

**VOLUME ONE
DEVELOPMENT GUIDE**

**Section 2
Plan and Policies**

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INTRODUCTION

All of the planning and community involvement activities that contributed to Volume Two, Sections 1-4, Background Studies, provide the basis for exploring the ways in which the county can achieve its desired future. Indeed, the goals and objectives for the plan are an outgrowth of the entire planning process up to this point.

This section explores several development scenarios that achieve, to varying degrees, the desired future of the county as set forth in the goals and objectives. One of these alternatives was selected as the best approach for addressing future development and is the basis for forming the development planning areas and policies.

The development planning areas and policies establish a general guide for future development in the county. They provide recommendations for what, where and how development should occur.

The policies are directive statements describing the county actions and positions necessary to meet the goals and objectives.

The St. Croix County Development Management Plan Goals and Objectives, development alternatives, and the development planning areas and policies for the county are intended to provide direction to achieve the most desirable community growth and development for the county and are to be used as a guide.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals are the long-term end toward which programs, activities and decisions are directed, but which may never be attained. Goals represent a general statement that outlines the most preferable situation that could possibly be achieved if all of the objectives and policies were developed to their fullest extent. Hence, the goals for this

plan describe the county's desired future.

Objectives represent more measurable, intermediate ends that are achievable, and mark progress towards a goal. Objectives are the strategic steps that are required to fulfill the county's desired future.

GOAL 1: PROTECT THE RURAL CHARACTER OF ST. CROIX COUNTY

OBJECTIVES

- 1A. Maintain a high quality environment.
- 1B. Protect and enhance the natural beauty of the county.
- 1C. Provide adequate green space throughout the county and in individual developments.

GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES CONT'D

- 1D. Vary the density of development according to varying site conditions and the availability of appropriate facilities and services.
- 1E. Encourage compact development through expansion and infill of existing developed areas.
- 1F. Encourage cluster developments to conserve natural resources and open spaces.
- 1G. Foster private land stewardship of individual properties and developments by landowners, developers and property managers.
- 1H. Avoid visual pollution caused by poor design or management of buildings and structures.
- 1I. Promote a positive sense of community and community image.

GOAL 2: PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL RESOURCES

OBJECTIVES

- 2A. Protect, maintain and improve the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water resources that originate or flow through the county.
- 2B. Conserve and protect wetlands and their natural functions.
- 2C. Conserve and protect floodplains and shorelands and their natural functions to avoid the impacts and costs of their development.
- 2D. Conserve and protect woodlands and grasslands and their related benefits for wildlife habitat, open space and air quality.
- 2E. Protect steep slopes and control erosion and sedimentation from development activities that can impact water quality, public facilities and neighboring property.
- 2F. Identify and protect environmental corridors where multiple natural features are located and provide a number of natural resources values.
- 2G. Conserve open space and protect unique open space areas.
- 2H. Promote sound soil and water conservation practices for both farm and non-farm activities.
- 2I. Protect and maintain air quality.
- 2J. Guide development to locations and conditions that minimize adverse impacts to natural resources.

GOAL 3: PROTECT THE PROPERTY RIGHTS OF PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS

OBJECTIVES

- 3A. Conduct all county planning activities with a fair and open process that provides opportunities for input from all county residents and property owners.

GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES CONT'D

- 3B. Develop land use regulations that have clear and equitable provisions designed to implement the public interest goals and objectives of this plan.
- 3C. Administer land use regulations with a fair, consistent and equitable process that is open to all affected parties.
- 3D. Enforce land use regulations in a fair, consistent and equitable manner that respects the due process rights of property owners.
- 3E. Provide fair and equitable compensation to private property owners when acquiring property or property rights according to established legal principles and practice.

GOAL 4: ENCOURAGE ORDERLY AND FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES

- 4A. Provide for a balance of land use types throughout the county.
- 4B. Locate industrial and commercial development where suitable conditions exist and appropriate facilities and services are available.
- 4C. Provide for a broad range of housing types that address the needs and resources of all residents.
- 4D. Coordinate the timing of development with the availability of schools and other necessary community facilities.
- 4E. Strike a balance between economic development, agricultural protection and environmental conservation.
- 4F. Encourage development that represents and respects community values.
- 4G. Develop tax and fee policies that are fair and equitable to all types of development and all affected taxing jurisdictions.
- 4H. Develop tax and fee policies whereby new development pays for the additional public facilities and services it requires and does not add to the tax burden of existing residents and businesses.

GOAL 5: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A SOUND AND DIVERSE ECONOMY

OBJECTIVES

- 5A. Pursue a healthy economic environment and quality of life that will attract and retain quality businesses and employment.
- 5B. Promote the growth of existing businesses and the development of new businesses in the county.
- 5C. Recruit stable and growing businesses that diversify the county's economy.
- 5D. Recruit businesses that fit the skills and income needs of the county's labor force.

GOAL 6: PROTECT AND ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

OBJECTIVES

- 6A. Develop and support policies that strengthen and maintain the farm economy.
- 6B. Develop and support policies that strengthen and maintain a farm operator's right to farm with customary farm practices that do not threaten public health or safety.
- 6C. Support economic incentives for agricultural landowners to retain productive agricultural lands in agricultural use.
- 6D. Protect and preserve productive agricultural lands for long-term agricultural use.
- 6E. Guide rural development to locations that will not convert agricultural lands.
- 6F. Encourage cluster development and private conservancy as methods for preserving productive agricultural lands.

GOAL 7: PROVIDE A SAFE, CONVENIENT AND EFFICIENT MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

OBJECTIVES

- 7A. Integrate the county and local road system with planned federal and state highway improvements for an efficient and safe road network.
- 7B. Manage the overall road system with a variety of techniques to maintain capacity at or above projected traffic volumes and limit traffic congestion.
- 7C. Develop and maintain a functional and jurisdictional classification system to ensure overall highway system performance.
- 7D. Control access throughout the road system in areas of higher traffic volumes to ensure the access, mobility and safety of affected road segments.
- 7E. Integrate the planning and design of major transportation facilities and surrounding land uses to protect the functionality and safety of the transportation improvements and to develop sound land use patterns.
- 7F. Explore transit options to expand the current level of service and to reduce the current levels of commuting.
- 7G. Develop a bikeway system throughout the county with varied facilities according to traffic volumes, road conditions and available trail routes.

GOAL 8: PROVIDE AND SUPPORT PUBLIC RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

OBJECTIVES

- 8A. Provide quality recreational opportunities for residents throughout the county.
- 8B. Continue to develop and maintain a quality public system of federal, state, county and local parks and recreation areas.
- 8C. Encourage the development of appropriate private recreational facilities.

- 8D. Incorporate the County Outdoor Recreation Plan as an element of the Development Plan.

GOAL 9: PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL 10: ENCOURAGE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IN MANAGING DEVELOPMENT AND PROVIDING RELATED PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

OBJECTIVES

- 10A. Promote cooperation in planning for development, facilities and services on community borders.
- 10B. Encourage efforts by local units of government to manage the location and timing of growth and development through programming and staging of public facilities and services.
- 10C. Avoid the extension of public facilities over large acreages of undeveloped land to serve scattered parcels.
- 10D. Encourage the use of existing capacity in public facility systems for infill development before making substantial extensions.

GOAL 11: MAINTAIN AN ONGOING, OPEN AND RESPONSIVE PROCESS FOR MANAGING DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES

- 11A. Develop planning policies and ordinances that address the diversity of community needs throughout the county.
- 11B. Encourage the support and participation of all towns in the county's plans and ordinances.
- 11C. Coordinate the county's development plans, policies and ordinances with the cities and villages in St. Croix County.
- 11D. Maximize public involvement in the development and administration of county development plans and ordinances to ensure that they reflect community values.
- 11E. Develop and revise policies, requirements and procedures to make compliance more understandable and convenient for affected parties.
- 11F. Provide reliable, consistent enforcement of county land use regulations.
- 11G. Update county development plans and ordinances on an ongoing basis to reflect changing needs and conditions.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

A critical step in the development of the planning areas is to determine what pattern of development the county supports in its efforts to implement the vision, goals and objectives identified by the participants in the planning process. This step requires the county to take into account the projected growth that is expected within the planning time frame and how that growth can be managed to accomplish the desires of the county, local government, and the public.

The projections from the socio-economic section anticipate, by the year 2020, St. Croix County will:

- Increase in population by 23,800 persons -- attaining a population of almost 80,000.
- Construct approximately 11,300 new housing units.
- Create approximately 12,000 additional jobs.

The steering committee reviewed four general development patterns based on different responses to growth management. These were:

CURRENT TRENDS -- A continuation of the land use pattern that has emerged over the past 20-25 years.

COMPACT CONTIGUOUS DEVELOPMENT -- Directing approximately 90 percent of the new residential and urban uses to urban areas.

MODIFIED COMPACT CONTIGUOUS DEVELOPMENT -- Directing 70 percent of the new residential and urban uses to urban areas and protecting environmental corridors.

