

CHAPTER 8 Land Use Element

The purpose of this 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, along with the land use category descriptions, 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 Lanark consists of predominantly natural areas, undeveloped land, and agricultural land and therefore has low development density. Table 8.1 below and Map 8.1 illustrate the distribution of different land use categories throughout the Town.

Table 8.1: Acreage of Existing Land Use in the Town of Lanark, 2004

Existing Land Use	Acreage	Percentage
Residential	1,332.8	5.8%
Commercial/ Services	18.5	0.1%
Agricultural	7,398.6	32.0%
Governmental/Institutional	47.0	0.2%
Road/ Railroad Right-of-Way	755.8	3.3%
Parks/Recreation	194.3	0.8%
Undeveloped/Natural Areas	13,381.8	57.9%
Total	23,128.7	100.0%

Source: Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

A. Residential

Uses in this category include lands with structures built as dwellings. These include single family and seasonal residences, mobile homes, duplexes, and farm residences or farmsteads. Concentrations of residential development are found in the southwest and southeast corners of Lanark with the remainder being scattered throughout the Town. The lower density residences are generally located along the established road network and water bodies. For the purposes of land use calculation, rural residences and farmsteads were estimated to occupy approximately 2 acres of area within the larger parcel, while calculations for acreage in concentrations of residential use are based on actual parcel size. As of December 2004, 1,332.8 acres, or 5.8% of the Town's land area, were devoted to residential land use.

B. Commercial/Office

Commercial development accounts for a very small amount (18 acres, 0.1%) of land area in Lanark. These lands include uses such as: retail and sales establishments, restaurants, taverns, offices, and other professional services. The majority of commercial uses, aside from home-based businesses, are located along or near USH 10 and State Highway 54.

C. Agricultural

Agriculture is the predominant land use in Lanark. Lands in this category include irrigated and non-irrigated crop lands, dairy farms, pasture, and lands that have structures used to store agricultural equipment or products. These lands (7,399 acres) represent approximately one-third of the total Town acreage. The majority of larger, contiguous areas of agricultural use are found in the northern and western areas of the Town.

D. Government/Institutional

These lands include Town owned lands, existing municipal and government owned structures, churches, and cemeteries. The greatest portion of these lands is attributed to Town owned property for the Town Hall and garage.

E. Road and Railroad (Right-of-Way)

This land use category covers all of the railroad and road right of way in the Town. Table 8.1 shows the combined acreage for these two modes of transportation, but broken down, the roads account for 741 acres and the railroad 14.8 acres.

F. Parks and Recreation

Lands in this category comprise approximately 0.8% of the total acreage in the Town. 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 lands in this category in the Town are owned by the WI DNR.

G. Undeveloped/Natural Areas

Lands in this category make up the largest amount of acreage in the Town of Lanark, accounting for 13,382 acres, or approximately 58% of the total area. Undeveloped land and natural areas, which includes wetlands, scrub or shrub land, privately owned forested areas, and water, is scattered throughout the Town. A substantial amount of the forested areas are enrolled in the Managed Forest Law program, as identified on Map 5.8 in Chapter 5 (Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources) of this plan.

Section 8.2 Land Use Trend Analysis and Projected Land Use

The Town of Lanark is a community that is dominated by agricultural and forested land. These two characteristics, along with easy access to major transportation corridors will continue to make the Town a desirable location for people to live. The challenge for present and future residents will be in protecting the rural landscape while accommodating increased development.

A. Residential Land Use

The Town experienced the highest rate of growth (25.6%) of all Portage County Towns between 1990 and 2000; and is projected to add another 477 residents by 2025 (a 33% increase from 2000). As forested and agricultural lands will most likely be converted for many of the new residential sites, the Town recommends housing densities that have minimal impact on groundwater quality and other natural resources, as well as remaining agricultural operations. Infilling of existing platted subdivisions (see Chapter 2, Housing) should be taken advantage of to absorb some of the residential growth while protecting the Town's open spaces. If residential land use projections are to be based on past permit activity (average of 14.9 single family permits per year over the past 14 years) times 2 acres per housing unit times 20 years, 596 acres will be needed to accommodate the new growth. If population projections are used (206 housing units times 2 acres), 412 acres will be needed for residential use. Due to unforeseen events and variables, the Town decided that growth in residential acreage will be somewhere in between the above two scenarios at about 500 acres, with most growth occurring in the southern portion of the Town.

