

**EMERALD LAND USE PROJECTIONS**

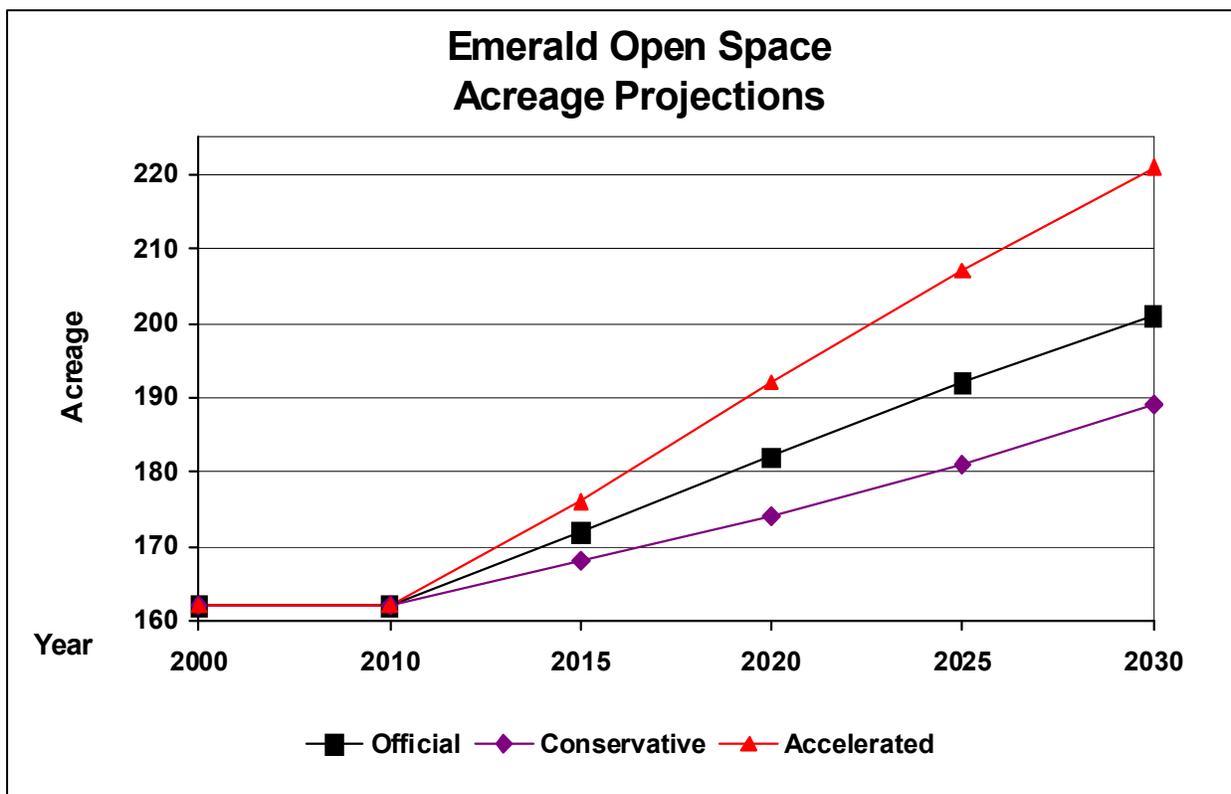
**OPEN SPACE PROJECTIONS**

The Town of Emerald anticipates that, as residential growth occurs, the demand for open space will also occur. The Plan Commission felt that generally open space should be preserved at a rate of 10 percent of residential growth. That ratio is used to estimate the open space that would be ideal for parks, recreation and natural areas for the future land use scenarios through 2030. Please see the chart and graph below.

**Open Space Acreage Projections – 2000 to 2030  
Town of Emerald**

Year	OFFICIAL TREND		CONSERVATIVE GROWTH		ACCELERATED GROWTH	
	Additional Acres Needed	Total Acreage	Additional Acres	Total Acreage	Additional Acres	Total Acreage
2000	0	162	0	162	0	162
2010	0	162	0	162	0	162
2015	10	172	6	168	14	176
2020	10	182	6	174	15	192
2025	10	192	7	181	15	207
2030	9	201	8	189	15	221

Source: Emerald Plan Commission & St. Croix County Planning & Zoning Department Projections.



