

9. Existing Land Use

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Introduction

From the historic downtown to the new housing developments, Evansville is a beautiful community with wonderful parks and expanding development potential. These attributes are echoed in the value statements presented in Chapters 1 and 2.

Existing Land Use Inventory

The *Existing Land Use Map* was created from information obtained by the City of Evansville. Existing land use information was initially obtained using the zoning map. Land uses were then verified for properties in question using a combination of visual inspections and utility information. The description of the land use categories illustrated on the *Existing Land Use Map* are as follows.

Single-Family Residential

Single-family residential development is spread throughout the City with the vast majority of neighborhoods in the central and western portions of the City. These consist of detached homes housing a single family. Single family residential is the dominant form of development in the City of Evansville, accounting for approximately 24% of all land use.



FIGURE 9A: EXAMPLES OF SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOUSING.

Two-Family Residential

Two-family residential development is scattered throughout the City. These mostly consist of recently built twin homes, historic two-flats, and single-family homes that have been converted to house two units. Two family homes in the older areas of the City tend to be scattered, while two family homes in newer areas are often located on corners or clustered together.



FIGURE 9B: EXAMPLES OF TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOUSING.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family dwellings are defined as residential units with three or more units per structure. These include single family homes that have been converted to multi-unit structures, parcels with multiple structures (e.g. the Prairie Crossing Planned Unit Development), small 5 unit apartment buildings, and 24+ unit apartment buildings and assisted living apartments.



FIGURE 9C: EXAMPLES OF MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOUSING.

Mixed Use

Mixed use land uses are currently concentrated in Evansville's downtown. These are characterized by buildings that accommodate both commercial and residential units within the same structure. Most of these parcels have commercial or retail uses on the lower floor and residential uses on the upper floors, while some have residential uses in a portion of the lower floor as well.



FIGURE 9D: EXAMPLES OF MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS.

Commercial

Commercial land uses are concentrated primarily along USH 14, in the Downtown, and on the east side. Commercial uses are scattered throughout the City. Commercial land uses include retail businesses, offices, restaurants, gasoline stations and service businesses like real estate agencies, banks, and auto repair establishments. Many commercial uses in the downtown are only differentiated from the mixed-use category in that they do not have residential uses on the same property.



FIGURE 9E: EXAMPLES OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

Industrial

Industrial land uses include light and heavy industrial activities. These include manufacturers, warehouses, laboratories, agricultural processing, and materials storage. Industrial properties are currently concentrated near the railroad corridor and along Water Street.



FIGURE 9F: EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

Government/Institutional

Government/Institutional uses include the city hall, churches, police station, fire station, community center, public parking lots, post office, schools and skilled nursing senior care facilities.



FIGURE 9G: EXAMPLES OF GOVERNMENT/ INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Parks and Open Space

This category includes public parks and public or privately owned open space, including stormwater management areas.

Wetlands

Areas of land in the City of Evansville that are mapped as wetlands by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and are currently in their naturally undeveloped state.

Agriculture/Undeveloped

Agricultural or undeveloped land in the City is land that is actively being cultivated or is in a transitional period between agricultural and development.

CALCULATING DENSITY

There are two primary ways to express density, net density and gross density.

Net Density is the number of residential units over the number of residential acres.

Gross Density is the number of residential units divided by all land. This calculation includes businesses, parks and open space, and streets.

Table 9.1 below is a numerical breakdown of the existing land uses in the City. In 2022, the net density (total number of dwelling units divided by all resident acres) in the City is 3.55 dwelling units/acre (2,244 housing units/ 630.59 acres). The current gross density in the City is 1.06 dwelling units/acre (2,244 housing units/2,119.87 acres). The densest portion of the City is the downtown, at 15.75 dwelling units/acre, the least dense portion of the City is Orchard View Estates and Brown School Road at 319 dwelling units/acre. In 2015, the net density in the City was 3.66 dwelling units/acre (2,095 housing units/ 571.72 acres).

