

Introduction

To understand the character of the Town of Oshkosh one only needs to look at the landscape. From the scenic farms, woodland and wetland habitats, beautiful shoreline areas to the attractive residential neighborhoods, the Town of Oshkosh is a rural community, with a rich farming tradition and expanding development potential. These attributes are echoed in the value statements presented in Chapter 1 and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, listed in Chapter 2.

Existing Land Use Inventory

The *Town of Oshkosh Existing Land Use Map* was created from information provided by Winnebago County and the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC). The Town of Oshkosh Planning Advisory Committee provided additional updates in 2002.

Agricultural land uses still dominate the northern reaches of the town. Abundant natural areas, including woodlands and wetlands are treasured natural resources that contribute significantly to the quality of living. Generally speaking, commercial development is concentrated along CTH A, USH 41 and USH 45. What follows is a description of the land use categories illustrated on the *Town of Oshkosh Existing Land Use Map*.

RIGHT-OF WAY (ROADWAYS)

All town, county, and state roadways in the Town of Oshkosh are shown in black on the *Existing Land Use Map*. To learn more about transportation facilities serving the town, refer to Chapter 5.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial land uses are concentrated primarily in the sanitary district along the USH 41, CTH S and CTH A corridors. Commercial land uses include retail businesses, restaurants, gasoline stations and service businesses like travel agencies, realtors, and attorneys. Chapter 8 profiles economic development opportunities in the Town of Oshkosh.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial land uses are found along USH 41 and along the railroad that runs parallel to CTH A.

NON-METALLIC MINING SITES

There is one non-metallic mining site identified on the map. The site is located off CTH Y in Section 33. For more information about non-metallic mining operations, refer to the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element, Chapter 7.

OPEN WATER

Water features include ponds, streams, creeks and drains. The primary water features in the town are Lake Winnebago and Lake Butte Des Morts.

SINGLE AND TWO FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Single and two-family (i.e. duplex) residential development is scattered throughout the town with the highest concentration in the sanitary districts. Information about the characteristics and quality of the town's housing supply is available in Chapter 4.

UNDEVELOPED/OTHER AGRICULTURAL AREAS

The vast majority of the town is classified in this category. Agricultural lands include family farms and rented cropland. For additional information about the town's agricultural land uses, refer to Chapter 7. The undeveloped areas include woodlands and other undeveloped areas that are not currently farmed.

UTILITIES AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Cemeteries, churches, the town hall, schools and electric substations are included in this category of land use. A detailed profile of utilities and community facilities serving the Town of Oshkosh is provided in Chapter 6.

MULTI-FAMILY/MOBILE HOMES/GROUP QUARTERS

This category of land use is found only near CTH A. For more information about multiple-family, group quarters, and retirement homes in the Town of Oshkosh, refer to Chapter 4.

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

A property along the Lake Winnebago shoreline in Section 6 falls into this category.

WETLANDS

Wetland areas are illustrated in dark green. All wetland data was provided by the Winnebago County Land and Water Conservation Department.

Existing Underdeveloped Industrial/Commercial Areas

All areas shown on *Existing Land Use Map* as commercial and industrial are in fact developed accordingly. Areas shown on the *10- and 20-Year Future Land Use Maps* for future commercial/industrial development have the potential to be developed in this manner. These sites are currently underdeveloped in their existing state and the development will maximize the potential of the area from the town's perspective. Higher end development would require municipal water and sewer service that is not available or anticipated in the town.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP

Existing Land Use Breakdown

The table below is a required numerical breakdown of the existing land uses in the town. This table is required by 1999 WI Act 9, Wisconsin’s Smart Growth Law. The net density (total number of dwelling units divided by all residential acres) in the Town of Oshkosh is 1.45 dwelling units/acre (1,348 housing units/930.5acres).

