

**Town
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Land Use Plan

Adopted : _____

**Prepared by: Town of
Belvidere Landowners**

"Beautiful Place"

Town of Belvidere Land Use Plan Buffalo County, Wisconsin

Town Board: David Danzinger, Chair
Robert Tuxen, Supervisor
Warren Rivette, Supervisor

Town Clerk: Deborah Ruff

Town Treasurer: Barbara Brommer

Planning Committee: Shirl Averbeck
Jerry Betthauser
Bill Bruegger
David Danzinger
Mel Danzinger
Marian Engfer
Ron Flury
Joseph Greshik
Ed Helmueller
Lyle Hofer
Gale Hoch
Don Gruhlke
Fred Maule
Betty Miller
Robert Miller
Jerry Neitzel
Warren Rivette
Jack Scherer
Jerry Schreiber
Charles Stehlik

Town of Belvidere Land Use Plan

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Definitions:

Bluff- A steep headland, promontory, riverbank, or cliff.

Dugway- A section of roadway extending from the top of a bluff to the bottom of a bluff, generally through the wooded portion of the bluff with a steep grade, often with sharp curves and/or switchbacks. We assume the term originates from construction by digging into a hill.

Prime Farmland- Rural land with the best combination of physical & chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is available for these uses. Normally includes classes I, II, III land as defined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Works Cited

“Bluff.” The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.

“Dugway.” Brevick, Dave. Buffalo County Highway Commissioner. Personal Interview. 4 Oct. 2001.

“Prime Farmland.” Official definition. National Resource Conservation Services.

Planning Process

The land use planning process began with a presentation by the Buffalo County Extension Agriculture Agent to the Buffalo County Towns Association in December of 1997. The agent spoke on changes in agriculture and the effect of that change on land use. Belvidere Township was the fourth township to contact the Buffalo County Extension Office for help in developing a plan. Town of Belvidere officials then attended a public meeting for other towns and further discussion took place on reasons for planning. Town officials also attended a public meeting for the Town of Alma Land Use Planning process to gain additional information.

Town of Belvidere officials then invited a number of people to serve on a planning committee. Efforts were made to invite a diverse group of residents and non-residents. The planning committee provided needed views and input into issues that should be addressed and that are included in this document. Results from this effort are found in Exhibits A - C.

Land use plans are not static documents, but are designed to change and be revised to meet current needs of the people. This document will be used as a guide to future change and development in the Town of Belvidere.

Brief History of Town of Belvidere

It is important to understand a little about one's past before making decisions about the future. The following is a brief excerpt about the history of the Town of Belvidere.

"The Town of Belvidere was set off by resolutions of the County Board of Supervisors first on the 5th day of February, 1855 and was organized at the next town meeting."¹ Belvidere was reduced in size with some sections going to Waumandee, Alma, Milton and later to Lincoln. "The surface of the town is level in the western part ... but the whole northern, central and eastern part is hilly, although on the top of the bluffs the land is gently rolling. With the exception of some sandy patches on the level land, most of the town contains good farmland, but is not so well provided with water ..."²

The first parts of the township that were settled were the flat areas. John C. Waecker and Joseph Berni, both pioneers of Alma were among the first settlers. The next settler of importance was John Peter Stein, who came from Wabasha, MN, in 1851. Stein claimed to have raised the first crops of wheat, barley and potatoes in the township. He was also well known to be a supplier of potatoes to local Indian tribes. He also served as a blacksmith to Indian tribes. Stein also served as Justice of the Peace for the town for many years.

Many of the first settlers came from Canton of Schaffhausen, Switzerland. The first couple married in the town were John C. Waecker to Sabina Keller by Justice of the Peace Marvin Pierce in September, 1853. The first chairman of the town was J. P. Schnug, Jr., who owned the farm on which the first railroad station in Cochrane was built.

In 1859, the City of Buffalo was formed. At about the same time, the City of Belvidere was laid out about three miles above Buffalo City on Pomme de Terre Slough. The city was vacated some years later, but will be long remembered because of Squire Frederick Schmid, nicknamed Speculation-Schmid. Many of the first businesses established in the town were taverns being contributed to the large number of settlers of German decent.³

There were five schools in the township; Cochrane, Blue Bell, Herold, Lakeview and Rose Valley. Also, Creameries in Cochrane, Herold, and Rose Valley.

¹ History of Buffalo County, Wisconsin. L. Kessinger. Alma, Buffalo County, Wisconsin: 1888. pages 620.

² Ibid., page 621.

³ History of Buffalo County, Wisconsin. L. Kessinger. Alma, Buffalo County, Wisconsin: 1888. pages 623.

9 ELEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The Smart Growth legislation, signed into law as part of the 1999-2000 budget, is intended to provide local government units tools to create comprehensive plans, to promote more informed land-use decisions and to encourage state agencies to create more balanced land-use rules and policies. Nine elements are required by the Smart Growth legislation. These elements ensure that all aspects of community life will be considered as part of the comprehensive plan. The nine elements are:

- Issues and opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Implementation

Development of Goals for the Town of Belvidere

Land use planning is more than a set of rules for building, etc. It is a declaration of the priorities and values of the people within the Town. These priorities and values should determine if and how property is developed and used.

The remainder of this document describes the priorities and values of the people of the Town of Belvidere. It lists a set of action plans to achieve these priorities and values.

Issues and Opportunities:

Population and Population Projections:

Population of the Town has decreased some over time from 505 in 1990 to 396 in 2010. Projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration – Demographic Services Center, indicate that population is expected to increase slightly to 443 in 2020. Residents felt that their population would reflect the projections as indicated.

Town of Belvidere Population Statistics and Projections – U.S. Census Data

Jurisdiction	Census 1960	Census 1970	Census 1980	Census 1990	Census 2000	Census 2010	Proj. 2015	Proj. 2020
Belvidere	456	464	425	505	442	396	444	443
Buffalo County	14202	13743	14309	13584	13804	13,577	14,554	14,794

Population by Race:

The Town of Belvidere is predominantly white. This has been constant since records have been kept. There is an increasing population of Hispanic people (that may not be reflected in the census) due to employment opportunities on farms and other business entry level positions.

Town of Belvidere Population by Race – 2010 Census

Race	Population %
Total	396
White	98%
Hispanic	0.2
Black	0.0
Asian	0.02
Native American	0.0
Other	0.0

Population by Education Level:

The Town of Belvidere is similar to other neighboring municipalities except that they have a slightly lower percent of the population with high school and college graduate degrees in Buffalo County. This may be explained by the distance they are from higher paying jobs than other Towns in Buffalo County.

Town of Belvidere Population by Education – Am. Community Survey

Education Level	Population %
Total (>25 years old)	386 (people)
No High School Diploma	19.7
High School Diploma Only	29.3
Some College	29.5
Associates Degree	7.5
Bachelor's Degree	11.1
Graduate Degree	2.8

Population by Age:

Population in the Town of Belvidere tends to be older than in Buffalo County. The median age is 50.3, Buffalo County is 44.1. This is most likely due to the large number of people that have moved to the Town of Belvidere to retire.

Town of Belvidere Population by Age – 2010 Census

Age – years	Number	Percent
Under 5	18	4.6
5-9	13	3.3
10-14	22	5.6
15-19	23	5.8
20-24	13	3.3
25-34	32	8.2

35-44	35	8.8
45-54	78	19.8
55-59	42	10.6
60-64	31	7.8
65-74	47	11.9
75 and older	42	10.6

Per Capita Income:

Per capita income has increased in the Town of Belvidere faster than that of Buffalo County, and only lags slightly behind the State of Wisconsin.

Town of Belvidere Per Capita Income – 2000 Census

	1990 per Capita Income	2000 Per Capita income	% Change
Town of Belvidere	\$14,681	\$20,297	+38.3
Buffalo County	\$10,947	\$18,123	+65.6
State of Wisconsin	\$13,276	\$21,271	+60.2

Town of Belvidere Planning Committee: Reasons for Living in Town of Belvidere:
(this is not a ranked listing)

- ◆ Peaceful rural setting
- ◆ Recreational opportunities are local – no need to travel
- ◆ Fresh air
- ◆ Little traffic
- ◆ Great fishing potential
- ◆ Scenery
- ◆ Good people
- ◆ Next to nature
- ◆ Family is here
- ◆ Great soils
- ◆ Know your neighbors – changing in that Belvidere has a greater number of renters, more part-time residents and more people from the urban areas that are not familiar with the rural areas and the way rural neighbors relate to each other
- ◆ Close to 4 major medical centers
- ◆ Close to major metro centers
- ◆ Close to work – no commute – (Not as true as it was in 2001 when plan was first written)
- ◆ Developed a cottage into a retirement home
- ◆ Great place to start a 2nd career – Job opportunities have decreased in the last 5 years
- ◆ Low crime rate
- ◆ Privacy in back yard
- ◆ Good place to raise a family
- ◆ Quality education

- ◆ Close to major grain terminal
- ◆ Diversity of wildlife
- ◆ Good restaurants – reasonable prices
- ◆ Best place out of 30 to move to
- ◆ Unique culture of local community
- ◆ Good climate with 4 seasons
- ◆ More free public boat landings than anywhere else on the Mississippi River

Town of Belvidere Planning Committee: Concerns about Living in Town of Belvidere:

(this is not a ranked listing)

- ◆ Shift of property tax burden away from farmland and woodland to buildings and homes
- ◆ Large increase in Managed Forest Land decreasing the tax base in the Town more
- ◆ Environmental Impact of fly ash disposal landfill – water and air concerns (EPA Bill)
- ◆ Manure management – nutrients from poultry barns
- ◆ Growth of rural housing – need updated sub-division rules
- ◆ Higher food prices/less variety
- ◆ Quality of drinking water is going down
- ◆ People throwing trash along roadways
- ◆ Response time for local police
- ◆ Road repair, snow plowing, boat landing
- ◆ Youth – little incentive to stay in the area
- ◆ Local residents can't compete for woodland
- ◆ Concern over “camper” and trailers on woodland
- ◆ Not enough involvement in local government
- ◆ Loss of family farms
- ◆ Light soils (minority of soils)
- ◆ Chicken manure odor
- ◆ The name “Cochrane” (??)

