



**CITY OF MERRILL**  
**CITY PLAN COMMISSION**  
**AGENDA • TUESDAY MAY 3, 2016**

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**Regular Meeting**

**City Hall Council Chambers**

**5:15 PM**

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- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
  1. Minutes of April 4, 2016 meeting
- III. Public Comment Period
- IV. Agenda items related to update of City Comprehensive Plan:
  1. Community Survey Update
  2. Review of Transportaion Chapter
  3. Review of Land Use Chapter
- V. Other agenda items for consideration:
  1. Consider Site Plan from Lincoln County for shed at East Sixth Street and Memorial Drive.
  2. Resolution authorizing the vacation of an alley located in Lot Two, Block Four of the original plat of Jenny (near the former Lincoln House site) At a meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the Board of Public Works recommended approval.
  3. Resolution authorizing the vacation of a part of Meadow Lane At a meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the Board of Public Works recommended approval.
- VI. Public Hearing(s) to begin at 6:00 P.M.:
  1. Public hearing on City of Merrill request to rezone property located at 1501 Hwy 107 from Rural Development to Planned Unit Development and to rezone the following parcels from Rural Development to R-1 Single Family Residential: 1340 Grand Ave, 801 Edgewater, 803 Edgewater, 901 Edgewater, 1401 Highland, 1403 Highland, 1404 Highland, 1405 Highland, 1407 Highland, 1411 Highland, 1413 Highland, 1501 Highland.
- VII. Establish date, time and location of next meeting
- VIII. Adjournment



CITY OF MERRILL  
CITY PLAN COMMISSION  
MINUTES • MONDAY APRIL 4, 2016

Regular Meeting City Hall Council Chambers 5:45 PM

I. Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Pete Lokemoen	Aldersperson - Second District	Present	
Bill Bialecki	Mayor	Present	
Mike Willman	Chairman - Park & Rec	Present	
Ralph Sturm		Present	
Melissa Schroeder		Present	
Ken Maule		Present	
Robert Reimann		Present	

Other attendees included: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Alderman John Burgener, Alderman Dave Sukow, Alderwoman Kandy Peterson, Peter Annis, Bryan Bloch and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

Hearing attendees included: Sarah Wisniewski, Adam Schneider, Boris Lehman, Ethan Lehman, Glenn Nass, Elaine Nass, Floyd Smith, Eldred Kufahl, Mary Kufahl, Loretta Smith, Arlene Voigt, Charles Novitch, Bob Dehnel, Jane Dehnel, Michael Clark, Robin Grenfell, Rich Grenfell, Marlene Henrichs, Brent Scantlin and Tom Rybarczyk.

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):

1. Minutes of March 1, 2016 meeting

Motion (Lokemoen/Schroeder) to approve.

**RESULT: APPROVED**

III. Change Order of agenda items:

Mayor Bialecki requested that he be allowed to change the order of agenda items, and to have the public comment period next. Without objection, it was so ordered.

IV. Public Comment Period

None.

V. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Consider site plan from Merrill High School for athletic complex improvements at Jay Stadium

Alderman Lokemoen stated that he has no concerns with the application.

Motion (Lokemoen/Maule) to approve.

Attachment: 2016-04-04 City Plan Commission Minutes (1613 : Minutes of April 4, 2016 meeting)

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED &amp; SENT TO COUNCIL</b>	<b>Next: 4/12/2016 7:00 PM</b>
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2. Consider site plan for Rodeo Arena at Merrill Festival Grounds

Alderman Lokemoen stated that the only issue being considered at this time is the building at the north end of the site. He has no issues with the application.

Motion (Lokemoen/Reimann) to approve.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED &amp; SENT TO COUNCIL</b>	<b>Next: 4/12/2016 7:00 PM</b>
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3. Consider site plan for proposed chicken coop at Jefferson Elementary School, 1914 Jackson Street.

Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel explained that the City of Merrill Code of Ordinances allows the keeping of a maximum of three chickens.

Motion (Lokemoen/Schroeder) to approve, provided that the maximum number of chickens allowed by ordinance is not exceeded.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED &amp; SENT TO COUNCIL</b>	<b>Next: 4/12/2016 7:00 PM</b>
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VI. Recess:

At 5:53 P.M., Mayor Bialecki announced a recess until 6:00 P.M., the scheduled time for the public hearing.

At 6:00 P.M., Mayor Bialecki called the meeting back to order.

VII. Public Hearing(s):

1. Public Hearing on City of Merrill request for rezoning of four parcels, from R-2 Residential to R-3 Residential. The parcel addresses are 500 W. Tenth Street, 502 West Tenth Street, 504 West Tenth Street and 903 N. State Street.

City Attorney Hayden read the public hearing notice.

Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel explained that the property owner, Brent Scantlin would like to erect a duplex on the property he owns at 903 N. State Street. To keep the zoning contiguous, three other parcels (500, 502 & 504 W. Tenth Street) would also need to be rezoned. None of those property owners have requested a rezoning.

Rich Grenfell, 1000 N. State Street, reported that he was asked to speak on behalf of several residents in the vicinity of the requested rezoning. He mentioned several reasons for opposing the rezoning, and noted that Brent Scantlin was only property owner that has requested rezoning. Mr. Grenfell urged the City Plan Commission to disapprove the rezoning request.

Tom Rybarczyk, 504 W. Tenth Street, spoke against the rezoning. He said he would not be opposed to a single-family dwelling on the property, but was not in favor of a duplex or a rental property.

Eldred Kufahl, 502 W. Tenth Street, stated he was totally against the rezoning, and added his opinion that the property owner has a “poor track record” on property maintenance.

Loretta Smith, 500 W. Tenth Street, stated that the Smiths did not request rezoning and she was definitely against it.

Sarah Wisniewski, 909 N. State Street, noted that she was one of the youngest residents in the neighborhood. She is against the rezoning.

Charles Novitch, 1302 Cottage Street, stated that he is against the rezoning and urged the City Plan Commission to disallow the request.

Arlene Voigt, 1103 N. State Street, urged the City Plan Commission to maintain the current zoning.

Brent Scantlin stated that he does not intend to erect a single-family dwelling on the property. In his opinion, the only financially feasible option for him would be a duplex.

Mary Kufahl, 502 W. Tenth Street, stated that she is totally against the rezoning.

Marlene Henrichs, 821 Cottage Street, stated that years ago the residents of the neighborhood wanted single-family dwellings in the area, and she is still in favor of those types of residence in the neighborhood.

Elaine Nass, 1206 Cottage Street, stated that the neighborhood is well-kept and family-orientated.

Bob Dehnel, 1204 N. State Street, stated that the neighborhood has historically been a good place to raise children. He spoke against the rezoning request.

Adam Schneider, 1300 N. State St., stated that he is against the rezoning.

Motion (Schroeder/Maule) to close the public hearing. Carried.

Motion (Bialecki/Schroeder) to disallow the rezoning request.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>DISALLOWED</b>
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VIII. Establish date, time and location of next meeting

Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at 5:00 P.M., in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

IX. Adjournment

Motion (Schroeder/Lokemoen) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:32 P.M.

## **CHAPTER 5: TRANSPORTATION - DRAFT**

### **5.1 Background**

This chapter is designed to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including automobiles, transit, active transportation (such as bicycling and walking), railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The transportation network exists to provide mobility and access to people, goods and services locally, regionally, and nationally, and is essential for commerce and recreation. However, it is important to recognize, plan for, and mitigate the negative impacts of the transportation system on people, adjacent land uses, and the environment. These impacts include noise and light pollution, localized air pollution, health problems, crashes, greenhouse gas emissions, and polluted storm water runoff, among other impacts.

#### **A. Previous Studies**

A variety of plans were reviewed as they relate to transportation in the Merrill area. These plans provide a starting point for the planning process.

##### **1. City of Merrill 2007 Comprehensive Plan**

This plan focuses extensively on both land use and transportation. The transportation section includes recommendations for the following:

- Inventory and trends of the transportation network;
- Street system characteristics, classifications, and traffic counts;
- A list of transportation issues;
- Recommended transportation system improvements.

##### **2. Merrill Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2015**

The 2015 plan assessed the bikeability and walkability of the City of Merrill. An inventory of bicycling conditions and sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian crashes with vehicles, and bicycle and pedestrian use areas are documented in the plan. Locations of potential bicycle routes and recommendations for roadway improvements were developed, along with safety programming recommendations.

### 3. State Highway 64/Pine Ridge Avenue Access Safety Study 2013

This study analyzed proposed development along STH 64 near USH 51 and the traffic and safety impact potential of the proposed development. The study focused on the intersection of STH 64 and Pine Ridge Avenue but included the segment of STH 64 between Memorial Drive and the USH 51 interchange. The study also provided traffic forecasts with and without the proposed development. The study provided specific recommendations for road treatments for motorists, bicycles and pedestrians within the study area.

### 4. Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan (2012 – 2021)

The transportation chapter of the Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan focuses on maintaining and developing the transportation system to keep Lincoln County attractive to businesses and residents. This chapter discusses roads, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, snowmobile and ATV use, public transportation, airports, and freight. This chapter also discusses the connection of land use to transportation.

### 5. Lincoln County Locally Developed, Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, 2014-2018

The purpose of this plan is to assess transit services focused on elderly and disabled users, identify gaps in service, create strategies to address the gaps, and prioritize the implementation of those strategies. The plan is designed to have broad input into the entire planning process and must be updated every five years. Some gaps identified include limited evening and weekend services, underserved employment needs, and a lack of rural and intercity services. Other issues identified include decreasing funding while ridership is increasing and accessibility issues.

Strategies to address these gaps include expanding coordination between agencies and providers, and developing an intercity pilot program between Merrill and Tomahawk.

### 6. North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle Facilities Network Plan

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) created this plan in 2004 to guide the development of bicycle facilities in north central Wisconsin. The vision of this plan is to increase the

mobility of people within the Region by making bicycling a more viable and attractive transportation choice. The plan will strengthen the rural character of the County by connecting natural and cultural resource destinations and by connecting communities, which also will have positive economic development from tourism.

The plan contains route selections from the Lincoln scenic bike and auto tour that includes STH 107, which had good bicycle suitability, and STH 17, which was not so well suited to bicycling and should be a candidate for bicycling improvements, such as an expanded paved shoulder.

## 7. North Central Wisconsin Regional Livability Plan

The Regional Livability Plan addresses four components of a livable region, including transportation. Goals related to transportation are:

- Goal 6: Provide and improve transportation access to people of all ages and abilities to ensure lifelong mobility and accessibility.
- Goal 7: Fund the maintenance and expansion of the transportation system.
- Goal 8: Enhance the regional economy by supporting airports and freight rail.

## 8. Connections 2030

Connections 2030 is a 25-year statewide multi-modal transportation plan that is policy-based. The policies are tied to “tiers” of potential financing levels. One set of policy recommendations will focus on priorities that can be accomplished under current funding levels. Another will identify policy priorities that can be achieved if funding levels increase. Finally, WisDOT also identifies identify critical priorities that we must maintain if funding were to decrease over the planning horizon of the plan.

## 9. State Trails Network Plan

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) created this plan in 2001, to identify a statewide network of trails and to provide guidance to the DNR for land acquisition and development. Many existing trails are developed and operated in partnership with counties. By agreement

the DNR acquires the corridor and the county government(s) develop, operate, and maintain the trail.

