

Town of Russell, Wisconsin

2016 Comprehensive Plan



Introduction

In 2009, the Town of Russell began the process of writing its Plan. This Plan seeks to create goals, policies and implementation strategies for the future. From April 2009 to November 2009, the Town of Russell, along with 13 other Towns and Bayfield County held community meetings and sought input on the planning process related to the Plan. It was during these meetings that input related to issues and opportunities, land use, housing, economic development, transportation, utilities and community facilities, natural and cultural resources and implementation strategies were identified and developed.

Based upon the steering committee's input as well as an understanding of the project scope, a set of planning objectives was outlined as a part of the Plan process:

1. Make certain that the information presented as part of this process was developed in a transparent fashion. The use of a project website, community meetings, monthly steering committee meetings, a County-wide survey, open house meetings and a public hearing were key to the successful completion of this Plan.
2. Create uniform land use classifications that are clearly identified within the Plan.
3. Work with the County to ensure that the goals, objectives and implementation strategies are obtainable and realistic.

Community engagement activities were an essential aspect of the Plan. Below is a review of the community meetings and engagement activities associated with the process.

- Monthly community meetings held the last Wednesday and Thursday of each month from April 2009-October 2009.
- Community Survey sent to over 15,000 land owners within Bayfield County. The survey was also made available online.
- A community open house meeting was held in August 2009. A public hearing was also held in December 2009.
- Committee Meetings were held twice per month beginning in April and once per month, jointly with the County Comprehensive Plan Committee.
- All information related to the Plan was available through the project website.

Acknowledgments for 2009 Plan Development

The 2009 Plan was developed in cooperation with Bayfield County, the Town Board, Town Plan Committee, and the consulting firm of Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH®).

County Staff for 2009 Plan

Karl Kastrosky, Planning Director; Mark Abeles-Alison, County Administrator; Travis Tulowitzky, County Planning; Mike Furtak, County Planning; Doug Casina, County Planning; Rob Schierman, County Planning; and Tim Kane, UW-Extension Office

2016 Plan Update

The Town Plan Commission had several recommended revisions and/or additions to the the Plan in 2015. Upon review of the current Plan, it was felt that a complete review would be appropriate. Major updates to the goal dates for the Implementation component of the Plan were made.

Town Board

Paul "Rocky" Tribovich, Chairman
Jeff Benton, Supervisor
Mark Bugher, Supervisor
Larry Meierotto, Supervisor
Donald Sullivan, Supervisor
David L. Good, Clerk/Treasurer

Town Plan Commission

Larry Meierotto, Chairman
Jeff Benton
Ann Bowker
Tessa Levens
Kathy Wendling

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Town of Russell Plan offers a broad look at the elements of housing, land use, transportation, natural environment, utilities and community facilities, economic development, issues and opportunities, intergovernmental cooperation, implementation. This Plan offers a "30,000 foot" elevated look at the Town related to trends and future needs through a series of goals and policies. The intent of this Plan is to offer guidance to the residents, stake-holders and landowners of the Town of Russell as well as to ensure the long-term health, safety and well-being of the Town. All statistical and demographic data for this Comprehensive Plan resides within the Bayfield County Comprehensive Plan.

Sense of Place

The Town of Russell lies at the northernmost tip of the Bayfield peninsula in Bayfield County. Over 90 percent of the Town's 49.8 square miles of area are wooded with a large majority of the Town held as part of public forestland or a part of the Red Cliff Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa. Residential and commercial uses make up approximately two percent of the existing land uses of the Town.

The Town of Russell is rich in history and cultural significance. The majority of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribal lands are within the Town of Russell. While the Red Cliff Band has established its own land use policies and objectives, it is the intention of this Plan to ensure that long-lasting collective policies related to land use, water quality and the environment can continue to achieve harmony between the Town, Tribe and County.

