

# LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY PLAN

NOVEMBER 2008



**GAYS MILLS**  
Crawford County, Wisconsin



# LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY PLAN

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# GAYS MILLS



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# INTRODUCTION



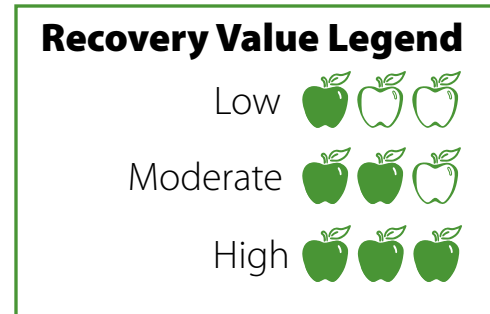
The Village of Gays Mills was struck by back-to-back floods in August 2007 and June 2008. Both flood events were greater than 500-year flood events, which resulted in substantial losses to residences and businesses within the Village. With these devastating floods occurring so close together, the Village began earnestly considering the possibility of relocating the portion of the Village located in the floodplain.

At Governor Jim Doyle's request, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommended to President Bush that Crawford County, along with 30 other Wisconsin counties be declared a National Disaster. The Presidential Disaster Declaration for the recent flooding was made on June 14, 2008. Given the scale of the disaster in Wisconsin, FEMA activated the Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) program, which integrates assistance from State and Federal partners to address recovery needs for communities experiencing particularly devastating losses. Upon hearing that this assistance was available, the Village Board formally requested a LTCR planning effort be initiated. The LTCR Team was first introduced to the community at a recovery plan kick-off meeting held on August 11, 2008.

This Long-Term Community Recovery Plan reflects a community vision for recovery in the aftermath of these two severe flooding events. The Plan is the result of an intensive 3-month planning process that involved many committee meetings, workshops and public presentations, along with numerous consultations with local, state, and federal officials. Community participation provided an invaluable source of input and feedback that enabled the LTCR Team to refine the recovery projects described in this Plan.

This document is not intended to be a final plan document that hardens recovery actions in concrete. Instead this Plan provides a framework for the recovery effort, identifying both short-term and long-term recommendations. Unlike a traditional comprehensive plan, the Long-Term Recovery Plan is an action oriented series of projects that Gays Mills can use to make critical funding and resource allocation decisions. It outlines a path forward to ensure a more sustainable and resilient future for Gays Mills.

# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT



The Long-Term Community Recovery Plan serves as a guide to decisions related to community recovery. The Village Board of Gays Mills should oversee the Recovery Plan implementation and confirm implementation priorities. The Long Range Planning Committee should be encouraged to track project implementation and continue their role of informing and recommending actions to the Village Board.

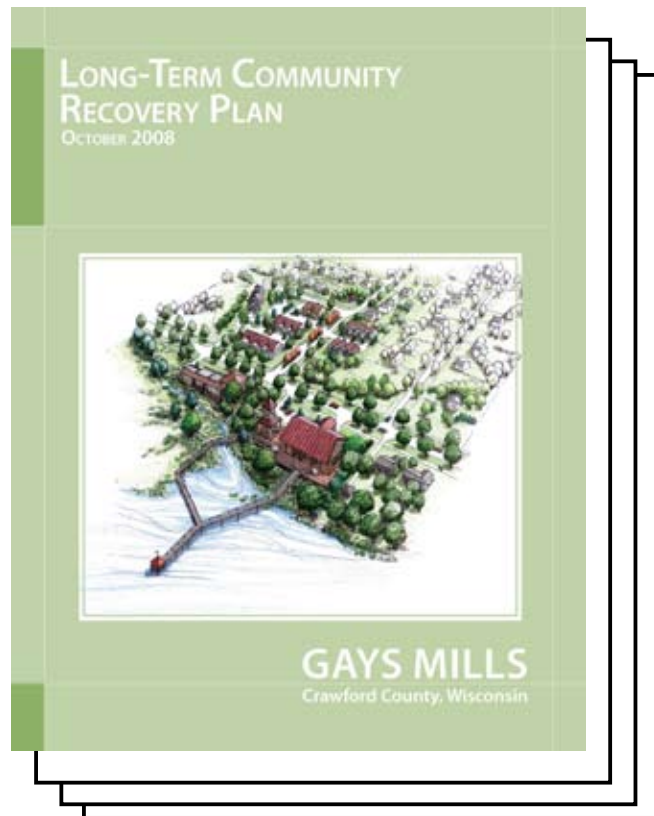
The projects recommended in this plan have recovery values identified of low, moderate or high priority.

These recovery values should be considered when determining priorities and timeframes for implementation. Project implementation priorities should be based on two general principles:

- ◆ Focus on projects that will have the most impact on recovery when completed. Obviously, the High Recovery Value projects should have priority. These should be the major focus of the governing bodies.
- ◆ Move forward on projects that can be completed quickly, have significant public support, or have available funding. Completion of these types of projects creates significant visibility for the Recovery Plan and helps solidify community and political support for continued emphasis on plan implementation. In some cases these projects may not have a high recovery value, but their completion will help hold the community's interest and reflect a positive momentum forward.







The Recovery Plan should be viewed as a guide, not specific instructions. Specifics of the projects in the plan may change and evolve as designs are undertaken or as more details become known. It is important to be flexible and assess changes based on the community recovery vision and the overall principles of the Recovery Plan. Evaluation and feedback are key components of the LTCR planning process. In addition to helping to improve the overall effort, progress that is evaluated and tracked can be used to communicate success to stakeholders and the general public.

While Gays Mills will be the primary user of this Recovery Plan, state and federal partners in the long-term recovery effort can also use this document to assist in community recovery. Various state and federal agencies may be key to acquiring needed funding for project implementation, and the project write-ups can be instrumental in determining the appropriate agency and funding eligibility.







# PLANNING PROCESS

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# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



The Long-Term Community Recovery Plan is a community-driven document that reflects priorities expressed by the community and the experience of the Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) Team. Team members contributed experience in areas such as comprehensive planning, site planning, affordable housing, and economic development.

Following the August 2007 flood, The Village of Gays Mills established a Flood Recovery Committee to work closely with Community Development Alternatives (CDA) in developing several grant applications for either acquisition/demolition or elevation of damaged homes. With the completion of the initial Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) applications, the primary mission of the Committee was achieved. Interested members of the Committee turned their attention to a broader range of comprehensive planning issues facing

Gays Mills and the Long Range Planning Committee was established. It was not long thereafter that the June 2008 flood event occurred, demanding renewed attention to an evaluation of flood recovery options.

A range of public participation techniques were undertaken in developing this Recovery Plan. Public informational meetings were held in the evenings to better understand community concerns and present recovery concepts; however, the hard work of refining these concepts fell to the Long Range Planning Committee. The LTCR Team commends their efforts and the community owes gratitude to the long hours and the energy they contributed to this planning process. A brief description of the LTCR-facilitated meetings follows under community participation.



# LTCR FACILITATED MEETINGS



## ***Kickoff Meeting***

08/20/08

Kickoff Meeting with the LTCR Team and the Gays Mills Long Range Planning Committee (Committee). The Team introduced themselves to the Committee, explained the process that would be followed, and identified key stakeholders and developed an initial set of recovery alternatives.

## ***Planning Charrette***

08/20/08

Planning Charrette, Day 1. Small working sessions evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed alternatives for community recovery in Gays Mills. The participants selected the relocation option to move forward with and began to create a vision for what features and qualities the relocated community should consist of. An community open house was held in the evening to encourage residents to provide input in a more informal forum.

## ***Planning Charrette***

08/21/08

Planning Charrette, Day 2. The Committee focused on identifying issues and concepts for housing, community services, and economic development. In the evening hours, a public informational meeting was held to discuss the progress that had been made over the two-day event as well as to solicit input and feedback from the community.

## ***Community Meeting***

09/18/08

Community Meeting. This meeting was held in the evening to present the initial conceptual design alternatives for the relocation of the community. This presented an opportunity for the community to ask questions and provide feedback to the preliminary concepts.

## ***Design Charrette***

09/19/08

Design Charrette. At this all-day event, small groups worked on narrowing down the relocation options and charting a path forward. This included identifying housing needs and obstacles to rebuilding. A list of community stakeholders and partners were also reviewed.

## ***Presentation to Village Board***

10/06/08

Presentation to Village Board. Initial presentation to Gays Mills Village Board on the status of the recovery planning effort.

## ***Presentation of Draft Plan***

10/20/08

Presentation of Draft Plan to Long Range Planning Committee. Committee members and interested residents had the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the draft plan. Written comments were accepted until 10/24/08.



# FLOOD RECOVERY & ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION TOUR



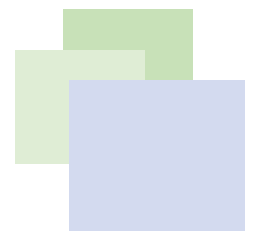
During the planning process, members of the committee expressed an interest in seeing how other communities have recovered. Recovery from a disaster and sustaining economic viability is seen in communities similar to Gays Mills such as Darlington and Mineral Point. Because of the successes of these communities, Laura Brown, Community Development Educator, Crawford County UW Cooperative Extension recommended that the Committee and Village Board tour these communities.

The goal of this event was to provide residents, local officials, and committee members with the opportunity to see the results of successful flood

recovery and economic development strategies and meet community leaders and residents who made them work.

These communities provided excellent local examples of economic development through community participation, innovative hazard mitigation programs, and downtown revitalization.

Particularly important to the committee members was the wet flood proofing techniques used to protect historic Darlington businesses and their potential applicability to Gays Mills downtown merchants.





# RECOVERY OBJECTIVES AND PROJECTS



## Recovery Objectives

As a result of the Gays Mills Planning Charrettes held in August 2008 and the efforts of the Long-Term Community Recovery team, the following objectives have been identified for Gays Mills:

- ◆ Provide for more options and choices in housing types
  - ◆ Recreate neighborhoods that are pedestrian friendly
  - ◆ Preserve and create affordable housing
  - ◆ Support the retention of existing businesses and encourage new entrepreneurs
  - ◆ Incorporate sustainable design principles in future developments
  - ◆ Provide public facilities and services in a coordinated and efficient manner to meet current and future needs
  - ◆ Promote small businesses that support tourism and create a destination for Gays Mills and the Kickapoo watershed
- ◆ Site Development Costs. Securing funding for the acquisition, engineering, environmental and site development to provide replacement housing and spur economic recovery.
  - ◆ Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). To take maximum advantage of FEMA's mitigation opportunities, external funding is needed for the 12.5% local match requirement.
  - ◆ Main Street Improvements. Low cost improvements for two blocks in the historic village center would provide visual enhancement and create a sense of place.
  - ◆ Business Incubator. Saving the old school, moving it to higher ground, and rehabbing the structure for use as a business incubator and provide an anchor to the proposed redevelopment site.

## Projects

Projects receiving the highest priority from the Long Range Planning Committee and the LTCR Team include:

- ◆ Economic Director and Flood Recovery Manager. Obtaining funding for a talented individual to coordinate recovery projects and pursue economic development opportunities is the highest priority.

The Long-Term Community Recovery Plan is a guide for recovery from the back to back flood events that struck Gays Mills in 2007 and 2008, but did not destroy the spirit and sense of community present. This Recovery Plan, along with strong community support, can provide the road map to community recovery. Not all projects can be implemented immediately; some may be implemented within the next 12 months while others may take several years to be implemented. Gays Mills recovery will certainly take time, but the end result will be a stronger, more resilient community.





# REGIONAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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# REGIONAL CONTEXT



To appreciate the topography and terrain of the Kickapoo Valley, one needs to understand the history of the formation of the region. Gays Mills, located in Crawford County, is located in part of a region known as the Driftless Area.

The Driftless Area encompasses about 20,000 square miles in western Wisconsin and adjacent states, which was by-passed by the continental glaciers. The Driftless Area of the upper Midwest derives its name from the fact that it was unglaciated during the most recent glacial event about 12,000 years ago. Glaciers surrounded but did not pass over this area. As a result, the topography is more rugged than that usually associated with the Midwest. In Wisconsin, the Driftless Area parallels the Mississippi River to the Illinois state line in a band 60 to 80 miles wide.

Surface waters, such as the Kickapoo River and Billings Creek, and Cheyenne Creek in Wildcat Mountain State Park, have carved winding, steep-sided valleys out of the sandstone and limestone rock formations. The Driftless Area is the only part of Wisconsin with no natural lakes. In striking contrast, much of this region is a rolling upland plain, where streams have deeply cut into landscape to create a maze of narrow, twisting ridges and valleys, locally called coulees or hollows. The more resistant

limestone rock formations are often exposed as bluffs or outcrops along the numerous ridges.

According to legend, Kickapoo translates to crooked river in the language of the Indians of the valley. They called the river Kickapoo and the early white pioneers applied that name to both the river and the Indians of the region. The Kickapoo River is also known as the crookedest river in the world and zigzags wildly on a 125 mile course down to its confluence with the Wisconsin River.

This unglaciated region of southwest Wisconsin, with its winding river and acres of untouched forests covering the hills and valleys, attracted settlers to forge a new life in the Kickapoo Valley. As a result, the Village of Gays Mills is one of the communities that developed beside the Kickapoo River in the very heart of the Kickapoo valley, despite the threat of the river's flooding.

James B. Gay migrated into the Village of Gays Mills in 1847 and established a saw and flour mill alongside the Kickapoo. Many families followed suit and moved into the community between 1848 and 1865. The Village was soon established and by mutual consent given the name Gays Mills in honor of the founders.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT



Grandma Colleen

The Gay family along with the Robb family continued to operate the saw mills until they went out of business in 1878, and the flour mills operated until 1924. These two families were considered the prominent and influential families of the community.

At the turn of the century Gays Mills was a bustling, lively center. To quote life-long resident Colleen Cushman, who is affectionately called "Grandma Colleen", "Gays Mills was one hot town!" The town boasted two hotels, a shoe store, two livestock buyers, three saloons, four general stores, a bank, two dentists, two doctors, a drugstore, several dressmakers, a tailor, and a milliner. A post office, two tobacco warehouses, three sawmills, a lumberyard, a grist mill, an implement dealer, two hardware stores, a candy and school supplies store, an attorney, and an undertaking parlor also rounded out the list.

Rail transportation was vital to connect the Village with the rest of the country. The Kickapoo Valley & Northern Railway stopped in Gays Mills and connected with other trains to distant parts of the United States. The Gays Mills railway depot had facilities for freight and passengers as well as a livery stable. It was not uncommon for families living in Gays Mills to keep a few cows, some chickens, and to raise and preserve sufficient vegetables and fruit to feed a family all year long.

Beginning in 1905, the area farmers quickly realized that soil conditions were optimal for growing apples on the ridges above the Kickapoo River. Since then, the apple orchard industry has steadily grown and is now considered to be the most important economic business of Gays Mills. The last weekend of September, the Village sponsors the annual Applefest, which attracts thousands of visitors, many traveling considerable distances to attend.

Grandma Colleen has resided in the community for 81 years and has witnessed numerous changes over the years, including the demise of The Kickapoo Variety, a business she operated with her husband.

Since the heyday of the 1940's and 50's, the Village of Gays Mills has experienced a gradual transformation, common to many small rural towns of the Midwest. Rail service to the community has ceased. There has also been a decline in the number and type of businesses operating along Main Street and the architectural character of the downtown district. Currently, the Village offers a supermarket, restaurant, gas station, meat locker, bar, flower and gift shop, laundromat, food co-op, realtor, newspaper, auto repair shop, bakery, and a community library. A thrift store also recently took occupancy of an empty storefront along Main Street and opened its doors for business.

# FLOOD MANAGEMENT CHRONOLOGY

The Kickapoo watershed is characterized by high ridges and deep valleys with steep slopes. The nature of the terrain can lead to flash flooding which has historically been a serious problem for Valley residents. This was particularly true during the August 2007 flood event which rose quickly at night and led to some harrowing moments for Gays Mills residents. It was provident that no lives were lost during the last year's flooding. Gays Mills has experienced flooding eleven times in the past 100 years, with the worst of the flood events occurring in 1912, 1935, 1951, 1978, 2007, and 2008.



Gays Mill 1935 Flood

Just as Gays Mills has had a long history of flooding, it has also had a long history of attempting to deal with the problems associated with flooding. The key milestones taken to deal with flooding in Gays Mills and along the Kickapoo River Valley are listed below.



