



8 LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

The land use chapter is a key backdrop of the county comprehensive plan. It looks at how future land development might play out within each town and what projected acreages might be needed to accommodate growth and change in select land use categories. Overall, land use change is impacted more by human development than the forces of nature, barring any major catastrophic natural event. The previous chapters have provided a wealth of background data and other information pertinent to Taylor County. Land use activity has and will be an ever-changing scene on the local landscape. How land use activity directly or indirectly impacts the livelihood and environment of Taylor County is up to each resident and visitor of the county.

The comprehensive planning legislation outlines the minimum required components necessary to be included in the planning document. These components shall include a compilation of goals, objectives, policies, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property; a listing of the amount, type, intensity, and net density of existing uses of land in Taylor County; an analysis of trends in supply, demand and price of land; opportunities for redevelopment; and existing and potential land use conflicts. The plan shall contain projections, based on background information for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial land uses and shall also include a series of maps that show current and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive lands, and the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities will be provided in the future consistent with the timetable descriptions represented in Chapter Four, and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

Evaluating present land use patterns assists in identifying projected future land use acreage for agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and other types of land uses. Also, sewer service areas, environmental limitations, proximity to existing uses, farmland preservation areas, and other measures serve as guides to future development. As a result, an inventory and analysis of existing land use conditions is necessary to evaluate current land use patterns and densities that will assist Taylor County and other local units of government in determining land available to meet the county's future needs.



8.1 EXISTING LAND USE

A generalized depiction of Taylor County's *existing* land use pattern is one step in planning for a desired future land use pattern. An inventory of existing land use was completed in the summer/fall 2006 using state and county data, aerial photography, and individual town review and input. The Land Use Advisory Committee submitted draft existing land use maps to all 22 towns in order for their officials to review the map for accuracy. All but one town provided comments on their existing land use map.

Existing Land Use Map Categories

A standard generalized land use classification system was used to assign different land use areas into thirteen categories. A description of the land use classification system used in developing the 2006 generalized existing land use map (Map 8.1A) is represented below.

- 1) **Agriculture** - Predominate land use is agriculture where the lands include croplands, livestock grazing, and dairy farming.
- 2) **Commercial** - Retail sales establishments, restaurants, hotels/motels, and service stations, including gravel and sand pits.
- 3) **Forest** – Forest lands under private or industrial ownership. Mixed residential activity may also occur within this area.
- 4) **Residential** - Lands with structures designed for human habitation including: permanent, seasonal, and mobile housing units and recreational cabins and cottages.
- 5) **Manufacturing** – Manufacturing and industrial processing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution, and similar activities.
- 6) **Open Space** – Private and public owned non-wooded undeveloped lands, fallow fields.
- 7) **Government/Institutional** – Lands used for government-owned administration buildings and offices; fire stations; public hospitals and health care facilities; public schools, colleges, and educational research land; and lands of fraternal organizations. Cemeteries, churches, and other religious facilities are included in this land use category.
- 8) **Communications/Utilities** - Land used for generating and/or processing electronic, communication, or water, electricity; petroleum; or other transmittable product and for the disposal, waste processing, and/or recycling of by-products.
- 9) **Federal** – Federal owned forest lands.
- 10) **State** – State owned forested.
- 11) **County** – County owned forest lands.
- 12) **Town** – Town owned forested and non-forested lands.
- 13) **Water** - Open water areas, including natural and impounded lakes and streams.

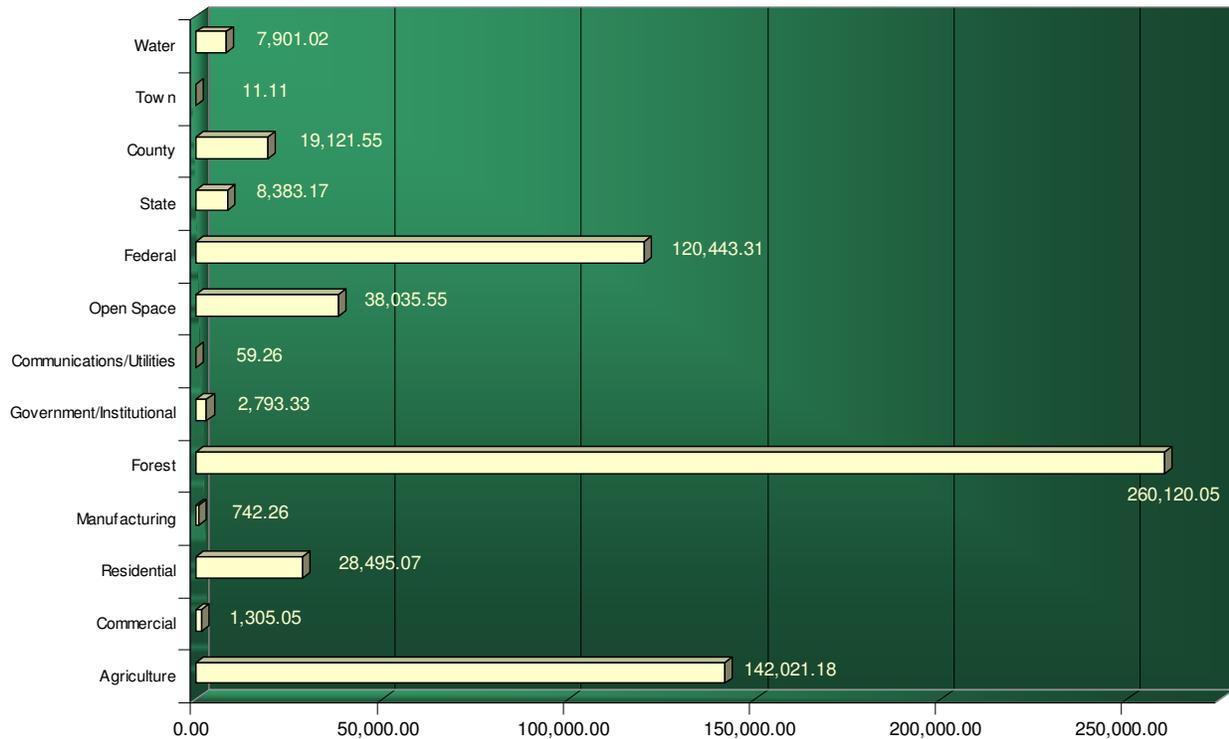
Table 8-1 and Figure 8-1 illustrate the approximate acreage in each existing land use category for Taylor County. Forestry and agriculture represent the greatest percentage of existing land use. City and Village data was not calculated and reviewed due to the fact that the county has no governmental jurisdiction with their boundaries.



