

CHAPTER 8 Land Use Element (See MAP 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4)

The purpose of this plan’s land use chapter is to compile an inventory of existing land use patterns, and establish the goals, objectives, policies and issues 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.

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. See Map 8.1 for current land uses.

The table below of the 2016 Assessment Class Distributions provides the Town of Plover’s parcel count and acreage by classes of assessment. The significant acreage utilized by agriculture has encouraged the growth of agri-industries which is obvious by the almost 1000 acres involved in commercial and manufacturing uses. The proximity to urban areas and convenient transportation infrastructure in this area has resulted in residential areas competing for their “fair share” of acreage.

**TABLE 8.1
TOWN OF PLOVER CLASS DISTRIBUTION - 2016 ASSESSMENT**

	LAND		IMPROVEMENTS		ACRES	
	PARCELS	%	PARCELS	%	ACRES	%
CLASS 1 - RESIDENTIAL	651	32.6%	564	72.7%	1235	5.52%
CLASS 2 - COMMERCIAL	62	3.1%	45	5.8%	306	1.37%
CLASS 3 - MANUFACTURING	18	0.9%	10	1.3%	662	2.96%
CLASS 4 - AGRICULTURAL	514	25.7%	0	0.0%	14886	66.56%
CLASS 5 - UNDEVELOPED	357	17.9%	0	0.0%	2143	9.58%
CLASS 6 - AGRICULTURAL FOREST	136	6.8%	0	0.0%	1034	4.62%
CLASS 7 - FOREST LANDS	103	5.2%	0	0.0%	1813	8.11%
CLASS 8 - OTHER (INCL AG BLDGS)	159	8.0%	157	20.2%	287	1.28%
TOTALS	2000	100.0%	776	100.0%	22366	100.0%

Source – Town of Plover Assessment Roll

A. RESIDENTIAL

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 and Bluebird Drives). 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.

TRENDS: In anticipation of future population increases the town has identified the area north of STH 54 and the area east of I-39 for residential expansion. The town recommends housing densities that will have a minimal impact on groundwater quality, other natural resources, and

agricultural operations. Possible future service agreements with the Village of Plover may allow for increased housing densities in specific areas of the Town (Map 8.4).

CONFLICTS: 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.

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 would be incompatible. Examples of areas to be mapped as “Residential” include:

- 1, Existing developed residential zoning and areas immediately adjacent to or in close proximity.
- 2, Clusters of lots, strongly residential in character. Expansion to adjacent areas may be allowed though limited, with a preference to fill in the spaces within the cluster.
3. Areas identified on Map 8.4 as possible sewer and water extensions as per intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Plover.
4. Lands immediately adjacent to Village of Plover boundaries and municipal services.
5. 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.
6. Existing mobile home parks. Development of new mobile home parks is regulated by special exception.

LAND USE CATEGORIES:

Low Density Residential: Generally designated for single family residences requiring a minimum of 2 acres per parcel. Except, on water front areas along the Wisconsin River, parcels may be reduced to a minimum of 1 acre in size.

Medium Density Residential: Single family residential uses preferred. Identifies area where lots already exist in platted subdivisions or residential clusters. Densities for creation of new residential parcels may vary in size from ½ acre to 1 acre. Allowance for medium residential building density may be based on total project acreage, property location, property accessibility, soil type and approval of a proposed private, community or municipal waste water treatment method along with a potable water system, in accordance with State and County requirements.

High Density Residential: This residential land use category would be a good fit for “Planned Development” projects. All residential uses such as single family, duplex and multi-family dwellings as well as zero-lot-line, condominium, town house and neighborhood commercial structures can be allowed down to a minimum of ½ acre per lot but any single family development needs to stand distinct and separate from any of the other high density uses. High density uses would be recommended but not limited to areas defined on Map 8.4 per the intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Plover. Allowance for these residential building densities may be based on total project acreage, property location, property accessibility, soil type and approval of a proposed private, community or municipal waste water

treatment method along with a potable water system, in accordance with State and County requirements. This residential land use category would be a good fit for “planned Development” projects.

B. COMMERCIAL/SERVICES LAND USES:

Commercial development is primarily located along the State Highway 54 corridor throughout the Town of Plover and includes a wide range of uses such as restaurants, taverns, offices, an auto race track, auto salvage, hotels, trucking, a gas station and convenience store, and professional services

TRENDS: The Town hosts an array of commercial and industrial 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. The Town anticipates a range of commercial and industrial uses occurring in these areas, but will consider each on a case-by-case basis.

With available transportation such as excellent highway and railway capabilities, and the ability to satisfy high capacity needs for electrical and natural gas demands, industrial park concepts such as warehousing come to mind.

CONFLICTS: Potential land use conflict identified by the Town Plan Commission identified involved 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.

MAPPING CRITERIA: Areas of existing or future commercial land uses. 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. These land uses should be primarily located along railroad and principal arterial road corridors. The lower traffic-volume neighborhood commercial uses may also be located along collector type roads. The location of commercial clusters may require the creation of frontage/back-age roads to service these uses as access restrictions may exist along these types of corridors.

LAND USE CATEGORIES:

Commercial: Includes uses as allowed in Commercial zoning districts along with light manufacturing uses per Town approval.

C. INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING

Unique among all other towns in Portage County, the Town of Plover has the greatest amount of industrial acreage. Current uses include vegetable processing, pallet construction, mulch

reprocessing, and commercial fertilizer distribution facilities. Value added processing is needed to support production of vegetable products in the Town of Plover.

