

# **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**Village of Bell Center**

**Crawford County, Wisconsin**

**Final Plan**

Adopted by the Village Board on June 9, 2009

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June 17, 2009

Chairman and Members of the Bell Center Village Board and Plan Commission

Ladies/Gentlemen:

Davy Engineering is pleased to present this Comprehensive Plan which I have assisted your community prepare over the last year. A very valuable part of this planning process is the joint planning approach in which the Village cooperatively evaluated planning needs and recommendations.

It will be important to remember that after January 1, 2010, all Village land use actions and decisions, such as zoning and platting decisions, must be "consistent" with your Comprehensive Plan. Keep in mind that elements of this Plan can be amended at any time as new issues and opportunities arise.

Davy Engineering wants to thank the Village of Bell Center for retaining us to assist you with this planning program.

Sincerely,

DAVY ENGINEERING CO.  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

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William J. Burke AICP  
Community Planner

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **Bell Center Village Board**

Jeffrey Christie, President  
Calvin Wallace  
Judy Stovey

Marian Wittman, Clerk  
Barb Ashe, Treasurer

### **Bell Center Planning Commission**

Bob Pettit, Chairman  
Jeffrey Christie  
Lena Wallace  
John Wittman  
Marian Wittman  
Karmen Janecek

### **PLANNING AND DESIGN ASSISTANCE:**

Davy Engineering Co.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Crawford County, Village of Bell Center decided to participate in a planning effort to comply with Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law. The Village Board took action in May 2008, to arrange for the preparation of this plan. The state planning law requires that by January 1, 2010, all units of government that have zoning, subdivision or official map ordinances must also have a Comprehensive Plan which meets the state's new definition of a Comprehensive Plan. Section 66.1001 of Wisconsin Statutes contains the planning standards which this Comprehensive Plan must conform to. These standards are limited to identifying the content of a Comprehensive Plan and certain procedural steps for plan adoption. The standards do not mandate what the goals, policies or recommendations of the plan should be. This plan is not subject to approval by the state.

The contents of this Comprehensive Plan, consists of the following required subject elements: Issues and Opportunities, Housing, Transportation, Utilities and Community Facilities, Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Land Use, and Implementation. In addition a Public Participation Plan is required to be developed and adopted by the Village Board.

The Planning Commission of the Village is the supervisory planning body for the development of this plan. The Planning Commission will recommend the Comprehensive Plan they produce to the Village Board for final acceptance.

Plan Recommendations – The structure of the nine planning elements referenced above centers around the identification of goals, objectives, policies and programs for each of those planning elements; the recommendations of the plan are contained in these four subject areas that are produced for each of the nine subject elements identified above. These four categories of recommendations are required to be a Comprehensive Plan under Wisconsin planning law, and are briefly defined here:

Goals: General statements of idealized conditions and aspirations – few in number

Objectives: Targeted areas of planning to be dealt with to achieve goals

Policies: Principles and standards to guide actions in achieving goals and objectives

Programs: Specific actions and projects to implement goals, objectives and policies

The balance of the Comprehensive Plan document represents analysis and inventory data which do not contain planning recommendations.

Goals and objectives are often combined for some subjects. Some specific planning subjects specified in the state definition of Comprehensive Planning may not be present in the Village, and such subjects will be addressed in a more simplified fashion without a need for identifying goals, objectives, policies or programs for these items.

All recommendations in this Plan are advisory and can be amended at any time by the Village. It should be noted, that after January 1, 2010, zoning and subdivision ordinances and official mapping ordinances must be "consistent" with a Comprehensive Plan.

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# **SECTION 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT**

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## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT

The Village of Bell Center is using this planning process as a tool to provide for a positive future of the village. Wisconsin's planning laws are set up to assist units of government accomplish goals and policies which plan for a community's future.

Wisconsin's planning legislation enables a village to provide for its public health, safety, and general welfare, as authorized by Chapter 60.22 and 62.23 of Wisconsin's village planning laws, and Chapter 66.1001 which specifies the standards for comprehensive plans. This plan has been prepared according to these standards. Specific planning purposes as stated in these laws include "guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the local government and the promotion of order, convenience, morals, and prosperity, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development". Key purposes also include the protection of property values and the promotion of economic development.

The Village of Bell Center is located in northeastern Crawford County, in western Wisconsin. This planning area is located in the Kickapoo River drainage basin. The Year 2000 population of the Village of Bell Center was 116, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

In 2000, there were 5.57 square miles of land within the Village of Bell Center according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The map in **Figure 1** illustrates the regional setting for this village planning area.

### 1.1 COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

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The Village of Bell Center envisions itself as maintaining a positive small town character in which all residents contribute to improving living environments in the village.

### 1.2 OVERALL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT GOAL

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The overall planning goal for the Village of Bell Center is to produce a plan to guide the future of the village in an orderly manner; which is fiscally sound; which protects property rights and respects community rights; which protects property values; which maintains low housing densities outside the platted village area; and maintaining development which will not adversely affect the natural environment.

### 1.3 PRINCIPLE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Principal issues center on the improvement and maintenance of properties and having the ability to administer and enforce village codes and provide for nuisance abatement. In addition, it will be important to avoid scattered land usage patterns, particularly housing, throughout the large rural area of the village so as to minimize the village's public servicing and regulatory responsibilities because of the absence of village utility services and absence of administrative and maintenance staff. Providing code enforcement is an important issue for the village.

## 1.4 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, POPULATION ANALYSIS, AND PROJECTIONS

### Population Trends

The Village of Bell Center population has fluctuated through the years; however, the rate of growth from 1990 to 2000 was a negative 8.7%. The state's estimate of the village's 1/1/07 population is 113, which gives it an estimated growth (loss) rate of -2.5 % since 2000.

Within the larger county context of population trends, the Crawford County population has increased by about one-third since 1960, with an 8.2% increase from 1990 to 2000. The state's estimate of the county's 1/1/07 population is 17,553, which is an estimated population growth of 1.8% since 2000. It should be noted that the U.S. Census Bureau has estimated the county's 2007 population at 16,998.

See the accompanying table for population change since 1960.

Population Trends	Population Change and % Change										
	1960	1970	%	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%	2007 Est.	%
Bell Center	155	110	-29.0	124	12.7	127	2.4	116	-8.7	113	-2.5
Crawford County	16,351	15,252	-6.7	16,556	8.5	15,940	-3.7	17,243	8.2	17,553	1.8
Wisconsin			11.80%		6.50%		4.00%		4.70%		

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

**Population Projections** – The Wisconsin Department of Administration's population projection program has projected the following population levels for the Village of Bell Center. Crawford County population projections are also shown here to give a picture of the larger population growth context.

**Figure 1: Population Projection, 2000 – 2030**

Planning Area	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Village of Bell Center	116	110	107	104	100	96
Crawford County	17,243	17,683	17,890	18,067	18,182	18,184

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Administration

The state's population projection method is based substantially on historic trends. The state reports that their projections are not based on development programs, planning, or emerging trends that could affect growth for any given community. It's possible for there to be greater population growth for the Village based on the continued growth of nearby job centers and the private investment in development. For this reason, the states projections, reported above, should be used primarily for reference purposes and should be subject to thorough re-evaluation based on the results of the 2010 U.S. Census of Population. It should be understood, that when calculations involving such small ranges of change, that the amount of actual change over many years can end up being significantly different than the projected numbers.

The level of future growth, for both community and rural housing, can be increased by continued preferences for small town living in combination with Village growth policies, new infrastructure, and services that will attract more growth, and incentives to accommodate housing growth. Population growth forecasts are always based on a set of assumed conditions. This Comprehensive Plan must assume that the character of growth, or lack thereof, will also be affected by national and state economic conditions and changes in lifestyle preferences and demands.

<b>Selected Demographic Characteristics Year 2000</b>	<b>Bell Center</b>	<b>Crawford County</b>	<b>Wisconsin percent</b>
<b>Population 2000</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>17,243</b>	
Under 18 years old	31	4,512	
Percent	26.7	26.16	25.50%
18-65 years old	67	9,978	
Percent	57.7	57.86	61.40%
65+ years old	18	2,753	
Percent	15.5	15.96	13.10%
85+ years old	0	367	
Percent	0	2.1	1.80%
Median Age	40.5	38.9	36.0
Education: % of Population			
Less than 9th Grade	6.1	7.4	5.40%
High School Graduate	35.4	42.5	34.60%
Some College	14.6	18.4	20.60%
Associate Degree	3.7	7.3	7.50%
Bachelors Degree	14.6	9.3	15.30%
Graduate Degree	3.7	3.9	7.20%
% High School Grads. or higher	72.0	81.3	85.10%

The demographics characteristics table summarizes selected census data which describes the population of the Village of Bell Center. The amount of data to be analyzed is in proportion to the size and growth rates of a community. Other demographic characteristics, such as income, occupations, home values etc. are presented in the Housing Section and in the Economic Development Sections of this plan.