Table 8-1: Existing Land Use Categories		
	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	142,021.18	22.56%
Commercial	1,305.05	0.21%
Residential	28,495.07	4.53%
Manufacturing	742.26	0.12%
Forest	260,120.05	41.33%
Government/Institutional	2,793.33	0.44%
Communications/Utilities	59.26	0.01%
Open Space	38,035.55	6.04%
Federal	120,443.31	19.14%
State	8,383.17	1.33%
County	19,121.55	3.04%
Town	11.11	0.00%
Water	7,901.02	1.26%
Total	629,431.91	100.0%

Source: NWRPC

Figure 8-1: Existing Land Use Acreage



	Agriculture	Commercial	Residential	Manufacturing	Forest	Government/Institutional	Communications/Utilities	Open Space	Federal	State	County	Town	Water
Series1	142,021.18	1,305.05	28,495.07	742.26	260,120.05	2,793.33	59.26	38,035.55	120,443.31	8,383.17	19,121.55	11.11	7,901.02

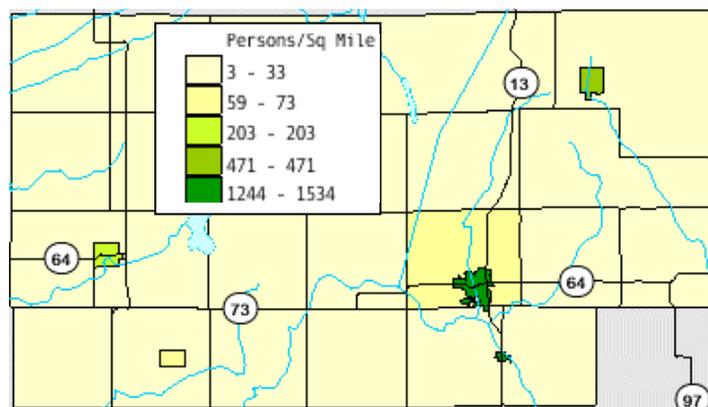


LAND USE PATTERN

Land use activity has evolved to its present form primarily following human development of the landscape. Taylor County's existing land use pattern remains primarily rural in nature, with large areas of farmland and forest and few established incorporated municipalities. Population centers are concentrated in the communities of Medford, Gilman, Lublin, Stetsonville and Rib Lake and rural-crossroads (intersections) or unincorporated communities and along select waterfront areas. Large tracts of agricultural and open space lands are found throughout the county, but most prominently in the southern and western portions of the county. The county's northern portion contains most of the forested areas (Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest) with both agricultural and forested areas scattered throughout the county.

Residential land use development consists mainly of single-family homes; few multi-family homes, apartments and other rentals; mobile homes; and other structures intended for human occupancy. Recreational, seasonal and occasional housing units are also classified as residential and make up a small percent of the total. Although residential land use makes up a relatively small portion (just under 5 percent) of developed land use in Taylor County (Table 8-1), it is the dominant developed land use. Residential density is significantly higher within the incorporated areas (Figure 8-2) and within the county's unincorporated rural crossroad hamlets/settlements of Bellinger, Chelsea, Donald, Goodrich, Hannibal, Jump River, Perkinstown, Westboro and Whittlesey and around lake districts.