The Town of Russell is unique due to its people, due to its geography, its relationship with the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and because of its idyllic natural beauty. The combination of forest lands, farms, rolling topographic and coastal areas set this Town apart from others. Throughout this planning process several main objectives were developed through public engagement activities and public meetings. Based upon public input, the following have been identified for fostering a sense of place within the Town of Russell:

1. Our rural character is comprised primarily of a relatively undeveloped place, rich in natural beauty. Forests, woodlands, the natural landscape and vegetation predominate over the built environment outside of the core business area for the Red Cliff Reservation. To the extent possible, these areas should be preserved.
2. Development and redevelopment that does occur within the Town of Russell shall do so by incorporating light-imprint standards that minimize the impact on the environment.

What is Light-imprint? Light-imprint is a green approach to compact residential, commercial and industrial design. By incorporating light-imprint design techniques within the context of the Town of Russell, better management of runoff, natural drainage areas and overall edesign concepts can be enhanced.



3. Intergovernmental cooperation between the Red Cliff Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa and Bayfield County is critical in developing short-term and long-term goals and objectives within the Town of Russell. As part of this planning process, the Town will work with the Tribe and County in ensuring that the environment and economy of Russell is enhanced.

Issues and Opportunities

The Town of Russell has the largest population within Bayfield County. Based upon population projections it is anticipated that the population will experience a steady rate of growth over the next 10 years. Between 2010 and 2020 approximately 480 new residents will call the Town of Russell home. Below is a breakdown of existing population figures and a look at population trends within the next 10 years.

	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025
Town of Russell and Red Cliff Reservation	978	1216	1279	1367	1612	1757

The issues and opportunities element provides background information about the Town of Russell and its overall policies, programs, goals and objectives. The information provided in this section is critical to the development of the goals and objectives concerning the future direction of the Town. Issues and opportunities were identified as part of the 2009 public engagement process. The following is a review of key issues and opportunities as they related to the Town of Russell.

Throughout the Town of Russell comprehensive planning process key issues, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses were identified. Below is a review of those issues.

Key Issues

- Preservation of land while allowing growth to occur.
- Environmental protection.
- Maintaining and preserving water quality.
- Intergovernmental cooperation with Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.
- Rate of development and where development occurs within the Town.



Strengths

- Nature, woods, streams, wetlands and Lake Superior coastal areas.
- The people that make up this area.
- Location.
- Public involvement.
- Fishing and wildlife.
- Access to local health care.
- Two National Parks; Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and Frog By Tribal Nation Park

Opportunities

- Develop better understanding of rural character while also allowing for future growth.
- Develop design standards for new construction.
- Develop Town-wide Wi-Fi/Broadband systems.
- Work with Bayfield County and Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa on the development of light-imprint standards for future development and redevelopment.
- Promote a transparent planning process when it comes to development, redevelopment and planning within the Town of Russell.

Housing

The number of households within the Town of Russell has increased at a pace consistent with the population. Single-family households as well as agricultural/rural residential dwellings are the predominant housing option within Russell. The following goals related to housing have been developed as County-wide objectives in meeting the housing needs.

- Goal: The housing stock in the Town of Russell should provide an adequate range of housing opportunities to meet the varied needs and desires of existing and future community residents.
- Goal: Guide new housing development into areas that minimize impacts on sensitive natural resources so that the Town continues to be an attractive place to reside.

Utilizing information in the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element, the Town of Russell, in conjunction with Bayfield County, has inventoried and mapped sensitive resources that should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.

What is Alternative Development? A development or land division in which dwellings and other buildings are located on only a portion of a development, in contrast to conventional practice, which distributes development evenly across the entirety of a parcel, in order to accomplish either of the following:

Preserve by deed restriction, including conservation easement, restrictive covenant and development rights transfers, the majority of the land division parcel for present or future agricultural use or conservation and/or create, maintain or expand protective barriers contiguous with roadways, lakes, wetlands and other natural resources in the Town of Russell

Encourage "low-impact" development that strives to retain natural vegetation that can help reduce storm water runoff, flooding, and minimize impact on water quality.