*1935* – Congressional assistance is sought by Valley residents to alleviate flood damage.

*1938* – The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) begins preliminary studies of flood reduction measures.

*1940* – Congress authorizes USACE to conduct surveys to determine feasibility of flood reduction improvements. This work is interrupted by World War II and not resumed until the mid 1950's.

*1962* – Congress authorizes the Kickapoo River Valley Flood Control Project. A major component of the project was to be the construction of an earthen dam and reservoir on the Kickapoo River at LaFarge, as well as the construction of levee and channel improvements at Gays Mills and Soldiers Grove. Construction of the dam was begun in the late 1960's.

*1975* – With the dam three-quarters completed, construction was halted due to environmental and endangered species issues, the escalation of construction costs, and the long-term costs of maintaining levees in Gays Mills and Soldiers Grove.

*1976* – At the direction of USACE, URS Corporation completes a massive study entitled "Alternatives for Flood Reduction and Recreation in the Kickapoo River Valley."

*1978* – A major flood disaster hits Kickapoo Valley causing approximately \$10.5 million in damage to private property, crops, bridges, roads, and municipal facilities. In response to the flood, Gays Mills establishes the Flood Avoidance Committee to obtain community views on various flood reduction alternatives. After an extensive survey of residents, Vandewalle & Associates prepared a Flood Reduction Study that included several alternatives, including a levee and partial relocation options. Although the study was adopted by the Village Board, no actions were implemented.



# FLOOD MANAGEMENT CHRONOLOGY



*1984* – USACE undertook an investigation that determined a levee designed to the 200 year flood event for Gays Mills was feasible without the construction of the LaFarge Dam. However, the project was never constructed.

*2007* - Gays Mills suffered another devastating flood, resulting in significant damage to the village. Shortly afterwards, the village began working with Wisconsin Emergency Management on the acquisition or elevation of flood-damaged structures located in the floodplain.

*2008* – Less than 10 months after the 2007 flood event, Gays Mills was struck again when the Kickapoo River rose to 20.44 feet above the Base Flood elevation (BFE), considered to be greater than a 500 year flood event. FEMA activates the Emergency Support Function (ESF) 14 Long Term Community Recovery planning program to assist Gays Mills in developing a recovery plan.



Gays Mills first joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in 1973 and was converted to the Regular phase of the program in 1978. A revised Flood Insurance Rate Map was issued March 5, 1990. The NFIP is a non-structural approach to solving flooding hazard issues through flood plain management, mitigation and insurance. The State of Wisconsin established additional flood plain regulations and priorities which include either flood-proofing or removing structures repeatedly inundated. Federal grant programs are available to the State and local governments to eliminate repetitive flooding damages.





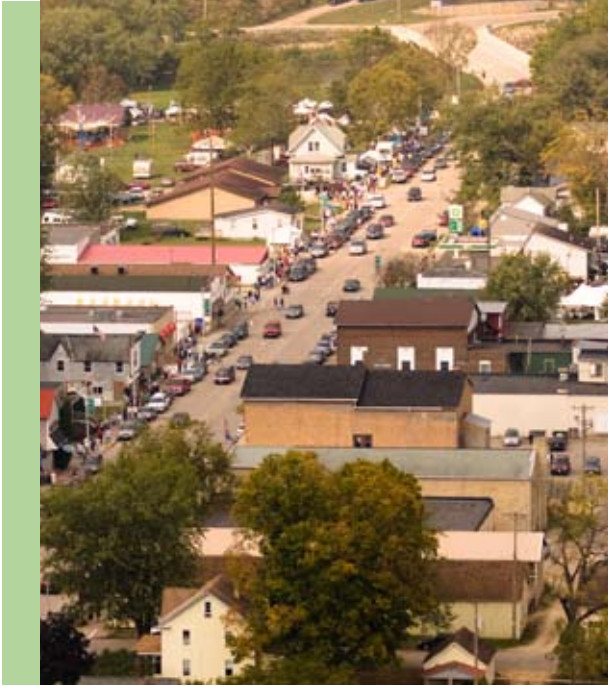
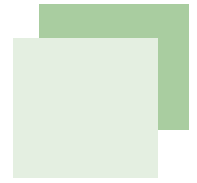
# EXISTING CONDITIONS

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# EXISTING CONDITIONS



According to the 2000 US Census, Gays Mills had a population of 625 that was predominately white (97.7 percent) and resided in 289 housing units. Like many rural Midwestern towns, the population of Gays Mills had been on the decline prior to the flood events of 2007 and 2008. Based upon Crawford County Assessor records and U.S. Census data there are 184 households in the original town site. Approximately one-third of the households have family members that are under the age of 18 and another one-third has individuals that are 65 years and older. The major employment sectors of the residents of Gays Mills are education; health and social services; retail trade; and manufacturing.

The Village of Gays Mills is governed by a President and Board of Trustees, with limited paid staff consisting of a public works employee, a full time clerk and a part time clerk. Gays Mills has no dedicated resources for planning or community development; but the community is located within the region covered by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). The major sources of income for the Village are generated through taxes, intergovernmental revenue, and public services. The Village has a total tax base of \$23,414,900 with current debt of \$1,210,114 or 5.2 percent. That high debt load reveals that the Village has very limited to no capacity to take on any additional loans or bonds.

The Wisconsin State constitution imposes a limit on a municipality's general obligation debt to an amount equal to 5 percent of the equalized value of taxable property within the municipality.

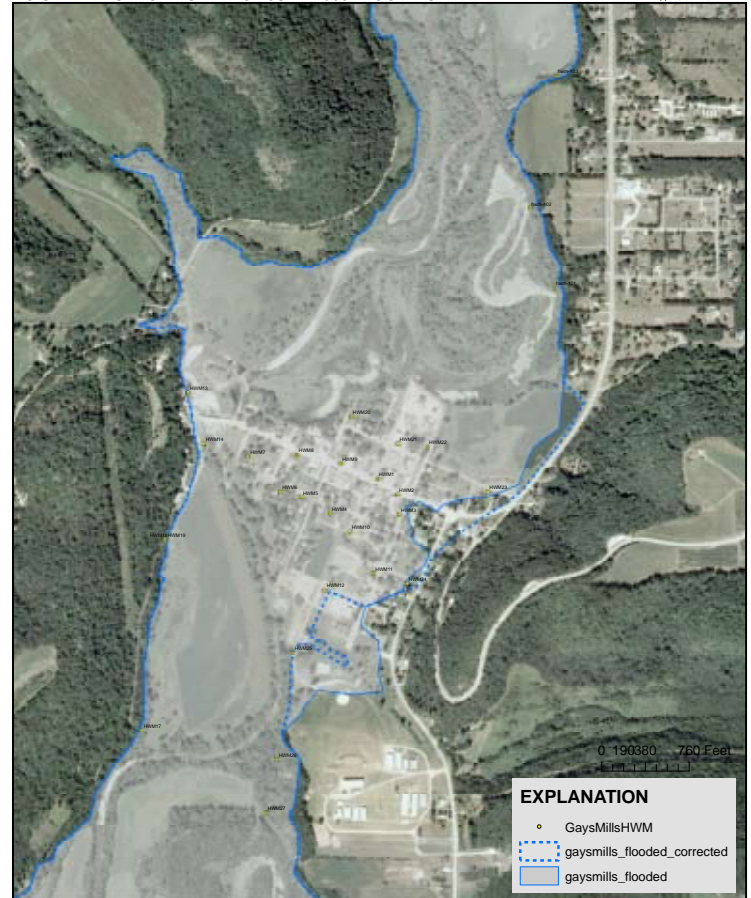
The community has an Economic Development Corporation with seven members. Limited funding has constrained the Corporation from aggressively marketing Gays Mills to potential industries and businesses.

Just prior to the June 2007 flood, the Village completed a major renovation and repair of its waste water distribution system. Over 2,300 linear feet of sewer mains were replaced within the area that received significant damage from the flood. The debt service for this improvement was to be repaid through an assessment on the homes it was to service, however, only a fraction of the properties remain users of this infrastructure. The project had an approximate cost of \$1.2 million funded in part through a grant and the balance was funded by a loan through the USDA.

Most new construction within the village limits has generally occurred north of the village center along State Highway 131.

# DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Kickapoo at Gays Mills - Extent of 2008 Flooding (USGS)



Over 90 percent of the original town site was inundated in June 2008. Nearly all Main Street businesses were flooded and a few have not reopened yet for business. With a few exceptions, most residential properties in the “downtown” were flooded to some extent. Approximately 108 homes are located downtown and of these 56 (53 percent) were substantially damaged during these two flood events. The Village Emergency Services Building has not been in use since the 2007 flood. Those services are now operated from an already overcrowded fire department building located on higher ground along SR 131.

The diminished residential base resulting from the floods is creating hardships on local businesses. They are not able to assume any additional debt that would result from relocating to higher ground.

Minor damage was reported to the waste water treatment plant. The Community Building which houses a community center/meeting room on the first floor and Village offices on the second floor received minor flooding and the Village was able to maintain its operations in the facility after the flood waters receded and the building was cleaned up.

The lack of affordable housing within the village limits has hindered the community’s ability to retain many residents that were displaced by the floods. The cost of replacing damaged homes is a great obstacle to many of the residents there. According to a local realtor working in the area for the past 10 years, 17 properties in the downtown area have been sold with prices ranging from \$12,000 to \$89,000 and averaging approximate \$45,000 during this period.

# HAZARD MITIGATION INITIATIVES



Following the 2007 flood, ten homes were included in a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant application for acquisition and demolition, along with another five buyouts funded through HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Both of these grant applications have been approved.

A separate HMGP grant application related to the 2007 flood has proposed that eighteen homes be floodproofed by elevation, reflecting a desire by the community to preserve the integrity of the downtown area and by individual property owners who wanted to remain downtown. This second HMGP application has also been approved by FEMA; however, the 2008 flood event intervened and decisions are pending whether to elevate or acquire and demolish these residential properties. It appears that 11 out of the 18 property owners have indicated a preference to have their structures acquired and demolished (some are considering physically relocating their structures if engineering and financial considerations are favorable). The second HMGP application will need to be amended to address buyouts for the 11 properties; however, the elevations can proceed immediately in the order of their favorable cost/benefit ratios.

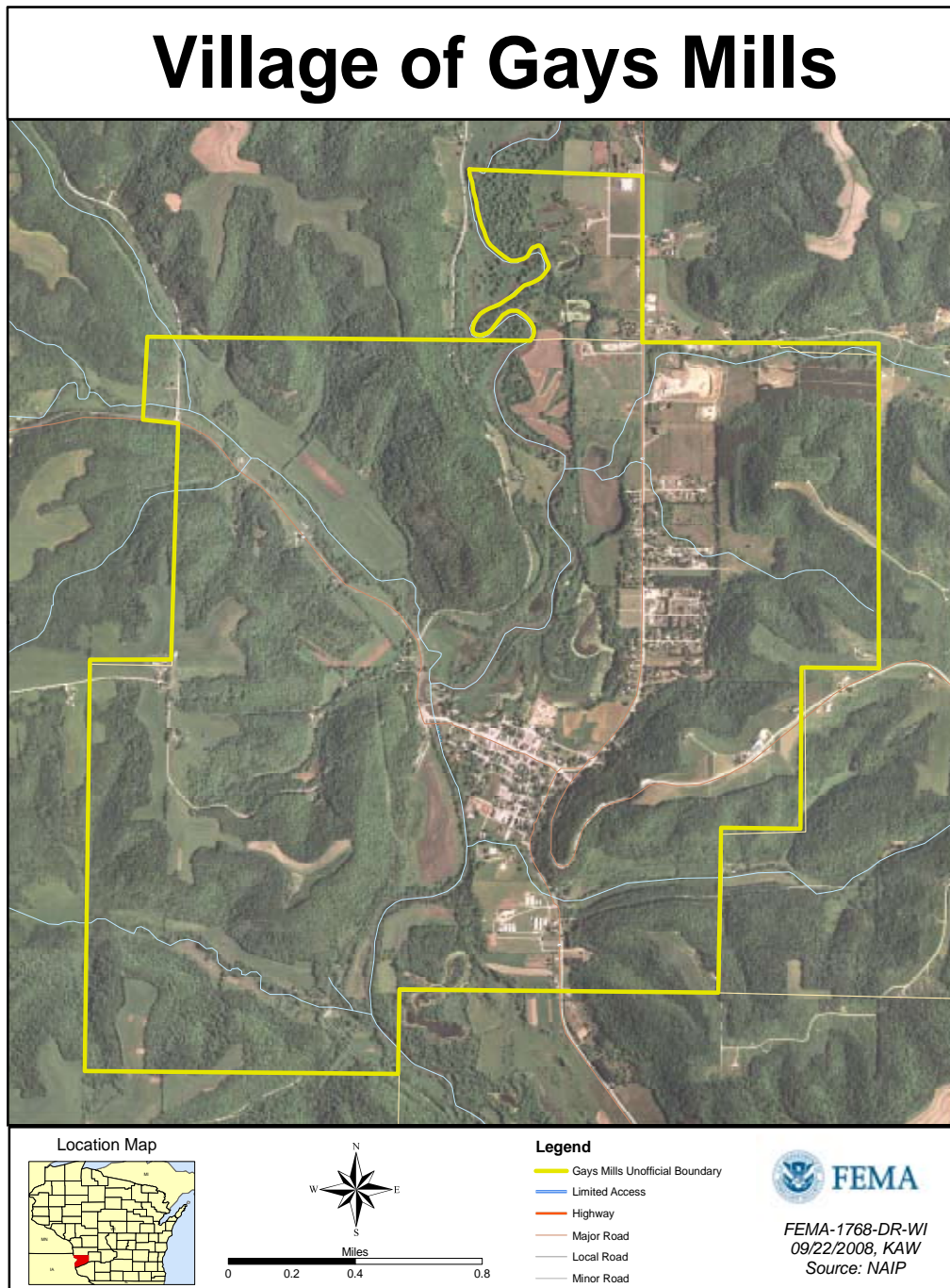
An additional round of HMGP grant applications statewide, including one for Gays Mills, are currently in process and will be based upon 2008 federal disaster funding availability. These funds, as before, would be available to acquire, demolish, relocate or elevate residential properties. The amount of funds for the 2008 HMGP grant cycle has not been determined at this time since it is based on a percentage of the total FEMA Public Assistance grant to the State, which has not been finalized at this time.

New flood hazard data will be available in 2008 from the Wisconsin office of the USGS which was tasked by FEMA to produce inundation maps and updated hydrology. A new flood study and flood map for Gays Mills is recommended that reflects the USGS flood verification study currently underway.

Today, Gays Mills faces the daunting challenge of repairing and replacing the damaged structures. There is great temptation to remain in-place and to face the obstacle of future floods head-on. However, it is important for the community to rebuild the lost and damaged structures in a more sustainable manner that will match the community's vision for the future.



# LAND SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT



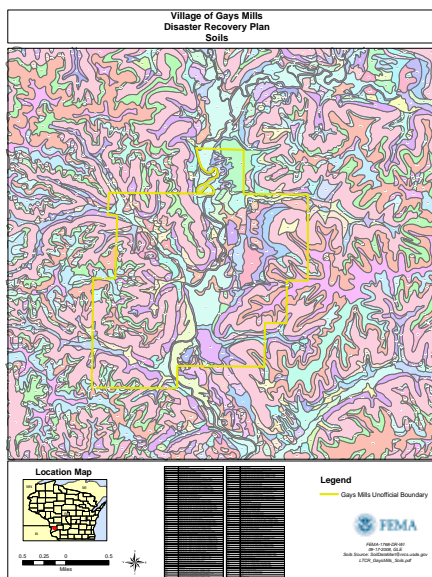
Lands within the incorporated limits of Gays Mills are severely constrained by landscape features, wetlands and floodplain regulations.

**Purpose:** a quantitative land use analysis was conducted for the recovery plan to assess available vacant parcels of lands.

### Analysis Objective

Evaluate land use maps for the purpose of locating suitable areas in which to relocate residences and businesses away from the floodplain.

