

## **3.0 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES**

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## 3.0 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

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### *Introduction*

To identify broad community issues and opportunities, public input was solicited through a series of activities beginning in 1997. At that time, a community survey was conducted. As part of the *1997 Land Use Plan Update*, the Town of Nekimi hosted a Land Use Visioning Workshop to solicit additional citizen input and to determine whether the concerns that were expressed in 1997 were still valid. As part of the Comprehensive Planning Process, the Planning Commission and residents participated in a Visioning Workshop and a SWOT Workshop. What follows is a description of the methods and results of these public input activities. The issues and opportunities identified are addressed through the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies of this Comprehensive Plan.

### *Community Land Use Survey*

A survey was conducted for the Town of Nekimi Planning Committee (now the town's Planning Commission) to gather opinions from town residents and landowners on land use and development issues. Each household was asked to fill out one survey form. Five hundred and sixty-nine survey forms were distributed and 271 were returned. The survey form included 11 questions. Some respondents did not answer all of the questions on the survey. What follows is summary of the findings:



\* More than half of the respondents (54.61%) feel that the amount of residential development is about right, while slightly more than a fifth (22.51%) indicate there is too much development in the Town of Nekimi.

\* Overall, the largest percentage of respondents (40.96%) feel that the amount of industrial development in the Town of Nekimi is about right, while slightly more than a third (33.95%) indicate that the town already has too much industrial development.



\* Overall, almost half of the respondents (46.86%) feel that the amount of commercial development in the Town of Nekimi is about right, while about 30 percent indicate that the town already has too much commercial development.

\* Three-quarters (75.28%) of the respondents feel that the Town Board should adopt policies to regulate the amount and location of new development.

\* Protection of environmentally sensitive lands, such as wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes, is rated very important by 60 percent of respondents and somewhat important by 28 percent.



\* Survey respondents rate preservation of farmland relatively high. Overall, approximately two thirds (67.16%) ranked farmland preservation very important, and more than a fifth (22.88%) gave it a rating of somewhat important.

\* Survey respondents also rank preservation of natural areas and open spaces relatively high. More than half of the respondents (60.89%) gave this land use issue a ranking of very important, and 28 percent gave it a ranking of somewhat important.

\* Less than half of the respondents (44.65%) indicated that compact residential growth is important. Thirty percent ranked it somewhat important and more than 20 percent (22.14%) felt that the promotion of compact residential growth by discouraging scattered subdivisions and scattered lots, is not important in the town.



\* Sixty-two percent of the survey respondents feel that the promotion of compatible land use patterns is a very important land use issue, while more than a quarter (27.31%) gave this land use issue a ranking of somewhat important.

\* The majority of survey respondents (59.04%) feel that cooperation between the Town of Nekimi and Winnebago County is a very important land use issue. Only 9 percent gave this land use issue a rating of not important.

A detailed breakdown of the survey responses, as well as a profile of survey respondents, is included in the *1997 Town of Nekimi Land Use Plan Update*. The Planning Commission feels strongly that the results from the survey are still relevant. Therefore, it was not necessary to repeat the survey as part of the Comprehensive Planning process.

### ***Land Use Visioning Workshop***

The Town of Nekimi Planning Commission hosted a “Land Use Visioning Workshop” on January 22, 2001 to solicit residents’ ideas about what land use issues were of most concern to the community. Approximately 20 people were in attendance at the meeting. Several individuals had questions to clarify information in the draft goal statements and about information depicted on the *Zoning, Existing Land Use, and Future Land Use Maps*. Additional comments and concerns were received in writing and are included as Appendix B of the *1997 Town of Nekimi Land Use Plan Update*.

## ***SWOT Workshop***

What follows is a brief definition of a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat as used in a SWOT exercise.

- Strength**     *Something that makes a community stand out when compared to other communities. Something that makes you proud to call the community home. A strength can be a physical asset, a program, an environmental condition or an impression or feeling (i.e. friendly community atmosphere).*
- Weakness**    *Opposite of a strength. Problem that needs to be addressed.*
- Opportunity** *Something that could be done to improve the community. A potential.*
- Threat**        *A threat may be internal or external. A threat can be anything that could jeopardize the future success of a community.*

*A SWOT meeting is a planning exercise used to get communities thinking about:*

- where they have been;
- where they are;
- where they want to be in the future; and
- how they want to get there.