The committee also ranked the top concerns they had in the Town of Belvidere.

1. **Loss of family farms.** Concern that fewer farms are located within the township, which equates to the loss of the major industry. Good farmland is also being taken out of production for recreation purposes.
2. **Changes in Land Use should be Environmentally Friendly.** Land use changes should also have the potential to add good paying jobs in the community and add to the local tax base.
3. **Quality of drinking water is going down.** Drinking water quality is not as good as it used to be. Nitrates are higher, and additional odor problems are observed, that were not present in the past.
4. **CAP X 2020.** The power line will be a major change to the current landscape and no power from the line will benefit the people who will be affected by the power transmission line. It also goes against all of the planning goals for the Town of Belvidere.
5. **Frac Sand Mining.** Residents have concerns with non-metallic mining, specifically frac sand mining. These concerns are in the areas of water quality, human health, traffic patterns, environmental quality, and scenic beauty. The top reasons that people live in and move to the Town of Belvidere are the scenic beauty, natural resources, and rural agriculture atmosphere. Concern over the effect of non-metallic mining on local tax base.

HOUSING ELEMENT:

Wisconsin's population density is 103 people per square mile, Buffalo County is well below that with only 20 people per square mile. Housing growth in Belvidere was the third fastest among Buffalo County Towns.

Housing Units in the Town of Belvidere and Buffalo County – Census Data

Area	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Town of Belvidere	158	182	218	222	219
Buffalo County	4,597	5,478	5,586	6,098	6,664

There are a total of 219 total housing units in the Town of Belvidere. The housing density was 6.33 homes per square mile, which is higher than the average for Towns in Buffalo County. 79.9% (175) of the homes were occupied during the 2010 census. 69.1% of the homes (121) were occupied by families. 34% (59) had at least one individual 65 years or older living in the home. 11.4% (20) were renter occupied homes. Average household size was 2.34 persons. The median home value was \$175,300 and was built in 1975. 96.8% of all homes were single family dwellings (8.2% of those homes were mobile homes). 15.1% (33) of homes were seasonal or recreational homes this is the highest percent among Buffalo County Towns.

There has been a significant growth of seasonal homes, cabins and second homes in Belvidere over the last twenty years. There has been some concern over trailers being placed without permits and being left in place year round and not having a fire number. Concern was also expressed about manufactured homes that may not meet safe living standards. It was determined that housing is available for purchase for those choosing to purchase a home. Land for building homes is readily available in the Town including many sites that are not designated as prime farmland.

Goals and Actions:

- New housing starts have continued to increase in the Town of Belvidere. One development is planned and is currently advertising for interested parties. Residents are concerned that other developments will follow and destroy the natural beauty of the Township. The town will encourage housing developments to build on land not classified as prime farmland and to encourage cluster development when possible. Also, access to improvements (houses, cabins, sheds, etc) should be reasonable to allow for emergency response vehicles to reach property without risk to volunteers and equipment.
- The Land Use Planning Committee recommends the development of an ordinance that restricts the building on the scenic bluffs. This ordinance would require that all new buildings built on bluffs not interfere with the natural beauty of the bluffs and be restricted by a county bluff view ordinance. The Town of Belvidere Planning Committee recommends that Buffalo County consider a countywide plan to restrict bluffland development.
- All trailers and mobile homes must be kept in good repair and meet all requirements of the Buffalo County Zoning Department. Sanitation permits must be obtained and be kept to standards.
- All mobile homes that are relocated in or to the Town of Belvidere must be 10 years old or less.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT:

Vehicular traffic is the major form of transportation in Belvidere due to limited other forms of transportation available. Recreational transportation is used including snowmobiles and bicycles.

No new road construction is anticipated in the timeframe of this plan. The major objective of the transportation plan is to improve current roads high quality.

Belvidere has a total of 51.84 miles of road. 6.88 miles of state road, 14.08 miles of county roads and 30.88 miles of town miles. Functional road classification for rural roads include principal arterials, major and minor collectors, and local roads.

Principal arterials serve interstate and interregional trips. These roads serve urban areas with populations greater than 5,000 and are classified as interstate highways. Belvidere has 6.88 miles of principal arterials.

Collector miles collect traffic from local roads and link them to nearby population centers. Major collectors are classified as state roads and minor collectors are classified as county roads. Belvidere has 15.38 miles of collector miles. This includes all County Roads plus Prairie Moon Road.

Local roads provide access for travel over relatively short distances. These roads are classified Local Miles and includes all town roads. Belvidere has 29.58 miles of Local Miles. See map page 18.

Belvidere also has 2 bridges over 20 feet and 0 bridges under 20 feet.

State and Regional Transportation Plans:

At www.dot.state.wi.us the Wisconsin Department of Transportation home page under “Plans and Project”, then, “Planning Resources”, then, “Modal and Multimodal Plans”, the Town reviewed and considered the following State and Regional Transportation Plans that have potential affects or integration with the Town plan.

Connections 2030 - the current multimodal plan being developed for all forms of Transportation through the year 2030

Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020 – the current strategic plan for all facets of the 12,000 miles of the State’s highways

Wisconsin Six-Year Highway Improvement Program – the more specific construction programs for the Wisconsin DOT through 2014

Wisconsin Airport System Plan 2030 – the plan for determining airport facility needs

Wisconsin Bicycle Plan 2020 – comprehensive bicycle plan

Wisconsin Statewide Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 – the plan outlines State and local measures to promote safe pedestrian travel

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 – the rail plan being developed for integrated rail development through 2030

Buffalo County Highway Plans – Currently, there are no plans for major county road work, beyond general maintenance for any county roads within the borders of the Town of Belvidere.

Currently, the Town of Belvidere is not specifically identified for any recommendations or included in any projects with these plans.

Bus Service:

There is no bus service in the Town of Belvidere. The nearest commercial bus service is the Jefferson Bus Lines stopping in Winona, MN.

Freight Rail Service:

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) runs along the entire western edge of Buffalo County and the Town of Belvidere. The closest currently used spur is located in the Village of Cochrane, WI.

Passenger Rail Service:

There is no passenger rail service to the Town of Belvidere. Daily passenger service (AMTRAK) is available in Winona, MN, with one train heading south in the am and one train heading north in the pm.

Airports:

There are no public or private airports in the Town of Belvidere. Winona, MN has a private airport but no passenger air service. La Crosse, WI has the closest passenger air service which is about 40 minutes from the Town. Most residents traveling by air would fly out of Minneapolis/St. Paul which is about 120 minutes travel time. An airport shuttle service to the MSP Airport from Menomonie and Wabasha, MN is also available.

Water Transportation:

The Mississippi River runs on the entire west side of Buffalo County, with the Port of Winona being the closest terminal. Much of the grain produced in the Town will be transported by truck to Winona and sold to one of three grain buyers to be loaded onto barges. Fertilizer, Chemical, Liquid Propane and other commodities are shipped to Winona and distributed throughout the region by truck.

Trucking:

Most commercial shipping in the Town is by truck, with State Highway 35 being a major transportation route. Road bans may be implemented each spring on County and Town roads.

Pedestrian and Bike Trails:

There are no designated biking trails in the Town of Belvidere.

Snowmobile Trails:

There is a very strong network of snowmobile trails in the Town of Belvidere and across Buffalo County. These trails are located on private property. Maintenance and property agreements are completed by local clubs. See map on page 19.

Town of Belvidere Road Improvement Plans – Town of Belvidere Board

Year	Road Name	Miles of Road	Improvement
2013			
2014			
2015			

Wish list if funds become available:

Lists are suggestions only and can be changed as needs and highway finances change. Each year the Town Board will prioritize current year road and bridge work based on condition of road/bridge, safety, traffic count, slope, funds available and other factors.

Belvidere has some problems with vandalism of town road signs and has a goal to keep all road signs up to date and replaced as needed and as funds permit.

