

11.0 Purpose

The Land Use Chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* is one of the most important components of the plan, second only to the Implementation chapter, which establishes an action plan for the local municipality. Prior to the adoption of the Comprehensive Planning Law (Smart Growth) in 1999, many communities adopted what were termed ‘Land Use Plans’ or ‘Development Plans’, which reflected the goals of the community through specific land use related policies by way of ordinances, zoning and subdivision regulations. The Town of Excelsior’s Development Plan, adopted in 1999 provides a good example of this kind of ‘policy-driven’ plan. The 1999 Development Plan was the Town’s first attempt at identifying clear community goals, objectives and policies for agricultural, transportation, commercial, industrial and residential land uses. A primary theme was to maintain the natural beauty of the Town, and the recognition of its strong “sense of place”. The 1999 Plan also designated all lands not previously zoned single family residential or commercial as Resource Conservancy-5, per the Sauk County Code of Ordinances Ch. 7.10A, which requires a minimum of five acres per residential lot.

The Town of Excelsior’s 1999 Development Plan addressed some of the broader issues affecting land use including the protection of agricultural lands that exhibit the greatest long-term commitment to agriculture, encouraging developments to prevent soil erosion and to promote orderly development that could efficiently connect to existing urban services.

The 2009 *Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan* maintains similar themes as the 1999 Development Plan, however the new *Plan* refines these concepts and enacts specific policy measures to achieve the *Plan’s* overall Vision. The Land Use chapter recognizes that the goals, objectives and policies under each of the previous chapters either directly or indirectly impact land use within the Town.

The Land Use chapter of this *Comprehensive Plan* serves to recognize policies addressed in previous chapters and to discuss how they impact land use. In doing this, the Town officially recognizes the direct relationship between chapter policies and land use decisions. Second, the Land Use chapter offers an opportunity to address issues that are specific to land use such as the current use of the land, designated future land use, land divisions, density policies, home siting requirements, and development guidelines.

11.1 Existing Land Use

Map 11-1 Land Use and Land Cover, along with the following descriptors, will aid in the understanding of existing land uses in the Town. The information provided in this section will serve as baseline data for future studies. Land can be classified by use districts or by cover, and is sometimes classified by both.

Land Use Districts

- Residential.** For purposes of this *Plan* this calculation includes lands designated by the Residential land use districts as described earlier in this chapter, even though all lands under these districts may not yet be developed. These areas combined account for 1.4% of the Town’s land area, or roughly 317 acres of land.
- Commercial.** For purposes of this *Plan* this calculation includes all lands with a zoning designation of Commercial and Recreational-Commercial as shown on **Map 11-3 Zoning Districts** and which are currently developed for such purposes. Note that for the purposes of this *Plan* all lands under these zoning designations have been considered developed as such. As lands are rezoned to Commercial or Recreational-Commercial and subsequently developed, these lands can be added to this land use category. These areas combined account for 0.1% of the Town’s land area, or roughly 25 acres of land.

- Agriculture.** Generally, any land not categorized as commercial or residential was put into this category, which primarily included farmland and farmsteads as well as farmettes, woodlots, grasslands and low-density residential development. This is the largest land use category in the Town and includes approximately 98.5% of the total land area or approximately 22,311 acres.

Land Cover Classifications

- Coniferous Forest.** This area includes land that is primarily undeveloped, evergreen forestland. This area may also include rural residential development with low densities, but due to the small patchwork of acres with this designation, it is highly unlikely. This area represents less than 3% of the Town's total land area, or approximately 653 acres.
- Deciduous Forest.** This area includes private and public lands that are primarily hardwood forestland that is undeveloped and un-platted. This area also includes areas of low-density residential development. This area includes 28% of the Town's total land area, or approximately 6,112 acres.
- Grassland.** This area includes private and public lands that are undeveloped and are not in agricultural or woodland uses. These areas typically consist of prairie remnants or restored prairies representing grasslands first experienced by early settlers. These areas account for approximately 18% of the Town's land area, or 3,922 acres.
- Open Water.** These areas are characterized as lakes, ponds and perennial streams. It accounts for 0.23% of the total land area, or approximately 50 acres.
- Wetland.** These areas consist of hydric soils that are not characterized by standing water. These areas are reflective of flood fringe areas like marshes and low lying stream bank areas. They account for approximately 6% of the Town's area, or approximately 1,314 acres.
- Barren.** These areas have typically supported mining activities or other human activity, which has left the ground in an infertile state. The areas are characterized by soils incapable of supporting plant growth or by exposed rock formations. This area accounts for 1.7% of the total area, or approximately 370 acres.

