

Figure 6-2: Existing Site Conditions

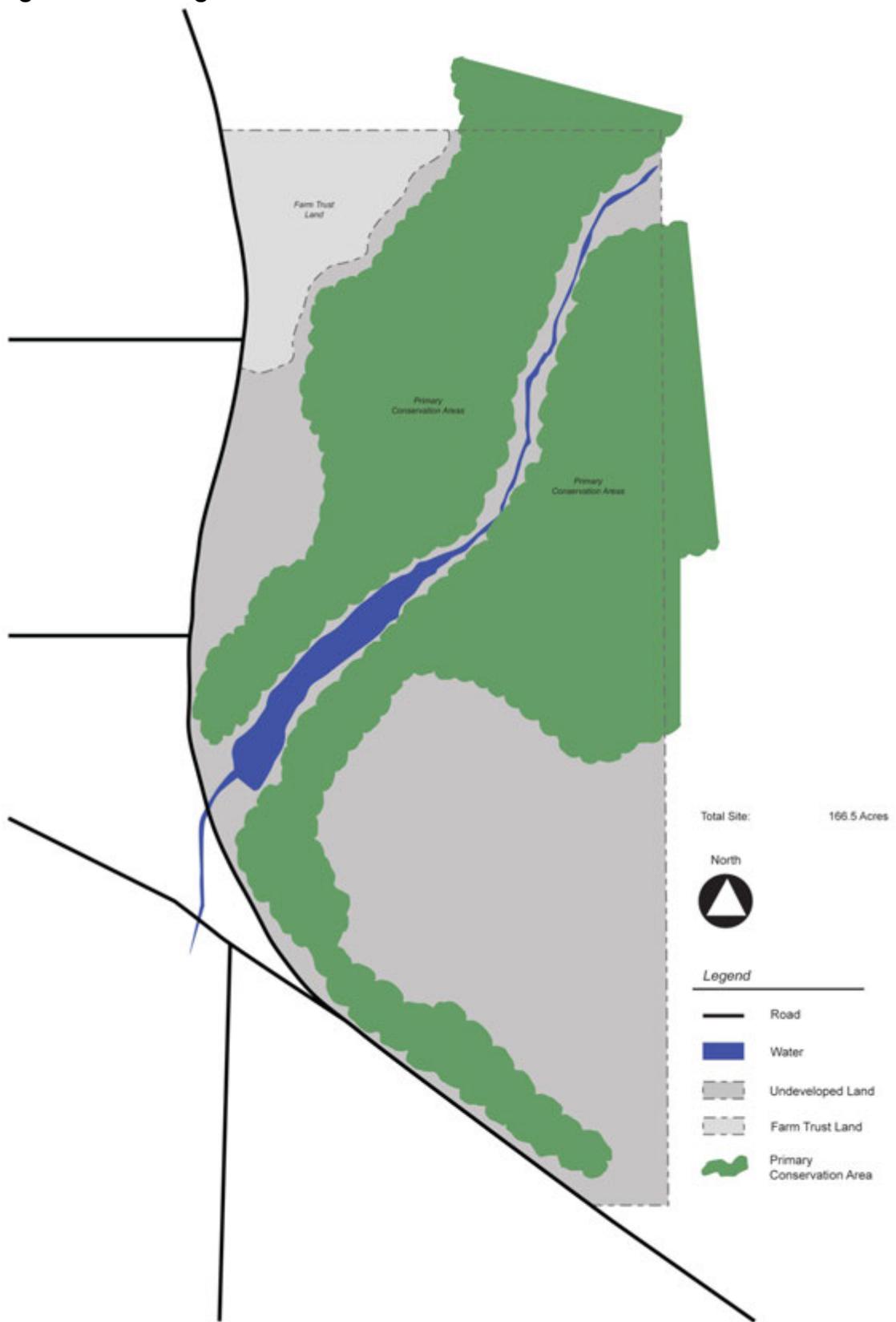


