

## **CHAPTER 8 Land Use Element**

66.1001 (2)(i) Wisconsin Statutes:

**Land Use Element.** A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs containing in par. 66.1001(2)(a) to 66.1001(2)(h). The element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan under this subsection shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.

The purpose of this plan's land use chapter is to compile an inventory of existing land use patterns, and establish the goals, objectives and policies which will be used to guide public and private actions concerning future land use and development. These goals, objectives and policies express ideas that are consistent with the desired character of the Town and the other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Section 8.1 Existing Land Use**

The Town of Grant is predominantly an agricultural community with a low overall residential development density. Residential development is located mainly in the western third of the Town, particularly in the Kellner area. There is very limited commercial and non-ag industrial development in the Town. Table 8.1 and Map 8.1 below illustrate the distribution of different land use categories across the Town. The land use categories are defined in Section 8.6 below.

**Table 8.1: Acreage of Existing Land Use in the Town of Grant, 2018**

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Residential	1,445	3.2%
Agricultural	18,522	40.6%
Natural Areas/Recreational	6,314	13.8%
Commercial	76	0.2%
Industrial	0	0.0%
Governmental/Institutional	95	0.2%
Road Right-of-Way	1,262	2.8%
Rail Right-of-Way	17	0.0%
Undeveloped	17,889	39.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,620</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Town of Grant and Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

#### **A. Residential Land Use**

Residential land use (1,445 acres, 3.2% of total land area) includes single family and seasonal residences, mobile homes, duplexes, and farm residences or farmsteads. Residences outside of the Kellner area are generally scattered throughout the Town in strips or corridors along the road network.

## B. Agricultural Land Use

The primary use of Town land is agricultural (18,522 acres, 40.6%), which includes irrigated and non-irrigated crop lands, dairy farms, livestock operations, and lands that have structures used to store agricultural equipment or products.

## C. Natural Areas/Recreational Land Use

This category (6,314 acres, 13.8%) includes public and private lands used for the preservation of wildlife and environmentally sensitive areas, as well as lands which have been specifically developed for public or private recreational activities, such as shooting and archery ranges, and riding club arenas. The majority of these lands are associated with Buena Vista Wildlife Area, a vast grassland habitat that supports the state threatened Greater Prairie-chicken and many other species of birds. See Chapter 5 (Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element) to learn more about the Buena Vista Wildlife Area.

## D. Commercial/Industrial Land Use

Commercial development accounts for a small amount of land use in the Town (76 acres, 0.2%). The uses include retail and sales establishments, restaurants, taverns, offices, and other professional services. Lands occupied by telecommunication towers are also identified as commercial. No Industrial land use was identified in 2018.

## E. Governmental/Institutional Land Use

These lands (95 acres, 0.2%) include existing municipal and government owned structures, public schools, churches, and cemeteries.

## F. Right-of-Way Land Use

This land use category includes all public road surface and right-of-way within the Town, as well as railroad right-of-way. In 2018, road ROW accounted for nearly all of this category (1,262 acres, 2.8%), while rail ROW present was minimal (17 acres, <0.1%).

## G. Undeveloped Land Use

Lands were classified as “undeveloped” if they were not involved in any form or use for residential, agricultural, natural areas, recreational, or commercial development, but were likely to accommodate these uses in the future. Forested lands are also included in this category. At 17,889 acres and over 39.2% of total Town land area, this land “non-use” represents the largest land use category.

**Map 8.1 Existing Land Use**

## **Section 8.2 Land Use Trend Analysis and Projected Land Use**

The Town of Grant is a community that is dominated by higher intensity agricultural operations, consisting primarily of irrigated vegetable production. In order to maintain the Town's economic base and rural character, future development will most likely consist of a mix of low density residential (two to five acres), rural residential (five to forty acres), and farm expansion.

### **A. Residential Land Use**

The Town's population has risen slowly over the last 20 years, with increased residential land use including both farm and non-farm development. Expansion of the City of Wisconsin Rapids may create additional residential pressure within Grant. The Town Plan Commission anticipates this trend to continue and desires to direct future non-farm residential uses away from higher intensity agricultural operations. The Town encourages the use of the Open Space Design Option and Lot Averaging to allow for low-density development, while also preserving lands that are either environmentally sensitive or are important for maintaining rural character. (Please see the Open-Space Design Option section of the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources chapter for further information.)

