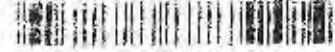


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# COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

**This cover sheet is now a permanent part of the recorded document**

1/41

## Comprehensive Plan #2015-01

**WHEREAS** Minnesota State Statute #462.355 grants the Authority to establish comprehensive land use plans to the townships;

**WHEREAS** The current Wilson Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan is outdated;

**WHEREAS** A Public Hearing has been held in Accordance with Minnesota State Statute #462.375Subd. 3;


**THEREFORE** be it Resolved The Wilson Township Board does hereby adopt by resolution, the following Comprehensive Land Use Plan



**Robin Jandt Township Clerk**

2-4-15

**Date**



**Leon Bowman Township Chairman**



This document was prepared by

Paul Siebenaler Wilson Township Planning Director

13206 County Road 25 Minnetonka, MN 55910

# Wilson Township

## COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

### Wilson Township Board

Leon Bowman - Chairperson  
Tony Chelmowski  
Bob Peterson  
Dave Delano  
Ernest Culp

### Wilson Township Officers

Robin Jandt - Clerk  
Karen Haedtke - Treasurer  
Paul Siebenaler - Zoning Administrator

### Wilson Township Planning Commission

Marvin Hunger - Chairperson  
Lenny Marg  
Mat Tentis  
Dave Delano  
Alison Plemmons  
Mike Nydegger

### Planning Commission Actions

July 28, 2008 - Public Hearing on the draft Comprehensive Plan  
September 15, 2008 - Public Hearing on the proposed Comprehensive Plan  
December 2, 2009 - Public Hearing on the proposed 1<sup>st</sup> amendment to the Plan

### Town Board Actions

October 7, 2008 - Public Hearing to accept the Planning Commission recommendation  
November 10, 2008 - Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by Ordinance #01-08  
December xx, 2008 - Comprehensive Plan submitted to Winona County Planning Dept.  
May 28, 2009 - Public Hearing on the proposed enhanced Comprehensive Plan  
June 01, 2009 - Public Hearing on the proposed enhanced Comprehensive Plan  
June 01, 2009 - Adoption of the enhanced Comprehensive Plan by Ordinance #01-2009  
December 02, 2009 - Adoption of the amended Comprehensive Plan by Ordinance  
January 9, 2015 - Adopted the amended Comprehensive Plan by Resolution

# Wilson Township

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## COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

January 9, 2015

This version of the Wilson Township Comprehensive Plan incorporates several adjustments to provide for adoption of Township Zoning Ordinances compatible with Winona County Zoning Ordinances and the inclusion of Commercial and Recreational District and a Light Industrial District.



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# Introduction



Wilson Township is an organized unit of local government in Winona County, Minnesota. The Township came into existence on May 11, 1858, and has been administering public services under the legislative authorities granted by the State of Minnesota and Winona County ever since. The rural settlement of Wilson formed at the intersection between present day Minnesota State Highways 43 and Winona County road 12. The community of Wilson continues to function as a typical rural hamlet, with a mix of uses including a concentration of housing.

The citizens and public officials of Wilson Township initiated discussions in 2007 regarding the future of their community. These discussions resulted in a consensus to compose goals and plans for its future. To accomplish this, the Township Board decided in October 2007 to develop a Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The basic goal of this Plan is to put the Township on the road of planning for its future, with an emphasis on protecting and enhancing the scenic landscapes and its rural lifestyle. A significant goal of the Township is to do those things necessary to sustain the historic sense of place of the Township and to sustain its ability for local governance into the future.

The Township developed specifications for composing their Comprehensive Land Use Plan and retained the professional planning services of Davy Engineering Co. to work with the Township and County officials as well as citizens to produce this Comprehensive Plan.

The Township Officers conceived the planning process to seek out and incorporate the views of Township residents and landowners and to coordinate the plan preparation with the plans of Winona County, and the city of Winona.

This Comprehensive Land Use Plan does not recreate information already available from other relevant sources, such as from County and municipal planning documents. Instead, this Wilson Plan comprises the Wilson Township part of Winona County Comprehensive Plan. In this regard, the Wilson Plan incorporates Wilson Township references contained in the County Plan. The Township Officers intend this document to take the place of the "Wilson Township Profile" in the County Comprehensive Plan (Page #85).

## The Plan Framework

The following sections dealing with Township Vision, Planning Goals, and the Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analyses constitute the policy base of this Plan. This policy base supports the specific goals, policies, and action programs in each section, and constitutes the detailed recommendations of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Minnesota Statute 462.351 - 365 grants the Township the authority for composing this Comprehensive Land Use Plan.



# Overall Vision

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The citizens of Wilson Township recognize a Comprehensive Plan has numerous purposes for their community, including the following:

1. Addressing the physical, social, and economic sustainability of Wilson Township.
2. Maintaining its prime agricultural lands, and the integrity of its farming operations.
3. Sustaining a geographically unified Township by keeping the integrity of its borders.
4. Maintaining a viable Township government and a realistic Township tax base.
5. Fostering Township control over land use decisions including advancements in governmental functions and programs as necessary to deal with and administer evolving public needs.
6. Promoting long-term assessments in devising goals and plans.
7. Maintaining its scenic and rural landscape.
8. Maintaining its valuable natural resource base.
9. Maintaining its rural character and *sense of place*.
10. Preserving the historic Wilson Hamlet at Winona County Highway 12 and Minnesota State Highway 43 as the service center of the Township.
11. Maintain low-density housing.
12. Advocating positive stewardship of Township natural resources through progressive planning and management policies.
13. Communicating and coordinating with adjacent units of government on issues and opportunities of mutual benefit.
14. Monitoring development opportunities at the Interstate 90 and Highway 43 Interchange to avoid the chaotic and detrimental conversion of farmland to urbanized uses.
15. Realizing the influence of the city of Winona may result in some lands adjacent to the City may transition to urban uses and require services from the

City, and that the delivery of such services will remain consistent with the goals, policies, and programs of the Wilson Township Comprehensive Plan.

16. Continuing a viable Township unit of government by ensuring that adequate resources are available for future Township generations.



Figure #1. A scene depicting the unique valley landscapes of the northern portions of Wilson Township primarily used for agriculture and the harvesting of natural resources.

Figure #2. Most of the southern portion of Wilson Township consists of rolling cropland and pastures bisected by steep sided, wooded valleys and drainage ways.



# Comprehensive Plan Goals



The following goals guided the preparation of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan:

1. Promote the health, safety, general welfare, and economic sustainability of the Township.
2. Be consistent with the Vision Statement for the Township.
3. Recognize the landscape differences located within Wilson Township as a basis for responsible land use practices.
4. Ensure development controls are consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
5. Establish a respectable balance of property rights and protection of community rights.
6. Be sensitive to and incorporate the views of residents and property owners.
7. Protect and enhance the land and water resources of the Township.
8. Protect and enhance the living environments of Township residents.
9. The base planning horizon is twenty years; however, the planning for the Highway 43 Interchange area requires a mix of planning periods because of the limitations on short-term development but with the recognition of longer-range development potential at that location. The management of Interchange development will be most effective if the Township and the County retain the authority to adjust Interchange planning and zoning in tune with public desires, with market forces, and with infrastructure requirements.
10. Utilize the SWOT analysis to address the weaknesses and threats to the Township, and to build on its strengths and opportunities.
11. Recognize that Wilson Township is part of the planning and development jurisdiction of Winona County, and that the Township coordinates its planning efforts with the County.
12. Produce a planning document that is easily usable by Township officials in making decisions on planning and development issues.
13. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan should be the basis for the development of any land use controls that would be more restrictive than of the County.

14. Maintain the Comprehensive Plan as a flexible and changeable tool to adapt to adjustments in the vision and development goals of the Township. Township Officers should comprehensively review the Plan every five years, with a priority list of concerns looked at annually.
15. Serve as the official Wilson Township element of the Winona County Comprehensive Plan, and update “profile” element of that document.
16. Be consistent with the Winona County Comprehensive Plan and the County Comprehensive Water Plan.



Figure #3. A view of the working, agricultural landscape prevalent throughout Wilson Township, and the landscape residents seek to preserve by increasing community support and awareness for all agricultural activities found in the Township. Agriculture in the Township consists of small and large farms, equine facilities, dairy and swine operations, orchards, and row crops.

# SWOT Analysis



The Township residents early in the comprehensive planning process identified this baseline planning information. This information represents the pre-comprehensive planning status of the Township. These characteristics are not in order of importance.

## Strengths

1. Rural environment
2. Agricultural atmosphere
3. Scenic ridge and valley landscape
4. Progressive leadership
5. Good accessibility via the Interstate Highway and the Wilson Interchange
6. Township authority to administer its own zoning and subdivision regulations

## Opportunities

1. Potential to re-establish a rural Wilson Service Center in recognition of the Wilson area's historic role
2. Plan a Wilson Service Center based upon an understanding of the relationship of market forces, and the need for business accessibility needs that would be satisfied by the advantages of being located at the Interchange of Interstate Highway 90 and State Highway 43, which is at the center of the historic Wilson community. Such a Plan would be of low intensity, applying smart growth principles to avoid sprawl and assure an esthetic environment.
3. Build a sustainable tax base
4. Maintain a viable Township population
5. Maintain a viable Township government with viable Township services
6. Land owner interest in development which could benefit the Township economically, such as local job development and increased tax base

## Threats

1. Loss of tax base due to annexations
2. Loss of a viable Township community and Township government
3. Impacts from actual and planned city of Winona growth
4. Loss of good farm land and threats to farming operations from development
5. Effects from commercial and industrial land development proposals, such as rural sprawl through spot zoning, traffic problems, costly infrastructure needs, and increased taxation through land value increases and speculation.



**Figure #4. Farming is the dominate land use in the Township and is a multimillion dollar industry critical to the vitality of the regional economy as well as a supplier of locally sourced foods. Agriculture is also extremely beneficial to the financial integrity of the Township since farms pay more in taxes than they require in public services. Wilson Township residents value the intrinsic contributions agriculture makes to the community and their quality of life and strongly sought efforts to promote Township agriculture.**



## Demographic Analysis

The demographic information contained in this Comprehensive Plan is from the year 2010 United States Census unless otherwise noted.

### **Population**

The Minnesota Demographer estimated 2013 population of Wilson Township as being 1,146 persons. The year 2010 U.S. Census count for the Township was 1,177, and the 1990 Census population was 1,141 persons. These figures indicate a gain of population in recent years.

The population was 99% white in 2000. For 2013, State demographics place Wilson Township behind Homer Township as the second most populated township in Winona County.

Wilson Township functions within the larger context of Winona County with the County having an estimated 2013 population of 51,461. The County population grew by 0.97% since 2000.

### **Age**

The median age of the Township population in 2010 was 46.3 years old, compared to 42.3 years old in the 2000 census. The greatest concentration of population was in the age bracket of 50 to 64, amounting to 29% of the Township population. The Township contained 174 persons exceeding 65 years old for a percentage of 14.7, compared to 12.9% for the 2000 census.

### **Income**

The median Township household income in 2010 was \$60,000, compared to \$52,422 for 2000 census. Nearly one third of Township households received Social Security income with a mean annual Social Security income of \$18,419. Thirteen point 8 percent of Township residents received other form of retirement income, with a mean annual retirement income level of \$23,980.

In 2010, statistics indicated six families below the poverty level, or 1.4% of Township residents, compared to 0.9% for the 2000 census.

### **Employment**

The Township labor force consisted of 952 residents over 16 years old, and 24 unemployed workers. The unemployment rate in 2010 was 0.46%.

The greatest occupational areas of employment for Township residents in 2010 included:

1. Management, professional and related occupations at 30.8%,
2. Production, transportation, and material moving at 17.0% and
3. Sales and office occupations at 32.1%.

Only 24 persons or 3.7% of the population had occupations in farming, fishing or forestry.

The type of industry that employed most Township residents was sales and office occupations at 211 persons or 32.1% of the Township population. Management, business, science and arts employed the second greatest number of Township residents at 198 persons or 30.1% of Township residents. Manufacturing businesses employed the third greatest number of Township residents at 170 persons, or 25.9% of the Township residents over 16 years old.

Private wage and salary workers amounted to 73.8% of the Township population and 11.6% of residents described themselves as government workers. Self-employed workers amounted to 14.2% of the Township population in 2010.

## **Housing**

Wilson Township had 426 housing units in 2010, with 392 units listed as owner occupied, for an owner occupancy vacancy rate of 8.0%. There were 34 renter occupied housing units, having a renter vacancy rate of 8.0%.

Owner occupied housing units amounted to 92% of all Township units, with renter occupied units being 8%.

During the 1990s, there were 68 new homes built in the Township. From 2000 to 2007, there were 39 new homes built according to Township records. From 2007 to 2014 there were 17 homes built according to Township records

The housing stock of the Township comprised of 94.7% single-family units, the balance being two duplex units, seven 10-to-19-unit structures, and 11 mobile homes.

The median value of Township housing was \$216,200, compared to \$119,000 for the 2000 censuses.

Rural, non-farm housing is required to be at a density of one home per quarter-quarter section, about 40-acres.

## **Growth Projections - (Population)**

There are several indicators of community growth, with population being the most common indicator. The Minnesota Demographic Services Center has made population projections for all units of government to the year 2035 by five-year increments. These projections have the requirement of fitting all units of government projections into the State total and then into county totals. These future population levels are driven by a formula based largely on past population growth. This formula does not take into account new growth trends and future economic development initiatives that may propel a community's population growth beyond the State's official projection.

With this explanation as background, it is important to report the State's official population projections for this planning area. Reported below are the projections by the State to the year 2035 for Wilson Township. Also, it is important to



place these projections into the larger population framework of Winona County and city of Winona.

**Figure #5: State Population Projection Scenario**

	2006	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	% Change 2006-2035
Wilson Township	1,095	1177	1146	1,076	1,076	1,070	1,065	-2.73%
city of Winona	27,324	27,093	27,201	27,383	27,644	27,666	27,704	1.39%
Winona County	49,903	49,430	49,740	50,200	50,890	50,980	51,160	2.45%

Source: Minnesota Demographic Services center

These population projections appear to be modest taken at face value. However, in community planning, it is important to remember the past does not easily mold the future. An important new factor in community growth is the relatively recent advent of aggressive economic development promotion and incentives, and the greater availability of growth incentives offered by all levels of government. Existing company expansions and private entrepreneurship can be the spark for spikes in growth that are unprecedented in the past trends. For this reason, this Comprehensive Plan does not endorse these population projections as the official projections for the Plan, instead includes them here as an alternative growth scenario. Communities can grow or decline from factors that the State's projection formula cannot take into account, such as from annexations, incorporations, consolidations, the formation of special service districts, and the preferences of some businesses for convenient rural locations.

It is also important to realize the equally great competition for growth from several nearby communities. La Crosse, Wisconsin and Rochester, Minnesota are good examples of the larger communities having significant influences on the population growth of the Township.

### **Land Use and Jobs**

Another indicator of community growth is the amount of new land development and the number of jobs created by such development. The area of land converted for a new use and by a tax base growth rather than by significant new population are the growth indicators. The reason for this is often due to the attractiveness of commuting to other communities by these new jobholders, and the ready availability of infrastructure to serve new housing for these jobholders. Other related factors are the perceived cost of living, tax levels, safety, proximity to schools, and proximity to essential services.

Wilson Township has a significant amount of open land available for development. However, most of the land in the Township supports agriculture - the dominant Township land use. A great deal of it also consists of woodland and steeply sided hills that are generally not conducive to development. Essentially, the Township is not conducive to any significant job development as a result from large-

scale land conversion, with the exception of certain possibilities in the area of the Interstate 90 / Highway 43 Interchange.

### **Implications and Conclusions from Demographic Trends**

1. Recent estimates indicate a small population loss projected for Wilson Township, some of it likely from annexations to the city of Winona.
2. Even though most of the Township is farmland, farming only occupies a small proportion (3.2%) of the population.
3. Much of the population of the Township commutes to the city of Winona.
4. The Township has the potential for housing additional commuting population.
5. The Township residents have a higher income compared to either the County or the city of Winona and very close to the median income level for the State. The poverty level in the Township is much lower than the County or the State levels.
6. A significant proportion of Township residents were employed in managerial and professional jobs with the manufacturing, educational and service industries.
7. The rate of owner-occupied housing for the Township was significantly higher than that of the County or the city of Winona.
8. State population projections do not account for new growth possibilities at the Township level. The small population loss projected for Wilson Township by the State is largely from past trends and is not an accurate portrayal of future growth possibilities for the Township.
9. Wilson Township has the ingredients for population and job growth, based in part, on its excellent regional transportation access, proximity to regional job centers, a scenic rural living environment, and significant land areas free of physical development limitations such as large areas of flood plains, high bedrock and wetlands. However, there are large areas of steep slopes having development limitations.
10. The Township has a single density requirement for non-farm housing, approximately 40-acres per home. Township input has indicated that this density may not protect prime farmland enough because prime farm areas have no greater housing limitations than the rest of the Township. Many agricultural zoning programs have found that such densities accelerate the loss of prime farmlands. Residents expressed an interest in having more density choices for non-farm housing through a diversity of zoning districts that would provide area for smaller lot sizes but limited to the more marginal farmland and woodlands of the Township.



