TOWN OF DEKORRA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Columbia County, Wisconsin

Update Recommended by Plan Commission 8.28.14, Adopted by Town Board 9.23.14 (Ord. 2014-04)
Amendments Recommended by Plan Commission 7.14.16, Adopted by Town Board 8.16.16 (Ord. 2016-02)

TOWN OF DEKORRA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUMMARY

THE REASON FOR PLANNING

Dekorra enjoys a rich agricultural and recreational heritage, punctuated by the scenic Wisconsin River and rolling hills that define the Town's unique character. The Town's landscape is attractive to an increasing number of residents and visitors. Increasing tourism and growth of nearby communities will place pressure on Dekorra's character in the near future. Dekorra must carefully and creatively plan.

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* will help the Town preserve its rural character and, at the same time, attract high quality commercial, industrial, and residential development to planned areas of the Town to help balance its tax base. Carefully planning the location, timing, and quality of this new development will both maximize tax base and assure that the features that brought residents to the Town in the first place are not destroyed in the process.

This *Comprehensive Plan* updates the Town's 2005 Comprehensive Plan, and meets all requirements of the State's comprehensive planning law. The *Comprehensive Plan* document includes ten chapters, covering land use, transportation, agricultural, natural and cultural resources, utilities and community facilities, housing, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, and implementation.

DEKORRA'S VISION

Dekorra is "beautifully situated" in the heart of southern Wisconsin. Set amidst abundant natural resources and productive farmland, the Town has maintained the integrity of the landscape as a foundation to the Town's quality of life and economy. Building on a vibrant regional economy, convenient access ensures the availability of good jobs to Town residents, and attracts high quality businesses. Thoughtfully planned residential and business development ensures the small town character of the community is retained, while providing places to live, work, and a strong quality of life for residents.

PROTECTING RURAL COMMUNITY CHARACTER

"Community Character" is hard to define, but it is the reason why many people choose to live in Dekorra. The Town's rural character is defined by large areas of agricultural land, woodlands, and natural areas like the Wisconsin River and the Rocky Run, Hinkson and Rowan Creeks. To preserve this rural and natural character, the *Plan* will help the Town to:

- Preserve scenic and natural areas, like wooded hillsides and steep slopes, from development.

- Sensitively site new housing on the rural landscape.
- Limit housing density in agricultural areas.
- Protect the character of the Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin waterfront.

GUIDING DEVELOPMENT

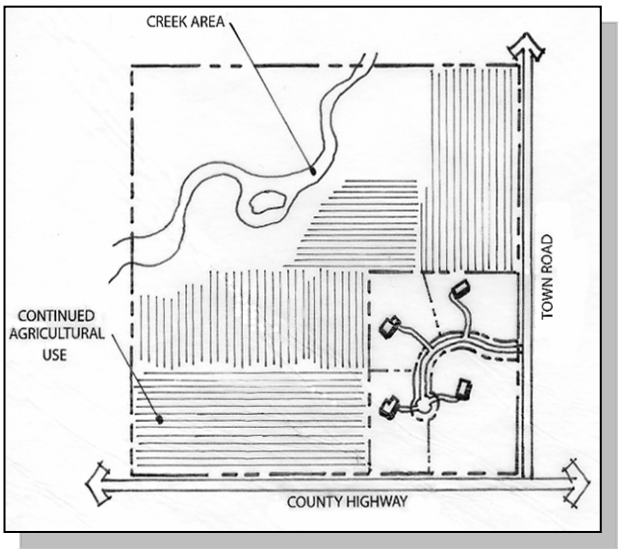
This *Comprehensive Plan* contains a Planned Land Use map (Map 6) to help the Town decide how to guide future land uses. Future development decisions will be based on that map and policies to:

- Guide a quality mix of business development and promoting business redevelopment in a carefully planned, publicly sewered area near the I-39/CS Interchange.
- Designate a second Commercial/Industrial Mix area along Highway 51 near the Town's north edge.
- Allow for modest residential development areas.
- Work with Poynette to arrive at mutually agreed growth and preservation areas and cooperative economic development.
- Keep intensive new development away from sensitive environmental areas, such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and productive agricultural land.

PROMOTING HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

As important as *where* new development goes is *how* it looks and relates to surrounding uses, roads, natural areas, and the desired rural character of the Town. Through this *Plan*, the Town recommends:

- Using siting guidelines for homesites and clusters to preserve existing farmland, vegetation, and site features (e.g., fence rows) and minimize the visual impact of rural development.
- Designing new commercial and industrial developments with high quality building materials, landscaping, lighting and signage.
- Making sure that new residential and commercial waterfront development fits with the existing character of the area.
- Treating lands along the Interstate and the Interchange Area as a critical gateway to the Town.



IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN IN COOPERATION WITH OTHERS

The Town of Dekorra will have to work on further efforts and with other governments to fully achieve its future objectives. Recommendations include:

- Working with Poynette on an intergovernmental boundary/land use agreement.
- Coordinating with Columbia County on implementing the County's plans and zoning ordinance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A. Snapshot of Dekorra

Dekorra, located in southwestern Columbia County, contains a mostly rural landscape of drumlins, moraines, and stream bottoms. Over the past decade or so, the 46 square mile Town has experienced modest growth due to its landscape and location. Residents enjoy the rural atmosphere of the Town, Lake Wisconsin and accessibility to nearby centers such as Madison. Interstate 39/90/94 and U.S. Highway 51 run through the Town. Most of the land in Dekorra is undeveloped, but the landscape is punctuated by pockets of residential development, especially along the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin. Map 1 shows the regional influences that affect Dekorra.

B. Purpose of this Plan

The 2012-14 Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan is intended to update and replace the Town's 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The purposes of the Comprehensive Plan are to:

- Identify areas appropriate for development and preservation over the next 20 years;
- Recommend types of land use for specific areas in the Town;
- Preserve agricultural lands and retain farming as a viable occupation;
- Identify needed transportation and community facilities to serve future land uses;
- Direct economic development, housing, and other investment in the Town; and
- Provide detailed strategies to implement Plan recommendations.

This Comprehensive Plan was updated under the State of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation, contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. It was updated in two phases—the first adopted in 2012 and the second in 2014. The document is organized into several chapters corresponding with the required plan elements under this law.

C. General Regional Context

Map 2 shows the relationship of Dekorra to nearby places. Dekorra is in the southwest quadrant of Columbia County, roughly five miles south of Portage. Dekorra surrounds Poynette on three sides--portions are within Poynette's 1½ mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. Dekorra abuts the Town of Lowville to the east, Lake Wisconsin and the Town of Caledonia to the west, the Town of Pacific to the north, and the Towns of Arlington and Lodi to the south.

Map 1: Regional Influences

Map 2: Jurisdictional Boundaries

CHAPTER TWO: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter gives an overview of demographic trends, background information, and population forecasts to understand the changes taking place in Dekorra. It also summarizes past participation efforts and includes overall goals to guide the future preservation and development in the Town.

A. Population Trends and Forecasts

Dekorra experienced significant population growth during the 1990s. The Town grew from 1,829 permanent residents in 1990 to 2,350 permanent residents in 2000—an increase of 28.5% (see Table 1). Dekorra's growth slowed in the first decade of the new millennium. According to the U.S. Census, **Dekorra's 2010 population was 2,311, a decrease of 1.7% from the year 2000.** This is attributable to a comparatively modest number of new housing starts plus significantly lower average household sizes. These population numbers do not account for the Dekorra's significant seasonal population base.

The Town of Arlington also experienced a decrease in population between 2000 and 2010. While the other communities compared in Table 1 experienced varying rates of population increase from 2000 to 2010, the rates of increase were lower across the board compared to the 1990 to 2010 time period. This reflects the significant economic downtown that began in 2007.

Table 1: Population Trends

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Population Change*	Percent Change*
Town of Dekorra	1,763	1,914	1,829	2,350	2,311	-39	-1.7%
Village of Poynette	1,118	1,447	1,662	2,266	2,528	+262	+11.6%
Town of Lowville	819	976	938	987	1,008	+21	+2.1%
Town of Arlington	701	752	748	848	806	-42	-5.0%
Columbia County	40,150	43,222	45,088	52,468	56,833	+4,365	+8.3%
Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	+323,311	+6.0%

Sources: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010
** 2000 to 2010 population change*

Table 2 shows the Town's forecasted population growth in five-year increments over the next 20 years based on historic growth trends. The three forecast scenarios in Table 2 reflect different assumptions on the continuation of historic trends and population growth. On average, Dekorra has added about 22 new residents per year from 1990 to 2012.

The aging population and the Town's attractive setting suggest that Dekorra may become even more popular for both seasonal vacationers and retirees. Further, anticipated employment growth and higher housing costs in Dane County suggest that commuter housing growth pressure will also be significant.

A forecasted population of somewhere between 2,811 and 3,033 permanent Dekorra residents by the year 2035 will be used as the basis for this Plan. Seasonal population is not reflected in these totals, but the seasonal housing growth is factored in to housing unit forecasts addressed in Chapter Eight: Housing. Actual future population will depend on market conditions, regional growth pressure, attitudes toward growth, changing demographics, development regulations, and availability of public utilities.

The "Recent Compounded Growth" scenario is included in Table 2 mainly to demonstrate an extrapolation of Dekorra's population loss experienced since the 2000 Census. This downward trend in population is unlikely to continue over the long-term. The Town has previously experienced comparable losses between 1980 and 1990 and subsequently resumed a pattern of population growth.

Table 2: Town of Dekorra Population Forecast Scenarios, 2015-2035

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Linear Growth Model (extrapolation of average of 22 new residents per year from 1990 to 2012)	2,374	2,484	2,593	2,702	2,811
Long-Term Compounded Growth Model (extrapolation of average annual 1.2 percent increase in population from 1990 to 2012)	2,393	2,539	2,694	2,858	3,033
Recent Compounded Growth (extrapolation of average annual 0.1 percent decrease in population from 2000 to 2012)	2,299	2,282	2,266	2,249	2,233

B. Age and Gender of Population

Table 3 compares the distribution of Dekorra's population in 2010 to surrounding communities, the County, and the State. Trends in age distribution affect demand for housing, schools, parks, and services.

Table 3: Age and Gender Statistics, 2010

	Town of Dekorra	Village of Poynette	Town of Lowville	Town of Arlington	Columbia County	State of Wisconsin
Median Age	47.6	36.8	46.7	44.1	41.0	38.5
% under 18	19.7	26.8	20.1	23.2	23.3	23.6
% over 65	15.4	10.8	15.2	12.7	14.6	13.7
% Female	47.9	50.7	46.7	48.5	49.1	50.4

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2010

In 2010, Dekorra had the highest median age of all communities compared, roughly comparable to surrounding towns, but notably higher than that of Poynette. The percentage of the Town's population aged 18 and under was the lowest of all communities compared, notably lower than that of Poynette and most closely comparable to that of the Town of Lowville. The percentage of Dekorra's population aged 65 and older was the highest of all communities compared, comparable with nearby towns, Columbia County, and the State, but notably higher than that of the Village of Poynette. Between 2000 and 2010, the Dekorra's median age increased; the percentage of persons under the age of 18 decreased; and the percentage of persons over the age of 65 increased.

Nationwide trends show an aging population. Following this trend, the average age of Dekorra's population has increased steadily over the past thirty years. **The median age in Dekorra rose from 31.7 in 1980 to 40.2 in 2000 to 47.6 in 2010.** With prolonged life expectancy and declining birth rates, the median age will likely continue to rise over the 20-year planning period. The Town's popularity as a location for seasonal and retirement homes will also continue to contribute to the rising median age.

C. Educational Levels

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS), about 94% of Dekorra's population age 25 and older had attained a high school level education. Approximately 20% of this same population had attained a college level degree (bachelor's degree or higher). These educational levels remained relatively unchanged since the 2000 Census.

D. Income Levels

The 2007-2011 ACS indicates that **Dekorra's median annual household income was $66,563** during this period. The ACS data indicates that the percent of Dekorra residents below the poverty level was 3.5 percent, up a little from the 2000 rate of 2.1 percent but still quite low on a statewide basis.

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue also provides income data for local jurisdictions. Based on income tax returns as reported in the Wisconsin Municipal Income Per Return Report **for 2011, the adjusted gross income (AGI) per tax return for Dekorra residents was $56,940, which is high compared to most neighboring communities**. The AGI per tax return for all residents in Columbia County was $46,990; for residents in the Town of Lowville, $50,810; residents in the Town of Arlington, $58,920; and residents in the Village of Poynette, $45,700. This data includes only income subject to tax and income of persons filing tax returns; it does not include non-taxable income and income of persons not filing returns. It does not directly reflect household incomes because tax returns do not always correspond with households.

E. Household Trends and Forecasts

Table 4 compares household characteristics in 2010 for Dekorra with surrounding communities, Columbia County, and the State. **Dekorra's average household size of 2.37 persons in 2010 was the lowest of all communities compared**. The fact that Dekorra had the lowest average household size is consistent with the Town's trend toward a higher median age.

The Town's average household size has been declining over the past three decades. The number of persons per household dropped from 2.92 in 1980 to 2.65 in 1990 to 2.48 in 2000 to 2.37 in 2010. The average household size in all of Columbia County in 2010 was 2.43, down from 2.49 in 2000. Average household size in Dekorra is forecasted to gradually decrease to approximately 2.25 persons per household by 2035. Household forecasts are included in Chapter Eight: Housing.

Table 4 shows a **notably smaller percentage of year-round homes in Dekorra than in the comparison jurisdictions and the State**. Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of year-round households as a percent of total housing units in Dekorra fell from 76.7 percent in 2000 to 72.8 percent in 2010.

Table 4: Housing & Household Characteristics, 2010

	Town of Dekorra	Village of Poynette	Town of Lowville	Town of Arlington	Columbia County	Wisconsin
Total Housing Units (inc. seasonal)	1,337	1,122	433	332	26,137	2,624,358
Total Year-Round Households	974	1,046	407	309	22,735	2,279,768
Percent Year-Round Households	72.8%	93.2%	94.0%	93.1%	87.0%	86.9%
Average Household Size	2.37	2.42	2.48	2.61	2.43	2.43
% Single-person Households	23.3	30.6	18.4	15.2	26.0	28.2
% with Individuals 65 Years or Older	25.4	21.1	26.5	22.0	25.3	24.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2010

F. Labor Force and Employment Trends and Forecasts

A community's labor force is the portion of the population employed or available for work. The labor force includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment. According to the 2007-2011 ACS, **1,031 of Dekorra residents aged 16 and older were employed out of a potential labor force of 1,195 Town residents**. According to data from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Columbia County's **unemployment rate appears to be decreasing** from a peak in the late 2000s. The May 2013 County unemployment rate is reported to be 6.0 percent. The April 2012 unemployment rate for Columbia County was 6.5 percent, which was down from 7.3 percent in April 2011, and down from 8.4 percent in April 2010.

Most employed residents of Dekorra work in manufacturing, education/health/social services, retail trade, or transportation/warehousing/utilities occupations. The percentage of the Town's employed population by sector is shown in Table 5. According to the DWD, as of the last quarter of 2012, the largest employers in Columbia County were: Divine Savior Healthcare, Inc.; County of Columbia; Portage Community Schools; Associated Milk Producers, Inc.; and Walmart. Much of the Town's labor force is employed outside of Dekorra and Columbia County; the mean travel time to work between 2007 and 2010 was 25.9 minutes.

Table 5: Occupations of Dekorra's Employed Residents

Industry	Percentage of Labor Force
Manufacturing	26.0%
Education/Health/Social Services	22.4%
Retail Trade	10.1%
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	7.8%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	5.9%
Construction	5.9%
Professional/Scientific/Management/Administrative	5.8%
Wholesale Trade	5.0%
Public Administration	5.2%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Accommodation/Food Service	3.3%
Other Services	1.1%
Agriculture/Forestry/Mining	0.9%
Information	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS)

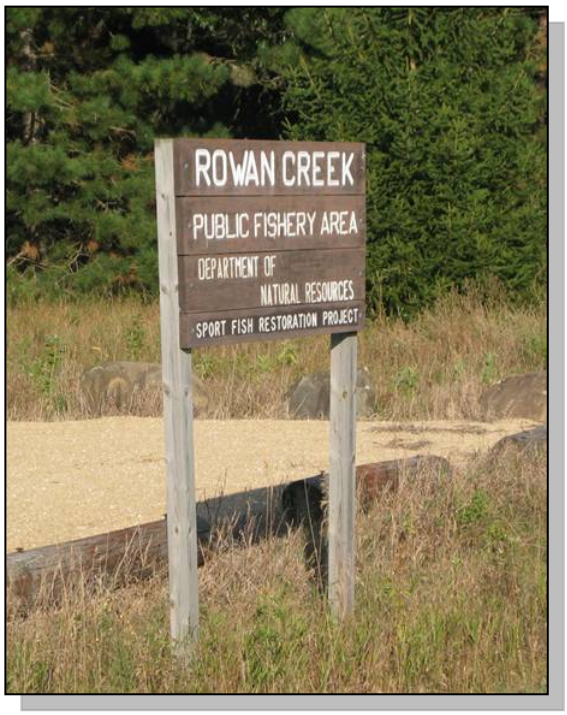
Forecasting employment growth for establishments located within Dekorra is difficult. The Town's greatest concentration of jobs is near the Interstate 39/Highway CS Interchange, which is planned to grow as both a service and job center over the next 20 years (see Map 7). There will also be scattered employment opportunities along Highway 51 and the waterfront.

G. Issues Raised Through Public Input

The Town Comprehensive Planning Committee—comprised of the Town Board and Town Plan Commission—directed a number of efforts to ensure that this Comprehensive Plan is based on the goals of Dekorra residents. These efforts have been held over the past 10 years, during various comprehensive planning exercises. Some of these were held jointly with Poynette and Lowville in the mid-2000s. These

efforts raised the following key issues and opportunities that later sections of the Plan attempt to address.

1. **Community Character:** The Town's rural, small-town character was the #1 reason why survey respondents live in the area. Lake Wisconsin defines the character of the Town and is the main tourist attraction. "Growth" along the lake often means older, smaller seasonal homes being replaced with year-round retirement homes. Most support regulations that would help to preserve existing community character. Land in rural (agricultural) areas was being split into 35-acre lots, resulting in the fragmentation of the Town's farmland.
2. **Land Use:** Residents wish to balance new growth with farmland and natural area preservation. Approaches to grow near existing populated areas and to cluster new housing, as opposed larger lots and more scattered development, are supported. There is also a desire to attract high quality commercial and industrial development to the Interstate 39/CS Interchange Area.



3. **Housing and Economic Development:** Most wish to promote economic development consistent with community character. The Town's housing stock is in good condition, but there are isolated maintenance and code violation problems. Policies for new housing development are often confusing, especially given different County versus Town policies.
4. **Environment:** Rolling hills, Class A streams, and the Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin make Dekorra a special place. Preservation of wildlife habitat, woodlands, wetlands, streams, and other natural areas is important to the quality of life. There is a perception that the Wisconsin River is over-used on weekends.
5. **Community Facilities and Services:** There is a desire to provide park and recreation opportunities to all areas of the Town, not just the waterfront. Still, there is a strong desire to control property taxes and obtain a fair share of state and federal funding.

H. Preferred Future Scenario

An open house was held on June 24, 2003 to gather input on two alternative future scenarios for the Dekorra-Lowville-Poynette area. The scenarios depicted different ways that development in the next 50 or 60 years might be arranged. The two scenarios presented were:

1. **"Trend" Scenario**

   This scenario represented the area if then-current land use trends continue and land use controls remain similar to what they are today. Features included:

   - 35-acre rural lots
   - Build-out of waterfront properties
   - Undefined development edges
   - Disconnected natural areas
   - Development spread along Interstate
   - Uncoordinated economic development
   - Large-lot development at the edges of the Village
   - Identity of region as "suburb" of Madison

2. "**Vision**" **Scenario**

   This scenario represented the area with changes made to plans and regulations to take advantage of lessons learned and the results of public input. Features included:

   - Clustered rural housing
   - Reflection of small-town, rural character in new development
   - Joint economic development planning
   - Growth focused in already developed areas
   - Clear edges between developed and open lands
   - Unified natural areas
   - Higher density development in Village; with priority placed on infill development and redevelopment
   - Coordinated effort to get people to live, work, and recreate locally

   When asked to pick which scenario they preferred, most participants preferred the "Vision Scenario." This Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan is based largely on the "Vision Scenario" developed in 2005.

I. VISION AND GOALS

Nearly every remaining chapter in this Plan includes goals, objectives, policies, and programs. Combined, these provide both the vision for this Plan and the specific guidance that the Town will use in making decisions to implement the Plan over the 20-year planning period. Specifically:

- A **Vision Statement** is an expression of the general direction the community wishes to take over the next 20 years. All goals, objectives, policies, programs, and actions to implement the Plan should be consistent with this vision.
- **Goals** are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach development issues during the next 20+ years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.

- **Objectives** are more specific than goals. Objectives are usually attainable through policies and specific implementation activities. Accomplishment of an objective contributes to fulfillment of a goal.
- **Policies** are rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Success in achieving policies is usually measurable.
- **Programs** are specific projects or services advised to achieve plan goals, objectives, and policies. Programs are sometimes included in the same list as "policies" and are sometimes included in the same section as "recommendations," depending on the chapter.

In 2005, the Dekorra, Lowville, and Poynette Joint Steering Committee developed a vision statement and regional goals based on agreed-upon opportunities. Dekorra supports the regional vision and goals, and has prepared this Plan in accordance with the framework provided through them.

REGIONAL VISION [ESTABLISHED DURING 2005 PLANNING PROCESS]

The area's identity is defined by its high quality of life and unspoiled natural beauty. Communities must protect natural and community resources, including quality education, by carefully managing change as new residents are welcomed. Controlling property taxes is also an important component of maintaining a high quality of life.

REGIONAL GOALS

1. **Preserve and enhance the area's quality of life.** The area's identity is defined by its high quality of life and unspoiled natural beauty. Communities must protect natural and community resources, including quality education, by carefully managing change as new residents are welcomed. Controlling property taxes is also an important component of maintaining a high quality of life.
2. **Incorporate sensible, sustainable land use practices.** Support land use practices that will preserve the area's character while accommodating planned growth. Such practices include focusing new development near already developed areas and exploring new models of neighborhood design. These practices will help to preserve natural resources, reduce infrastructure and service costs, and maintain small-town and rural character.
3. **Provide economic opportunities for existing and future businesses.** Support the growth of existing businesses and the expansion of new business, tax base, and job opportunities where compatible with the character of the area and consistent with natural resource preservation. This may include exploration of low-impact recreation and tourism opportunities.
4. **Capitalize on emerging trends and markets for agriculture.** Farming is a key feature of the area's economy and cultural landscape. Identifying new uses for farmland and new markets for agricultural products will help preserve the area's rich farmland and agricultural heritage. Different approaches to rural development that preserve farmland while providing non-farm income opportunities should be explored.

In addition to the regional goals, this Plan is guided by the following Town vision and goals. More specific policies linked to these goals and objectives are included in Chapters Three through Nine. An overall program to implement these goals, objectives, and policies is included in Chapter Eleven.

DEKORRA'S VISION

Dekorra is "beautifully situated" in the heart of southern Wisconsin. Set amidst abundant natural resources and productive farmland, the Town has maintained the integrity of the landscape as a foundation to the Town's quality of life and economy. Building on a vibrant regional economy, convenient access ensures the availability of good jobs to Town residents, and attracts high quality businesses. Thoughtfully planned residential and business development ensures the small town character of the community is retained, while providing places to live, work, and a strong quality of life for residents.

TOWN GOALS

1. **Agriculture**: Preserve farming as a viable business activity and productive farmlands for continued agricultural use and rural character preservation.
2. **Natural Resources**: Respect the natural environment as an irreplaceable resource and protect and enhance natural and recreational resources for the enjoyment of present residents and future generations.
3. **Land Use**: Promote a future land use pattern that is consistent with the Town's rural, "small-town" character, but which also focuses economic development near major highways.
4. **Transportation**: Provide a safe and efficient road system that serves the land use pattern and recognizes that different types of roads can and should serve different purposes.
5. **Housing and Neighborhood Design**: Manage residential growth by providing opportunities for limited housing development, while retaining rural character, productive farmland, natural resources, and historic and cultural features.
6. **Economic Development**: Facilitate high-quality economic development that provides quality job opportunities, retains the Town's natural resource and agricultural assets, and maintains and improves quality of life for Town residents.
7. **Community Facilities, Utilities, and Services:** Provide access to basic public services such as police and fire protection, road maintenance and snow removal, recycling, schools, recreational facilities and activities, and public utilities in intensive development areas.
8. **Parks and Recreation:** Provide open space and trails for outdoor recreation, access to natural resources, and environmental protection, with safe and efficient neighborhood connections.
9. **Intergovernmental Cooperation:** Build on relations with surrounding and overlapping governments to achieve mutual goals and deliver services efficiently.

CHAPTER THREE: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter of the *Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan* satisfies the agricultural, natural and cultural resources elements described in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This chapter does not directly address the use of natural resources for recreational purposes (instead see Chapter Six).

A. Agricultural Resource Inventory

Farming is still a way of life for many Town residents and an essential part of our region and nation. The agricultural landscape, also defines much of Dekorra's rural character. The land is punctuated by seasonal changes in crop cover, colors and textures of fields, and architecturally significant farm buildings.

1. Character of Farming

Farmers in Dekorra produce a variety of agricultural commodities including dairy, alfalfa, corn and soybeans, as well as vegetables and fruits for the local market. Most of the farms in the Town remain family-owned.

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service's Census of Agriculture, the average farm size in Columbia County in 2007 was 199 acres, down from 228 acres in 2002. During this same time period, the total acres in farming in Columbia County decreased from 348,369 acres in 2002 to 316,393 in 2007, while the total number of farms increased from 1,526 in 2002 to 1,585 in 2007. For the sake of comparison, the average farm size for the entire County was 208 acres in 1997 and 182 acres in 1990.

2. Location of Farmland

According to WISCLAND data developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR), approximately 51% of the land in Dekorra was used for agricultural purposes in the early 1990's. The "Farmland" land use category included row crops, hayfields, pastures, grasslands, idle farmland, and Conservation Reserve Program land. As shown in Map 5, agricultural land still covers much of Dekorra, but not as much as other towns to the east and south.

3. Assessment of Farmland Viability

The suitability of land for crop production is one important predictor of its future viability for continued farming and its level of appropriateness for non-farm development.

The USDA-NRCS Land Evaluation System groups soil suitability for agriculture based on three factors: prime farmland soils, soil productivity for corn, and land capability class. Soils are grouped by suitability from Group I to Group VIII. Group I soils have few limitations that restrict their use for agriculture. Group II soils have moderate limitations that may reduce the choice of crops, require special conservation practices, or both.

Soil suitability for agriculture is presented on Map 3. Much of Dekorra's land is not as well-suited for crop production as land in neighboring towns, and may be better suited to animal farming

and other open space uses. Approximately 15% of all soils in Dekorra are in Group II and are concentrated in the northeastern part of the Town near Highway 51. There is only a very small amount of Group I soils in the Town.

The viability of land for continued farming is affected by other factors aside from soil suitability. These include size and shape of cropland, farm product market prices, individual commitments to farming (financial and emotional), opportunities for animal farming, conflicts with nearby non-farm uses, proximity to urban areas (sewer and water), and proximity to highways. Each of these factors was considered in making land use recommendations included in Chapter Four: Land Use.

B. AGRICULTURAL GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICES, AND PROGRAMS

1. Goal

Preserve farming as a viable business activity and productive farmlands for continued agricultural use and rural character preservation.

2. Objectives

a. In planned agricultural areas, limit the amount of non-farm uses, and guide the location of allowable homes on individual sites.

b. Direct new homes to smaller lots, to locations where housing is already located, and in clusters where appropriate.

c. Support appropriate opportunities for farmers to obtain non-farm income.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Designate **most of the Town as a planned *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*** represented on Map 6, with most of those lands appropriate for A-1 Agricultural zoning.

b. **Limit the number of homes in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*** by following a maximum residential density policy, described in more detail in Chapter Four.

c. **Guide the placement of homes**, driveways, and other uses in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* to **less productive soils** and the edges of agricultural fields, as described in more detail in Chapter Four.

d. Promote the **clustering or grouping of smaller residential lots** in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* consistent with the residential density policy, and promote the use of design guidelines to direct homes away from the best soils and protect rural character. Refer to the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Chapter Four for detailed lot size and clustering standards.

e. Allow **home occupations, farm family businesses, and other compatible business opportunities** on farm parcels to supplement farming income.

f. Support farmland preservation tax credits, use value assessments, reform in federal farm laws, and other programs that **encourage the continued use of land for farming**.

g. Continue to collaborate with Columbia County and the State on **farmland preservation planning and zoning decisions**.

Map 3: Soil Suitability for Agriculture

C. Inventory of Other Natural Resources

Understanding Dekorra's natural features suggests possible locational advantages for particular land uses. It is also essential to understand the location of environmentally sensitive areas where development is not appropriate. This will prevent severe developmental or environmental problems that may be difficult or costly to correct in the future. Maintenance of these natural features is also important for community appearance and the functions they perform for natural communities. Map 4 depicts the Town's environmentally sensitive areas, some of which are described in more detail below.

1. Landforms/Topography/Non-metallic Mineral Resources

Dekorra is situated near the eastern edge of Wisconsin's driftless area. The Town's landforms are characterized primarily by gently rolling ground moraines. Elevations range between 835 feet above sea level at the Wisconsin River and 1,080 feet in bluff areas.

There are a few small sand and gravel quarries located in Dekorra, mostly near the Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin.

Under State Statutes (295.20), landowners who want to register their property as a nonmetallic mining deposit are required to notify each county, city, village and/or town that has zoning authority over their property. Registrations must be recorded at the County Register of Deeds in the County where the mineral deposit is located. Columbia County does not yet have a register of marketable mineral deposits. State law limits the ability of a municipality or a county to rezone or otherwise interfere with the future extraction of a mineral resource from a registered nonmetallic mineral deposit. It is important to note that zoning changes prohibiting mining on land registered as a marketable nonmetallic mining deposit cannot take effect during the registration period. Registration is effective for 10 years and renewable for an additional 10 years. In addition, registration on property with active mining operations can be renewed for as long as mining is ongoing. Zoning changes may take affect after the registration has expired.

