

## Chapter Two Background Conditions

### 1. Overview

This chapter provides a brief overview of Winnebago County to provide the general context for farmland preservation planning. Due to very recent efforts by Winnebago County there is significant data regarding existing conditions in both the comprehensive plan, updated in 2016, and the land and water resource management plan, also updated in 2016. The information in this chapter is intended to supplement those sources or to update relevant data.

### 2. Population

There were 169,004 county residents in 2015, which represents a 20 percent increase over 1990 (Table 1). By 2040, the county population is anticipated to reach 193,130 (Table 2).

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**Table 1. Population Counts and Estimates; Winnebago County and Civil Divisions; 1970-2015**

<b>Civil Division</b>	<b>1970 Count</b>	<b>1980 Count</b>	<b>1990 Count</b>	<b>2000 Count</b>	<b>2010 Count</b>	<b>2015 Estimate</b>
<b>Town</b>						
Algoma	3,158	3,249	3,492	5,702	6,822	7,007
Black Wolf	2,127	2,318	2,154	2,330	2,410	2,435
Clayton	1,771	2,353	2,264	2,974	3,951	4,045
Menasha	8,682	12,307	13,975	15,858	18,498	18,832
Neenah	2,942	2,864	2,691	2,657	3,237	3,323
Nekimi	1,193	1,516	1,475	1,419	1,429	1,450
Nepeuskun	743	682	647	689	710	708
Omro	1,444	1,684	1,616	1,875	2,116	2,525
Oshkosh	4,943	4,420	4,655	3,234	2,475	2,523
Poygan	734	898	824	1,037	1,301	1,328
Rushford	1,415	1,420	1,361	1,471	1,561	1,736
Utica	1,029	1,038	1,046	1,168	1,299	1,402
Vinland	1,472	1,632	1,688	1,849	1,765	1,850
Winchester	1,209	1,261	1,433	1,676	1,763	1,667
Winneconne	1,408	1,595	1,761	2,145	2,350	2,145
Wolf River	904	1,052	1,037	1,223	1,189	1,217
<b>Village</b>						
Winneconne	1,611	1,935	2,059	2,401	2,383	2,487
<b>City</b>						
Appleton [1]	0	5	443	812	1,490	1,540
Menasha [1]	14,836	14,728	14,638	15,643	15,144	15,110
Neenah	22,902	22,432	23,219	24,507	25,501	25,781
Omro	2,341	2,763	2,836	3,177	3,517	3,543
Oshkosh	53,082	49,620	55,006	62,916	66,083	66,582
Winnebago County	129,946	131,772	140,320	156,763	166,994	169,004

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (counts) and American Community Survey (estimate)

Notes:

1. Municipality located in Winnebago County and another county

**Table 2. Population Projections; Winnebago County and Civil Divisions: 2020-2040**

Civil Division	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
<b>Town</b>					
Algoma	7,770	8,360	8,925	9,375	9,730
Black Wolf	2,535	2,605	2,670	2,695	2,700
Clayton	4,510	4,855	5,200	5,470	5,685
Neenah	3,810	4,110	4,400	4,635	4,820
Nekimi	1,445	1,460	1,470	1,460	1,435
Nepeuskun	775	805	835	855	865
Omro	2,300	2,415	2,520	2,595	2,645
Oshkosh	2,475	2,475	2,465	2,415	2,355
Poygan	1,435	1,530	1,615	1,680	1,735
Rushford	1,497	1,715	1,765	1,790	1,805
Utica	1,400	1,460	1,515	1,550	1,575
Vinland	1,755	1,755	1,750	1,720	1,680
Winchester	1,870	1,940	2,000	2,030	2,050
Winneconne	2,540	2,650	2,760	2,830	2,875
WolfRiver	1,220	1,240	1,260	1,255	1,245
<b>Village</b>					
Fox Crossing	20,070	21,080	22,020	22,680	23,140
Winneconne	2,495	2,550	2,600	2,620	2,615
<b>City</b>					
Appleton [1]	1,680	1,820	1,950	2,055	2,145
Menasha [1]	15,330	15,460	15,520	15,380	15,120
Neenah	26,990	27,810	28,520	28,870	28,970
Omro	3,740	3,885	4,020	4,100	4,140
Oshkosh	69,250	71,250	72,900	73,650	73,800
Winnebago County	177,050	183,230	188,680	191,710	193,130

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Administration

Notes:

1. Municipality located in Winnebago County and another county

### 3. Land Use Patterns and Development Trends

When the county was first settled in the 1800s, communities primarily were established close to lakes, rivers, and railroad lines. Proximity to transportation routes and commerce were the primary locational criteria and little thought was given to environmental constraints such as floodplains. The major communities in the county (Oshkosh, Neenah, Menasha, Omro, and Winneconne) were established in such areas. Map 35 (Volume 1) shows the parcel density from 2014.

Winnebago County has about 312,704 acres of land and water. Wetlands and water account for 71,000 acres, or about 23 percent of the County. The predominant land use in the county continues to be agriculture. About one-half of the County’s total area is in agricultural uses, although this total is continuing to decline. It is anticipated that more than 7,300 acres of agricultural land will be converted to non-agricultural land uses from 2000 to 2020. Approximately 132 acres will be converted per year to residential use, and 177 acres per year to other non-agricultural uses. Residential land uses account for half of all developed land in the County. The other half of the developed acreage is attributed to a mix of uses including commercial, industrial, roadway, utilities, public facilities, and recreation/conservation.

