

## **CHAPTER 8 Land Use Element**

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 Almond is predominantly an agricultural community and therefore has a low residential development density. It boasts one of the highest concentrations of vegetable production in the County and Central Wisconsin. Consequently, there is very limited commercial and industrial development in the Town, while residential development is scattered throughout the moraine areas of the central and eastern portions of the Town. Table 8.1 below and Map 8.1 on the following page illustrates the distribution of different land use categories across the Town.

**Table 8.1: Existing Land Use in the Town of Almond, 2004**

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage
Residential	621.0	2.2%
Commercial	45.7	0.1%
Agricultural	16,246.6	58.8%
Governmental/Institutional	263.0	1.0%
Road Right-of-Way	697.6	2.5%
Parks and Recreation	115.0	0.4%
Non-Metallic Mineral Extraction	47.6	0.2%
Undeveloped	9,609.6	34.8%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>27,646.1</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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

#### A. Residential Land Use

Lands with structures built for human habitation. These include single family and seasonal residences, mobile homes, duplexes, and farm residences or farmsteads. Residences are scattered throughout the Town and are generally located along transportation corridors.

#### B. Commercial/Office Land Use

Commercial development accounts for a small (0.1%) amount of land use in the Town. These lands include uses, such as; retail and sales establishments, restaurants, taverns, offices, and other professional services.

#### C. Agricultural

The primary use of these lands is agricultural. Lands in this category include irrigated and non-irrigated crop lands, dairy farms, livestock operations, and lands that have structures used to store agricultural equipment or products. Lands in this category represent the predominant land use in the Town, at almost 59% of the total acreage.

#### D. Government/Institutional

These lands include existing municipal and government owned structures, public schools, educational research lands, churches, cemeteries and fire stations. The greatest portion of these lands is attributed to the presence of wooded research lands owned by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and the Almond-Bancroft School District.

#### E. Road (right-of-way)

This land use category includes the road surface and all of the right-of-way for the Town. These lands account for approximately 2.5% of the total acreage in Almond.

#### F. Parks and Recreation

These lands could be publicly or privately owned. Public lands may include State, County, or Town Parks, nature preserves, boat landings, or athletic fields. Private lands may include golf courses, campgrounds, etc. The majority of these lands are found near the Wolf Lake area.

#### G. Non Metallic Mineral Extraction

These include lands that are currently being used to extract sub-surface materials such as sand, gravel, clay, or other aggregates.

#### H. Undeveloped

Lands in this category include privately owned wooded and non-wooded areas, and fallow fields. As of April, 2004, over 34% of the land in the Town was considered undeveloped. Of this total, 107 acres are attributed to the surface waters of the four lakes present in Almond. The rest of the undeveloped land is scattered along the central and eastern moraines, and the northwest portion of the Town.

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

The Town of Almond 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, farm and non-farm residential use.

#### A. Residential Land Use

The Town's population has risen slowly over the last 20 years, with increased residential land use comprising farm and non-farm development. The Town Plan Commission anticipates this trend to continue and desires to direct future non-farm residential uses away from higher intensity agricultural operations.

#### 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 development in this area. To encourage retention of the community's agricultural base, the Town recommends the protection of as much productive agricultural land as possible.

**Map 8.1 Existing Land Use**

### C. Commercial Land Use

The majority of commercial activity in the Town compliments the dominant agricultural uses and serves limited residential needs. The Town foresees that trend to 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. 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 *Agricultural Assessment Guide for Wisconsin Property Owners 12/03*)