11.2 Recent Development Trends

The issuance of new land use/building permits for single family residential construction in the Town of Excelsior has remained relatively constant during the last 16 years. From 1990 to 2000, an average of 15 permits per year were issued for residential construction, and from 2001-2005 an average of 16 permits per year were issued. Even though there has been a consistent, and by some standards, low rate of growth, future development pressures should not be overlooked. *Chart LUI Number of Permits Issued (1990-2006)* depicts the relatively constant rate in overall development in the Town of Excelsior since 1990, with the peak year occurring in 2003. Assuming the Town will experience an increase in growth in the rural areas, it will become more important for the Town of Excelsior to guide rural residential growth in a way that preserves the rural character of the Town and that can be adequately served by existing public facilities. Where upgrades to public facilities are needed, service to the town should not be impacted.

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Table LU1: Number of Permits Issued (1990-2006)

Land Use Permits Issued for New Construction in the Town of Excelsior								
Year	Resident					Commercial	Total Permits Issued for New Construction	Percent of Total Issued
	Single Family	Mobile Home	Total Permits Issued for Homesteads	Garage	other			
1990	10	1	11	5	1	0	17	3.26%
1991	14	0	14	2	1	0	17	3.26%
1992	17	0	17	2	3	0	22	4.22%
1993	11	0	11	0	2	0	13	2.49%
1994	12	3	15	3	2	0	20	3.83%
1995	17	0	17	3	4	0	24	4.60%

1996	15	0	15	9	4	0	28	5.37%
1997	19	1	20	5	8	1	34	6.52%
1998	19	0	19	4	9	0	32	6.14%
1999	23	0	23	3	18	0	44	8.44%
2000	15	0	15	4	11	0	30	5.75%
2001	10	0	10	2	11	0	23	4.41%
2002	18	0	18	6	15	0	39	7.48%
2003	24	0	25	5	43	0	73	14.01%
2004	17	0	17	6	7	0	30	5.75%
2005	14	0	14	9	7	0	30	5.75%
2006	13	0	13	19	13	0	45	8.63%
Total 1990 - 1999	157	5	173	36	52	1	251	48.17%
Total 2000 - 2006	111	0	112	51	107	0	270	51.82%
Total 1990 to 2006	268	5	285	87	159	1	521	100.00%
Percent of Total Issued	51.43%	.96%	54.70%	16.70%	30.51%	0.19%	100.00%	Percent of Total Issued
Average Issued Per Year	15.76	0.29	16.76	5.11	9.35	0.058	30.64	Average Issued Per Year

Source: Sauk County Planning & Zoning

11.3 Current Population and Housing Density

A density calculation can be utilized during the comprehensive planning process to compare population and housing statistics for a community. This calculation will provide additional insight into development patterns and provide background information as the Town of Excelsior determines its future development policies and practices. In 2000, with a population of 1,410 persons and a land area of approximately 35 square miles and 22,654 acres, the Town of Excelsior's population density was roughly 40 persons per square mile or roughly 1 person per 16 acres.

The calculation for the housing density of the Town of Excelsior in 2000 is the number of occupied housing units in 2000 (558 h.u.) divided by the total land area. This equates to about 16 houses per square mile or approximately one home per 40 acres. The further breakdown of these densities based on development patterns and location will be analyzed later in this section.