## Regional Growth Context

Wilson Township is geographically positioned on the boundary between prairie and river, and as such offers one of the few readily traversed passes through that transition zone to the Eisenhower Interstate System and the East-West corridor in the upper Midwest.

Winona Township to the north, with its broad valley bottom lands and long border with the city of Winona, was annexed by the City and has ceased to exist as an independent entity. Hillsdale Township northwest of Wilson Township remains an independent political entity. The city of Winona is due north of the Township and is the direct connection to the Mississippi River. Homer Township to the east is of similar terrain to Wilson, with rural residential homes to the north, heavily forested bluff lands, and an active agribusiness in the southern part of that township. Pleasant Hill to the southeast, Wiscoy to the south, Hart to the southwest, and Warren Township to the west are each a mixture of forests and farming; Wiscoy Township is known for its organic farming and Minnesota wildflower seed production.



The economic components for this portion of Winona County are manufacturing and distribution, agribusiness, tourism, education, and housing. Manufacturing and distribution are located almost exclusively within the city limits of Goodview and Winona. These businesses utilize the abundant water supply, convenience of city services, and where needed the barge terminals and rail lines which run through the City along the Mississippi River. Truck traffic moves along MN Highway 43 to Interstate Highway 90. The manufacturing businesses in the city of Winona range from metal working to plastics manufacturing to custom circuit board manufacture. Distribution is a substantial business segment, the outward movement of goods from these businesses following the Mississippi River along US Highway 61 or flowing through Wilson Township to the Eisenhower interstate highway along MN Highway 43.

Agribusiness by its nature is driven by geography and land use policy. The geography of the prairies favor dairies and row crops, that of the bluff lands forestry, and the lowlands of the valleys farms where smaller field sizes and available sunlight place greater constraints on agribusiness use. Pleasant Hill, Wiscoy, Hart, and Warren Townships are nearly completely agrarian for these reasons; Homer and Wilson Townships are conducive to agribusiness in their southern sections to the point where steep bluff lands meet the prairies.

Tourism, driven by a wide range of circumstances from civic events such as the Great River Shakespeare Festival to the spectacular colors each Fall, is economically beneficial primarily to the City, although strongly influenced by the ambience of the area. Wilson Township provides a particularly dramatic entrée from the interstate into the city as one descends from the prairie to the river north on MN Highway 43.

The area in the immediate vicinity of Wilson Township is unusually rich in educational organizations. The MNSCU educational system, embodied by Winona State University and the Winona-Redwing Technical College, is a large and growing source of jobs for this area, and has been of direct benefit to the City and as well as indirect benefit to the surrounding townships by providing employment for Township residents. The area also has St. Mary's University to the northwest, the Winona Public School system within the City, the Winona Public Middle School to the immediate northeast of the Township, Cotter High School and several smaller church-based educational organizations serving the needs of primary grade students. Collectively the economic impact of education in the region immediately surrounding Wilson Township is substantial.

It is within this context that Wilson Township has developed this comprehensive land use plan. The Township is at once agrarian, transportation corridor, and home to more than 1000 citizens. The Township provides a compellingly picturesque path to Winona, possesses and fully utilizes excellent cropland in the southern section, and has steadily and responsibly developed the deep, relatively broad valleys with somewhat more marginal farmland into residential land. Wilson Township has willingly and fruitfully supported our regional roll as a conduit from farm to city, from city to the Eisenhower Interstate, ambience for tourism, labor pool for the City, and safe, low impact housing policies for our citizens. It is our desire through self-determination to continue in that historic role. We wish to avoid the mistakes made in many parts of the state and country which lead inexorably to urban sprawl at the expense of the state and nation's greatest strategic non-renewable resource - farm land.

Our current understanding for the surrounding townships of Hillsdale, Homer, Pleasant Hill, Wiscoy, Hart, and Homer is growth maintenance, maintenance of economic output from current land use in particular.

The city of Winona has a decidedly expansionist growth agenda and represents to the degree knowable the greatest majority of regional growth. The city of Winona has stated in the 2007 city of Winona Comprehensive Land Use Plan (WCLUP) and city of Winona Alternate Urban Area Review (WAUAR) the desire and intention to continue the annexation of Wilson Township. The City asserts the need for additional housing and, more urgently, additional industrial land which will be acquired as needed to fuel additional economic growth in the City. The plan pointedly targets the central portion of Wilson Township as the source of land for that economic growth. Wilson Township is unaware of specific plans for re-development of underutilized industrial or commercial land within the current City limits. If fully realized, the city of Winona

intends to annex approximately 25% of Wilson Township including the hamlet of Wilson, the Township Hall and the Township Fire Department sites.

The following sections each deal with specific components of growth and development within Wilson Township - Natural Resources, Land Use, Economic Development, Transportation, and finally Public Facilities and Services. Wilson Township is geographically positioned on the boundary between prairie and river, and as such offers one of the few readily traversed passes through that transition zone to the Eisenhower Interstate System and the East-West corridor in the upper Midwest.

### **Conclusions Regarding Regional Growth Context**

1. The purpose of the above analysis is to enable the planning for Wilson Township to have a clear understanding, of not only the planning goals and needs for the Township, but also of the measures to accomplish these goals and needs. This discussion identifies appropriate questions for the Township in establishing a realistic context within which it can proceed forward.
2. Understanding the growth projections and plans of the city of Winona is critical to Wilson Township in planning for its future. The Township has the authority under Minnesota State Statutes to administer planning within the Township.
3. Wilson Township is in a position of great uncertainty regarding the lack of identified growth impacts and any general timing of such impacts from the city of Winona because of the reliance of the City on undefined measures and timing of "ultimate" growth and "market" determinants of City expansion actions. These uncertainties could last for several decades, during which time Wilson public officials and residents have responsibilities and rights to engage in specific programs and expenditures to address public needs and other Township goals.
4. The city of Winona is exercising legitimate authority and responsibility in thinking about how large they would like the City to become, and to plan for projected needs. The city of Winona also has authority to show its ideas for future growth within its two-mile extraterritorial planning jurisdiction.
5. The access into the Township afforded by Interstate Highway 90 constitutes a significant regional influence on Wilson Township. Eventually, this highway accessibility has the potential to attract interest in the market place for the location of commercial and industrial land uses requiring arterial highway accessibility.
6. In general, the implications of large-scale growth plans by the city of Winona into Wilson Township would result in significant urbanization of rural lands, increases in traffic, and significant speculation in land. These impacts could potentially result in increased land values that may lead to patterns of urban

sprawl, problems for farm operations, and problems for the provision of Township services.



**Figure #6.** Wilson Township landscape is a patchwork of fields, pastures, and woodlands extending upwards along valley sides. The Township as noted in the County Comprehensive Plan, “enjoys, and is challenged by a diversity of topography that results in a variety of zoned lands.”

# Natural Resources



## Summary Analysis

The following analysis originates from, and incorporates by reference, the natural resources elements of the Winona County Water Plan, Winona County Biological Survey, Winona County Soils Survey, 2000 Winona County Comprehensive Plan, and references contained therein.

## Land Resources

Wilson Township comprises approximately 34.5 square miles of the original 36 square miles assigned to the Township during the formation of Winona County. The city of Winona has annexed non-contiguous portions of the Township over the past 15 years. The majority of those annexations have been residential developments or land which became developed after annexation. The 2005 orderly annexation order OA-1159 gives the City the right to annex an additional 2.7 square miles of the Township upon the request of the land owner.



Of the 36 square miles comprising the original Wilson Township, approximately 5.7% residential land has been annexed by the city of Winona<sup>1</sup>. An additional 7.4% of Wilson Township residential land is targeted for annexation under the orderly annexation agreement with the city of Winona, for a total of approximately 13.1% of the original Township. Approximately 21% of the Township has a prime farmland rating with a crop equivalency



rating (CER) of 80 or more; nearly the entirety of that land is under cultivation or in various resource conservation programs. The predominant agribusinesses are dairy operations and row crops. Bluff land and sloped land with grades greater than 12% cover approximately 46% of the original 36 square miles of Wilson Township<sup>2</sup>. Nearly all land in this category is heavily forested. Non-prime farmland and residential property comprise the remaining 20% of the Township. Non-prime farmland is a complex mixture of low-slope land suitable for hay or pasture production.

Each of the three major valley floor streams has portions which are designated Protected Waters with Shoreland Classification as tributary river segments. Each of these streams is populated with brown trout; that in East Burns Valley and Pleasant

<sup>1</sup> Estimated from pixel analysis of Winona County Farmland Ratings map.

<sup>2</sup> 2000 Winona County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Figure 41, estimated by pixel count.

Valley with brook as well as brown trout<sup>3</sup>. Two areas, one along the northern border with the city of Winona and the other in the southeastern ninth of the Township, are homes to indigenous terrestrial rare indigenous oak forests and dry prairie recognized by the State of Minnesota as natural communities and rare species<sup>4</sup>.

### Topography, Landscape, and Soil Types



Topography, bedrock structure, the character and depth of the soil, and ground and surface waters define the land resources of the Township. Three general topographical types describe the Township: ridge, bluff lands, and valley floor. Much of the Township land is subject to a higher-than-average propensity for erosion. This tendency was most recently noted during the intense rains in the summer of 2007 where water flows from bluff to valley resulted in substantial damage to the public infrastructure and private property.

The ridge topography is present throughout the Township. The ridge topography totals approximately 21% of the original Township area, the greatest portion of ridge topography found in southern portion of the Township. Ridge topography is of a gently-rolling nature with underlying bedrock structure of limestone and dolomite overtopped with well-drained fertile topsoil. The bedrock structure has been subjected to considerable stress over geological time to



<sup>3</sup> Winona County Comprehensive Water Plan, 2004-2010, Table 8.5

<sup>4</sup> Minnesota County Biological Survey Map Series No. 11 (1996), Winona County, Minnesota



now have a highly fractured, internally-eroded porous karst structure. Consequently surface water, where the land is relatively level, passes readily into the upper water tables. Most sinkholes in this karst limestone can be found in these ridge portions of the Township<sup>5</sup>. The covering soil in the ridge topography varies widely in depth; Seaton-Blackhammer-Southridge and Port Byron-Lindstrom-Mt. Carroll are the predominant soil classifications<sup>6</sup>.

The bluff lands are the largest topographical classification at approximately 46% of the Township<sup>7</sup>, the bluff lands depicted as dark green in the graphic at right. These bluff lands provide the picturesque views for which Wilson Township is quite proud. The bluff lands describe those portions of the topography which are the transition from ridge to valley floor nominally 600 feet below the ridge. These bluff lands are rather steeply-sloped and forested heavily with deciduous trees and vegetation. The grades for these slopes range between about 60% at the ridge to approximately 12% close to the valley floor. Surface water at the ridge / bluff land area accelerates rapidly as it falls to the valley floor. Consequently water flows quite rapidly over the transition from prairie to bluff land to the valley floors below using the numerous dry gulches which characterize the topography. The bluff land soils are quasi-stable when well-vegetated; the soil here is comprised largely of LaCrescent-Elbaville-Lamoille structure. The probability for damaging erosion in the bluff land areas is high, especially so in those areas where de-forestation has occurred.

The valley floors, shown in blue at right, have relatively deep Seaton-Newalbin-Festina soil deposits, admixed with fractured limestone where the valley floors meet the base of the bluff lands. Each of the valleys in Wilson Township has a stream which flows year round towards the Mississippi River.



### **Bedrock**

The underlying bedrock is a natural resource which in certain locations within the Township to provide crushed rock for the surrounding roads, driveways, and other applications where crushed rock has utility. There is one commercially-active quarry on Highway 43 extracting dolomitic limestone from the Oneota Dolomite stratum in the Prairie du Chein group, and several inactive quarries on local town roads scattered throughout the Township.

<sup>5</sup> Map 6.

<sup>6</sup> For more thorough analyses, see the Winona County Water Plan.

<sup>7</sup> 2000 Winona County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Figure 41, estimated by pixel count.

## Soils

Wilson Township has a considerable range of soil conditions. The ridge regions are predominantly agriculturally-productive loess-covered till and bedrock residuum. The bluff lands are comprised of rocky colluvium in the steeper sloped areas and stony colluvium overlain with silty colluvium on the more gently-sloped bluff lands. The valley floors are primarily silt and sand admixed with alluvium (flood plain sediment) where the valley floors flatten and widen.

The general county soil classifications and characteristics can be found on Map 4.



CORRELATION OF MAP UNITS



Correlation of Map Units		
hal	Alluvium	Floodplain sediment
wts	Silt and Sand	Predominantly locally derived rather than glacial outwash; forms a terrace above modern floodplains. Locally overlain by loess and silty colluvium
wc	Colluvium	Unsorted slope sediment. On steep slopes, the colluvium is stone and bedrock outcrops are common. On gentler slopes, the stony colluvium is overlain by silty colluvium.
rtl	Loess-covered till and bedrock residuum	Till is non-calcareous, and is generally thinner and more patchy than the till of scl. Loess thickness is intermediate between that of scl and rl. The sandy to clayey residuum that underlies the till is much thicker and more continuous in the eastern part [of WC] than in the western part. Boundary between rtl and rl is approximate.

## Prime Soils

Approximately 24% of Wilson Township is comprised of prime soil, nearly all of which is under farm land cultivation or in a land preservation program. The USDA defines prime farmland as that which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for providing food, feed, storage, forage, fiber, and crop seed oils. The soil must be topographically such that flooding is infrequent and the duration of

standing water short. Precipitation or supplied water must be adequate and sufficiently predictive to expect high crop yields in most years. The covering soil in the ridge topography varies widely in depth; Seaton-Blackhammer-Southridge and Port Byron-Lindstrom-Mt. Carroll are the predominant soil classifications<sup>8,9</sup>.

## Hydrology

### Ground Water<sup>10</sup>

Virtually all Wilson Township residents use well water resources for domestic, commercial, and agricultural purposes. The water supply is predominately drawn from bedrock formations known as aquifers in different parts of the Township. Water quality has been and will continue to be a concern throughout the Township. There has been some anecdotal evidence for water shortages in older rural wells.

Wilson Township is situated above three distinct aquifers separated by confining layers which limit the vertical water movement between aquifers<sup>11</sup>. The Jordan aquifer, a subcomponent of the Prairie du Chein formation, is closest to the surface. This was in earlier times the primary water source for land not in the immediate vicinity of streams or the Mississippi. The Jordan aquifer meets the St. Lawrence confining layer beneath Wilson Township at a nominal altitude of 1000 feet above mean sea level. Large portions of the Jordan have become naturally de-watered as exposed edges in the bluff land have provided a leakage path.

The second and most frequently-used aquifer in Wilson Township is the Franconia-Ironton-Galesville (FIG) sandstone<sup>12</sup>. The FIG aquifer is bounded by the St. Lawrence confining layer above and the Eau Clair confining layer below. This aquifer meets the Eau Clair confining later at a nominal altitude of 700 feet above mean sea level. Minnesota DNR Hydrological Department reported using die tests the St. Lawrence layer has considerable porosity resulting in both horizontal and vertical flow in the Wilson Township area.<sup>13</sup> There are no known reports of inadequate flow from wells utilizing the FIG aquifer.

The deepest and least frequently used aquifer is the St. Simon formation. The St. Simon formation meets the bottom portion of the Eau Clair confining layer approximately 700 feet above mean sea level. Additional information on groundwater resources and protection



<sup>8</sup> The Soil Survey of Winona County

<sup>9</sup> 2000 Winona County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Table III, page 8-10.

<sup>10</sup> Taken directly from Winona County Background and Inventory Report, 2001, pp 14-15.