Encourage the retention of natural vegetation, especially along streams, and lakeshores.

- Goal: Improve the existing housing stock to enhance quality, livability, and character of the Town of Russell.

Economic Element

Like most of the County, the economy is largely agrarian based. Large scale commercial and industrial uses that employ large amounts of the workforce have rapidly declined in numbers as the logging and timber harvesting industry mechanized. Eco-tourism is now adding to our economic base.

The economy of the Town of Russell has changed over the past several decades, however the need for quality paying jobs and opportunities for the workforce is shared throughout the region. Below are the general goals that are supported throughout Bayfield County as a means of retaining a strong work-force throughout the life of this Plan.

- Goal: The region as a whole should continue to develop better communications (cellular, DSL, internet access) to accommodate home-based businesses.
- Goal: Protect farmland through zoning and other measures.
- Goal: Support existing and traditional agriculture such as dairy, beef, crops, orchards, and ranches.
- Goal: Encourage small or cooperative enterprises based on agriculture, including new efforts to marketing local foods and food products to locate in the Town of Russell.
- Goal: Support UW Extension, WITC, and start-up organizations in their continuing education programs.
- Goal: support and promote home based businesses and encourage entrepreneurs and contractors to operate home-based businesses.
- Goal: encourage new small tourism related businesses such as bed and breakfast is, short-term rentals, Kayak rentals, campgrounds, riding stables and hunting and fishing guides and supplies.
- Goal, in conjunction with red Cliff Band of Lake superior Chippewa work with the Bayfield County economic development Corporation to develop and support a regional economic plan for the county.

Land Use

The town's future land use map is based upon updated, countywide land-use classifications for Bayfield County. The Russell future land use map is unique because of the relationship with the red Cliff band of the Lake Superior Chippewa as well as coastal areas of Lake Superior. Over the next 10 years, it is anticipated that additional growth will occur within the town. It is critical that this growth occur in an orderly fashion to minimize environmental and infrastructure costs on the town and or county.

New development at higher densities within the town of Russell should be concentrated in areas that support both the infrastructure improvements and requirements and emergency service access to these areas. Light imprint standards will be required for new development as outlined within this plan.

Transportation

the town of Russell has a comprehensive, multimodal transportation system that provides a safe, environmentally sensitive, and economical movement of people and goods.

- Work to enhance the bay area world transit system (BART). Explore ways to encourage use of the public transportation system.
- Explore areas to provide public parking and park-and-ride facilities. Promote carpooling.
- Encourage additional bicycle and pedestrian trails.
- Enhance regional snowmobile and ATV trails between communities.

The majority of the Red Cliff band of Lake Superior chip or tribal lands lay partially within the town of Russell. This comprehensive plan has no jurisdiction over these tribal lands.

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goals and Objectives

A set of recommended goals, objectives, and action steps has been developed to assist the Town of Russell in the conservation and promotion of effective management of the local natural, agricultural, and cultural resources.

- Goal: Conserve, protect, manage, and enhance the Town's natural resources.
 - Objective: Endorse the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) watershed initiatives to restore altered shoreland/wetland vegetation and prohibit removal of natural vegetation in critical shoreland areas.
 - Objective: Promote the establishment and maintenance of natural buffers along water resources.
 - a. Collaborate with state and local organizations whose charge is to enhance water quality.
 - b. Work to control wastewater and septic systems.
 - c. Control runoff during construction projects through the establishment of erosion control standards found within the Bayfield County Code.
 - Objective: Educate the public on Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will ensure the protection of natural resources.

