

CHAPTER 3: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses in detail the Florence County 20-Year Land Use Map (**Map 3.1**) and supporting land use recommendations. Background materials inventoried in *Volume II: County Resources*, the *2001 Florence County Land Use and Lake Protection Plan*, and the town comprehensive plans were referenced during the preparation of the county’s future land use plan. The future land use map reflects the type, location, and density of specific future land uses Florence County would like to promote during this planning period. A complete list of preferred land use classifications with development recommendations are listed below; a detailed list of implementation strategies provided in Chapter 4 of this plan; and implementation tools such as county ordinances will help guide county officials as they work toward achieving the Florence County 20-Year Land Use Plan.

20-YEAR LAND USE MAP

Land Use Classifications

The Florence County 20-Year Land Use plan illustrates the following land use classifications. Within each classification, there are recommended land uses to help ensure these classifications are developed according to their definitions and purpose. Encouraging the implementation of these land uses as outlined within the recommendations will better preserve the county’s vast natural environment while facilitating efficient and orderly development.

- Residential
- Town Center
- Commercial/Light Industrial
- Industrial
- Governmental/Institutional/Utilities
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation
- Agricultural
- Woodlands/Open Space
- Public Land
- Private Land/Public Access
- Non-Metallic Mining Overlay
- Key Environmental Features Overlay

Land Use Recommendations

Residential

The Residential land use classification is divided into three categories: *concentrated residential*, *rural residential*, and *shoreland residential*. The land use recommendations listed for each category are necessary to promote orderly and efficient growth patterns that are consistent with adjacent land uses and to preserve surrounding natural features.

Concentrated Residential

The “Concentrated Residential” category is illustrated as “*Residential*” on the county’s 20-Year Land Use Map. This residential category encompasses the areas of the county that has experienced or is expected to see denser housing development.

Recommendations:

- **Infill development is desired whenever possible** to limit the costs to extend infrastructure; minimizing the loss of open space, valuable agriculture land, and productive woodlands; and decreasing the travel distance between residences and existing services.
- **The rehabilitation or redevelopment of existing structures** is encouraged to offer a more affordable housing option for town residents and to improve the general look and overall housing conditions within Florence.
- **The capability to connect existing and future residential subdivisions** should be considered during the planning stage in order to promote multi-modal transportation options between towns and the Town Center or other service areas.

Rural Residential

The “Rural Residential” category is illustrated as “*Woodlands/Open Space and Agricultural*” on the county’s 20-Year Land Use Map. Florence County’s vision is to protect productive farmland and existing natural areas (vegetated areas and/or open space) from development that would likely result in the loss and continued fragmentation of such features.

Recommendations:

- **Single-family residences** are envisioned to be built outside of the noted concentrated residential areas on larger lots located predominately within agricultural, wooded, and open space land use designations.
- **New residential development is encouraged to conform to surrounding land uses** in order not to detract from or conflict with existing adjacent properties.
- **The integration of conservation subdivisions** and like development patterns are viewed as an effective means in protecting environmental features; preserving open space and agriculture land throughout residential areas; and limiting the parceling of woodlands and wildlife habitats.
- **The enforcement of county and local ordinances** will help ensure new residential development conforms to setback, construction, and usage requirements.

Shoreland Residential

The “Shoreland Residential” category consists primarily of single family and limited types of multi-family housing built directly on a water feature or within second tier developments also referred to as lake development areas. Many of the town’s surface waters have already experienced heavy development along their shorelands. Additional growth in these areas is placing greater development pressure on the natural environment leading to deteriorating water quality, loss of wildlife habitat, and a diminished quality of life.

- **Any additional development in the shoreland zone must be in compliance with the Florence County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance** and any adopted local ordinances in order to provide a layer of protection from future development along the shorelands.
- **Second tier development within the shoreland zone** should be properly planned to minimize the impact to water resources and transportation network.

- **Keyholing, or the procurement of water rights for property owners without water frontage** should be discouraged to avoid continued problems with public access easements.
- **Shoreland development plans should identify and maintain public access points** to the water resource.
- **Any new plans for expansion or alteration of existing structures in shoreland areas should account for and mitigate**, if necessary, the increased impacts of that development. Plans for the expansion or alteration of an existing structure should investigate methods to mitigate any increase in negative impacts on the county’s surface waters, such as septic system upgrades/alterations, stormwater control, or shoreline restoration.
- **The construction of community water and sewer systems should be investigated** as one method to help preserve water quality and minimize risks to the environment as new development continues to occur adjacent to surface water features.