On February 11, 2002, the Town of Nekimi Planning Commission participated in a SWOT exercise. The objective of the exercise was to find out how the Planning Commission viewed various aspects of the town. This could include their feelings on physical things such as roads, utilities, etc., and “quality of life” issues. OMNNI Associates, the town’s comprehensive planning consultant, facilitated the exercise.

At the meeting, participants were asked to share what he or she thought were the town’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Anyone present could list as many items as he/she wished under each category. All ideas were recorded by OMNNI Associates. The table on the next few pages lists the responses given, by category.

At the meeting, participants collectively agreed that the Town of Nekimi’s primary *strengths* lie in its rural character and natural features. The most important *weakness* seemed to be the town’s lack of zoning control and resulting uncontrolled growth.

**TABLE 11: TOWN SWOT RESULTS**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to USH 41 (potential source of growth, especially commercial)</li> <li>• Balanced road transportation system –             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Roads are well laid out</li> <li>* No large areas of the town without access to roads</li> <li>* Residents can get to a highway in 5 minutes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Location, Location, Location – 1 hour from Milwaukee and Green Bay</li> <li>• Relationship / Cooperation with surrounding towns</li> <li>• Cooperation with Winnebago County with respect to road maintenance</li> <li>• Ring and surrounding environs– Rolling Hills – Good Residential Environment – Town Focal Point</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax – School Taxes are High</li> <li>• Influx of City of Oshkosh Residents moving into the Town and wanting same services as available in the city</li> <li>• Lack of buildable lots</li> <li>• Under County Zoning (limits the Town, especially with respect to commercial development)</li> <li>• Lack of local control over all issues</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mega Farms – opportunity to support tax base</li> <li>• Commercial development potential along USH 41</li> <li>• Potential to develop additional businesses along STH 44 and STH 26 - to support local economy if need arose</li> </ul>

<b>Threats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annexation by the City of Oshkosh</li> <li>• Poor history of intergovernmental cooperation from the City of Oshkosh</li> <li>• Mega Farming (for people living in immediate vicinity of operation)</li> </ul>
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### ***Vision Development***

At a special meeting on April 15, 2002, the Planning Commission and residents in attendance participated in a visioning exercise. The exercise involved completing a series of statements related to what the Town of Nekimi would look like in 20 years. The statements related to each of the nine (9) required plan elements. For example, participants were asked to complete the following statement, “In 20 years, looking down from an airplane at the Town of Nekimi, one would see...” OMNNI used the responses to develop draft vision statements, which the Planning Commission reviewed in the summer of 2002. Each of the final vision statements is provided at the end of this chapter.

### ***Visions***

Rather than develop a series of policy statements, the Planning Commission participated in a visioning process to establish a framework from which to make future planning decisions for the Town of Nekimi. The result of this process was a vision statement for each of the nine required plan elements, including an overall vision statement. This process was critical to establish a unified vision for the Town of Nekimi, provide a direction and focus for the planning efforts, and build upon the work that was completed as part of the *1997 Land Use Plan Update*.

Below are the community vision statements, which represent the broad interests of town residents, elected/appointed officials, business leaders and property owners. These visions establish the planning framework and a direction for subsequent planning efforts and decisions in the town. Supporting goals, objectives and program initiatives are described in Chapter 12 of this plan.

