

Town of Gardner Comprehensive Plan Strategies

Population and Housing

Population Projection, Town of Gardner, 2020 to 2040

	Town of Gardner
2020	1,230
2040	1,215
Change 2020 to 2040	
Number	(15)
Percent	-1%

Source: Wisconsin Demographic Services Center (2020 estimate and 2040 projection). Extrapolated to 2020 and 2040 by BLUPC.

Population

- Since 2000, Gardner's population has grown by 3%.
- Through 2040, Wisconsin Demographic Services Center projects that Gardner's population will decline slightly to 1,215.

Age

- The median age in Gardner increased by nine years, from 42 years in 2000 to 51 years in 2019. This trend is either due to growth in Gardner's and Door County's senior population, or people are not moving away from Door County.
- In comparison to the growth in the number of seniors (60 years and older), Gardner and Door County are experiencing a decline in the number of youth and young adults.



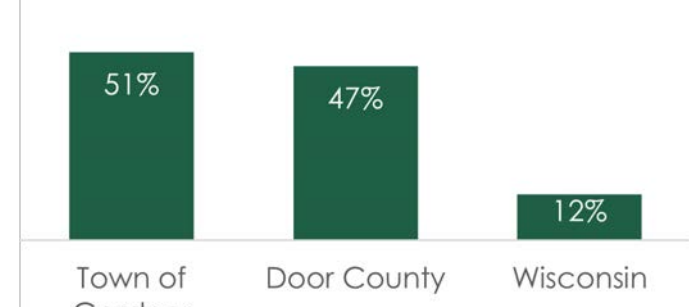
Median Household Income
\$63,472

Population Trends, Town of Gardner, Door County, and Wisconsin, 1990 - 2020

	Town of Gardner	Door County	Wisconsin
1990	1,025	25,690	4,891,769
2000	1,197	27,961	5,363,675
2010	1,194	27,785	5,686,986
2020	1,233	28,770	5,854,594
Change 2000 to 2020			
Number	36	809	490,919
Percent	3%	3%	9%
Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR)			
	0.15%	0.14%	0.44%

Source: U.S. Census (1990, 2000, 2010); WI Demographic Services Center (2020).

Residential Vacancy



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-year data (2015-2019).

Year Housing Units were Built

1950 - 1969	1970 - 1999	2000 - Present
473	544	161

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-year data (2015-2019).

Housing Strategies:

Goal:

To encourage and maintain an adequate supply of safe and affordable housing that provides a choice of location, style, and cost for current and future town residents while maintaining harmony with the Town's natural environment.

Objectives:

- Maintain housing values over time by promoting maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.
- Promote developments that provide a range of housing choices to meet the needs of all income levels, age groups, and persons with special needs.
- Promote housing that is environmentally conscious and have minimal negative impacts on surrounding land uses.
- Identify and utilize government agencies, local neighborhood associations, non-profit agencies, and private sector industries to implement these housing recommendations.

Housing Vacancy

As of 2019, Gardner's residential vacancy rate was about 51 percent. Of Gardner's vacant housing units, 85 percent are vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Housing of this type is very common in Door County overall.

Economic Development Strategies

Goal:

To promote an economic environment which maintains and increases the town's current tax base and provide quality employment opportunities.

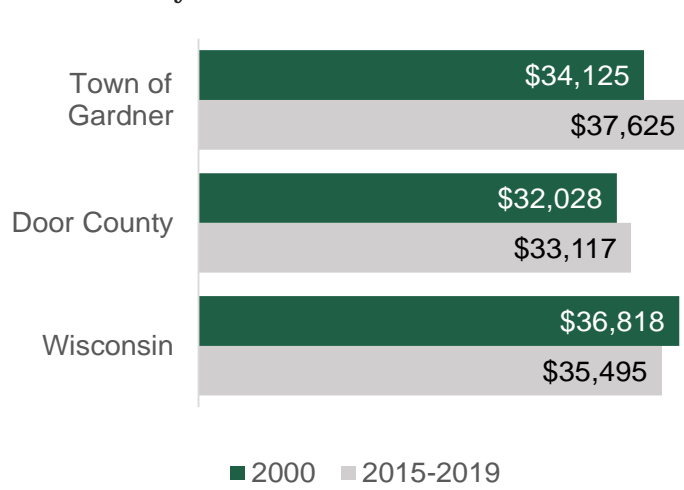
Objectives:

- Promote current and future rural economic development opportunities in the Town.
- Partner with governmental, non-profit, and educational entities in the development of Gardner's economic opportunities.
 - Partner with the Door County Economic Development Corporation in developing the Town of Gardner's economic opportunities.
 - Partner with the Door County Job Center in the marketing of job opportunities inside of Gardner.
 - Partner with NWTG Sturgeon Bay in promoting educational and skill learning opportunities to Gardner residents.
- Support the development of zoning for commercial uses in economic centers found in the Town.
- Improve and maintain current infrastructure needed to sustain current and future businesses in the Town.
- Continue to support responsible ecotourism in the town to environmental features such as Little Sturgeon Bay and the Niagara Escarpment.

