

City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029



Veterans' Memorial in Riverside Park

**Prepared by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission,
Under the direction of the Blair City Planning Commission and City Council**

ABSTRACT

Title: City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Summary: The City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029 responds to and is consistent with the State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law as defined in Sections 66.1001(1)a and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes. The comprehensive plan is made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the City that will in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.

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Ordinance No. 54

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF BLAIR, WISCONSIN

The Common Council of the City of Blair, Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

SECTION 1: Pursuant to sections 62.23(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, the City of Blair is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 2: The Common Council of the City of Blair, Wisconsin, has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by section 66.1001(4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 3: The Plan Commission of the City of Blair, by a majority vote of the entire Commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the Common Council the adoption of the document entitled "CITY OF BLAIR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2009-2029," containing all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 4: The City has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, in compliance with the requirements of section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 5: The Common Council of the City of Blair, Wisconsin, does, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the document entitled "CITY OF BLAIR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2009-2029," pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 6: This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members elect of the Common Council and publication and posting as required by law.

ADOPTED this 9th day of November, 2009.

Ardell Knutson

Ardell Knutson, Mayor, City of Blair

(Published): 12-10-09

(Approved): 5-0

Attest: Lori A. Ladson

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1. Issues and Opportunities

This section of the City Plan includes the background information as specified in State Statutes for the Issues and Opportunities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The City's history, demographic, social, economic, and education information are reported in this section. For planning and comparison purposes, social and economic information is also provided for the surrounding municipalities, Trempealeau County, the state of Wisconsin and United States. Overall objectives, policies, goals and programs for the City are presented in Chapter 9 of this Plan with the other City Planning initiatives.

City of Blair's History and Background

Norwegian immigrants first settled the area that is now the City of Blair in the 1850s. This settlement was originally known as Porterville but in 1873 the community's name was changed to Blair. The name of Blair came from a railroad entrepreneur by the name of John Insley Blair. John Blair was a major stockholder of the Green Bay and Minnesota Railroad (more recently called the Green Bay and Western, and currently called the Wisconsin Central). The City was incorporated on May 11, 1949, and has experienced steady growth. The City's population in 2007 was 1,273, according to the US Census Bureau. The City serves as an agribusiness center for the surrounding farms. The city's creamery, operated by the Associated Milk Producers, Inc. (AMPI) processes milk from the surrounding dairy farms and manufactures cheese. The City also is part of the Blair-Taylor School District, which provides education to elementary, junior high, and high school students.



AMPI's facility in downtown Blair

The City is strategically located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 53 and State Highway 95 in Trempealeau County. The Wisconsin Central Railroad also serves the City. The damming of the Trempealeau River by the City in the early 1900s created Lake Henry, which led to the creation of a city park and recreation facilities along the South shore of the lake. The City is approximately 1 square mile in size and less than 30 miles north of La Crosse, WI, and east of Winona, MN, and less than 45 miles south of Eau Claire, WI.

Population Trends and Projections

The City of Blair experienced a population increase of over 25% from 1960 to 1980, however the following decade recorded a population decrease of 1.4%. The decade of 1990-2000 again was a growth period for the City, with an increase in population of over 13%. Trempealeau County recorded lower rates of population growth from 1960 through 2000, while the state and nation outpaced the City of Blair and Trempealeau County in growth (see Table 1.01).

The City of Blair's population is projected to increase from 1,273 residents in 2000 to 1,584 residents by the year 2029, an increase of 23.5%, according to the Demographic Services Center of the State of Wisconsin's Department of Administration (see Table 1.01).

Table 1.01. City of Blair, Surrounding Towns, County, State, and National Population and Population Projections

Population Characteristics, 1960-2000								
Jurisdiction	1960 ⁽¹⁾	1970 ⁽¹⁾	1980 ⁽¹⁾	1990 ⁽¹⁾	2000 ⁽¹⁾	% Change 60-80	% Change 80-90	%Change 90-00
T. Arcadia	1,851	1,697	1,919	1,710	1,555	3.7	-10.9	-9.1
T. Ettrick	1,316	1,268	1,420	1,309	1,284	7.9	-7.8	-1.9
T. Lincoln	882	811	935	889	829	6.0	-4.9	-6.7
T. Pigeon	768	759	876	766	894	14.1	-12.6	16.7
T. Preston	1,060	1,027	1,112	963	951	4.9	-13.4	-1.2
V. Ettrick	479	463	462	491	521	-3.5	6.3	6.1
V. Pigeon Falls	207	198	338	368	388	63.3	8.9	5.4
C. Arcadia	2,084	2,159	2,109	2,166	2,402	1.2	2.7	10.9
C. Blair	909	1,036	1,142	1,126	1,273	25.6	-1.4	13.1
C. Whitehall	1,446	1,486	1,530	1,499	1,651	5.8	-2.0	10.1
Trempealeau Co.	23,377	23,344	26,158	25,263	27,010	11.9	-3.4	6.9
State	3,951,777	4,417,821	4,705,642	4,891,599	5,363,715	19.1	4.0	9.7
Nation	179,323,175	203,302,031	226,542,199	248,709,873	281,421,906	26.3	9.8	13.2
Population Projections, 2010-2029								
Jurisdiction	2010 ⁽²⁾	2015 ⁽²⁾	2020 ⁽²⁾	2025 ⁽²⁾	2029 ⁽³⁾			
T. Arcadia	1,588	1,604	1,620	1,628	1,639			
T. Ettrick	1,272	1,266	1,259	1,247	1,240			
T. Lincoln	781	763	746	725	710			
T. Pigeon	976	1,016	1,057	1,091	1,122			
T. Preston	927	915	903	886	875			
V. Ettrick	536	544	551	556	561			
V. Pigeon Falls	411	423	434	444	453			
C. Arcadia	2,456	2,482	2,508	2,521	2,538			
C. Blair	1,385	1,440	1,495	1,542	1,584			
C. Whitehall	1,695	1,709	1,723	1,728	1,737			
Trempealeau Co.	28,326	28,969	29,612	30,100	30,573			
State	5,751,470	5,931,386	6,110,878	6,274,867	6,414,440			
Nation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			

Sources: (1) U.S. Census Bureau, (2) Wis. Demographic Service Center, (3) Calculated from population trends 2010-2025

Table 1.02 shows estimated population growth in the City of Blair, surrounding municipalities and the state from 2001 through 2007. The estimates are based on the prior census and analysis of current data including housing units, dormitory and institutional populations, automobile registrations, residential electric meters and others. From 2001-2007 Blair's population fluctuated slightly and actually decreased by .8%, or 10 people. The state and Trempealeau County recorded increases of 3.3% and 4.6% from 2001-2007.

Table 1.02 City of Blair, Surrounding Towns, County, and State Population Increase 2001-2007

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Change	Numerical Change
T. Arcadia	1,585	1,602	1,610	1,621	1,643	1,647	1,660	4.7	75
T. Ettrick	1,287	1,293	1,302	1,307	1,304	1,304	1,298	0.9	11
T. Lincoln	815	815	822	824	832	829	810	-0.6	-5
T. Pigeon	907	914	928	940	941	949	945	4.2	38
T. Preston	952	950	956	966	960	958	968	1.7	16
V. Ettrick	524	521	526	532	526	522	519	-1.0	-5
V. Pigeon Falls	393	393	392	395	396	396	392	-0.3	-1
C. Arcadia	2,403	2,394	2,384	2,373	2,383	2,393	2,402	0.0	-1
C. Blair	1,291	1,301	1,297	1,296	1,302	1,296	1,281	-0.8	-10
C. Whitehall	1,657	1,655	1,664	1,666	1,659	1,670	1,671	0.8	14
Trempealeau Co.	27,229	27,393	27,599	27,765	27,975	28,126	28,119	3.3	890
State	5,400,449	5,453,896	5,490,718	5,532,955	5,580,757	5,617,744	5,648,124	4.6	247,675

Source: State of Wisconsin Demographic Services

Racial Characteristics

Whites make up over 98% of the population in the City of Blair and Trempealeau County (see Table 1.03). This is a much higher percentage than the State of Wisconsin (88.9%) and the United States (75.1%). American Indians and Alaska Natives, Blacks or African Americans, and Asians were next three highest recorded races in the City and Trempealeau County. No minority group in the City exceeded half a percent of the City or County's total population.

Table 1.03 City of Blair, Trempealeau County, State and Nation Population by Race

RACE	C. Blair	%	Trempealeau Co	%	State of WI	%	U.S.	%
One race	1,267	99.0	26,884	99.5	5,296,780	98.8	274,595,678	97.6
White	1,254	98.5	26,688	98.8	4,769,857	88.9	211,460,626	75.1
Black or African American	3	0.2	35	0.1	304,460	5.7	34,658,190	12.3
American Indian and Alaska Native	2	0.2	45	0.2	47,228	0.9	2,475,956	0.9
Asian	1	0.1	36	0.1	88,763	1.7	10,242,998	3.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0	3	0.0	1,630	0.0	398,835	0.1
Some other race	7	0.5	77	0.3	84,842	1.6	15,359,073	5.5
Two or more races	6	0.5	126	0.5	66,895	1.2	6,826,228	2.4
Totals	1,273	100	27,010	100	5,363,675	100	281,421,906	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000

The 2000 Census showed the City of Blair had a significant elderly population, with over 28% of the City's population over the age of 65 (see Table 1.04). This large percentage of elderly is in part due to a 98-bed nursing home located in the City. Blair has a higher percentage of population over age 65 than Trempealeau County (16.4%), the State (13.1%), and the Nation (12.4%) for this same time period. The second largest population group in the City was the 25-34 age group at 12.3%, while the second largest population group in the county, state and nation was the 35-44 age group (see Table 1.04).

Table 1.04 City of Blair, Trempealeau County, State and Nation Population by Age 2000

Age Group	City of Blair	%	Trempealeau Co	%	State of Wisconsin	%	U.S.	%
Under 5 yrs	81	6.4	1,663	6.2	342,340	6.4	19,175,798	6.8
5 to 9 yrs	86	6.8	1,940	7.2	379,484	7.1	20,549,505	7.3
10 to 14 yrs	72	5.7	2,017	7.5	403,074	7.5	20,528,072	7.3
15 to 19 yrs	68	5.3	1,867	6.9	407,195	7.6	20,219,890	7.2
20 to 24 yrs	60	4.7	1,231	4.6	357,292	6.7	18,964,001	6.7
25 to 34 yrs	156	12.3	3,317	12.3	706,168	13.2	39,891,724	14.2
35 to 44 yrs	155	12.2	4,300	15.9	875,522	16.3	45,148,527	16.0
45 to 54 yrs	127	10.0	3,688	13.7	732,306	13.7	37,677,952	13.4
55 to 59 yrs	57	4.5	1,401	5.2	252,742	4.7	13,469,237	4.8
60 to 64 yrs	48	3.8	1,151	4.3	204,999	3.8	10,805,447	3.8
65 to 74 yrs	106	8.3	2,030	7.5	355,307	6.6	18,390,986	6.5
75 and over	257	20.2	2,405	8.9	347,246	6.5	16,600,767	5.9
Totals	1,273	100	27,010	100	5,363,675	100	281,421,906	100
Median Age	42.3		38.3		36		35.3	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment levels in the City are lower than the county, state and nation (see Table 1.06). The State of Wisconsin is trying to develop strategies to reduce its brain-drain problem and grow the number of state residents with Bachelors degrees because of increased income levels that occur with a higher knowledge work force.

Table 1.06 Educational Attainment

	% High Sch Grad or Higher	% Bachelor Degree or Higher
C. of Blair	64.4	9.9
Trempealeau Co	67.7	13.3
State of WI	85.1	22.4
U.S.	80.4	24.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Housing Unit Trends and Projections

Housing unit projections (see Table 1.07) were derived using the projected population estimates in Table 1.01, and dividing them by the average number of people per housing unit as of the 2000 US Census. The average number of people living in each Blair housing unit in 2000 was 2.3. Using this technique, the city's housing stock is projected to grow from 564 in 2000, to 689 by 2029, or by approximately 4 homes a year.

Table 1.07 Housing Units and Projections Based on Population per Household - C Blair, Surrounding Municipalities, County, State, & Nation

	TOTAL HOUSING UNITS							HOUSING UNIT PROJECTIONS			
	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Chg 70-90	% Chg 90-00	2010	2015	2020	2025	2029
T. Arcadia	492	611	595	610	20.9	2.5	635	642	648	651	655
T. Ettrick	384	482	501	526	30.5	5.0	530	528	525	520	517
T. Lincoln	179	267	262	271	46.4	3.4	252	246	241	234	229
T. Pigeon	217	278	272	326	25.3	19.9	361	376	391	404	415
T. Preston	312	367	340	372	9.0	9.4	357	352	347	341	337
V. Ettrick	166	201	228	254	37.3	11.4	255	259	262	265	267
V. Pigeon Falls	83	130	136	144	63.9	5.9	152	157	161	164	168
C. Arcadia	714	838	970	1,112	35.9	14.6	1,116	1,128	1,140	1,146	1,154
C. Blair	371	449	493	564	32.9	14.4	602	626	650	670	689
C. Whitehall	524	659	653	733	24.6	12.3	737	743	749	751	755
Trem-pealeau Co.	7,639	9,744	10,097	11,482	32.2	13.7	11,803	12,070	12,338	12,542	12,739
State	1,472,332	1,863,897	2,055,676	2,321,144	39.6	12.9	2,500,639	2,578,863	2,656,903	2,728,203	2,788,887
Nation	68,704,315	88,410,627	102,263,678	115,904,641	48.8	13.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

According to building permit activity in the City from 1997 to 2007, the City averaged approximately 2.1 single-family homes, 0.6 duplex units, 0.1 multi-family units, 0.9 commercial buildings, and no industrial buildings (see Table 1.08). Building permit trends from 1997 to 2007 (see Table 1.08) serve as a basis for projecting the number of new homes, commercial buildings and industrial buildings that can be expected over the coming decades. Using this historical growth trend, the City can expect 48 new single-family homes, 15 new duplex units, 2 new multifamily units, 21 new commercial buildings and no new industrial buildings by the year 2030 (see Table 1.09).

Table 1.08 City of Blair Building Permits Issued 1997-2007

	Single Family Housing Units	Duplex Housing Units	Multi Family Housing Units	Commercial Buildings	Industrial Buildings
1997	2	2	0	2	0
1998	2	4	0	0	0
1999	2	0	0	0	0
2000	0	0	0	0	0
2001	2	0	0	0	0
2002	4	0	0	1	0
2003	4	1	1	1	0
2004	3	0	0	2	0
2005	0	0	0	0	0
2006	2	0	0	2	0
2007	2	0	0	2	0
Total	23	7	1	10	0

Table 1.09 Building Permit Projections Based on 1997 –2007 City Building Permit Rate Trends

Type of Building	2010	2015	2020	2025	2029	2030
Single Family Homes	6	17	27	38	46	48
Duplex Homes	2	5	8	11	14	15
Multi Family Homes	0	1	1	2	2	2
Commercial Buildings	3	7	12	16	20	21
Industrial Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Additional Permits Per Period Since 2007	11	30	48	67	82	86

Employment Characteristics

Table 1.10 shows the sectors of the economy in which residents of the City were employed in 1989 and 1999. Comparisons between some categories are difficult due to changes in category names and definitions that occurred between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses. The major employment sectors in 1999 for the City of Blair were Manufacturing (203 employees); Educational, Health and Social Services (120 employees); Retail Trade (43 employees); and Construction (38 employees). In 1989 the major employment sectors were similar: Manufacturing (101 employees); Retail Trade (76 employees); Health Services (68 employees); and Educational Services (41 employees).

Table1.10 City of Blair Employment Characteristics 1989 and 1999

Employment Sector	1989 # Employed	1989 % Employed	1999 # Employed	1999 % Employed	1989 –1999 # Change	1989 –1999 % Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Hunting & Mining	3	0.7	25	4.5	22	733.3
Construction	26	5.9	38	6.8	12	46.2
Manufacturing	101	22.7	203	36.5	102	101.0
Transportation	20	4.5	-	-	N/A	N/A
Communications and Other Public Utilities	4	0.9	-	-	N/A	N/A
Wholesale Trade	14	3.2	8	1.4	-6	-42.9
Retail Trade	76	17.1	43	7.7	-33	-43.4
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	16	3.6	-	-	N/A	N/A
Business and Repair Services	15	3.4	-	-	N/A	N/A
Personal, Entertainment & Recreation Services	11	2.5	-	-	N/A	N/A
Educational Services	41	9.2	-	-		
Health Services	68	15.3	-	-	N/A	N/A
Other Professional and Related Service	23	5.2	-	-	N/A	N/A
Public Administration	26	5.9	24	4.3	-2	-7.7
1989 Total	444	100			N/A	N/A
Transportation & Warehousing and Utilities			25	4.5	N/A	N/A
Information			2	0.4		
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing			22	4.0	N/A	N/A
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative and Waste Management Services			13	2.3	N/A	N/A
Educational, Health and Social Services			120	21.6	N/A	N/A
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services			20	3.6	N/A	N/A
Other Services (except public administration)			13	2.3	N/A	N/A
1999 Totals			556	100	N/A	N/A

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce-Bureau of the Census

Income Levels

The City's median family income and per capita income for both 1989 and 1999 were below those of the County, State and Nation (see Table 1.11). Between 1989 and 1999, the disparity between median family income and per capita income in Blair and in the County, State, and Nation increased. The number of residents with low and moderate incomes living in the Grand View Care Center Inc., a large nursing care facility, may contribute to these lower income levels in the City. The 2000 U.S. Census reported that of Trempealeau County's 465 residents that are institutionalized, 95 (about 20%) live in the City of Blair.



Grandview Care Center

Table 1.11 City of Blair Median Family Income and Per Capita Income

Jurisdiction	1989 Median Family Income \$	1999 Median Family Income \$	1989-1999 Median Family Income % Change	1989 Per Capita Income \$	1999 Per Capita Income \$	1989 –1999 Per Capita Income % Change
City of Blair	26,830	41,292	53.9	11,090	16,253	46.6
Trempealeau County	28,526	45,369	59.0	10,674	17,681	65.6
State Of Wisconsin	35,082	52,911	50.8	13,276	21,271	60.2
Nation	35,225	50,046	42.1	14,420	21,587	49.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Issues and Opportunities Based On City of Blair Household Survey

During the spring of 2009 the City conducted a 22-question survey of households asking their opinions on issues and opportunities relating to the city services, lifestyle, and community needs. Respondents were not required to answer every question, and each survey invited two people in each household to submit responses, which explains the small variance in the number of responses for each question.

Questions 1-19 involved the selection of one of five responses ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” Questions 20 through 22 asked for written responses pertaining to the biggest issues facing the City, and what residents liked most and least about living in the City.

Table 1.12 summarizes survey Responses for the first 19 questions. Over 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the City should encourage residential and industrial growth and development, and over 90% felt that commercial growth and development should be encouraged. Overall, the survey results indicated that residents feel strongly about the need for growth and development in the City of Blair.

Over 75% of residents believed that police and fire services and parks and recreation facilities were adequate. Almost 70% of residents felt that the City should maintain the existing level of public services, and 63% respondents indicated they were not willing pay extra taxes in order to improve public services.

Table 1.12 City of Blair Household Survey Results

Planning and Development Issue Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Residential growth and development in the City should be encouraged.	0	0	24	71	72
2. Business growth and development in the City should be encouraged.	0	1	10	57	99
3. Manufacturing growth and development in the City should be encouraged.	1	4	14	57	90
4. The City should encourage affordable housing development.	6	16	56	49	40
5. The City's current road network and road conditions are adequate.	3	22	32	97	12
6. The City's police and fire protection services are adequate.	4	5	26	91	39
7. The City's park and recreation facilities are adequate.	0	16	24	84	42
8. The City should maintain the existing level of public services.	2	5	41	90	26
9. The City should levy additional taxes to improve public services.	38	67	50	10	0
10. Open lands/natural areas in the City should be protected	5	19	50	60	32
11. I am willing to pay to protect natural resources such as fields, wetlands, open spaces and waterways.	37	42	62	19	7
12. The plans and ordinances that the City uses now to regulate development are adequate.	18	44	70	27	2
13. The City should require that houses are maintained better in my neighborhood.	10	17	46	45	48
14. Speeding traffic is a problem in my neighborhood.	12	40	42	29	42
15. The City should require that yards are maintained better in my neighborhood.	9	23	53	38	41
16. The City should provide loans and grants for housing rehabilitation.	18	30	55	46	16
17. The appearance of the commercial areas in the City should be improved.	0	8	57	65	34
18. The appearance of the entrances to Blair should be improved.	4	13	64	56	26
19. The City's current recycling/trash removal is adequate.	3	4	15	101	42

Question 20 asked residents to list two of the biggest issues facing the City of Blair today. Some of the biggest concerns included: lack of a grocery store; lack of available jobs in the City; need for business and industry; and unkempt residential properties.

