

Chapter 8. Land Use

Introduction

Comprehensive planning is a way to improve local decisions that affect land. Having a comprehensive plan with a land use element in the Town of Little Black makes subsequent zoning and other land use decisions more transparent by helping to illustrate the reasons why a decision was made. The major goal in completing this element is to create a useful tool for decision makers (elected officials and plan commissioners) to guide growth and development in the Town of Little Black, for developers as they seek planned areas to advance projects, and for residents and other to make known their desire for growth and change in the future. Many northern communities are facing the same kinds of problems as the rest of the state including loss of community character, pollution, traffic issues, taxes at an all-time high and other infrastructure and maintenance costs that continue to strain local units of government. Many of these problems are being exacerbated by unplanned growth and development. When communities have the ability to define the way they wish to grow and develop, the extent of these problems can be significantly diminished.

Existing Land Use

An inventory of the existing land use in the Town of Little Black was conducted in the 2011 using state and county data. The determined land use categories are approximations based on photo-identifiable land uses that were derived by linking the parcel data with the assessment database. A standard generalized land use classification system was used to assign different land use areas into thirteen categories. A description of the land use classification system used in developing the generalized existing land use map (Map 8.1 Appendix) for the Town of Little Black is as follows:

Agriculture - Predominate land use is agriculture where the lands include croplands, livestock

grazing, and dairy farming.

Commercial - Retail sales establishments, restaurants, hotels/motels, and service stations, including gravel and sand pits.

Forest – Forest lands under private or industrial ownership. Mixed residential activity may also occur within this area.

Residential - Lands with structures designed for human habitation including: permanent, seasonal, and mobile housing units and recreational cabins and cottages.

Manufacturing – Manufacturing and industrial processing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution, and similar activities.

Open Space – Private and public owned non-wooded undeveloped lands, fallow fields.

Government/Institutional – Lands used for government-owned administration buildings and offices; fire stations; public hospitals and health care facilities; public schools, colleges, and educational research land; and lands of fraternal organizations. Cemeteries, churches, and other religious facilities are included in this land use category.

Communications/Utilities - Land used for generating and/or processing electronic, communication, or water, electricity; petroleum; or other transmittable product and for the disposal, waste processing, and/or recycling of by-products.

Federal – Federal owned forest lands.

State – State owned forest lands.

County – County owned forest lands.

Town – Town owned forested and non-forested lands.

Water - Open water areas, including natural and impounded lakes and streams.

Table 8-1 illustrates the approximate acreage in each existing land use category for the Town of Little Black.

**Table 8-1: Town of Little Black Existing Land Use Data
Acres Percent (2010)**

	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	13,431	62%
Residential	764	4%
Forest	1,742	8%
Ag Forest	2,168	10%
Commercial	151	<1%
Manufacturing	195	<1%
Undeveloped	3,118	14%
Other	174	<1%
Total	21,743	

Source: Taylor County Landplanning

Development Patterns

There are a number of things in a community that influence the way it develops or does not develop. The primary factors influencing the development pattern in the Town of Little Black include the following.

- **Commercial Land**

Commercial land in the Town of Little Black consists of homebased businesses and seasonal businesses scattered throughout the town.

- **Transportation Network**

The town's road network allows access to all land parcels in the town.

- **Surface Water Resources**

Undeveloped shoreland areas in the Town of Little Black are unlikely to experience growth pressure.

- **Forest Management Programs**

Lands that are enrolled in forestry programs such as the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program can provide some insurance that these lands will continue to be utilized for forest activities. These forested lands are under contractual obligation for either 25 or 50 years, and may or may not be renewed upon expiration.

- **Land Prices**

Land prices depend on many factors that vary

significantly from place to place. It is difficult to generalize the market price for property within a relatively small area within a county due to site specific features and because there are a limited number of properties on the market at any given time. Table 8-2 compares various type of land sales between 2008-09 and 2000.

Table 8-2 Agricultural and Forestland Sales Taylor County 2009 & 2000

	Land Buildings and Other Improvements					
	Agricultural land continuing in agricultural use			Agricultural land being diverted to other uses		
Year	Number of transactions	Acres sold	Dollars per acre	Number of transactions	Acres sold	Dollars per acre
2009	14	976	2764	7(a)	199(a)	3277(a)
2000	25	2384	953	20	837	1421
				Note (a) 2008 data		
	Land without Buildings and Other Improvements					
	Agricultural land continuing in agricultural use			Agricultural land being diverted to other uses		
Year	Number of transactions	Acres sold	Dollars per acre	Number of transactions	Acres sold	Dollars per acre
2009	14	422	2743	8(a)	241(a)	1419(a)
2000	21	1184	751	11	339	849
				Note (a) 2008 data		
	FOREST LAND SALES					
	Forest land continuing in forest use			Forest land being diverted to other uses		
Year	Number of transactions	Acres sold	Dollars per acre	Number of transactions	Acres sold	Dollars per acre
2009	29	777	1640	1	36	1900
2000	66	2502	759	38	1458	780

Source USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

Land Trends

Wisconsin Department of Revenue assessment statistics were used to determine land use trends in the Town of Little Black. Land assessment data can be used to conduct a simplified land use analysis and for examining trends. Figure 8-1 exhibits the total 2010 acreage in each of the tax assessment classes. Currently, the statutory classes of real estate used for assessment purposes are Residential, Commercial, Manufacturing, Agricultural, Undeveloped (formally Swamp and Waste), Agricultural Forest, Forest and Other.