MODIFIED CURRENT TRENDS -- Varying density and managing site design of development to maintain rural character, protect environmental corridors, support agriculture, and place urban uses appropriately in urban areas.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

CURRENT TRENDS

Implementation of the Current Trends development scenario assumes that the following development/land use patterns will continue through 2020:

- By 2020, it is expected that more people will live in the rural areas of the county than in the city and village limits. About 41,100 people (52

percent) will live in the rural areas and about 38,600 (48 percent) will reside in the cities and villages.

- Of the projected 11,300 housing units to be constructed by 2020, about 6,000 will be built in the urban areas and about 5,300 in the rural area.

- Based on average lot sizes per town, this would mean about an additional 17,300 acres converted to residential uses in the unincorporated areas.
- Conversely, about 1,340 acres of land would be added to residential uses in the cities and villages.
- About 83 percent of the residential development would occur in the Towns of Hudson, Kinnickinnic, St. Joseph, Somerset, Star Prairie, Troy and Warren.

IMPLICATIONS - CURRENT TRENDS

- Continued conversion of agricultural land to residential development.
- Continued dispersed development.
- Single large lot development and large lot conventional subdivisions.
- Continued loss of open space.
- Encroachment on environmental areas.
- Increasing conflict between agriculture and rural, non-farm residences.
- Random commercial development.
- Does not implement the vision, goals and objectives.
- Requires little intervention in the market.
- Increases potential of problems with septic systems in areas with a concentration of subdivisions.
- Increases traffic problems associated with sprawl.

<h3><i>COMPACT CONTIGUOUS DEVELOPMENT</i></h3>

Implementation of the Compact Contiguous Development scenario would result in the following development pattern.

- By the year 2020, policies, regulations and intergovernmental cooperation would direct over 21,400 persons into or adjacent to the cities and villages.
- About 60 percent (48,500) of the persons would reside in or adjacent to the cities and villages and about 40 percent (31,300) would live in the towns.
- Of the new housing units, about 10,100 would be constructed within or adjacent to the cities and villages and about 1,200 in the towns.
- About 1,860 acres of additional residential land would be consumed in the towns and about 3,000 acres in or contiguous to the cities and villages.

IMPLICATIONS - COMPACT CONTIGUOUS DEVELOPMENT

- Dramatically reduces the amount of dispersed residential development compared to Current Trends development.
- Requires urban infill, small lot development (1/3-acre urban average) and compact, contiguous development.
- Virtually "shuts down" non-urban residential development.
- Creates an identifiable "urban edge."
- Puts less development pressure on environmental corridors.
- Preserves agricultural land and open space.
- Doesn't increase conflicts between farm and non-farm uses.
- Inconsistent with city and village plans.
- Increases pressure to expand corporate boundaries.
- Requires considerable expansion of public utilities/services in incorporated areas (assuming annexation).
- Could precipitate the need for independent sanitary districts or intergovernmental agreements for sewer service (annexation alternative).
- Requires considerable political will, intergovernmental cooperation, and public and private support to significantly change market forces.
- Consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives.

MODIFIED COMPACT CONTIGUOUS DEVELOPMENT

Implementation of the Modified Compact Contiguous Development scenario would result in the following development pattern.

- By the year 2020, about 55 percent (43,700) of the population would reside in or adjacent to the cities and villages and 45 percent (36,100) would reside in towns.
- About 7,900 of the new housing units would be in or contiguous to the cities and villages and about 3,400 would be in the towns.
- Residential land use would increase about 5,600 acres in the towns and about 2,300 acres in the cities and villages.

IMPLICATIONS - MODIFIED COMPACT CONTIGUOUS DEVELOPMENT

- Redirects less growth to urban areas, thereby, allowing more dispersed development than Compact, Contiguous alternative, but less than Current Trends.
- Consumes more land than Compact, Contiguous scenario, but less than Current Trends.
- Puts less development pressure on agricultural land than Current Trends.
- Preserves environmental corridors.
- Creates a more definable "urban edge."
- Requires urban infill.
- Requires expansion of public utilities/services in incorporated areas (assumes annexation).
- Could precipitate the need for independent sanitary districts or intergovernmental agreements for sewer service (annexation alternative).
- Inconsistent with local plans.
- Requires significant political will, intergovernmental cooperation, and public and private support to influence market forces.
- Consistent with vision, goals and objectives.

MODIFIED CURRENT TRENDS

There is no change in the existing development framework in the Current Trends alternative and under it development would continue as it has in the past. A Modified Current Trends scenario changes the conditions of the Current Trends alternative. It is designed to accommodate the county's projected growth and development while at the same time it addresses the goals and objectives to maintain rural character, protect the natural environment and support agriculture. The changes to the Current Trends that create the Modified Current Trends do not restrict or redirect development but do mitigate the impacts of development, preserve natural resources and support agriculture and encourage fiscally responsible extension of municipal utilities.

The Modified Current Trends incorporates these changes by:

- Varying residential density.
- Incorporating conservation site design considerations for development.
- Preserving rural character, natural resources and supporting agriculture.
- Placing urban uses appropriately in urban areas.

To effect these changes the Modified Current Trends uses three planning areas:

- Urban - Planned urban areas with urban uses relating to cities and villages with public utilities. Emphasis on fiscally sound utility extensions and accommodating urban

uses such as high-density residential, industry and large scale commercial.

- Transitional - Rural in transition to urban. Suburban areas which should develop to accommodate future public utilities.
- Rural - Rural in character with development, which protects environmental corridors, conserves open space and allows agricultural uses.

This alternative encourages urban development at a rate and timing consistent with approved local plans. It also accommodates rural development with design policies that can retain the county's rural character. It recommends policies and regulations be established to protect environmental corridors and support productive agriculture. It encourages development techniques (i.e. open space or conservation site design)

to preserve open space, maintain rural character and manage stormwater.

Consequently, the following development pattern would occur:

- The urban/rural population ratio would remain about the same as it presently exists (48 percent to 52 percent).
- About 6,000 housing units would be added to the cities and villages and about 5,300 to the towns.
- About 1,350 additional residential acres would be added to the cities and villages and about 12,300 would be added to the towns.
- This pattern presumes that half of the development in the towns is clustered with 65 percent open space set aside, saving about 5000 acres of open space over the Current Trends development scenario.

IMPLICATIONS - MODIFIED CURRENT TRENDS

- Protects environmental corridors.
- Consistent with local facility plans.
- Protects open space and rural character.
- Continued dispersed development.
- Allows for a range of residential densities across the county.
- Encourages fewer large-lot subdivisions.
- Communities expand public utilities according to their plans.
- Requires improving regulations and ordinances to protect environmental areas, potentially productive agricultural lands, and encourage open space or conservation site design techniques.
- Requires more attention be paid to site design.
- Places urban uses appropriately in urban areas.
- Requires coordination among local governments.
- Consumes more land than Modified Compact, Contiguous scenario, but somewhat less than Current Trends.
- More consistent with goals and objectives than Current Trends.

- Requires minimal intervention in the market.

CONCLUSION

The steering committee reviewed and discussed the four alternatives and came to the following conclusions:

- Continuing with the current trends would not respond to the desires of the public nor implement the recommended goals and objectives.
- The compact contiguous development alternative and its modification could not be selected because the committee believed that both of these scenarios would require too drastic of a change in policy, regulations, intergovernmental relations, and

market forces to be realistically implemented.

- The steering committee recommended the Modified Current Trends alternative be the basis for the development of the St. Croix County Development Plan. It was further revised after the proposed planning areas and policies were developed and reviewed. It accommodates anticipated development while addressing the recommended goals and objectives.

GENERAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

FUTURE CONDITION	ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS			
	Current Trends	Compact Contiguous	Modified Compact Contiguous	Modified Current Trends
Land consumption	High	Very low	Low	High
Dispersed development	High	Low	Moderate	High
Ag land conversion	High	Very low	Low	High
Environmental impact	High	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Septic problems	High	Very low	Low	Moderate
Farm/Non-farm conflict	High	Low	Moderate	High
Meets vision and goals	Low	High	High	Moderate
Sewer expansion	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Corporate expansion	Moderate	Very high	High	Moderate
Encourages urban infill	Low	Very high	High	Low
Creates urban edge	Low	Very high	High	Moderate
Market intervention	Low	Very high	High	Low
Local gov't cooperation	Low	Very high	High	Low
Local gov't will support	Low	Very high	High	Moderate

Key: High, Moderate and Low refer to the level at which the scenarios exceed, meet or fall short of the future condition identified.

PLANNING AREAS AND POLICIES

The St. Croix County Development Planning Areas and Policies implement the Modified Current Trends development alternative as the preferred alternative. Hence, this development plan is not intended to recommend a redistribution of growth or to direct a reduction in growth. Instead, it is designed to accommodate the projected growth in St. Croix County within a policy and implementation framework that:

- protects natural resources in environmental corridors, implements stormwater management, and retains open space through environmental policies and ordinance revisions.
- maintains rural character by establishing appropriate rural uses and densities and encouraging conservation site design
- preserves productive agricultural lands by identifying potentially productive agricultural lands and recommending a site assessment process for evaluating agricultural viability

- directs urban uses to urban areas by limiting industrial and large-scale commercial activity to areas with public utilities.