Map 8.1: Existing Land Use

B. Transportation (Right of Way)

An increase in residential use usually carries with it a corresponding increase in need for more roadways or at least, an increased load on the existing infrastructure. For purpose of projecting land use, the Town projects an increase of 5% of 500 acres (500 acre increase in residential use), or 25 more acres of road right of way over the next twenty years.

C. Agricultural Land Use

Although lands designated as agriculture have shown a decline in equalized value over the last twenty years (Table 8.2), the Plan Commission anticipates that agriculture will continue to be a significant use over the next twenty years due to lack of municipal services, environmental factors, and the desire of current farmers to continue farming. To encourage retention of the community's agricultural base, the Town of Lanark recommends the protection of productive agricultural land. The Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) system will be used as a tool to help identify productive agricultural areas (see the Agriculture, Natural, Cultural Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan).

D. Commercial Land Use

The majority of commercial activity in Lanark compliments the agricultural uses and serves limited residential needs; the Town expects that trend to continue. Developable acreage for this type of commercial activity is abundant, provided that new businesses have a minimal impact on the agricultural community, rural character and are compatible with surrounding uses. The Town recommends directing larger scale commercial activity to areas that provide services, such as municipal sewer and water. It is difficult to project future commercial use in a rural area, therefore; the Town projects an increase in commercial activity that is proportional to the projected increase in population, which translates to an increase of approximately 7 acres during this planning period.

E. Parks and Recreation

The Town encourages the expansion of parks and recreational land to meet the projected increase in residential development. It is recommended that recreational uses do not conflict with surrounding uses or the Town's rural character.

F. Undeveloped/ Natural Areas

These areas of the Town may be desirable for development. Development in these areas should occur in a manner that protects the Town's rural character and poses minimal negative impacts to natural resources.

G. Trends in Land Values

Table 8.2 below describes the change 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)."

Table 8.2: Equalized Property Values, Town of Lanark

Type of Property	1980		1990		2000	
	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Value
Residential	\$9,688,000	37%	\$13,862,000	49%	\$52,261,000	72%
Commercial	\$140,000	1%	\$197,000	1%	\$663,000	1%
Manufacturing	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%
Agricultural	\$10,778,000	41%	\$8,981,000	32%	\$3,188,000	4%
Swamp and Waste	\$7,000	0%	\$33,000	0%	\$103,000	1%
Forest	\$4,868,000	19%	\$5,113,000	18%	\$11,381,000	16%
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$4,351,000	6%
Personal Property	\$658,000	3%	\$136,000	6%	\$189,000	0%
Total Value	\$26,139,000	100%	\$28,322,000	100%	\$72,136,000	100%

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

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, December, 2003*).

F. Redevelopment Areas

The only potential site identified at this time for redevelopment is located at the intersection of STH 54 and County Rd TT. This property, owned by the Town, is the site of an abandoned land fill. *The Town will study possible alternative uses for the property over the next ten years.*

Section 8.3 Land Use Conflicts

The primary land use conflicts identified during the planning process were: a potential for dispute between non-farm residences and existing farm operations, how to maintain rural character and protect the integrity of lakes, rivers and their corridors and other natural resources while accommodating increasing residential development, and impacts from non-metallic mining operations on surrounding uses. Due to the important role agriculture plays in the community’s economy and character, the primary recommendations for limiting conflict are to direct and encourage non-farm residential development away from intensive agricultural operations, encourage the use of spatial or vegetative buffers, and provide information to residents regarding Wisconsin’s Right to Farm law. The degree to which natural resources are protected will largely depend on the extent to which the recommendations in this plan are followed.

