



TOWN OF WASHINGTON

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

Incorporation Hearing

December 17, 2025

PRESENTERS

Bob Solberg, Petitioner

Gary Becker, Becker Professional Services

Rick Manthe, Stafford Rosenbaum

TOWN EXCELLENCE

- Financial Stability
- Superior Service Delivery
- Stewards of the Environment
- Leaders in Planning and Governance
- Preserve Washington Character, Community, and Responsive Local Government for Today and Tomorrow

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- Cumulative effect of multiple annexations
- Desire for local control and representation
- Informed residents about annexation process, ETJ, and land use restrictions
- Increasing inquiries about incorporation
- Town hired Gary Becker to conduct a feasibility study for incorporation

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- Shared feasibility findings at listening session in June 2024
- Given overwhelming support, board decided to fully engage with Gary Becker to pursue incorporation
- Held two information sessions for residents in September 2024
- Support has remained very strong

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT and CONCLUSION

Gary Becker

- 40 years experience assisting municipalities, regions, and community organizations
- Certified Economic Developer and Finance Professional
- President of Becker Professional Services
- Past Executive Director of the Local Government Institute of Wisconsin
- Expert in Incorporation Proceedings
 - Lisbon
 - Brookfield
 - Maine/Texas
 - Westport (in process)
 - Middleton (in process)
 - Washington (in process)



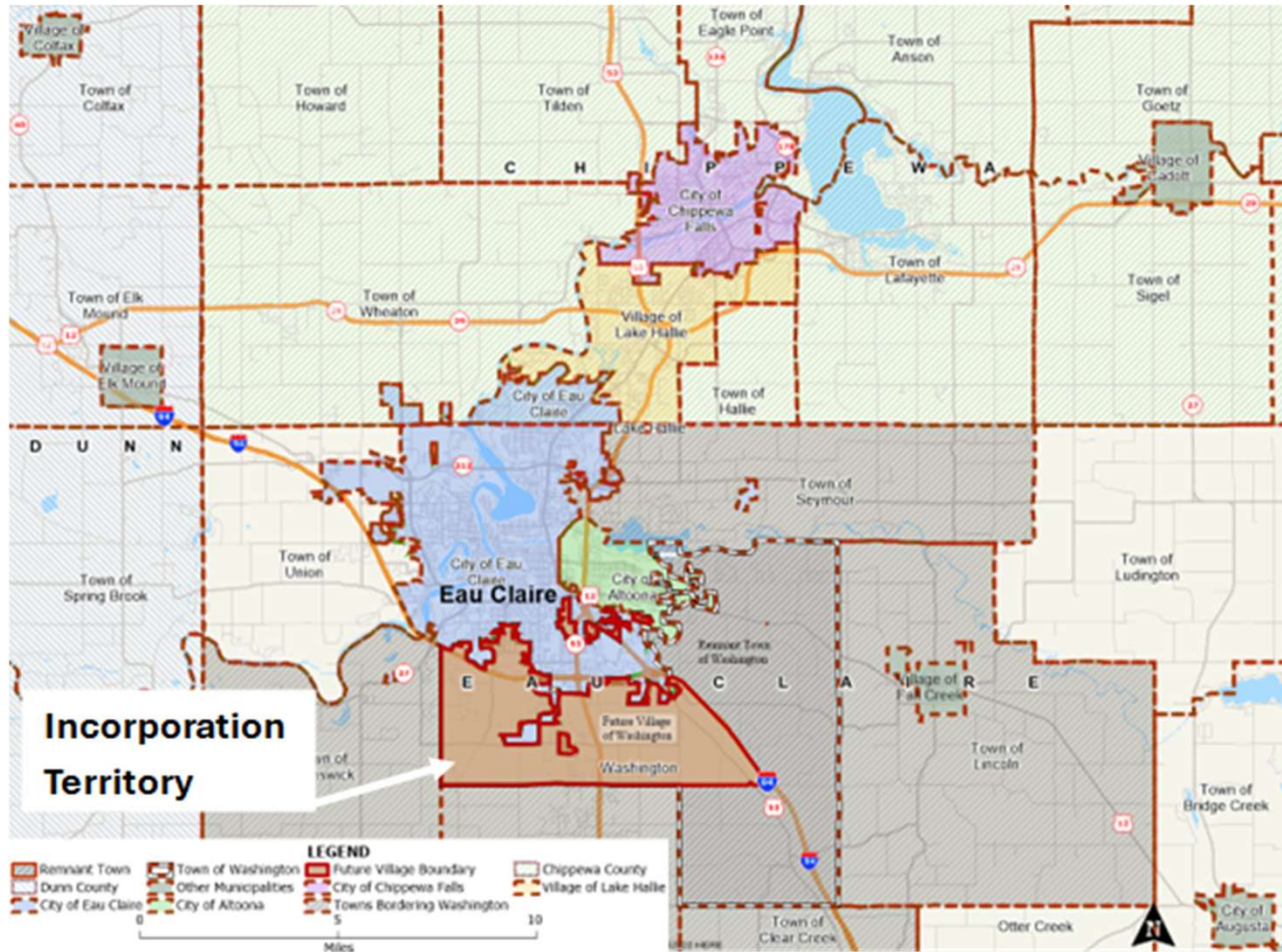
Becker Professional Services

Gary Becker

December 17, 2025

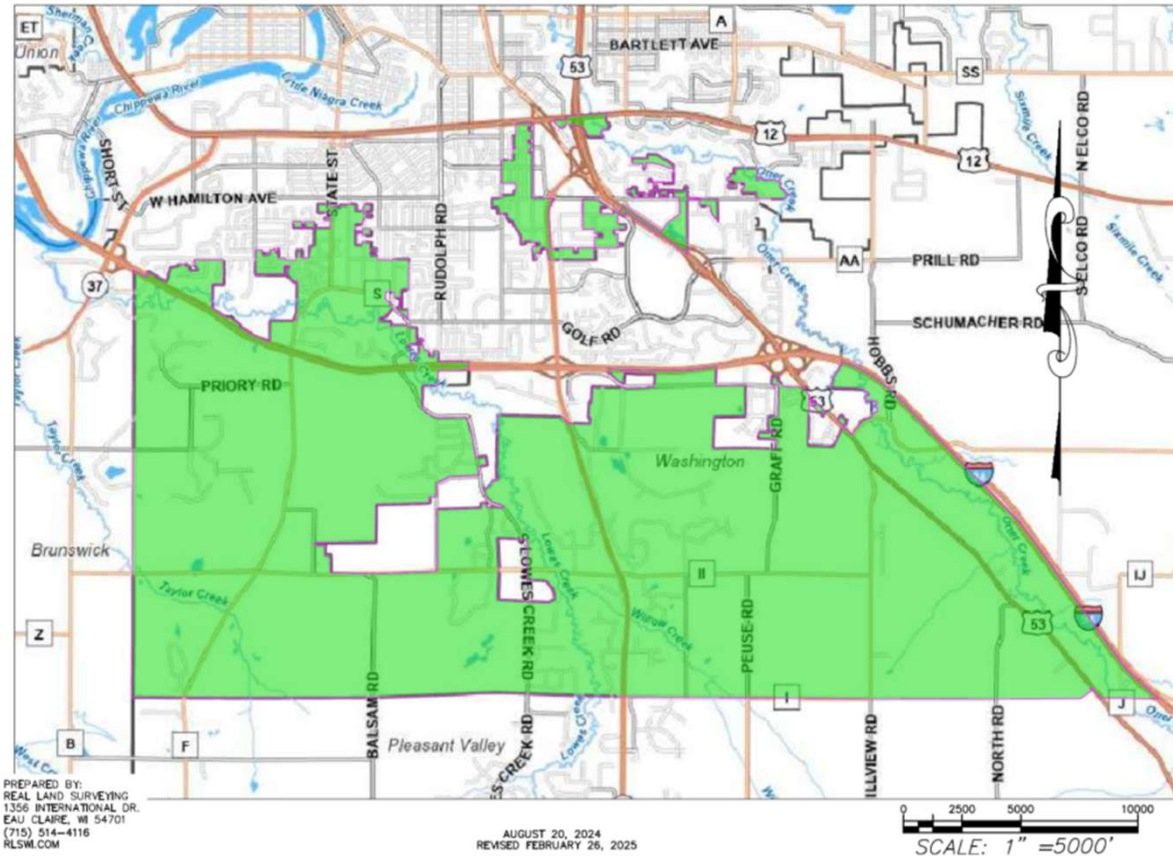


Introduction to the Incorporation Territory



- Northwest Eau Claire County
- Adjacent to Eau Claire and Altoona
- Part of the Chippewa Falls/Eau Claire Metro Area
- Washington is an active participant in the Chippewa Falls – Eau Claire Sewer Service Plan as well as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

