

Land Use

Vision:

Iowa City guides development and growth in order to make wise and efficient use of land and infrastructure. In order to create a quality living environment for all area residents, the City will protect and promote the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods, while encouraging new development that is designed in a manner that is efficient and sustainable, compatible with and connected to surrounding development, and sensitive to its environmental context. Future development should adhere to the City's neighborhood principles for compact and contiguous development.

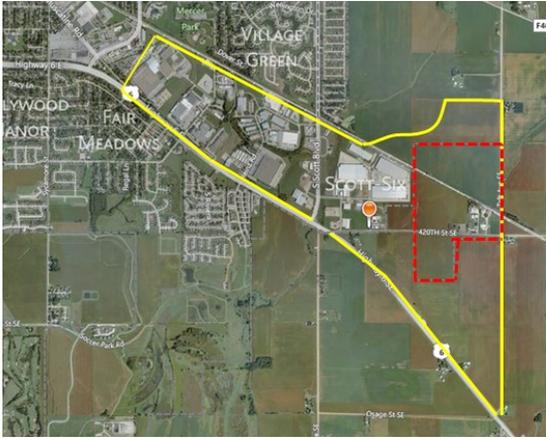
Land Use Goals and Strategies:

Encourage compact, efficient development that is contiguous and connected to existing neighborhoods to reduce the cost of extending infrastructure and services and to preserve farmland and open space at the edge of the city.

- Focus growth within the Iowa City urban growth area by using the City's extra-territorial review powers to discourage sprawl and preserve prime farmland.
- Guide development away from sensitive environmental areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, flood hazard areas, and streams.
- Recognize the important relationship between transportation and land use by requiring new neighborhoods to be designed in a manner that contributes to the larger interconnected street pattern of the city and that provides for safe, efficient and orderly movement of vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic.
- Blocks should be limited in size and be laid out in a pattern that ensures the connectivity of streets, provides for efficient provision of public and safety services, and establishes efficient and logical routes between residences and non-residential destinations and public gathering places.
- Identify areas and properties that are appropriate for infill development.
- Ensure that infill development is compatible and complementary to the surrounding neighborhood.



Iowa City requires all new subdivisions to connect into existing street networks and to provide opportunities to link into future developments by building stub streets. This not only builds continuity and connection for neighborhood residents, but allows for better traffic flow and more efficient provision of sewer, water and City services, including fire fighting and police protection, waste and recycling collection, and transit.



Iowa City's principal industrial area is located in the area between Highway 6, Scott Boulevard, and the Iowa Interstate Railroad. Industrial uses require large parcels on flat land with proximity to highway and rail. The yellow line shows future growth of the Industrial zone; the area in red is a recently added section of industrial property that is being marketed to firms associated with wind energy.

Plan for commercial development in defined commercial nodes, including small-scale neighborhood commercial centers.

- Use the District Plans to identify appropriate commercial nodes and zone accordingly to focus commercial development to meet the needs of present and future population.
- Discourage linear strip commercial development that discourages walking and biking and does not contribute to the development of compact, urban neighborhoods;
- Provide appropriate transitions between high and low-density development and between commercial areas and residential zones.

Focus industrial development on land suitable for industrial use with good access to rail and highways, but buffered from residential neighborhoods.

- Identify, zone, and preserve land for industrial uses in areas with ready access to rail and highways.
- Ensure adequate roads and other infrastructure that will attract new employers to the community.
- Plan for appropriate transitions between residential neighborhoods and higher intensity commercial to ensure the long-term health of neighborhoods.
- Provide adequate buffer areas between residential areas and intensive industrial activity to mitigate any negative externalities, such as noise, odors, dust, and vibrations.

Maintain a strong and accessible Downtown that is pedestrian-oriented with a strong and distinctive cultural, commercial, and residential character.

- Encourage continued investment in the Downtown to assure its place as the center of arts, culture, entertainment, commercial, and civic activity within the city and the metro area.
- Promote growth and development in the Riverfront Crossings District in a manner that increases its residential appeal and enhances the commercial viability of the Downtown.
- Preserve the historic, mainstreet character of the Downtown, while encouraging appropriate infill development to enhance the economic viability and residential diversity of the area.

Continue to protect our community's historical, environmental, and aesthetic assets.

- Develop strategies to encourage the protection of natural areas and historic features and support the enhancement of areas that can serve as assets and/or amenities for adjacent development.
- Use City projects, such as the riverfront redevelopment, as an opportunity to demonstrate the appropriate relationship between development and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Continue support for the Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan, the Sensitive Areas Ordinance, and Open Space requirements.
- Preserve and enhance the entranceways to the city. Consider the appearance of new development from major entranceways at the time of rezoning.

Review zoning and annexation of undeveloped areas to plan for the development of sustainable and livable neighborhoods.

- Zone for neighborhood development in conjunction with annexation.
- Continue coordinated efforts with surrounding municipal governments to plan for future growth and development.



Historic preservation policies have not only helped to save some of Iowa City's most historic buildings, but have also allowed creative re-use of buildings like the Park House Hotel at the corner of South Dubuque and Jefferson Street and the Carnegie Library at the Corner of South Linn and College Streets. Historic Districts have helped preserve the distinctive architecture of entire neighborhoods as varied as the elegant homes of Woodlawn at the east end of Iowa Avenue to the eclectic stone cottages of the Moffitt District.