Gardner's Economic Base

Gardner's civilian labor force (aged 16 years and older) comprised over 600 people in 2019. The largest share of Gardner's civilian labor force was employed in management, business, science, and arts related occupations (34%). This occupational category increased by 57.6%.

Average Earnings, Population Aged 16 and Older with Earnings (2019 dollars), Town of Gardner, Door County, Wisconsin, 2000 and 2015-2019



Source: U.S. Census, Decennial (2000) and ACS 5-year data (2015-2019).

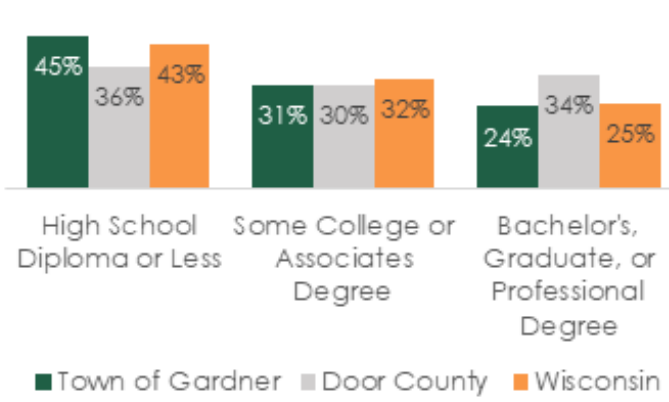
Economic Development

Civilian Labor Force (16 Years of Age or Older) by Occupation, Town of Gardner, 2015-2019

Occupational Category	Civilian Employed Population (16 years +)	
	Number	Share
Management, business, science, & arts	208	34%
Production, transportation, & material moving	138	22%
Sales & office	95	15%
Service	84	14%
Natural resources, construction, & maintenance	89	14%
Total	614	100%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-year data (2015-2019).

Educational Attainment, Population Aged 25 and Older, Town of Gardner, Door County, Wisconsin, 2015-2019



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-year data (2015-2019).

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Intergovernmental Cooperation Strategies

Goal:

Coordinate and cooperate with surrounding communities, Door County, and other stakeholders on governmental initiatives, programs, and projects.

Objectives:

- Continue to communicate and work with surrounding communities, Door County, and other stakeholders.
- Coordinate and share community facilities and services when feasible.
- Coordinate with other units of government to avoid duplication of efforts.

DESTINATION
DOOR COUNTY



Town of Union

TOWN OF BRUSSELS

Transportation

Transportation Strategies

Goal:

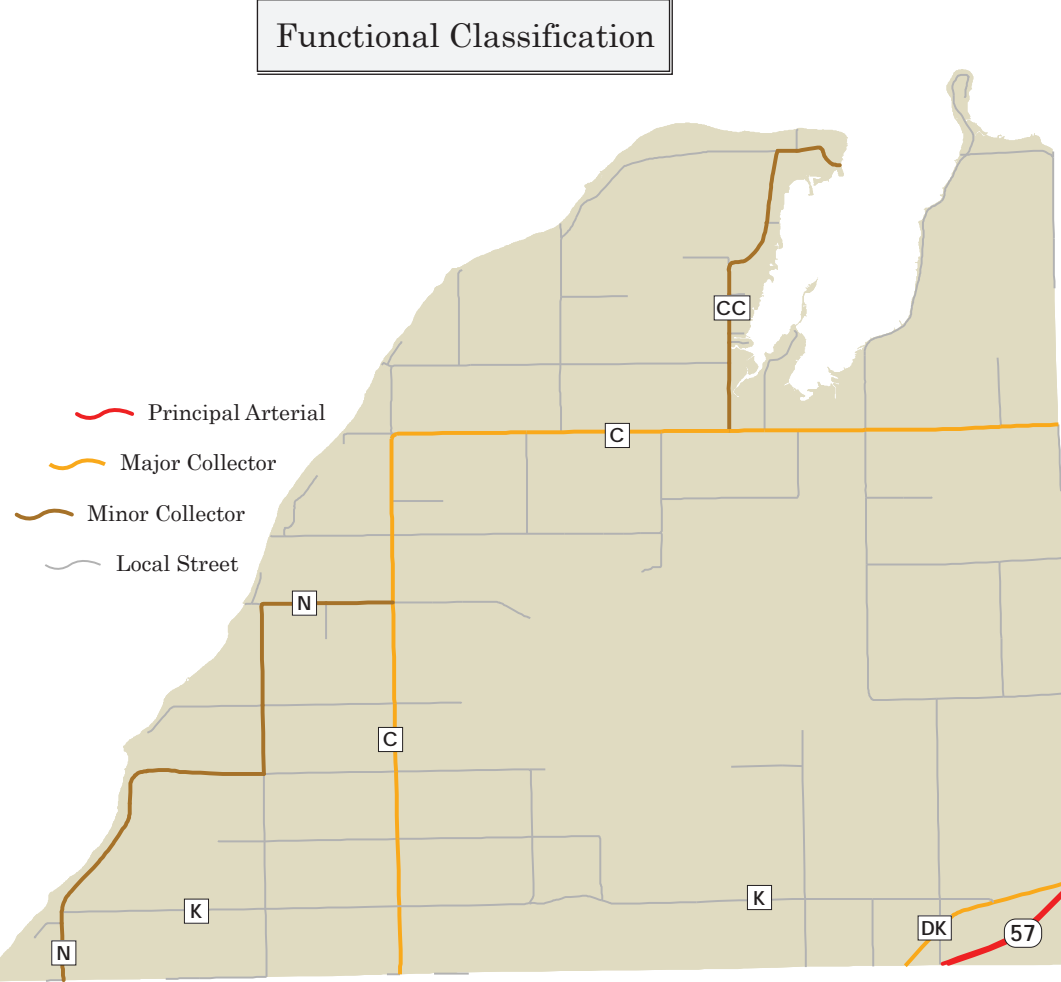
Maintain and support the development of a safe transportation system.