VILLAGE OF WASHINGTON PROPOSED BOUNDARY SCALE MAP



The Incorporation Territory contains:

- 20.5 square miles, including 3 islands within the City of Eau Claire
- 5,423 (estimated) people – 69% of the Town of Washington population
- \$900,000,000 equalized property value
- Business parks and commercial subdivisions with 165 businesses providing retail, service and employment diversity
- 1 City of Eau Claire territorial island within Washington
- Since 2005, 203 annexations have occurred transferring over 1,800 acres (2.8 square miles) to adjacent municipalities fragmenting the community of Washington and creating an irregular northern border.



Overview of IRB Standards

STATUTORY CRITERIA

Homogeneity and Compactness

- The proposed area must be ***reasonably*** homogeneous and compact considering natural and social boundaries.

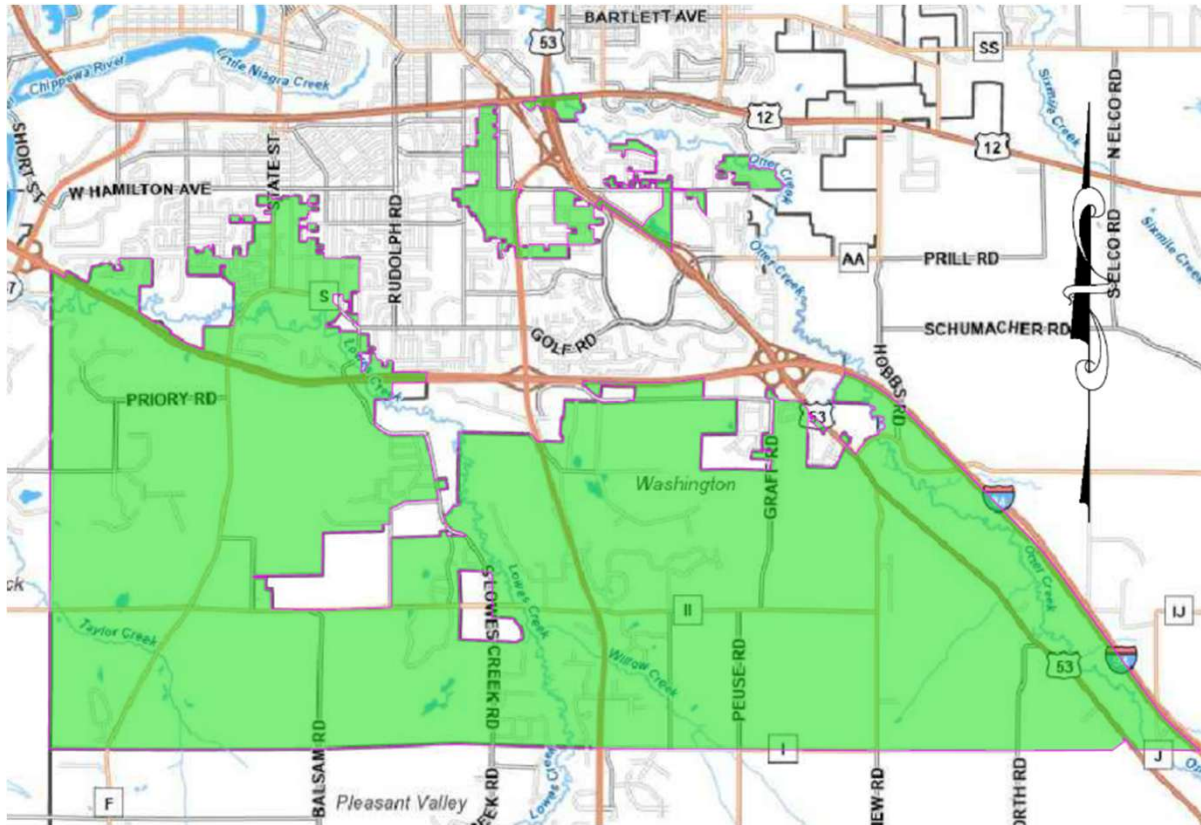
Development Potential

- Territory beyond the core area must show potential for substantial residential or urban development within three years.

Public Interest Evaluation

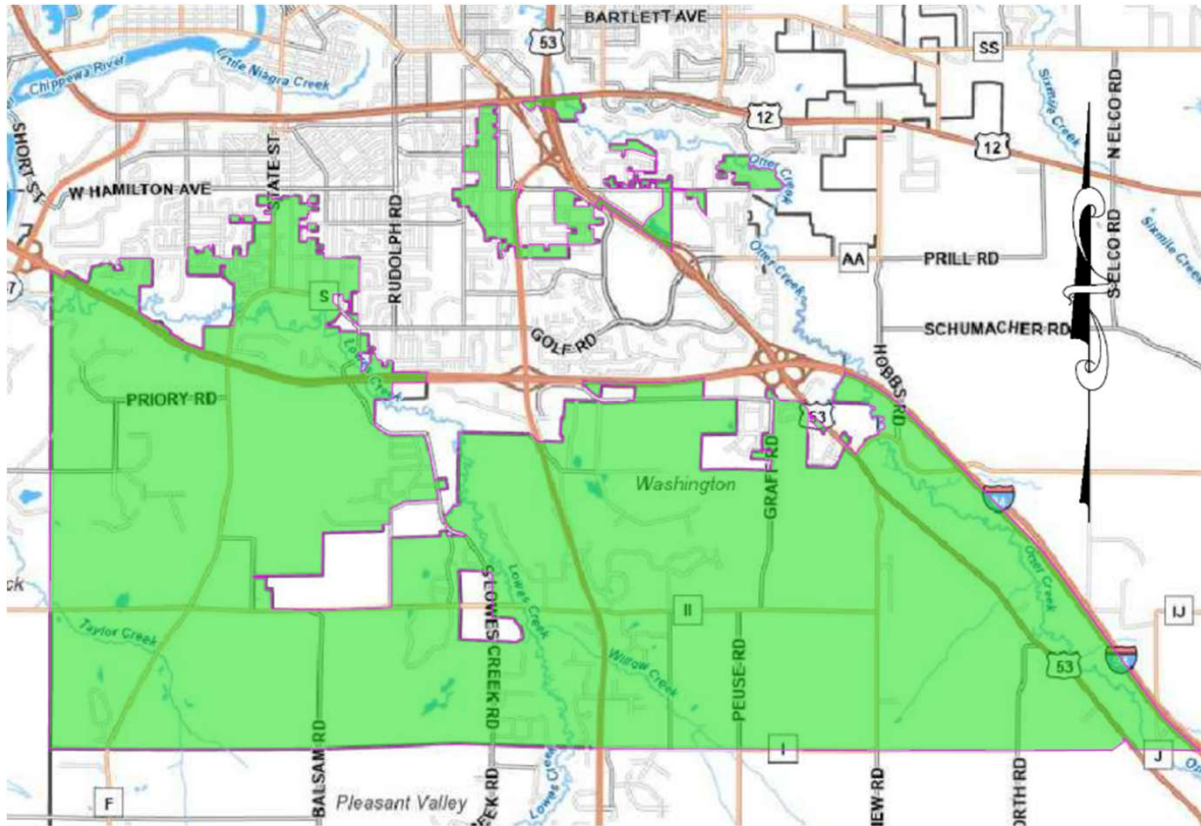
- The IRB assesses tax revenue, municipal services, impact on remnant town, and metropolitan community benefits.

