

Chapter 5 - Land Use

Per State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 - Comprehensive Planning (2)(h), the Land Use element of a community's comprehensive plan is to be:

"A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications."

5.1. Overview

Rock County is unique in that it has only limited ability to make decisions that affect land use. That ability lies primarily with the Cities, Villages and Towns of Rock County through their zoning authority. Each City, Village and Town in Rock County is making population projections based upon the amount of growth they want to have and on other criteria that each has decided is appropriate for their community. Each community has then made housing and land need projections based on their own projections for population.

Rock County recognizes and acknowledges that each community has the right and responsibility to determine its own projected growth and future land needs, and that the land use plans of each community, whether it be City, Village or Town, controls land use decision making within that jurisdiction. **It is therefore imperative that anyone wanting information on land use anywhere in Rock County consults the local jurisdiction or jurisdictions' future land use map (s) to obtain the most current and accurate land use information available.** Each City and Village land use map as of 2009 is located in Section IV: Appendix I - City and Village Future Land Use Map of this *Plan*.

This Chapter will demonstrate one possible scenario for additional future land demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses based on a widely accepted methodology for

projecting population. Although there may be inconsistencies between projections made in this Chapter and those made by individual communities, the goals, objectives and policies of this Chapter are intended to bring a balance to the way communities in Rock County view their future land use.

As such, this Chapter is only intended to serve as a tool to support and guide local land use plans and maps by illustrating historic land use trends, existing planning factors and future land use expectations as well as presenting information and education on current planning principles and opportunities and possible future land use conflicts. To that end, the goals, objectives and policies of this Chapter are directed toward suggesting methods and strategies for local governments to achieve their land use goals through careful planning, intergovernmental cooperation and effective policy making and more importantly, toward recommending means by which to reach a unified regional vision for Rock County.

Therefore, in order to implement this Chapter's goals, objectives and policies, Rock County must aggressively and proactively implement the other Chapters of this *Plan*, to achieve this successful regional vision regarding land use. This is especially true with significant priority and importance, in the implementation of the goals, objectives and policies in Section II: Chapter 10 - Intergovernmental Cooperation of this *Plan*. It is expected that the primary role of the Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency will be to educate, coordinate and mediate, where needed, for intergovernmental planning and cooperation that helps to bring together ideas and views of every community in Rock County.

5.2. Existing Plans and Programs

A number of County and regional plans contain key planning concepts policies, ideas and philosophies that are incorporated into the development of the goals of this Chapter. Farmland preservation, ESOSAs (steep slopes, hydric soils, floodplains, wetlands, etc.) and extraterritorial jurisdiction are three fundamental planning concepts and tools that have influenced land use patterns in Rock County for the past several years. Those concepts and tools, as well as others, are addressed in currently existing plans and programs that regulate or affect land use throughout Rock County. Additionally, future land use maps that are currently being developed by all jurisdictions within Rock County will all need to be considered for their affect on one another throughout the planning period.

City, Village and Town Land Use Plans and Maps

Some Towns in Rock County adopted future land use plans in the mid 1990s. Most of those Towns wrote their plans with the aid of the Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency and most of the plans have been used to guide land use decisions since their adoption. Nine Towns have worked with the Agency to produce new land use plans that are consistent with comprehensive planning legislation (State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001). Cities and Villages in Rock County have also had land use plans to guide their growth in the past,

and all of them have, either independently or with a private consultant, gone through a comprehensive planning process similar to the process Towns have gone through to update their land use plans.

Farmland Preservation Program/Agricultural Preservation Plan and Map

The State of Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program has served as a tool to help sustain farming as a viable economic option for farmers throughout Wisconsin. Because of this program, a detailed *Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update* and map were developed that indicate where land is planned to remain in exclusive agricultural zoning and where farmers are, therefore, eligible for tax credits through the State program. The map also depicts where urban and rural growth is expected to occur. Limitations of the plan for preservation of agriculture include the ability of the landowner to leave the program at any time and convert the land to another use. Proposed land divisions may not be denied at the County level based on conflict with the plan alone. So, while the program has helped to reduce the tax burden on farmers, it has not provided a large enough incentive to prevent development of agricultural land. Trends in Rock County have shown that significantly less acreage of agricultural land is currently eligible for tax credit through the Agricultural Preservation Program than there was at the height of landowner participation.

Rock County, Wisconsin 2009-2014 Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan

The POROS Plan is intended to be adopted as a part of, and implemented in coordination with this *Plan*. See Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources of this *Plan* for a more complete description.

208 Water Quality Plans

Federal legislation for water quality planning programs was enacted in the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1965 and the subsequent 1972 amendments to the act. A key section of the act, more commonly referred to as Section 208, required the preparation of areawide water quality management plans (208 water quality plans) by local agencies designated by the governor of each state. The principal purpose of the 208 water quality plans is to develop a long-range sanitary sewer service boundary for areas with large concentrations of population. In Rock County, the Cities of Janesville and Beloit and the Town of Beloit would fall into this classification. The urban sanitary sewer service area boundary identifies the geographic land area within which sanitary sewer service could be made available in a cost-effective and environmentally acceptable manner.

Managed Forest Land

Several property owners in Rock County are in WDNR's Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program, which was developed to ease the property tax burden for Wisconsin forestland owners with at least 10 acres of woods or forestland who wish to manage their woodlands for a period of either 25 or 50 years. Because there is a penalty for early withdraw, this program limits the change of use and MFL property for the period of enrollment. The MFL program is intended to foster timber production on private forests, while recognizing other values. MFL participants pay property taxes at a reduced rate. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WDOR) estimates MFL program participants can reduce their property tax an average of 80% after paying harvest taxes. There are fewer landowners in the MFL program now than in past years, however it may still continue to affect land use to some extent in Rock County.

Use Value Assessment

In 1974 the State of Wisconsin amended the Wisconsin Constitution to permit the preferential treatment of agricultural land and the 1995-1997 Budget Act changed the standard for assessing agricultural land in Wisconsin from market value to use value. The goal of this legislation is to protect Wisconsin's farm economy and curb urban sprawl by assessing farmland based upon its agricultural productivity rather than its potential for development. Because Rock County has a significant amount of agricultural land that is affected by development pressure, this program has perhaps slowed, but not stopped the financial benefits of selling farmland for development.

Plans/Maps From Outside Rock County

Although plans from other counties or neighboring communities do not have direct jurisdiction in Rock County, they may affect what happens here. It is important to be aware of those plans and policies to gain a more detailed and realistic idea of how regional activity may affect Rock County. Both local and regional plans can help to suggest future trends, pressures, opportunities and constraints for future land uses in Rock County.

5.3. Existing Land Use Inventory and Historical Trends

In order to be able to plan for future land use it is essential to know what currently exists on the land. Existing land uses can be explored and analyzed in a variety of ways for Rock County. The information provided throughout this Chapter, such as the 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory, focuses primarily on the unincorporated areas of Rock County yet some of the information will include data and analysis that also includes the urban areas of the County, such as that found in the projection analysis. For the purpose of analyzing the unincorporated areas of Rock County, the following data sources will be discussed:

- 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory
- Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WDOR) Assessment data
- Local zoning ordinances and maps
- Current land use maps

This section will compare trends by comparing information from these data sources, however because of the lack of consistent historical land use data from any one source it is impossible to do a valid analysis of past trends. An analysis of historical trends in the price of land will also appear at the end of this section.

2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory

Studying existing land use activities is an important step in planning for future land use. The 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory is the most current unincorporated Rock County land use map available (see Map 5.1). It was developed using the American Planning Association's Land Based Classification System (LBCS) and is derived from aerial photographs taken in 2000. This Rock County LBCS map utilizes categorization based on the type of activity that occurs on the land as opposed to one based on the type of structure that appears on the land. According to the American Planning Association, LBCS Project, "activity refers to the actual use of land based on its observable characteristics. It describes what actually takes place in physical or observable terms (e.g. farming, shopping, manufacturing, vehicular movement, etc.)" Recognizing activity occurring on the land is the best way to describe land use and was therefore selected by Rock County as the method of classifying the land to best represent use.

Previous land use inventories done for Rock County, however, used similar but slightly different ways of identifying and categorizing land use. This fact prevents accurate comparison of the 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory with past inventories to determine how land uses have changed over time. It also poses difficulty for making specific projections about land use in the future, since projections are based on past trends. The inventory has, however, provided Rock County with a consistent and systematic way to categorize unincorporated land uses that can continue to be used for future Countywide inventories. It is important to note that this inventory was not completed for the incorporated areas of Rock County because each of the incorporated communities have taken the responsibility for identifying and mapping their own land use. Historically, some Rock County Towns, however, have taken the portion of the 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory map representing their Town and have used it in their development/comprehensive plans as their current land use map.

On the following page, descriptions of each of the categories used in Map 5.1 are listed in the order of highest percentage of the total unincorporated land use to the lowest percentage of the total unincorporated land use (see Section IV: Appendix H - Land Use Category By LCBS Category of this *Plan* for more specific information about the categories used to develop Map 5.1)

- *Dark Green: Natural Resource-Related Activities - 365,612 acres (87.5%)*
This category includes all types of farming and mining. As expected in Southern Wisconsin unincorporated areas, the largest percentage (nearly 88.0%) of land in Rock County was in agriculture, livestock and mining activities in 2000 and is expected to remain the largest use throughout the planning period. Typical agricultural activities including cropping, livestock and pasturing account for 363,919.8 acres (or 87.1%) while mining activities account for only 1,691.7 acres (or .4%) of the total unincorporated land area.
- *Yellow: Residential Activities - 24,039 acres (5.8%)*
This category includes activities that occur in all types of residential uses and structures, land with residential ownership characteristics and land within a development that is residential in character (i.e. undeveloped lots within a subdivision). This category includes activities that occur in all types of housing, such as single family and multi-family structures, institutions and hotels, and includes other household activities such as transient living.