### **B. Agricultural Land Use**

Residents consider agricultural land a valuable natural resource to the Town and since it is the community's economic base, there is desire to preserve the agricultural land and limit new non-ag development in these areas. To encourage retention of the community's agricultural base, the Town recommends the protection of as much productive agricultural land as possible. The Town has established a Farmland Preservation Overlay Zoning District within the Zoning Ordinance as a way to protect such lands.

### **C. Commercial Land Use**

The majority of commercial activity in the Town compliments the dominant agricultural uses and serves limited residential needs. The Town anticipates that trend will continue. Developable acreage for these activities is abundant, provided that new businesses have a minimal impact on the agricultural community and are complimentary to surrounding uses. There is a desire by Town residents to preserve and protect the existing open space and maintain the community's rural character, resulting in a future desire for very limited commercial activity in the Town.

### **D. Trends in Land Values**

Table 8.2 below describes the increase in the equalized values for the different property types, as compiled by the State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WI DOR). The implementation of agricultural use value assessment in the mid 1990's redistributed valuations from the Agricultural category to the Residential, Forest, and Other categories. The Other category (created between 1990 and 2000) includes, "buildings and improvements; including any residence for the farm operator's spouse, children, parents, or grandparents; and the land necessary for the location and convenience of those building and improvements (WI Statutes 70.32)." The critical factor defining "Other" property is its actual use supporting a farm enterprise. If an assessor obtains verifiable evidence that buildings on a farm are used for agricultural purposes, they qualify as "Other." (WI DOR 2018 *Agricultural Assessment Guide for Wisconsin Property Owners*). Additional modifications were made to the property categories in 2004 when the Swamp and Waste class of property was renamed Undeveloped, and the Agricultural Forest class of property was created.

**Table 8.2: Equalized Assessed Property Values, Town of Grant**

Type of Property	1990		2000		2010		2018	
	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total
Residential	\$24,734,000	52%	\$62,478,000	67%	\$97,660,900	68%	\$113,139,000	72%
Commercial	\$564,000	1%	\$996,300	1%	\$1,672,900	1%	\$2,060,200	1%
Manufacturing	\$0	0%	\$11,100	0%	\$869,200	1%	\$475,200	0%
Agricultural	\$14,052,000	30%	\$5,596,600	6%	\$2,267,700	2%	\$2,659,000	2%
Undeveloped (1)	\$20,000	0%	\$2,798,800	3%	\$3,517,900	2%	\$4,082,400	3%
Ag Forest (2)	N/A	0%	N/A	0%	\$4,729,700	3%	\$5,270,700	3%
Forest	\$7,568,000	16%	\$14,992,100	16%	\$25,167,800	17%	\$21,813,000	14%
Other	N/A	0%	\$3,720,800	4%	\$8,273,500	6%	\$8,298,900	5%
Personal Property	\$307,000	1%	\$2,278,000	2%	\$398,800	0%	\$356,600	0%
<b>Total Value</b>	<b>\$47,245,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$92,871,700</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$144,558,400</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$158,155,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Department of Revenue, Historical Statement of Changes in Equalized Values 1990, 2000, and 2010 (Report 2) and Statement of Changes in Equalized Values 2018 (Expanded Version).

(1) The Swamp and Waste property classification was renamed Undeveloped in 2004.

(2) The Ag Forest property classification was created in 2004.

### **Section 8.3 Land Use Conflicts**

The primary land use conflict identified by the Town Plan Commission is a potential for dispute between non-farm residences and farm operations. Due to the important role agriculture plays in the community’s economy and character, the primary recommendation for conflict resolution is to direct non-farm residential building away from intensive agricultural operations.

### **Section 8.4 Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies**

The following statements pertain to land use within the Town of Grant. The goals, objectives and policies from the previous seven chapters must also be taken into consideration when making decisions on development within Grant.

