

OVERVIEW

One of the most important tasks a city government is faced with is land use planning. Developing a future land use plan allows the city to ensure that adequate land is available that can accommodate growth and future development goals. The plan also encourages orderly development of land in a way that allows the City to provide services in the most cost-effective way possible.

The Future Land Use Map serves as a guide for future zoning, subdivision and annexation decisions. A good future land use map provides consistency and predictability in the decision-making process that encourages and protects private investment in the community.

The goal of the chapter is to guide DeWitt in planning future development through creating land use policies that promote economic development, good quality of life and efficient provision of services.

LAND DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Zoning Ordinance

In combination with the comprehensive plan, the City of DeWitt uses its zoning ordinance to establish orderly development. The ordinance divides the city into districts and defines how property within those districts can be used. Zoning assigns compatible and incompatible uses that dictate what is included in and separated from the district. Zoning also can control the height and bulk of structures, separation between buildings and sets standards for parking, landscaping and signage. The City of DeWitt currently has 14 zoning districts.

- A-1 Agricultural Holding District
- R-1 Single Family Residential District
- R-2 Moderate Density Dwelling District
- R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling District
- C-0 Office Business District
- C-1 Neighborhood Business District
- C-2 General Commercial District and Downtown Overlay
- C-3 Highway Business District
- M-1 Light Industrial District
- M-2 Heavy Industrial District
- PDD- Planned Development District
- MH- Mobile Home Park District
- F-C- Flood Channel District
- F-P- Flood Plain Overlay District

Subdivision Ordinance

The City of DeWitt also has a subdivision ordinance that is used to guide orderly and efficient land use. The ordinance establishes rules for how land is divided and developed from vacant property for residential, commercial and industrial uses. The ability to regulate this development ensures that all new development within the City meets minimum standards for safety and infrastructure.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

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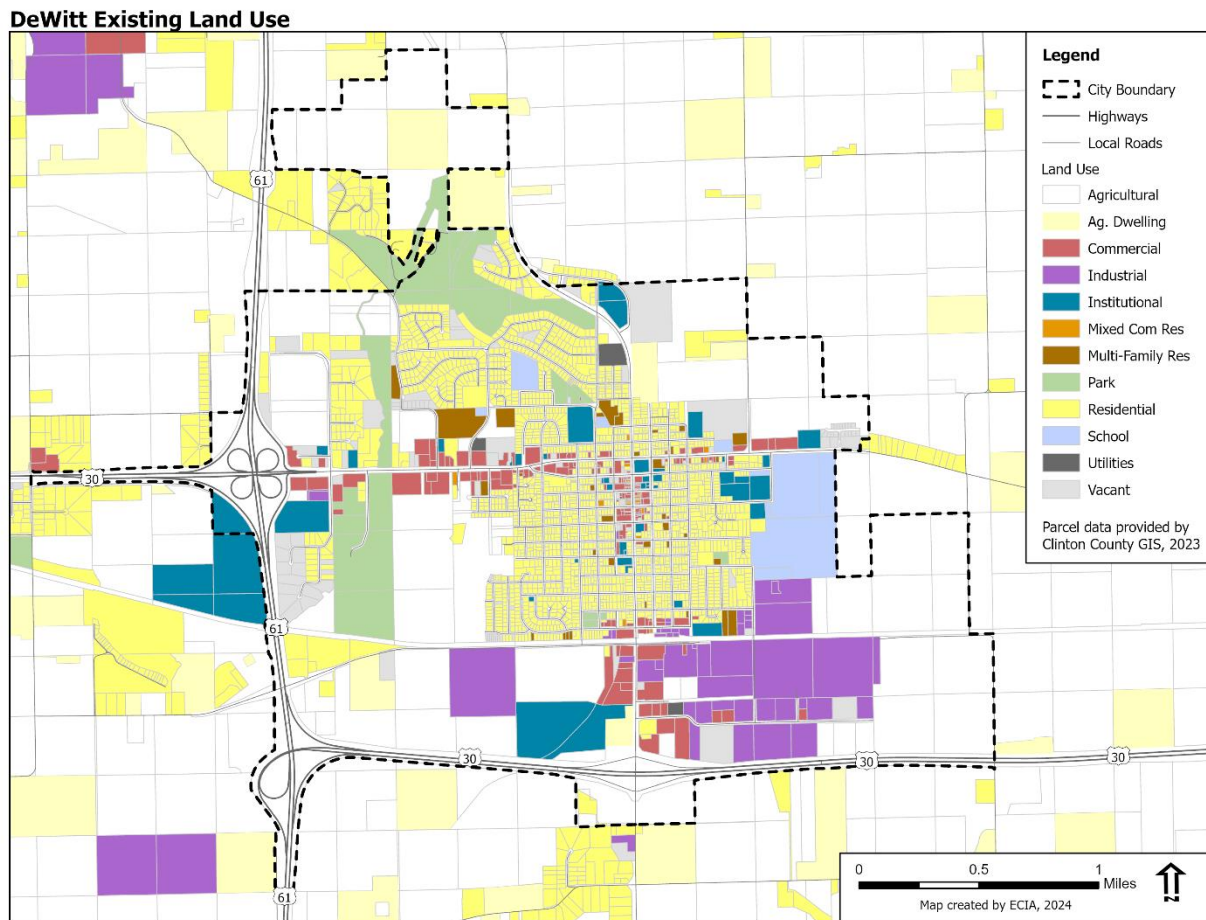
Iowa Code allows cities that have adopted subdivision ordinances the option to review new subdivision plats located within 2 miles of their city boundaries. If a property owner within two miles of the city plans to subdivide their land, they must apply to both the County and City for approval. The City of DeWitt uses extraterritorial subdivision review as a way to promote orderly and efficient development around the city's boundaries so that it can ensure that new rural development will be built to City standards in case it becomes a part of the City.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