The goals and objectives call for the rural portion of the county to generally maintain a rural appearance, with agriculture being the predominant use and any new development limited primarily to residential uses at densities and site designs consistent with the rural character of the area.

Policies identify the way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve the vision, goals, objectives and recommendations of the St. Croix County Development Management Plan. They are courses of action selected to guide and determine present and future decisions. The policies stated in this section represent an effort to improve the quality of life in St. Croix County through statements that reflect the character and resources of the community.

Those policies that direct action using the words "will" or "shall" are advised

Rural Character and Conservation Site Design

To meet this plan's goals and objectives for retaining rural character, it is important that site design considerations that preserve open space and maximize open space views be implemented in the rural area. Cluster, open space or conservation site design are all names for the site design considerations which can preserve the rural character of an area. This is accomplished by clustering housing in small rural village-like groups on smaller lots while setting aside natural areas and other desirable features of the site. Open space views are maximized for the dwellings as well as the surrounding area.

Ideally, at least 65% of the gross acreage of the site should be set aside in open space. The percentage of open space should go up as residential densities fall. Hence, for a density of 20 dwelling units per 40 acres, 65% open space is appropriate, but for a density of 5 dwelling units per 40 as much as 85% open space may be appropriate.

This design technique also allows for better stormwater management, alternative on-site wastewater treatment and can reduce the amount of roads required within the development. However, the future demand on collector and arterial roads will be similar to that of the Current Trends development scenario.

to be mandatory and regulatory aspects of the implementation of the St. Croix County Development Management Plan. In contrast, those policies that direct action using the word "should" are advisory and serve as guides, reflecting a common vision of the citizens of St. Croix County. In addition, policies which direct county action using the words "will encourage" are intended to characterize programs or activities that the county will favor, promote and encourage, but will not require. The St.

Croix County Board of Supervisors and the Planning, Zoning and Parks Committee will pursue these policies toward the vision, goals, objectives and recommendations of the plan. St. Croix County can effect these policies by implementing the regulatory tools they are authorized to use, such as, planning, zoning, subdivision and sanitary controls, stormwater management, impact fees, and site plan review, and through non-regulatory approaches such as information and education programs.

PLANNING AREAS

The development plan includes three planning areas: *Urban*, *Transitional*, and *Rural*. Each planning area is recommended to have a distinct development pattern. Please see the Planning Areas map on page 14.

The *Urban Planning Area* is the territory including and contiguous to the cities and villages in the County. This is the planning area where urban services could be provided within the next 20 years. The planning emphasis for this area is to provide fiscally sound utility extensions and to accommodate urban uses such as high-density residential, industrial, and large-scale commercial development.

The *Transitional Planning Area* is the next growth region contiguous to the urban areas. This area is in transition from a rural to a more urban or suburban character due to changes in land use and residential density. The

planning emphasis for this area is to accommodate future utility extension through "ghost" platting and the strategic placement of dwellings, and to limit high-intensity urban uses. The *Transitional Planning Area* is located around the urban areas of Baldwin, Hammond, Hudson, New Richmond, River Falls, Roberts and Somerset.

The *Rural Planning Area* includes most of the land in the county under rural development pressure and virtually all of the land under agricultural production.

The future market for housing, environmental characteristics and soil productivity for agriculture distinguish the *Rural Planning Area*.

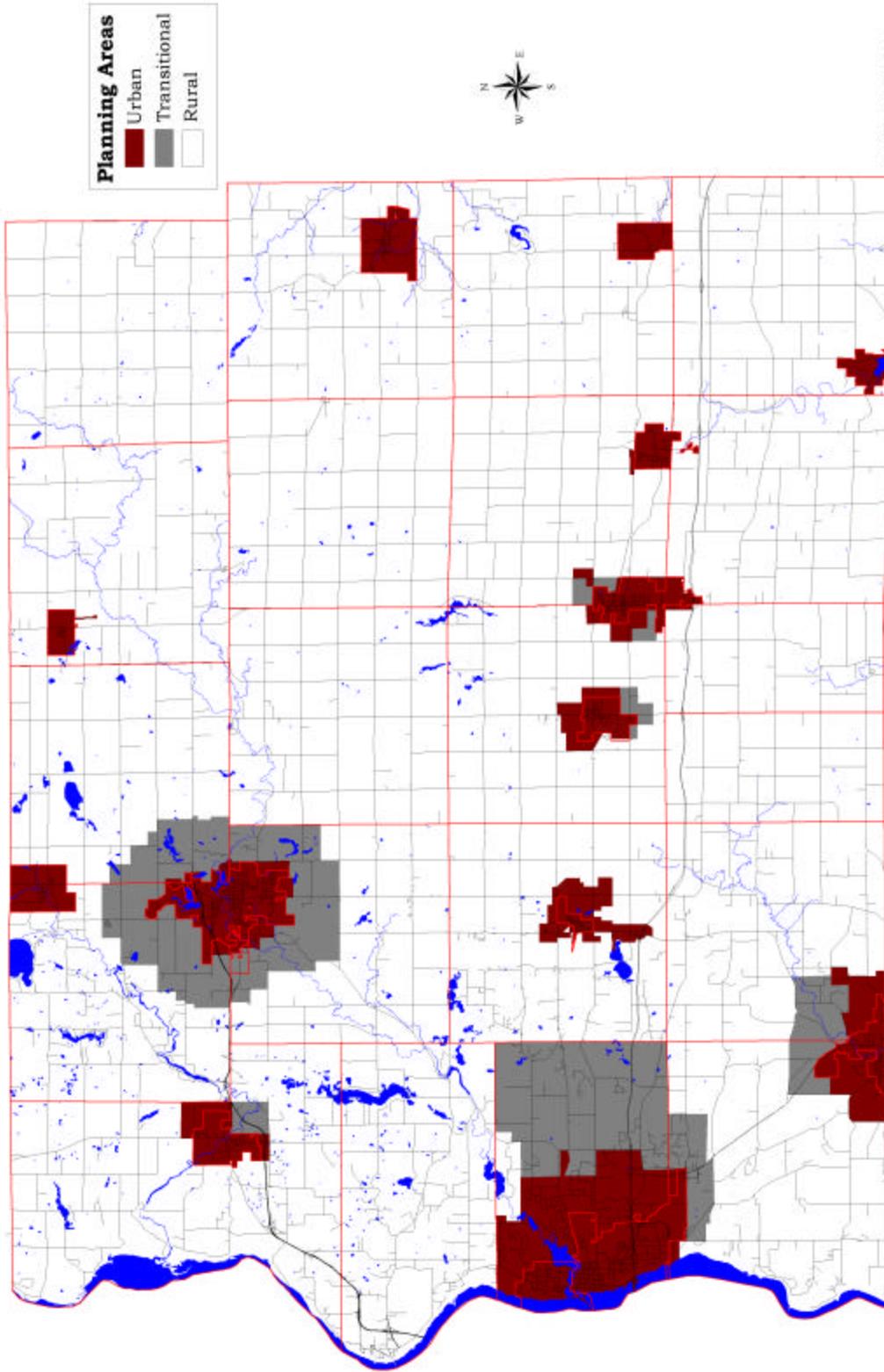
The *Rural Planning Area* is the area of the county where the majority of future rural non-farm development will occur. The planning emphasis in this area is to retain rural character through control of

gross residential density and site design characteristics. Additional emphasis is on protecting environmental corridors, preserving viable agriculture and open

space, controlling access to improved or upgraded highway corridors and improving town and county roads.

St. Croix County

Development Management Plan



Rural Centers

The Rural Planning Area contains several rural centers. Rural centers are small, unincorporated communities which are characterized by groups of residences on relatively small lots with at least one adjoining non-residential use. Usually, a rural center has several houses and one or two commercial establishments. They are generally located along county trunk highways and some have public services provided through a sanitary district. As long as rural centers remain small they can contribute to rural character and provide needed neighborhood commercial opportunities for rural residents.

The Rural Planning Area will also include a Farmland Preservation Area, which will consist of primarily all the land in the county under agricultural production. The emphasis for this area should be to provide for long-term agricultural use using site assessment to determine agricultural viability and to allow for non-farm development consistent with agriculture. This area

contains those rural areas with the highest concentrations of potentially productive soils.

The actual delineation of the Farmland Preservation Area will be dependent upon pending changes to the Farmland Preservation Program and existing farmland protection policies in local communities.

PLANNING AREAS AT A GLANCE

Planning Area	Residential Gross Density	Density Bonus for Cluster/Conservation Site Design	Open Space Goal for Cluster/Conservation Site Design Development	General Character/Uses
Urban	Maximum of 14 dwelling units per acre multi-family, 4 dwelling units per acre single or two family	NA	NA	Urban uses (residential, commercial, industrial), planned for public utilities
Transitional	Maximum of 3 dwelling units per acre sewered, 1 dwelling unit per acre unsewered, ghost platting required	Cluster/conservation site design allowed, no bonus, minimum lot size based on site conditions	At least 50% of the site permanently preserved in open space	Suburban and urbanizing character, large subdivision development, some commercial, some clustered development
Rural	Average of 8 dwelling units per 40 acres, 2 acre minimum lot	25% of applicable site density, minimum lot size based on site conditions	At least 50% of new residential development in conservation site design, with 65% to 85% of such sites in permanent open space or agriculture.	Rural character, agriculture, non-farm residential, limited commercial, clustered development

The planning areas are distinguished by their differences in land use, density and character.

