

CITY OF ONALASKA MEETING NOTICE

COMMITTEE/BOARD: Long Range Planning Committee
DATE OF MEETING: January 8, 2015 (Thursday)
PLACE OF MEETING: City Hall – 415 Main Street (Rm 112)
TIME OF MEETING: 5:30 P.M.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

1. Call to Order and roll call.
2. Approval of minutes from the previous meeting.
3. Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual).

Consideration and possible action on the following items:

4. Review and discussion of the following documents for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update:
 - a) Chapter 4: Transportation Recap
 - b) Chapter 5: Utilities & Community Facilities Update
 - c) Chapter 6: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources (new version) & modified goals from original chapter in 2005 Comprehensive Plan.
5. Pay Estimates: Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc.
6. Consideration and Approval of 2015 Long Range Planning Committee Meeting Schedule.
7. Adjournment

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that members of the Common Council of the City of Onalaska who do not serve on the Board may attend this meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision making responsibility.

Therefore, further notice is hereby given that the above meeting may constitute a meeting of the Common Council and is hereby noticed as such, even though it is not contemplated that the Common Council will take any formal action at this meeting.

NOTICES MAILED TO:

Mayor Joe Chilsen
Ald. Erik Sjolander
Ald. Jim Olson
Ald. Jim Bialecki
Ald. Bob Muth
Ald. Harvey Bertrand
Ald. Jack Pogreba
City Attorney Dept Heads
La Crosse Tribune Charter Com.
Onalaska Holmen Courier Life Fox News
WIZM WKTY WLXR WKBH
WLSU WKBT WXOW

*Committee Members

* Gary Lass
* Kristen Odegaard – Vice Chair
* Dana Frederickson
* Debbie Clarkin - Chair
* Ken Schmocker
* Jim Warren
* Jennifer Brown
* Long Range Planning Committee Members
Brea Grace
Katie Meyer
Onalaska Public Library

Date Notices Mailed and Posted: 12-30-14

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the City of Onalaska will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with a disability to ensure equal access to public meetings provided notification is given to the City Clerk within seventy-two (72) hours prior to the public meeting and that the requested accommodation does not create an undue hardship for the City.



CITY OF ONALASKA

STAFF REPORT

Long Range Planning Committee – January 8, 2015

Agenda Item: Review and discussion of the following documents for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources (New version) & modified goals from original chapter in 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

Background: SEH will lead a discussion of the new Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources Chapter (attached). The new chapter includes the Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources Chapter goals found within Volume 1 of the original comprehensive plan.

6.0 Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources

6.1 Existing Conditions

6.2 Existing Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Programs

6.3 Summary of Existing Conditions

6.4 Goals, Objectives and Policies

*Wis. Stats. 66.1001(2)(e)
(e) Agricultural, natural and cultural resources element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s. 295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.*

Understanding the resource base of a community provides an important context for the development of goals, objectives, and policies for the conservation and management of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. Within the following element, various components of the community resource base are examined at a broad level, or “planning scale”. The purpose of this examination is to provide the City of Onalaska with the necessary information to make informed decisions and recommendations about future growth and preservation of these resources.

6.1 Existing Conditions

Agricultural resources are very important to the social and economic characteristics of the City of Onalaska, surrounding communities, and La Crosse County. Many area jobs are generated by agricultural businesses as well.

Natural resources are significant in the City of Onalaska as they contribute to how the area is developed. Many natural resources that are in close proximity to Onalaska also act as recreational amenities for residents and landowners, which contributes to the quality of life in and around the City.

Cultural resources are important because of the history they hold. These resources are often able to tell stories about past events and residents that have been influential to Onalaska, in addition to shaping current events.

Local Agricultural Industry Trends

Agriculture is an important element of the social and economic characteristics of Onalaska and La Crosse County. Historically, the Mississippi River has been used to transport goods, including produce, throughout the region and world. In 2014, there are 18 parcels and 288 acres within the City of Onalaska that are assessed as agricultural.

Changes in agriculture due to socio-economic conditions and the development pressures to convert agricultural land to other uses can have profound impacts on communities that have historically been tied closely to agricultural production. La Crosse County agriculture is diverse with a wide variety of products being produced. Table 6-1 indicates the agricultural-related commodities that generate the most sales in La Crosse County.