The sport of snowmobiling brings a lot of tourism to Buffalo County. The trails, when adequate snowfall occurs, are second to none. Snowmobile trails, located through private land, are maintained by local snowmobile clubs. A county trail map is included at the end of this plan.

Bicycle usage in rural areas is on the increase. The planning committee expressed concerns about safety on town and county roads due to the amount of motorized traffic, farm traffic and bicycle traffic all sharing the same roads. Many visitors to the Town may not be aware of the amount and size of modern farm machinery.

Some elderly transportation is available through Buffalo County Health and Human Services, Meals on Wheels program. Transportation is also available for veterans through Veteran's services.

The Town of Belvidere currently cooperates with the following units of government on transportation issues: Buffalo County, Town of Lincoln, Town of Waumandee, Town of Milton, City of Buffalo, and Wisconsin DNR.

Goals and Actions:

- The Town of Belvidere will only take over a private road if it meets guidelines developed by the state and is blacktopped.
- A greater proportion of land continues to be acquired by absentee landowners and managed as recreational land. Many recreational landowners are not supportive of the snowmobile industry and the benefits of local trails to the Town and County economy. An educational program needs to be developed and implemented to educate landowners on the economic benefits of the snowmobile industry and the benefit of having access to trails on private land. This program should include any non-bias research on the impact of snowmobiles on whitetail deer movement.
- Snow removal and Town road repair is contracted out to a private contractor for four years. This will be reevaluated both for quality of service and cost competitiveness.
- Hold a discussion with Buffalo County Highway and Town of Milton to determine if Prairie Moon Road should continue as a Town Road or should it be upgraded to a State Road.

UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT:

This element looks at existing utility service and community facilities benefiting the citizens of the Town of Belvidere. Items include solid waste disposal, recycling services, parks, telecommunication services, emergency response services, schools, government facilities and others.

Sanitary Waste and Water Supply:

The Town of Belvidere has one concentration of residents along the Mississippi River North of Buffalo City. All citizens in Belvidere have private sewer and water service. There are currently no plans to develop public services at this time. Buffalo County Zoning issues all sanitary permits in the Town.

Solid Waste/Recycling:

Garbage disposal and recycling is available in cooperation with Buffalo County and one of two county recycling centers is located in the Township. The Town of Belvidere currently funds 23% of the total cost of operating the BBC Recycling center. . Town citizens can bring their recyclables and garbage bags to the Recycling Center for disposal. Please contact a Town Board member or the Town Clerk about recycling locations and schedules. Currently, the hours are the 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 pm. And Tuesdays Noon until 5:00 pm (April – November).

Town Facilities:

The Town Shed is the only public/governmental facility in Belvidere and was built new in 2011. It is located at the intersection of County Road N and State Highway 35. The Township uses the Cochrane VFW facility for meetings and voting which meets ADA regulations.

There is one cemetery located in the Town called the Herold Cemetery. A local association is responsible for maintenance and records. The Town of Belvidere provides funds to the association.

Telephone/Electricity/Internet Services:

Cell phone service is poor in some areas of the Town, especially in the valley areas. DSL internet service is excellent throughout the Town.

Riverland Energy Cooperative and Xcel Energy both supply electrical service in Belvidere. The citizenry find alternative energy sources such as wind, solar and methane acceptable in the Town.

Natural Gas:

There are no natural gas services in the Town. Most people rely on Liquid Propane.

Libraries:

There are no public libraries in the Town. Residents rely on the Alma Public Library. The County pays a fee for each transaction for Town residents using Libraries outside of the county borders.

Education:

Students residing in the town attend Alma Area Schools, Cochrane-Fountain City Public Schools. Taxpayers also support the Chippewa Valley Technical College and Western Technical College.

Fire Protection, Police Protection and Emergency Management:

The Scenic Valley Ambulance and Western Buffalo County, Tri-Community Volunteer Fire Departments and Rescue Service provide fire and ambulance services. The Town funds 34% of the fire departments' operating budget and splits the cost of ambulance service on a per capita basis.

Health Care and Long Term Care Services:

There are no health care providers in the Town of Belvidere. Excellent Medical Services are provided by services in La Crosse, Eau Claire, and Winona, and Wabasha MN. Long term care services are provided in Winona, MN, Fountain City, Pepin, and Wabasha.

Public Parks:

There are no parks or public trails in the Town. The Town of Belvidere maintains two DNR boat landings on the Mississippi River.

Goals and Actions:

- New residents to the Township should realize that emergency services cannot be expected to be to all locations quickly because of the distance and the terrain that must be traveled.
- Cell phone towers should be located in a manner that fits into existing landscape and has minimal effect on wildlife. These towers should be built to avoid guide wires and located on existing landscape whenever possible. Buffalo County should look at making all towers fit this description.
- Maintain the high quality fire and rescue services that are currently available. This requires regular contact and discussions with the other municipalities involved. EMS services need to understand the need for communications because of the split service areas in the Town. Support the MABAS system.
- Maintain recycling and solid waste services that the Town currently uses.
- Carefully consider new alternative energy resources as they become available as conditional use permits are considered by the Buffalo County Board of Adjustment.

AGRICULTURAL NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT:

Agriculture:

Belvidere was settled by farmers and agriculture continues to play a very important part of the economy of the Town. Very little value added agriculture is currently being used or explored in the Town.

The Town of Belvidere is in the driftless area of Wisconsin along the Mississippi River. The land is very steep and in some ways difficult to farm. The land is very productive and numerous cropping rotations are possible. Recently, there has been a switch from dairy production to row crop and some large poultry production farms.

Soils: Rose Valley is the major drainage area for Belvidere Township. There are no rivers or major streams in the township, therefore, soils are not influenced by the water resources as most of the other townships in the county.

Blufftops are mainly Fayette and Dubuque soils, with Fayette being the deeper, more productive of the two. Slopes of 0 – 12% are very common and require a minimal amount of management to control sheet and rill erosion. Contouring and conservation tillage will maintain productivity of these soils. However, gully erosion in areas of concentrated flow where the landscape changes to the steep bluffsides is a concern.

Most land in the valleys is Fayette Silt Loam. These Fayettees are mapped as a different soil type, since it is found in the valley side slopes. This is still very productive land, but requires more management to protect it from erosion since slopes range from 6 – 20%.

In the lowest site positions, Tell, Richwood and Meridian are the most common soil types. These are productive, well-drained soils of 0 – 6% slopes. They require minimal levels of management to maintain productivity and prevent soil erosion. Areas of concentrated flow from the steep bluffsides is a concern.

The lowest site positions have Arenzville mapped as the predominant soil type. Generally, this is well to moderately well drained and productive. Drainage problems are the major management concern of these soils.

In the Cochrane area, Dakota, Sparta and Burkhardt are the major soil types. These are not floodplain soils but are in a bench or terrace site position of the Mississippi River. Irrigation water management and nutrient management are of major concern in these soil types. Nitrate content of groundwater is a concern because of the shallow water table and the number of private wells in the area.⁴

Major soil types found in the Town of Belvidere are listed in the following table.

⁴ Buffalo County Wisconsin Soil Survey. USDA, 1957. Interpreted by Todd Mau, USDA-NRCS.

Major soil types found in the Town of Belvidere⁵			
Soil Name	Abbreviation	Yield Potential	
		Corn (bushels)	Hay (tons)
Arenzville	Ar	135	5.0
Burkhardt	Bu	75	3.1
Dakota	Da	95	4.2
Dubuque (B slopes)	DeB	110	4.1
Dubuque (C slopes)	DeC	100	3.9
Dubuque (D slopes)	DeD	90	3.3
Fayette (B&C slopes)	Fa	145	5.5
Fayette (C&D slopes)	Fv	135	4.9
Richwood	Rc	150	5.5
Sparta (A Slope)	SpA	65	2.8
Sparta (B Slope)	SpC	55	2.4
Steep, Stoney & Rocky	St	---	---
Tell	TeA &TeB	105	4.3
Waukegan	WkA	110	4.4

Any drive in the Town of Belvidere will show the importance agriculture once had to the visual, economic and social landscape. Farmers settled the township and even though active farming in the township has declined, farming still remains the major economic activity. Agriculture has changed throughout the town's history going from wheat to livestock to dairy and now a trend back to grain. Most farms are larger in size, with the exception of an increase in part-time farming activities. See soils map on page 28.

Number of Dairy Farms in Town of Belvidere by Year								
	1970	1989	1994	1995	1996	1999	2001	2011
Number of Dairy Farms	60	28	22	21	20	9	8	4

Very little value-added agricultural products are produced in the township. Milk and cattle are all shipped out of the township for processing. Gone are the days of the small local cheese cooperatives and flour mills. Very little lumber is processed in the area, with most being trucked to large mills for processing. The La Crosse Milling Company is located in Cochrane, but most, if not all of the raw product inputs come from outside the state and country.