11.4 Future Land Use Districts (locations correspond with *Map 11-2 Future Land Use Map*)

The future land use districts as shown on *Map 11-2 Future Land Use Map* is intended to aid the Town of Excelsior in making land use decisions pertaining primarily to rezone requests and subdivision plats. It is also intended that decisions about future land uses in the Town be consistent with this *Map* and that any decision not consistent with this *Map* not be permissible until such time that a map amendment has been completed as part of an amendment to the *Town*

of *Excelsior Comprehensive Plan*. Future land uses designated in this *Plan* also correspond to the following descriptions:

Primary “Smart Growth” Development District

Primary “Smart Growth” development areas are statutorily defined as areas 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. The Primary Development District is intended to accommodate the kinds of relatively intensive residential development often characterized by conventional residential subdivisions, but is also intended to encourage more land-efficient forms of traditional mixed use residential/commercial neighborhoods that incorporate increased density and smaller lot sizes, pedestrian safety and convenience, street interconnectivity, conservative uses of previous paving materials and the application of stormwater best management practices.

The Town of Excelsior’s Primary Development District is limited to those locations lying within the City of Reedsburg’s Extraterritorial District Boundary, those directly adjacent to the Reedsburg ET district that is designated “Future Commercial” on the Town’s Future Land Use Map, or those contiguous with the boundaries of the Villages of Rock Springs and North Freedom

- **Primary Development District Density:** (refer also to Section 7.12 *Sauk County Zoning Ordinance* for a more detailed discussion on density policies pertaining to the Conservation Subdivision.)

Conventional subdivision (not *conservation* subdivision) density in the Primary Development District is limited only by the minimum area requirement for the underlying zoning district or for sanitary treatment systems on unsewered lots. *Conservation Subdivision* density is determined by the allocation of no more than 60% of the original parcel as the “development area”, leaving the remaining 40% of the original parcel as open space, or the “preservation area”. The density policy for a conservation subdivision shall also require that the density in the development area not exceed (1) one acre per lot, excluding lands utilized by road rights-of-way. For example, 60 acres (60%) of a 100-acre parcel minus (4) acres utilized for road rights-of-way will yield 56 acres or a maximum number of permitted lots/dwelling units of 56. Multiple-Family dwellings will only be permitted in an approved Planned Unit Development - Conservation Subdivision as defined by the *Sauk County Zoning Ordinance Ch.7.12*.

- **Compatible County Zoning:**

Class I Subdivision:	fewer than ten (10) lots	Agricultural or Single-Family Residential / Multiple-Family Res.
Class II Subdivision:	fewer than twenty-five (25) lots	Single-Family Residential / Multiple-Family Res.
Class III Subdivision:	consists of twenty-five (25) or more lots	Single-Family Residential / Multiple-Family Res.

Also, under the Planned Unit Development/Conservation Subdivision, a conservation subdivision requires that at least 40% of a parcel be zoned Agriculture or Resource Conservation, while the remaining 60% may be zoned single-family residential.

- **Higher Density Development**



Currently, higher density developments are concentrated on or in the vicinity of Lake Virginia and within the City of Reedsburg Extra-Territorial (ET) District. The policies in this *Plan* call for infill of these areas on lots that are not currently developed, and for directing new subdivision development to the Primary Development District within the Reedsburg ET and lands contiguous to the Villages of Rock Springs and North Freedom.

Utilizing the historic commercial growth patterns and previous designation for commercial land uses in the Town's 1999 Development Plan, the Town's Primary Commercial Smart Growth District is limited to lands within Extra Territorial (ET) areas next to Reedsburg and those directly adjacent to the Reedsburg ET district that are designated "Future Commercial" on the Town's Future Land Use Map.

Non-Primary Development District (Residential)

The Town of Excelsior Planning Committee proposed and discussed the idea of a land use district primarily intended for sustained agricultural land uses and other uses that are consistent with and compatible with agricultural operations. The district would be characterized by cropped and vacant fields as well as adjoining woodlots, wetlands and grasslands. Farmhouses and farmsteads are the predominant form of development. Non-agricultural developed features include hobby-type farmsteads intermixed with scattered non-farm single-family residences. Although farming is the primary use, the area also supports recreational opportunities such as hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, boating, and tourism activities. A significant portion of the district would include relatively large parcels under common ownership, although it would include smaller parcels that support residential development.

The intent of the proposed district is to maintain the area's rural appeal and farming tradition. Farms and farming operations should continue to be a significant component of this district. New rural residential development should be sensitive to the visual landscape while minimizing conflict with farming operations. Hobby farming, lands set aside for preservation and recreation, and low density residential development are forms of land uses that are compatible with this proposed land use district.

