

# Chapter 1

## The City of Prescott and Comprehensive Planning

### Location and Geography

The City of Prescott is located in Pierce County, Wisconsin. It is situated at the confluence of the St. Croix River and Mississippi River. This geographical region of Wisconsin is referred to as the Western Uplands and is characterized by its higher elevations and great trenches and gorges along the Mississippi River. The Mississippi has carved its channel between 230 feet and 650 feet below the upland ridges and provides some of the most rugged and picturesque scenery in Wisconsin.

### History



Prescott was settled in 1840 and received its official name in 1851. The City was named after Philander Prescott who built a home and a store on the present day site of the City of Prescott.

Philander Prescott was born September 17, 1801 in Phelpsstown, New York and arrived at Camp New Hope (Fort Snelling) in Minnesota in 1820. He married the daughter of a

Dakota chief in 1823. Prescott and his wife and their children lived among the Dakota for more than 40 years.

What would become the City of Prescott began as a military land claim in 1827. It remained unpopulated until the arrival of Philander who at that time was an Indian interpreter and agricultural supervisor at Fort Snelling in Minnesota.

He resided in Prescott and at the Fort alternately until his death in 1862. Philander was sent by the government on a peace mission to meet with the Sioux Indians near Mankato where he was killed at the beginning of the Dakota Conflict.



The Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers played a major role in the shaping of Prescott. River traffic passed by as people and goods traveled north and the area became a center for shipping, milling, and transportation.

Over time, the lumber industry became more important. Logs were floated down the St. Croix River. Warehouses were built to store food and supplies. A continued influx of immigrants meant hotels, restaurants, banks, and new homes were constructed to meet the demands of the new population.

As rail travel overtook steamboat traffic and logging subsided, settlers came in decreasing numbers.

### **Prescott Today**

At present, Prescott is located in one of the fastest urbanizing areas in the State. Between 1970 and 2010, Pierce County's population has grown by 52% while Prescott's has grown by 83% to 4,258 residents. During that same period, Wisconsin's population increased by 29%.

The largest influence on Prescott's growth is in-migration due to the close proximity to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA). Located only 30 minutes from the TCMA and 25 minutes from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, Prescott has seen a large number of Minnesota residents move to the City because of inexpensive land, reasonable housing, and smaller communities. Many Prescott residents live in the City and commute to jobs in Minnesota.

### **Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law**

The City of Prescott's Comprehensive Plan complies with the requirements of Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001. The Statute states that beginning January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit enacts or amends an official mapping ordinance, subdivision ordinance, zoning ordinance, or shorelands zoning ordinance, the ordinance shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan.

The City of Prescott adopted its first Comprehensive Plan addressing the new State Statute requirements in 2003. The City applied for, and was awarded a \$41,400 grant in 2000 to help it develop its Comprehensive Plan.

A comprehensive plan is designed to act as a community's main planning document that addresses the long-term growth and physical development of that community. These plans must address nine elements, each focusing on a unique sector of the community. The elements required by the Wisconsin State Statutes are:

- ◆ Issues and Opportunities
- ◆ Housing

- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Utilities and Community Facilities
- ◆ Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Land Use
- ◆ Intergovernmental Cooperation
- ◆ Implementation

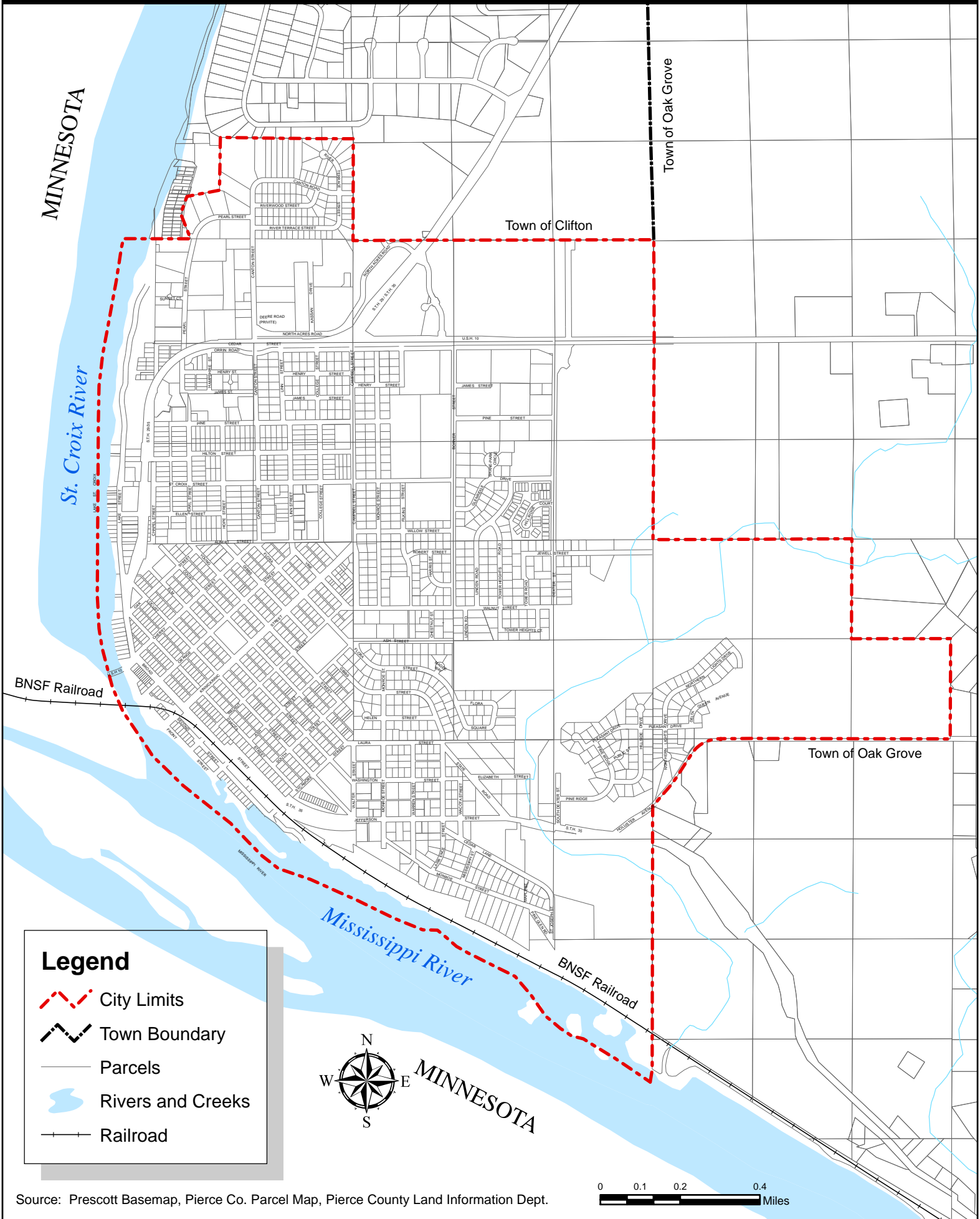
Each element is addressed in a manner that provides fluidity and consistency with the other elements, existing local and regional plans, and local and regional objectives.