Figure 8-2: Persons Per Square Mile



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

LAND USE ASSESSMENTS & TRENDS

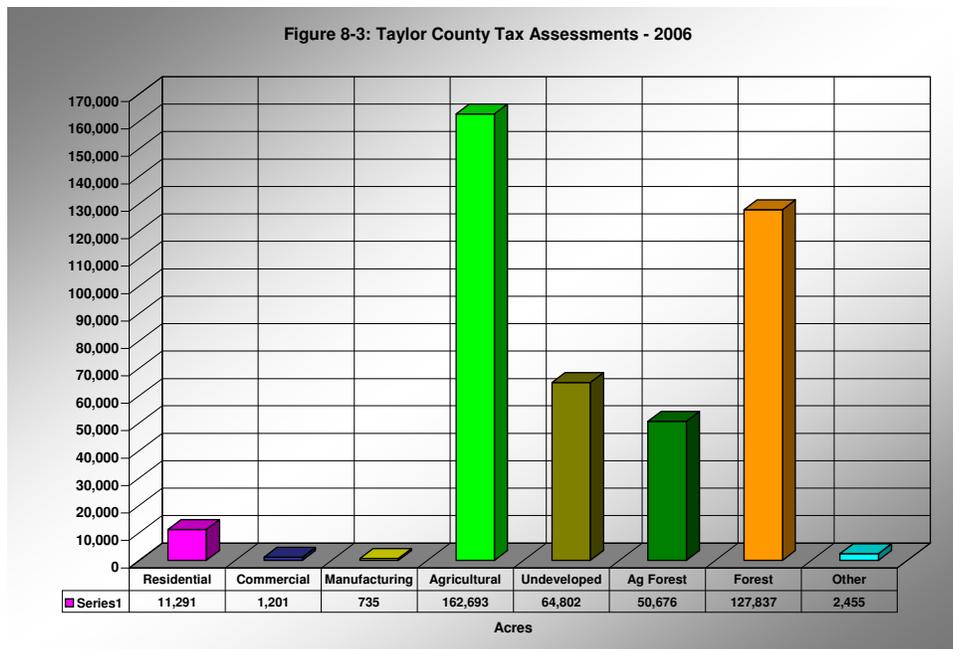
Changes in land use over time can indicate development patterns or trends, which may be useful in determining future land use. Ideally, existing land use information would be compared with historic