2. General Soils Information

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. Problems that limit development on certain soils include slumping, poor drainage, erosion, steep slopes and high water tables. Dekorra's soils are of four major associations:

- *The Lapeer-Wyocena Association* if found in a wide east-west strip across the center of Dekorra. These soils are found mostly on glaciated uplands, and are characterized by moraines, drumlins, and glaciated ridges. The drumlins are generally east-west oriented. Both Lapeer and Wyocena soils are well drained and consist of a sand/loam mix. These soils have medium fertility and low available water capacity, which may inhibit cultivation in spots. The heavily sloped and ridge areas are wooded. These soils are well suited for development.
- *The Plainfield-Okee Association* is found in the south one-third of Dekorra. The predominating landscape of these soils is sand-capped drumlins separated by low areas of sandy outwash. These soils are generally well-drained. The sandier Plainfield soils occur in outwash plains, while loamy Okee soils are found on the drumlins. The soils are generally low in fertility and available water capacity, and are easily susceptible to drought conditions and wind erosion. Much of this soil association is wooded and provides for wildlife habitat. Increasing numbers of residential units are being constructed on this association due to its low value for farming, and its proximity to Poynette.

- *The Houghton-Adrian-Palms Association* is found in three areas of Town, all located along streams (Rocky Run, Rowan Creek, and Hinkson Creek). These soils are usually found in floodplains, and tend to be very poorly drained. Marshes are common throughout this association. These soils have low fertility and high available water capacity, and are often subject to flooding. The soils are limited in their capacity for housing or road construction. Most of the wildlife areas and hunting and fishing grounds throughout the County are associated with the *Houghton-Adrian Palms* association.
- *The Granby-Alluvial Association* is found in the northwest corner of Dekorra, adjacent to the River. These soils are characterized by nearly level or gently sloping poorly drained soils. Available water capacity and fertility are low in this association. Flooding is occasional to frequent, and runoff is very slow. These sand soils can be seasonally dry, and subject to wind and water erosion. *Granby-Alluvial* is poorly suited to crops, although some forage, vegetable, and cash grain crops could be grown in well-drained areas. Housing, industrial, and commercial development is ill suited to this soil association, yet there has been a significant amount of housing built in these areas- mostly using holding tanks for waste disposal.

The suitability of the various soils in the Town for on-site waste treatment systems is described in Chapter Six: Utilities and Community Facilities.

3. Drainage Basins

Dekorra is located in the Lower Wisconsin River basin. The Lower Wisconsin River basin drains approximately 4,940 square miles of south-central and southwestern Wisconsin. Water quality in the basin is generally good. The primary water quality problems are caused by nonpoint sources of pollution, particularly from agricultural operations. Basins are further divided into watersheds, shown on Map 4. Most of the Town is in the Lake Wisconsin Watershed. The northeastern portion of the Town is in the Duck Creek and Rocky Run Watershed.

4. Groundwater

Groundwater resources are plentiful in the Town at both shallow and deep levels. The general geology of the region is comprised of gravel and sand over sandstone or dolomite formations. Water supplies are drawn mostly from the alluvial aquifer made up of the coarse-grained sand and gravel, and are generally of good quality. A large amount of the groundwater withdrawn and used in Dekorra is recharged locally from infiltration of precipitation.

Although groundwater in Dekorra is of good quality, problems with contamination can occur. In areas of granular soils, the upper aquifers supplying water are susceptible to contamination from both surface and subsurface sources. The most common and widespread groundwater contaminant is nitrate-nitrogen. Nitrate-nitrogen is highly soluble in water and is not significantly absorbed in the soil; thus it can seep readily through the soil and into the groundwater. Potential sources of nitrate pollution include on-site wastewater systems, animal feedlots, livestock waste facilities, sludge and septic application, lawn and agricultural fertilizers, silage juice and decaying plant debris.

Another contaminate found in Dekorra groundwater is atrazine, which has been the most commonly used corn herbicide in Wisconsin for the past 30 years. The herbicide and its breakdown products are often found in groundwater in agricultural areas of Wisconsin. Three square miles in the southeast corner of Dekorra, east of and adjacent to the Village of Poynette, are included in the Wisconsin Atrazine Prohibition Area. The affected areas of Dekorra are as follows: section 25; section 36; the east half of section 26; and the east half of section 35.

Map 4: Dekorra Natural Areas

5. Surface Waters

Dekorra is bordered on the west by the Wisconsin River and the 9,000 acre Lake Wisconsin, formed by a downstream dam in the river near Prairie du Sac. The lake has a maximum depth of 39 feet. Popular with year-round residents, seasonal residents, and tourists, these waters provide recreational opportunities.

The man-made Lake Columbia is partially located in the Town. The lake was constructed as a cooling pond for the Columbia Power Plant south of Portage. Lake Columbia remains free of ice year-round due to the power plant. The lake has exceptionally high levels of fish and aquatic vegetation.

The Town has several high quality streams. The following information was derived from WisDNR water body summaries:

- Rowan Creek runs through the southern portion of the Town. 3.6 miles of Rowan Creek at its eastern end are categorized as a Class I trout stream and an Exceptional Resource Water (ERW). 10.4 miles of its westerly stretch are categorized as Class II. Rowan Creek was on the WisDNR's list of Section 303D impaired waters, due to both nonpoint and point source pollution, but it was delisted in 2002. It's considered by some to be the best trout stream in Columbia County.
- Hinkson Creek is a small, low gradient, coldwater, Class II tributary to Rowan Creek. It's 10 miles in length and buffered by wetlands. Its upper reaches support natural reproduction of brook trout, while its lower half requires stocking.
- Rocky Run Creek flows through Dekorra in the northern quarter of the Town. East of Highway 51 the stream is trout water, with 5 miles designated as Class II and 3 miles designated as Class III. Rocky Run receives point source discharges from the Lake Columbia power plant (Alliant/Wisconsin Power & Light), and a tributary to the stream receives discharge from the Rio wastewater treatment plan. The creek has been ranked as a high priority for nonpoint source pollution protection, and would benefit from a pollution reduction project.

These surface waters are important to the health of the Wisconsin River. The river has been impacted both from industries (including paper making) and by non-point and point source pollution in its tributaries. Overall, the Lower Wisconsin River is classified as a diverse warm water sport fishery (WWSF), but it is classified as an Impaired Water for mercury and PCB contamination. The River no longer supports commercial fishing, due to pollution. The River is home to a number of threatened and endangered species.

6. Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplain areas. These are areas predicted to be inundated with floodwaters in the 100-year storm event (e.g., a storm that has a 1% chance of happening in any given year). The State requires County regulation of devel-

opment in floodplains. Development is strongly discouraged in floodplains to avoid property damage.

Floodplain areas in the Town are located along Rocky Run Creek, Rowan and Hinkson Creeks, and the Wisconsin River. While floodplain areas are included on Map 4, the National Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) produced by FEMA should be referenced for official delineation and elevations of floodplain boundaries.

7. Wetlands

Wetlands are important for aquifer recharge, groundwater and surface water quality, and wildlife habitat. Wetlands cover approximately 9% of Dekorra. Wetlands in Dekorra are generally found in close vicinity to the streams. Sizeable wetland areas are located along Rocky Run Creek, Rowan and Hinkson Creeks, and along the Wisconsin River north of the Interstate 39/90/94 bridge. The single largest wetland is just east/northeast of Whalen's Bay near the mouth of Rowan Creek.

Wetlands of at least two acres are shown on Map 4. County zoning regulates wetlands located within 1,000 feet of a lake, pond, or flowage, and within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of streams or rivers, or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever is greater. Wetlands are also subject to WisDNR or Army Corps of Engineers fill regulations.

8. Woodlands

Remaining woodlands are valuable contributors to the area's character, beauty and wildlife habitat. Due to nature of Dekorra's topography, about 1/3 of the Town contains significant areas of woodland cover. These areas generally coincide with heavily sloped, floodplain, or marginal agricultural areas. The most common species found in the woodlands are oak, hickory, maple, and basswood.

The State's Managed Forest Land (MFL) program is designed to encourage long-term investment in private forestland and promote sound forest management practices. This program is available to landowners with 10 or more contiguous acres of forestland. Participating landowners must agree to a forest management plan that includes selective harvesting. In exchange, their land is taxed at a lower rate. According to the WisDNR's 2013 Master Listing, there were 1,327 acres of forestland in the Town enrolled in the MFL program (the equivalent of roughly two sections of land).

9. Steep Slopes

As shown on Map 4, slopes exceeding a 12% grade occur throughout Dekorra, but are more frequent in the central and western portions of the Town. A total of 639 acres (2% of total acreage) in the Town contain slopes of 12% or greater, and 93 acres (>1% of total acreage) contain slopes of 20% or greater. Slopes of between 12% and 20% present challenges for building site devel-

opment. Steep slopes that exceed a 20% grade are not recommended as development sites due to erosion concerns.

10. Hilltops and Ridgetops

Hilltops and ridgetops are important natural features that serve to define the horizon. While commanding impressive views, large structures (houses) constructed on top of them tend to be visually prominent to surrounding lands.

Home placement on hilltops and ridgetops can lead to a perception of greater development in the Town than if homes were placed more discretely at the base or side of hills with screened vegetation. Hilltops and ridgetops in Dekorra are generally associated with steep slope areas on Map 4.

11. Rare Species Occurrences/Natural Areas

WisDNR's Natural Heritage Inventory program maintains data on the general location and status of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species. Rare plant or animal species occur along streams, the Wisconsin River, and Lake Wisconsin. More specific information on location and type of species is available from the state's Bureau of Endangered Resources on a request basis.

Additionally, WisDNR published in 2006 the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, which identifies 229 Legacy Places that have been identified as the State's top conservation priorities. There are seven of these places included in Columbia County: Arlington Prairie; Baraboo Hills; Baraboo River; Glacial Habitat Restoration Area; Lewiston Marsh; Middle Wisconsin River; and Portage to Buffalo Lake Corridor.

12. MacKenzie Environmental Education Center/Poynette State Game Farm

The MacKenzie Environmental Education Center and Poynette State Game Farm are Department of Natural Resources' facilities located in the eastern part of Dekorra. They are unique among state facilities in their mission of environmental education.

Since its incorporation in 1934, education programs and public contacts have been emphasized. In 1961, a cluster of buildings, built as part of an economic recovery program, and 250 acres were formally set aside "to promote

knowledge and wise use of Wisconsin's outdoor resources." In 1975, a resident center, authorized and funded through the Legislature, opened to accommodate overnight groups taking part in education programs.

People come from many areas of the state to attend programs at the center, ranging in age from preschool to adult. In 2001, 5,669 students attended overnight programs, and 7,459 students came to MacKenzie on day trips. The facility is also open to the general public. Exhibits and displays show some of the natural communities found in Wisconsin. Hiking trails and picnic areas provide an opportunity for outdoor experiences, and wildlife displays provide a means of learning about Wisconsin's indigenous flora and fauna. A logging museum and conservation museum are also among the attractions.

The primary role of the State Game Farm today is to provide pheasants and chicks for both public and private hunting grounds throughout Wisconsin. Wild pheasant populations in Wisconsin have declined steadily since the 1950's, due to conversion of wetland and grassland habitat to cropland and urban development. The Farm produces about 100,000 per year. Adult pheasants are raised for release on public lands, while pheasant chicks are produced and given to 75 cooperating conservation clubs in 35 counties, who raise the birds and release them on private lands open to public hunting.

In February 2013, WisDNR issued a termination of contract notice to the Wisconsin Wildlife Foundation (WWF), the primary organization that managed the MacKenzie Center and its programming under contractual arrangement with WisDNR. WisDNR cited financial concerns and a possible reorientation of part of the Center's emphasis toward "outdoors skills, recruitment and retention." The "outdoor skills" component of this new emphasis would include education and training for hunting, angling, and trapping.

In 2014, WisDNR took over the operation of the Center, education programs will continue, animal exhibits will remain.

13. Wisconsin DNR Project Boundaries

These are areas of land that the WisDNR has determined represent significant natural features or habitats, typically adjacent to existing publicly-owned lands that WisDNR has an interest in purchasing from willing sellers. The availability of land acquisition funds and the willingness of landowners to sell determine how much land within a project boundary is purchased in any given year. Within project boundaries, WisDNR may also pursue cooperative management of the land with private landowners.

DNR will often adopt master plans for individual properties and clusters of properties. On December 12, 2012, the Natural Resources Board adopted the Columbia County Planning Group Master Plan, which highlights DNR properties and planning areas within Columbia County and the associated vision, goals, and objectives for the areas. The Columbia County Planning Group includes 19 properties comprising 24,107 acres. The CCPG Master Plan identifies potential property expansions and contractions.

Revised DNR Project Boundaries are reflected on Map 6: Planned Land Use.

D. Natural Resource Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Respect the natural environment as an irreplaceable resource and protect and enhance natural and recreational resources for the enjoyment of present residents and future generations.

2. Objectives

a. Preserve streams, drainageways, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, steep slopes, the continuity of larger woodland areas, and other natural features.

b. Protect surface water and groundwater quality.

c. Prevent future problems associated with developing land too close to natural areas and on erosion prone slopes.

d. Cooperate with other units of government on resources under shared authority.

e. Maintain the peace and tranquility of the rural setting.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Preserve environmental and open space corridors by **prohibiting new buildings in wetlands, stream banks, floodplains, shoreland setback areas, and on slopes greater than 20%**. Development should also be discouraged on slopes between 12% and 20% where other more appropriate sites are available. The Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Code have specific regulations regarding development on slopes of 12% or greater. Steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains are shown on Map 4. The Town should support more detailed mapping of these natural resources where it is apparent that a development proposal may impact these features, existing maps are in error, or changes have occurred in the features.

b. **Preserve special landscape features** including the Rowan, Hinkson and Rocky Run Creek Corridors; remaining undeveloped Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin frontage; bluffs and hilltops; and larger woodland habitats.

c. Help protect and improve the **quality of surface water** within the Town, particularly the Hinkson, Rowan, and Rocky Run Creeks, mainly by participating in County and State water quality improvement efforts and encouraging private land stewardship.

d. Support the formation a broad-based coalition focused on the **long-term management of the creeks, Lake Wisconsin/Wisconsin River,** and their watersheds. Consider Supporting Creation of Lake Association or "Friends" Group Focused on Lake Wisconsin, as described in greater detail in the Economic Development chapter.

e. Enforce the Town's **Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Ordinance**. Emphasize use of natural techniques to control the quality, quantity, and temperature of water leaving any site.

f. To protect groundwater quality, **avoid the over-concentration of on-site waste treatment systems**.

g. Avoid extensive hard-surfaces within designated **groundwater recharge areas**.

h. Before approving any changes in land use, **consider the impact on wildlife habitat**, potential locations of rare or threatened plant and animal species, **and archeological sites** such as mound groups. Ensure that the land use changes meet all applicable criteria in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code.

i. Continue to participate on efforts to amend, update, and **implement the Columbia County Hazard Mitigation Plan to reduce or mitigate natural hazards in the Town.**

E. CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Preservation of historic, archeological, and other cultural resources fosters a sense of pride, improves quality of life, and provides an important feeling of social and cultural continuity between the past, present and future. The following sections describe the significant historic, archeological, cultural resources in the Town.

1. Early Town History

a. **Origin of the Name "Dekorra"**

Sebrevoir DeCarrie, a French fur trader, fell in love with Ho-Pe-Ke-E-Kaw (Glory in the Morning) while living among the Winnebago people, now known as the HoChunk. Glory in the Morning, the eldest daughter of a Winnebago chief, agreed to be his wife, and to them was born a daughter, Oak Leaf, and two sons, Cheu-Ke-Ke (Spoon) and Chah-Post-Kaw-Kaw (Buzzard). After a while DeCarrie wanted to return to his white culture and take the children with him, but his wife disagreed. The final decision was left to the children. The daughter chose to return to the white world with her father and the two sons chose to stay with their mother.

Sebrevoir DeCarrie became a French army officer and was subsequently killed in Quebec in 1760.The two sons became Winnebago chiefs. It is believed that the sons used the name DeCarrie, but the name was convoluted by the white man's interpretation to become DeKorra, Decorra, DeKorrah, Decorah, Dakouray, Dekora, Decorri, De Korra, DeKauray, and many more variations. The Dekorra Precinct was named in honor of Chief Greyhead Decorah, the grandson of Sebrevoir DeCarrie and Glory in the Morning. Dekorra was adopted as the official township name by the Board of County Commissioners, and later a village was platted within the Town named the Village of Dekorra.

b. **The Beginning**

Christopher Columbus, on behalf of Spain, discovered a land mass in 1492. Many consider this to be the first foreign entity to claim what is now known as the United States. However, Spain did not clearly define her claim nor did she exert any influence much further than the territory that she actually occupied. When Frenchman Jacques Cartier sailed into the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1534, he laid the basis for later French claims that eventually included much of the continental United States. French control continued until 1759, when the Seven Years War between France and Great Britain ended and Great Britain obtained the undisputed control of all land east of the Mississippi River. At that time, the future State of Wisconsin became a part of the English colony of Quebec. English control continued until 1775, when

the colonies declared independence from Great Britain. Columbia County, including the Town of Dekorra, had been controlled by four nations beginning with Spain in 1512 to 1634, France from 1634 to 1763, Great Britain from 1763 to 1783, and the United States from 1783 to present.

c. **Native Americans**

Prior to the claims and domination by foreign nations, the land now known as the Town of Dekorra, was inhabited by descendants of the first humans to move into the area as the last glacier withdrew, around 7000 B.C. It is believed that the ancestors of the Native Americans entered the continent across a land bridge from Siberia to Alaska.

The most important topographical feature of Wisconsin in relation to its history is the Fox-Wisconsin waterway, which extends from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. From prehistoric times, when the native peoples traveled the river, to 1673, when Marquette and Joliet journeyed westward in search of the Mississippi River, and for more than one hundred and fifty years beyond, the Fox-Wisconsin waterway was the most widely used transportation route within the state. The waterway was also a vital link in the great pathway that opened up the west. Along the Fox-Wisconsin traveled the many native peoples, fur traders, missionaries, soldiers, loggers and early settlers. The waterway was Wisconsin's "First Main Street". The portage between the Fox and Wisconsin and the large bend of the Wisconsin River were landmarks known across North America as "the meeting place." From the Winnebago chief, WaukonHaKa Decorah (or Snakeskin), a fur trader named Brisbois learned that the Winnebagoes referred to the Wisconsin River as the Nee-Koonts-Sa-Ra, or "the Gathering River," meaning a river having many tributaries. The Ojibwe word for the river, meaning "gathering waters," was Wees-Kon-san. The Territory, and later the State, of Wisconsin was named for its principal river.

There was an extensive network of Indian trails throughout Wisconsin connecting village sites, numerous fishing, hunting, sugar bush and wintering camps, agricultural garden beds, burial mounds, ceremonial sites, and river landings and crossings. Several major trail systems arrived in the area that was to become the Town of Dekorra. One of the more important trails was the Prairie du Chien to Four Lakes (Madison) to Portage to Green Bay trail, which became part of the Military Road, and which connected Fort Howard in Green Bay to Fort Winnebago near the portage to Fort Crawford in Prairie du Chien. The Port Washington trail from Lake Michigan to the Wisconsin River also came to this area. One of the Winnebago Indian villages was strategically located at the junction of the major trails and also controlled the traffic on the Wisconsin River. It was near the Indian villages at strategic points on these trails that the early French traders established their trading posts and inns. Later, in this area, were platted first Kentucky City and then the Village of Dekorra.

d. **The Precinct of Dekorra**

Long before the Town of Dekorra was established and Wisconsin became a state, there existed the Precinct of Dekorra, which was part of the territorial government. The precinct was named in honor of Chief Grey Haired Decorah, son of Spoon Decorah and Flight of Geese, and grandson of Glory of the Morning.

The area now encompassed by the Town of Dekorra has been a part of five different territories, the Northwest Territory from 1787 to 1800, Indiana Territory from 1800 to 1809, Illinois Territory from 1809 to 1818, Michigan Territory from 1818 to 1836, and finally the Wisconsin Territory from 1836 to 1848, at which time Wisconsin became the 30th state of the union. The territorial boundaries would shift and change as states were created and admitted into the union.

The boundaries of the counties were continually shifting and changing as well. In 1836, the Territory of Wisconsin was established and the territorial legislature set off a county named Portage from the existing counties of Brown and Crawford. The original Portage County included all of present day Columbia County except a small portion of the Town of Caledonia, which remained in Crawford County; and it also included portions of current day Dodge County and Sauk County. The territorial legislature changed the boundaries of the county in 1838 and once again in 1841. The 1841 boundaries for Portage County included all of the present day counties of Columbia, Adams, Juneau, and Wood; and eastern parts of Taylor, Price and Iron; and western parts of Marquette, Portage, Marathon, Lincoln, and Langlade. Kentucky City was the county seat for Portage County from 1838 until 1844, when an election was held in the county to determine the location of the county seat. Plover won out over Fort Winnebago, Kentucky City was not in the running. Three election precincts were established in the area now comprising Columbia County, one of which was at the house of Lafayette Hill, located in Kentucky City, which later became the Village of Dekorra.

Columbia County was set off from Portage County by an act of the legislature dated February 3, 1846. On July 16, 1846 the County Commissioners, three in number, created several voting precincts in the new county, one being the Dekorra precinct. The Dekorra precinct included township 11, ranges 8 and 9 and the south half of town 12, range 9 lying south of the Baraboo River. This precinct included the present day Town of Dekorra, the south half of the Town of Pacific, and all of the Town of Caledonia lying south of the Baraboo River. On November 11, 1851, The Town of Caledonia was created by the County Board of Supervisors, removing it from the Town of Dekorra. Then, on November 19, 1852, the whole of the present Town of Pacific was attached to Fort Winnebago, leaving the boundaries for the Town of Dekorra as they exist today.

e. **Villages**

Although the Town of Dekorra has always been primarily a rural setting, there have been five villages of note in its long history – Kentucky City, Village of Dekorra, Village of Poynette, Village of Inch, and Village of Oshaukuta. Kentucky City, located on the banks of the Wisconsin River, was platted in 1837, and included the area that would later be platted as the Village of Dekorra. On January 12, 1838 Kentucky City became the county seat for the County of Portage and remained the county seat until 1844, when the county seat was moved to Plover. Kentucky City was one of three voting precincts in the county in 1844, as mentioned previously. Lafayette Hill, owner of Hill's Hotel and Tavern, was one of the first residents of Kentucky City and was very active in local politics and in the development of the town, as shall be seen later during the discussion of the Village of Oshaukuta. LaFayette Hill's Hotel and Tavern was built in 1837, consisted of two stories and was the only known structure to be built in Kentucky City. However, a reference has been found indicating that a brick maker was located in Kentucky City as well. Hill's tavern was designated as a voting precinct on

April 20, 1842, when the area was part of Portage County. Hill's Tavern was again designated as a voting precinct on July 16, 1846, after Columbia County was formed. Hill later sold this business, platted the Village of Oshaukuta in 1848, and established a new public house there. Hill's Village of Dekorra hotel and tavern stood until the late 1950's, when it was finally torn down. During its last years it served as a shelter for a local farmer's livestock and for storage.

The plat for the Village of Dekorra, which included a portion of the Kentucky City plat, was filed on January 7, 1843, by agents for James H. Thompson of Cincinnati, Ohio. Thompson had purchased the land in the fall of 1842 and named the village after the Town of Dekorra.

At the direction of James Thompson, several stores were built. Between 1843 and 1890, the area had supported several businesses, including grocery stores, shoe shops, taverns, blacksmiths, carpenter/joiners, at least three small hotels, and a post office. LaFayette Hill's Hotel and Tavern was included in the new village as well. The village also served as a supply and rest stop for lumber rafts, steamboats and travelers on the river. Several homes were built in and near the village. The residents included carpenter/joiners, blacksmiths, a river pilot, a wagon maker, and a Presbyterian minister who served both the Towns of Caledonia and Dekorra in the 1850's, crossing on the ferry to get to Caledonia.

The village site was selected because of its landing facilities and the village itself became a major lumber distribution center for southern Wisconsin. The village plat included a 1000 foot wharf located along the Wisconsin River, which was used by commercial river traffic as a landing for the rafts carrying lumber from the northern pineries to destinations along the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers. The rafts would tie up along the wharf area to unload lumber, deliver and take on supplies, and often to wait for the wind to die down so the pilots could see the channel again. Steamboats also docked at the wharf area while they lay on supplies from the local merchants and farmers and loaded on cargo, such as barrels of flour, for delivery to far off places. It is not known as yet what the wharf actually looked like. We believe it was closer to the definition, "a band at the water's edge; shore" rather than "a structure of wood or stone." According to James Hastie, who first came to the area in 1856, "Rafts would tie up to some trees on shore … When tied up they would take on supplies of eggs, meat, flour; also getting their jugs filled with whiskey and molasses." The rafting, handling, buying and selling of lumber became the major business of the village. There are stories of oxen pulling wagons loaded with lumber to destinations on the Arlington prairie, in and around Madison, and as far away as Milwaukee.

A ferry, built before 1856, was based in the village and traveled across the Wisconsin River to the Town of Caledonia for more than 30 years and was still being operated by James McMillan in 1890. The ferry was described as a large scow, usually manned by two men. A cable ran from the top of the bluff on the Dekorra side of the river to big trees on the Caledonia side. The ferry operator would use a pole to push the ferry toward the opposite shore until the current caught the rudder and propelled the ferry to the other side. One account states it cost 25 cents to take a team of horses and rig across the river. They also ferried people, cattle and hogs.

The village well, dug around 1832, was used until about 1940, at which time it was filled in. A building was erected in Dekorra Park to preserve the location of the original well. However, the structure now standing on the site is nothing like the original, which was an open, wooden structure, about four feet tall.

The first village school was located in block three, on lots six and seven. The original Dekorra school house was a simple frame structure that was located across the road from the well. The first teacher was James Wilson. This school was used until the new brick school was built to the east of this site.

The second village school was built in 1878 on lots 10, 11, and 12, block nine. The brick building had separate entrances for the boys and girls. The big wood box was located in the boys' entrance, since the boys were responsible for filling it with wood stored in the wood shed located behind the building. A large, pot-bellied stove was located in the northwest corner of the single classroom. At one time there were three to four rows of desks in the center that were on skids. These desks could be stacked on the outside rows of desks to clear the floor for community dances. There were two outhouses located on the west side of the school and, in the earlier years, the school was surrounded by a wooden fence. The first teacher was James Cross. The school was torn down in 1958. Many of the bricks from the original school were used in the house now sitting on this site.

The opening of the Madison-Portage railroad began the decline of the Village of Dekorra. Today the former village site is the home of a park, several homes and cottages, a trailer court and a tavern. The former ferry crossing is now a DNR boat landing.

A burying ground was provided for in the original village plat, but the land was not officially deeded to the town until June 6, 1864. Many of the original settlers of the village and surrounding area are buried there.

James Thompson sent engineer Peter Taylor to the Wisconsin Territory to build a saw mill at a site Thompson had designated, directly west of the newly platted Village of Dekorra. Thompson sold the mill in 1854. The saw mill was later transformed into a steam grist mill which failed and the machinery was transferred to Blue Mounds.

The first grist mill in south central Wisconsin was erected in 1843, 100 rods from the Wisconsin River, at the direction of James Thompson of Ohio and his partners. Grain was

brought from more than 50 miles away for grinding. The flour produced by the mill was exported as far away as the northern pineries. The mill was first leased from Thompson by Joshua Rhoades for three years. Samuel Carr traded his Ohio farm for the mill, sight unseen, moved to the Town of Dekorra and operated it until 1868, when the mill was purchased by John MacKenzie.

John MacKenzie made many improvements to the property, including a rat-proof flour house, which still stands today. The flour house is a 30'x 42' structure with a full basement and floors and walls made of solid rock. The grout and rock on the bottom was seven inches thick. A plank floor was laid over that.

A millrace is "the channel for a current of water, especially one built to use the water industrially." According to one account, a wooden dam was built on Rowan Creek (which flows into the Wisconsin River) just west of where the creek now flows under County Highway J. A dam was built to hold back the water in the creek, creating the mill pond that had been located on the south side of the road. At one time a narrow, steel bridge went over the dam. When the miller was ready to grind, someone would open the gates of the dam which allowed the water to rush down the millrace to the mill. The power of the flowing water would turn the water wheel, which powered the mill. One account suggests it was an undershot waterwheel, meaning the water passed beneath the wheel rather than over the wheel. Later, after the mill was no longer running, a deep, well-stocked fishing hole was formed on the river side of the dam. The Dekorra mill pond was a popular curling spot in the latter half of the 1800's.

The Wilson Inn and Stage Coach Stop was located on the north side of Hinkson Creek, on the east side of County Highway J. James Wilson (born in 1802 in Scotland), his wife Mary Robertson Wilson (born in 1802 in Scotland) and nine children came to Wisconsin sometime before 1843. A tenth child was born in the Town of Caledonia in 1843. In 1850, James Wilson built the inn and stagecoach stop on the old Lodi/Portage Road at Wilson Creek (now Hinkson Creek). Wilson hewed all of the lumber by hand. Mary Wilson died in 1865 and James died in 1878. Both are buried at Dekorra Cemetery.

James D. Doty, the future governor of Wisconsin, sold 160 acres in the Town of Dekorra to William McDonald, a Scotsman. Prior to filing the Inch Village plat, it is said that McDonald had maintained a store in the Village of Dekorra. On March 28, 1851, William McDonald filed the Village of Inch plat and on February 21, 1866, he filed an addition to the original plat. The Village was located south of the present County Highway B and on the west and east sides of the present US Highway 51.

The true origin of the name Inch is not known but it is believed that it is a variation of the Scottish word for meadow, meadowland or island. Over 35 lots were eventually sold in the village and the residents included a physician, a minister, a musician, merchants, a blacksmith, and carpenter/joiners. The buildings included several homes, at least one store, a small hotel, and a blacksmith shop. The village had a designated post office and was located on a stage coach and freight line. According to Katherine Hadden's "Forgotten Villages: The Village of Inch," the school, built about 1850, was "a frame building with hewn logs for beams and joists." The school was originally built on Grove Street but, in 1876, it was moved

to the west side of Main Street (Hwy 51). Male teachers taught the winter terms "when the husky eighteen and twenty-year-old farm boys attended…" Female teachers taught the fall, spring and summer terms. The school was closed in 1957.

In 1875 land adjacent to the village was donated by William Waugh, one of the earlier settlers, for a church and cemetery. The congregation formed in 1856 and met in the Village of Inch school until the church was built in the summer of 1875 at a cost of $1,600.00. It took its name from the Village of Inch although it was not part of the village plat. The original building was 26' by 40'. The church joined the Methodist charge in 1878 and was occupied by the Inch United Methodist congregation, which included descendants of the William Waugh family and other earlier settlers, until March of 2009, when it had to be demolished after suffering serious damage from the flooding of 2008.

Many of the early settlers of the village and surrounding area are buried in Schofield Cemetery, which is located near the intersection of Thompson Road and US Highway 51 and in the Inch Cemetery located behind the church site.

The 1871 opening of the Madison-Portage Railroad caused the decline of the village. McDonald eventually purchased all but one lot back and converted the property into one of the largest farms in the area. Main Street of the village is now US Highway 51 and Grove Street is now Hebel Lane.

