

## I. Introduction

### **Creation of the Baileys Harbor Comprehensive “Smart Growth” Plan**

1999 Wisconsin Act 9 – commonly referred to as Wisconsin’s “Smart Growth” legislation – stated that by January 1, 2010, any Wisconsin municipality that has programs or takes actions that affect land use must have a comprehensive plan in place. The comprehensive plan must serve as the basis for community decision-making, be consistent with the municipality’s ordinances and programs, and comply with the Wisconsin statutes as to the nine issues or elements outlined therein. In several circumstances, such as when the municipality is applying for various state funds, municipal plans will also be evaluated against general planning goals outlined in the legislation.

The Smart Growth legislation has undergone various amendments since its initial enactment. Some were to clarify the legislation, others to more clearly state which municipalities were required to create comprehensive plans. The statutory requirements as to the necessary contents of a comprehensive plan have remained essentially unchanged throughout these revisions. Although the Town of Baileys Harbor may not currently be required to create a “Smart Growth” plan, local officials felt that it was a good idea to do so anyway, both since the existing town comprehensive plan needed to be updated and since the town might easily enact programs or ordinances that would require such a plan be in place. The Town of Baileys Harbor has therefore created and adopted this plan under the authority granted by Wisconsin Statutes Section 66.1001, replacing the town plan previously in place.

Town officials hired GBH Consulting in the summer of 2002 to work with town residents on developing a new town plan that complied with the Smart Growth legislation. During the creation of the plan, eight widely publicized Public Information Meetings were held; eight newsletters were distributed to all property owners; open, posted meetings were held between GBH Consulting and the town plan commission each month; a Resource Inventory Report was completed; materials related to the plan’s development were available for review at the library and through a link on the GBH Consulting website; and volunteer citizen “work groups” drafted the initial vision statements and goals regarding each plan element.

### **Overview of the Plan**

The plan is comprised of ten chapters. After the Introduction and a Brief History of Baileys Harbor, the remaining chapters are structured so as to match the required plan elements outlined in the Smart Growth legislation, except the topics of housing and economic development, which are addressed simultaneously in Chapter VI.

Chapter III covers the “Issues & Opportunities” the Smart Growth legislation requires a municipality to consider in its planning. Chapters IV through IX present the other seven topical elements required by the legislation: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources; Land Use; Housing and Economic Development; Transportation; Utilities & Community Facilities; and Intergovernmental Cooperation. Each of those chapters contains the exact Smart Growth legislative requirements with regard to the particular topic, a summary of existing conditions, a vision statement, and goals, objectives, and implementation policies. All components of these chapters – except the legislative

requirements – were drafted using research by GBH Consulting, the results from Public Information Meetings, and the results from work groups and other resident input methods.

Chapter X is the Implementation chapter, which, as required by the Smart Growth legislation, contains a summary of all implementation mechanisms decided upon with regard to the eight topical elements, a timeline and cooperating partners for implementation of those tools, and discussion as to how the plan will be updated.

Finally, the plan contains nine appendices. The first appendix contains the Public Participation Plan the town adopted and used during the creation of this plan as well as other information related to public participation throughout the process. The remaining eight appendices provide the detailed background research and information for each of the plan elements, which were purposefully placed here rather than in the body of the plan so as to make the plan as readable, user-friendly, and compact as possible.

## **2010 Plan Amendment Process**

Much has changed subsequent to the 2005 Plan's adoption.

- The collapse of the housing market that began in 2008 triggered a global recession from which the United States is just emerging.
- The economy and housing market in Door County, like that of the rest of the country, has been affected by the recession.
- Unemployment in Door County increased by 3.2% between August 2008 and August 2009 (the state-wide increase was 4.6%)<sup>1</sup>
- The 2005 Plan called for additional actions in order to effectively implement the Plan.
- Concerns raised by residents and landowners over the process used to define the boundaries of the Town Core area.