data to identify these trends. Unfortunately, historic land use inventory data for Taylor County is largely unavailable, making this type of analysis difficult. Wisconsin Department of Revenue land assessment data can be used to conduct a simplified land use analysis and for

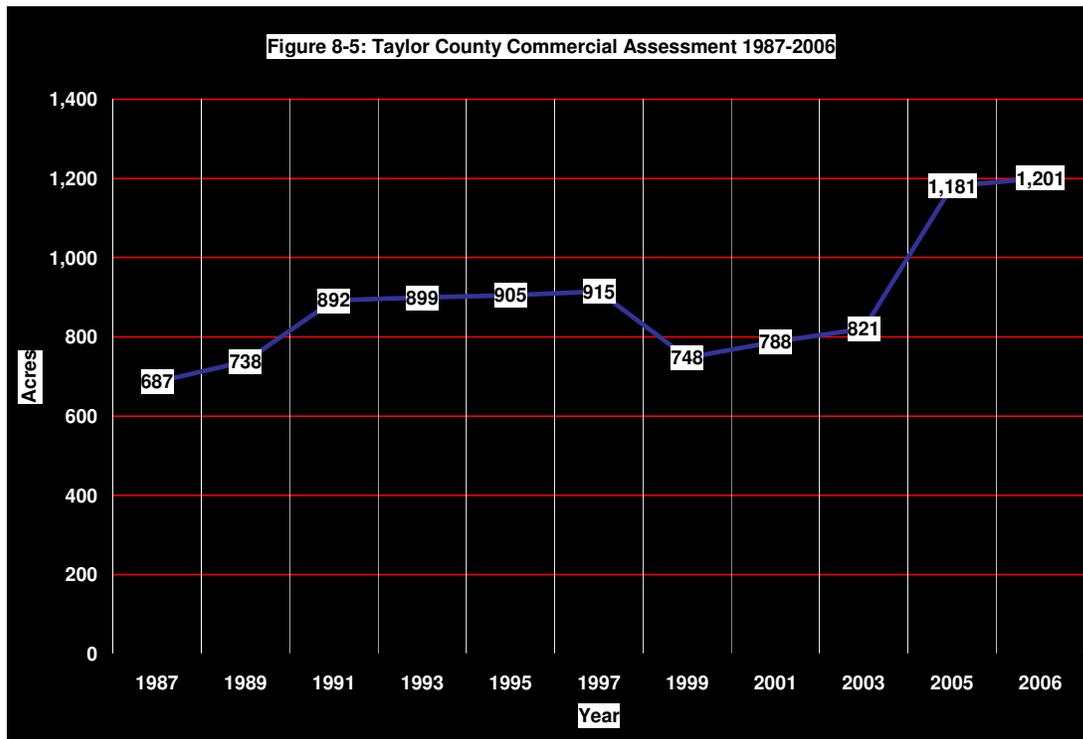
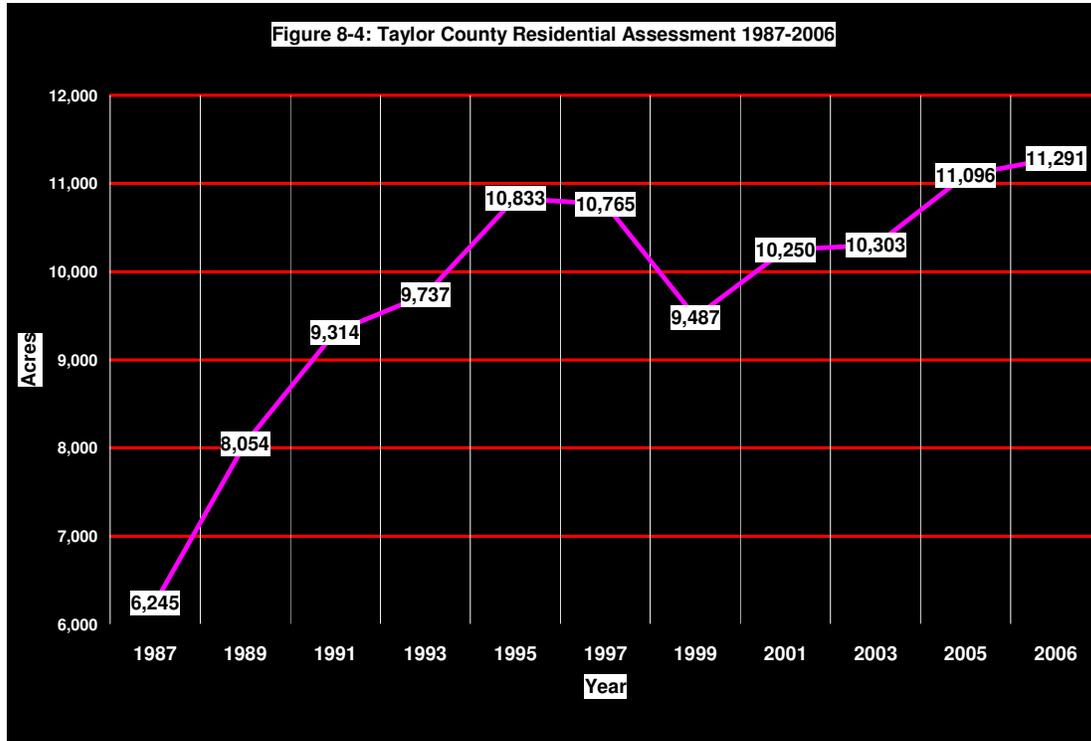


