

Chapter 1

Introduction

Location and General Regional Context

The Village of Ellsworth was first settled by Anthony Huddleston, C.B. Bruce, E.M. Bruce, Wilson Kinnely and their families in 1857; in what was then known as the Town of Perry. The Village of Ellsworth was platted as a village in 1862 and incorporated under the laws of Wisconsin in 1887; it was renamed from Perry to Ellsworth soon after due to an existing Village of Perry, elsewhere in the State. The Village was named after Civil War Colonel, Elmer E. Ellsworth (shown below).

The community's development was primarily associated with the Omaha Railroad, which established a depot in the area of East Ellsworth in 1885. At one time Ellsworth and East Ellsworth operated independently from one another, but now function as one village.

The Village of Ellsworth is located in Pierce County, Wisconsin and is known as the County Seat (Map 1-1). The Village is located at the intersection of four major highways, Highways 10, 63, 65, and 72, which provides residents with access to communities to the north, south, east, and west. The Village is surrounded by the Towns of Ellsworth and Trimble.



Colonel, Elmer E. Ellsworth
Source: Village of Ellsworth

Ellsworth and the surrounding communities have primarily prospered off the high quality soils and farming conditions. These resources are highly valued and make the Village an attractive place to live and work.

Comprehensive Planning Law

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law or "Smart Growth Law" was passed in October 1999 as part of the State's biennial budget. This law requires that every town, village, and city be guided by a comprehensive plan by January 1, 2010. Smart Growth was enacted to encourage long-range planning for communities and provide consistency in land use decision making.

Smart Growth planning also calls for public participation throughout the entire planning process. Before 1999, public participation and a public hearing were not required for adoption of a local plan.

State statutes require the plans to consist of nine elements, each focusing on an important sector of your community. These elements are:

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing

- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Implementation

The goal of Smart Growth is to ensure that communities look at how all of these elements intertwine and affect each other, creating an awareness and overall cohesive vision for the Village of Ellsworth.

Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Village of Ellsworth's Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that the historical, cultural, economical, and environmental qualities of the community that residents enjoy remain and matters that can be improved upon are addressed. The plan will act as a guide for not only Village government, but also local organizations and community residents and will look at how the Village fits into the regional context.

The Comprehensive Plan can provide a variety of benefits to a community by coordinating community activities, departments, or policies; protecting resources like historic buildings/locations or forest/agricultural/wetlands/etc.; promoting economic development by revitalizing downtowns, developing housing/facilities, and retaining existing businesses; and save the community money through intergovernmental cooperation.

Plan Development Process

Ellsworth has incorporated the nine required elements into their plan as the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities & Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Plan Implementation

Each chapter was addressed individually before moving on to the next chapter. When all were complete, the comprehensive plan was reviewed as a whole, checking for any inconsistencies.

Regional Planning Jurisdictions and Government Agencies

While the Village of Ellsworth plans for its own future, it also is within multiple planning and government agency districts that do their own planning. Available plans will be reviewed to address any inconsistencies between them. Some of the planning and government agencies that will be contacted include:

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
- Pierce County
- Pierce County Economic Development Corporation
- Town of Ellsworth
- Town of Trimble

Public Involvement and Public Participation Policy

Wisconsin State Statutes Section 66.1001 requires a public participation plan/policy/procedure is developed for the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. The plan/policy must address public meeting notices, publications, and open discussions must be written for every stage of the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

It is required that the local governing body adopts any comprehensive plan or amendments to a plan must do so with the use of a resolution, passed by a majority vote. Once a comprehensive plan is adopted, one copy must be provided to the following: every governing body within the boundaries of the local government unit; the clerk of all adjacent governing bodies; the Wisconsin Land Council; the Wisconsin Department of Administration; the regional planning commission, and the local public library.

Wisconsin State Statutes also requires that all comprehensive plans must meet the minimum requirements; the resolution shall not be adopted by the regional planning commission if those requirements are not met.

The Village acknowledges, in order for the Comprehensive Plan to be utilized effectively, it must be created and embraced by Village residents. The Village has created a Public Participation Plan that helps identify key stakeholders for each element and various methods to generate public involvement. The following methods of public participation where utilized:

- **Public Meetings:** The public is invited to attend all Plan Commission meetings; the public will be allowed to ask questions during a designated time period at each meeting. Information and drafts of the Comprehensive Plan will be available for review during the public meeting and at the Village of Ellsworth Public Library.
- **Website:** The Village will use their website to post information and drafts of the Comprehensive Plan. A link will be provided for comments. The comments will be sent to the Village Clerk and/or a member of the Plan Commission.

- **Public Hearing:** A public hearing is a legal requirement of the Comprehensive Planning Law. It allows residents to express their views and offer comments before adoption of the comprehensive plan.

Initial public involvement was generated through the Village Plan Commission. The Plan Commission held regular monthly meetings open for public participation and residents were encouraged to provide comments. During many of the meetings a brainstorming sessions looked at the strengths and weaknesses of the Village of Ellsworth. The ideas and thoughts generated from these meeting were used to develop the Village's vision statement and overall goals for the plan.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

For each planning element, Goals, Objectives, and Policies will be created. These will be used to create planning goals and identify ways to achieve each goal. Definitions of these terms are listed below.

Goal: A general statement that describes a desired future result.

Objectives: Objectives are statements that describe what the Village hopes to achieve by a goal.

Policies: Policies, programs, and actions describe specific implementation strategies to be carried out in order to meet a goal and achieve the objectives. A policy can be an ordinance, a program can be a series of policies and actions, and an action can be something carried out by a group without the need of an official policy.