Farms will most likely continue to grow in size, but small part-time farmers will also increase in number. Some of these may consider value-added products as part of their activities. Marginal land may be lost to agriculture due to low prices, modest returns and federal and state land management programs. This has been common and under current government programs will continue to increase.

⁵ Buffalo County Wisconsin Soil Survey. USDA, 1957.

Natural Resources:

Belvidere has a wide variety of wildlife species and excellent wildlife habitat. It is best known (as is all of Buffalo County) for high quality whitetail deer. This area has been identified for its tremendous potential for wildlife, threatened species and general natural habitat. Other important natural resources in the Town include:

- Private wetlands
- Streams throughout Town
- Wildflower and Native grass habitats
- State wetland

Groundwater

All drinking water in the Town of Belvidere is from groundwater sources (private wells). Buffalo County completed a groundwater study in 1998 indicating very little contamination of wells within the Town of Belvidere. Contamination that was found was in the form of elevated nitrates, and these problems were solved by drilling deeper cased wells rather than shallow sand point wells. A more recent study, but with a smaller number of samples, from the Buffalo County Health and Human Services continues to indicate good groundwater quality.

Surface Water

There are numerous small streams in the Town of Belvidere; many of which are intermittent streams. One stream in Rose Valley should be explored as a potential quality fishery. There are no lakes found in the Town of Belvidere. See hydrology map on page 29.

Forests

Forest land makes up 41.5% of the land in the Town of Belvidere. Much of the high quality timber has been harvested, and most timber land is managed for both forest and wildlife. The forests are located on very steep slopes which are too steep to convert to farmland, or on land that is normally too wet to farm.

Wetlands:

Wetlands make up a smaller portion of the Town of Belvidere. The wetlands are found along the Mississippi River bottoms and along some of the streams. Wetlands should be protected from development. Current zoning regulations will not allow building in designated wetlands. A current wetlands map can be found on page 30.

Floodplains:

Development is not allowed by the Buffalo County Floodplain Zoning Ordinance. These are fragile areas necessary to avoid flooding of roads and other developed property. A map of the designated floodplains for the Town of Belvidere can be found on page 31.

Non-Metallic Mining:

Non-metallic mining mainly consists of the excavation of sand, gravel and stone. This has been traditionally rock quarries in the Town of Belvidere for road building and field limestone. There is concern about the increasing numbers of frac sand inquiries in the

western Wisconsin area which also fall under the non-metallic mining category. There are currently 32 approved non-metallic mines in Buffalo County with two active mines in the Town of Belvidere. See map page 32.

Recreational activities have been increasing in all of Buffalo County, and to a great extent in Belvidere Township. Most recreational uses involve some sort of hunting or fishing activity, but bicycling, golfing, snowmobiling, boating, bird-watching and sightseeing have all increased visitation to the township. Many people throughout the state and nation recognize Buffalo County either by its whitetail deer population, in association with the Mississippi River and most recently, with quality snowmobiling.

The Town of Belvidere is responsible for maintaining access to two Mississippi River boat landings, one north of Buffalo City in the area called Belvidere Landing and one south of Buffalo City called the Lower Spring Lake Landing. Belvidere Township is also home to Buffalo County's largest private campground, the Great River Harbor found on the Mississippi River, North of Cochrane.

A 12-acre fly ash disposal site is located in the township owned and operated by Dairyland Power Cooperative. The site was established in 1981, and receives 75,250 tons of waste per year from the two Alma coal-fired electrical generating plants. Test groundwater wells help protect the environment from contamination from the site.

Town residents are concerned about future expansion of the Dairyland Power Fly Ash Landfill. Fly ash is being brought in from other locations and the current site is filling up rapidly. Restrictions should be placed on future expansion and sites for fly ash and any type of industrial waste product.

The Cochrane Drainage District also plays a significant part in the township. The Drainage District was established in 1946, and continues to be operational today. It affects many landowners in the township and the Village of Cochrane. It was constructed by the Corps of Engineers and completed in 1949, under the authority contained in the River and Harbor Act of 2 March, 1945 (see Exhibit D). "This plan provided for the construction of a drainage ditch by the United States as a proper means of reimbursement for damage, caused by seepage and backwater from the upper Mississippi navigation project, to lands and property in the vicinity of Cochrane. The additional benefits which the ditch affords over and above the prevention of seepage damages were considered sufficient to require local interests accept ownership and maintain the works after completion."⁶ The ditch is maintained by the Buffalo County Cochrane Drainage District Board. They levy funds from each parcel each year to be kept in a maintenance account.

The Town of Belvidere Comprehensive Plan survey contained many responses concerning the scenic beauty, quality air and water and unique aspects of the area as reasons they live and/or own property in the township.

⁶ Letter to Honorable Lester Johnson, 10 February, 1955.

Cultural Resources:

The Town of Belvidere is rich in history and cultural activities that reflect the heritage of the Town. Some examples of cultural resources in the Town include:

- Old stage coach stop
- Artists

There are no County or State Parks located in the Town of Belvidere.

Goals and Actions – Agriculture

- Support the preservation of the family farm and cooperate with other units of government to assist farms when possible.
- Manage development in such a way that large blocks of farmland can be protected.
- Protect existing farm operations from restrictions on noise, odor, and accepted animal husbandry practices associated with farm operations. This policy recognizes that often non-farm residents who are unfamiliar with farm operations may have unrealistic expectations of farming operations. The township recommends Buffalo County look at a right to farm ordinance to protect the right of farmers to use technology, practices and scale to succeed in agricultural production, as long as such practices do not negatively affect the environment or health of others living in the township.
- Land owners within the township will be encouraged to follow soil conservation plans that meet T levels of erosion (tolerable soil loss levels).
- Landowners need to be respectful of their neighbors and should not build livestock facilities closer to their neighbor's house than they would have it to their own residence. Guidelines from the University of Minnesota, farm odor and residence separation should be used for all new livestock facilities (Exhibit J).
- All farms meet a reasonable nutrient/waste management plan for their farm and keep it updated as farm size increases. These plans should be in place for both livestock and non-livestock farm businesses.

Goals and Actions – Natural Resources

It is the objective of the residents of the Town of Belvidere to maintain natural resources located within the township. The following statements have been put in place to meet this objective:

- To consider the natural beauty of the township whenever development is considered.
- To protect and maintain habitat for the wildlife found in the township. Land use should protect as much of the native ecosystems as possible and protect the scenic vistas and views within the township.
- Support Buffalo County's regulations on non-metallic mines.
- Encourage residents to use programs such as Managed Forest Crop Law, Mississippi Valley Conservancy and others to maintain the natural beauty of the Township.