Town Center

The Town Center land use classification consists of a mix of municipal, commercial, industrial, and residential land uses. The Town Center is located in the Town of Florence near the State Highway 2/US Highway 141 and County Highway N intersection.

Recommendations:

- **The area should maintain a strong visual image through the preservation of each building’s distinctive architectural features** and by identifying the appropriate use of scale, materials, and colors.
- **A variety of multi-modal transportation options should be incorporated into the future development of the Town Center** to enable residents and visitors to safely travel to and from businesses and amenities.
- **The rehabilitation and appropriate utilization of existing buildings** are critical elements in fostering the county’s long-term economic viability.
- **The utilization of appropriate zoning and design regulations will ensure the area maintains a healthy business appearance.** The siting of parking lots and garages in non-prominent locations and the inclusion of proper landscaping, fencing and vegetation to buffer mixed land uses will help create an inviting environment in which to visit and shop.
- **The area will maintain a vibrant mix of commercial and retail businesses and municipal services to promote that “small town” image residents and visitors alike enjoy and rely upon.**
- **It will be important to incorporate single and multi-family housing units and long-term care facilities** into any future plans for revitalization of the Town Center to enable individuals an opportunity to reside close to shopping and government services.
- **The maintenance and expansion of municipal services are necessary to accommodate future growth and to better serve existing businesses and residents.**
- **Community interaction is improved** through the planning of multiple cultural, institutional, and other public activities.

Commercial/Light Industrial

The Commercial/Light Industrial land use classification includes retail, professional, and service sector businesses. This land use designation also includes manufacturing operations that creates or changes raw or unfinished materials into another form or higher valued product. Oftentimes, business owners will have a small assembly or manufacturing facility in the back of the building and use the front space to sell that merchandise directly to the customer. These areas have been identified on the county's 20-Year Land Use Plan to reflect locations throughout Florence County that have experienced some business development already and are expected to see further growth in the future. These locations are conducive for more concentrated business development in order to avoid scattered growth that may conflict with surrounding land uses.

Recommendations:

- **The permitting of commercial and light industrial businesses should follow local and county land use regulations as applicable.**
- **Existing businesses should maintain a crisp appearance**, while new commercial developments are constructed in similar scale in order not to detract from the character of the surrounding properties.
- **Highway corridor development should be built in a linear pattern** in order to give businesses maximum traffic exposure and allow for safe access into and out of the businesses.
- **Future highway commercial sites should safely accommodate current residents along with transient demands** by allowing ample room for parking and drive-thru services.
- **The creation and implementation of a detailed corridor development plan on the county's main highways should include consistent design standards** to address multi-modal transportation, signage, land uses, and infrastructure needs.
- **Home-based businesses are envisioned to be a large component of the county's economic development strategy.** As a result, appropriate acknowledgement of those businesses through proper zoning, signage, and promotion are important to ensure their continued viability.

Industrial

The Industrial land use classification is the Town of Florence's industrial park where heavy manufacturing operations are directed to locate.

Recommendations:

- **Maximizing the capacity of the county's lone industrial park is an important asset in retaining and attracting businesses.**
- **Future large-scale business developments should locate in the industrial park where supporting infrastructure is already in place.**
- **The county, along with the Town of Florence, should continually monitor the capacities of the existing infrastructure and community facilities necessary to accommodate new or expanded industrial development.**

- **Industrial sites should be maintained in a manner to enhance the aesthetics of the park.** It is recommended that a set of design standards be adopted that address landscaping, building design, lighting, parking, noise, and outside storage.
- **Industrial development should not be detrimental to the surrounding area** by reason of dust, smoke, odor, degradation of groundwater, or other nuisance issues.

Governmental/Institutional/Utilities

The Governmental/Institutional/Utilities land use classification addresses the capacity and efficiency of government buildings; emergency services and facilities; utilities and utility sites; cemeteries; and public services provided to the town residents.