Objectives:

- Maintain and improve current town infrastructure in a timely and well-planned manner.
- Coordinate efforts with local communities, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and other entities to maintain a safe, efficient, and accessible county wide transportation system.
- Maintain consistent funding for maintenance and improvement of the Town of Gardner transportation system.

Functional Class Mileage	
Functional Classification	Mileage
Principal Arterial	2.25
Major Collector	10.34
Minor Collector	7.63
Local Street	55.52
Total	75.73

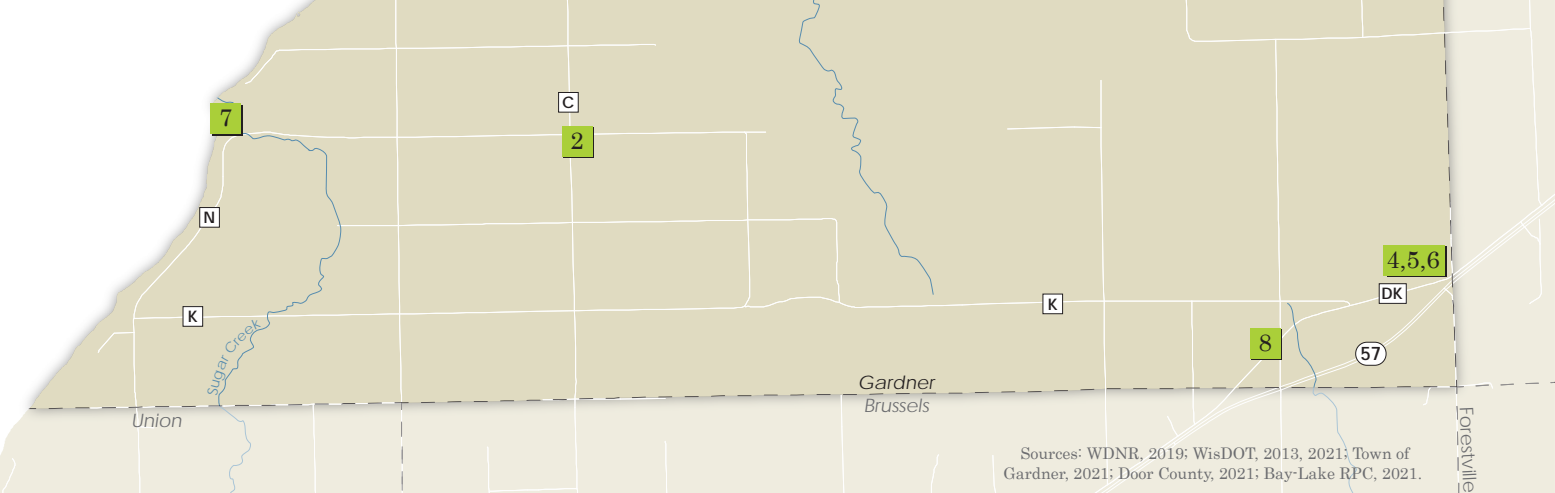
Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation



Utilities and Community Facilities

Community Facilities
1. Brussels-Union-Gardner Fire Dept.
2. Gardner Town Hall
3. Robert M. Carmody County Park
4. Southern Door Elementary School
5. Southern Door High School
6. Southern Door Middle School
7. Sugar Creek County Park
8. Tornado Memorial County Park
9. Big Rock Place (Water Access Point)
10. Boni's Road (Water Access Point)
11. Clafin Park (Water Access Point)
12. Fox Lane (Water Access Point)
13. Johannee Road (Water Access Point)
14. Landing Road (Water Access Point)
15. N Stevenson Pier Road (Water Access Point)
16. Polish Lane (Water Access Point)
17. Riley's Bay Road (Water Access Point)
18. Squaw Island Road (Water Access Point)
19. Wilcox Road (Water Access Point)
20. Wood Lane Road (Water Access Point)

Community Facility
Water Public Access Site
Street
Water Feature
Municipal Boundary



Utilities and Community Facilities Strategy

Goal:

Ensure that the town's utilities and community facilities are maintained, updated, and expanded in a manner that reflects the present and future population of the Town of Gardner.

