



GREEN LAKE COUNTY

571 County Road A, Green Lake, WI 54941

The following documents are included in the packet for the *Green Lake County Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee* business meeting that is scheduled for Monday, March 23, 2026, at 5 pm.

Packet Pages:

- 2 Agenda
- 3-4 Draft Meeting Minutes from 2/9/26
- 5 Draft Meeting Minutes from 2/23/26
- 6-9 Subcommittee Meeting Discussion Outline - "Food for Thought"



GREEN LAKE COUNTY
LAND USE PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

Matt Kirkman
Director

Office: 920-294-4156
FAX: 920-294-4198

Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee Meeting Notice

Date: Monday, March 23, 2026, Time: 5:00 PM
Green Lake County Government Center, UWEX Training Room
571 County Rd A, Green Lake WI

AGENDA

**Committee
Members**

Mike Starshak-chair
Gene Thom-vice chair
Shelly Rothman
Lisa Reas
Paul Schwandt
Jane Strelow
Jim Hebbe
Taylor Strauser
Samuel Mast
Mary Lou Neubauer
Jeff Shadick
Mark Wilton
Sue McConnell
Todd Morris
Matt Kirkman
Patricia Malone

Sec: Ryan Schinke

This agenda gives notice of a meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee. It is possible that individual members of governing bodies of Green Lake County government may attend this meeting for informative purposes. Members of the Green Lake County Board of Supervisors or its committees may be present for informative purposes but will not take any formal action. A majority or a negative quorum of the members of the Green Lake County Board of Supervisors and/or any of its committees may be present at this meeting. See State ex rel. Badke v. Vill. Bd. of Vill. of Greendale, 173 Wis.2d 553, 578, 494 N.W. 2d 408 (1993).

Purpose Statement: To complete the 10-year update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Meeting Goal: Subcommittee to identify Goals Policies & Objectives for Focus Areas

1. Call to Order
2. Certification of Open Meeting Law
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Minutes of 2/9/2026 & 2/23/2026
5. Public Comment (15 minutes total/3-minute limit per person)
6. Committee discussion:
 - a) Review changes to Comp Plan Goals from Evaluation
 - b) Review Possible Additions / Considerations for the Plan
 - c) Develop Goals, Policies and objectives for these additions
 - d) Discuss Amish fire aide plan and zoning ordinance conflicts.
 - e) Discuss Public Input for Focus Areas.
 - f) Future Meeting Dates:
 - i. Monday, April 27th, 5:00pm
 - ii. Additional meetings if necessary
 - g) Future Agenda items for discussion
7. Adjourn

Please note: Meeting area is accessible to the physically disabled. Anyone planning to attend who needs visual or audio assistance, should contact the County Clerk's Office, 294-4005, not later than 3 days before date of the meeting.

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**GREEN LAKE COUNTY
2026 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Monday, February 9, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

Matt Kirkman called the meeting of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Green Lake County Government Center, UWEX Training Room, Green Lake, WI. The requirements of the open meeting law were certified as being met. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Present: Shelly Rothman, Gene Thom, Lisa Reas, Paul Schwandt, Mike Starshak, Jane Strelow
Jim Hebbe, Taylor Strauser, Samuel Mast, Mary Lou Neubauer**

Absent: Sue McConnell, Mark Wilton, Jeff Shadick

Also Present: Matt Kirkman, Land Use Planning & Zoning Director

Patricia Malone, UWEX – Community Development Educator

Todd Morris, County Conservationist

Ryan Schinke, Land Use Coordinator/Tech

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERVIEW

Kirkman gave a brief description of the Green Lake County Comprehensive Plan.

INTRODUCTIONS

Committee Members introduced themselves.

ESTABLISH SUBCOMMITTEE GROUND RULES

Malone went through ground rules with committee.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Motion/second (Schwandt/Thom) to elect Mike Starshak as Chair. Kirkman asked for any other nominations. Motion carried with no negative vote.

Motion/second (Thom/Schwandt) to elect Gene Thom as Vice Chair. Chair Starshak asked for any other nominations. Motion carried with no negative vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Starshak spoke regarding Comprehensive Planning process.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES - None

SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. 2016 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation

FUTURE SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Comprehensive Plan Focus Areas
2. Future Meeting Date: Monday, February 23rd, 5:00pm

ADJOURN

6:50 p.m. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Starshak.