Recommendations:

- **County officials will continually monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of all county provided services** to identify the need for improvement, change in policy, establishment of mutual aid agreements, or future capital investments.
- **All county-owned facilities and properties should be operated in a manner to avoid issues with traffic, noises, or other compromises to surrounding land uses.**
- **The renovation of and construction of new county facilities should focus on energy conservation.**
- **The Florence Municipal Water and Sewage District will be monitored on a continued basis** to ensure it is capable of handling future development in and near the district.
- **The county will advocate for the preservation of the Pine River Hydro Dam** as a suitable means to generate electricity for the area.
- **County officials will remain informed of changing issues on telecommunication towers and antennas and wind generation facilities** and the siting of such utilities.
- **Joint planning for future public facilities and the use of existing public facilities should be done collaboratively with town officials to avoid duplication of costs.**
- **Florence County is encouraged to maintain regular contact with the Florence School District** in order to be involved with the long-range plans of the district including the siting of new facilities, improvements to existing structures, etc.

Park and Recreation

The Park and Recreation land use classification discusses existing and future recreational facilities, trails, parks, and open spaces throughout Florence County.

Recommendations:

- **Florence County should work with town officials and appropriate state offices to implement the goals outlined in the county's outdoor recreational plan.**
- **All county recreational facilities will be built and/or renovated to accommodate all age groups and people with special needs.**
- **Florence County staff are encouraged to work with town officials and local recreation clubs** to proactively address issues with any of the county's recreational facilities.

- **The town will cooperate with the surrounding towns, Florence County, Federal Forest Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and local organizations to promote the expansion and connectivity of recreational trails, such as snowmobile and ATV.**

Agricultural

The Agricultural land use classification was established to preserve existing lands devoted to the growing of crops and the raising of livestock

Recommendations:

- **The county will encourage the preservation of the county’s remaining prime agricultural lands and the farmer’s right to farm.**
- **Any future development permitted within this land use classification should comply with county and local ordinances and done in a manner which has the least amount of impact on the natural environment and limits the fragmentation of larger parcels.**
- **Various development models, such as conservation by design subdivisions are encouraged to help preserve the larger tracts of contiguous farmland.**
- **Prime agriculture lands are to be preserved under the application of best management practices for agricultural activities.** Inappropriate agricultural practices can have an adverse impact on the quality of surface water and groundwater unless properly managed.
- **The integration of natural buffers** is encouraged between farming and future non-farming operations in order to lessen conflict between land uses.
- **Various types and sizes of agriculture businesses are encouraged to operate to help diversify the local economy and to take better advantage of the county’s climate and soil conditions.**

Woodlands/Open Space

The Woodlands/Open Space land use classification promotes the preservation and environmentally friendly utilization of the county’s private and public woodlands and open space areas.

Recommendations:

- **If residential development is permitted in these areas, low density development should be promoted** to lessen the impact to these natural environments and help ensure there is a limited amount of fragmentation occurring as the result of any new development.
- **The utilization of existing natural areas/features** is essential to enhance/retain buffers between incompatible uses while maintaining the county’s scenic views.
- **The utilization of development methods, such as conservation subdivision designs or clustering can help maintain the continuity of woodlands and open spaces.**
- **The application of best management practices and appropriate zoning ordinances and regulations will help protect the county’s vast woodlands and open space areas and to be better utilized to enhance all recreational opportunities and facilities.**

Transportation

The Transportation land use classification covers all means of moving people and goods from one location to another. This includes both motorized and non-motorized travel, such as roads, trails, and rivers.

Recommendations:

- **To better preserve the natural look of the county and to minimize the negative impacts of future residential development along roads**, it is recommended that new development be minimally visible from the road through minimum setback requirements.
- **For any new residential developments proposed within the town, an Area Development Plan will be provided.** This will allow the town to review and ensure that future roads are well designed to promote efficient traffic flow and to avoid unnecessary cul-de-sacs and loops that can increase future maintenance costs or be difficult for fire, police or rescue services to navigate.
- **The adoption of an official map for the Town Center area** will provide long-range guidance on the building of future roads and streets, trails, and recreation facilities.
- **The utilization of the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) program** will assist local officials in maintaining the roads in the future and to ensure there is a cost effective road management plan in place.
- **Recreational paths and trails such as snowmobile, ATV, hiking, and biking trails will have proper signage and intersection controls** to ensure safe crossing and interaction with vehicles.

Public Land

The Public Land designation encompasses a large percent of land within Florence County. County officials will need to work with appropriate local, state, and federal officials to ensure these areas are properly maintained but responsibly promoted and utilized for a variety of recreational activities.