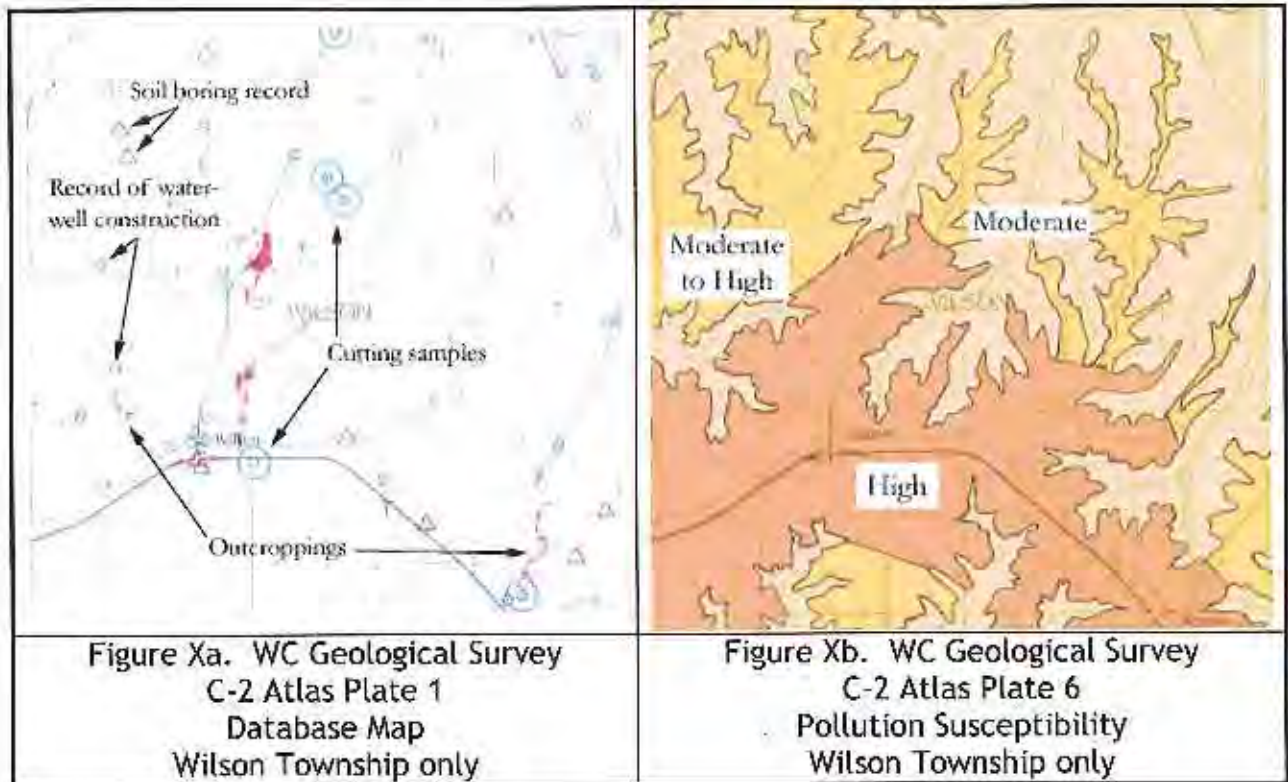
<sup>11</sup> "Geology and Well Construction," Atlas C-2, Plate 7. Olsen (1984)

<sup>12</sup> Recently renamed Tunnel City - Wonewac sandstone

<sup>13</sup> Conversation with Jeff Green, DNR-Waters, Rochester, MN.

strategies may be found in the Winona County Water Plan. Very little data is available for this aquifer due to its shallow depth. The aquifer is believed to be artesian in nature. Groundwater movement and estimated yields are unknown at this time.

The available data on the three water bearing hydrological structures within Wilson Township suggest water supplies are adequate to meet current agricultural and residential demand. The consequences of higher rates of water extraction from the Township aquifers should be formally evaluated prior to permitting.



See Map 6 which indicates over 50 sinkholes, mostly in the southwest third of the Township.

**Surface Water**<sup>14</sup>

Rivers, creeks, associated floodplains and valley walls are environmentally sensitive areas. Thus, development and agricultural activities must be carefully controlled to

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, page 15

minimize pollution and prevent sedimentation and soil erosion. Preservation is essential in order to maintain the water quality in these areas.

Another source of groundwater in Wilson Township is springs and seeps. They vary in size, shape and yield. Most of these features seem to discharge from single aquifers, although joints along ridges may permit intermixing of waters from other aquifers. Some springs and seeps will dry up due to low precipitation, while others are correlated with seasonal variations. Springs and seeps commonly occur at the juncture of valley walls and valley floor where karst aquifers have been eroded. Regardless of location, springs and seeps reflect the Wilson Township groundwater conditions and provide valuable reference points for monitoring water temperature and chemistry.

Groundwater in the Jordan aquifer under Wilson Township originates as precipitation that percolates through the ground and into aquifers. The velocity of groundwater movement and the amount of water available are dependent on pathways in the bedrock or unconsolidated deposits. Carbonate bedrock deposits of limestone and dolomite are important to groundwater quality. These deposits are cemented and dense with porosity caused by fracturing, jointing or weathering. Porosity factors enhance and create pathways for groundwater movement and small to very large interconnected cavities. Karst features that results from the weathering of carbonate bedrock, combined with jointing, have established carbonate-featured aquifers that permit rapid water infiltration.

Aquifer water levels can vary throughout a year. The Mississippi River and its tributaries affect aquifers by accepting groundwater discharge and thus lowering the water table within those aquifers. It should be noted groundwater discharge from aquifers exposed along valley walls may be dewatered.

### Surface Water - Groundwater Connection<sup>15</sup>

The Prairie du Chien - Jordan aquifer is directly connected to surface water given the close proximity to the upper surface. Water percolating through the soil is the primary means of ingress. The karst structure of the dolomitic limestone in the upper bedrock provides the pathway for relatively rapid downward flow to the interior of this topmost aquifer.

Karst features, sinkholes and cave systems enable surface water to be rapidly introduced to the subsurface. The sinkhole at right, photo courtesy of MN DNR- is



<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

located just south of I-90. Since formations are not capped by an effective aquiclude, this area is considered hydrologically sensitive to pollutants transported from the surface to the subsurface. Die tests performed in the St. Lawrence confining layer by Minnesota DNR hydrologists have shown the porosity of that layer is higher than the original estimates. Water flows through the St. Lawrence are both horizontal and vertical.

The Prairie du Chein - Jordan aquifer system locally discharges to smaller streams. This discharge occurs where these formations are at or near the surface.

Till cover (unconsolidated material) is also a source of discharge to these streams. Mixed within these deposits are non-continuous clay layers which can act as aquitards. In other areas where bedrock is exposed, recharge can occur as surface runoff directly enters exposed rock units. The lower formations, such as the Franconia, Ironton - Galesville and Mount Simon, do not discharge in Winona County, except at outcrops along the Mississippi River.

There are no large-scale wetland environmental systems in Wilson Township; however, Map 7 locates several isolated wetlands.

### Watershed

The watershed structure in Wilson Township consists of both bluff land structure which provides the path for water to flow from ridge to valley, and streams which transport water from the valleys to the Mississippi River.

### Designated Trout Streams

Wilson Township has trout streams which are protected under Minnesota Chapter 103F, each fed by a combination of natural springs and contribution from surface water collected from the bluff land by rainfall. Sections along the flow for each of these trout streams have a Shoreland designation as defined in Minnesota Chapter 6120.3000 Subp. 1a. F, Chapter 6120.3000 Subp. 1a. I, and other relevant subparts:

Creek Name	MN Rule 7050 Designation	Length	Trout species <sup>16</sup>
West Burns Valley	1B, 2A, 3B	3.4 mi	Brown
East Burns Valley	1B, 2A, 3B	3.8 mi	Brown, Brook
Burns Valley	1B, 2A, 3B	1.6 mi	Brown
Pleasant Valley	1B, 2A, 3B <sup>17</sup>	8.0 mi	Brown, Brook
Gilmore Valley	1B, 2A, 3B	3.5 mi	Brown

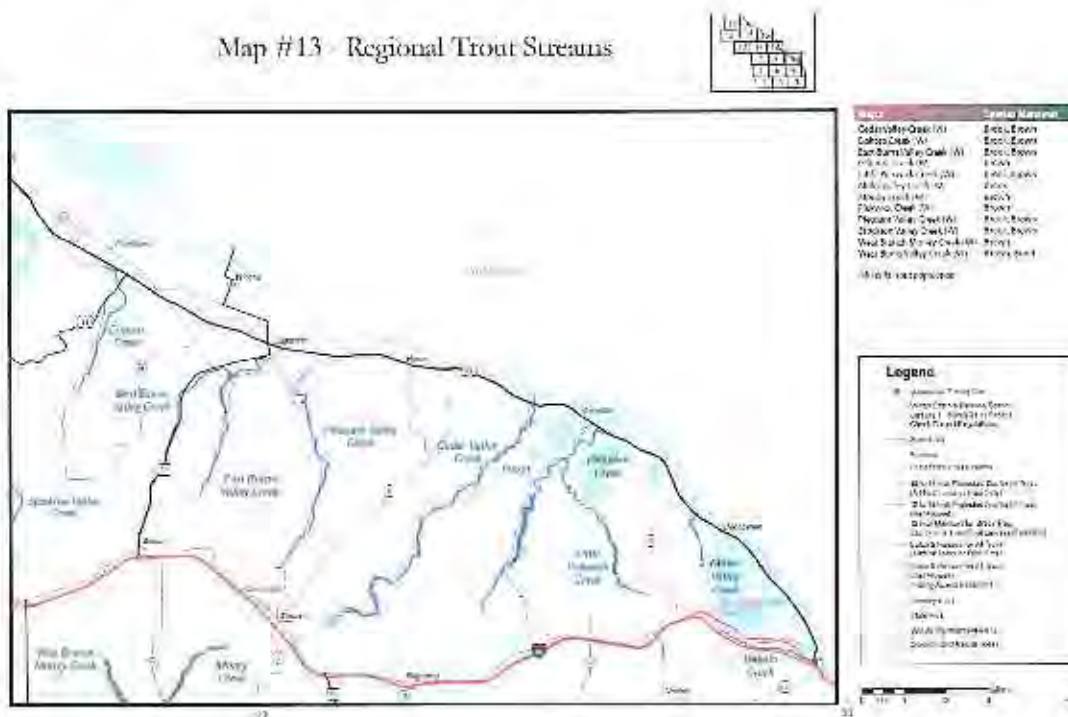
<sup>16</sup> Winona County Water Plan, Table 8.5

<sup>17</sup> Pleasant Valley creek, ex trout areas is rated as 2C

- 1B = domestic consumption with disinfection
- 2A = aquatic life and recreation
- 2C = cool or warm water indigenous sport fish or commercial fish
- 3B = general industrial use with moderate degree of treatment

The trout in each of these streams is designated as wild by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources<sup>18,19</sup>.

Map #13 - Regional Trout Streams



## ▲ Goals - Natural Resources

1. Maintain the rural and natural qualities of the Wilson Township landscape.
2. Protect the prime agricultural soils and associated farming environment necessary for viable farming activity throughout Wilson Township.
3. Protect the ground water resource from contamination that would adversely affect drinking water and aquatic resources.

## ■ Policies - Natural Resources

1. Endorse the natural resource protection policies described in the Winona County Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Water Plan.

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/fishing/trout-rivers/south\\_mn\\_maps.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/fishing/trout-rivers/south_mn_maps.html), Spring 2007

<sup>19</sup> Map 13.

2. Draft natural resource planning recommendations for Wilson Township to supplement the recommendations already found in the County Comprehensive Plan, and highlight the zoning regulations for the Township.
3. Preserve the natural and scenic qualities of steep slopes and minimize drainage, flooding, and property destruction associated with steep slopes by restricting housing on slopes exceeding 12%. For slopes less than 12% provide zoning standards that minimize the amount of land disturbance and vegetation removal.
4. Support conservation easements and land trusts to protect scenic bluff lands.
5. Protect the scenic qualities of wooded lands and bluffs in the Township.
6. Devise specific zoning districts tailored to agriculture and natural resource activities, and substitute the existing single zoning district found in the County Zoning Ordinance.
7. Support Winona County efforts to prohibit development in all documented floodplain zones and drainage ways to enable the passage of floodwaters without endangering lives and property.

### **Action Programs - Natural Resources**

1. Maintain a prime agricultural zoning district with standards to protect and preserve prime productive soils, with the provisions of the proposed district to be consistent with the Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan policies. Work with the County to incorporate this district in the County Zoning Ordinance and in the Township Zoning Ordinance.
2. Develop a resource protection / rural conservation zoning district for application to the non-agricultural lands.
3. Place steep slopes and blufflands protection standards in the Township and County Zoning Ordinances.
4. Compose a bluff land protection ordinance in cooperation with the County as required in the OAA Joint Resolution.





**Figure #7.** The Township has several distinctive manmade artifacts including this stone-arched bridge immediately west of County Road 17 in Section 25.

# Land Use



## Summary Analysis

The land use element of this Plan includes the analysis of the land use studies and plans of Winona County, the city of Winona, the County Soil Survey, the County Water Plan, and the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances of both the City and County of Winona. This land use summary analysis uses these informational sources as helpful references. Map # 9 illustrates the general land use in the Township as depicted by the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Winona County. The County Assessor's Office for 2008 calculated the proportional values of these land use categories from the market values provided by tax purposes: residential 51.04%, agricultural 42.64%, commercial/industrial 3.04%, exempt/other 2.77%, and seasonal 0.50%.

Agriculture is the dominant land use in terms of land area in Wilson Township. The number of families farming the land has declined, however the amount of land required for a viable farming business has increased. The acreage of land classified by the County as agricultural generally consists of actively worked crop and pasturelands, inactive cropland enrolled in the Federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP Program), and timbered land owned by farmers. The timbered land is concentrated on the more hilly landscape along the northeastern part of the Township. The southwestern portion of the Township comprised largely of row crops. Non-farm residential land use in the Township is relatively modest.

Animal agriculture is a significant activity in the Township. This aspect of agriculture has been undergoing transformation from small-scale livestock operations on pastured lands to confined, large-scale animal feeding facilities. Such facilities represent changes in the business of agriculture brought on by the economic necessities of consolidation and marketing, and the industrial changes in food production and distribution.

This transformation in agriculture has also influenced feedlots. Feedlots vary in size regarding the number of animal units. As of 2007 Wilson Township had 79 permitted feedlots located mostly in the southwestern half of the Township. It should be noted the County has permitted small, non-commercial feedlots as well within the Township.

A land use impact from feedlots is the necessity for waste storage and disposal. Animal wastes create odors that individuals residing nearby may find disagreeable. For this reason, feedlots have required separation distances to housing. Because agricultural practices can create off-site impacts viewed negatively by others, it is important for rural land use planning to recognize these potential effects. Land use planning can provide plans and standards that avoid the encroachment of incompatible land uses near these fixed agricultural locations from which off-site impacts can potentially affect non-agricultural uses, mostly housing. The ten forces of agricultural change as listed in Table XIX of the Background and Inventory Report of

The County Comprehensive Plan (as identified by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics) is a helpful guide to characterize the transformation of Wilson Township agriculture.

There are several specialized land uses in the Township, including the settlements of Wilson, Witoka, and Centerville, the former County Landfill occupying several hundred acres, the Town Hall and Fire Station, a Minnesota Department of Transportation maintenance facility and communications tower, a cellular communications tower, a YMCA camp, Bridges Golf Club, a large equestrian center, a number of rock quarries, and several churches and cemeteries.

### Review of the City of Winona 2007 Comprehensive Plan

The esthetic appeal of the Township forested hills and valley bottomlands have received attention for the placement of suburban housing. These landscapes occupy most of the northern portions of the Township, adjacent to the city of Winona, where over time the City has permitted residential development in the neighboring hills and valleys. The city of Winona growth plans indicate intentions to incorporate more of these landscapes for potential housing. Such City expansion would remove population and tax base resources from the Township, and risk the intrusion of incompatible housing near agricultural operations in a manner referenced above (residences beside feedlot facilities).

Map # 3 illustrates the spatial extent of existing and committed annexations into Wilson Township by the City into the Township. The areas outlined in red are "orderly annexation areas" already agreed to by the City and the Township, pending required procedures for final annexation.

A general inspection of the land needed to accommodate population growth by the City would indicate that the existing Township lands designated for annexation and the undeveloped lands in the already annexed area is sufficient for thirty years of City population growth. As an example, the City Planning Department reports there are a total of 481-acres of developable land in the east and west UAR growth areas and the Sweetwater area. The City Planning Department further acknowledges that this land is being set aside for residential uses at an average density of approximately 14,000 square feet per home. This density would yield approximately 1,500 new dwellings, and at an assumed 2.6 persons per home, these lands could increase the City population by 3,750 new persons. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan for the city of Winona indicates a population growth of about 2,100 persons between the years of 2000 and 2030. By considering these numbers, the existing annexation areas would provide half again as much land as the City needs to contain its projected population growth.

The Township Officers interpret the scope of expansion indicated in the Comprehensive Plan for the city of Winona to approach a magnitude of approximately 8 to 10 square miles of land extending through the middle of Wilson Township (equating to the "ultimate" growth scenario). The following Economic Development Section discusses the likely impacts to the Township from the endorsement by Winona for an industrial corridor along Highway 43 out to the Interstate 90 Interchange.

Even though the above magnitude of impact may not eventually occur, the actual experience of urban growth, generally, indicates that unintended growth speculation and its resulting development exceeds original plans. Much of this unintended growth results from the development benefits and investment income induced by the availability of City sewer and water services and better access afforded by improved highways and streets. Such a large-scale extension of City services, infrastructure, and improved access has the potential to create patterns of urban and rural sprawl within such a planned corridor.

These kinds of induced, unintended consequences of expanded urban infrastructure will result in trade-offs affecting both the city and rural quality of life, and the natural environment. The trade-offs from urban growth can be expected to include unintended sprawling patterns of land use, incompatible land uses, pressures to rezone land, environmental degradation, increased storm water flows, and habitat fragmentation. Additional trade-offs that could be expected include the costly infrastructure needs such as storm water accommodation, upgrading road capacities, and the general difficulties of extending and managing urban functions in an irregular jurisdictional border zone. These trade-offs are magnified by Winona intentions to extend an urban political jurisdiction in a narrow corridor extending through the middle of Wilson Township. This potential situation could be complicated even further if "leap-frog" annexations of islands of land within Wilson Township were to occur. These are the urban development patterns which contemporary principles of *Smart Growth Planning* seek to avoid.