Question 21 on the survey asked residents what they liked most about living in the City of Blair. Some of the most common responses included: beautiful City park; friendly people; quiet area; quality schools; and small town atmosphere.

Question 22 on the survey asked residents what they like least about living in the City. Some of the most common responses included: appearance of some buildings and properties; the local government; the grain barrels located near the park; and the absence of a grocery store.

All survey responses for questions 20, 21, and 22, along with a more in-depth analysis of the survey, are included in the Appendix.

General Issues and Opportunities in the Plan

In general, the issues and opportunities identified in this Plan and in the survey responses show that:

- The City's population has been growing.
The City's population increased by about 13% between 1990 and 2000. This exceeded the county and state growth rate and was about the same as the national population growth rate over the same time period.
- The City should work to improve the educational attainment of the population.
The percentage of residents with a high school education or higher is about 74%. This number is lower than that of the County (80.9%), State (85.1%), and the Nation (80.4%).
- The City has limited space within existing city boundaries to accommodate residential and business growth.
Growth to the north is limited by the Wisconsin Central Rail Line and the Trempealeau River
Growth to the south is limited due to low-lying wetlands
Growth to the west could only occur through annexation of land on the west side of U.S. Highway 53
Growth to the east could continue through annexation of agricultural land
- The City has opportunities for the efficient reuse of empty commercial buildings.
Numerous commercial buildings are vacant in the downtown. This is an inefficient use of the land and new businesses need to be encouraged to occupy the vacant buildings.
- The City must encourage industrial development in proper locations.
Survey results indicated that residents are unhappy with the proximity of industrial buildings to residential areas, schools, and parks.
- The City must maintain its outdoor recreation facilities.
While expansion of the parks is not necessary, upgrades to equipment and improved access will allow the parks and Lake Henry to provide the citizens of Blair with the quality of recreation they have come to expect.
- The City must address the housing needs of the future.
Projections for necessary residential lands in 2030 are estimated at 19.5 acres. This land is available in the southeast part of the City, east of Tappan Street and south of Olson Street. Developing this land would have the advantages of providing housing to citizens of Blair that is close to other amenities of the City, particularly the high school.
- Housing stock in the City is older than in other communities.
Housing stock built before 1960 constitutes 55% of all units, which is a higher percentage than in the County (48%), State (43%), and Nation (35%).
- Housing is less expensive in the City than in other communities.
The median housing value in the City of Blair in 2000 was \$68,800, lower than the average value in the County (\$77,000), State (\$112,000), and Nation (\$119,000). This could make the City attractive for potential homebuyers.
- Residents in the City spend less on financing their homes than in other communities.
In the City of Blair, 13.9% of homeowners spent 30% or more of their income on their homes in 2000, a lower percentage of homeowners than in the County (14.2%), State (17.8%), and Nation (21.8%). This could make the City attractive for potential homebuyers.

- Lower property values mean lower tax revenues.

Although affordable housing in the City allows residents to spend more of their income elsewhere and may attract people to the community, lower property values means less revenue is collected in property tax revenue.

- The City must address the quality of neighborhood and property conditions

The 5.8% vacancy rate is higher than the 3% needed for residents to have adequate choice in housing.

Survey results indicated that numerous residential properties are not properly maintained and the front lawns feature items such as irreparable automobiles. This can have a negative impact on the value of other houses in the area.

- The City must address the housing needs of the future.

Projections for necessary residential lands in 2030 are estimated at 19.5 acres. This land is available in the southeast part of the City, east of Tappan Street and south of Olson Street. Developing this land would have the advantages of providing housing to citizens of Blair that is close to other amenities of the City, particularly the high school.

- The City is connected to other communities by dependable roads and railroads.

U.S. Highway 53, State Highway 95, County Highways I, N, and S, and the Wisconsin Central Rail Line serve the City of Blair.

- The traffic counts on many roads in Blair decreased between 1992 and 2006, despite an increase in population (see Table 1.01). This indicates a decline in commercial travel in Blair, whether the result of Blair residents driving less, or of people outside the City bypassing it as they travel to other places.

- The City would like to further develop their street network involving phasing in east-west extensions of Maple and Olson Streets. The complete extension of 4th Street from U.S. Highway 53 on the West to Elland Road on the East is another street project being considered, but it would also require a bridge across Tappen Coulee Creek.

- The City has lower income and a higher poverty rate than other communities.

The City's median household income of \$30,679 in 1999 is lower than the median household income in the County (\$37,889), State (\$43,791), and Nation (\$41,994). However the number of residents with low and moderate incomes living in the Grand View Care Center may contribute to the lower income levels in the City. The City's 9.6% poverty rate in 1999 was higher than the rates in the County (8.3%) and State (8.7%), but lower than the National rate (12.4%).

- Additional business and industrial development is needed.

- The City is developing a new industrial park to accommodate business and industry expansion.

- The City needs to provide expansion opportunities and/or attract "Traded Companies" to the community. Traded Companies are firms that make or provide value-added products or services and export them out of the region and import new capital into the community that is shared with other sectors of the City's economy through an economic multiplier effect. Traded companies typically provide superior wages and benefits because of the knowledge base needed by their workforce. Examples of Traded Companies that have a high location quotient and success in Western Wisconsin are equipment and metal manufacturers, wood and forest product companies, and agricultural and food processing companies.

- The City has an opportunity to capitalize on its strategic location in close proximity to Eau Claire, WI, La Crosse, WI, and Winona, MN, and on the Wisconsin Central Rail line. Appealing marketing materials could be developed to promote the City as an affordable place to build a business and to raise a family.
- Direct-to-consumer agriculture and community-supported agricultural production systems are growing sectors of the economy. Organic fuels and bio-fuel production are encouraging innovations. Ventures in all these areas could be productive in the City of Blair.
- The City was successful in receiving Public Facility Grant from the State of Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant program through federal stimulus funding. This grant award will be used to design and construct a downtown improvement project.
- Re-establishment of a grocery store in the City is underway.
- The City has three tax incremental financing districts to assist with economic development

- Lack of Jobs in the City

Many residents commute to work in bigger cities such as La Crosse, WI, Eau Claire, WI, and Winona, MN. The mean travel time for City of Blair workers is about half an hour.

- Young Residents Leaving the City

The median age for the City of Blair exceeds the County, State, and National average, according to Table 1.04. The aging population in the City of Blair indicates that young residents are moving out of the city in greater numbers than they are being replaced. This trend suggests that there are not enough jobs to prevent young workers from moving away or to attract new people to the area.

- The City has high-cost infrastructure concerns

The City's concrete reservoir will need to be replaced in the near future.
Lake Henry will need to be dredged in the near future.

- The City plans to improve its quality of life by upgrading its walkways

The City would like to develop a walking trail along the south shore of Lake Henry to the weigh ponds.
The City would like to extend a sidewalk with lighting along Broadway Street from Tappan Street to Elland Road and then South on Elland Road to the High School.

- Need for a Municipal Filtration System

The City of Blair pumps around 316,000 gallons of water per day.
The City of Blair Ground water supply is susceptible to contaminations from a variety of sources, and the water has high concentrations of iron and manganese.

- Blair-Taylor Middle/High School

The school enrolls about 320 students in grades 7-12 and provides a wide variety of sports programs and extracurricular activities.

- **Waterways**

Lake Henry is one of the largest locations for recreational activities in the City, and anglers enjoy catching Northern Pike, Large Mouth Bass, and Panfish in the 44-acre lake. However, sedimentation is a concern for the lake, and proper lake management is necessary to protect and maintain the lake's quality.

With a river and two creeks flowing through the City wetlands and water are an important natural resource totaling over 55 acres.

- **State Stewardship Funds**

The City of Blair is eligible to apply for State Stewardship funds through the DNR to acquire land and easements, develop recreational facilities, and restore wildlife habitat.

- **Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC)**

The MRRPC represents nine counties in western Wisconsin including Trempealeau County. The MRRPC maintains the region's eligibility as an Economic Development District and eligibility for EDA funding.

- **Partnerships with Preston and Whitehall**

The City of Blair and the Town of Preston have a joint fire department and public library.

The city cooperates with the city of Whitehall for wastewater treatment.

City of Blair's "Statement of Overall Objectives, Policies, Goals and Programs to Guide Future Development and Redevelopment Over the Next 20 Years":

The State's comprehensive planning law calls for local governments to prepare an overall statement to guide future development. Based on the information presented in this Plan the following is the City of Blair's Statement.

The City of Blair is committed to making itself the best possible place to live, work, and play, and will strive toward development that improves the quality of life for all its residents.

2. Land Use

To plan for the future land use of the City, it is important to have a good understanding of its existing land uses. This section analyzes existing land uses, residential densities, and the supply and demand for land. Property assessment records from 2007 indicate that the largest land use is agriculture with 157 acres or about 43% of all assessed land (see table 2.01). Much of this land surrounds the built-up part of the city, indicating that the city has room to grow. The category of residential assessed lands, with 105 acres, was the second most prominent land use, followed by manufacturing and commercial land uses.

Table 2.01 City of Blair Assessed Land Use Inventory

Land Type	Acres	Percent of Land use
Residential	105	28.6
Commercial	34	9.3
Manufacturing	42	11.4
Agricultural	157	42.8
Undeveloped/Other	0	0.0
Forest/Ag Forest	29	7.9
Other (public land, etc.)	0	0.0
Total	367	100.0

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Bureau of Equalization, 2007 Statement of Assessments

Table 2.02 below shows the City's land use make up based on interpretation from a 2006 air photo. The City covers 741 acres. Assessed land uses do not take into consideration public lands, which accounts for the difference in total land areas reported in tables 2.01 and 2.02. Public lands include the parks, which are the major subject of the City's *Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan*. Major land uses are residential, agriculture woodlands, manufacturing, public-institutional, business, and transportation. Map 2.1 at the end of this chapter shows the location of these land uses. The location of recommended land uses can be found on Map 9.1, in Chapter 9: Implementation.

Table 2.02 City of Blair 2006 Existing and Recommended Land Use

Land Use Category	2009 Number of Acres	2009 Percent of Total	Recommended Acres	Recommended Percentage
Residential	176	23.8	227	29.8
Shopping, Business or Trade	26	3.5	51	6.7
Industrial, Manufacturing, Storage and Handling	34	4.6	77	10.1
Social, Institutional, Health Care and Public Safety	14	1.9	10	1.3
Travel, Transportation and Vehicle Movement	44	5.9	50	6.6
Mass Assembly - Fairs Exhibitions	2	0.3	2	0.3
Leisure Activities and Recreation	29	3.9	39	5.1
Agricultural Activities	153	20.6	87	11.4
Natural Resource Related Activities		0.4	3	0.4
Quarrying	3			
Grasslands/Prairies	62	8.4	33	4.3
Woodlands	129	17.4	116	15.2
Water	49	6.6	48	6.3
Internment	13	1.8	13	1.7
Wetlands	7	0.9	7	0.9
Total	741	100.0	763	100.0

Table 2.03 shows the acreage for various zoning districts in the city. Residential zoning represented the largest amount of land with 199 acres, and the agricultural designation was second with 191 acres. The total amount of land in the city of Blair is 755 acres (this deviates from the total given in Table 2.02 due to rounding and differences in land use and zoning categories). Map 2.2 at the end of this chapter shows the location of these zones.

Table 2.03 Zoning District Designation by Acreage

Zoning Designation	Acreage
Agriculture	191
Industrial	103
Residential	199
Multiple Family	7
Manufactured Homes	16
Downtown Commercial	25
Highway Commercial	29
Public & Semi Public	58
Parks & Open Spaces	78
Water	49
Total	755

Land Supply, Demand, and Price

Supply

Using Table 2.02 as a basis, the City of Blair has a total of 741 acres. The current supply of developed land in the City of Blair is the amount of land that has already been developed, which equals 338 acres (see Table 2.02). One hundred seventy-six acres have been developed for residential use and 162 have been developed for other purposes. Fifty-nine of the remaining acres cannot be developed, including Lake Henry, the Trempealeau River, wetland areas, and the quarry. An additional 344 acres, however, could be developed in the future. This land includes agricultural lands, grasslands, and woodlands. The total supply of developable land is 682 acres, which is the sum of currently developed land and the land that could be developed in the future. About 50% of developable land is currently developed. This indicates that the City of Blair has a great deal of capacity for growth.

Demand

The current demand for developed land in the City of Blair can be defined as the current supply of developed land less the amount of vacant land. Vacant land, in turn, is equal to the supply times the vacancy rate. Housing unit information was used to estimate a vacancy rate for the city. There were 564 housing units in Blair in 2000 (see Table 1.07). The homeowner vacancy rate of 1.1% and the rental vacancy rate of 4.7% (see Table 3.06) yield a total vacancy rate of about 5.8% for housing units in the City of Blair in 2000. The current demand for developed land in the city can be estimated by holding the 2000 vacancy rate constant and applying it to all developed land. The vacancy rate of 5.8% applied to 338 developed acres in Blair yields approximately 20 vacant acres. Subtracting this from the total of developed land means that the current demand for developed land in 2009 is approximately 318 acres. There will be about a 25.8-acre increase in demand for land in the city of Blair by 2030 (see Table 2.05). Table 2.08 estimates the increase in land use based on the number of projected building permits and the average lot size. The average lot size of 0.31 acres was calculated by dividing the number of residential acres (176; see Table 2.02) by the number of housing units (564; see Table 1.07). The lot size is assumed to be the same for commercial property and it is held constant until 2030. Demand for residential and commercial land will increase by 19.5 acres and 6.3 acres respectively. The largest increase in the demand for land will occur between 2010 and 2015 when a total of about 5.7 acres will be demanded for new development.

Prices

Eleven single-family homes were on the market in the fall of 2008 with asking prices ranging from \$29,000 to \$229,000. Table 2.04 shows that average asking price of these homes was \$122,460 and the median asking price was \$124,500. The asking prices were within 10% of their respective assessed values with the exception of three properties. The average lot size of the residential lots was 0.4 acres, and the average price per acre of land was \$27,796.97.

Table 2.04 City of Blair Single-Family Residential Property Values

House Number	Street	Asking Price (\$)	Improvements (\$)	Land (\$)	Assessed Value (\$)	PIN	Sq. Ft.	Acres	Price per Acre for Land (\$)
902	Olson	229,000	123,600	14,500	138,100	206005280010	23,121.46	0.53	27,358.49
518	Sylfest	149,900	130,600	14,500	145,100	206001960000	20,320.52	0.47	30,851.06
217	S. Knutson	149,900	142,800	8,700	151,500	206004200000	12,497.55	0.29	30,000.00
414	Urberg	129,000	103,200	10,000	113,200	206001860000	38,699.84	0.89	11,235.96
217	Pearl	124,000	103,600	12,200	115,800	206003090000	22,630.16	0.52	23,461.54
203	Urberg	125,000	100,500	5,900	106,400	206002840000	7,184.70	0.16	36,875.00
135	W. Broadway	114,000	94,100	9,000	103,100	206003120000	17,753.81	0.41	21,951.22
226	E. Broadway	104,000	84,500	10,000	94,500	206000520000	18,008.46	0.41	24,390.24
312	S. Immell	69,900	62,900	5,700	68,600	206003400000	6,650.15	0.15	38,000.00
315	S. Peterson	29,900	24,000	4,400	28,400	206001690000	5,555.37	0.13	33,846.15
	Average	122,460	96,980	9,490	106,470		17,242	0.40	27,796.97

Source: County Treasurer and MRRPC

Productive Agricultural Soils

The City of Blair consists of 356 acres of Class II soil, 86 acres of Class III soil, 264 acres of Class IV-VIII soil, and 49 acres of water. Class II soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require special conservation practices. Class II soil is the most suitable soil for farming in the City. Most of the Class II soil is located in the area adjacent to Lake Henry and the Trempealeau River. There are also large areas of Class II soil near the southern corners of the city. Class III soils have severe limitations that limit the choice of plants and require special conservation practices. Class IV-VII soils have even more severe limitations that generally make the class unsuitable for cultivation. The city contains no land that is ranked as Class I, which has few limitations that restrict its use. Map 2.3 at the end of the chapter shows the locations of these soil classifications.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Analysis of aerial photographs and Map 2.1 (at the end of the chapter) reveal prime locations for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Residential

One possible location for future residential development is the area to the south of the current residential area in the southeast part of the City, east of Tappan Street and south of Olson Street. This land is currently agricultural land, grassland, or woodland. Developing this land for residential use would extend the current residential area. This land is also close to Blair-Taylor High School. The disadvantage of using this land is that it would involve the loss of productive farmland. The land to the north of Mill Road and Highway S provides another alternative for residential development. This area currently contains small pockets of residential areas within undeveloped woodlands and grassland areas, and is currently zoned for residential use (see Map 2.2, at the end of the chapter). Development in this area would involve the loss of very little farmland. However, this area is separated from the rest of the City by Lake Henry.

Commercial

One option for commercial redevelopment is to fill buildings that are currently unoccupied. Residents that responded to the survey indicated that empty buildings were a problem in Blair. New businesses should be encouraged to use existing buildings. Some new businesses would require new development. The area near Highway 53 and 4th Street would be a good location for new commercial development. Some of this land is currently used for commercial purposes but a large portion is agricultural land. Because it is easily accessible from the highway, this location would be best for businesses that would attract customers from areas outside, as well as within, the City. This location would be an excellent site for a bigger establishment, such as a grocery or discount store.

The City also has plans for a Downtown Lighting, Landscaping and Beautification Project, which will introduce new lighting, plantings, street furniture, and other amenities to the streets in the downtown commercial area. This area consists of Center St., Broadway, and 1st St., from Highway 95 in the west to about Main St. in the east, and Gilbert St. north to the railroad tracks. This project will make the commercial area more attractive, and could spur more investment in downtown Blair.

Industrial

The City of Blair currently has a small industrial area near the railroad tracks and Lake Henry. However, there is very little room for expansion at this location because commercial buildings, homes, and parks surround the industrial area. The area on the northeastern edge of the City near the railroad tracks would be suitable for industrial development, and it is already zoned for industrial use. This area is large enough to support an industrial park that would be isolated from the rest of the city. An industrial park is planned for this area of the City as part of TIF Number 3, and future industrial activities should be directed there and the area of TIF Number 5. TIF Number 3 involves the extension of Webster Street to the south and Olson Street to the east. Expansion of these streets will attract traffic away from Elland Road, thus increasing the safety of students going to and coming from Blair-Taylor High School. TIF Number 5 involves the construction of a railroad spur to serve the industrial park. Map 9.1 (at the end of the Chapter 9: Implementation) illustrates this industrial location.

Public

The City of Blair is considering a *Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan*. This plan does not call for the creation of new parks, but points out the need for upgrades to equipment and existing facilities, primarily at Riverside Memorial Park. The *Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan* does, however, raise the possibility of constructing new walking and bicycle trails that could extend beyond the parks and connect them with other areas of the City, especially the schools.



Blair-Taylor School



Riverside Park

Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts

Most of the land use conflicts in the City of Blair revolve around the location of industrial sites. Survey results revealed that numerous residents are dissatisfied with the current proximity of some industrial sites to residential areas and parks. Specifically, many residents complained about being able to smell the new grain bins from the park. The residents indicated that they would like future industrial development to be located in an industrial park that is separate from the rest of the City. The area on the northeastern edge of the City identified in the previous section could fulfill this need. However, this location could lead to future conflict. Map 2.2 at the end of the chapter indicates that the new industrial park could potentially encroach on a small portion of residential areas if all of the land zoned for industrial use is actually used for that purpose. The best way to mitigate this potential problem would be to keep some of the existing woodlands as a buffer zone between the industrial park and the residential area, which is suggested in Map 9.1, at the end of Chapter 9: Implementation.

Industrial land to the south of Broadway along Elland could also pose a conflict with residential areas further south, as well as with the high school on the east side of Elland. Not only are traffic and noise a potential nuisance for homeowners in the immediate area, but increased traffic volume could make it unsafe for students to walk and bicycle to school. One way to mitigate this potential conflict is to designate the lands south of Olson Street as residential (see Map 9.1), and to allow only light industrial uses between Olson and Broadway. Another way to mitigate this potential conflict is to concentrate on developing safe routes to school, such as the walking and bicycle paths outlined in the *Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan*.