# BASE MAPS



## GIS data layers included in the analysis

- ◆ Floodplains
- ◆ Wetlands
- ◆ Soils
- ◆ Slope (Digital Elevation Model)

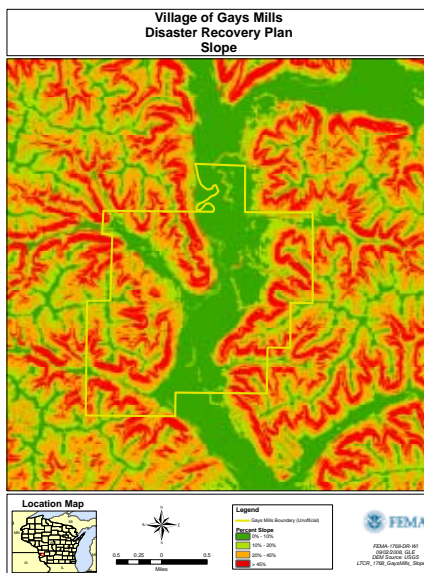
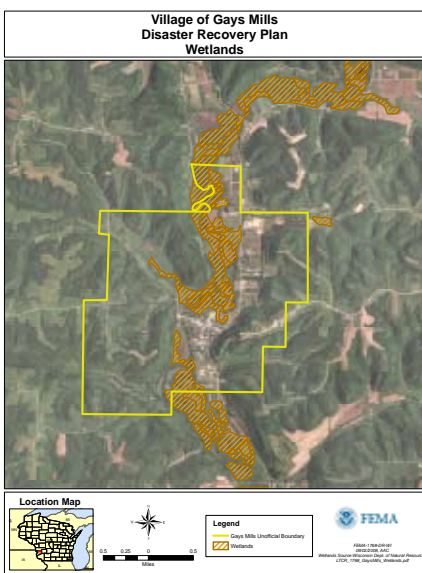
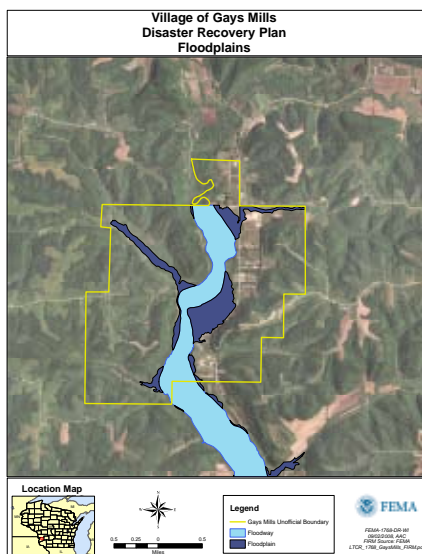
The first step in any GIS supported Land Use Analysis is the collection of map data.

These are examples of maps that are used in a “Land Use” analysis. Other examples would be flora and fauna, geology, infrastructure, and existing land use.

On their own, these maps are often used in a qualitative analysis, where the planning team drives the analysis through their interpretation of the maps.

In a quantitative analysis, the map data is converted into some form of numbers (see index maps), so that composite suitability maps can be prepared (see final product).

Once the quantitative analysis product is complete, it can be used along with these maps – so that the planning team can use both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques.

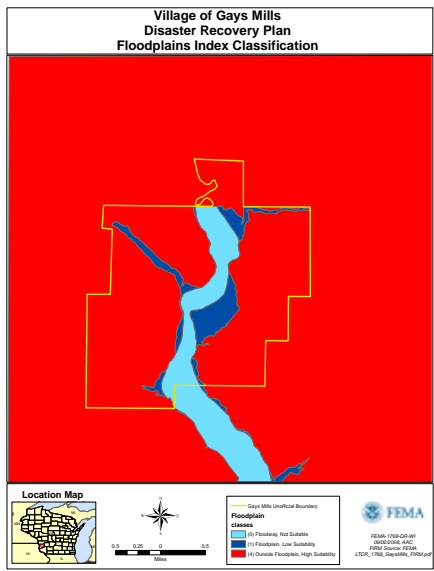
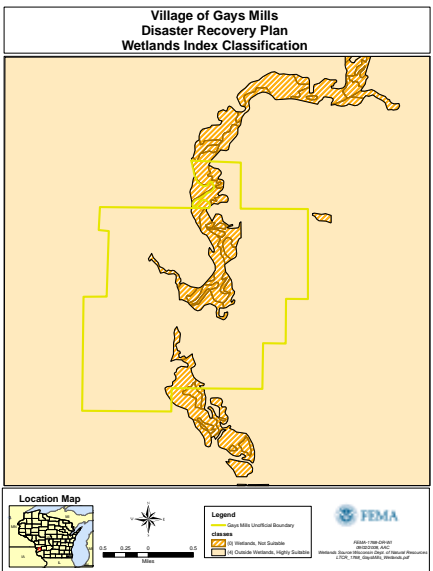
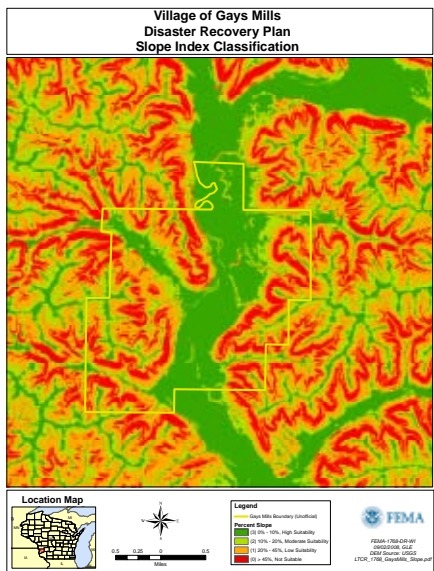
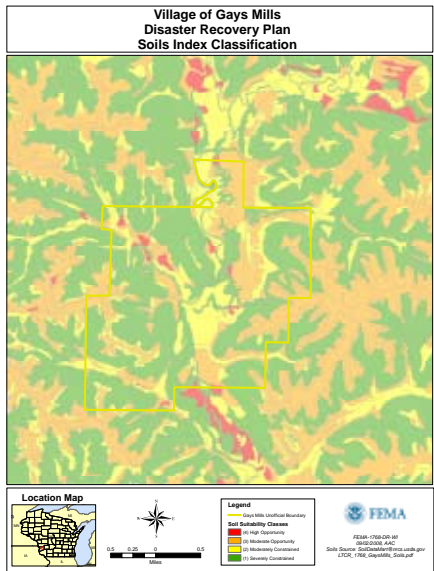
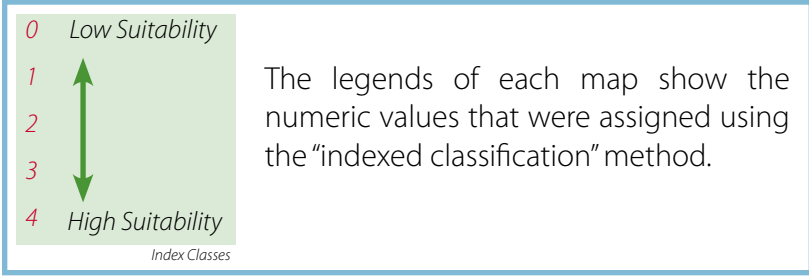


# INDEXED MAPS

To “normalize” the land use maps, the data is converted to an “indexed classification”.

This is a method of reclassifying the data into numerically indexed classes.

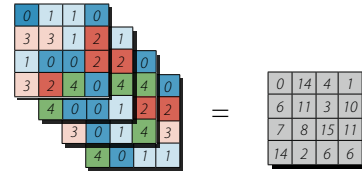
This analysis used a scale of 0-4 to represent “not suitable” to “high suitability”.



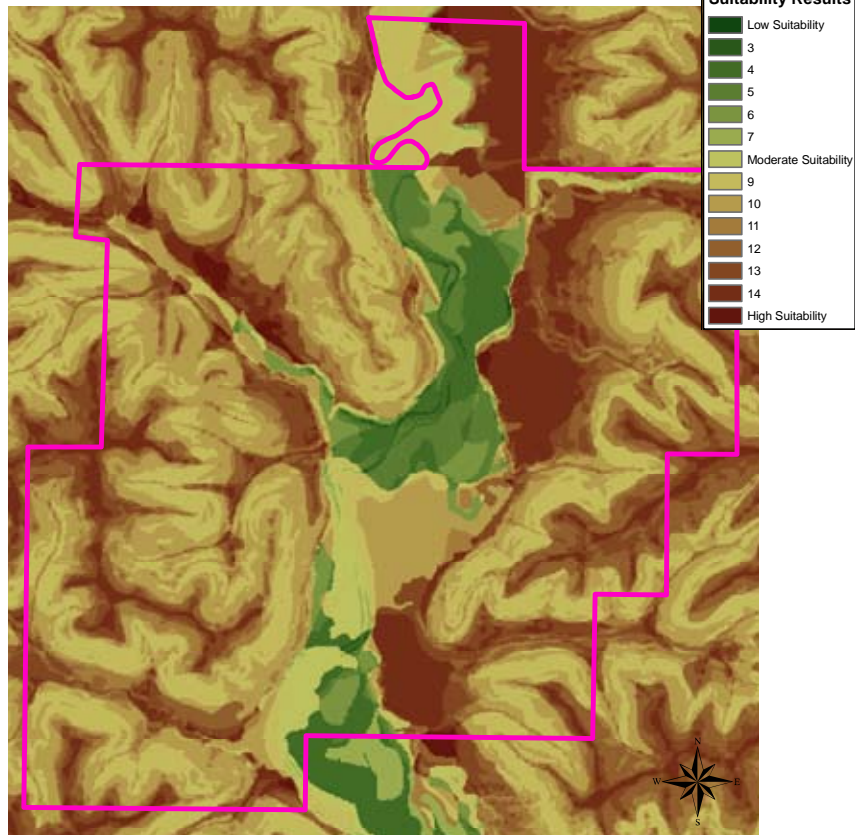
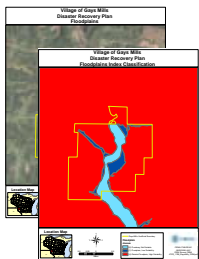
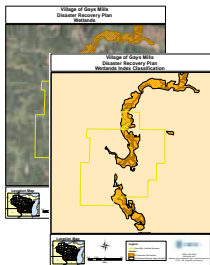
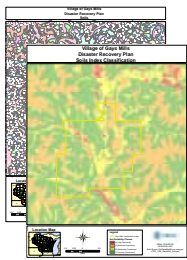
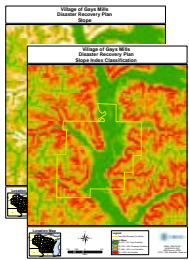


# COMPOSITE SUITABILITY MAP

The objective of analysis is to sum the index values to produce a composite suitability map. This is accomplished using GIS computational analysis techniques to “sum” the values of GIS layers



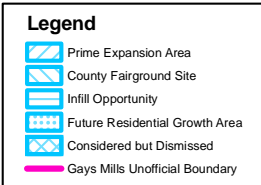
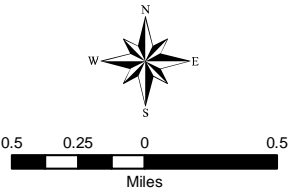
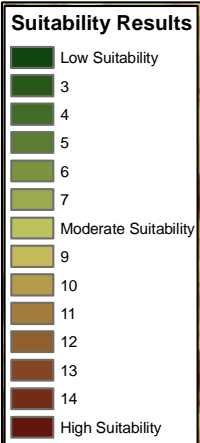
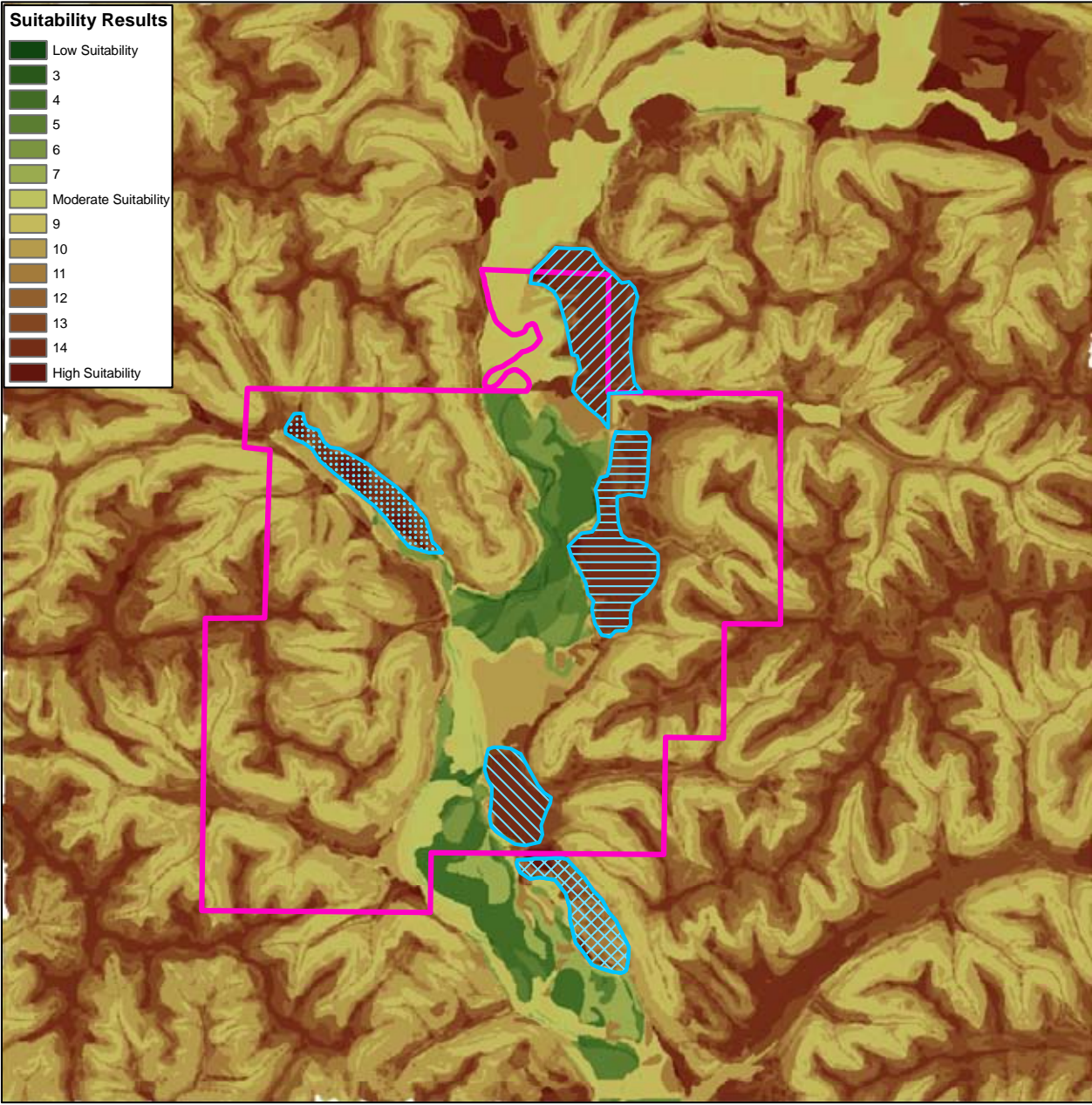
Soils+Slope+Wetlands+Floodplain = Sum of Layers



The Composite Suitability Map (above) is used to determine opportune areas for development. The design team also considered other planning factors such as

road access and infrastructure to determine potential development sites, which are overlaid onto the Development Opportunities Map (Next page).

# DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES







# RECOVERY PLAN

*Plan Overview* ..... 28

*Site Development Opportunities* ..... 36



# RECOVERY PLAN OVERVIEW



The recovery planning process involved a series of planning and design charrettes with the Gays Mills Long Range Planning Committee over the past several months. Initial meetings focused on reaching consensus regarding four major alternatives that the community identified for long term recovery from recent flooding events. The major recovery alternatives included:

- ◆ No Action Alternative. A status quo option would continue the ongoing process of either acquiring/demolishing damaged homes in the floodplain or floodproofing/elevating residential structures, both with the assistance of FEMA's HMGP grants. This option which did not include a relocation element was soundly rejected.
- ◆ Levee Option. The Committee also reached consensus that the levee option was not feasible for financial, risk and technical reasons.
- ◆ Partial Relocation. A voluntary relocation effort that would leave relocation decisions

to downtown merchants and residents. Redevelopment site(s) would be developed to meet a diversity of housing needs and to facilitate economic recovery.