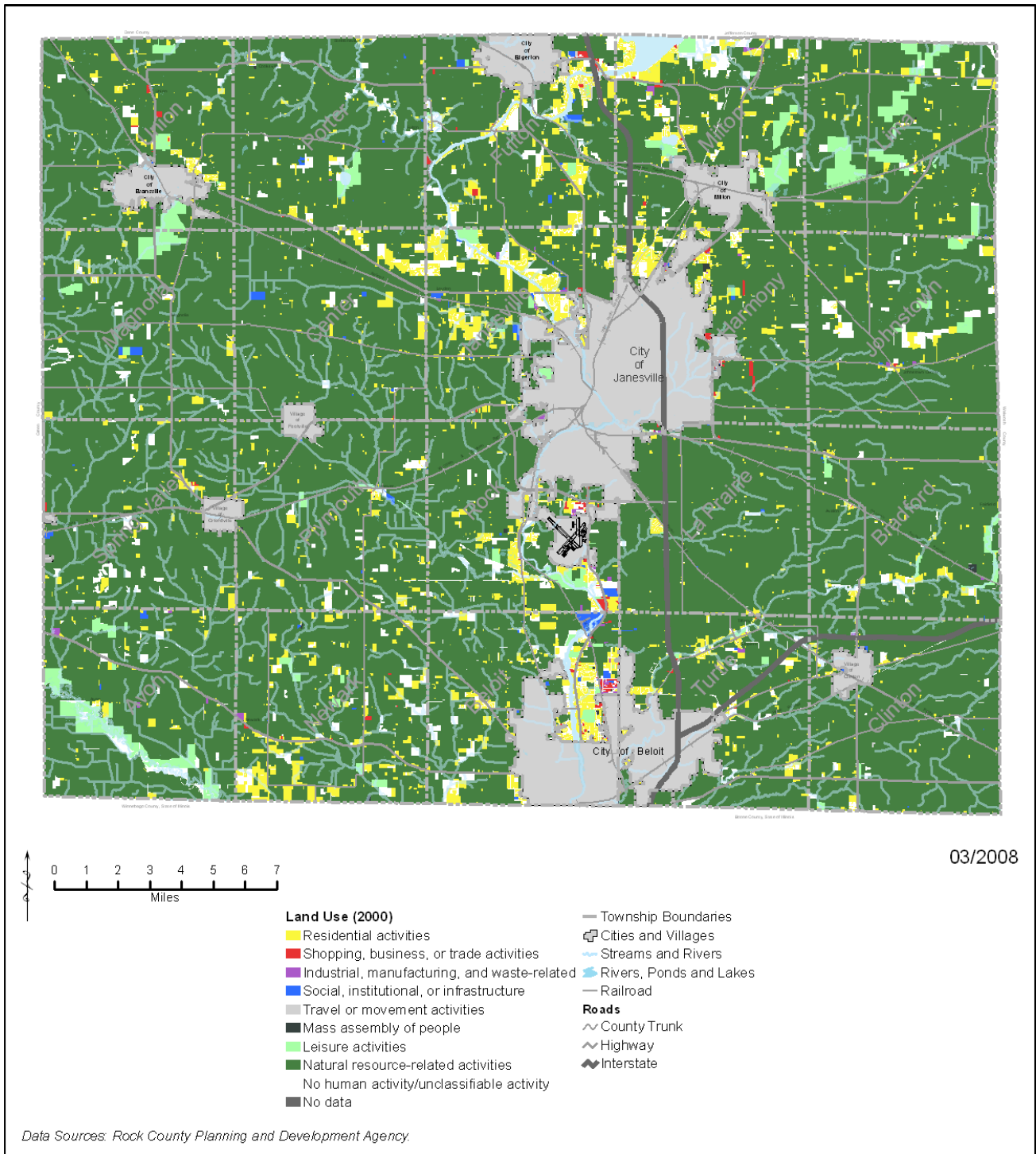
Residential activity was the second most prevalent activity in unincorporated Rock County in 2000 at 5.8% of the total land use. The most common form of residential use in unincorporated Rock County is single-family residential housing. Some of that housing is in rural subdivisions and some of it is in a scattered housing pattern, often along convenient transportation routes to urban areas. Evidence from Town zoning maps and WDOR assessment data (discussed later) confirm residential as the land use that is the most commonly occurring developed use that is planned for short-term future development.

- *White: No Human Activity or Unclassifiable - 13,197 acres (3.2%)*
Areas such as forests or wetlands and other unusable areas that are not part of a park areas may have been previously categorized as waste in other land use inventories, are classified as no human activity. This category also includes activities that are yet to be determined (1.7 acres). This may include areas where the land use activity was in transition at the time of the Inventory. It is unlikely that there will be an increase in land with no human activity in the future however the amount of land that is unclassifiable or yet to be determined is likely to vary over the planning period.
- *Light Green: Leisure Activities - 9,753 acres (2.3%)*
This category includes both passive and active leisure activities such as team sport locations, parks and water activities. Because parks and play areas tend to use a relatively large amount of land compared to other uses, the leisure activities category represents a fairly large percentage of the total land uses compared to other developed uses. It is expected that the amount of land in this category will increase as need is indicated and funding is available.

- Blue: Institutions, Utilities and Infrastructure - 1,446 acres (.35%)**
 All schools, police and fire and other institutional uses, utilities (including lines and plants), water and gas storage, and cemeteries are included in this category. Even though these activities are needed by people living in the unincorporated areas of the County, there is still a very low proportion of land use being used for these purposes. It is ultimately up to those living in rural areas and utility providers to decide where and when more land for these services are needed or wanted within the unincorporated jurisdictions.
- Red: Commercial (Shopping, business or trade activities) - 999 acres (.2%)**
 This category represents all uses that are business related, including all retail, office and service activities, such as restaurants. Only about one quarter of 1% of the total land uses in rural Rock County fall into this category, most likely because of the lack of municipal sewer to service commercial users. Although there may be opportunities to increase the proportion of commercial uses in the rural areas, those opportunities will be largely market driven.
- Purple: Industrial - 526 acres (.1%)**
 This category includes all industrial, manufacturing, assembly, warehouse and waste management activities, including landfills. As with commercial uses, an industrial user would be likely to have sewage disposal needs that would be best met within city or village limits (i.e. on a municipal sewer system) and the amount of industry in rural Rock County is not likely to change drastically. Current Town land use and zoning maps confirm that little additional land is currently set aside for industrial uses.
- Black: Social, Cultural or Religious Assembly - 213 acres (.1%)**
 Churches are likely one of the most common uses that were classified into this category. Although there are churches and other meeting places in many Towns, the amount of acreage needed for that type of use is minimal and therefore represents the smallest percentage of all of the land activity classifications.
- Dark Grey: No Data**
 The incorporated areas of Rock County (Cities and Villages) were omitted in the 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory, therefore no data were available for these areas. This category has been omitted from the percent of acreage calculation.



Map 5.1:
Land Use Inventory: 2000



Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WDOR) Assessment Data

Another source of land use information comes from WDOR tax assessment data. This data is useful in Rock County because it is based on consistently categorized land information that is reported annually for tax assessment purposes. However, shortfalls for the use of this data for making assumptions about land use do exist.

Shortfalls of the WDOR data for tracking land use are:

1. There is no map associated with the data.
2. Not all properties are viewed for reassessment every year and therefore the data may contain estimates of the number of acres in any one use in a given year based on information from the previous assessment.
3. In cases where no structural changes have taken place on a parcel, there may not be new data provided on the property even if the primary activity has changed.

These shortfalls indicate that this data may contain flaws from year to year, and may have flaws for use as projection data, however it is the best historical data available to Rock County at time and so will be used for a general outlook on future land use.

Property in Wisconsin is taxed based on the classification of private property into categories that indicate how the land is being used and what type of structure appears on the land. The WDOR has very clear guidelines and definitions of each type of use because ultimately, the amount of money that landowners owe in taxes is directly relevant to the type of land they own, because of the policy of use-value assessment, discussed previously in this Chapter. This makes for a very consistent method of categorizing land at such time as a property is assessed.

The WDOR data differs from the 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory data discussed previously in that the data is for assessment purposes and therefore, different parameters were used to categorize land use. Additionally, the WDOR data includes data collected in the incorporated areas of Rock County. Rock County totals include all Cities and Villages. It is important to note that when the 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory categories are combined to roughly match to WDOR data for Towns, that the amount and proportion of each land use relative to the others is fairly consistent between the two data sets. This fact builds confidence in the use of the WDOR data for future land use projections that will appear later in this Chapter.

Definitions of the land uses that have been derived by WDOR data are listed below. As suggested above, some of the WDOR land use classifications have been combined to accommodate the purpose of this analysis, which is to show historic land use trends. The WDOR categories entitled agriculture, agriculture forest, forest and other were combined to be able to more closely compare to the natural resource-related activities category in the 2000 Rock County Land Use Inventory. Commercial uses in this system compare roughly to the combined categories of commercial, institutional (not including government property), social/cultural and part of the travel or movement categories in the inventory, residential and industrial compare to the categories of the same names, and finally, land classified as undeveloped is roughly the

same as those classified under no human activity plus the part of the travel or movement category that represents road right of way.

- *Agricultural (Includes WDOR categories of Forest, Agricultural Forest and Other)*
Lands devoted primarily to agriculture, small-scale agricultural forestation and lands that are producing, or are capable of producing, commercial forest products (as defined by State of Wisconsin Statute 70.05) and other supporting activities. Also includes lands containing dwelling units and related improvements associated with agricultural use. This category does not include forests or woods that are in parks or that are not being forested under WDOR definitions.
- *Residential*
Lands containing dwelling units and related improvements not associated with agricultural use.
- *Commercial*
Lands, including improvements, devoted primarily to commercial operations, including, but not limited to dining, lodging, and retail sales establishments.
- *Industrial*
Lands, including improvements, devoted primarily to manufacturing and industrial operations, including, but not limited to, assembling, processing, and fabricating.
- *Undeveloped*
Lands generally unfit for any of the aforementioned uses, including, but not limited to, parks, hunting grounds, wetlands, ponds, gravel pits, and road rights of way.

