

## **1. What is occurring under this agreement?**

In effort to support and protect all Village and Town Residents, effective January 1, 2025, the Town will transfer nearly all its territory to the Village of Lac la Belle. The area being transferred is depicted in green on the map below (Exhibit 1).

The Town board in addition to the Town Staff will assume all the duties under the newly combined Village of Lac La belle. Town and Village residents will continue to receive all the services that they currently receive under the combined new Village of Lac La Belle.

## **2. Why are we combining the Village and Town?**

The Village and Town both benefit from the agreement. These benefits are described below:

- a. Village: The Village is limited in its ability to provide the services that its residents deserve. Over the last several years, the Village and Town have entered into several agreements in which the Town provides critical services to all Village residents, such as police, public works, and clerk services. Also, both communities utilize the same engineer, assessor, building inspector, garbage collection, and fire and emergency medical services. This agreement solidifies these services for all residents under one community.
- b. Town: Will no longer be subject to annexation or zoning by surrounding cities and villages, which negatively impacts its borders and long-term tax revenue. The new Village will not be subject to Waukesha County's approval for use, activity, or permits therefore allowing the new Village to directly decide what's best for the community and residents, without outside influences.

## **3. What happens if we don't move forward with the merger?**

- a. The Town will continue to exist and operate as it does today. We will continue to be subject to annexation affecting our tax base and our ability to effectively execute long term planning for our community and residents; it creates a situation where the Town will continually be "reactive" versus "proactive".
- b. Over the last decade the Village has seen several residents transition from permanent residents to seasonal. As a result, it has become increasingly difficult to fill State required Commissions and Board vacancies. If this trend continues, the Village could be forced to dissolve back into a Town, losing all its protection and zoning benefits afforded to community and residents under a Village.

## **4. Will this affect my Taxes?**

- a. Properties currently in the Village will see a decrease to the 2025 tax rate.
- b. Properties currently in the Town will see very slight increase to the 2025 tax rate. For property currently assessed at \$500,000 there will be an approximately \$50 increase per year. Property currently assessed at \$1 million there will be an approximately \$100 increase per year.
- c. Because this agreement provides overall cost savings, the new Village will be eligible for State grants. These grants would reduce the slight increase.
- d. Please note that your tax bill has many components: (County, State, WCTC, School District, Town/Village, garbage, Lake Management Districts, etc.). As is always the case, we can only indicate what will happen with the Town and Village tax rate.

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**5. What will happen to unincorporated areas (such as Okauchee Lake, Monterey, and Mapleton) within the Town of Oconomowoc?**

We plan to continue to recognize these areas as we do today, in addition to the Historic Village of Lac La Belle.

**6. Why did you send certified letters, and why have I not received my notice/letter yet?**

State statute requires all residents to receive notice by certified mail. Approximately 4,000 certified letters being hand delivered is a large task for the U.S. Post Office. To promptly communicate with all residents, we also ran an article in the newspaper, posted copies of the notice/letter on the Village and the Town's websites and Facebook page.

**7. Why are residents just hearing about this now?**

Incorporation of the Town is not a new topic, it has been discussed and attempted many times over several decades. Unfortunately, there were barriers we could not overcome to finalize the process. Over this time, the opportunities and options have changed. At the same time, the Village and Town entered into several intermunicipal agreements to reduce cost and to better serve the residents of both communities. The leadership from both communities saw this as an opportunity to solidify all the benefits of working together, and we began conversations with the State of Wisconsin, attorneys, and between the leadership, to understand all the pros and cons of a merger. It took time to evaluate all of the details. Throughout the entire process, the central question that leadership consistently asked was "Is this the best thing for both respective communities and residents?". The answer is yes. However, it was necessary for us to deliver a complete plan to all residents without causing confusion. That process occurred on

October 24 with certified notices/letters, newspaper articles, Facebook posts, and details on both websites.