- ◆ Total Relocation. This option would involve relocating all structures in the floodprone area to higher ground over an extended period of time. Advocates for this option clearly understood that this alternative would necessarily be a long range vision and one that would be executed in phases.

The Committee was fairly evenly split between the partial and total relocation alternatives; however, over time it became apparent to all concerned that no matter what the path forward was called, the outcome would be a voluntary partial relocation. The UW Extension interviews with downtown merchants indicated a desire of most businesses to remain on Main Street. In addition, downtown residents who wish to remain in their homes and, hopefully, participate in FEMA funded floodproofing assistance by elevating structures, would not be forced to relocate.

# RECOVERY PLAN OVERVIEW



The LTCR Team conducted an extensive land use analysis to develop suitable locations to implement the voluntary partial relocation option. Four major redevelopment areas were identified that included the County Fairgrounds site; the North Site surrounding the Applewood Business Park; the Farm Site in the northwestern corner of the Village; and, in-fill opportunities along SR 131. (see map on page 25)

At the Design Charrette, the Committee reviewed the suitable locations presented by the LTCR Team and decided that the best alternative for implementing the voluntary partial relocation plan was to utilize infill opportunities. The infill opportunities included in this plan were narrowed down from a larger list of potential sites based on parcel size, location, and Committee input. The infill opportunities will allow the community to utilize the existing street layout and are in proximity to existing infrastructure.

## Definition

**Charrette** – from a French word meaning “cart”. A technique for conducting workshops by bringing together stakeholders with diverse viewpoints to collaborate on planning issues, developing goals and objectives, or generating design concepts for development projects. Planning or design charrettes typically involve intense and possibly multi-day meetings involving local officials, developers and residents.

Additionally, traffic flow will be able to connect into the existing thoroughfares that the community currently utilizes.

Four development sites emerged from a collaborative process of the LTCR Team working closely with the Gays Mills Long Range Planning Committee and input from interested residents and local officials. Concept plans were developed for each site and preliminary site development estimates were prepared that included acquisition, engineering, environmental, and construction of roads and utilities. These concept plans and accompanying descriptions follow this section.

The four concept plans are presented in the next section because of the simple fact that at this time there is no guarantee that the property owners of these sites are willing sellers.

# RECOVERY PLAN OVERVIEW



The LTCR team is not proposing that all sites could or should be developed over the next five to ten years. Individual property owners have been contacted by members of the planning committee about their potential interest and the LTC Team has recommended that a fair market land appraisal be conducted for the privately owned development sites (one development site is County owned and leased back to the Village). Assuming that some federal funds are used to acquire one or more parcels, then the acquisition process is bound by federal law and regulations regarding how compensation is handled when lands are acquired to meet a public need. The Village Board has made it clear that they do not want to resort to eminent domain to acquire property.

Several other potential development sites were considered and were located on

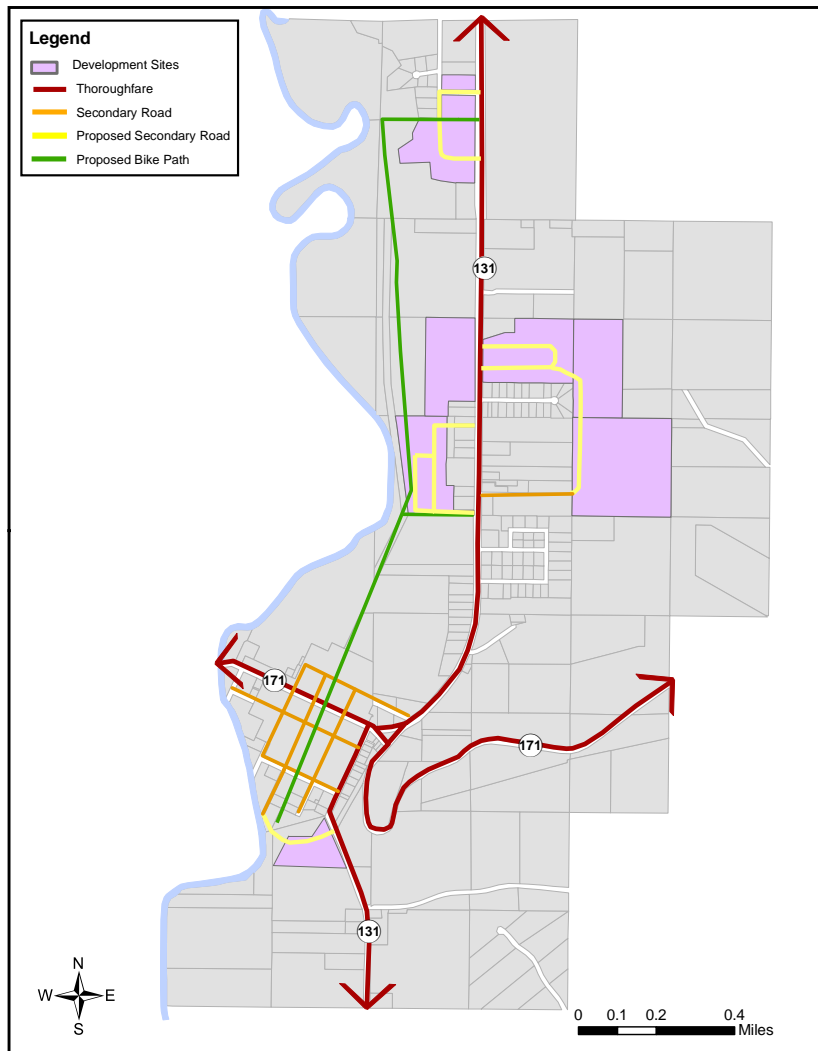
very suitable lands; however, their development was considered to be longer range and would be more driven by the private sector rather than supported in part by public funds to address immediate recovery needs. The two examples noted below, if developed, would most likely be developed as private sector initiatives. These sites include:

## Definition

**In-fill Development** – a planning term referring to land development that occurs on vacant buildable lots or on vacant parcels of land remaining within a pre-existing neighborhood or area. In the case of Gays Mills, the LTCR team identified vacant tracts of land ranging from 10 to 25 acres of size that could be subdivided into mixed-use developments including residential, commercial and institutional uses. The area considered was along both sides of SR 131 that presently reflects low-density single-family residences and some scattered commercial land uses.

- ◆ The farm field site along SR 171 Road, whose highest and best use may well be agriculture but also, could be held in reserve for future large lot single family residential development.
- ◆ Another Chestelson parcel, nestled in the small scenic upper valley located at the end of Appletown Road, could also be used for higher-end single-family residential development or be reserved for some special use such as a resort, spa, or rural convention center.

# RECOVERY PLAN OVERVIEW



Long Term Traffic Circulation Pattern

The accompanying figure provides a long term plan for traffic circulation which links a number of these development parcels together, with side or secondary streets creating more of a defined village concept, rather than the existing, more linear nature of the development pattern. Any future comprehensive planning for Gays Mills should give serious consideration to this proposed circulation pattern or adopt a similar concept.

The secondary major objective of the Plan is to create a prioritization of projects that would help the community move forward with long term recovery. The list of projects that follow is based on input and feedback from the community during the planning and

design charrettes, through one-on-one discussions with community leaders, and from consultations with Regional, State, Federal and non-profit partners. This input, coupled with the professional experience of the LTRC, was used to identify and prioritize the recovery projects that will best help Gays Mills recover from the flood events. These projects attempt to meld together the community's vision with the immediate needs for recovery from the flood events, mainly providing affordable housing options and opportunities for economic development. The projects will also help the community maintain the intrinsic qualities that villagers have long appreciated about Gays Mills.

# SUSTAINABILITY



Critical policy issues emerge following a natural disaster that force local governments to make difficult decisions about how to rebuild. Disaster victims have an inherent desire to rebuild rapidly and return to normal – to the way things were before the disaster. However, communities must balance this perceived immediate need against the long-term objective of sustainable development.

In the broadest context, sustainable development “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundland Commission, 1987). The extent to which Gays Mills can achieve a sustainable future largely depends upon how well the concepts and principles of sustainable development, including disaster resilience, are integrated into the recovery implementation process.

- ◆ Energy-efficient construction techniques and products
- ◆ Improved indoor environments through environmentally-preferable materials and building practices
- ◆ Water-efficient products and processes
- ◆ Renewable energy options, when feasible
- ◆ Waste reduction and recycling during the construction process
- ◆ Smart growth and sustainable land development practices

## Hydro Power

Hydro power must be one of the oldest methods of producing power. The trend for the future will probably include small-scale hydro plants that can generate electricity for a single community. The average annual residential energy use in the U.S. is about 3,000 kilowatt-hours for each person. The original dam in Gays Mills produced approximately 756,000 kilowatt-hours annually. Assuming that the same annual output, Gays Mills would be able to accommodate 230 residents or meet the need for its public facilities. Advantages of hydroelectric power include:

- ◆ Fuel is not burned so there is minimal pollution
- ◆ Water to run the power plant is provided free by nature
- ◆ Hydropower plays a major role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- ◆ Relatively low operations and maintenance costs
- ◆ The technology is reliable and proven over time
- ◆ The dam and equipment at Gays Mills is already in place



# SUSTAINABILITY



## **Biomass**

Bioenergy technologies use renewable biomass resources to produce an array of energy related products including electricity, liquid, solid, and gaseous fuels, heat, chemicals, and other materials. Bioenergy ranks second (to hydropower) in renewable energy production and accounts for 3% of the primary energy production in the United States. Biomass is emerging as an important renewable alternative energy source with potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Agricultural production of biomass energy crops will present alternative uses for marginal soils; opportunities for improved stewardship of air, water, and soil resources; and new stable economic markets for rural America.

## **Solar**

Solar technologies use the sun's energy and light to provide heat, light, hot water, electricity, and even cooling, for homes, businesses, and industry. Sunlight (solar energy) can be used to generate electricity, provide hot water, and to heat, cool, and light buildings. Solar collectors can be utilized to create power for businesses and residents. A solar collector is not always needed when using sunlight to heat a building. Some buildings can be designed for passive solar heating. These buildings usually have large, south-facing windows. Materials that absorb and store the sun's heat can be built into the sunlit floors and walls.

## **Wind**

Wind energy is clean energy that produces no emissions, which means it doesn't contribute to acid rain and snow, global climate change, smog, regional haze, mercury poisoning, water withdrawal or related water quality issues. Wind is a clean, inexhaustible, indigenous energy resource that can generate enough electricity to power millions of homes and businesses.

Wind energy is one of the fastest-growing forms of electrical generation in the world. Wind energy boosts rural economic development and is a valuable future crop for farmers and ranchers. Wind farms are located in rural areas where they provide well-paying jobs. Wind turbines are compatible with rural land uses—crops can be grown and livestock can be grazed up to the base of the turbine.

## **Buildings**

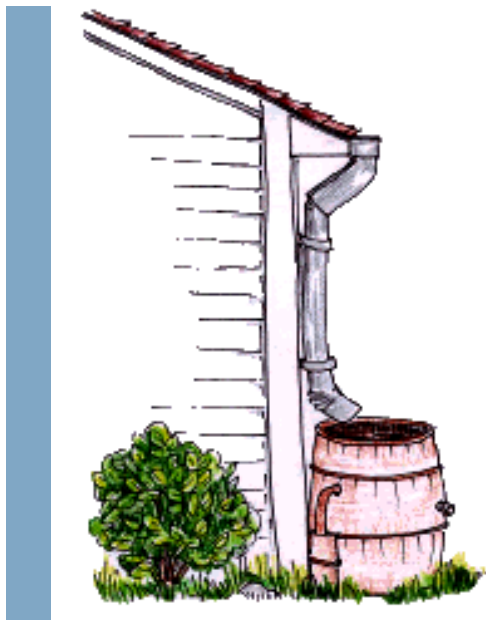
Sustainable design seeks to reduce negative impacts on the environment, and the health and comfort of building occupants, thereby improving building performance. The basic objectives of sustainability are to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources, minimize waste, and create healthy, productive environments.

Sustainable design principles include the ability to:

- ◆ Optimize site potential
- ◆ Minimize non-renewable energy consumption
- ◆ Use environmentally preferable products
- ◆ Protect and conserve water
- ◆ Enhance indoor environmental quality
- ◆ Optimize operational and maintenance practices

Utilizing a sustainable design philosophy encourages decisions at each phase of the design process that will reduce negative impacts on the environment and the health of the occupants. It is an integrated, holistic approach that encourages compromise and tradeoffs. Such an integrated approach positively impacts all phases of a building's life-cycle, including design, construction, operation and decommissioning.

# SUSTAINABILITY



## Stormwater Management

Urban development has dramatically changed the natural system of stormwater runoff when it rains. A sustainable stormwater strategy uses a natural systems approach to manage stormwater, reduce flows, improve water quality and enhance watershed health. As a part of the comprehensive planning process, development of a stormwater management plan using strategies that manage stormwater runoff, enhance community and neighborhood livability, and strengthen the local economy should be emphasized.

Many techniques can be used to reduce the impact of increased runoff generated by urbanization including limiting the amount of impervious area and utilizing grassed swales to convey and treat runoff.

◆ Vegetated Infiltration Basins and Rain Gardens eliminate or dramatically reduce stormwater flow rates and volumes. Water quality is improved by settling and filtering out pollutants, they recharge groundwater, and they can provide stormwater storage capacity over a large drainage area. The vegetation also helps prevent soil erosion, provides wildlife habitat, and is visually attractive. Vegetated infiltration basins can have an informal or formal design and are easily integrated into the overall landscape or site design.

- ◆ Swales are gently sloping depressions planted with dense vegetation or grass that treat stormwater runoff from rooftops, streets, and parking lots. As the runoff flows along the length of the swale, the vegetation slows and filters it and allows it to infiltrate into the ground.
- ◆ Cisterns and Rain Barrels temporarily store and reuse rainwater slows and reduces stormwater runoff from the site. They conserve non-potable water and may reduce water use charges. Collected water can be used for landscape irrigation and some interior uses, such as toilets and washing machines.
- ◆ Landscape Solutions add visual appeal and can increase property values. Even sites with space constraints or poor drainage can benefit from landscaping for stormwater management. Adding trees to landscaping is easy, attractive, and has many stormwater benefits. They slow runoff flow, improve water quality; reduce pavement heat, which in turn lowers runoff temperature. Careful landscaping can also save energy, reduce pollution and improve air quality. Tree wells can provide additional benefits by accepting runoff from sidewalks or other paved areas.



# SUSTAINABILITY



## **Paving Solutions**

Even when an area requires paving, there are still options to infiltrate stormwater into the ground. Pervious pavers reduce stormwater runoff flow rate, volume, and temperature, and filter pollutants. Paving solution include:

- ◆ ***Pervious Pavers*** - Pervious pavers may reduce or eliminate the need for an underground storm drain system or a curb and gutter system. They are durable and attractive, and allow great flexibility of design.
- ◆ ***Pervious pavement*** - Pervious pavement is made of either pervious asphalt or pervious concrete. Both materials resemble conventional asphalt and concrete, but have more air spaces that allow water to pass through the pavement into a reservoir base of crushed aggregate, then infiltrate into the ground.
- ◆ ***Turf block*** -Turf block is best suited for areas of low traffic and infrequent parking, such as patios, walkways, and terraces, residential driveways, overflow parking areas, emergency access roads, and street shoulders.



# SITE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The original town of Gays Mills is located mostly in the floodplain of the Kickapoo River. Because of the severe flooding that has occurred over the course of many years, a large number of the village residents and businesses have been forced to leave the village.

Of the 26 commercial buildings located on Main Street, only 17 have re-opened after the historic flooding that occurred in 2007 and again in 2008. Of the 108 residences, approximately 53% are substantially damaged including 25 that stand vacant. As a result, the Village has realized the need to move to a safe location outside of the flood plain.

During the planning process the Village advised the Long Term Community Recovery (LTCR) team of specific goals for a voluntary partial relocation as outlined below:

## Goals

- ◆ Create a village that will retain its businesses and residents as well as attract new businesses and residents.
- ◆ Create a village that will be environmentally sustainable by maintaining the village as a place where residents can walk to community services.
- ◆ Create homes with a variety of affordable housing types that will enable residents to remain in the village as their housing needs change.