The City of DeWitt also has adopted a floodplain management ordinance to manage uses and lands that have significant flood hazards. The Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Clinton County identifies all flood hazard areas within the 100-year flood boundary. The floodplain management ordinance regulates construction in these areas to protect life and property, while also promoting suitable uses for the City's floodplains.

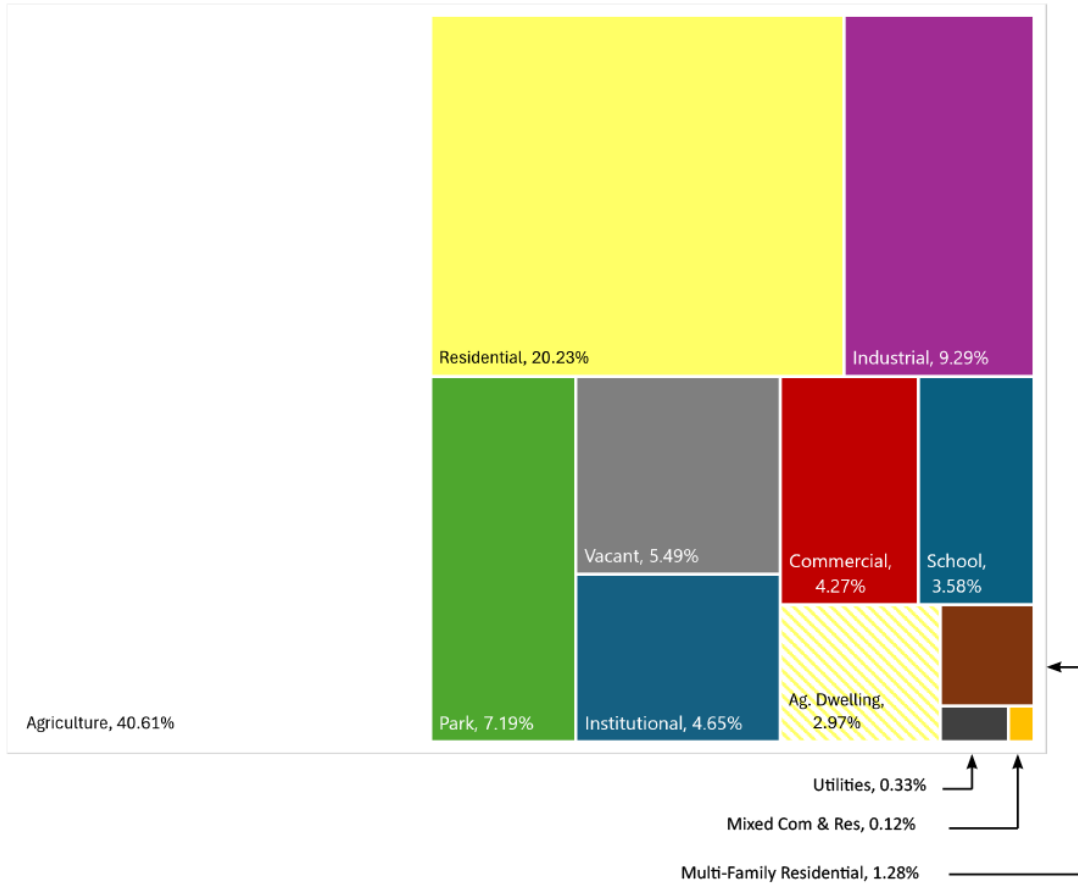
EXISTING LAND USE

To develop a vision for DeWitt's future land use an evaluation of DeWitt's current land use was conducted. Figure 9.1 shows the City's existing land use in 12 categories.