HOMOGENEITY AND COMPACTNESS



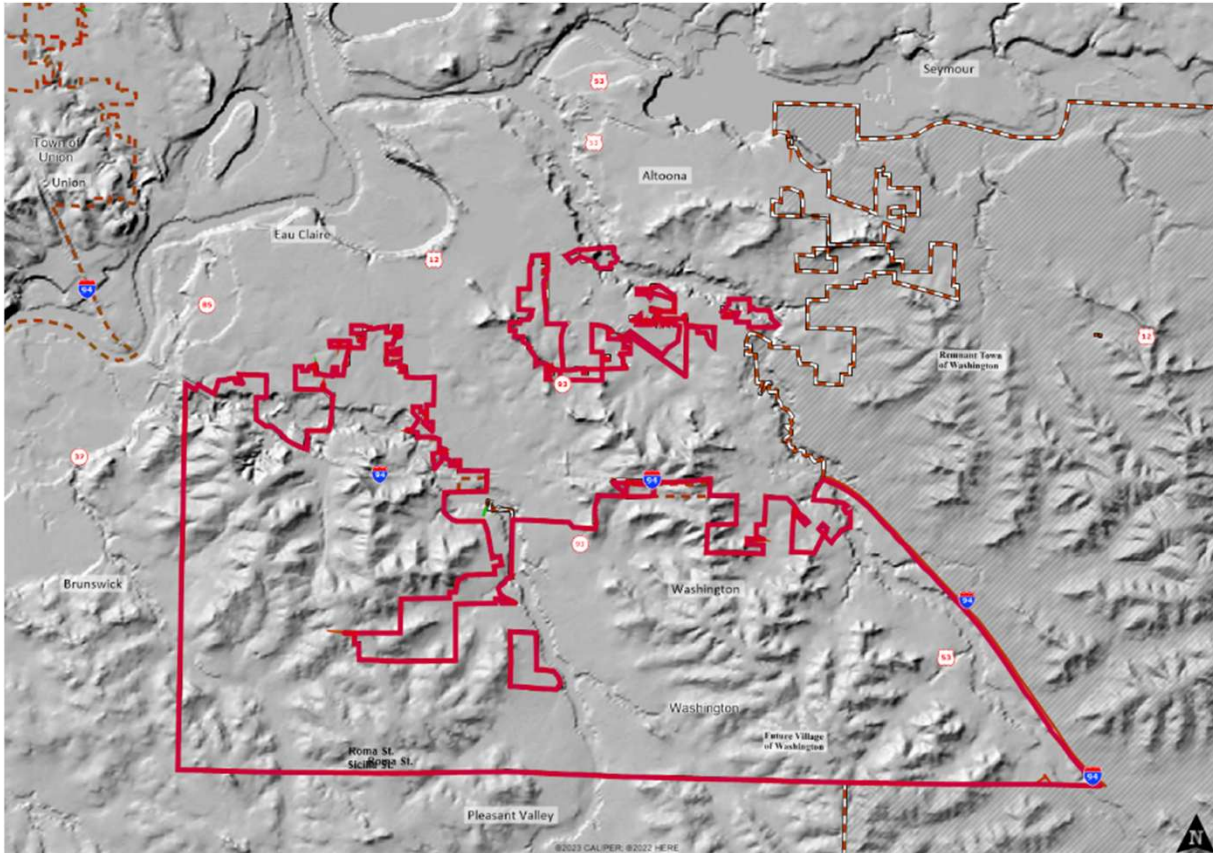
- The boundary is regular on three sides
- Formed by historic political boundaries and an interstate highway
- The north boundary is irregular as a result of past annexations
 - Contains 3 islands surrounded by the City of Eau Claire

HOMOGENEITY AND COMPACTNESS



- Incorporation will prevent annexation of areas important to the financial, social and cultural health of Washington while preserving alternatives to annexation that provide the basis for cooperation and good faith negotiations among communities
- The very threat of annexation, i.e. the loss of land and property taxes, can make the difference between a completed municipal project, and one that must be halted midway or cancelled

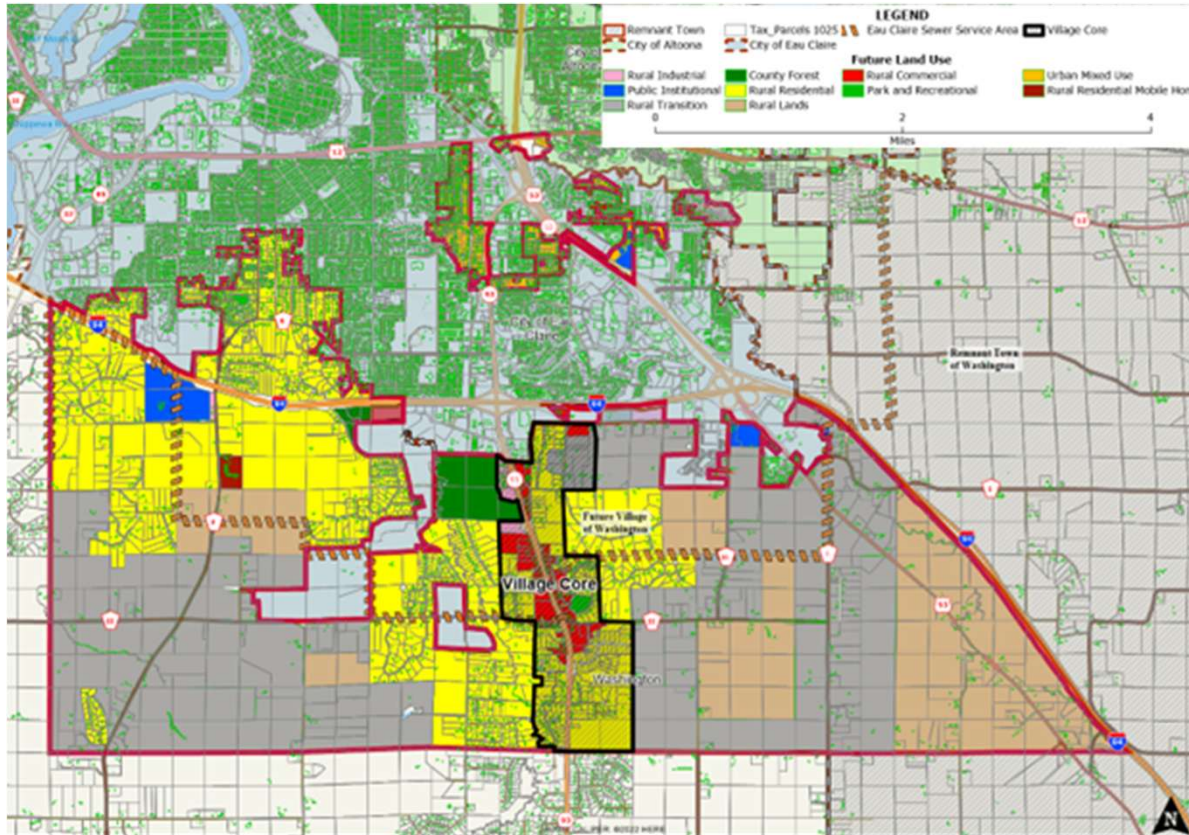
TOPOGRAPHICALLY DISTINCT



The Incorporation Territory is topographically distinct from the adjacent municipalities that developed in the river floodplains:

- Steep slopes make development more difficult
- High density development with centralized distribution and collection infrastructure impractical on this topography
- Topography calls for clusters of development with well and septic serving each cluster