**RESIDENTIAL PROJECTIONS**

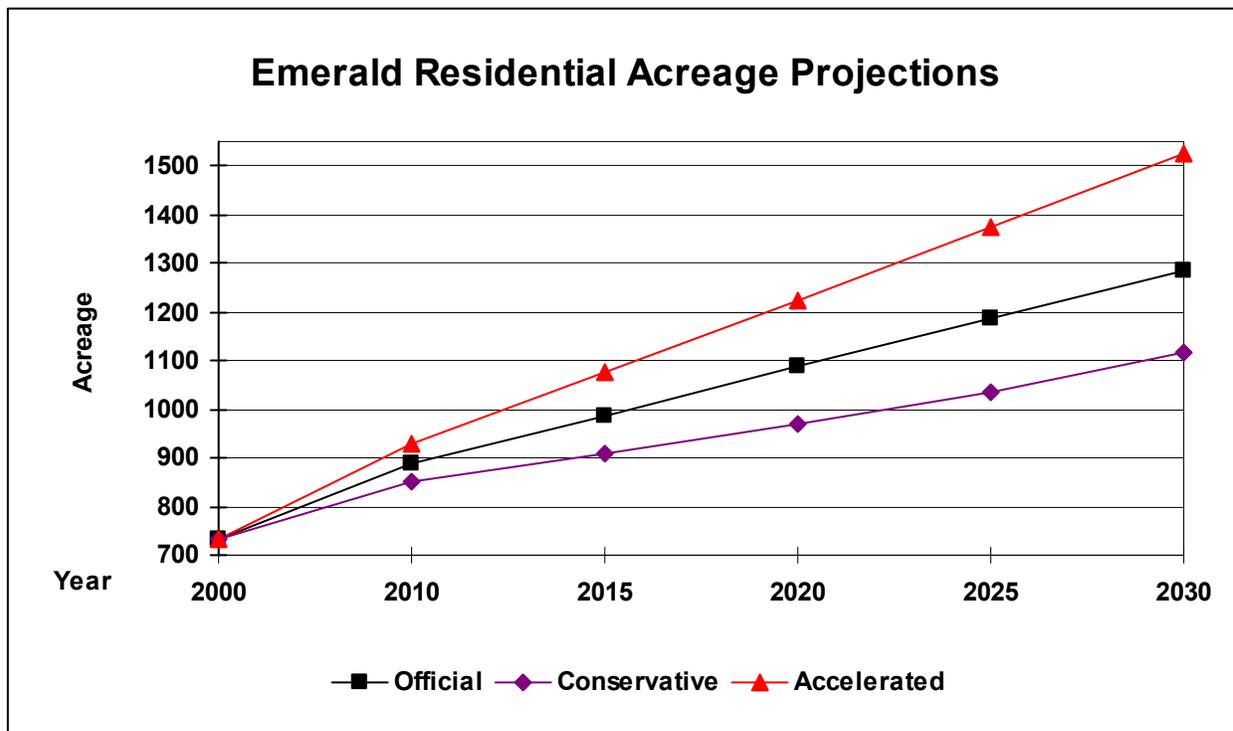
The residential land use projections for the Town of Emerald were developed as part of the population and housing projections in the Issues and Opportunities Element. They are provided here as a reference.

The Town of Emerald’s acreage projections are based on an average of three acres per housing unit. The 3.0 acres per housing unit was used to estimate acreage used for residential development. The three acres represents the residential housing site and the associated infrastructure needed. It is not intended to represent lot size or to correspond to the actual acreage owned or taxed as residential or agricultural building site property.

**Residential Acreage Projections – 2000 to 2030  
Town of Emerald**

YEAR	OFFICIAL TREND		CONSERVATIVE GROWTH		ACCELERATED GROWTH	
	ADDITIONAL ACRES NEEDED	TOTAL ACREAGE	ADDITIONAL ACREAGE	TOTAL ACREAGE	ADDITIONAL ACREAGE	TOTAL ACREAGE
2000	0	732	0	732	0	732
2010	158	890	118	850	198	930
2015	99	988	58	907	144	1075
2020	100	1089	60	968	150	1225
2025	96	1188	69	1037	150	1376
2030	99	1285	78	1115	149	1525

Source: WI Department of Administration & St. Croix County Planning & Zoning Department Projections.