It is as a result of these and other issues affecting the community that the Town of Baileys Harbor decided to amend the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

### **Background**

At the conclusion of the 2005 Smart Growth planning process, the Town Board was instructed by project consultant, Mariah Goode of GBH Consulting, to formally define the town's "Core" area. It was the Board's understanding that the characteristics and purpose of the core was described in the plan, however there was not an actual boundary associated with that definition. It was also the Board's understanding that this definition could be submitted shortly after approval of the plan, and that the maps reflecting the boundaries were to be completed for insertion into the final plan. Several subsequent meetings were held in which the core definition was listed as an agenda item. As a result of these meetings, the Town Board and Planning Commission defined where they felt the core should be. No citizen input or resistance to the Board's actions was brought forward at these meetings, or at any other time over the next several years.

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<sup>1</sup> *Door County Workforce Profile 2009*, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, July 2010.

During the development of the Door County Comprehensive Plan in the spring of 2009, citizens of Baileys Harbor raised concerns regarding the decision making process used in ultimately defining the town core. At a public hearing held by the Door County Resource Planning Committee (RPC) to review the Door County Comprehensive Plan in October 2009, testimony was heard by Baileys Harbor citizens challenging the validity of the Town Board's actions in their defining the core area. The RPC voted to not recognize the Town Board's core definition and defaulted back to whatever definition was in the approved 2005 Smart Growth Plan.

At that point the Town Board realized several issues still remained:

1. The definition of the core as shown in the 2005 Smart Growth Plan was still ambiguous.
2. Damage was done to the relationship between the Town Board, the Planning Commission, and the town's citizens.
3. A definition of the town core area that is clear, accurate, well-planned, and has been decided through a process that is recognized as legitimate, is central to the future growth of the town.

As such, the Town Board felt that a full and formal review of the 2005 plan would be the most appropriate step in moving forward. The process began in the spring of 2010 with emphasis placed on citizen notification and participation. Subsequent revisions and updates are made part of this document.

#### How Do the 2010 Plan Amendments Relate to the 2005 Plan?

The 2010 amendments are a continuation of the 2005 Plan and its planning process. However, ***the goals, objectives, and policies identified within the 2010 Amendments will be given primacy over any similar or conflicting recommendations resulting from the 2005 planning process.*** As stated in the introduction to this section, much has changed during the five years since the 2005 Plan was developed and adopted. In some cases, implementation actions developed during the current process may supplant those of the earlier planning effort.

#### How Was The Public Involved?

The 2010 Amendments to the 2005 Town of Baileys Harbor Comprehensive Plan were developed with the active participation of residents, landowners, business owners, and other stakeholders. To gain citizen understanding and support throughout the planning process the public was provided with a variety of opportunities to become involved in the development of the amended comprehensive plan. The adopted *Public Participation Plan*, describing the various public participation activities and opportunities, as well as the complete results of the Community Survey, Kick-off Meeting, and Cognitive Mapping Forum are provided within the Appendices to this Plan.

## **II. Brief History of Baileys Harbor**

The Town of Baileys Harbor, population 1,003, located in the County of Door, Wisconsin, is 66 miles northeast of the City of Green Bay and 22 miles northeast of the City of Sturgeon Bay. According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 68.8 square miles (178.1 km<sup>2</sup>). Of that area, 29.5 mi<sup>2</sup> (76.5 km<sup>2</sup>) is land and 39.2 mi<sup>2</sup> (101.6 km<sup>2</sup>) is water, which means that just over 57% of the town's area is water. It is bordered on the east by the waters of Lake Michigan, on the south by the Town of Jacksonport, on the west by the Towns of Egg Harbor and Gibraltar, and on the north by the Town of Liberty Grove.

The area now known as Baileys Harbor was named for Captain Justice Bailey, a sailor who in 1848 sought shelter in the harbor from a storm on Lake Michigan. His employer, Alanson Sweet, impressed with the limestone and lumber resources available, built the town's first infrastructure – a pier. Later businessmen continued investment in the logging, mining, and shipping industries. These endeavors required additional laborers, and settlers came from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Poland, England, Germany, Scotland, and Ireland. As they came to Baileys Harbor, they cleared more land and farming became the predominant economic activity. In more recent years, tourism and its related commercial endeavors, such as retail, lodging, foodservice, and real estate/construction trades, have become dominant.