RECORDED BY

Ryan Schinke
Land Use Planning & Zoning Coordinator/Tech

APPROVED ON:

DRAFT

**GREEN LAKE COUNTY
2026 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Monday, February 23, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Starshak called the meeting of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Green Lake County Government Center, UWEX Training Room, Green Lake, WI. The requirements of the open meeting law were certified as being met. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Present: Shelly Rothman, Gene Thom, Lisa Reas, Paul Schwandt, Mike Starshak, Jane Strelow
Sue McConnell, Taylor Strauser, Samuel Mast**

Absent: Jim Hebbe, Mark Wilton, Jeff Shadick, Mary Lou Neubauer

Also Present: Matt Kirkman, Land Use Planning & Zoning Director

Patricia Malone, UWEX – Community Development Educator

Todd Morris, County Conservationist

Jessica Jungenberg, Rural Environmental Health Alliance

Ryan Schinke, Land Use Coordinator/Tech

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – to be done at 3/23/2026 meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sam Mast spoke regarding the Amish community having issues with 50% building use restrictions that coincide with some Conditional Use Permits and some restrictions on small acreage farms in the Amish community. These items would be added to the next meeting agenda in March.

SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Malone led subcommittee discussion on 2016 Plan Evaluation.

Malone led subcommittee discussion regarding Comp Planning focus areas.

Jessica Jungenberg of REHA assisted the subcommittee's discussion regarding short-term rentals

PUBLIC APPEARANCES – none

FUTURE SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Focus areas, goals, policies, and objectives
2. Future Meeting Date: Monday, March 23rd, 5:00pm

ADJOURN

Motion/second (Thom/Schwandt) to adjourn meeting

7:00 p.m. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Starshak.

RECORDED BY

Ryan Schinke

Land Use Planning & Zoning Coordinator/Tech

APPROVED ON:

Comp Plan Evaluation Continued

Goal 1: Preserve the rural character. Maintain goal and objectives 1 and 2. Comments related: How do you define growth? Use of Shoreland Zoning to protect lake. What options do we have? Minimum lot sizes, Building setbacks, Vegetation Protection, Impervious Surface Stds, Filling, Grading, Excavation, Building Height restrictions, and shoreland-wetland zoning. Can we place limits on the number of houses? In zoned towns we already limit the number of dwelling on a lot/parcel. Unzoned is still a free-for-all. SZO standards have to be specifically traceable to shoreland and water (of the State) protection. Inserting zoning standards in SZOs cuts out Towns from the process and could be legally challenged.

Goal 2: Protect the Natural Resources.

Objectives 1 through 4 are still relevant. We need to consider adding a groundwater objective. Add the link to the LWRM plan.

Goal 3: Farmland Preservation

A concern with this goal is the impact it may have on smaller farmers and the Amish as they add small businesses to their operations (requirement regarding benefit and percentage of building committed to agriculture). The allowance of small businesses on agricultural properties is a concept that can conflict with traditional zoning ordinances. You start with an ag parcel that might have residential and agricultural uses and then the owner wishes to add a commercial (or in some cases an industrial) use. Stacking all regulated uses on one parcel renders the zoning of the parcel, moot. However, allowances have recently been made by DATCP for commercial uses that are ag-related and some non-ag related uses when applied to certain restrictions. One of those restrictions is the building containing the non-ag use be primarily used for the ag use of the farm. The Amish have managed to meet this requirement, in many cases, by filling 51% of the building (containing the non-ag use) with combustible hay. They could park farm equipment, store seed, house farm animals, etc. and their fire aide plan stays intact. And truly, the ordinance states that these non-ag uses shall require no building, structure or improvement other than a building that is an integral part of or incidental to the agricultural use on the farm. We are bending these rules already by allowing new buildings to be built for these non-ag uses.

I did reach out to DATCP regarding Sam's "opt-out" conversation. What DATCP was saying is that through the Farmland Preservation Planning process, the County could have made the decision that all Amish owned farms are not appropriate for inclusion into the farmland preservation areas. Certain provisions of the Farmland Preservation plan would have needed to be amended to account for this and then the plan's maps would be amended showing all of the Amish farms to be planned as areas of non-farm use. With that, any

rezone request from an Amish owner out of A1 would be possible as the FP/Comp plan amendment process is a more robust process than the evaluation of rezone criteria.