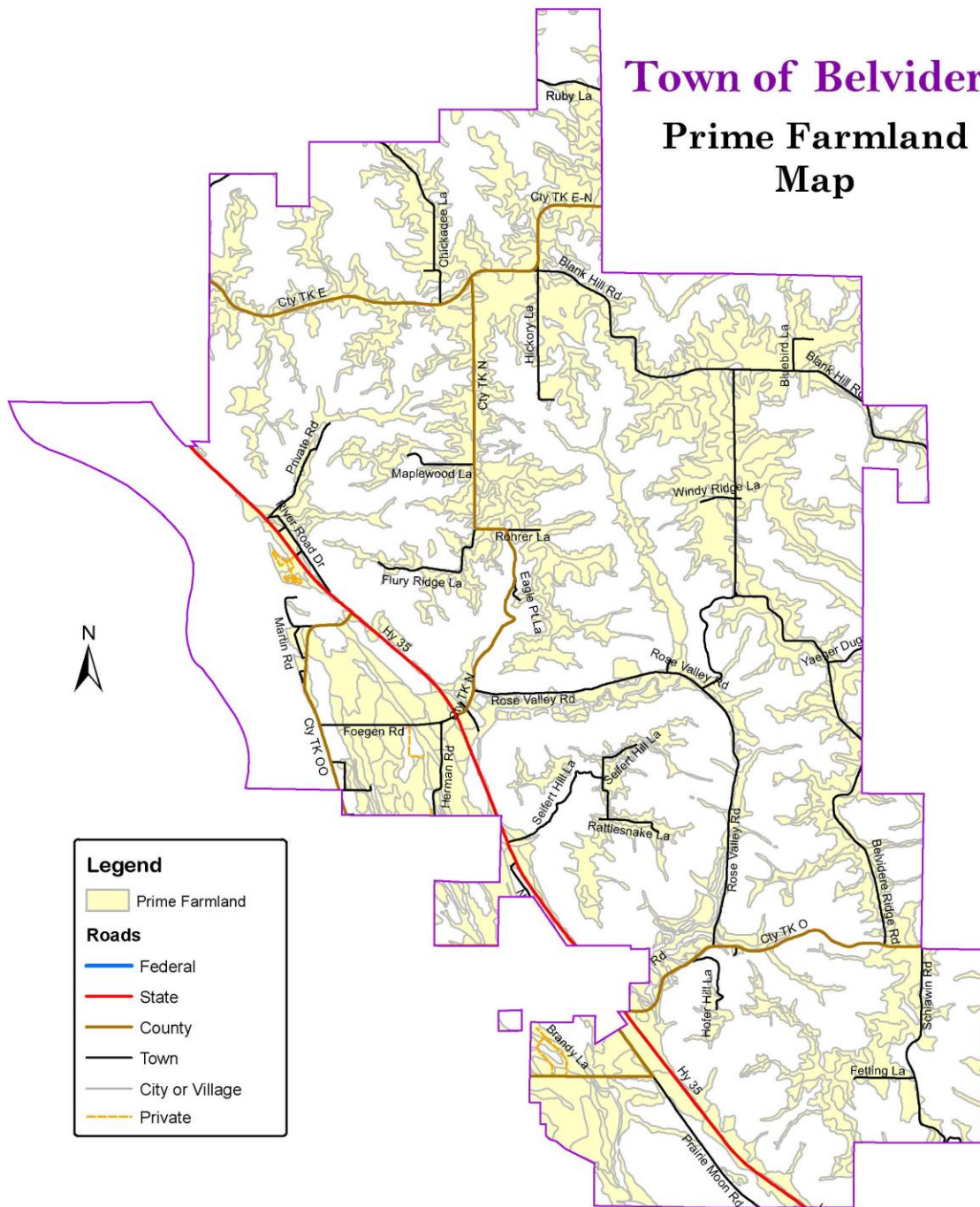
Goals and Actions – Cultural Resources

- The Cochrane/Buffalo City/Belvidere Historical Society will be supported to maintain the historical culture of the Township and to explore and teach others about the history such as Cochrane Chert and how it played a significant part in the area's history.

Town of Belvidere

Prime Farmland

Map



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Town of Belvidere
Hydrology Map

Legend

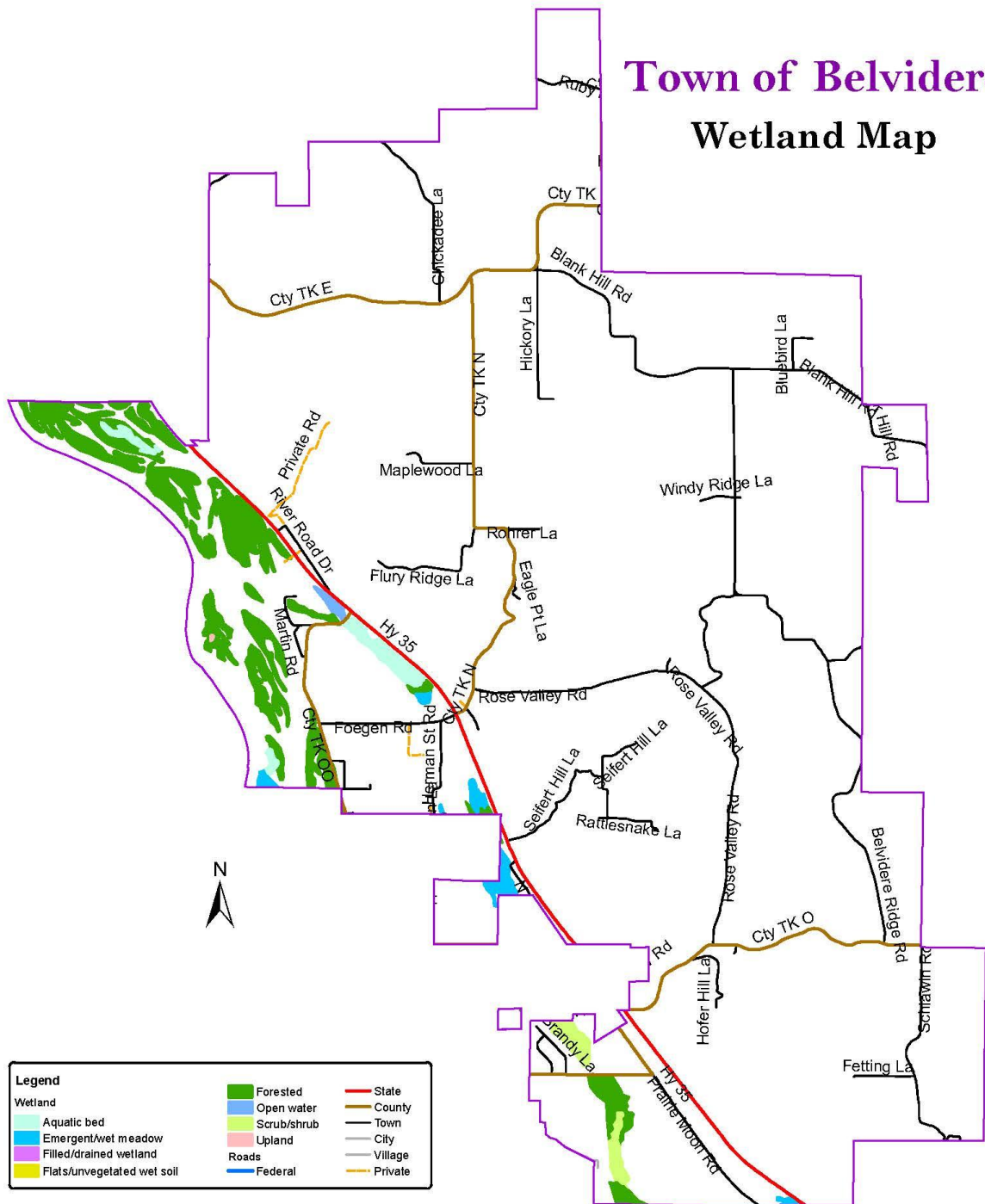
- Rivers & Streams
- Water Bodies

Roads

- Federal
- State
- County
- Town
- City or Village
- Private

A horizontal scale bar with tick marks at 0, 0.5, 1, and 2 miles. The bar is black with white tick marks and labels.

Town of Belvidere Wetland Map

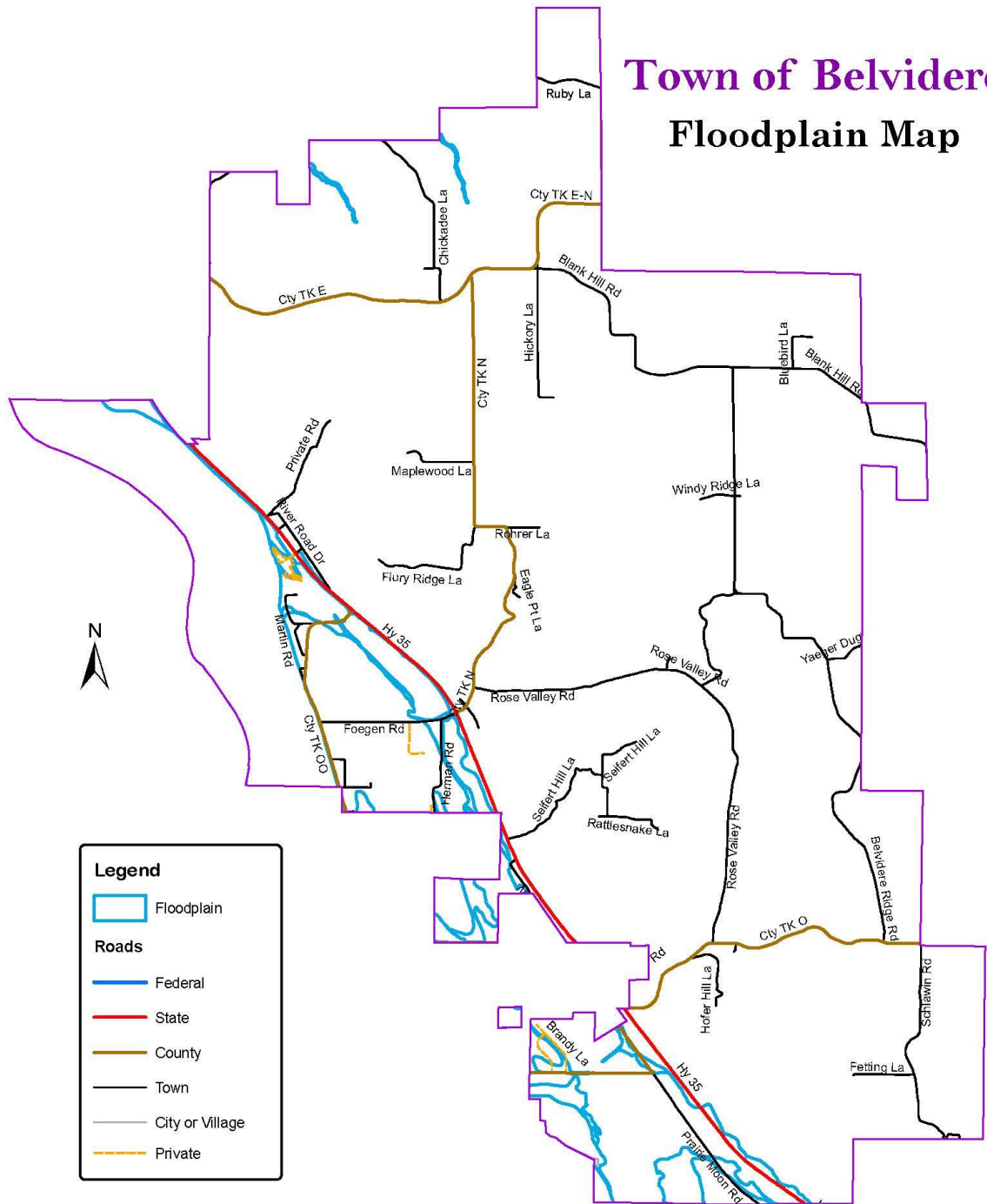


Legend		
Wetland		
Aquatic bed	Forested	State
Emergent/wet meadow	Open water	County
Filled/drained wetland	Scrub/shrub	Town
Flats/unvegetated wet soil	Upland	City
	Roads	Village
	Federal	Private