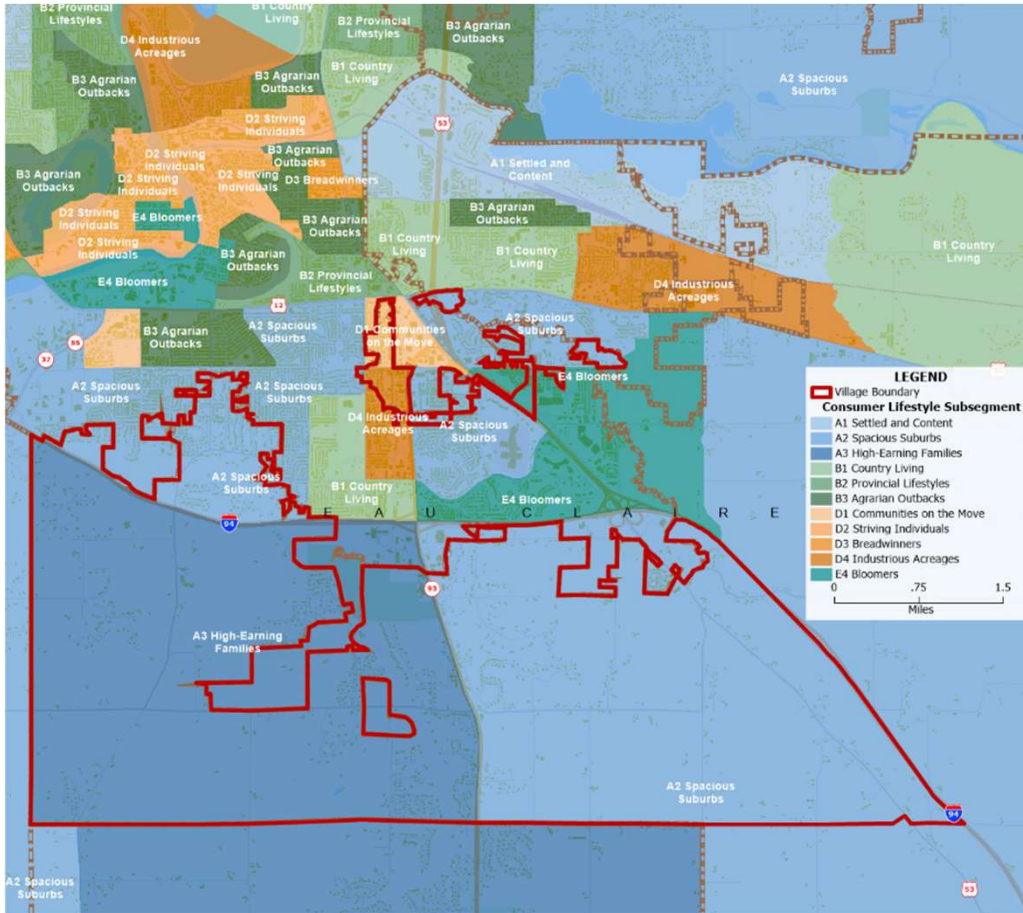
COMPACT AND CONNECTED CORE



The Incorporation Territory has:

- A compact core
- Centered on STH 93
- Neighborhoods and commercial zones tightly linked
- Connected by local, county and state roads to the rest of the territory
- Providing convenient access to most residents
- 60% of territory residents live within 5 minutes' drive of the Village core
- Well positioned to serve a growing community

SHARED SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRAITS



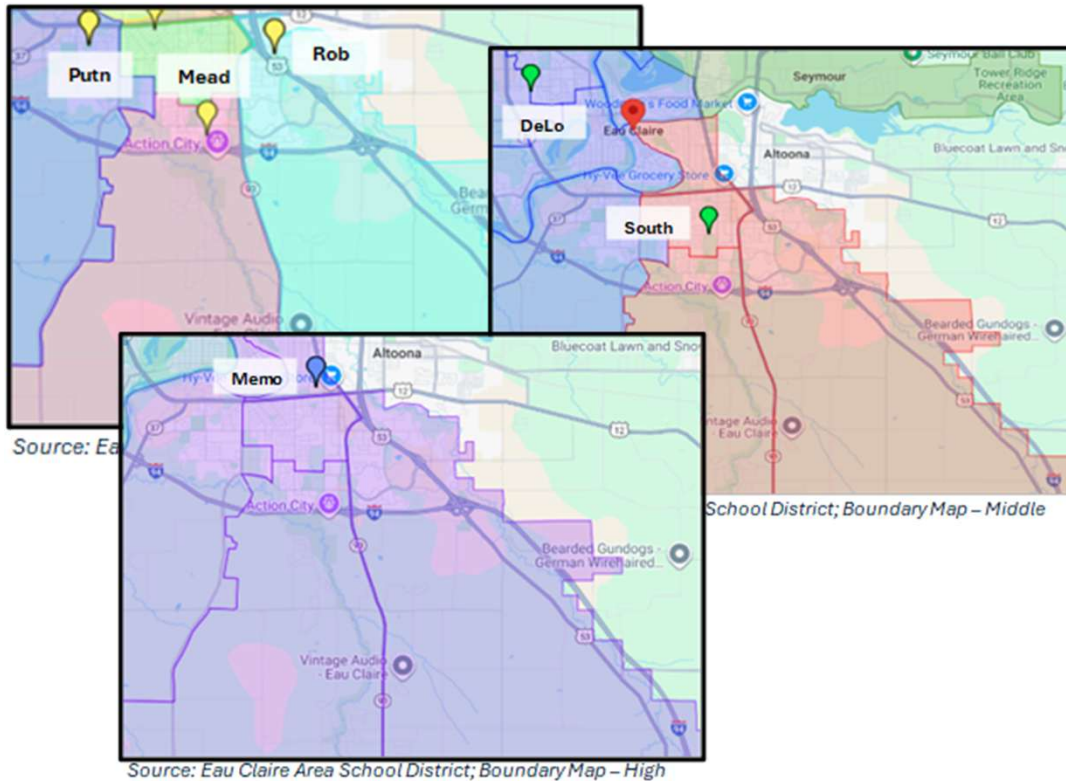
The marketing industry identifies the range of lifestyle choices of consumers and maps them to show the geographic distribution of such lifestyles.

The Incorporation Territory:

- Reasonably homogeneous in the suburban lifestyle preferences of its residents
- Distinct from the adjacent urban municipalities

Washington is sought out by metro residents with these lifestyle preferences because the Town's clusters of suburban and larger lot subdivisions are compatible with those lifestyles