Non-Primary Development District areas designated on ***Map 11-2 Future Land Use Map*** may also accommodate clusters of rural residential development provided that such developments abide by standards set forth in the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan and any separately adopted Town Ordinances. The Non-Primary Development District areas include rural residential areas that would offer an additional living option to those identified under the Primary Smart Growth District. The Non-Primary Development Areas for residential development under this plan recommends a change from the 1999 Resource Conservancy – 5 program to the adoption of Exclusive Ag program utilizing Sauk County's guidelines. (see ***Map 11-3 Zoning***). However, until the State provides final certification of the County's new Exclusive Ag program, the Town of Excelsior will need to adopt the resource Conservancy – 35 program. The RC-35 program will provide the Town of Excelsior the similar on-primary development characteristics as the forthcoming Exclusive Ag program and allow the zoning to reflect the true essence of this plan. This *Plan* does not include Non-Primary Development Areas for *commercial* land uses.

Residential development proposals in Non-Primary Development District areas may not necessarily meet the whole definition of "Smart Growth" in that they are not always contiguous to like land uses and may not assure a low municipal utility cost. Therefore, it will be important that developments proposed in these areas be evaluated according to their impact on municipal service costs with consideration given to requiring developers in these areas to upgrade utilities and transportation routes so as to accommodate such development without placing a financial burden on the Town of Excelsior or neighboring communities.

- **Criteria for Evaluating Development Impacts in Non-Primary Development Districts**

In order to ensure efficient and cost effective development patterns in the Non-Primary Development District, a set of criteria for each proposed development is listed below. It shall be

the intent of both the developer and Town to utilize these criteria when considering new developments in the Non-Primary Development District. The criteria are not all-inclusive, but ask broad questions about development proposals to ensure that they are appropriate in location, size and scale and that utility and transportation provisions will be feasible, safe, and effective. These criteria will also help the Town evaluate development proposals to ensure that appropriate upgrades are made to affected utilities and local town transportation routes and that any upgrades required by the Town as part of the approval of any development in the Non-Primary Development District are the fiscal responsibility of the developer.

1. Adequate public facilities to accommodate development either exist or will be provided within a reasonable amount of time.
2. Public facilities and services needed to accommodate development will not place an unreasonable burden on the affected local units of government. Affected units of government may include the Town of Excelsior, the Village of Rock Springs, Fire and Ambulance Districts, the School District, and Sauk County.
3. Public facilities and services needed to accommodate development will not have significant negative impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, including wetlands, streams, species-rich habitats, steep slopes, and large tracts of forest.

11.5 Steps for Siting New Development

All development occurring in rural areas should result from following the four-step design process outlined in this section. Conservation subdivisions must abide by these guidelines, but they are also strongly advised for conventional subdivisions and Certified Survey Map (CSM) divisions. This approach is derived from Randall Arendt's *Conservation Design for Subdivisions* guide (1996). According to Arendt, all potential building sites should be evaluated for their conservation and development potential, culminating in broad concept plans showing proposed locations of building lots, streets, greens, commons, meadows, woodlands, and other types of open space. During the planning process, the following four steps should be followed sequentially:

1. *Identify All Potential Conservation Areas.*
Principal conservation areas must always be protected from development, but land containing other features may be deemed equally important to preserve. High quality farmland, environmentally sensitive upland areas, features of historical or cultural significance, scenic landscapes, or any land with unique, rare attributes can be identified for protection. In initial site plans, designers should be encouraged to include more land than they think will eventually be designated as open space, so that no potentially desirable area is excluded from consideration in the design process. In conservation subdivisions, at least 40% of the land must be set aside for conservation. During the initial stages of planning, as much as 60% of the land may be tentatively reserved for conservation. Steps 2-4 will aid designers in making final conservation area determinations. Planning for conventional subdivision development should follow the same process.
2. *Locate Building Sites.*
The value of houses is often higher when there are views of open space, so the number of "view lots" should be maximized in any new development. This also ensures that preserved open space is usable and accessible by all members of a community. To allow for the maximum number of buildings with open space views, houses and lots should be human-scaled and not excessively wide. Identifying building sites before drawing lot lines and locating streets allows building locations to be carefully selected so that important natural, cultural, and historical features are preserved. Although it may be impractical to protect all secondary conservation areas, many of the features identified in Step 1 should be avoidable when siting houses.
3. *Design Street Alignments and Trails.*