Recreation and access to recreational activities are important aspects of the economy in the present day Town of Baileys Harbor. Fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, boating, cross-country skiing, and wildlife viewing are some of the popular outdoor activities. Baileys Harbor is the most biologically diverse town in the State of Wisconsin, supporting a wide variety of species as well as ecological communities. These resources are important to residents as well as draws to visitors.

### III. Issues and Opportunities

*Per Wisconsin Statutes Section 66.1001(2)(a), the issues and opportunities element of a comprehensive plan is “background information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20-year planning period. Background information shall include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its comprehensive plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, education levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local governmental unit.”*

#### **Issues and Opportunities: Summary of Existing Conditions**

*Please see Appendix 2 for further background research and data required for the issues and opportunities element of the plan.*

In public input sessions and through citizen work group discussions, Baileys Harbor’s residents and property owners have identified a number of general issues and opportunities facing the town.

#### General Issues

Several of the main issues residents see as facing the town are related to the demographic characteristics of the town’s residents and/or the town’s economy:

- The town’s population is aging, both in terms of the existing population and with regard to individuals moving into the community.
- There are few large-scale full-time employers in the town besides Harbor Construction and PCI, and a limited number in other areas of northern Door.
- Economically, the town is now tourism and construction based; agriculture is rapidly declining.
- Year-round income earning potential is decreasing in the town/county as the economy becomes more tourism-dependent.
- Increased land values make attainable housing, either rental or ownership, out of reach for many, especially younger persons and families working in Door County.
- The aging population of the town is affecting local emergency services (firefighters, first responders, etc.) – membership in these necessary services is reaching a plateau. With the median age of the population climbing, this is a problem – these volunteers are already stretched.

Residents note that while Baileys Harbor is considerably less developed than other northern Door communities, the town seems to be on the cusp of large-scale tourist/second home development; such development has created major issues for other northern Door communities. Currently, most “developers” in Baileys Harbor are natives or long-time residents, but that will probably shift, as it has in other local communities. There is increasing pressure on the waterfront properties, and more multi-unit and sub-division development in the town, both in and out of downtown Baileys Harbor.

With the continued influx of second homeowners/seasonal residents, full-time residents fear that community member familiarity is decreasing. It is harder for them to know their neighbors like they used to in years prior. On the up side, however, those moving here

seem to value the small-town values so prevalent in the town – family, friends, religion, community events, and support of local businesses.

### General Opportunities

Residents and property owners overwhelmingly feel that the small-town community character of Baileys Harbor is its greatest asset. They like the mix of uses in the town, the fact that it is a year-round community, the preponderance of single-family housing, the smaller scale of tourist-focused businesses (as compared with other northern Door communities), and the fact that many town businesses are owner-operated and small. Residents appreciate that the town's architecture is still at a small scale and in the downtown, is primarily historic in character. The town's historical flavor is further enhanced through its parks, lighthouses, remaining farms, and pastoral vistas. In addition to the physical small-town characteristics of the town, residents feel that Baileys Harbor is a very personable community where "everyone knows your name" and there are still strong ties between community members. Since those moving here seem to value both the tangible and intangible aspects of small-town character, the town has the opportunity now to define and then work on retaining the characteristics important to residents and property owners.

Baileys Harbor's residents and property owners also feel that the following are opportunities or advantages the town has as it plans for its future:

- Baileys Harbor's residents like the town's location on the "quiet side," its being adjacent to Lake Michigan, and its easy access to both northern Door and Sturgeon Bay.
- The town has a large number of acres protected by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, The Ridges Sanctuary, the Door County Land Trust, Bjorklunden, and The Nature Conservancy, not to mention areas protected by individual private property owners through conservation easements. This contributes to the beauty of the town for residents and visitors as well as to the town's biological diversity.
- The town's outlying land is primarily agriculture or vacant/fallow farmland, not yet developed. The town has the opportunity to allow wise development and/or protection of these areas.
- The town has a vast amount of shoreline: Lake Michigan, Kangaroo Lake, and Mud Lake.
- People still live on "Main Street" in Baileys Harbor, and the vast majority of the secondary roads in downtown remain residential.
- Development so far has largely been proportional to existing structures, with developers taking into account the town's character.
- There is a strong base of support for preserving the history of Baileys Harbor. Many written and visual histories are on record at the library and preservation of historic buildings is numerous.