**Table 8.2 Equalized Assessed Property Values, Town of Almond**

Type of Property	1980		1990		2000	
	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total
Residential	\$3,251,000	12%	\$6,404,000	22%	\$16,979,000	50%
Commercial	\$168,000	1%	\$338,000	1%	\$1,030,000	3%
Manufacturing	\$67,000	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%
Agricultural	\$20,287,000	75%	\$18,600,000	64%	\$5,830,000	17%
Swamp and Waste	\$2,000	0%	\$5,000	0%	\$49,000	0%
Forest	\$2,779,000	10%	\$2,965,000	10%	\$5,722,000	17%
Other	N/A	0%	N/A	0%	\$4,037,000	12%
Personal Property	\$655,000	2%	\$753,000	3%	\$571,000	2%
Total Value	\$27,209,000	100%	\$29,065,000	100%	\$34,218,000	100%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue Statistical Report of Property Valuations, 1980, 1990, 2000

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

The primary land use conflict identified by the Town Plan Commission was a potential for dispute between non-farm residences and existing 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**

**Goal 1:** Preserve and protect productive farmland.

**Objectives:**

- 1.1 Encourage programs that protect agriculture as a viable economy.
- 1.2 Create and adhere to a Town Land Division Ordinance that will help to protect productive agricultural areas.
- 1.3 Encourage cooperation with adjacent municipalities to protect productive agricultural areas.

**Policies:**

- 1.1 (a) Use Exclusive Agriculture (A-1) Zoning to protect productive farmland.
- 1.1 (b) Inconveniences, such as aerial spraying, dust, noise, odors, etc. that come from agricultural operations and aren't a major threat to public health or safety, shall not be considered a nuisance.
- 1.1 (c) Inconveniences, such as equipment traveling on roads, shall not be considered a nuisance.
- 1.1 (d) Recommend new non-farm residences be built at least 200 feet from lands zoned A1 due to dust , noise, spreading of animal waste or sludge, aerial or ground spraying, irrigation, etc.

**Goal 2:** Protect natural resources in the Town.

**Objectives:**

- 2.1 Encourage the proper management of natural resources in the Town; including sensitive areas, wetlands, steep slopes, and the Wolf Lake area.
- 2.2 Encourage the proper siting and reclamation of non-metallic extraction operations.

**Policies:**

- 2.2 (a) Use Conservancy Zoning to protect valued natural resources.
- 2.2 (b) Encourage the use of conservation easements in appropriate areas.

**Goal 3:** Maintain the Town's rural character.

**Objectives:**

- 3.1 Incorporate the Open Space Design option into the Land Division Ordinance and encourage its use.
- 3.2 Limit residential growth within the Town

**Policies:**

- 3.2 (a) Groundwater quality, traffic and transportation infrastructure, loss of rural character, and protection of open space are taken into consideration when recommending housing density.

3.2 (b) Encourage the use of buffers around residential areas to avoid conflict with farms, non-metallic mineral extraction, and sensitive areas.

3.2 (c) Direct non-farm residential development away from productive agricultural areas.

3.2 (d) Work with the County to amend the Zoning Ordinance to create zoning districts for the purpose of protecting and maintaining open space and natural resources.

**Goal 5:** Maintain a balance between the public interest and private property rights.

**Objective 5.1:** Encourage public participation in Town government.

**Policies:**

5.1 (a) Maintain open communication with Town residents and land owners.

5.1 (b) Maintain ongoing communication with the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department regarding control of unlicensed vehicles and the accumulation of “junk” on private property.

**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 Almond 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 20 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 Almond, 2020**

Future Land Use Category	2004 Acres	Percentage	2020 Acres	Percentage	Change 2004 to 2020
Residential	621	2.2%	685	2.5%	10.3%
Commercial	45.7	0.1%	55	0.2%	20.4%
Agricultural	16,246.6	58.8%	16,226.6	58.7%	-.001%
Governmental/ Institutional	263	1.0%	263	1.0%	0%
Road Right-of-Way	697.6	2.5%	703	2.5%	.008%
Parks and Recreation	115	0.4%	115	0.4%	0%
Non-Metallic Mineral Extraction	47.6	0.2%	67.6	0.2%	42%
Undeveloped	9,609.6	34.8%	9,530.9	34.5%	-.008%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,646.1</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>27,646.1</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

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

## **Section 8.6 Future Land Use Categories**

### **MAPPING CRITERIA**

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

#### **Residential Mapping Criteria**

As used here, the term “residential” is intended to identify existing concentrations of lots, which are distinguished by platting or nonagricultural zoning, where it is the original intent of the developer/residents to maintain a residential/neighborhood character and where nonresidential uses would be incompatible

#### **Commercial and Industrial Mapping Criteria**

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.