Figure 6-3: Conventional Rural Design

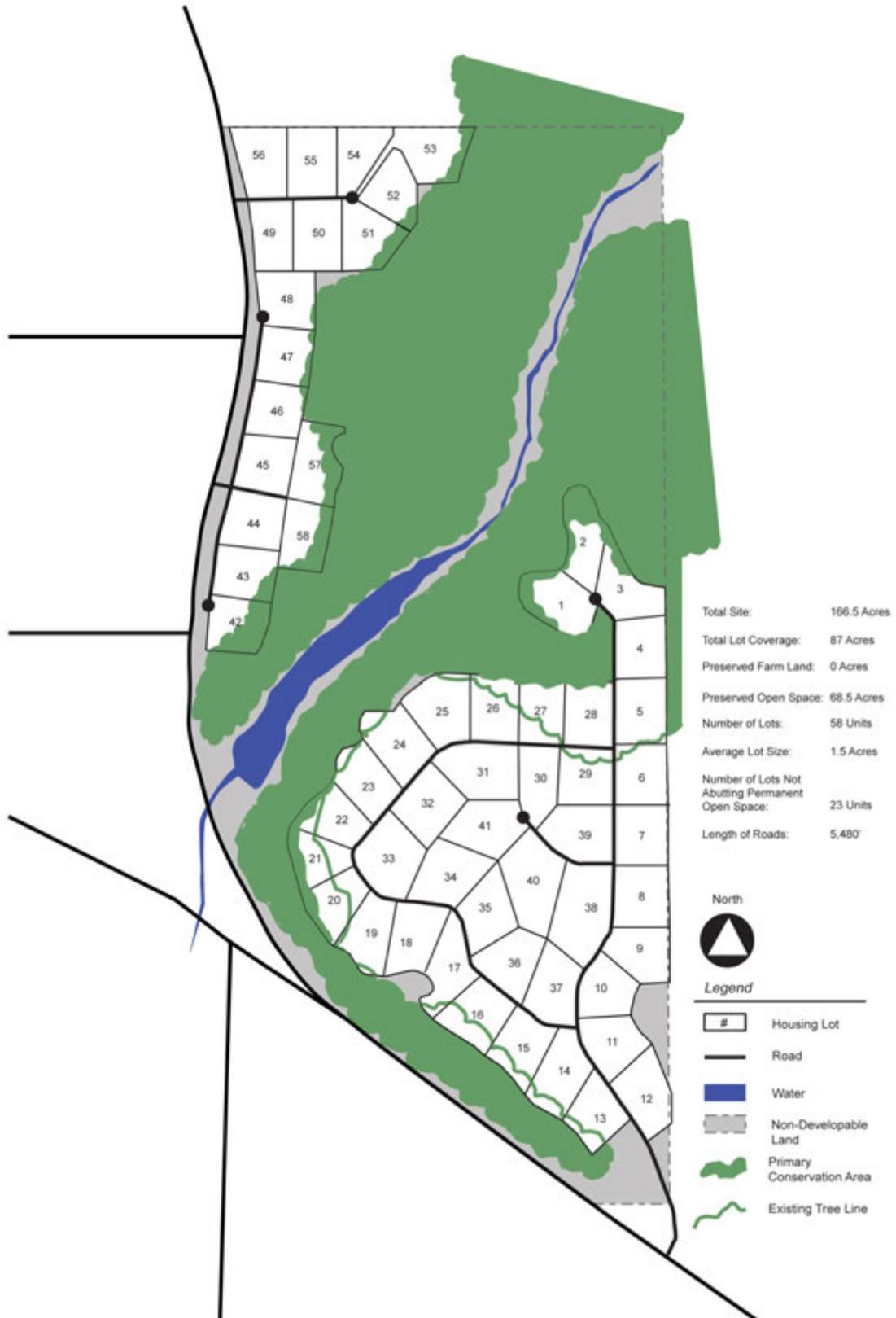
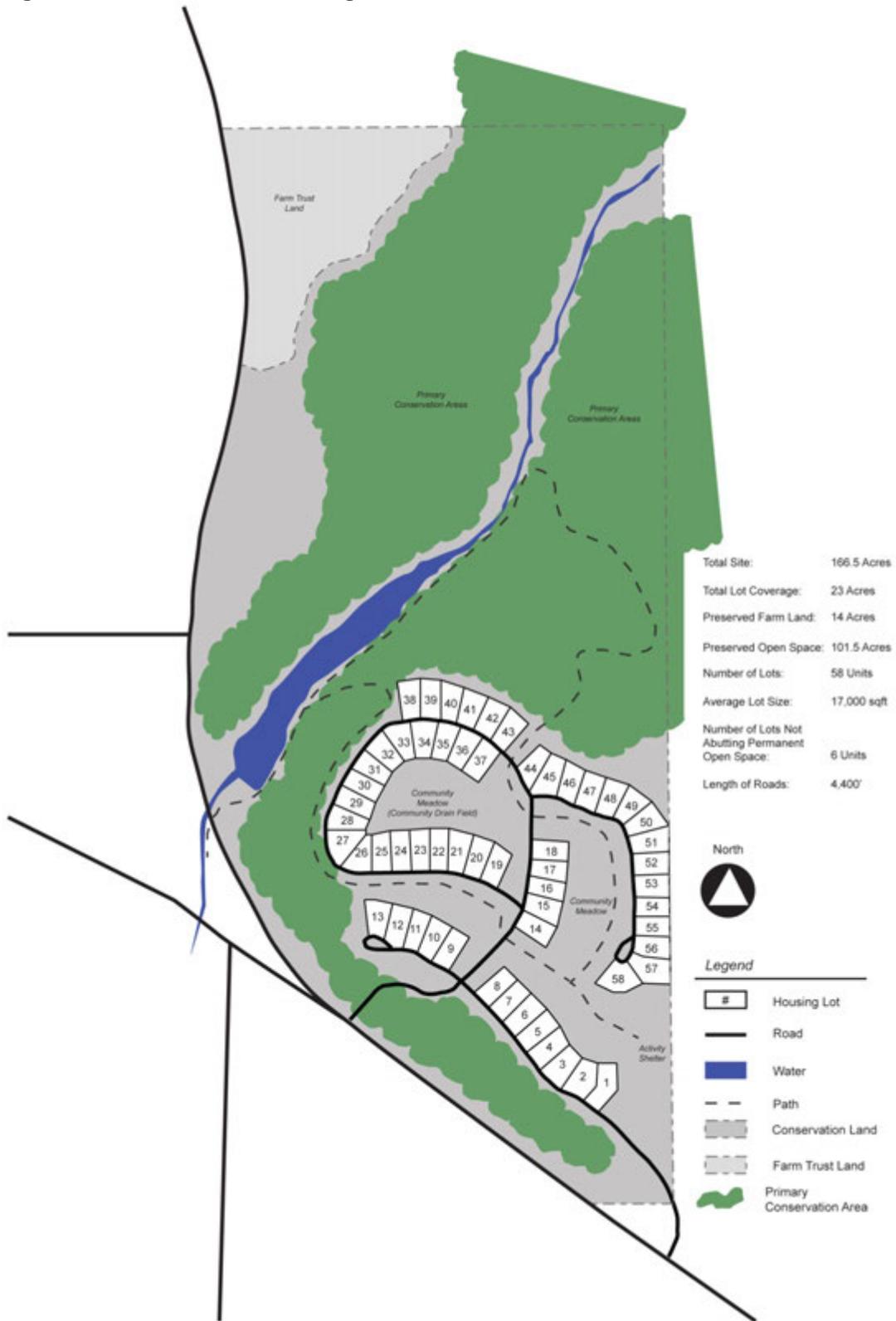


