

CHAPTER 4 Utilities and Community Facilities Element

Section 4.1 Introduction

Adequate infrastructure, utilities, community facilities and services are important in meeting existing and future community needs for Pine Grove. They are the framework of a community's life, and without them, present day standard of living could not exist. The decisions made for the Town regarding the utilities and community facilities will impact all present and future residents.

This chapter will describe the existing utility and community facilities serving Pine Grove, and outline future desires/needs for the residents.

Section 4.2 Public Utilities Inventory

A. Sanitary Sewer Service/On-Site Wastewater Treatment Technologies

There is no municipal sanitary sewer service within the Town of Pine Grove. Residents in the Town utilize private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS), otherwise known as private septic systems, as allowed by the Portage County Private Sewage System Ordinance.

The lack of municipal sewer service may present an obstacle to any significant future development in the Bancroft area. Certain government assisted housing programs require such facilities. Generally, duplexes or apartments should be served by a municipal sewer and water system.

In 1983, the Town Board engaged the assistance of the Portage County Planning and Health Departments to undertake a study of private sewage and water systems in the Bancroft area. Of the eighty-five (85) total sewage systems surveyed at that time, 15 were reported as failing to accept sewage, 4 reported surface discharges, and 33 were reported as operating near high groundwater. According to the Portage County Groundwater Specialist, a significant number of these on-site waste systems have been replaced with code compliant systems since the 1983 study.

A state program entitled the Wisconsin Fund is available to homeowners and small commercial businesses to help offset a portion of the cost for the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing failing septic systems (POWTS). The program provides grant funding based upon several criteria, including household income and age of the structure. More information regarding eligibility and possible assistance in the preparation of grant applications is available through the On-Site Waste Specialists with the County Planning and Zoning Department.

B. Water Supply

The Town relies entirely on private wells for water supply. Please see the groundwater section of the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources element for further information.

As part of the 1983 study mentioned above, 75 water systems in the Bancroft area were surveyed and 78 water samples were tested for bacteria and nitrate levels. Based on the 1983 findings, only 14 of the 75 water supply systems were reported as being properly installed and 10 of the 78 water samples were shown to have nitrate levels above the health standard of 10 parts per million. Since the 1983 study, many of the private wells have been re-drilled and relocated. Water testing has been on-going since 1983 and the data from water samples since that time indicate nitrate levels in certain portions of the Town are still above the health standard of 10 parts per million (Map 4.1).

Since potable water is obtained primarily from groundwater, consideration should be given to possible sources of contamination. One possible source is landfills. Landfills (also formerly known as dumps) have been around as long as people have lived in Portage County; however, the locations of many of the smaller, private dumps are unknown. The amount of materials deposited in these was small and the toxicities of the materials were likely fairly low as compared to current solid waste. All known landfills, except the current County Landfill located on Cty Rd QQ, have been closed. According to Department of Natural Resources Administrative Code, there must be a 1,200 foot separation between a private well or reservoir and the nearest edge of an existing, proposed, or abandoned landfill. Landfills in the Town are shown on Map 4.2.

C. Storm Water Management

Responsibility for storm water management within the Town of Pine Grove is split between Portage County and the Town. Management responsibility for the Town mainly consists of ditches along the local road network, while Portage County maintains the ditches along the portion of County Roads within Pine Grove. The ditches along Town roads vary in size, ranging from 1 to 4 feet in width; however, there are no stormwater ditches within the settlement of Bancroft.

A majority of the western half of the Town is within the Portage County Drainage District (see Map 5.2). Many of the District's approximately 93 miles of ditches were built in the early 1900's for the purpose of lowering the water table of an extensive marshland to accommodate agricultural production. Although the Portage County Drainage District was not chiefly created for storm water management, the ditches within the district help facilitate the flow and drainage of runoff during and after storm events, as well as melt water from the spring thaw.

D. Solid Waste and Recycling Facilities

The Town currently contracts through the Portage County Solid Waste Department with Wittenberg Disposal Services, LLC, based in Wittenberg, Wisconsin, for handling solid waste and recycling. Waste is collected every week and transported to the Portage County Landfill in the Town of Stockton for dumping. The Portage County Landfill is scheduled to close in 2006, after which the waste will be trucked to a landfill in Marathon County. Recyclables are collected bi-weekly and transported to the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in the Village of Plover.