Such land use problems and trade-offs are more specifically associated with the planned extension of Winona along the valleys and across the ridges into Wilson Township. Township residents interpret this planned pattern can be expected to induce urban sprawl, as has long been documented in the experiences of many other urban areas as having severe environmental and fiscal impacts. Such impacts result in very costly city infrastructure commitments, and create significant and persistent traffic problems. Planning experience and research shows the dominant residential living style is low-density, and when a municipality extends infrastructure to open up hundreds of acres of scenic rural area, the market for that land results in a significant loss of control of development on those lands by land use authorities. Extraordinarily, the city of Winona planning material describes urban sprawl as being counterproductive to its planning goals and standards that seek to reduce a sprawling land use style. More communities are implanting *Smart Growth* initiatives of compact, environmentally sound development standards as an effective alternative to traditional urban growth patterns.

The land adjacent to the Interchange between Interstate 90 and Highway 43 represents a unique planning and management opportunity for the Township. This opportunity is due to the potential increased economic value of these lands for non-agricultural uses created by the regional accessibility of these lands to two major highways. Many highway Interchanges, particularly on the Interstate system, are of interest to the business community for uses uniquely requiring excellent access for services by motorists and businesses with trucking requirements. Businesses and industries are increasingly relying on securing sites beside Interchanges for the obvious conveniences these sites offer for customer access and expediting freight

operations. Undeveloped Interchange points have historically been subject to speculative land investment for the above purposes, and the Wilson Interchange is likely no exception.

Township Officers can expect these private judgments about future land uses to manifest themselves in related land purchases and subsequent requests for zoning permissions with the intention of converting land to non-agricultural land use. The likelihood of this land use conversion merits recognition in the Wilson Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan. As these plans for land use conversion materialize, the Township in conjunction with the County can specify and regulate the fashion that any non-agricultural land use in the Interchange area is developed.

The County Zoning Map for Wilson Township indicates the current provision of planned future land usage in the Township, as shown on Map # 9. This zoning pattern shows very little diversity of land usage, with a small allowance for *Community Development* in the Wilson and Witoka settlements. The narrow strip of *Rural Residential* through Sections 3, 4, and 9 merit re-examination in light of the restrictive topography and limited local road access in this area. These existing zoning patterns are subject to change as reflected by policies contained in this document as well as subsequent revisions to the County Land Use Plan.

The writers of this document want to remind Township Officers as well as residents that a zoning map is not intended to be a direct representation of land uses planned well into the future, although the zoning patterns in general and all rezoning should be consistent with a land use plan. Zoning patterns tend to evolve with the actual land development requests from landowners, and in this process, can end-up departing from the land use plan for an area.

## Goals – Land Use

1. Protect Wilson from Urban Sprawl - Protect Township lands outside the Orderly Annexation Area (OAA) from the extension of city of Winona urban uses. The extension of urban uses would fragment and lessen the Township agricultural, rural, scenic, and environmental resources.

2. Low Density Housing - Maintain low-density residential environments in those parts of the Township not presently committed to annexation and development by the city of Winona. The goal of low-density, non-farm housing is consistent with five-acre lots and codified into the supporting Township Zoning Code. This density range is consistent with the EPA recommended density for acceptable, on-site residential waste disposal and treatment. A further purpose of this density is to avoid higher densities that could create the need for, and feasibility of, centralized utility systems that would give rise to patterns of urban sprawl including scattered commercial land uses, and serve to subject such lands to annexation.

3. Maintain the Viability of Agriculture - Recognize that the business of agriculture is the dominant land use in Wilson Township and provide for its viability into the future.

4. Re-establish a Wilson Service Center - Reestablish a Wilson Township community and economic service center reflective of the function of such center served in the past.

## **Policies - Land Use**

1. Recognize agriculture as the priority user of lands because it is the dominant land use in the Township. This recognition also satisfies the need to provide a larger, secure environment for agricultural activities as well as reduce the potential for conflict between farm and non-farm properties. This policy recognizes the Township Officers may contend with the situation that agriculture may not be the only planned land use throughout the effective life of this document. Some form of exclusive agricultural zoning is advisable to accommodate and protect the most intensive agricultural lands and activities in the Township.

2. Wilson Township supports and promotes the existing goals and policies for agriculture adopted by Winona County in the Winona County Comprehensive Plan.

3. Apply the goals and policies of alternative Concept One regarding the planning for the Highway 43 Interchange (see the Interchange section below).

4. The full implementation of recommended future land uses throughout the Township, including the Interchange area must await the availability of new and revised zoning standards and districts by Wilson Township. Further Interchange planning is subject to the completion of these new zoning standards. Develop an appropriate set of zoning standards and districts for Wilson Township encompassing the land uses envisioned in this Comprehensive Plan.

5. Establish five-year horizons to set and review zoning patterns as a means to ensure Township Officials will retain their authority for planning. This timing is consistent with the conventional five-year reevaluation period for comprehensive plans. It is important in setting land use policies to understand that planning is a process of continuing evaluation and goal adjustment. A long-range, land use plan, (just really a concept), should not be officially imprinted on the ground at the beginning of this long range planning period because this takes away the authority and flexibility of public officials to engage in the continuing planning process in which adjustments will be necessary as the community advances into that long-range period, typically a twenty-year period for a land use plan.

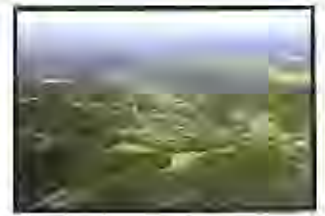
6. Coordinate with the city of Winona planning oversight regarding urban land uses and associated services within the Orderly Annexation Areas.

7. Work with the city of Winona on planning and mitigating any possible negative impacts from Projects in the Orderly Annexation Areas.
8. Maintain active Township involvement in the Joint Planning Board (JPB) to assure compliance with the provisions in the AUAR Agreement for lands not currently annexed into the city of Winona.
9. Require land development standards comparable to those for the city of Winona for properties in annexation areas. Ideally, the Township and County would incorporate these standards to maintain uniformity for ease of use by the public and for governmental enforcement.
10. Implement standards for single-family rural resident densities throughout the Township based on appropriate planning criteria that are consistent with this Plan.
11. Require that development in the Township be consistent with the policies and standards of the Winona County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
12. Protect the natural resource lands, waters, and scenery from adverse impacts of development.
13. The updated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances need to reference land use standards from the County Comprehensive Water Plan to ensure land development practices in Wilson Township are consistent with the objectives and standards of the County Water Plan.
14. Explore the possibility of innovative land use tools, such as programs to transfer development rights, purchase of development rights and conservation easements, and voluntary agricultural enterprise zones.

### **Action Programs - Land Use**

Reevaluate the definition of feedlots for Wilson Township, including the idea of having lesser residential setbacks from small feedlots.

# Economic Development



## Summary Analysis

A significant component of this Economic Development Section consists of the results of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis described earlier in this Plan. The Implications and Conclusions Section of the Demographic Analysis provides additional insight and direction for this Economic Development Section.

Viable local economic development efforts viable are typically associated with an area wide framework consistent with the nature of market forces and State and County policies that often shape economic development decisions. A successful strategy must maintain a focus on the core principle of economic development - to build on the assets you have, and tap the potentials you have. To supplement this strategy, this Plan references the Economic Development Element contained in the Background and Inventory Report of the Winona County 2001 Comprehensive Plan, for primary information. Furthermore, this document employs material listed in the Baseline Report attached to 2007 city of Winona Comprehensive Plan.

The economy is constantly in transition, and such contemporary forces are affecting Wilson Township. The hamlet of Wilson has been historically characterized by an agricultural economy, shaped by a landscape and soils resource very conducive to farming. In recent decades, many of the Township residents, including farmers, have commuted a short distance to jobs primarily in the city of Winona. As the Demographic Chapter of this Plan has indicated, there are very few full-time farmers remaining in the Township; however, agricultural activity is, by far, the largest business enterprise and largest occupier of land in Wilson Township. The conversion of farmland to non-farming activities will significantly raise values on adjacent properties and adversely affect the business of agriculture in the Township. Farmers will encounter obstacles to their livelihood in the form of higher property taxes and ongoing additional costs of doing business.

The economic structure of Wilson Township continues to undergo moderate transformations, and these alterations reflected in ownership patterns and expectations will affect the Township. Some of this transformation is the result of the growth of the city of Winona and its annexation of the northern portions of Wilson Township. Such urban development requires the kind of services that have historically not been available from the Township. The historical population growth and the current growth projection for the City reveal a continued slow growth into the future. These slow growth projections strongly indicate a less of a need for the City to acquire land in the Township. Nevertheless, the Comprehensive Plan for Winona calls for significant infrastructure extensions into Wilson Township, especially towards the Highway 90 Interchange. The City specifies this infrastructure is to support industrial uses.

The ownership patterns referenced above will result in expectations and plans to develop a variety of non-agricultural land uses, not only at the interface of the existing City and Township borders, but also on lands in the southern part of the Township benefiting from access to the Interchange between Interstate 90 and



Highway 43. The proposed industrial corridor by the City through the center of Wilson Township has the potential to change much of the character of the Township, not only in land usage change but also by the secondary impacts that such a dramatic change in land use would induce. An important impact would be the increase in land values and assessment values thereby leading to speculation and additional land use conversions. This increase in land value would inhibit farmers from being able to acquire more land for farming, and would potentially increase the property taxes farmers and existing residents would be paying due to the increased valuations and higher purchase prices due to speculation. The speculative purchase of lands in the Highway 43 Corridor is presently occurring, and the extension of urban infrastructure will certainly accelerate the escalation of land values.

The reality of urban development is that land speculation and City expansion plans are subservient to market forces and competitive advantages within a given region. The city of Winona and Wilson Township are located between the larger metropolitan markets of Rochester and La Crosse, indicating a continued centering of urban type development in these existing urban centers, as shown on Map # 1. There are other locations for Interchange development in Winona County, notably the Interchange between Interstate 90 and Highway 74 in the City of St. Charles. The City of St. Charles has already installed urban infrastructure at the Interchange and is actively promoting the development opportunities of the Interchange. There are Interchanges along Interstate 90 at Highway 43 South, and at Highway 29 leading to the City of Lewiston that have land available for development, although neither area have urban infrastructure to support intensive development. The combination of public and private development factors may yield some interest in development in these Interchange areas over the next twenty years.

The tax base is the life-blood of a viable unit of government and the major source of revenue for the Township to provide public services to its residents and businesses. The annexation of taxable real estate has begun eroding the Township tax base. The orderly annexation process is expected to transfer additional tax base from the Township to the city of Winona with a substantial loss possible due to the large number on residences in these areas. Furthermore, the taxable value of real estate in Wilson Township is approximately 37% less than its total market value according to figures from the County Assessor's Office. Some Township development in the Interstate 90 / Highway 43 Interchange area is a reasonable method of mitigating losses to its tax base and tax revenue because of city of Winona annexations.

A basic economic development reality regarding the development outlook for Wilson Township is the fact that the Interstate 90 / Highway 43 Interchange area is its own engine for growth, separate from any City growth, because the Interchange is appealing for highway related uses. Township officials are aware of this reality by the existence of developer reports.

In recognition of the above economic realities and expectations, and in recognition of the economic planning information in the plans of Winona County and the city of Winona, Wilson Township realizes it must understand and proactively plan for its economic future. To this end, Wilson Township has developed economic development goals, policies and action programs as set out below.

## **Goals - Economic Development**

1. Maintain a sufficient economic base for the delivery of Township services throughout the future.
2. Create economic development opportunities in the Township to provide jobs and services to Township and County residents, and to maintain and enhance the Township and County revenue sources.

## **Policies - Economic Development**

1. Support plans and actions protecting the agricultural economy of the Township.
2. Maintain policies and programs protecting the economic base of the Township, including zoning policies and standards that enable the Township to tap economic potentials.
3. Keep abreast of proposed land development intentions at the Interstate 90 / Highway 43 Interchange area.
4. Evaluate all economic development projects proposed within the Township in a fashion assuring consistency with all aspects of the Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning. The proponents of any economic development project will be required to present detailed evaluations of their proposals identifying environmental, traffic, land use, and other impacts according to a format determined by the Township Board.

## **Action Programs - Economic Development**

1. Review and update the Township Zoning Ordinance and Map to be consistent with the Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
2. Work with state, regional and private economic development organizations to apply economic development benefits to Wilson Township,
3. Compose a Township zoning and certificate request form with an environmental assessment worksheets.



**Figure #8.** The Minnesota Equestrian Center situated at junction of County Roads 21 and 44. The Equestrian Center is a nationally recognized facility serving the needs of horse owners and enthusiasts alike.

# Transportation



## Summary Analysis

Community planning, transportation and land use decisions are interrelated. The planning, or lack thereof, for one will directly influence the other. This transportation and land use relationship is very important for Wilson Township. Zoning patterns and the platting of land are two land use functions that must be compatible with the safety and efficient functioning of streets and highways.

Map # 3 shows the Wilson Township road network and the larger context of the County road system. Map #10 illustrates the Wilson Township Road Map, identifying the latest traffic counts for State Highway 43 and Interstate 90.

Transportation in Wilson Township is limited to the local, County, State roads, and Interstate Highway 90. The State road system consists of State Highways 43 and 44, and the maintenance responsibilities for Interstate Highway 90. The Interchange between Interstate 90 and Highway 43 is the dominant transportation facility in Wilson Township, and it is an independent generator of potential growth, principally to businesses requiring convenient interstate access. Therefore, this Interchange will be a determinant of land use change in its immediate area. Township and County governments have the authority to determine the type, intensity, and timing of any land use conversion in this Interchange area.

The Township road network consists of thirty-six miles of mostly gravel roads and follows an irregular pattern dictated by the uneven topography. The dominant road orientation in the Township is in a north to south alignment with this pattern accommodating traffic flows into and out of the city of Winona.

The County highway system contained in Wilson Township consists of County Roads, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21, 44, and 105. State Highway 43 is the main arterial connection to Interstate Highway 90, with County Roads 21, 44, 17, and 105 being the secondary north to south routes.

The transportation and related land development issues throughout the Highway 43 Corridor present important planning challenges. The northern portion of this Corridor is in a narrow valley with no significant intersecting streets. Throughout its length, numerous Individual private drives meet Highway 43 and each one of these private drives poses to lower the safe, operational capacity of Highway 43. This document suggests the Township officials implement a form of comprehensive access planning to Highway 43 as a means to preserving the long-term safety and arterial functionality of the Highway. Furthermore, the strip of residential zoning along both sides of Highway 43 in Township Sections 3, 4, and 9 should be reevaluated with a goal to improve safety by adopting access restrictions to existing and proposed residential development.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) is uncertain regarding future improvements to Highway 43. According to MNDOT Officials, in 2007 the State had no plans to widen the highway with additional traffic lanes on the eastern earthen grade north of the existing four-lane section. MNDOT reports the anticipated

traffic volumes for Highway 43 have not materialized, as some of the truck traffic has been using alternate routes. MNDOT does not specify any improvements for Highway 43 in its 2008 to 2030 Improvements Program. MNDOT continues its comments by reporting the lack of a continuous four-lane, right-of-way on the north end of the Highway in the city of Winona has lessened the priority for improvements on the Highway. Although MNDOT does claim, there is a possibility, with State approval, of using the unpaved road grade as a trail route.

Maintaining and protecting the Township road system is one of the most important responsibilities of the Township government. This issue becomes very important for those road segments the city of Winona annexes, and the additional traffic generated by subsequent development placed on the Township portion of the same road. It is important to minimize the amount of Township road improvements that would become necessary due to such City action. In this scenario, it would be necessary for the City and the Township to have road agreements for sharing the cost of Township road improvements generated by City traffic.

Future development along County Highway 12 near the Highway 43 Interchange will warrant disciplined planning and development standards. The Regional Context, Land Use, and Economic Development Chapters of this Plan discuss the anticipated growth pressures in this area. The Township can expect Highway 12 to see an increase in traffic and correspondingly assume the function as a Major Collector or a Minor Arterial. It will be important for Wilson Township to preserve the long-range safety and capacity of Highway 12. Since most traffic accidents occur at intersections and driveways, the Township should consider driveway spacing standards and plan for intersection improvements. Turning lanes are a significant improvement in the interest of minimizing accidents and preserving the through traffic function of a road. It will be important to have adequate building setbacks along Highway 12, particularly for development near its intersection with Highway 43.

Since there is significant commuting by Wilson residents into the city of Winona, there are opportunities for carpooling and perhaps an area transit service may become a greater need throughout the future. A formal, park-and-ride commuter lot may be desirable in the Wilson Hamlet Area. The Township Hall / Fire Department property now provides an informal park-and-ride commuter lot.

## **Goals - Transportation**

1. Maintain an economical and safe Township road system.
2. Avoid land use development that jeopardizes the safe and efficient functioning of State, County, and Township thoroughfares.

## **Policies - Transportation**

1. Maintain close communication with the State and County Departments of Transportation so the Township remains current and proposed road improvement plans and projects.

2. Provide the necessary maintenance and the reconstruction budgets for Township roads and related drainage needs.
3. Work with County, State, and city of Winona governmental units to assure the appropriate sharing of costs and responsibilities for transportation impacts within Wilson Township.
4. For areas outside the Orderly Annexation Area (OAA), the Township should draft agreements with the city of Winona for cost sharing on Township roads impacted by additional traffic due to City development using Township roads. For development within the OAA, the requirements of the OAA Joint Resolution regarding Township roads and other development obligations of the city of Winona will apply.
5. Prepare technical standards consisting of frontage roads, driveway spacing, setback dimensions, and prospective road improvements for thoroughfares likely to experience increased traffic volumes resulting from development on properties fronting these roads. County Highway 12 is an example of a road requiring specialized design standards.
6. Plan for and support opportunities for a balanced transportation system, including rural transit, park-and-ride facilities, trails, and other feasible measures.