Figure 6-4: Conservation Design District



This designation has been shown in six areas on the future land use plan. These areas were defined as suitable for conservation design due to the existing natural features and, in some cases, the potential for utility extension.

Park and Open Space



Areas designated as park and open space are represented in a light green color. This designation is given to areas that can be used as regional type park facilities. Some areas are designated open space because, although there may not be abundant vegetation, they are not suitable for development. This is often due to wetlands or water courses.

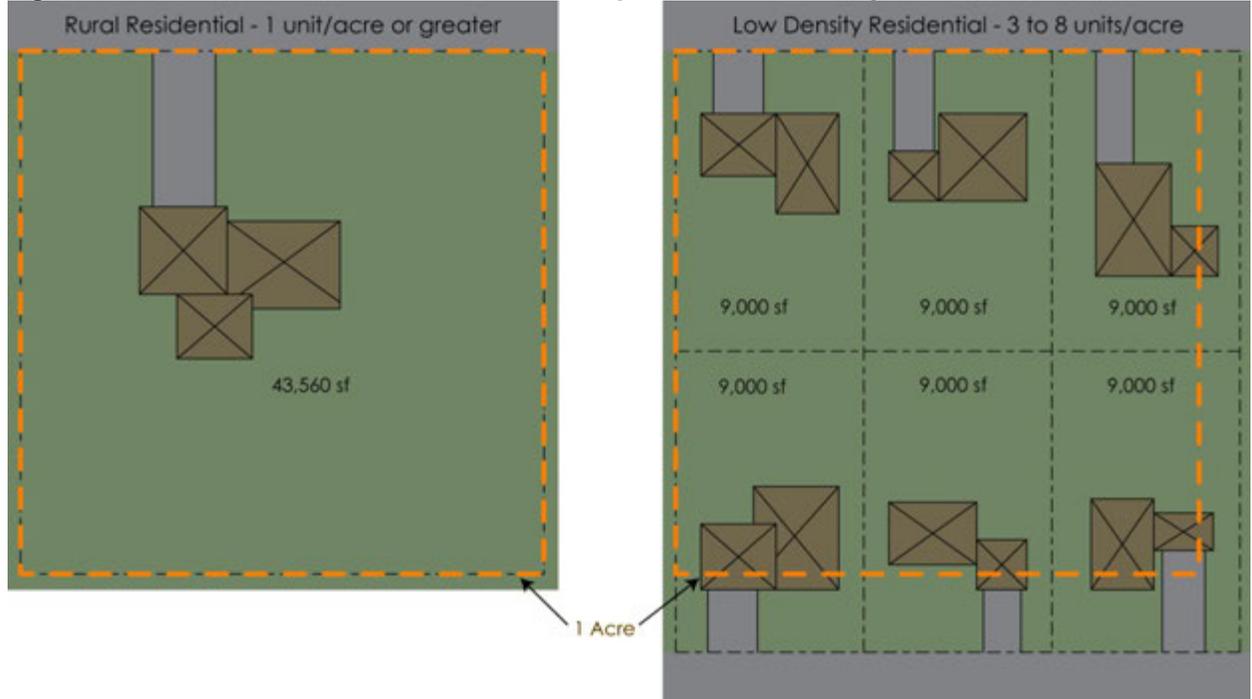
Though parks developed within future residential subdivisions are not shown, there are a few areas of park and open space identified in the future land use plan. These areas are typically areas that are not suitable for development due to wetlands, water courses, or dense vegetation. Some of these areas would also support the expansion of greenways throughout the city. These facilities are similar to the eastern portions of the Leaf River Recreational Trail. Additional park and open spaces should be considered beyond the designations in the future land use plan. Most park areas and trail connections need to be specifically planned in context of a proposed subdivision or a detailed master plan of a small development area to ensure connectivity with the proposed development. Land area equal to 10 percent of residential acreage is recommended for the development of parks.

Rural Residential

Rural residential is shown on the land use plan in a pale yellow color. This designation represents single family residences developed on larger lot sizes than those within the low density residential designation. The density (amount of units per acre) of low density residential is typically between three and eight dwelling units per acre, while the density of rural residential is one dwelling unit per acre or more. A comparison of these development types is shown in **Figure 6-5**.



Figure 6-5: Rural Residential and Low Density Residential Comparison



The majority of these designations are located in the extraterritorial area, outside of city limits. Due to its location and large lot size, these units will utilize an on-site septic system or drain field to handle waste water.

All existing locations of rural residential remain static, and there are no additional areas of rural residential land use designation shown on the future land use plan.

Railroad Right of Way

Railroad right of way is shown in light purple on the future land use plan. This designation is included to show the location and width of the existing railroad right of way. This area may be impacted due to possible improvements to Highway 10 or intersecting roadways as outlined in the Transportation Plan.

