

Chapter 3

LAND USE PLAN

CHAPTER PURPOSE

The land use plan is the basic building block in a community's comprehensive plan. The plan identifies where people will live, shop, work and play. Development and redevelopment anticipated in the plan drives the need for all types of infrastructure – sewer, water, roads, parks and more. In addition, the land use plan helps the Planning Commission and City Council make decisions on individual development requests.

The purpose of the land use plan is to identify appropriate locations for all types of land use, including where different land use types can be located in proximity to one another. It also provides critical background data for infrastructure planning. The land use plan appendix specifies criteria for determining the appropriate location for a specific land use and identifies strategies to ensure that different types of uses exist together harmoniously.

LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

Establish and maintain a land use pattern that reflects the community's desire to provide for a variety of land uses, including residential neighborhoods of varying densities and housing types, retail commercial and office areas, industrial developments, civic uses and parks and open space.

- Encourage the mixing of complementary uses to enhance convenience, livability and accessibility and decrease traffic.
- Facilitate clustering of new development to preserve natural communities identified in the 2006 *Natural Resources Inventory*.
- Support the needs of an aging population for shopping, passive and active recreation, including walking and biking trails, and other support services within easy access.
- Support further subdivision within existing low density neighborhoods only when it is consistent with the density and intensity of the neighborhood and meets the standards and intent of the subdivision regulations.
- Encourage preservation of outlots that were created for open space in return for smaller lot sizes in the adjacent neighborhoods.

- Require vegetative screening and other types of buffers to provide transitions between land uses of different intensities, e.g. low density neighborhoods and retail commercial developments.
- Promote sustainable building practices in all new developments and redevelopments.
- Support redevelopment of obsolete, underutilized and deteriorated uses.
- As northwest Plymouth continues to develop, respect the many natural features that reflect the character of the area.

Achieve a balance among: 1) efficient delivery of public services; 2) preservation of natural and cultural resources; and 3) respect for individual property rights.

- Provide public services and facilities in a cost-effective manner.
- Support an orderly and efficient staging of infrastructure and utilities.
- Apply development standards that protect the environment and advance community values while allowing sound use of private property.
- Encourage resource preservation in areas where parks and open spaces are planned and in areas of high erosion potential (steep slopes and bluffs).
- Promote solar access protection.
- Where feasible, support preservation of resources (sites and structures) that are historically significant to Plymouth.

Encourage that all areas of Plymouth be visually appealing, vital and continually maintained.

- Apply development standards that produce quality design, aesthetic appeal and compatibility in building height and mass between existing properties and adjacent new development.
- Establish regulations that ensure all types of residential, commercial and industrial structures and properties are maintained.
- Construct and maintain high quality, attractive public facilities.

Pursue complementary economic growth and redevelopment opportunities that serve to further enhance the community's economic and social vitality and in turn help sustain Plymouth's high quality of life.

- Promote development of well-designed commercial and industrial uses to maintain the community’s diversified tax base and provide varied employment opportunities.
- Support existing Plymouth businesses.
- Recruit diverse businesses that are complementary to Plymouth’s existing businesses.
- Support redevelopment of obsolete and deteriorated commercial and industrial development.
- Encourage development and infrastructure improvements that support the daytime worker population.

Support efforts that strengthen community identity, contribute to a high quality of life and enhance Plymouth as a desirable place to live, work and play.

- Strengthen City Center as a community-wide focal point.
- Provide non-motorized connections across major physical barriers at key locations where feasible.
- Encourage new development to integrate pedestrian and bicycle facilities—both within and connecting to adjacent development – and transit facilities.
- Encourage development or redevelopment, where needed or appropriate, of high profile buildings with high quality finishes at major entrances to the community.

DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

ELIMINATION OF OVERLAY DISTRICT

The 2030 plan divided the city into two areas: northwest Plymouth and the existing urban area. As noted in the following paragraphs, there is no longer a need to look at these areas differently.

In the 2030 plan, the City established an overlay district that covered all of the northwest area of the city and a Rural-to-Urban Transition within the overlay district. In conjunction with the overlay district and transition area, the city incorporated new land use guide plan classifications and performance standards for the development in the northwest area.

