

In February, 2018 village residents were asked to complete a survey, which the planning & development committee referenced while updating the comprehensive plan. This would allow the resulting plan to reflect the community's values, desires, and concerns.

### **Community Vision**

During the autumn and winter of 2002-2003, SWWRPC and UWEX-Iowa County sponsored sessions so residents could share and shape the vision for their communities going forward. Our comprehensive plan takes this information into account, but places more emphasis on the feedback residents provided on the village survey from February, 2018.

The most important were:

1. Revitalize the Main Street area
2. Update & repair broken village infrastructure, and update outdated systems
3. Provide safe, affordable housing
4. Develop business opportunities to increase employment, population, and tax base
5. Encourage professional offices to open in the village
6. Explore funding options for construction of a village municipal building
7. Balance economic development with preservation of small-town feel
8. Keep the Ridgeway elementary school open

In keeping with the feedback residents provided in 2018 and in response to a community survey regarding the school building in June 2020 the emphasis would be on:

1. Revitalizing the Main Street area
2. Update & repair broken village infrastructure, and update outdated systems
3. Provide safe, affordable housing
4. Develop business opportunities to increase employment, population, and tax base
5. Encourage professional offices to open in the village
6. Balance economic development while preserving the character and charm of our small-town community and environment
7. Explore funding options for the adaptive reuse of the former Ridgeway Elementary School as a community center and a village municipal building with amenities available for all generations of the community

### **Visioning**

During the winter of 2003 Village of Ridgeway planning representatives were asked to identify issues, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses specific to the village. The list was updated in 2018 to reflect developments and again in 2020.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Issues:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of senior activities and social engagement</b></li> <li>• <b>Encourage businesses &amp; services catering to youth and young families</b></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Opportunities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adaptive reuse of the former elementary school into a community center to address issues raised by residents</b></li> <li>• <b>Transportation/access to transportation: The village could designate &amp; encourage</b></li> </ul>
--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of retail &amp; grocery shops within the village</li> <li>• Establishment of an industrial park</li> </ul>	<p>the establishment of taxi or Uber services on Main Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike Trail/Depot: Attractions could be staffed by volunteers</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Weaknesses:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street and Sidewalk Maintenance- curbs and gutters installed in new developments &amp; install where currently missing within village limits. Repair sidewalks as needed for safety and aesthetics</li> <li>• Lack of land for further development and minimal lots available for building homes</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Strengths:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air, Water, and Environmental Quality</li> <li>• Village Park with ample amenities</li> <li>• Fire and ambulance service</li> <li>• Scenic views</li> </ul> <p>Small-town community environment and welcoming atmosphere</p>

# **Section E:**

## **Agricultural, Cultural, & Natural Resources**

Village of Ridgeway 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update

### SUMMARY:

As required by *Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2)(e)*, this section deals with conservation promotion & effective management of the agricultural, cultural, and natural resources that have historically defined the village of Ridgeway, with the intention of protecting our heritage even as we pursue economic development.

### GUIDING POLICIES:

- **Promote tourism opportunities, with an emphasis on local resources/features, such as trails, walking tours, the depot & other historical areas, etc.**
- **Note the value of local agricultural, cultural, & natural resources/heritage, and recommend protecting and leveraging them for community development.**
- **Enforce noxious weed control ordinances.**
- **Support municipal tree planting programs & encourage the preservation of worthy specimens.**
- **Utilize available county, state, & federal programs to conserve, maintain, & protect local resources.**
- **Consider revising the village's land development ordinance to require businesses along Main Street to conform to certain visual & performance criteria.**
- **Promote businesses along Main Street that have outdoor seating & other amenities catering to a walking clientele, further enhancing the village's small-town character.**
- **Review zoning plan to ensure proper separation distances between urban & rural land uses so as to avoid conflicts.**

### AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES:

Agriculture plays an important role in southwestern Wisconsin, being somewhat economically important to the Village of Ridgeway. Some things to consider:

#### **Farming Conflicts**

Previous village planners noted manure spreaders soil the streets & foul the air when driven through the village. Consider forbidding them along key village streets.

#### **Farm Expansion**

A strategy to cope with running a farm in today's market. It may lead to farm job losses as more automation occurs, as well as greater potential for soil/water contamination. Previous Village of Ridgeway Plan Commissions felt that farm expansion should be outside village.