TABLE 19 2002 EXISTING LAND USE AMOUNT & INTENSITY		
Land Use Type	Amount (in acres)	% of Planning Area
Single & Two Family Residential	927.89	14.14%
Multiple -Family / Retirement Homes	2.61	0.04%
Agricultural Land / Undeveloped	4,284.34	65.71%
Conservancy	149.00	1.70%
Wetlands	397.13	6.01%
Parks & Recreation	38.24	0.59%
Industrial	27.51	0.42%
Commercial	133.18	2.04%
Utilities & Community Facilities	18.22	0.29%
Transportation – Roads and Railroads	518.70	7.91%
Mining/Quarry Sites	23.96	0.37%
Inland Water Features (Excludes Lake Butte Des Morts and Lake Winnebago)	48.21	0.74%
TOTALS	6,568.99	100%

Zoning Regulations

The Town of Oshkosh zoning requirements are established and enforced by Winnebago County. Table 20 provides a summary of the Winnebago County Zoning Ordinance dimension requirements, by district, in the Town of Oshkosh. There are 14 different zoning districts found in the Town of Oshkosh.

For additional information about zoning ordinance requirements related to permissible uses, landscaping, signage and the like, contact the Winnebago County Zoning Department at (920) 236-4844. or review the ordinance on-line at www.co.winnebago.wi.us.

R-1, RURAL RESIDENTIAL NON-SUBDIVIDED DISTRICT

The intent of this district is to accommodate scattered home sites in areas where “neighborhood” and “community” facilities are of secondary consideration to the location of the home site itself.

R-2, SINGLE FAMILY SUBDIVIDED DISTRICT

Single-family detached residential development in subdivisions is permitted in this zone.

R-3, TWO FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

This district accommodates medium density residential development with emphasis on two family attached residential uses.

R-4, MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Higher density residential development, including duplexes, apartments, condominiums and the like are permitted in this district. The intent is to provide rental housing while retaining a relatively low overall density pattern. All development in this zone must be connected to public sewer.

R-5, PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

This district can accommodate condominium and cluster development. A diversity of dwelling types, open space and uses conceived and planned as comprehensive and cohesive projects are permitted in this district.

MH-1, MOBILE HOME DISTRICT

The intent of this district is to provide standards for mobile homes in a duly recorded and legally maintained subdivision. Sewers are not necessarily required.

A-1, AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

This district accommodates large-scale agricultural uses, including, but not limited to: crop farming, beekeeping, dairying, fish farms, forestry, grazing, greenhouses, livestock raising and sod farming.

A-2, GENERAL FARMING DISTRICT

This district is designed to allow the development of small-scale farming operations, characterized by the mixed crop traditional “family farm.” All uses permitted in the A-1 district are permitted, along with single and two-family homes, provided homes are accessory to the farming use.

B-1, LOCAL SERVICE DISTRICT

Provides for individual or small grouping of retail and customer service establishments. These businesses shall be low-traffic generating and shall not exceed 1,500 square feet of area for the principal structure.

B-2, COMMUNITY BUSINESS DISTRICT

This district accommodates localized commercial markets throughout Winnebago County. The development in this area would be on a much smaller scale than regional commercial operations (i.e. malls). It is the intent of this zoning district to encouraging the grouping of commercial establishments.

B-3, HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT

This district is to provide for the special development needs of businesses that have a countywide trade area. The secondary intent of this district is to provide for certain commercial activities that are uniquely oriented toward the service of highway traffic.

M-2, HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

This district accommodates all of the uses permitted in the Light Industrial District, but also permits freight yards, indoor storage warehouses, breweries, and all other manufacturing, assembly or processing. Vehicle body shops and vehicle wholesale and auction centers are also permitted in this district.

M-1, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE DISTRICT

This district is designed to accommodate so-called “clean” industrial neighborhoods and associated office uses. Specifically, general, clerical and professional offices, research and development facilities, wholesale distributors, millwork, light metal fabrication, small manufacturing operations, commercial bakeries, and contractors offices are permitted in this district.