Another land use conflict is the location of some residential and commercial buildings in the flood plain. Map 2.4 at the end of the chapter identifies the land adjacent to the two creeks running through Blair as part of the 100-year flood plain. However, Map 2.1 shows that this land is being used for residential and commercial purposes. The risk posed by flooding requires the City of Blair to consider ways to discourage development in areas prone to damage by dangerous floods.

Land Use Projections

Table 2.05 provides projections on the number of new residential, commercial, and industrial buildings that can be expected over the coming years, based on building permit projection information provided in Table 1.09. The acreage projections were calculated by multiplying the projected number of building permits by 0.3, which is the approximate residential lot size in the City of Blair. The city can expect about 26 acres of newly developed land by 2030. The land for new builds will most likely come from the undeveloped land within the city limits.

Table 2.05 Projections for New Development in the City of Blair in Acres, after 2007

Type of Development	2010	2015	2020	2025	2029	2030
Residential	2.4	6.9	10.8	15.3	18.6	19.5
Commercial	0.9	2.1	3.6	4.8	6	6.3
Industrial	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3.3	9	14.4	20.1	24.6	25.8

Overall land use projections based on past building permit trends (see Table 2.05), when combined with current acreage for land use (see Table 2.02), indicate that the City of Blair can expect a total of 195.5 acres to be used for residential purposes and 32.3 acres to be used for commercial purposes by 2030. The City can expect the amount of acreage used for industrial purposes will remain constant at 34 acres based on past trends.

Major Employers

Table 2.06 lists the major employers in the city. The Grand View Care Center, a 98-bed facility providing specialized care for Alzheimer's disease and dementia, as well as other services, is the city's largest employer with over 100 employees. The Blair-Taylor Elementary School and High School both employ over 50 workers. Associated Milk Producers also has over 50 employees. Countryside Lefse LLC ranks fourth in overall employees with over 20. A number of other companies employ over five employees.

Table 2.06 Major Employers

Employers	Location	Number of Employees
Grandview Care Center Inc.	620 Grand View Avenue	100-249
Associated Milk Production Inc.	220 Center Street	50-99
School District of Blair-Taylor	219 S. Main Street	50-99
School District of Blair-Taylor	N21034 Elland Road	50-99
Countryside Lefse LLC	1101 E. Broadway	20-49
B T Cleaning Services	Sylfest Street	10-19
Kwik Trip Inc.	4 Hwy 53 & 95	10-19
Rainbow Restaurant	N30798 US Hwy 53	10-19
Union Bank of Blair	123 S. Urberg Avenue	10-19
C.V. Smith	217 E. 4 th Street	5-9
Dollar General	314 W. Broadway	5-9
Spierings	1117 E. Broadway	5-9
Stetzer Electric Inc	520 W. Broadway	5-9

Source: worknet.wisconsin.gov

Table 2.07 illustrates the residential density of the City of Blair compared to adjacent communities, Trempealeau County, and the State. In 2000 the City of Blair had 1,177.3 people per square mile and 512.7 housing units per square mile. The population density of Blair is greater than that of Trempealeau County and the State of Wisconsin.

Table 2.07 Residential Density, 2000

	Population	Housing Units	Land (sq. mi.)	Density (Units per Sq. Mi.)	
				Population	Housing Units
T. Arcadia	1,555	610	118.8	13.1	5.1
T. Ettrick	1,284	526	77.1	16.7	6.8
T. Lincoln	829	271	28.3	29.3	9.6
T. Pigeon	894	326	38.6	23.2	8.4
T. Preston	951	372	59.2	16.1	6.3
V. Ettrick	521	254	0.6	868.3	423.3
V. Pigeon Falls	388	144	0.5	776.0	288.0
C. Arcadia	2,402	1,112	2.7	889.6	411.9
C. Blair	1,273	564	1.1	1157.3	512.7
C. Whitehall	1,651	733	1.7	971.2	431.2
Trempealeau Co.	27,010	11,482	734.1	36.8	15.6
State	5,363,715	2,321,144	54,310.0	98.8	42.7

Source: US Bureau of Census

Table 2.08 shows the number of housing units per square mile increased by 64.5 units from 1990 to 2000. This increase in housing density is much greater than the County and State, which had increases of 1.9 and 4.9 respectively.

Table 2.08 Housing Growth 1990-2000

	Housing Units 1990	Housing Units 2000	Net Change	% Change	New Housing Units Per Sq. Mi
T. Arcadia	595	610	15	2.5%	0.1
T. Ettrick	501	526	25	5.0%	0.3
T. Lincoln	262	271	9	3.4%	0.3
T. Pigeon	272	326	54	19.9%	1.4
T. Preston	340	372	32	9.4%	0.5
V. Ettrick	228	254	26	11.4%	43.3
V. Pigeon Falls	136	144	8	5.9%	16.0
C. Arcadia	970	1,112	142	14.6%	52.6
C. Blair	493	564	71	14.4%	64.5
C. Whitehall	653	733	80	12.3%	47.1
Trempealeau Co.	10,097	11,482	1,385	13.7%	1.9
State	2,055,676	2,321,144	265,468	12.9%	4.9

Source: US Bureau of Census

Key Land Use Issues Impacting the City:

- The City has limited space within existing city boundaries to accommodate residential and business growth.

Growth to the north is limited by the Wisconsin Central Rail Line and the Trempealeau River

Growth to the south is limited due to low-lying wetlands

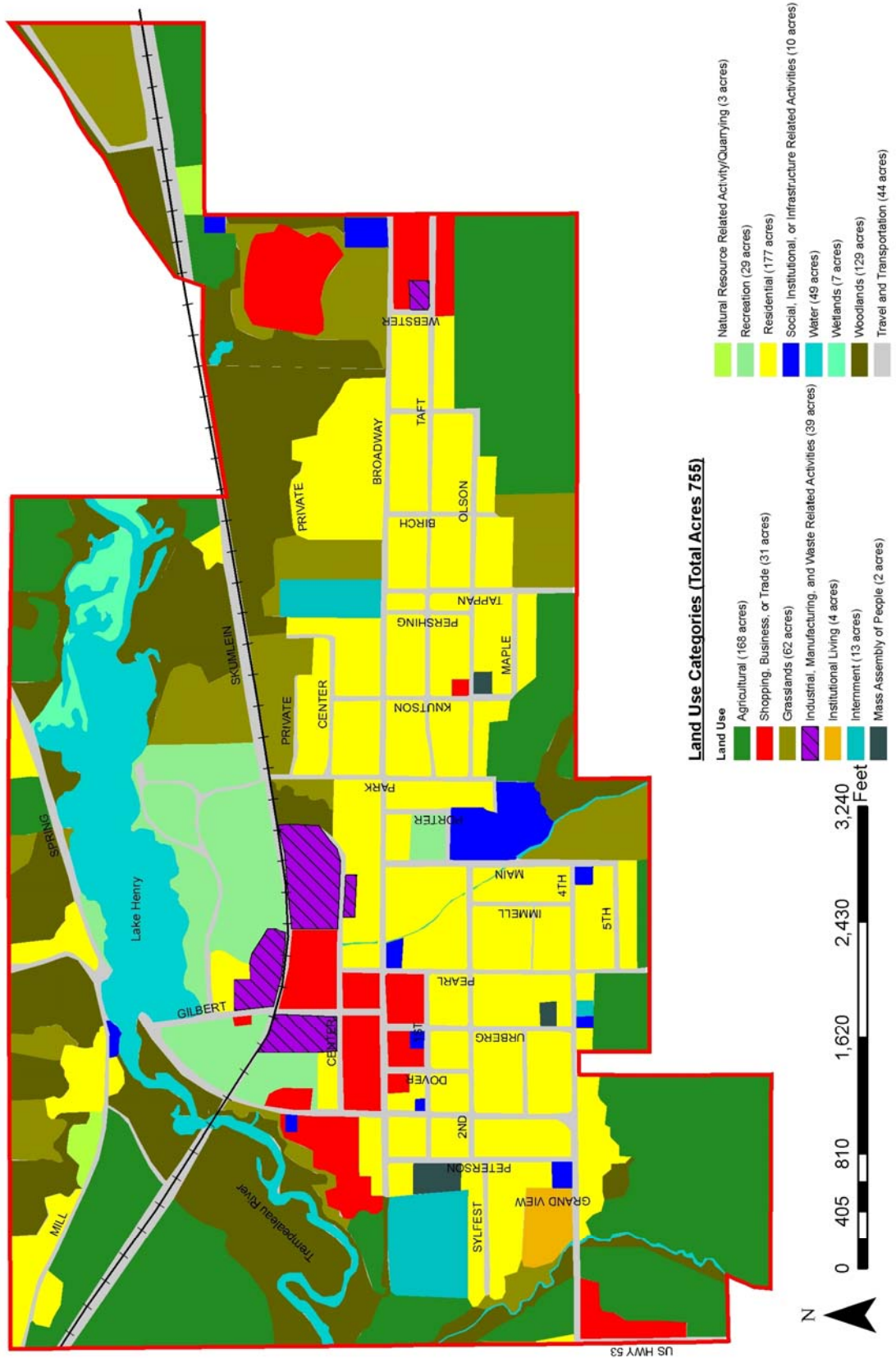
Growth to the west could only occur through annexation of land on the west side of U.S. Highway 53

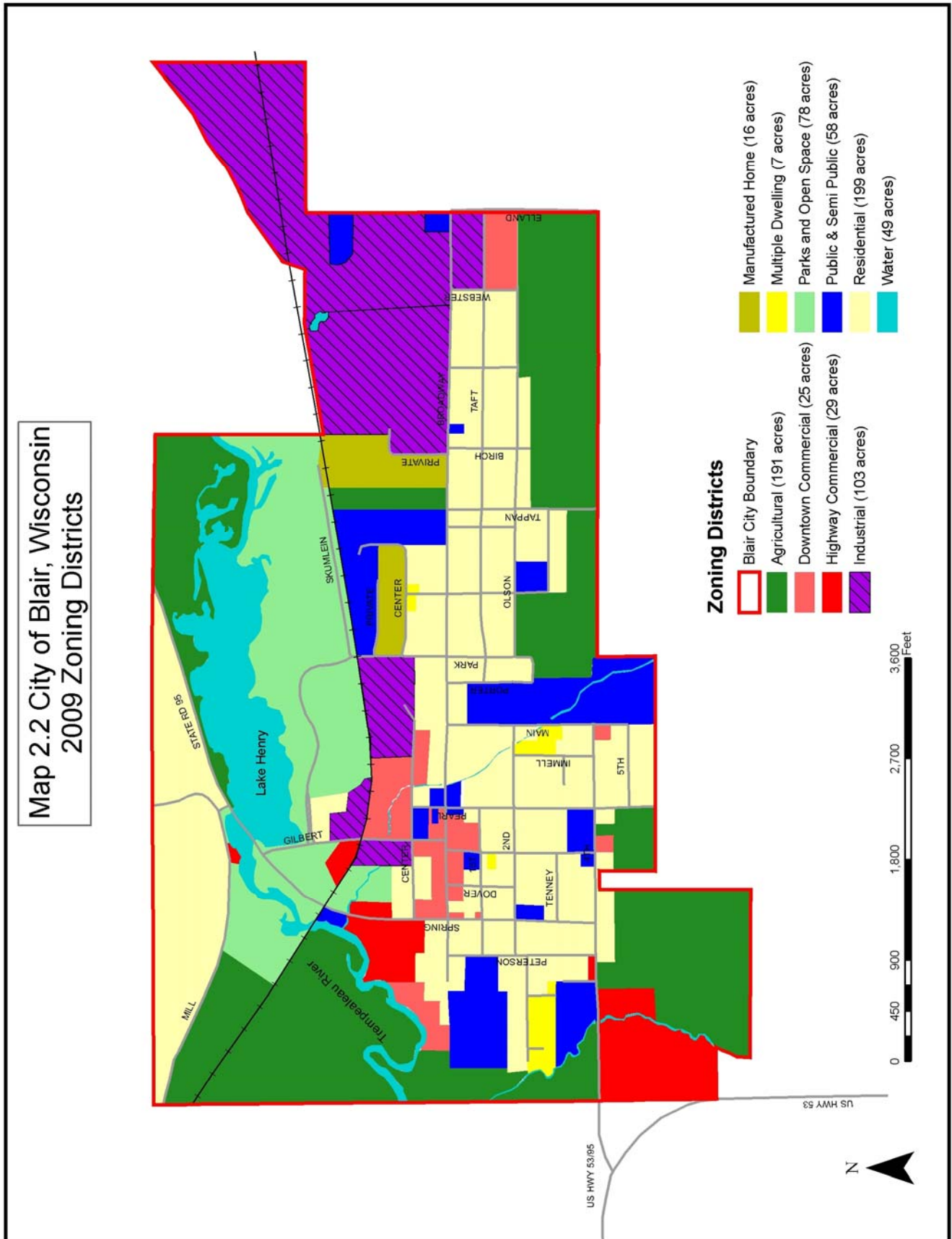
Growth to the east could continue through annexation of agricultural land

- The City has opportunities for the efficient reuse of empty commercial buildings.
Numerous commercial buildings are vacant in the downtown. This is an inefficient use of the land and new businesses need to be encouraged to occupy the vacant buildings.
- The City must encourage industrial development in proper locations.
Survey results indicated that residents are unhappy with the proximity of industrial buildings to residential areas, schools, and parks.
- The City must maintain its outdoor recreation facilities.
While expansion of the parks is not necessary, upgrades to equipment and improved access will allow the parks and Lake Henry to provide the citizens of Blair with the quality of recreation they have come to expect.
- The City must address the housing needs of the future.
Projections for necessary residential lands in 2030 are estimated at 19.5 acres. This land is available in the southeast part of the City, east of Tappan Street and south of Olson Street. Developing this land would have the advantages of providing housing to citizens of Blair that is close to other amenities of the City, particularly the high school.

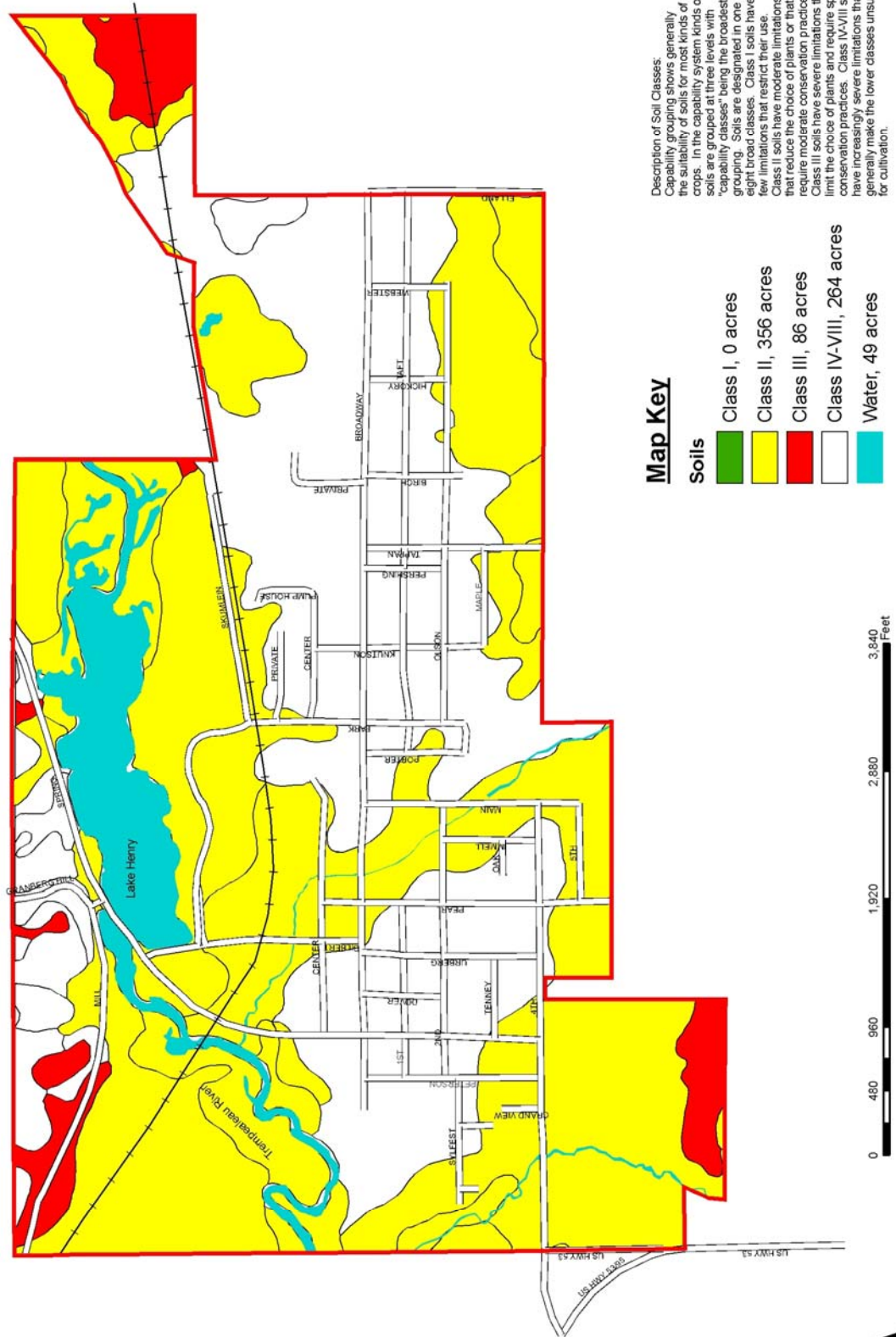
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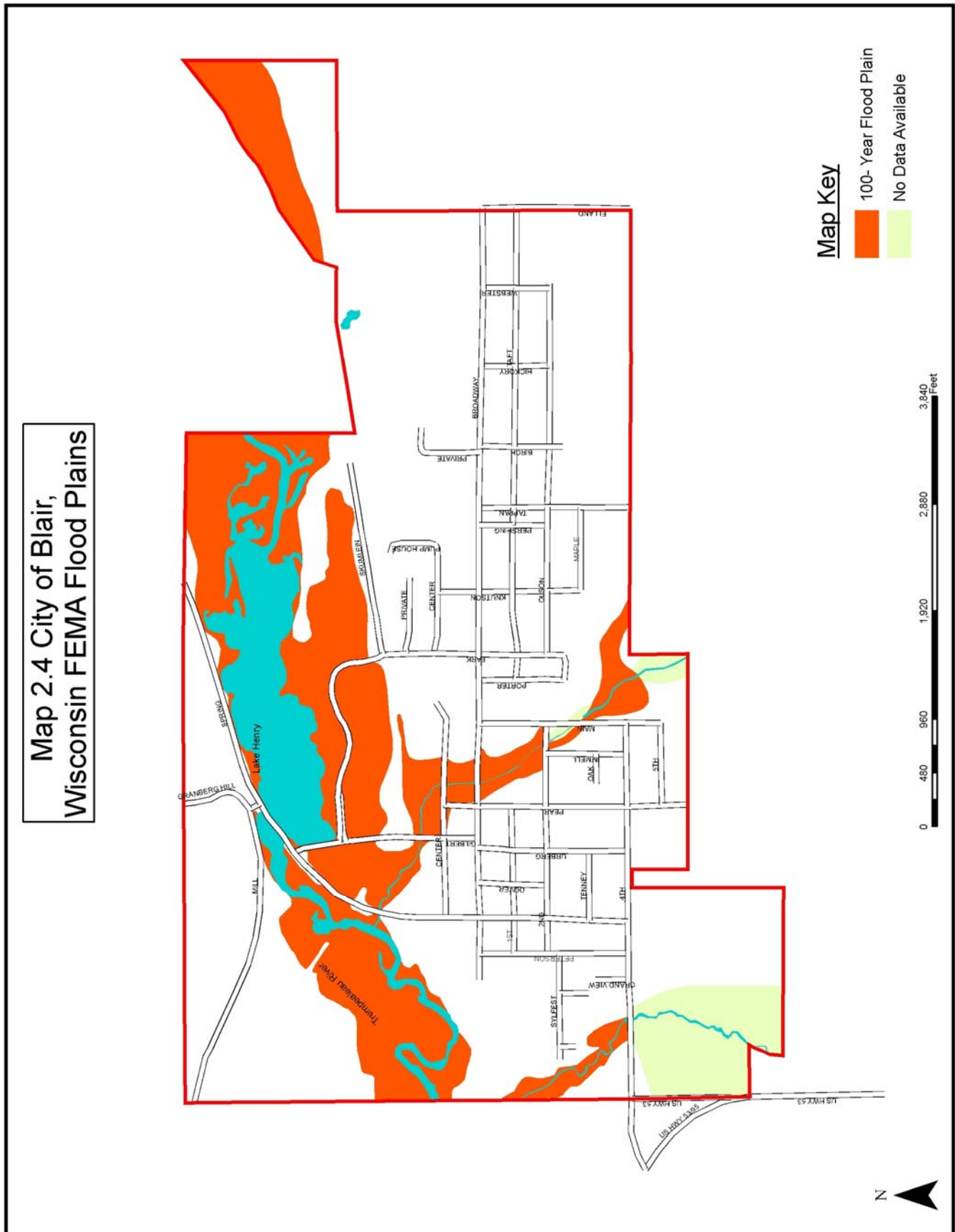
MAP 2.1 City of Blair, Wisconsin
2009 Existing Land Use





Map 2.3 City of Blair, Wisconsin
Productive Agricultural Soils





3. Housing

Housing Units by Type and Year Built

The following is an analysis of the current housing situation in the City based on 2000 US Census statistics. Table 3.01 provides information about the type of housing structures in the City, the State of Wisconsin and the United States. As of the 2000 Census, over 65% of Blair's housing units were single-family units. Trempealeau County had more (73.9%), while the State of Wisconsin (66%) and the Nation (60.3%) had fewer. The 2nd largest housing group in Blair as of the 2000 census was mobile homes at 12.2% followed by 2-unit dwellings at 11.8%.