Section 8.4 Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies

One of the main themes identified throughout the comprehensive planning process was the desire to maintain the rural atmosphere or character of the Town. This is stated in the Town’s vision statement and found in the Issues and Opportunities element of this plan, as well as the primary land use goal.

But what is rural character? The vision or embodiment of rural character can mean different things to different people. The Lanark Plan Commission has agreed that rural character is a combination of many factors.

To help guide future boards and commissions in their decision making, this document includes the following factors that contribute to and help define the Town's rural character:

- A mix of hills and valleys, winding roads and stone fence lines, farmfields, larger tracts of woodlands, scattered residences and the natural beauty of healthy surface waters and wetlands.
- Residences, as well as signs, blend into the landscape, rather than being the focus of it.
- The ability to walk down quiet roads and enjoy a night sky unobstructed by the proliferation of unshielded lights from commercial and residential development.
- Higher intensity commercial uses and concentrations of commercial activity are located in more urbanized areas.
- The ability to farm, hunt, and reside in close proximity to one another.

Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal: Protect those elements of the landscape in the Town of Lanark that define the rural character and contribute to creating a sense of place.

Objective 1: Preserve significant environmental resources, including water bodies, floodplains, wetlands, shorelands, and groundwater, as well as areas offering opportunities for recreation, open space and wildlife habitat.

Policies:

1.1 Use Conservancy Zoning to protect valued natural resources that include shorelands, shoreland wetlands, and publicly owned lands used for recreation and wildlife management.

1.2 Development along waterways through the Town should protect the quality and aesthetic value of the water resource and associated corridors.

1.3 Encourage land use practices that protect air, land, and water quality.

1.4 Encourage farmers to work with agricultural agencies to develop farm plans and procedures that help protect riparian lands and minimize field and feedlot runoff into surface waters.

1.5 Land is used in a manner that produces minimal negative effects to publicly important areas as identified in the UW-Stevens Point Lakes Study (Appendix G).

1.6 Work with Portage County to create a second tier Conservancy Zoning District.

Objective 2: Direct commercial activity to appropriate locations.

Policies:

2.1 Adhere to commercial development standards as stated in the Economic Development element of this plan to aid in determining appropriate locations.

2.2 Recommend design standards that protect rural character through the use of such things as; vegetative buffers, shielded lighting, and unobtrusive signage associated with commercial development.

Objective 3: Preserve highly productive farmlands, support the continuation of sustainable farming operations, and recognize small scale agriculture as a vital part of the rural landscape, which provides diversified agricultural products while enhancing the rural character of the Town.

Policies:

3.1 Identify and map highly productive farmlands and sustainable farmlands, and preserve those lands through the implementation of the A1, Exclusive Agriculture District.

3.2 Direct nonfarm development, particularly residential subdivisions, into areas where it will not interfere with or be negatively impacted by farming activities. This can be accomplished by utilizing the County's authority, under its Subdivision Ordinance, to deny proposed lot splits in locations deemed unsuitable for development.

Objective 4: Residential development occurs in a manner that provides a high quality living environment, enhances property values, avoids conflicting land uses, minimizes impacts on the natural environment and preserves the rural atmosphere.

Policies:

4.1 Require that new, unsewered lots be at least 2 acres in size to minimize pollution of groundwater from on-site sewage systems. Consider residential development on lots less than 2 acres that: (1) infill existing small lot subdivisions where the quality of groundwater resources will not be degraded; or (2) require permanently preserved undeveloped open space in return for small lot sizes.

4.2 Within or adjacent to the A1, Exclusive Agriculture Zoning District or the A20, Primary Agriculture Zoning District, residential dwellings proposed adjacent to agricultural uses permitted in the Portage County's Agricultural Zoning Districts shall be established a minimum of 100 feet from the property line adjacent to the agricultural use, including road right-of way, as defined at the time of the plat. In no situation shall this requirement render an existing parcel unbuildable for residential purposes. Setbacks established on the plat or certified survey map shall remain in effect as long as adjacent zoning is A1 or A20.