Agricultural

The agricultural land use designation is shown in green on the future land use plan. This land use designation is used to represent areas of land that are in agricultural production as either crop or grazing land, or have been developed with farm dwellings. Areas designated as agricultural land on the land use plan include areas outside of future development areas. At this time, these areas serve as a reminder of the importance of a defined edge between urban and rural, which will help to preserve the agricultural qualities of the region. Furthermore, this distinction will help encourage an efficient development



pattern within the city and surrounding area. These areas are best suited for agricultural land until the extension of city services makes development feasible, preventing urban sprawl. At that time, the city should reevaluate the land use plan, and consider updates to designate uses other than agricultural.

Some areas designated as agricultural on the future land use plan are unsuitable for development due to the presence of wetlands or low-lying areas. These areas may be suitable for low intensity land uses, which should be considered on a case-by-case basis if warranted, keeping in mind the feasibility of extension of city services and the impact to surrounding features.

Wooded

Wooded land uses are shown in dark green on the future land use plan. This classification is given to areas with dense tree stands. These areas often include hilly terrain and water features such as lakes or streams. Wooded areas classified on this map are considered natural areas that could largely be preserved through the application of CDD on adjacent land. Due to the nature of the land in these areas, any other form of development would typically need to be very low density development, which would likely prevent or complicate future annexation, and would gradually degrade the wooded designation of the property. A majority of the wooded established designations will remain on the future land use plan, though some areas may be decreased from the application of the conservation design district.



AMENDING THE LAND USE PLAN

Land use plans need to be amended from time to time when the city's needs change, or when a worthy development proposal that garners the support of the community and adjacent property owner requires a zoning change that is inconsistent with the adopted land use plan. While the plan should serve as a guide for zoning and subdivisions, and be referred to on a frequent basis as developers come forward with proposed projects, it is important to acknowledge that the plan is a living document. It is meant to be drawn on, tweaked, refined, and have detail built into it from the inside out, starting with the most immediate growth areas adjacent to existing development. The plan is not meant to be ignored or relegated to the status of irrelevant. Nor are wholesale changes to be made without regard to how they affect other planned land uses in the surrounding

area. The best way of keeping a land use plan up to date and relevant, and to consider the impacts of another land use on surrounding properties, is to follow a formal process for considering amendments to the plan. No matter how much study and scrutiny is put into the original development of a land use plan, over time, existing and future property owners will see different opportunities and constraints with respect to the use of their land. These opportunities will not justify amending the land use plan in all cases, but in some cases, a change may be a positive step.

Zoning decisions should be based on (i.e., consistent with) a city, county, or township comprehensive plan. If for no other reason than this, decisions by the city in accordance with the plan are extremely important. If the city entertains requests not in accordance with the plan, amendments to the plan should be carefully considered and based on an approved process. **Consistent decisions by the city are important – both following its plan and making thoughtful amendments to the plan based on an approved process.** Consistency demonstrates to potential developers that the city has respect for the process and for the public when considering prospective development.

A proposal not consistent with the plan should be identified prior to the project being placed on an agenda for a zoning change or subdivision. Inconsistency could be in the form of:

- Land use (the type or size of a proposed land use area),
- Specific land uses allowed by the proposed zoning district that would be inconsistent with the intent of the plan, or
- Street or highway alignment and/or continuity.

For example, if industrial zoning is proposed where commercial land use is shown on the land use plan, an inconsistency arises due to the industrial land use having its own designation. If the property owner wishes to pursue a zoning application for the industrial zoning district, he/she must also request a land use plan amendment. If a subdivision is proposed that does not include right of way for a collector street connection that is shown in the plan, this is an inconsistency that must be corrected, or the plan must be amended with some acceptable alternative, if one is found to exist.

As another example, if a commercial zoning district is proposed in an area identified for commercial land use, and that particular commercial zoning district allows industrial types of uses, it should not be applied, particularly along corridors with high visibility or in areas adjacent to less intense land use such as residential. In other words, to avoid inconsistencies, all allowed uses of each zoning district should be reviewed for compatibility with the future land use designation during an application for a zone change.

Ensuring that this does not happen will likely result in the need to amend some of the city's zoning districts to build in the assurance that a commercial district really does develop as intended, with retail sales and services, restaurants, and offices, rather than uses of an industrial nature.