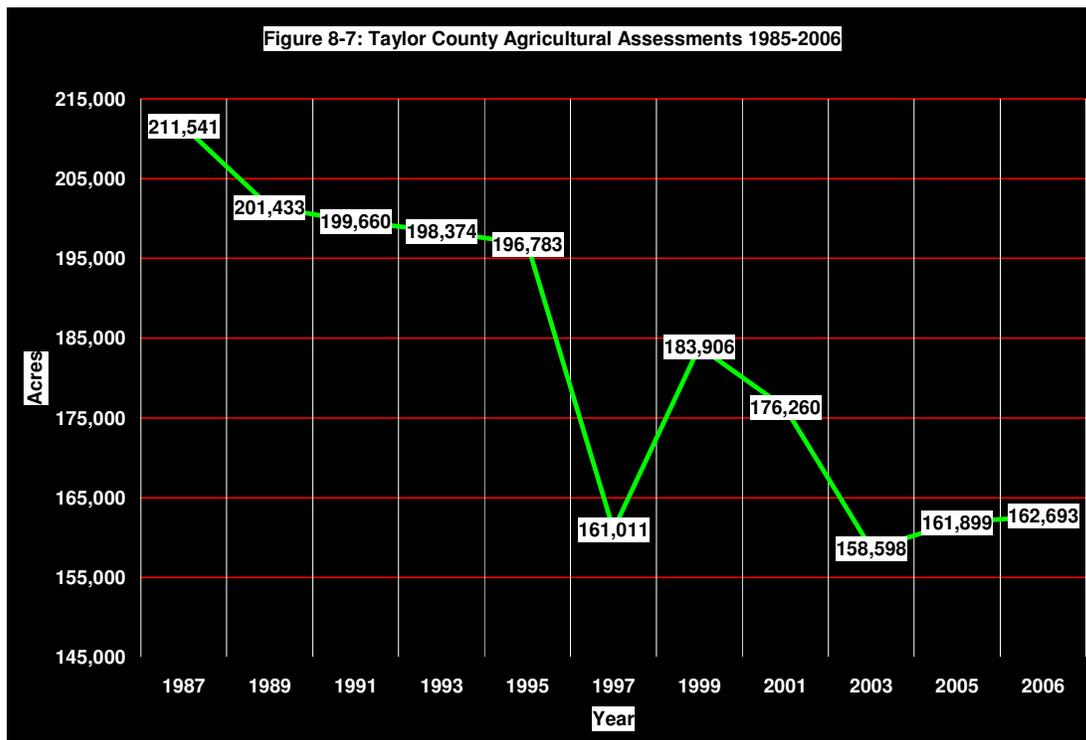
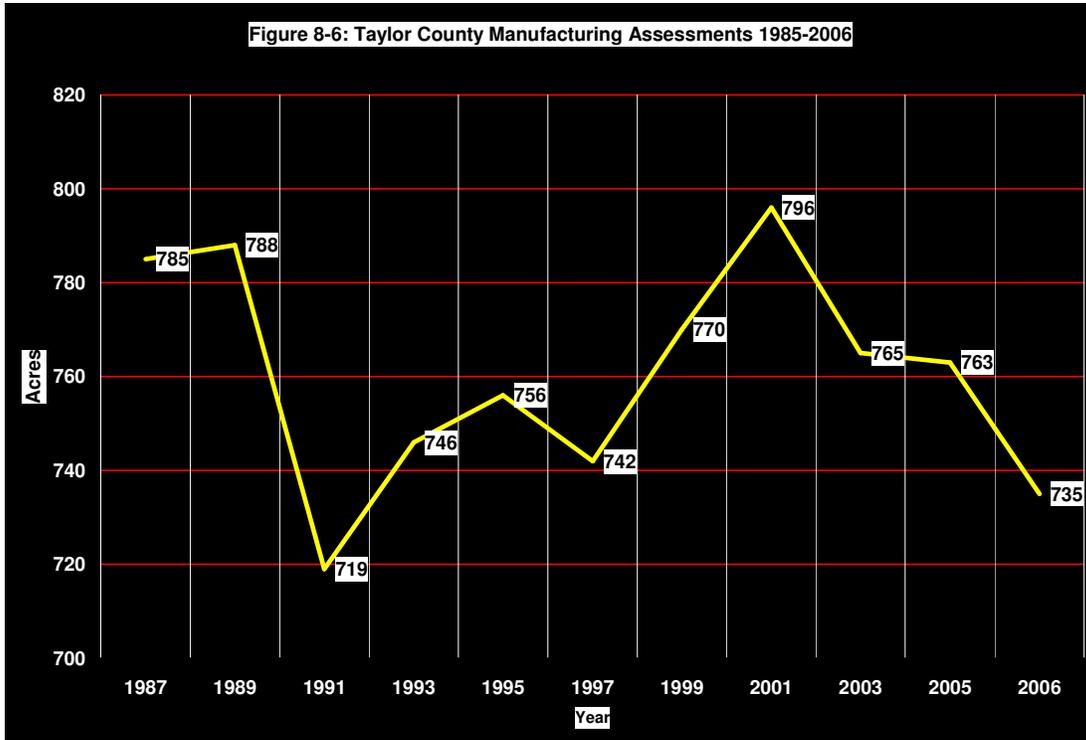
examining trends. Figure 8-3 exhibits the total 2006 acreage as of October 18 in each of the tax assessment classes. Currently, the statutory classes of real estate used for assessment purposes are Residential, Commercial, Manufacturing, Agricultural, Undeveloped (formally Swamp and Waste), Agricultural Forest, Forest and Other.