### **Goals of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law**

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law or "Smart Growth" Law was designed to confront the social, environmental, and economic challenges resulting from urban sprawl. A comprehensive plan must be created with these goals in mind.

1. Promotion of redevelopment of land with existing infrastructure and public services, and maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitat, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
5. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and low costs.
6. Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.
7. Encouragement of cooperation and coordination among nearby units of government.
8. Building community identity by revitalizing main streets & enforcing design standards.
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels within the community.
10. Providing infrastructure, services & developable land adequate to meet market demand residential, commercial and industrial uses.
11. Promoting expansion or stabilization of the economic base and job creation.
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests & goals.
13. Planning & developing land uses that create or preserve unique urban & rural communities.
14. Providing an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that meets the needs of all citizens.

# Map 1-1: Project Location - City of Prescott



## **Benefits to Planning**

A comprehensive plan can provide numerous benefits to a community. These include:

- ◆ Coordinating community activities
- ◆ Understanding the past and present
- ◆ Providing a roadmap to the future
- ◆ Allowing a community to be proactive rather than reactive
- ◆ Preserving local control
- ◆ Promoting economic development
- ◆ Promoting intergovernmental cooperation
- ◆ Protecting cultural, agricultural, and natural resources

The most important benefit of a comprehensive plan is that it provides information so that City officials can make consistent decisions. It also provides a vision that residents, committees, business owners, and developers can utilize when pursuing their own projects.

## **Public Participation**

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires public participation at every stage of planning. At a minimum, the law calls for the adoption of a public participation plan to provide for a diverse range of opportunities for the public to help shape their community, making copies of the proposed plan available for the public to review, and holding at least one public hearing prior to adopting the comprehensive plan.

The City of Prescott implemented a number of additional public participation efforts including holding two community workshops on June 14, 2014 and June 17, 2014, developing a community survey, forming a Work Group to create the draft Comprehensive Plan, and post chapter drafts of each element on the City's website.

The public participation outcome (reviewed in Chapter 2 and Appendix A), yielded significant interest in thinking about how Prescott might imagine its future from a sustainable community perspective. This discussion was based on sustainability being seen as a core American value focused on self-sufficiency, self-determination, ingenuity, creativity, entrepreneurship, and responsibility for self, family, neighborhood, and community (among other descriptors). More specifically, it yielded strong attention toward local energy, food, and water self-sufficiency, and the economic development, security, and resilience that comes from keeping those dollars in the local economy.

Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations in a wide variety of chapters integrate this perspective and reinforce the historic pride and sense of place that the Prescott community is determined to maintain, strengthen, and build upon.

## **Formulating Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations**

Goals, objectives, and recommendations are found at the end of each chapter. These provide guidance and direction for the growth and development of Prescott and can be used to evaluate the implementation of the plan. A definition of each is provided below.

### **Goals:**

Goals are statements of desired outcomes or achievements. They are general in nature.

### **Objectives:**

Objectives are more specific and are measurable.

### **Recommendations:**

Recommendations are specific actions to be taken to achieve the objectives and meet the goals.

The goals, objectives, and recommendations identify the direction and priorities the City has identified and will implement over time.

## **Note on Comprehensive Plan Limitations**

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to act as a guide for the future growth and development of the City of Prescott. It should be noted that although the Comprehensive Plan covers a 20 year period, the City should review and revise the Comprehensive Plan on a periodic basis to adjust for deviations from population and other growth forecasts and unforeseen variables. At a minimum, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed every ten years.

Maps and drawings found within the Comprehensive Plan are a compilation and reproduction of various sources and data. The maps are intended to be used for general reference purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for an accurate site survey. When referring to the Comprehensive Plan during the decision making process, the intent of the Plan as a whole should be considered.