LaFayette Hill, formerly of Kentucky City and the Village of Dekorra, purchased land and filed the plat for the Village of Oshaukuta in 1848. The word "oshaukuta" is believed to be from a Native American language and to mean "big spear" or "a good place to spear fish." The Village of Oshaukuta was located near Rocky Run Creek and the present US Highway 51. The village was made up of 24 lots and many of them were sold. Hill soon erected Hill's Tavern which he maintained until his death in 1853. The village consisted of about six houses, Hill's tavern, a blacksmith shop, store, post office, and a public school. It is rumored that an irate farmer's wife burned the tavern to the ground because her husband spent too much time there.

The first Oshaukuta grade school, located on the left side of a now-vacated road located west of US highway 51, was used until a new school was built further north on US Highway 51. According to former students of the second school, upon entering the front door, you would either go down a set of steps to the basement or up steps to the entrance to the single class room. The entry area contained a water cooler and large coat rack. A large black stove was located in the front of the classroom and the teacher's desk was beside it. The room contained four rows of desks with five to six desks in each row. One teacher taught all classes, which was interesting for the younger students as they listened to the lessons of the older students, but boring for the older students when they had to listen to the younger students' lessons. But all students had to sit quietly and listen if it was not their turn to recite.

The school is currently a private home located on the west side of the intersection of US Highway 51 and Phillips Road. This school was originally built about 300 feet to the south of the present site. A basement was dug on the present site and the school building was rolled

on logs onto the basement. The school continued in this building for several more years, until the building was remodeled into a home that now stands on the same site. Original date of construction is unknown.

LaFayette Hill died on July 7, 1853. His early death was believed to have stifled the growth and prosperity of the young village. The opening of the Madison-Portage Railroad in 1871 was the final death blow for the village. The main street of Oshaukuta is the present US Highway 51 and a monument has been placed on the east side of the highway to mark the location of the village.

The plat of the Village of Pauquette was filed on April 7, 1837 by proprietors Lt. A.S. Hooe and Wallis Rowan. James Doty, a future governor of Wisconsin, filed an acknowledgment on February 8, 1837, that he was also a proprietor of a portion of that plat. The village was named for the fur trader/interpreter Pierre Pauquette, no lots were ever sold, and the plat was later vacated.

About 1850 Doty applied for the establishment of a post office at Pauquette, which was granted, but the postal officials misread the name and spelled it as Poynette. Samuel R. Pinney filed the original plat for the Village of Poynette in 1851, naming the village after the already established post office on the site. The plat consisted of 32 lots in four blocks. In 1852 a school district was formed and a school was built one half mile south of the village. The Village was located on the Military Road, which was built in the 1830's and connected the Forts of Howard, Winnebago, and Crawford.

Wallace Rowan was the first settler in Columbia County to file a claim, said claim being filed on June 6, 1836. The creek running through the village was named in honor of Rowan. He built a double log structure on the Military Road near this stream, which served him as a place for Indian trading and accommodation for travelers as well as his family's home. It was the first hotel in the area. The log building later served as the first home of Hugh Jamieson, a school, a dry goods store, post office and meeting house.

The Madison-Portage Railroad, which opened in 1871, was built through the Village of Poynette. This meant great prosperity for Poynette and a rapid decline for the Villages of Dekorra and Inch. No longer was the Wisconsin River a major transportation route.

The Village of Poynette filed a petition with the Dekorra Town Board to separate the Village of Poynette and the Town of Dekorra into two separate corporations. A special town board meeting was scheduled for September 29, 1892 to vote on the separation. The results of that meeting are not known at this time, but it is assumed that the petition was approved by the voters.

f. **Rural Town of Dekorra**

Joseph Hartman settled on his property in 1849. He was a blacksmith by trade, took up farming and served as a Justice of the Peace for over 30 years. When the Madison & Portage Railroad came through the area in 1871, a flag station and siding was built near Hartman's home. Hartman was appointed postmaster of what became known as the Hartman Post Office, but it was never platted as a village. Area families used the flag station to stop the pass-

ing train so they could travel to distant cities such as Portage, Arlington and Madison. Area farmers used the siding to bring in box car loads of lime for their hay fields or to ship out box car loads of clay for brick making in other localities. The post office and siding was located on the north side of County Highway B, at the intersection of County Highway B and Keebaugh Road.

"… the brawny Scots, who upon a certain moonlight night, with their wives flatirons, hied themselves to the ice at the mouth of the Rocky Run (Creek)," according to James R Hastie, a Dekorra resident and avid curler. Curlers first used their wives flat irons and later progressed to wooden blocks which they made after the image of Scottish rocks. The men first curled out in the open, on frozen ponds or on the river itself. Later a curling building was located in the triangle of what is now the intersection of County Highways B & V. The building was built on a tobacco shed frame, water was hauled up from the river below and poured onto the floor. The doors were left open to freeze the water into a single sheet of ice to be used for curling. There was a walkway on both sides and benches to sit on. Community dances were held in another part of the building that was separated from the curling part by a wall and door. Steps led up from the curling rink to the entrance to the other part. The building was demolished in the late 1920's.

Fulton Pond was used for curling in the last half of the 1850's. Legend has it that when Mr. McMillan was digging a fence post hole on this property, he hit a spring and water came up, forming a pond. This property was owned by John Fulton when it became a popular curling spot and is located on the east side of the intersection of McMillan Road and Bilke Road.

Henry Reedal (born in 1788), his wife Sarah Reedal (born in 1807), and their children were a wealthy family that moved to the Town of Dekorra from England around 1850. Grace Hastie tells of her grandfather, Henry Reedal, drinking whiskey and trading horses with the King of England. Upon arriving in Dekorra, the Reedal's invested their money in property, raised horses and raced them on their own track, drawing racers from great distances. They also farmed their land using hired laborers. The Reedals were said to be "people of leisure." Henry and Sarah Reedal eventually sold off all of their land holdings and left the area. The house started as a small, wood-framed structure and the Reedal's later added a brick, 2-story addition. The Haupt family purchased the property about 1900 from the Reedal's and in about 1906 added the kitchen. A descendant of those early Haupt's still lives in the house, located near the intersection of County Roads J and B.

g. **Rural Schools**

In addition to the grade schools built in the various villages of the town, there were several other schools built to serve the children located in the rural areas. It is unknown when Hastie School was actually built, but area students attended until 1943, when the school was closed due to low attendance. The school was built on the east side of County Highway J, near its intersection with Black Road. The remaining students were transferred to Lincoln school. It is believed the Hastie school was sold and moved to the lake area to be used as a cottage.

The first Lincoln School was located on the north side of Black Road where it intersects County Highway V. It is said that the school also served as a place of worship for a Baptist

congregation. It is reported that this building was later moved to Schiefelbein Road and used as a cottage. The second Lincoln School was built on the south side of Black Road at the same intersection and was used as a school until the mid to late 1970's. It has since been remodeled and is used as a private residence.

The northern district of the Spring Prairie Lutheran congregation (Dekorra) met on January 13, 1868, to plan the building of a meeting place and school house, which was later called the Olson School. The school and meeting place, located on County Highway CS across from Smith Road, was to be a frame structure, 20 X 30 X 10 feet. The Dekorra Lutheran congregation, numbering 83 members, was organized in 1869 as an annex to the Spring Prairie charge. The congregation worshipped at the school until they built their church in 1869, located at the intersection of County Highway CS and Smith Road. A new church was built in 1971. The Dekorra Lutheran Cemetery was originally established as a burial place for Norwegians by the local Lutherans. The cemetery association was organized in 1949 to maintain the grounds.

The Jefferson School was built on the north side of Teeter Road, about half way between US Highway 51 and Stebbins Road. There is little information available about this school at this time. It is known that Iva Cuff Robson Luther was one of the teachers.

Pershing School was located on the north side of Thompson Road, just west of the intersection of Thompson and Keebaugh Roads. According to one account, steps led to the front door of this school, which opened into a long coat room. That in turn led to the single room where all classes were taught by one teacher. Students carried in wood from the shed behind the school to feed the wood stove located in the front, left corner. The teacher sat to the right of the stove in front of the black board. Shelves were located in the back, right corner where the students stored their lunches. There was also a door in this corner that opened into a small kitchen. Students brought in water from the well located near the front steps to fill the water cooler. The two outhouses, one for girls and one for boys, were located in the opposite, rear corners of the school property. Community dances and meetings were held at the school. The original building has been remodeled into the house that still stands on this site.

There was also a school located on Smokey Hollow Road, referred to as Smoky (without the e) Hollow grade school. There is no other information available about this school at this time.

2. Remaining Historic Resources

The Town has a fine collection of historic or architecturally significant buildings and sites from the Amish Era. The State Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) contains data on a wide range of historic properties that demonstrate Wisconsin's "distinct cultural landscape," but they do not convey "special status such as National Register designation." As of 2013, the AHI includes 29 documented properties in Dekorra. These properties mainly include houses and farm buildings.

The State Historical Society also maintains a list of properties certified as significant by the National Park Service, and determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic

Places. Currently, there are no properties in Dekorra listed in the State or National Registers. There are two sites identified as possibly eligible: the Dekorra Mill and the William Black Farm. Several historical societies operate within the area, including the Poynette Area Historical Society, the Columbia County Historical Society, the Portage Historical Society, and the Lodi Valley Historical Society.

3. Archeological Resources

According to the State Historical Society there are 49 known archaeological sites and cemeteries in Dekorra as of July 2013. This does not include all of the sites that might be present in the Town. Sites include cemeteries (church or municipal cemeteries, burial mounds, and unmarked graves), cabins and homesteads, and Native American community and burial sites. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from encroachment by any type of development. Few of the sites reported to the Society have been evaluated for their importance or eligibility for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

4. Visual Character Resources

The comprehensive planning process included an analysis of visual resources that greatly enhance the unique community character or "personality" of Dekorra. Visual resources include both natural and human-altered landscapes.

Dekorra is mostly rural in character, but it has been greatly influenced by the development of Poynette, vacation and resort development along the Wisconsin River, and the Interstate. There is a great deal of residential development along the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin. Driving the roads through the development areas along the river is reminiscent of vacation areas of northern Wisconsin. Views of Lake Wisconsin are breathtaking from the Highway V causeway (Whalen's Grade).

Most of the rest of the Town remains quite sparsely settled. There, the land is rolling and mostly devoted to agriculture, open space, and woods. Cultivated flat-to-rolling fields and scattered farmsteads dominate the landscape. Fields are often farmed to road edges and there are few woodlots. Town roads have relatively little traffic, making them ideal for recreational cycling. Long views of the horizon dominate the visual experience.

F. Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Preserve Dekorra's rural, scenic, and historic character.

2. Objectives

a. Recognize Dekorra's character is defined by large areas of rolling agricultural woodlands, natural areas, Whalen's Grade, and the historic "Dekorra Village" area near the River.

b. Identify and protect unique historic and archeological areas within the Town.

c. Protect scenic views, particularly of rolling countryside and along Lake Wisconsin.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Emphasize the value of the remaining **natural resource areas as focal points** of natural beauty and recreation (see Map 4).

b. Promote the **nomination of historic sites** and perhaps the Dekorra Village to the National or State Register of Historic Places. Make sure that new development in these areas respects the historic integrity and small scale of these districts.

c. Encourage **new development forms that celebrate the Town's agricultural heritage**. Examples include grouping new homes at the end of a driveway or road to look like a historic farmstead, incorporating existing farm outbuildings in new development, and promoting new building styles and materials consistent with historic styles.

d. In largely undeveloped areas, promote the **use of existing topography and vegetation to screen** new development from public roads. See Chapter Four: Land Use for more detail.

e. Support Town parks, local festivals, fairs, farm tours, farm breakfasts, and markets that **celebrate the Town's farming heritage** and rural way of life.

f. For the Interstate 90-94-39 corridor, work with the County to **limit additional billboards, communication towers, and unplanned development** and with ATC to **minimize the visual impact of planned Badger-Coulee lines**.

g. Work to **upgrade development quality and provide an attractive gateway** at the Interchange Area

CHAPTER FOUR: LAND USE

This chapter of the Plan contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide the future preservation and development of lands in Dekorra.

A. EXISTING LAND USE

1. Existing Land Use Pattern

Most of Dekorra is in privately-owned open space. Much is *Agriculture/Open Lands* on Map 5, with scattered areas of *Woodlands* and *Wetlands* along Rowan, Hinkson, and Rocky Run Creeks with very low development densities. Residential development has occurred pre near Lake Wisconsin and the Wisconsin River, and along Town and County roads. Residential development has generally occurred at lower densities (2+ acre lots), with higher densities in older lakefront areas. Commercial and industrial uses are generally along Highway 51 and the Interstate/Highway CS interchange, where public sewer is available.

Table 6: Town of Dekorra Existing Land Use, 2014

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture/Open Lands	15,171	53%
Wetlands	2,572	9%
Woodlands > 40 acres	3,281	11%
Rural Single Family Residential	843	3%
Road	491	2%
Public Open Space	3,111	11%
Private Recreational Use	36	<1%
Surface Water	2,798	10%
Institutional	127	<1%
Mixed Residential	29	<1%
Landfill/Extraction	7	<1%
Neighborhood Business	7	<1%
General Business	99	<1%
Industrial	41	<1%
TOTAL	28,613	

Source: GIS Inventory, Vandewalle & Associates, 2014

2. Land Development Trends

From January 1, 2000 to January 1, 2010, there were a total of 204 new lots created in Dekorra (172 by certified survey map and 32 by subdivision plat). Nearly all of these 20.5 lots per year

were intended for single-family residences—either proposed or pre-existing houses. This total does not include homesites that did not generally require land division review by ordinance (e.g., 35+ acre lots).

During this same period, the Town's housing stock grew from 1,237 units to 1,337 units (100 units, or about 10 units per year). Annual growth in housing units during the first half of the decade was likely higher than the 10-year average of 10 units per year, while growth in the latter half of the decade following the Great Recession starting in 2007 was likely lower than 10 units per year. This is consistent with Columbia County zoning permit records, which suggested that an average of 6 new houses were built per year in Dekorra between 2007 and 2011. Some of these houses were on 35+ acre parcels and others were on pre-existing waterfront lots.

Combined, this data suggests that there were more lots created for residential use in Dekorra between 2000 and 2010 than were built upon with single family houses. Still, the gap is not as wide as 3 to 1, because many of the new lots were created for existing residences and for non-residential uses.

B. PLANNED LAND USE

1. Planned Land Use Pattern

Map 6 presents recommended future land uses over the 20-year planning period for all parts of the Town. Changes from the existing land use pattern to realize this planned land use pattern may occur if and when property owners make requests for rezoning, subdivisions or land divisions, conditional use permits, or other development approvals. Map 6, along with policies later in this chapter, will guide Town decision making on future land use changes.

Map 6 shows most of the Town as being preserved for agriculture, open space, and natural areas. Aside from very low density housing in the *Agriculture* and *Woodland Preservation Area*, new single family residential development will be directed to areas in and around existing residential development. New high quality commercial and light industrial land uses will be directed to the *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area surrounding the Highway CS interchange with Interstate 90-94-39, where public sanitary sewer service is available. Other commercial and industrial uses will be directed to a second *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area along Highway 51 near Columbia Lake. This area is appropriate for small-scale industrial and business uses because it already has some small-scale industrial uses, is located near the intersection of Highways 51 and J, has rail access, has soils that are not ideal for agriculture, and is relatively remote from the influence of Poynette.

Table 7 shows the acreage included within each planned land use designation on Map 6. Each designation is described in detail in the Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies section below.

Table 7: Town of Dekorra Planned Land Use

Planned Land Use Designation	Acres	Percent
Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area	16,463	58%
Environmental Corridor*	3,473	12%
Public Open Space	3,111	11%
Surface Water	2,798	10%
Urban Transition Area (within Town only)	420	1%
Multiple Family Residential/Mobile Home Park	33	<1%
Single Family Residential	963	3%
Neighborhood Business	20	<1%
General Business	10	<1%
Institutional	135	<1%
Commercial/Industrial Mix	696	2%
Roads (Existing only)	491	2%
TOTAL	28,613	

Source: GIS Inventory, Vandewalle & Associates, 2014

** Many Public Open Space areas are partially comprised of Environmental Corridor. For the purposes of this table, these areas have been classified as Public Open Space and not as Environmental Corridor. Therefore, total Environmental Corridor acreage in the Town is more than what is listed in this table.*

2. Projected Land Use Demand

Land demand over the 20-year planning period (in five-year increments) for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses have been projected. Projected demand is then compared to the potential supply of land to meet that demand, presented in Map 6 and Table 7.

Projected rural (i.e., remaining in Dekorra) residential land use demand is presented in Table 8. The ranges presented in this table are based on the two population growth forecast scenarios -- Linear Growth and Long-Term Compounded Growth -- presented in Table 2. Table 8 assumes that the average residential homesite will be 3 acres, based on recent land division/subdivision trends. Housing unit forecasts that aided in preparation of this table are also shared and described more fully in Chapter Eight: Housing.

The information in Table 8 suggests that through 2035, lands used for rural residential purposes in Dekorra may grow by between 1,100 and 1,500 acres over 2010 totals. This is about the equivalent of two sections of land.

Table 8: Projected Rural Residential Housing and Land Use Demand

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Cumulative potential demand for additional housing units in Town (above year 2010 totals)	109 to 120 units	175 to 209 units	241 to 303 units	308 to 403 units	374 to 510 units
Cumulative potential demand for additional acres of rural residential development (above year 2010 totals)	326 to 359 acres	525 to 626 acres	724 to 909 acres	924 to 1,210 acres	1,123 to 1,529 acres
Projected annual demand for new housing units in previous five-year period	13 to 20 units/yr	13 to 18 units/yr	13 to 19 units/yr	13 to 20 unit/yr	13 to 21 units/yr

Map 5: Existing Land Use

Map 6: Planned Land Use

Map 6b: Parcels with Recorded Development Restrictions

Future development planned under Map 6 and the policies of this *Plan* provide enough capacity to accommodate the expected residential land use demand through the year 2035. This is because the *Single Family Residential* and *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation* planned land use districts can each accommodate new homes at different densities. It is the Town's desire to seek conversion for land for residential purposes towards the low end of the ranges in Table 8. If that desire changes, the Town may choose to amend Map 6 and/or the policies behind that map to provide for additional growth capacity within the next 20+ years.

Having an available supply of appropriate land for non-residential development over the 20-year planning period is also important. Based on an analysis of historic growth rates, the Town projects a demand for 20 to 30 acres of land for commercial purposes every five years during the 20-year planning period. The Town also projects a demand for 15 to 20 acres of land for industrial purposes every five years during this same period. This anticipated demand for commercial and industrial land can easily be accommodated within the 600+ acres shown in the *Commercial/Industrial Mix* areas on Map 6, supplemented by waterfront business areas.

If past trends continue, the amount of agricultural land in active use in the Town may decrease by up to 500 acres every five years over the 20-year planning period. The Town seeks to minimize the amount of agricultural and open land conversion.

3. Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Residential development in the Town has created some conflicts between newer residents and surrounding farming operations. Activities that make up the day-to-day operation of a farm—slow farm machinery, farm odors associated with manure, livestock noise—are sometimes considered nuisances by new, non-farming neighbors.

The Town seeks to minimize these types of conflicts in the future through thoughtful land use planning that discourages intensive residential development in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*. Conflicts will inevitably occur in areas where residential and other non-farm development abuts or occurs in planned agricultural areas.

4. Opportunities for Infill Redevelopment

The Town promotes opportunities for community-sensitive infill development and redevelopment in appropriate locations and situations. Any soil or groundwater contamination on redevelopment sites should cleaned or mitigated in conjunction with redevelopment. The primary redevelopment area within the Town is the Interchange Area, where the Town advocates high-quality redevelopment of older properties, served by public sewer. There will also be smaller redevelopment sites along the waterfront. These will occur as seasonal cottages make way for larger, and often year-round, homes. They will also occur in older commercial development areas such as Whalen's Grade and the Dekorra village area.

C. "Smart Growth" Planning Areas

"Smart Growth Areas", as defined by §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, are "areas that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state, and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs." The Town is required to designate these areas in this Plan.

This Plan designates the *Single Family Residential, Commercial/Industrial Mix*, and *Urban Transition* areas as shown on Map 6 as "Smart Growth Areas".

The primary *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area is designated at the I-39/90/94 Interchange Area. Here, the Town provides public sanitary sewer service. This service enables the Town to facilitate redevelopment of aging development parcels and promote denser development than would otherwise be possible. Development in this area also takes advantage of existing transportation infrastructure and provides the Town with an enhanced non-farm, non-residential tax base. The Town is actively promoting development of this area, as is further documented in the Economic Development chapter.

The *Urban Transition Area* is designated near the Village of Poynette. This area is identified for potential development on municipal services over the 20-year planning period, and is described in greater detail in the sections that follow.

D. Land Use Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Promote a future land use pattern that is consistent with the Town's rural, "small-town" character, but which also focuses economic development near major highways.

2. Objectives

a. Maintain low densities and minimize the visual impact of non-farm development in agricultural areas.

b. Direct new development to areas of existing development, utilities, and highways.

c. Promote high quality design and scale compatibility in new development projects.

d. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.

3. Policies

a. Assure that **incompatible land uses are not located close to one another** or require appropriate separation and screening where they are.

b. Promote **grouping and clustering of allowable development sites** to preserve farmland, protect other natural resources, and reduce development visibility.

c. Direct **intensive new development to the mapped *Commercial/Industrial Mix* areas, Poynette,** and other specific areas targeted for development as a way to relieve pressure to develop in the planned *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*.

d. Follow the Town's **rezoning procedures** (in Chapter 11.06 of the Town Code of Ordinances) and the County's zoning ordinance when considering changes in land use that require rezonings. Follow similar procedures for the review of conditional use permits. Both rezoning and conditional use permit applications require Town and County approval to take effect.

e. Utilize the **Town's Plan Commission** as the primary recommending entity for development decisions in the Town, except that the **Town's Architectural Review Committee** shall be the recommending entity for applications for site plan review within the boundaries of Dekorra Utility District #1. The **Town Board** is the primary Town approval agent for development decisions in the Town, except where specifically delegated by Town ordinance.

f. **Use the documents listed as described in Figure A as the primary substantive bases for Town decision making on the indicated land use and development approvals**. Other Town ordinances and County, State, and federal rules may also apply.

Figure A: Documents Used in Review of Common Development Approval Requests

Plan or Ordinance	Applicable Code Chapter or Section	Rezonings	Conditional Use Permits	Zoning Variances	Site Plan Approval	Plats and CSMs
Town Comprehensive Plan	Especially Land Use	✓	✓		✓	✓
County Zoning Ordinance	Title 16, Chapter 100	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Town Land Division and Subdivision Code	Chapter 10					✓
Town Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Regulations	Section 11.01		✓		✓	✓
Town Site Plan Review Ordinance	Section 11.04				✓	
Town Interchange Area Design Guidelines	If near CS Interchange	✓	✓		✓	✓

E. PLANNED LAND USE MAPS

Maps 6 and 7 and related policies described below should be used to guide development decisions that involve a change in land use, such as rezonings, conditional use permits, and subdivision plat and certified survey map approvals. Changes in land use to implement the recommendations of this *Plan* will generally be initiated by property owners and private developers. In other words, this *Plan* does not automatically compel property owners to change the use of their land.

Not all land shown for development on the Maps 6 and 7 will be appropriate for rezoning and other land use approvals immediately following adoption of this *Plan.* Given market and service demands, careful consideration to the amount, mix, timing, and location of development to keep it manageable and sustainable is essential. The Town advocates the phased development of land in such a way that advances the Town's overall goal and objectives, consistent with growth projections within this *Plan* and other trend information like U.S. Census data.

Like other aspects of this *Comprehensive Plan*, a variety of different types of circumstances may compel the Town to amend Map 6 over time. These include, but are not limited to, changes in market demand, development trends, and available land supply.

The following sections of this chapter provide detailed objectives and policies for the primary planned land use designations that are shown on Maps 6 and 7. The policies under each section apply only to the planned land use designation described in that section.

F. Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area (see Map 6 for locations where policies apply)

1. Objective

As shown on Map 6, the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* identifies land intended to be preserved primarily for farming, forestry, open space, and agricultural or forestry support activities. The *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* is also intended for farmsteads and limited new residential development per the "Policies and Programs" section below; home occupations and family businesses, and other uses identified as permitted and conditional uses in the implementing zoning districts described below.

2. Recommended Zoning

Most lands in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* planned land use designation should be zoned A-1 Agriculture. The A-1 district is a state-certified farmland preservation zoning district, which prioritizes continued farming and open space uses and also enables eligible farmers to obtain state income tax credits.

Where new residential development is proposed, rezoning away from the A-1 zoning district will be required. The RR-1 Rural Residence District is the preferred district for the new residential lots. Other residential districts, such as the R-1 Single Family Residence district, may be considered where the applicant can demonstrate that another district aside from RR-1 meets the objective of the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* and responds to a unique circumstance.

Other zoning districts, such as the A-2 General Agriculture, may also be appropriate on an occasional basis for lands planned in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*, such as where preexisting parcel sizes and land uses differ from the norm for these areas.

Columbia County also has the A-4 Agricultural Overlay zoning district, which generally limits underlying land uses and structures to those related to agriculture and open space. The County uses the A-4 district as a means to track and maintain development density policies over time. The A-4 overlay district will often be applied to the balance of the Contiguous Common Ownership that remains zoned A-1 at the time of rezoning to RR-1 or other residential zoning district.

3. Key Definitions

The definition of "Contiguous Common Ownership" and its component words is important for determining the right to develop lands in the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area.

"Common Ownership" means any combination of contiguous parcels singly owned by one uniquely named entity as identified by deed. Such an entity includes, but is not necessarily limited to, an individual person, a married couple or family trust, or a partnership or corporation. Lots or parcels shall be considered "Contiguous" if they share a common boundary. Parcels in Common Ownership that are directly across from a public street, rail right-of-way, easement, or navigable river, stream, or creek, along with parcels that meet only at a corner, shall be considered "Contiguous."

"Contiguous Common Ownership" means all contiguous lands zoned A-1 and/or A-2, and under Common Ownership at the time of the development proposal. Contiguous Common Ownership may include one or more tax parcels, "40's", or lots with lots defined as a parcel designated in a recorded plat or certified survey map, or described in a conveyance recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, except that each residential lot legally created through a "farm consolidation" process and documented with a recorded certified survey map (CSM) shall not be considered part of any Contiguous Common Ownership.

4. Policies and Programs

a. **Required Rezoning Criteria:** Whenever land is proposed for rezoning away from the A-1 district, the following criteria must be met by state law:

   i. The land is better suited for a use not allowed in the A-1 zoning district.

   ii. The rezoning is consistent with the applicable Town and County comprehensive plans, including the County farmland preservation plan.

   iii. The rezoning will not substantially impair or limit current or future agricultural use of surrounding parcels of land that are zoned for or legally restricted to agricultural use.

b. **Limits on Conversion of Prime Farmland:** The conversion of prime farmland for residences and other nonfarm development must be minimized. Prime farmland is defined and illustrated as Groups I, II, and III soils on Map 3. The Town Board will consider creation of new residential lots on prime farmland only if it determines that no available non-prime farmland exists on the parcel of record or that placement of lots on prime farmland provides better protection of land, environmental, and habitat resources than a non-prime location. In addition, per state law, new development may not (a) convert prime farmland from agricultural use or convert land previously used as cropland, other than a woodlot, from agricultural use if on the farm there is a reasonable alternative location or size for a nonfarm residential parcel or nonfarm residence; or (b) significantly impair or limit the current or future agricultural use of other protected farmland.

c. **Standard Residential Development Density with <u>35+ acres</u> in Contiguous Common Ownership:** Except as otherwise provided in subsections d. and e., the owner of each set of lands in Contiguous Common Ownership of 35 acres or greater within the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* may develop single family residences, subject to the following criteria:

iv. The owner is allowed one single family residence per 35 acres of Contiguous Common Ownership, including any existing house(s) within the Contiguous Common Ownership.

v. Before or at the time of rezoning, the owner may acquire additional land from adjacent landowners to assemble a larger Contiguous Common Ownership, provided that such land is also in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* and is not restricted against additional residential development by policy, zoning rule, deed restriction, conservation easement, or otherwise.

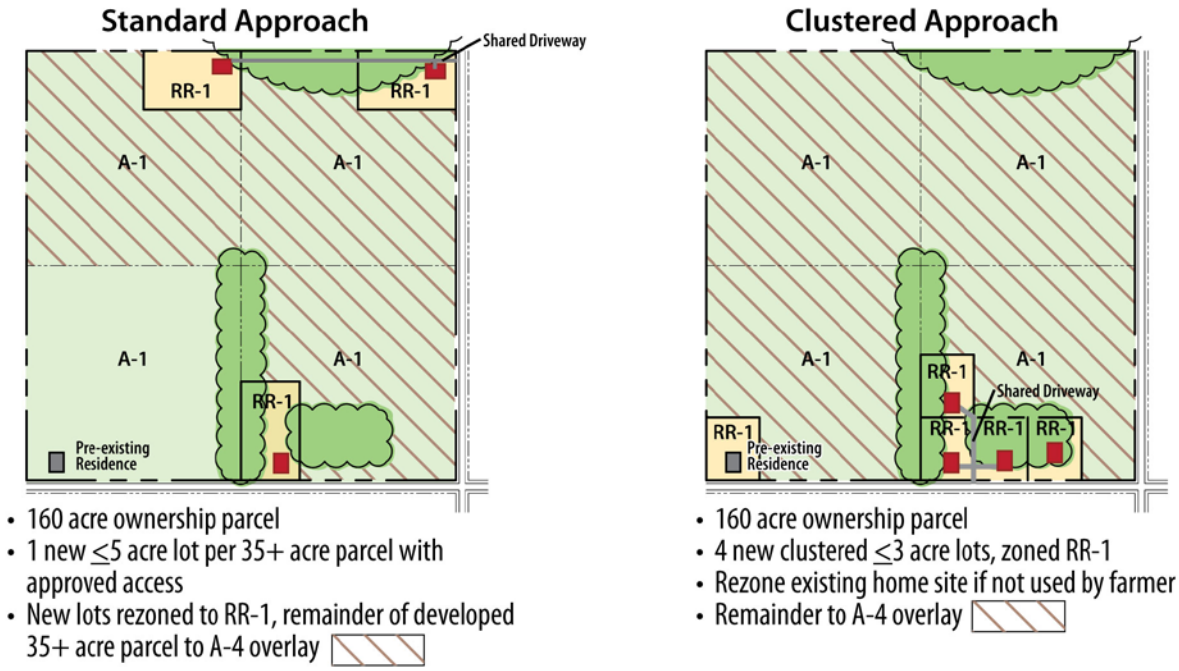
vi. Each new residence must be on a new lot of one acre or greater created by CSM. Each new lot for a new residence may not exceed five acres in area, except that larger lots may be permitted where other policies in this Plan are met and an additional ten acres in Contiguous Common Ownership are restricted via A-4 zoning for every one acre greater than the five acre normal maximum. These maximum lot size and additional restricted land requirements do not apply when the lot is created around a pre-existing residence as described in subsection g. below.

vii. Each newly created residential lot must abut a public road, or have a suitable access easement approved by the Town Board and County.

viii. The balance of the acreage used to enable the approval of a single family residential lot within the Contiguous Common Ownership shall be restricted to agricultural or open space uses via deed restriction. All such deed restrictions shall be preapproved by the Town, recorded in conjunction with the recording of the associated certified survey map, and allowed to be removed or altered only if approved by the Town Board. The Town does not intend to issue any building permit for construction on an associated residential lot until the recorded deed restriction is provided. Columbia County may also require use of A-4 Agricultural Overlay zoning over the balance.

d. **Density Bonus for Clustering with 70+ acres in Contiguous Common Ownership:** The Town desires to provide an incentive for smaller lots and clustering as a means to preserve farmland, open space, and rural character. Where the owner of each set of lands in Contiguous Common Ownership of 70 acres or greater within the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* proposes the construction of new residences that meet the standards applicable to clusters in subsection f., the land owner shall be permitted one additional single family residence above the quantity normally permitted under subsection c. above, including any existing residence. For 70 to 105 acres in Contiguous Common Ownership, the new residences must be clustered with any existing residence. Figure B provides one set of examples of permitted residential density on a hypothetical 160 acres of Contiguous Common Ownership, with and without clustering.