Table 3.01 City of Blair, Housing Units by Type, 2000

Type	City of Blair	%	Trempealeau County	%	State of WI	%	U.S.	%
1 unit detached	364	65.1	8,487	73.9	1,531,612	66.0	69,865,957	60.3
1 unit attached	4	.7	102	.9	77,795	3.4	6,447,453	5.6
2 units	66	11.8	653	5.7	190,889	8.2	4,995,350	4.3
3 or 4 units	21	3.8	284	2.5	91,047	3.9	5,494,280	4.7
5-9 units	32	5.7	486	4.2	106,680	4.6	5,414,698	4.7
10-19 units	4	.7	267	2.3	75,455	3.3	4,636,717	4.0
20 or more units	0	0	135	1.2	143,497	6.2	10,008,058	8.6
Mobile Home	68	12.2	1,054	9.2	101,465	4.4	8,779,228	7.6
Other	0	0.0	14	.1	2,703	0.1	262,610	0.2
Total	559	100	11,482	100	2,321,144	100.00	115,904,641	100.0

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 3.02 provides information on the age of housing. About 18% of Blair's housing stock has been constructed since 1980, compared to the County (21.9%), State (27.6%) and Nation's (32.8%) percentages during this same time period. Over 55% of Blair's housing stock was constructed prior to 1960, higher than the rates for the County (48%), State (43%) and Nation (35%).

Table 3.02 City of Blair Year Structure Built, 2000

Year Built	City of Blair	%	Trempealeau County	%	State of WI	%	U.S.	%
1999-3/2000	1	0.2	253	2.2	50,735	2.2	2,755,075	2.4
1995-1998	27	4.8	793	6.9	170,219	7.3	8,478,975	7.3
1990-1994	24	4.3	661	5.8	168,838	7.3	8,467,008	7.3
1980-1989	52	9.3	1,092	9.5	249,789	10.8	18,326,847	15.8
1970-1979	71	12.7	2,105	18.3	391,349	16.9	21,438,863	18.5
1960-1969	74	13.2	1,047	9.1	276,188	11.9	15,911,903	13.7
1940-1959	130	23.3	1,736	15.1	470,862	20.3	23,145,917	20.0
1939 or Earlier	180	32.2	3,795	33.1	543,164	23.4	17,380,053	15.0
Total Structures	559	100	11,482	100	2,321,144	100	115,904,641	100

Source: US Census Bureau



Examples of housing types in Blair

Housing Units Lacking Facilities and Services

Twenty-six homes in Blair had no telephone service as of the 2000 Census, which is a higher percentage than in the County, the State, and the Nation (see Table 3.03). No homes in the City reported lacking complete plumbing or kitchen facilities. The City of Blair fared better on these measures than Trempealeau County, the State, and Nation, according to the 2000 Census.

Table 3.03 Housing Units Lacking Facilities and Services

Governmental Unit	Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities		Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities		No Telephone Service	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
City of Blair	-	-	-	-	26	5.0
Trempealeau Co.	86	0.8	108	1.0	294	2.7
Wisconsin	10,648	0.5	12,580	0.6	34,208	1.6
United States	670,986	0.6	715,535	0.7	2,570,705	2.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Median Housing Unit Value

The median value of a home in the City of Blair was \$68,800 in 2000 (see Table 3.04). This value was ranked 21st of the 26 towns, villages, and cities in the County. The City of Blair's median housing unit value was lower than those for the County (\$77,000), State (\$112,200), and Nation (\$119,600).

Table 3.04 Median Value of Owner Occupied Units

Jurisdiction	2000 Median Housing Value
T. Arcadia	87,000
T. Ettrick	85,600
T. Lincoln	80,000
T. Pigeon	67,500
T. Preston	75,600
V. Ettrick	74,600
V. Pigeon Falls	72,400
C. Arcadia	69,500
C. Blair	68,800
C. Whitehall	66,900
Trempealeau Co.	77,000
State	112,200
Nation	119,600

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Example of housing type in Blair

Occupancy Characteristics, Vacancy Rates, Year Moved In

Tables 3.05 and 3.06 illustrate housing unit occupancy characteristics and vacancy rates for the City of Blair, adjacent communities, Trempealeau County, the State, and Nation. In the City of Blair, 69.8% of houses are owner occupied housing units (see Table 3.05), a percentage lower than that of Trempealeau County (74.1%), but higher than that of the State (68.4%) and the Nation (66.2%).

As of the 2000 Census, the City of Blair has a combined vacancy rate of 5.8% for available housing (see Table 3.06). The housing vacancy rate is the proportion of the housing inventory that is available for sale only or for rent. A vacancy rate of approximately 3% is the recommended standard in order to provide the population with an adequate choice of housing.

Table 3.05 Housing Unit Occupancy Rates, 2000

Governmental Unit	Total Occupied Housing Units	% Owner Occupied	% Total Renter Occupied
T. Arcadia	569	82.8	17.2
T. Ettrick	488	87.1	12.9
T. Lincoln	257	83.3	16.7
T. Pigeon	305	86.6	13.4
T. Preston	333	79.9	20.1
V. Ettrick	241	61.4	38.6
V. Pigeon Falls	139	59.7	40.3
C. Arcadia	1,038	61.7	38.3
C. Blair	533	69.8	30.2
C. Whitehall	693	62.6	37.4
Trempealeau Co.	10,747	74.1	25.9
State	2,084,544	68.4	31.6
Nation	105,480,101	66.2	33.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3.06 Housing Unit Vacancy Rates, 2000

Governmental Unit	Homeowner Vacancy Rate	Rental Vacancy Rate
T. Arcadia	0.4	4.9
T. Ettrick	0.7	3.1
T. Lincoln	0.5	10.4
T. Pigeon	0.4	-
T. Preston	-	5.6
V. Ettrick	3.3	3.1
V. Pigeon Falls	1.2	1.8
C. Arcadia	1.8	10.0
C. Blair	1.1	4.7
C. Whitehall	0.7	9.4
Trempealeau Co.	1.4	6.4
State	1.2	5.6
Nation	1.7	6.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the 2000 US Census, 26.3 percent of Blair residents moved into their present households between 1995 and 1998 (see Table 3.07). Between 1990 and March 2000, 60% of City residents moved into their present household.

Table 3.07 City of Blair, Year Householder Moved In

Year Moved in	Percent
1999 to March 2000	15.6
1995 to 1998	26.3
1990 to 1994	17.6
1980 to 1989	14.7
1970 to 1979	9.7
1969 or Earlier	16.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000



Example of housing type in Blair

Affordability of Housing

Table 3.08 illustrates the affordability of housing in the City, surrounding communities, Trempealeau County, the State of Wisconsin, and the Nation. In 2000, less than 14% of City of Blair residents spent 30% or more of their income on housing. This was a lower percentage than residents of the County (14.2%), the State (17.8%) and the Nation (21.8%). Almost 47% of Blair's residents spent less than 15% on housing.

Table 3.08 Percent of Income Spent on Owner Occupied Units, 2000

Governmental Unit	Total Owner Occupied Units	Percentage Spending Less than 15 Percent	Percentage Spending 15 to 30 Percent	Percentage Spending 30 Percent or More	Not Computed
T. Arcadia	188	58.0	30.3	11.7	-
T. Ettrick	146	45.9	32.9	21.3	-
T. Lincoln	62	38.7	38.8	22.6	-
T. Pigeon	136	43.4	42.0	14.7	-
T. Preston	91	42.9	40.7	16.5	-
V. Ettrick	128	32.0	56.2	11.7	-
V. Pigeon Falls	75	53.3	30.7	16.0	-
C. Arcadia	550	46.2	37.5	15.6	0.7
C. Blair	279	47.0	39.1	13.9	0.0
C. Whitehall	388	59.8	31.0	8.8	0.5
Trempealeau Co.	5,156	44.7	40.5	14.2	0.6
State	1,122,467	36.8	45	17.8	0.4
Nation	55,212,108	36.5	40.8	21.8	0.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000

According to the 2000 US Census, less than 19% of Blair residents who rent their home spent more than 30% on housing (see Table 3.09). This is a lower level than the percentage of residents of the County (21.8%), State (32.3%) and Nation (36.8%) who spend more than 30% of their income on rent.

Table 3.9 Percent of Income Spent on Renter-Occupied Units, 2000

Governmental Unit	Total Renter Occupied Units	Percentage Spending Less than 15 Percent	Percentage Spending 15 to 30 Percent	Percentage Spending 30 Percent or More	Not Computed
T. Arcadia	73	41.1	35.6	9.6	13.7
T. Ettrick	34	32.4	38.2	5.9	23.5
T. Lincoln	33	39.4	30.3	27.3	3.0
T. Pigeon	18	33.3	44.4	11.1	11.1
T. Preston	44	13.6	38.6	20.4	27.3
V. Ettrick	93	23.7	45.2	25.8	5.4
V. Pigeon Falls	59	22.0	49.1	23.7	5.1
C. Arcadia	394	28.7	38.6	19.0	13.7
C. Blair	163	28.2	38.7	19.0	14.1
C. Whitehall	269	29.7	42.1	22.3	5.9
Trempealeau Co.	2,545	27.5	39.1	21.8	11.7
State	641,672	21.1	41.5	32.3	5.2
Nation	35,199,502	18.1	37.5	36.8	7.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000

Availability of New Housing

Projections for the year 2030 estimate that the City of Blair will see an increase in land used for housing of 19.5 acres (see Table 2.05). At the average lot size of 0.31 acres, this leads to a projection of about 60 new homes by 2030. Much of this demand for residential land can be satisfied by building in the area to the south of the current residential area in the southeast part of the City, east of Tappan Street and south of Olson Street. This land is currently agricultural land, grassland, or woodland. Developing this land for residential use would extend the current residential area. This land is also close to Blair-Taylor High School.

Key Housing Issues Impacting the City:

- Housing stock in the City is older than in other communities.

Housing stock built before 1960 constitutes 55% of all units, which is a higher percentage than in the County (48%), State (43%), and Nation (35%).

- Housing is less expensive in the City than in other communities.

The median housing value in the City of Blair in 2000 was \$68,800, lower than the average value in the County (\$77,000), State (\$112,000), and Nation (\$119,000). This could make the City attractive for potential homebuyers.

- Residents in the City spend less on financing their homes than in other communities.

In the City of Blair, 13.9% of homeowners spent 30% or more of their income on their homes in 2000, a lower percentage of homeowners than in the County (14.2%), State (17.8%), and Nation (21.8%). This could make the City attractive for potential homebuyers.

- Lower property values mean lower tax revenues.

Although affordable housing in the City allows residents to spend more of their income elsewhere and may attract people to the community, lower property values means less revenue is collected in property tax revenue.

- The City must address the quality of neighborhood and property conditions

The 5.8% vacancy rate is higher than the 3% needed for residents to have adequate choice in housing.

Survey results indicated that numerous residential properties are not properly maintained and the front lawns feature items such as irreparable automobiles. This can have a negative impact on the value of other houses in the area.

- The City must address the housing needs of the future.

Projections for necessary residential lands in 2030 are estimated at 19.5 acres. This land is available in the southeast part of the City, east of Tappan Street and south of Olson Street. Developing this land would have the advantages of providing housing to citizens of Blair that is close to other amenities of the City, particularly the high school.

4. Transportation

The efficient movement of people and goods is the goal of transportation planning. To provide and maintain an efficient transportation system, social, economic, and environmental concerns all need to be considered. To begin to understand these concerns, the existing transportation system needs to be analyzed. This section of this comprehensive plan inventories all the various modes of transportation that exist in the City of Blair or are readily available to City residents and businesses.

Public Road Inventory

The City of Blair participates in the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) program. The WISLR program maintains a complete listing of public roads in the City of Blair by jurisdiction, classification and number of miles. An inventory of City of Blair roads is shown in Table 4.01.

Table 4.01 Roads within the City of Blair

Road Name	Gross Miles	County Miles	Municipal Miles	County Jurisdiction			Municipal Jurisdiction		
				Arterial	Collector	Local	Arterial	Collector	Local
1 st Street	0.25		0.25						0.25
E 2nd St	0.16		0.16						0.16
W 2nd St	0.25		0.25						0.25
E 4th St	0.14		0.14						0.14
W 4th St	0.20		0.20						0.20
E 5th St	0.14		0.14						0.14
Birch St	0.15		0.15						0.15
E Broadway St	0.57		0.57						0.57
W Broadway St	0.11		0.11						0.11
E Center St	0.33		0.33						0.33
W Center St	0.20		0.20						0.20
Cheese Plant Rd	0.06		0.06						0.06
CTH S	0.95	0.95			0.95				0.00
Dover St	0.13		0.13						0.13
Gilbert St	0.33		0.33					0.33	0.00
Grandberg Hill Rd	0.14		0.14						0.14
Grandview Ave	0.05		0.05						0.05
Greenbriar Ln	0.05		0.05						0.05
Hickory St	0.06		0.06						0.06
Immel St	0.15		0.15						0.15
N Knutson St	0.06		0.06						0.06
S Knutson St	0.17		0.17						0.17
Main St	0.31		0.31						0.31
Maple St	0.14		0.14						0.14
E Maple St	0.03		0.03						0.03
Mill Dr	0.51		0.51					0.51	0.00
Oak St	0.04		0.04						0.04
Olson St	0.48		0.48						0.48
Park Dr 1	0.56		0.56						0.56
Park Dr 2	0.35		0.35						0.35
Park Dr 3	0.23		0.23						0.23
S Park Rd	0.15		0.15						0.15
N Pearl St	0.05		0.05						0.05
S Pearl St	0.37		0.37						0.37
Pershing Ave	0.12		0.12						0.12
Peterson Ave	0.14		0.14						0.14
S Peterson Ave	0.12		0.12						0.12
Porter St	0.15		0.15						0.15

Table 4.01 Roads within the City of Blair

Road Name	Gross	County	Municipal	County Jurisdiction			Municipal Jurisdiction		
Pumphouse Rd	0.16		0.16						0.16
Skumlien Rd	0.32		0.32						0.32
Sylfest St	0.19		0.19						0.19
Taft St	0.83		0.83						0.83
Tenney Ave	0.13		0.13						0.13
Urberg Ave	0.26		0.26						0.26
Webster St	0.06		0.06						0.06
Total Miles	10.35	0.95	9.40	0.00	0.95	0.00	0.00	0.84	8.56

Source: Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads

Public roads are classified as arterial, collector, and local based on functionality. Arterials provide intra-community links and intersect urban arterial systems and connect to rural collectors. Collector roads provide traffic circulation in residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Collectors also move traffic from local roads onto the arterial system. Local roads provide the lowest level of mobility and provide direct access to collectors and arterials.

Within the City of Blair there are 10.35 miles of public road that are under the jurisdiction of either Trempealeau County or the City of Blair. The City of Blair maintains 9.40 miles of public road, of which 0.84 miles are classified as collector roads and the remaining 8.56 miles are classified as local roads. Trempealeau County has 0.95 miles of public road in the City of Blair classified as collector roads.

Traffic Counts

Traffic counts for the City of Blair have fluctuated over the years as shown below. Table 4.02 shows traffic counts for 1992, 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2006. With the exception of US 53, traffic counts for all roads with available data showed a decline between 1992 and 1998. Counts on these same roads increased by 2001, declined again in 2004, and remained unchanged in 2006. The volume of traffic on US Highway 53 increased by 33% from 1992 to 2004. Traffic counts for the most recent years can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's web site at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/counts/>. Map 4.1 at the end of the chapter shows the location of the traffic studies.

Table 4.02 - City of Blair Traffic Counts - 1992, 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2006

Location	1992	1998	2001	2004	2006	% Chg. 1992-1998	% Chg. 1998-2001	% Chg. 2001-2006	% Chg. 1992-2006
US 53 – Intersects with State Highway 95	4,630	5,100	5,700	6,200	5,200	10.2	11.8	-8.77	12.3
State Hwy 95 – Runs North-South through Blair	NA	2,300	3,500	3,200	3,200	NA	52.2	-8.57	NA
State Hwy 95 and Broadway Street	4,750	2,300	3,500	2,800	2,800	-51.6	52.2	-20.00	-41.1
2 nd Street – from State Hwy 95 to Main Street	400	270	390	320	320	-32.5	44.4	-17.95	-20.0
Gilbert St. – from State Hwy 95 to Broadway St.	980	820	1,100	860	860	-16.3	34.1	-21.82	-12.2

Interstate Highways

Interstate 94 is located 16 miles east from the City of Blair.

U.S. and State Highways

U.S. Highway 53 runs along the southwest corner of Blair. There it intersects with State Highway 95, which runs north-south through the City.



State Highways 53 and 95 run through the City of Blair

Para-Transit Service:

The Trempealeau County Senior Services (TCSS) operates an escort driver service to senior citizens and the disabled, which provides opportunities for medical travel. TCSS also operates a van service in Blair and other communities for senior citizens and the disabled, allowing residents access to medical offices, shopping, and social activities. TCSS also runs an inter-city bus to La Crosse, WI, and Eau Claire, WI, on alternating days. This bus is a reservation service, open to senior citizens and the disabled, and is intended primarily to allow residents access to medical care in those cities.

Intercity Bus Service

Inter-city bus service (Greyhound) is available from the nearby communities of Winona, MN (34 miles), Sparta, WI (42 miles), La Crosse, WI (43 miles), and Eau Claire, WI (54 miles).

Freight Rail Service:

The Wisconsin Central rail line runs along the northern part of the City in an east-west direction. This Rail line runs between Green Bay, WI, and Winona, MN, where it connects with the Burlington Northern and the Canadian Pacific rail lines.



View from the freight rail tracks looking west, toward downtown; Riverside Park is on the right

Passenger Rail Service

Daily passenger rail service is available in La Crosse, WI, 43 miles from the City of Blair, and in Winona, MN, 34 miles from the City of Blair. The AMTRAK Empire Builder Line provides passenger service between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest via Minneapolis/St. Paul.

High-speed passenger rail service for the region continues to be a possibility. The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) has a nine-state plan intended to improve passenger rail transportation in the Midwest. The project is in the early stages, and the preferred route would connect the Twin Cities with Chicago/Milwaukee via the existing AMTRAK route on the Canadian Pacific Santa Fe Rail Line through La Crosse, WI, and Winona, MN.

Airports

The La Crosse Municipal Airport is located about 40 miles south of the City of Blair. Northwest Airlines and American Airlines offer 10 flights daily from the La Crosse Municipal Airport.

Water Transportation

The City of Blair is not located on a commercial waterway. The nearest water transportation is located at a port in Winona, MN, 35 miles southwest of Blair. This harbor contains docks, fleeting areas for barges, grain terminals, and the Port Authority commercial dock. The municipal dock was originally established by the City of Winona in 1956 and is now operated by the Port Authority of Winona. It is used for loading and unloading barges in the transport of commodities such as fertilizer, salt and coal. The Port Authority currently leases the facility.

Trucking

One trucking company was identified as operating out of the City: Green Line Custom Trucking, a grain hauler.

Pedestrian/Bike Trails

The Great River State Trail can be accessed at Perrot State Park in Trempealeau, WI, about 25 miles southwest of the City of Blair. The Buffalo River State Trail can be accessed at Osseo, WI, which is located about 27 miles north of the City. The La Crosse River State Trail can be accessed either in Sparta, WI, about 42 miles southwest of Blair, or La Crosse, WI, about 43 miles southeast of Blair. These trails are open to hikers, bicyclists, skiers, snowshoers, horseback riders, snowmobiles, and all-terrain-vehicles.