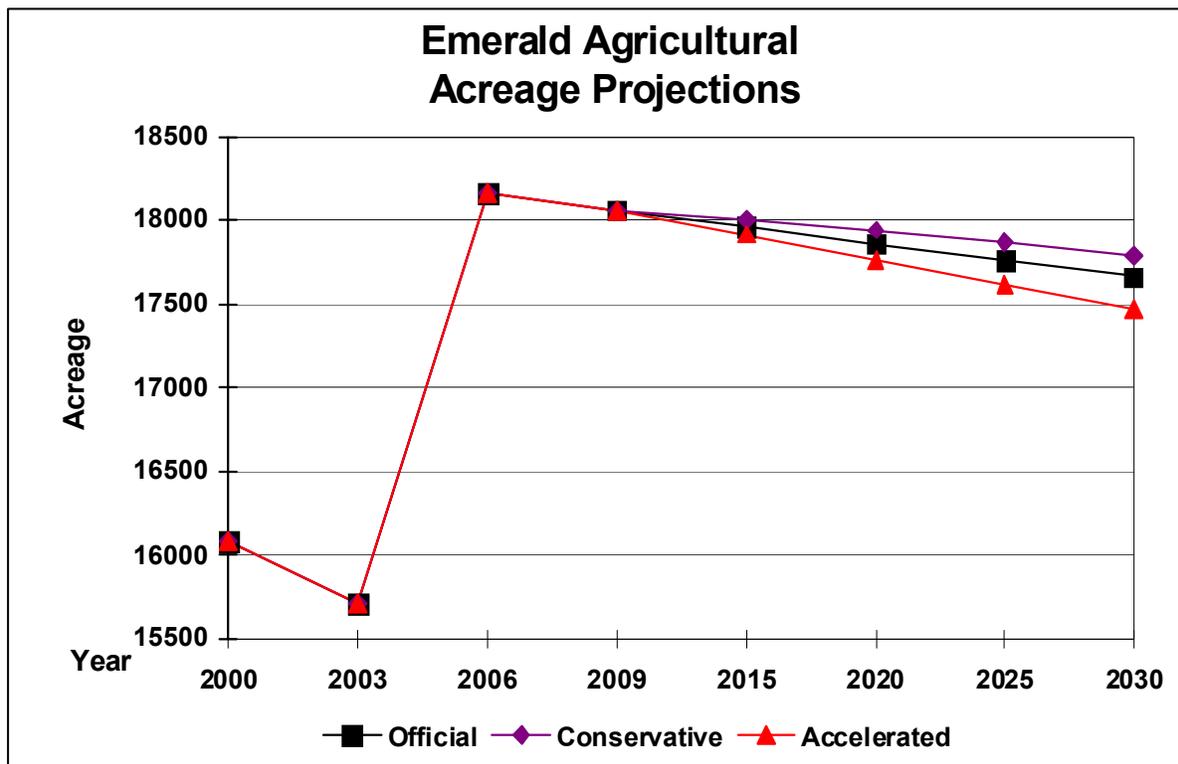
**AGRICULTURAL PROJECTIONS**

The Town of Emerald generally expects modest changes in the amount of agricultural land in the town. The change will be a slight decline as land is converted to residential or other land uses. The amount of change will be directly related to the amount of residential land use that occurs and somewhat related to the growth in recreational, commercial and industrial land uses. Agriculture is, and will, continue to be the primary land use in Emerald. The agricultural land use projections are a product of the residential land use projections and the existing agricultural land use statistics. They were created by subtracting the Official Trends, Conservative Growth and Accelerated Growth residential land use projections from the existing agricultural land use statistics.

**Agricultural Acreage Projections – 2000 to 2030  
Town of Emerald**

YEAR	OFFICIAL TREND ACREAGE	CONSERVATIVE GROWTH ACREAGE	ACCELERATED GROWTH ACREAGE
2000	16,081	16,081	16,081
2003	15,706	15,706	15,706
2006	18,161	18,161	18,161
2009	18,057	18,057	18,057
2015	17,958	17,999	17,913
2020	17,858	17,939	17,763
2025	17,762	17,870	17,613
2030	17,663	17,792	17,464

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue and St. Croix County Planning & Zoning Department Projections.