A. Goal: Maintain the Town’s rural character.

B. Objectives:

1. Avoid conflicts between residential and non-residential land uses.
2. Consider the “open space design” option in the Zoning Ordinance for residential development.
3. Encourage increased use of the Lot Averaging Option of the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance.
4. Consider developing a Nuisance Ordinance.

C. Policies:

1. Groundwater quality and quantity, traffic and transportation infrastructure, loss of rural character, and protection of open space are taken into consideration when recommending housing density.
2. Encourage the use of buffers around residential areas to avoid conflict with farms, non-metallic mineral extraction, and sensitive areas.

3. Promote use of the A1-a Farmland Preservation Overlay Zoning District.
4. Direct non-farm residential development away from productive agricultural areas.
5. Adoption and maintenance of a Comprehensive Plan with ordinances to enforce such a plan.

**Section 8.5 Future Land Use Recommendations**

Table 8.3 below and Map 8.2 illustrate the Future Land Use recommendations for the Town of Grant Comprehensive Plan, and identify how development should proceed in the future to meet the Town’s goal of encouraging a pattern of community growth and development that will provide a quality living environment, protect rural character, and maintain the agricultural economy. Future development and redevelopment should be encouraged in an orderly pattern adjacent to and compatible with existing development.

Land Use recommendations include both immediate and long range planning goals to be implemented. The long-range Land Use Plan recommendations will be implemented over the course of the 25-year planning period as development proposals and land use changes are presented to the Town for consideration. The Town will have to consider periodically updating its zoning map to reflect changing land uses and citizen requests.

**Table 8.3: Future Land Use in the Town of Grant, 2040**

Land Use Category	2040 Acres	Percentage
Low Density Residential	941	2.1%
High Density Residential	440	1.0%
Enterprise Agriculture	13,032	28.6%
Intermediate Agriculture	9,781	21.4%
Limited Agriculture/Mixed Use	13,415	29.4%
Natural Areas - Limited Development	6,555	14.4%
Commercial	81	0.2%
Industrial	0	0.0%
Governmental/Institutional	95	0.2%
Road Right-of-Way	1,262	2.8%
Rail Right-of-Way	17	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,620</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Town of Grant and Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

**Section 8.6 Future Land Use Categories**

Assigning different land use classes to land in the Town is a formidable task. In order to ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the process, specific mapping criteria were developed.

There is no “Undeveloped” category on the Future Land Use map; all areas were assigned an anticipated future use that meets the goals, objectives and policies of this Comprehensive Plan. These future land use designations are only intended to identify what compatible uses would be for the particular parcels; they are not intended to require these parcels to develop in these uses throughout the planning period.

#### A. Residential Land Use Category and Mapping Criteria

To better describe and define residential intensity within the Town of Grant, future residential land use has been divided into Low Density and High Density designations.

1. **Low Density** category: Includes residential development on larger lots due to limitations presented by the natural conditions of the soils, depth to groundwater, and/or compatibility with adjacent lands in the area. May include existing non-residential uses.
2. **High Density** category: Includes existing higher density residential development in the Town of Grant, specifically within the Kellner area. In-fill residential development at densities similar to that currently found within the category is appropriate. May include non-residential uses that are compatible with neighboring properties provided the residential character of the neighborhood is not disturbed. Non-residential proposals must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### B. Agricultural Land Use Category and Mapping Criteria

Lands recommended predominantly for the continuation of agricultural pursuits, the protection of productive agricultural lands, and the retention of the rural nature of the community. In recognition of the differentiation of soil characteristics throughout the County, changing agricultural economy, and development pressures, three categories of agriculture will be used based on the intensity of the agricultural operations in that area:

1. **Enterprise Agriculture:** The Enterprise Agriculture category is intended to include lands that are eligible for the State's Farmland Preservation Program. These lands can support a full range of intensive agricultural uses, including intensive concentrations of irrigated lands, cranberry marshes, large dairies, and large confined livestock feeding operations. The category's uses and regulations are designed to implement Land Use Plan goals by encouraging livestock and other agricultural uses in areas where conditions are best suited to these agricultural pursuits, and discouraging residential development to avoid potential land use conflict.
2. **Intermediate Agriculture:** The Intermediate Agriculture category is intended to preserve and enhance land for agricultural uses. The category's uses and regulations are designed to encourage agricultural uses in areas where soil and other conditions are best suited to these agricultural pursuits, and control residential development to avoid potential conflict with agriculture uses. The category may also serve as a buffer for more intensive agricultural and/or residential uses in adjacent categories. The intensity of agricultural uses supported in this category is less than that of the Enterprise Agriculture category but more than the Limited Agriculture/Mixed Use category.
3. **Limited Agriculture/Mixed Use:** The Limited Agriculture category is intended to provide for the continuation of low intensity agricultural uses, restrict new and expanding livestock operations, provide for careful siting of single family residences, and support other uses that maintain the rural characteristics of the area. It may serve as a buffer for more intensive agricultural and/or residential uses in adjacent categories, and prevent premature conversion of rural lands to urban and other non-agricultural uses. The category's use and development regulations are designed to implement the Town's goals by limiting urban and suburban development in areas that are suited to agricultural uses.

**Map 8.2 Future Land Use Map**

### C. Natural Areas Land Use Category and Mapping Criteria

Includes lands recommended to remain in their natural state or for non-intensive uses such as recreation, wildlife habitat, or forest management. This category is applied to lands that are environmentally important or sensitive, including: shorelands, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, substantial wildlife habitat and public resource areas. Limited residential development could occur in specified areas that does not negatively impact the ecological or aesthetic value of lands designated for preservation in their natural state. Criteria for identification may include the following:

- Lands within 100 feet of navigable waters or to the landward side of adjoining wetlands, if greater than 100 feet, wetlands within 300 feet of navigable waters; excludes preexisting structures or cropland that would be nonconforming uses under Conservancy Zoning.
  - Other wetlands (not adjoining navigable waters).
  - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year floodplains.
  - Publicly owned lands used for recreation or wildlife/resource management.
  - Privately owned lands enrolled in permanent conservation easements for grassland and wetland protection, restoration and enhancement, and to improve wildlife habitat.
  - Large tracts of unbroken native landscapes such as natural forests, grasslands, and wetlands.
  - Other natural features of the landscape deemed important by the local community
1. **Natural Area – Limited Development** category: Identifies lands that are environmentally important to the community; however seasonal residential development could occur without negatively impacting the ecological value of the area. Lands identified within this category include public lands for the preservation of wildlife and environmentally sensitive areas, and private lands enrolled in conservation easements in perpetuity.

### D. Commercial and Industrial Land Use Category and Mapping Criteria

Includes areas of existing, developed commercial or industrial land uses. For most rural communities, it is difficult to determine an appropriate location for the growth of commercial activity. Most of the businesses that develop are home or farm based and do not have the option of relocating. Some communities have a clear vision of a commercial or industrial development area while others may not. Proposals for new industrial and commercial development should be considered only on a case-by-case basis, based on the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan. Approval for such use may require a change to the land use map.

1. **Commercial** category: Lands recommended for commercial development. This category is applied primarily to existing commercial areas. Future commercial locations should be evaluated based on land use and aesthetic compatibility of such businesses with existing or planned development on adjacent lands on a case-by-case basis. Favorable locations for this type of development would be along County and State roads and railroad right-of-way. It is anticipated that a sizeable percentage of existing and future commercial activity will take place as “home occupations” in residentially designated areas.
2. **Industrial** category: Include uses where the manufacturing of a product from a raw material is the primary purpose of the business. Individual industrial development proposals should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Favorable locations for this type of development would be along County and State roads and railroad right-of-way.

E. Governmental/Institutional Land Category and Mapping Criteria

Lands where public facilities exist or are to be located. Facilities include, but aren't limited to: government services and institutions, educational, religious, cemeteries, medical and health care, military, power plants, solid waste disposal sites, municipal wells and sewage treatment plants.

F. Right-of-Way

This land use category includes all public road surface and right-of-way within the Town, as well as railroad right-of-way.