The Town Board is satisfied with this service provider and expects it will be able to meet future needs. County-level program clean-up days provide a valuable service for Town residents for several items that Wittenberg Disposal will not pick up. In addition, the Town sponsors a "Spring/Fall Clean-Up Program" twice a year for residents, for the disposal of tires, brush, and appliances. Residents bring their items to the Town's former waste transfer station where they are picked up by Wittenberg Disposal.

E. Corporate Utilities

1. Telecommunication Facilities: Pine Grove currently has three telecommunication towers located near the Bancroft area (Map 4.2). The Town Plan Commission has expressed a desire to regulate these structures; however, the Town does not possess any ordinances nor is it subject to the County's Tower Ordinance to address this issue.
2. Telephone and Internet Services: The Town is currently served by Union Telephone Company out of Plainfield, Wisconsin for telephone and Internet services.

Map 4.1 Nitrate Nitrogen in Private Well Water

Map 4.2 Community Facilities & Utilities

Map 4.3 Gas Service (Bancroft Area)

3. Gas and Electric Power: The Town currently receives its electric service from Alliant Energy or Wisconsin Public Service Corporation. Natural gas service is offered by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation in the settlement of Bancroft. Liquid propane is available through private, commercial providers.
4. Power Generating Plants and Transmission Lines: There are no major transmission lines or power generating facilities located within the Town.

Section 4.3 Community Facilities Inventory

A. Municipal Buildings

The Town Hall and Fire Station are currently located at 8412 Division Street in Bancroft. This building is leased to the Town by a private entity. Plans are underway for the siting and building of a new town hall and fire station to be located near the existing Town garage, located one block east of Tennessee Walker Road in Bancroft. The garage houses snowplowing and road maintenance equipment, as well as fire equipment too large to be stored at the fire station. The Town Board usually meets at the Town Hall, while the Plan Commission meets at the upper level of the Bancroft State Bank, located at 5496 County Road W in Bancroft, Wisconsin. The new facility will be designed to accommodate all future municipal meetings.

B. Police

The Town of Pine Grove is served by the Portage County Sheriffs Department. The Portage County Sheriff's Department provides protective services through random patrols and on a "call-out" basis. Portage County is divided into 3 districts for patrol purposes. The district in which Pine Grove is located is bounded by STH 54 to the north and east, the Portage County line to the south and west, and the Wisconsin River to the north. During the day shift one officer is assigned to each district, plus an additional officer "floats" throughout the County. During the night shift, two officers are assigned to each district, plus two additional officers float throughout the County. Officers may drive through the Town any number of times during each shift to check on businesses and residences.

C. Fire / Rescue

The Bancroft-Pine Grove Volunteer Fire Department currently has 30 members, all having Firefighter I certification. The Town's current vehicles consist of: two tankers, two pumpers, one brush rig, and one First Responders rig.

In addition to the volunteer fire department the Town also has mutual aid agreements with surrounding Portage and Waushara County municipalities.

There are currently 12 First Responders in Pine Grove, all certified in basic First Responder and de-fibrillator training. Equipment is currently stored at the existing fire department building located at 8412 Division Street in Bancroft, and in the Town Garage on Cty Rd. W.

The Town of Pine Grove is currently served by the Portage County Rescue Department, with ambulance service provided by Portage County. The Portage County Rescue Department covers approximately 810 square miles, and is the only ambulance service in the area. The department has 4 ambulances based in Stevens Point, staffed 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. Most patients are transported to St. Michael's Hospital in Stevens Point. However, they do transport to medical facilities in other cities. The rescue equipment includes 5 medic vehicles and 1 rescue air boat.

D. Schools

The Town of Pine Grove lies within two School Districts for primary and secondary education, the Almond-Bancroft and Tri-County School Districts (Map 4.2). Nearby post-secondary education for Town residents include the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and Mid-State Technical College available in Stevens Point; the University of Wisconsin-Marathon County and North Central Technical College, located in the City of Wausau approximately 45 miles north of the Town; and Mid-State Technical College in Wisconsin Rapids.

