

Chapter 12 – Thoughtful Land Use and Growth Management:2040

This chapter identifies future land use needs and development within Earlham and the identified planning area described in Chapter 4. Thoughtful land use planning involves difficult decisions about when, where, and how development is allowed to occur and incentives are used. The public made it clear that growth management is vital. They don't want Earlham to look like Waukee and its neighborhoods of cookie-cutter homes. Strategic growth is desired, in which existing residents have a say in what happens. This plan considers these thoughts. Additionally, the plan includes future development options to accommodate developer and landowner preferences.

This chapter discusses:

- Summary of current conditions from Chapter 3.
- Summary of public input about future thoughtful land use and growth management needs and vision.
- Planning boundary and future land use key considerations and needs/demands.
- Analysis of future land use patterns and a future land use map for the city and its planning area.
- Thoughtful development goals, polices, and action items.

Summary of Current Conditions

The following matrix itemizes the positive and negative characteristics identified in the background research concerning the topic of this chapter.

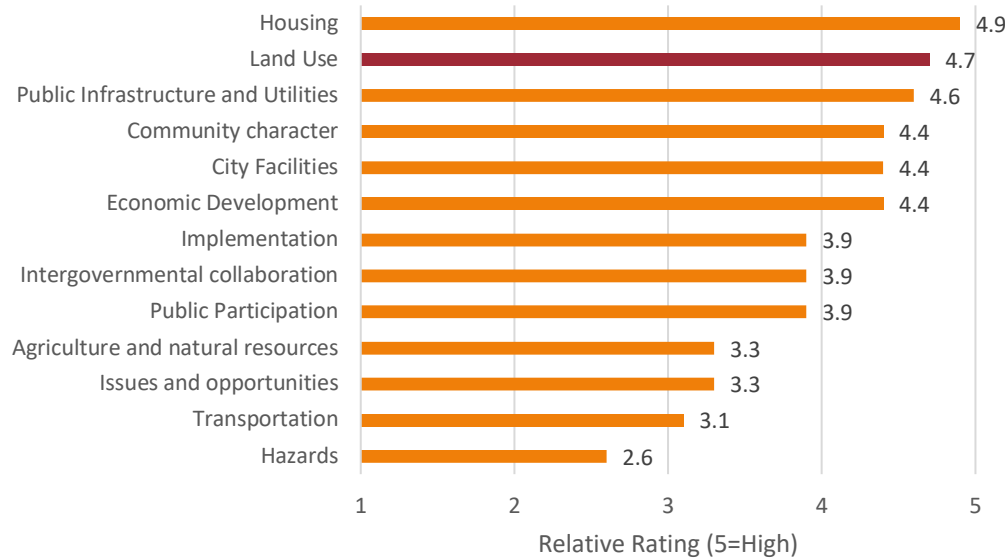
Figure 12.1: Current Conditions Matrix for Thoughtful Land Use and Growth Management

Thriving Earlham	Struggling Earlham
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on the size of the city and its proximity to Des Moines, the large areas for single-unit residential and agriculture are good. In fact, the area used for agriculture might be a bit low when one considers that many farmers may be unwilling to sell. Fortunately, land just outside of the city is not yet developed.• Like Earlham proper, the planning area is mostly flat with some rolling hills dissected by small steams. Most of the area is used for row crop production.• However, the growth generated by the metro is notable surrounding Earlham compared to more remote parts of Iowa. Considerable acres, equal to the entire size of Earlham's city boundary, are used for residential purposes, mostly individual large-lot acreages. Subdivisions are in development north of the interstate. An estimated 500 people today live in the planning boundary. The mix of uses in the planning area indicates it is poised for further growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a projected shortage of land for residential, commercial, and industrial development needed by 2040.• Many landowners are unwilling to sell their land to facilitate planned development. Some will wait until they can collect maximum value for their land, which may not result in planned and thoughtful land use patterns.

Summary of Public Input About Thoughtful Land Use and Growth Management Needs and Vision

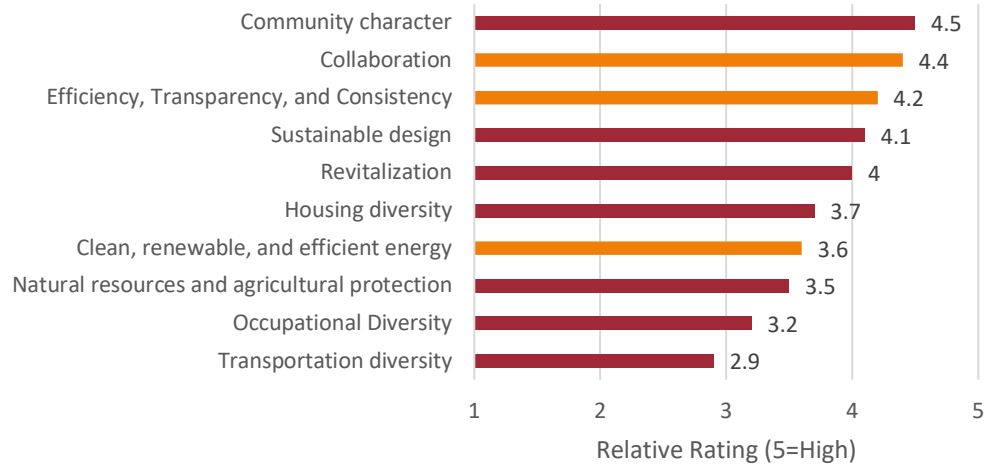
Land use and growth management are concerns of Earlham area residents and leaders. Many of the questions in the survey relate to this topic, all illustrated and analyzed here. A question was asked during the first steering committee meeting: “How are we intentional about keeping our culture of togetherness as we grow?” This is a great question for any community, especially one like Earlham that faces growth pressure. It is important that some growth occurs, but it is also vital that this strong community character of Earlham be retained. This can only happen through managed and planned growth.

Figure 12.2: Relative Importance of Iowa Smart Planning 13 Planning Elements According to the Steering Committee



Land use is among the highest priorities of the 13 Iowa Smart Planning Elements. Accordingly, this chapter will provide detailed analysis and several goals, actions, and policy suggestions.

Figure 12.3: Relative Importance of Iowa Smart Planning 10 Planning Principles According to the Steering Committee



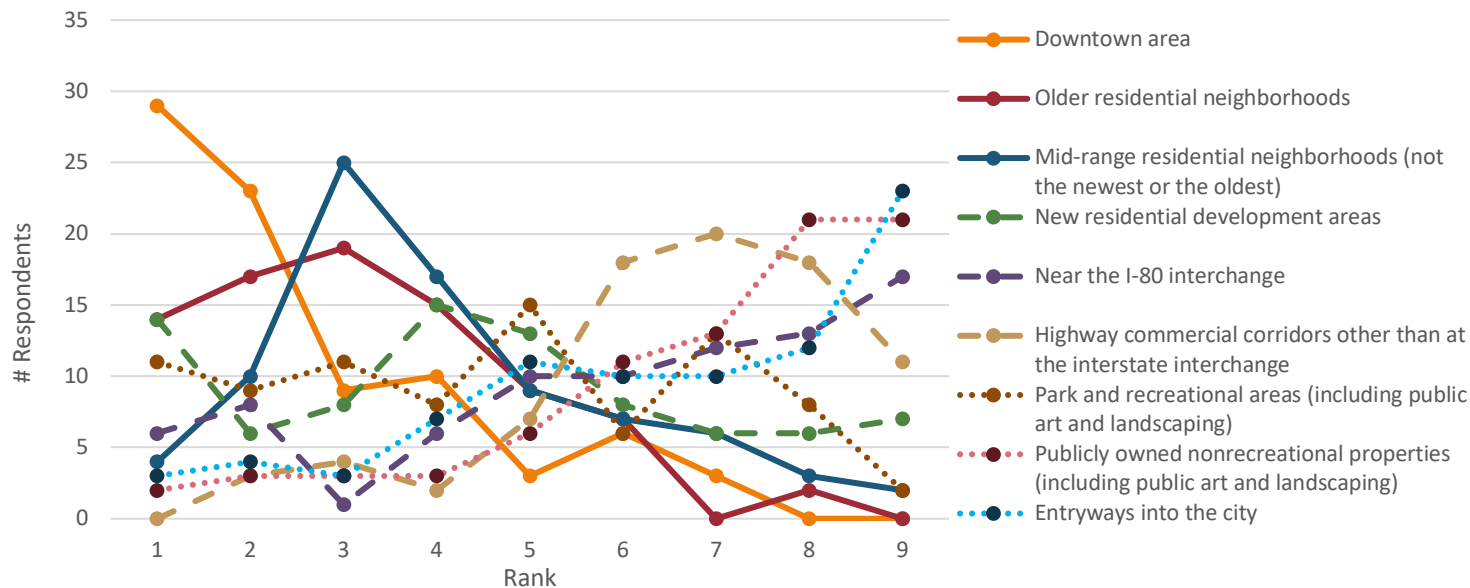
Land use and growth management relates to all 10 Smart Planning Principles but perhaps relate the most to the seven highlighted here. The community character is greatly impacted by changes in land use as Earlham grows and develops. Sustainable design and rehabilitation will reduce the impact on natural resources and agricultural areas. Proper land use planning will help ensure greater housing, occupational, and transportation diversity.

Figure 12.4: Steering Committee Four Questions Exercise Comments Related to Land Use and Growth Management

Biggest Opportunities	Biggest Challenges	One Big Dream	One Big Fear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Des Moines metro. • Small town feel or small-town living. • Bedroom community that is NOT just a bedroom community. • Bringing new families into the community. • Bike trails connecting to larger trails. • Grow residential and retail zoning. • Opportunity for growth – business and housing. • Commercial and residential growth. • Engage Chestnut St. with businesses to drive street traffic. • Grow housing strategically to match needed workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of development land. • Acquiring land for growth – buildings for new businesses. • Need more businesses and places for businesses. • Housing (affordability and availability). • New businesses opportunities. • Incorporating farmland in zones. • Housing. Keeping up with our growth. • Being landlocked for development. • Calculated growth. • Appropriate zoning. • Housing development – sustained growth. • School landlocked and growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth while maintaining identity. • Nice, controlled growth. • My biggest dream is for Earlham to maintain its small-town charm while accommodating just enough growth to keep the school district and community thriving on its own. • Expand residential base and grow to 2000. • Bypass highway around town. • Slow, steady growth that we can keep up with – infrastructure. • Smart growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not growing and getting left behind – missing our opportunity. • Losing the businesses we have. • Lack of growth and turning into a dying town. • My biggest fear is that Earlham will be swallowed up by urban sprawl from the east. • My biggest fear is that uncoordinated/unplanned sprawl would result in a loss of community and pit neighborhoods and businesses against one another. • Not being able to keep up with our growth. No housing available. Landlocked. • That we look like DeSoto. • Growing too fast and losing the small-town environment. • Lack of housing = no growth for our town.