To understand the differences, one must understand three concepts, how they are calculated and how they apply: gross density, maximum gross density and average gross density.

GROSS DENSITY

Gross density is a measure of the intensity of development in a given area. A gross density policy determines the number of residential dwelling units (houses) allowed in each planning area. Gross density allows for flexibility in the minimum lot size while maintaining an appropriate development density for an area.

Gross density is calculated by multiplying the total acreage of an area by the number of dwelling units (du) allowed. In the Planning Areas and Policies Section of this plan, gross density is calculated two ways. In the Urban and Transitional Planning Areas it is calculated per acre and in the Rural Area it is calculated per 40 acres.

URBAN/TRANSITIONAL

A per acre density is more appropriate in an urban setting where higher densities can be supported by urban services. For example, if there are 2 dwelling units allowed per acre (A) and there are 10 total acres, the gross density is: $2du/A \times 10A = 20$ dwelling units allowed for that 10 acres.

RURAL

In the Rural area, a per 40 acre density is based on a more typical parcel size. For example, if there are 12 dwelling units allowed per 40 acres and there are 80 acres, the gross density is $12du/40A \times 80A = 24$ dwelling units allowed for that 80 acres.

Lot size is independent of the gross density and relates to the buildable area of the site, development standards and local development objectives. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate gross density with varying lot sizes. Lot sizes can vary from 1/2 acre, one acre, two acres, five acres, ten acres, twenty acres or anywhere in between these numbers.

MAXIMUM GROSS DENSITY

Maximum gross density is the maximum number of dwelling units allowed per acre in the Urban and Transitional planning areas. Maximum gross density cannot be exceeded unless the plan, which sets the density, is amended.

Maximum gross density is used to describe density goals in the urban and transitional areas because there is an expectation of significant development in these areas, which may even reach buildout. Buildout is when all available land in a given area is used for development.

AVERAGE GROSS DENSITY

Average gross density sets an average density goal for a planning area. It differs from maximum gross density in that it is not applied unit by unit within an area but is instead applied to the whole area.

Average gross density is utilized in the Rural Planning Area because it is better suited to development, which will be spread out and mixed in with continuing rural land uses such as farming, hobby farms, and large estates.

When the average is applied to the planning area in each town a total density is calculated for the town. This density is available for a variety of zoning districts throughout the town as designated by the locally adopted plan. The average gross density could be applied uniformly throughout the area or it could be a mixture of higher and lower than average gross densities.

For example, if there was a planning area consisting of 1000 acres with an average density of 2 dwelling units per 40 acres the area would have a density allocation of 50 dwelling units. (2D.U./40A x 1000A = 50D.U.) These dwelling units could be spread out all through the area or concentrated in one portion, depending upon local plans and policies.

Figures 3 and 4, pages 20 and 21, illustrates the application of average density to two sections over a time frame of 30 years. It is only an illustration; it is not meant to imply that density for a town will be calculated or applied on only two sections.

One Quarter Quarter Section, Approximately 40 Acres

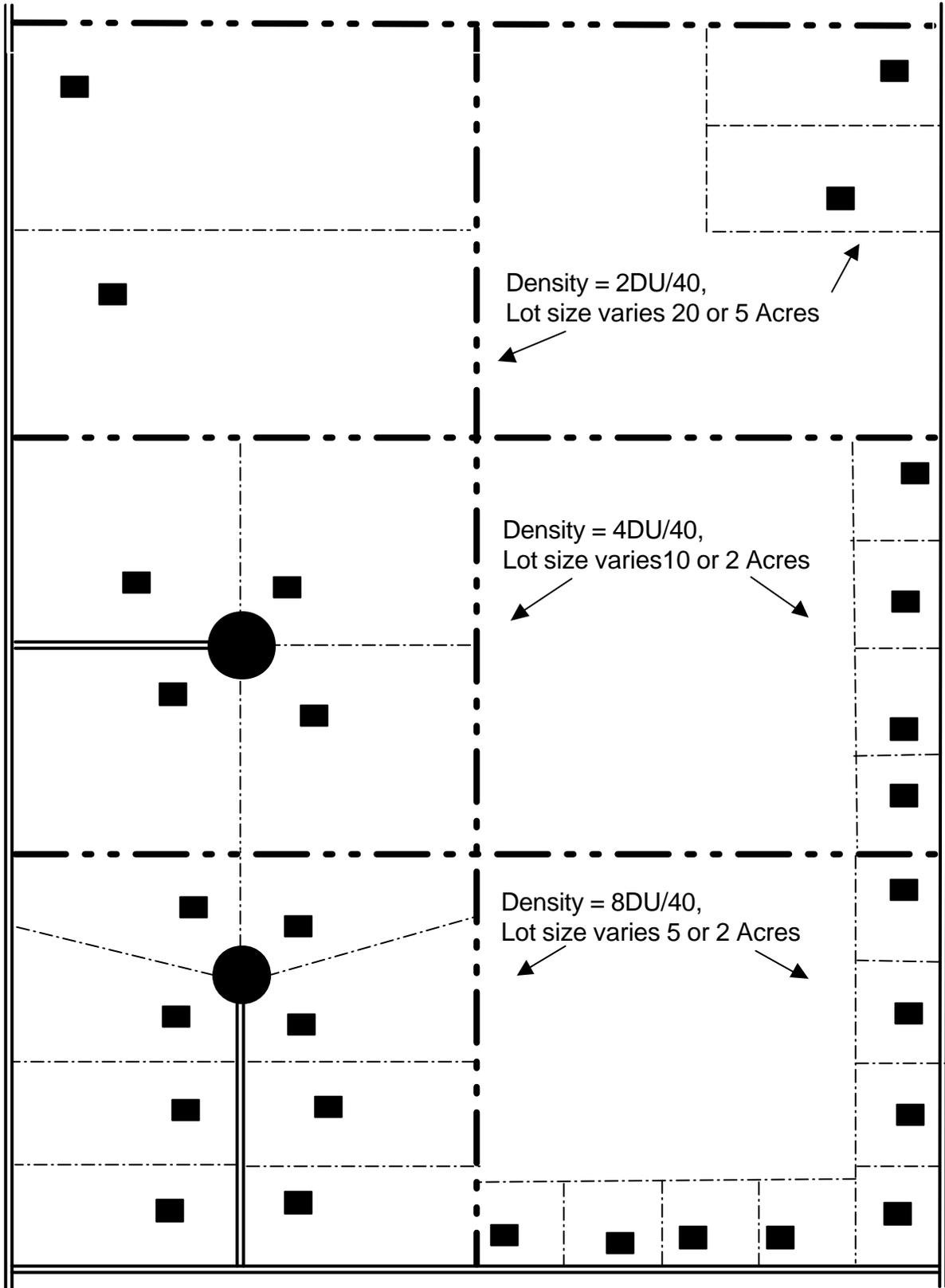


FIGURE 1 – Examples of gross residential densities with varying lot sizes.