### **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES (OVERALL VISION)**

*In 2025, the Town of Nekimi provides residents with a high quality of life in a rural residential setting. Permanently preserved natural areas and farming operations are an integral part of the rural landscape -- made possible by development options like conservation subdivisions designed to preserve and protect these areas from future development and annexation pressures. The Town continues to develop working relationships with the City of Oshkosh to obtain needed services and expand the economic base.*

## **HOUSING VISION**

*The Town of Nekimi provides residents with quality single-family housing opportunities as the primary residential choice. Residential developments in the Town are designed to preserve and protect open space and farmland in order to maintain the rural character of the community and enhance the value and appearance of residential areas.*

## **TRANSPORTATION VISION**

*In 20 years, a network of well-maintained town roads and highways serves the Town of Nekimi. Careful consideration is given to the layout of new streets to ensure that traffic flows of the major highways are protected. The USH 41 corridor is the primary link between the Town of Nekimi and the greater region. Public transit, provided by Winnebago County and the City of Oshkosh, is available for Town residents on an as needed basis. Private transportation is more commonly used.*

## **UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES VISION**

*In 20 years, The Town of Nekimi continues to provide all the basic town services it has provided since 2002. The Town coordinates with Winnebago County and the City of Oshkosh to ensure that Town residents have easy access to a full-range of services, including: medical care, retail, educational facilities and entertainment choices. Portions of the Town, adjacent to the City of Oshkosh, are served by municipal sewer and water service through a service agreement with the City. Most residents rely on private well water and individual septic systems.*

## **AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES VISION**

*In 20 years, the Town of Nekimi has successfully maintained 70 percent of the farmland that existed in 2002. This achievement was the result of dedicated farmers, the actions of town government, the consolidation of several small family farms, and the use of conservation subdivisions. Farming operations in the Town of Nekimi consist of a balance of family farming operations, rented cropland, and larger corporate farms. Contiguous areas of woodlands, wetlands and other natural areas in the Town of Nekimi have also been permanently protected from development. The Town's farmland and natural areas enhance the rural character of the community by maintaining open vistas and providing buffers between residential areas to maintain the low, rural density of development desired by residents.*

*As has been the tradition, cultural and entertainment venues are easily accessible in nearby urban centers via USH 41, STH 26 and STH 44.*

*Residents of the Town of Nekimi enjoy convenient access to County, City, and Town park facilities. In addition, a network of multiple-use trails provide year-round recreational benefits to Town residents. Hunting opportunities are abundant.*

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION**

*Economic activity has expanded significantly in the Town of Nekimi. The most extensive business development has occurred along the USH 41 frontage. Secondary development areas include STH 26 and STH 44. Industrial development opportunities have been realized along STH 44. Some additional, local- and highway service- oriented businesses*

*(i.e. convenience stores, clinics, grocery store) have developed along STH 26, near the USH 41 interchange. All development is well landscaped and attractive.*

*The developments in the Town are recognized as being in Nekimi due to design, landscape and structural features.*

#### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION VISION**

*In 2025, the Town of Nekimi works cooperatively with the City of Oshkosh and neighboring towns to provide residents with a wide variety of cost-efficient, non-duplicative services for the betterment of all communities. Annexation is planned, based on service demands, and coordinated in a fashion to ensure that both communities have preserved their community identities, while providing a unique blend of desired commercial, industrial and residential development.*

*School district development is coordinated with the Town to ensure that the location, size, and nature of school facilities will not result in additional pressure for annexation, residential development, or the provision of costly services.*

*Town leaders keep residents informed on all matters pertinent to Town operations and land development issues and pursue opportunities to provide coordinated, cost-effective services with neighboring governments.*

#### **LAND USE VISION**

*Land use within the Town of Nekimi is anchored by conservation subdivisions that are surrounded by protected open space, natural areas and farmland.*

*Commercial and light industrial development is concentrated along the major highway corridors. It is well landscaped and includes buffers to protect encroachment into residential and farming areas.*

*In 2025, Ring has expanded to accommodate limited residential development and locally patronized businesses (i.e. restaurant/pub). The area remains a small, close-knit community within the Town.*

#### **IMPLEMENTATION VISION**

*By 2025, the Town of Nekimi has consistently recognized the importance of zoning to prevent incompatible land uses and creative design solutions, such as conservation subdivisions. The Town believes in the value of planning and the opinions of its residents and business owners, while also respecting the responsible efforts of landowners to improve their property and community. Evidence of this commitment to planning is seen in the Town's efforts to keep the plan updated.*

*The Town makes judicious use of grant funds, when available, to help in plan implementation activities.*