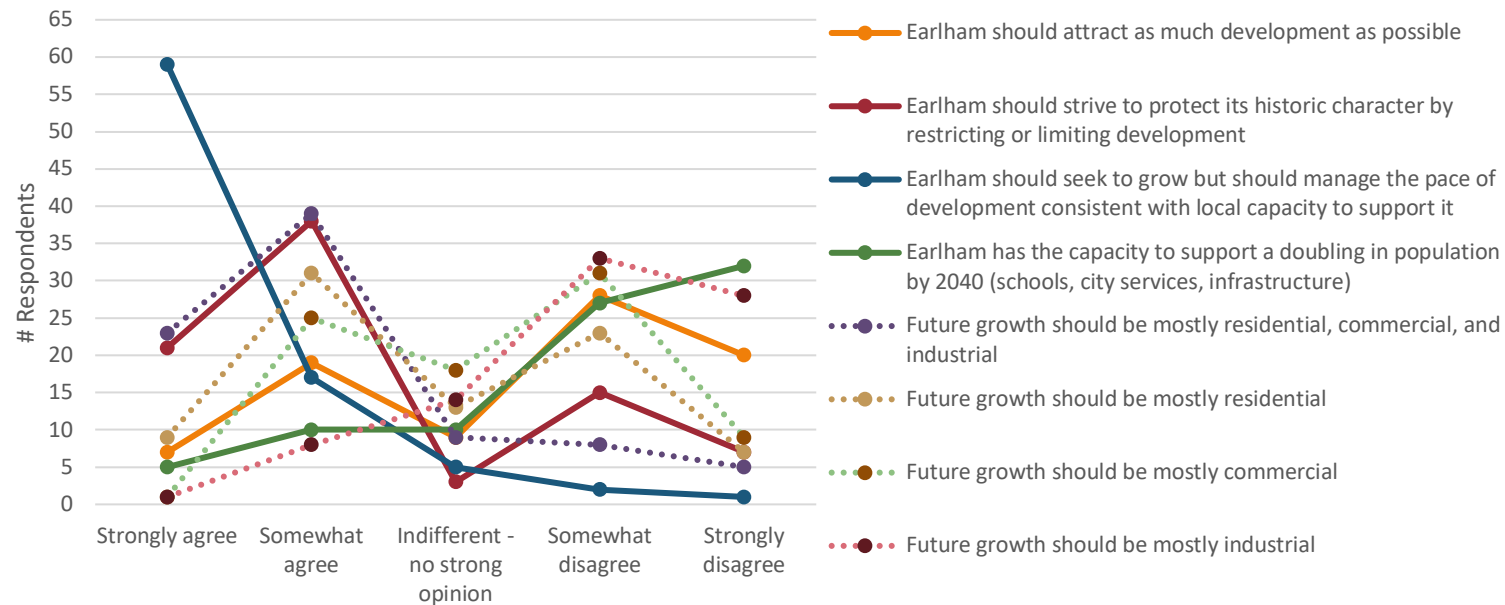
The community survey, to which 84 people responded, asked a series of questions about land use issues. The following summarizes those questions.

Figure 12.5: Community Survey Results: “Please Rank (1 is top rank) the Following As to Where the Local Leaders Should Invest More Resources (Or Focus Higher Percentage of Existing Resources) Compared to the Level of Investment Today.”



This chart informs the goals, actions, and policies for the future land use plan and map. The downtown and older residential areas should be the focus of investments, followed by mid-range neighborhoods and then new residential areas. Support is much less for development in city entryways and non-recreational public spaces.

Question 12.6: Community Survey Results: “Earlham’s Location Makes it a Prime Target for Future Development. Please Check How Much You Agree with the Following Statements About this Future.”



Earlham’s residents tend to support managed development and a balance of growth among residential, commercial, and industrial. Protecting historic character is also vitally important. People strongly disagree with the statement that the city has the capacity to double in population by 2040.

Figure 12.7: Survey Respondent Thoughts About Earlham Related to Land Use and Growth Management (Number of Responses)

Favorite Thing	Least Favorite Thing	Most Important Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural small-town feel (42) • Historical Significance (3) • Self-sufficient community (2) • “I love the small-town feel, I feel that can still be achieved even with expansion and growth. Engage the community, get individual and groups involved. Pull individuals into sub committees to help.” • Quaint • “It has a charm to be an amazing attraction that people would want to stop and interact with in town. People love small towns that are well taken care of and pretty to look at. I could see Earlham being a destination for people travelling through, which would boost the local economy.” • “The potential it holds. Continue to invest downtown and make it a destination locals and visitors can enjoy. Residential development will follow. Provide jobs for people downtown to keep local dollars in Earlham.” • Downtown • “I would encourage us to use Winterset downtown, Dallas Center, or Walnut as examples of what our town could bring to the neighboring area and try to avoid Adel (all neighborhoods) or DeSoto (all industrial/gas stations/concrete). Van Meter exploded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behind in development/lack of future planning (7) • Infrastructure, street, sidewalk, storm water drainage conditions, slow internet/cell service, lack of water pressure (6) • Lack of retail/commercial options and opportunities (3) • Landlocked for growth (2) • People that try to make Earlham a big city. (2) • Lack of affordable housing (2) • Lack of investment in historic downtown (2) • Poor conditions of the downtown area. • Lack of good paying jobs in Earlham • People living in commercial spaces • Older areas of town that need revitalization • Limited dining options • Expensive housing • Limited housing options • Not enough senior or singles houses/townhomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown (22) • Gathering spots (2) • The museums (2) • Older neighborhoods

Favorite Thing	Least Favorite Thing	Most Important Places
<p>when that subdivision was built and the disconnect between “town” and the “new subdivision” is scary and something I would love to avoid in Earlham.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Earlham is a safe place to raise a family. Part of that has been a result of its slow growth. As a community I feel our focus on future growth should take into consideration that sometimes bigger does not mean better. It’s ok to stay small, make improvements for our existing community. Being mindful of what growth would mean for the safety of Earlham should be the biggest priority. Making sure that our police, fire department and infrastructure can handle the growth before it is here.” • Parks • Proximity to Interstate • Well-kept homes • Respect for agriculture • Controlled growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried about aging population and worried about housing turnover in the next 5-15 years. • Could be swallowed up by Dallas County growth • Commercial retailers trying to come in. • Same people buying properties, limits growth. • No golf course • Larger park closer to town. • Lack of trails • Too close to the interstate • “People who move to Earlham to get away from the city, but then complain we don’t have enough amenities.” 	

What Should Stay the Same?	What Should Change?	What Would Make Earlham a Better Place to Live
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small town feel/rural (25) • Historic Downtown/district (11) • School does not consolidate (4) • Stay separate from Interstate (3) • Keep trees/add more. (2) • “Earlham should not expand for the sake of expansion.” • “Keep surrounding areas from overtaking us.” • Keep it removed from Des Moines. • “Town size does not need to double but does need to bring in more businesses.” • No HOAs • Historic nature • Keep it quaint • Respect farmers and their land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalize downtown commercial district, green spaces in downtown (9) • More opportunities- activity spaces for youth and families (5) • More trails/new walking/bike paths (4) • Update the School/growth (4) • Prepare for what is to come, embrace, plan, and prepare. (4) • Improve/grow infrastructure (3) • Address truck routes for future growth; The truck traffic through town (2) • 360th street NE of town should be connected to Earlham on the East side by a paved road. Followed up by bicycle trails, making Gendler Park a place to visit. • Limit tax abatement & housing developments before the city’s core structures/utilities can handle. • Updating zoning requirements for business districts. • “Don’t need tax abatements for new construction.” • Ability to have chickens in town • “Earlham needs to stay small.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled development including amenities/moderate steady growth (4) • Keeping Earlham like it is: small-ish; quaint; not changing; “It’s perfect, leave it alone.” (3) • More essential businesses (3) with a focus on preserving its past and small-town agricultural feel • Revitalize downtown (2) • Attract the right kinds of businesses to downtown or elsewhere in town for measured growth. • “Being especially welcoming to those willing to make our town better, such as the wonderful Bricker – Price Block investment, now a jewel of downtown.” • More people/population growth • “Recognize that growth is positive if done properly.” • The promise that certain parcels of land will remain agriculture and will not turn into developments (or if developments happen, current residents will have a say opportunity to express their feelings)” • Being able to own chickens in town • Incentives for current residents, not new buildings

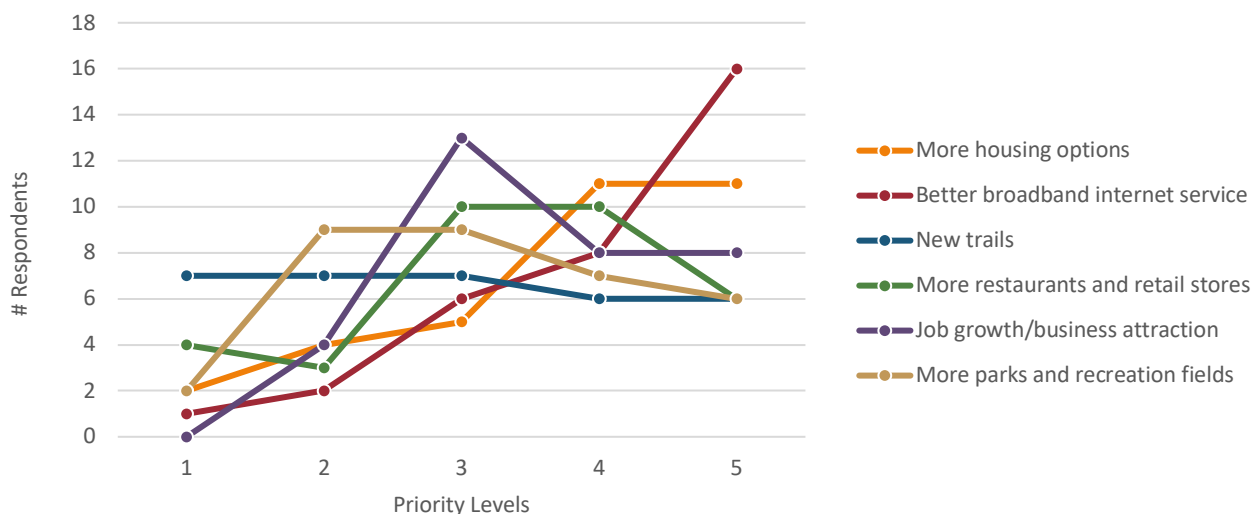
As the matrix in Figure 12.7 shows, there were many comments about growth, most of them concerned about growing too fast. It is interesting that topics like future growth come to the surface. Often, issues like run-down housing and deteriorated streets come up. Figure 12.8 (next page) repeats the four-question exercise used with the steering committee (Figure 12.4) but with a bigger audience of about 75 people who attended the community forum in October 2023.