Table 6-1
La Crosse County's Top Commodities
(sales by dollar value, 2007)

Milk	\$29.6 million
Grains	\$15.6 million
Cattle and Calves	\$8.7 million
Hogs and Pigs	\$3.6 million
Other Crops and Hay	\$0.95 million

Source: University of Wisconsin-Extension

In 2012, there were 748 farms in La Crosse, down from 821 in 1987. The average La Crosse County farm size was 235 acres in 1987. By 2012, that number had decreased to 212 acres.

The State of Wisconsin saw significant fluctuations as well. In 1987 there were 75,131 farms in Wisconsin. By 1997, this number had dropped to 65,602, a 12.7 percent decrease. However, by 2012, the number of farms had increased to 69,754, a seven percent decrease from 1987.

The average farm size in Wisconsin has been declining. In 1987, the average Wisconsin farm size was 221 acres. As of 2012, the average farm size was down to 209 acres, over a five percent decrease.

Most of the farms in La Crosse County are owned by individuals or families, as shown in Table 6-2 below.

Table 6-2
Number of Farms by Farm Ownership
– La Crosse County

Ownership	2007	2012
Individual/Family Farms	740	645
Partnership	81	58
Corporation - Family	12	27
Corporation - Other	4	4
Other (Co-op, Trust, etc.)	8	14
Total	845	748

Source: United States Department of Agriculture

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture has been discussed at the City-level recently. Currently, there are very few practices. No livestock operations (including chickens) are allowed. Community gardening has been stymied by ordinances restricting this as a principal use.

Topography

The topography of the City of Onalaska is extremely sloped due to the coulees. The City is in what is referred to as the Driftless Area, because the most recent glacial activity did not impact the area. However, glacial melt significantly impacted the region and created what are now known as the Coulees. The City of Onalaska elevation ranges from 700 feet to approximately 1,200 feet above sea-level. The City recognizes the importance to the bluffs and has in place bluffland protection regulations to protect their development.

Figure 6-1 Onalaska Elevations

Source: City of Onalaska

Bedrock Geology

The geology of the area is of the Cambrian System and the Prairie du Chien group of the Ordovician System. The geology is comprised of sandstone with some dolomite and shale.

Soils

A soils map below indicates the various soil suitability classes. Because of the steep topography of the City, generalities are difficult to make. Site-specific soil studies need to occur when development is proposed to be certain of the drainage, erosion, and overall suitability it has for development or agricultural practices.

Figure 6-2 Onalaska Soil Associations

Source: City of Onalaska

Mineral Resources

No mining exists within the City of Onalaska. Areas north of La Crosse County have seen large increases in non-metallic mineral extraction activities. These provide the region many jobs and employment opportunities.

Watersheds and Surface Water

Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, intermittent waterways, and natural drainage ways make up the surface waters of La Crosse County. These resources are all water bodies, standing still or flowing, navigable and intermittent, including natural drainage ways that collect and channel overland rainwater or snowmelt runoff. Natural drainage ways are characterized by intermittent streams, threads, rills, gullies, and dry washes that periodically contribute water to first-order streams. There are also many artificial drainage ways where the natural drainage ways have been altered by human activity. All of these features have the ability to transport sediment and pollutants and are affected by their watersheds, the land that surrounds them.

Onalaska is located in the Lower La Crosse River Watershed, which is in the northwestern part of the La Crosse-Bad Axe River Basin, which encompasses approximately 126 square miles with approximately 100 miles of streams.

The La Crosse River and the Black River are the major river corridors in Onalaska. The La Crosse River flows along the southern limits of the City and empties into the Mississippi River in La Crosse. The Black River runs

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along the western limits of Onalaska and flows to the Mississippi River after passing the spillway through Lake Onalaska.

Lake Onalaska is a heavily utilized community asset. The City recently completed a Great River Landing plan for the waterfront area to allow easier access the Lake. The 7,000 acre lake has depths of up to 40 feet, but average is eight feet deep. The lake was formed by 1937 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finished the Dresback, Minnesota Lake and Dam 7. Lake Onalaska is used for boating, logrolling, sailing, fishing, hunting, birdwatching and wildlife viewing.