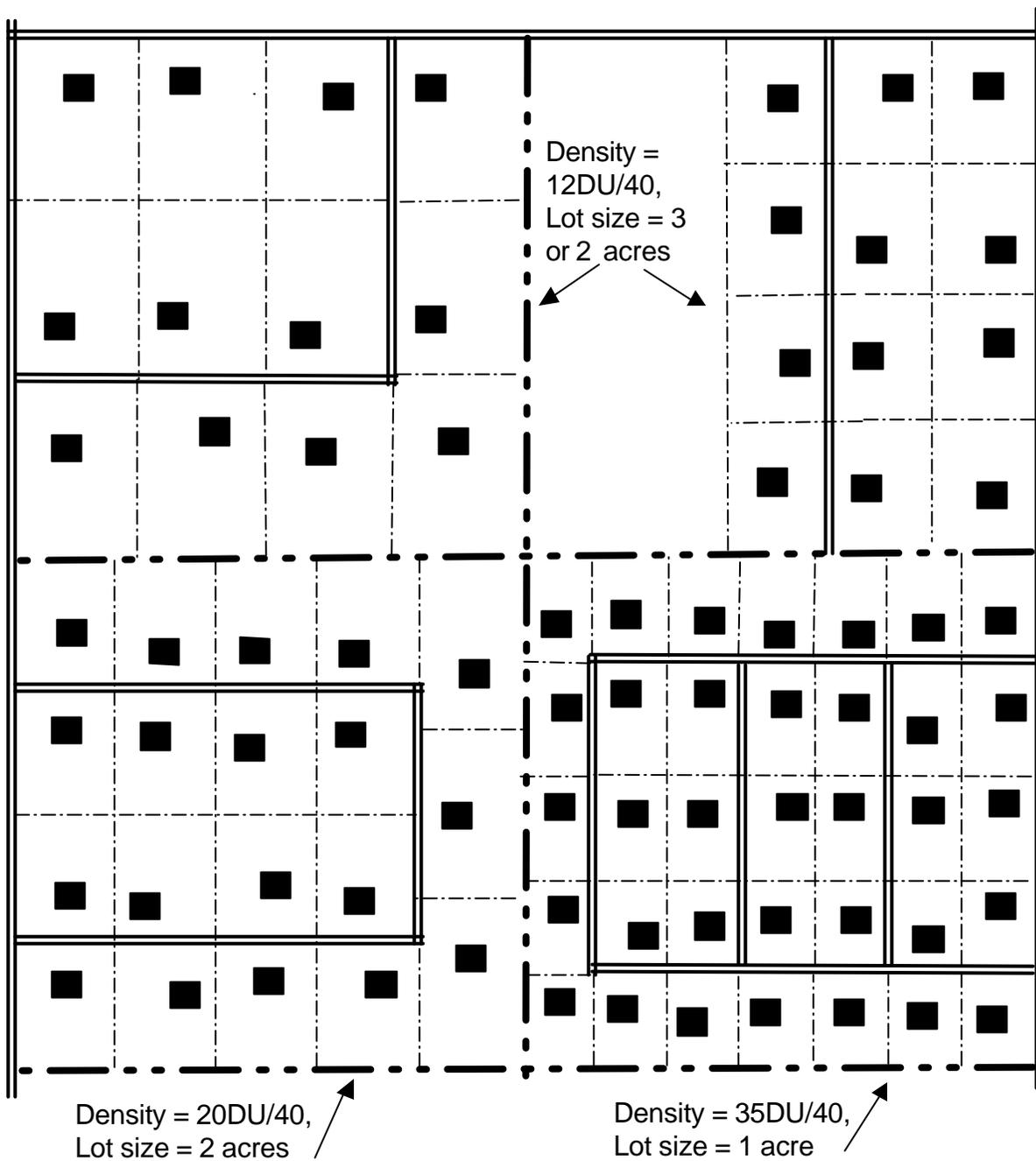


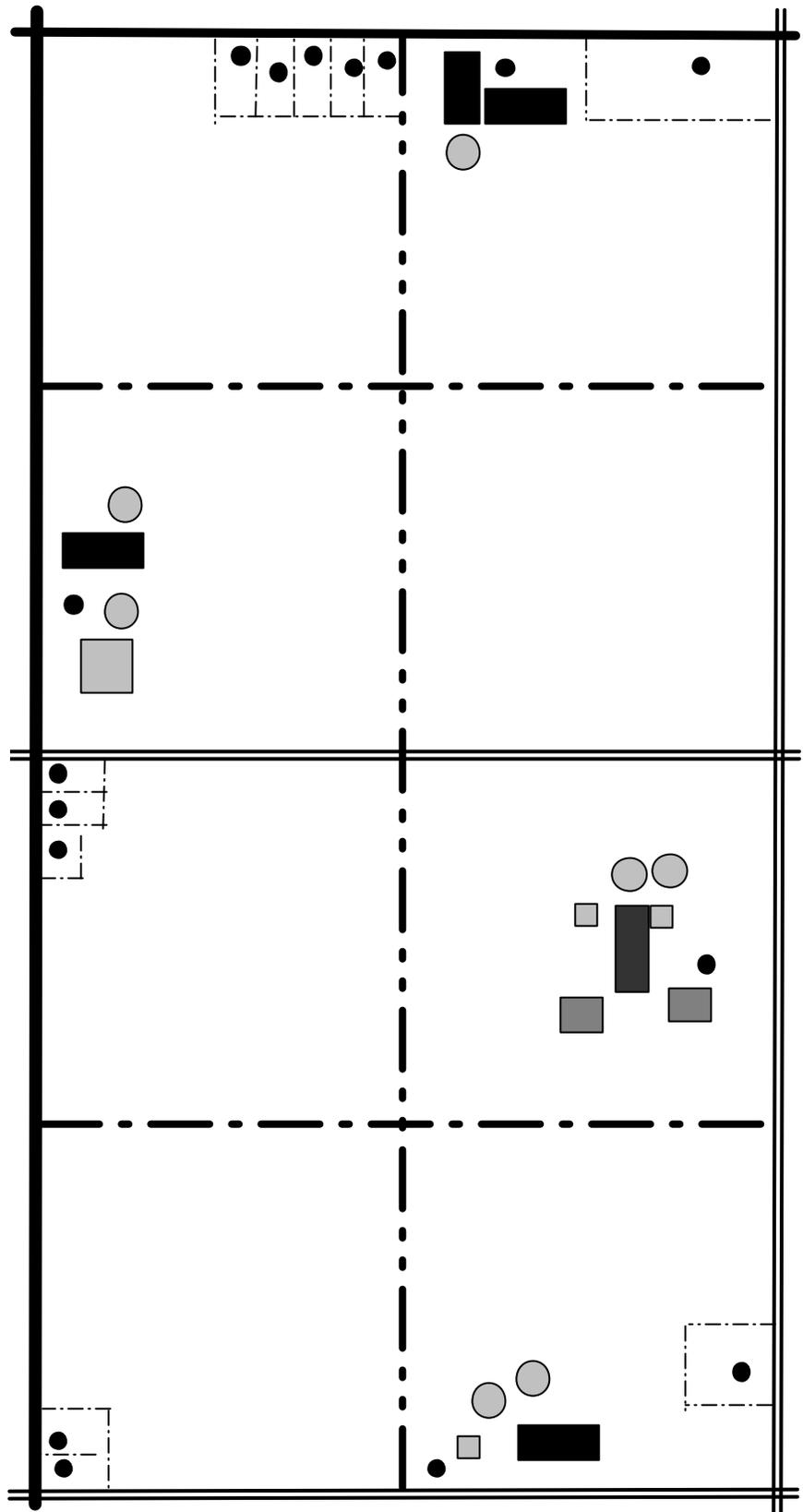
FIGURE 2 - Examples of gross residential densities with varying lot sizes.

Average Density on 2 Sections:

$$1280 \text{ Acres} \times 8\text{DU}/40\text{Acres} = 256\text{DU}$$

Legend

- State Road 
- County Road 
- Town Road 
- Section Line 
- Property Line 
- Major Subdivision 
- Single Residence 



