

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 in the Town of Plover. 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

Land uses within the Town of Plover are quite diverse when compared to other Towns in Portage County. The Town of Plover boasts one of the highest concentrations of vegetable production in the County and Central Wisconsin. In addition, due to the proximity to urban areas, convenient transportation infrastructure, and regional agricultural suppliers, there are over 400 acres of commercial and industrial uses in the Town. Table 8.1 below and Map 8.1 depict the distribution of different land uses across the Town.

Table 8.1: Town of Plover Existing Land Use Acreage, 2005

Existing Land Use	Acreage	Percentage
Residential	1,428	5.3%
Commercial/ Services	184	0.7%
Agricultural	16,555	61.0%
Governmental/Institutional	96	0.4%
Road/ Railroad Right-of-Way	1,202	4.4%
Parks/Recreation	1,675	6.2%
Industrial	222	0.8%
Vacant/Undeveloped	5,776	21.3%
Total Acreage	27,138	100%

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

A. Residential Land Use

Residential land use includes single-family and seasonal residences, mobile homes, duplexes, and farm residences or farmsteads. Established patterns of residential use can be found: along the Wisconsin River; within the Prainwood Estates subdivision (east of the I-39/Hwy 54 interchange); near the Bluebird subdivision (east of I-39 between Porter Dr. and Bluebird Dr.); and west of I-39 and north of Cty Rd HH. This area west of I-39 represents the approximately 65 acres that will be annexed by 2008 into Stevens Point as part of the mutual boundary agreement with that city. A brief description of the boundary agreement with the City can be found in the Issues and Opportunities and Intergovernmental Cooperation elements of this plan.

Other residences are scattered throughout the Town and are generally located along the established road network. 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 June 2005, 1,428 acres, or 5.3% of the Town's land area, were devoted to residential land use.

B. Commercial/Services Land Use

Commercial development accounts for a small amount (184 ac., 0.7%) of land use in the Town. These lands are located primarily along State Trunk Highway (STH) 54 corridor and include a wide range of uses, such as; restaurants, taverns, offices, an auto race track (Golden Sands Speedway), auto salvage, hotels, trucking, and other professional services.

C. Industrial

The industrial lands within the Town are also located along the STH 54 corridor and include such uses as vegetable processing, ethanol production, pallet construction and reprocessing, and a fertilizer distribution facility. These uses currently account for approximately 222 acres, or 0.8% of the total Town acreage. The Town of Plover has the largest amount of industrial acreage when compared to other Towns within Portage County.

D. Agricultural

Agriculture represents the largest land use in Plover. Lands in this category include irrigated and non-irrigated crop lands, cranberry bogs, dairy farms, livestock operations, permanent pasture, and lands that have structures used to store agricultural equipment or products. At 16,555 acres, agricultural uses occupy approximately 61% of the total Town acreage. Active agricultural operations are found throughout the Town, with some areas abutting the Village of Plover's corporate boundary.

E. Governmental/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 Stevens Point Area Public School and the Stevens Point Catholic School Districts.

F. Right-of-Way

This land use category covers all of the railroad and road right-of-way in the Town. Table 8.1 shows a combined acreage for these two modes of transportation of 1,202 acres. Pavement and lands within the road right-of-way account for 1,127 acres of the total, with the railroad right-of-way totaling approximately 75 acres.

G. 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 owned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for use as wildlife habitat.

H. Undeveloped

Lands in this category include privately owned wooded and non-wooded areas, and fallow fields. As of June 2005, approximately 5,776 acres (21%) of the land in the Town was considered undeveloped. The majority of these lands are located between STH 54 and the Wisconsin River.

Map 8.1 Existing Land Use

Section 8.2 Land Use Trend Analysis and Projected Land Use Needs

The Town of Plover is a community that continues to be dominated by higher intensity agricultural operations, consisting primarily of irrigated vegetable production and complementary vegetable processing facilities.

A. Residential Land Use

The Town's population has slowly increased over the last 20 years. Due to the proximity to the Village of Plover and the anticipated growth in the area, however, the Town's population is projected to increase at a faster rate than the previous twenty years.

The Town has identified the areas north of STH 54 and east of I-39 for the majority of future Town residential expansion. Given that some agricultural lands will most likely be converted for any new residential uses, the Town recommends housing densities that will have a minimal impact on groundwater quality, other natural resources, and remaining agricultural operations. Possible future service agreements with the Village of Plover may allow for increased housing densities in specified areas of the Town (Map 8.4). Future residential land use needs are based on population projections for the year 2025, multiplied by 2 acres per housing unit. This future need is also based on the supposition that each new household will occupy a new housing unit (Table 8.3).