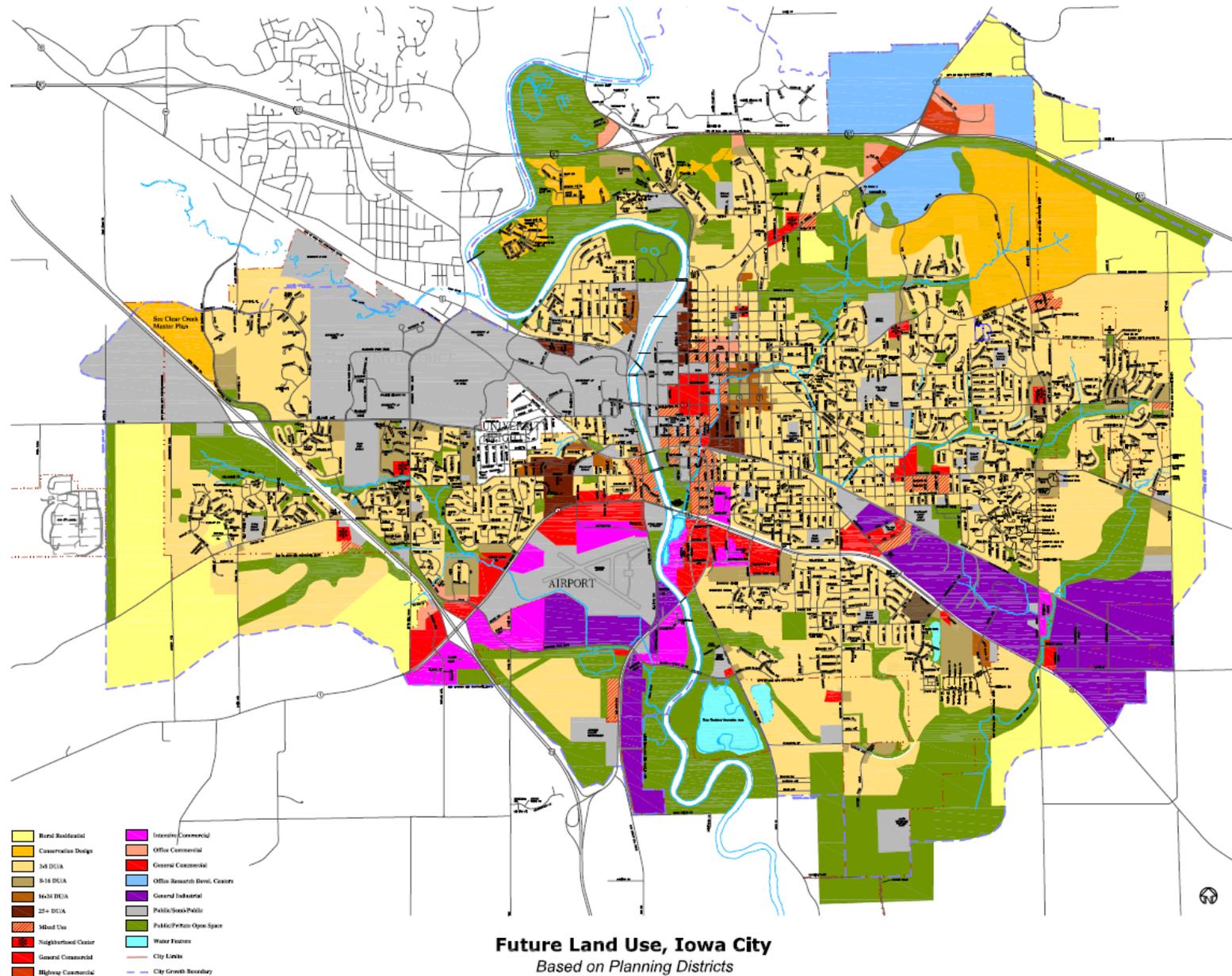
The land use map is intended to serve as a general guide for persons making decisions regarding the development of land within Iowa City. The map indicates appropriate land uses and density of development in relationship to available infrastructure, City services, environmental conditions, and surrounding land uses. The map must be viewed in the context of the overall Comprehensive Plan. Where District Plans have been adopted, more detail regarding specific locations and properties may be found in the District Plan.

In addition to the District Plans, the neighborhood design principles, beginning on page 19, should be considered when interpreting the land use map. For example, if a property is located at the intersection of a collector and an arterial street, the neighborhood design concepts indicate that alternatives to single-family development, i.e. neighborhood commercial or multi-family development, may be appropriate.

Areas that are shown as Rural Residential are areas that are not projected to have the utilities necessary for urban development in the foreseeable future or are areas that have sensitive environmental features that preclude development at urban densities. As infrastructure is extended, appropriate land uses or restrictions will need to be evaluated.

Conservation design is appropriate in areas containing steep slopes, woodlands, stream corridors, and other sensitive features and balance the protection of sensitive natural features with the development rights of property owners. By clustering development on more buildable portions of the property, natural areas can be preserved. Building sites are identified to take advantage of the views of the preserved land, and streets are designed to access the properties in a manner that minimizes disturbance of natural areas. The resulting subdivision has more compact areas of development, but less paving and more open space when compared to conventional development.

Future Land Use Map



A larger version of this map is available on page 51 of this document or by request from the Dept. of Planning and Community Development.