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Figure 9.2. charts the proportion of DeWitt’s land area occupied by each land use. Much of DeWitt is still used for agricultural purposes



LAND USE PRIORITIES

Identify Appropriate Areas for New Development

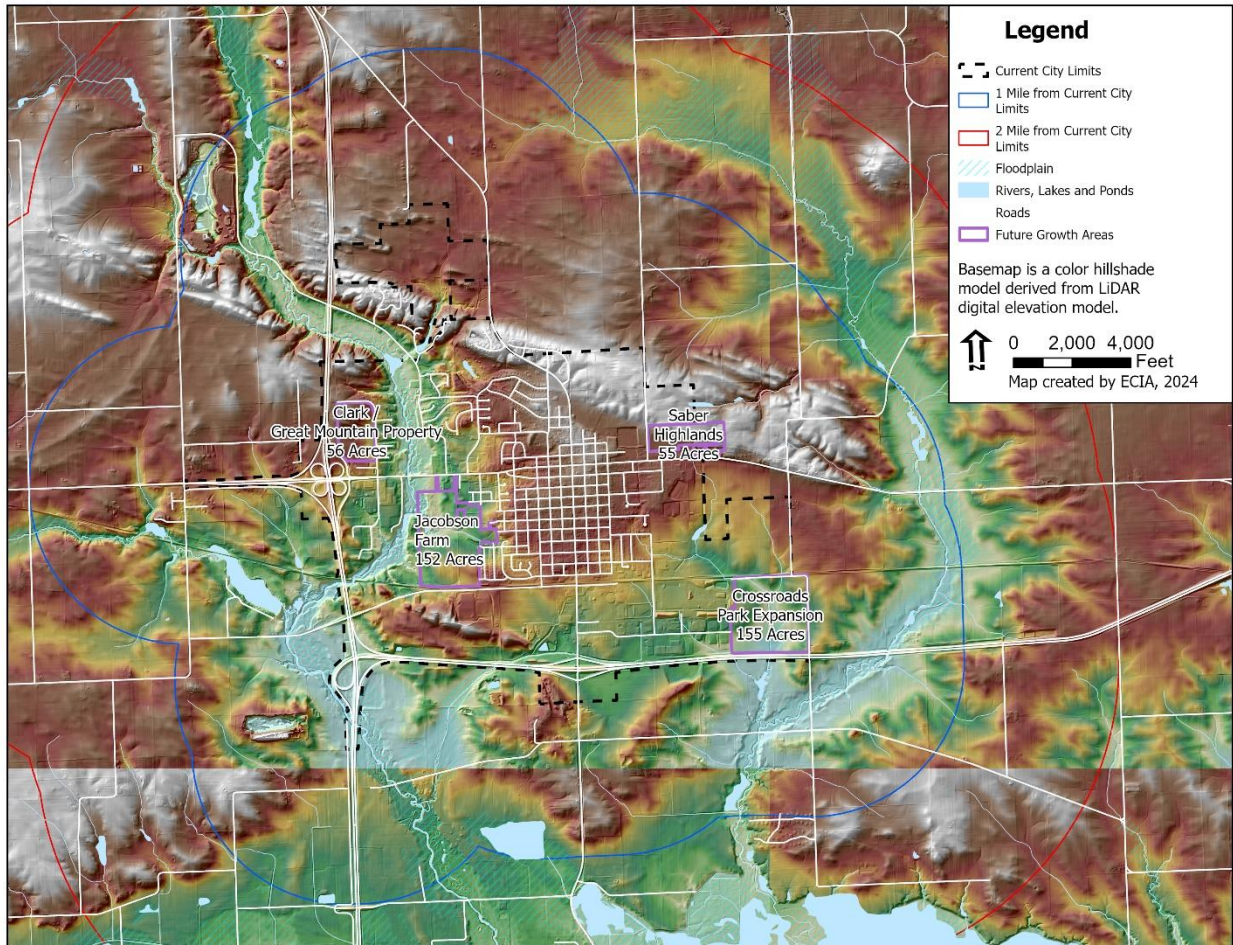
New land development is necessary for improving a community’s quality of life and economic vitality. However it is important that new growth occurs in suitable areas and in an orderly manner. The City must consider multiple factors when deciding whether or not a new development is most appropriate at a given location, such as:

- Is adequate infrastructure available?
- Will the use negatively impact surrounding properties?
- Is the topography of the land suitable for development?
- Is the land in a floodplain?