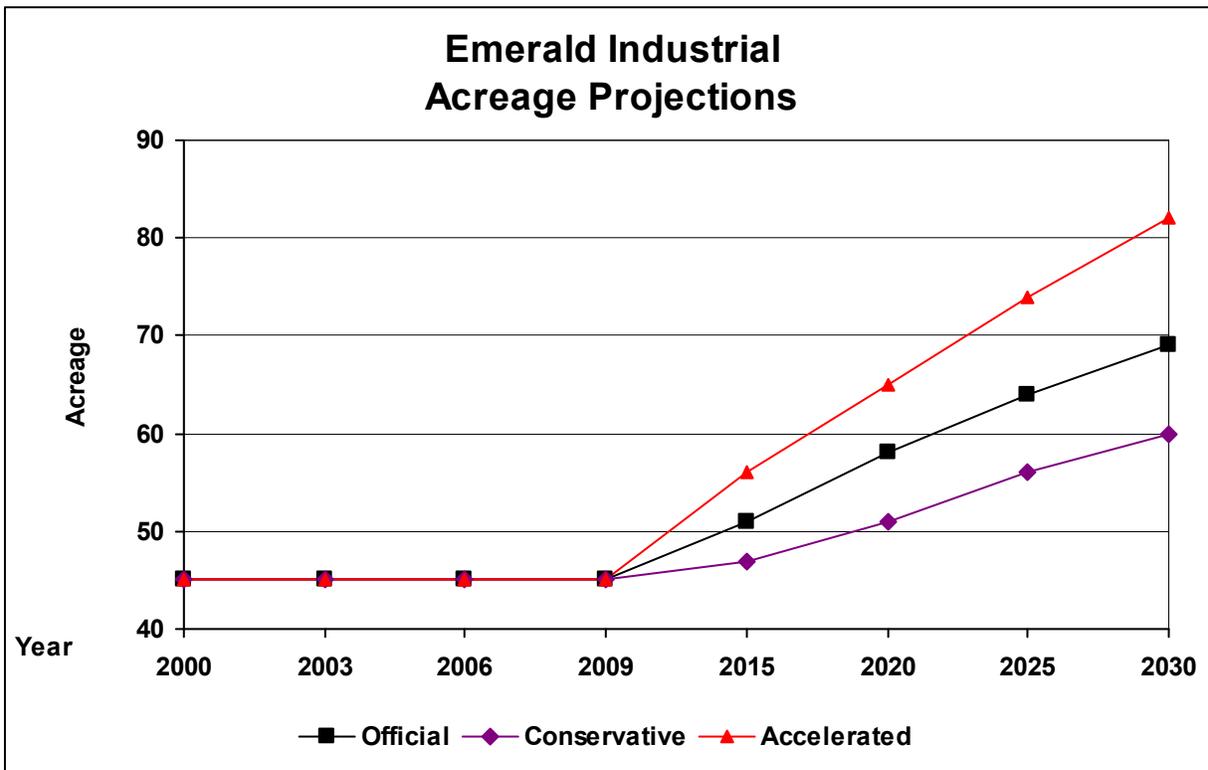
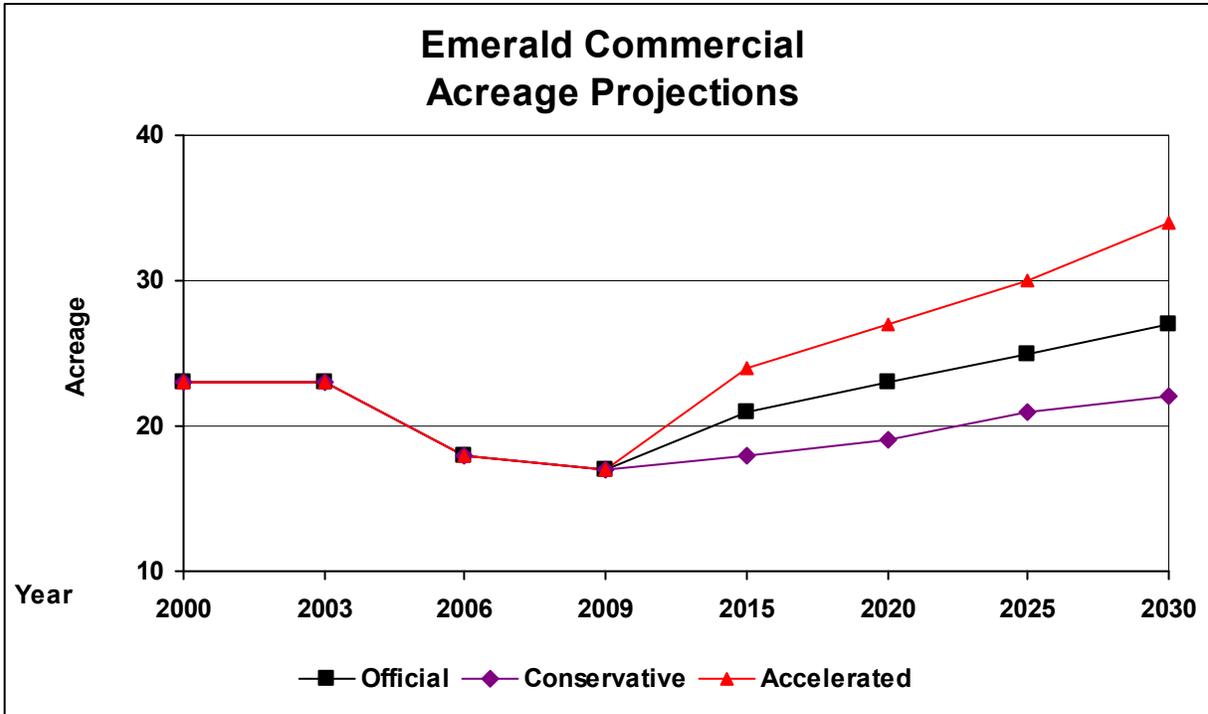
## COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL PROJECTIONS

The Town of Emerald generally does not anticipate very much change in the amount of commercial or industrial land use in the town. The existing commercial and industrial land uses are 0.1 and 0.2 percent of the town's total land uses, respectively. Emerald has identified some limited expansion of commercial and industrial uses that would be related to agriculture and existing businesses or would center around the unincorporated community of Emerald where sewage treatment is available. The town has also identified some expansion of home occupations. The town generally recommends the majority of new commercial and industrial development be located in the nearby cities or villages. Extensive commercial and industrial development would not be consistent with the rural character and community goals, objectives and policies of the town. Because of the small amounts of existing commercial and industrial development most projections are not very realistic or accurate. Despite this, limited projections have been developed to assist in discussion of growth scenarios and future land use distribution within the town. To some extent the amount of future commercial and industrial land use will be related to increases in residential development. Therefore the projections were created by using projected residential growth to estimate related changes in commercial and industrial land use acreages. Please see the chart below.

