

Introduction

Land use, both existing and future, is the central element of a Comprehensive Plan. Previous chapters have discussed:

- Projected population growth.
- The quality housing available in the Township and potential future housing needs.
- Transportation network challenges with increasing population growth.
- Available utilities and community facilities.
- Local business choices and economic growth opportunities.
- Clearfield's natural resources and recreational opportunities, among others.

This chapter focuses on existing land uses, trends in land development, and available local land use tools. *Chapter 8: Future Land Use* will address actions necessary to achieve the goals and visions created during the development of this Comprehensive Plan.

Of the 14 local planning goals provided in the Comprehensive Planning Law, those below specifically relate to planning for land use:

- Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
- Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
- Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitat, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
- Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
- Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, State governmental and utility costs.
- Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.
- Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
- Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.

Visions, Objectives, Policies, and Goals

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the Land Use Element contain 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) (66.1001), 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) (66.1001), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

Existing Land Use Inventory

The Existing Land Use Map (on page 7-9) was created from baseline mapping data provided by the United States Department of Agriculture, United States Geological Survey, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC), Juneau County, and the Town of Clearfield. The descriptions of the land use categories illustrated on the Existing Land Use Map are as follows.

Agriculture

In terms of total acreage, agriculture is the largest ‘developed’ land use in the Town of Clearfield. Agricultural uses in the community are dominated by crop production and the raising of livestock with additional uses including fruit and vegetable production. The agricultural landscape includes croplands, pasture land, hay fields, and fallow fields, among others. Please refer to *Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources* for a more detailed description of agricultural uses in the community.

Commercial

Commercial development represents a relatively small component of the Town’s land base and is located primarily in the southeast corner of the Town and along STH 58. *Chapter 6: Economic Development* includes a profile of commercial development in Clearfield.

Open Lands

The Open Lands classification refers to land that is not developed or otherwise used for an active land use. This may include fallow or abandoned agricultural fields and remnant grasslands, among others.

Residential

Residential land uses in Clearfield are scattered throughout the Town but are primarily concentrated in the southeast section of the community. These uses may include single family homes on medium-sized and larger lots, mobile homes, and farmsteads. Additional information related to residential development in Clearfield can be found in *Chapter 2: Housing*.

Transportation

Transportation uses include state and county highways and town roads. Additional information on the transportation system can be found in *Chapter 3: Transportation*.

Water

Surface waters in Clearfield (other than streams and creeks) include a number of ponds, many of which are located in the Lemonweir and Little Yellow river floodplains. For additional information on surface waters please refer to *Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources*.

Wetlands

Wetlands in Clearfield include emergent and submergent varieties and are concentrated in the Lemonweir and Little Yellow River valleys. For more information related to wetlands please refer to *Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources*.

Woodlands

Forests and wooded areas are the dominant landscape feature in Clearfield and include Juneau County forest land in the northwest corner of the Town. *Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources* provides additional information regarding forests and woodlands in the community.

Rivers and Streams

Numerous streams and creeks drain Clearfield’s landscape. Most drain to the Lemonweir and Little Yellow Rivers before those waters meet the Wisconsin River. For more information on rivers, streams, and creeks please refer to *Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources*.

Land Use by Acreage and Percentage

Table 22: Breakdown of Existing Land Uses in the Township of Clearfield, 2009.		
Land Use Category	Amount in Total Acres	Amount in Total Percentage
Agriculture	2,572.20	11.09%
Commercial	61.05	0.3%
Open Lands	143.64	0.6%
Residential	358.54	1.54%
Transportation	376.17	1.62%
Water*	210.95	0.91%
Recreation	194.10	0.83%
Woodlands	19,271.52	83.11%
Total	23,188.17	100%
Linear Measurements		
I 90 and STH 80		7.29 miles
Roads and Highways		59.01 miles
Rail Lines		6.58 miles
Rivers and Streams		34.31 miles
* The Open Water category does not include rivers and streams or wetlands. Source: Town of Clearfield Existing Land Use Map, 2009		

Table 22 provides a numerical breakdown of existing land uses in Clearfield. As the table shows, woodlands are the dominant land uses in Clearfield accounting for more than 60% of the total land area in the Township.

Land Use and Development Tools

The Land Division Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance are the two primary tools used to implement a comprehensive plan. The Land Division Ordinance governs the process for transitioning from one land use to another (typically from agriculture to residential), while the Zoning Ordinance identifies the permitted and conditional uses allowable within given zoning districts and includes various site limitations including setbacks, height restrictions, and the like.

In addition to the Land Division Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance, the Town of Clearfield also enforces the Uniform Dwelling Code (Ordinance #21) which sets standards for the construction of new homes and remodeling or rehabilitation of existing structures. For additional information on zoning, subdivision, and other local land use tools please refer to *Chapter 8: Future Land Use*.