4.3 Encourage the use of the Open Space Development guidelines to concentrate residential development on suitable portions of individual properties while preserving, to the best possible extent, the natural characteristics of the remaining open space.

4.4 Direct duplex and multi family residential development into urban areas, where public sewer and water utilities are available.

4.5 The Town will create a Land Division Ordinance.

Map 8.2: Future Land Use

Section 8.5 Future Land Use Recommendations

Table 8.3 and Map 8.2 illustrate the Future Land Use recommendations for the Town of Lanark Comprehensive Plan, and identify how development should proceed in the future to meet the Town’s goals of protecting rural character, providing for orderly growth and encouraging development that will maintain the Town’s tax base. Future development should be encouraged in an orderly pattern adjacent to and compatible with existing development. The Town projects that any future residential, commercial, development will occur primarily on undeveloped forested land and some agricultural lands. As stated before, balancing the protection of rural character and individual property rights in the face of increased growth will present a challenge for Town residents.

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 land use or zoning map to reflect changing land uses and citizen requests.

Table 8.3: Future Land Use in the Town of Lanark, 2020

Existing Land Use	2004 Acres	%	2010 Acres	2015 Acres	2020 Acres	2025 Acres	%	Change 2004 to 2025
Residential	1,332.8	5.8%	1,432.8	1,582.8	1,732.8	1,832.8	7.9%	37%
Commercial	18.5	0.1%	18.5	20.5	22.5	25.5	0.1%	37%
Agricultural	7,398.6	32.0%	7,368.6	7,329.6	7,249.6	7,158.6	31.4%	-3.2%
Industrial	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%
Governmental/ Institutional	47.0	0.2%	47.0	47.0	47.0	47.0	0.2%	0.0%
Road/Railroad Right-of-Way	755.8	3.3%	760.8	765.8	770.8	780.8	3.4%	3.3%
Parks and Recreation	194.3	0.8%	194.3	194.3	194.3	194.3	0.8%	0.0%
Undeveloped/Natural Areas	13,381.8	57.9%	13,306.8	13,188.8	13,111.8	13,089.8	56.6%	-2.2%
Total	23,128.7	100%	23,128.7	23,128.7	23,128.7	23,128.7	100%	

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

Section 8.6 Future Land Use Categories

Categorizing the land within the Town of Lanark 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. Examples of areas to be mapped as residential include;

1. Existing developed residential or recreational zoning.
2. Subdivisions or clusters of lots, strongly residential in character, that have developed under agricultural zoning. It is recommended that such areas be identified as residential

in this Plan, but considered for rezoning to an appropriate residential district, only where the majority of residents are in agreement as to the need for residential zoning restrictions.

3. Areas for expansion of residential development based on goals and policies in this Plan. Current non residential uses would be allowed until future residential development occurs.

Land Use Categories:

Rural Residential: New lots are to be equal to, or greater than 2 acres per residence. Lands in this category may include existing concentrations of developed and undeveloped lots that are smaller than 2 acres. Existing uses are allowed until future residential development takes place.

Commercial Mapping Criteria

Areas of existing developed commercial land uses. As a rural community, it is difficult to determine an appropriate location for the growth of commercial activity. The Town of Lanark does not have specific areas identified for future commercial or industrial development. Most of the businesses that develop are home or farm based and do not have the option of relocating. Proposals for new 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

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 Category 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.

L-2 Intermediate Agriculture: The Intermediate Agriculture Category is intended to preserve and enhance land for agricultural uses. Large confined livestock operations should be limited to ensure compatible land use and minimize conflicts with adjacent uses. The intensity of agricultural uses allowed in this district is less than that of the L-1 Enterprise

Agriculture category but more than the L-3 Limited Agriculture category. This 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.