According to the *Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan*, the City would like to establish a walking and bicycle trail along the south shore of Lake Henry, in Riverside Memorial Park. The plan goes on to suggest that this trail could be expanded to include other parks and provide connections to other locations in the City. In particular, this enlarged trail system would provide safer travel routes to local schools.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) has identified roads most suitable for biking in all 72 counties in the State. The roads nearest to Blair that the DOT has identified as most suitable for biking include County Highways I, N, and S, and certain sections of State Highway 95. Trempealeau County bicycling road conditions can be found online at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/bike-foot/docs/biketrempealeau.pdf>.

State and Regional Transportation Plans

The following transportation plans were reviewed as part of the City of Blair planning process. The plans were reviewed to insure consistency with other governing jurisdictions with regard to the future transportation improvements.

Translink 21: A Multi-Modal Transportation Plan For Wisconsin's 21st Century -November 1995: The plan develops an overall vision for transportation systems for the State of Wisconsin for a 25 year period. Multi-modal transportation opportunities are stressed in the plan. No specific improvements for the City are detailed in the plan. However, grant funding opportunities, local road assessment programs, elderly travel assistance programs that affect local units of government in Wisconsin are described within the plan.

The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation is in the process of developing a new multi-modal transportation plan "Connections 2030" scheduled to be completed in 2007. The plan will address all forms of transportation: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit – and ways to make the individual modes work better as an integrated transportation system. Connections 2030 will be a policy-based plan. The policies will be tied to "tiers" of potential financing levels.

Wisconsin State Highway Plan – February 2000: The plan created by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation focuses on improving Wisconsin's State Highway system over the next 20 years. The plan focuses on three areas; traffic movement, safety, and pavement preservation. The plan is updated every six years.

Wisconsin DOT Six Year Highway Improvement Program: The plan details all road construction programs to be constructed in the state between 2006 and 2011.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 – December 1998: The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's "Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020" recommends strategies and actions for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and local governments to take to enhance biking in the State of Wisconsin. The plan explores ways to increase ridership and create more biking trail opportunities.

The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 – March 2002: "The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020", developed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation attempts to improve pedestrian travel opportunities in conjunction with public roads. The plan details ways how local governments can encourage pedestrian travel in road planning.

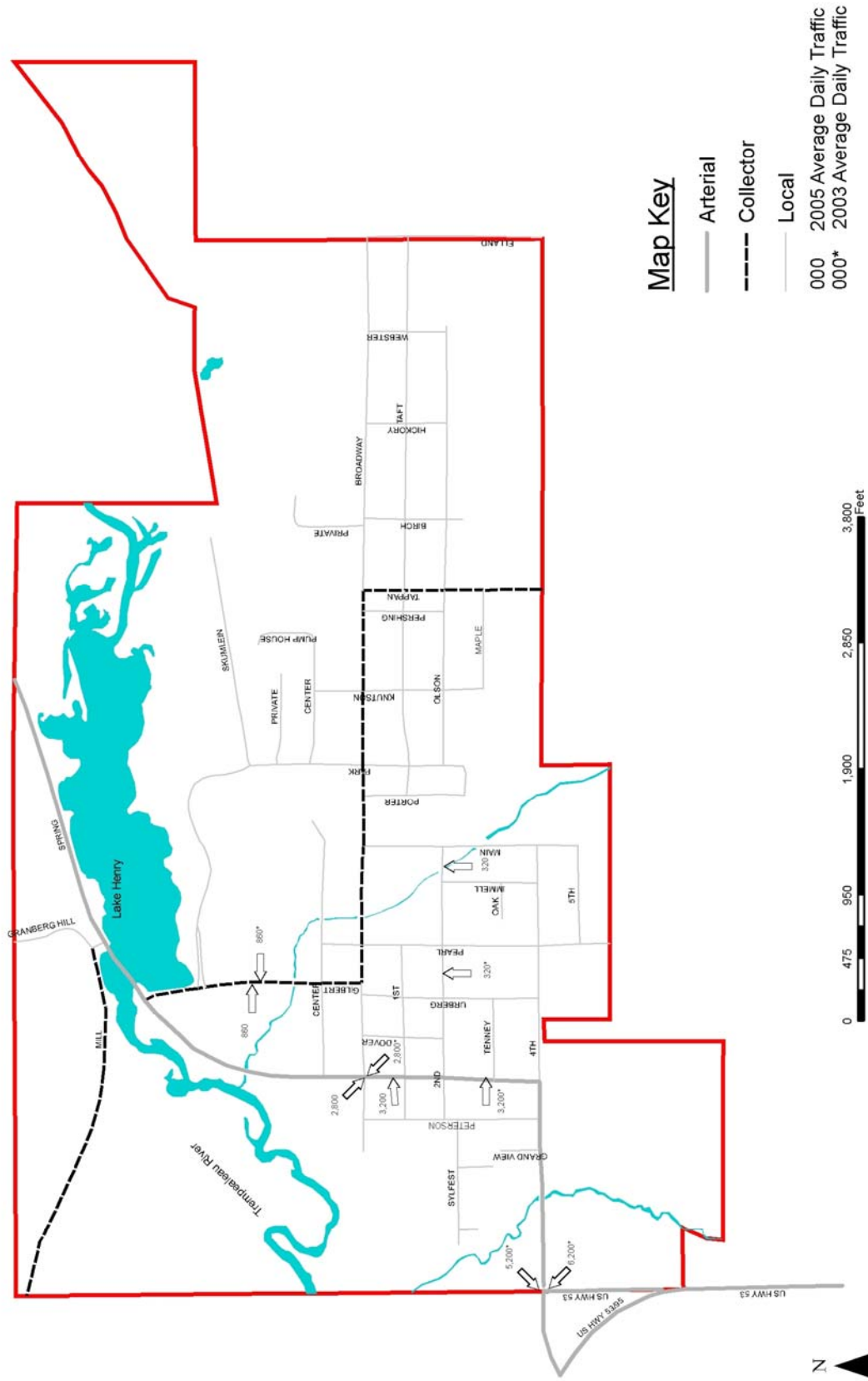
Wisconsin's Great River Road Bicycle Suitability Report – May 2001: This report was prepared by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission under contract with the Department of Transportation (DOT) identifies specific deficiencies regarding shoulder widths on the marked Great River Road in Trempealeau County.

Key Transportation Issues Impacting the City:

- The City is connected to other communities by dependable roads and railroads. U.S. Highway 53, State Highway 95, County Highways I, N, and S, and the Wisconsin Central Rail Line serve the City of Blair.
- The traffic counts on many roads in Blair decreased between 1992 and 2006, despite an increase in population (see Table 1.01). This indicates a decline in commercial travel in Blair, whether the result of Blair residents driving less, or of people outside the City bypassing it as they travel to other places.
- The City would like to further develop its street network involving phasing in east-west extensions of Maple and Olson Streets. The complete extension of 4th Street from U.S. Highway 53 on the West to Elland Road on the East is another street project being considered, but it would also require a bridge across Tappen Coulee Creek.

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Map 4.1 City of Blair, Wisconsin
2009 Transportation with
Traffic Counts



5. Economic Development

Employment and Household Income Information

As of the 2000 Census, the City of Blair had 581 residents in the civilian labor force (see Table 5.01). The largest proportion of workers (36.0%) worked in the traditional-economy occupations of Production, Transportation and Material Moving Operations. Private wage and salary workers made up 74.6% of all workers in Blair. Government workers made up 16.9% of the workforce, and 7.6% of workers were self-employed.

Table 5.01 Employment Status, Occupation, and Class of Worker

Employment Status	Number				Percent of Population 16 and Older			
	City of Blair	Trempealeau County	Wisconsin	U.S.	City of Blair	Trempealeau County	Wisconsin	U.S.
Population 16 years and over	1,011	21,021	4,157,030	217,168,077	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<u>In Labor Force</u>	581	14,540	2,872,104	138,820,935	57.5	69.2	69.1	63.9
Civilian Labor Force	581	14,538	2,869,236	137,668,798	57.5	69.2	69.0	63.4
employed	556	14,028	2,734,925	129,721,512	55.0	66.7	65.8	59.7
unemployed	25	510	134,311	7,947,286	2.5	2.4	3.2	3.7
Armed Forces	0	2	2,868	1,152,137	0	0.0	0.1	0.5
<u>Not in Labor Force</u>	430	6,481	1,284,926	78,347,142	42.5	30.8	30.9	36.1
Occupation	Number				Percent of Those Employed			
	City of Blair	Trempealeau County	Wisconsin	U.S.	City of Blair	Trempealeau County	Wisconsin	U.S.
Management, Professional and Related Occupations	114	3,855	857,205	43,646,731	20.5	27.5	31.3	33.6
Service Occupations	99	1,975	383,619	19,276,947	17.8	14.1	14.0	14.9
Sales and Office Occupations	82	2,646	690,360	34,621,390	14.7	18.9	25.2	26.7
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	11	413	25,725	951,810	2.0	2.9	0.9	0.7
Construction, Extraction and Maintenance Occupations	50	1,297	237,086	12,256,138	9.0	9.2	8.7	9.4
Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	200	3,842	540,930	18,968,496	36.0	27.4	19.8	14.6
Class of Worker	Number				Percent of Those Employed			
	City of Blair	Trempealeau County	Wisconsin	U.S.	City of Blair	Trempealeau County	Wisconsin	U.S.
Private wage and salary workers	415	10,700	2,217,490	101,794,361	74.6	76.3	81.1	78.5
Government workers	94	1,535	340,792	18,923,353	16.9	10.9	12.5	14.6
Self-employed workers	42	1,671	167,248	8,603,761	7.6	11.9	6.1	6.6
Un-paid family workers	5	122	9,395	400,037	.9	0.9	0.3	0.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Unemployment Rates

Unemployment data for the City of Blair are only available for the year 2000. However, annual unemployment rates are available for Trempealeau County, the State, and the Nation (see Table 5.02). The County's rates over the six-year period have ranged from a low of 3.9 in 2000 to a high of 5.8 in 2003. Trempealeau County has consistently had a lower unemployment rate than the Nation, only rising slightly above the national rate in 2001. Since 2004, the County has had an unemployment rate lower than the State's.

Table 5.02 Trempealeau County, State of Wisconsin and U.S. Civilian Labor Force Unemployment Rate

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Blair	4.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Trempealeau Co.	3.9	5.0	5.4	5.8	4.8	4.4	4.2
State of Wis.	3.4	4.4	5.3	5.6	5.0	4.8	4.7
U.S.	4.0	4.7	5.8	6.0	5.5	5.1	4.6

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Income and Poverty

The median family income for City residents increased by \$14,462, or 54%, from 1989 to 1999 (see Table 5.03). This is a smaller increase than in the County (\$16,843), State (\$17,829), and Nation (\$14,821) during the same period. However, between 1989 and 1999, per capita income increased by \$7,187, or 65.6%, in the City. This is a higher increase than in the County (\$5,163) and Nation (\$7,167), though it is a lower increase than in the State (\$7,995).

Table 5.03 Median Household and Family Income, Per Capita Income & Percent in Poverty 1989-1999

	1989				1999			
	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income	Percent in Poverty	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income	Percent in Poverty
City of Blair	18,393	26,830	10,674	13.1	30,679	41,292	17,681	9.6
Trempealeau Co.	23,864	28,526	11,090	10.7	37,889	45,369	16,253	8.3
Wisconsin	29,442	35,082	13,276	10.7	43,791	52,911	21,271	8.7
U.S.	30,056	35,225	14,420	13.1	41,994	50,046	21,587	12.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000

One explanation for this disparity in the increase of two measures of income is that, according to the 2000 US Census, the City of Blair has a higher percentage of workers in the lower-paying Service Occupations, and a lower percentage in the higher-paying Management, Professional and Related Occupations, than the County, State, or Nation (see Table 5.01). Therefore, even if jobs are being created in Blair (and surrounding communities to which Blair residents commute), they may not be high-wage jobs that are family-supporting. Another explanation for this disparity is that, according to the 2000 US Census, Blair has a much lower level of women employed outside the home (47.8%) than the County (62.3%), the State (61.4%), or the Nation (54.0%). Per-capita income increased in terms of dollar amounts, as it did in most locations nation-wide in the 1990s – in fact, it increased at a higher rate in Blair than many other places. But, if households in the City of Blair remained single-income while their neighbors in the County, State, and Nation more often became two-income, then the City of Blair would expect see a slower rise in median family income. Still another explanation for this disparity is that Blair has a higher percentage of residents who rely on Social Security and retirement income than the County, State, or Nation (see Table 5.04). Social Security and retirement-fund income does not tend to rise or fall as quickly as do wages and salaries.

The City of Blair's poverty rate decreased by 3.5% from 1989 to 1999 (see Table 5.03). The County, State, and Nation also experienced decreases in their poverty rates during the same reporting period. The City's poverty rate of 9.6% in 1999 is higher than the County's (8.3%) and the State's (8.7%), but the gap had narrowed since 1989. Furthermore, the City's poverty rate in 1999 was dramatically lower than the National poverty rate of 12.4%, after being equal with the National rate in 1989.

Commuting to Work

Over two-thirds (68.5%) of workers in Blair drove to work alone, while 19.6% carpooled, and 8.6% walked to work (see Table 5.05). The mean travel time to work for City of Blair workers was a little over 28.7 minutes, with most traveling to the nearby village of Arcadia.

Table 5.04 Percentage of Residents with Income from Social Security and Retirement Funds, 1999

	Percentage with Social Security	Percent with Retirement Funds
City of Blair	39.1	19.3
Trempealeau Co.	32.0	13.4
Wisconsin	26.4	15.7
U.S.	25.7	16.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 5.05 Commuting to Work – City of Blair

Means of Travel	Percent
Car, Truck, Van – Drove Alone	68.5
Car, Truck, Van – Carpooled	19.6
Public Transportation (includes taxicab)	-
Walked	8.6
Other Means	1.1
Worked at Home	2.2
Mean Travel Time to Work 28.7 minutes	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

City of Blair and Trempealeau County's Top Employers

Many Blair residents travel outside of the City for employment. Major employers within the City and County are listed in Table 5.06. In 2006, Trempealeau County's largest industries were Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing (24.9% of labor force), Educational Services (7.7% of labor force), Food Manufacturing (6.6% of labor force), Food Services and Drinking Places (4.6% of labor force) and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (4.5% of labor force).

Table 5.06 Major Employers

City of Blair		
Establishment	Product or Service	Size
Grand View Care Center Inc.	Nursing Care Facilities	100-249 employees
Elementary and Secondary Schools	Elementary and Secondary Schools	100-249 employees
Associated Milk Producers Inc.	Cheese Manufacturing	50-99 employees
City of Blair	Executive & Legislative Offices, combined	20-49 employees
Kwik Trip Inc.	Gasoline Station with Convenience Stores	10-19 employees
Trempealeau County		
Establishment	Product or Service	Size
Ashley Furniture	Furniture Manufacturing	1000+ employees
JFC Inc.	Poultry Processing	250-499
Ashley Distribution Services	General Freight Trucking	250-499
Lucas Body Systems	All Other Plastic Product Manufacturing	250-499
Osseo Medical Center	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	100-249
Tri-County Memorial Hospital	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	100-249
Global Finishing Solutions Inc.	Sheet Metal Work Manufacturing	100-249
Whitehall Specialties Inc.	Cheese mfg	100-249
Grand View Care Center Inc.	Nursing Care Facilities	100-249

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Bureau of Workforce Information

Industry Projections

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Industry provides projections for the Western Workforce Development Area, which includes Trempealeau County. Over the next several years, the largest projected employment increases will take place in the educational and healthcare services (see Table 5.07).

Table 5.07 Industry Projections for Western Workforce Development Area*, 2004-2014

Industry Title	2004 Estimated Employment	2014 Projected Employment	2004-2014 Employment Change	2004-2014 Percentage Change
Total Non-Farm Employment	136,640	152,080	15,440	11.3%
Construction/Mining/Natural Resources	5,230	6,150	920	17.6%
Manufacturing	23,180	22,880	-300	-1.3%
Food Manufacturing	2,760	2,760	0	0%
Printing and Related Support Activities	1,610	1,600	-10	-0.6%
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg	2,250	2,330	80	3.6%
Trade	21,090	22,670	1,580	7.5%
Food and Beverage Stores	2,560	2,670	110	4.3%
Transportation and Utilities (Including US Postal)	8,380	9,390	1,010	12.1%
Financial Activities	5,750	6,260	510	8.9%
Education and Health Services (Including State and Local Gov Educ and Hosp)	29,640	36,260	6,620	22.3%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	5,830	7,840	2,010	34.5%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	3,490	4,140	650	18.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	12,770	14,740	1,970	15.4%
Information/Prof Services/Other Services	15,700	18,240	2,540	16.2%
Government (Excluding US Postal, State and Local Educ and Hosp)	14,910	15,500	590	4.0%

*Western WDA includes Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon Counties

Source: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Occupations with the Most New Jobs, Fastest Growth, and Most Job Openings

Tables 5.08 through 5.10 describe the industries with the most potential for growth between 2002 and 2012. The nursing profession is anticipated to have the largest percentage increase of new jobs (29.5%) over the ten-year period. The fastest growing occupations, on a percentage basis, over the period are projected to be medical assistants, medical records/health info techs, and computer software engineers. The occupational field projected to have the most job openings, on a percentage basis, in the Western Workforce Development Area is once again nursing, followed by truck drivers.

Table 5.08 Top 10 Occupations With The Most New Jobs In The Western Workforce Development Area*, 2002-2012

Occupational Title	Estimated Employment		Change		Annual Average			Education or Training Requirements
	2002	2012	Numeric	%	New Jobs	Replacements	Total Openings	
Truck Drivers/Heavy/Tractor-Trailer	4,080	4,990	910	22.3	90	70	160	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Registered Nurses	3,050	3,950	900	29.5	90	60	150	Bachelor's or Associate degree
Retail Salespersons	3,900	4,400	500	12.8	50	140	190	Short-term on-the-job training
Comb Food Prep/Serv Wrk/Incl Fast	2,360	2,820	460	19.5	50	100	150	Short-term on-the-job training
Nursing Aides/Orderlies/Attendants	2,290	2,760	470	20.5	50	30	80	Short-term on-the-job training
Cashiers	3,800	4,140	340	8.9	40	190	230	Short-term on-the-job training
Waiters/Waitresses	2,330	2,640	310	13.3	30	120	150	Short-term on-the-job training
Janitors/Cleaners Ex Maids/Hskpng	2,250	2,560	310	13.8	30	40	70	Short-term on-the-job training
Sls Reps/Whls/Mfg/Ex Tech/Sci Prod	1,500	1,800	300	20.0	30	40	70	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Receptionists/Info Clerks	1,160	1,470	310	26.7	30	30	60	Short-term on-the-job training

*Western WDA includes Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon Counties

Source: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Table 5.09 Top 10 Fastest Growing Occupations In The Western Workforce Development Area*, 2002-2012

Occupational Title	Estimated Employment		Change		Annual Average			Education or Training Requirements
	2002	2012	Numeric	%	New Jobs	Replacements	Total Openings	
Medical Assts	390	630	240	61.5	20	10	30	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Medical Records/Health Info Techs	230	370	140	60.9	10	<5	10	Associate degree
Computer Software Engrns Apps	160	250	90	56.3	10	<5	10	Bachelor's degree
Dental Hygienists	170	250	80	47.1	10	<5	10	Associate degree
Personal and Home Care Aides	610	880	270	44.3	30	10	40	Short-term on-the-job training
Home Health Aides	460	660	200	43.5	20	10	30	Short-term on-the-job training
Dental Assts	280	400	120	42.9	10	10	20	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Social/Human Service Assts	420	600	180	42.9	20	10	30	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Computer/Information Systems Mgrs	160	220	60	37.5	10	<5	10	Bachelor's degree or more, plus work exp.
Network/Computer Systems Admin	160	220	60	37.5	10	<5	10	Bachelor's degree

*Western WDA includes Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties

Source: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Table 5.10 Top 10 Occupations With the Most Job Openings In The Western Workforce Development Area*, 2002-2012

Occupational Title	Estimated Employment		Change		Annual Average			Education or Training Requirements
	2002	2012	Numeric	%	New Jobs	Replacements	Total Openings	
Cashiers	3,800	4,140	340	8.9	40	190	230	Short-term on-the-job training
Retail Salespersons	3,900	4,400	500	12.8	50	140	190	Short-term on-the-job training
Truck Drivers/Heavy/Tractor-Trailer	4,080	4,990	910	22.3	90	70	160	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Registered Nurses	3,050	3,950	900	29.5	90	60	150	Bachelor's or Associate degree (see note 9)
Comb Food Prep/Serv Wrk/Incl Fast	2,360	2,820	460	19.5	50	100	150	Short-term on-the-job training
Waiters/Waitresses	2,330	2,640	310	13.3	30	120	150	Short-term on-the-job training
Nursing Aides/Orderlies/Attendants	2,290	2,760	470	20.5	50	30	80	Short-term on-the-job training
Labrs/Frght/Stock/Matrl Movers/Hand	2,280	2,290	10	0.4	<5	80	80	Short-term on-the-job training
Janitors/Cleanrs Ex Maids/Hskpng	2,250	2,560	310	13.8	30	40	70	Short-term on-the-job training
Team Assemblers	2,500	2,440	-60	-2.4	<5	70	70	Moderate-term on-the-job training

*Western WDA includes Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties

Source: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Environmentally Contaminated Sites in the City of Blair

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law requires local units of government to evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) was utilized in identifying contaminated sites in the City of Blair. Only one contaminated site was listed for the City of Blair with an “open” status. In total, there were 28 BRRTS sites in the City of Blair. Table 5.11 lists the open site in Blair and its status.