# Section H: LAND USE

## Village of Ridgeway 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update

### SUMMARY:

This section's purpose is to examine the Village of Ridgeway's land use, based on the data from the other sections on this comprehensive plan. The goals, objectives, and policies of this section must be supported by all the other plan elements. This section will consider both current and future land use within the village, all of which are noted in *Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2)(h)*.

### LAND USE POLICIES:

The following are the land use policies for the Village of Ridgeway.

- **Follow comprehensive plan regarding future land use & zoning decisions.**  
See Maps H.1 and H.2 in the Appendices Section.
- **Enforce revised village zoning to address lagging Main Street vitality and preserve the community aesthetic.**
- **Strive to balance the preservation of the small-town character and scenic rural community of Ridgeway with economic development.**
- **Encourage Main Street business development & update/repair its infrastructure.** Main Street is the most visible part of the village to visitors, and unfortunately suffers from both a lack of things to do, and maintenance needs. Remedying this should be a priority.
- **Leverage the park, depot, and trail as pivots of future growth in the village.**
- **Foster the development of a village chamber of commerce.**  
Village business owners can mentor new entrepreneurs, use funds to pay for advertising/outreach efforts, etc.

### EXISTING LAND USE:

Per the land use map in appendix E.1, the Village of Ridgeway is primarily considered an agricultural and forestry-based community. The village's land use can be broken down as follows:

Classification	Village of Ridgeway % of Land Area
Agriculture	48.7%
Residential (Single & Multi-Family)	12.1%
Commercial	0.3%
Manufacturing	0%
Production Forest	23.9%
DNR-MFL Forest	3.7%
Undeveloped (formerly Swamp/Waste)	0%
Other (Federal, State, County, School, Cemetery)	11.5%

(Source: Iowa County Tax Assessor Dept., SWWRPC—as noted on previous comprehensive plan)

**Agricultural**

With 48.7% of assessed area, agriculture is the dominant land use in the village. This category includes crop production land, agricultural forest, livestock production land, or land that's eligible for enrollment in specific federal agricultural programs.

**Residential**

12.1% of land use in the village is noted as residential.

**Commercial**

Commercial refers to any parcel that has a business on it, but does not include industrial properties. The commercial designation on the land use map doesn't differentiate between highway businesses, home occupations, or general businesses. In the Village of Ridgeway, commercial development occupies approximately 0.3 percent of the total land area.

**Manufacturing**

This land use denotes business & industry engaged in processing, manufacturing, packaging, treatment, and/or fabrication of materials and products. There is no manufacturing in the village.

**Forested**

This classification is Production Forests and DNR-MFL Forests acreages combined. In Ridgeway it is the second largest classified land use, with 27.6% of area being classified as such.

**Undeveloped**

This classification refers to areas that were formerly classified as swamp/waste. It is open land includes bogs marshes, lowlands brush land, and uncultivated land zoned as shoreland and shown to be wetland. There's none in the village limits.

**Other**

The remaining land types that do not fall into the above categories, including federal, state, and county lands, school property, and cemeteries are classified as "other". Approximately 11.5% of land in the Village of Ridgeway is listed under this classification.

**RESIDENTIAL LAND USE TRENDS:**

With 12.1% of land use categorized as such, residential is a dominant developed land use within the village. The following shows the fluctuations in residential units for the past 30 years:

<b>1990 Census</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>Notes</b>
244	286	293	There was a 17% (approx.) increase in housing stock from 1990 to 2000. However, from 2000 to 2010, housing growth slowed to about 2%.

(Source: 1990, 2000, & 2010 US Census)

**REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

None noted/identified at this time.

**EXISTENCE OF BROWNFIELDS OR PROPERTIES SUITABLE FOR REDEVELOPMENT:**

Per the Wisconsin DNR, there are five sites in Ridgeway (the database lumps the village with the town), including the following four categories:

**LUST**

A Leaking Underground Storage Tank that has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum. Some LUST cleanups are reviewed by DNR and some are reviewed by the Dept. of Commerce.

**ERP**

Environmental Repair Program sites are sites other than LUSTs that have contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Often, these are old historic releases to the environment.

**SPILLS**

Spills are discharges of hazardous substances that may adversely impact, or threaten to adversely impact public health, welfare, or the environment. Spills are usually cleaned up quickly.

**No Action Required**

There was or may have been a discharge to the environment and, based on the known information, DNR has determined that the responsible party does not need to undertake an investigation or cleanup in response to that discharge. Reports of UST closures with no action required are filed in state archives.