Figure 9.3. shows which areas within a 2 mile area of DeWitt would be suitable for new development. DeWitt and the surrounding area is mostly flat and there is a lot of undeveloped land within its current

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corporate limits. South of DeWitt is an exception, as there are floodplain areas due to the Wapsipinicon River.



Identify Areas for New Housing Development

During the planning process, members of the community identified housing affordability in DeWitt as a key issue to address through the comprehensive plan. Increased affordability will most likely come from the development of new units, and therefore identifying which areas would be most appropriate for new residential development is a top priority for the future land use map.

Invest in Existing Neighborhoods

In addition to development in new areas the City must also look at development opportunities within existing neighborhoods. Well maintained homes and businesses help a city achieve a status as a strong community that is attractive for both residents and visitors. Continuing to invest in existing neighborhoods through infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation of existing buildings, adaptive reuse, historic preservation and infill development show that these areas are valuable to the City and encourages residents to take pride in their community. The first step in neighborhood investing is identifying potential development sites. Existing vacant lots and buildings, empty storefronts,

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neighborhood parks, homes that need repair and local streets are examples of opportunities the City can invest in to improve the attractiveness of a neighborhood. See Chapter 4. Economic Development for examples of incentive programs that can be used to encourage private investment.

Protect Open Space and Farm Land

DeWitt is a community that prides itself on its small-town character. Part of that small-town character is the surrounding landscape, including farming, forests and natural areas. Growth in these communities requires that communities preserve the land that their residents value. Using strategic and early planning, the City can determine which land is most important to conserve and which land can accommodate the projected need for future growth.