## Sustainable Living Objectives

- ◆ Use energy efficient building systems including lighting, HVAC and windows
- ◆ Use energy efficient street lighting and select fixtures to minimize light pollution
- ◆ Install low maintenance, indigenous landscaping
- ◆ Maximize water efficiency through use of grey water system

- ◆ Minimize stream pollution through the design of landscaped areas to capture storm water runoff
- ◆ Use solar technology to the extent feasible
- ◆ Use natural, renewable, and/or salvaged materials
- ◆ Provide biking/walking paths to connect elements of the community

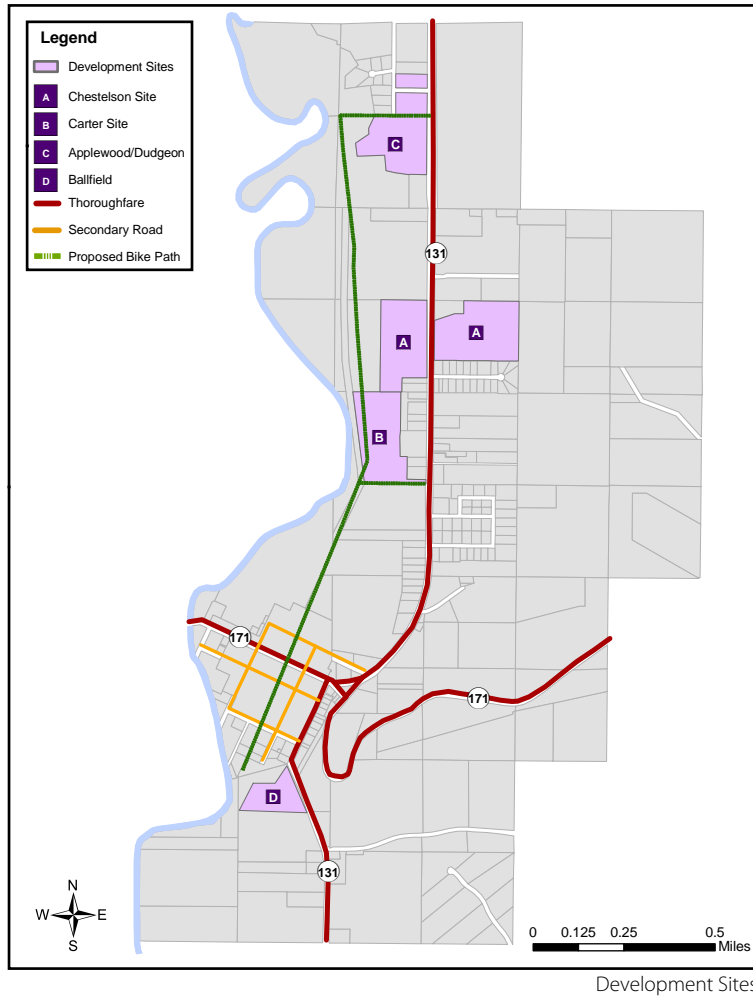
## Action Plan

- ◆ Acquire Property
- ◆ Retain Project Manager to organize and implement development plan
- ◆ Develop design and construction timeline
- ◆ Identify funding opportunities
- ◆ Prepare design and construction documents
- ◆ Obtain Development Approvals
- ◆ Begin Construction

## Potential Funding Resources

- ◆ Wisconsin Emergency Management
- ◆ HUD – Community Development Block Grants
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- ◆ USDA Rural Development Agency
- ◆ Alliant Energy
- ◆ Economic Development Agency
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Energy
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Transportation

# SITE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



The entire Village was evaluated to determine the best suitable sites for relocation. Four sites with varying development potential emerged from the design charette and subsequent committee meetings with input from stakeholders. These sites are represented on the location map above. The site with the highest potential for relocation of civic, commercial and residential areas is located

on State Route 131 approximately 1 mile north of the current village center. (Site A). The other three sites (Sites B, C and D) do not have the land area necessary to meet the requirements for a partial village relocation. However, these sites provide additional infill opportunities for the development of residential and commercial areas as the Village grows.



# SITE A - CHESTELSON



## Recovery Value - (High)



### Project Description

This site (approximately 30 acres) is centrally located within the village boundary and will enable villagers to take advantage of the natural beauty found along the Kickapoo River. With land on both sides of State Route 131, a portion of the site fronts a beautiful pond, and with ample land area available for residential, commercial and civic uses, this site is truly suitable for a new town center. The site bordered on the west by the abandoned railroad path proposed as a new bike path connecting the village from north to south. The natural beauty of the site offers the village a unique opportunity to “re-invent” itself, while maintaining its roots as a river town.

The proposed development will include improvements to the existing roadway SR 131 that will create a new Main Street environment. Streetscape improvements are proposed to reduce traffic speed, accommodate pedestrian crossings, add bicycle lanes, sidewalks, lighting and street trees all of which will create an environment consistent with the village’s goals for sustainable living.

The lake side land located west of SR 131 would be developed to create a unique identity and sense of place for the Village. The lake could become a recreational amenity for the Village providing a place for all to enjoy. This area is planned for public and commercial uses and includes Village offices, the library, a community/cultural center (17,000 SF) and a neighborhood commercial area (10,000 SF).

The land located east of SR 131 offers a unique opportunity to extend the existing village to higher ground. In addition to providing for a new commercial center, this site offers a mix of housing opportunities for residents displaced by the floods and will attract new residents to the community. The plan has 45 single family residential lots, 8 patio/townhomes, 18,000 SF of commercial buildings, a church and a community garden.

### Preliminary Site Development Project Costs

\$1,912,000\*

#### Included in the cost estimate

- ◆ Acquisition
- ◆ Engineering, Environmental & Permitting
- ◆ Construction of Site Work (Utilities, Roads, Sidewalks, Lighting)

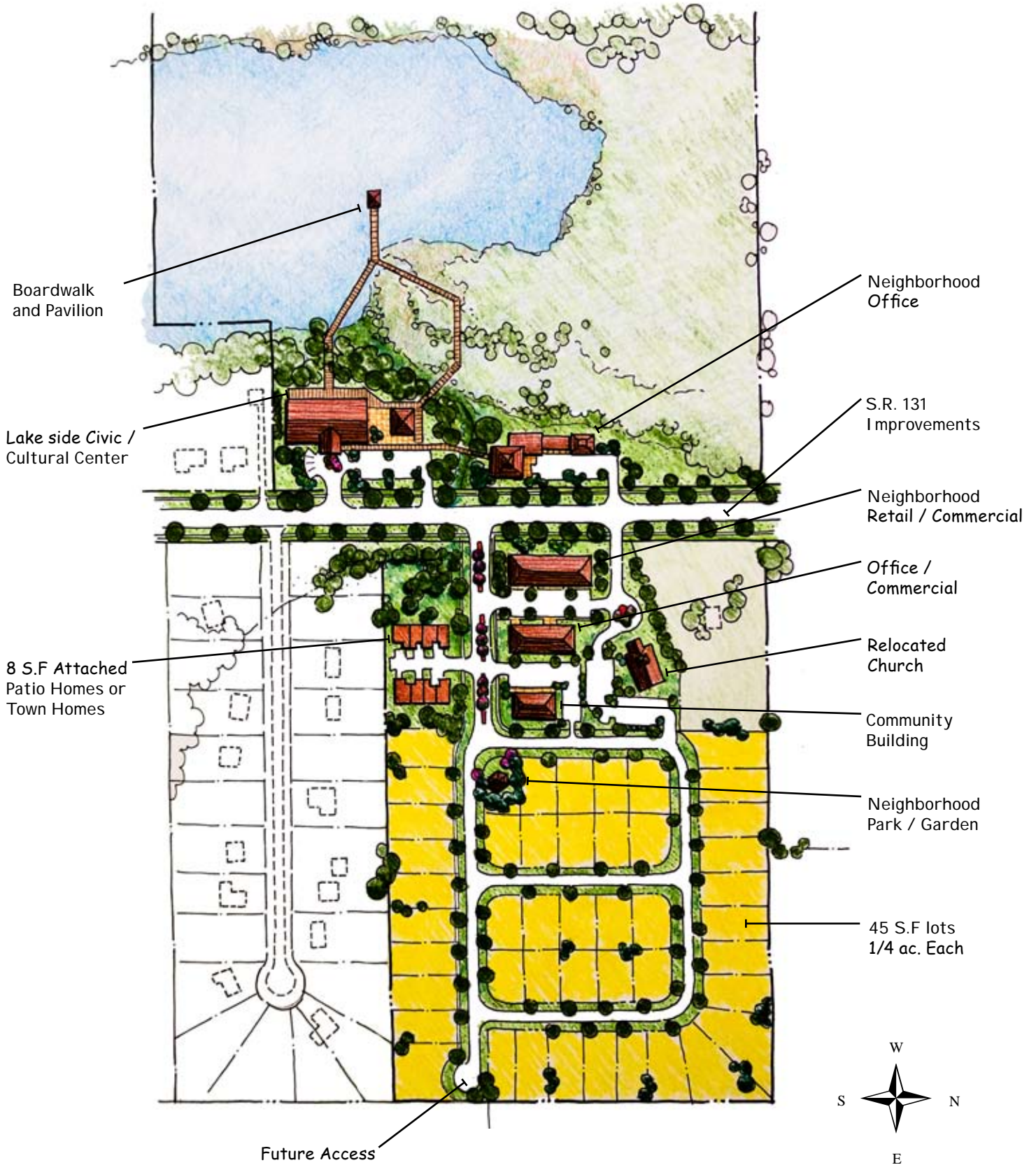
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\*Disclaimer:

The preliminary cost estimates for road and site work were prepared from preliminary site plans. Costs were developed using RS Means CostWorks 2008, a nationally recognized estimating program using assembly and unit costs. The costs were adjusted for location. No engineered plans have been developed; therefore, these costs are for planning purposes only.



# SITE A - CHESTELSON



# SITE B - CARTER



## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



### Project Description

This site consists of approximately 20 acres, providing an excellent opportunity for a new low density residential neighborhood. The property, located just north of the Gays Mills Cemetery, includes the south portion of the lake described with the Chestelson Site and is adjacent to the abandoned railroad path which is planned as a biking and walking path to connect the community from the north to the south.

This site offers spectacular vistas across the small lake which would be maintained for public use. A nature center with board walks is envisioned on the north side

of the property connecting the lake with the entire community via the walking path. The neighborhood consists of 23 single family homes and is anchored by a church located on village owned property adjacent to the cemetery.

### Preliminary Site Development Project Costs

\$903,000 \*

### Included in the cost estimate

- ◆ Acquisition
- ◆ Engineering, Environmental & Permitting
- ◆ Construction of Site work (Utilities, Roads, Sidewalks, Lighting)

**\*Disclaimer:**

The preliminary cost estimates for road and site work were prepared from preliminary site plans. Costs were developed using RS Means CostWorks 2008, a nationally recognized estimating program using assembly and unit costs. The costs were adjusted for location. No engineered plans have been developed; therefore, these costs are for planning purposes only.



# SITE B - CARTER





# SITE C- APPLEWOOD BUSINESS PARK DUDGEON PROPERTY



## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



### Project Description

The Long Term Recovery Committee views this site as a lower priority than the infill sites located closer to the historic center of the Village. Its location at the northernmost edge of the community would not meet their goal of creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

This site includes the south portion of the Applewood Business Park (approximately 8 acres) and the adjacent property immediately south of the park (approximately 15 acres). The vacant property within Applewood Business Park is owned by the Village and is part of a Tax Increment District (TID). This concept plan includes various types of buildings including a 29,000 SF research and development facility and a four building complex offering 25,600 SF for offices and business incubation to businesses and industries seeking a rural location.

When the Applewood Business Park was constructed, the village extended sewer and water through the property to the south. This plan extends the road network in alignment with utilities already in place on the Dudgeon property.

A medical, elder care and residential mixed use development is envisioned for the south portion of this property. The plan includes a 10,000 SF assisted living facility, 10,000 SF of medical office space, a 18,500 SF medical clinic with court yard center, 25 attached single family patio homes and 20 townhomes.

### Preliminary Site Development Project Costs

\$480,000 \*

#### Included in the cost estimate

- ◆ Acquisition
- ◆ Engineering, Environmental & Permitting
- ◆ Construction of Site Work (Utilities, Roads, Sidewalks, Lighting)

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#### \*Disclaimer:

The preliminary cost estimates for road and site work were prepared from preliminary site plans. Costs were developed using RS Means CostWorks 2008, a nationally recognized estimating program using assembly and unit costs. The costs were adjusted for location. No engineered plans have been developed; therefore, these costs are for planning purposes only.

Site Development Opportunities  
**SITE C- DUDGEON**



# SITE D- BALLFIELD SITE



## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



### Project Description

This project was assigned a moderate recovery value because of its potential for expedited development. This site provides the best opportunity to retain residents displaced from recent flood events. A variety of construction techniques could be implemented to accomplish timely development including site built and factory built homes.

This site (approximately 5 acres) provides an excellent opportunity for 14 home sites to be located adjacent to the Village on the property currently used as a baseball field/picnic area. In addition to new residences, this area could easily accommodate the physical relocation of flood damaged structures from downtown.

The "old school building" is shown as part of this plan as it offers the opportunity for a bed and breakfast to be located adjacent to the Village and near the area most visited by tourists including the apple orchards and the fairgrounds. The historic log cabin village, the swimming pool and fairgrounds will remain.



A community garden is planned on the site as an amenity to all village residents. A proposed pedestrian bridge at the south end of Rebecca Street will link this neighborhood to the entire village. An extension of Railroad Avenue will allow for vehicular access to State Route 131.

### Preliminary Site Development Project Costs

\$527,000 \*

#### Included in the cost estimate

- ◆ Acquisition
- ◆ Engineering, Environmental & Permitting
- ◆ Construction of Site Work (Utilities, Roads, Sidewalks, Lighting)

**\*Disclaimer:**

The preliminary cost estimates for road and site work were prepared from preliminary site plans. Costs were developed using RS Means CostWorks 2008, a nationally recognized estimating program using assembly and unit costs. The costs were adjusted for location. No engineered plans have been developed; therefore, these costs are for planning purposes only.



# SITE D- BALLFIELD SITE







# RECOVERY PROJECTS

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- Comprehensive Plan* ..... 66
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- Hazard Mitigation Initiatives*..... 70
- Park*..... 71





# HOUSING



## Introduction

Hazard mitigation through acquisition and demolition of substantially damaged structures sounds like an easy fix for the families in Gays Mills but solely relying on FEMA's HMGP program raises serious implications for the community at large and still leaves families that desire to remain in Gays Mills with few options. The relocation decisions for these households are hampered by the low fair market value for many of the downtown residential structures and limited incomes and equity of many families. This problem is compounded by the fact that 75% of the households have a mortgage that must be paid off. That may leave limited funds as down payment on a replacement home.

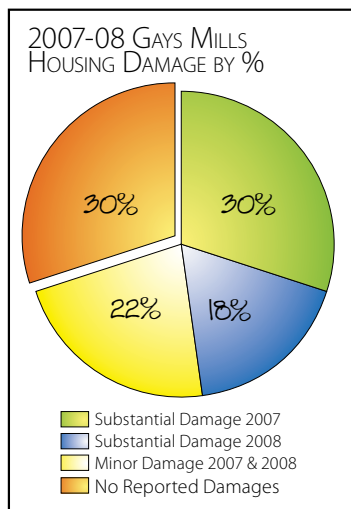
Rental properties that were substantially damaged are not a priority in the program, even though rentals are vital to the sustainability of small rural communities.

Of the 228 residences located within the village limits, 108 are located within the Village's historic center. Of these 56 (53%) have been substantially damaged in these two flood events. As a result of the 2007 flood, approximately 30 residential properties are in the process of buyouts,

and an additional 28 homes that were substantially damaged with their fate still unknown. Without an inventory of available and affordable development parcels outside of the floodplain, most of the affected households will be forced to leave the community. The creation of building lots and multi-family units for approximately 35 households is needed as quickly as possible.

## Homeowners

The greatest issue facing the community in the relocation of structures will be the gap between the "market value" paid under the mitigation acquisition and the replacement cost of new construction and/or relocating the existing structures. A majority of the existing structures are in excess of 50 years in age. Gays Mills median household income levels at \$30,400 is 33% below the states median household income level of \$43,791. This creates a quandary in qualifying these families for sufficient loan amounts for replacement homes. These families may have to trade-down to smaller homes or revert to renting.