Land Use	Area (Acres)	% of City Land Area
Residential		
Single-Family	630.59	29.75 %
Two-Family		
Multi-Family		
Central Mixed Use and Mixed Use	9.81	0.46 %
Business & Commercial	85.68	4.04 %
Government & Public	198.82	9.38 %
Social Institutional	16.95	0.80 %
Small Scale Industrial	86.23	4.07 %
Large Scale Industrial	135.39	6.39 %
Parks & Recreation	68.89	3.25 %
Open Space/ Conservation	158.65	7.48 %
Agriculture/ Undeveloped	454.92	21.46 %
Right of Way	273.93	12.92 %
Total	2,119.87	100%

Source: City of Evansville GIS 2022

Land Use and Development Regulations

What follows is an analysis of implemented planning and regulatory tools, which the city currently uses to guide land use in the city and the region.

Zoning

The City of Evansville completed a comprehensive update of its zoning code except the sections on residential land uses in 2000. At that time, the Municipal Code, including the Zoning Code, was recodified. A number of subsequent amendments have been approved to address a variety of issues.

Most of the challenges with respect to the Zoning Code stem from the fact that the code is relatively new. The City also has discovered many errors that occurred during the recodification process. Additionally, many amendments that were adopted have led to inconsistencies within the code when one section was changed, but the same change did not occur in other sections. Copies of the Zoning Code are available at City Hall and on the City's website.

Evansville's zoning code follows a traditional Euclidean¹ model that segregates uses by type and establishes dimensional requirements related to lot size, setbacks and building height. As new uses are created over time, they are listed specifically in the zones in which they are permitted. To be effective, this type of code must list every possible use and establish a zone in which that use would be appropriate. Euclidean codes are based on a philosophy that separation of uses will create a safer, healthier environment.

Alternative zoning models have been developed based on the building form and performance standards. Form-based zoning codes regulate a community based on the appearance (e.g. building line, landscaping, lighting, signage, building size, building materials, building design) rather than the type of use. Some communities are also using hybrid-zoning codes that combine performance and form-based zoning criteria to regulate land use. The City of Evansville Zoning Code does include some performance standards.

Subdivision Regulations and Extraterritorial Plat Review

The purpose of a subdivision ordinance is to regulate and control the division of land to:

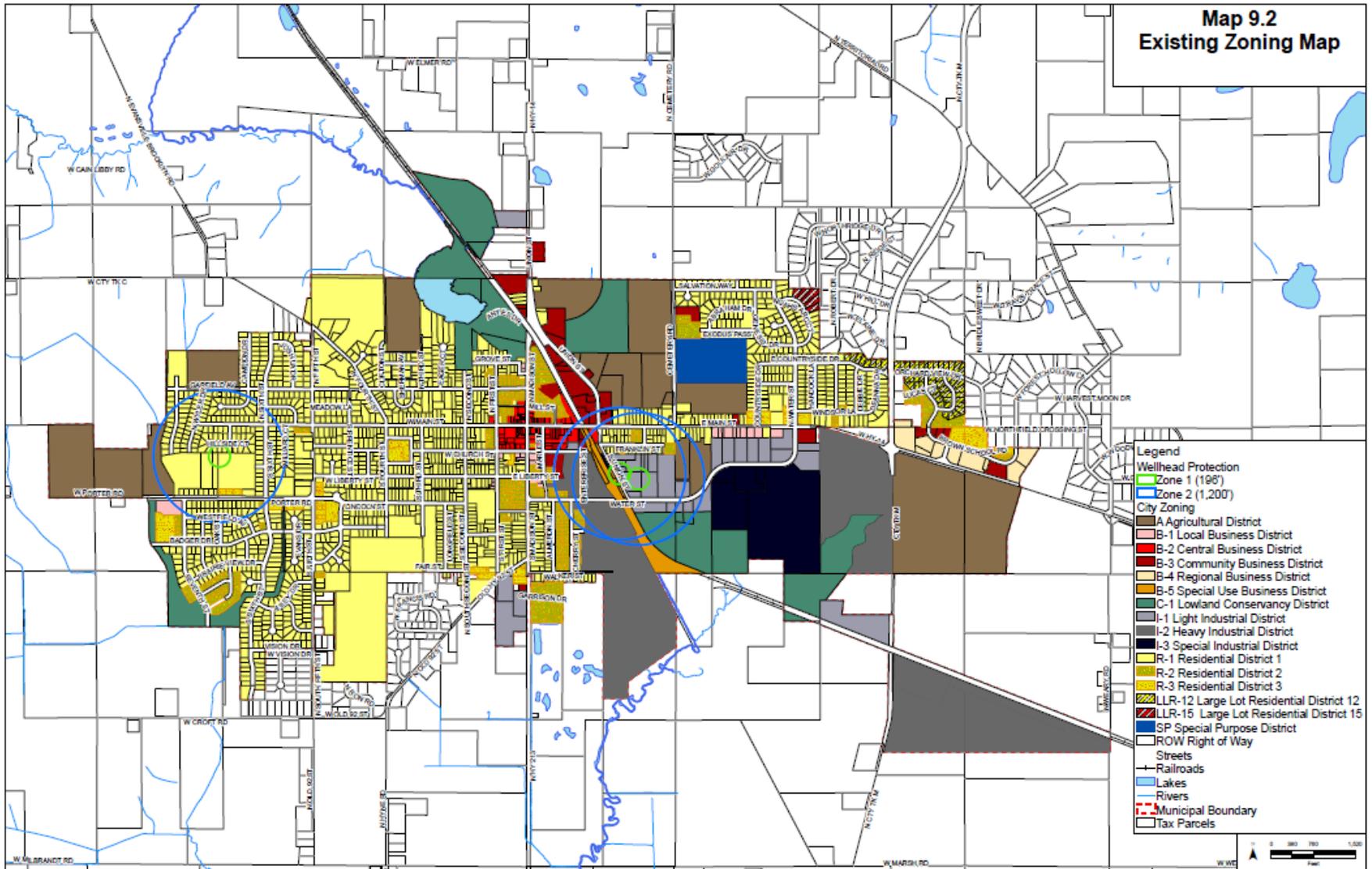
- Require the orderly layout and use of land (e.g. useable parcel shapes, through streets, no cul-de-sacs);
- Reduce congestion on streets and highways; and
- Facilitate adequate provision for water, wastewater and other public improvements.

A subdivision ordinance includes technical requirements, design standards for plats and certified survey maps, and required improvements (e.g. stormwater detention, public and private wastewater, land dedication).

The City currently has extraterritorial plat review authority. The extraterritorial plat review authority allows the City to regulate the subdivision of land within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of a municipality (the area surrounding Evansville within 1.5 miles of the City boundary). The objective of extraterritorial jurisdiction is to ensure development occurring outside of the City does not negatively impact the future development of the City or its residents. This authority allows the City to review land divisions that are proposed up to 1.5 miles beyond the municipal boundaries to ensure street extensions, environmental corridors, parks, and other services are appropriately considered for current and future residents of the City and region.

¹ Reference to *Euclid vs. Amber Realty Company*, 1926 U.S. Supreme Court Decision, which serves as the foundation for zoning practice in the United States.

Map 9.2: Existing Zoning Map



Extraterritorial Zoning

An important implementation tool for this plan is an extraterritorial zoning code.

The City of Evansville and the Town of Union prepared an extraterritorial zoning code which was repealed in 1988. Accordingly, the City has no extra-territorial zoning authority, only extraterritorial plat review authority.

Official Map

The official map is one of the oldest plan implementation devices at the disposal of the local communities. It is also one of the most effective and efficient devices to manage the problem of reserving land for future public use. Section 62.23(6) of the Wisconsin Statutes provides that the governing body of any local municipality may establish an official map for the precise identification of right-of-way lines and site boundaries of streets, highways, waterways, and parkways, and the location and extent of railway right-of-ways, public transit facilities, and parks and playgrounds. Such a map has the force of law and is deemed to be final and conclusive with respect to the location and width of both existing and proposed streets, highways, waterways, and parkways, the location and extent of railway right-of-ways, public transit facilities, parks and playgrounds. The statutes further provide that the official map may be extended to include areas beyond the corporate limits but within the extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction of the municipality.