**Figure 6-3
Onalaska Watersheds**

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and City of Onalaska

Waters can be added to the 303(d) list for two reasons:
1) when water quality standards are not being met or 2) when designated uses are not being achieved.

Impaired Waters

The La Crosse River is on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) 303d impaired waters list for having high phosphorus, while the Black River is impaired due to mercury, phosphorus and PCB levels.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

Through the Wisconsin's Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters Program, the WDNR is working to maintain the water quality in Wisconsin's cleanest waters. These waters have been classified into outstanding and exceptional waters. Outstanding resource water is defined as a lake or stream which has excellent water quality, high recreational and aesthetic value, and high quality fishing and is free from point source or non-point source pollution. Exceptional resource water is defined as a stream which exhibits the same high quality resource values as outstanding waters, but which may be impacted by point source pollution or has the potential for future discharge from a small sewer community.

There are no outstanding or exceptional water resources as identified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources within Onalaska's boundaries.

Point Source Discharges

Metallics, Inc., located on CTH Z had an active WPDES permit. This is the only one in the City at this point. Bostwick Valley Mobile Home Park, which abuts the northern City limits, has a WPDES permit as well.

Area High Capacity Wells

Many western Wisconsin municipalities utilize deeper aquifers for obtaining water supply. There are 16 existing high capacity wells in the City, including several that are for golf courses and other irrigation needs.

Groundwater

Groundwater from the Mt. Simon Sandstone Formation is the primary source of potable water. The aquifer was created by sandstone and dolomite deposited hundreds of millions of years ago. The City of Onalaska has a Wellhead Protection Plan and ordinance in place to help protect water quality. Well and drinking water information is further described in the previous chapter.

Shorelands

Shorelands provide valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation, and also act as buffers and thus serve to protect water quality. However, shorelands are also considered prime residential building areas because of their scenic beauty.

"A high capacity well is any well on a high capacity property. A high capacity property is one property that has or will have one or more wells with a combined capacity of 70 gallons per minute (gpm) or more."
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Recognizing this conflict, and in order to maintain the environmental, recreational, and economical quality of our water resources, the State of Wisconsin requires counties to adopt and enforce a shoreland ordinance.

As required by the State, shorelands are defined as:

- all land within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a lake, pond or flowage; or
- all land within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a river or stream or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever is greater.

Incorporated municipalities are allowed to create and enforce their own shoreland zoning ordinances that differ from the State's regulations. The City of **Error! Reference source not found.** defines shorelands in the same regard as the State.

Floodplains

One sensitive land feature that most residents are aware of is the floodplain, the flood-prone lands adjacent to water bodies. Floodplains can be desirable development areas due to the proximity to lakes, rivers and streams, but pose additional problems by possibly putting residents and property at risk. Development in floodplains can also affect the environmental quality of the waterway.

According to FEMA, floodplains exist along the La Crosse River, locations adjacent to Lake Onalaska and in several spots to the east of Sand Lake Road; development is strictly prohibited in these area. Development within the floodplain is usually assessed through the use of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**Figure 6-4
Onalaska Flood Hazard Zones**

Source: FEMA and City of Onalaska

It is important to remember that these maps are no substitute for site specific analysis. Natural and man-made changes in the landscape, and the age and accuracy of flood insurance maps have in some cases limited their reliability for the identification and designation of floodplains. The City also has floodplain development regulations in their zoning ordinance which should be consulted prior to any construction.

Wetlands

There are a number of wetland areas within the watersheds that can affect water levels of rivers and creeks flowing through the City of Onalaska. Wetlands are defined by the state statute as "an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet

"According to the Wisconsin Emergency Management Division, Wisconsin communities experienced significant flooding each year from 1990-2001, except 1994. A Federal Disaster Declaration was granted for nine of those years. Total damages to public and private property (including agricultural damages) during that time period totaled more than one billion dollars" (Ohm, Brian. Planning for Natural Resources. P. 28, 2002.)

