

## Introduction

The long-term well being of the Town of Oconto Falls is dependent in no small part on the adequacy of the public utilities, community facilities, and municipal services it provides to its residents and business owners. Anticipating and preparing for the future utility and facility needs of the Town is essential to ensuring a sustainable future.



The recommendations presented at the end of this chapter are based on long-range planning considerations and should not be substituted for the detailed architectural and engineering studies required prior to expending capital on specific public works projects. The information contained herein, coupled with the demographic trends and population projections in *Chapter 2: Community Profile*, provide a realistic assessment of the Town's municipal services and was carefully considered in the preparation of *Chapter 8: Land Use*.

## Utilities & Community Facilities Vision

*The Town of Oconto Falls will provide well-planned, cost-effective municipal services and infrastructure, in harmony with its rural character and natural environment, in order to maintain a fair and equitable tax rate for its citizens and business owners. It will strive to provide the infrastructure and technology necessary to allow its residents and business to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century marketplace and will continue to pursue opportunities for shared services and facilities with its municipal neighbors when such partnerships would benefit the community and its residents.*

## Current Utilities & Community Facilities

### Drinking Water

The potable water needs of residents and businesses in the Town of Oconto Falls are met by individual, private wells. The Town of Oconto Falls has a high quality supply of potable groundwater and surface water for nearly all anticipated uses. Additional information about groundwater resources is provided in *Chapter 6: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources*.

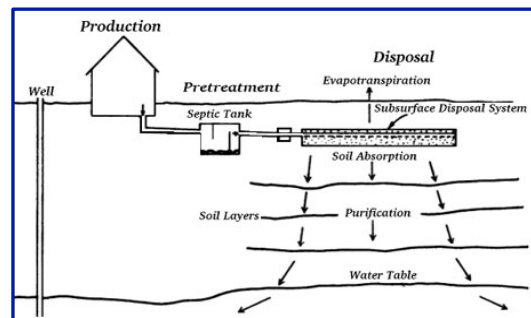
## CHAPTER 5: UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Wastewater Treatment

All residences and businesses located in the Town of Oconto Falls are served by personal onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS). The most commonly used POWTS in Oconto County are septic systems and mound systems, although a number of other systems are permitted in the state. Chapter SPS 383, Wis. Stats., establishes uniform standards and criteria for the design, installation, inspection and management of POWTS. When properly designed and installed, onsite systems biologically treat effluent as it percolates through the soil and other media before entering the water table.

#### Septic Systems<sup>1</sup>

The modern onsite system has consisted primarily of a septic tank and a soil absorption field. Septic tanks remove most solids and floatable material and function as an anaerobic bioreactor that promotes partial digestion of organic matter. Septic tank effluent, which contains significant concentrations of pathogens and nutrients, is discharged to an absorption field for further treatment through biological processes, adsorption, filtration, and infiltration into underlying soils.

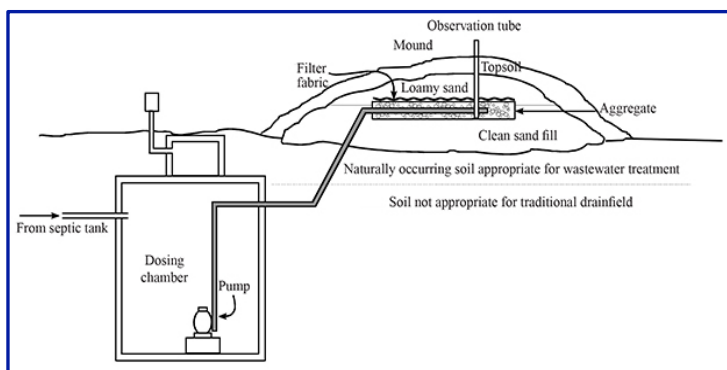


Courtesy USEPA

Conventional septic systems work well if they are located in areas with appropriate soils and hydraulic capacities, designed to treat the incoming waste load, installed properly, and maintained to ensure long-term performance. If not, they become primary sources of groundwater contamination.

#### Mound Systems<sup>2</sup>

A mound system is one of a number of alternative systems that have been developed to overcome site conditions that limit the use of conventional septic systems, including soils with slow or fast permeability, shallow soils over bedrock, or a high water table. Mound systems create suitable conditions for initial wastewater treatment above the natural soil surface. Following preliminary treatment in a septic tank, effluent flows to a dosing chamber. It is then pumped to the mound for further treatment before 'discharging' to the underlying soil strata.



Courtesy Residential Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from USEPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Manual.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpted from Residential Onsite Wastewater Treatment: Mound Systems.

