

Chapter Three

FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGY

Introduction

Waterloo Township's principal planning components are embodied in the Master Plan's Future Land Use Strategy discussed in this Chapter, and the Public Services Strategy discussed in Chapter 4. The Future Land Use Strategy identifies the desired pattern of land use and development throughout the Township. The Public Services Strategy specifies policies regarding future infrastructure and other public services improvements to better assure future public services are coordinated with the planned future land use pattern, and the achievement of the Plan's goals and objectives.

The Future Land Use Strategy consists of policies regarding future land use and development in the Township. Implementation of these policies rests with the regulatory tools of the Township – most importantly the Waterloo Township Zoning Ordinance. This Ordinance will be the primary implementation tool of the Waterloo Township Master Plan through appropriate changes in the provisions of the Ordinance. The Township's Zoning Ordinance generally regulates the type, location, bulk, and intensity of land development throughout the Township.

The Township may also adopt other supporting regulatory tools to further the implementation of the policies of the Master Plan. Land division and private road regulations are very important as a means to further implement the Master Plan and the Future Land Use Strategy. Land division regulations are intended to assure efficient land division patterns, the avoidance of non-buildable lots, and adequate public access to public roads. Private road regulations are intended to provide for road circulation networks re-

stricted from general public use, in response to the local housing market, while at the same time assuring such roads are built and maintained to minimum public health, safety, and welfare standards. Related ordinances and a capital improvement program, may, from time to time, be adopted or amended to further carry out this Plan.

Overview of the Future Land Use Strategy

The Future Land Use Strategy establishes the planned future land use pattern throughout the Township for the next 10 to 20 years. However, no new land uses should be established, or land rezoned, without adequate public facilities and services are available to meet the needs of the proposed uses. Such development should not outpace the Township's ability to effectively manage the rate of development. The goals and objectives presented in Chapter 2 are the foundation on which the Future Land Use Strategy is based, including:

- Environmental protection and the conservation of natural resources, including preservation of woodlands, wetlands, and lakes and streams.
- Provide opportunities for a variety of new land uses, including residential development and limited opportunities for expanded commercial and industrial uses, in a purposeful and carefully managed manner.
- Rural character preservation.
- Encourage the preservation of agricultural resources.
- Minimize public service costs.

- Insure compatibility between land uses.

The future land use pattern was established based upon an analysis of the Township's natural and cultural characteristics including community attitudes, existing roadway network, soil conditions, existing and nearby public infrastructure, environmentally sensitive areas, and neighboring municipal land use conditions. The opportunities and constraints presented by these characteristics were evaluated within the context of the goals and objectives presented in Chapter 2 to arrive at a planned future land use pattern.

The Future Land Use Strategy calls for a land use pattern characterized predominantly by agricultural and low density residential development, natural open spaces including woodlands and wetlands, and the long term viability of the Waterloo State Recreation Area. Future commercial and industrial development is limited to M-52 near Stockbridge and M-106 near Munith. Opportunities for higher density residential development are primarily limited to areas in close proximity to the Village of Stockbridge.

High density residential development in the form of mobile home parks is strongly discouraged at this time. The Township presently has four mobile home parks and, in 1999, the dwellings within these parks represent approximately one third or more of the total dwelling units in the Township. The Township has provided ample opportunities for this form of residential development. This Plan supports future residential development more compatible with the Township's extensive natural resources, limited public services, and overall rural character.

Land use in Waterloo Township's neighboring communities was a consideration in the development of the planned future land use pattern, and the Future Land Use Strategy is generally compatible with the planned land use pattern along its borders. The surrounding Townships of Leoni, Grass Lake, and Lyndon provide for primarily open space, agricultural and/or low density residential development (one dwelling per two acres or more) near Waterloo Township's borders and this Plan similarly proposes low development densities along the vast majority of the Waterloo Township's peripheral areas. Henrietta Township permits residential densities of approximately one dwelling per one half acre throughout the majority of the Township. Stockbridge Township permits development densities of one dwelling per acre or less, including one half acre lots, mobile home parks, and multiple family dwellings, adjacent to portions of Waterloo Township planned for similar suburban/urban development.