Land Division Ordinance

Land Division and Building Ordinance #7 governs land divisions in the Town of Clearfield. It identifies and regulates the process to subdivide property in the community consistent with state statutes including requirements for roads to serve newly created parcels.

Zoning Ordinance

The Town of Clearfield Zoning administers and enforces zoning for all lands within the Town with the exception of shoreland zoning areas (see next page). The Town has three zoning districts: Rural, Exclusive Agricultural, and Business. Please refer to Table 23 on the following page for a description of each district and to page 7-6 for a copy of the Town of Clearfield Zoning Map.

Table 23: Town of Clearfield Zoning Districts.¹		
Districts	Permitted Uses*	Minimum Lot Size
Rural District	Principal agricultural uses and structures, single-family dwelling, two-family dwellings, manufactured housing, hobby farms, public parks and playgrounds, public and semipublic non-profit institutional uses, and home-based businesses.	5 acres
Exclusive Agricultural District	Agricultural uses, agricultural-related residences, pre-existing residences and residential lots, other agriculturally related structures and improvements, and permitted utility uses.	35 acres
Business District	Retail stores and shops, banks, post offices,	1 acre

¹ Subject to Change. Consult the Town of Clearfield Zoning Ordinance for current requirements.

	medical or dental clinics, professional offices, service-type businesses, service stations, hotels/motels/boarding houses, clubs and lodges, public meeting halls, blacksmith shops, machine shops, farm implement sales, and feed mills, among others.	
* Please refer to the Town of Clearfield Zoning Ordinance for detailed descriptions of permitted and conditional uses within the zoning districts. Source: Town of Clearfield Zoning Ordinance, 2009.		

Shoreland Zoning

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is administered by Juneau County for all lands within the County including the Town of Clearfield. The ordinance regulates land uses within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high watermark of navigable lakes, ponds, or flowages and within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable rivers or streams.

Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation

Juneau County and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission administers state non-metallic mining reclamation requirements for all Townships in the County consistent with §NR 135.02(1) and (2), Wis. Adm. Code. The ordinance prohibits any person from engaging in nonmetallic mining or in nonmetallic mining reclamation without a permit unless the proposed activity is specifically exempted.

Trends in Land Supply, Demand, and Price

Residential Development

Residential development currently accounts for less than 1% of the Town’s total land area. Official Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) population projections for 2025 estimate an increase from an estimated 775 persons in 2005 to a projected 974 in 2025 (please see Table 2 in *Chapter 1: Issues & Opportunities*). Single-family homes account for 67% of the total units available (see Table 12 in *Chapter 2: Housing*). The majority of the remaining units are mobile homes.

As the economy and housing market rebound during the next few years it is likely that the Town will experience increased demand for new residential construction. Clearfield’s beautiful rural setting and proximity to nearby cities may make it a desirable location for seasonal homes as well as year-round residents. Land prices may rise noticeably as a result.

Farming

Residents have expressed a strong desire to retain farming as a significant component of the Town’s landscape and economy. However, the state and regional farming economy has continued to see the

number of area farms decrease. This can be attributed to diminished farm product returns, aging farmers seeking retirement through land sales, and demand for rural housing. Simple economics also plays a role in the loss of farmland.

Zoning map will be inserted here.

Preservation of rural character is contingent upon successful efforts to retain farmland. *Chapter 10: Implementation* and *Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources* provide additional detail about these strategies, including:

- Encouraging landowners to pursue opportunities to partner with land trusts charged with the protection of natural areas and farmland.
- Encouraging landowners to consider conservation-based development options to preserve farmland.
- Establishing an Agriculture Committee to minimize farmland conflicts through negotiation and open communication.
- Establishing networks, through the Agriculture Committee, to connect farmers who are considering selling their property with other farmers who would like to acquire additional property.
- Considering opportunities for the transfer and/or purchase of development rights.

Commercial and Industrial Development

Commercial development in Clearfield is not highly desired by residents and landowners. The close proximity of the Mauston, New Lisbon, and Tomah area have offset the need, and market, for future commercial development in Clearfield. Future commercial development, when it does occur, will primarily be in the form of agricultural services and home-based businesses catering to local residents.

Trends in Land and Housing Prices

Although the current economic and housing downturn has greatly reduced the demand for new home construction, and depressed the price of existing homes, long-term trends indicate that land and home prices in Clearfield will rebound and rise well into the future. The Town's geographic location, natural environment, and rural character make it a desirable location for future year-round and seasonal residential development.

Existing land use map will be inserted here.