## **1.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

1. Population Growth Rates – Population levels in this planning area are expected to remain relatively stable, although the village has ample lands for new growth.
2. Aging Population – A significant demographic trend is the increasing levels of elderly population. The effects of this trend will be increasingly felt in this planning area as the working age population retires in the village and bring with it the related health and social services that will be required. An additional implication will be the reduced number of young person’s available to enter the

labor force to fill future jobs. Although jobs are filled on a regional basis, this trend is state-wide and region-wide, thereby indicating that there will still be possible shortages in the number of persons to fill future jobs. Near the end of the present planning period, the 85 plus age range will likely be quite significant in tune with state and national projections of significant growth in this age group. Overall, the aging population can be expected to require expanded wellness and medical services and related public accommodations for the housing, transportation, shopping services, and wellness facilities for this elderly population.

3. Location Potential – The Village of Bell Center has a relatively remote location in the Kickapoo Valley, and is not located on a principal arterial highway. These characteristics would indicate little growth potential for the village relative to its location. However, relatively remote, quiet and scenic locations are increasingly valued as home sites for many. There is little current evidence that this trend will significantly affect Bell Center.
  
4. Other Issues & Opportunities – Maintaining the esthetic condition of property, free from nuisance and blight, has been identified in the planning process as a significant issue. This issue has been determined to adversely affect the value of property, the resale potential of other property, and the quality of life of other residents in the village

## **SECTION 2: HOUSING ELEMENT**

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# HOUSING ELEMENT

## 2.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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1. Accommodate new housing within the scope of existing village services.
2. Support efforts toward home and property maintenance and rehabilitation.

## 2.2 HOUSING POLICIES

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1. Be open to additional housing in areas which are physically and environmentally suited for it, but which does not require additional village services.
2. Enforce the appropriate housing and other village codes to ensure that new and existing structures are of sound quality, provide safe, healthy and habitable quarters for their occupants, and that individual properties and neighborhoods are kept attractive and well maintained.
3. Consider adopting appropriate codes to insure that housing standards and densities and the development of land for housing meets contemporary development standards and are consistent with the village Comprehensive Plan.
4. Enforce the existing one and two family building code and other village codes to ensure that new and existing structures are of sound quality, that they are suitable located on the land so as to avoid neighborhood conflicts and protect property values, and are well maintained.
5. Maintain low density housing beyond the village's platted core area. This includes the designation of only non-residential uses on lands having development limitations and that are too remote for public services and in recognition of the absence of village services normally required for developed land.

## 2.3 HOUSING PROGRAMS

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1. Investigate the adoption of a zoning ordinance to implement the housing goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Seek county assistance to undertake a program of housing conservation and rehabilitation
3. Investigate the adoption of a subdivision ordinance to enable the village to review the proposed platting of land for conformance with village housing goals and policies and the overall Comprehensive Plan.

4. Take advantage of the housing programs of the Wisconsin Dept. of Commerce, the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development Program, Housing programs of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, and the housing programs of Crawford County.

<b>Selected Housing Characteristics Year 2000</b>	<b>Bell Center</b>	<b>Crawford County</b>	<b>Wisconsin</b>
Occupied Housing Units	41		
Vacant Housing Units	15	--	--
Percent Vacant	25.0%	21.3%	10.20%
Average Persons per Housing Unit	2.58	2.48	2.5
Year built - Percent			
1939 or earlier	18.9%	27.0%	23.40%
1940-1969	17.0%	23.6%	32.20%
1970-1989	43.4%	33.3%	27.70%
1990 to 2000	20.8%	16.0%	16.80%
Lacking Some or All Plumbing	3%	1.3%	0.50%
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	3%	1.2%	0.60%
No Telephone Service	4%	2.7%	1.60%
Median No. of Rooms per Home	5.1	5.2	5.4
Housing Value - Percent			
Less than \$50,000	33.3%	22.8%	6.50%
\$50,000 to \$99,000	66.7%	52.5%	35.40%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	0%	16.7%	30.60%
\$150,000 to \$199,000	0%	5.6%	15.50%
\$200,000 or more	0%	2.5%	12.00%
Median Value	\$55,000	\$ 75,100	\$ 112,200

## **2.4 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS FOR HOUSING**

1. Standards for the development and maintenance of housing and property are needed.
2. Standards for land use on and adjacent to housing in the core village are needed.
3. Assistance for the rehabilitation, repair and maintenance of housing is a need.
4. Question of administrative and enforcement resources to implement housing goals, policies, and programs.

## **SECTION 3: TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

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## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

### 3.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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1. To provide a safe, esthetic, and cost-effective village street system; which serves the housing needs and potentials of the village.

### 3.2 TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

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1. Maintain good communication between village officials and state and county transportation officials regarding all proposed street and highway improvements, including funding opportunities.
2. Maintain street conditions and related drainage needs in a fashion affordable to the village and which serves village residents in a convenient and safe manner.
3. Enforce standards for existing and new streets which provide safe and adequate ingress and egress for emergency vehicles.

### 3.3 ACTION PROGRAMS FOR TRANSPORTATION

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1. Evaluate all dead-end or closed streets, and open and improve those which are necessary for the convenient circulation of village traffic and which are necessary for property access and emergency vehicle access.
2. Maintain a five year street improvement program with an annual capital budget to implement this program.
3. Assure that developers develop planned public streets according to contemporary street design and construction standards with pre-approval by the Village Board and subject to village inspections before acceptance of such streets.
4. Investigate the adoption a village subdivision ordinance which provides enforceable standards for the construction and acceptance of streets intended to become village streets.

### 3.4 FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF STREETS, HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC VOLUMES

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The existing Functional Highway System for Crawford County is illustrated on the map in **Figure 3**. This map indicates that Highway 131 through the Villages of Bell Center is classified as a major collector road.

Average daily traffic volumes on Highway 131 on the north end of the village is reported as 840 by the state Department of Transportation, and 300 south of the village. Average traffic levels within the villages are at manageable levels, and do not represent problems related to congestion or safety. Continued improvements in geometric street and intersection design will always be necessary. An area traffic volume map is presented in **Figure 4**.

The Village of Bell Center has 10.83 miles of public streets. No significant traffic safety areas have been identified in the Village.

According to the U.S. Census, most village residents, 81.4% in 2000, drove alone to work; 15.3% carpooled. The mean travel time to work for Bell Center residents was 33.1 minutes. The mean travel times at the county and state level were 21.8 minutes and 20.08 minutes respectively. This would indicate that employed village residents commute to job centers at distances equivalent to the county seat communities of Crawford, Vernon and Richland and Grant Counties.

### **3.5 COMPARISON TO STATE AND REGIONAL PLANS**

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There are no village street or town road improvement plans that would affect, or would conflict with any state or regional transportation plans that are known to exist at the present time.

### **3.6 INCORPORATION OF STATE AND REGIONAL PLANS**

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There are no presently known state or regional transportation plans that would require incorporation into village or town planning.

### **3.7 TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR PLANS**

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There are no transportation corridor plans presently being proposed by any unit of government that would affect the Village of Bell Center.

### **3.8 TRANSIT**

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There are no general public transit services in the Village of Bell Center. The Crawford County Senior Resources Department provides senior van services to various meal sites throughout the county, with Gays Mills being the closest site to Bell Center. Residents in Bell Center can call this service for individual pick-ups from the Senior Trailer van serving the northern part of Crawford County.

### **3.9 TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED**

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In addition to the transportation services identified in Section 3.7 above, the Opportunity Center in Prairie du Chien provides transportation to developmentally disabled and handicapped

individuals to a sheltered workshop in Prairie du Chien. There are also three volunteer driver services available throughout the county for veterans, medical and handicapped individuals.

### **3.10 BICYCLE TRAVEL**

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Bicycle travel is permitted throughout the Village of Bell Center, but there are no bike paths or trail facilities.