"...wetlands serve a vital role in nature, are part of the balance of nature and are essential to the purity of the water in our lakes and streams. Swamps and wetlands are a necessary part of the ecological creation and now, even to the uninitiated, possess their own beauty in nature." (The Wisconsin Supreme Court in Just v. Marinette County (1972).

conditions.” Wetlands may be seasonal or permanent and are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants, replenish groundwater supplies, store floodwaters and maintain stream flows.

Due to the steep topography, isolated wetlands are relatively uncommon in Onalaska. However, there are larger wetland areas adjacent to the Black and La Crosse Rivers and along Lake Onalaska.

The Wittenberg Marsh is a 120 acre marsh located near downtown Onalaska that is subject to flooding and is used as a nesting area for Bald Eagles.

The La Crosse River marsh is located east of STH 16 includes approximately 1,600 acres of public and private land between La Crosse and West Salem.

Figure 6-5
Onalaska Wetlands

Source: City of Onalaska

Steep Slopes

It is generally more desirable, both environmentally and economically, to avoid steep slopes and disrupting natural drainage ways with construction and land development. Problems with erosion and runoff pollution can occur

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with development on steep slopes, and flooding and wet basements can occur with drainage way disruptions.

There are numerous areas with steep slopes in the City of Onalaska, particularly to the north and east. Onalaska has an erosion control ordinance that requires an erosion control plan for land disturbance activity and requires approval of the plan before development can occur.

Forest and Woodlands

Woodlands are an important feature of Onalaska. The City is located in a region of the country known as the Prairie-Forest Border, which is a transition zone between plains and forests. Vegetation typically consists of oak forest, degraded oak savanna, grassland, dry prairie and bottomland hardwoods.

Urban forestry has been practiced by the City as the importance of trees in providing economic, ecological and environmental benefits are realized.

Onalaska is also a Tree City USA, a designation given by the National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters to communities who promote urban forestry programs.

Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat and Open Space

Scattered throughout La Crosse County are various federal, state, and local wildlife, fishery, natural and scientific areas, including private conservancy areas. These often encompass one or more of the sensitive land areas discussed previously (e.g., wetlands, forests, shorelands, prairies). These areas are managed as open space to provide important feeding, breeding, nesting, cover, and other habitat values to a wide variety of plant and animal species.

Lake Onalaska is home and a stop-over for many animal species. Many panfish are harvested from Lake Onalaska, and waterfowl use this area as a migration rest-spot. Onalaska is known as a great bird-watching location as well, particularly near the Van Loon Wildlife Area, Perrot State Park, and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, all of which are located near the City. Other birding sites include Myrick Marsh, Hixon Forest Nature Center and Goose Island.

The La Crosse River Conservancy Project contains over 1,000 acres of wetlands, floodplain and woodlands for nature-based recreation and education facilities. Access can occur through several existing community parks.

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, which includes Lake Onalaska, was established in 1924 and sees millions of visitors

annually for fishing, boating, hiking, birdwatching, hunting and general sightseeing.

The Onalaska Bluffs contain over 700 acres that provide many scenic views, and have large forests and rock outcroppings.

Rare and Endangered Species and Natural Communities

According to the WDNR Natural History Inventory, La Crosse County is home to many animal and plant species, as well as natural communities that can be considered rare or endangered.

Onalaska lies within two town ranges in La Crosse County. The areas where Onalaska lies have been identified as having the following endangered species and natural communities by the DNR:

