept sand mines out of Colfax. Continuing to do so is very important.

### **14: Nuisance Issues (ex. Pets running loose, noise, obnoxious odors)**

--Concern: Nasty burning smells that seem like the odor is caused by burning of garbage. Enforce restrictions on burning barrels or pits.

--Farming is important, at the same time so is controlling dust and odors! Manure smell is difficult to control. Dust from trucking crops or manure can easily be controlled. Traffic safety and air quality should be addressed in the town of Colfax for all industries / factories / farms.

--clearly, western Wisconsin already has too many frac sand mines. Effective manure spreading or industrial odors ordinances should be in place.

--No spot zoning such as tractor pulling, inner tubing, concerts, etc.—limit noise and light pollution.

I like being in ‘rural’ area but still believe that some things like property upkeep is important (i.e. swim pool which has collapsed for mosquito habitat, dogs barking most of day, etc). Love my home but don’t appreciate those who allow ‘incumbrances’ onto my peaceful life.

### **15: Parks/Scenic Areas Preservation/Development**

--Please, please, PLEASE preserve our township from the health hazards, environmental destruction, and false economic hope of sand mines! Colfax has thus far stood strong in the midst of the mines pushing in from every direction. Kudos! If we need to be the lone protectors of Dunn County, so be it. We will be stronger and sleep better for it, for protecting our resources & our futures. Thank you, Colfax.

--The Town of Colfax would do well to actually advertise itself as a place of rural beauty and small business integrity to encourage tourism in a definitely non-industrialized region.

### **16: Police/Fire/Emergency Medical**

--Need to know EXACTLY where they are going with more than one (there are 4) 810<sup>th</sup> Ave. that are in the ‘9000’ (East of M). I told the dispatchers precisely where I was located & I could hear the sirens coming down M (getting louder) then starting to get faint when they started to go east on the 810<sup>th</sup> Ave. in the ‘9000’. I live (in the ‘8000’). I know that there are other roads / streets like this and we can’t have our EMT going in the wrong direction. Lives depend on it! With computers as a source this shouldn’t happen.

### **17: Property Value Protection**

--Not sure where we stand on sand mines. But I hate to put any money into my house for fear the sand mines will come in. Then the money I spent on my house will be lost.

--. . .as related to industrial site (property) value erosion.

### **18: Recreational Opportunities (ex. Biking/walking/ATV routes)**

--Part of a township’s responsibility is to protect and preserve the citizen and land owner rights. Along with that, it is the township’s responsibility to supply public safety services. The Township budget needs to balance to the township income. Approval of an ATV route system would connect Colfax Township with adjoining townships and help bring in outside revenues.

--More recreation areas would be great. Hiking, biking, camping? Colfax has many untapped possibilities.

--Need a place for kids to go—and hang out—not enough to do—more options of places to

eat.

--We should invite bikers' organizations to address connotations of bike routes.

### **19: Residential Lot Size**

--Would like to see lot size choices and see options.

--Town of Colfax has always had good people in charge and I am very happy at the way things are going. I would like to see lot size 1 acre---4 acres is too big. People don't mow their lawns.

--5 acres to a house.

### **20: Transportation (Road Maintenance/Snow Plowing)**

--Keep roads in good / safe condition. There's potential for someone having an accident if they're too far on shoulder when meeting another car, etc. due to drop-off over culvert where drainage ditch is deep. In general the Township does a good job serving the people and keeping spending down. Thanks! We appreciate Glen's diligence & faithful labor & those who serve on the board.

--Citizen safety: I would like to see 3 feet of tar on both sides of the road (for bikers & walkers to be on) instead of gravel. I live in between M & 40 and when they re-tarred our road I asked if they could do this. I don't remember what was said, but we have gravel. With those hills the gravel washes out onto the road & it costs money for someone to clean it up. Another reason to have it is because of the feed trucks / manure trucks that travel on the road. 4 different times a year constantly for a week or two. This would be better for bikers / walkers.

--I feel that the Township should take care of our driveway to the corner as people visiting DNR land tear up the driveway.

--Hire part time help to help patch roads.

--Roads with difficult access driveways should get more priority in snow removal than flat roads with flat driveways.

--Roads—specifically the east 1/3 of 945<sup>th</sup> Avenue is in terrible shape where I live and should have been redone years ago.

### **21: Solid Waste/Recycling**

--Concern: Littering our roadways.

--Maintain the excellent solid waste recycling facility in Colfax.

### **22: Surface Water Quality/Quantity (ex. Pond, streams)**

--It is very important to protect our water and air quality by keeping out sand mining in particular.

--Frac sand mining devastates trout streams.

### **23: Town Tax Dollar Usage**

--Everything is going pretty good.

--Tax farm land on value of land—what they buy it for per acre.

--I don't have any concerns or issues. As far as I'm concerned you seem to be doing a good job.

--I have no concerns. Have a good day.

### **24: Utilities (including broadband)**

--Improve cell phone reception in rural areas. High speed broadband performance maintenance.

--Would love to see cable internet / TV extend out to our house (just south of town on 40) or would gladly sign petitions re: interest in cable availability for our area.

--As a small business owner where the internet is a primary form of communication and advertising, it is EXTREMELY important that high speed internet be available and reliable to homes and businesses outside the city limits.

--I would like to see better access to high speed / broadband availability as well.

--Higher broadband internet speed.

--I'd like to see our area develop an internet site available only to Town citizens that would act as a modern day free, local communications board where Town of Colfax people can—request help or service for chores, transportation, or other care they may need (this might aid elders or their adult children to readily ask for help or parents to find child care or transportation sharing of children for activities); Where Colfax residents can share events to which they would like to invite neighbors; Where public announcements can be shared; And where citizens may publish items they may want to sell or purchase; Where local government reports can be shared such as relevant PR & D reports and information from the area ground water study.

--We can't get hi-speed internet where we live at a reasonable price. This is very important to most of us rural people! Also, the road we live on is in very poor shape and needs to be fixed and the snowplowing is not completed in a timely manner. I realize we are on a town road so we are usually one of the last ones to be plowed. It would be nice to be able to get Cable TV out here also.

### **25: Wetland Protection**

--Wetlands are primary suppliers of all streams and aquifers.