SHARED SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRAITS

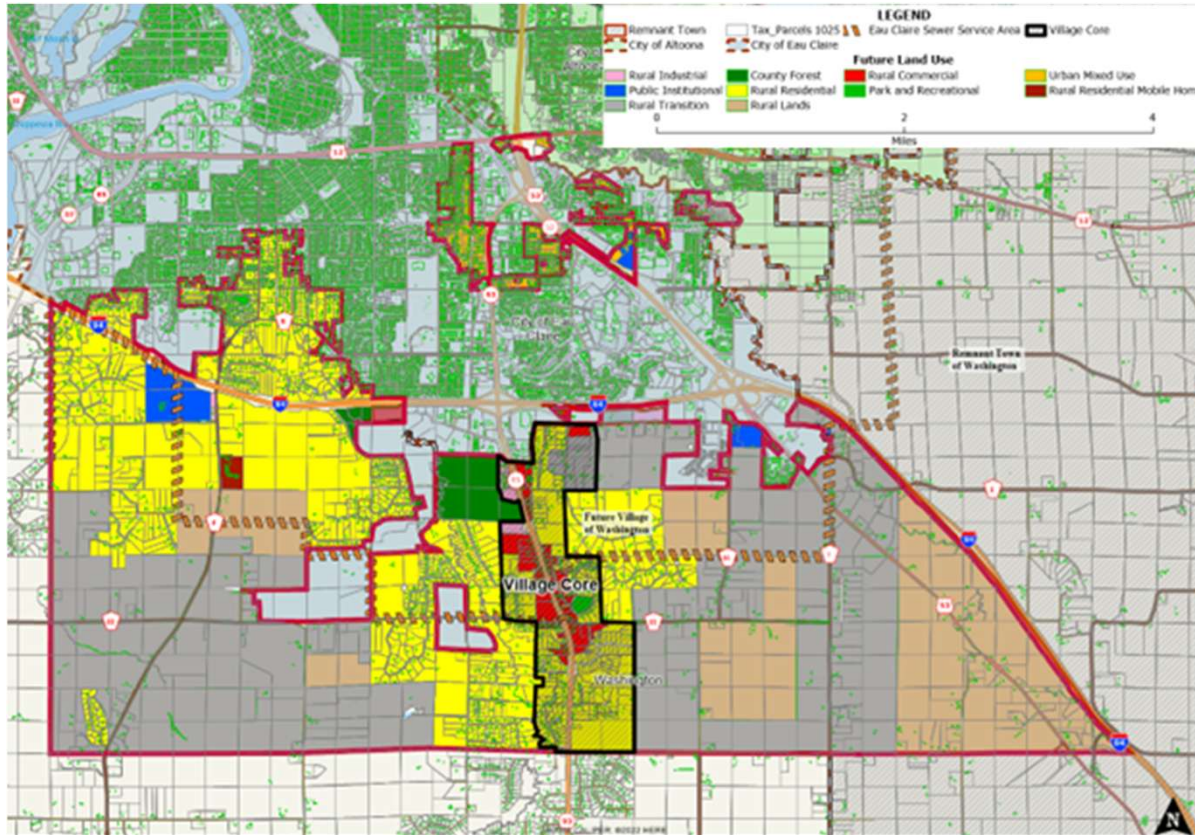


The Incorporation Territory school children:

- Attend 3 elementary schools
- 2 middle schools
- 1 high school
- Participate in many youth sports opportunities
 - Lowes Creek Baseball is a 55-year Washington tradition, fielding 20 Little League teams, 8 T-ball teams and 350 players.

Residents share lifestyle preferences, active participation in the same school district, social organizations, and recreational activities.

ORDERLY LAND USE PATTERN



Incorporation Territory land uses feature:

- Clustered residential and commercial developments
- Access to nature and services
- Clustered in an orderly and logical manner relative to the proposed municipal boundary.

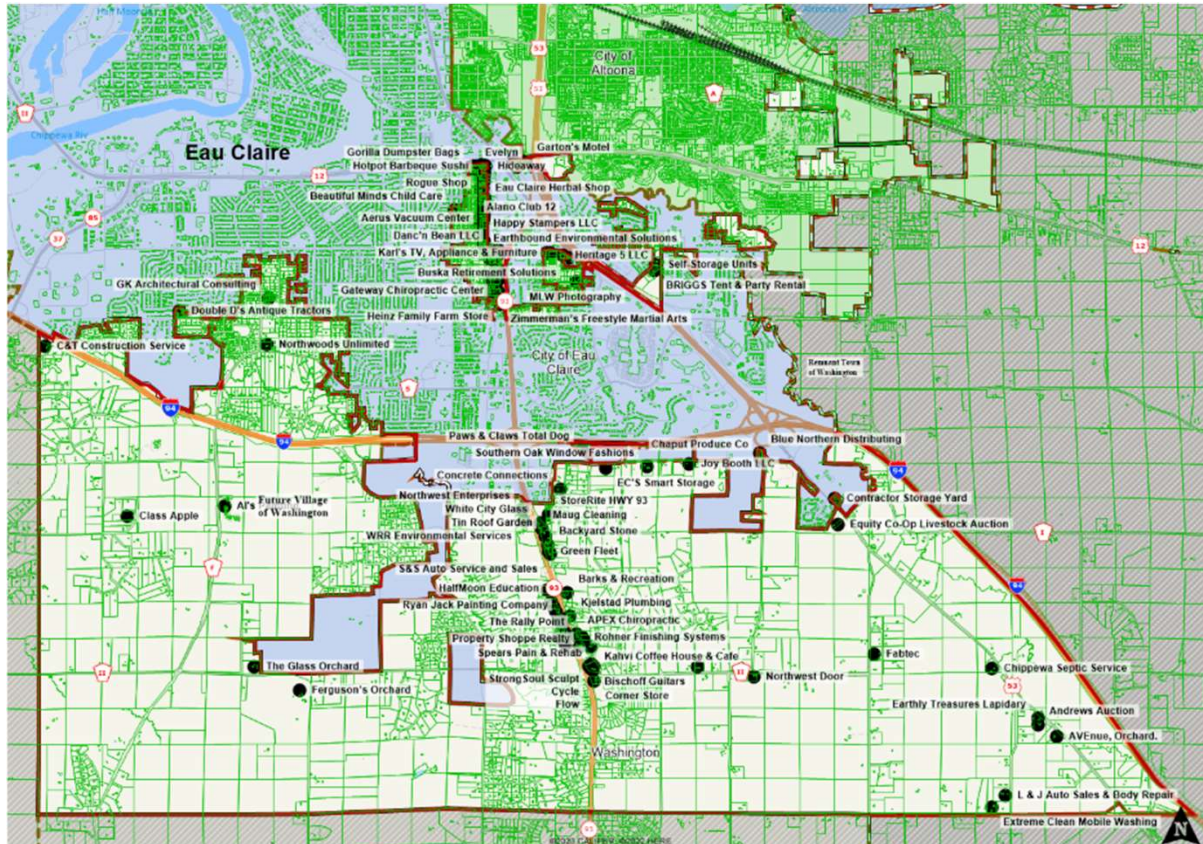
Land use patterns indicate a compact and homogeneous territory growing in an orderly fashion.

STABLE RESIDENTIAL BASE

Population Characteristics	City of Altoona	City of Eau Claire	Incorporation Territory	Remnant Town
Median HH Income	\$77,002	63,882	\$70,253	\$77,561
Owner Occupied Housing Units	57.4%	57.7%	61.8%	69.6%
Renter Occupied Housing units	42.6%	42.3%	38.2%	30.4%

Household incomes and home ownership rates compare favorably to neighboring communities, indicating the new Village of Washington has a stable residential and housing base from which to incorporate.

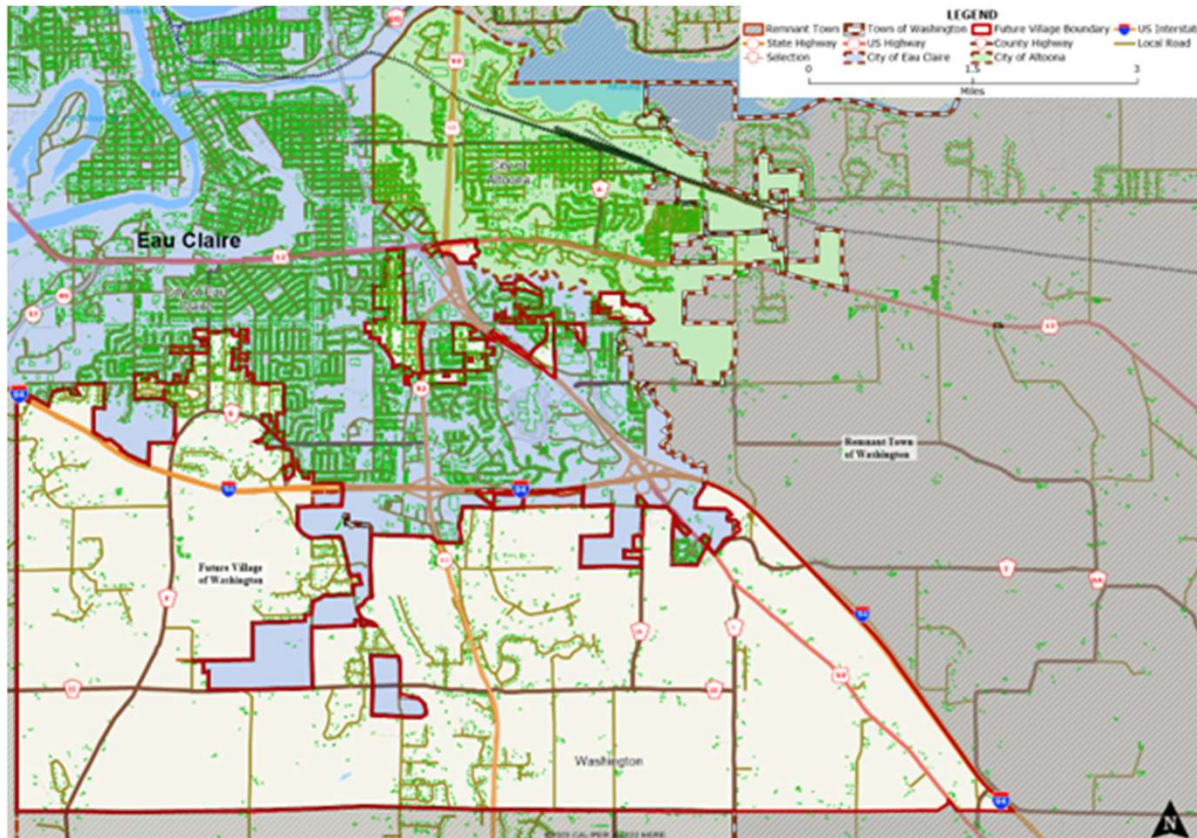
DIVERSE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