### **3.11 WALKING AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

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There are very limited sidewalks in the Village, and pedestrian activity is of low intensity. However, walking throughout the core village area is unrestricted and there is no reported need for additional pedestrian facilities.

### **3.12 RAILROADS**

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There is no rail service in the Village of Bell Center. The nearest railroad is the Wisconsin Southern Railroad at the Village of Wauzeka, and the Burlington Northern at Ferryville, WI. The nearest Amtrak passenger service is at La Crosse, WI approximately 55 miles to the north.

### **3.13 AIR TRANSPORTATION**

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There is no airport in the Village of Bell Center. The closest air service is approximately 20 miles away at the Prairie du Chien airport. The closest commercial air passenger service is approximately 60 miles away at the La Crosse municipal airport.

### **3.14 TRUCKING**

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There is no licensed common carrier trucking services operating out of the Village of Bell Center. There is little trucking traffic in the village since there are no commercial or industrial uses that would generate trucking traffic.

### **3.15 WATER TRANSPORTATION**

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There are no commercially navigable streams in the Village of Bell Center. The nearest commercial water transport terminal is located on the Mississippi River at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

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## **SECTION 4: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT**

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# UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

## 4.1 SANITARY SEWER SERVICES AND WATER SERVICES

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### 1. Goals and Objectives

- a) Maintain development densities in the village which don't require centralized sewer and water utilities and the related expenses and administrative obligations.
- b) Continuation of on-site sewage disposal facilities and drinking water wells that meet all state and county health and installation standards.
- c) Maintain safe drinking water supplies

### 2. Policies

- a) Regulate future development in the village at low enough density to avoid the need for public sewer and water utilities.
- b) Assure that the county sanitary ordinance and related inspections are maintaining healthy and legal on-site waste disposal systems and healthy water supplies in the village.

### 3. Programs

- a) Coordinate with the county authorities to assure the code compliance of on-site waste disposal systems in the village,
- b) Work with the County Sanitarian's Office and appropriate state agencies for information and assistance on complying with the goals, objectives and policies of the utility element of this Comprehensive Plan.
- c) Investigate the adoption of zoning and platting standards to enable the village to insure that any future development will not be at densities so as to require public sewer and water systems.
- d) Seek assistance to determine the current status of ground water quality related to the closed landfill in the southeast corner of the village.

### 4. Location, Use and Capacity

There are no public utility systems or services in the village.

### 5. Future Needs and Timetable

Since there are no existing utility systems in the village, and with none planned, there are no future needs or timetables for such services.

## 4.2 STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

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### 1. Goals and Objectives

- a) Minimizing the injury to humans and damage to property from storm water.

### 2. Policies

- a) Investigate village ordinances which manage storm water flows on public and private lands to achieve the goals and objectives of this section.
- b) Assure that all land developments comply with state and federal storm water regulations and permit requirements.
- c) Apply storm water management standards in all subdividing of land requiring villager review, including the prevention of housing, commercial and industrial development within flood prone areas and within flash flood corridors.

### 3. Programs

- a) The village has no storm water services or programs except for the maintenance of adequate drainage within village street rights-of-way.

### 4. Location, Use and Capacity

The Village's role in storm water management is limited to providing for the flow of storm water within street rights-of-way, including the related culverts that convey storm water flows under village streets.

### 5. Future Needs and Timetable

- a) Because of the small amount of developed lands in the village, and little new development anticipated, there are no significant needs or timetables for storm water facilities.
- b) The village will continue with normal and routine storm water accommodation within its street rights-of-way.

## 4.3 SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING

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### 1. Goals and Objectives

- a) Maintain Village solid waste collection and recycling services.
- b) Assure that the appropriate authorities and individuals are taking responsibility for any environmental issues related to the closed landfill in the southeast corner of the village.

### 2. Policies and Programs

- a) Continue Village and Town contracting for solid waste services.
- b) Work to minimize the accumulation of debris and littering on public and private lands.

- c) Assure that village landowners comply with the codes and regulations regarding solid waste disposal.
- d) Request the assistance of the County Health Department and the Department of Natural Resources to test the drinking water of all domestic wells in the village core area.

### **3. Location, Use and Capacity**

Since solid waste services are contracted for, with garbage being picked up once a week and recyclables picked up every other week. The village pays the total cost of this service with no fees assessed to property owners. There is no solid waste or recycling facilities within the village. There is a once-a-year village clean-up; and arrangements are made to pick up old tires.

There is a former landfill southeast of the platted core area of the village; the village has never had any jurisdiction over this landfill or its operation. The DNR has reported the size of this landfill as being 6.5 acres and 7.5 acres. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) refers to the site as the closed Bell Center Landfill. The DNR reports that the site is privately owned; that it has no liner or leachate collection system; and that it was operated from July 1970 to August 1986. They also refer to the landfill as a DNR restoration project. The Department retained an environmental testing service in 2004 to sample seven monitoring wells and seven gas probes to monitor methane gas. The DNR reports that “engineered soil cover” was placed over the site in the early 1990’s. The DNR reported at that time that groundwater movement was toward the river from the landfill area, and not toward the village core area. They also advised the testing of drinking water in the village area.

### **4. Future Needs and Timetable**

Future needs and timetables are assumed by the Village of Bell Center to be the same as presently existing, with collection services continuing to be contracted from private firms. There is a general need throughout the village for the clean-up of solid waste, debris, and junk from private properties. Village authority to implement this need is quite limited as proved by past village efforts in this regard. The village retains the option and the intention of applying their authority to clean up solid waste which poses health and nuisance problems and visual blight as effective means become available to them. A future need includes the identification of ground water quality as may be affected by the old landfill referenced above and the correction of any adverse effects associated with this old landfill.

## **4.4 PARKS AND RECREATION**

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### **1. Goals ,Objectives, Policies and Programs**

With a population of only about one hundred people, the Village of Bell Center has a single park facility. It is an approximately one acre playground and open space site on the village hall grounds. There has been no reported need for goals, policies, objectives or programs for village parks and recreation uses. The 2000 Census recorded only 31 persons less than 18 years of age, and these youth have recreational opportunities at the local school system. Many of the residents in the village have their own on-site recreational facilities for their children and for adult leisure time uses. The

rural, open space in the area provides opportunities for private recreational activities on both state and private lands. The map in **Figure 6** locates the lands in the Bell Center area which are available to the public for fishing and hunting through state ownership and easements.

## **2. Location, Use and Capacity**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has 1,400 acres in their Bell Center Unit of the Kickapoo River State Wildlife Area, some of which is located within the village. Of this, 1,100 acres are owned by the DNR, and 300 acres are under easements for hunting and fishing. The map in **Figure 6** locates this area. These lands do not have built-up facilities for active recreation since the lands are intended primarily for hunting and fishing. These public lands are also available for hiking, camping, hunting, cross-country skiing, canoeing, birding, and photography. The village has about one acre of public open lands at the village hall. The capacity of all these lands would fully accommodate the related needs of village residents.

## **3. Needs and Timetable**

It can be expected that the DNR will continue to make additions and improvements to their lands throughout the future. This may include studying the potential for a recreational trail on the old railroad grade along the Kickapoo River. Public interest in various segments of this trail has been expressed throughout the years. This grade extends southward to the Wauzeka area at the Wisconsin River and northward to the Village of Gays Mills. There is no formal plan or timetable for the possible use of this railroad grade for recreational purposes. Pursuing such a trail would require a multi-jurisdictional approach. Based on the experiences of other river valley trails, there has been a need for such recreational facilities which can bring substantial economic benefits to an area.

# **4.5 TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES**

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## **1. Goals and Objectives**

- a) Maintenance of telecommunication facilities adequate for the residential and business needs of the village.
- b) Providing upgraded facilities with contemporary technology and capacity as needed throughout the future.

## **2. Policies and Programs**

- a) Work with the telecommunication providers to advocate the provision of telecommunication facilities necessary to meet the needs of local residents and businesses.

## **3. Location, Use and Capacity**

Telecommunication facilities are available by private providers, and are generally located within public street rights-of-way. Telephone and cable service is provided by Riverland-Grant Telephone Co-op. Satellite television services are used by many residents in the village. A new cable substation recently relocated in the village has improved cable services.