##### ***Land Use Categories:***

**Commercial:** Includes uses as allowed in Commercial Zoning districts.

**Industrial:** Include uses where the manufacturing of a product is the primary purpose of the business.

#### **Agricultural 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:

##### ***Land Use Categories:***

**L-1 Enterprise Agriculture:** The Enterprise Agriculture District is intended to include lands that can support a full range of intensive agricultural uses, including large dairies, large confined livestock feeding operations, and concentrations of irrigated vegetable crop production. The district’s uses and regulations are designed to implement Comprehensive 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. Due to the more intensive nature of uses allowed, the L-1 category is not intended to be applied near moderately- to densely-populated areas, and it is not intended to accommodate residential uses as principle uses.

**Map 8.2 Future Land Use Map**

**L-2 Intermediate Agriculture:** The Intermediate Agriculture District is intended to preserve and enhance land for agricultural uses. Large confined livestock operations are not recommended in these areas in order to minimize conflict and protect the environment. The intensity of agricultural uses allowed in this district is less than that of the L-1 Enterprise Agriculture district but more than the L-3 Limited Agriculture district. The district'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 avoid potential conflict with agriculture uses.

Residential development in these areas is recommended to occur in a manner that preserves rural character, protects open space, and promotes the rural lifestyle. Recommended lot sizes can vary between ten (10) and forty (40) acres (unless using the Open Space option). Densities will be based on goals, objectives, and policies in this plan along with citizen input.

**L-3 Limited Agriculture/Mixed Use:** The Limited Agriculture District 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 uses in adjacent districts, and prevent premature conversion of rural lands to urban and other non-agricultural uses. The district's use and development regulations are designed to implement the Comprehensive Plan goals by discouraging urban and suburban development in areas that are suited to agricultural uses and that are not well served by public facilities and services. Recommended minimum lot size for residential use in these areas is five (5) acres.

### **Natural Areas Mapping Criteria**

Lands recommended to remain in their natural state or for non-intensive uses such as recreation, wildlife habitat, or forest management. This category was applied to lands which are environmentally important or sensitive, including shore lands, 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:

1. Lands within 100 feet of navigable waters, or to the landward side of adjoining wetlands if greater than 100 feet. Includes wetlands within 300 feet of navigable waters; excludes preexisting structures or cropland that would be nonconforming uses under Conservancy Zoning.
2. Other wetlands (not adjoining navigable waters).
3. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100 year floodplains.
4. Publicly owned lands used for recreation or wildlife/resource management.
5. Large tracts of unbroken native landscapes such as natural forests, grasslands, and wetlands.
6. Other natural features of the landscape deemed important by the local community

### ***Land Use Categories:***

**NA – Protected:** Lands recommended to remain in their natural state or for non-intensive, non-developed uses such as passive recreation, wildlife habitat, ground and/or surface water protection and forest management. Development of these lands is not recommended due to the potential of destroying or degrading important or unique natural resources or due to the excessive measures necessary to overcome development barriers presented by the environmental conditions.

**NA – Limited Development:** Identifies lands that are environmentally important to the community; however limited residential development (*no more than one residence per 20 acres*) could occur without negatively impacting the ecological value of the area.

### **Institutional Land 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, and sewage treatment plants.

#### ***Land Use Categories:***

##### **1. Institutional**

### **Resource Extraction Mapping Criteria**

These areas are considered economically viable resources and are identified within specific boundaries to minimize or avoid conflict with other adjacent land uses. Resource extraction uses include clay, sand, gravel, and other aggregate extraction.

#### ***Land Use Categories:***

##### **1. Non-Metallic Mineral Extraction**