**8. What are the reasons the Town could not incorporate?**

State law on incorporation was created a long time ago and has not been updated to reflect the state of modern Wisconsin communities. As a result, there are two major hurdles that have limited the Town's ability to incorporate:

- a. **Town Boundaries:** The Town must have contiguous boundaries. The Town has effectively established permanent boundaries with all of its neighboring communities except the City of Oconomowoc. There are two Town islands entirely surrounded by the City, which have been created by annexations over the years. Until the Town has a contiguous boundary without any islands, the State will not approve an incorporation.
- b. **Population Density:** The State requires incorporated municipalities to have a certain population density per square mile. Nearly half our communities' land is protected by the Farmland Preservation District and does not meet that requirement for incorporation. Even if it was not protected in the Farmland Preservation District, a significant portion of this land must be planned for substantial development in the next three years.

**9. Can I still hunt in the new Village?**

To the extent that you can hunt in both respective communities today, we don't anticipate any changes after the agreement becomes effective.

**10. Will the burn permitting process change?**

To the extent that you can burn in both respective communities today, we don't anticipate any changes after the agreement becomes effective.

**11. Why was January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, picked as the effective date?**

The date was picked based on advice from the State of Wisconsin Dept of Revenue

**12. Will my property's assessed valuation change due to this agreement?**

There will be no changes to assessed values because of this agreement.

**13. Will the agreement require additional public service expenditures?**

There will be no additional expenditures because of this agreement.

**14. Does the agreement affect the scheduled election process or number of board positions?**

- a. Elections for the newly formed Village will continue to follow the same election process and schedule currently being used by the Village of Lac La Belle consisting of one Village President and four Village Trustees.
- b. Town Residents will see a slightly different process for the first year only. Currently, to run for Town office candidates are required to fill out nomination papers to be placed on a ballot. The Villages uses the Caucus Process where residents are nominated to be placed on a ballot. The newly formed Village will have several opportunities for residents to educate themselves on this new process.

**15. Will any of my current Municipal Services Change?**

All services currently provided to both the Village and Town will stay the same. There will be no lapse in services.

**16. What does this mean for Sewer Service?**

Properties served by Mary Lane Sanitary Commission and Blackhawk Sanitary District will be absorbed by the Village, and the Village will become the sewer service provider. There are no expected changes to sewer rates for these properties.

For properties served by Town of Oconomowoc Utility District No. 1, you will continue receiving sewer service in the same manner as presently provided. There are no expected changes to sewer rates for these properties.

Sewer service to the current Village will continue as planned for 2025.

**17. What ordinances will apply to my property?**

One of the many goals of this agreement was to create predictability for the residents. Therefore, after the agreement becomes effective, the ordinances that apply to your property will be familiar:

For Town territory transferring to the Village, the Town's current ordinances will continue to apply to this territory until the Village can update its code for the long-term.

For current Village Territory, the Village current ordinances will continue to apply. There will be no changes to the Village's existing Code that affect this territory.

Please note that the Town and Village Codes are substantively very similar.

**18. Will any property remain in the Town after the agreement becomes effective?**

Yes, two areas consisting of 17 properties are surrounded by the City of Oconomowoc. These areas are known as Town remnants. These remnants will continue to receive all services that they currently receive. These properties may be charged a fee for the services, but the fee will not exceed the real estate tax that would have otherwise been paid by those properties if the agreement was not been in place.

These 17 properties are shown on the below Map (Exhibit 1) as "Town Island Oconomowoc A" and "Town Oconomowoc Island B."

**19. Will my School District Boundaries change?**

There will be no changes to current school district boundaries.

**20. Will my current licenses or permits change?**

Any license, permit, or other approval issued by the Town or Village will remain in effect.

**21. Will my address change?**

There are no plans to change any property mailing address in the Village or the Town.

**22. Where will the Village and Town Hall's be located?**

In the same location that Village and Town meetings presently occur, which is Oconomowoc Town Hall, W359N6812 Brown Street, Oconomowoc, WI 53066.

**23. Where will I vote?**

You will continue to vote at Crosspoint Community Church, W380N6931 N Lake Rd, Oconomowoc, WI 53066.