#### **4. Future Needs and Capacity**

Future needs and capacity decisions are made by the private providers, although needs have been reported for greater capacity in cable service.

### **4.6 POWER GENERATING PLANTS AND TRANSMISSION LINES**

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#### **1. Goals and Objectives**

- a) Maintain necessary power supplies to village residents, farms and businesses.

#### **2. Policies and Programs**

- a) Work with the appropriate power companies and electric cooperatives to provide the necessary capacities and facilities to provide the necessary power supplies.
- b) Coordinate with the electric utilities on the use of village rights-of-ways.
- c) Work with the electric utilities to take advantage of utility assistance and incentive programs for community projects and economic development.

#### **3. Location, Use and Capacity**

There is no power generating plants in the Village of Bell Center. The Village is supplied with electric power by Alliant Energy and by Scenic Rivers Cooperative which purchases its power from Dairyland Power Company. This cooperative has local service lines throughout the village, mostly in road easements. There is a high power transmission line extending throughout the village south of the core village area.

#### **4. Future Needs and Timetable**

There are no known plans for the upgrading of electric power facilities to serve the Village of Bell Center. Utility assistance and incentive programs should be pursued by public and private organizations and business prospects on a continuing basis.

### **4.7 CEMETERIES**

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There is one cemetery under the jurisdiction of the Village. Cemetery lots are sold by the Village Board.

### **4.8 HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

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There are no health care facilities or services in the village. Residents travel to health care facilities in the cities of Prairie du Chien, La Crosse, Boscobel, Viroqua or the clinic at Soldiers Grove. The County Department of Aging has a twice-a-week van service available to the senior citizens which can be used to travel to health care facilities in Prairie du Chien.

Since the village has no municipal jurisdiction in the area of health care, there are no village goals, objectives, policies, programs or needs related to health care. It's the village

intention to cooperate and communicate with health providers in the interest of health care for village residents.

#### **4.9 CHILD CARE FACILITIES**

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There are no child care facilities in the village. There are no village goals, policies, objectives, or programs related to child care since the village has no municipal jurisdiction for such services and no such services exist in the village.

#### **4.10 POLICE SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

---

There are no police services provided by the village. Policing services are provided by the County Sheriff's Department.

**1. Goals and Policies**

- a) The village has a need to provide some additional regular policing services, and it's the village's intention to continue pursuing solutions to this need.

#### **4.11 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

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**1. Goals and Objectives**

- a) Support the Gays Mills Fire Department to enable it to continue providing fire protection needs of the Village.
- b) Support the continuation of rescue and ambulance services from the Ocooch Rescue Service in Gays Mills.

**2. Policies**

Continue to retain fire and rescue services from existing providers with continued financial support for services to enable necessary upgrade its facilities, services and training.

**3. Programs**

Support the continued testing and training of Fire Department and rescue service volunteers.

**4. Location, Use and Capacity**

The volunteer fire and rescue services are provided from facilities in the Village of Gays Mills.

**5. Future Needs and Timetable**

Since the village provides no fire department facilities or services, they have no jurisdiction for the provision of equipment or services for future needs.

#### **4.12 LIBRARY FACILITIES**

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There are no library services or facilities provided by the village. There is no reported or requested need to provide such services, therefore, goals, policies, objectives and programs are not subjects of village planning.

#### **4.13 SCHOOLS**

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The goals, objectives, policies and programs concerning the operation of the North Crawford School District fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of that system's School Board and administrators.

#### **4.14 OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FACILITIES**

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Other government facilities in the Village of Bell Center include the Village Hall which has a community meeting room with kitchen and rest room facilities. The village also owns an historic church next to the village hall. This church has been placed under the jurisdiction of the Bell Center Backers whose goal is to restore the building. There is currently no public use of the building.

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## **SECTION 5: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT**

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# AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

This section has drawn on the data and analysis of several resource documents and studies which address the subjects of agriculture, natural resources, and cultural resources. Among the plans and studies are the Crawford County Soil Survey, the Crawford County Land and Water Resource Management Plan 2006, the U.S. Geological Survey, The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, information from the Valley Stewardship Network, and from the Department of Natural Resources.

## 5.1 GROUNDWATER

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### Summary analysis for the Conservation, Promotion, & Effective Management of Groundwater Resources

The Village and Town of Bell Center obtain their drinking water from groundwater. There is no known shortage of groundwater supplies. The groundwater aquifer varies in depth below the ground surface, ranging from significant depth on the higher ridge lands to being visible at the ground surface in the wetland areas in the Kickapoo River valley. Groundwater discharges (flows) into the various streams, rivers, and wetlands within this planning area. Much of this groundwater discharges to the surface through numerous springs on the lower hillsides and stream bottoms. Some groundwater may be confined above an impervious layer of clay or rock, thus inhibiting its ability to discharge at a lower elevation.

It's important to conserve the quantity and quality of groundwater to preserve its value for drinking water, and to supply the livestock and fish and wildlife in the area. Minimizing the amount of contamination from urban, agricultural and other rural land activity is important for protecting the quality of this ground water. Ground water occurring at shallow depth under porous soils has a greater potential for being contaminated from surface land activity. The use of chemicals on the land in urban and agricultural areas can adversely affect ground water quality. Nitrate contamination of drinking water can be a common problem, particularly for impacts on babies and young children and livestock. The drainage of chemical-laden waters into surface waters will diminish the esthetic quality and recreational use of these waters. The programs and plans of the Crawford County Land Conservation Department, in cooperation with the federal and state Departments of Agriculture have been implementing measures which conserve and manage the quantity and quality of ground water.

1. **Goals and Objectives**
  - a) Protect ground water resources to assure healthy drinking water.
2. **Policies**
  - a) Decisions within the authority of state, County, Village and Town governments regarding land and water resource matters should be base on a thorough understanding of ground water impacts, and be made with the assurance of maintaining the quality of ground water within established health standards.
3. **Programs**
  - a) Support and/or initiate programs at the Village and Town level which protect ground water quality where such needs arise.

- b) Assure that the Department of Natural Resources and the land owners of discontinued private landfill continue to take responsibility for monitoring and remediation of any contaminants to ground water that may be detected from this land.

## **5.2 FORESTS**

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### **Summary Analysis for the Conservation, Promotion, & Effective Management of Forest Resources**

There are significant forest resources in the Village of Bell Center. There is no state or national forests in this planning area; however the hills and river bottomlands contain significant woodland resources. The uplands contain mainly hardwoods, and the bottomlands contain mainly softwoods. According to the County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, the grazing of livestock in woodlands is deteriorating the quality of tree growth and reproduction. Part of this is due to landowners countering the affect of use-value land assessment which increases the “recreational” value of woodlands by changing such lands to croplands by grazing it. An additional issue is the increasing fragmentation of woodlands by the location of rural homes in woodlands. These woodlands also have significant commercial value from the logging of hardwoods for a variety of wood products. Some of the forest lands in this planning area are under the jurisdiction of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

#### **1. Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs**

- a) Since the woodlands in this planning area are all privately owned, the Village of Bell Center has a very limited role in planning for this resource.
- b) The Village of Bell Center supports the continued forestry goals, policies and programs of the County Land Conservation Department.
- c) The Village of Bell Center will reflect the needs for forestry management in any future land use management programs.

## **5.3 PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS**

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### **Summary Analysis for the Conservation, Promotion & Effective Management of Productive Agricultural Areas**

The Village of Bell Center is located in the hilly, unglaciated, driftless landscape. The village has an unusual amount of rural lands which include a significant amount of agricultural area. Much of this area is hilly and timbered and river bottom. Most of the agricultural field cropping is concentrated on the flatter ridge tops which are more conducive to cultivation. The number of farms which support full families in the Village of Bell Center has declined over the years. At least five farming operations have been identified within the village. The County’s Land and Water Resource Management Plan contain extensive analysis and recommendations for agricultural lands which are adopted by reference for this Section of the Comprehensive Plan.

1. **Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs**
  - a) Since the agricultural lands in this planning area are privately owned, the Village of Bell Center has a limited role in planning for this resource.
  - b) The Village of Bell Center supports the goals, policies and programs of the County Land Conservation Department.
  - c) The Village of Bell Center will reflect the needs for agricultural lands in any future land use management program.