Lands in this category are recommended for low density development because of physical limitations for building or a need to protect farmlands or environmentally important lands from excessive development. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to; loss of farmlands; steep slopes, proximity to environmentally sensitive lands, distance from public roadways, depth to seasonal high groundwater; surface drainage; flooding potential; groundwater quality; and land use compatibility with existing or planned uses.

This category also applies to agricultural lands that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products, including highly productive farmland and farming operations where found in concentration. A minimum lot density of 10 acres is recommended for lands in this category.

L-3 Limited Agriculture/Mixed Use: The Limited Agriculture Category is intended to provide for the continuation of low intensity agricultural uses, recommend against 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 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 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.

Lands which may, on a case-by-case basis, have the potential for a broad range of rural-oriented land uses including: agriculture; forestry; and single-family residences with minimum lot densities of 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 a manner that does not negatively impact the ecological or aesthetic value of areas designated for preservation in their natural state. Criteria for identification may include the following:

1. Lands within 100 feet of navigable waters or to the landward side of adjoining wetlands, if greater than 100 feet. Including wetlands within 300 feet of navigable waters, and excluding 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.

Lands in this category include:

- Riparian buffers along navigable streams and larger water bodies.
- FEMA 100 yr. Floodplain
- DNR regulated wetlands within 300 feet of navigable lakes and waterways.
- Publicly owned lands used for recreation or wildlife/resource management.

NA – Limited Development: Identifies lands that are environmentally important to the community; however limited residential development (*no more than one residence per 10 acres*) could occur without negatively impacting the ecological value of the area. These areas include large blocks of forested lands, lands along the Ice Age Trail, natural areas adjacent to wetlands, and the riparian corridor along the Spring Creek.

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

Section 8.7 Open Space and Rural Landscape Preservation

The Town of Lanark wants to allow for low density residential development while also preserving the traditional rural/country appearance and character of the township. The traditional rural nature of the township with farms, mature woods, wetlands, quiet roads, and open spaces is what has drawn many residents to the Town. Residents have expressed a desire to maintain a countryside environment while also allowing opportunities for growth (see results of community survey in Appendix B). This open space section of the land use plan identifies areas in the Town suitable for low density residential development, where additional efforts to preserve open spaces will be made.

A. Primary and Secondary Open Space Areas

To protect those elements of the landscape that define open space and enhance the rural living experience, the Town of Lanark Planning Committee has classified portions of the Town as Primary and Secondary Open Space Areas. In general, Open Space Areas include lands that are either environmentally sensitive, such as wetlands, floodplains and prime agricultural soils, or are important for maintaining a rural, uncluttered landscape, such as sustainable farmlands, large woodlots, scenic views, historic architecture and wildlife habitat. A boundary map for the Primary Open Space Areas defined below, is located in Appendix F of this land use plan.

1. Primary Open Space Areas.

Natural regions of the town comprising only the most severely constrained lands, where development is typically restricted under current codes and laws. Portage County has determined the following elements to be included in the Primary Open Space Area:

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Regulated Wetlands
- Federal Emergency Management Agency 100 Year Floodplain
- Slopes Exceeding 20 Percent.
- Riparian Buffers, 100 feet from lakes and navigable streams
- Public Parks and Recreation Property
- Lands enrolled in Land Trust Programs or Conservation Easements

2. Secondary Open Space Areas.

The Secondary Open Space Areas will allow low density residential development at densities ranging from one dwelling unit per five-acres to one dwelling unit per twenty-acres. In this area, however, residential dwelling units could be clustered onto lots as small as two-acres and remaining open spaces will be preserved through various zoning and legal techniques. Residential parcels could be clustered at the time land is split under County plat requirements.