Segment 18, from Tomahawk to Wisconsin Dells, would extend from the Bearskin/Hiawatha Trail, south through Merrill, ending in Wausau. There it would connect with another trail and extend further south to Wisconsin Dells.

## B. Transportation Issues

The Plan Commission identified a variety of issues related to transportation as listed below:

- The city is considering extending Pine Ridge Ave north to CTH G and south to Big Eddy Rd.
- There have been discussions of connecting Taylor Street to CTH G and Business USH 51 in the future to create a northern east – west corridor in the city.
- Hazardous materials are transported by truck and by rail through the city. Bills of sale are easy to access on each train. Trucks have placards.
- Trains block traffic by the industrial district east of Center Ave. along the Wisconsin River.
- Snowmobile trails need better access to local businesses. A comprehensive review of the snowmobile network is needed because it keeps changing every other year, and some corridors may need permanent protection.
- A recreation trail could connect Prairie River Park to Stange Park.
- There have been discussions of connecting Joe Snow Road, Golf Drive and Center Road to create a southern east – west corridor.
- Additional issues relate to aging infrastructure and the cost to improve, high-speed areas, congestion areas, overall flow of traffic or network, funding transit system, and lack of intra-city bus service.

## 5.2 Inventory & Trends

This section of the plan reviews local roads, bike & pedestrian trails, the airport, rail service, and transit. There is no water transportation service. These together form the transportation system within the city and connect the city to the larger state transportation system.

### A. Local Roads

Local roads (streets) create the primary transportation system. These roads allow people and goods to move within the city and provide connections to the county, state and federal road networks.

The City of Merrill's principal arterials include STH 64, USH 51, and CTH K north of STH 64. STH 64 is the major east-west corridor in the city and is one of three roads in the city that crosses the Wisconsin River. Minor arterials in the City are STH 107 spanning from the Prairie River to the northwest border of the city, CTH G, CTH K south of STH 64, CTH Q south of STH 107, and parts of 9<sup>th</sup> St, 3<sup>rd</sup> St, Main St, Memorial Drive, and Taylor Street. Collectors are numerous and include Riverside Dr., O'Day St, Sales St, and parts of 6<sup>th</sup>, Mill, Parlor, Court, & Jackson Streets.

The City of Merrill road network consists of roughly 7.70 miles of state highways, 6.85 miles of county highways, and about 71.10 miles of local roads.

Annual average daily traffic counts (AADT) are measured and calculated by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) for 23 areas in the city. Monitoring these counts provides a way to gauge how traffic volume is changing in Merrill. Congestion levels, pavement quality, bridge conditions, and safety are some considerations used by WisDOT to determine what state highways need improvements within existing funding levels.

#### Road Classifications

**Principal Arterials** – serve interstate and interregional trips. These routes generally serve urban areas with 5,000 people or more.

**Minor Arterials** – accommodate interregional and county-to-county traffic, often in conjunction with principal arterials.

**Major Collectors** – provide service to moderate sized communities and other county-level traffic.

**Minor Collectors** – take traffic from local roads and provide links to all remaining portions of smaller communities and connect to other higher function roads listed above.

**Local Roads** – provide direct access to residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

Table 1: Annual Average Daily Traffic at Recorded Sites, City of Merrill 1974-2013

Site	1974	1980	1983	1989	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013
1A	980	940	1080	1710	1500	2000	1900	1900	---	1700	---
2	1560	3270	3260	2420	3600	4700	5900	5000	3200	3500	3200
3B	3170	3300	3430	4110	5600	4600	5500	4200	2900	3500	3400
4	2210	1730	1800	3140	4000	4200	3600	2500	---	2100	---
5C	900	950	1140	1500	2400	2700	3700	2300	2100	2200	1900
6	1130	2650	3130	4010	6400	5400	4500	3800	---	3500	---
7	850	1420	1470	1500	2900	3400	2800	2900	3700	1900	1700
8	3920	---	---	---	3800	4600	4600	4900	6200	4600	3200
9	10750	10860	14130	12560	13400	10500	12800	12800	8400	9700	8000
10	210	380	690	1010	1900	2400	2000	2000	1900	1800	---
11	950	3430	3560	3150	5500	3800	5600	4100	3000	3500	2800
12	1040	2220	2450	2160	4000	5800	4200	3700	2100	2500	2000
13	720	1460	1090	1460	2600	2100	2100	2200	1400	1400	1100
14	210	1150	1620	1760	2400	2200	2500	2300	1600	1800	---
15D	7770	5980	5000	4870	5700	5800	5300	5300	4900	4900	5800
16	8060	7710	8150	8160	10100	8100	7700	6900	---	7600	6000
17	2800	2780	4060	4790	4400	5300	6700	4800	---	---	3800
18	7630	5590	7050	8820	10400	10200	10100	8000	9100	9200	7800
19	5530	10650	7770	11180	16600	19000	15500	11500	9800	13400	9400
20	1260	640	660	1160	1400	1400	940	1200	---	1200	---
21	680	---	1950	2940	4600	4500	5600	5500	4200	3800	3400
22	220	---	1240	1060	1600	1400	1600	1700	---	1600	---
23E	2100	5610	6030	---	11200	11400	9500	10200	---	---	8900

Source: Wisconsin Highway Traffic Volume, Wisconsin Department of Transportation & NCWRPC

--- = No count available

The **LETTER** after the Site # designates that site as a community entrance.

- Site **1A**: STH 107, **West Entrance** to Merrill at Hillside Dr.  
 Site 2: STH 107, between Champagne and Superior Streets.  
 Site **3B**: STHs 64/107 (Main St), **West Entrance** to Merrill between Foster and Eugene Streets.  
 Site 4: Foster St, just south of STHs 64/107 (Main St).  
 Site **5C**: CTH Q, **South Entrance** between Spring Rd and Emmerich St.  
 Site 6: CTH Q (State St), between the Wisconsin River and STH 64/107 (Main St).  
 Site 7: State St, between Main St and Grand Ave.  
 Site 8: Grand Ave, just west of the Prairie River.  
 Site 9: E 1<sup>st</sup> St, just east of the Prairie River.  
 Site 10: Taylor St, just east of Airport Rd.  
 Site 11: Pier St, just north of E 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
 Site 12: Pier St, just south of E 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
 Site 13: E 9<sup>th</sup> St, just east of Pier St.  
 Site 14: E 9<sup>th</sup> St, just west of CTH K.  
 Site **15D**: CTH K, **North Entrance** to Merrill north of the Prairie River.  
 Site 16: CTH K, just south of CTH G.  
 Site 17: CTH G, just east of CTH K.  
 Site 18: CTH K, just north of the Wisconsin River.  
 Site 19: Main St (STH 64), just west of Sales St.  
 Site 20: Sales St, just north of Main St. (STH 64).  
 Site 21: Memorial Dr, just north of Main St. (STH 64).  
 Site 22: Memorial Dr, just south of CTH G.  
 Site **23E**: Main St (STH 64), **East Entrance** to Merrill just west of Pine Ridge Ave.

The City’s road network is maintained by the Street Department. The City uses a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to plan for short term future road projects.

The Lincoln County Highway Department prepares its own roadway management plan that identifies projects on county highways. Annual road improvement plans are created and submitted to the County Board for approval.

WisDOT prepares six-year highway improvement programs by region that identify projects for Interstate highways, U.S. highways, and state highways.

**B. Interchange Analysis**

There are two interchanges that have major implications on the overall development of the city. These are both on Highway 51, one at State Highway 64 and the other at County Highway K.

Table 2 provides an overview of the interchange characteristics. Traffic counts, soil suitability for residential and commercial development, and existing land use are identified. The County Highway K interchange is still mostly undeveloped, and intense development exists on one-fourth of the available land near the Highway 64 interchange.

<b>Interchange</b>	<b>CTH K</b>	<b>STH 64</b>
<b>Interchange Type</b>	Diamond	Diamond
<b>Transportation Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete highway access.</li> <li>• Bus. 51 starts here and travels south into Merrill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete highway access.</li> <li>• CTH W and STH 17 both are one block to the east.</li> </ul>
<b>Freeway Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts (AADT)</b>	North of Interchange 2004 – 13,180 2007 – 11,200 2010 – 10,300 2013 – 11,100  South of Interchange 2004 – 13,100 2007 – 13,800 20010 – 10,600 2013 – 12,900	North of Interchange 2004 – 13,100 2007 – 13,800 20010 – 10,600 2013 – 12,900  South of Interchange 2004 – 18,200 2007 – 17,700 2010 – 15,700 2013 – 14,100
<b>Hwy K or Hwy 64 Average Annual Daily</b>	Southwest of Interchange 2004 - 3400	West of Interchange 2004 - 10200

<b>Traffic Counts (AADT) 2004</b>	2007 - 3400 2010 - 3500 2013 - 3700  Northeast of interchange 2004 - 2300 2010 - 2000	2013 - 8900  East of interchange 2004 - 9200 2007 - 7700 2010 - 7600 2013 - 7700
<b>NE area by interchange</b>	Agricultural land with less than 10% trees.	Agricultural land with 50% covered by trees.
<b>NW area by interchange</b>	50% forested wetlands, 40% forestland with less than 10% of total cleared.	Fully developed with strip mall, single use commercial, former big box retail in use as office space, and large surface parking lot.
<b>SE area by interchange</b>	50% Forestland & 50% agricultural land. Some development that appears to be light industrial.	Agricultural land, no trees. Single fast food building
<b>SW area by interchange</b>	Agricultural land with less than 20% trees.	Big box retail.
<b>Visibility from freeway</b>	Ramps are raised to meet crossroad. Poor visibility of northwest area. Good visibility of all three other areas.	Ramps are raised to meet crossroad. Good visibility of all four areas.
<b>Environmentally Sensitive Areas</b>	Pesabic Lake just west of railroad tracks and interchange. Large forested wetland north of CTH K.	Nearest environmentally sensitive land is on the northeast corner of STH 64 and STH 17.
<b>Soil Suitability for Dwelling w/ Basement</b>	South & east of CTH K are somewhat limited by depth to water table zone 7 feet down. North and west of CTH K are very limited by depth to water table 7 feet down.	Most of the land south of STH 86 is very limited to development because of depth to water table 7 feet down. Most of the land to the north is slightly limited based upon depth to water table.
<b>Soil Suitability for 2 Story Commercial Buildings</b>	Steep slopes (6-35%) very much limit development on 40% of the land.	Most land around this interchange is suitable or slightly limited by depth to water table.
<b>Development Opportunities &amp; Limitations</b>	The steep slopes may be cut down to fill in the lower spots to reduce the steep slopes that limit development.	

Source: NCWRPC, WisDOT

### C. Road Diets

Road Diets can be inexpensive solutions to improve traffic flow and safety for motorists, bicycles and pedestrians on four-lane roads. A road diet consists of restriping a four lane undivided arterial to three lanes, one travel lane in each direction and a center left turn lane. The space made available can often be used to stripe bicycle lanes or provide on street parking. It also allows the placement of median islands in the center left turn lane at crosswalks, decreasing crossing distance and enhancing safety for pedestrians, especially those with mobility challenges. Road

diets have also been shown to reduce vehicle speeds on roads where speeds are a problem.