### ***Commercial & Industrial Acreage Projections – 2000 to 2030 Town of Emerald***

YEAR	OFFICIAL TREND ACREAGE		CONSERVATIVE GROWTH ACREAGE		ACCELERATED GROWTH ACREAGE	
	Commercial	Industrial	Commercial	Industrial	Commercial	Industrial
2000	23	45	23	45	23	45
2003	23	45	23	45	23	45
2006	18	45	18	45	18	45
2009	17	45	17	45	17	45
2015	21	51	18	47	24	56
2020	23	58	19	51	27	65
2025	25	64	21	56	30	74
2030	27	69	22	60	34	82

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue & St. Croix County Planning & Zoning Department Projections.



## *INTERACTIVE LAND USE WORKSHOP RESULTS*

The development projections for open space, residential, commercial, industrial and agriculture land uses were utilized as the basis for an Interactive Land Use Workshop. The first part consisted of an interactive slide show of land uses where participants individually voted on whether they would like or dislike seeing a land use in the Town of Emerald. Then the participants were divided into three groups for a land-use mapping exercise. Using two Trends, conservative and aggressive, different groups projections for open space, residential, commercial and industrial future land use were mapped. This allowed participants to experience the possible scope of future development, discuss pros and cons of various locations for future development



Citizens and Plan Commission members worked with facilitators to develop land use maps representing two possible trends for the future of Emerald. Photo by Pete Kling.

and provide the plan commission with indications of how future land use could play out. Each group developed two maps. Analysis of the maps provided some commonalities and consensus for the plan commission to work from in developing the town's future land use map.

A final step in the process was to have the participants

indicate which level of future growth, conservative or aggressive, was preferred in the town. Voting anonymously, all three groups chose the conservative trend 1. Votes were: public open space 58 percent trend 1, 42 percent trend 2; commercial/industrial land use 91 percent trend 1, 9 percent trend 2; residential land use 83 percent trend 1, 17 percent trend 2; overall land use 100 percent trend 1.

As the vote indicates, there was support for protection of natural resources and open space in the town. Some groups focused on specific sites, like Emerald Lake and the Klatt wetlands complex, while others generically identified the town's many wooded/wetland sites found throughout the town. There was consensus that commercial and industrial development would be limited to those which support agriculture or are related to U.S. Hwy 63. There was also strong consensus that residential development should remain small-scale and scattered to lessen the impact on the rural landscape and farming activities. The historic pattern of development, one or two small lots to support existing and new families and small hobby farms is definitely preferred and should be encouraged. These results are incorporated into the land use goals, objectives and policies and the future land use map and narrative.

## EMERALD LAND USE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

The following goal statements were developed by the Planning Commission to refine alternative land use scenarios and policies. These were developed with a heavy emphasis on the results of the public opinion survey and the historic land use trends that have been followed in the town. Based on all the public input activities, the Plan Commission members have concluded that the majority of town residents feel the historic development pattern has worked well and should continue with supporting changes in town policies and adoption of appropriate regulations. The Plan Commission felt that incremental changes enhancing land use options without creating significant change would best fit the future needs, growth and preferences of Emerald's residents.

**Goals:** Encourage land uses that will maintain the town's rural character and agricultural heritage.

Promote the continuation of agriculture as the primary land use.

Minimize nonagricultural development on prime agricultural soils.

Maintain the integrity of zoning districts by considering distinct uses and separation.

Encourage compatible commercial development to support agriculture and rural lifestyles.

Direct industrial land uses to designated areas to improve compatibility and decrease conflicts.

Encourage limited residential development to keep housing affordable.

Consider equity and fairness to landowners with comparable resource and location characteristics when developing land use policies and ordinances.

Ensure that a desirable mix of land uses consistent with Emerald's agricultural character is achieved.

### Objectives:

1. Manage the rate of development to help limit conflicts between agriculture and non-farm land uses and control the conversion of agricultural land to other uses.



Agriculture plays an important role in the Town of Emerald; managing the pace of growth will help to limit conflicts between farm and non-farm land uses. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

2. Allow development in location, forms and densities, which supports the preservation of agriculture, open space and maintains a distinctive rural community.
3. Encourage individuals to consider land preservation programs to preserve productive farmlands for continued agricultural use.