### **Action Programs - Transportation**

1. Develop standards and plans for the protection and enhancement of County Highway 12 within the vicinity of Highway 43, and integrate this information into any future Master Plan for the Interchange area.
2. Develop a five-year, Capital Improvements Program for the Township road system.



# Public Facilities and Services

## Summary Analysis

The public facilities and services in Wilson Township include the provision of a Township road system (including maintenance, drainage, and snowplowing), administration of a Zoning Ordinance, and fire and emergency first responder services.

The Town government and the Fire Department operate out of a common facility at the intersection of Highway 43 and County Road 12. The focus of Township Fire Department is rural fires and urban developments and provides mutual-aid through agreements with other fire Departments. The Fire Department has two pumper trucks and two tanker trucks to transport water from a 20,000-gallon water reservoir at the Station. The Department does not have a ladder truck to attack fires in large or commercial multi-story buildings.

The Township is also within the Winona School District for K to 12 educational services. Township residents and property owners have access to a full range of county governmental services. The United States Natural Resource Conservation office in Lewiston also provides a range of agricultural and rural development services to residents and property owners.

Other public or semi-public facilities in Wilson Township include the Camp We-No-Nah, two churches, five cemeteries, and 250-acres owned by Winona County with a portion of the acreage occupied the County Sanitary Land Fill.

Tri-County REC and Xcel Energy provide electric service throughout the Township. Century Link, AT&T, Charter, and HBC provide telephone service with cable television partly provided by HBC and Charter Cable. Northern Natural Gas Company has a natural gas transmission line extending through the Township to the city of Winona. This gas company does not sell gas to individual customers in the Township, although the company provides a small number of property owners with natural gas in exchange for permission to bisect their properties with the gas line. The Minnesota Energy Resources bill these property owners for gas usage. It is unknown if Northern Natural Gas would provide gas directly to any new large-scale users along its line in Wilson Township.

## **Goals - Public Facilities and Services**

1. Maintain the functional integrity and affordability of Township public services.
2. Upgrade public services as necessary to serve growth.

## **Policies - Public Facilities and Services**

1. Remain open to improved methods of delivering public services, including service sharing, joint service agreements, and other methods necessary to maintain and improve the quality of life for Wilson Township residents, businesses, and property owners.

2. Coordinate Township public services and facilities with the County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

### **Action Programs - Public Facilities and Services**

1. Maintain the delivery of Township services according to existing capabilities.
2. Upgrade Fire Department equipment and training as necessary to serve the fire protection and rescue needs of all future uses in the Township.
3. Explore needs to provide specialized waste disposal and/or water services to appropriate areas requiring such services if environmental or health conditions warrant, and consistent with the Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

(WEST)



(EAST)

**Figure #9.** An aerial view of the Township Hall and Fire Station situated at the northwest corner of the intersection between State Highway 43 and County Road 12.



# Interchange Plan



## Summary Analysis

The approach of inserting a *plan* within a *plan* represents the first concerted attempt by Township Officials to apply comprehensive planning techniques to the Interchange Region. This plan will evolve as Township Officials gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the region as well as when development schemes come under scrutiny. The Interchange between Interstate 90 and State Highway 43 lies in Section 29 in the southwest corner of Wilson Township, and provides the Township with its only access to the Interstate. The Interchange offers access into the city of Winona by way of Highway 43 that eventually connects to State Highway 61 on the east side of Winona. Highway 43 immediately north of the Interchange consists of a four-lane, limited access thoroughfare, where after approximately one-mile, the Highway converts to a two-lane configuration. County Highway 12 on the north side of the Interchange, Wilson Frontage Drive and County Road 19 on the south, funnel's traffic from throughout the Township to the Interchange.



Figure #10. An aerial view of the Interchange Region.

As pointed out in the Regional Growth Context Section of this Plan, the accessibility benefits of this Interchange create the potential for specialized development. This potential reflects somewhat by property ownership changes in the area of the Interchange with indications of future development. In realizing these potentials and private sector intentions, Wilson Township is taking an active interest in assuring that any such development is consistent with sound planning and development standards consistent with Township values and plans.

While land on both sides of the Interchange have development potential, reasons such as less severe topography, site visibility from Highway 43, and the likelihood of the installation of centralized utilities. Furthermore, the two quadrants north of the Interchange have the advantage of an internal road system (Elfmanns Drive and Elfmanns Road) thereby eliminating the need to have driveways directly onto County Road 12. Wilson View Drive performs a similar capacity in the northwest quadrant.

Township Officials identify the southern and western portions of this Interchange Region as a *Potential Development Area*, as conceptually illustrated in Map # 11. This Plan recommends that Winona County support this designation by either amending its Comprehensive Plan and/or placing this designation in its upcoming update of the County Plan. Township Officials thoroughly evaluated and discussed alternative concepts for possible development in the Interchange Region during the overall planning process. The Officials solicited comments and suggestions from residents and property owners during two, separate public Open Houses. The Township Planning Commission also held two public hearings related to comprehensive planning of the Interchange Region.

This initial Interchange Plan represents only a conceptual level since the planning process revealed strong differences of opinion regarding the scale and intensity of development in the Interchange Region. These differences of opinion also centered on the absence of sufficient facts that would confirm the near-term demand for commercial or industrial development combined with the reality that existing zoning prohibits development beyond the existing land uses. This document recognizes the existence of a mixed-use pattern north of the Interchange Region by using the term status quo and distinguishes this pattern as the *Wilson Hamlet* in the Comprehensive Land Use Map. Continuing Township work on this concept plan, including involvement of property owners, will be necessary over time.

### **Alternative Interchange Development Concepts**

The Interchange Planning Process began with an evaluation of four development alternatives, with the intention of narrowing them down to a semi-final concept. The Township Officials identified an Interchange sub *Area* as shown on Map # 11.

It must be stressed, private market forces combined with public policy will determine the pace and magnitude of development at the Interchange. Therefore, the development alternatives evaluated during the Planning Process represented a range of concepts and not predictable outcomes endorsed by the Township. The importance of evaluating alternatives and producing recommended development

concepts is that they facilitate discussions in setting the direction for how the Township and County could move forward in dealing with the development of critical Township resource.

The evaluation of these alternatives took place in a three-step process, including two Public Open Houses at the Township Hall where the public had the opportunity to review the concepts and alternatives and submit verbal and written comments to the Planning Consultant and the Township Officials. The second-step consisted of Workshop Meetings of the Town Board and the Planning Commission to reevaluate the alternatives and concepts in light of public comments and to incorporate their own policy recommendations. The Planning Consultant also organized the mailings of post cards to notify residents of the second Public Open House to encourage resident participation, and posted drafts of the plan on the County website throughout the process. The third-step consisted of a series of Township Public Hearings on the entire Plan document.

Considering development phasing is important for any *Potential Development Area* that is presently rural in character. This is because full development would typically occur over many years, thereby requiring that such development be managed through a phasing of progressive levels of planning and zoning over time, with the Plan being subject to amendment at each of these levels of review.

The Planning Process examined four Interchange development concepts:

Concept One - Status Quo, near-term starting in 2008

Concept Two - Low intensity, mixed-use business and industrial developments. Maximum 4 developments per 5 acres.

Concept Three - Moderate intensity, mixed use business and industrial development. Maximum 5-6 developments per 5 acres.

Concept Four - Comprehensive intensity, intensive Interchange development. Over 6 developments per 5 acres.

This Wilson Township Comprehensive Plan endorses Concept One, or the Status Quo alternative. This alternative will remain the planning policy of the Township until Township Officials amend the Plan to reflect the realities of new facts confirming the demand for development at the Interchange. Concept One also reflects the existing limited level of development potential due to the rural zoning of the Interchange Region and lack of infrastructure.

Township Officials recommended Concept One for the following reasons:

1. Concept One reflects the realities of development potential for the foreseeable future based on the existing Zoning Ordinance.
2. No evidence of development plans by property owners in the Interchange Region.
3. Consensus from the Planning Process that Concept One best reflects the vision, goals, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Lack of centralized utilities, as required for Concepts Three and Four, and the fact that such utilities would not be present during the foreseeable future due to the time required to organize, plan, engineer, and finance, such extensive improvements.

5. Concept One does not expose Wilson Township to near-term financial obligations that could be associated with servicing developments under the other three Concepts.

6. Uncertainty of what the expected updates to the County Comprehensive Plan will recommend for the Interchange Region.

7. Concept One is flexible. It does not shut the door on a development proposal judged to be acceptable, since a rezoning or conditional use remains a possibility.

8. Concept One acknowledges the existing Wilson Community area north of the Interchange and recommends its continuation as a *rural hamlet* for the near future.

The ensuing text describes the Interchange Concept Two Alternative:

### **Interchange Concept Two**

Permitted land uses will continue to correspond to those in the Agriculture / Natural Resources (A/NR) Zoning District except for uses permitted in the existing Community Development (CD) Zoning District.

The CD District Zoning applies only to the EAST HALF of the Interchange Region.

The CD District does not allow all commercial and industrial uses as conditional uses. A concentration of conditional uses could raise the question of the need for centralized utilities. The small amount of land Zoned Community Development restricts development opportunities as most of these properties are already supporting other uses. Wilson Township recognizes these uses as constituting a *Rural Hamlet*.

A considerable limitation to development proposals is the lack of infrastructure for intensive development. Capacity of onsite sewer and water wells is the determining factor in the intensity of nonresidential development.

The mixed use developments (the historic Wilson Community) North of the interchange comprise the Hamlet of Wilson. This designation enables the continuation of existing residences and businesses and ensures this area continues as the Wilson Township Service center.

Concept Two Continues until the time when the development intensity exceeds 4 developments per 5 acres. Once a development proposal is under review that exceeds this limit, the Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan should be reevaluated and amended to consider the next Concept Level of Development. Progression to the next Concept Level shall require new Zoning Districts and design standards.

Throughout the duration of Concept Two, Wilson Township has no responsibility for any centralized water or sewer services.

Specific Interchange Plan Recommendations - Concept Two

### **Goals - Interchange Concept Two**

1. Interchange land use shall conform to applicable zoning, while allowing

potential development.

2. Recognize The Wilson Hamlet as the Center of Wilson Township and allowing it, as a mixed use service center of the township.
3. Maintain a continuous planning process for the Interchange Region, which allows for amendments to reflect realities of the changing economy.
4. A long range goal is to secure the benefits of appropriate development as a way to ensure employment and services to Wilson Township and Winona County residents as well as generating tax revenue to maintain Township services.

### **Policies - Interchange Concept two**

1. Development in the interchange region shall be consistent with the Interchange Concept Plan One.
2. Future interchange concept plans shall be revisions to the Wilson Comprehensive Land use plan and subject to changes to the Wilson Zoning Ordinance.
3. Continue making plans for the Interchange Region. This planning process may include the Interchange Master Plan using concepts Three and Four.
4. The complete Interchange Master Plan shall be part of the Wilson Comprehensive Plan and promote a higher level of development i.e. Concept Three or Four.

### **Action Programs - Interchange Concept Two**

Wilson Township may compose site design standards to manage the appearance of potential development in the Interchange Region. These design standards would complement provisions in the Township Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Ordinance.

### **Interchange Master Plan Components**

Township zoning needs to shift from existing rural perspectives to contain provisions for the likelihood of commercial and industrial uses in the Interchange Region

1. Map #11 - The map illustrates the opportunities and constraints of development for the Interchange Region.
2. Traffic Counts - The latest available traffic count providing a baseline for traffic patterns which would estimate traffic changes of a proposed development.
3. Infrastructure Plan - Planned infrastructure is necessary to assess development feasibility. The main infrastructure needs are water and sewer capabilities. Other needs are local roads, storm water management, electricity, phone and computer services as well as emergency services. This Plan shall address infrastructure needs of a likely development proposal. It should state that all Minnesota and Federal storm water requirements must be met. The plan should include the names of the agencies responsible for providing services.

4. Land Use Concept for the Interchange Region - The land use concept is an illustration of ways to conveniently access Interstate Highway 90. The plan illustrates a mixture of land uses that prevents lowering of the value of adjacent properties or the quality of Wilson Township Life. The Plan, as shown in Map 12, shall limit uses to commercial, services and light industrial uses. Therefore lessening any exposure of toxic substances, odor, dust and noise to residents.

5. Growth Phases - The Plan identifies growth phases based on availability of necessary infrastructure to serve specific levels of land use intensity. It should include a Capital improvement plan as a funding reference

6. Esthetic Values - Growth in the Interchange Region will be to maintain real estate values and encourage economic development and business investment.

Figure #11. This graphic exemplifies architectural and site design standards appropriate for development opportunities in the Interchange Region.

1. Zoning Plan - The Interchange Region requires a zoning plan as a means to accommodate the orderly conversion of agricultural lands to commercial or industrial uses. If the Township Officials envision a mixture of land uses at the Interchange Region, then the Master Plan needs to describe a flexible, although specialized district having the flair to promote a range of complimentary uses. The Township (or the County) does not have the appropriate zoning district presently available.

2. Road/Traffic Plan - A plan of the design and location of all roads in the Interchange Area. This plan would include standards for parcel access, driveway spacing, frontage roads, intersection design, turning lanes, service area and parking. Protecting the safety and capacity of arterial roads is an important consideration in the plan.

3. Collaboration - A successful planning process must include input of property owners in the Interchange Region. Also collaboration with other authorities, such as County state may be necessary

# Comprehensive Master Plan Map

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## Purpose and Usage

The Comprehensive Master Plan Map (Map # 11) illustrates the overall framework for the growth of Wilson Township. This is the first attempt at a Conceptual Land Use Map by necessity given the lack of prior long-range planning in the Township and the limited scope of this first planning effort. Township Officials recognized the significance of the County Comprehensive Water Plan and the Winona County All Hazards Mitigation Plan. The intention of the Conceptual Land Use Map reflects the basic policies and strategies contained in those documents. This map must remain the subject of continuous refinements since the ensuing recommendations will advocate more elaborate specifications for inclusion in the Township and County Comprehensive Plans and subsequent Zoning Ordinances. For example, the development standards for the hamlets of Wilson, Witoka, Centerville, the Interchange Region, and for the Resource Conservation Area need to be developed through amendment of existing or entirely new zoning districts as applied to the land use categories shown on the Conceptual Land Use Map. The following Implementation Section contains recommendations for composing these new zoning districts.

# Plan Implementation



## Summary Analysis

Units of government have the authority to implement various aspects of their comprehensive plans. Typically, these implementation measures occur after the adoption of the plan and consist of ordinances (zoning and subdivision regulations), site plan reviews, and capital improvement programs. Such implementation measures are also important for use in grant applications, as negotiation instruments with public or private entities, and other unique or special circumstances.

Plan implementation for Wilson Township will necessarily involve regular collaboration with Winona County, the city of Winona regarding future actions in the Orderly Annexation Area (OAA), the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR), MNDOT and the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) process.

An increasingly important factor in implementing a comprehensive plan is the requirement for consistency between the contents of the plan, and the zoning decisions by the community. In 2006, the Minnesota Supreme Court<sup>20</sup> ruled that the land use recommendations in a comprehensive plan have supremacy over zoning. The Township Officials need to be cognizant of this factor when creating a Zoning Ordinance based on the recommendations and policies described in the Comprehensive Plan.

## Goals - Plan Implementation

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan in combination with other Township powers to implement the goals, policies, and action programs of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
2. Request adoption of the Wilson Comprehensive Land Use Plan by Winona County and continue a positive, collaborative relationship with the County Planning Department.
3. Ensure the Township Zoning Ordinance is consistent with the Wilson Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

## Policies - Plan Implementation

1. Support the environmental principles and land development standards adopted in the Winona County Comprehensive Plan and the Winona County Comprehensive Water Plan.
2. Maintain the Comprehensive Plan as a guide at all Township Board Meetings when the Board considers land use scenarios.

<sup>20</sup> MN Supreme Court, A04-206, Mendota Golf LLC v City of Mendota Heights



3. Work with the County Planning Department to update the County Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to facilitate the implementation of the Wilson Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
4. Insure the Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan replaces the Wilson Profile Section of the current County Comprehensive Plan.
5. The Township acknowledges the legal relationship between Township and County zoning jurisdictions, including the limits of each.
6. Provide follow-up studies and plans to further expand, define, support, or amend the Comprehensive Land Use Plan in the interest of keeping the Plan current and reflective of Township needs and goals.
7. Request the County to amend its Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance where the Township determines that an acceptable proposed use is suitable for a given location in the Township but which is inconsistent with the existing County Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

### **Action Programs- Plan Implementation**

1. Submit the Wilson Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan to Winona County for review and comment as required by Chapter 394.33 of Minnesota State Statutes. Even though the Township planning policies cannot be inconsistent or less restrictive than the County Comprehensive Plan (although it can be more restrictive), if there are differences which the County accepts, then the County has the authority to amend its Plan to accommodate specific recommendations contained in the Township Plan.
2. The Township Board will pass an ordinance approving the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Maintain strong enforcement of the Township Zoning Ordinance. This should include the option of the Township installing restrictions and conditions exceeding those found in the County Zoning Ordinance on property improvements.
4. Maintain active Township involvement in city of Winona annexation proceedings.
5. The Township Planning Commission shall be the stewards of the Township Comprehensive Plan.
6. After approval of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Township should proceed to establish priorities for pursuing follow-up actions on Plan implementation.