Placeholder: Photo example of road diet

STH 64 and CTH K in Merrill are potential candidates for road diets. This is recommended in the Merrill Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the STH 64/ Pine Ridge Avenue Access Safety Study. Research has shown that road diets do not decrease the Level of Service (LOS) of arterial roads, until peak traffic volumes exceed **1,750 vehicles per hour**. They also showed that this can be mitigated through signal timing optimization. Academic recommendations for the upper limit of a road diet range from 15,000 to 23,000 vehicles per day (VPD). The highest counts in Merrill are 9,800 VPD on a segment of STH 64.

#### D. Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation

Both bike and pedestrian facilities are important for the residents of the city. Many people rely on alternative transportation due to mobility challenges, inability to afford the purchase and maintenance of an automobile, while others choose alternative modes for health, convenience, environmental, or other personal reasons. Providing the appropriate infrastructure will help keep those with no alternative safe and convenient, while encouraging others that would like to bicycle or walk for transportation.

Bicycle facilities consist of a wide range of infrastructure ranging from low traffic neighborhood streets to separate multi-use paths, from bicycle specific traffic signals to traffic lights that simply detect stopped bicyclists. Facilities also include destination amenities such as secure bicycle parking, showers and lockers. Multi-use trails are often used for recreational activity but if planned correctly they can provide important transportation connections for work, shopping, and recreational trips.

Everyone is a pedestrian at some point in their trip, whether they are walking to their car, bus stop, or make the entire journey on foot. Pedestrian facilities are designed to improve the safety of pedestrians and reduce conflicts between the various road users. These include sidewalks, crosswalks, paved shoulders, traffic signals, street lighting, median islands, terraces, multi-use paths, and other treatments. These

types of facilities are especially important for at-risk populations, including children, the elderly, and those with physical disabilities.

All roads except USH 51 are available for bicycle travel. However, characteristics such as road design, travel speeds, bicycle facilities, amount of traffic, and amount of truck traffic influence whether bicyclists feel comfortable or safe on a road. While lower traffic levels make most local roads suitable for bicycling, arterial and collector roads are important to connect bicyclists to their destinations and to provide faster, more direct routes.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, very few of the arterial roads in Merrill are rated as suitable for bicyclists; most are rated either moderately suitable or undesirable. Five out of the six major bridges crossing the Wisconsin River and the Prairie River in Merrill are rated as moderately suitable or undesirable. STH 64 is rated as undesirable or moderate condition from USH 51 to California Street in the west. CTHs G and K are rated moderate condition or undesirable throughout the City. CTH Q is rated either best or moderate condition throughout the City. STH 107 has a small portion of moderate condition between State Street and Prospect Street, but the remainder heading northwest is rated as best condition.

These ratings indicate that major bicycle connections for using a bicycle for transportation in Merrill are missing which can make bicycling unsafe for those that have no alternative and undesirable for those who do have an alternative. Most of the bicycle and pedestrian crashes that occurred between 2005 and 2012 in Merrill occurred along arterials that are rated moderate or undesirable condition, with the majority occurring around STH 64.

The City of Merrill does not allow bicycles on sidewalks, unless bicyclists are in the learning stage or are closely supervised by an adult. However, in low density areas with few intersections or curb-cuts, sidewalks can provide an alternative to riding on busy arterial streets and connections to existing shared use paths. The City of Merrill should reevaluate the prohibition of riding on sidewalks in some areas of the City, and remove the prohibition where riding on the sidewalk does not present hazards related to turning motorists or pedestrians.

Bicycle parking and other destination amenities are important components of bicycle transportation infrastructure. Secure bicycle parking is a very important component of the bicycle transportation network and reduces concerns about bicycle theft, while other destination amenities such as showers and lockers can improve the convenience of bicycling.

Sidewalks make up the primary component of the pedestrian network. Sidewalks exist in most residential areas and throughout the downtown. Issues of most concern to pedestrians are missing sidewalk sections, broken or uneven sections, and unsafe intersections. Roads that do not have sidewalks may not provide areas to walk outside of the traffic lanes. These are less desirable for most pedestrians since there is no

Placeholder: Photo example pedestrian intersection treatments

separation between moving vehicles and the pedestrian. Important improvements to the pedestrian network including providing adequate signal time to cross, high visibility yield signs (can include flashing signs, especially at midblock crossings), providing space to reduce crossing distances (including curb extensions and median islands), and using different paving material or height of pavement at the crosswalks. All roads except USH 51 are available for pedestrian travel.

The City of Merrill recently adopted the *City of Merrill Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2015*. The recommendations and action steps of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should be implemented in concert with the comprehensive plan, therefore the *City of Merrill Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2015* is considered to be part of this plan. The *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* also includes a bicycle suitability map.

#### E. Airport

Merrill has a general utility airport, which is located on the northwest side of the city. A general utility airport is intended to serve most small general aviation single and twin-engine aircraft with a maximum takeoff weight of 12,500 pounds or less. These aircraft typically seat from two to six people and are commonly used for business and some charter flying as well as a wide variety of activities including recreational flying, training, and crop dusting.

The Merrill Municipal Airport (RRL) has two asphalt runways, one is 5,100 feet and the other is 2,997 feet in length. Currently there are about 30 airplanes and 8 ultralights based at the airport. Aircraft operations average 51 per day between September 2013 and September 2014. This includes both takeoffs and landings. It is approximately 48%

transient general aviation, 48% local general aviation, 4 % air taxi and less than 1% military.

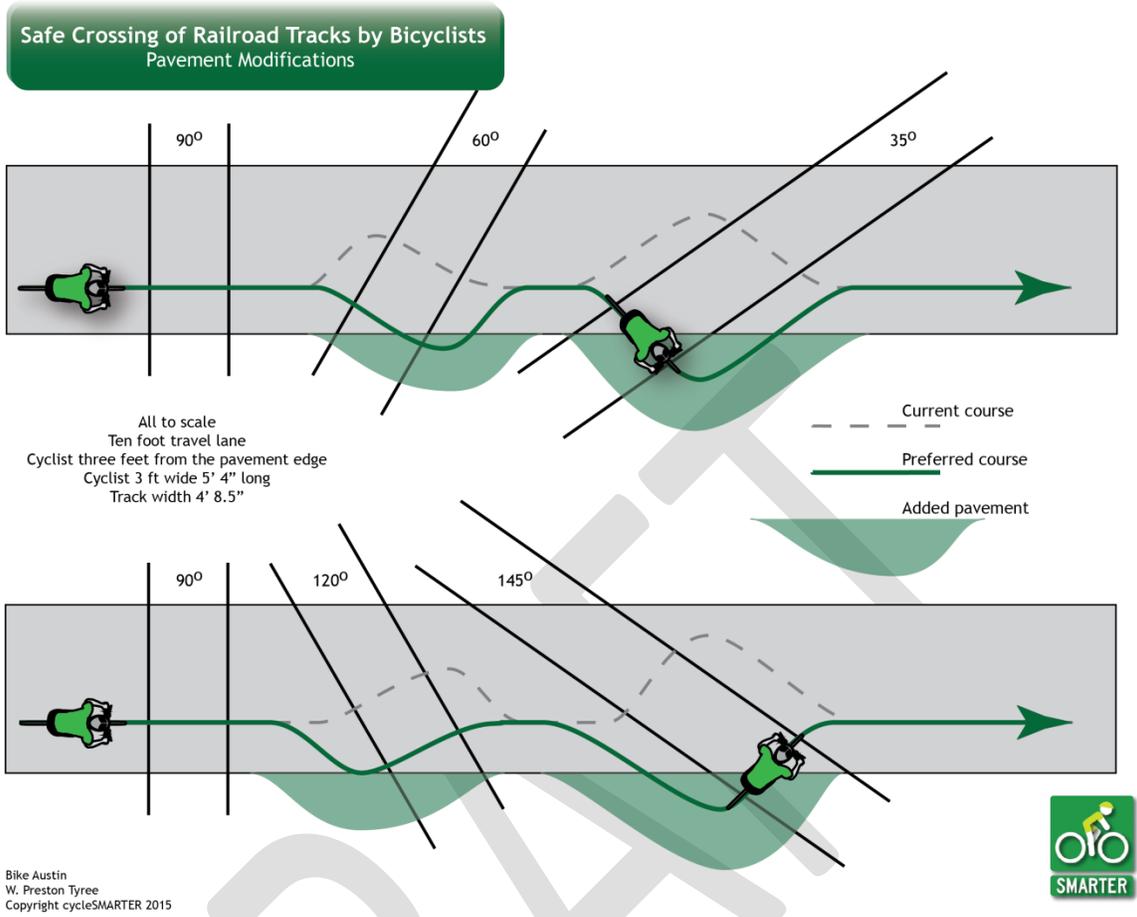
The nearest commercial air service is the Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport (RHI) in Rhinelander and the Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) in Mosinee.

Also located in the city is a heliport. The Good Samaritan Health Center maintains an asphalt heliport in their parking lot.

#### F. Rail

Wisconsin Central Railroad, a subsidiary of Canadian National, has tracks that enter the City on the southeast side from Wausau, and exit on the north side heading toward Tomahawk. This branch extends to a mainline that connects to the Fox Cities, the Twin Cities, Duluth, and others such as Milwaukee and Chicago. The tracks follow the Wisconsin River and diverge where a spur is located at the confluence of the Prairie and Wisconsin Rivers. The tracks west of the spur are abandoned.

Nationally, rail traffic is expected to increase through 2040. Local rail conditions will depend greatly on decisions made by rail companies, the location of businesses that ship by rail and the freight decisions of local businesses. Growth of rail traffic could require an increase in safety measures. Maintaining the rail service to the area may contribute to attracting rail based businesses and reduce the freight transported by trucks over the highway system, reducing the road maintenance needs. The rail system can create hazardous conditions at road crossings, especially for bicycles and wheelchairs that can get wheel stuck in between the tracks. These issues can be mitigated through intersection and crossing design. See below for an example.



### G. Bus/Transit

Transit service is vital for a healthy urban community for numerous reasons. It is often the only form of transportation for low income, senior and disabled community members, proving essential to access employment and other goods and services. Transit reduces congestion and road maintenance costs by reducing the number of private automobiles on the road. The benefits of these services accrue not only to those using the transit system, but to everyone within the community, in the form of shorter travel times, higher overall incomes, reduced unemployment and higher social mobility, and reduced air pollution. However, the convenience of a transit system greatly affects whether choice riders will choose to take public transit. It is generally found that people are willing to walk up to 1/2 mile to reach a rail stop and up to 1/4 mile to reach a bus stop. Additionally, long trip times or unreliable service can push choice riders to other modes and inconvenience or even make steady employment impossible for those that have no other choice.

The Merrill Transit System operates Merrill-Go-Round transit service, a demand-response system that serves a 12 square mile area of the City of Merrill and operates from 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Holidays. Riders schedule service by calling at least an hour before the trip, and buses run once an hour. Daily ridership is about 275 passenger trips. Ridership increased between 2006 and 2008, but declined between 2008 and 2009 during the Great Recession. The door-to-door service provided by Merrill-Go-Round means everyone is within walking distance of the transit service, but the one hour headways and the lack of night time and weekend service reduces the flexibility for riders that work hours outside of the normal workday.