Acris blanchardi (Blanchard's Cricket Frog) - Frog
Agalinis gattingeri (Roundstem Foxglove) - Plant
Alder thicket - Community
Ammocrypta clara (Western Sand Darter) - Fish
Ammodramus henslowii (Henslow's Sparrow) - Bird
Anguilla rostrata (American Eel) - Fish
Aphredoderus sayanus (Pirate Perch) - Fish
Artemisia dracunculus (Dragon Wormwood) - Plant
Artemisia frigida (Prairie Sagebrush) - Plant
Callirhoe triangulate (Clustered Poppy-mallow) - Plant
Chlidonias niger (Black Tern) - Bird
Crotalaria sagittalis (Arrow-headed Rattle-box) - Plant
Cuscuta glomerata (Rope Dodder) - Plant
Cycleptus elongates (Blue Sucker) - Fish
Dalea villosa var. villosa (Silky Prairie-clover) - Plant
Dodecatheon amethystinum (Jeweled Shooting Star) - Plant
Dry Prairie - Community
Dry Mesic Prairie - Community
Emergent Marsh - Community
Emydoidea blandingii (Blanding's Turtle) - Turtle
Etheostoma asprigene (Mud Darter) - Fish
Falco peregrinus (Peregrine Falcon) - Bird
Gastrocopta procera (Wing Snaggletooth) - Snail
Glycyrrhiza lepidota (Wild Licorice) - Plant
Grammia phyllira (Phyllira Tiger Moth) - Moth
Hiodon alosoides (Goldeye) - Fish
Huperzia porophila (Rock Clubmoss) - Plant
Hybopsis amnis (Pallid Shiner) - Fish
Ictiobus niger (Black Buffalo) - Fish
Lampsilis higginsii (Higgins' Eye) - Mussel
Macrhybopsis hyostoma (Shoal Chub) - Fish
Macrhybopsis storeriana (Silver Chub) - Fish
Megalonaias nervosa (Washboard) - Mussel
Moxostoma carinatum (River Redhorse) - Fish
Northern Wet Forest - Community

Nothocalais cuspidate (Prairie False-dandelion) – Plant
Notropis texanus (Weed Shiner) – Fish
Opsopoeodus emiliae (Pugnose Minnow) – Fish
Orobanche fasciculata (Clustered Broomrape) – Plant
Pituophis catenifer (Gophersnake) – Snake
Platanthera flava var. herbiola (Pale Green Orchid) – Plant
Plethobasus cyphus (Bullhead) – Mussel
Polyodon spathula (Paddlefish) – Fish
Quadrula metanevra (Monkeyface) – Mussel
Sand Prairie – Community
Shrub-carr – Community
Silene nivea (Snowy Campion) – Plant
Southern Dry Forest – Community
Southern Dry Mesic Forest – Community
Strophostyles leiosperma (Small-flowered Woolly Bean) – Plant
Tritogonia verrucosa (Buckhorn) – Mussel
Truncilla donaciformis (Fawnsfoot) – Mussel
Vireo bellii (Bell's Vireo) – Bird
Woodsia oregano ssp. Cathcartiana (Oregon Woodsia) – Plant
Zigadenus elegans ssp. Glaucus (White Camas) – Plant

These species are protected, and as such, are preserved to the extent possible.

Cultural Resources Existing Conditions

Preservation of historic and cultural resources is important to the vitality of any community. The City of Onalaska has a rich history that originally centered on logging and railroads. While the importance of these to the region have become less prominent, they are still an important part of the City's character and history.

The City of Onalaska contains numerous archaeological sites and buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as other important buildings and features. The Onalaska Historical Museum, which is located in the Onalaska Public Library, houses artifacts and documents related to the City's history.

The following list has been compiled over the course of three decades and therefore names and the continued existence of some items on the inventory may be changed. Items on the list are often privately owned and are not available for the public to enter.