Figure 12.8: Community Forum Four Questions Exercise Comments Related to Land Use and Growth Management

Biggest Opportunities	Biggest Challenges	One Big Dream	One Big Fear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth (mentioned several times) • Controlled growth (mentioned several times) • Using storefronts rather than allowing them to sit empty • Growth from within our community • Self-sustaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding moral decay from city sprawl • Lack of building lots, space, landlocked (mentioned several times) • Balanced growth (mentioned several times) • Population growth for any incoming businesses • Growing without going boom, like Adel and Waukee with rapid growth • Diversity, growth without rapid growth • \$, land • Truly maintaining small town feel with urban sprawl • To keep growth from ruining what we have • Maintaining moderate growth without major disruptions • Growing responsibly so we are still a smaller town • Keeping businesses/farms locally owned • Expanding with progression • Empty storefronts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain • Lack of building lots • Houses north of Casey's • Connection to existing trail system • Gendler Park expansion • Balanced growth • Stay a small welcoming Iowa town • No huge subdivisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled/unmanaged growth, over-development, excessive growth (mentioned several times) • Residential growth outpacing sports services • No houses north of Casey's • Development blends into Des Moines • Architecturally unattractive buildings that compete with our current businesses • Earlham forcing others outside of town to be annexed, raising my taxes • Rapid growth that the city cannot cope with for school and infrastructure • Going "boom" - large class sizes • Taking farmland from families • Losing the small-town community feel • To keep growth from ruining what we have • Too fast growth so we become like Waukee, pricing everyone out of living here with housing costs and property taxes

During the community forum, a survey was distributed to each person. The survey asked them to rate development priorities. The following is the result for 33 people who responded.

Figure 12.9: Level of Importance for Earlham in 2040 (1 is low, 5 is high)



The residents responding to this question stated that, of the six choices given, better broadband service was the highest priority. More housing choices was rated high as well, followed by job growth and new businesses. More restaurant and retail options is also a priority. Parks and trails received less interest.

The “opinion casting” exercise used scale bars as another way to gain understanding on where people are on a range of thought concerning a few issues. The following are some of the key findings for about 20 people who participated that relate to land use and growth management.

- The group is slightly (55% vs. 45%) opposed to the City of Earlham and other groups activity investing in the downtown.
- The group believes moderately (70%/30%) that entryways and corridors are okay like they are.
- The group is slightly (55%/45%) happy with housing choices available.
- 90% feel that Earlham should limit the use of tax abatement and other incentives.
- The group believes slightly (55% vs. 45%) that incentives should be focused on the latest and best opportunities rather than focused on struggling neighborhoods.
- 75% feel that environmental sustainability should be a high priority.
- 80% state that the City of Earlham should leave farmland alone and let the private sector work.
- The group believes moderately (60%/40%) that metro growth threatens Earlham.
- About 75% state that Earlham should focus on maintenance of existing parks and programs instead of developing new ones.

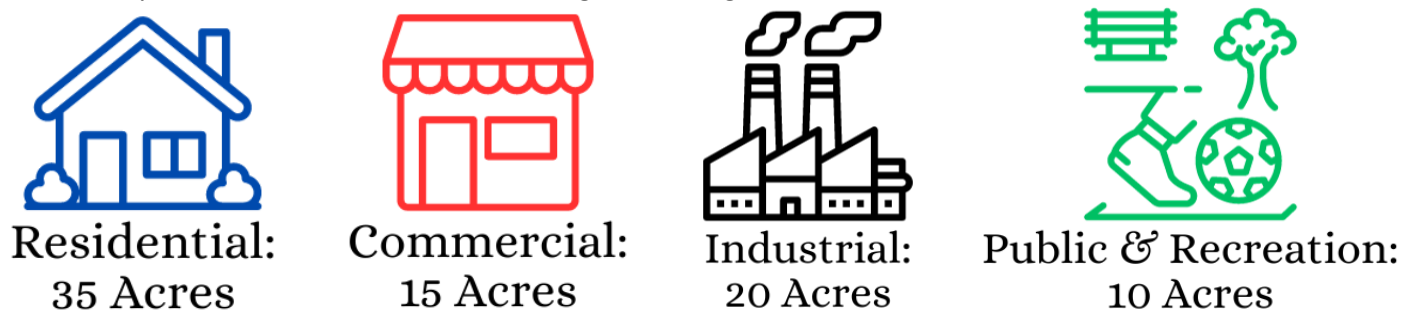
Planning Boundary and Future Land Use Key Considerations and Needs/Demands

In Chapter 4 the plan outlined a future planning boundary where the City of Earlham would consider land use and other planning strategies, policies, and projects. While this planning boundary exists for the sake of planning for the future, that does not mean that this plan recommends annexing this area. Nor does it mean that the City of Earlham and partners have exclusive authority to make land use decisions for that area.

Current City Boundary

The current city boundary and land use pattern means that about 75% of the growth to 1,800 and 60% of growth to 2,000 people can easily fit within the current boundaries, especially if several housing options are provided and missing middle housing is allowed in some areas, including infill areas. This can occur even with allowing for choices (more land than needed by category to allow developers to choose where to develop).

In summary, the total needed land use, including 30% overage to allow for market choices is as follows:



This will result in the reduction in agriculture, but this is normally acceptable within the city boundary.

The future land use pattern within the current city boundary should be governed by the following:

- Residential uses should be located near other residential uses and close to services and places of work.
- As Earlham continues to grow, the growth should be distributed more evenly in single-unit, duplex, and multi-unit properties, so that the percentage of the other types compared to single-unit grows.

- Commercial development should be walkable, experience-oriented, and close to downtown.
- Industrial development should be designed to the scale of Earlham and its needs and should be designed to fit in close to residential areas.
- Infill development should be encouraged as much as or more than new development.
- Mixed-use development should be encouraged and incentivized.
- Creative and trend-responsive development (such as accessory dwelling units) should be encouraged in most neighborhoods.
- Land use conflicts should be limited through design standards and proactive investments, including nuisance enforcement and building maintenance policies.
- By 2040, some land in the city boundary should remain undeveloped (mostly agriculture) in order to provide market choices over time.

Current Zoning in Earlham

The consideration of future land use patterns in the city cannot be complete without evaluating the current zoning. Zoning should be based on what is desired for an area, not necessarily to confirm what exists today. Zoning in the city is fairly simple; only four zones exist on the map. “A” zones are for agricultural land. About 20% of the land in town is zoned “A”. This land is by the Casey’s store, includes the sewer lagoons, and is near the cemetery. “R” zones dominate the city, about 60% of the land. Residential zones include most of the residential area and some land today not used for residential but could be developed. Recreational areas are also in the residential zone. “C” zones include the downtown, the bock just north of downtown, a part of the area southwest of the railroad, west of the school, and along the North Chestnut corridor leading out of town. About 10% of the land is “C” zoned. The remaining 10% is “M” zoned, which includes areas along the railroad only and is designed for manufacturing.

In the “A” zone, a range of low-intensity agricultural uses are allowed along with single- and two-unit residences and typical uses, such as churches and schools. The minimum lot size is 20,000 square feet. In the “R” zones, only residential uses are allowed. In this zone, there are notable limits to multi-unit projects with more than three units. Lot sizes vary by type and make it challenging to redevelop older neighborhoods or to build affordable multi-unit projects. Single- and two-unit lots must be at least 6,500 square feet and multi-unit projects must be 4,000 square feet per unit. The “C” zone allows any “R” permitted use plus local commercial uses. Bulk regulations for residential uses are the same as an “R” district, but there are no other minimum lot size limits, with the exception of at least 1,000 square feet for any residential uses in second floors of commercial spaces. The “M” district allows any “C” permitted use except, other than for caretakers on the site, no residential is allowed. There is no minimum lot size, but height and yard regulations exist.

The ordinance also includes two “F” zones for flood plain areas, but they do not show up on the Official Zoning Map. The “F1” zone is for the management of floodwater and the “F2” zone is for the actual FEMA designated flood hazard areas. Limited uses are allowed in the “F1” zone. “F2” is simply an overlay zone that allows the uses of the parent zone but sites them in such a way as to prevent impacting the FEMA flood zone.

Planning Area Outside of Earlham

About 5,075 acres are in the planning boundary area but outside of the city’s boundary, well more acres than needed to accommodate projected/predicted growth. However, development in this area, if managed, can help meet the plan’s goals for Earlham, whether or not the land is annexed into the city. Ideally, about 50 additional acres will be developed by 2040, most of it in low-impact development that meets local needs and takes advantage of the interstate.

While the City lacks ability to directly plan for the future of this area, especially without annexation, it is vital that the City remain involved in the policymaking and land use decisions to ensure these infrastructure elements meet local needs and achieve the goals of this plan. With this in mind, the steering committee was asked to comment about growth and development in the planning area. They related that there has been little development in and outside of the city in the past ten years and almost no annexation. The reason for this and the lack of annexation is that the city is concerned it cannot provide services. The city

leaders want to know the intentions of property owners about annexation. Leaders are also unaware of any pending subdivisions close to the city. They have no intentions to annex land.

The future land use pattern outside of the current city boundary should be governed by the following:

- Expanding the city boundaries through annexation is a tool that can help the city encourage and also manage growth.
- It is felt that upgrading to accommodate urban development (city-scale infrastructure, such as paved streets instead of gravel roads and water mains that can accommodate fire hydrants) is not an exceptional challenge, due to the experience both Madison and Dallas Counties have with development projects and the development capacity and resources of service and utility providers in the area.
- Land should be developed closer to town before land farther away from the city is developed.
- Rural land use patterns should be consistent with the zoning found in the surrounding areas.

Current Madison County Zoning

The current zoning ordinance in Madison County is a generally traditional form of Euclidian zoning. There are only four districts: “A” (Agricultural), “R” (Residential), “C” (Commercial), and “I” (Industrial). The planning area includes only “A” and “I” zones. “A” zones allow all types of agricultural uses and one- and two-unit developments. “I” zones allow any uses allowed in a “C” zone, which also allows almost any “R” uses. The only exception is residential is not allowed in an “I” zone, except for the home of a caretaker. All areas in Madison County surrounding Earlham are “A” zones except part of the mining area about a mile southeast of town, another area on the south edge of town today used for agriculture, and a small parcel a half mile south of town. The minimum lot size is three acres in all zoning districts. Therefore, Madison County encourages very low-density development.