Transit systems can and should be integrated with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, as most riders begin and end their transit trip as a bicyclist or pedestrian. Providing exterior bicycle racks on buses can greatly increase the mobility of transit riders. The pedestrian infrastructure network must provide accessibility where riders board and alight, which in this case is at the origin and destination of any transit rider.

With continuous challenges related to federal and state funding for public transportation, it is vitally important for the City of Merrill to continue to provide funding support for transit service to mitigate further service reductions and fare increases. The City also needs to consider transit whenever it is making decisions related to transportation and land use, as the efficiency and effectiveness of a transit system is directly affected by land use patterns and transportation investments. Improving land use decisions will reduce the costs to operate the transit system as well as encourage more people to use the system, which reduces the need for additional funding.

Promoting a better mix of uses and increasing density, especially for destinations (commercial and industrial areas) can reduce the stops and travel time needed for the transit system. Concentrating major employment centers into a few select districts would cluster destinations together. Increasing the allowable density could be achieved by reducing surface parking requirements and allowing buildings to take up a larger proportion of the lot area, which will concentrate more destinations within a smaller area of land, reducing the travel distance for transit. These land use patterns will also encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation, reduce trip distances for motorists, and better utilize parking.

## H. Transportation Facilities for Disabled

Para-transit is a specialized transit service to serve elderly and disabled persons who require more accessible vehicles and flexible routing. Providers of this service are usually existing municipal transit operators, taxi companies, and private companies with buses and vans. Merrill Go Round has accessible buses with accommodations for wheelchairs, and there are some other accessible transit services provided by Lincoln County Social Services and volunteer drivers. The Pine Crest nursing home provides some transit services for the elderly. It is common for transit services to require registration to prove a disability. This practice can provide additional barriers and reduce the effectiveness for people with disabilities, especially people that are temporarily disabled. The impacts of this practice should be strongly considered against the potential for fraud when planning for transit for people with disabilities.

## I. Transportation and Land Use

The interrelationship between land use and transportation makes it necessary for the development of each to be planned with the other. Types, intensities and patterns of land-uses influence the traffic on roadways, the demand for transit, and the feasibility of active transportation. Intensely developed land often generates high volumes of traffic, yet if it is developed densely while encouraging alternative transportation, traffic increases can be mitigated. If this traffic is not planned for, safety can be seriously impaired for both local and through traffic flows. On the other hand, transportation infrastructure and investments influence the development intensity, desirability, and accessibility of adjacent land, affecting the potential uses.

Traffic generated and attracted by any new land-use can increase congestion on the roadway system. Even without creating new access points, changes in land-uses can alter the capacity of the roadway. The new business may generate more vehicle traffic. An uncontrolled number of driveways tends to affect highways by increasing the amount of turning traffic into and out from these attached driveways, therefore impairing safety and impeding traffic movements.

### 5.3 Goal, Objectives & Policies

#### Goal:

Provide an integrated, efficient, balanced, and economical transportation system that provides mobility, convenience, and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including young, elderly, transit-dependent and disabled citizens. This includes providing choices in the mode of transportation (car, transit, bicycle, walking, etc.), easy transfer between modes, and accessible and convenient opportunities for those without the use of a motor vehicle.

#### Objectives:

1. Improve transit access to community activity centers such as schools, parks, shopping areas, employment centers, government offices, medical facilities, and elderly housing.
2. Ensure that schools, parks, playgrounds and similar activity centers are well served by sidewalks and bicycle routes.
3. Evaluate the City of Merrill zoning code for transportation impacts of land use requirements, such as excessive parking requirements, intensity and density.
4. Implement recommendations in the *Merrill Bike and Pedestrian Plan 2015*.
5. Provide appropriate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on arterial and collector roads, based on volume and speed of traffic and the connectivity value of the road.
6. Work with WisDOT to control access onto Highways 51, 64 & 107 to preserve capacity and movement of traffic. Encourage WisDOT to commission/fund highway corridor plans for these highways to address corridor development, intersection deficiencies, sight distances and turning movements.
7. Evaluate candidate roads using FHWA guidelines and apply road diets to arterial streets that will not be resurfaced or reconstructed within the next five years.
8. Develop Airport Land Use Ordinance under Wisconsin Statutes sections 114.135 and 114.136 to protect the public investment in the Merrill Airport.

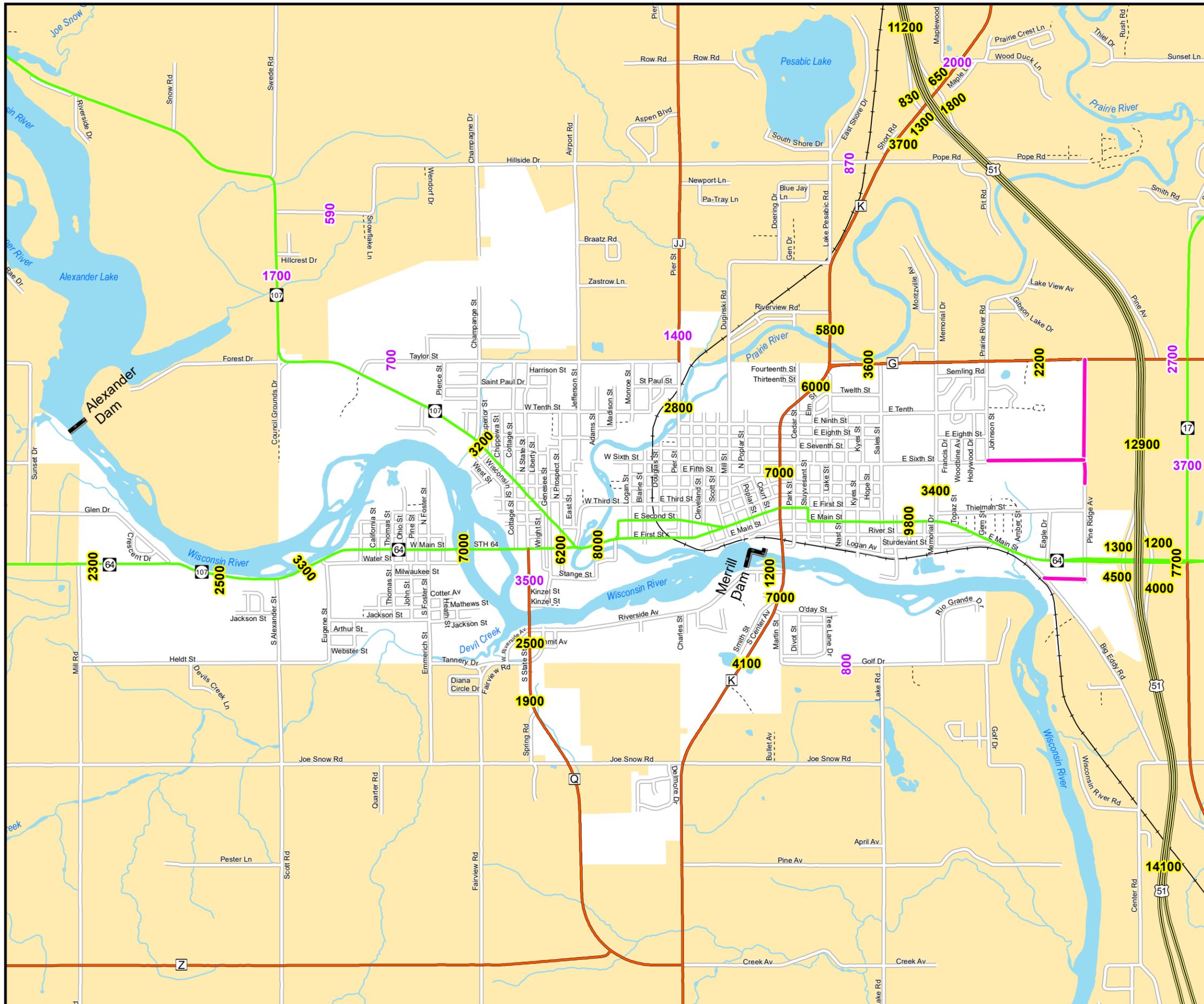
9. Evaluate areas where speeding is a concern and implement measures, such as traffic calming, to address safety concerns.
10. Utilize river corridors for multi-use trail development.

Policies:

1. Encourage a well-connected, grid-like street pattern in new development.
2. Plan for extension of major arterials and other roads as necessary to complete connections, provide for appropriate routes for trucks and emergency vehicles and serve planned development areas.
3. Consider future road locations, extensions or connections when reviewing development plans and proposals.
4. Use the official map to plan an interconnected road network and reserve space prior to development occurring.
5. Include appropriate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on all arterial and collector roads when undergoing resurfacing or reconstruction.
6. Direct land uses that generate heavy traffic to roads that have been constructed for such use.
7. Encourage traditional neighborhood designs (TND) and cluster development as a means to support a range of transportation choices and control traffic impacts.
8. Enhance local transit service and support the transit system through both funding and land use decisions, especially for transit dependent populations.
9. Consider bicycle and pedestrian accessibility when selecting sites for new public facilities such as schools, parks, libraries and community centers.
10. Require bicycle and pedestrian access to be carefully considered during site plan review.
11. Work with rail service providers and users to address facility or service issues in order to maintain safe and efficient rail operations in the City.

12. Prohibit cul-de-sacs and dead end streets unless topography or other environmental factors limit other options.
14. Prioritize maintenance and safety enhancements of existing roads over capacity expansions and new roads.
15. Reduce travel lane widths to 10 feet wherever practical (including minor arterials and principle arterials less than 45mph), to reduce speeding, improve safety, reduce maintenance costs and increase the available space for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and terraces.

DRAFT



Map ?  
**Transportation**  
 City of Merrill

**DRAFT**

**Legend**

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Future Roads
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Railroad
- Dams
- Water
- 2010 Average Daily Traffic Count
- 2013 Average Daily Traffic Count



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, WisDOT  
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

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Attachment: Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Map (1661 : Review of Transportation Chapter)

## **CHAPTER 7: LAND USE - DRAFT**

### **7.1 Background**

Merrill encompasses over 5,000 acres and lies at the confluence of the Wisconsin and Prairie Rivers. It is also at the crossroads of Highway 51 and 64 and serves as the county seat for Lincoln County. The city has a growing commercial base, numerous neighborhoods and is home to many parks. How land is used and how it should be used in the future is the fundamental purpose of this chapter.

#### **A. Previous Plans**

Several plans related to land use have been developed over the years, including the previous comprehensive plan and sewer service area plan. Previous city and county plans form the foundation for this chapter.

#### **Comprehensive Development Plan, 2007**

The previous plan was prepared under the state's new planning law (66.1001) and it replaced a 1997 plan. Some of the goals identified in that plan, include: create an economically efficient and environmentally sustainable development pattern, revitalize business districts, enhance Merrill neighborhoods, and preserve and enhance the quality of life in the community. A major issue identified in that previous effort was the need to expand employment and tax base in the community.

#### **Wellhead Protection Plan, 1996**

This plan focuses on preventing contaminants from entering the area of land around the public water supply. It identifies existing well locations, surrounding land uses, and recharge areas. The plan also incorporates recharge direction of flow, potential contamination sources within ½ mile radii of each well site, public education and conservation programs, and contains a management plan for addressing potential sources of contamination in the delineated well head protection areas.