Objectives:

- Maintain town facilities and services that adequately serve the present and future needs of the town.
- Maintain and expand the intergovernmental cooperation activities.
- Identify opportunities to expand broadband internet service in the town.
 - Utilize USDA grant programs to implement broadband projects.
- Look for opportunities to expand community gathering areas such as community centers.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

Goal:

To provide and maintain safe recreational opportunities to all residents and visitors.

Objectives:

- Maintain the quality of current parks, recreation areas, and trails for residents and visitors.
- Insure that people with a disability or with disabilities can reasonably access parks and recreation facilities.
- Research areas for future installation of additional parking at water access sites.

Land Use

Land Use Strategies

Goal:

To maintain the vision of the town as a recreational, rural, and agricultural community which also promotes its unique and natural beauty.

Objective:

- Utilize the land use strategies section to make rational decisions on developments.
- Ensure that rural development is sensitive to the needs for rural preservation and the protection of environmental areas.
- Ensure shoreline developments follow shoreline zoning and Door County zoning ordinances which are applicable to the shoreline.

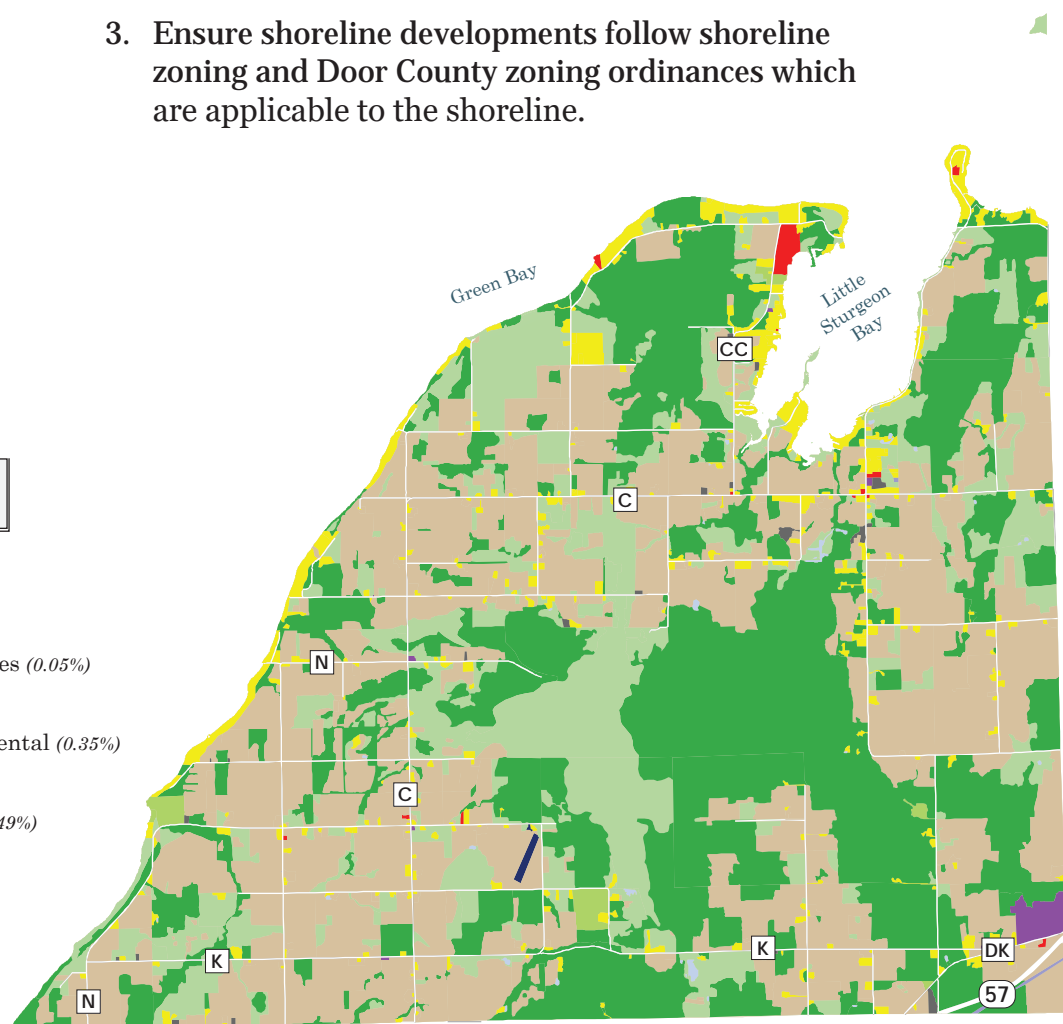
Acres of Existing Land Uses

Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	8,842.78	40.27%
Commercial	49.27	0.23%
Communication and Utilities	10.64	0.05%
Institutional and Governmental	77.89	0.35%
Industrial	39.48	0.18%
Natural Area	3,843.36	17.51%
Parks and Recreation	106.76	0.49%
Residential	953.91	4.34%
Right-of-Way	459.01	2.09%
Transportation	14.05	0.06%
Water	34.12	0.16%
Woodlands	7,527.21	34.28%
Multi-Family	0.00	0.00%
Total	21,960.69	100.00%