# HOUSING



Manufactured<sup>1</sup> and modular<sup>2</sup> homes are affordable alternatives to site built homes. The cost of these units are typically in the range of \$50 per square foot<sup>3</sup>, plus site improvements so it averages to around \$85 per square foot finished product.

<i>Replacement Housing Gap Example</i>	
<i>Value of existing property</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>
<i>Mortgage on property</i>	<i>\$45,000</i>
<i>Replacement cost</i>	<i>\$95,000</i>
<i>Qualified for loan of</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>
<i>Funding GAP</i>	<i>\$45,000</i>

When a manufactured home is placed on an approved foundation (HUD's Permanent Foundations Guide for Manufactured Housing) the title of the units are surrendered and converted to "real property" contributing to the tax base. This allows the property to be eligible for all normal real estate financing programs.

Compounding the problem is the fact that the homes damaged are located within the Flood Zone. This leaves only three options:

- ◆ "Elevation" raising the house above the flood water levels
- ◆ "Relocating Home" move the home to a new location out of the flood zone
- ◆ "Replacement" Replace the home with a new one outside the flood zone

## **Renters**

A sustainable recovery from the past two flood events will require that Gays Mills has the opportunity to grow again. One important aspect of the community's future housing needs is rental housing. Affordable rental housing must be given an equal priority to home ownership.

Prior to the 2007 flood, approximately 23% of Gays Mills's households rented their home with average rent in the range of \$300 to \$500 per month. The largest percentage of rental units was existing single-family dwellings and many were located in the downtown area. Replacement of these rental units by the owners would be very challenging given current market conditions and Gay's Mills rural location. It is not realistic to assume the private sector will fulfill these housing needs.

Nearly half of all renters are low or very low-income households and they will need considerable assistance. Incentives and first cost reductions for developers and possibly direct subsidies to renters are needed. This will require a partnership with a non-profit housing organization to analyze the need to build a number of rental units to replace those that will be lost through the buy-out program.

There is an existing small HUD Section 8 apartment complex in Gays Mills; it is a senior project, with 14 one bedroom efficiency units. It should be noted that this project has suffered high vacancy rates pre-disaster upwards to 45 percent. Vacant units can be made available with federal funding for small households for use as temporary housing in an effort to address unmet housing needs this winter.

<sup>1</sup> Manufactured Home is a structure built to HUD's Manufactured Homes Standards.  
<sup>2</sup> Modular Home is a structure built off site to the ICC Residential Codes then brought to the site.  
<sup>3</sup> Information from Crossroads Home Sales, Oxford, WI (608) 589-5100

# CONDUCT HOUSING FAIR



## Recovery Value - (High)



A Housing Information Fair is needed to provide the residents of Gays Mills with the tools they need to make informed decisions on their various relocation options.

### Project Description

The “housing fair” should be held in the near term during a weekend, preferably on a Saturday. Housing fairs are normally conducted in an informal setting, with agency and non-profit representatives manning stations and residents moving from table to table to ask questions and gather information. The State’s two primary housing agencies, The Department of Commerce (DOC), Division of Housing and Community Development, and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic

Development Authority (WHEDA) should be active participants. Wisconsin Emergency Management, Mitigation Division is needed to explain the nuances of the various buyout and floodproofing programs.

Other participants could include voluntary disaster relief organizations, non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, The Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development, Inc., a Certified Housing Counseling Agency, along with representation from Gays Mills government.

Crawford County UW Extension may be able to help facilitate the housing fair through their involvement with Crawford County Housing Coalition.

### Action Steps

- ◆ Gays Mills’ government should take ownership of the fair
- ◆ A local fair coordinator should be identified to facilitate logistics
- ◆ Contact all key players for commitment to participate.
- ◆ Provide adequate public notice for the fair through available media outlets
- ◆ Village personnel should personally contact affected residents.
- ◆ Identify local or regional experts in assessing elevation, physical relocation and rehab opportunities to advise residents

# PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RENTAL HOUSING



## Recovery Value - (High)



The loss of rental housing units due to the recent flooding will have adverse impacts on the overall economic health of Gays Mills. Providing affordable rental housing is crucial to retaining affected residents and attracting younger families to the community.

## Project Description

Construct six to twelve multi-family rental units maintaining affordability to low-income households. To accomplish this goal a partnership between the community and a non-profit housing development organization will be required. There are three nonprofit organizations

that have indicated interest to act as a lead or as partners to create affordable housing opportunities in Gays Mills.

The multi-family rental housing units would be located on one of several potential development sites.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Obtain appraisals on three of the four potential development sites
- ◆ Identify willing seller or sellers
- ◆ Establish housing subcommittee to provide local leadership
- ◆ Confirm development sponsor to seek funding for acquisition and site development

- ◆ Acquire property
- ◆ Secure commitment of a nonprofit housing organization to develop multi-family rental housing project

## Potential Resources

- ◆ Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development, Inc.
- ◆ Coulee CAP, a Community Housing Development Organization (CHODO)
- ◆ Community Development Alternatives, Inc. (CDA)





# CREATE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



## Recovery Value - (High)



The lack of available and affordable existing housing outside of the floodplain requires the construction of new affordable homes in order to retain displaced families. Many residents will need financial incentives to be able to purchase new homes. The community needs to look to both for private builders and non-profit developers to help fill the need.

## Project Description

Build 35 new homes as quickly possible in order for Gays Mills to retain the displaced residents, in addition to attracting new residents to the community. The LTCR Team has created several concept plans for single family homes and multifamily housing on potential in-fill development sites along SR 131. The Village government has requested the assistance of the MRRPC and Community Housing Development Organizations (CHODOs) to support the community in acquiring land

and site development work to create affordable building lots. A financing strategy will be necessary to identify non-profit developers and to develop options to purchase or to lease to own a new home.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Establish housing subcommittee to provide local leadership
- ◆ Acquire property
- ◆ Establish clear title(s) and address any remaining environmental, zoning or other issues
- ◆ Prepare engineering design, subdivide land, and site development
- ◆ Bring together non-profit and for-profit housing developers, banks, lenders, federal and state housing agencies to make necessary resources available for the project
- ◆ Secure commitments from residents for purchase of new homes

## Potential Resources

- ◆ Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- ◆ The Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development, Inc.
- ◆ Community Development Alternatives, Inc (CDA)
- ◆ USDA Rural Development
- ◆ Local banks/Lenders
- ◆ Local Contractors

## Sustainable Opportunities

The creation of this housing project for homeownership with financing strategies to help make new homes affordable will not only provide the necessary tools for recovery but could help draw in new families into the community with an opportunity to achieve the American Dream of owning their own home.



# PHYSICAL RELOCATION OF DAMAGED HOMES



## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



The “Ball Park Site” could offer the opportunity for the community to physically move some of the damaged homes out of the floodplain and expand the amount of affordable housing for the community. The project is rated only moderate due to the cost of such endeavors typically being as high or higher than new construction cost.

Older homes require complete updating of all major systems (electrical, plumbing and heating) to meet the requirements of the current building code. Many of these older homes have lead based paint that would require removal if any federal funding were used. However, even given these constraints, a number of community residents have expressed the desire to salvage structures that are proposed for acquisition and demolition.

## Project Description

The site is currently under the ownership of Crawford County and leased back to the Village for use for recreational purposes. Transferring clear title to the Village government is essential to complete the project. Provide a mechanism to physically relocate existing homes from the flood plain to the “ballpark” site and find financing to help in the rehabilitation and repair of the structures.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Village submits formal request to the County Fairgrounds Committee and Crawford County Board of Supervisors
- ◆ Crawford County Board of Supervisors considers the Fairgrounds Committee recommendation
- ◆ Village establishes clear title and addresses any remaining environmental, zoning or other issues

- ◆ Bring together not-for-profit housing developers, banks, lenders, federal and state partners to make funding resources available for the site development
- ◆ Secure commitment of a nonprofit housing organization to develop the site
- ◆ Non-profit develops case by case rehabilitation and repair specifications for each structure under consideration to be moved

## Potential Resources

- ◆ Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority rehab program
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- ◆ Community Development Alternatives, Inc (CDA)
- ◆ USDA Rural Development 502 and 504 programs
- ◆ Local banks/lenders using HUD’s 203k rehab program



# ECONOMIC RECOVERY

## OVERVIEW

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) provides a variety of planning and economic development services in south central Wisconsin. The MRRPC 2007 study, "Crawford County Workforce Profile", determined that the Crawford County industries paid 68% of Average Annual Wages as compared to the statewide average. Also Crawford County is among the slowest growing counties in the State and is projected to have an increasingly older population. The Long-Term Community Recovery team has concluded there is a need for an economic development plan for the Village of Gays Mills and for the entire Kickapoo Valley watershed.

Demographics in the flood affected area indicate that a significant number of the 184 households are low-income elderly.

- ◆ In the 2000 Census the Median Household Income for Crawford County was \$34,135 which was 20% below the median for the State of Wisconsin.
- ◆ Gays Mills median income was \$29,250 - 15% below the average for Crawford County.
- ◆ Forty-five percent of the 289 households in all of Gays Mills have incomes less than \$25,000; and 78 of these had incomes less than \$15,000.
- ◆ Seventy-six or 41% of the downtown households are over the age of 65.

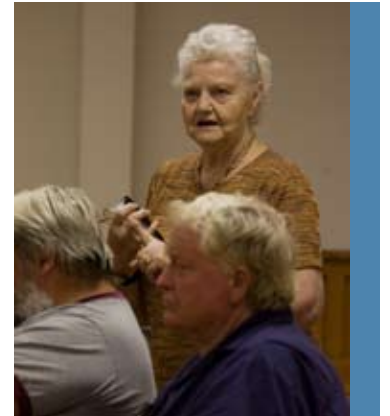
The Village will continue to lose population as affected residents participate in the buyout programs and move out of the community. The Village of Gays Mills and the North Crawford School District will lose substantial tax revenues with continued removal of flood-prone real estate from the tax rolls. When structures are acquired for flood hazard mitigation, the land is dedicated to public open space in perpetuity. Conservatively 30 homes could be purchased and demolished in the

near term and over an extended period of time that number could reach to as many as 60 residences.

The 2007 average fair market value for a home within the flood prone downtown area is \$56,700. Based upon Crawford County's assessed value percentage and the mill rate, the average homeowner would pay \$1,142 in annual real estate taxes. With approximately 30 residences acquired, demolished and removed from the tax rolls, the annual loss in real estate tax revenues will be \$34,250, rising to \$68,500 with the loss of an additional 30 homes that were damaged in the past two flood events. The loss of so much housing argues strongly for providing replacement housing elsewhere to create a more sustainable future for Gays Mills.

In August 2008 the Southwest Small Business Development Center and the Crawford County UW Cooperative Extension conducted a survey of the downtown merchants in Gays Mills. They found that 87% of the business owners were impacted directly by the 2007 flood and 62% in 2008. Losses included damages to inventory, physical property and loss of business.

Realistically, Main Street Gays Mills will remain in its current location at least in the foreseeable future. Financially the businesses are unable to incur debt to relocate and move into new facilities. For the most part the business owners and many in the community like the feeling and amenities of downtown Main Street. Gays Mills businesses are interested in the future of the Village and welcome opportunities to strengthen, in a comprehensive way by improving the business climate in the Village.



# DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

## Recovery Value - (High)



The Village of Gays Mills is confronted with simultaneous challenges of flood recovery and the need for economic development that will retain and attract new businesses. Given the limited resources of the Village government, there is a crucial need for a program director who is capable of coordinating flood recovery programs and projects while simultaneously working on economic development opportunities for Gays Mills, and other communities along the Kickapoo River that have been affected by the recent floods.

## Project Description

Initially the Director will develop a strategy and implementation timeframe that is consistent with

the Recovery Plan. Implementation elements include many of the recovery projects described in this plan including: replacement housing, Main Street improvements, hazard mitigation initiatives, tourism, among many others.

The Director will engage actively with the business community including the Gays Mills Economic Development Council, Crawford County Tourism Council, the Kickapoo Valley Association and other county economic development associations throughout the watershed. The Director will coordinate and collaborate with housing and development experts in the region to achieve the Village's vision for the future.

The Director will coordinate and prepare grant applications, identifying potential grant opportunities or providing information to government, non-profit and foundation partners. The Director will maintain an office in the Village of Gays Mills. This will be a community in-kind contribution.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Village to meet with MRRPC as soon as possible
- ◆ MRRPC to prepare grant application to EDA
- ◆ Advertise for candidates in advance of receipt of grants
- ◆ Hire candidate as soon as funds are committed

## Potential Resources

- ◆ EDA Grant to MRRPC



Cost Estimate:	
*Project Administration	\$316,000
Potential Sources	
EDA 75%	\$237,000
Non-Federal 25%	\$79,000
Limited In-kind Gays Mills	
*Salary, benefits and other direct costs for 3 years	

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FOR THE KICKAPOO WATERSHED

## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



In addition to Gays Mills, a number of communities along the Kickapoo River also incurred damages from recent flooding events, including Steuben, Viola and La Farge. There is a need to address flood recovery and economic development opportunities from a watershed approach, in order to take advantage of the tourism, agricultural and natural resource opportunities in the surrounding region.

## Project Description

Develop long-term flood and economic development strategy for the entire Kickapoo Watershed including Crawford, Richland, Monroe and Vernon Counties; however, with an emphasis on the portion of the watershed below the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

The southern portion of the Kickapoo River Valley is a bucolic region of winding roads, meandering streams and the river, with abundant wildlife. Much can be done to attract tourists to this portion of the valley and stimulate tourism-related jobs and other business opportunities.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Consult with existing organizations whose mission is to promote business development and tourism in the southern portion of the Kickapoo Valley
- ◆ Conduct an assessment of existing economic studies
- ◆ Identify current sources of economic data and new developments
- ◆ Coordinate with private sector and economic development agencies
- ◆ Identify common goals and opportunities for collaboration

- ◆ Research sources of funding to support tourism development
- ◆ Consult knowledgeable outdoor recreation specialists to enhance local planning and marketing activities
- ◆ Identify no-cost approaches for attracting tourists such as Wisconsin Rustic Roads and FHA Scenic Byways
- ◆ Support regional tourism marketing efforts focusing on the Kickapoo Watershed

## Potential Resources

- ◆ EDA Grant
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Commerce (CDBG-PING)

Cost Estimate	
<i>Economic studies and Project Administration</i>	\$ 93,334
<i>Potential Sources</i>	
<i>EDA</i>	\$70,000
<i>Non-Federal</i>	\$23,334



# EVALUATE & SUPPORT BROADBAND INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE

## Recovery Value - (Low)



High speed Broadband Internet Access is important to economic development, educational opportunities, e-commerce, digital libraries, emergency services, community services, e-mail, and voice-over-internet in rural areas. Wireless networks allow transmission to remote areas outside wired towns and villages. Subscriber costs must be kept affordable to allow access for all income levels. Free public internet access is needed in libraries, schools and public buildings for those unable to afford a personal computer and internet access.

The 21st Century is the Information Age and for rural communities to participate fully in the new economy they need an advanced Internet network infrastructure. Just as rural America was wired for electricity and telephone decades ago the time has come to facilitate internet access.

## Project Description

This project establishes a Base Station Controller with relay stations to local user sites having high speed wireless linking routers. Public access personal computers with wireless routers are essential for project success. Typically these computers would be available in the community library. Project elements include:

- ◆ Evaluate and purchase computers for Gays Mills Library
- ◆ Research county-wide wireless broadband options
- ◆ Identify funding options
- ◆ Program and project management services
- ◆ Procure network operations and infrastructure

## Action Steps

- ◆ Evaluate and purchase 4 public access personal computers and printers
- ◆ Create a steering committee to evaluate county-wide wireless options
- ◆ Consult with universities, the State, communities, utilities and hi-tech firms experienced with wireless networks
- ◆ Define a vision and establish project objectives
- ◆ Identify funding sources
- ◆ Select a consultant and establish the project timeline and deliverables
- ◆ Procure network operations and infrastructure

## Potential Resources

- ◆ EDA Grant
- ◆ USDA-Rural Development Telecommunications Program

Project Details	
Support for Assessment	\$ 4,000
Public Access Library Computers	\$10,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$14,000</i>
<i>EDA</i>	<i>\$10,500</i>
<i>Local / Foundation</i>	<i>\$ 3,500</i>





# RETAIN AND EXPAND EXISTING BUSINESSES



## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



### Project Description

Small businesses, especially those impacted by flooding, have expressed a desire to improve their images in order to attract customers and improve their profit margins. Ample technical business assistance is available from a variety of sources including the UW Extension System. Surveys and workshops need to be conducted to retain and expand the exiting businesses in Gays Mills and throughout the Kickapoo Watershed.