4. Try to minimize the visual impact of development and retain rural features to maintain rural, undeveloped character and feeling.
5. Encourage a variety of small lots and hobby farms to conserve agricultural land and natural resources.
6. Encourage residential development to locate away from prime farmland, large fields, large animal operations and areas where wildlife are present.
7. Support quality and accessible parks and recreational facilities and services and maintain dedicated open space for all residents.
8. Ensure that transportation system improvements are coordinated with land development decisions.
9. All housing should be located and sited to fit into the landscape and enhance and maintain rural character.
10. Encourage development of single family housing sites in the town that meet the needs of persons within a variety of income levels and age groups.
11. Multi-unit or multiple-dwelling housing and mobile home parks are not compatible with the rural character of the town.
12. Direct high density development and other more intense land uses to locate where public utilities are available.
13. Focus economic development efforts on farming and farm-related businesses that support agriculture and are compatible with neighboring land uses.
14. Encourage the redevelopment and reuse of the town's existing commercial sites.
15. Prevent unplanned, continuous strip commercial development along major roadways.
16. Support home-based businesses where there will be no impact on surrounding properties.
17. Preserve Emerald's most important and sensitive natural resources and areas.
18. Allow development that protects environmentally sensitive areas, natural resources and productive forest lands.



The Emerald Town Park in unincorporated Emerald is a popular facility for residents.  
Photo by Barbara Nelson.

19. Preserve the town’s scenic beauty, heritage, historic structures and archeological resources.

**Policies:**

1. Review the town’s land use plan, land division ordinance and rezoning policies prior to making a recommendation on a rezoning or land division request.
2. Review the St. Croix County’s land use plan and ordinances, including sanitary, land division, nonmetallic mining and zoning prior to making a recommendation on a rezoning, land division or other land use request.
3. Rezoning will occur only in response to a proposal for an immediate change in land use and only the part of the parcel needed for the development will be rezoned.
4. Support the continued operation and/or expansion of existing farms and businesses in Emerald.



Preservation of good farmland and support of agriculture are part of Emerald’s goals. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

5. Support land preservation programs such as farmland tax credits, use-value assessment, farmland preservation zoning, agricultural enterprise areas (AEA), purchase of agricultural conservation easements (PACE), etc. to

sustain the continued use of land for farming and agriculture as the economic base and major land use in the Town of Emerald.

6. Encourage small-lot residential development of two to 10 acres to promote rural character and protection of agricultural and natural resources.
7. Prohibit major subdivisions in Emerald; defined as the creation of five or more lots on the same parcel of land within a five-year period.
8. Adopt a town land division ordinance to implement the goals, objectives and policies of this plan and regulate the pace and type of development.
  - a. Limit residential development to only minor subdivisions, four lots or less on the same parcel of land within a five-year period, to keep the rate of residential development at historic levels.
  - b. Discuss lot sizes for various types of development to minimize impacts on agriculture and the rural character of Emerald.

- c. Consider requiring new non-farm residential lots to be located to preserve larger tracts of agricultural land, protect natural resources and reduce visibility of development.
  - d. Residences should be located adjacent to tree lines and wooded field edges, if available. If not, homes should be clustered on the edges of farm fields. Tree lines should be preserved. Encourage tree preservation and tree planting to screen new structures from neighboring properties and the public road.
  - e. If a program is developed by St. Croix County, encourage minor subdivision lots in conjunction with transfer of development rights to preserve agricultural land.
  - f. New mobile home parks and multi-unit dwellings do not fit the town's rural character and should not be allowed. Multi-unit, multiple dwelling housing or a mobile home park consists of three or more units in a structure or on a lot.
9. Develop land use regulations to guide the location of future residential development and protect important features of the natural environment without making existing houses nonconforming whenever possible.
  10. Direct proposed development to areas where soil characteristics are compatible with the proposed development.
  11. Encourage site design that achieves rural character and farmland preservation objectives and ensures that development is safe from saturation, seasonal flooding or ponding.
  12. Review the decision and ordinance to prohibit major subdivisions within 10 years, to determine if it still reflects the position of Emerald's residents.
  13. If at some point, major subdivisions are allowed encourage conservation design development to provide community facilities and services in a cost-effective manner, preserve farmland, protect wildlife habitat or open space and for sites with unique or exceptional natural resources such as surface water, wetlands, steep slopes, or highly productive agricultural soils.
  14. Consider adopting an ordinance to implement town impact fees on new development projects to offset additional expenses to the town for upgrading or expanding town parks, roads, services and facilities.



Hobby farms blend into the agricultural landscape of Emerald. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

- 15. Continue to communicate and work with St. Croix County, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, landowners and private developers on the U.S. Highway 63 corridor preservation project to limit development and help preserve the highway as a throughway.
- 16. Consider adopting a road and driveway ordinance to establish design and construction standards, prevent new road construction, prevent safety and drainage issues which may impact existing town roads, improve safety, decrease conflicts with agricultural and commuter traffic and prevent problems with joint driveways.



Emerald has numerous drainageways, sinkholes and wet soils that are part of the groundwater recharge for the town. These soils generally cannot support development without raising water quality concerns and town policies are designed to prevent future problems with water quality. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

17. Direct intensive, large-scale commercial and industrial land uses to locate in urban centers where municipal services are available.