The following sites are located in the Town or Village of Ridgeway and contain the DNR Activity Number, Activity Type, Activity Name, Municipality, County, and a Priority Level:

<b>DNR Act. #</b>	<b>Activity Type</b>	<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Notes</b>
03-25-187997	LUST	BADGER MART	HIGH	
04-25-038582	Spills	CTH T PIKES PEAK RD		
09-25-244999	No Action Required	RIDGELAND FARM	HIGH	
02-25-242037	ERP	RIDGEWAY VIL		Site closed by Dept. of safety; Site transferred to DNR jurisdiction in 2013
03-25-207263	LUST	TALLMAN SERVICE CENTER	LOW	

(Source: Wisconsin DNR's BRRTS, updated on 2018-02-05)

**FUTURE EXPANSION:**

A municipality's expansion/growth is somewhat determined by its infrastructure-both existing & proposed. For the Village of Ridgeway, future growth for retail, commercial, and industrial development is most suitable on the east and west sides of the Village for transportation, in all directions for water service and on the south, west, and east sides of the Village for sewer service. The previous planning & development committee noted the south side as potential sewer service, but no details were given as to its purpose, selection criteria, etc. Housing is best suited for all sides of the Village for transportation and water, but according to the table, sewer service for housing would only be suitable on the south, east, and west sides of Ridgeway.

<b>Best Directions for Future Village Expansion</b>				
<b>Infrastructure Type</b>	<b>Retail</b>	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>Housing</b>
Transportation	East, West	East, West	East, West	North, East, South, West
Water	North, East, South, West	North, East, South, West	North, East, South, West	North, East, South, West
Sewer	East, South, West	East, South, West	East, South, West	East, South, West
Other				

Business, commercial, industrial/manufacturing are the primary land uses that will help the Village grow. Sole focus on housing and agriculture will not benefit the village, long-term. As seen elsewhere, growing populations demand/depend on services expected of the municipality to provide. However, those services are expensive, and the same residents asking for the service also expect their tax burden to drop. Businesses, however, can be leveraged to cover those costs, while not having the same service expectation as residents. Therefore, the village should make it a priority to attract businesses to operate in the village, in order to thrive.

Future housing location should be located away from major roads, business/industry, and near the school.

Locating future businesses should be dictated by access to transportation routes. Businesses, from daycare to factories all depend on people being able to get there quickly and safely. As such, the planning & development committee recommends that businesses primarily be located along Main Street and near/on the highway frontage. Said businesses should also be tied to municipal utilities. Zoning may have to be revised to accomplish this.

### EXISTING AND POTENTIAL LAND USE CONFLICTS:

Neighboring land uses can sometime cause conflicts. Two common acronyms used to describe these conflicts are NIMBY's (Not in My Back Yard) and LULU's (Locally Unwanted Land Uses). In rural areas like Ridgeway, agricultural operations near non-farm populations are the most common source of problems. Some common irritants are odors, light pollution, weed infestation, agricultural chemicals, etc. Others can be landfills, highways, cell towers, transmission lines, etc.

Ridgeway currently has a land use conflict with alleged inaccessibility to the B-2 and M-1 districts (dictated by WisDOT) within the Village. The previous planning & development committee foresaw this as a continual source of future conflict. There was also concern with segregation of multi and single-family housing in the village.

### INTEGRATED LAND USE:

It's recommended that the village ordinance require landscape buffers between incongruent land uses to avoid conflicts.

Other strategies would require landowners with potentially conflicting land uses to acknowledge their impacts and then design their operations or development to account for them. A community approach utilizing physical solutions, planning strategies, and a long-term vision for the land will enable multiple and differing land uses to exist.

## FUTURE LAND USE:

The principal reasons people choose to live in the Village of Ridgeway are the cost of living, affordable housing, and the recreational opportunities provided by the Military Ridge Trail—which was tied with making use of local/walkable businesses in a recent survey.

While it's understandable that residents will want low point of entry into property ownership, protect their investment, and improve their standard of living, this cannot be accomplished without attracting businesses to the village. Ridgeway, as a dormitory town will ultimately atrophy; the low cost of properties will ultimately backfire as a means to generate revenue for both the municipality, and property owners.