## **5.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS**

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### **Summary analysis for the Conservation, Promotion & Effective Management of Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

The general categories of environmentally sensitive resources in this planning area include the river valley environments of the Kickapoo Rivers and the steep hillside environments. The river corridor contains sensitive habitat for a variety of plant materials, wildlife, and birds; and the hillsides contain a variety of habitats for these same resources. The hills in the area also contain numerous dry lime prairies, sometimes referred to as "goat prairies" where many remnant prairie plants still survive in a dry prairie ecosystem. Many of these sensitive resources are contained within the Kickapoo River State Wildlife Area. The Department of Natural Resources maintains an inventory of the various sensitive resources in this area.

These sensitive resources have human and economic value in the form of the valuable natural scenery they create, the esthetic and peaceful living environments for area residents, and the value they present to the local economy from visitors and new residents who come to the area because of the environmental quality of these sensitive natural resources.

Preserving and enhancing these environmentally sensitive lands and waters can be expected to significantly benefit the future welfare of village and area residents and visitors to this area. Throughout the future, the preservation of these natural qualities will likely improve the economic vitality of the whole Kickapoo Valley region, including the Village of Bell Center.

1. **Goals and Objectives**
  - a) Appreciation and preservation of the sensitive natural resources in this area.
2. **Policies and Programs**
  - a) Support measures to plan for and protect sensitive resources as it would apply to the welfare and economy of the Village of Bell Center.

## **5.5 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES**

---

The Village of Bell Center is not aware of any endangered species within their borders. It's also the understanding of the Village that other units of government would have sole jurisdiction in the identification, management and planning for endangered species.

1. **Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs**
  - a) Remained informed about threatened and endangered species within the Village of Bell Center.

## **5.6 STREAM CORRIDORS**

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### **Summary analysis for the Conservation, Promotion & Effective Management of Stream Corridors**

The major stream corridors in this planning area is the Kickapoo River located in the western quarter of the village. Other streams within the village include Sand Creek and an intermittent stream in Dry Hollow. These streams are fed by several unnamed streams in narrow valleys. The Town and Village have no planning or management jurisdiction regarding rivers and streams.

The Kickapoo River is a natural, cultural and historic asset of national significance. Under local and regional leadership, it has the potential to be a much greater quality of life and economic asset for the residents and businesses in the Bell Center area.

1. **Goals and Objectives**
  - a) Maintain the natural qualities of all stream corridors and tap the benefits afforded to the Village from these qualities.
2. **Policies and Programs**
  - a) Establish feasible plans and programs which facilitate the Village benefits from the natural and recreational qualities of area streams and stream corridors.
  - b) Support those programs which seek to manage and prevent ground water and surface water contamination from man-made sources and from erosion and sedimentation.
  - c) Support and help develop programs for the sustainable development of recreational uses of the Kickapoo River, and support the provision of facilities which service such recreational activity.
  - d) Support ideas for a Kickapoo Valley recreational trail.

## **5.7 SURFACE WATERS**

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The only surface waters in the Village of Bell Center are the waters in the streams identified above. There are no lakes in this planning area. The goals, policies and programs for surface waters are the same as for streams and ground water addressed above. The Village of Bell Center has no formal planning or management jurisdiction over surface waters.

## 5.8 FLOODPLAINS

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### Summary Analysis for the Conservation, Promotion & Effective Management of Floodplains

The only documented flood plain areas are those of the Kickapoo River. Aside from some agricultural lands, there are no known human uses in the Kickapoo River flood plain within the Village of Bell Center. There has been no flood damage to developed property from this river in recent years. The developed part of the Village of Bell Center is located above the flood plain of the Kickapoo River. Flash-flooding occurs regularly in the narrow valleys and gullies in Sand Creek and Dry Hollow. It can be expected that some damage occurs to agricultural lands and some agricultural improvements, including homes, in extreme rain events in these areas. The village adopted a flood plain zoning ordinance in 1992, and the flood plain area that is governed by this ordinance is located on the FEMA map, a copy of which is reproduced in **Figure 5**.

**1. Goals and Objectives**

- a) Prevent development from occurring in known flood prone areas.

**2. Policies**

- a) Maintain local regulations which prevent non-agricultural development out of the flood-plain.
- b) Support the County's flood-plain zoning program, and support its continuation under local control.
- c) Provide regulations which prevent development in flood prone areas of minor streams and drainage ways in the case of flash-flooding.

**3. Programs**

- a) Review and regulate development in flood plain and flash-flooding areas so as to prevent damage to built-up areas and agricultural development from flooding in such areas.

## 5.9 WETLANDS

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The driftless landscape of this planning area is typically without wetlands, except in stream corridors, where there are numerous wetland zones. Much of the Kickapoo River bottomlands consist of wetland environments. These wetlands are mostly publicly owned and regulated under wetland zoning administered by the County Zoning Office. Wetlands are also regulated by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Natural Resources through various permit laws. Communities in Wisconsin are required to regulate wetlands over five acres within shoreland areas, and Bell Center adopted such an ordinance on September 7, 1993. The maps that were adopted as a part of this ordinance included the Wisconsin wetland inventory maps stamped "final" and dated June 22, 1988, and the FEMA flood insurance map dated March 5, 1990. Most of the wetlands within the Village of Bell Center are in the Kickapoo River State Wildlife Area where there are no developed uses. These maps indicate some wetlands smaller than five acres in the Sand Creek corridor. Wisconsin communities are required to adopt ordinances regulating wetlands within shoreland areas. The wetlands in the

Bell Center are not in areas that might be subject to development. Many of these wetland areas are state-owned. These wetland maps are on file in the village hall.

1. **Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs**
  - a) The plans and regulations of the Village will remain consistent with the existing regulations governing wetlands.
  - b) The village supports trail and other low impact recreational development which benefit from the esthetic and educational benefits of wetland resources.

## **5.10 WILDLIFE HABITAT**

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The local lands have habitat areas for several species of wildlife. A significant amount of hilly land and river bottomland are located within the Village of Bell Center. A significant amount of land in and adjacent to the Village is contained within the Kickapoo River Wildlife Area, which consists of DNR ownership of lands and easements over private lands for fishing and hunting, see the map in **Figure 6**. These lands are managed for wildlife habitat, protection and hunting. The habitat resources which supports much of the area's wildlife consists of the timbered lands, agricultural crops, particularly corn, wetland areas, and the generally remote and undeveloped landscape. According to the County Land Conservation Department, significant amounts of former crop land in Crawford County are reverting to wildlife habitat as farming diminishes in its traditional use of the land. A development issue that can have an adverse effect on wildlife habitat is the fragmentation of that habitat by the scattered location of homes in the rural areas, particularly in woodlands. This fragmentation can also adversely affect the habitat for birds. Also, the introduction of invasive species of plant materials can adversely affect woodlands and wildlife habitats. Certain species of wildlife, such as white tail deer and turkeys, can also have adverse effects on human habitat and agriculture. The overpopulation of such species can result in economic damages to farm crops and can present safety hazards to highway travel. An overabundance of beaver can also cause damage to residential and agricultural properties and crops. Hunting and trapping are valuable measures for controlling many species of wildlife. Wildlife is strictly controlled by federal and state authorities, thus limiting the jurisdiction of the Village of Bell Center to develop their own plans, goals, policies and programs for wildlife and wildlife habitat.

1. **Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs**
  - a) The planning by the Town and Village will be consistent with laws and regulations regarding wildlife.

## **5.11 METALLIC AND NONMETALLIC MINERAL RESOURCES**

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### **Summary Analysis for the Conservation, Promotion & Effective Management of Metallic and Nonmetallic Resources**

There are no non-metallic resources currently being exploited or planned to be exploited in the Village of Bell Center. If lands with such resources were to be exploited for their non-metallic minerals, the Village of Bell Center would view this as being acceptable, consistent with all other goals, objectives policies, and programs of its Comprehensive Plan.

## **5.12 PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

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### **Context for the Conservation, Promotion & Effective Management of Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

The Village of Bell Center provides one park and recreation facility in the form of an approximately one acre park at the village hall property. This park contains a variety of playground equipment and tables for picnics. The map in **Figure 6** locates the significant amount of open space land in the Bell Center area which is available to the public for fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreation. These lands are within the state's Kickapoo River wildlife Area under the jurisdiction of the Department of Natural Resources. Parks and recreation are also addressed in Section 4.5 of this plan on park and recreational facilities.

## **5.13 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

---

### **Summary Analysis for the Conservation, Promotion & Effective Management of Historical and Cultural Resources**

There are no known historical or archaeological recorded properties in the Village of Bell Center.