Figure B: Residential Development Examples with and without Clustering



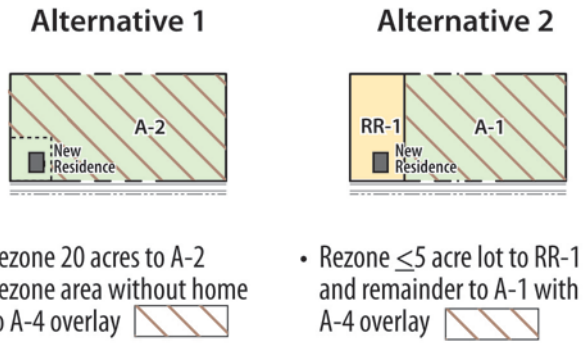
e. **Residential Development Density with <35 acres in Contiguous Common Ownership:** The Town contains many lots and groups of lots in Contiguous Common Ownership that are less than 35 acres. Map 6 designates certain parts of the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* where there are particularly high concentrations of such lots as "Existing Small Parcel Districts." The following are the Town's policies where there are less than 35 acres in Contiguous Common Ownership:

   i. **Generally:** Where such a lot already contains one or more dwelling units, the Town will not allow rezoning or division that would result in the right to build any more dwelling units. In order to build on such lots where there is not an existing residence, the following basic standards apply:

   - Must be a valid parcel(s) created legally prior to November 1, 1984.
   - Rezoning to A-2 or RR-1 will be required before a new home may be built.
   - Compliance with applicable "Residential Development Siting Standards" in subsection f. will be required for new home siting.
   - Each lot on which a new residence is to be built must front on a public road.
   - No further land division of such lots shall be permitted, unless either (i) the land is redesignated out of the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* through an amendment to this Comprehensive Plan or (ii) the divided land is restricted from additional residential development via a Town deed restriction (see subsection (c)(v) above), and via A-4 zoning if required by the County (see Alternative 2 in Figure C).

- In some cases, more than one such lot is held in Contiguous Common Ownership. When new homes are allowed on lots less than 35 acres per the policies in this subsection, the balance of the Contiguous Common Ownership will be restricted to prevent further housing development.

Figure C: Alternative Rezoning Approaches for Pre-1984 Substandard (<35 acre) A-1 Lots with Non-Farm Residence



ii. **If <35 Acres in Contiguous Common Ownership are WITHIN "Existing Small Parcel District":** Where such a lot is located WITHIN an "Existing Small Parcel District" on Map 6, is undeveloped (e.g., no housing unit constructed), and was legally created before November 1, 1984, the Town will support the rezoning of each such lot to allow one dwelling unit per lot, regardless of whether there are other sub-35 acre lots in Contiguous Common Ownership. This may not be consistent with County plans and policies, so comprehensive plan amendments could be required before this level of land development may occur within an "Existing Small Parcel District."

iii. **If <35 Acres in Contiguous Common Ownership are OUTSIDE OF "Existing Small Parcel District":** Where such a lot is located OUTSIDE OF an "Existing Small Parcel District" on Map 6, the owner of each set of lands in Contiguous Common Ownership less than 35 acres may have a maximum of one single family residence for all parcels that make up the Contiguous Common Ownership, including any existing residence.

f. **Residential Development Siting Standards.** Any new residential structure and its associated driveway and accessory structures where located on land designated within an *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* shall meet the standards in Section 11.04(d)(10) of the Town's Site Plan Review ordinance, except as may be allowed under the variance procedure in that ordinance. It is the applicant's responsibility to learn about and follow additional siting and design standards that may be promulgated by Columbia County. A cluster is a contiguous grouping of two or more allowable lots for new residential development. For two or more new lots to qualify as a cluster, the following additional cluster siting standards shall be met to the extent determined practical by the Town Board:

i. Meet cluster development standards in Section 10.745 of the Town's Subdivision and Land Division Code, except that the Town Board may allow variations and exceptions per that Code's procedures.

ii. Where the area of the Contiguous Common Ownership allows, clusters may take the form of subdivision plats (5+ lots) if also allowed by Columbia County.

iii. Flag lots will be allowed only where advisable to achieve rural character objectives of this Plan, such as by hiding the development. A flag lot is a lot with its widest point set back from the road, and having a thin, long strip (flagpole) of land connected to the road to provide legal access and frontage.

Above: A cul-de-sac can provide access to several homes set back from the roadway. The homes are kept off of the hilltops, and a series of driveways leading off the main road is avoided. Below: Vegetation and topography can "hide" development.

iv. Existing vegetation, stone rows, fence lines, and tree lines shall be preserved.

v. New streets or driveways shall be placed along existing contours, property lines, fencerows, lines of existing vegetation, or other natural features.

vi. Where existing vegetation and changes in topography would not adequately screen the development from public roads, and new plantings would be insufficient, consider arranging development sites in a pattern resembling historic farm building placements (e.g., a group of houses set back from the road, tree lined single drive or street, fence rows.)

vii. The cluster may not be located within 500 feet of any operating farm animal facility.

viii. The cluster may not be of a size or shape to be efficiently worked for farming.

ix. Isolated small pockets of uncultivable land in an area otherwise farmed will not result from the cluster.

x. The site has soils that are able to safely support clusters of buildings and private on-site waste treatment (septic) systems, other than holding tanks.

xi. Proposed development has adequate access to existing town roads or, the developer shall provide such a road built to town road standards or such other suitable access approved by the town and County, at the developer's expense.

xii. Proposed access points shall meet minimum spacing requirements as established by County and town ordinances, as applicable.

xiii. Proposed driveways will not exceed 1,000 feet in length, unless otherwise approved by the County following a recommendation by the Town Board.

xiv. The cluster is not on land prone to flooding, and does not require driveways over lands that are prone to flooding.

xv. The cluster is not on land of archaeological, cultural, historical, or religious significance.

g. **Treatment of Pre-Existing Residences:** The Town will allow legally established residences to remain within the A-1 zoning district when historically zoned in that manner, except where new land divisions are required outside of farm consolidation situations. When the owner of a preexisting residence legally established before December 21, 1977 desires to divide the land occupied by such residence and accessory buildings from the farm, in conjunction with a farm consolidation, the Town will require the resulting residential lot to be as small as practical, considering the desire to keep accessory buildings with the residence and the future probability that farm animals will be kept on the lot. Further, the Town will require that the balance of the tax parcel (or at least 35 acres elsewhere in the Contiguous Common Ownership) be deed restricted per subsection (c)(v) above. Columbia County may also require use of A-4 Agricultural Overlay zoning over the balance.

h. **Commercial and Industrial Endeavors:** Within the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*, the Town encourages home occupations and agricultural-related businesses that support farmers, including farm-scale businesses in the A-1 zoning district and larger-scale operations in the A-3 Agriculture Business district. Other types of new commercial and industrial uses over lands planned in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* are discouraged, except for mineral extraction sites and wireless telecommunication facilities that may be allowed under applicable zoning performance standards. Where a tourist rooming house is proposed, the Town will use the standards in Section G.2.b.iv below.

G. Single Family Residential (as shown on Map 6)

1. Objective

The *Single Family Residential* planned land use designation is established and mapped on Map 6 to identify certain lands for single-family detached residential development, generally on lots served by on-site waste treatment systems, with minimum lot size depending on zoning classification. Subdivision plats are allowed in areas shown in this designation. The Town intends to allow predominately residential development on those properties, in accordance with their current zoning. Lands shown on Map 6 within this planned land use designation were generally zoned R-1 Single Family Residence under the County zoning ordinance and zoning map in place at time of Plan update.

2. Policies and Programs

a. **Require a minimum lot size** for all new lots proposed as building sites in accordance with the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and the zoning classification of lots. Lots for residential building sites of **over five acres each are not allowed,** except where the subdivider obtains a variance following procedures in the Land Division and Subdivision Code based on unique or challenging natural features, topography, or land ownership patterns**.**

b. Direct the vast majority of land planned for *Single Family Residential* use to be **developed and maintained with single family residences**. Consider the following **other types of uses** on a limited basis on lands planned for *Single Family Residential* use on Map 6 where surrounding context warrants and a proper zoning district is sought:

   i. Institutional uses, such as churches;

   ii. Neighborhood-scale recreational uses, such as parks and walking trails;

   iii. Waterfront businesses. These include as small retail shops and restaurants, scaled and designed in a manner that is consistent with existing homes and businesses in the area. Heavier commercial uses that are not related to serving waterfront or related recreational activities should be directed to areas of the Town that are better suited for those uses, except that the Dekorra Village area in Sections 5 and 6 of Town 11N, Range 9E may accommodate a broader mix of uses.

   iv. Tourist rooming houses. These are single-family dwellings licensed by the state and used as a lodging place or tourist cabin or cottage where sleeping accommodations for less than 30 days are offered for pay to tourists or transients. Following a recommendation from the Plan Commission, the Town will consider conditional use permit requests for tourist rooming houses against tourist rooming house and conditional use permit criteria in the County Zoning Ordinance. In its review of such requests, the Town seeks to limit tourist rooming houses in terms of quantity, density, amount of tourist/transient use, and proximity to each other. Such limits are a means to maintain the essential character of the Town and the surrounding area for single family, owner-occupied use. The Town has developed further criteria and conditions which relate to the County criteria and account for the unique position and issues of the Town. These are available on the Town's Web page at: http://dekorra-wi.gov/.

c. **Limit development within the *Environmental Corridor*** shown on Map 6, unless more detailed investigations suggest that the land does not actually contain the conditions which lead to its mapping as *Environmental Corridor*. Development is also discouraged in areas with soils with severe limitations for on-site solid waste disposal, as shown on Map 8 and soils with building limitations, as shown on Map 6. Development of slopes between 12 and 20 percent and over 20 percent as are limited and guided by the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Code.

d. Follow standards for submittal of plats, supporting documents, and environmental assessment in the Town's **Land Division and Subdivision Code and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Code**.

e. Require land divisions within this *Single Family Residential* planned land use designation to be **designed in accordance with the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and the following general principles:**

i. Design and layout should not impede the orderly future development of the surrounding area or future utility extensions.

ii. Buildings should be sited to minimize visibility from pre-existing public roads through techniques like proper placement with respect to existing vegetation and topographic changes, retention of existing vegetation and topography, distance from such pre-existing public roads, and/or planting of new vegetation or berming.

iii. Buildings, roads, or driveways should not be developed within sensitive environmental areas, as described elsewhere in this Comprehensive Plan and in the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code.

iv. Existing contours, vegetation, stone rows, fence lines, and tree lines should be preserved wherever possible.

v. New streets or driveways should be placed along existing contours, property lines, fencerows, lines of existing vegetation, or other natural features wherever possible.

vi. Natural areas—such as clusters of mature trees and wetlands—should be preserved and integrated into the subdivision design as aesthetic, conservation, and recreational land use elements. For example, in wooded hillside areas, only enough area for the house, a cleared yard area of no greater than 10,000 square feet, and a driveway should be cut.

vii. Preservation of common open space, and access to and through such open spaces, should be emphasized.

viii. Building lots should be sited in such a manner to minimize the potential for incompatibilities with pre-existing land uses on adjoining parcels. These include uses such as agriculture, commercial forestry, and other business operations.

H. Neighborhood Business

1. Objective

The *Neighborhood Business* planned land use designation is established and mapped on Map 6 to identify certain lands as appropriate for smaller-scale retail, hospitality, and commercial service uses, generally located on smaller lots and close to residential uses, with attention towards minimizing impacts on those residential uses and preserving residential character of the surrounding area. Appropriate future land uses within areas mapped within mapped *Neighborhood Business* areas uses include, but are not limited to, inns, rental cottages, tourist rooming houses, beds & breakfast, offices, restaurants, gift and other types of shops, personal or professional services, recreational outfitters, and artist studios. *Neighborhood Business* areas are generally designated on Map 6 over lands close to the Wisconsin River/Lake Wisconsin where commercial uses and/or commercial zoning are already present. The updated County zoning ordinance contains a new C-1 Light Commercial zoning district that should generally be used for future rezonings in these areas.

I. General Business

1. Objective

The *General Business* planned land use designation is established and mapped on Map 6 to identify certain lands as appropriate for a wider range and scale of commercial service, retail, service, and office uses than the *Neighborhood Business* designation. Still, manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses should not be sited in *General Business* areas. *General Busi-*

ness areas are generally designated on Map 6 in limited areas along major roadways and at roadway intersection areas. The updated County zoning ordinance contains the C-2 General Commercial zoning district that should generally be used for future rezonings in these areas.

J. COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL MIX AREA: INTERCHANGE AREA

1. Interchange Area Objective

The land surrounding the Interchange of the Interstate 90-94-39 and County Highway CS is identified as one area for future "mixed use" development—almost entirely commercial and industrial development. These lands serve as the "Gateway to Lake Wisconsin," and as such should be an area with high quality development meeting design standards described later in this section. This is particularly true for lands along Highway CS west of the Interstate.

The realization of this Plan hinges in large part on the decision to bring public sanitary sewer service to this area. The planned *Commercial/Industrial* Mix area (illustrated on Map 6: Planned Land Use) largely coincides with the Utility District but also suggests potential future expansion areas for the Utility District. In general, the Town is seeking high-quality new development and redevelopment in this area that will provide tax base, services, and jobs, and will serve as a growth opportunity and enhance the Town's image.

The 400+ acre planned *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area shown on Map 6 roughly encompasses a radius of 1-mile from the interchange. The area is bounded on the north, east, and west by environmental corridors and steep slopes and to the south by a prominent ridge line. The boundaries of the environmental corridor areas reflect updated floodplain boundaries that were determined through a 2011 floodplain mapping update.

Map 7 is a conceptual development plan that advises, in greater detail, future land uses and transportation improvements in this *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area that is shown on Map 6. Future development proposals should be consistent with this conceptual development plan and the desired image and standards that follow.

The Town Board has a site plan review ordinance affecting new commercial and industrial development throughout the Town and detailed design guidelines for future development of the Interchange Area which go beyond the recommendations on the following pages. These are the "Interchange Area Design Guidelines," adopted by the Town Board on May 10, 2005.

The Economic Development Chapter also includes additional ideas and opportunities for the Interchange Area.

2. Interchange Area: Gateway Identification/Development Character

The Interchange Area is a "gateway" to Dekorra, the Poynette area, and Lake Wisconsin. Cooperation to develop joint entryway and directional signage that advertise the Dekorra-Poynette-Lake Wisconsin area to visitors is advised. Possible locations for signs might be at the Interstate entrance/exit ramps. These locations are shown on Map 7. There is actually an old but sturdy sign support structure southeast of the interchange that could serve this purpose.

Much of the Interstate 90-94-39 corridor is currently lined with continuous stands of trees. These trees help define the character for both residents and visitors. In addition to aesthetic importance, these trees help moderate the effects of wind and snow drifting, screen against noise, act to stabilize soil, reduce erosion and run-off, and provide for habitat for birds and animals. The Town encourages preservation of these trees as new development occurs and as ATC's Badger-Coulee transmission line project moves forward. The Town will also use its sign ordi-

nance limit the placement of billboards and other large signs along this corridor. The Town will also will work with ATC to minimize negative visual effects, unnecessary tree clearance, and development impacts of the transmission line project.

In addition, new landscaping will be required in all new development projects in the Interchange Area. Landscaping should be encouraged around building foundations, in and around paved areas, around areas where screening is appropriate, and in a buffer between the building and the highway. Landscaping materials should be of adequate size to ensure both a high degree of survivability and immediate visual effectiveness.

The Town requires that all proposed commercial and industrial projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, landscape plan, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan and signage plan prior to development approval. The design review standards within the Town's Site Plan Review ordinance and Interchange Area Design Guidelines will be used in the evaluation of such development proposals.

Map 7: Development Plan, Dekorra Interchange Area/Utility District

3. Interchange Area: Transportation Access

Numerous private access points can result in more congestion and more traffic-related conflicts along the corridor. Limiting the number of and ensuring adequate spacing between access points can help to control the type and pace of new development. Shared access drives and local access roads are promoted.

Map 7 shows two main proposed development pockets that would be served by an interconnected road network with a minimal number of access points from the County highways. The conceptual new road network is designed to provide access to individual businesses, whereas Highway CS is used primarily to provide access to and from the Interstate, Poynette, and waterfront areas. This arrangement will serve both the goals of avoiding congestion and safety hazards on Highway CS, and maximizing the number of businesses to the Interchange Area by using the full depth of properties.

Monument style signs are encouraged

4. Interchange Area: "Business" Land Use Areas

The "Business" areas shown on Map 7 provide locations for high-quality indoor retail, commercial service, office, and institutional land uses. Caretaker's residences would also be appropriate. Generally, future Business use areas are in closest proximity to the interchange, where market demand for such uses would be the highest.

5. Interchange Area: "Business/Industrial Mix" Areas

The "Business/Industrial Mix" areas shown on Map 7 provide locations just beyond the immediate interchange area, east of the Interstate, for either commercial or industrial development, or a carefully planned mixture of both types of development. Industrial uses should focus on high-quality indoor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office uses with generous landscaping, screened storage areas, modest lighting, and limited signage. Uses that generate significant trucking activity (e.g., distribution centers) and noises (e.g., heavy manufacturing) should be discouraged in this area.

Parking lots should be landscaped and accommodate safe pedestrian movement.

6. Interchange Area: "Business/Residential Mix" Areas

The "Business/Residential Mix" areas shown on Map 7 provide locations generally at the edges of the interchange area, intended to accommodate primarily commercial development. These

areas may also accommodate limited, carefully planned residential development compatible with the primarily commercial character of the area. Examples include residences on the second story of commercial properties and small apartment buildings. These areas are not intended to accommodate residential neighborhoods or large scale apartment complexes. The specific mix and details of these areas should be carefully considered to avoid potential conflict of uses or incompatibilities, and are subject to Town approval. Because most "Business/Residential Mix" areas on Map 7 are close to environmental corridor/floodplain areas, careful consideration must be given to managing environmental impact, including following the Town's stormwater management ordinance.

7. Interchange Area: Potential Park and Ride Lot

Map 7 suggests a possible location for a Park and Ride facility, southeast of the Interstate/Highway CS bridge. This area was recently used as a staging area for the bridge reconstruction project, and may be accessible from Smokey Hollow Road to the east. The Town intends to communicate this idea to WisDOT in conjunction with its park and ride study. Issues that may need to be overcome are environmental—both floodplain and potential contamination.

K. Commercial/Industrial Mix: Highways 51/J/V Area (on Map 6)

1. Objective

The second *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area is established and mapped on Map 6 to identify a limited area near the north edge of the Town for indoor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, office, and commercial uses, limiting outdoor activity areas and allowing only fully screened outdoor storage areas. Attention to building design, landscaping, signage, and lighting will be required. This planned *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area is focused around a few existing similar uses near the intersections of Highways 51, J/V, and the railroad tracks. Its size is limited by *Environmental Corridors* in the vicinity. Special attention will be needed to protect the integrity of the natural resources, rural character, nearby residential uses, and air quality in the area.

2. Policies and Programs

a. Encourage land uses within this area that **capitalize on its assets**, including Highway 51, railroad access, and proximity to the Columbia power plant. See also the Economic Development Chapter for additional land use ideas and opportunities for this area.

b. Require a **minimum lot size** for all new lots proposed as building sites in accordance with the Town's Land Division and Subdivision Code and the zoning classification of the lots. Dependent on the proposed development, a larger-than-usual setback distance from Highway J/V or other property lines may be required.

c. Direct development **away from the *Environmental Corridor***. Development is also discouraged in areas with soils with severe limitations for on-site solid waste disposal, as shown on Map 8; soils with building limitations, as shown on Map 6; and in areas with slopes between 12-20 percent and over 20 percent as shown in Map 4. Developers shall submit detailed maps showing these features when applicable to a certain development area.

d. Before the rezoning of lands for development, require the property owner or developer to **submit a plan showing environmentally sensitive areas** that should not be developed, including:

i. Wetlands based on a field survey conducted by a qualified professional
ii. Stream banks
iii. Shoreline setback areas
iv. Floodplains
v. Hydric soils (formed under wet conditions—many formerly wetlands)
vi. Soils with severe limitations for on-site waste treatment systems (see Map 8)
vii. Soils with low or very low potential for dwellings with basements
viii. Steep slopes (show 12-20% and 20%+)

e. Follow the Town's site plan review ordinance when considering specific commercial and industrial development projects in this area. **Attempt to follow the site and building planning and design standards** for the "Commercial/Industrial Mix: Interchange Area" in Section J above, to the extent considered reasonable by the Town Plan Commission and Board.

f. Outdoor activities shall be limited to loading, unloading, and storage, by recommendation of the Plan Commission and determination of the Town Board, with such areas:
i. Not exceeding ½ acre per building site (applies to storage area only).
ii. Fully screened from public roads and residentially zoned properties.
iii. Not negatively impacting the aesthetics of the surrounding area.
iv. Having no impact on air quality, water quality, odor, and noise beyond the property line.
v. Not negatively impacting opportunities to develop nearby lands with desired land uses.
vi. Located to the rear or non-street side of the building, and away from residential properties.

g. Support rezonings to the County's I-1 and commercial zoning districts within this area. Do not support the rezoning of any additional lands to the I-2 zoning district, except where the Town Board is satisfied that there will be restrictions against objectionable uses and activities.

h. Exercise the Town's ability under the County zoning ordinance in Town actions on conditional use permits in this area, using the conditional use permit standards outlined in the County zoning ordinance and the provisions of this Comprehensive Plan.

L. Environmental Corridors & Soils with Building Limitations (on Map 6)

1. Objective

Environmental Corridors are established and mapped to identify and protect generally continuous environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, floodplains outside of the limited already-developed lands along the waterfront, and undeveloped shoreland setback areas (not all of this last category shown on Map 6). They are intended for long-term open space, wildlife habitat, stormwater management, natural areas, and or trails uses. The *Soils with Building Limitations* area is mapped as an overlay designation on Map 6. This category includes slopes greater than 20 percent, floodplains within limited already-developed areas along the waterfront, and hydric soils not in mapped wetlands, per the Columbia County soil survey. The Town also wishes to preserve slopes of 12 percent to 20 percent to the extent practical.

2. Policies and Programs

a. Where development is proposed, determine the **exact boundaries of the *Environmental Corridor* or *Soils with Building Limitations* based on the features that define those areas**. These lands may be considered for more intensive uses if (1) more detailed information or studies reveal that the characteristic(s) that resulted in their designation as *Environmental Corridor* or *Soils with Building Limitations* is not actually present, (2) approvals from appropriate agencies are granted to alter a property so that the characteristic that resulted in its designation will no longer exist, or (3) a mapping error has been confirmed by the Town.

b. Where land included in the *Environmental Corridor* and *Soils with Building Limitations* area are adjacent to land in the *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area*, such land **shall count toward calculating the number of dwelling units** allowed on the overall parcel, per the Town's density policy in Section F above.

c. **Generally prohibit building development** in the *Environmental Corridor*, and discourage building development on *Soils with Building Limitations*, except that the preservation of prime farmland soils (groups I, II, and III) on Map 3 is prioritized.

d. **Permit cropping and grazing** within *Soils with Building Limitations* and the *Environmental Corridor* in an environmentally responsible manner.

M. URBAN TRANSITION AREA (AS SHOWN ON MAP 6)

1. Objective

The *Urban Transition Area* is shown on Map 6 over lands within the Village of Poynette, where the Village has land use decision making authority. The *Urban Transition Area* is also mapped over certain lands in close proximity to the Village limits within the Town that may be appropriate for development on sanitary sewer and water services over the 20-year planning period. These lands should either (a) be preserved in the near term as mainly agriculture and open space uses, with development densities no greater than one lot per 35 acres (consistent with *Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area* policies), or (b) be developed more intensively within the next 20 years, if desired by the respective property owners, if provided with public sewer and water services, and if consistent with the recommended intergovernmental agreement between the Village and the Town (see Chapter Ten). The size and boundaries of the Urban Transition Area may be altered as a result of this recommended agreement, revised growth projections, or otherwise as determined by the Town.

2. Policies and Programs

a. Limit new development in accordance with all policies applicable to the Agriculture and Woodland Preservation Area (see section F above), until such time when the Town and Village agree that particular mapped area is appropriate for more intensive development with public sewer and water service.

b. Require all permitted non-farm development projects be designed not to impede the orderly future development of the surrounding area with more intensive development with public sewer and water service in the future.

c. Negotiate with Poynette an intergovernmental agreement to further determine the type, timing, jurisdiction, services, and other aspects of future development within portions of the *Urban Transition District* presently in the Town. Chapter Ten contains more detailed guidance on the recommended agreement.

CHAPTER FIVE: TRANSPORTATION

This chapter includes a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies and programs to guide future transportation in Dekorra. The chapter also compares the Town's transportation policies to state and regional transportation plans.

A. Existing Transportation Network

Access is a key determinant of growth. Dekorra is very well connected to the region through the existing roadway network. Other transportation facilities, such as freight rail, are located in or easily available to the Town.

1. Roadways

Interstate 39/90/94 runs north-south through Dekorra. It enters the Town two miles west of Poynette, and exits when crossing the Wisconsin River. There is one interstate interchange in Dekorra, located where Interstate 39/90/94 intersects County Trunk Highway (CTH) CS. CTH CS runs east into Poynette and west to the developed residential areas on Lake Wisconsin. U.S. Highway (USH) 51 runs somewhat parallel to the Interstate, three to four miles east. State and county highways in Dekorra make up the community's arterial and collector road network.

Traffic within the Town has grown steadily in some areas and decreased in others. Traffic on the Interstate and USH 51 corridors has recently decreased in the Town, but traffic on select County highways has increased. Traffic volumes on Interstate 39/90/94 increased by 40 percent between 1996 and 2000, but between 2003 and 2008 they decreased by 33 percent, from 69,100 vehicles per day in 2003 to 46,300 vehicles per day in 2008 measured at a point just south of the CTH CS interchange. This change may in part be attributed to the onset of the Great Recession, fewer miles being driven by many households and businesses, and perhaps relatively higher fuel prices at the time.

While the most recent Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) traffic count data available for the Interstate corridor is from 2008, the most current data available for the remainder of the roadway network in Dekorra is from 2003. Traffic on USH 51 grew 31 percent between 1994 and 2000, but it decreased by 13 percent from 5,200 vehicles per day in 2000 to 4,500 vehicles per day in 2003 at a point just south of CTH B. While traffic on the Interstate corridor and USH 51 both decreased during these years, traffic on County highways in the Town grew steadily in most cases. The average growth in traffic on Dekorra's CTHs between 1994 and 2000 was 15 percent. The average rate of growth on select County highways (CTHs B, V, and CS) between 2000 and 2003 was over 10 percent. One noteworthy local road traffic volume change was on Tipperary Road west of CTH V. It handled 27 percent more traffic in 2000 than in 1994, but it subsequently handled 25 percent less traffic in 2003 than it did in 2000.

There are currently no plans to expand or significantly rework any of the County highways within the Town beyond routine maintenance.

According to the 2013-2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), there are a host of design, road maintenance, pavement replacement, and resurfacing projects slated over the next several years for the Interstate corridor through Columbia County. Rehabilitation of the Interstate bridges over the Wisconsin River was recently completed. The westbound/northbound lanes were completed in 2012, and the eastbound/southbound lanes were completed in 2013.

Town roads generally serve as local roads in the system. The Town maintains a five-year road maintenance program. Normal maintenance, such as crack filling and sealcoating, is anticipated as needed. Details regarding work on specific roads can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

2. Airports

There are no airports located in Dekorra. There are two landing strips in the Town, one located just south of Bilkie Road and one just east of Stebbins Road. Larger air carrier and passenger facilities are located approximately 30 miles to the south in Madison at the Dane County Regional Airport. Small passenger and freight service is available at the Portage Municipal Airport.

3. Rail

A line of the Canadian Pacific Railway operates north-south through Dekorra, running through Poynette to Madison to the south and Portage to the north. It runs west of and roughly parallel to USH 51. This placement provides opportunities for industries that may require boat, rail and highway access. The nearest passenger rail station is the Amtrak station in Columbus.