Publish or obtain information that can be distributed to residents on the disposal of hazardous materials, such as paint, waste oils, computers, insecticides, etc.
 - Objective: Protect and manage local forested areas and other wildlife habitats.
 - a. Encourage selective cutting in forest stands.
 - b. Coordinate with WDNR to identify and protect wildlife habitats.
 - c. Sensitive resources that should be preserved to the greatest extent possible have been mapped in the Bayfield County comprehensive plan.
 - d. Encourage "low-impact" development that strives to retain natural vegetation.
 - e. Discourage habitat fragmentation by encouraging development on the fringes of identified habitat areas.
 - f. Work and cooperate with local land trust and similar organizations on forest and wildlife habitat protection, management, and preservation.
- Goal: Preserve and enhance cultural resources, including historical and archeological sites and resources.
 - Objective: Coordinate with the Bayfield County Historical Society to update the inventory of historic properties within the Town and share this information with the State of Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory.
 - a. Maintain a list of eligible or registered historical places in the Town.
 - b. Encourage private landowners on the preservation of historic buildings within the Town.

Utilities and Community Facilities

The maintenance and enhancement of public facilities and public recreational facilities encourages a healthy community environment. The leadership of this growth is vital to maintaining the desired characteristics of the Town. This element serves as an inventory that describes what is and what has been. The Town of Russell will continue to establish and enhance mutual relationships with federal, state, county and local governments to develop solutions to issues within the Town as well as issues that involve multiple jurisdictions across municipal boundaries.

1. Ensure safe drinking water.
 - a. Support the monitoring and control of surface and ground water pollutants from residential, agricultural and business activity.
 - Abide by County regulations and zoning regarding wastewater.
2. Control storm water to protect natural watersheds and built features of the Town.
3. Encourage solid waste management by all residents.
4. Where possible, work with utility and telecommunication companies to place utilities underground.
5. Encourage telecommunications companies to provide further services for current and future residents and businesses.
6. Reduce long-term dependence on fossil fuels by promoting wind, solar and thermal energy conversions.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Development Element Goals and Objectives

- Goal: Improve communication with neighboring Towns, Bayfield County, area school districts, and state agencies.

Objective: Notify the area school districts about proposed residential developments so the districts may Plan accordingly. Encourage the school district to provide input into these decisions.

Objective: Notify appropriate state agencies of proposed land use changes and development plans.

- a. Notify WisDOT of proposed development projects adjacent to state trunk highways so they can plan accordingly for future improvements.
- b. Coordinate with WisDOT and WDNR to ensure transportation facilities are safe and natural resources are protected.

Objective: Seek ways to share community facilities and services with neighboring communities and coordinate on multi-jurisdictional applications whenever possible.

- a. Inventory equipment and services of adjacent jurisdictions.
- b. Seek funds for housing rehabilitation in coordination with other jurisdictions.

Objective: Identify existing or potential conflicts between local governmental units, including future land use trends, and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

- a. Establish a conflict resolution process with adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions.
- b. Work with Bayfield County and the surrounding Towns on land use and zoning issues.

Implementation

As part of the comprehensive planning process, a number of goals, objectives, and action items were developed that when implemented are intended to build stronger relationships and give direction to the Town Board and its residents. As is stipulated in Wisconsin Act 9, a Plan must be updated at least once every 10 years. However, in order to ensure that the Town's Plan is an effective management tool, the Town of Russell Plan Commission will review the Plan goals and objectives annually to track those activities that have been completed to realize its accomplishments and identify areas where additional resources or actions are needed. Part of this effort, will also include addressing conflicts which may arise between the elements of the Plan.

Housing Implementation Schedule

Action: The housing stock in Russell should provide an adequate range of housing opportunities to meet the varied needs and desires of existing and future community residents. **Ongoing**

Action: Support efforts of private and non-profit organizations to address the needs of all income levels, age groups, and persons with special needs in the development of housing within the Town. **Ongoing**

Action: Support efforts and new programs that will provide additional elderly and disabled resident housing opportunities and services. **Ongoing**

Action: Utilizing information in the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element, the Town shall inventory and map sensitive resources that should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. **Ongoing**