Figure 5.2 shows the acreage and percent of the total of each land use using WDOR data and the combined classifications for the year 2005.

Figure 5.2:
Land Uses Based On WDOR Rock County* Tax Assessment Data: 2005

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent
Agricultural**	344,020	82.9%
Residential	35,913	8.7%
Commercial	8,063	1.9%
Industrial	1,999	.5%
Undeveloped	25,036	6.0%
TOTAL	415,031	100.0%

*Source: Statement of Assessments: Wisconsin Department of Revenue - 2005
Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency - 2008*

** Includes incorporated and unincorporated areas*

***The Agricultural category consists of four WDOR categories: Agriculture, forest, agricultural forest and other*

Figure 5.3 on the following page shows WDOR land acreage by assessment categorization and by municipality. The percent of total Rock County land area by use is shown by total percentage of each use per municipality. This helps to illustrate a comparison of the amount of land currently used in each category. For example, even though the population of the Towns in 2005 was only about a quarter of the combined population of the Cities and Villages, residential uses in the Towns occupied 6.2% of the total County assessed area whereas the population of the Cities and Villages only required 2.4% of the total County assessed area. This suggests that significantly fewer people were housed on much more land in the rural areas than in the urban area.



**Figure 5.3:
WDOR Assessment Categorization by Municipality and County: 2005**

Unincorporated Towns	Residential Acreage	Commercial Acreage	Manufacturing Acreage	Agricultural Acreage	Undeveloped Acreage	Total Acreage of All Uses	Percent Total of All Rock County
Avon	501	39	11	17,091	2,093	19,735	4.8%
Beloit	2599	605	211	11,083	477	14,975	3.6%
Bradford	727	114	0	20,452	1,062	22,355	5.4%
Center	832	67	0	20,276	1,089	22,264	5.4%
Clinton	540	120	50	20,214	836	21,760	5.2%
Fulton	1844	319	3	14,716	1,315	18,197	4.4%
Harmony	1388	157	45	12,275	426	14,291	3.4%
Janesville	3954	281	10	11,388	302	15,935	3.8%
Johnstown	809	158	0	20,812	856	22,635	5.5%
La Prairie	318	516	21	19,661	732	21,248	5.1%
Lima	1226	48	0	16,883	2,531	20,688	5.0%
Magnolia	344	29	0	20,004	1,117	21,494	5.2%
Milton	1909	532	2	13,763	1,157	17,363	4.2%
Newark	1963	48	37	18,386	1,593	22,027	5.3%
Plymouth	1177	107	0	19,335	1,096	21,715	5.2%
Porter	847	2	0	19,737	1,356	21,942	5.3%
Rock	1696	416	14	11,526	2,133	15,785	3.8%
Spring Valley	405	54	0	18,956	1,886	21,301	5.1%
Turtle	1421	294	11	14,188	1,110	17,024	4.1%
Union	1365	325	0	17,010	1,637	20,337	4.9%
TOWN TOTAL ACREAGE	25,865	4,231	415	337,756	24,804	393,071	94.7%
PERCENT OF ROCK COUNTY	6.2%	1.0%	0.1%	81.4%	6.0%	94.7%	
City/Village	Residential Acreage	Commercial Acreage	Manufacturing Acreage	Agricultural Acreage	Undeveloped Acreage	Total Land Area	Percent Total of All Rock County
Clinton	50	141	28	133	0	352	0.1%
Edgerton	654	387	56	407	143	1,647	0.4%
Evansville	17	6	108	346	31	508	0.1%
Footville	125	30	20	348	0	523	0.1%
Janesville	5,432	2,267	815	1,891	58	10,463	2.5%
Milton	621	31	104	240	0	996	0.2%
Orfordville	187	29	8	303	0	527	0.1%
Brodhead	10	3	0	0	0	13	0.0%
CITY/VILAGE TOTAL	10,048	3,832	1,584	6,264	232	21,960	5.3%
PERCENT OF ROCK COUNTY	2.4%	0.9%	0.4%	1.5%	0.1%	5.3%	
ROCK COUNTY TOTAL ACREAGE	35,913	8,063	1,999	344,020	25,036	415,031	100.0%

Local Zoning Ordinances and Maps

Although zoning maps are not necessarily a good indication of what will occur on the land throughout the planning period, they generally are a good indicator of how the land is expected to develop in the short-term future and are a good reflection of what uses currently exist on the land. There may be exceptions to this point where zoning was changed to accommodate a new use and then the new use was never developed, however, it remains a fairly accurate indicator of current land use throughout Rock County. Map 5.2 shows a composite of updated and adopted Town zoning maps that are available to date. As more maps are available they will be added to the composite. Refer to individual official Town zoning maps for more detailed information.

Figure 5.4 lists generalized zoning districts that have been identified through Town zoning ordinances and the number of acres in each for all of unincorporated Rock County. Although the exact title and requirements of each zoning district may vary by Town, the basic precepts of the districts are accurately exemplified in the table. The zoning district that most Towns have titled exclusive agricultural (A-1) is characterized by the largest minimum lot size (35 acres in most Towns) and lowest dwelling unit density of all the zoning districts (usually one unit per 35 acres plus additional units under conditional use). It is thus the district that is most conducive to large-scale, productive agricultural activities. Conversely, the rural residential (R-R) and urban residential (R-1) and single and two-family residential (R-2) districts are designated for residential uses, at dwelling unit densities generally ranging between one unit per acre and one unit per three acres. In Towns where there exists a planned unit development (PUD) district, lower density developments are sometimes negotiated if there is municipal sewer available. Again, because the Countywide zoning categories have been generalized from Town zoning ordinances, it is important to refer to individual Town ordinances and maps for more detailed information.

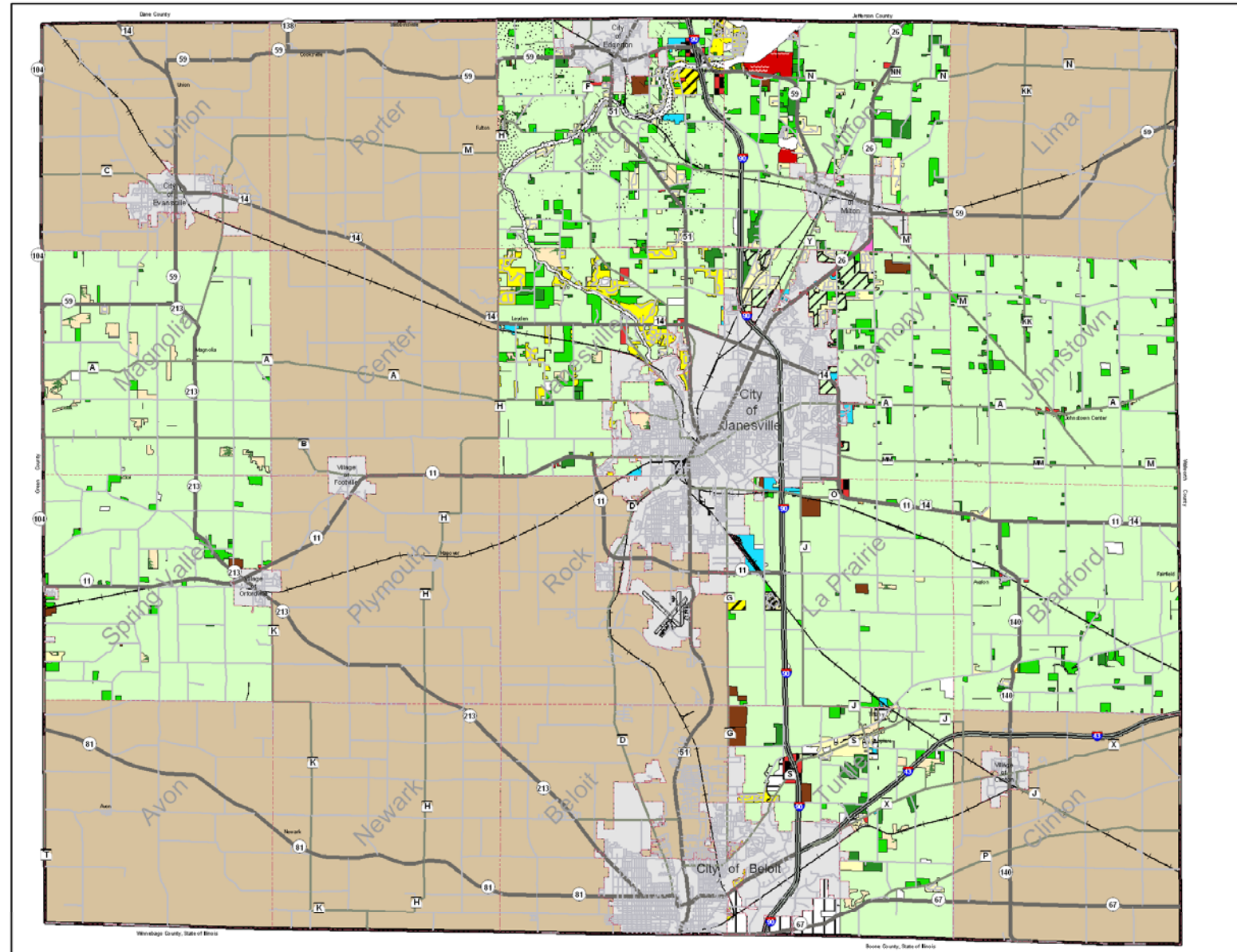
The purpose of presenting this zoning information is to provide another method of identifying current land use or uses expected in the near future. Figure 5.4 indicates that the majority (361,901 acres) of unincorporated Rock County is zoned exclusive agriculture (A-1), that the general agriculture (A-2) zoning district comprised the next largest portion of the County's land (14,582 acres), and the small-scale agriculture (A-3) zoning district comprised the third largest portion of Rock County in 2007. Combined, agricultural zoning comprises 82% of the total unincorporated zoned area in Rock County. This coincides with the WDOR assessment data for 2007 (82% agricultural).