1. **Residential** – any parcel or part of a parcel of untilled land that is not suitable for the production of row crops, on which a dwelling or other of human habitat is located.
2. **Commercial** – properties where the predominant use is the selling of merchandise or a service. Apartment buildings of four or more units and office buildings.
3. **Manufacturing** – consists of all property used for manufacturing, assembling, processing, fabricating, or milling tangible personal property for profit. It also establishments engaged in assembling component parts of manufactured products.
4. **Agriculture** – land, exclusive of buildings and improvements that is devoted primarily to agricultural use, as defined by rule.
5. **Undeveloped** – bog, marsh, lowland brush, uncultivated land zoned as shoreland, wetlands and other non-productive lands not elsewhere classified.
- 5m. **Agricultural Forest** – land that is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products, if the land satisfies any of three conditions.
6. **Forest** – productive forestland that is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products.
7. **Other** – includes all tax exempt lands.

Real estate assessments are also used to display trends in land use to aid in predicting future trends. Because this data covers extensive time periods, they are useful in conducting a simplified analysis for each real estate class. Trends in tax class assessment from 1987 through 2006 are depicted for residential, commercial, manufacturing, agriculture and forestry in Figures 8-4 through 8-8.







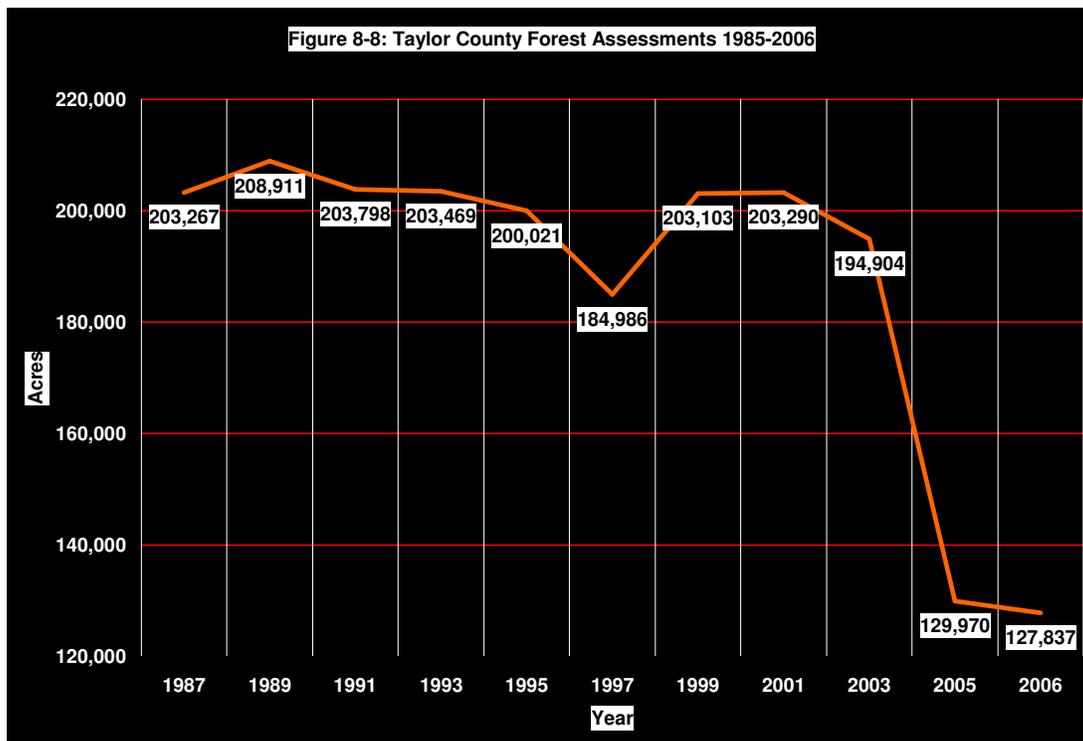


Figure 8-8 displays forest assessments covering 1987-2006. A significant decline in assessed acres is represented in the figure and is attributed to a change in classifying forest land. In 2005, a new assessment category was created “agricultural forest” and is defined as land that is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products, if the land satisfies a number of conditions.

LAND PRICES

Land prices depend upon many factors that vary significantly from place to place. It is difficult to generalize the market price for property within a county due to site specific features that dictate the price of land and because there are a limited number of properties on the market at any given time. Using a local realty companies MLS systems search with a criteria of non-waterfront acreage with parcels selling from 30 to 200 acres and the sales from 2003 to 2007, 75 units were found. The average market price per acre for rural non-waterfront lands in Taylor County is about \$1,100/acre. Although not as abundant in Taylor County, undeveloped lake frontage lots are significantly more and are normally sold on a per foot basis. This information is intended to represent a snapshot of land market sales in Taylor County and should not be considered a comprehensive analysis of real estate prices as a whole.

ZONING

Taylor County has not adopted a general comprehensive zoning ordinance governing the unincorporated areas of the county (towns). The Taylor County Zoning Department is responsible for administrating and enforcing some county codes, including the county's Shoreland Zoning (31), Subdivision Control (33), Floodplain Zoning (29), Sanitary Code (32), Airport Zoning (35), Contaminated Soil Control (37), Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation (46),



Rural Road & Building Identification (61), and Recycling Authority (28) ordinances. The department consists of a Zoning Administrator who provides advisory, educational and enforcement supervision over environmental health problems of the entire county.

Shoreland Zoning

All unincorporated areas of Taylor County located within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable lakes, ponds, or flowages and within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable rivers or streams, or to the edge of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater is regulated by the Taylor County Shoreland Zoning Code (31). The Taylor County Shoreland Zoning Code establishes development standards for lands adjacent to county surface waters. The dimensions of building sites in shoreland areas are as follows in Table 8-2.

Main Buildings	Lots Not Served by Public Sanitary Sewer	Lots Served by Public Sanitary Sewer
Minimum lot area	20,000 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft.
Minimum average lot width	100 ft.	65 ft.
Feet of frontage	100 ft. or more	65 ft. or more
Side Yards		
Minimum width of one main side yard	10 ft.	8 ft.
Minimum combined width of both main side yards	25 ft.	20 ft.
Minimum side yard for accessory structures	5 ft.	4 ft.

Source: Taylor County Shoreland Zoning Code (31)

Local Zoning Ordinances

Because Taylor County has not officially adopted a general county zoning ordinance, none of the towns in Taylor County are comprehensively zoned. The towns of Grover and Medford are the only towns that have subdivision ordinances different than that of Taylor County’s with each jurisdiction administering and enforcing their own ordinance.

Building and Sanitary Permit Breakdown

Table 8-3 details building statistics from 2004 to 2006. Sanitary permits include new and replacement systems. Zoning permits are issued for new building construction, remodeling, excessive grading, billboards and anything in the shoreland area. A Certified Survey Map (CSM) is required for lots less than ten acres. Table 8-4 lists permits issued for sanitary sewer systems in Taylor County from 1969 through 2006.

Year	Sanitary	Zoning	CSM	Privy
2004	172	46	43	11
2005	139	43	64	8
2006	122	49	83	7