B. Agricultural Land Use

Agricultural land is a valuable natural resource to the Town and since it is the predominant land use, there is a desire to preserve the productive agricultural lands and limit new development within these areas. To encourage retention of the community's agricultural base, the Town recommends the protection of as much productive agricultural land as possible; especially south of STH 54 and the cranberry operations along the western portion of the Town.

C. Commercial Land Use

The Town hosts an array of commercial uses, many of which complement regional agricultural operations. The Town foresees that trend to continue.

Two major areas in the Town have been identified to accommodate future commercial uses; the first area includes lands surrounding and to the south of the I-39/STH 54 interchange, and the second area includes lands on the north side of STH 54, west of the Village of Plover. This second area will be referred to as the Highway 54 Corridor and will be discussed in greater detail below. The Town anticipates a range of commercial uses occurring in these areas, especially due to potential future municipal sewer and water service provision, but will consider each on a case-by-case basis.

D. Highway 54 Corridor (between the Town of Grant and the Village of Plover)

As a result of increased safety concerns, a Controlled Access Plan was adopted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) in 1981 for the segment of State Trunk Highway 54 between Business Highway 51 in the Village of Plover and 48th Street in the Town of Grand Rapids (Wood County). Now in 2005, the entire length of STH 54 in the Town of Plover is designated as a controlled access highway, and as such, any new access points to this facility would need WisDOT approval.

In November of 1994, the segment of STH 54 between the Portage County line and Coolidge Avenue was opened as an upgraded four-lane facility, with the segment between Coolidge Ave and Business 51 being completed in November, 1997. This highway, although not considered an expressway, is a high-volume carrier for both truck and car traffic and has a posted speed limit of 65 miles per hour. Data from WisDOT indicates that the traffic volume on this highway has experienced an increase between 1999 and 2002 (see Map 3.1 of the Transportation Element).

In recognition of the above factors, the Town recommends that frontage or backage roads be developed to accommodate future uses along this corridor, especially along the northern portions adjacent to STH 54. All proposals for frontage or backage roads should be reviewed by the WisDOT to ensure compatibility with any State plans for the area.

Future land use recommendations along STH 54 on Map 8.2 represent a concept plan that does not dictate set boundaries between use categories. Proposals for commercial and industrial uses will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The Town recommends that future uses within the areas to the south of STH 54 be developed as industrial uses to complement the existing industrial operations and take advantage of the existing rail corridor. Areas along the north side of Hwy 54 are planned for commercial uses along the road that transition into multi-family residential uses, that ultimately transition to single-family residential uses. All development proposals in these areas will be evaluated in part on the ability of the Town to adequately provide for services and public health and safety, as well as the proposal's potential impacts on surrounding uses.

E. Redevelopment Areas

The only sites within the Town identified for potential redevelopment at the time of plan adoption was the alcohol processing plant and adjacent property (former cement storage and distribution facility) located on Highway 54 in the east portion of the Town. These sites have been identified not to mandate redevelopment, but to simply identify potential redevelopment at some point in the future due to the site's existing use or condition.

F. Village of Plover Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Recognizing that land uses in town territory may affect neighboring cities and villages that may need to grow beyond their borders, state laws have long provided these municipalities with certain "extraterritorial" authority over adjacent town lands and have provided methods for them to expand their borders through annexation. This city and village extraterritorial authority may, subject to the applicable laws, apply to planning, land division approvals, zoning and coverage of the city or village official map. The extra territorial jurisdiction for a city with a population of 10,000 or more is three miles from its corporate boundary, while the extra territorial jurisdiction for a city whose population is under 10,000 and for villages is one and one half miles from their corporate boundaries.

The Village of Plover's extraterritorial boundary extends into the eastern portions of the Town (Map 8.3). The Village of Plover has indicated that it will likely have to expand its borders in order to accommodate anticipated growth over the next twenty years. The Town recognizes that expansion from the Village will have a direct impact on the Town's ability to pay for services, tax base, and the maintenance of community identity. In light of anticipated growth, the Town and Village of Plover worked cooperatively on an intergovernmental agreement (Appendix F) containing service provision and shared revenue agreements, along with providing a framework for orderly growth and development over time. Included in this agreement are portions of the

Town where sewer and water service could be provided without annexation (Map 8.4). Both the Town and Village have agreed to review these agreements on an annual basis. The Town of Plover should continue to maintain a good working relationship with the Village of Plover to help ensure community identity and cost effective provision of services.