**FIGURE 3 – Illustration of Average Density Spread Over A Small Area.
Year 2000 Density = 16DU**

**Average Density on
2 Sections:**

$$1280 \text{ Acres} \times 8 \text{ DU}/40 \text{ Acres} = 256 \text{ DU}$$

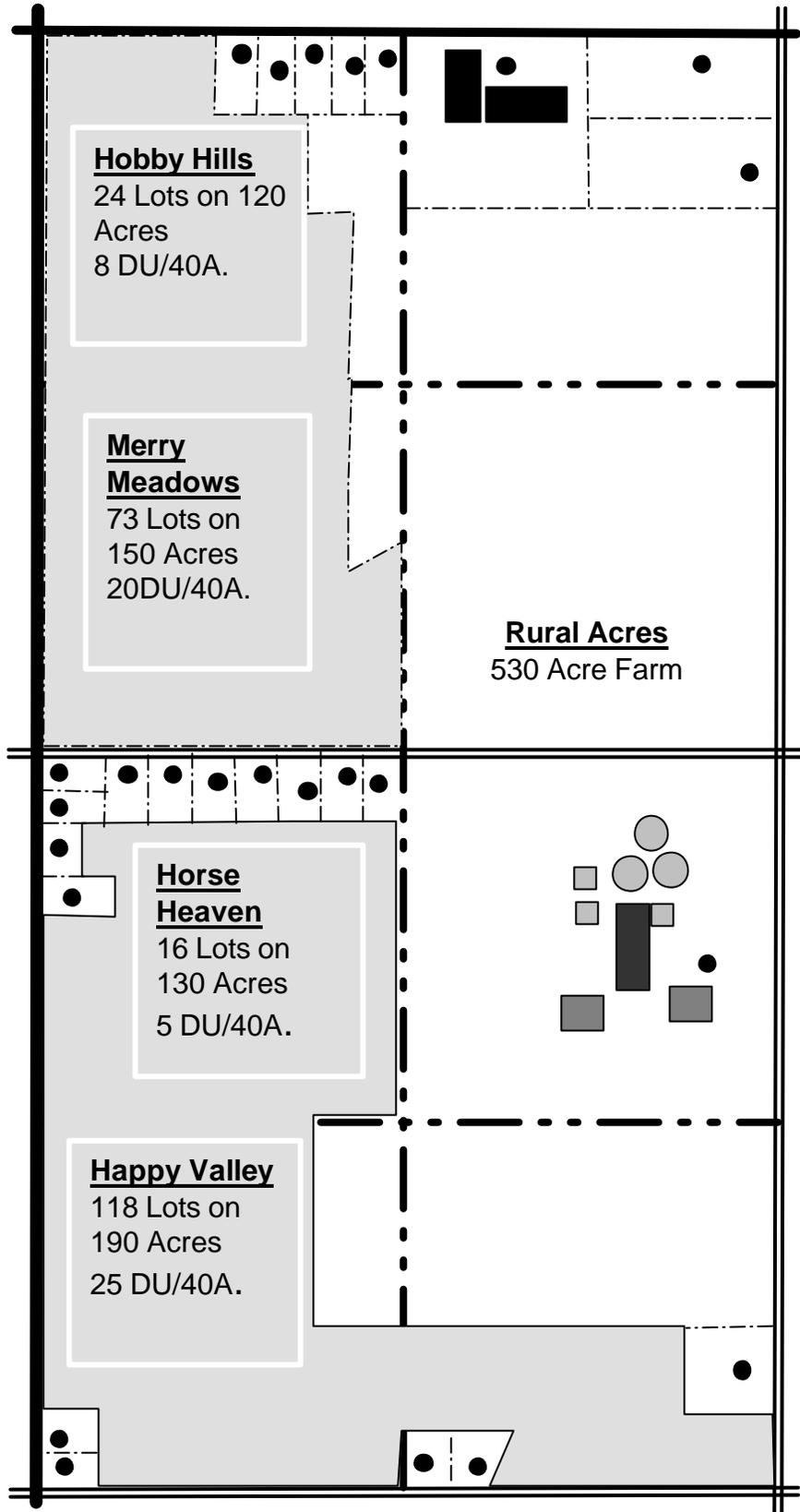


FIGURE 4 – Illustration of Average Density Spread Over A Small Area. Year 2030 Density = 256DU

URBAN PLANNING AREA

The urban planning area is the territory including and contiguous to the cities and villages in the county. This area has been identified using local plans, per Wisconsin Statutes 59.69(3), which states the county shall include the master plan of any city or village without change. In areas where the local plan was vague or nonexistent, projections developed in this plan were used.

The urban planning area is the area where urban services could be provided within this 20-year planning time frame. The existing and planned land use will have a distinct urban character and consist of single and multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, government and institutional, parks and recreation, conservancy, transportation and utilities, and very little, if any, agriculture.

Average existing residential density is approximately 3.5 dwelling units per acre. The minimum existing residential gross density is 1 dwelling unit per acre. Densities of 1 dwelling unit per acre have occurred primarily on the perimeter of the area. The urban planning area will continue to develop at about an average of 3.5 dwelling units per acre into the future.

The urban planning area is largely determined by city and village land use plans. Hence, the type and density of land uses in this area are beyond the scope of the development plan. However, the extent of these areas identifies a distinct urban edge created by differences in density due to the availability and cost of public services.

URBAN PLANNING AREA POLICIES

1. The maximum gross density for sewerred residential development in the Urban Planning Area should be 14 dwelling units per acre for multi-family dwellings and 4 dwelling units per acre for one and two-family dwellings. The maximum gross density for unsewerred development should be 1 dwelling unit per acre.
2. Intensive or high-density residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses shall be located primarily within the Urban Planning Area, which can provide basic urban facilities and services, including, most importantly, public sanitary sewer.
3. The county should work with the cities, villages and towns to review and adjust zoning regulations to ensure the proper staging of the anticipated development over time. The application of urban zoning districts should proceed incrementally, and the premature zoning of lands for urban use should be avoided.
4. Urban development shall be encouraged to infill vacant

developable lands within the Urban Planning Area, then be staged outward according to local plans.

5. In the Urban Planning Area lying in unincorporated municipalities, the county will require the ghost platting of new subdivisions to facilitate further division and development of lands before they are served with public sewer in the future. Ghost platting requirements in the Urban Planning Area will include the proper placement of dwellings so that lots can be divided further when sewer is available, and provisions for stormwater management, parklands, road easements and the eventual extension of sewer and water. The final gross density for ghost platted subdivisions, when sewered and fully developed, should be 4 dwelling units per acre.
6. Industrial and large-scale commercial development shall

expand upon existing areas; new industrial and large-scale commercial development shall only occur in the Urban Planning Area and shall be on public water and sanitary sewer.

7. Industrial and large-scale commercial development shall occur only where there is adequate access to major transportation facilities.
8. Industrial and large-scale commercial development shall not adversely impact surrounding development or the environment.
9. Urban residential development shall occur adjacent to existing development to contain costs of public service provision, and reflect compact and orderly development.
10. High-density multiple-household residential development will only be approved in areas where public services and facilities are available.

TRANSITIONAL PLANNING AREA

The Transitional Planning Area is the next growth area contiguous to the urban planning area. The area is, as its classification implies, in transition from a rural character to more of an urban or suburban character due to changes in land use and residential density. This area should contain primarily residential uses and some related commercial uses. Other uses may include open space, parks and recreation, government and institutional, transportation and utilities, commercial and industrial, where appropriate. Existing agricultural uses

may continue but will probably decrease in scale and number.

Development should occur so that future urban facilities and services are readily accommodated, as they become available. This can be achieved by initially subdividing lots and placing structures in a manner so that these parcels can be easily subdivided further in the future. Such a practice, sometimes called "ghost platting", would allow for the cost-effective provision of urban facilities and services as they are needed or wanted.

TRANSITIONAL PLANNING AREA POLICIES

1. The maximum gross density for development in the Transitional Planning Area shall be 3 dwelling units per acre if sewerred and 1 dwelling unit per acre if unsewerred.
2. Higher density residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses can be appropriate uses in the Transitional Planning Areas when provided for in locally adopted plans and where sufficient infrastructure is available or provided to accommodate the proposed development.
3. In the Transitional Planning Area the county will require the ghost platting of new subdivisions to facilitate further division and development of lands before they are served with public sewer in the future. Ghost platting requirements in the Transitional Planning Area will include the proper placement of structures so that lots can be divided further when urban facilities and services are available, and provisions for stormwater management, parklands, road easements and the eventual extension of sewer and water. The maximum gross density for ghost platted subdivisions, when sewerred and fully developed, shall be 3 dwelling units per acre unless a different standard is set by the community or agency providing the facilities.
4. The county will work with the cities, villages, and towns within the Transitional Planning Area to ensure a logical transition from rural to more dense development. The developable lands within the Transitional Planning Area should remain zoned for their current use until development is imminent.
5. The county will amend its development regulations to establish residential districts that allow mixed uses and densities ranging from 3 units to 1 unit per acre depending on the availability of urban facilities and services.
6. The county will encourage conservation site design development in the Transitional Planning Area to preserve open space and manage stormwater.

RURAL PLANNING AREA

The Rural Planning Area includes all the area of the county outside of the Urban and Transitional Planning Areas. Despite the rural character of this planning area, it will account for almost half of the increase in population projected in the plan for the county. The Rural Planning Area also holds significant areas of environmental corridors and productive agricultural land. See the maps on pages 26 and 29.

The predominant land uses in the Rural Planning Area will be agricultural and residential. Because of the rural residential development in the area, agricultural lands will continue to be converted to residential uses. This could cause the character of farming to change in localized areas to more rental farm acreage and smaller farms, including specialty and hobby farms. For the remaining viable agriculture in the Rural Planning Area there will continue to be available exclusive agriculture zoning with a maximum residential density of 1 unit per 35 acres.

Other uses in the area may include open space, parks and recreation, transportation and utilities, government and institutional, non-metallic mining and limited commercial and light industrial, where appropriate. The mix and intensity of uses in any particular community will largely depend upon local conditions and trends, as well as any locally adopted plans and policies.