Since the adoption of the 2030 plan in 2009, Plymouth has experienced substantial residential development, primarily in the northwest area of the city. Consequently, now that the area is largely developed, there is no longer a need to differentiate the northwest area from the rest of the city. This plan

therefore eliminates the overlay district and its associated guide plan classifications and performance standards. How the guiding of properties with rural-to-urban classifications changes with the elimination of the overlay is outlined below:

<u>Current Classification</u>	<u>New Classification</u>
LA-RT Living Area-Rural Transition	LA-1
LA-R1 Living Area-Rural 1	LA-1
LA-R2 Living Area-Rural 2	LA-2
LA-R3 Living Area-Rural 3	LA-3

The City will amend the zoning ordinance to eliminate the district and development standards that correspond to the LA-R land use classifications.

POTENTIAL CHANGE AREAS

There are areas throughout the city, including the northwest area, where land use change may occur over the course of the next 20 years.

Following input and review, the City changed the land use classification for several linear parcels west and east of Vicksburg Lane that will become part of the Northwest Greenway trail corridor. The City did not formally change the land use classification for the other affected parcels, but they are specially noted on the land use plan map. The areas include: 1) the southeast corner of County Roads 47 and 101; 2) the southwest quadrant of State Highway 169 and County Road 10; 3) the southwest quadrant of State Highway 169 and 36th Avenue; 4) the industrial area southeast of Medicine Lake; and 5) the northwest, southwest and southeast quadrants of I-494 and State Highway 55. The City anticipates further detailed study of the future land uses in these five areas.

Southeast Corner of County Roads 47 and 101

The easternmost parcel was guided LA-R2 (2-4 units/acre) in the 2030 plan. The other parcel was split between LA-4 (12-20 units/acre) and commercial use. Given the adjacent lower density uses, the City may support reguiding the larger parcel to LA-2.

Southwest Quadrant of State Highway 169 and County Road 10

This area is a mix of commercial uses, including car dealerships, vacant land and older industrial uses. It is likely that parts of the area will develop or redevelop over the next 20 years. The need for further study

is driven by the number of different property owners, variety of uses, adjacent residential development and existing traffic concerns in the area.

Southwest Quadrant of State Highway 169 and 36th Avenue

The commercial area between 34th and 36th Avenues has been of interest during the past two comprehensive planning efforts. However, the City has never initiated any detailed study of the area. Given recent interest in redevelopment of the northernmost parcels and the likelihood of additional redevelopment in the area, it became a candidate for further study.

Industrial Area Southeast of Medicine Lake

Many older industrial buildings in this area cannot satisfy the demands of the existing industrial market. During the planning period, some of the industrial buildings in the area will become less competitive in the market. At the same time, this area is located adjacent to one of the City's greatest natural assets, Medicine Lake, as well as an extensive park and trail system. In addition, the area has good highway access, plus many of the properties are located such that they are not negatively impacted by highway noise. Consequently, the City supports a transition to commercial office uses for much of the area and a change to higher density residential use for the area adjacent to Medicine Lake. The density would be determined by the type of design – use of low impact environmental design, including open space preservation and high quality architectural design are elements that could increase the density that the City would allow.

Northwest, Southwest and Southeast Quadrants of I-494 and State Highway 55

These areas may be considered gateways into Plymouth. Existing uses include a combination of commercial and light industrial, plus restaurants, hotels, storage facilities and a bank. Prior to the 2008 recession, a developer had looked at redevelopment of the southwest quadrant for office uses. The need for further study is based on the prominence of these areas.

MIXED USE

Mixed use development allows the mixing of higher intensity land uses in one building or the physical integration of different uses on the same lot or within close proximity. Typically, mixed use includes a combination of retail, office, cultural or entertainment uses with higher density residential use. However, these uses can occur in combination without housing and still be considered mixed use. To date, the City has processed one mixed use project at the site of the former Plymouth Shopping Center (State Highway 55 between South Shore and West Medicine Lake Drives).

Plymouth will allow mixed use to occur with or without housing as a component. Mixed use developments will be processed as a planned unit development (PUD), with the location of specific uses and development criteria determined through that process.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Plymouth presently has no sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, there is an active Plymouth Historical Society that will lead any preservation efforts within the city. The City will continue to provide assistance to the historical society in order to meet common objectives.