Table 5.11 BRRTS Sites – City of Blair

Site	Activity Type	Location	Spill Information	Site Status
Coop Equity/Richard Berg	Environmental Repair (ERP)	Rt. 2 SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Sec 24, T21N, R08W	Contaminated private well, groundwater contamination, soil contamination	Open

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

As part of the planning process the DNR’s “Registry of Waste Disposal Sites in Wisconsin” was reviewed. No waste disposal sites were listed for the City of Blair. There are five waste facility locations listed in DNR’s “Waste Management Facility” database for the City, Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 Waste Management Facilities – City of Blair

Facility Name	Location or Legal Description	Status	Wastes Handled
AMPI	220 Center Street, Blair, WI 54616	Operating	Universal Waste, Non-listed ignitable wastes
Coulee Region Bio Fuels	509 4 th Street, Blair, WI 54616	Operating	Oil
Gundersen Lutheran Blair Clinic	420 S. Peterson Ave., Blair, WI 54646	Operating	Infectious waste
NSPW Blair Office and Garage	115 N Spring Street, Blair, WI 54616	Operating	Non-Listed corrosive wastes, non-listed ignitable wastes, non-listed toxic wastes
Stetzer Electric	520 W Broadway Street, Blair, WI 54616	Operating	HW generator (very small)

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)

The City of Blair currently has three TIF districts in operation to assist with economic development.

TIF Number 3 is located in the eastern part of the City (see Map 5.1, at the end of the chapter). It was originally created in 1995 to facilitate the development of an industrial park south of Broadway and west of Elland Road. The TIF plan calls for new water, sewer, and road projects, in particular the extension of Webster Street to the south and Olson Street to the east. The properties had a base value of \$211,900. TIF Number 3 was amended on February 27, 2006, to expand the scope of some of these infrastructure projects. The TIF was further amended on June 24, 2008, to include areas north of Broadway to the railroad tracks, and west of Elland Road to a line extended north from the terminus of Hickory Street at Broadway. TIF Number 3 will expire in 2023.

TIF Number 4 is located in the central part of the City, at the southwestern corner of the intersection of Park St. and the railroad tracks, and runs south through the area where the course of Center St. is interrupted (see Map 5.1, at the end of the chapter). The base value of the property was \$14, 502. TIF Number 4 was created on June 4, 2007. It was amended May 19, 2009, to include other projects outside the original district, but without changing the original territorial boundaries of the district. The project originally involved laying 3200 feet of new railroad tracks, installing two switches, relocation of power lines, and other utility work. Under this amendment, however, the focus of the TIF was changed. The railroad projects were abandoned, and the TIF now is intended to aid in the Downtown Lighting, Landscaping and Beautification Project; various development incentives; development of parks and nature trails; improvements to a downtown parking lot; and improvements to the sanitary sewer. TIF Number 4 is scheduled to expire in 2027.

TIF Number 5 consists of 21,000 acres in the triangular-shaped industrial lands in the extreme northeastern portion of the City (see Map 5.1, at the end of the chapter). The project involves the construction of a railroad spur to serve the industrial park that is planned nearby, as well as some utility work. The property was valued at \$54,660 on January 1, 2007. TIF Number 5 is scheduled to expire in 2029.

Commercial Development

Expansion of commercial spaces should be directed, whenever practical, toward existing buildings that are vacant, rather than building new sites. Residents that responded to the survey indicated that empty buildings were a problem in Blair. If new businesses begin or established ones expand in these existing buildings, Blair's streetscape will reflect greater prosperity, perhaps encouraging even more investment. Nevertheless, some businesses will require new structures. The area near Highway 53 and 4th Street would be a good location for new, large-scale commercial buildings (see "Opportunities for Redevelopment" in the Land Use chapter).



Four views of Blair's downtown business district

The City also has plans for a Downtown Lighting, Landscaping and Beautification Project, which will introduce new lighting, plantings, street furniture, and other amenities to the streets in the downtown commercial area. This area consists of Center St., Broadway, and 1st St., from Highway 95 in the west to about Main St. in the east, and Gilbert St. north to the railroad tracks. This project will make the commercial area more attractive, and could spur more investment in downtown Blair. The streets receiving these improvements are shown on Map 9.2.

Industrial Development

The intersection of Gilbert Street and the railroad tracks is currently Blair's only industrial district. Its future growth is limited, however, by existing buildings, parks, and residences surrounding it. The northeastern area of the City presents the greatest opportunities for new industrial development (see "Opportunities for Redevelopment" in the Land Use chapter). An industrial park is planned for this area of the City as part of

TIF Number 3, and future industrial activities should be directed there and the area of TIF Number 5. The City's TIF boundaries are shown on see Map 5.1 at the end of this chapter.

City, Regional, and State Economic Development Programs

Numerous county, regional, and state economic development programs apply to the City of Blair. The following is a list of selected programs that could be beneficial to economic development in the City of Blair.

City Programs:

- Blair Industrial Development Corporation
- *Downtown Lighting, Landscaping and Beautification Project*

Regional Programs:

- Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) - Business Capital Fund Revolving Loan Fund
- Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs administered through the MRRPC (e.g., Public Works and Economic Development Program, Economic Adjustment Program, etc.)

State Programs:

- Wisconsin Department of Transportation Local Transportation Enhancements Program (TE)
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation Local Transportation Economic Assistance Program (TEA)
- Value Added Dairy Initiative (Grow Wisconsin)
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce Milk Volume Production Program
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce Dairy 2020 Planning Grant Program
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Program
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce Entrepreneurial Training Grant
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce - Community Development Block Grant For Public Facilities (CDBG-PF)
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce - CDBG Grant Planning Grant Program (CDBG-PLNG)
- Wisconsin Business Retention And Expansion Study Program (WIBRES)
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce - Blight Elimination and Brownfield Redevelopment Program (BEBR)
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce – Emergency Assistance Program (CDBG-EAP)
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce – Small Cities Housing Program
- State of Wisconsin Business Tax Credit Program
- Wisconsin Main Street Program

Strengths And Weaknesses for Fostering Economic Growth

Strengths

- Blair's strategic location at the center of the Eau Claire-La Crosse-Winona triangle
- High quality of life
- Quality elementary, secondary and post secondary educational system
- Located near major manufacturing centers
- Dependable roads
- High quality recreational resources
- Quality health care
- Strong community spirit (Blair Cheese Festival)
- Low crime rate
- Rail Service
- Airport

Weaknesses

- Interstate access is 16-20 miles from Blair
- Lower household and family incomes than County, State and Nation
- Aging population
- Higher poverty rate than the County and State
- Lower education levels
- Relatively high unemployment

Key Economic Development Issues Impacting the City:

- The City has lower income and a higher poverty rate than other communities.

The City's median household income of \$30,679 in 1999 is lower than the median household income in the County (\$37,889), State (\$43,791), and Nation (\$41,994). However the number of residents with low and moderate incomes living in the Grand View Care Center may contribute to the lower income levels in the City.

The City's 9.6% poverty rate in 1999 was higher than the rates in the County (8.3%) and State (8.7%), but lower than the National rate (12.4%).

- Additional business and industrial development is needed.
- The City is developing a new industrial park to accommodate business and industry expansion.
- The City needs to provide expansion opportunities and/or attract "Traded Companies" to the community. Traded Companies are firms that make or provide value-added products or services and export them out of the region and import new capital into the community that is shared with other sectors of the City's economy through an economic multiplier effect. Traded companies typically provide superior wages and benefits because of the knowledge base needed by their workforce. Examples of Traded Companies that have a high location quotient and success in Western Wisconsin are equipment and metal manufacturers, wood and forest product companies, and agricultural and food processing companies.
- The City has an opportunity to capitalize on its strategic location in close proximity to Eau Claire, WI, La Crosse, WI, and Winona, MN, and on the Wisconsin Central Rail line. Appealing marketing materials could be developed to promote the City as an affordable place to build a business and to raise a family.
- Direct-to-consumer agriculture and community-supported agricultural production systems are growing sectors of the economy. Organic fuels and bio-fuel production are encouraging innovations. Ventures in all these areas could be productive in the City of Blair.
- The City was successful in receiving Public Facility Grant from the State of Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant program through federal stimulus funding. This grant award will be used to design and construct a downtown improvement project.
- Re-establishment of a grocery store in the City is underway.
- The City has three tax incremental financing districts to assist with economic development
- Lack of Jobs in the City

Many residents commute to work in bigger cities such as La Crosse, WI, Eau Claire, WI, and Winona, MN. The mean travel time for City of Blair workers is about half an hour.

- **Young Residents Leaving the City**

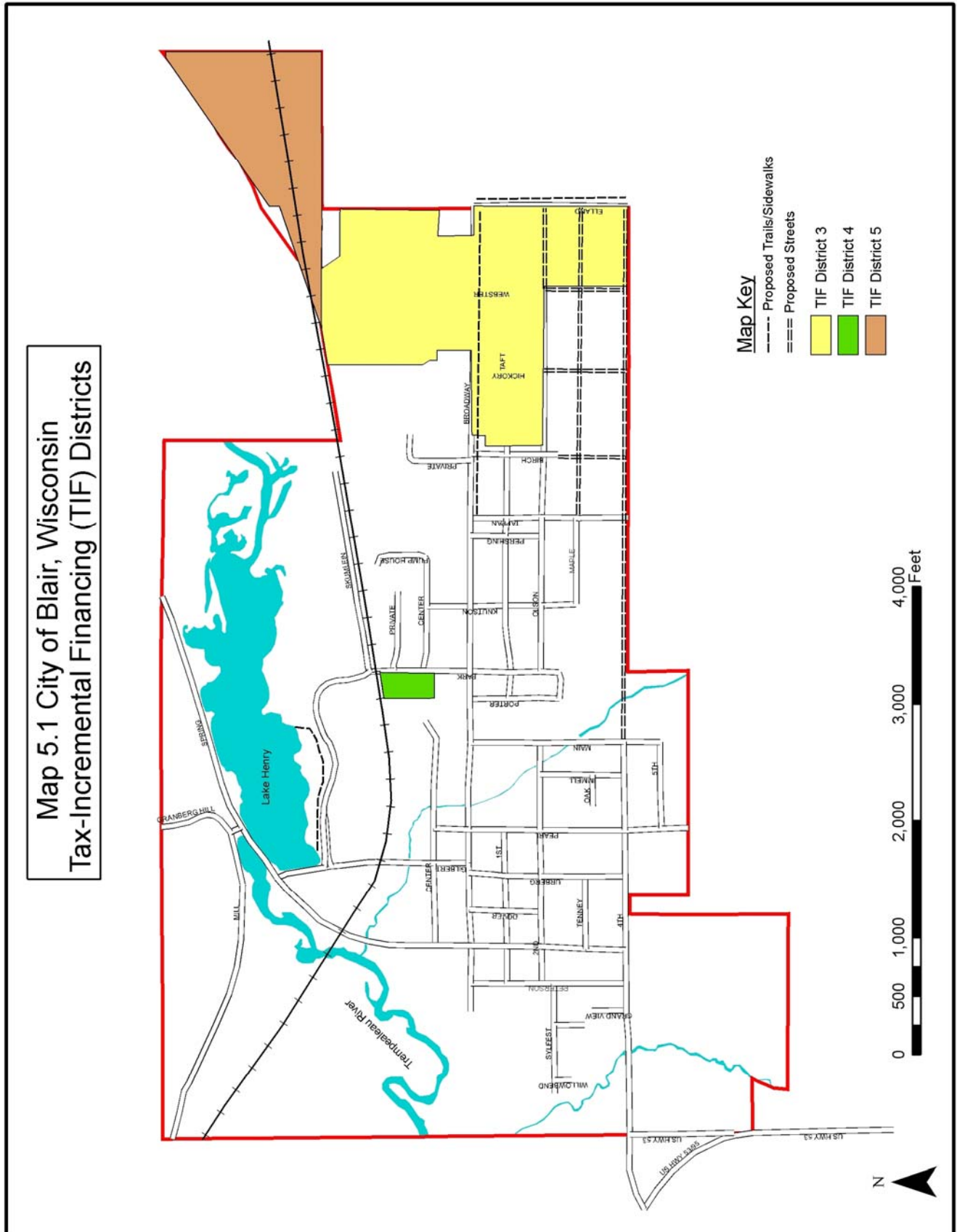
The median age for the City of Blair exceeds the County, State, and National average, according to Table 1.04. The aging population in the City of Blair indicates that young residents are moving out of the city in greater numbers than they are being replaced. This trend suggests that there are not enough jobs to prevent young workers from moving away or to attract new people to the area.

- **The City has opportunities for the efficient reuse of empty commercial buildings.**

Numerous commercial buildings are vacant in the downtown. New businesses need to be encouraged to occupy the vacant buildings.

- **The City must encourage industrial development in proper locations.**

Survey results indicated that residents are unhappy with the proximity of industrial buildings to residential areas, schools, and parks.



6. Utilities and Community Facilities

Inventory and Projected Needs of Utilities and Community Facilities

The table below inventories and analyzes the numerous utilities and community facilities in the city and also identifies objectives, goals and programs to maintain and further develop these facilities. Maps 6.01 and 6.02 show the location of these facilities as well as future expansion and initiatives pertaining to them as well.



Entrance to Riverside Park

Table 6.01 Utilities and Community Facilities

Utility or Community Facility	Location and Level of Use and Capacity	Expansion, Rehabilitation or Need to Create This Service in Next 20 Years	Objectives, Policies, and Goals Relating to this Utility or Community Facility
Wastewater Treatment Facility			
City of Whitehall's Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF)	<p>The City of Blair does not have a wastewater treatment plant. The City of Whitehall WWTF provides treatment of domestic wastewater from the City of Whitehall, Lincoln Sanitary District, Trempealeau County Health Care and the City of Blair. WWTF was constructed in 1974 and operates a six-celled lagoon system with a design flow of 1.2 million gallons per day (MGD) and in 2007 the actual annual average influent flow was 0.74 (MGD) day. The discharge receiving waters is the Trempealeau River located in the Pigeon Creek Watershed of the Buffalo-Trempealeau River Basin in Trempealeau County.</p> <p>The wastewater treatment plant permit limit for average monthly effluent BOD is 30 (mg/l). The monthly BOD effluent average in 2007 was 13 (mg/l). The wastewater treatment plant permit limit for average effluent in Total Suspended Solids (T.S.S.) is 60 (mg/l). During the 12 months of 2007 the wastewater treatment plant averaged a T.S.S. mg/l effluent level of 18 (mg/l).</p>	In 2005, influent flow was 62% of the wastewater treatment plant's theoretical hydraulic capacity, though the influent flow has continued to increase. There has been an increase in industrial loading due to a new Whitehall Specialties Facility.	Proposed DNR compliance schedules for ammonia-related evaluation for ponds and lagoons include: 1) submit Operational Evaluation and Report evaluating the ability of the existing stabilization pond or lagoon system to meet the water-quality-based ammonia effluent limits (report due 03/31/2010); 2) Submit facilities plan that evaluates alternatives for meeting the water quality based ammonia effluent limits (plan due 03/31/2011).

City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009 – 2029, Utilities and Community Facilities

Table 6.01 Utilities and Community Facilities

Utility or Community Facility	Location and Level of Use and Capacity	Expansion, Rehabilitation or Need to Create This Service in Next 20 Years	Objectives, Policies, and Goals Relating to this Utility or Community Facility
Sanitary Distribution Sewer System			
Sewer System	The City has approximately 7.16 miles	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to provide scheduled maintenance and upkeep as needed.
Water Supply			
Well Number Five	Located at 642 Park Road East. Well depth = 72 ft. Pumping Capacity 151,000 gpd; actual capacity gpm = 540	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to provide scheduled maintenance and upkeep as needed.
Well Number Six	Located on 972 Skumlien Road. Well depth = 96 ft. Pumping Capacity 155,000 gpd; actual capacity gpm = 500	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to provide scheduled maintenance and upkeep as needed.
Water Distribution			
Water Pumping Station	2007: Avg. # of general customers = 587; thousands of gallons of water sold = 118,319; total KWH used for pumping = 205,585. The total 2007 annual pumpage amount for the City was 144,935,000 gallons or approximately 397,082 gpd. Maximum gallons pumped by all methods in any one day was 628,000 gallons (10/23/2007) and the minimum gallons pumped by all methods on any one day was 316,000 gallons (2/14/2007).	The City of Blair Ground water supply is susceptible to contaminations from a variety of sources, and the water has high concentrations of iron and manganese.	Establish a municipal filtration system.
Solid Waste Disposal			
	Blair contracts with Tri-County Sanitation for garbage pickup.	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to monitor residential, commercial, and industrial solid waste and recycling generation rates and plan for new services accordingly.
Recycling Facilities			
None	Aluminum, newspaper, cardboard, #1 and #2 plastic, tin, and glass can be recycled. Curbside pickup is provided by Tri-R.	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to monitor residential, commercial, and industrial solid waste and recycling generation rates and plan for new services accordingly.
Parks and Recreation			
Lake Henry	Located on the north edge of the City, between Highway 95 and the railroad tracks, north of Riverside park.	The lake is in need of dredging as soon as possible. See the <i>Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan</i> .	Explore opportunities to fund dredging of the lake.
Riverside Park	Located on south shore of Lake Henry. Fifty acres in size with 24 campsites, tennis courts, volleyball pits, basketball court, picnic areas, two lighted baseball diamonds, playground equipment, swimming pool, showers, and restrooms.	The City would like to construct a walking and bicycling trail, which might be expanded to connect with other areas of the City, particularly the schools. See the <i>Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan</i> .	The City has submitted a grant application to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to fund construction of a walking and bicycling trail.

City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009 – 2029, Utilities and Community Facilities

Table 6.01 Utilities and Community Facilities

Utility or Community Facility	Location and Level of Use and Capacity	Expansion, Rehabilitation or Need to Create This Service in Next 20 Years	Objectives, Policies, and Goals Relating to this Utility or Community Facility
Strand Wayside	Small half-acre wayside located on north side of Lake Henry adjacent to STH 95.	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned. See the <i>Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan</i> .	Continue to provide scheduled maintenance and upkeep as needed.
Blair Taylor-School Properties	Located two blocks south of Broadway. Playground with equipment.	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned. See the <i>Five-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan</i> . The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the School District. Explore the possibility of connecting the school to surrounding areas with a walking and bicycle trail.
Telecommunication Facilities			
Centurytel	Services: telephone, cable & Internet	The City has limited authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by this utility.
Power Generating Plants			
Xcel Energy	Provides electrical service.	The City has limited authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by this utility.
Health Care Facilities			
Gundersen Lutheran Blair Clinic	Located at 420 South Peterson Avenue. There are also three hospitals located in Trempealeau County that are within easy driving distance from Blair: 1) Franciscan Skemp Arcadia Campus, 464 S. St. Joseph Avenue, Arcadia; 2) Luther Midelfort Oakridge, 13025 8 th Street, Osseo; 3) and Tri-County Memorial Hospital, 18061 Lincoln Street, Whitehall. Black River Memorial Hospital which is located on 711 W. Adams in Black River Falls is only 23 miles away from Blair. In addition two quality medical centers are located in La Crosse, less than a 50 mile drive from Blair: 1) Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, Inc., 1910 South Avenue, La Crosse, WI; and 2) Franciscan Skemp Medical Center, 700 West Avenue South, La Crosse.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by this health service organization.
Grand View Care Center Inc.	Located at 620 Grand View Ave. Grand View Care Center Inc. is a 98 bed nursing home facility.	Though the City has issued revenue bonds involving the center, the City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by this health service organization.
Child Care Facilities			
Blair Head Start Center	219 South Main Street	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by this child-care facility.
Police Facilities			
Blair Police Department	Located at 105 East Broadway Street. 3 officers, 1 police car	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to monitor police and public safety needs and make personnel changes and capital improvements as needed.