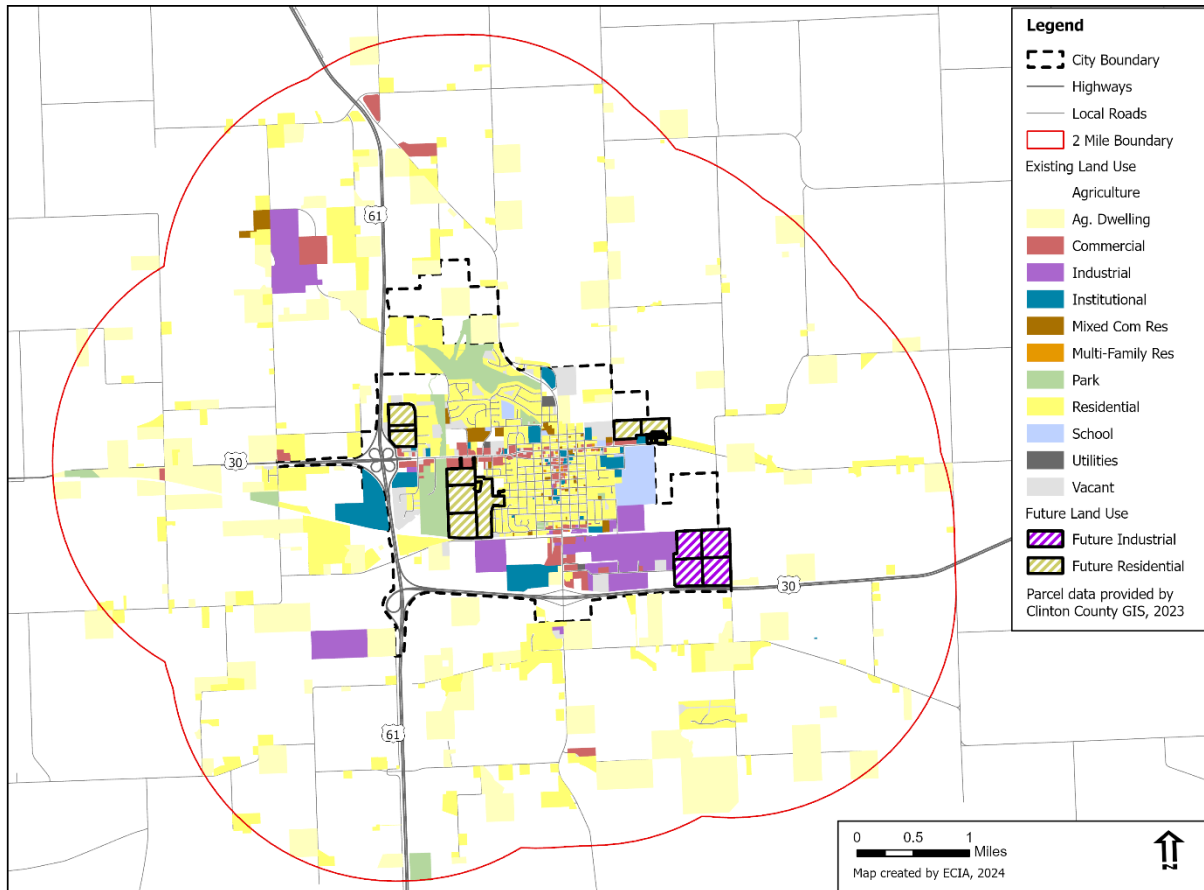
Encourage Mixed Uses Where Appropriate

Many of the tools the City can use to influence land use such as zoning are based on separation of incompatible uses, however mixing different types of land uses is appropriate and can make the community a better place. For example, downtown is an area where retail, residential, offices and restaurants coexist within a relatively small area. Mixed use areas can also include small-scale commercial areas that are compatible with residential uses and primarily serve people living in the neighborhood. The City can use its zoning code to identify opportunities to incorporate flexibility into its zoning regulations to allow appropriate mixing of different yet compatible land uses.

FUTURE LAND USE

Figure 9.4 shows the future land use map for the City of DeWitt.

DeWitt Future Land Use



Future Land Use Categories

Agriculture (white) is land use solely for farms and agricultural purposes such as crop and livestock production.

Ag. Dwelling (yellow and white stripes) is for farms that have a dwelling on the property. These parcels are both zoned agriculturally and classified as agricultural for tax purposes.

Commercial (red) is land used for a variety of businesses that provide goods and services.

Industrial (purple) is land used for manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale trade, construction and quarrying.

Institutional (blue) is land used for public facilities such as governmental buildings, churches, cemeteries and health services.

Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential (orange) is used for areas where commercial and residential uses coexist.

Multi-Family Residential (brown) is land used for two-family and multi-family dwellings.

Park (green) is land used for parks, passive and active recreation areas, trails and conservation areas.

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Residential (yellow) is land used for single-family dwellings.

School (light blue) is land used for school buildings.

Utilities (dark gray) is land set aside for utilities, such as cell towers or water treatment plants.

Vacant (light gray) is land without a current use.

Possible Future Growth Areas

Clark/Great Mountain

The Clark/Great Mountain properties consist of 56 acres and are located in the northwest part of the city located along Westwood Drive. The City is considering this area for a potential subdivision, see Chapter 8. Housing for more information.

Crossroads Business Park Expansion

The City of DeWitt is considering a 155 acre development east of Crossroads Business Park and north of Hwy 30 for new development to extend Crossroads Business Park. Expanding the business park is a priority for the City for future economic development, and this land would be a natural location for expansion being adjacent to the existing park.

Jacobson Farm

Jacobson Farm consists of a 52-acre tract of land located in southwestern DeWitt. A subdivision is currently being built, see Chapter 8. Housing for more information.

Saber Highlands

Saber Highlands is a 55 acre tract located north of 11th Street close to Central DeWitt. A subdivision has been platted for the land, see Chapter 8. Housing for more information.

Recommendations

Keep the Future Land Use Map current with changing growth conditions in the region.

- Review the Future Land Use Map at five-year intervals to ensure that it is a useful guide for growth and development.
- Consider review and amendment of the Future Land Use Map should development conditions change significantly.
- Review zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure compatibility with the recommendations of the DeWitt Comprehensive Plan.

Ensure that development is orderly and suitable.

- Provide adequate amounts of land in a variety of sites suitable for each type of use, and allow for anticipated change and growth based on economic forecasts.
- Provide adequate amounts of land for new housing construction to meet the community's expected population growth.
- Prioritize development within city boundaries to protect agriculture and open space
- Plan for conservation areas that provide recreational opportunities and protect important environmental resources

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Ensure that opportunities for commercial and industrial development are provided to support both the local and regional market.

- Encourage expansion of opportunities within existing corridors or nodes where infrastructure can support growth.
- Encourage continued reinvestment and redevelopment in downtown DeWitt.
- Promote opportunities for neighborhood commercial centers that are compatible with residential property.
- Encourage expansion of Crossroads Business Park to retain existing industry and attract new development