**Table 3. Land Use by Type; Unincorporated Winnebago County: 1995-2020**

Land Use	1995 [1]	2000 [1]	2003 [1]	2010 [2]	2015 [2]	2020 [2]
Residential	15,344	16,990	15,293	15,445	15,600	15,756
Agricultural	183,516	179,764	177,649	175,890	174,148	172,423
Commercial	914	1,128	1,242	1,255	1,268	1,281
Industrial	1,211	1,214	1,353	1,367	1,382	1,397

Source: Winnebago County GIS Department

Notes:

1. Actual
2. Estimate

Land use density is highest in areas closest to the urban areas as well as along the various lakeshores and some of the major road corridors. Pockets of higher density development exist in the older rural communities of Fisk, Pickett, Waukau, Eureka, Winchester, and Larsen. In addition, isolated pockets of higher density development are appearing in rural areas experiencing newer subdivision development. This is particularly evident in the Town of Clayton. Lower density development on parcels more than 20 acres in size are typically found in agricultural areas and in or within environmentally sensitive areas.

Residential development is spreading westward, especially in the sewer service areas in the towns of Algoma and Menasha. Additional residential development is also spreading into the Town of Clayton as a result of its proximity and access to the Fox Cities urbanized area. Industrial and commercial activity has also expanded in the urbanized areas of Winnebago County.

### City of Oshkosh

Based on the City of Oshkosh’s current (2005-2025) Comprehensive Plan, it was expected that significant growth would occur based on the recent history (at that time) of rapid development. If the recession of 2008 did not occur, it is likely that the City may have achieved their projection for having an additional 9,000+ acres of land being converted to new development during the planning period. The city is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan with the assistance of the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and is likely to adopt it sometime in 2017. Thus far, much of the City’s discussion during this process has occurred around revitalization of its downtown, riverfront areas, and existing neighborhoods. Numerous redevelopment projects have also occurred over the past 5 years and the City is poised to expand on those opportunities. While the plan is not completed, it is likely that the new version will project significantly less acreage on the periphery of the City to be developed in favor of infill and re-development options. The designation of farmland preservation lands by the Towns and County will be considered by the City and East Central when examining the appropriate locations for any new growth that would occur on the periphery. Neighboring Towns will be consulted with near the end of the City’s planning process, once preliminary ‘future land use’ maps are prepared.

## City of Menasha

Over the next 20 years, the city's comprehensive plan suggests that the city will add about 280 acres of residential development, 90 acres of commercial and industrial development, and 115 acres of institutional development. Much of the anticipated growth will likely occur in Calumet County, rather than in Winnebago County.

## City of Neenah

A significant amount of new development in the City of Neenah will occur as infill and redevelopment of areas within its corporate limits.

## City of Omro

Omro's comprehensive plan which was adopted in 2005 shows an outward expansion of the city on the north primarily for residential purposes and on the east along STH 21 for commercial and industrial purposes. A significant amount of future growth will occur on vacant lands within the city's corporate limits.

## Village of Fox Crossing

The Village of Fox Crossing is a new municipality consisting of former Town of Menasha land that was incorporated on April 20, 2016. Since the most recent comprehensive plan was adapted by the Town of Menasha in 2003, Fox Crossing is currently working on their first Comprehensive Plan as a new municipality. The 2003 plan places a maximum lot size on single lot rural developments as well as prohibiting platted developments outside the sewer service area in order to preserve productive agricultural land.

## Village of Winneconne

The Village of Winneconne's comprehensive plan, most recently updated in 2008, shows expansion of its corporate limits on the east along STH 116 for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes and to the west along STH 116 for residential purposes.

### Key Terms

**Drainage district** – A drainage district is a special district formed for the purpose of draining land, primarily for agriculture purpose and is subject to Chapter 88, Stats. Regardless of whether or not the drainage district was formed under ch. 88 Wis. Stats. (Formerly ch. 89) or any other law.

**Intergovernmental boundary agreement** – An agreement between local communities created pursuant to Section 66.0307, 66.0301 or 66.0225, Wis. Stats typically dealing with annexation, incorporation, consolidation, land use, revenue, service provision and other intergovernmental issues.

**Planned urban development** – The area designated in local land use planning for urban densities and the provision of municipal services such as municipal water and sanitary sewer services.

**Civil division** – The geographic area represented by an individual government entity.

## 4. Planned Urban Development

As further described in Chapter 8 of Volume 1, urban development is planned largely around existing urban centers and existing areas of dense development in order to preserve the existing urban and rural development patterns of the County. The plan also acknowledges the fiscal advantages of this urban development policy in efficient and economical use of existing infrastructure investment.

The plan also identifies urbanizing districts in the County based on the adjacencies to urbanized areas with transportation arterials and services.

Areas of the county within a sewer service area are depicted in Map 11 of Chapter 10, Volume 1.

## 5. Intergovernmental Boundary Agreements

The City of Oshkosh and Town of Algoma are municipalities in Winnebago County subject to a boundary agreement that controls annexations to the city. The Town of Nekimi has also entered a

boundary agreement and utilizes its comprehensive plan to delineate activities subject to this agreement.

## **6. Drainage Districts**

According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, there is one drainage district in the county. Larsen Drainage District is generally located along the Arrowhead River in the Town of Winneconne and includes 4,289 acres.