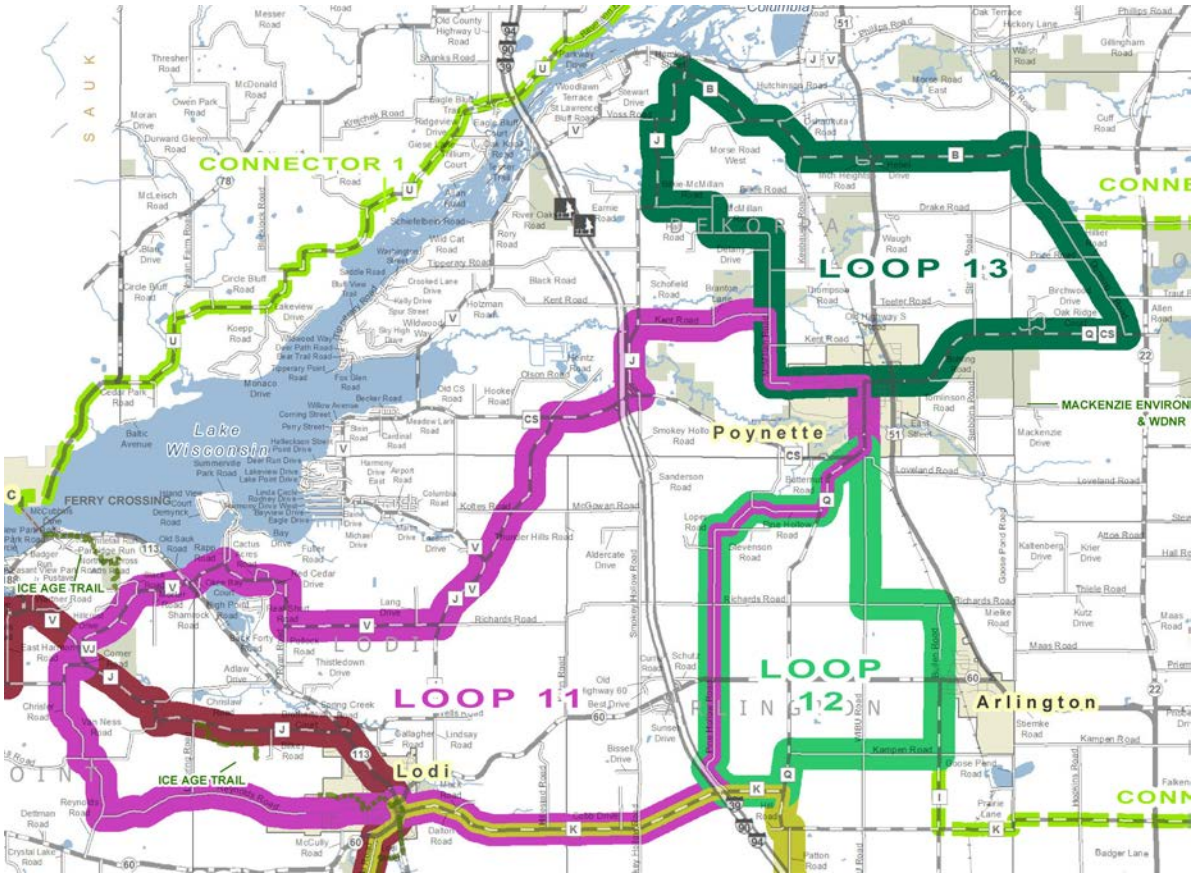
4. Bicycles and Walking

The bicycling industry is a significant facet of Wisconsin's economy. Many lightly traveled Town roads are in good condition for bicycling. In general, the rolling, winding roads through Dekorra provide amazing cycling options.

On the Wisconsin State Bicycle Map for Columbia County, WisDOT has recommended several cycling routes through Dekorra. The routes are located mostly along County and Town roads. The routes include CTH V along Lake Wisconsin and the Wisconsin River and CTH J from Lake Columbia south to CTH CS.

The Columbia County Silent Sports Trails Committee was formed to promote recreational bicycling in the County while strengthening and diversifying the County's recreational economy. The Columbia County Silent Sports Trails Committee has worked with the local bicycling community and the Columbia County Economic Development Corporation to identify and map on-street bicycle routes in a bicycling brochure called "Columbia County Bicycling Routes." That route map includes 14 separate loops in Columbia County, and connectors between the loops. Loops 11, 13, and a small part of 12 run through the Town of Dekorra, as represented in Figure D.

Figure D: Segment of Columbia County Bicycling Route Map for Lands Near Dekorra



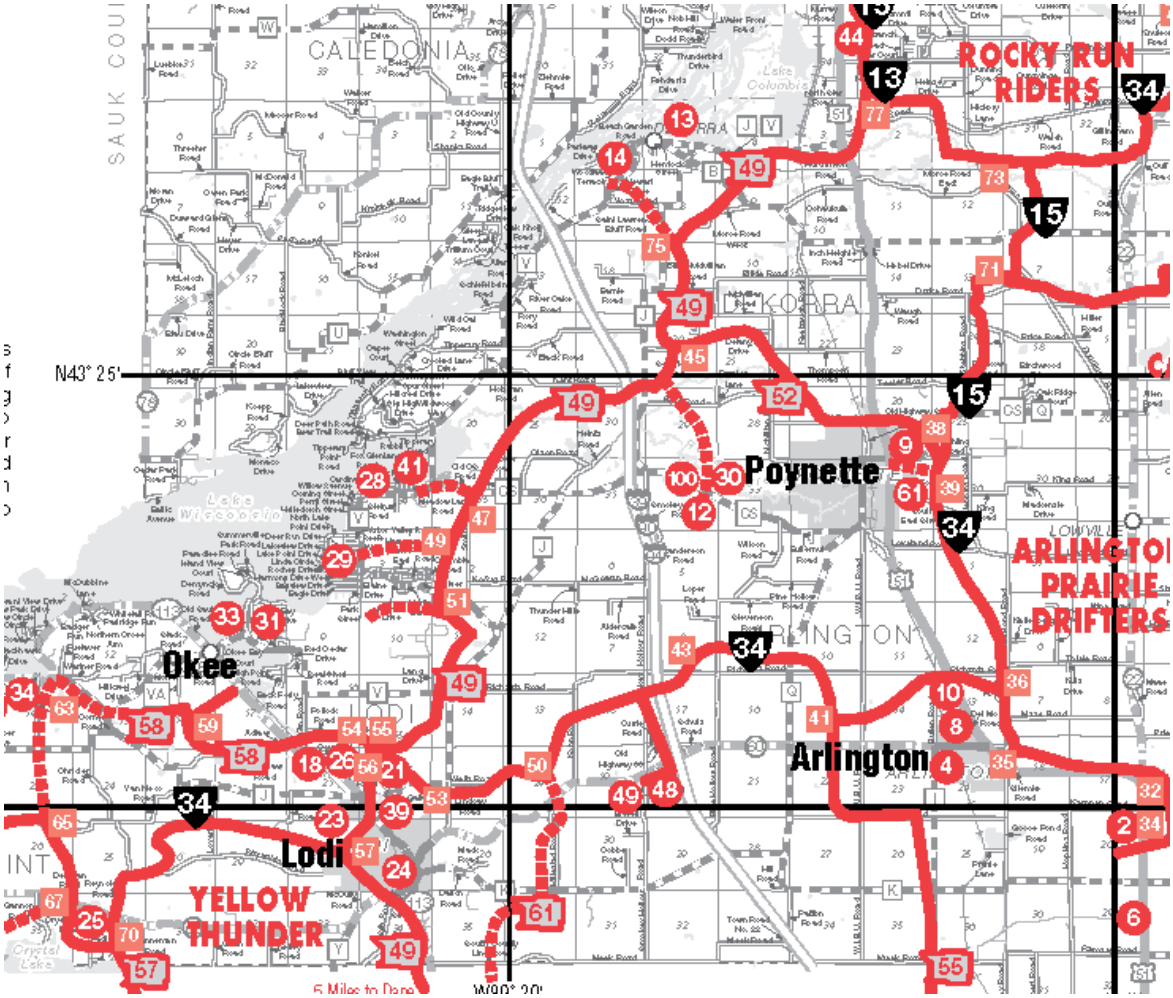
There are few sidewalks in Dekorra. Lesser-traveled roads, such as those in residential subdivisions, provide the main opportunities for safe walking. Sidewalks, paths, or wider paved shoulders should be considered in future planned development areas, particularly within utility and sanitary districts where development density and traffic is high (such as the Interchange Area shown on Map 7).

The Columbia County Group of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Master Plan identifies a short hiking and cross-country skiing trail within the Rowan Creek Fishery Area southwest of and adjacent to the Village of Poynette.

5. Snowmobile Trails

The 2012-2013 trail map of the Columbia County Association of Snowmobile Clubs identifies a robust network of County trails, County trails designated as State corridors, and club trails, a variety of which are located in the town of Dekorra. State Corridors 15/34 run east of Poynette and just west of the MacKenzie Center. They connect the Village of Arlington in the south to both Portage to the north and Wyocena to the northeast via the Rocky Run Creek Fishery area. State Corridor 13 branches to the east to connect to the Village of Rio. County Trail 49 runs approximately one to two miles east of the Wisconsin River through Dekorra between Lodi and USH 51. County Trail 52 connects County Trail 49 to State Corridor 15/34 north of Poynette.

Figure E: Segment of Columbia County Bicycling Route Map for Lands Near Dekorra



6. Transit and Specialized Transportation Services

There is no public transit system in Dekorra. The Columbia County Department of Health and Human Services facilitates transportation for elderly residents through a volunteer driver service and a County ride service, some portion of which is contractually outsourced. This service can take residents to medical appointments, grocery shopping, nutrition sites, or other personal business. The County can also help put residents in touch with private service providers who will help with transportation.

Additionally, the Columbia County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) coordinated an effort in February 2009 to prepare a Columbia County Locally Developed Transportation Coordination Plan. That plan assessed "the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes," and it identified gaps in service. ADRC worked to coordinate communication between numerous stakeholders and inventoried available transportation service providers.

7. Trucking

The federal, state, and county highway and interstate network through the Town accommodates truck traffic. There are rest areas along the Interstate within the Town. WisDOT is planning

upgrades to the rest areas within the next five years, including working with the Town on providing public sewer services. Water transportation is limited to recreational boating on the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin.

B. Review of State and Regional Transportation Plans

This section reviews state and regional transportation plans relevant to Dekorra. This Comprehensive Plan is consistent with these transportation plans. WisDOT's Southwest Region office is primarily responsible for Interstate, U.S., and State highways in Dekorra. Dekorra is not within the jurisdiction of a regional planning commission or metropolitan planning organization.

1. Connections 2030: Long-Range Multimodal Transportation Plan

Connections 2030, adopted by WisDOT in 2013, begins with a vision to create and maintain "an integrated multimodal transportation system that maximizes the safe and efficient movement of people and products throughout the state." The plan includes recommendations for highways, rail, air, port, and bike and pedestrian movement. The plan identifies trends and challenges, including aging transportation infrastructure, increased use, and declining revenues. The plan positions relatively general recommendations around seven themes:

a. Preserve and maintain Wisconsin's transportation system
b. Promote transportation safety
c. Foster Wisconsin's economic growth
d. Provide mobility and transportation choice
e. Promote transportation efficiencies
f. Preserve Wisconsin's quality of life
g. Promote transportation security

The plan identifies 37 statewide system-level priority corridors, which includes the Interstate 39/90/94 corridor through Dekorra. The *Connections 2030* plan is available at: http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/2030-background.htm.

2. Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020

The *Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020* focuses on the 11,800 miles of State Trunk Highways in Wisconsin. The plan is a strategic vision that considers the highway system's current condition, analyzes future uses, assesses financial constraints, and outlines strategies for the highway system. The plan identifies the backbone and connector routes of this system. The only such route identified in Columbia County is the Interstate. That plan does not identify specific construction projects, but rather broad strategies and policies to improve the highway system. In some ways the *Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020* was superseded by the more comprehensive *Connections 2030* plan.

3. Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

The *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* presents a blueprint for improving conditions for bicycling, clarifies the WisDOT's role in bicycle transportation, and establishes policies for further integrating bicycling into the current transportation system. The plan map shows existing state trails and future "priority corridors and key linkages" for bicycling along the highway system. In 2001, the State also adopted a pedestrian policy plan.

4. US 51 Corridor Study

The 2011 *US 51 Corridor Study* covers the stretch of Highway 51 between the north edge of DeForest and the south edge of Portage. The purpose of the Study was to identify options to preserve and improve the function of Highway 51 in that stretch, now and in the future. No construction projects are expected to be immediately programmed as a result of this Study. As an aside, Highway 51 will be expanded to a four-lane freeway through DeForest by 2015, significantly affecting commuting and business traffic between Dekorra and Madison/Interstate 94.

One of the topics addressed in the *US 51 Corridor Study* are traffic volumes and their potential effect on current and future highway levels of service. Late 2000s traffic volumes of 4,700-5,000 vehicles per day along Highway 51 were reported in the Dekorra area—lower than the 10,000+ near the southern (DeForest) and northern (Portage) edges of the study corridor. Projected Year 2040 traffic volumes in the Dekorra area exceed 6,000 vehicles per day. In any case, these figures are well below the normal planning threshold of 18,000 vehicles per day to consider a 4-lane roadway. As such, the *US 51 Corridor Study* suggests that most of Highway 51 between DeForest and Portage will be maintained as a two-lane facility for the foreseeable future.

The earliest morning and latest afternoon peak travel hours anywhere along the highway corridor occur in Poynette, Dekorra, and Arlington. This owes to the significant amount of commuting to the Madison and Portage areas from these smaller communities. This results in concentrated traffic concerns, which that diminish substantially during non-peak hours, except for those related to weather, agricultural vehicles, and deer.

The Study also looked at accident data. One of the interesting findings was that nearly ½ of all crashes involve deer, and 1/5 of the crashes have injury. There are, therefore, higher crash rates than the State average, but these are in large part driven by deer crashes.

Future improvements to this stretch of Highway 51 will be focused at intersections where there are current or projected safety or traffic flow concerns. These may include medians, left-turn lanes, and realignment, depending on the intersection.

5. Southwest Region Park-and-Ride System Study

Initiated in 2013, the *Southwest Region Park-and-Ride System Study* is intended to guide WisDOT's Southwest Region's future park-and-ride system planning and investments, improve public information on park-and-ride facilities, and establish ongoing coordination with local officials on park-and-ride system planning.

6. Interstate 39/90/94 Corridor Environmental Impact Study

In 2012, WisDOT initiated a two-stage study to provide a comprehensive analysis of the need for and impacts of a capacity expansion for Interstate-39/90/94 between the Beltline in Madison to the interchange of Interstate 39 and Interstate 90/94 north of Dekorra. The first stage, completed in 2013, was a traffic impact analysis for segments close to Madison. The second stage is an Environmental Impact Analysis for the entire corridor. The Environmental Impact Study, scheduled to be completed by 2019, will propose new concepts to add capacity on the Interstate.

As part of the process, WisDOT's consultants will hold meetings with various stakeholders to identify concerns and to establish goals and objectives. The consultants will also develop, analyze, and obtain input on a range of different alternatives**.**

C. Transportation Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

1. Goal

Provide a safe, efficient, multi-modal transportation system that meets the needs of multiple users and minimizes impacts on landowners and farming.

2. Objectives

a. Maintain and require an interconnected road and highway network.

b. Coordinate transportation with land use, especially near the interchange and USH 51.

c. Support biking, walking, transportation facilities and services for the transit-dependent and disabled, freight rail transport, trucking, water transport, transit, nearby air service, and other alternative modes of transportation.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Work with WisDOT to plan for a **future park and ride lot** at the interchange of the Interstate and Highway CS (see Map 7), through the Southwest Region Park-and-Ride System Study or otherwise.

b. Work with WisDOT and the Columbia County Highway Department to **control highway access for the planned *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area near the interchange (see Maps 6 and 7)**, including access consolidation where possible when new development and redevelopment proposals are offered.

c. Explore how access to the functioning **rail line might be used to promote industrial development** in the planned *Commercial/Industrial Mix* area near the Highway 51/J intersection, as shown on Map 6.

d. Remain involved and advocate Town interests on **WisDOT highway improvement plans, studies, and projects for the Interstate and Highway 51, such as the Interstate 39/90/94 Environmental Impact Study**.

e. **Cooperate with the Village of Poynette, WisDOT, and the Columbia County Highway Department** to explore the extension of Highway CS to link up with Highway 51 near the southern border of the Village. Currently, truck traffic and other motorists trying to reach the Interstate must move through the Village or use Town roads north of the Village to get from Highway 51 to Interstate 39.

f. Continue to **update and implement a Town Road Improvement Program** to provide for upgrading of Town roads and seek funding.

g. **Upgrade existing Town roads** to current standards to the extent practical when repaving those roads, **but do not over-design those roads** beyond rural standards.

h. **Discourage use of Town roads for through and/or heavy traffic** by considering techniques such as signage, speed zones, and weight limits. Continue to monitor and stay involved in State efforts to enable larger agricultural vehicles on Town roads.

i. Require **new roads and driveways to meet the design, location, and layout standards** in Town ordinances.

j. Promote **joint driveways** to achieve public safety and rural character goals.

k. Collaborate with the Columbia County Silent Sports Trails Committee and Highway Department on the **implementation of mapped bicycle routes through the Town**, including appropriate signage and maintenance of roads on which routes have been mapped.

l. **Accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic** on other less traveled town roads and County Highways, such as on Tipperary Road, along CTH V over Whalen's Grade to Smith Road, and in other intensively developed areas, through techniques like the installation and proper maintenance of paved shoulders and speed control and enforcement.

m. Support **additional transportation options** for those without access to an automobile, including the elderly, disabled and children.

n. Continue to **restrict against private improvements within Town road rights-of-way** and other Town lands, except with permission of the Town Board.

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CHAPTER SIX: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This chapter of the *Plan* contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide future utilities and community facilities in Dekorra. Parks and Recreational Facilities are addressed in Chapter Seven.

A. Existing Utilities and Community Facilities

1. Water Supply

Dekorra is not presently served by municipal water service; residents receive their water via private wells. Poynette provides municipal water services to residents within the corporate limits of the Village. The Town does not anticipate providing municipal water service over the 20-year planning period, except perhaps in the new Utility District. Areas shown as being within the Urban Transition Area shown on Map 6 may be provided with municipal water service when development is imminent.

2. Town Utility District

The Town Utility District near the Interchange is designed to facilitate sanitary sewer service to existing and planned land uses in this area. The Utility District is delineated on several maps in this Plan. The Town worked with WisDOT and WisDNR on the construction of a sewage treatment plant west of the rest areas and force sewer mains from the rest areas to the Utility District/Interchange Area. Construction of the new sanitary sewer facilities was completed in 2007. The system has adequate capacity to serve the 20-year needs of the rest areas, plus future growth in the Utility District/Interchange Area. Modules could be added in the future to accommodate additional development as needed.

3. Sanitary Districts

The Town created Sanitary District 1 under the authority of State Statute 60.71. It is intended to serve the area on both sides of Tipperary and Wildcat Roads near Lake Wisconsin as shown on Map 8. Commissioners are appointed by the town board and consist of 3 members serving 6 year staggered terms. There is no public sanitary sewer service provided or contemplated in this district at the present time.

The Town created Sanitary District 2 under the same authority. It is intended to serve the area on both sides of County Highway CS near Lake Wisconsin west of Whalen's Grade as shown on Map 8. Commissioners in District 2 are also appointed by the town board and consist of 3 members serving 6 year staggered terms. There is no public sanitary sewer service provided or contemplated in this district at the present time.

4. On-Site Water Treatment Systems

All development in the Town currently utilizes individual on-site wastewater treatment systems, often referred to as septic systems, which generally discharge the wastewater to underground drainage fields. Many of the Town's existing systems were installed prior to 1970, when standards for on-site systems began to be upgraded.

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce (COMM) regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site treatment systems. There are six types of on-site disposal system designs authorized for use today: conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, and sand filter systems. In some cases, alternative waste disposal

systems can be used in areas where conventional systems are not feasible due to unsuitable soil conditions. In Columbia County, the Department of Planning and Zoning administers the private sewage system ordinance under the same code.

Map 8 shows soil suitability for conventional on-site wastewater treatment systems in Dekorra. The suitability classifications (from severe to slight limitations) are derived from the Columbia County soil survey. Classifications are based on average slope, depth to soil saturation, average depth to bedrock, and flooding potential. In general, there is a high probability that a conventional system could be used in areas identified on Map 8 as having "slight limitations". As areas move toward "severe limitations", the probability increases that mound or alternative treatment technologies would have to be used.

5. Solid Waste Disposal Sites

There are no active solid waste disposal sites in the Town, and none planned. The Columbia County Recycling and Waste Processing Facility is located in Pardeeville.

Solid waste disposal sites, or landfills, are potential sources of groundwater pollution. With the passage of stringent federal regulations in the late 1980s, many smaller landfills closed. Many of these older landfills were located in worked-out sand and gravel pits, or in low-lying wetland areas. These landfills sites pose a much greater risk to local groundwater quality than modern landfills because of poor location and absence of liners or advanced leachate collections systems. To protect drinking water quality, WisDNR requires a separation of 1,200 feet (a little less than ¼ mile) between open or closed landfills and new private water supply wells.

6. Stormwater Management

Dekorra does not have or intend to have an urban storm sewer system. Dekorra has an Erosion Control and Stormwater Runoff ordinance that applies to all land-disturbing activities (as defined in Section 11.01 of the Building and Construction Codes). In addition, Columbia County requires the submittal of a stormwater management plan with all new subdivision requests. The Wisconsin DNR requires an erosion control plan and permit for all projects that disturb one or more acres of land. The landowner is required to ensure that a site-specific erosion control plan and stormwater management plan are then implemented.

7. Town Hall

The Town Clerk's office is located in the Village of Poynette municipal building at 106 S. Main Street. The Town conducts meetings at the former Dekorra Elementary School, typically in the gym area. The Town has acquired the entire building and site from the Poynette School District. There are no immediate plans to alter or upgrade the facility, though the Town has established a dog park on the site.

Map 8: Soil Suitability for On-site Waste Treatment Systems

8. Law Enforcement

The Columbia County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency for Town residents. The patrol officer serving Dekorra is stationed at a dispatch office in the Portage, on STH 33. The Town considers these law enforcement services adequate. The Town has a constable, who is primarily involved with enforcing the Town's ordinances.

9. Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Service

Fire and ambulance services are provided by the Joint Poynette-Dekorra Fire and EMS Protection District, which provides both firefighting and emergency medical services to the Village of Poynette, the Town of Dekorra, the Town of Lowville, and other communities by mutual aid agreements. It is located at 601 Water Town Road, Poynette. Fire and first responder services are provided by members of the volunteer department. They are backed up by other volunteer departments from other communities.

The Town of Dekorra is a member of the Poynette-Dekorra Fire Protection District. The District is governed by a Commission which has 7 members plus the Fire Chief who is a non-voting member. Dekorra is entitled to appoint 3 of the commissioners, selected by the Town Board and serving 2 year terms. The Fire Protection District and Commission is governed by the Restated Fire and Emergency Protection Agreement executed in 2011.

There are no planned changes to these services, which are considered adequate at this time.

10. Trash Collection and Recycling Services

Residents of the Town contract privately with one of several private services to receive on-site trash and recycling pickup on a weekly basis. The Town runs a trash drop-off/recycling site at McMillan and Hall Roads (W8901 Hall Road), paid through property tax bills as a special charge. No changes in these services are anticipated.

11. Libraries

Residents in Dekorra generally patronize the Poynette library. The Town has historically contributed funds to subsidize this service. Library patrons can use their Columbia County Library card at any of the libraries in the seven-county South Central Wisconsin Library System. The library and the United States Postal Service also provide free delivery for persons who are physically unable to visit the library. The Town considers the current library arrangement to meet foreseeable resident needs.

12. Schools

Most students in Dekorra attend schools in the Poynette School District. The Poynette school system includes two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. There used to be one elementary school, Dekorra Elementary, formally located in the Town on Bilkie Road, but it closed in 2009. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), 2012-2013 enrollment in the Poynette School District was 1,147 students.

A small portion of the southwestern part of the Town is in the Lodi School District. The Lodi School District has one primary school for pre-school to Grade 2; one elementary school for grades 3-5; a middle school for grades 6-8; a high school; Gibraltar Charter School, a charter high

school for children with differing educational needs; and Ouisconsing School of Collaboration, a charter school for grades 3-5. All schools are located within the Village of Lodi. DPI indicates that 2012-2013 enrollment for the Lodi School District was 1,609 students.

There are a few households in the northeast corner of the Town in the Portage School District.

13. Child Care Facilities

There are several small child care facilities, pre-schools, and family day care homes in the Poynette-Dekorra area. There is a perpetual shortage in child care services in the area and state. The Town will not get involved in providing child care services.

14. Churches and Cemeteries

There are two churches in Dekorra; Inch Methodist, on CTH B and USH 51, and Dekorra Lutheran, on CTH CS and Smith Road. These churches serve as both community gathering places and prominent buildings on the rural landscape.

There five cemeteries located within the Town. Each of the two churches has an associated cemetery. Others include the Schofield Cemetery (inactive, Town-owned) at USH 51 & Thompson Road, the Hastie Cemetery at CTH J & Black Road, and Dekorra Cemetery in the Old Dekorra Village Area. Other smaller burial areas are located throughout the Town.

15. Medical and Health Care Facilities

Health care needs in Dekorra will increase as the "baby boom" population approaches retirement age. Local hospitals and clinics include the following:

a. **Divine Savior Healthcare**
   2817 New Pinery Road, Portage
   608-742-4131

b. **Columbus Community Hospital**
   1515 Park Ave, Columbus
   920-623-2200

c. **UW Health Portage Clinic**
   2977 County Road CX, Portage
   608-742-3004

d. **UW Health Columbus Clinic**
   1511 Park Ave Ste D, Columbus
   920-623-5226

e. **Lodi Medical Clinic**
   601 Clark Street, Lodi
   608-592-3296

f. **Dean Care Family Practice Clinic Poynette**
   110 N. Main Street, Poynette
   608-635-4343

g. **Davis Duehr Dean Portage Clinic**
2825 Hunter's Trail, Ground Level, Portage
608-742-5522

The Town's proximity to the Madison metropolitan area provides a wide array of health care providers, including the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics, St. Mary's Hospital, Meriter Hospital, and several HMO provider facilities.

16. Wireless Telecommunications Facilities

Due to the proliferation of wireless communications, the construction of telecommunication towers is an issue that towns are addressing more and more often. Most telecommunications towers are located in the northwestern portion of Dekorra, near the Interstate. The Town should utilize detailed standards in the Columbia County zoning ordinance when considering requests to site new telecommunications facilities (see Chapter Four).

17. Power Plants and Transmission Lines

The Columbia Power Plant is located just north of the Town of Dekorra along the Wisconsin River. It is a 1054 megawatt facility built in the late 1970s.

The American Transmission Company (ATC) operates a transmission line through Dekorra, and there are plans to upgrade this line via the Badger-Coulee Transmission Line Project, described by ATC as follows: "American Transmission Company and Xcel Energy have plans for a high-voltage transmission line in western Wisconsin that would address electric system reliability issues locally and in the Midwest, provide economic savings and support renewable energy policy. The area, from north of La Crosse to northern Dane County, is being considered for the approximately 150- to 180-mile, 345-kilovolt line." A portion of this line runs through Dekorra. Submission of the application to the Public Service Commission (PSC) was completed in 2013. ATC anticipates a decision from PSC in 2014, construction to begin in 2016, and service along the line to begin in 2018. There are two primary routes forwarded to PSC for consideration that run through the Town: one entirely along the Interstate (Northern Route) and one (Southern Route) that enters the Town from the south just east of CTH J and runs due north to connect to the Interstate at a point just north of where Black Road intersects with the Interstate. At this point, both the Southern Route and the Northern Route coincide through the Town along the Interstate to the north.

B. Utilities & Community Facilities Goals, Objectives, Policies, Programs

1. Goal

Supply utilities, facilities, and services in line with resident expectations and the rural atmosphere.

2. Objectives

a. Coordinate utility and community facility systems planning with land use, transportation and natural resource planning.

b. Protect the Town's health and natural environment through proper siting of on-site wastewater treatment systems, stormwater management facilities, and power transmission lines.

c. Promote the use of existing public facilities, and logical expansions to those facilities to serve future development wherever possible.

d. Support the provision of a full range of utilities and community facilities in the Dekorra area, recognizing that many of these utilities may not be appropriate in a rural setting that most of the Town provides.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Explore options for the **upgrading and consolidation of Town administrative and recreational facilities**, including consideration of steps to upgrade the Town Hall to serve a broader array of community needs.

b. Continue to **provide basic services** for Town residents, including recycling.

c. Consider **water service** within the Utility District in the longer term.

d. Continue to work with the Village and other neighboring governments to share costs for **joint fire and emergency medical services** and with Columbia County to maintain law enforcement services.

e. Direct **rural development away from areas with limited suitability** for on-site waste treatment systems, as depicted on Map 8, as a way to protect groundwater supply for private wells.

f. Work with the County Planning & Zoning Department to ensure the **proper approval process and placement of new on-site wastewater systems**, and appropriate maintenance and replacement of older systems as a means to protect groundwater quality.

g. Allow the use of holding tanks and new biological and chemical wastewater treatment technologies **only where other systems are not feasible**, placement is consistent with the land use objectives of this Plan, and the property owner pays a special assessment on the property for monitoring and maintenance.

h. **Carefully evaluate proposed large on-site waste treatment systems**, or groups of more than 10 individual on-site systems on smaller lots (1.5 to 2 acres) in the same general area, to ensure that groundwater quality standards are not impaired.

i. Continue to enforce the Town's **Erosion Control and Stormwater Runoff ordinance** for multiple and individual lot developments.

j. Do not plan for direct Town government involvement in **health care and child care** over the 20-year planning period, as these services will be provided by private and non-profit entities and in nearby communities.

k. Do not plan for direct Town involvement in providing additional or expanded libraries, cemeteries, or solid waste disposal facilities. The Town expects that **cemeteries and libraries** in the area will be sufficient to serve Town residents over the planning period, or other entities will provide these facilities.

l. **Remain actively involved in ATC's plans to install a segment of the Badger-Coulee power transmission line** through the Town, and advocate a final alignment and design that maximizes positive economic development impacts and minimizes negative rural character impacts on the Town.

C. UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES TIMETABLE

Table 9 is an estimated timetable for possible utility and facility changes in the Town over the 20-year planning period. Budgetary constraints and other unforeseen circumstances may affect this timeframe.

Table 9: Utilities and Community Facilities Timetable

Utility or Facility	Timeframe for Town Improvements	Comments
Water Supply	N/A	All water supplied by private wells. Town may consider providing water service to Utility District in future. No other plans.
Sanitary Waste Disposal	2015-2020	Study sewer line extension to Sanitary District 1 of demanded.
On-Site Wastewater Treatment Technology	N/A	New alternative on-site wastewater treatment systems may be an alternative to existing holding tanks near the waterfront.
Solid Waste Disposal	N/A	All landfills in the Town are closed. None planned.
Stormwater Management	Ongoing	Enforce the Erosion Control and Stormwater Runoff ordinance (Section 11.01, Chapter 11 Building and Construction Codes).
Town Hall	2014-2020	Explore opportunities to upgrade, expand services, and/or consolidate services at the Town Hall building and site.
Recycling/Trash Services	N/A	The Town's recycling and trash service should meet forecasted needs over the planning period.
Law Enforcement	N/A	County Sheriff and Town Constable are expected to continue in their present form, with additional need as population grows.
Fire Protection & Emergency Medical Services	N/A	Joint fire and EMS services are sufficient to meet current needs and forecasted needs.
Medical Facilities	N/A	Medical facilities in nearby communities appear to meet needs.
Library	N/A	Continue arrangements for use of Poynette and other libraries.
Schools and Child Care	Ongoing	Encourage small child care facilities.
Park & Rec Facilities	See Chapter 7	
Telecommunications	N/A	Private carriers addressing phone and internet needs.
Power Plants & Transmission Lines	2014-	Remain actively involved in ATC's plans to segment build Badger-Coulee line through Town. No known power plant upgrades.
Cemeteries	N/A	Private sector will serve needs.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

This chapter of the *Plan* contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to guide public park and recreational facilities in Dekorra.