- 1. Goals and Objectives**
  - a) Realization of the importance of all historic and cultural resources in the region and support their preservation.
  
- 2. Policies and Programs**
  - a) Consider the preservation of historic and cultural resources in all actions of the Village Board that involve such resources.
  
  - b) Consider the enhancement, rehabilitation and functional adaptation of historic structures where such resources involve Village decisions.
  
  - c) Support the preservation and enhancement of the historic church building in the village

## **5.14 COMMUNITY DESIGN**

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The Town and Village are small communities without the kind of built-up urban environments where community design would be a public planning factor. Design quality should be an important factor in any development projects involving any future public buildings in the village.

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## **SECTION 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The purpose of this section is to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental units. Economic data for the Village of Bell Center is presented in this Section and in Section 1.

### 6.1 ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

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The Village of Bell Center has not significant economic base since there are no commercial or industrial establishments providing no employment base. The fact that the mean travel time to work of 33 minutes and that over 81 percent of village residents were involved in this driving indicates that the 64 people in the labor force in 2000 worked outside the village.

Data from the year 2000 U.S. Census for the Village of Bell Center and for Crawford County provide a snapshot of the area's economic base at that time. These conditions can change somewhat in the eight years since this information was collected, and this section should be reevaluated after the 2010 U.S. Census. The fundamental economic base of the Village of Bell Center is largely a function of the Crawford County economic base.

County-wide, the largest employment sector was retail trade at about 20% of total employment, with manufacturing at 15%, farm employment at 12%, and health care/social assistance at 10%. The sector for incomes was manufacturing at about 25%, retail trade at 17%, government at 14%, and health care/social assistance at 12%. Farm earnings have dropped consistently since 1970 in Crawford County. Farm earnings have dropped from 29% of total county income in 1970 to -2% in the year 2000. In total dollars, the county's total farm income in 2001 was a negative \$3,650,000.00. The economic sectors with the greatest growth in personal incomes between 1970 and 2000 were manufacturing sector and the finance, insurance and real estate sector. The economic sector with the greatest total proportion of earnings in Crawford County in 2001, next to manufacturing, was the health care and social assistance sector of the county economy.

The status of employment in the county mirrors the income trends identified above, except that farm employment maintained about 11% of the total jobs in the County in 2000, but farm employment has still declined every year since 1970. Retail trade was the largest non-farm employer in 2000 and has likely increased its proportion of employment with the location of the Cabela's sporting goods outlet in Prairie du Chien. Census figures indicate that Bell Center had a poverty rate of 42.9% in 2000, compared to 21.4% and 19% at the county and state level, yet the village's median family income was \$50,000.00, indicating a wide range of incomes in the village.

In summary, the economic base of Crawford County and the Village of Bell Center area is experiencing a transformation from the traditional rural jobs and farm employment to urban jobs in retail, manufacturing and services. It can be expected that more of the population of the Village will be employed in these urban kinds of jobs, with health care and related services seeing significant increases due, in part, to the aging "baby boom" population. Much of this transformation in local employment has been enabled by commuting and the related improvements in area highways. It's unclear what impact fuel costs will have on job commuting throughout the future.

### Analysis of Selective Economic Indicators

Occupation of Employee	Bell Center	%	Crawford Co. %
Management, Professional & Related Service	18	30.5	23.5
Sales & Office	5	8.5	18.1
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	5	8.5	21.0
Construction & Maintenance	4	6.8	2.7
Production, Transportation & Material Moving	8	13.6	9.1
	19	32.2	25.5
Industry Employees Work In		%	
Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	7	11.9	9.9
Construction	6	10.2	6.1
Manufacturing	15	25.4	22.8
Wholesale Trade	4	6.8	2.0
Retail Trade	5	8.5	12.5
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	7	11.9	4.3
Information	0	0	1.2
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental	2	3.4	2.2
Public Administration	5	8.5	4.7
Educational, Health, & Social Services	6	10.2	19.2
Arts, Entertainment, Accommodation, Food Services	0	0	7.9
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative	0	0	4.3
OTHER Services	2	3.4	3.2
		%	
Private Wage & Salary Worker	45	76.3	73.2
Government Worker	7	11.9	13.0
Self – Employed	7	11.9	12.9
Median Earnings - 2000			
Male, year round, Full - Time	\$30,000		\$28,788
Female, year round, Full - Time	\$20,625		\$19,761
Per Capita Personal Income	\$23,177		\$16,833
Percent on Public Assistance, Social Security	29.2%		34.7%
Household Mean Retirement Income	\$4,950		\$15,391
Percent below poverty level—individuals & families	42.9%		10.2% 7.2%
Median Family Income	\$50,000		\$41,540

Source: U. S. Census, 2000

## **6.2 LABOR FORCE ANALYSIS**

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The above economic base analysis has indicated that the labor force is evolving from rural jobs to urban jobs, such as manufacturing, retail and services. The agricultural labor force (including fishing and mining) is steadily declining, with there being only 6.8% (4 persons) involved in these occupations in 2000. Even though there are no full time farmers in the Village of Bell Center it's unclear if the total farm and rural labor force will continue with sharp declines since other forms of agricultural employment may emerge, such as more industrialized food production.

## **6.3 ECONOMIC S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS)**

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This information is based on input from SWOT worksheet filled out at the June 30, 2008 planning meeting, as well as information developed during the course of preparing the various sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Strengths**

- Strong values for keeping the overall village environment the way it is and improving those areas needed to improve the quality of living.
- Availability of open lands for development in the Village.
- Progressive leadership & attitude by village officials
- Agricultural heritage.
- Ample public lands available for outdoor recreation including hunting.
- The Kickapoo River and the associated recreational uses and related public lands.
- Scenic environment and scenic/rustic, non urban, residential environments.
- The interest of the Valley Stewartville Network in protecting and enhancing the Kickapoo River Valley.
- No flooding from the Kickapoo River

### **Weaknesses**

- Generally low incomes.
- Long term property tax impact from magnitude of public lands purchases.
- Rural road costs due to hilly topography, drainage, and related safety issues.
- Limitations on the ability to extend Village infrastructure for Village growth.
- Not enough value-added economic benefits from agricultural and timber products.
- No policing services
- Very limited administrative services for new public services
- No road standards or platting standards

### **Opportunities**

- Ample developable lands for new housing.
- Tourism, including more lodging.
- Agri-tourism, heritage tourism, eco tours.

- Expand recreational use of Kickapoo Rivers and associated business and job potential.
- The village is a good location for more small town and scenic housing.
- The Kickapoo Valley trail potential on old rail bed and other trails as feasible.
- Continued benefits from the County Land Conservation Department and their County Land and Water Resource Management Plan.
- The large-scale natural environment of the Kickapoo River valley present opportunities for growth in major national activities such as birding (more participants nationally than hunting) and other silent sports activities. These natural resource activities cannot be out-sourced and can generate complementary economic growth enterprises.
- Work on those regional economic development opportunities appropriate for the Bell Center area as identified in the Regional Planning Commission's report entitled: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, page 6-4 to 6-9.

### **Threats**

- Destruction of scenic views in primary view-shed corridors.
- Continued substandard land use development, such as housing and cabin developments along substandard roads.

## **6.4 DESIRED TYPES OF NEW BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES**

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- Value-added and organic agriculture, tourism and recreation.

## **6.5 DESIGNATED SITES FOR NEW BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES**

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- Limited light commercial development close to Highway 131.

## **6.6 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTAMINATED SITES**

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There are no presently environmentally contaminated sites known to exist in the village. A discontinued private landfill in the south end of the village has undergone environmental remediation and ground water testing in the early 1990's under the direction of the Dept. of Natural Resources, and has had no environmental monitoring or remediation work since then according to that Department.

## **6.7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

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The following economic development programs would be supported to the extent that they are consistent with other goals, policies, and programs of the Village Comprehensive Plan.

### **1. County Programs**

- Support and participate in Crawford County economic development programs.