### **Stormwater**

Stormwater is surface water in abnormal quantity resulting from heavy falls of rain or snow. In rural communities like Oconto Falls, with limited stormwater management infrastructure (curbs, gutters, storm drains, etc.), stormwater is typically managed through open ditches and road culverts. Erosion resulting from construction sites is currently regulated by Oconto County.

### **Electricity and Natural Gas**

The Town of Oconto Falls receives its electricity from the Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) and Wisconsin Public Service (WPS). OEC is a member-owned, not-for-profit, generation & distribution cooperative headquartered in Oconto Falls, Wisconsin. In 1937, the cooperative was formed to serve electricity in rural northeast Wisconsin. Currently OEC serves more than 9,600 members throughout Oconto, Marinette, and small portions of Shawano and Brown County.<sup>3</sup> WPS is headquartered in Green Bay and serves more than 445,000 electric customers and 323,000 natural gas customers in northeast and central Wisconsin and portions of Upper Michigan.



Courtesy Oconto Electric Cooperative

Properties along portions of STH 22 and some town roads can connect to an existing natural gas pipeline. The remainder of the community relies primarily on private propane gas tanks.

### **Solid Waste Disposal/Recycling Facilities**

The Town of Oconto Falls has contracted for curbside pickup of solid waste for landowners of the Town. The Town is also contracted with Oconto County to use the recycling center in the City of Oconto Falls for all recycling materials. Town residents are responsible for delivering recyclables to the facility.

### **Telephone Providers**

Telephone service in the Town is available from a wide array of landline, cable, and cellular providers.

### **TV Providers**

Residents have access to a variety of television viewing platforms including over-the-air network broadcasts, cable and satellite providers, and the internet, among others.

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<sup>3</sup> Excerpted from Oconto Electric Cooperative website, 2015.

## **CHAPTER 5: UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

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### **Town Facilities**

The Oconto Falls Town Hall is located on STH 22, west of the City of Oconto Falls. The structure includes a public restroom and kitchen facility. The Town also has a garage to store road maintenance equipment.

### **Post Office**

The nearest US Post Office is located at 145 N. Franklin St. in the City of Oconto Falls

### **Cemeteries**

#### **Volk Family Cemetery**

Located on Golden Corners Road near the southern Town boundary, this private cemetery is approximately 1 acre in size. There are no plans to expand this cemetery.



#### **St. John's Riverside Cemetery**

This Town cemetery is approximately 1 acre in size. It is located on the north side of Gray lake Road near STH 32. There are no plans to expand this cemetery.



Sufficient space is available in these cemeteries. No plans are in place to establish additional cemeteries in the Town of Oconto Falls.

### **Childcare**

There are no commercial childcare facilities currently located in the Town of Oconto Falls. Residents utilize informal networks of childcare (i.e., family or friends). Some residents may provide childcare from their home for their neighbors. The nearest commercial childcare centers are found in the cities of Oconto Falls and Gillett.

### **Senior Care Facilities**

There are currently no senior housing, assisted living, or retirement communities located within in the Town. Senior residents in the community live independently or are supported by family members, friends, and neighbors. Oconto County provides a number of services catering to the needs of its seniors.

### Oconto County Commission on Aging

The Oconto County Commission on Aging (OCCA) is a non-profit private organization whose mission is to assist older persons living independently in Oconto County. State and federal grants and local donations fund the organization. OCCA has a small staff and a large network of volunteers to provide services to those in need. The organization offers a number of programs and services to seniors in Oconto County, including:

- A home delivery meal program, which serves over 100 people in the county each day. The program also includes 6 congregate meal sites in addition to the home-delivered meals.
- An on-staff benefits specialist to help older adults with questions about public benefits and programs, provide information related to available services and programs, and offer assistance with winter fuel costs.
- Coordinate transportation for seniors age 60 and over through a network of volunteers.
- Sponsor events and activities like craft fairs, seminars, and special trips.

For additional information related to senior services, please contact OCCA.

### **Libraries**

The Oconto Falls Community Library is located at 251 N. Main Street in Oconto Falls. The 9,600 square foot facility was opened in 1992. The library offers a host of special services and programs including: public Internet access, computers for word processing, a summer reading program, story hours for children, photocopying, and a meeting room which can be rented. In addition to books and periodicals, the library also loans videos, educational play totes for children, and puppets.

The Gillett Public Library was constructed in 1996. It is located at 200 E. Main Street in Gillett. The library has regular hours Tuesday – Saturday and offers an array of services, including a summer reading program and weekly story hour for children.



Courtesy Oconto Falls Community Library (above) and Gillett Public Library (below).