All of the municipal wells and two alternative well sites were incorporated. Two of the city's wells are on the far west side of the city, and the other three wells, as well as two potential sites, are located on the eastern edge of the city. According to the plan, the east side aquifer has untapped capacity for at least one more well.

### Sewer Service Area Plan, 1996

The goal of the plan is to guide growth in areas where it can be efficiently served by sanitary sewer. The City desires an orderly, compact development pattern within the Sanitary Sewer Service Area and will not extend sanitary sewer lines outside its corporate boundaries nor outside the Sanitary Sewer Service Area.

In addition to delineating an urban sewer service boundary, the Sewer Service Area Plan provides a framework for future planning at each individual municipal level. The goals and policies developed throughout this planning process will also be applicable and useful in the development of local policy direction with respect to land use decisions within these communities. That plan was developed in 1996 and needs updating.

### Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan, 2015

In 2001 Lincoln County adopted a comprehensive plan which was also adopted under the comprehensive planning law. The towns of Merrill, Pine River, and Scott, which surround the City of Merrill were all involved in the process. Within those plans, much of the area adjacent to the city identifies rural single family and suburban single family residential development. Depending on the location and density these uses may or may not be compatible with the city's plan. In 2011 the county updated portions of that plan. In 2015 the county merged the two plans into one "integrated" plan.

### Lincoln County Farmland Preservation Plan, Underway

In 2015 the county kicked off the process of preparing a farmland preservation plan. This type of plan identifies areas where the most productive soils for agriculture are located and further identifies those that are the most important for long-term preservation. Part of the justification of these plans is to preserve our local food production capacity. Only areas located within towns can be identified for farmland preservation, however, some of these areas may hinder growth for the city depending on location. The plan is expected to be developed over 2016 and adopted in early 2017.

## B. Land Use Issues

The following are issues that have been identified during the planning process. They all have varying impacts on the future land use development in the area.

### Redevelopment & Revitalization:

Redevelopment along the river in the downtown area has been a strong focus for the community. Many of the buildings in this area are old and underutilized. There is substantial opportunity for redevelopment in this area. There are several neighborhoods that are beginning to show signs of age and disrepair, and the traditional commercial areas have also seen some decline. Some underutilized industrial properties are scattered throughout the city as well. Many of these areas may need some assistance to revitalize.

The city has some tools including tax incremental financing to promote redevelopment and revitalization in some areas, but there are limitations with that program. A redevelopment authority (RDA) is also in existence as is a housing rehabilitation program.

### Population Growth:

There is concern for the long-term for population growth in the city. Projections show a relatively stagnant population for the city. For overall growth, population growth is needed. Most new residential development in the area has occurred outside of the city, while the city's housing stock continues to age. There is a desire to have new housing construction within the city, including multi-family and single family homes to meet future market demands.

### Surrounding Development & Annexation:

Future uses in the planning area the city considers the planning area to be within one and one-half miles of its corporate limits. This is the same area that the city has the authority to provide extraterritorial review of subdivision proposals.

All non-agricultural development on lands located within the adopted Merrill Sanitary Sewer Service Area shall be served with the full array of municipal services. Unsewered urban development is strongly discouraged within the Merrill Sanitary sewer Service Area because large unsewered lots cannot be efficiently served with sanitary sewer and water, nor with other services such as storm sewer, sidewalks, high

levels of police and fire service, and street maintenance. Unsewered development is also discouraged because it allows for scattered development and land speculation that often results in premature conversion of productive agricultural land. Another reason is that septic systems are generally environmentally inferior to municipal systems.

The city encourages neighboring land uses, which emphasize agricultural preservation, allowance of very limited amounts of very low-density (1 dwelling unit per 35 acres) residential development and protection of natural resources in areas outside of the Merrill Sanitary Sewer Service Area. The city also discourages the creation of unsewered subdivisions within the sanitary sewer service area.

The City strongly encourages annexations to occur prior to development to ensure that such development is consistent with City plans, zoning and subdivision design standards, and utility systems. It is expected that growth will occur around both interchanges and to the south of the city. Currently, the county encourages annexation or at least sets standards to make annexation easier in the Suburban Residential district in the county zoning ordinance. Within this district there is a cooperative joint review process of proposed projects with developers, town and county representatives and the city.

## 7.2 Inventory & Trends

This section describes the general existing land uses in the city, it identifies future demands for land, it reviews land values, and it outlines a future land use plan for the city and the surrounding area. It also establishes basis goals, objectives and policies for the city related to land use and the other previous chapters.

### A. Existing Land Use

The City of Merrill is the largest city in Lincoln County and serves as the government center of the county. The city is located on the banks of the Wisconsin and Prairie Rivers and is surrounded by the Towns of Merrill, Pine River and Scott.

The city is roughly three miles east to west and about a mile north to south. The city is surrounded by agricultural uses, scattered residential, woodlands, and open space. In general, commercial development is stretched along State Highway 64 from the Highway 51 Interchange to the west side of the city, with the newest commercial development near the Highway 51 and 64 interchange. Government uses, such as the county, city, library and schools are located along this corridor as well, including some public housing. There are numerous other publicly owned parcels scattered throughout the city, including government facilities and a variety of parks and other open spaces.

Industrial uses are concentrated near the railroad tracks on the Wisconsin River and on the northwest part of the city near the airport and industrial park. Although some scattered industrial uses remain in some neighborhoods. Residential uses dominate most of the other areas of the city.

A comprehensive planning process requires that existing land use information be inventoried. To categorize land use starts with the examination of 2015 airphotos and on the ground review of that information. Ten basic land use classifications were used to categorize information. They are: Agriculture, Commercial, Governmental, Industrial, Open Lands, Residential, Multi-Family, Transportation, Outdoor Recreation and Woodlands. Water is also reflected.

See the Existing Land Use Map.

Using GIS, we calculated the land area for each category. Residential uses were the most dominant (23%), followed by Woodlands (19%), and Open Lands (12%). See Table 2.

**Table 1:**  
**Existing Land Use, 2015**

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	256	5.0%
Commercial	306	6.0%
Governmental	311	6.1%
Industrial	309	6.0%
Multi-Family	22	0.5%
Open Lands	615	12.1%
Outdoor Recreation	325	6.4%
Residential	1,176	23.1%
Transportation	428	8.4%
Water	356	7.0%
Woodlands	986	19.4%
Total Acres*	5,090	100.0%

Source: NCWRPC GIS  
(\* These calculations are derived from airphotos and generalized planning maps)

**B. Land Use Supply**

There are about 5,090 acres of land within the city. Of that over 600 acres are considered open lands (about half of that is part of the airport), 250 acres is agricultural and another 980 acres are wooded. Much of these three land uses are expected to transition to other uses over time. Combined these three categories amount to about 1,800 acres, however, not all of this land is suitable or desirable for development. Some types of use that require specific land, such as industrial uses, are more limited. The Airport Industrial Park is nearly full.

In addition, much of the future growth of the city will be as a result of annexation. Two areas have been identified as the major growth areas for the city. Residential development is expected to occur south of the city in the Town of Scott and Commercial and Industrial development will occur to the east in the Town of Pine River. Little urban type growth is expected north and west of the city, except for development near the “K” interchange in the Town of Merrill.

The planning area for the City of Merrill, which extends 1.5 miles around the city, adds over 19,500 acres. Nearly 80 percent of the total planning area is woodlands, agriculture, grasslands or tree plantations. Some of these areas will be where the city grows in the future.

C. Land Use Demand

Population and employment projections were completed in an effort to identify the demand for land in the City of Merrill. See Attachment A for detailed review of the population, housing and employment projections.

1. Population Projections

In 2014, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) prepared population projections for each county and community in the state. DOA projections indicate that the city will decline in population by about 70 persons by 2035. However, the most recent DOA population estimates seems to contradict their own long term projections.

Although the projections indicate a stagnant population, based on recent estimates and the city’s goal to increase the population, there is optimism that there will be growth in the city.

**Merrill Population Projections**

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	Change
DOA	9,573	9,460	9,625	9,690	9,500	(73)

Source: WI DOA Estimate (2015) & Projections

2. Housing Projections

As a result of the population growth there will be a need for additional housing units. Using the 2010 persons per housing unit figure and the population change we can project anticipated housing unit needs. Although official population projections would indicate little need for additional units, there are numerous market demands that indicate a need for new units, as well as the city’s desire to increase the population. A modest growth 20 units per years is projected to meet these demands, which translates into 400 units over the planning period.

**Merrill Housing Unit Projections**

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	Change
Units	4,595	4,695	4,795	4,895	4,995	400

Source: U.S. Census & NCWRPC

3. Employment Projections

County level data is the most detailed employment data available. No state agency prepares local level employment information. Therefore, to determine employment projections an economic modeling system is used. EMSI data is provided by zip code so the information provided includes much the city and surrounding area. Nearly 2,000 jobs are expected to be added over the planning period.

**Merrill Employment Projections**

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	Change
Total	8,052	8,134	8,628	8,934	9,251	1,199

Source: EMSI (Data reflects zip code 54452) & NCWRPC

4. Demand

Based on these various projections there appears to be sufficient land to meet future needs to 2035. However, if there is a desire to increase population, more residential land area is needed, especially for larger suburban type development.

D. Land Values

Overall equalized land values in the city have increased about 6 percent over the last five years; however, not all categories of land increased equally. Residential property values stayed virtually the same, while commercial and manufacturing increased by 23 and 8 percent respectively. See Table 2.

**Table 2:  
Merrill Equalized Property Values**

Type of Property	2010	2015	% Change
Residential	257,361,200	257,635,100	0.1%
Commercial	86,081,500	106,066,600	23.2%
Manufacturing	29,645,000	32,172,100	8.5%
Agricultural	72,000	30,900	-57%
Undeveloped	66,600	87,800	31.8%
Ag. Forest	0	0	NA
Forest	0	0	NA
Other	0	0	NA
<b>Total Value:</b>	<b>373,226,300</b>	<b>395,992,500</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

Source: WI DOR, 2010 & 2015

**E. Redevelopment and Infill Opportunities**

The river has become a focus of redevelopment efforts in the city. There still are some downtown retail areas and some of the older residential districts in the city that need to be addressed as well. There are several parcels within the city that are underutilized and could be ideal locations for redevelopment or infill development.

As new development occurs on the fringes of the community it is important that the city focus its efforts to maintain the vitality of the existing commercial and residential areas of the community. The city has an active redevelopment authority that has a goal of focusing funding in specific revitalization and redevelopment areas of the city.

**F. Future Land Use Plan**

The Future Land Use Plan Map represents the long-term land use recommendations for all lands in the city and the planning area. Although the map is advisory and does not have the authority of zoning, it is intended to reflect community desires and serve as a guide for local officials to coordinate and manage future development of the city.

The Future Land Use Plan Map builds on the previous plan efforts and the previous chapters of this plan. Using information from demographics, housing, transportation and the other chapters the future land use was developed, which represents the desired arrangement of future land uses in the year 2035. Some change is anticipated within the developed areas of the city, but the majority of change is expected

along the edge of the city and in certain portions of the planning area over time.