Source: Bay-Lake RPC 2022

Existing Land Use

Agricultural (40.27%)
Commercial (0.23%)
Communication/Utilities (0.05%)
Industrial (0.18%)
Institutional/Governmental (0.35%)
Natural Areas (17.51%)
Parks & Recreation (0.49%)
Residential (4.34%)
Right-Of-Way (2.09%)
Transportation (0.06%)
Water (0.16%)
Woodlands (34.28%)



NAIP Imagery, 2020

Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources Strategies

Natural Resources

Goal:

To maintain, preserve, and responsibly use the town's natural resources in a manner that allows for future generations of residents and visitors to use the same resources.

Objectives:

- Preserve and enhance the lakes, streams, bays, shorelines, wetlands, grasslands, woodlands, soil, and other natural resources found in the Town of Gardner.
- Responsibly develop in a manner that protects wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, the soil, the Niagara Escarpment, the shoreline, water resources, and other significant and sensitive ecosystems.
- Encourage the removal and management of invasive species.
- Work with Door County on the reclamation of non-metallic mining site found in the town.
- Encourage a resiliency planning mindset which better prepares the town to withstand coastal hazards and other climate related hazards.
- Support green infrastructure projects within the town such as rain gardens, retention ponds, and ecosystem restoration projects.
- Increase awareness of hazards and water quality issues related to karst landscapes, such as sinkholes and groundwater contamination.
- Look for opportunities to use nature-based solutions along the coastline to increase ecosystem services and the resiliency of the Town to negative environmental impacts.

Agricultural Resources

Goal:

To preserve and encourage the town's agricultural resources.

Objectives:

- Promote agricultural innovations and technique that improve the health of soils, and the Town's water quality.
 - Partner with Peninsula Pride Farms and the Door-Kewaunee Demonstration Farms Network to promote sustainable farming in the Town of Gardner.
- Minimize conflict between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.
- Support zoning that encourages local family farms and small specialty farming operations.



Environmental Corridors

Environmental corridors represent significant environmental features which should be protected from other land use influences, not only for the benefit of plants and animals but also for people.

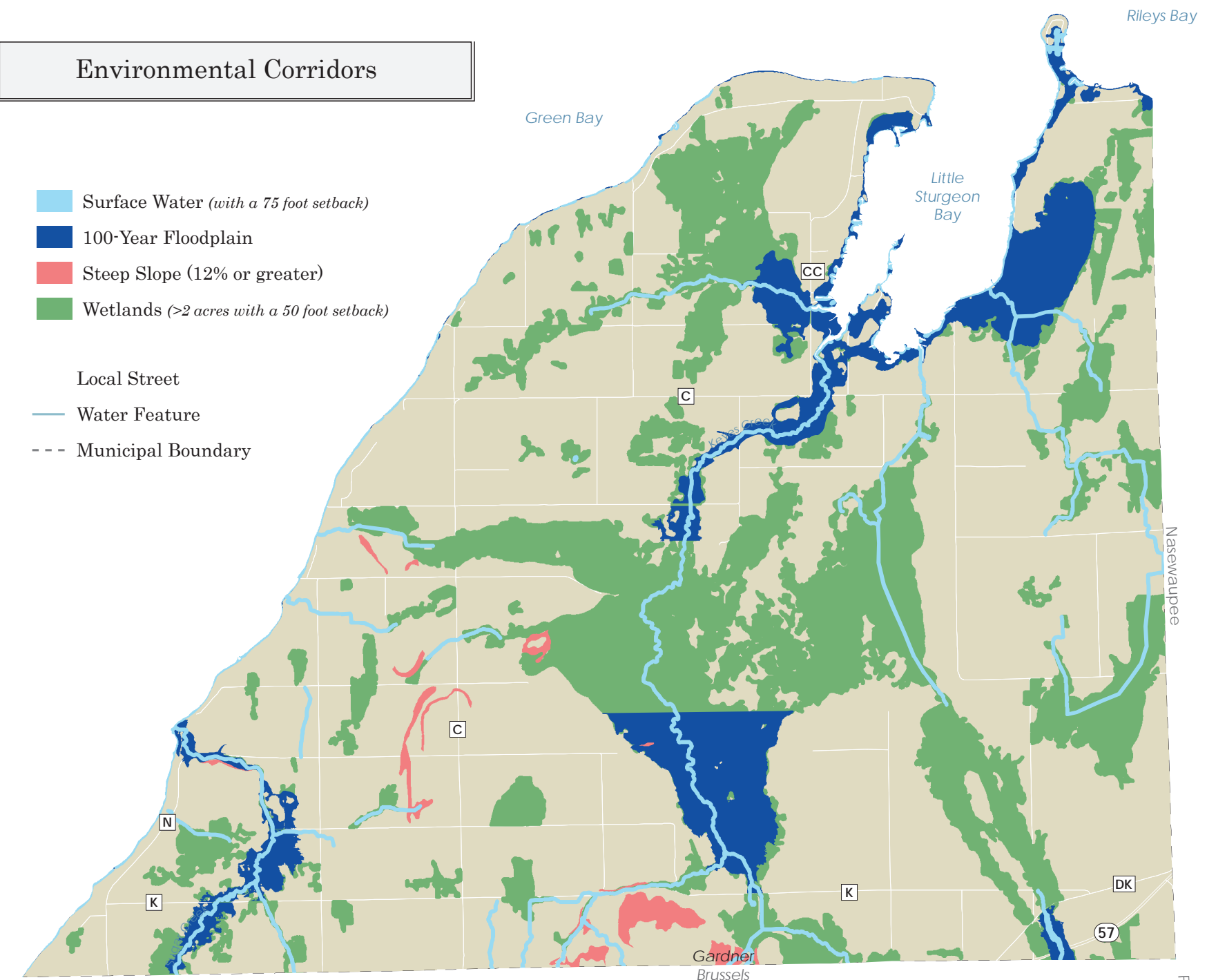
These features include:

- Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, flowages
- 75-foot setbacks for water features
- Wetlands, as delineated by the WDNR
- 50-foot setbacks for wetlands
- 100-year floodplains, outlined by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Areas of steep slope (those 12% or greater)


Environmental Corridors

Surface Water (with a 75 foot setback)
100-Year Floodplain
Steep Slope (12% or greater)
Wetlands (>2 acres with a 50 foot setback)

Local Street
Water Feature
Municipal Boundary



Source: FEMA, 2005; NDCS, 2016; WDNR, 2019; WisDOT, 2021; Town of Gardner, 2021; Door County, 2021; Bay-Lake RPC, 2021.



Comprehensive Plan

2022 - 2042

Town Snapshot

Population (2020 Estimate) 1,233 <small>Source: U.S. Census (2000, 2010), Wisconsin Demographic Services Center (2020).</small>	Civilian Labor Force 614 <small>Source: American Community Survey 2019, 5-year Data Profiles</small>
Median Age 51 years <small>Source: U.S. Census, Wisconsin Demographic Services Center (2020).</small>	Unemployment Rate 5.1% <small>Source: American Community Survey 2019, 5-year Data Profiles</small>
Total Occupied Housing Units (Permanent Residents) 581 households <small>Source: American Community Survey 2019, 5-year estimates</small>	Largest Non-farm Industry Manufacturing <small>Source: American Community Survey 2019, 5-year Data Profiles</small>
Median Household Income \$63,472 <small>Source: American Community Survey 2019, 5-year estimates</small>	Median Earnings \$37,625 <small>Source: American Community Survey 2019, 5-year Data Profiles</small>

20-Year Vision

Vision Statement:

The Town of Gardner is a recreational, rural, and agricultural community with an abundance of picturesque shoreline. The Town strives to preserve its small-town charm while maintaining and promoting it's unique and natural beauty, populated with friendly welcoming residents.

Town of Gardner Town Board

Carl Waterstreet - Chairman
 Amy Sacotte - Clerk
 Nancy Robillard - Treasurer
 Glen Merkle - Supervisor #1
 Mark Lentz - Supervisor #2
 Kevin Fleischman - Supervisor #3
 Glenn Dart - Supervisor #4