Some Towns are using local zoning statistics as the best indicator of past and existing land use within that Town. Additionally, many Towns will be analyzing their current zoning and its applicability to what they want their future land uses to be. This is especially important since, according to State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 - Comprehensive Planning, zoning must be consistent with their comprehensive plans by January 1, 2010) Some Towns may be updating and using their zoning maps during the comprehensive planning process as a way to show shorter-term intended future land uses.

Map 5.2:
Composite Town Zoning: 2009

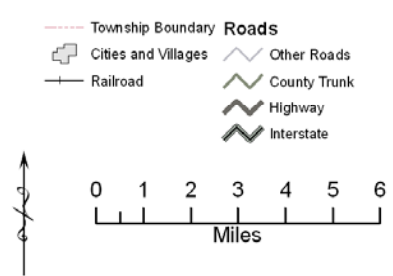
Zoning

Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035 Map 5.2



Rock County, Wisconsin 6/2009

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet Approved by Town Overlay Districts ANT - Antenna C1 - Lowland Conservancy C2 - Highland Conservancy Zoning A1 - Exclusive Agriculture District A1A - Transition Area A2 - General Agriculture Area A3 - Small Scale Agriculture Area A4 - Agricultural Residential District B1 - Local Commercial District B2 - Large Scale Commercial District B3 - General Commercial District C2 - Highland Conservancy District CHI - Commercial Highway Interchange District CR - Commercial Recreation District DEDICATED | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IN - Institutional District M1 - Light Industrial District M2 - General Industrial District MHP - Mobile Home Park District PUD - Planned Unit Development R1 - Urban Residential District R2 - Single and Two-Family Residential District R3 - Multi-Family Residential District R3E - Elderly Residential District RAT - Rural Agricultural Transition District ROW-DOT RR - Rural Residential District RR/A - Rural Residential/Ag District RRROW SFRR - Single Family Rural Residential District SP - Special Purpose District TBC1 UAT - Urban Agricultural Transition District Mobile RR District |
|--|---|



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Duplication of this map is prohibited without written consent of the Rock County Planning, Economic and Community Development Agency. The data in this map was compiled using the Rock County Coordinate System. All graphic and attribute information is based on the Rock County Coordinate system. This map is not intended to be a substitute for an actual field survey and is an advisory reference only.

Data Sources: Rock County Planning and Development.

**Figure 5.4:
Unincorporated Zoning: Rock County: 2007**

Unincorporated Rock County Zoning District	Zoning District Code Designation	Acres	Percent of Total Zoned Areas In Unincorporated Rock County
Exclusive agriculture	A-1	361,901	88.1%
Agricultural transition	A1A	2,936	0.7%
General agriculture	A-2	14,592	3.6%
General agriculture	A-3	14,592	3.6%
Small-scale agriculture	A-3	7,135	1.7%
Agricultural residential	A-4	9	< 0.1%
Local commercial	B-1	489	.01%
Large-scale commercial	B-2	695	.02%
General commercial	B-3	67	< 0.1%
Lowland conservancy overlay	C-1	20	< 0.1%
Highland conservancy overlay	C-2	3,295	0.8%
Commercial highway Interchange	CHI	653	0.2%
Commercial recreation	CR	532	0.1%
Institutional	IN	96	< 0.1%
Light industrial	M1	1,314	0.3%
General industrial	M2	399	0.1%
Mobile home park	MHP	247	0.1%
Planned unit development	PUD	297	0.1%
Urban residential	R-1	3,709	0.9%
Single and two-family residential	R-2	32	< 0.1%
Multi-family residential	R-3	40	< 0.1%
Elderly residential	R-3E	4	< 0.1%
Rural agricultural transition	RAT	357	0.1%
Rural residential	RR	5,449	1.3%
Rural residential/agricultural	RR/A	95	0.0%
	RU2	389	0.1%
	RU3	135	0.0%
Single family rural residential	SFRR	2,153	0.5%
Special purpose	SP	2,165	0.5%
	TBC1	292	0.2%
Urban agricultural transition	UAT	1,238	0.4%
UNINCORPORATED TOTAL	-	410,674	100.0%

Source: Rock County Geographic Information System data - 2007
Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency - 2007
Rock County and Town Ordinances - 2007

Current Land Use Maps

As previously stated, Rock County does not have zoning authority and also does not have the authority to make land use decisions for Towns within Rock County. Historically, Towns have produced their own land use map, sometimes with County assistance, at varying times with varying criteria and appearance. Many Town land use plans, however, are outdated or simply do not exist at all. More current, quality land use data is simply not available from all 28 municipalities in Rock County, therefore, there is no way to compile a more current valid Countywide land use map. For this reason, there is no current Countywide land use map in existence that is more recent than the Rock County 2000 Land Use Inventory, showing consistent, valid land uses. Rock County is planning to do another Countywide snapshot of current land uses, similar to the 2000 Land Use Inventory on page II-5-9 of this Chapter, after the release of 2010 Census data when new aerial photography becomes available. Rock County may also compile a quilt of new Town level current land use maps after they have been adopted through the comprehensive planning process or have been newly produced.

Trends in Land Value and Price

Analyzing trends in land value over time provides a means by which to analyze the demand for land for different uses. The precepts of demand theory tell us that when demand goes up, so does price (value). Figure 5.5 shows the WDOR total assessed value of each type of land use, without improvements, for the entire County, divided by the number of acres assessed, to give a per-acre value. These trends illustrate a significant increase in land value for all categories, especially for residential and agricultural land, between 2003 and 2008. Notably, agricultural land sells for a much lower price than residential property does, even though it may sometimes be intended for a non-agricultural use. This trend has created an atmosphere where it may be more affordable or more advantageous to buy a large piece of rural property (i.e. 35 acres or more) than to buy a much smaller urban lot for the primary purpose of building a house. This creates an incentive for homebuilders to locate in rural areas on very large lots.

Figure 5.5:
Trends in Assessed Land Value Per Acre: Rock County: 2003-2008

	Assessed Value Per Acre						Percent Change: 2003-2008
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
Residential	\$31,536	\$31,866	\$33,407	\$34,723	\$37,788	\$39,379	+24.9%
Commercial	\$35,021	\$33,421	\$36,942	\$37,840	\$36,656	\$40,878	+16.7%
Manufacturing	\$14,248	\$14,147	\$14,202	\$15,130	\$16,233	\$16,872	+18.4%
Agricultural*	\$342	\$383	\$370	\$404	\$440	\$445	+30.1%
Undeveloped	\$282	\$196	\$202	\$215	\$251	\$719	+155.0%
Total	\$3,654	\$3,831	\$3,995	\$4,250	\$4,606	\$4,854	+32.8%

*Source: Statement of Assessments: Wisconsin Department of Revenue - 2003-2008
Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency - 2008*

**Includes incorporated and unincorporated areas*

Further analysis of the increase in agricultural land value shows meaningful trends when comparing the price of agricultural land for continued agricultural use compared to the price of agricultural land for a use other than agriculture. Over the 10 years shown in Figure 5.6, the price of land continuing in agriculture more than doubled, which sounds significant until it is compared to the price of agricultural land diverted to other uses which was nearly five times the price in 2007 than it was in 1998. In 2007 the price of agricultural land intended for other uses was nearly three and a half times higher than the price of land staying in agricultural use. These figures further indicate the high level of development pressure on agricultural land in Rock County.

Figure 5.6
Trends in Agricultural Land Prices for Agricultural Use and
Agricultural Land Diverted to Other Uses: Rock County: 1998-2007

	Continued Agricultural Use		Agricultural Use Diverted to Other Uses	
	Number of Sales	Price Per Acre	Number of Sales/ Price Per Acre	Price Per Acre
1998	32	\$2,375	18	\$2,903
1999	23	\$2,233	14	\$3,644
2000	36	\$3,034	10	\$5,190
2001	23	\$3,095	20	\$3,555
2002	29	\$2,976	16	\$3,587
2003	38	\$3,339	3	\$3,950
2004	49	\$3,703	7	\$7,348
2005	43	\$4,531	6	\$13,243
2006	25	\$4,567	7	\$8,248
2007	42	\$5,074	4	\$17,145

Source: Land Sales Report: United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistic Service

5.4. Land Use Projections

Over approximately the past two decades, Rock County has experienced growth that had previously been unrealized in the County’s history. Rock County has experienced a change from past years when most of the population was tied to the agricultural industry in some fashion, to being a community largely populated by people who work in non-agriculture. Fast and convenient transportation corridors that link nearby large urban centers has made Rock County a desirable place to live, even for those who are employed outside of the County. The presence of Interstate 90/39 which connects the Chicago metropolitan area, the City of Rockford, and the Cities of Beloit and Janesville, through the middle portion of the County, to the Madison metropolitan area, as well as Interstate 43 connecting the County to the Milwaukee area have been heavily influential in the growth of Rock County. Comparatively low land prices and pleasing environmental amenities have helped to spur primarily single-family residential development within easy commuting distance of these corridors and others (such as U.S.

Highway 14 and State Highway 26). These transportation amenities have been part of the reason that Rock County has gone from being a largely rural community with small Cities and Villages to having quickly developing and expanding urban centers and rural residential communities.

There is continued pressure for housing development and transportation improvements to serve this expanding Rock County population. Even though a current economic downturn has slowed growth, it is expected that the demand for housing will be a strong economic factor once again at some point in the future, thus warranting continued planning for growth throughout the planning period, to 2035. Additionally, preservation of agriculture and natural resources is an important aspect of future land use planning. This *Plan* has addressed this issue in Section II: Chapters 2 and 3 and will continue to present additional strategies for how Rock County can balance the need for growth while maintaining its rural and agricultural roots (see Section II: Chapter 10 - Intergovernmental Cooperation and Chapter 11 - Implementation).