The planned commercial/industrial development near or along M-106 to the northeast of Munith in Waterloo Township is generally compatible with Henrietta Township's program for similarly accommodating commercial development along this corridor through Munith.

Individual Components of the Future Land Use Strategy

The Future Land Use Strategy divides the Township into four land use "Areas," with each Area intended to be reserved for certain dominant land uses, based upon the character of that Area. These individual Areas collectively make up the planned future land use pattern in the Township and consist of the following:

- Agricultural - Rural Residential Area
- Public Recreation Area
- Suburban Residential Area
- Commercial / Industrial Area

It is not the intent of this Plan to identify each individual land use which should be permitted in each Area. This Plan makes broad-based recommendations regarding the dominant land use or uses intended to be accommodated in each of the *four* Areas. Specific permitted land uses will be determined by the zoning provisions of the Township, based upon considerations of compatibility.

Following is a review of the principal components of the Future Land Use Strategy. The approximate limits of these *four* Areas are illustrated in the Future Land Use Map at the end of this Chapter.

Agricultural - Rural Residential Area

The Agricultural - Rural Residential Area includes the vast majority of the Township not otherwise part of the Waterloo State Recreation Area (see following "Public Recreation Area"). This Area is intended to provide opportunities for rural residential lifestyles of comparatively low development density while still providing opportunities for and supporting the continuation of farming activities. This Area is currently composed of primarily large lot residences and agricultural operations.

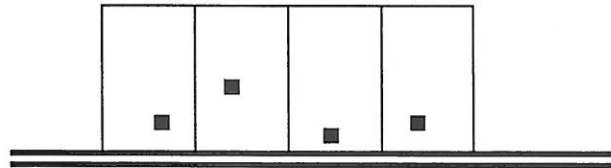
While it is not the intent of this Plan to actively encourage the conversion of these farmlands to residential use, this Plan recognizes that the viability of long-term farming operations in the Township is questionable and options should be made available

to the landowner to pursue reasonable alternative uses. These areas provide opportunities for accommodating low density residential development provided adequate sewage disposal and potable water are available. Low density residential development is considered appropriate for the majority of the Township due to, in part: 1) the limited road infrastructure; 2) large and sensitive wetland environments; 3) the Township's interest in minimizing conflicts between agricultural and non-farm residential uses; 4) the Township's interest in managing the rate of development; and 5) the Township's interest in preserving the area's rural character.

A fundamental principal behind the Agricultural Area is that an increase in the measures taken by a landowner (in regard to future residential development) to preserve the Township's rural character and resources and minimize negative public impacts should be accompanied by a comparatively higher permitted development density. In this fashion, a strong incentive would then exist to develop land in the Township in a responsible manner as it relates to preserving the Township's current character, protecting natural resources, and minimizing public health, safety and welfare concerns. Development projects which strive to preserve the Township's current character, protect natural resources, and minimize public health, safety and welfare concerns could approach a maximum development density of 1 dwelling unit per three acres, while projects which do not pursue such measures should face greater development density restrictions in the area of one dwelling unit per five acres. However, to minimize the wasteful consumption of agricultural land through incremental large parcel splits (such as five acres), a limited number of one acre splits should also be made available to landowners in this Area, such as at a rate of one 1-acre split for each 30 acres contained in the farm parcel. Successful integration of new residential development should be rewarded and encouraged with heightened development densities where appropriate. Integration measures should employ clustering and interior road access. Strip development should be discouraged.

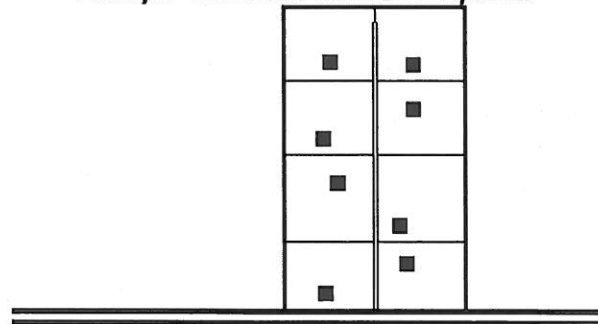
Strip residential development along the Township's major roads is illustrated in Example A. This is the easiest form of development but it impacts public safety because of the many driveways directly abutting the major roads and it can significantly undermine the rural character of the Township.