SOLAR ACCESS PROTECTION

Protecting solar access means protecting solar collectors (or the location of future collectors) from shading by adjacent structures or vegetation. The City recognizes the importance of protecting solar access. In addition to allowing solar energy systems as a permitted use in all zoning districts, the zoning ordinance provides standards for establishing and protecting solar energy systems. The ordinance limits building height in all zoning districts and requires a conditional use permit to exceed the height limitations. In approving a conditional use permit to exceed the height standard, the City Council must find that the building would not limit solar access to abutting or neighboring properties. While these standards go a long way to protect solar access, mature trees, topography and the location of structures make it difficult to obtain unobstructed access on every lot.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Table 3-2 provides a breakdown of future land uses within the city, calculated for each distinct land use classification.

**TABLE 3-2
FUTURE LAND USE**

Land Use Plan Classification	Total Gross Acres	Cumulative % of Total
LA-1, Living Area 1	7,193	31.6%
LA-2, Living Area 2	3,223	14.1%
LA-3, Living Area 3	624	2.7%
LA-4, Living Area 4	578	2.5%
LA-5, Living Area 5	4	0.02%
Sub-Total Living Areas	11,622	50.9%
C, Commercial	474	2.1%
CC, City Center	133	0.6%
CO, Commercial Office	597	2.6%
IP, Planned Industrial	1,739	7.6%
P-I, Public/Semi-Public/Institutional	3,077	13.5%
MXD, Mixed Use	16	0.1%
Roads, Railroad, Etc.	3,419	15.0%
Lakes	1,710	7.5%
Sub-Total Non-Living Areas	11,165	49.0%
TOTAL	22,787	99.9%

Source: City of Plymouth

When interpreting the land use plan as found in Figure 3-1, the City will use the following guidelines:

- Where applicable, the boundary between two land use classifications will be considered to extend to the center of an adjacent street.
- In undeveloped areas, the classifications on the plan assume that the boundary between classifications will follow major roads. Consequently, if the final alignment of a road changes from that shown on the map, the line on the land use plan will also move to reflect the adjusted road alignment.

For residential, commercial and industrial classifications, there is more than one corresponding zoning district. More than one district may be applicable to a particular site depending on: 1) the type and density/intensity of uses; 2) compatibility with the comprehensive plan, including public facilities (e.g. transportation and sanitary sewer); and 3) the purposes of the individual zoning district.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Residential use is predominant in Plymouth, comprising just over half of the city’s total acreage. The land use plan provides for a broad range of housing opportunities in four different “Living Areas.” Each specifies a range of acceptable densities.

The City will continue to provide opportunities for a broad range of housing styles for people in all stages of the life cycle. While the plan recognizes that detached homes are the most dominant housing option in Plymouth, this plan strives to provide opportunities for a variety of housing styles developed in a range of densities.

The City has established minimum and maximum densities for each living area as illustrated in Figure 3-1. All new development will be required to meet the minimum density guidelines unless the developer can demonstrate that site characteristics make it infeasible to reach this goal. Density is based on the net acreage of the site (which excludes wetlands and areas below the 100-year ordinary high water level for lakes and streams) divided by the number of dwelling units.

COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Commercial land uses occupy a relatively small amount of the City's land area (just over five percent). However, their location and accessibility are critical to providing residents with necessary goods and services. The location of and access to a specific commercial site is directly related to the type and intensity of commercial use that the site can support.

The land use guide plan includes three commercial guiding designations, consisting of "CO" (commercial office), "C" (commercial) and "CC" (city center).

To protect the health, safety and general welfare of the surrounding uses and the community as a whole, proposed commercial developments must be carefully evaluated in terms of their access, location, size, intensity, traffic generation, context, site plan and building orientation, structural aesthetics and transition to non-commercial uses. Access and how much traffic a proposed development will generate will be major considerations in determining the zoning for a commercially-guided site.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Although residential use is the predominant land use in Plymouth, industrial land (less than eight percent of the City's land area) provides opportunities for much of Plymouth's employment base. Convenient locations with access to regional highway and railway routes and other services needed for business development have made Plymouth an important industrial employment center for the western part of the region. The jobs and tax base that industrial uses provide are important contributors to the economic vitality of the community.

With the continued evolution of the information age, Plymouth has seen a shift in the nature of its industrial users. Current trends show a greater amount of area devoted to office uses and the associated higher demand for parking. The City will need to balance the demand for parking with other objectives, including limiting impervious surfaces and promoting travel demand management.