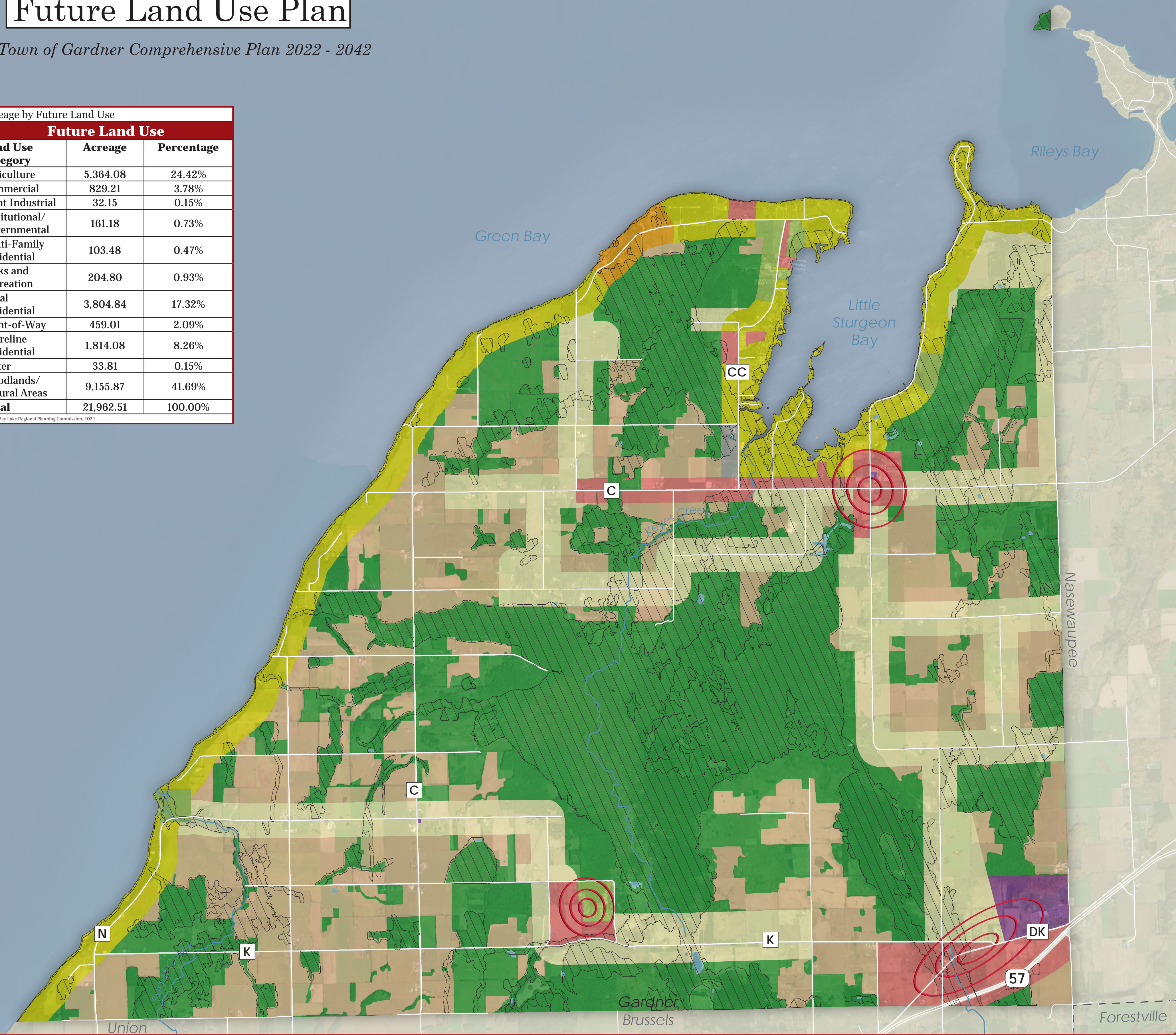
Town of Gardner Plan Commission

Mark Lentz - Chairman
 Pete Anderson - Vice-Chairman
 Amy Sacotte - Recording Secretary
 John Bloomer
 Kerry Dragseth
 Amber May - Alternate
 Keitha McDonald - Alternate

Town of Gardner Comprehensive Plan 2022 - 2042

Future Land Use		
Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage
Agriculture	5,364.08	24.42%
Commercial	829.21	3.78%
Light Industrial	32.15	0.15%
Institutional/ Governmental	161.18	0.73%
Multi-Family Residential	103.48	0.47%
Parks and Recreation	204.80	0.93%
Rural Residential	3,804.84	17.32%
Right-of-Way	459.01	2.09%
Shoreline Residential	1,814.08	8.26%
Water	33.81	0.15%
Woodlands/ Natural Areas	9,155.87	41.69%
Total	21,962.51	100.00%

Source: Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2002



The 20-year development scenario for the Town of Gardner was established using current land use and anticipated trends. The future land use map identifies recommendations for type and location of future land uses in the town leading up to the year 2042.

The following land use classifications and corresponding strategies were established in the creation of the future land use map. The town provided recommendations for these land use classifications that best represent the community's character and are in the town's best interests of the town and its citizens. These future land use recommendations in the Town of Gardner should be carefully reviewed by the town when making decisions concerning future growth/conservation. The following categories of land use are associated with the Town of Gardner Future Land Use Plan map.

- Rural Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Shoreline Residential
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Governmental/Institutional
- Mixed Use Areas
- Parks and Recreation
- Agricultural
- Woodlands/Natural Areas
- Environmental Corridors

Transportation

Any future developments are encouraged to include well-connected patterns that offer motorists several route options and avoid concentrating traffic on few roads. Well-connected patterns will also allow people to safely and efficiently navigate the Town's roads with and without personal vehicles. Where able, developments should encourage active transportation (walking and biking) options.

The town should continue to cooperate with other municipalities, Door County, and state government in the development and maintenance of all infrastructure systems.

Rural Residential

Where opportunities arise, properties should be infilled and redeveloped to reduce the impact development has on the rural and natural character of Gardner. Infill and redevelopment of properties can reduce the demand for new infrastructure needs that would need to be maintained and repaired.