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0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Town of Belvidere Floodplain Map



Legend

Floodplain

Roads

Federal

State

County

Town

City or Village

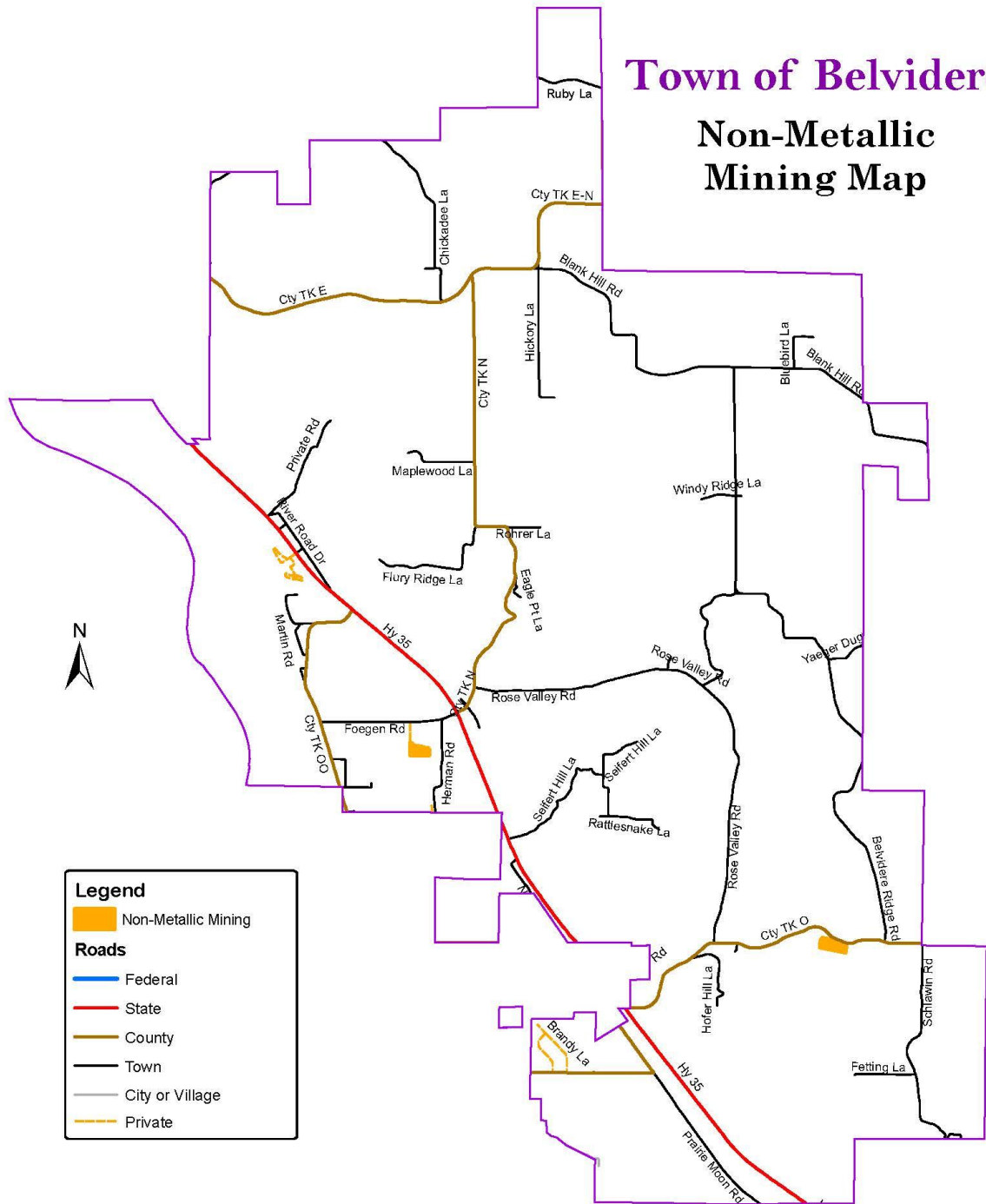
Private

As with all public information derived from various sources, this data may contain errors or faults. Therefore, Buffalo County does not provide any warranty, express or implied, as to the accuracy of this data. The recipient is encouraged to make an independent investigation or verification of this data. If an error is found, it is requested that the Buffalo County Information Services Director be advised of the particulars so this data can be examined and corrected. This map is not a substitute for an accurate field survey.



Town of Belvidere

Non-Metallic Mining Map



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0 0.5 1 2 Miles

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT:

The majority of the data for this section came from the U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2009 5-Year Estimates. Other sources of information were the Department of Workforce Development and citizens from the Town of Belvidere.

Employment Information:

Manufacturing, agriculture and the education/health/social occupations comprise a majority of people employed in the Town of Belvidere. The Town is very rural with very productive soils. It is also within commuting distance to manufacturing, school and health care jobs in Alma, Arcadia, Mondovi, Eau Claire, La Crosse, and Winona. The Town of Belvidere and all of Buffalo County tends to have very low unemployment rates, due to the variety of jobs in the region and the growth of industry in Arcadia (Ashley Furniture and Golden Plump Chicken).

Town of Belvidere Employment Statistics – Census Data

Employment Status	Number	Percent
Population 16 years and older	272	100
In Labor Force	195	71.7
Civilian Labor Force	195	71.7
Employed	172	63.2
Unemployed	23	8.5
Armed Forces	0	0
Not in Labor Force	77	28.3
Occupation		
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	37	21.5
Construction	7	4.1
Manufacturing	27	15.7
Retail Trade	33	19.2
Professional, management, etc.	24	13.9
Education, health care	16	9.3
All others	28	16.3
Class of Worker		
Private wage and salary	137	79.7
Government workers	13	7.6
Self-employed	19	11.0
Unpaid family	3	1.7

Commuting to Work:

Many employed residents of the Town of Belvidere, who do not work on their own farms, or are self-employed, commute out of the Town to work. La Crosse, and Winona, MN are within 60 minutes for all residents.

Town of Belvidere, Commuting Habits – Census Data

Means of Travel	Percent
Car, truck, van – drove alone	69.8
Car, truck, van – carpooled	18.8
Public transportation	0
Walked	2.9
Other means	0.0
Worked at home	18.0
	Minutes
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	32

Buffalo County Industries:

Buffalo County has a very small manufacturing base. Only one industry, La Crosse Milling (oat miller) is in the top ten employers in the County. Most all of the employment opportunities in the near future will be outside of the Town or Buffalo County.

Table 10: Buffalo County Top 10 Employers – WI DWD

Company	Service	Size
Marten Transport	Trucking	1,000+
Mondovi Public Schools	Education	100-249
CFC Public Schools	Education	100-249
County of Buffalo	Government	100-249
American Lutheran Homes	Nursing Care Provider	100-249
Dairyland Power	Electrical Power Generation	100-249
School District of Alma	Education	50-99
Midwest Dental	Dental Care	50-99
US Army Corp of Eng.	Engineering Service	50-99
La Crosse Milling	Oat Miller	50-99

Environmentally Contaminated Sites in the Town of Belvidere:

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) was utilized in identifying contaminated sites in the Town of Belvidere. There were no contaminated sites in the Town of Belvidere identified in the database.

The Wisconsin DNR Solid and Hazardous Waste Information System was reviewed for waste disposal sites in the Town of Belvidere. There were no waste disposal sites in the registry located in the Town of Belvidere.

County, Regional and State Economic Develop Programs:

County Programs:

- Revolving Loan Fund

Regional Programs:

- Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, Economic Development Program, Revolving Loan Fund

State Programs:

- Value Added Dairy Initiative
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection Milk Volume Program
- USDA – Rural Development

Local Planning Effort:

The planning committee identified some characteristics of businesses that would be desirable to have in the Town of Belvidere. The list of these business characteristics is listed below.