When observing Amish-owned properties, they appear to meet all of the standards of the Farmland Preservation Plan. It would be a shame to lose all of these properties because of a self-imposed fire aide plan restriction. Are there ways to amend the fire aid plan to require construction materials that are fire retardant / suppressing? Could their plan require a fire wall or fire blocking to stop a fire from spreading into the ag portion of the building?

Goal 4: Residential Development is promoted in designated areas that are suitable and compatible.

Keep objectives 1,2, and 4. Modify objective 3. It currently says “collaborate,” but we may need to re-think the role of the county in housing. Most current efforts are happening at the individual town, city, and village level. Counties can take on roles with the issue of affordable housing. What do we think GLC’s role should be? I put a call into Mark Wilton. I think a County should position itself to be open to Munis plans to deal with housing so long as farmland can be preserved as prescribed by the farmland preservation plan. I don’t think Counties should be actively purchasing land and getting into development projects.

Goal 5: Attract service and employment opportunities consistent with existing and future land uses.

County shouldn’t be an impediment to economic development. Objective 1 and Objective 2 may fit better under Goal 3 (FPP). With objectives 3 and 4 change the word “work” to support or cooperate. Here, again, Munis should be driving this ship. Unincorporated areas (towns) are called unincorporated for a reason. Counties should be open to the Muni’s economic development objectives so long as the locations do not conflict with the farmland preservation plan and other planning efforts.

Goal 6: Provide and maintain a safe, orderly, efficient transportation system (Adequate Infrastructure).

Keep this goal. Add objective 1 under Goal 7 to Goal 6. As much as can be required of the County Highway Department under this goal should be attempted. This is a clear County planning goal.

Goal 7: Provide for the development of planned municipal services, where appropriate, and supporting services for the entire population.

In general this is not a major role for the county. The county could play a role in encouraging communication and cooperation.

Goal 8: Work with local communities in sharing information (plans, needs, regional branding) (Cooperation).

In general, this goal is really focused on communication and cooperation. Is this a principle more than a goal? Some folks felt that it would be better as a goal. Others shared that in a hierarchy a principle is higher than a goal. Our principles could be included in the plan.

Goal 9: Encourage cooperation to brand Green Lake County as regional destination (Local and regional economic development)

Group felt this goal was important to keep, but it should focus more on local and regional economic development. It should go beyond tourism.

Possible Additions/Consideration for the Plan

- Should the county be more active in tourism (consider the impact on property tax).
 - Amenities associated with tourism can make communities more attractive.
 - The on-going tension between wanting/encouraging change versus those who want no change.
 - Consider the importance and value of united efforts in tourism.
- Add an objective around high capacity wells. It would fit the best under Goal 2.
 - Need a better understanding of what the current regulations allow.
 - What could/should the county do?
- The subcommittee needs a better understanding economic development in Green Lake County.
 - Pat will contact specialists to get presentation and information put together.
 - Taylor talked about the economic impact of the watershed. The study is complete and she can share.
- Additional information needed.
 - From the MCDs we need financial data. For example tourism data – room tax, sales tax related to tourism and other industries. There are other relevant categories. A general question is what are the economic drivers in GLC?
 - A question for the MCDs – what do they need or want from the county?
- New concerns
 - Solar and Wind Farms. What changes were put in the zoning ordinances? Are they sufficient? [We know that February 2025 the County adopted a zoning ordinance amendment that addresses](#)

Wind and Solar Energy installations. We were limited by Chapter 66.0401 Wis. Stats. and Wis. Admin. Code PSC128. The County could not be more restrictive than these rules. I think the rules are sufficient to address Wind and Solar.

- Data Centers. Here .. according to DATCP ... if the proposed location is on lands zoned Farmland Preservation, we'd explain to the developer that the data center use is not allowed. At least this would be the answer in our zoned towns and the AEA areas of the unzoned towns.
- Housing.
- Business succession including farms.
- Accountability – what strategies could be used?
 - Annual update
 - Including an action plan chart that includes timeline and responsible parties.

Public Input.

- Surveys. The last county-wide survey occurred about 2003. What questions should we ask?
- Informational meetings.
- Listening sessions or focus groups in individual communities.
- Hearings – formal, at the end of the planning process.