Projection Selection

In developing and presenting this *Plan*, Rock County has formulated various projections utilizing multiple methodologies integrating the best available information and data. This *Plan* utilized United States Bureau of the Census and Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) projections where available, as these projections were formulated by non-partisan, professional demographers. In those cases where United States Bureau of the Census and/or WDOA projections were not available, projections were formulated by Rock County staff, utilizing best available information and data, with the best interest of all County resources and residents in mind.

Rock County recognizes that individual local communities located in the County have and will formulate and present projections in their comprehensive plans that may contrast with those presented herein, and that those projections were formulated with the best interest of each local community's resources and residents in mind.

Therefore, in recognizing Rock County's role as a regional, coordinating planning body, tasked with planning for the best interest of all County resources and residents, and to ensure clarity and consistency in development and presentation of this *Plan*, Rock County will utilize the projections as presented herein, while concurrently recognizing that projections put forth by local County communities in their comprehensive plans may contrast with said projections.

As previously referenced in other Chapters of this *Plan*, the WDOA population projections have been chosen by Rock County to estimate future growth. The WDOA projections may appear conservative compared to population projections based on other methodologies used by communities in Rock County in the formulation of their individual comprehensive plans. The WDOA projections, however, are based on historical population growth trends over time, thus it is reasonable to assume that WDOA projections are a fair indicator of what future population

growth will be in Rock County as a whole. While other jurisdictions are utilizing methodologies that are projecting greater growth (i.e. greater increases in population) for their communities than the WDOA is projecting, Rock County is continuing to use the WDOA projections because there is no indication that these trends will change in the future.

Future Residential Land Demand

According to WDOA projections, Rock County is expected to need approximately 12,033 additional households between 2010 and 2035 to accommodate new population. The density (how close together) at which future additional households are built will determine the amount of land needed to accommodate the new population. The methodology chosen by each individual community in Rock County for projecting population as well as the assumptions made by each community for expected density will determine the amount of land needed to accommodate housing in each community. The amount of land needed to accommodate new housing based on the WDOA housing projections will not be calculated because the methodology, projection parameters and desired density for new development differs for each community, making any countywide projection inaccurate. The estimated amount of housing expected in the County and for each community based on the methodology chosen by Rock County will be explored further in this *Plan*, in Section II: Chapter 6 - Housing.

Land Demand Based on WDOR Data

WDOR provides fairly consistent data on land use through land assessments, however, only those lands that are assessed for property taxing purposes by the WDOR are included, meaning that no government owned property, except parks, is included in the totals. The WDOR data is especially useful for projecting the need for commercial and industrial types of land uses other than governmental uses such as parks and government buildings that might be classified as social or institutional in the 2000 Land Use Inventory. Analysis was done by Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency based on projecting the amount of acreage found in each land use in the 2005 WDOR data.

These projections were formulated utilizing the 2005 WDOR Statement of Assessment total acreage for each type of property divided by the population ratio for those uses, which was then applied to the WDOA population projection scenario as presented in Figure 5.7. Figure 5.7 indicates that the County will need an additional 1,116 acres of commercial land and an additional 277 acres of industrial land between 2010 and 2035. According to WDOR data, it is expected that Rock County will need nearly an additional 4,972 acres of land for residential growth between 2010 and 2035, which would accommodate all of the new households (12,033 with the method used above) at approximately 2.42 units per acre.

The Countywide analysis that appears below is not being presented as an indication of what is expected to happen in Rock County in the future, but rather, is meant to serve as an approximation of what may happen if current trends continue according to projections based on

WDOA and WDOR data. The reality of how much growth is likely to take place in the future is entirely in the hands of each City, Village and Town in Rock County.

**Figure 5.7:
Projected Land Use Factors and Land Demand By Use: Rock County: 2010 - 2035**

	2005	2010 (2005- 2010 change)	2015 (2010- 2015 change)	2020 (2015- 2020 change)	2025 (2020- 2025 change)	2030 (2025- 2030 change)	2035 (2030- 2035 change)	Change: 2010-2035	
Population	156,994	160,911 (+3,917)	165,354	169,648	174,018	177,855	182,644	+21,733	13.5%
Households	-	63,590	66,133 (+2,543)	68,556 (+2,423)	70,877 (+2,321)	72,919 (+2,042)	75,623 (+2,704)	+12,033	18.9%
Residential land use in acres	35,913	36,809 (+896)	37,825 (+1,016)	38,808 (+983)	39,807 (+999)	40,685 (+878)	41,781 (+1,096)	+4,972	13.5%
Commercial land use in acres	8,063	8,264 (+201)	8,492 (+228)	8,713 (+221)	8,937 (+224)	9,134 (+197)	9,380 (+246)	+1,116	13.5%
Industrial land use in acres	1,999	2,049 (+50)	2,105 (+56)	2,160 (+55)	2,216 (+56)	2,265 (+49)	2,326 (+61)	+277	13.5%
Agricultural land use in acres	344,020	342,873 (-1,147)	341,573 (-1,300)	340,314 (-1,259)	339,035 (-1,279)	337,911 (-1,124)	336,506 (-1,403)	-6,365	-1.9%

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Administration - 2004
 Wisconsin Department of Revenue - 2005
 Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency - 2008 and 2009

While these WDOR figures are for all of Rock County, there is also historical data available at the Town level back to 2002 and possibly further. The same information when used at the Town level will provide another way to use past land use trends to predict future land use demand, etc. Like this *Plan*, most Town comprehensive plans analyze past growth patterns, supply and demand of land, population, age, housing and other pertinent trends, as well as the economic climate and transportation trends within the town.

Projection Analysis

As recent trends tell us, economic factors such as job growth or loss can profoundly affect the demand for housing and the amount of land required for new housing. The nation-wide aging of the population and the associated needs of an older population, as well as the changing influence of a new generation of landowners are likely to have a huge impact on how land is used in the future. Additionally, as stated above, new and improved transportation corridors are likely to change how land is used not only along those corridors, but also throughout the County. All of these factors plus others not mentioned here can and will affect land needs throughout the planning period.

While the projections provided in this Chapter provide a simple analysis of how Rock County might grow over the next 25 years, it must be cautioned that these projections (as well as any other projection methods) do not account for all of the factors that may affect future land use. Land use needs can be affected by many factors. Additionally, the individual communities within Rock County will choose to grow at varying rates and will require proportionately different amounts of land to accommodate new land uses in the future. Instead of attempting to calculate the amount of growth and future land needs for each individual community in Rock County, it will be assumed that each community will decide upon the amount of growth that they want or expect and will base their future land needs based on an analysis of those needs. Each community in Rock County will or already has addressed this question within each of their Comprehensive Plans.

5.5. Future Land Use Map

State of Wisconsin Statute provides that all cities and villages in Wisconsin are entitled to govern their own affairs (referred to as “home rule”) including the use of land within their jurisdiction. The County has no jurisdiction and no influence over land uses within municipal boundaries. Towns in Wisconsin do not have the same statutory authority as cities and villages, but were granted the authority to adopt and administer their own local zoning ordinances by the County. The County, however, retains the authority to approve or deny land divisions in unincorporated areas based on various regionally applied criteria and, has historically conducted or assisted with land use planning efforts in all unincorporated areas of the County as well. For this reason, the Future Land Use Map contained in this Chapter (Map 5.3) does not show all of the land uses proposed in each incorporated municipality’s future land use maps, but is a quilt comprised of future land use maps from each of the Towns within the County.

As stated in Section II: Chapter 2 - Land Use of this *Plan*, each city and village in the State of Wisconsin has the right to review and approve land uses, through plat review, in areas adjacent to their borders called extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJ). There is a significant amount of area in the County where both municipalities, through their ETJ authority, and Towns, through their local zoning control, have authority over decisions that affect future land use. Map 5.3 therefore, additionally includes Countywide ETJs overlain to show areas where there may be limiting factors for town development and/or preservation. For further clarification, Map 5.4 also shows ETJ areas.

Most of the Cities and Villages in Rock County have planned future land uses that are outside of their current municipal boundaries, but are within their ETJ authority. These planned land uses may be different than the land uses that underlying Towns have planned for on their future land use maps. Map 5.3 therefore, delineates the furthest extent of those areas that have been planned by each of the urban municipalities for specific land uses (red lined areas titled Extent of Planned Municipal Future Land Use) to indicate where there may be potential for conflict with land uses planned by underlying Towns. It is possible to see the differing planned land uses in these potential conflict areas by comparing the future land use maps of Cities and Villages (see Section IV: Appendix I - City and Village Future Land Use Maps of this *Plan*) with those of

the Towns within the ETJ (Map 5.3). It is strongly recommended, however, that those wishing to know the specific planned future land use of a particular piece of land consult the future land use map of both the Town and the City or Village with ETJ authority in that area.

Map 5.3: Future Land Use (Map) reflects the current future land use maps of each respective Town in the County, per the Town's comprehensive plans, at the approximate date of adoption of the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035* (September 10, 2009). This Map shall continue to represent and reflect the Town's most current future land use maps, to include all subsequent amendments and changes made by the respective Towns to their future land use maps prior to the next Rock County comprehensive plan update, scheduled for 2014.