Current businesses location in the Town include:

- Auto Repair
- Farming
- Farm Custom Operators
- Trucking
- Vineyard
- Construction
- Harbor and camping facility
- Golf Course
- Logging

Ideal characteristics of a desirable Town of Belvidere business:

- Green Industry
- Good Jobs
- Agricultural Based
 - Dairy/Livestock businesses
 - Small Fruit production farms
 - Orchard(s)
- Hunting and Outfitting
- Nature based jobs; canoeing, birding, nature trips (native flora & fauna) , eagle watching - habitat (bald and golden)
- Home based/Cottage Industries

Plans and Actions:

- Town residents support tourism as an industry as long as preservation of the natural resources, beauty and history of the Town is a vital consideration.
- Buffalo County economic development resources will be used along with Buffalo County Land Conservation, Buffalo County NRCS and DNR personnel to ensure that environmental impacts are always considered.
- Support the formation of a Buffalo County Economic Development Corporation as a non-profit group supporting environmentally friendly economic development in the Town and Buffalo County.
- Priority should be given to industrial development/manufacturing in the areas close to the Village of Cochrane.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ELEMENT:

State and Federal Agencies:

Wisconsin Department of Transportation:

The Town of Belvidere participates, in cooperation with the Buffalo County Highway Department, in the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

The Town of Belvidere has contact with FEMA following any natural disasters which affect the Town. The county works in cooperation with the Buffalo County Emergency Management when working with FEMA.

Buffalo County:

Cooperation between governmental units is a normal activity. Belvidere currently cooperates with several other units of government on issues that can be better addressed as a group. The Town of Belvidere maintains positive relationships with several Buffalo County agencies. They consult with the Buffalo County Highway Department on road issues, and meet with the Highway Commissioner each year to assess Town roads and bridges. They work with Buffalo County Emergency Management to have emergency plans in place. The Town of Belvidere is also under Buffalo County Zoning. Finally, they are working with Buffalo County and the Buffalo County Towns Association in developing their Town and County comprehensive plans.

The Town of Belvidere has been part of the Buffalo County Recycling program since the program began. The Town also cooperates and helps to fund Emergency Response and Fire Protection with Alma, Buffalo City, Village of Cochrane, and Town of Milton.

Belvidere is also an active member of the Buffalo County Towns Association and meets with them quarterly.

School Districts:

The Town is served by the Alma Area Schools, Cochrane-Fountain City Public Schools. The residents of the Town of Belvidere are very supportive of their schools.

The following agreements are currently in place:

- Buffalo County and Tri-Community collection site Recycling and Solid Waste
- Road maintenance agreements with the City of Alma, Town of Alma, Town of Lincoln, Town of Waumandee and Buffalo County
- School districts of Alma and Cochrane-Fountain City
- Buffalo County Towns Association
- Tri-Community Volunteer Fire Department
- Scenic Valley and Western Buffalo County Emergency Services
- Cochrane Ditch Drainage Board
- Wisconsin DNR – Boat Landings
- Cemetery Boards

- Road agreements with Buffalo City and Village of Cochrane
- Village of Cochrane meeting hall and VFW for voting

Goals and Actions:

- Encourage coordination and cooperation among units of government. Remain active with the Towns Association and discuss issues that can better be addressed as a group of towns, i.e. Managed Forest Land and its effect on town tax bases.
- Have a candid discussion with Buffalo County Highway Department and Buffalo County Towns Association of areas of possible cooperation on road maintenance and repair.
- Maintain the strong relationship with the Fire and EMS Services.
- Support County efforts at economic development to improve the local economy and increase tax base.

LAND USE ELEMENT:

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The Town of Belvidere is a rural town. Agriculture is by far the predominant industry. The following table displays the breakdown of property within the town.

Town of Belvidere Property Assessment – Buffalo County Treasurer (2010)

Property Classification	# of Parcels	Total Value	Total Acres
Residential	198	21,370,300	212
Commercial	10	1,502,300	112
Manufacturing	0	0	0
Agricultural	556	1,330,350	9,522
Undeveloped	194	329,950	658
Productive Forest Lands	145	4,400,800	2,102
Agricultural Forest Land	290	4,492,300	4,269
Woodland Tax Lands	132	5,330,400	3,158
Exempt Lands	134	0	2,954
TOTALS	1,659	38,756,400	22,987
Alma Area Schools	287	8,827,150	
Cochrane-Fountain City Schools	782	34,812,150	
Cochrane Drainage District	51	810,550	
Chippewa Valley VTAE	287	8,827,150	
Western Wisconsin VTAE	782	34,812,150	

All towns within Buffalo County participate in county comprehensive zoning as described in Wisconsin Statute 59.97. Zoning decisions are made by the Buffalo County Zoning Committee and Buffalo County Zoning Department. This document is evolving and will change as deemed necessary by the taxpayers of the Town of Belvidere. It will contain a description of the goals and objectives of the people in the town as to how they would like to see change and development.

Existing Land Uses:

The Town of Belvidere is very rural. It is mainly agricultural and forest land. There is limited residential housing, with home owners mainly building on old farm sites, and along the Mississippi River. Most of the land is steep soils with very productive land in the valleys and along the bluff tops. See map on page 43.

Topography:

The Town of Belvidere can be described as bluffs and valleys. Land that is not currently in productive farmland is mainly too steep to farm, or is in the limited areas of wetland found in the town.

Commercial/Industrial:

Only three properties in the Town are not currently zoned agricultural. See future land use map on page 44. There are several non-home based businesses in the Town but are currently agricultural or residential.

Population and Housing Densities:

Population density of the Town is 11.2 people per square mile. Housing density 6.32 houses per square mile.

Land Demand and Prices:

Land sales values in Buffalo County have increased in the past 10 years. Until the last few years, this was driven by recreational land sales mostly to whitetail deer hunters. High farm commodity prices (especially corn and soybeans) have increased the demand for farmland sales to equal prices of forestland. Agricultural land sales in 2011 for Buffalo County was \$3,359 dollars per acre, the 3rd highest in the NC District, (Wisconsin Department of Revenue Statistics). The Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service shows similar numbers with farmland sales at \$2,857 per acre (2010 data) and forest land sales at \$3,346 per acre (2010 data). Both of these values were the 3rd highest reported in the North Central District. Land values may be influenced by frac sand mining depending on where the industry expands.

Opportunities for Redevelopment:

The Town of Belvidere has had very limited development over history due to the Town's rural nature. No redevelopment opportunities were identified.

Land Use Projections:

The two major land uses in the Town of Belvidere are agriculture and recreation (hunting); both of these uses provide very little development pressure. There is a small amount of land along State Highway 35 that may be suitable for small industrial development. There are houses close by, so existing landowners need to be considered.

Housing has only increased by a few houses each year, with one current planned group of houses. Housing tends to be low cost in the Town of Belvidere except along the River and may attract additional residents.

If current home building trends continue (as assumed by the planning committee) about 3 houses would be built each year or about 60 in 20 years. Committee members agreed that the average housing lot would be about 2.5 acres or a total of 150 acres of land taken out of other uses. If current trend continue 75% (112 acres) of these homes would be constructed on agricultural land, the remaining 25% (38 acres) on woodland or undeveloped lands.

Forest Land:

Forest land in the Town is generally land that is too steep for other uses. The committee sees very few, if any opportunities for land to be taken out of forest and put into row crop production. The exception is some areas that have been planted to trees through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Managed Forest Law (MFL) enrollment is a concern throughout Buffalo County. Currently, Belvidere has 9,529 acres of forest land with 3,158 acres enrolled in the MFL program; this accounts for about one third of the woodland acres in the Town. MFL continues to be a major concern because of falling property tax base for the Town and County.