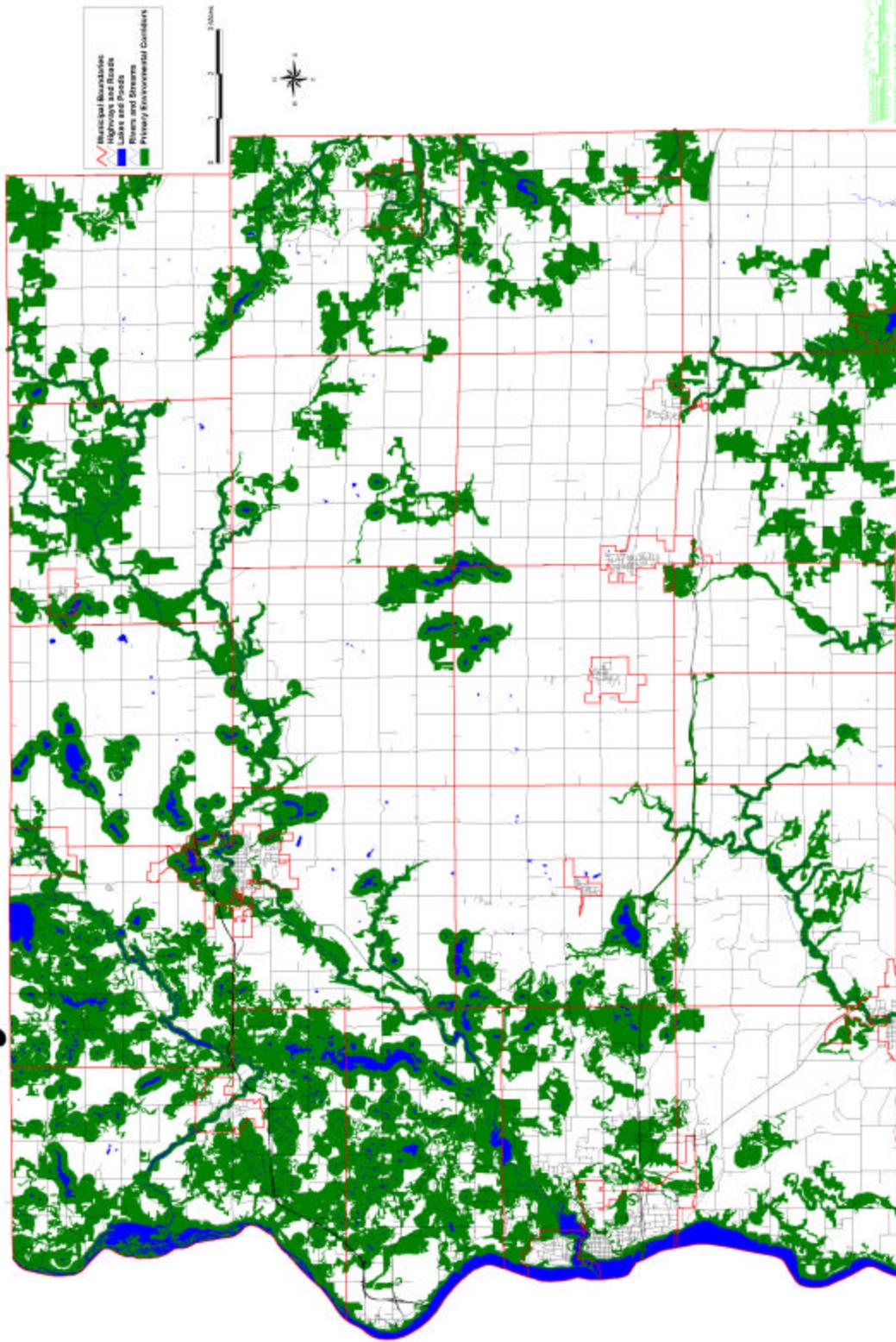
Priorities in this planning area are the preservation of rural character and the protection of environmental features. Rural character can only be maintained in the Rural Planning Area through site design considerations for new development and by conserving open space and agriculture land.

To achieve the goal of preserving rural character, at least 50 percent of the new residential development in the Rural Planning Area will need to use cluster or conservation site design. The protection of environmental corridors in the Rural Planning Area can be achieved through management strategies that eliminate or minimize the impact of development on their component resources.

The area shown on the Potentially Productive Farmland Map contains the county's most productive agricultural soils according to the county's classification of potentially productive farmlands (LESA 1-5 agricultural soils groups, revised). Those farms with productive soils should be considered for long-term management strategies to protect agriculture, such as exclusive agricultural zoning, and transfer or purchase of development rights programs.

The Rural Planning Area addresses rural character, open space and development impacts while at the same time accommodating the continued demand for housing in the countryside.

Primary Environmental Corridors



RURAL PLANNING AREA POLICIES

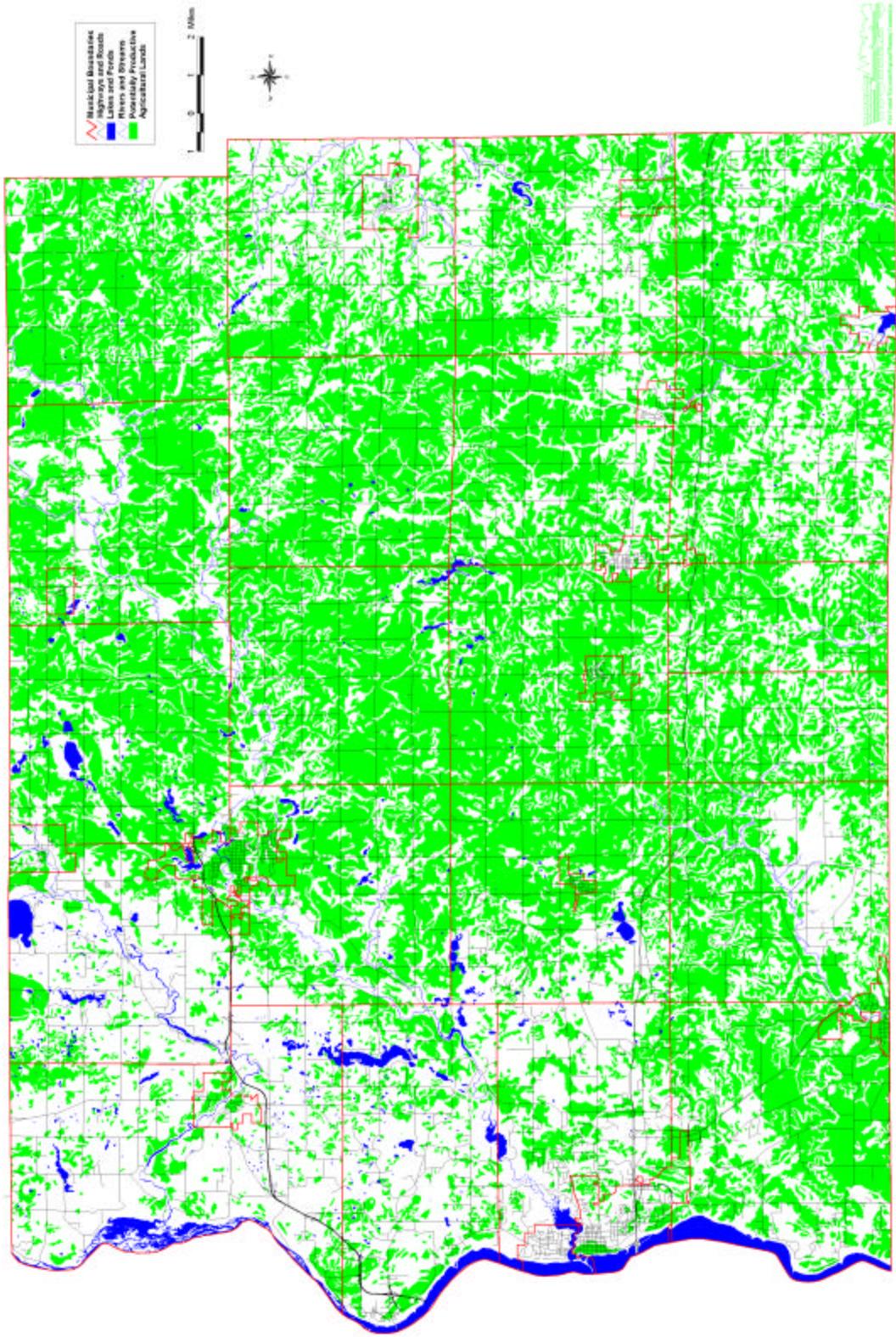
1. The average gross density, for residential development in the Rural Planning Area, shall be 8 dwelling units per 40 acres of privately held land. This average will be applied to the Rural Planning Area in each town.
2. Where conservation site design is used, a bonus of 25 percent of the gross density shall be allowed.
3. In exclusive agriculture zoned areas the maximum gross density shall be 1 dwelling unit per 35 acres.
4. The minimum lot size in the Rural Planning Area shall be 2 acres, except where conservation site design is used, the minimum lot size will be determined by site design standards.
5. Through appropriate incentives and ordinance standards, the county will advance the use of conservation site design in at least half of the new residential subdivisions in the Rural Planning Area.
6. The county will implement conservation site design in the Rural Planning Area to:
 - retain rural character
 - maintain natural features
 - minimize visual impact
 - avoid environmental problems
 - reduce impervious surfaces
 - reduce local road miles
 - maximize the use of on-site wastewater treatment and wells
 - protect environmental corridors.
7. Non-residential land uses in the Rural Planning Area should be limited to uses that are consistent with the rural character of the area or otherwise essential to the area.
8. Commercial uses in the Rural Planning Area should be located to serve rural residential neighborhoods or on state or federal highways to serve the traveling public. Light industrial uses should be appropriately located at major transportation nodes, separate from residential and agricultural areas. These uses shall be provided for in locally adopted plans and where sufficient infrastructure is available or provided to accommodate the proposed development.
9. Agricultural uses should include a broad range of uses from traditional farming through, plant nurseries, tree farms, orchards, community-supported farming, hobby farms and all current alternatives.
10. The county will encourage the preservation of agriculture through the implementation of exclusive agriculture zoning.
11. The county will do a feasibility study to explore the potential development and establishment of purchase and/or transfer of development rights programs to encourage the preservation of agriculture.
12. The county will encourage the implementation of best management practices for agriculture, which

conserve soil and water, and reduce the use of pesticides.