Source: Taylor County Zoning Department



Table 8-4: Taylor County Sanitary Permit Breakdown				
Year	# of HT's	# of Septic Tanks	# of Mound/At Grade Systems	Total Jobs
1969	0	96	0	96
1970	0	95	0	95
1971	0	110	0	110
1972	0	136	0	136
1973	1	144	0	145
1974	3	145	0	148
1975	4	92	0	96
1976	13	117	0	130
1977	20	103	0	123
1978	37	87	0	124
1979	55	76	0	131
1980	44	64	0	108
1981	39	40	0	79
1982	39	25	0	64
1983	65	18	3	86
1984	66	44	1	111
1985	48	31	2	81
1986	48	16	3	67
1987	56	26	2	84
1988	83	17	1	101
1989	62	21	3	86
1990	90	25	2	117
1991	75	18	6	99
1992	94	20	6	120
1993	92	23	8	123
1994	76	30	20	126
1995	66	25	24	115
1996	86	12	32	130
1997	64	20	30	114
1998	115	16	34	165
1999	103	10	31	144
2000	97	7	35	139
2001	95	11	46	152
2002	74	17	47	138
2003	118	21	41	180
2004	109	18	45	172
2005	94	18	27	139
2006	80	9	33	122
Totals	2,211	1,803	482	4,496
Source: Taylor County Zoning Department HT: Holding Tanks				



OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Opportunities for redevelopment include infill, brownfield site redevelopment, and obsolete and dilapidated building and building sites. Throughout Taylor County, there may be parcels of land in all local units of government that could use varying levels of redevelopment. Because of the rural nature of Taylor County, redevelopment will occur when and where practical in order to protect land values and neighboring properties. The Zoning Administrator acts as the Brownfield Site Coordinator which entails working with county-owned sites that are contaminated by chemical pollution and then taking steps to get the sites cleaned up and back on the tax roll by being re-sold to the public. Taylor County has been and continues to be active in addressing redevelopment of environmentally contaminated properties.

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL LAND USE ISSUES & CONFLICTS

As growth occurs in Taylor County and as municipal areas expand, there will likely be increasing land use conflicts. Future rural residential, commercial and manufacturing developments will likely require the conversion and fragmentation of farmland, forests, and open space areas.

Conflicts between non-farm residential development and surrounding farms and forestry activities could become increasingly common in the rural parts of Taylor County. Other potential rural land uses that could conflict with neighboring uses include large-scale farm operations, non-metallic mining operations, late night farming operations and rural manufacturing plants. While this plan and its process sought to minimize future land use conflicts, continued local government and developer related coordination must occur as few ordinances are in place that can directly impact land use conflicts.

The County's planning process was useful for minimizing potential land use conflicts between communities and the county by offering intergovernmental discussions and seeking input by sharing and asking for input of county goals and objectives and town maps before adoption at the county level. Local comprehensive plans prepared as part of this process (Chelsea and Molitor) document more specific localized existing and potential land use conflicts. Other towns such as Medford and Hammel are working on comprehensive plans as well.

PROJECTED LAND SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The principals of "supply and demand" significantly impact real estate property. While we generally don't make new land, the existing supply can be subdivided into smaller tracts and made available for a plethora of land use purposes. Total acres, soil condition, scenic quality, and many other qualities that make property what it is also weigh in on the overall demand and price asked for said property.

On any given day there could be hundreds of parcels of land for sale and for the right price, land not listed for sale could also be made available for purchase. While it is difficult to predict exactly what future land use activity will be desired, the planning process sought to identify projected demand for future land use activities covering a 20-year planning horizon (in five-year increments) for residential, agricultural, commercial and manufacturing (industrial) land use. Projected land use changes for residential considered future population, household projections



and past residential assessment data, while commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural projections utilized past assessment data.

Residential

Between 2006 and 2030, Taylor County is projected to need 5,431 more acres for residential land use, approximately 226 acres per year (Table 8-5). Future residential acreage was determined by calculating the assessed acreage per person. The estimated future acreage per person was then calculated based on the historical yearly percentage change. These numbers were then multiplied by the WDOA population estimates, resulting in the estimated assessed residential acreage.

Table 8-5: Future Residential Acreage

	2006*	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Residential Acres Needed	11,291	12,075	13,158	14,302	15,499	16,722
Acre Change	--	784	1,083	1,144	1,197	1,223

Source: NWRPC Projections
 *2006 DOR

Commercial

The amount of land (acres) assessed for commercial purposes increased by 75 percent between 1985 and 2006. Projections based on historic trends indicate that by the year 2026, Taylor County will require about 2,600 acres of commercial land (Table 8-6).

Table 8-6: Future Commercial Acreage

	2006*	2011	2016	2021	2026
Commercial Acres Needed	1,201	1,457	1,767	2,144	2,600
Acre Change	--	250	310	377	456

Source: NWRPC Projections
 *2006 DOR

Manufacturing

The amount of land (acres) assessed for manufacturing purposes decreased by 6.4 percent between 1985 and 2006. Projections based on historic trends indicate that by year 2026, Taylor County will lose 48 acres of manufacturing land (Table 8-7).

Table 8-7: Future Manufacturing Acreage

	2006*	2011	2016	2021	2026
Manufacturing Acres Needed	735	723	711	699	687
Acre Change	--	-12	-12	-12	-12

Source: NWRPC Projections
 *2006 DOR

Agricultural

Taylor County has lost an average of 2,500 acres of agricultural land per year since 1985. Projections indicate that the county will lose an average of 1,700 acres per year for the next 20 years. All together it's estimated the county will lose 35,000 acres over that 20-year period.