1. Residential – any parcel or part of a parcel of untilled land that is not suitable for the production of row crops, on which a dwelling or other of human habitat is located.

2. Commercial – properties where the predominant use is the selling of merchandise or a service. Apartment buildings of four or more units and office buildings.

3. Manufacturing – consists of all property used for manufacturing, assembling, processing, fabricating, or milling tangible personal property for profit. It also includes establishments engaged in assembling component parts of manufactured products.

4. Agriculture – land, exclusive of buildings and improvements that is devoted primarily to agricultural use, as defined by rule.

5. Undeveloped – bog, marsh, lowland brush, uncultivated land zoned as shoreland, wetlands and other non-productive lands not elsewhere classified.

5m. Agricultural Forest – land that is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products, if the land satisfies any of three conditions.

6. Forest – productive forestland that is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products.

7. Other – includes all tax exempt lands.

Real estate assessments are also used to display trends in land use to aid in predicting future trends. Because this data covers extensive time periods, they are useful in conducting a simplified analysis for each real estate class. Trends in tax class assessment from 1993 through 2010 are depicted for residential, commercial, manufacturing, agriculture, undeveloped/swamp & waste, forest and other in Table 8-3.

Table 8-3 Statement of Assessments. Source Taylor County Land Planning

Class	1993		2000		2010	
	Acres	Value	Acres	Value	Acres	Value
Residential	900	9,537,700	888	22,748,900	764	40,541,700
Commercial	358	2,153,200	197	2,265,600	151	3,937,900
Manufacturing	217	99,700	215	40,400	195	267,400
Agricultural	15,979	9,251,300	14,905	4,424,000	13,431	2,502,400
Undeveloped	NA	NA	NA	NA	3,118	1,707,600
Ag Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,168	1,848,700
Sw amp & Waste	529	20,500	1,836	391,750	NA	NA
Forest	4,104	568,800	3,919	1,942,100	1,742	2,627,700
Other	NA	NA	NA	NA	174	7,470,100
Totals	22,087	21,631,200	22,074	36,583,450	21,743	60,903,500

Table 8.4 shows the changes with the land classifications since 2003.

Table 8.4 Changes in Land Use

Acres by Year and Class: Township of Little Black								
	Residential	Commercial	Manufacturing	Agricultural	Undeveloped	Ag Forest	Forest	Other
2003	678	185	215	13,538	3,366	0	3,911	175
2004	692	200	195	13,490	3,192	0	4,010	181
2005	710	201	195	13,510	3,241	2,100	1,882	179
2006	731	198	195	13,499	3,150	2,148	1,862	174
2007	740	219	195	13,524	3,141	2,164	1,776	175
2008	747	219	195	13,517	3,116	2,180	1,767	177
2009	755	227	195	13,514	3,119	2,177	1,746	177
2010	764	151	195	13,431	3,118	2,168	1,742	174

Source Taylor County Land Planning

Zoning

The Town of Little Black as of January 1, 2011 did not have a local zoning ordinance and Taylor County has not adopted a general comprehensive zoning ordinance governing the unincorporated areas of the county. The Taylor County Zoning Department is responsible for administering and enforcing some county codes, including the county's Shoreland Zoning (31), Subdivision Control (33), Floodplain Zoning (29), Sanitary Code (32), Airport Zoning (35), Contaminated Soil Control (37), Non Metallic Mining Reclamation (46), Rural Road & Building Identification (61),

and Recycling Authority (28) ordinances. The department consists of a Zoning Administrator who provides advisory, educational and enforcement supervision over environmental health problems of the entire county.

Shoreland Zoning

All unincorporated areas of Taylor County located within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable lakes, ponds, or flowages and within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable rivers or streams, or to the edge of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater is regulated by the Taylor County Shoreland Zoning Code (31). The Taylor County Shoreland Zoning Code establishes development standards for lands adjacent to county surface waters.

Building Permit Breakdown

Building Permits are required in the township. They may be obtained by contacting the town clerk. Permits for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) are required. Sanitary permits include new and replacement systems. Zoning permits for new building construction, remodeling, excessive grading, billboards and anything in the shoreland area are issued by the Taylor County Zoning Department. A Certified Survey Map (CSM) is required for lots less than ten acres.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Opportunities for redevelopment include infill, brownfield site redevelopment, and obsolete and dilapidated building and building sites. Although no specific areas have been identified, there may be parcels of land in the Town of Little Black that could use varying levels of redevelopment. Redevelopment will occur when and where practical in order to protect land values and neighboring properties.