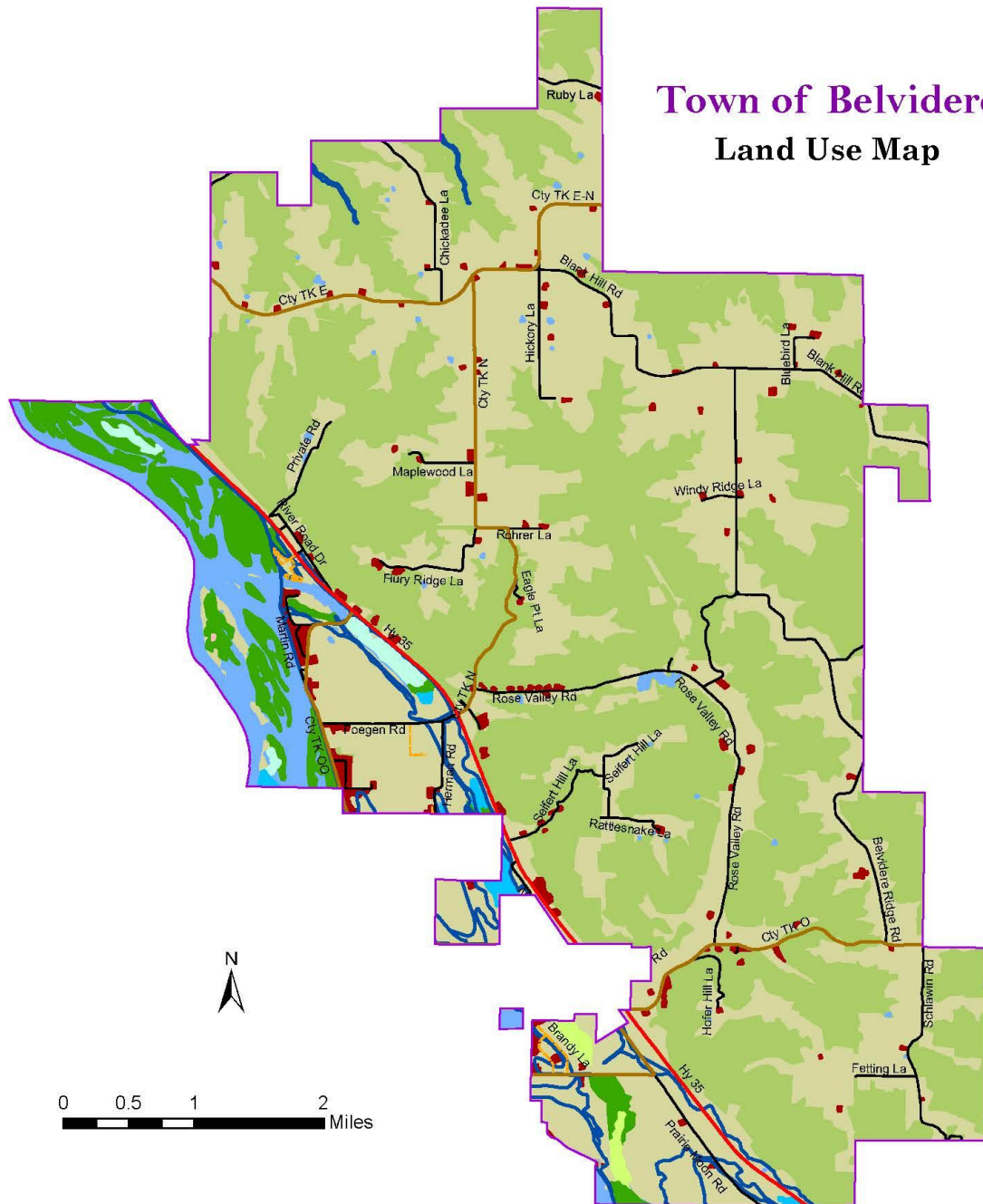
Current Zoning:

Currently, all Towns in Buffalo County are under the county zoning rules. Belvidere desires to maintain this relationship, but would like to have a say in rezone changes and in conditional use permits. At this time, Town residents do not want to implement any protections for farmland, natural areas or any other land use area. They would like to encourage landowners to voluntarily participate in programs to preserve farmland, such as land conservancy organization.

Actions and Plans:

- Cluster development should be encouraged whenever housing is considered to preserve farmland and natural areas.
- Right to Farm protection should be given to farms located in the Township.
- Conservation plans should be encouraged to preserve both farmland and natural areas.
- Access to private property should be regulated to prevent driveways that are too steep for emergency vehicles to safely travel. Private access from town, county and state roads should require permits to prevent unsafe access.
- Preserving prime farmland should be a priority when rural development is considered.
- Large gatherings held in Belvidere Township should be limited. All gatherings greater than 500 people should obtain a permit from the proper county authorities. These permits should address road use, sanitation issues, bonding, parking, and law enforcement if deemed necessary. This permit must be obtained a minimum of 30 days before the event and meet all other requirements set by Buffalo County.
- Landfills, regardless of their use, need to have special permits from Buffalo County and the Town of Belvidere.
- Mobile homes more than 10 years in age will not be allowed to move in the Town of Belvidere.
- Town of Belvidere may charge an annual road maintenance user fee, based on wear and tear of town roads caused by the frequency and travel of heavy equipment over town roads related to a non-metallic mining operation. Fee will be based Buffalo County Highway Department or other creditable resource repair estimates. An annual bond may be required by the town for these repair costs.
- Town of Belvidere Board will consider a licensing ordinance for non-metallic mines and other businesses that may alter the beauty and natural resources of the Town. The Town will decide before the application is brought to Buffalo County Zoning.
- Town of Belvidere Board will put in place ordinances to regulate businesses that may affect the health and safety of the people of the Town.
- Bluff protection will be put into place that preserves the natural scenic beauty and natural resources which are unique to the bluffs in the Town and Buffalo County.
- Existing landowner rights will always be considered when considering any business development.

Town of Belvidere Land Use Map



Legend

Roads

Federal	Village
State	Private
County	FEMA Floodplains
Town	Wetland
City	Aquatic bed

Emergent/wet meadow
Filled/drained wetland
Flats/unvegetated wet soil
Forested
Open water

Scrub/shrub

Upland

Forest

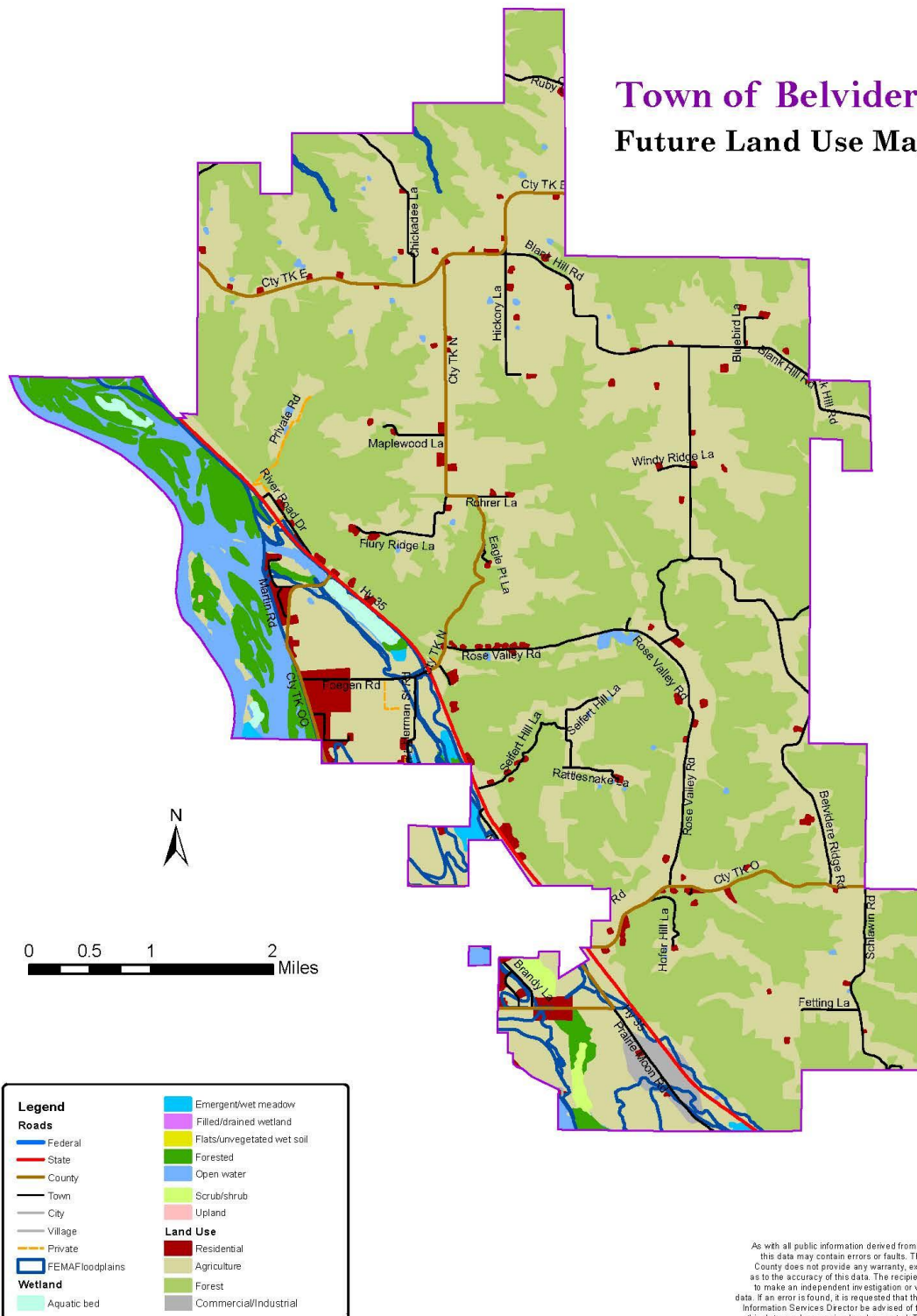
Residential

Agriculture

Land Use

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Town of Belvidere Future Land Use Map



IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT:

Goals and Actions in Implementing Plan:

- The Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed at each annual meeting of the Town. Updates that are needed will be the responsibility of the Town Board of the Town of Belvidere and will be incorporated by notification of public meetings, surveys if necessary and public hearings.
- The plan will be updated at least every ten years.
- The implementation of the plan will be the responsibility of the Town Board of the Town of Belvidere, Buffalo County Zoning and the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors.
- The Town Board of the Town of Belvidere will work together with other Towns and Buffalo County to implement other portions of the plan.