This chapter, in conjunction with data shared elsewhere in this Plan, also serves as the Town's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The State of Wisconsin requires communities to prepare and adopt a park and recreation plan in order to maintain eligibility for State and Federal grants and loans, and update such plan every five years.

The first Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Park and Outdoor Recreation Plan was completed by the Town's Park Master Plan Committee in 2008, and served as the Town's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan through the year 2013. This chapter reflects and builds upon the Committee's work.

This chapter includes a number of recommendations to improve park and recreation resources in the Town. It does not represent, however, a commitment by the Town of Dekorra to complete any particular project over the ensuing five years or beyond. Implementation of the plan will depend upon adequate financial resources being made available by the Town of Dekorra, taxation, user fees, grant monies, private donations, or other as-yet unknown sources.

A. Existing Park and Recreational Facilities

1. Planning Area

The planning area for this Chapter is coterminous with that for the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan—the entire Town of Dekorra.

2. Natural Resources

The Town's natural resource base is covered in depth in Chapter Three: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources.

3. Population, Housing, and Land Use Trends and Projections

Trends and projections are the underpinning of the recommendations of this chapter and required by the State. These are included in other chapters of this Comprehensive Plan, including Chapter Two: Issues and Opportunities, Chapter Four: Land Use, and Chapter Seven: Housing.

4. Overview of Town-owned Parks and Recreational Facilities

This Chapter uses terms from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to describe the characteristics of a park, as follows:

- A mini park is typically less than one acre. Mini-parks typically include playground equipment and some field space, and serves a residential area within ¼ mile or so.
- A neighborhood park is typically 1 to 9 acres. Neighborhood parks typically include areas for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, and playground equipment. Service area can be ½ mile or more.
- A community park is generally 10 acres on up. Community parks typically include large areas for intensive recreational activities, often with lighting, parking, restrooms, and spectator areas. Passive recreation and natural areas may also be included.
- Developed water accesses provide access to Lake Wisconsin or the Wisconsin River from Town roads. Some are improved with pier and driveway. Some are grass access only that may primarily serve as storm water run-off areas.

- Undeveloped water accesses are remnants of road plats and/or public water access as required in Town ordinance 10.82(b)(1), which also may serve as storm water run-off areas and provide possible access from the water.
- Natural and conservancy areas are set aside for their natural beauty, their function of concentrating storm water runoff, and their benefit to residents, vacationers and wildlife.

The Town of Dekorra owns five mini parks, three neighborhood parks, four conservancy areas, 15 developed water accesses, three undeveloped water accesses (and four related undeveloped areas), and recreational facilities at the Town Hall site (which arguably serves as a community park). These are described in the following subsections.

5. Existing Mini-Parks

a. **Camp Perry Park**

Location: Near W10934 Willow Ave. Section 33, T11N, R8E; N of County Rd V, turn N onto Willow Street

Facilities include: Lake Wisconsin frontage, sign designating launch, ADA accessible playground area (2007), picnic table area, sand beach (swim at own risk), charcoal grill pit, pier, parking available, portable toilet and access from water for picnic, etc.

b. **James Whalen Memorial Park**

Location: Near W10893 Tipperary Rd. Parcel 915, Section 27-28, T11N, R8; across from Tipperary Point Rd Access - Boat Landing

Facilities include: sign designating park, ADA accessible playground area (2007), picnic table areas, parking for fishing, across the street from Tipperary Point Access and portable toilet

c. **Camp Rest Park**

Location: Near N3814 Tipperary Rd. Parcel 1600.02, Section 22, T11N, R8; located on Tipperary Rd.

Facilities include: sign designating park, has Wisconsin River frontage, shelter, well with hand pump, new playground equipment (2004), picnic table areas, sand beach (swim at own risk), paved boat launch, parking, portable toilet and access from water for picnic, etc.

d. **Irene's Isle**

Location: Parcels 1600, 03, 04, 05, 06, Section 22, T11N, R8; between Isle and Tipperary Road, 50' by 300' area adjacent to and South of Camp Rest Park

e. **Riverside Park**

Location: Near W9370 County Highway V. Section 6, T11N, R9; N of County Road V next to Wisconsin Street Access, frontage between Wisconsin River and Hooker's Resort. Frontage width varies from approximately 100 feet by Hooker's to approximately 50 feet where it almost joins the land at Dekorra Park, separated by one parcel.

Facilities include: sign designating park, has Wisconsin River frontage, adjacent to Wisconsin Street paved boat launch, horse shoe pits, picnic table area, parking, portable toilet, and access from water for picnic, etc.

6. Existing Neighborhood Parks

a. **Happy Hollow Park**

Location: Near N3685 Tipperary Rd. Parcel 766.1, Section 22, T11N, R8E; located on Tipperary Road

Facilities include: sign designating park, tennis court, baseball field, basketball court, playground equipment, picnic table areas and portable toilet

b. **Dekorra Park**

Location: Near W9306 County Highway V. Section 6, T11N, R9E, lots 3,4,5,8,9,10,11, Dekorra Village Plat; N of County Road V and next to Main Street Access

Facilities include: sign designating park, Wisconsin River frontage, tennis court, ADA accessible playground area, picnic table areas (2007), fishing, adjacent to Main Street paved boat launch, parking, 2 charcoal grill pits, well with hand pump, portable toilet and access from water for picnic, etc.

c. **Hickory Oak Park**

Location: Near W7350 Hickory Ln. Section 1, T11N, R9E; E of Phillips Rd, Hickory Oak Subdivision
Facilities include: Playground equipment, shelter, and basketball court

7. Community Park

The Town Hall site (former Dekorra Elementary School) arguably serves as the Town's community park. It is located in Section 16, T11N, R9E, N. on the north side of Bilkie Road. Facilities include playground equipment, baseball diamond, soccer field, gym, dog park (established in 2014), and parking.

8. Existing Developed Water Accesses

a. **Camp Perry Access**

Location: Near W10934 Willow Ave. Section 33, T11N, R8E; 50 ft x 200 ft, N of County Rd V, turn N on Willow St., next to Camp Perry Park.

Facilities include: limited access, access by water for picnic

b. **Corning Street Access**

Location: Near W10963 Corning Rd. Section 34, T11N, R8E; W of County Rd V, turn W onto Corning Street

Facilities include: Lake Wisconsin frontage, sign designating launch, pier, portable toilet.

c. **Stein Road Access (Lake Wisc. Highlands)**

Location: Near W10702 Becker Rd. Section 34, T11N, R8E; Stein Rd N of County Rd V, 60 ft x 100 ft

Facilities include: sign designating access, has Wisconsin River frontage, sandy area (swim at own risk), fishing, canoe or small boat launch by foot, minimal parking, and no toilet, access from water for picnic

d. **Tipperary Point Access**

Location: Section 27-28, T11N, R8; 75 ft x 125 ft, off Tipperary Point Rd

Facilities include: Lake Wisconsin frontage, paved boat launch, pier, fishing, parking along side of access and across street at James Whalen Memorial Park

e. **Second Road Access**

Location: Section 27, T11N, R8E, between parcels 807 and 808, 25 ft x 75 ft off Tipperary Rd

Facilities include: Lake Wisconsin frontage, sign designating access, grassy picnic area (no table), parking along road fishing, canoe or small boat launch by foot and no toilet, access from water for picnic

f. **Copse Road Access**

Location: Section 22, T11N, R8; 25 ft x 150 ft, between parcels 750 & 751, located off Tipperary Road

Facilities include: sign designating access, Wisconsin River frontage, gravel road to boat launch, parking along sides of access, and cement pavements put in launch area in 2007

g. **Saddle Road Access**

Location: Section 22, T11N, R8E; 25 ft x 150 ft, between parcels 740 & 744, off Tipperary Road

Facilities include: sign designating access, Wisconsin River frontage, paved boat launch, parking along the sides of access

h. **Camp Rest Access**

Location: Section 22, T11N, R8; 25 ft x 50 ft off Tipperary Road

Facilities include: Wisconsin River frontage, paved boat launch and parking

i. **Wildcat Road Access**

Location: Near N3933 Wild Cat Rd. Section 22, T11N, R8E; 60 ft x 100 ft, off Wildcat Road, between lots 681 & 682

Facilities include: sign designating access, fishing, canoe or small boat launch by foot, foot path to river, only parking along Wildcat Road, picnic area (no table), access from water for picnicking

j. **Cedar Street Access**

Location: Near N4020 Wild Cat Rd. Section 23, T11N, R8; 25 ft x 100 ft, off Wildcat Road

Facilities include: sign designating access, fishing, canoe or small boat launch by foot down a stairway only, stairway and foot path to Wisconsin River below, parking – limited parallel to cul-de-sac, picnic area, access from water for picnicking

k. **Oak Knoll Access**

Location: Near N4567 Oak Knoll Dr. Parcel 1701.13, Section 12, T11N, R8E, 25 ft x 100 ft. off Oak Knoll Drive

Facilities include: sign designating access, Wisconsin River frontage, paved boat launch, parking along side of access, minimal water – canoe or small boat launch only; no picnic area available

l. **Woodlawn Terrace to River Access**

Location: Section 6, T11N, R9E; W of Parkway Drive, between parcels 1274 & 1285

Facilities include: paved road to river, steel rail across water's edge with three red posts, canoe or small boat launch by foot, parking along side of access, no picnic area

m. **Beach Garden Road Access**

Location: Section 6, T11N, R9E; W of Parkway Drive between parcels 1292 & 1306.2

Facilities include: paved road halfway down access, canoe or small boat access by foot, fire pit, picnic area (no table), parking at pavements end, access from water for picnic

n. **Wisconsin Street Access**

Location: Near W9370 County Highway V (Hooker's Resort) Section 6, T11N, R9E; W of County Rd V, next to Riverside Park

Facilities include: paved boat launch, Wisconsin River frontage, minimal parking but additional parking at DNR parking lot up the road

o. **Main Street Access**

Location: Section 6/5, T11N, R9E; W of County Rd V, next to DNR parking lot

Facilities include: paved boat launch, Wisconsin River frontage, DNR Parking lot across the road E of County Highway V

9. Existing Undeveloped Water Accesses and Related Areas

a. **Sweetbrier Trail**

Location: Section 6, T11N, R9E; W. of Parkway Dr, between parcels 1263 & 1273

Facilities include: undeveloped ravine

b. **Shady Cove**

Location: Section 6, T11N, R9E; W. of Parkway Dr. between parcels 1272 & 1280

Facilities include: undeveloped ravine

c. **Wildwood Glen**

L**ocation**: Section 6, T11N, R9E; W. of Parkway Dr. between parcels 1298 & 1282.4

Facilities include: undeveloped ravine

d. **Unnamed Ravine**

Location: Section 6, T11N, R9E; W. of Parkway Dr. between parcels 1271 & 1308

Facilities include: undeveloped ravine

e. **Unnamed Access**

Location: East of W10858 County Highway V. between parcels 1003 & 1004

Facilities include: undeveloped access

f. **Unnamed Access**

Location: River Oaks Road extension across Hwy V to water access.

Facilities include: undeveloped road right of way

g. **Unnamed Trail**

Location: River Oaks Road cul-de-sac trail extending South and East to DNR lands

Facilities include: undeveloped trail

10. Existing Natural and Conservancy Areas

a. **Water Frontage along Tipperary Road**

Location: Parcel 1100.6, Section 27, T11N, R8; all along the south border of Tipperary Road, 3400 ft x 50 ft to 100 ft

Facilities include: undeveloped and privately maintained

b. **St. Lawrence Bluff Park**

Location: Near N4691 Saint Lawrence Bluff Rd. Parcel 1356, Section 12, T11N, R8E; St. Lawrence Bluff Rd, goes to River E of Interstate I90 bridge, 1.75 acres

Facilities include: undeveloped, sign designating park, walkway along easement to signs showing entrance into park, no parking except on side of St. Lawrence Bluff Rd, walking possible but no established trails

c. **Beach Gardens Town Acreage**

Location: Sections 5 & 6, T11N, R9E; Various parcels in the Beach Garden Area

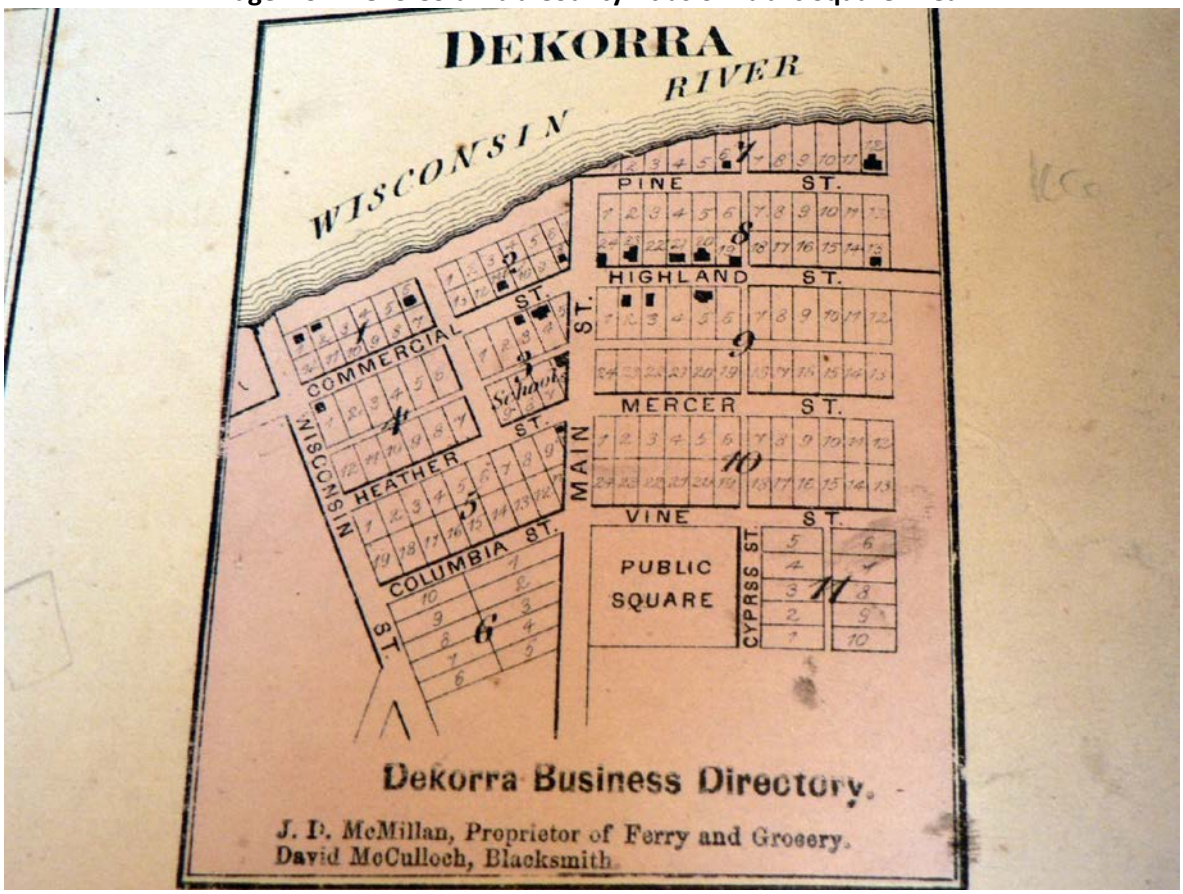
Facilities include: undeveloped and forested area, walking possible but no established trails

d. **Public Square**

Location: Parcel 104.4, Section 5, T11N, R9E; Dekorra Village Plat, plus undeveloped Main Street to County Highway V

Facilities include: undeveloped, walking possible but no established trails

Image from 1873 Columbia County Atlas of Public Square Area



11. Other Publicly Owned Recreational Lands and Facilities in Dekorra

a. Jamieson Park (Village of Poynette)

Location: Section 33, T11N, R9E off County Rd C

Facilities include: overnight camping (48 hours), trails, picnic area, portable toilets, well with hand pump

b. Forest Area in Beach Gardens (Poynette School District)

Location: Section 6, T11N, R9E. Parcels 1185, 1212

Facilities include: Undeveloped

c. Lake Columbia Area (Wisconsin Power & Light)

Location: Across the road from W8495 County Highway J & V

Facilities include: Fishing area, Canoe launch (no powered equipment), gravel road walking area

d. Whalen's Grade (Columbia County)
Location: Section 27, 28, 33, 34, T11N, R8; E and W of County Rd V

Facilities include: Lake Wisconsin water frontage, fishing, ADA accessible fishing area, picnicking (no tables), parking on west side only

e. Whalen's Grade Boat Landing (WisDNR)

Location: Parcel 959.E, Section 34, T11N, R8; County Rd V

Facilities include: blacktop boat launch and large parking area, and portable toilet

f. Dekorra Wisconsin River Public Boat Access/Parking Lot (WisDNR)

Location: Parcel 99, Section 5, T11N, R9E; Across from Main Street Access

Facilities include: Large paved boat parking area for Main Street Access, maintained by Town/DNR partnership

g. Poynette State Game Farm/MacKenzie Environmental Education Center (WisDNR)

Location: Section 25, T11N, R9; 364.63 acres

Facilities include: See Chapter 3: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

h. Rowan Creek Area (WisDNR)

Location: Section 36, T11N, R9; 861.4 acres

Facilities include: See Chapter 3: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

i. Hinkson Creek Area (WisDNR)

Location: Section 21, T11N, R9E ; 318.16 acres

Facilities include: See Chapter 3: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

j. Public Hunting Grounds (WisDNR)

Location: Section 13, T11N, R8E; 200 + acres along Interstate 90/94

k. Rest Areas off I-39/90/94 (WisDOT)

West Location: Section 13, T11N, R8E

East Location: Section 18, T11N, R9

l. Other State of Wisconsin Lands

Locations: Section 1, T11N, R9E; 138 acres; Section 2, T11N, R9E; 160 acres; Section 11, T11N, R9; 10.34 acres

m. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Lands

Location: Sections 13 and 22, T11N, R9E; 250+ acres

12. Other Existing Recreational Opportunities

Programs that require organizations in surrounding municipalities are organized for youth and for adults. Opportunities for youth include football, wrestling, basketball, volleyball, softball, baseball, golf, hockey, soccer, curling, and swimming at the high school pool. Adult opportunities include baseball, softball, basketball, golf, volleyball, horseshoes, and curling.

Individual opportunities include the use of Lake Wisconsin and Wisconsin River boating, fishing, water skiing, canoeing, personal watercraft use, swimming, sailing, kayaking, and island camping. Other activities include running, walking, and biking along the roadways; tennis; basketball; golf; hiking; and hunting on public hunting grounds. Winter activities include snowmobiling, ice boating, ice fishing, cross country skiing, ice skating, and ice races by Whalen's Grade.

The Annual Midsummer Night's in Dekorra fireworks display has grown substantially each year. It currently is located on privately owned land. It would require substantial acreage acquisition should the venue change to publicly owned space. The current arrangement with the private land owner is working very well. The Town of Dekorra would be hard pressed to find a better venue than the current location.

B. Outdoor Recreation Survey Results

In December of 2006, the Town of Dekorra distributed 2,500 survey questionnaires to residents seeking information regarding parks, recreation programs and facilities. A total of 370 responses were received which reflects a participation rate of 14.8 percent.

The survey sought to assess residents' satisfaction with existing parks and recreation facilities and opportunities. A majority of those who responded reported they were satisfied or more than satisfied with existing town park and recreation facilities.

The survey also asked to rank the need for the various types of park resources. Primary interest was in acquisition and development of a bikeway and walking/hiking trails with 41 percent selecting this as a high or very high priority. Continuing with very high or high priority resources, the development and utilization of natural or historic areas was next with 39 percent, followed by community parks with 24 percent, neighborhood parks with 21 percent, and mini-parks with 12 percent. The survey did not include water accesses as a park category. However, through another question, it became clear that the greatest recreational uses in the Town were water-based.

In general, the following were the survey priorities:

- Maintain/improve access to water
- Develop new and link existing pedestrian and biking trails
- Maintain/develop scenic, historic, and environmentally sensitive areas
- Maintain cleanliness and safe usable condition of existing parks and equipment
- Spend wisely, utilize existing facilities fully before expanding

C. Needs Assessment

For the purpose of interpretation, the following definitions shall be used. Where terms referred to in this Chapter are not defined, the Town adopts the terms, definitions, and standards that appear in the "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines" (4th Edition) published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). This system is intended to serve as a guide and not an absolute blue-print. The NRPA suggests that a park system, at a minimum, be composed of a "core" system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.50 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population.

1. Needs Standards

a. **Mini-Park (or Neighborhood Playground)**

Mini-Parks typically have facilities for young children or senior citizens, a land area of less than one acre, and a service area of about ¼ mile. The Town of Dekorra has several mini-parks already and whenever possible, prefers not to acquire or develop new parks that are this small. However, some parks in newly created subdivisions may be mini-parks.

b. **Neighborhood Park**
A neighborhood park serves a residential neighborhood within about a ½ mile radius. Typically, a neighborhood park includes area for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, playground equipment, as well as picnic facilities. Larger neighborhood parks may include tennis, volleyball, and basketball courts, soccer or ball fields and restroom facilities. The preferred size of a neighborhood park is 5 to 9 acres, but they can be as small as one acre. Newly created subdivisions often have neighborhood parks.

c. **Community Park**
A community park is a large recreation facility serving the entire community. Typically, community parks include all of the improvements found in a neighborhood park plus athletic fields designed for competitive athletics. Generally, community parks have lighted playfields, spectator areas, restroom facilities, and picnic shelters, or pavilions. Community parks are 10+ acres in area. Community parks with adjacent natural areas may be significantly larger.

d. **Regional Park**
A regional park is a facility designed to serve a broad area that generally includes several local government jurisdictions. Regional park facilities are owned and maintained by a county, state, or a regional park district. Regional parks generally feature both natural areas for passive recreation and active recreation facilities.

e. **Special Purpose Park**
Special purpose parks are town-owned recreational and open space facilities that are designed to serve a specific purpose, which may include a public plaza or memorial, a swimming pool or other discreet recreational use, or key open space in an otherwise fully developed commercial or industrial district.

f. **Conservancy Park**
A conservancy park is a publicly owned area that is managed primarily for its natural resource qualities, such as wetlands, wildlife habitats, or unique vegetation. Generally, trails and other passive recreational facilities are installed within conservancy parks. Conservancy parks are usually not suitable for active recreation facilities such as playfields or athletic facilities.

g. **Environmental Corridors**
Environmental corridors are continuous environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, floodplains outside of the limited already-developed lands along the waterfront, and undeveloped shoreland setback areas. They are intended for long-term open space, wildlife habitat, stormwater management, natural areas, and or trails uses. They are further described in Chapter Four: Land Use, and shown on Map 6.

h. **Other Drainageways or Greenways**

Drainageways or greenways are undeveloped lands that are maintained in an undeveloped condition in order to provide sufficient land area to detain or retain periodic stormwater. While drainage ways and greenways have recreational benefits, they are periodically flooded or have poor drainage and are generally unsuitable for active recreational use.

i. **Service Area**
The service area is the zone of influence of a park. Service areas are usually determined by the average distance users are willing to travel to reach a facility. Although expressed in terms of service radius, features such as arterial roads, rivers, or other disruptions to normal travel may influence the extent of the service area.

2. Improvement Standards

The Town of Dekorra's existing park and outdoor recreation areas offer a high level of service. The Town of Dekorra continually strives to improve service to its residents. The following table summarizes standard NRPA park size recommendations.

Table 10: NRPA Park Size and Service Area Standards

Park Type	Acreage Standard	Service Area Radius
Mini-Park	.25 to .5 acres per 1,000 population	¼ mile
Neighborhood Park	1.0 to 2.0 acres per 1,000 population	½ mile
Community Park	5.0 to 8.0 acres per 1,000 population	1 to 2 mile (in village setting)

The Town of Dekorra currently meets these standards. There are six mini-parks of about 1/3 acre each and three neighborhood parks of about 2 acres each. Regardless, there will be additional need for "close-to-home" mini-parks and neighborhood parks in new subdivisions.

While the Town Hall site arguably services as a Dekorra's community park, a site that would support structured athletic fields should also be studied.

The Annual Midsummer Night's in Dekorra fireworks display has grown substantially each year. It currently is located on privately owned land. It would require substantial acreage acquisition should the venue change to publicly owned space. The current arrangement with the private land owner is working very well. The Town of Dekorra would be hard pressed to find a better venue than the current location.

D. Recreational Activity Improvement Recommendations

There are currently no Town of Dekorra organized sports and recreational activities, and no Town organized activities are anticipated. Participants join the organization of their choosing for these activities. The Poynette School District, Village of Poynette, and private groups offer organized recreational activities. These fees for organized recreational programs should be primarily left to the participating individual. In the 2000s, there were discussions with the village of Poynette on setting up a joint sports authority, but no action has yet been taken.

E. Parks and Recreation Goals, Objectives, and Policies

1. Goal

Provide open space and trails for outdoor recreation, access to natural resources, and environmental protection, with safe and efficient neighborhood connections.

2. Objectives

a. Provide permanent open space throughout the Town of Dekorra for outdoor recreation, access to natural resources, and environmental protection.

b. Provide neighborhoods within the Town of Dekorra access to both neighborhood and community park facilities.

c. Provide safe and efficient trail access and bike routes between residential neighborhoods, parks, and other recreational sites and destinations.

d. Preserve environmental corridors as permanent open space areas.

3. Policies

a. Provide mini-park or neighborhood park facilities that are safely accessible by children within all developed residential neighborhoods.

b. Provide sufficient community park facilities to serve community-wide park and outdoor recreation interests.

c. Utilize drainageways, greenways, and environmental corridors as part of a permanent open space system suitable for passive recreation use, including nature walking, wildlife habitat preservation, and trail development. Such environmental areas are not suitable as neighborhood or community parks because of topography and drainage limitations.

d. Require new developments (per Town of Dekorra ordinance) to provide land and/or per lot fee in lieu of lands, and easements that would be consistent with the goal of safe and efficient trail access and continued park development.

e. Implement a maintenance plan for boat landings that would include a capital improvement schedule, and with a focus on pier improvement. Investigate options for landing or pier usage fees. Use such fees to help cover these maintenance and improvement costs.

f. Coordinate parkland and open space planning with the Village of Poynette, Town of Lodi, Town of Arlington, Town of Lowville, Poynette School District, and WisDNR.

g. Design park facilities whenever practical to meet the requirements of the American's With Disabilities Act (ADA).

h. Create historic kiosk or information center near the Dekorra Park area.

i. Support the work of the Columbia County Silent Sports Committee in the planning, development, and marking of a bike route/loop through the Town.

F. Parks and Recreation Programs and Recommended Improvements

1. Generally

The Town will work to use ATC money as much as possible for park projects that meet the criteria for its use.

Common issues and recommendations identified for most Town parks are as follows:

- Permanently mark park boundaries
- Trim trees, remove dead limbs and stumps, and remove invasives as advised
- Continuous maintenance of picnic tables and wood signs
- If parks have street numbers, get signs and/or add number to existing park sign

2. Individual Park Improvement Suggestions

a. Cedar Street Park
   - Bounded by cottage at N4005 Wildcat Rd and private tennis court; owner maintains park. No vehicle access to park.
   - Dead/dying oak in middle of park; leave stump to rot as there is no vehicle access

b. Happy Hollow Park
   - Replace tennis court standards

c. 2nd Road Access
   - Regular clean-up of litter and driftwood at shoreline

d. Tipperary Point Access
   - Regular clean-up of brush on north side of ramp

e. Stein Road Access
   - Reroof artesian well house

f. Camp Perry Access
   - Regular clean-up of litter and driftwood at shoreline

g. Sweetbriar Trail
   - Complete boundary survey
   - Resolve final name for this area, given other “known-as” names (Woodlawn / Unnamed road / Shady Cove)

h. Potential Columbia Court Access
   - Resolve whether in fact there is an access at this location
   - Complete boundary survey

i. Beach Garden Road Access

- Complete boundary survey (not clear whether fire pit, bench, and logs are on town property)
- Either remove brush or retain if it has value as a visual block
- If brush removed, add guardrail like Woodlawn access

j. Dekorra Park
   - Regular pulling/killing of brush in fence on tennis courts (continuous)

k. Main Street Access
   - Repair west side of landing pad blacktop

3. Recommendations for Future Parks

a. Trails
   - Extend Rowan Creek Trail from the Village of Poynette to WisDNR entrance on County Highway CS, and eventually to the Wisconsin River.
   - Encourage hiking trails on WisDNR lands and in the area along Parkway Drive.
   - Work with the Silent Sports Committee on bike routes, loops, signs, trailheads, and connector trails.

b. Community Parks
   - Continue to improve and open the Town Hall site to community and recreational use as practical and demanded
   - Identify 10+ acre site that could accommodate ball fields
   - Identify site that may be a public or private sports center in the Utility District/Interchange Area

G. Future Parkland Acquisition Guidelines

As new residential subdivisions develop in the Town, additional parkland will be dedicated through implementation of Chapters 10.81 through 10.85 of the Town Land Division and Subdivision Code, available at http://dekorra-wi.gov/ordinances-agreements-resolutions. Those sections generally require developers to dedicate developable land for park and recreational space equivalent to 5,000 square feet per dwelling unit for subdivision plats.

In areas where land dedication is not desired by the Town, a fee as specified on the Town of Dekorra Fee Schedule per lot created will be required. There are certainly cases areas where a fee for land acquisition elsewhere is more desirable and a recreational trail or easement through the property would better suit the public. The Town may use such fees for additional land acquisition for parks, conservancy areas, and recreational trail areas or for the development of parks, conservancy areas and recreational trail areas and are payable at the time of plat approval. At time of writing, the fee amount was $1,715 per lot. The Town will continue to consider if such fees ought to be applied to residential lots created by certified survey map, and adjust ordinances accordingly.

The Town may also acquire property via delinquent tax options and donations, as has happened in the in the Beach Gardens area. As land is acquired in this manner, it should be reviewed whether the best use is as a Town park or for subsequent sale and private development.