Existing & Potential Land Use Conflicts

As growth occurs in the Town of Little Black, there will likely be increasing land use conflicts. Future rural growth will likely require the conversion and

fragmentation of farmland, forests, and open space areas. Conflicts between non-farm development and surrounding farms and forestry could become increasingly common. Other potential rural land uses that could conflict with neighboring uses include large-scale farm operations, nonmetallic mining operations, late night farming operations and rural manufacturing plants. Conflicts will also occur with businesses that require large quantities of water. While this plan and its process sought to minimize future land and water use conflicts, continued local government and developer related coordination must occur as few ordinances are in place that can directly impact land use conflicts. The planning process could be useful for minimizing potential land use conflicts between communities and the county by offering intergovernmental discussions and seeking input by sharing and asking for input of county goals and objectives and town maps before adoption at the county level.

Land Use Projections

While it is difficult to predict exactly what future land use activity will take place, the planning process sought to identify projected demand for future land use activities covering a 20-year planning period (in five-year increments) for residential, agricultural, commercial and manufacturing (industrial) land use. Projected land use changes for residential considered future population projections and past residential assessment data, while commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural projections utilized past assessment data.

Residential

Between 2010 and 2030, the Town of Little Black is projected to need 180 more acres for residential land use. Future residential acreage was determined by calculating the assessed acreage per person. The estimated future residential acreage was then calculated based on the expected population growth and is shown in Table 8.5.

Table 8-5: Future Residential Acreage

Year	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Acres	764	765	770	779	789

Source: Little Black Planning Committee

Commercial

The amount of land (acres) assessed for commercial purposes was one hundred fifty one acres in 2010. Based on the data for the last 17 years land in commercial usage has been declining. Projections by the Planning Committee are that by the year 2035, the Town of Little Black may need forty five more acres of commercial land.

Manufacturing

For the past 17 years the land assessed for manufacturing purposes in the Town of Little Black has been declining. If the city of Medford expands its manufacturing base, 100 acres of land could be lost due to annexation. Other wise there is no projected acreage for manufacturing over the 20-year planning horizon.

Agricultural

Projections in Table 8-6 indicate that the Town of Little Black will lose an average of 15 acres per year for the next 25 years. All together it's estimated the town will lose 374 acres over that 24-year period.

Table 8-6: Future Agricultural Acreage

2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
13,431	13,355	13,280	13,205	13,131	13,057

Source: Little Black Planning Committee

Annexation

Since 2003 the township has lost 325 taxable acres. Some of this has been annexed to the City of Medford. If Medford should expand in the next 25 years this trend could continue.

Future Land Use

The future land use map for the Town of Little Black is the visual guide to planning by bringing

together most, if not all of the elements of the comprehensive plan such as agricultural and natural resources, economic development, housing, utilities and community facilities, and transportation. It's a map of what the town wants to have happen, not a prediction or projection based on a formula. As part of the planning process, the Town of Little Black Planning Committee was provided an existing land use map, demographic and other background data. The result of the input provided created perspective on future land use direction for the town. The direction towards the future is portrayed in Map 8.2 in the Appendix. In most cases, land uses are identified to take advantage of cost effective extension of public infrastructure, where available. The map is intended to serve as a general guide for future growth and development in the Town of Little Black over a 20-year planning horizon. It is important to note the future land use map is not an official map nor is it a zoning map.

Future Land Use Categories

Future land use categories were identified to assist in developing a future land use map. These categories along with a description and intended use are shown in List 8-1

List 8-1: Town of Little Black Future Land Use

- **Agriculture** The predominate land use is agriculture where the lands include croplands, livestock grazing, and dairy farming. Animal and crop-related agricultural uses with limited residential development.
- **Forest lands** under private ownership.
- **Forestry and single-family residential activities.**
- **Town-owned lands.** Governmental purposes or recreation.
- **Commercial** Retail sales establishments, restaurants, hotels/motels, and service stations, including gravel and sand pits.

General retail, restaurants, grocery, professional offices and service-oriented businesses.

- **Conservation Areas of the Town** that are currently undeveloped and are not appropriate for future development due to environmental constraints (wetlands). Conservation areas to preserve and protect.
- **Government /Institutional Lands** used for government-owned administration buildings and offices; fire stations; public hospitals and health care facilities; public schools, colleges, and educational research land; and lands of fraternal organizations. Cemeteries, churches, and other religious facilities are included in this land use category. Utility or civic uses such as schools, hospitals and government facilities.
- **Open Space** Private and public owned non-wooded undeveloped lands, fallow fields. Fallow fields and wildlife habitat.
- **Manufacturing** Manufacturing and industrial processing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution, and similar activities. Wholesale, warehouse activities, commercial, industrial, and manufacturing uses.
- **Residential** Areas of the township now developed, or that are deemed appropriate for such development. Single family detached dwellings with a minimum of 2 acres in non-developed areas.

