

Compass Points

Kenosha County's Comprehensive Planning Newsletter

Comprehensive Planning Progress

Kenosha County's multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning process appears to continue on target for completion and County Board adoption in the spring of 2009.

As of June 2008, the Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee (MJAC) has given preliminary approval to the inventory chapters of the plan (Chapters II through VI), as well as the preliminary draft of Chapter XIII, "Economic Development Element." Chapter VII, "Issues and Opportunities Element," and Chapter X, "Housing Element," were completed this past winter, and the MJAC expects to approve both elements later this summer, after the local community projections are compiled.

Currently, most of the nine local governments participating in the multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan are working on community-level future land use maps to guide development over the next twenty or so years. In addition, each community in the County is selecting population and employment projections, which will help to determine potential demand for housing, utility and community services, transportation facilities and services, and other land uses.

Recently, the MJAC reviewed the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element (Chapter VIII) at an MJAC meeting on April 29, 2008. This element is summarized on page 3 of this newsletter and can be found, along with all other completed draft chapters, on the Kenosha County Smart Growth website.

The MJAC plans to review the transportation element and the utility and community facility element at their summer meetings. Community members and other interested stakeholders are always welcome to attend MJAC meetings and offer comments on the plan. Meetings usually take place on the last Tuesday of the month, starting at 2:00 pm in the Kenosha County Center Hearing Room (19600 75th Street, Bristol).



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Chapter III: Inventory of Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, plan chapters are revised to address comments by local communities and to incorporate updated land use information when it becomes available from agencies such as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. Some information added to this inventory chapter of agricultural, natural and cultural resources includes:

Agricultural Land Evaluation for Cropland

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has rated the soils in Wisconsin based on soil type, slope, agricultural capability class, and soil productivity. The best soils for crop production were assigned a value of 100.

Over 57 percent of the County has an LE rating of 80 or higher, including about 940 acres that are rated between 95 and 100.

Potential Groundwater Recharge Areas

As part of the regional water supply planning program, areas within Kenosha County and throughout the Region were analyzed and classified based on their potential for water recharge. Classifications included very high (areas with more than 6 inches of potential recharge per year), high (4-6 inches), moderate (3-4 inches), and low (less than 3 inches).

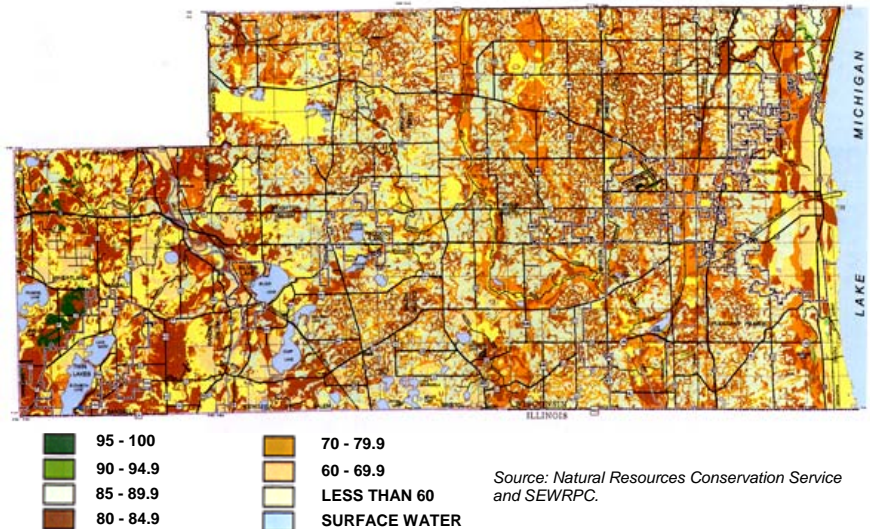
About 1 percent of areas in Kenosha County are rated "very high" for recharge potential, and about 16 percent are rated "high." Most of these areas are located in the western portion of the County, mainly around lakes, streams, and around the Bong State Recreation Area.