1. Almond-Bancroft School District – This School District has schools located within the Village of Almond and the unincorporated community of Bancroft. The Bancroft elementary school has approximately 30 students in early childhood through kindergarten. The Village of Almond elementary school (1st – 5th grades) has approximately 200 students and the high school (6th – 12th grades) has approximately 300 students. Both the elementary and the high school grades are located in one building in the Village of Almond.
2. Tri-County Area School District – District facilities are located in the Village of Plainfield, in Waushara County, approximately 7 miles from the Town of Pine Grove. There is one K-12 building (last remodeled in December 1996), which served a 2003-04 enrollment of approximately 850 students and 61 full time teachers.

School breakfast and lunch are made available for all children of the districts. A staff of food-service personnel is available to serve children hot lunch on all days children are at school. The food service program is electronically managed through the purchase of a lunch card.

All students living outside the Almond and Plainfield Villages limits are offered bus transportation. The Districts have contracts with three local bus contractors.

E. Libraries

There are no library facilities in the Town of Pine Grove. Library facilities available to residents include three branches of the Portage County Public Library. The Charles M. White library is located in Stevens Point and is open seven days a week. The Village of Plover Branch library and the Village of Almond Branch library (the closest facility for Pine Grove residents) are open Monday through Saturday with limited hours. More detailed information about the Portage County Public Library system can be obtained via the internet at: <http://library.uwsp.edu/pcl/> or by calling the library at: **1-800-264-0766**.

Other area libraries include the Plainfield Public Library (affiliated with the Winnefox Library System) located in Plainfield, approximately five miles south of Pine Grove; and the James H. Albertson Center for Learning Resources, located on the UW-Stevens Point campus. Detailed information about services at the Albertson Center can be obtained via the internet at: <http://library.uwsp.edu/> or by calling the library at: **715-346-2540**, and information regarding the Plainfield Library can be gained by calling **715-335-4523**.

F. Parks

Two parks are found within the Town of Pine Grove, both located in Bancroft; Town of Pine Grove Park and the Lions Park.

1. Bancroft Lions Park

This park is owned by the local Lions Club and offers one enclosed shelter, play equipment, shaded area and picnic tables. It is a well-used community park because of its central location on County Rd W in Bancroft. This park is the site of Bancroft Good Old Days held each summer.

2. Bancroft Ball Park (Town Park)

This park is owned by the Town of Pine Grove and offers a softball diamond, outdoor toilet facilities, playground equipment and shaded area. The American Legion owns a shelter-house and concession stand adjacent to the ball park.

G. Cemeteries

The Town of Pine Grove currently has two cemeteries, one public and one private, located near Mosquito Bluff in Sections 23 and 24. The Pine Grove Cemetery is managed and maintained by the Pine Grove Cemetery Association; there are plots and land available for possible expansion to the north side. The other site is a private plot; the Beggs-Pratt Family Plot located near the Pine Grove Cemetery. This cemetery is maintained by family members.

H. Health Care Facilities

There are no health care facilities located within the Town of Pine Grove. Residents utilize those services and facilities available in Plover, Stevens Point, Wild Rose, and Plainfield, such as the Plover branch of Rice Medical Center, located on Plover Road, St Michael's hospital and Rice Medical Center in the City of Stevens Point, Berlin Memorial Hospital, and Wild Rose Community Memorial Hospital. Wild Rose Community Memorial Hospital provides access to emergency, diagnostics, rehabilitation and outpatient surgical services. The Waushara Family Physicians have two locations, in Plainfield and Wild Rose. Other health care facilities located in the area available to Town residents include dental and chiropractic offices, sports medicine, podiatry and many others. Regional facilities are also available through the Marshfield Clinic.

I. Child/Adult Care Facilities

There are 2 different categories of State licensed child care; they depend upon the number of children in care:

-Licensed **Family** Child Care Centers provide care for up to 8 children. This care is usually in the provider's home, but it is not required to be located in a residence.

-Licensed **Group** Child Care Centers provide care for 9 or more children. These centers are usually located somewhere other than a residence and may be small or large in size.