G. Trends in Land Values

Table 8.2 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 Plover

Type of Property	1980		1990		2000	
	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total
Residential	\$29,053,000	34%	\$43,859,000	42%	\$94,355,000	60%
Commercial	\$5,745,000	7%	\$5,155,000	5%	\$9,751,000	6%
Manufacturing	\$14,407,000	17%	\$20,300,000	19%	\$25,457,000	16%
Agricultural	\$25,770,000	30%	\$24,271,000	23%	\$6,748,000	4%
Swamp & Waste	\$57,000	0%	\$59,000	0%	\$212,000	0%
Forest	\$3,523,000	4%	\$3,391,000	3%	\$5,480,000	3%
Other	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$4,701,000	3%
Personal Property	\$6,865,000	8%	\$7,735,000	7%	\$11,815,000	7%
Total Value	\$85,420,000	100%	\$104,770,000	100%	\$158,519,000	100%

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

Section 8.3 Potential Land Use Conflicts

Potential land use conflict identified by the Town Plan Commission were:

- (1) Potential for dispute between farm and non-farm uses. 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 and commercial development away from intensive agricultural operations;
- (2) Conflict between existing residential and future commercial uses. Future Town Boards and Plan Commissions will have to address the need for buffers or other measures to minimize conflict between these uses;
- (3) The impacts of future non-residential development along Eisenhower Road to the existing Bluebird and Prainwood subdivisions.

Section 8.4 Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies

A. Goal: Provide for orderly planned growth that promotes a safe, healthy, productive and pleasant living environment.

B. Objectives:

1. Maintain and develop transportation systems that ensure the efficiency and safety of traffic.
2. Preserve agricultural land and maintain local conditions that support the Town's agricultural economy.
3. Conserve natural areas and recreational resources within the Town.
4. Promote land use that protects the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources.
5. Promote development of residential areas that make effective use of available land.
6. Commercial, industrial, and manufacturing uses are encouraged in a manner that minimizes conflicts with surrounding uses and enhances the Town's tax base.

C. Policies:

1. Require frontage or backage roads along the Highway 54 corridor as development occurs to safely handle slow moving traffic, service new development, and reduce driveway access.
2. Frontage or backage roads, when developed, shall be constructed to Town standards and extend from property line to property line.
3. Continue to work with the State Railroad Commission to maintain or improve safety at railroad crossings.
4. Encourage the continued use and upgrading of the rail corridor.
5. Consider the creation of a Town road ordinance
6. Protect productive agricultural lands through the application of Exclusive Agricultural Zoning.
7. Submit the Town's Zoning map to the State Land Conservation Board for certification.
8. Support the continuance and growth of agri-business and agri-industry in appropriate locations.
9. Encourage soil conservation practices that minimize erosion, including the retention and development of wind breaks.
10. Protect the principal agricultural use and purpose of ditches in the Portage County Drainage District.
11. Cooperate in the County program for the control of noxious weeds.
12. Promote the safe use and application of chemicals and fertilizers to maintain groundwater quality.
13. Protect environmentally sensitive areas through the use of Conservancy Zoning.
14. Encourage the continued management of public lands and the Wisconsin River and its tributaries by the Department of Natural Resources.
15. Encourage residential development in areas identified for possible service provision by the Village of Plover (Map 8.4).
16. Promote residential densities that maintain quality groundwater.
17. Direct residential development toward areas identified on the Future Land Use Map.
18. Promote higher density development in areas identified for potential sewer service.
19. Allow for light manufacturing uses within areas designated as future commercial land use per Town Board approval.

Map 8.2 Future Land Use

Map 8.3 Village of Plover Future Land Use

Map 8.4 Town/Village Service Area Agreement

20. Continue to use County regulations regarding signs, especially in commercial and industrial areas, until the Town creates its own sign ordinance.
21. The Town and Village of Plover must forward any proposed change to their Land Use maps w/in the Village's extraterritorial area to the Town and Village before such change occurs.
22. The Town Board, in agreement with the Village of Plover, shall review intergovernmental agreements on an annual basis, no later than the 4th Wednesday of April.