### **26: Wildlife Habitat Protection**

### **27: Inter-community cooperation**

--The Town needs to develop ways to coordinate with neighboring towns so Colfax residents are not damaged by adjacent industrial (sand mine) development.

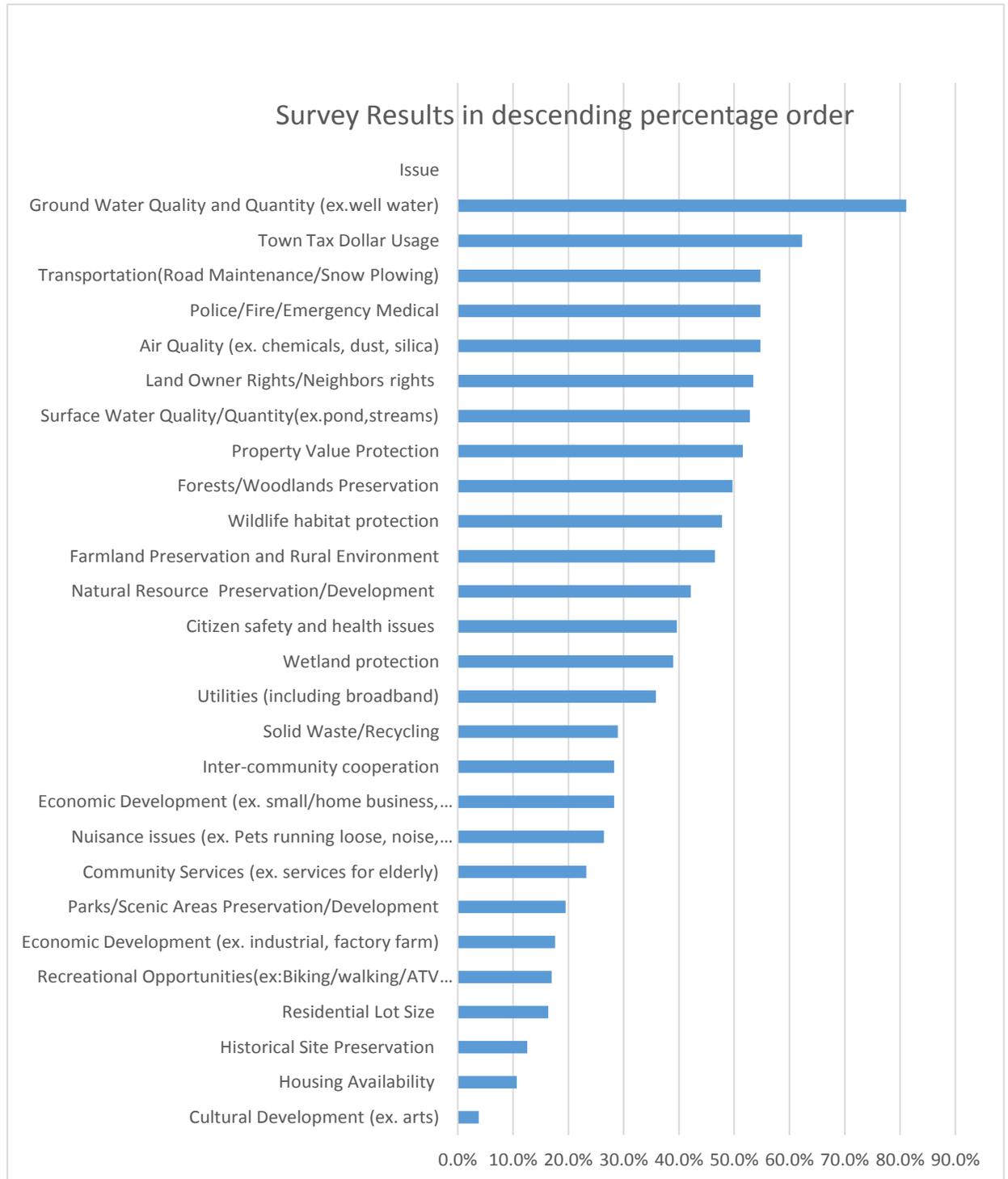
--Legal labor force.

--Sand mine issues—protect health, land, animals—sad when a county line can stand in the way of concerns.

--Town of Colfax should be involved in the plant in Howard. I am concerned about the environment and global warming. I am concerned about the oil drilling with the sand and chemicals that are pumped in deep earth. Politically = too much money in politics. Money is not free speech.

Appendix A

Chart 1 Survey Results in Very Important descending Percentage Order



# Appendix B

## Maps

Larger maps are available at the Town Hall.  
Please contact the Town Clerk if you need to refer to a larger or more detailed map.

## Explanation of Zoning Districts

The following are examples of permitted uses in each of the Dunn County Zoning Districts. Refer to the *Dunn County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance* for other permitted uses and structures allowed in each Zoning District.

**Residential District (R1):** Single family housing; Schools; Religious activities; Public parks and playgrounds; Family child care centers; Adult daycare facility with a capacity for eight (8) or fewer persons.

**Residential District (R2):** Those permitted principal uses found in the Residential (R1) district; Two family housing.

**Residential District (R3):** Those permitted principal uses found in the Residential (R1, R2) Districts; Multiple family housing ; Mobile and manufactured home communities subject to the provisions of Sec.13.3.6 and Chapter 66.0435 Wis. Stats.; Rest and nursing homes.

**Intensive Agriculture District (IA):** Agricultural uses with the purpose of earning an income or livelihood; Undeveloped natural resources and open space areas; A single-family/two-family farm residence that is the only residential structure on the farm; A single-family/two family farm residence that is occupied by an owner or operator of the farm, a parent or child of an owner or operator of the farm, or an individual who earns more than 50 percent of his or her gross income from the farm; A migrant labor camp that is certified under s. 103.92, Wis. Stats.

**Primary Agriculture District (PA):** Those permitted principal uses found in the IA District; New or expanded livestock facilities that will have no more 500 animal units subject to the Livestock Facility Siting provisions in section 13.3.5 of this ordinance. (06/17/2015)

**General Agriculture (GA):** Those permitted principal uses found in the IA and PA districts; Public parks and playgrounds; Governmental uses such as town halls, garages, solid waste transfer stations, and recycling collection centers or depots; Rest and nursing homes; Religious activities; Schools, public and parochial and their accessory uses; Cemeteries, not ancillary to a permitted use; Single family housing (02/18/2015).