18. Encourage some

additional commercial expansion or new businesses in unincorporated Emerald when available sewer service is utilized.

- 19. Support home-based businesses where there will be no impact on surrounding properties or farm operations.
- 20. Discourage “side of the road” development on State and County highways to prevent congestion and preserve rural character.
- 21. Support agriculture-compatible uses such as rural storage operations in ag-type structures or to reuse existing ag buildings, direct-farm marketing, farmers’ market and greenhouses or nurseries.
- 22. Encourage alternative agriculture such as fruit and vegetable farms in the town, designed to supply food to farmers markets and grocery stores in the region’s urban areas.
- 23. Encourage St. Croix County to develop programs such as voluntary purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights and purchase of conservation easements to preserve productive farmland.
- 24. Encourage development to locate away from environmentally sensitive areas and productive farm and forest lands.

25. Guide the location and design of development to minimize any adverse impact on the quality of surface waters, groundwater aquifers, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands, prairie and agriculture.
26. Preserve and protect natural landscape features such as wetlands, floodplains, streams, lakes, steep slopes, woodlands, prairies and oak savannas as essential components of the hydrologic system, valuable wildlife habitat and focal points of natural beauty and recreation.
27. Consider protection and enhancement of sensitive natural resources, open and recreational space, large blocks of forestland and scenic vistas when reviewing development proposals and making public expenditures.
28. Encourage and support projects involving citizens and government or private organizations such as Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Pheasants Forever, etc., to protect waterfowl and wildlife habitat in the Town of Emerald through acquisition. Areas such as the future Klatt-Lyon Wildlife Preserve on Hutton Creek, Upper Willow River wetlands, Emerald Lake, Yankee Pond and Carr Creek wetlands and native prairie sites provide surface and groundwater protection, are open to the public for some open space recreation and hunting activities and will improve and expand scenic amenities for town residents.
29. Promote development and agricultural practices which protect surface and ground water quality, including proper erosion control, manure management, and storm water management strategies.
30. Discourage and, where possible, prevent the filling or developing of wetlands and floodplains.
31. Protect and encourage restoration of natural shoreline areas, wetlands and woodlands with natural landscaping, utilizing native plant species and minimizing turf to protect and enhance surface and groundwater quality.
32. Consider the impacts on wildlife habitat, potential locations of rare plant and animal species and archeological sites prior to approving any changes in land use.



Large blocks of open space support a wide variety of wildlife and can protect sensitive resources. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

- 33. On steep slopes with a grade from 12 to 20 percent allow development only where best management practices for erosion and sediment control and storm water management can be implemented successfully.
- 34. Promote use of the forestry “best management practices” as minimum standards for logging and encourage forest landowners to enroll in the State’s Managed Forest Land Program to promote further value for timber and wildlife.
- 35. Encourage and support a buffer zone around public lands to mitigate conflicts between property owners and citizens utilizing public lands for recreation.
- 36. Encourage private landowners to protect and, if necessary, rehabilitate identified cultural, historic, archeological and scenic resources when specific sites are proposed for development.
- 37. Because of the town’s and residents’ future need for aggregate resources, the town may consider future non-metallic mining operations that are compatible with and support the agricultural economy of Emerald and do not negatively impact prime farmland, environmental areas and drainage areas or waterways.



Historic structures such as this red barn and the windmill are what give the Town of Emerald its own unique rural character. Also they are important historic and scenic additions to the landscape. Photos by Barbara Nelson.



## EMERALD FUTURE LAND USE

The Town of Emerald's future land use map shows general land uses over the life of the plan. The map generally does not show specific or exact locations, rather general areas of possible land use changes. Based on public input, the Plan Commission determined that the town's residents want to see agriculture continue to be the predominant land use in the town. While some development is acceptable, the Plan Commission reached the



Emerald residents want to allow some development while preserving the rural landscape and agriculture for the future of their town. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

conclusion that the town's historic development pattern is preferred. The historic pattern has been consistently rural with a mix of low-density lot sizes ranging from two-acres to 10-acres. It has been varied and does not mimic a conventional major subdivision, even over time. This pattern is valued by the town's residents because it has not negatively impacted farmland or agriculture practices, it has retained the town's attractive rural landscape and has provided beautiful homesites for family members and new residents. Overall the town's historic scattered rural residential development has been very compatible with the agricultural economy of the town.

There are five future land use categories: Parks, Recreation and Open Space, Mixed Rural, Commercial, Industrial and Institutional and Utilities. They are described as follows:

**Mixed Rural:** This area includes all lands currently used for agricultural production, farms, and scattered home sites and is generally compatible with agriculture. This is the existing primary land use in the Town of Emerald that will continue to occupy the majority of the landscape.

