

# CHAPTER 7: LAND USE

## INTRODUCTION

Land use directly influences, or is influenced by, all elements presented in the other chapters of this plan. The choices for housing type and location, transportation alternatives, decisions on employment locations, recreational opportunities, and the quality of the man-made and natural environments are all intricately woven together into land use. Land use policy decisions often have far-reaching and long-lasting impacts on a community. Policy decisions can influence housing growth, the protection of natural resources, and a number of other factors. This chapter describes existing land use patterns and analyzes development trends.

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS AND NARRATIVE

### Current (2015) Land Use & Land Use Trends

#### THE FACTS:

- *The Town of Algoma encompasses approximately 6,731 acres. About a third or 32 percent of the land within the Town is developed.*
- *The Town's Protected Area encompasses approximately 3,644 acres or about 54 percent of the Town's current land area.*
- *About 1,630 acres of the lands within the Protected Area is vacant (cropland, woodland, other open land).*

#### WHAT IT MEANS:

The Cooperative Plan between the City of Oshkosh and the Town of Algoma, dated January 16, 2004 established a long-term boundary agreement that limits the City of Oshkosh's extraterritorial jurisdiction and annexation within the Town's "Protected Area". This in turn, also provides a finite amount of land area for the Town to growth within, meaning that concern should be given to maximizing the use of these lands to ensure a financially sound and stable community in the future.

#### **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- *Lands available for development within the Town are finite, with only about 1,600 acres available for urbanization and/or preservation. What approaches should be taken to ensure wise use of these lands?*
- *The Town does not have full control over its land use decisions. The county and city both have a say as to the type of development that can occur and where it can be located in 90% +/- of the town. How does this impact the Town's ability to grow as it desires?*
- *What infill and/or redevelopment opportunities exist within the Town and should these be a priority over the consumption of new lands?*

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- *How will the Plan's overarching future land use decisions and policies affect the persistent drainage issues experienced throughout the town, whether they are newly built neighborhoods or more established older neighborhoods?*

## **Development & Market Trends**

### **THE FACTS:**

- **According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, 104 building permits for new residential construction were issued in the Town of Algoma between 2010 and 2017.**
- **On average, 13 residential building permits were issued per year between 2010 and 2017.**
- **According to information on file at the Wisconsin Department of Administration, about 1,186 acres was annexed by the City between 2000 and 2018 (Table 7-5).**
- **Overall, the Town's land value was higher in 2009 at \$133,280,300 and then decreased to \$124,528,400 (-6.6%) in 2013 as a result of the economic downturn that began in 2008. Since 2013, the equalized land value has been increasing, and has surpassed the level it was in 2009.**

### **WHAT IT MEANS:**

The Town continues to see steady amounts of new development. While building permits dipped slightly over the first few years of the 2008 recession, since 2010 an average of 13 residential units has been seen, as well as significant increases in equalized property valuation. These trends are expected to continue unless there is another major recession during the planning period.

### **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- *How do you think the market conditions have changed since the last plan update – are there differing demands for types and styles of housing and other amenities?*
- *Do you feel that these building trends – in terms of numbers - will continue or will they be tempered by other factors?*

## **Land Use Density & Intensity**

### **THE FACTS:**

- *Density is broadly defined as a “number of units in a given area<sup>1</sup>”. For the purposes of this report, residential densities are defined as the number of housing units per square mile of*

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*total land area (units/square mile), excluding water. **Between 2000 (198 units/sq. mi.) and 2010 (289.2 units/sq. mi.), residential densities increased in the Town of Algoma by 91.2 units per square mile***

- *Intensity is the degree of activity associated with a particular land use. Therefore intensity is defined as the measure of the units per acre of residential development. **Between 2000 and 2015, residential single-family land use intensities are estimated to have increased from 1.4 units per acre to 1.8 units per acre. Multi-family land use increased from 1.2 units per acre to 3.4 units per acre (Table 7-8).***