The Crawford County fairgrounds on the south edge of the Village could be a valuable asset for Gays Mills. In mid-July the grounds bustle with the county fair, bringing visitors and revenue into the community. Expanding the economic value

of the fair grounds to Gays Mills, outside the annual fair week, should be aggressively pursued with the Crawford County Fairgrounds Board. Public/private sector opportunities might include: entertainment events, outdoor markets, among others.

### Action Steps

- ◆ Coordinate and collaborate with regional economic development groups
- ◆ Facilitate the development of a downtown or regional business association to improve resource sharing and communication between businesses
- ◆ Conduct an assessment of technical assistance needs of business owners beyond the downtown area

- ◆ Provide technical assistance to businesses through workshops on topics such as computer literacy, internet marketing, customer service, financial management, staff management (4 workshops annually)
- ◆ Fund joint marketing initiatives to include development of a website for collaborative regional tourism promotion

### Potential Resources

- ◆ EDA grant to MRRPC
- ◆ USDA-Rural Development Business Industry Program

Project Details	
Workshop support (over 3 years)	\$30,000
Potential Sources	
EDA	\$22,500
Local In-kind	\$ 7,500

# SUPPORT NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



### Project Description

Opportunities exist to build the industrial base in Gays Mills and counties in the area through actions that integrate existing industries with knowledge based industry clusters. The economic studies already developed by the MRRPC and the State of Wisconsin provide valuable insights toward economic development of the Kickapoo Valley.

### Action Steps

- ◆ Assess the current infrastructure to support new businesses including retail and industrial sites and utilities, including fiber optics, broadband and other telecommunication systems
- ◆ Provide technical assistance for new business through workshops on topics such as financing, business planning, computer software and marketing

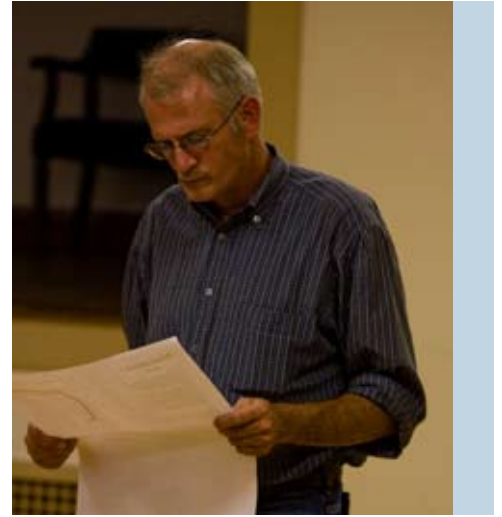
- ◆ Provide support for the regional Inventors and Entrepreneurs Clubs to facilitate business mentoring and resource sharing
- ◆ Implement marketing campaign to attract new businesses and industry

### Potential Resources

- ◆ EDA
- ◆ USDA-Rural Development Business Industry Program

Project Details	
Workshop support (over 3 years)	\$17,000
Potential Sources	
EDA	\$12,500
Local In-kind	\$4,500

# BUSINESS INCUBATOR



## Recovery Value - (Medium)



A business incubator would help provide start up businesses with an affordable method of getting a business started or assisting an existing one during downturns in the business climate. This is essential to keep small businesses afloat and/or to prevent them from leaving Gays Mills.

## Project Description

Another option for the old elementary school is to relocate it from its current location near the Kickapoo River to the Chestelson site off of State Highway 131. The business incubator could help to anchor the new "Main Street." Renovations to the 4,000 square foot building would more than accommodate the needs for a business incubator.

The business incubator would be designed to help start-up businesses by providing affordable rental space, onsite support services, and technical assistance until the business is fully up and running and able to operate on its own. Additionally, the incubator would be able to offer access to equipment, expandable space, hands-on management assistance, and access to financing.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Develop eligibility criteria for entrepreneurs and small businesses
- ◆ Engage design professionals in incubator development
- ◆ Develop small business support/technical assistance with UW-Platteville Extension

## Project Details

\$375,000

## Sustainable Opportunities

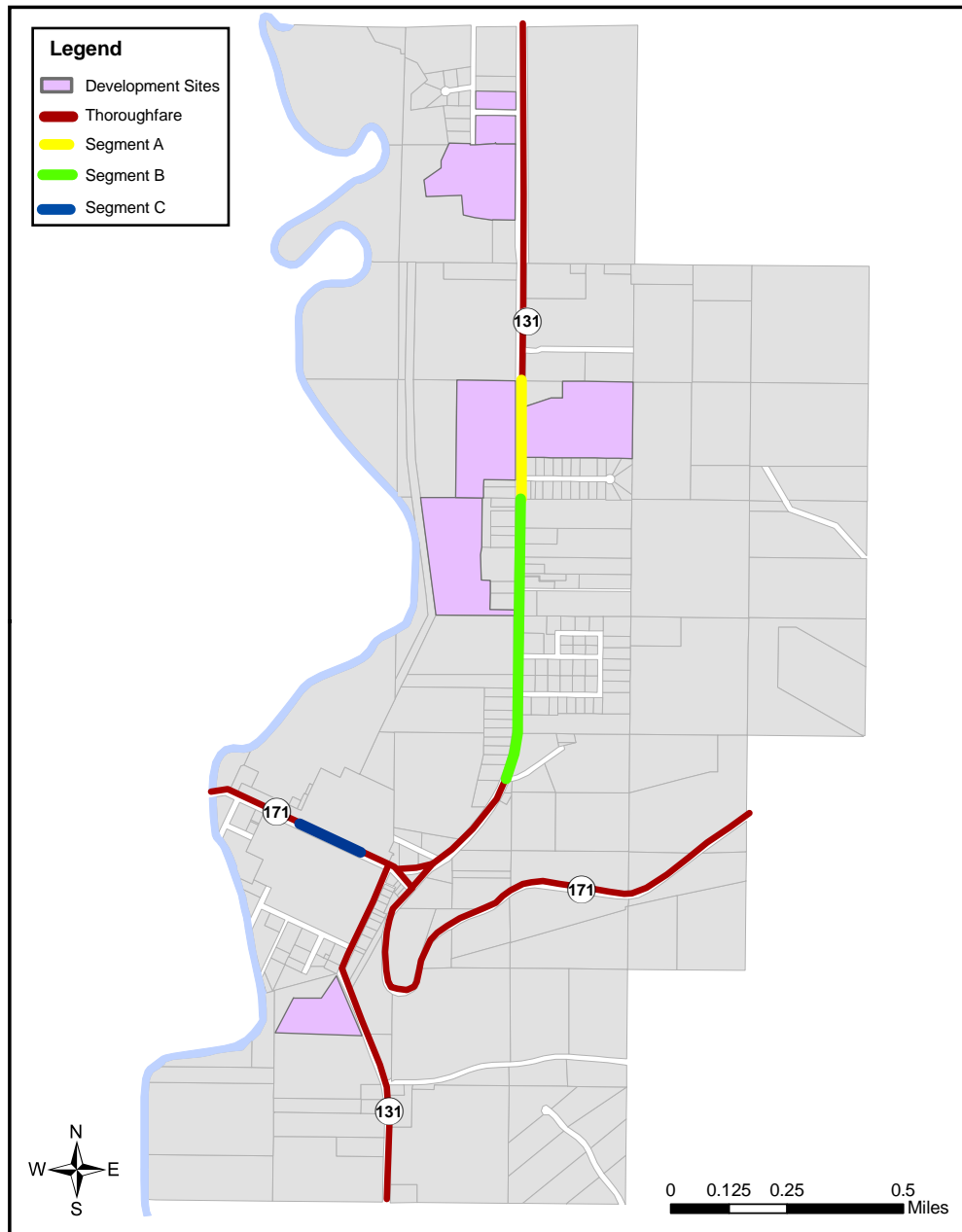
- ◆ Rehabilitating an existing structure will save the building from demolition and keep the building materials out of the landfill
- ◆ Renovate the building with energy efficiency features

## Potential Resources

- ◆ 2008 WI DOC reallocated CDBG Rehab funds
- ◆ USDA Rural Development
- ◆ National Business Incubator Association, <http://www.nbia.org>



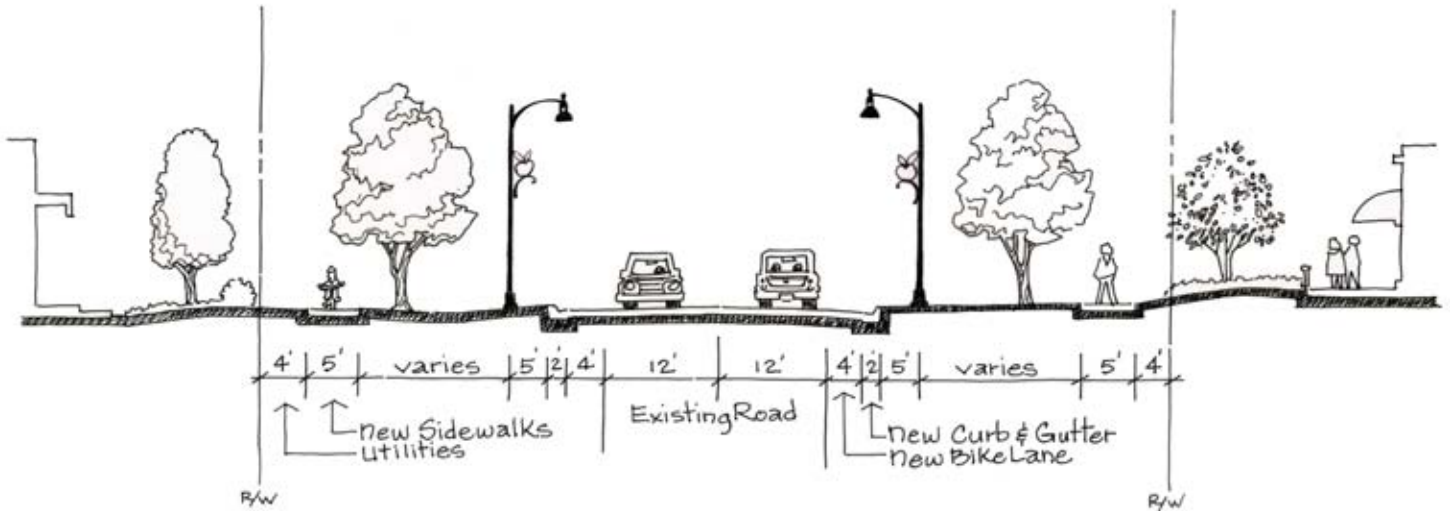
# ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS STATE ROUTE 131 TO MAIN STREET



The visual character of a community's major roads has a strong impact on the perceived character of the entire community. Likewise, the roadways' accommodation of pedestrians and bicycles is a measure of the safety, livability and sustainability of a community. Functional and visual enhancements work together to slow traffic

and make the roadway safer in the town center as well as to provide a sense of place for the community. Three segments with varying improvement components are proposed according to the land uses adjacent to the highway. (See plan)

# SEGMENT A - NEW TOWN CENTER CHESTELSON SITE



## Recovery Value - (High)



### Project Description

The proposed new town development plan and the recovery of Gays Mills would not be complete without addressing the character of SR 131 and its effect on the community. These roadway improvements are planned to create a new "Main Street". The proposed changes include slowing traffic and adding bicycle lanes to the existing roadway. The addition of sidewalks, new lighting and landscaping will complete the improvements needed for the new town center.

## Preliminary Site Development Project Costs

\$181,535.00\*

### Included in the cost estimate

- ◆ Change to an urban roadway section
- ◆ Reduce the speed limit to 25 mph
- ◆ Install street trees and landscaping
- ◆ Install sidewalks & crosswalks on both sides of the right-of-way
- ◆ Widen pavement to provide bike lanes in roadway
- ◆ Install decorative lighting

**\*Disclaimer:**

The preliminary cost estimates for road and site work were prepared from preliminary site plans. Costs were developed using RS Means CostWorks 2008, a nationally recognized estimating program using assembly and unit costs. The costs were adjusted for location. No engineered plans have been developed; therefore, these costs are for planning purposes only.



# SEGMENT B - BLUEBIRD LANE TO HAGER HOLLOW RD



## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



### Project Description

Improvements to this segment of SR 131 provide the link between the historic village center and the proposed new town center located approximately one mile to the north. The improvements proposed are in keeping with the current density and land use along this section of the roadway. Improvements include new lighting, a bike lane, and a sidewalk with trees and landscaping to complete the visual connection between the old and new town centers.

## Preliminary Site Development Project Costs:

\$116,651.22\*

### Included in the cost estimate

- ◆ Retain rural roadway section
- ◆ Widen pavement to provide bike lanes in roadway
- ◆ Install decorative lighting
- ◆ Install street trees and landscaping
- ◆ Install sidewalks on one side of the right of way

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#### \*Disclaimer:

The preliminary cost estimates for road and site work were prepared from preliminary site plans. Costs were developed using RS Means CostWorks 2008, a nationally recognized estimating program using assembly and unit costs. The costs were adjusted for location. No engineered plans have been developed; therefore, these costs are for planning purposes only.

# SEGMENT C - DOWNTOWN GAYS MILLS REBECCA ST TO GAY ST



**Recovery Value - (High)**



## Project Description

Improvements are proposed for two blocks on Main Street in the historic Village center. These improvements will transform the now fully paved commercial environment into a pedestrian friendly area with amenities that will help to slow traffic, provide visual enhancement and create a sense of place. Landscape islands with brick pavers, street trees and benches will line Main Street from Rebecca Street to Gay Street.

## Preliminary Site Development Project Costs

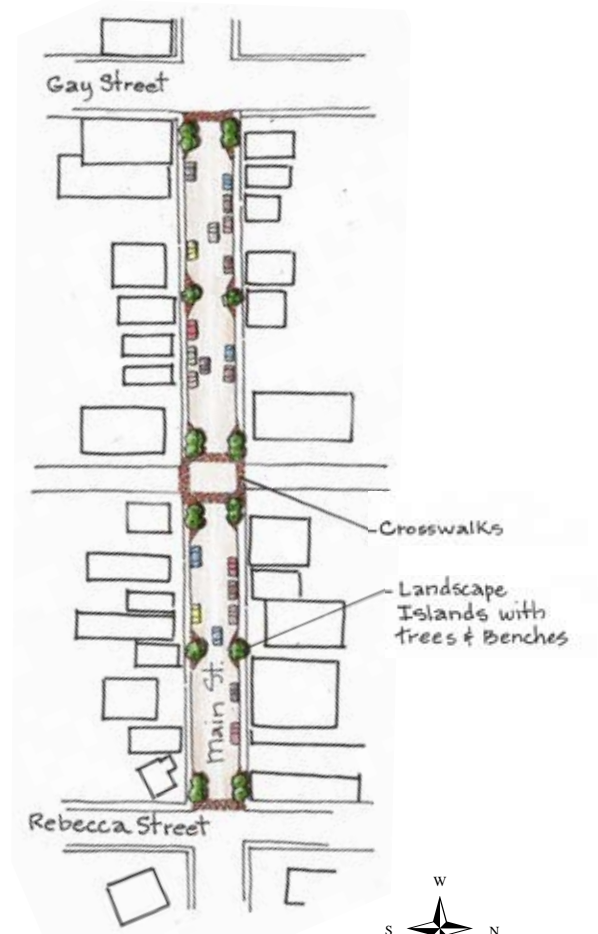
\$131,015.00\*

### Included in the cost estimate

- ◆ Install landscape islands in parallel parking area
- ◆ Install crosswalks of decorative pavers
- ◆ Install decorative street lighting
- ◆ Install street trees and landscaping
- ◆ Install street furnishing such as benches, trash receptacles, and signs

\*Disclaimer:

The preliminary cost estimates for road and site work were prepared from preliminary site plans. Costs were developed using RS Means CostWorks 2008, a nationally recognized estimating program using assembly and unit costs. The costs were adjusted for location. No engineered plans have been developed; therefore, these costs are for planning purposes only.