The previous comprehensive plan utilized twelve basic land use categories. Those same categories were used in this plan as well. They are defined below:

1. Neighborhood Residential

Identifies areas recommended for typical single-family residential development, typically consisting of smaller lot sizes served by municipal sewer and water – a high density area.

2. Multi-family Residential

Identifies areas recommended for high-density multi-family residential development, to include duplexes, condos and apartments - the highest density area.

3. Rural Residential

Identifies areas recommended for less dense residential development, consisting of larger minimum lot sizes than the neighborhood residential category and may not have municipal sewer and water. These areas also provide a transition from more dense development to the rural countryside – a lower density area.

4. Mixed Use Commercial

Identifies areas recommended areas for mixed use development, where commercial is the dominant use, but residential is a common second floor type use.

5. Commercial

Identifies areas recommended for commercial development. This would include retail sales, personal and professional services, and offices.

6. Industrial

Identifies areas recommended for industrial development. This would include manufacturing, processing, and assembly facilities.

## 7. Business Park

Identifies areas recommended for office and related type development. This would include medical clinics, office buildings, and other related types activities.

## 8. Interchange Development

Identifies areas recommended for highway related commercial development, such as convenience stores, hotels/motels, and fast food.

## 9. Governmental/Public/Institutional

Identifies areas recommended for governmental, and public/institutional facilities. The airport is included here.

## 10. Transportation Corridors

Identifies areas recommended for road network along with the recommendations for improved and safe traffic movement in the city, including rail facilities.

## 11. Open Space/ Preservation

Identifies areas recommended for open space and recreation. This would include parks and other recreational facilities. It also identifies areas recommended for preservation and protection, such as floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, DNR wetlands, steep slopes, and open water. This could include endangered species habitat or other significant features.

## 12. Agricultural/Forest

Identifies area recommended for agricultural uses such as crop farming and livestock operations. Also includes wooded areas. These are transitional areas that long term will likely be considered for other uses.

Land use and zoning are similar but they are not the same. Land use categories are more general, while zoning is much more detailed. Zoning is the legal tool to regulate specific land uses. Since the land use categories are generalized it is possible that more than one zoning district would correspond to each of the categories. Timing is also a

consideration for zoning. Some of the areas identified on the future land use map may not be appropriate for certain zoning for five or ten years, based on other factors, such as the extension of specific infrastructure. The goal was to produce a generalized land use plan map to guide the city's growth in the next twenty years.

Change is expected to occur near both interchanges as those lands convert to commercial type development. Some areas to the east, south and north are expected to become residential. Future business park type development is expected south of the city along Highway Q and Business 51, and to the east along the Highway 51 corridor.

See the Future Land Use Plan Map.

#### G. Future Land Use Planning Area

As the city grows in the future it will need to expand so it is important to monitor the area surrounding the city. The planning area extends 1.5 miles around the city, which covers about 24,500 acres. This is the area the city can exercise plat review, as outlined in state statutes.

In addition, the city has a Sewer Service Area (SSA) plan in place that establishes a boundary where new development requiring sewer can occur. The boundary of the Sewer Service Area was intended to be large enough in size to easily accommodate projected urban growth in the Merrill area over a 20-year period and provide enough excess acreage to ensure efficient operation of the urban land market. The boundary was last amended in 2015 and covers about 7,500 acres.

These two boundaries, the 1.5 mile planning boundary and the sewer service area boundary are important to monitor. Land area closest to the existing corporate limit are the most important to monitor. These are the areas most likely where annexations will take place and expand the city limits.

As discussed earlier, the city is likely to grow north into the Town of Merrill, east beyond Highway 51 in the Town of Pine River, and to the south along Business 51 into the Town of Scott. The future land use plan for the planning area indicates residential growth to the north, and to a lesser degree to the southwest of the city. Business and commercial expansion is expected to the east and south. This growth will happen slowly over time, as needed.

See the Future Land Use Planning Area Map.

## H. Existing Land Use Tools

To implement the recommendations of the comprehensive plan there are some basic tools that are available to the city. These are zoning, subdivision ordinance, and official mapping.

- Zoning:

Zoning is the major tool used to regulate land uses and implement a comprehensive plan. The zoning ordinance regulates the use of property to advance the public health, safety, and welfare. It has been used throughout the United States and in Wisconsin since the 1920's.

A zoning ordinance creates different use zones or districts within a community. Each district has a list of permitted uses, which are uses that are desirable in a district. Each district may also contain a list of special uses, sometimes called special exceptions or conditional uses, which are allowed under certain circumstances, and require review by a local body in to be allowed. All other uses are prohibited.

Zoning regulations are adopted by local ordinance and consist of two basic things, a map and related text. The zoning map displays where the zoning district boundaries are, and the text describes what can be done in each type of district. The Future Land Use Plan and zoning are similar but they are not the same. Land use categories are more general, while zoning is much more detailed. Zoning is the legal tool to regulate specific land uses. Since the land use categories are generalized it is possible that more than one zoning district would correspond to each of the categories.

Zoning should be derived from, and be consistent with, the policy recommendations adopted in the comprehensive plan. The desired land uses should “drive” the development of specific zoning ordinance provisions including district descriptions, permitted uses, conditional uses and the zoning map. This consistency has been important in upholding legal challenges in the Courts.

Following the planning process it is critical that the zoning ordinance be updated to incorporate the findings of the plan.

- Land Division:

Subdivision regulation relates to the way in which land is divided and made ready for development. A community can control the subdivision of land by requiring a developer to meet certain conditions in exchange

for the privilege of recording a plat. While imposing conditions restricts the use of private property, the cumulative effect of land subdivision on the health, safety, and welfare of a community is so great as to justify public control of the process.

Of all the land use control devices available, subdivision regulation has probably the greatest potential. When compared with zoning, a well-administered subdivision control is more useful in achieving planning goals and its influence is far more lasting. Once land is divided into lots and streets are laid out, development patterns are set. Subdivision regulations can ensure that those development patterns are consistent with community standards. Subdivision regulations can also ensure the adequacy of existing and planned public facilities such as schools, wastewater treatment systems, water supply, to handle new growth. Finally, subdivision regulation can help ensure the creation and preservation of adequate land records.

There is some overlap between zoning and subdivision codes in terms of standards. Both ordinances, for example, can set lot sizes. Both can deal with the suitability of land for development. Implementing important plan techniques such as rural cluster development often requires use of the zoning ordinance and the subdivision ordinance.

Under Wisconsin law, the city has authority to provide extraterritorial review of subdivision requests in the surrounding towns within one and one-half mile of its corporate limits.

- Official Mapping:

Cities may adopt official maps. These maps, adopted by ordinance or resolution, may show existing and planned streets, highways, historic districts, parkways, parks, playgrounds, railroad rights of way, waterways and public transit facilities. The map may include a waterway only if it is included in a comprehensive surface water drainage plan. No building permit may be issued to construct or enlarge any building within the limits of these mapped areas except pursuant to conditions identified in the law.

Official maps are not used frequently because few communities plan anything but major thoroughfares and parks in detail in advance of the imminent development of a neighborhood.

- Other tools

#### Extraterritorial Plat Review:

Extraterritorial plat review allows the city to review, and approve or reject subdivision plats located within the extraterritorial area as long as the city has a subdivision ordinance or an official map. Statutes define the review area as the unincorporated areas within 1.5 miles of the city.

The purpose of the extraterritorial plan approval process is to help cities influence the development pattern of areas outside the city that will likely be annexed at some point. It also helps cities protect land uses near its boundaries from conflicting uses outside the city limits.

#### Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Zoning:

Extra-territorial zoning is tool allowed under Wisconsin Statutes. To do this, however, requires a lengthy three-step process including the creation of a joint committee consisting of representatives from the City and the Towns, which work together to adopt this tool.

This joint committee prepares a proposed plan and regulations for the extraterritorial area and submits it to the City, which may adopt it as proposed or resubmit the proposal to the joint committee for changes. In either case, the proposed regulations must receive a favorable majority vote from the joint committee before the City can adopt them.

### 7.3 Goal, Objectives & Policies

As in previous chapters of this plan a series of goals, objectives, and policies are identified. Some of these were brought forward from the previous comprehensive plan. These are identified to set a general direction for the City.

Goal:

Create an economically efficient and environmentally sustainable development pattern.

Objectives:

Provide an adequate supply of developable land for residential, commercial, industrial, and other uses.

Encourage compact, mixed-use development patterns that are well served by sidewalks, bicycle routes and other non-motorized transportation facilities.

Promote development that has mixed housing neighborhoods that provide a range of housing types, densities and costs.

Policies:

Utilize existing public facilities to serve new development whenever possible.

Periodically update the wellhead protection ordinance to protect the municipal water supply.

Encourage the clean up of contaminated sites that threaten public health, safety and welfare.

Coordinate the Sewer Service Area Plan and the Comprehensive Plan.

Provide safe and convenient access between neighborhoods, employment centers, schools, service centers and recreational centers.

Encourage a range of housing types and densities throughout the city.

Utilize official mapping authority within the City limits and the planning area to identify and protect a road system that serves the long-term transportation and other infrastructure needs of the community.

Discourage low density, unsewered urban development in the identified growth areas adjacent to the city.

Discourage conflicting land uses anywhere in the city or planning area.

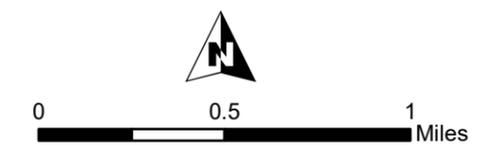
Encourage collaboration between the City of Merrill and neighboring jurisdictions with regard to planning initiatives and development policies.