P-1, INSTITUTIONAL AND RECREATIONAL PARK DISTRICT

This zoning district provides for uses such as cemeteries, funeral homes, hospitals, schools, landfills and parks.

The *Town of Oshkosh Zoning Map* illustrates the existing zoning established under the Winnebago County Zoning Ordinance. This map is provided on the next page.

In addition to these specific zoning district requirements, the Winnebago County Zoning Ordinance includes sign regulations, landscape regulations and the shore land zoning overlay requirements.

Town of Oshkosh Land Divisions & Subdivision Ordinance

Since 1999, the Town of Oshkosh has had its own subdivision ordinance. The purpose of the ordinance is to regulate and control the division of land within the unincorporated areas of the Town of Oshkosh to:

- Further the orderly layout and use of land;
- Prevent the overcrowding of land;
- Lesson the congestion on streets and highways; and
- Facilitate adequate provision for water, sewage and other public improvements.

The ordinance outlines procedures for land division, technical requirements, design standards for plats and certified survey maps, and outlines required improvements (i.e. stormwater detention, public and private sewage, land dedication). The ordinance also provides for sidewalks, if determined by the Town Board to be necessary for safe pedestrian movement, particularly in high traffic areas, near commercial areas, schools, and places of public assembly. The ordinance does not provide requirements for establishing cluster subdivisions or planned unit developments. To obtain a copy of the Town of Oshkosh Subdivision Ordinance, contact the Town Clerk.

ZONING MAP

**TABLE 20
WINNEBAGO COUNTY ZONING DISTRICTS⁺**

DISTRICT	MINIMUM AREA	PUBLIC SEWER REQUIRED	FRONT SETBACK	SIDE SETBACK	REAR SETBACK	SHORE SETBACK
R-1, Rural Res.	NA	No	30 feet	7 feet one side 10 feet other	25 feet	75 feet
R-2, Single Family Subdivided	NA	No	30 feet	1 feet one side 10 feet other	25 feet	75 feet
R-3, Two Family	NA	No	30 feet	1 feet one side 10 feet other	25 feet	75 feet
R-4, Multiple Family	NA	Yes	40 feet	15 feet each side	40 feet	75 feet
R-5, Planned Residential	NA	Yes	None	15 feet btwn single- & two-family; 30 feet for other	None	75 feet
MH-1, Mobile Home District	Requires Conditional Use Approval. Provisions for minimum setbacks do not apply.					75 feet
B-1, Local Service	80,000 – 130,000 sq feet (unsewered) 40,000-65,000 sq feet (sewered)	No	30 feet	7 feet one side 10 feet other	25 feet	75 feet
B-2, Community Business	130,000 – 220,000 sq ft (unsewered) 65,000 – 110,000 (sewered)	No	30 feet	7 feet one side 10 feet other	25 feet	75 feet
B-3, General Business District	12-20 acres (unsewered) 6-10 acres (sewered)	No	50 feet	7 feet one side; 10 feet other	50 feet	75 feet
P-1, Institutional and Rec.	NA	No	75 feet	15 feet	50 feet	75 feet
A-1, Agri Business	NA	No	75 feet	15feet	50 feet	75 feet
A-2, General Farming	NA	No	75 feet	15feet	50 feet	75 feet
M-1, Light Industrial	NA	No	30 feet	7 feet one side; 10 feet other	25 feet	75 feet
M-2, Heavy Industrial	NA	No	30 feet	7 feet one side; 10 feet other	25 feet	75 feet

SOURCE: Winnebago County Zoning Department, 2002

⁺ Subject to Change. Consult Winnebago County Zoning Ordinance for Current Requirements.