City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009 – 2029, Utilities and Community Facilities

Table 6.01 Utilities and Community Facilities

Utility or Community Facility	Location and Level of Use and Capacity	Expansion, Rehabilitation or Need to Create This Service in Next 20 Years	Objectives, Policies, and Goals Relating to this Utility or Community Facility
Fire and Rescue Facilities			
Blair Preston Fire Department	Located at 117 Broadway Street. Volunteer fire department with 28 volunteers; 75 fire hydrants operated during 2007. Ambulance services nearby are Tri-County Ambulance Service in Whitehall and Arcadia Ambulance Service in Arcadia.	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Maintain availability of ambulance services.
Schools			
Blair-Taylor Elementary School	Located at 219 S. Main Street. 2007-2008 enrollment = 294.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the School District. Explore the possibility of connecting the school to surrounding areas with a walking and bicycle trail.
Blair-Taylor, School of Science, Engr. and Technology (SoSET)	SoSET Charter School is located at 219 S. Main Street. 2007-2008 enrollment = 66. SoSET was established in 2004 to provide for the unique needs of individual learners in grades 3-6.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the School District. Explore the possibility of connecting the school to surrounding areas with a walking and bicycle trail.
Trempealeau Valley Virtual School Consortium	Created in 2007, the Trempealeau Valley Virtual School Consortium provides an online learning alternative to the students in the Alma Center-Humbird- Merrillan, Arcadia, Blair-Taylor, Independence and Whitehall districts by offering students the opportunity to work in a self-paced environment, customize their courses and schedules, participate in district social and co curricular activities and take courses leading to a high school diploma.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the School District.
Blair-Taylor Middle/High School	Located at 337 N. 31024 Elland Road. 2007-2008 enrollment = 322. Sport Programs Offered: Football, Cross-Country, Volleyball, Basketball, Wrestling, Track, Golf, Softball, & Baseball. Co-Curricular Activities Offered: Forensics, Drama Club, FFA, FCCLA, High Quiz Bowl, Jazz Band, Swing Choir, Letter Club, Pom Pom Squad, Cheer leading, Close Up, Student Council, Spanish Club, SADD, Creative Writing Club & National Honor Society.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the School District. Explore the possibility of connecting the school to surrounding areas with a walking and bicycle trail.
Post-Secondary Education Institutions	Post-secondary education is available to Blair residents at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, Western Technical College, and Viterbo University located in La Crosse; Western Technical College-Independence Campus; UW-Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire; and Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical, St. Mary's University, and Winona State University in Winona.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by these nearby colleges and universities.
Churches and Cemeteries			
Blair Lutheran Church	126 S. Peterson Avenue	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the Church.
First Lutheran Church	419 Urberg Street	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the Church.

City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009 – 2029, Utilities and Community Facilities

Table 6.01 Utilities and Community Facilities

Utility or Community Facility	Location and Level of Use and Capacity	Expansion, Rehabilitation or Need to Create This Service in Next 20 Years	Objectives, Policies, and Goals Relating to this Utility or Community Facility
St. Ansgar Catholic Church	702 E. Olson Street	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the Church.
Christian Church-Western WI	W116990 State Hwy 95	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the Church.
Rest Haven Cemetery	E. Broadway, between Pershing Ave. and S. Birch St.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the cemetery.
Comess Cemetery	W. 4 th St. at Pearl St.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the cemetery.
Zion Cemetery	126 S. Peterson Ave., between Broadway and Sylfest St.	The City has no operational authority over this service.	Coordinate any City services related to any improvements planned by the cemetery.
City Administrative Buildings			
Blair City Hall	122 S Urberg Street. The City has seven elected officials: a mayor and 6 aldermen. The City has 9 full-time employees, and varying numbers of seasonal, part-time employees.	The City Hall/Library was remodeled recently. No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to monitor City administrative needs and make personnel changes and capital improvements as needed. Cooperate with efforts being made as part of the Downtown Lighting, Landscaping, and Beautification Project.
Blair Community Ctr.	103 E. Broadway Street	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to monitor community center needs and make personnel changes and capital improvements as needed.
Libraries			
Blair-Preston Public Library	122 S. Urberg Street	The City Hall/Library was remodeled recently. No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to monitor City administrative needs and make personnel changes and capital improvements as needed. Cooperate with efforts being made as part of the Downtown Lighting, Landscaping, and Beautification Project.
City Maintenance Buildings			
City Garage	The City owns 3 dump trucks, 3 pickup trucks, 1 street sweeper, 4 grass mowers, 1 front end loader, 1 chipper, and 1 sewer jet	No major expansion or rehabilitation projects are planned.	Continue to monitor City maintenance building, vehicle, and equipment needs and make personnel changes and capital improvements as needed.

Table 6.01 Utilities and Community Facilities

Utility or Community Facility	Location and Level of Use and Capacity	Expansion, Rehabilitation or Need to Create This Service in Next 20 Years	Objectives, Policies, and Goals Relating to this Utility or Community Facility
Roads and Sidewalks			
Sidewalks	Throughout the City	Walking trails and paths increase quality of life by providing residents a healthful means of recreation and travel. Sidewalks in good repair are instrumental in establishing connections throughout the City.	Develop walking trail on south shore of Lake Henry. Extend a sidewalk with lighting along Broadway and on Elland Road to the high school.

Key Utilities and Community Facilities Issues Impacting the City

- The City has high-cost infrastructure concerns
Lake Henry will need to be dredged in the near future.
- The City plans to improve its quality of life by upgrading its walkways
The City would like to develop a walking trail along the south shore of Lake Henry to the whey ponds.
The City would like to extend a sidewalk with lighting along Broadway Street from Tappan Street to Elland Road and then South on Elland Road to the High School.
- Need for a Municipal Filtration System
The City of Blair pumps around 316,000 gallons of water per day.
The City of Blair Ground water supply is susceptible to contaminations from a variety of sources, and the water has high concentrations of iron and manganese.
- Blair-Taylor Middle/High School
The school enrolls about 320 students in grades 7-12 and provides a wide variety of sports programs and extracurricular activities.



Lake Henry

7. Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

Inventory and Projected Needs of Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

With a Lake, a river, and two creeks flowing through the City of Blair, wetlands and water are an important natural resource totaling over 55 acres. Lake Henry is one of the largest locations for recreational activities in the City, and anglers enjoy catching Northern Pike, Large Mouth Bass, and Panfish in the 44-acre lake. However, sedimentation is a concern for the lake, and proper lake management is necessary to protect and maintain the lake's quality.

Resource Name	Location, Description and Significance of Resource	Objectives, Policies, Goals, and Programs for Conservation and Promotion of Effective Management of Resource
Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape	The City of Blair lies within the Western Coulee and Ridges ecological landscape. This landscape runs north and south along the Mississippi River from the south in Grant and Iowa Counties to the north in Dunn, Barron and Chippewa Counties. Its 9,640 square miles cover 17% of Wisconsin's land area. It is characterized by highly eroded unglaciated topography. Its steep-sided valleys are heavily forested with hardwoods. Agricultural activities, primarily dairy and beef farming, are confined to the valley floors and ridge tops. Large and small meandering rivers and streams are also a characteristic. Brown and Brook Trout are common in the spring-fed and coldwater streams. Soils are typically silt loams, and sandy loams in the uplands and alluvial or terrace deposits on the valley floors.	Resource management activities for this ecological landscape are detailed below for each specific component of this resource that is found in the City.
Soils Major soil types in the City include: Waukegan Silt Loam Meridan Loam Trempe Loamy Fine Sand Meridan Fine Sand Loan Bertrand Silt Loam Plainfield Loamy Loamy Alluvial	The soils in the City are comprised of a combination of loams, sands, silts and alluvials. In general the majority of soil types have moderate permeability with some having excessive permeability. There are some loamy alluvial soils along the floodplain of the Trempealeau River.	The Trempealeau County Soil Survey maps should be consulted when new development is being proposed to prevent groundwater contamination, erosion, and excessive building foundation deterioration and roadway destruction.
Groundwater	Blair's Municipal Water system is 100% groundwater with 503 service connections. The City has two active municipal groundwater wells. Treatment processes of the municipal water system include: ph adjustment or corrosion control, fluoridation, pre-hypo chlorination or disinfection.	Amendments made in 1996 to the Safe Drinking Water Act require states to conduct source water assessments for all public drinking water systems. These assessments provide drinking water systems with the information they need to protect their drinking water source (well or intake) from contamination to meet current and future needs. The following is a source water assessment for the City of Blair as of 12/07. The Blair Waterworks system is susceptible to contamination by volatile organic compounds (VOCs), ethylene dibromide (EDB), synthetic organic compounds (SOCs), nitrate, antimony, fluoride, and thallium. The system has moderate susceptibility to contamination by microbes. There is a wellhead protection plan or an ordinance to protect their wells. Protection activities should focus on whether there is a need to update the plan or the ordinance to further protect the recharge area around these wells.

City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009 – 2029, Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

Resource Name	Location, Description and Significance of Resource	Objectives, Policies, Goals, and Programs for Conservation and Promotion of Effective Management of Resource
Surface Waters and Stream Corridors	The City of Blair is located in the Middle and Upper Trempealeau River watersheds.	The State of the Black-Buffalo-Trempealeau Basin Plan – May, 2002 (PUBL # WT-556-2002) is the information source for much of the information listed below on Blair's surface waters and stream corridors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trempealeau River 	The Middle Trempealeau River Watershed is 42% forest, 16% grassland, and 36% agriculture. The Upper Trempealeau River Watershed is 45% forest, 17% grassland, and 30% agriculture. Both watersheds are ranked high for groundwater contamination due to high nitrate levels. The Trempealeau River's existing use is categorized as Warm Water Sport Fish/35. Stream bank erosion was listed as a potential source of concern in the basin plan, however the river was ranked as stable and not declining from previous assessments.	Enforce City's subdivision and stormwater management ordinances to reduce runoff that causes sedimentation in the river and destroys habitat for aquatic animals and plants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Henry 	<p>Lake Henry borders the northern edge of the City: surface area = 43.5 acres and maximum depth = 8-10 feet. Classed as a drainage lake, a lake with both an inlet and outlet where main water source is stream drainage. Lake has a public access boat ramp. Northern Pike, Large Mouth Bass and Panfish are reported as common species in the Lake. Lake Management Organization is present. Sedimentation is listed as a concern for lake.</p> <p>Dam constructed on Trempealeau River created Lake Henry. The Blair Mill Dam, owned by the City, has a hydraulic height of 9 ft. and a structure height of 13 ft. The dam has a low hazard potential rating, inspected on 03/17/2008.</p>	<p>Enforce City's subdivision and storm water management ordinances to reduce runoff that causes sedimentation in the lake, which destroys habitat and spawning pools for fish, other aquatic animals, and plants. Support Lake Management Organization in their efforts to protect and maintain Lake's quality.</p> <p>Routinely inspect and monitor integrity of dam structure.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tappen Coulee Creek 	Tappen Coulee Creek (latitude 44.297°N, longitude 91.236°W). Categorized as a Warm Water Forage Fish/3.6 Class 3 Brook and Brown trout stream. It was also categorized as not meeting its potential biological use. Stream bank erosion was listed as a pollutant source impacting habitat and stream temperature. Tappen Coulee Creek was listed on the Wisconsin DNR proposed 2006 impaired waters list because of sediment and elevated temperature levels.	Enforce City's subdivision and storm water management ordinances to reduce runoff that causes sedimentation in the lake, which destroys habitat and spawning pools for fish, other aquatic animals, and plants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reynolds Coulee Creek 	Reynolds Coulee Creek (latitude 44.295°N, longitude 91.244°W) Categorized as a Cold II/3.6 Stream that has some natural production but may need stocking to maintain desired fish levels. Threat to its existing use, sedimentation and temperature fluctuations noted as concerns.	Enforce City's subdivision and storm water management ordinances to reduce runoff that causes sedimentation in the lake, which destroys habitat and spawning pools for fish, other aquatic animals, and plants.

City of Blair Comprehensive Plan 2009 – 2029, Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

Resource Name	Location, Description and Significance of Resource	Objectives, Policies, Goals, and Programs for Conservation and Promotion of Effective Management of Resource
<p>Wetlands</p>	<p>With a river and two creeks flowing through the City, wetlands are an important natural resource totaling over 55 acres. Most of these wetlands are associated with the Trempealeau River on the north side of the City.</p> <p>Wetlands are defined in Wisconsin Statutes 23.32 as areas where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions.</p> <p>Wetlands are environmentally sensitive due to the many values and functions they provide. Wetlands filter and replenish groundwater used for drinking and bathing, provide protection from flooding, act as filters for certain kinds of wastes and soluble contaminants generated from runoff that protects rivers and creeks. Wetlands also provide food and habitat for all sorts of plant and wildlife, which benefits hunting, fishing, sightseeing and other recreational and tourism interests. Wetlands also protect shorelines from erosive wave action and enhance the quality of life by providing spacious and scenic open spaces.</p>	<p>Continue to enforce the City's Wetland and Shoreland-Wetland Zoning Ordinance as promulgated from the following two regulatory authorities.</p> <p><u>State Administrative Codes NR 115 & 117:</u> With the loss of one-half our State's wetlands totaling approximately 5 million wetland acres, the State legislature directed the DNR to create rules to protect wetlands located near lakes and streams. State Administrative Codes NR 115 and 117 were the end result of this directive. These codes set the minimum wetland protection standards that have been delegated by the State legislature for counties, cities and villages to administer.</p> <p><u>Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act:</u> The primary goal of the Federal Clean Water Act is to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Nation's waters". Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulates the disposal of dredged or fill material into U.S. waters, including wetlands. This is the primary Federal law that regulates the filling and draining of wetlands. Section 404 is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with guidance and oversight by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In Wisconsin the Department of Natural Resources has developed water quality standards for wetlands identified in NR 103, Wisconsin Administrative Code. The Department is responsible for determining if the Section 404 permit application complies with these standards. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cannot make a decision on these wetland alteration permits until the Department grants, denies, or waives water quality certification.</p> <p>In conclusion, it should be pointed out that it is a violation to physically alter any wetland no matter its size without regulatory approval and that at least a 404 permit is needed to do so. An additional shoreland-wetland permit may also be required from the local government if the activity being proposed is impacting a wetland within the shoreland boundary.</p>

Resource Name	Location, Description and Significance of Resource	Objectives, Policies, Goals, and Programs for Conservation and Promotion of Effective Management of Resource
Floodplains	<p>The Trempealeau River, Reynolds Coulee and Tappen Coulee Creeks all have floodplains whether officially mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or not.</p> <p>Floodplains are environmentally sensitive from a water quality perspective because nature has always been able to extract a price for the use of floodplains. This price is in the form of damaged buildings and structures, sewer backups, exposing hazardous materials and increased storm water runoff, all of which contribute to degradation of water quality. The Nation's annual flood recovery costs are excessive and the human hardship beyond this is immeasurable. It is for this reason that the federal, state, and local governments encourage hazard mitigation planning that discourages floodplain development. The purpose for regulating floodplains is to protect life, health and property from flooding.</p>	<p>Continue to enforce the City's Floodplain Zoning Ordinance as promulgated from Chapter NR 116 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the National Flood Insurance Program.</p> <p>Counties, cities and villages are responsible for administering floodplain zoning in accordance with regulatory standards of Chapter NR 116 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the standards of the National Flood Insurance Program. Areas regulated by floodplain zoning include all areas that would be covered by the regional flood and include floodplain islands designated on the official map where emergency rescue and relief routes would be inundated by the regional flood.</p> <p>Floodplains are land areas, which have been or may be covered by floodwater during the "regional flood". The <u>regional flood</u> is a flood determined to be representative of large floods known to have occurred in Wisconsin or which may be expected to occur on a particular lake, river or stream. The regional flood is based upon a statistical analysis of lake level or stream flow records available for the watershed or an analysis of rainfall and runoff characteristics in the watershed or both. In any given year, there is a 1% chance that the regional flood may occur or be exceeded. During a typical 30-year mortgage period, the regional flood has a 26% chance of occurring.</p> <p>The floodplain is made up of the floodway and flood fringe areas. The floodway is the channel of a river or stream and those portions of the floodplain adjoining the channel required to carry the regional flood discharge. The <u>flood fringe</u> is that portion of the floodplain outside of the floodway, which is covered by floodwater during the regional flood. The term flood fringe is generally associated with standing water rather than flowing water. Prohibiting further development in the floodway, buyouts and relocation, and using flood-proofing techniques in conjunction with flood insurance for buildings in the flood fringe are typical ways of mitigating flood damages.</p>

Resource Name	Location, Description and Significance of Resource	Objectives, Policies, Goals, and Programs for Conservation and Promotion of Effective Management of Resource
Unique Wildlife Habitat	-	-
Metallic and Nonmetallic Mineral Resources	No viable metallic or nonmetallic mineral resources exist in the City.	N/A
Historical and Cultural Resources A search of the Wisconsin National Register of Historic Places revealed 17 registered buildings or sites in Trempealeau County. None of these sites are located in the City of Blair. A search of Wisconsin's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) was also conducted. This search identified one hundred forty-four properties in the City of Blair which can be found at http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/ . Several of the City's properties listed on the inventory are shown below. The State Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation assembled this list of properties over the period of more than 25 years. It contains data on buildings, structures, and objects that illustrate Wisconsin's unique history. It documents a wide range of historic properties such as round barns, log houses, metal truss bridges, small town commercial buildings, and Queen Anne houses that make up Wisconsin's distinct cultural landscape. Approximately 120,000 properties in Wisconsin are on this list that is maintained by the Wisconsin Historical Society.		

Architecture & History Inventory Number	Location	Historic Name
51556	137 4 th Street	Preston Town Hall
51649	216 S Urberg Avenue	Town Hall (Jail, fire department, Council Chamber, opera)
51651	419 S. Urberg Avenue	Norwegian Lutheran Church
53399	129 S. Peterson Avenue	Blair Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
64078	C. 210 Gilbert Street	Preston Creamery

Key Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Issues Impacting the City:

- **Waterways**

Lake Henry is one of the largest locations for recreational activities in the City, and anglers enjoy catching Northern Pike, Large Mouth Bass, and Panfish in the 44-acre lake. However, sedimentation is a concern for the lake, and proper lake management is necessary to protect and maintain the lake's quality.

With a river and two creeks flowing through the City wetlands and water are an important natural resource totaling over 55 acres.



Lake Henry

8. Intergovernmental Relationships

Many of the issues detailed in other chapters of this comprehensive plan involve communities other than the City of Blair. The effective handling of transportation, economic development, and agricultural, natural, and cultural resources will require the involvement of the County, the State, and the Federal governments, as well as cooperation among Blair and its neighboring communities. The City of Blair maintains relationships with other governmental bodies in an effort to better serve the public.

State and Federal Agencies

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Wisconsin municipalities work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on many different levels. The Department of Natural Resources regulates municipal and industrial operations discharging wastewater to surface or ground waters through the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit Program. Within the DNR, the Office of Energy is the central point for coordinating most energy and utility projects. Another DNR program, the Solid Waste Program, strives to reduce waste while increasing reuse and recycling. The City of Blair is also eligible to apply for State Stewardship funds through the DNR. The conservation and recreation goals of the Stewardship Program are achieved through the acquisition of land and easements, development of recreational facilities, and restoration of wildlife habitat.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT). In partnership with local governments and other groups, WDOT administers a variety of state and federal programs for projects that enhance the State of Wisconsin's transportation network. The City of Blair participates in the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) program of the WDOT. The WISLR program maintains a complete listing of public roads in the City of Blair by jurisdiction, classification and number of miles. This program assists in the facilitation of state funding for road maintenance.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The City of Blair has minimal interaction with federal agencies. In the event of a natural disaster (flooding, tornado, etc.), FEMA would be the federal agency to assist in relief efforts. The City recognizes this and participates in the development of the Trempealeau County All Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Regional Planning Commission

The City of Blair and Trempealeau County are located in the multi-county region of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). The MRRPC represents nine counties in western Wisconsin: Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau and Vernon. The MRRPC maintains the region's eligibility as an Economic Development District and eligibility for Economic Development Administration funding. It also provides planning and development assistance to local governments, including comprehensive planning, zoning ordinance drafting, economic development assistance, geographic information system mapping, and grant writing.