# Map ? Existing Land Use City of Merrill

## DRAFT

### Legend

-  US Highway
-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Private Roads
-  Railroad
-  Dams
-  Water
-  Agriculture
-  Commercial
-  Governmental / Institutional
-  Industrial
-  Multi-Family
-  Open Lands
-  Outdoor Recreation
-  Residential
-  Transportation
-  Woodlands

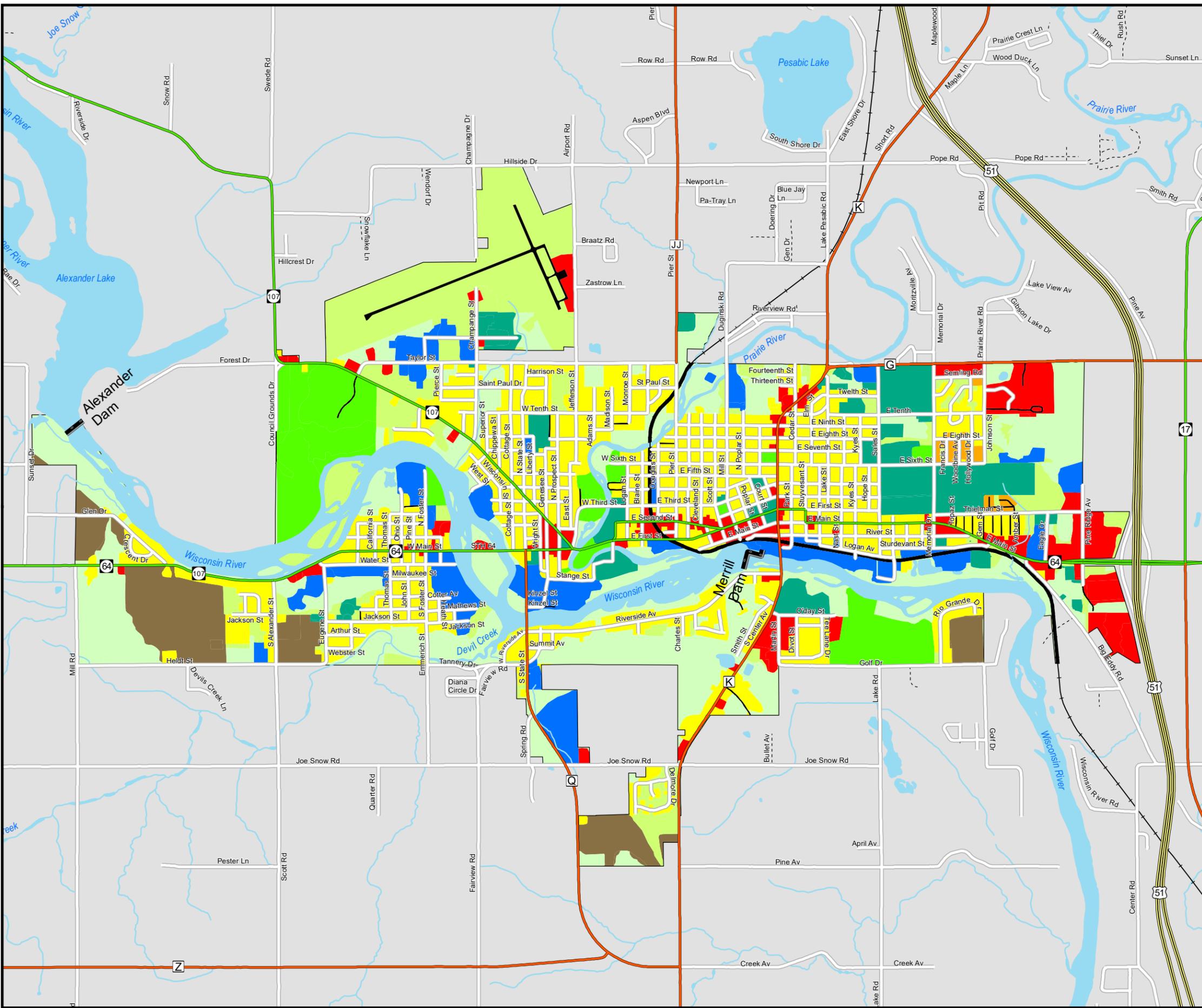


Source: WI DNR, NCRWPC, Landuse 2015

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCRWPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



**North Central  
Wisconsin Regional  
Planning Commission**  
210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403  
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org



Attachment: Comprehensive Plan - Land Use Map (1662 : Review of Land Use Chapter)

# Map ? Future Land Use Plan City of Merrill

## DRAFT

### Legend

-  US Highway
-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Private Roads
-  Railroad
-  Dams
-  Water
-  Agricultural / Forest
-  Business Park
-  Industrial
-  Commercial
-  Interchange Development
-  Governmental / Public / Institutional
-  Airport
-  Mixed Use Commercial
-  Neighborhood Residential
-  Rural Residential
-  Open Space / Preservation
-  Transportation Corridors



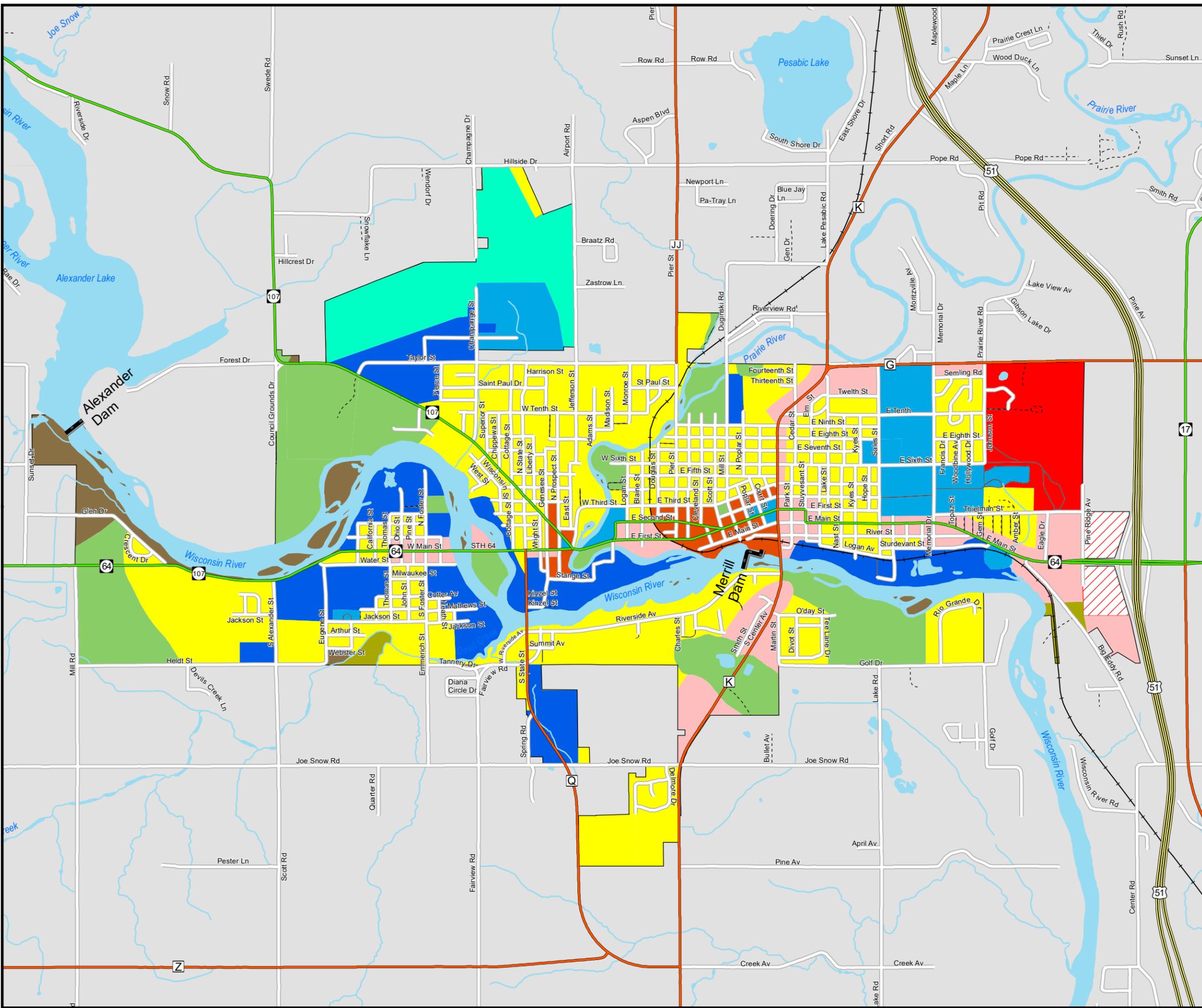
Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC

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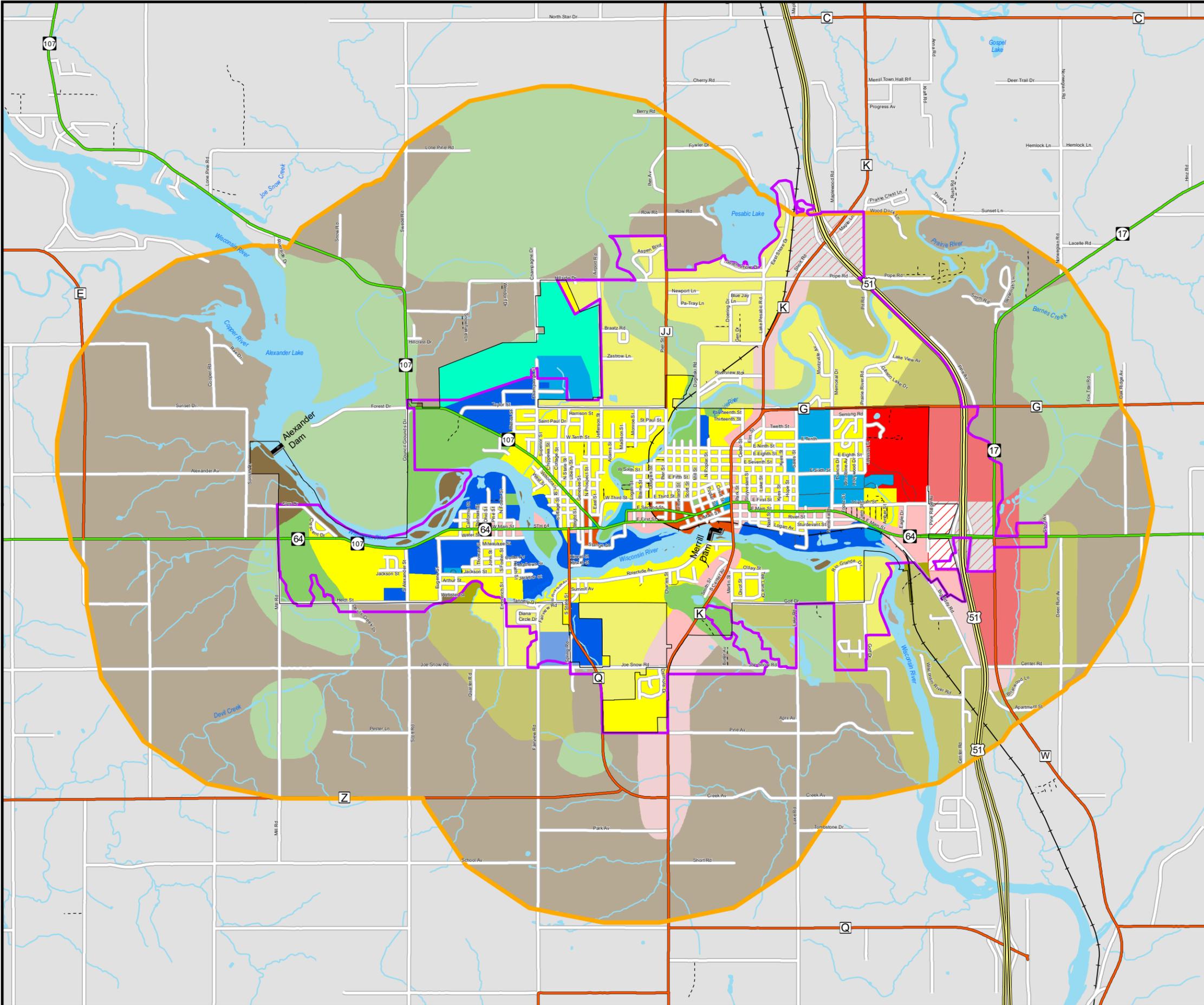


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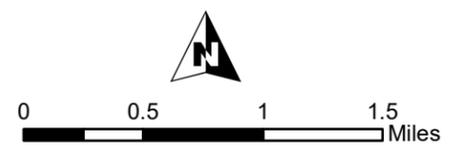
Attachment: Comprehensive Plan - Future Land Use Map (1662 : Review of Land Use Chapter)



Map ?  
**Future Land Use Planning Area**  
 City of Merrill  
**DRAFT**

**Legend**

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private Roads
- Railroad
- Dams
- Water
- Sewer Service Boundary
- Extra-Territorial Boundary
- City Boundary
- Agricultural / Forest
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Interchange Development
- Governmental / Public / Institutional
- Airport
- Mixed Use Commercial
- Neighborhood Residential
- Rural Residential
- Open Space / Preservation
- Transportation Corridors



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

**North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**  
 210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403  
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

ADDRESS 607 N. Sales APPLICATION NO. 16057  
TAX NO. 34.0001.000.084.01.00 FEE 50.00

**BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION - CITY OF MERRILL**

RECEIVED  
APR 15 2016  
BY:

The hereby undersigned applies for a permit and is aware of and agrees to comply with all ordinances of the City of Merrill. Failure to comply with ordinances or call for required inspections will result in issuance of citations.