**Limited Commercial District (LC):** Food/Grocery Stores; Financial/Professional/Business places; Retail/Sales stores; Service establishments; Seasonal or Temporary Artisan Sales such as produce stands.

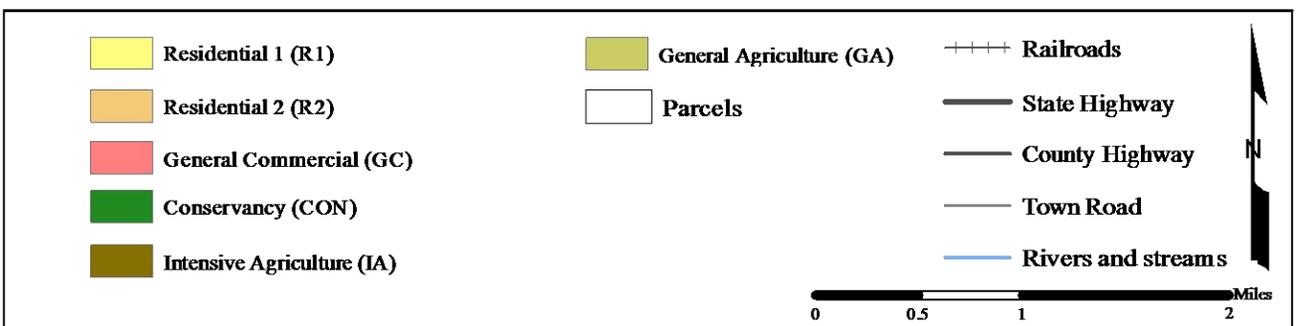
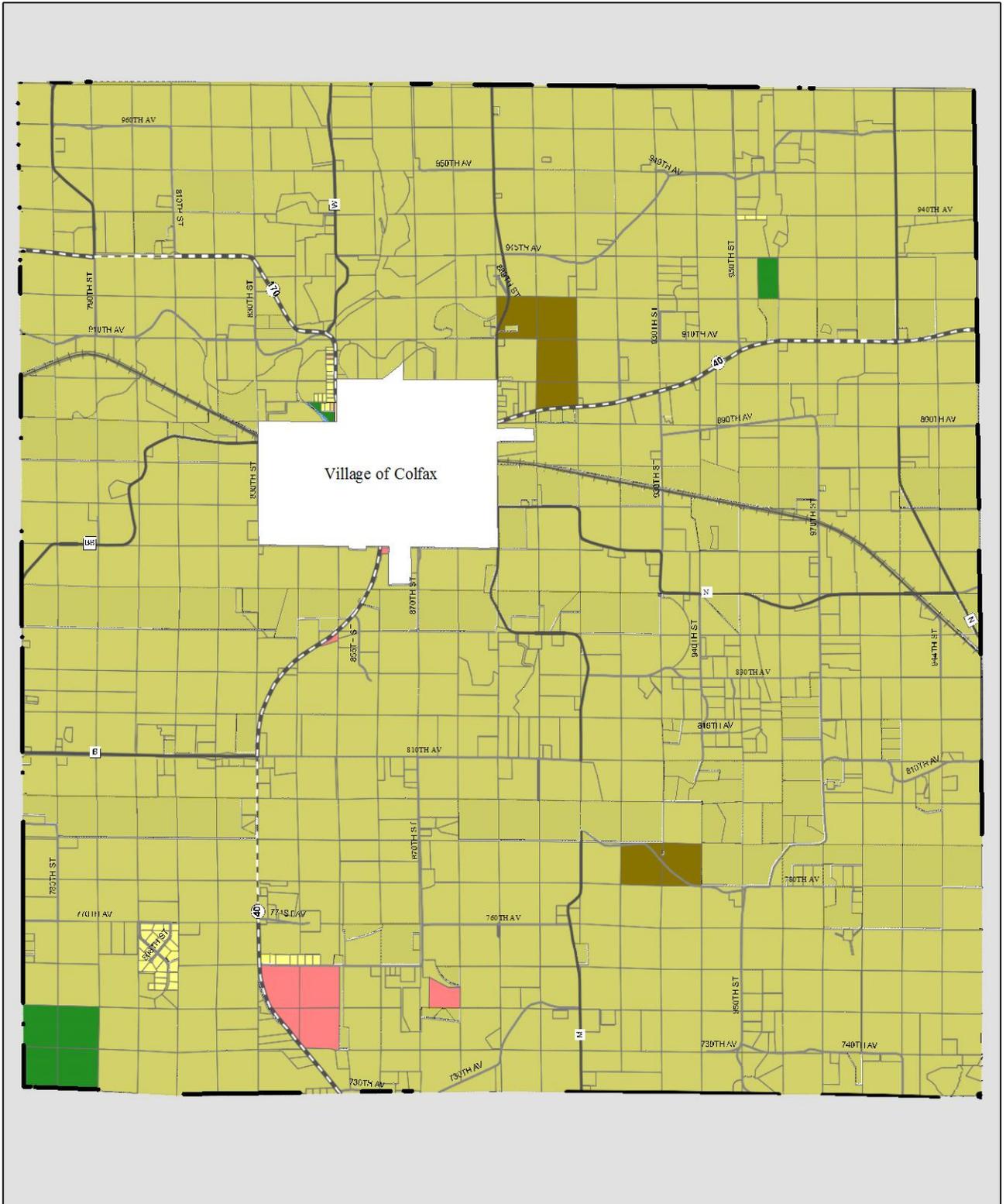
**General Commercial District (GC):** Those uses found in the Limited Commercial District as well as those commercial establishments greater than 3000 sq. ft.

**Light Industrial District (LI):** This district is intended for any manufacturing or industrial operation which, on the basis of actual physical and operational characteristics would not be detrimental to the surrounding area or to the County as a whole, by reason of noise, dirt, smoke, odor, traffic, physical appearance or other similar factors.

**Shoreland & Recreational District (SR):** Public parks and playgrounds; One or two-family dwelling for year round or seasonal use for owner occupancy, rent or lease; Restaurants, dinner clubs, night clubs and taverns; Gift and specialty shops customarily found in recreational areas; Marines, boat liveries, sale of bait, hunting and fishing equipment, boats and off-road recreational vehicles; Family child care centers; Adult family home, community based residential facility and community living arrangement with capacity for eight (8) or fewer persons; Adult daycare facility with a capacity for eight (8) or fewer persons.