## **2. Regional Programs**

- Programs of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
- Comprehensive Economic Development strategy (CEDS)
- Economic development programs of Dairyland Power and the rural CO-OP
- Economic development of Alliant Energy
- United Coulee Region (7-Rivers Region)
- Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE)
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UW La Crosse
- Hidden Valleys Tourism Association
- Western Technical College

## **3. State Programs**

- Governor's Grow Wisconsin Program
- Community-Based Economic Development Program-Dept. of Commerce
- Wisconsin Development Fund—Technology Development Fund (WDF)
- Wisconsin Development Fund—Major Economic Development Program (MED)
- Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA)
- Transportation Facilities Economic Assistance and Development Program
- Workforce Connections, Job Training Partnership Act
- Enterprise Development Zone, WI Department of Commerce
- Customized Labor Training Grant Program
- Downtown Historic District Tax Credits

## **4. Federal Programs**

- HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Public Facilities
- HUD Community Development Block Grants, (CDBG) Economic Development
- HUD Community Development Block Grants, Blight Elimination and Brownfield Development
- Rural Economic Development (RED) Early Planning Grant
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits
- 2002 and 2008 Federal Farm Bill—Rural Development Section
- Federal Disaster Mitigation Act

## **6.8 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND PLAN**

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### **1. Goals and Objectives for the Bell Center Area**

- a) Moderate growth in the village economy with an increasing tax base.
- b) Tap the economic benefits of the Kickapoo River natural resources.

### **2. Policies**

- a) Tap the esthetic and recreational opportunities of the Wisconsin and Kickapoo Rivers and associated public lands. The large expanse of diverse natural environment in the Bell Center area presents the potential for supplementing the economy of the area from the growing areas of

“silent sports” recreational activities such as the use of trails, canoeing, birding, seasonal housing and other environmental sectors of the economy which is proving to be the economic base for many scenic rural areas.

- b) Support and promote tourism and related tourism businesses potential.
- c) Support value-added agriculture and organic farming in the region.

**3. Programs of Action**

- a) Utilize the applicable development strategies identified by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission in their 2003 report entitled: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
- b) Work with Crawford County government for economic development projects in the Bell Center and Gays Mills area.
- c) Support trail development plans in partnership with land owners and the Department of Natural Resources.
- d) Initiate collaborative efforts with county, state, and other organizations to develop a plan for a Kickapoo River Valley recreational/nature trail. Plan trail segments to directly connect to the Bell Center village core area.

## **SECTION 7: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ELEMENT**

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# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ELEMENT

## 7.1 PLANNING CONTEXT

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This element of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to present the Village's recommendations for cooperating with other units of government. The goal of such cooperation is to facilitate savings in public funds, elimination of the unnecessary overlapping of services, providing new services by sharing with other governmental units, and fostering relationships for cooperation on future needs and opportunities.

## 7.2 RELATIONSHIP OF VILLAGE TO SCHOOL DISTRICT

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There are no school facilities in the Village of Bell Center

## 7.3 RELATIONSHIP OF THE VILLAGE TO OTHER GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

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### 1. Adjacent Village and Town Units

There is a positive relationship between the Village of Bell Center and its adjacent units of government. Since the Village of Bell Center has few public functions, there is little intergovernmental activity involving the village. The village has some coordination with the adjacent Towns of Clayton, Haney and Utica on road matters. The Bell Center village limits abut the limits of the Village of Gays Mills for about one half mile; however, neither village has any developed uses in this common village limit area.

### 2. Regional Jurisdictions

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission is a public regional jurisdiction that has potential relationships with the Village of Bell Center. The village has a positive and constructive relationship with the regional planning commission.

### 3. County Government

The Village of Bell Center has a positive relationship with the Crawford County government. The village benefits from county parcel mapping. County sanitary ordinance standards are enforced in the village by the County government. The village has sought and received cooperation from the County Sheriff's Department on a variety of nuisance abatement matters.

### 4. State Government

There are many kinds of relationships between state government and the Village of Bell Center. Some of these relationships do not relate to Comprehensive Planning. Relationships related to planning and development is largely in the area of various state standards and licenses for public services such as with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DNR has a significant function within the village in the form of a large area of its Kickapoo River State Wildlife Area. This area surrounds the developed core area of the village on three sides. These lands provide public access for hunting and other outdoor recreation. These lands also serve to preserve the natural scenery of the area against development. Also, DNR solid waste standards apply to the disposal of

solid and hazardous waste, and the DNR has a formal involvement with the closed landfill regarding the remediation and testing of the site. Other DNR standards relate to regulations for ground water and surface water contamination throughout the village. The State Department of Transportation applies various standards for the location and improvements of town, village, county and State Highways in the village that receive state and federal aid. The State Department of Commerce is charged with implementing the requirements under the Wisconsin Uniform Building Code which requires all local units of government to inspect all one and two family dwellings for compliance with that building code. The Department of Commerce also is in charge of state standards regarding on-site waste water disposal systems. The rules of the State Department of Revenue affect land valuation, assessment and taxation.

There are no known conflicts or unresolved issues between state programs and the Village of Bell Center. It would be the goal and policy of the Village to foster cooperation and coordination between the Village and the State in all matters with local impact, consistent with the various goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **7.4 INCORPORATION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLANS AND AGREEMENTS**

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There are no known intergovernmental plans or agreements involving the village that would relate to this Comprehensive Plan. It's already been pointed out in Section 4 of this Plan that the Gays Mills Fire and Rescue Department has mutual aid arrangements to serve the village.

#### **7.5 EXISTING AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTAL UNITS AND PROCESSES TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS**

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There are no existing or potential conflicts with other units of government known to exist at the time of the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan. In the event of conflicts, the methods to resolve such conflicts would be sound communication and fact gathering, and the use of professional intermediaries depending on the circumstances.

#### **7.6 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION PLAN**

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- 1. Goals and Objectives**
  - a) Maintain positive relationships with other units of government.
  - b) Seek and obtain benefits from the programs and assistance available from other units of government.
  - c) Engage in intergovernmental service sharing as a means of economizing on the use of public funds and enabling efficiencies on the use of public funds and facilities.
  - d) Initiate an intergovernmental cooperation effort to plan and develop a Kickapoo River Valley recreation/nature trail.

**2. Policies and Programs**

- a)** Engage in regular and open communication with other units of government and non-governmental organizations for the purpose of fostering cooperation and taking advantage of cost savings and efficiency opportunities.
- b)** Continue to seek cooperation with the Village of Gays Mills on public services such as policing, and perhaps the sharing of administrative and code enforcement services.
- c)** Remain knowledgeable about legislative proposals to enable benefits from new assistance and efficiency programs, grant programs, and regulatory reform programs.
- d)** Maintain regular communication with state, county and federal elected officials to communicate problems, needs and recommendations related to intergovernmental needs, issues and recommendations.

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**SECTION 8: LAND USE ELEMENT**

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# LAND USE ELEMENT

## 8.1 PLANNING CONTEXT

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The planning for land use has not been of previous concern by the village. The village is 5.45 square miles in area according to county records. Most of the village consists of undeveloped open space, ranging from timbered hills, agricultural lands and river valley bottoms. The developed core of the village consists of about 35 acres of land, composed mostly of single family homes

Most of the developed area is located on a high terrace of Gotham loamy fine sand. A smaller amount of the developed area is located on flood prone Orion silt loam alluvial soils at the intersection of Sand Creek and Dry Hollow Creek. Even though there is additional undeveloped area on the high silt terrace, the expansion potential of this core area is still quite limited by the two above mentioned creeks and the steep hill bordering the east side of the core area. This terrace area has continuing development potential due to the favorable loamy sand soils which are conducive to on-site sanitary systems. Individual wells would have adequate supplies of water from the valley bottom aquifer of the Kickapoo River.

An important land use related implication of land use is the statutory requirement that for certain local governmental land use regulations to remain in effect after January 1, 2010, a Comprehensive Plan must have been adopted. These local regulations include zoning, land division and official mapping regulations. Under zoning, county administered flood plain and wetland zoning is also included in this requirement.

The village's desire to continue enforcing lots size requirements would be subject to this January 1, 2010 deadline. It hasn't been confirmed that the village has an adopted zoning ordinance which would be necessary to enforce lot size requirements and other land use restrictions. Adopting such an ordinance can be a follow-up to the Comprehensive Planning program.