The official map is thus intended to implement the community's master plan of streets, highways, parkways, parks, and playgrounds. Its basic purpose is to inhibit the construction of buildings or structures and their associated improvements on land that has been designated for future public use. Unlike subdivision control, which operates on a plat-by-plat basis, and acts on development proposals, the official map can operate over the entire City in advance of development proposals. The official map is a useful device to achieve public acceptance of long-range plans, since it serves legal notice of the government's intention to all parties concerned well in advance of any actual improvements. It thereby voids the altogether too common situation of development being undertaken without knowledge or regard for the long-range plan.

The City of Evansville has adopted an official map, which includes all of the property within the 1.5-mile extraterritorial limits.

Trends in Supply, Demand, and Price of Land

This portion of the chapter reviews existing trends in the supply, demand, and price of land in the city and region.

Farming

Area farmers are experiencing pressure to accommodate rural residential development. Nearby townships and Rock County identify agricultural preservation within the townships as a high priority. The City and its residents also rely on the preservation of prime farmland both for cultural identity and for economic opportunity. The City strongly supports the townships in preserving agricultural land in the townships, provided the land to be preserved is not identified in this plan's *Future Land Use Map* as being a likely site of future urban development.

The City accommodates residential development within the City at urban densities to help preserve farmland. By coordinating with the Town of Union through extraterritorial zoning, Evansville can better direct development away from farmland and to areas of the City.

Commercial and Industrial Development

Commercial development in the City is concentrated primarily in the downtown and along USH 14. This pattern is expected to continue, though there is some opportunity for neighborhood services to be developed, particularly on the west side of the City. Neighborhood services could include a dentist or doctor's office, optometrists, dry-cleaners, sandwich shops, convenience stores, or similar small neighborhood businesses. If commercial land uses are included within future residential subdivisions, the commercial locations should be explicitly noted on the subdivision plats, so potential purchasers of nearby residential lots will have notice. Larger commercial areas would

remain concentrated in the downtown and along USH 14. Industrial development is concentrated primarily along Water Street and the railroad corridor.

Demand

As reflected in state and local population projections, the City's population is expected to steadily increase over the next 20 years. Accordingly, demand for housing is expected to remain high. New housing construction for all stages of life and all lifestyles will be important to meet local demand. Community survey and visual preference survey respondents indicated they supported offering a variety of local housing types, including single-family houses, two-family dwellings, and multi-family housing. Incorporating universal design and promoting infill development will be necessary to satisfy housing demand. By providing choices, the City can accommodate the housing demands of families, single individuals, retirees, young professionals and others over a broad range of incomes and lifestyles. Without offering diverse housing, Evansville will have difficulty attracting employers and residents, as well as allowing people to remain in Evansville throughout their lifecycle.

Trends in Land and Housing Prices

Land prices in the City are expected to steadily rise in value as more and more people continue to move to the community to take advantage of its great location, schools, parks, and other amenities. After the Great Recession and the associated housing market collapse, America is now seeing a 20 year low in the percentage of home owners. Due to this shift towards renting rather than owning, home prices have recovered slowly post-recession, while rents have increased much faster than incomes. As land and housing prices have increased, housing in the City, particularly rental housing has become less affordable. More information on housing affordability can be found in Chapter 4: Housing.

Annexation

As documented in the Community Profile Chapter, the City is expected to grow. This growth will require annexation. Annexation from neighboring communities can be challenging and result in conflicts. To help mitigate that potential, the City made extensive efforts to include neighboring communities in the planning process to provide opportunities for communication about these challenges. Historically, the City has only annexed land as landowners proposed new developments or as property owners in the Town of Union have requested annexation to deal with failing septic systems by connecting to City sewer and water.

SB 87 (2003 Wisconsin Act 317) prohibits a city or village from annexing any town territory unless the city or village agrees to pay the town, for five years, an amount equal to the amount of property taxes that the town levied on that territory in the year in which the annexation is final. However, a city or village is not required to make payments to the town if the governments enter into one of three specified boundary agreements.