While there are several child daycare providers located in the Town of Pine Grove, there is one licensed child care facility located in Bancroft. For a complete list, contact the Regional Division of Children and Family Services at: 2811 8th St. - Ste. 70, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494, Phone: (715) 422-5080, Fax: (715) 422-5091.

A number of assisted living options are available to older residents of Portage County, which include: adult family homes, adult day care programs, community based residential facilities, and residential care apartment complexes. The closest facilities for Pine Grove residents are available in the Stevens Point/Plover urban area. For more information and to obtain a current list of facilities, contact the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services through:

Section 4.4 Summary of Future Needs

The Town of Pine Grove is a relatively small, rural community (2000 population – 904) with limited financial resources. The Town’s population is projected to grow to 984 people by 2025. Due to the relatively low current population and future projections, the Town anticipates existing services or planned facilities, such as the new town hall and fire station, will adequately meet future needs. A number of issues have been brought up through the planning process regarding services and facilities, as stated in Section 4.5 below. These issues will be addressed through the adherence to stated goals and policies and as resources become available.

One issue of on-going importance is water quality in the Bancroft area. The possible long term needs identified in the Town’s adopted 1981 Land Use Plan include the implementation of a Town sanitary district and the installation of sewer and/or water facilities. As stated earlier, water testing in the Bancroft area since 1983 has shown nitrate levels in some wells above the health standard. In the absence of any regulations other than the state administrative code, water testing should continue to help keep residents aware of drinking water quality, especially in Bancroft, an area of higher density development.

Contracts and agreements with other service providers such as fire, solid waste and recycling, snow plowing, and road maintenance will be periodically reviewed.

Section 4.5 Utilities and Community Facilities Issues

The following issues were identified through the planning process:

- The Plan Commission has expressed interest in some regulation for telecommunication towers, due to the affect they may have on agriculture, aerial spraying, and aesthetics within the Town. How can the Town regulate these structures without zoning?
- How will the Town provide water in a cost effective manner, if it is required/needed in the Bancroft area?
- It needs to be determined whether a municipal water system would be more cost effective than installing a sewer system in Bancroft.
- Some residents have expressed a concern with the County Sheriff’s Department coverage in the Town, its response time, and the possible loss of their weekly community-check ride. At a very minimum, the Town expects to see regular patrols.
- Some Plan Commissioners stated that radio communications for emergency response could be improved. How can the Town improve communications for emergency response calls?
- To what extent should the Town maintain or provide additional amenities to the Town Park?
- Some residents have expressed a desire for more elderly housing options in the area. How will the Town address the Town’s aging population with respect to assisted living/adult daycare?

Section 4.6 Utilities and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1 - Places for continuing education are available in the Town.

Objective 1 - Encourage the use of existing and planned facilities for continuing education purposes.

Policy - Investigate the possibility of utilizing new Town structures for continuing education purposes.

Goal 2 - Recreational places and activities for the residents of the community are provided.

Objective 1 - Encourage the use of public facilities for recreational purposes.

Policy - Recommend the Town Park be upgraded as follows:

- Identify all survey stakes
- Create a sand volleyball court
- Create a map of all items that are in the park.
- Build a shelter
- Install new playground equipment
 - Swing set, Slide system, Jungle gym
- Build tennis/basketball court combo
- Build horseshoe pits
- Build shuffleboard system
- Build walking/exercising trail around park
- Build railroad historical marker

Goal 3 - Maintain or enhance public safety.

Objective 1 - Increase the County Sheriff's Department's awareness of the Town's safety concerns.

Policies:

1. Work to prioritize the Town's safety needs.
2. Increase communication with the Sheriff's Department and Emergency Services to make them aware of the Town's safety needs.

Goal 4 - A safe supply of drinking water is available to Town residents.

Objective 1 - Encourage the testing of private water supplies at regular intervals.

Policies:

1. Investigate the feasibility of creating a sanitary district and building a municipal water system for the Bancroft area.
2. Recommend that residents get their water tested every 2-5 years to monitor groundwater quality.

Goal 5 - Limit the number of telecommunication towers within the Town.

Objective 1 - Encourage co-location of telecommunication antennas whenever possible.

Policy - Work with developers or communication providers to help properly site telecommunication towers.