Example A: Strip Development



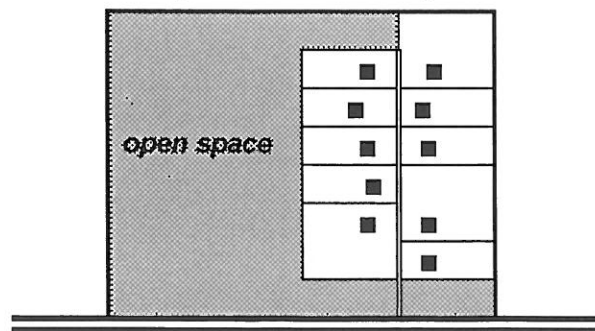
The use of interior roads is illustrated in Example B. This form of development minimizes traffic hazards and congestion associated with excessive points of driveway access and encourages the preservation of the Township's rural character as experienced from the existing public road. This form of development should be encouraged and rewarded with a higher development density.

Example B: Interior Road Development



The use of clustering as a development option, as illustrated in Example C, provides for the use of interior roads and the setting aside of open space by way of conservation easements, deed restrictions, or similar legally binding tools. Not only does this approach exhibit the benefits associated with interior roads, but this also provides for the protection of important open spaces and resources, including agricultural lands and fragile eco-systems. In this way, a farmer (and other land owners) is able to receive a greater return on his property through increased residential splits while still maintaining the balance of the farm parcel in production if so desired.

Example C: Cluster Development



This open space can also be used for other resource-based activities including the preservation of special environments such as wetlands and woodlands, and the establishment of recreation areas for residents of the development.

This development pattern is better accommodated through increased flexibility in lot sizes, widths, and setbacks, and should be encouraged through density incentives.

The Plan recognizes that there are certain land divisions already present in the Agricultural Area that do not reflect the preferred development pattern recommended for this Area. It is not the intent of the Plan to suggest that special restrictions should be placed on such lots, or that the zoning provisions applicable to these lots should be changed. This Plan supports the continuation of such conditions, both in the Agricultural Area and other Areas identified in this Plan, where the township's public health, safety, and welfare is not threatened.

Potential new residents in this Area should recognize that the traditional smells, noises, pesticide applications, and generally recognized agricultural activities associated with farming may well continue on a long term basis in this area, and the Township does not consider such activities and operations as nuisances. Rather, the Township supports the long term continuation of farming in the Township. Local developers and real estate agents should disclose this information to prospective buyers of land in the Agricultural - Rural Residential Area.

Public Recreation Area

The Public Recreation Area includes all land within the legal boundaries of the Waterloo State Recreation Area (W.S.R.A.). The majority of this land is under public ownership and managed by the State for the purposes of outdoor resource-based recreation. The land is generally characterized by expansive areas of wetlands. In addition to presenting severe physical limitations to development, wetlands provide important environmental benefits including habitats for wildlife, flood control, groundwater recharge and discharge, and surface water purification.

In light of the critical role the W.S.R.A. plays in providing local and regional opportunities for outdoor resource-based recreation, the sensitive environmental resources contained within, and the importance of these resources to the long term viability of the W.S.R.A., the Public Recreation Area

proposes strong limitations on the introduction and intensities of new land uses. Future use and development of land in this Area should be predominantly limited to open-space and natural resource based land uses, such as agriculture and wildlife management, and low density residential development.

Residential development should be permitted at densities of approximately 1 dwelling per 2 to 3 acres, and cluster development should be encouraged. New commercial or industrial development should be prohibited from encroaching into this Area, as should other land uses which are apt to undermine the intended character of this Area and its sensitive resources due to excessive traffic levels, alteration to surrounding eco-systems, or similar negative impacts.