Trempealeau County

The City of Blair works with the Trempealeau County Highway Department in matters of road maintenance. The City participates in the Trempealeau County All Hazards Mitigation Plan. City of Blair residents also have access to Trempealeau County's Department of Aging specialized transportation services. Trempealeau County's Social Services Department helps residents with their social, economic and personal well-being. Trempealeau County has eight mini-buses to serve county residents (see Chapter 4: Transportation). Seven of the eight buses are used mainly to transport residents to meal sites while one bus makes two weekly trips (Tuesday and Thursday) to La Crosse and two weekly trips to Eau Claire.

(Wednesday and Friday, except the third Friday of the Month). Pickup locations in the City of Blair are at the City Hall and Westbrook Apartments.

Other Local Governments

The Town of Preston borders the City of Blair. The Town and City have a joint fire department and public library. The City also cooperates with the City of Whitehall for wastewater treatment.

School Districts

Public education in the city is provided by the Blair-Taylor School District.

Comprehensive Planning

Trempealeau County applied for state planning grant funds several times but was denied funding. The County is currently preparing a comprehensive plan that should be complete by 2010.

Key Intergovernmental Issues Impacting the City

- **State Stewardship Funds**

The City of Blair is eligible to apply for State Stewardship funds through the DNR to acquire land and easements, develop recreational facilities, and restore wildlife habitat.

- **Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC)**

The MRRPC represents nine counties in western Wisconsin including Trempealeau County. The MRRPC maintains the region's eligibility as an Economic Development District and eligibility for EDA funding.

- **Partnerships with Preston and Whitehall**

The City of Blair and the Town of Preston have a joint fire department and public library. The city cooperates with the city of Whitehall for wastewater treatment.

9. Implementation

This Comprehensive Plan will only be beneficial if it influences how City of Blair officials make land use and project budgeting decisions. It is hoped that the planning process used to develop this plan is sustainable and this Plan will be a key policy document for local officials. This chapter identifies actions that need to be undertaken to implement this Comprehensive Plan.

Plan Element Integration and Consistency Requirement

Wisconsin Statutes call for all Comprehensive Plans to include an Implementation Element. This element is to have a description of how each of the plan elements in the Comprehensive Plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan. This integration and consistency requirement for the City of Blair's Plan was achieved through developing this Plan holistically under one continuous planning process starting in the fall of 2008 and culminating with the Plan's adoption in late 2009. State Statutes also allow for communities to develop and adopt each plan element independently. Under this arrangement integration and consistency is a bigger challenge due to lack of information about the contents of elements yet to be developed.

The City's planning process involved: designing, mailing and tabulating resident surveys; reviewing drafts of each element independently and for consistency with the other elements; and developing the City's goals, policies and program's collectively for each of the elements for accuracy and consistency purposes. In addition the same City Planning Commission was in charge of the planning process from beginning to end. Due to this holistic planning process, the nine elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan have been thoroughly integrated and are consistent with one another.

Plan Update and Amendments

State Statutes call for all Comprehensive Plans to be updated at least once every ten years. An update is a major rewrite of the entire plan and maps. An amendment can be made at any time as long as appropriate public notices and meetings have occurred to allow for the amendment. The City will evaluate the Plan's need for amendments at least every five years and update it pursuant to State Statutes every ten years.

Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule

State Statutes call for Comprehensive Plans to develop a compilation of programs and specific actions in a stated sequence (including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps or subdivision ordinances) in order to implement the goals policies and objectives listed in a local governmental unit's comprehensive plan. State Statutes also call for Comprehensive Plans to provide a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of its Comprehensive Plan. The following chart is the City of Blair's Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule. This schedule is based on analysis of the information reported on in the other elements of this Plan, as well as the City survey and the three public information meetings held on the Plan. Goals are broad statements that the City desires to achieve. Some of the goals are straightforward in explaining what needs to be done, while others have objectives, policies and programs listed beneath them that are designed to help achieve a given goal.

The Common Council is the responsible party that is charged with implementing the City's comprehensive plan goals through use of the city's Planning Commission, other committees and boards, the City Clerk, and other city staff.

Table 9.01 City of Blair Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule	
1 = High or Short-Term Priority	
2 = Medium or Mid-Term Priority	
3 = Long-Term or Continual Priority	
Action	Priority
1. Issues and Opportunities Goals	3
01. Investigate how to capitalize on the City's lower income levels and poverty level due to the high concentration of residents living in nursing facilities and assisted living facilities. The City's lower income levels could position the City to become more competitive in receiving housing rehabilitation funds or economic development infrastructure funding.	
02. Investigate ways the City may be able to improve cost sharing and resource pooling on programs, projects, and products with other municipalities and counties.	3
2. Land Use Goals. The Land Use Element is a key section of the Comprehensive Plan and takes into consideration trends in land supply, demand, and prices as well as potential areas of future land use conflicts.	3
01. Promote the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures -- (4)(b)1*. a. The City will look for and encourage redevelopment opportunities and infilling opportunities where practical.	
02. Encourage land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs -- (4)(b)5*. a. The City encourages development activity that is within or adjacent to the built environment of the City. This will promote development at densities that allow for efficient and economical public services, including police, fire, roads, water, sewer, storm water, electrical, energy, and public transportation. b. The City will promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs by seeking opportunities to partner and share costs with other local governments, the State, and public utilities.	3
03. Identify "Smart Growth Areas". A smart growth area is defined by Wisconsin Statutes as an area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities that have relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs -- (4)(c)*. a. The entire City of Blair is designated as a Smart Growth Area, as are areas outside the City limits that are adjacent to the built environment of the City that are determined to be efficiently served by its public infrastructure. The southern part of the City is particularly well-suited for residential development due to the existing concentration of residential uses, flat terrain to provide public services, and the area's close proximity to the high school. According to the anticipated funding of the State's Smart Growth Dividend Aid Grant Program, the homes constructed in the City or adjacent to the City's built environment on ¼ acre lots or less and at 80% of the County's median sales price would each generate 2 dividend aid grant credits for the City.	3

Table 9.01 City of Blair Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule	
1 = High or Short-Term Priority	
2 = Medium or Mid-Term Priority	
3 = Long-Term or Continual Priority	
Action	Priority
Land Use Goals (Continued)	
04. Provide adequate infrastructure, public services, and supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential commercial and industrial uses -- (4)(b)10*. a. Map 9.1 City of Blair Recommended Land Use Map shows locations where residential and commercial developments are being recommended. Approximately 120 acres are available. This is an adequate supply to meet projected development needs of 60 – 90 housing units, 20 commercial units and 1-5 industrial-manufacturing building projected by the year 2029, based on 1997 – 2007 building permit trends.	3
05. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals -- (4)(b)12*. a. The City's Public Participation Plan calling for a City resident survey, public information meetings, and a public hearing prior to developing the Comprehensive Plan is how the City intends to balance individual property rights with community interests and goals. b. The City will also provide opportunities for input at public meetings when changes to the Comprehensive Plan or zoning code are being considered that involve both individual property rights and community interests and goals.	3
06. Plan and develop land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities -- (4)(b)13*. a. The City will strive to maintain its existing character as an agriculture service center with growing manufacturing and transportation opportunities due to its economic development attributes. These attributes include: being served by U.S. Highway 53 and State Highway 95; having spur-line access to Wisconsin Central Railroad; and being within commuting distance of the larger cities of La Crosse WI, Eau Claire, WI, and Winona, MN.	3
3. Housing Goals. The following housing goals are based on an analysis involving age, structural value, and occupancy characteristics of the City's housing stock and the infrastructure conditions the City must consider to appropriately plan for new housing. Input provided from the City survey and public meetings were also considered in developing these goals. 01. Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels -- (4)(b)9*. The areas shown on Map 9.1 and 9.02 identify over 50 acres of developable land that is suitable for housing. These locations provide an adequate supply for the 60 - 90 additional housing units projected for the year 2029 in Tables 1.07 and 1.09.	3
02. Promote the use of innovative housing techniques such as planned unit developments, clustering, conservation subdivisions, and accessory apartments that are compatible with existing neighborhoods and are designed to better protect the natural environment.	3
03. Identify locations for new housing development alternatives by using the following City maps: Public Utilities and Community Facilities; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; and Recommended Land Use.	3

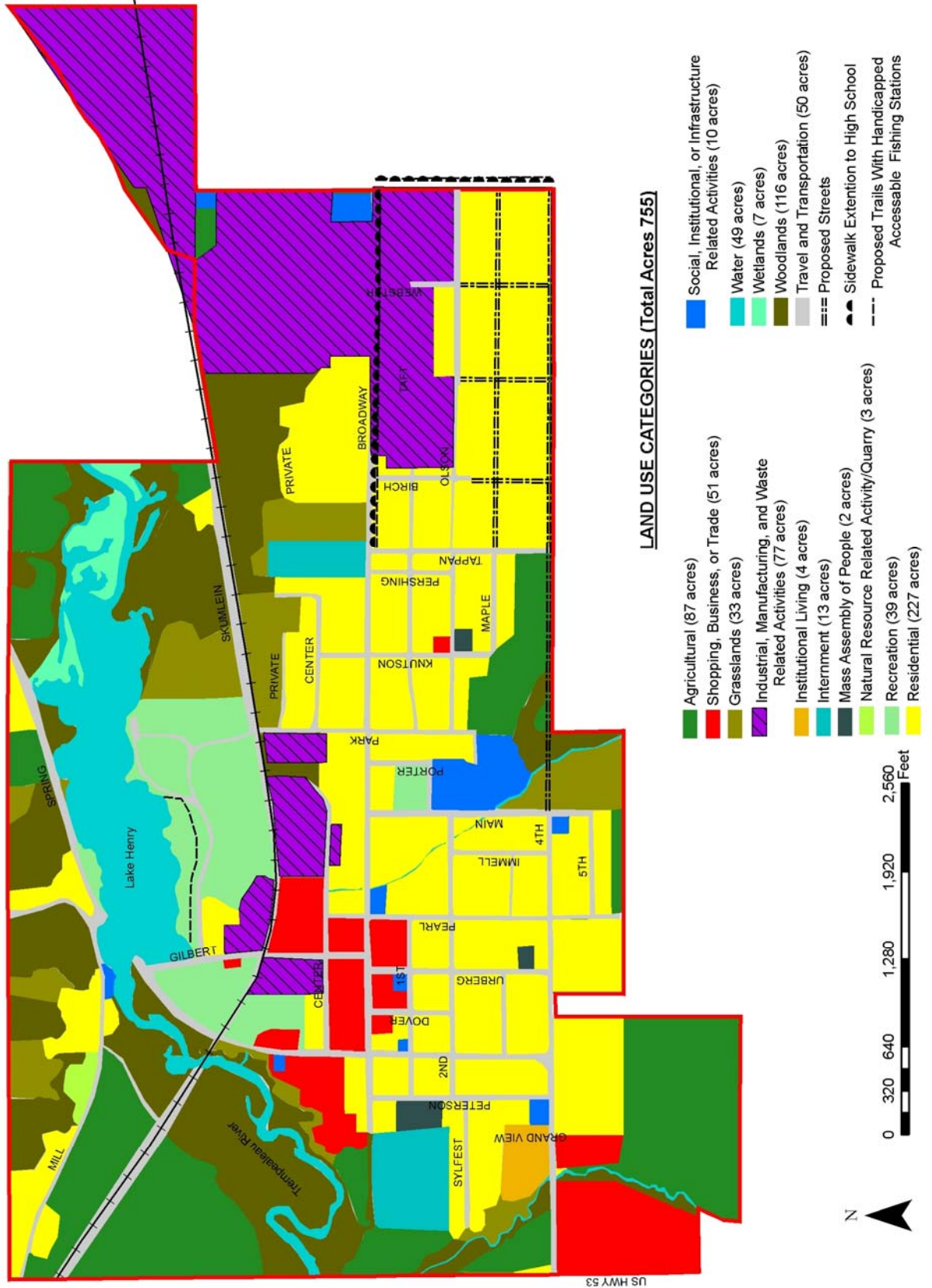
Table 9.01 City of Blair Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule	
1 = High or Short-Term Priority	
2 = Medium or Mid-Term Priority	
3 = Long-Term or Continual Priority	
Action	Priority
<p>4. Transportation Goals. Efficiently moving people and goods to their destination in a safe and environmentally sound manner is the overall goal of transportation planning. To accomplish this the City is proposing the following:</p> <p>01. Develop a high quality transportation system that balances the needs to move people and goods with preserving neighborhoods and the City's quality of life.</p>	3
<p>02. Encourage neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices -- (4)(b)2*.</p> <p>a. Public bus stops, sidewalks, and walking and bike paths will be considered for all new development projects in the City.</p>	3
<p>03. Provide an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens -- (4)(b)14*.</p> <p>a. Investigate ways to provide assistance to the City's commuting workforce. The 2000 census reported that 88% of the City's workforce (473 workers) commute to work, and the average travel time to work for these workers was 29 minutes. Of these 473 workers that commute, 105 (22%) reported that they car pool. This substantial portion of the City's workforce spends a considerable amount of time and money commuting to work. The City is open to ideas to help support ride sharing, such as car and van pooling, that benefits the City and encourages involvement in the regional transportation coordinating committee formed by La Crosse, Buffalo, Trempealeau, Jackson, Monroe, Vernon, Crawford and Juneau Counties. Federal and state funding and financial incentives are available to assist communities and employers in acquiring vehicles and operating these programs.</p>	3
<p>5. Economic Development Goals</p> <p>01. Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels -- (4)(b)11*.</p> <p>a. Help create quality jobs for Blair's workforce and expand the tax base of the City by diversifying the economic base. The most beneficial and sustainable way to do this is by targeting development efforts at both existing and new "Traded Companies". Traded Companies export their products or service out of the City and import new capital into it, which benefits other sectors of the economy through economic multiplier effects.</p> <p>b. Give priority on industrial-zoned lands to economic base activity or traded companies that have an export orientation for their product or service.</p> <p>c. Promote and assist development of the three Western Wisconsin economic driver industries of: (1) equipment, machinery and metal manufacturing, (2) agriculture and food processing and (3) forest and wood products.</p> <p>d. Promote and assist development that will enhance the downtown and encourage business growth and success; especially, the downtown landscaping, lighting and beautification project.</p>	3

Table 9.01 City of Blair Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule	
1 = High or Short-Term Priority	
2 = Medium or Mid-Term Priority	
3 = Long-Term or Continual Priority	
Action	Priority
Economic Development Goals (Continued)	
e. Work to ensure that all existing and future business and industry in the City mitigate the impact of their operations (noise, traffic, odors, sight, etc.) in an environmental and socially acceptable manner.	
f. Continue to support and help grow direct-to-consumer agriculture and community-supported agriculture production systems. Organic farming and bio-fuel production industries are examples of niche industries that that the City could capitalize on and are gaining prominence in the region.	
g. Support small-scale home businesses that have little or no environmental or social impact as a way for the City to maintain its economic base and small-town charm.	
h. Implement the development of the City's new industrial park, Map 9.2.	
02. Investigate the possibility of a marketing program to promote the opportunities for business and industry expansion in the City.	1
6. Utilities and Community Facilities Goals	1
01. Implement the downtown lighting, landscaping, and beautification project as shown on Map 9.2.	
02. Plan for new sidewalk with lighting on Broadway from Tappen Street to Elland Road and then south to the high school, Map 9.2.	2
03. Hydraulically dredge Lake Henry as soon as is practical.	2
04. Consider developing a Capital Improvement Plan.	2
05. Develop a walking path and bike path on the south shore of Lake Henry with handicapped-accessible fishing piers, Map 9.2.	2
06. Plan for new street extensions on Maple Street, 4 th Street, Birch Street, Hickory Street and Webster Street, Map 9.2.	2
07. Investigate support for a recreational trail for hiking, bicycling and snowmobiling from Blair to Hixton, Map 9.2.	2
08. Take actions to improve the City's water supply as described in Chapter 6 under "Water Distribution," and reduce the levels of iron and manganese in the City's water supply.	2
7. Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Goals	3
01. Protect natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, rivers, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources -- (4)(b)3*. a. The City will review all new development proposals in regard to their impacts on the above natural resources.	
02. Preserve cultural, historic and archaeological sites -- (4)(b)6*. a. Chapter 7 has documented 5 sites in the City that are on the Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. The City will utilize this information when reviewing new development proposals.	3
03. Protect economically productive areas including farmland and forests -- (4)(b)4*. a. Research ways the City can better serve as an agri-service center so surrounding farmers and woodland owners can improve their economic competitiveness in ways that will create jobs and further support the economic base of the area.	3

Table 9.01 City of Blair Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule	
1 = High or Short-Term Priority	
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3 = Long-Term or Continual Priority	
Action	Priority
8. Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals 01. Encourage coordination and cooperation with and among nearby units of government -- (4)(b)7*. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to work with the County Highway Department, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT), and neighboring local governments in developing road maintenance and construction efficiencies and cost sharing arrangements. b. Continue to participate in the Wisconsin DOT Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLER) program to help ensure state road aid funding and identifying budgeting efficiencies. c. Coordinate activities with Trempealeau County and surrounding towns as they develop their comprehensive plans. d. Cooperate with the school district to the extent practical with any resources the City has that would be of assistance. e. Explore opportunities for joint purchases with the County and other local governments that would result in quantity discounts on products and services. 	3

* 4a, 4b (1) through 4b (13), and 4c are sections under Wisconsin's planning grant Statute 16.965, which calls for grant recipients to address these "Smart Growth" planning goals in their planning efforts.

Map 9.1 City of Blair, Wisconsin
Recommended Land Use 2029



Map Key

- Proposed Trails/Sidewalks
- Proposed Streets
- Downtown Lighting, Landscaping and Beautification Project
- New Park Trail With Handicap Accessible Fishing Piers
- New Sidewalk on Broadway from Tappan to Eland Street and then south on Eland Street to the High School
- New Residential Area complete with extensions of Maple St, 4th St, Birch St, Hickory St, and Webster St
- New Commercial-Industrial Site
- Expansion of Commercial or Light Industrial Area
- Investigate support for a recreational trail for hiking and bicycling and snowmobiling from Blair to Hixton
- New Industrial Park

0 420 840 1,680 2,520 3,360 Feet

N

Appendix: City of Blair Resident Survey Results

In General, the key issues and opportunities identified in this Plan and the survey responses show that respondents feel that growth and development should be encouraged in the City. Out of 167 respondents, 143 either agreed or strongly agreed that residential growth should be encouraged, and 157 respondents agreed or strongly agreed to a similar statement about business growth. Numerous respondents commented on the lack of businesses in the City in their responses to questions 20 through 22, and the absence of a grocery store appeared as one of the big issues facing the City of Blair. Citizens also had major concerns about the lack of good jobs in the City and felt that people should have places to work in the City instead of commuting to La Crosse or Winona, MN. Residents were also concerned about the number of empty houses and commercial buildings. Some respondents felt that non-native Blair residents are forever treated as outsiders, which prevents newcomers from coming to the City. Out of 166 respondents, 147 agreed or strongly agreed that the city should encourage manufacturing growth. Although the majority of respondents agreed that growth and development should be encouraged, many commented on their dissatisfaction with grain bins that are located near the park and residential areas.

Respondents appear to be satisfied with the current level of services in the city. Out of 164 respondents, 116 agreed or strongly agreed that the City should maintain its current level of public services, and 130 out of 167 agreed or strongly agreed that the police and fire services are adequate. However, responses to questions 20 through 22 revealed that a number of citizens feel there is a significant amount of favoritism by the police force. The largest sources of disagreement regarded extra taxation and fees. Out of 165 respondents, 105 disagreed or strongly disagreed that the City should levy additional taxes to improve public services. Many respondents were concerned that taxes were too high in the City and felt that there is too much unnecessary government spending. One specific response questioned the need for four full-time city employees. Also, 79 out of 167 respondents stated they would not be willing to pay to protect natural resources even though only 24 disagreed or strongly disagreed that natural resources should be protected. There were a number of other major concerns revealed by responses to questions 20 through 22. Many citizens seemed to be dissatisfied with the transparency of the local government. They felt that all of the decisions about their tax dollars were being made by a small group of people. Also, they felt like they were uninformed and not part of decision-making process. According to one respondent, the Council does not inform citizens about decisions until they are made.

Another major concern was the appearance of yards. Many citizens felt that the City needs to do more to force people to clean the junk out of their yards and maintain their lawns. Also, respondents felt that the bar scene is too large a part of the community and some felt that illegal drugs, especially in some of the bars, is a big problem in the community. Respondents cited friendly people, a beautiful park, quality schools, and a small town atmosphere as the things they like most about living in the City of Blair.