Trends in Supply, Demand and Price of Land

The Town of Oshkosh has a strong desire to carefully regulate the location of new residential development in order to ensure that future growth will not have a negative impact on the town's rural character, interfere with farming operations, or result in significant increases in service needs and costs. Historically, there have been two choices for housing locations in the Town of Oshkosh:

- In one of the sanitary districts, or
- On a larger, rural parcel beyond the sanitary districts.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Historically, the sanitary districts have been the focus of residential development. Situated along the waterfront areas, the districts include many older waterfront homes that were initially developed as cottages and summer residences. The value of these properties is being realized and many of the seasonal homes have been converted into year-round residences. Likewise, infill development on remaining lakeshore properties has continued. As the more expensive properties with lake frontage have become occupied, new development has started to infill areas across the street from the waterfront and beyond. This trend of increased development, near the waterfront, though not actually on the water, will continue in the future.

In other areas of the town, beyond the waterfront, homes are generally situated on larger lots with individual sewer systems and private wells. These homes sites are more affordable than the waterfront properties in the sanitary districts and the land values are comparable to values in nearby towns. However, development of these parcels does require the installation of private wells and septic systems that significantly increase development costs. Most of these rural residences were built along roadsides as farmers and other landowners sought to sell lots for revenue. The result is a string of homes along county and town roads. This pattern is evident on the *Existing Land Use Map*. To prevent conflicts with adjacent farmland and to maintain contiguous farm fields, the town encourages rural subdivisions that cluster rural development together in one area, rather than allow it to stretch down an entire road or into a larger area.

Residents of the town take great pride in their natural environment. New residential development has successfully adapted to the natural environmental limitations. For example, soils limitations have prevented basements in certain areas. Nevertheless, quality residential homes are being built without basements in these areas (i.e. Shangri La Point).



FARMING

There is a strong desire to retain farmland in the Town of Oshkosh. This priority was clearly expressed in the community survey and during the planning workshops and meetings. However, the state, regional and county farming economy has continued to suffer from a reduction in the number of farmers. Likewise, the number of local farmers has also decreased. This can be attributed to diminished farm product returns and aging farmers seeking retirement.

As local farmers age, the supply of farmers willing and able to purchase land for farming is diminishing. Unlike the past, when the children of a farmer would takeover the land, children of today's farmers are seeking jobs with 401K and other benefits the farm cannot provide. Nevertheless, farmers wishing to retire need to find ways to raise the money needed to sustain their lifestyle in retirement. This leads to pressure to sell and convert farmland to other more profitable uses for better sale prices. Reported farmland sales values are only \$1,440/acre compared to \$2,727/acre for farmland sold for development purposes.¹ This trend in land value is not expected to reverse itself. In fact, it will likely only continue to grow in the future creating additional pressure for land development.

Preservation of rural character is contingent upon successful efforts to retain farmland. The Implementation Element provides additional detail about strategies to be considered, including:

- Encouraging landowners to pursue opportunities to partner with land trusts charged with protection of natural areas and farmland;
- Establish an Agriculture Committee to minimize farmland conflicts through negotiation and open communication;
- Establishing networks, through the Agriculture Committee to connecting farmers who are considering selling their land property with other farmers who would like to acquire additional property; and
- Pursue transfer and purchase of development rights program opportunities.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The town's commercial and industrial development sectors are growing steadily. Though still only a fraction of the town's land area, commercial and industrial activities are becoming more common. The town wants additional commercial and industrial development to support the local tax base and provide quality local employment opportunities.

New commercial and industrial development is currently locating along USH 41, near the town's northernmost boundary. Commercial development is also occurring along CTH A. Future development is anticipated along STH 45. Commercial and industrial land sold in the town costs less than properties sold in the City given the limited services available. This difference in land value is not expected to change in the future. Town land will continue to be more affordable.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Given the town's limited development history, there is not a strong need for redevelopment. Commercial and industrial operations are modern and efficient to meet local needs. The primary opportunity for redevelopment is the aging waterfront cottages that are being converted into year-round residences. Long-term redevelopment is also expected for the quarry in the town.

¹ The Program on Agricultural and Technology Studies & The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Wisconsin Land Use Research Program, July 1, 1999, based on tax record data from WDNR and Tiger Census Files. Information is available on-line at www.wisc.edu/pats/landuse.