Conflicts and Conflict Resolution

The fact that there are potentially going to be 31 different land use plans (from 11 Cities/Villages and 20 Towns) that can affect land use decisions in Rock County, will inevitably create conflict situations between communities, especially in the areas where more than one community has jurisdiction over land use decisions in one location (ETJ areas). The following is a list of all of the municipalities in Rock County, plus three additional municipalities that are not located within the County, but have extraterritorial jurisdictions that extend partially into the County:

- City of Beloit
- Village of Clinton
- City of Edgerton
- City of Evansville
- Village of Footville
- City of Janesville
- City of Milton
- Village of Orfordville
- City of Brodhead (Green County)
- Village of Brooklyn (Green and Dane Counties)
- City of Whitewater (Walworth County)

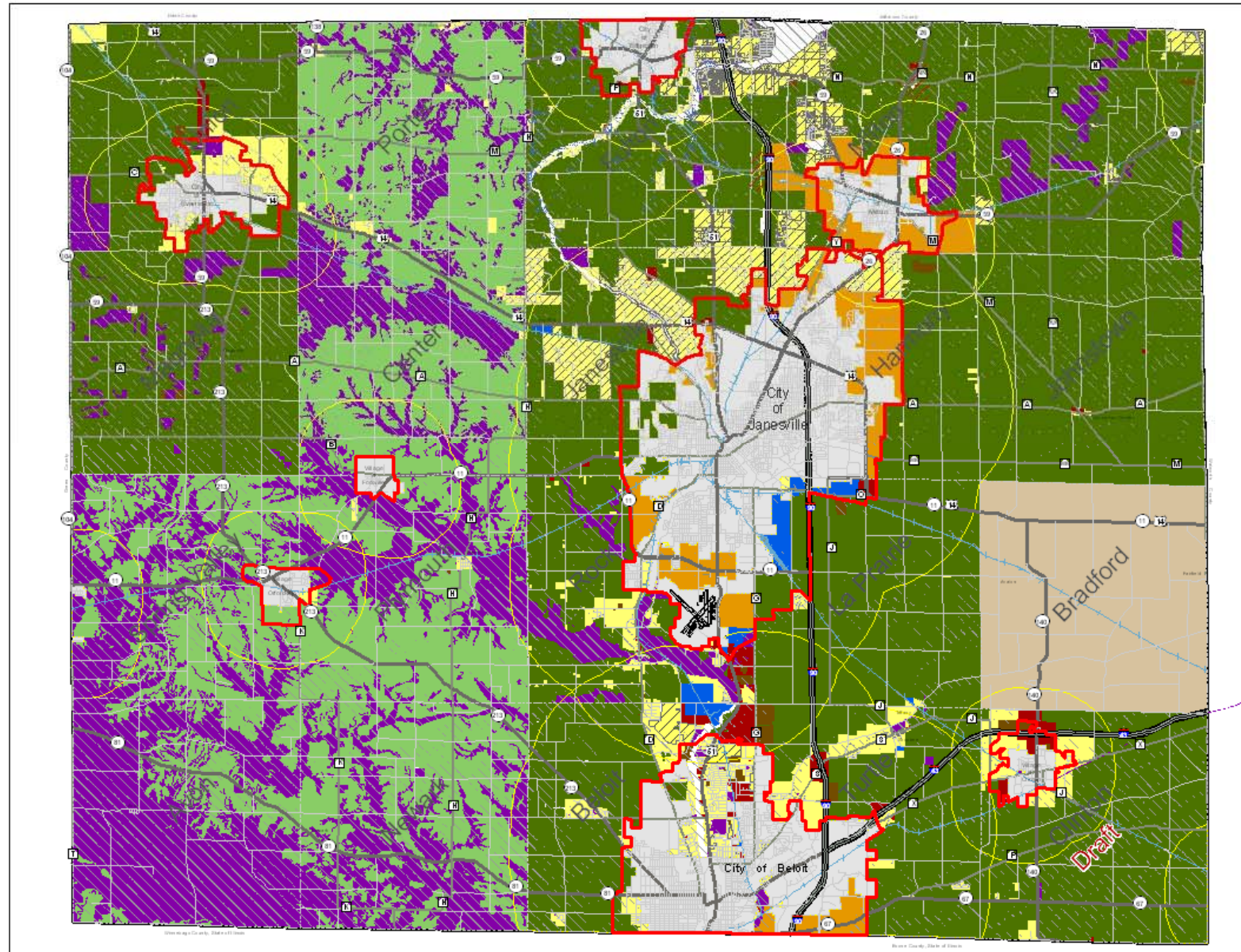
As part of the commitment to resolve conflict situations and to strengthen the future vision of Rock County, the Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency plans to analyze local future land use maps and goals and then make recommendations about how local communities can resolve conflicts. The agency also plans to educate local communities on how to utilize regional planning goals to bring about conscientious, region and community oriented thinking and planning on the local level.

The role of Rock County therefore, is not to control land use through the representation of land uses on the Future Land Use Map (Map 5.3), but to give a general overview of where Rock County might assist with coordination and cooperation between jurisdictions over areas of possible conflict. Concepts discussed further in Section II: Chapter 10 - Intergovernmental Cooperation of this *Plan* will guide Rock County in its effort to bring about conflict resolution that will ultimately result in the best uses of land throughout Rock County.

Map 5.3:
Future Land Use Map

Future Land Use

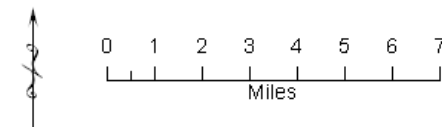
Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035 Map 5.3



Rock County, Wisconsin (9/10/2009)

- Future Land Use**
- Agricultural
 - Agricultural, Woodland and Scattered Residential
 - Residential
 - Mixed Use
 - Urban Transition
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Special Purpose
 - Open Space, Park or Environmental Corridor
 - Unclassified
 - Pending
- Roads**
- Township Boundary
 - Cities and Villages
 - Railroad
 - Other Roads
 - County Trunk
 - Highway
 - Interstate

- Overlays**
- Extent of Planned Municipal Future Land Use
 - Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
 - Environmentally Significant Open Space
- Town Plans**
- Commercial/Industrial Long Term
 - Environmental Corridor

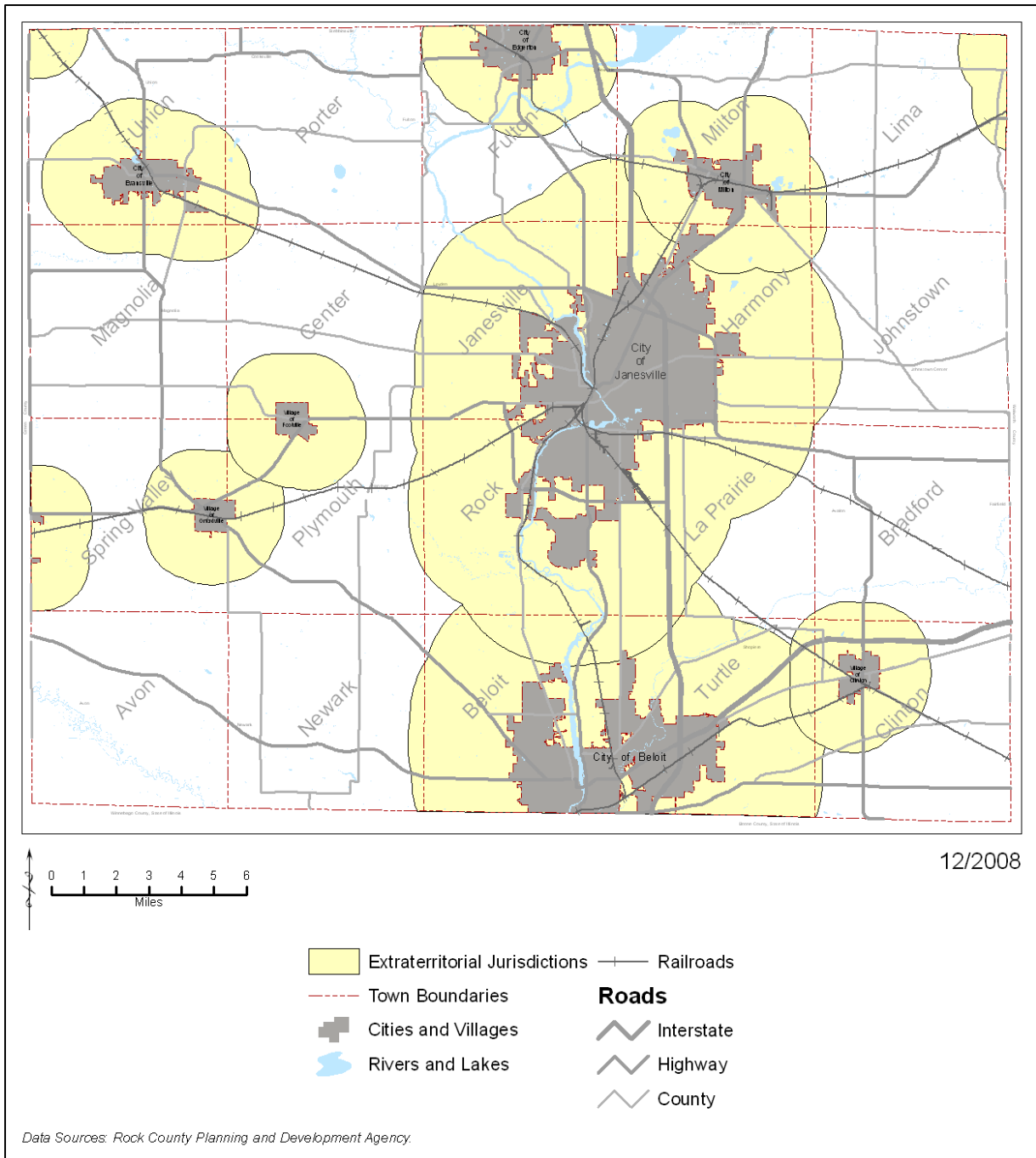


City Sources: Rock County Planning and Development, MAPS, Vandeville & Associates, R.H. Batterman & Co., Inc. and Town of Union.
This map is a generalized composite map of local Town Future Land Use Plans. Detailed Future Land Use Plans can be obtained from the respective towns for which the plans have been adopted.
This map does not depict Future Land Use Plans for incorporated areas. Detailed Future Land Use Plans can be obtained from the respective municipalities for which the plans have been adopted.

Rock County Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
Planning, Economic and Community
Development Agency
51 E Main St., Janesville, WI 53441
(TEL) 608-757-5261, (FAX) 608-757-5266
e-mail: Planning@rock.wi.gov

Duplication of this map is prohibited without written consent of the Rock County Planning, Economic and Community Development Agency. The data in this map was compiled using the Rock County Geographic Information System. All graphic and statistical information is based on the Rock County Coordinate System. This map is not intended to be a substitute for an actual field survey and is an advisory reference only.