13. The county will establish a farmland preservation area consistent with the Chapter 91, Wisconsin Statutes and the Farmland Preservation program. The farmland preservation area will be countywide, consisting of all parcels of 100 acres or more containing at least one-third of their area in potentially productive agricultural lands, all lands presently under

exclusive agriculture zoning and all 40 acres with a present farmland preservation contract. In implementing the plan, the farmland preservation area will be land that is available for exclusive agriculture zoning or farmland preservation contracts. The actual delineation of the exclusive agriculture districts developed to implement the plan shall be developed cooperatively between the county and each town.

Potentially Productive Agricultural Land



GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The following policies either apply countywide throughout all planning areas

or are applicable to more than one planning area.

LAND USE

1. Development in the county shall be consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, countryside or terrain.
2. The county will continue to implement the provisions of the St. Croix Riverway Master Plan. The boundary of the master plan district is hereby included in the St. Croix County Development Management Plan by reference and is consistent with the county's St. Croix Riverway Zoning District.
3. To facilitate the legitimate and practical provision of affordable housing, the county will allow for manufactured housing, secured to permanent frost-proof foundations, in any location where conventionally built housing is allowed. In the case of mobile homes, the wheels and towing hitch must be removed and adequate, permanent skirting must blend the dwelling with the foundation.
4. The county will provide technical support and expertise, especially geographic analysis of social, economic and physical features, to encourage and facilitate the development of local plans.
5. The county will encourage coordinated planning and land uses along municipal borders at the town, village and city levels.
6. The county will monitor and document the impact of development on area schools and will coordinate with area school boards to document the impacts associated with them.

DEVELOPMENT DENSITY

1. The St. Croix County Development Management Plan specifies the number of new dwelling units based on gross density. For the Rural Planning Area average gross density is designated in dwelling units per 40 acres. **Existing parcels** are deemed to be those parcels, tracts or lots existing on record prior to plan implementation. **Plan implementation** is considered to have commenced when the zoning ordinance has been revised to reflect plan goals, objectives, policies and recommendations. **New parcels** are those parcels,

- tracts or lots intended for a residence created by initial or subsequent divisions of an existing parcel.
2. The county will keep track of the density of development in the Rural Planning Area so that the complete development of the town does not exceed the planned average gross density.
 3. Assuming there are suitable soils for an on-site wastewater treatment system and area for a backup drainfield, all new parcels must be at least one acre in the Urban and Transitional Planning Areas and at least two acres in the Rural Planning Area, except where conservation site design is used. The minimum lot size will be determined by site design standards.

DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

1. The county will encourage conservation site design subdivisions that retain at least 65 percent of the subdivision in permanent open space.
 2. The county will use market incentives, such as density bonuses, to encourage conservation site design in the Rural Planning Area.
 3. Conservation site design residential developments shall be designed to be compatible with the rural character and environmental features of the area.
 4. Residential clusters used in conservation site design shall be located in areas, to the greatest extent practical, visually screened from surrounding roadways and other residential clusters, so that existing open space vistas within and outside the site are maximized.
- These residential clusters shall be carefully adjusted to topographic and other natural and cultural features, taking full advantage of the setting of those features without causing undue disturbance.
5. All residential development should be buffered from nearby agricultural or non-metallic mineral extraction lands to minimize conflicts between farming or mining and residential uses.
 6. The county will institute conservation site design standards through appropriate provisions in zoning, land division, sanitary and stormwater management ordinances.
 7. The county will develop design standards that enhance the visual and functional quality of development.

1. All development in the county shall attain pre-development levels of stormwater runoff during and after development through best management practices.
2. All development in the county shall use best management practices for construction site erosion control. Erosion and sediment control practices shall be used when removing the vegetative cover of the land or exposing the soil.
3. All unsewered subdivisions shall be designed to protect the immediate groundwater supply through the proper placement and operation of wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems.
4. The county will protect from pollution 5-year time-of-travel zones-of-contribution for municipal and community wells that lie outside incorporated municipalities.
5. Developments proposed near intermittent streams, or dry runs or washes, which may only flow during the spring and/or during storm events, shall be designed to prevent sediment and pollution into these streams.
6. All wetlands within the shoreland area of a stream, lake or pond; other wetlands at least one acre in size; or any wetland associated with a closed depression shall not be developed, drained or filled.
7. A permanently vegetated open space buffer with a minimum width of 75 feet shall be required surrounding preserved wetlands, shorelands and closed depressions.
8. Stormwater runoff as the result of development shall not be discharged into wetlands and closed depressions, except for those associated with approved stormwater management structures.
9. Closed depressions shall not be developed, drained or filled, nor shall closed depressions be used for the dumping or storage of any substance, material or equipment. Best management practices to repair damage near residences and structures shall be exempt from this provision.
10. The county will restrict all development or re-development within the 100-year floodplain and identified dam breach inundation areas.
11. Stormwater runoff from new development shall be managed so as not to adversely impact shorelands or their associated water bodies.
12. To preserve interior woodland habitat, woodlands of at least 40 acres and with at least one-quarter mile of width shall only be developed at the edges using conservation site design.
13. Development shall not be allowed on remaining prairie remnants.
14. The county will encourage the restoration of prairie or grassland ecosystems through cooperative

- efforts of the state, county and federal agencies, and landowners.
15. Steep slopes with a grade of 20 percent or more shall not be developed.
 16. Development shall only be allowed on steep slopes with a grade from 12 to 20 percent where best management practices for erosion and sediment control and stormwater management can be implemented successfully.
 17. Development occurring on parcels entirely or partially within primary environmental corridors shall use conservation site design, and shall minimize the visual and physical impacts on the resources present. Single lot development entirely or partially within primary environmental corridors shall incorporate the component resources into the development rather than harm or destroy them.
 18. Development occurring on parcels entirely or partially within secondary environmental corridors will be encouraged to use conservation site design, shall incorporate the component resources into the development rather than harm or destroy them, and shall minimize the visual and physical impacts on the resources present. Single lot development entirely or partially within secondary environmental corridors shall incorporate the component resources into the development rather than harm or destroy them.
 19. Development occurring within or near independent environmental resources shall incorporate those resources into the development rather than harm or destroy them.
 20. The county will protect and manage identified unique open space areas, through the cooperation of state and federal agencies, local governments, conservation groups, landowners and the county, after determining there is public and governmental support for such protection.
 21. The county will encourage the use of restrictive agreements to preserve open space when conservation site design, purchase of development rights or transfer of development rights are used.

AGRICULTURE

1. The county will encourage farm market alternatives to diversify the county's agricultural economy.
2. The county will advise those establishing or occupying non-agricultural uses in the Farmland Preservation Area that the area is agricultural in character and that other uses are in the minority and subordinate to agricultural uses.
3. The county will favor existing agricultural land uses over newly established non-agricultural land uses when considering land use conflicts in the Farmland Preservation Area

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| <p>4. The county will encourage the use of the Farmland Preservation Program as one tool to protect agricultural land.</p> <p>5. The county will monitor the progress and effect of the Agricultural Land Use Assessment Law and will consider its impact on St. Croix County land economics.</p> <p>6. The county will explore the feasibility of purchase and/or transfer of development rights programs targeted toward the most valuable and viable farms in the</p> | <p>county as tools to give farmers financial alternatives to developing farmland.</p> <p>7. The county will consider a Land Evaluation/Site Assessment system to evaluate which farms or farmland should be protected.</p> <p>8. The county will encourage the use of deed restrictions or conservation easements to preserve farmland when conservation site designs, purchase of development rights or transfer of development rights are used.</p> |
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TRANSPORTATION

- | | |
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| <p>1. The county will work with the local governments and the state to determine, and plan for, necessary improvements to the transportation system in St. Croix County.</p> <p>2. In cooperation with the Department of Transportation, the county will identify and preserve reasonably needed transportation corridors, to avoid future conflicts between land use and transportation needs.</p> <p>3. The county will incorporate state standards for defining functional and jurisdictional classification of highways.</p> <p>4. The county will strive to maintain appropriate levels of service on</p> | <p>highways under its jurisdiction and will encourage other jurisdictions to maintain adequate levels of service.</p> <p>5. The county will implement access control on highways based on jurisdictional classification.</p> <p>6. The county will encourage the state to consider local planning findings, goals, objectives and policies when planning major transportation facilities.</p> <p>7. The county will stay informed of regional efforts to provide transit options to workers commuting from St. Croix County to the greater metropolitan center.</p> |
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RECREATION

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| <p>1. The county, consistent with its Outdoor Recreation Plan, will</p> | <p>maintain a system of parks, trails and natural and recreation areas</p> |
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which together with federal, state and local parks, and natural and

recreation areas provide a viable open space system.

CONCLUSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Development Management Plan is an advisory document and as such the goals, objectives and policies set forth in it can only be achieved through implementation of competent administrative, regulatory and programmatic provisions.

This section, Plan and Policies, establishes clear policy statements to advise and direct development

management decisions. However, once the plan is adopted, there are a number of actions that are required to carry out those policies.

Section 1, Plan Implementation, will describe all of the things that the county and others will need to do so that the plan vision, goals and objectives can be realized through implementation of the policies.

