

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Land Use**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of the Land Use element is to promote orderly growth by balancing the needs of residents and property owners, while maintaining the City's natural resources. The Land Use chapter is to identify and analyze how land within the City of Cornell is being used at a specific point in time and to help recommend appropriate uses for the land in the future.

The information in the Land Use Chapter act as a guide for future public and private land use decisions. The chapter inventories and maps existing land use patterns and helps in analyzing and understanding the influences on these patterns.

A well thought-out land use plan will help the City to make zoning decisions, evaluate development proposals, and provide a vision that provides the necessary background information for local government, residents, business owners, and developers to make consistent and informed decisions.

#### **Survey Results**

The City should purchase land to ensure room for future growth.		
	Count	Percent
I strongly agree	14	10.0%
I agree	35	25.0%
Not sure	52	37.1%
I disagree	30	21.4%
I strongly disagree	9	6.4%
Total	140	100.0%

Only 35% of the respondents felt the City should purchase land to ensure room for future development.

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Development should be limited to preserve our natural environment. (please check one)		
	Count	Percent
I strongly agree	19	14.2%
I agree	57	42.5%
Not sure	28	20.9%
I disagree	23	17.2%
I strongly disagree	7	5.2%
Total	134	100.0%

Over half of the respondents (57%) felt that development should be limited to preserve the natural environment.

The City needs more parks/recreational areas. (please check one)		
	Count	Percent
I strongly agree	7	4.9%
I agree	18	12.7%
Not sure	33	23.2%
I disagree	65	45.8%
I strongly disagree	19	13.4%
Total	142	100.0%

A majority of the respondents (59%) did not feel there is a need for additional parks or recreational areas in the City.

If more parks are needed, where would you like to see them? (please check all that apply)	
	Count
South side of City	16
West side of City	16
North side of City	15
East side of City	16
Other: (list and tally)	10
Total	73
Holcombe	
not needed	

If there were to be additional parks, the respondents to the survey did not have any consensus of which area of the City it should be located.

## **SWOT Exercise Results**

### **Strengths**

- A lot of potential development land
- Available acreage
- Uniqueness of the area
- Riverfront
- Trails and recreational opportunities
- Chippewa River
- Parks
- Room for Growth
- Low cost utilities
- Low cost land prices

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of funding
- Lack of multiple family housing
- Lack of State funding for infrastructure projects
- No four-lane highway
- Public utilities don't reach all areas of the City
- Lack of private sector/local capital/funds

### **Opportunities**

- Redevelopment along the riverfront
- New Subway restaurant
- Industrial park development – airport
- A lot of undeveloped land within the sewer service area
- Available capacity of water tower and WWTP
- Available capacity of the schools

### **Threats**

- Natural disaster
- Developer currently take on infrastructure costs – greater potential for risk
- Economy
- Lack of developer interest
- Growth going to other communities
- Lack of transportation options – four-lane highway/rail
- Loss of local school
- Lack of funding – grant programs
- Additional DNR or State regulations
- Potential contamination

## **Land Use vs. Zoning**

Both land use planning and zoning are important elements in land use management efforts of local governments because an effective zoning decision should be based on a sound plan that is supported by the community. The Land Use Chapter focuses on the future and establishes community goals and objectives regarding how land will be used in the next 20 years. Zoning on the other hand, is only one tool that can help communities achieve their respective goals and objectives through land use regulation.

The Land Use Chapter identifies where and how citizens would like to see the physical development of the community take place. Planning is a process that helps a community prepare for change, rather than react to it.

Zoning is a tool that gives the government the power to intervene in the lives of private citizens for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare. It does this by separating conflicting land uses and ensures development is directed in certain areas that can accommodate that particular land use. Under zoning, communities are divided into different districts, (or zones) which impose different land use controls or specific restrictions on each district. A local government comprehensive plan will likely be more successful if the plan and zoning ordinance are well integrated and if they accommodate the interests and needs of neighboring communities.

In summary, zoning is a regulatory tool used to regulate and enforce comprehensive plans. The development of a comprehensive plan ensures effective and consistent zoning decisions at the local level. The Land Use Chapter is a useful tool for decision makers to guide growth and development of the community and should be consistent with future zoning decisions.

## **Existing Land Use Analysis**

The purpose of the existing land use analysis is to identify existing land uses and land use patterns (see *Map 8-1*). Creating an existing land use map will help determine future land uses and identify existing and/or potential land use conflicts. Below is a brief description of land use patterns for the following categories.