Economic diversity adds stability, identity and social cohesion to the Incorporation Territory:

- Approximately 165 businesses across retail, services, healthcare, and construction
- Serving the everyday needs of residents as well as providing employment opportunities
- Fuels local economic vitality

ROAD NETWORK AND HIGHWAYS



The Incorporation Territory's budding road network supports compactness, homogeneity and integration into the greater metropolitan community:

- The territory is served by major highways and a network of roads
- Facilitating regional and internal connectivity
- Providing 60% of territory residents with access to the village core within 5 minutes.

STRONG COMMUNITY SUPPORT

58

Landowner Signatures

From remnant Town supporting

92

Residents voted “Yes”

*At the June 2024 listening session
with 211 attending*

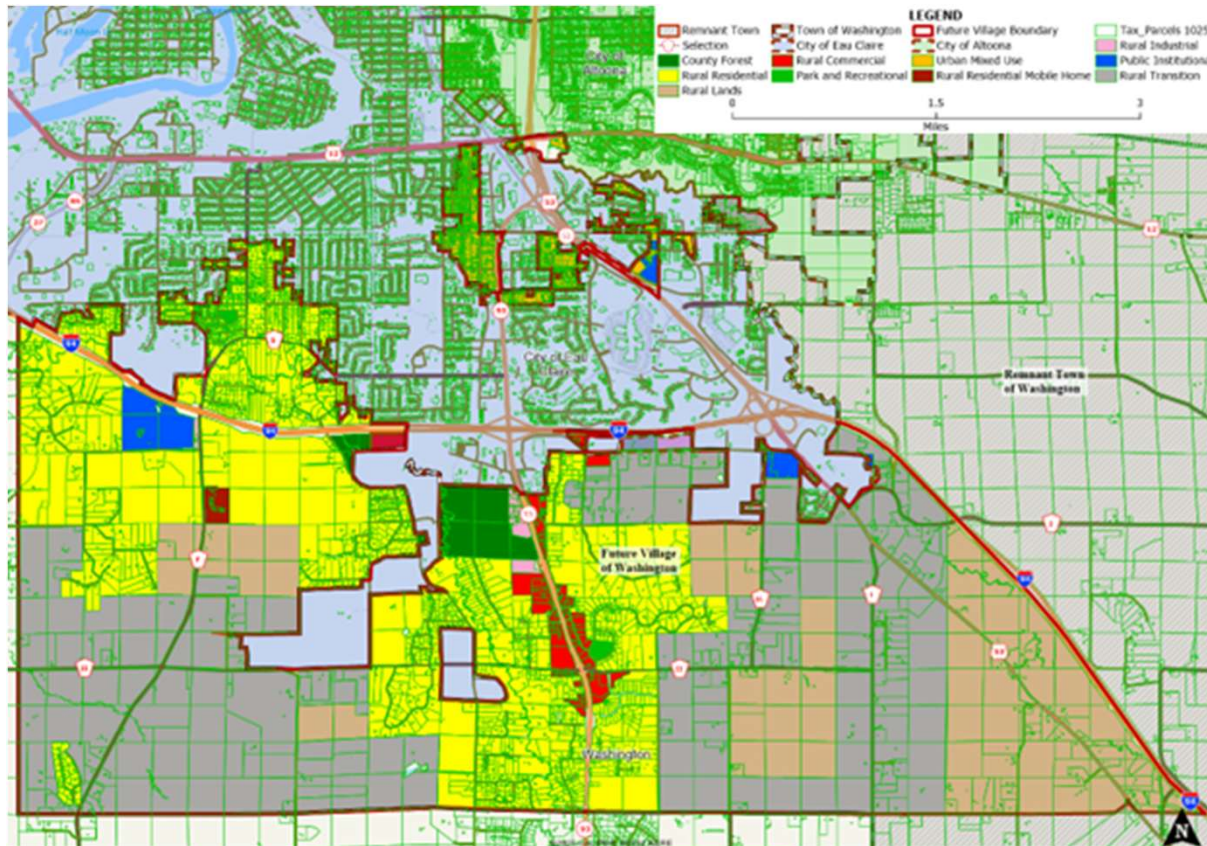
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Residents voted “No”

At the June 2024 listening session

Residents of the Incorporation Territory are united in their support as evident during well-attended listening sessions and outreach