In addition to the standards in Sections 10.81 through 10.85 of the Town Land Division and Subdivision Code, the Town will use the following guidelines when making decisions on whether to acquire or accept park and recreational lands:

- The acquisition of parkland is consistent with this Comprehensive Plan and other adopted Town plans and policies.
- Adequate road and trail access will be available or provided to lands within the park service area, and for ongoing access and maintenance of the park.
- Where feasible, parkland should be located adjacent to other public facilities or environmental corridors in order to take advantage of shared-use opportunities and maximize the utilization of environmental areas for recreational benefits.
- Environmental corridors *may* be accepted as part of the public land dedications, where such land is not within wetlands or 100-year floodplains and such land provides key linkages between residential neighborhoods and community facilities.
- Land needed for stormwater management or land within delineated wetlands or 100-year floodplains will not be credited toward meeting parkland dedication requirements.
- As a general rule, mini-parks and playgrounds are more costly to improve and maintain on a per acre basis. Where feasible, consideration should be given to the accumulation of larger dedications or fees that could support the activities of a neighborhood or community park, as opposed to obtaining a significant number of additional mini-parks.

H. Maintenance and Operations

While adding new parkland is important to serving new residential areas, the Town is committed to a program of maintaining existing parks in good condition and providing sufficient funds for operations. Such maintenance and operation include providing sufficient budget for:

- Maintaining and replacing facilities and equipment, as needed.
- Mowing and maintaining the lawn and landscaped areas.
- Keeping the parks litter-free, graffiti-free, and in a general state of positive upkeep.

These maintenance and operations need to be considered as part of the overall budgeting for park facilities. As new lands are added to the park system, additional funds are needed maintenance and operations.

I. Existing Usage Assessments; Possible Disposition

The Town Board and Parks Commission will continue to assess existing Town owned lands and make recommendations as to improvements, whether the Town should continue to own all these properties, or whether some of them should be sold. Lands assessed may include parks, water accesses, and erosion control green space (such as in the Beach Gardens Plat).

Such assessments should consider the following factors:

- Types and amount of existing uses. Existing uses may include water access, recreation, erosion control, or common green space buffer.
- Extent to which existing uses are available in other parks, or whether one or more existing uses in the park under assessment are unique or uncommon.
- Make-up of existing users. This should include whether the lands are truly used by the public in general or only by adjacent property owners and their friends/patrons.
- Suitability for future improvement as more attractive recreational space.
- Suitability for private development, both in terms of land characteristics and marketability.
- Whether the money obtained from such a sale could be better used for park and recreational lands or facilities elsewhere.
- Whether the Town could indeed legally sell the land if it chooses. Some lands if vacated by the Town may need to revert to adjacent landowners.
- Whether a water access is necessary to meet statutory requirements (generally one access for every ½ mile).
- Neighborhood and community opinion.

Such assessments will provide the data to create an informed decision on potential disposition of Town park and recreational lands.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HOUSING

This chapter of the Plan contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs aimed at providing an adequate housing supply that meets housing demand in Dekorra.

A. EXISTING HOUSING FRAMEWORK

1. Housing Stock Characteristics

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of new housing units in Dekorra increased by over 8 percent to a total of 1,337 according to the 2010 Census. However, Dekorra lost population during this same time period at a rate of -1.7 percent. The aging population of Dekorra combined with fewer persons per household and the continuing prevalence of seasonal homes are key factors to consider in analyzing these changes. As shown in Table 11, the proportion of single-family homes as a percent of the total number of housing units in the Town remained constant between 2000 and 2010 at about 94 percent.

Table 11: Housing Units by Structure Size, 1990 – 2010*

Units per Structure	1990 Units	1990 Percent	2000 Units	2000 Percent	07-11 Units	07-11 Percent
Single-Family	962	90.9%	1,171	93.9%	1,311	93.9%
Two-Family (Duplex)	15	1.4%	8	0.6%	4	0.3%
Multi-Family	5	0.5%	0	0%	0	0%
Mobile Home	76	7.2%	67	5.4%	81	5.8%

*Source: U.S. Census, 1990 & 2000; *U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011 American Community Survey.*

Table 12 compares other housing stock characteristics of Dekorra with the Towns of Lowville and Arlington, the Village of Poynette, and Columbia County. In 2010, 27.2 percent (363 units) of Dekorra's housing was classified as "vacant," but of those units, 82.9 percent (301 units) were classified as having "seasonal, recreational, or occasional use." Of all communities compared, Dekorra has by far the greatest percentage of seasonal units. Dekorra also had the highest rate of owner occupancy among the communities. Nearly 91.9 percent of all Dekorra's housing units were owner-occupied.

Based on the 2007 to 2011 American Community Survey, the Town's median housing value of $232,000 was higher than the values of all of the surrounding communities compared, with the exception of the Town of Arlington. Dekorra's median value also substantially exceeded that of Columbia County as a whole, as shown below.

Between 2003 and 2012, the change in the annual median sale price of a home in Columbia County followed a distinct pattern based on statistics derived from the South Central Wisconsin Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Corporation. Starting in 2003, the median sale price of a home was $138,000. This median sale price rose each subsequent year until reaching the 10-year peak in 2006 at $185,609. It then began to decline each subsequent year until reaching the 2012 low of $126,250. This pattern is not uncommon, and largely reflects the real estate impacts of the Great Recession on a community's housing stock. Many communities generally followed a similar bell-curve pattern of increase, reaching an apex around 2006 or 2007, followed by successive decreases in annual median sales.

More recent indicators of the real estate market and the economy in general suggest a strengthening market. It will be telling to see if 2013 median sales (to be reported in January 2014) will begin to increase again.

Table 12: Housing Stock Characteristics

	Town of Dekorra	Village of Poynette	Town of Lowville	Town of Arlington	Columbia County
Total Housing Units	1,337	1,122	433	332	26,137
Total Year-round Households	974	1,046	407	309	22,735
% Seasonal Units	22.5%	0.2%	1.4%	0.6%	7.2%
Owner-Occupied Vacancy Rate	2.9%	2.1%	1.9%	1.1%	2.5%
% Owner-Occupied	91.9%	67.5%	90.7%	84.1%	74.6%
Median Housing Value	$232,000	$153,200	$223,900	$237,500	$177,000
Median Contract Rent	$1,065	$824	$598	$690	$713

Source: U.S. Census, 2010, and U.S. Census Bureau's 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS).

2. Housing Condition and Age

Age of a community's housing stock is sometimes used as a measure of the general condition of the community's housing supply. Nearly one-third of Dekorra's housing stock was constructed since 1990. Nearly one-fifth of the Town's housing stock was constructed prior to 1940. Over the planning period, some of these older homes may be in need of rehabilitation.

3. Forecasted Housing Needs

The Town had 1,337 housing units in 2010 based on the U.S. Census. Future housing units in Dekorra are forecasted based on the population forecast scenarios in Chapter Two, projected decreases in average household size, and an assumed future housing vacancy rate. For purposes of forecasting, the total vacancy rate is assumed to be constant at 27 percent, recognizing that seasonal housing will continue to make up a substantial portion of the Town's total housing stock. The 2000 average number of persons per household was 2.48, while the 2010 average was 2.37. This downward trend has been consistent for decades. This forecast assumes another decrease in the average, but anticipates that it will level off at a relatively constant average of 2.25 persons per household for the next 20 years.

Based on this methodology and the population projections from Chapter Two, Dekorra is forecasted to accommodate between 1,446 and 1,457 total units by 2015, between 1,512 and 1,546 total units by 2020, between 1,578 and 1,640 total units by 2025, between 1,645 and 1,740 total units by 2030, and between 1,711 and 1,847 total units by 2035. Actual housing units built in the Town will depend on a number of factors, including market conditions, demographic shifts, regulations, and attitudes towards growth. The Town desires housing unit growth at the lower end of the reported ranges.

These housing forecasts were used to forecast residential land use demand in Chapter Four.

4. Housing Affordability

Under the comprehensive planning law, a community must provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups, and special needs. Affordable

housing choices in the Town will be most feasible where public sanitary sewer services are available and Town plans allow for housing. Sewer service allows smaller (and therefore more affordable) lots and the potential for attached housing options, like condominiums and small apartments.

The Village of Poynette provides the most appropriate location for affordable housing in the area, reflected through the Urban Transition Area on Map 6. Additionally, based on the Census Bureau's 2007-2011 American Community Survey, over 20 percent of Poynette's housing units were in multi-family structures containing three or more units, and over 9 percent of the Village's housing units were mobile homes.

The Town's three mobile home parks and older houses also will provide affordable housing in Dekorra. The Town also advocates smaller lot sizes for rural residential development outside of publicly sewered areas, which can reduce the overall costs for housing. According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), there are no subsidized housing units in Dekorra.

In Columbia County, housing assistance is provided through both a non-profit and a private company. Administration of the W-2 program is provided for Columbia County by Forward Services Corporation by way of contract with the State of Wisconsin. Some housing assistance is available to those who qualify for the W-2 program.

The County refers others with housing assistance needs to the non-profit Community Action Council. The Council receives federal and state funding to provide housing assistance to low- to moderate-income residents. These programs include:

- Weatherization assistance to replace materials and rehabilitate homes
- Section 8 housing
- Rental assistance program
- Emergency funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Grants for temporary housing for the homeless
- Home buyers rehabilitation funding
- Down payment and closing cost assistance

Other housing programs available to Dekorra residents include home mortgage and improvement loans from WHEDA and home repair grants for the elderly from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds down-payment assistance for homebuyers, rental rehabilitation, weatherization-related repairs, accessibility improvements, and rental housing development. The Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) funds activities such as emergency rental aid, homeless prevention efforts, and related housing initiatives. Further information on these programs can be obtained by contacting WHEDA.

The USDA Rural Development department provides low-interest loans to very low-income owner occupants, to improve or repair homes, to remove health and safety hazards, or to make homes accessible to disabled household members.

Other programs available to Columbia County residents can provide disabled, low-income, or elderly residents with energy assistance and in-home services, such as cleaning and health visits. Further information on these programs can be obtained by contacting the Columbia County Department of Health and Human Services.

B. Housing Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

1. Goal

Encourage safe, affordable housing and neighborhoods for all Dekorra residents.

2. Objectives

a. Support the provision of housing in the Town to meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups and special needs.

b. Encourage high quality construction and maintenance standards for housing.

c. Encourage home siting that will not result in property or environmental damage, or impair rural character or agricultural operations.

d. Encourage neighborhood designs and locations that protect residential areas from infringement by incompatible land uses, promote connectivity of road and environmental systems, support a range of transportation choices, and preserve rural character.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Plan for a **sufficient supply of developable land for housing for a variety of income levels**, including low and moderate income residents, in areas consistent with the goals of the Town as set forth in this Plan, at a pace consistent with recent development trends, and of densities and types consistent with a rural setting. Map 6 shows areas planned for housing.

b. Direct eligible persons to County, State, Federal, and non-profit **housing programs** to promote and preserve decent, affordable housing options, maintain the Town's existing housing stock, and provide housing options with people of all ages and with special needs.

c. **Support the private market in developing affordable housing** for low and moderate income residents, the elderly, and people with special needs. Several state and federal programs and funding sources are available to assist private developers, Columbia County, local governments, and residents meet housing objectives.

d. Encourage the **maintenance of housing and residential neighborhoods** through efforts such as enforcement of existing local and county housing and zoning regulations and the identification of funding sources and programs to rehabilitate housing that has deteriorated. For example, using CDBG funds, communities may establish rehabilitation loans or grants to assist owner-occupants with repairs.

e. **Work with Poynette** and other urban communities in the area to also meet the policies and programs listed above. In many cases, affordable housing goals are more appropriate to achieve in urban areas because the higher levels of urban services and utilities allow for greater densities and closer proximity to required services.

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CHAPTER NINE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This chapter presents the Town's economic development strategy, based on the following economic vision. To accomplish this, the chapter:

- Contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs to promote the retention and enhancement of the economic base in Dekorra.
- Assesses geographic and other focus areas for the desired range of businesses and industries.
- Identifies the Town's assets, strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to attracting and retaining businesses.

DEKORRA'S ECONOMIC VISION

Dekorra is "beautifully situated" in the heart of southern Wisconsin for business and pleasure. The Town enjoys access to Interstate 39/90/94 and Highway 51 and features an interchange that is already zoned and served by public sewer. Dekorra's farmlands, wooded hills, the Wisconsin River, and Lake Wisconsin provide the perfect backdrop for both work and play.

A. Economic Development Framework

1. Town of Dekorra: Economic Overview

The Town of Dekorra is located just minutes north of the City of Madison, Wisconsin's state capital and home to the state's flagship university, technical institutions, and centers of innovation. The Town is also only 20 minutes south of the Wisconsin Dells, ranked the "#1 U.S. Family Destination" by TripAdvisor.com.

Dekorra maintains a relatively diverse economic base for a community of its type and size. In recent years, the Town as a whole has experienced a growing and increasingly affluent population, but is still predominately characterized by farmlands and rolling, wooded hills. The presence of several key assets in the Town—such the "triple" Interstate 30/90/94, U.S. Highway 51, and the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin—has provided additional opportunities to promote higher-value commercial, industrial, and residential development. Dekorra is also the "Gateway to Lake Wisconsin" – providing multiple opportunities for lake access, housing and business development, and water-based recreation.

The Town desires to produce greater tax base and more numerous and higher paying jobs. The Town also wishes to improve the aesthetic appearance and image of the Town, through redevelopment of aging sites and areas and through the implementation of higher-end design standards on new development.

Described in the remainder of this chapter are the Town's more specific assets, opportunities, and challenges for economic growth; its desired focus for economic development associated with the major transportation and natural assets; and potential implementation approaches to help achieve the Town's economic development strategy.

2. Local and Regional Economic Development Initiatives

a. *Town of Dekorra Economic Improvement Strategy*: In 2011, the Town prepared an Economic Improvement Strategy with funding support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). This strategy was developed to articulate and communicate the Town's approach and opportunities for economic growth. The strategy focused in particular on advancing high-quality economic development within the Town's Utility District, located at the interchange of Interstate 39-90-94 and County Highway CS. This Economic Improvement Strategy also provided direction for economic development in limited planned locations along U.S. Highway 51 and Lake Wisconsin. A key component of the Strategy was a website designed to communicate and market Dekorra's economic opportunities to businesses, developers, and investors (see http://dekorrabusdevel.com/). The content of the Economic Improvement Strategy and website are integrated into this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

b. *Columbia County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC):* The Columbia County Economic Development Corporation is a non-profit corporation that was established in 1992 to coordinate economic development throughout Columbia County. CCEDC undertakes the following activities: business development, retention and expansion; business visits; entrepreneurs and inventors club; maintenance of website serving as community portal (see http://www.ccedc.com/); inventories available business sites; markets revolving loan fund; maintains regional data; and supports tourism activities such as the Silent Sports Committee.

c. *Thrive:* Thrive is a multi-county regional economic development partnership comprised of eight counties in the Madison region: Dane, Dodge, Columbia, Sauk, Jefferson, Green, Iowa, and Rock counties. Thrive is involved with advancing regional initiatives that focus on building the region's competitive economic advantages, while preserving and enhancing quality of life. Thrive's activities to support economic development in the region include: connecting businesses and communities to capital through the "Capital Connections" website resource (see http://www.thrivehere.org/business-tools/funding/), providing site selection resources and links to regional economic development professionals, and most recently developing its Advance Now Comprehensive Economic Strategy (described below).

d. *Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:* Advance Now: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) are a tool and planning process promoted by the federal Department of Commerce to establish formally recognized and approved Economic Development Districts and establish strategic priorities and an implementation plan for economic development in these areas. Dekorra and Columbia County are within an eight-county Economic Development District that includes: Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock, Sauk and Columbia counties. In May 2012 a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Advance Now, was prepared with the guidance of Thrive (described above) for and approved for this region. This strategy sets a blueprint for economic development programs and helps leverage opportunities for funding, and devises actionable implementation strategies for the region (see http://advancenow.thrivehere.org/project-overview/)

B. Economic Assets and Opportunities

The Town aims to proactively respond to its strengths and weaknesses in fostering its desired economic focus. In the process of preparing the Town of Dekorra Economic Improvement Strategy (described above) both public and consultant input shaped the lists of assets and opportunities presented in Figures F and G. In addition to helping the Town develop strategies, inventorying assets, strengths, and opportunities is critical to the Town's ability to market itself as a place to do business.

Figure F: Town of Dekorra ASSETS/STRENGTHS for Economic Improvement

Environment and Geography	**Infrastructure**
Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin	"Triple Interstate" (39,90,94)
Natural Beauty (rolling, wooded countryside; dramatic views)	Utility District/sewer service/treatment plant
Designated natural areas (Muir Park, Hinkson, Rowan, and Rocky Run Creeks, wildlife areas and State fisheries)	Interchange
MacKenzie Education Center	Power Plant
Proximity to population and innovation centers (Madison, Chicago, Minneapolis)	Rail Corridor
Positioning and Marketing through Thrive and changes to CCEDC	Busiest rest areas in State
Access to higher education	Good roads
Economy, Tourism & Recreation	"The Grade" and bridges to Sauk County
Proximity to Wisconsin Dells	Local parks and boat launches
Lake Wisconsin is tourist destination	**Human Capital**
Recreation gateway to Dells/north	Massive "Circle City" population/market
Trout Fishing	High local incomes and education
Boating destination	Established "Baby Boom" resident base
Waterfront living, dining, and lodging	Local "movers & shakers"
Cabins/Camping	Movement to advance bike routes through County Silent Sports Committee
Food processors, plastics, health care as other key area industries	Commitment to improve interchange appearance and address code violations in Town
Economic development opportunity areas generally remote from residential areas	
4th of July Celebration	

Figure G: Town of Dekorra OPPORTUNITIES for Economic Improvement

General/Town-Wide	Lake Wisconsin Waterfront
Nature-based recreation & education	Retirement destination (low maintenance living options)
Hinkson, Rowan, and Rocky Run Creeks	Sustainable design opportunities (e.g., stormwater management)
Unified community entryway and wayfinding signage	Redevelopment in the "Whalen's Grade" causeway area
Becoming a more bike-friendly community (capitalize on regional cycling destination)	**Utility District/Interchange Area (see further description of area below and in Land Use chp.)**
Rest Area kiosks as marketing opportunity	"Welcome Center"--pavilion, fireworks, events, fishing pond (possibly in combination with private business, with preferred location on west side of Interstate)
Further collaboration with County and Poynette (revive "Columbia Corridor Communities"?)	Local products outlet(s)—meat, dairy, wine, etc.
4th of July Celebration/Festival and Midsummer Nights in Dekorra	Innovation Center—business development for local "baby boom" entrepreneurs
Highway 51 Corridor (see more detailed description of this area below and in Land Use chapter)	Preliminary Welcome Center--Lake Wisconsin, Dells, "Northwoods"
Freight rail-road based industries	Outfitters--fishing, paddling, boating, climbing, biking, etc.
New uses related to power plant (greenhouses?, waste processing?)	Lodging
Highway 51 upgrades	Dining
	Ag, Forestry, and Tourism Incentives (TIF?)

In addition to understanding the assets, strengths, and opportunities, it is also important to acknowledge challenges and weaknesses in order to address problems and advance an effective economic strategy. The Town's challenges and weaknesses in advancing its desired economic base include the following:

- Competition with other local governments for economic development, particularly in challenging economic times.
- Town government structure limits the ability to provide economic incentives for development, like Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Limited tax base creates limited revenues to proactively solicit economic development.
- Inconsistent development quality across Town, and in areas like interchange and waterfront.
- Limited array and locations of public utilities, even with sewer now in the Utility District/interchange area.
- Perception among some that Town is not "business-friendly" or predictable.
- Limited job opportunities in area.

C. Economic Development Strategy

This section describes the Town's economic development strategy. It includes an identification of geographic areas most appropriate for business development, and an assessment of categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that the Town desires.

1. Dekorra's Economic Opportunity Areas

There are three focus areas where business development is planned and most appropriate in the Town of Dekorra. These include high quality commercial and industrial uses in the Interstate 39/90/94 Interchange Area (Utility District); industrial and related business development in the US Highway 51/County Highway J/V intersection area; and residential and tourism development and redevelopment along Lake Wisconsin. The geographic boundaries of each area are shown on Map 6: Planned Land Use and Map 7: Development Plan, Dekorra Interchange Area/Utility District, with the associated Land Use chapter including detailed land development policies for each area. The desired economic development direction for each of the three areas is described below.

a. Interstate 39/90/94 Interchange Area (Utility District)

This area surrounds Dekorra's Interstate interchange, and includes Dekorra's Utility District. This is the only area within the Town that is served by public sanitary sewer service. Future development and redevelopment in the Utility District and on adjoining lands should include commercial service and retail uses designed to serve the community, visitors, and the traveling public, with the additional potential for industrial and distribution uses (in high-quality buildings and on sites in less visible areas). A sampling of desired types of businesses include hotels, restaurants, a business that could also serve as a "welcome center" and/or a "celebration center" for the area, an incubator for small business start-ups and acceleration, and specialty retail stores such as an outlet for locally-produced food and beverage products. The Town's business development website contains information on available development sites in the Interchange Area (see http://www.dekorrabusdevel.com/map/index.html).

Desired future uses and site and building design standards for this critical and highly visible economic development area are further articulated within the Town's Interchange Area Design Guidelines document (see http://dekorra-wi.gov/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/InterchangeDesignGuidelines.pdf). These guidelines are implemented through the Town Architectural Review Committee's review of new development projects.

b. U.S. Highway 51/County Highway V/J Intersection

In addition to direct access to a major U.S. highway through the Town, this area in the northern part of Dekorra is also flanked by a major freight rail line and is close to Alliant Energy's Columbia power production facility. The Town envisions future economic development at this intersection, which is already home to two small businesses. Future development will include a mixture of indoor manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses, with associated office and commercial uses. Particular opportunities associated with rail service and proximity to the power plant may be pursued, such as commercial greenhouses. Site and building design in this area of the Town will need to be particularly sensitive to natural features and the rural character of nearby lands. The

Town's business development website also contains information on available development sites in this area (see http://www.dekorrabusdevel.com/map/index.html).

c. **Lake Wisconsin Area**
The eastern shore of Lake Wisconsin is home to numerous year-round and seasonal homes. There are also a few areas where non-residential development, mainly serving residents and vacationers, has occurred. These include lands in the historic Dekorra "village" area near the northwest corner of the Town, and lands south of "Whalen's Grade"—a highway crossing/causeway over the lake near the Town's southwestern corner. Future development and redevelopment of commercially planned and zoned areas of the Lake Wisconsin area will include smaller scale commercial uses that support the surrounding neighborhoods, permanent and seasonal lakefront residents, and tourists. Potential future uses include inns, rental cottages, bed and breakfasts, offices, restaurants, gift and other retail shops, personal or professional services (e.g., salon), recreation outfitters, art studios, and daily shopping and services. Countywide bike route planning and related improvements to highways in the area will make the lakefront area an even more attractive tourist spot. The Town's business development website also contains information on a limited number of (re)development sites in this area (see http://www.dekorrabusdevel.com/map/index.html).

By virtue of these three areas, through Map 6: Planned Land Use, the Town has designated a sufficient number of sites and opportunities for the Town to achieve its desired economic development focus over the 20-year planning period.

D. Agricultural and Natural Resource-Based Economic Development

While business development in the Town is intended to be focused in the three areas discussed above and for the uses described, another key component of the economic base of the Town relates to agriculture and natural resources. The Town contains vast tracts of agricultural land and many natural resource-based assets: the Wisconsin River and Lake Wisconsin, natural areas and trout streams, and the MacKenzie Education Center. This chapter aims to acknowledge the impact and potential of these assets and features in the Town and support economic development activities centered around agricultural and natural resources, while ensuring that new development does not impair these resources.

E. Re-use of Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The Wisconsin DNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintains a list of contaminated sites, or "brownfields," in the State. The DNR defines brownfields as "abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination." Examples of brownfields might include a large abandoned industrial site or a small corner gas station. Properties listed in the DNR database are self-reported, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing of possible brownfields in a community.

There are two sites in Dekorra listed on the DNR's Environmental Clean-up and Brownfields Redevelopment database that had not been closed at the time this updated chapter was prepared, however these sites were classified as "no action required" (July 2012). More specific locations, property ownership information, and status of remediation efforts for these sites are available from the DNR.

The location of contaminated sites was considered when making land use recommendations in the Plan. If additional contaminated sites are identified in the future, the Town supports clean-up and appropriate

reuse of these and other contaminated sites, but should not approve (re)development projects until remediation is completed or commitments are secured for remediation.

F. Economic Development Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

1. Goal

Facilitate high-quality economic development that provides quality job opportunities, retains the Town's natural resource and agricultural assets, and maintains and improves quality of life for Town residents.

2. Objectives

a. Work jointly with nearby communities, Columbia County, and regional entities (e.g., Thrive) on mutually beneficial economic development initiatives that promote the stabilization, retention, and attraction of local economic opportunity.

b. Prioritize business development at the interchange area of Interstate 39/90/94 and County Highway CS and at the intersection area of US Highway 51 and County Highway V/J.

c. Plan for compact growth and small-scale businesses compatible with a mainly residential setting along the waterfront/marina area. Address commercial land uses that challenge compatibility and negatively affect quality of life in this area.

d. Promote economic development efforts that are compatible with and support farming and farm-related businesses and natural resource based recreation.

e. Employ strategies to minimize the environmental impacts of economic development within the Town.

f. Broadly market the Town's economic opportunities as a strategy to attract new businesses compatible with the Town's vision for development, including through the Town's general and economic development websites (both accessible through http://dekorra-wi.gov/). Keep both websites up to date.

g. Identify and pursue funding sources to help attract, support, and grow economic enterprises within the Town.

3. Policies and Programs

a. Accommodate a **range of high quality employment opportunities** particularly focused in areas planned as *Commercial/Industrial Mix* on Map 6, and as further detailed on Map 7 for the Interchange Area.

b. Direct **highway oriented commercial uses**, particularly redevelopment, to lands closest to the Interchange.

c. Direct **light industrial uses** (with limited outside storage, limited noise, controlled trucking) further away from the immediate interchange area (but within 1 mile and in locations/designs that do not negatively affect the Town) and to a second proposed mixed use area located along Highway 51 near its intersection with County Highway J/V.

d. **Discourage scattered commercial or industrial development** between the Interchange area and the rest areas, along Highway CS, and along Highway 51 in locations that are not planned for commercial development (see Map 6).

e. Continue to **enforce the Town's Interchange Area Design Guidelines**, site plan ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and other site and building standards and ordinances to ensure high quality development and a high-end living and business environment.

f. Support the continued maintenance of **farming as a legitimate business activity** in the Town. Support opportunities for farm family businesses, home occupations and agriculturally related businesses to assist farmers in creating secondary income sources.

g. Encourage **small businesses related to farming, natural resources, and recreation**.

h. Direct small businesses to County and State **economic funding sources**.

i. Continue to maintain and market the Town's **economic improvement website and general Town website** as means to broadcast the Town's opportunities and attract businesses compatible with the character of the Town and that fit the available development sites.

j. **Partner with the Village of Poynette and other area communities** in order to attract businesses that are appropriate for each community and work together on joint marketing of the area. Encourage the revitalization of downtown Poynette.

k. Encourage and explore the opportunities for implementing the **proposed trail** linking the MacKenzie Education Center, Poynette, the Rowan Creek, the utility district/interchange area, and Lake Wisconsin. In general, promote the work of the Columbia County Silent Sports Trails Committee in increasing bicycling in the area.

l. Consider a **community entryway and wayfinding signage** program to direct visitors to points of interest within the community, with particular opportunities focused on the Interchange area.

m. Explore the appropriate use of **Tax Increment Financing** or other development incentive tools to promote development within the Town, particularly in the Interchange Area on an opportunity basis.

G. Implementation of Economic Development Strategy

In order to achieve economic development in the focus areas indicated above—and to minimize environmental impacts—the Town will implement its Economic Improvement Strategy. The activities described below will be considered for implementation to advance economic improvement in the three geographic areas described above, with a particular focus on the Utility District/Interchange area.

The Town's ability to implement a complicated economic improvement strategy is limited. The Town has a very small staff and no designated organization, committee, or individual devoted to economic development. Further, compared to cities or villages, towns in general have limited economic development powers under Wisconsin Statutes. Therefore, creativity and simplicity in developing a viable economic strategy are critical.

1. Managing the Environmental Impacts of Development

The Town recognizes that its natural environment is a central component of what makes Dekorra special and provides the basis for its existing economy and many of its economic development opportunities. In addition, each of the Town's three economic development areas is located in proximity to natural areas and floodplain. As such, this Plan promotes strategies designed to leverage its natural assets, while simultaneously reducing the impact of future development on natural resources. Dekorra will accomplish this via the following efforts:

a. **Concentrating Development in Limited Areas**
Broadly speaking, the Town's plan is to direct economic development only to a few specific areas, thereby preserving the vast majority of Town's land as open space. Concen-

trating development into well-planned, discrete locations allows for the more effective and efficient mitigation of negative environment impacts. This includes the ability to provide sanitary sewer service to the utility district/interchange area, instead of large septic systems that have greater soil and groundwater contamination potential. Through this Comprehensive Plan, the Town also specifically directs development out of environmental corridors (as mapped on Map 6 and described in the Land Use chapter).

b. **More Accurate Floodplain Mapping**
As part of the same EDA grant that supported the Town's Economic Development Strategy, the Town completed a technical floodplain study for the utility district/interchange area. This study has resulted in more accurate mapping of floodplain boundaries in this portion of the Town. More accurate floodplain mapping is particularly important along County Highway J north of County Highway CS, where old (incorrect) floodplain maps would have significantly limited economic development activity.

c. **Providing Clear Information on Environmental Constraints**
The Town's business development website utilizes the Town's natural resource database to help characterize, filter, and market sites for development/redevelopment. It allows users the ability to filter properties with environmental constraints, such as floodplains, wetlands, and soil limitations. It also provides additional information about the natural features of each key economic development site highlighted through the website, such as the presence of steep slopes and woodlands.

d. **Requiring Development Design Standards Focused on Resource Protection**
All new development in the Town must comply with progressive Town stormwater management standards, as articulated within the Town's subdivision and site plan review ordinances. The subdivision ordinance also includes particular standards designed to preserve steep slopes. New development proposed for the Utility District/Interchange Area of the Town must also comply with design standards intended to manage the development's impact on the natural environment. Articulated within the Town's Interchange Area Design Guidelines document, these include standards for low-impact site preparation and grading, thoughtful parking lot and other impervious area design, retention of pre-existing vegetation, and provision of green space and new landscaping.

e. **Consider Supporting Creation of Lake Association or "Friends" Group Focused on Lake Wisconsin**
Water quality in Lake Wisconsin has a direct impact on economic development, particularly as it related to maintaining and enhancing interests around the lake. Efforts to maintain water quality can be advanced from many different types of groups. Options to augment existing State and County water quality maintenance standards include forming either a Lake Association or "Friends" group, perhaps on a multi-town or multi-county level. Both types of organizations are generally funded through voluntary membership dues (as distinct from Lake Districts which function through a property tax levy). These types of organizations often have access to State funds or other grant sources to implement water quality management programs. Lake Associations have a variety of additional potential authorities and functions, including acquisition of property, borrow-

ing and investing funds, habitat improvement, maintaining lake access, and purchasing sensitive areas.