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Table 8-1 - Current Land Use

Current Land Use	Acres	Percent
Single Family Residential	644.5	29.3%
Multiple Family Residential	7.4	0.3%
Commercial	45.6	2.1%
Industrial	108.3	4.9%
Institutional	76.9	3.5%
Parks/Recreation	144.4	6.6%
Agricultural	219.8	10.0%
Conservancy	164.7	7.5%
Undeveloped	785.1	35.7%
Total	2,196.7	100.0%

Source: City of Cornell and Cedar Corporation

**Single Family Residential:** The majority of housing options in the City of Cornell are single family homes. Single family homes occupy approximately 644 acres (29% of total acreage) within the City and can be found throughout the City.

**Multiple Family Residential:** The City of Cornell has over 7 acres of land (0.3% of total acreage) devoted to multi-family housing. Multi-family homes consist of apartments, twin homes, and condominiums and typically are higher density developments compared to single family. Most of this type of land can be found scattered throughout the City.

**Commercial:** Commercial properties create employment opportunities within the City and provide residents with goods and services. In general, they are less expensive to provide services for than residential properties. The City of Cornell has a mix of downtown commercial and highway commercial properties. The City of Cornell has 45.6 acres of commercial businesses (2.1% of total acreage). These properties are mainly located along Bridge Street, Main Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

**Industrial:** Industrial development offers job opportunities and a significant source of tax revenue for municipalities. Like commercial properties, they also require fewer services than residential uses. The City of Cornell has a few industrial areas in the City: south of the dam and west of State Highway 27; northeast of the City Garage in the industrial park; and, out near the airport. There are approximately 108 acres of industrial land (4.9% of total acreage) in the City.

**Institutional:** Institutions provide valuable services to a community. There are nearly 77 acres of institutional land in the City of Cornell (3.5% of total acreage). These properties include the schools, churches, museums, visitor center, senior citizen's center, City Hall, Police and Departments, and water tower. Typically, institutional land uses are scattered throughout a community.

**Parks/Recreation:** Park and recreation land provides valuable passive and active recreational opportunities for area residents and is considered a measure of the quality of life a community has to offer. The City has approximately 144 acres of park land (6.6% of total acreage). The park land consists of open space along the Chippewa River, playground equipment, parking, restrooms, Old Abe Trail, and a beach area that is located in the northwestern part of the City.

**Agricultural:** Agricultural land is land that is being actively farmed. The City has nearly 220 acres of agricultural land (10% of total acreage). Most of this land occupies a good portion of the southeastern and northeastern portion of the City and across the Chippewa River to the west.

**Conservancy:** Conservancy land is land that owned by the State or County and will likely not be developed in the future. Within the City there are about 165 acres of conservancy land (7.5% of total acreage). Most of this land occupied is found along both shores of the Chippewa River.

**Undeveloped:** There are approximately 785 acres of undeveloped parcels (35.7% of total acreage) within the City. Undeveloped lands are important to a community as they provide a “land bank” for future growth needs. Most of the undeveloped properties in the City are lands that would be considered open space and aren’t used for farming, but may include wetlands, slopes, or other undevelopable lands.

### **Existing Land Use Patterns and Influence on Patterns**

Land use patterns in the City of Cornell have been influenced by two main conditions. First, the Chippewa River that provided a conveyance system for lumber production in the early 1900s. This was a major influence on how the City grew. This has allowed a number of industries such as saw and paper mills to start up in the area.

Second, the City is split by State Highway 64, a main east and west transportation corridor in Northern Wisconsin and State Highway 27. These highways provide transportation routes for the City to attract workers that can commute to the City and for industries and businesses for shipping their goods.

### **Land Value**

One of the most important costs associated with development is the price of land. Land Values vary greatly depending on the current use that they have or use that it may have in the future. Generally, an acre of rural farmland won’t have the same value as an acre of commercial land in the City. An analysis of price per acre based on how it is taxed is done by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue each year (Statement of Assessment). This information on Table 8-2 is from 2008.