Current Dallas County Zoning

The current zoning ordinance in Dallas County is more progressive and diverse, having thirteen zoning districts. The zoning districts within the identified planning area are “A-1” (Agricultural), “A-2” (Agricultural/Conservation/Floodplain), “RE-1” (Suburban Estate), “C-1” (General Commercial), “C-2” (Highway Service and Agricultural Related Commercial), and “I-1” (Light Industrial). A few conditional business use sites also exist within the planning area. All of the non-“A” zones are at least a mile from the Earlham boundary and most of them are near Exit 106 in the northeast corner of the boundary. Accordingly, Dallas County has not identified the Exit 104 area as a potential development location.

The “A-1” zone, which is adjacent to Earlham’s north boundary, allows agricultural uses and many traditional low-density residential uses but only one unit per parcel. All residential uses in “A-1” zones must be ten acres or larger, except farmsteads on existing farm parcels that are less than five acres. Uses like churches and similar uses must be on parcels of at least five acres. The “A-2” district has similar regulations as “A-1” but is limited to floodplains and similar areas. The “RE-1” zone is designed to encourage very low-density residential uses and similar uses (churches, schools, etc.) while allowing also agricultural uses that are not obnoxious to residential uses, such as horse pastures. Minimum lots size for most uses is three acres. The “C-1” district is designed for local businesses uses that serve that area of the county. No residential uses are permitted, the range of business options are somewhat limited (not broad), and there is no minimum lot size. The “C-2” zone is concentrated around Exit 106 and is designed for highway or agricultural related businesses. This district is similar to the “C-1” district other than it has a broader range of allowable business types. Finally, the “I-1” district is a “light” industrial district that allows anything allowed in “C-2” districts plus light-intensity industrial. Only one parcel is zoned “I-1”, which is near Exit 106. None of the districts, other than the “A-1” district, takes more than about ten acres of land in the planning area and most are individual parcels rather than a group of them.

Potential Development Land

The steering committee mentioned that the city needs some kind of inventory of land that should be targeted for potential development. This section identifies agricultural and undeveloped parcels that could be developed over time. Listing a parcel in the following figure does not indicate it should be developed. It

simply provides information that can be helpful for local leaders when considering development and approaching property owners as part of implementing this plan. The following parcels are not necessarily available or for sale at the time researched (March 2024).

Figure 12.10: Potential Development Land Inventory

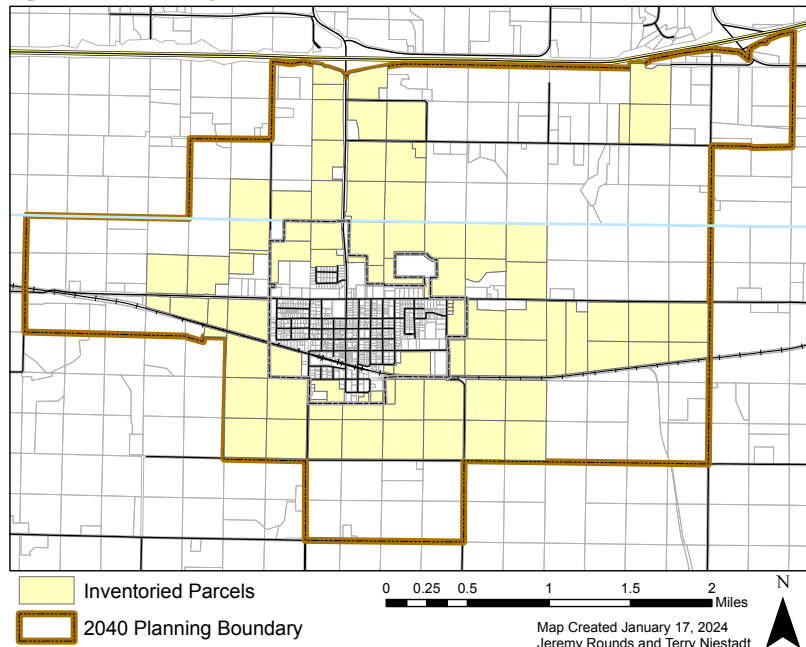
Parcel Number and Address	Location	Acreage	Average CSR	Length of Current Ownership	Total Assessed Value	Assessor Class	Zoning Class
860002700010000	Just southwest of town proper	24.64	77.71	1994	\$37,200	Ag	R
860002700051000	Just north of sports complex	23.35	75.86	2020	\$31,500	Ag	A
860002800220000	Just west of Casey's store	12.66	86.45	2020	\$21,200	Ag	A
860002700060000	NW touching county border	14	89.14	Unknown	\$24,200	Ag	A
860002800221000	Just north of Casey's store	23.81	88.89	2020	\$41,100	Ag	A
860002500063100	East side of NE Birch St.	0.46	91.26	2008	\$800	Ag	R
860002500063200	East side of NE Birch St.	0.46	91.48	2008	\$800	Ag	R
860002500063400	East side of NE Birch St.	0.46	91.48	2008	\$800	Ag	R
860002500063500	East side of NE Birch St.	0.46	91.39	2008	\$800	Ag	R
860002500063600	East side of NE Birch St.	16.16	78.58	2008	\$24,000	Ag	R
860002700020000	Southern edge of city	6.10	87.54	Unknown	\$11,000	Ag	R
860002600011000	Southern edge of city	11.41	84.91	2015	\$18,800	Ag	R
850001800030000	Southern edge of city	~ 2	Unknown	2014	\$7,300	R	R
860002400010000	Just west of cemetery	18.55	72.41	2023	\$23,500	Ag	R and A
850000300030000	Between SE 2 nd and Railroad	~ 1	Unknown	2023	\$31,200	R	R
Madison County Outside of Earlham							
250041222000000	Just southwest of city	39	85.34	1994	\$64,600	Ag	A
250041228000000	Just southwest of city	39	90.05	1994	\$59,900	Ag	A
250041226010000 – 1573 115th St	Quarter mile southwest of city	39	77.42	1994	\$189,600 (\$134,800 is ag dwelling)	Ag	A
250041224000000	Quarter mile southwest of city	39	77.05	1994	\$59,600	Ag	A
250040180020000	Just west of city	38.96	89.26	1994	\$67,500	Ag	A
250040162013000	Quarter mile west of city	19.14	65.58	2019	\$15,200	Ag	A
250040162014000	Quarter mile west of city	17.59	60.7	2019	\$20,500	Ag	A
250040180010000	Just west of city	36.68	90.66	2018	\$64,500	Ag	A
250040148001000	Just west to city	34.59	52.76		\$29,600	Ag	A
250040146000000	Quarter mile west of city	38.19	78.12	2020	\$57,800	Ag	A
250040120060000	Just northwest of city	11.8	76.19	Unknown	\$17,400	Ag	A
250040124030000	Just northwest of city	3.72	90.1	Unknown	\$6,500	Ag	A
250040124020000	Just northwest of city	29.25	Unknown	2007 (owned by Earlham Schools)	\$35,800 (tax exempt)	Ag	A
200030640022000	Just north of city	37.70	87.94	2011	\$61,800	Ag	A
200030640011000	Just north of city	8.38	83.24	2011	\$11,200	Ag	A
200030626010000	Just north of city	10.54	84.49	2011	\$16,00	Ag	A
200030624010000	North and west of wastewater treatment lagoons	31.06	83.77	2011	\$46,800	Ag	A

Parcel Number and Address	Location	Acreage	Average CSR	Length of Current Ownership	Total Assessed Value	Assessor Class	Zoning Class
200030628001000	Just north of NE 6 th Street by lagoons	34.58	81.12	2023	\$51,700	Ag	A
200030622001000	North and east of wastewater treatment lagoons	34.76	88.29	2023	\$59,200	Ag	A
200030546019000	Quarter mile northeast of city	16.83	79.84	2023	\$26,100	Ag	A
200030544000000	Quarter mile northeast of city	34.96	90.73	2023	\$61,600	Ag	A
200030542010000	Half mile northeast of city	37.44	83.85	2023	\$60,600	Ag	A
200030548010000	Quarter mile northeast of city	36.93	77.63	2010	\$216,600 (\$168,500 is ag dwelling)	Ag, Ag Dwlg	A
200030564001000	Just east of city	31.92	81.41	2008	\$49,800	Ag	A
200030600020000 – 150 Birch St. NE	Just east of city	13.99	78.07	2008	\$410,500 (\$382,300 is ag dwelling)	Ag, Ag Dwlg	A
200030566010000	Just east of city	36	86.05	2008	\$60,100	Ag	A
200030562010000	Quarter mile east of city	34.50	90.37	2009	\$60,500	Ag	A
200030568010000	Quarter mile east of city	36	86.4	2009	\$60,300	Ag	A
200030584003000	Half mile east of city	34.34	90.67	2016	\$60,400	Ag	A
200030584004000	Half mile east of city	34.58	90.15	2016	\$60,500	Ag	A
200030582000000	3/4 mile east of city	39.69	91.46	2016	\$68,300	Ag	A
200030588010000	3/4 mile east of city	27.67	90.39	2009	\$48,500	Ag	A
200030464000000	1 mile east of city	38.80	43.2	2013	\$18,000	Ag	A
200030466010000	1 mile east of city	21.47	49.54	2013	\$11,500	Ag	A
200030462000000	1 mile east of city	38.00	18.82	2013	\$7,300	Ag	A
200030468010000	1 mile east of city	15.63	0.12	2013	\$0	Ag	A
200030844000000	Quarter mile SE of city	39	89.88	Unknown	\$67,800	Ag	A
200030846000000	Half mile SE of city	37.80	93	Unknown	\$65,400	Ag	A
200030842010000	Half mile SE of city	40	48.13	Unknown	\$30,600	Ag	A
200030848010000	Half mile SE of city	38.8	Unknown	Unknown	\$40,600	C	A
200030722000000 – 1103 Heritage Ave.	Just SE of city	38	83.37	2022	\$194,400 (\$140,600 is ag dwelling)	Ag; Ag Dwlg	I
200030728000000	Quarter mile SE of city	38	89.38	2022	\$65,900	Ag	A
200030724001000	Just SE of city	33.06	89.25	2020	\$57,200	Ag	I
200030724002000	Just SE of city	6.94	80	2017	\$6,400	Ag	I
200030726000000	¼ mile south of city	38.80	89.78	2020	\$67,600	Ag	A
200030742010000	Just south of city	15.06	88.03	2020	\$25,700	Ag	A
200030748010000	¼ mile south of city	38.8	91.12	2020	\$68,600	Ag	A
200030744010000	Just south of city	12.48	86.46	2020	\$20,900	Ag	A
200030746000000	¼ mile south of city	32.45	85.98	2020	\$54,100	Ag	A
Dallas County Outside of Earham							
1336400002	¼ mile NW of city	39	89.37	2020	\$71,060	Ag	A-1
1336400005	Just north of city	28	87.45	1987	\$49,930	Ag	A-1