After identifying building locations, the next step is to determine the best way to access every residence with a street system. There are a number of environmental considerations involved in the street siting process, and no new streets may be constructed in principal conservation areas. All new roads should avoid wetlands, large trees, mature tree stands, and important wildlife habitats. The length of new access streets should be minimized for aesthetic, economic, and environmental reasons. If roads must be sited very near mature trees, it is important to leave enough space so that construction equipment does not cross the tree canopies' outer drip lines. This will prevent major damage to the root systems of these trees.

In some cases, it may be desirable to create a "single-loaded street," with buildings all located to one side of the street. The other side of the street should typically border an open space area. This allows for an unobstructed view from the houses or businesses along the street, and showcases preserved natural areas for people who drive, bike, or walk along the road. The view from the natural area is also improved in this situation, as most new houses look far better from the front than the back. People enjoying the open space would probably prefer to see the front facades of neighboring homes rather than the wood decks and sliding glass doors typical of house backs. Residents, in turn, benefit from increased backyard privacy.

Regardless of the layout approach, all new streets should be interconnected and integrated with existing roads. Interconnected streets provide easier and safer access for fire engines, ambulances, school buses, snowplows and garbage trucks. They also distribute traffic evenly, whereas dead-ends and cul-de-sacs often lead to traffic bottlenecks by funneling vehicles to a limited number of through streets. In some areas, cul-de-sacs may be unavoidable due to topographic constraints or the location of principal conservation areas. In these cases, pedestrian and bike linkages should provide connections to other nearby streets or to a neighborhood trail system. Streets serving new developments should be designed to connect with adjoining properties that are potentially developable in the future. This will ensure that few new neighborhoods will be self-contained.

Walking and biking trails should provide residents convenient access to gathering areas, commercial centers, and public open spaces. Trails can serve to connect portions of the town that are not connected by streets, and they can provide recreational opportunities in and around preserved natural areas.

4. *Draw Lot Lines.*

Before determining precise lot lines, conservation areas should be officially delineated. Any secondary conservation areas not designated for street or building development should be protected. Conservation areas should be connected via natural corridors wherever possible. Strips of mature tree stands or wetlands can serve as attractive amenities to development, and can accommodate recreational trails or paths connecting public open space lands.

After the designation of conservation areas, building sites and street alignment, lot line placement should be fairly obvious. Lots abutting conservation areas should not have to be very deep, as the open space visually extends the perceived depth of their yards. In neighborhoods that will utilize joint septic systems, lots should be designed so that two to three houses can easily share one large septic tank and drain field by way of an easement extending across the properties. To utilize space efficiently and to promote friendlier neighborhoods, houses should maintain similar setbacks that are not far from public walking paths or roads.

11.6 Town of Excelsior Density Policy

Residential development in the Town of Excelsior is discussed in Section 11.3. The new residential density policy in the Town of Excelsior is one residence per thirty-five (35) acres of land, based on the Town's proposed adoption of Sauk County's RC35 zoning restrictions until State certification of Sauk County's new Exclusive Ag program..

In the Primary Development District both conventional and conservation subdivisions are permitted. In conservation subdivisions, principal conservation areas may not be developed, and at least 40% of the land must be preserved. On the remaining 60%, development may be as dense as one house/lot per two-acres in the Town of Excelsior.

- **Amendments to the Town of Excelsior Density Policy**

Once a density policy is adopted, amendments may be deemed appropriate from time to time. To ensure that the any future density policy amendment best recognizes the needs of all residents, the Plan Commission will hold a public hearing to acquire feedback from Town residents and landowners to utilize in the decision-making process.