Table 6-3
Onalaska Locations on Wisconsin Architectural and Historical Inventory

Location	Historic Name	Type	Date Built
700 Wilson Street	Onalaska High School Annex	College Building	1909
Address Restricted	Archeological Site	Olson Site	1400
421 N. 2 nd Street	Frank E. Nichols House	House	1888
414 2 nd Avenue N.		House	1890
445 2 nd Avenue North		House	1925
N 7085 CTH M	Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	1880
200 Main Street		Retail Building	1900
1606 S. Kinney Coulee Rd	Pertzsch Farm	House	1870 1923
N6950 Knudson Rd.	Halfway Creek Cemetery	Cemetery	1880
CTH M	Maple Shade School	1-6 Room School	1895
W8666 CTH Z	Chicago and Northwestern RR Bridge	Structure	1900
Sweden Coulee Rd	House	House	
205 Main Street	Personal Touch Monogramming (Current)	Retail Building	1950
W5306 CTH W	Farmstead	House	1915
440 2 nd Avenue N		House	1890
414 4 th Avenue S.		House	1890
401 School District Rd	Fauver Hill School	School	1924
CTH ZZ	Asbury Cemetery	Cemetery	1863
926 State Highway 35	Lake Motel	Hotel/Motel	1950
Address Restricted	Midway Village Site	Grave/Burial Site	0 AD
330 Main Street	Masonic Temple	Meeting Hall	1881
N 7166 CTH D		House	1900
910 Oak Forest Drive	Onalaska National Guard Armory/Vehicle Maint Shop	Armory	1960
Johnson Coulee Road	Johnson Creek Cemetery	Cemetery	1864
CTH XX		Overhead Truss Bridge	
W 6281 Industrial Blvd	Onalaska US Army Reserve Facility	Military Base	1978
N6051 Filler Street	Midway School	1-6 Room School	1927
112 S. 2 nd Street	D & J River Sports (Current)	Retail Building	1936
100 S. 2 nd Street	Onalaska Woolen Mill	Mill	1906
308 2 nd Avenue North		House	1925
N 7333 Olson Road	Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	1890
W 7845 CTH Z		House	1930
N 4980 Sand Lake Coulee Rd	Richards-Hauser Farmstead	House	1902
N 6945 CTH M	Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	
CTH D	Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	1900
605 2 nd Avenue North	Trane Advanced Comfort Specialists (Current)	Structure	1910
201 Main Street	Onalaska State Bank	Bank	1911
530 La Crosse Street		House	1880
Address Restricted	Sand Lake Archaeological District	Grave/Burial Site	1000
N 7132 CTH W	Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	1880
W 6016 CTH W	Halfway Creek Lutheran Church	Church	1913
W 7908 CTH Z	Oak Grove School	School	1920
2 nd Avenue (NW Corner 2 nd /Irvin)	Chicago and Northwestern RR Train Depot	Depot	1914
W 6266 CTH D		House	1870
212 2 nd Avenue		House	1900
N 5861 CTH Z	Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	1900
W 6429 CTH D	Weverstad Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	1875
619 2 nd Avenue	A Spec Auto Performance (Current)	Gas Station	1930
N 7921 Olson Road		House	1860
N 7210 CTH M		House	1910
2 nd Ave, SW, E Side	La Crosse Insulation (Current)	Industrial Building	
W 5331 Olson Rd	Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	
W 7051 Front Street	Grain Elevator		1910
113 2 nd Avenue N	Peter Pan Cleaners & Object Art Gallery (Current)	Retail Building	1950
W 6658 CTH D	Biederman Farmstead	Agricultural Complex	1896
N 5733 CTH OT	Warehouse	Warehouse	1910
110 Irvin Street	Aiken Lumber Co.	Lumber Yard/Mill	1923
111 Irvin Street	agriculture, natural resource, and historic resources	Small Office Building	1885

The City of Onalaska has established a Historic Preservation Commission to prioritize and identify locally important elements to preserve and retain.

Archaeological

Onalaska has a rich archeological history. Many projects have found remnants of prior settlements in and around the Onalaska area. The City has a Historic/Archeological Preservation zoning district for additional review and oversight in certain historically sensitive areas of the City.

6.2 Existing Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Programs

Numerous Federal, State, Regional, Local, and Private plans and programs exist which contribute to preservation, conservation, or management of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in La Crosse County. Although no list can be exhaustive, a partial list is shown below.

- Farmland Value Use Assessment

This program allows farmland to be assessed based on the lands ability to produce income from agricultural uses, rather than its potential market value to developers.

- Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program

Wisconsin farm owners are eligible to receive a state income tax credit, provided their county has a Farmland Preservation Plan in place.

- Forest Land Tax Program

These programs are run by the Wisconsin DNR and encourage sustainable forestry on private lands by offering tax incentives to landowners.

- Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits (WPDES)

This DNR operated program regulates municipal and industrial operations discharging wastewater to surface or groundwater.

- Wisconsin Historical Society

The Historical Society was founded in 1846 and helps people to connect with the past by maintaining and collecting stories and items. This organization also has grant funding available to help local communities identify and preserve historical features.

- Wisconsin's Historical Preservation Plan 2006-2015

This plan outlines specific goals and objectives to protect and enhance the state's cultural resources.