Action: Encourage "low-impact" development that strives to retain natural vegetation that can help reduce stormwater runoff and flooding. **Ongoing**

Transportation Implementation Schedule

Action: Establish open line of communication with BIA/Tribal, Bayfield County, WisDOT, and local or regional transit authorities to maintain and enhance transportation facilities throughout the Town of Russell. **Ongoing**

Action: Continue to establish a local network of roads that is connected, coordinated, and affordable that will link residents to important community facilities and regional highways. **Ongoing**

Action: Facilitate discussion with BART to improve transit locations throughout the County. **Ongoing**

Utilities and Community Facilities Implementation Schedule

Action: In association with Bayfield County, work to improve awareness of water quality issues in Bayfield County and design enhancement features that assist in the preservation of natural areas as well as a reduction stormwater runoff. **Ongoing**

Action: Maintain essential emergency services to protect the public health, safety and welfare of the community. **Ongoing**

Action: Ensure there are adequate emergency services of police, fire, rescue, hazardous event responders and emergency medical services. **Ongoing**

Action: Meet with representatives of utility companies to seek system upgrades in a timely and cost-effective manner when they are necessary such as Broadband, and cellular service, **Ongoing**

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Implementation Schedule

Action: Educate residents about the importance of natural areas and wildlife corridors. **Ongoing**

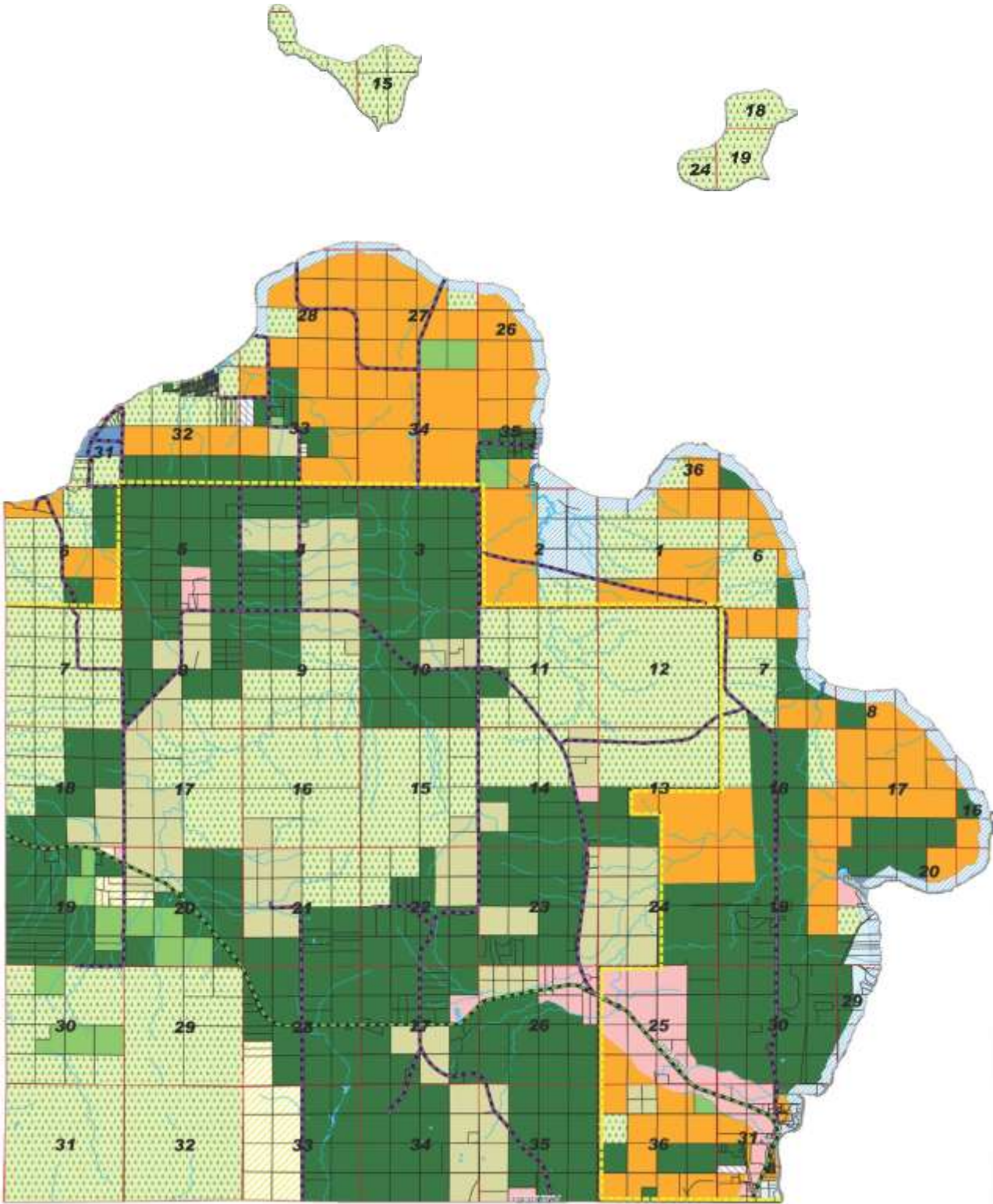
Action: Endorse the WDNR watershed initiatives to educate shoreland and basin property owners on the appropriate safe levels, application, timing and safe types of fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and fields in the Town of Russell. **Ongoing**