11.7 Zoning Classifications

The Town of Excelsior adopted county zoning in 1964. At this time the entire Town was placed under the Agricultural Zoning District. Since that time there have been a number of rezoning actions, including the rezoning of lands around Lake Virginia, and a development along State Road 136 and County Road PF to the Single Family Residential District, and a rezoning north of State Road 33 which recognizes commercial land uses. A comparison of *Map 11-3 Zoning Districts* and *Map 11-2 Future Land Use Map* indicates a relationship between lands designated by the Primary Development District and lands zoned Single Family Residential. Lands zoned Commercial are so few as to not have established a pattern. Finally, lands currently zoned Resource Conservancy -5 reflecting the proposed Non-Primary Development District will be changed to Resource Conservancy - 35. This Plan calls for implementing optional development controls to manage growth. Town development controls would be the responsibility of the Town of Excelsior to manage and enforce.

11.8 Future Land Area Needs

Predicting future land area needs for residential, commercial (includes industrial), and agricultural uses involves a process of projecting trends into the future to determine the demand that will be placed on a community relative to maintaining land in its current land use or converting it to an alternative land use. Once these projections are made, quantities of land can then be accurately identified on a future land use map. In order to study the demand of future land uses in Excelsior two factors will be considered. The first of these factors looks at population projections over time. And the second factor utilizes assumptions that population and development pressure will increase in the Town given the increased development of Sauk County and of the areas within and around the City of Reedsburg located 2 miles to the west, as well as the City of Baraboo and the City of Wisconsin Dells each located several miles to the east and north east respectively. Future land Uses are broken down into residential, commercial and agricultural.

- **Future Residential Land Area Needs**

According to the population projections under *Chapter 3 Population Inventory and Analysis* and *Chapter 4 Housing* it is reasonable to assume that the population will continue to increase in the Town of Excelsior. This increase will in turn cause an increased demand for housing in the Town. To realistically determine the number of new homes that will be needed through the year 2030, one must make a few assumptions. First, based on *Chart P10: Population Changes per Age Bracket*, population increases are most noticeable among aging households with a limited

household size and among the adolescent age groups, that the greatest population increase occurs within the 40-59 age bracket, with a smaller increase among the 10-19 age bracket. Using this information, it is less likely that household sizes will increase in the Town and will likely decrease. Using these two assumptions, the *Household Size Trend* population projection represents a 12.5% decrease in housing size every 10 years. **Table LU3 Household Forecast: Household Size Trend and Lands Needed** correlates population increases to average household size to determine a projected number of new households. Only occupied households were considered for purposes of determining the amount of land needed in the future for additional occupied residential houses. Additional land needed represents a conservative assumption of two acres needed for each new house: an average lot size of 1.5 acres and an additional ½ acre required for each lot for road rights-of-way, new park dedication and utility rights-of-way.

Table LU3: Household Forecast: Household Size Trend and Lands Needed

Year	Population	Average Household Size	Number of Occupied Households	Additional Residential Land Needed
1990, per census	1,194	2.96	439	NA
2000, per census	1,410	2.63	558	238 (10 yr)
2010, Projection	1,464	2.30	636	156
2020, Projection	1,474	1.97	748	224
2030, Projection	1,127	1.31	860	224

Source: US Census and Sauk County Planning & Zoning

Based on this projection, in the twenty years between the 2000 census and 2020 the Town can expect an average of just over 20 acres per year to be converted to residential uses. It is important to note that the Town currently has approximately 292 vacant residential lots around Lake Virginia and within the Reedsburg ET area. The Town conceivably has adequate existing residential lots to accommodate additional residential housing development for the foreseeable future.

- **Future Commercial Land Area Needs**

To determine the amount of land needed for future commercial land uses, the *Plan* evaluates the amount of land in the Town rezoned by Sauk County to the Commercial or Recreational-Commercial Zoning District since 1990. From 1990 through 2005, less than forty acres were rezoned from an Agricultural or Resource Conservancy Zoning District to a Commercial Zoning District, an average of less than 2.5 acres / year. Based on this average, it is evident that there is currently not a high demand for commercially zoned lands and it can be anticipated that the Town will convert approximately 55 acres to commercial land uses between 2008 and 2030.