Parcel Number and Address	Location	Acreeage	Average CSR	Length of Current Ownership	Total Assessed Value	Assessor Class	Zoning Class
1431300003	Just north of city	29.50	78.73	2019	\$47,280	Ag	A-1
1431300008 – 36551 CH P57	¼ mile north of city	27.99	46.04	2019	\$238,640 (\$210,040 is ag dwelling)	Ag, Ag Dwlg	A-1
1431100003	½ mile north of city	31.50	45.57	2019	\$26,050	Ag	A-1
1431100008	¾ mile north of city	11.26	40.52	2019	\$8,230	Ag	A-1
1431100007	Adjacent to Exit 104	12	40.43	2006	\$8,790	Ag	A-1
1431100009	Adjacent to Exit 104	24.94	43.39	2022	\$21,780	Ag	A-1
1431100005 - 18482 363rd Circle	½ mile north of city	30.98	67.30	2023	\$245,320 (\$183,660 is ag dwelling)	Ag, Ag Dwlg	A-1
1431200003	¾ mile north of city	37	75.03	2023	\$56,070	Ag	A-1
1431300002	Half mile north of city	36.50	91.08	2021	\$50,010	Ag	A-1
1431400001	Half mile north of city	35	92.64	2021	\$66,120	Ag	A-1
1431400002	Half mile north of city	4.5	92.67	2021	\$11,770	Ag	A-1
1431300005	Quarter mile north of city	38.50	90.63	2021	\$71,140	Ag	A-1
1431400006	Quarter mile NE of city	40	91.94	2021	\$74,990	Ag	A-1
1433100004	Just north of Gendler Park	39.23	77.65	City owned land	\$51,030 (\$17,520 exempt)	Ag	A-1
1433100002	Quarter mile north of Gendler Park	38	41.53	City owned land	\$25,650 (exempt)	Ag	A-1 and A-2
1432200008	Just north of Gendler Park	9.75	40.24	City owned land	\$6,100 (exempt)	Ag	A-1

Source: Dallas and Madison County Schneider Corp Beacon GIS sites

Figure 12.11: Map of Inventoried Parcels



During the planning research, an attempt was made to identify hindrances to development, primarily in the inventoried parcels. Some things are notable. There are no State or Federal properties in the planning area that could prohibit development. Research did not yield any conservation easements or other government agreements (CRP ground is likely, but those agreements are not permanent) that prohibit development. There are no major utilities or other developments that limit development potential. No County or State plans were found that call for a specific kind of development or new roads in the planning area.

What is a Future Land Use Plan?

A future land use plan is a physical guide for growth and development within a community between now and the planning horizon of 2040. The future land use map (Figure 12:12) lays out the preferred development pattern and is composed of a series of future land use categories as defined on the following pages. The following pages also include maps of land use categories and details about considerations related to zoning and other land use regulations.

Relationship to Zoning

Future land use plans serve as the basis for determining the appropriate zoning for property being developed or annexed into a community. Chapter 414 of the Code of Iowa grants cities the authority to enact city zoning regulations and requires zoning regulations, "...be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan..." The Earlham Comprehensive Plan should be consulted whenever a city zoning code regulation is amended and every time a property is rezoned to ensure that the action is consistent with both the goals and policies included in the plan and with the land use classifications as shown in the future land use map.

Later in this chapter is a zoning compatibility matrix to provide guidance on zoning districts that are compatible or partially compatible with each future land use classification.

Amending the Future Land Use Plan/Maps

The future land use plan for the Earlham Comprehensive Plan represents the ideal future land use layout for the community, as visualized today, based on current conditions and anticipated future conditions. This plan is not set in stone and may change for many reasons. If circumstances change and reveal a conflicting land use, the future land use plan should be amended appropriately to reflect the updated conditions of the community. If Earlham feels it is justified and appropriate to rezone a property in a manner that is inconsistent with the future city land use map or any related policies, this plan and map(s) should be amended as a part of the rezoning action to ensure consistency. The City should carefully document the justifications for an amendment to this plan and findings adopted as part of the official record.

Future Land Use Categories

Several land use categories are proposed for Earlham and its surrounding planning area by 2040. These are not necessarily the same as found in the current land use description and map in Chapter 3.

The categories used for Earlham's plan are as follows:

- Agriculture and open space
- Estate residential
- Low-density residential
- Medium-density residential
- Downtown mixed use
- Commercial
- Business park
- Industrial
- Public/civic
- Transportation/utilities
- Parks and recreation

Common land use categories not found in Earlham includes high-density residential and industrial park. Neither of these uses were desired by the public. Another use found in the current land use map that is not carried over is vacant lots. While these will certainly exist, it makes no sense to plan for them. Each lot should have a planned use, especially in a growing community.

Agriculture/Open Space

This is area that is today used for agriculture, is a floodplain, has heavy tree cover, or is otherwise undeveloped and should remain such. It is set aside for agricultural land or otherwise preserved from future development. Some land in this category, excluding floodplains and wetlands, may become suitable for development and the map can be amended. However, because the public wishes for managed growth in the area, policies to protect much of the farmland are needed. In rare instances, agricultural land outside of the city may be converted.

Estate Residential

This category is for very low-density residential mostly outside of the city and where farmland is less productive, such as a CSR below 70. Lot sizes will be at least one acre, enough to accommodate onsite septic systems. These developments may be located in areas with steep slopes or significant tree cover that could be an obstacle to other residential developments.

Low-density Residential

This is an area mostly of single-unit detached homes on lots of at least 6,500 square feet with 60-foot-wide lots. In total, there may be two to eight units per acre. This land use will be predominantly single-unit detached homes with some duplexes and single-unit homes with accessory dwelling units. Developments within this category may also include religious, educational, institutional uses, manufactured housing developments, child daycare centers, and neighborhood-scale recreational areas.

Medium-density Residential

This will include townhomes, rowhouses, cottage developments, and small apartment buildings and complexes of no more than 8 units per building or 16 units per complex/lot. Occasionally, single-unit homes with accessory dwelling units will be included in this land use category, and existing single-unit homes of any density will be allowed to remain. Medium-density residential experiences a variety of densities from 5 to 24 dwelling units per acre. Development within this category may also include religious, educational, institutional uses, manufactured housing developments, child daycare centers, and public and private recreational areas. This land use can serve as a transitional land use from low-density residential to more intense uses such as downtown, commercial, or light industrial. All this land is in the existing city boundary. About 25% of the residential growth, in terms of number of housing units, in the planning area should be medium-density residential. About 10% of the land growth for residential uses should be medium-density residential.

Downtown Mixed-use

This includes the current downtown area outlined as the heart of downtown in Chapter 6. The uses should consist of multi-story buildings and be exclusively first-floor retail or restaurant with limited amount of other commercial or office uses to encourage all-day activity. The upper floors of these buildings should be reserved for residential or office uses. New buildings in this area should be two-stories tall with mixed uses or one-story commercial. Parking is important, but public and private parking should be behind buildings, not on vacant development lots.

Commercial

This is land set aside for future local and traveler business needs. It is not designed to replace the downtown as a main commercial area but rather to supplement or complement it for business development that may not fit in or make sense in the downtown area. These uses can include daycares, assisted living, small office complexes, convenience stores, car washes, car dealerships, hotels, banks, and auto repair shops. In its application, the commercial land use should be built at a suitable scale so as not to negatively impact surrounding land uses. Lots should be small to encourage smaller retailers. Design standards for buildings, parking areas, signage, and landscaping are important, as this land use will likely be what welcomes people into the town and give them a first impression of Earlham when they leave I-80.

Business Park

This is proposed as a compatible use with existing uses and county zoning around Exit 106. It includes office complexes and even some light industrial that synergizes well with Earlham's I-80 and railroad traffic. Business Park uses include larger office complexes and corporate campuses up to 40 acres. Light industrial uses include warehouse and distribution facilities and activities such as testing, fabrication, manufacturing, assembly, or processing of materials to a refined form and that do not require transformation that creates smoke, odor, dust vibrations, soot, or other noxious elements. All activities are contained within the buildings with no or well screened outdoor storage. Limited support retail or commercial activities would be allowed, such as gas stations,

convenience stores, or coffee shops. This use will also require design standards to draw people to the area and look reasonably attractive from the interstate. Collaboration with Dallas County is vital.

Light Industrial

At Earlham's scale, industrial uses should be limited in intensity to light manufacturing and assembly operations and those that serve the agricultural, mineral extraction, and transportation industries prominent in the area. Shipping, distributions, and wholesale operations may include outdoor storage. Sensitive land uses should be screened or buffered from this land use category.

Public/Civic

Some new public uses will be needed to accommodate growth in the area. It includes the current land uses of this type, such as churches, local government buildings and outdoor uses (city, county, school), public works storage areas, and other civic uses that have a general impact on the community. These should be located where people can access them easily. The Earlham School District owns land just northwest of Earlham and within the planning area. This plan is designed to manage growth so that moving the school is not required, and that land is shown to remain in agriculture.

Transportation/Utilities

Transportation uses, such as public parking and transit centers, and public infrastructure, such as telecom towers, electric substations, the sewer lagoons, and natural gas stations, are considered part of this use. Growth to 1,800 should not require wastewater investment; if growth requires new capacity, it is anticipated that mechanical plant upgrades will eliminate the need for the addition of a new lagoon. Industrial-scale wind and solar developments are also within this category. Transportation and utility uses should be properly scaled to Earlham's needs and screened from surrounding uses.