Potential Sources of Sand, Gravel, Clay, and Peat

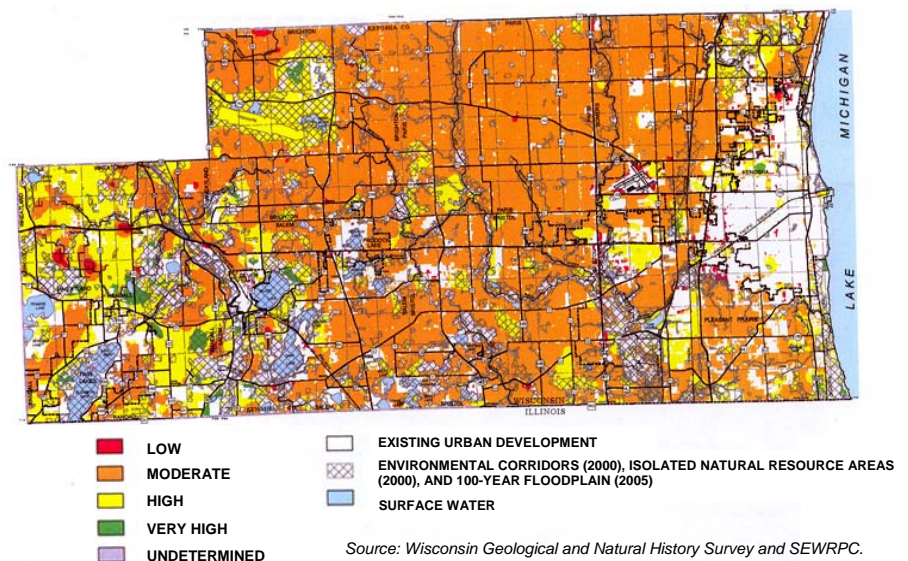
Areas of potential commercially workable sources of sand, gravel, clay and peat were inventoried and mapped, using information from the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS).

The areas with the highest potential for significant deposits of sand and gravel (categorized as "outwash deposits") encompass about 11 percent of the County, or 19,641 acres. "Glacial lake deposit" areas contain clay deposits that can be useful for construction, and these areas account for about 8 percent of Kenosha County, or 13,450 acres. Deposits of peat may be found in areas categorized as "peat and organic sediment," which cover about 5 percent of the County, or 8,715 acres.

AGRICULTURAL LAND EVALUATION FOR SOILS IN KENOSHA COUNTY



GROUNDWATER RECHARGE POTENTIAL IN KENOSHA COUNTY



Summary of Draft Chapter VIII: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

One of the nine State-required comprehensive plan elements, the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element must compile recommendations for the conservation and effective management of natural resources in Kenosha County through the plan design year of 2035.

Community input from the countywide Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis, the Kenosha County Café, and local informational meetings was reviewed, along with data from the inventory of agricultural, natural and cultural resources (Chapter III), to help identify issues to address in this element. Specific goals and objectives are outlined for each issue, as well as policies (steps or actions recommended to be taken to achieve goals and objectives) and programs (projects or services intended to achieve policies). These can be found in the complete draft element, available on the Smart Growth website or at Kenosha County Planning & Development Department.

Programs and Conservation Techniques

Several Federal and State agencies provide conservation and preservation programs to protect agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. The most significant of these include: U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, & Consumer Protection (DATCP); Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR); National Parks Service (NPS); and Wisconsin State Historical Society (WSHS). Some programs offered by these agencies are described, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, Soil and Water Resource Management Program, Wetland Reserve Program, and Historic Homeowners Income Tax Credit Program.

Chapter VIII also briefly describes several conservation techniques, including conservation easements, conservation subdivisions, lot averaging, and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs.

Agricultural Resources

Loss of agriculture and farmland due to development pressures and changes in the economy are considered by residents as major threats to Kenosha County. Agriculture is seen as an important contributor to the local economy and, given the changes in farming practices and the demand for new and innovative agricultural products such as bio-fuels, there is potential growth for businesses and industries based on agriculture. Agricultural resource goals and objectives were categorized under the following issues: management of productive agricultural areas, farmland protection, and the viability of agri-business.

Natural Resources

Throughout the public input process, County residents voiced concern about the depletion of natural resources, and they indicated that a high priority should be placed on preserving existing natural resources, including stricter regulations to protect water quality. Natural resource goals and objectives, as well as related policies and programs, were developed to address the following natural resource issues: environmental corridors, natural areas, and critical species habitats; surface and groundwater resources and watersheds; floodplains, wetlands, and severe structural and severe wet soils; Lake Michigan; nonmetallic mineral resources; invasive species; environmental health; and parks, outdoor recreation, and open space preservation.

Cultural Resources

Developing and enhancing cultural opportunities and activities is seen as a way to bolster tourism and improve the overall quality of life in Kenosha County, making it a more attractive community for residents and visitors. Cultural resource issues addressed in Chapter VIII include: historical resources, archaeological resources, local historical societies and museums, and cultural venues, events and organizations.

OVERALL ELEMENT GOALS



AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

- ◆ Preserve and protect Kenosha County's agriculture and farmlands.
- ◆ Identify and encourage desirable and sustainable agri-businesses and job development.

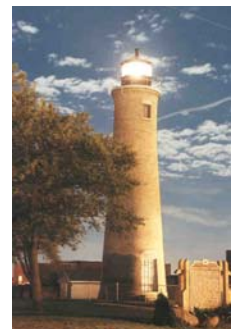
NATURAL RESOURCES

- ◆ Preserve and enhance Kenosha County's natural resources, including Lake Michigan, and park and open space sites.



CULTURAL RESOURCES

- ◆ Preserve and enhance the historic and cultural resources and character of Kenosha County.



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