# PREPARE A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Recovery Value - (Moderate)



This project has a moderate recovery value because it would provide the blueprint for all new development in Gays Mills for the long-term. The comprehensive planning process should be initiated in the near term, given higher priority recovery projects. Gays Mills does not currently have a comprehensive plan; but Gays Mills is required under Wisconsin State Statute to adopt a comprehensive plan by 2010. A comprehensive plan will provide a needed framework for the community as it makes decisions regarding how and where it should grow.



## Project Description

A comprehensive plan is a planning document that provides communities with information and policies that will guide future planning and community decisions. Comprehensive plans incorporate a twenty-year vision and provide a rational basis for local land use decisions.

The plan for Gays Mills will reflect the uniqueness of the community and specific community-driven needs. The following comprehensive plan elements are required per Wisconsin State Statute:

- ◆ Issues and Opportunities
- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Utilities and Community Facilities
- ◆ Natural and Cultural Resources
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Intergovernmental Cooperation
- ◆ Land Use
- ◆ Implementation

An update of the zoning ordinance will also be important to be certain it reflects the comprehensive plan and enables the community to enact its vision.



## Action Steps

- ◆ Create a steering committee to oversee the comprehensive planning process
- ◆ Select a consultant and establish the project timeline and deliverables
- ◆ Define a vision and planning goals
- ◆ Establish regular meetings between the consultant and steering committee
- ◆ Adopt the plan
- ◆ Following adoption, prepare revised zoning code reflecting key elements of the comprehensive plan

## Sustainable Opportunities

- ◆ Include sustainable development practices in comprehensive plan
- ◆ Include sustainable practice in the zoning and building codes

## Potential Resources

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC)

Project Details	
Cost of Comprehensive Plan	\$15,000
Cost of Zoning Ordinance	\$5,000

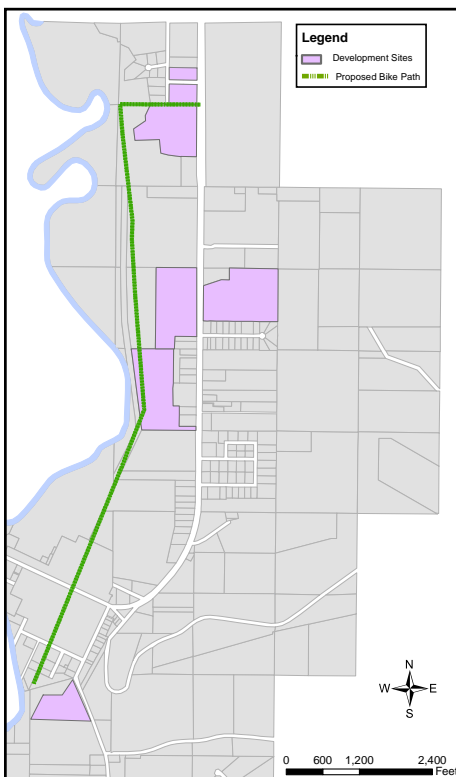


# KICKAPOO HICKING AND BIKING TRAIL

## Recovery Value - (High)



This project has a high recovery value because it provides a connection between the old town of Gays Mills with the existing and proposed development north along State Highway 131. The Kickapoo River Trail will also provide increased recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors including cross country skiing. Recreational opportunities for residents and tourists along the Kickapoo River are limited in the Gays Mills area.



## Project Description

Construct a bike trail along the old railway bed that runs through Gays Mills along the Kickapoo River. The railway was abandoned after flooding in the 1930's.

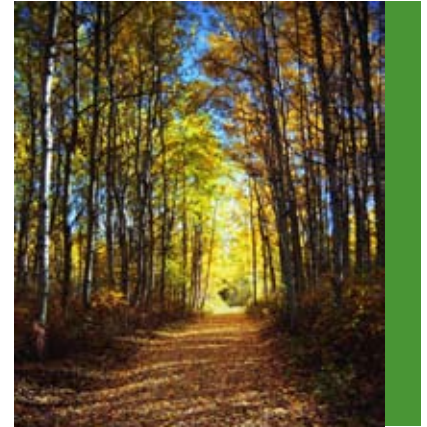
The distance along the old railway bed from the town center (Main Street) north to the village limits is approximately 2 miles. The bike trail would have the potential of eventually extending further north to provide a connection to North Crawford School and the Village of Soldiers Grove.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Create a steering committee to oversee the development of the Kickapoo Biking Trail
- ◆ Identify and seek out project stakeholders
- ◆ Create a preliminary plan for the trail
- ◆ Apply for funding for the acquisition and construction of the trail

## Sustainable Opportunities

- ◆ Provides outdoor recreation opportunity
- ◆ Promotes active living



## Potential Resources

- ◆ Rails to Trails Conservancy, see <http://www.railtrails.org/index.html>
- ◆ DNR Stewardship Grants for acquisition of property
- ◆ Kickapoo Valley Association, see <http://www.kickapoovillage.org/Kickapoo.htm>
- ◆ Mississippi Valley Conservancy, see <http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org>
- ◆ Wisconsin Safe Routes to School Toolkit, see <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/saferoutes-toolkit.htm>
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Local Transportation Enhancement Program, see <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/te.htm>

## Project Details

\$200,000

# COMMUNITY CENTER



## Recovery Value - (High)



A community center will provide a facility that will house the village offices, library, and community center, and conference hall. The community center will not only be able to provide modern space for the village offices and the library, but also meeting and recreational space for community members. The community center has the ability to become the new heart of the community to help strengthen human capital. This is essential to galvanize the community's energy around the rebuilding effort.

## Project Description

This project would be located on the relocation site on the west side of State Highway 131. The community center will anchor the new "Main

Street." It will be approximately 15,000 square feet of space and contain the village administrative offices, village library, and community center. The community center will provide a public meeting space, kitchen facilities, and the capacity to host retreats.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Solicit community input
- ◆ Determine specifications for the offices and community center
- ◆ Identify funding opportunities
- ◆ Prepare design and construction documents
- ◆ Obtain permit/approvals
- ◆ Begin construction

## Project Details

\$1.7 million

## Sustainable Opportunities

- ◆ Design to high LEED standards
- ◆ Design building for energy efficiency and using eco-friendly building materials
- ◆ Use low maintenance/native landscaping
- ◆ Maximize water efficiency

## Potential Resources

- ◆ EDA
- ◆ USDA Rural Development Administration
- ◆ Foundations





# HYDRO ELECTRIC PLANT



## Recovery Value - (Medium)



Restoring the existing hydroelectric dam in Gays Mills will provide a clean and renewable energy source to Gays Mills. This energy produced will be able to supply Gays Mills with the electricity needed to fuel its municipal energy needs.

## Project Description

It is proposed that the existing hydroelectric dam could be refurbished and brought back on-line to serve Gays Mills. The existing hydroelectric dam was constructed in 1941 and at the time produced an annual output of around 756,000 kilowatt-hours for the village's electrical grid. However, it ceased operation for electricity production in the 1960's and was turned over to Gays Mills by the power company.

Assuming that the restored hydroelectric dam could produce an annual output of the original dam of 756,000 kilowatt-hours annually, the dam would produce more than enough energy to cover the energy needs of the Village to operate its street lights, water distribution system, wastewater treatment plant, village offices, community center, and library. Excess electricity could be sold back to the power grid operated by Alliant Energy that currently serves Gays Mills.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Obtain cost proposals from qualified engineering firms to refurbish the dam and existing structures so that they would be operational
- ◆ Work with Alliant Energy to develop a proposed agreement of how the electricity could be used by the Village

- ◆ Apply for grants to assist in the project costs

## Sustainable Opportunities

- ◆ Financial Incentives for the Production of Clean Energy <http://www.power.wisconsin.gov>
- ◆ Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, <http://www.mwalliance.org/index.php>
- ◆ Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan, <http://cleanenergy.wi.gov/>
- ◆ Alliant Energy Community Grants Program, <http://www.alliantenergy.com>

# HAZARD MITIGATION PROJECTS



## Recovery Value - (High)



Hazard mitigation initiatives are needed in Gays Mills to assist with flood proofing of businesses and the village's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Facility that are on Main Street. Based on a survey conducted by the University of Wisconsin – Platteville Extension Service, the majority of the business owners on Main Street intend to remain in their current location for the foreseeable future. Therefore, these businesses will need to be flood-proofed to help ensure quick recovery from future flood events.

The EMS Facility needs to be relocated out of the floodway to ensure that the facility and equipment are not damaged or impeded by future flood events.

## Project Description

The existing businesses along Main Street can undergo flood proofing techniques to help ensure they do not receive substantial damage during future flood events. The flood proofing techniques applied to individual businesses will vary depending on the individual

circumstance. The most appropriate flood proofing techniques will need to be determined by trained professionals through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Technical Assistance Program (HMTAP).

A technical study conducted by HMTAP will provide the basis for future grant applications to FEMA for funding the flood proofing of the businesses. Grant money for the flood proofing may also be available through the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants (PDM), as well as from future HMGP program applications.

Gays Mills will be submitting an application for HMGP funding in 2008; however, that money has been prioritized for acquisition/demolition and relocation of residential structures.

The EMS Facility on Main Street has been out of service since the August 2007 flood in Gays Mills. It is critical that an essential facility that serves the community in times of disasters be located out of harms way. It is proposed that the village co-locate the Emergency Medical Services Facility with the Firehouse.

This could be completed either through adding capacity to the existing Firehouse or constructing a new joint facility.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Create a steering committee to oversee the hazard mitigation initiatives
- ◆ Seek technical assistance from HMTAP to complete the technical study of flood proofing businesses on Main Street
- ◆ Determine whether expansion of the existing firehouse or construction of a new facility is most appropriate
- ◆ Submit grant applications

## Potential Resources

- ◆ Hazard Mitigation Technical Assistance Program (HMTAP)
- ◆ Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- ◆ Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant (PDM)
- ◆ Volunteer Fire Department VFD-Funding, [www.vfd-funding.com](http://www.vfd-funding.com)



## Recovery Value - (Low)



This project has a low recovery value because it is dependent on the number of properties in the village that end up being bought out through the HMGP acquisitions and relocations. After these parcels are vacated, the village will be required to maintain these as parks or open space in perpetuity. Therefore, the Village should create a parks and open space plan for this land.

## Project Description

This project would entail creating additional park and recreational activities for residents and tourists to Gays Mills. Recreational opportunities that could be included are: campground sites, RV parking, fishing pier, canoe/kayak launch, hiking trails, arboretum, community garden plots, a village green, amphitheatre, or a open-air market. These park facilities would complement the existing parks,

recreational facilities, pavilion, and fairgrounds that are within the Village.

The scope of which opportunities will be most appropriate will depend on the amount and location of land that is turned over to the village through the HMGP. Once the properties have been identified, the community should conduct an assessment of its needs and develop a vision for how to use the land to best meet its needs.

## Action Steps

- ◆ Create a steering committee to oversee the development of a parks plan
- ◆ Identify and seek out project stakeholders
- ◆ Create a preliminary plan for the parks
- ◆ Apply for funding the development of the projects.
- ◆ Construct the facilities

## Project Details

- ◆ University of Wisconsin Department of Landscape Architecture, see <http://www.la.wisc.edu/>
- ◆ Coulee Region Chapter of Trout Unlimited, see <http://www.couleeregiontu.org/>
- ◆ Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, see <http://www.wiwf.org/>
- ◆ Kickapoo Valley Association, see <http://www.kickapoovalley.org/Kickapoo.htm>
- ◆ Mississippi Valley Conservancy, see <http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org>

## Sustainable Opportunities

- ◆ Provides outdoor recreation opportunity.
- ◆ Promotes active living.
- ◆ Build facilities out of recycled materials.





# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



This recovery plan presents an overall framework for long term recovery and a range of specific recovery projects for the community to consider in moving forward to a sustainable and resilient future. Given the difficult economic conditions confronting both the public and private sectors at this time, not all of the recovery projects can be implemented in the near term and a phased approach to recovery is necessary. The LTCR Team did not envision that all four proposed development sites would be developed in the near term, as the total number of proposed housing units and commercial space greatly exceeds any anticipated near term requirements. However, the LTCR Team is confident that adequate funding will be made available to quickly implement some of the key recovery priorities.

The recovery plan clearly spells out why the community cannot recover on its own and will require technical and financial assistance from multiple funding sources. The recovery projects were prioritized by the Committee during a review session on the draft recovery plan, held October 20, 2008, in Gays Mills. A number of public and non-profit sponsors have indicated their willingness to support Gays Mills in fully recovering from these two recent flood events.

High priority projects and potential sponsors include:

## **Economic Development and Recovery Manager**

Given the limited capacity of Gays Mills government, all stakeholders concurred this position was the highest priority. The Village Board has signed a letter reflecting their strong interest to partner with MRRPC in a grant application to the EDA.



## Supplemental funding

Supplemental funding would be used to hire a qualified professional who would be located in Gays Mills to coordinate long term recovery initiatives. In addition to the manager's responsibilities in Gays Mills, they would promote economic development opportunities throughout the Kickapoo Watershed.

## Site Development Costs

Securing funding for acquisition and site development is a high priority in order to provide replacement homes, attract new residents and spur economic recovery. EDA grant funds could be used for site development costs to support Gays Mills economic recovery. A combination of low-interest USDA RDA loans, the participation of a CHDO, and other housing incentives can be used to acquire lands and provide affordable multi-family and single-family homes.

## Hazard Mitigation Initiatives

FEMA will continue to support Gays Mills through a range of technical assistance and grant programs that will reduce future disaster damages.

## Mitigation

Some of FEMA's mitigation programs are competitive pre-disaster grants (PDM) and others like HMGP and HMTAP are available in post-disaster situations. In a similar vein as Darlington, Wisconsin, Gays Mills should seek ongoing FEMA support to remove vulnerable structures from the floodplain or retrofit structures by elevation and other floodproofing techniques a part of a long-term sustainable strategy.



## Main Street Improvements

Low cost improvements for two blocks in the historic village center would provide visual enhancement and create a sense of place. This low cost project would help provide momentum for the community's recovery and support downtown merchants who will remain on Main Street. EDA has indicated a willingness to consider funding this and several other economic recovery projects described earlier in this Plan.



### **Business Incubator**

Reallocated 2008 CDBG funding could be used to save the old school, move it to higher ground, and rehabilitate the structure for use as a business incubator. This project would help spur economic recovery and provide an anchor to the Chestelson site. During community meetings, many residents spoke of a desire to save the old school, the only Gays Mills structure with potential eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If WI DOC CDBG would fund this project, it would greatly benefit the community by providing most or all of the 25% non-federal match needed for the EDA grant application.

When the LTCR Team is demobilized at the end of October, 2008, and when the Joint Field Office (JFO) closes later in November, 2008, FEMA will continue its support in Gays Mills recovery through FEMA Region V, Mitigation. However, the lead responsibility for long term recovery for Gays Mills and other targeted communities will shift to the Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) and the standing Wisconsin Recovery Task Force (WRTF).

Another sponsor for Gays Mills recovery is Crawford County. UW Extension for Crawford County has requested that the Crawford County Housing Coalition consider sponsoring a housing fair for Gays Mills residents. The Village Board should meet with County representatives regarding the ball field site and collaborate on expanding economic opportunities associated with the County Fairgrounds.

### **Near Term Action Items**

- ◆ The Gays Mills Village Board should approve the Long Term Community Recovery Plan at their next regularly scheduled Board Meeting (November 3, 2008).
- ◆ The Long Range Planning Committee should work closely with the Village Board to distribute the approved Recovery Plan to all key stakeholders who might provide technical or financial assistance to Gays Mills.
- ◆ Sponsor a housing fair for households in the downtown area who have not yet participated in the 2007 HMGP grant applications.
- ◆ Meet with MRRPC representatives to finalize the EDA grant application and seek commitments for the 25% non-federal share requirement. Consider advertising for the program manager position in anticipation of a grant award.
- ◆ Secure one or more parcels of land for future residential and commercial development.
- ◆ Once a site is secured, seek the assistance of sponsors to begin the development process. Retain services of an architectural/ engineering firm to develop a final site plan, conduct environmental assessments, prepare specifications and bid documents for construction, and assist the community in the selection of a contractor to complete the planned improvements.







View of Gays Mills from Baldy  
1924