Action: Sensitive resources that should be preserved to the greatest extent possible are inventoried and mapped in the Bayfield County Comprehensive Plan. **Completed**

Action: Develop a list of eligible or registered historical places in the Town. Work with Bayfield County in developing a historical and cultural resource map for the Town of Russell. **2010**

Action: Work with landowners on the preservation of historic buildings. **Ongoing**

Town of Russell Future Land Use



New legend by County

Economic Development Implementation Schedule

Action: As appropriate, provide support for financial assistance and/or incentives through state and federal grants, low interest loans and other financial instruments to existing and new companies. **Ongoing**

Action: Ensure that the land use adequately addresses development standards that reflect the characteristics of the Town (e.g. appropriate building materials, setbacks from natural resources, signage, lighting, landscaping, etc.) **Ongoing**

Intergovernmental Cooperation Implementation Schedule

Action: Improve communication with neighboring Towns, Bayfield County, area school districts, and state agencies. **Ongoing**

Action: Notify appropriate state agencies of proposed land use changes and development plans. **Ongoing**

Action: Coordinate with WisDOT regarding proposed development projects adjacent to state trunk highways so they can plan accordingly for future improvements. **Ongoing**

Action: Work with Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in developing an annual planning summit to discuss land use, transportation and economic development strategies for the area. **Ongoing**

Action: Explore the potential for mutual services with neighboring Towns including road development /maintenance, garbage collection, etc. **Ongoing**

Action: Seek funds for housing rehabilitation in coordination with other jurisdictions. **Ongoing**

Action: Identify existing or potential conflicts between local governmental units, including future land use trends, and describe processes to resolve such conflicts. **Annually**

Action: Establish a conflict resolution process with adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions. **Ongoing**

Action: Work with Bayfield County and the surrounding Towns on land use and zoning issues. **Ongoing**

Land Use Implementation Schedule

Action: Develop light-imprint design standards for the Town of Russell. **2016**

Action: Provide continual public review and a public-based amendatory process to the Plan. **Ongoing**

Action: Conduct a review of the Plan on an annual basis. **Annually**

Action: Develop and maintain a Plan Commission for the Town of Russell. The purpose of this Committee is to review land use applications, ensure that the policies of the Plan are adopted and work with the Town Board to ensure that land use decisions are carried out. **Ongoing**

Action: Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the characteristics and policies of the Future Land Use Map of the Town. Make amendments to the Zoning Ordinance based upon the Future Land Use Map. **2016**