### **School Districts**

The majority of school-aged residents in the Town of Oconto Falls attend schools in the Oconto Falls School District (OFSD). A small number living along STH 32 attend the Gillett School District (GSD). As of 2015, OFSD and GD are the 172<sup>nd</sup> and 300<sup>th</sup> ranked school districts in Wisconsin.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> According to Niche, an educational services company that provides rankings for more than 100,000 public and private districts in the U.S. based on dozens of statistics and 27 million opinions from more than 300,000 students and parents.



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### Oconto Falls School District

OFCD is comprised of six schools: Abrams and Oconto Falls Elementary Schools, Washington Middle School, Oconto Falls High School, Falls Alternative Learning Site, and New Path. Total enrollment in the district was 1,746 as of the 2015 Third Friday Count. In terms of total enrollment, OFSD ranks 117<sup>th</sup> of Wisconsin's 447 school districts.

Table 5.1: Oconto Falls School District Enrollment, 2015-16		
Facility	Grades	Enrollment
Abrams Elementary School	K4 through 5th	279
Oconto Falls Elementary School	Pre-K through 5th	544
Washington Middle School	6 <sup>th</sup> through 8th	389
Oconto Falls High School	9 <sup>th</sup> through 12th	506
Falls Alternative Learning Site	10 <sup>th</sup> through 12th	18
New Path	10 <sup>th</sup> through 12th	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,746</b>
Source: Wisconsin Department of Education, 2015.		

### Gillett School District

GSD is comprised of four schools: Gillett Elementary School, Gillett Middle School, Gillett High School, and GOAL Academy. Total enrollment in the district was 536 as of the 2015 Third Friday County. In terms of total enrollment, GSD ranks 311<sup>th</sup> of Wisconsin's 447 school districts.

Table 5.2: Gillett School District Enrollment, 2015-16		
Facility	Grades	Enrollment
Gillett Elementary School	K4 through 5th	245
Gillett Middle School	6 <sup>th</sup> through 8th	101
Gillett High School	9 <sup>th</sup> through 12th	156
GOAL Academy	6 <sup>th</sup> through 12th	34
<b>Total</b>		<b>536</b>
Source: Wisconsin Department of Education, 2015.		

## Parks

There are no park facilities located in the Town of Oconto Falls. However, several City of Oconto Falls and Oconto County park facilities are located in close proximity to the community. These include:

### Eastside Beach

With nearly 4-acres of Oconto River frontage, this park offers a swimming beach, boat launch, fishing piers, picnic areas, playground and a covered shelter. It is located on the northwest side of the City.



Courtesy City of Oconto Falls

### Memorial Park

This 15-acre park between Chestnut Avenue and Jefferson Street is home to the Oconto Falls High School Panther's track, football and baseball programs. It contains covered pavilions, picnic areas, and children's playground equipment.



Courtesy City of Oconto Falls

### Pine Grove Park

Located on the north side of Sherman Street between Oakland

and Elm, this 3.7-acre City park features tennis courts, a basketball court, volleyball courts, playground, a covered shelter and picnic tables.

### Pleasantview Ball Park

The newest park facility in the City, Pleasantview Ball Park, is a 2.5-acre site including a baseball diamond, bleachers and playground equipment. The park is located on the east side of the City off CTH I.

### Tubing Hill

On the slopes of the bluff overlooking the River Island Golf Course, the tubing hill has been a long winter tradition. Operated by the Oconto Falls Lion's Club the rope tow permits tubers the luxury of enjoying the slide down the steep hillside without the struggle of a long climb back to the top. The site of the tow is a wooded 61-acre site bounded by the Oconto River, River Island Golf Course, and residential neighborhoods. The park offers biking and hiking opportunities during the remainder of the year.



Courtesy City of Oconto Falls

### Veterans Park

Once the home of a hospital and City Hall, this 0.4-acre park is located near the Washington Middle School on the corner of Franklin Street and Central Avenue. The park features a war memorial and fountain.

### Westside Beach

Located on the western shore of the Oconto River at the end of Flatley Street, this 3-acre City park includes a picnic shelter, boat launch, picnic areas, hiking opportunities, fishing areas, and a small playground.



Courtesy City of Oconto Falls

### Riverside County Park

Located in the Town of Gillett off CTH B, this day-use park property provides boat access to the Oconto River, as well as fishing opportunities, a sandy beach, and picnic tables.

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### ATV/UTV & Snowmobile Trails<sup>5</sup>

Oconto County has over 450 miles of ATV/UTV trails and over 475 miles of snowmobile trails. Trailheads are located: near the Hwy 32/Hwy 64 intersection, just east of Chute Pond; in Gillett at Zippel Park; in Suring near the Town Hall; and, in Lakewood on Hwy 32. ATV/UTV trails are typically open from April through October. Snowmobile trails are open during winter months when conditions permit.

