

Future Land Use Plan

Introduction

The following future land use strategy is the result of the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC) making the necessary updates from its initial comprehensive plan (2005) to ensure that its plan remains an effective guide for the continued land use planning efforts of the 185 units of government in the Bay-Lake Region. The land use strategies identified were developed based on changing land uses (type and location), updated demographics, changing physical characteristics, updated regional goals and objectives, regional survey results, and by utilizing the knowledge of Region's advisory groups and experts from various organizations.

The following land use map depicts existing land cover as provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources which is used to complement the BLRPC's land use inventory identified in the Land Use component of this plan update. The land cover map provides an up-to-date, generalized land use image that illustrates the current growth centers and development patterns of the Bay-Lake Region as of 2016. Over the last decade, many areas of the Region have continued on the path of low-density, fragmented, noncontiguous development. Highway corridor development has also resulted in low-to-medium densities near major transportation corridors in rural areas as commute times diminish with upgrades to the Region's highway network.

Based on regional survey results and recent local comprehensive plan updates, many communities in the Region have reviewed the growth strategy of their local comprehensive plans and made amendments to encourage more compact or infill development, thereby limiting sprawl and fragmentation. The BLRPC recommends this development strategy in order to help communities provide residents, businesses, industries, etc. with efficient, cost effective public services, offers increased opportunities for public transit, and promotes active communities with bicycling and walking options. In addition, by limiting sprawl and land fragmentation, the Region is likely to see more preservation of agricultural land and experience greater opportunities to maintain and enhance the many significant natural resources found in Northeast Wisconsin.

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission values the comprehensive planning efforts of its local units of government. Nearly all of the local jurisdictions in the Region have comprehensive plans with future development/preservation strategies that are unique and meet their needs based the community's size and makeup. By utilizing the goals and objectives, along with the recommended development/preservation strategy of this regional plan, the communities of the Region are provided with a tool that can offer additional guidance toward establishing a healthy, thriving community into the future.

Environmental Corridors

Environmental corridors identifies several of the Region's significant natural resources (e.g., WDNR wetlands, 100-year floodplains, slopes 12% or greater, and shoreland areas). These features are intended to serve as a guide for communities in order to best minimize adverse impacts on these features, especially areas that are vulnerable to future development. The preservation and protection of these natural features continues to be a top priority as development pressures increase. The majority of natural features are either unsuitable for development, enhance the appearance of the community, or improve natural processes such as flood control, water retention, or groundwater recharge.

Woodlands / Forestry

Woodland and urban forests, along with open spaces and fallow fields, are planned to be preserved within the Region. Future residential development in these locations should be minimal. Any development should be designed to limit fragmentation of large woodland and open space areas, protect wildlife habitats, and maintain the natural beauty of the Region.

Park & Recreation

It is the intent of this plan to maintain/enhance the Region's vast number of existing park and recreation areas. Counties and communities in the Region are encouraged to work with surrounding jurisdictions and stakeholders to identify future local/regional recreation opportunities (e.g., parks, trails, etc.) for residents and visitors.

Community Facilities / Communication / Utilities

- Community facilities and utilities such as electric and natural gas services provided to Region residents will likely encounter expansions and upgrades due to continued development. Changing technologies including broadband communication, power generation and distribution, transportation improvements, source water and sanitary system advancements, etc. may provide many benefits, including cost effectiveness, safety, and convenience.
- Communities and counties are encouraged to work cooperatively to provide future services as cost effectively and efficiently as reasonably possible including future road services, recycling services, disposal of solid waste, police protection, fire and rescue services, etc.

Economic Development

COMMERCIAL:

- Commercial development in the Region, in many cases, has moved to areas along highway corridors where visibility is maximized along with the convenience of stop-and-go shopping. Communities with strip malls and other commercial developments located along a highway corridor should plan for in-fill development of empty lots along the corridor and adjacent to those frontage lots.
- As people travel farther to shop at larger retail/commercial centers, many downtowns are suffering the loss of small businesses. Therefore, communities should strongly consider planning for the re-use of vacant commercial buildings and/or redevelopment of the downtown areas.
- Communities should be wise in their enforcement of zoning and other ordinances to avoid any adverse impact on existing businesses and future businesses that might consider locating in the area.
- Communities should consider incentive programs for attracting new businesses to the area (e.g., programs for facade improvements, assistance with signing, revolving loan programs, etc.) to help make their downtowns more attractive.
- Infrastructure (e.g., roadways sewer, water, lighting, broadband, etc.), especially in the older downtowns and newly developed commercial corridors, should be updated or developed to ensure that the area can attract businesses and accommodate their needs including decent roadways, adequate sewer, water and storm sewer services, lighting, and broadband capabilities.
- Larger commercial developments should be located in areas where utilities are readily available or where the extension of such utilities will not overburden a community financially or physically.

INDUSTRIAL:

- It is recommended that future heavy industries be steered toward the established/proposed industrial parks, which provide the adequate services, infrastructure, and necessary transportation facilities.
- As manufacturing industries continue to decline and manufacturing jobs become harder to find, communities should plan for additional types of development that will stimulate their local economy.
- Evaluate the capacities of the utilities, infrastructure, and community services that are needed to accommodate high-tech industry developments or technology parks.
- Any existing and proposed industrial developments should make an effort to minimize any potential environmental impacts.