7. Proceed to draft the recommended new Zoning Districts in conjunction with the County to facilitate the implementation of the land use and zoning recommendations of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

8. Review the Comprehensive Land Use Plan periodically, and amend the Plan as development conditions and Township policies change. This would typically be a limited review of specific issues coming up during a calendar year. The Township Officers should initiate a complete review of the document every five years.

9. Adopt the chapters and zoning districts in the current Winona County Zoning Ordinances, with exclusions and/or amendments as needed, consistent with this amended CLUP:

- ❑ Ag/Natural Resource (A/NR)
- ❑ Rural Residential (RR)
- ❑ Urban Residential (UR)
- ❑ Community Development (CD)
- ❑ Commercial and Recreational (CR)
- ❑ Limited Industrial (LI)
- ❑ Rural Heritage(RH)
- ❑ County Special Use District (CSU)
- ❑ Closed Landfill Restricted District (CLR)

10. Adapt the Rural Residential District to promote rural, residential growth on moderate sized lots such as three to five-acres on marginal farmland. The Comprehensive Plan recommends the creation of a conservation subdivision ordinance as a means to cluster residences near each other to maintain larger, continuous swaths of farmland and open space.

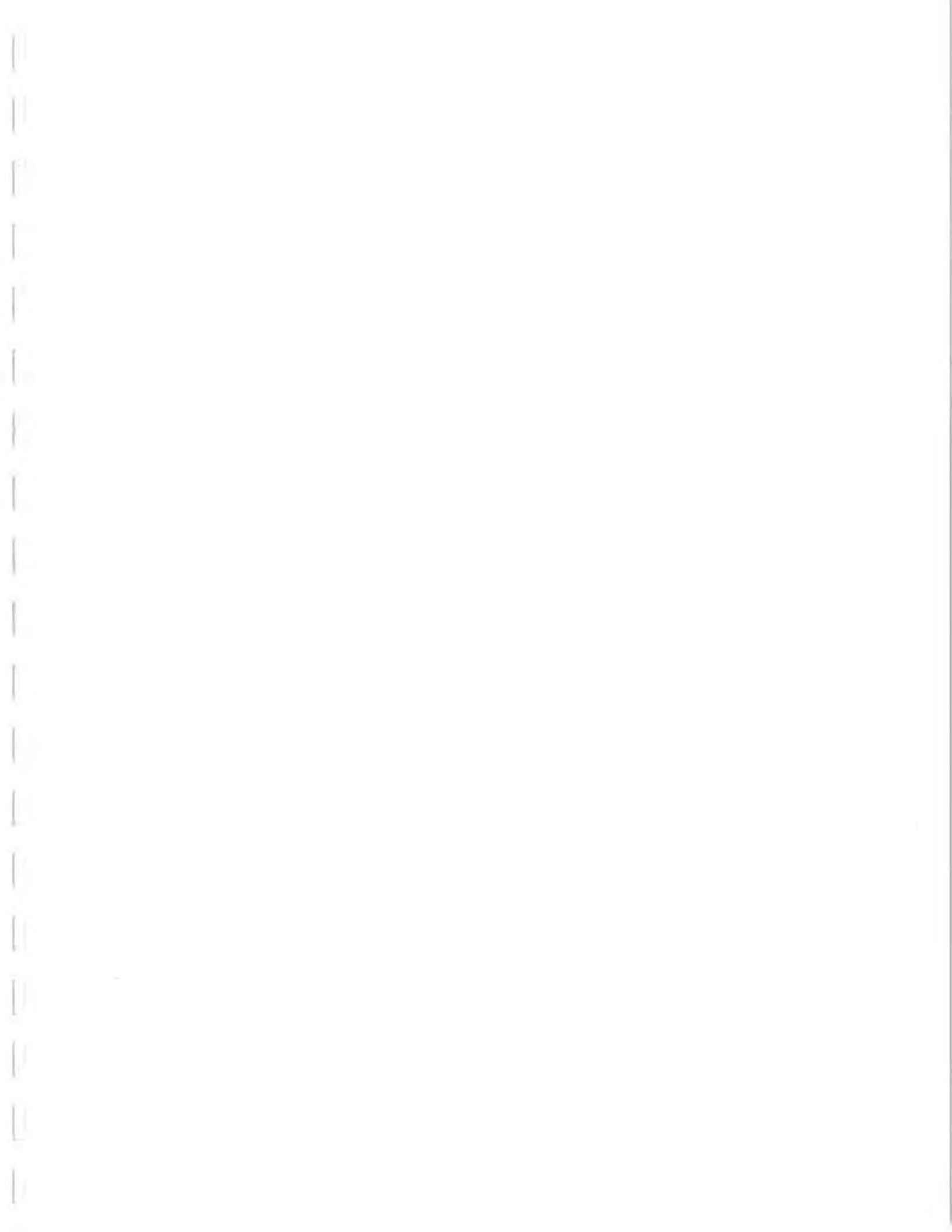




Figure #11. This illustration suggests the possibilities of preserving farmland and protecting unique natural areas while simultaneously allowing residential development by implementing an option for conservation subdivisions in Wilson Township. Conservation subdivisions are a method of grouping dwellings on small lots occupying a portion of the larger tract as a means to leave the majority of the cropland and open space available for farming and natural resource uses with minimal inferences from the nearby residences.



## Plan Maintenance

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### Summary Analysis

Since planning recommendations are mostly advisory, it is important the Township Plan be available to the Township Planning Commission and Township Board whenever land use discussions occur. Eventually unexpected opportunities and circumstances may arise, and in such cases, it is important to amend the Comprehensive Plan to recognize such changes. Of course, the Town Board should be prepared to support the recommendations generated by the Planning Commission unless the Board considers, after thoroughly reviewing all relevant information, decides to contradict the recommendation in the best interests of the Township. To keep the recommendations of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan appropriate, it is important that a group, such as the Plan Commission become the stewards of the Comprehensive Plan. The fundamental task of maintaining the Plan rests entirely with the Township Board.

### Goals - Plan Maintenance

1. Use the Comprehensive Land Use Plan in making Township Board decisions on Township land use, zoning, and growth topics.
2. Maintain a positive and collaborative relationship with Winona County on planning and land use themes.

### Policies - Plan Maintenance

1. Schedule a limited annual review of the Plan, with an extensive review every five-years.
2. Amend the Comprehensive Land Use Plan whenever warranted by unique circumstances not discussed in the Plan.
3. Develop an annual priority list of follow-up tasks for the Township Planning Commission.

## **Action Programs - Plan Maintenance**

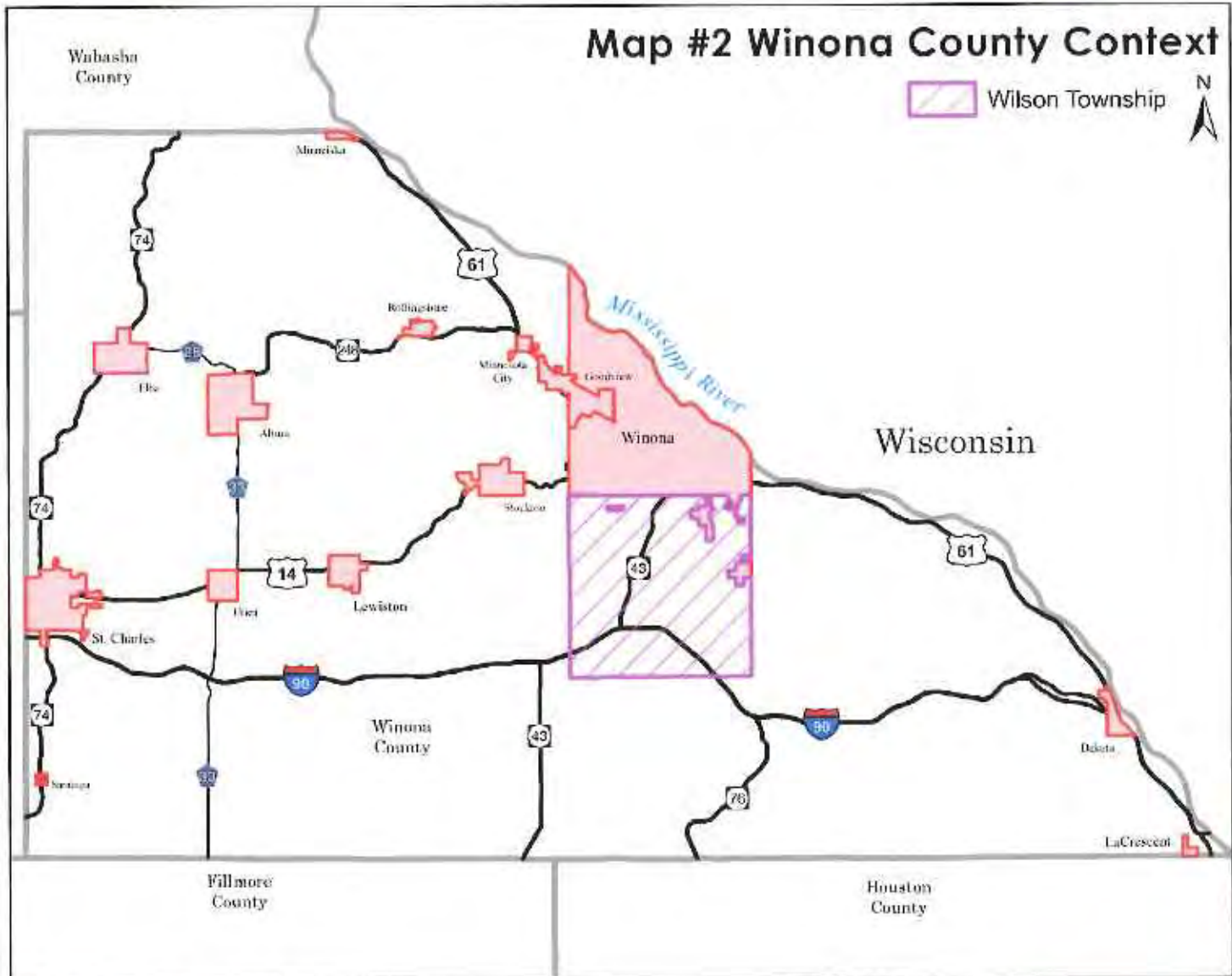
1. The Township Board designates the Township Planning Commission to be the official stewards of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
2. Submit the Comprehensive Plan to Winona County for review and placement into the County Comprehensive Plan representing the land use policies of Wilson Township.
3. The Township Board during periodic reviews of the Plan should examine possible revisions to the feedlot standards, and requirements for single-family, rural housing densities.
4. Develop further the 5-year land use plan for the Interchange Zone and the mechanism for the implementation of that plan.
5. Commission detailed follow-up studies and efforts necessary to continue the planning process in Wilson Township.

# Map #1 Regional Context



Source: Microsoft Virtual Earth

# Map #2 Winona County Context

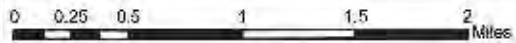
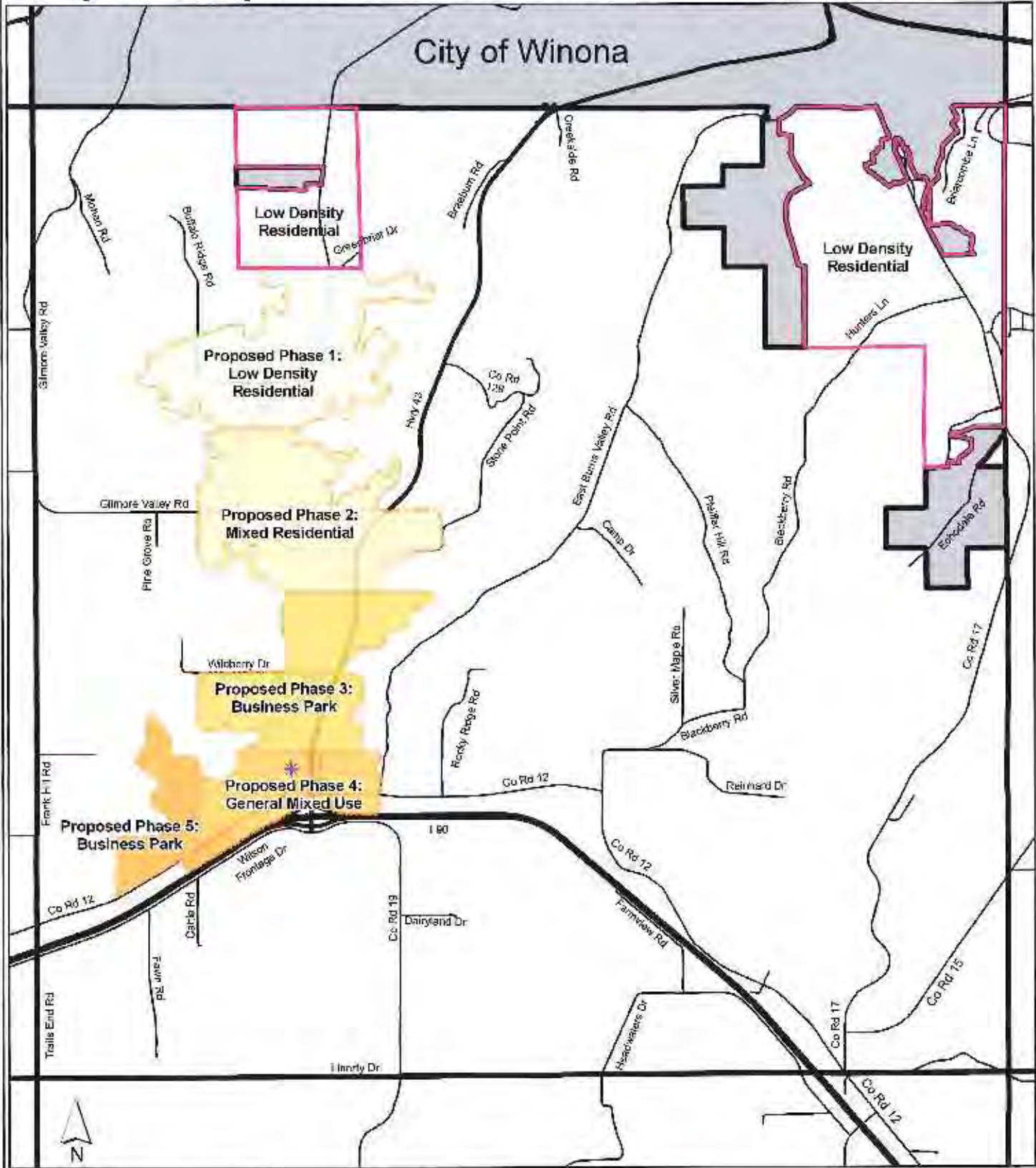


## Wilson Township



# 2007 City of Winona Comprehensive Plan

## Map #3 - Proposed Land Use Plan & Urban Expansion Area



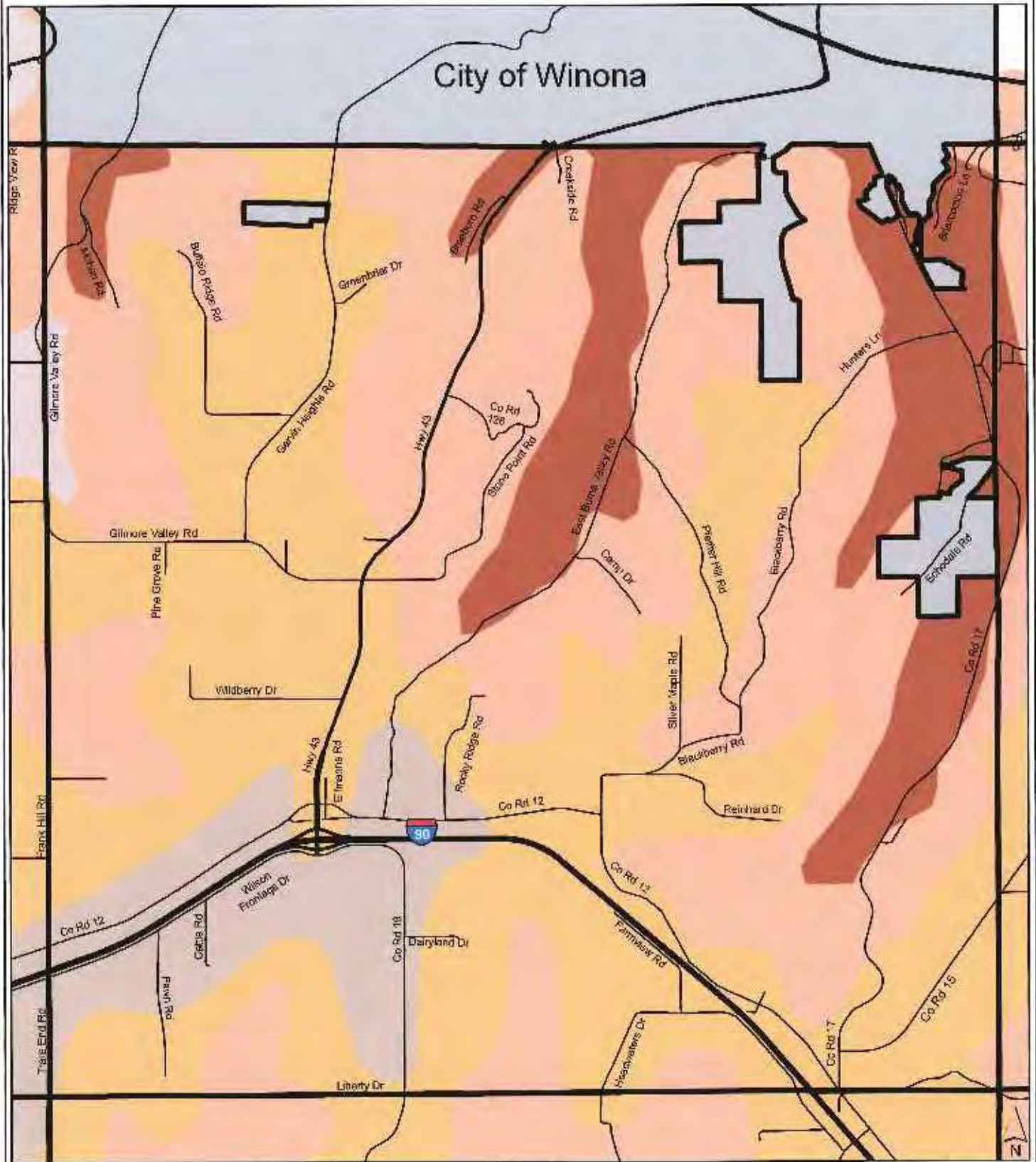
Wilson Township



- Proposed land use concepts as depicted in the 2007 City of Winona Comprehensive Plan
- Alternative Urban Area Review (AUAR)
- ★ Wilson Town Hall