Snowmobile enthusiasts also have access to the Nicolet State Recreational Trail. This county-operated trail meanders for more than 89 miles through the Nicolet National Forest in northeastern Wisconsin. The trail follows the same corridor built by railroad companies in the late 19th century to open up Wisconsin's pine and hardwood forests for the timber industry. The Nicolet State Trail runs through several small communities from Gillett in Oconto County to the Michigan state line.<sup>6</sup>



Courtesy Oconto County Tourism.

### Police Protection<sup>7</sup>

Police protection in the Town of Oconto Falls is provided by the Oconto County Sheriff's Department (OCSD). OCSD is headquartered at 301 Washington Street in the City of Oconto and provides 24-hour emergency assistance to a 1,006-square mile area. Its mission is to *improve the quality of life of all citizens and provide for a safe community by reducing crime and preventing public disorder*. To accomplish that mission, OCSD currently employs 26 deputies, 26 jail staff, 9 telecommunications officers, and 3 support staff. The annual operating budget is approximately 5 million dollars.

### Patrol Deputies

Patrol Deputies investigate all citizen complaints, or requests for assistance that may come to their attention. They shall, at all times, protect life and property, preserve the peace, apprehend criminals, prevent crime, recover lost and stolen property, direct traffic, investigate vehicle accidents, and enforce the ordinances of the County of Oconto and the laws of the State of Wisconsin and United States.



Courtesy Oconto County Sheriff's Department

<sup>5</sup> Excerpted from Oconto County Tourism website, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Excerpted from Nicolet State Trail, WDNR website, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Excerpted from Oconto County Sheriff's Department website, 2015.



### Recreation Deputy

The Recreation Deputy is responsible for enforcement of any laws pertaining to County Forestry Ordinances, and the safe operation of Recreational vehicles including ATV's, Snowmobiles, and Watercraft. The deputy patrols more than 300 miles of ATV trail, 425 miles of snowmobile trails, 49 miles of cross country ski trails, and 151 square miles of lakes and water, including 17 miles of the Bay of Green Bay, and also coordinates water rescue, search and rescue on land, and monitors timber sales.

### Oconto County Jail

The Oconto County Jail has 56 inmate beds in liner/dorm style facility. The facility includes 14 maximum security cells, 5 female cells, 8 medium security dorm beds, 18 minimum/medium security dorm beds, 1 special needs cell, 2 segregation cells, 4 isolation cells, and 4 receiving cells. Overcrowding at the jail has required the housing of inmates at the Marinette, Forest, or Shawano County Jails.

### **Fire & Rescue<sup>8</sup>**

The Oconto Falls Fire Department (OFFD) serves the City and Town of Oconto Falls along with part of the Town of Stiles. All three communities provide funding for the department. The OFFD fire station is located on Cherry Street in the City of Oconto Falls. Current staffing includes 30 trained volunteers with a chief, assistant chief, 2 captains, and 2 safety officers. OFFD provides 911-based emergency service dispatched by the Oconto County Sheriff's Department. Response time within the Town of Oconto Falls vary depending on the location of the call and the time of day, but average between 5-10 minutes.



Courtesy Oconto Falls Fire Department

### **Ambulance Service<sup>9</sup>**

The Oconto Falls Area Ambulance Service (OFAAS) is a progressive, paid on call volunteer 501(C) 3 non-profit organization providing a wide array of pre-hospital emergency medical services to over 9,500 residents in its service area. The OFAAS is staffed by EMTs, EMT-Its, and First Responders trained in the latest techniques of life-saving care.



Courtesy Oconto Falls Area Ambulance Service

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<sup>8</sup> Excerpted from Oconto Falls Fire Department website, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Excerpted from Oconto Falls Area Ambulance Service website, 2015.

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Courtesy St. Clare Memorial Hospital

### Healthcare Providers<sup>10</sup>

There are no healthcare providers located in the Town of Oconto Falls. The nearest hospital is St. Clare Memorial Hospital located at 855 South Main Street in the City of Oconto Falls. Formerly Community Memorial Hospital, St. Clare joined Hospital Sisters Health System in September 2014 and now offers increased access to physician specialists as well as seamless coordination of primary and specialty care. In affiliation with Prevea Health, St. Clare operates a number of clinics in the area including: Gillett Health Center in Gillette, Oconto Health Center in Oconto, and Suring Health Center in Suring, among others.