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Table 8-2 2008 Land Values

Land Use Category	2008 Land Value per Acre	2008 Improvement Value per Acre	2008 Total Value per Acre	2008 Total Land and Improvements Value of the Entire City
Residential	\$11,494	\$72,949	\$84,443	\$43,910,400
Commercial	\$14,063	\$80,757	\$94,820	\$10,525,000
Manufacturing	\$4,284	\$25,349	\$29,633	\$2,074,300
Agricultural	\$208	\$0	\$208	\$30,400
Undeveloped	\$574	\$0	\$574	\$85,500
Ag Forest	\$697	\$0	\$697	\$42,500
Forest	\$1,114	\$0	\$1,114	\$479,000

Source: 2008 Statement of Assessment - Wisconsin Dept. of Revenue

Overall property values continue to increase. Total real estate property values increased by about \$850,000 between 2007 and 2008. Land values increased by \$40,000. Overall land values and improvement values are slightly increasing. Unless new development occurs, future improvement values will likely decline in the short term, and then begin appreciating again.

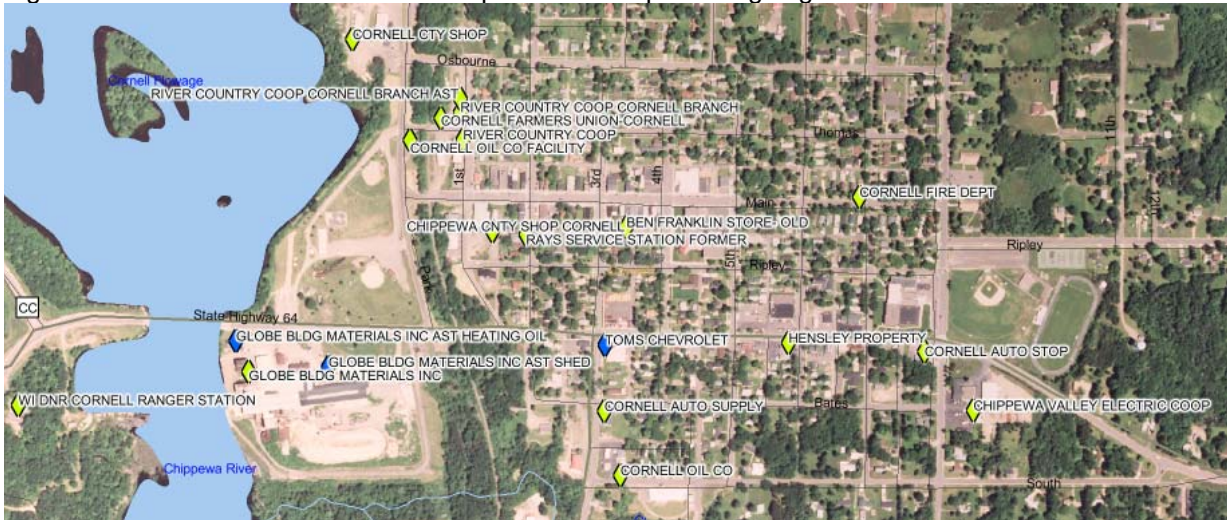
**Limitations for Development**

The primary issue that could impact further growth and development of the City of Cornell are natural limitations such as topography, slopes, wetlands, and floodplains restrict some areas in and around the City making them undevelopable.

**Redevelopment Opportunities**

Redevelopment opportunities typically occur in Brownfield areas or locations that have been previously contaminated. The City of Cornell has few known sites that have some environmental groundwater or soil contamination, often caused by underground storage tanks (Figure 8-1 and 8-2). The majority of sites found on the DNR website have since been cleaned up. For those property owners that are interested in cleaning up their property there are a number of Brownfield cleanup grants available through the DNR and EPA. Most of the sites have been remediated and are classified as closed.