The process of amending the land use plan is as follows:

1. Identify the inconsistency.
2. Prepare a sketch of the proposed land use change.

This can be as simple as drawing on a copy of the land use plan, or using tracing paper over the land use plan to show the proposed change.

At this point, it is important for the property owner to decide if they wish to move ahead with a land use plan amendment. The issues should be discussed with City staff responsible for planning, engineering, and zoning administration. A meeting with surrounding property owners may be advisable at this stage.

3. Require the property owner to apply for a land use plan amendment if they wish to move ahead with their proposal.

Public notice similar to that of a zoning change should be required prior to both the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council hearings. Notice to surrounding property owners, informing them of the proposed change, should be mailed in advance of the hearings.

Provide a staff analysis of the following findings associated with the proposed change:

- a. Is the proposed land use compatible with existing land uses, existing zoning designations, or approved subdivisions?
- b. Is the proposed change compatible with surrounding future land uses, or does it result in the need for other land use plan changes to bring about future land use compatibility? If so, have those changes been included in the proposed amendment?
- c. Does the proposed change result in the need for changes to streets and roadways to bring about existing or future continuity and

connectivity? If so, have those changes been included in the proposed amendment?

- d. Can the proposed change be accommodated by the surrounding infrastructure (roadways and utilities)?
- e. Is the proposed change consistent with the other adopted plans and policies of the city?

4. Hold a Public Hearing

According to Minnesota State Statutes, any amendment to the city's comprehensive plan, including the land use plan, must be presented at an advertised public hearing prior to adoption. Notice of the hearing should be published once in the newspaper at least ten days prior that includes the place, time, and purpose of the hearing. During the hearing, the request for a land use plan amendment shall be presented to attendees, followed by questions, if any, from the attending public.

5. Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing

Based on the staff findings and recommendations, combined with the input received at the public hearing, the Planning and Zoning Commission will decide if it agrees with the findings of staff or if it feels differently on some point. The Planning and Zoning Commission must be careful to document its findings and share their recommendation for approval or denial of the requested land use plan amendment with the City Council.

6. City Council Public Hearing

Based on the staff findings and recommendations, along with those of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the input received at the public hearing, the City Council needs to determine if it agrees with the findings of staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission. A final decision will be made by the Council, and if they feel differently on some point, they must be careful to document the findings that led them to approve or deny the requested land use plan amendment.

7. Modify the Land Use Map

If the land use plan amendment is approved, the map needs to be revised to show the approved change. An updated map should be posted on the

City's website, both as a stand-alone map and as a part the comprehensive plan.

Once steps 1-6 have been taken, the City will have completed its review and consideration of a proposed land use amendment. If approved as part of step 6, the change will be official, and only step 7 will remain as a matter of completing the process by communicating the change on the land use map.

GROWTH PHASING

The future land use plan assigns future designations to hundreds of acres that will not be needed to accommodate the 5, 10, or 25 percent growth scenarios for the next 25 years. An analysis of the future land use designations was completed to determine the most feasible locations for growth based upon utility and street extensions, potential costs, and proximity to other land uses. In most cases, these growth areas are connected to land that have already been developed and are already or can easily be served by city utilities and services. A single growth phase was defined for the City of Wadena. **Figure 6-6** displays phase one growth areas for commercial, industrial, mixed-use, medium density residential, low density residential, and park and open space land uses. Similar to the future land use plan, more acreage is included in phase one than is needed because of the future projections of this plan. The additional acreage was included in the plan to provide flexibility for city staff and developers as development opportunities were explored. The phase one growth areas were also used in the development of the travel demand model as part of the transportation plan to define locations of future traffic generators.

Phase One - Commercial Land Use

There are three areas of commercial land use defined in phase one. Two areas are adjacent to US Highway 10 and currently vacant making them prime areas for commercial development. The two parcels on Ash Avenue West were destroyed during the 2010 tornado and have not been rebuilt. The current condition makes these sites shovel ready, and should be marketed as such for development. The third area of commercial land use in phase one is located to the northwest of Wal-Mart. The large scale of these sites, along with the proximity to US Highway 71 and surrounding commercial development make the area suitable for a variety of commercial uses.