Inspections or Questions call 536-4880

✓ OWNER Lincoln County ✓ SIGNATURE [Signature]  
✓ ADDRESS 607 N. Sales ✓ DATE 4-4-2016  
Merrill, WI 54452 CONTRACTOR \_\_\_\_\_  
✓ PHONE NO. 715-536-0307 LICENSE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Is your property in a Historic District or a Historic Site? \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Description of proposed work Place per built garden  
Shed on property (8x12 feet)

Total square feet of building or addition \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated construction cost \$2,500

BUILDER \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
DWELLING CONTRACTOR QUALIFER NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
ELECTRICIAN \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
HVAC \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
PLUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Do Site Plan Drawing (Reverse Side) if Placing New Buildings/Structures on Lot, and Show and List All Property Easements on the Site Plan.**

**Do not write below. Follow instructions/conditions listed below when permit is issued.**

Zoning

Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_ Block No. \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision \_\_\_\_\_  
Zoning District \_\_\_\_\_ Floodplain Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_ Fire Zone Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_

Zoning Permit Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_  
Conditions of Approval \_\_\_\_\_

Building Inspection

Building Permit Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_  
Conditions of Approval \_\_\_\_\_

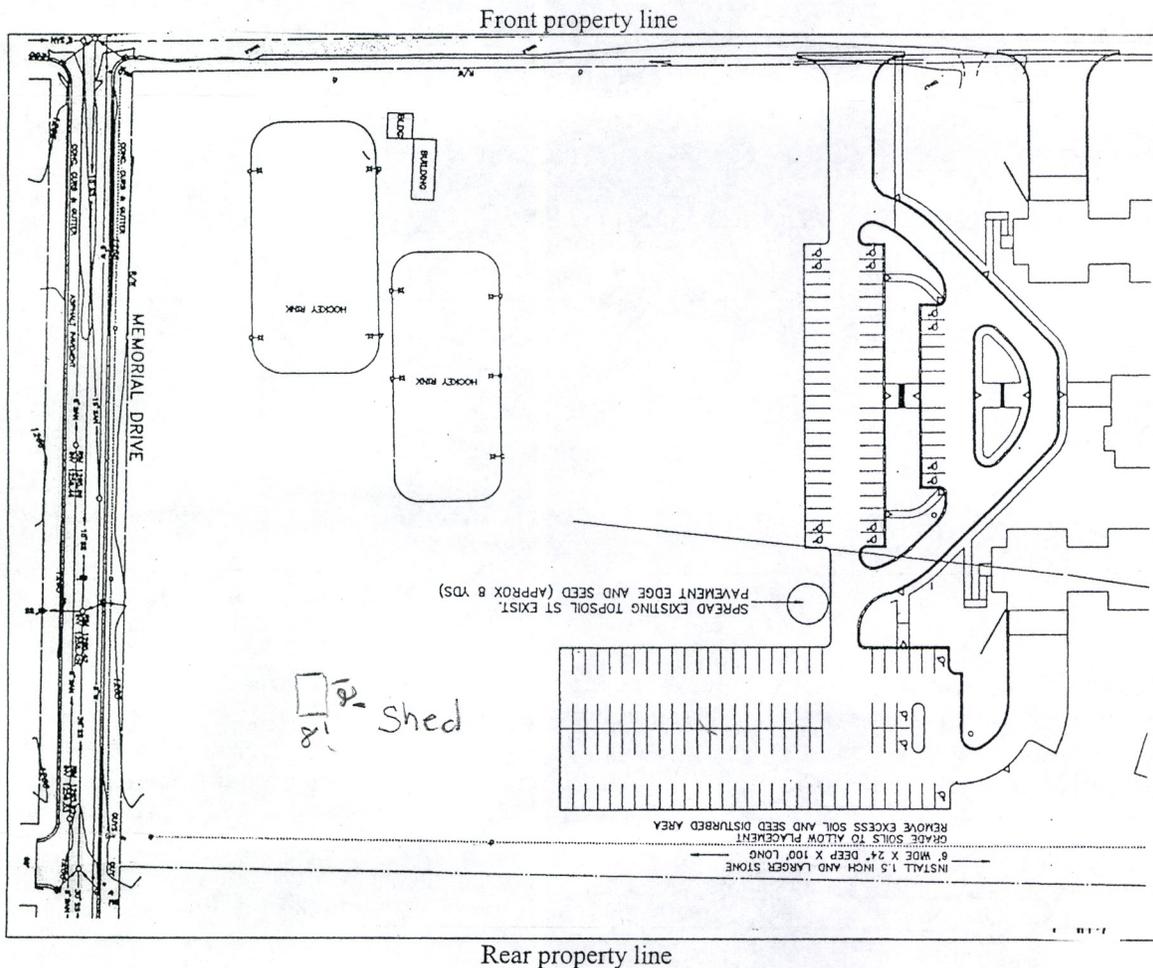
Attachment: Site Plan from Lincoln County for shed (1614 : Site Plan from Lincoln County for shed)

**Site Plan Instructions:**

Use the line drawing below for the Site Plan Drawing. Treat the four outside lines of the drawing as the property lines of your lot. Draw an overhead view of each current structure on the property and of the new structure you want to build. Identify them on the drawing as (house, garage, shed, deck, **new garage**, **new shed** etc.) Show the dimensions (example 24' x 30') of each structure, enter its distance (example ← 21' 8" →) from property lines, and enter the distance (example ← 10' →) between structures. Be clear and precise in entering all distance measurements for the new structure.

(You MUST stake the building site & call 536-4880 for approval prior to starting to build.)

**(OWNER OF PROPERTY IS RESPONSIBLE TO KNOW WHERE THEIR PROPERTY LINES ARE)**



Rear property line

Property site address Memorial + Sixth

Lot width \_\_\_\_\_ Lot depth \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment: Site Plan from Lincoln County for shed (1614 : Site Plan from Lincoln County for shed)

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_****A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE VACATION OF AN ALLEY LOCATED IN LOT TWO, BLOCK FOUR OF THE ORIGINAL PLAT OF JENNY**

WHEREAS, the Public Works Director/City Engineer requests and recommends the vacation of an alley, which has never been utilized as such, to clear title on the former Lincoln House Lot; and,

WHEREAS, the alley to be vacated is described as: In the City of Merrill, Lincoln County, Wisconsin,

Commencing at a point in the South line of Lot Two (2), Block Four (4) of the original Plat of Jenny, Forty-five feet West of the Southeast corner of said Lot and running thence northerly in a line parallel with the East line of said lot to the North line of said lot, thence East along said North line to a point therein Thirty Five (35') feet back from the North East corner of said lot; thence South on a line parallel with said East line to the South line of said lot; thence West along said south line to the place of beginning; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Public Works on April 27, 2016 and the City Plan Commission on May 3, 2016, have recommended such vacation;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERRILL, WISCONSIN this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2016, that the following described alley be vacated:

Commencing at a point in the South line of Lot Two (2), Block Four (4) of the original Plat of Jenny, Forty-five feet West of the Southeast corner of said Lot and running thence northerly in a line parallel with the East line of said lot to the North line of said lot, thence East along said North line to a point therein Thirty Five (35') feet back from the North East corner of said lot; thence South on a line parallel with said East line to the South line of said lot; thence West along said south line to the place of beginning.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City hereby declares that the alley being vacated is not needed for public purposes and hereby declares that the portion vacated shall revert, to the extent permitted by law, to the adjoining property owners.

CITY OF MERRILL, WISCONSIN

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
William R. Bialecki  
Mayor

Passed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
William N. Heideman  
City Clerk

DRAFT

Attachment: Resolution on Alley Vacation near former Lincoln House (1612 : Resolution on Alley Vacation)

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE VACATION OF A PART OF MEADOW LANE**

WHEREAS, The Public Works Director/City Engineer requests and recommends the vacation of that portion of Meadow Lane lying within Lot 4 of Certified Survey Map 2467, City of Merrill, Wisconsin; and,

WHEREAS, the street to be vacated is described as:

That portion of Meadow Lane lying within Lot Four (4) of Certified Survey Map Number 2467, recorded in Volume Fourteen (14) of Certified Survey Maps on Page 58 in the City of Merrill, Lincoln County, Wisconsin; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Public Works on April 27, 2016 and the City Plan Commission on May 3, 2016, have recommended such vacation;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERRILL, WISCONSIN this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2016, that the following described street be vacated:

That portion of Meadow Lane lying within Lot Four (4) of Certified Survey Map Number 2467, recorded in Volume Fourteen (14) of Certified Survey Maps on Page 58 in the City of Merrill, Lincoln County, Wisconsin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City hereby declares that the street being vacated is not needed for public purposes and hereby declares that the portion vacated shall revert, to the extent permitted by law, to the adjoining property owners.

RECOMMENDED BY: Board of Public Works and City Plan Commission

CITY OF MERRILL, WISCONSIN

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
William R. Bialecki  
Mayor

Passed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
William N. Heideman  
City Clerk

Attachment: Resolution on Street Vacation - Portion of Meadow Lane (1611 : Resolution on Street Vacation)

**CITY OF MERRILL**  
1004 EAST FIRST STREET  
MERRILL, WI 54452

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

All persons interested will be given an opportunity to be heard at a public hearing to be held by and before the City Plan Commission of the City of Merrill, Wisconsin, commencing at **6:00 p.m., on Tuesday, May 3, 2016**, in the City Hall Council Chambers, 1004 East First Street, Merrill, Wisconsin, on the following proposed matter to wit;

1. Request by the City of Merrill to rezone property located at 1501 Hwy 107 from Rural Development to Planned Unit Development with the intent of constructing multi-family apartment complex. Legally Described in Pin# 25131061010203. The following parcels rezoned from Rural Development to R-1 Single Family Residential: 1340 Grand Ave, 801 Edgewater, 803 Edgewater, 901 Edgewater, 1401 Highland, 1403 Highland, 1404 Highland, 1405 Highland, 1407 Highland, 1411 Highland, 1413 Highland, 1501 Highland. All located within the City of Merrill, Township 31N, Range 6E, Section 10, Lincoln County Wisconsin.

Anyone having any questions regarding the hearing should contact Zoning Administrator, Darin Pagel at 536-4880.

Dated: April 12, 2016

CITY OF MERRILL, WISCONSIN

By:   
 William N. Heideman  
 City Clerk