# Map #4 - General Soils Map



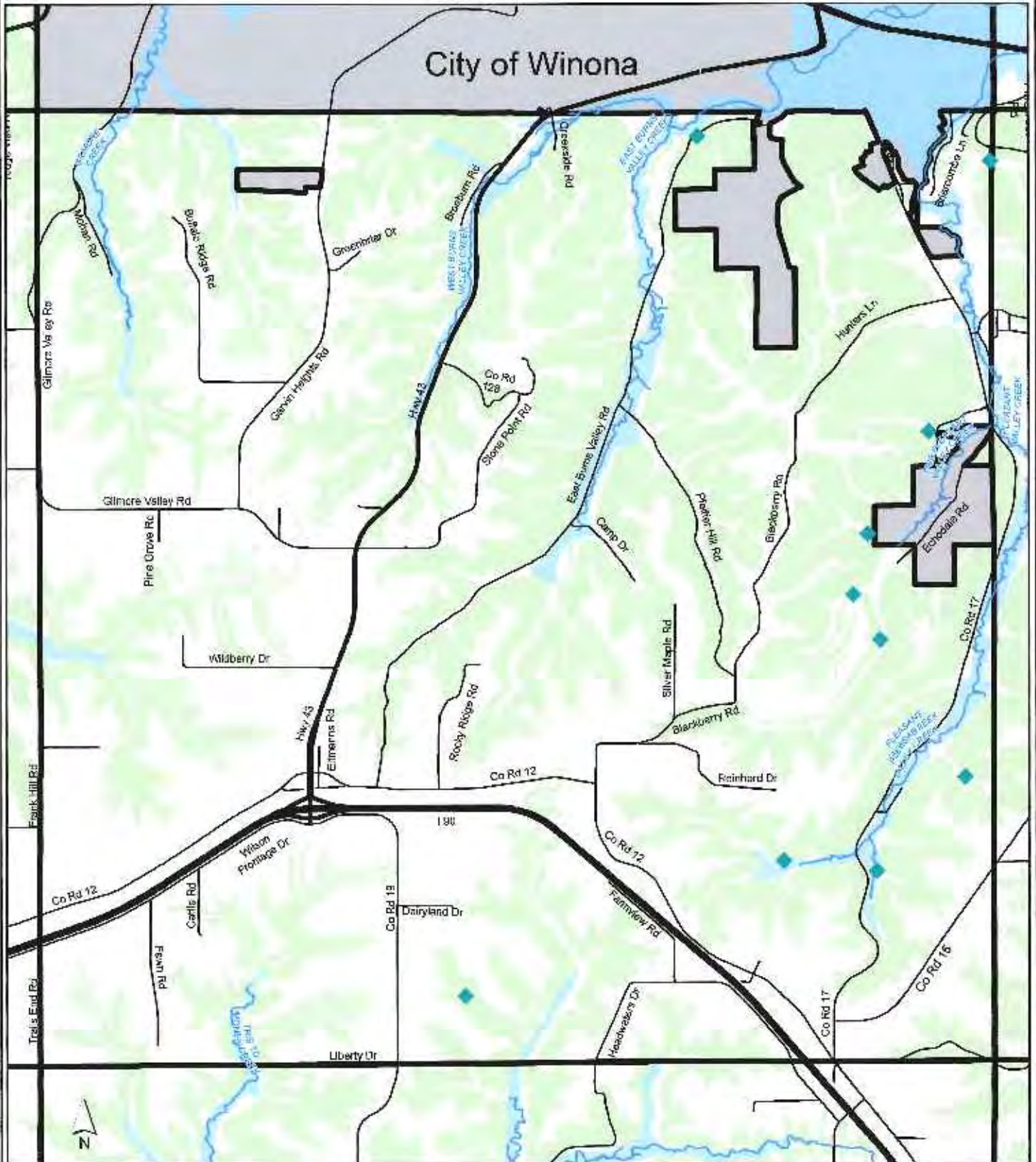
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Wilson Township



Soils	
	Port Byron-Lindstrom-Mt. Carroll
	Seaton-Blackhammer-Southridge
	Seaton-Newalbin-Festina
	Seaton-New Glarus-Palsgrove
	LaCrescent-Elbaville-Lamoille

# Map #5 - Natural Resources

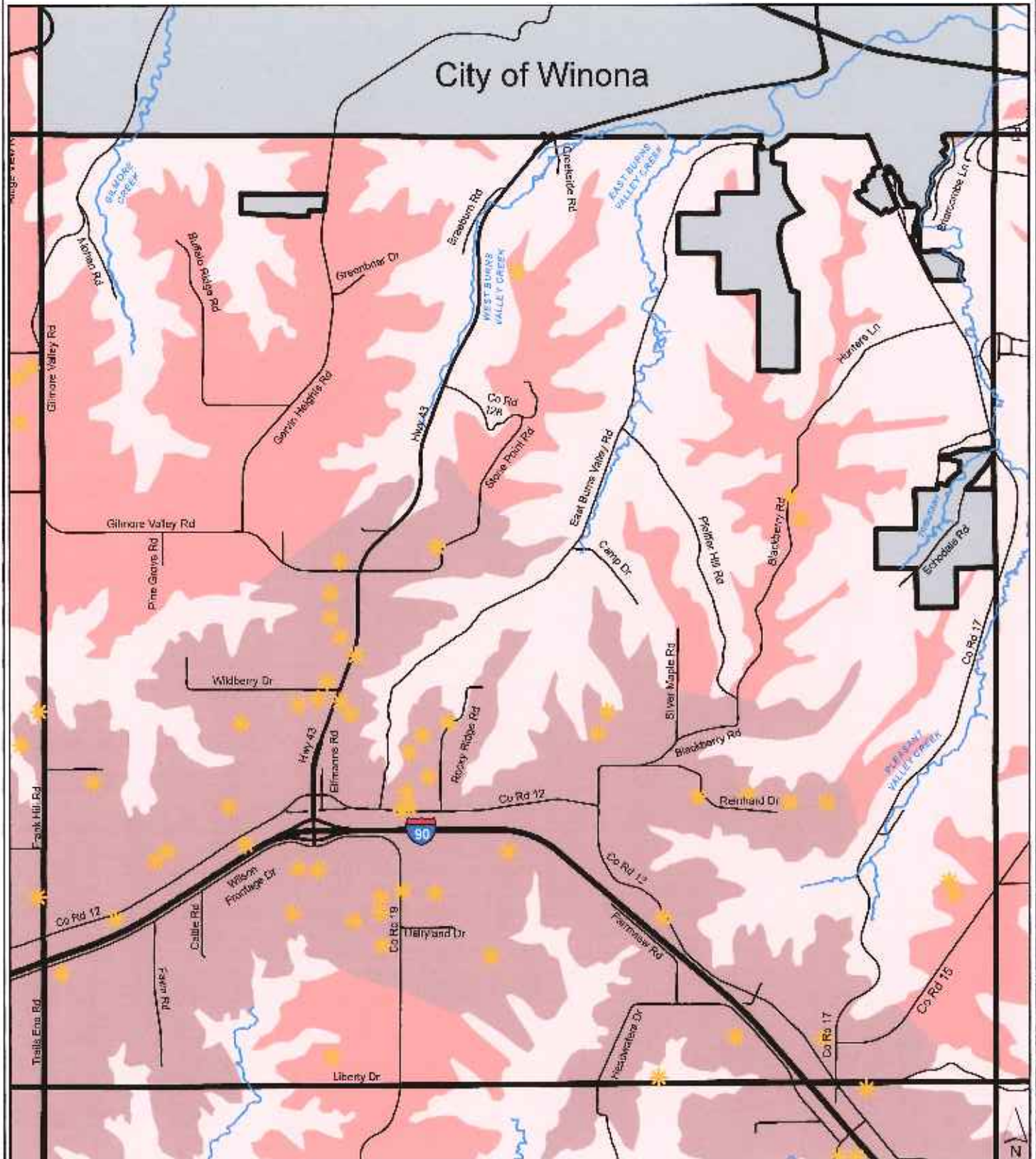


0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Wilson Township

- DNR Regulated Dams
- Perennial Streams
- Floodplain
- Slopes 12% and Above

# Map #6 - Ground Water Pollution Probability



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

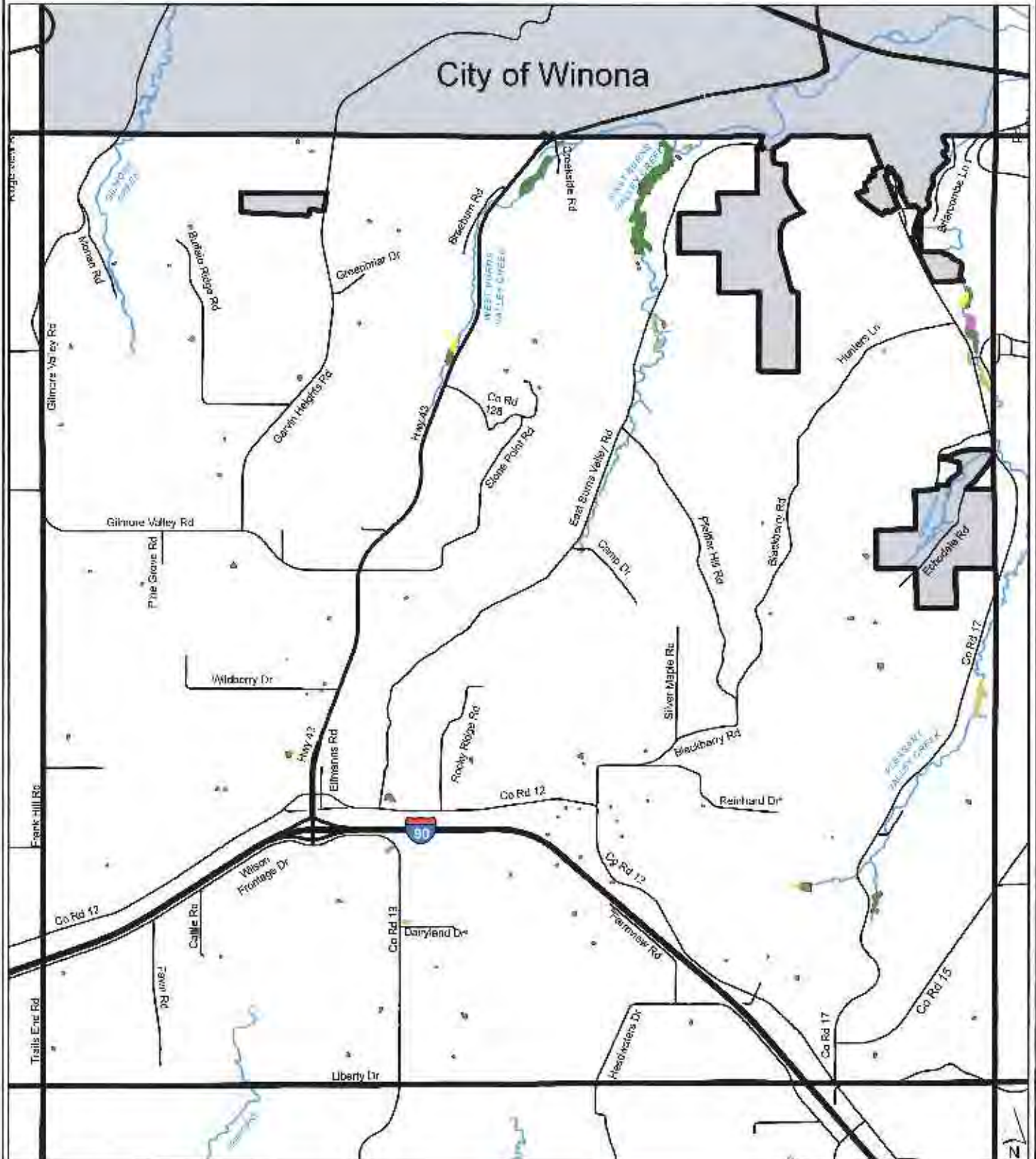
Wilson Township



**Ground Water Pollution Probability**

- High
- Moderate to High
- Moderate
- Perennial Streams
- Sinkholes

# Map #7 - National Wetland Inventory



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

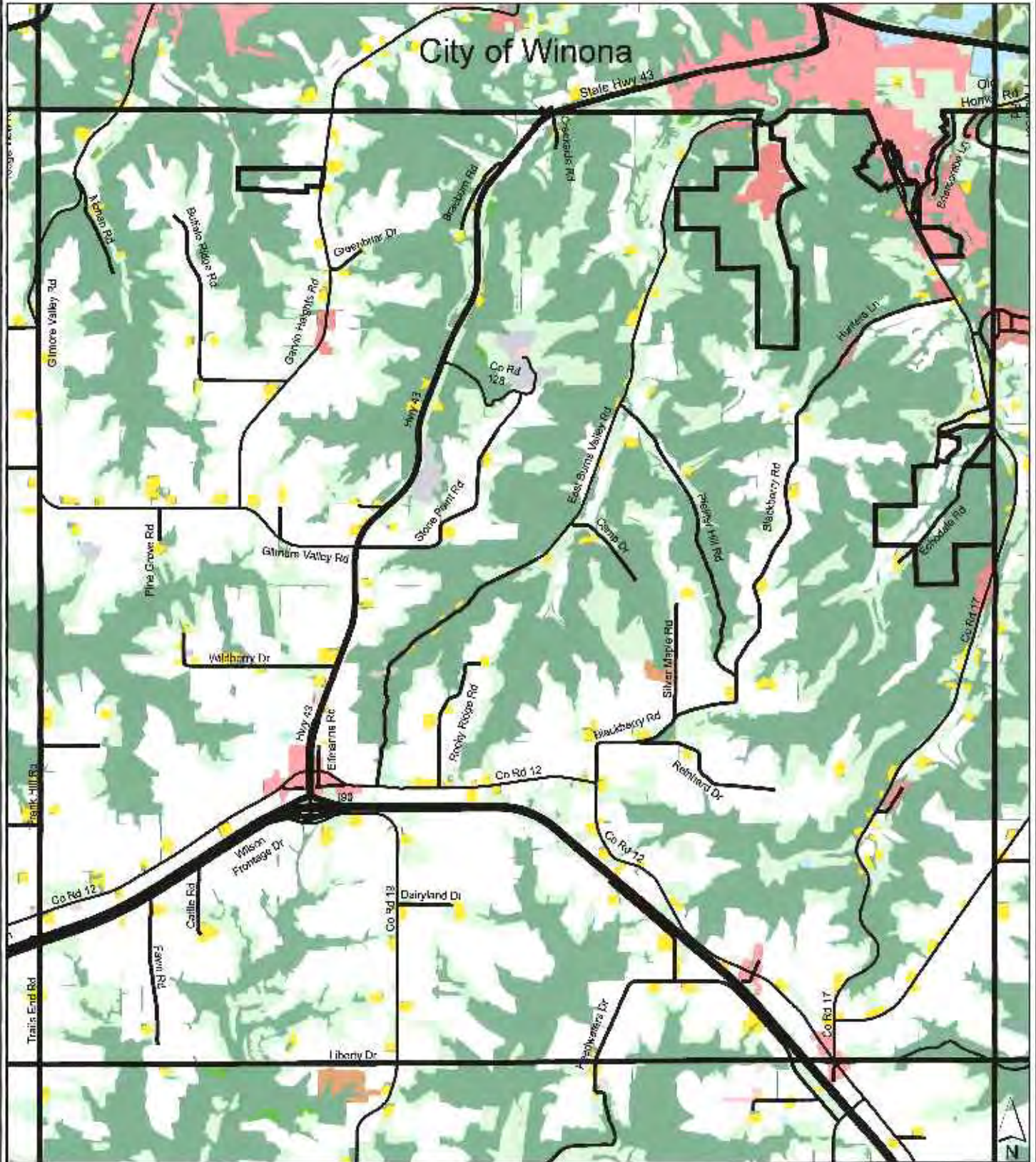
Wilson Township



## National Wetland Inventory

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Wooded Swamp             |  Shrub Swamp       |
|  Seasonally Flooded Basin |  Inland Deep Marsh |
|  Inland Fresh Meadows     |  Riverine          |
|  Inland Shallow Marsh     |  Perennial Streams |