Figure 8-1 – Contaminated Sites of Completed Cleanups or Ongoing



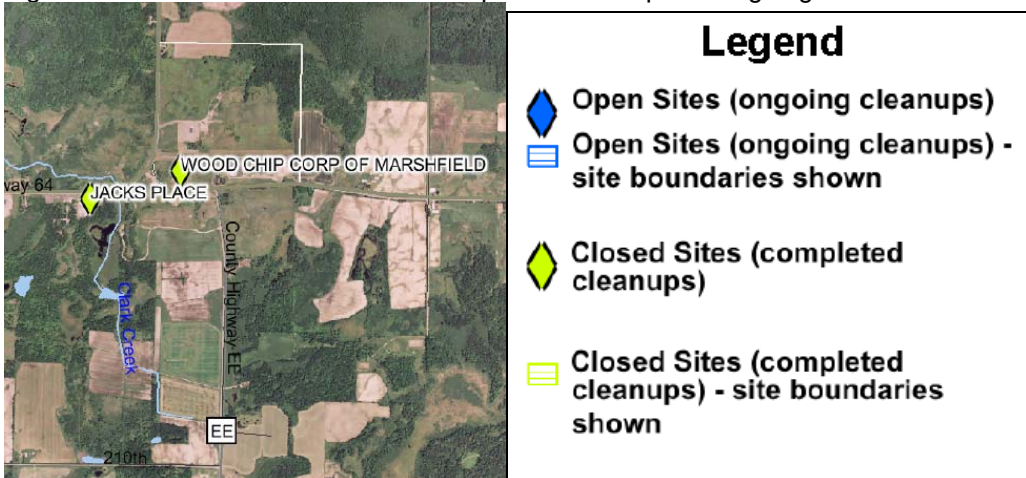
**Closed Sites (Completed Cleanup)**

- Cornell Farmers' Union
- River Country Coop
- Wolniak Machine Corp
- Jack's Place
- Chippewa County Shop
- Cornell Oil Co.
- Cornell Fire Department
- Brunet Island State Park
- W & W Hardwoods Inc.
- Cornell City Shop
- WDNR Ranger Station
- Wisconsin Truss Inc.
- Ray's Service Station (old)
- Chippewa Valley Electric Coop
- Singleton Residence
- Ben Franklin Store (old)
- Cornell Auto Stop
- Hensley Property
- Cornell Auto Supply
- Wood Chip Corp of Marshfield
- Globe Building Materials Inc.
- Cornell Oil Co.

**Open Sites (Ongoing Cleanup)**

- Globe Building Materials Inc.
- Tom's Chevrolet

Figure 8-2 – Contaminated Sites of Completed Cleanups or Ongoing



## **Influences on Land Demand and Supply**

Land prices have remained relatively steady in recent years and some has even declined in the past year. This is opposite the trend in the late 1990's and early 2000's where land prices were rapidly appreciating each year. Because of the decrease in cost for land, it is possible that the area could see an increase in the demand in the near future. Also, the available undeveloped land in the City offers a variety of opportunities for future residential and other commercial development.

## **Existing or Potential Land Use Conflicts**

Land use conflicts occur when incompatible land uses cause a negative effect. One example of a potential future conflict would be if the industrial zoned area adjacent to a residential area evolved into a manufacturing center and created noise and traffic problems. Currently, no land use conflicts are identified and the development of the Comprehensive Plan and cooperation with City residents and adjacent Towns will help to minimize potential conflicts in the future.

One of the primary objectives of identifying future land use needs and selecting locations for future land uses is to minimize potential conflicts.

## **Future Land Needs Analysis**

The City of Cornell future land needs analysis will be based on potential residential needs.

Table 8-3 shows the amount of additional households which would be needed based on population and household projections from the Housing Chapter. If the projections are accurate, the City will have an additional 40 households between 2005 and 2025.

Table 8-3 - Housing Forecasts - City of Cornell

Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Persons Per Household	2.42	2.38	2.34	2.30	2.26	2.23
Total Occupied Housing Units	607	597	607	617	627	637
Additional Units Needed	-	-10	10	10	10	10

Source: City of Cornell and Cedar Corporation

Our projections we will assume a half acre per lot (this includes open space requirements and rights-of-way). If 40 lots or households are needed, 20 additional acres of residential acres will be needed and includes multiple family residential.

Currently, the City has about 785 acres of undeveloped land plus 220 acres of agricultural land. Some of this undeveloped and agricultural land is unbuildable due to natural limitations or current zoning limitations.

### **Smart Growth Areas**

The term Smart Growth Areas means an “area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.” (WI Statute: 16.965)

It is important for the City of Cornell to consider areas that are ideal for growth. One way to do that is to look at factors such as wetlands, steep slopes that limit where growth can go and areas that are cost effective for expanding infrastructure. Map 8-2 shows the areas that should be protected as well as areas that would require a lift station. Due to these conditions and availability of land, there is not a need to annex future land in the foreseeable future, but there will likely be a need to expand the sanitary service area especially in the southern portion of the City or across the Chippewa River.

There are approximately 334 acres of undeveloped land within the “Smart Growth Area” of the City. Portions of this undeveloped land contains wetlands and steep slopes, however, much of the land would be suitable for potential development. This indicates that the City has ample room for future growth within the Current City Limits.