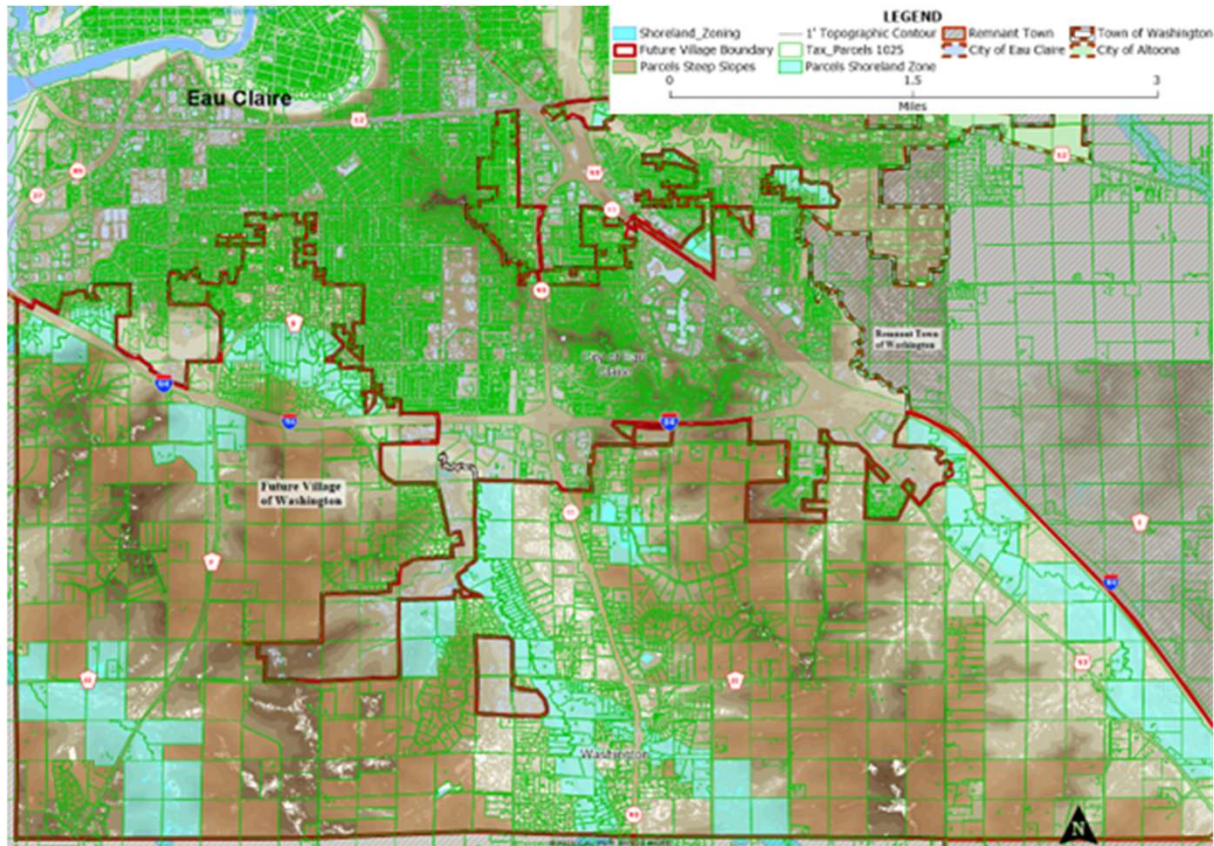
LAND USE AND ZONING



The Incorporation Territory has significant potential for development within the next 3 years:

- Significant amounts of vacant land planned and currently zoned for residential development
- More land is currently zoned to be in transition from agriculture to developed uses
- The territory has 4,487 acres of vacant land zoned for agricultural to residential or commercial transition.

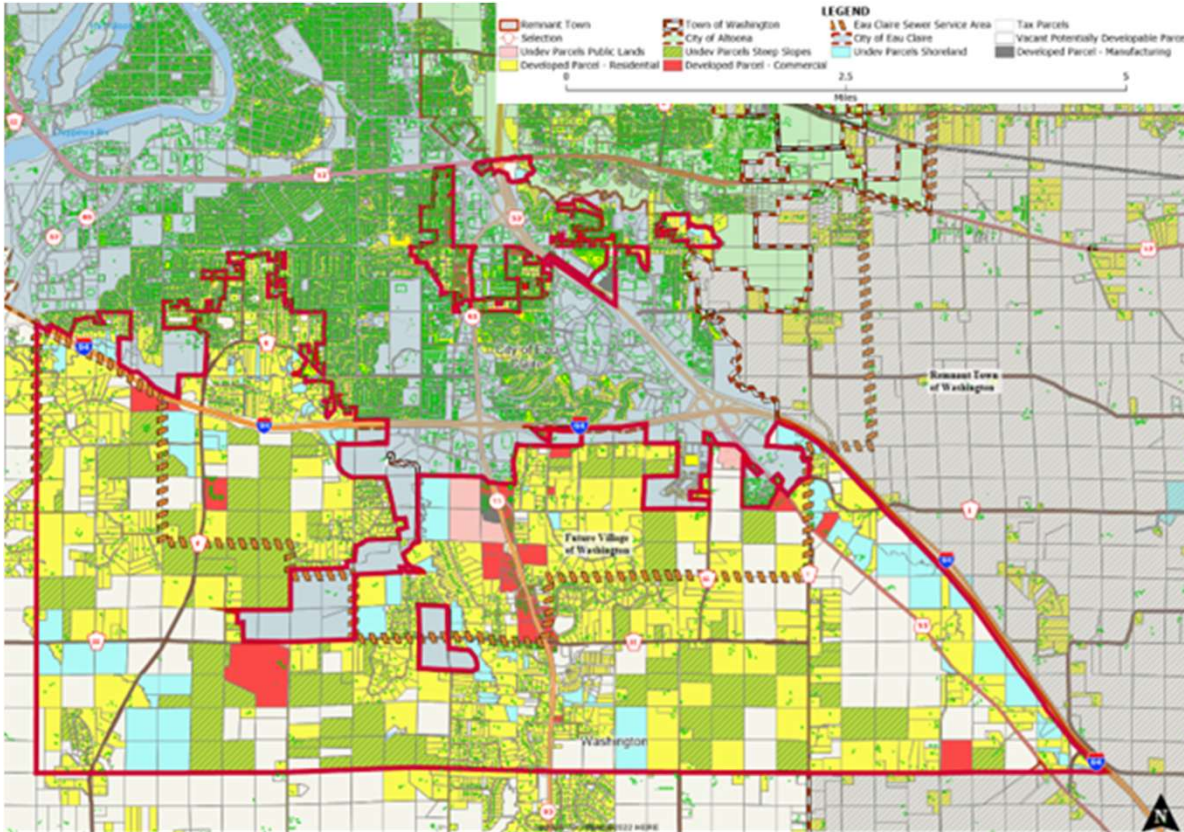
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS



A significant portion of the Incorporation Territory is not suited for urban development:

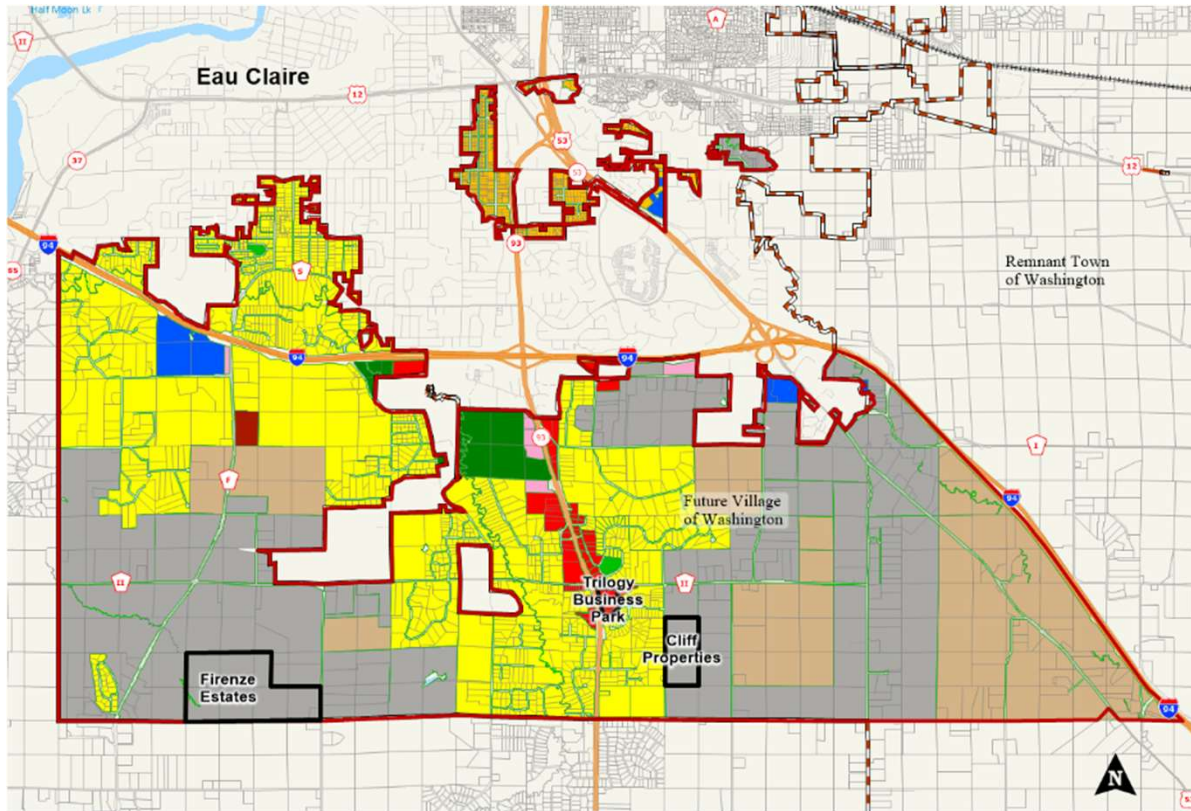
- Approximately 27% of the land is unbuildable due to wetlands, steep slopes, and shoreland zoning restrictions