2. Ongoing Maintenance of the Town Business Development Website

In January 2011, the Town launched its economic improvement website, as part of the EDA-supported effort described above. The website is aimed at marketing the community's assets and disseminating information about the Town's economic development opportunities.

The creation of this website was considered by the Town to be an integral component of the Economic Improvement Strategy. Businesses and developers increasingly rely on the internet to conduct their initial screening of communities and potential development locations prior to formerly contacting property owners, brokers, or the community itself for more information.

Therefore, Dekorra's website is viewed by the Town as a critical way to reach prospective business owners and developers, and a strategy for differentiating Dekorra from other communities in the State and region that have similar economic assets, such as Interstate interchanges.

The Town's business development website (www.dekorrabusdevel.com):

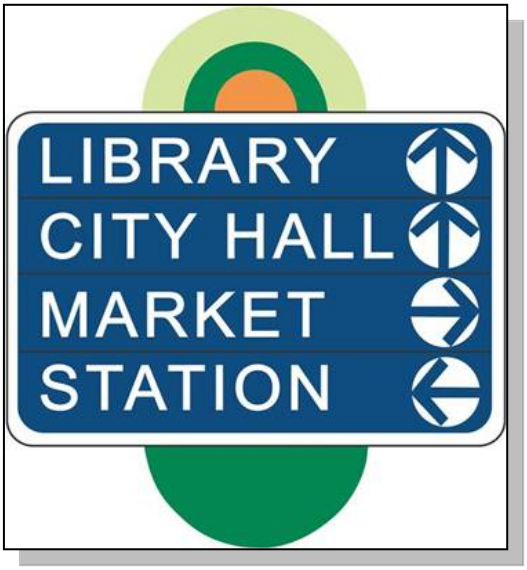
- Summarizes the Town's vision for economic development.
- Communicates the Town's many assets for economic development, both Town-wide and geographic area-specific.
- Provides "community profile" information to help prospective businesses learn more about Dekorra.
- Provides the Town's policies for economic development and land use, particularly through links to the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Interchange Area Development Plan map.
- Provides the Town's Interchange Area Design Guidelines, which describes design policies applicable to the utility district/interchange area and lists the Town's desired range of businesses for this area.
- Includes an interactive "economic opportunities map" that allows users to gather detailed information about available properties within the three economic improvement areas, and to search for properties based on a number of criteria that they control (e.g., site size, assessed value, etc.).

The Town will also need to continue to "get the word out" that this website exists as a resource. It is available on the major search engines. Advising county and regional economic development professionals, local and regional commercial real estate brokers and developers, and other potentially interested parties of its existence will be a next step. Ongoing maintenance of the website will be critical.

Local governments are also quickly finding that social and professional internet media, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, are additional, affordable ways to reach their constituents and others who may be interested in the Town. In its review of digital communication tools, the Town may consider these options as well.

3. Continued Public Infrastructure Investments

The Town and area property owners have already made a considerable investment in extending sanitary sewer to the Utility District/Interchange Area. As development demand dictates, there are opportunities for further sewer extensions in this area, such as east along County Highway CS.



Generic example of a wayfinding sign

Each of the Town's three economic improvement areas is adjacent to one or more U.S., State, or County highways. The Town will therefore continue to advocate for improvements and access policies that both assure safe traffic flow and maximize business development opportunities on adjacent lands.

The County Highway CS interstate overpass was reconstructed in 2011, with both a functional and attractive design. The Town successfully advocated for continual access during construction, additional permanent lighting to increase safety and visibility, improved aesthetic design, and wider bridge width to facilitate current and future bike and pedestrian use. Bike and pedestrian use would increase in the area if a proposed trail linking the MacKenzie Education Center, Poynette, the Rowan Creek, the utility district/interchange area, and Lake Wisconsin is implemented. Such a trail would increase tourism potential in this area, if properly executed. The outcome of the Silent Sports Committee's work is also critical, as is continued maintenance of the Town's lovely parks.

Finally, the Town may consider a community entryway and wayfinding sign system, with the most critical location for such signs near the ends of Interstate 39/90/94 ramps. Entryway signs announce that one has entered a community; there seems a great opportunity to use an existing structure at the southeast corner of the Interchange for an entryway sign. Wayfinding signs direct visitors to key destinations in the community. Any effort to install entryway and wayfinding signs should be accompanied by removal of pre-existing, redundant signage.

4. Consideration of Development Incentive Tools

To encourage development in the Town's economic development areas, and particularly in the Utility District/Interchange Area, the Town may explore the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Within a TIF district, the local government may borrow funds to install necessary public improvements or to fund development incentives. Once new private development occurs in the TIF as a result of these efforts, the principal and interest payments associated with the borrowing are made with the additional property tax revenues.

Under Wisconsin Statutes, towns do not have the same abilities to use TIF districts as cities or villages. Still, towns are authorized to establish TIF districts (and direct TIF expenditures) to promote agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, and tourism development. Fortunately, many of the Town's desired business types within the utility district/interchange area fit into one of these categories. There may be further opportunities for TIF were the Town to enter what is called a "cooperative plan" with the Village of Poynette, which may address a wide variety of intergovernmental boundary, land use, and economic development issues.

The Town's use of TIF would probably be opportunity-based or project-based. That is, a particular possible private development project that is consistent with the Town's economic development strategy and with this Comprehensive Plan in general could approach the Town with a particular request for a financial incentive to allow a desired project to be financially feasible in the Interchange Area. If desired, the Town could then establish a TIF district around the affected property, and execute a development agreement with the property owner to recover Town costs and assure that the project/requestor will generate enough additional tax revenue to fund any incentives or public improvements initial paid for through TIF borrowing.

There are some other possible avenues for creating development incentives through direct Town action. Those could include, for example, creation of a Community Development Authority (CDA) that could buy and resell land, among other powers. However, due to staffing limitations and the risk associated with this type of activity in an uncertain real estate market, creation of a CDA is not advised at this time.

5. Pursuit of Grants and Other Funding Support

The Town will continue to work independently and with other agencies in the pursuit of grants or other funding sources to advance economic development in the utility district/interchange area, and to a lesser extent in the other parts of the Town that are targeted for economic growth. Grants to enable business and job creation will be the particular focus, but other sources including revolving loan funds, or specialized training programs may also be considered. While the state of federal and state grant programs is in a state of flux, potential key funding opportunities may include the following:

- *Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Initiatives:* WEDC is the public-private entity functioning as a "re-organized" Wisconsin Department of Commerce under the new administration, divides the State into seven different territories covered by Regional Account Managers who help connect resources to businesses hoping to expand and/or locate in the Region. Dekorra and Columbia County are within the region that includes the following Counties: Columbia, Dane, Green, Jefferson, Sauk, Rock, Iowa and Dodge counties. WEDC partners with local government, as well as businesses and industry, specifically targeting

high-growth businesses. Several of the programs discussed in the following section of the report are overseen by WEDC. Representatives of the Town, potentially together with those from the County, might consider meeting with WEDC Regional Account Managers to help the agency better understand priorities of the Town regarding economic development and to further identify what specific resources might be available to the Town.

- *Community Based Economic Development Program (CBED*): Through this program, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation currently offers funding assistance to local governments and community-based organizations that undertake planning, development, and technical assistance projects that support business development. Using CBED program funds, local governments can finance economic development plans, small business and technology-based incubator grants, revolving loan programs to provide funding support to local businesses, and entrepreneur training programs for at-risk youth. Funds are available on an annual basis through a competitive application process. Application materials are available from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC).

- *Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program:* This state program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, is designed to support the costs for amenities associated with transportation projects, generally state or federal highways. Eligible activities may include streetscaping, landscaping, and bike/pedestrian improvements. Funds are generally available every other year through a competitive application process, but future funding may be in doubt.

- *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):* This federally funded program is currently administered for non-urban locations in Wisconsin by the state's Economic Development Corporation. Grants for improvements to public infrastructure where the direct result is the attraction or expansion of a business that brings quality jobs into the community.

- *Brownfield Redevelopment Funding:* The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation currently manages the Blight Elimination and Brownfield Redevelopment program. This program provides funding for the assessment, remediation, redevelopment, and acquisition of contaminated brownfield sites for the purposes of blight elimination and redevelopment. Eligible projects must advance economic development and positively impact the environment, and may include activities like environmental investigation, removal of underground tanks, land acquisition, site and building clearance, and infrastructure improvement.

- *Renewable Energy Incentives for Businesses*: A Focus on Energy program provides financial incentives to businesses to take advantage of clean, green, renewable energy, such as wind, solar, biomass, biogas, and biodigesters. Further, the U.S. Department of Energy periodically issues competitive funding through the Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, Industrial Technologies Program, and other offices. The Town can monitor whether any programs align with local needs or business opportunities or present partnership opportunities as they arise.

- The *Columbia County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC)* has a revolving loan program, established in 2002, meant to aid start-ups or expansions of Columbia County businesses. The fund provides 50/50 matching funds providing a maximum ratio of $20,000 per new full time equivalency job created. This program is for businesses with 50 or fewer em-

ployees and annual revenue below one million dollars. For more information see http://www.co.columbia.wi.us/ColumbiaCounty/Default.aspx?tabid=1578.

- The *Customized Labor Training Fund* provides training grants to businesses that are implementing new technology or production processes. The program can provide up to 50 percent of the cost of customized training that is not available from the Wisconsin Technical College System. (WEDC)

- The *Dairy 2020* Initiative awards grants and loans for business and feasibility planning to dairy producers and processors considering a modernization or expansion project. (WEDC)

- The *Rural Economic Development Program* makes individual awards up to $30,000 for feasibility studies and other professional assistance to rural businesses with fewer than 25 employees. Businesses that have completed their feasibility evaluations are eligible for individual micro loans up to $25,000 for working capital and the purchase of equipment. (WEDC)

- The *Major Economic Development Program* offers low-interest loans for business development projects that create a significant economic impact. (WEDC)

- The *U.S. Small Business Administration's Certified Development Company (504) Loan Program* provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. 504 loans can be used to fund land purchases and improvements, grading, street improvements, utilities, parking lots and landscaping, construction of new facilities, or modernizing, renovating or converting existing facilities. A Certified Development Company is a nonprofit corporation set up to contribute to the economic development of its community.

6. Continue to Pursue Collaboration where Appropriate

The Town recognizes that with its limited in-house resources it will be an ongoing challenge to manage economic improvement on its own. As such, the Town will continue to pursue opportunities to work with other appropriate agencies or organizations on economic improvement efforts. This may include collaborations to help the Town respond to questions from potential business owners or developers, manage the economic improvement website, recruit businesses and investors, assist in identifying and procuring funding, and other activities. Potential organizations that could assist the Town include the Columbia County Economic Development Corporation and the Town's engineering, planning, and legal consultants. In addition, the Town may consider forming an informal committee—or expanding the scope of an existing one such as the Architectural Review Committee—to help direct its economic improvement activities.

7. Support Economic Activities Related to Agricultural and Natural Resources

The Town supports the economic health of production agriculture in the Town. The Town also encourages the exploration of "non-traditional" forms of agriculture, such as vegetable, fruit and nut farms, and other small-acreage farms; grazing; research farming; community-supported agriculture; farmers' markets; equine centers; and businesses supporting hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities. See the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter for detailed recommendations.

The Town encourages the establishment of recreation-based businesses that relate to the enjoyment and enhancement of the collection of resources in the Town: Lake Wisconsin and the Wisconsin River, streams, MacKenzie Environmental Center, and other privately owned and publicly owned resources. The Town generally supports businesses that aim to enhance and expand recreational opportunities in the area. The Town may continue to collaborate with various partners in the County on promoting "silent sports" and low impact recreational pursuits.

CHAPTER TEN: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

This chapter of the Plan contains background information, goals, objectives, policies and recommended programs for intergovernmental planning and decision making; incorporates by reference all plans and agreements to which Dekorra is a party under §66.0301, §66.0307, §66.0309 of Wisconsin Statutes; and identifies existing and potential conflicts between this *Comprehensive Plan* and the plans of adjacent villages and towns, Columbia County, the State, and school districts.

A. EXISTING "REGIONAL" PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The following is a description of the plans of other jurisdictions operating within or adjacent to Dekorra. These jurisdictions are depicted in Map 2. A summary of any potential conflicts with the Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan follows the description of each jurisdiction's plans. Where conflicts are apparent, a process to resolve them is also proposed.

1. Columbia County

In 2007, the Columbia County Comprehensive Plan 2030 was prepared in conjunction with comprehensive plans for most of the towns in Columbia County, and also reflected city and village plans. The Columbia County Comprehensive Plan 2030 includes an "Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources" element; a future land use map that identifies planned "Agricultural and Other Open Space Areas," and policies for limited residential development within such areas. In 2013, the County adopted amendments to the Columbia County Comprehensive Plan 2030 to ensure full consistency with its new Farmland Preservation Plan, which itself was adopted as a detailed component of the County's Comprehensive Plan under Section 66.1001.

In March 2012, after a 3½ year effort that overlapped with the State's adoption of the Working Lands Initiative, Columbia County adopted a "comprehensive revision" to its general county zoning ordinance. Under Wisconsin Statutes, a comprehensive revision to a general county zoning ordinance must be approved by each town in the county for that zoning ordinance to take effect in that town. The County elected as part of that process not to make substantial changes to its agricultural and open space zoning districts and zoning standards. Instead, the County agreed to defer such effort until after the completion of its Farmland Preservation Plan and to treat such second effort as another "comprehensive revision." The County adopted the second comprehensive revision to its zoning ordinance in 2014 to address farmland preservation matters.

There are no known conflicts between this Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan and the adopted Columbia County plans and ordinances, except those that are explicitly mentioned within Chapter Four: Land Use. This Town Comprehensive Plan was prepared to correspond with the County Comprehensive Plan (as amended in 2013) and the 2014 comprehensive revision to the County zoning ordinance.

2. Village of Poynette

The Village of Poynette adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 2005. Poynette's 2005 plan was generally consistent with and complimentary to Dekorra's Plan. There were other recent and emerging development, service, and intergovernmental issues between the two communities, particularly at the Village's northeast corner.

In November 2013, the Village amended its Comprehensive Plan. These amendments focused on changes to the Village's Planned Land Use map and its Implementation chapter.

Planned Land Use map amendments corresponded with the complete update of the Village's zoning and subdivision regulations. Compared to the 2005 plan, the Village's Planned Land Use map amendments reduced the areas outside of the current Village limits that the Village envisions for new development on sanitary sewer and water service following annexation. This was in response to updated land demand forecasts. The exception is that the new Planned Land Use map in the Village's plan now shifts a planned industrial area from south of the Village near Highway 51 (in the Town of Arlington) to north of the Village and Hinkson Creek near Highway 51 (in the Town of Dekorra). Map 6 in this Town Comprehensive Plan does not show such a future industrial area.

Within its amended Implementation chapter, the Village's plan advises negotiation of an intergovernmental agreement/cooperative plan with the Town of Dekorra. The stated purpose would be to take advantage of shared opportunities with key community in Poynette School District for shared gain; avoid costly future conflicts; and build on 2005 joint comprehensive planning effort between communities. Poynette's amended plan suggests that negotiations on an agreement could occur as early as 2014 or 2015, or when there is mutual interest.

3. Town of Lowville

The Town of Lowville Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2004. It is consistent and complimentary to the updated Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan.

4. Town of Pacific

The Town of Pacific Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2005. While understanding its role as a residential community, the Town of Pacific seeks to maintain its rural character by promoting low density housing and enforcing higher development standards for new subdivisions, while protecting its ample natural resources. Due to its larger shared borders and influence, the town anticipates more collaboration between the City of Portage and the Town of Wyocena and Columbia County as a whole than with the Town of Dekorra. There are no known conflicts between Pacific's and Dekorra's plans.

5. Town of Caledonia

The Town of Caledonia Comprehensive Plan 2030 was adopted in 2009. That town anticipates that growth will occur at a similar rate as the past two decades. It discourages housing growth on parcels with fewer than 35 acres and on land zoned for agricultural purposes. Its goal is to maintain and promote the rural identity and agricultural economy already in the area and improving already-existing commercials areas. The Town of Caledonia views its relationships with adjacent towns as one of "mutual respect with limited opportunities for shared resources and services." There are no known conflicts between Caledonia's and Dekorra's plans.

6. Town of Arlington

The Town of Arlington Comprehensive Plan 2030 was adopted in 2009. Arlington's plan is focused on farmland preservation. It is consistent with the Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan.

7. Town of Lodi

The Town of Lodi Comprehensive Plan 2030 was adopted in 2009. It is consistent with the goals and objectives to the Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan, particularly when considering its objectives for land use, agriculture, and economic development. Its anticipated collaboration ef-

forts deal more with the Village of Lodi and Columbia County as a whole than with the Town of Dekorra.

B. Important State Agency Jurisdictions

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) Southwest Region office (Madison) serves Dekorra and all of Columbia County. The Town should continue to maintain good relations with the Southwest Region office as planning, congestion, and safety issues arise along U.S. and State highways, particularly Highway 51, the Interstate, and the CS interchange area. WisDOT plans are summarized in Chapter Five.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) provides service to the Town out of its service center located in Poynette. Project boundaries for potential DNR land acquisitions from willing sellers are shown on Map 6, and WisDNR plans and studies are summarized in Chapter Three.

There are no known conflicts between the plans and policies of these State agencies and the Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan.

C. Regional Planning Commission

Dekorra is not within the service area of any Regional Planning Commission or Metropolitan Planning Organization.

D. School Districts

Information on local school districts is presented in Chapter Six. There are no known conflicts between the Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan and the plans of the affected school districts. Dekorra's *Plan* advocates a controlled growth strategy in and around the Town and the continued operation of Dekorra School.

E. Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives, Policies, Programs

1. Goal

Develop and build on mutually beneficial relationships with nearby governments and school districts.

2. Objectives and Policies

a. **Work with Poynette** to ensure that future municipal boundary changes, utility service areas, land use policies, and extraterritorial decisions benefit all three communities.

b. Explore the possibility of **pursuing cooperative economic development initiatives** and/ or a marketing approach.

c. Work with Columbia County and neighboring jurisdictions on their **ongoing comprehensive/farmland preservation planning and zoning efforts**.

d. Cooperate with neighboring governments, school districts, Columbia County, and State agencies on **providing joint or shared services and planning for future public facilities needs**, such as recreational programming and emergency services.

e. Stay informed on **activities of the School Districts** to ensure the Town has the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect Town residents, such as building improvements, tax issues, and transportation.

3. Recommended Program: Intergovernmental Agreement/Cooperative Plan

Dekorra and Poynette may benefit from entering into a formal intergovernmental agreement covering community development issues of mutual concern. These issues may include municipal boundaries, extraterritorial rights, economic development, rural development, growth management, sanitary sewer and water service provision, parks and recreation, development design standards, or even shared revenues from new development. An agreement could help the communities minimize competition for development, share both the costs and benefits of economic development, make sure that future development is of high quality, provide all parties with a greater sense of certainty on the future actions of others, and promote municipal efficiency in an era of diminishing government resources.

There are two main formats for intergovernmental agreements under Wisconsin Statutes. The first is available under Section 66.0301, which allows any two or more communities to agree to cooperate for the purpose of furnishing services or the joint exercise of any power or duty authorized under State law. While this is the most commonly used approach, a "66.0301" agreement is limited to a 10-year term related to boundaries. Another format for an intergovernmental agreement is a "cooperative plan" under Section 66.0307 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This approach is more labor intensive and ultimately requires State approval of the agreement, but does not have some of the limitations of the "66.0301" agreement format, mainly the term.

The following is a draft outline of issues that an intergovernmental agreement could cover. Municipal attorneys would need to place any agreement in a proper legal format prior to adoption, obviously following a significant amount of additional negotiation among the communities. Often, intergovernmental agreements are executed after a year or more of meetings, research, consideration of options, writing, and legal review.

a. **Municipal Boundary Changes.** Future (e.g., through 2035) annexation area boundaries could be based on a negotiated *Urban Transition Area* boundary between the Town and Village (see Map 6). Within that mutually agreed area, the Town could agree not to oppose annexation. Outside of that area, the Village could agree not to annex land. Both communities could agree to a procedure for addressing road maintenance issues when new land is annexed. The discussions on municipal boundary changes should address the future of the existing agreement between the Village and Town associated with the Pauquette Pines development.

b. **Utility Service Area Boundaries.** Future (e.g., through 2035) utility service area boundaries could be established within a negotiated *Urban Transition Area* boundary between the Town and Village and near the interchange. Each community could agree not to extend public sewer services beyond those limits. This, combined with the municipal boundary provisions described above, may provide greater certainty to both communities, property owners, developers, and the general public as to where intensive development could occur and where it could not. The discussions on utility services could also cover provisions for dealing with developed areas with failing septic systems or holding tanks to address public health concerns. The discussions and resulting agreement could also assure that both communities are carrying out appropriate stormwater management planning in planned development areas in accordance with specified standards.

c. **Future Land Use Recommendations.** The negotiations and resulting agreement could focus on provisions to:

- Amend this Comprehensive Plan and Poynette's plan as necessary to achieve full compliance with the agreement.
- Make development (e.g., rezoning) decisions that are consistent with the amended comprehensive plans and the agreement. This type of provision could include amending the comprehensive plans or intergovernmental agreement if both communities agreed in the future.
- Implement innovative approaches to achieving shared growth management and land use objectives. This may include cooperative extraterritorial zoning, whereby the Village and Town could jointly make zoning decisions within all or part of lands within 1½ miles of the Village limits.

d. **Joint Economic Development Efforts.** The negotiations and resulting agreement could focus on provisions to:
   - Jointly pursue state, federal, and county economic development grants and incentives to promote business and light industrial development consistent with the "small-town" character of the area.
   - Cooperatively plan for economic development in mutually agreed areas in and near Poynette and the Interstate 39/CS interchange.
   - Consider a revenue sharing agreement for new municipal taxes generated from development in some of these areas.
   - Decide on the rerouting of Highway CS to extend near the Village's southern boundary east to Highway 51 as a means to facilitate economic development and redirect heavy and through traffic.

e. **Shared Programs or Services.** The communities could discuss greater opportunities for cooperation or consolidation of local parks and recreational programming. This should ideally be done in consultation with the Poynette School District. Another issue that could be advanced through an intergovernmental agreement is a joint commitment to work with Wis-DNR and potentially non-profit groups to create a trail through the Rowan Creek corridor.

f. **Agreement Term and Amendments.** An intergovernmental agreement should specify the length of time that it is applicable. Twenty years is a typical timeframe (e.g., through 2035), as this corresponds with local comprehensive planning time horizons. Occasionally, agreements have provisions for automatic extensions if neither party decides to withdraw. Most agreements also include provisions for periodic review and possible amendments if both parties agree.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: IMPLEMENTATION

This final chapter provides a roadmap for specific actions necessary to fully implement the Plan's recommendations. This chapter generally does not cover day-to-day decisions. Instead, it identifies certain programs and larger actions that the Town may undertake over the next several years.

A. Plan Adoption

A first step in implementing the Town of Dekorra Comprehensive Plan is making sure that it is adopted in a manner that supports its intended future use as a tool for consistent decision-making. Pursuant to Section 66.1001, Wisconsin Statues, the Town has included all necessary elements and has followed the procedures for adopting and updating this Plan under the State's comprehensive planning legislation.

The State comprehensive planning statute requires that the implementation element "describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan shall be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan." Because the various elements of this Plan were prepared simultaneously, there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different elements or chapters of this Plan, although there are clearly challenges and tensions among certain recommendations.

B. Plan Monitoring, Amendments, and Update

The Town should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, and amend and update the Plan as appropriate. This section suggests recommended criteria and procedures for monitoring, amending, and updating the Plan.

1. Plan Monitoring and Use

The Town will constantly evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions against the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan. The Town of Dekorra intends to use this Plan to inform such decisions under the following guidelines:

- **Rezonings:** The Town Board and County Board have shared authority to approve, conditionally approve, or reject requested changes to the zoning of any property in the Town. Section 11.06 of the Town Code of Ordinance describes the Town rezoning process in detail. In general, Town Board action on a rezoning request is preceded by a recommendation of the Town Plan Commission. The Town will generally not approve speculative rezoning of lands in the absence of a specific development proposal and site plan.

  Proposed rezonings must be consistent with the recommendations of this Plan. Specifically, the Planned Land Use map and the detailed policies associated with that map will be used to guide the application of the general pattern of zoning districts. However, the precise location of zoning district boundaries may vary, as judged appropriate by the Plan Commission and Town Board. Departures from the exact land use boundaries depicted on the Planned Land Use map may be particularly appropriate for projects involving a mix of land uses and/or residential development types, properties split by zoning districts and/or properties located at the edges of Planned Land Use areas. In their consideration of rezoning requests, the Plan Commission and Town Board will also evaluate the specific timing of the rezoning request, its relationship to the nature of both existing and planned land uses, and the details of the proposed development. Therefore, this Plan allows for refinement of the precise planned land use boundaries and Town discretion on the timing of rezonings implementing the Plan.

- **Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments:** Changes to the text of the County zoning ordinance will be approved or rejected/vetoed by the Town Board, following a recommendation by the Town Plan Commission. Columbia County may not approve a zoning ordinance text amendment if a majority of town boards in the County reject/veto that amendment. The Town will rely on this Comprehensive Plan and may rely on the advice of professionals before deciding whether to approve, reject/veto, or take no action on a proposed zoning ordinance text amendment.
- **Conditional Use Permits:** Under the 2012 County Zoning Ordinance, the County and Town share Committee share authority to approve, conditionally approve, or reject requests for conditional use permits. Prior to County action, the Town Plan Commission will make a recommendation to the Town Board on a conditional use permit request, and the Town Board will take Town action.

  Proposed conditional use permits should be consistent with the recommendations of this Plan to the extent applicable. In their consideration of conditional use permit requests, the Plan Commission and Town Board will also evaluate the specific timing of the conditional use permit request, its relationship to the nature of both existing and planned land uses, and the details of the proposed development.
- **Land Divisions and Subdivisions:** Both the Town and County review all proposed land divisions and subdivisions against the standards of their respective and independent subdivision regulations. Within 1 ½ miles of the Village of Poynette limits, Village review and approval of land divisions is also required by the Village. At the Town level, the Town Board will act to approve, conditionally approve, or reject all requested land divisions and subdivisions, following a recommendation from the Town Plan Commission. Separate applications for both the Town and County reviews are required. Frequently, a request for land division or subdivision approval is submitted in tandem with a rezoning request.

  Proposed land divisions should be generally consistent, but not necessarily precisely consistent, with the recommendations of this Plan. Specifically, the Planned Land Use map and the policies related to this map will be used to guide the general pattern of development and the general location and design of public streets and parks. Departures from the exact locations depicted on these maps will be resolved through the land division process involving certified survey maps, preliminary plats and final plats. In their consideration of land divisions, the Plan Commission and Town Board will also evaluate the specific timing of the land division request, its relationship to the nature of both existing and planned land uses, and the details of the proposed development. This Plan allows for the timing and the refinement of the precise recommended boundaries, development patterns, and public roads and parks provided through the land division process, as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission and Town Board.
- **Building and Zoning Permits:** Prior to the erection or remodeling of most buildings in the Town, the petitioner must obtain a building permit from the Town under Chapter 11 of the Town Code of Ordinances and a zoning permit from the County.
- **Driveway Permits:** Prior to the installation of a driveway to a Town road, the petitioner must obtain from the Town a driveway permit.
- **Other Land Use Actions:** In general, the Town Board, following a recommendation from the Plan Commission, will take all other actions related to land use. These include amendments

and updates to this Plan; annexations, incorporations, or consolidations affecting the Town; amendments to utility and sanitary districts affecting the Town; and potential Town acquisitions or sales of land.

2. Plan Amendments

Amendments may be appropriate in the years following Plan adoption and in instances where the Plan becomes irrelevant or contradictory to emerging policy or trends. "Amendments" are generally defined as minor changes to the Plan maps or text. All required procedures should be followed. Frequent amendments to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided.

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the Town use the same basic process to amend or add to the Plan as it used to initially adopt the Plan. This means that the procedures defined under §66.1001(4), Wisconsin Statutes need to be followed.

3. Plan Update

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the Comprehensive Plan be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to an amendment, an update is often a substantial re-write of the Plan document and maps. The Town must update its Comprehensive Plan by the year 2024 (i.e., ten years after 2014).

C. Implementation Recommendations

Table 13 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the Town should complete to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Often, such actions will require substantial cooperation with others, including County government and local property owners. Other Town government priorities, time constraints, and budget constraints may affect the completion of the recommended actions in the timeframes presented.

The table has three different columns of information, described as follows:

- *Category:* The list of recommended actions is divided into six different categories generally based on the different chapters of this Plan.
- *Recommendation or Program:* The second column lists the actual actions recommended to implement key aspects of the Comprehensive Plan. The recommendations are for Town actions that might be included, for example, in an annual work program or as part of the annual budgeting process.
- *Implementation Timeframe:* The third column responds to the State comprehensive planning statute, which requires implementation actions to be listed in a "stated sequence." The suggested timeframe for the completion of each recommendation reflects the priority attached to the recommendation. Suggested implementation timeframes are all within the next 10 years (and not the full 20-year planning period), because the Plan will have to be updated by 2024.

Table 13: Recommended Major Implementation Actions

Category	Implementation Timeframe	Recommendation or Program
Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources	2014	Adopt amendments to the 2012 County Zoning Ordinance to reflect required changes under the State's farmland preservation law.
Land Use and Ordinance Amendments	2014-2015	Amend Town Land Division and Subdivision, Erosion Control and Stormwater Management, and Site Plan Review ordinances as necessary to ensure consistency with this Comprehensive Plan.
	2023-2024	Prepare a complete update of this Comprehensive Plan.
Transportation	2014 and ongoing	Continue to update and implement a Town Road Improvement Program, and advocate for County maintenance and upgrades to County Highways in Dekorra.
	2016-2024	Work with Poynette, WisDOT, and the County Highway Department to extend Highway CS to Highway 51 along the southern border of the Village.
	2014-2019	Monitor and attempt to influence ongoing WisDOT studies and improvements to the Interstate and Highway 51 through Dekorra.
	2014-2015	Implement bike routes within the Town in cooperation with the Columbia County Silent Sports Trails Committee.
Utilities and Community Facilities	Ongoing	Implement the recommendations in Table 10 in timeframes identified in that table, as budget resources permit.
Parks and Recreation	Ongoing	Implement the recommendations in Chapter Seven of this Plan, as budget resources permit.
Economic Development	2014-2024	Implement the Town's Economic Strategy as described in Chapter Nine.
Intergovernmental Cooperation	2014-2016	Negotiate a formal intergovernmental agreement between Dekorra and Poynette.