Secondary Open Space Areas may include natural, historic or cultural elements identified by the community as significant for preserving the natural landscape of the area. The Town of Lanark Plan Commission shall review individual requests for land splits when a landowner uses the Open Space Design Option. The Commission will work with the property owner to determine which of the Secondary Open Space Areas should take priority on the proposed development, given the unique features that exist in different areas of the Town. The Town of Lanark has determined the following elements to be included in the Secondary Open Space Areas:

- **HYDRIC AND HIGHLY PERMEABLE SOILS:** The Town should look to support alternatives to building on these types of soils. Groundwater and surface water contamination, as well as construction limitations, are common problems associated with developing in hydric and highly permeable soils. For the purpose of this plan, hydric soils are defined as soils where depth to groundwater is generally <1 foot from the surface.
- **SIGNIFICANT WILDLIFE HABITATS:** Preserve natural areas that attract and protect native wildlife, so the abundance of wildlife found in the Town will continue to flourish into the future. Significant wildlife habitat, for the purpose of this plan includes natural meadows, non-commercial woodlands exceeding 10 contiguous acres in area and natural corridors used by wildlife for movement throughout the area. Woodlands are a major component of the rural

character of the Town. Where feasible, developments should limit their intrusion into woodlands, preserving them for wildlife and timber production.

- **ACTIVELY FARMED AGRICULTURAL REGIONS:** Family farms and smaller hobby farms contribute much to the rural character of the area. Rural development should be directed to areas where conflict with active farming operations is minimized.
- **PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS** (where these soils coincide with crop fields, meadows, and pastures): High quality soils are a rare occurrence in the Town of Lanark. When these soils coincide with active farmlands, every effort should be made to protect their continued viability. Development should be directed away from these productive lands to permit farming operations to continue free from conflicts with incompatible land uses.
- **SCENIC VIEW-SHEDS AND ROAD CORRIDORS:** The unique scenic beauty of the Lanark area undoubtedly persuaded many residents to settle here, and it should be maintained wherever possible. New developments should be sited to minimize intrusion into scenic vistas from public rights-of-way or natural areas. Homes should be buffered from roadways by natural vegetation where ever possible, and new road cuts should be kept to a minimum.

See Appendix F for a map of Primary Open Space Areas.

B. Developing In Open Space Areas

The Open Space Design Option of the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance provides for the protection of open space within a development by requiring at least fifty (50) percent of the Secondary Open Space Area, and one-hundred (100) percent of the Primary Open Space Area on the parcel be protected from further development. Other provisions of the Open Space Design Option include:

- The overall density remains the same as would be found in a traditional development in the existing zoning district.
- The Open Space Design Option may be applied to tax parcels of **twenty (20) acres** or more in communities with an Open Space and Rural Landscape Preservation section in their land use or comprehensive plan.
- Each lot must abut a designated open space.
- Lots not served by a public or common sanitary sewer shall be **at least two (2) acres in size**, exclusive of road right of way.
- The designated open space is to remain open in perpetuity.

The specifics of the Open Space Design requirements are found in the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance.

This Comprehensive Plan proposes a continuation of the density currently allowed under existing zoning districts. This plan, however, proposes a rearrangement of that development to achieve a greater potential for useful agriculture, woodlands and wetlands and a more traditional rural environment.

The following is a simplified example of how an open space design may be determined for a property.

Open Space Design Process

The first step, which involves the identification of open space worthy of preservation, is divided into two parts: Primary Open Space Areas (Figure 1) limited to regulatory wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes, and Secondary Open Space Areas (Figure 2) including those unprotected

elements of the natural and cultural landscape that deserve to be spared from clearing, grading, and development.