POTENTIALLY DEVELOPABLE PARCELS



Despite the amount of undevelopable land, the Incorporation Territory has sufficient developable land to support the Village's growth for the next three years and beyond

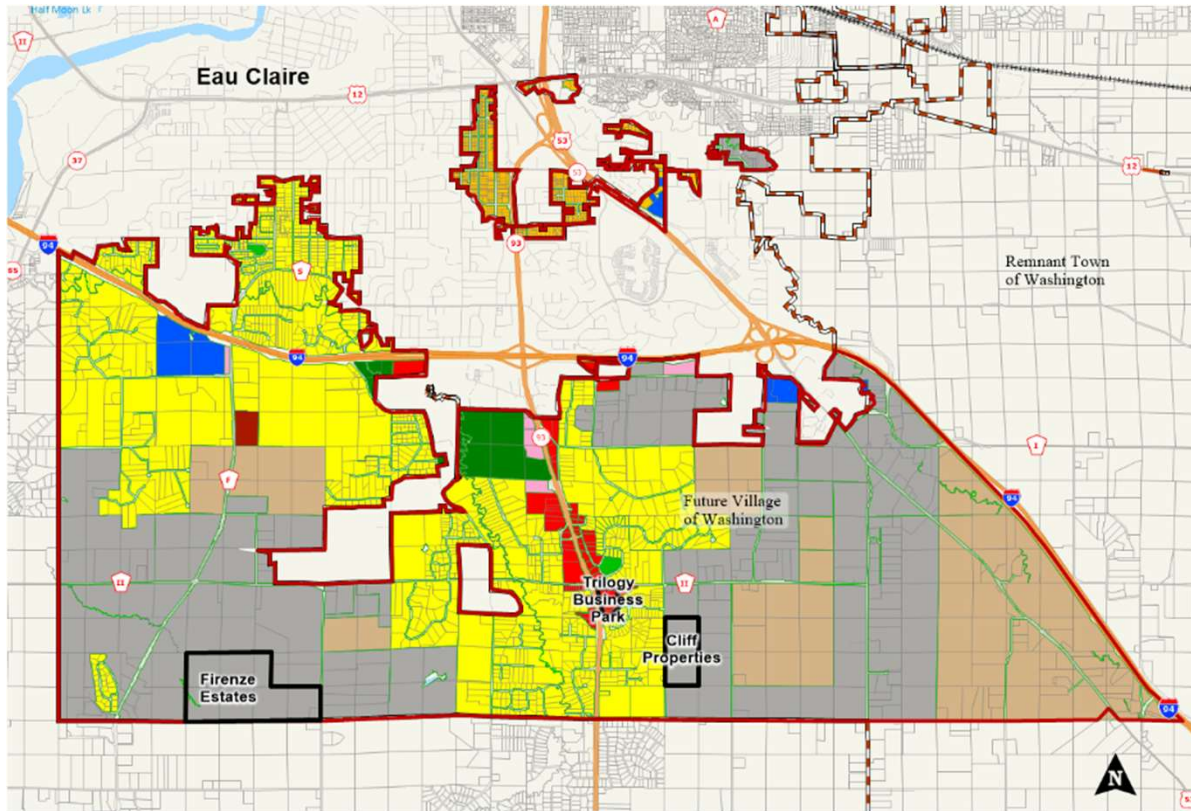
RECENT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



Three major subdivisions were recently approved within the Incorporation Territory:

- Firenze Estates – 260-acre residential subdivision, 128 lots
- Cliff Properties – 74-acre residential subdivision
- Trilogy Business Park – planned to house up to 16 businesses
- Additionally, the Town averages 27 residential building permits per year
- Incorporation will grant full zoning authority to the territory to promote orderly growth

RECENT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



- Currently Eau Claire imposes a ten-acre minimum lot size within its extra-territorial jurisdiction that restricts development within a large portion of the Town . Removing that barrier will unlock substantial development potential
- Community wastewater treatment rather than centralized collection and treatment increases the development potential of the territory more so than if development relied on a centralized collection system
- Intersection of major highways makes the area primed for future development



Municipal Services and Facilities

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Fire protection is managed by a non-profit with five stations; one located in each participating jurisdiction
- Current fire protection agreement would apply to new Village
- Eau Claire EMS has rapid response times of under ten minutes
- Current EMS agreement would apply to the new Village

LAW ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE

- Eau Claire County Sheriff provides Town law enforcement coverage and enhanced parking enforcement currently
- Agreement and planning for a dedicated law enforcement with a deputy assigned 20 hours weekly
- Current law enforcement agreement would apply to the new Village

PUBLIC WORKS OPERATIONS

- Currently provided by Town employees and equipment
- New Village will contract with remnant Town for public works services
- Services include road maintenance, snow plowing, stormwater management, and cemetery operations with modern equipment
- No change in this level of service is expected with incorporation

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Municipal complex with meeting facilities, administrative offices, a community room, public works garage, fire station, equipment storage and materials storage
- This facility would continue to serve the remnant Town by agreement
- Rest Haven Gardens municipal cemetery adjacent to the municipal complex
- This facility would be managed and operated by the Village

PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION CENTERS

Corydon Park, Tamarack Pool & Park, Trillium Town Park & Trails, STH 93 multi-modal trail, Horlacher Park – Lowes Creek Baseball, Lowes Creek County Park, Dedicated Access Points to Lowes Creek, Seven Mile Creek Park, Town Trail at Trilogy



Public Interest – Fiscal Capacity and Tax Base

STRONG FISCAL CAPACITY

- \$900,000,000 equalized property value
- Mill rate: \$1.99/\$1,000 equalized property value
- Tax Revenue: \$1,700,000
- Intergovernmental & other revenue: \$837,255
- Cost to operate Village of Washington: \$2,537,255

The proposed village demonstrates strong fiscal capacity with a balanced budget supporting the level of municipal services desired by residents.

The Village would not be assuming any debt from the Town, and therefore has significant borrowing capacity should it need to incur any new capital costs associated with incorporation.

STRONG FISCAL CAPACITY

Municipality	2025
C. of Altoona	\$5.47
T. of Brunswick	\$1.45
C. of Eau Claire	\$8.22
T. of Pleasant Valley	\$1.92
T. of Washington	\$1.10
V. of Washington (2026)	\$1.99

Competitive Tax Rates

A tax rate of \$1.99 per \$1,000 is favorable compared to neighboring cities, ensuring affordability for residents, while generating sufficient tax revenue to provide the services resident's demand.

- Post-incorporation, the town retains strong financial viability with continued revenue and manageable tax rates.
- Use of financial tools available to villages like tax increment financing provides additional support for infrastructure and development projects.



Impact on Remnant Town and Metropolitan Community

MINIMAL ADVERSE IMPACT ON REMAINING TOWN

- Assessed Value of Remnant Town: \$399,900,272
- Property Tax Levy: \$500,000
- Tax Rate per \$1,000 Valuation: \$1.25
- Population: 2,365

Incorporation will maintain sufficient population and property values to support essential services in the remnant town.

IMPACT ON METROPLITAIN COMMUNITY

Intergovernmental Cooperation

- Washington collaborates with neighboring jurisdictions through mutual agreements and shared support for regional growth

Sustainable Development Strategy

- Focus on lower-density, clustered growth, housing diversity, and environmental protection aligns with regional goals.

Improved Governance Efficiency

- Incorporation will increase efficiencies for the territory by reducing the number of governments with jurisdiction over decision-making and enable coherent service delivery and effective infrastructure planning.



Conclusion

PETITION MEETS CRITERIA

- The petition satisfies all incorporation requirements
- The territory is well-zoned, exhibits orderly land use patterns and has strong market demand supporting future growth
- The proposed Village has the ability to provide municipal services, has strong fiscal capacity, and demonstrates community support for incorporation
- Incorporation enhances regional planning, preserves local identity, and prevents annexations of areas important to the financial, social and cultural health of the community



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EAU CLAIRE COUNTY