### Population Trends and Issues

While Baileys Harbor's year-round population has fluctuated from decade to decade, the town has experienced significant growth since 1950, when the population was 715 persons: the 2000 U.S. Census found Baileys Harbor's year-round population to be 1,003 persons. It is expected that the town's population will continue to increase, particularly as the "baby boom" generation retires over the next 20 years. A modified

Growth Trend Series of population projections for the town, determined to be the most accurate to estimate the town's growth for the planning period, predicts that Baileys Harbor's year-round population will be just over 1,300 persons as of 2025.

Although the town's population is increasing, it is aging. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of year-round residents that were under 5 years of age decreased by over 55 percent, and the number of residents 25-34 years of age decreased by over 20 percent. During that same time period, however, the number of residents age 65 and older increased by over 30 percent.

In addition to monitoring population trends for its year-round residents, the Town of Baileys Harbor also needs to keep in mind potential growth in its number of seasonal residents and visitors. Calculations done in 1999 by University of Wisconsin-Extension Door County estimate that the total population for Baileys Harbor, defined as year-round residents plus seasonal residents and visitors, is actually much higher – between 44 and 350% higher, depending on the month – than the number of Baileys Harbor's year-round residents counted in the Census.

#### Household Characteristics, Trends, and Issues

As one would expect based on population increases, Baileys Harbor's total number of households increased significantly between 1990 and 2000. Again, though, it is clear that the town is aging: there was virtually no increase in the percent of the town's households that had children under 18 present.

Housing occupancy statistics show that between 1990 and 2000 the number of occupied housing units in the town increased significantly, which corresponds with the year-round population growth. Even so, in 2000 nearly half of the town's housing units were still "for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use."

Based on population projections, demographic trends, decreases in average household size, and recent building permit application levels, over the 20-year planning period Baileys Harbor can expect an average increase of approximately 6-8 households (roughly 14–17 people) per year. Note that that figure is for new *year-round* households and residents, and that the homes those households will be occupying will be a mixture of existing homes and new construction. The town will also obviously have new *seasonal* residents that will occupy existing and new residential units. A reasonable estimate, taking into consideration projected year-round population increases and likely comparable increases in seasonal residents, is that over the 20-year planning period the town can expect an average of 10 new residential units to be constructed each year.

#### Employment Characteristics, Trends, and Issues

In 2000, the top industries employing Baileys Harbor's employed residents 16 and over were: 1) arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services; 2) educational, health and social services; 3) construction; and 4) retail trade. A very small number of the town's residents – far fewer than in 1990 – were employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting, and mining, which have been historically significant employers for local residents. The percent of town residents employed by manufacturing industries also declined significantly between 1990 and 2000.

Data on wage levels for year-round full-time workers in the town are not available, but examination of county and state wage levels provides insight regarding the industries

within which Baileys Harbor's residents are employed. Overall, the average annual wage for all industries in Door County has been roughly 70 percent of Wisconsin's average wage for the past five years. In fact, Door County's workers' annual average wages are lower for nearly all industry categories than those of the state as a whole.

The highest annual average wages for Door County workers are found in the construction and manufacturing industries, while the lowest annual average wages for Door County workers are found in the retail trade; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and service industries. County-wide the overall trend is an increase in the number of service industry and retail trade positions, which, coupled with housing costs that are higher than the average housing costs across the state, poses a significant problem for year-round residents of working age.

#### Income and Education Levels

*Note: Statistics on income levels include all residents, working or not, and all sources of income.*

Door County has generally had per capita income levels at or above state averages since 1979. Door County's median household income, however, is consistently lower than the Wisconsin median, and has in recent years been significantly lower than the Brown County median.

Baileys Harbor's residents' income levels, in comparison with state and county levels, have fluctuated, and also vary in comparison to the state and county levels depending upon whether or not one is examining median family income, median household income, or income tax returns. In 2001, the Average Gross Income per income tax return filed for Baileys Harbor residents was \$32,838 and for Door County as a whole, \$35,978.