To protect the health, safety and general welfare of the surrounding uses and the community as a whole, the City must carefully evaluate industrial developments in terms of their access, location, size, intensity, traffic generation, context, site plan and building orientation, structural aesthetics and transition to non-industrial uses. Access and how much traffic a proposed development will generate will be major considerations in determining the zoning for an industrially-guided site.

PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL LAND USES

The objective of public, semi-public and institutional uses is to provide services, frequently on a non-profit basis, rather than the sale of goods and services. In Plymouth, public/semi-public uses make up 13.5 percent of the city's land area. Many of these uses, such as schools, churches and parks are essential to the creation of a healthy, well-balanced community. Others, such as public utility structures are essential to providing municipal sewer and water, which residents and businesses rely upon on a daily basis. Where these services are located is an important community consideration.

Some institutional facilities such as places of worship, schools, parks and recreation facilities can be suitably located in residential neighborhoods. Schools and parks in particular often become the focus of the neighborhood in which they are located. Public service facilities such as post offices and libraries are more appropriately located in or near neighborhood centers.

The development of other uses such as correctional treatment and detention facilities need to be carefully planned and regulated consistent with state law.

MIXED USE

The mixed use classification allows the integration of land uses of different intensity within close proximity. In the City of Plymouth, it means a developer can mix residential and non-residential uses or different types of non-residential uses, which, in turn, can reduce reliance on the automobile and increase convenience for residents.

2040 CITYWIDE DEVELOPMENT

The City foresees development occurring at the levels illustrated in Table 3-3. The table illustrates that Plymouth’s residential density in currently undeveloped areas will range from 3.2 units per acre to 6.1 units per acre.

**TABLE 3-3
LAND USE IN 5-YEAR STAGES**

Classification	Allowed Density Range		Undeveloped	2018-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	Total Min. Units	Total Max. Units
	Minimum	Maximum								
Residential			Net Acres	Net Acres						
LA-1	2	3	206.7		103.4	103.3			413	620
LA-2	3	6	216.9	40.0	96.9	80.0			651	1,301
LA-3	6	12	25.5		25.5				153	306
LA-4	12	20	16.5		16.5				198	330
Residential Subtotal			465.6	40.0	242.3	183.3	-	-	1,415	2,557
C/I Land Uses										
C						10.1				
CO	6	20	18.8						113	376
									Min. U/A	Max. U/A
Total			484.4	40.0	242.3	193.4			3.20	6.10

Net acres equals gross acres minus wetland, floodplain, ROW (arterials), parks and buffers

Source: City of Plymouth

CONSISTENCY WITH OFFICIAL CONTROLS

State law requires consistency between a community’s comprehensive plan and official controls.

Whenever the City makes a change to its comprehensive plan, the City will review its official controls, including the zoning ordinance, to identify possible inconsistencies between the adopted plan and official controls. An inconsistency would be any official control that is in direct conflict with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.

To maintain consistency between the land use plan and zoning map, the City will only rezone property consistent with the land use plan. Appendix 3C identifies which zoning districts are generally consistent with each of the land use classifications. Zoning districts not specifically identified under each land use classification may also be allowed if the resulting density and type of development are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

The City has established a uniform process and criteria for amending the land use plan. The outline of the process and review criteria are found in Appendix 3D.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following specific implementation strategies are planned to carry out the land use plan. These strategies are in addition to the enforcement of the City’s existing official controls (zoning, subdivision and other regulations that are part of the city code), which are some of the most important tools for implementation of the City’s land use policies.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<p>Zoning Map Amendments– Continue to use the FRD (Future Restricted Development) zoning district as a holding zone until property is rezoned concurrent with review of development plans. Consider amendments to rezone property consistent with the 2040 Land Use Plan, provided that the development does not result in the premature extension of public utilities, facilities and services.</p>	Short
<p>Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 21, Plymouth City Code) – Eliminate the RSF-R district (single family detached rural to urban transition), which is no longer needed with the elimination of the rural-to-urban land use classifications.</p>	Short
<p>Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 21, Plymouth City Code) – Review the ordinance text and map to identify any inconsistencies with the comprehensive plan and propose amendments as necessary.</p>	Short
<p>City Center – Schedule additional streetscape improvements, including lighting, landscaping, signage and street furniture as part of the future capital improvement programs.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Historic Preservation – Identify historic landmarks in the city and work with the Plymouth Historical Society to preserve and promote them.</p>	Ongoing