Suburban Residential Area

The Suburban Residential Area provides for residential development of a more suburban character than found or planned elsewhere in the Township. This Area includes both existing residential development of a more suburban character as well as vacant land where new residential development of similar character is considered appropriate. Development densities of 1 or more dwellings per acre is considered appropriate in this Area. The Future Land Use Strategy identifies four locations in the Township as a Suburban Residential Area. Three of these Areas – Waterloo, Portage Lake and Clear Lake Suburban Residential Areas – are intended to recognize existing suburban development areas but expansion is strongly discouraged. The fourth – the North Suburban Residential Areas – is intended to be the primary location for future suburban residential development in the Township. Each of these Areas is discussed below.

North Suburban Residential Area: The North Suburban Residential Area is located along the northern periphery of the Township, extending north of North Territorial Road/M-52 between Hill Road and M-106. This location is identified as a Suburban Residential Area because: 1) excellent access provided by M-52, M-106, and N. Territorial Road; 2) close proximity to the urban services of Stockbridge; 3) adjacent land in Stockbridge Township is planned for suburban development; and 4) portions of this area already reflect suburban development patterns.

Development densities in the area of one dwelling per one acre are considered appropriate in the Suburban Residential Area provided adequate potable water and on-site sewage disposal exists. Higher development densities are considered reasonable only where public sewer is provided. Development densities in excess of three to four dwellings per acre, including multiple family dwellings, are considered reasonable uses within the Suburban Residential Area but only after special review proceedings to determine if the project is appropriate on the specific property. Factors such as available infrastructure and public services, the surrounding existing and planned land use pattern, and the specific characteristics of the property should be considered.

Waterloo Suburban Residential Area: This Area is identified as a Suburban Residential Area because it already reflect suburban development patterns. However, because of more appropriate locations identified in the northern portions of the Township for future suburban development; the Waterloo Suburban Residential Area is not considered a residential growth area. The only locations in this Area that may be appropriate to accommodate new suburban development are those limited areas where parcels have already been subdivided for higher density development. However, in order to protect the future character of the Waterloo village and existing residential areas, development densities in excess of three to four dwellings per acre, including multiple family dwellings, is strongly discouraged.

Clear Lake and Portage Lake Suburban Residential Areas: Clear Lake and Portage Lake Suburban Residential Areas are established in recognition of existing suburban development nodes. These areas are characterized by one or more mobile home parks and lakefront residential development on lots of variable size, many of which are less than 10,000 square feet. This Plan supports the continuation of these existing residential settlements but does not support the expansion of these suburban residential areas. The existing densities do not support the Township's interest in protecting the environmental quality of its lake resources and nearby wetlands. The Future Land Use Strategy identifies areas more appropriate for accommodating new suburban residential development, as discussed above under "North Suburban Residential Area."

Commercial / Industrial Area

The Future Land Use Strategy establishes two principal Commercial/Industrial Areas to accommodate future commercial and industrial development – the Munith and North Commercial/Industrial Areas. Development in these Areas is intended to address both the local day-to-day needs of local residents and the needs of regional consumers and highway travelers, and provide opportunities for light industrial uses. Commercial or industrial uses which are characterized by high levels of consumer and/or truck traffic, buildings of comparatively large bulk or size, or operations which require comparatively high levels of public services should be permitted only after review to determine their appropriateness at the proposed location. All future industrial and commercial uses and operations should be compatible with on-site sewage disposal and potable water until the time when public sewer may be available. Each of these Areas is further discussed below.

Munith Commercial/Industrial Area: The Munith Commercial/Industrial Area is located directly north-east of Munith and is generally bounded by N. Territorial Road to the north, M-106 to the southeast, and Musbach Road to the west. This Area is identified as a Commercial/Industrial Area because, in part: 1) M-106 and North Territorial Road provide excellent access infrastructure; 2) the Munith area currently exists as a small commercial/industrial node; and 3) there are existing commercial and industrial uses in this Area. This Area is intended to be compact and not encroach into outlying areas, including further east along M-106.