### Utilities & Community Facilities Plan

This section of the chapter describes the various issues and opportunities related to utilities and community facilities in the Town of Oconto Falls. The issues associated with the provision of municipal utilities are related to: the timing, location, and construction of new infrastructure; the need for higher levels of services as the community grows; greater economic competition within the region; and fiscal constraints, among others. Opportunities include a healthy local population, economy, and business climate, efficiencies of scale, and possibilities for intergovernmental cooperation and shared services. Properly designed public utility systems can provide maximum protection of community health and guide desirable future growth on the basis of a fair and equitable distribution of benefits and costs.

### Maintaining Reasonable Tax Levels

Residents respect the fiscal discipline demonstrated by local officials and value reasonable tax rates. Given limited finances, coupled with long-term uncertainties surrounding Wisconsin's shared revenue program and state-imposed levy limits, the Town of Oconto Falls understands the need to carefully consider all expenditures. This consideration extends to providing utilities and community facilities for the community. To ensure the supply of efficient, cost-effective services, the Town will continue to consider shared service opportunities with neighboring communities.

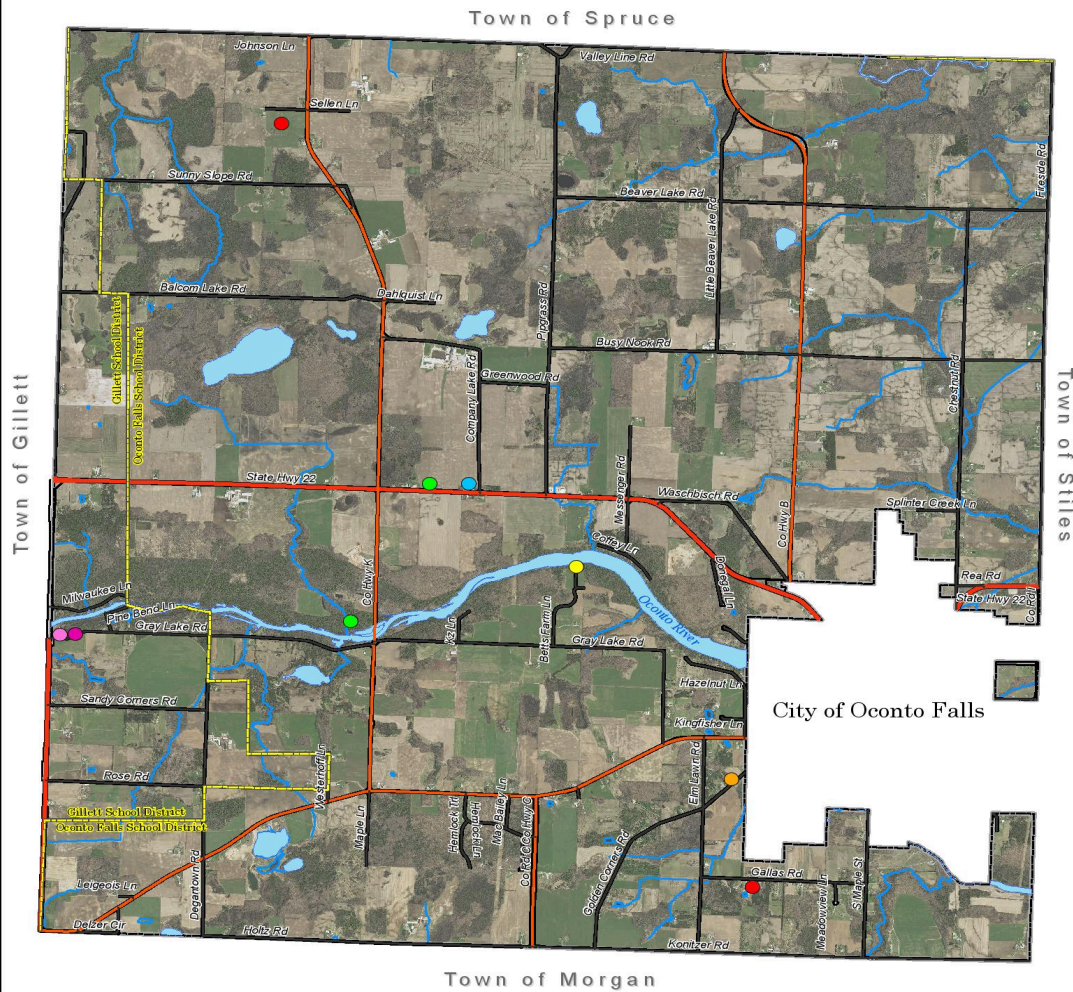
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<sup>10</sup> Excerpted from St. Clare Memorial Hospital website, 2015.