Residential Growth

URBAN RESIDENTIAL:

- Urban Residential areas are envisioned to continue to grow at relatively high densities with infill development and a mixture of housing types which are served by public sanitary sewerage and water supply. These areas also contain the necessary support uses (e.g., local commercial, work, dining, bicycle and pedestrian friendly, recreation, school facilities, etc.).
- An increase in senior living facilities and services is anticipated in the urban areas to accommodate the aging "baby boomer" generation, offering a walkable environment that includes ease of access to necessary services.
- Steering future residential developments to existing urbanized communities will aid in the preservation of the Region's prime farmlands, open spaces, and significant natural features.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL:

- These areas coincide with the movement of the population out of the urban core. This development type offers a transition area between urban and rural residential land uses at moderate densities. A variety of housing types is expected to continue in these areas which currently receive services such as public sewer and water, or have the potential to receive public services. Future suburban development should be located and designed to maximize the use of existing transportation and utility systems.
- As the "millennial" generation begins to form families, it is anticipated more housing will occur in the suburban areas as opposed to them generally living and working in urban areas as individuals. Senior living facilities are also expected to increase in numerous suburban communities of the Region since most of the necessary services are quickly accessible by short car trip or by walking.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL:

- Rural centers, or crossroad communities, are envisioned to provide for limited mixed use growth, while promoting residential and business infill along with redevelopment within and around the existing communities.
- The rural residential developments will continue to provide for spacious living environments at low densities. Developments consist mostly of single family housing found in a linear pattern along local travel corridors. Rural housing should have minimal adverse impacts on agriculture and woodlands while protecting existing unique natural areas.
- Waterfront properties are likely to experience infill development to the extent of the water body's ability to accommodate additional shoreline growth.
- The rural residential category also includes developments found along the numerous shorelines of inland lakes and rivers, and Lake Michigan, as well as the forested counties in the northern portion of the Region. The majority of the Region's seasonal homes and cottages are found in these areas which means communities must plan for a population that fluctuates frequently.

Transportation

- Work with communities and stakeholders to achieve a resilient and reliable transportation system that provides for all transportation modes (e.g., motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, etc.) and is compatible with surrounding land uses.
- Communities should address any road deficiencies and deterioration as industrial/agricultural equipment increases in size and weight. Evaluate pavement conditions of county and local roads and ensure proper maintenance.
- Changes to rail, airport, or port and harbor activities should be monitored and evaluated for potential impacts to the Region.
- Monitor and review WisDOT's long-range transportation planning efforts (e.g., Long Range Transportation Plan, Statewide Freight Plan, State Highway Plan, etc.) to determine any potential land use influences.

Agriculture

- The areas of agriculture-related land uses are recommended to be preserved for the continuation of farming activities. Proposed non-farm developments should be directed toward designated residential growth areas, while low density growth proposals should not significantly impact prime agricultural lands or agricultural productivity. Adequate buffers should be considered between farming and non-farming operations in order to lessen conflicts.
- The trend in farming within the State of Wisconsin continues to be the larger farming operations (e.g., CAFO's). Although the number of farms has declined over time, the average farm size and the number of livestock have increased. It is important, therefore that the farm operations continue to adhere to best management practices to protect water quality and also limit any other adverse impacts such as local road deterioration.

Action Plan

The following actions are intended to be used as a general guide to implement the regional comprehensive plan.

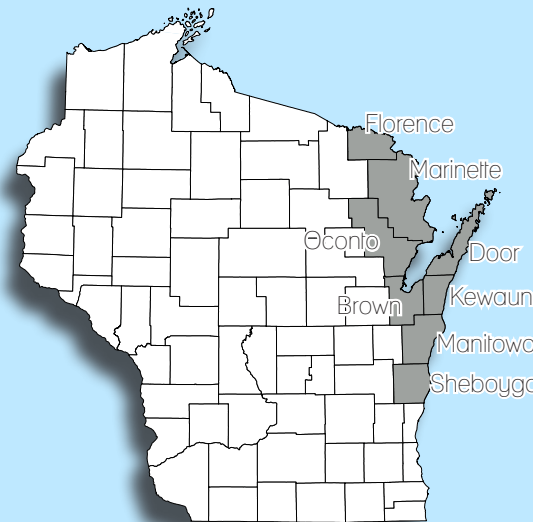
- This regional comprehensive plan should be referred to local units of government to assist them in making decisions regarding land use and land use policies.
- Oversee the comprehensive plan's recommendations and monitor/update the statistical projections within the comprehensive plan.
- Communicate with other units of government in an effort to identify shared goals, objectives, and strategies to promote the Region's development/preservation.
- Encourage cooperation and communication between neighboring municipalities, county government, and the BLRPC.
- Educate public officials, local plan commissions, and residents on the various development options including conservation developments, cluster districts, traditional neighborhoods - that will allow creative development opportunities while protecting and enhancing the natural resources of the Region.
- Work with communities to ensure their zoning and other land use implementation guides, such as this regional plan, can properly implement their local comprehensive plans.
- Continue to conduct a minor update of the regional plan's components every 3-to-5 years and a complete update of the plan every 10 years.



Land Cover

- Developed / Growth Center
- Agriculture
- Natural Areas/Grasslands
- Woodlands

Bay-Lake Region



Base Map Features

- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Railroad
- Surface Water
- Commercial Airport
- Port