- **The Florence County Conservation Department will work with the towns and other government officials to implement the goals found in the *Florence County Land and Water Resource Management Plan* adopted in 2006.**
- **Florence County will work with town officials and other governmental entities to ensure these public lands are utilized appropriately** for tourism and economic development opportunities.
- **The county will facilitate communications amongst state, federal and local officials** when harvesting of timber, planning improvements to roads, etc. are taking place.

Private Land/Public Access

The Private Land/Public Access designation encompasses land throughout Florence County that is held in private ownership, but is open for public access for recreational use. This land use designation is shown on the Florence County 20-Year Land Use Plan. For example, the designation encompasses the Wild Rivers Legacy Forest which is owned by Conservation Forestry LLC and Forest Investment Associates and is managed for timber production. A

conservation easement is held on the land by the State of Wisconsin and The Nature Conservancy for public recreational access. The designation also encompasses land owned by Wisconsin Electric that is open for public recreational access.

Non-Metallic Mining Overlay

The Mineral Resources Overlay is depicted on the 20-Year Land Use Map to ensure active and future quarries are identified and accounted for when considering future development close to them and the redevelopment of these sites for other uses. This overlay includes both metallic mining, although extremely rare, and non-metallic mining activities. In most cases, the type of mining to occur in Florence County will involve extraction of gravel, marl, clay, and similar materials to be conducted for a specified approved period of time. When mining is complete and the site is reclaimed, the overlay shall be removed and the previous or proposed new land uses allowed to continue.

- **Florence County staff will work with town officials to monitor existing mining operations.** Any issues involving the mining operation should be brought to the attention of the county or town officials in a timely manner.
- **Florence County will thoroughly review any proposed mining operations with the assistance of town officials.** The town should recommend conditional use requirements to the county that ensure the mining operation does not significantly compromise surrounding land uses. The application of setbacks will help alleviate issues with neighboring properties.
- **Mining operations should be sited in areas that will have little negative impact** on the neighboring properties, adverse affects on groundwater, or significant wear on local roads.
- **Florence County will work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, with input from the affected town,** to ensure mining operations are properly closed and reclaimed.
- **The county will pursue avenues in which to reclaim mining operations not sufficiently closed by their owners.**
- **The reclaimed mining sites will be available for other land uses.** The county, with input from the affected town, will need to determine the land use that best suits the area and future needs of area. (i.e. agriculture, recreational, residential)

Key Environmental Features Overlay

The Key Environmental Features Overlay contains four components; 100-year floodplain as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), WDNR wetlands with a 50-foot setback, steep slopes of 12 percent or greater, and 75-foot setback from all navigable waterways as defined by the Florence County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Together, these elements comprise an overlay deemed most sensitive to development. These combined features serve as a reference overlay for future development on the recommended 20-year land use plan.

Recommendations:

- **This plan will serve as a guide for the preservation of the key environmental features.** Referencing these features when reviewing proposed developments is important to maintaining the county's rural character and quality of its natural resources and wildlife habitats.

- **Future developments should be located away from key environmental features as much as possible**, or designed in such a manner to help minimize the negative effects on water resources, wildlife habitats and the overall character of the county.
- **Any development near environmental features will be carefully reviewed in order to maintain ample wildlife corridors and water recharge areas.**

IDENTIFIED SMART GROWTH AREAS

According to s. 16.965, Wis. Stats., a “smart growth area” is “an area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands within existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low utility and municipal and state governmental costs.”

- Redevelopment and investment in the Town Center and the Florence Municipal Water and Sewage District.
- Industrial park development.
- Infill and additional investment in the area surrounding Memory Lane and County Highway C.
- Hillcrest School
- Redevelopment and investment in the area of Superior Street and County Highway N.
- U.S Highway 2/State Highway 141 infill corridor development.
- Reclamation of current quarry sites for future residential and/or recreational opportunities.

Table 3.1 contains a summary of the year 2030 projected land uses, along with their approximate acreage totals, as shown on the Florence County 20-Year Land Use Map. It is important to note that the 2030 land use designations are by general location to illustrate approximate location of those land uses.

Table 3.1: 20-Year Land Use Acreage Allocations

Reserved

Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2009.

Map 3.1: 20-Year Land Use Map (Reserved)