CHAPTER 4: LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Land use directly influences, or is influenced by, all elements presented in the other chapters of this plan. The choices for housing type and location, transportation alternatives, decisions on employment locations, recreational opportunities, and the quality of the man-made and natural environments are all intricately woven together into land use. Land use policy decisions can have far-reaching repercussions. Policy decisions can influence housing growth, the protection of natural resources, and a number of other factors. This chapter describes existing land use patterns and analyzes development trends.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS AND NARRATIVE

Current 2019 Land Use and Land Use Trends

The Facts:

- Eldorado encompasses approximately 23,128 acres. About a tenth or 8.9% of the land within Eldorado is developed.

- Approximately 60 percent of the total land in Eldorado is in agriculture (13,758.7 acres, 59.5%), other prevalent uses include open other land (5,026.6 acres, 21.7%) and woodlands, both planted and general (1,942.9 acres, 8.4%).

- Land use distribution in Eldorado has changed little in the last 9 years.

- Overall, the largest gains were experienced by open other land (450 acres), while the largest losses were seen by non-irrigated cropland (381 acres) and general woodlands (112 acres).

What it Means:
Eldorado is rural agricultural community. Land use controls that the Town has been implementing have been successful in protecting agricultural land in the Town. While some residential development is occurring, it is isolated and is happening on single individual lots. The Town has not seen new subdivision development in many years.

Development & Market Trends

The Facts:

- According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA), 33 new residential units were issued building permits in Eldorado between 2010 and 2018.
• Since WDOA tracks additions and removals, a total of 16 single-family units, 2 duplex units and 4 mobile homes were removed during this time period.
• While Eldorado’s equalized value has fluctuated, overall since 2011 the Town’s equalized value increased by 17.2 percent, from a low of $21,877,500 in 2011 to a high of $25,634,700 in 2018.

**What it Means:**

While the Town is seeing some new residential development, a number of housing units are also being removed. If no housing units were removed, over the last 9 years, the Town would have averaged slightly less than four additional housing units per year. However, since the Town is also seeing a number of housing units removed, the Town is currently averaging slightly less than two additional housing units per year. Over the next 33 years, according to WDOA’s housing projections, the Town is expected to average slightly less than four additional housing units per year.

**Land Use Density and Intensity**

**The Facts:**

• Density is broadly defined as a “number of housing units in a given area”¹. For the purposes of this report, residential densities are defined as the number of housing units per square mile of total land area (units/square mile), excluding water. *Between 2000 (14.1 units/sq. mi.) and 2010 (15.8 units/sq. mi.), residential densities increased slightly in Eldorado by 1.7 units per square mile.*
• Intensity is defined as the measure of the units per acre of residential development. *Residential single-family land use intensity is estimated to be 0.6 units per acre. There aren’t any multi-family land use or units in the Town.*

**What it Means:**

Residential densities have increased slightly between 2000 and 2010. Since the Town is rural, much of its residential areas are relatively low and have developed at rural densities. An exception may be within the village, where land use densities are slightly higher. Multi-family development is normally restricted to areas where sanitary sewer is available. Since sanitary sewer is not available, it is likely that this has affected the availability of multi-family development.

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Land Use Conflicts

The Facts:

- New residents, not accustomed to rural living, are moving into the community and raising objections over many issues associated with farming operations.

- Agricultural operations and residential development near the Eldorado Marsh Wildlife Area and other wetland areas, floodplains and streams could impact surface and groundwater and other resources and lead to displacement of wildlife.

What it Means:

With continued development, conflict between agricultural operations and residential uses may increase as more people move into the Town. In addition, as agricultural operations get larger, this conflict will only increase. Unique to the Town is the Eldorado Marsh Wildlife Area. This sensitive resource is surrounded by agricultural land uses and expanding, mostly residential, development. While annexation is not currently an issue in the Town, in the future it may become more of an issue as development expands west from the Village of North Fond du Lac and east from the Village of Rosendale. Therefore this plan should seek to minimize the conflict between these, and other conflicting land uses through well-thought out land use planning and policy recommendations.

Future Land Use Projections

The Facts:

- Using household projections from the WDOA, it is estimated that by 2035 there will be approximately 615 housing units or about 62 additional units in the Town.

- Based on current residential intensity, the Town will need an additional 148 acres for residential development.

- Multiplying the ratio of commercial and industrial acres per person by the 2030 population and adding a 15 percent infrastructure factor and a 20 percent market factor, it is determined that an additional 2.47 acres of commercial development and an additional 0.22 acres of industrial development will be needed by 2030.

What it Means:

Projections can provide extremely valuable information for community planning, but they have limitations that must be recognized. Projections are not predictions; they are based on historical growth patterns and the composition of the current land use base. Their reliability depends, to a great extent, on the continuation of past growth trends. In addition, projections for small communities are especially difficult and subject to more error, as minor changes can
significantly impact growth trends. Finally, growth is difficult to predict in areas that are heavily dependent on migration, as migration rates may vary considerably based on economic factors both within and outside of the area.

Actual rate and amount of future growth in communities can be influenced by local policies that can slow or increase the rate of growth. Individual communities can maximize the net benefits of their public infrastructure by encouraging denser growth patterns that maximize the use of land resources while minimizing the impact on the natural resource base.

**POTENTIAL FRAMING CONCEPTS**

These are derived from the data analysis and discussions throughout the process. Framing Concepts provide more detailed discussion of key issues that were identified as well as big ideas expressed in relation to the goals. These may include maps that show where in the community particular policies apply, detailed description of specific strategic directions, specific recommendations as well as diagrams and photo imagery to help convey specific points. The following Framing Concepts are suggested for moving forward in the process:

- Development of Land Use Districts
- Agricultural land preservation and/or AEA (Note: agricultural land preservation is proposed under Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources, Chapter 9.)