Parks and Recreation

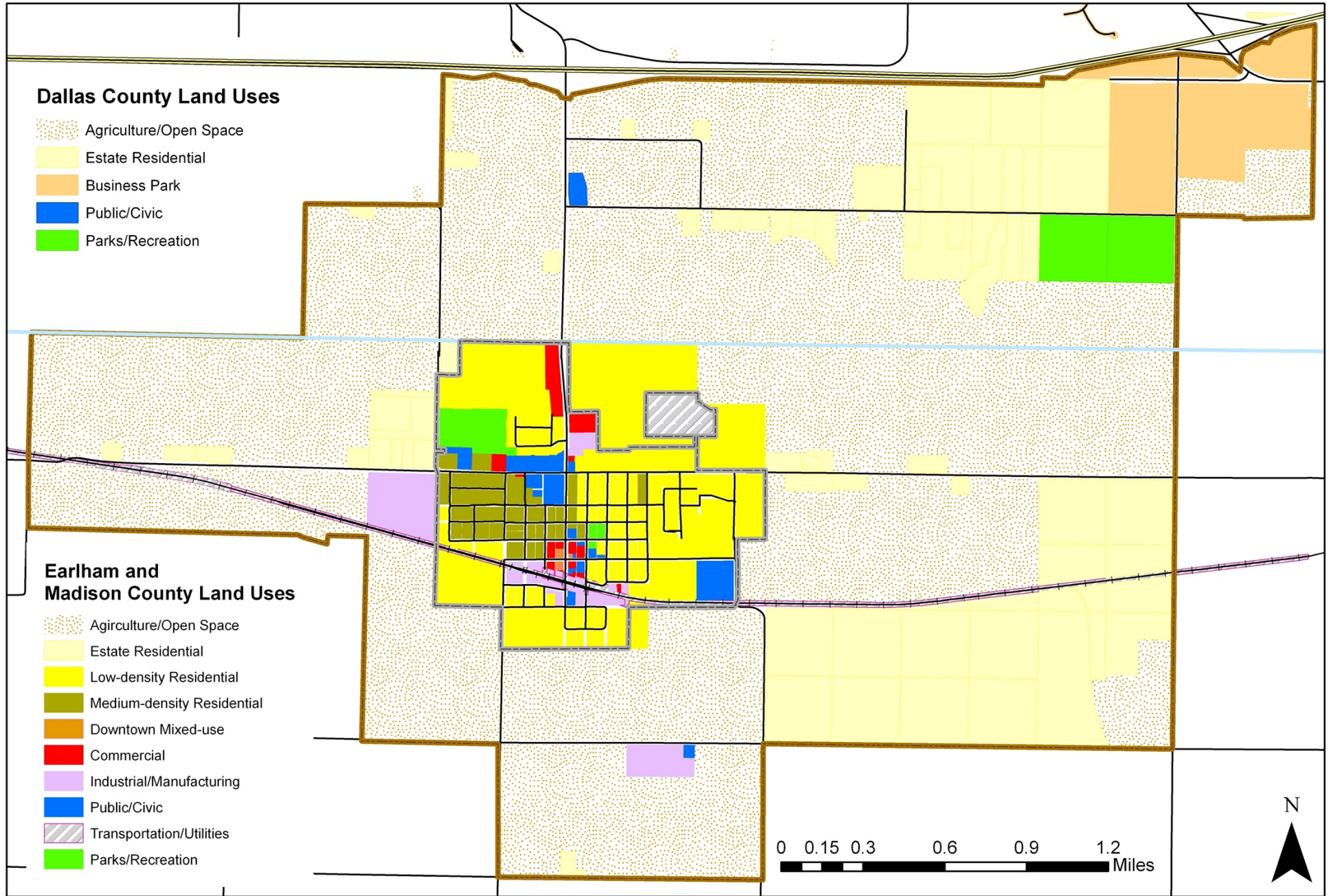
Publicly owned parks and recreation areas, greenways, trails, and indoor recreational facilities are part of this land use. These can include recreational fields, golf courses, and other uses that are free to access or require a fee to participate.

Future Land Use Plan and Map

This plan and map lay out the ideal land use patterns within the current city boundary and the planning area so that Earlham reaches the vision of 1,800 residents within the current boundary by 2040 and can support moderate growth in the surrounding planning area. This section includes the map, description of development, a chart showing the percentage of land in each category, and analysis of land use patterns. Note that this is not the same as a zoning map and that the city has limited power to regulate land use outside of the city boundary.

Before preparing this future land use map, it is important that Madison and Dallas Counties future land use maps be consulted. Madison is currently undergoing its own comprehensive plan update and offers no land use map. Dallas County has an aging plan (2000) with a map of future land use and development target areas. That map showed Exits 104 and 106 as priority commercial development areas, but little information was given about the strategy.

Figure 12.12: Future Land Use Map for Earlham in 2040



Before going into detail about this map, a few things should be pointed out. First, It assumes that there will be no vacant lots in the future and removes this as a future land use category. All lots, especially in the city, will have a purpose. Second, it also assumes that no land in the city boundary will remain agricultural. This in fact is not realistic. Even if the town grows to 1,800 people, it is likely that agriculture will remain. Although it is likely some land will remain in agriculture, it does not make sense to designate that continued use in the city boundary. Third, this land use map also does not include estate residential in the city. Development in the city boundary today should be denser than estate residential, consistent with utilities available. Fourth, consistent with public comments and the topography of the area, no development is proposed at Exit 104. Rather, new development and redevelopment is proposed near Exit 106, which today is more than two miles from the city. Fifth, the area south and west of the school, where many homes need some repairs and where it makes sense for a bit more density, the plan calls for medium density land use. Undeveloped land on the fringes of the city will become low-density land use. Like today, we do not anticipate any high-density residential uses. Commercial and industrial will grow at the expense of agricultural land, and other uses will stay about the same. Finally, development at the site of past and current gravel excavation areas is proposed for a combination of residential and industrial uses. Ultimately, the future uses by 2040 will be dictated by how long the mining operations persist in the area.

Analysis of future land use patterns

The following charts outline the estimated acreage and percent of land within each land use category. The following data is based on the city area of 640 acres and surrounding planning area of 5,075 acres for a total of 5,715 acres. No annexation is assumed.

Figure 12.13: Future Land Use Composition in 2040 by Percentage

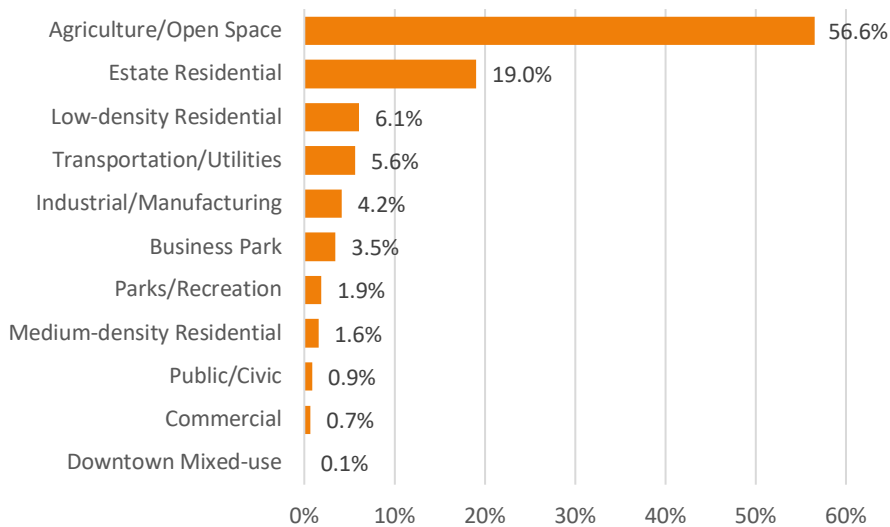
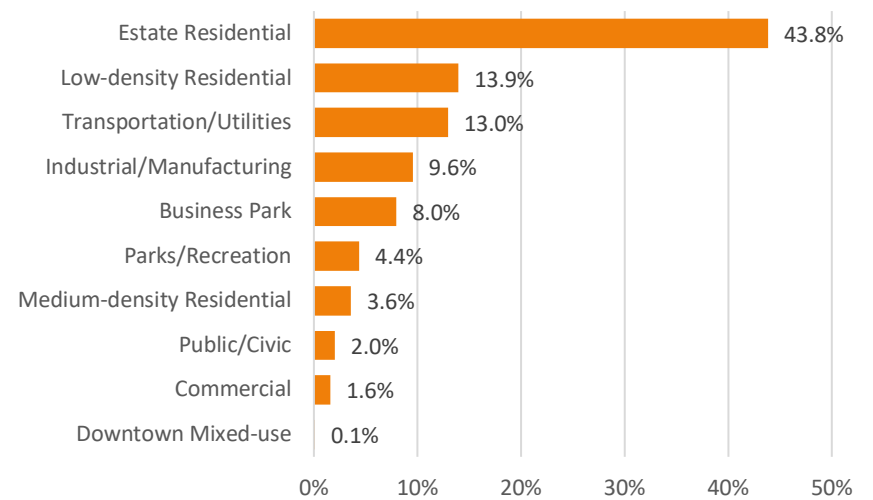


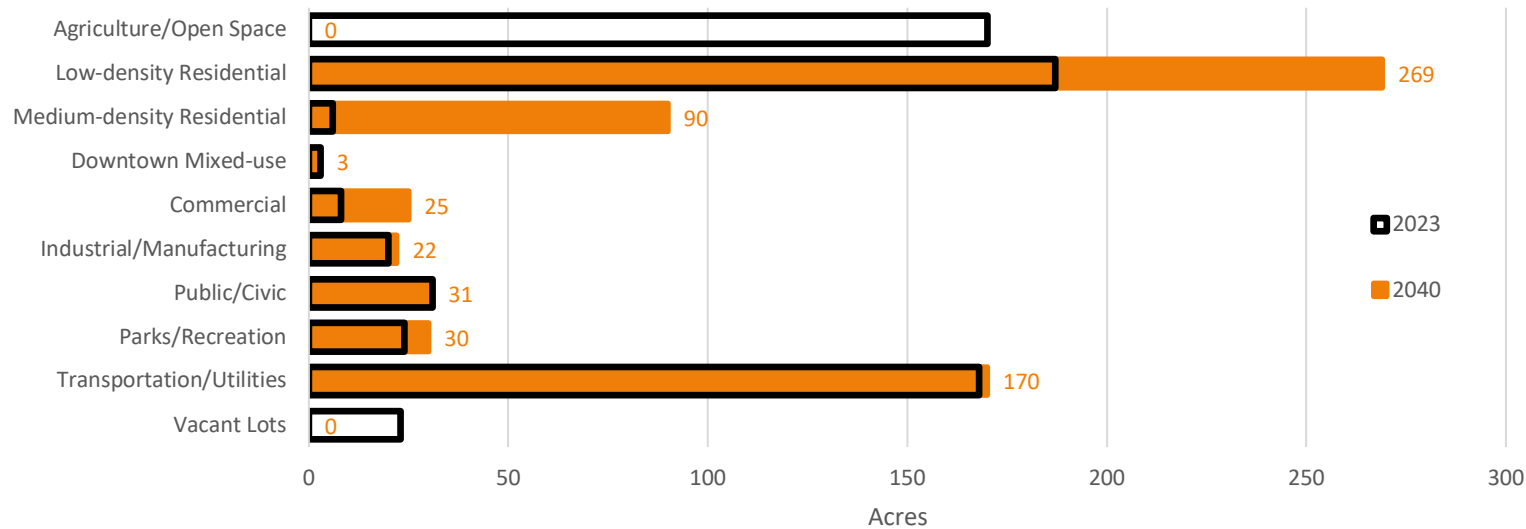
Figure 12.14: Future Land Use Composition in 2040 Excluding A/OS



The chart to the left shows the overall composition of future land uses by category including agriculture/open space. The chart to the right shows the same excluding agriculture/open space. Note that the planning area will remain primarily agriculture, but estate developments will make a sizeable portion of the land development. Most of the land uses will remain less than 10% of the land area. It should be noted that the future land use map will include a new land use category, business park, which is a designation for the area near Exit 106. Overall, in the entire planning area, estate residential, industrial, and low-density residential will grow, replacing considerable land now used for agriculture/open space.