Traditional and conservation subdivisions, which limit the impact of developments on natural-elements, can be used to increase the availability of housing.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family housing offers opportunities to increase residential density in Gardner. Examples of multi-family housing include but are not limited to duplexes, multiplexes, condominiums, townhomes, and senior housing. Orange sections on Map 5 are outlined for multi-family, but these areas can also be developed for single-family homes.

Shoreline Residential

Shoreline residential properties in Gardner are represented by small and large lot sizes. These lots tend to be more compact and orderly. Gardner has about 24 miles of shoreline, of which over 50% is developed.

The town should monitor shoreline growth for potential natural coastal impacts to properties, impacts on the environment, and impacts to adjacent properties. When possible, shoreline properties should be re-developed and infilled.

Mixed-Use Areas

Mixed-use areas are meant to designate areas which could see a mix of uses. Generally, the uses are a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional. Mixed-use areas could be zoned to allow for buildings serving two uses, such as commercial and residential, or parcels which have two buildings which are different uses. Mixed-use parcels could increase the density in the town and reduce the need for the development of agricultural and natural lands.

Gardner currently has mixed use areas located at the intersection of Stevenson Road and County Road C and the County Road DKJ corridor. A third potential future mixed-use area is located along Lovers Lane and County Road K. Future mixed-use growth should be consistent with the rural character of the town, while limiting conflicts with existing land uses.

Commercial

Commercial node development best represents the rural and natural character of Gardner.

Commercial nodes should be located near:

- County Road DK
- Hwy 57
- Select spots around County Road C, CC, and K.

The community survey identified several favorable businesses related to the retail, entertainment, and other service industries.

Light Industrial

New industrial uses should be light industrial, reflect the rural nature of the town, and avoid impacting surrounding land uses. Examples of light industrial uses are vegetable/fruit/cheese processing facilities, assembly plants, and wholesale establishments. When possible, industrial uses should be placed near commercial uses and away from residential uses. If industrial developments are located adjacent to residential land uses, steps should be made to decrease the negative impacts on these residences.

Light industrial uses are suggested to be built along County Road CC in-between Circle Ridge Road and County Road C.

Agriculture

Agriculture will continue to be the primary land-use in the Town of Gardner. Agricultural and related operations in these areas should be protected by limiting non-farm development to low density uses. Best management practices continue to be highly encouraged for all farming operations renting or managing land in the town.

Woodlands/Natural Areas

In order to preserve the rural and natural character of the town, future developments are encouraged to incorporate woodlands and natural areas into their design, whenever feasible.

Environmental Corridors

Environmental Corridors are legally protected and cannot be developed because of natural features which make it difficult or dangerous to build there. These features include wetlands, a 75-foot shoreland buffer (with a 35-foot vegetated buffer), floodplains, and steep slopes equal to or greater than 12%. Properties which have these natural features can be developed, but the nature features themselves cannot be developed upon without special permits through the managing entity (WDRN, FEMA, Door County, etc.).

Governmental/Institutional

The Governmental/Institutional land uses include existing government buildings, emergency services and facilities, schools, utilities and utility sites, cemeteries, and other facilities that provide public services to the town.

- Monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of town public services and identify needs for improvements, policy changes, establishment of mutual aid agreements, or future capital investments.
- Properly Maintain all town-owned facilities and properties.
- Maintain communication with Door County on the county's efforts to increase broadband internet access.
- Continue to coordinate with the Southern Door County School District.

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Parks and Recreation

Future parks and recreation needs will be dependent on development or an expressed need for additional public park and recreational facilities which could include nature preserves, and historic and cultural parks.

Eco-tourism could be considered a means to draw in tourists who would spend money in the area to view natural amenities. The natural features of the town (Gardner Swamp, Little Sturgeon Bay, and Niagara Escarpment) all have potential to draw these tourists in while taking measures to limit the disturbance of these resources.

The town should continue to explore diverse recreation opportunities for its residents and visitors, in both active and passive recreation. It is also important that the town continues to ensure people of all abilities will be able to enjoy parks and recreation facilities.

Action Plan

1. Administer the comprehensive plan's strategies and recommendations and monitor the statistical projections in the comprehensive plan.
2. Conduct an update of the plan components every three to five years and a complete update of the plan every ten years per Wis. Stats. § 66.1001.
3. Consider an annual report on the implementation and effectiveness of the comprehensive plan.
4. Explore options for town zoning which will assist in the enforcement of town regulations and ordinances. Town zoning should consider future land use needs, strategies, and the goals and objectives outlined in the comprehensive plan.
5. Conduct an annual review of, and amend or create as necessary, existing or new town ordinances to coincide with the comprehensive plan.
6. Consider cooperative efforts with Door County and the surrounding communities regarding topics such as land use planning, provision of coordinated public services and facilities, and plan implementation.

Funded by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act, Grant #NA21NOS4190086.