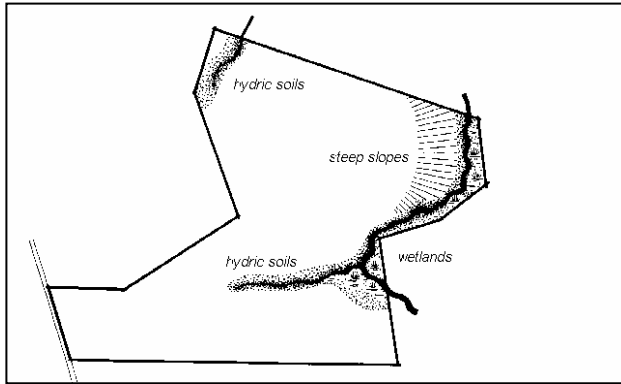


Figure 1: Primary Open Space Areas

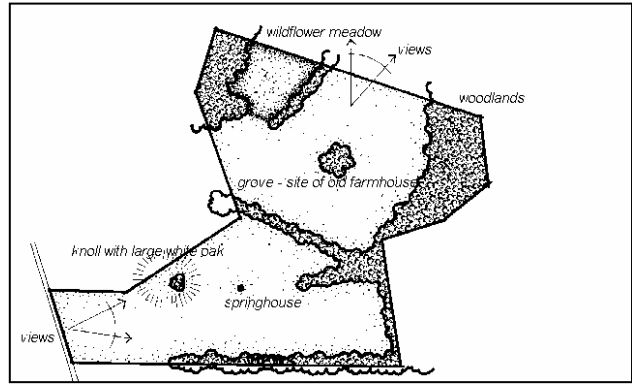


Figure 2: Secondary Open Space Areas

The result of combining the Primary and Secondary Open Space Areas, identified in the first step, is a map showing areas of the site suitable for future development (Figure 3). With development areas outlined, suitable home sites, roadways and lot lines can be added to the plan.

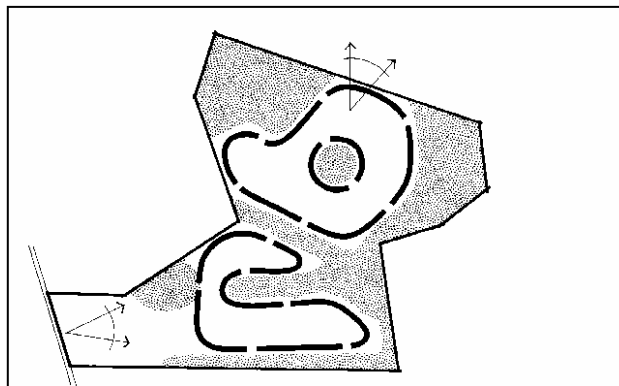


Figure 3: Suitable Development Areas

Figure 4 shows a finished subdivision, designed by the process described above. The subdivision on the right (Figure 5) depicts a conventionally designed subdivision, splitting the entire parcel into individual lots.

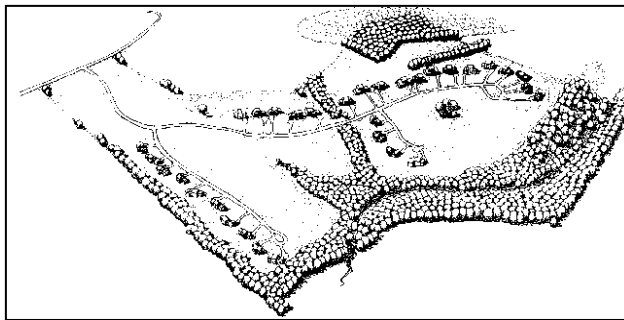


Figure 4: Open Space Designed Subdivision

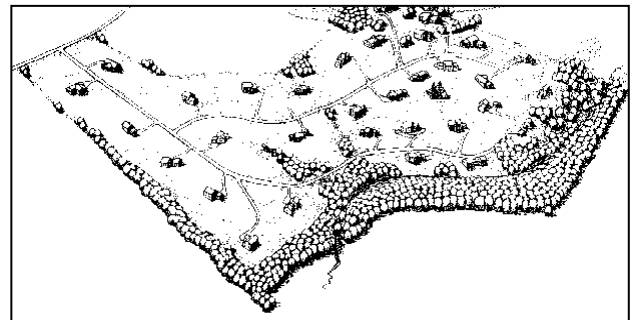


Figure 5: Conventional Design Subdivision