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Table LU-4: Commercial Lands Needed

Period Year	Land rezoned to Commercial or Rec-Commercial	Additional Commercial Land Needed
1990-2000	25 acres	
2000-2008	0	
2008-2010		5 acres
2010-2015		12.5 acres
2015-2020		12.5 acres
2020-2025		12.5 acres
2025-2030		12.5 acres

- **Future Agricultural Land Area Needs**

Based upon projected and actual residential and commercial land needs, it can be assumed that the amount of agricultural land in the Town of Excelsior will decrease accordingly. To evaluate the amount of agricultural land that may potentially be converted to other uses in 5-year increments, add the projected commercial and residential lands needed from **Table LU3 Household Forecast: Household Size Trend and Lands Needed** and **Table LU-4: Commercial Lands Needed**. It is likely that the continued creation of Certified Survey Map lots and implementation of the RC-5 District will further reduce the amount of agricultural lands in the Town, however this Plan's land use goal, objectives and policies recognize the importance of agriculture and farmland.

11.9 Natural Limitations to Building and Site Development

Natural limitations to development vary depending on where in the Town development is being proposed. Generally speaking, the Baraboo River, which traverses through the Town, includes a related floodplain area depicted on **Map 9-3 General Floodplain Areas** and wetlands noted on **Map 9-1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas**. Likewise, there are other non-riparian wetlands scattered throughout the Town. Other natural limitations to development include soil limitations on the placement of foundations, roads and septic suitability. General soils information can be noted under **Chapter 9 Natural Resources** and on **Map 6-1 Septic Suitability**, and **Map 6-2 Alternative Septic Suitability**.

11.10 Land Use Goal, Objectives and Policies

Land Use Goal: Plan, control and manage development that will continue to foster a sense of community, and that will preserve the country flavor of the Township while maintaining a balance among agriculture, natural resources, quality of life and development.

Land Use Objectives and Policies:

LUO-1 Protect natural areas, such as wetlands, floodplains, the "Narrows" area, large contiguous forested areas, and the Baraboo Range.

LUO-2 Encourage development adjacent to already developed areas using alternatives to conventional residential development patterns that minimize development impacts on public infrastructure.

LUP-2a Areas of the Town that are appropriate for high density residential development are limited to those lands within the Reedsburg ET District and lands contiguous to the boundaries of the Villages of Rock Springs and North Freedom. Development areas shall include one property ownership next to the village boundaries, but extend no further out than ¼ mile from the village boundaries. New development needs to be located contiguous to existing development or village or city limits. This does not include conservation developments (e.g. cluster development with siting guidelines), which would be allowed outside the E.T. district.

LUP-2b Allow commercial zoning only within Extra Territorial (ET) areas next to Reedsburg and those lands directly adjacent to the Reedsburg ET district that are designated "Future Commercial" on the Town's Future Land Use Map..

LUO-3 Maintain the economic viability of sustainable farming.

LUP-3a Maintain prime (Class I, II and III Soils) agricultural crop land.

LUP-3b Direct new residential development to "borderline" or "marginal" (Class IV-VIII Soils) lands not suitable for farming, whenever possible.

LUO- 4 Partner with neighboring municipalities on land use policy.

LUO- 5 Protect the quality of surface and ground water from the impacts of development.

LUP-5a Establish conservation design requirements for new residential development.

LUO- 6 Protect community aesthetics, including scenic views and neighborhood character.

LUP-6a Maintain an uncrowded rural community, natural beauty and quality of life.

LUP-6b Restrict commercial signage (billboards) on roads and highways.

LUO- 7 Maintain private property rights.

LUO-8 Ensure that future uses at the Sauk County landfill property are compatible with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and adjacent land uses.

LUP-8a Participate in discussions with Sauk County regarding plans for the Sauk County landfill property.

LUP-8b Establish guidelines for special exception permits for shooting ranges to minimize impacts on neighbors, such as hours when shooting is allowed, types of weapons, bunkering protections, gates, etc.

LUO-9 Establish Conservation Development Guidelines, including the following:

LUP-9a Conservation developments will preserve open space features such as farmland, natural features that define the area, environmentally sensitive areas and other areas that enhance the rural character.

LUP-9b Conservation developments will promote the rural character and limit the visibility of new development from main roads by establishing requirements for topography, vegetation, and building setbacks. Require natural (native when possible) plantings when hills and trees are absent. Lots should be situated away from entrances to subdivisions to reduce their visibility from the main public right-of-way.