Map 5.4:
Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Areas: 2009



5.6. Land Use Issues and Opportunities

Issues can be current or predicted problems or conflicts and opportunities are probable emerging possibilities for Rock County given current conditions. Some issues and opportunities for the planning period have been identified below. Rock County does not have jurisdiction to

make decisions regarding many of the issues discussed in this section, however, the County is taking on the roll of educating, encouraging and supporting those communities that do have the ability and the responsibility to affect land use.

- **Agricultural Land Supply and Demand:** Rock County is home to some of the most productive agricultural soil found in the world (see Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources of this *Plan*). Much of that prime agricultural land is in close proximity to major transportation corridors and in logical growth areas for Cities and Villages, particularly the City of Janesville. Historically, strong opposition to development, corporate and private landowner interest in preserving the farmland and wise City of Janesville officials have prevented the City from growing in the direction of this high quality, unique soil. Development pressure, however, continues to be very strong and there may be a growing attitude regarding inevitability that this land will eventually be developed to allow the City to grow and thrive. There is also strong awareness that once this land is developed, it will never go back to being prime agricultural land again. It is the recommendation of this *Plan* that the affected Town, Village and City jurisdictions take the opportunity to work in a cooperative effort to do conscientious planning and program development to preserve the prime agricultural land on into perpetuity.



- **Opportunities for Redevelopment:** Opportunities for redevelopment in Rock County are primarily found in the region's urban areas, specifically in areas designated as brownfields. Brownfields and the opportunity for their redevelopment are discussed in Section II: Chapter 9 - Economic Development of this *Plan*. In addition to brownfield locations, there may likely be several opportunities to enhance the developed community throughout the urban areas of Rock County such as through downtown revitalization and creating sustainable neighborhoods and commercial areas. It is recommended that an examination of each community's redevelopment goals be reviewed for any specific analysis on this topic.

- **Urban and Rural Divide:** In Rock County, as well as in all of Wisconsin, there exists a natural conflict on land use issues between urban and rural governing jurisdictions. Cities and villages often need more land at their borders to grow and expand. This need often conflicts with the needs and desires of the rural communities (towns) surrounding the urban area. There is competition between urban and rural jurisdictions for tax base as well as lifestyle choice along municipal boundaries. Those who have logically established their homes, and often their agricultural based businesses near urban centers are not always willing to give up their rural lifestyle to accommodate urban expansion.

This conflict becomes more complicated when looking at it from a land preservation point of view. Based on the fact urban development usually requires less land than rural development, it makes sense to allow urban areas to expand into rural areas. Cities and villages are able to provide the opportunity for more compact and efficient development that is on a more reliable municipal sewage system. Following the precepts of “good planning” suggests that urban expansion should be allowed wherever it is needed, however, common sense tells us that the rights, needs and desires of rural communities and landowners is equally important. Urban and rural communities will typically not work together or come to desirable land use decisions for both parties. Unfortunately, this lack of communication and cooperation between conflicting opinions can lead to inadequate, undesirable and/or inefficient outcomes that affect the entire region.

The best solution for managing these types of conflicts, is for urban and rural communities to come together in the spirit of intergovernmental cooperation to decide on what the real goals are for how to have the best regional community possible, how to jointly plan for balanced growth, how and where urban expansion is to take place and what types of development are appropriate in both types of communities (see Section II: Chapter 10 - Intergovernmental Cooperation of this *Plan*). These activities should include discussions on the potentially conflicting issues of annexation, differences in zoning and density regulations, and connectivity and compatibility of land uses. These issues can be addressed through intergovernmental agreements and jointly agreed upon policies and ordinances that are upheld in each jurisdiction. Striving for this type of intergovernmental planning activity presents the opportunity for Rock County to play a part in educating, facilitating discussions and mediating conflicts where necessary, so that the Cities, Villages and Towns of Rock County can work toward attaining the best possible future outcome.

- **Municipal Sewer and Private Septic Systems:** The factor that most affects the ability and efficiency for urban and rural areas to accommodate development is the type of sewer services that are available (see Section II: Chapter 8 - Utilities and Community Facilities, Map 8.2 of this *Plan*). Urban areas in Rock County have municipal sewer systems that are less likely to fail than private septic systems, although various types of private septic systems are available as well, and are being used in rural Rock County. Private mound systems are functional in almost any type of soil conditions, making it

possible for housing development to occur almost anywhere. Under current Rock County regulations, all residential private sewage disposal systems must be on lots that are a minimum of 40,000 square feet, or just under one acre. Urban residential lots, however, can be much smaller lots, thereby using less land for housing purposes and preserving agricultural land and open space.

The obligation presented by this situation is for Rock County to research and implement, if possible, regulations that would encourage the use of group septic systems in rural areas that will encourage clustered housing on less land. There is also the opportunity for Rock County to, once again, educate and facilitate discussions between urban and rural communities to plan specifically for municipal sewer services through a jointly agreed upon sewer service area.

- **Regional Transportation Systems:** Land use in Rock County is heavily influenced by its location on one national and several regional transportation corridors (see Section II: Chapter 7 - Transportation of this *Plan*). Proximity to the Interstate highway system, and several regional roadways and railways provides opportunity for Rock County businesses to participate efficiently in regional markets. This may mean that commercial and industrial land uses along with associated residential needs, may be more likely to locate here, given favorable economic conditions (see Section II: Chapter 9 - Economic Development of this *Plan*).
- **Variation in Zoning and Density:** Every community in Rock County has its own land use vision that is presumably held up through each community's individual policies and zoning regulations. This produces a great amount of variability in what kinds of developments that are desirable and allowable in each community. That variability sometimes leads to conflict, particularly in urban fringe areas. Conflicts in these areas can come to a better and fairer conclusion when communities come together to analyze and visualize the similarities and differences in their zoning and density desires and policies. Intergovernmental agreements are a good tool to address specific zoning and density requirements that are agreed upon by all parties.

In some cases, especially in rural communities, current zoning ordinances are not designed to carefully regulate density and may produce a different development pattern than was desired even by the jurisdictional community itself. Rock County can provide education to further an understanding of zoning and density issues and model ordinances to address zoning and density issues. Rock County can also help to facilitate discussions between communities for a desirable outcome for the communities involved, as well as for the region as a whole.

Programs that are based on joint agreements for zoning and density such as PACE/PDR and TDR programs would require a major cooperative effort between urban and rural areas to come up with an effective method to encourage development to go into

designated development areas while leaving others for preservation purposes. In the case of TDR, it would be necessary to downzone in both sending and receiving areas, where additional development rights would need to be purchased to build at a higher than typical level. This type of program is only attainable with careful joint planning and cooperation. Rock County is poised for providing the type of guidance to communities to discuss and facilitate these types of innovative land use options.

- **Neighborhood Design and Connectivity:** One of the ways to encourage people to consider living in compact rural or urban environments is to make those neighborhoods just as pleasing, but more convenient than living on large rural lots or in areas that are not as well suited for housing development. Several factors can help to improve the urban living environment.

The way a development looks and feels as a motorist or pedestrian moves through a neighborhood is affected by such factors as street length and width, street curvature, street lighting, parkway plantings, sidewalks and pedestrian paths and the availability and accessibility of parks and open space. A variety of housing types (including multi-family) and costs can help to bring interest and accessibility to a planned neighborhood to a wide variety of people. Sharing open space in a cluster development type of design can provide homeowners with the opportunity to enjoy higher quality open space with less individual maintenance responsibility (ownership and maintenance of open space is often undertaken by a homeowners association). Done properly, cluster housing together with the use of a group onsite septic system can decrease the negative effects of housing on the environment and agriculture and increase homeowner satisfaction.

- **Development Design:** Another way that communities of Rock County can establish and maintain community identity is to have a process for reviewing and approving development designs. Higher quality, more efficient and livable and aesthetically more pleasing urban developments can be achieved through such things as architectural control, landscaping regulations and density regulations along with policies stating the desirability of mixed uses, connectability and walkability. In rural areas, policies on rural clustering, road screening, landscaping, compatible uses and density can have a dramatic effect on the rural landscape. Rock County is willing and available to assist communities with these types of efforts.
- **Low Impact Development (LID):** LID is an innovative stormwater management approach with a basic principle that is modeled after nature, managing rainfall at the source using uniformly distributed decentralized micro-scale controls. LID's goal is to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source. Techniques are based on the premise that stormwater management should not be seen as stormwater disposal. Rock County should encourage the use of LID where feasible.

- **Community Attitude and Cooperation:** There is no doubt that the attitude and desires of the individual communities within Rock County will have a strong effect on how land use is considered now and how the county as a whole will look in the future. It is important for each individual community to understand the effects of their land use policies and decisions and to carefully consider new ways to manage development.

A main challenge of this *Plan* is to promote and encourage the orderly, efficient and compact development of land in a manner that maintains a balance among the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and agricultural land and the need for continued development. As such, future land use decisions must be careful to compatibly and efficiently maximize the County’s limited land resources while respecting the rights of landowners. This Chapter, as well as other Chapters of this *Plan*, has identified some of the integral elements needed to achieve the desired balance.

Accomplishing smart growth will ultimately require a cooperative effort between County and municipal government in the management of future development. Rock County recognizes that each individual community will continue to create its own plans and implement local land use changes through local ordinances. The goals, objectives and policies of this Chapter provide recommendations not only for Rock County but also for local units of government so as to serve as a framework for those communities to build and implement future plans, policies and ordinances for the fair, efficient and coordinated management of future land use.



5.7. Land Use Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Past growth trends in Rock County suggest that there will be continued growth in population throughout the planning period. This growth will affect the need for housing, schools, employment and services throughout Rock County. The goals, objectives and policies presented herein are intended to help guide future development and redevelopment to meet these future needs, not by making specific land use recommendations, but by helping to bring together the visions of all of the Towns, Villages and Cities throughout Rock County. Tools for how all jurisdictions can work together toward common goals using the ideas and concepts presented throughout the Chapter are supported by the following goals, objectives and policies.