**Non-metallic Mining Overlay District (NMM):** Uses allowed by the underlying zoning district and Nonmetallic mining operations that have been previously permitted with a special exception use permit and/or by a nonmetallic mining reclamation permit.

**Conservancy District (CON):** Grazing; The harvesting of any wild crop such as marsh hay, ferns, wild rice, berries, tree fruits and tree seeds; Sustained yield forestry; Hunting, fishing, trapping, preservation of scenic, historic and scientific areas, wildlife preserves; Nonresident buildings used solely in conjunction with the raising of waterfowl, minnows and other similar lowland animals, fowl or fish; Hiking trails or bridle paths; Public and private parks, picnic areas, golf courses and similar uses.



# Z o n i n g

The following map shows the location of the recharge areas in Colfax Township.

**LEGEND (recharge to groundwater)**

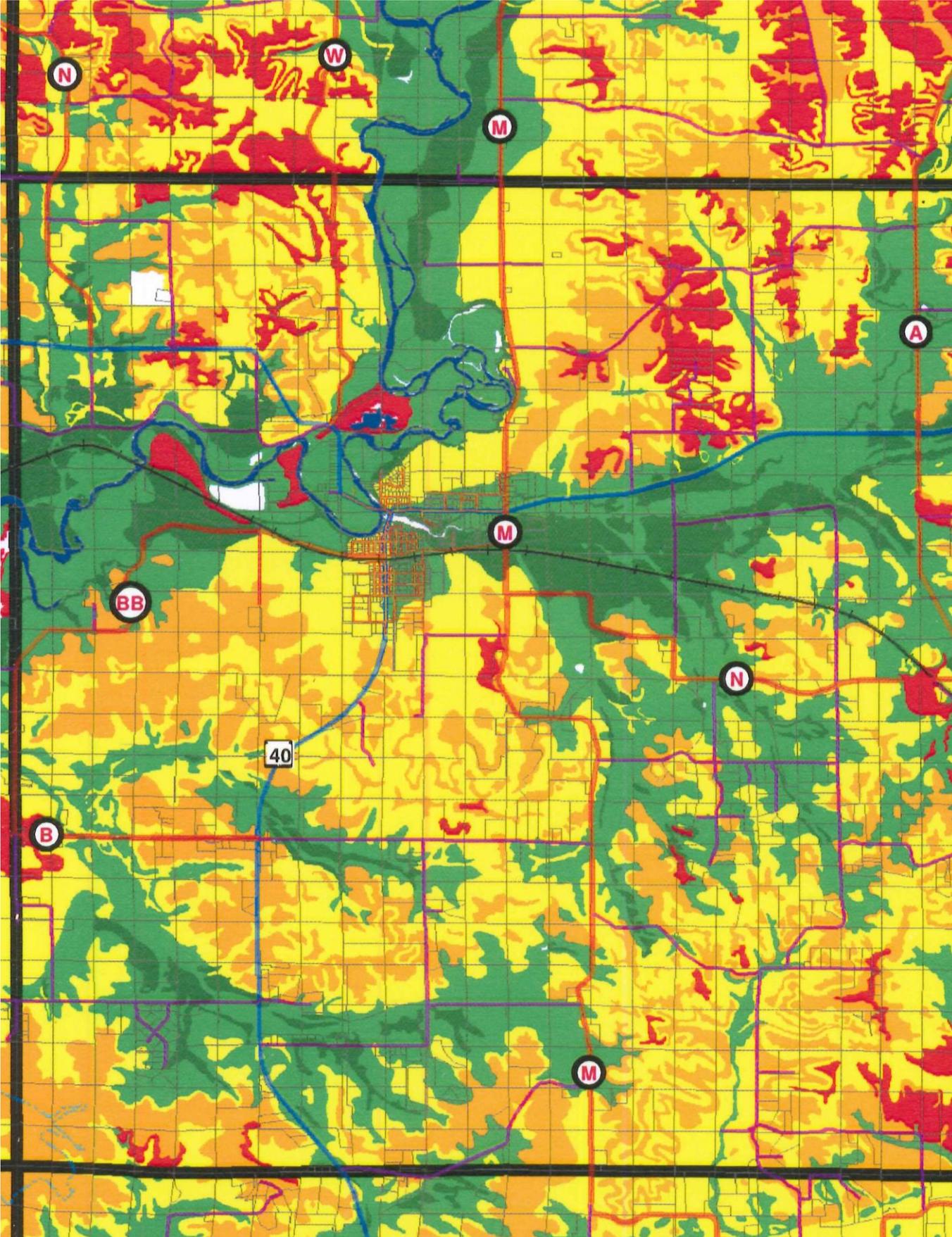
	EXCELLENT
	VERY GOOD
	GOOD
	FAIR
	POOR

To aid in planning for future development in the Town, the location of recharge areas to the sandstone aquifer is necessary to maintain good recharge to the aquifer and to protect the aquifer from being contaminated from surface pollutants. Soils ranked as “excellent” recharge potential have the greatest risk of contaminants reaching the aquifer. Housing developments where several wells and septic fields exist would run the risk of septic waters entering the aquifer. The permeability of these soils could be 20 inches per hour or more. Agricultural pollutants can also contaminate the aquifer quickly in “excellent” and “very good” recharge areas.