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### Town of **OCONTO FALLS** *Oconto County, Wisconsin*

2015 Comprehensive Plan - Facilities & Utilities Map



#### Legend

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <span style="color: pink;">●</span> St John's Riverside Lutheran Cemetery | <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> School District Boundary | <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> Open Water  |
| <span style="color: purple;">●</span> St John's Riverside Lutheran Church | <span style="color: red;">—</span> State                       | <span style="color: black;">—</span> Right-Of-Way    |
| <span style="color: blue;">●</span> Town Hall                             | <span style="color: orange;">—</span> County                   | <span style="color: blue;">—</span> Streams & Rivers |
| <span style="color: green;">●</span> Potential Town Park                  | <span style="color: black;">—</span> Town                      | <span style="color: black;">■</span> Township        |
| <span style="color: yellow;">●</span> River Access                        |  |  |
| <span style="color: red;">●</span> Tower                                  |  |  |
| <span style="color: orange;">●</span> Volk Cemetery                       |  |  |

0.0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

Created: February 27, 2016



**Community Planning  
& Consulting, LLC**

The information shown on this map is for planning purposes only. Any other use of this information displayed is the responsibility of the user and to be used at their own risk. There is no guarantee of accuracy in the data of this map.



Source: Oconto County, WisDOT



## CHAPTER 5: UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems

As mentioned earlier in this document, wastewater treatment for homes and businesses in the Town is primarily served via onsite septic and mound systems. These and other POWTS must comply with Wisconsin Statute SPS 383 to ensure that the systems are designed and function properly so as to protect human health and groundwater resources. However, studies have indicated that even properly-designed and maintained conventional septic and mound systems pose a threat to ground water, particularly in soils with high transivity.

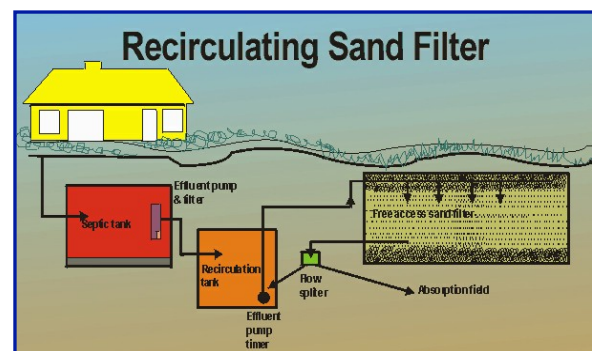
In the City of Oconto Falls, wastewater treatment is provided by the Sewage Disposal Commission via system of gravity flow sewers and force mains. Effluent is treated at the City's trickling filter wastewater treatment plant. The expansion of municipal sewer service often occurs at significant costs, financially and ecologically, and typically requires the annexation of land. Alternative onsite wastewater treatment systems provide a third option.

Alternative sanitary facilities can provide wastewater treatment at a fraction of the cost of conventional onsite systems, particularly when they are clustered to accommodate multiple homes or businesses. Options for clustered sanitary systems permissible in the state of Wisconsin include recirculating sand filters and constructed wetlands, among others. A brief description of these systems is provided below.

#### Recirculating Sand Filters

A recirculating sand filter (RSF) offers an economically viable, environmentally benign alternative to conventional drain field-based treatment systems. The basic components of a RSF system include a septic tank, recirculation tank, and sand or gravel filter. Water discharged from the system far exceeds the quality of a conventional system at a fraction of the price.

RSFs are a viable alternative to conventional methods when soil conditions are not conducive to the proper treatment and disposal of wastewater through percolation beds. Sand filters may be used on sites that have shallow soil cover, inadequate permeability, high groundwater, and limited land area. RSF systems commonly serve subdivisions, mobile home parks, rural schools, small municipalities, and other generators of small wastewater flows.<sup>11</sup>



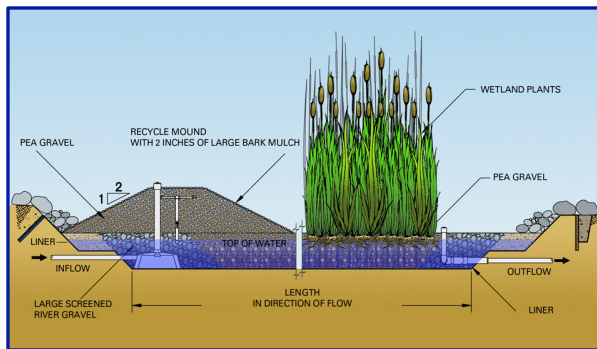
Courtesy Purdue University

#### Constructed Wetlands

Constructed wetlands have been used as effective wastewater treatment systems for more than forty years. They have become the dominant treatment system for communities in the Minneapolis metropolitan region not served by municipal wastewater treatment. Although a

<sup>11</sup> Source: Environmental Technology Institute: Recirculating Sand Filters, 1998.