Land Use Goal

- 5.1. Provide information, education, strategies, recommendations and policies for building consensus on land use goals and policies for each of the Towns, Villages and Cities of Rock County thereby strengthening the vision of the future for all of Rock County.

Land Use Objectives and Policies

- 5.1.1. Encourage and support consensus building on land use issues through promoting and facilitating intergovernmental communication and cooperation.
 - 5.1.1.a. Rock County shall provide a forum for collaborative planning efforts across time and jurisdictions.
 - 5.1.1.b. Rock County shall encourage coordination and evaluation of land use policy between all jurisdictions in Rock County.
 - 5.1.1.c. Rock County shall promote intergovernmental communication to assure the compatibility of adjoining land uses for both existing and future development.
 - 5.1.1.d. Rock County shall provide models and encourage towns and municipalities to make revisions to their ordinances to be compatible with one another and with the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*.
 - 5.1.1.e. Rock County shall encourage and help to facilitate communication and coordination between governments, schools, environmental organizations, utilities and other entities or organizations that are interested in or have an affect upon future land use.
 - 5.1.1.f. Rock County shall encourage comprehensive and joint planning of utilities and services, such as public sewer, public water and onsite sewage disposal systems so that such utilities and services compliment rather than conflict with one another.

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- 5.1.1.g. Rock County shall willingly participate in consensus building opportunities regarding land disputes (i.e.: annexation, zoning, density and design issues) between varying jurisdictions.
- 5.1.1.h. Rock County shall promote orderly and cost effective development practices that make the maximum use of existing and planned services, especially for County owned properties.
- 5.1.1.i. Rock County shall establish a system of data sharing among Rock County and the local municipalities for mapping, zoning, development proposals, ordinances, etc.
- 5.1.1.j. Rock County shall work more closely on the review of development proposals, such as establishing joint meetings with developers to discuss proposed subdivisions.
- 5.1.2. Provide information, education, strategies, recommendations and policies for building consensus on future land use goals.
- 5.1.2.a. Rock County shall develop model ordinances for use by local municipalities, such as subdivision, conservation subdivision, traditional neighborhood development (TND), stormwater management, erosion control, wind energy and communication tower management and any other applicable ordinances or policy documents.
- 5.1.2.b. Rock County shall develop model design guidelines and a site plan review process for local communities to ensure compatibility with planned land uses and ensure quality commercial and industrial building designs that meet community standards. This process should be streamlined to efficiently meet the design goals of the communities in an expeditious manner.
- 5.1.2.c. Rock County shall encourage local communities to mix compatible land uses such as residential, commercial, institutional and other land uses in appropriate areas.
- 5.1.2.d. Rock County shall update the Rock County Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) to:
- Be in accordance with the goals, objectives and policies of all chapters and sections of the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*
 - Require all land division plats and maps be submitted in a digital format compatible with the Rock County Geospatial System
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- Require zoning and site permitting approval analysis to be based on development management criteria
- 5.1.2.e. Rock County shall continue to update and implement the *Rock County, Wisconsin 2009-2014 Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan* to guide land use analysis and approval.
 - 5.1.2.f. Rock County shall consider updating the County regulations on private sewage systems to allow multi-user systems that service higher density developments than are available under the current regulations.
 - 5.1.2.g. Rock County shall assist local communities in seeking grants from governmental agencies, foundations and alternative funding sources in order to fund needed planning and improvements.

Land Use Goal

- 5.2. Preserve and protect the agricultural and natural resource base while preserving and enhancing the scenic beauty and aesthetic quality of Rock County.

Land Use Objectives and Policies

- 5.2.1. Support and encourage future land uses in rural Rock County that aim to preserve agricultural and natural resources and enhance scenic beauty and aesthetic quality of Rock County.
 - 5.2.1.a. Rock County shall adhere to the goals, objectives and policies of the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural and Historic Resources Chapters (Section II: Chapters 2 - 4) of the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*.
 - 5.2.1.b. Rock County shall encourage limiting rural development where development negatively affects agricultural and natural resources.
 - 5.2.1.c. Rock County shall encourage the use of low impact development (LID) where appropriate.
 - 5.2.1.d. Rock County shall help to maintain a balance among the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural lands and continued residential, commercial and industrial development within Rock County.
 - 5.2.1.e. Rock County shall analyze the effects of such factors as subdivisions, housing density or any other factors that affect the aesthetic quality of Rock County with the intent of preserving scenic beauty.

- 5.2.1.f. Rock County shall consider development incentives that utilize traditional neighborhood design, promote mixed-use development and use conservation subdivision design to preserve green space, environmentally sensitive areas and agricultural land (see Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources, 2.5., *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*).
- 5.2.1.g. Rock County shall promote development in areas where sewer services are available in order to encourage high-density development and to preserve the rural area.
- 5.2.1.h. Rock County shall assist local unincorporated governments in developing procedures for assessing land use proposals for factors such as smoke, noise, odor, traffic, soil suitability for building, wetlands, kettles and steep slopes, erosion control issues, drainage patterns, potential for groundwater contamination, existence of prime farmland and natural resources, potential conflict with agricultural operations, proximity to developed areas, access to a dedicated road, proximity to municipal sewer and other public facilities and services, aesthetics, compatibility with neighboring uses, consistency with local and County land use plans and other appropriate factors.
- 5.2.1.i. Rock County shall encourage the use of a land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) system by the local governing units and/or Rock County for objective evaluation of land proposed for development and/or preservation.
- 5.2.1.j. Rock County shall investigate the use of innovative preservation programs such as purchase of agricultural conservation easements (PACE)/purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR) programs (see Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources, 2.5., *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*).

Land Use Goal

- 5.3. Support and encourage an appropriate allocation of land to various types of land uses to meet the social, physical, and economic needs of County residents, workers, and property and business owners.

Land Use Objectives and Policies

- 5.3.1. Accommodate reasonable growth in Rock County's population, households and employment through the year 2035.
 - 5.3.1.a. Rock County shall continue to work with communities to designate realistic and flexible growth areas while taking into account economic realities and the provision of efficient services.

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- 5.3.1.b. Rock County shall continue to conduct analyses of land uses throughout the County (including Cities and Villages) to determine the amount of land needed to accommodate growth and development.
 - 5.3.1.c. Rock County shall provide education and information to the public on land use and growth issues and opportunities in the form of brochures, articles, presentations or other mediums on land use issues and opportunities.
 - 5.3.1.d. Rock County shall encourage higher density development and promote the development of existing undeveloped and underutilized lots and the rehabilitation of existing structures.
 - 5.3.1.e. Rock County shall continue assessment and provision of a range of transportation opportunities that will effectively serve the existing and proposed County land use pattern through its location, capacity and design.
 - 5.3.1.f. Rock County shall encourage continuing assessment and provision of utilities and community facilities for adequate service to County residents, workers, and businesses.
 - 5.3.1.g. Rock County shall provide for diversified, balanced, environmentally compatible business development that will offer a variety of goods and services through conveniently located, well-designed business clusters while providing needed services for County residents.
 - 5.3.1.h. Rock County shall help communities to ensure that adequate development areas are reserved for appropriate rural land uses.
 - 5.3.1.i. Rock County shall reference and implement land use decisions according to the policies and recommendations of all elements of the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*.
 - 5.3.1.j. Rock County shall encourage and, where possible, partner with local communities to enhance or redevelop commercial and industrial and waterfront uses.
- 5.3.2. Encourage and support development of land that is compact, cost efficient and energy efficient.
- 5.3.2.a. Rock County shall assist with developing programs that encourage the appropriate use of land (see Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources, 2.5., *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*) .
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- 5.3.2.b. Rock County shall encourage local communities to conduct a cost of development fiscal analysis to estimate and report the effects of residential and non-residential development. Such analysis should include physical, market, environmental, social, economical, fiscal and traffic impacts.
- 5.3.2.c. Rock County shall encourage energy efficiency and conservation related practices (i.e. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification) for all new and existing developments.
- 5.3.2.d. Rock County shall promote orderly and cost effective development practices that make the maximum use of existing and planned services, especially for County-owned properties.
- 5.3.2.e. Rock County shall encourage prioritizing development into the following areas (in order):
- Urban infill areas
 - Areas of existing and contiguous development
 - Areas most easily served by municipal sewer and water
 - Areas other than the above
- 5.3.2.f. Rock County shall conduct a countywide study to identify and map potential hazards such as hazardous waste disposal sites, hazardous materials transportation routes, brownfield sites, and dams (see *Hazard Analysis*, Wisconsin Emergency Management)
- 5.3.3. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.
- 5.3.3.a. Rock County shall promote the continuous use of public forums to present regional planning ideas and to incorporate landowner ideas and concerns into County policies and goals.

Land Use Goal

- 5.4. Maintain unique identities and a sense of community in Rock County Cities, Villages and Towns.

Land Use Objectives and Policies

- 5.4.1. Encourage development approaches that establish and maintain community identity and uniqueness in those areas where development is appropriate and desired.
- 5.4.1.a. Rock County shall support land use practices that enhance community identity.

- 5.4.1.b. Rock County shall encourage communities to establish and maintain unique identities and a sense of community through the layout, design and regulation of new development.
- 5.4.1.c. Rock County shall promote the development and enforcement of land use, planning and design standards that are consistent and compatible across municipal boundaries while recognizing the uniqueness of individual communities.
- 5.4.1.d. Rock County shall encourage the creation of buffers between potentially conflicting land uses.
- 5.4.1.e. Rock County shall promote the design and maintenance of safe neighborhoods and utilize available programs to ensure well-maintained properties.
- 5.4.1.f. Rock County shall educate local communities on methods of phasing and regulating development.
- 5.4.1.g. Rock County shall encourage local communities to utilize design standards for commercial, industrial and multifamily development to promote quality building design and community identity.
- 5.4.1.h. Rock County shall promote the concept of traditional neighborhood design combined with conservation subdivision design that focuses on creating walking neighborhoods with a mix of uses that encourage social interaction.