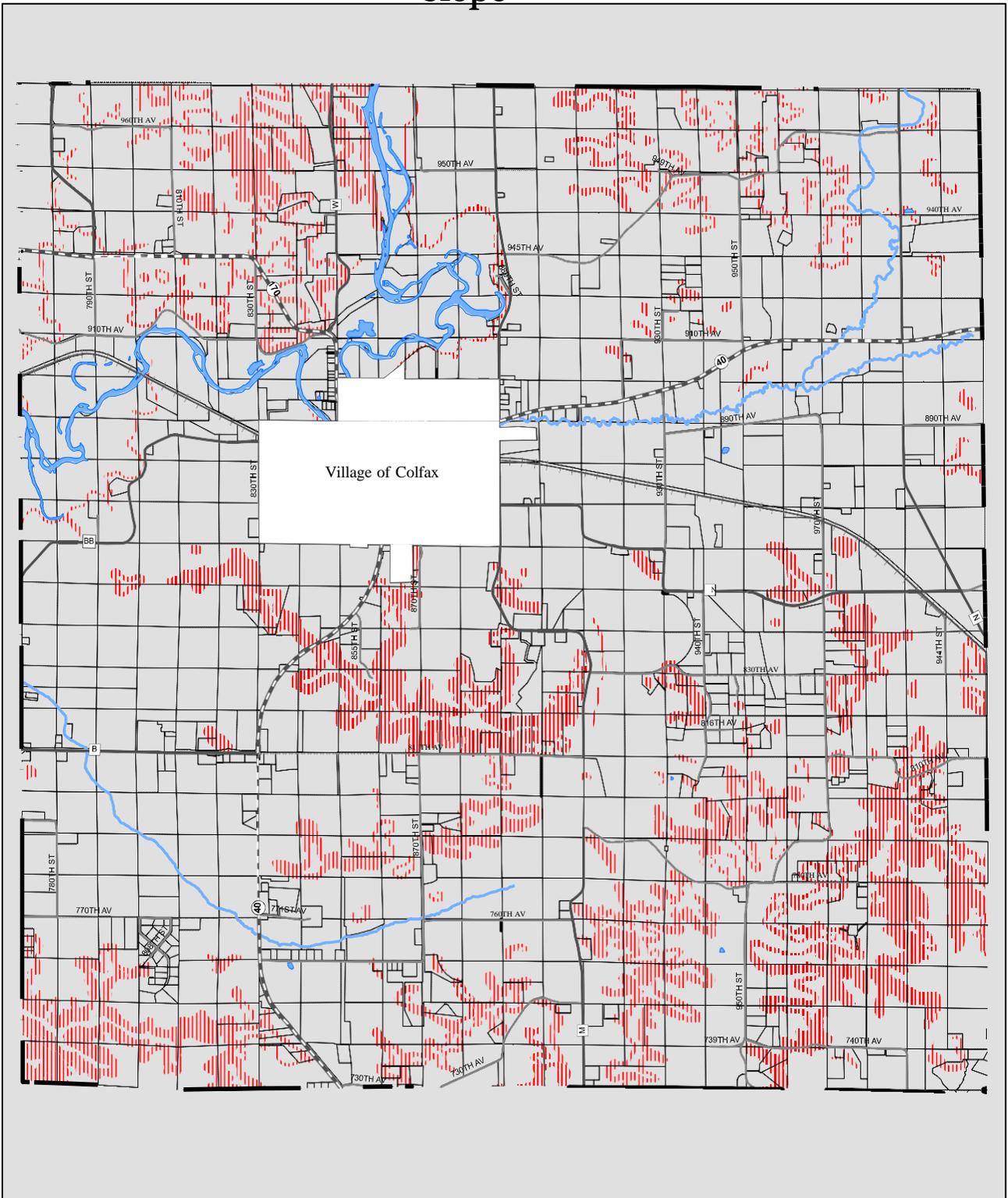
Protection of the aquifer should be an important consideration when planning future land use patterns in the Town. Developing large tracts of privately owned land in the Town could threaten the aquifer recharge capability (groundwater quantity) and increases the likelihood of contamination. Land use decisions should examine potential impacts on the aquifer. Development lot sizes and uses may need to be adjusted based on the recharge and contamination susceptibility of the land.

Because groundwater quality and quantity are of vital importance to the Town, any requests for land divisions, variances, conditional or special use permitting, or re-zoning in areas of “excellent” or “very good” recharge must ensure that recharge to the aquifer will not be threatened and there will be no contaminant increase.

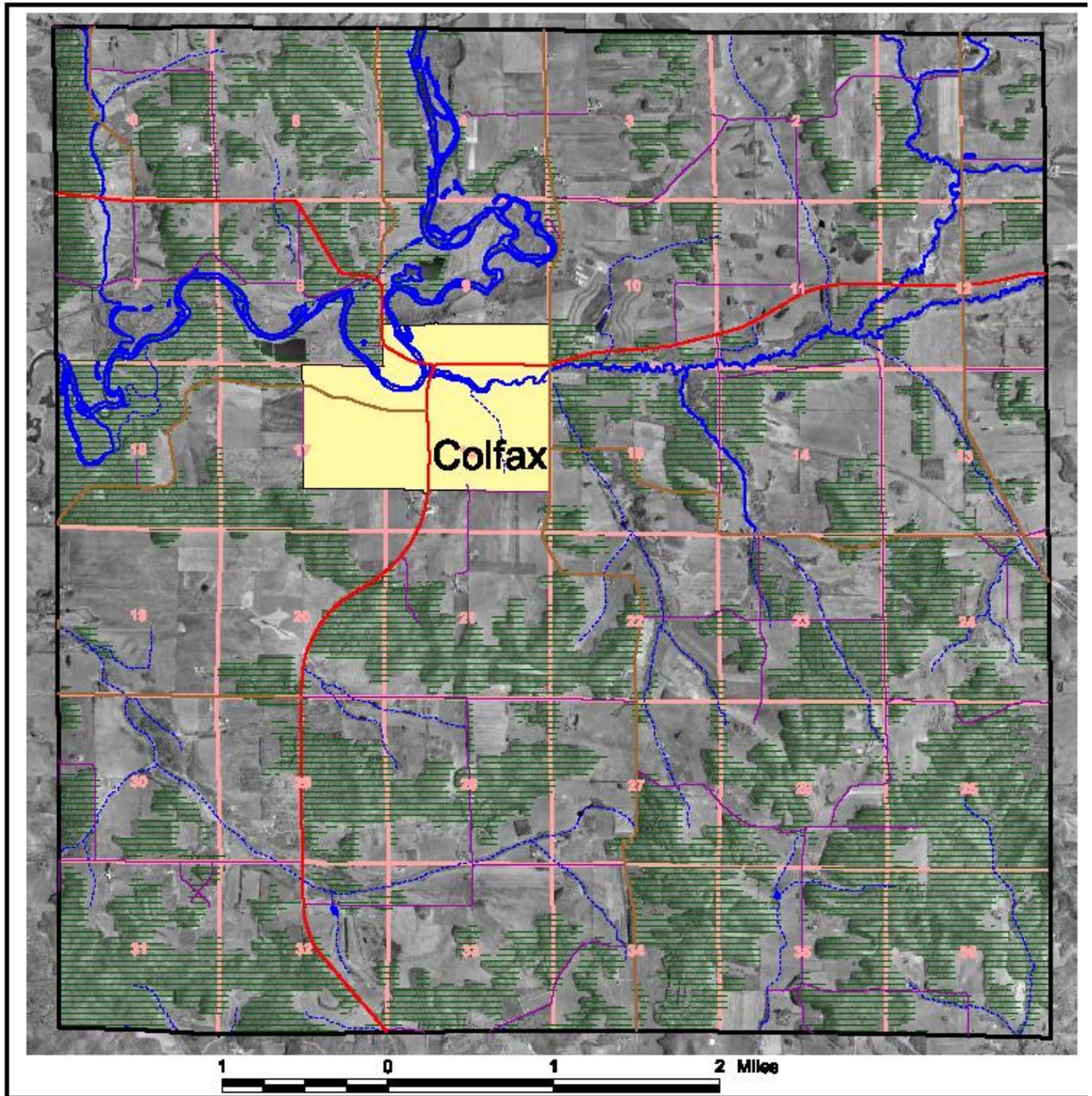
**Recharge Zones of Colfax Township**  
(location of recharge areas to the sandstone aquifer)