Courtesy Science for Environmental Policy

variety of wetland-based systems are used to treat effluent, the most common is a subsurface flow wetland. Subsurface flow wetlands utilize an anaerobic reactor (septic tank) for pretreatment followed by a forced-bed aeration system and wetland treatment cells. Constructed wetlands are designed to achieve tertiary treatment at a fraction of the cost of a municipal system. They become cost effective against conventional onsite systems when treating effluent from eight or more homes.

### Personal Energy Systems

With rising energy prices and a greater awareness of the environmental impacts of conventional power plants, more Americans are utilizing personal energy systems to reduce costs associated with electricity, heating, and cooling. In addition, state and federal tax incentives have reduced the total costs of these systems making them available to a greater percentage of users. Personal energy systems include photovoltaic solar, solar thermal, small wind, geothermal, and wood-fired boilers, among others.

The Wisconsin Solar and Wind Access Law (66.0401, State Stats.), defines how local governments are permitted to regulate solar and wind energy systems. It covers zoning restrictions by local governments, private land use restrictions, and system owner rights to unobstructed access to resources. Under the law, local government may not place any restriction on the installation or use of solar or wind energy systems unless the restriction:

- Serves to preserve or protect public health or safety.
- Does not significantly increase the cost of the system or decrease it's efficiency.
- Allows for an alternative system of comparable cost and efficiency.

The law effectively prohibits unreasonable public land use controls covering solar and wind energy systems by defining a fairly narrow set of reasonable conditions. The law subsequently allows for a local permitting procedure for guaranteeing unobstructed access to wind or solar resources. A permit will not be granted if obstruction already exists or if the construction of such an obstruction is already well into the planning stages.

### Mobile Communications Towers

As part of the 2013-14 State Budget the Wisconsin Legislature approved Section 66.0404, Wis. Stats. The law governs the local regulation of mobile towers and tower sites and effectively



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preempts existing zoning regulations regarding cellular communications towers. Under the new law, local governments are limited in their ability to regulate such towers. The following actions are effectively prohibited:<sup>12</sup>

- Testing, sampling, monitoring or other radio frequency compliance requirements.
- Basing approval on signal strength or the adequacy of existing mobile service infrastructure.
- Moratoriums on the construction of new towers.
- Control over physical placement of towers within the municipality.
- Fees that exceed statutory maximums (\$3,000 or \$500 for “class 2 colocation”) or are recurring.
- Disapproval on purely aesthetic grounds.
- Sureties for the structure in excess of \$20,000 or indemnity requirements.
- Any limits on the durations of permits.
- Any limits on the height of structures to anything less than 200 feet (above 200 feet is regulated by the FAA anyway).
- Setbacks or fall zones that are any different than other commercial structures.
- Regulation of related power systems.
- Disapprovals based on lighting or lack thereof of the structure.

### Parks and Recreation Facilities

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a community standard of ten acres of parks and recreation land per 1,200 residents. The 2015 population of the Town of Oconto Falls is an estimated 1,275 persons with a projected 2035 population of 1,565. Based on these standards the minimum recommended park acreage necessary to meet anticipated needs over the next 20 years is approximately 13 acres. As noted earlier in this chapter, a number of parks and recreational facilities are located in the City of Oconto Falls. Although enjoyed by Town residents, these facilities are paid for by city taxpayers.

During the development of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, two sites were considered as potential locations for Town parks. The first is adjoining the current location of the Town Hall. Although site limitations and traffic volumes on STH pose challenges, the location may be suited to picnic tables, play apparatus, and a pavilion, among others. The more ideal site is located in Section 20, where CTH K meets the Oconto River. It is centrally located, situated off the highway, and is large enough to accommodate a variety of facilities. Perhaps most importantly, it is located on the banks of the Oconto River and provides opportunities for public access.



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<sup>12</sup> Excerpted from Wisconsin Towns Association, “New Mobile Service (Cell) Tower Preemptions.”

### Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

A Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) is a document that describes current parks, recreation, and open space assets and presents a strategy for meeting future needs. The purpose of the plan is to guide land acquisition, development, and maintenance activities by identifying the general location, character, and extent of existing and desired parks, playgrounds, and special recreation areas. By statute, a CORP must be updated every five years.

The funding of local parkland acquisition and development has become more difficult with legislation limiting local government's ability to establish and enforce impact fees upon new residential development projects. As a result, more Wisconsin communities are seeking grant funding to offset the cost of park and recreation development. Wisconsin statutes prohibit local government from applying for state and federal parks and recreation funding without an adopted CORP.