Within today's city boundary, the land use composition will change notably. See the following chart.

Figure 12.15: Future Land Use Composition Within the City of Earlham in 2040 (in acres)



The land use plan outlined here can accommodate growth to 1,800 people without expanding the boundaries of the city and it allows for the community to have a role in planning the future of the surrounding area, although land use decisions ultimately will be between property owners and Dallas and Madison Counties respectively.

Development Types and Zoning Compatibility

This part of the plan provides detail about the types of development that are compatible with each land use category. This list is not exhaustive but provides an overview as the city looks to update its zoning ordinance and other land use regulations.

Agriculture/Open Space

- Agriculture
- Timberland
- Waterways and water bodies
- Farmhouses and outbuildings
- Accessory small-scale wind and solar installations for use on the site

Estate Residential

- Small agriculture (less than 40 acres), including outbuildings appropriate to that use and screened from neighbors
- Managed timberland
- Waterways and water bodies
- Single-unit homes on large lots (less than one unit per acre)
- Accessory dwelling units (with authorization where they can be accommodated into the aesthetic of the property)
- Accessory small-scale wind and solar installations for use on the site, screened appropriately

Low-density Residential (1 to 5 units per acre)

- Single-unit homes
- Duplexes
- Accessory dwelling units (with authorization where they can be accommodated into the aesthetic of the property)
- Accessory small-scale solar installations for use on the site, screened appropriately

Medium-density Residential (1 to 20 units per acre)

- Single-unit homes
- Duplexes
- Manufactured homes in a park or community setting
- Multi-unit housing
- Home conversions (single-unit homes converted to multi-unit homes)
- Condominiums and townhouses or rowhouses
- Accessory dwelling units

Downtown Mixed-use

- Retail and office uses in downtown traditional style buildings fronted to the street right-of-way
- Upper-story residential
- Residential in the rear half of the main floor, with authorization
- Accessory small-scale solar installations for use on the site, placed on building roof and not visible from the street/ground level

Commercial

- Retail and office uses
- Quasi-commercial uses, such as car washes and small-scale storage unit businesses
- Quasi-industrial uses such as auto repair shops and various assemblers, welders, etc., that also provide some retail sales
- Upper-story residential

Business Park

- Retail and office uses
- Quasi-commercial uses, such as car washes and small-scale storage unit businesses
- Quasi-industrial uses such as auto repair shops and various assemblers, welders, etc., that also provide some retail sales

- Gardens and planters to be maintained by property owner or residents of the neighborhood
- Garages as an accessory to a residential use
- Neighborhood parks

- Accessory small-scale solar installations for use on the site, screened appropriately
- Gardens and planters to be maintained by property owner or residents of the neighborhood
- Garages as an accessory to a residential use
- Neighborhood parks

- Gardens and planters to be maintained by property owner or residents of the neighborhood, located in the rear yard
- Garages as an accessory to a residential use and designed with aesthetics for the historic district, located in the rear yard
- Outdoor seating and community space
- Neighborhood parks

- Accessory small-scale solar installations for use on the site, screened appropriately
- Outdoor seating and community space
- Medium-density residential uses aesthetically compatible with and providing housing for employment for the commercial area
- Neighborhood parks

- Light industrial, with exceptions
- Accessory small-scale wind and solar installations for use on the site
- Parks or open space for use by occupants and employees
- Residential uses aesthetically compatible with and providing housing for employment for the commercial area

- Accessory garages when aesthetically consistent with the development

Light Industrial

- Low-intensity industrial uses that do not produce excessive dust, odors, and gasses
- Retail and office uses when accessory to an industrial use
- Quasi-commercial uses, such as car washes and storage unit businesses
- Storage, handling, and loading facilities, properly screened when outdoor
- Agricultural handling and processing facilities that do not produce excessive dust, odors, and gasses
- Mining, extraction, and processing, including concrete mixing

Public/Civic

- Public buildings and properties, including lots and outdoor spaces, properly screened when needed
- Churches, other religious uses, civic organization halls, and other facilities open to the general public or by membership

Transportation/Utilities

- Public streets and rights-of-way
- Public utilities, such as wastewater treatment lagoons, water towers, etc.
- Private utilities, such as cellular and radio towers, industrial-scale wind turbines, and gas pump stations, with authorization

Parks and Recreation

- Public and private parks and open spaces
- Outdoor recreational facilities
- Campgrounds and cabins
- Parking and driveways for access to those facilities

- Accessory or compatible communication and electrical transmission facilities

- Garages and vehicle storage facilities, accessory and as the principal use
- Parks or open space for use by occupants and employees
- Accessory and principal use small-scale wind and solar installations for use on the site or for sale to the grid
- Parks or open space for use by occupants and employees of the industrial area
- Accessory or compatible communication and electrical transmission facilities

- Schools, cemeteries, and museums, public and private
- Accessory small-scale solar installations for use on the site, screened appropriately

- Iowa Interstate Railroad and its right-of-way
- Public off-street parking areas
- Accessory garages when aesthetically consistent with surrounding development/land uses

- Outbuildings for use by those managing and maintaining the park area
- Accessory small-scale wind and solar installations for use on the site, properly screened
- Waterways, water bodies, and wetlands

As part of this analysis, the existing zoning ordinance for the City of Earlham was reviewed to determine the compatibility of the future land types with the current zoning ordinance. The zoning compatibility matrix shows the relationship between the categories and existing zoning in early 2024. Land use categories are either compatible (“C”), partially compatible (“PC”) or incompatible (blank) within each zoning classification.

This matrix (Figure 12:16, next page) should be used as the basis for determining the appropriate zoning districts for the land uses outlined in this chapter, either when updating the city’s zoning ordinance or annexing land into the city. When a property owner seeks a rezoning, this information may also be useful. A new zoning ordinance or an update to the existing one should include a similar matrix, or this chapter should be amended to address changes. Ultimately, the future land use map should be consistent with the types of development allowed and encouraged by specific zoning districts. The future land use map in this plan and zoning map should be compatible.

Figure 12.16: Zoning Compatibility Matrix

Land Use Types	Zoning Categories					
	A – Agriculture	R – Residence	C – Commercial	M – Industrial	F1 – Floodplain	F2 – Flood Hazard Area
Agriculture and open space	C				C	PC
Estate residential	C	C	C			PC
Low-density residential	C	C	C			PC
Medium-density residential		C	C			PC
Downtown mixed use			C			PC
Commercial			C	C		PC
Business park			C	C		PC
Industrial				C		PC
Public/civic	C	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC
Transportation/utilities	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC
Parks and recreation	PC	PC	PC	PC	C	PC

The F2 zone is an overlay zone of sorts, so the PC for each one means that this overlay puts additional conditions on the underlying zone.

Annexation and Growth Management

Annexation is the process of adding land to the corporate boundaries of the city. In planning terms, annexation offers a few benefits, such as the ability to regulate land use within an area near the city where there is some demand to grow or to prevent land uses that are inconsistent and incompatible with the city’s land use pattern. However, annexation should be based on a thoughtful analysis of the need and purpose for doing it and for the long-term outcomes of annexation. Decisions should not be made merely on the potential for new revenues. Ideally, the City of Earlham will only pursue voluntary annexation. This does not mean, however, that the City should sit idle while waiting for surrounding owners to request annexation. Talking with owners proactively, not threateningly, may be useful in carrying out this plan.

However, implementing this plan does not require annexation. Rather, the land use patterns recommended for the future of the city’s planning area should be influenced without annexation and so that annexation to accommodate proper development is more feasible if it is agreed by the residents, city leaders, and surrounding landowners to annex an area. The goal is to over time attract the right development and developers so that the people of the city will be supportive of planned, modest, and researched annexation over time to allow the town to incrementally grow.

Growth management is a land use planning toolbox. Within the toolbox are various strategies that apply to various situations and relate to achieving an outcome. Growth management is not intended to prohibit growth but rather to ensure it is sustainable in its own right and in terms of impact on the city as a whole. A tenet of growth management is that new development should not dramatically change an existing community. This is a threat posed by many in the public participation element of this plan. Such phrases as “not looking like Waukee,” “retain our small-town charm,” or “not grow too fast for our infrastructure” ring loud. What can be done to manage growth is limited in Earlham’s case without the support of surrounding counties, as they practice zoning. Therefore, collaboration is required to influence development decisions in these areas.

Growth management strategies Earlham may wish to consider are:

- Annex areas that should be targets for managed growth that are likely to develop in a more haphazard way otherwise.
- Research and develop several land use polices and tools, including updating zoning, to promote managed/sustainable growth.

- Create a buffer to separate the city and potential development north and east of the city.
- Create or modify city incentives, such as tax abatement and TIF, toward specific kinds of developments most needed.

Potential Growth Areas – Land Use Map Meeting in December 2024

A meeting of the steering committee was held in December 2024, following the provision of information from Ryan Marquart of the Madison County Development Group about some suggested revisions to the draft land use map. Mr. Marquart submitted comments and a map to SICOG in August to begin this discussion. He also attended the December meeting to discuss his ideas and answer questions.

The main emphasis Mr. Marquart wanted to discuss was the potential for one or more data center just south of Earlham. He gave the following information in support of this concept:

- Data centers do not require the high consumption of water they once required. Because they do not require potable water, quarry water can be used for the cooling towers in these developments.
- Land is relatively flat and easy to develop.
- The high-voltage power lines passing south of town are major lines from Omaha to Des Moines and most of the wind generated power from southwest Iowa feeds into these lines, so power is available to feed a development.
- The right developer would pay up to \$100,000 an acre for a data center development, the property would produce high property taxes, and most of the jobs produced would pay well.

Mr. Marquart also discussed the potential for rail-based development just east and west of Earlham.

- Earlham is the first area west of Des Moines along the railroad where there is affordable and relatively flat land outside of a floodplain. Booneville is mostly developed and priced out, Van Meter is in a floodplain, DeSoto is in a valley, and most land between the towns is hilly, inaccessible, or expensive.
- The landowner's family is working with Madison County Development Group to explore opportunities that would add to the tax base and bring employment to town. The group is looking for a good fit for the community and for a good neighbor.
- IAIR (the railroad) has expressed interest and capacity to support development.