# Slope



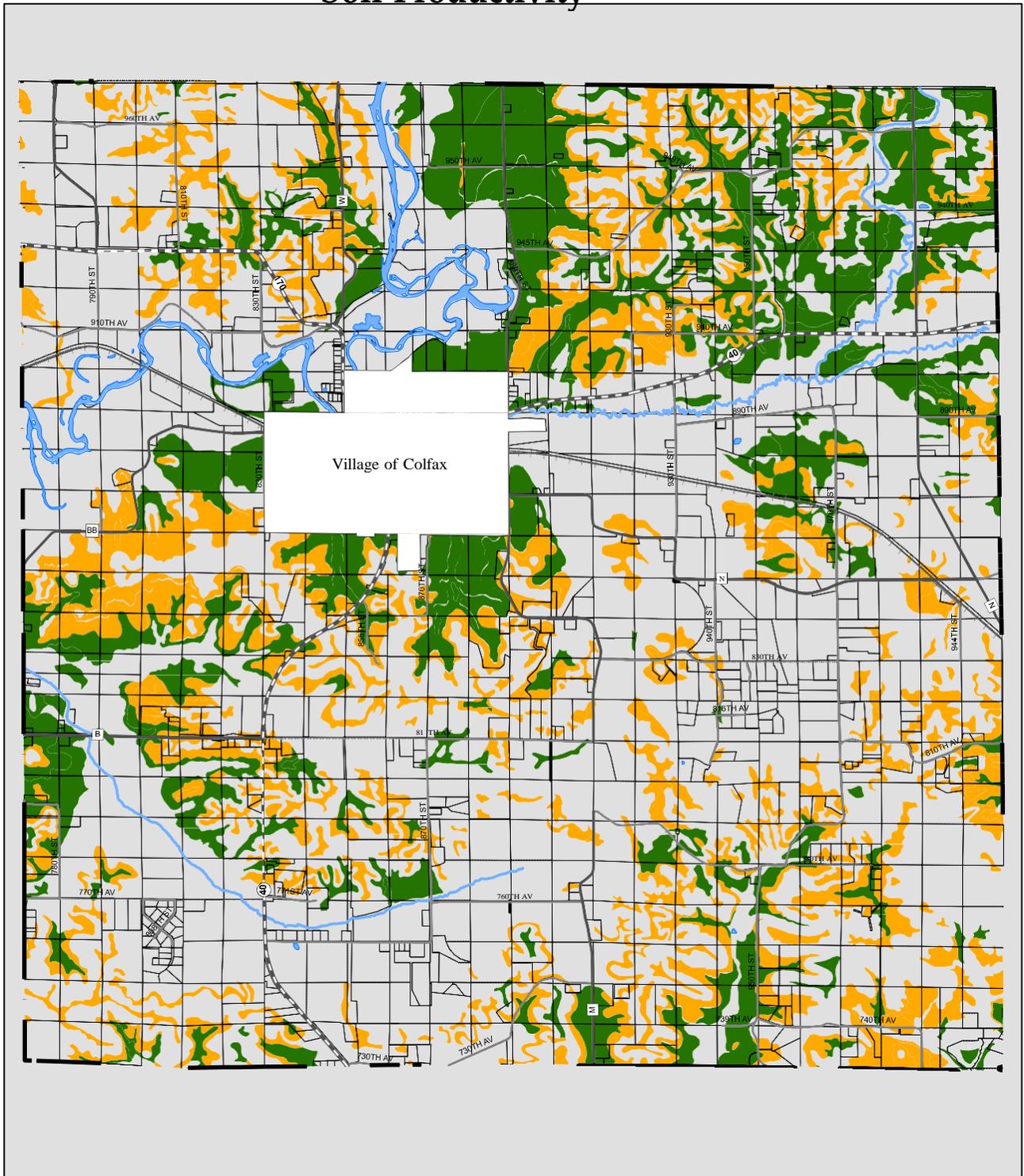
# Woodlands



 Woodlots Greater Than 10 Acres

A contiguous forest is extremely important to the environment, forest based economics, variety of wildlife and air/water quality. The fragmentation of woodlands and forests results in the disruption of animal habitat and migration and leads to problems between wildlife and humans.