## 8.2 INVENTORY OF EXISTING LAND USES

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### 1. Amount, Type and Intensity of Land Use Categories

<b>Land Use by Property Tax Valuation</b>				
<b>Village of Bell Center</b>				
	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total Value</b>	<b>Intensity</b>
Residential	35.154	10.07%	\$1,998,600	Low
Commercial	0	0	0	Low
Manufacturing	0	0	0	Low
Agricultural	1,413.666	40.51%	\$195,100	Moderate
Undeveloped	250.635	7.18%	\$161,600	Moderate
Ag. Forests	373.370	10.69%	\$410,800	Moderate
Productive Forest Land	265.590	7.6%	\$584,400	Moderate
Other	22.460	0.64%	\$792,100	--

Managed Forest Land	709.20	20.32%	\$1,540,200	Low
Exempt Land	773.920	22.18%	0	--
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3,489.395</b> <b>5.452 Sq. Mi.</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$4,912,700</b>	
Summarized from Crawford County records for 2007				

Most exempt lands are owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources consisting of 758.079 acres in 2007.

## 2. Map of Existing Land Use

Figure 7 presents a generalized map of existing land uses.

## 3. Supply, Demand, and Price of Land

There is an adequate supply of land for all categories of land use that would have a need to locate in the Village of Bell Center. There is a fairly limited demand for land for urban type use. There has been some demand to purchase farm land and river frontage lands for rural residential, hunting, and public lands purposes in this region of the Kickapoo Valley. Land use conversion in the area has been of only a moderate scale. There has been a moderate increase in demand for rural, scenic non-farm housing. The price of land has increased in tune with rural land value increased in general.

## 4. Redevelopment Opportunities

There are fairly limited redevelopment opportunities and needs in the Village of Bell Center. There are some properties in the village which have become somewhat functionally obsolete and/or deteriorated and would have some redevelopment potential.

## 5. Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Land use conflicts in the village consist of some conflicting impacts between large-scale open storage and adjacent residential properties. The absence of active commercial or industrial uses indicates limited potential for future land use conflicts. It's possible that there could be some future conflicts between residential uses and specialized agricultural activities due to the large amount of farm lands within the village limits, although this is not foreseen by the village planning officials.

# 8.3 LAND USE PROJECTIONS

## 1. Projections by 20 Year Increments

Village of Bell Center					
Net New Acres of Land Use	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Residential*	2	5	5	5	5
Commercial	0	1	1	1	1
Industrial	0	0	0	0	0
Agricultural & open	slight agricultural and open space loss				

**2. Future Land Use by Net Density**

The net density of future land use in the Village of Bell Center is projected to be the same as present land use densities as set by the Village zoning ordinance.

**3. Future Land Use Map**

- a) Because of the areas projected lack of population growth and land development, the Village's Existing Land Use map is assumed to represent its future land use for this planning period.

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**8.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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1. Respect for property rights and protection of community rights.
2. Cooperation with the Village of Gays Mills and surrounding towns on border land development.
3. Maximum feasible compatibility between adjacent land uses with avoidance of nuisance impacts on neighbors and on the community in general.
4. Encourage and accommodate Village development and expansion in accord with professional land use and design standards.
5. Assure that all housing has sanitary waste disposal and healthy drinking water in conformance with county and state health and sanitary codes and development standards

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**8.5 POLICIES**

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1. Evaluate development proposals according to consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Insure that village land use development maintains property values, avoids blight, complies with all health and sanitation codes, and is coordinated with street and traffic needs.
3. Insure that village land use development protects the natural environment and promotes cultural integrity of the community.
4. Cooperation with any plans that may develop for recreation and trail development in Department of Natural Resources land within the village.
5. Regulate housing densities to require minimum residential lot sizes of 35 acres outside the village center and smaller lots in the village center as provided for in a village zoning ordinance.

## **8.6 ACTION PROGRAMS**

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1. Adopt a zoning ordinance and zoning map as a tool to implement the Land Use and Housing goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.
2. Consider the adoption of a land division ordinance (subdivision ordinance).
3. Strong enforcement of land use standards.
4. Work with county and state authorities to insure that all housing in the village has sanitary waste disposal in compliance with county and state codes.

## **SECTION 9: IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT**

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# IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT

## 9.1 PLANNING CONTEXT

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The goal of this planning element is to describe the planning implementation tools which the village has available to it. These tools can help implement the Village Comprehensive Plan. Since there hasn't been any formal Comprehensive Planning in this area, there have been few standard implementation tools in place. Such tools typically include land division ordinances, zoning, and official mapping. Wisconsin's one and two family building codes are administered by a consultant hired by the village. There has been no comprehensive zoning at the county level, although the county administers a flood plain zoning ordinance in the unincorporated areas of the county.

The Village of Bell Center adopted a bound book of Municipal Code provisions, apparently in the mid 1960's. The book has no date on it or an adopting ordinance with a date; however, the General Provisions of Chapter 15 states that the 1963 provisions of the Wisconsin Statutes are those used in the book. This code appears to be somewhat of a standard code for villages, with many of the provisions not applying to Bell Center. For example, the code book calls for the village to have a Board of Health, a Board of Review, and a Civil Defense director; provides standards for grocery stores, restaurants, and taverns; and provides for sewer and water connections.

The Village of Bell Center also has other ordinances enacted at separate times. These include ordinances for: mobile homes, establishment of Plan Commission, licensing of dogs, banning of outdoor wood burners, no discharge of fire arms within of 100 yards of residences in the plated village area, uniform dwelling code, prohibition of outdoor storage of junk, and an ordinance relating to the extension of natural gas in the village. No ordinance could be found regarding zoning.

Implementation measures related to the Comprehensive Plan take on additional importance with respect to the requirement in the §66.1001(3) of the Comprehensive Planning statute which requires that after January 1, 2010, any village decision regarding land use, platting or official mapping must be "consistent" with an adopted Comprehensive Plan. This requirement has particular importance to Bell Center regarding its intention to regulate housing density.

## 9.2 PROGRAMS AND ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT PLAN ELEMENTS (1 TO 8)

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1. Continue to administer the village's wetlands in shorelands ordinance
2. Continue to administer the village's flood plain ordinance
3. Consider the use of Impact Fees to assess against developments in the village as a means of compensating the village for its actions in evaluating such developments requiring village review and approval.
4. Assure that any village zoning ordinance is "consistent" with its Comprehensive Plan

5. Maintain continued involvement and support for trail development in the Kickapoo Valley to assure that any associated economic development occurs in the village.
6. Follow-up on seeking assistance for conducting a health survey regarding the adequacy of sanitary disposal and drinking water quality in the village core area homes.

### **9.3 CONSISTENCY AND INTEGRATION OF ALL PLANNING ELEMENTS**

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1. All nine of the Comprehensive Planning elements were developed to be consistent with each other. Recommendations from various planning elements were integrated into other planning elements where there was a direct relationship.

### **9.4 MECHANISM TO MEASURE PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING ALL ASPECTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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The mechanisms to measure progress toward achieving all aspects of this Comprehensive Plan include the following:

1. Appointing a custodian of the Comprehensive Plan whose responsibility it would be to monitor where Comprehensive Plan recommendations would be applicable to proposed developments, and advise the village board of the relationship of such recommendations to those proposed development.
2. Annual assessment by the village planning commission to measure progress toward achieving plan recommendations and to identify unexpected changes in trends and to determine areas in the plans needing amendment.
3. Plan to comprehensively review and update the Comprehensive Plan on five year intervals.

### **9.5 PLAN UPDATING PROGRESS**

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The Village Plan Commission and Village Board will update its plan every five years, or at any other time if actions or plans are proposed in the Village which are substantially different from or inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

### **9.6 IMPLEMENTATION FOLLOW-UP**

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1. After the Village adopts the Comprehensive Plan, it will develop an annual priority list of actions to work on. These actions would relate to the recommendations in the Plan. The Village may appoint individuals or committees to work on such priorities. Any recommendations related to such

priority work items would be brought to the Village Board for their review and final decisions.

2. After the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, or as a part of the plan adoption process, the Village Board will appoint a custodian of the Plan. This custodian may be an individual or group, typically, the Plan Commission, whose responsibility will be to keep the Comprehensive Plan before the Village Plan Commission and Village Board when development decisions are required by the Village. This function could also take place regarding decisions by other units of government or others which would affect the Village. The function of the plan custodian would be advisory and instructive. One of the functions of the custodian would be to point out where the required “consistency” between village land use decisions and the Comprehensive Plan relates to specific development cases coming before the Village Plan Commission and Village Board.
3. Adopt a village zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance which is consistent with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.
4. Assure administrative and enforcement consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and any village zoning and platting programs.