Section 8.5 Future Land Use Recommendations

Table 8.3 and Map 8.2 illustrate the Future Land Use recommendations for the Town of Plover 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 Plover, 2025

Existing Land Use	2005 Acres	% (of total)	2010 Acres*	2015 Acres	2020 Acres	2025 Acres	% (of total)	Change 2005 to 2025
Residential	1,428	5.3%	1,304	1,354	1,404	1,450	5.4%	1.5%
Commercial/ Services	184	0.7%	234	234	284	384	1.4%	108.6%
Agricultural	16,555	61.0%	16,355	16,305	16,105	16,029	59.8%	-3.2%
Governmental/Institutional	96	0.4%	96	96	96	96	0.4%	0.0%
Road/ Railroad Right-of-Way	1,202	4.4%	1,172	1,172	1,172	1,202	4.5%	0.0%
Parks/Recreation	1,675	6.2%	1,675	1,675	1,675	1,675	6.2%	6.1%
Industrial	222	0.8%	272	272	372	372	1.4%	67.6%
Vacant/Undeveloped	5,776	21.3%	5,700	5,700	5,700	5,600	20.9%	-3.0%
Total	27,138	100%	26,808	26,808	26,808	26,808	100%	

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

*acreage reflects a loss of approximately 330 acres per the boundary agreement with the city of Stevens Point. The total Town acreage then remains constant through 2025 due to the uncertainty in projecting additional acreage loss due to future annexation or boundary agreements.

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. Examples of areas to be mapped as residential include;

1. Existing developed residential zoning.
2. Clusters of lots, strongly residential in character.
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.
4. Existing mobile home parks. Development of new mobile home parks is regulated by special exception.

Land Use Categories:

Low Density Residential: Equal to, or greater than 2 acres per residence.

Medium Density Residential: Less than 2 acres per residence. May include residential uses such as single family, duplex, mobile home parks and multi-family dwellings where appropriate. Some of these uses may be allowed at higher densities within areas identified on Map 8.4 per the intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Plover. Allowance for higher residential building densities may be based on total project acreage, property location, property accessibility, soil type and approval of a proposed waste water treatment method along with a potable water system, in accordance with State and County requirements.

Commercial and Industrial Mapping Criteria

Areas of existing or future commercial or industrial land uses. 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 along with light manufacturing uses per Town approval.

Industrial: Include uses where the manufacturing of a product from a raw material 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 Category is intended to include lands that can support a full range of intensive agricultural uses, including large dairies, large confined livestock feeding operations, cranberry production, and concentrations of irrigated vegetable crop production. The category's uses 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 category 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.

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 uses. Some of these areas have been identified as mixed use with the understanding that growth from the Village of Plover may occur at some point in the future.

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. Department of Natural Resource lands
2. Wetlands (except those in the Portage County Drainage District)
3. Portage County parks and the Tomorrow River State Trail

4. School Forest
5. Lands within 100 feet of navigable waters or to the landward side of adjoining wetlands (excluding the Drainage District), if greater than 100 feet. Including wetlands within 300 feet of navigable waters, and excluding preexisting structures or cropland that would be nonconforming uses Conservancy zoning.
6. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100 year floodplains, including the Floodway of the Wisconsin River.
7. Large tracts of unbroken native landscapes such as grasslands.

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 could occur without negatively impacting the ecological value of the area. These areas include lands along the Wisconsin River where residential development has already occurred; however, no future development will be allowed in these areas. If improvements to existing structures occur, it is recommended that the existing footprint and roofline is not exceeded.

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 Category: **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 Category: **Non Metallic Mineral Extraction**

Recreational Planned Unit Development (R-PUD) Mapping Criteria

The purpose of the *Recreational Planned Unit Development* is to promote tourism by permitting and encouraging diversification, variation and imagination in the relationship between land uses, building density, building sizes and open spaces. The R-PUD considers the total acreage as valuable land and is intended to allow substantial flexibility in planning and in designing a proposed recreational/resort type of development that focuses on the *family unit*. Ideally, this flexibility results in a development that is better planned, and that contains more services and

amenities. And ultimately, a development that effectively and efficiently utilizes developable land better than one produced in accordance with a typical zoning ordinance. The Recreational Planned Unit Development is intended to allow for mixed compatible land uses, attractive tourism services and higher concentrated building density on a portion of the site, while preserving open space on another portion of the same site. Open space is defined, for this type of development, as land that will not have any type of permanent structures located on it.

The following mix of uses would be allowed, but not all would be required to meet the definition of a recreational planned unit development: Camping, Cottage Rental, Dock Rental, Boat Rental, Horse Stables, Indoor/Outdoor Water Sports and Slides, Teen Club, Health Club, Multi-Story Residential Rental Units, Multi-Story Condominium Housing, Hospitality Service, Food Service; non-smoking, non alcohol, Retail Service, Meeting Rooms, Indoor/Outdoor Auditorium, Maintenance & Storage Building, Golf Course, and Archery.

No “adult” retail services or “adult” entertainment of any kind would be permitted. Condominium or multi story residential rental units by themselves would not be considered a R-PUD.

Building density is based on total project acreage, property location, property accessibility, soil type and approval of a proposed waste water treatment method along with a potable water system, in accordance with State and County requirements.

Land Use Category: Recreational Planned Unit Development