TRENDS:

The Town of Plover has potential for expansion of this use.

Two major areas in the Town have been identified to accommodate future industrial 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 south side of STH 54, west of the Village of Plover, along the railroad corridor. The Town anticipates a range of commercial and industrial uses occurring in these areas, but will consider each on a case-by-case basis.

With available transportation such as excellent highway and railway capabilities, and the ability to satisfy high capacity needs for electrical and natural gas demands, industrial park concepts such as warehousing come to mind.

MAPPING CRITERIA: Areas of existing or future industrial land uses. Proposals for new industrial development should be considered only on a case-by-case basis, based on the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan. These land uses should be primarily located along railroad and principal arterial road corridors. The location of industrial/manufacturing clusters may require the creation of frontage/back-age roads to service these areas as access restrictions may exist along these types of corridors. Approval for such use may require a change to the land use map.

LAND USE CATEGORIES:

Industrial/Manufacturing: Include uses where a product is manufactured from a raw source or a warehousing, a trucking or an assembly operation from components manufactured elsewhere is the primary purpose of the business.

D. AGRICULTURAL

Agriculture represents the largest land use in Plover. Land use in this category include irrigated and non-irrigated crop lands, cranberry bogs, dairy farms, livestock operations and permanent pastures as well as the many , structures that store products or house agricultural equipment. As the previous Assessment Class Distribution table indicates the vast majority of land in the Town of Plover is dedicated to agriculture. Active agricultural operations are found throughout the Town, with some areas abutting the Village of Plover’s corporate boundary. The Town of Plover “Central Sands” area is historically well known for raising of potatoes, snap beans, and sweet corn as well as a wide diversity of other products. We envision the need for additional vegetable processing/canning operations in the Town of Plover.

TRENDS: The Town of Plover land uses will continue to be dominated by agriculture. The Town continues to be on the edge of residential growth and business expansion due to its strategic relationship to the City of Stevens Point, the Village of Plover and the City of Wisconsin Rapids.

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 preservation of as much agricultural land as possible - especially south of STH 54 and the cranberry operations along the western portion of the Town.

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.

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 the Boston School Forest, wooded research lands, owned by the Stevens Point Area Public School and the Stevens Point Catholic School Districts.

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.

F. PARKS AND RECREATION

These lands could be publicly or privately owned and may include State, County, or Town parks, nature preserves, boat landings, ~~or~~ athletic fields, disc golf courses and campgrounds, ~~ete~~. The majority of these lands are owned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for use as grassland habitat for the Greater prairie chicken and Little Plover River fishery.

G. UNDEVELOPED (INCLUDES TAX EXEMPT PROPERTIES)

Lands in this category include privately owned wooded and non-wooded areas, and fallow fields. The majority of these lands are located between STH 54 and the Wisconsin River.

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.

H. LAND USE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTIONS

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

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.

POLICIES:

1. Require frontage or back age 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 back age 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.
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 within 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.

EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTIONS: 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.

I. 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.

HIGHWAY 54 CORRIDOR

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 corridor would need WisDOT approval. 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 back age roads be developed to accommodate future uses along this corridor. Proposals for commercial, industrial and planned development uses will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

HIGHWAY 54 CORRIDOR - WEST

The Town encourages future uses within an area to the south of STH 54 be developed as industrial uses to take advantage of the existing rail corridor. Areas along the north side of Hwy 54 are planned

for commercial uses adjacent to the road that transition into predominately residential uses that ultimately transition to single-family residential uses. This area has potential for the development of a recreational pathway that would interconnect Wisconsin Rapids trails with the Green Circle and the Tomorrow River State Trail involving the use of road rights-of-way ~~or a new strip of land being dedicated as part of development.~~ **On adjacent lands. To achieve this goal, a strip of land would need to be dedicated as a part of any future development.**

HIGHWAY 54 CORRIDOR - EAST

This area is seen as having potential for commercial and industrial development. It is recognized that the need for access from I39 or frontage roads will impact how this area is developed. This footprint provides an opportunity for planned business/commercial/industrial parks.

RESOURCE EXTRACTIONS:

These areas are considered economically viable resources and **should be** 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.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT:

The purpose of Planned Development as a land use is to encourage thinking outside the box. Developing a planned concentration of structures designed to satisfy a specific goal - be it homes, businesses, a mix of both, or recreational opportunities.

This land use is to encourage diversification, variation and imagination in the relationship between building density, building sizes and open spaces. This category considers total acreage to allow substantial flexibility in planning and designing a residential development – possibly with services - that focuses on the family unit. Ideally, this flexibility results in a development that is better planned, and that contains more services and amenities than usually found in **traditional** residential neighborhoods. Planned Development might allow for mixed compatible land uses and higher concentrated building density on a portion of the site, while preserving open space as an amenity on another portion of the same site.

Condominium or multi story residential rental units by themselves would not be considered a **Planned Development**. Building density would be based on total project acreage, 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.

PARTNERING WITH NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES:

Opportunities to provide residents greater accessibility to neighboring communities by providing pathways as well as the ability to extend water and sewer utilities from adjacent municipalities into the Town of Plover should be explored as future considerations are examined. Review “Extraterritorial Jurisdictions” on Page 8 of this section as well as the discussion of Intergovernmental Cooperation in Chapter 7.