Based on the low population projections and amount of expected development in the town, there are no specified locations where the residential development should occur over the time frame of this plan. Instead residential development will follow the historic pattern of infilling along existing roads while avoiding productive farmland and sensitive

natural resource areas to protect abundant wildlife. Residential growth has generally followed the natural lay of the land and taken advantage of pockets of marginal farmland near woods, ponds or scenic vistas. It has been spread through-out the town but has generally followed the landscape in a manner that has kept development aesthetically pleasing and not concentrated in one area.



Emerald's topography is naturally rolling with agriculture interspersed with woodlands and rural residences. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

The Mixed Rural land is zoned Ag Residential. Development will occur through minor subdivision creation and the majority of the area will remain in agricultural uses.

Policies that will encourage the

historic development pattern have been determined. These policies will be incorporated into a town land division ordinance to preserve the historic pattern of growth in the town.

- Residential development would be subject to a town land division ordinance.
- There would be no major subdivisions allowed in the town.
- Only minor subdivisions would be allowed in the town.
- No new roads could be developed or built in the town.
- Residential development will be encouraged to avoid good farmland, sensitive environmental areas and large wooded parcels.

- Development sites should be compatible with agriculture, wildlife habitat and the natural topography of the landscape and preserve and protect surface and ground water, wetlands, steep slopes,



Rural residential development in Emerald. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

woodlands and prairie.

- Development in unincorporated Emerald utilizing the existing sewage treatment capacity of approximately 20 new units could be residential or commercial only.
- The policies of no majors, no new roads, only minors on existing roads would be reviewed by the Plan Commission and Town Board in about 10 years to reevaluation the development pressure and determine if it is still the direction Emerald’s residents prefer.
- Home-based businesses, where there will be no impact on surrounding properties or farm operations, are encouraged.

**Commercial:** Only very limited, low density commercial development that is compatible with and supports the agricultural economy of the Town of Emerald; that has minimal infrastructure needs; does not negatively impact farmland, environmental areas, drainage



Small commercial greenhouses are the kinds of ag-related businesses Emerald residents support. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

areas or waterways; and that fits in with the rural landscape should be allowed in the town. Examples would include rural storage operations in ag-type structures or to reuse existing ag buildings, direct farm marketing of on-farm products, farmer’s market in a central location, green house or nursery, etc.

Specific locations would depend on the nature of

the ag-related commercial activity and its exact relationship to agriculture in the town.

Home occupations are preferred to rezoning property for commercial use. Some additional commercial development could be located in unincorporated Emerald on CTH D where sewer service is available for about 20 additional residences or businesses.

There are some service commercial facilities like taverns and a beautician presently located there and these types of commercial activities should continue to be located where wastewater treatment is available. Limited expansion of the existing commercial sites is also appropriate.

**Industrial:** The existing industrial development in the town, the limestone quarry, which is compatible with and supports the agricultural economy of the Town of Emerald and does not negatively impact prime farmland, environmental areas, drainage areas or waterways, will continue to operate. The existing limestone quarry will has a planned expansion to the south, as shown on the Future Land Use Map. Because of the need for aggregate resources in the town, future additional non-metallic mining operations may be considered.

Very limited ag-related industrial development that is compatible with and supports the agricultural economy but does not negatively impact prime farmland, environmental areas, drainage areas or waterways or residents would be considered. This type of industrial use could be located in the northwest corner of the town on CTH S near the existing ag-related industrial use in the Town of Cylon. This existing use directly supports agriculture in the area and Town of Emerald, is the kind of use that the town would allow and is where it should continue to be located. There should not be any other addition or expansion of industrial uses in the town.

***Institutional & Utilities:*** This land use area includes the town hall, town solid waste and recycling site, the wastewater treatment plant, and several electrical substations, transmission lines and communication towers. No new sites are planned.

***Parks, Recreation & Open Space:*** This land use area is comprised of the town park site in unincorporated Emerald, the USH 63 wayside and the WDNR’s Emerald Valley Wildlife area.



The abundant prairie, woodlands and water are the landscape features Emerald hopes will be part of the landscape in the future. Photo by Barbara Nelson.

Additional neighborhood recreation facilities may be provided at the town hall site, if sufficient land is available. Also the Emerald Valley Wildlife area may expand as the neighboring non-metallic mining site is reclaimed.

Based on public input, the Plan Commission identified several sites as very high priority

for open space protection; they are important for a variety of reasons: protection of surface and groundwater quality, high quality wildlife habitat and potential hunting grounds, native prairie, historically and culturally important sites and scenic landscapes that add significant value to the community. Priority sites include: the future Klatt Lyon Wildlife area on Hutton Creek, Upper Willow River wetlands, Emerald Lake, Yankee Pond and Carr Creek wetlands and native prairie. If opportunities develop for working with public or private agencies such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wis. Department of Natural Resources, Pheasants Forever, Whitetails Unlimited or the St. Croix County Sportsmens’ Alliance, etc., the town would support the addition of these open space areas.

