

# Sustainable Weston

In an age when energy costs are high & taxpayers are more aware of their surroundings, **Sustainable Weston** is an effort focused on creating a community that is environmentally conscious. This new campaign has five areas of concentration: energy, ground & surface water protection, recycling, wetland & woodland preservation and controlling urban sprawl.

## Energy: Conservation & Alternatives

Without question, energy use is the number one issue facing local municipalities today. With taxpayers relying on 24 hour policing, weekly garbage pick-up, passable roads in the winter months, and nighttime recreational activities, energy makes up 60% of operating expense increases in Weston's 2008 operating budget.

**Sustainable Weston** will look at the energy issue from all sides, concentrating on conserving energy in municipal operations and creating opportunity for local business to use alternative energy such as **geothermal** (North American Hydro) **and wind power**. Village government has just undergone an energy audit by Focus on Energy and is exploring the possibility of converting the municipal center to 50% solar dependency. In addition, the Village will spend \$90,000 on the Weston Public Safety Building to make the facility more energy efficient.



As the Village replaces equipment, an emphasis will be placed on using hybrid vehicles and new truck technology that reduces emissions. Efforts are underway to also create a **“paperless” government** environment through the use of electronic agendas, scanning of official documents, e-mails and an interactive website.



Plans are underway to expand MetroRide, Weston's popular **Route K**, bus service and to enhance the community's sidewalk and multi-use path system to reduce dependence on the automobile. Weston's sidewalk policy is based on creating neighborhood connections to schools, parks, shopping areas, and government buildings.

Weston is a **dark skies community** relying on a low level lighting strategy that prohibits any home or business from extending light above 1 candle foot beyond the property line during evening hours. This strategy requires energy efficient light fixtures and low-level bulbs.

## Ground & Surface Water Protection

The Village of Weston is Marathon County's leader in protecting groundwater aquifers and quality surface waters such as the Eau Claire River and the Bull Junior Creek. Through the establishment of a storm water utility, the Village has reduced suspended solids discharge to rivers and streams through capital improvement projects, site plan review, street sweeping, mowing and taxpayer education.

In 2008, the Village of Weston will explore a “Riparian Area Protection” ordinance that limits the amount of fertilizer and pesticides residents may use within 50 feet of a wetland or surface water. The Village of Weston also has four wellhead protection areas designed to protect groundwater that provides drinking water to the community. A wellhead protection area prohibits discharge activity in a large area surrounding Weston's municipal wells.



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## Recycling; Statewide Leadership

The Village of Weston, with its current population of approximately 13,800, is one of the top recycling communities in the state in Total Recyclables, Banned Items, and Recycling Pounds per Capita, for a municipality of our size for the third year in a row! The 2006 rankings are based on communities within the population range of 12,000 -15,000. Currently, the average person in the Village recycles 253.10 pounds of material (not including yard waste) annually, which equates to **1746.39 tons kept out of the landfill.**



The Village also hosts a yard waste facility that allows taxpayers to drop off grass clippings, leaves, etc. 24 hours a day. The Village in turn creates compost out of the material at its material handling facility and uses the product on municipal projects. In 2008, the Village of Weston, Marathon County Solid Waste and its garbage collection partner, Veolia ES, will work on new recycling strategies in the area of electronics, plastic beverage containers, and hazardous waste.

## Wetlands & Woodlands

The Village of Weston is approximately thirty percent wetlands that serve as nature's filter for the Eau Claire River, Bull Junior Creek, Cedar Creek and ultimately the Wisconsin River. Working closely with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the WDNR, the Village has established Wetland Protection District that limits building, protects wetlands species, and mitigates wetland loss due to development.

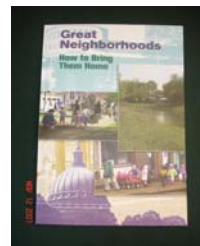


The neighborhood woodlands initiative is a cooperative venture between residential developers and the Village to preserve as many trees as possible in the establishment of new housing options. The Village also has an aggressive urban forestry program aimed at preserving mature trees and eradicating pests such as the Gypsy Moth, Linden Borer and the Green Ash Borer. Weston's effort in 2006 led the way for the establishment of the countywide gypsy moth coordinator. Since 2003, the Village has **planted over 700 trees** throughout the community.



## Urban Sprawl Control: Discipline Through Planning

The Village of Weston has adopted a Comprehensive Plan aimed at controlling growth and preserving agricultural lands. Adopted in 2006, this twenty-year future land use plan clearly delineates a business & industrial districts and minimizes the impact of growth south of Highway 29. Also in 2006, the Village of Weston and the Town of Weston established an extraterritorial zoning ordinance that limits sprawl in the northeast corner of the Village and helps to preserve the rural nature of the township.



In the fall of 2007, the Village partnered with the environmental group, 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin, to take an in-depth look at how the centers & edges of Weston will be developed to create "Great Neighborhoods" – a program designed to create sustainable residential areas.