North Commercial/Industrial Area: The North Commercial/Industrial Area is located along M-52 between N. Territorial and Hill Roads. This Area is identified as a Commercial/Industrial Area because, in part: 1) M-52 provides excellent access infrastructure and visibility; 2) close proximity to the urban and emergency services of Stockbridge; and 3) there are existing commercial and industrial uses along this segment of M-52. This Area is intended to be compact and not encroach into outlying areas, including further east or west along M-52.

The Plan does not support commercial or industrial development beyond the limits illustrated on the Future Land Use Map because of the existing and planned residential development in surrounding areas, the Township's interest in protecting the safety and function of the state highways, and the more ap-

appropriate locations for commercial and industrial development in surrounding urban communities.

The Future Land Use Strategy does not identify the village of Waterloo as a principal growth area for commercial and/or industrial development. However, there are several small properties currently zoned for commercial use and it is not the intent of the Strategy to suggest this commercial zoning should be removed. Rather, the Strategy recommends that no new additional lands in Waterloo be zoned for commercial use and that to the extent these existing commercially zoned properties are developed for commercial purposes, such uses should be geared toward meeting the day-to-day consumer needs of the local residents and visitors. Commercial uses in Waterloo which attract regional consumers or excessive vehicular traffic, and/or are characterized by comparatively large building volumes contrary to the existing or intended residential environment of the area.

Strong screening and buffer yard measures are proposed for new commercial and industrial development in the Commercial-Industrial Areas to minimize conflicts with surrounding residential and other uses generally not considered compatible with such development. Limitations on signage, building height, size, bulk, and related architectural qualities should be established to encourage compatibility of new land uses with the desired character of the surrounding areas.

Special Land Uses

The previous pages presented recommendations regarding the planned future land use pattern for the Township during the coming ten to twenty years. Each Area presented discusses the dominant land uses to be accommodated. As noted earlier, it is not the intent of this Plan to identify each individual land use which should be permitted in each of these Areas. Specific permitted land uses will be determined by the zoning provisions of the Township, based upon considerations of compatibility and the purpose of each zoning district.

The Township recognizes that some land uses may be considered generally compatible with the intent of a particular zoning district, yet may not be appropriate on a particular parcel in the subject zoning district due to unique or special conditions. These unique or special circumstances may be a result of traffic,

noise, or visual or operational characteristics, which if unmitigated could result in significant public or private nuisance. Such uses are typically referred to as *special land uses* in community zoning ordinances. They should be permitted only after a special review has determined that the land use and associated site development proposal meets special standards to assure its compatibility with surrounding land uses, other permitted uses in the district, public facilities and services, and other community features. Special land uses often include (but are not limited to) landing strips, mineral extraction pits, service stations, and kennels.

Special land uses should be permitted in appropriate locations pursuant to specific standards and review procedures established in the Township's zoning ordinance. Approval should not be indiscriminate and conditions should be imposed (as applicable) to minimize impacts on surrounding lands. Review and approval of such uses should strive to assure such uses are compatible with the character of adjacent property and the surrounding area, do not interfere with the general enjoyment of adjacent property, are not detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of persons or property, and can be adequately served by essential public facilities and services:

This Plan strongly discourages the approval of special land uses for disruptive commercial or industrial activities in residential areas, under the guise of "*home occupations*." These uses undermine the character of residential neighborhoods and quality of life for current and future residents.

Phased Zoning

This Plan does not recommend the rezoning of vacant land to a more intensive zoning district except in a phased or incremental manner. For example, while the Plan may identify Township areas that may be appropriate to accommodate commercial or higher density residential development, the Plan does not recommend "across the board" or immediate rezonings of these vacant lands. The Plan recommends that rezonings to more intensive districts occur incrementally over time. The Township must be capable of meeting increased public service demands and managing township-wide growth and development. Time is needed for carefully reviewing individual rezoning requests as they apply to the specific property. Rezoning should be in response to a demonstrated need, and minimize unnecessary hardships on the landowner as a result of property

assessments and/or resulting nonconforming uses
and structures.