Table 8-8: Future Agricultural Acreage

	2006*	2011	2016	2021	2026
Agricultural Acres Needed	162,693	153,044	143,967	135,429	127,397
Acre Change	--	-9,649	-9,077	-8,538	-8,032

Source: NWRPC Projections
*2006 DOR

8.2 FUTURE LAND USE

Taylor County’s future land use map is the visual guide to planning by bringing together most, if not all of the elements of the comprehensive plan such as agricultural and natural resources, economic development, housing, utilities and community facilities, and transportation. It’s a map of what Taylor County towns want to have happen, not a prediction or projection based on a formula.

As part of the planning process, the Taylor County Land Use Advisory Committee requested assistance from each town on the development of the future land use map. Each town was provided an existing land use map, demographic and other background data. The result of the input provided by participating towns creates a countywide perspective on future land use direction. The direction towards the future is portrayed in Map 8.2A. In most cases, land uses are identified to take advantage of cost effective extension of public infrastructure, where available. The map is intended to serve as a general guide for future growth and development in Taylor County over a 20-year planning horizon. It is important to note the future land use map is not an official map nor is it a zoning map. Again, the future land use map is NOT a zoning map. Table 8-9, describes the differences between the future land use map, official map, and zoning map.

Table 8-9: Comparison of Three Different Maps

	Future Land Use Map	Official Map	Zoning Map
Comprehensive Plan Requirement	Yes	No	No
Wisconsin Statutes	66.1001(2)(h)	62.23(6)	59.69(5); 60.61(4); 62.23(7)
Local Government Adopts	By ordinance as part of comprehensive plan	By ordinance or resolution	By ordinance as part of zoning ordinance
Parcel-based	No	Yes	No
Displays	General land use categories	Streets, highways, parkways, railroad right-of-ways, historic districts	Zoning districts
Use	Visual guide for the community	Establish and preserve location of streets, highways, parks, waterways	Designate height, bulk, and use of land

Source: Land Use Resource Guide (June 2005)

A total of sixteen future land use categories were identified to assist in developing a future land use map. Table 8-10 lists these categories along with a description and intended use.



Table 8-10: Future Land Use Category Descriptions

Category	Description	Intended Uses
Agriculture	The predominate land use is agriculture where the lands include croplands, livestock grazing, and dairy farming.	Animal and crop-related agricultural uses with limited residential development.
Forest	Forest lands under private ownership.	Forestry and single-family residential activities.
Federal	U.S. Government forestland.	Forest crop production and recreation.
State	State forestland and natural areas.	Forest crop production, conservancy and/or recreation.
County	County-owned lands.	Forest crop production and recreation.
Town	Town-owned lands.	Governmental purposes or recreation.
Commercial	Retail sales establishments, restaurants, hotels/motels, and service stations, including gravel and sand pits.	General retail, restaurants, grocery, professional offices and service-oriented businesses.
Conservation	Areas of the County that are currently undeveloped and are not appropriate for future development due to environmental constraints.	Conservation areas to preserve and protect.
Government / Institutional	Lands used for government-owned administration buildings and offices; fire stations; public hospitals and health care facilities; public schools, colleges, and educational research land; and lands of fraternal organizations. Cemeteries, churches, and other religious facilities are included in this land use category.	Utility or civic uses such as schools, hospitals and government facilities.
Parks and Recreation	Includes public & private future community parks, trails, facilities and recreational areas.	Park and recreation areas.
Non-Metallic Mining	Open and underground extraction of non-metallic minerals and its supporting facilities.	Non-Metallic mining operations.
Open Space	Private and public owned non-wooded undeveloped lands, fallow fields.	Fallow fields and wildlife habitat.
Manufacturing/ Industrial	Manufacturing and industrial processing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution, and similar activities.	Wholesale, warehouse activities, commercial, industrial, and manufacturing uses.
Single-Family Residential*	Areas of the County that are now developed, or that are deemed appropriate for such development.	Single family detached dwellings with a minimum of 2 acres in non-developed areas.
Multi-Family	Areas of the County that are now	Multi-family dwellings with two (2) or more



Table 8-10: Future Land Use Category Descriptions

Category	Description	Intended Uses
Residential*	developed, or appropriate to be developed as multi-family development, such as apartments, duplexes, condominiums and townhouses.	attached units where community utilities are readily available.
Rural Cross-Road Mixed Use	Unincorporated communities, bergs, hamlets, or predominantly rural settlements that compactly accommodate development. Existing development usually precedes future developments.	Mixed residential, commercial, and industrial growth areas.

*Shoreland areas within the single and multi-family residential land use categories will follow the precepts of the Taylor County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance as defined by Wisconsin §59.692 for the protection of all shorelands in unincorporated areas.

8.3 SUMMARY

The predominate land use activities in Taylor County are agricultural and forestry in nature. Through continued expansion of existing agricultural and forestry related practices or conversion of existing land use to another land use form, overall changes to the landscape are inevitable. The purpose of this chapter was to identify known conditions relating to land use and shifts or changes anticipated to occur in the future, thereby enabling local units of government to better understand upcoming trends or dynamic changes that may be occurring.

Throughout the development of the land use process, local units of government (towns) were requested to provide input into the primary components relating to this Chapter. While the majority of towns responded with information, ultimately some chose not to respond. In the future, as towns develop their own comprehensive plans and officially adopt their plans according to 66.1001, their respective future land use map will replace the future land use map found within this document.