### **High-Speed Internet**

Access to high-speed (or broadband) internet is critical in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. The improved connectivity provided by such access supports robust business services, expands access to health care, and improves the quality of education in schools. It has become a necessity, as vital to rural America's future today as electricity and the telephone were in the last century. The technology is a must for the types of home-based and value-added businesses that can thrive in a community like Oconto Falls.

### **Capital Improvements Plan**

As mentioned in *Chapter 4: Transportation*, a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is a budgeting tool used to plan for major capital expenditures. CIPs are typically five-year plans identifying necessary and desired improvements related to infrastructure, facilities, and parks and recreation areas.

## **Utilities & Community Facilities Programs**

The following pages describe the various federal and state programs that are available to aid the Town in implementing its utilities and community facilities plan.

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development**

#### Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program

The Rural Economic Development Loan (REDL) and Grant (REDG) programs provide funding to rural projects through local utility organizations. Under the REDL program, USDA provides zero interest loans to local utilities that are then passed through to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. The ultimate recipients repay the lending utility directly. The utility is responsible for repayment to USDA. Under the RED program,

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USDA provides grant funds to local utility organizations to establish revolving loan funds. Loans are made from the revolving loan funds to projects that will create or retain rural jobs. When the revolving loan fund is terminated, the grant is repaid to the Agency.

### Rural Utilities Program

A number of programs are available through the Rural Utilities Program as part of the Water and Environmental Programs (WEP). WEP provides loans, grants, and loan guarantees for drinking water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, and storm drainage facilities in rural areas, cities, and towns of 10,000 or less. Public bodies, non-profit organizations, and recognized Indian Tribes may qualify for assistance. WEP also makes grants to nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance and training to assist rural communities with their water, wastewater, and solid waste programs. Available programs include:

- Water and Waste Disposal Direct and Guaranteed Loans
- Water and Waste Disposal Grants
- Technical Assistance and Training Grants
- Solid Waste Management Grants
- Rural Water Circuit Ride Technical Assistance

### Telecommunications Program

The Telecommunications Program improves the quality of life in rural America by providing capital for the deployment of rural telecommunications infrastructure. Funding is available under various grant and loan programs.

## **Wisconsin Department of Administration**

### Community Development Block Grant – Public Funds

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Public Funds supports infrastructure and facility projects for communities. Eligible projects include improvements, repairs, or expansions of streets, drainage systems, water and sewer systems, sidewalks, and community centers. Grants are limited to projects that, if implemented, would meet a CDBG National Objective.

### Community Development Block Grant – Public Facilities Economic Development

Grant funds under the CDBG for Public facilities Economic Development are awarded to local governments for public infrastructure projects that support business expansion or retention. Examples of eligible applications include: new or improved water & sewer service and streets that result in business expansion and job opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals.



## **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources<sup>13</sup>**

### Clean Water Fund Program

The Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) provides subsidized interest rate loans to municipalities seeking to fund wastewater and stormwater infrastructure projects. The CWFP also includes pilot projects to fund adaptive management and other non-traditional projects to comply with a municipality's permit limit. Applications for funding are accepted year round as long as funding is available.

### Safe Drinking Water Loan Program

The safe Drinking Water Loan Program provides subsidized interest rate loans to municipalities seeking to fund drinking water infrastructure projects. Applications are accepted year round when funding is available.

### Acquisition and Development of Local Parks Program

The Acquisition and Development of Local Parks Program provides assistance to local government to buy land or easements and develop or renovate local parks and recreation area facilities for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes (e.g., trails, fishing access and park support facilities). Applicants compete for funds on a regional basis. This grant program is part of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

### Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a Federal program administered in all states that encourage creation and interpretation of high-quality, outdoor recreational opportunities. Funds received under this program are split between WDNR projects and grants to local governments for outdoor recreation activities. Grants cover fifty percent of eligible project costs.

### Recreational Trail Aids

Municipal governments and incorporated organizations are eligible to receive reimbursement for development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Eligible sponsors may be reimbursed for up to fifty percent of the total project costs. This program may be used in conjunction with the state snowmobile and ATV/UTV programs and Stewardship development projects.

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<sup>13</sup> Excerpted from various WDNR websites.

## **CHAPTER 5: UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

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### Municipal Flood Control Grants

Available to all cities, villages, towns, tribes, and metropolitan sewerage districts to provide assistance with items such as the acquisition of property, vacant land, structure removal, flood proofing, administrative support and other activities.

### Urban Nonpoint Source & Stormwater Management Grants

This program provides competitive grants to local governments to reimburse costs of planning or construction projects controlling urban nonpoint source and stormwater runoff pollution.

### **Utilities & Community Facilities Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

The goals, objectives, and policies related to utilities and community facilities are presented in Chapter 10: Implementation.