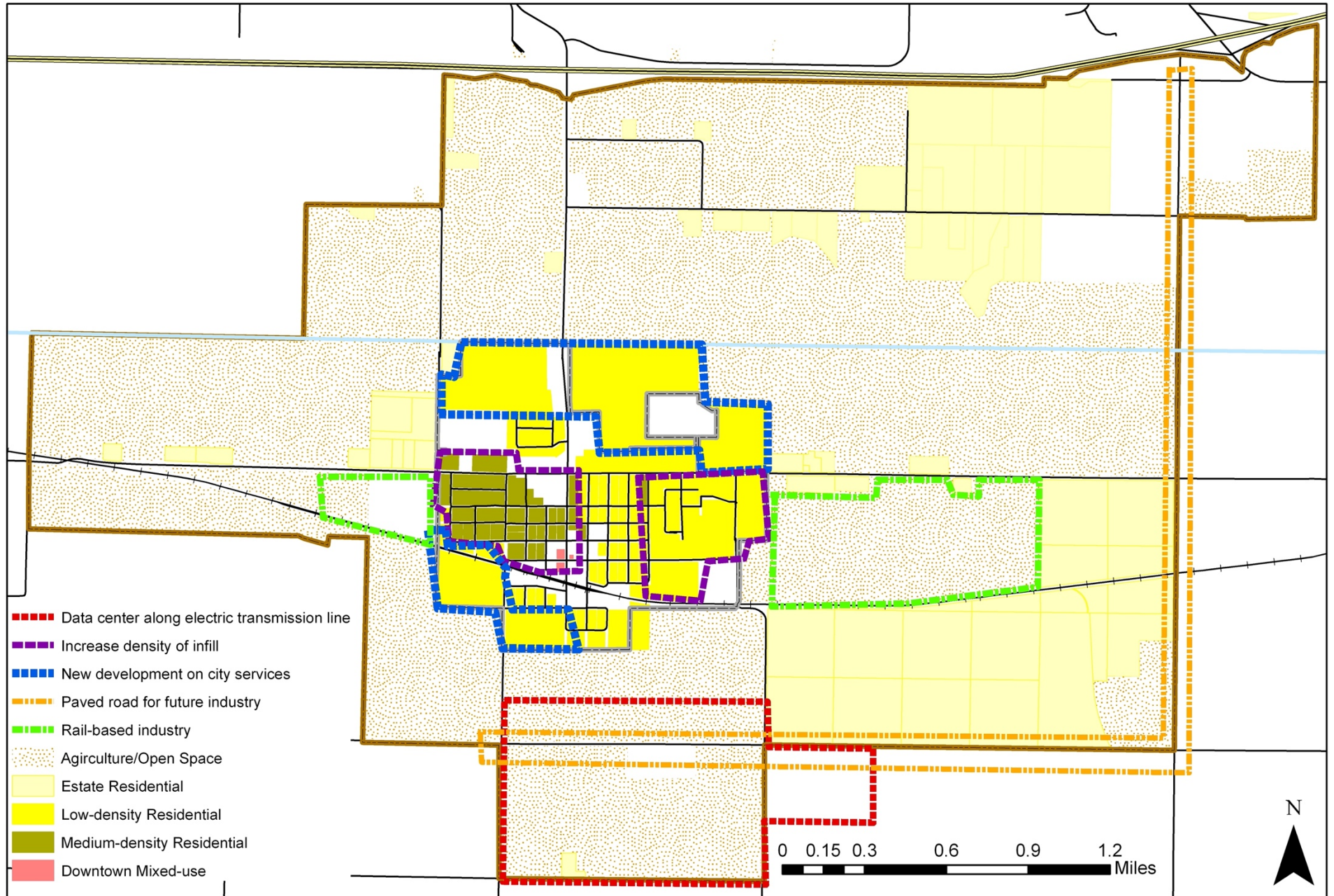
Finally, Mr. Marquart discussed the need for and value of paving Ivy Avenue on the east side of the development area, which will facilitate economic development on the east and south sides of Earlham. He mentioned that data centers rely on clean air with limited dust, so any roads serving those areas would need to be paved. Current roads in the primary area are gravel.

While she could not attend the meeting, steering committee shared the following pertinent comment: "I would love to see us recruit housing, recruit appropriately placed data centers, recruit a retirement community, etc. And put them exactly where they would best contribute to the overall architecture of the community."

Following the discussion with Mr. Marquart, the committee decided to keep the land use map like it was originally presented with only minor changes. However, Figure 12.17 is a map that incorporates ideas from that meeting as well other ideas generated from the planning process to determine locations of potential developments. This map attempts to balance the relatively modest growth projection outlined in this plan and visualized by city leaders and residents versus the real potential of growth that Earlham could experience due to its proximity to multiple transportation networks, the pending third lane in each direction of Interstate 80, flat developable land, and extensive infrastructure in the area.

Short of recommending annexation, the plan calls out areas that should be considered first for either increased development intensity or new development. The following map shows such areas.

Figure 12.17: Potential Growth Areas



The purple outlined areas call for an increase in density compared to today, either through infill lots being developed or through increase in density created by townhome and condominium style “missing middle” housing types over time. During one of the planning meetings, where a draft of this map was discussed, the state of the development in the right purple shape was clarified. A lift station is required to handle the wastewater if any more development occurs, especially if density increases or development extends south into open space.

The blue outlined areas are intended for urban-scale development (not large lots) with public services as the city grows. Those areas within the city boundary should be targeted first. During a committee meeting where a draft of map was discussed, stormwater issues were described. It appears that a retention basin or other stormwater management practice will be required, which will be expensive and take away lots from development. Fortunately, there are from time to time grants available to build urban conservation practices.

The green outlined areas are properties that could have amicable landowners and that are suitable for rail-based low-intensity industry. As of 2024, it is reported that most rail-based industry will pay \$35,000 per acre, about three times the farmland value.

The red outlined area is land identified by Madison County Development Group as most suitable for the eventual development of one or more data centers, especially once the quarries to the east are exhausted and water from the basin that is created is potentially available. It is reported that data center operators will pay up to \$100,000 per acre for the ideal property.

Finally, the orange line outlining this road network may be a future paving project. Doing this would facilitate continued residential and especially industrial development east and south of Earlham.

Future Land Use and Growth Management Plan Goals, Policies, and Action Items

Several goals, actions, and policies have been created to help local leaders and partners a vibrant land use pattern over time that will accommodate future needs while protecting the current community character.

Goals are statements of overall vision and intent and which aim to be broad. They serve as categories for action items and policy statements. Action items are specific steps and activities the City of Earlham, its people, and partners should take. Policies are ongoing principles by which the City of Earlham, its people, and partners should adhere when approving new developments or planning future investments.

These goals, policies, and action items were created to further promote the guiding principles of the Earlham Comprehensive Plan.



Thoughtful Land Use and Growth Management Vision

Earlham will have ongoing discussions and maintain regular public input on a set of thoughtful strategies to grow in a managed way and retain its small-town character without becoming too exclusive.

Goal 1

Increase level of knowledge about and attention to planning and land use issues.

Action 1A

As a practice, encourage and fund planning and zoning members to attend training about land use and zoning topics regularly.

Action 1B

Engage the public about land use. Get public buy-in about goals and visions in this plan and amend these planning statements from time to time.

Action 1C

Continually gauge the state of current infrastructure and facilities and determine how those conditions affect the short-term ability of Earlham to accommodate development.

Action 1D

Continue to study and consider emerging issues and land use cases affecting Iowa, such as wind turbines, solar collectors, EV stations, broadband infrastructure, etc.

Action 1E

Update this plan as changes are made to the community that may not be compatible to this plan or that may change the trajectory of the community.

Action 1F

Study and evaluate growth management principles and policies used in Iowa and cities experiencing growth pressure similar to Earlham.

Policy 1A

Make knowledge and interest in gaining knowledge a factor in selecting commission and board members.

Policy 1B

Be transparent about annexation policy.

Goal 2

Preserve existing properties and land uses and promote the best land use pattern.

Action 2A

Update the city's zoning ordinance and other land use regulations to reflect this plan and particularly this chapter.

Action 2B

Consider historic property regulations and protections and a downtown-specific zoning classification.

Action 2C

Enhance broadband capacity as a part of development and revitalization projects.

Action 2D

Consult the comprehensive plan when reviewing rezoning requests and development proposals (including subdivisions within the City's 2-mile extra-territorial area) to determine if they are consistent with the plan.

Policy 2A

Make revitalization a key element of future land use policy and projects. Promote infill development.

Policy 2B

Attempt to achieve a balance of residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Policy 2C

Promote walkability among land uses. Require sidewalks and trails in most development areas.

Policy 2D

Preserve (avoid development) sensitive natural features within the Earham planning boundary, such as floodplains, stream corridors, areas with significant tree cover, and areas with steep slopes.

Policy 2E

Discourage the unnecessary conversion of agricultural land in areas listed as Agriculture on the Future Land Use Map. Consider a policy to review development proposals that is based on scientific criteria, such as CSR2.

Policy 2F

Connect new to existing areas of the community by requiring through streets and pedestrian connections to encourage a cohesive community character and sense of place.

Goal 3

Make managed growth possible and the kinds of developments most desired simpler to achieve.

Action 3A

Review zoning to identify code requirements that may be discouraging new development and redevelopment / infill projects.

Action 3B

Collaborate with surrounding farmland owners to identify places the town can grow. Seek to understand landowner intentions.

Action 3C

Collaborate with Dallas and Madison Counties, particularly their planning and zoning commissions and planning staff.

Action 3D

Monitor growth toward the goal of 1,800 people in the city by 2040 and modify growth strategies according to progress toward that goal.

Policy 3A

Modify fees and land use regulatory processes to make it easier for the ideal types of development needed for the city's future.

Policy 3B

Consider public safety as development is pursued.

Policy 3C

Require new developments and subdivisions in the city and planning area to have public streets and other infrastructure that meets City design standards.

Policy 3D

Require new development to connect and extend street, water, and sanitary sewer infrastructure necessary to both serve their project and allow for future development of neighboring properties.

Policy 3E

Encourage development adjacent to existing development first rather than supporting subdivisions farther away from the main part of the city.

Chapter 13 is the implementation chapter. It includes a matrix that provides strategies to carry out each goal, action, and policy outlined in this chapter. The matrix also outlines the suggested timeframe for each, the guiding principles and Iowa Smart Planning principles impacted, and potential partners that should be involved. It also provides tools and resources to help with the implementation process.