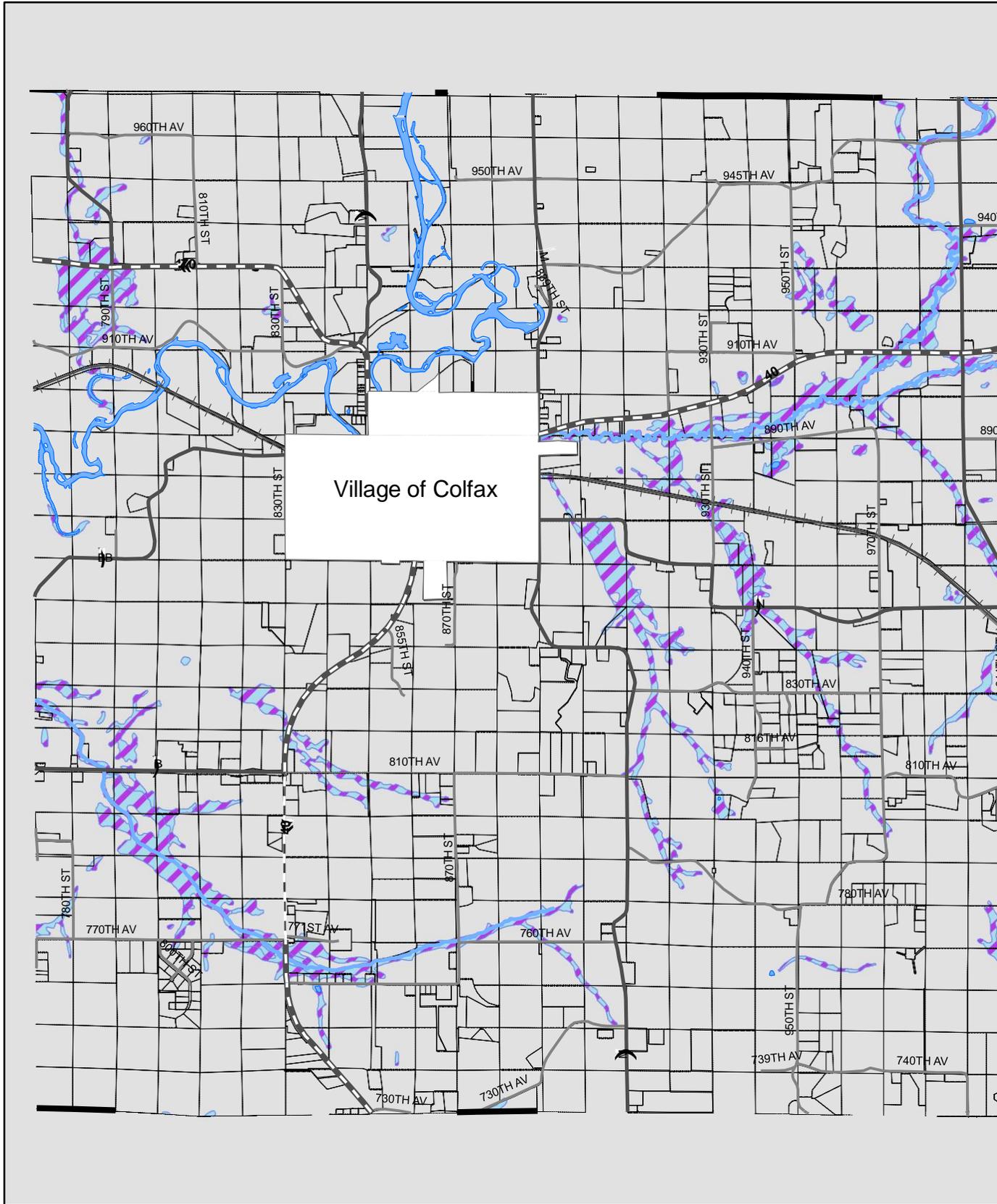
# Soil Productivity



- High
- Medium
- Parcels

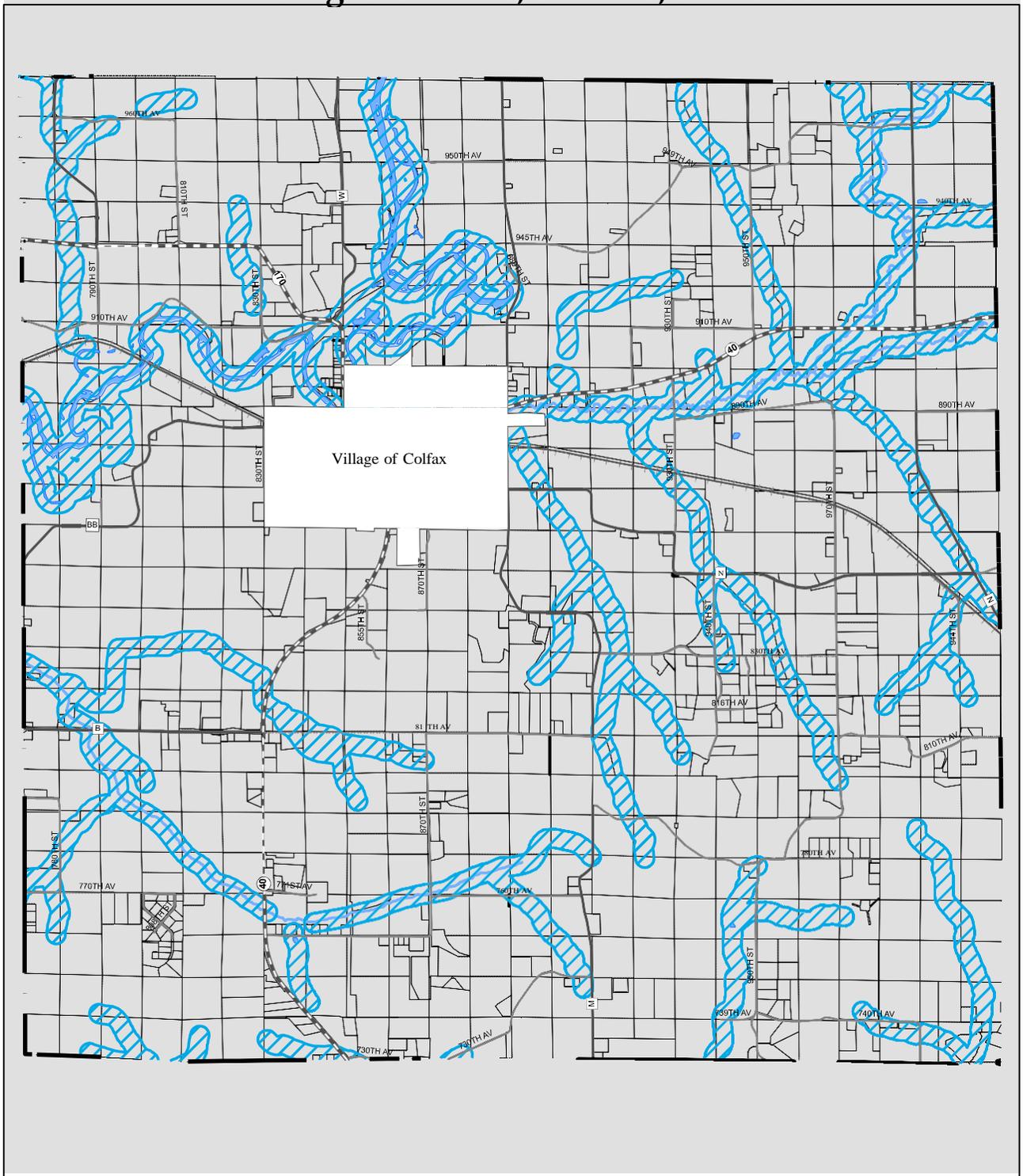
Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation, and labor. Soil capability classifications of 1, 2, and 3 should be retained for farmland use whenever possible.