- La Crosse County Land and Water Resource Management Plan 2012-2017
Each Wisconsin county is required by state law to develop a County Land and Water Plan. It is meant to serve as a guide for local conservation efforts that are administered by various regulatory organizations.
- City of Onalaska Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2010-2015
This plan inventoried existing recreational facilities and identified future needs.
- City of Onalaska Ordinances
Ordinances have been adopted to aid in the effort of conserving resources and protecting landowner rights, land values, and the public health and safety.
- Great River Landing Plan
This plan discussed appropriate public investments to make Lake Onalaska more accessible and enjoyable.

6.3 Summary of Existing Conditions

This element provides an important foundation and vision for City land-use planning and decisions. In addition, numerous programs at the state and county level are available to assist the City in their planning efforts and in the protection of local agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. Protection of such resources needs to be balanced with, and can be complementary to, other community goals as discussed in the Issues & Opportunities, Land Use, and Economic Development elements.

Agricultural Resources - Existing Conditions Summary

Agriculture is a very important part of Onalaska's history. While not a dominant land class, the region's economy, including Onalaska's to a slightly lesser degree, depends on the agricultural industry for jobs.

Natural Resources – Existing Conditions Summary

The topography of Onalaska is one of slopes, some severe. Lake Onalaska, and the Black and La Crosse Rivers are the primary surface waters. These provide many recreational opportunities, but also cause hazards for building due to floodplains and wetlands.

Groundwater quality is generally good and the City has adequate capacity to serve its residents for quite some time. Land supply has been in great demand, and the City has proactively preserved the bluffs from development. These areas are also more difficult, or even impossible, to serve with the municipal water system. Wetlands play an important role in the ecology of the community, and are often viewed as unique natural

The effects of natural and man-made systems often resonate beyond any one community's borders."

- McKnight Foundation, re: focus: Making Choices for Future Generations.

amenities of the area. Future development should consider environmental features and be built in such a manner that protects them and is consistent with the character of the community.

Cultural Resources – Existing Conditions Summary

The City of Onalaska is rich in history. There are numerous items in the City of Onalaska that are on Wisconsin's Architecture and History Inventory list. The City has established a committee to further review development proposals that could impact historic properties or areas, and sees this as invaluable to the character of the City into the future.

6.4 Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Preserve the bluffs, scenic views, waterfront, wetlands, woodlands and wildlife habitat within the City and encourage the protection of these resources on surrounding lands.

Objectives

- a. By protecting vegetation on development sites to minimize soil erosion.
- b. By protecting habitats for federally threatened, endangered or state listed species and natural communities.
- c. By requiring natural resource features to be accurately depicted on all site plans, certified survey maps, preliminary plats and final plats.
- d. By promoting compact development, especially in the coulee areas.
- e. By protecting environmentally important lands, including through purchase or conservation easements, when possible.

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Goal 2: Encourage land use patterns and practices that are environmentally sensitive and complement the natural hydrologic system, including the balance between ground and surface waters.

Objectives

- a. By requiring proper stormwater management practices to increase groundwater recharge and minimize runoff.
- b. By preserving wetlands as essential components of the hydrologic system and as valuable wildlife habitat.
- c. By continuing to enforce the City's Wellhead Protection Plan and update the plan as necessary.
- d. By discouraging the regrading of large areas that alters natural topography and drainage patterns.
- e. By continuing to protect floodplain areas and natural drainageways from being filled or altered in any way that reduces their function.

Goal 3: Enhance public access, use and enjoyment of the community's natural and recreational resources.

Objectives

- a. By implementing the Great River Landing plan.
- b. By establishing and maintaining an efficient system of parks, trails, pedestrian pathways, bicycle routes and greenways to provide access and linkage to natural and recreational resources.
- c. By promoting the cooperation and coordination of acquisition and development of natural and recreational areas among state and local agencies, individuals, businesses and foundations.

Goal 4: Identify, conserve and protect Onalaska's cultural, historical and archaeological resources.

Objectives

- a. By encouraging the preservation of historically significant buildings and sites in Onalaska.
- b. By working with the Historic Preservation Commission to update the City's historic inventory as buildings and sites warrant such recognition.