Between 1989 and 1999, the number of Baileys Harbor households earning \$24,999 or less decreased significantly, while the number of households earning between \$75,000 and \$149,999 increased dramatically. Significant increases were also apparent for residents' median household income levels, median family income levels, the number of households with Social Security income, and the number of households with retirement income (the latter two obviously corresponding with the aging of the town's population). These figures all sound like good news, until considering them in the context of the town's declining number of young families, increased dependence on low-paying tourist-focused industries, and high housing costs – young workers and families earning average wages are often unable to move into or stay in the community.

Income levels are typically examined in conjunction with educational attainment levels. In Baileys Harbor in 2000, 91.6 percent of the town's population aged 25 years or older had completed high school or higher; 30.1 percent had completed a Bachelor's degree or higher. Both of those figures were significantly higher than the corresponding statistics – in actual numbers and as a percent of total population – from 1990.

Younger residents – those age 3 and older – were enrolled in elementary and high school in greater numbers in 2000 than in 1990, but the number of children enrolled in nursery school, preschool, and kindergarten in 2000 was exactly the same as in 1990. This reinforces the trend noted earlier regarding the decreasing percent of the town's population comprised of residents under age 5 between 1990 and 2000.

## **2010 Community Demographic Update**

### **Population and Projections**

The table on the following page provides updated population data for the Town of Baileys Harbor. The figures under the 2005 Plan heading are taken directly from the 2005 comprehensive plan. Those underneath the 2010 Amendments heading are updated figures provided by the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Population projections are not intended as predictions of future population. They provide a reasonable, anticipated future population from which to guide planning efforts.

The Wisconsin Department of Administration's population projections are developed by the Demographic Services Center in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96. These projections are based on past and current population trends, and are intended as a baseline guide for the users.<sup>2</sup>

Projecting future population numbers for a community poses a significant challenge. Numerous factors including the national economy, regional housing and employment trends, and changing demographic preferences, may change over relatively brief periods of time. The challenge becomes that much more difficult in communities which experience wide fluctuations in seasonal population. The seasonal population in Baileys Harbor may vary from a winter low of 439 to a mid-summer high of 3,496.<sup>3</sup>

<b>Population and Population Projections for the Town of Baileys Harbor, 1950-2030.</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>2005 Plan</b>		<b>2010 Amendments</b>		<b>Change in Projected Population, 2005 to 2010</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Change</b>	
<b>1950</b>	715	--	--	--	--
<b>1960</b>	654	(8.5)%	--	--	--
<b>1970</b>	615	(6.0) %	--	--	--
<b>1980</b>	799	29.9%	--	--	--
<b>1990</b>	780	(2.4) %	--	--	--
<b>2000</b>	1,003	28.6%	1,003	--	--
<b>2005</b>	1,050*	4.7%	1,103	10.0%	5.0%
<b>2010</b>	1,103*	5.0%	1,177	6.7%	6.7%
<b>2015</b>	1,169*	6.0%	1,255	6.6%	7.4%
<b>2020</b>	1,254*	7.3%	1,324	5.5%	5.6%
<b>2025</b>	1,313*	4.7%	1,378	4.1%	5.0%
<b>2030</b>	1,379*	5.0%	1,408	2.2%	2.1%

Source: US Census, Wisconsin Department of Administration, and 2005 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Baileys Harbor.  
 \* Modified Growth Trend Series Projections developed by GBH Consulting, February 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpted from Wisconsin Department of Administration Intergovernmental Relations website, <http://www.doa.state.wi.us/subcategory.asp?linksubcatid=105&locid=9>, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Seasonal population estimates appear on page A-21 of the 2005 Town of Baileys Harbor Comprehensive Plan. The data presented in that table were developed by the Door County office of UW-Extension in 1999.

### **Summary of Plan Goals**

Following are general goals that Baileys Harbor residents have discussed and generally agreed upon at planning meetings.

The Town of Baileys Harbor shall:

- Retain its humble, quaint, small-town atmosphere and values as it grows.
- Work to ensure that further natural/open areas are permanently protected.
- Work to ensure more physical as well as visual waterfront access for all.
- Strive to keep a balance of ages within the community.
- Strive to increase townspeople's ability to earn a comfortable living.
- Ensure that new development shall be on a scale that complements existing structures.

For a complete listing of Comprehensive Plan goals objectives, and policies please refer to *Chapter X: Implementation*.