LUP-9c Conservation developments will incorporate a road/trail network to connect homes to each other, and streets among developments will be connected. Open space in one development should connect to open space in adjacent developments.

LUP-9d Conservation developments will encourage the creation of smaller lots that are clustered on the buildable portion of a property, allowing for the preservation of open space. Soils best suited for community septic systems and storm water detention will be mapped and set aside as common open space with shared community facilities.

LUP 9e Support amendments to County and Town subdivision regulations as necessary to incorporate low-impact development and conservation design techniques that:

- (1) Limit total impervious area,
- (2) Minimize site disturbance and soil compaction to preserve natural topography and minimize erosion,
- (3) Ensure sound water quality and run-off controls while minimizing the use of storm drain pipes (this includes allowing, where applicable, the use of rain gardens, permeable pavements, etc.),
- (4) Encourage the Town to sponsor annual water testing for all residents (at a reduced fee for residents),
- (5) Require adequate buffer areas and setbacks to minimize encroachment and preserve the natural character and natural scenic quality of sensitive areas, including bluffs and slopes,

(6) Utilize native vegetation in new plantings.

LUP 9f - Create an environmentally sensitive area overlay zoning district to require all new development to avoid such areas to the greatest extent possible.

LUO - 10 Rezoning petitions for industrial and mineral extraction uses shall not be supported in areas where such activity would be inconsistent with the values and goals of the comprehensive plan. Conditions written to guide any such uses should be based in part on the following policies:

LUP 10a - Discourage mineral extraction in the Baraboo bluffs.

LUP 10b - Discourage mineral extraction on bluff faces.

LUP 10c - Discourage mineral extraction visible from public roads.

LUP-10d - Require that all resource extraction activities have a reclamation plan that provides for the activity to be conducted in a way that minimizes its impact on the natural environment. A guarantee of financial assurance should be posted in an amount equal to the projected cost of reclamation. The reclamation plan and financial guarantee should be reviewed with every renewal of the special use mining permit. The reclamation plan should fall within a use that is compatible with all the other elements of the comprehensive plan.

LUP 10e –Require that all non metallic extraction operations in the town be approved by the town plan commission and the town board before operations shall begin.

LUP 10f - All reclamation plans shall include a hydro-geologic study showing impact on water tables. This study shall be conducted by an independent, qualified engineer or firm approved by the town and paid for by the applicant.

LUP 10g - We recognize that non-metallic mining is necessary to provide for the needs of the town for agriculture and roads, but there shall be no more than one permitted non-metallic mineral extraction operation of each type (sand/gravel, limestone, quartzite) at one time.

LUP 10h - All mineral extraction sites shall be no more than 20 acres, including buffers required by county zoning ordinances, and no more than 65 feet deep, or no deeper than the plane of adjoining land, whichever is less.

LUP 10i - Because of the quality and size of our town roads, all petitioners shall limit hauling on any town road to 1/8 of a mile. Petitioner must maintain the quality of any town road used for such mining operation. Petitioner shall post a guarantee of financial assurance in an amount equal to the projected cost of maintenance.

LUP 10j - Require all such activity to be distant from any natural or recreational waterway, wetland, natural spring, or other sensitive natural area.

LUP 10k - Limit hours of operation of any mineral extraction activity including maintenance of equipment and reclamation activities to the hours of 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and 6:00 to noon on Saturday excluding legal holidays.

LUO -11 Land Uses and Land Divisions in the Town of Excelsior will be regulated through the Sauk County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, and appropriate Town policies and ordinances.

LUO-12 Manage the creation of new lots for residential development.

LUP-12a Replace the Resource Conservancy - 5 Zoning District with the Resource Conservancy - 35 Zoning District which will serve as a transitional zoning to the

Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District. The transition to Exclusive Agriculture will occur after an updated Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District has been certified by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to meet the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 91 and which has been approved by the Sauk County Board of Supervisors. Following certification and approval, the town will file an application with Sauk County to apply Exclusive Agricultural Zoning to all areas zoned Resource Conservancy - 35.

LUP-12b The Town of Excelsior will utilize the Sauk County Planned Unit Development Program and intends to follow minimum standards set forth in the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance with regard to density, lot size, and sighting requirements.