### **Future Land Uses**

Table 8-4 projects the future land use acres based on the Future Land Use Map that was developed by the Comprehensive Planning Committee. Due to the ample supply of undeveloped land within the City, the Future Land Use Map stayed within the current City Limits (see Map 8-3).

The future land use map should be consulted when addressing future rezoning requests and land use issues. However, it is not meant to be a tool for a mass rezoning of City properties in order to match the Future Land Use map. Based on the available land within the City Limits, there is plenty of land to take on growth for the foreseeable future.

These future land use acreages listed in Table 8-4 (calculations were based on the Future Land Use Map) as well as the designations on the Future Land Use Map 8-3 are estimates and are not to be interpreted as committing the City to developing that amount of land in the next 20 years.

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Table 8-4 - Future Land Use

Future Land Use	Acres	Percent
Single Family Residential	802.3	36.5%
Multiple Family Residential	54	2.5%
Commercial	56.9	2.6%
Industrial	183.9	8.4%
Institutional	73.1	3.3%
Parks	144.4	6.6%
Agricultural	113.5	5.2%
Conservancy	164.7	7.5%
Undeveloped	603.9	27.5%
Total	2,196.7	100.0%

Source: Cornell Commission and Cedar Corporation

### **Trends in Land Supply and Demand**

Table 8-5 shows projected land use needs in five year increments in the City of Cornell. Overall, there is plenty of undeveloped land available for future growth in the City.

The largest need for land in the future will be for residential development. The City will need roughly 5 acres of land every 5 years for residential use based on the Household Forecasts in Table 8-3 and assuming the lot sizes will average approximately one-half acre.

Table 8-5 - Projected Land Use Needs in Acres

Year	*2008	2010	2015	2020	2025	Additional Acreage
Residential	652	654	659	666	672	
• Acres		2	5	7	6	20
Commercial	46	48	51	54	57	
• Acres		2	3	3	3	11
Industrial	108	110	115	122	128	
• Acres		2	5	7	6	20
Agricultural	220	214	201	184	169	
• Acres		-6	-13	-17	-15	-51

Source: \* 2008 is Existing Land Use calculations.

There are approximately 76 acres of undeveloped land in the northern portion of airport industrial park within the City available to potential future industrial type businesses.

## **Future Land Use Trends**

In the past 30 years, more and more agricultural and forestland has been lost as development increased and sprawled into the rural areas. In recent history, however, development has begun to slow. It is important for Cornell to establish a land use strategy or plan to protect them from undesirable land use activities in the future.

### **Land Supply**

The amount of land in the City may increase over time if land is annexed from adjacent municipalities in the future. Currently, there is approximately 2,197 acres of land including portions of the road right of way, of which about 47% of the land is considered developed (1,027 acres). This leaves a significant amount of land that is currently not developed within the City Limits, although some of the undeveloped land is Conservancy that won't be developed in the future (164.7 acres). Under the Current Land Use, the City has approximately 717 acres of developable land within the City Limits.

### **Land Demand**

There is an occasional land division in the City, but there has not been a significant major subdivision in quite a while. The City desires future growth, but considering the state of the national housing and job market, it is difficult to predict how much growth can be expected in the next 20 years. Currently, the supply outweighs demand.

## **Options to Annexation**

Although unlikely, it is possible that the Towns of Estella and Cleveland could be developed up to the City of Cornell's legal boundary. This would greatly decrease the chance that land would be annexed in the future. The City could support two actions that would increase the amount of residential land in the City if desired. First, the City could create a residential zoning classification that reduces the minimum lot size.

Second, the City may encourage redevelopment of some areas to accommodate higher residential densities.

## **Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

### **Goal 1: Ensure orderly growth within the City of Cornell.**

#### **Objectives**

1. Try to avoid land use conflicts that may decrease the value of properties.
2. Preserve neighborhoods.

**Policies**

1. Use the City's Land Use Plan as a guide for future development and zoning decisions.
2. Utilize "Smart Growth" areas for cost efficient growth when feasible.
3. Encourage developers so that the look and scale of redevelopment is consistent with the neighborhood it is in by allowing variances to existing subdivision and zoning codes such as in the original platted area of the City.
4. Consider developing joint committees with the Towns of Estella and Cleveland to discuss and avoid future land use conflicts.