# Map #8 - Land Cover



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Wilson Township

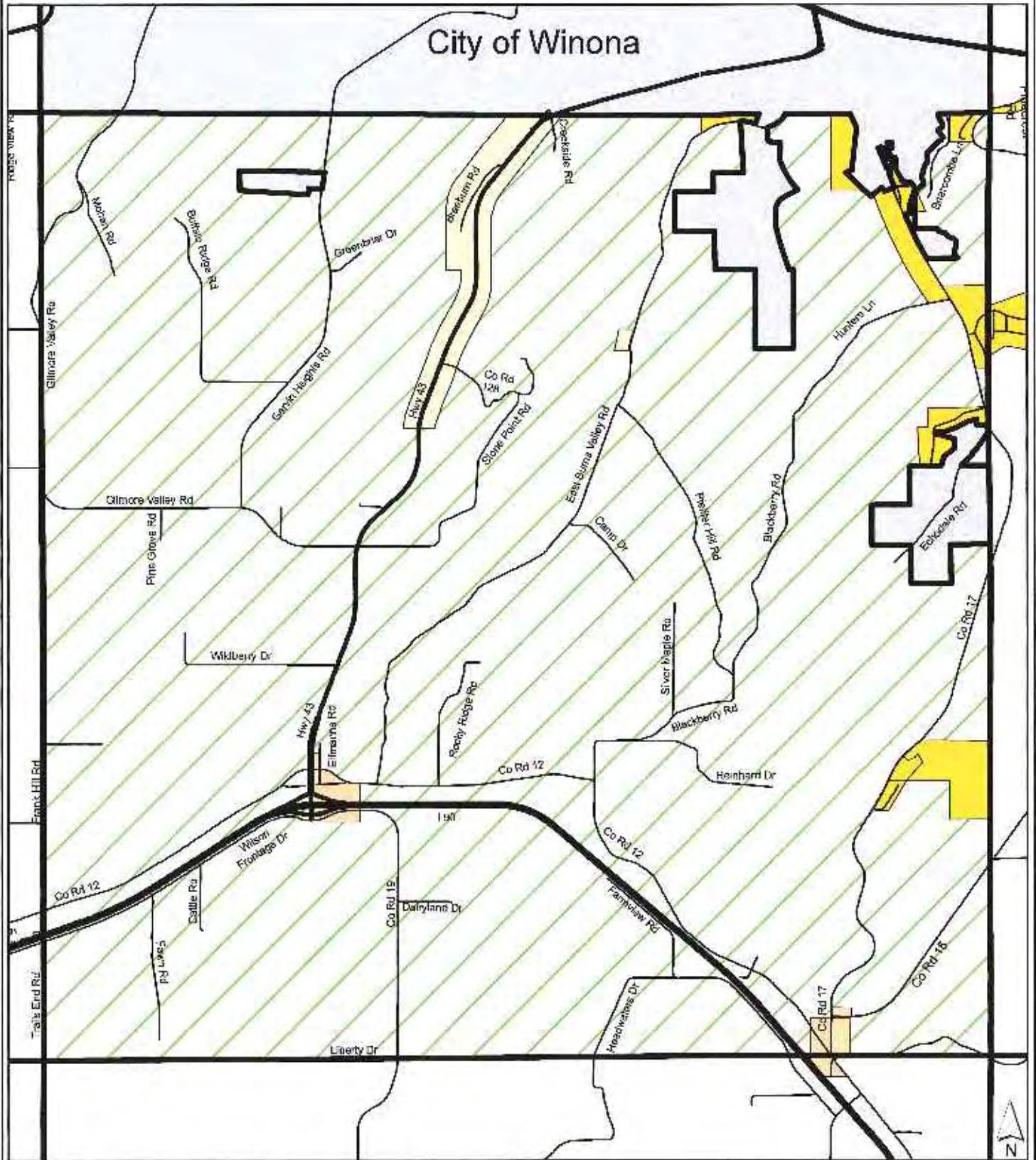


Planning Department



Land Cover	
Color-coded swatch	Crowded / Open Areas
Color-coded swatch	Other Rural Development
Color-coded swatch	Rural Residential Complex
Color-coded swatch	Traditional Agriculture Land
Color-coded swatch	Unforested
Color-coded swatch	Urban / Industrial
Color-coded swatch	Water
Color-coded swatch	Wetlands

# Map #9 - Winona County Zoning



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Wilson Township



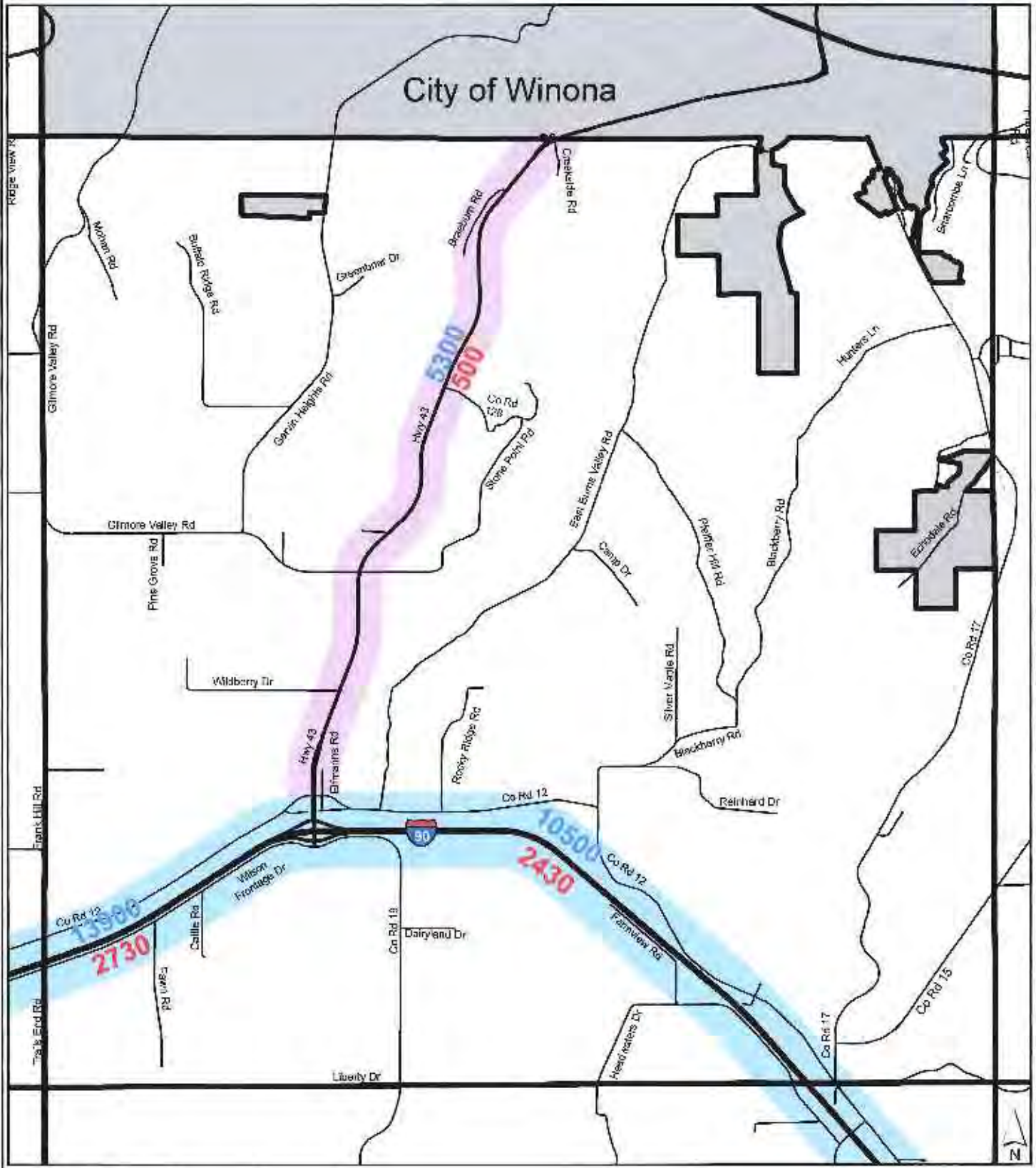
Agriculture/Natural Resource

\*This District is a County Zoning Designation

### Winona County Zoning

- Commercial
- Commercial & Recreational
- Community Development
- Community Development 2
- Industrial
- Municipal
- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential

# Map #10 - Minnesota D.O.T. Traffic Volume Map, Year 2004



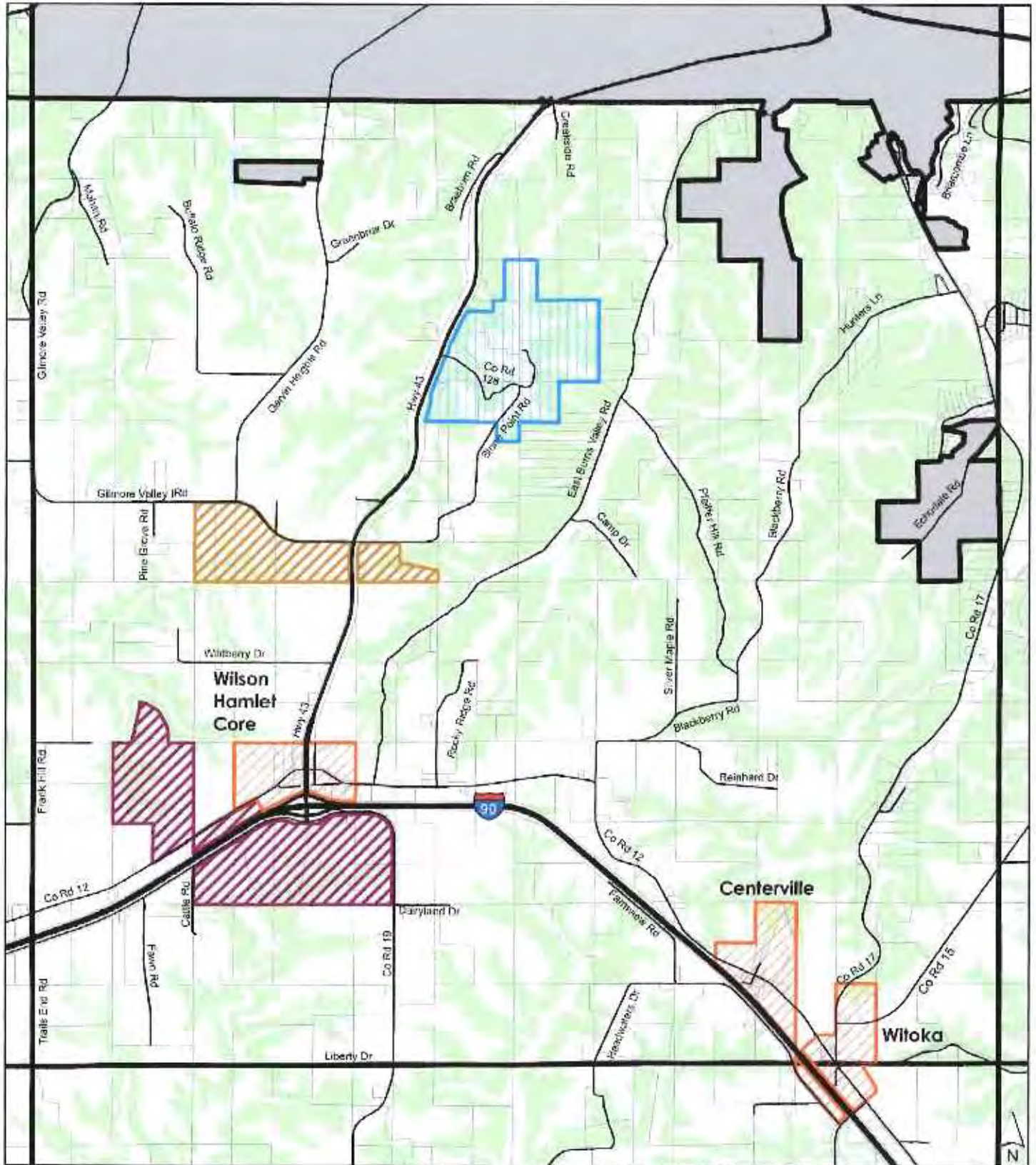
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Wilson Township



**Number of Vehicles**  
 Average Annual Daily Traffic  
 Heavy Commercial Average Annual Daily Traffic

# Map #11 - Comprehensive Master Plan Map








0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Wilson Township



Planning Department

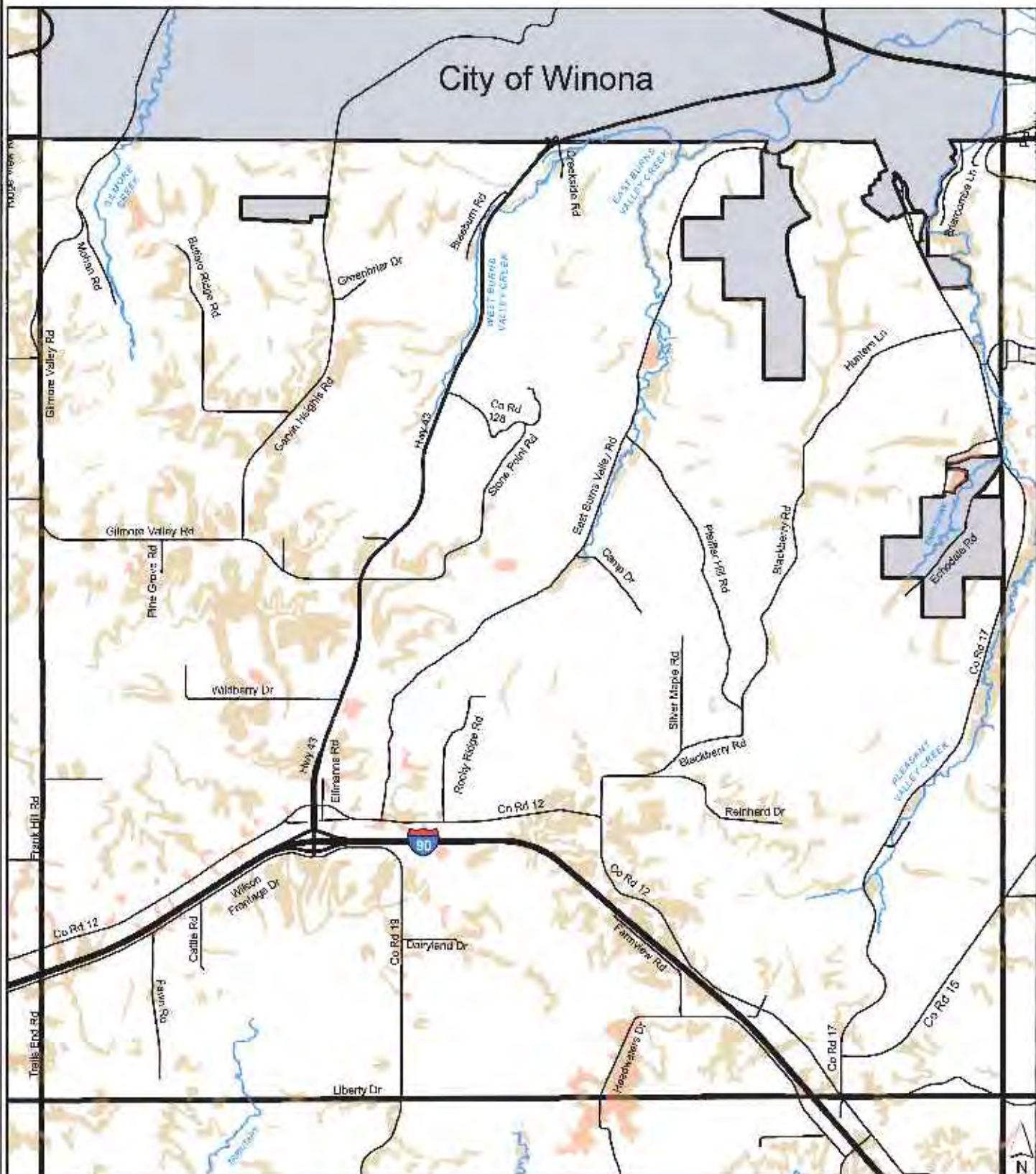
\*Lands not designated by symbol are Agriculture Natural Resources.

	Rural Harvest Settlements		Interchange Sub Area
	Agriculture Service Area		County Special Use
	Slopes 12% and Above		





# Map #12 - Soil Limitations For Commercial Development



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Wilson Township



- Soils Very Limited for Commercial Development
- Soils Somewhat Limited for Commercial Development