- c. By continuing to protect important archaeological sites in and around the City.
- d. By ensuring Onalaska's environmental and aesthetic qualities, including the waterfront and scenic views, are preserved or enhanced.
- e. By considering an incentive program for building and property owners who apply to list their properties on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

Policies and Recommendations

Agricultural Resources

- 1) Encourage the use of conservation subdivisions for residential developments in agriculturally and environmentally important areas within and adjacent to Onalaska.
- 2) Support private landowners who wish to protect their land by using conservation easements and other land protection tools, unless such measures conflict with the efficient, orderly and planned expansion of the City.
- 3) Work with neighboring jurisdictions to encourage an orderly, efficient development pattern that protects productive agricultural land and minimizes conflicts between urban and rural uses.

Natural Resources

- 4) Consider creating an ordinance to protect remnant oak savannas or mature oaks from being damaged or removed during development. Additionally, continue to work toward managing the oak wilt problem in the City.
- 5) Promote awareness of natural resources and critical resource issues in the City through public education and volunteer stewardship activities in public parks and through collaboration and partnership with local landowners, conservation groups (such as the Clearwater Farm Foundation and/or the Mississippi Valley Conservancy), public agencies, UW-La Crosse and other stakeholders.
- 6) Protect the bluffs through continued acquisition of land and/or easements along the bluff.

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- 7) Use the City's zoning, subdivision review and official mapping powers to protect scenic views of the bluffs and Mississippi River Valley, the downtown riverfront area, the bluffs to the east of the City and any other significant natural resources.
- 8) Maintain the City's status as a Tree City USA.
- 9) Follow the goals and guidelines in the Street Tree Inventory Report and Management Plan, including the Plan's four principal goals:
 - Maintain Safety in the Urban Forest
 - Maintain the Health of the Urban Forest
 - Perpetuate the Urban Forest
 - Establish Good Public Relations
- 10) The City should encourage the preservation of wildlife corridors and open space in new developments through the use of incentives and flexible regulations, such as land trusts, open space and cluster zoning, density bonuses and conservation easements.
- 11) Continue to consult the Onalaska Central Greenway Conceptual Master Plan to identify and protect key linkages and provide greenway corridors and connections within Onalaska and surrounding communities.
- 12) The City should work with the DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and environmental groups to identify the locations where sensitive species occur within the City of Onalaska and they should cooperate with these agencies on creating maintenance plans and development guidelines to protect these species.
- 13) Continue to strictly enforce the City's erosion control ordinance.

Cultural Resources

- 14) Continue to celebrate downtown Onalaska and the important archaeological sites in the City.
- 15) Consider updating Section 13-5-6 (d) of the Historic Preservation chapter of the Zoning Code to include specific design guidelines for historic districts. The design guidelines should:
 - Provide an overview of the architectural styles and types of buildings found in the community.
 - Recommend preserving the general integrity of the historic architectural features of buildings and of the historic district as a whole.
 - Guide new development that respects and enhances the existing

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character of the area, particularly as it pertains to encouraging "compatible infill".

Additionally, adopt and implement the Centering Onalaska guidelines for historic districts.

- 16) Continue to encourage and support property owners who wish to rehabilitate and designate their historic properties. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings should be strongly encouraged.

Long Range Planning Commission

Monthly Pay Estimates

December 4, 2014

	Contractor	Original Contract Amount	Change Orders	Paid to Date	Due this Estimate
1.	Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH) Comprehensive Plan Update	\$39,500.00	-	\$23,074.47	\$2,862.44

Long Range Planning Commission

Monthly Pay Estimates

January 8, 2015

Contractor	Original Contract Amount	Change Orders	Paid to Date	Due this Estimate
1. Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH) Comprehensive Plan Update	\$39,500.00	-	\$23,074.47	
Invoice No. 289477				\$2,862.44
Invoice No. 291146				\$2,778.56
			Total	\$5,641.00

CITY OF ONALASKA
MEETING SCHEDULE - 2015

Long Range Planning Committee

Long Range Planning Committee Meetings (5:30 P.M.)
January 8 th
February 5 th
March 5 th
April 2 nd
May 7 th
June 4 th
July 9 th
August 6 th
September 3 rd
October 1 st
November 5 th
December 3 rd

Note: There may be additional meetings scheduled as needed in order to obtain additional public input near the end of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update project. Project is projected to be finalized in Summer 2015.