**24. I still have more questions. How do I find out more information about this agreement?**

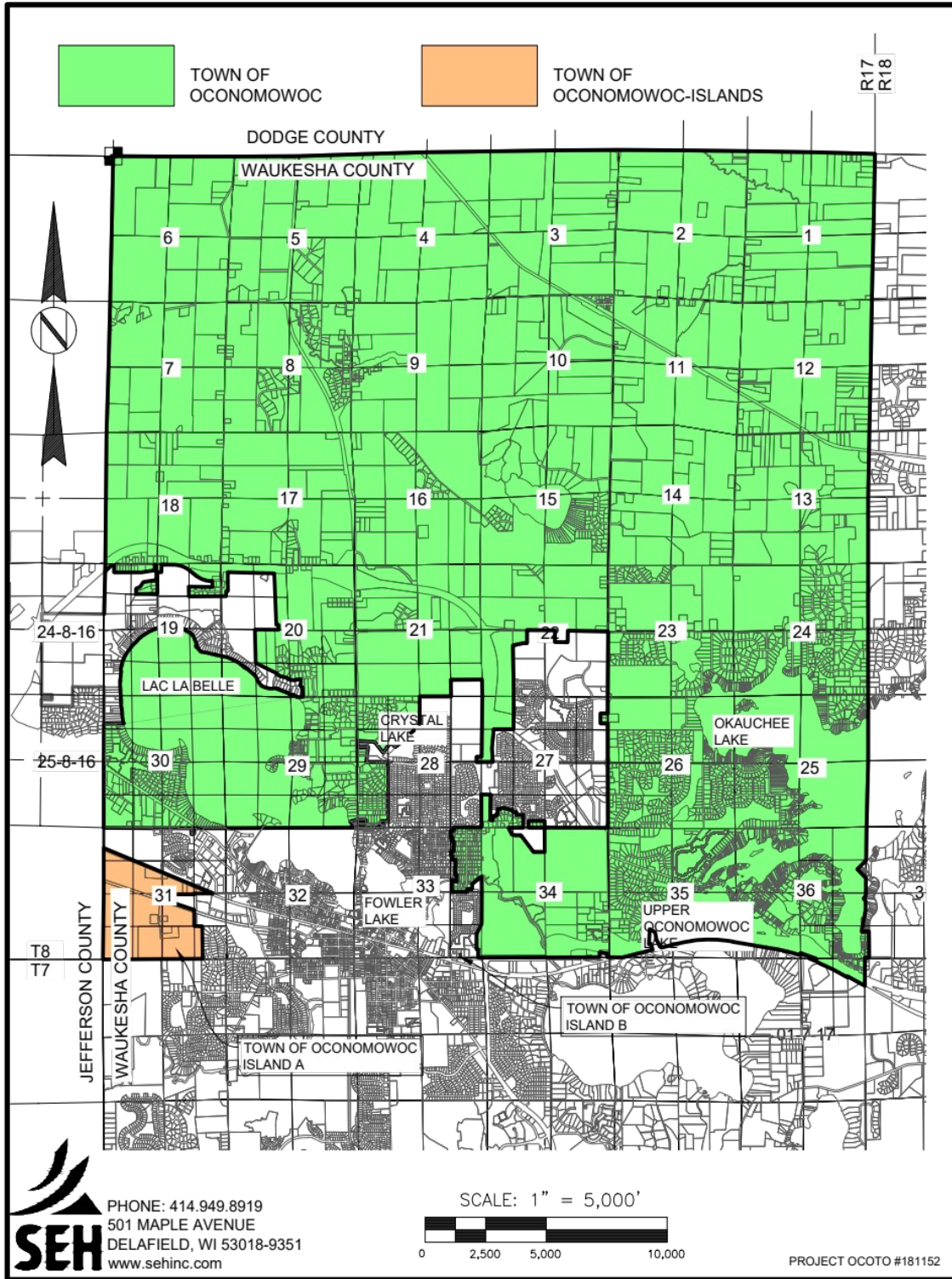
You have several options. You can submit written comments or questions to the following email addresses: [clerkoffice@townoconomowoc-wi.gov](mailto:clerkoffice@townoconomowoc-wi.gov) or [clerk@townoconomowoc-wi.gov](mailto:clerk@townoconomowoc-wi.gov).

Or by mail at W359 N6812 Brown Street, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin 53066.

On November 13, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., a public hearing will also be held at Crosspoint Community Church. You are welcome to provide a comment during the public hearing.

At the public hearing, please provide your questions upon arrival to avoid duplicative questions. You will not be restricted from asking additional questions if they arise during the public hearing.

Exhibit 1



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