## WHAT IT MEANS:

Residential densities have increased slightly over the past 10 to 15 years. However, the Town is still developing much of its residential areas at a relatively low, suburban, density. Infrastructure location and parcel/lot sizes are the two most important factors in determining land use density and intensity in a community. Multi-family development is normally restricted to areas where sanitary sewer is available, as in the case in the Town of Algoma. The Town, with the exception of a few farmhouses, has very little housing developed prior to 1960's and therefore much of the community is not as walkable as it could have been. This forces automobile use, combined with other local and regional land use factors eventually contributes to congestion on the roads.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- *How and where can the Town seek to increase its residential density so as to provide more walkable options for future residents?*
- *What other land use strategies might assist with traffic congestion?*

## Land Use Conflicts

### THE FACTS:

- ***Due to the 2004 Cooperative Agreement with the City of Oshkosh, the Town is able to plan for development in its protected area.***
- ***Much of the undeveloped land uses in the Town are still agricultural, but mostly of a cash crop nature with few animal husbandry operations. As a result, residential, commercial and industrial development and existing farming operations can come in direct contact with one another.***

### WHAT IT MEANS:

With continued development of the Town, the rural/urban interface will move further west and into existing rural and agricultural areas. The plan should seek to minimize the conflict between land uses, through well-thought out land use planning and policy recommendations.

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The Town strives to, and should continue to keep methods of communication open between itself and affected entities (City of Oshkosh, Town of Omro, Winnebago County, Oshkosh School District, and Algoma Sanitary District) , so that future land use proposals can be discussed and/or reviewed in a timely manner (whether by right or per agreement) prior to final approval.

## **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- *What policies need to be developed and adopted that the town can enforce with respect to preventing land use conflicts?*
- *How does the town inform developers on proposing solid land use policy changes that more effectively address the poor drainage issues within their development plans?*
- *What role does the sanitary district play in the timing or location of future development and key infrastructure and how is coordination ensured?*

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## **Future Land Use Projections**

### **THE FACTS:**

- ***It is estimated that by 2040 there will be approximately 3,774 housing units or about 1,321 additional housing units in the Town.***
- ***By maintaining the current split<sup>2</sup> there will need to be an additional 1,176 single-family units, 4 duplexes and 39 multi-family units.***
- ***The result is a projected need for 335 acres of new land for single family and two-family development, and 6 acres of land for multi-family development for a total of 342 acres for residential uses.***
- ***It is determined that an additional 62 acres of commercial and an additional 15 acres of industrial acreage will be needed by 2040.***
- ***Future recreational lands were estimated at 63 acres during the life of the plan***
- ***Based on these assumptions approximately 482 acres of agricultural and open space lands will be lost over the life of the plan.***

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the large number of duplexes constructed between 2010 and 2017, duplexes constructed were subtracted from single-family units in order to allow for the construction of some duplexes between 2018 and 2040.

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## WHAT IT MEANS:

While projections can provide extremely valuable information for community planning, by nature, is also difficult to predict in areas that are heavily dependent on migration, as migration rates may vary considerably based on economic factors both within and outside of the area.

The actual rate and amount of future growth communities experience can be influenced by local policies projections have limitations that must be recognized. First and foremost, projections are not predictions. Projections are typically based on historical growth patterns and the composition of the current land use base. Their reliability depends, to a large extent, on the continuation of those past growth trends. Second, projections for small communities are especially difficult and subject to more error, as even minor changes can significantly impact growth rates. Third, future growth that slows or increases will affect the overall rate of growth. Regardless of whether communities prefer a no growth, low growth, or high growth option, it is recommended they adequately prepare for future growth and changes to provide the most cost-effective services possible. Furthermore, individual communities can maximize the net benefits of their public infrastructure by encouraging denser growth patterns that maximize the use of land resources while minimizing the impact on the natural resource base.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- *How much agricultural or open space land should be protected in the final plan? In other words, what areas of land should be prioritized for development within the Protected Area?*

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## POTENTIAL FRAMING CONCEPTS:

1. A District Approach to Land Use
2. Vibrant Neighborhoods & Area Development Plans
3. Infill & Redevelopment