In order to achieve its vision for the future, Ridgeway will need to focus on revitalizing its downtown, maintain & upgrade village infrastructure. People will visit the area due to its scenic beauty and recreational advantages. Having things for them to do, in an attractive package may just be what's needed to have them and businesses stay.

# Section I: IMPLEMENTATION

## Village of Ridgeway 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update

### SUMMARY:

This section is the purpose of the whole comprehensive plan-it will be used to guide future growth and development in the village. This plan includes the information required in *Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2)(i)*, and will be updated no less than once every ten years.

### GUIDING POLICIES:

Based on the information noted in the preceding sections of this Comprehensive Plan, and the village survey from March 2018, the following policies are recommended to protect the village's character, while hoping to spur needed economic invigoration:

#### **Revitalize Main Street**

Main Street is vital to the future development of the Village of Ridgeway. It's the first thing people see when driving into/through the village, and has the majority of non-home-based businesses. In its current state, it communicates a negative impression to those visiting our community. The following are some key issues must be addressed to foment development in the area:

- Sidewalk maintenance should be a priority. Small-town shops are meant to be walkable businesses. This necessitates safe, functional sidewalks.
- Street trees should be planted wherever beneficial. Arborists or landscape architects should be consulted to generate a list of species, cultivar, and spacing instructions.
- Zoning (see below) should be reviewed to encourage businesses along Main Street & phase out residential lots/use.
- Street lighting should be updated using latest, energy-saving technology. New fixtures should also be softened to look less like highway lighting & more like community lighting.
- Every effort must be done to mitigate empty/unused buildings. Perhaps seasonal/rotating tenants may be considered. Guidance from a business incubator such as the one in Platteville may be necessary.

#### **Update zoning**

In order to assure development along Main Street, highway frontage, etc. conforms to the ideals of this plan, performs as hoped, and maintains the character of village neighborhoods, it will likely be necessary to adjust the zoning in these sectors. New construction should be encouraged to take into account the many potential lifecycles/uses a structure will have between construction and demolition. Moreover, development-especially along Main Street, should be required to fit into and reflect/evoke the village's character, for example the ridge system itself, rail transportation, agriculture/farming, working class, nature etc.

### **Leverage interest in Ridgeway's park, village green, depot, & Military Ridge Trail**

People from neighboring communities travel to the village to enjoy our 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks, trail, and other village activities held near the park. Because of its central location, natural beauty, and growing interest in nature-related activities, it would be wise to grow businesses, services, and activities that play off of that theme.

- Building a nature center/municipal building near this area could allow for year-round traffic to the village. It would link the village's natural surroundings to its main street businesses and could be located overlooking SW Wisconsin's ridges-something that hasn't really been tapped by our neighbors.
- Classes by naturalists, biologists, gardeners, etc.
- Manned by seniors looking for ways to be engaged/active in their community

### **Encourage use of village green/park year-round**

Already popular areas to spend family time in, these areas can be further used by farmers market, craft festivals, etc.-activities that can draw in crowds around the year.

Potentially, the more popular booths/sellers could be encouraged to open a temporary location along Main Street, filling up empty retail space.

### **Encourage the establishment of a village chamber of commerce**

Entrepreneurs looking to start a business in the Village of Ridgeway can benefit from the experience of business owners who've run local establishments for years. All business would benefit from exchanging information, workshops, etc.

### **Strive to balance small-town character of Ridgeway with economic development**

Economic growth, population growth, etc. can radically alter the small-town ambiance villagers love. All development must take into consideration how it will affect the character of the village, not just its pocketbook. This can, to some extent, be influenced through zoning and the village land development ordinance, but some closer inspection by the planning & development committee and the village board-especially of any large-scale projects may be required in order to safeguard the community's values, and to ensure compliance with this comprehensive plan.

### **TID**

New TID(s) should be created to fuel Main Street revival, and to possibly develop land south of 18/151,

New TID(s) should be laid out with forethought-not as a reactionary measure to news or similar.

### **Enforce ordinances-especially those applicable to the village's visual appearance**

Lawns should be mowed per the ordinance requirements, unsightly elements should be discouraged. The village should consider renting a dumpster once or twice a year to encourage residents to get rid of items too large or cumbersome to eliminate through normal means. A possible e-waste "festival" for area residents may also be considered.

## CONSISTENCY AMONG PLAN ELEMENTS:

As required by Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001, all elements included in this plan are consistent with one another and no known conflicts exist. All nine elements included in this plan work to achieve the desired future for the Village of Ridgeway.