# Wetland



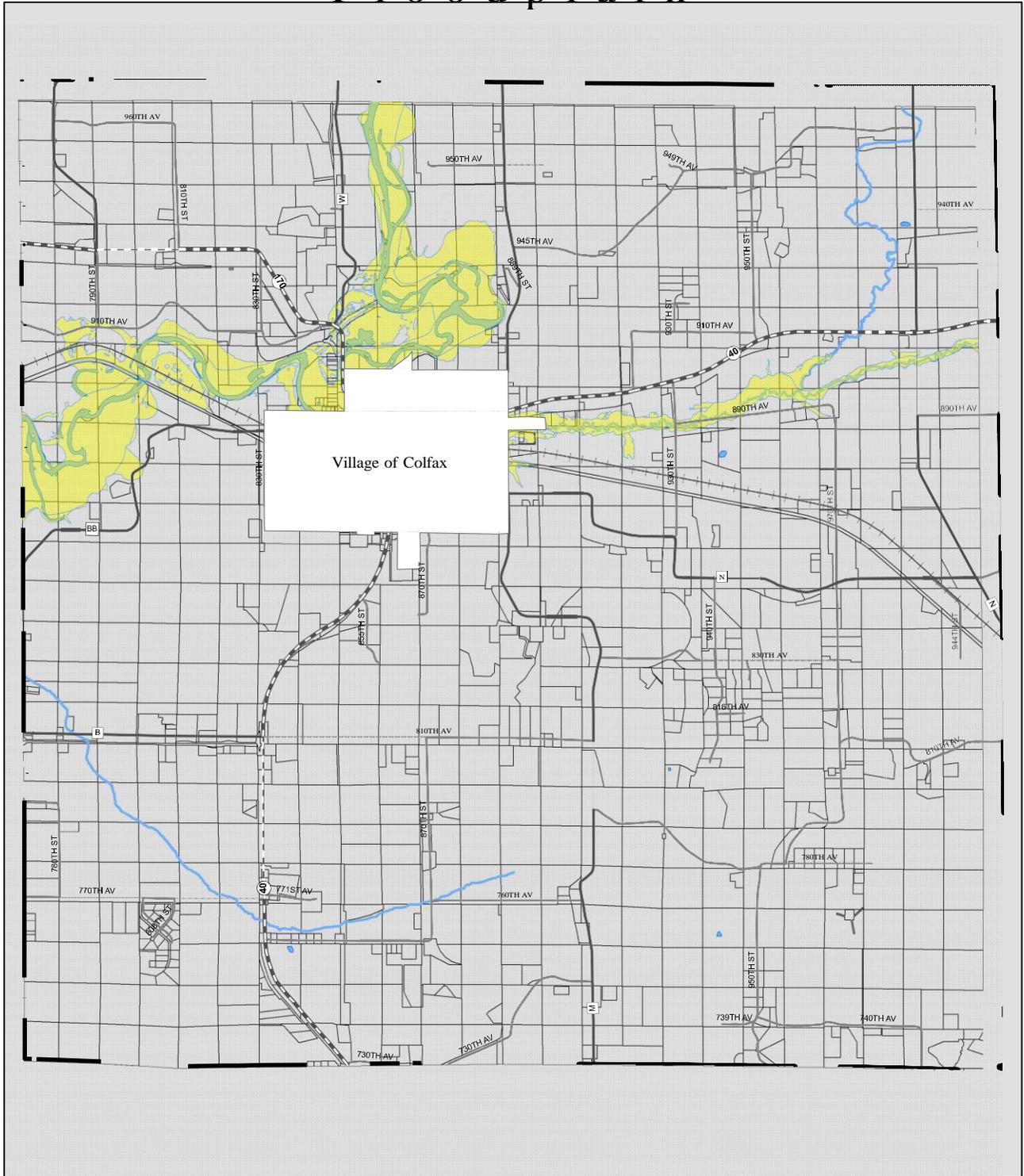
Residential development and farming adjacent to rivers and streams are attractive options that require careful planning to avoid surface water contamination. Phosphorus, manure, and sand mine run off have had damaging impacts on area lakes and streams. Careful review of land use tributary streams and the Red Cedar River will support health of the Town and neighboring towns' surface waters

# Navigable Rivers, Streams, and Creeks



-  Navigable rivers, streams, and creeks
-  Parcels

# Floodplain



- Floodplain
- Parcels

To protect property and public investments, Wisconsin Statutes 87.30 (1) requires counties, cities and villages to implement Floodplain Zoning. Dunn County is responsible for administering the Floodplain Management Program. The floodway is typically the most dangerous part of a floodplain, and uses in this area must be limited to conservation areas or open space.

Planning the future land use of areas of the Town—especially within the extraterritorial zoning area of the Village-- can minimize land use conflicts. Determining what type of land use should go where needs to take the land characteristics, existing development patterns, transportation options, and adjacent land uses into account. While the Land Use Map in Appendix B mainly addresses future land use and zoning proposed by the Village of Colfax in the extraterritorial area, land use decisions made by the Town should be made on a case by case basis. All of the factors addressed in this Comprehensive Plan should be taken into consideration when making individual land use decisions.

**LEGEND**

-  Parks/Open Space
-  Residential
-  Institutional
-  Commercial

# Future Land Use

